



## COLUMNISTS

## Scholastic Chess

Steve Goldberg



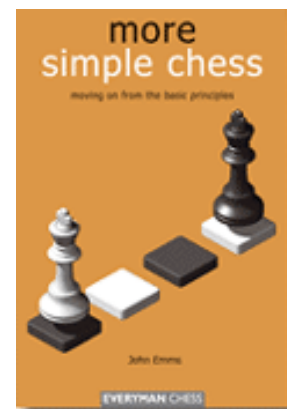
*Winning Chess  
the Easy Way*  
by Susan Polgar

## 2005 National K-12 Tournament

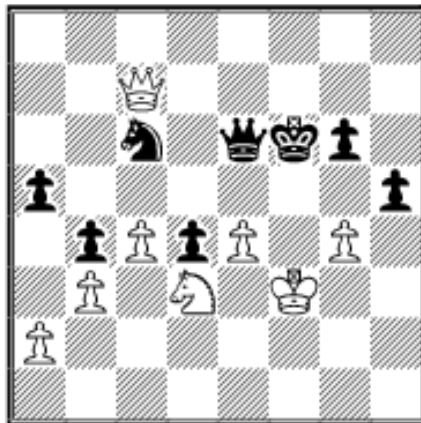
We are privileged this month to hear from seven young stars from the recent National K-12 tournament in Houston. Included are a number of their favorite games from various events, one of which features a victory by Mark Heimann, then a 6th-grader, against a strong GM, with the black pieces no less! Additionally, one of the top players in the U.S., GM Gregory Kaidanov, graciously gave of his time to discuss chess training. It is clear why he has been such a success with his own chess and with the chess of those he tutors.

### 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 *More Simple Chess* by GM John Emms. Send your answers to [scholasticchess@chesscafe.com](mailto:scholasticchess@chesscafe.com). Good luck! Please note – winners within the last three months are ineligible for this month's contest.

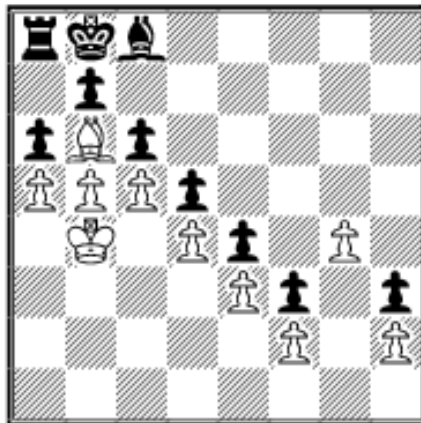


We will accept all contest answers for one week following the appearance of the column, then randomly select our three winners from this group. So please e-mail your responses to me by February 15, 2006.



Problem 1:

Again we gratefully borrow from GM Yasser Seirawan's instructive book *Winning Chess Tactics*. In the diagram, it is White to move. How would you proceed?



Problem 2:

Also from *Winning Chess Tactics*, it is again White's turn to move. Can he manage a win or a draw? If so, how?

For both problems, send your answers to [scholasticchess@chesscafe.com](mailto:scholasticchess@chesscafe.com).

***First Annual Susan Polgar National Open Championship for Girls:  
January 27-29, 2006***

Over 200 girls attended this inaugural event in Corpus Christi, Texas. Chief organizer and Director of the Susan Polgar South Texas Chess Center Dan DeLeon had a very hectic couple of weeks prior to the start of the tournament but reports: "All is well and we survived," adding that "it went off without a hitch. All the players had a wonderful time and enjoyed themselves."



Photo credit: Paul Truong

Rather unique was the free hair and nail care offered to all the players between rounds by Sandra Flinn, Cosmetology Director of local Del Mar College. The tournament also included a well-attended Boys/Men Susan Polgar Texas Shootout for siblings and other males who wanted to play.

Mexican girls champion and University of Texas-Brownsville student Nelly Estrada won the Open Section Championship. Estrada also won the Puzzle Solving Championship event, while local player Rheanna English won the blitz tournament championship.

**2005 Pan-Am Intercollegiate: December 27-30, 2005**

The team from the University of Maryland-Baltimore County (UMBC)

finished in clear first in the annual Pan-Am Intercollegiate tournament, held this past December in Miami. Their victory ends the dominance of the squad from the University of Texas-Dallas (UTD) from the past two years.



Pan-Am players taking a break from chess.  
Photo credit: Jim Stallings

James Stallings, Associate Director for Chess and Education at UTD, reports that “Miami was an excellent venue for the 2005 Pan Am. It was extremely well run by the Miami Dade staff. The players could literally walk across the street and be at the beach, so it was a very relaxing atmosphere. The UTD games were hard fought with UMBC – as always. A move here or there and the scores could have easily changed, but, as I told our UTD alumni, ‘That’s chess.’ Our B-Team actually finished ahead of our A-Team which had 2 GMs on it, so kudos go to them. The teams both tied with 5-1 scores. The B-Team scored more wins than anyone at the tournament with an impressive 19½-4½ record. Thus, the question becomes who will play in the Final Four in April with Miami Dade, UMBC, and Duke. Fortunately, I don’t have to answer that, but Coach Rade Milovanovic does!”



Top Row: Bruci Lopez, Katerina Rohonyan, Pawel Blehm.  
 Bottom Row: Pascal Charbonneau, Alex Onischuk.  
 Photo credit: Dr. Alan Sherman

In a press release from Miami Dade College, the school took pride in stating: “This will be the fourth straight year ... that MDC’s chess team has qualified for the upcoming Final Four tournament, which decides the top collegiate chess team in the country. It will be held on the campus of defending national champion the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) in Richardson, a bedroom community just north of Dallas, Texas April 1-2, 2006... ‘This is like beating the New York Yankees in baseball,’ MDC’s top player Renier Gonzalez announced proudly, shortly after his squad earned a draw against UMBC. ‘We beat one of the best teams in Yale and earned a draw against UMBC. We continue to prove that we are not a surprise anymore. You don’t need professional players in chess to be successful, what you need is a collaborative effort and heart.’ Hosting the Pan American Intercollegiate Chess Tournament was a major accomplishment for Miami Dade College considering the institution did not even have a team until just three years ago. The Pan American Intercollegiate Chess Tournament started in 1947 and has long been considered the most prestigious tournament of its kind in the western hemisphere.”

### **2005 National K-12/Collegiate Championship**

Sweeping his section at the National K-12 with a perfect 7-0 score was ten-year-old 4th grader *Daniel Naroditsky* who attends a small private school in Foster City, California. It was only in the summer of 2002 that Daniel was taught chess by his father Vladimir, who had been a serious chess player while growing up in Ukraine. By the end of that summer, Daniel was already playing challenging games against his older brother Alan and against his father. His first tournament against adult players occurred the following January, and in March 2003 he trounced the unrated section of the Northern California Scholastic Tournament with a 5-0 score. As his father describes, “this was the starting point for more



serious studies.”



Daniel Naroditsky

Daniel since has played in a number of scholastic and adult tournaments with remarkable results. After good results at the 2004 National Elementary Championship and at the 2004 National K-12 Championships, his play exploded in 2005. He won the K-3 section at the 2005 SuperNationals in Nashville, with a 7-0 score, followed by a fifth-place finish at the 2005 World Youth Chess Championships in Belfort, France (with 8.0 points in 11 rounds in the Under 10 section), and then a repeat 7-0 score at the most recent National K-12 in Houston. He also placed first in the age 5-9 division of the Internet Scholastic Chess Championship in early July.

Daniel sports a 1917 USCF rating and currently studies with both IM John Donaldson and IM Armen Ambartsumyan. He allocates up to 3-4 hours daily for chess, reading books and magazines, reviewing famous games, and playing on the Internet Chess Club (ICC). He also utilizes various chess programs for further study. Daniel especially enjoys learning about the history of chess and the life stories of some its great players.

When asked for the secret of his success, Daniel stated simply, “I study a lot and concentrate while playing.” He advises other players that wish to improve to “stop thinking about losing and winning ... If you start to study [chess] and do not like it – try to study it some more and you should try to have some fun playing and not to think about how hard it is.”

Besides chess, Daniel enjoys swimming and floor hockey as well as playing the piano and studying classical music. “I love learning about Baroque, Renaissance and Medieval composers, their lives and their music, especially those who are not very famous,” he said. “I also like

ancient history, mathematics and reading biographies of famous people – scientists, musicians and chess players.”

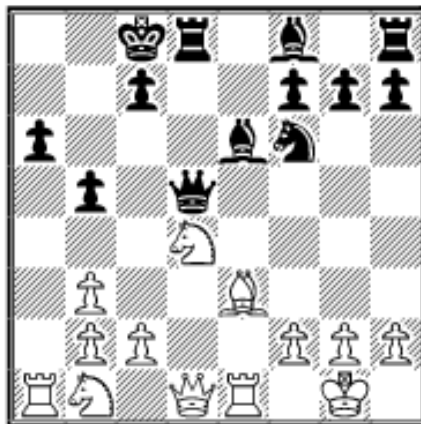
His short-term goal is to reach master level in 2006 while improving his endgame technique. Longer term, he aims for the grandmaster title. Just your normal, typical American ten-year-old.

Here is one of his games:

***Daniel Naroditsky (1880) – Paul Taylor (1700)***

National K-12 (6) 2005

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 d6 5.0-0 Nf6 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 Na5  
8.d4 Nxb3 9.axb3 exd4 10.e5 dxe5 11.Nxe5 Be6 12.Nc6 Qd5 13.Nxd4  
0-0-0 14.Be3**

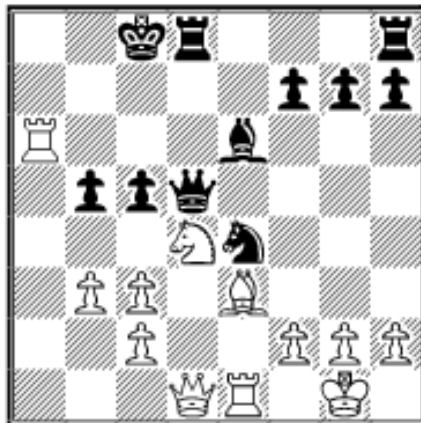


Fritz9 indicates that Black is in good shape at this point.

**14...Bb4?**

Missing 14...c5.

**15.Nc3 Bxc3 16.bxc3 Ne4 17.Rxa6  
c5**



**18.Qa1 cxd4 19.Ra7 Qc6 20.Bxd4  
Nf6 21.Re5 Nd5 22.Ra6 Qb7  
23.Ra8+ Kd7 24.Ra7 Qxa7  
25.Qxa7+ Kc6 26.Qc5+ Kd7  
27.Rxd5+ Bxd5 28.Qxd5+ Ke7  
29.Qe5+ Kd7 30.Qxg7 Rhe8 31.h3  
Kc8 32.Qxf7 h6 33.Qg6 Kb7  
34.Qxh6 b4 35.Qb6+ Kc8 36.Qxb4  
Rg8 37.Qc5+ Kd7 38.b4 Rc8  
39.Qd5+ Ke7 40.b5 Rcd8 41.Qe5+  
Kd7 42.b6 Kc6 43.Qc5+ Kd7  
44.b7 Rdf8 45.Be5 Re8 46.Qd6#**

***Ray Robson*** is presently a fifth-grader in Largo, Florida but has been a household name in the world of scholastic chess for some time now. Born in Guam in 1994, he learned the game at the age of three from his father.

When asked how much time he devotes to chess, Ray answered, “I don’t have a lot of time to study chess anymore because I have a lot of homework for school. I studied more – two or more hours a day – when I was in second and third grade.” Nevertheless, Ray’s results in national and international competition have been outstanding. He has participated in four National K-12 tournaments, twice placing first in his grade level, and has played in three



national Elementary School championships, winning twice. He also placed first in the one national blitz championship he attended. In addition, he played in the 2005 Pan-Am scholastic tournament in Brazil where he tied for first and was awarded the FM title. For the last two years Ray has also represented the U.S. at the World Youth Chess Championships, placing 10th in his division in 2004 in Greece, and 6th in his section this past summer in France, a mere half-point behind the winners. At the 2005 SuperNationals (while in 4th grade), he went undefeated in the K-6 division, winning a full college scholarship to the University of Texas-Dallas.

Currently rated 2174, Ray attributes his success to simply putting in plenty of time studying. He enjoys books by Kasparov and plays on the ICC from time to time. He is coached by GM Gregory Kaidanov, who tells me that he has worked with Ray for about two years after having met him at a chess camp in Gainesville, Florida. Kaidanov was kind enough to spend some time discussing his work and chess training in general. There are many fine chess coaches, but in my brief conversation with Gregory Kaidanov I had the clear impression that there is something very unique and special about this player and coach. Listening to him speak it was as if I was watching a series of simple, normal developing moves from which spring a beautiful, surprising combination.

Kaidanov tutors a number of players, including three current scholastic champions. He humbly states, “I don’t like to take full credit for the success of my students. I don’t know how much of their success is because of my help.” Typically, teaching sessions take place via the ICC, by phone and/or by e-mail. “I constantly send homework,” he says. Kaidanov and Ray occasionally have the opportunity to work in person, whether in Lexington, Kentucky (where the GM lives), at chess camp, or during one of Kaidanov’s visits to Florida. He generally works with Ray once or twice per week, for a total of two to three hours each week.

A typical session involves going over one of Ray’s recent games in detail. They look for key moments, with an emphasis on correcting any

mistakes in his game. “Sometimes I’ll present grandmaster games, perhaps my own, to further work on these mistakes.” He will also refer to similar mistakes from Ray’s previous games as needed.

Kaidanov spoke glowingly about Ray, describing him as “an exceptionally gifted player” and as “a student every coach can dream about.” He added that Ray is “one of the greatest kids I have ever worked with. He is extremely polite and respectful but also very competitive.” When I asked him to make a prediction about Ray’s chess future, Kaidanov deferred, indicating that it is impossible to predict one’s future success since each person develops differently. He mentioned anecdotally that as a young player, Karpov stated about himself that “it wasn’t his time yet.” However, Kaidanov did comment that “I hope one day Ray will be one of the best in the world. At this time, he has everything – he is extremely competitive and responsible.” This competitive nature is something the GM coach stressed repeatedly about Ray Robson, and not just involving chess. Spending a couple of days at the Robson home recently, Kaidanov and Ray took a little time off to play some table tennis. “He is so competitive!” even at table tennis, Kaidanov noted.

When I asked the coach if he had a “generic” training schedule that other players might utilize, he was quick to point out that proper chess training must be specifically tailored for each student. He provided a similar response when I asked for book and software recommendations, noting that this also must be player-specific. He did comment, though, that “the best book is the book the student falls in love with” so that he is motivated to gain from it.

I asked if he has his students annotate their games, expecting a “yes, of course” type of response. But again he hesitated to give a pat answer: “Some younger kids may not be able to annotate their games well,” he said, in which case he will annotate the games and review the results with the student. In fact, he noted that when he worked with Josh Waitzkin of *Searching for Bobby Fischer* fame, Waitzkin “never annotated his own games until he had been training for several years.”

Kaidanov agreed that sometimes the strongest players may not make the best tutors because they may not comprehend how lesser players are unable to understand concepts that the stronger players readily grasp. When I asked him how he came to be a successful teacher, he answered, “I never really had a coach except for a short time, so I had to learn on my own. But I met many great players, particularly Polugaevsky with whom I worked as a second on many occasions. I saw how hard he would study chess ... Nobody gave me guidance. I had to do it myself. I never attended the chess schools in the Soviet Union – the Botvinnik or Petrosian schools, although I did attend occasional lectures.”

Quite simply, he summarized, “I like to teach. It is a most stimulating experience seeing people experience success through hard work. This is



the road to success.”

Although Kaidanov was hesitant to predict what Ray might achieve in the world of chess, Ray himself was clear regarding his own goals: “Within the next 12 months I’d like to get my rating up to the high 2200s or to 2300. I will try to win the Pan-Am [scholastic tournament] this summer and place in the top three in the World Youth in the fall. Here are my long-term goals: Become an IM, win the World Youth, and get at least one GM norm.”

In the following game, Ray defeats a master:

**FM Ray Robson (2119) – FM Movilla Barrios (2265)**  
2005 Southern Open, Florida

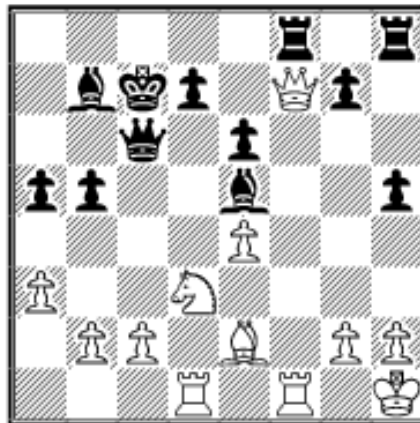
**1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nc6 5.Nc3 Qc7 6.Be3 a6 7.Bd3 b5  
8.a3 Bb7 9.0-0 Nf6 10.Kh1 h5**



**11.f4 Ng4 12.Bg1 Nxd4 13.Bxd4  
Bc5 14.Be2 Ne3 15.Bxe3 Bxe3  
16.Qd3 Bxf4 17.Qf3 Be5 18.Qxf7+  
Kd8 19.Rad1 Qc6**

Black offered a draw at this point.

**20.Na2 a5 21.Nc1 Kc7 22.Nd3  
Raf8**



**23.Nxe5 Rxf7 24.Rxf7 Qxe4  
25.Rdxd7+ Kc8 26.Rc7+ Kd8  
27.Rfd7+ Ke8 28.Re7+ Kf8  
29.Rxb7 Qxe5 30.Rec7 Black  
resigns.**

**Lucas Van Beuzekom** is a fifth-grader from Orlando, Florida and finished in a two-way tie for first place in his division with Ray Robson at the National K-12 tournament. He only began playing chess about three years ago, having been introduced to the game by his father. Lucas was especially attracted to the fact that each piece on the board had its own unique movement. Although both his father and brother play, he says his greatest competition in the family comes from his grandfather.

2005 proved to be quite a year for Lucas. He won the Florida State K-5 Championship, was selected to represent the U.S. at the World Youth Chess Championship in France, shared first place in Grade 5 with friend Ray Robson at the National K-12 in Houston, was named in December to the 2006 All America Chess Team, and had observers in awe as he crushed the field while winning the K-6 Blitz tournament at the grade nationals in Houston.



Lucas is especially proud of his draw with Robson that resulted in the Grade 5 first-place tie. As his equally proud father describes: “His draw against Ray at the nationals really sticks out for him. No one gave him a chance to compete with Ray but he went in with extreme confidence and a belief in himself that he could hold his own against the best in the country.”

He has worked with IM Aviv Friedman, who assisted the U.S. squad at last summer’s World Youth Chess Championship. However, he only devotes about 30 minutes a day to chess because of school requirements and his other interests.

Currently rated 1798, Lucas takes pleasure in the fact that age and size don’t pose limitations to one’s success in chess. As his father stated, “I think Lucas enjoys the fact that unlike certain sports like football or basketball, even the smallest kids can have huge success.” Lucas advises other kids to “try hard and don’t over-do it. Learn the basics really well and always do a blunder check (look for possible blunders before you make your move).” His goals? “My short term goal is to get my rating to 2000. Long term I want to become a grandmaster like Magnus or Hikaru.”

**Michael Lee** swept the 6th Grade section of the 2005 National K-12 with a perfect 7-0 score, duplicating his performance from two years ago when he won the 4th Grade division of the 2003 National K-12. Residing in Bellevue, Washington, Michael recently celebrated his twelfth birthday. He has been playing chess for the past five years, having joined his school’s chess club in first grade. His younger sister Megan is also becoming an accomplished chess player, and she placed 8th in the 4th grade section of the recent nationals in Houston.



Michael Lee with Susan Polgar

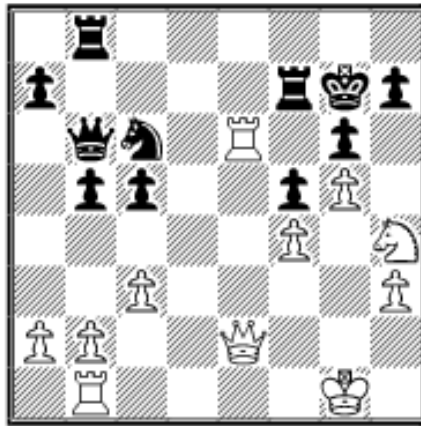
In addition to National K-12 and National Elementary championship tournaments, Michael has participated in the past three U.S. Opens, achieving a score of 6/9 in both 2004 and 2005. He devotes about half an hour daily to chess and benefits from working with IM Georgi Orlov. Currently rated 2102, he credits his father, coach Orlov and previous coach NM Elliot Neff with helping him to reach his current level. His advice to other aspiring scholastic players is succinct and to the point: "Read books. Study hard." For fun, he suggests playing bughouse chess and going up against chess coaches in simultaneous exhibitions. Short term, he would like to gain another 100 points over the next twelve months, pushing him into master territory. Long term, "GM" sounds awfully nice.

He shares with us one of his games where he managed to fight his way back to victory after losing a knight:

***Kevin ZhaoXiong (1498) – Michael Lee (1793)***

2004 National Elementary Chess Championship, Round 5

**1.e4 c5 2.Nc3 Nc6 3.g3 g6 4.Bg2 Bg7 5.d3 d6 6.f4 e6 7.Nf3 Nge7 8.O-O O-O 9.Be3 b6 10.h3 f5 11.Nh4 Rb8 12.g4 Qe8 13.Re1 Bf6 14.g5 Bg7 15.Bd2 Qd8 16.Rb1 b5 17.exf5 exf5 18.Nd5 Kh8 19.Bc3 Nxd5 20.Bxg7+ Kxg7 21.Bxd5 Ne7 22.Bg2 Rf7 23.d4 Qb6 24.c3 Bb7 25.Bxb7 Qxb7 26.dxc5 dxc5 27.Re5 Qb6 28.Qe2 Nc6 29.Re6**



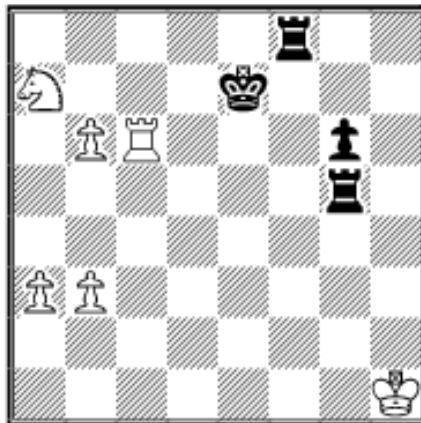
29...Qc7?

Missing the threat of 30.Rxc6 Qxc6  
31.Qe5+ forking the king and rook  
at b8.

30.Rxc6 Qxf4 31.Nf3 Rbb7  
32.Qe5+ Qxe5 33.Nxe5 Rfe7  
34.Rxc5 b4 35.Nc6 Re3 36.cxb4  
Rxb3 37.Rc3 Rh4 38.Kf2 Rd7  
39.Rf3 Rd2+ 40.Kg3 Rg4+ 41.Kh3  
Rgx5 42.Nxa7 Rd4 43.a3 Rdg4

Michael is still a piece down but his rooks are more active, menacing the white king.

44.Kh2 Rg2+ 45.Kh1 R2g4 46.Rh3 f4 47.Rh2 f3 48.Rf1 h5 49.b3  
Rg2 50.b5 h4 51.b6 h3 52.Rxb3 f2 53.Rxf2 Rxf2 54.Rc3 Rf4 55.Rc4  
Rf8 56.Rc7+ Kf6 57.Rc6+ Ke7



58. Rc7+

Fritz much prefers 58.Rc2.

Ke6 59.Rc6+ Kd5 60.Rc8 Rxc8  
61.Nxc8 Kc6 62.a4 Kb7 63.Nd6+  
Kxb6 64.b4 Rg4 65.a5+ Ka6  
66.Ne8 Rxb4 67.Nc7+ Kxa5  
68.Nd5 Rd4 69.Ne3 Kb5 70.Kg2  
Kc5 71.Kf3 Kd6 72.Ng4 g5 73.Ne3  
Rf4+ 74.Kg3 Ke5 75.Ng4+ Ke4  
76.Nf2+ Kf5

76...Rxf2 77.Kxf2 Kf4 is an easy win with correct play.

77.Nh3 Ra4 78.Nf2 Ra3+ 79.Kg2 g4 80.Nd1 Kf4 81.Nf2 Ra2 82.Kg1  
Kf3 83.Nd3 Ra1+ 84.Kh2 g3+ 85.Kh3 Rh1#

*Alex and Mark Heimann*, the dynamic duo from Wexford, Pennsylvania, finished with a combined twelve wins, one draw and one loss in the 7th Grade section of the recent National K-12 tournament. Mark took clear first place with his 6½ points in the seven-round event, and Alex was one of three players tied for 2nd-4th place a mere half-point back. The home-schooled twins have been playing chess since age 6, with their father as their only coach, and have met with considerable success.



Mark Heimann (L), Alex Heimann (R)

Mark has now been a champion or co-champion of his grade level four times in National K-12 tournaments. To put this in perspective, there were 141 players this past December in the Grade 7 section alone. He has also done exceptionally well in past National Elementary and National Junior High championships. One of his favorite moments occurred this past Labor Day when he defeated GM Aleks Wojtkiewicz with the black pieces.

*Aleks Wojtkiewicz (2611) – Mark Heimann (2092)*

2005 Ohio Chess Congress

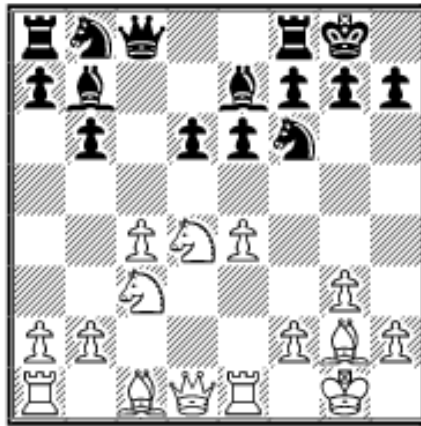
Annotations by Mark Heimann

**1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 b6 3.g3 Bb7 4.Bg2 e6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Nc3 c5 7.Re1 0-0**

Black should first complete the Hedgehog set-up with d6, a6 and Qc7 before castling.

**8.e4 d6 9.d4 cxd4 10.Nxd4 Qc8**





A sad necessity, as 10...Nbd7 allows 11.e5 after which White gains a huge advantage. No better is 10...Qc7 because 11.Nbd5 is annoying.

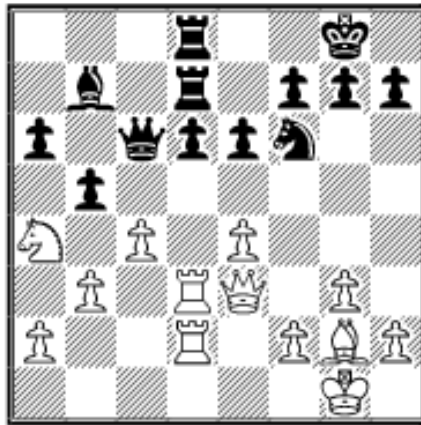
**11.Be3 Nc6 12.Rc1 Nxd4**

Avoiding the trap of 12...Re8 (or 12...Rd8) 13.Nd5 taking advantage of the pin along the c-file.

**13.Bxd4 Rd8 14.b3 Nd7 15.Re2 a6 16.Rd2 Qc7 17.Qg4 Bf6 18.Bxf6 Nxf6**

Black has managed to untangle himself and exchange off two sets of minor pieces. White's advantage is fading.

**19.Qe2 Rac8 20.Rcd1 Rd7 21.Rd3 Rcd8 22.R1d2 Qc5 23.Na4 Qc6 24.Qe3 b5**



Black is starting to gain the initiative. White is in real danger of being worse.

**25.cxb5 axb5 26.Nc3?!**

Better is 26.Rc3 Qa6 27.Nb6 Ng4 28.Qg5.

**26...b4 27.Na4**

Allows Black to win material.

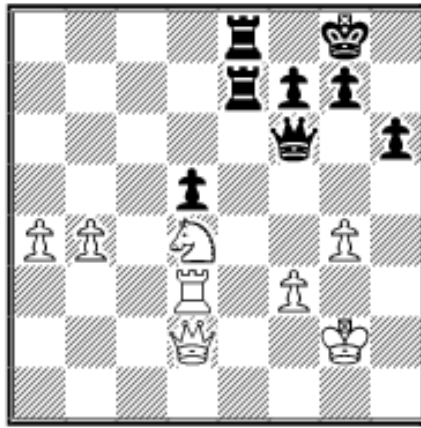
**27...Ba6 28.Qb6**

28.Rd4 e5 wins even more material for Black. 28.e5 Qc1+ 29.Rd1 Qxe3 30.Rxe3 dxe5 limits White's losses.

**28...Qc8 29.Qxb4 Bxd3 30.Rxd3 Qc1+**

Post-mortem analysis showed that 30...Qc2 31.Rd2 Qb1+ 32.Bf1 Qxe4 wins another pawn for Black and was simpler.

**31.Bf1 Ng4 32.Nb6 Nxh2 33.Kxh2 Qxf1 34.Qd2 Rb7 35.Nc4 Rb5 36.g4 d5 37.Ne3 Qa1 38.exd5 Qe5+ 39.Kg2 exd5 40.Nf5 h6 41.a4 Rb7 42.Re3 Qf6 43.Nd4 Qg5 44.f3 Re7 45.Rd3 Qf6 46.b4 Rde8**



Taking control over the e-file so Black can build threats against the white king.

**47.a5 Re1 48.Qf2 h5 49.Rd2 hgx4  
50.fxg4 Qg5 51.Kg3 R8e4 0-1**

Alex Heimann also has a number of championships to boast of, including sharing the National K-12 Grade 4 championship three years ago with his brother Mark. At the spring 2004

National Elementary Championship he scored a perfect 7-0 in the K-5 Championship section, which was especially nice since the tournament took place in nearby Pittsburgh, with many friends present. He has also been a state scholastic champion or co-champion since second grade.

Asked about their training regimen, the boys responded, "It varies depending on upcoming tournaments so there is no strict schedule. We don't spend a whole lot of time overall, but it depends on the day of the week and the time of year. In the summer we have a lot of other activities (like fishing and hunting for critters) that take most of our time."

With Alex sporting a 2153 rating and Mark at 2138, I was curious how the boys have achieved such success without professional tutoring and with what seems to be a light training schedule. Their father Larry, a university professor at Carnegie Mellon, clarified the issue. "True that we don't spend lots of time on it, but it is structured, focused and regular," he explained. "We regularly review tactics and endgames. I have them do various visualization exercises (which have become more complex over the years) and I've made lots of flashcards (I've made 5 different sets – over 300 altogether) to help my students with quick pattern recognition and to reinforce principles (I have a little 'Coach says...' section on the back of cards that students learn in addition to the pattern. Learning what 'Coach says' helps them to sort of hear my voice in their heads during the game so they can remember and apply the principles). Before tournaments you usually see my team doing a quick flashcard review to make sure we are warmed up and thinking chess before the first round. So while we don't spend lots of time on chess each day, we try to do a little bit (I'm guessing around 20 minutes a day on average) regularly and we focus on particular issues that I think are important or need to be addressed ... Overall chess is treated a lot like piano practice – you don't have to do it for hours on end, but you need to do it for a little while most days and you need to have a clear plan/structure for doing it." He adds that simply learning how to checkmate the opponent is not the only goal: "I do stress with the boys and with our homeschool team that character issues are far more important than winning games."

The boys echoed these sentiments when I asked them how they account for their wonderful success in chess. Mark said, “My opinion is that God really blesses me – that’s the biggest reason. My dad gives us pretty good training and makes sure we have good attitudes before the round starts (we are respectful of opponents and not too cocky against weaker players or too intimidated by stronger opponents).” Alex added, “I agree that the biggest reason is that God blesses us. In addition to my dad, my brother is a good sparring partner.”

Professor Heimann made an interesting observation about his sons. In a typical Swiss tournament, a strong player in their section may well have to play both Mark and Alex, sometimes in successive rounds. “They do make a pretty tough one-two punch,” their father notes. “Sometimes an opponent may get by one with a win or draw only to have to face the other the following round, and beating or drawing them both in the same tournament is tough.”

In the following game, Alex builds up a strong attack and quickly finishes the game.

*Alex Heimann (2154) – Adarsh Jayakumar (1705)*  
2005 National K-12 Championship, Round 3  
Annotations by Alex Heimann

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 4.0-0 Nxe4 5.Re1**

5.d4 is the main line, but 5.Re1 is a more aggressive alternative that fits my style of play.

**5...Nd6 6.Nxe5 Be7 7.Bd3 b6?!**

The main line here is 7...0-0 and is Black’s best choice. This line is dubious because it allows Qg4 or Qh5 without giving Black sufficient counterplay.

**8.Nc3 Bb7?**

Black should castle while he still can – otherwise White gets a fierce attack.

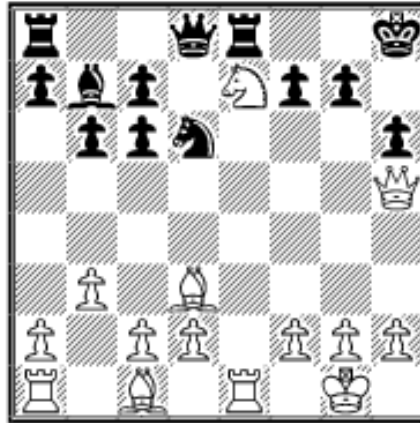
**9.Qh5 h6 10.Nd5**

Keeping the pressure on Black.

**10...0-0?**

Black’s position is desperate, but castling now allows White to win a piece and still retain the initiative.

11.Nxc6 dxc6 12.Nxe7+ Kh8 13.b3 Re8



14.Bb2

14.Qxh6+ gxh6 15.Bb2+ mates a little faster than the text.

14...f6 15.Qxh6+

A queen sac wins the game quickly.

15...gxh6 16.Bxf6#

15-year-old **Daniel Ludwig** went undefeated in the 10th Grade section of the 2005 National K-12 tournament, yielding only a draw to go with his six victories. One of eight siblings, Daniel is home-schooled and according to his mother, didn't necessarily show much promise academically as a young child. He didn't enjoy reading, and his brothers taunted him, calling him "stupid," but he demonstrated early talent in art, drawing three-dimensional figures by age three. His mother Claire had him begin playing chess, with his first introduction to tournament chess at age six. The 1996 U.S. Open was taking place not far from the Ludwig home, so Mrs. Ludwig brought Daniel and two of his older sisters to the event just to observe. When she set up a chess set at a table for her kids to play, the TD invited her to have her children participate in the tournament, which they did.

As the kids learned to play, initially Daniel's sister Monika appeared to show the most promise. Her mother found it "especially artistic seeing a 12-year-old girl make sweeping moves to defeat an older man." By the time Daniel was in third grade, however, he was rapidly improving, demonstrating total recall of earlier games.

Unable to easily access chess coaches, Daniel has been primarily self-taught, although he has taken lessons from GM Kaidanov. As his mother explains, "Being one of the youngest kids in a large family meant that he was always losing at games. His two older brothers (one 12 years and the other 10 years older) were extremely competitive, and they enjoyed giving Daniel a hard time (what are older brothers for? – SG) ... It was such a treat to get to play with them at all that he didn't mind getting trounced in whatever game or sport they engaged in. So Daniel was quite fearless going into chess where it's so important to be okay about losing. He had developed a pretty thick skin by the time he started (age 7)." She also noted that even at an early age, Daniel had the ability to "memorize and analyze like his father, a mathematician/physicist, but he also has an artistic and creative side like the folks on my side of the family. He saw and drew things three-

dimensionally from a very early age which had to help him whenever he looked at a chessboard although I think it got in the way of his early reading because he seemed to be seeing too much.”

Currently, Daniel is a strong 2300+ player, but his mother feels that he actually has been “held back” in his chess development because of the relative lack of instruction and local tournament availability. That may be changing, however, as Daniel was selected to be part of the first class at the new U.S. Chess School.



Outside of chess, Daniel loves cross-country running and has participated in the state cross-country championship. According to Mrs. Ludwig, during the running season he may go perhaps two months with virtually no chess activity in order to concentrate on his running. It appears that whatever area of endeavor Daniel Ludwig chooses to immerse himself into, he does it with 100% effort and concentration. Not a bad lesson to learn.

### **U.S. Chess School**

A potentially major step forward in cultivating young chess talent began in January when Greg Shahade’s U.S. Chess School opened its doors to its first class of nine students.

Training and lodging were provided free of charge to these nine talented young players, in Lexington, Kentucky, with GM Gregory Kaidanov the primary instructor. As specified at the U.S. Chess School [website](#), the series of 5-7 day intensive training programs aim to:

1. Train our young players to their fullest potential
2. Create strong bonds of friendship among the top young American players
3. Provide the players with a mentor whom they can turn to for advice at any time
4. Instill the kind of work ethic that is necessary to becoming a top player
5. Cultivate as many new American GMs as possible
6. Help to develop talent to lead our future Olympiad teams





Left to right: Daniel Rensch, Jake Banawa, Robert Hungaski, Igor Shneider, Daniel Ludwig, Lev Milman, Josh Friedel, Sal Bercys, Joel Banawa. Seated: GM Gregory Kaidanov

The inaugural class at the school consisted of the following players (ages at time of acceptance into the school):

- NM Daniel Ludwig (2331), age 15
- NM Joel Banawa (2386), age 15
- FM Daniel Rensch (2409), age 19
- SM Jake Banawa (2416), age 18
- FM Igor Shneider (2420), age 17
- FM Sal Bercys (2440), age 15
- IM-elect Robert Hungaski (2457), age 17
- IM Josh Friedel (2512), age 18
- IM-elect Lev Milman (2523), age 17

The school days generally ran from about 10:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. and included time for sports activities in addition to the intensive chess instruction. Some of the topics covered included:

- analysis of selected games of each student
- general chess psychology
- solitaire chess (trying to predict the next move of an already-completed game)
- using a computer to study openings
- playing for a win in equal positions
- how to defend difficult positions

In addition, GM Kaidanov assigned each student to prepare a lecture on a very specific topic by to be presented at a future session of the school. For example, Daniel Ludwig was asked to analyze Psakhis' and Topalov's games on the black side of the Benoni opening, Robert

Hungaski was asked to be prepared to discuss the topic of exchange sacrifices in Anand's games, and Joel Banawa was assigned the task of reviewing the specific endgame of rook plus "f" and "h" pawns versus rook. No generic "What I Did Over the Summer" presentations here!

We'll keep you posted as new developments occur. To make a donation or to read more about this excellent program visit their [website](#). U.S. Chess School president Greg Shahade can be contacted at [admin@uschessschool.com](mailto:admin@uschessschool.com).

### Shaun Alexander

Seattle Seahawks running back Shaun Alexander has had a spectacular season, earning National Football League Most Valuable Player honors for his exploits on the football field. He recently made the news for some nice work he's doing away from the game.



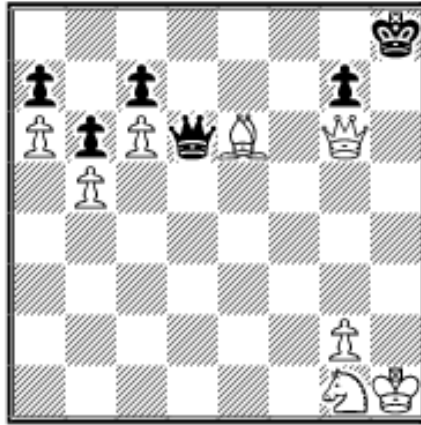
Shaun Alexander presenting check to AF4C

A \$7,500 donation was made by the Shaun Alexander Foundation to provide funding for America's Foundation for Chess (AF4C) First Move program at Seattle's Madrona Elementary School. Perhaps the most prolific of Madrona's graduates is GM Yasser Seirawan, one of the founding board members of AF4C. In a press release from the AF4C office, Alexander was quoted as saying, "When I first learned of this program, I knew this was a unique approach to teaching children important skills that will help them make the right moves in school and in life. I also knew that I wanted to support AF4C in providing this innovative educational tool to the teachers and students in some of our most challenging classrooms."

John Henderson of AF4C also reports that Alexander arranged for a special chess tournament at Madrona, with two players receiving an all-expenses-paid trip to Hawaii to watch him play in the Pro Bowl. Kudos to Shaun Alexander for demonstrating how prominent athletes can be positive role models for our children.

### Answers to our January Everyman Quiz

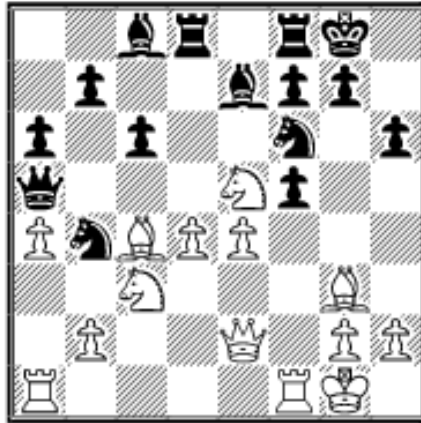
Below are the questions and answers from last month's quiz:



Problem 1:

In this diagram from GM Yasser Seirawan's excellent *Winning Chess Tactics*, it is Black's move. What is your suggestion?

*Answer: 1...Qh2+!! Kxh2 and lo and behold, draw by stalemate!*



Problem 2:

Also from *Winning Chess Tactics*, it is now White to move. How would you proceed?

*Answer: This position is from Botvinnik – Stepanov, USSR 1931. 1.Bxf7! Rxf7 2.Nc4 Black loses his queen and eventually the game.*

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Have something newsworthy you'd like to share? E-mail me at [scholasticchess@chesscafe.com](mailto: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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