

A Brief History of the U.S. Open



by **Arthur Bisguier**
USCF's Grandmaster-on-Call

So the U.S. Open traces its lineage to the first Western Championship in 1900, which makes it the longest running annual tournament in the world. Held under the auspices of the Western Chess Association from 1900 to 1934, these events provided virtually the only arena for rising American players who lived outside of the New York area. All things considered, the Western Championship was the closest thing to a National title since the Morphy era.

In 1934, the Western Chess Association became the American Chess Federation, claiming to represent the entire nation. Unfortunately, so did the National Chess Federation, which, on the retirement of Frank Marshall, organized an invitational U.S. Championship in 1936. Obviously such a situation was undesirable and after five years of negotiation, the two organizations merged in

1939 to form the USCF — committed to holding the tournaments of both predecessors. The Western Championships, after an interim as the North American Championships, emerged in 1940 as the U.S. Open, and has been held every year since.

The Pittsburgh event in 1946 saw the innovation of the “Swiss System,” the brainchild of Kenneth Harkness. However, it was only used in the preliminaries; the finals were a round robin. Under the guidance of George Koltanowski, subsequent U.S. Opens were all “Swiss System.” Particularly notable was the 1957 tournament in Cleveland, which saw the emergence of 13-year-old Bobby Fischer, who tied for first with me. I drove home with the trophy, but it was subsequently discovered that the tie-break had been miscalculated and young Bobby was really the winner.

With the growth of chess in the 1980's, the U.S. Opens got larger (the record remains 843, set at Pasadena in 1983) and so did the prize fund and the prize lists.

2003 U.S. Open schedule of workshops, side events and chess-education seminar can be found on pages 58 and 59 of this *Delegates Call*. Past U.S. Open winners are listed below.

U.S. OPEN PAST CHAMPIONS

1900 Louis Uedemann 1901 N.M. MacLeod 1902 Louis Uedemann 1903 Max Judd 1904 Stasch Mlotkowski 1905 E.F. Schrader 1906 George Wolbrecht 1907 Einar Michelsen 1908 E.P. Elliott 1909 Oscar Chajes 1910 George Wolbrecht 1911 Charles Blake 1912 E.P. Elliott 1913 Bradford Jefferson Sr. 1914 Bradford Jefferson Sr. 1915 Jackson Showalter 1916 Edward Lasker 1917 Edward Lasker 1918 Boris Kostic 1919 Edward Lasker 1920 Edward Lasker 1921 Edward Lasker 1922 Samuel Factor 1923 Stasch Mlotkowski, Norman Whitaker 1924 Carlos Torre 1925 Abraham Kupchik 1926 Leon Stolzenberg 1927 Albert Margolis 1928 Leon Stolzenberg 1929 Herman Hahlbohm 1930 Samuel Factor, Norman Whitaker 1931 Samuel Reshevsky 1932 Reuben Fine 1933 Reuben Fine 1934 Reuben Fine, Samuel Reshevsky 1935 Reuben Fine 1936 I.A. Horowitz 1937 D.S. Polland 1938 I.A. Horowitz, Isaac Kashdan 1939 Reuben Fine 1940 Reuben Fine 1941 Reuben Fine 1942 Herman Steiner, Dan Yanofsky 1943 I.A. Horowitz 1944 Samuel Reshevsky 1945 Anthony Santasiere 1946 Herman Steiner 1947 Isaac Kashdan 1948 Weaver W. Adams 1949 Albert Sandrin Jr. 1950 Arthur Bisguier 1951 Larry Evans 1952 Larry Evans 1953 Donald Byrne 1954 Larry Evans, Arturo Pomar 1955 Nicolas Rossolimo 1956 Arthur Bisguier 1957 Robert Fischer, Arthur Bisguier 1958 E. Cobo-Arteaga 1959 Arthur Bisguier 1960 Robert Byrne 1961 Pal Benko 1962 Antonio Medina 1963 William Lombardy, Robert Byrne 1964 Pal Benko 1965 Pal Benko, William Lombardy 1966 Pal Benko, Robert Byrne 1967 Pal Benko 1968 Bent Larsen 1969 Pal Benko, Arthur Bisguier, Milan Vukcevic 1970 Bent Larsen 1971 Walter Browne, Larry Evans 1972 Walter Browne 1973 Norman Weinstein 1974 Pal Benko, Vlastimil Hort 1975 Pal Benko, William Lombardy 1976 Anatoly Lein, Leonid Shamkovich 1977 Leonid Shamkovich, Andy Soltis, Timothy Taylor 1978 Joseph Bradford 1979 Florin Gheorghiu 1980 John Fedorowicz, Florin Gheorghiu 1981 Florin Gheorghiu, Larry Christiansen, Jeremy Silman, Nick de Firmian, John Meyer 1982 Andrew Soltis, William Martz 1983 Larry Christiansen, Viktor Korchnoi 1984 Roman Dzindzichashvili, Sergey Kudrin 1985 Yasser Seirawan, Boris Spassky, Joel Benjamin 1986 Larry Christiansen 1987 Lev Alburt 1988 Dmitry Gurevich 1989 Lev Alburt 1990 Yasser Seirawan 1991 Michael Rohde, V. Akopyan 1992 Gregory Kaidanov 1993 Alexander Shabalov 1994 Georgi Orlov, Dmitry Gurevich, Ben Finegold, Smbat Lputian, Leo Kaushansky, Albert Chow 1995 Alex Yermolinsky 1996 Gabriel Schwartzman 1997 Alex Yermolinsky 1998 Judit Polgar, Boris Gulko 1999 Alex Yermolinsky, Alexander Goldin, Eduard Rozentalis, Alexander Shabalov, Gabriel Schwartzman, Michael Mulyar 2000 Alex Yermolinsky 2001 Alek Wojtkiewicz, Joel Benjamin, Alexander Stripunsky, Fabian Doettling

2002

Gennady Zaitchik, Evgeniy Najer

Cherry Hill, New Jersey • July 27-August 4, 2002

2002 U.S. OPEN WINNERS



**Gennady
Zaitchik**



Evgeniy Najer