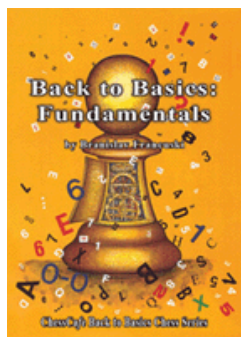




COLUMNISTS

Scholastic Chess

Steve Goldberg



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Summer Junior Championships

This month gold-medal winner Alec Getz shares his experiences at the Pan American Youth Championships, and has provided an annotated game from the tournament. At the U.S. Cadet (Under 16) Championship, Darwin Yang got hot after a rough start and has annotated one of his games for our readers. The U.S. Junior (Closed) Championship was a small tournament, with only four players at the end, but we've included the decisive final round game between Tyler Hughes and Gregory Young.

Everyman Quiz of the Month

Each month Everyman Chess sponsors our Everyman Quiz of the Month, offering a free chess book to three respondents with correct answers. This month, winners of our quiz will receive *Starting Out: The King's Indian* (CD), by GM Joe Gallagher. Please note – winners within the last three months are ineligible for this month's contest.



We will accept all contest answers for one week following the appearance of the column, then randomly select our three winners from this group. Please e-mail your responses to me by August 20, 2008. Send your answers to scholasticchess@chesscafe.com. Good luck!

The following questions are taken from our July 2008 [column](#).

- Which of the following is not a characteristic of a Lucena position (with White having K+R+P against Black's K+R)?
 - White has a pawn on the seventh rank, but not a rook pawn.
 - The white king is directly in front of his pawn, on the eighth rank.
 - The black king is directly in front of the pawn, on his first rank.
- Regarding a standard Lucena position (with White having the K+R+P), which of the following statements is correct?
 - White wins.
 - Black wins.
 - The game is drawn with correct play.
- National master Dan Heisman reported rarely encountering the Lucena position in his own games, yet he does teach it to his students. Which of the following was his reasoning?
 - It's unlikely for a player to improve beyond a Class B rating otherwise.
 - Teaching logical patterns, and how and why they work, helps students learn to find good moves.
 - A player should not rely on "hope chess."

2008 U.S. Junior Championship, June 14-18, Lindsborg, Kansas

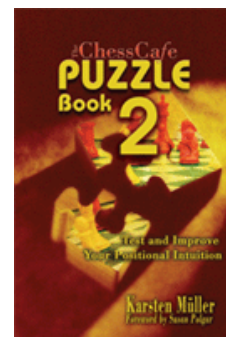
It was a disappointingly small field for the 2008 U.S. Junior Championship, with only four players finishing the event. Many top

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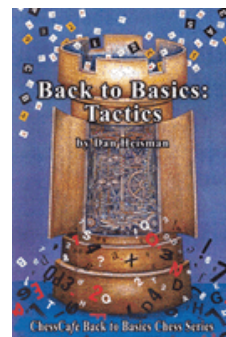
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by Dan Heisman

players declined or were unable to attend because of a number of factors, including school obligations and late invitations. Nevertheless, four young masters competed: Tyler Hughes, Gregory Young, Daniel Yeager, and Edward Lu. A fifth player, Bradley Sawyer, also began the tournament but dropped out after the fifth round. Hughes and Young finished tied for first, but Tyler won their individual encounter and was awarded the championship title on tiebreak points. Below is their exciting final round game.



Tyler Hughes

Photo: Anatoly Karpov Int'l School of Chess

Hughes, Tyler -Young, Gregory

US Junior Championship Lindsborg (8), 18.06.2008

1.d4 f5 2.g3 Nf6 3.Bg2 g6 4.c3 Nc6 5.Nh3 Bg7 6.Qb3 e6 7.Nd2 d5 8.Nf4 Qe7 9.h4 b6 10.Nf3 Ne4 11.Nd3 Bb7 12.Bf4 0-0 13.a4 Na5 14.Qc2 c5 15.e3 Rfc8 16.Be5 Nc6 17.Bxg7 Kxg7 18.Nfe5 Nxe5 19.Nxe5



19...Nf6 20.f4 c4 21.h5 Nxh5 22.g4 Nf6 23.Bf3 fxg4 24.Bxg4 Rg8 25.Qh2



25...Kf8 26.a5 b5 27.a6 Bc8 28.Bf3 Bd7 29.Qh6+ Rg7 30.Ke2 Rb8 31.Qh2 b4 32.f5 bxc3



33.Nxg6+ hxg6 34.Qxb8+ Be8 35.bxc3
gxf5 36.Rhb1 Nd7 37.Qh2 Rh7 38.Qg3
Rh4 39.Rh1 Rxh1 40.Rxh1 Qg7 41.Qd6
+ Kf7 42.Qc7 Ke7 43.Qxa7 f4 44.Qb7
Bg6 45.exf4 Bd3+ 46.Kf2 Qf6 47.Qb4+
Kf7 48.Qd6



48...Nb6 49.Qc7+ Ke8 50.Rh8+ Qxh8
51.Qb8+ 1-0

**2008 U.S. Cadet Championship, June
14-17, Lindsborg, Kansas**

Like the Junior (Closed) Championship,
the 2008 U.S. Cadet Championship (for
players age 16 and under) also fielded a
small group, with seven players
competing. Conrad Holt captured first

place with his score of 6 points, followed by Darwin Yang at 5½ and
Deepak Aaron with 4½ points.



FM Darwin Yang

Eleven-year-old Darwin Yang was the only master in the tournament,
having topped the 2200 mark this past March. The other players ranged
from a rating of 2063 to 2180, so the group appears to have been well
matched. Darwin's father Dujui Yang noted, though, that Darwin did not
appear very ready for the Cadet championship. "He thinks summer is for
relaxing!" he said.



Conrad Holt

Photo: Anatoly Karpov Int'l School of Chess

Darwin lost his first round game with eventual winner Conrad Holt, “and he was very lucky at the second game with Andrew [Shvartsman],” his father said. Darwin drew that game. “Then everything changed,” Duju continued. “He started playing very well.” Indeed, Darwin won each of his remaining games. It wasn’t quite enough to catch Conrad, but it did yield him uncontested second place. Here is his fifth round encounter with Patrick Tae, annotated by Darwin:

Yang, Darwin (2233) - Tae, Patrick (2180)
US Cadet Championship 2008 (5), 16.06.2008

1.d4 d6 2.c4

Normal is 2 e4. However, I was wary of transposing to a possible Pirc after 2...Nf6.

2...Nf6 3.Nc3

It seemed to me a black Pirc structure was inevitable; however, I thought that putting in the move c4 was an improvement over any original Pirc structure. The pawn exerts more control over the central squares, produces a good square for the rook on c1, and prevents any counterplay with ... a6 and ... b5.

3...c6 4.e4 Nbd7 5.Nf3 e5

5...g6 seems like the most normal way of development.

6.Be2 Be7

The Pirc that I have usually encountered is mainly based on placing the black bishop on g7; maybe my opponent doesn’t play Pirc? Now it transposes to some sort of unusual Philidor or Indian defense with the pawn on c4.

7.0-0 0-0 8.h3

If Black had taken on d4 before, then I am not sure I would require this move. This move is the preparation of the development of the white bishop on e3. If I had developed now, the black knight sortie to e3 would have been an unnecessary nuisance to White’s “nice” position.

8...Qc7 9.Be3

White’s position looks harmonious, but until White develops a plan, how a position looks is not relevant. For all anyone knows, the position of White’s pieces in relation to White’s plan may even hinder the plan. That

is why for now we must reserve judgment on White's position.

9...a6 10.Rc1 exd4



This move seems like a concession. Why not maintain the tension in the center? Black has given White the base d4 for his operations on either the queen- or kingside. He has exposed the potentially weak backward d6-pawn to bombardment on the d-file. And what he has gotten in return does not seem to compensate.

11.Nxd4 Ne5?!

Now this is just illogical. What is the point of ...Ne5? It will be forced to run on f4, and later, actually helps White's plan accelerate to hyper-speed. Like it or not, Black's knights are incredibly vulnerable to White's avalanche of pawns. 11...Nc5 is probably better, with the idea 12.Qc2 a5. Black's position is dangling like a leaf in a storm, but it seems to hold for now. Black's plan should probably be ...Re8 and ...Bf8 to force White to adopt a non-aggressive placement that will allow Black to finish his development. White should probably play b3, a3, and b4 to dislodge Black's ultra-important knight. Here is an example of possible (not necessarily best) play: 13.b3 Re8 14.a3 Bf8 15.f3 Qb6 16.Rb1 a4 17.b4 Nb3 18.Rbd1+/-.

12.g4!

This exclamation mark is not that much about the strength on the move but of the "originality" of the idea. One of the main plusses about this plan is that Black's knights stand right in the path of the charge. Coming up is f4 and g5, which gains tempi. White's attack is nearly irresistible.

12...Rd8 13.f4 h5??

Black uses the pin on the d-file to his "advantage". However, ...h5 is almost certainly a mistake. The h5 pawn is vulnerable to attack by white's bishop on e2 and it weakens Black's kingside. Perhaps better is 13...b5 14.cxb5 axb5 15.Ndxb5 (15.Ncxb5 Qb7) 15...Qb7+/- . Black's position is horrible, but perhaps he at least has some counterplay in the center and queenside, and has opened up the position.

14.g5+- Nh7 15.Nf5



White's cavalry makes use of the nice square on f5 and threatens fxe5. What can Black do?

15...d5

Losing, but the alternatives were bleak. 15...g6? 16.Nh6+ Kg7 17.fxe5+-; 15...Ng6 16.Bd4 Bf8 17.Bxh5+-; 15...Bxf5 16.exf5 Nd7 17.Bxh5+-.

16.fxe5

Free knight!

16...Bxf5 17.Rxf5

17.exf5? Qxe5 White is slightly better. 18.Bf4 (18.Qd4?? Qg3+; 18.Bd4?? Qg3+; 18.Rf3? d4) 18...Bc5+ 19.Kh2 (19.Kh1 Qxf5) 19...Qxf5 20.Bxh5 Nxe5.

17...g6 18.Rf2

Compared to Rf1, the bishop can go to f1 and the rook can be sent to d2 to support the d-file. 18.Rf1 d4 19.Bxd4 Nxc5 White wants to go Bf1, but the rook is on f1; 18.Rf4 Bxc5+; 18.Rf3 dxc4+.

18...d4 19.Bxd4 Nxc5 20.Bf1 Ne6



21.Nd5!

Transposes to winning position. 21.Rd2 Nxd4 22.Rxd4 Bc5.

21...cxd5 22.cxd5 Qd7 23.Bb6 Bg5 24. Bxd8

24.Rc3 is also possible and probably better, but I had seen a way to win a piece or better after Bxd8. 24...Nf8 25.

Bxd8+.

24...Bxc1 25.Qxc1

25.Bb6 Bf4; 25.Bf6 Be3.

25...Nxd8 26.Qh6

White threatens e6.

26...Rc8

26...Qe7 27.e6.

27.e6 Nxe6

Best. 27...fxe6 28.Rf8#; 27...Qe7 28.exf7+ Nxf7 29.Qxg6+ Kf8 30.d6 (30.e5) 30...Qd7 (30...Qe8 31.e5) 31.e5; 27...Qe8 28.exf7+ Nxf7 29.Qxg6+ Kf8 30.e5.

28.dxe6+ Qxe6 29.b3 Qxe4 30.Bc4 Qe1+ 31.Kg2 Qe4+ 32.Kh2 Qe5+ 33.Qf4 Qxf4+ 34.Rxf4



Now it is a matter of technique.

34...Rc7 35.a4 Kg7 36.Rd4 f5 37.Kg3 g5

37...Kf6 38.Rd6+ Kg5 (38...Kg7 39.Kf4) 39.h4+ Kh6 40.Kf4+-; 37...Re7 38.Kf4 Kf6 39.h4.

38.h4 g4 39.Kf4 b5 40.axb5 axb5 41. Bxb5 Rc2

41...Rc3 42.Rd3 Rc5 43.Bc4.

42.Kg5

Beginning to weave a net that will either result in the loss of the black pawns or mate.

42...Kf7

42...g3 43.Rd7+ Kg8 (43...Kf8 44.Kf6 Ke8 (44...Kg8 45.Bc4+ Kh8 (45...

Rxc4 46.bxc4 f4 47.c5 Kh8 (47...f3; 47...Kf8 48.Rd8#; 47...f3 48.Rg7+ Kf8 49.Rxg3 f2 50.Rf3; 47...g2 48.Rg7+ Kf8 49.Rxg2) 48.Kg6) 46.Rd8+) 45.Rd2+) 44.Kg6 Kf8 45.Kf6 Kg8 46.Bc4+ Kf8 (46...Kh8 47.Kg6) 47.Rd8#.

43.Bc4+ Ke7

43...Kf8 44.Kf6.

44.Kxf5 Ra2 45.Kg5 g3 46.Rd1 g2 47.Rg1 Kd6 48.Kxh5 Ke5 49.Kg4 1-0

I am a positional player, and playing a game like this gave me a great thrill.



U.S. Medalists (L-R): Alec Getz, Courtney Jamison, Simone Liao, Sylvia Yang, Evan Xiang, Alena Kuzniatsova, & Vincent Huang
Photo: Chess Life Online

2008 Pan American Youth Championship, June 30-July 6, Villa Carlos Paz, Argentina

The U.S. delegation to the 2008 Pan American Youth Championships in Argentina was composed of twenty-two players, seven of whom came home with medals:

- Alec Getz, gold medal, Boys Under 16
- Vincent Huang, silver medal, Boys Under 14
- Sylvia Yang, silver medal, Girls Under 12
- Simone Liao, silver medal, Girls Under 10
- Courtney Jamison, bronze medal, Girls Under 18
- Alena Kuzniatsova, bronze medal, Girls Under 14
- Evan Xiang, bronze medal, Girls Under 10

Gold medallist Alec Getz is also automatically awarded the FIDE master title and an international master norm for his performance at the Pan Am Youth event. I was curious how he had prepared for the tournament.



Alec Getz

“I didn’t do any special preparation for the top players for the tournament like prepare lines against them with a computer,” he said. “I just looked at some of their games, making sure I was comfortable with what they were playing and their style. Also before the tournament; to get used to the ‘long’ time control (I hadn’t played a long time control in a while because at the Marshall Chess Club there are a lot of one-day G/30 and G/60 tournaments), I played at the 1st New York International at the Marshall the week before. The New York International was invitational (only players rated over 2200 USCF or FIDE) so it was very strong which was good training for the Pan Ams. I got 4/9, which was a good result (top player under 2300). I had 1 win, 6 draws, and two losses Drawing 2400s at the Marshall gave me the confidence that if I could consecutively draw 2400s without losing, there should be no reason I should lose to the players at the Pan Ams. So this tournament was very good psychologically for me and was good training for the Pan Ams.”

Alec noted that he was impressed with the competition he faced. “This tournament is definitely much stronger than the American nationals, one reason because it is only the best players that go from their countries where at the nationals everyone goes. Also in this tournament there is a very big prize at stake (FM title and IM norm) and it attracts very strong players. In my section alone there were three 2300 FIDE rated people (which, using the old estimate equals 2400 USCF). At the nationals, you are lucky even to get a master to come because there is no real prize except the title. In fact, I still go to the American nationals only for my school team.”

Four coaches accompanied the U.S. team: Beatriz Marinello, Michael Khodarkovsky, Aviv Friedman, and Armen Ambartsoumian. Alec describes their important role: “In the Pan Ams, everyone was assigned a certain coach that would help you individually prepare for the next round. Because of fog in Buenos Aires and delays at their airport, the rounds all had to be two rounds a day except for the last day. This prevented us from preparing for the first round of the day, which started at nine in the morning so there was no time to prepare. However, the round at five at night we were able to prepare something. My coach, Michael Khodarkovsky, helped me choose what to play and making sure I was comfortable with my opening. However, after the penultimate round all the coaches chimed in because I was up for the gold medal. We discussed offering a draw, and they told me not to even think about it, because Mayorga was already an FM and therefore why would he accept a draw, as only first place gets an IM norm. And they told me if he declines the draw, it would hurt me psychologically. This mental preparation really helped because I had the confidence I could win the whole tournament, and it paid off.”

He also appreciated the opportunity to get to know his teammates a bit better. “The U.S. delegation basically had their own ‘private’ hotel, the only other people staying at the hotel were a few Brazilian players and an

Argentinean. I met players I had never met before from other parts of the U.S. The hotel also had a ping pong table, which I had a lot of fun playing with the ‘ping pong crowd,’ which included the Argentinean. Although he didn’t speak any English we all spoke with him the universal language of ping pong.”

An interesting sidelight was that because of a “slightly embarrassing incident” before the tournament, Alec reports learning a little humility. “I was playing someone on ICC in a five-minute game. I was completely winning but he flagged me (beat me on time). I had a really tense day at school that day, so I got angry and said to him, ‘Is that how you’re 3000 in blitz... by flagging everyone?’ but then the next morning I realized how I behaved and apologized. He said ‘okay.’ But then I realized his handle and said wait a minute... is he who I think he is? And I checked and it was the top rated guy in my section in the Pan Ams. So I was sitting next to him in the penultimate round, after I had defeated him the round before, and asked him if he was that ICC handle who flagged me. He said yes. And then after this round (I was the last game done by over an hour) he and his father were still at the playing site waiting for the result. There were no taxis so late and it wasn’t safe to walk back... so they gave us a lift.”

Asked what advice he might offer other players, Alec said, “If you believe in yourself and have the confidence that you can do it, then you will do it. If I didn’t get the confidence that I could beat Mayorga, I wouldn’t have won. Just play your game and don’t get intimidated by your opponent’s rating (either too high or too low), and then you will see a lot of games you’ll be winning that you didn’t ever think you would before you had this mindset that you can beat anybody.”

Alec will be entering the ninth grade this fall at Hunter College High School in New York, and kindly annotated his second round game for us:

Getz, Alec (2142) - Arcos Facio, Mateo (2021)
XIX Festival Panamericano de Ajedrez (2), 2008

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.b3

This Nimzo-Larsen system is not usually played at the top level, because if Black plays correctly, he should equalize the position. However, against lower rated players it can work since White understands the position strategically more than Black.

2...g6 3.Bb2 Bg7 4.e3 0-0 5.c4 d6 6.d4 c5 7.Nc3 Na6 8.Be2 Bf5 9.0-0 Ne4 10.Nxe4 Bxe4 11.Qd2 Nb4?

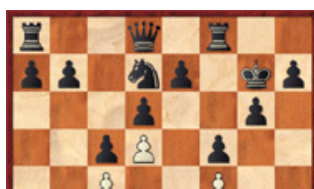


The position should be fairly equal after a normal move like 11...e6. However, Black wants to bring his knight away from the edge en route to c6, but this maneuver turns out to actually waste a lot of tempi and gives White a very comfortable position.

12.a3 Nc6 13.d5 Bxf3 14.Bxf3 Ne5 15. Be2 f5 16.f4

White has the two bishops advantage, but he is willing to give this up for what he gets in return.

16...Nd7 17.Bxg7 Kxg7



18.e4!

A very strong pawn sacrifice. If he doesn’t take the pawn, White will take



on f5 with weaknesses around Black's king, while the square e6 and the pawn e7 are very weak. When Black takes the pawn, White will stick the rather calm-looking bishop on e2 in Black's face and restrict Black's movement with Bg4-e6, and then White will commence an attack

on Black's kingside. For example, Qc3 and g4-g5 with a very dangerous position for Black. Of course, in the current position, Rybka does not like giving pawns and does not suggest e4 as one of the top moves, but against a human it can be very difficult to refute.

18...fxe4 19.Bg4 Nf6 20.Be6

Ah, now Rybka likes!

20...h5

It is actually very hard to find a defense for Black here because that bishop is so strong in "suffocating" Black's position. 20...h5 stops White's g4 idea, but White has another resource.

21.f5 Rh8 22.fxg6 h4



Black is trying to create some breathing room, but it is not enough to save the game. Taking on g6 is suicidal for Black's king, as White's pawn is its main defender. For example, 22...Kxg6 23.Bf5+ Kf7 24.Qg5 with a winning position.

23.Rae1 Rh5 24.Bf5

White is threatening to win the e4-pawn when he will be the one a pawn up with a superior position.

24...h3

The final hope for some complications.

25.g4 Rh4 26.g5 Nd7 27.Qf2 Rh5 28.Bxd7 1-0



[Goldberg: if 28...Qxd7, 29.Qf7+ Kh8 30.g7+ Kh7 31.g8Q#; or 28...Qf8 29.Qg3, Black will have to give up his queen, and more, for a white rook; or 28...Rxc5+ 29.Kh1 Qg8 30.Qh4 and Black is not long for this world.]

Answers to Last Month's Quiz

1. Which of the following positions represents a "Lucena" position?

a)



b)

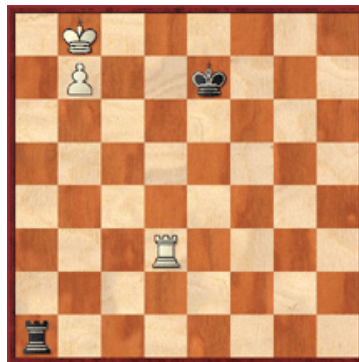


c)



Answer: b

2. From the position shown below, what should White's next move be?



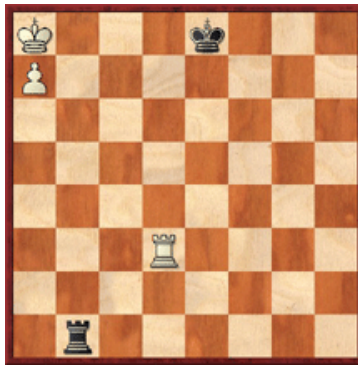
a) Rd4

b) Kc7

c) Re3

Answer: a

3. Is the position below a win for White, or a draw?



Answer: It's a draw.

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