Getting the 1957 US Junior for San Francisco was a real coup for SF’s Chess for Youth Committee and the Chess Friends of Northern California! The tournament was ably directed by International Master and World Blindfold Champion George Koltanowski, with, as usual, more than a little help from his wife, Leah. Chess Friends of Northern California members, Florence and Bill Stevens, took care of the sandwiches for the entire week of the tournament, while Henry King created the beautiful signs which decorated the playing area. Since the tournament was played in the Spreckels-Russell Dairy Company’s auditorium (1717 Mission Street, San Francisco), they supplied the milk, chocolate milk and ice cream, which were consumed in large quantities!

George Koltanowski's personal copy of the program signed by Bobby Fischer.

The nine round Swiss tournament started on July 8th and ended on July 14th. Thirty-three players from eight states (California, Kansas, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Texas, Oregon and Utah) took part. Brooklyn's fourteen-year-old Bobby Fischer (USCF 2231), the 1956 US Junior Champion, was, of course, the one to beat. But California also had some real contenders in Long Beach's fifteen-and-a-half-year-old Master (USCF 2240) Larry Remlinger, San Francisco's seventeen-year-old Master (USCF 2222) Gilbert Ramirez and Los Angeles' Master (USCF 2233*) Stephen Sholomson. Larry Remlinger
had won the Long Beach Championship at age 12 and, until Fischer came along, had been considered the American prodigy; unfortunately, for whatever reason, Larry did not participate. Gilbert Ramirez had surprised everyone by winning the California Open Championship the previous fall, but astonishment knew no bounds when he won the California Closed State Championship shortly thereafter. Stephen Sholomson, the Los Angeles High School Champion, had just recently emerged as a provisionally-rated master.

The first round, which was held on July 8th, saw only one upset...Northern California's own Gil Ramirez gave up a draw to out-of-stater Richard Owen, putting him under considerable pressure for the rest of the tournament, due to Bobby’s continuous wins.
There were other activities besides the main tournament. George and Leah Koltanowski arranged for all the participants to be taken to see an evening showing of Pat Boone's newest picture, Bernardine, at the Fox Theater, the famous 4,651 seat movie palace on 1350 Market Street. On Wednesday, July 10th, there was a two part Rapid Transit (10-seconds a move) Championship. The first part consisted of three sectional round robin tournaments to determine who would play in the final championship round. Bobby won the finals and became the Junior Speed Champion. Chess Friends of Northern California's Chess in Action magazine wrote, "His skill in move-on-move play has been demonstrated against fast company at MICC (Mechanics' Institute Chess Club) on several occasions since. Old timers gasp!"

Unfortunately for Gil, the deciding game of the tournament came in round five.
Gil had to win this because of his first round draw against Richard Owen, but Bobby was just too aggressive about keeping the initiative. The annotations to the Ramirez-Fischer game were from the Chess in Action article from the July-August 1957 issue; they were probably written by the Tournament Director, George Koltanowski.

A first-hand account of the tournament from the San Francisco newsletter, the Precita Valley Chess Herald, said, "During the final round and last day, the Spreckels-Russell Dairy Co. auditorium became a little crowded. Everybody wanted to be in on the final results. First prize, of course, went to Bobby Fischer. He got a typewriter--and, he doesn't know how to type. Maybe he can trade it for a "Kingboard"! Guthrie McClain, editor of THE CALIFORNIA CHESS REPORTER, deserves a word of praise for his up-to-the-minute bulletins during the tourney, which appeared at the auditorium where the tourney was taking place and at a few chess clubs."
Bobby Fischer won the Milwaukee Journal Independent-Press Telegraph Trophy for ranking player under 15 years, the Herman Dittman Trophy and a Royal portable typewriter. Gil Ramirez won a RCA portable radio and a trophy. Stephen Sholomson won a handsome leather bag and a trophy. Ronald Thacker, Mike Bredoff, Leonard Hill, Arthur Wang and Ralph Clark all won books. Fred Weden won the Milwaukee Journal Independent-Press Telegraph Trophy for ranking player under 13 years. All the out-of-state entries, that did not win a prize, received a Kingboard as a souvenir of their San Francisco visit. Unfortunately, the definition of 'Kingboard' is lost to posterity!