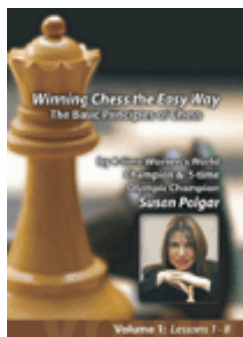




COLUMNISTS

Scholastic Chess

Steve Goldberg



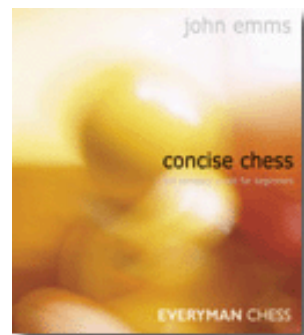
*Winning Chess
the Easy Way*
by Susan Polgar

2006 Spring Scholastic Championships, Part One

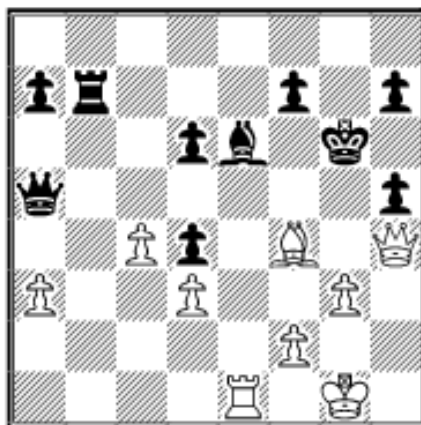
We're deep into the springtime national scholastic championships and this month we provide coverage of both the 2006 National Junior High School Championship and the 2006 National High School Championship. Young superstar Ray Robson figures prominently in our report, and we'll also discuss David MacEnulty's recent trip to South Africa and his visit with thousands of excited kids. Next month we'll feature the Elementary School Championship, which is slated to begin May 12.

Everyman Quiz of the Month

Each month Everyman Chess Books 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 *Concise Chess*, by GM John Emms. Send your answers to scholasticchess@chesscafe.com. Good luck! 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. So please e-mail your responses to me by May 17, 2006.



Problem 1:

It is White's turn to move in this position from GM Yasser Seirawan's excellent book *Winning Chess Tactics*.

What do you suggest?



Problem 2:

This is also from *Winning Chess Tactics*. It is White to move, and he is in position to capture two of Black's pawns. How does he do this?

For both problems, send your answers to scholasticchess@chesscafe.com.

National Junior High School Championship, April 7-9, 2006

Louisville, Kentucky was the home of the 2006 National Junior High School Championship, where two tornadoes struck. One touched down near Louisville in the middle of the second round, shutting down play for about 40 minutes, while all players and guests fled to safer areas. Fortunately no one was hurt and no damage occurred to the tournament hotel.



Action at the 2006 Junior High Championship
Photo: MyChessPhotos.com

The other came in the guise of 5th grader Ray Robson, who wreaked havoc with the playing field. Both the Junior High Championship and the Junior High Blitz tournament were won by Ray, and, if this wasn't enough, he was the only player to beat GM Gregory Kaidanov in the 22-board simultaneous exhibition held during the tournament weekend (Andrew Ortiz also held the GM to a draw).

I talked with Gary Robson, Ray's father, about the tournament and he had this to say:

I asked Ray what he thought about the event and,

characteristically, he gave a short reply: 'It was a tough tournament.' Maybe that sums it up best. I can add that outside of the tournament hall there was a lot of positive energy in Ray's favor. Several people, who learned that I was the fifth-grader's father, came up to talk to me and to wish Ray well. He had a lot of people cheering for him (which is quite the opposite of when he plays in an elementary event). I guess that despite Ray's rating (he started on Board Two), a lot of people looked at him as an underdog. Six of Ray's seven opponents were grade nine students, and most of them were on the U.S. Top 100 chart for their age group, so he did have some good competition. When he went into the final round, Ray was ready to get things over. He was a full point ahead of the rest, so all he needed was a draw. Although he usually plays for the win regardless of the circumstances, he did offer a rather quick draw in the last round.



Ray Robson

Gary, a public school teacher, was understandably looking to conserve funds, so he arranged to stay with a local family through an international "home-stay" network and elucidates on their interesting experience:

Our host in downtown Louisville was very kind, but she lived in a studio apartment. Ray and I slept on a mat on the floor each night, and her cats – which were very cool – wrestled over us each night. If Ray hadn't continued winning each round, I guess I would have moved us into a hotel.

Ray Robson is well-known in scholastic chess circles. His father summarizes some of his recent accomplishments:

Ray's now won the K-3 (when he was in third grade), the K-6 (when he was in fourth grade), and the K-9 (as a fifth-grader). I hope he can keep the streak going and win the K-12 next year. He's also won the two national blitz events that he's played in: the K-6 and the K-9. I'm just glad that all of his hard work is paying off in good results.

Following the National Junior High School Championship, Ray traveled to Lexington, Kentucky to participate in the second session of the U.S. Chess School, operated by IM Greg Shahade and GM Gregory Kaidanov. Gary Robson explains Ray's experience there:

He did say that it was much better than the chess camp he attended before. Since there were only six participants, they received much more attention than they would have in a normal camp. Ray's first word to describe the experience was "fun" and then he added that it was also challenging. They did exercises from Dvoretsky, Solitaire Chess exercises, opening analysis, positional analysis, and they also presented some of their games. At the end of the week, they were given homework assignments based on various openings. In the evenings Ray had fun playing Ping-Pong with Gregory [Kaidanov] and Christian Tanaka (one of the participants and a friend of Ray's) and anyone else who cared to play.



Ray Robson and GM Kaidanov

We'll attempt to provide further coverage of this U.S. Chess School session next month. In the meantime, we present his simul game with Kaidanov from the Junior High tournament. Gary Robson wanted readers to understand that this was only a simul game and noted that "Ray had a huge advantage in the simul since Gregory was playing 22

games at once. Ray had a lot of time to think while Gregory was at the other 21 boards, and Ray made use of his two ‘pass’ options to gain extra time to think about two moves. We would much rather see a real game between these two.” He added, “It would be more fair to Gregory if a note was added about how master-level players are not usually the participants in a simul (something we didn’t know beforehand but heard about afterwards).” Nevertheless, here’s the game:

GM Gregory Kaidanov (2722) - FM Ray Robson (2201)

Simul, National Junior High, 2006 [E04]

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.g3 dxc4 5.Bg2 a6 6.0–0 b5 7.Ne5 Nd5 8.e4 Nf6 9.Nc3 Bb7 10.d5 exd5 11.Nxd5 Nxd5 12.exd5 Bd6 13.Nc6 Nxc6 14.dxc6 Bc8 15.a4 Be6 16.Qh5 0–0 17.axb5 g6 18.Qh6 axb5 19.Bg5 f6 20.Rae1 fxe5 Pass 21.Rxe6 Rf6 22.Qxg5 Rxe6 23.Qd5 Qf6 24.Bh3 Qxb2 25.Bxe6+ Kg7 26.h4 Qe5 27.Rb1 Qxd5 28.Bxd5 c3 29.Bb3 b4 30.Kf1 Ra3 Pass 31.Ke2 Bc5 32.g4 Bxf2 33.Bd5 c2 34.Rc1 b3 35.Bxb3 Rxb3 36.Kxf2 Rc3 0–1

Ray was also kind enough to send along a crucial 6th-round game from the National Junior High Championship, which he annotated.

FM Ray Robson (2201) - Evan Ju (2188)

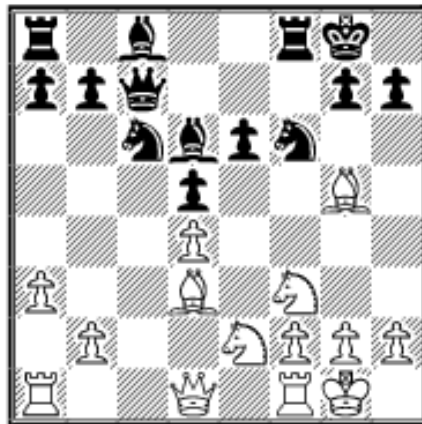
National Junior High (6), 2006 [C06]

This was the 6th round, and I was playing the only other person who had 5 points. If I won this game, I would be a full point up going into the final round.

1.e4 e6

My third French in my three games as White!

2.d4 d5 3.Nd2 Nf6 4.e5 Nfd7 5.Bd3 c5 6.c3 Nc6 7.Ne2 cxd4 8.cxd4 f6 9.exf6 Nxf6 10.0–0! Bd6 11.Nf3 Qc7 12.Bg5 0–0! 13.a3?



This move was too slow. Rc1 would have been better.

13...e5 14.dxe5 Nxe5 15.Ned4 Ne4 16.Bh4 Bg4 17.Be2 Nxf3+?

This move would have been bad, if I had responded correctly.

18.Nxf3

Here 18.gxf3! would have been

better: 18...Bh3 19.fxe4 Bxh2+ 20.Kh1 Bxf1 21.Qxf1 dxe4 22.Ne6.

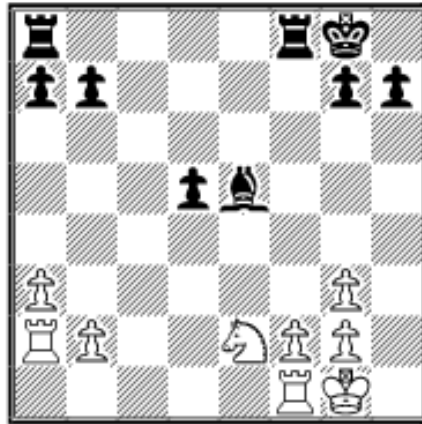
18...Qf7 19.Bg3 Nxc3 20.hxc3 Qh5?

During the game, I was afraid of ...Bc5, which would have tied me down to the defense of the f2-pawn.

21.Nd4 Bxe2 22.Qxe2 Qxe2 23.Nxe2

In this endgame, Black has an isolated d-pawn, but he should be okay because he has a dark-squared bishop instead of a light-squared one.

23...Be5 24.Ra2!



This was a good move. After the b-pawn moves the rook guards the second rank. Then the black rooks can't invade on the c-file. The rook may also double on the d-file.

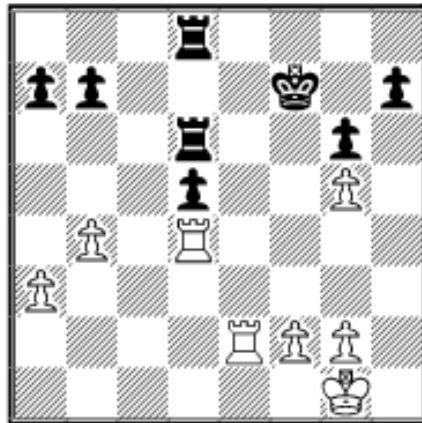
24...Rad8 25.Rd1 Rf6 26.b4 Ra6?!

The rook is misplaced here.

27.Rd3 Kf7 28.Rad2 Rad6 29.g4 g6 30.Nd4 Bxd4 31.Rxd4 Ke6

Here my opponent offered a draw. I didn't accept, even though I had less time.

32.Re2+ Kf7 33.g5!



This move fixes the h-pawn and stops the black rook from moving to f6.

33...Re8??

Here my opponent blundered a rook. After ...Re6 he still could have drawn with accurate play.

34.Rf4+ Kg7 35.Rxe8 d4 36.Ree4

d3 37.Rd4 1-0

National High School Championship, April 21-23, 2006

A near-record 1423 players participated in the 2006 National High School Championship, held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Despite the presence of superstars Alex Lenderman and Sal Bercys, both 11th graders at New York's Edward R. Murrow High School and both rated 2450+, the championship section was won by Landon Brownell of Catalina Foothills High School in Tucson, Arizona. In fact, Landon nearly completed a triple crown of sorts, also winning the Blitz side tournament and placing in a three-way tie for second in the Bughouse tournament.

Although most of the participants were indeed high school students, there were also a number of junior high school and elementary school players. Ninth-graders Ilan Meerovich of Illinois and Medina Parrilla of New York both finished with 5½ points in the 7-round event, only a point behind winner Brownell. Remarkably, Brian Luo, who is only in third grade, also finished with 5½ points; another 3rd grader, Darwin Yang, finished with 5.0 points and was actually among the leaders after the fifth round with 4½ points, before faltering a bit in the final two rounds.

A couple of these underclassmen achieved some major upsets. Jeff Young, a 9th grader from California rated 1881, upended the 2451-rated Salvijus Bercys in the second round. In addition, 6th grader Eric Rosen defeated master Christopher Williams, rated nearly 400 points higher, in round four.

David MacEnulty in South Africa

As initially reported at the USCF website, famed chess coach David MacEnulty recently visited South Africa (see the archived January 2006 Scholastic Chess [column](#), where we had the chance to speak at length with MacEnulty). The trip was arranged by businessman David Berman, a native South African and Harvard Business School graduate, who now spends most of his time in New York City.



David MacEnulty (right) and David Berman (front left, with his sons)

“The trip was truly amazing,” proclaimed MacEnulty. Financier Berman echoes his thoughts, calling it “a privilege” to bring chess excitement to some 3000 schoolchildren in Cape Town. MacEnulty and Berman traveled to nearly two dozen schools, speaking about the many academic benefits of chess and showing the film *Knights of the South Bronx*. The kids were mesmerized by the movie, and school administrators were impressed by the various studies cited that demonstrated across-the-board improvement in kids exposed to chess in a meaningful way, particularly when it is included within the school curriculum. A number of chess sets were donated to Cape Town schools, and more are on the way.

David Berman’s goal is clear. He wants the South African government to provide funding to incorporate chess into the daily school schedule, and to that end, he intends to bring MacEnulty back to South Africa at least twice more – later this summer, then again around March of next year. While no major inroads have been made yet, with Berman’s persistence, perhaps one day chess will overtake soccer as the game of choice among South African youth.

Look for Berman at the 2006 National Elementary School Championship in Denver. He’ll be there rooting on his sons Josh (age 5) and Jacob (age 7).

2006 Scholar-Chessplayer Outstanding Achievement Awards

College scholarships ranging from \$200 to \$2000 have been awarded to seven high school students, with the award winners announced the first day of the recent National High School Championship. As noted in a recent USCF press release, “These scholarships are given to high school juniors and seniors who excel in academics, chess and leadership... These annual awards are given by the U.S. Chess Federation and the U.S. Chess Trust and are intended to encourage high school students who promote a positive image of chess.” Here are the bright young players:

- Oleg Zaikov
- Alexander King
- Ankur Bakshi
- Kevin Binz
- Peter Tu
- Thomas Gossell
- Adam Holmes

International Chess Festival, June 15-19, 2006

This chess festival, centered around the National Open at the Las Vegas Riviera Hotel and Casino, continues to grow, and now features the new Susan Polgar World Open Chess Championship for Girls and the USCF National Game/10 Championship. On June 15, Polgar will be

conducting a one-day chess camp, assisted by GMs Sergey Kudrin and Dmitry Gurevich, and IM Ben Finegold. There will also be simultaneous exhibitions featuring GM Walter Browne and GM Susan Polgar, as well as the one-day National Open Blitz Championship. The next day, June 16, the National Open Scholastic Tournament takes place, open to players age 19 or younger *and* rated below 1800. Multiple GM lectures will be offered throughout the festival and GM Arthur Bisguier is offering to analyze tournament games at no charge. For further information, visit their [website](#).

World Youth Chess Championship, October 20-31, 2006

The 2006 WYCC will take place this fall in Batumi, Georgia, with the U.S. squad looking to match or improve upon their fine performance last year. In that event, held in Belfort, France, Alex Lenderman took first place in the Boys Under 16 division, while Daniel Naroditsky, Ray Robson, Parker Zhao and Robert Hess all placed in the top ten in their sections. In all, 31 youngsters represented the U.S., 19 boys and 12 girls, and each performed well.

The United States Chess Federation recently released a list of players who have qualified to participate in the 2006 WYCC, based either on peak rating, winning a medal at a previous WYCC, or winning a gold medal at the previous Pan American Youth Festival. USCF Scholastic Director Jerry Nash indicated that there is no limit to the number of players who are permitted to represent their national federation; we'll know which players have chosen to attend as we get closer to the event this coming fall. The qualifying players are:

Boys Under 10

Darwin Yang	Nicholas Nip
Brian Luo	Eric Liao
Lucas Van Beuzekom	Jonathan Chin
Fernando Spada	Atulya Shetty
Fernando Mendez, Jr.	Sam Schmakel
Aleksandr Ostrovskiy	Alexander Katz
Brennen Lee	Albert Ho
Kevin Bu	James Shao
Eric Zhang	

Boys Under 12

Ray Robson	Michael Yang
Parker Zhao	Zachary Young
Daniel Naroditsky	Christopher Heung

Boys Under 14

Marc Arnold	Victor Shen
Alexander Heimann	Jeffrey Haskel
Mark Heimann	Michael Thaler
Michael Lee	Christian Tanaka

Boys Under 16

Daniel Ludwig	James Critelli
Robert Hess	Francis Chen
Evan Ju	Sarkis Agaian

Boys Under 18

Alex Lenderman	Joel Banawa
Salvijus Bercys	Mackenzie Molner
Igor Schneider	

Girls Under 10

Sylvia Yang	Eileen Dai
Eve Zhurbinskiy	Megan Lee
Caroline Zhu	Ellen Xiang
Sarah Chiang	

Girls Under 12

Alena Kuzniatsova	Helen Chu
Darrian Robinson	Eve Litvak
Kathleen Zhou	

Girls Under 14

Karsten McVay	Gayatri Vempati
Anjali Datta	Yang Dai

Girls Under 16

Alisa Melekhina	Marina Asami
Medina Parrilla	Julia Kerr
Abby Marshall	Courtney Jamison
Louiza Livschitz	

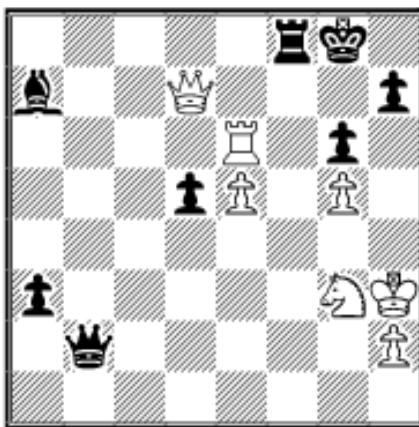
Girls Under 18

Tatev Abrahamyan	Hana Itkis
Laura Ross	Katharine Pelletier

This is a very talented group, and we look forward to their participation in this elite tournament.

Answers to Last Month's Quiz

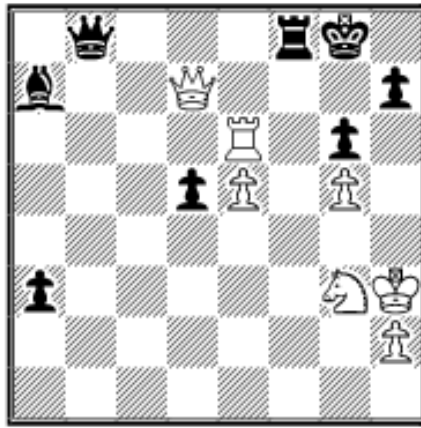
Below are the questions and answers from last month's quiz:



Problem 1:

It is Black's turn to move, with Fritz indicating that "Black has a decisive advantage." What do you suggest?

Answer: Fritz likes 1...Bg1, with a significant advantage to Black.



Problem 2:

This is a continuation of problem 1. Black has played 40...Qb8, for which Fritz now indicates that "White has a decisive advantage." How should White respond? For extra credit, can you identify the game from which these problems are taken from?

Answer: The diagrammed positions both come from the game Lopez - Schneider, shown in the April Scholastic Chess [column](#). The game occurred in round 3 of the 2006 College Final Four championship. Here, White played 41.Re7 and Black resigned. Fritz gives the continuation: 41...Qc8 42.Rg7+ Kh8 43.Rxh7+ Kg8 44.Rg7+ Kh8 45.Qxc8 Rxc8 46.Rxa7.

Have something newsworthy you'd like to share? E-mail me at scholasticchess@chesscafe.com. I can't promise that I'll be able to respond to each e-mail, but every one will be read and considered. For all games submitted, please provide the following information: (1) Names and age of both players; (2) Ratings of both players; (3) When and where the game was played; (4) The time control used in the game; and (5) Any other information you think would be helpful for us to know.

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