

# NEW IN CHESS

**Just Checking Garry Kasparov!**

**Rowson's Reviews reaches 50**

**Interview**

**Ken Rogoff: 'I think of chess all the time'**

# Magnus Carlsen

**Fights back in London to Reclaim Top Spot**

**Russian Super Final**

**Larry Evans remembered**

**And much more**



**NEW COLUMN: NIGEL SHORT** ★

**HOU YIFAN (16) WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPION** ★

**VUGAR GASHIMOV KEEPS PROMISE**

With sponsors that made their fortunes in the City, it could barely be a surprise that the VIP-room of the London Chess Classic was visited by numerous heavyweights from the world of finance. For the majority of the chess players they must have remained unnoticed, if only for the fact that almost all of them stuck to the modern adage that suits are for men who *hope* to become rich. Even the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, walked in casually dressed in a sweater.

Jeans and a jacket without tie make Ken Rogoff fairly inconspicuous when he comes into the room during the fifth round. He only attracts attention when he starts to do interviews with Anand and Nakamura, filmed by a cameraman. His wife Natasha produces children's programmes and his clever promise to provide her with fairly unique footage is one of the reasons why they are now here. Rogoff's schedule is crazy and squeezing in a visit to a chess tournament is no sinecure. The density and tensity of his schedule is driven home to me when in the evening I write him an email suggesting an interview the next day and he almost promptly replies that it was a whirlwind visit and that he is already back in the States. As an alternative he proposes to talk via Skype and so the next Sunday, at 8 a.m. ('I often wake up at six, which is a good time to work with kids of 12 and 14') he sits ready in his study. He has just bought a new computer including a wide-angle webcam and the royal view that I have of him behind his desk makes it easy to forget that there is an ocean between us.

**You clearly felt at ease at the London Chess Classic. What is it that you enjoy? Seeing old friends? The tension of the games?**

'The last time I went to a tournament was Rotterdam 1988. I also saw one game of the Kasparov-Anand match in New York. It's fun. As for seeing old friends, there were only a couple of people I knew. Most of the players

had started playing after I stopped. It was fun and interesting to meet them. It's a very nice tournament, very well organized. I knew I might be in London at that time. I thought I should go back to a tournament, I kept putting it off, but it was a great thing to do and my wife enjoyed it also, as she was able to do some filming. So it was great.'

**How much had changed?**

'(Immediately) Not a bit (laughs). Somewhere the computers were lurking in the background and obviously there was slightly better technology

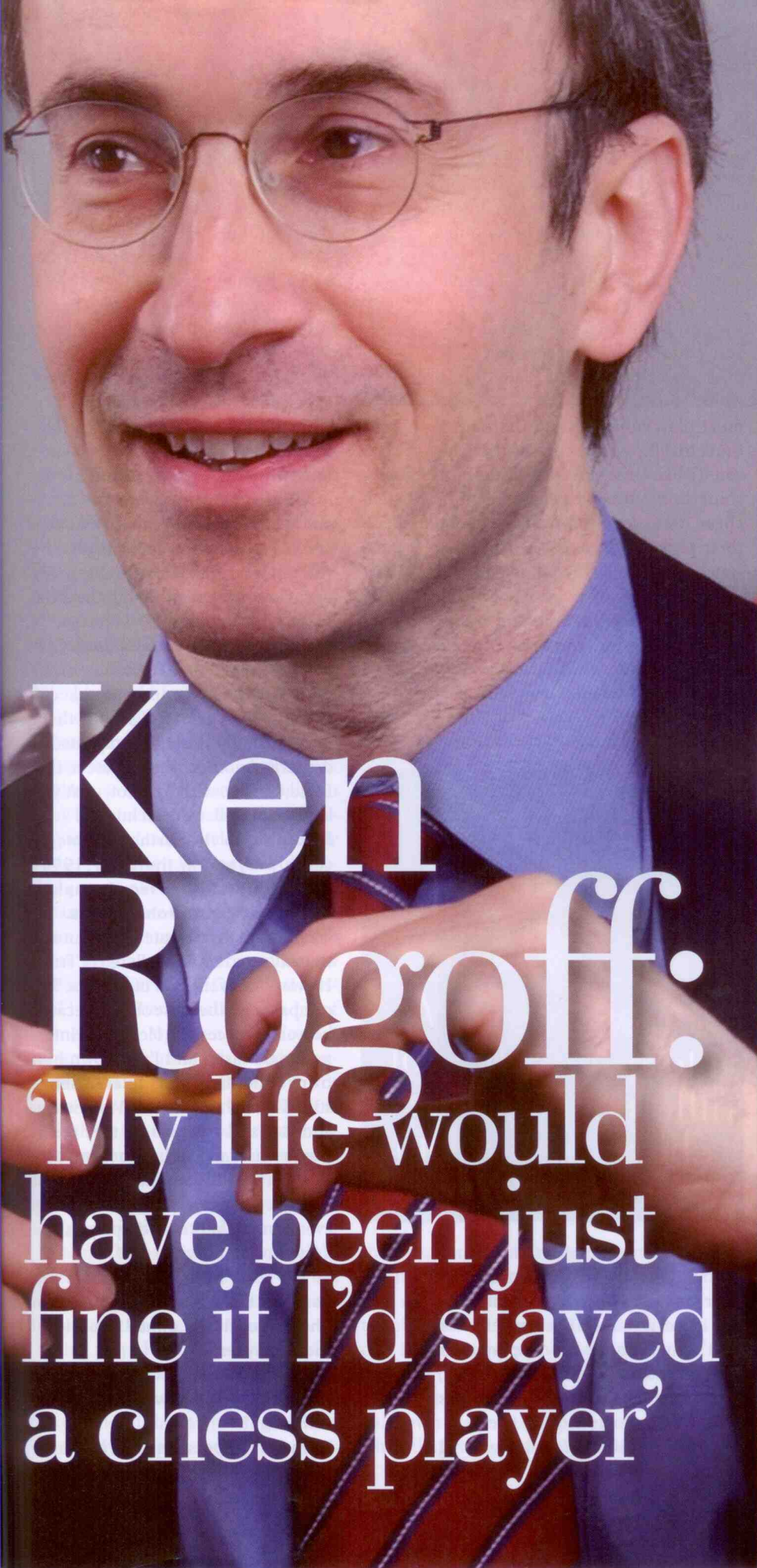
for seeing the games, but it felt very familiar.'

**It's a common belief among chess players that they could also use their chess talent in other fields. And if this is not their own conviction then often other people will tell them so. Perhaps typical was Bobby Fischer's statement that he was not a chess genius but a genius who happened to play chess... (Laughingly interrupts) I think he could say that! Yet, you are one of the rare exceptions of a chess grandmaster who made a**

At 16 he dropped out of school to be a chess player. None other than Bobby Fischer had praised his play and soon Ken Rogoff was an International Grandmaster. However, once he returned to the groves of Academe, he embarked on an even more impressive career in economics. Having graduated summa cum laude from Yale, he was Chief Economist of the International Monetary Fund from 2001 to 2003 and from 1999 he has been Professor of Economics and Public Policy at Harvard. His recent bestseller *This Time Is Different: Eight Centuries of Financial Folly*, written together with Carmen Reinhart, makes it clear why Rogoff is consulted by political leaders and policy makers all over the world. In the meantime his passion for chess has not dwindled, as

**Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam**

found out.



Ken  
Rogoff:  
'My life would  
have been just  
fine if I'd stayed  
a chess player'



At the age of 16 Ken Rogoff was U-21 Champion of the United States. In 1969 he represented his country at the Junior World Championship in Stockholm, where this photo was taken.

**serious career in another field. What are your views on the supposed further talents of chess players?**

‘There are simply a lot of extraordinary people who play chess, who clearly could have done anything, there is no doubt about that. One of the things at the very top level that makes them great players is the ability to be totally consumed and focused on chess. That’s also one of the reasons why it is hard to do two things, because you either give your life and your passion to it or you’re just not the same. That was also true of course of Fischer, who was monomaniacal and that was a big part of his gift. One of the things I say about chess, I don’t know if it’s true, but I felt at least when I played, that there are all different kinds of people that can be good at chess. You needed to learn to adopt your style to what you did well. So, trying to draw a simple generalization like chess players are good at science or chess players are good at mathematics or chess players have good memories, doesn’t work very well. In fact one of the things that is so interesting about chess is that it has this flexibility to be able to approach it in different ways. Clearly at the very highest level, if you have one glaring weakness, it’s going to get you, but you can look at even some of the different top players, and they approach it very differently. I also would say in chess in schools, sometimes the kid who is the math whizz and considered the class’s brain is by no means the best chess player. Sometimes kids who don’t even think of themselves as super smart turn out to be the best chess players. I think that is one of the mysteries and exciting things about chess.’

‘In chess people can figure out where their strengths are and try to play at them. I think they do that at every level. You can have someone who has a phenomenal memory and you make use of that, and you can have someone who has very good calculating and you can use that. You can be someone who is very good at drawing analogies. Maybe you don’t have a

great memory and maybe you don’t calculate well, but you are very good at drawing analogies between different positions. It’s a matter of adopting what your talents are. I thought it was very interesting what different people chess players are.’

**Do you think you can read a person’s character from his game?**

‘I used to think that, I really did. I think you can tell a lot. I certainly don’t play enough to do that, but I think that if you play chess with a person it’s like a conversation. You learn something about a person playing chess. You can certainly learn about their personality, and I don’t mean watching them at the chess board, I mean the moves.’

**Did you do a lot of thinking about this when you were an active player? About what chess is and how you could improve your play in other manners?**

‘Yeah, I think I am going to answer a



‘It was very interesting what different people chess players are.’

slightly different question. A very important part of chess is figuring out your mistakes and how to improve and it’s very painful. Because let’s face it, it’s much more fun to play over your wins than the losses. And yeah, you just have to play over your losses again and again and again. I remember meeting Bobby Fischer when I

was playing in the U.S. Junior Championship in New York in 1969. He had been having problems with rook and pawn endings. He got outplayed in some rook and pawn endings and he basically finally said, OK, this stops here, this isn’t going to happen again. And he was spending all his time on rook and pawn endings. And indeed, I think it was against Geller that he won a rook and pawn ending after that, that you couldn’t have imagined before. I think that takes really steel will and most people don’t have it. Most people lose the same game again and again and again. They don’t realize that they are losing the same game again. The real top players have that ability to try to suffer repeatedly through the same defeat and learn from it.’

**Is that something you did yourself?**

‘I understood it, but I definitely didn’t do it as well as I would have liked. I absolutely understood it, but there were certainly mistakes I repeated at desperate moments in my career, that I said, oh boy, what an idiot, can’t you learn? But well, we’re all human.’

**Returning to the further talents of chess players, in the early 1990s Bankers Trust tried to recruit employees among chess grandmasters.**

‘Yes, Norman Weinstein was an extremely good trader at Bankers Trust. He was one of the best of that era. The campaign was because of him, because he was so successful. He was an International Master and I’ve known him from childhood and we are friends still. There was a time at Wall Street, and it is still true, where they feel if you’re smart and willing to learn, they can work with you. They didn’t just look at chess players, I would say they even went to look at chess players and a few have done well.’

**In 1991 we had Bankers Trust advert on the back cover of New In Chess specifically aimed at top-level chess players.**

‘Wow.’

**Would you say this was a successful campaign?**

‘I am not the person to ask, because I



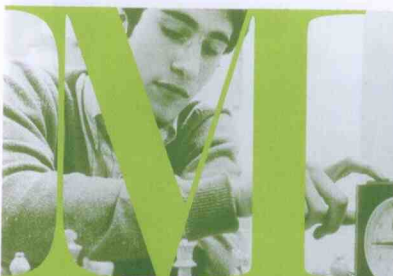
(Left) Ken Rogoff, an 18-year-old freshman at Yale, plays 20-year-old Anatoly Karpov at the World U-26 Team Championship in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, in 1971. Karpov won.



don't know them all, but I think there have been a few who managed to do that. I am not a trader, that's a very specific thing, I am more of a philosopher, an academic. Being a trader certainly requires iron nerves as chess does and also this ability to concentrate for very long periods. What I do is very different. In economics, there are a couple of areas where I have found having played chess very useful. There's an area of economics called game theory, and some of my work makes use of it. I've done research on why countries can benefit from having independent central banks that try to keep inflation low instead of having monetary strategy managed by the treasury. I wrote a paper on that more than 25 years ago, back when there were only a couple of countries in the world that had independent central banks. That actually uses a bit of game theory. And then I also do a lot of work on financial crises and countries defaulting and that too involves game theory. Because when countries default on their debt, it's almost never because they can't repay it, it's because they don't feel like it and it's a strategic interaction. Game theory is quite complex mathematically. I am not a great mathematician, I am certainly not someone like John Nunn, but the parts of game theory I needed, came very intuitively to me. And I think having played chess was very helpful in my work. I can also say, much later in my career, when I became Chief Economist at the International Monetary Fund, I again found chess very

useful. I would say particularly in negotiations, where at least chess taught me to think about what the other person's thinking in a very disciplined way. And also to stay very calm. Now other people may develop those skills in their own way, but I learned them through chess.

**Is that because chess players have to be by nature good psychologists?**  
'Maybe a computer can afford not to think about what the opponent is



**'Most people lose the same game again and again and again.'**

thinking, but most of us are trying to understand what your opponent's next move is going to be. Part of it are the objectives of the position, but part of it is their temperament and many other things. You could technically, as a computer does, just think about your own move, and there are times when that's the right thing to do, but

chess teaches you to think what another person's thinking. It's funny, because chess is considered to be so isolating and anti-social by many people, but in some ways it's not. Another very important skill you learn in chess is that we all make mistakes. And if you panic after you made a mistake you're doomed. Chess teaches you to stay calm in difficult situations. I've certainly faced many challenging situations in my career as an economist, particularly over the last decade, where I think that's been very useful. Let's say, you're giving a lecture and you make a mistake and you could just fall when somebody points that out and you do not know what to say next. But if you stay calm you can think of how to recover from it. In chess that is very important, both within a game and I'd say also within a tournament. When you lose a game, do you just become depressed? I've never looked at it statistically, but I am sure it must be true that for most players their performance the day after they lose a game has a worse average than their overall performance. Not the very top players, of course, but for most people the best time to play someone is the day after they lost.'

**In chess there is this idea that the truth exists. Do you feel that in your field of work the truth can be found?**  
'(Laughs) No, it's a social science and at the end of the day a lot of important results depend on how people behave acting in concert. Economics is not so much about individual psychology as group behaviour. We have cer-

tain rules of thumb, like people like to pay less rather than to pay more and such that are very useful, but it's just too complicated to talk about reducing it to absolutes. There are certainly principles we have that we know, and economics is always advancing, but I don't think anyone speaks yet in terms of absolute truth. In chess, clearly, you can ultimately have a computer that will never lose. I think in economics I am not sure we can, say, design a trader who will never lose money.'

**In the current worldwide financial crisis many people are wondering what is really going on. In your columns you are very outspoken. Is that a scary thing, because the impact can be so tremendous?**

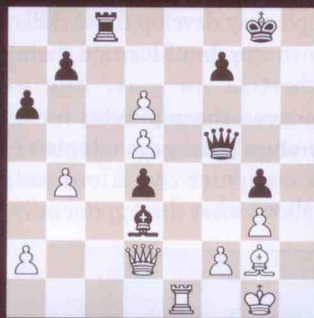
'I try to be very responsible in what I say. We all make mistakes, but I try not to make off-hand remarks or say things to the extreme just to make a point if I don't believe it, particularly in my writings. I have an internationally syndicated column that is published in over 50 countries and 13 or 14 languages. You have to say something or you're not interesting, but I certainly am careful. I don't think one wants to excessively weight one's influence, that's for sure. I've certainly talked to many many presidents and prime ministers, but I don't humour myself to think that the whole future of anything turns on anything I say. Most people who are world leaders and policy makers look at many ideas and sources of information and then try to go with the flow when they see a lot of things pointing in the same direction. I don't try to say things just to gain attention.'

**But when you are writing about the Euro zone you are convinced that they'd be better off if they took the right decisions now.**

'Yes. A lot of my work and particularly the past ten years has been on the history of financial crises. I wrote this book with Carmen Reinhart, *This Time Is Different*, which took us eight years to write, about financial crises. One of the lessons is that the policy

**Ken Rogoff  
Jan Smejkal  
Biel Interzonal 1976**

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 c5 3.g3 g6 4. ♘g2 ♘g7 5.e3 0-0 6.♘ge2 ♘c6 7.0-0 d6 8.d4 cxd4 9.exd4 ♘f5 10.h3 h5 11.♘g5 ♖d7 12.♘h2 e5 13.d5 ♘d4 14.♘xd4 exd4 15.♘b5 ♖fc8 16.♖c1 ♘h7 17. ♘f4 g5 18.♘d2 a6 19.♘a3 g4 20.hxg4 hxg4 21.b4 ♘d3 22. ♖e1 ♖f5 23.♘g1 ♘f6 24.c5 ♘g5 25.♘xg5 ♘xg5 26.♘c4 ♖d8 27.♘xd6 ♖xd6 28.cxd6 ♘xc1 29.♖xc1 ♖c8 30.♖d2



30...♘h7 31.d7 ♖d8 32.♖e7 ♘g6 33.d6 ♘f6 34.♖h6+ ♖g6 35.♖h4+ ♘g7 36.♖e8 1-0

makers often are frozen and unable to take steps quickly enough. Markets move faster than policy makers and probably the single-most consistent mistake you see over time is the policy makers' fail to get ahead of the curve. They don't want to see it coming, they won't admit it's coming. That's clearly been a huge problem in Europe.'

**And this is simply something you're warning them for.**

'Oh yeah. I can certainly say there is an open conversation beyond just my column, but of course it's not easy to take these tough decision and especially within Europe where there are widely diverging interests.'

How influential Ken Rogoff is he found out in 2008 when in a speech in

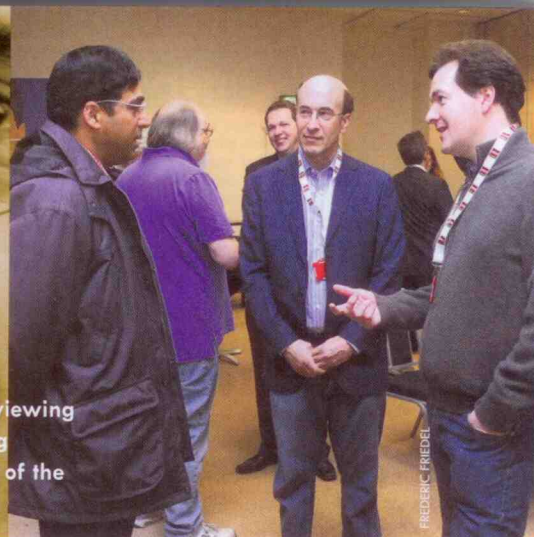
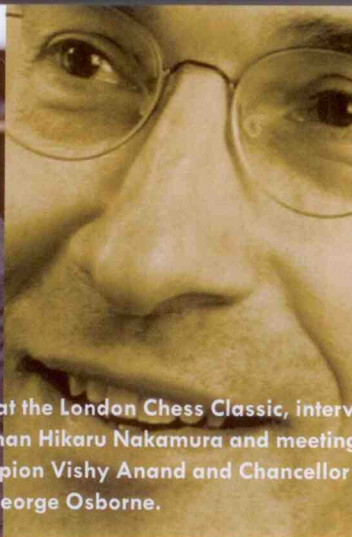
Singapore he said: 'We're not just going to see mid-sized banks go under in the next few months, we're going to see a whopper, we're going to see a big one – one of the big investment banks or big banks.' The next day his remark was front page news all over the world. Less than a month later Lehman Brothers collapsed.

'In this speech I pointed at my research and also at some of my students' research, which suggested that first of all the world was going into recession and second that the financial system had just gotten too big and needed to shrink. And I thought through how would it shrink and I said it seemed to me unlikely that it would shrink by having all the banks in the world shrink by 15 or 20 percent at the same time. Which I called an immaculate contraction. I said that was awfully unlikely. The way capitalist systems work is that if there is too much supply, a couple of companies go under. A big airline, we see it all the time. I thought the same would happen with the banking sector. I have to say, sometimes things surprise you. I was quite surprised that that made such headlines as it did.

'I didn't say anything about Lehman. I was thinking about Lehman, but I certainly didn't say that. Sometimes you say these things when everyone else is thinking them. But the bottom line is that I like to study the international financial crises, I don't like to cause them. I certainly hadn't anticipated being in bold headlines on the front page of almost every newspaper in the world for what I thought was making a straightforward obvious point.'

**And you really went into hiding?**

'I did. I got calls from every newspaper or television station. You know, if I couldn't have an interview they'd fly me to wherever I wanted to go. First of all I didn't see the positive effect of saying anything further. And I didn't want to be asked, who were you talking about? I didn't want to say and I didn't want to not say. I certainly



Ken Rogoff at the London Chess Classic, interviewing his countryman Hikaru Nakamura and meeting World Champion Vishy Anand and Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne.

NEW IN CHESS

FREDERIC FRIEDEL

spoke to policy makers that contacted me, but I felt it wasn't appropriate to talk to the press because I didn't want to be painted into a corner where I would have to say what bank I was talking about.

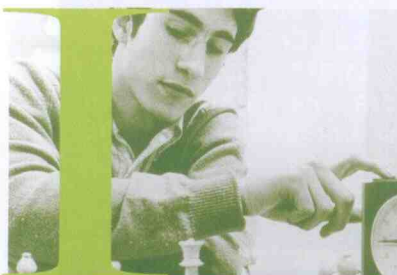
**If you look at your resume, starting with dropping out of school to play chess and then becoming a respected scientist with a huge career, it is hard to see any logic. What logic do you see?**

'Chess players are very creative people. I think to be a successful chess player you have to constantly think of new ideas. The same thing is true at least to be an academic, an economist, I don't know, probably it's true in any branch, to be successful you have to be creative. If you just follow life in a very linear fashion that doesn't always lend itself to creativity. People tend to think of artists and musicians as quirky and creative, but anyone who knows chess players knows that there is a lot in common. It's probably less so of academics, but there are certainly a lot of interesting stories people have.'

**When you left school to play chess, did you have the feeling this was something you were going to do for a long time to come or was it just an adventure?**

'I don't think I thought two moves ahead to be honest. It felt like the right thing to do. Frankly, I think this is not literally true, but it felt like more people went to jail than to college at my school. There were some very good teachers and there were some very good students, but it was

a tough place and I didn't feel like I was missing a lot. I was very excited about playing chess and back then in the United States there was just very little, it was very hard to be a chess



**'It's always puzzled me that chess hasn't done better commercially.'**

player. Just based in the United States you couldn't grow, so I felt playing in Europe was important. It wasn't carefully thought out.'

**Which were the three most memorable games you played in your career?**

'Boy, that's a tough question, but I'll just whip off of the top of my head. The first one I was very young. I won a game against Stephen Spencer. This was a game Fischer annotated later and I went over the game for what must have been a few hours with him and I won my first U.S. junior championship (Fischer visited the cham-

pionship and wrote in his column in *Boys' Life*: "The player that impressed me most was 16-year-old Ken Rogoff from Rochester, N.Y. What I liked best about Ken – who won the championship – was his self-assured style and his knowing exactly what he wanted over the chess board. I'm told that he's only been playing chess for two or three years and it should encourage each of you young fellows who read this column to know that by applying yourself, as Ken did, you can become a fine player in a relatively short time, too." – DJtG). Another game that was certainly important was against Kavalek in the U.S. Championship in 1975. Again it was a good game, but it was a very important game competitively. I ended up finishing second and qualifying for the Interzonal and probably was leading the tournament at that time. It was a very difficult game, I remember that. Probably another one would be my game with Smejkal from the Interzonal in Biel in 1976, where he was outplaying me badly, but he slipped at one point and let me have a counterattack which won. It was an interesting game, but again an important game. I enjoyed a lot of my games, and there are certainly games I won crushingly, but those are games I remember.'

**What was the reason for you to return to school: because there were not enough chances for you in chess or because there was the lure of something else?**

'This is a combination of the two. I certainly realized I wouldn't be World

## Interview

Champion. I had met Karpov, and he was a couple of years older than me, and not like I would say I couldn't win a game, but this was somebody who was just amazingly talented, worked what seemed like night and day on chess. I remember another game I played, I think I was 16 years old, against Ljubojevic, who was 19 when I played him. I was Black in a Sicilian. You have to remember he was absolutely one of the couple most talented players in the world then and I think he rose as high as third. We played the Sicilian, where I actually needed to win to make an international master norm, and he won beautifully. I remember analysing the game afterwards with him and there were some very long variations. As a 16-year-old player playing mostly older players I was certainly used to being outplayed, say in endgames, but almost never outcalculated, that just didn't happen. There was one point where I thought I had calculated a very long nice variation and I asked Ljubo, What were you going to do here? And he said, No, no, you show me. And I reeled off what was for me an incredibly long and creative variation. And he said, Oh yes, and then he told me, No, that doesn't work and showed me one that was about twice as long that would actually win. I was blown away.

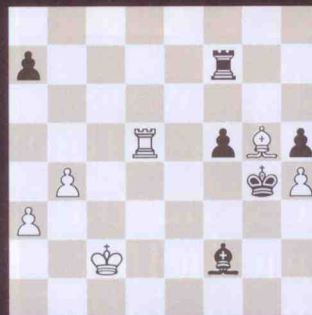
'I had already done very well against top players in the world at that time. I won't say I was lacking confidence, but I felt it was awfully unlikely I would be World Champion. At the same time I had a somewhat idealistic view of what I might accomplish in my life and so I decided to go to school. I think I would have been very happy as a chess player. Frankly, I don't think I ever was unhappy. I really loved it and enjoyed it. My life would have been just fine if I'd stayed a chess player.'

**What was the idealistic idea you had about your life?**

'One thing I thought to myself was I wanted to do something more important in my life. And I have to say that for years I was doing theoretical eco-

Lubomir Kavalek  
Ken Rogoff  
U.S. Championship 1975

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4.c4 ♘f6 5.♗c3 ♗c6 6.♗f3  
♙g4 7.cxd5 ♗xd5 8.♖b3 ♙xf3  
9.gxf3 e6 10.♖xb7 ♗xd4 11.  
♙b5+ ♗xb5 12.♖c6+ ♙e7  
13.♖xb5 ♙d7 14.♗xd5+  
♖xd5 15.♖xd5 exd5 16.♙e3  
♙e6 17.0-0-0 ♖c8+ 18.♙b1  
♙c5 19.♖he1 ♗d6 20.♖d3  
♖hd8 21.a3 h6 22.h4 h5 23.  
♖g1 g6 24.♙g5 ♖e8 25.♖gd1  
♙xf2 26.♖xd5+ ♙c6 27.♖5d2  
♖e1 28.♖xe1 ♙xe1 29.♖e2  
♙a5 30.f4 ♙b6 31.f5 gxf5 32.  
♖e5 f6 33.♖e6+ ♙d5 34.♖xf6  
♙e4 35.♖f7 ♖c7 36.♖f8 ♙c5  
37.♖f6 ♙d4 38.♖f8 ♙g7 39.  
♖e8+ ♙f3 40.♖e1 ♙d4 41.b4  
♙g4 42.♖d1 ♙f2 43.♖d5 ♖f7  
44.♙c2



44...f4 45.♙d1 f3 46.a4 ♙g3  
47.♖d4+ ♙h3 48.♙e3 f2 49.  
♙xf2 ♙xf2 50.♖e4 ♙xh4 51.  
a5 ♙f2 52.b5 h4 53.♙e2 ♙g2  
54.b6 axb6 55.axb6 h3 56.  
♖g4+ ♙g3 0-1

nomics, very mathematical, which I thought was important, but I am not sure that many people could understand. Another reason was I didn't like the travel so much and now of course I travel all the time as an international economist. And a third reason was I thought I had a much better social life when I was back at home in Rochester

than when I was travelling. There were virtually no women in chess and now of course I am in a profession which has very few women also. So later in life I realized that everything was just about me and not about chess. But when you're 17 or so when I was thinking this, you don't realize that.'

**Did you ever look at the chess world as a closed economic system? First there were the Soviets who were spoiling it for the players from the Free World, because they were supported by the State. Later when the Soviet Union collapsed they were still there and too many people were playing for too little money.**

'You know, it's funny, when I was 17 or 18, I would read articles that were really very thoughtful, and I remember one by I think his name was Camille Coudari, he was a French-Canadian player, a very strong player back then. I remember him writing chess being an opiate for the masses, all sorts of philosophical articles and I was so focused on chess I didn't think a lot. I should have thought about those things. I'd like to say I had the depth and maturity to be aware of those things, but I probably didn't. I didn't worry about that at all. Just didn't think about it.'

**Did you think about this later, looking from the outside in, thinking: what a strange economy is this?**

'It's always puzzled me that chess hasn't done better commercially, because it has such cachet, there's so many people interested. Even as the world has evolved, chess is very Internet-friendly and at the cutting-edge of artificial intelligence and computing. It's always puzzled me. You can blame it on the other disfunction of the world chess federation, but I'm not sure that's it. It's not something I understand very well. One aspect, which is in common with being an actor or being in the movies, is that people love to play chess. They're willing to play chess for very little, they love it. You may think of actors as making a lot of money, but if you take them col-





**CHESS TOURNAMENT** leader Kenneth Rogoff waits, sits and appears poised to pounce on his opponent as their match on Monday neared its conclusion. And that's pretty much what happened: Rogoff won the match. Watching in the background is Paul Drummond, who brought the tournament to Oberlin.



The other day I dropped over to the U.S. Junior Championship at the McAlpin Hotel in New York City and saw some very talented young players in action, struggling for the title. It brought back memories of years ago when I used to be in those events. The player that impressed me most was 16-year-old Ken Rogoff from Rochester, N.Y. What I liked best about Ken — who won the championship — was his self-assured style and his knowing exactly what he wanted over the chessboard. I'm told he's only been playing chess two or three years and it should encourage each of you young fellows who read this column to know that by applying yourself, as Ken did, you can become a fine player in a relatively short time, too.



By **BOBBY FISCHER**



Incidentally, it might also be interesting to note that Ken drew a game with Bent Larsen in the summer of '68 when Larsen was playing in the U.S. Open championship. Larsen is considered one of the very best players in the world today. In this game that I'm going to briefly outline, Ken clinched the first prize

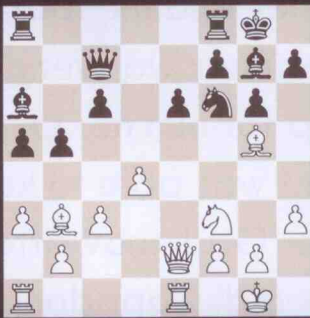
lectively they make nothing. There's a couple of people, like Leonardo Di-Caprio, making a lot for his movie, but most people get nothing. In their whole lives they get nothing and in fact the directors, the producers, they all get nothing too. There's this huge pool of people for whom there's just nothing they'd rather do. Chess has a bit of that because you have these immensely talented people who love to play chess and this creates this big pool. Nevertheless, even with that, I never have fully understood why chess has not been more successful in being bigger commercially.

**That's what I was thinking about inspired by the title of your book, *This Time Is Different*. To my mind the chess world in the past twenty or thirty years has been in some permanent crisis and I was wondering if things are different now or if there have always been the same problems that are simply intrinsic for chess players and for them as a community?**

'I think Fischer made an enormous contribution to chess and I was interested that a lot of the players in London whom I interviewed remarked on that. That they felt their lives were just much better because of the professionalism that Fischer brought. It really changed things. But then, since Fischer, it's hard to point at a big change like that for chess. It's really drifted since then, it doesn't feel like it's improved. I was very impressed at the London Chess Classic that the conditions were pretty good. Gener-

**Ken Rogoff  
Steve Spencer  
New York 1969**

**1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♖g7 3.♘c3 c6 4. ♘f3 d5 5.h3 dxe4 6.♗xe4 ♗d7 7.♙c4 ♗gf6 8.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 9.0-0 0-0 10.c3 ♖c7 11.♗e2 b6 12.♙g5 b5 13.♙b3 a5 14. a3 ♙a6 15.♗fe1 e6**



**16.♗e5 ♗xe5 17.♗xe5 ♖fc8 18.♗xf7 ♗xf7 19.♗xe6 ♗e8 20.♗f6+ 1-0**

ally speaking, of course to this very elite group, they felt that the general level of professional conditions was good. But it doesn't feel like it's nearly what it could be.

**You don't have any clear suggestions?**  
'Unfortunately I am not deeply immersed in the chess world to understand that or to give any wisdom. It is clear to me that people complain about chess not being a great spectator sport, but it's a fantastic Internet spectator sport. And somehow that equa-

tion hasn't been closed. That ought to offer opportunities that haven't yet been exploited.'

**How much time do you still spend thinking about chess these days?**

'I think about chess all the time. That's a short answer! It's not thinking about it with any depth but I think part of my brain is hardwired to play chess and so I'll think about it. In boring meetings I think about it, walking along you're thinking about small positions, games, nothing really of a deeply constructed nature. But I think it's something, if anything, I do to relax. And by the way, I am a big fan of *New In Chess*, it's just a wonderful magazine. I started subscribing to it a few years ago and, once again, I don't read it with any depth... I can't understand modern games, because I don't know where the computer ends and the analysis starts, and it's interesting to see people's comments explaining what they thought were critical moments in the game.'

**Do you still think a lot about your own chess, the games you played? Any nostalgia?**

'No, no. There is nostalgia, but when I am thinking about chess it's not really so much about my own games.'

**Do you go online to follow tournaments?**

'No. I do look at the ChessBase website and follow the very top tournaments a bit. Again, I am not so paralysed by my interest in chess that I do it all the time.'

**And you must barely have time...**

'No, no, it's relaxing, but I don't have the understanding I wish I had. But I enjoy it, it's a fantastic resource.' ■