

# CHESS LIFE

# Kids

FEBRUARY 2023 USChess.org



# That

# Nakamura

# Life





# Nakamura's Double Attacks

BY JOHN HARTMANN

**T**HE DOUBLE ATTACK is one of the most fundamental tactical ideas in chess, and every top player makes use of them to win games, including GM Hikaru Nakamura, who is featured this month. Looking through his games for this article, I was surprised to see just how many games Nakamura won with this tactic, especially in blitz.

To understand double attacks, we need to understand targets. The *king* can be a target, as you might expect, and so can *material* — pieces or pawns, especially if they are unprotected or of high value. A *square* can also be a target, particularly those where checkmate can be delivered. We find double attacks by identifying targets, and choosing moves that aim at two at once.

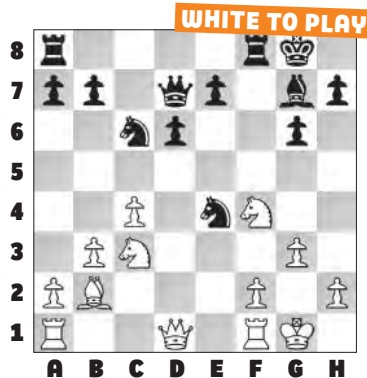
Here are two examples from Nakamura's games to make this clear.

## KING AND MATERIAL

GM Hikaru Nakamura (2768)

GM Shamsiddin Vokhidov (2568)

Titled Tuesday (8), *Chess.com*, 11.15.2022



Black has just played 15. ... Ne4, making use of the pin on the c3-knight. But the e4-knight is unprotected, which is a hint that there might be a tactic in the position. The open diagonal towards the king is another helpful hint.

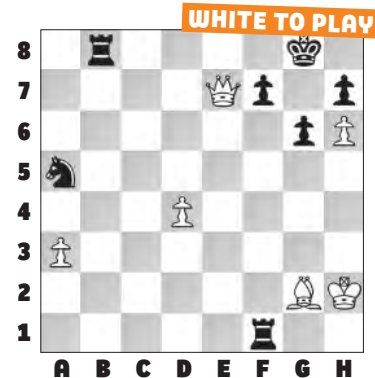
Nakamura noticed both elements and played **16. Qd5+** and because Black can't get out of check and save the knight at the same time, he loses material. After **16. ... Kh8 17. Qxe4**, White won on move 27.

## MATERIAL AND SQUARE

GM Hikaru Nakamura (2768)

GM Gawain Jones (2623)

Titled Tuesday (4), *Chess.com*, 11.15.2022



Here is an example where the targets are material and a square. White could simply take the f1-rook with a winning position, but the unprotected b8-rook (and a5-knight!) along with the possible checkmate on the g7-square allowed Nakamura to play the triple attack **35. Qe5**, threatening mate and gain of material. **Black resigned** here.

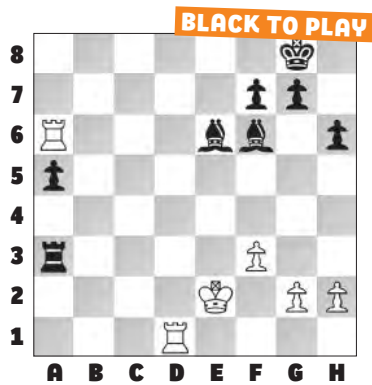
Notice, by the way, that this tactic wouldn't work without the mate threat on g7. Black could play ... Na5-c6, defending the rook and attacking the queen.

The queen excels at “forks,” or double attacks. But she's not alone in her abilities. Every piece is capable of this kind of tactic, including knights and bishops.



## BLAZING BISHOPS

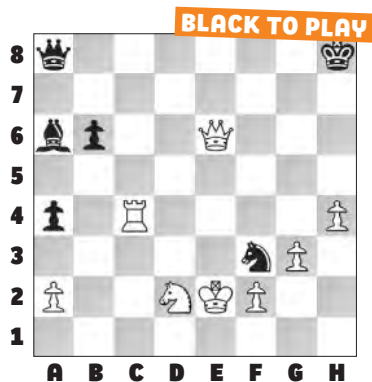
GM Subramaniyam H. Bharath (2479)  
GM Hikaru Nakamura (2766)  
Titled Tuesday (6), *Chess.com*,  
05.24.2022



What are the targets? The king is in the open, so we should consider it, especially since the undefended a6-rook is on the same diagonal! With **30. ... Bc4+**, checking the king and attacking the rook, Nakamura won the game.

## TRICKY KNIGHTS

GM Fabiano Caruana (2758)  
GM Hikaru Nakamura (2768)  
Titled Tuesday (10), *Chess.com*,  
09.27.2022



In a worse position, Black was able to turn the tables and win material with **45. ... Nd4+**, a double attack on the queen and king.

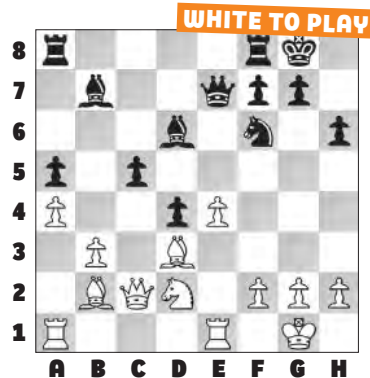
Nakamura's fork depends on the presence of another tactical idea in

the position — the pinned c4-rook can't capture the d4-knight because it would put its own king in check.

Sometimes finding the right move requires that you identify two or more tactical ideas in the position. Here are a few more positions where Nakamura was able to combine themes to earn a victory.

## PAWN PUSH

GM Hikaru Nakamura (2750)  
GM Grigoriy Oparin (2674)  
Titled Tuesday (4), *Chess.com*,  
04.19.2022

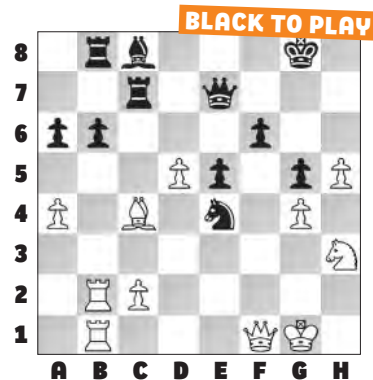


The d6-bishop and f6-knight look ripe for a double attack, but there are two defenders on the e5-square. Do you think the pawn fork works?

Nakamura played **18. e5!**. The key idea is that if Black grabs the pawn with **18. ... Bxe5** then White takes advantage of the new pin on the e5-bishop with **19. f4**, winning material. Oparin tried **18 ... Ng4** **19. exd6 Qh4**, threatening queen checks on h2 and f2, but after **20. Nf1**, everything is defended, and **Black resigned**.

## DOUBLE AND TWO-FOLD

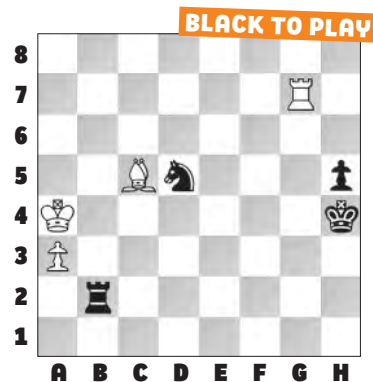
IM Jacob Leon Pajeken (2387)  
GM Hikaru Nakamura (2736)  
Titled Tuesday (1), *Chess.com*,  
09.21.2021



The c4-bishop is attacked once and defended once. How can we bring another attacker into play? **40. ... Qc5+**! Checking the king, and creating a *two-fold attack* (two attackers, one defender) on the c4-bishop. Black wins material after **41. Nf2 Qxc4** **42. Qxc4 Rxc4**.

## PREPARATORY MOVE

IM Khazar Araz Babazada (2431)  
GM Hikaru Nakamura (2750)  
Titled Tuesday (3), *Chess.com*,  
04.12.2022



**68. ... Nc3+**! After taking note of the undefended bishop, Nakamura uses this move to prepare the double attack by luring the king to the right square. **69. Ka5 Rb5+** Winning the bishop. **70. Ka6 Rxc5** **71. a4 Nxa4**, White resigned.

Identifying targets and searching for double attacks can bring big benefits to your game. Let us know if you play any spectacular moves at [letters@uschess.org](mailto:letters@uschess.org)! 📧



# Super-Coach Sunil

He inspired hundreds of champions, even world champions!

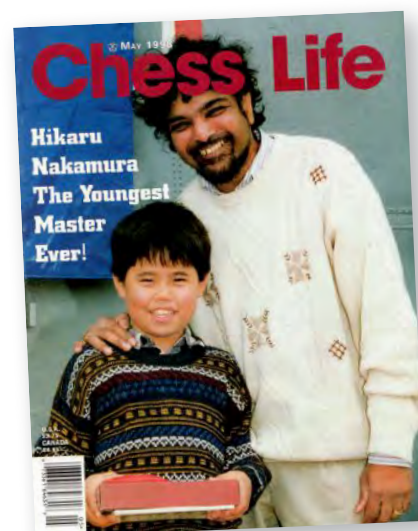
BY AL LAWRENCE

**F**M SUNIL WEERAMANTRY [Soo-NEEL Ver-a-MAHN-tree] was born in Sri Lanka, an island nation in the Indian Ocean. Sunil became a chess master at just 15, scoring exciting victories reported throughout the chess world. In 1978, he played first board for Sri Lanka in the World Chess Olympiad, finishing fourth among the best players from all 65 nations — ahead of even a former world

champion! In 1983, Sunil moved to America and began teaching his first generation of champions. He kept playing as well, winning the New York State Championship twice, perhaps the most difficult state crown to win.

Sunil became one of the most successful chess coaches in history, raising the level of chess in the USA. He has coached over 200 national and international youth champions. Two of those are his stepsons Asuka Nakamura and GM Hikaru Nakamura. Asuka has won more U.S. scholastic championships than anyone in history. (see *Chess Life Kids* February 2022, page 20) Hikaru is one of the best players in the world, ranking as high as number two, and he's the current World Fischer Random Chess Champion. Hikaru is also the world's most popular chess streamer, with 1.5 million followers on his Twitch channel. (see this issue, page 12)

Sunil founded the National Scholastic Chess Foundation in 1990. His organization now serves more than 100 schools



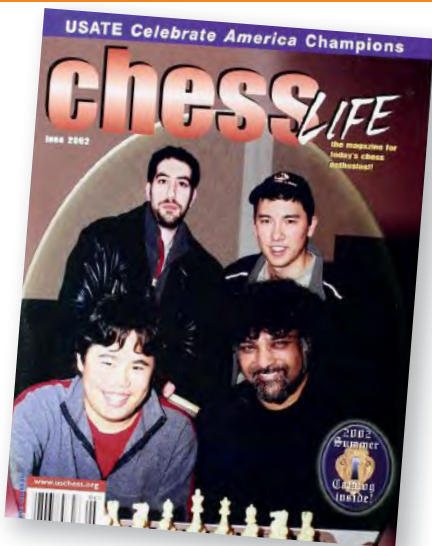
Sunil with stepson Hikaru Nakamura in 1998.

throughout New York State and Florida, and provides community programs and chess-teacher training across the USA. He put many of his teaching tips into two highly praised books: *Best Lessons of a Chess Coach*, and *Great Moves: Learning Chess Through History*. He serves as the U.S. Chess Trust Vice President of Scholastics, helping provide free chess materials and scholarships to school kids.

Honors continue to pile up. He







Team Weera-Family won the 2002 U.S. Amateur Team East. Clockwise from top left: Michael Ellenbogen, Asuka Nakamura, Sunil Weeramantry, Hikaru Nakamura.

was inducted into the New York State Chess Hall of Fame in 1996. The University of Texas at Dallas named him Chess Educator of the Year in 2005. In 2022, US Chess honored him with its highest award, the Distinguished Service Award.

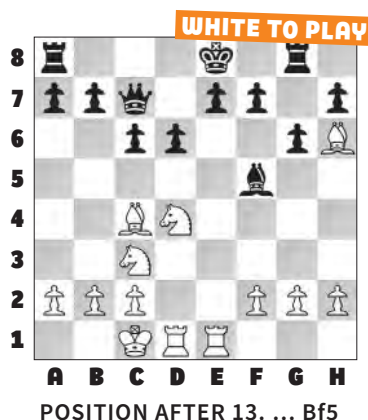
But don't think Sunil's work is finished! He's still teaching chess

and coming up with new ways to bring the game to people of all ages.

Check out FM Weeramantry's attacking style as he punishes another master for leaving his king in the middle of the board too long.

### PIN, FORK, AND MATE!

FM Sunil Weeramantry  
Mark Schlagenhaut  
June 10, 2020



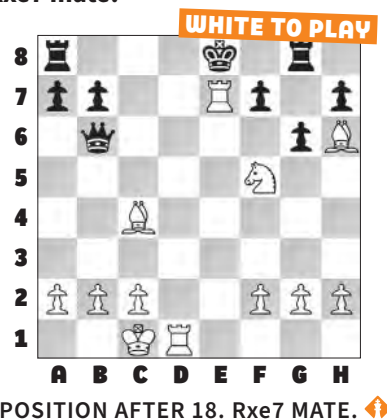
Earlier in the game, Sunil exchanged his queen for three pieces. Black needed to play 13... d5 to hold down the fort in this

complicated, unbalanced position with near material equality. Sunil senses this is the moment to strike while Black's king is still in the center and works out the winning tactics of yet another sacrifice! Do you see it?

### 14. Ndb5!! cxb5 15. Nxb5 Qb6

If 15. ... Qxc4, a knight fork and the pin on the e-file combine to win the black queen!: 16. Nxd6+ Kd8 17. Nxc4+. But even after Black's game move, the pins and forks are overwhelming. The pawn "protection" in front of Black's king is an illusion!

### 16. Nxd6+ Kd8 17. Nxf5+ Ke8 18. Rxe7 mate!



Sunil, who is committed to chess in education, speaks at the 2021 Koltanowski conference in Cherry Hill, New Jersey.

INTERNATIONAL KOLTANOWSKI  
CONFERENCE  
ON CHESS IN  
EDUCATION



# That Nakamura Life

ART BY  
NICOLAS BARRIOS

LAYOUT & DESIGN BY  
NATASHA ROBERTS

SCRIPT BY  
MELINDA  
MATTHEWS



Wow, that football stream was fun! I love integrating other sports with chess.

It's hard to remember a time when you weren't streaming. You've done so much in your career.

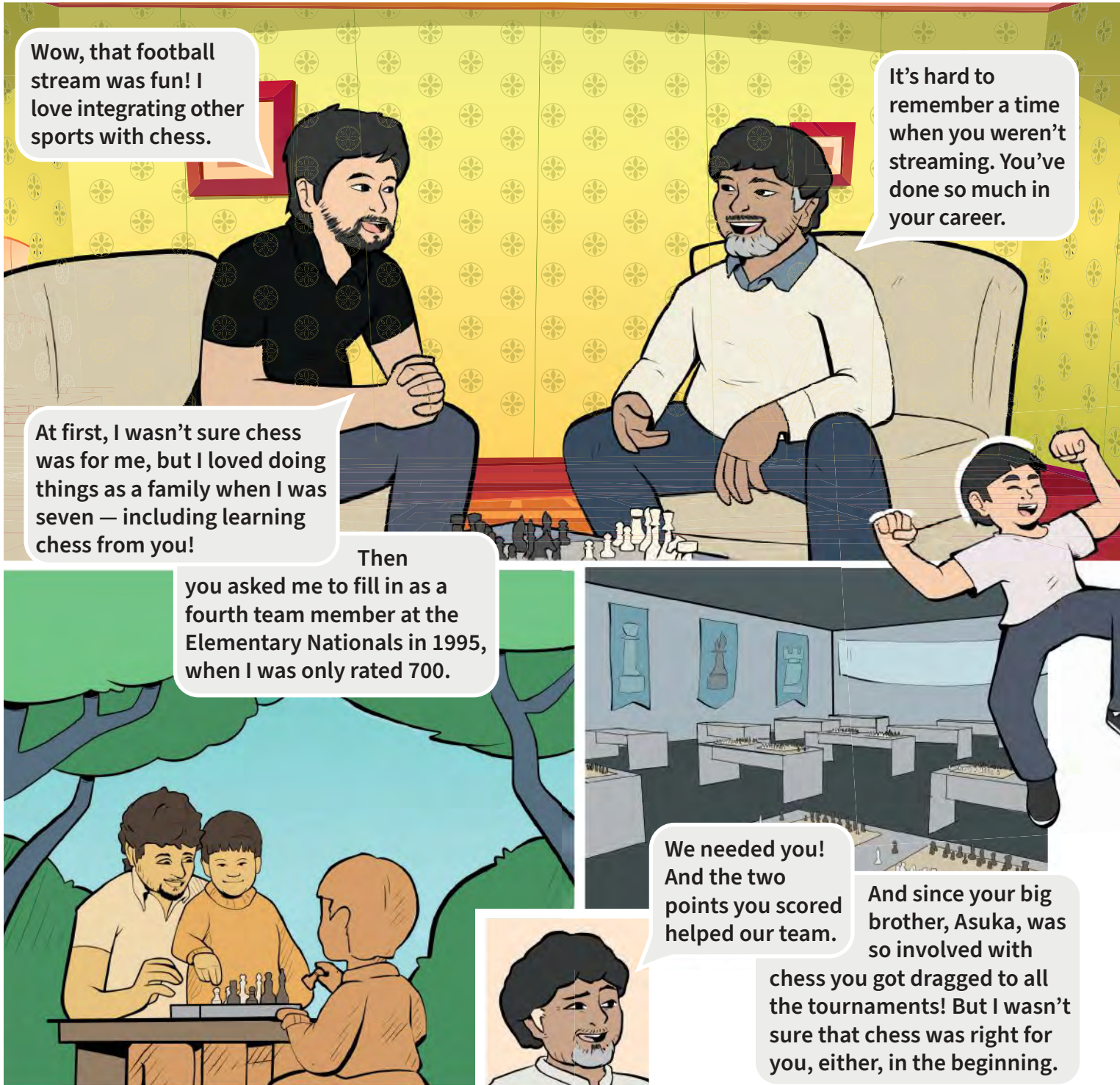
At first, I wasn't sure chess was for me, but I loved doing things as a family when I was seven — including learning chess from you!

Then

you asked me to fill in as a fourth team member at the Elementary Nationals in 1995, when I was only rated 700.

We needed you! And the two points you scored helped our team.

And since your big brother, Asuka, was so involved with chess you got dragged to all the tournaments! But I wasn't sure that chess was right for you, either, in the beginning.



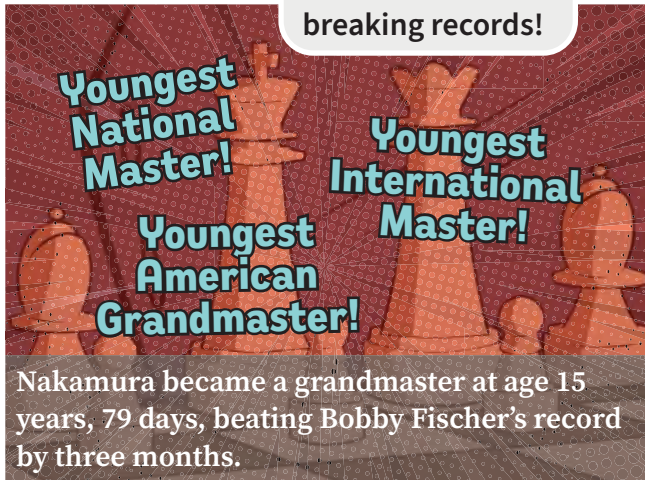


My real turning point was that tournament in Stamford, Connecticut, where I defeated a national master when I was eight. That woke up my competitive spirit.

I remember how you used that Novag computer to help you improve. You were so meticulous. You recorded every game!



Then I started breaking records!



Nakamura became a grandmaster at age 15 years, 79 days, beating Bobby Fischer's record by three months.

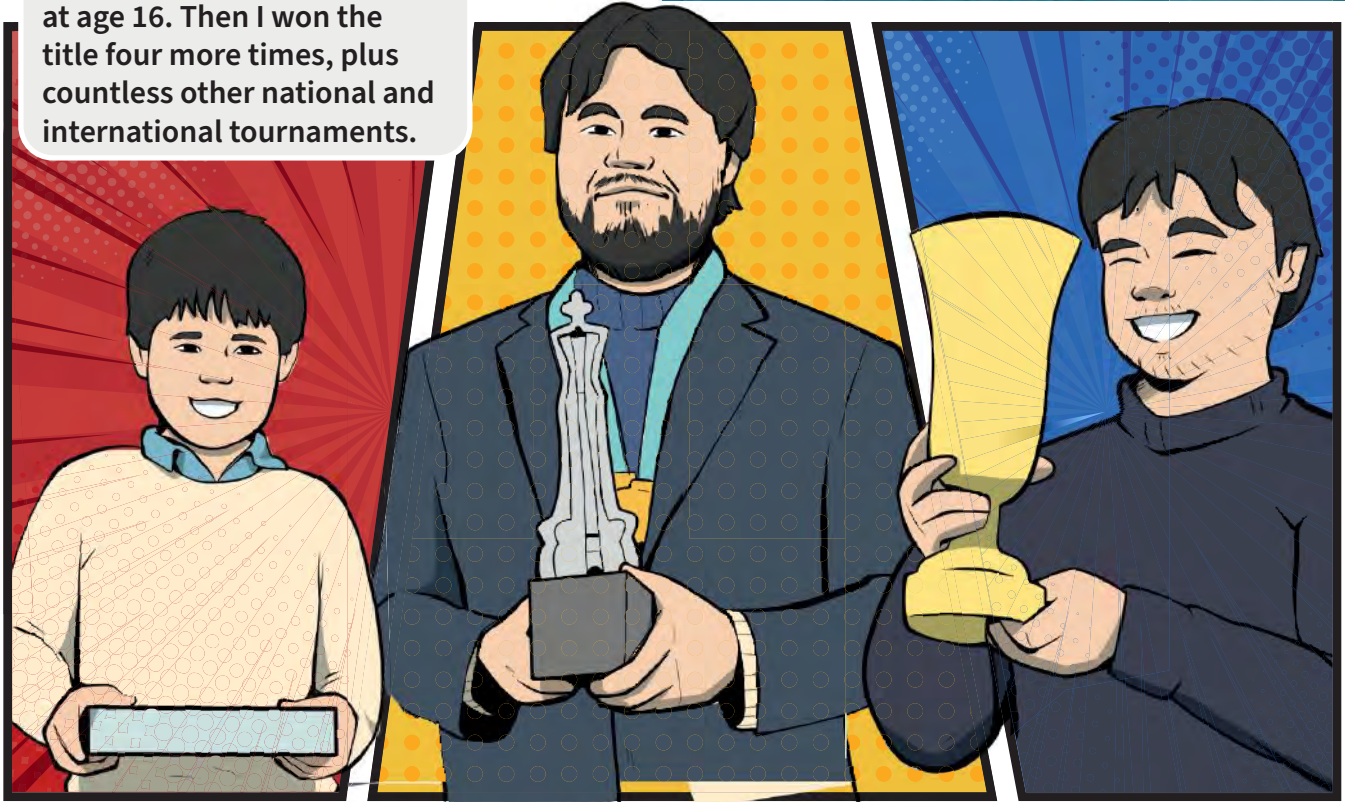
\*all youngest records have since been broken

Each time I lost against the computer I learned something new. It helped me improve pretty rapidly.

Hmm.  
Let me try alternating sides and copying the computer moves.



Not long after, I won my first U.S. Championship title at age 16. Then I won the title four more times, plus countless other national and international tournaments.



“The first championship in 2005 will always be the most special, but winning this fifth one was by far my best performance because of the strength of the field.”

Hikaru Nakamura on winning his 2019 title, *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, May 2, 2019



As time passed, people began wondering if my passion for speed chess was going to ruin my game. But I loved it! I still do.

**Fastest hands  
in the West!**

A reporter once said I had the fastest hands in the West!

## 2022 FIDE Fischer Rapid World Champion

**World #1 in Blitz**  
(FIDE Blitz ranking  
as of December 2022)

### SEVEN BULLET CHESS TIPS FROM HIKARU

Here are suggestions for improvement from one of the world's best speed players.

- Never resign (anything can happen).
- Never assume when pre-moving.
- Don't focus on time.
- Choose your thinking time wisely.
- Almost any opening works.
- Simplify when up material or down on time.
- Know when to quit (stop playing if your form is off).\*



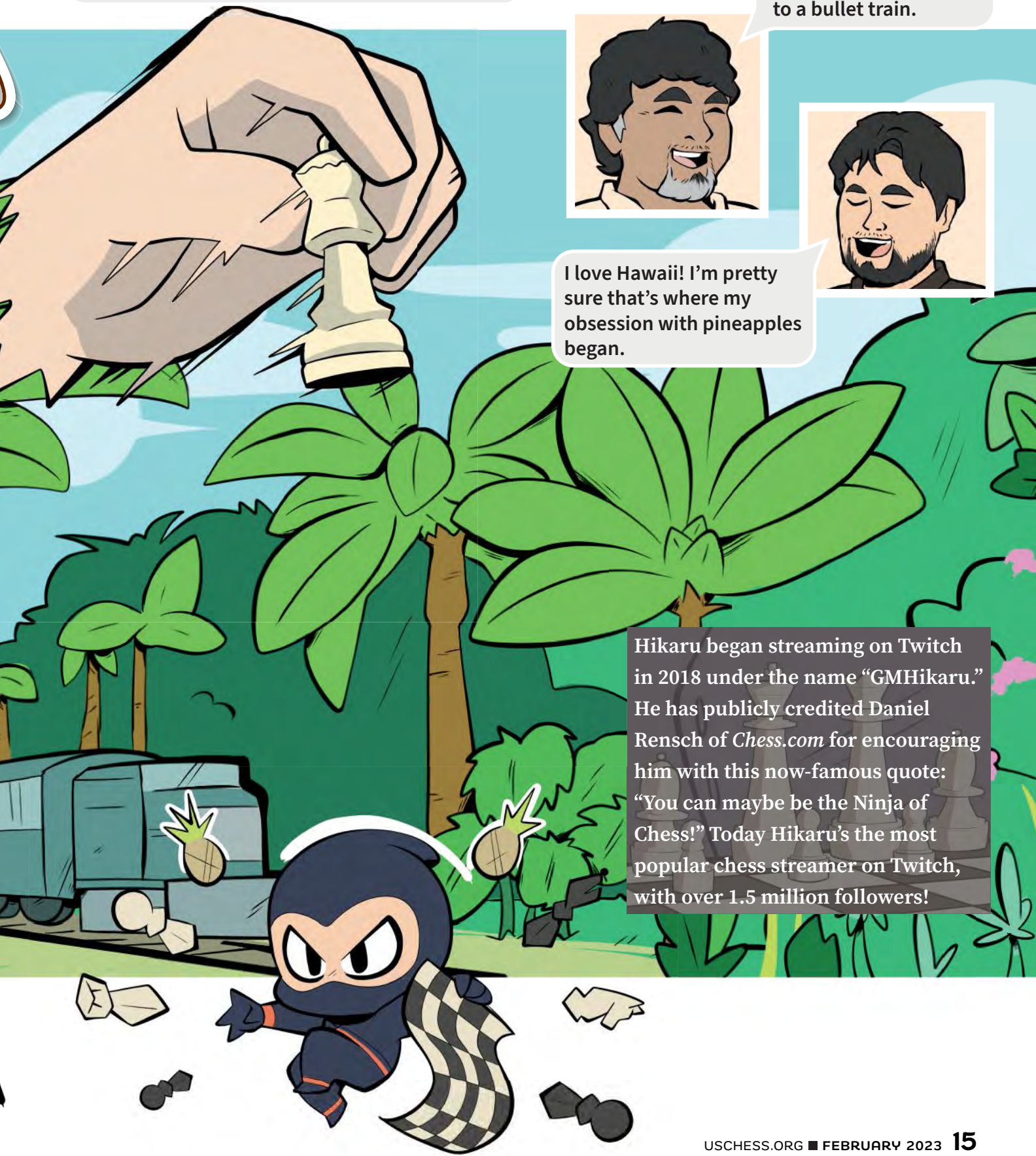
He actually recorded how long it took me to pick up a piece, make the move, and press the clock. It was something like a fraction of a second!

One time a news station in Hawaii even compared your speed to a bullet train.

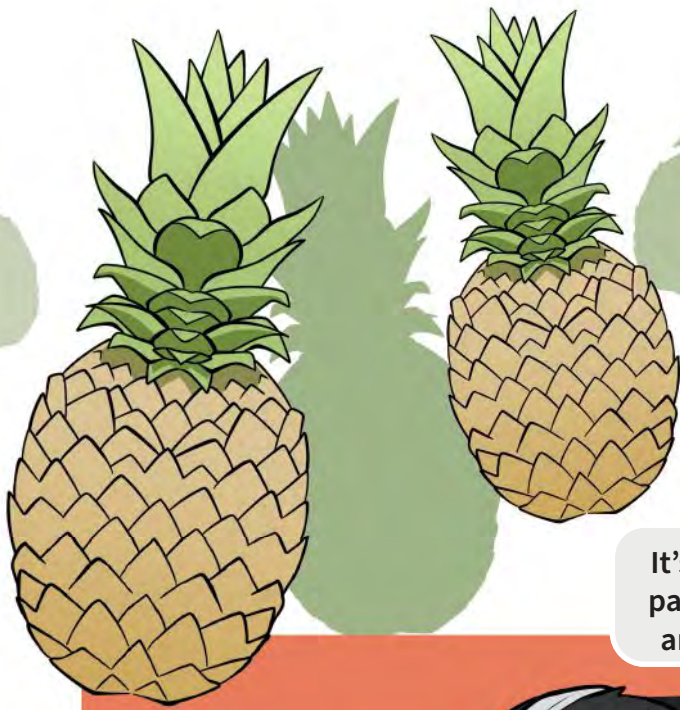


I love Hawaii! I'm pretty sure that's where my obsession with pineapples began.

Hikaru began streaming on Twitch in 2018 under the name "GMHikaru." He has publicly credited Daniel Rensch of *Chess.com* for encouraging him with this now-famous quote: "You can maybe be the Ninja of Chess!" Today Hikaru's the most popular chess streamer on Twitch, with over 1.5 million followers!







And now you have pineapples all over your studio when you stream!

Yes, who would have guessed that chess would lead to an incredible streaming career?



It's been fun reliving the past with you! But what are your future plans?

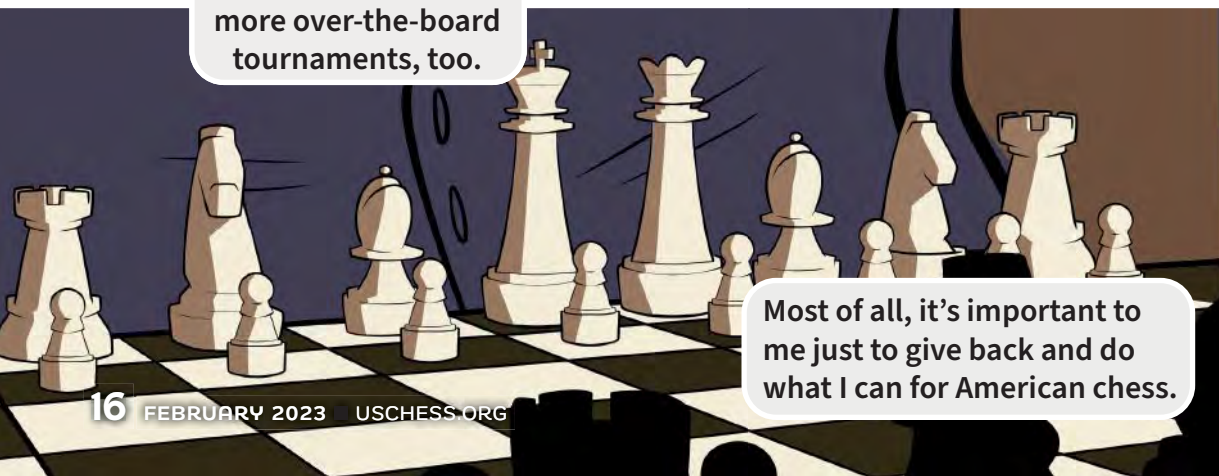
Believe in the journey of chess. Enjoy it because it's only going to be here once.  
~ Hikaru, *Chess Life* interview, June 2022



First, I do feel a big responsibility when it comes to streaming.

I would like to see the community of people who enjoy chess but who aren't serious players grow.

And I intend to play more over-the-board tournaments, too.



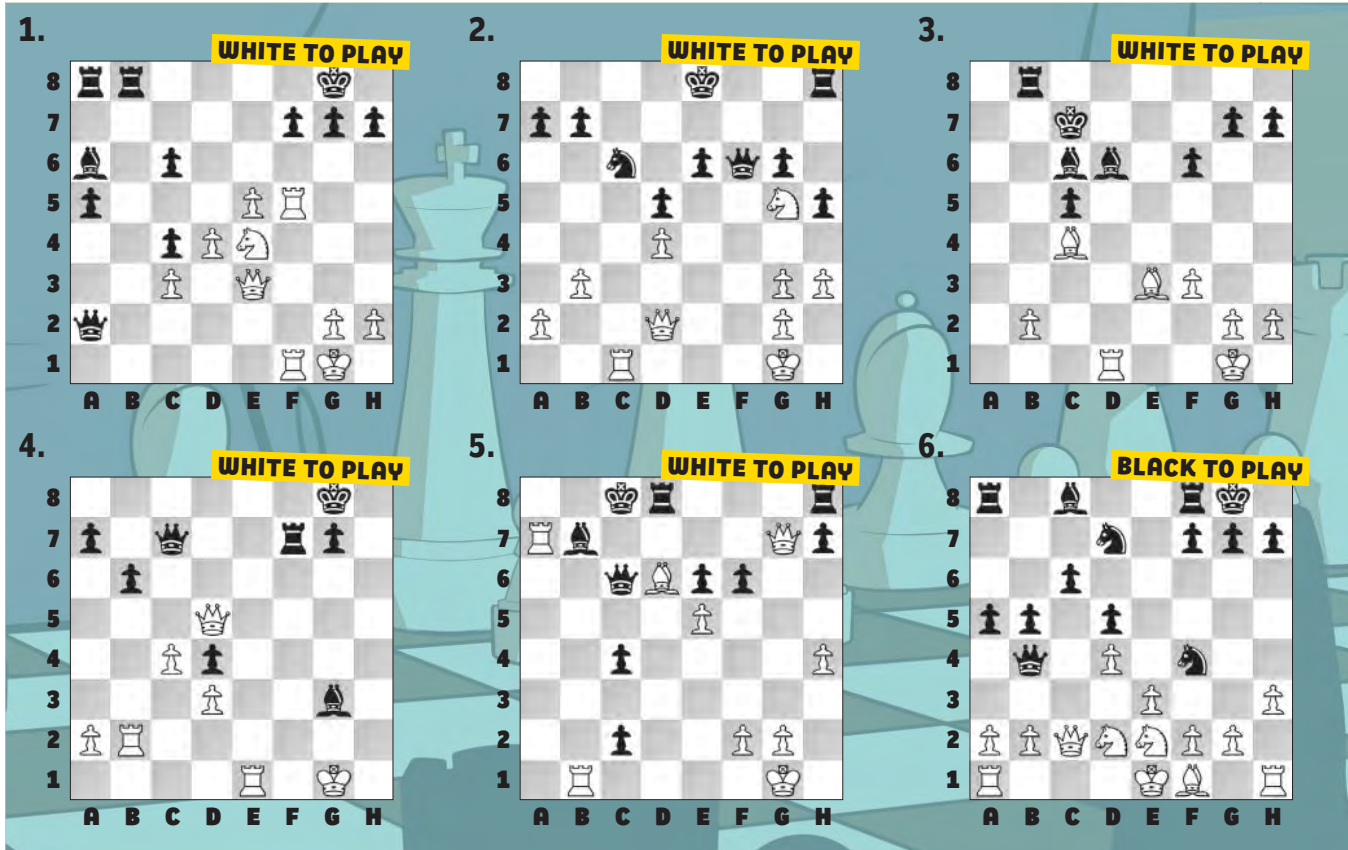
Most of all, it's important to me just to give back and do what I can for American chess.

Many thanks to FM Sunil Weeramantry and GM Hikaru Nakamura for their participation!



# What Was Hikaru Thinking?

**H**IKARU'S TACTICAL SKILLS have been honed over the years. See if you can figure out what he was thinking in these puzzles that span his career. Don't peek at the answers until you try to solve them!



(1) All of the black pieces are on the queenside, while White's pieces are aimed at the king. That's one sign that a tactic is possible. Here the young Nakamura played **24. Nf6+! gxf6** — as good as anything else. Black loses after both 24. ... Kf8 25. Nxh7+ Kg8 26. e6 and 24. ... Kh8 25. Rh5!. **25. Qh6?** Such a natural move, but a bit of a mistake. It's mate soon after the correct 25. Qg3+! Kh8 (25. ... Kf8 26. Rxf6) 26. Qh4 with Qh4xf6+ next. **25. ... Qa3?** One tempo short. After 25. ... Rb2! 26. g3 Rg2+ 27. Kh1 Rxh2+ 28. Qxh2 Qxh2+ 29. Kxh2 Bc8! 30. Rxf6 Be6 and White needs to show technique to win. **26. exf6 Qf8 27. Rg5+ Kh8 28. Rg7, Black resigned.** (Nakamura – Djukic, World U10 Ch, 1997)

(2) **42. Nxe6! Kd7** The queen can't be taken: if 42. ... Qxe6 43. Re1 with a fatal pin. **43. Nc5+ Kc8 44. b4!** Threatening b4-b5 followed by a discovery. **44. ... b5.** No better is 44. ... Qxd4+ 45. Qxd4 Nxd4 due to 46. Nb3+ Nc6 47. b5. **45. a4 Kd8 46. Kh2!** Avoiding any checks on d4. Note the difference in king safety! **46. ... Re8 47. axb5 Ne7 48. Ra1 Nf5 49. Qf4 Qb6 50. Ra6 Qxb5 51. Rxa7**

**Re7 52. Ra8+, Black resigned.** (Nakamura – Paschall, Bermuda, 2003)

(3) **28. Rxd6!, Black resigned.** A nice way to finish the game. White's point is 28. Rxd6 Kxd6 29. Bf4+ winning a piece. Nakamura won his first U.S. Championship in this event. (Nakamura – Muhammad, U.S. Championship, 2004)

(4) Here Nakamura found a nice mate-in-two in blitz mode. **32. Re8+**, making use of the pin on the rook, and forcing the king to a fatal square. **32. ... Kh7 33. Qh5 mate.** (Nakamura – Nureev, Dos Hermanas / ICC, 2009)

(5) If we could play Rb1-b8, it would be mate. Nakamura finds a neat way to open the file. **25. Ra8+! Bxa8 26. Rb8, mate.** (Nakamura – Wheeler, PRO League, Chess.com, 2018)

(6) **15. ... Qxb2!** Luring the queen to the right square for a double attack. **16. Qxb2 Nd3+ 17. Kd1 Nxb2+ 18. Kc2 Nc4.** Up a clean pawn, Nakamura went on to win on move 29. (Carlsen – Nakamura, Speed Chess Ch, Chess.com, 2022)

## Transitions

*Chess Life Kids* is getting a makeover! John Hartmann, whose spectacular work as *Chess Life* editor has received national awards, will be adding *Chess Life Kids* editor to his duties beginning with the April issue. I'm moving to a new role as managing editor but will continue my involvement with both magazines behind the scenes. We believe this internal restructuring will create a more comprehensive and seamless relationship between *Chess Life* and *Chess Life Kids*. It has been an honor bringing chess content to life in the pages of *Chess Life Kids*, and I look forward to seeing what the future holds!



## CLK editors and the Nakamura connection!



Photo, top: John Hartmann prepares to blitz with GM Hikaru Nakamura at a recent street chess event in New Orleans. Photo, bottom: Melinda Matthews' son, Nicholas Rosenthal, was paired with Nakamura on board one at the 2011 U.S. Open in Orlando.

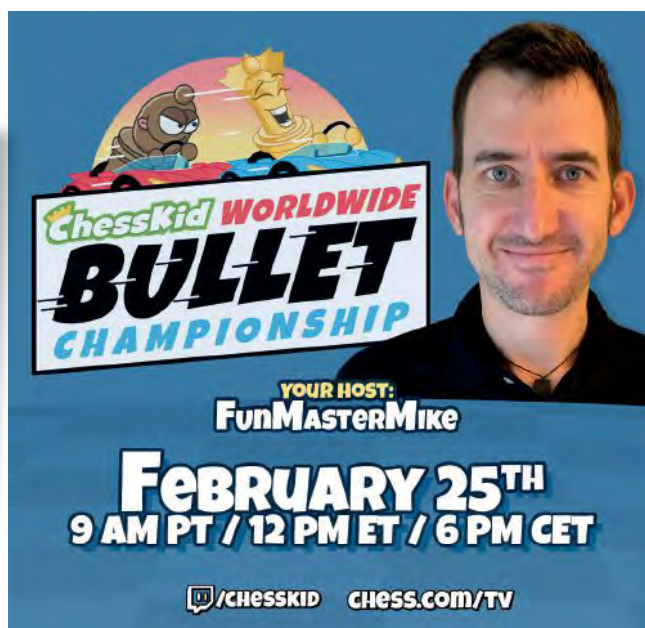
## News Flash!

The 2022 National K-12 Grade Championships

concluded on December 11, 2022. You can find the winners at [uschess.org/results/2022/k12/](https://uschess.org/results/2022/k12/) — and look for a comprehensive tournament report from Laurel Aronian in the April issue of *Chess Life Kids*.

## ChessKid Worldwide Bullet Championship

If you love bullet chess as much as GM Hikaru Nakamura does, why not sign up for the ChessKid Worldwide Bullet Championship? It's open to all kids and it's free once you join the ChessKid Official Club (club membership is free, too!). The tournament will be held on February 25th at 9 a.m. PT / 12 p.m. ET / 6 p.m. CET. Go to [ChessKid.com](https://ChessKid.com) for details and to join the club!



**ChessKid WORLDWIDE BULLET CHAMPIONSHIP**

YOUR HOST:  
**FunMasterMike**

**FEBRUARY 25<sup>TH</sup>**  
9 AM PT / 12 PM ET / 6 PM CET

[/CHESSKID](https://twitch.tv/chesskid) [CHESS.COM/TV](https://chess.com/tv)



THE  
**2023**

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