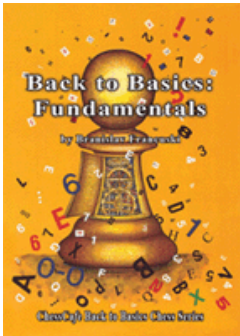




COLUMNISTS

Scholastic
Chess

Steve Goldberg



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2009 U.S. Junior Championship

The U.S. Junior Open, the U.S. Cadet (Under 16) Championship, and the U.S. Junior Closed (Under 21) Championship events all took place in July. The talented youngsters who finished first in each of these tournaments have graciously contributed annotated games for our readers.

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 one of the following, at the discretion of **ChessCafe.com**: *Starting Out: The Sicilian*, by John Emms, or *Starting Out: 1.d4!*, by IM John Cox.



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 August 26, 2009. Send your answers to scholasticchess@chesscafe.com. Good luck!

Problem #1



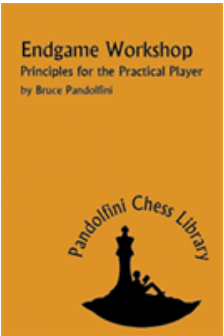
It is White to move. What do you suggest?

Problem #2



It is White to move. What do you suggest?

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2009 U.S. Junior Open, July 10-12, Milwaukee, WI

The U.S. Junior Open brought 158 players together in Milwaukee, forty-nine of them for the Under 21 section that would determine the 2009 U.S. Junior Open champion. The tournament was a five-round event, and after four rounds, only two players held a perfect score: Eric Rosen from suburban Chicago, and Minnesota's Kevin Bu.

These two met in the final round, but drew their encounter. In order to determine a champion, a blitz playoff game was played, in which Rosen was able to defeat his opponent with a series of strong tactical shots.



Eric Rosen; photo: Betsy Dynako

Rosen, Eric (2174) - Bu, Kevin (2069)

US Junior Open Blitz Playoff, 12.07.2009

Queen's Gambit Declined [D35]

Notes by Rosen

1.c4

In my round five game against Kevin I played 1.e4 and he was able to equalize with the Caro-Kann. That game ended in a draw. Before this game I was deciding whether or not to stick with e4 or play c4, which I had played regularly a few months ago.

1...Nf6 2.Nc3 e6 3.Nf3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.d4 c6 6.Bg5

The QGD exchange variation gives White a comfortable and solid position.

6...Be7 7.e3 0-0 8.Bd3 Bg4 9.h3 Bh5 10.Qc2

In an effort to have the best winning chances, White is planning to eventually castle queenside and pawn storm the kingside.

10...Bg6

10...Bxf3 11.gxf3 Nbd7 12.0-0-0 White has good attacking chances with the open g-file and is ready to gain space with e4.

11.Bxg6 hxg6 12.h4 Nbd7 13.0-0-0 Re8 14.Ne5

White wants to open up the h-file with h5 as soon as possible.



14...Nxe5 15.dxe5 Nh7 16.f4 Nf8 17.Bxe7 Qxe7 18.h5 Qe6 19.hxg6 fxg6?!

Weakening the kingside. 19...Qxg6 is a better try: 20.Qf2 Nd7 21.Qh4 f5 and White is slightly better.

20.Rh2

Planning to exploit the h-file with Rdh1.

20...Qf5

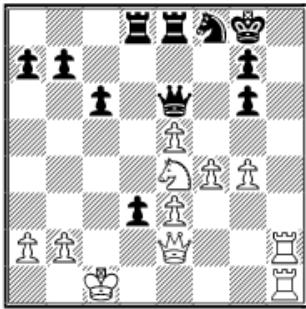
Having a strong attack, White does not want to trade queens.

21.Qe2 Rad8 22.g4 Qe6 23.Rdh1 d4!?

Black needs to create counterplay on the queenside.

24.Ne4 d3

24...Qxa2 25.Ng5 Qa1+ 26.Kd2 dxe3+ 27.Kxe3+-.



25.Ng5!

Creating mating threats on h8.

25...Qc4+ 26.Kb1

Black is forced to give up the piece and gets into a lost position.

26...Nh7 27.Rxh7 Kf8 28.Qd2 Rd5 29.Rh8+ Ke7 30.Rxe8+ Kxe8 31. Rc1 Qa6 32.Ne4 Ra5 33.a3 b5 34.Nc5 Qb6 35.Qxd3 Qc7 36.Qxg6+ Qf7 37.Qxc6+ Kf8 38.Qc8+ Ke7 39.Qd7+ Kf8 40.Qd8+ Qe8 41.Qxa5 1-0

Eric’s success hasn’t come in a vacuum. He’s been steadily improving, having worked with Tamara Golovey for many years. She runs the Kings and Queens chess program in Wilmette, Illinois, and served as a childhood coach for GMs Yury Shulman and Boris Gelfand. For the past several years, Eric has worked with GM Dmitry Gurevich. At the 2009 spring SuperNationals, he finished with a score of 5½/7, his only loss coming at the hands of eventual winner (and now GM-elect) Robert Hess.

Attending Niles North High School in Skokie, Illinois, Eric will be entering tenth grade in the fall. The school has been quite strong in chess in recent years. Eric’s father Brad explains that “during the past year Eric alternated on Board One with Ilan Meerovich. With Ilan having graduated, Eric will be the sole Board One player next year. Eric works closely in coaching and teaching his teammates. Niles North finished #3 (out of about 120 teams) at the IL State Championships in 2009. Clearly the goal for 2010 is to bring home the first place trophy.”

Following the Junior Open, Eric’s rating stands at 2185, tantalizingly close to the magical 2200 mark. But his father had an interesting and refreshing perspective about this. “Surely 2200 is one of those significant rating milestones, and we hope to see him reach it in the not too distant future,” said Brad. “However, at the end of the day it’s only a number, one that can be revisited on the downside as well, and Eric has aspirations in chess that go beyond simply reaching the 2200 rating level.”

2009 U.S. Cadet Championship, July 6-10, Crossville, TN

Eight players under the age of sixteen were invited to the 2009 U.S. Cadet Championship in Crossville, Tennessee, home of the United States Chess Federation. Fourteen-year-old Andrew Ng entered the tournament with the second-lowest rating (2168) of the group.

Nevertheless, by the time the seventh and final round concluded, Andrew stood alone in first place, a half-point ahead of Victor Shen, the highest-rated participant, with his 2320 pre-tournament rating. Not surprisingly, Andrew enjoyed the event. “I really enjoyed the playing atmosphere,” he said. “We had nice sets, nice clocks, and a nice room to compete in. The general environment was very comfortable and helped one to play his best chess.”



Andrew Ng

He began learning about chess around the age of six, when his father tried to introduce Andrew’s sister to the game. She wasn’t much interested, but Andrew took to it quickly.

He has been working with trainer Michael Khodarkovsky since 2003, and has also had lessons with GM Sergey Kudrin and GM John Fedorowicz. Andrew enjoys reviewing annotated grandmaster games, and adds, “I have read pretty much all of Kasparov’s books, the *My Great Predecessors* series and the others. I also use the *Mammoth Book of the World’s Greatest Chess Games* by Graham Burgess, John Nunn and John Emms. Essentially, I use books that contain useful and educational games for study.”

Andrew has kindly provided our readers with an annotated game of his own, from the U.S. Cadet Championship. Playing black, he sacrifices a rook on move twenty, but before White knows what hit him, Black is up two pieces:

Tanaka,Christian (2237) - Ng,Andrew (2169)
U.S. Cadet Championship 2009 (6), 09.07.20099
Catalan [E05]
Notes by Ng

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.g3

White’s plan in the Catalan system is to fianchetto his bishop on g2 and develop his pieces comfortably.

3...d5 4.Bg2 Be7 5.Nf3 0–0 6.0–0 dxc4

This enters the Open Variation. Here White is faced with a choice of how to regain the c4-pawn.

7.Ne5

Other possible moves are 7.Qc2, 7.Qa4, or 7.Nbd2.

7...Nc6 8.Bxc6 bxc6 9.Nxc6 Qe8 10.Nxe7+ Qxe7 11.Qa4 e5



Black states his intentions: he plans to sacrifice a pawn to gain the initiative and possibly a kingside attack. Black also plans to pressure the weak e2-pawn while harassing the white queen.

12.dxe5 Qxe5 13.Qxc4 Be6

The harassing of the queen begins.

14.Qd3 Rad8 15.Qe3 Qh5

Black’s threat here is Ng4, attacking the queen and the h2-pawn, so White had to prevent this.

16.f3 Rfe8

Threatening Bh3 with a discovered attack on the white queen.

17.Qg5

White offers a trade of queens. Black can take the queen and regain the pawn, the variation being 17...Bc4 18.Qxh5 Nxh5 19.Re1 Rxe2 20.Rxe2 Bxe2 21.Kf2 Bd3, when the endgame is roughly equal.

17...Qh3 18.e4 Bc4 19.Re1 h6!



Black forces White to decide where to move his queen. Only one move

keeps White in the game. All other moves lose.

20.Qc5?

20.Qh4 was necessary. 20...Qxh4 21.gxh4 and the endgame should be about even.

20...Rxe4! 21.Be3

White cannot take the rook: 21.fxe4 Ng4, when White can not defend mate on h2 without losing significant material.

21...Rd5!

Planning to move the rook to the h-file with pressure on the h2-pawn.

22.Qb4 Rxe3

The rook is poisoned because of mate on f1.

23.Nd2 Rh5 24.Nf1

White has to defend mate on h2.

24...Bxf1 25.Qd2 Rxe1 26.Rxe1 Bc4

Now Black is just up two pieces, and the rest is simply the conversion of a material advantage.

27.b3 Bd5 28.Rf1 Qe6 29.Qf2 Re5 30.Qxa7 Re2 31.a4 Qh3 0-1

2009 U.S. Junior Closed, July 13-16, Milwaukee, WI

The 2009 U.S. Junior Closed (invitational) tournament fielded one of the strongest playing contingents in years, with seven of the eight participants holding FIDE titles. Players included IM (now GM-elect) Alex Lenderman, IM Sam Shankland, IM Ray Robson, IM Sal Bercys, FM Elliott Liu, FM Joel Banawa, FM Michael Lee, and Maxx Coleman, winner of the 2008 U.S. Junior Open. The average USCF rating for this field was 2455.



*Top: organizer Frank Berry, organizer Alex taneli, Ray Robson, Sal Bercys, Elliott Liu, Sam Shankland, Maxx Coleman;
Bottom: organizer Ashish Vaja, Michael Lee, Alex Lenderman, Joel Banawa. Photo: Chess Life Online*

In the hard-fought, seven-round tournament, it was the youngest player, Ray Robson, who came out on top, with a score of 6/7. As such, he qualified to participate in the 2009 World Junior Championship as well as the 2010 U.S. Championship. The only other undefeated player, Sal Bercys, took second place.

The final scoring went as follows:

- Ray Robson 6
- Sal Bercys 5
- Alex Lenderman 4
- Sam Shankland 3½
- Michael Lee 3½
- Joel Banawa 3
- Elliott Liu 2½
- Maxx Coleman ½



IM Ray Robson Photo: Chess Life Online

Ray shares his thoughts in his third-round game:

Lee,Michael (2407) - Robson,Ray (2557)
US Junior Invitational (3), 14.07.20099
French Defense [C01]
Notes by Robson

1.e4!?

Michael normally plays c4, and likes to play the positions after c4 c5. However, after c4, I play e6. With this move order Michael is hoping for c5, which is what I always play, because then he can trick me into his opening by playing c4!

1...e6!?

A surprise for my opponent! Now we were both on new territory.

2.d4 d5 3.exd5

Since Michael never plays e4, I guess that he wanted to get a simpler position where theory wouldn't matter as much.

3...exd5 4.c4 Nf6 5.Nf3 Be7 6.Nc3 0-0 7.Be2

7.cxd5 was also interesting.

7...dxc4 8.Bxc4 Bg4 9.Be3 Nc6 10.Qd2?

This move was unexpected for me, but also not very good. 10.0-0 seemed more natural, when I was going to play 10...Qd7 followed by Rad8.

10...Bb4

This was a good move, as now I have ideas like Ne4 in the air. Also, I always have the option of Bxf3.

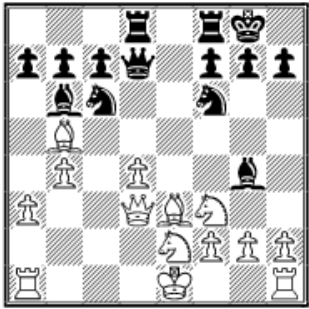
11.Qd3 Qd7

Preparing Rad8 and possibly supporting the move Bf5.

12.a3 Ba5 13.b4 Bb6 14.Bb5

I was threatening Bxf3 followed by taking the d4-pawn.

14...Rad8 15.Ne2



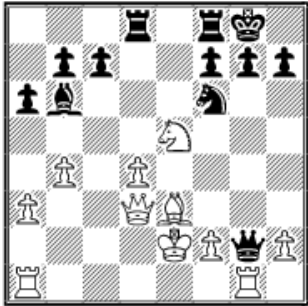
15...a6?

15...Bxf3 16.gxf3 a6 17.Bxc6 (17.Ba4 Ne5! is a nice trick) 17...Qxc6 would have been very good for me.

16.Bxc6 Qxc6 17.Ne5 Qxg2 18.Rg1

I had originally underestimated White's position.

18...Bxe2 19.Kxe2



19...Qh3

Originally I was planning to play 19...Qe4?, but then I saw the stunning 20.Rxg7+!! Kxg7 21.Rg1+ Kh8 22.Qxe4 Nxe4 23.Bh6 and there is no defense to Bg7+ and Bf6 mate! 23...Nc3+ (23...Rg8 24.Nxf7#) 24.Kf3.

20.Rg5

Because of the game continuation, this may not have been the best move.

20...Nh5!

Now I have the threats of f6 and of taking on d4, because of the fork on f4.

21.Rg4 f6 22.Qf5

White threatens Rxg7+. 22.Qb3+ Kh8.

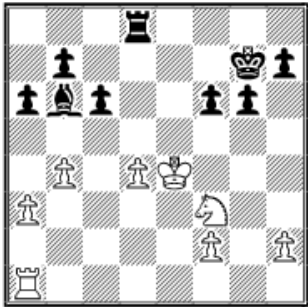
22...Kh8 23.Qf3

The only move. 23.Nf3 g6 24.Qe6 Rfe8.

23...Qxf3+ 24.Nxf3 g6

After this I was able to convert the pawn advantage without too much trouble.

25.Kd3 Ng7 26.Bh6 Rfe8 27.Bxg7+ Kxg7 28.Re4 Rxe4 29.Kxe4 c6



Preparing to bring my rook to d5 where it will have a lot of scope.

30.a4 Rd5 31.Rd1 g5 32.h3 h5 33.Ke3 Kg6 34.Rg1

Trying to stop g4, but this hastens the end.

34...Kf5 35.Rd1 g4 36.hxg4+ hxg4 37.Ng1 Re5+ 38.Kd3 Bxd4! 39.Ne2 Bxf2 40.Rf1 Re3+ 41.Kd2 Rf3 42.b5 axb5 0-1

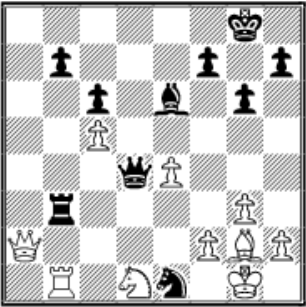
42...Be3+ 43.Ke1 Bd2+? 44.Kxd2 Rxf1 45.Ng3+.

Additional Notes

Congratulations to GM-elect Alex Lenderman, who obtained all three of his grandmaster norms in little more than a month. Kudos also to WFM Abby Marshall who just became the first female to win the Denker Tournament of High School Champions.

Answers to Last Month's Quiz

Problem #1



It is Black to move. What do you suggest?

Answer: Black wins with 1...Nxg2. If 2.Kxg2, White loses his queen to 2...Rxg3+ 3.Kxg2 Bxa2. Or if 2.Rxb3 Qxd1+ 3.Kxg2 Bxb3 (position from Winter-Bronstein ENG-URS radio match 1946).

Problem #2



It is White to move. What do you suggest?

Answer: 1.Rh8+ Kg6 2.f5+ exf5 3.Qxh6+ gxh6 4.Rag8#. (from Build Up Your Chess: Vol. 2, Beyond the Basics).

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