

Prisoner Express Chess Club

Chess Newsletter Fall 2023
One World, One Board



by **Raheem 725**

To our existing subscribers and new subscribers to the Chess Newsletter, Welcome! Prisoner Express is so grateful to each and every one of you for taking the time to read this newsletter. If you have been subscribed to the Chess Newsletter previously, you may remember that as the new chief editor, I have been trying to take this newsletter into a different direction than how it was run previously. Chess is a beautiful sport that I believe goes beyond technical ability. Chess is about you, your opponent, and the intimate relationship carved from the game.

In that regard, I would like to maintain a relationship with you, the readers, as well. If you have any questions, if you like or dislike something, or have a suggestion or would like to request more information about anything, please do not hesitate to send me a letter and hopefully I can help as many people as I can. After all, this newsletter is meant for you, and I want to create something you can all relate to. Enjoy the rest of the newsletter!

.....



In the previous newsletter, I put an emphasis on Connection and Communication. This edition, I want to highlight a theme that is similar, but still just as necessary to put a spotlight on: Sharing Common Ground. Chess has been played for centuries, and almost every culture has its own variation of the game. Yes, it's a game of you vs. your opponent, but it's also a game of you *and* your opponent, and that's the idea I want to impart on you all with this newsletter.

As the world is ever-changing and growing around me, I find myself drawn to the things that I can learn about other countries and cultures. But it's grown exhausting sifting through all of the news about the world, and recently, I've realized why: there's always an emphasis on stressing the differences between others and ourselves rather than showing us what there is to appreciate about each other.

Through this edition of the Chess Newsletter, I would like to tackle this issue. The world we live in is a hectic one, with turmoil in every corner you look for any reason you can imagine. But at the end of the day, it's still the same world we're all a part of, and it's the same thing with chess. No matter what your relationship to your opponent is, the fact of the matter is that we all share the same board.

Chess in Words

“A King can stand people’s fighting but won’t last long if people start **thinking.**”

- Will Rogers

“The chessboard is the **world**, the pieces are the phenomena of the Universe, the rules of the game are what we call the laws of Nature and the player on the other side is hidden from us.”

- Thomas Huxley

“Life is a kind of chess, with struggle, competition, good and ill events.”

- Benjamin Franklin

“A chess game is a dialogue, a conversation between a player and his opponent. Each move by the opponent may contain threats or be a blunder, but a player cannot defend against threats or take advantage of blunders if he does not first ask himself: What is my opponent planning after each move?”

- Bruce A. Moon



Interview in NYC

This summer, I was in New York City for 10 weeks for my job. I had seen it before on TV and in books, but for the first time, I got to witness firsthand the multitude of people who played chess in parks against strangers in NYC. Some came after work, some were homeless, some were just trying to kill some time, but in the end, everyone who played did it because they loved the game and the unity it brought within the community. One day, walking through Washington Square Park on my way home from work, one of the players called me over to play and we struck up a conversation. I didn't want to let this opportunity go to waste and was able to get a brief interview with him after explaining to him my role in creating this newsletter. For the sake of privacy, the condition was that I would not share his name, so I'll refer to him as "A."

Me: Thank you for doing this. For the sake of time, I'll only ask a few questions and you can give me short answers.

A: Sounds good.

Me: Great. First question: Where do you spend your free time?

A: Right here. Don't got much else to do when I'm not at work.

Me: Why chess? What's so special about chess that it takes up so much of your time?

A: Look around, man. It's fun. When you reach a certain age, you start to find the value in talking to people you wouldn't normally get to. Normally someone dressed up like you wouldn't see me if I was standing right in front of them. Right?

Me: Maybe, yeah.

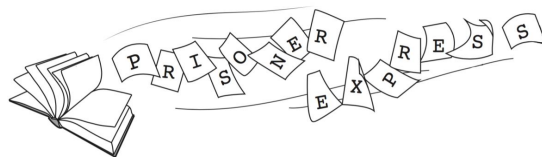
A: But now, we're here talking. Chess is a vessel, man.

Me: You're right, that makes sense. I'm glad you decided to call me over 'cause I like these types of conversations. Last question: Is there anything you want to leave with the readers? Like, a last message?

A: Nobody needs a message from me, man. I'm just a guy in the park! [laughs]

Me: Fair enough [laughs]! Thanks for your time.

I am incredibly grateful to A for giving me his permission to post this interview in our newsletter for this fall. Let me know if you like this kind of engagement and we can try to continue having interviews as a mainstay in future newsletters.



Chess Trivia

There are many ways to interact with the game of chess - playing the game, through math, through literature, etc. In the previous edition, I presented an alternative: Chess Trivia! Read the rules, play with others, and let me know if you like the idea and want me to keep this segment in the next edition!

Rules:

- **There are three tiers of question difficulty:**
 - **Tier 1 Questions: 10 points**
 - **Tier 2 Questions: 30 points**
 - **Tier 3 Questions: 50 points**
- **Tier 1 Questions are the easiest to answer**
 - **Each correct answer for Tier 1 is worth 10 points**
- **Tier 2 Questions are medium level difficulty**
 - **Each correct answer for Tier 2 is worth 30 points**
- **Tier 3 Questions are the hardest to answer**
 - **Each correct answer is worth 50 points**
- **Each question is a chess trivia question that you can memorize and play with your friends**
- **The aim of the game is to answer as many chess questions correctly as possible**
- **Take turns answering, giving each other the option of a Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3 question to answer and select a question at random within the Tier for your opponent to answer**

The first one to 200 points is the winner!

Trivia Game Questions

Tier 1:

1. How many squares does a chessboard have?
2. What is it called when a player can't defend an attack against their king?
3. Which player starts first in a game of chess?
4. In what year was the first game of chess ever recorded?
5. Who is regarded as the greatest chess player of all time?
6. How many total pieces are there at the start of a chess game?
7. How many spaces is the King allowed to move at a time?
8. Which chess piece has the most options in terms of how it is allowed to move?
9. What is the highest title for a professional chess player?
10. What is the only piece on a chessboard that cannot put the King in check?
11. Which chess piece has the lowest point value?
12. Which chess piece can only move diagonally?
13. Who is the current World Chess Champion as of 2023?
14. Which chess piece has the highest point value?
15. What is the term used to describe the situation where the King has been put in danger?

Tier 2:

1. What is the maximum number of knights a player can have on the board in a game of chess?
2. How many rows of pawns are there at the beginning of a chess game?
3. Which country hosted the first official World Chess Championship?
4. Who was the first American-born World Chess Champion?
5. What's the name for the style of chess where players only have a set amount of time to make all of their moves?
6. Which piece was added last to the modern game of chess?
7. Which chess player has won the most world championship matches?
8. Which characteristics are used to define a square on a chessboard?
9. What is the initial arrangement of the chessboard called?
10. What's the term for a move that simultaneously attacks two pieces?
11. What is the average number of possible moves per position in chess?
12. What is the world record for the longest game of chess ever played?
13. Which chess piece is depicted on the logo of the World Chess Federation (FIDE)?
14. What was the rook formerly known as?
15. Who is regarded as the highest ranking female chess player of all time?

Tier 3:

1. What technique is also known as the Four Move Checkmate?
2. What is the special name for the endgame scenario of King and Rook vs. King?
3. What is the name of the strategy that involves attacking the f7 or f2 squares as they are only protected by the king?
4. Who was the first World Chess Champion to win the title without losing a single game in the match?
5. What is the first move of the Scandinavian Defense?
6. What is the standard time control for classical chess games in most tournaments?
7. What is the chess move 1.e4 known as?
8. What's the term for a series of moves that forces an advantageous end?
9. What is the term for a draw achieved by a repetition of moves?
10. Which famous American rapper is known for his love of chess and has even incorporated it into his music videos?
11. What is the world record for the largest number of simultaneous chess games played by a single person?
12. What is the name for a situation in which any move a player makes will worsen their position?
13. Which grandmaster is known for playing blindfold chess?
14. How many positions are there for the eight queens puzzle on an 8x8 chessboard?
15. What opening results after the moves 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5?

Chess News

Champions Chess Tour



The Champions Chess Tour is a series of 6 chess tournaments that take place from February 3rd, 2023, starting with the Airthings Masters Tournament through to December 22 with the Champions Chess Tour Finals as the conclusion.

In the previous edition of the newsletter, I focused on the first two tournaments that took place: the Airthings Masters Tournament and the Chessable Masters Tournament. While Grandmaster Magnus Carlsen, a 5-time World Champion, ended up winning the Airthings Masters Tournament, it took an enthralling 6 game set against Grandmaster Hikaru Nakamura. Nakamura ended up taking home the prize money in the Chessable Masters Tournament, beating out Carlsen after a misinput on his keyboard, as well as Fabiano Caruana in the finals after a 7-game set.

Since then, the 6 segments of the tournament have been completed and all that remains are the Semi-finals that take place from December 4th-12th, and the finals which take place December 15th-22nd. Somewhat unsurprisingly, Magnus Carlsen is currently the top ranked player in the tournament as a whole after winning 3 out of the 6 total segments, despite only participating in 5 of them.

The third segment in the tournament was the ChessKid Cup, which Carlsen opted not to participate in. Fighting to fill the gap left behind, the top chess players battled it out to claim the

vacant crown, and in something of a surprise, Uzbekistan's Nodirbek Abdusattorov earned the top prize after beating out Fabiano Caruana, who has the third highest rating of all time.

Carlsen returned for the Aimchess Rapid segment that took place from July 10-14. The Norwegian was back with a bang, immediately returning to his place as the victor against America's Wesley So, who finished in second place.

It was back-to-back wins for Carlsen, who finished first place again in the Julius Baer Generation Cup that took place from August 30th to September 3rd. He faced off against France's Alireza Firouzja in the final.

In the sixth and final segment of the Champions Chess Tour, the AI Cup, Carlsen faced off against another French opponent: Maxime Vachier-Lagrave. This segment took place from September 25-29, and surprisingly enough, Carlsen was finally knocked off his pedestal, with Vachier-Lagrave clinching the top spot. Despite an amazing start early on in the tour, Hikaru Nakamura never returned to the leaderboards.

The Semi-finals are rapidly approaching with \$500,000 on the line. Only 8 players remain. In order of their rankings based on their successes throughout each segment, the final 8 players are: Magnus Carlsen (1), Nodirbek Abdusattorov (2), Fabiano Caruana (3), Hikaru Nakamura (4), Wesley So (5), Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (6), Alireza Firouzja (7), and Denis Lazavik (8). All 8 remaining players are Grand Master level, so these next two rounds promise to be thrilling. With a further \$500,000 on the line for the winner of the final, it will be fascinating to experience the twists and turns that await us in December.

Chess Trivia Solutions

Tier 1:

1. 64
2. Checkmate
3. Whoever is playing with white pieces
4. 1475
5. Garry Kasparov
6. 32
7. 1
8. The Queen
9. Grandmaster
10. The opposing King
11. The pawn
12. The bishop
13. Ding Liren
14. The king
15. Check

Tier 2:

1. 10
2. 2
3. USA
4. Bobby Fischer
5. Speed Chess
6. The Queen
7. Emmanuel Lasker
8. A number and a letter
9. Starting position
10. Fork
11. 30
12. 20 hours and 15 minutes
13. The King
14. Tower
15. Judit Polgar

Tier 3:

1. The Scholar's Mate
2. Philidor position
3. Fishing Pole Trap
4. Anatoly Karpov
5. 1...D.5
6. 90 minutes for the first 40 moves, followed by 30 minutes for the rest of the game

7. King's Pawn Opening
8. Combination
9. Threefold Repetition
10. Wu-Tang Clan's Rza
11. 686 games by Grandmaster Alik Gershon
12. Zugzwang
13. George Koltanowski
14. 92
15. Ruy-Lopez Opening

The Mechanics of Chess

From this point on, the newsletter will focus more on the technical aspect of chess, including sample techniques you can use to improve your own game, practice checkmate scenarios, and a refresher of the notation of the game. There is also a chessboard attached at the end of the packet for you to practice with however you see fit! Enjoy!

Refresher of rules/notation/etc. reference

Symbol	Meaning	Symbol	Meaning
K	King	Q	Queen
R	Rook	B	Bishop
N	Knight	x	Captures
+	Check	++ or #	Checkmate
O-O	Castles King's side	O-O-O	Castles Queen's side

- Move number.
 - Piece abbreviation (if not a Pawn.)
 - Coordinates of destination square (file/rank).
1. Nc3
-

8	a8	b8	c8	d8	e8	f8	g8	h8
7	a7	b7	c7	d7	e7	f7	g7	h7
6	a6	b6	c6	d6	e6	f6	g6	h6
5	a5	b5	c5	d5	e5	f5	g5	h5
4	a4	b4	c4	d4	e4	f4	g4	h4
3	a3	b3	c3	d3	e3	f3	g3	h3
2	a2	b2	c2	d2	e2	f2	g2	h2
1	a1	b1	c1	d1	e1	f1	g1	h1
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h

CAN ONLY MOVE ONCE EXCEPT WHEN IT MAKES ITS FIRST MOVE
AND THEN IT CAN MOVE 2 TIMES

CAN ONLY GO FORWARD AND CAPTURE
DIAGONALLY

PAWN



KNIGHT

MOVES IN AN L SHAPE; 2 UP 1 LEFT
OR RIGHT-OR-1 UP 2 LEFT OR RIGHT

ONLY PIECE THAT CAN
JUMP OVER ANOTHER

CAN ONLY CAPTURE WHEN JUMPING
IF LANDS ON SQUARE WITH ENEMY



BISHOP

A BISHOP MAY ONLY MOVE DIAGONALLY
AND CAN MOVE AS FAR AS ITS
LINE OF SIGHT

A ROOK MAY ONLY MOVE STRAIGHT AND
CAN MOVE AS FAR AS ITS LINE OF SIGHT-
BE IT FORWARD/BACKWARD, LEFT/RIGHT

ROOK



QUEEN

CAN MOVE AND CAPTURE ON ANY SQUARE
IN LINE OF SIGHT

SHE CAN MOVE ON THE STRAIGHTS AND ON THE DIAGONALS

RESTRICTED TO ONE MOVE PER TURN-CAN MOVE
IN ANY DIRECTION - STRAIGHTS OR DIAGONALS

MAY CAPTURE IN ANY DIRECTION

THAT'S WITHIN ITS LEGAL MOVE RANGE

KING



Techniques

- The Scholar's Mate

- The Scholar's Mate is a four-step checkmate technique that is the most common finish to a chess game. As such, the following demonstration will be conducted with two parameters:
 - The player is playing as white. This strategy works for both black and white, but for the sake of clarity, white will be used.
 - The opponent does not know how to defend against the Scholar's Mate.
- First, white moves the pawn from e2-e4



- Next, white develops the bishop from f1 to c4 to attack black's f7 pawn



- The third move is to develop the queen from d1 to h5



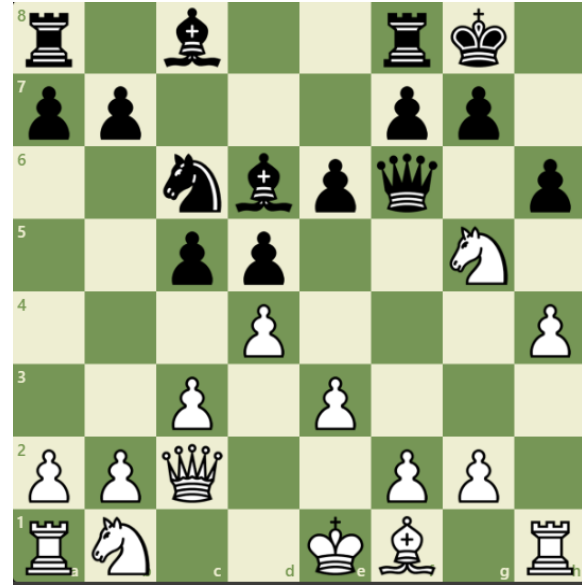
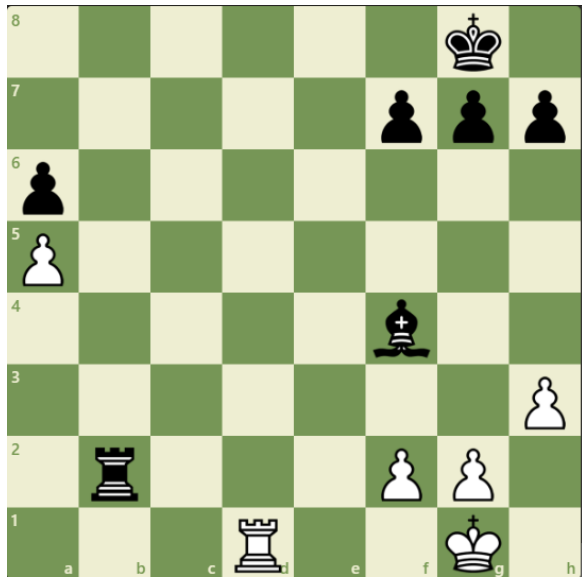
- The fourth and final move is Qxf7#

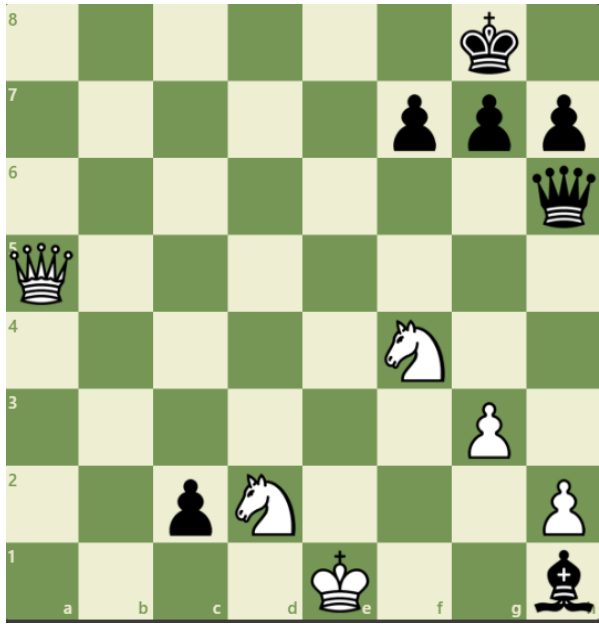


- Please note:
 - The Scholar's Mate will work whether the opening pawn is moved from e2 to e3 or e4.
 - This means that the mate will also still work if the queen is moved to either h5 or f3, depending on where the opening pawn was moved
 - Most importantly, the Scholar's Mate is a tenet of chess. Most players have performed it or have had it performed on them at some point. Black can counter with Qe7, Qf6, and g6, and a failed Scholar's Mate leaves your queen vulnerable. Losing your queen at such an early stage in a match can be a significant handicap.

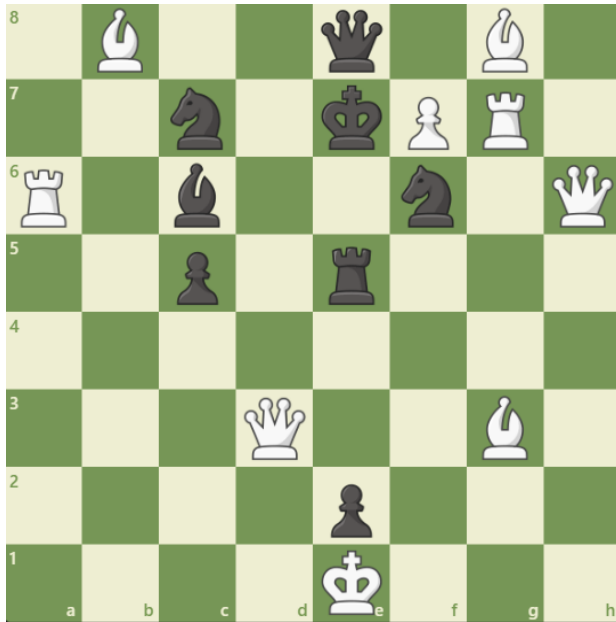
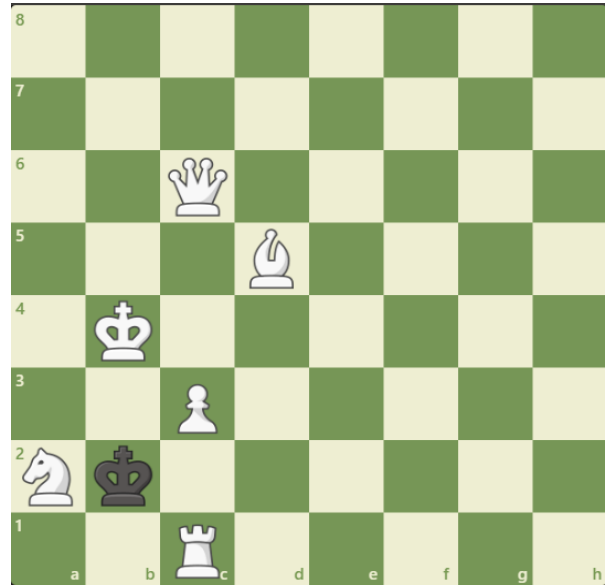
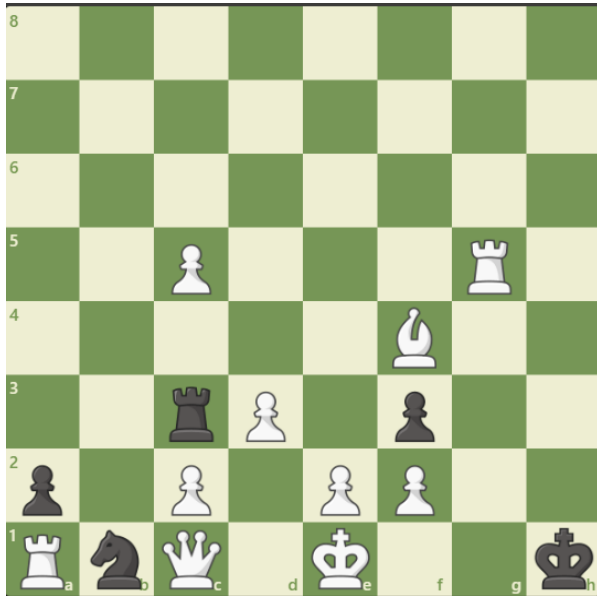
Practice Problems

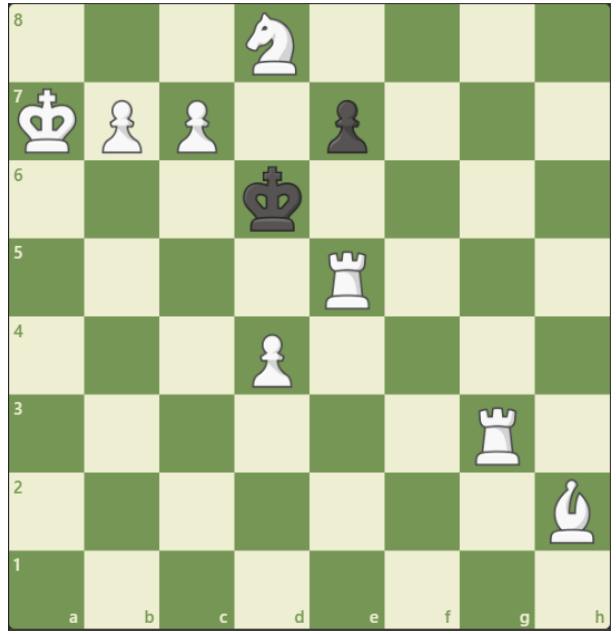
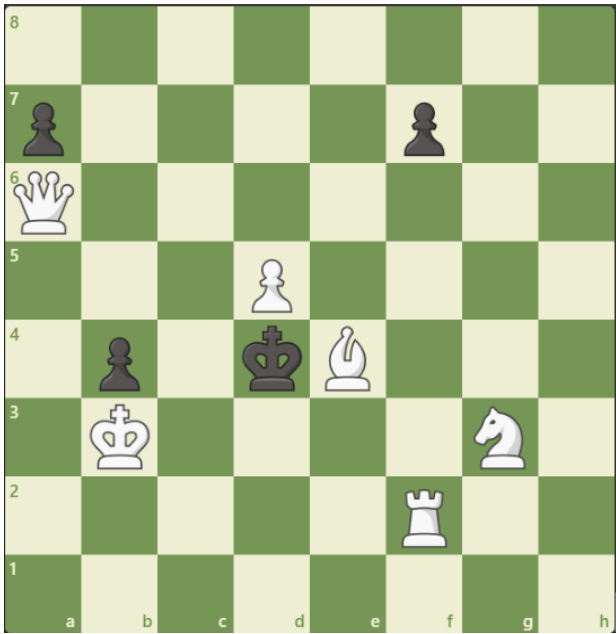
One Move Checkmates





Multi-Step Checkmates





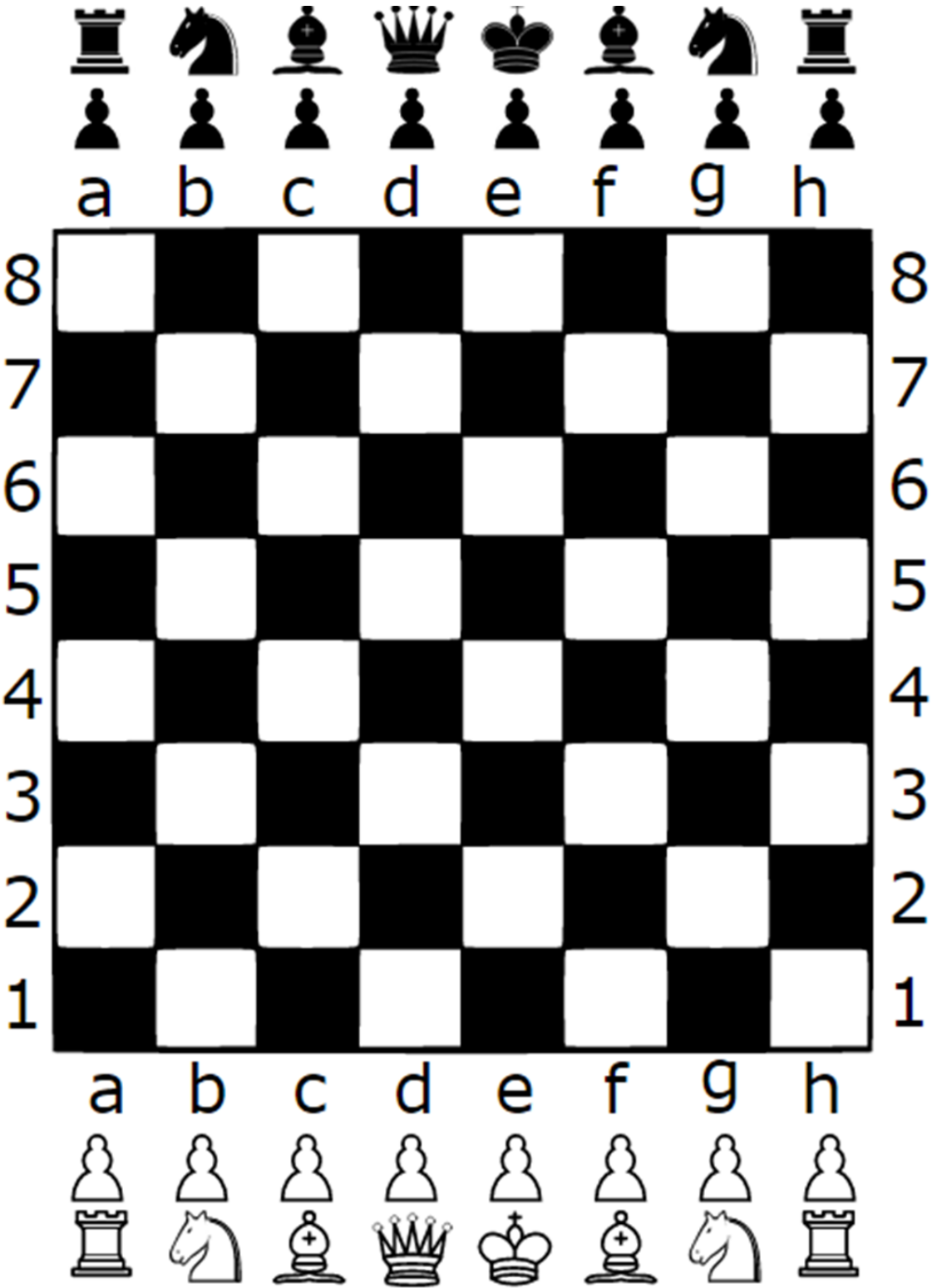
Open Note About the Future

This brings the Fall 2023 Chess Newsletter to a close! I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you all for having made it through this edition of the Chess Newsletter, it took a lot of time and effort to get this far, and I'm very pleased that I was able to continue working on this packet.

As a last note, I request that for any reader who has any questions, reactions, feedback, or any other form of response to this newsletter to please reach out to me, Raheem 725. This is my second edition of the chess packet and none of this would be possible without the feedback, both positive and constructive, that I received on the previous edition. I would love to know what worked and didn't work for you, the readers; you all are the reason I do this.

This semester, it was tougher to get through the packet because of regulations on my availability to work as a student, so I apologize if anything feels off or incomplete. As I seek to make the Chess Club more and more engaging, I am calling on you all to let me know what kinds of things you want to see, what you like and don't like, and what you want to learn more about. I'm the one writing, but you all are the ones who will guide my hand. Thank you again!

**Gary Here-Sorry for the delay in mailing this out. As some of you know I recently broke my wrist and had a concussion. Surgery for wrist was 5 weeks ago, It still hurts and my mobility is limited. Hopefully I will make a full recovery in time.
Hope you enjoy the lesson. You can cut the pieces out of the newsletter and move them on the board to help solve puzzles.
Be well and Happy New Year-Gary**



CTA/Durland Alternatives
Library
PO Box 6556
Ithaca, New York 14851
www.prisonerexpress.org

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit 448
Ithaca, NY 14850

Change Service Requested

Chess Newsletter 2023

Prisoner Express promotes rehabilitation by providing information, education, and opportunities for creative self-expression to incarcerated individuals throughout the United States.

Prisoner Express is funded by the Durland Alternatives Library, a project partner of the Center for Transformative Action. Additional support comes from the Cornell Public Service Center and the Office of Academic Diversity Initiatives. A grant from the Sonya Staff Foundation has enabled Prisoner Express to expand the size of this newsletter.

Publication

Direct from Publisher

