

Salamanca (Alekhine; Spassky, Karpov, Korchnoi, Topalov, Shirov, Ponomariov, and Maia Chiburdanidze, Judit Polgar, Hou Yifan, Pia Cramling)

Salamanca is a city situated in western [Spain](#) and is the capital of the [Province of Salamanca](#) in the [autonomous community](#) of [Castile and León](#). The city lies on several rolling hills by the [Tormes River](#). Its Old City was declared a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) in 1988. It is one of the most important university cities in Spain. As of 2020, the municipality has a population of 150,000 (from Wikipedia).



Shirov in play vs. Elisabeth Paetz at Salamanca Chess Festival, Masters (rapid) 2021. Flickr

Ongoing: Prominent **Uni Masters Rapid chess tournament series** since the end of the 2010s, **since 2018** (the 8th edition) with a **Magistral Rapid** (incl. Karpov, Topalov, Ponomariov, Shirov, Hou Yifan, Pia Cramling, further strong women and promising players from Spain, of course).

Official Site: [Festival de Ajedrez - Salamanca cuna del Ajedrez moderno \(salamancachess.com\)](http://salamancachess.com)

Chess and Culture at the Chess Festival "[Salamanca Cradle of Modern Chess](#)"

A great variety of activities are programmed in the Festival, such as **lectures**, **simultaneous exhibitions**, **Children's amateur tournaments**, **contests**, and a **chess film season**. The Festival will be crowned by the **Masters Tournament Semi-Rapid**, in which eight exceptional male and female players will take part. Time control: **40 min. plus 5 seconds per move**.

This **Rapid Festival** will commemorate the Tournaments held at the **University of Salamanca** at the end of the 1980's and beginning of the 1990's in which chess legends such as Boris Spassky, Viktor Korchnoi and Judit Polgar participated.

Salamanca Chess Festival (Rapid, round robin of eight players), Winners:

1st in 2018: **Topalov** (incl. Karpov, Granda Zuniga, Santos Ruiz, Stripchenko, a.o.)

2nd in 2019: **Iturrizaga Bonelli** (incl. *Topalov*, Ponomarev, Hou Yifan, Vega Gutiérrez)

3rd in 2021, Feb.: **Shirov** (incl. *Topalov*, Iturrizaga Bonelli, Anton Guijarro, Paehtz, Vega)

4th in 2021, Dec.: **Santos Latasa** (incl. *Topalov*, Shirov, Edouard, Cramling, Vega)

5th in 2022: **Santos Latasa** (incl. *Topalov*, Kamsky, Keymer, Kosteniuk, M. Socko, Vega)
Veselin Topalov participated in all five Rapid editions at the Salamanca Chess Festival.



Clear double winner in a row at Salamanca Rapid in 2021 (in the second tournament that year) and in 2022: Jaime Santos Latasa, pictured at Dubai Open 2017 then as an IM. Photo: Chessdom













The second Rapid event of the year 2021 (exceptionally with two events) saw a surprising winner: [Jaime Santos dominates Salamanca Masters | ChessBase](#) (December 2021), following this edition: [Alexei Shirov prevails in Salamanca | ChessBase](#) (February 2021)

Previous international events in Salamanca:

Alekhine simul in 1944. Some international invitation tournaments in the late 1980s / early 1990s, most notably in 1991: **Vladimirov won unbeaten**, incl. **Spassky, Korchnoi** just after celebrating his 60th anniversary, and Zapata, twelve players (for more, see below).

In 1990, Romero Holmes and Todorcevic shared the win (incl. Maia Chiburdanidze, ten players). In 1989, the winners were Kudrin, Georgadze and Rivas Pastor, incl. Zsuzsa Polgar and 13-years young Judit Polgar who finished last, twelve players). In 1988, Gilardo Garcia, Zenon Franco Ocampos, Julio Granda Zuniga, Jaime Sunye Neto, and Manuel Rivas Pastor, were among the twelve players (final tournament standings are incomplete, probably Gilardo Garcia as winner).

🇪🇸 Salamanca 1991

	Date	Type	Elo	Average	Games	Rounds
	Apr, 1991	Tourn	2479	66	11	
Name			ELO		Points	
 GM Vladimirov, Yevgeniy (born in USSR)			2575		8.5	
 GM Spassky, Boris (born in USSR)			2560		7.5	
 GM Korchnoi, Viktor (born in USSR)			2615		7.0	
 GM Hoffman, Alejandro			2415		7.0	
 GM Gomez Esteban, Juan Mario			2400		6.5	
 GM Rodriguez Vargas, Orestes (born in Peru)			2470		6.0	
 GM Rivas Pastor, Manuel			2450		5.0	
 IM Oltra Caurin, Ramon			2440		4.5	
 IM Sanz Alonso, Francisco Javier			2415		4.5	
 GM San Segundo Carrillo, Pablo			2430		3.5	
 GM Zapata, Alonso			2530		3.0	
 IM Martin Gonzalez, Angel			2445		3.0	

The fate of Grandmaster Vladimirov:

Oct-02-17 **diagonal**: In 1991, Vladimirov, born 1957, had some pretty good days in Spain:

Within three months in spring and summer, he <won the closed tournament at Salamanca 1991>, unbeaten ahead of Spassky and Korchnoi who was on holidays (Salamanca included as usual a bunch of Spanish combatants, and Zapata from Colombia who finished shared last, twelve players),

placed <shared third at closed Dos Hermanas 1991>, Alexander Goldin won ahead of Julio Granda Zuniga; Dos Hermanas went on to become an elite tournament for some years in the mid and late 1990s (remember, Great Garry Kasparov failed to win at Dos Hermanas),

and <took the traditional Leon tournament 1991> (then played as a round robin in classical chess), watch out the impressive Albo d'Oro of this series, lasting now for 30 years: <http://www.advancedchessleon.com/pa...>

*Vladimirov was a top forty something to top fifty something player during the years 1988, 1989, 1990, and 1991. According to Chessmetrics (Sonas), his peak ranking is clear **no. 10 of the world**, and a regular top twenty to top forty player between 1987 and 1992. Best tournament was in Frunze (USSR Army Championship) 1988: [URS Army-ch 1988 \(365Chess.com\)](#), cp.: [Frunze, 1988 \(chessmetrics.com\)](#).*

Dec-07-08 **Karpova**: Edward Winter:

<As is well known, after losing three consecutive games to Karpov, Kasparov accused Vladimirov, his second, of treachery. He repeated his denunciation, at length, on pages 203-208 of "Child of Change". A couple of sample extracts follow:

'... the logic of the way things developed then, prove, to my mind though Vladimirov denies it – that I was betrayed ...' (page 204)

'I have often wondered what drove Vladimirov to behave as he did ... The motive, I think, was a twisted kind of jealousy ... He was having to live through me. I was achieving the sort of success he craved for himself and which he thought his own talents deserved. Deep down he resented my success. He thought it should be his. This kind of feeling makes a man a natural traitor, especially if it is allied to a weak personality with a tendency to self-degradation.' (page 205)

Kasparov has never offered proof, and fawning journalists have never demanded any. But now, having destroyed Vladimirov's reputation, the same Kasparov has the gall to write on page 113 of "London-Leningrad Championship Games":

'... a serious conflict occurred in my relations with Vladimirov after the 19th game. To me he seemed to be behaving strangely – copying out the analysis of openings employed in the match. I cannot assert anything, and I have no grounds for accusing him, but equally I can no longer trust Vladimirov as I used to.'

Note those words carefully:

'... I cannot assert anything, and I have no grounds for accusing him ...'>

Source: <http://www.chesshistory.com/winter/...>

Jun-18-09 **AnalyzeThis**: Destroy a man's reputation, repent at leisure.

Jul-05-11 **Fusilli**: <**AnalyzeThis**> I second that, brother. *Kasparov always was a sore loser who would never take responsibility and **always blame others with made-up claims***. Remember how he couldn't stand losing to the computer and accused IBM of cheating? And he says Vladimirov has a weak personality and needed him to lose to feel good about himself? So, Vladimirov needed the man who was paying him to lose? I don't know anything about Vladimirov, but this logic is just stupid. What a child, this Kasparov, for God's sake. Like Fischer, thank you for your games, but please shut up.



Jul-05-11 **kellmano**: <**Fusilli**> Thirded. I was always annoyed that Kasparov was so very good, as his personality is not to my taste.

Jul-05-11 **perfidious**: <**Karpova**: '...I cannot assert anything, and I have no grounds for accusing him, but equally I can no longer trust Vladimirov as I used to.'>



Kasparov began to distrust Vladimirov, whatever his reasons. Fair enough, and I'm not about to question his feelings or the circumstances, as I wasn't a party to any of this.

The published, **unsubstantiated accusations** are another matter, however, as even Kasparov acknowledges that **he lacks any substantive evidence** therein.