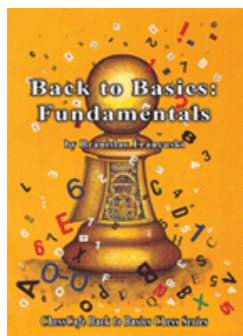




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Kayden Troff

There are plenty of talented young chess players in the U.S., many of whom have appeared in this column. This month a new phenom makes his debut here, not quite as highly rated as some others, but he's still only ten years old and has already defeated the current U.S. Junior Champion and an international master in blitz play. His name is Kayden Troff, from Utah. We trust you'll enjoy his story and his games below.

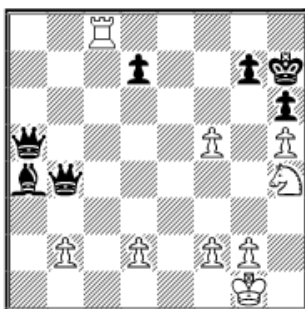
Everyman Quiz of the Month

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 the CD *Starting Out: The Scotch Game*, by GM John Emms. Please note – winners within the last three months are ineligible for this month's contest.



We will accept all contest answers for *two weeks* following the appearance of this column, then randomly select our three winners from this group. In order to meet the two-week deadline, please e-mail your responses to me by April 22, 2009. Send your answers to scholasticchess@chesscafe.com. Good luck!

Problem #1



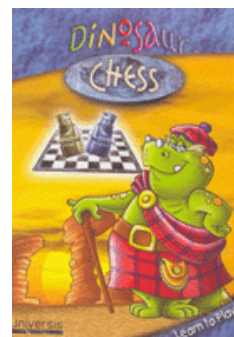
White to move and win.

Problem #2



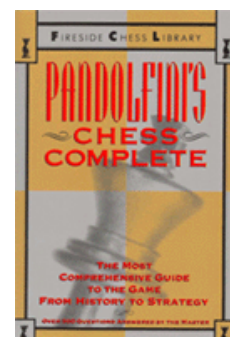
It is White to move. His queen is trapped but how can he lose only a piece

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rather than his queen?

As of press time, his most recent rating stands at 1983, and the April 2009 USCF rating supplement places him about sixteenth in his home state. Nice stats, but hardly front-page news. Until you consider that Kayden Troff is still a month shy of his eleventh birthday.

The youngster from suburban Salt Lake City, Utah has had quite a phenomenal rise. His first rated tournament took place near the end of 2004, and at the end of 2005, at age seven, he had a provisional rating just over 1000. By the end of 2006, he was around the mid-1400s, and he finished 2007 with a rating of 1655.



*Kayden Troff with his trophies
at the 2008 Grade Nationals*

The year 2008 was a very busy year for Kayden. He played in about three dozen rated tournaments and his rating rose to 1947, a gain of nearly 300 points. After winning his state elementary championship four years in a row, he took second place in the fifth grade section of the National K-12 Championship in Orlando in December 2008.

Kayden followed this performance by winning the 2009 Utah State Speed Championship in January and the 2009 Utah Game/60 Championship in March. "This is the first time that either of these championships have been won by anyone in the K-12," said his mother, Kim Troff (pronounced "Trofe," rhyming with "loaf"). He has already placed first in three other tournaments this year as well.

Kayden is not the only chess player in his family. "His dad always loved chess growing up, but never had anyone to play," explained Kim. "So he decided that when he had kids, he was going to teach them. The first two girls were not interested, but his boys loved it. He started teaching Kayden's older brothers when they were about four. Kayden would sit on his dad's lap and watch them play. Finally, when he had barely turned three, he announced that he wanted to play. We laughed and set up the board. Kayden sat down and played a game of chess. He knew how the pieces moved and he knew how to attack with them. He has been playing ever since."

Kayden's two brothers are proficient chess players in their own right, as their mother explains. "Kayden has two brothers who play chess. Jeremy is sixteen and is the current Utah State High School Champion. He was also the 2008 Utah State Junior High Champion. He also teaches private chess lessons and the three boys all run a very successful chess camp (along with another family, the Treimans) twice during the summer and once over winter break called TNT Chess Camp. You can visit the

[website](#) to see the details of their camp. Zachary, age thirteen, is more a hobby chess player. He enjoys chess (especially the money he makes from it), but is much more interested in his baseball. He was the fifth grade state champion, and was co-champion with Kayden last year in the State Elementary Blitz Championship.”

Like a number of other chess prodigies, Kayden is home-schooled. “He started school at four and was reading and doing double digit addition by the time he turned five,” his mother said. “He learned his multiplication tables in one week in 1st grade and is now doing algebra. He loves to read. We usually have at least three books going at one time; one he is reading on his own, one he and I read together, and a classic of my choosing. We just finished Uncle Tom’s Cabin and are now reading The Prince and the Pauper by Mark Twain.”



*At the Igor Ivanov Memorial tournament;
IM John Donaldson is next to Kayden*

Although living far from any chess hubs, Kayden has had the benefit of working with a couple of strong grandmasters. “His first coach was GM Igor Ivanov,” Kim explained. “Kayden started with him when he was six years old and worked with him as often as Igor could get up to Salt Lake until he passed away from cancer. He also took lessons over the phone and Internet from GM Gregory Kaidanov from January 2008 until the summer of 2008. Kaidanov helped him with some new openings and really taught him how to utilize the tools available to teach himself. This proved to be a real turning point for Kayden and he has really taken off since then. Right now he is being coached by his father using those tools and watching videos from grandmasters on different openings. His favorites are by GM Nigel Davies. He utilizes Deep Rybka 3 quite extensively to analyze his games, and he also plays on the ICC.”

Because of scheduling conflicts, Kayden was unable to play in the SuperNationals in Nashville, but his family is hoping to take him to the Chicago Open in May, and he is one of eight youngsters invited to attend the next session of Greg Shahade’s U.S. Chess School, in New York in July. Kayden is especially active in the online World Chess Live (WCL) Rated Grand Prix Qualifier tournaments every Thursday. “It was these tournaments,” his mother said, “where he beat IM Alex Lenderman who is the highest rated Under 21 blitz player in the nation. Of course these are Quick games, but Alex Lenderman has only lost four WCL games in these tournaments since September and Kayden accounts for two of those losses. Kayden has taken first place in two of these tournaments this year and his performance rating has been in the 2400s in these two tournaments.”

The interesting game below is from a recent Utah over-the-board event in which Kayden faced a 1959-rated opponent in an unusual Queen’s Pawn opening. In this game as well as those below, notes are from Fritz:

1.d4 d5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.f3 c5 4.e4 e6 5.Be3 cxd4 6.Qxd4 Nc6 7.Bb5 Bd7 8. Bxc6

8.Qd2 a6 9.exd5 axb5 10.dxc6 Bxc6 11.Qxd8+ Rxd8 with Black slightly better.

8...bxc6 9.exd5 exd5 10.0–0–0 Be7 11.Bg5

11.Qd3 0–0–/+.

11...0–0 12.h4

12.Nge2 Re8–/+.

12...Re8–+ 13.g4

13.Qd2 Qb6–+.

13...c5 14.Qf4?

Better is 14.Qd2 d4 15.Bxf6 Bxf6 16.Ne4–+.

14...d4 15.Bxf6 Bxf6

15...gxf6?! 16.Nd5 Bb5 17.Qf5–/+.

16.Ne4 Be5 17.Qd2 Qb8

17...Qb6!? keeps an even firmer grip 18.Ne2–+.

18.Ne2 d3?

With this move Black loses his initiative; better is 18...Qb6–+ and Black can look forward to a comfortable game.

19.cxd3

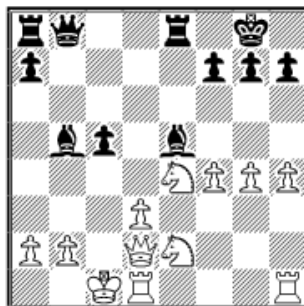
Black is slightly better.

19...Bb5

19...Qb6 20.f4 Bd4 21.g5.

20.f4

20.Qc2!? has some apparent merit.



20...Bxd3!–/+

Demolishes the pawn shield.

**21.N4c3 Bxe2 22.Nxe2 Bxb2+! 23.Qxb2 Qxb2+ 24.Kxb2 Rxe2+ 25.
Ka1 Re4 26.Rhf1 Rc8 27.Rd7 a5 28.Kb2 c4 29.Kc3 Re3+ 30.Kd2**

30.Kc2 h6–/+

30...Rh3

Black intends c3 (30...Ra3 31.Re1 h5→).

31.Rc1?

Better is 31.h5–/+.

31...h6→ 32.a4

32.Rg1 c3+ 33.Kc1→.

32...c3+ 33.Ke2 Rc4 34.Rd3

34.Kf2 otherwise it's curtains at once 34...Rxf4+ 35.Kg2 Rxh4 36.Rxc3–
+.

34...Re4+ 0–1

35.Kf2 Rxd3→.

In our next game, Kayden had the black pieces against reigning U.S.
Junior Champion Tyler Hughes in a WCL game featuring plenty of
tactical melees, racing pawns and a beautiful finish.

Tyler B. Hughes - Kayden Troff

WCL USCF GP Qualifier 34 World Chess Live, 05.03.2009

Queen's Gambit Declined: Exchange Variation [D35]

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Bg5

Black has an active position.

5...Be7

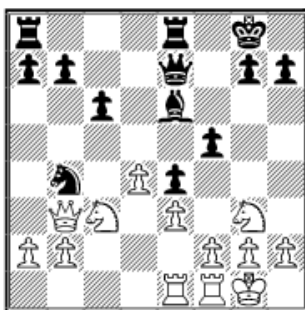
5...c6 6.e3=.

**6.e3 0–0 7.Bd3 c6 8.Nge2 Re8 9.Qc2 Ne4 10.Bxe4 dxe4 11.Bxe7 Qxe7
12.Ng3 f5 13.0–0 Na6 14.Rae1 Nb4 15.Qb3+**

15.Qd1!? should be considered.

15...Be6

Black is slightly better.



16.Nxf5?

Better is 16.Qd1!?

16...Qf8—+ 17.d5 Nxd5

Better is 17...Bxf5 18.f3 Nd3 19.fxe4 Nxe1 20.Rxf5 Qd6—+.

18.Nd4= Bf7 19.Qxb7

19.Nxd5 Bxd5 20.Qxb7 Rab8 21.Qxa7 Rxb2=.

19...Nxc3

Black is slightly better.

**20.bxc3 Bc4 21.Qxc6 Bxf1 22.Rxf1 Rac8 23.Qd5+ Qf7 24.Qa5 Re7 25.
h3 Rec7 26.Qf5**

26.Qe5 Rxc3 (26...Qxa2 27.Nf5 with White slightly better) 27.Qxe4 Re8.

26...Qxf5—/+ 27.Nxf5 Rd8 28.Rc1 Rd2 29.Ng3

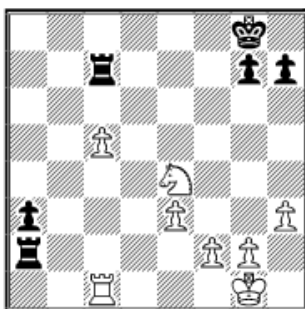
29.c4 a5 30.a3 a4 with Black slightly better.

29...Rxa2

29...Rc4!? —/+.

30.Nxe4 a5 31.c4 a4 32.c5 a3

White has to watch this pawn.



33.Rc4??

The best bet to save the position is 33.c6.

33...Ra1—+ 34.Kh2 Ra7 35.c6

35.Rc2 doesn't do any good 35...a2 36.Kg3 Rg1 37.Rxa2 Rxa2—+.

35...a2 36.c7 Rh1+!!

Lovely play, a forceful sacrifice.

37.Kg3 Rxc7 0–1

Our final game features another WCL game, this time against IM Alex Lenderman, the highest-rated Under 21 Quick player in the U.S. It ends with a unique mate by Kayden.

Kayden Troff - Alex Lenderman

WCL USCF GP Qualifier 18 World Chess Live, 02.10.2008

Torre System [A46]

1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.Bg5 c5 4.c3 Be7

4...cxd4 5.cxd4 Nc6 6.Nc3+/-.

5.Nbd2 Qb6 6.Rb1

6.Nc4 Qc6+/-.

6...Nc6

6...cxd4 7.cxd4 d5 8.e3=.

7.e3+/- d5 8.Bd3 Qa5 9.Ra1 h6 10.Bh4 c4 11.Bc2 b5

11...g5 12.Bg3+/-.

12.a3 Qb6 13.0-0 0-0 14.Ne5 Re8

14...a5 15.f4+/-.

15.f4 a5 16.Ndf3

16.Bxf6!? Bxf6 17.Qh5+-.

16...Ne4+/-



17.Nxc6 Qxc6 18.Bxe7 Rxe7 19.Ne5 Qc7

19...Qe8 20.Rf3+/-.

20.Bxe4 dxe4 21.Qg4 Qd6 22.Qg3 Qd5 23.Ng4

White threatens Ng4xh6.

23...Kf8 24.Qh4 Bb7

24...f6!?= is worthy of consideration.

25.Ne5+/- Ke8

25...Rc7 26.f5 f6 27.fxe6 Qxe6 28.Qg3+/-.

26.Qg4

Better is 26.f5 f6 27.Ng6 exf5 28.Nxe7 Kxe7 29.Qh5+-.

26...g6?

Better is 26...f6 27.Ng6 Rc7+/-.

27.Qh4+- h5

27...Rc7 28.Qxh6 Qd6+-.

28.Qf6



28...Kd8 29.Nxf7+ Kd7 30.Ne5+ Kd6 31.Nxg6

31.f5!? seems even better 31...Rg8 32.fxg6 Ba6+-.

31...Rc7

31...Ree8 is no salvation 32.f5 Bc6 33.a4 bxa4 34.Ne5+-.

32.Ne5

Better is 32.f5 and White can already relax 32...Rg8 33.a4+-.

32...b4

32...Rg8+- the last chance for counterplay.

33.axb4 a4 34.Ra3

34.Rxa4! Rcc8 35.b3 Rxa4+-.

34...Bc6

34...Rcc8 35.f5 Kc7 36.Qf7+ Kb6 37.Nd7+ Kc6 38.fxe6+-.

35.f5 Re8

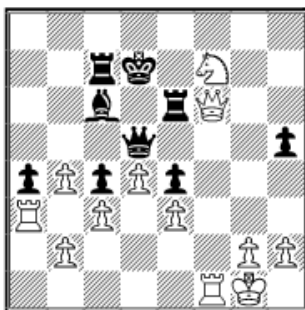
Now if 35...Rg8, 36.b3! Bb5 37.bxc4 Rxc4 38.Rfa1+-.

36.fxe6 Rxe6 37.Nf7+

37.Qf8+ Ree7 38.Rf6+ Qe6 39.Nxc4+ Kd7 40.Nb6+ Kd6 41.c4 Bd7 42.d5 Qxf6 43.Qxf6+ Re6 44.Qf8+ Re7 45.Rc3 Rc8 46.c5+ Kc7 47.Qxe7 Kb8 48.Qd6+ Kb7 49.Qxd7+ Rc7 50.Qe8 Rxc5 51.bxc5 h4 52.Qc8+ Ka7 53.Qa8#.

37...Kd7

37...Rxf7 38.Qxf7 Re7+-.



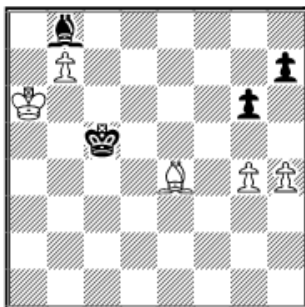
38.Qd8# 1-0

In the April 2009 USCF Rating Supplement, Kayden is ranked the #10 over-the-board “Under 10” player in the country, and the #3 “Under 13 Quick” player in the U.S., although he may now have risen to #1, pending the recent results of his competitors. Having taught for awhile at his family’s chess camp, he has a brief introductory YouTube video available titled [Kayden Troff Teaches Basics of Chess](#). He ends the clip with a big smile and says, “Once you learn all the basics [how the pieces move], then you can get on to strategies and planning, and that is when chess begins!”

You can follow Kayden at his [blog](#).

Answers to Last Month’s Quiz

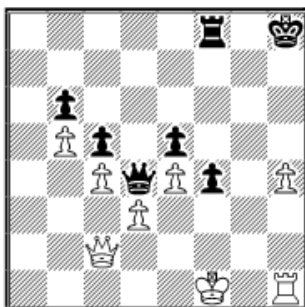
Problem #1



White to move and win.

Answer: *1.Bxg6 hxg6 (1...h6 2.g5 hxg5 3.h5) 2.h5 and Black can't stop both the b- and h-pawns.*

Problem #2



It is Black to play and win.

Answer: *1...Qa1+ 2.Kg2 f3+ 3.Kh2 Qxh1+ 4.Kxh1 f2 and either the pawn promotes or White gives up his queen. Both problems are from [606 Puzzles for Chess Nuts](#), by Fred Wilson and Bruce Alberston.*

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