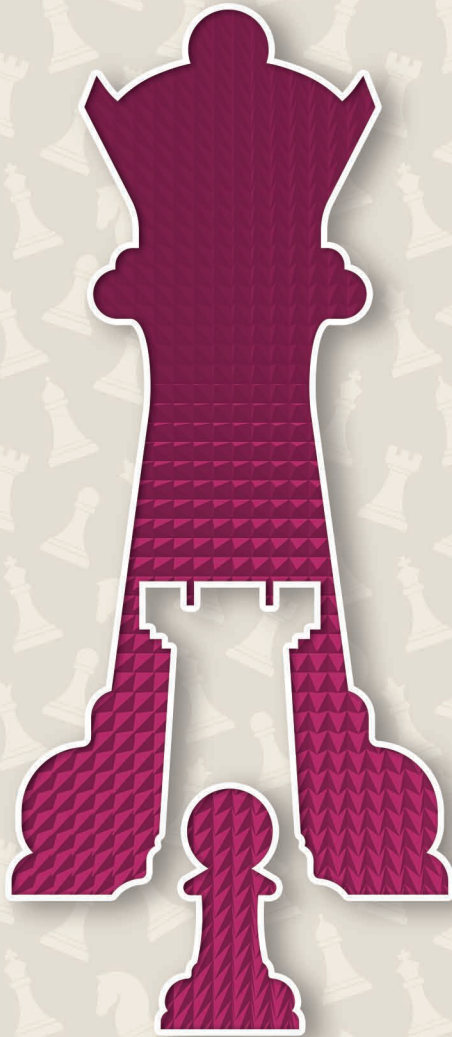


# Queens of chess



**STUDENICA**  
FOUNDATION



The background of the entire page is a chessboard with chess pieces. The board is tilted slightly to the right. The pieces are rendered in a light, semi-transparent style, creating a subtle pattern across the checkered squares. The pieces include kings, queens, rooks, knights, and pawns, scattered across the board.

# QUEENS OF CHESS



**STUDENICA**  
FOUNDATION



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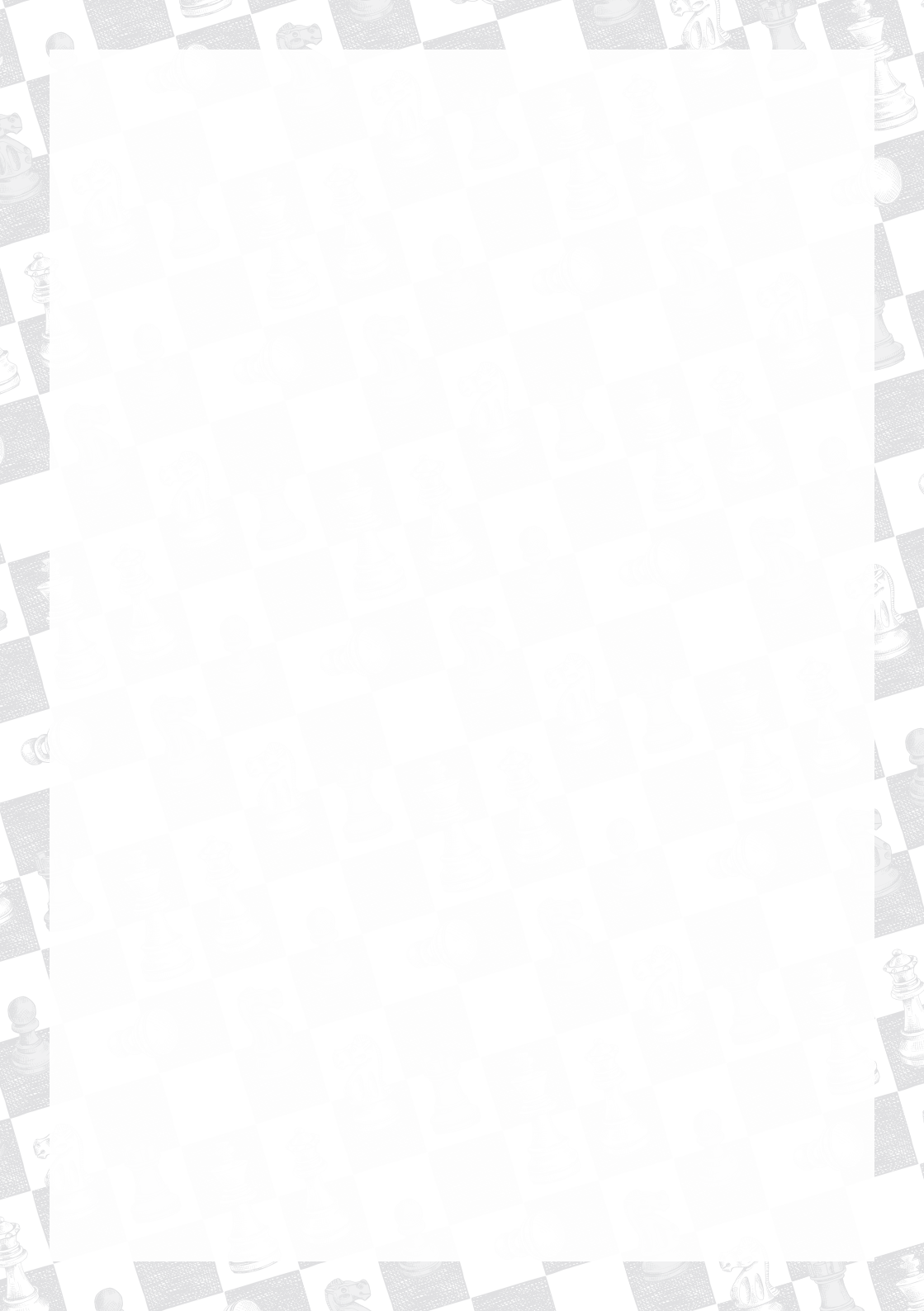
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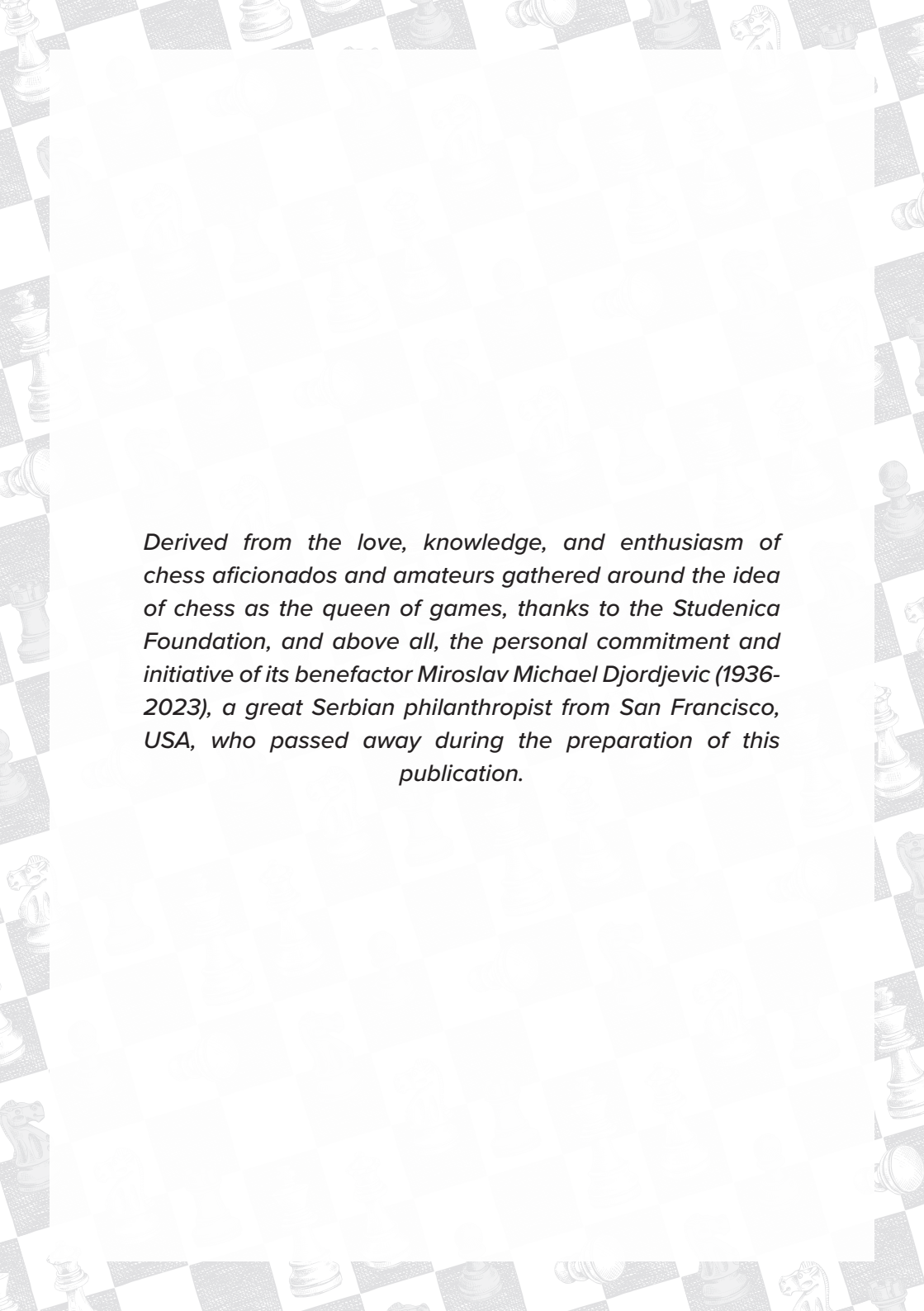
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**Contribution to the Moral Education and Developmental  
Program of Children's Imagination and Intelligence**

Compiled by  
**Nevena Todorovic**





*Derived from the love, knowledge, and enthusiasm of chess aficionados and amateurs gathered around the idea of chess as the queen of games, thanks to the Studenica Foundation, and above all, the personal commitment and initiative of its benefactor Miroslav Michael Djordjevic (1936-2023), a great Serbian philanthropist from San Francisco, USA, who passed away during the preparation of this publication.*



*Miroslav Michael Djordjevic*

... I saw the photos of young female chess players engaged in a game of chess on the club premises, with everyone present showing eagerness and great zest for the game. They made use of their time and energy in a much better way than if they had wasted it on computer games, poor TV shows, or long chats on their mobile phones.

Indeed, the images are beautiful. They warmed my heart as I watched the children, young and focused on chessboards and pieces.

I know chess quite well, and I maintain that it represents a significant mental and intellectual effort in our lives. I can confirm this from my personal experience.

I started playing chess when I was seven or eight years old. Without intending to boast, chess has helped me a lot in developing self-discipline and depth of thought, creating visions, and defending ideas that I implemented in life, as well as in devising "original moves" in times of crisis or significant opportunities in my career and life in general.

I wish you, the entire club, all the best and success in your efforts. What you have achieved is worth congratulating upon.

Kind regards,  
Miroslav Djordjevic



March 16, 2020

*From Miroslav Michael Djordjevic's letter to Milorad Brankovic, President of the "Delfin" Chess Club*



*At the tournament, it's buzzing with activity.*

# Why choose chess?

*"Playing chess is a significant mental and intellectual effort and endeavor for us and our lives. I assert this from my personal experience."  
- Miroslav Michael Djordjevic*

The Studenica Foundation is based on the principle that education has an invaluable role in the development of a society. Thus, it has been providing young people for three decades with the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills, in order for them to elevate themselves and their country.

The Foundation's vision is reflected in a society wherein knowledge, cultural, scientific, and philanthropic values lie at the basis of the community. Its mission is manifested in its efforts to guide institutions and individuals toward creating better conditions for the development of comprehensive education.

As part of the "Education and Support for Youth" program, the Studenica Foundation has launched the "Queens of Chess" project, relying on the values of chess as a cognitive sport discipline that aids in the cognitive growth and voluntary predispositions of children, as well as their intellectual and moral values.

In pursuit of the development of the intellectual capabilities and moral upbringing of the youth, the Studenica Foundation wants to contribute to the increase in the participation of children in the social life of the country and their personal development.



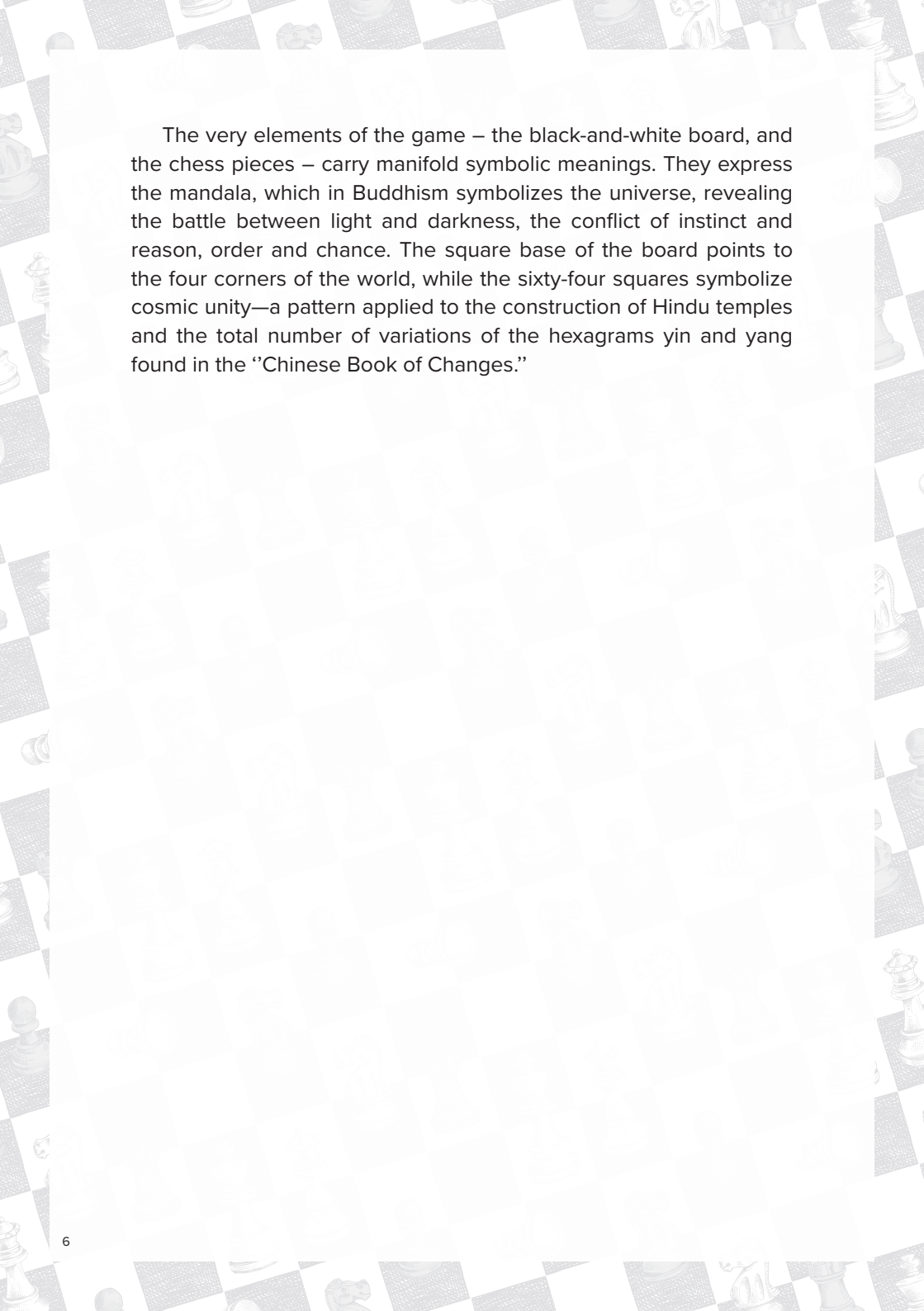
*"Winners of the 'Queens of Chess 2021' Tournament*

# A Brief History of Chess

While there is no reliable data on the origins of chess, it is believed to have appeared over two thousand years ago. During archaeological excavations along the ancient Silk Road in present-day Uzbekistan, two ivory figurines from the 2nd century AD were discovered as the earliest material evidence. A certain form of the game called "chaturanga," reminiscent of today's chess, is mentioned already in the Vedas and is originally from India, where it became established among the warrior caste as a form of war strategy simulation in the 5th century.

In Persian literature, it is further noted that the game was adopted by the subjects of the Sasanian dynasty in the 6th century after Alexander the Great's conquest of Punjab, bearing a similar name - "chatrang," later renamed to "shah" (king). The Arabs then took chess over by conquering the Near East in the 7th century, introducing it to Europe first as a gift to the court of Charlemagne and later spreading it through conquest to Spain, from where it expanded across the entire continent as of the 9th century. In the Middle Ages, chess became part of mandatory knightly education throughout Europe. However, it reached Russia later, directly from Persia. Ancient China and Egypt also developed similar board games.

Chess began to take its present form in Europe with the introduction of castling and the expanded movement of the queen and the bishop. The outlines of the established theory emerged in the 15th century, when the first printed work on chess by the Spaniard Lucena was published. In the 18th century, the French master Philidor laid the foundation for modern chess with his work "Analysis of the Chess Game."



The very elements of the game – the black-and-white board, and the chess pieces – carry manifold symbolic meanings. They express the mandala, which in Buddhism symbolizes the universe, revealing the battle between light and darkness, the conflict of instinct and reason, order and chance. The square base of the board points to the four corners of the world, while the sixty-four squares symbolize cosmic unity—a pattern applied to the construction of Hindu temples and the total number of variations of the hexagrams yin and yang found in the “Chinese Book of Changes.”

# A Short History of our Chess Tournament

In 2016, a group of chess professionals and enthusiasts gathered around the "Delfin" Chess Club and its president, chess coach Milorad Brankovic, Ph.D., initiated a tournament for female elementary school students, aiming to promote chess primarily among young female juniors from an early age.

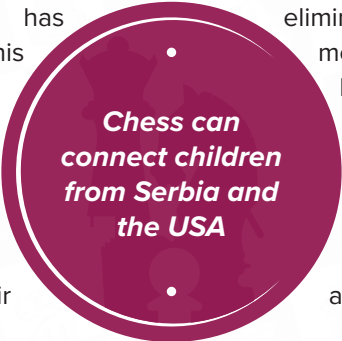
Every year since then up until today, March 2023, the Youth Chess Championship for female elementary school students has been organized in Belgrade. From the beginning, the main patron of this event, named "Queens of Chess," has been the Studenica Foundation, with the "desire to support young people in the development of their abilities and intellectual potential." Miroslav Michael Djordjevic, the founder and president of the Foundation, has followed and supported its work with undiminished enthusiasm throughout the years, hoping that this small chess medal will become familiar to other chess players and leave its legacy among them.

From the eighty-four girls taking part in the competition the first time it was held, there have since been one hundred and two girls – students from the lower grades of Belgrade elementary schools – competing in the event and receiving prizes from the Studenica Foundation: trophies for the first-placed, medals for all participants, and chess books for everyone. With eight years of the existence of the competition past, the organizers now highlight that over one thousand two hundred girls have tried their hand at the chessboard.

The tournament was opened by the most successful Serbian chess player in the world, Grandmaster Alisa Maric. The media patron was Net Magazine, and the tournament's friend was the Adzibadem – Belmedik General Hospital.

However, the popularization of chess as a top-level, mass sport and the desire to reap the benefits of playing it in the developmental program of the youngest age group date back to 2006. In that year, the state offered the opportunity for chess to be introduced as an elective subject in elementary schools in Serbia. "Chess is a game of imagination and strategy that provides rules, rank, and opportunities for intellectual growth," read the material that the members of the National Education Council considered that year. The program covered forty schools, mainly in Belgrade, where the first-graders voluntarily entered the process of chess education through extracurricular activities. Nonetheless, since the idea was left to the individual affinities, organizational capabilities, and material possibilities of the local government, it was faced with partial to no interest at all. One of those who have kept this chess flame alight to this day is the "Delfin" Chess Club.

– Technology has eliminated distance today. What this means is that if we organize teams in Belgrade and San Francisco, we can not only arrange friendly matches in real-time, but also socialize and organize camps – so that the children from America can come over, learn the language and customs of their ancestors, and get to know their roots.



***Chess can  
connect children  
from Serbia and  
the USA***

eliminated distance means is that if we organize teams in Belgrade and San Francisco, we can not only arrange friendly matches in real-time, but also socialize and organize camps – so that the children from America can come over, learn the language and customs of their ancestors, and get to know their roots.

Milorad Brankovic, Ph.D.,  
President of the "Delfin" Chess Club

Later, in 2013, the project was developed through the program for the development of chess talent, to which professor Viselav Krsmanovic, Ph.D., and Milorad Brankovic, Ph.D., personally contributed. On that occasion, research was conducted on a sample of four hundred fifty children at about thirty elementary schools, in collaboration with the Department of Psychology at the University of Belgrade and the Secretariat for Education and Child Protection of the City of Belgrade. Psychologists, pedagogists, and teachers were involved in the study.



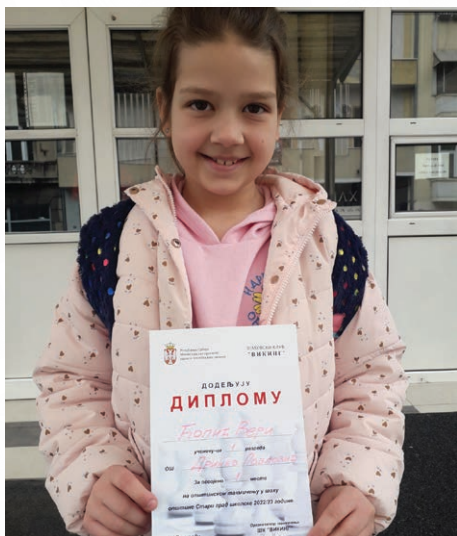
*Prize Winners and Studenica Foundation Scholars,  
'Queens of Chess 2023' Tournament*

Although the preliminary results indicated an increase in the values affirming chess as a teaching tool, limited participant engagement in the research and insufficient resources have, for now, halted the verification of the initial premises.

Currently, the youngest elementary school students still have the opportunity to choose chess as an elective subject in about thirty schools in Serbia, within the framework of the school's stay-and-play program.



*Marina Hernando Zivanovic*



*Vera Copic*

# The One-Act Chess

## **Cast:**

**Marina Hernando Zivanovic**, a first-grade student at "Drinka Pavlovic" Elementary School in Belgrade and a member of the "Delfin" Chess Club.

**Vera Copic**, a first-grade student at "Drinka Pavlovic" Elementary School in Belgrade and a member of the "Delfin" Chess Club.

**Maja Copic**, Vera's mother, is a pedagogist at an elementary school in Belgrade.

## **Journalist**

On stage, the light illuminates the students, the chessboard in front of them; they are preparing for the start of the game. The camera, from a wide shot, first zooms in on the face of one participant, and then pans over to the other. In the background, there is an illuminated screen of the chessboard, through which the audience will be following the match. A journalist uses the time before the start of the match to interview the young chess players. The camera focuses on the journalist.

## **Journalist: How did you start playing chess?**

Marina (softly, looking at the board): I first played it with friends in kindergarten, and I found it interesting, but back then, I didn't know how each piece moved.

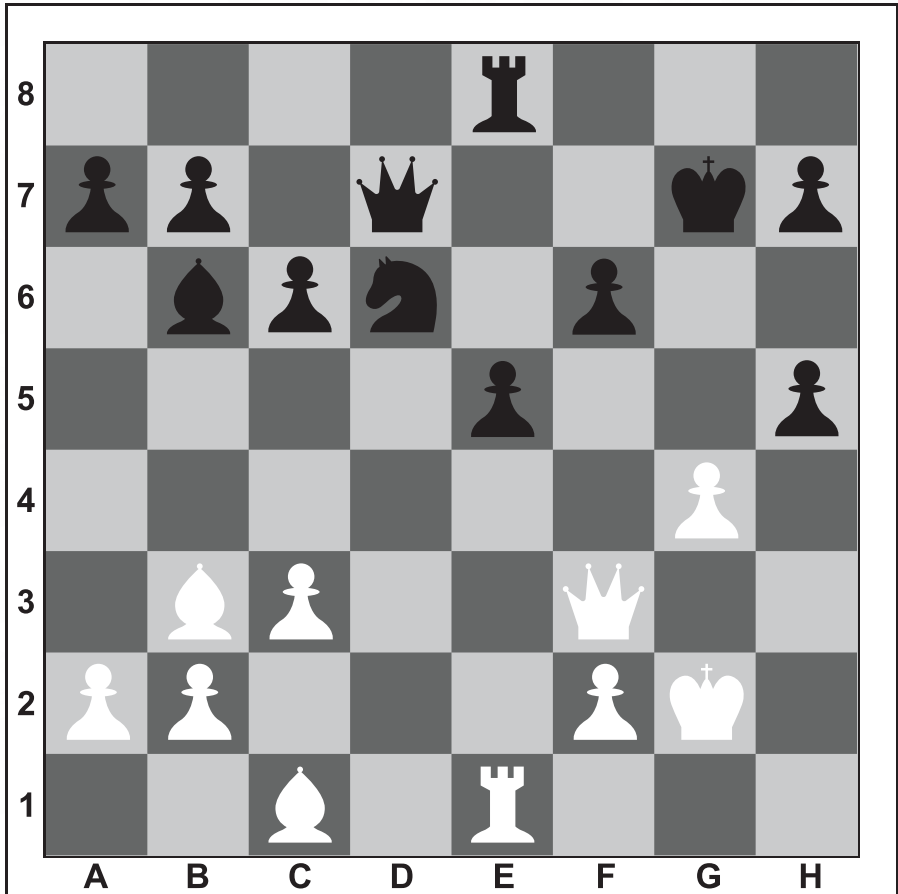
Vera (addressing the journalist, confidently): I got interested in it already in kindergarten. I saw that chess was played at home.

## **So, did you start attending extracurricular classes in the first grade?**

Marina (louder, taking up the conversation): Yes, by then, I was more interested, and I liked it.

## **Because you started playing it more often.**

Marina: Yes.



*The position of Marina Hernando Zivanovic's round from the 'Queens of Chess 2023' tournament (opponent unknown)*

*Marina, playing as White, is materially weaker, but she manages to capitalize on the opponent's poor king position. In this position, she played L6, delivering a check to her rival. The sacrifice of the piece. The black opponent captured the unprotected rook, avoiding the check, but got checkmated as the queen took the pawn on F6.*

***Vera, how did you learn to deal with chess, follow your opponent's intentions and think about your next move?***

Vera (resolutely): That wasn't a problem.

***Marina, has chess met your expectations? Do you still want to stick with it?***

Marina (smiles): Yes, definitely.

***Vera, what do you like about chess? Did you learn all the moves right away? Did the power of the queen, king, or rook captivate you, or did you like the power of the multitude of the pawns?***

Vera (composed): The queen captivated me because it can move anywhere on the chessboard.

***And you, Marina, what do you like most about chess?***

Marina (decisively): Mate.

***I assume that is the case when you're winning, not when you're losing. What else do you like doing?***

Marina: I also do gymnastics and painting.

***What about you, Vera? Do you do anything else besides school and chess?***

Vera (nervously): I started taking ballet lessons.

***How do you manage to fit it in? What do you find most interesting about all the activities you do?***

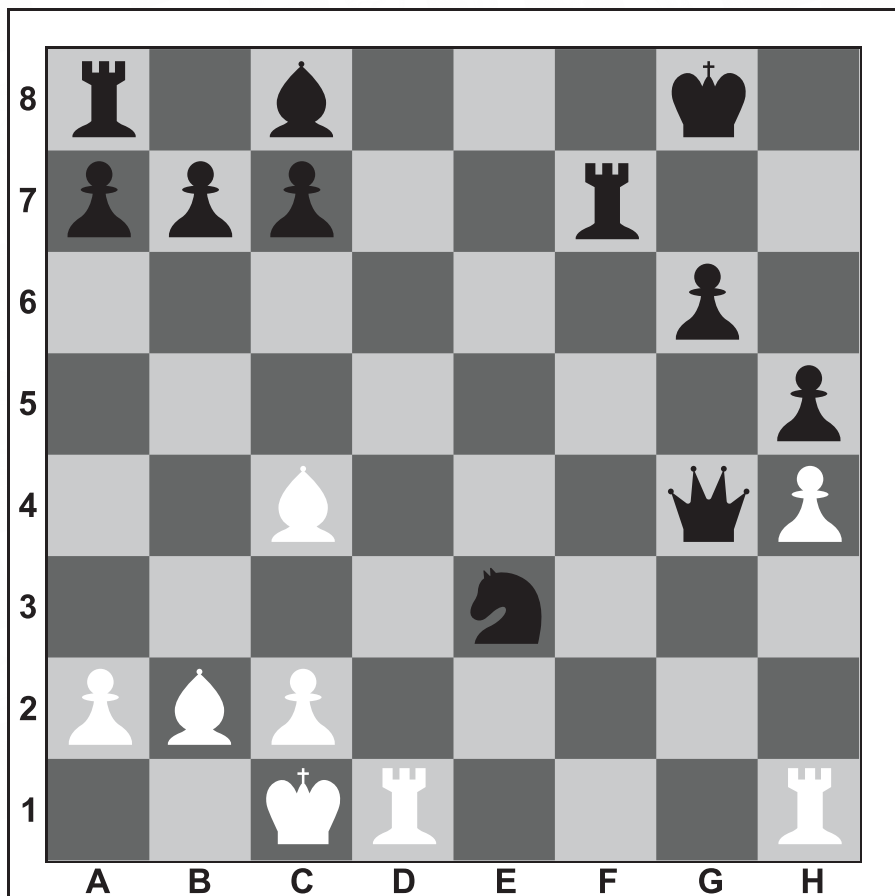
Marina (thinking): Every sport is different in its own way. Maybe I like chess a bit more. (Pause...) Gymnastics... Chess, after all.

***And you – ballet or chess?***

Vera: Chess.

***Why? Usually, girls prefer ballet dancing. In chess, you have to sit, while in ballet, you can move.***

Vera (still fidgeting): I prefer sitting more.



*The position of Vera Copic's round from the 'Queens of Chess 2023' tournament (opponent unknown)*

*Vera, playing as White, lost her queen, and two of her pieces were under attack. Nevertheless, she executed a winning combination with a two-move rook tactic. Firstly, she delivered a check to her opponent's king D8, and when the king moved to the only available square, H7, she checkmated it with the rook on H8. It secured a favorable position for the White bishops.*

***What places did you win in the previous competitions?***

Marina (offhand): Second at the school level, second at the municipal level, fourteenth at the city level, and first at the 'Queens of Chess' tournament.

***And you, Vera? Have you got any wins behind you?***

Vera (confidently): Yes. I won first place at the school competition, first at the municipal level, thirteenth at the city level, and first at the 'Queens of Chess' tournament in the first-grader category.

***How did it feel winning first place?***

Marina (with a smile): I was really happy.

***Why?***

Marina: Because I did something successfully.

***And you? Is chess your favorite now?***

Vera (relieved): Yes, chess.

The lights in the room go out, and the spotlights illuminate only the participants. The journalist withdraws behind the scenes and continues the conversation with Vera's mother. The camera follows the journalist and the beginning of the conversation.

***With whom did you first play chess?***

Vera: With Dad.

***How long did your rounds last, would they draw out?***

Vera: Yes.

***You were not fidgety, you didn't ask to do something else.***

Vera: (bluntly) I did. I asked him to take his moves back. When I made a move that wasn't good, then I would get upset.



***Did your dad let you win?***

Vera (with disbelief): That doesn't happen with my dad. Touch-move.

***Now that you see how Vera has embraced chess, would you, as a pedagogist, include chess in the curriculum?***

Vera's mother, Maja Copic: much my daughter chess. Now I see chess is for the logical thinking. might give up; that she activates competitions important.



I am surprised by how has grown to love how important development of I worry that she it's crucial to me her brain circuits, aren't even that

***Have you noticed any improvements in terms of her concentration, memory, and attention after these six months?***

Mother: She is quite mature compared to most girls, attentive, responsible, has good concentration, and is more persistent in many things.

**Chess is not considered a lucrative career choice.**

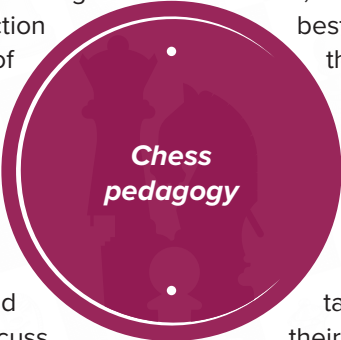
Mother: Our family is not chasing money. It's important that she is happy.

**Do most parents at that age favor sports, physical health, and motor skills?**

Mother: We perceive chess as a sport. I like that the school chess club fosters a friendly atmosphere; many girls from their class have enrolled in the chess school, and they are doing well.

**What is your experience with the "Delfin" chess school?**

Maja Copic, mother: There are many schools, but I enroll my children in those which encourage work, order, and discipline. Children function best when they know what is expected of them. This is nicely balanced in this school: step by step, they are guided through all the levels of chess playing, from the beginning. This yields results. For example, they receive tasks to solve at home, material for homework, links, and tasks on YouTube, and then they discuss their solutions at school. They have also been taught to play chess on the computer. The teaching methodology with children is good. I am a pedagogist in an elementary school, and I can say that they are consistent, working carefully and systematically with the youngest.





*Alisa Maric*

# Chess interview

## **How to win the title of the best Serbian and Yugoslav chess player of all time**

*Alisa Maric, the grandmaster and promoter of the "Queens of Chess" event*

In times of quick and easy solutions, chess has lost ground before the surge of modern lifestyles, owing to the measuring of profitability in all spheres of life. The acceleration on the scale of achievements threatens to reach its maximum, and the evaluation of humanistic principles its lowest level. Then what is the place of chess, as the biggest brain-teaser sport discipline and the most rational art?

One of them is Alisa Maric, a doctor in economics and a chess player crowned with unforgettable victories. She was born in 1970 in New York and has from an early age found love in chess. At the age of twenty, she entered the global arena as one of the challengers for the match providing the winner with the title of the women's world champion and won third place. At this, she has earned two Olympic medals and is the winner of three European Champion Cups. Alisa is not only the most successful Serbian female chess player of all time, but one of the most successful female chess players in the history of chess.

## The first steps in chess



*The 'Queens of Chess 2017' Tournament*

***You started playing chess very early, at the age of four. Back then, did you already know that it was love for a lifetime?***

- I learned to play chess when I was three or four, and started competing at the age of nine; everything was going well, but at that age, you can't make such decisions. Still, I knew I liked the game.

***And when did you open your eyes to your love for chess? When, or how old were you when chess became something you could not do without?***

- It's hard for me to say now. The love came gradually. At the age of twelve, I became the youngest master in Yugoslavia and was the youngest at many senior tournaments. Girls didn't play with seniors; there was a big difference in age, experience, strength, and knowledge, you know, but I was successful at a very young age.

## Male and female chess players

***Can we talk about the differences and similarities between male and female chess?***

The difference between male and female chess players occurs, among other things, due to the sheer number and challenges that women encounter in life. There are fewer women in chess, seeing that obligations such as education, career, and family often interrupt their involvement in chess further down the road. Organizations for women and girls require more focus and support compared to their male counterparts.

***In the elements of the game themselves, have you noticed over the years there being differences? Does women's chess favor one style of play over men's?***

Women tend to favor security, while men are more willing to take risks, but there is an explanation for this, as I have already mentioned. For example, although there are examples that refute this, Judit Polgar, the strongest female chess player in women's chess, played on an equal footing with men. She possessed that offensive, attacking style; she played to beat them and is the opposite of what I was talking about, so it is difficult for us to generalize. If there were more women, we wouldn't be talking about that difference.



*The 'Queens of Chess 2017' Tournament*

## **The new technological revolution in Chess**

***Do you consider computers and the internet to be good tools for the development of chess?***

- I believe that computers have a positive effect on the development of chess because a computer can be an opponent at any moment. Children don't need to seek out a friend or neighbor to play a game of chess. Even for professional chess players, it's a good tool to deepen their game, explore many positions, and better understand the properties of chess pieces in different situations.

### ***So, have computers introduced beauty into chess?***

- Because with the help of computers, chess players can analyze a position, they can see possibilities that didn't occur to them as ideas. The computer suggests to you what to pay attention to, what to deepen. Nowadays, you need to know a lot. The beauty in chess comes later because, behind everything, there must be serious work, being in a good condition.



*Publication: "Serbia&World"  
Author: Srecko Stojkovic  
Publication Date: April 1, 2023*

### ***Why did you accept to be the promoter of this competition?***

- I'm no longer actively involved in chess; I'm not a competitor anymore, but I'm always interested in what's happening in the world of chess. I'm always glad to greet the children and to see young people playing chess. I know that nowadays children like to play chess on their computers and phones, but I think they need to be organized, and given space, arrange tournaments where they can compete. I always gladly accept such opportunities.





*The 'Queens of Chess 2020' Tournament*

***Many challenge the value of chess as a sport because it does not rely on the physical predispositions of the competitors. However, the truth is that chess players require significant physical fitness.***

Chess players exercise  
love. Many enjoy tennis,  
everyone practices at  
walks. Evening walks  
because games are  
they consume a lot  
n e r v o u s n e s s

***Chess requires  
excellent physical  
fitness***

physically what they  
football, but what  
tournaments are  
are mandatory  
d e m a n d i n g ,  
of energy, and  
prevails.

And walks are good  
clear one's head a bit.  
simplest form of physical  
tournaments, especially if there  
Physical strength is necessary for clear thinking. If you do not engage  
in physical activity, you will feel it in your results.

before a game to  
They represent the  
training during  
is no pool in the hotel.

– To love it, to want to it. Results are someone loves it, It's important to the result should enthusiasts do it

*What is crucial for a child to choose chess?*

it, to be attracted not important. If they will progress. play for pleasure; be secondary. True like that.



*The 'Queens of Chess 2020' Tournament*

– That applies to top reach its maximum, dedication, but if we choose play. It means attracted to chess strength and power. something new.

*Chess is a combination of talent, knowledge, perseverance, and self-discipline*

results. Discipline must like in any sport, and it's not necessary only for love and that people are because it has Every position is

# Chess between Game and Science

*“Chess is more than a game, less than science.”*  
- Voltaire

## **At the crossroads of the technological revolution**

Since its first appearance on the historical stage, chess has represented an exciting odyssey of the mind, skill, and art for anyone engaged in it. It has been an imaginative inspiration, a formidable opponent, and a grateful teacher. For the achievers, it has been a strength and will, a hard-won victory; for the defeated, a gracious example of human frailty and virtue. Where does chess belong today, in the era of the digital revolution, in the matrix of new civilization values of modern man?

Professor Viseslav Krstmanovic, Ph.D., a sports sociologist, is the author of several books on sports and textbooks, and the author of projects aimed at the implementation of sports activities in the development of youth and the vital maintenance of the older population.

***How would you, as a pedagogist and former athlete, define chess?  
Why is chess a combination of sports and science?***

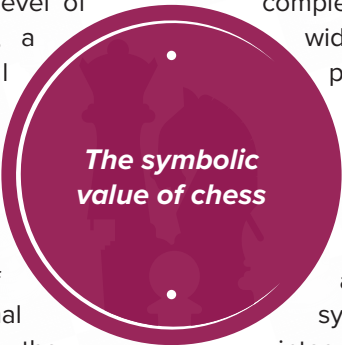
Chess is a mental sports game - it has embraced sports rules, competition, and organizational institution systems, and contains competitive motivation within itself; it involves mental and expert work in the acquisition of cognitive and conative dispositions of young people – that's why it's a blend of sports and science. Chess

has entered schools because it can accelerate the processes of upbringing and education of youth. Today, it is left to the individual initiative of elementary schools. It is retained in stay-and-play programs in lower grades, through chess clubs and their coaches who work with students, one of them being the "Delfin" Chess Club.

***What are the values of chess that enhance children's development and growth?***

Chess, based on research and practice, improves concentration, memory, creativity, alternative selection, future prediction, hypothesis testing, feasibility assessment, formulating problems, and realistically assessing positions. These are all principles employed by science. It develops logical thinking, symbol manipulation, thoughtful decision-making, spatial visualization, and artistic expression, while for precision and combinatorics, it develops a mathematical way of thinking. Thus, chess influences their accelerated spiritual development and cognitive dispositions.

Chess is a game that abounds in symbolic meaning, as is understood by developmental psychology and pedagogy alike. Structurally, it is a game with a high level of complexity and stringent rules. Jean Piaget, a widely known Swiss developmental psychologist, gave precedence to games with rules in the moral education of children. This goes against the view of Lev Vygotsky, a renowned Soviet psychologist and the founder of the Marxist tradition of a "new man," that upbringing is the integration of the symbols of culture.



***At the beginning of this century, you worked on a project for developing chess talents in Serbia in collaboration with the "Delfin" Chess Club and under the auspices of the Institute for the Improvement of Education of the Republic of Serbia.***

Talents in our country are a product of chance. Why? Parents lack money, partially qualified individuals work with children, and we never select children based on genuine talent for a specific sports branch. Selecting talents is a product of chance, depending on the circumstances; in reality, they are the greatest wealth that this country has.



*The 'Queens of Chess 2021' Tournament*

With the digital revolution, the world has entered a new technology that it essentially does not control. Commercialization of everything, including sports, is expanding. Chess is one way of fighting. It increases the human mental and humane capacity. Through brain activity, it stimulates motor skills in children and thus contributes to their faster intellectual and social development in the working process. Through these projects, my collaborators and I are fighting for the biological and mental survival of humanity. We produce health, not disease. Chess, among other things, is a preventive.

Children learn how compared to work out their attention to the whole as in music experience is them. So, even can be expected

### *How children play chess*

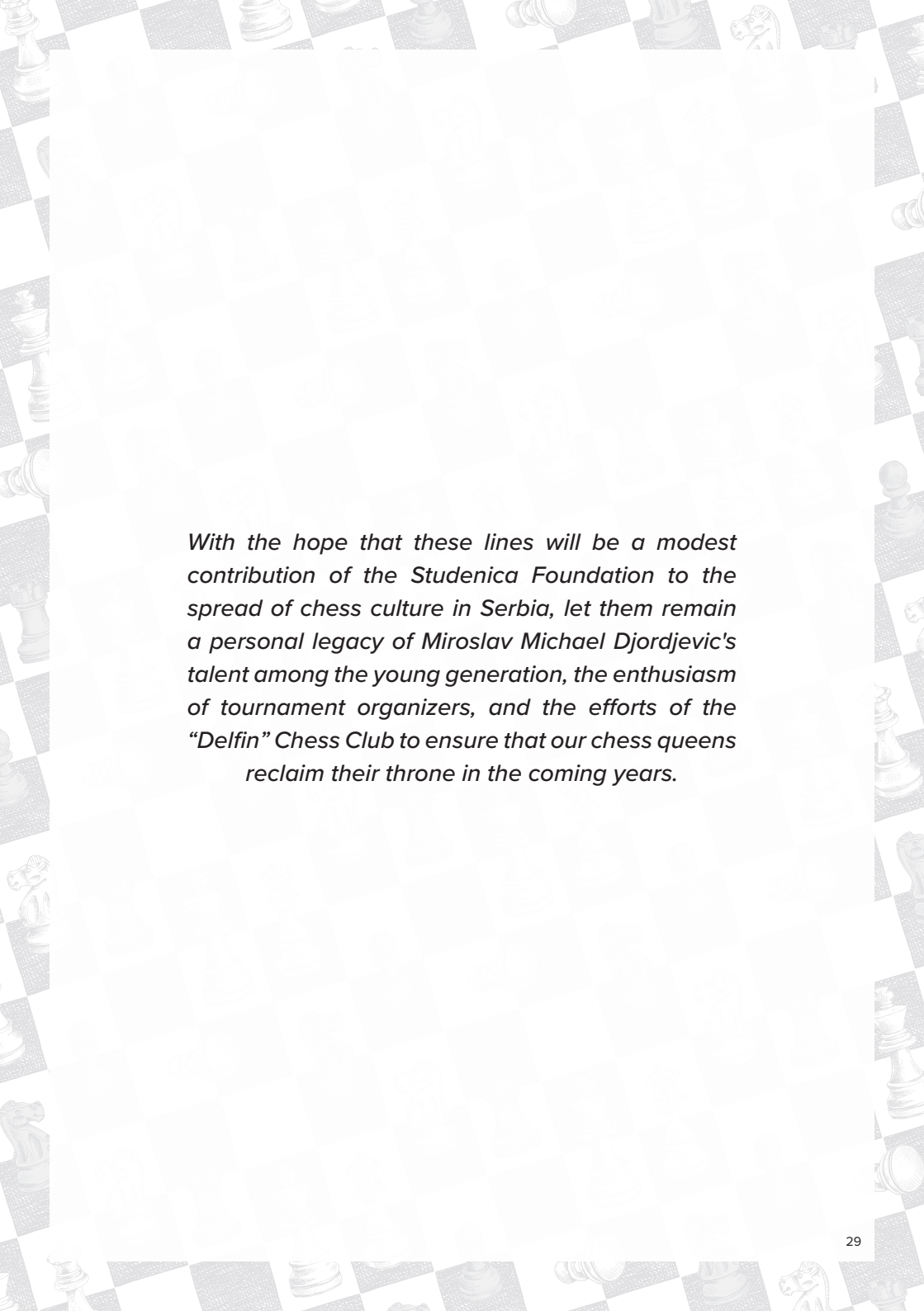
to play chess differently adults: while adults stratagems, paying details, children “see” chessboard. Similarly, and math, previous of little significance to young chess players to scale the heights!



*The 'Queens of Chess 2021' Tournament*

### *Instructions for playing chess with children*

- » Initially, play those games with children that have simple endings.
- » Allow the child to do the mate in two moves.
- » Let the child play with his/her peers as much as possible, for him/her to taste victory.
- » Apply the touch-move rule while playing with an adult opponent.
- » Do not deliberately allow the child to win.



*With the hope that these lines will be a modest contribution of the Studenica Foundation to the spread of chess culture in Serbia, let them remain a personal legacy of Miroslav Michael Djordjevic's talent among the young generation, the enthusiasm of tournament organizers, and the efforts of the "Delfin" Chess Club to ensure that our chess queens reclaim their throne in the coming years.*

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