

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PREMIER CHESS MAGAZINE

# RANK & FILE



## *HOW TO BEAT A GM.* **FINISHING 3RD IN THE US OPEN**

*1000TH GAMBITO!*  
**SAN DIEGO ON A ROLL**

*SUPERSTATES 2023*  
**SCHOLASTIC WINNERS**

*CALL FOR NOMINATIONS*  
**THE 2023 BOARD ELECTION**

**SUMMER 2023**



US CHESS  
STATE AFFILIATE





# OVER THE BOARD

Cover - A So Cal Chess Family: Claire, Gabriel & Cliff Eidelman

*SCCF's Board Leads  
the Way for Chess in  
Southern California*

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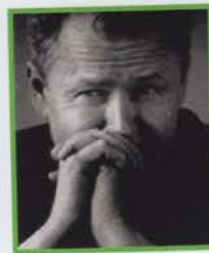
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## EDITOR'S CORNER

Chess is booming in Southern California and we are all reaping the benefits. With the pandemic over, in person chess has returned in force. I am very proud of the organizers and competitors jumping into the action. Records for attendance are being set in nearly all areas, San Diego, Orange County, Los Angeles, Glendale and more. It is incredible to see and as a big ole chess nerd, I love it!

A piece of this action is the fact that the World Championship was held this year. And, for the first time in over a decade Magnus Carlsen was not playing. A lot of grumbling has been around whether it should be considered a World Championship or not due to the fact that the World's strongest player was not there. That is not a good argument however as the rules of this World Championship cycle were structured in case Magnus would not play. It is unfortunate that Nakamura failed to qualify due to this rules quirk but Ding qualifying and winning does one big favor for me. he is in my movie! *King Chess* the documentary film about the 2018 World Championship cycle premiered

this year at the Golden State Film Festival in Hollywood, CA. It was a big success for us. The festival brought in a sales agent that will ink a deal to sell it to a media company this summer. On top of that, Ding being World Champion now is a game changer. We detail his first attempt in the 2018 Candidates tournament along with all of the other amazing players including my favorite Fabiano Caruana. I am offering a cheap sneak peak at [kingchessfilm.com](http://kingchessfilm.com) for a limited time and a free copy to anyone that buys our t-shirt! If you can't afford to support the film, but really want to see it, please email me, [dylanquercia@gmail.com](mailto:dylanquercia@gmail.com) and I'll get you a VIP copy of the film.

Additionally, I am very proud of our Scholastic and Senior State Champions that will be representing So Cal at the National Invitationals. The Irwin Tournament of State Champions, co-champion, Grandmaster Enrico Sevillano will be vying for a repeat. These events are very strong so please check out the SuperStates 2023 article and give a kind word to our representatives!



# 1,000TH GAMBITO

By Chuck Ensey



The Gambito Open number 1,000 was held in January 2023 by the San Diego Chess Club. This weekly event smashed the records with 114 players. The club reduced the entry fee to just \$20 as a nod to the old times - actually it was \$15 when we first started it, but it gradually increased with time because players like winning bigger prizes! The club also threw in an iconic \$1,000 into the prize fund in celebration of this historic event, so the total prize fund came to \$2,900!

The prizes were based on 107 paid entries; there were 7 unrated players who received free entry but were not eligible to win a prize. We tried for 8 sections, but the U1400 wasn't quite big enough so we moved the U1200 section into a combined U1400/U1200 section. I made a little tribute speech to the namesake, Ron Gambito and we held a moment of silence in respect for the founder of the Gambito Open, Bruce Baker, the long time resident Master of the club and a good friend to so many players.

Thank you to all the participants and here are the prize winners:

**Elite Section (16 players)** - 1st Place: Noah Ward (4), \$150. 2nd/3rd Place: Isaac Wang (3) and Alex Y. Wang (3), \$112 each. 4th/5th Place: Marius Gabriel Lucan (2 1/2) and Carlos Varela (2 1/2), \$62 each. Noah is still on a hot streak after drawing with a 2647 rated GM at the Dreaming King Open and tying for 2nd U2200/5th - 7th Place... Noah also became at Master (over 2200) at the DKO. The Elite section had 5 Masters and 11 Experts!

**Open Section (29 players)** - 1st/2nd Place: Benjamin Tang (3 1/2) and Esther Jou (3 1/2), \$137 each; 3rd - 6th Place: 5-way tie between players with 3 points: Gordon Xu, Byron Lu, Wesley Rullman, Yanfeng Guo and Alan Peng, \$51 each. These are all familiar names in the winner's circle at the Gambito Open!

**U2000 Section (11 players)** - 1st Place: Zachary Gold (3), \$125; 2nd-4th Place: 3-way tie between

James Humphrey (2 1/2), Arjun Sankar (2 1/2) and Carlos Antaran (2 1/2), \$75 each.

**U1800 Section (13 players)** - 1st Place: Sai Pulagam (4), \$125; 2nd Place: Ken Green (3), \$100; 3rd/4th Place: Tosshaan Thapar (2 1/2) and Giancarlo Paniagua (2 1/2), \$62 each.

**U1600 Section (13 players)** - 1st Place: Ryan Mike (4), \$125; 2-4th Place: Frank Kronewitter (3), Arjun Jagan (3) and Samarth Raghavan (3), \$75 each.

**U1400/U1200 Section (16 players)** - 1st/2nd U1400: Ryuta Nunez (3 1/2) and Toby Chen (3 1/2), \$112 each; 1st/2nd U1200: Howard Wang (3) and Jason Nunez (3), \$112 each; 3rd U1400: Jacob Liu (2 1/2) and Xingtí Gu (2 1/2), \$37 each; 3rd U1200: Nicholas Cespedes (2 1/2), \$75.

**U1000 Section (16 players):** 1st Place: Shishir Soda-gudi (4), \$100; 2nd Place: Omar Orduno (3), \$60; Best Unrated: Niles Gattani (3) and Edwin Antonio (3), free entry to next event they play in; 3rd Place: Mateo Higuera (2 1/2), \$40; 4th Place: Hemish Parikh (2), Greg Deuerlein (2) and Joshua Nordyke (2), \$7 each.

Jim Harrell acted as Tournament Director and Chuck Ensey as Assistant TD. It was rated early last night thanks to the great job Jim does of getting all those unrated players assigned new ID numbers and also getting any expired memberships updated so the event can be rated within one hour after submission.

Thanks everyone for playing; we love all of you! True sportsmanship was on display and every one was on their best behavior. New friends were made and all had a great time! The playing hall was completely filled with 29 tables, 4 players each (29 x 4 = 116!). There were 4 house players that filled in for one game each: Paul Agron in the Elite, Buddy Morris in the Open, Javier Betancourt in the U1800 and Wassam Auef (unrated) in the U1000.

## Serving California Chess Families





# HOW TO BEAT A GM

By NM Gabriel Eidelman



The U.S. Open is an annual event that has been taking place since 1900. It's one of the most exciting open events in the United States. This means that there are no sections, so everybody has the chance to play people much higher rated (or much lower-rated).

In 2022, I participated in the U.S. Open in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. That was my first time ever playing in this event, and for that matter ever playing a real open tournament. In the first round, I was paired against a much lower-rated player, and I suffered a really rough loss. I spent hours trying to turn a dead-drawn position into a win, and then, when we were both in time trouble, I made a terrible blunder that immediately cost me the game. An open event like this is not very forgiving to those kinds of losses (especially early on), and I had to spend the next several rounds playing lower-rated players. With that in mind, I came into this year's tournament driven to turn around my record. I was very happy when I found out it was being held at a beautiful resort in Rancho Mirage, CA (right by Palm Springs). As you probably know, it gets pretty hot in the summer there; we were seeing daily temperatures near 110 degrees. However, the tournament hall was well air-conditioned and comfortable. I was staying at the hotel with my good friend Alex Costello, an International Master who also had a great tournament.

I started smoothly with three wins against lower-rated players (who should never be underestimated, as I learned from my last event!), and then was paired against Grandmaster Joshua Sheng. I was very happy to have the chance to face him, but unfortunately, I misplayed the opening and missed a simple tactic (though things were already pretty bad), leaving me a full pawn down quite early. I spent a long time trying to scrape my way out of it but he held it together and took the full point. After beating another lower-rated player, I was paired against the one person I was really hoping I wouldn't have to play: Alex Costello (my roommate). Luckily the game ended in a draw so things weren't too awkward, but it's still tough to come to the game with

the same will to win when playing your friend.

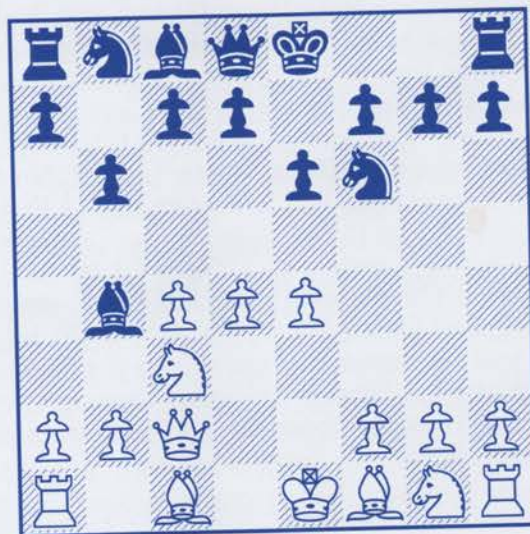
After that game, I beat another lower-rated player and then won a very important game against Robby Adamson, an experienced 2300+ player. This was a tough game that lasted several hours, and coming out on top felt amazing. Then, I was onto the last game of the event, which I knew would be against a Grandmaster considering my high score of 6.5/8. My annotations to this fun, smooth, and hopefully educational game are below.}

Event: 2022 U.S. Open Round: 9

White: Eidelman, Gabriel (2300)

Black: Rozentalis, Eduardas (2695)

**1.d4 e6** a very flexible option for people that are happy to transpose into a French after e4. **2.c4** here Black has many options, including the Queen's Indian defense which I faced unsuccessfully in my game against Joshua Sheng earlier in the tournament. **2...Nf6 3. Nc3 Bb4** And we have a Nimzo Indian, one of the most popular openings. **4. Qc2** white prevents the fracturing of his pawn structure with Bxc3, and prepares for a possible central launch with e4. Black has many options here. The most popular are 0-0, c5, and d5. **4...b6** In my opinion, this move is slightly inaccurate here. It wouldn't be fair to really call it an inaccuracy because it is a mainstream option that has been tried thousands of times as well. However, I don't think it's black's best option and I believe that White gets an advantage after this. **5. e4!**





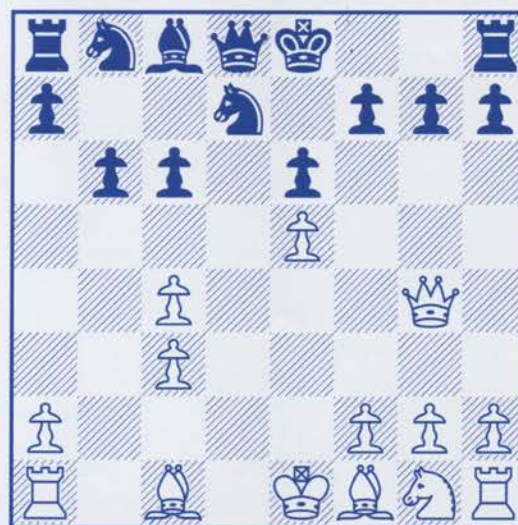
Aggressive and very logical. This move gains space in the center and immediately threatens e5 (when the knight is pretty much out of squares). This means that black should take action in the center before castling. Another benefit of this move is that it restricts the range of motion of his light-squared bishop if he puts it on b7

**5...Bxc3+** My opponent is trying to set up a classical structure where he exchanges the darksquared bishop and then puts his pawns on dark squares (meaning that d6 and e5 come next). In this kind of structure, he can hope that my doubled c-pawns are a long-term weaknesses and that my space advantage isn't worth much.

5... d6 immediately is refuted by 6. Qa4+ 5... c5 is the main option here since there is no way to comfortably get the aforementioned structure, as we will see in the game. This aggressive response poses immediate questions to my center. The problem with it is that once I put my pawn on d5, his light-squared bishop finds absolutely no future on the a8-h1 diagonal, which makes the move b6 a total waste of time. 6. d5 Qe7 now I have to decide how to respond to the pressure down the e-file. The simplest solution in my opinion is 7. Nge2 exd5 8. exd5 followed by developing the dark-squared bishop and queenside castling. White can centralize his pieces very nicely and I like his position.

**6.bxc3** 6.Qxc3? Nxe4 is of course not possible. **6...d6** Getting ready to play e5 and block the center. This is again a move that I don't want to call inaccurate because it is the main move here and the logical follow-up of the previous move, but it seems dubious to me, because of the strong response white has available. 6...Bb7 7.Bd3 Is probably less bad for black.

**7. e5!** It was also very possible to allow e5 and just continue development, but I find the advantage after this move to be much more tangible. I had this move prepared I was very happy to play it and deny him of his plan with e5. **7...dxe5** 8. **dxe5** Nfd7 8... Ng4 is tricky but doesn't change the evaluation. **9. Qe4!** I was still comfortably in my preparation. The only way for Black to defend the rook is by playing c6. This is not what black wants to play; it creates a big weakness on d6, and it makes his development much more difficult. The knight will be robbed of the c6 square and the bishop won't have a good diagonal on b7 **9...c6** **10. Qg4N** (Diagram in the next column)



I quite like this move, forcing black's hand on the kingside. It is the top computer move but all previous games were played with Ba3. Now black has a few ways to defend the g7 pawn, but none of them are very appealing. I'd like to take a moment to take stock of the situation on the board. At first glance, things don't look so good for white. The pawn structure is terrible with double isolated c-pawns, and we have no pieces developed except for the queen. Nonetheless, white has a big advantage. And it's not due to any forcing variations; white retains this advantage with simple development. The main reason is that black is suffering from a lack of space and no good places for his pieces. The c6-pawn makes development very hard, and he has a major permanent weakness on the d6 square.

**10...Kf8?** My opponent played this very quickly. He did not want to create a big problem on the dark squares and figured I had no easy way to attack the uncastled king. However, the inability to castle (kingside or queenside) is a serious long-term issue for black.

**10... g6** This is the other option and is considered the lesser evil by the computer. It creates severe weaknesses on the dark squares, but at least black retains the ability to castle. **11. Nf3** **Qc7** **12. Bf4** **c5** **13. Be2** **Nc6** **14. O-O-O**

**11. Nf3** let's get our pieces developed now! **11...Qc7** **12. Bf4** simple development and protection of e5.

**12...c5** Black's only real plan of development is to play this move and prepare Bb7 and Nc6. **13. Bd3** This was the correct placement of this bishop. I was worried that on e2 it would block the e-file for my own rook to defend the e5 pawn. The bishop also looks generally more active here, pointing at the enemy kingside **13...Bb7**

**14. Rd1!** Is a very nice and subtle move, serving as prophylaxis against black's best continuation. You have to

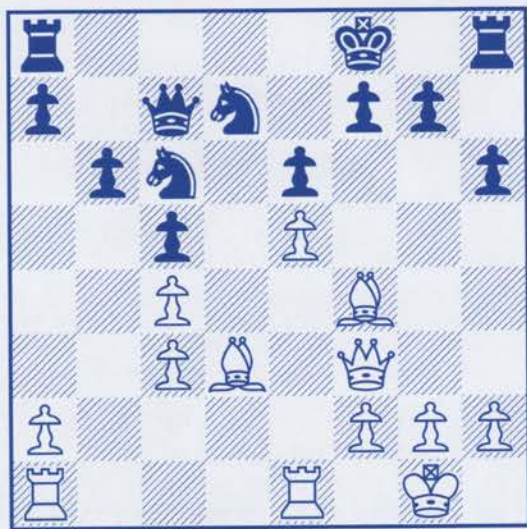
Six seats on the SCCF Executive Board are up for election this summer. If you are interested in serving on the Executive Board, please write the Elections Board at: 4892 Silver Spur Lane, Yorba Linda, CA 92886 or e-mail garden909@aol.com The call for nominations will close June 20, 2022.



look closely and anticipate one specific line to see the difference between this and the game move and he did not end up playing this line, but these kinds of subtleties can make a big difference in the game. 14...h5 15. Qg3 Bxf3 16. gxf3! the key point, when I can start attacking down the g-file too. 16...Nc6 17 Rg1 Rg8

**14. O-O Bxf3?!** This was a very interesting decision made quickly by my opponent. I can understand the general reasoning behind it; he lacks in space so he should therefore exchange pieces so that the pieces he does have more room to breathe. This idea is probably correct in this position. However, his execution was imprecise. 14... h5! It is very clever to gain a tempo on this move before continuing with Bxf3. The inclusion of h5 is very important in some lines. 15. Qg3 Bxf3! Only now should he make the trade. Here is where we see the difference between 14. O-O and 14. Rd1! If I had played Rd1 instead, I could recapture with the pawn and get an attack going down the g-file. The inclusion of h5 would be a weakness in that case, since the extra pawn on h7 would be very helpful in preparing g6 without worrying about a bishop sac. However, in this situation, taking with the pawn is much less appealing due to the castled king. Things get complicated here. 16. Qxf3 Nc6 17 Rf1 Rd8 When, compared to the pawn not being on h5, I am suffering from the concrete issue of how to defend the e5 pawn. White still has a nice advantage after 18. Qg3 h4 19. Qg5 Although already Black can think about ideas like g6 and Rh5. 19...Ndx5 almost works but it's met with the nice: 20. Rxe5!

**15. Qxf3 Nc6 16. Rf1 h6**



This is a pretty strange looking move. I suppose he was looking for some kind of play with g5. Much more logical would have been Rd8, preparing to capture on e5. 16... Rd8 is more tricky. 17 Qg3 White retains a big advantage with Rad1 coming next. Here it would be very useful to have the pawn on 17...Ndx5 loses to either

recapture. 18. Bxe5 Nxe5 19. Rxe5 Rxd3 20. Qxd3 Qxe5 21. Qd8# oops!

**17. Bg3!?** I basically had two ideas in playing this move. For one, I saw it as prophylaxis against the move g5. I figured that if I basically stopped him from doing anything, I would be able to squeeze him to death. The other idea was to prepare Bg6, which would force him to make a super awkward move like Ndb8. 17 Rad1 Is probably most accurate, preparing for Bc2 and an invasion on the d-file. I still like the prophylactic reasoning behind Bg3.

**17... Ke7** My strategy of stopping all of his play paid off. He found no good plan so he just decided to prevent my idea of Bg6 and try to connect his rooks. The problem is that the king is just too vulnerable in the center and his pieces are too constricted. 17... Rd8 18. Bg6 Ndb8 19. Rad1 +- what are his knights doing? 17... Kg8 Was probably better, but look at how silly that h8 rook looks. White retains a decisive advantage, though there is still some work to do. 18. Rad1 +-

**18. Rad1** He can't take my e5 pawn so I decided to centralize my rook and prepare play on the d-file.

**18...Rad8** Trying to challenge my play on the d-file.

**19. Qe4** Simple play. I centralize my queen and get the e-pawn nicely defended. He still can't get his h-rook into play (even though he tried to) because it allows my queen to invade on h7 **19...Rhe8** **20. Bc2** More simple play. If he continued to do nothing I could play Ba4 and Rd6 next. His position is under too much pressure. **20...Kf8** This makes my task much easier, but it's hard to imagine my opponent saving the position anyways. **21. Qh7 Ne7** **22. Qh8+** nice and simple. **22...Ng8**

**23. Bh7 Black Resigns, 1-0.**

A very fun and in many ways, simple game. I was well prepared in the opening, got an extremely comfortable advantage and a position that I understood, focused on preventing all of my opponent's counterplay, and smoothly converted the game. The main thing I hope you take away from this game is that when you have an advantage, focus on understanding what your opponent will play and how he will try to swindle you. If you prevent all of his ideas before they even have the chance to be played, then you can smoothly convert an advantage. Most of the time, when people let an advantage slip, it is because they missed an idea their opponent had. It is dismissed as a blunder and a stupid move, but usually, it stems from a flawed thought process. This caps the best tournament of my life. Excuse me for not going into depth for any of my games against lower-rated players; those games can be just as difficult and the fact that I won all of them gave me the opportunity to face Grandmasters. I hope you enjoyed this article and I hope you are inspired to play in the U.S. Open this year!



# ***SUPERSTATES 2023***

*By Dylan Quercia*

The Annual SuperStates tournament was back in person for the first time since the start of the pandemic in 2020. The event was organized by Super Coach, Jay Stallings and held in Valencia CA. It was quite a success with over 400 students in attendance maxing out the convention center's capacity.

Two prestigious college scholarships of \$4,000 each were offered for the top male and top female finishers in the Championship section. This combined \$8,000 was provided by the 501(c)(3) non-profit Chess Prodigies supported by the 1000GM scholarship fund. This scholarship fund is the largest provided by any state in the United States and will give the winners a head start in funding their education.

The winners of each section were selected as representatives to their respective National Invitational events to be held in late July and August of 2023 alongside the US Open. All of the winners were deemed state champions and will proudly represent Southern California (CA-S). The SCCF & Chess Prodigies have awarded them cumulative stipends of \$400 each to help pay for their travel expenses. Congratulations to all of the players and winners.

Here are the Southern California Champions and Representatives to the 2023 National Invitationals:

**FM Rushaan Mahajan -**  
*GM Arnold Denker National  
Tournament of High School  
State Champions*

**Expert Esther Jou -**  
*WIM Ruth Haring National  
Tournament of Girls State Champions*

**Expert Sihan Tao -**  
*Dewain Barber National Tournament  
of Middle School State Champions*

**Class A Player Glenn Zhang -**  
*John D. Rockefeller III National  
Tournament of Elementary School  
State Champions*



*Students getting ready for their games by Artur Aghajanyan*

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Esther Jou (1989) - Ram Stewart (1395)  
Chess Palace Anniversary 21.08.2022

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Qxd5 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.d4 Bg4 5.Be2 e6  
6.c4 Qd7 7.Nc3 c6 8.h3 Bf5 9.Ne5 Qc7 10.Bf4 Qd8  
11.g4 Bg6 12.h4 h6 13.Nxg6 fxe6 14.Qd3 Kf7  
15.0-0-0 a5 16.h5 g5 17.Qg6+ Kg8 18.Bxg5 hxe6  
19.h6 Qc7 20.Qxg5 Na6 21.Bd3 Bd6 22.Kb1 Nb4  
23.Bg6 Bf4 24.Bf7+ Qxf7 25.Qxf4 Qg6+ 26.Ka1  
Nc2+ 27.Kb1 Na3+ 28.Ka1 Qb1+ 29.Rxb1 Nc2# 0-1



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