CANDIDATES TOURNAMENT
No championship match for the No.1 U.S. player
Fabi's missed chances
Jeffery Xiong
Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi is next world title challenger
Carlsen's nemesis?
Illya Nyzhnyk
New ideas in the openings
Creativity on trial
Romain Edouard

STANDING OVATION
15-Year-Old wins the National Open
Hitting the jackpot in Las Vegas
Arthur Guo

INTERVIEW AND BEST GAMES
David Brodsky
A tactician with a competitive drive!

MY GENERATION
GM-elect joins the new wave of most promising juniors in the United States

U.S. JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS
Annie Wang and Hans Niemann are tops!
Golden tickets
Grayson Rorrer

RIVARLIES IN FOCUS
Background story to an unusual game
The Look
Christopher Yoo

CHESS JOURNALISTS OF AMERICA AWARDS
BEST OVERALL CHESS MAGAZINE 2021
Interview with
GM-elect David Brodsky
MY GENERATION

8

Interview with
GM-elect David Brodsky
MY GENERATION
Josip Asik

14

Cover story
A TACTICIAN WITH STRONG
COMPETITIVE DRIVE
David Brodsky

20

No championship match
for the No.1 U.S. player
FABI'S MISSED CHANCES
Jeffery Xiong

28

Russian GM Ian Nepomniachtchi is the next
world title challenger
CARLSEN'S NEMESIS?
Illia Nyzhnyk

38

Openings
CREATIVITY ON TRIAL
Romain Edouard

44

Master Class:
ALL-ROUND TRAINING
GM Jacob Aagaard

50

Hans Niemann heads a
strong field of opponents
A GOLDEN TICKET
Grayson Rorrer

60

The background story to an unusual
game
THE LOOK!
Dusan Krunić and
Christopher Yoo

66

Amidst new faces and
rousing competition,
Annie Wang comes
out on top
A TRiumPH OF
EXPERIENCE
Grayson Rorrer

73

15-year-old wins
the National Open
in Las Vegas
HITTING THE JACKPOT
IN LAS VEGAS
Arthur Guo

78

Chess parenting
CHESS AND LOATHING
IN LAS VEGAS
By Victor Orr

80

Endings
SENIOR
ENDGAME MOMENTS
GM Alex Fishbein

87

Chess Tech
NEVER RUN AWAY
FROM DATA!
Jon Edwards

90

A Remembrance
GLENN ARNE
PETERSEN
Pete Tamburro

94

Book reviews
FRESH LEAVES
FROM THE
BOOKSHELF
FM Carsten Hansen

98

5X5
Where Grandmasters
advise young players
GM DAVID SMERDON
Now aged 19, David Brodsky from Westchester County, NY, belongs to the new generation of the most promising juniors in the United States (see the table for Top 10 Juniors by FIDE ratings). This interview and the article that follows were actually prepared back in 2020 when there were no OTB tournaments, so we were looking forward to more successes from him.

We did not have to wait long as shown by his excellent performance in the 2021 U.S. Junior Championship (see page 50) where he gained 15 rating points and then just before we went to print he convincingly won the 87th Southwest Open in Dallas, TX, with an undefeated 6 points from 7 games.

By Josip Asik

David Brodsky, photo by Stevan Dobrojevic
What were the circumstances of your first learning to play chess?
When I was six, my mom thought I might like chess, but she wasn't sure I would follow her suggestions. So she bought a chess computer game (Fritz and Chess) for my four-year-old brother. Naturally, I couldn't let him have all the fun.

Do you remember the reason for the attraction you must have felt? I'm honestly not sure. I always enjoyed puzzles, so maybe chess was another puzzle to me.

How did things change from playing chess to first studying the game?
At the beginning, there wasn't a clear distinction in my mind between playing and studying chess. The two were intermingled.

Who were your first chess teachers?
GM Ronen Har-Zvi was my first teacher/coach. Interestingly, I started with Skype lessons and have never had a face-to-face coach.

What were your first chess books?
The Chess Tactics for Champions series by Susan Polgar and Paul Truong were my first chess books. They were an excellent way to learn basic tactics. Winning Chess Openings by Yasser Seirawan was another one of my first books that I loved as evening reading. It taught me opening principles and gave a good overview of opening theory.

How did it look like first time travelling abroad for chess?
The 2014 World Youth Championships in Durban, South Africa was my first international tournament. The experience stood in such stark contrast to the American Swiss tournaments I was used to. While the organization was far from stellar, I loved the playing venue, the atmosphere, having lots of time to prepare and socialize, etc.

When did you realize you wanted to devote your time to becoming really good, even a titled player? Honestly, I don't feel there was a moment like that. I wanted to become a GM since the very beginning — a "realistic" goal in my six-year-old mind. In my mind, GMs knew everything and never lost. As I got older, I realized how hard it would be to become a titled player, but at the same time I was getting closer and closer to the GM title.

What were your most memorable tournament experiences early on? In my very first tournament, I was one of (believe) three players who finished 4/4 in the novice section, and I won the first place trophy on tiebreaks. That by itself was a memorable experience.

How did you manage to balance chess with your school/studies? I have been homeschooled for academic reasons since 1st grade, before I even knew what chess was. When I play a tournament, I try to get my schoolwork done ahead of time. In the fall of 2018, I was even able to go play the World U16 Olympiad in Turkey, an experience that meant a lot to me. Nonetheless, it's still a struggle to balance playing and studying chess with school. One of my key principles is to study chess every day, even if it is just a few tactics.

What interests do you have outside chess? Academically, I am very STEM oriented (STEM is a curriculum based on the idea of educating students in four specific disciplines — science, technology, engineering and mathematics — in an interdisciplinary and applied approach. -Ed.) I participate in a few math competitions (I'd rate my competitive math strength at around 2200). I participate in computer science competitions and am working on a research project, and plan to study computer science in college. I used to do karate, love racquetball, and am playing a lot of table tennis with my brother during quarantine.

What grandmasters have you studied under and what did you learn from each? I've had three GM coaches: Ronen Har-Zvi, Alex Yermolinsky, and Farrukh Amonatov. Ronen gave me a strong chess foundation and brought me up to around 2100. Alex Yermolinsky helped strengthen all aspects of my game, especially endgame, to get me to IM. My current coach Farrukh Amonatov is helping me reach the GM title, mainly by strengthening my middlegame play. I am thankful to all my coaches for everything they taught me.

What setbacks do you think you've had, if any, and how did you react to them? I have had several slumps in my career so far, many of which were incredibly frustrating. The winter of 2019/20, the fall of 2018, and late summer (early fall) of 2016 come to mind. Something just wouldn't be right with my play. I have no cure to those slumps besides studying more and continuing to play.

Where does your competitive drive come from? I've had a competitive drive from a young age. When I was 4, I decided to memorize the names, capitals, and locations of all the countries in the
world, and I did. Then when I was
5, I decided to manually calculate all
the powers of 2 up to 2100 (I stopped
around 250). There was no reason to do
either of those things besides my drive.

**What role have your parents/
family played in your chess career?**
My parents have been very supportive
of my chess career, from paying for chess
lessons to taking me to tournaments
to scheduling our family plans around
tournaments.

**What are your possible life goals
at this point? Where do you want to
be five years from now?**
I have plenty of options. In the fall, I will
start studying computer science at UTD
on a combination of chess and National
Merit scholarships. In 5 years, I could
see myself either working in the tech
industry, in graduate school, or playing/
teaching chess professionally.

**What grandmaster’s games do
you especially like?**
I’m a big fan of Carlsen’s games, especially his games from 2019. I also
enjoy watching creative players like
Dubov and Rapport play, even if their
styles are different from mine.

**How would you describe your
style of play?**
It’s hard for me to describe my style. I’m
an active player who is more tactically
oriented, but I’m still fairly solid and
rarely go into tactical slugfests.

**How has all the traveling
affected you? And now, how about
the staying-at-home?**
Traveling is one of my favorite things
about chess, even if it gets tiresome
at times. In addition to traveling all
over the US, I’ve gone to South Africa,
Greece, and Turkey with chess. In
South Africa and Greece, we were able
to go on vacation after the tournament.
As a homeschooled, staying at home
hasn’t changed my lifestyle as much as
it has for others. Quarantine is getting
tiresome and depressing, especially
since I live in one of the hardest hit areas
in the US. I’m realizing just how much I
miss chess tournaments, and I can’t wait
until I’ll be able to play OTB again. The
bright side of the whole situation is that
I have more time to study chess, and
there are more coaching opportunities
online. At the moment, I’m really
excited to be taking online group
lessons with Kravtsov and Gelfand.

**Do you annotate all your games
played on your database?**
Yes, even if some of my notes aren’t as
detailed as I’d like them to be.

**What changes would you like to
see in the chess world, either in the
US or internationally, that would
help young players?**
I’d like to see a crackdown on cheating.
There have been more than a few very
disturbing incidents in the US
where players who were caught with
phones in the bathroom weren’t
forfeited. There was one time when
I was definitely cheated against.
Obviously the battle against cheating
is very difficult, but I feel that security
measures in some US tournaments are
very lax, and measures against cheaters
should be strict, transparent, and
consistent.

**What particular games that
you’ve played are key to
your chess development?**

**OSTROVSKYI - BRODSKY,
New York State Championship 2014,**
was my first win against an IM (ignoring
that he had a “+10” advantage at
one point in the game).
complex position where White will most likely give a perpetual check.

32...\textbf{\textdaggerdbl}\textdaggerdbl}d8 32...\textdaggerdbl}d8 was also winning, 33.b4+ \textbf{\textdaggerdbl}\textdaggerdbl}c7 (Not 33...\textdaggerdbl}\textdaggerdbl}d8?? 34.\textdagger\textdagger}c6 mate.) 34.\textdagger\textdagger}c4+ \textbf{\textdaggerdbl}\textdaggerdbl}b7 35.\textbf{\textdagger}\textdagger}b4+ \textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xb4++. 33.\textbf{\textdagger}\textdagger}b4+ \textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}c7 34.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}c4+ \textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}\textdagger}b6! My king must come out.

35.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}c6+ 35.\textbf{\textdagger}\textdagger}b4+ \textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}a5 36.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}b5+ \textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xa4++. 35...\textbf{\textdagger}\textdagger\textdagger}b7 There are no more checks.

36.\textbf{\textdagger}\textdagger}xh7 36.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xd8 \textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xd8 37.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}f1 (37.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xc2 \textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xc2 38.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xc2 \textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}d1 mate.) 37.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}c8++. 

36...\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}d2 White resigned and that was my first IM scalp!

\section*{ROHDE – BRODSKY,}

New York International 2015, was my first win against a GM.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{image1.png}
\caption{David Brodsky, World Youth Chess Championship 2015, Porto Carras. Photo by Diana Matisone.}
\end{figure}

20.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xe5 20.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xe5? loses because of 20...\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xd4 21.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}f3 \textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xf3 22.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xf3 \textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}\textdagger}e5. 20...\textbf{\textdagger}\textdagger\textdagger}xf3! The key move.

21.\textbf{\textdagger}\textdagger}gxf3? Sort of a sad necessity as 21.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xf3 runs into 21...\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xe5. However, White can get a better version. As Rohde correctly pointed out after the game, he should have played 21.\textbf{\textdagger}d2! \textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xe5 (21...\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xe5?? 22.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xh7++) 22.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}gxf3, which, though it is pretty bad for White, is a better version of the game.

21...\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xe5 22.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}e4 \textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xf3+! Winning a pawn.

23.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xf3 \textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xe4 Rohde only had a couple minutes on his clock, with a 30 second increment. I am a pawn up and White’s king is in trouble. I think that Black is pretty much near winning here.

24.\textbf{\textdagger}\textdagger}e1 \textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}g5 25.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}g2 \textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}f4 I’m threatening... \textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}f3+.

26.\textbf{\textdagger}\textdagger\textdagger}e3 Preventing ...\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}f3+ and being tricky.

26...\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}c8 Getting my rook off the a8 square and attacking the c4 pawn.

26...\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xe3? 27.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xa3+ \textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}e8 28.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xe8 mate.

27.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}d2 Rohde offered a draw. Though it was tempting, I’m totally crushing him here.

27...\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xe3 28.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xe3 \textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}f3+ 29.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}h1 \textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}f6 Attacking the rook.

30.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}b1? White is totally lost after this move as it is just too slow. White should play 30.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}d1! h5 (30...\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xc4? 31.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}g5+! is probably what Rohde missed.) 31.c5 and, though Black is probably still near winning here, it’s better than what happened in the game. 30.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}c1 was also possible.

30...\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}f5 Harassing the rook.

31.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}d1

31...\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}h5! The key move. Black makes lofty for his king, and does so in a way that he can play ...\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}e6–g6. 31...\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}h6? fails to 32.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xh6.

32.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}c5 Keeping the c-pawn. The problem with this move is that he pretty much gets mated.

32...\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}e6! Swinging the rook to g6 with deadly effect. White has no good defense.

32...\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}h4 33.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}g3.

33.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}g3 \textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}e6 34.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}b8+ \textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}h7 White is getting mated on h3. Rohde thought here for a bit over 30 seconds... until he flagged. 0–1

My first GM scalp!

\section*{KADRIC – BRODSKY,}

Washington Chess Congress 2016, was a convincing positional win against an almost 2600 GM.

28...\textbf{\textdagger}\textdagger\textdagger}h6 Taking aim against the f4 pawn. 28...\textbf{\textdagger}	extdagger\textdagger}d7! followed by ...\textbf{\textdagger}\textdagger\textdagger}f8–e6 was probably even stronger here. Note that 29.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xg3? fails to 29...\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}xh3 after which White is getting mated. 30.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}h6+ 31.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}f1 \textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}g6+ 32.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}h2 \textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}h1 mate.

29.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}h2 \textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}g4 30.\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}d2 The build-up is now complete. White’s pieces are all tied up.

30...\textbf{\textdagger\textdagger}d7! Improving my knight. It’s coming to e6, where it will be attacking...
the f4 pawn. It is very difficult for White to deal with this threat.
31...&e1 &e6 32...&h1 &e6 33...&xg3 hxg3+ 34...&xg3 did not seem as convincing to me.
34...&g1 &h4 35...&xh4 &xh4 36...&f3
After a basically forced transition, the rooks have all been traded. Now, it's time to hit the f4 pawn even more.

36...&f8! Coming to h6.
37...&d3? A tricky move. 37.a4 was the critical move necessary to defend against this threat.
37...&h6 38...a5.
A) I admit I only saw 38...&xf4 39...&xf4 (39...&xf4 &xf4 &h1 mate.)
39...&xh4+ which should be good enough to win.
B) 38...&xf4! was however stronger.
39...&xf4 (39...&xf4 &xf4 &h2+ 41...&f1 &h1 mate.)
39...&xh4! 40...&xb7+ &d8 Black's king escapes, and White's king will be the one getting mated. 41...&h8+ &h7 42...&xh7+ &h8 43...&d8+ &g7+-.
37...&xh4 38...&f3 White's point. Not 38...&xf7? &h2+ 39...&f1 &h1 mate.
38...&xf4 39...&d5 &d3! The key move. Now, White's king is boxed in unless he takes the knight.
40...&xe3 &xe3 41...&f1 41...&f5? e2-+.
41...&f4 Time to assess: Black is a pawn up, and the e5 pawn will probably be in some trouble. White is sort of blocking the pawn, but I wasn't concerned that it would stop me from winning. After all, I'm two pawns up, White's pieces need to defend against the pawn, and I should be able to pick up some pawns on the queenside with my king.
42...&e2 &g7 43...&f3 &d7 44...&d4
This shouldn't help White. If he does something like 44...&e6 45...&g5+ &e5
A) After 46...&xf7 &xe5 White's knight is going to be stuck or the pawns are going to crash through. 47...&a5 (47...&d8 &g4! 48...&xb7 &f3 49...&xf3+ &h3+- the g-pawn queens.) 47...&c7 48...&a6 &xa6 49...&xa6 &g6 50...&h8+ &g7-+
B) 46...&f3 &xe5 47...&e1 Say White decides to wait. Then 47...&f6 48...&e2 &xe6 49...&e1 &d6 50...&e2 &c7! and my king is coming out the other way. 51...a5 is met with 51...&c3!+
44...&cxd4 45...&d3 45...&xd4 &xe5 46...&f3 &d6 is similar to the game. Black's king will infiltrate via c5.

45...&f6! 46...&e6+ &xe6 47...&xd4+ &d6! Some accurate calculation. There is no point allowing White to go c4-c5.
48...&e2 48...&f5+ &e5 (48...&e5??
49...&g7 &f3 50...&d6+ &d6 51...&f4) 49...&g7+ &f3+ is the key idea. The pawns crash through.
48...&e6 49...&d4! &d6 also fails. After
49...&xe6 50...&f4 (50...&e7 &e6 $a2 &b2+ 49...&d4 &d4+ &d4 $a3+- there will be too many pawns for the knight to handle!) 50...&h6 51...&e2 &b4 52...&xg3 &e3+-.
48...&d6 49...&d4 b6! Preventing c5.
50...&a4 f5 51...&a5 &g7+ Pushing the white king back.
52...&f3 &e5 53...&axb6 axb6 54...&g1 Preventing the f3 breakthrough. Now, however, Black's king will infiltrate with decisive effect.
54...&e5 55...&f3 &f6 56...&e1 &a1 57...&a2 &a5 58...&g1 &b3 59...&f3 &f6
White resigned in view of something like
59...&f6 60...&g1 &a2 61...&e2
(61...&e2 &c3—+) 61...&e5 62...&g1 &c1 63...&f3 &f6 64...&g1 &d1 65...&e2 &e5 where Black is totally in control. For instance, 66...&d1 &d6 (66...&e7??) wins, though it requires some calculation.
67...&e2+ 68...&c5 62...&d1 &d2 70...&e2 &e1 71...&g1 &f3 72...&c6 73...&c7 &f1+ 74...&d3 75...&e1+ 76...&f1 &g1 (++)
67...&e2 (67...&f3 &e2++) 67...&f3 68...&c3 g2 69...&e3 &c5 70...&d3 g1+ 71...&g1 &xg1 1-0

36...&h3! Christiansen probably missed this move.
37...g3 Black is now on top. With little time on the clock I had to make the time control, and then decide what to do.
37...&g4 Offering a queen trade.
38...&g6 38...&d6 39...&d6 39...&d3+! 39...&g2! was better. 39...&f3+ 40...&g1 &f3+ (40...&e3? 41...&d3+ spoils the fun.)
38...&g6 40...&d5? Now it's just lost for White. White had to go for 40...&xg6+ &xg6 which is not going to be easy for him to hold. I will attack his c4 pawn and my king is more active.
40...&f3 41...&h1+ &g8 42...&d5+ &h8 Getting out of the checks.
43...&f4 &h6 Black goes king hunting.
44...&g2 44...&d8+ &g8+.
44...&h2+ 45...&f3 &g2 46...&g1? Sneaky. Now, Black wins not by taking the rook but by chasing the white king. White runs out of checks after 46...&d8+ &h7 47...&d3+ &h6.
46...&h3+ White's point is 46...&xg1??
47...&h5+ &h7 48...&g8+ &g7 49...&d7+ &d6 50...&g4+ &h6 51...&h3+. I didn't see any point allowing 46...&g5+ 47...&e4.
47...&f4 &e7+ 48...&d4 &e3 mate. Or 47...&e2 &e7+ 48...&f2 &e3+ 49...&xg2 &g7 winning.
47...&g3+ 48...&e2 &e7+ 49...&d1 &b3+ 50...&d2 50...&d3 &e1+ 51...&c2 transposes to the game.
50...&e3 51...&c2 &f2+ 52...&b3 &e3+ White resigned as he will get mated soon.

CHRISTIANSEN - BRODSKY,
US Amateur Team East 2017, was a mature, high quality win against a strong, experienced GM (even if he did overpress and should have taken a draw.

Phil's favorite game of the year and piece

25...
26...
27...
28...
29...
30...
31...
32...
33...
34...
35...
36...
37...
38...
39...
40...
41...
42...

SHIMANOV – BRODSKY.
Philadelphia Open 2017, is one of my favorite games. I wasn’t even an IM at that point, and I positionally outplayed and beat a 2650 GM with the black pieces.

25...d4 Solidifying my knight on e4 and preparing to double on the d-file.
26.g1 c5 27.h2 b6 28.h4 White doesn’t have many active moves here, so he logically tries to push h4-h5, which may or may not end up being in his favor.
29.d1? I decided to take the time to improve my king so that it prevents e5-e6 in some variations and opens up ...h8 ideas.
30.c3 d5 31.b3 If 31.e3 I was planning 31...a5 with a ...d2 invasion coming once the bishops are traded.

31...d3! With the rooks traded, h4-h5 will not be as strong.
32.xd3 A sad move, after which Black invades.
33.xd3 34.f3 e3 White has no easy way to defend the f4 pawn, and his position collapsed.
34.xg3 xg3 35.d4 e4 36.c4+ e7 was also very strong.
36.e6+ 36.e4+ 37.xe2+ xe2+ 38.xe2 xe5 39.xd4 xd4+ would result in a similar endgame to the one we actually had in the game.
36.e4 e7 I saw no reason to play 36...xe6.
37.c4 xf4+ 38.xf2

38...xe2+!!? The simplest solution. I don’t know if I was convinced that the opposite-colored bishops endgame was winning during the game, but my intuition proved to be correct.
39.xe2 xc4 40.xe4 h5 41.e2 xe6 42.f3 d6 43.e2 c5 44.f3 If the white king tries to come to the queenside, Black has the option of ...g3 attacking the kingside pawns. Therefore White waits with his bishop.
44.a5 45.a4 d6 46.d1

The correct plan here is to play ...xe5-d4, trade on a4, and push the c-pawn down the board. The only problem is that after bx4 ax4, White can play bx4-fx6, but he is too slow.

46.h2 This was the first of a few confused aimless moves, but I soon found the right path. Something like 46.e5 was much cleaner. 47.axb5 (47.e2 bx4 48.bxa4 d4++) 47...bx5 48.e2 a4+-.

47.e2 e5 48.f2 c3 49.e2 c5 50.f3 d4+ 51.g2 c3 52.e3 d6 53.e2 bx4 54.bxa4 d5 55.c4 c4 56.f1 a5 57.d2 d3 58.xg6 c4 59.xf5+ e2 Just like I described above, White wins two pawns, but his counterplay is too slow.

60.g3 c3 d3 61.h1 f2+ 62.g4 d2 63.h5 c2 64.xc2 xc2 65.f3 h4 66.f4 d3 67.f5 d1 68.h6 gxh6 d8+-

White resigned

My first 2650+ scalp!

BRODSKY – SWIERCZ.
US Masters 2019, was my first win against a world top-100 player.

See page 16
HAVING ALREADY GAINED HIS THIRD GM NORM AT THE END OF AUGUST 2019, 17-YEAR-OLD DAVID WAS EAGERLY LOOKING FORWARD TO INCREASING HIS FIDE RATING BEYOND THE 2500 BARRIER, AFTER WHICH HIS GM TITLE WOULD BE OFFICIALLY RATIFIED. BUT THEN FOLLOWED SOME UPS AND DOWNS, INCLUDING A LONG PAUSE DUE TO THE COVID LOCKDOWN, SO HE IS STILL WAITING TO ACHIEVE HIS GOAL. HOWEVER HE HAS NEVER BEEN CLOSER THAN NOW AS HIS RATING IS CURRENTLY PEAKING AT 2480—SO HE’S ALMOST THERE!

After winning my first round game at the Southwest Class Championships, I found myself paired up against UTRGV coach GM Bartok Maciej. Bartek actually invited me to try my very first IM Norm round robin tournament back in 2015.

1.e4 c5 2.Øf3 Øc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Øxd4 e6 5.Øc3 Øc7 6.Øe3 a6 7.a31? A trendy line I was experimenting with.

7...b5 8.Øxc6 bxc6 9.Øe2 Øb7 10.Ød2 Øc8 11.Øb6 0-0 12.Øf3 Øc7 13.Øf4 e5

So far, everything went according to my preparation, but here I deviated.

14.Øg3 I honestly have no idea why I played this move. 14.Øg5! is logical and stronger and was played in a stem game. After 14...Øc7 15.Øxf6 Øxf6 16.Ød1 Ød8 17.Øe2 0-0 18.Ød5, White obtained an edge and later won on move 45 in Hou Yifan 2663 - V.Pokkin 2597, Almaty 2016.
GM BARTEK MACIEJA: “I met David for the first time in 2015 when he came to Brownsville to compete in an IM-norm tournament. He was much younger than all the other participants and since then has improved a lot. He is ambitious, has an active style and is not afraid to go for complications against higher rated opponents. And he is often successful! With good coaching, it should take him less than a year to become a GM once OTB tournaments resume.”

Black has protected everything, but it will be difficult for him to untangle.

27...<h4>5 27...<e4! followed by <f5> was a strong alternative.

27...<h4>d5 28.<exd5 A mistake which blows all my advantage. I wanted to win the a-pawn and invade with my rook, but in reality I'm giving Black counterplay. 28...<exd5! was a better choice. Once White plays <e6-f5, he will have a strong positional bind.

28...<g7 28...<e4 29.<exa6 <d4 was another possibility.

29.<exa6 <d8 Rather passive, but not a mistake. 29...<c5∞ was totally playable.

30.<g3 <f5 31.<h4 I chose the most forcing approach, seeing that I had at least a draw there.

31...<hxh4 32.<gxg7 <xg7 33.<a7+<e7 34.<h5

21...<h4 g5 Allowing <x6 would be a positional nightmare for Black.

22.<xg5? I was so tempted by this sacrifice that I chose to play it. I wasn't sure how Black would successfully parry White's attack... Of course, there was nothing wrong with the safe choice 22.<g3+.

22...<hxh5 23.<g5+<h8 24.<e3 Lifting the rook.

24...<h7 25.<h5<g5 25...<g8 26.<f3! was one of my ideas. Another possible defense was 25...<d8, when after 26.<h3 <f5 27.<xf5 <g7 a lot of fight lies ahead.

26.<h3 f6

20...<h6 19.<b3 <c7 20.<c4 0-0

Black is in heavy time trouble, my opponent makes a mistake. After 34.<e7 there was hardly anything better for me than making a draw by 35.<d7 <g5 36.<e6 <xe6 37.<xe6 <f6 38.<g5+<h8 39.<h5+ with perpetual check.

35.<e8!± Black's position is now very difficult. While he tries to resolve the pin along the seventh rank, I can freely advance my b-pawn.

35...<h8 36.<f8 36...<e8 37.<f7± is also very dangerous for Black.

36.<b4<4 No better for Black is 36...<g6,
37...\h6?! Black's position is beyond salvation after this move, but it may have already been lost. Black could try to create counterplay with 37...\e4 38.h6 e3, but White can just play 39.\h1 stopping everything and leaving Black as tied up as he was before.

38.\g6 39.b6 \f6 40.\h4+ \g5 If 40...\f7, then 41.\h3 is winning.

38.\g6 39.b6 \f6 40.\h4+ \g5 If 40...\f7, then 41.\h3 is winning.

41.\b7 \g8 After 41...\b8 I calculated a forced win for White: 42.\a8 \xh7 43.\g6 \xh7+ \f6 45.\h6+ \f5 46.\h3+ \f6 (46...\e4 47.\d3 mate.) 47.\e6 mate.

42.\h6+ \g6 43.\h3 Defending the g2 pawn and eying the e6 square. Black resigned since he cannot stop the pawn from promoting after \a8.

This chaotic and messy game got my tournament off to an excellent start, and after 7 more rounds I managed to earn my 2nd GM norm!

After winning my first round at the US Masters, I "won the lottery" and got paired against the top seed, GM Dariusz Swiercz. Playing against a 2650+ GM is always a challenge, but I wasn't going to back down.

C53

David Brodsky 2428
Dariusz Swiercz 2670

US Masters, Greensboro 2019

1.e4 \e5 2.\f3 \c6 3.\c4 \c5 4.c3 \f6 5.d3 d6 6.0-0 a6 7.a4 \a7 8.\f1 \d4 9.\e2 \f6

14.exf5 \xf5 15.d4 A principled counterstroke in the center.

15...\xh3 16.\xh3+ This is yet another experimental idea that Black has against the Giuoco Pianoissimo. I was on my own here. When I checked after the game, I was horrified to discover that I had analyzed this variation in detail with a friend a few months previously and had forgotten everything!

10.b4 Expanding on the queenside and postponing \b7d2 to not allow ...g7-g5. If 10.\b7d2, then Black's idea is 10...g5. It may appear overambitious, but the following game shows how wrong it can go for White. 11.e1 (Engines claim 11.d4 is good for White, but it's not so clear.) 11...\g6 12.\d1 h5 13.\f2 \e6 14.\f5 \xh5 15.\f3 \f7 16.d4 0-0 17.\h3 \f6 18.\f3 \d5 19.\f5 \g6 20.\f3 \f4 21.\f4 \f5 22.\h4 23.\f5 \f4 24.\f4 \f4 25.\f1 \f3 26.\f2 \f3 27.\xh6 \xd6 28.\f4 \f7 29.\f2 g4 0-1 B.Amin 2709 - B.Adhiban 2582, Zagreb 2018. Also possible is 10.\f2!?

10...\g6 11.\b7d2 0-0 12.\f1 \e6 13.\b75 f7! Overambitious. After a move like 13...\e6 I honestly didn't feel

16.\h8? Technically a mistake. Black should have gone for the endgame after 16...\xh7 17.\xh7+ \xf7 18.\h3 \f6 19.\f5 \a5 20.\f5 \f5 21.\xh6 \xh6 22.\f5, when he is a pawn down, but has serious compensation.

17.\f2 White is simply threatening \h4 and Black is in an awkward situation.
17...\textit{f7} 18.\textit{e4} I was later kicking myself for not including 18.\textit{b5}! \textit{a5} before playing 19.\textit{a4}, since the knight is much worse on a5 than on c6, and \textit{b3} ideas aren't so dangerous.

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18.\textit{h6} 19.\textit{g3} \textit{d5} 20.\textit{h4}

20.\textit{e4}? 20...\textit{xf3}! 21.\textit{gxh3} \textit{exd4} was Black's best shot at counterplay. Now it would be the moment to regret not having included \textit{b4} first, since with the black knight on a5 this wouldn't be possible. At higher depth, the engine claims that White is better, but to human eyes it's totally unclear. Here's a line that illustrates it: 22.\textit{hxh6} \textit{gxh6} (22...\textit{d3} 23.\textit{xd2} \textit{gxh6} 23.\textit{d4} 25.\textit{f6} c2 26.\textit{xc2} \textit{e5} 27.\textit{h5}, White should be winning.) 24.\textit{b5} \textit{fxe3} 25.\textit{cx4} \textit{e5} 26.\textit{hxh6}.

21.\textit{g5} \textit{g6} 22.\textit{xf5}? This wins the exchange, but the engines suggest a stronger resource, 22.\textit{xg4}, which is far from intuitive trick I missed.

22.\textit{hxh6} \textit{gxh6} 24.\textit{xf5} \textit{e5} 25.\textit{exe4}+

\textit{xe4} is up an exchange, but Black has some compensation.

24.\textit{ef8} 25.b5 \textit{ce7}? The losing mistake. 25...\textit{a5} would have kept the game going due to a trick I missed.

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26.\textit{xc7} (26.\textit{c5} is stronger.) 26...\textit{b8} 27.\textit{xax5} \textit{h4}! after which Black can actually salvage a draw.

26.\textit{a3}! Black can't resolve the pin.

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GM FARUKH AMONATOV:

"I met David just over a year ago and started working with him. He was already an international master with a decent rating and one GM norm. It was clear to me that this talented boy has excellent prospects. He is currently one of the strongest juniors in his age category and has now completed all his remaining GM norms. His opening repertoire is at a high level and he is particularly strong in complex positions as his calculating skills are excellent. Moreover in recent months David has significantly improved his endgame knowledge (thanks to several chess camps) and he reminds me of the young Morozevich – playing any position with fear. In my opinion he has great potential and I am sure that soon his results will reach a very high level."

26...\textit{c5} 27.\textit{bxc6} \textit{xc6} 28.\textit{exe7} \textit{b8} 29.\textit{xf8}! The key idea. White gives up his queen gaining two rooks and a minor piece in return.

29...\textit{xf4} 30.\textit{xf4} \textit{g5} 31.\textit{xd5}! The practical choice. Of course White is also winning after 31.\textit{h5} \textit{xc3} but I felt that Black has better swindling chances here than in the game.

31...\textit{g5} 32.\textit{a1} \textit{g8} 33.\textit{c5}

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33...\textit{e3}? Infiltration on the e-file would be a disaster for Black.

34.\textit{fxe4} 35.\textit{a5}? h5 36.\textit{d2} \textit{f7} 37.\textit{d5} \textit{e6} 38.\textit{f1} \textit{h4} 39.\textit{f9}+ \textit{d7} 40.\textit{f7}+ \textit{g8} 41.\textit{d6} \textit{xh1}+ 42.\textit{xb1} \textit{f6} 43.\textit{b6}+ \textit{d7} 44.\textit{f7}+ \textit{x} 45.\textit{d7} \textit{xb1}+ 46.\textit{f1}

Black resigned.
My first win against a world top-100 player! This very high quality game put me on the track to get my 3rd and final GM norm.

8...\f5 9.\e1 \xd2 10.\xd2 \xd3 11.\xd3 0-0 12.\c3 \d7 13.\f4 a6 14.\e2 \ae8 15.\ae1 \d8
dubious move which surprised me. I'm not realistically threatening \g4 and \xh6 anytime soon. Both 24...c5?? and 24...\e8 should equalize.

25.\e3 \g5 26.\g4 I chose to go for a slightly better endgame.

26...\xg4 27.\xg4 \e4 28.\xf4 \d6 29.f3

As usual over Thanksgiving, I was playing in the National Chess Congress in Philadelphia. This time, (a lot of) luck was on my side, and going into the last round, I was tied for first with 4½/5. My talented opponent was having a fantastic tournament, having beaten two GMs in back to back rounds.

C42

David Brodsky 2466
Jason Liang 2261

National Chess Congress, Philadelphia 2019

1.e4 e5 2.\f3 \f6 A surprise.

3.\xe5 d6 4.\f3 \xe4 5.d4 d5 6.\xd3 \xc6 7.0-0 \e7

22.\d2? Perhaps my only mistake. 22.\h2 \d8 23.\g4 was the right way to get to e3. One key difference is that 23...\e6 runs into 24.\xf5!.

22...\d8! Now that my knight has moved away from f3 and can no longer go to e5, Black maneuvers his knight to e6.

23.\f1 \e6 24.\d2 \h8! A

29...\e8?! This may not have been the wisest decision due to the game continuation. 29...\g8 30.\f2 c6 is unpleasant for Black, but it's hard to see what White plays next. Of course, not 30...\e8 because of 31.\xd6 \xe1 32.\xf8 with material advantage.

30.\xh8 \xh8 31.\e3 c6 32.c4! I switch from positional to tactical.

32...\xc4 33.\xc4 \xf6 34.\c5 \xh5

35.\a5 After I win the b7 pawn, the c6 pawn will be very weak. Black's biggest problem for now is his knight, which is stuck on h5.

35...\f6 35...\f6 36.\xf6 \xf6 37.\xb7 is hopeless for Black. 35...\h7! 36.\xb7 \g6, followed by ...\f6 is the engine's
suggestion, but White is still clearly better.

36...c7 g5 37...xb7 g7 38...b6 38...d8! was stronger. I underestimated how good 38...c5 39.d5 e8 40.b8 is for White.

38...f5 39.f2 h5 Black logically tries to create play on the kingside.

40.d8 d6 41.g4 hgx4 42.fxg4 h6 43.g7 44.c5 h2 45.xc6

52.b7!? A practical decision. I could have played 52.e5 first, but I still wasn't sure about 52.f5 53.b7 h4+ 54.xf1 g3 55.b8 g2+ 56.e2 g1= which after which it looks like White should have something, but it's not obvious.

The engine finds 57.wb7+ x5 f5 58.wd7+ xe4 59.gb4! which wins on the spot, but this isn't the easiest resource to envision from afar.

52...c7 He decides not to allow e5. While this prolongs the fight, I was 100% confident in my ability to win the ensuing endgame. 52...f5 53.e5 would transpose to the 52.e5 note above.

53.b6 d6 54.b8 b8 55.b8 f5 56.e6 e3+ 57.g3 c4 58.xa5 d5 59.e7+ xd4 60.b4

Next, White wants to advance his passed pawns, but Black has counterplay.

45...f5 46.xf5 d6 47.c4 Unfortunately 47...e7 x5 48.xf5 xf5 isn't nearly enough to win.

47...x5 47...g4+ 48.hg2 c7 49.a4 x5f may have been a better try, but it isn't clear if it holds.

48.a4 g4+ 49.hg2 f4 50.b5! After this move, I knew I was winning.

50...a5 If 50...axb5, then 51.a5++ is the key idea.

51.b6 e4

The dust has settled. White will win this endgame slowly but surely, but he has to be careful not to allow a knight trade since he has the wrong-colored bishop.

52.b7 51.a5 a8 62.xg4 c7 63.f5 c4 64.e1 b5 65.e5 a6 66.d6 c5 67.c6 e4+ 68.c7 dc5 69.bd4+ da6 70.b e7 71.a3 db8+ 72.d7 db7 73.c7 a7 74.f2 a8

Mission accomplished! Now I have to be careful not to accidentally stalemate Black.

75.d7 b8 76.a6 a8 77.xb7+ There are more efficient ways to win, but I decided to go for an endgame I knew by heart.

77...xb7 78.b6 a6 79.c5 b7 80.g3 c8 81.c6 a7 82.c5 a8 83.d7 a7 84.b6 b4 85.b8 We reach the textbook position. I actually learned the winning technique when I was 6, and 10 years later I get to use it for the first time!

85...a5 a6 c4 87.c5 b3 88.d b4 c3 89.a4 b3 90.d2 a4 91.c4 a5 92.e3 a4 93.b6 a3 94.b3 a4 95.b2 c3 a3 96.c3 a2 97.b2 a2 98.a5+ a2 99.c3 a1 100.b4 a2 101.c1+ a1 102.a3 Mate

With this win, I won one of the biggest tournaments of my life! This technical, positional game was a nice change from some of my more chaotic games, even if there were a few inaccuracies/mistakes.