

Chess Smiles

The Chess Friends

The Man Benji, The Myth Sarang, and The Legend Vivi

<https://www.chessfriendsbooks.com/blog>

Howdy! It's the Chess Friends!

When you open the *Northwest Chess* magazine in April, the month where the first day is celebrated as the day of jokes and pranks, you had better believe that The Chess Friends wrote a fun article!

The tradition of joking around on April 1st originated in the late Middle Ages. Historians don't know exactly how this holiday came to be, but, [according to one theory](#), it had to do with the world switching from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar. In the old calendar, New Year's Day was often celebrated after the spring equinox, around April 1st, but, with the adoption of the new calendar, the start of the new year was moved to January 1st. Back in the day, without phones, the internet, and New Year's bots on chess.com, it took a while for everyone to catch on to the calendar switch, so people who still celebrated New Year's in April got pranked on!

We, The Chess Friends, aren't big fans of practical jokes; we are more of the classy-type fun people who like a good joke that everyone can laugh about. Humor, when used positively, helps us make new friends or push through difficult times, like blundering in a completely winning position. Humor in chess is so important that GM Viswanathan Anand, the 15th World Chess Champion, dedicated a whole chapter to it in his new book, [Lightning Kid](#). He says, "Humor helps you enjoy the moment and see things in a new light, so don't forget to laugh." *Gelotology*, a branch of science that studies laughter and its effects on the mind and the body, [confirms](#) that, after all, laughter is the best medicine!

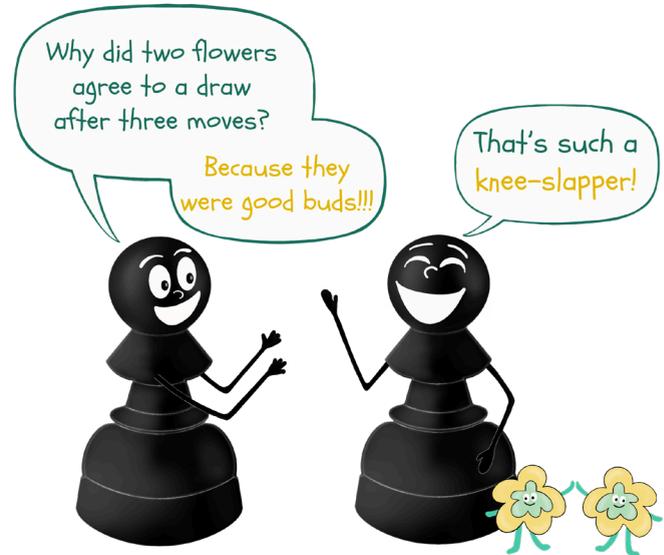
Today, we're going to describe our favorite categories of chess humor: dad jokes, situational jokes, and jokes that only chess players understand, including everyone's beloved chess memes!

As usual, our buddy Peshka is here by our sides to bring more smiles to your face!

Dad's Jokes! The term *dad's joke* appeared in the dictionary only six or seven years ago. It is a wholesome type of humor that parents approve, and kids pretend they don't like, but secretly enjoy. You make a dad joke, also known as a pun, by breaking language norms or by playing with double-meaning or similarly sounding words. We are not sure why these jokes are called "dad jokes" rather than "mom jokes;" we think our moms are pretty fun too!

For example, recently, when we asked our moms:

– Should we play chess in April?



They answered:

–May as well!

We call such jokes "knee-slappers" and often share them in our articles and blogs. A key to a good knee-slapper is to deliver it in an absurd Q&A format! Here is our latest collection, spring edition!

What did the tree say when it checkmated its opponent with a second left on the clock?

What a re-leaf!

What do you tell a baby cow who wants to play a late-night blitz event?

It's pasture bedtime!

How did the egg feel after a long chess game?

Egg-zausted!

Did you hear about the cloud that was about to play chess on April 1st?

It was so excited, it wet its plants!

Did you hear about a cherry tree that got an IM norm after a tournament in April?

It was an unbe-leaf-able performance!

And, at the same tournament, a pickle got its first GM norm!

It was a big dill!

What do grapes say when you ask them to play a chess game with you?

Wine not!

What did the mama flower say to her kids when she saw they played chess online for three hours?

Stop playing chess and clean your bloom!

OK, we will stop here, even though Peshka says there is no such thing as too many knee-slappers!

Situational jokes! These jokes happen spontaneously, when you least expect something funny, like in a conversation when people are discussing serious business. For a joke to make people laugh, you have to say something surprising that is simple and true at the same time. That's the key. The joke is in the truth.

I remember that once in a local tournament, the first round was delayed because it took time for the TDs to assemble the tables and boards in a new location. When they finally set everything up, and grumbling chess players were seated, the TDs made their pre-game announcement, apologizing for the delay and asking:

“Please double-check your boards. Is anyone missing any of their pieces?”

There was a silence, then came a grave voice from the middle of the room:

“I will soon!”

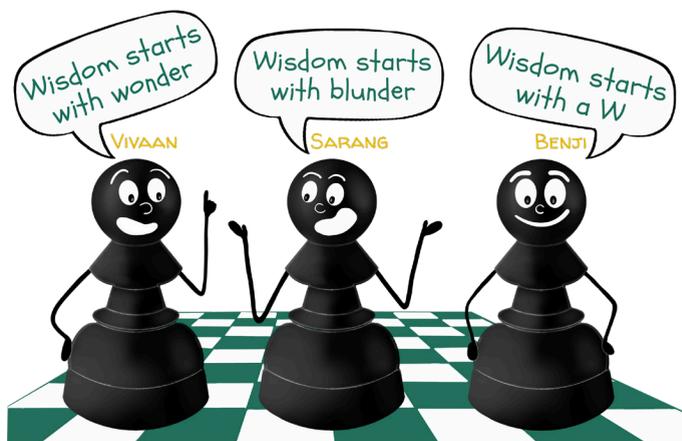
The tournament hall exploded with laughter, the tension disappeared, and everyone had a great time!

Peshka remembers how once The Chess Friends had a serious conversation about what wisdom in chess is:

Chess jokes! These jokes are the ones that only chess players would understand, because of their chess knowledge, the emotions around wins and losses, or what it feels like playing late-night blitz! These jokes often don't need a spoken language to be delivered; chess pieces are enough.

For example, in an online tournament in 2021, Magnus Carlsen was paired against Hikaru Nakamura in the last round. After Magnus played 1. e4, the commentators were predicting the game to enter a Ruy Lopez or an Italian or something, but, after Hikaru's 1. ... e5, Magnus played the shocking... (at least to us, the chess folks) 2. Ke2! Hikaru responded with Ke7, and both players couldn't hold their laughter! They just repeated king moves and the game ended in a draw. Then the opening went on to have a name, the Double Bongcloud! Was that funny?

CHESS WISDOM



It probably was, but you have to be a serious chess player to understand the joke!

Another example came from the Reykjavik Open, a serious classical event, where Anna Cramling, a famous chess streamer who invented the Cow Opening (you can read about her opening on [our blog here](#)), sat down for a serious game. She shook hands with her opponent, pressed the clock, and locked in. Her opponent, playing White, made the first move: he glided his pawn to e3 (the beginning of the Cow), kept it there for a second, before sliding it all the way to e4, as if to say “Hello there, nice to meet you! I follow you!” Classy. Anna just smiled.

If you want more humorous chess situation, the books by Dewain Barber [Humor In Chess](#) (2019) and [Humor In Chess II](#) (2021) have hundreds of pages filled with funny but true anecdotes from chess life! In *Humor In Chess II*, The Myth Sarang and The Legend Vivaan's Dad, Siva, submitted a story, titled “The TSA At Work.”

On the internet, chess jokes are often delivered in the form of *memes*, when an existing image, chess or not chess related, is paired up with a caption usually describing “me doing this” or “me feeling that,” like in these images of Peshka, from our book:



I first thought that's how the word "meme" came into existence, but its roots go a lot deeper. The term was coined by British evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins in the 1970s, who spoke about cultural evolution and needed a name for his introduced concept of the smallest transmittable unit of culture, similar to the "gene." So, he took the Greek word "mimōimai" which means "to imitate," and shorten it to rhyme with "gene," and voila, the word *meme* appeared! With internet, the word took off to have life of its own, but it still does basically the same: conveys human shared experience, only in a humorous way. It is so popular that it appeared in the [New York Times crosswords](#) many-many times!

Speaking of crosswords, we made something just for you, our dear readers of the *Northwest Chess* magazine, something that is equally good as a chess knee-slapper! It's chess crossword games that bring joy and challenges! We invite you to take out your pens or pencils and have some fun!

Let's start with a good old word search puzzle. You can play it online at <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/9501938> and design your own through The Word Search!

Chess Ideas Word Search

K	I	D	Z	F	Y	N	L	A	F	O	R	K	L
W	A	T	C	W	Z	C	W	N	D	E	E	D	U
R	P	L	R	E	I	I	F	E	N	D	N	O	F
D	N	H	L	E	N	S	N	I	C	F	K	M	T
O	A	S	I	D	B	P	C	L	E	Z	N	T	B
S	I	D	M	L	A	U	E	H	U	E	C	E	D
P	T	I	E	S	I	E	C	G	E	C	I	I	S
Z	L	H	S	R	H	D	Z	H	P	N	E	I	G
L	S	A	E	A	G	W	O	I	E	C	Z	N	A
L	N	I	N	E	A	E	N	R	N	T	I	U	A
T	B	Z	H	N	R	E	W	E	K	S	O	S	G
L	I	U	G	D	D	I	S	C	O	V	E	R	Y
I	F	F	I	A	N	C	H	E	T	T	O	G	O
C	T	T	D	E	F	L	E	C	T	I	O	N	I

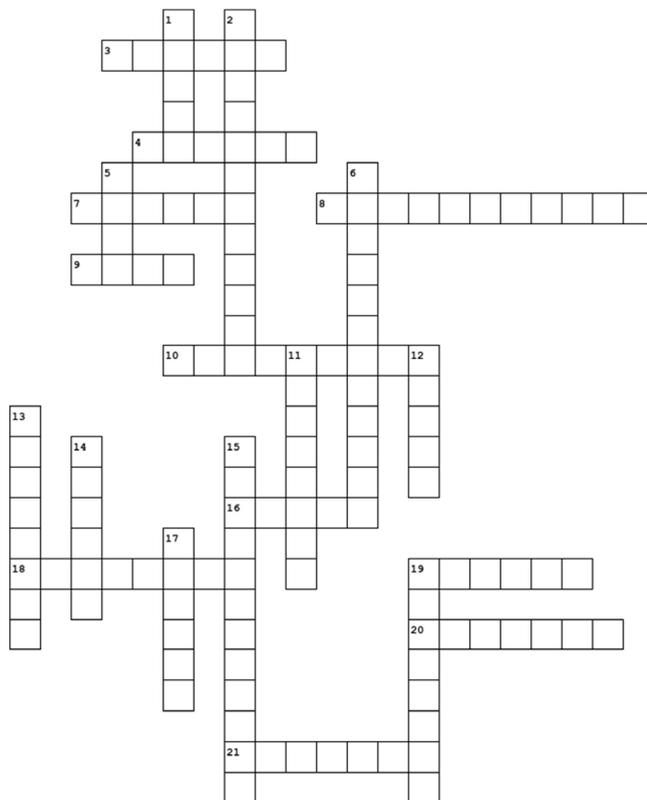
Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/9501938/>

How'd that go for you? Ready to ramp up the challenge? Try our *Northwest Chess* Legends crossword! If you'd like to try it on your phone or computer, you can do so at <https://crosswordlabs.com/view/northwest-chess-legends>, and even make your own at Crossword Labs!

Didn't see your own legendary name in the puzzle? Please don't take it to heart! We'll make more! We just wanted to pick a few legends for our first one spanning WA, OR, and ID and several roles in the chess world!

If you have some name suggestions for future crosswords, let us know at chessfriendsbooks@gmail.com. Before we let you go, let's test your chess openings with another crossword we created! You can also try it out online at <https://crosswordlabs.com/view/chess-opening-crossword>.

Chess Opening Crossword



Across

3. Popular defense infamous for its blocked light squared bishop
4. Popular White system where White usually makes a "pyramid" of pawns
7. Defense vs the Ruy Lopez named after the capital of Germany
8. d4 Nf6 opening with a fianchettoed bishop on g7
9. Flank opening named after a 19th century Englishman
10. Nonsense opening made famous by Magnus and Naka
16. White gambit named after Welsh sea captain
18. Opening family that includes the O'Kelly and Kalashnikov variations
19. Anti-18-Across played at the club level
20. Flank opening that begins after 1. c4
21. Maybe the best beginner White opening from the country of panettone

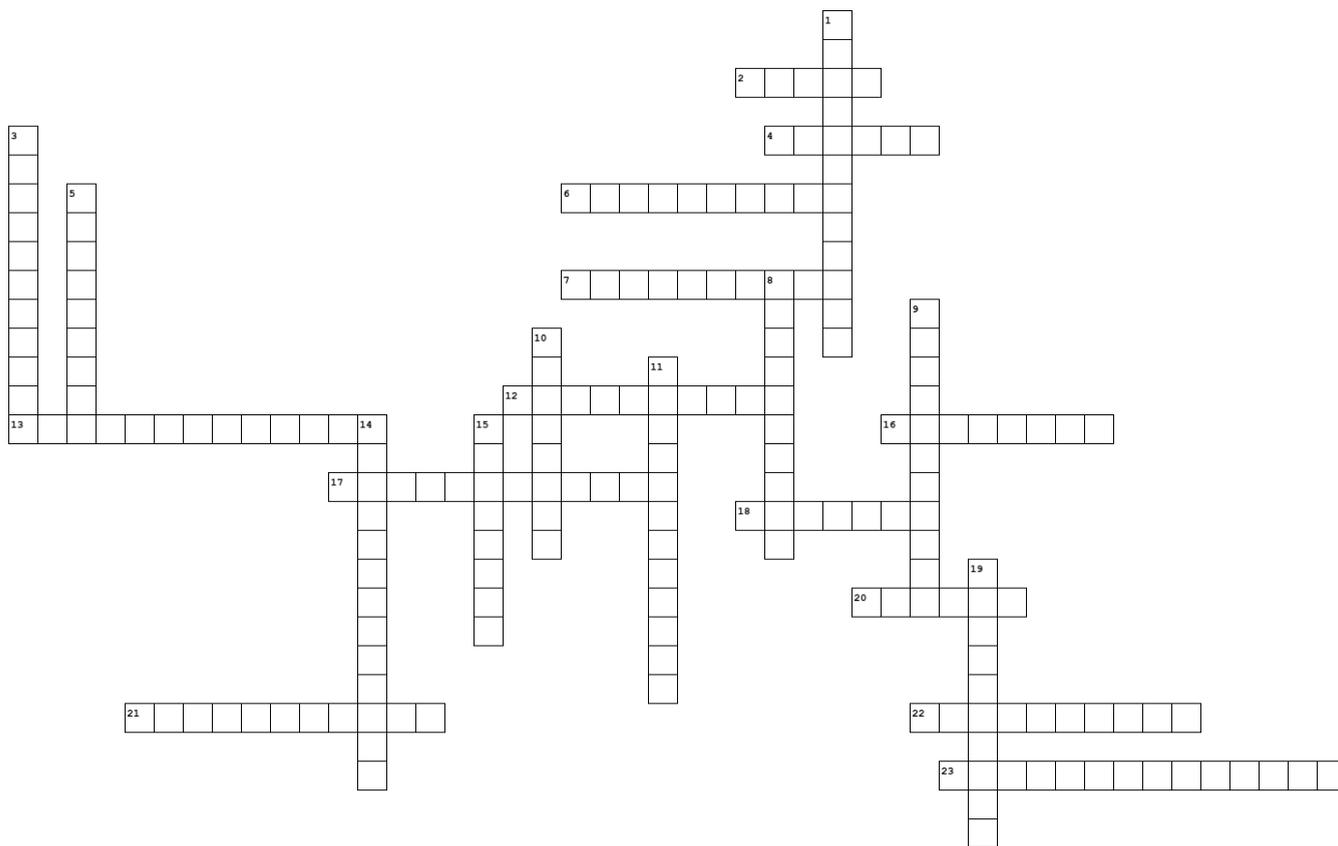
Down

1. Black gambit named after Hungarian-American grandmaster Pal
2. Nordic dweller
5. Slovak GM rhyming with a famous snowman

- 6. Flexible Animal Defense System
- 11. A popular opening vs 1. e4 that is currently often referred to by kids as the 'meta'
- 12. Black opening vs 1. d4, named after Holland's main language
- 13. Commonly called Modern

- 14. An adult beverage
- 15. Standard 1. d4 opening that has its own Netflix mini series
- 17. Aggressive White opening after 1. e4 from the city that first invented croissants
- 19. Fourth World Champion

Northwest Chess Legends Crossword



Across

- 2. PNW Sister Streamers
- 4. NW Chess Cartoon Pawn
- 6. FIDE Arbiter Scholastic State Man
- 7. Blazers Champ
- 12. OR Champion Raptor
- 13. NW Legend who's bested Fischer
- 16. WIM/FM WA Champ
- 17. Current WA State Champ
- 18. FM 12yo
- 20. NW Chess Interviewer
- 21. WCF President
- 22. WFM Airapetian

- 23. IM ID champ Luke

Down

- 1. NW Chess Kid Authors
- 3. IM Coach legend
- 5. Oregon Champ Matt
- 8. Local GM Coach
- 9. WA kid turned GM in 2024
- 10. OG WA GM Yasser
- 11. 18-time ID State Champ
- 14. Grand Knights Founder Sloan
- 15. WGM/FM OR Champ
- 19. NW Chess editor from ID

Well friends, that's what we have for you this month. We hope you enjoyed our fun and funny article, and we look forward to seeing you at a chess event soon!

Three Cheers, Fellow Future Master Chess Friends!

And Peshka says its goodbye with a bonus comic!



The Man Benji,
The Myth Sarang,
The Legend Vivaan

Washington Senior Championship



APRIL 16 + 18-19, 2026

ORLOV CHESS ACADEMY - SEATTLE

7212 WOODLAWN AVE NE, SEATTLE, WA 98115

Info/Entries: Josh Sinanan,
WCF President, 206-769-3757,
WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com

Registration: Online at
nwchess.com/OnlineRegistration.
Pay by Zelle (wa-chess),
SettleKing (Washington Chess
Federation), or write a check
made out to: WCF. Registration
deadline Wed. 4/15 @ 5pm.

Memberships: Current US
Chess and WCF membership
required, other states accepted.
Membership must be paid at
time of registration.

Format: A 5-Round, G/90; +30 Swiss in two
sections: Championship & Premier U1800.
Sections with < 6 players may be combined.

Eligibility: Open to Seniors age 50+ (or
reaching age 50 by August 1, 2026).

Rating: USCF rated. Championship section
also FIDE rated. April 2026 USCF Regular
rating will be used to determine pairings and
prizes.

Entry Fee: \$55 by 4/9, \$65 after. Players rated
>1600 may play up if desired. Free entry for
GMs, IMs, WGMs, or 2300+ USCF.

Rounds: Thu: 6:30pm. Sat/Sun: 10am, 3pm.

Byes: Two half-point byes available. If
interested, request before end of round 2.

Prize Fund: \$750 (b/o on 25 pd. entries)

Championship: 1st/2nd: \$150-\$100.

1st U2000/U1900: \$80.

Premier U1800: 1st/2nd: \$100-\$70.

1st U1700/U1500/U1300: \$60.

*Highest finishing Washington resident in
Championship receives the title of
Washington State Senior Champion, a seed
into the Invitational Section of the 2027
Washington State Championship, and a \$750
travel stipend from the WCF to attend the
2026 Irwin National Tournament of Senior
State Champions, held concurrently with the
U.S. Open in late July. If needed to break a tie
for 1st place, two G/90 playoff games will be
played later in the year.*