

Monthly Newsletter

◆ December 2025



TRI BRIDGES CHESS CLUB

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Introduction

Located in Exton, Pennsylvania, our club meets every Tuesday for friendly games, socializing, and skill-building. In addition to casual play, we host tournaments that give members the chance to compete, learn, and grow as players. We also offer instructional classes to help members expand their chess knowledge and deepen their understanding of the game.

My name is Azim Julkipli, and I am the author of these monthly newsletters. Having been a proud member of the Tri Bridges Chess Club for many years, I've made lasting friendships and had the opportunity to volunteer within our wonderful community.

This newsletter is designed to keep our members connected and informed. Each issue will feature updates on local events, tournaments, and club news, along with puzzles, book recommendations, and annotated games. Our goal is to celebrate the achievements of our players and foster a welcoming environment that inspires both beginners and experienced players to continue their chess journey with enthusiasm.

Botvinnik vs. Capablanca AVRO game

By Dirk Troltenier

From [Nov 6 – Nov 27, 1938, the AVRO tournament](#) took place in the Netherlands as a double round-robin with rounds played across ten different Dutch cities. It was one of the strongest tournaments ever played: Eight of the world's best players, including Max Euwe and José Raúl Capablanca, two former world champions, and the reigning world champion Alexander Alekhine, met to (unofficially) determine the challenger for the next world championship match. I use the word "unofficially" because at that time the reigning world champion could determine themselves who they would accept as challenger based on their personal preference and the price money the challenger could raise.



Two of the top aspirants for first place and, hence, for challenging Alekhine, were [Mikhail Botvinnik \(1911-1995\)](#), the rising star hailing from the Soviet union, and the Cuban [José Raúl Capablanca \(1888-1942\)](#). Botvinnik, who started to play chess relatively late at the age of fourteen, had in recent years won a number of strong tournaments. He was the poster child of Soviet chess and famous for his methodical and systematic, engineering-like, approach to chess.

[Capablanca](#) on the other hand had been a chess prodigy who supposedly learned the game's rules at the age of four by just watching his father and uncle play. He had been the world champion 1921-1927, losing his title to Alekhine. Amazingly, he only lost thirty-four of the 570 games he played in his career, i.e., on average only about one out of seventeen games, which earned him the nickname "the chess machine". It is no surprise then what Botvinnik said about Capablanca: "José Raúl Capablanca was always my idol. How else could I regard a person, who, before becoming World Champion, lost a total of just eight tournament games!"



One of the two games Botvinnik and Capablanca played in that tournament (BTW: AVRO is the abbreviation for a Dutch radio company at the time: Algemeene Vereeniging Radio Omroep) became one of the most famous chess games ever played. Why?

A) The strategy Botvinnik used to launch an attack on his opponent's king in the Rubinstein variation of the Nimzo-Indian opening was innovative and withstood the test of time: Even today, i.e., 87 years later, opening experts widely regard it as White's strongest option in that opening and are still not sure how to best respond as Black.

B) The game's concluding combination is original, beautiful, and tricky: Can you figure out what White's next move is in the position on the left? (BTW: The fact that [Botvinnik admitted that he was not able to calculate the whole variation to the end](#) should not discourage you to go as far as you can in your analysis 😊.)

If you are interested in the solution, check out White's 30. move using this [lichess link where you can also play through the complete and commented game.](#)

What happened to our two heroes in and after the tournament?



The AVRO game between Mikhail Botvinnik (right) and Capablanca (left)

Capablanca did not do well in this tournament, as it was the only one in his life in which he scored less than 50%. He also did not get a chance to play for the world championship another time and passed away only about 3 years later at the age of fifty-three in New York City.

Botvinnik's plan to challenge Alekhine for the world championship did not work out either because WW II began less than a year after the AVRO tournament. However, Botvinnik did go on to become World Champion in 1948, in a tournament (world champion Alexander Alekhine had died undefeated) which to a large extent consisted of the players that took part in the AVRO tournament 10 years earlier.

Annotated game

Annotated By Chris Romeril

In the following game, Chris Romeril (as white) played against Tanay Parripati (as black) on Chess.com as a 10-minute rapid game. Sit back and watch this game unfold before you!
<https://www.chess.com/game/143327968702?move=59%22> is the link to the game itself

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 e6 4. Nc3 exd5 5. cxd5 d6 6. e4 g6 7. f4 Bg7 8. Bb5+ Nfd7

8... Nbd7 9. e5 dxe5 10. fxe5 is dubious

9. a4 Na6 10. Nf3 Nb4 11. O-O a6 12. Be2 O-O 13. Be3 Nf6 14. Nd2

avoiding Bg4

14. Bf2 Bg4

14... Rb8 15. f5!?

This is the first move that has not been played in any master level games, f5 is sensible, trying to rip apart black's king safety, it does negate on e5 ideas white had though

15... b5 16. axb5 axb5 17. Bxb5 Bxf5 ! 18. exf5 Nfxd5 19. Nxd5?

Bf2 should have been played, if 19... Nxc3 "removing the defender of Bb5" 20. bxc3 hits the knight 20... Bxc3 21. Ra3 (21. Rc1 Bxd2 22. Qxd2 because the rook is passive on c1 22...Rxb5 and while white is down 2 pawns, white can generate a strong attack) 21... Bxd2 22. Qxd2 Rxb5 23. Rh3

19... Nxd5 20. Bxc5??



What I thought was a desperado, as either the bishop on b5 or e3 will perish, I thought might as well take a pawn, I did not see the fork on e3
20. Bf2

20... dxc5 21. Bc4 Bd4+

21... Ne3 is also good

22. Kh1 Ne3 23. Qf3 Rxb2 24. fxg6 hxg6

Looks natural as you cannot take with the f pawn due to the pin

24...Nxf1 25. gxh7 Kh8 using the 'umbrella' pawn, 25... Kxh7 26. Qh5+ Kg8 27. Rxf1 Rxd2 28. Bxf7+ Rxf7 29. Qxf7+ and white will draw with perpetual

25. Bxf7+! Kg7 26. Ra7 ! 26... Nxf1??

26... Rxd2 ?? loses to Be8 or e6 in mate in 5

27. Be6+?

27. Bc4+ Kh6 28. Qh3+ Kg5 29. g3 threatening Qh4 was slightly stronger according to the engine

27... Kh6 28. Qh3+ Kg5 29. Qg4+ Kf6?? 30. Ne4+?? Ke5



Somehow black is winning, the king moves safely to the middle of the board

31. Ng5?!+ Ne3??

And I am back in the game

Ne3?? 31... Nd2 31... Rf4 both guarding e4+

32. Qe4+ Kd6 33. Nf3??

White has no more checks now

33. Bf7 threatens Ra6 and Qxg6+

33... Rb6 34. Qxg6

With less than a minute I lost the bishop, it took me too long to realize the queen is defending Rb1 mate

34... Rf6 35. Qg3+ Kxe6 36. Ng5+ Kd5

and this move made me resign because of 36... Kd5 37. h3 37. Nf3 Rb1+ 38. Ng1 Rxg1+ 39. Kxg1 Rf1+ 37... Rf1+ 38. Kh2 Be5 white is down too much material 0-1

PA State Team Championship

By Joshua Anderson

"This is so much worse - and so much better" - Charan "Cherry" Perumalla

The 2nd annual PA State Team Championship drew 20 teams, including a New York school that sent two teams. Many other organizations, such as West Chester University and the Tri-Bridges Chess Club (TBCC), also sent multiple teams. Finally, several teams were made up of community chess players from different parts of the state.

There was one team, the "Patzers of Pennsylvania", with a board average of 2196: 1 college NM, two long-time area NMs, and one strong expert. There wasn't another team within 400 points (!) of them, but there were numerous teams between 1600 and 1800, making for an exciting battle for second place, while the "Patzers" were expected to win straightforwardly.

While the first few rounds were largely mismatches, there were a few upsets. The 2nd through 4th-ranked teams, all with averages of 1700+, were no better than 2-1 at the end of the first day. Tri-Bridges "B" almost lost in both the second and third rounds, needing a long win from Samika Nettem, on the 4th board in round 2, and a long draw from Vahini Sadhu Venkata, on the 2nd board in round 3, to keep their perfect score.

Being the only 3-0 team aside from the Patzers, the team was quite sure they would face them the next morning. Wanting to relax in the evening, it was decided to skip the blitz tournament and watch *Searching for Bobby Fischer*, a movie made over 20 years before any of the players were born.

With our team relaxed and watching the movie, we had a lot of laughs, especially when, at the beginning of the film, Lawrence Fishburne yells, "Josh who?" and they all yell, "Anderson."

Though TBCC B fought hard the next morning, just as the other teams had, the Patzers won in another runaway: 4-0.

In the lower part of the event, the four Under 1200 teams finally had some victories (they were all 0.5 - 2.5 going into the fourth round), with two teams, TBCC-C and Golden Rams 2, from West Chester University, climbing to 1.5 - 2.5. Both lost in the next round, but were able to share the Best Under 1200 prize. TBCC A meanwhile had been doing well themselves, but ran into upsets in the 2nd and 4th rounds when they lost to Spartan Chess and then Penn State University.

These results set up an interesting final round in the top half of the event, with everything except first place still to be fought over. The 1700+ teams had time to climb back into contention, and with Tri-Bridges' "B" loss, no team was better than 3-1. Second-seeded "4 Old Fischer Men" were playing the top seed, but with only FM Karl Dehmelt as a titled player, they were going to lose —and did, 4-0. The third-seeded Tactical Titans faced Tri-Bridges Chess Club "B," while Rook and Roll, at 2.5-1.5, faced the other 3-point team, Penn State University.



The last minute of the last round: Vahini Sahdu Venkata v Leo Paas. (Photo by Joshua Anderson)

Rook and Roll won easily, 3.5 - 0.5, though Penn State University did win the top college team title. In the match between the 3-point teams, there was a lot of drama: Perumalla won pretty quickly, then, for about 90 minutes, was torn in two as he was drawn to his friends' games and also terrified of looking. Our first board, Christopher Romeril, who had earlier upset an Expert, Michael Andrew Clark, now lost, leaving the team 1 and 1 with the two ladies still playing. Nettem drew Taekyum Kim, who was 200 points higher-rated, and, for the 2nd time in the event, Sadhu Venkata was the last game at the party. The position and time on

the clock swung wildly until, with 1 second left for Leo Paas, the game ended in a draw. The split decision left the two New York teams tied, with Tactical Titans winning top scholastic team, with Tri-Bridges Chess Club "B" for 3.5, but having played more formidable opponents throughout, the game points were not as good, and so that team finished 4th on tiebreaks, though tied for 2nd overall and 2nd among all PA teams.

In the end, it was tough to be too mad at the 2196 team, not only are they all great guys who most of the PA chess community have known for years, but they invited anyone interested to the "after party" where they went over games for tons of players and shared their thoughts on various positions and gave encouragement to many up and coming players.



The "after party" with numerous groups celebrating a fine event. (Photo by Joshua Anderson)



"Patzers of Pennsylvania" - l. to r. Peter Minear, Joseph Mucerino, Matthew O'Brien, Michael Romero (Photo by Nathan Zeigler)

Author's note: Tri-Bridges Chess Club is a community chess club that does not require membership and, while it helps its members, it does little to restrict them. So, when a group of young men from our area who regularly attend our tournaments and seminars signed up, I did not say anything. When, on Saturday morning, a couple of team members' parents asked if they could join the Tri-Bridges Chess Club as well, we were, of course, happy to have them. They had an average rating of 1699 v. 1693 for "B," so they became the Tri-Bridges Chess Club

G/15 D3 Championship

By Swamik Gandhe and Joshua Anderson

On November 15th and 16th, we held our annual G/15 d3 state championship, lasting 2 days, with beginners on Saturday and stronger players on Sunday.

On Saturday, Riaan Gandhi led the Under 500 section with a score of 5.5/7. Krish Bheema came in second with 5.5/7, tying with Riaan. Shreyansh Jagtap, a new player, came in third with 5/7. Leora G, a relatively new player, came in 4th with 4.5/7 as a good starting point. Then Rithvik Munagapati came in 5th with 4.5/7, tying with Leora.

In the under-1000 section, 17 players competed, and many had ups and downs that day. Han Kim led the section with a score of 6.5/7. This result is a remarkable moment for Han because he broke 1000 in quick-rated games. In second place, David Cai, a regular player who attends tournaments, scored 5.5/7, losing to the third-place player. Krish Mohan placed third with a score of 5/7, which brought his rating up a ton! Roshan Rafi, a new player to the club, scored 4.5/7, which also raised his rating significantly. Eric Yao scored 4/7, tying for 5th place with Sarvesh Saravanan, Darsh Pancholi, and Saswath Kannan.

One of the reasons I chose to hold these events for the state is my hope that our high schoolers will take advantage of the opportunity and explore the idea of finishing well, even getting a shot at a state title. Yes, it is a G/x state title, and yes, it is divided between East and West, but the state affiliate still awards it, and thus, it is a state title.

This championship was the first time in the last round that one of our kids had the opportunity to take the state title. After a hard-fought six rounds, Chris Romeril and Cherry Perumalla - friends, teammates, club members- found themselves on the first board battling for the state title. Both had gotten there with a bit of luck, as Tanay Parripatti, having recently broken 2000, lost to both in winning games, and both drew top seed Joseph Mucerino as well. If Romeril won, he and Mucerino (assuming he won, no guarantee against Subhang Nettem) were both state G/15 champions for the East, over many club members and visiting strong players Fang Sun and Constantine Ananiadis. If Perumalla won and Nettem helped with a draw or a win against Mucerino, then Perumalla would tie for first with Mucerino and possibly Sun, who was playing Riaan Labhadur.

Perumalla won but got no help from Nettem, and so Mucerino was the sole winner of first place with 6 points.

Our next state event is the G/75 state championship on January 31st. Sign up for it at - [2026 PA State Game/75 Championship - East - Tri Bridges](#).

The results for those two events can be found here.

<https://ratings.uschess.org/event/202511160413>

<https://ratings.uschess.org/event/20251115035>

Romeril and Perumalla fighting for the state title - their first? (Photo by Joshua Anderson)



Reach for the Sky

By Joshua Anderson



All photos taken by Samika Nettem. First is a large group shot, second is of Arin Chendrimada, and third is of Jaime Neilson. While we do not let the children playing stand on chairs, our photographers do such things to provide interesting shots for the readers.

The Reach for the Sky tournament is always one of the most special events of the year. The Suresh family sponsors the event and honors their son, Sid's, love of tournaments. They sponsor the event by arranging the trophies and are always helpful and involved in discussions about the event sections.

This year, the lowest section was Under 500 instead of Under 600. The players responded with 25 players coming out in this section. In four rounds, 25 players may mean that two players remain untied and undefeated. That is what happened here: Riyan Gandhi and Ajaiya Thapliyal both went 4-0.

In the Under 1000 section, both Lucas Chen and Aarush Vudathu scored 3.5 - 0.5 by giving up an upset draw in the first round and then winning three straight. Chen's third win was against Jamie Neilson, who was 3-0 at the time, allowing Chen and Vudathu to clinch a tie for first. Neilson, Pulkit Rastogi, and Thanvish Reddy Govindu finished tied for third with 3 points.

The Open section was won by Aryan Roy (3.5-0.5) when Chris Romeril and Jeff Zheng drew each other in the final round to finish tied for 2nd with 3 points.

Experiences From The Holly Heisman

By Azim Julkipli

The Holly Heisman is an annual event organized by Joshua Anderson to support the Holly Heisman Fund, which provides assistance to women in need. Founded in 2003, the tournament has grown significantly over the past two decades. In the last two years, it has expanded even further by moving to a hotel venue, attracting players from a wide range of areas—including many from our own club. This year, a few of our top players shared their experiences:

“The Holly Heisman was a wonderful experience. I placed 5th, and throughout the tournament the competition was challenging in a fun and motivating way. Each win pushed me to work harder for the next round. The prizes were especially exciting—LEGO sets, fidgets, ribbons, T-shirts, free tournaments, and of course trophies. All of that made kids like me want to play.”

— *Roshini Sadhu Venkata, 5th Place U900*

“I did very well at the Holly Heisman tournament. One thing I really liked was the environment—being surrounded by strong chess players pushed me to improve. My section was extremely competitive, making every game a real challenge. It was encouraging just to be part of such a well-run event. The prizes were also really cool and added something extra to the tournament.”

— *Akhil Kaplavayi, 3rd Place U1500*

“In the Holly Heisman Memorial Event, I finished first in the U1500 section with a perfect 5/5 score. Honestly, it felt like a mix of strong play and a very lucky day. A couple of my toughest opponents made surprising blunders, and sometimes I still wonder if it was their overconfidence, my calm, the energy of the room, or just pure luck. Whatever it was, I felt like I played some of my best chess.

The tournament, hosted by Tri-Bridges at the Exton Hotel, had an excellent atmosphere—organized, diverse, and full of new faces. I’m used to competing against people I know, so seeing so many different styles and personalities brought a whole new energy. There were games where things went my way early, like when an opponent unexpectedly dropped a piece, but I tried to stay focused. By the final round, I felt confident enough to finish with a clean ladder checkmate: a pawn push supporting my rook on the seventh rank, and the other rook delivering the final check on the eighth. It was the perfect ending to the day.

Holding that big trophy was an incredible feeling—one of those rare, overwhelming moments of happiness where everything you’ve worked for suddenly feels real. It’s a memory I’ll never forget.”

— *Riaan, 1st Place U1500*

The Holly Heisman is more than just a tournament—it’s an experience. With unique prizes, a welcoming and competitive atmosphere, and the chance to play alongside friends, it’s an event our members look forward to every year. If you missed this year’s Holly Heisman, be sure to mark your calendar for the next one!

Hi, my name is Aarush Vudathu. I live in Downingtown and I am a 7th grader in Lionville Middle School. I have been playing chess for one year and I learned the game from my mom. She played the game as a kid and wanted to teach it to me. When I was six I learned how the pieces move.



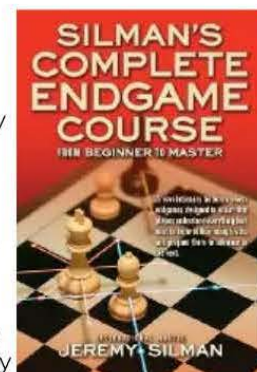
After a few years I started playing in tournaments. I started playing in tournaments in Tri-Bridges a year ago and ever since then I never stopped. There are so many friendly faces there that I can always count on. I really want to thank the person who runs this great chess club, Joshua Anderson. He is truly amazing and I want to thank him for running this club for all the kids who love chess just like me. I've gotten so much better at chess but another important thing is that I made so many friends in Tri-Bridges.

I love chess and I recently broke a 1000 in rating. If I could give any advice to players who want to break 1000, it is to never give up, have confidence, and learn from your games. At one point when I started I played many tournaments but I didn't win. I kept on pushing myself until I won my first tournament. That first tournament was so important to me and also gave me a big confidence booster. After that I went into every tournament with a whole new attitude. You always should learn from your games by taking notations so you can check your games afterwards. You should always think, "What mistakes did I make in this game, and what can I do so I don't make this mistake again?"

My most recent tournament helped me break the 1000 barrier. In this tournament I pushed myself to play in a higher open section instead of a U1000 section. Anyone could play in the correct section but you should always push yourself to higher limits. It truly helps and also feels good, especially when you win a game against a player who is maybe 200-300 points higher rated than you. Even if you lose it is fine because you will learn a lot from that game.

Written by: Riaan

After reading Silman's Complete Endgame Course by International Master Jeremy Silman, I came away with mixed thoughts. As an introductory endgame book, it is excellent, especially for beginners looking to build a solid foundation. Silman organizes the material by USCF rating classes, starting with simple positions such as basic king and pawn endgames, and gradually progressing to more advanced ideas. The book concludes with a section featuring complete games from top players, which helps connect the concepts to real play. Silman also has an amazing writing style with touches of humor accompanying his 500 pages of chess knowledge.



However, the level-based structure is not always aligned with actual playing strength. I completed the book when I was around 1000 rating, and I found much of it less challenging than expected. Although the book is marketed as a guide to take a player from "beginner to master," it doesn't explore advanced endgames in enough depth to serve as a lifelong reference. Because of that, this wouldn't be my first choice as the only endgame book for someone serious about long-term improvement. For that reason, I would still pair it with another endgame resource as I continued to grow.

Still, for casual players or anyone just starting to study endgames, it is one of the best books available. Despite a few shortcomings, Silman's Complete Endgame Course stays an exceptionally well-written and highly approachable resource, one that every new chess player should begin with, even if they eventually outgrow it.



Level 1 puzzle - White to play and win

Can you solve these puzzles? -

Solutions at the last page



Level 2 puzzle - White to play and mate in 3!

Solution to last issue's puzzles:

Level 1: Be7 Kc8 Qf8 Be8 Qxe8#

Level 2: Bb7 Kc7 Ba6 Kxb8 Kd6 Ka8 Kc7 d6 (or d5) Bb7#

*From the German Book Schachkompositionen

UPCOMING EVENTS!

One of the best ways to improve at chess isn't just by studying countless books—it's by playing real games! Our upcoming club events offer great opportunities to put your skills into practice, challenge new opponents, and learn from every match. Remember, practice may not make you perfect, but it definitely makes you better! Here's what's coming up at the Tri Bridges Chess Club.

[ECE #111 – Friday Night Tournament](#) on Friday, December 5th
Sections: Open, U900, U600, U300
Time Control: G/25 d5

[ECE #112 – Saturday Afternoon Tournament](#) on Saturday, December 13th
Sections: U1200, U800, U400
Time Control: G/25 d5

[ECE #113 – \\$250 Sunday Game Hour](#) on Sunday, December 14th
Sections: Open, U1300, U800
Time Control: Open & U1300 are G60/d5; U800 is G25/d5

[Boxing Day Blitz](#) on Friday, December 26th
Sections: Undecided, based on attendees
Time control: G/5 d2

Samika's Experience as Chief TD

I have helped at many events throughout the year, but I have never been able to receive credit from US Chess because of their rule requiring you to be over 18. That changed at the \$250 Game Hour on November 23 as I got to be the “chief td”. Even though I was going to get credit, it was a complicated process to get here. About a week before the Game Hour, Joshua Anderson told me that US Chess had changed its policy so that kids 13 and up could earn credit for serving as a tournament director. I was obviously really happy with the new rule and the fact that Joshua kindly ordered me the tournament rules book to read. Hoping to direct my first event that Sunday, I immediately started reading the book when it came on Wednesday. The next day, I had to start the Safe Play training, a class about player safety.



I completed the class and sent Joshua the certificate for completion. The last thing I had to do was sign a document stating that I had completed the Safe Play and read the book. Even though it was getting late and it took like three tries to fill out the document correctly, I got it done two days before the event. Finishing then was necessary to give US Chess a chance to process everything. (Note from Joshua - best to allow US Chess about 2 weeks, but sometimes they can move faster.)

Finally, the day of the Game Hour came on Sunday. It turned out to be a fun event where I got to talk to a lot of people and even build a gingerbread house! Because I have been helping at tournaments for a while now, it didn't feel much different to direct the tournament or pair the rounds, but it was nice to be considered as the one “in charge”. Joshua Anderson even surprised me with a cake that had my name on it towards the end of the event, which definitely made me smile. Overall, the experience was enjoyable, and I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to be an actual tournament director.
