HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Dear friends, the Chess Today Team wishes you a Happy and Prosperous New Year – may all your dreams come true in 2003! Enjoy good health, enjoy life and, of course, play good chess!

The New Year Day is always special – people reflect on what happened in the past year and try to look into the future. This day has some magic and I would like to get some of that magic into this issue.

We will leave aside tournament news for a day or two and look at more global events. Let us start with a look back at the most important events of 2002!


Two rising Indian chess stars – Sasikiran (2569) and Harikrishna (2502) tied for 1st at Hastings, together with GM Barsov (2525, Uzbekistan) – on 6½ out of 9.

Viorel Bologan (2668) won a tournament in Pamplona with 7 out of 9, 1½ points clear of Radjabov (another rising star), Almasi and Andersson.

Nigel Short (2663) won his match against Hannes Stefansson (2604) in Reykjavik – 4½:1½!

Larry Christiansen and Nick De Firmian tied for first at the US Championship in Seattle. Christiansen won the tie-break match.

Evgeny Bareev won Corus tournament in Wijk aan Zee with 9 out of 13. Alexander Grischuk was second. Adams and Morozevich tied for third place.

Ukrainian Ruslan Ponomariov became the new FIDE World Champion after defeating his compatriot Vasily Ivanchuk in Moscow – 4½:2½.

Einstein Group plc took over the rights (contracts or arrangements) previously held by the troubled Brain Games Network for the Brains in Bahrain (Man v Machine), Dortmund qualifier and 2003 Chess Championship match against Vladimir Kramnik.

February 2002.

Five GMs – Gregory Kaidanov (USA), Alexander Grischuk (Russia), Aleksej Aleksandrov (Byelorussia), Alexander Shabalov (USA) and Vadim Milov (Switzerland) tied for first at super-strong Aeroflot Open in Moscow (with 6½ out of 9). Kaidanov was first on tiebreak.

GM Eduardas Rozentalis (2598, Lithuania) won the huge open (678 players!) in Capelle la Grande with 7½ out of 9.


Loek van Wely drew his match vs. Rebel – 2:2, all games were decisive and White won every game!

March 2002.

Veselin Topalov and Boris Gelfand tied for first at NAO Masters (cat. 18) in Cannes. The winners scored 6 out of 9. Elo-favourite Alexander Morozevich had probably the worst result in his career, finishing clear last.

Garry Kasparov won Linares (cat. 20) – with 8 out of 12. Ruslan Ponomariov competed with his most of the distance and finished clear second on 6½ points, proving that his result results were justified. Kasparov won their mini-match 1½:½.

GM Yasser Seirawan proposed a plan on unification of the chess world. The
April 2002.

Peter Leko beat Alexander Grischuk in the final of FIDE Grand Prix in Dubai. Alexei Shirov was third. WGM Zhu Chen knocked out Ruslan Ponomariov in the first round of the event.

May 2002.

Vishy Anand won a Rapid Chess tournament in Prague, organised by Bessel Kok. In the final he beat Anatoly Karpov. Kasparov lost to Ivanchuk earlier in the tournament.

Prague Agreement was signed by Ilyumzhinov, Kramnik and Kasparov. There were immediate complaints from some top GMs, who claimed that the agreement left them outside of World Championship for 2 years.

Peter Leko won the Dortmund Qualifier. He beat Alexey Shirov (2½:½), in the semi-final and in the final defeated Veselin Topalov (2½:1½), thus gaining the right to challenge Vladimir Kramnik.

China–USA match took place in Shanghai. The hosts won 20½:19½.

GM Ilia Smirin (2676, Israel) won closed tournament in Biel (cat. 16).

GM Loek Van Wely won the Lost Boys Open in Amsterdam with 8½ points out of 9 – 2949 performance!

August 2002.

Etienne Bacrot won the French Championship, defeating Joel Lautier in the final match.

September 2002.

GM Alexander Lastin (2625) won the
Russian Championship in Krasnodar.

The New Match of the Century took place in Moscow on 8–11 September. It was a 10 round Scheveningen rapid play (25 minutes + 10 seconds per move) tournament between 10 players from Russia and 10 from the Rest of the World. To the surprise of many, ROW won 52–48! GM Yasser Seirawan was captain of the winning team.

Shirov was the top scorer – 7 out of 10!. 3Ks – Kasparov, Kramnik and Karpov had a negative result.

Humpy Koneru became the youngest girl to become a GM, beating the previous record of Judith Polgar.

BOSNA Sarajevo won the European Team Cup, ahead of "Norilsky Nikel" (Norilsk), Polonia Plus GSM (Warsaw) and NAO.

GM Eduard Gufeld (1936–2002) died in USA from a heart attack.

October 2002

Etienne Bacrot beat Boris Gelfand in a match in France – 3½:2½. Only the last game was decisive.

Anand and Xu Yuhua defended their World Cup titles won in Shenyang China in 2000 as they won again in the FIDE World Cup in Hyderabad, India. In the final Anand beat Rustam Kasimdzhanov 1½:½.

Vladimir Kramnik drew against DEEP FRITZ in Bahrain – 4:4. He had an early lead (3:1), but then lost two games.

Young Hungarian GM Peter Acs (2591) won category 17 closed tournament in Netherlands.

November 2002.

Boris Gelfand won rapid tournament in Cap d'Agde, defeating Anatoly Karpov in the final (2:0).

Russia won gold in men's Olympiad in Bled (Slovenia), ahead of Hungary and Armenia.

In the women's event China won again, though Georgia led for most of the tournament. But that team collapsed on the finish. Russia took silver and Poland – bronze.

GMs Viktor Korchnoi and Yona Kosashvili won in Curaçao Open.

GM Thomas Luther (2538) won German Championship.

December 2002.

GM Igor Khenkin (2603, Germany) won strong open in Dominican Republic with 7½ points out of 9, ahead of Peter Svidler, Sergei Volkov, Daniel Fridman and Hikaru Nakamura (7 points).

GM Ilya Smirin won Israeli Championship.

Russian GM Filippov won in the Torre Memorial in Mexico.

Anatoly Karpov defeated his old rival Garry Kasparov in rapid chess match in New York – 2½:1½.

GMs Kasimdzhanov and Bologan share first place at Pamplona.

As I said, the New Year Day is somewhat magic and so today I want to show you some truly beautiful and simply bizarre and weird positions – enjoy our collection!

Kudriashov – I. Ivanov
USSR, 1979

White to play
The last moves were 1.a8# h3!!.
Here White resigned despite being a queen up and able to get another one!
As you can see here, his decision was quite reasonable:
2.b8# f2+ 3.¢h1 g2+ 4.¢h2 5.e5+ 5.¢xh3 gxh3 6.g4 7.¢h5
8.g6 g1+ 9.¢xg1 fxg1#.

2.¢xe1 f2+ 3.¢h1 fxe1#–+

2.¢xf8+ 3.¢xh1 fxe1#+

(from the book ⇒The Most Amazing Chess Moves of All Time's by GM Emms)

In the above position the White king did not survive the attack of Black's passed pawns. In our next few examples the king caught cold, walking too much on the board. Let us start with a classical example:

Averbakh–Kotov
Zurich 1953
1.d4 ¢f6 2.c4 d6 3.¢f3 ¢bd7 4.¢c3 e5 5.e4 ¢e7 6.¢e2 0–0 7.0– 0 c6 8.¢c2 ¢e8 9.¢d1 10.¢b1
a5 11.d5 ¢c5 12.¢e3 ¢c7 13.¢h3
a2 14.¢bc1 g6 15.¢d2 16.¢b8
16.¢b3 17.¢xb3 18.¢h2
17.¢xb3 15.¢h2
18.¢h2
19.¢c2 20.¢g4 21.¢xh4
22.¢dxh4
23.¢xh4
24.¢f3 25.¢e7 26.¢g1
27.¢xg5
28.¢g2 29.¢f2
30.¢e2 (D)

White has better bishop, etc. but the presence of the pawn on h3 allows Black to start beautiful attack:

30...¢xh3+!! 31.¢h6+
32.g4 #f6+ 33.g5 (D)

White's king is on its own and has hard time surviving the attack. Here the easiest way to win was 33...¢g4! 34.¢xf4 35.¢h5 36.¢g6 37.¢xg5 38.¢f3 39.¢h3 40.¢g4 41.¢xf4 42.¢g4 43.¢g4 44.¢xg5 45.¢h4 46.¢g5 47.¢g5 48.¢h4 49.¢g3 50.¢xd6 51.¢b8 52.¢g8 0–1

Another classical example of a queen sacrifice:

Polugaevsky–Nezhmetdinov
[A53] Sochi, 1958
1.d4 ¢f6 2.c4 d6 3.¢c3 e5 4.e4
4.dxe4 5.¢xd4 6.¢d2 g6 7.¢g7 8.¢b2 0–0 9.¢d3 10.¢e2
10.¢e2
11.¢h4 12.¢g3 13.¢f5 14.¢d1 f4 15.¢g2
15.¢g2
16.¢g2 17.¢g2 18.¢xg3
19.¢h3 19.¢f4 20.¢c6 21.¢f2
22.¢f2
23.¢h1 (D)

24...¢xf4!!

Black starts crushing attack. What makes it beautiful is that Black develops the attack with quiet moves,
being a queen down.

25.\(\text{d}x\text{h}2\) \(\text{d}f3+\) 26.\(\text{d}d4\) \(\text{d}g7!\) (D)

27.\(a4\)

White could not save the game, as the following variations show. They are based on the analysis of Nezhmetdinov himself, which you can find in the book *Nezhmetdinov's Best Games of Chess* (available at the GM Square online shop).

27.\(\text{d}g1\) \(\text{d}x\text{g}3\) 28.\(\text{d}e2\) \(\text{d}f3\) 29.\(\text{d}g1\) \(\text{d}d3+\) 30.\(\text{d}c4\) \(\text{d}x\text{b}2+\) 31.\(\text{d}x\text{b}4\) \(\text{d}c3+\) 32.\(\text{d}a3\) \(b5!\) 33.\(\text{d}d4\) \(\text{d}x\text{d}4\) 34.\(\text{d}x\text{f}3\) \(\text{d}c3\) 35.\(\text{d}b4\) \(\text{d}c4+\) 36.\(\text{d}b3\) \(\text{d}a1–+\).

27.\(\text{d}c3\) \(\text{d}d3+\) 28.\(e5\) \(\text{d}x\text{e}5+\) 29.\(\text{d}c4\) \(\text{d}x\text{b}2+\) 30.\(\text{d}x\text{b}4\) \(\text{d}x\text{c}3+\) 31.\(\text{d}a3\) \(\text{d}x\text{d}1\) 32.\(\text{d}x\text{d}1\) \(\text{d}x\text{g}3+\). 27.\(\text{d}f2\) \(c5+\) (or 27...\(\text{d}x\text{f}2\) 28.\(\text{d}e3\) \(\text{d}f3+\) 29.\(\text{d}d2\) \(\text{d}h6+\) 30.\(\text{d}f4\) \(\text{d}x\text{g}3+\)--) 28.\(\text{d}x\text{c}6\) \(\text{d}d3+\) 29.\(e5\) \(\text{d}x\text{e}5+\) 30.\(\text{d}c4\) \(b5+\) 31.\(\text{d}x\text{b}5\) \(\text{d}b8+\) 32.\(\text{d}a4\) \(\text{d}x\text{b}2+\) 33.\(\text{d}a3\) \(\text{d}x\text{d}1–+\).

27...\(c5+\) 28.\(\text{d}x\text{c}6\) \(\text{b}xc6\) 29.\(\text{d}d3\) \(\text{d}x\text{d}3+\) 30.\(\text{d}c4\) \(d5+\) 31.\(\text{d}x\text{d}5\) \(\text{c}x\text{d}5+\) 32.\(\text{d}b5\) \(\text{b}8+\) 33.\(\text{d}a5\) \(\text{d}c6+\) (D)

0–1.

And finally, a modern example, played on the highest level – one of the best games of the past decade!

**Kasparov–Topalov**  
Wijk aan Zee 1999

1.\(e4\) \(d6\) 2.\(d4\) \(f6\) 3.\(c3\) \(g6\) 4.\(e3\)

24.\(\text{d}x\text{d}4!\) \(\text{c}x\text{d}4\) 25.\(\text{e}7+!\) \(\text{b}6\)

26.\(\text{d}x\text{d}4+\) \(\text{d}x\text{a}5\) 27.\(b4+\) \(\text{a}4\)

28.\(\text{c}3\) (D)

Objectively stronger was 28.\(\text{d}a7!\), for example, with the following nice line possible: 28...\(\text{d}x\text{d}5\) 29.\(\text{d}x\text{a}6+\) \(\text{d}x\text{a}6\)

30.\(\text{d}b2\) \(\text{d}c3+\) 31.\(\text{d}x\text{c}3\) \(\text{d}a5\) 32.\(\text{d}b2\)

\(\text{e}6\) 33.\(\text{d}x\text{e}6\) \(\text{f}x\text{e}6\) 34.\(\text{d}b3+\) \(\text{d}x\text{b}3\)

35.\(\text{c}x\text{b}3\) #.

28...\(\text{d}x\text{d}5\) 29.\(\text{a}7\) \(\text{b}7\) 30.\(\text{a}b7\)

\(\text{c}4\) [30...\(\text{d}e8\)] 31.\(\text{d}x\text{f}6\) \(\text{d}a3\)

32.\(\text{d}x\text{a}6+\) \(\text{d}x\text{b}4\) 33.\(\text{d}c3+\) \(\text{d}x\text{c}3\)

34.\(\text{d}a1+\) \(\text{d}d2\) 35.\(\text{d}b2+\) \(\text{d}d1\)

36.\(\text{f}1\) (D)

Is not chess beautiful?! Just look at what a journey the black king had to take!

36...\(\text{d}d2\) 37.\(\text{d}d7!\) \(\text{d}x\text{d}7\) 38.\(\text{a}x\text{c}4\)

\(\text{b}xc4\) 39.\(\text{d}x\text{h}8\) \(\text{d}d3\) 40.\(\text{a}a8\) \(c3\)
While all people enjoy attacks on the king, I also find pleasure in unusual positions. Like this one:

**Smyslov–Pachman**

Moscow Ol 1956

Queen's Gambit Declined

1.c4 ²f6 2.²c3 e6 3.d4 d5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.²g5 c6 6.e3 h6 7.²h4 ²f5 8.²f3 ²b6 9.²xf5 ²xb2 10.²c8+ ²e7 11.²xd5+ cxd5 12.²c1 ²b4+ 13.²e2 ²b5+ 14.²f3 ²d7 15.²xf6+ ²xf6 (D)

What a weird position, with kings on f3 and f6, instead of knights! This is some kind of 'Improved Petroff'! :-)

White is better because he has healthier pawn structure – the d5- and b7- pawns are somewhat weak.

16.g3 ²f5+ 17.²g2 ²d6 18.²d1 g6 19.²d3 ²e6 20.²b1 ²c6 21.²xb7 ²ab8 22.²xb8 ²xb8 23.²e2 ²g7 24.²a4 ²e7 25.²b1 ²xb1 26.²xb1 ²b8 27.²c2 h5 28.²b5 ²c7 29.h4 a6 30.²b7 1–0

Pawns chains can take various configurations and some are quite spectacular. Look at this game:

**Epishin–Baburin**

Vienna Open 1998

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 ²c6 4.²e3 ²f6 5.²c3 e5 6.d5 ²a5 7.²f3 ²d6 8.²a4+ ²d7 9.²xa5 a6 10.²c5 b6 11.²xd6 bxa5 12.²a3 ²b5 13.b3 ²xe4 14.²xe4 cxb3 15.0-0-0 bxa2 (D)

Both sides have tripled pawns – double Irish pawn centre!!

28.²d2 fxg3 29.²f3 gxh2+ 30.²xh2 ²fg8 31.²h3 ²g4 32.²e6 ²xc4 33.²f6 ²g7 34.²xf5 ²xc2 35.²g5 ²e7 36.²h4 ²d4 37.²f4
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\[\begin{array}{c}
\text{\(b5\)} 38.\text{a4} & \text{\(c3\)} 39.\text{c4} & \text{\(e6e2\)} \\
40.\text{c6} & \text{\(d5\)} 41.\text{xc2} & \text{\(xc2\)} \\
42.\text{xd5} & \text{\(xe6\)} 43.\text{d6} & \text{\(\frac{1}{2}\)–\(\frac{1}{2}\)}
\end{array}\]

Pieces sometimes find most bizarre places to be in. Some positions are just hilarious (or sad, if you have such a piece!). One example, which I witnessed in Copenhagen in 1996:

**Tseshkovsky–Nouro**
Politiken Cup, Copenhagen 1996

\text{XIIIIIIIIY} \\
9-+-+-+-+0 \\
9tRp+-+-+-0 \\
9-+p+pmkp+0 \\
9zP-sn-+-+p0 \\
9-+-+-+-zP0 \\
9+-+-+-zP-0 \\
9r+-+-zPK+0 \\
9+-+-+-+N0 \\
xiiiiiiiiy

Black to play

White is not only a pawn down, he also effectively has a piece less.
41...\text{b2} 42.\text{a8} \text{a2} 43.\text{h3} \text{b3} \\
44.\text{f8+} \text{g7} 45.\text{c8} \text{xa5} 46.\text{f3} \\
b5 47.\text{g4} \text{f6} 48.\text{h8} \text{xg4+} \\
49.\text{fxg4} \text{c4} 50.\text{g3} \text{a3} 51.\text{h5} \\
gxh5 52.\text{gxh5} \text{c3} 53.\text{f8+} \text{g7} \\
54.\text{f5} \text{b4} 55.\text{h6+} \text{g6} 56.\text{h4} \text{f5}+ 0-1.

While the white knight was a very sad piece in the above game, sometimes putting your knights to an edge can be interesting. I was pretty impressed with this game:

**Psakhis–Speelman**
Hastings 1987/1988

1.d4 \text{f6} 2.c4 \text{g6} 3.\text{f3} \text{g7} 4.\text{g3} \\
5.cxd5 \text{exd5} 6.\text{g2} \text{b6} 7.0-0 \\
\text{c6} 8.e3 0-0 9.\text{c3} \text{e8} 10.\text{e1} \\
\text{e5} 11.d5 \text{a5} 12.e4 \text{c6} 13.\text{c2} \text{xd5} \\
14.\text{exd5} \text{f5} 15.\text{e2} \text{d7} 16.\text{d1} \\
\text{a4} 17.b3 \text{d6} 18.\text{d2} \text{e8} \\
19.\text{ea1} \text{e4} 20.\text{a3} \text{e5} 21.\text{f1} \\
\text{f6} 22.\text{ab5} \text{xb5} 23.\text{xb5} \text{a6} \\
24.\text{xc8} \text{xc8} 25.\text{a7} (D)

Speelman himself gave this move "?!" in his book, for objectively it is not sound. But it is very creative and for that deserves '!!'.

22.\text{c4} \text{d4} 23.\text{b3} \\
\text{b5} 24.\text{b2} \text{ac3} 25.\text{a4} \text{d1} \\
26.\text{b1} \text{a3} 27.\text{c1c1} \text{xb1}

28.\text{xb1} f5 29.\text{b7} g5 30.\text{a6} f4 \\
31.\text{d3} \text{xd3} 32.\text{exd3} \text{xd3} \\
33.\text{e2} \text{d5} 34.gxf4 \text{gxf4} 35.\text{e1} \\
\text{b2} 36.\text{c3} \text{d3} 37.\text{g1} \text{b4} \\
38.\text{g7+} \text{f8} 39.\text{a2} \text{d3} 0-1

Again, this game is another good reason to visit GM Square shop in 2003! :-) There you can find excellent the book 'Jon Speelman's Best Games'.

I once had ventured with my knight to a similar square too:

**Baburin – J. Horvath**
Budapest 1992

1.d4 \text{f6} 2.c4 \text{g6} 3.\text{f3} \text{g7} 4.\text{g3} \\
d5 5.cxd5 \text{exd5} 6.\text{g2} \text{b6} 7.0-0 \\
\text{c6} 8.e3 0-0 9.\text{c3} \text{e8} 10.\text{e1} \\
e5 11.d5 \text{a5} 12.e4 \text{c6} 13.\text{c2} \text{xd5} \\
14.\text{exd5} \text{f5} 15.\text{e2} \text{d7} 16.\text{d1} \\
\text{ac4} 17.b3 \text{d6} 18.\text{d2} \text{e8} \\
19.\text{ac1} \text{e4} 20.\text{a3} \text{e5} 21.\text{f1} \\
\text{xf6} 22.\text{ab5} \text{xb5} 23.\text{xb5} \text{a6} \\
24.\text{xc8} \text{xc8} 25.\text{a7} (D)

Not that I was happy to make that move... But everything else was even worse! Strangely, I survived in the game.

25...\text{e8} 26.\text{e3} f4 27.\text{c5} \text{f5}
Finally, let us look at some strange bishops:

Porreca–Bronstein
Belgrade 1954
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♘f5 5.♕g3 ♘g6 6.h4 h6 7.♗h3 ♘h7 8.♗c4 ♗c4 9.♕f4 ♘bd7 10.0–0 ♘c7 11.♖e1 ♗g8!? (D)

Again, very creative thinking! Black wants to play ...e6, but he does not want to allow any sacrifices on that square. So, his move is pretty logical!

12.♗d3 e6 13.♕f4 ♘d6 14.♕xd6 ♘xd6 15.♗f5 ♗f8 16.♗f3 0–0–0 17.♕g3 ♗h7 18.a4 ♘xd3 19.♕xd3 ♘d6 20.a5 a6 21.a4 ♗a3 g5 22.h5 ♗f4 23.♗e2 ♘c7 24.c3 ♗he8 25.♗e4 ♘xe6 26.♗xe6 ♘xe4 27.♗xe4 ♘f6 28.♗f3 g4 29.♗d1 ♗g8 30.♗e5 ♗d5 31.♗a4 ♗g5 32.♖b3 ♘dxe5 33.dxe5 ♗d7 34.♗d1 ♗xe5 35.♗e4 ♗xh5 36.♗xg4 ♗xg4 37.♖xg4 ♘xa5 38.♖g7 ♘f5 39.g4 ♗f6 40.♗g2 ♗d6 41.♗g3 e5 42.♗g8 ♗d5 0–1

If you come across unusual or bizarre positions, please send them in PGN or Chess Base format to ababurin@iol.ie. We will publish them in Chess Today!

Stay tuned – Chess Today will get even better in 2003!

Contact information. Do you want to report a tournament or have a suggestion concerning Chess Today?