

# Chess Records

**Edward Winter**

(2006, updated in 2007)



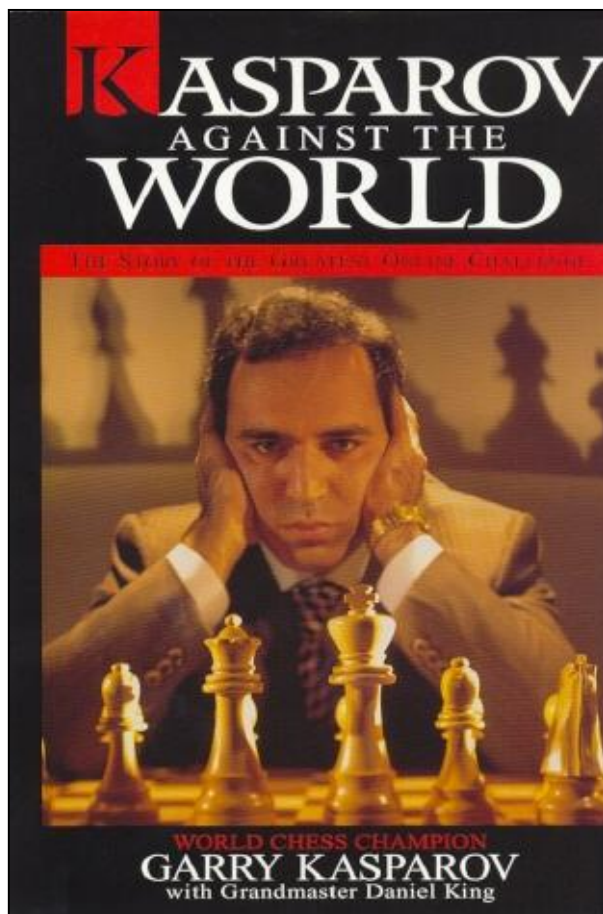
This inventory of chess records will be built up over the months ahead. Additions/corrections from readers to existing entries and proposals for new ones will be most welcome. An exceptional webpage by [Tim Krabbé](#) already covers chess records relating to the practical game (such as the latest castling, greatest number of checks, most promotions and earliest stalemate), and as far as possible our own Chess Records article will avoid any overlap.

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## **Analysis**

### **Longest**

A 202-page book was devoted to a single game: *Kasparov Against the World* by G. Kasparov with D. King (New York, 2000), although there was also much diary material. (C.N. 2483; pages 176-177 of *A Chess Omnibus*.)

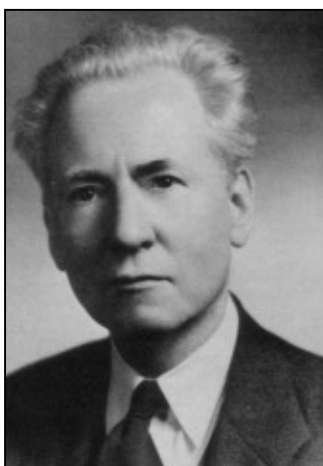


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### Authors/writers

#### *Oldest*

David Lawson (*né* Charles Whipple, 1886-1980) was aged 89 when his book *Paul Morphy The Pride and Sorrow of Chess* (New York, 1976) was published. (C.N. 287; page 108 of *Chess Explorations*.)



David Lawson

#### *Youngest*

Murray Chandler (born on 4 April 1960) brought out *A White Pawn in Europe* in 1975 (privately printed in Wainuiomata). It gave his games at the World Junior Championship in Yugoslavia and English tourneys from August to November 1975.

(Contribution by Robert Meadley in C.N. 662; page 108 of *Chess Explorations*.)

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## Blindfold simultaneous displays

### *Largest number of boards*

M. Najdorf played 45 games blindfold and simultaneously at the Prestes Maia Gallery, São Paulo, Brazil on 24-25 January 1947. He scored +39 –2 =4 in approximately 23 hours. A report and all 45 game-scores were given on pages 169-179 of *Miguel Najdorf El hijo de Caissa* by Nicolás Capeika Calvo (Buenos Aires, 2002).

### *Largest number of boards (games played consecutively)*

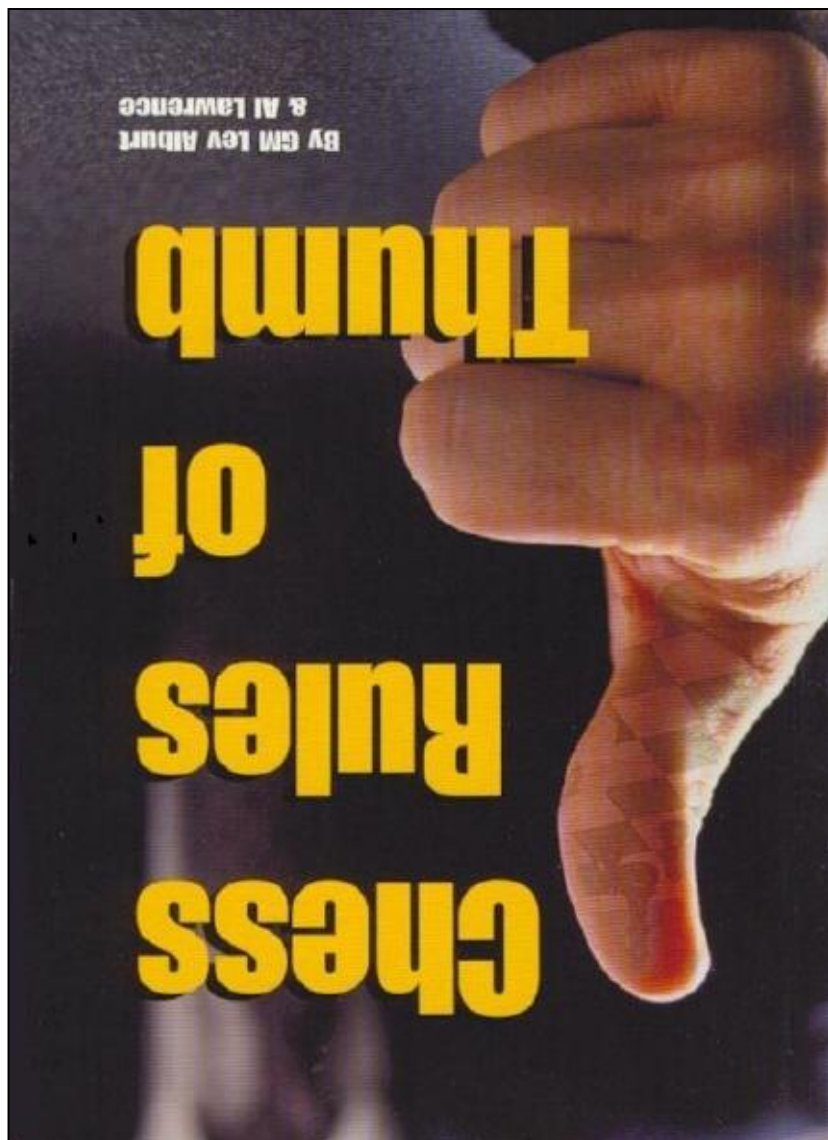
To follow.

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## Book reviews

### *Shortest*

The shortest book review appeared in C.N. 3480. It was wordless:





## Books

### *Bestselling*

*Bobby Fischer Teaches Chess* (first published in 1966) has sold over one million copies. (C.N. 2267; page 147 of *A Chess Omnibus*.)

**Bobby Fischer Teaches Chess**

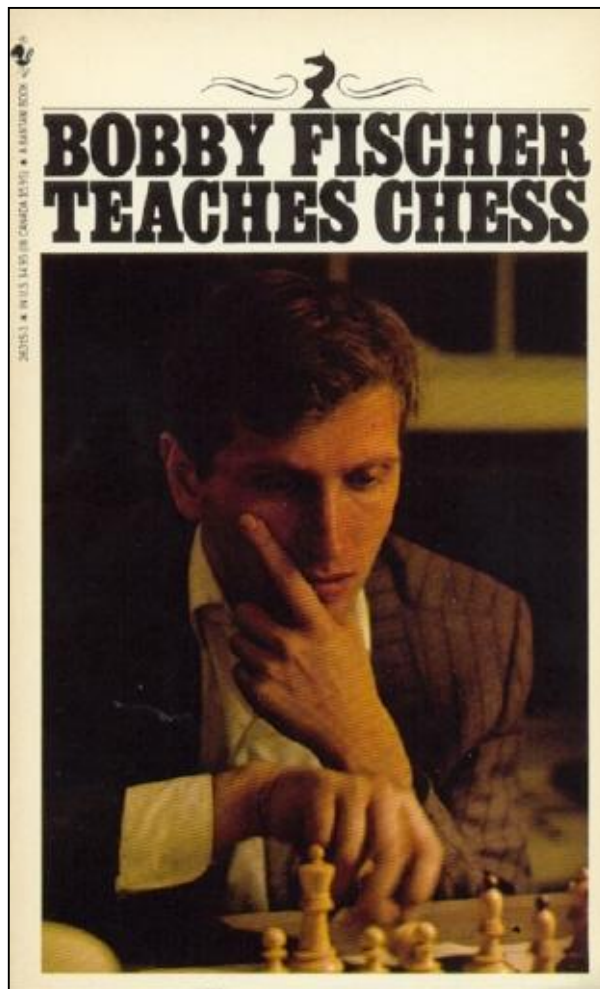
Learn to think the same way Bobby does. Learn by being put in increasingly complex situations that require you to think and move. Not just read. **THIS COURSE IS FOR EVERYBODY.** Whether you're a beginner or a more experienced player, you'll be a better player after you take Bobby Fischer's Chess Course. It works.

In this position:

- White can mate in one move
- White cannot mate

If White can mate, draw an arrow to show his mating move.

(Solution on page 95)

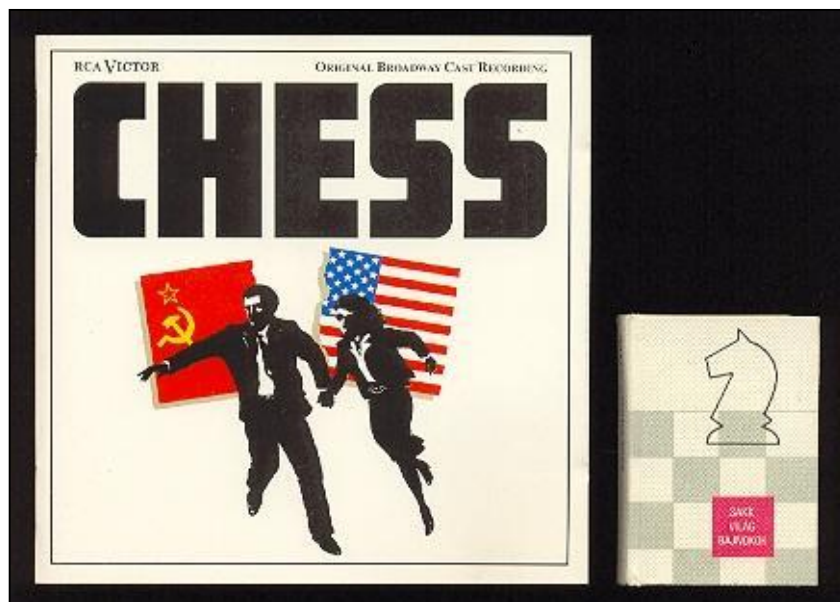


### *Earliest chess content*

The earliest printed book with chess content was *Summa Collationum* by Johannes Gallensis or John of Waleys (Cologne, Ulrich Zel, circa 1470). (Contribution by Michael Macdonald-Ross in C.N. 484; page 114 of *Chess Explorations*. See also C. N. 4536.)

### *Smallest*

C.N. 4244 mentioned *Sakkvilágbajnokok* by Károly Molnár (Budapest, 1977), a 243-page hardback on the world champions. It measures approximately 6cm x 4cm, and for purposes of comparison it appears below alongside a CD:



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## Clubs

### *First*

*The Life of Philidor* by George Allen (New York and Philadelphia, 1865) has references to chess clubs in London in the 1770s. Page 70 states:

‘In 1770, a new Club, at the Salopian Coffee-house, had superseded the heroic rendezvous of Old Slaughter.’

From page 72:

‘In 1774, therefore, they formed a new Club in St James Street, under the very shadow of the Palace. The number of members was limited to a hundred ... statesmen, warriors, men of letters – all crowded forward to enter its ranks.’

Page 73 relates that the Club financed Philidor’s attendance there from February to June of each year, and page 74 notes that Philidor dedicated his 1777 edition of *Analyse du jeu des échecs* ‘to the very illustrious and honourable Members of the Club’.

(Acknowledgment: Robert John McCrary (Columbia, SC, USA).)

### *Oldest*

The Schachgesellschaft Zürich was founded in 1809, as stated on, for instance, page 7 of the Zurich, 1934 tournament book. The first documentation (a balance sheet) dates from 1810. (Contribution from Richard Forster (Zurich).)

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## Columns (newspaper)

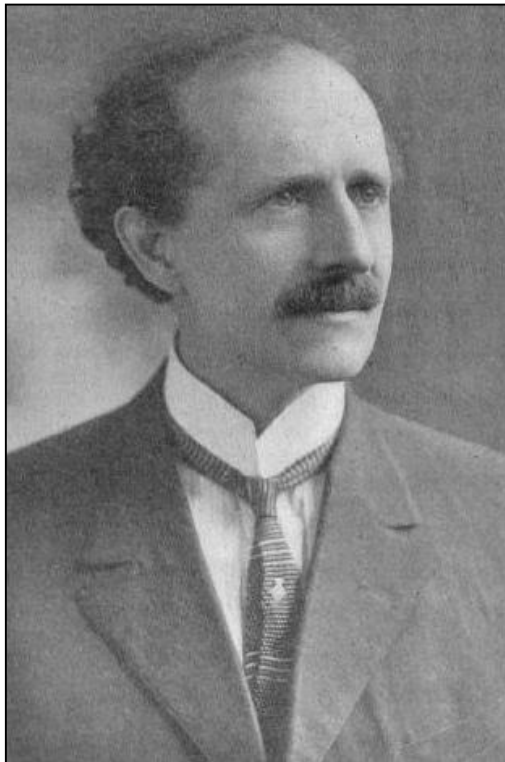
### *First*

Egerton Smith published a chess column in the *Liverpool Mercury* which began on 9 July 1813.

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## Columnists (newspaper)

### *Longest tenure*



Hermann Helms

From the obituary of Hermann Helms (1870-1963) on page 32 of the February 1963 *Chess Life*:

‘Establishing a remarkable record for chess journalism, he began his column for the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* in October 1893 and continued it decade after decade until the paper folded in 1955.’

However, in C.N. 4783 John Hilbert (Amherst, NY, USA) drew attention to the following news item on page 114 of the May 1911 *American Chess Bulletin*:

‘The many readers of the chess department of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, which flourished from October 1893 to November 1907, when it was discontinued by the management, will no doubt be glad to learn of its resumption on 23 March last, under the editorship of Hermann Helms.’

C.N. 4799 reported that the [obituary](#) of George Koltanowski in the *San Francisco Chronicle* of 7 February 2000 stated that he ‘wrote more than 19,000 chess columns for the *San Francisco Chronicle*’ and that ‘his column, which appeared in the *Chronicle* every day without interruption for 52 years, was the longest-running daily chess column in history’.

In C.N. 4841 John Donaldson (Berkeley, CA, USA) reported that George Koltanowski’s first chess column in the *San Francisco Chronicle* was published on page 7L of the 9 May 1948 issue. Initially it was a weekly column, and the top part of the first one is reproduced here:

# CHESS

The Game Offers the Competitive Clash Americans Always Demand

By **GEORGE KOLTANOWSKI**  
*World's Rinkfield Chess Champion*

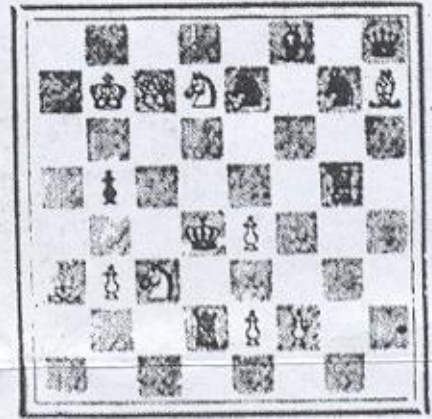
IT HAS BEEN SAID that the American people do not want a game in which luck or chance do not play a part—that chess does not fit into the modern tempo of going forward at greater and greater speed.

Yet, why is chess so popular in other countries? In England it is played in every nook and corner. Latins in both hemispheres still love chess, as they did many years ago, when the professional chess player used to walk down streets with a chess board strapped to

form by many illustrious people of the past several centuries. There is a dramatic story about Robespierre, the famous head-chopper of the French revolution. He used to play chess every day between two and four o'clock at the Cafe de la Regence. During one of the guillotine's busiest seasons, a young man went up to Robespierre and challenged him to a game.

### Heads You Lose

"I never play with strangers unless I play for a stake," Robespierre said haughtily.



## Chess Problem

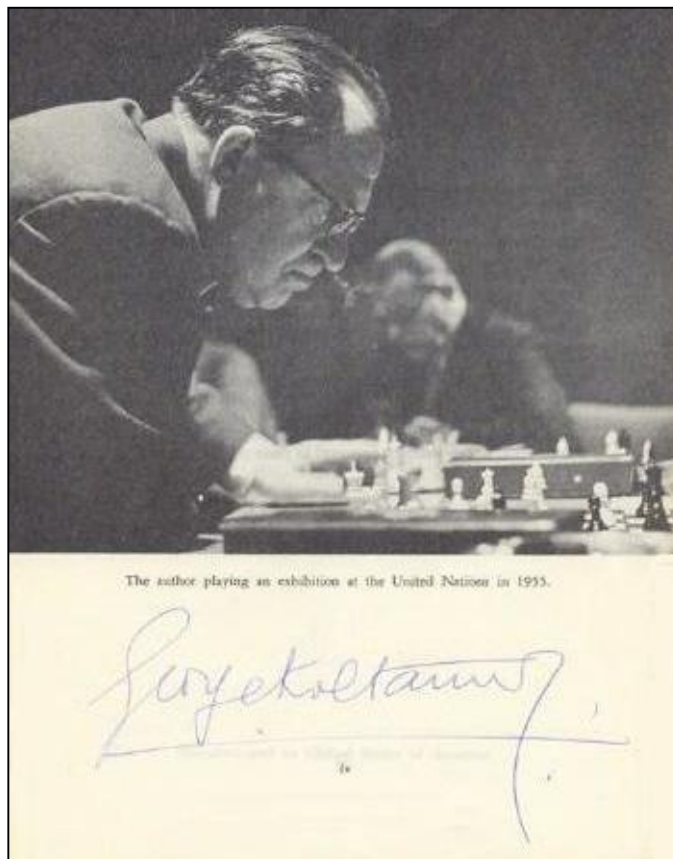
Problem No. 1, by E. M. Hassberg, Brooklyn.

Black (8), White (10).

White to play and mate in two moves.

(Solution will appear next week)

Koltanowski continued the column until his death in February 2000, i.e. for a total of almost 51 years and nine months.



George Koltanowski (inscription in *Koltanowski's Chess Annual 1955*)

## Correspondence games

*Slowest*



C.N. 3435 quoted a paragraph from page 215 of *CHESS*, 17 May 1957:

‘H. Jarvis, Croydon, played postal chess from 1931 (when he went on holiday to Germany) onwards, with Eberhardt Wilhelm, secretary of the international correspondence chess organization. When the war started, it was Mr Jarvis to move. Naturally the game was abruptly interrupted, and after the war ended it was two years before normal postal services were resumed. Wilhelm thereupon wrote and pointed out that it had been Mr Jarvis’ move for eight years and said that if he did not reply by return he would claim the game. Mr Jarvis had the move ready; he despatched a move at once and the games were duly concluded. So the one move took eight years. “Is this a record” asks Mr Jarvis “for the longest time ever taken to play a chess move?”’

The same C.N. item also gave a game which took about 16 years and was widely published in the mid-1870s:

**Karl Brenzinger – Francis Eugene Brenzinger**  
**Correspondence, 1859 – 18 March 1875**  
**Two Knights’ Defence**

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Nf6 4 Ng5 d5 5 exd5 Na5 6 Qe2 Nxc4 7 Qxc4 Bd6 8 d3 O-O 9 Nc3 h6 10 Nge4 Kh8 11 O-O Nh5 12 d4 f5 13 Nxd6 cxd6 14 dxe5 dxe5 15 Qe2 Qe8 16 Nb5 f4 17 f3 Ng3 18 hxg3 fxg3 19 f4 Bd7 20 Nd6 Qe7 21 Ne4 Qh4 22 Nxc3 Qxc3 23 Rf3 Bg4 24 Rxc3 Bxe2 25 Re3 Bc4 26 d6 Rxf4 27 Re1 Rd4 28 b3 Bb5 29 c4 Bc6 30 c5 Rg4 31 Re2 Rf8 32 Be3 Kg8 33 a4 Rb4 34 Rb2 Kf7 35 Bd2 Rg4 36 Bc3 Ke6 37 b4 Rf3



38 Bxe5 Kxe5 39 b5 Be4 40 Rd2 Rfg3 41 Raa2 Bxg2 42 d7 Bc6+ 43 Kh2 Bxd7 44 Rxd7 Rg6 45 Re2+ Kf6 46 Rde7 (This mistake was attributed to impatience after Black took seven months over his 45th move.) 46...Rg2+ 47 Rxc2 Rxc2+ 48 Kxc2 Kxe7 49 Kf3 h5 50 a5 Kd7 51 White resigns.

Sources: *La Stratégie*, 15 May 1875, pages 141-143, and *Deutsche Schachzeitung*, July 1875, pages 218-219.

Although the magazines specified that White and Black lived in Pforzheim and New York respectively, Irving Chernev (on page 129 of his book *Wonders and Curiosities of Chess*) stated that the game was ‘between a Mr Brenzinger of New York and his brother in England’. In C.N. 3438 John Hilbert provided Steinitz’s notes to the game, from *The Field*, 24 April 1875.

## Games

### *Earliest game*

C.N. 4835 included a contribution from José Antonio Garzón (Valencia, Spain) about the earliest game played under modern rules:

*‘The game appears in the poem “Scachs d’amor”, Valencia, circa 1475. It is the work of three famous Valencian poets, Bernat Fenollar, Narcís Vinyoles and Francí Castellví. Castellví plays the red (white) pieces and Vinyoles the green (black) ones, while Fenollar is the referee, describing in his interventions the birth of*

*modern chess and providing a first set of rules. The opening is a Centre Counter-Gambit (1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5), so as to “show” the new piece from the very beginning. The poets describe the movement of the new piece, claiming to have invented it (stanzas 1 and 54), and thus confirming the Spanish origin of modern chess.*

*The poem and game were discussed on pages 257-300 of La reina Isabel la Católica: su reflejo en la dama poderosa de Valencia, cuna del ajedrez moderno y origen del juego de damas (Valencia, 2004), which I co-authored with Govert Westerveld, and on pages 331-352 of my book El Regreso de Francesch Vicent. La Historia del nacimiento y la expansión del ajedrez moderno (Valencia, 2005).'*

Concerning games played before the introduction of the modern rules, see the article ‘The oldest recorded games of chess’ by H.J.R. Murray on pages 441-449 of the November 1903 *BCM*.

### ***Fewest games lost by a world champion***

José Raúl Capablanca lost only 34 games in his adult career (1909-1939). He was unbeaten from 10 February 1916 to 21 March 1924. (C.N. 164 and 1988 *Guinness Book of World Records*, page 565.)



José Raúl Capablanca

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## **Grandmasters**

### ***Oldest***

Information sought.

### ***Youngest***

‘The youngest individual to qualify as an International Grand Master is Sergey Karjakin (Ukraine, born 12 January 1990),

who did so on 12 August 2002 aged 12 years 212 days.' (*Guinness World Records 2007*, page 99.)

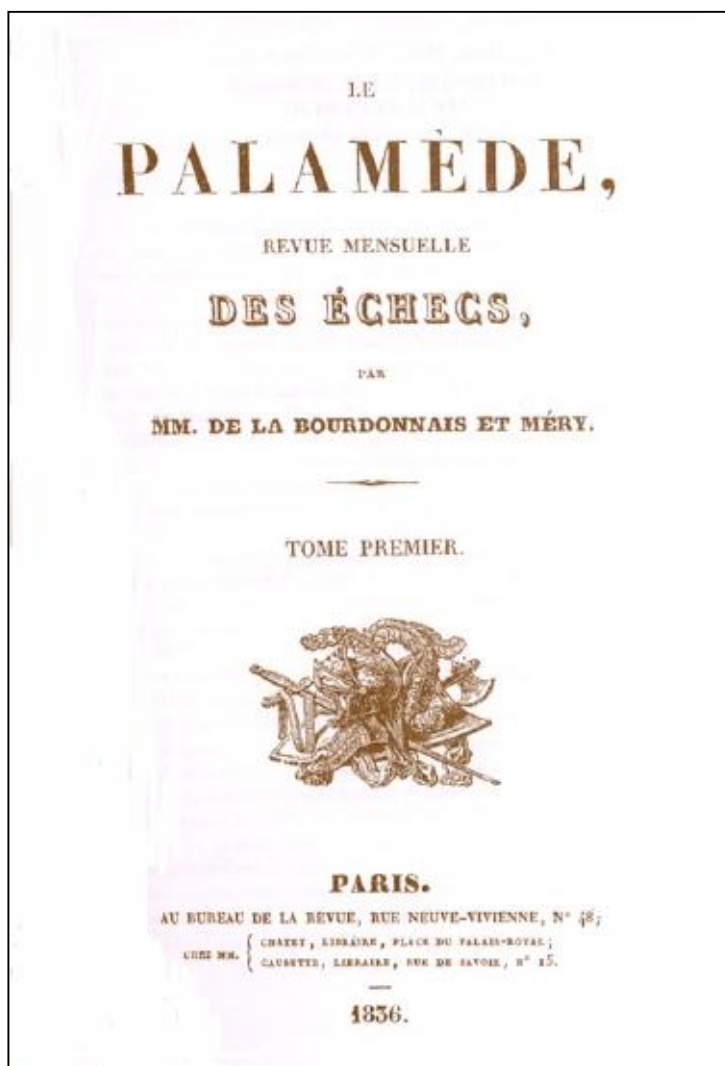
A chart exists of the 17 ['Youngest grandmasters in history'](#).

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## Magazines/periodicals

### *First*

*Le Palamède*, edited by L.C.M. de Labourdonnais and J. Méry, began publication in 1836.



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## National champions

### *Oldest player to win a national championship*

Information sought.

### *Youngest player to win a national championship*

Information sought.

## *Most national titles won by a player*

Information sought.

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## **Players**

### *Youngest player of a published game*

José Raúl Capablanca, receiving queen odds, defeated Ramón Iglesias in Havana on 17 September 1893 when he was four years and ten months old. (C.N. 2146; page 234 of *Kings, Commoners and Knaves*.)

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## **Problemists**

### *Youngest composer of a published problem*

Page 132 of the May-June 1917 *American Chess Bulletin* published a composition by Elliot Franklin Eichholtz, who was stated to be five years old. (C.N. 2184; page 234 of *Kings, Commoners and Knaves*.)



*Mate in two moves.*

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## **Simultaneous displays**

### *Largest number of boards*

C.N. 4800:

- From page 46 of *Guinness World Records 2006* (London, 2005):

‘International chess master Andrew Martin (UK) played against 321 different opponents at Wellington College, Berkshire, UK, on 21 February 2004. Martin won 294 games, drew 26 and lost only one. The attempt took 16 hr 51 min.’

- On 3 August 2005 [ChessBase](http://www.chessbase.com) reported on a display by Susan Polgar at the Gardens Mall, Palm Beach Gardens, FL, USA on 1 August 2005 against 326 opponents (+309 =14 –3 in 16 hours 30 minutes).

- The circumstances of the latter exhibition were widely discussed. See, for instance, a subsequent (16 September 2005) [ChessBase article](#), as well as a letter from Andrew Martin on pages 8-9 of the 7/2005 *New in Chess*.

### *Largest number of boards (games played consecutively)*

To follow.

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## **Tournaments**

### *Fewest moves played*

In the 2003 Capablanca Memorial tournament, Premier I group, Péter Székely of Hungary played a total of 130 moves (his opponents played 133) in the 13 rounds. He scored +0 –0 =13, with an average of ten moves per round. His smallest number was six, and his longest game lasted 13 moves. He won fourth prize since he had the highest Sonneborn-Berger score of the four players on 50%. (Contribution by Calle Erlandsson in C.N. 2937; page 81 of *Chess Facts and Fables*.)

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## **World champions**

### *Oldest*

William (*né* Wilhelm) Steinitz (born in May 1836) lost his world chess championship title on 26 May 1894, when aged a little over 58 years.

### *Youngest*

When Garry Kasparov became world champion on 9 November 1985 by defeating Anatoly Karpov he was aged 22 years 210 days.

Between 1993 and 2006 there was no consensus on the identity of the world champion. On 22 January 2002 Ruslan Ponomarev, aged 18 years 103 days, defeated Vassily Ivanchuk in a match for the FIDE world championship.

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**Latest update: 18 February 2007.** The e-mail address for additions and corrections and suggestions is [chessnotes@chesshistory.com](mailto:chessnotes@chesshistory.com). Correspondents are asked to include their name *and full postal address* and, when providing information, to quote exact book and magazine sources.

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