

Variant Chess

Journal of the British Chess Variants Society

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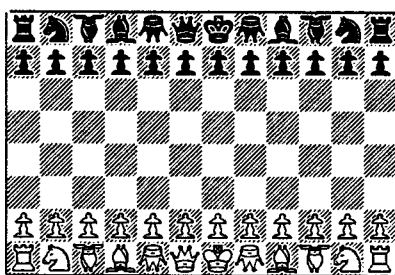
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ISSN 0958-8248

Modern Courier Chess — Some Games

by Paul Byway

Modern Courier Chess first appeared in *Variant Chess* in 1992 (no. 8, pp. 102–105). The initial layout is shown in the diagram below: the orthodox men are augmented by pieces of two types. The courier, shown as an inverted bishop, moves two squares in a straight line, along rank, file or diagonal, jumping over any intervening piece of either colour. A courier only has access to half the squares of one colour, so the four couriers cover between them all 96 squares of the board, and no courier can be exchanged



for another unless one of them was created by promotion. The fers is shown as an inverted queen, and moves one square diagonally. To speed up the opening phase of the game an unmoved fers is allowed an initial move (but not capture) as a courier. This privilege does not extend to a fers newly created by promotion. The usual double pawn move and en passant rules operate, but there is no castling: the king instead may make two king-moves in one turn (but not to capture), and as with castling he may not use this privilege to move out of or through check. For instance the Kg1 may go to h3, but there must be a clear, check-free path via g2 or h2.

Three over-the-board games are given. For the first two I am largely indebted to Toby Howes, who has provided the bulk of the notes. The third is possibly the best o-t-b game recorded so far, both players being graded about 200 in orthochess and the errors few: it gives plenty of food for thought.

Subscription rates for 1 year (4 issues)

UK £8, Europe airmail £9
Rest of World surface £9/\$16
Rest of World airmail £11/\$20
Single issue (inc post) UK £2
Eu airmail & RoW surface
£2.25, RoW airmail £2.75
Cheques payable to 'British
Chess Variants Society'.

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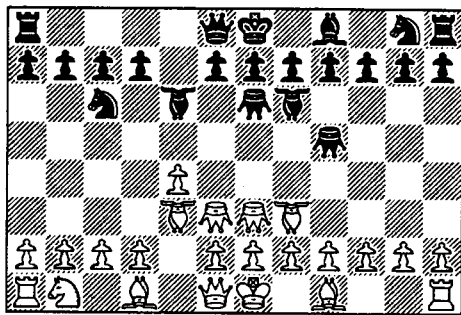
Modern Courier Chess

White: Toby Howes, Black: Ian George
 Friendly Game, Camborne, 13 January 1995
 Notes: *Toby Howes (roman), Paul Byway (italic)*

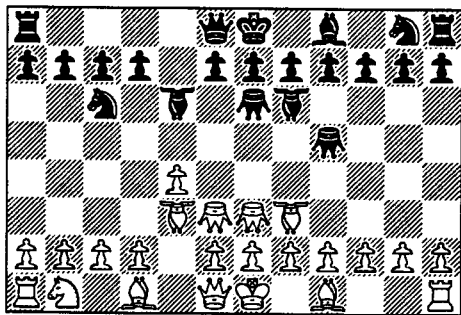
Modern Courier Chess

White: M. Cheeseman, Black: Toby Howes
 3 September 1994. All moves in 35 minutes.
 Notes: *Toby Howes (roman), Paul Byway (italic)*

1. e4 e5 2. Ce3 Ch6 — The Courier Gambit perhaps? (2.Ce3 is a 'chess-like' interpretation: 2.Fe3 is also good.) 3. C×e5 Nc6 4. Ce3 Ce6 — At the sacrifice of the pawn Black has three pieces developed and is attacking e4. This is better than my handling in Wood – Howes as I played 2...a5!? 3. C×e5 Ff6!? 4. Ce3 Nc6. In this case I wanted to enable the rook to enter the game, better I think is 2...l5 3.C×e5 Nc6 4.Ce3 and then proceed with development. 5.Ff3 Bh4 6.Fg3 Bi5 7.Nj3 Fj6 (Black doesn't realise that knight for bishop is not an equal trade.) 8.N×i5 F×i5 9.Ch3 Fg6

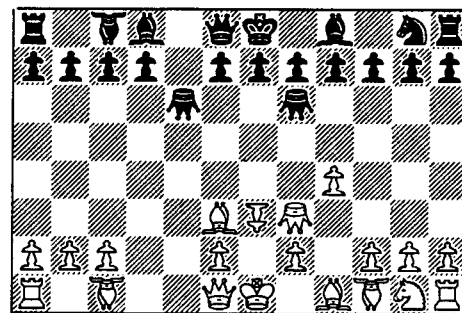


Black has managed to clear the back rank for the rook (a8) to come into the game. 10.c3 i6 11.Rj1 (Now we see a struggle for j4.) 11...j5 12.i3 j4 13.Cg5 — To drive back the fers on i5. 13...Bk6 14.C×i5 B×h3 (Two bad mistakes in a row.) 15.g×h3 f5 16.Bb3 Re8 17.i×j4 Ff7 — Breaking the pin on the courier. 18.e×f5 Cc8 19.d4 — I want to make room to develop my knight. 19...Qe7 20.Nd2 C×j4 21.l3!? — As Ian pointed out 21.k3 is the move I should have played. 21...Nj6 22.Ne4 h6!?

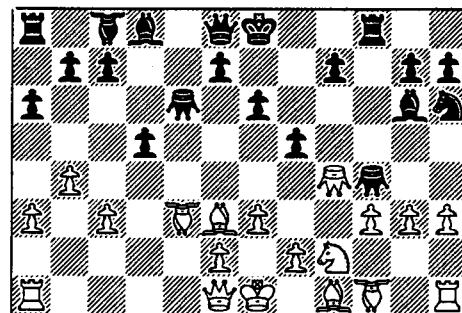


I played Ne4 as I thought that he would play 22.h6, missing the following sequence: 23.C×g7 K×g7? 24.f6† Q×f6 25.N×f6 K×f6 26.k3 (Black will only last as long as it takes White to get his pieces out.) Cl6 27.j4 Rlg8 28.Bj2† Kg7 29.Ri1 Kh7? 30.B×f7 Resigns (1-0) (This game contains too many Black errors, but we see the versatile fers in another light. A pair of ferses make a tough and flexible shelter for the king. In mediaeval times such a formation was called a 'hut'.)

1.i4 — Strange opening move from White as it doesn't allow any piece development, as the courier and fers can leap over the pawns. 1...e5 2.Fh3 Fh6 3.e3 Ch8 4.d4 e×d4 5.e×d4 Fe6 6.Fc3 (I prefer Fe3. allowing a later c3.) 6...Nc6 7.Nd2 Cf6 — Threatening the pawn and exchanging a courier for fers, an alternative for White might be 8.Qd3. 8.g3 C×d4 9.F×d4 N×d4 (My working assumption is that this is an even exchange.) 10.Nf3 N×f3† 11.B×f3 (A good post: the bishop can attack both wings without being molested by a courier.)

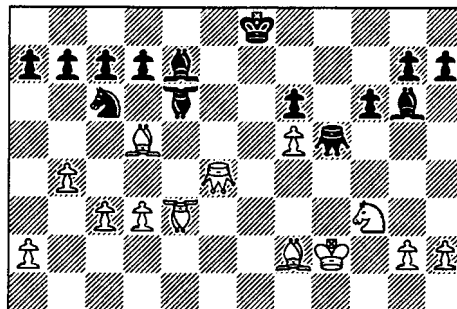
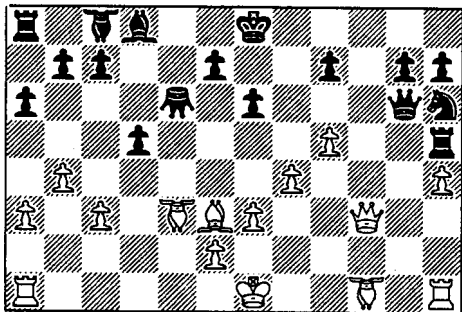


11...d5 — This move is an attempt to limit the mobility of White's bishop and protect the vulnerable b7 pawn. 12.c3 — protecting the b4 square from incursion by the Black queen. 12...Ni6 13.l3 j5 (A manoeuvre worth remembering. First there was a sideways shuffle of the courier (3...Ch8) followed by its rapid transit to the other wing (7...Cf6, 8...C×d4). With the courier gone 13...j5 frees both king's rook and king's bishop. I just have some concern for the king, and would rather try this on the other side.) 14.Ni2 j×i4 15.F×i4 Bk6 — A rudimentary pin. White stated that he protected the fers and did not break the pin in later stages as intended pawn development and control of i4. 16.Nk3 — Perhaps 16.k4 threatening 17.Fj5 might have been better. 16...Rj8 17.j3 a6 18.Ce3 Fi5 — Black protects b5 from the White queen and begins to march his black fers deep into White's territory. 19.a3 Fj4 20.Ni2 g6 21.b4 h5 (Risky, in view of the king's position.) 22.k3



22... Fi3 — 22...h×i4 better?

(The lively king's side play shows that ferses don't necessarily make for a slow game.) 23.h4 h×i4 24.j×i4 Fj2 25.Bh2 F×k3 26.Bk5 Rj2 27.Qh3 B15 28.N×k3 Rk2? 29.N×i5 R×k5 30.Qj3 Qh6 31.i5 Qk6 32.l4 R×i5 — Many possibilities.

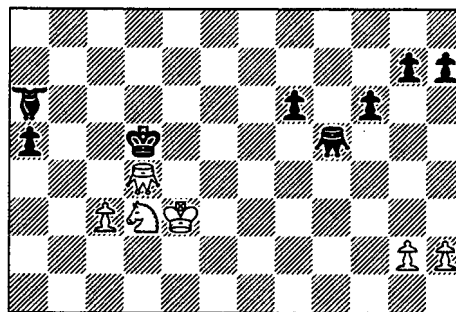


33.Bg2 Qk4 34.Qj8 Kh7 35.Cj3 R×i4 36.R×i4 Q×i4 37.Bj5†? (Black seems to escape with a draw after 37.Cj5† N×j5 38.B×j5† i6! (only move) 39.Qh6† Ki8 40.Q×i6† Qi7 41.Qk8† Qj8 42.Qi6† Qi7.) 37...N×j5 38.Q×j5† Kg7 39.Qf1 Qi1† 40.Kg2 Qi2† 41.Kg1 Q×j3 (0-1)

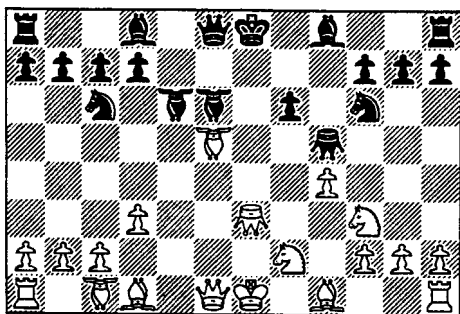
37.Cc5 Bd8 38.b5 Ne7 39.C×e7 B×e7 40.B×b7 c6 41.b×c6 d×c6 42.d4 Bg2 43.Fe5 Bf3 44.a4 B×h5 45.d5 c×d5 46.B×d5 Bf7 47.Kh3 a5 48.Fd6 ('Rook behind the pawn' — whether attacking the Sicilian Dragon or in the ending. MCC shows a similar dynamic feature with 'bishop behind the fers' — and here it is. Also of great importance is the fact that I have the 'right' courier for White's two queen's side pawns.) 48...Bf6 49.Fe5 Bg5 50.Fd4 Bd8 51.Bf4 Cc4 52.B×f7 K×f7 53.Nh2 C×a4 54.Ng4 Ke6 55.Ne5 Bc7 56.Kg4 Ca6 57.Nd3 B×f4 58.K×f4 Kd5 59.Ke3

Modern Courier Chess

White: Gary Kenworthy, Black Paul Byway
Powdermill Club, Waltham Abbey, 10 March 1993
Notes by Paul Byway



1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Fe6 3.g3 Nc6 4.f4 e×f4 5.g×f4 f5 6.Fg3 g6 7.Nj3 Nj6 (7...Ni6, 8...j6, 9...Bj7 may be a better plan.) 8.h4 f×e4 9.N×e4 Ff5 (making room for the courier on e6.) 10.Ng5 Fh6 11.Nf3 Ch8 12.i4 i5 13.Fh3 Ce6 14.d3 Fg4 15.F×g4 C×g4 16.Nfh2 Ce6 17.Ch3 Cf6 18.h×i5 F×i5 19.f5 g×f5 20.C×f5 h6



59...h5? (Carelessness: 59...a4 is answered by 60.Nb4† winning the courier, but 59...j5 was correct, when White is overstretched. The position has simplified to the point at which the knight becomes a much better piece than the courier.) 60.Nf4† Kc4 61.N×h5 Kb3 62.Kd2 Kb2 63.Fc5! (This is what I overlooked: it makes a nonsense of my last few moves.) 63...Kb3 64.Nf4 Kc4 65.Nd3 j5 66.Fb4! (The a-pawn is now worthless.) 66...a4 67. Ne5† Kd5 68.Ng4 Fh4 69.Ke3 Cc4 70.Kf4 Ce2 71.Nh6? k6 72.Nf5 Fi3 73.Ne3† Ke6 74.c4? C×c4 75.N×c4 Kf6 76.Kg4 Kg6 77.Nb2 k5 (Knight and fers cannot mate, unless Black is trapped in the corner controlled by the fers. All I must do is to get rid of the pawns.) 78.Kh3 Fj4 79.N×a4 i5 80.Nc5 i4 81.Nd3 k4 82.Nf4† Kg5 83.Ng2 i3 84.k×i3 k×i3 85.Ni1 Fk3 86.Nj3 F×i2 87.N×i2 Kf4 88.Ki3 Ke4 Draw agreed (½-½). (In any event the fers cannot be saved. This ending emphasises once again the importance of position to the value of minor pieces. A tremendous tussle!)



21.Ch5 (not falling for 21.C×d7 Qg7. White's fluent aggression is a shock to the system!) 21...Qg7 22.Qg2 N×h5 23.i×h5 j6 24.Ce3 Bk6 25.Qd5 K-h7-i7 (K double-move) 26.Bf3 Cf4 27.Kh1 C×h2 28.B×h2 B×j2 (The pawn-snatch has a positional basis: the rooks are connected, the White rook is kept off the i-file for the moment, and the Fi5 can no longer be dislodged.) 29.Rg1 Qd4 30.Ff4 Rlg8 31.Ki2 Q×d5 32.B×d5 Be7 33.c3 Kh8 34.b4 R×g1 35.R×g1 Rg8 36.R×g8 K×g8 (The rooks come off in an attempt to tame White's aggression, but it would have been better to attend to the queen's side.)

Readers are reminded that 12×8 vinyl boards are now available from Paul Byway, 20 The Finches, Hertford, SG13 7TB, for £8 plus post and packing.

Progressive Fischer Random

by Malcolm Horne

The first World Wide Web Championship of Progressive Fischer Random Chess, organised by Hans Bodlaender of the Netherlands, took place via the Internet between December 1996 and October 1997. Twenty-one players entered from eleven different countries (Italy, Spain, Portugal, Australia, Finland, Canada, the USA, Germany, the Netherlands, Hungary and Brazil).

The players were split into three preliminary groups, then the top two from each group went through to a six-player final:

1. Alfred Pfeiffer 5/5
2. Roberto Cassano 4/5
3. Fabio Santoni 3/5
4. Zoltan Blazsik 2/5
5. Timo Honkela 1/5
6. Alessandro Castelli 0/5

The victor, Alfred Pfeiffer from Germany, won all his games in the tournament bar one; in the preliminary round he set up the position incorrectly in one game and as a result was promptly mated! Alessandro Castelli had to withdraw shortly after the final started, and his results were in fact one loss (to Pfeiffer) and four defaults.

The winner and runner-up both received a set of Heraldic Chess, donated by Modest Solans of Spain who also played in the tournament.

Three different randomised starting positions were used in the preliminaries, and a further three in the final, so that each player faced (at most) the same starting position once with White and once with Black. Black's starting line-up mirrored White's, and Scottish (rather than Italian) progressive rules were used — see the Cassano

v Honkela game below. Moves were sent by e-mail and players were asked to respond within one week.

Fischer's version of Randomised Chess places the king between the rooks in the starting position. Castling either side is then possible, but the final castled position must be identical to an orthodox castled position, e.g. if Ra1/Kb1/Re1 then 000 (Kc1/Rd1) or 00 (Kg1/Rf1). Randomised Chess has often been played in the past without castling but, as Peter Wood has stated, the castling option adds uncertainty and tension in the opening, and enhances the game. The Fischer rule is a little peculiar however, and I think there's much to be said for Peter's suggestion that kings and rooks remain on their original squares, enabling normal castling, with only the other pieces being randomised. (In all versions it is of course appropriate to have bishops running on different colours.)

However, the above remarks apply to the randomisation of orthodox chess. In the progressive game castling is so rarely desirable that whether you have it or not really doesn't make much difference. For Progressive one might, I think, prefer a completely free no-castling randomisation (save for the bishop proviso, and that Black mirrors White for fairness). On the other hand, the Fischer name does add a certain weight. But what a pity that Fischer himself has publicised (and played?) Fischer Random Chess so little since its launch in 1996!

Why play Progressive with a randomised starting position?

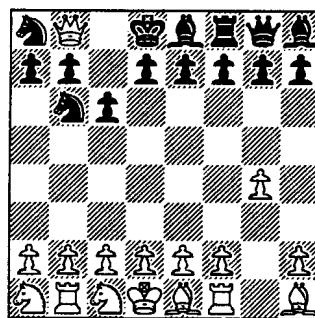
I think there are two good reasons. Firstly all opening theory — and there is a lot of it about these days — is dispensed with. For me that's a plus, but of course it's a matter of taste. Secondly opening play is quite a bit different, and there are new tactical motifs and unusual mating threats. The randomisation of Progressive Chess has a greater effect than the randomisation of the orthodox game.

Here are some games from the tournament (three from the preliminaries, three from the final). The standard of play in the preliminaries was rather low (60% of games did not get beyond move six), but the games in the final were harder fought.

For more information consult Hans Bodlaender's Chess Variant pages (at <http://www.cs.ruu.nl/~hansb/d.chessvar/>). A second tournament has already begun, with twelve competitors.

(1) Preliminary Round
Fabio Santoni (Italy) v
Jouni Tolonen (Finland)
a-h: NRNKBRQB

1. g3 2. c6, Ncb6 3. g4, Qg3,
Qxb8† 4. Resigns (1-0)



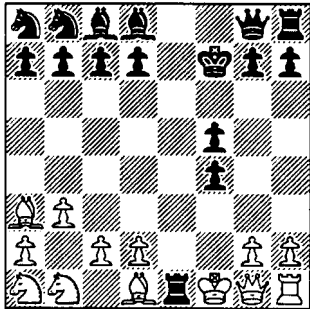
I don't think I've ever seen such an early resignation in Progressive! Black's problem is that if, after ... Nc8, he uses his other three moves to grab the queen (with the Na8 or with the Bh8) he will get mated (5. f3, Bg3 and either N to b7). But if he just leaves the queen there his position looks hopeless.

(2) Final

Roberto Cassano (Italy) v
Timo Honkela (Finland)

a-h: NNBBRKQR

1. f4 2. e5, f5 3. e4, b3, Ba3†
4. Kf7, e×f4, R×e4, R×e1†



5. Kf2, Kf3, K×f4, K×f5, Bh5†!!
A beautiful solution. Under Italian rules this would be 'mate' (Black is unable to play a full set of moves), but under Scottish rules the check merely ends the turn early. The rule makes little difference in practice as the result is almost always the same. 6. g6† 7. Kf4, Kf3, Kf2, Be7, B×d8, Q×e1, Qe7† (1-0) The two extra king moves were not strictly necessary.

In the remaining four games readers may like to work out the mate (or the moves that forced mate next time around) for themselves. Answers — not necessarily unique — are given upside down at the end.

(3) Final

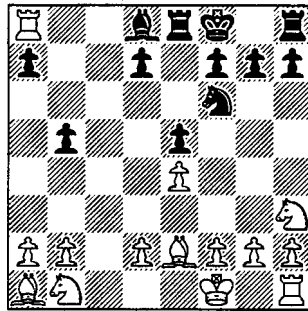
Fabio Santoni (Italy) v
Alfred Pfeiffer (Germany)

a-h: BNQBRKNR

1. c4 In the three other games with this set-up 1. e4 was preferred. 2. b5, e5 Black threatens mate with the queen on f2 (supported by Bh4) or g2. 3. c×b5, e4, Nh3 4. c6, c×b5, Q×c1, Nf6 The knight move gives the king just enough air — it will no longer be mate if White's rook, supported by the bishop, lands on f7. 5. Be2, R×c1,

Rc8, R×b8, R×a8? (Diagram)

6. Black to win:

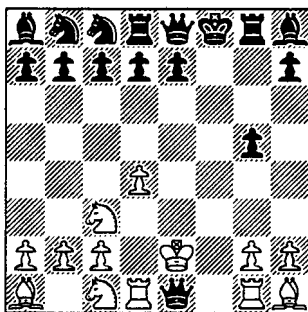


(4) Preliminary Round

Timo Honkela (Finland) v
Bent Hansen (USA)

a-h: BNNRQKRB

1. Nc3 This was by far the most popular first move with this line-up. All the Black players now pushed their g-pawn (six to g5, one to g6), and B×c3 was the common follow-up. 2. g5, f5 3. d4, e4, Ke2 4. f×e4, e3, e×f2, f×e1Q†? 5. White to win:

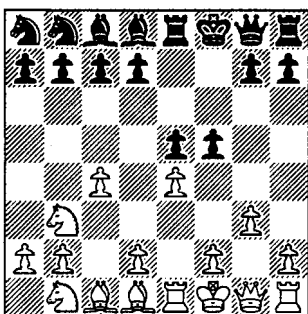


(5) Final

Zoltan Blazsik (Hungary) v
Roberto Cassano (Italy)

a-h: NNBBRKQR

1. Nb3 2. e5, f5 3. c4, e4, g3?
4. Black to win:

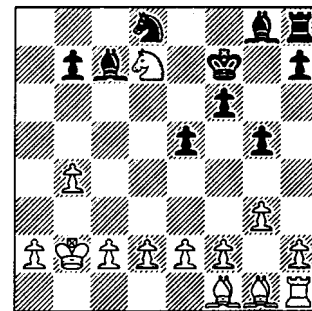


(6) Preliminary Round

Robert Sasata (Canada) v
Alessandro Castelli (Italy)

a-h: QNRNKBBR

1. Ne3 1. e4 was the most popular move here, followed by 1. b4. 2. Nbc6 e5 3. Nc4, Nb6, N×a8 4. Nd4, Nb3, N×a1, f6 5. Nc3, Nb5, N×a7, N×c8, N×c7† 6. Kf7, Bd6, B×c7, Nb3, N×c1, g5 7. Nb6, N×d7, b4, Kd1, K×c1, Kb2, g3? 8. Black to win:



The full results of the preliminaries were:

(A) Castelli 3½/4, Cassano 3/4, Modest Solans 2½/4, Robert Sasata 1/4, Fred Kok 1/5, Alec Goudreau 0/1 (withdrew), Ken White 0/0 (withdrew).

(B) Pfeiffer 5/6, Blazsik 5/6, Andrea Mori 4/6, Joao Pedro Neto 3/6, Roy Peters 2/6, David Nazarian 1/6, Fabio Forzoni 1/6.

(C) Honkela 4/5, Santoni 4/5, Jouni Tolonen 3/6, Deumo Polacco 2/2 (withdrew), Gilberto Montero 2/5, Bent Hansen 1/5, Daniele Ferri 1/6.

SOLUTIONS

SOLUTIONS to
Progressive Fischer Random:
(3) Santoni v Pfeiffer: 6. Re6, Rd6, Rd3, R×h3, R×h2, R×h1†
(4) Honkela v Hansen: 5. Kd3, Nd5, Nf4, Rf1, Ne6†
(5) Blazsik v Cassano: 4. f×e4, e3, Q×d2† 5. Q×d2† 6. Kg8, Bh4, B×g3, Qf7, B×h2, Rf8, R×d2† (also mates with 6. e×d2 etc.)
(6) Sasata v Castelli: 8. e4, e3, e×d2, d1Q, Kg6, Bf4, Bd2, Qc1†

Fully Randomised Chess

by George Jelliss

I wish to argue, contrary to the opinions in the preceding article, that the rules of Randomised Chess should not be watered down by unnecessary special conditions. If we're going to play Randomised Chess let's play the real thing, not a Bowdlerised version.

In Fully Randomised Chess the arrangements of the men on the back rows of both players are determined by chance (not Black mirroring White, not king placed only between rooks, not bishops restricted to opposite colours, not Fischer's quasi-orthodox castling, not the same randomisations used for both games between two players, nor for games against other players).

It may be that in a particular game one player will be placed at a disadvantage because of an awkward initial arrangement of the pieces, though I am doubtful that any such disadvantage would be crippling. But because the opening positions are chosen at random any disadvantages should statistically even out over a series of games. Trying to even out the odds by playing two games with the same opening position, one as White and the other as Black, or of using the same positions for games between other players is contrary to the spirit of Randomisation.

Playing a set of games with the same back row is not randomised chess at all, it is merely a particular type of Alternative Back-Row Chess.

Castling. An alternative way of formulating the castling move so as to apply to all cases, and to reduce to the orthodox case under orthodox conditions is as follows: (a) If K and R are adjacent, interchange them. (b) If K and R are apart, bring them together before interchanging them, moving both the same distance, or the R one cell more when the separation is an odd number of cells.

The usual conditions apply: K and R must be unmoved, any cells between them clear, and K may not castle out of or through check.

Fishereactions

Hugh Myers (writing to Peter Wood in January): I'll restrain my impulse to insult the commentators in "Fishereactions" (VC26 p.131). I'll just say that they are ignorant of "orthoChess's" literary value, the appreciation of games played in consistent conditions, comparable because they have identical beginnings. Chess isn't just a game to be won or lost; the concept that it's an art is based on the recording of games that can be entertaining or in some way rewarding. Having the first move seems to be a small advantage, as it could be in "Random" chess too, but that can be offset by what they prefer not to do, study of specific defenses. Anyway, White's advantage is small and it can be neutralized. If there were hundreds or thousands of possible starting formations, no doubt many of them would have inherent weaknesses that would give one player a bad game right from the start. The element of chance would increase.

A balanced "Fishereaction" could be quoted from what I wrote on pp.41-42 of the *New Myers Opening Bulletin* #9 (December 1996).

We quote from that article:

Robert J. Fischer is attacking chess openings, literature, history, and the game itself. For many years he had already shown manic disloyalty to the game to which he owes all of the fame and money that he has ever had. The disloyalty has been to himself too, as he could have earned a lot more by playing or writing ...

After staying in Serbia and Hungary, this year he popped up in South America ... It was said that he was promoting a book purported to be about "Random Chess" — new arrangements of pieces on the first rank; Pritchard (*New MOB* #8, p.43) says that there have been over fifty published variants of this, with different names ...; they differ in how the pieces are placed on the first rank, e.g. all at once, in secret, or one at a time, moving alternately. Fischer pushes a version in which there are 960 different formations, and the opponents each use the same one. The idea is to cancel opening knowledge, making competition more "fair" by putting players on their own, taking away

the advantages gained by pre-game study and memorization of book openings. Fischer pretends that this is the only kind of chess that he wants to play, and that it's too much of a handicap for him to keep up with new developments in opening theory.


Hypocrisy! I knew Fischer well when he was a New York teenager. Except for B. Zuckerman, I never knew a more fanatical opening nut; he was constantly carrying books. I can't imagine Fischer having had comparable early success without his intensive opening study — and for most of his career his openings were a very limited specialization, selected to suit his playing style. Now he wants others to play without any opening preparation! Wouldn't that make it hard to compare their best games with his? More importantly, it would eventually wreck popular appreciation of all of the great players of the past, and erase a major part of chess literature. Actually, he may not realize that his own history would largely be erased because his playing career is over or nearly over.

The normal initial formation is logical, with a tradition that goes back about 1500 years. If the hindering of pre-game preparation were so needed that we would want to substitute chaos for that formation, what about the study of endings and of middle game combinations? The opening is one phase of the game, not the only one in which a student can gain an advantage by studying the books.

"Random Chess" might be a boon to those too lazy to study — except that they would find themselves facing opponents who study endings and middle games even more. And if there were 960 different initial positions, I assure you that there would be professional players who prepare openings in all of them!


I am not saying that "Random Chess" is something evil; it's another game, one of thousands of chess variants, not necessarily better or worse than many of them. Playing it is all right. What's bad is Fischer's attitude, promoting it as a superior replacement for "orthoChess", which he apparently doesn't want to play anymore.

It would be easy to just dismiss that as another eccentricity of a notorious eccentric. But he's an eccentric of legendary status, and there are those who pay attention to him. Unfortunately, this year it seems that a growing number, hopefully unaware that they are joining a betrayal of their game, are expressing sympathy for Fischer's random thinking.



PROBLEM PAGES

conducted by *Ronald Turnbull*
Highland Cottage, Gatelawbridge, Thornhill
Dumfriesshire DG3 5EA, Scotland



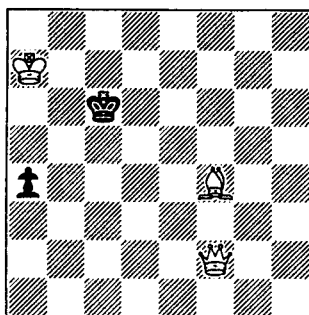
PREJUDICE AND QUIBBLES

In the last issue I expressed a prejudice in favour of the mate-in-two. My thanks to those (including some more eminent than myself) who wrote in defence of the long helpmate, at the same time as they offered items for my Christmas list of desired two-movers.

The logic of a good problem often includes the word 'but'. A direct-mate necessarily includes 'but': the black move refutes the threat BUT allows some new mate. That's what we mean by STRATEGY. The long helpmate shows an interesting mating position. Leading to the mate are moves of greater or lesser difficulty (usually greater) which just go 'and... and... and'. The sophisticated palate does not seek a meal that's all pudding.

Prejudice is a fine thing. I intend in this column to pandar to the prejudice of the help-maters, as well as indulging my own prejudice for direct play. Due to chance, and the obliging nature of the esteemed contributors, this issue has a lot of two-movers.

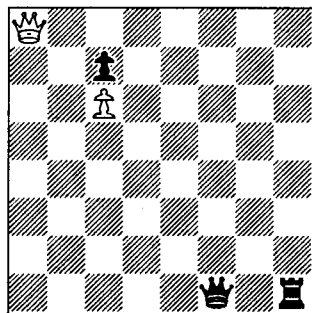
(226) Ian RICHARDSON



Mate in 2. No Captures

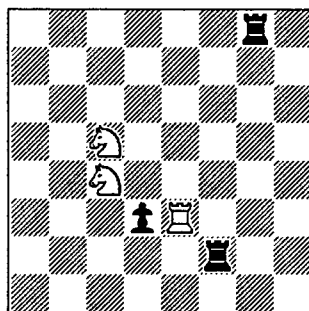
In **no-capture**, captures are illegal (except capture of king).

(227) John BEASLEY



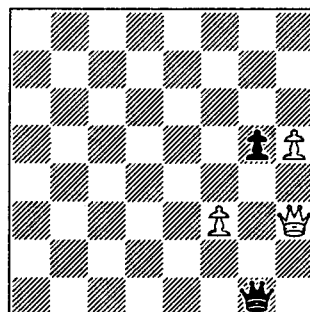
Mate in 2. Republican (D. P.)

(228) Stephen EMMERSON



Mate in 2. Republican

(229) Ronald TURNBULL



Mate in 2. Republican

Republican Chess brings the first (and second, and third) of the issue's quibbles. Rare indeed is the truly unambiguous stipulation.

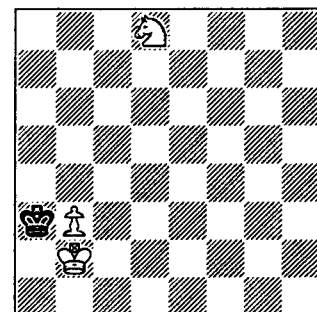
Thanks to Paul Raican and Mark Ridley for partial elucidation of **Republican Chess**: If after one side's move the enemy king can be placed on the board in a position where he would be in orthodox checkmate, then he is so placed.

It seems reasonable that if the K can be so placed, then he must be so placed; this won't affect direct mates (or will it?), but offers good self-mate possibilities.

There is another form, 'legale matzet'. The Dutch explanation says something like "there must have been a legal mating move". I am uncomfortable with the idea of a 'legal move' taking place in an illegal position with only one king on the board.

The concept can be expressed most naturally (Problem 227) as **Republican Chess (due process)**: Before moving, you may place the enemy king on any vacant, unchecked square; provided that the following move delivers orthodox checkmate. 'Due Process?' The republicans do usually subject the monarch to some form of show trial before executing him... In this case, it seems reasonable that the placing of the king should be optional.

(230) Stephen EMMERSON & Ronald TURNBULL



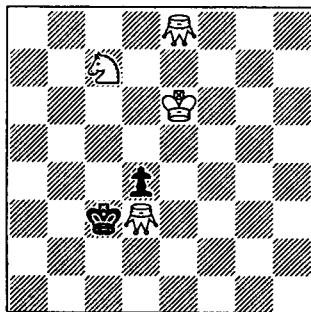
Seriesmate in 11. Mars Circe.

Once again, the length-record for Mars Circe wenigsteiner series-movers has been equalled but not surpassed. **Mars Circe**: a unit

captures from its rebirth square (if vacant) and not from the square it happens to occupy. Captured units are removed in the ordinary way. In (230), any move of the knight gives check from b1. White plays eleven times, the final move mating.

The **Grasshopper** of (231) moves and captures on Q-lines to the square immediately beyond some intervening piece (e.g. Ge8-e5). **Nightrider** moves like knight, but keeps going (e.g. Ne8-d6-c4-b2).

(231) Arthur WILLMOTT



Helpmate in 3½

(b) Grasshopper e8 becomes Nightrider

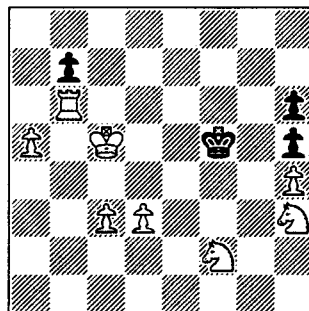
Here's the next quibble. **Oscillating Kings**: "Kings change places after Black move": but in diagram (233), may Black play 1...Ka7, trusting in the oscillation to get him out of check?

Must the move be not-self-check before the fairy transformation (as in Alice Chess and series-movers) — or does 'check' mean "side to move can capture the enemy king" and only apply on the completion of the move? Well, Allan Bell supposed the former (which is rather old-fashioned), while I supposed the latter (which is how we interpret Circe, Madrasi, and any new stipulation unless told otherwise).

Either convention makes sense — obviously, as Allan and myself are both sensible (or maybe

sensitive) people. And the 'modern' interpretation is not enforced every time, for instance it doesn't apply to Maxi or to Single Combat — for the good reason that if it did it would imply horrible and counter-intuitive complications. (And yes, if you actually desire the horrible and counter-intuitive complications, the stipulation is called 'Ultra Maxi': *Problemist*, May 95)

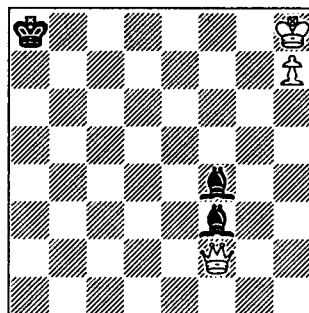
(232) Allan BELL



Mate in 2. Oscillating Kings.

- (a) after Black move
- (b) after White move
- (c) after all moves

(233) Allan BELL



Selfmate in 2. Oscillating Kings after Black move

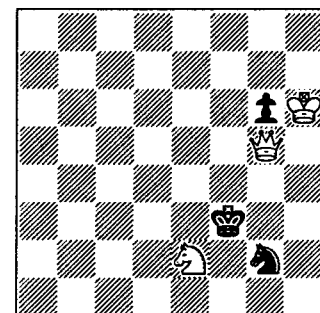
Here, however, no horrible and counter-intuitive complications arise, and we don't really want both versions. What do readers think? Allan's opinion is expressed in (232 and 233): No moves into self-check before or after oscillation — mine in (234): Check only applies after oscillation — readers are invited to give theirs too in diagram form...

[The editor (GPJ) thinks both versions should be allowed, the case where the King cannot pass through check being distinguished by the term 'non-passant', as proposed in his article 'The Royal Game' VC7 p.39.]

Oscillation after both (232c): I find it simplest, here, to think of a 'fixed king' (Black one in the diagram) and a 'moving king' (White in the diagram). Under the old-fashioned convention, which applies here, an attack on the moving king is check (e.g. 1:Se4†) and must be countered. An attack on the fixed king is not check but must also be countered; if it cannot be countered the side to move is stalemated. (e.g. 1:Rf6=).

Checkmate is either give check to both (unless side to move can destroy both checks, i.e. capture the double-checker) or checkmate the moving king.

(234) Ronald TURNBULL



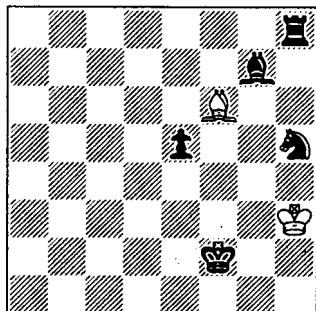
Mate in 2. Oscillating Kings after Black move

In (234), if 1. Qh4, Black must play S×h4, else self-check after oscillation. 1. Kg7 (relieves stalemate) Kg3 (K \diamond K) legal.

A final piece of maximal/minimal oscillation: "Add 32 units to empty board for legal cluster. Oscillating (after W move) Kings". A legal cluster is a legal position that becomes illegal on removal of any unit. Solution at the end.

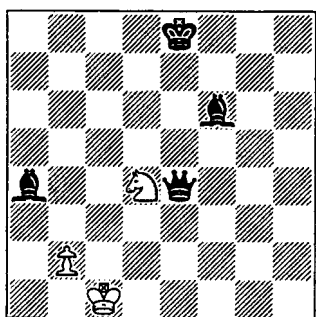
Follow-my-leader: if Black can legally play to the square just vacated by White, he does so. (An 'old-fashioned' convention: White may not leave his King in check on the grounds that Black is obliged to play the F-M-L move and cannot capture it.) Problems (235) and (236) show the potential of this form, as well as the two main ways of achieving selfmate. Will others Follow this Lead?

(235) Mario VELUCCHI



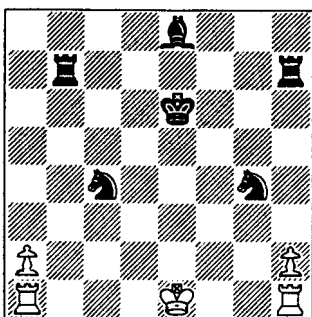
Selfmate in 5. Follow-my-leader.
2 solutions.

(236) Ian RICHARDSON



Selfmate in 4. Follow-my-leader.

(237) Valery LISKOVETS

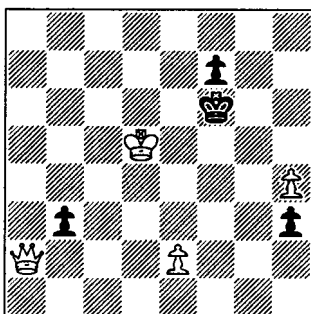


Helpmate in 3. (a) PRA
(b) add White Bishop e4.

Partial Retro Analysis (PRA): different solutions are required depending on the history of the diagram. In (237) part (b) is orthodox.

Problem (238) brings the final quibble; in **Shrinking Men**, no unit moves further than it did last time. I am in a strong position here for resolving quibbles, as I invented this form! If we trace the path of the wQ from d1, it turns out that her present power of movement cannot exceed four units (e.g. a2-a6). (Under the conventions of shrinking men, the power of a promoted piece does not exceed that of the pawn promoted from.) I can supply to composers a dossier of the powers of the shrinking queen.

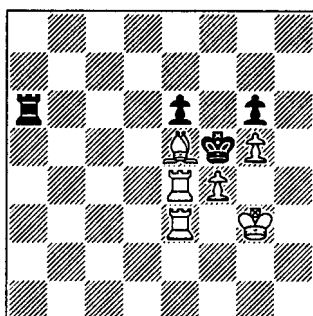
(238) Peter FAYERS



Helpmate in 2. Shrinking Men.
(b) after first B+W move-pair
Helpmate in 1.

Isardam: positions where two like pieces (Ks excluded) attack each other are illegal.

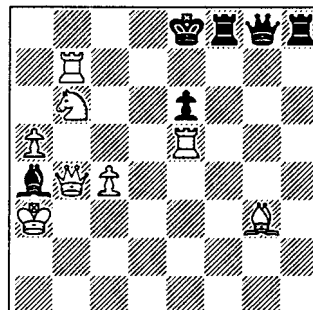
(239) Allan BELL



Mate in 4. Isardam

Double Series Selfstalemate: Black plays 8 helpful moves, then White plays 8 moves, then Black is obliged to stalemate.

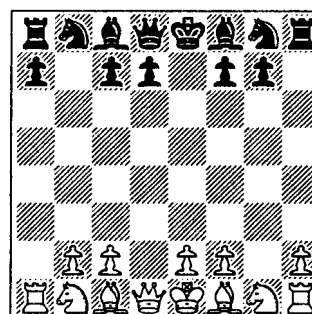
(240) Arthur WILLMOTT



Double Series Selfstalemate in 8

Single Combat: if the piece that moved last time can legally move again, it does.

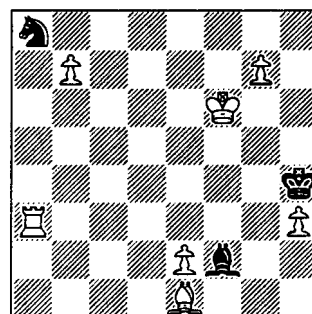
(241) Mario VELUCCHI



Single Combat.
After Black's 9th. Game so far?

Maxi: Black plays a geometrically longest legal move. No quibbling over these last three, just good tough chessplay.

(242) Paul RAICAN

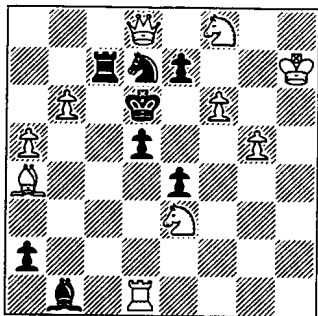


Selfmate in 8. Maxi.

Problem (243) on next page.

Well now: what did you think of all those directmates?

(243) Miroslav BRADA



Mate in 2. MAFF + OWU
3 solutions

For explanation of MAFF (mate with a free field — nothing to do with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food) and OWU (one white unit) see the tournament announcement p. 145.

Peter Fayers is preparing an article/mini-lecture, and would be glad to see any helpmate problems similar to (238) where, after a pause, we continue to a different solution still with the same side to move [e.g. Mate in 2, (b) from mating position of (a)].

Solutions to the Originals in VC26

Comments from: Erich Bartel, John Beasley, Stephen Emmerson, Alex Ettinger, Peter Fayers, Aubrey Ingleton, Cedric Lytton, Ronald Turnbull.

211 (unnamed composer) 1:Kb2 2:Ka1 7:b8R 8:Rb2 9:Rh2 10:Rh1† K-† How to self-mate with bare king. "No solution, how can there be?" (unnamed solver) Excelsior and underpromotion; good -EB.

212 (Velucchi) 1.h×g2 3.g×h5 5:h×g7 Kh6 6:g8B Bg7† No problem at all, except to wonder why g3 and h5 are present -SE; one of 4 suggesting this pawn removal. Excelsior and under-promotion again. Simple but nice! -EB.

213 (Vitale) 1:Re7 Rc4 2:R*e4 Red4† W starts 1:Rc7 Bg7† 2:R*g7 Rbf7†. Nice echo -AE, who suggests rotating the board 180° and then replacing wS by wP (C+). Difficult, but neat though not perfectly matched -SE. One of the best Andernach helpmates so far -MR. A pity one superfluous unit in each solution -EB.

214 (Vitale) 1:Sd7 Sd5 2:Sf6 Sf4 3:Sh5 Sf3† (b) 1:Qg5 Sd3 2:Se3 Sf4 3:Sg4 Sf5† Another nice echo with subtle dual-avoidance -AI. bS distant, which aided solving -RT

215 (Nebotov) 1:Sf3 K×f3 2:Rg5 Rh2† (b) S×d6 R*d6(Sf7) 2:Sg5 Rh6† Pt (a) took about an hour! This 'orthodox' is tricky to get your head round -SE. Amusing twist in (b) -AI.

216 (Nebotov) 1:Bc4 K×g6 2:Bg8 Bg7† (b) 1:R*h6(Ra1) Kf7 2:Rh1 R×h1† Funnily, same mate as in 212 -AE. Didactic but themeless pair -SE. Brahms followed Beethoven. Similarly, this suffers by following the much better 215 -PF.

217 (Raican) 1:Rd8 Qb8 2:Rd6 Qh8 3:Rb6 Qa1 (+Ka6†); 1:Re8 Qb8 2:Re5 Qh8 3:Re2 Qa1 (+Ke1†); 1:Rc8 Qb8 2:Rc7 Qh8 3:Rc2 Qa1 (+Kc1†); 1:Ra8 Qb8 2:f4 Qh8 3:Rb8 Qa1 (+Ka8†). Nicely done -SE ... and at least as sound as SE's reprogramming of Popeye! Very artificial -AI. For once, I find myself in disagreement with this accomplished solver -RT

218 (Richardson) 1:Qe5(†K) Rf6 2:Q×g5(†S) Se7 3:Q×f6(†S) wins next move. B starts: 1:Qd4(†S) Sh3 2:Rf3(†Q) gf 3:Qe3(†K&B) wins next move. Fun when you get used to it -AI. Real eighteenth-century blood and thunder -JB. Popeye duals 2nd part with 2:g4(†S) Sg5 3:Qf6 or Qd5.

219 (Turnbull) 1:Kd2 e1S/f2/e1K 2:Bb7/K×e2/Kc1,c2. I had hoped that combination of mutate (from diagram, Black 1...Ke3, f2 lead to immediate mate) and Holst (W mates the piece that B has lost the power to promote a friend for) might excuse the dual after 1...e1K. But: need to lose the dual -SE. First time I've seen the King pinned in the mating position! -PF. I'm confused - don't see any pinned king -RT.

220 (Bartel, Axt) 1:Rf1 2:S×d3 3:Rg1 4:B×d2 5:Qa1. Unthematic use of Mirror Circe condition -SE. PF thanks me for the exceedingly unhelpful hint.

221 (Turnbull, Emmerson) 1:Be6 (2:B×c4) 1...Rc5†/Qc5† 2:b8R/h8Q. Q/R Grimshaw, impossible in orthodox and so one of my favourite themes -RT. Beautiful demonstration of Isardam -AI. Very easy but worth doing -CCL. JB points out that as h1Q is bound to happen, the need to block bP e6 makes the key quite unnecessarily obvious.

222 (Fayers) 1:Kf5 e6; 1...Gf7 2:Kd5 e6; 1:Kf5 Gf7† 2:Kd5 e6; 1...Gf5 2:Kd7 e6†† 3:Kd5 Gf7. Same mate 3 times by different means! -AE. Nice surprise 3:Kd5! -AI. EB and Popeye cook c) by 2:Ke8 f7 - mate only if pawn on back rank immobile. Which I don't think it should be, but "I think this is an admitted convention" -EB. There is, sadly, no general rule for these situations: different in Einstein, Circe Parrain, etc.

223 (Raican) 1:d4 Sf6 2:Kd2 Se4† 3:K×e4 e5 4:K×e5 Ke7 5:Bg5† Kb4 6:Qe1† K×e1 7:e4 Q×g5† 8:Ke8 Qd8†. I do like these fairy proof games! How many more conditions shall we see? -PF, sole solver (this time we've a Single Combat one).

224 (Velucchi) 1:h4 Sc6 2:h5 Sd4 3:h6 S*f6 4:Rh6 S*e2; 1:h4 Sf6 2:h5 S*h5 3:e4 Sf6 4:Rh6 S*e4 (with duals, hence loose stipulation) PF suggests wQh5 instead of wRh6, to give a sound proof game both parts...? Not quite as triumphant as 208 (VC25) -SE. Change of places by the black knights!! Fine! But second seems to be more of a cook than a solution -EB (who sends his own Problemkiste 1995 showing interchange of bS in 4 move SPG. Of course, such interchange not altogether surprising in Anti-Circe.)

225 (Stein) 1:Bg8 2:Rh8 3:Bh4 5:S*d3 9:K×c5 10:Kd6 12:S*a6 13:a6 14:Be6† S*e6. Final move opens 3 lines for mirror mate with all force on board edge. But too hard for our solvers!

Solving Ladder p. 145.

Two's Company

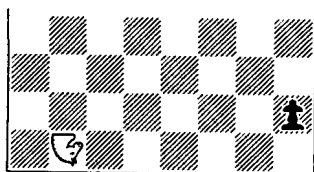
by Stephen Emmerson

Well, the entry for VC's 1st Theme Tourney is now in, and while I am having the fun of going through the many interesting submissions, your Problem Editor has asked me to provide a small selection of other two piece problems, for your enjoyment.

Since being invited to judge, I've managed to find a surprising number of other problems — about 150 so far, without examining more than a couple of sources exhaustively. Some of this selection might have had prizes, had they been eligible; I've thrown in a few by other composers, too!

The obvious theme to show with few men is the echo, and (A) is a very simple example.

(A) H. Ebert & H. Axt
Four Men Only No. 2



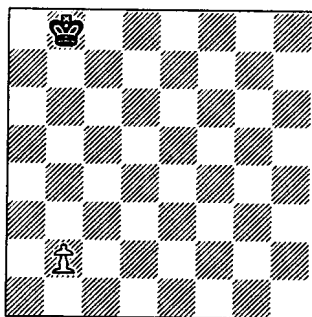
Helpstalemate in 2 with set play
No Captures. Nightrider

The condition used here is partly to stop cooks and partly used to give the stalemates themselves. Often, the conditions are just pure cookstoppers, but I think this breach of economy is more acceptable in 2-man problems, considering the lean use of force! Also, 64 squares is rather a large place for just 2 pieces, and some way must be found of adding enough features to make sure the solutions aren't riddled with duals.

Another way of adding landmarks to the terrain is with a condition such as Circe, or its

relatives, which give special merit to certain particular squares. This is the case in (B); I have added the last 3 parts which are 'cousins' with 3 changes each. Again, I think some leeway must be allowed in such cases. There are echoes down the a-file here; can anyone find conditions to fill in the gaps?

(B) J. Mintz *feenschach* 1983
(b-d) S. Emmerson original.



Helpmate in 5½ Circe.

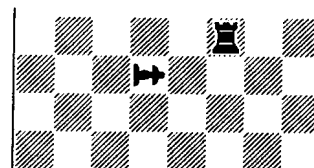
- (b) bKe8 H†4 Mirror Circe.
- (c) bKd8 H†5 Equipollent.
- (d) bKa2 H†2½ Antipodean.

In Circe, a captured piece other than a King is replaced on its home square if vacant, so if wSb3×Bd4 the B is added at f8. In Mirror Circe: a captured piece is reborn on the home square of a similar piece of opposite colour (Bc1); In Equipollent play a captured piece is displaced the same distance and direction as the move made by the capturing piece (Bf5); In Antipodean Chess a captured piece is reborn 4 ranks and 4 files away (Bh8).

If the pieces aren't enough, the conditions can become everything, as in the following task (C). The piece on f4 can change to any piece from S, B, R, or Q after each move, or not change at all, and the hypervolage condition means that

every time a move finishes on a square of a different colour from that upon which it started, the piece will change colour as well. The Berolina pawn moves diagonally and captures straight forward; this is the piece to be mated. Finally, both sides must play a geometrically longest move. This problem shows that it's possible for pieces of the same side to mate, perhaps this example will encourage others to come out!

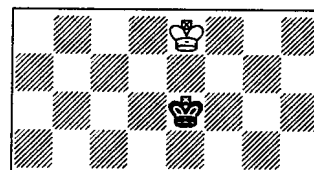
(C) M. Caillaud
Die Schwalbe 1980



Helpmate in 2.
Double Maxi.
Summa-promoter
hypervolage Rf4.
Royal Berolina Pawn d3

In (D), I was fortunate to find an echo with correspondence in the play, in good modern style. Note the dual avoidance on W's 1st!

(D) S. Emmerson original

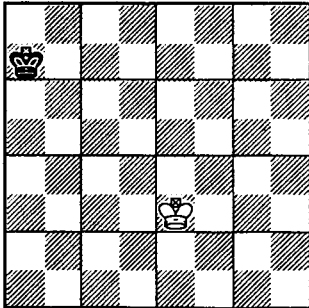


Helpmate in 2, 2 solutions.
Royal Querquisites

The Querquisite can be thought of as a type of Chameleon; it has the power of movement of the piece upon whose file it stands, e.g. a rook on the a- and h- files, a king on the e-file, &c. Here both pieces are royal and can pass through check. The piece was invented by J. E. H. Creed, *FCR* June 1947 (and, as the *Odysseus*, by H. Schmid 10 years ago).

Another way to deal with few pieces rattling around in a large board is to add some force! (E) does this by the expedient of retracting the capture of the piece required to mate. In Grid chess, all moves and checks must cross a grid line.

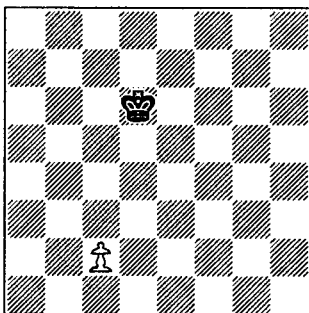
(E) A. H. Kniest
Frankfurter Notizen 1966



Grid Chess. Black retracts one move for Serieshelpmate in 5 (b) move bK to square upon which it is mated in part (a)

Alternatively, one can remove parts of the board! (F).

(F) H. Ebert *feenschach* 1979
version by S. Emmerson



Haaner play.
Help double stalemate (a) in 4 (b) in 5 exactly

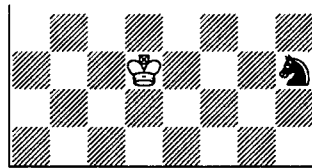
In Haaner play cells vacated in course of play become voids and cannot be used again. I haven't received quite as many Haaner chess entries as I expected, or entries on small irregular boards. Among published problems, boards found include 2x3, 2x2, boards

consisting of the squares a1, a2, b3 only, even 1x1! I did find some on boards of different dimension: some trivial stuff on a 1 x n by Dawson, also a 1x4 torus, but only the solitary 3D example I've found is worth quoting (if not diagramming). This is interesting because it shows how a leaper can lose a move in 3D.

(G) U. Marks
feenschach 1994
White Camel d3 =
(0, 1, 3)-leaper, Black Ph4.
Stalemate in 3 with set play.
Stereo Chess (see VC16).
No captures.

Returning to adding force, here's a curiosity (H) in which this is done to help achieve a double stalemate!

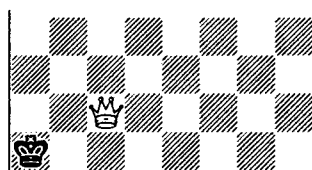
(H) G. Busing
feenschach 1980



Remanantes Schach. Royal S.
Series help double stalemate in 3.
(b) h3 to g1.

In Remanantes Schach, non-moving ghosts of pieces are left behind after each move to guard and block squares, I believe. A humorous twin! Can anybody confirm this rule? The problem was originally published with Haaner chess stipulated as well, but I cannot see why.

(I) H-J. Schiegl
Frankfurter Notizen 1970

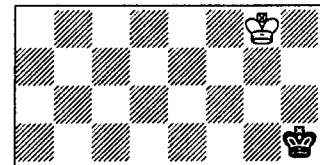


One Way Chess
Mate in 1 (PRA)

Besides the retractor seen earlier, there is a little scope for some retro-analysis as in (I). In One-Way Chess no piece may leave a square in the same direction as it enters. How did the BK arrive at a1?

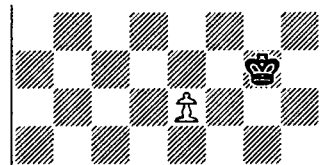
Some nice sequences to finish with. Enjoy solving! (J) is the longest 2-piece problem I've found on an orthodox board. The Edge Chess condition means all moves are confined to the edge cells. Mars Circe (see pp.139-140) implies wK may not enter d8 or f8 nor bK d1 or f1.

(J) Z. Oliva
Problemkiste 1996



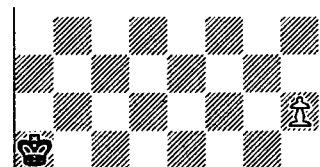
Helpstalemate in 17
Mars Circe. Edge Chess

(K) S. Emmerson original



Circe. Helpmate in 8.
White must check.

(L) Erich Bartel
Problemkiste 1994



Seriesmate in 13
Circe. Relegation Chess.

In Relegation Chess pieces returning to the second rank of their side turn back to pawns.

Solutions on next page.

VC Theme Tourney 1:

In all 66 entries have been received, from 16 composers and 9 countries. Warm thanks to the composers; we have been enjoying their entries very much. We hope, but do not promise, to announce the award in the next issue (Summer 98).

SOLVERS SCORES

MAXIMUM	15
Mark Ridley	5
Erich Bartel	10½
Ian Richardson	7½
Peter Fayers	12
Stephen Emmerson	13
Aubrey Ingleton	11½
A Ettinger	8½

Late solutions VC 25

Paul Raican	13½
Vlaicu Crisan	18
(½pt behind leaders!)	
Erich Bartel	16
Aubrey Ingleton +2 for total 18	

Solutions to 'Two's Company'

(A) Set 1...Nh4 2.h1B Ng2=; 1.h1B Nh4 2.Ba8 Nb7=.

(B) (a) 1...b4 2.Kc7 b5 3.Kd6 b6 4.Kc5 b7 5.Kb4 b8Q† 6.Ka3 Qb3† (b) 1.Kd7 b4 2.Kc6 b5† 3.Kb5(Pb7) b8Q† 4.Ka6 Qb6† (c) 1.Kc7 b4 2.Kb6 b5 3.Ka5 b6 4.Kb6(Pc7) c8Q 5.Ka7 Qb7† (d) 1...b3 2.Kb3(Pf7) f8Q 3.Ka4 Qb4.

(C) 1.Ra4 = wS Sc5 = bR 2.Rh5 = wB Bd1=bQ†

(D) 1.Kf6(B) Kd7(Q) 2.Bb2 (S) Qd4† 1.Kf5(B) Kd8(Q) 2.Bb1 (S) Qd3†

(E) (a) Retract Kb6×Q 1.Kc6 2.Kb5 3.Kc4 4.Kd5 5.Ke5 Qd4† (b) Retract Kf4×Q 1.Kg4 2.Kf3 3.Kg2 4.Kf1 5.Kg1 Qa1†

(F) (a) 1.Kc7 c3 2.Kb8 c4 3.Ka7 c5 4.Ka8 c6 =/= (b) 1.Kd7 c3 2.Kc8 c4 3.Kb7 c5 4.Ka7 c6 5.Ka8 c7 =/=.

(G) Set 1...h3 2.Cg4 h2 3.Ch1 =; 1.Ce3C h3 2.Ce2 h2 3.Ch1 =.

(H) (a) 1.Sg5 2.Sf3 3.Sg1 Ke3 =/= (b) 1.Sf3 2.Sg5 3.Sh3 Ke3 =/=

(I) Partial Retro-Analysis: if BK entered from b1 1.Qb1; if from b2 1.Qb2; and if from a2 then 1.Qc1, not 1.Qa2? Kb2! - a trap for the unwary.

(J) 1.Kh6 Kh8 2.Kh7 Kg8 3.Kh8 Kh7 4.Kg8 Kh6 ... 9.Kb8 Kg1 10.Ka7 ... 15.Ka2 Ka1 16.Kb1 Ka2 17.Kc1 Kb1=.

(K) 1.Kf4 e3† 2.Kf5 e4† 3.Kf6 e5† 4.Kf7 e6† 5.Kf8 e7† 6.Kf7 e8Q† 7.Ke8(Qd1) Qa4† 8.Kd8 Qd7†

(L) 5.h8R 6.Rb8 7.Rb2=P 12.b8Q 13.Qb1†

TOURNEY ANNOUNCEMENT
Miroslav Brada (Slovakia) announces a tourney for two new fairy conditions he has invented.

MAFF (Mate with a Free Field): in the 'mate' to Black, there must be exactly one free cell in the bK's field; the check to Black can be eliminated only by moving bK to the free cell. A normal mate without one free cell in the bK's field is illegal under this stipulation and any move which inevitably leads to an illegal move, is forbidden.

OWU (One White Unit): in the mate to Black, there must be exactly one W unit in the bK's field. A mate without a W unit in the bK's field is illegal and any move which inevitably leads to an illegal move, is forbidden.

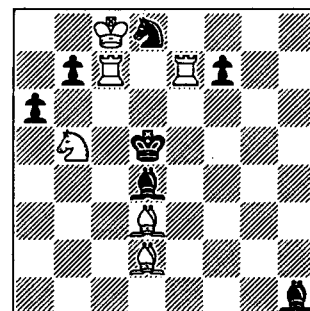
Quibbles: Should the conditions apply evenly to W and B? Miroslav has an open mind ('we need to see more problems'), and would welcome problems in either

mode. The final clause in each, possibly intended to eliminate complication, will in fact create complication of a new and interesting sort. (Normally, a move to which there is no legal reply is stalemate.)

The tourney is for mate-in-two, MAFF or OWU or both, with any other fairy stipulation allowed. Closing date 15 November 1998, results promised by 30 November 1998! Entries to **Miroslav Brada, Visnovskeho 2505/5 Zvolen 96001, Slovakia:** or e-mail to miroslav.brada@fphil.uniba.sk.

Example compositions:

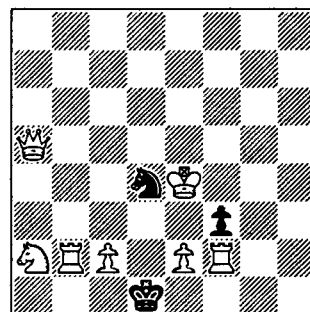
Miroslav BRADA
Sachova skladba 1997



Mate in 2. MAFF
2 solutions

Solution: MAFF: 1:Bf4! (Red7) 1... Kc6/Ke6 2:Rcd7/Bc4 1:Bb4! (Rcd7) 2:Bc4/Red7.

Miroslav BRADA
The Problemist 1997



Mate in 2 (with try). OWU

Solution: OWU: 1:e3? (Rb1) 1... Sc2/Se2 2:Qd2/Rf1 but Sb3! 1:c4! (Rf1) 2:Rb1/Qd2.

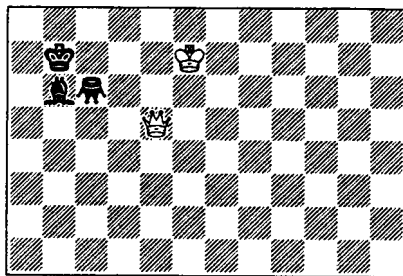
**THE END IS
NIGH**
by Paul Byway
20 The Finches, Hertford
Hertfordshire SG13 7TB

Solutions to the Losing Chess studies are on page 152.

Modern Courier Chess

The fortress draw with queen against two bishops is given in 'Secrets of Pawnless Endings'. It seems that bishop and fers can also draw, but only in the corner of the same colour as the fers. Here is the play.

#31 Paul Byway (original)



White to play: Draw

1.Ke7 Bc7 2.Qb2† Ka7 3.Qb2 Ka6 4.Qc5 Kb7 5.Ke6 Bb8 /i 6.Qb4† Ka7 7.Qa5† Kb7 8.Ke7 Bc7 9.Qc5 Bb8 10.Qb4† Kc7! /ii 11.Qb3 /iii Ba7 12.Qc4 Kb7 /iv 13.Qb4† Kc7 14.Qa5† Kb7 15.Kd6 Bb8† 16.Kc5 Ba7† 17.Kc4 Bb6 =.

/i 5...Bb6? 6.Qb4 Kc7 7.Qe7† Kb8 8.Kd6 (Black loses once the king reaches d6).

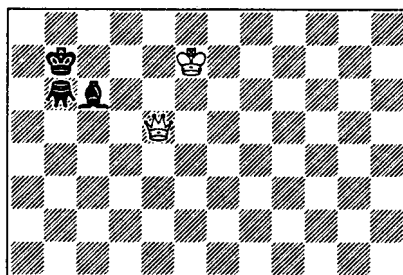
/ii Playing ...Ka7 only works when White's king cannot move to d8 now:— 10...Ka7 11.Kd8 Fb7 12.Qc5† Ka6 13.Kd7 Ba7 14.Qa3† Kb6 15.Qb4† Ka6 16.Kc7 and wins.

/iii 11.Qa5† Kb7 12.Kd8 Bd6 zz reciprocal zugzwang =.

/iv 12...Bb6 13.Ke6 wins. Black must not leave a piece pinned.

With a fers of the 'wrong' colour Black loses, as follows:—

#32 Paul Byway (original)



White to play: Win

1.Ke7 Fc7 2.Qb2† Ka7 3.Qb4 Ka6 4.Qc5 Kb7 5.Ke6 Fb8 /i 6.Qb4† Ka7 /ii 7.Qa5† Kb7 8.Kd6 and wins. This move is not possible if Black has two bishops: now a fers or king move loses immediately. White also wins after any bishop move: for example: (a) 8...Bh1 9.Qb4† Ka8 (9...Kc8 10.Qc3† Kd8 11.Qh8†) 10.Qa3† Kb7 (10...Fa7 11.Kc7) 11.Qb2† and 12.Qa1(c1)† wins the bishop. (b) 8...Be8 9.Qd5† Kb6 (9...Kc8 10.Qe6† or 9...Ka6 10.Qa8† or 9...Ka7 10.Qd4† etc) 10.Qd4† and wins after 10...Kd7 11.Qe4† or 10...Kb5 11.Qe5† or 10...Ka5(a6) 11.Qh8

/i 5...Fd8 6.Qb4† K-any 7.Qd6(†) /ii 6...Kc7 7.Qa5† Kb7 8.Kd6 rejoins the main line. No better is 7...Kc8 8.Kd6 after which a move by fers or king immediately loses a piece, and a bishop move is answered by 9.Qc3† winning: e.g. 8...Be8 9.Qc3† Kb7 10.Qf3† Kc8 11.Qf5† Kd8 12.Qf6† Kc8 13.Qe6† Kd8 14.Qe7†

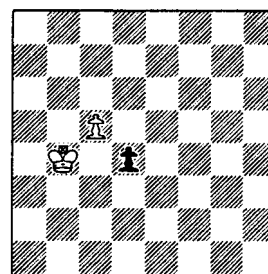
The solution in #31 is (in the main line) no different to the two bishops case; since the piece on c6 doesn't move it may as well be fers as bishop, but the other piece does all the work and if this is a fers then White can win. Of course, White's main advantage must lie in the play preceding these diagrams, which will be much easier than against two bishops.

Losing Chess

The activity in this variant has not yet subsided. Try these five. If you solve #33 then #34 should be easy: if not it will be helpful. It is a twin study. I record #35 (in the nick of time) before it is overtaken by the

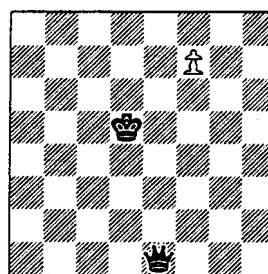
work of John Beasley. My final piece #36 uses the same idea.

#33 Paul Byway (original)



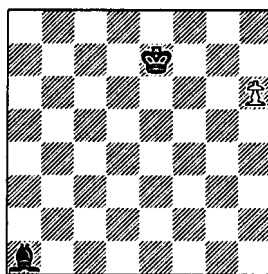
White to play and win

#34 Paul Byway (original)



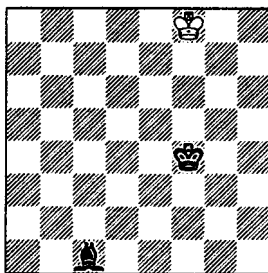
White to play and win
(b) Qe1 → Re1

#35 Paul Byway (original)



White to play and win

#36 Paul Byway (original)

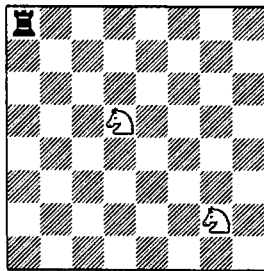


White to play and win

John Beasley sent a 17-page document on *Three-piece Endings in Losing Chess*. He has constructed computer databases for these endings and records his discoveries. It is essential reading for all who play Losing Chess competitively. (He is willing to provide a database look-up service by letter or telephone.)

The following diagram records one of the finest pieces to come out of this work. John says that this is 'discovered by computer' and not 'composed by JDB', but I object: men build motorways — even if they use earth-moving equipment. The nature of the work has changed — but the work was still John Beasley's.

#37 John Beasley



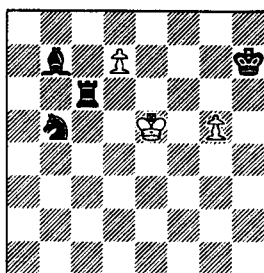
White to play and win

Black to move loses immediately. White has a ten-move manoeuvre to pass the move to Black: every move is unique, if we make allowance for the symmetry of the initial position.

Competition 3

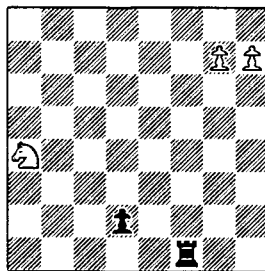
For our competition this time I set these two fine Losing Chess studies from Fabrice Liardet.

#38 Fabrice Liardet



Losing Chess
White to play and win

#39 Fabrice Liardet



Losing Chess
White to play and win

Result of Competition 2

My vague stipulation was universally criticised, but Ian Richardson caught my intention: he gave seven continuations, including the following Italian mate: 6.b5, bxa4 Nbd7, Ngf6, Rxf8, exd4 7.Rc1, Rc7, Kc2, e4, e5, exf6, Rc8† His suggestion for a Black continuation is: 6.Nf, Rxf8, Kd7, exd4, b5, bxa4. If White queens the g-pawn and takes everything, Black gets two queens and gives checkmate. (8 points)

Fred Galvin suggests: 6.b5, bxa4, Kd7, Nf6, Rxf8, Ne4† and 6.Nh6, Rxf8, Ke7, Rc8, Rc1, Rxa1 which can be answered by 7.e4, N3, Bb5, dxe5, Rc1, Rc8, Re8†

In Competition 1, part (a) Ian gave: 8.Kc7, Kxb8, Bf1, Bxg2, Bxh1, Bxe4, Bxa8, h6 and I gave 9.a3, Nf3, Ng5, Nxf7, Nxh8, Nf7, Nxh6, Nf5, Nxg7 wins(?). Fred responded with: 10.Kc7, Kd6, Ke5, Kf6, Kxg7, Bd5, Bb3, a5, a4, d5 and Black wins! but he remarks that replacing 9...Nxg7 with Ng3 preserves the White win. (3 points).

Correspondence

Hugh Myers (writing to PCW): The "Yakutat and Aleut" article (VC26 pp.113-4) is the kind of investigation that I like to see, although, as the author recognises, there are still unanswered questions. I can't agree with Murray's "impossible to indicate ... No two pieces are exactly the same." Some are similar enough considering hand-carving, and I see pieces that

look like knights, bishops and rooks (those with crescent tops might be either Bs or Rs). No.3 in the top row and No.2 in the middle row are the same piece (more obvious in Murray); I've seen it before (a Bishop? I don't remember). Yet the author's investigation makes it seem that these are pieces for a form of checkers (draughts). Even so, I'm sceptical of that. Are these the only Yakutat pieces? If so, why assume that they're all from one set rather than remnants of more than one set? And can we believe that the anthropologist would know detailed rules for a game unless many more pieces were available?

Chivalrous Attrition

This game designed by **William F. Bultas**, 4579 Laclede Avenue #206, St Louis, MO 63108-2103, USA (e-mail: chimera@anet-stl.com) is described as a 'chess variant' but really belongs to the Nim family.

In the basic version, each player starts with a single knight. White places his knight anywhere on the board. Then Black places his knight (but not on a cell that is the reflection or 180° rotation of White's cell, since Black could then win by simply imitating White's moves — a standard strategy of Nim games).

The knights lay waste all cells through which they pass (i.e. they never reenter a cell previously used by either player — they are "Attila's huntsmen", e.g. C. Berge, *Theory of Graphs*, Methuen, 1962, p.202).

The players move alternately and a player loses if he cannot move (because the knight only has access to wasted cells) or if the other player captures his knight. (Capture of White by Black is only possible if the knights start on squares of the same colour, and of Black by White only if they start on opposite colours, so Black should choose to start on a cell of the same colour as White.)

Similar games can obviously be played by more than two players or by two players each with more than one piece. I would think a game with each player using knight and grasshopper might be interesting! — GPJ.

Xiangqi

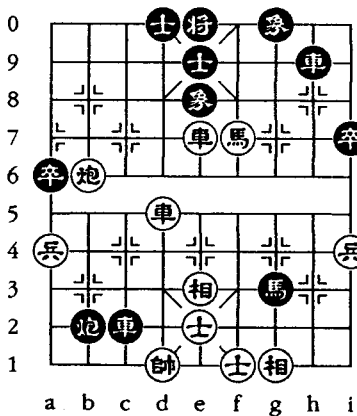
by Peter Wood

Last year's Shanghai Cup competition held at Hastings saw a clash between the two top UK non-asian players, Paul Byway and Chris Hann. The outcome of this game decided the destination of the non-asian prize.

Chris Hann - Paul Byway

Light annotations by Paul Byway (PB) and Peter Wood (PW).

1.Ng3 g6 2.Ci3 Che8 3.Rh1 Ng8
 4.Nc3 Ri9 5.Bce3 Nc8 6.Cb5 c6
 7.Rh5 Nf6 8.c5 c:c5 9.R:c5 Nd6
 10.Nd5 C:e4+ 11.Gde2 Ce5 12.Nc3
 C:b5 13.N:b5 (PW. Honours to Black
 in the opening. Red's 10.Nd5 just
 loses the valuable 'e' pawn....)
 13....N:g4 14.Ci2 (... as well as the
 'g' pawn.) 14....Bce8? (PB. 14.... Cg8
 was far superior.) 15.Cg2 Nf6
 16.Rd1 Nfe4 17.N:e4 N:e4 18.Re5
 Ng3 19.R:e7 Gfe9 (PW. Protecting
 the 'g' pawn. Red has taken the
 initiative and won back the central
 pawn.) 20.Rd5 a6 (PW. Rh9,
 intending Rh2, looks a promising
 idea.) 21.Nd6 Rc0 22.Nf7 Cb1
 23.Kd1 Rc1+ 24.Kd2 Cb2 25.C:g6
 (PW. Red fears no demons.) 25....Rh9
 26.Cb6 Rc2+ 27.Kd1



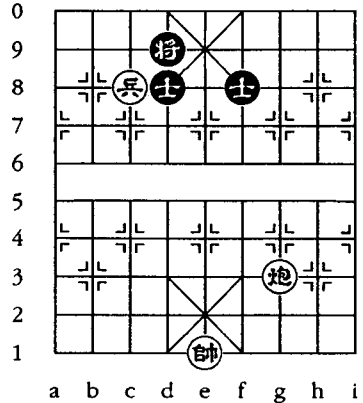
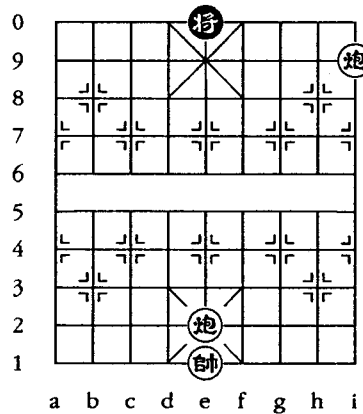
27....C:e2 28.G:e2 N:e2 (PW. Not
 28....R:e2, for Red mates following
 Cb0+.) 29.Cb0+ Rc0 30.Ke1 Nc3
 (PB. Things started to go wrong after
 this move. Probably I should capture
 Bishop or Cannon and play safe.)
 31.Rd3 N:a4 32.Cb9 Rc9 33.Cb0+

Rc0 34.Cb8 Rb0 35.Cb7 Nc5??
 36.B:c5 a5 37.Bce3 a5-b5 38.Rd5
 Ra0 39.Red7 b4 40.Rg5 Ra1+
 41.Rd1 R:d1+ 42.K:d1 Rf9 (PB. I
 missed 42.... Gf8 which would have
 blocked the N check and freed King
 and Rook.) 43.Cb0+ Bc0 44.R:g0+
 Gf0 45.Nd8+ Rd9 46.Rg8 Gfe9
 47.Ke1 R:d8 48.Rg0+ Gf0 49.Rg4
 b3 50.Re4+ Gfe9 51.Bg5 Rb8
 52.R:e9+ Resigns. (PB. I must have
 been punch-drunk here, for I needn't
 have resigned in the final position -
 although it's undoubtedly difficult.
 The game swayed back and forth; I
 was surprised at the number of errors
 I found when going over the game.)

PROBLEM COMPETITION

As mentioned in VC21 and 22, the Italian magazine *Scacchi e Scienze Applicate* organised a Xiangqi problem tourney for mates in 2 and 3 moves. This attracted 42 entries and results are expected soon.

Taken at random from the entries are a couple of mates involving Cannons. The first is a mate in 2 by Wang Gao of China. The second is a mate in 3 by D. Nastasio of Italy. Solutions next time.

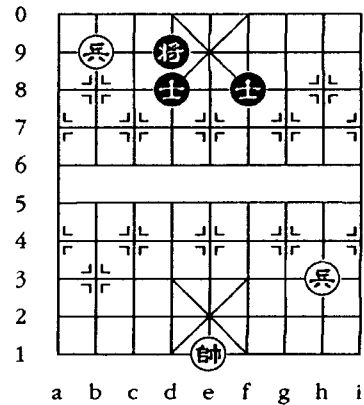


Another Xiangqi tourney has been organised now - for mates in 4 and 5 moves. The closing date is the 31st March 1998. This is very tight for time, but if anyone wants to have a go please send two copies of problems plus solutions to: Lin Ye, Via Don Gnocchi 20/D - 20075 Lodi (LO), Italy.

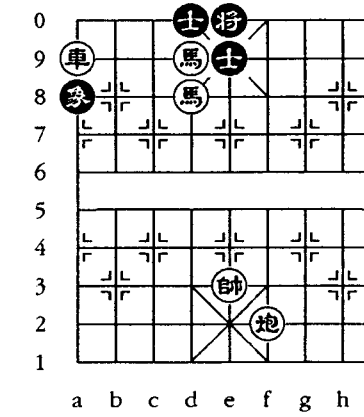
31st March 1998 is the closing date also for a problem tourney in Avalanche Chess - for 2 move problems. Send problems and solutions (two copies) to: Romano Bellucci, Castello 5449 - 30122 Venezia, Italy.

The prizes in each tourney are: 1st. 80,000 L., 2nd. 60,000 L., 3rd. 35,000 L. It should be noted that in Xiangqi, stalemate, as well as checkmate, is also a win for the player who inflicts it.

The problem below comes from an issue of David Woo's *Xiangqi Review* (Jan/Feb 1997). It has a remarkably similar idea to the one above by Nastasio. Solution next time.



Too late for the Problem Tourney is this mate in 2, which has been sent to me by Ian Richardson. Solution on back page.



The Genealogy of Chess

(by David H. Li) Reviewed by Peter Banaschak

Late in February this year Professor David H. Li published *The Genealogy of Chess* (ISBN 0-9637852-2-2). This work is organised in three parts.

In the first part of his book he examines the views of some 30 Western researchers of different background. Some are non-scientists just offering their more or less well-founded views on the matter, some are specialists on one field or the other. After having scolded most of them for inconsistencies in their respective hypotheses he casts a vote on the original country of chess for each of them. He counts 13 votes for India and 6 for China (and from 1¼ to ¼ for other candidates from Babylonia to Russia) (p.114).

He then proceeds to inspect other writers' definitions of 'Chess' and arrives at a rather narrow (but of course, fully acceptable) definition of what 'Chess' is. Furthermore he depicts the attitude of the Chinese literati (i.e. the learned scholar-officials), and describes the Chinese games of Liubo and Weiqi.

Then he produces his hero, the Chinese general Han Xin. This Han Xin is also named as the inventor of Chess in Eyles Irwin's *Account of the Game of Chess, as played by the Chinese* [1]. He then plunges into a narrative of how Han Xin develops the game out of the principles of Weiqi and Liubo, the military and strategic ideas put forward by the Chinese military classics, and his immediate needs as a commander of troops who are encamped during winter. The Chinese proto-chess which he constructs mirrors all these necessities.

In the third part he explains how this Chinese proto-Chess got out of view for some centuries and how it was revived under the Tang dynasty (618–907), and how and why the game was augmented and altered until it gained the appearance it still has today.

Finally he reveals how chess was transmitted into the west (first Persia and then India) and the east (Korea and Japan).

In his preface he states that his mission is "to set the record straight. To wrestle the honor of inventing chess from ones who are undeserved (...) and bestow it upon its rightful claimant, whose recognition is denied for centuries." (p.5).

I would be glad if I could call his work well done and the case he presents a convincing one. His book is well written, it is a pleasure to read, and, especially the first part, contains some candid views on some of the old boy network of chess historians. All in all it is well worth reading. But there are some things one should do in such a work, which he did not do.

(1) A book on Chinese Chess that does only occasionally contain Chinese Characters makes an awkward impression. Technical restrictions that prohibit the use of Chinese Characters in the text should be countered by providing at least a glossary of Chinese terms together with their rendering in Latin script.

(2) Li does not decide what transcription system he will consistently use. He mixes Pinyin and Wade-Giles [2] (which he occasionally calls Giles-Wade, p.143), sometimes even the Needham variant of Wade-Giles rendered freely [3].

(3) Li insists on translating most of the Japanese and Chinese titles of his references throughout. This without, of course, giving the original titles in their original script anywhere [4], but for one instance: he gives the title of a paper by Isaak M. Linder in Cyrillic script (although Li confesses that he can't read Russian and quotes Linder from someone else's work, p.105). It is not acceptable for a researcher not to clearly and explicitly state where quotes are taken from.

(4) He does not state what edition of older works [5] he uses (he only gives the presumed year of publication of the original [6]).

(5) He lists as a reference books of which he himself states that they are lost [7]. All this makes the bibliography slightly confusing. In addition he switches the format in which he gives bibliographical data from one entry to another.

(6) He does not always check Chinese sources quoted someplace [8]. When he does, as with his translation of a seemingly chess-relevant passage of *Chuci* (*The Elegies of Chu*) (pp.129–130) he completely disregards the existing standard translations of the respective passage (although they more or less agree with him), and even worse, he ignores that there are lots of good *Lunyu* (*Analects of Confucius*) translations (which only in error would dare to translate 'boyi' in *Lunyu* xvii, 22 as 'chess').

(7) He mentions works as "consulted but not cited in this book" (p.354), and has in fact quoted from them [9]. Moreover he seems not to be familiar with his predecessors who have already written on Chinese chess. His bibliography is very selective (to put it mildly) [10].

Of course important contributions can be made in unfit form. But again, there is a But: the very core of David H. Li's findings is the declaration that the Western Han (206BC–23AD) general Han Xin is the inventor of Chess. This statement is based on virtually nothing.

Of course there is the account that Eyles Irwin gives, but subsequent research until now has failed to identify from which source Irwin's informer, Pan Zhenguan, has drawn his information. And exactly this is the crucial point: Although the shred of information provided by Pan Zhenguan through Irwin is as good a starting point as anything else, it is simply not enough. It would have been a great find indeed if Prof. Li could tell us from which earlier source the account given by Irwin comes. Lacking this vital piece of

information we cannot follow the tracks of the basic text back through time to assess its credibility. But as it is, the story Li tells is nothing more: a good story, well told, a story plausible enough in itself, but it is simply not backed by any evidence.

He has devised an ingenious explanation for the nearly eight centuries of complete silence from Han Xin's death to the seventh century. According to Professor Li that is because Han Xin incurred the displeasure of the ruling elites after he was put to death. Li tells us it became too dangerous to openly play the game. But of course this does not account for the inclusion of Han's biography in the biography sections of the *Shiji* (the first and model of the great dynastic histories) [11] and the *Hanshu*.

The question of presentation and the problem of his fertile imagination is not everything that can be criticised. There are some further, more basic problems.

1. He leans heavily on Zhang Ruan's *Zhongguo xiangqi shi* (Peking 1991), but is unable to give Zhang's name correctly (he gives Zhang Anru instead, e.g. pp. 366, 383).

2. He quotes Zhao Buzhi on Guangxiangxi (Broad Xiangqi), but keeps on calling him Yao Buzhi (pp. 266, 269, 365).

3. He gives the Chinese word for 'trigram', 'gua' (today in the 3rd tone), as 'qua' throughout his book (e.g. pp. 157-9, 256-7). All this happens far too often to be just a spelling error or a typo, it's a systematic error.

4. Furthermore, his speculations on why and how the logographs on the pieces (pp. 206-207, 230-231) were devised, and later changed, lack credibility. We simply don't know anything about how the pieces looked and how they were inscribed.

5. On p.231 he proclaims that the 'earlier' name of the game was "Game to capture Xiang Qi" (Xiang Qi [12] being the enemy of Han Xin) and was changed to "Game to capture Jiang" ('jiang' meaning 'general') [13]. He calls 'xiang' and 'jiang' "almost homonymous". Sinologists

[14] have reconstructed Middle Chinese (the language of the Tang dynasty (618-907) capital). 'Xiang Qi' (Han's enemy) would have been pronounced 'yǎng dz'ia', whereas 'xiangqi' (Chinese Chess) would have been pronounced 'ziang' g'ji', and 'jiangqi' (Chinese Chess, but with 'general' as first character) 'tsiang' g'ji'. I find it none too homonymous. But however, why any of these should be "easier to pronounce" (which he thinks accounts for a change of the name of the game) than any other (p.339), remains Prof. Li's secret.

It remains a fact that the *Xuanguai lu* (*Tales of the obscure and peculiar*) by the Tang Minister of State Niu Sengru (779-847) is the first real source on Chinese chess. Until now it has not been convincingly demonstrated that any text or archaeological find is of an earlier date [15].

Notes.

[1] in: *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, Antiquity Section, Vol.5, 1793, pp.53-63.

[2] Sometimes (e.g. p.342) he even uses two transliteration systems to represent one person's name (Pinyin: Yuan Zhuang (whom he insists calling Zhaung), Wade-Giles: Yuan Chuang).

[3] Not even to mention the outdated transcription system used by e.g. Karl Himly. Li constantly refers to the *Shuo yǎn* (pinyin) as *Shou wǎn* (e.g. p.55). Concerning the passage from the *Shuo yǎn* in question, Li makes fun of Himly's incorrect translation (p.55-56), completely ignoring that Himly had only limited access to Chinese source texts and good dictionaries, and there was only a limited philological experience with Chinese texts. This is, of course, also true for the other Westerners, even those in China, of the time.

[4] Disregarding that this makes it unnecessarily complicated to check quotes (or is this exactly what he tries to do?).

[5] And he is very generous with the term 'Classic' which he bestows on about every old Chinese text.

[6] Thereby totally disregarding that completing a work and having it published are not at all the same, and ignoring as well that some Chinese works have very complex publishing and editing histories.

[7] e.g. "Lü Cai (600-665), The Encyclopaedia of Games, in two volumes" (p.364): but "That minister, Lü Cai (600-665), is the author of a two-volume work on The Encyclopaedia of Games. The work, unfortunately, is no longer extant." (p.215, note 4).

[8] One simple example: on p.271 he shows the initial array of a Chinese Chess variant, Qiguo xiangqi ('The Chess of the Seven Realms', which he calls Heptagonal Xiangqi) and lists three references, two in Chinese and one in English. But: in *Gujin tushu jicheng* (101 Vols.) Taipei 1964; (an encyclopaedia first printed in 1726; it compiles older texts under 6109 subheadings in 10000 books) which a sinologist would surely use, Vol.59, p.1027, has a nice reprint of the plate with the array and the Chinese text accompanying it.

[9] e.g. he claims not to have cited Leventhal, *The Chess of China*, Taipei 1978, but in reality he refers to this book on p.271.

[10] e.g. Zhou Jiasen's works are not referred to.

[11] As a fact, Han Xin is mentioned about 300 times in the *Shiji*. He is reckoned among the three great military heroes of the Chinese.

[12] The dictionaries I have consulted agree on giving the second character with which the name is written as 'ji' (2nd tone).

[13] Both of which ideas I heavily doubt, as again they are not backed by evidence.

[14] esp. Bernhard Karlgren, *Grammata Serica Recensa*, BMFEA 29 (1957), Repr. Taipei 1996.

[15] Prof. Li mentions (pp. 215-218) some interesting events — but these cannot be checked, as he fails to state what his sources are. Until then, they have to be dismissed as fictitious.

Peter Banaschak
Münster, Germany

BOOKSHELF

by Peter Wood

THE GENEALOGY OF CHESS

by David H. Li

David Li's book, reviewed on the preceding pages, should be of interest to all people who like anything to do with chess history, and in particular Chinese Chess history.

There are three main sections to the book: 1) The origin of chess in western literature, 2) Towards chess as a Chinese invention, 3) Chess after invention, in China and beyond.

The author's brief is to put China fair and square as the birthplace of chess. To this end he has gone through, almost without exception, all authorities that have ever published material about the origin of chess. He is scathing in his criticism of those who have advocated India as origin, exposing the seemingly threadbare and misleading evidence on which this view has been based (Murray in particular is much criticised).

The layout of the book is first class. It is well written and is compelling reading. One can hardly put it down. The book is written with much passion, and will without doubt invoke much discussion. It is an important book, and I recommend it to readers.

The book has 383 pages and costs £18 (54 DM, or equivalent). Write to: **Premier Publishing Company, P. O. Box 341267, Bethesda, Maryland 20827, USA.**

Peter Banaschak, the reviewer of David Li's book, provided a 'Glossary of Relevant Chinese Terms' which is reproduced on the back of the sheet announcing the BCVS AGM circulated with this issue, since we are unable to print the Chinese characters.

David Pritchard (address on our front page) has produced a correction sheet for *The Encyclopedia of Chess Variants* which is free to any reader

sending him a stamped self-addressed envelope (overseas: an international reply coupon).

CHESS OF THE WUZHI MOUNTAIN

by Shu Ming Li & C. K. Lai

This has been received shortly before publication date. The book is a collection of 72 "endgame studies and problems", all leading to a mate for Red in five moves. The preface states that it is aimed in the first place at beginners, but the mates are not that easy to find - at least in the half dozen or so positions I have so far looked at. Compared to C.K.Lai's previous *Checkmate in Three* book, solutions *are* given. However, to keep a bilingual flavour, the first 12 solutions are given in Chinese. This will be helpful to those ambitious souls who wish to study Xiangqi material from China.

Shu Ming Li comes from San Francisco. To quote from the preface he is a veteran of Xiangqi, a famous chess activist, and well versed in composition. Price £6.99. Write to: **C.K.Lai, 12 Lagan House, Sumner Road, London SE15 5RB.**

ALESSANDRO CASTELLI

The President of AISE and editor of *Eterosacco* has written and brought out two more books in the 'I Manuali Di Eterosacco' series (6 & 7). One of these is *Finali di Partita - Scacchi Progressivi* (Italian Progressive). The other is *Scacchi Doppia Mossa* (Double Move Chess). Detailed reviews will be given in a future issue. The price of each volume is 20,000 Lire (\$16). Write to: **Alessandro Castelli, C. da Potenza 11, I-62010 Villa Potenza (MC), Italy.**

Double Move Chess

by Peter Wood

This variant may well be new to many readers. It was based on an idea by Fred Galvin of the USA in 1957, and given prominence in one of the Frenchman Boyer's books. There have been AISE tournaments held since 1980, although not every year.

The laws of chess apply, modified as follows: 1) White starts with one move, and thereafter each player makes two consecutive moves per turn, 2) Check, checkmate and all rules involving them are ignored. One wins by capturing the opposing King. 3) There is no e.p. capture.

It can thus be seen that it is rule 2 and 3 that make the game different from Marseillais Chess, where a turn ends with a check and a player must escape from check on his first move. Incidentally the *Encyclopedia of Chess Variants* incorrectly gives rules on en passant capture. This may once have applied in DM, but not at any rate since 1992 in AISE tournaments when Castelli's book *Chess Variants* was published.

A couple of short games illustrate the effect of rule 2.

Castelli - Piazza Played 1981.

1.Nc3 d5/e5? 2.e3 Qh5! (1-0). Black is unable to prevent capture of his King by such moves as 3.Q:f7/Q:e8, 3.Bb5/B:e8, or 3.Q:e5/Q:e8.

1.d4 is a move to avoid., e.g.:

Pugnali - De Luise Played 1993.

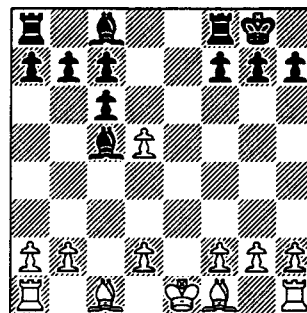
1.d4 Nc6/e6 2.c3/Nf3 Ne5/N:f3 3.e:f3/h3 (3.g:f3/Bf4 is better.) Bb4/Qh4 Resigns. (0-1).

A slightly longer game now, played in 1991.

Fontana - Castelli

Comments by the winner.

1.e4 e5/Qf6 2.Qf3/Q:f6 N:f6/Nc6 3.Nc3/Nf3 N:e4/N:c3 4.N:e5/N:c6 d:c6/Nd5! 5.c4/c:d5? (5.Bc4/0-0 does not seem to offer more, for the N on d5 has blocked the a2/g8 diagonal and after 5....Bd6/0-0 Black is better.) 5....Bc5/0-0 (The white King is threatened by both B and R)



6.Kd1/f3 Bf5/Rfe8 7.d3/Be3 R:e3/B:d3 Resigns (0-1).

BCVS Notices

BCVS Championships

A form inviting proposals for further BCVS Championships is sent to UK members with this issue. Only four responses were received to the circular sent last time, so we have only been able to put together one new championship so far.

This is another experimental tournament in a game not played before, namely **Sting** (Scorpion Chess — in which the King has the added power of Grasshopper). The players are Colin Carter, George Jelliss and Ian Richardson. *This has only just started so there is still time for one or two others to join in.*

The only variant that has received two first-choice requests for a new tournament is **Alice Chess**. *Players in the on-going 1997 Alice Tourney may like to enter for a 1998 one also.* One first-choice and two second-choice proposals have been received for **Avalanche Chess** (in which after each move the player advances one of the opponent's pawns). Two nominations were made for each of Randomised Chess, Chancellor Chess, and Mutation Progressive Chess.

The Editor would like views on whether we are going the right way about organising our tournaments. Is there any member who would like to take on the task of Tournament Coordinator? Are we right in asking prospective players to nominate the variants they want to play or should we dictate a short-list of variants at the start of the year from which players may then choose? What is the best way of organising a Randomised Chess tourney by post — e.g. how should the randomisation be chosen?

Extinction Chess

The *BCVS* postal tournament, commenced last year, has now finished. **Robert Reynolds** is the winner with 7 points out of 8 — a fine performance. His only dropped point was against the runner-up

Ian Richardson, who scored 6 points. In third place is Dave Tremayne with 3 points. Fourth and fifth places are shared between George Jelliss and David Richardson, who both finished with 2 points. Several of the players said how they had enjoyed playing this variant. (*Others, like your editor, just couldn't get the hang of how this variant should be played!*) Some games will appear in the next issue.

Annual General Meeting

UK subscribers should receive a separate circular with this issue giving detailed notice of the 1998 **Annual General Meeting** of the British Chess Variants Society.

This year's meeting will be on **Saturday 16th May** and will once again be at our president's home: Badgers Wood, Hascombe Road, Munstead, Godalming, Surrey. The meeting to commence at 11.30 am.

The meeting will be followed by an informal discussion on the Society and its future and then, after lunch, by a rapid-play tournament under a variety of variant chess rules.

Peter Wood has decided to stand down as Treasurer and John Beasley has been nominated to succeed him, at least temporarily. If someone else with accountancy or book-keeping experience is willing to take on the post permanently we would be pleased to hear from them.

Thanks are due to Peter for his efforts as Treasurer in getting the Society soundly established. His contributions to these pages will continue to be welcomed, especially in keeping us abreast of events in the realms of Xiangqi and new Books.

The subscription for 1998 remains the same (£8.00 UK, £9.00 overseas — or £11 if you require *Variant Chess* to be sent by airmail outside Europe). Subscriptions should now be sent to **John Beasley**, 7 St James Road, Harpenden, Herts, AL5 4NX.

Solutions to Losing Chess pp.146-7

#33. 1.c6 d3 2.c7 /i d2 3.c8Q /ii d1N /iii 4.Kc5 Nb2 5.Kc6 Nd3 6.Kc7 Nb4 /iv 7.Qa6 N×a6 8.Kb8 wins

/i 2.Kb3 d2 3.Kb2 d1B 4.Ka1 Bc2 5.Kb1 B×b1 6.c7 Be4 -/+

/ii 3.c8R? d1N 4.Kc5 Nb2 5.Kc6 Nd3 6.Kc7 Nb4 -/+ 3.c8K? d1R 4.Kb7 Rd2 5.Kb6 Rd8 6.Kb3 Rd1 = 3.c8B? d1R 4.Bd7 R×d7 5.Kb5 Rd3 -/+ 3.c8N? d1B 4.Kc5 Be2 5.Kd6 Bf3 6.Ke7 Bd5 7.Kd8 Bc6 -/+

/iii 3...d1Q(R) 4.Qc1 Q(R)×c1 5.Kc4 +/- 3...d1K(B) 4.Qc2 K(B)×c2 5.Kb3 +/-

/iv 6...Ne5 7.Qg4 N×g4 8.Kc6 Nf2(h6) 9.Kd6 Nd1(h3) 10.Kd5 +/-

#34. (a) 1.f8N Ke4 2.Nd7 Ke3 3.Nf6 Ke2 4.Ng4 wins. (b) 1.f8N Ke4 2.Nd7 Ke3 3.Nf6 Ke2 4.Nd5 wins.

#35. 1.h7 Kf6 2.h8K /i Ke5 3.Kg7 Kd4 4.Kf6 Kc3 5.Ke5 Kb2 6.Kd4 wins.

/i 2.h8N Kf7 3.N×f7 Bh8 2.h8B Kf7 3.B×a1 Kf6 2.h8Q Kf7 3.Q×a1 Kf6 2.h8R Bd4 /ii 3.Rd8 Kf5 4.R×d4 Kf4 [/ii 2...Be5 3.Rb8 (h2) 2...Bc3 (b1, a1) 3.Rc8 (b8, a8)]

#36. 1.Kg7 Ke3 2.Kf6 Kd2 3.Ke5 wins.

#37. 1.Nf4 (Ne3 is equivalent) Ra1 2.Ng6 Ra2 3.Ne5 a8 /i 4.Ng4 Ra1 5.Nf6 Ra2 6.Ng8 Ra1 7.Ne7 Ra2 8.Ng6 Ra1 9.Nf4 Ra8 10.Ng2 and we are back where we started, but with Black to move.

/i 3...Rh2 4.Nb6 Rh1 5.Nf4 Rh8 6.Nb2 with an echo of the original domination. 3...Ra1 4.Nf6 Ra2 5.Nfd7 Rh2 6.Nb6 with the same position as after 3...Rh2 4.Nb6.

Solution to Xiangqi p.148

1.Ne6 (threat Nf8†) If 1...G~, 2.Ndf8† If 1...Kf0, 2.Nf8† (Try 1.Kf3 is met by Gf8.)

VC - BOUND VOLUMES

Volume 1 (issues 1-8) £10 (UK), £11 (Europe, and Surface worldwide), £13 (Airmail worldwide). **Volume 2** (issues 9-20) £17 (UK), £18 (Europe, and Surface worldwide), £21 (Airmail worldwide). Postage is included.

Bound volumes of *VC's* pre-cursors *The Games and Puzzles Journal* 1987-9 (1 vol £17.50) and *Chessics* 1976-86 (2 vols £15) are also available. Order from George Jelliss. Address on front cover.