

Margate Chess Congress (1923, 1935 – 1939)

[Margate](#) is a [seaside town](#) and resort in the district of [Thanet](#) in [Kent, England](#), on the coast along the [North Foreland](#) and contains the areas of [Cliftonville](#), [Garlinge](#), [Palm Bay](#) and [Westbrook](#).



Margate Clock Tower. Oast House Archive



Margate, a photochrom print of Margate Harbour in 1897. Wikipedia

The chess club at Margate, held five consecutive international tournaments from spring 1935 to spring 1939, three to five of the strongest international masters were invited to play in a round robin with the strongest british players (including Women's reigning World Championne *Vera Menchik*, as well as British master players Milner-Barry and Thomas, they were invited *in all five editions!*), including notable "**Reserve sections**". Plus a strong Prequel in 1923. Record twice winner is Keres.

Capablanca took part three times at Margate, but could never win!

Margate tournament history

Margate 1923 Kent County Chess Association Congress, Master Tournament (Prequel of the series)

1. Grünfeld, 2.-5. Michell, Alekhine, Muffang, Bogoljubov (8 players, including Réti)

<http://storiascacchi.altervista.org/storiascacchi/tornei/1900-49/1923margate.htm>

There was already a today somehow forgotten Grand Tournament at Margate in 1923, Grünfeld won unbeaten and as clear first (four of the eight invited players, namely Alekhine, Bogoljubov, Grünfeld, and Réti, were then top twelve ranked according to chessmetrics). André Muffang from France (IM in 1951) won the blitz competition there ahead of Alekhine!



Reshevsky playing a simul at age of nine in the year 1920 The New York Times photo archive

Margate 1st Easter Congress 1935

1. Reshevsky, 2. Capablanca, 3. Thomas, 4.-6. Klein, Reilly, Sergeant (10 players, incl. Mieses, 70)
First big international tournament win for young Samuel Reshevsky!

Szmul Rzeszewski, born in 1911 was a Polish [chess prodigy](#) and later a leading American chess grandmaster. He was never a full-time chess professional, nevertheless a strong contender for the World Chess Championship from the mid-1930s to the mid-1960s.

<http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chess.pl?tid=79515>

<http://www.saund.co.uk/britbase/pgn/193504margate-viewer.html>

→ Famous game: Reshevsky (who was only 23) defeated the former World Champion Capablanca: Replay Reshevsky vs. Capablanca 1-0: <http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1224079>

Margate 2nd Easter Congress 1936

1. **Flohr**, 2. Capablanca, 3. Stahlberg, 4. Lundin, 5.-6. Tylor, Milner-Barry (10 players)

<http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chess.pl?tid=79515>

Unlike the other four Margate tournaments from this series, complete records and gamescores are no longer available

Margate 3rd Easter Congress 1937

1./2. **Fine** (on tie-break), **Keres**, 3. Alekhine, 4. Foltys, 5. Milner-Barry (10 players)

<http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chess.pl?tid=79481>

<http://www.saund.co.uk/britbase/pgn/193804margate-viewer.html>

> **Premier Reserves Sections**: A: Ernst Ludwig Klein (Austria). Reserve B: Golombek and Landau. Reserve C was won by veteran player Mieses. Four main round robin tournaments!!!!

Statistical rhubarb:

Margate 1937 was the first of three world class chess tournaments within two years in which Keres and Fine shared first place, followed by Ostende 1937 (together with Swiss Henry Grob who beat both Fine and Keres), and the legendary AVRO tournament 1938 (Keres first on tie-break, again with Fine, in a field including four former, present or future World Chess Champions, in chronological order: Capablanca, Alekhine, Euwe, and Botvinnik; plus Reshevsky and Flohr)

→ Famous game: Thomas vs. Keres, Margate 1937, 0-1

<http://www.mark-weeks.com/aboutcom/aa07h11.htm> (Move by Move explained by Mark Weeks)

Replay: <http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1071800> (Chessgames)

Margate 4th Easter Congress 1938

1. **Alekhine**, 2. Spielman, 3. Petrovs, 4.-5. Böök, Milner-Barry (10 players)

> **Premier Reserves Sections**: A: Ernst Ludwig Klein (Austria), ahead of Najdorf (Poland). Paul List (Lithuania) took 5th place. Landau won Section B ahead of 2. Koltanowski, 3. Prins, 4. Opocensky
Four main round robin tournaments (see further below for further details).

<http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chess.pl?tid=79450>

<http://www.saund.co.uk/britbase/pgn/193804margate-viewer.html>

→ Famous game: Alekhine vs Böök, Margate 1938, 1-0

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u30PodviZsE> (Chess lecture by Mato Jelic)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_o5G6nb944 (Evolution of Chess style by Tryfon Gavriel)

Tryfon Gavriel is a frequent Chessgames contributor as **User: kingscrusher**. His Youtube page (<http://www.youtube.com/kingscrusher>) features many instructional chess videos.

Replay: <http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1013330> (Chessgames)

Alekhine's sacrifice may or may not be fully sound, but it certainly presents Black with massive problems over the board and leads to the sort of complex combinative position which Alekhine loved to play.

→ Famous game: Petrovs vs Alekhine, Margate 1938, 1-0

Replay: <http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1013336>

Margate 5th Easter Congress 1939

1. **Keres**, 2.-3. Capablanca, Flohr, 4. Thomas, 5. Milner-Barry (10 players)

Mojsze Mendel (later: Miguel) Najdorf, born in 1910, an up and coming master now in the highest Margate group, journeyed again from Poland, and finished sixth.

> Friedrich (Fritz) Sämisch, Germany, Third Reich, won Margate II (**Premier Reserves Section A**)

<http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chess.pl?tid=79516>

<http://www.saund.co.uk/britbase/brit30.htm> (scroll down)

Important distinction:

As introduced, the Margate Chess Congress offered a Premier group, and several Reserve sections (indicated as B-group, C-Group, etc. or Margate II, Margate III, etc.). *If there is no specification, then Margate refers to the Premier tournament.* Thus **A** means **Reserve section A** (alias the second highest group), **B** then means **Reserve section B**, still pretty strong, watch out for example in 1938:

Feb-26-16 **hemy**: 1938 Margate Chess Congress included four full tournaments of ten players in each one: Premier Tournament, Reserves A, B and C:



Margate (Premier)

Alekhine 7

Spielmann 6

Petrovs 5.5

Böök 5

Milner-Barry 5

Golombek 4.5

Alexander 4

Sergeant 3.5

Vera Menchik 3

Thomas 1.5

Reserves A

Winner: **Ernest Ludwig Klein (ex-Austrian master, England) 7**

During the 28th game of the Euwe-Alekhine WCC match in 1935, Klein caused an incident, consulting the World Champion during the game! The result was physical violence and police intervention. Ernst Klein was British Chess Champion in 1951.

Klein disappeared from the chess scene in 1952 after a dispute with the British Chess Federation following his withdrawal from a radio match against Olaf Barda from Norway. Compare: www.chessgames.com/perl/chessplayer?pid=58946

(Reserves A, continuation)

Moishe Mendel Najdorf (Poland) 6.5

Gerald Abrahams (England) 6

Nicolas Rossolimo (France) 6

Paul List (Lithuania) 4.5

Andrew Rowland Benedick Thomas (England) 4

Adrian Garcia Conde (England) 3.5

Frits van Seters (Holland) 3.5

Baruch Harold Wood (England) 2.5

Henry Holwell Cole 1.5

Reserves B

S. Landau 7.5

G. Koltanowski 7

L. Prins 6.5

K. Opočenský 6

J. König 5

V. A. Vinser 4

F. G. T. Collins 3.5

L. C. G. Dewing 2.5

A. Eva 1.5

L. Illingworth 1.5

(Reserves B)



Salo Landau wins

Photo and Biography: Chessgames

Born in Bochnia, Galicia, 1903, died in March 1944, 40 years old, The Netherlands. In 1914, the Landau family fled the Russians to Vienna, young Salo went to friends in Rotterdam. For some years, he was the Dutch number two, behind [Max Euwe](#). Landau won a strong quadrangular double-round tournament in Rotterdam, 1931, surpassing [Edgar Colle](#), [Savielly Tartakower](#) and [Akiba Rubinstein](#), his biggest international success. In 1936, Landau became Dutch champion when Euwe, then reigning World Chess Champion, did not defend his national title.

In September of 1942, he tried to escape the Nazis by fleeing to Switzerland with his family, but they were caught in Breda, southern Holland. He was sent to a forced-labor camp in Gräditz, Silesia. His wife and young daughter, whose hiding place was betrayed, were sent to [Auschwitz](#) in September 1944, where they were gassed on October 12, 1944. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salo_Landau.

Reserves C

G. Meyer 6.5

G van Doesburgh 6.5

V. A. T. Schelfhout 5.5

Sonja Graf 5

C. B. Heath 5

B. Reilly 5

Z. Solmanis 4.5

V. Skillicorn 3

F. N. Jatneson 2.5

H. J. Snowden 1.5



Sonja Graf-Stevenson (Photo from Chessgames)

Information about the Reserves tournament in 1938 was collected by me from newspapers in Estonian and German languages

Source for Margate 1938: <http://www.chessgames.com/perl/chess.pl?tid=79450&kpage=1#reply1>

To close up this rather forgotten series, once again the winner lists:

Margate tournament history

Margate Prequel (1923)

1. Grünfeld, 2.-5. Michell, Alekhine, Muffang, Bogoljubov (8 players, including Réti)

Margate 1st (1935)

1. Reshevsky, 2. Capablanca, 3. Thomas, 4.-6. Klein, Reilly, Sergeant (10 players, incl. Mieses)
First big international tournament win for young Samuel Reshevsky!

Margate 2nd (1936)

1. Flohr, 2. Capablanca, 3. Stahlberg, 4. Lundin, 5.-6. Tylor, Milner-Barry (10 players)

Margate 3rd (1937)

1./2. **Fine** (on tie-break), **Keres**, 3. Alekhine, 4. Foltys, 5. Milner-Barry (10 players)

Margate 4th (1938)

1. Alekhine, 2. Spielman, 3. Petrovs, 4.-5. Böök, Milner-Barry (10 players)

Margate 5th (1939)

1. Keres, 2.-3. Capablanca, Flohr, 4. Thomas, 5. Milner-Barry (10 players)

Mojsze Mendel (later: Miguel) Najdorf, born in 1910, an up and coming master now in the highest Margate group, journeyed again from Poland, and finished sixth.

Keres is twice winner. Capablanca took part three times at Margate, but could never win!

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