

Variant Chess

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New Varieties of Hexagonal Chess

by G. P. Jelliss

Various schemes have been proposed for playing chess on boards on which the cells are hexagons instead of squares. A brief account can be found in *The Oxford Companion to Chess* 1984 where games by Siegmund Wellisch 1912, H.D.Baskerville 1929, Wladyslaw Gliniski 1949 and Anthony Patton 1975 are mentioned. To these should be added the variety by H. E. de Vasa described in Joseph Boyer's *Nouveaux Jeux d'Echecs Non Orthodoxes* 1954 (which also has the Baskerville and Gliniski games).

On any board whose cells are at regular intervals in straight lines we can define all the familiar chess and variant chess pieces. A WAZIR moves to one of the nearest cells and a ROOK is an extended wazir (i.e. it makes a move equivalent to a series of wazir moves in a straight line). A FERS moves to the nearest cells not commanded by a rook and its extension is a BISHOP. A KING combines wazir and fers, while a QUEEN combines rook and bishop. A KNIGHT moves to the nearest cells not commanded by a queen. These are the moves of the chess pieces accepted in most versions of hexagonal chess.

Instead of two bishops we need three to patrol all the hexagons. The three different families of cells on which the bishops move are usually distinguished by colouring or shading. In the illustrations I use white and lines sloping in two different directions.

If we seek to retain the orthodox back rank order of pieces as far as possible, then we must insert the third bishop in among the usual eight officers, and to ensure that the three bishops all run on different squares we find that there is only one place it can go, namely between king and queen:

R N B Q B K B N R

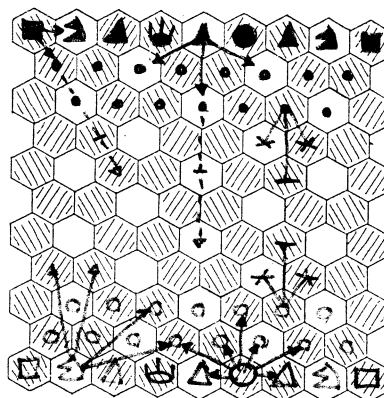
This base–line was first proposed by de Vasa.

If we require that all the pieces on our back row, other than knights, start with their lines of action blocked by pawns, as in orthodox chess, then we

find that we need 8 pawns on the second rank plus 5 on the third rank. I prefer to add 2 more so that there are 5 pawns on each colour, and the rooks are more securely blocked in. There is then one pawn in each file except the edge files. A FILE being a line of cells perpendicular to the base–line.

Now how should the pawns move? If they are to continue to block the files we must allow them only to move directly forward. This is a fers move. For their capture moves we have choices: the other two forward fers moves, or the two forward wazir moves, or both. The wazir moves seem best, else a pawn is confined to cells of one colour. This is also consistent with the pawns having the same types of moves as the king. These rules for pawn movement, though derived by direct analogy with orthodox pawns, differ from those in all the other variants mentioned above. [They all use wazir moves and captures, except de Vasa who gives the pawns fers type captures.]

Now, how far apart should the two sides, similarly arrayed, be placed? To allow the central pawns a move each before they confront each other, and for the knight to take at least 4 moves to reach the opposite back rank requires at least 11 ranks. (A RANK is a line of cells parallel to the base–line.) If we keep to a roughly rectangular shape of board the ranks contain alternately 9 and 8 cells, making a total of 94 cells. Thus our opening position is:



The pawns in this variant retain the properties of orthodox pawns of being able to guard each other in diagonal chains (a DIAGONAL here meaning not a bishop–move line but a line at an angle to the base–line) and if pawn A guards pawn B then a forward move by A results in a position where B guards A. This seems a good feature. For orthodox pawns this only happens when A is on the second rank and B on the third, but our hexagonal pawns can do it on any ranks. A pair of pawns can thus "steamroller" to promotion under mutual guard. Though some pawns are already advanced one rank, and have a long forward step, nevertheless I have found it advisable to retain the optional double step, and e.p. capture, since otherwise stone–walling spoils the game.

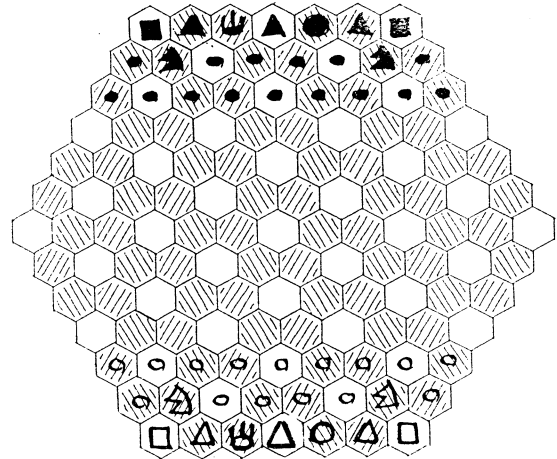
The second–rank pawns can only reach the opponent's back rank with the aid of a capture, either on the back rank or earlier in the play. And a capture by a third–rank pawn means it cannot advance to promote. This is an entirely new feature of the game. (Alternative rule: allow pawns to promote on reaching the last or next–to–last rank.)

To record games we number the ranks 1 to 11 and letter the files a to q. Cells on the a–file are thus a1, a3, a5, a7, a9, a11 and on the b–file b2, b4, b6, b8, b10; there are no cells a2, a4, b1, b3 etc.

The following is a trial game played with my father: White G.P.J. Black G.J. senior 1.j2–j4 j10–j6 (the optional double step) 2.b2–b4 Bm11–j10 3.No1–n4 i9–i7 4.g3–g7 n10–n6 5.Nc1–d4 No11–n8 6.h2–h4 d10–d8 7.f2–f6 Qg11–a9 8.Ra1–c1 e9–e5 9.f6xe7(e.p.) Be11xe7 10.Be1–h2 k9–k5 11.Nd4xBe7 d8xNe7 12.j4xk5 j6xk5 13.h4–h6 Nc11–d8 14.h6–h8 Ra11–c11 15.Rc1–e1 Nd8–e5 16.Nn4–m7 Rc11xg7 17.Bm1–g3 Rg7–f6 18.d2–d4 Ne5xi3 19.Bi1xi3 Rf6xi3† 20.Kk1–m1 Nn8–j6 21.e3–e5 Nj6–f4 22.Qg1–i1 Nf4xe1 23.Qi1xe1 Qa9–j6 24.h8xg9 f10xg9 25.Bg3–d2 Qj6–j2† 26.White resigns.

Although the above variety of hexagonal chess solves the problem of constructing a chess variant on a board of hexagons, with minimal alteration to the chess rules, it may be thought not to be sufficiently "hexagonal". Accordingly the next step is to adapt it for play on a hexagon–shaped board. If we insist on keeping the back rank of 9 men, the inevitable result is the 217–cell hexagon board as used in Patton's three–handed game. But this is far too large for a two–handed chess (and probably for three). So there must be some modification to the game array. A

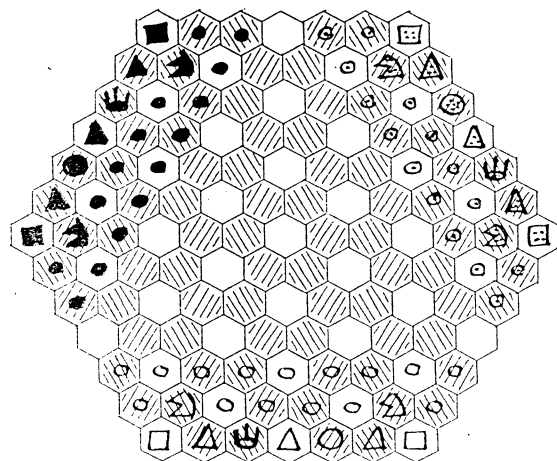
simple modification is to bring two of the pieces forward to the second rank. The knights seem the best choice. This enables us to fit the array onto a hexagon with 7 cells per side (total 127 cells):



The 15 pawns once again occur 5 on each colour. (Placing the Ns on the outer cells of the second rank would isolate the end pawns on the third rank from support by other pawns. Similarly putting the knights in the middle of the second rank isolates the centre pawn, so the illustrated array seems best.)

Since pawns may become stranded against the sloping edges on the opponent's side of the board it seems fair to allow them to promote upon reaching these edges as well as on the opponent's back row, but only to R, B or N, not Q.

The same board and game array can be used for a three–player version:



This position has the nice feature that the end pawns on the third rank are inhibited from moving since they would be immediately en–prise to two opposing pawns.

Values of Pieces in Hexagonal Chess

by Mirosław Miodoński

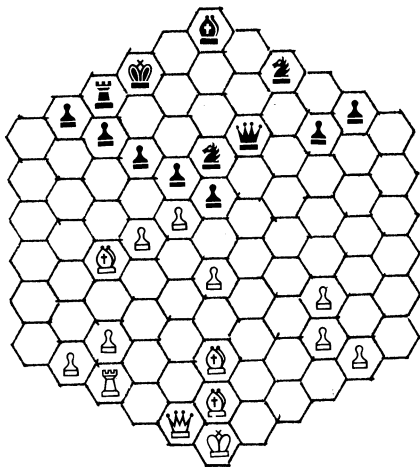
I have been interested in Hexagonal Chess (W. Gliński type) since 1981, when the game started to develop in Poland and many tournaments took place. The 91 cells and 6 directions for movement considerably increase the possibilities for combination play. A knowledge of the values of the pieces is very important in theory, and in practice, particularly for a beginning player. It is a valuable indication of how to play, though there are a lot of restrictions in practical games of course. Initially I used values given by Władysław Gliński in his book *First Theory of Hexagonal Chess*. But this question was discussed all the time and other systems soon appeared. The following table presents several alternative schemes, by Ryszard Sławiński, Ryszard Filutek and Jan Roczniak, all calculated by mathematical methods. The final line shows the results of my own method [similar to that described in "Mobility of Chessboardmen" by G.P.Jelliss *Chessics* #11 p.7 (1981)].

Author	King	Queen	Rook	Knight	Bishop	Pawn
W.Gliński	–	10	5	4	3	1
R. Sławiński	4	14	10	4.5	2.2	1
R. Filutek	3	11	7	3	4	1
J. Roczniak	2.34	6.66	4.46	2.30	2.60	1.00
M. Miodoński	10	35	23	8	12	2 – 7

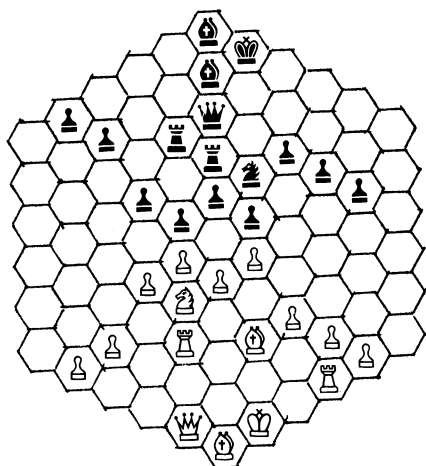
As you can see the relations among the pieces cause a lot of controversy. The biggest disagreement is between the relative values of Knight and Bishop. On the square board a nominal equality of these pieces is accepted; the details of any given position decides which of them is just better. On the hexagonal board the situation is different; generally the superiority of the knight is admitted here. My calculations apparently show that a bishop has a considerable advantage, but we have to remember that it covers only a third of the board. On the remaining part of the board the bishop is simply absent, and its value is zero there. A knight is intrinsically worth less than a bishop, but it operates everywhere, and that is its advantage.

My calculations mathematically estimate the power of each piece when alone on the empty board. This is an idealised situation, but it does provide a sound basis for further considerations. The more pieces there are on the board, the more do the comparative values of pieces become variable. Only in endings as a rule do the positions approximate to the ideal conditions. Many games demonstrate that an exchange of a knight for a bishop, as long as there are both queens on the board, i.e. in an opening or middle game, makes possible an efficacious attack. Here are some examples from my correspondence games.

Game 1. M. Miodoński v. D. Fatyga, Tournament KGK(M)16, 1984–85



1.d5 g6 2.g5 h5 3.Ndf4 Bh6 (if a knight is better than a bishop then Black is threatening to gain the advantage of the exchange, but White simply says: please do!) 4.gh5 B:f4 5.Nf4 (White gains a tempo) 5....gh5 6.N:h5! (and immediately offers to exchange the second knight for an attack) 6....Ndf8 (now, this exchange is too risky, however Black will carry it out after a few moves) 7.Rg3+ Kf10 8.Bc4+ Kd9 9.Ng8! Qe9 10.e6 R:g8?! 11.R:g8 Bi3+ 12.hi3 Q:g8+ 13.Kf1 (see diagram 1). White has three bishops and an advantage on light and medium cells, which will soon be felt; all the White pieces have free space. 13....k6 14.Rg4 Qk5+ 15.Bi4 Ql5 16.Qg1! Rd8 17.ef7 ef7 18.d6 b6 19.Bb7! Re9 20.Bh8 Qh5? 21.Qb7+ and Black resigns; he is checkmated on the following move; apart from a mistake on the 20th move, Black's position is very difficult to defend.

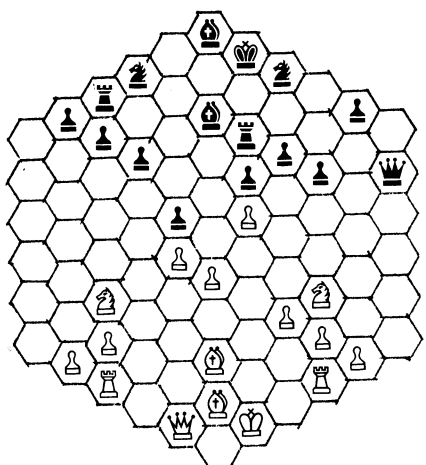


Game 2. Jarosław Lewandowski v. M. Miodoński, IIIrd Championship of Poland, 1984

The position after White's 12th move was as shown (diagram 2). It is true that Black has developed a little better. However, the position does not seem dangerous, does it? 12...Ni4! (suddenly it proves to be almost lost for White! Black's attack is very strong.) 13.k3?! (maybe 13.k2 was better, but would not have saved) 13...N:g3! 14.R:g3 Qk1+ 15.Rh1 Q:k3 16.Qf2 h5! 17.h4 Ql4 18.Rf4 Bk3 19.Rg2 Ql1+ 20.Ke1 hg5 21.hg5 Rg10 22.Nh3 Qk1 23.b2 Bk2! 24.Rk4 R:k4 25.N:k4 Bi4 26.Rg4 Qb1+! and Black won soon in the ending.

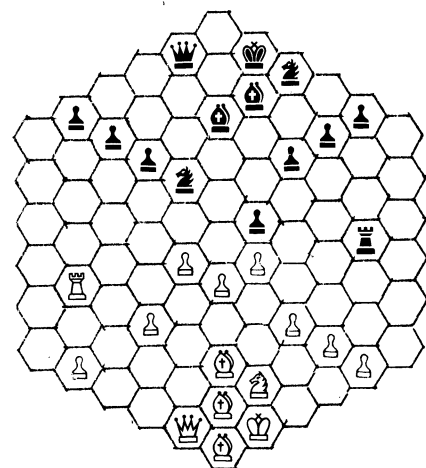
Game 3. M. Miodoński v. A. S. Biezobrazow, Tournament K–2–85 organised in USSR.

The position is given after White's 8th move (diagram 3). 8...B:c3?! (Black without proper consideration accepts the offered exchange of the medium bishop for a knight) 9.Q:c3 Rf9? (a mistake again; it was necessary to move the King; a crushing attack follows.) 10.Rb4! Ke10 11.B:b7 Rff8 12.R:f8 R:f8 13.Q:c7 Ne7 14.Rg4 Rc8 15.Bc6+! dc6 16.Q:e7+ Be9 17.Bb6 Rd9 18.Q:c6+ and Black resigns.



Game 4. A. S. Biezobrazow v. M. Miodoński, Tournament K–2–85 (USSR).

This last example, on the other hand, illustrates bilaterally correct play and two exchanges of knight for bishop enacted at the proper moments. Black Rook's Opening. 1. g5 g6 2.Nhf4 e6 3.e5 Rk4 4.Ng2 Rb4 5.c4 R:c4 6.R:c4 B:c4 7.N:g6! fg6 8.R:c4 Ne7 9.R:e6 Bg9 10.Rb3 (diagram 4). White has gained two pawns and wants to fortify his position, however Black has the initiative) 10...Bd4 11.B:d4 N:d4 12.k2 Rc1! (two Black pieces impudently break into the enemy's camp. It seems very risky, but what can White do?) 13.Qe4 N:b1 14.d5 Bh8 15.Qd3 Ne3+! 16.Kf2 R:f1+ 17.K:e3 Rh1 18.Kf2 Ri1 19.i3 Qg9 20.e6 d6 (and a tie was agreed, though the position was still tense).



W. Gliński wrote in his book *First theory...* in 1973: "In the developing phase of the game the comparative values of the knight and bishop ... are also usually dependent on the position of the moment and on the player's personal preference." In my opinion it is always worth considering an exchange of knight for bishop at the beginning of a game. As a rule such an exchange makes a game more animated and leads to dynamic positions which are difficult to evaluate. It is true that a knight is slightly better in endgame positions than a bishop, but this does not decide who wins; the exchange must be carefully thought over, taking into consideration the position on the board.

The pawns must be treated entirely differently. They are special pieces. They move only forward one cell on the files and their capture power is 2, except on files a and l. The power of a pawn should be regarded as increasing as it approaches the promotion square, thus pawn b1 is valued at 2, pawn b4 is 5, pawn b6 is 7, pawn b7 promotes. [Mr Miodoński, together with co-author Jan Rocznik, is looking for a publisher for a book on Hexagonal Chess.]

The Courier Game

by FIDE Master Paul V. Byway

Many enlarged varieties of chess are described in H.J.R.Murray's *History of Chess*, and what they have in common is a very short life. There is however a startling exception – the Courier game, which is known to have been played for about six hundred years: it should therefore be ranked alongside the handful of successful chess variants, such as Shatranj and Shogi. The game was already in existence at the beginning of the thirteenth century, for it is mentioned in a German poem dated to 1202AD. One writer of the early fourteenth century described the introduction of the couriers as an improvement of chess, and another reported in 1337 that he had seen the game being played at Constance but not elsewhere. All that we know of the method of play was given by Gustavus Selenus in his *Das Schach – oder König–spiel* of 1616.

The game was played on a board of 12x8 squares, and a well known painting of Courier in progress (Lucas von Leyden, Berlin, 1520AD) indicates that a1 was black: Murray on the other hand shows a1 as white with the white king standing on the left, a reflection of the modern arrangement. The layout of the white men is shown below for both Mediaeval chess and Courier:

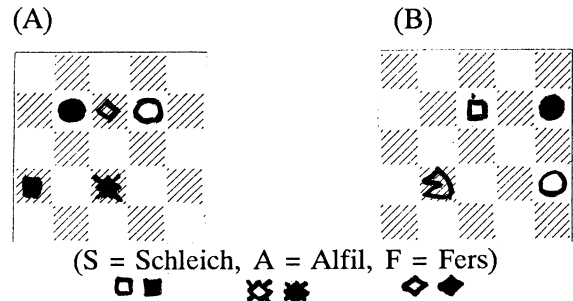
Chess: R N A F K A N R
 Courier: R N A C S F K M C A N R

The alfil or mediaeval bishop (A) leaps diagonally over one square to the square beyond and the fers or mediaeval queen (F) moves one square diagonally only. The rook (R) and knight (N) remain unchanged, but the player disposes of four new pieces: two couriers (C) with the modern bishop's move, a schleich (sneak, S) which moves one square orthogonally [known in fairy chess as a wazir (Editor)], and a mann (sage, M) which moves like the king (K) but is non-royal. Castling is not permitted and the rules of pawn promotion are unknown: the following opening moves are obligatory: 1.a4 a5 2.l4 l5 3.f4 f5 4.Ff3 Ff6. [These F–moves being an opening privilege only.]

The popularity of Courier was probably due to an increase in fire–power: the mann was a new "sufficient mating force" worth 3–4 pawns and the schleich though even slower than the fers was more useful at close quarters; the value of two modern bishops is well known. These augmented forces offered many more ways of forcing checkmate in

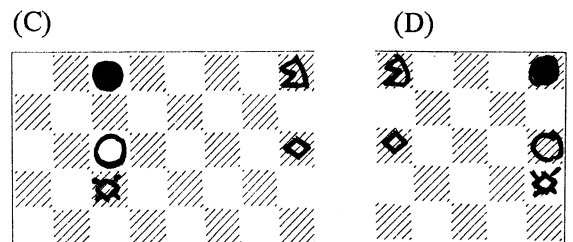
the endgame than were available to the player of Mediaeval chess. The endgame ideas below (all composed 22 iv 1992) show some of them.

(A) interested me because all the pieces are from one family of semi–pieces [see Correspondence page in this issue]: the possibility of (B) was pointed out by John Beasley.



(A) Black to play loses: 1...Ka8 2.Sa6 Kb7 Sa7‡
 White to play wins: 1.Ae3 (or a3, e7) Ka8/i 2.Sa6 Kb7 3.Sb6† Ka8/ii 4.Kd6 Ka7 5.Kc6 Ka8 6.Kd7 Ka7 7.Ac5† Ka8 8.Sa6 Kb7 9.Sa7‡ (a pure mate).
 /i 1...Ka7 2.Kc6 Ka8 3.Sb5 Ka7 4.Sb6 Ka8 5.Kd7 Ka7 6.Ac5† Ka8 7.Sa6 Kb7 8.Sa7‡.
 /ii 3...Ka7 4.Ac5† Ka8 5.Sa6 Kb7 6.Sa7‡.

(B) 1.Kk5 Kl8 (best) 2.Kk6 Kk8 3.Kl6 Kl8 4.Nk6† Kk8 5.Sj8 (or k7)‡



(C) Mating the caged king. 1.Sg8 Kd8 2.Sf8 Kc8 3.Se8 Kb4 4.Sd8 Ka8 5.Fg7 Kb8 6.Ff6 Ka8 7.Fe7 Kb8 8.Sd7 Kc8(or a8) 9.Sc7† Kb8 10.Sb7† Kc8(or a8) 11.Sb6 Kb8 12.Kd7 Ka8 13.Fd6 Kb8 14.Fc7† Ka8 15.Sa6 Kb7 16.Sa7‡

(D) The other alfil. 1.Sg8 Ki8 2.Fg7 Kj8 3.Sh8 Kk8 4.Si8 Kl8 5.Fh6 Kk8 6.Fi7 Kl8 7.Kk6 Kk8 8.Fj6 Kl8 9.Fk7† Kk8 10.Sj8‡

The courier game later faded away, together with mediaeval chess, in competition with the modern variety and became associated particularly with the village of Ströbeck in the Hartz Mountains. Frederick William of Brandenburg donated a board and set to the village in 1651, and Frederick the Great of Prussia visited and played in 1744, but visitors in 1825 and 1831 reported that the game was extinct. Apparently there are articles on the courier game in *Schachzeitung*: 1847, 214; 1853, 7; 1861, 223; 1883, 330; and in *BCM*: 1902, 421.

Modern Courier Chess

by FIDE Master Paul V. Byway

This is the result of an attempt to reform the courier game by emulating the development of modern chess: I have enhanced the powers of some of the weaker pieces and reorganised the central section which, in the original, doesn't leave a very aesthetic impression. The layout from white's side is as follows:

R N C B F Q K F B C N R

Firstly the piece that moves like a modern bishop is called a bishop, and the name courier is given to an alternative generalisation of the alfil – a leaper in eight directions – a monochrome knight – Cc3 can leap to a1, a3, a5, c5, e5, e3, e1, c1 [i.e. alfil + dabbaba]. The mann is transformed into a modern queen and stands centrally, next to the king, while the schleich is replaced by a second fers. An unmoved fers has the option of a courier's leap into a vacant square and pawns have the familiar double move option. Castling is not defined but the unmoved king may take a double step to a vacant square, provided that it can be expressed as two legal single moves and he is not in check: moving a royal piece into check is, of course, not allowed.

It was intended that Modern Courier Chess would play much like modern chess but with added depth of strategy and tactics: perhaps fortunately, it proves to be subtly different. The king will usually be found somewhere near the centre, with a mobile screen of ferses providing the most economical defence, sometimes supported by couriers. In consequence the game takes on the style of Chinese chess, but is more heavily orchestrated, with a strong diagonal element in the play. Another point is that the number of monochrome pieces, vis-a-vis chess, is increased from 25% to 50%: as a result there are often strong middlegame attacks on squares of one colour.

Finally, in chess scholar's mate is essentially a white-square attack on the weak point in the black position, f7: three pieces can reach f7 in five moves. In MCC the weak point is j7, and four pieces can reach it in six moves. At present this attack is a heavy point-scorer: Game 1 is a good example. As for fool's mate there are quite a few versions of the same mate in three moves whereas in chess we have four versions in two moves: this is probably a fair reflection of the difference in complexity and timescale that exists between Chess and MCC.

There now follows a selection of illustrative games.

Game 1

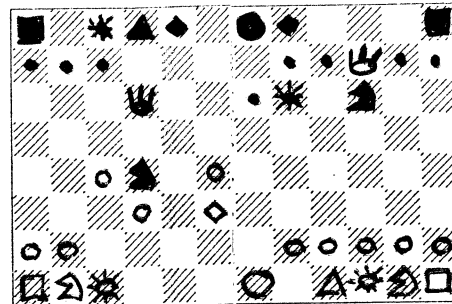
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1.e4 a5 2.Nj3 h6 3.g3 e5 (3...Bxe4 is answered by 4.Bxj7 or Qj5†) 4.Bxj7 Bxe4 5.Bi6† Bh7 6.Bxh7† Kxh7 7.Nk5 Nj6 8.Qj5† Kg6 (8...Ki8 must be better) 9.Ch3 (threatening mate in one) f6 (better 9...f5) 10.Qj3† Kh7 (10...Kg5 11.Ce3† Kg4 12.f3‡) 11.Cf5† Kg8 (11...Ki8 12.Qj6† Nh7 13.Qxh7‡) 12.Qj5† Resigns (11...Nh7 12.Qxh7‡). (1–0).

Game 2

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1.g3 e5 2.e4 Nj6 3.f4 exf4 4.gxf4 f5 5.d3 g6 6.Ff3 (courier leap) Ch6 7.Fg3 (courier leap) fxe4 8.Fxe4 (avoiding slight material loss) 8...d5? 9.Fxd5 Qc5† 10.Qf2 Qxd5 11.Bf3 Qb5 (in order to protect the b-pawn) 12.c4 (12.Nc3 was better; 12...Qxb2? 13.Rb1 wins the Queen) 12...Qd7 (threatens both d3 and i2) 13.Qe2 Nc6 14.Bxj7 Nd4 15.Qd1 Bxj7 16.Qxj7

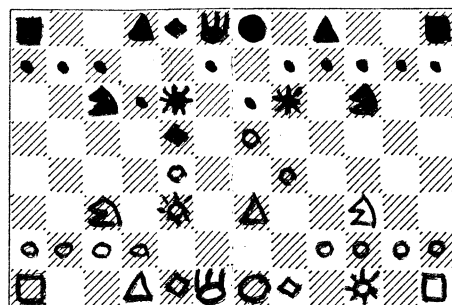


16...Nh5 (cutting off the Queen) 17.Qxk7 Nf3† 18.Kf2 Qxd3 19.Nc3 Cxf4† 20.Fxf4? Bh4† 21.Resigns. (0–1).

Game 3

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1.e4 e5 2.Ce3 Nc6 3.Nj3 Ce6 4.h4 d6 5.Nc3 Nj6 6.g4 g6 7.f4 exf4 8.Bxf4 Ch6 9.Bg3 Ff6 10.g5 Fe5 (Black overlooked that g5 is protected by Ce3)



11.Nd5 (initiating a tactical sequence) 11...Cxe4 12.Cxe5 dxe5 13.gxh6 Qxh6 14.Nf6† (the point) Bxf6 15.Qxf6 Nh5 (the answer) 16.Qf2 Nxg3 17.Qxg3 j6 (with two pawns for a fers, Black has a small material advantage) 18.Ff3 Ce6 19.Fg4 Qf4 20.Qb3 Bk6 21.Ch3 Cxg4 22.Qxb7?? Qg3† 23. Resigns (since 23.Kh1 Qg2† 24.Ki1 Qxi2‡) (0–1).

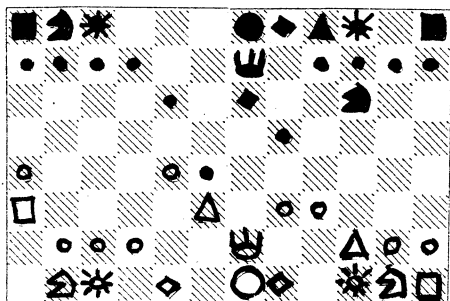
My opponent in the next two games has an uncompromising attacking style: his opening is totally foreign to my concept of Modern Courier Chess opening theory, but has not been refuted. I call it the "central cannon opening".

Game 4

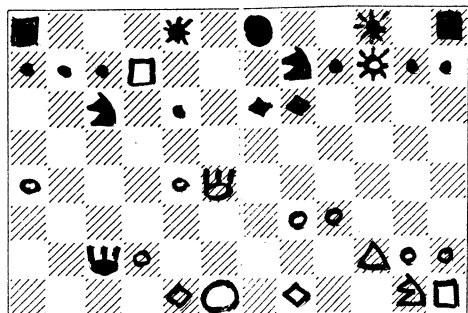
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 1.f4 f5 2.a4 c5 3.Ra3 Cc6 4.g4 fxg4 5.Rg3 h5 6.i4 Ch6 7.e3 g5 8.ixh5 gxf4 9.Rxg4† Fg7 10.Qj5† i6 11.hxi6 Ni7 12.Qi5 Ng6 13.Qxk7 Rj8 14.Rxg6 Bxg6 15.i7 Ri8 16.Qxj7 Fe6 (courier leap) 17.Ch3 Ke8 (two-move privilege) 18.Nj3 i6 19.Ni5 Bxk2 (suicidal) 20.Rk1 Bi4 21.Rk8 Resigns. (1-0).

Game 5

R.Talbot v. P.V.Byway, 15 i 1992
 1.f4 f5 2.a4 e6 3.Ra3 Nj6 4.g4 fxg4 5.h3 g5 6.e4 gx4 7.Bxg4 h5 8.Bf3 (the rook has been kept off the g-file: Black now embarks on a faulty combination, overlooking an intermediate check) 8...Bxj2? 9.Qg2† Fg6 10.Bxj2 Qj4† 11.i3 Qg7



12.Cj3 (White invites the destruction of his Q-side, confident in the strength of his central attack) 12...Qxb2 13.Qg5 Nc6 14.Cxh5 Qxc1 15.Kf1 Qxb1 16.Rd3 Qxc2 17.Rxd7 Ce8 18.Cxj7 Fh6 (courier leap) 19.Bi6† Bh7 20.Bxh7† Nxh7 21.Qxf4



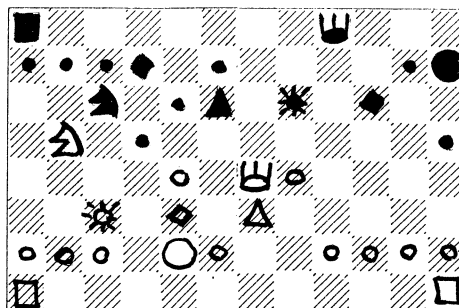
(prevents the Black queen from returning to the scene of battle) 21...Ni5 22.Ni2 Cj6 23.Ff3 Nxj7 24.Qk4† Kh8 25.Rg1 Ni5 26.Qf4 (realising that Qxk7 gets nowhere) 26...Nxh3 27.Qf6† Ki8 28.Bi4 Nxg1 29.Bxj6 Nx2 30.Qf8† Cg8 (I couldn't resist the opportunity to play this move: the Black king now finds safety) 31.Qxa8 Kj7 32.Bf2 Ne5 33.Re7

Qd3† 34.Resigns (34.Kg2 Qxf3† 35.Kh2 Ng4† soon mates). (0-1).

Finally a game in which the players "slug it out" to the end.

Game 6

P.V.Byway v. R.Talbot, 10 xii 1991
 1.e4 (I believe this is the best opening move) 1...d6 2.Nj3 i5 3.h4 Nj6 4.g3 h6 5.Nc3 Cc6 6.d3 e6 7.Ch3 Rk8 8.Cj5 (at this point I decided to break through on the white squares, whatever the cost) 8...i6 9.Cxj7 Bxj7 10.Nk5 Ki7 (two-move privilege) 11.Nxj7 Kxj7 12.Fh3 g5 13.Fi4 h5 14.Fxh5 Nxh5 15.Bxh5 ixh5 16.Qj5† (down to my last white-square piece, a pawn or two will at least restore the material balance) 16...Fj6 (it wasn't necessary to give away a rook: 16...Cj6 was better) 17.Qxh5† Kk6 18.Qxk8 gxh4 19.Ke2 (two-move privilege again: a poor move, the king was safer on its original square) 19...Cxe4†!? 20.dxe4 Nc6 21.Fe3 Qi8 (the weakness of c2 now shows itself) 22.Qg4 d5 23.gxh4 Kl7 24.Nb5 Ch6 25.Bg3 Bf6 26.Cc3 Fd7 (perhaps 26...d4 or 26...Rd8 was better)



27.Rad1 Rg8 28.Qh3† k6 29.exd5 Qxc2† 30.Rd2 Qa4 31.Na3 Qa6† 32.Ke1 Nb4 33.Qf1 Qb6 34.Nc4 Qa6 35.a3 Nxd5 36.Ne5 b5 37.Fd4 Cf4 38.Bxf4 Nxf4 39.Nxd7 Ng2† 40.Kd1 Qa4† 41.Kc1 Bxd4 42.Nc5 (Black must exchange queens or give up material) 42...Bxc5 43.Cxc5 Rg4 (throwing in his last reserves) 44.Rc2 Nxh4 45.Rg1 (the tide turns) 45...Rd4 46.Rg7† Fk7 47.Rxf7 b4 48.Rxc7 Nf3 49.Rxa7 Qb3 50.axb4 Re4 51.Ce3 Qxb4 52.Rcc7 Qd2† 53.Kb1 Rb4 54.Rxk7† Kl8 55.Ri7†Kk8 56.Qxk6† Resigns. (1-0).

It might be thought that MCC would be longer and slower than Chess: experience so far (we're all beginners!) doesn't show this, although it will probably be so at World Championship level in a couple of hundred years. All games so far have been decisive, and the play attacking throughout.

If any readers are interested enough to want to play MCC, I'd be happy to undertake some postal games. [Please write to: Paul Byway, 188 Lampits, Hoddesdon, Herts EN11 8DU.]

Modern Courier Chess Endgames

by FIDE Master Paul V.Byway

I have added a selection of endgame studies in MCC. Some of them, particularly (10) & (12) are, I suppose, not strictly speaking (artistic) studies but (didactic) finales; important for covering those areas of endgame theory extra to Chess.

(1) ○Kc7, Pf6, Pf4 ●Kc4, Ff8. Win.

After As–Suli (#1 in *History of Chess*).

1.Kd8/i Kd5 2.Kd7/ii Ke4 3.Ke8 Kf5 4.Kf7/iii Kf4 5.Kf8 wins.

/i 1.Kd7 Kd5 2.f5 (2.Ke8 Ke6 3.Kf8 Kf6=) Ke5 3.f7 Kf5= or 1.Kd6 Kd4 2.Ke6 Ke4 3.f5 Kf4 4.f7 Kg5 5.f6 Kg6= or 1.Kc8 Kc5 2.Kd8 Kd6 (or 2.Kd7 Kd5= or 2.Kc7 Kc4 rpt)

/ii 2.Ke8 Ke6 3.f7 Fg7= /iii 4.Kf8 Kf6=

(2) ○Kc6, Ng5, Ck5 ●Kc8, Pk6. Win.

(After CB223/BC183 *HoC* p.672)

1.Nf7 Kb8 2.Nd6 Ka7/i 3.Kb5 Ka8/ii 4.Ka6 Kb8 5.Kb6 Ka8 6.Kc7 Ka7 7.Nb7 Ka6/iii 8.Kc6 Ka7 9.Nc5 Ka8/iv 10.Kd7 Kb8/v 11/Kd8 Ka8/vi 12.Kc8 Ka7 13.Kc7 Ka8 14.Na6 Ka7 15.Nb8 Ka8 16.Ci5 k5 17.Cc5 k4 18.Ce5 k3 19.Cc5 k2 20.Nd7 k1↑Q 21.Nb6‡.

/i 2...Ka8 @ 6. /ii 3...Kb8 @ 5. /iii 7...Ka8 8.Nc5 Ka7 9.Kc6 Ka8 @ 10. /iv 9...Kb8 10.Kd7 Ka8 (10...Ka7 @ 13.) @ 12. /v 10...Ka7 @ 13. /vi 11...Ka7 @ 13.

The same process works with blockaded pawn on a4, c4, e4, g4, i6, k6. There is a second corner where this mate can be prepared, e.g. ○Kj3, Ni7, Ce3 ●Kl3, Pe4. White wins when the pawn is blockaded on a6, c6, e4, g4, i6, k6. Against the Pk6 the White knight must go to h2 rather than l2.

(3) ○Kc6, Ng5, Ck7 ●Kc8, Pg7. Win.

(After unsound CB224 *HoC* p.672)

1.Nf7 g6/i 2.Ci5 g5 3.Ci3 g4 4.Cg3 Kb8 5.Nd6 etc as in #2. /i 1...g5 2.Ci5 g4 3.Cg3 Kb8 4.Nd6 etc.

(4) ○Kh1, Pb5, Cc7 ●Kc2, Pf3. Win.

(After Kubbel & Reti)

1.Kg1/i Kd3 2.Kf1/ii Kc4 3.b6 Kb5 4.b7 Ka6 5.b8↑Q wins. /i 1.b6 Kd3 2.b7/iii f2 3.b8↑Q f1↑Q‡ (=) /ii 2.Kf2 Kc4 3.b6 Kb5 4.b7 Ka6= /iii 2.Kg1 Ke2 3.b7 f2‡ (=)

(5) ○Kb8, Pf6 ●Kh6, Cc2, Pb4. Draw.

1.Kc7 Kg6/i 2.Kd6 Kf6 (or f7)/ii 3.Kc5=

/i 1...g3 2.Kd6 Kg6 3.Ke7 b2 4.f7 b1↑Q 5.f8↑Q

Qb4‡ 6.Ke8 Qb8‡ 7.Ke7 Qc7‡ 8.Ke8 Cc4 9.Qd6‡ (=) /ii 2...g3 3.Ke7 transposes to /i.

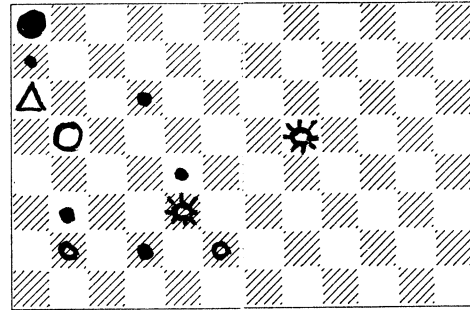
(5a) C→c4, ○ to play, ● wins. In /i after 5...Qb4‡ 6.Ke8 we have 6...Ce6‡ wins.

(5b) Reverse colours, move bP back one square then ○ win, beginning 1.b5.

(6) ○Kb5, Ba6, Ce3, Ch5, Pb2, Pf2

●Ka8, Pa7, Pb3, Pd2, Pd6, Pe4

Win. (After Kubbel *TGW* #23).



1.Kc6 d1↑Q 2.Kc7 Qd5 3.Cc3 e3 4.f3 e2 5.Cf5 e1↑Q 6.Cd5 Qe7(or Qk7)‡ 7.Cd7 wins

(7) ○Kd6, Fc6, Rl1 ●Ka8, Rk2. Win.

1.Kc7/i Ra2/ii 2.Kb6 Rb2‡ 3.Fb5 Kb8 4.Rl8‡

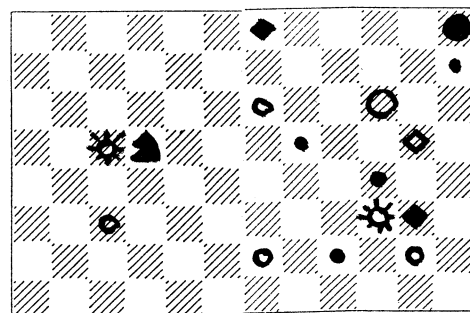
/i 1.Ra1‡ Kb8 2.Rb1‡ Ka8 3.Kc7 Ra7=.

/ii 1...Rk7‡ 2.Fd7 Ka7 3.Ra1‡.

(8) ○Kj6, Cc5, Cj3, Fk5, Pc3, Pg2, Pg6, Pk2

●Kl8, Nd5, Fg8, Fk3, Ph5, Pi2, Pj4, Pl7

White to play and win.



1.Kj7/i i1↑Q/ii 2.Fj6/iii Qe1/iv 3.Ce5 Qf2/v 4.g3 Qa7‡ 5.g7 wins.

/i 1.Fl6 Kk8. /ii 1...l6(or l5) 2.Fl6 (or Fj6) Kl7 3.Fk7 i1↑Q 4.Cj5(or Cl5)‡. /iii 2.Fl6 Qi5 3.Ce5 Nf4 4.Cg5 Ng6 5.Ci5 Ni5‡ 6.Kj8 Nh7‡ draws.

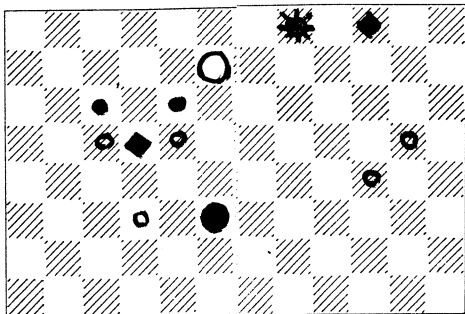
/iv 2...Qg3 3.Ce5 Qj6 4.Kj6 Nf4 5.g7 Ng2 6.Ki7 Nf4 (6...Ni1 7.Kh8) 7.Kh8 Ff7 8.c4 Nd3 9.Ce7 with the idea 10.Ch5 wins. /v 3...l6(or l5) 4.g3 Qf1(or Ph4) 5.Fk7‡ Kl7 6.Cl5‡; or 3...Qh4 4.g3. This is a version of (6): Principles governing development of (8) from (6): 1. To make it more of an MCC and not a Chess study. 2. To spread the play to make full use of the board. 3. To improve the material

balance. 4. To make the position more natural. In some of Kubbel's studies (the original is one) the bones of the construction show through, in the form of blocking pawn pairs to cut down the play.

(9) ○Kf7, Pc5, Pd3, Pe5, Pj4, Pk5

●Kf3, Ch8, Fd5, Fj8, Pc6, Pe6

White to play and win.



1.Kg7/i Cj6/ii 2.Kxj6/iii Kg4/iv 3.Kh8/v Kh5/vi 4.Kh7/vii Ki4 5.Ki8/viii Kj5/ix 6.Kj7/x Kj4 7.Kj8. /i 1.j5 Fj7 2.Kg7 Fj6 3.k6 Cj8 ● win, or 1.Kg6 Kg4 2.Kh7 Kh5 3.Kh8 Ki6 4.Ki8 Fk7 5.k6 Kj6 or 1.Kg8 Ch6 2.j5 Fk7 3.Kh7 Cj4 4.Ki6 Fl6 or 1.k6 Cj6. /ii 1...Kg4 2.Kh8 Kh5 3.Ki8 Fk7 4.Kj7 wins, or 1...Fj7 2.Kh7 Ch6 3.Ki7 Cj4 4.k6, or 1...Ch6 2.Kh6 Kg4 3.j5 Kh4 4.j6 Ki4 5.k6 Kj5 6.k7, or 1...Kf4 2.Kh8 Ke5 3.Ki8 Fk7 4.Kj7 Kd4 5.Kk7 Kd3 6.j5 e5 7.j6 e4 8.j7 e3 9.j8↑Q e2 10.Qc1. /iii 2.j5 Fk7 3.Kh7 Cj4 4.Ki6 Fl6 5.j6 Fk5 6.j7 Cl6 wins for ●. /iv 2...Kf4 3.Kh7 Ke5 4.Ki8 Kd4 5.Kj8 Kd3 6.Ki8 e5 7.j7 e4 8.j8↑Q e3 9.Qf4 wins. /v 3.Kh7 Kh5 4.Ki8 Ki6 5.j7 Fk7 (or 5.Kj8 Kj6) draws at least. /vi 3...Kh4 4.Ki8 Ki4 5.Kj8 wins. /vii 4.Ki8 Ki6 5.j7 Fk7 = or 5.Kj8 Kj6 =. /viii 5.Ki6 Kj4 6.Kj7 Kj5 =. /ix 5...Kj4 6.Kj8 wins. /x 6.Kj8 Kj6 =.

The Black structural element on the Q–side is invulnerable and he threatens to capture White pawns there and win. The ○K's counterattack takes advantage of the poorly placed Black pieces holding up the White connected passed pawns. (C + concordant F is worth a little more than a B in general).

Some terminology: A mutually defending group of pawns and fers: **alfferzada** e.g. Pb2, Fc3, possibly with Pd4, or Pd2. A mutually defending group of pawns and courier: **alffilada** e.g. Pb2, Pc3 with Cd4 or Cb4. Two pieces are **concordant** if restricted to squares of the same colour, and **discordant** if on opposite colours. The line–operating pieces, B, R, Q are **major pieces** while the point–operating pieces, F, C, N are **minor**.

A conjecture: K + 3 minor pieces v. K is a general win. Considering only combinations of pieces originally present there are 8 cases: NNF,

NNC, CCN, CCF, FFN, FFC, NCFd, NCFc, where in NCF the F may be discordant or concordant with the C. An exception is CCF which is a draw if the ●K can reach a corner accessible to none of them. In fact Black can draw against four pieces and pawn, e.g. ○Kd5, Ca5, Cb5, Fc7, Bd4, Pa7 ●Ka8 !

(10) ○Kc6, Cc5, Ne4, Fg5 ●Kc8. Win.

1.Ff6 Kd8 2.Fe7† Kc8/i 3.Nd6† Kb8 4.Fd8 Ka8 5.Nc4 Kb8 6.Fc7† Ka8/ii 7.Nb6‡ (a pure mate, each W piece covering one square). /i 2...Ke8 3.Nd6‡ /ii 6...Kc8 7.Nd6(or Nb6)‡.

(11) ○Kg7, Qc7 ●Ke8, Cd8, Nd6, Cc4. Draw.

Black cannot be stalemated: he plays Cc4↔e4.

(12) ○Kc3, Nd2, Cd5, Fc7 ●Ka8. Win.

The Black king is already restricted to the a–file: it can be mated by N + C at l1 and by N + F at l8, a1. Mate cannot be forced at a8, even with 3 pieces, but the ●K can be driven down the short side and mated at a1. Note that the courier, while playing a vital role, never moves. 1.Nc4 Ka7 2.Nb6 Ka6 3.Nc8 Ka5 4.Fb6† Ka6/i 5.Fa7 Ka5 6.Nd6 Ka6/ii 7.Nb5 Ka5 8.Nc7 Ka4 9.Fb6 Ka3 10.Na6 Ka2/iii 11.Nc5 Kb1 12.Nd3 Ka2 13.Fa5 Ka3 14.Fb4† Ka2/iv 15.Kc2 Ka1 16.Kb3 Kb1 17.Fc3 Ka1 18.Nf4 Kb1 19.Ne2 Ka1 20.Fb2† Kb1 21.Nc3‡. /i 4...Ka4 5.Nd6 Ka3 6.Nb7 Ka2 7.Nc5 Kb1 8.Nd3 Ka2 9.Fa5 Kb1 10.Fb4 Ka2 @ 15. /ii 6...Ka4 7.Fb6 Ka3 8.Nb7 see note /i. /iii 10...Ka4 11.Nc5† Ka3 12.Fa5 etc. /iv 14...Ka4 15.Nb2‡.

A Magic 8x12 Rectangle by G.P.Jelliss

The following magic rectangle adds to 582 in the ranks and 388 in the files. It is an extension of the 8x8 Beverley tour of 1848, by a process I call the BRAID METHOD, which is based on extending the "braid" formed by four knight moves within a series of 2x4 areas. It can be used to extend a number of 8x8 magic tours, which contain the braid feature, to larger boards 4m x 4n. The earliest example of such an expanded tour was a 16x16 tour given by H.Wihnyk in *Schachzeitung* (x 1885 p.202).

1	46	71	76	5	44	67	78	7	42	65	80
72	75	2	45	68	77	6	43	66	79	8	41
47	70	73	4	37	12	83	62	39	10	81	64
74	3	48	69	84	61	38	11	82	63	40	9
49	94	23	28	13	36	59	86	15	34	57	88
24	27	50	93	60	85	14	35	58	87	16	33
95	22	25	52	29	20	91	54	31	18	89	56
26	51	96	21	92	53	30	19	90	55	32	17

Escalation

by G.P.Jelliss

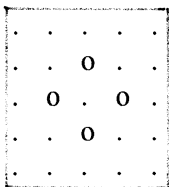
Escalation first appeared in *The Games and Puzzles Journal* page 107 in 1988. The account here has three modifications: the making of pieces, the re-use of captured pieces, and the opening position recommended.

Making a set of pieces that will work in practice has been the main stumbling block. A new set I have made uses some small transparent plastic squares. Each piece in the opening position is a pile of two square plastic tiles.

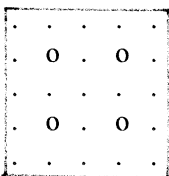
The lower tile, which can be opaque, is white or black to indicate the player to which the piece belongs. The upper tile, which has to be transparent, bears a pattern of spots (marked in yellow on top and in red underneath) which indicate the moves of the piece it represents.

When the yellow spots are uppermost the piece is a leaper, while when the red spots are uppermost the piece is the corresponding rider.

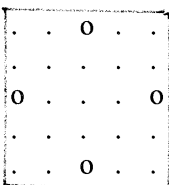
The five patterns occurring, the pieces they represent, and the number of each type in the set are as follows:



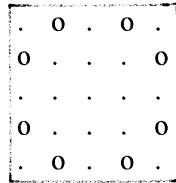
Wazir (2)
(Rook)



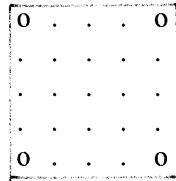
Fers (4)
(Bishop)



Dabbaba (8)
(Dabbabarider)



Knight (2)
(Nightrider)



Alfil (16)
(Alfilrider)

The number of pieces of each type used is determined by their mobilities. An Alfil has access to only 8 squares of the board, so each player needs 8 of them to patrol all 64 squares. Similarly a Dabbaba has access to 16 squares, so each player needs 4 of them. A Fers is confined to squares of one colour so each player needs 2. The Wazir and Knight can reach any square in a series of moves.

A piece always consists of two or more tiles, transparent ones resting on an opaque base, and the pile moves as one piece.

When a capture takes place the opaque base of the piece captured is removed; the opponent keeps these displayed alongside the board as a record of the number of captures that have taken place.

The transparent upper tiles of the captured piece are placed on top of the capturing piece, any duplicate tiles being held in reserve for possible re-use. These must be displayed where the opponent can see them, and must not be turned over.

The pattern of spots (seen through the transparent tiles) indicates the powers of move of the new piece, which now combines the powers of capturer and captured. Thus the result of captures is the formation of ever more complex pieces.

When a leaper (i.e. a piece whose visible spots are all yellow) reaches either of the opponent's back ranks it promotes

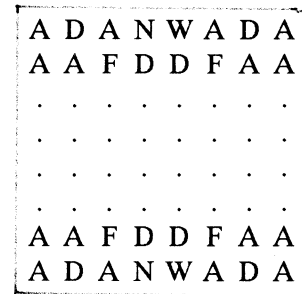
to the corresponding rider. This is shown by turning over the transparent tiles of which the piece is composed (so that the spots showing are now red).

It is possible, after capture of a rider by a leaper, or vice versa, for a HYBRID to be formed that can make certain moves as leaps and other moves as rides. Such a piece cannot be promoted further.

The Wazir's spots are trimmed with purple to indicate its royal status. This it retains in capture or promotion. A royal rider may not move through check.

The new rule about re-use of captured tiles allows a player, instead of making a normal move, to place one or more captured tiles on top of one or more existing pieces of his own colour. This move may even mate; possibly by multiple check!

The new opening position recommended is as follows:



The number of possible opening positions, with the 16 pieces of each side on the two back ranks, is over a billion! To be exact $(2^{15})^2 = 1,073,741,824$. (Two choices of square for each A, D, F and N, then the W must occupy the last remaining space, hence 2^{15} ways for each side.) In every case the W and N occupy opposite coloured squares.

The recommended position has been chosen for symmetry and to ensure that a Fool's mate in 1½ moves is no longer possible, it now takes 2 moves as follows:
1.Fe3 Ae5 2.Dg3 A×g3♯ or
1.Dg3 Ae5 2.Fg1/e3 2.A×g3♯.

Solutions to Original Problems in VC7

55. M.Olausson (Sweden) Set 1...000♣ Play 1.Gh5† R×a4 2.b5 R×g4 3.Gf3 Ra4 4.Gd3 Rh4 5.Ga6 Ra4 6.Gc6 Rh4 7.bxc6 Ra4 9.c8=N Ra4 10.Na7 Rh4 12.Ne5 Rh4 14.Kf6 Rh4 15.Ng4 00♣ [I mislaid the composer's solution, the above is the solution as found by A.W.I.]

87. G.Sphicas & S.Pantazis. 1.Kd6 4.Kxb5 5.Kc4 6.b5 10.b1+N 11.Nd2 12.Ne4 13.Kd5 14.Ke5 15.Nd6 Nd3♣

98. H.Ebert. (Set 1.Rc5♣!) 1.Ne5 Kd4 2.Rd3♣ 1.Nb4 Kd4 2.Bg7♣ (1.Ne7? Kd6!) [Are we back in the middle ages? A.E. Several solvers succumbed to the try.]

99. N.Plaksin. The original Rooks did not move! The Rg6 is a promoted pawn which moved once from g8! Retract: 1.g7×Rh8=Q†† b2×Ra1=Q etc. with Black Ph7–h1=Q and White Pa2–a8=Q. Promotion to Queens in all corners!

100. V. Buňka, Czechoslovakia 1.R×d3 Qxa3 2.R×d5 N×d5♣ 1.R×d5 Rxc7 2.R×f5 exf5♣ 1.R×c7 Qa4 2.Rxe4 Qxe4♣ 1.Rxe4 Qg8 2.R×g4 Q×g4♣ Black rook cross. [8 moves by black rook ending in sacrifice. A fine problem E.B.]

101. V. Buňka, Czechoslovakia (a) WQf2 1.e2 Qc5† 2.Ke4 N×d2♣ (b) WRc1 1.Nd4 Rc5† 2.Ke4 Ng5♣ (c) WBg6 1.f5 Be8 2.Ke4 Bc6♣ (d) WNe8 1.Ke4 K×f7 2.Kf5 Nd6♣ [A good idea, but the twins are too dissimilar E.B. Very satisfying I.R.]

102. R. Senkus (Lithuania). 1.N×e3 Ng3 2.Nf5 Q×c3♣ & 1.N×e4 Ng2 2.Nf2 Q×d5♣ Many cooks. Some correspondents claim that Mr Senkus's problems are not original; but no-one has quoted the sources he has allegedly copied.

103. R. Senkus (Lithuania). (a) 1.R×g2† Be3† 2.K×e4 Rd4♣ (b) 1.B×g2† Bg1† 2.K×e4 Nc5♣ (c) 1.R×d3† Re3† 2.K×d4 Nc2♣ (d) 1.B×d3† Re1† 2.K×d4 Nb3♣ Many cooks, including 1.Bf4 exf6 2.Bd6 Re5, given as a second solution to (a) but also works in (b) (c) and (d).

104. L. Zoltan & G. Bakcsi (Hungary). 1.Of3 Kc2 2.Ke4 e3 3.Bd5 Kc1♣ 1.Bc4 Kb2 2.Kd4 e4 3.Qc5 Kc1♣ [Twice Anderssen–

verstellung, well known theme, E.B.]

105. I.Shanahan (Australia) 1.Bc8 3.Qh1 4.Ba6 5.a1=R 7.Rg2 9.f1=N 10.Nh2 11.Bf1 for Nh3♣. [Underpromotions and a good series of moves E.B. Neat geometry M.O.]

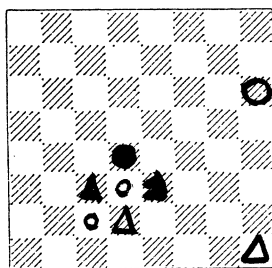
106. Alexander George & Jim Mauldon (USA) Not (a): 1.Bc4 2.Nb3 3.Rd2 4.Bd3 5.Nc4? impossible check 6.Rb2 7.Qd1 for K×Q=. But the 5th move's analogue in (b) presents no problem.

107. R. Senkus (Lithuania). 1.Qd7 Nc4/Nb3/Nb7 2.Be3†/Qd2† /Q×b7 N×e3♣/N×d2♣/g2♣. Set: 1...Nc4/Nb3 2.Q×c4/Q×b3 g2♣. Tries: 1.Qc4? Nb1! 1.Qc8? Nb3!

108. M.Olausson (Sweden) Set 1...Qh5♣ Play 1.Bf3 Q×d6 2.Kg4 Qd1 3.K×g5 Qd8† 4.Kh6 Qd1 ... 7.g6 Qd8 8.Bd5 Qh4♣ [Correct short solution: 1.d7 Q×d7 2.g4 Qd1 3.Bd5 Q×g4 4.Kh2 Qa4 5.Be4 Qe8 6.Kh3 Qa4 7.Bg2 Qh4♣, 3...Qa4? 4.Bg2 Q×g4 5.Kh2 Qa4 6.Kh3 Qh4♣, E.B.] [Cooks in 8, E.B., A.I., A.E.]

109. M.Dragoun, Czechoslovakia 1.Lg3 Qb4 2.Nf6 Rg5♣ & 1.Lb4 Rg4 2.Lf6 Qc5♣ [Two fine thematical variants E.B.]

110. M.Dragoun, Czechoslovakia (a) 1.Gh3 Be8 2.Bc4 Bc6♣ & 1.Lh3 Bg4 2.Ne4 Be6♣ (b) 1.Bh3 Be2 2.Gc6 Bc4♣ & 1.Nh3 Bg6 2.Le6 Be4♣ [Four "Sternmatts" by WB – I named it so 25 years ago, compare: Erich Bartel, 7886, Feenschach 1966



H†2, 2 ways, (a) diagram (b) black Grasshoppers c3/e3. Solution: (a) 1.Nc4 Be1 2.Ne5 Bf2 & 1.Bb4 Bc1 2.Be5 Bb2, (b) 1.Gc5 Bg5 2.G3e3 Bf6 & 1.Ge5 Ba5 2.Gec3 Bb6. E.B.] [Doesn't appear to be a Lion problem at all; G might suffice at b3 A.W.I.]

111. M.Olausson. (a) 1.Rb8 Ka3 2.Gc8 Ka4 3.Rb7 Ka5 4.La8 Ka4 5.Ga6♣ (b) 1.Lh3 Kd1 2.Rg2 Ke1

3.Gh1 Kd1 4.Lf1 Kc1 (switch–back) 5.Ge1♣ Ideal mates. [Beautiful, I.R.]

112. M.Olausson (Sweden) Circe condition missing. 1.g1=R g8=B†/R 2.Kh8/Rg5 Q×g1=/Qg5 (Rh8)= & 1.g1=B Qg1(Bf8) 2.Kh8 f×f8=N=

113. El. & Er. Bartel. (a) 1.Ge3 Ke4 2.Gg4 Kf3 3.Gh1 Fg2♣ (b) 1.Ge3 Kd4 2.Gc2 Kc3 3.Ga1 Fb2♣ (c) 1.Ga2 Fc8 2.Gb5 Kc6 3.Ga8 Fb7♣ (d) 1.Gf2 Ke6 2.Gg5 Kf6 3.Gh8 Fg7♣ Exact echo in 4 corners. [Welsh would say "nice and tidy" I.R. Duals in Gnu paths to the corners are cleverly avoided by self–check A.E.]

114. I. Richardson (UK) (a) 1.Le4–b7 Kc8 2.La4–f4 Kd8 3.Cd7♣ [Cooks 3.Lb8♣ & 1.Le–e7 Kc8 2.La–a7 Kd8 3.Cd7♣ Composer removes soldiers e6, g4] (b) Duals 1.La5/h7 Kc8 2.Lh7/a5 Kb8 3.Cb7♣

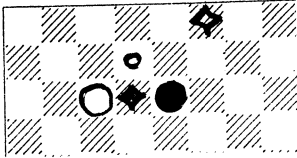
115. I. Richardson (UK) 1.Nf3 Mc4 2.Md3 Bc3† 3.Ke4 Cf5♣ [Composer notes black moves 2 & 3 interchangeable.]

116. P.Wong (Australia) 1.Qb7 Ra8 2.Qc6 Ra7 3.Qb1 Rxa5† 4.Kb2 Ra1 5.Kc3 Rxb1 6.Qdb1 R×d1 7.Qf–g2 Rh1 8.Qgf3 Rh2 9.Qh4 R×h4 10.Qh–g7 Rh8 11.Qf6 R×g8= and 1.Qg–g7 Rh8 2.Qf6 R×h7 3.Qh1 Rh5 4.Q3–g2 R×h1 5.Qgf3 Rg1 6.Qe1 R×e1 7.Kb2 Ra1 8.Kc3 Ra2 9.Qa–b4 Ra4 10.Q5–c6 R×b4 11.Qb8 R×b8=

117. P.Byway (UK) (a) Black: 1...Lb5! 2.Lc2 Lb3 3.Le2 Ld3 4.Lg2 Lf3 5.Lh1 Lg2 draw. White: 1.Ld5! with respect to the white–square leapers White has the opposition: he outflanks and wins after 1... La6 2.Ld7 or 1...Lc8 2.Lb5 or 1... Lb5 2.Ld7/Lc6 Ld5/Kc6 3.Lb7♣. (b) White wins by releasing the stalemate and playing to trap the black L, e.g.: 1.Lg4 Lb5 2.Lg6 Ld5 3.Lg8 (3.Lf7? Le6=) Le6 4.Kd6 Le4 5.Le8 Kb7 (other moves also here) 6.Lb4 Lc4 7.Ld7+ Ka6 8.Kc5 Lb5 9.Lb6 Lb7 10.Ld5 Ld7 11.Lb5♣ The analysis is truncated here. [In general 2L v K obviously win, A.W.I.]

118. P.Byway (UK) White: 1.Kf6 Lc3! 2.La1 Lb2= or 1.La3 Lc5 2.Lb2 Ld4 3.Lc1 Le3= Black to play must give ground: 1...Lc5 2.Ld2 or 1...Le3 2.Lb4 or 1...Le5 2.Lc3 note that

while the K outflanks at an N move the L outflanks at a camel's move. Nevertheless White cannot win: 1...Lc5 2.Ld2 Ld6 3.Le3 Lf6 4.Ld4 Kg7! 5.Le3 Kg6 6.Lf4 Kh7 (9...Kh5 loses) 10.Kf5 Lg7=. Paul also gave the following example of the double opposition:



Black: 1...Ke5 2.Lf6+ wins
White: 1.Lg7 Ld8 =

119. M.Olausson (Sweden)

1.Be3† Kh2 2.Kd2 Qa8 3.Ke1 Qh8 4.Bb2 Qb2(Bc1) 5.Bb2(Qd8) Qf-a8 6.Ke2 Qh1 7.Bf4† Kg1 8.Bd4† Qd4(Bc1) 9.Bc-e3† Qe3(Bc1) 10.Bce3(Qd8)† Kg2 11.Be5 Qa1/Qh8 12.Bxa1/Bxh8 Qd1‡. An example of what Hilmar Ebert calls "Pairdance". [Short cook in 10 - no Circe involved: 1-2.Ba5 Bd6 Q-a8-h8 3.Be5 Qfa8 5.Ke2 Qa8 6.Bb6† Kg2 7.Bf4 Qha1 8.Bb2 Q1h8 9.Bc5 (or other) Qha1 10.Bd4 Qf3‡ (6...Kh1 7.Ke1 Qg2 8.Bd6 Qa1‡) A.W.I.]

120. F. Sabol (Czechoslovakia).

1.Qb8! Rc3(Pc7) 2.Rh8 Kh2(Ph7) 3.bc3(Ra1) Rd1‡ [not 1.ba3(Ra1) Rd1?]. [Critical (?) moves by Q & R for closing lines by circe effects. E.B. Nice evacuations for circe purposes, M.O.]

121.M.Olausson. A. 1.Kf1 2.Re7 5.Kc4 6.Ra7‡ B. 1.Kf7(Ng8) 2.Ke8 4.f8=R 6.Rh7‡ Circe-ideal mates with uncapturable rooks. [Nice, but very small, E.B.]

122. Er.Bartel. 1.Ke1 Gd1† 2.Kf1 Gd3† 3.Ke1 Ge3‡ 1.Kd2(Gd8) Ge3 2.Kc2 Gd3 3.Kd1 Gd2‡ Exact Echo. [A beauty! I.G.R. Pretty echo A.W.I. The second solution was hellishly difficult! A.E.]

123. M.Olausson.

A. 1.Kc4 4.Ka7(Nb8) 5.Kb6 6.Ka5 (nPa7) 7.ab8=nN† [Cook 1-5.Pa6 & Ka7(Nb8), A.W.I.] B.(a) 1-2.Kxg3 3-7.h8=N† (b) 1-3.Kh8! 4.hxg3 5-7.g6† [I can't see any thematic connection? E.B.]

124. George P. Spichas (USA)

1. W K a 2 (n P a 7) 2. a 8 = n B
3.ba8=nR(nBc8) 4.nRa5(nPa7)

5.a8=nQ 6.nQb7 7.nBd7 8.nRd5
9.Ka3(nPa7) 10.a8=nN 11.nNc7
12.nBg1-b6 13.nBa5 14.nNd5
(nRa8)†† for nRa5(nBc1)‡ AUW, all promotions on a8.

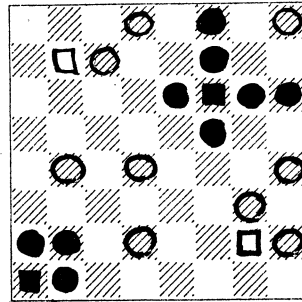
125 M.Olausson (Sweden)

(a) 1.g2 h7 2.g1=Q h8†Q 3.Qg8 Qxg8 (Qg8→N which cannot reappear on g8) 4.Ka1 Qb3= (b) 1.Kf3 h7 2.Kg2 h8=B 3.Kh1 Bd4 4.g2 Bg1= (Kxg1? B=Ra1!)

126. M.Olausson. 1.Kxf2 h8=B 2.Kg1 Bd4 3.Kh1 Bg1= (Kxg1? Ra1!) & 1.g1=Q Ne2 2.Qg8 hxg8=Q 3.f4 Qg1= (Kxe2? Bf1!). [First sol. like 125(b) but superfluous men E.B.]

127. N. Plaksin.

W & B both promoted 4Ps to Ks and 4Ps to Rs. The stalemate position required is:



There were 10 long castlings!

128. V. Nebotov (Ukraine). Contrary to the example moves given in VC7 the pieces in this problem reappear on the opponent's back rank! (Or is the problem upside down!) 1.Qg6! [threats 2.Qh5‡ Bxh5?? (Q→Bc8†!) & 2.Qg3‡ Rxg3?? (Q→Rh8†!)] 1...Kh4 2.Qg4‡ 1...Qxg1 (R→Qd8) 2.Qh8‡. Tries: 1.Qh7†? Bh5! 2.Qxh5?(B→Qd1) Qxh5!(Q→Qd8). 1.Rh1†? Kg4 2.Qf5† Kxf5(Q→e1, K-cap is "normal" circe!) [Almost a natural idea, should have a future, M.O.] Some claim 1...Qd1 or Qf1 defeat the threats, but this is on the assumption that the pieces reappear on their own home rank. Clearly we have two Mutant variants here!

129. V. Nebotov (Ukraine).

1.Ke7 h6 2.Kf6 h7 3.Kg5 h8=B 4.Kh6 R→a1xh1††† (Bh8 via c1) and 1.Kc7 c6 2.Kb6 c7 3.Ka5 c8=B 4.Qb6 Kb4‡ (Rc1 via a1).

130. V. Nebotov (Ukraine).

1.Rf6 c8=N 2.Rf2 K→e1xf2 3.Bc4 g8=B 4.Ba6 B→f1xa6 5.Rd5 Ncd6= (5...Nbd6? R→a8xc8!).

131. Er.Bartel (Germany).

Key: 1.Nd1! Ng2 2.Ne3 N8-‡ Tries: 1.Nd3? N4g6 2.Nf4 Nf7‡ 1...Ng2/f3 2.Ne1 N8-‡ but 1...N8g6†! 1.Ng4? Ng2 2.Ne3 N8-‡ 1...Nf3 2.Nh2 N8- but 1...Nf7†! 1.Nh1? Ng2!

132. Er.Bartel (Germany) 1.axb8=B 2.ed8=Q(Ra1) 3.fg8=N(Qd1) 4.gf8=R Auw with promotions only. [Amazing - at first sight I thought it must be a reflex problem. I.G.R. Beautiful & funny Auw Erich! M.O.]

133. V. Nebotov (Ukraine).

(a) 1.Rxh6 Rxh6 2.Kf1 Rh1‡ (b) 1.Kf1 Rf4 2.Qh8 Kf2‡ (c) 1.Kf1 Re6 2.Qh8 Re1‡ (d) Remove h6 (mated) and play 1.Rh7 Rh6 2.Kf1 Rh1‡ (not 1.R1h8? since then Black can remove Rh1 as a mated piece!) [(b) is a good problem, but why all the rest? K.W.]

The rules of Anti-Circe are disputed. V.N. seems to assume that the capturing piece reappears on the square of same colour as that from which it moves (otherwise 3...Re1 is not check since h1 is occupied). He also assumes the rule does not apply to Ks since, as K.W. points out, black escapes by 3.Kf/g2! (3...KxK being illegal as e1 is occupied).

Puzzle 7.1 P.Wong (Australia).

Double-maxi circe tempoverlust.

1.Nc3 Nf6 2.Ne4 Nd5 3.Nf3 Ne3 4.Nf6† gx6(Ng1) 5.Nd4 Bh6 6.Ne6 Bf4 7.Nf3 Bh6 8.Ne5 Bf4 9.Nc4 Bh6 10.Nd6† exd6(Ng1) 11.Nf3 Bf4 12.Ng7† Kf8 13.Nh4 Bh6 14.Ng6† fxg6(Nb1) 15.Nc3 Bf4 16.Ne6† dxe6(Nb1) 17.Ne4 Bh6 18.Ng5 Nd7 19.Nxe6(Pe7) Ke8 20.Nf4 Bf8 21.Nxg6(Pg7) Nc4 22.Ne5 Nb8 23.Nf7 Bh3 24.Nxd6(Pd7)† Nxd6 (Ng1) 25.Nxh3(Bc8) Ne4 26.Nf4 Nd6 27.Nh5 Ne4 28.Nxf6 (Pf7)† Nxf6(Ng1) 29.Nf3 Ng8 30.Ng1.

Solver's Scores

	VC1-6	VC7	Total
A.W.Ingleton	149	56	205
I.G.Richardson	97	46	143
S.Pantazis	137	-	137
A.Ettinger	60	48	108
D.Nixon	81	15	96
M.Olausson	68	18	86

Stefanos Pantazis has less time for solving since he took over editorship of the *U.S.Problem Bulletin* in 1991. Problems and articles to him at 710 Dobson St #2, Evanston, IL 60202.

(Subscription is \$9 overseas or \$12 airmail to R. Sostack, 2484 Ramona St, East Meadow, NY 11554).

Eugene Albert of *Ideal Mate Review* also has a new address: 1740 Interlachen Road #39–G, Seal Beach, California, CA 90740.

Corrections

✧ Slawomir Woszczyński sends the following correction to problem 16 in VC1: Add white Ba6, black B b5. The solution is then as before.

✧ Michel Olausson corrects #57: WKf6, WNh2, WBh1, BKg1, BPg3 H‡2 Circe, 2 ways, sols as before.

Semi–Pieces by Paul Byway (A brief note on this topic was given in VC7. The following are further notes from Paul's letter, 18 xii 1991.)

Semi–pieces were a detour in the development of Modern Courier Chess. It began with a piece I came to call a SEMI–SAGE. (A sage being a commoner with a king's move.) That is a {1,1} + {2,0} leaper. [Here Paul gave problem 117, solution above.]

When I introduced this piece to a club mate who was a mathematician he said "...I see, it moves to the first square of the same colour in all 8 directions"; a way of looking at it that hadn't occurred to me.

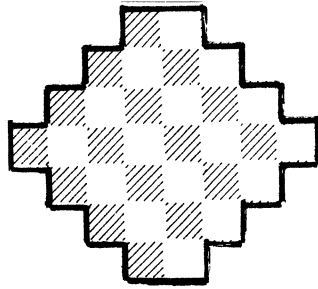
Thinking of the relationship of this piece to the bishop I came to consider the private world they inhabited in which squares of the opposite colour might as well not exist. Considering the white squares only for example, the bishop moves in effect as a rook, while the {1,1} + {2,0} leaper moves as a king, or rather as a sage, since the king is royal. [Here follows the example of double opposition quoted above, and problem 118. He notes "it will turn out that the camel is a semi–knight".]

It was while working through studies such as these that the idea arose of semi–pieces as a class: we have the definition:– a SEMI–PIECE moves like a PIECE on a semi–board.

A SEMI–BOARD is produced as follows:– (1) Delete from the board all the squares of one colour: imagine yourself left with a piece of lacework, full of holes. (2) Rotate the board clockwise by 45 degrees, while

leaving the orientation of the individual squares unchanged. (3) Compact the board and rechequer.

From the 8×8 board we get:



[I was sure I'd seen this somewhere before, and sure enough, I located it on page 125 of *The Problemist Fairy Chess Supplement*, Vol.1, No.18, June 1933 where T.R.Dawson writes, following the four symmetric 8×8 camel tours by F.Hansson: "I wonder how many solvers have realised that Camel tours on the 8×8 board can all be represented as Knight's tours on the attached board?" (he diagrams the same serrated board, rotated 90°).

The same idea also appears in S.W.Golomb's "Of Knights and Cooks and the Game of Cheskers" (his cooks are our camels) in *Journal of Recreational Mathematics* Vol.1, No.3, July 1968, pp.130–7, where it is attributed to his colleague Dr Lloyd R.Welch. Great minds think alike! But Dawson has the priority.]

A further application of the semi–board process reduces the board to the quarter–board (4×4).

A possible development of this idea is to have a problem on the first board, having a second problem hidden within it on the semi–board. An idea that particularly appeals to me is to have a nest of problems inside one another like Russian dolls.

Another possibility is the problem containing only related pieces (except for kings and pawns). The problem by Dawson in VC1 is of this type (N + semi–N, i.e. camel). A hierarchy of semi–pieces is possible [as noted in VC7: Wazir → Fers → Dabbaba → Alfil (→ denotes 45° rotation of moves combined with increasing length by factor √2.) In order to show pieces of the same family on a diagram (e.g. rook, semi–rook) I suppose one could show their position in the hierarchy by rotating the figure of the piece clockwise or

anti–clockwise by 45° or 90°.

[Paul also gives some notes on "Magic Pieces"; for example a rook on the 8x8 board becomes a "Magic Bishop" on the serrated board if it is still allowed to move to the squares of the cancelled colour – it vanishes into the interstices between the squares! But I don't feel these are yet sufficiently developed to discuss at length. Roger Smook wrote to me on a similar idea several years ago.]

Chess Variants Day

Report by David Pritchard

An informal Variants Day was held in Godalming on 11th July 1992. There were some late cancellations but a dozen people turned up including problemists John Beasley and Adam Sobey. Others present included Frank Parr, the games inventor Graham Lipscomb, Steve Jackson, who is writing a book on Sir George Thomas, and Trevor Jones from the Guildford Chess Club.

C.K.Lai brought along his xiangqi (Chinese Chess) computer which was constantly in use. He was accompanied by a former Asian xiangqi champion, Che, and his wife, a modest and delightful couple.

George Jelliss demonstrated his game Escalation using a set that he had made for the occasion. A five–minute chessgi tournament was won by Patrick Donovan, Phil Simpson second and David Pritchard third.

Further Notes by George Jelliss

Considerable thanks are due to David Pritchard for hosting the meeting so affably, providing nourishment, and opening his home, in a pleasant countryside setting, to so many visitors.

Chessgi, Chinese Chess and Madras Chess proved the most popular activities. Chessgi was made particularly easy to play with a special set in which the pieces are of cotton–reel style, with a black piece–symbol on one end and white the other, so that upon capture it only has to be turned over.

Adam Sobey kindly gave my game Escalation a trial, and showed up some faults (which I hope have been overcome: p.106).

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The AWARDS for problems

1989–90 by Denis Blondel

1991–92 by Kjell Widlert

are to appear in a supplement

New Editor/Publisher

I must apologise for the considerable delay in publishing this issue of *Variant Chess*. It is the last I will be producing, and includes an index to the eight issues, thus completing the set.

I have decided I need a rest from editorial and administrative work, but expect to continue to contribute articles and to work on my *Guide to Variant Chess*.

Fortunately Peter Wood, has agreed to take on the task of keeping *Variant Chess* going, and I have passed all rights in it to him with effect from 1/i/1993.

Fuller details of the subscription arrangements for Volume Two of the magazine will be shown on a separate sheet circulated with this issue.

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THE END OF VOLUME ONE