GM MECKING
Where is he?

A tale of Chess, Illness, and Religion

Exclusive interview
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Editor’s Notes for this Volume
I am the Editor of this volume only as we wanted a volume to come out to close 2015 with a sense of good service to our members.

For this volume cover page I interviewed GM Henrique Mecking, who kindly agreed to give an Exclusive Interview. Mecking was ranked number three in the world in 1976 and played the Candidates Match in Manila right before he got severely ill. Mecking’s interview is a unique, rare piece of document on the Brazilian legend.

I also interviewed Grandmaster Damen Sadvakasov who once lived in Pittsburgh and now lives back in his home country of Kazakhstan. Maxim is a child star from the Pittsburgh area who is also featured in an another exclusive interview.

Franklin Chen, Bob Atwell, Paul Lucarelli, and Steve O’Connor all contributed articles for this special edition of the En Passant. This is the largest edition of the En Passant in our history and the only one ever with color cover in booklet format.

I hope our readers enjoy the materials and learn from them. If anyone wants to contribute contents to the next volume of the En Passant
(March 2016)
please feel free to contact me.

John Barroso
Pittsburgh Chess Club Secretary

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GM MECKING, WHERE IS HE?

The Brazilian Grandmaster whose zenith occurred at Bobby Fisher’s time (in 1977 Mecking was ranked number three in the world) has been back playing chess again. But why had he disappeared? First, let’s see who he is.

Mecking, best known by his Brazilian nickname Mequinho, was Brazilian champion at age 13, but became a Grandmaster only at age 19 in 1972. He was also the first Brazilian Grandmaster.

In 1971 Mecking placed third in Hastings after co-winners Karpov and Korchnoi (wikipedia). In 1973 he won the Petrópolis Interzonal where Keres and Bronstein participated (wikipedia). According to the wikipedia citation, “from that time until 1979 Mecking was the strongest player born in the west after Bobby Fischer’s effective retirement in 1972”. The well-known Victor Korchnoi, in an interview to New in Chess said that he views Mecking, Tal, and Magnus Carlsen as the “great three” who came from countries where chess was not very popular but each had “over the board hypnotic influence over their rivals” (New in Chess, 2011, p. 39).

In 1973 and again in 1976 Mecking played for the world tournament but in 1973 was eliminated by Korchnoi in the Candidates Tournament and in 1976 he was eliminated by Polugaevsky. After that, Mecking was stricken by a disease, of which we shall turn to in a moment.

In the Brazil of those days, sunk deep into military dictatorship and plagued by waves of high and low economic development and severe inequality between the rich and the poor, Mecking rose as a national hero. At the time many were quick to draw comparisons between Mecking and Bobby Fischer, though Mecking’s height at a Fide rating of 2635 only occurred in 1977, five years after Bobby Fischer’s retirement.

From a young age Mecking wanted to be world champion. Without support, Mecking then asked the President of Brazil for help, former Emilio Garrastazú Médici (one of the hard-liners of the Brazilian dictatorship). President Médici answered “I will solve your problem”. The President appointed Mecking to a position within the Ministry of Education and from that and the financial support, President Médici made a major contribution to helping the young Mecking become a Grandmaster. In 1971 Mecking moved to Rio de Janeiro due to the government appointment and a year later he became the first Brazilian Grandmaster at age 19: “President Médici helped me a lot. He was an intelligent man, he liked sports….I asked for his help so I could drop out of college and only study chess and become world champion” (interview to Folha de São Paulo newspaper).

When Mecking became a Grandmaster, the militaries paraded him on Firefighter’s trucks at the sounds of the Mangueira drums (samba school) and the Flamengo’s (soccer team) fans pouring in by the thousands. That was 1972 (Brazil had won the World Cup in 1970 in Mexico) and the best known name in Brazil was soccer player Pele but according to Spraggett (who runs a website in Canada) “for a while Mecking was more famous than Pele” (Kevin Spraggett).

At the height of his fame, Mecking is cover page of Veja, the largest and most prestigious magazine in Latin America.
The military coup-de-stat in Brazil happened in the context of the cold war, when the CIA viewed Brazil as the major door to be shut to socialism (after the Cuban Revolution succeeded) and so the CIA played major role in implanting the last of many Brazilian dictatorships (the Brazilian cold war dictatorship was the first and also the longest of Latin American dictatorships of that era). Mecking was in a way caught in the middle of that by accepting military help, another side of the cold war that puts him and Bobby Fischer in similar scenarios, except that Bobby Fischer had no government help.

Mecking observes Spassky thinking in Manila, 1976, when Mecking played in the Candidates Match.

THEN, THE UNEXPECTED
In 1978 Mecking was 26 and at the height of his chess career. He was diagnosed with a rare disease that weakens the body’s muscles causing astonishing pain. The disease, called Myasthenia Gravis, which is the same that killed Onassis (husband of Jacqueline Kennedy after the death of President Kennedy) took

Mecking off the maps of chess for many years. Treated in Houson, Texas and many other places Mecking never really fully recovered.

To this day, in email conversations, Mecking indicated he still suffers horrific pains though he is almost fully cured, but there is a twist to the cure.

In an interview to Revista Isto É in 2008 Mecking said he has been treated with homeopathic medicine. At one point, Mecking says in the interview that he became so weak he had to be spoon fed as he had no muscle power. “I needed help even to brush my teeth” (Revista Isto É, 2008).

HOW MECKING WAS CURED
Mecking tells on an interview to O Globo (January 2014) that when the disease took over him, he felt unbelievable weakness and cold, but after a miraculous cure, he converted to the Catholic Church. “When I was about to die on May 28th, 1979, aunt Laura, from the Charismatic Renovation Church [a branch of the Catholic Church that has modernized the service and approach to the new youth] who was very well known for being used by Jesus, prayed for me along with two other friends and Jesus Christ conceded me a miraculous cure and I improved 99%.... later Jesus conceded me more miraculous cures... I believe one day Jesus will cure me 100% and soon I will be able to be one of the best in the world again” (O Globo, January 1st, 2014).

In the same interview Mecking said that he has preached in 18 Brazilian states.

In his 17 years of absence from chess due to his severe disease, Mecking found energy to study and graduate in Theology through the Catholic Church, but was not ordained priest. According to interview given to Canal Xadrez, Mecking tells how his daily life is now: “I sleep five hours a night... I stopped playing because I wanted to be a priest and pray all day... but I returned because Jesus gave me green light... I like to stay in bed late praying...three days a week I jog, three days I lift weights... I go to the church service everyday”. Mecking is asked if he is ready for a girlfriend given he won’t be a priest but he answers that “it is sinful for a single person to have sex”.

In another interview Mecking mentions other miracles. Mecking mentions a miracle by Jesus Christ in a simultaneous exhibition where he lost a knight and was losing and lost
throughout the whole game. He was playing the best player of Mato Grosso State in Brazil. Then, he says “but then the girls from the Charismatic Renovation Church were praying all the time and a lot of people gathered around the table where I was losing but in the last moment Jesus found a way and I miraculously got a draw. ... I have not lost a game in a simul in thirty years” (interview to Clube the Xadrez Online, 2007).

A respected newspaper revealed in 2000 that Mecking lives in a humble house with no furniture, except for a chair and a table where he practices chess. His mattress is on the floor and the walls are populated by numerous crucifix and images of Jesus and the Virgin Mary. In the garage a 1980 VW Beatle was seen. With a Franciscan (Franciscan priests) life style, Mecking admits his expenses are minimum. He only spends money with food and the pay of a lady to cook for him. At the interview time, Mecking lived in the town of Taubaté, State of São Paulo (Jornal da Tarde, June 14, 2000). As of the time of writing of this article, December 2015, he still lived in the same house.

FACEBOOK
It would be incorrect to say that Mecking is a recluse. Mecking has a Facebook page (under Henrique Mecking) with 5,000 followers. His facebook page has chess games, comments and discussions on chess (all in Portuguese) and also many religious messages, recommendations for cure and reports of miracles.

Mecking is the author of a bestselling book called “How Jesus Saved My Life”, which he expressed interest in having the book published in English, should there be an interested publisher. Many of Mecking’s chess books are published by Ciência Moderna publishers from Rio de Janeiro.

In my email conversations with Mecking, he authorized me to publish anything he posts on his Facebook page, which abounds in chess and religious information and details not possible to include here. Some of Mecking’s posts however are interesting. He indicates he was number 1 ten times on ICC (online chess) where he played with the name of Lonrenzo in honor of Saint Lorenzo, one of his protector saints. Among many of Mecking’s religious postings, in one he announces that “soon Jesus will have a worldwide mission for me”.

Although some may be turned down by Mecking’s religious preaching, it is hard to dislike him when he talks about chess and his career and the pains he has been through with his disease in the last twenty years of his life. Deep in the heart, Mecking, like Bobby Fisher, is filled with passion and a desire for pureness.

John Barroso,
Pittsburgh Chess Club Secretary
December, 2015.

PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS
I have never met Mecking in person but we have exchanged quite a few emails. I can tell that Mecking is one of the kindest persons I have ever met. His replies are always honest, kind, and polite and his honesty is brutal and his soul is pure. In his last email he humbly apologized for not being able to answer more questions. He explained he was studying in preparations to play for his team Piracicaba in the São Paulo State Chess League to take place in December 5th,2015 in the famous cowboy city of Barretos (the largest rodeo city of Latin America).

Emmanuel Lasker was world champion for twenty seven years. I could stop writing now. That says it all.

Emanuel Lasker was born in 1868 at Berlinchen in Neumark (now Barlinek in Poland), the son of a Jewish cantor. At the age of eleven he was sent to Berlin to study mathematics, where he lived with his brother Berthold, eight years his senior, who taught him how to play chess. To supplement their income Emanuel Lasker played chess and card games for small stakes, especially at the Café Kaiserhof.

Lasker’s rise in the chess world was meteoric. In 1889, he won the Café Kaiserhof's annual Winter tournament 1888/89 and the Hauptturnier A ("second division" tournament) at the sixth DSB (German Chess Federation) Congress held in Breslau.

Lasker challenged Siegbert Tarrasch, who had won three consecutive strong international tournaments (Breslau 1889, Manchester 1890, and Dresden 1892), to a match. Tarrasch haughtily declined, stating that Lasker should first prove his mettle by attempting to win one or two major international events. (In the next decade Tarrasch ate those words, among others – SOC)

Rebuffed by Tarrasch, Lasker challenged the reigning World Champion Wilhelm Steinitz to a match for the title. Initially Lasker wanted to play for US $5,000 a side and a match was agreed at stakes of $3,000 a side, but Steinitz agreed to a series of reductions when Lasker found it difficult to raise the money. The final figure was $2,000, which was less than for some of Steinitz' earlier matches. Although this was publicly praised as an act of sportsmanship on Steinitz' part, Steinitz may have desperately needed the money. The match was played in 1894, at venues in New York, Philadelphia, and Montreal. Steinitz had previously declared he would win without doubt, so it came as a shock when Lasker won the first game. Steinitz responded by winning the second, and was able to maintain the balance through the sixth. However, Lasker won all the games from the seventh to the eleventh, and Steinitz asked for a week's rest. When the match resumed, Steinitz won the 13th and 14th games. Lasker struck back in the 15th and 16th, and Steinitz was unable to compensate for his losses in the middle of the match. Hence Lasker won convincingly with ten wins, five losses and four draws.

Lasker thus became the second formally-recognized World Chess Champion, and confirmed his title by beating Steinitz even more convincingly in their re-match in 1896–1897 (ten wins, five draws, and two losses).
After the match some commentators, notably Tarrasch, said Lasker had won mainly because Steinitz was old (58 in 1894). Lasker answered these criticisms by creating an even more impressive playing record. Before World War I broke out his most serious "setbacks" were third place at Hastings 1895 (where he may have been suffering from the after-effects of typhoid fever), a tie for second at Cambridge Springs 1904, and a tie for first at the Chigorin Memorial in St Petersburg 1909. He won first prizes at very strong tournaments in St Petersburg (1895–1896, Quadrangular), Nuremberg (1896), London (1899), Paris (1900) and St Petersburg (1914), where he overcame a 1½ point deficit to finish ahead of the rising stars, Capablanca and Alexander Alekhine, who later became the next two World Champions. For decades chess writers have reported that Tsar Nicholas II of Russia conferred the title of "Grandmaster of Chess" upon each of the five finalists at St Petersburg 1914 (Lasker, Capablanca, Alekhine, Tarrasch and Frank Marshall).

Lasker's match record was as impressive between his 1896–97 re-match with Steinitz and 1914: he won all but one of his normal matches, and three of those were convincing defenses of his title. He first faced Marshall in the World Chess Championship 1907, when despite his aggressive style, Marshall could not win a single game, losing eight and drawing seven (final score: 11½–3½).

He then played Tarrasch in the World Chess Championship 1908, first at Düsseldorf then at Munich. Tarrasch firmly believed the game of chess was governed by a precise set of principles. For him the strength of a chess move was in its logic, not in its efficiency. Because of his stubborn principles he considered Lasker as a coffeehouse player who won his games only thanks to dubious tricks, while Lasker mocked the arrogance of Tarrasch who, in his opinion, shone more in salons than at the chessboard. At the opening ceremony, Tarrasch refused to talk to Lasker, only saying: "Mr. Lasker, I have only three words to say to you: check and mate!"

Lasker gave a brilliant answer on the chessboard, winning four of the first five games, and playing a type of chess Tarrasch could not understand. Lasker eventually won by 10½–5½ (eight wins, five draws, and three losses). Tarrasch claimed the wet weather was the cause of his defeat.

In 1909 Lasker drew a short match (two wins, two losses) against Dawid Janowski. Several months later they played a longer match, and chess historians still debate whether this was for the World Chess Championship. Lasker easily won the match 8–2 (seven wins, two draws, one loss). This victory was convincing for everyone but Janowski, who asked for a revenge match. Lasker accepted and they played World Chess Championship match in Paris in November–December 1910. Lasker crushed his opponent, winning 9½–1½ (eight wins, three draws, no losses).

Then World War I broke out and serious tournament and match play came to an abrupt halt.

In January 1920 Lasker and José Raúl Capablanca signed an agreement to play a World Championship match in 1921, noting that Capablanca was not free to play in 1920. The match was played in March–April 1921. After four draws, the fifth game saw Lasker blunder with Black in an equal ending. Capablanca's solid style allowed him to easily draw the next four games, without taking any risks. In the tenth game, Lasker as White played a position with an isolated queen pawn but failed to create the necessary activity and Capablanca reached a superior ending, which he duly won. The eleventh and fourteenth games were also won by Capablanca, and Lasker resigned the match.
After he lost the title in 1921, Lasker was still in the top rank of players, winning at Moravská Ostrava in 1923 ahead of Richard Reti, Ernst Grunfeld, Savielly Tartakower, and Max Euwe. His last tournament win was at New York 1924, finishing 1.5 points ahead of Jose Raul Capablanca, Alexander Alekhine, and Frank Marshall. In 1925, he came 2nd at Moscow behind Efim Bogoljubov and ahead of Capablanca, Marshall, Tartakower, and Carlos Torre-Repetto. There followed a long hiatus from chess caused by his intention to retire from the game, but he re-emerged into front line chess in 1934 placing 5th in Zurich behind Alekhine, Euwe, Salo Flohr and Bogoljubow and ahead of Ossip Bernstein, Aron Nimzowitsch, Gideon Stahlberg. In Moscow in 1935, he was 3rd, a half point behind Mikhail Botvinnik and Flohr and ahead of Capablanca, and Rudolf Spielmann. It was this result by the 67 year-old that Reuben Fine described as “a biological miracle”. In 1936, Lasker placed 6th in Moscow and finished his career later that year at Nottingham when he came =7th with 8.5/14 (+6 -3 =5).

Lasker’s extended absences from chess were due to his pursuit of other activities, including mathematics and philosophy. He spent the last years of the 19th century writing his doctorate. Between 1902 and 1907, he played only at Cambridge Springs. It was during this period that he introduced the notion of a primary ideal, which corresponds to an irreducible variety and plays a role similar to prime powers in the prime decomposition of an integer. He proved the primary decomposition theorem for an ideal of a polynomial ring in terms of primary ideals in a paper Zur Theorie der Moduln und Ideale published in volume 60 of Mathematische Annalen in 1905. This polynomial ring is now called a ‘Lasker ring’.

After Lasker lost his title, he spent a considerable amount of time playing bridge and intended to retire. However, he returned to chess in the mid-thirties as he needed to raise money after the Nazis had confiscated his properties and life savings. After the tournament in Moscow in 1936, the Laskers were encouraged to stay on and Emanuel accepted an invitation to become a member of the Moscow Academy of Science to pursue his mathematical studies, with both he and his wife, Martha, taking up permanent residence in Moscow. At this time, he also renounced his German citizenship and took on Soviet citizenship. Although Stalin’s purges prompted the Laskers to migrate to the USA in 1937, it is unclear whether they ever renounced their Soviet citizenship.

Lasker counted Albert Einstein amongst his friends. He published several chess books but as he was also a mathematician, games theorist, philosopher and even playwright, he published books in all of these fields, except for the play which was performed on one occasion. After he graduated from high school, he studied mathematics and philosophy at the universities in Berlin, Göttingen and Heidelberg. Lasker died in New York in 1941, aged 72. In 2008, Dr. Lasker was among the first 40 German sportsmen to be elected into the “Hall of Fame des Deutschen Sports”.

Lasker’s contributions to chess are also impressive. There is the Lasker Defense to the Evans Gambit and Queens Gambit Declined. His books, A Manual of Chess and Common Sense in Chess are both classics. We also have several game collections of his in our library.
GM DARMEN’S NEWS

Darmen Sadvakasov lived in Pittsburgh for a while when he was a Graduate student at Carnegie Mellon. At that time he came to the Pittsburgh Chess Club, gave a Simul at a coffee shop for the Pittsburgh Chess Club, played blindfold at Duquesne University and was on the newspapers and TV news for that. Then Darmen moved back to Kazakhstan where he now lives in the capital city of Astana.

Darmen lived in Pittsburgh for a few years with his wife and was well-known to the chess scene. In this exclusive interview to En Passant, Darmen let us know about his new job, chess, and his kids! Here is what GM Darmen, a life-member of the Pittsburgh Chess Club wrote to us:

I live in Astana, Kazakhstan. I work for the national oil and gas company KazMunayGas.

I am Director of the Department of Strategy and Coordination. I am involved in strategic planning and analysis, performance management (KPI), international relations, strategic communications, and the coordination of other functions.

My wife Maryam lived with me in Pittsburgh for 1 year attending English classes at Duquesne and a social school. Now we have 3 children: Arai (6 years old), Batyrkhan (3 years), and Danial (1.5 months).

I practically stopped playing chess since 2010. However, I have been vice-president of Kazakhstan Chess Federation (2011-2014). During 4 years our young chess players have won more than 30 medals in the world championships (boys/ girls and school). In 2012 we organized in Astana FIDE world chess rapid and blitz championship with the best players (Carlsen, Karyakin, Grischuk, etc.). In 2013 Women world team championship was held in Astana.

Darmen gives a simul in Astana, Kazakhstan.

After graduation from CMU, I visited the US only once to take part in well-known petroleum forum - CERA week (Houston). At the moment, I don't have concrete plans to visit US, but will be happy to come to Pittsburgh one day.

I have a Facebook account. That is simplest way to contact me.

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Book review
by Paul Lucarelli

Book:
Practical Chess Exercises 600 Lessons From Tactics To Strategy
ISBN # 987-1-58736-081-1


This is a good book to help turn your chess brain on. It is a worthy primer to study before going to tournaments or skittles play. Use it to stimulate and wake your chess sense before jumping into a serious game. This book is one I refer to and study again and again.

This paperback comes in at just over 200 pages and is priced at around $18(USD). The book itself is a nice size to hold with clear diagrams, nice binding and quality all around. Also, another plus is that it doesn't seem to have many errors, none that I’ve noticed. It is a worthy addition to any chess library.

Generally, the book consists of diagrams of chess positions which the reader is asked to consider and find the best continuation. The twist and point of the book is that the positions the reader is looking to solve are not organized into any groupings based on solution method. The puzzles are randomized. There is no hint at what level of chess strength any position may call for. And there is no hint at what the solution may be.

This sort of randomization forces the reader to consider many more options when attempting to solve the current puzzle. The reader is hit with a mass variety of chess themes. It is the varied and random themes that force the solver to actually stop and think about what is really happening. This type of problem solving is what actually happens during a real game of chess. If you miss an idea or theme then you can lose the game. Studying with this book before a tournament will refresh these ideas to your mind.

The layout of the book is very reader friendly. The problems are on the left-hand page, with 6 problem diagrams per page, 1 diagram per problem. On the right-hand page are the solutions. The solution line is given along with a few sentences of clear explanation. There is no flipping back and forth or page turning to find the solution. This is quite convenient. Because the solutions are directly on the right, it may be helpful to cover them with a blank piece of paper.

This book gets my recommendation because of its many plusses. It is actually helpful, it is easy to carry to tournaments, and it is a quick study. I don't have anything negative to say about the book. Do you need another "puzzle" book, maybe not. But, you may need a tune-up before your next tourney. For that alone it’s a book worth considering.- PL.
Clever chess tactics that were not what they seemed  
by Franklin Chen

In round 3 of the current 6-round Pittsburgh Chess Club Tuesday night tournament, I played a very tense game that led to an unusual position with beautiful tactical possibilities. My opponent, Melih, is a strong player who is a winner of the 2015 Pittsburgh Chess Club Championship earlier this year, and had won the last two tournament games we have played, so I came into this game anxious and also thirsty for revenge.

The game proved to be very challenging for both of us. I achieved a better position out of the opening as Black but was too cautious to press more aggressively. After more than 3 hours (!) of play, we ended up in a simplified late middlegame in which I had only a small but clear advantage. We were both clearly physically and mentally exhausted, and starting to run out of time (these tournament games have a time control of 2 hours per person with a 5-second delay per move). It was up to me to try to find a way to win by inducing errors in his play.

Get ready to be quizzed!

What ended up happening was in retrospect both remarkable and comic. To maximize your entertainment as well as challenge your tactical skills, I recommend pausing at each diagrammed position below in order to ask yourself what move you would play, and why, before gradually uncovering the whole story.

Note: an interactive chess board with all variations is provided at the end of this article.

First, assess a quiet-looking starting position

For context, here is the position after 21 moves, after Black played 21…Qc6.

21...Qc6; White to move

Questions
- What opening do you think this middlegame came from?
- Who stands better and why?
- What is White’s best plan, and what is Black’s best plan?

Answers

Congratulations if you guessed this was a French Defense, Advance Variation, gone totally wrong for White!

Black stands better and has a simple plan:
- attack White’s backward Pawn on c3 on the half-open file, and perhaps also the e5 Pawn as well; and the a2 Pawn and b4 Pawn are also potential targets
- use the half-open c-file for the Rooks, and the dark-squared Bishop against White’s Pawns, and get the Queen involved as well
- using these attacks, overload White’s defenses somehow in order to win at least one of those Pawns to enter a probably winning endgame
White’s only possible counter-plan:
- defend the weak Queen side Pawns
- maybe plant the Knight on a good outpost such as d4
- defend the Pawn on e5 with maybe an f4 advance, and hope to attack Black’s King side with perhaps an f5 break

Progress after seven moves?
Black has just played 28…Rc4.

28…Rc4; White to move

Questions
- Who has made more progress in the last seven moves: White or Black?
- What is the nature of the progress made?

Answers
White has played to wait to see what Black is up to; meanwhile, Black has made some progress on the Queen side by:
- doubling Rooks on the half-open c-file
- using the Queen to bear down on White’s a-Pawn, which White has (mistakenly) advanced to a3.

Black fell into a trap?
I played 29…Qxa3.

29 Rac2; Black to move

Questions
On the 29th move, White moved the Rook from a2 to c2, leaving the defense of the a3 Pawn.
- What is the meaning of this strange move?!
- Can Black just take the Pawn with the Queen?

Answers
You may be thinking “White is provocatively setting a trap for Black to fall into”. You get credit if you can see the trap.

Black played a surprising move
White has just played 29 Rac2.
But wait, I took the Pawn! Did I fall into a trap?

Questions
- What is the trap you saw earlier, if you saw it?
- Is it really a trap?

White closed the trap?
White has played 30 Ra2.

30 Ra2; Black to move

Answers
So the Rook moved back to a2, apparently trapping Black’s Queen. But again, was it really a trap?
Black refuted the trap?
Black played 30…Rxd4.

30...Rxd4; White to move

You get credit if you saw this move taking White’s Knight on d4, and saw that White’s Queen is overloaded such that retaking the Rook in either one of two ways leads to losing back the Rook on c1 and therefore losing a piece overall and the game.
I was very proud of seeing this tactic. (If you saw a different move for Black, we’ll discuss that further down below.)

White refuted the refutation?
White played 31 Qc2.

31 Qc2; Black to move
When Melih moved his Queen to c2, I was in shock and disgust at myself: in my fatigue near the end of this game, and overexcitement at believing I had “refuted” a “trap”, I had completely failed to take into account that White was not actually required to take my Rook on d4!
Amusingly, it turns out that Melih, after playing 29 Rac2 setting the “trap”, saw to his horror the resource 30…Rxd4, and thought he was lost, but then saw 31 Qc2. So neither of us had originally seen this saving resource for White.

Questions
- Is Black’s Queen trapped for real now?
- What should Black do? Is Black lost? Or is Black still winning? Or should Black start looking for a draw?

Black panicked, trying to draw
Yes, Black’s Queen is trapped for real. You get credit if you saw that Black’s flashy 30…Rxd4 had this flaw.
The only question for me was how best to give up my Queen.
I chose poorly. In a daze, I could not think straight. I chose to give back a Rook with 31…Qxc3, in order to force a trade Queens on c3 and go into an endgame an exchange down for two Pawns, and hope for a draw.

31…Qxc3; White to move
I was correct that the resulting position was objectively equal and drawable, but in a time scramble, it’s obviously easier to play White, and for the rest of the game, both sides made major errors (with White botching up winning positions and Black botching up drawn positions) until a simplified position was reached (Rook and two Pawns for each side) with only seconds left on the clock, and a draw agreed. I consider myself lucky to have drawn. The final position was:

Agreed drawn
But Black could have played to win
You get credit if you chose instead to sacrifice the Queen with 31…Qxc1+ to get the Rook and Bishop and Pawns against White’s Queen, with advantage and a good chance of winning. After 32 Qxc1 Bxb4, Black is about to win White’s c3 Pawn:
32...Bxb4; White to move

In fact, if you saw all this when thinking about whether to take the Pawn on a3 in the first place, then you get bonus points for seeing a way to an advantage through the sequence of tactical blows. Neither Melih nor I saw any of this up front, unfortunately.

I chickened out and did not take this continuation because after being shocked that my Queen was disappearing, I experienced a visceral fear that I needed to bring down White’s Queen also, else it with White’s Rook might be dangerous to my King.

It turns out that my fear was objectively unwarranted, as Black’s defenses are sufficient because of the power of the dark-squared Bishop to hit White’s e5 Pawn and even the f2 Pawn, but I was not thinking straight any more as time was running out for the four-hour game and it was already around 11 PM at night on a weekday.

One possible position

Here is a position that might have arisen if I had gone into this variation:

White to move

The thing is, even though the computer says Black has an advantage, it could be scary playing against White’s Queen.

Another possible position

But analysis also shows that White has to be very careful. For example, if White is greedy and wastes time taking Black’s a7 Pawn above, Black quickly gets a winning attack:

White to move

In time pressure, anything can happen, and I think it would have been very likely that White would have grabbed the a7 Pawn, after which Black’s position play itself.

Finally: Black’s real refutation!

I said you get extra credit for seeing everything to the point of sacrificing Black’s Queen for an advantage. But you only get full credit if you saw the real refutation of
White’s “trap” earlier in the game! I kicked myself for not having seen it.

Questions
- Was there a point at which Black could have deviated and won the game outright?
- Hint: which of Black’s pieces have we not focused on in the variations covered so far?

Answers
Black could, after White “trapped” the Queen with 30 Ra2, used a different and better deflection of White’s overloaded Queen than 30…Rxd4, which was OK but not best.

We haven’t looked at Black’s Bishop enough. I only saw this upon recovering from the draw and analyzing the game later at home: the winning shot is 30…Bg5!

White to move

If White blocks the threat to the Queen with 31 f4, then Black just lops off the Pawn with 31…Bxf4 and now:

- if White takes the Bishop or otherwise moves the Queen, Black will win either the Rook on a2 or the Rook on c1
- if White takes Black’s Queen, then Black takes White’s Queen on d2 with tempo and will eventually win all three of White’s weak Pawns on dark squares (c3 followed by e5 and b4)

Either way, the endgame is an easy win for Black.
Neither Melih nor I saw this winning resource for Black during the game. We just weren’t looking at that quiet Bishop because it hadn’t participated in anything up till that point.

Conclusion

Chess never ceases to surprise me. Tactical possibilities are everywhere, and in this game, both Melih and I missed various possible continuations, playing moves thinking we knew what had to follow. I hope you enjoyed this story of missed opportunities and incomplete calculations. My thanks to Melih for a challenging and fascinating game, and sharing his thoughts with me afterwards.

Franklin Chen, member of the Pittsburgh Chess Club.

Chess blog: http://ChessImprover.com/author/FranklinC/
A sample of 79 State of Pennsylvania Honor Roll students was selected (such sample appears in this edition of the En Passant). The data has four students from first grade and seven students for each grade above that till grade twelve, totaling 79 Honor Roll USCF ratings. Given that these are Honor Roll students then this study can only be generalized to the population of Honor Roll ratings nationwide. Given the curvilinear relationship between school grade and USCF official ratings, the model turned out a complex Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) case of transformed data. All MLR assumptions are met. The final model can be used to predict a chess players’ official USCF rate given one knows his/her school grade.

The scatter diagram below shows a curvilinear relationship with Pearson r=0.591. Given the curve, we must transform the data in order to apply MLR. Many transformations were done and most failed to produce a Residuals plot without a “wedge or megaphone” pattern (which indicates a violation of the equal variance of the errors assumption). So, eventually the model had to progress to even more complex transformations leading to the final model presented here.

Given the space limitations, we will briefly check the data (school grade and official USCF ratings) to see how ratings behave for different grades. The collection of boxplots by grades show that ratings steadily increase as grade increase but ratings level off 7th grade, that is, the rise in rating is slower, which means it is harder to rise quickly. We can also see that for most grades the top players ratings differ quite significantly (ratings spread out more for top players). Longer whiskers on top of each box plots show that.

It would be interesting to see how ratings behave for all players regardless of grades. The histogram below shows a near perfect Normal Distribution (bell shape) of the ratings. That tells us that most official USCF ratings spin around an average (overall average a little below 1200) with fewer and fewer ratings being much larger or much smaller than that. For those who know the 68-95-99 rule the following values can be used: USCF average for all grades = 1109 and standard deviation = 393 (given the sample is large these statistics are very close to those in the overall population).

For those readers who have some knowledge of statistics here is a direct summary of the 79 official USCF ratings:
From this summary above we can say that half of all USCF rating for kids between school grades 1 and 12 are between 941 and 1350. The large sample size (in Statistics above 30 is considered a large sample) allow us to generalize to the total population by means of the Central Limit Theorem and Calculus Limit theorems (which show that a sample mean approaches the population mean as the sample size gets larger and larger).

THE PREDICTIVE MODEL:
A Weighted Transformation Multiple Linear Regression to predict Official USCF rating based on School Grade.

A lot of simulations and transformation went into finding the most appropriate model. The main issue was finding a model whose Residual Plot (a chart of how the errors remaining in the model behave) complied with a basic requirement: that the errors have equal variance for all values of x (x=school grade). Eventually, the following model was found (with an important note that other, more complex models are possible but this one is effective and simpler to use):

\[
\text{Rating} = 1053.8 + 160.65 \times \text{Grade} - 166943 \times \text{Weighted Rating}
\]

Note that after many trials a new variable, “weighted rating” had to be added in order to completely fix the violation of equal variance of the errors in the residuals. This variable is simply the product of grade and the reciprocal of rating or, more simply, grade divided by rating. So this is a predictor, along with grade, the original predictor. Together, they predict official USCF rating for top players in their grades. The model is relatively simple compared to many other attempted transformations. It does require, however, that a table of weights be used. Such table is below and it shows what value to plug into the two predictors (Grade, Weighted Rating). The first term is called intercept and it has no meaning for overall purposes.

To use the model just type:

1053.8 plus 160.65 times a grade from the table minus 166943 times the Weighted Rating for the grade just used as shown on the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>WeightedRating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.005010998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.005187768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.003555655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.004050737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.004272882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.004550331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.00671772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.005892478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.00667809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.008758806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.00959424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.009269738</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The weighted ratings values shown on the table can be replaced by school grade divided by the Official USCF average rating for each given grade (if the USCF provide such national averages) and the values will be very similar to those on the table above.

The model will respond by giving the expected official USCF rating of top players throughout the USA. Note that the response is NOT the official rating of a specific player. The response is the national average of all players in that given grade. Interpretation is critical in statistics. But overall, we can say that if a chess player is in a given grade we expect his/her rating to be around the given response.

Finally, since all the work was done around the important fact that the model should not have any “wedge or megaphone pattern (or curves) in the residuals, below is the residuals plot for this model. It is important to note that had the raw data been used to produce a model, the model would fail in predicting the rating for higher grades. That model also gave an r-squared of only 34.95%. Our current and improved model gives an r-squared of 89.93%. R-squared, once the model passes all requirements, is an important measure of how well the predictors explain the response. Here, variation in our two predictors explain 89.93 or technically 90% of the variation in ratings.

It is indeed a very useful model. To satisfy curiosity, below is the average USCF rating per grade from the data. Use the model to predict a rating and compare that to this table. The model is quite close!

\[ model \text{ } p\text{-value} < 0.05 \]
\[ residuals \text{ chart: no wedges or curves} \]
\[ r\text{-squared with raw data: } 34.95\% \]
\[ r\text{-squared with transformed data: } 89.93\% \]

\[ maximum \text{ } error \text{ the model makes (95\% of the times) for each found response: } 252.8 \text{ points (this means the actual rating can be above or below the response by 252.8 points. This happens due to the large standard deviation in the ratings). Say a given response is 1300, then the true rating will be between 1047 and 1553.} \]

John Barroso
Professor of Statistics at the University of Pittsburgh and Duquesne University.
*Pittsburgh Chess Club Secretary*
December, 2015.
Maxim Yaskolko gives En Passant an exclusive interview!

Maxim Yaskolko is 12 years old. His rating is 1946. It is impressive by any measures or age or chess. In an exclusive interview to the En Passant Maxim’s reveals his chess trajectory, study habits, and also shares a game with us. Let’s learn from him!

Young Maxim thinks his move!

**EP:** Maxim please tell us how this all started.

**Maxim:** “I started playing chess when I was 5. There is a funny story to how I started playing chess. My older brother was playing at the time and I decided to try and challenge my dad to a game. I ended up losing since I barely knew how to move the pieces. I remember being very sad and messing up the chess board. After that game I was very determined to get better. After I went to a few Jerry Meyers’ sessions at the Pittsburgh Chess Club and learned the basics of chess I started improving very rapidly. By the end of the first year I had reached the rating of 1000. And by the end of the second year I was attending his advanced class. My rating is currently 1946”

**EP:** Did you lose a lot in the beginning?

**Maxim:** “Surprisingly I lost very little after maybe my first 5 games. I had my uncle, dad, but mostly brother training me”.

**EP:** Do you study a lot with chess books?

**Maxim:** “Unlike most people I am not really fond of reading chess books. Due to my young age I found actually playing more fun and helpful than sitting and studying by a book written by a grandmaster rated 1000 points higher than me. When you study your mistakes from games there is a higher chance of that position happening again than it would when you read a book. Don’t get me wrong though, learning from books is necessary, but playing the game itself is equally important”

**EP:** Given your young age, does it feel different to beat older people?

**Maxim:** “Haha! I find beating older people more satisfying than beating people my age. I’m not sure why, but when I play older people I find the games to be much more interesting and entertaining. Therefore I feel better when I defeat them”

**EP:** Besides chess, do you have any other hobby or play something else?

**Maxim:** “Yes, I enjoy playing the piano and playing tennis. I also swim competitively, but I have not achieved as impressive results as I have in chess”.

**EP:** What do you recommend for chess players who want to improve?

**Maxim:** “Everybody learns differently, but there is one thing everybody has to do to get better. Practice. Practice what you learn, your openings, endgames, and everything else that’s connected with chess. Even if you have troubles with time, try playing moderately fast paced games online”.

**EP:** Do you dream about becoming a Chess Master or a Grandmaster?

**Maxim:** “Actually, no. I had these types of dreams a few years ago, when I was in the top 20 in the country for my age. I played and had good games against people my age who are now chess legends. Hope never dies though”.

**EP:** Tell us about your study time.

**Maxim:** “I study about 10 hours a week, half of which are lessons and the other half is self-training and practice. Whenever I get bored, I play a quick blitz
game to excite me and then get back to studying. If I feel like I’m not really progressing at all, I take a break from chess and do something else for a few hours or maybe even a day. If this continues though, I seek advice from my coach”.

**EP:** *In a game where you reach a position and don’t quite know what to do, what is your thinking to take a decision?*

**Maxim:** “Usually, I already have a plan that I know to follow. However if it’s a position and you are looking for a plan, the best way to do this is 7-point scale. Basically you are evaluating the game on 7 scales but I like to add an 8th too.

- Material
- Direct threats
- King safety
- Open files
- Center and space
- Weak and strong squares and pawn structure
- Placement of Pieces
- Time

From the evaluation you can decide on a plan. You can try to improve your score or lower his. A simple example is that when his king is weak, attack his king, or when your pieces are undeveloped, develop your pieces.

**EP:** *Is there a game you would like to share with us?*

**Maxim:** “Yes. Here is game I played in my last tournament where I did quite well, and I am using it because it is fresh in my mind and is a cool game even though there are no novelties or spectacular tactics.

Maxim’s coaches are **Mike Opaska** and **Alexander Shabalov**.

Following is a game just played by Maxim.

**National Chess Congress**
11/28/2015, Round 3
White: Taran Idnani, 1984
Black: Maxim Yaskolko, 1888
Result: 0-1

1.Nf3 d5 2.g3 Nf6 3.Bg2 c6 4.0–0 Bg4 5.Ne5 Bh5 6.d4 e6 7.c4 Nbd7 8.Nxd7 Qxd7 9.cxd5 exd5 10.Nc3 Be7 11.Qb3 0–0 12.Bf4 Rac8 13.Rac1 b6 14.Rfe1 c5?! [A risky move that works in all variations but one. We both missed that after exc5 d4, he has the nasty c6.]

15.Nxd5 Nxd5 16.Bxd5 cxd4 17.Bf3 Bxf3 18.Qxf3 Bf6 19.Qd3 Qa4 [Fritz 11 says that the position is drawn but I think I have the slight initiative.]

20.a3 b5 21.Kf1 [Kf1 stopped Rc4 because after b3 I could take on c1 and then again on e1 but now the king is protecting the rook.]

21...Qa6 [Not only does this reinstate the move Rc4 but also now the queen is ready to jump onto the h1–a8 diagonal.]

22.Rxc8 Rxc8 23.Rc1? Rxc1+ 24.Bxc1 Qc6

[My opponent was eager to trade pieces into a completely drawn endgame and moved quickly after he decided on doing so. Unfortunately, he forgot about the weak diagonal.]

25.Kg1 Qxc1+ 26.Kg2 Qxb2 27.Qe4 Qxa3 28.Qa8+ Qf8

[Here my opponent resigned. This short but interesting game teaches not to move too fast even when you think you calculated everything.]

**EP:** *Can you give our readers a final message?*

**Maxim:** “At the end there is one thing I want to add. It is that chess is an extremely good activity and sport that you should get better at. Chess helps me get through hard times and make me the happy child I am today”. 

|
“Endgame Studies” by
Bob C. Atwell

Column #1 (studies ES1 to ES6)

ES1  WHITE TO PLAY AND WIN (easy)
Composer: A. Troitsky, 1924

ES2  WHITE TO PLAY AND WIN (easy)
Composer: H. Rinck, 1906

ES3  WHITE TO PLAY AND WIN (medium)
Composer: H. Rinck, 1938

ES4  WHITE TO PLAY AND DRAW (medium)
Composer: G. Bogdassarjanz, 1937

ES5  WHITE TO PLAY AND WIN (very difficult)
Composer: D. Joseph, 1921

ES6  WHITE TO PLAY AND WIN (difficult)
Composers: G. Barbier & F. Saavedra, 1925
This is a new chess column to En Passant that will typically present 6 endgame studies each month for solving. The solutions will be given in the following issue of En Passant. In addition, there are plans to schedule future Saturday club sessions as "Problem Discussion Days" where these and other studies, as well as other chess topics of interest, can be examined. This is discussed further below.

Be assured that composed endgames studies are not about the real endgame positions players face in practical games, many of which are impossibly difficult, quite technical, sometimes a bit boring, and require a lifetime of both playing and study to properly understand. Composed endgames are actually BEAUTIFUL CHESS COMBINATIONS that just happen to occur in endgame settings.

There are some truly AMAZING things going on in these wonderful positions! They are well worth the time it takes to understand their solutions, and of significant practical use to any aspiring chess player simply because they are EXCELLENT TESTS OF TACTICAL ABILITY.

In addition, familiarity with studies will gradually increase a player's knowledge of miscellaneous general endgame concepts, and in that way benefit a player's ability in practical endgames that occur over-the-board.

All 6 endgame studies presented above, with the possible exception of ES4, are natural positions that look like they could have occurred in games. This column will try to use mostly natural positions, as they generally create far more interest than some of the bizarre-looking positions that exist in the literature.

First, here is an example endgame study position to give an idea of what endgame studies are about, and the beautiful ideas that can be presented. Try to solve it first, or just play through the solution that immediately follows.

**ES1 WHITE TO PLAY AND WIN**

(easy) Composer: A. Troitsky, 1924

(See ES1 diagram at the start of this column)

**SOLUTION to ES1:**

White is one pawn up in a Rook+Pawn vs Rook position. Positions with this material distribution are often drawn because White is sometimes unable to force the promotion of his pawn. In this particular position, however, White can win, but there is only one way to do it: He can immediately advance his extra pawn with 1 h7! threatening 2 h8=Q winning. Black only has 2 moves that prevent the queening, namely 1...Rd8 and 1...Rh2:

(A) If Black plays 1...Rd8, stopping the White pawn on the 8th rank, White plays 2 Rc6+! forcing 2...Kd1 or 2...Kd2. Now 3 Rd6+! is a double attack that forks Black's king and rook, and diverts Black's rook from the 8th rank. After the forced 3...Rxd6 White plays 4 h8=Q. White now has queen against rook, giving him a winning position.

(Incidentally, if Black played a move like 1...Rd5, which doesn't stop the pawn but DOES threaten 2...Ra5 mate, White of course then avoids 3 h8=Q?? allowing the mate, and instead first plays 2 Rc6+!, driving the Black king off the c-file and killing the mate threat, followed by 3 a8=Q with a winning position.)

(B) If Black plays 1...Rh2 White plays 2 Rf1+! forcing 2...Kc2 or 2...Kd2. Now 3 Rf2+! is a double attack that forks Black's king and rook, and diverts Black's rook from the h-file. After the forced 3...Rxf2 White plays 4 h8=Q. White now again has queen against rook, giving him a winning position.
attractive, and makes this a GREAT endgame study.

Note that the solution is definitely UNIQUE; the moves must be played in the right order. If White had tried 1 Rc6+? Kd2 2 h7 Black would not play the losing defense 2...Rd8? allowing the winning 3 Rd6+! again, but instead 2...Rh2! when White will not be able to win. If White had tried 1 Rf1+? Kc2 2 h7 Black would not play the losing defense 2...Rh2? allowing the winning 3 Rf2+! again, but instead 3...Rd8! when White will not be able to win.

Above are 5 more excellent chess studies (ES2 to ES6) for the reader to solve. In each case you need to figure out how White can force a win or draw from the initial position. There is one UNIQUE solution to each one, so if you think you've found more than one way to accomplish the task, you haven't seen everything yet.

The solutions to these studies will be given in the next issue of En Passant. Also, the website will announce the schedule of a future Pittsburgh Chess Club Saturday analysis session where these and other great chess problems will be discussed.

All of these studies illustrate amazing chess combinations. The first 3 (ES2 to ES4) are quite solvable; the last 2 (ES5 and ES6) considerably tougher. The difficulty rankings are my subjective evaluations, but give an idea of how I think the studies compare against one another. Solving any of these will require some effort.

**ES2** WHITE TO PLAY AND WIN
(easy), Composer: H. Rinck, 1906
(See ES2 diagram at the start of this column)
It looks like a wide open chessboard, but the Black queen can be "hunted down and executed" by the White rook and bishop. The composer of this problem, Henri Rinck, created hundreds of outstanding chess studies, but I think this very simple one is among his absolute best.

**ES3** WHITE TO PLAY AND WIN
(medium), Composer: H. Rinck, 1938
(See ES3 diagram at the start of this column)
This study is based on a rather surprising tactical motif that can easily be overlooked in chess games.

**ES4** WHITE TO PLAY AND DRAW
(medium), Composer: G. Bogdassarjanz, 1937
(See ES4 diagram at the start of this column)
White is down a rook AND bishop, and if he promotes his only trump, the pawn on h7, Black can win the new queen at once with the skewer 1...Rh2+ . How can White force a draw? The final position of this endgame study is one of the most amazing in chess.

**ES5** WHITE TO PLAY AND WIN
(very difficult), Composer: D. Joseph, 1921
(See ES5 diagram at the start of this column)
Don't expect to solve this one, although you should at least be able to reach the point where the pawn promotions have occurred. White's queen maneuvers that force the win after that are rather subtle.

**ES6** WHITE TO PLAY AND WIN
(difficult), Composers: G. Barbier and F. Saavedra 1925
(See ES6 diagram at the start of this column)
I had to throw this one in even though "everyone in the world" has probably seen it. This simple position conceals some UNBELIEVABLE tactical content!

It's one of the most magnificent studies ever composed (it belongs in my own personal "top 5", for certain), and actually resulted from a "collaboration" between the original composer Barbier (who erroneously thought he was presenting a DRAW study**) and the Spanish priest Saavedra (who examined Barbier's published DRAW study, realized it WASN'T a draw, and made a famous correction that turned it into an excellent WIN study).
I think that the few people who would disagree with me about how truly great a study this is would at least concede that it is the most beautiful position you can create on a chessboard with only FOUR pieces!

If you have never seen ES6 before, and are able to solve it from the diagram, you are a very strong chess player, with great imagination.

** Unfortunately, Fritz wasn't around in the year 1925 to tell Mr. Barbier about his mistake; fortunately, a Spanish priest WAS available...

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**Bob. C. Atwell**  
Pittsburgh Chess Club Board Member  

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**SAVE THE DATE!**

**SHABALOV** will be at the Pittsburgh Chess Club in *February, 2016!*

Check out announcements on the Club’s webpage  
www.pittsburghcc.org

Facebook: PittsburghChessClub  
Tweeter: #pghchess

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**CHESS BOOKS, SETS, BOARDS, CLOCKS AT COST VALUE**

Stop by for books, clocks, boards, chess sets, notation pads, and chess equipment in general. We give them at **cost value**!
A 1926 CHESS PROBLEM WITHOUT A SOLUTION!
Can you find it?

In 2012 I was in São Paulo, Brazil when I found the chess problem below. The little restaurant where I ordered lunch had the problem printed on their paper plate mat. I thought that was a unique plate mat and saved it but I never really took the time to find the solution. If you find it please email me at profjohnbarroso@gmail.com for a mention in the next issue of the En Passant. The problem, named “Christmas Tree” was published on the famous Diário Popular newspaper, by some “Dr. Mauricio Levy” on October 23rd, 1926. It says “white to move and mate in two”.

![Chess Problem Image]
# Western Pennsylvania Scholastic Chess Honor Roll

## Top Grade 12
1. Mo, Jack 2122 North Allegheny Sr High School  
2. Yaskolko, Alexander S 1783 Science And Technology Academy  
3. Wecht, Gabe 1358 Shady Side Academy Senior School  
4. Crawford, Daniel 1290 Central Catholic High School  
5. Kuntz, Austin 1106 Quigley Catholic High School  
6. Goldstein, Noah 1100 Shady Side Academy Senior School  
7. Krishnan, Dipak 952 Shady Side Academy Senior School

## Top Grade 11
1. Gottlieb, Joshua 1529 Home High School  
2. Buuch, Molor 1346 Shady Side Academy Senior School  
3. Shalaby, Yusuf 1189 Home High School  
4. Rana, Neil A 1133 Sewickley Upper School  
5. Coplan, Kyle 1114 Bethel Park Sr High School  
6. Small, Hunter 974 Seton La Sales Sr High School  
7. Bahl, Tarush 943 Bethel Park Sr High School

## Top Grade 10
1. Friedlander, Henry 1427 Shady Side Academy Senior School  
2. Stein, Devon 1192 Fox Chapel Area High School  
5. Robinson, Matt 1104 Moon Area Sr High School  
6. Patil, Rohan M 1042 Fox Chapel Area High School  
7. Alagar, Rajan 1020 Home High School

## Top Grade 9
1. Motuni, Sourish 1874 North Allegheny Intermediate School  
2. Wang, William 1803 North Allegheny Intermediate School  
3. Cano, Steven R 1383 Fox Chapel Area High School  
5. Pedapati, Vinay C 1253 South Fayette High School  
6. Pan, Steven 1126 North Allegheny Intermediate School  
7. Linsuan, Kiran 1045 Home High School

## Top Grade 8
1. Senthil, Swathi 1631 South Fayette Middle School  
2. Matros, Leonid 1554 Jefferson Middle School  
3. Zipfel, Jason 1397 Hopewell Area Junior High School  
4. Chengshi, Christopher 1367 Hampton Township Middle School  
5. Tustin, Jasmine 1349 Weir Middle School  
6. Bisno, Sam 1190 Falk School  
7. Dantu, Pranav 1149 South Fayette Middle School

## Top Grade 7
1. Yaskolko, Macim 1900 Starrett Classical Academy  
2. Gao, Allen 1501 Falk School  
3. Cullen, Grant 1173 Sacred Heart School  
4. Reed, Alexander B 949 Hopewell Area Junior High School  
5. Cranor, Maya 871 Science And Technology Academy  
6. Rana, Navin N 816 Sewickley Upper School  
7. Stein, Dylan 803 Dorseyville Middle School

## Top Grade 6
1. Narkeeran, Madhavan 1641 South Fayette Middle School  
2. Wang, Eric J 1584 Ingomar Middle School  
3. Malsetty, Vasshita 1397 Holiday Park Elementary School  
4. Komandur, Abhinav 1261 Franklin Regional Middle School  
5. Breigel, Jason 1245 Mc Murray Elementary School  
6. Queen, Zachary 1164 Eden Christian Academy  

## Top Grade 5
1. Cao, Timothy X 1682 Newlnsburg Elementary School  
2. Sasso, Irvy D 1486 Community Day School  
3. Devine, Ansh 1281 Holiday Park Elementary School  
4. Matros, Constantin 1122 Jefferson Elementary School  
5. Ml, Kathrym 1016 Mc Knight Elementary School  
7. Pers, Alexander 953 Shady Side Academy Junior School

## Top Grade 4
1. Ferreira, Michael L 1129 Lincoln Elementary School  
2. Wang, Yiding 1129 Franklin Elementary School  
3. Jones, Owen Kyle 1060 Roosevelt Elementary School  
4. Scouramurthi, Santosh 1053 Environmental Charter School  
5. Elayed, Kamal Sami 942 Winchester Thurston North School  
6. Monaco, Edward IV 900 Winchester Thurston School  
7. Pius, Jebish 799 Pink Elementary School

## Top Grade 3
1. Park, Evan S 1227 Hosack Elementary School  
2. Pius, Kebish 951 Center Elementary School  
3. Lee, Jeremy 880 Fairview Elementary School  
4. Sadam, Prince 862 University Park Elementary School  
5. Ades, Ori 749 Community Day School  
6. Elayed, Mohamed Sami 732 Winchester Thurston North School  
7. Kim, Alex 692 Fairview Elementary School

## Top Grade 2
1. Yu, Leonardo 999 Mc Knight Elementary School  
2. Fitzgerald, Williem 604 Ingomar Elementary School  
3. Yu, Andy P 489 Wyland Elementary School  
4. Konade, Arya 419 Franklin Elementary School  
5. Xiang, Evan 413 Wyland Elementary School  
6. Luther, Christopher 278 Edgewood Elementary School  
7. David, Luke 198 Montessori Children Center

## Top Grade 1 & Under
1. Narkeeran, Meena 522 South Fayette Elementary School  
2. Muralidharan, Kaarlic 162 Mc Knight Elementary School  
3. Chose, Max 144 Kerr Elementary School  
4. No others in Grade 1 & Under with established ratings (26 or more games)

Ratings on 12/1/15 of players active locally with established ratings. Website: www.youthchess.net
SAVE THE DATE!

SIMULTANEOUS EXHIBITION
Pittsburgh Chess Club

With Melih Özbek
Pittsburgh Chess Club
Co-Champion 2015

Date: January 30th, Saturday
Time: 6:00pm to 8:00pm
Suggested donation: $5
Number of boards: 18
First come, first serve basis

Guaranteed seating with RSVP only: profjohnbarroso@gmail.com
Pay: on date, on site. If late seat will be given to others.
The Club will serve pizza at $1 per slice.
Event will be photographed and filmed and posted on social media.

WHY BECOME A MEMBER OF THE PITTSBURGH CHESS CLUB?

A lot of people think that they are members of the Pittsburgh Chess Club. But to be a member one has to complete a form and pay a yearly contribution.

The contributions that our members pay help the Club pay rent and general expenses. When someone becomes a member that person is actually not only helping the Pittsburgh Chess Club: the person is helping chess in Pittsburgh.

So becoming a member of the club is also an act of love and support for chess. But besides that, we are a Club and a nice physical space, where members can get together twice a week to play and discuss chess, to make friends and learn from others or to discuss games and moves or to share knowledge about chess.

We allow members to borrow books from our very large chess library; we have coffee, snacks, and drinks while members are on the site. Even those who do not live in Pittsburgh any longer can still be members of the Club to support it, or just subscribe to a yearly Subscription to our Newsletter, the acclaimed En Passant. We are committed to producing four of such Newsletters a year.

BECOME A MEMBER OF The Pittsburgh Chess Club TODAY!
Pull the membership form off this issue and mail it to us along with a check or money order.

You may subscribe to the En Passant Newsletter ONLY. You will receive four newsletters a year for only $10.

We appreciate your business!

SAVE THE DATE!

SHABALOV will be at the Pittsburgh Chess Club in February, 2016!
Check out announcements on the Club’s webpage
www.pittsburghcc.org
Facebook: PittsburghChessClub
Tweeter: #pghchess
Pittsburgh Chess Club
5604 Solway St. Suite 209
Pittsburgh, PA 15217-1270
(412) 421-1881
www.pittsburghchessclub.org
facebook: pittsburghchessclub
twitter: #pghchess
questions about membership? email
profjohnbarroso@gmail.com

Use this form to join the Pittsburgh Chess Club or renew your membership.

The Club holds some of the nation’s longest-running tournaments and has one of the largest chess libraries in the United States. Club members have free access to the library, and receive discounts at PCC tournaments. Our newsletter, *En Passant*, regularly wins awards from *Chess Journalists of America*. The Club has even helped to organize national championship tournaments, going back as far as the 1946 U.S. Open, but also as recently as the 2004 National Elementary. Visit our website at:
http://www.pittsburghchess.org

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership Type</th>
<th>Dues (1 year)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>$65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Junior (under age 18)</td>
<td>$25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affiliate*</td>
<td>$45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior (over age 65)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Associate**</td>
<td>$35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Discount***</td>
<td>½ off all after first adult</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a 20% discount for members living in the counties adjoining Allegheny, and a 50% discount for members living beyond those countries.
*Current membership in an Affiliate club required.
-Please, only one discount.

- If the contact information below hasn’t changed, just check box.

Name:

Today’s date:_________ Birth date:_________ Gender: (M/F):_________

Address:

City:_____________ State:____ Zip:____ County:_________

Phone:_____________ E-mail:

Membership type (circle one): Regular / Junior / Senior / Affiliate / Associate / Family

Dues: __________ Tax-deductible donation: __________ Total: __________

☐ Yearly Subscription to the *En Passant* only ($10 a year).

Check the box above to subscribe to the *En Passant* Newsletter ONLY.

Make check or money order for Membership or for the *En Passant* subscription payable to the Pittsburgh Chess Club.
We are on Smile.Amazon
SELECT US

1. Go to Smile.Amazon.com
2. Sign into your account
3. Select the Pittsburgh Chess Club
   - **TYPE Pittsburgh Chess Club at the bar at the bottom.**
     If you click the big “select” button right away you may select the first organization on the list instead of the PCC. When you see a box that says “Pittsburgh Chess Club”, only then SELECT it.

You select your organization once. Every time you shop, Amazon will give us half percent of your purchase total.
There is no cost of any kind to you!

**NOTE:** AFTER you have selected us and log into Amazon.com you must see the Pittsburgh Chess Club name where the arrow in the picture below is showing.
SIMULTANEOUS EXHIBITION
at the Pittsburgh Chess Club

Date: January 30th, Saturday
Time: 6:00pm to 8:00pm
Suggested donation: $5
Number of boards: 18
First come, first serve basis
Guaranteed seating with RSVP only:
profljohnbarroso@gmail.com
Pay: on date, on site.
If late, seat will be given to others.
The Club will serve pizza at $1 per slice.
SIMUL GIVER.

Mehit Ozbek, Co-Champion of the Pittsburgh Chess Club, 2013. USCF 2129
Born in Istanbul, Turkey in 1985, Mehit has been playing chess since he was 5. He's pursuing a PhD in physics at Carnegie Mellon University. He's attended many tournaments at the Pittsburgh Chess Club since he came to the US in 2010, and he won three tournaments this year. Mehit is in the Board of Directors of the Pittsburgh Chess Club.
Event will be filmed and photographed and posted on Facebook, Tweeter, Youtube, and Club's page.

UPCOMING TOURNAMENTS
12th William J. Browne Memorial
January 23rd, 2016, Saturday
Quads 3RR, G/60 d5.
EF: $12 by 1/19, $17 later,
$2 discount to PCC Members.
Prizes: $30 to first each quad. Reg.: 10 - 10:45am,
Rds. 11AM - 1:30 PM - 4PM.
No 1/2-point byes.
At the Pittsburgh Chess Club

17th Tri-State Jr. Open
January 23rd, 2016, Saturday
Galleria Mall of Mt. Lebanon
Open to all K to 12
www.youthchess.net

Jerry Meyer's classes for kids
Starting January 3rd, 2016
Sundays at the
Pittsburgh Chess Club
Classes for Adults under 1700
Monday night classes
www.youthchess.net

SHABALOV
At the PCC in February. Date/time to be posted on the Club's page, Facebook, and Tweeter.