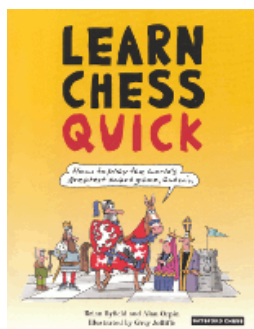




COLUMNISTS

Scholastic Chess

Steve Goldberg



CHESSTHEATRE

Play through and download the games from [ChessCafe.com](#) in the [DGT Game Viewer](#).



Alisa, David, and Rochelle

This month, we talked with three talented junior players. WIM Alisa Melekhina annotates her first-ever win over a GM, National Junior High School champion David Adelberg and his father discuss his burgeoning chess career, and All-Girls National champion Rochelle Ballantyne describes her tournament motivation.

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 *Practical Endgame Play*, by GM Neil McDonald.

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 May 26, 2010. Send your answers to scholasticchess@chesscafe.com. Good luck!

Problem #1



[FEN "3rr1k1/p1q2p1p/1p4p1/3Bn3/2PRQ3/2b4P/PB2RPP1/7K1 b - - 0 1"]

It is Black to move. What do you advise?

Problem #2



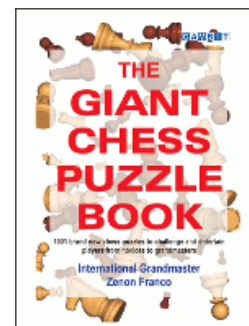
[FEN "2r1brk1/pp2q1pp/1n2p3/4NpP1/1nP2P2/2N5/PP2Q1P1/1BKR3R w - - 0 1"]

It is White to move. How can he exploit the h-file?

Purchases from our [shop](#) help keep [ChessCafe.com](#) freely accessible:



Boost Your Chess 1: The Fundamentals
by Artur Yusupov



Giant Chess Puzzle Book
by Zenon Franco



Elements of Positional Evaluation
by Dan Heisman

Alisa Nabs her First GM Scalp

The strong 2010 Bill Wright St. Louis Open took place in April. Four GMs tied for first: Hikaru Nakamura, Robert Hess, Alejandro Ramirez, and Joshua Friedel. A number of other GMs, IMs, and NMs also participated.



WIM Alisa Melekhina

WIM Alisa Melekhina was among the group contending for the top spot going into the final round, but she was paired with current U.S. champion Nakamura, who took the full point. Nevertheless, Alisa had a wonderful time at the tournament, in no small part because of her game against GM Ben Finegold in the penultimate round.

But she also was very appreciative of the organizational efforts for the tournament. "The tournament was run extremely professionally, and the players were treated with exceptional reverence," she said. "The playing site including the Chess Club and Scholastic Center of St. Louis and the Chase Park Plaza Hotel were just as gorgeous and accommodating as I remember them from the U.S. Women's Championships in October, and am greatly looking forward to returning in July for the 2010 Champs."

Here is her fourth round game with Finegold, with annotations courtesy of Alisa:

Melekhina, Alisa (2304) – Finegold, Ben (2619)

Bill Wright St. Louis Open (4), 11.04.2010

Caro-Kann [B10]

1.e4 c6 2.d3

Usually I play the Exchange against the Caro, and have tried the Nh3 lines in the main variation as well. However, I wasn't prepared opening-wise for the tournament, and my Exchange lines desperately needed updating. Finegold was one of the commentators at the U.S. Women's Championships in October where I played the Nh3 line against Yun Fan, so I didn't want to go into that, and it looked like I had no way out. Just to get out of any theory as fast as I could, I decided to try 2.d3. I saw a friend play it once on ICC, and it is surprisingly sound. I had some idea of what to do against 2...d5, but I was not expecting 2...e5 at all.

2...e5 3.Nf3 d6 4.d4

After the game, a lot of fellow players gave me a hard time about this move, wondering why I would play the Philidor a tempo down. I didn't see it in such a negative way, and was planning on transposing it to a KID with White where Black plays the c6, Nd7 line instead of the usual Nc6. I thought that I would have to play d4 eventually anyway, and I may as well play it now to facilitate my development. I don't know how fallacious my reasoning was, but

the fact that I couldn't find any games in the database with the same move order is not comforting.

4...Nd7 5.c4 exd4 6.Qxd4

Still in a KID mode of thinking, I thought this move would hinder Black from fianchettoing his bishop and taking control of the dangerous a1-h8 diagonal, and would make it difficult for Black to play something like Ne5 and Bg4.

6...Ngf6 7.Nc3 Be7 8.h3 0-0 9.Be3 d5!?

I thought this breakthrough was pushing it. It seems that Black would have a quite comfortable game with simply playing Re8, Bf8, and Nc5, putting pressure on the e4 pawn, where I would have to grudgingly retreat with my queen to prevent it from getting trapped, and play either Bd3 or Nd2.

10.cxd5 Bc5 11.Qd2 cxd5 12.exd5 Re8 13.Be2



[FEN "r1bqr1k1/pp1n1ppp/5n2/2bP4/8/2N1BN1P/PP1QBPP1/R3K2R b KQ - 0 13"]

13...Rxe3

Once again, Finegold is using all his resources to sharpen the game and take advantage of my questionable opening and delay in castling. However, it doesn't seem that Black gets reasonable compensation. After Bxe3, it is still a game even though Black is a pawn down.

14.fxe3 Qe8 15.Nd4 Qe5 16.0-0 Nb6 17.d6 Bd7

17...Nbd5 18.Nxd5 Nxd5 19.Rac1 Bxd6 20.Nf3.

18.Kh1

To allow my knight to retreat, if necessary, and prevent the burdensome and potentially devastating fork on e3.

18...Re8 19.Rad1

I'm willing to give back the pawn in exchange for getting into an endgame where I was confident I would have at least drawing chances, and would be pushing for a win.

19...Na4 20.Bd3 Nxc3 21.bxc3 Nh5

Black begins to formulate counterplay against the dark-squared weaknesses surrounding my king.

22.Rf2 Bxd6 23.Nf3 Qg3 24.Bxh7+ Kxh7 25.Qxd6



[FEN "4r3/pp1b1ppk/3Q4/7n/8/
2P1PNqP/P4RP1/3R3K b - - 0 25"]

25...Ba4

Draw offer by Black. Surprisingly, Black has nothing after 25...Qxf2 26.Qxd7 Qxe3 (26...Ng3+ 27.Kh2 Rf8) 27.Qxf7 Ng3+ 28.Kh2 Re7 29.Qf8.

26.Qd3+ Kg8 27.Rdd2

With this move, I consolidate and the momentum shifts to me. But Finegold put up a tremendous fight for fifty more moves and would not make it easy for me!

27...Bc6 28.Kg1 Nf6 29.Rf1 Ne4 30.Rb2 Nc5 31.Qd2 Ne4 32.Qe1 Qg6

32...Qxe1 33.Rxe1 Nxc3 34.Nd4 Bd5.

33.Nd4 Bd7 34.Rf3 Nc5 35.Qg3 Qd3 36.Qf4 Rf8

The past ten moves or so were played in a time scramble, as the time control was game in 2 hours, and no sudden death, so we would have no relief after move 40. I was slightly ahead on time here, which may explain the few inaccuracies made by both sides. 36...f6.

37.Nf5 Bxf5 38.Qxf5 Qxc3 39.Rc2 Qe1+ 40.Kh2 Ne6 41.Rcf2 Nd8 42.Rg3 Qc3 43.e4 Qc7 44.Rf4 Ne6 45.Rh4 g6 46.Qf6 Ng7



[FEN "5rk1/ppq2pn1/5Qp1/8/
4P2R/6RP/P5PK/8 w - - 0 47"]

It seems as if I should have something, but black defends accurately, and I have no mate! Now my rooks seem to not be doing much, and I have to re-manuever, but I didn't have any particular plan in mind.

47.e5 Re8 48.Rg5 Re6 49.Qf4 Qc3 50.Qd4 Qxd4 51.Rxd4

Finally, I managed to reach an endgame, where I hoped my advantage would eventually prevail.

51...Nf5 52.Rd7 Rxe5 53.Rxb7 Ra5 54.Rb2 Kg7 55.Rg4 Ra3 56.Rc4 Ne3 57.Rc7 a5 58.Rf2 Nf5

Here we both had less than five minutes, and as blitz is not my forte, the

increment was what truly saved me. We stopped notating at this point, so the rest of the moves may not be completely accurate, but the final position reached is, where we both had less than thirty seconds remaining.

59.g4 Nd6 60.Rd2 Ne4 61.Re2 Nd6 62.Ra7 g5 63.Rd2

63.Rf2 Ne4 64.Rc2 Kg6 65.Ra6+ f6.

63...Nc4 64.Rc2 Ne5 65.Kg2 Kg6 66.Ra6+ f6 67.Rf2 Nd7 68.Rd6 Nc5 69.Rdxf6+ Kg7 70.R6f5 Ne4 71.Re2 Nc3 72.Rxg5+ Kh7 73.Rc2 Nxa2 74.h4 Ra4 75.Rb5 Rxg4+ 76.Kh3 Rg8 77.Rc7+ Rg7 78.Rxg7+ Kxg7 79.Rxa5 Nc3 80.Kg4 Ne4 81.Ra7+ Kg8 82.h5 Nf6+ 83.Kg5 Ne8 84.Ra8 Kf8



[FEN "R3nk2/8/8/6KP/8/8/8/8 w - - 0 85"]

85.h6 1-0

After thirteen years of playing chess, I had finally beaten a GM!

David Adelberg Captures National Title

We last covered the exploits of Scottsdale, Arizona native David Adelberg in our June 2009 Scholastic Chess column. David is now thirteen-years old and finishing seventh grade, although he has been taking high school level mathematics courses for some time now.

At the recent 2010 Junior High Nationals, there was a four-way tie for first place in the K-9 Championship section, among Adelberg, Kevin Bu, Zaroug Jaleel and Michael Omori. David was awarded the first place trophy based on tiebreak points.



NM David Adelberg

Photo: Chess Life Online

For the past couple of months, David has trained weekly with GM Alex Yermolinsky. David's father, Dr. Dan Adelberg, joked that this might set a record for a coach taking on a student who then wins a national title.

The senior Adelberg explained that he and David had the opportunity to meet Yermolinsky when he visited the Phoenix area, at the invitation of local organizer and player IM Danny Rensch. The GM and the Adelbergs hit it off well, and Dr. Adelberg explained what he and David were looking for:

"There was a pattern that David was having in some games, where he had some sort of advantage, and the advantage would slip away. He wasn't finishing games and was missing scoring opportunities. I was under the impression that Alex Yermolinsky was particularly known for endgame knowledge, and I thought he might be able to help David finish games successfully."

At this point, David chimed in to add that it wasn't just endgames that were an issue, middlegames were proving troublesome at times as well.

Although Yermolinsky and David haven't worked together very long, David appreciates his coach's pleasant demeanor and critical approach to David's games. In addition to his work with his GM coach, David also reads about half a book per week.

What is the current emphasis in his training? "Definitely openings!" David said. His father added that David "is studying different openings and different variations of the same opening. He's trying to develop a greater repertoire of openings."

David and his father traveled together to the Junior High nationals, and Dr. Adelberg was impressed with the organization and location of the tournament. "I thought the hotel was great. Minneapolis was nice to get to, a beautiful small city. The tournament was really nice, it ran real well. Everything ran without a hitch. I thought it was very well done. There were plenty of options, the hotel was really nice. It was right in downtown, so it was easy to walk to grab a bite."

The only negative aspect of the tournament, David's father said, was its timing on the calendar. "Initially, we were thinking of possibly going to the High School Nationals as well. But the High School Championship was the following weekend. Just the logistics of missing school and traveling to a big tournament, and then the next weekend having another event to travel to, limited the possibility of doing both. If there was an additional week separating the events, maybe it would have been more likely that we would have done both.

"The other issue with the High School National," he continued, "is that it was in Columbus, which is not an excellent airport for us to go to – the flights were not very convenient as far as returning. He would have missed two extra days of school."

Instead, David traveled to the Far West Open in Reno, and had a very nice 4/6 showing, drawing eventual winner GM Jesse Kraai and defeating IM David Pruess.

The next tournament that David will be attending is the second annual Copper State International, in early June. "It's a small tournament," his father said, "with very high rating minimums – FIDE 2200. Youth players can play with a FIDE rating of 2000, and it's set up for IM and GM norm possibilities. This year they have two groups – an 'A' group of ten players, and a 'B' group with about thirty players. It happens to fall just after David finishes school, and it's local. It's just an awesome tournament for us. We don't have to fly in and it doesn't conflict with school, it has awesome competition. Last year was a fantastic experience, and this year we're highly anticipating this coming event too. A number of GMs are coming."

The following month, in July, David will be attending the invitational U.S. Cadet Championship, for players aged sixteen and under. Next, David plans on spending a couple weeks at a chess camp in New Jersey.

But he definitely does not limit himself to chess alone, as his father explains. "He is especially interested in math, finishing his third year of high school level math this year. He's also interested in foreign languages. He's started some preliminary home learning of Russian, and has had some Spanish and Latin in school, and has studied some Hebrew. Outside of school, he's very interested in golf. He also plays tennis and other sports, but golf is his favorite

event. He's definitely a 'gamer' – he does play bridge, he likes bridge a lot; he thinks about new bidding systems. He's just learning, but he's pretty good, and has read some books on bridge. He actually got interested in bridge from another chess player who was at the chess camp. His parents are world-class professional bridge players. David spent a weekend with him, and wanted to know a little about bridge."

It seems that GM Ben Finegold, who is also a master bridge player, may have a kindred spirit in young Mr. Adelberg.

In the game below, from the Junior High nationals, David is challenged by the strong youngster Megan Lee. Annotations are by David.

Lee, Megan – Adelberg, David (2244)

2010 National Junior High Championship (5), 28.04.2010

Sicilian Defense [B85]

This was definitely my most difficult game, which was against the All Girls national champion. To complement this, I was fatigued as this was the third round of the second day. With a few inaccuracies, I made my opponent's unusual plan successful. However, I was able to win the point during the time scramble.

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Be3 e6 7.Be2!?

If White wants to go for this position, then he normally first plays Be2 to avoid the additional option Ng4 after Be3.

7...Be7 8.0-0 0-0 9.f4 Nc6 10.Nb3

I have never seen this move before. Indeed, this lets me play b5. More usual is 10.a4.

10...b5 11.a3 Bb7?!

During the game I knew that I should delay the development of the bishop, but I was a little careless and felt that since my opponent was unfamiliar with this opening, I should be able to win this game as long as I make normal moves.

12.Bf3 Qc7 13.Qe1 Rfe8 14.Kh1?!



[FEN "r3r1k1/1bq1bppp/p1nppn2/1p6/4PP2/PNN1BB2/1PP3PP/R3QR1K b - - 0 14"]

After deep thought, my opponent came up with the last two moves. The first one is bad, but the king is better placed on g1 than h1 because of my bishop on b7.

14...Bf8

I was happy to make this move since I could tell that my opponent had no plan, so she would have to burn even more time on her next move.

15.Rd1 Rac8?!

I was still in autopilot mode. I was just playing normal moves. Better would be 15...Nd7!. The point is that the rook can help out on the b-file if White plays the plan in the game.

16.h3

My opponent continues to play without an obvious plan.

16...Nd7 17.Qf2!

Stopping Nc5 or Nb6. Now I started have some regrets for playing Bb7 and Rc8.

17...g6?!

This gives my opponent a slight weakness. I felt that I could bring my bishop to g7, but this is not so easy.

18.Bg4 Rb8

Admission of my earlier errors. There is not much else I can do, as 18...Bg7 19.Qd2!. I will have to move my bishop back to f8.

19.h4 Bc8 20.Ne2 Nb6 21.h5 Nc4 22.hxg6 fxg6?!

22...hxg6! I still did not feel that White had much play here (which she doesn't), so I wanted to avoid this move, which gives White an open h-file to use. However, I created a bigger weakness instead.

23.Bc1 Bg7

My g6 move accomplished its goal, but at a price.

24.Nc3!?

This move came after even more deep thought. My opponent was beginning to reach time pressure. I simply believed her that Nxa3 was too risky.

24...Rf8!?

24...Nxa3 25.e5 Nc4 26.exd6 Nxd6 27.Rfe1 White has some compensation here.

25.Qg3 a5?

This is a risky move. Better would have been 25...b4!.

26.Qd3!



[FEN "1rb2rk1/2q3bp/2npp1p1/pp6/2n1PPB1/PNNQ4/1PP3P1/2BR1R1K b - - 0 26"]

This is surprisingly strong. After some deliberation, I came to my next move.

26...Nd8?

I felt that this extremely ugly and disappointing move was necessary, but better would have been 26...Qb6! 27.a4 Nb4. This would have kept good chances. However, the move ...Bxc3 would have to come in the near future, and this was enough to put me off of this.

27.Nd4 Bd7 28.Nce2?

This hands the initiative back to me. Much better would have been 28.Be2! b4 - the move I was intending. (I understood that my position would be difficult after 28...a4 29.Ncxb5 Rxb5 30.Qxc4 Rc5 31.Qd3 Bxd4 32.Qxd4 Rxc2 33.Bd2+/-) 29.Qxc4 Qxc4 30.Bxc4 bxc3 31.b3!+/- White will likely round up the c3-pawn, while White has strong pressure on e6.

28...e5 29.Bxd7 Qxd7 30.Nf3 exf4 31.Bxf4?

Time pressure was pressurizing my opponent. After this move she had around five minutes left on her clock. (31.c3!)

31...Nf7 32.Qb3 Qc6 33.Ned4?

This move has a good idea, but it is connected with a blunder. Better would have been 33.Nfd4!. I will win the e4-pawn, but then White has strong compensation because of her better pieces and my weak d6-pawn.

33...Qxe4



[FEN "1r3rk1/5nbp/3p2p1/pp6/2nNqB2/PQ3N2/1PP3P1/3R1R1K w - - 0 34"]

34.Rde1??

My opponent misses my reply, which effectively ends the game.

34...Qxf4 35.Ne6 Qh6+ 36.Nh2 Rfe8 37.Qf3 Nce5 38.Qd5 Ng4! 0-1

A nice way to end the game. However, If my opponent had played more accurately after 26...Nd8, the outcome might have been different.

A Scholarship for Rochelle

Rochelle Ballantyne played for Elizabeth Vicary's IS 318 team the past few years, and is now a ninth grader at Brooklyn Tech. She takes her chess seriously.



Rochelle Ballantyne

Photo: Chess Life Online

"I study chess almost every day, approximately an hour and thirty minutes," she said. "I study openings, chess tactics and sometimes I look at chess lectures. Then at other times I help my brother prepare for his tournaments.

"When I went to nationals with IS 318 last year I worked with Greg Shahade. He went over my games and gave me some helpful tips and ideas for the next time I play. Now that I have graduated from 318 I have joined a program called Chess-In-The-Schools. They gave me the opportunity to now work with a grandmaster named Alexander Stripunsky."

Her hard work has been paying off. At the recent All-Girls National Championship in Columbus, Ohio, she tied for first place with Danni Chen, who is a freshman at Ohio State University. Rochelle was awarded the first place trophy on tiebreaks, and more importantly, won an Academic Distinction Scholarship to the University of Texas at Dallas, valued at approximately \$68,000.

Asked if she prepared in any special manner for the national tournament, Rochelle said, "Not really, I just did what I normally do. If I study more than usual, I tend to do worse at tournaments, so I just try to relax and have as much fun as possible at nationals!"

She was accompanied by about half a dozen other kids from her school, from all grades. "I had a great time!" she exclaimed. "I was happy that Nationals was in Ohio because I have never been there so I was able to explore new places. I was extremely happy that Girls Nationals and High School Nationals were at the same place because I was able to have fun with my friends.

"My favorite game was against Anna Matlin. This is because she was first board and there was some speculation as to whether or not I would be able to beat her. At the time, I got hurt before my round against Anna started, so my head hurt a lot and nobody thought I was in the condition to play against Anna, but I really wanted to play her. I guess it was because I really wanted the scholarship. The scholarship was my motivation and I wasn't going to give it up, injury or not. I ended up drawing with her."

Regarding future tournaments she plans to play in, she said, "I'm not sure ... I think I am just going to enjoy this amazing victory and maybe play in some Marshall Club tournaments. Basically, I'm going to focus more on my schoolwork and be a regular teenager, but I'm not going to retire. I enjoy chess too much."

What advice would she give to other young chess players? "I'm not the greatest advice-giver when it comes to chess," she admitted. "But I would tell my brother, who is an aspiring chess player, to take his time; chess is just a game so don't get too mad when you lose. If you want to be a great chess player, you need to study a lot and really be passionate about chess. And most importantly, have fun. Chess is an amazing game - it can really help you in the future, and the people you meet while playing chess are really great also."

We look forward to following the progress of this talented and pleasant young lady!

Answers to Last Month's Quiz

Problem #1



[FEN "3rqrk1/Rb4pp/3Rpp2/1p6/5P2/1P6/1PP3PP/2BQ3K" b - - 0 1]

White has just played Rxa7, capturing a pawn. How should Black respond?

Answer: 1...Qc6!, threatening both 2...Qxg2# and 2...Rxd6. White cannot play 2.Rxc6 due to 2...Rxd1#. From an analysis position from Neikirkh-Botvinnik, 1960, in the book [Open Files](#), as noted in the ChessCafe.com [book review](#) by Derek Grimmell.

Problem #2



[FEN "2kr4/ppp3Pp/4RP1B/2r5/5P2/8/PP1p3P/3K4 w - - 0 1"]

It is White to move. In the actual game, he apparently resigned at this point, but what saving move does he have?

Answer: 1.Rd6!! If 1...Rxd6 2.g8=Q+; if 1...cxd6 2.f7 and one pawn will queen. From [Mastering Positional Chess](#) by Daniel Naroditsky.

© 2010 Steve Goldberg. All Rights Reserved.

Comment on this month's column via our [Contact Page](#)! Pertinent responses will be posted below daily.

[\[ChessCafe Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Review\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)
[\[Endgame Study\]](#) [\[The Skittles Room\]](#) [\[Archives\]](#)
[\[Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About ChessCafe.com\]](#) [\[Contact Us\]](#)

© 2010 BrainGamz, Inc. All Rights Reserved.
"ChessCafe.com®" is a registered trademark of BrainGamz, Inc.