

CHESS KIDS

ACROSS THE

BOARD



BY AL LAWRENCE

Celebrating *Chess Life Kids*
from across the country.

Oliver Boydell

New York City, New York

Oliver's Got Moves!

Youngest chess author ever!

Oliver Boydell is only 11. Despite his age, his new book on chess, *He's Got Moves*, is being sold in bookstores all over the USA. His book is not just for kids. Publisher Metabook is recommending it to adult readers to help grownups get better at chess too!

The subtitle of Oliver's book sums it up: "25 Legendary Chess Games, As Analyzed by a Smart Kid."

Before Oliver wrote his book, Daniel Naroditsky of North Carolina held the record as youngest chess book writer. Daniel was 14 when he published his first book. Daniel later became a grandmaster. Oliver would like to follow in his footsteps.

When Oliver was just five years old, he used his iPad to teach himself to play chess. "There wasn't even a chess set in the house," his mom Tiffany said. Oliver developed his own teaching methods. He would take a losing position against his classmates and ask them to try to win. When they couldn't, he would take the winning side and show them how. His teacher asked him to teach a regular chess class.



Oliver improved at “warp speed.” Not long after learning the moves, he won the kindergarten champion title at the National K-12 Grades Championship. Two months later, Oliver began working with famous chess teacher and *Chess Life Kids* columnist Bruce Pandolfini. Bruce served as chess adviser for the popular Netflix series, “The Queen’s Gambit.”

“After just a few minutes of meeting him and playing a game,” Bruce said, “I knew Oliver Boydell was special. Not only did he avoid my trap — he countered with one of his own.” The next year, Oliver captured the title of New York City’s First Grade Champ.

The young author also trains twice a week with eight-time U.S. Women’s Champ GM Irina Krush (*see pg. 20 for*

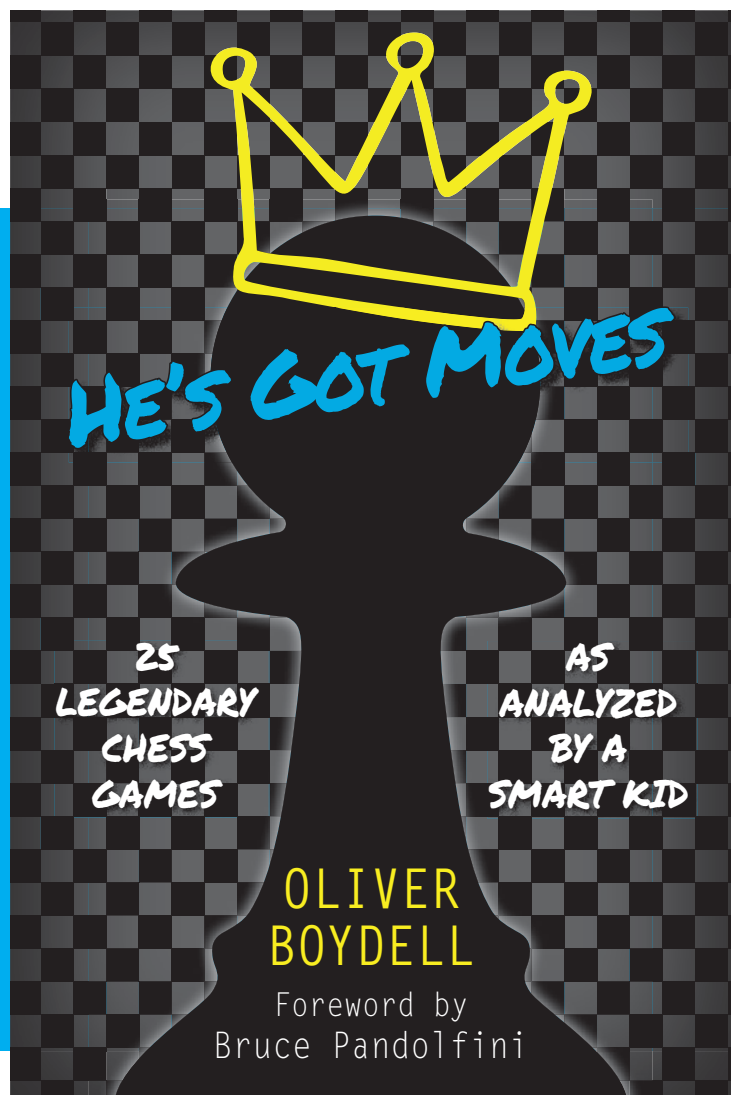
more on Krush). Before the coronavirus closed schools and put a stop to many activities, Oliver studied piano and participated in skiing, tennis, and soccer.

After the lockdown, Oliver had lots of time on his hands. He picked out the 25 chess games he decided were the most important of all time. As he wrote, Oliver explained the moves of each game. Mom Tiffany helped with the typing.

Oliver asks the reader questions — and provides the answers at the end of the book. After each game, he gives his favorite move and a list of “Lessons Learned.” Oliver also provides a glossary of important chess terms.

U.S. Chess Hall-of-Famer GM Maurice Ashley and popular *Chess.com* teacher FM “FunMaster” Mike Klein are excited about the book. “Oliver has taken the classics and put his personal spin on them for chess lovers everywhere to understand,” Ashley wrote.

Oliver’s book is available in hardback and digital editions online at Amazon and *barnesandnoble.com*, as well as in bookstores — and be sure to check with US Chess Federation Sales at *uscfsales.com*.



Photos: facing page, Oliver at the legendary Marshall Chess Club; this page, above, Oliver holding an advance copy of his book on November 7, 2020 — the first time he saw a printed version of his book; right, the cover of Oliver’s book. Bruce Pandolfini, who wrote the book’s foreword, praises the collection: “Oliver has assembled some of the world’s best chess games into a superbly integrated volume. Young or old, new to the game or experienced, readers will find Oliver Boydell’s first book to be a touchstone for challenge and inspiration.”



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Back in 2016, Oliver went to see the World Championship held near his home. There, Grandmaster Judit Polgar, one of the best chess players

ever, autographed the iPad Oliver had used to teach himself chess. Do you think Oliver should autograph his new book and send it to GM Polgar?



Photos, clockwise from top left: Oliver’s prized chess boards include one signed by Garry Kasparov and another autographed by Fabiano Caruana; Oliver jumps for joy in Cape Cod as his book nears completion; skiing in Colorado before the pandemic hit; with GMs Irina Krush and Maurice Ashley in 2018 at the Charity Chess Championship (a fundraising event) in New York City; with Bruce Pandolfini (l) and FM Mike Klein (r) between rounds at the 2019 National Elementary (K-6) Championship.