

The Gambit

The Nebraska State Chess Archives

Nebraska State Chess Association

Volume 3: July 1-September 30, 2026

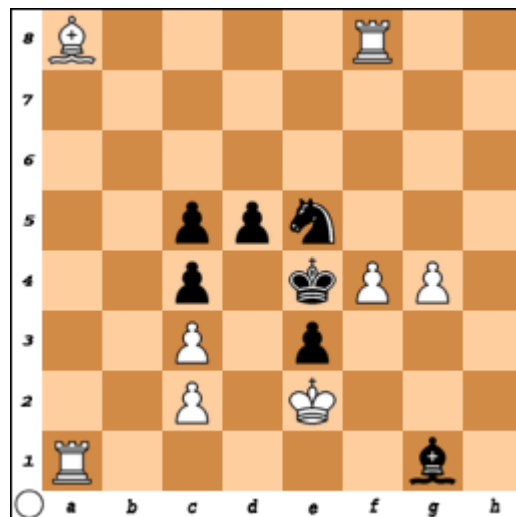
Third Quarter

Many chess problems having variations show certain ideas throughout the solution. Normally the main idea has to be repeated in each thematic variation.

Example:

Rauf Aliovsadzade

(first publication)



Mate in Three

After **1.Rd1!** White threatens 2.Bxd5#.

And three thematic variations follow.

1...Nf7 2.Rxf7 and 3.Bxd5#,

1...Nc6 2.Bxc6 and 3.Bxd5#,

1...Nd3 2.Rxd3 (3.Bxd5#), if 2...cxd3+ 3.cxd3#.

The idea here is: A Black piece is captured on three different squares.

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Gambit Editor- Bruce Draney. The Gambit serves as the official publication of the Nebraska State Chess Association



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Nebraska Chess Information Page

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Omaha Chess Community

President-Nick Lacroix
Omaha, NE

Nebraska State Chess Association

President-Steven Cusumano, Omaha VP-Michael Mills, Lincoln VP-John Linscott, Outstate VP-Vince Jodoin, Secretary-JJ Lang, Treasurer-Jenny Tricker

Nebraska Chess Hall of Fame 14002 Frederick CIR Omaha NE 68138

President-Bruce Draney (gambiteer49@yahoo.com) 2025-2026 HOF Selection Committee:
Bruce Draney, Rod Malpert, Loren Schmidt.

Central Nebraska Chess Club-President Eric Ring, Kearney, Nebraska

ACTIVE NEBRASKA CHESS CLUBS

OMAHA:

Spence Chess Club-Meets on Wednesday night from 7-10 for USCF rated play. West Hills Church basement 3015 S 82nd AVE Omaha, NE-John Hartmann

Anderson Chess Club at Camelot-Meets on Friday afternoon 12-4 PM for unrated casual play
Location: Camelot Community Center 9270 Cady AVE Omaha, NE-John Bagley

Millard Library Chess Club-Meets on Sunday afternoon 2:30-4:30 for unrated and occasional rated play. Location: Millard Public Library 13214 Westwood LN Omaha, NE. Bruce Draney (402) 312-6335 or Scott Look (402) 889-1779

Increase the Piece Chess Club-Meets on Monday night 4-7:30 PM for casual play
Location: Washington Library 29th & Ames AVE, Omaha, NE Jerome Helm

International Café-2416 Farnam ST Omaha, NE 68131 Thursday and Saturday 4-8 PM
Richard Hudrin

Northside Chess Club-Salvation Army 2424 Pratt Street, Omaha NE, Wednesday 1-3, Free Lunch 12-1. Richard Gardner Jr.

LINCOLN SCC Chess Club-Meets on Wednesday nights at SE Community. College 89th & O ST, Lincoln, NE for casual and occasional rated play. Leo Iacono

Capital City Chess Club-Meets on Thursday 6-9 PM at The Post 2001 N ST in Lincoln, NE, for casual and occasional rated play. Nicholas Burroughs or Tim Coleman.

Cigarz Chess Club-Meets on Monday Nights at Cigarz Lounge, STE 104 800 Q, Lincoln NE 402-904-3460, for casual play. Stacy Williams

UNL Chess Club-Meets on Monday Nights during the school year in the Brace Laboratory Building at 510 Stadium Drive in Lincoln, NE, from 6-8 PM for casual play. Julia Haller is President.

OUTSTATE:

Beatrice Chess Club-Meets on Wednesday 6-8 PM at Beatrice Public Library 100 N 16th ST, Beatrice, NE 68310, for casual play. Dylan Dell-Haro

Nebraska City Chess Club-Meets on Thursday 4:30-6:30 PM at Morton James Public Library, 923 1st Corso, Nebraska City, NE 68410, Kyle Madison 712-520-0859

Kearney Nebraska Chess Club-Central Nebraska Chess Club-Meets every other Saturday 3-4:30 PM at Kearney Public Library, 2020 1st AVE, Kearney, NE 68847 for casual and occasional rated play Eric Ring 308-240-1793 or Alex Maiwaldt 308-293-9116

Davenport Chess Club-Davenport Public Library 109 N Maple AVE, Davenport, NE 68335 Jack Roegner 765-407-0895

Nebraska Chess Related Websites:

NSCA Website-www.nebraskachess.com, Leo Iacono Webmaster

Facebook Chess Related Groups:

Nebraska Chess Community group-Vince Jodoin,

Nebraska Chess History group-Bruce Draney

Central Nebraska Chess Club Group-Eric Ring,

UNO Chess Group

Lincoln Chess Foundation & Nebraska Chess Hall of Fame Group-Bruce Draney

National Online Chess Playing Sites

Chess.com

Lichess.com

Editor's Notes and Acknowledgements

Welcome to this my 17th issue of this publication, now in its historic 64th year of continuous publication. As always, I would like to acknowledge or thank the following people who make my job easier or contribute in other ways to the betterment of Nebraska chess.

Rauf Aliofsadzade-Rauf as always contributes another one of his outstanding chess puzzles to adorn this quarter's front cover. He always responds within a day when I request a new puzzle.

Dmitriy Khots-Dmitriy has made Boys Town a huge partner and contributor to Nebraska scholastic chess, not only working with me to arrange for use of the Boys Town National Headquarters building for chess events, but going above and beyond to accommodate our chess needs. He's always ready and willing to work with me to support scholastic chess.

GM Viktor Matviishen-Viktor spent an entire week here in Omaha working with our young people at the Lincoln Chess Foundation/Boys Town summer chess camp. He chatted with our kids, played simuls against them and signed autographs. It was a pleasure to meet him and get to know him.

Nick Lacroix-Nick not only directed this year's Cornhusker State Games; he also taught a group of older kids at the aforementioned chess camp. Nick is a class act all around and is quickly settling in as the new President of the Omaha Chess Community.

Rod Malpert-Rod once again spent the weekend in Lincoln to support the Cornhusker State Games by socializing and going over games for any players who requested his input. Rod has been instrumental in supporting Nebraska chess both by playing in our events and also financing important incentive programs like the CCC and the UNL Participation Fund. He also doubled the prize fund for the NSCA Action Championship on September 12th.

Gabe Hoffman-Despite a busy schedule that involves going to school, and working, Gabe continues to direct, play, and contribute articles to this publication. Check out his latest contribution in this issue.

Will Osborne-Congratulations to Will for not only qualifying for the Closed but doing so with an amazing 5-0 perfect performance. Will is now back to the 1900s as a result of this performance.

Scott Look and Tom O'Connor-Along with Nick Lacroix and GM Viktor Matviishen these two gentlemen instructed all week at the Lincoln Chess Foundation/Boys Town Summer Chess Camp. Their help and expertise at working with our young people was greatly appreciated.

Bob Woodworth-Bob who is now in his 31st year as our Nebraska State Historical Archivist also has contributed chess problems and articles to the publication for the last several issues.

Latest CCC (Cornhusker Chess Circuit) and POY (Player of the Year) Standings as of 9/30/2026

These standings have been updated to include the Cornhusker State Games and the Crane City Open in Kearney.

Last Name	First Name	Omaha City	Midwest	wilkins	CSG	Crane City	Rounds	Points	Tot Pts
A or Above									
Jessop	Thomas	4+3=7	5+3.5=8.5	4+3=7	5+4=9	4+3.5=7.5	22	17	39
Cusumano	Steven	4+2=6	5+3.5=8.5	4+3=7	5+3=8	4+3.5=7.5	22	15	37
Lacroix	Nick	4+3=7	4+4.5=8.5	4+3.5=7.5	3+3=6	0	15	14	29
Class B									
Koppinger	Matt	4+3=7	5+2=7	4+2=6	5+3=8	4+2=6	22	12	34
Look	Scott	X	5+2.5=7.5	4+3=7	4+3=7	4+2=6	17	10.5	27.5
Kisicki	Chris	4+3=7	1+0=1.0	4+2.5=6.5	4+3=7	0	13	8.5	21.5
Class C									
Schiff	Philip	4+2.5=6.5	5+2.5=7.5	2+0=2.0	4+3.5=7.5	4+2.5=6.5	19	11	30
Reigenborn	Jonathan	4+2=6	5+3=8	4+3=7	4+3=7	0	17	11	28
Kantem	Samanvi	4+2=6	5+1.5=6.5	4+2.5=6.5	4+2.5=6.5	0	17	8.5	25.5
Class D/E or Below									
Leholm	Matthew	X	5+3=8	4+2.5=6.5	5+3=8	0	14	8.5	22.5
Mora	Daryan	4+2=6.5	5+3=8	4+3=7		0	13	8.5	21.5
Coleman	Tim	4+.5=4.5	4+1=5.0	X	5+2=7	0	13	3.5	16.5
Pallepati	Adrith	4+1=5.0	5+1.5=6.5	4+1=5.0	X	0	13	3.5	16.5
Central Neb.									
Jessop	Thomas					4+3.5	22	17	39
Jessop	Edward					0	5	1	6
Ring	Eric					4+2=6.0	4	2	6
Srs. 50+									
Look	Scott	X	5+2.5=7.5	4+3=7	4+3=7	4+2=6	17	10.5	27.5
Kisicki	Chris	4+3=7	1+0=1	4+2.5=6.5	4+3=7		13	8.5	21.5

The CCC is a pilot program designed to encourage participation by all players in Nebraska events. It is sponsored by the Lincoln Chess Foundation and the program will reward players in 6 sections with two \$150.00 prizes in each section. One prize is simply for playing the most rounds during the year in CCC events. The other prize is a combined rounds + points score. Half point byes do not count in the standings but full point byes and forfeit wins do count since the player showed up to play but didn't have an opponent. There are 3 more CCC events in the 4th quarter, including the Lincoln City Championship, the Great Plains Open and the Hall of Fame Memorial.

The Nebraska POY (Player of the Year) program, which is run by the NSCA (Nebraska State Chess Association), was begun in the mid-1980s to reward players for playing in Nebraska events, but over the last 40 years its purpose and goals have changed multiple times. In the late 1980s, the NSCA decided to award at first one and later two at large slots in the State Closed championship to top POY scorers so that strong players who couldn't play in the Midwest Open could still have the opportunity to get into the Closed.

By the mid 1990's directors in central and western Nebraska were running many tournaments and by making their events POY events they increased their attendance since strong players would not only support these out state events, they would also increase their chances of qualifying for the Closed. By 1989, the methods for selecting Closed participants had also changed multiple times as emphasis on just the Midwest Open waned in popularity. With the addition of the Cornhusker State Games in 1986, it was decided to give one slot to the defending champion, one slot to the Midwest Open champion, two slots to the Cornhusker State Game winners and only one slot to the POY winner. For several years an attempt was made to create a Last Chance Qualifier to award the 6th and final slot. The intention was to hold this event in central Nebraska, but this plan kind of fell through and by 1993, they abolished this qualifier and let in the top 2 POY scores instead.

In 1993, I started a major two-day tournament here in Omaha called the Great Plains Open and after I took over as NSCA President the membership voted to reduce Cornhusker State Games qualifiers to only one and give the other slot to the Great Plains Open winner which was originally held in late April or early May. At some point the NSCA decided to move the GPO to the fall and hold it in Lincoln and move the Midwest Open which had traditionally been a fall event in September or October to the spring.

A few years ago, current NSCA leadership became concerned that relatively weak players were earning both POY slots which diminished the strength and prestige of the event. In response they made significant changes to the entire POY system. Instead of just rewarding weak players for playing in all the POY events they instituted a plus score system that ignored just accumulating points by playing, and instead only awarded points for a plus score (wins-losses). While this definitely improved the quality of the Closed, it also made participation by lower rated players in POY events more or less irrelevant. However, it should be noted that both Wayne Pressnall of North Platte and Richard Olson of Clarks either retired or died and so from 2015 on there were really no longer any POY events even being held in central or western Nebraska and all POY events were held in either Omaha or Lincoln.

The current POY system is more or less totally focused on filling two slots in the State Closed with the strongest and most active players and a couple years ago the NSCA established a B closed that was filled entirely with the next 6 players in the POY standings. The Lincoln Chess Foundation established the aforementioned CCC program to see if this would encourage those lower rated players who found no real reason to care about the POY since they would very rarely earn any positive scores, to play in POY/CCC events.

Current POY Standings as of September 30th, 2026

Place	Name	Total Points /4 events
1 st	Sidd Parthasarathy	11
2 nd	Nick Lacroix	10
3 rd	Thomas Jessop	10
4 th	Steven Cusumano	8
5 th	Tony Dutiel	5
6 th	Will Osborne	5*CSG Winner
7 th	Dominic Zeisler	4
8 th	Greg Revesz	4*MWO Winner
9 th	Daryan Mora	4
10 th	Chris Kisicki	4
11 th	Jonathan Reigenborn	4
12 th	Joe Knapp	4
13 th	Philip Schiff	4

*POY scores are based on a player's top 4 scores in the POY events held during the year. A player's score is based on wins minus losses with draws not counting. So, a score of 3-2 in a 5 round event earns 1 POY point. In a 4 round event if a person scores 3.5-.5, the draws don't count and the player simply earns 3 points in that event. The top two finishers by year's end will receive the last 2 at large bids to the State Closed unless they have already qualified by winning the Midwest Open, Cornhusker State Games, or Great Plains Open. The next 6 qualifiers who don't make it into the A Closed, are eligible for the B Closed. Note that right now, Nick Lacroix, Sidd Parthasarathy, Thomas Jessop, or Steven Cusumano would qualify for the A Closed and there is a huge 7-way tie for the 4th, 5th and 6th spot for the B Closed. It's also very possible that one of these people will win the last qualifier which is the Great Plains Open in November, although the NSCA recently revised the rules so that a person must at least finish as the top Nebraskan and not back in because the real winner has already qualified.

Smaller Chess Events Around the State in July

Wednesday July 1st-The Spence Club held another action chess tournament. It drew 6 players and was won by Gabe Hoffman with a perfect 4-0 score. Chris Kisicki finished 2nd with 3.5-.5.

Sunday July 5th-The Millard Library Chess Club held an FRO Action Quad which was totally misnamed as the FRO Firecracker Team Blitz, since it was neither a team event due to only 4 players showing up, nor was it even a blitz event since the time control was a gimmicky play on the July 4th holiday of G/7;d4 which exceeded the 10-minute limit for it to be blitz. Winner was Scott Look.

Wednesday July 8th-The Spence Club held a rated 3 round quick event which drew 14 players and was divided into a top quad and a lower section with the other 6 who just played a 3 round Swiss. Nick Lacroix won the quad with 2.5-.5. Aiden Johnson won the lower section with 3-0.

Saturday July 11th-The Bellevue Library hosted another rated chess event this time it was a series of quads that drew a nice crowd of 26 players. Quad winners were Daryan Mora in quad 1, Brady Thomas and Rudhra Pittala in quad 2, Ruthvik Kandukuri in quad 3, Atul Grandhi, Sachin Rai, and Teertha Pittala in quad 4, Tanish Gaddam in quad 5, and Edward Rhodes in quad 6. The event was organized by Jerry Slominski and directed by Gabe Hoffman.

Saturday-Sunday-July 18th-19th-The 40th anniversary of the Cornhusker State Games-Full results and games can be found on page 8.

Monday-Friday-July 27th-31st-The Lincoln Chess Foundation and Boys Town hosted a summer chess camp at the Boys Town National Headquarters here in the metro area. A full report on the event can be found on page 14 in this issue.

Cornhusker State Games Celebrates 40th Anniversary in Lincoln on July 18th-19th

#	Name	Rating	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	Tot
1	Will Osborne	1856	W19	W4	W9	W8	W5	5.0
2	Thomas Jessop	1842	W21	W24	L8	W23	W9	4.0
3	Nayak	2141	D10	W37	D20	W16	W6	4.0
4	Ajay Pasupuleti	1614	WF	L1	W35	W15	W12	4.0
5	Joe Knapp	1887	W23	W14	1/2	W22	L1	3.5
6	Scott Look	1628	W25	W11	1/2	W10	L3	3.5
7	Neil Reeves	1800	W31	L9	D21	W19	W22	3.5
8	Philip Schiff	1660	WF	W27	W2	L1	1/2	3.5
9	Jonathan Reigenborn	1556	W30	W7	L1	W20	L2	3.0
10	Matthew Leholm	1502	D3	W17	W18	L6	D20	3.0
11	Steven Cusumano	1890	W17	L6	D19	W26	D13	3.0
12	Joseph Riegsecker	1541	W38	W13	D22	1/2	L4	3.0
13	Chriss Kisicki	1701	W26	L12	1/2	W21	D11	3.0
14	Matthew Koppinger	1654	W32	L5	L26	W31	W29	3.0
15	Samanvi Kantem	1550	W28	D20	1/2	L4	W27	3.0
16	Jeffery Solheim	1585	W34	D18	1/2	L3	W26	3.0
17	Gabe Hoffman	1497	L11	L10	WF38	W30	W28	3.0
18	Joseph Meduna	1702	WF	D16	L10	W24	1/2	3.0
19	Rui Tao	1416	L1	W25	D11	L7	W33	2.5
20	Leo Iacono	1697	W29	D15	D3	L9	D10	2.5
21	Jerome Tichacek	1400	L2	W33	D7	L13	W34	2.5
22	Michael Schaal	1670	W35	W36	D12	L5	L7	2.5
23	Jafari	1418	L5	W32	W27	L2	1/2	2.5
24	Mansi Adduri	1618	W33	L2	1/2	L18	W31	2.5
25	Anika Vanaparti	1067	L6	L19	1/2	W32	W35	2.5
26	Curtis Holsinger	1382	L13	W30	W14	L11	L16	2.0
27	Washburn	UNR	W37	L8	L23	W35	L15	2.0
28	Servant	811	L15	D29	W36	1/2	L17	2.0
29	Matt Savage	1356	L20	D28	1/2	W36	L14	2.0
30	Tim Coleman	921	L9	L26	Bye	L17	W36	2.0
31	Tom Lombard	1400	L7	W34	1/2	L14	L24	1.5
32	Zach Bitterman	1168	L14	L23	1/2	L25	W37	1.5
33	Adam Hansen	1024	L24	L21	1/2	W37	L19	1.5
34	Aryana Vanaparti	955	L16	L31	1/2	Bye	L21	1.5
35	Scott Burroughs	1258	L22	WF38	L4	L27	L25	1.0
36	Stewart	792	Bye	L22	L28	L29	L30	1.0
37	Bruce Smith	1531	L27	L3	1/2	L33	L32	0.5
38	Jefferson	UNR	L12	LF35	LF17	U---	U---	0.0

Cornhusker State Games Reserve 7/18/2026

#	Name	Rating	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	Total
1	Harvey	1700	W5	W4	D3	W2	W6	4.5
2	Verma	1166	W11	W6	D7	L1	W4	3.5
3	Nelson	UNR	W9	W8	D1	L4	W7	3.5
4	Roberts	911	W7	L1	W10	W3	L2	3.0
5	Ohles	1420	L1	L7	Bye	W8	W10	3.0
6	Walker	UNR	W12	L2	W8	D7	L1	2.5
7	Clarke	1503	L4	W5	D2	D6	L3	2.0
8	Pitzl	1280	W10	L3	L6	L5	W9	2.0
9	Coulter	1423	L3	W10	1/2	1/2	L8	2.0
10	Madison	UNR	L8	L9	L4	Bye	L5	1.0
11	Sherwin	UNR	L2	LF12	U--	U--	U---	0.0
12	Debebe	1482	L6	LF11	U---	U--	U--	0.0

Cornhusker State Games Scholastic 7/18/2026

#	Name	Rating	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	Total
1	Shaik	883	W8	W10	W5	W2	W4	5.0
2	Bokka	850	W17	W15	W4	L1	W6	4.0
3	Zimmer	UNR	L10	W17	D15	W16	W11	3.5
4	Pittala	988	W12	W11	L2	W5	L1	3.0
5	T Pittala	526	W7	W6	L1	L4	W13	3.0
6	Kiran	690	WF20	L5	W9	W7	L2	3.0
7	Formanes	UNR	L5	W8	W13	L6	W14	3.0
8	Gaddam	353	L1	L7	W18	W17	W16	3.0
9	Pallepati	1142	W13	D16	L6	D11	W10	3.0
10	Kumar	578	W3	L1	D12	W15	L9	2.5
11	Mahesh	637	W14	L4	W16	D9	L3	2.5
12	Verma	356	L4	W14	D10	L13	W15	2.5
13	Cheedella	443	L9	W19	L7	W12	L5	2.0
14	Bock	UNR	L11	L12	W19	W18	L7	2.0
15	Lin	548	W18	L2	D3	L10	L12	1.5
16	VCheedella	638	W19	D9	L11	L3	L8	1.5
17	Kantem	135	L2	L3	Bye	L8	1/2	1.5
18	McCoy	113	L15	Bye	L8	L14	D19	1.5
19	Gruntorad	UNR	L16	L13	L14	Bye	D18	1.5
20	Alvarez	UNR	LF6	U---	U---	U---	U--	0.0

Cornhusker State Games Junior Section 7/18/2026

#	Name	Rating	Rd1	Rd2	Rd3	Rd4	Total
1	Gurnsey	1254	W5	W3	W2	W4	4.0
2	Cooksley	614	W6	W4	L1	W3	3.0
3	Christensen	797	W7	L1	W5	L2	2.0
4	Ossian	383	W8	L2	W6	L1	2.0
5	Bockstadter	UNR	L1	W8	L3	W7	2.0
6	Strizek	UNR	L2	W7	L4	W8	2.0
7	Finley	UNR	L3	L6	W8	L5	1.0
8	Jefferson	UNR	L4	L5	L7	L6	0.0

SOME TRULY ASTOUNDING CHESS EVENTS!!
An Article by NSCA Historical Archivist Bob Woodworth

THREE amazing, absolutely unbelievable, ‘wild’ chess events I will never forget!! I have been playing chess since around 1951 or so (nearly 75 years to be exact) and if I were asked to recall 3 of the most unforgettable, amazing chess events (or game results), I would absolutely include the top 3 listed here below:

GM Robert Fischer’s 4-game consecutive match game victories vs. GM Tigran Petrosian in the 1971 World Chess Championship qualifying match.

GM Vladimir Kramnik overlooking a mate-in-1 move before he was checkmated!!

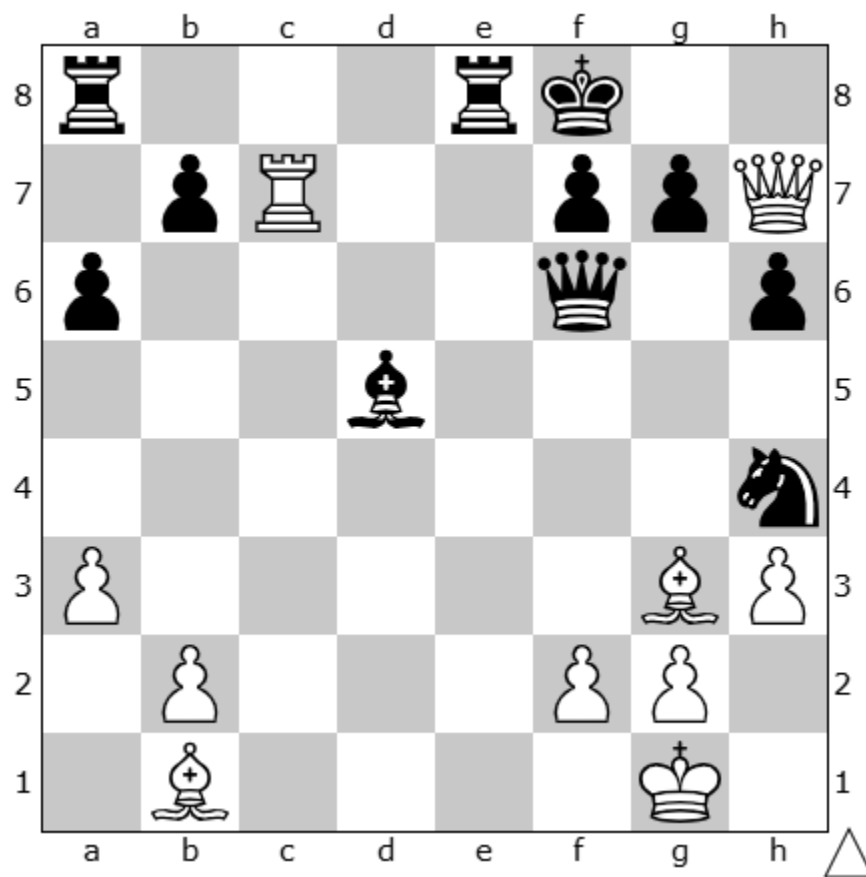
Omaha’s David Ackerman’s brilliancy vs. Ben Munson to win the 1972 Sioux City Open chess tournament.

Grandmaster Robert Fischer (or Bobby Fischer as he was known) played some amazing chess during his career. He was the U.S. Champion at 14 years of age, won the 1963-’64 U.S. Championship without losing a game or conceding a draw, defeated 2 world class GM’s Taimanov & Larsen by scores of 6-0 and 6-0. But as great as these performances were his defeating of GM Tigran Petrosian by winning 4 CONSECUTIVE games to win the right to play GM Boris Spassky for the 1972 World Chess Championship was even more impressive. GM Petrosian was possibly the most difficult GM to defeat in the entire history of chess bar none!! Petrosian could smell trouble on the chessboard ‘a mile away’ to quote a phrase. To have Fischer defeat him in 4 CONSECUTIVE games borders on the impossible in this writer’s opinion! That is why I give this event as Fischer’s greatest chess accomplishment other than defeating Spassky in the famous 1972 World Chess Championship match.

Next is the infamous mate-in-one that GM Vladimir Kramnik overlooked in his computer match vs. ‘Deep Fritz’ in Bonn, Germany in 2006. ‘Fritz’, the computer software program played 1.Nxf8 and GM Kramnik (who had plenty of time & thinking that the endgame was lost for White) responded with 1.Qe3? It looks like a good move threatening a queen trade plus pressure on the White king! When GM Kramnik returned to the board he was astonished to see that he was actually checkmated by 2.Qh7 mate!! Yes, this actually happened. Absolutely unbelievable!!

Finally, Omahan David Ackerman's brilliant play to win the 1972 Sioux City Open chess tourney. Dave was an extremely strong Expert-rated chess player from Omaha. Going into the final round on Sunday, Dave had a perfect 4-0 score. (Rich Chess & John Watson drew their last round game and finished 4 ½ -1/2.

Mr. Ackerman appears to be in a bad mating net after Munson's 30 Rc7 which threatens a checkmate. Ackerman then announced a checkmate in five moves by playing 30.Re1+ 31.Kh2 Nf3+!! 32.gxf3 32.Rh1+!! 33.Kxh1 Qxf3+ & mate next move. The tournament hall was abuzz with excitement with seeing such a great ending to win the tourney. It was one of the more exciting times I've ever seen in playing chess & I WAS THERE!! So, in closing I sincerely hope that the reader is as amazed as I was with these three extremely memorable chess events!!!



Bob Woodworth
Omaha, NE
Sept., 2026

Note that the GM Kramnik oversight is written in more detail in the Aug./Sept.,2013 Nebraska "GAMBIT" issue & the Ackerman game is better described in the 2009 "GAMBIT".

HOW CAN MY CHILD GET BETTER AT CHESS? by Gambit Editor Bruce Draney

Part I: Private Chess Lessons

I get asked quite often by parents how their child can get better at chess and of course there are many answers to this question. Almost no one begins playing chess as a prodigy, but improvement is possible for anyone depending upon their dedication and devotion to the game.

One way to get better and gain an edge on other beginners is through private tutoring or instruction from a good player. It is a very common myth that only a Master level player can get your child to improve his/her game. In fact, the exact opposite may actually be true. You really only need an adult with some basic knowledge of chess principles to teach your child things that will improve their game if they are a young beginner. You don't need a Master or even an Expert.

It's far more important for you to find a person who is kind, patient, and knows how to relate the key principles to your child in a way that they can understand. The general rule is that the tutor should probably be at least 300-500 points above the student in rating, with the greater difference mattering more once the student reaches Class C (1400). Most Class C players are not searching for private tutors locally though and if they do want private instruction, they are probably getting online instruction via video call or zoom perhaps with a Master from another state.

Here are the things I would recommend to parents when they are looking for a tutor:

1. Does my child want chess lessons? This sounds like kind of a stupid question, but believe it or not it's more important for the child to want lessons than it is for the parent to want their child to have lessons.
2. Would your child work better with an older teacher or with someone younger? Every child is different and some children might relate better to someone closer to their age, while others might feel more comfortable with a mature older adult.
3. How much does the person charge and what are their qualifications? We have at least 5-6 Nebraskans or former Nebraskans (that I know of) currently offering private instruction. I'm not here to advertise for anyone as that would be unfair to the others, but if you are unsure of who to ask, I would suggest keeping an eye out on the Nebraska Chess Community Facebook group where many of these teachers often advertise that they are taking on new students.
4. Do you want face to face live lessons or would you or your child prefer online lessons by zoom or video call?
5. How long would you like your lessons to be in terms of minutes? If your child is very young, their attention span may not be conducive to lessons longer than 20-30 minutes and online zoom calls might be a better bet for your child.
6. Finally recognize the signs that your child may be losing interest and ask them every month or few weeks if they are enjoying the lessons and they feel like they are getting better.

No teacher that I know of wants to waste their own time or you or your child's time by teaching a child who is clearly not enjoying the experience. Lessons are probably the best but also the most expensive way for your child to improve their chess play.

YOUNG LUKE HENGEN OF OMAHA EARNS HIS MASTER RATING AT THE DENKER AND U.S. OPEN IN GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN.

Luke Hengen of Omaha who is only 16 and still in high school joined an elite club of young Nebraskans who have reached 2200 while still under 18. Luke entered the Denker with an official rating of 2154, but managed to finish strongly with a score of 4-2. He and his sister Clover also played in the U.S. Open which is 9 rounds now days.

The Open offers a 7-day, 5-day, and 4-day schedule to accommodate players who played in the National Invitationals or who can't for whatever reason play in the week-long event because of work or expense. Players who play in the 4- or 5-day schedule must play more games per day to catch up and eventually all three groups merge by the last day to finish the tournament. Luke beat a 1700 player, then drew a Florida GM and lost his only game to a 2360 player. After that, he defeated two 1900 players and 2 Experts. Aware of the fact that he had earned the 2200 rating and wanting to see it actually published officially, he withdrew in round 9, and finished with an actual score in played games of 5.5-1.5. His combined score excluding byes in the Denker and Open was 10.5-4.5 which left him at 2206.

Just to place this in perspective, the only 4 other young native Nebraskans who ever reached 2200 before graduating from high school, were IM John Watson, SM Rod Malpert, NM Paul Rohwer, and IM Keaton Kiewra, and all four of them are already in the Nebraska Chess Hall of Fame. For those of you who don't know Luke, he is quiet, shy, humble, and unassuming. He is polite and pleasant win or lose and always eager to learn from his losses as well as his wins.

The Omaha World Herald actually did a feature article on his accomplishment after his official rating was published on September 1st. The sky is the limit given Luke is only a junior this year and although he is two-time defending State High School Champion as well as 2-time State Closed Champion, his next milestone will likely be reaching 2400 and possibly earning a FIDE Master title before he graduates.



(Photo Credit: Allison Hengen)

Lincoln Chess Foundation/Boys Town Summer Chess Camp Offers a Week of Fun and Learning at the Omaha Summer Chess Camp July 27-31, 2026

Thirty-one K-12 students who wanted to improve their chess skills, participated in the first Nebraska summer chess camp in almost a decade during the week of July 27-31 here in the Omaha metro area at the beautiful Boys Town National Headquarters.

Bruce Draney of the Lincoln Chess Foundation, organized the camp and directed it all week, while Dmitriy Khots of Boys Town was an absolutely essential partner in arranging our use of the facility which is ideal for chess events like this and last year's State Scholastic Team Championship and also providing lunches, snacks and beverages.

Special guest was Grand Master Viktor Matviishen who was a huge hit as he interacted with all the kids during the week, gave a special Q&A on Thursday, and played over 31 in a simultaneous exhibition to conclude the camp on Friday afternoon at the end of the day scoring 30-0-1, his only draw against Sidd Parthasarathy.

Our teachers had fun too, as former State Champion Nick Lacroix taught the middle school and high school kids, Tom O'Connor of Lincoln who has extensive experience working with Lincoln scholastic programs taught our rated beginners, while Scott Look who has worked for years with young people in the Omaha area taught the unrated beginners.

The mornings featured 45-minute blocks focused on openings, middle games, and end games, while the afternoons were set up for puzzle solving, competition and short tournaments. Viktor ended up teaching our two top rated young players in the state, Luke Hengen and Sidd Parthasarathy as well as two ambitious young players, Ridit Rai and Adrith Pallepatti, who were much lower rated, but loved being allowed to be in Viktor's class all week. Viktor simply adjusted the material so that Ridit and Adrith would not feel lost or overwhelmed.

Seven of our 31 participants were actually kids from Boys Town which was absolutely fantastic as the things Dmitriy is building over there as chess camps like this teach many of the valuable skills that Boys Town actually emphasizes such as critical thinking, patience, sportsmanship, and problem solving.

Since this was my first ever chess camp that I was responsible for organizing, my main concerns were that parents or students might not like it or might not want to spend almost \$300.00 for the week. Based on all the feedback I got from parents and students it was all highly positive if not effusive. Many asked me to please do it again next year.

The only thing that was uncooperative was July weather in Omaha which reached 100F on the first two days before cooling down to only the 80s by Friday afternoon. Dmitriy generously took all of us out to dinner at Spezia's on 72nd Street on Friday night after the event, except for Tom who wanted to get back home to Lincoln.

PHOTO MONTAGE FROM THE LCF/BOYS TOWN SUMMER CHESS CAMP 7/27-7/31/2026



Photo credit Bruce Draney
Instructor Tom O'Connor contemplates
His next move versus GM Matviishen



Photo credit Bruce Draney
Camp students eagerly await a chance to make
their next move versus GM Matviishen on 7/31/2026



Photo Credit Bruce Draney
Instructor Scott Look tries to hang on
Against GM Matviishen on 7/31/2026



Photo Credit Allison Hengen
Luke made Master (2206) the week
after working with GM Viktor

2nd Annual Crane City Open August 8-9 in Kearney, Nebraska

For the 2nd year in a row the Harmon Events Center in Kearney was the setting for the only POY/CCC event outside of Lincoln or Omaha, the Crane City Open directed and organized by Eric Ring of the Central Nebraska Chess Club.

This year the event moved back a week to Saturday and Sunday August 8th and 9th. The Open section drew 12 players but half of them were rated 1600 or above and included Thomas Jessop, Steven Cusumano and Tony Dutiel all rated above 1800. Because it was a 4 round tournament this gave players a chance to only have to play 2 rounds per day instead of the more grueling 3 rounds on Saturday.

At the end of it all, Steven Cusumano and Thomas Jessop both finished with 3.5-.5 to tie for 1st place in the event. Tony Dutiel took 3rd with 3-1. Jessop has become the strongest player in the central part of the state since Wayne Pressnall of North Platte dominated central Nebraska chess over 15 years ago. He also has two brothers who are rapidly improving and in this case Thomas' younger brother was our Barber Middle School tournament representative this year.

This year Eric also offered an unrated Elementary section on Saturday only which drew 8 young people and was won by Callum McCord with a perfect 7-0 score. Eric is building a very nice and successful program out there in Kearney and it's great to see a long-awaited revival of central Nebraska chess. He now runs rated events in February, August and November.

Crane City Open 8/8-8/9/2026 Directed by Eric Ring
Open Section Standings

CRANE CITY OPEN 8/8-8/9/2026 IN KEARNEY Open Section

#	Name	Rating	R1	R2	R3	R4	Total
1	Steven Cusumano	1856	W4	W8	W3	D2	3.5
2	Thomas Jessop	1877	W10	W6	W8	D1	3.5
3	Tony Dutiel	1843	W9	W5	L1	W6	3.0
4	Philip Schiff	1530	L1	W7	W5	D8	2.5
5	Matthew Koppinger	1676	W11	L3	L4	W10	2.0
6	Scott Look	1665	W12	L2	W9	L3	2.0
7	Eric Ring	1058	L8	L4	W10	W11	2.0
8	Sean Baker	1729	W7	L1	L2	D4	1.5
9	Jeff Brueck	1215	L3	W11	L6	L12	1.0
10	Luis DeLeon	1064	L2	W12	L7	L5	1.0
11	Marshall Everitt	970	L5	L9	W12	L7	1.0
12	Shannon McCord	698	L6	L10	L11	W9	1.0

Games from the Crane City Open 8/8-8/9/2026

Round 1:

Cusmano-Schiff

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 Nc6 6. Ndb5 Bb4 7. a3 Bxc3+ 8. Nxc3 O-O 9. Bd3 d5 10. exd5 Nxd5 11. Nxd5 Qxd5 12. O-O Ne5 13. Be2 Rd8 14. Bf4 Ng6 15. Be3 Bd7 16. Qxd5 exd5 17. Rfd1 Bc6 18. Rd4 Ne7 19. g4 f5 20. Rad1 Re8 21. Bf3 fxg4 22. Bxg4 Ng6 23. Bf3 Rad8 24. c3 Ne7 25. Bg5 g6 26. Bxe7 Rxe7 27. Bxd5+ Bxd5 28. Rxd5 Re2 29. R1d2 Rde8 30. Kf1 Re1+ 31. Kg2 Kf7 32. Rd7+ R8e7 33. R7d3 a6 34. Rh3 h5 35. Rf3+ Kg7 36. Rd6 R1e6 37. Rxe6 Rxe6 38. c4 Re7 39. b4 b6 40. Re3 Rc7 41. Re6 Rxc4 42. Rxb6 a5 43. Rb5 axb4 44. axb4 Kf6 45. Rb8 g5 46. h3 h4 47. b5 g4 48. Rh8 Rb4 49. Rh5 Kg6 50. Rc5 Kf6 51. hxg4 Rxg4+ 52. Kf3 Rb4 53. Rh5 Kg6 54. Rd5 Kf6 55. Ke3 Kg6 56. f4 Kf6 57. Kf3 Ke6 58. Rh5 Kf6 59. Kg4 h3 60. Rf5+ Kg6 61. Rg5+ Kf6 62. Rh5 Kg6 (1-0)

Round 2:

Dutiel-Koppinger

1. e4 e5 2. Nc3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. d3 Na5 5. f4 Nxc4 6. dxc4 Bb4 7. Qd3 exf4 8. e5 Nh5 9. Nf3 g5 10. Bd2 g4 11. Qf5 gxf3 12. Qxh5 fxg2 13. Rg1 Rg8 14. Qxh7 Qg5 15. Bxf4 Qg6 16. Qxg6 Rxg6 17. Bg3 b6 18. Rxg2 Ba6 19. O-O-O Bxc3 20. bxc3 Bxc4 21. Rd4 Bxa2 22. c4 Rc6 23. Bh4 Kf8 24. Rgg4 b5 25. cxb5 Rg6 26. Rxg6 fxg6 27. c4 a6 28. b6 cxb6 29. Kb2 Bxc4 30. Rxc4 Kf7 31. Bf6 d6 32. Rc7+ Ke6 33. Rc6 b5 34. Rxd6+ Kf5 35. h4 a5 36. Rd5 b4 37. Rb5 Ke6 38. Rb6+ Kf5 39. Bg7 Rg8 40. Rf6+ Kxe5 41. Rxg6+ Kf5 42. Rg5+ Ke4 43. Kb3 Kf3 44. h5 Kf4 45. Rg1 (1-0)

Round 3:

T. Jessop-Baker

1. b3 d5 2. Bb2 c5 3. e3 Nc6 4. Bb5 Qb6 5. Bxc6+ bxc6 6. f4 e6 7. Nf3 Nf6 8. O-O Ba6 9. Re1 c4 10. Ne5 Bc5 11. Nc3 Bd6 12. Qf3 cxb3 13. axb3 Bb7 14. Na4 Qc7 15. Ng4 Nxg4 16. Qxg4 f6 17. Qxe6+ Qe7 18. Qxe7+ Bxe7 19. Ba3 Bxa3 20. Rxa3 Kf7 21. Nc5 Rhb8 22. Rea1 Bc8 23. Rxa7+ Rxa7 24. Rxa7+ Kg6 25. Rc7 Ra8 26. Na4 Bf5 27. Rxc6 Re8 28. Kf2 d4 29. Nb2 dxe3+ 30. dxe3 Ra8 31. Nd3 Ra2 32. Ne1 Be4 33. Rc7 Bd5 34. Kg3 Ra1 35. Nf3 Rc1 36. Nh4+ Kh6 37. Nf5+ Kg6 38. Ne7+ (1-0)

Round 4:

Everitt-Ring

1. e4 Nc6 2. Bc4 Nf6 3. d3 e6 4. a3 d5 5. exd5 exd5 6. Bb5 Bd6 7. Nf3 Bg4 8. Nbd2 O-O 9. O-O Nd4 10. Ba4 c6 11. c3 Nxf3+ 12. Nxf3 Bc7 13. Bg5 Qd6 14. g3 Nh5 15. Be3 Rae8 16. d4 Rxe3 17. fxe3 Nxg3 18. Ne5 Bxd1 19. Bxd1 Nxf1 20. Kxf1 Qf6+ 21. Nf3 Bxh2 22. Ke2 Bd6 23. Bc2 Re8 24. Rf1 Qe7 25. Ne5 Bxe5 26. dxe5 Qxe5 27. Rf3 c5 28. Rh3 g6 29. Ba4 Re7 30. Rh4 Qxe3+ (0-1)

The Vienna Game by Gabe Hoffman

Welcome back to another article!

For this article, I'm covering not a tournament but instead a well-known opening.

C29 Vienna Game: Vienna Gambit

e4 e5, 2. Nc3 Nf6, 3. f4

Due to the extent of the information, the involved diagrams needed, and other information, this will be my first article to be covered in multiple parts. For the express purpose of providing the most relevant and interesting information, I am only covering the sidelines of the mainline 4.fxe5, and an in-depth exploration of the rarely played sideline 4.exd5?! For this first part, I will cover the 4.exd5 line and the three most common responses, a couple of notable sidelines, and a sharp line from the main line of 4.fxe5.

As an ode to the efficacy and rarity of this line, enjoy this 6-move miniature from a bullet game on Chess.com where, testing the line, I caught a CM pre-moving.

1. e4 e5 2. Nc3 Nf6 3. f4 d5 4. exd5 Ne4 (pre-moved) 5. Nxe4 exf4

6. Nf3. Black resigned 1-0 (Link to game: [stakedpawns vs. Alexander432 | Analysis - Chess.com](#))

Now onto the actual opening

I don't remember exactly how or when I decided to cover this article, but I stumbled upon the fact that it was a playable line that is surprisingly underplayed.

Now, all of this analysis has so far been done alone with myself, a board, and many, many iterations of trying to find reasonable moves and consulting Stockfish considerably; I have, as of the time of writing this, reached out to a few different notable and well-respected people for advice, assistance, and feedback while researching this line.

As such, before I actually get to the ideas, positions, and such, special thanks to Nick Lacroix, Jerry Slominski, and John Hartmann for invaluable contributions and feedback.

4. exd5 the idea After 1. e4 e5 2. Nc3 Nf6 3. f4 d5 4. exd5



Black to move

By taking on d5, White steers the game into murky waters. By avoiding mainline theory and getting into unique positions Black will be forced to think much earlier than they were likely anticipating.

The engine immediately considers this worse at -0.4 compared to mainline, being closer to equal at -0.2; after a short time, however, it considers this at -0.2 and the mainline of fxe5 at -0.3.

Now, with a long enough calculation, they are close to equal but there's a clear divergence, with the main line of fxe5 being considered +0.1 at stockfish depth of 41 and exd5 being -0.1 at the depth of 44.

Mind you this is not a definitive value as a stronger engine may have different evaluations but again this is for entertainment and education purposes, not a definitive of here's your answer to life the meaning of it and everything in it. :) Although a tiny, seemingly insignificant difference when you consider that fxe5 has hundreds of thousands of games played, and an extensive number of master games played compared to this exd5, it makes you wonder why? As such, I have been extensively exploring the lines to try and find the answer to that very question.

There have only been, according to the Lichess Database, 87 master games that have featured 4. exd5. A shockingly small number when you compare that 1.1K games have reached the mainline with fxe5. Of those 87 games, there have only been 12 in the last decade! With only 1 in the last 6 years. Moving on from the history for a bit, which I'm sure has lost half the audience from boredom, let's get back to chess.

So, what does Black play?

Well, after White makes this deviation from theory and Black stares at White for approximately 30 seconds trying to figure out if that's a blunder or if they made a serious mistake and concluding none of the above, Black must now decide how to continue the game after this shocking revelation.

Black has three main responses to counter White's idea, and I will explore each of them in turn and try to look at the best ideas for both sides. As a reminder, I am not an expert and am simply a humble chess player analyzing this with a board and an engine to write and explore for your enjoyment; as such, not all of my analysis may be correct, and there will likely be errors involved.

The three lines that will be explored for Black and how White handles them are as follows: 4... Nxd5, 4... e4, and 4... exf4. I will also cover a couple of other sidelines that Black may try. For each of these "main" lines of the primary three, I will further explore a couple of sidelines, but for the sake of this article won't go so deep, as this is merely part one and I would like to cover all three primary points.

Additional sidelines and further analysis of these lines will be included in part two; I also intend to cover some of the more common lines we are familiar with returning to mainline Vienna, and some very sharp lines therein.

4. ...Nxd5

1. e4 e5 2. Nc3 Nf6 3. f4 d5 4. exd5 Nxd5



White to move

This is the sharpest try, and the best according to the engine. If you can understand the ideas, you will enjoy the position more than Black.

While there are several ideas here, some are worse than others from an engine perspective, one thing to remember is that the engine will always prefer Black in this line for the opening, as even the Vienna Gambit itself, the engine gives Black an edge if not being equal.

Playing this exd5 line it's what kind of "worse" do you want to play, as while I'm only going to consider two primary responses and some of their continuations here in part 1.

I will come back to look at this in part 2 as one of these much "worse" lines is very sharp and Black only holds an advantage if they play precisely, it's a very interesting line that I will be investing considerable time analyzing.

As for this article, I'll be reviewing what are likely the two most common lines (These were my first instinct candidate moves, and the engine agrees that these are the "best" moves) The moves I considered for White are 5. Nxd5 and 5. fxe5



Black to move in both positions above.

After 5. Nxd5 Qxd5. 6. fxe5

The most human line is to just take the pawn with the queen and allow the queen trade,

6. ...Qxe5+ 7. Qe2 Qxe2+ 8. N or Bxe2



Black to move

Although White is slightly more developed and the pawn structure can favor White long-term, the position is equal due to the relatively open nature and that both sides still have the bishop pair.

Taking with the bishop allows a bit more flexibility in the commitment of the knight and development.

Black may also opt to play 7. ...Nc6 instead of 7. ...Qxe2+, after which 8. Nf3 provokes the queen trade either with 8. ...Qxe2+ followed by 9. Bxe2 or attempting to retreat.

If the queen goes to e7, White will oblige the trade to remove the tension, and if the queen retreats to e6, White will keep the tension to take the center with c3 and d4 ideas; delaying the exchange.

The move order matters as White would like to remove the queens even at the cost of allowing Black to develop a little, as with pawn minority on the king side White wants to use the half open f-file without having to worry about any threats from the queen, which their removal slows down the game considerably and White will be able to use their superior pawn structure to their advantage.

What if Black plays the other check and avoids the pawn?

6. ...Qe4+

This is the best move by the engine; it uses the fact that because White's pawn is still on e5, Black will be able to move their queen away.

7. Qe2 Qxc2, 8. d4

For those interested here's pretty much the resulting position of Qg6.

(8...Qg6 9. Nf3 Nc6 10. Kf2 Be6 11. Bd3! Qd5 12. Qxd5 Bxd5.....)

Awkwardly, the engine wants Black to just retreat the queen to g6 and be -0.3, but the most human move of 8. ...Bb4+ is what I will continue with as it's really tempting to try and continue the attack.

8... Bb4+ 9. Kf2! Qxe2+ 10. Bxe2



Black to move

Although White has a very ugly pawn structure and the king looks rather misplaced White's compensation is the center, and surprisingly the position is somehow practically equal at -0.2. The position will be dynamic, and neither king will be safe for long.

Moving on to 5. fxe5, this move the engine seems to really like and is quite common in master games. From a human perspective I really dislike it as after 5. ...Nxc3 6. bxc3 Qh4+ 7. Ke2

White, despite being near equal, will not enjoy the position.

7... Bg4+ 8. Nf3 Nc6 9. d4

After looking for master games I have discovered that the best way for White to play this position is to not rush with 9. d4, but instead play 9. Qe1 and hide the king on d1. Instead of rewriting the above section, I have opted to use this note as the diagram above was from my initial analysis.



Black to move

Black has easy plans and development compared to White, who will struggle to actively place their pieces and find safety for the king; this is not a position I'd recommend to lower-rated or even intermediate players, as it's very complicated. White walks a tightrope that an expert or higher-rated player may not quite enjoy but can calculate their way through.

Despite that, if you're comfortable with this position and have a good understanding of how to make use of it, you can find yourself with an enjoyable game; a good example of this is this game between Hikaru Nakamura and Sophie Milliet

Nakamura, Hikaru - Milliet, Sophie, 1-0, Cap d'Agde CCAS Gp-A, 2010, lichess.org/UwHPSK0f

It wouldn't be honest of me to showcase just a good result, so here's an instructive loss.

Eshuis, Hans - Jensson, Einar Hjalti, 0-1, North-Sea/TT3, 2016, lichess.org/C4EJ9MDn

To understand the result, we must understand why. That is clearly laid out in the games themselves.

Where Hikaru Nakamura was able to use the mistake his opponent made to break in and seize the initiative in a sharp position to win.

Hans Eshuis was unable to find the right squares and, despite having the bishop pair, ended up in a slow positional squeeze. You may be wondering why I don't include master games for every line? Mostly space. Space and finding interesting games and a win and a loss for every line is not only tedious, as not every line I think needs a master game, but it would go into far more depth than this article was initially designed to cover. While I would've liked to find a master game for every line with only 87 games played I decided to be more

sparing and use them in areas where they provide genuine value. I included them here due to the difficulty and complexity of handling the position where in the Nxd5 followed by Qxd5 the general position is going to boil down far more to opening principles with some nuances and I didn't think master games here would bring much value.

We've got one more critical line to look at: 6. ...Nc6.

Position after 6...Nc6



White to move

With this line, Black delays the capture of the central pawn to apply pressure and make White choose how to defend the pawn.

After 7. Nf3 Bg4 8. Be2



Black to move

Due to the space limitations here and my desire to explore this line further, which I don't fully understand as this was a late addition, I will explore this line much further in part 2.

4...exf4

After 4. exd5, the second most logical response from Black after the obvious 4...Nxd5 is 4...exf4.

1. e4 e5 2. Nc3 Nf6 3. f4 d5 4. exd5 exf4



White to move

Black's idea is that without e5 being playable now for White, they can simply take on f4 and return to material parity. With the d5 pawn being en prise; in most lines the d5 and f4 pawns will be exchanged.

White has a few different ways to play the position. Let's start with the most obvious try. Again, I will remind you this is more so about which “worse” you want to play, as we are not computers and cannot play perfectly in spite of our best efforts.

5. d4



Black to move

White immediately takes control over the center and asks Black how they would like to defend the f4 pawn. Black has a couple of different good options and also some very bad options; for example, what if they were to try and treat the position like a King's Gambit and try to defend the pawn using g5?

Position after 5...g5?



White to move

Here g5 is simply a mistake, as Black is seriously lacking development, and after Qe2+ forcing something to move to protect the king. h4 is coming, and the weak g5 pawn will fall in due time.

6. ...Qe7? White can now trade or play h4 and this position is worse for Black according to the engine. Furthermore after 7. h4 in the ...Be7 line. The engine gives the absurd 7. ...O-O! as despite White having an advantage of +1.2 this is Black's best attempt for compensation.

6. Qe2+

Be7 7. h4!

5. d4 Nxd5



White to move

With this line, Black concedes the f pawn and liquidates immediately, After: 6. Nxd5 Qxd5 7. Bxf4 Be7.



White to move

The position is now equal, and the ensuing struggle for the center and piece activity makes this my favorite line of the opening.

White still needs to be careful! They cannot rush c4...

8. c4?? Qe4+!

The bishop on f4 is lost and White is simply going to be much worse.

Avoiding this simple blunder, the position is about equal, and will have some very dynamic play.

In part two, I will explore further on move 7 for Black and some of the resulting positions.

There's one more line to look at: what if White doesn't play d4 but instead controls the center with a piece?

5. Nf3



Black to move

With this move, we transpose into the King's Gambit Accepted. More particularly, the Abbazia defense modern variation. The major difference, however, is that White has Nc3 already committed, putting Black on the move in an otherwise familiar position.

This is a very interesting line, as if Black plays what is considered best by the engine with 5. ...Nxd5, the engine wants

6. Bb5+?! c6 7. Qe2+ Be6 8. Nxd5 Qxd5 9. Ba4



Black to move

Despite being technically worse at -0.4, White appears to have the much better practical chances, and the board is already in chaos on move 9.

Making this by far the most interesting line of this variation.

While I could explore other lines here, for brevity's sake I'm going to move forward to the last of the three major lines.

What if Black just completely ignores either pawn?

4... e4

1. e4 e5 2. Nc3 Nf6 3. f4 d5 4. exd5 e4



White to move

With this line Black opts to not reclaim the pawn immediately and instead to take away the center with the claim that the White f4 pawn will be weak and the d5 pawn will remain difficult to defend as White may struggle to develop.

White has a couple of different ways to play the position.

5. d3 5. Bb5+ 5. Qe2 . You could also play Nge2 or Be2 but for now I will cover these 3 lines.

5. d3



Black to move

This is the most challenging try for White as Black now has to make a decision on what to do with the pawn? Capturing is less than ideal as White will simply develop and there will be no compensation for the pawn and pushing isn't a good option.

Black could try to defend it with 5. ...Bf5, but after 6. dxe4 Nxe4 7. Qe2 Qe7

The engine gives White nearly +1 as they still hold an extra pawn.

The best move for Black is to protect the pawn through removing an attacker with 5..Bb4.

Position after 5... Bb4



White to move

6. ...end 7. Bxd2 0-0 8. Nge2 Bc5 9. Na4 Nbd7 10. Nxc5 Bxc5 The position is close to equal and both sides have clear and simple plans.

Black now defends the pawn, and threatens to take on d5 without trading knights. White cannot take the central pawn as Black gets a strong initiative so 6. Bd2 is pretty much forced and after 6... e3

We reach the line that according to the Chess.com Opening explorer is called.

King's Gambit Declined: Falkbeer Accepted, Staunton, Charousek, Morphy Defense



(image from Chess.com [King's Gambit Declined: Falkbeer Accepted, Staunton, Charousek, Morphy Defense - Chess Openings - Chess.com](#))

After 7. Bxe3 0-0 the position will be equal.

Black just has to avoid the tempting 7. ...Bxc3? As after 8. bxc3 Nxd5 9. Bd2!

Black can also play 8...O-O instead of Nxd5 but it doesn't change the position much .

I could continue on this line further but I have other lines and ironically enough John Hartmann actually just covered the King's Gambit side of this line in Chess Life Kids in the June issue. More particularly he covers the Falkbeer Countergambit.

Since this transposes into that I recommend you check out what he wrote as my thoughts for this line are very similar to what he wrote plus it covers a bit more of Kings gambit ideas!

You can find it here [Chess Life Kids Magazine Issues | US Chess.org](#)

You will need to be a member of USChess and log in to view it online. I recommend the PDF Version as I find it easier to read.

5. Bb5+



Black to move

The idea behind Bb5 is to get the bishop outside the pawn chain before committing d3 or Qe2+ so its not blockaded. The position is still very close to equal. Black can opt to block the check with a piece or allow a trade of pawns. Black may play 5... c6 or 5... Nbd7 both hold equality and the play is slightly different in each. On 5...c6 after 6. dxc6 bxc6 7. Bc4



Black to move

Black can also opt to play 5... Nc6 7. d4, Bb4 8. Ne2 White has solved development issues and will finally safely be able to castle in a near equal position with the Black e4 pawn being surprisingly annoying to deal with (Black can take with 7... exd3 e.p. but doing so allows a queen trade that actually makes White's position a bit easier)

White has a tiny edge due to Black's shattered pawns and yet will still struggle to get all of their pieces out. On 5...Nbd7 6. Qe2 Bb4 7. Nxe4 0-0 8. Nxf6+, Nxf6 9. Nf3 Re8 10. 0-0



Black to move

5... Bc7 is also playable but leads to similar positions as Nbd7. However the bishops will be traded immediately, while I lack the space for a diagram here's some raw analysis.

5...Bc7 6. Qe2 Bc7 7. Bxd7+ Nbd7 8. Nxe4 Nxe4 9. Qxe4 0-0

Both sides here are equal and will have their pieces kicked around some as we start to get into middlegame territory with both sides trying to finish development. White is still up a pawn but its not easy to defend long-term.

5. Qe2



Black to move

White intends to win the Black e4 pawn at the cost of time.

I will note that Mr. Hartmann mentioned this Line in his covering of the Falkbeer Countergambit in Chess Life Kids that is very interesting however his claim requires White to make a very simple mistake.

The line given:

5. Qe2 Be7! 6. Nxe4 0-0! 7. Nxf6+ Bxf6 with the threat that now the Rf8 -e8 is a very strong threat

Position after Hartmann's Line



White to move

I have great respect for Mr. Hartmann as he is the one to get me into directing and I don't mean this to be disrespectful and I understand the line was designed for kids in a slightly different opening.

I would like to be critical and point out that from an objective perspective:

I don't think castles should be given a great, the bishop move of 5... Be7 I can justify as it is the only move, however castles is a good move and while the "best" according to the engine, the alternative 6...Nxd5, is also very playable and Black will still have an edge. And lastly 7. Nxf6? is an outright mistake there is no justification for White to trade his good knight.

The simple d3 is much better. As d3 keeps White's well placed knight stable, keeps the initiative, and preps to long castle while protecting the f4 pawn.

For engine support at a Stockfish depth of 36 7. d3 is evaluated at -0.3 and 7. Nxf6+ is evaluated at -1.5.

After 7...Re8 Black will still have an edge albeit much smaller and nowhere near as large nor crushing.

Position after 7...Re8



White to move

Again I mean this with no disrespect and appreciate that we even have a Chess Life for Kids, I think there's just a bit more nuance and depth to it than Mr. Hartmann alludes to. Aside from 5...Be7 Black has Bd6 or Bf5 but both are worse.

5...Bf5 6. Nf3! Be7 7. Nxe4 0-0 or

5...Bf5 6. Nf3! Qe7 7. h3 Bxf3+ 8. gxf3 exf3 9. Qxe7+

In both cases White has a slight edge

And on Bd6

5...Bd6 6. d3 0-0 7. dxe4 Nxe4 8. Nxe4 Re8 9. Qf3

And again the position is surprisingly close to equal.

This article took a ton of work and was far longer than I intended, even still I didn't cover everything I would've liked and there's still much more work to be done I didn't include nearly as many master games as I hoped and this article is already far too long. I am open to any feedback or comments you may have and any suggestions for the future and here's an email you can reach out to.

1.e4ghchess@gmail.com I tried to make this article a bit more professional than some of my others while still keeping a bit of humor at the beginning, overall I hope you enjoyed learning about this sideline as much as I had working on this!

Until next time!

Editor's note: Gabe Hoffman is a regular contributor to the Gambit. Gabe has gone above and beyond to supply me with articles for this publication. He is currently attending Metro Community College and lives here in Omaha. Gabe is not only a player and tournament director; he also has branched into the field of chess journalism. This article when he sent it to me was more than 20 pages long, but with spacing and reducing the size of diagrams I was able to shrink it down to only. The diagrams, analysis and thoughts included in the article are his and his alone. I really appreciate the enthusiasm and the content he brings to this publication.

Smaller Chess Events Around the State in August

August 8th-9th-On Saturday and Sunday, August 8-9, the Central Nebraska Chess Club of Kearney hosted the 2nd annual Crane City Open which is the only POY and CCC event held outside of Omaha or Lincoln. Full results and games can be found on page 17 of this issue.

August 12th-The Spence Club held a double blitz event that drew 12 players including at least 1 Expert and two A players. Winner was Abhinav Suresh with 9.0. Nick Lacroix and Shikhar Saxena tied for 2nd both with 8.5.

August 15th-The Post in Lincoln hosted a small event that drew 4 players. The event was won by Max Ivanov with 2.5-.5.

August 16th-The Millard Library Chess Club hosted another FRO team blitz event called the FRO Rainy Days Team Blitz. The event drew 8 players (4 teams of 2). Individual winner was Michael Dreiger with 5-1. Elijah Jamal and Alan Zhuang tied for 2nd with 4.5. The top team however, was Elijah Jamal and Scott Look whose combined score was 7.5.

August 19th-The Spence Club began a 3-week long G/30 dual rated event that had two games per week and not ending until Wednesday September 2nd. Since the event officially ended in September the final results will be reported on page 40 in this issue, in the Smaller Chess Events in September column.

NSCA Action/Blitz Championships Attract a Nice Crowd on 9/12/2026 at UNO

The UNO CPACS building was once again the site of the NSCA Action and Blitz Championships this year. Tony Dutiel directed the event and it drew a strong field of over 80 total players in 5 separate chess sections. There was an U1200, U800 and U400 section for younger kids not interested in playing in the faster events. Thirty-five players played at least one game in the G/10;d2 Action Championship including Masters Rod Malpert, Mike Blankenau, State Champion Luke Hengen. In the end none of them won the event. Top honors went to a young lady from Overland Park, Kansas, Ananya Wadhwa with 5.5-.5. Nebraska Champion was Nick Lacroix with 5-1.

The NSCA Blitz Championship was held in the afternoon and drew 33 as a couple of people who played in the morning opted out of the afternoon blitz event. Winner of the Blitz and Nebraska State Blitz Champion for 2026 was Sidd Parthasarathy who scored 10.5-1.5.

NSCA State Action Championship 9/12/2026

#	Name	Rating	Tot
1	Ananya Wadhwa	1881	5.5
2	Nick Lacroix	1917	5.0
3	Sidd Parthasarathy	1816	4.5
4	Noah Polacek	1685	4.5
5	Mike Blankenau	2319	4.0
6	JJ Lang	1969	4.0
7	Aayush Wadhwa	1962	4.0
8	Luke Hengen	1952	4.0
9	Steven Cusumano	1784	4.0
10	Ethan Riegsecker	1591	4.0
11	Shannor Qiang	1378	4.0
12	Joe Knapp	1768	3.5
13	Rod Malpert	2219	3.0
14	Thomas Jessop	1729	3.0
15	Dominic Zeisler	1719	3.0
16	Matt Buckley	1716	3.0
17	Max Ivanov	1637	3.0
18	Michael Mills	1609	3.0
19	Samanvi Kantem	1559	3.0
20	Adam Hansen	1745	2.5
21	Michael Marmorstein	1730	2.5
22	Micah Cosgrove	1549	2.5
23	Chris Kisicki	1507	2.5
24	Curtis Holsinger	1279	2.5
25	Nathan Sandquist	1502	2.0
26	Daryan Mora	1483	2.0
27	Gabe Hoffman	1423	2.0
28	Philip Schiff	1371	2.0
29	Brady Thomas	1069	2.0
30	Zach Bitterman	994	2.0
31	Srini Kachala	1486	1.0
32	Michael Gurnsey	1361	1.0
33	Esme Washburn	1177	1.0

NSCA State Blitz G/3;+2 Championship.

#	Name	Rating	Tot
1	S. Parthasarathy	1876	10.5
2	An. Wadhwa	1958	10.0
3	Knapp	1743	8.5
4	T. Jessop	1588	8.5
5	Aa. Wadhwa	2011	8.0
6	Lacroix	1897	7.5
7	Zeisler	1528	7.5
8	Lang	1830	7.0
9	Polacek	1744	7.0
10	Cusumano	1677	7.0
11	Michael Mills	1500	7.0
12	Qiang	1357	7.0
13	Blankenau	2094	6.5
14	Hengen	1845	6.5
15	Buckley	1734	6.5
16	Riegsecker	1673	6.0
17	Marmorstein	1619	6.0
18	Hansen	1684	5.5
19	Hoffman	1500	5.5
20	Schiff	1498	5.0
21	Kachala	1260	5.0
22	Gurnsey	1527	5.0
23	Ivanov	1602	4.5
24	Thomas	1011	4.5
25	S. Kantem	1303	4.0
26	Holsinger	1280	4.0
27	Kisicki	1662	2.5
28	Bitterman	1136	2.0
29	Washburn	1274	1.5
30	Cosgrove	1470	0.0

U400 Section Standings

#	Name	Rating	Tot
1	Boehm	467	5.0
2	Kantem	299	4.0
3	Parthasarathy	212	1.5
4	Patnaik	112	1.5

U1200 Section Standings

#	Name	Rating	Tot
1	Pittala	1054	3.0
2	Zeisler	1084	2.5
3	Shaik	972	2.5
4	Eastwood	1042	1.5
5	Bokka	850	0.5

U800 Section Standings

#	Name	Rating	Tot
1	V. Cheedella	602	4.5
2	Formanes	649	4.0
3	Kumar	574	3.5
4	Rai	732	3.0
5	Misra	554	3.0
6	Patnaik	362	3.0
7	P Gundabolu	632	2.5
8	Pittala	618	2.5
9	S. Rai	610	2.0
10	R. Cheedella	510	2.0
11	R. Gundabolu	439	2.0
12	Hamid	UNR	2.0
13	Gaddam	527	1.0

Special thanks go to the NSCA and President Steven Cusumano as well as to Senior Tournament Director Tony Dutiel for arranging this event which drew over 80 players in total. It worked out especially well because the Nebraska-Bowling Green football game wasn't until 6 PM, so players who were big Nebraska football fans like Rod Malpert could play in the Action event and still have time to make it back to Lincoln to attend the game.

Searching for Bobby Fischer in Iceland by Gambit Editor Bruce Draney

Some of you may have noticed I was somewhat conspicuously absent from posting about chess from August 24th-September 6th. Fortunately, this was not due to illness, but rather to the fact that I took a two-week vacation to four Scandinavian countries: Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Iceland. While I didn't play any chess during this 14-day trip I did try to visit the major sites in Reykjavik, Iceland where Bobby Fischer played in 1972 and lived out the last years of his life after returning to play a rematch in war torn Serbia and receiving asylum from Iceland.

To those of us who grew up in the 70's, Fischer was an icon, demolishing the Soviet Union's total dominance of chess and winning the United States' only FIDE World Chess Championship in 1972 by defeating defending champion Boris Spassky in Reykjavik and becoming a world-wide sensation in the process.

Unfortunately, Bobby was a very troubled individual and suffered from mental illness. He became very paranoid and feared all sorts of conspiracies about people plotting against his life. He refused to defend his title in 1976 and dropped out of sight living on the streets of cities in California for over 20 years. In 1992, Fischer suddenly emerged from the shadows and announced a rematch with Spassky, but by this point he was spouting all sorts of antisemitic and anti-American sentiments. He deliberately chose to play his match in Serbia in the middle of a civil war and the United States had placed sanctions on the Serbian government due to its ethnic cleansing policies.

Bobby became an international pariah despite defeating Spassky in the rematch. All of the attention focused on his craziness and untoward behavior and language. While in Japan, Bobby was arrested and the United States requested extradition from the Japanese government to face charges and possible jail time for playing in Serbia.

Bobby then wrote an impassioned letter to the leader of Iceland, requesting political asylum so he wouldn't be imprisoned in the United States. Iceland granted his request and Japan released him to the Icelandic government. Bobby settled at first in Reykjavik and later in a town about 40 miles away called Selfoss.

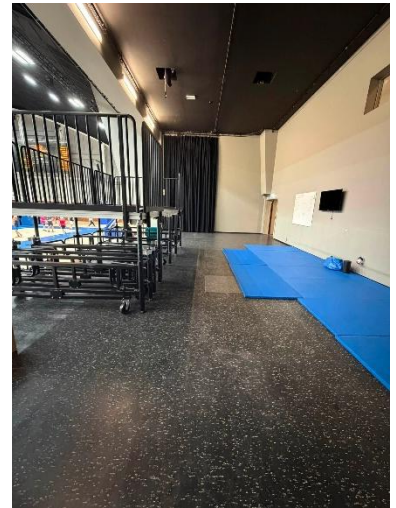
Selfoss was where he died and he was buried in a cemetery just outside of town. While I was in Iceland, I made a special effort to visit the actual playing site where the 1972 match took place. To my amazement, the room was neglected to the point that it was simply used for storage and the hall where spectators sat to watch the games, was now a basketball court. I took a bus to Selfoss and visited the Bobby Fischer museum which contained a lot of interesting memorabilia and great artifacts and information. I took a taxi out to his grave which is in a little cemetery with a church. His gravesite is quite modest, reading Robert James Fischer March 9, 1943-January 17, 2008. If you can overlook his severe mental illness exhibited later in his life you can still see the genius and talent that he possessed and there will probably never be anyone quite as dominant in chess ever again as he was.



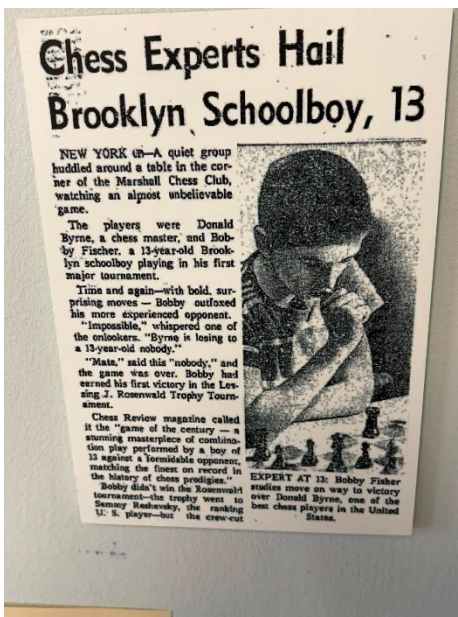
Site of 1972 Spassky-Fischer Championship



Fischer Museum in Selfoss



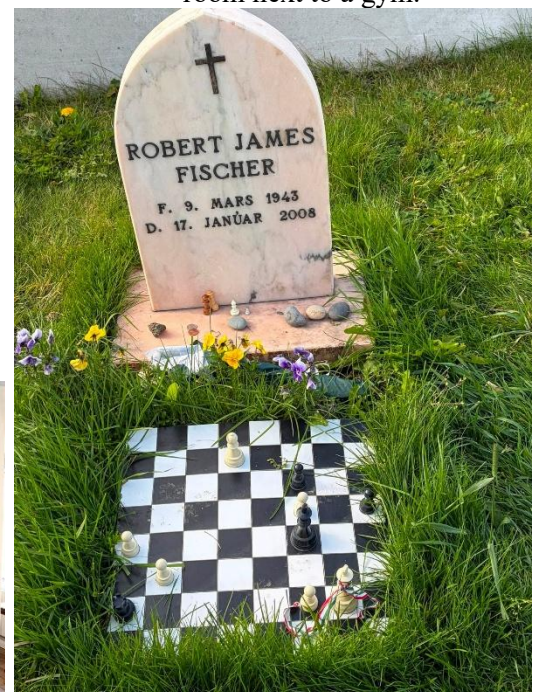
Stage where the games were played now a storage room next to a gym.



His rise to prominence began in 1956 one year after his vanilla performance in Lincoln in the U.S. Junior Championships.



1972 Fischer Photo Montage



Fischer's grave in Selfoss, Iceland

Kickoff Scholastic September 26th at Boys Town

The first scholastic team event of the 2026-2027 school year was the Kickoff Scholastic at Boys Town National Headquarters on Saturday, September 26th. The event drew a nice crowd of 74 players who played at least one game. There were 5 sections of chess, 4 of which were team scholastic events. The rated sections included an Open, K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 section and the unrated section was open to anyone who had never played in a USCF rated event before. The event was organized by me but special thanks go to Dmitriy Khots and several of the teachers from Boys Town who were a huge help in setting up tables and sets and in taking them down after the event was over. Nick Lacroix and Michael Gooch provided valuable floor director assistance especially in the K-3, 6-8 and unrated sections held down by the fireplace on the other side of the facility.

Open section winner was Adrith Pallepatti who finished with 3.5-.5. High school individual champion was Shannor Qiang with 5-0, while team honors went to the Boys Town A team. The middle school champion was Samanvi Kantem with 4-0. Millard North Middle School dominated the field to easily win the team trophy. Only one team was represented in the elementary school section, so Woodbrook took home the trophy.

In the unrated section, there were 28 players which was fantastic. In addition, a number of schools sent teams of players including St. Vincent DePaul, Christ the King, Omaha Christian Academy, and Chesterton. Nathaniel Prakash took 1st place with 4.5-.5. His team from Omaha Christian Academy took home the top team trophy as well. Despite a few delays and snafus caused by players being in the wrong section or coding problems that led to teammates playing one another the event ran fairly smoothly and everyone was finished by 5:30 even in the Open section.

Kickoff Scholastic Open Section

#	Name	Rating	Rd1	Rd2	Rd3	Rd4	Total
1	Pallepati	1132	W8	W2	W5	D4	3.5
2	Kantem	1547	W10	L1	W9	W5	3.0
3	Look	1601	W7	L5	D4	W6	2.5
4	B. Khots	1958	D6	W10	D3	D1	2.5
5	Gurnsey	1254	W9	W3	L1	L2	2.0
6	Vemuri	978	D4	D9	W7	L3	2.0
7	G. Sewell	UNR	L3	W8	L6	W10	2.0
8	L. Sewell	UNR	L1	L7	W10	D9	1.5
9	Schickner	UNR	L5	D6	L2	D8	1.0
10	Miller	UNR	L2	L4	L8	L7	0.0

Kickoff Scholastic High School Rated Team Section

#	Name	Rating	Rd1	Rd2	Rd3	Rd4	Rd5	Total
1	Qiang	1404	W8	W4	W3	W2	W5	5.0
2	Snyder	1144	W5	W13	W12	L1	W7	4.0
3	Roberts	911	W9	W15	L1	W6	W4	4.0
4	Harpenau	UNR	W6	L1	W14	W12	L3	3.0
5	O'Malley	UNR	L2	W17	W13	W9	L1	3.0
6	Soft-Star	UNR	L4	W8	W15	L3	W12	3.0
7	Z. Redhorn	489	W14	L12	W10	W13	L2	3.0
8	Mclead	UNR	L1	L6	W17	W16	D9	2.5
9	Porter	UNR	L3	W18	W16	L5	D8	2.5
10	Henderson	UNR	L12	D16	L7	W18	W14	2.5
11	Simpson	UNR	L13	L14	D18	W17	W15	2.5
12	Staab	UNR	W10	W7	L2	L4	L6	2.0
13	Fuller	UNR	W11	L2	L5	L7	W16	2.0
14	Sarratt	UNR	L7	W11	L4	D15	L10	1.5
15	Kelley	UNR	W18	L3	L6	D14	L11	1.5
16	Martin	UNR	D17	D10	L9	L8	L13	1.0
17	Troester	UNR	D16	L5	L8	L11	D18	1.0
18	Stenberg	UNR	L15	L9	D11	L10	D17	1.0

Kickoff Scholastic Middle School Team Section

#	Name	Rating	Rd1	Rd2	Rd3	Rd4	Total
1	Kantem	1547	W3	W6	W8	W9	4.0
2	Kiran	764	W13	W8	D7	W12	3.5
3	Formanes	UNR	L1	W5	W10	W4	3.0
4	Bourampeta	828	W9	W7	W6	L3	3.0
5	Sama	604	W14	L3	W12	D7	2.5
6	Cheedella	602	W10	L1	L4	W11	2.0
7	Gaddam	527	W15	L4	D2	D5	2.0
8	Grandhi	613	W12	L2	L1	W15	2.0
9	Ibarra-Moore	UNR	L4	W14	W15	L1	2.0
10	Patnaik	UNR	L6	W13	L3	W14	2.0
11	Kumar	339	Bye	L12	W13	L6	2.0
12	Moore	UNR	L8	W11	L5	L2	1.0
13	McCauley	UNR	L2	L10	L11	Bye	1.0
14	Nichols	UNR	L5	L9	Bye	L10	1.0
15	Reitain	UNR	L7	Bye	L9	L8	1.0

Kickoff Scholastic Elementary Team Section

#	Name	Rating	Rd1	Rd2	Rd3	Rd4	Total
1	Rai	732	W4	W3	W2	W5	4.0
2	Kumar	543	W6	W4	L1	W3	3.0
3	Zhong	663	W5	L1	W6	L2	2.0
4	R. Cheedella	510	L1	L2	W5	W6	2.0
5	A. Grandhi	173	L3	W6	L4	L1	1.0
6	V. Patnaik	UNR	L2	L5	L3	L4	0.0

Scholastic Kickoff Unrated Section

#	Name	Rd1	Rd2	Rd3	Rd4	Rd5	Total
1	Prakash	W14	D11	W18	W6	W3	4.5
2	Weiland	W7	W12	W9	L3	W5	4.0
3	Neilson	W19	W16	W8	W2	L1	4.0
4	R Hrabovsky	L5	W24	W22	W10	W8	4.0
5	Andersen	W4	D6	W11	W15	L2	3.5
6	Langle	W17	D5	W14	L1	W12	3.5
7	Ellis Pavlish	L2	D19	W20	W17	W11	3.5
8	Velez	W23	W10	L3	W9	L4	3.0
9	Stevens	W25	W21	L2	L8	W15	3.0
10	Han	W15	L8	W16	L4	W18	3.0
11	Oregon	W22	D1	L5	W18	L7	2.5
12	Emmett Pavlish	D20	L2	W19	W13	L6	2.5
13	Wetjen	D18	L14	W23	L12	W16	2.5
14	Bogard	L1	W13	L6	L16	W19	2.0
15	Underwood	L10	W23	W17	L5	L9	2.0
16	Weidauer	WF	L3	L10	W14	L13	2.0
17	M. Hrabovsky	L6	W22	L15	L7	WF	2.0
18	Wirick	D13	W20	L1	L11	L10	1.5
19	Cope	L3	D7	L12	W20	L14	1.5
20	Smet	D12	L18	L7	L19	Bye	1.5
21	Dvorak	W24	L9	LF24	-----	-----	1.0
22	Godfrey	L11	L17	L4	D23	-----	0.5
23	Kommineni	L8	L15	L13	D22	LF17	0.5
24	Sualy	L21	L4	LF21	-----	-----	0.0
25	M. Neilson	L9	-----	-----	-----	-----	0.0

Smaller Chess Events Around the State in September.

September 2nd-As mentioned under the August smaller events list, the Spence Chess Club concluded a 3-week long 6-round G/30 event that drew 12 players. There was a 4-way tie for 1st place between Nick Lacroix, Steven Cusumano, Adam Hansen, and Daryn Moran, all with 4-2.

September 9th-NSCA Omaha Vice President Michael Mills stepped in to direct a quick quad that drew 4 players. Adam Hansen finished 1st with a score of 2.5-.5, his only draw was with Philip Schiff.

September 12th-The NSCA held it's Action/Blitz State Championship at UNO in the CPACS building at 62nd and Dodge. A full report with results and standings can be found on page 32-33 in this issue. Attendance was an outstanding 83.

September 12th-Jack Roegner of Davenport, Nebraska held his small unrated Milo Days chess tournament in nearby Carleton, Nebraska. At this writing results are unknown. I was originally planning to drive out to play in this event but allergies and the aftereffects of jet lag, and disruptive sleep schedules from my 2-week long vacation trip just made getting up at 6:30 AM and driving 120 miles a non-starter.

September 16th-The Spence Club held a double round robin G/3+2 blitz event that attracted 9 players. It was a 6-round event where each player played one game with black and another with white, meaning the top possible score was 12. Luke Hengen finished in clear 1st place with a perfect 12-0 score. Adam Hansen and Daryn Moran tied for 2nd with 8-4.

September 19th-Jerry Slominski played a simultaneous exhibition at the Bellevue Library that attracted 10 players. Jerry went 7-1-2 and much fun was had by all as he gave away prizes to people who showed up to support the event.

September 26th-The first team scholastic event of the 2026-2027 school year was held at Boys Town National Headquarters building. The event was called the Kickoff Scholastic and a full report and standings can be found on page 37 of this issue.

September 30th-The Spence Club concluded a 6-round two-week long G/20;d5 action event that began on Wednesday September 23rd. The tournament featured 3 rounds on the 23rd and 3 more on September 30th. The event drew eight players.

October

2026

Subtitle

Nebraska Chess Calendar



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17 Lincoln City Championship POY and CCC
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

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November

2026

Subtitle

Nebraska Chess Calendar



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7 CNCC Championship in Kearney
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 Great Plains Open POY-CCC-State Qualifier
15 Great Plains Open POY- CCC-State Qualifier	16	17	18	19	20	21 Cornucopia Team Scholastic Boys Town
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

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December

2026

Subtitle

Nebraska Chess Calendar



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19 4 th Hall of Fame Memorial-Final CCC Event
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Omaha High School Metro Chess League Gears Up for 3rd Season of Competition

The Omaha High School Metro Chess League started up its 3rd straight season of competition in September. The fall league has 7 teams: Omaha Central, Lewis Central, Elkhorn South, Millard North, Elkhorn Mount Michael, Westview, and Omaha Home School. The league features weekly matches between the high schools. Since there are an odd number of teams in the fall league, each team will receive a bye at some point during the season.

Millard North High School won the fall league last year, but Omaha Central captured the winter league title and also won the State High School Team Championship last February. The official day for playing the matches is Wednesday, however the coaches are free to schedule their matches on any day of the week that works for them. The fall league concludes the week of November 9th-13th which is a makeup week for any matches that couldn't be arranged for any reason.

The scoring is done by match results of the top 4 boards and a 5th if both schools have 5 players available. Each board is scored as a win, loss, or draw for the two teams and whichever team scores the most points out of 4 (or 5), wins a point for the match result. Unlike the old Lincoln High School Chess League which based the standings on total points, this league simply uses team results as a whole and ignores the total points scored. If the two teams score 2-2 (or 2.5-2.5), each team receives a half-point in the standings.

It's not too late to accept interested metro high schools into the league if not for the fall schedule we will hold a winter league as well as we have at least two high schools that couldn't manage to get a team together for the fall, but plan to participate in the winter. We also sometimes have fall league members who simply can't manage to get a team together for the winter league.

Final standings of the fall league will be posted in the 4th quarter Gambit due out at the end of December.

NEBRASKA CHESS HALL OF FAME ANNOUNCES THE CLASS OF 2026

As the Nebraska Chess Hall of Fame celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, the selection committee composed of Bruce Draney, Loren Schmidt, and Rod Malpert unanimously chose to add two of our most distinguished directors, organizers, and state and local leaders that have between the two of them directed over 700 chess tournaments in a combined 37+ years of living in our state.

We are proud to announce that the Class of 2026 will welcome Michael Gooch and John Hartmann. Both Michael and John have led the NSCA, Michael having been President twice while John is tied for the 2nd longest tenure as NSCA President in the organization's 50-year history.

Michael began as a coach at the high school level when his son attended Creighton Prep. Michael has coached chess clubs, organized camps, organized the metro high school chess league for years, and organized hundreds of chess tournaments both rated and unrated over a career spanning 25 years. Michael saw the need for a 501c3 chess organization to serve Omaha, so in the early 2000s he organized the Omaha Chess Community. He not only started the OCC but served as its President all the way up until last year when he officially retired and passed the organization's leadership on to Nick Lacroix.

Under the OCC's direction, the Omaha Chess Club was saved from extinction because they kept losing meeting places. The reputation of the club was so poor by 2005 that it was rebranded and went under the name Omaha Chess Community. The Community established a regular playing site first at UNO and then at Lewis and Clark Middle School. Behavior rules and expectations were established and strictly enforced to prevent any further damage to the club's reputation.

Michael teamed up with Omaha Central chess coach Drew Thyden and began running a huge mostly unrated chess tournament every November at Central High. At its peak, the tournament drew nearly 200 players.

Michael also organized summer chess camps, continuing the tradition established by Brownell-Talbot teachers Dan Frost and Karen Bowley. These camps offered a fun week of instruction by qualified teachers.

Even though he has officially retired as the President of the OCC, he still enjoys directing or help directing tournaments and has kept busy assisting Nick Lacroix in running the Cornhusker State Games in July. Michael also helped out assisting me at the Kickoff Scholastic on September 26th.

Although John hails originally from New York, he moved to Nebraska in 2009 and immediately saw the need to take a leading role in organizing chess tournaments and stepped in to lead the NSCA in its time of need.

John has coached high school chess clubs, organized summer chess camps here in Omaha, and perhaps his biggest contribution was starting a weekly chess club called the Jack Spence Club that runs rated tournaments every week. No other Nebraska chess club ever did this before but John has made the club successful and through the Spence Club alone he has run hundreds of rated chess tournaments.

John has brought IMs to Omaha to work with our young people and he is the only Nebraskan in our history to ever become the editor of Chess Life magazine and has served in that capacity since 2000. John also has edited the bi-monthly Chess Life for Kids magazine which is geared toward the scholastic community since 2023. John has received 3 Chess Journalists of America awards over the course of career.

John is also an active player and when he's not directing in events he frequently participates as a rated tournament player. He has played in 4 Nebraska Closed Championships. He is a great contact person because he has so many connections due partly to his job as editor of two national magazines.

Both Michael and John will be formally inducted into the Hall of Fame between rounds one and two at the Hall of Fame Memorial tournament on December 19th, this year being held at the Wyndham hotel in Old Mill just north of 108th and Dodge Streets. All people are welcome to attend the ceremony and congratulate both of these gentlemen for the honor being bestowed upon them.



Michael Gooch
(Photo Credit: Michael Gooch)



John Hartmann
(Photo Credit: Dan Lucas)

Final Closing Thoughts from Gambit Editor Bruce Draney

This completes my 17th issue of the Gambit counting the 2020 and 2021 retrospective issues covering the Covid years. The final issue of 2026, will be published shortly after Christmas and will cover chess news and events between October 1st and December 31st.

There are lots of people I need to thank for making my job of publishing this newsletter easier. Gabe Hoffman has become a regular contributor as our intern supplying me in this issue with his latest article on the Vienna Game (1 e4 e5, 2 Nc3....). Thanks to him for composing these articles enthusiastically. Bob Woodworth who has been the Nebraska Chess Historical Archivist for more than 25 years has stepped up to contribute puzzles and articles as well. In this issue he provides us with 3 memorable chess experiences one of them a chess over the board brilliancy by former Nebraska great, David Ackerman who saved himself from a mate in one and found a forced mate in 5 himself against Iowa great Ben Munson.

I'd like to thank Dmitriy Khots and the staff and kids of Boys Town. Dmitriy has now after this past weekend's team Kickoff Scholastic allowed us to use his beautiful headquarters building to hold important chess events. We have another tournament called the Cornucopia coming up on November 21st and hopefully the State Team Scholastic in February as well.

I'd like to thank Scott Look for filling in for me by opening and closing the Millard Library Chess Club as I was in Europe for 2 weeks and also didn't feel well after getting back home the following Sunday. Plus, lately I have been trying to watch the Detroit Lions games on Sundays and they frequently don't end until 3-3:15 PM so Scott opens up the club and runs it until I get there. Scott also plays in nearly every local tournament there is which definitely improves our numbers.

This issue comes in at 47 pages and because the Cornhusker State Games game scores were not yet available for publication, this issue doesn't contain lots of games which would have made it even longer. Eric Ring of Kearney did supply me with some important games from the Crane City Open in August, so that will have to suffice for this issue.

This Gambit has now been published since September of 1964, meaning we just passed the 72nd anniversary of the first issue which was but a single mimeographed page that was mailed to members of the Lincoln Chess Club in the fall of that year. I'm honored to follow in the footsteps of some very famous editors including Hall of Famers Bud Narveson, Loren Schmidt, Michael Mathews, and Kent Nelson to name drop just a few.

Although I have proofread this issue prior to publication, it's entirely possible that with 47 pages, that mistakes may exist. If they are minor grammatical errors please forgive me, but if they are major factual errors that I didn't catch please email or message me and I can always make necessary changes, and resubmit it to Leo Iacono for an updated version. In the meantime, enjoy the beautiful fall weather that Nebraska has to offer and we'll see everyone at the end of the year in late December. Oh, and by the way, Go Big Red.