

Tri-Bridges Tribune

◆ February 2026



Photographs of playing site rooms during Saturday's event.
Both photos by Michael Cook.

Introduction

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

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

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

TRI BRIDGES CHESS CLUB

Address: 666 Exton Commons Exton, PA

Email: Tribridgesmail@gmail.com

Website: Tribbridgeschessclub.com

Facebook: [Tri-Bridges Chess Club](https://www.facebook.com/Tri-Bridges-Chess-Club)

Instagram: [tribbridgeschessclub](https://www.instagram.com/tribbridgeschessclub)

In this newsletter you can expect:

Item	Page
1 Fabulous Weekend	2
Double rook sac game	5
Writing for the Tri-Bridges Tribune	6
Liberty Bell Open	8
Player Spotlight	9
Short Book Recommendation	9
Puzzles	4&10
Upcoming Events	10

1 Fabulous Weekend

By Joshua Anderson

1 Fabulous Weekend
2 Great Tournaments
3 Champions!



(Photo of state trophies by TD Jessica Collier)

As freezing temperatures gripped the region, the sign-ups for the state championships were slow to get going, but by the time the 4 sections started, we had 81! Combined with the excitement of leaving home (Tri-Bridges Chess Club) for the hotel, Chester County Hotel and Conference Center, the day was off to a rollicking start. (Much thanks to Charan “Cherry” Perumalla, Vahini Sadhu Venkata, and Cindy and Lou Cardi of Shining Knights for helping set up the night before.)

The two scholastic sections, kept upstairs, much to the preference of the stronger players, combined for almost 40 players and were well handled by guest tournament directors Michael Cook and Jessica Collier. They ran the room well, and, as is often the case with this event, the scholastic sections were done by about 4 pm.

As is common with top seeds, many had rough days, and players from the upper middle did quite well. Winning the Under 500 with the only perfect score was Khrish Beema, who picked up almost 250 rating points! David Kasparov, who regularly attends the club, came in second with 3.5 points and was one point away from doubling his rating! The two players with only one loss, both regular tournament players at Tri-Bridges Chess Club, were Hyindhav Murugesh and Mokshith Lingutla.

The Under 1000 section had much less stratification. First, the only perfect 4-0 score was Miles Clough. After him were 6 players tied with 3 points. In tiebreak order - Bhavye Susarla, Joy Yang, Sai Venkat Shanvith Alahari, Krish Harris Mohan, Jacob Bartell, and Sai Venkata Vihaansh Nagisetty.

While the various kids celebrated, the downstairs sections of Under 1600 and Open were hard at work. They had played two sections and were locked in battle in the third. By this point, the lower-rated players had mostly fallen away, unlike the scholastic players, who largely held serve. In fact, as the smoke cleared at the end of the fourth, the top 3 players, all still in high school, finished 1, 2, and 3. Pranav Srinivasula had the only perfect score, Jaise Shah led the 3 players with 3 points, being joined by Viraaj Jairath and Declan Nice.

The Open also held form on the top board, with IM Tom Bartell winning with a 4-0 score, and the 4 players over 2000 all finished in the top 6. The surprise of the day was Aryan Roy, who finished 2nd, after drawing in round 1. This unintentional Swiss Gambit kept Roy from playing the top players in the tournament, but helped him finish the section at 3.5. The other class A player to finish in the top 4 was Kevin Shen, who finished tied for 3-4 with Expert Denis Markov.

Playing up has become a major problem for CCA events, where more than half a field can qualify for a section below the one they are playing in. There was not nearly as much of that going on at the state championship. In both the Open section, 5 people, and the Under 1600 section, 6 people, chose to play up. For the most part the results were expected, though in the Under 1600 two Methacton players, Benjamin Warunker and Declan Nice both had nice results picking up over 130 points. In the Open section, Shivam Wagh broke 1600 for the first time by gaining over 130 points from victories over two victories over 1800s and drawing a National Master before losing to a third 1800 in the last round.

While the last round had been going on, Samika Nettem, ever industrious, set up the Winter Open. So, the next day, though we did have a little work from late signups, it was much easier to handle than the 30+ last-minute signups for the G/75 d5. Nettem also had control of the Under 1000 section.

Unlike the G/75 d5, a pretty traditional time control, the Winter Open, a brainchild of Perumalla and Christopher Romeril, was a five-round G/30, d10, with just two sections - Open and Under 1000. Money, over \$600 in the Under 1000, and almost \$2000 in the Open, also makes this event a bit different from our usual fair.

The Under 1000 section had 29 players, including 4/5 of the Neilson family. The elder Neilson daughter, Lily, coached by Vahini Sadhu Venkata, won first place with a 5.0 score. While the rest of the family in that section didn't fare as well, how could they*, Maddy and Jamie had solid performances considering their rating. Dr. Naoko Neilson, internationally known astro-physicist, is probably too busy to join her daughter for Sadhu Venkata's lessons and should be applauded for playing, something many parents talk to me about but few do.

The 25 non-Neilsons had an interesting event as well. As mentioned earlier, top seeds in scholastic events (technically, this is not a scholastic event, just had many scholastic players, and more parents should absolutely feel free to play in sections like this), and that was true here. Second place went to Divin Kennyth Peter Francis, who was playing in his first over-the-board tournament with a 4-1 score. Alex Lau came in third, and Bheema, fresh off his State G/75 - East Under 500 championship, came in fourth, both 4-1.



Playing and advertising for us all at the same time! Thank you Dr. Naoko Neilson! (Photo by Samika Nettem)



Perumalla making IM Bartell think? Perumalla later said, "I made Bartell's bishop pair the value of at least a queen." So, maybe not! (Photo by Joshua Anderson)

In the Open section, IM Bartell and FM Matthew O'Brien did as expected, finishing first and second. In fact, the top 6 seeds all finished in the top eight. The two who had joined them had events they will not soon forget.

Perumalla spent the first round assisting Nettem, as his opponent had been unclear about what section he had wanted to be in and got double-listed. The reward for this help was a game with IM Bartell.

In round three, Perumalla sacked two rooks to mate Wagh (game on pg. 5.) To have a good day, sometimes you need a little luck,

and a missed check by his opponent in Round 4 meant that Perumalla would play Rohan Guduru in the final round. He got a good game from his Caro-Kann and finished 4-1, picking up \$325 as he tied with O'Brien for second - third.

While his family was battling away in the Under 1000, Russell was facing his own difficulties. These difficulties started with the other title player in the Open, and the winner of the Autumn Open, FM Dirk Troltenier. Russell managed a draw with Troltenier (a noteworthy upset and not the only one to deserve mention, as Swanik Gandhe (1184) beat Jeffrey Johnson (1928) and Akhil Kapalavayi (1157) drew Preston Ladson (1870) in the first round) Russell then upset Ladson, before losing to Johnson. He then beat another 1800, Roy, before ending the day with a half-point bye. His performance rating was over expert level, and he earned 188 rating points in a section with adults and strong players!



The Unknown Chess Player - "Don't Worry We All have Games like That!" Photo by Nettem

Many of a tournament director's responsibilities are not covered by the rulebook, especially when running events for small organizations where the roles of organizer and tournament director overlap. These include explaining ideas and rules to new parents, putting together the Swiss sys files for the tournament directors, corralling the kids when rounds are accelerated as they often are, keeping parents out of many of the playing spaces, taking pictures and handing out prizes. Nettem did all of that and more and was thus named head tournament director for the event by the organizer.

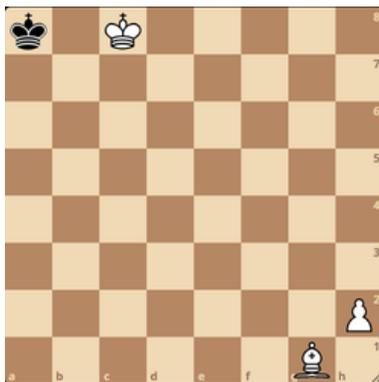
Results for these event can be found at - <https://ratings.uschess.org/event/202601311003>

Retrograde Puzzles

In retrograde puzzles, you are given a position, and you usually have to figure out what the previous moves were or where a certain piece was. Can YOU solve these 4 puzzles?



In this chess game, where is the queen located so it can give checkmate on the next turn? Obviously, this game was played with only legal moves.



This position: Black played last. What was his last move, and what was White's last move?



How did this position arrive after exactly 4 moves for each side?



How did this position arrive after exactly 4 moves for each side?

Solutions on page 9

Double Rook Sac Game

Annotated By Cherry Perumalla

This is the game previously mentioned in the above article (pages 2-4), and features not one, but TWO rook sacrifices. Played and annotated by Charan Perumalla as black with Shivam Wagh as white, this game is both instructive and quite amazing.

1. Nf3 d5 2. d4 c5 3. e3 Nc6 4. Bb5 a6 5. Bxc6+ bxc6 6. dxc5 Qa5+ 7. Bd2 Qxc5 8. Nc3

Although white has "development", white's dark square bishop has relatively low future prospects. Black also has most of the control in the center, and will have little difficulty developing.

Bg4 9. h3 Bh5 10. Qe2

Although this move and moves you'll see later make sense they are see-through, and one-dimensional.

10...Nf6

White's early lead in development doesn't seem very important anymore.

11. Rg1

This move has some flaws. Like I said before the moves are one-dimensional and have a very obvious plan. This move also stops the king from casting king-side, telling me his plan. His king either has to castle queen-side where I can use my open B-file or play in the center, where I can explode the center.

11...Qd6

Trying to go e5

12. a3 e5 13. g4 Bg6 14. Na4

Trying to get some kind of Bb4 (why he played a3) and Nc5

14...Qc7 15. Bc3

Even though it is a very oddly placed Bishop it protects b2, attacks e5 and is not easily punished.

15...Bd6 16. b3

I assume b3 was played to fianchetto, but leaves weaknesses like a3.

16...c5

Baiting him to castle into c4, if he does not castle i would have still played c4 trying to make his pawns weak.

17. O-O-O c4 18. b4 a5 19. bxa5 Bxa3+

19... Rxa5 Although I played Bxa3 Rxa5 is crushing with the following line.

20. Bxa5 Qxa5 21. Nb2 Bxa3 22. Rd3 Bxd3 (22...

Bxb2+ 23. Kxb2 cxd3 24. cxd3 O-O)

20. Nb2 Bd6

I knew Ne5 was the natural move, but I did not want to lose the pawn on e5.

21. Qd2

This is where I saw the vision, Ne4...

21...Ne4 22. Qxd5

Both my rooks are hanging, but I still take the Bishop!

22...Nxc3



Even though I took the Bishop here, the best move is to castle! White really cant do anything to stop black impending attack and castling just insures the king is safe.

23. Qxa8+ Ke7 24. Qxh8

I lose both my rooks, but now the queen can't defend.

24...Ne2+ 25. Kd2

Either Kd2 or b1 if he went to b1 I could just go back and have at least a draw. (the computer says it's a draw, but practically speaking I have doubts, and I think I should be able to win.)

25...Nxg1

Forcing him to take otherwise I take f3 with check.

26. Nxg1 c3+ 27. Ke1 cxb2

Now having a very strong pawn on b2 and c2 failing it was only a matter of time before his position crumbled.

28. Qa8 Bxc2 29. Qd5 Bxd1 30. Qxd1 Qc1 31. Ne2 Qxd1+ 32. Kxd1 b1=Q+

0-1

Writing for the Tri-Bridges Tribune

By Joshua Anderson

Many people have expressed interest in writing for the newsletter, but some think it is extremely time consuming while others don't know where to start. I have put together some notes that will hopefully make things much easier and give you all a bit more clarity on what the newsletter is looking for and how about creating it. As always, feel free to reach out to Azim or I if you have any questions about the writing for the newsletter.

How to Write Articles for the chess publications

1. Speak with the editor to determine when it is due and what he is looking for
2. It is as important in chess writing as any other kind of writing to set up a space to "lock in." This space can certainly be a club, just let me know when. However, since you can't just drive yourself down and let yourself in, set up a space to write and rituals at your place.
3. Find a space, somewhere quiet, probably at or near a desk.
4. For ritual – perhaps music you like or a drink you like to have while working, at first this may feel a little weird, but it will help "train your brain" if you do it regularly and consistently.
5. Have open just the programs you need to write, so less tempted to "surf" or just play around.
6. The idea in writing for a chess magazine/publisher/most types of publishers that are not school is different than writing to get an A. You can rely more on having a back and forth with the editor, who may wish for you to expand more here, shorten there, for reasons having nothing to do with your work, but for instance, the layout of the magazine.
7. Strong verbs are key – they define what happened in your piece
8. Write with your heart (tell the story you want to tell), edit with your head (make it readable for the public)
9. Good communication with the editor is helpful, but generally just a matter of an email or two.

How to Write a Tournament Report

1. A tournament report needs to tell the who, what, where, when, and why.
2. Get the facts first and then create the story.
3. The winners are important, but a list of winners is dull, repetitive, and can be found on the USChess.org site. That said, especially the first places, should be worked into the story.
4. Tournament reports are often done by sections. Larger events or events with many sections usually will have a focus on one person, such as your experience in the Under 1500 section of the Exton Open. Or it might employ a more structural style, discussing the event itself, its importance, and related aspects.
5. It usually promotes events that follow it, so working that in is an appropriate idea near the end.

How to Write an Instructive Piece

1. The key to an educational piece is to teach something, so that means a bit of repetition.
2. In the introduction, tell them what you are going to teach them.
3. The narrative of the piece is to highlight what you are trying to teach them. In many ways, this is easy because there is no narrative, and it is more of a step-by-step process. A really well-done educational piece may not be step-by-step and still show the idea, but you can always default to step-by-step.
4. In conclusion, here you tell them what you just taught them, making sure to highlight the main idea that you want them to learn.

How to Write a Book Review

Due to the many types of books and many types of reviews, I am going to write broadly here.

1. Read the book – depending on the book, this can be done lightly and quickly.
2. A chess book review structure is similar to a regular review: Introduction, summary, analysis, what do you, the reviewer, think of the argument, and the conclusion
3. In a chess book, the intro is still just what the book is, which is the main topic
4. Summary should not go into individual lessons, but more broadly, what does the book cover in a few paragraphs, perhaps highlighting style as well.
5. Analysis is where you might show individual lesson/chapter concepts
6. Do you think the analysis works? Do you think this is a good way to explain the topic? questions like that
7. Conclusion and a basic yes, I liked the book because or no the book fails because of x.
8. Usually, items like character and/or spoilers are not an issue. Shocker ... “the light squared black Bishop really moved me,” said no one ever. Likewise, unless someone actually killed someone with a pawn, having even a pawn give checkmate in a chess book would not constitute a spoiler.

How to Write a Game Analysis

1. Play through the game
2. Annotate, focusing on whatever idea you believe is the key to the game
3. Check with the computer
4. Write an introduction mentioning the key theme of the idea
5. Annotation need not just be on the point you wish to highlight, but that is where the more thorough annotations need to be.
6. When you conclude the game again, harken back to the idea that you are trying to highlight.

How to Take Good Chess Pictures

1. Basic photos should tell about a moment in time, one we want to think about again (in the chess club, we fortunately don't have real tragedies, so I am not talking about that, which is a different thing)
2. Lighting is tricky and important as we tend to have spaces with not great lighting. It is one of the reasons to turn on all the lights in the playing space.
3. The best stories are of the kids playing and how they are thinking or reacting to a move
4. Board photos are boring, but if you are trying to get a photo for someone to use for a diagram or puzzle, that sort of thing, they can be good for getting the position quickly.
5. The background of the basement encourages one to focus on the player when possible, but often a little background is going to get in, and that can still be a very good photo.
6. That said, it is again the expressions on the face of the player that make the most compelling stories.
7. When taking photos of kids getting trophies, try to focus on the kid getting the trophy, not on the person handing out the trophy -especially if it is me!
8. A picture of all the trophy winners together is nice and really much more likely to be a better fit for the club walls or website.

Liberty Bell Open

By Azim Julkipli

The 58th Liberty Open attracted over 550 participants throughout 6 sections, showcasing a wild variety of players and skills in the tournament. Many members of our club took part in this tournament, and gained valuable lessons, with some getting close to the top of their section! Here are two experiences from the tournament:

Liberty Bell 2026 was a really fun event, and one of my favorite aspects was being able to spend time with and have fun with a lot of my friends. The competition itself was pretty good, with some pretty tough opponents and some easier opponents to win against. I ended up with an overall score of 4/7. I managed to win a few games, but I also managed to throw away one winning game, which ended up being a draw, and lost two games. However, despite my mistakes, I learned a lot from this experience. I was happy with my performance and had a good time with the overall event itself. - Pallavi

I am Shivam Wagh, an 8th grader at Upper Merion Middle School. It was great at Liberty Open 2026! I played in the U2100 section, despite being only rated 1370, but I still managed 3/7 points. I played in the 3-day section. Some days before the tournament, I practiced by playing many games, doing puzzles, and using tactics. This helped me a lot in my games since I always had to rely on middle and endgame tactics. In the first round, I had a bye, but I got an extra game with an 8-year-old child prodigy, rated 1800. I lost the game due to a blunder, but stuck on till the last moves. In between the rounds, I had lunch and tried to relax for the next rounds. The second, I got paired up with Abigail Zhou (1900), who is also a child prodigy, and lost to her, too. Here I relaxed again, but talked to TBCC members as I saw them. The first two rounds didn't go so well for me overall. In the third round, the game was really a draw, but I lost to a 2000, Geoferry Herman. So, the first day wasn't really for me. Travelling the next day wasn't so easy because of the snow, but we made it about 30 minutes before the rounds started since we lived close to Philly. But the second day was really great. I played my 4th round with Brendan Boyle (1723), and I won! This boosted my confidence from the day before and helped me "lock in" for my next rounds. The 5th round was also great. I was paired up with Leif Karell (2000), and I won a knight in the opening! Later, though my queen was trapped, the game was drawn by repetition of his attacking my queen. On the last day, I got only .5/2 points, but stayed in until the end of both games. My 6th round was with Marvin Shumowitz. I lost a rook for a knight, but my knight had a wonderful outpost to attack white's king. Later, the game was drawn because of my strong knight. In between these two rounds, I had a lot of time since my game was finished so early. Also, the many TBCC players were playing hand and brain, and I loved to join! In the last round, I was paired up with Cyrus G.-Jacob (1932), who had beaten Adhinanth in his last round. I was afraid, but confident at the same time. I took the game till the endgame, where I was 2 pawns down, and I lost. Overall, I got 3/7 points, and my rating increased from 1370 to 1472, a whole 100 points!

- Shivam Wagh

Player Spotlight



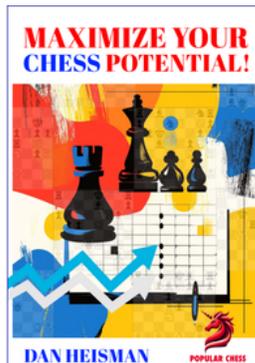
Lily Neilson, a dedicated 7th-grade student, recently competed in the U1000 section of the Winter Open tournament. Lily delivered an outstanding result, finishing with a perfect 5-0 score — the only player in her section to achieve this score.

Lily currently studies with her coach, Vahini Sadhu Venkata, and credits their lessons as both engaging and intellectually stimulating, helping her deepen her understanding of the game while maintaining her enthusiasm for improvement. Her strong tournament results reflect not only her natural ability, but also the consistent effort and thoughtful guidance she receives in her training sessions.

Achieving a perfect score in any section is a remarkable accomplishment, and Lily's performance at the Winter Open highlights her potential and competitive focus. We look forward to seeing her continued growth and future successes at the board.

Congratulations to Lily on an exceptional tournament result!

Short Book Recommendation



Maximize Your Chess Potential! by Dan Heisman is a practical, experience-driven guide to help club players improve at chess by focusing on the how and why of proper study and play. Dan Heisman has been teaching chess for over 50 years, full-time since 1996, and this extensive

coaching experience shapes every chapter of the book. Heisman covers many topics in these tips that can help players of all strengths, including general study habits, thought processes during a game, psychology and mindset, tactics and safety, positional concepts and strategy, and openings and endgames.

Heisman approaches this book by being broader rather than highly theoretical. His tips often focus on real-life patterns, such as when a position is good to attack in or when an idea is strategically sound. Throughout the book, diagrams illustrate instructive positions that reinforce the text. These positions highlight common mistakes and better alternatives, guiding the reader through the logic behind good decisions. He also characterizes his top ten tips as such.

One of the book's strengths is its blend of general improvement principles and practical examples. Maximize Your Chess Potential! does not rely heavily on engine analysis either; instead, it recognizes that factors like psychology, habits, and consistency are as crucial as analysis and theory.

Overall, Maximize Your Chess Potential! is a good book for those looking to improve at chess, focusing less on theory and more on factors like psychology, time pressure, tactics, and ideas, which is helpful for all players. by Prana Srinivasula

SOLUTIONS

- Retrograde puzzles:
1. Q on a1, with b3#
 2. Nb6 to a8+, Kxa8
 3. (1. Nf3 d5 2. Nd4 Nf6 3. Nc6 Nd7 4. Nxb8 Nxb8) 4. (1. e4 e6 2. Bb5 Ke7 3. Bxd7 c6 4. Be8 Kxe8)
- Pg. 10 puzzles:
1. c4
 2. (1. Qh1 Kxg5 (1... hxg5 2. Qg2 hxg2 3. Nxd2#) 2. Ng2 hxg2 3. h4#)

UPCOMING EVENTS!

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

State Championship from March 7 - 8

[ECE #121 – Saturday Tournament](#) on March 14 @ 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Sections: U1300, U900, U500

Time Control: G25 d5

[ECE #122 – Friday Night Tournament](#) on March 20 @ 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Sections: Open, U800, U500, U200

Time Control: G25 d5

[ECE #123 – \\$250 Sunday Game Hour](#) on March 22 @ 10:00 am - 6:00 pm

Sections: Open, U1200, U500

Time: Open & U1200 are G60/d5; U700 is G25/d5

Can you solve these
puzzles? -



Level 1 puzzle - Black to play
and win material

Solutions on pg. 9



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

WARNING - EXTREMELY DIFFICULT