

🇨🇦 Yanofsky, Daniel Abraham ("Abe") (26.03.1925 - 05.03.2000)



First Canadian Grandmaster ever. Born in 1925 in Brody, then Poland, he arrived the same year in Canada, as an eight months young baby. A child prodigy. Brilliant technical play, especially in the endgame. Prominent Winnipeg lawyer and city councillor, Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Mayor of West Kildonan, Manitoba.

Awarded the IM title in 1950 (the inaugural year), the GM title in 1964 and the International Arbiter title in 1977.

### **The first chess player in the British Commonwealth to be awarded the Grandmaster title**

(Apart from German-born chess player Jacques Mieses who moved to England in the 1930s to escape Nazi persecution as a Jew. Mieses became a British citizen late in life, then received the title when FIDE first awarded the grandmaster title in 1950, Mieses was one of the 27 original recipients, and the oldest of them)

Yanofsky was **British Champion in 1953** and **Canadian Champion on eight occasions: 1941 in 1943, 1945, 1947, 1953, 1959, 1963, 1965; his eight titles is a Canadian record** (tied in closed tournaments with [Maurice Fox](#)).

"Little Abie" or "Abe", as the local newspapers called him soon, was a **Child Prodigy**. At age of 12, Yanofsky won the championship of Manitoba. He repeated every year through 1942, when nobody else even bothered to show up. Thereafter, Yanofsky was banned from further participation in the Manitoba provincial championship to encourage others to play in it :)

At 14, was picked to play at board 2 for the Canadian Team in the Olympiad in Buenos Aires 1939. Yanofsky was the youngest player in the event, and he achieved an 85% score, earning attention from all the great players around the world. Yanofsky was the sensation of the tournament, making the highest score on second board (Canada played in the B-group). In Graham Burgess' book, *Chess Highlights of the 20th Century*, Yanofsky's spectacular win over Dulanto (for the notation see further below) in the 1939 Olympiad is presented as a central highlight of the year.

He won his first [Canadian Chess Championship](#) in 1941 to become a **National Champion at 16**.

The next year, he won at Ventnor City, USA, and succeeded **in the U.S. Open held at Dallas 1942** (joint 1st-2nd as best on tie-break, with Herman Steiner on 16/17!). Further international wins at **Arbon (SASB), Switzerland 1946** (best on tie-break, with Karel Opocensky and Ludek Pachman, 4. Albéric O' Kelly, eight players), Reykjavik 1947, **Hastings 1952-53** (with Harry Golombek, Jonathan Penrose and Antonio Medina), the **Canadian Open Chess Championship, held in Edmonton 1979**. *Daniel Yanofsky placed clear second at Barcelona 1946 (behind Miguel Najdorf), sole second at Hastings 1951-52 behind Svetozar Gligoric, third shared at the (14th) Hoogovens, Beverwijk (today Tata Steel, Wijk aan Zee) 1952 (Max Euwe won), clear fifth at Dallas, USA 1957 (Svetozar Gligoric and Samuel Reshevsky won this strong and closely contested invitation event, eight players), and shared second (with Moshe Czerniak) behind Bobby Fischer at Netanya 1968.*

In 1946, at age 21, Yanofsky entered the first top-class post-war tournament, at [Groningen](#), and defeated Soviet champion and tournament winner [Mikhail Botvinnik](#); Abe Yanofsky winning the [brilliance prize](#) (notation follows under "Notable chess games").

Abraham Yanofsky won the Canadian Closed Championship with a perfect score of 11/11 - twice! (1943, 1959).

During his studies in Oxford, he found time to win the British Championship in 1953!

Yanofsky represented Canada at the [Interzonals](#) held in [Saltsjöbaden](#) 1948 and [Stockholm](#) 1962. Later at age 61, Yanofsky qualified for another Interzonal appearance, but generously ceded that opportunity in favour of a younger player.

Yanofsky had the lead organizer role for Canada's first supergrandmaster tournament at **Winnipeg 1967**, to mark [Canada's Centennial](#), and played in the tournament, winning the Brilliancy Prize for his victory over Laszlo Szabo. The Winnipeg tournament was jointly won by **Klaus Darga** (first on tie-break) and **Bent Larsen** ahead of Keres and Spassky as joint third / fourth.

He represented Canada at **eleven Olympiads**: ([Buenos Aires 1939](#) {13.5/16}, [Amsterdam 1954](#) {9/17}, [Munich 1958](#) {5.5/11}, [Tel Aviv 1964](#) {10/16}, [Havana 1966](#) {3.5/5}, [Lugano 1968](#) {6/14}, [Siegen 1970](#) {7/14}, [Skopje 1972](#) {6/13}, [Nice 1974](#) {7/14}, [Haifa 1976](#) {3.5/10}, and [Malta 1980](#)) {6/11}, a total surpassed among Canadians only by IM [Lawrence Day](#) (thirteen).



Yanofsky in 1947 (Photo: Wikipedia)

**Except for a brief period in the late 1940s, Yanofsky never concentrated full-time on chess.**

He graduated with a law degree from the [University of Manitoba](#) in 1951, and served in the [Royal Canadian Navy](#) during World War II (1944–1946). He won several scholarships, which allowed him to pursue legal studies at [Oxford University](#) (1951–1953). Following graduation, he practised law in Winnipeg, with his brother Harry, who was also a chess master. Daniel Yanofsky argued several cases before the [Supreme Court of Canada](#).

In his professional career, he was a Queen's Counsel. Because of his contributions to the world of chess, the Canadian government presented him with the Order of Canada in 1972.

As a player his greatest strength was in the endgame. If he had devoted himself entirely to chess he would certainly have gone much further.

Samuel Reshevsky described him in his book *How Chess Games Are Won* thus "*Dan Yanofsky is a tough opponent. His style is defensive but quite accurate. When given the slightest opportunity, he is strong enough to beat the best.*"

Editor *Canadian Chess Chat* 1956-59, between 1954 and 1981, he edited a chess column in the *Winnipeg Free Press*. He wrote the tournament book for the *First Canadian Open, Montreal 1956*, and edited the tournament book for the *Winnipeg 1967 Grandmasters' tournament*.

In later years, Yanofsky suffered from both cancer and heart disease. Canadian Chess Hall of Fame.

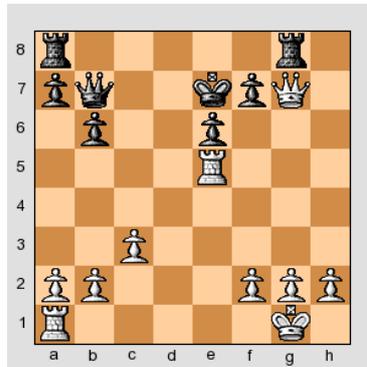
## Notable chess games

- [Daniel Yanofsky vs Alberto Dulanto, Buenos Aires Olympiad 1939, French, Classical \(C11\), 1-0](#) (click to replay!). 14-year-old Yanofsky unleashes a pretty rook sacrifice to win a game which was highly praised by World Champion Alexander Alekhine.

### **Yanofsky, Daniel Abraham vs Dulanto, Alberto Ismodes 1-0**

Buenos Aires ol (Men) prel-A Rnd 7, Buenos Aires 1939.08.30

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Bg5 dxe4 5. Nxe4 Nbd7 6. Nf3 Be7 7. Nxf6+ Nxf6 8. Bd3 c5 9. dxc5 Qa5+ 10. c3 Qxc5 11. O-O O-O 12. Re1 Rd8 13. Ne5 b6 14. Bxf6 Bxf6 15. Bxh7+ Kf8 16. Qh5 Bxe5 17. Rxe5 Qc7 18. Be4 Bb7 19. Bxb7 Qxb7 20. Qh8+ Ke7 21. Qxg7 Rg8



22. Rxe6+ Kxe6 23. Re1+ Kd6 24. Qf6+ Kc5 25. Re5+ Kc4 26. b3+ Kd3 27. Qd6+ Kc2 28. Re2+ **1-0**

<http://alekhine-nb.blogspot.ch/2013/06/alekhine-praising-canadian-child.html#!/2013/06/alekhine-praising-canadian-child.html> (Alekhine praising young Yanofsky's sacrificial win over Peruvian player Dulanto)

- [Daniel Yanofsky vs Mikhail Botvinnik, Groningen 1946, Ruy Lopez, Closed, Chigorin \(C99\), 1-0](#) In a Brilliancy Prize game, the young Canadian stuns the Soviet champion and Groningen event winner. Yanofsky defeated future World Champion Mikhail Botvinnik, which he later described as "the greatest sense of achievement in life".

### **Botvinnik vs. Yanofsky 0-1: The most famous game in Canadian chess history!**

Yanofsky, on move 33, saw further than Botvinnik when he set a vicious trap. Botvinnik took the bait and went down to colossal defeat.

- [Viacheslav Ragozin vs Daniel Yanofsky, Saltsjobaden Interzonal 1948, French, Classical \(C13\), 0-1](#) Yanofsky coolly gives up his queen to forestall the experienced Soviet GM's dangerous attacking chances.
- [Samuel Reshevsky vs Daniel Yanofsky, Tel Aviv Olympiad 1964, Grunfeld \(D93\), 0-1](#) Yanofsky sacrifices a piece to entomb White's bishop and ruin his pawn structure, leading to a strategical masterpiece.
- [Laszlo Szabo vs Daniel Yanofsky, Winnipeg 1967, King's Indian \(E70\), 0-1](#) A lovely thematic dark-square King's Indian game which won the Brilliancy Prize.



Winnipeg Canadian Centennial Tournament in 1967: Spassky vs. Yanofsky (round 1)

Sources:

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel\\_Yanofsky](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Yanofsky) (Wikipedia)

<http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1032134> (Yanofsky vs. Botvinnik, see above)

<http://www.canadianchess.info/articles/CanadianChessNewsletter86GC.html> (game notation)

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1946&dat=19460904&id=rX4tAAAAIBAJ&sjid=CJkFAAAAIBAJ&pg=5685,497871&hl=de> (Report from Groningen: Red chess master praises Yanofsky)

<http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1150076> (Yanofsky vs. Dulanto, see above)

<http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1081467> (Yanofsky vs. Korchnoi 1962, last round game at the Interzonal in Stockholm, an important game for Korchnoi who won)

<http://chess.ca/newsfeed/node/273> (Winnipeg 1967)

<http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chess.pl?tid=83284> (Winnipeg 1967)

<http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chess.pl?tid=79989> (Hastings 1952-53)

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian\\_Chess\\_Championship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian_Chess_Championship) (National Canadian Championship)

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<http://aymemorialchess.blogspot.ch/> (Abe Yanofsky Memorial Chess Tournament)