

Variant Chess

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President	
David Pritchard, Badger's Wood, Hascombe Road, Munstead, Godalming, Surrey GU8 4AA	
Secretary	
John Beasley, 7 St. James Road, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 4NX	
Treasurer	
Peter Fayers, 2 Beechwood Avenue, Coulsdon, Surrey CR5 2PA	
Editor	
Paul Byway, 20 The Finches, Hertford, Hertfordshire SG13 7TB	
Problem Editor	
Ronald Turnbull, Highland Cottage, Gatelawbridge, Thornhill, Dumfriesshire DG3 5EA	
Librarian	
George Jelliss, 5 Biddulph Street, Leicester, Leicestershire LE2 1BH	

Review

34	Abstract Games Issue 2 Summer 2000
36	The second number of Kerry and Connie Handscomb's
38	new magazine (<i>...for the competitive thinker</i>) has
40	arrived, and lives up to the promise of the inaugural
41	issue. It is bigger (twenty pages instead of sixteen) and
42	the third issue is set to grow again. The production
43	quality is high and the cover is in colour. <i>Abstract</i>
44	<i>Games</i> has a wider remit than <i>Variant Chess</i> and about
46	40% is likely to be devoted to Chess variants. Here you
48	will find articles on Hex strategy, Lines of Action
52	(strategy again), Twixt and Mem (this one by David
52	Pritchard), as well as part II of an article on Kyoto
	Shogi. Kerry has given his permission to use some of
	this material and I hope to produce a piece on <i>Kyoto</i>
	<i>Shogi</i> for our next issue, for that is an area where our
	past coverage has not been great. If your interest in
	intellectual games extends beyond variants of Chess
	then this magazine is a must.

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This Issue

Four pages more this time - to reproduce the tourney award of Hans Gruber for Variant Studies and Fairy Problems. Our thanks to him for undertaking this onerous task. The greater length ensures that those who have no interest in such things are not deprived.

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TWO CLASSIC GAMES OF LOSING CHESS

by John Beasley

Losing Chess has a history of over a hundred years, and two complete correspondence games from early days have come down to us. I thought it might be interesting to examine these with the aid of the computer, not in a spirit of "yah boo, look what they missed" (yes, there are tactical oversights, but they are far fewer and less serious than I make myself) but rather to show what was being achieved even in those far-off days. My thanks to Ken Whyld and David Pritchard for the source material, to Stan Goldovski's program *Giveaway Wizard* (run on a 450MHz Pentium III with 128Mb RAM) for the analysis, and to Fabrice Liardet and his Internet page (see *VC* 34 p 18) for comments on openings and strategy.

The first game was reported in a Losing Chess article by Hans Klüver in *Deutsches Wochenschach* in 1924.

White	Black
Hans Klüver	T. R. Dawson
(Hamburg)	(London)

1. e2-e3 b7-b5
2. Bf1xb5 c7-c6

"La défense antique" (Fabrice Liardet, who calls it "un peu douteuse"). Klüver remarks that 2...Nc6 would allow a 16-man sacrifice (3.Bxc6 dxc6 4.Qg4 etc). He also analyses 2...Bb7, due to E. Schütte, but this is now regarded as a poor line for Black.

3. Bb5xc6 Nb8xc6
4. b2-b4 Nc6xb4
5. Qd1-h5

5.a4 (*Iznogoud-Salvadori* 1996) is simplest (FL, analysis on his page).

5. Nb4xa2

Preventing 6.Qxf7, which 5...Nxc2 would permit (Klüver, see next note).

6. Qh5xh7

Klüver gives 6.Qxf7 Kxf7 7.Rxa2 "Ba6 etc", but this is surely a slip in writing up; if we insert the natural 7...Qa5 8.Rxa5, White is indeed dead.

6. Rh8xh7
7. Ra1xa2 Rh7xh2
8. Ra2xa7 Ra8xa7

9. Rh1xh2 Ra7-a3
10. Nc1xa3

Klüver gives 10.Bxa3 Bb7 11.Bxe7 Bxg2 etc as worse, and *Wizard* sharpens this to 10...Qb6 11.Bxe7 Qxb1 12.Bxf8 Qxc2 13.Bxg7 Qxd2 winning offhand.

10. Ng8-h6
11. Rh2xh6 g7xh6
12. d2-d3

Threat e4 and then Bh6 (Klüver). But this is inconclusive, and *Wizard* prefers 12.c4 gaining space. *Wizard*'s general strategy, when there is no provable win, is to gain as much space as possible, often by playing moves which a human player would reject as too risky, and very effective it is.

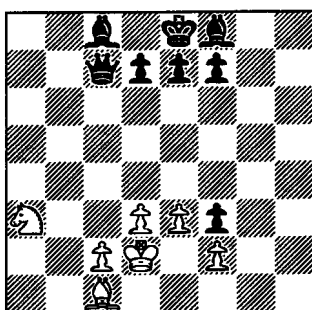
12. h6-h5

Klüver describes this as the only but excellent answer to White's threat, but *Wizard* prefers 12...f5.

13. g2-g4 h5xg4
14. Ng1-f3

Not a move to *Wizard*'s taste, though the blocked pawn on f3 should have served White well (see note to move 16). At each of moves 13-15, *Wizard*'s first preference is e4, gaining space and allowing White to exchange off his second bishop.

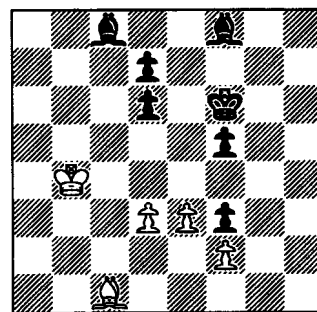
14. g4xf3
15. Ke1-d2 Qd8-c7?



Here Klüver notes 16.Ke2 Qxc2, and also points out that 16.Kc3 would be bad because the king is valuable in the endgame. But 16.e4! would have won (*Wizard*). The point is that after 16...Qxc2 17.Nxc2 White threatens Ke2 opening the diagonal c1-h6 with gain of tempo, and it is Black who will be left with a rampant bishop.

16. Na3-b5 Qc7xc2
17. Kd2xc2 f7-f5
18. Nb5-d6 e7xd6
19. Kc2-c3 Ke8-e7
20. Kc3-b4 Ke7-f6

"Die Krisis der Partie!" (Klüver).



21. Bc1-d2

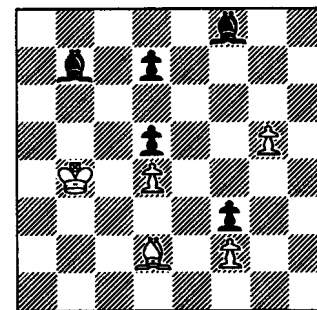
Threatening 22.Kc5 dxc5 23.Bb4 etc (Klüver), but this is illusory. 23...cxb4 reduces White to two mobile pawns, and *Wizard* shows he is lost:-

24.e4 fxe4 25.dxe4 Kf5 26.exf5 Bd6 27.f6 Bg3 28.fxg3 f2 29.g4 b3 30.g5 f1R 31.g6 Rxf6 32.g7 d5 33.g8K (33.g8R Rb6) Rf7 34.Kxf7 Be6 35.Kxe6 b2 36.Kxd5 b1R, or 24.d4 Bh6 25.d5 Bxe3 26.fxe3 f2 27.d6 (27.e4 fxe4 28.d6 Ke7 29.dxe7 Bb7 30.d8K f1B 31.Kxd7 Bc6 32.Kxc6 Bb5) Ke6! 28.e4 Kxd6 29.exf5 Bb7 30.f6 Ke7 31.fxe7 f1R 32.e8K Bd5 33.Kxd7 Be6 34.Kxe6 Rf7.

21. f5-f4
22. e3xf4 Kf6-g5

Again not to *Wizard*'s taste. The king is a flexible piece, and a modern player tries to preserve it. Klüver says as much at move 16.

23. f4xg5 Bc8-b7
24. d3-d4 d6-d5!



This remarkable move abjures ...Bh6 (Klüver gives 24...Bh6 25.gxh6 d5 26.Bg5 and Bf6 as favouring White) and lets White force ...Bxb4, but if say 25.Bc1 Bxb4 26.Ba3/Bd2 BxB 27.g6 then 27-28...Bd3 beats all promotions. Klüver gives two exclamation marks, and *Wizard* also thinks it best.

25. **Kb4-c4**
 Klüver calls this a losing blunder, preferring Kb3 with a probable draw, but in fact White still has a chance.

25. **d5xc4**
 26. **Bd2-b4?**

Now White does lose. 26.g6 would have kept the game alive (*Wizard* failed to find a win in a 24-hour run).

26. **Bf8xb4**
 27. **d4-d5**

Wizard shows that 27.g6 also loses.

27. **Bb7xd5**
 28. **g5-g6 Bd5-e4**
 29. **g6-g7 Be4-g6!**
 30. **g7-g8R**

Klüver says that Black wins "easily" after 30.g8Q/B/N, and he spells out the line 30.g8K Bf8 31.Kxf8 Be8 32.Kxe8 c3 33.Kxd7 c2 34.Kd6 c1B 35.Kd5 Be3 36.fxe3 f2 and 37...f1R.

30. **Bb4-d2**
 31. **Rg8xg6 d7-d6**
 32. **Rg6xd6 Bd2-e3**
 33. **f2xe3 f3-f2**

and White resigned. Klüver spells out some lines: 34.e4 f1R 35.e5 (35.Rd1 Rxd1 36-38.e7 c1R) c3 36.e6 c2 37.e7 Rd1 38.Rxd1 cxd1R, or 34.Rd1 c3 35.e4 (35.Re1 fxe1B 36.e4 Bh4 37.e5 Bf6 36.exf6 c2 37.f7 c1R) c2 and now say 36.Re1 fxe1B 37.e5 Ba5.

The second game appeared in the February 1955 issue of *Le Courier des Échecs*, and is quoted by David Pritchard in *The Encyclopedia of Chess Variants* and *Popular Chess Variants*. The source has notes only to 27.d8K and 33...e1K.

White
 E. T. O. Slater
 (London)

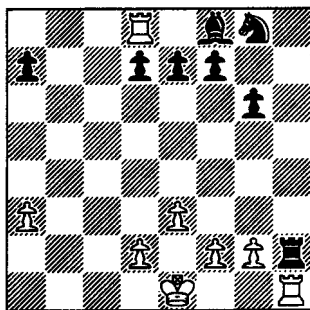
Black
 Hans Klüver
 (Hamburg)

1. **e2-e3 b7-b5**
 2. **Bf1xb5 c7-c6**
 3. **Bb5xc6 Nb8xc6**
 4. **b2-b4 Nc6xb4**
 5. **a2-a3 Nb4xc2**
 6. **Qd1xc2 g7-g6**
 7. **Qc2xc8 Qd8xc8**
 8. **Ng1-f3 Qc8xc1**
 9. **Nf3-g5 Qc1xb1**

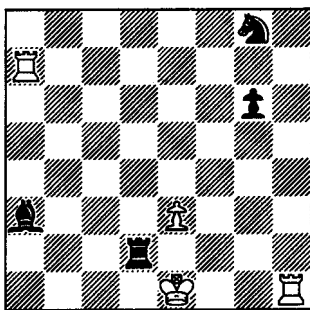
I think a modern player would almost instinctively take the king here.

10. **Ra1xb1**
 Knight captures lose at once (*Wizard*).

10. **Ra8-b8**
 11. **Rb1xb8 Ke8-d8 (?)**
 12. **Ng5xh7 Rh8xh7**
 13. **Rb8xd8 Rh7xh2**



At this point there is a win that only a computer could be expected to find: 14.Rxd7 Rxxg2 (if 14...Rxh1 then 15.Rxa7 Rxe1 16.Rxe7 Rxe3 17.Rxe3 Bxa3 18.Rxa3 and White's R+3P will soon force Black's N+2P to make a losing move) 15.Rxe7 Rxf2 16.Rxf7 Bxa3 17.Rxa7! Rxd2:

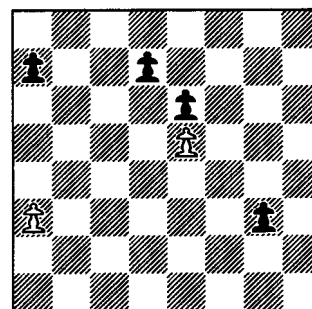


Surely Black has won this? Two of his men will go at once, and a third can be sacrificed leaving the last under attack (...Nh6). Yet this final pawn cannot be given away, and it is *White* who has a forced win! *Wizard* plays 18.Rxa3, and if say 18...Ra2 19.Rxa2 Nh6 then 20.Rxh6 g5 (sadly for Black, his pawn must move, and White can marshal his men to cater for all promotions) 21.Rh4 gxh4 22.Rf2 h3 23.Rf4 h2 24.Kf2 and it's easy.

But White cannot be blamed for overlooking this, and play continued:

14. **Rd8xf8 Rh2xh1**
 15. **Rf8xg8 Rh1xe1**
 16. **Rg8xg6 Re1xe3**
 17. **d2xe3 f7xg6**
 18. **e3-e4 g6-g5**
 19. **e4-e5 e7-e6**
 20. **f2-f4 g5xf4**
 21. **g2-g3 f4xg3**

White has come down to two pawns. Can he get rid of them?



22. **a3-a4 g3-g2**
 23. **a4-a5 g2-g1Q!**

This stops an eventual d8R by White (Black will reply ...Qe8 and win).

24. **a5-a6 d7-d6**
 25. **e5xd6 Qg1-b1**
 26. **d6-d7 Qb1-g6**
 27. **d7-d8K! Qg6-b1**
 28. **Kd8-c7? Qb1-b8**
 29. **Kc7xb8 e6-e5**
 30. **Kb8xa7 e5-e4**
 31. **Ka7-b7 e4-e3**
 32. **a6-a7 e3-e2**
 33. **a7-a8R e2-e1K!**

Other promotions lose, but K v K + R is a known draw.

There was a sequel. Notes in *Fairy Chess Review* in December 1955 (quoting the *Engelhardt Year Book* for 1956, which I haven't seen) and April 1958 suggest that the players wondered what would have happened after 28.Ke8 instead of Kc7, and went back and replayed. White now has a difficult win; there is analysis by Klüver in *FCR*, and *Wizard* confirms.

Tactically, it seems to me that these games stand up well to computer examination. There are oversights, but not in unreasonable number, and there is some impressive analysis as well. Strategically, it is perhaps another matter, and one can point to a lack of aggression in trying to command space and an eagerness to make sacrifices that in truth merely weaken the player's position. But it is notoriously difficult to lay down strategic principles when playing "to lose", and I feel that the strengths of these early games substantially outweigh their weaknesses.

ALICE CHESS

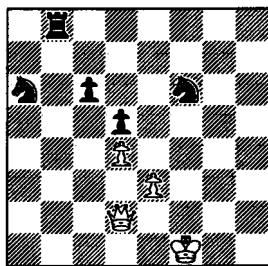
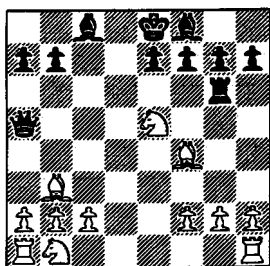
by Peter Coast

Here are another three games from the BCVS Alice Chess Tournament, kindly annotated for us by Peter: don't forget that moves made on the second board are in *italics*.

White
Peter Coast

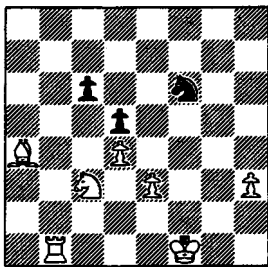
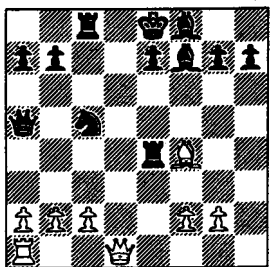
Black
George Jelliss

- | | |
|------------|---------|
| 1. d2-d4 | Ng8-f6 |
| 2. Bc1-g5 | c7-c6 |
| 3. e2-e3 | Qd8-c7 |
| 4. Qd1-d2 | Rh8-g8 |
| 5. Bg5-f4 | Nb8-a6 |
| 6. Bf1-c4 | Rg8-g6 |
| 7. Ng1-f3 | Qc7-a5+ |
| 8. Ke1-f1 | d7-d5 |
| 9. Bc4-b3 | Ra8-b8 |
| 10. Nf3-e5 | |



The idea here was 10. ... Qb5+ 11. c4

- | | |
|------------|--------|
| 10. ... | Rg6-g4 |
| 11. h2-h3 | Rg4-e4 |
| 12. Nb1-c3 | Bc8-e6 |
| 13. Ne5xf7 | Na6-c5 |
| 14. Rh1-b1 | Rb8-c8 |
| 15. Bb3-a4 | Be6xf7 |
| 16. Qd2-d1 | |



My position is bad - a trap is called for!

- | | |
|------------|---------|
| 16. ... | Bf7-c4+ |
| 17. Kf1-g1 | Bc4-b5 |

Necessary to stop Bb5+, but I am prepared.

18. Qd1-d8

This sort of penetration is quite dangerous, and gives my position a considerable boost.

- | | |
|---------|--------|
| 18. ... | Ke8-f7 |
|---------|--------|

- | | |
|------------|--------|
| 19. Qd8xd5 | e7-e6 |
| 20. Qd5xc5 | Rc8-c4 |
| 21. Qc5-f5 | Bf8-d6 |

If 21. ... Rxa4 22. Rf1 is strong.

22. Bf4-g5

Now 22. ... Rxa4 23. Bxf6 gxf6 24. Qxh7+ Kany 25. Rb8

- | | |
|---------|--------|
| 22. ... | Rc4-c5 |
|---------|--------|

- | | |
|-----------|--------|
| 23. d4-d5 | Bb5-d3 |
|-----------|--------|

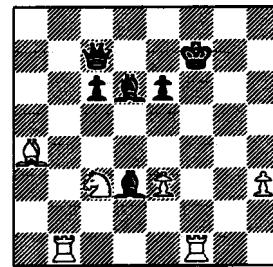
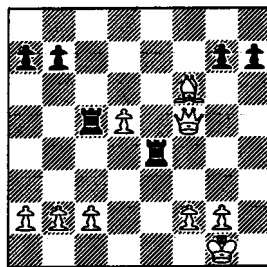
24. Bg5xf6

If now 24. ... Bxb1 25. Qxh7+

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 24. ... | |
|---------|--|

- | | |
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| Qa5-c7 | |
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- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 25. Ra1-f1+ | |
|-------------|--|

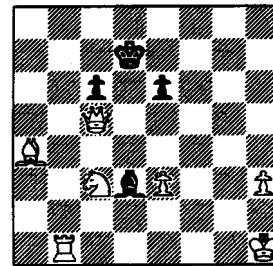
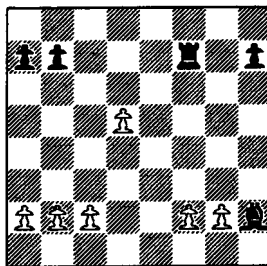


I thought it was all over now because if, say, 25. ... Ke8 Rb8+ wins and 25. ... Bxf1 26. Qxh7+ wins, BUT

- | | |
|-------------|----------|
| 25. ... | g7xf6! |
| 26. Qf5-h5+ | Kf7-e7 |
| 27. Qh5-g5+ | Ke7-d7 |
| 28. Qg5-g7+ | Kd7-c8 |
| 29. Qg7-f8+ | Kc8-d7 |
| 30. Rf1xf6 | Bd6-h2+! |

This bottles up my king in the corner. From now on I always have to be on the look-out for a stray check - it will be mate!

- | | |
|-------------|--------|
| 31. Kg1-h1 | Qc7-e5 |
| 32. Rf6-f7+ | Qe5-e7 |
| 33. Rf7xe7+ | Re4xe7 |
| 34. Qf8xc5 | Re7-f7 |



All over now, but

35. Qc5xc6+ ??

The same mistake as move 25, this time giving up the queen.

- | | |
|---------|--------|
| 35. ... | b7xc6! |
|---------|--------|

Now Be2 is dangerous.

- | | |
|------------|---------|
| 36. Rb1-e1 | Rf7xf2 |
| 37. Re1-d1 | Rf2-d2 |
| 38. Nc3-e4 | Rd2xd5 |
| 39. Rd1xd3 | Kd7-c7 |
| 40. g2-g4 | resigns |

Black retired at this point, but the dangers of mate are passed and White has a comfortable endgame a piece and several pawns up.

17. Qe5-e4+
If 17. ... Kd8 18. Qe7 mate.

resigns

White
Peter Coast

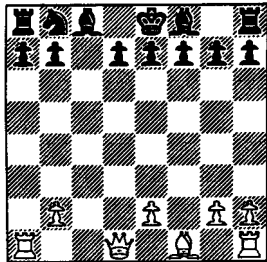
1. c2-c4
2. d2-d4
3. f2-f4

I have to make a space for my king somehow: the threat of Qa5+ is embarrassing. Better perhaps is a3 or a4.

3. ...
4. Ke1-f2
5. Bc1-d2

I have not played the opening at all well, and was expecting to lose quickly.

6. Ng1-f3
7. Nb1-c3

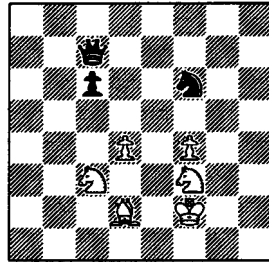


Black
Ivan Dirmeik

- c7-c6
- Qd8-c7

- Qc7-a5+
- Qa5xa2+
- Qa2xc4

- Ng8-f6
- Qc4-c7



This, I think, is not good: pawn-chasing rather than development.

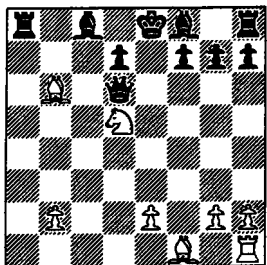
8. Nc3-d5
9. Qd1-b3
10. Bd2-c3

The queen has wasted a move going back to where it started.

11. Bc3-a5
12. Ba5xb6
13. Ra1xa7

Level pegging again.

13. ...
14. Qb3-e3+
15. Qe3xe5



This had to be carefully calculated because the White king is loose.

15. ...
16. Kf2-g1

Looks unlikely, but is a safe spot.

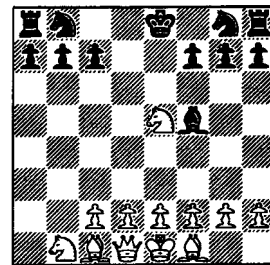
16. ...

White
George Jelliss

1. a2-a3
2. Ng1-f3
3. Ra1-a2

This is a Jelliss special - it can be quite useful to protect the second rank, but has its disadvantages as well, as this game shows.

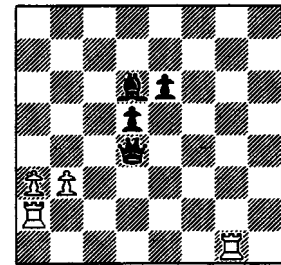
3. ...
4. Nf3-e5
5. Rh1-g1
6. b2-b3



Black
Peter Coast

- d7-d5
- Bc8-g4

- e7-e6
- Bf8-d6
- Bg4-f5
- Qd8-d4



This exposes the back rank weaknesses, and should not have been allowed. Incidentally, if 6. Nxf7, I planned 6. ... Bb4 with threats such as 7. ... Qxd2.

7. Rg1-h1
8. d2-d4

To protect the Ne5.

8. ...
9. Ra2-d2
10. Qd1-d3

This was a good defensive move.

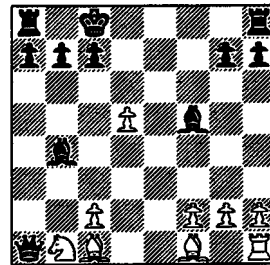
10. ...
11. Ke1-d1

To avoid 12. Qb5+ winning my bishop.

12. Ne5xf7+

My king is now relatively secure.

13. e2-e4
14. e4xd5



I looked for a long time at 14. ... Ne4, but couldn't make it work after 15. Be3. I need more pieces in play.

15. Nb1-c3
16. Nc3-e4
17. Qd3xe4

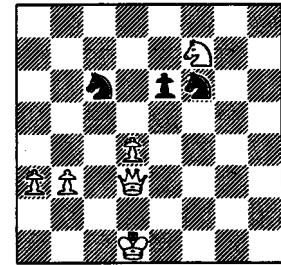
- Qd4-a1

- Bd6-b4+
- Bb4xd2

- Bd2-b4+
- Ke8-d8

- Kd8-c8

- Ng8-f6
- Nb8-c6



- Qa1-b1
- mate

ISOLATED PAWNS

by David Pritchard

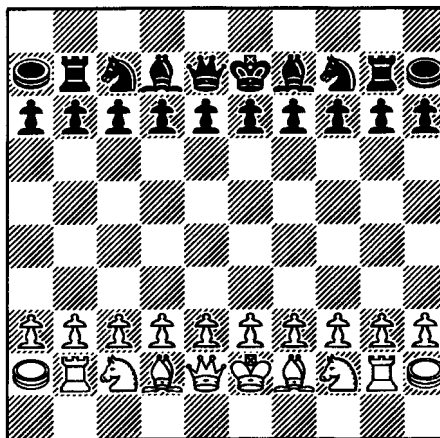
SABBATICAL CHESS

This Chessgi variant was invented by Adrian Millward and was successfully played in the variants tournament following the AGM last year. (Successful anyway for Adrian: he won the tournament.) The chessmen are allocated points on the conventional scale: Queen 9, Rook 5, Bishop and Knight 3, pawn 1. Usual set-up. When you capture a man you place it off the board in front of you. After making a move, you may, but are not obliged to, remove from the board any one of your pieces, other than the king or a pawn or the piece you have just moved, of equal or less point value than the captured man or men in front of you. For example, you have captured a knight and two pawns. You could now remove a rook 'to go on sabbatical' since both the captured men and the rook are equal to five points. You move the captured men to the side of the board as they cannot again be used for this purpose. The rook is kept 'in hand' and may be dropped back on the board following any subsequent move of yours. You may not however drop a sabbatical piece to give check although this rule is optional; nor a bishop on the same coloured square as a bishop of yours that is still on the board. In the above example, you could, say, have sent a bishop 'on sabbatical', removing the captured knight but leaving the two pawns (in effect 2 points) to count towards your next sabbatical. An alternative method is to keep the score in points of captured men. This may be a better system as credits are allowed. So, for example, after an early exchange of queens you could remove a knight on sabbatical and still have 6 points in reserve. You cannot send a piece on sabbatical and return a piece from sabbatical on the same turn. To sum up: you can opt to send a piece other than the king or a pawn on sabbatical or to bring a piece back onto the board, but not both, immediately after you have moved. A move followed by a drop counts as a single move; hence a king may move into or remain in check provided the drop restores legality. The game plays well and can certainly be exciting. The only small amendment I would make would be to allow bishops on the same-coloured squares as this would not be illegal and the present rule seems an unnecessary restriction.

STRATOMIC

Stratomic, described as 'chess for the 21st century', was published by l'Impense Radicale in 1975. The inventor, Robert Montay-Marsais, tells me that in fact his rules had been altered by the publishers without his permission. The game was subsequently withdrawn from the market 'par suite de la tromperie'. The inventor has now relaunched the game with a reversion to the original, previously unpublished, rules. The board is 10x10 with two nuclear missiles and two extra pawns a side. All other men are

orthodox. Pawns promote (including to missiles) on the 2nd/9th ranks; castling and e.p. captures are orthodox. The initial array has something of the appearance of Grand Chess whilst nuclear weapons have of course been anticipated in Atomic Chess (1947) and Bomb Chess (1973).



The missiles (called Nuclea) move like kings (you have to imagine that it is the launchers that are being moved). They can be launched to any square on the board, occupied or not. This counts as a move and results in the elimination of any man that is on the square and any men in adjacent squares, regardless of colour, together with the Nuclea itself. Kings, uniquely, are immune. However, a Nuclea cannot be launched until one piece of either colour (excluding pawns) has been captured. It also cannot be launched if it is under attack from an opposing piece or pawn, when it is said to be 'pinned'. It is not immediately clear from the rules whether Nucleas, which apparently mutually threaten each other, can be captured in the normal way but it is a fair assumption that they can be. (*It's also a fair assumption that they are excluded from the description 'piece or pawn' for otherwise they would never act at all. Ed.*) Players should aim to castle early and disperse their major pieces. A nuclear strike can deprive a king of his defenders, facilitating a mating attack. Both sides can practice nuclear dissuasion in the early stages by avoiding capturing a piece. Understandably, draws in Stratomic are uncommon. Robert Montay-Marsais, 8B rue de Lahire, 45000 Orleans, France.

EXPRESS CHESS

Express Chess is a card-playing variant. A 50-card 'starter' pack (there are two but you only need one to play) offers a choice of three games, Blitz, Match Play or The Big Game. In the Blitz game, each player takes half the pack, distinguished by colour, removes the king, shuffles the remainder then draws 11 cards blind and adds the king to form a hand of 12 cards. Each card represents a chessman. The first player starts by putting down a card and the opponent places a card directly opposite and so on until each player has a row of five cards. These are the front rows played face up and may contain only pawns and

knights. The sequence is repeated for the second row of five cards which is played face down. Any card can be placed in the second row but the king must be placed. At no time may a player have more than one queen, one rook, two knights and two bishops on the table at the same time. Because of these limits a player may not be able to put down ten cards initially. The remaining cards are held in hand. Play now begins. You either move or capture. Any card played from the second row is turned face up. After moving, any gaps in your lines are replaced from hand face up and your hand is replenished from the stockpile. You capture the king to win. Understandably in view of the 4x5 'board' there are some artificial rules. There is a Safari Edition in which the cards depict wild animals the chessmen being identified by indices. Useful for playing The Big Game (which has three rows of seven cards a side) perhaps?!
Blackbox Inc., P.O.Box 1475, Princeton, NJ 08542 U.S.A.

LOSING CHESS

In the *ECV* I wrote that Losing Chess was 'believed to be older – perhaps much older – than a closely-related game, TAKE ME (1874)'. How much older may be evident from an entry in *Le livre de Jeu de Dames* (Bornemann – 1999). Thierry Depaulis, describing the history of draughts, draws attention to a book by Pierre Mallet published in 1688 in which five variants of the game (on the 8x8 board) are described. Of special interest is one of these, 'le coquimbert' translated as the game of 'a qui perd gagne'. Mallet's source was apparently Rabelais' *Gargantua et Pantagruel*. However, Michel Boutin informs me that the list of games in Rabelais poses numerous problems for scholars, in particular distinguishing real games from inventions of the author who it appears was not lacking in a sense of humour. Apparently another interpretation of the word (which Rabelais renders as 'coquinbert') could be an inversion of draughts in which the player who usually wins actually loses. Boutin compares this seeming absurdity to a deliberately slow Formula 1 race!

On the other hand, if we take the translation in its modern sense of 'a qui perd gagne' we can assume that there is certain to have been communication between draughts and chessplayers at that period. So we can project that Losing Chess was in existence at that time, which, if true, is a significant back-dating of the game. It is perfectly plausible, going a step further, that the draughts variant was in fact derived from the chess variant. All this alas is not much more than conjecture but certainly interesting...

IN PRAISE OF LARGER CHESS

A writer in a recent issue of *NOST-algia* penned this memorable sentence:

'FIDE chess is an excellent game in itself, but it is so easy to make it even better by adding 36 squares and one or more new pieces'. Even committed variant players might

shy at this endorsement. (One is reminded of that old saying, With friends like these, who needs enemies?) The writer earlier refers to those variants which offer 'far-out rules which alter the whole feel of the game'. By 'far-out', he adds, 'I mean the likes of Extinction Chess'(!).

CENTURY CHESS

This game is not recorded in the *ECV*. Martin's Century Chess was launched on 15th March 1915 according to a document in a scrapbook in the British Library (reference Cup.700g.1). It was subsequently advertised in the *Chess Amateur* of August of the same year.

Published by Martin & Co. at an address in Birkenhead, it is played on a 10x10 board with extra knights. The two central pawns on each side are designated Royal Pawns. It would be interesting to know their powers. The piece array (a1-j1/a10-j10) is RNNBKQBNNR with 10 pawns, including the Royal pawns, on the 2nd/9th ranks. The game appears well balanced with the welcome lack of those heavy pieces common to so many large chess games that tend to diminish the powers of the pawns and minor pieces. At a guess, the inventor of the variant was called Martin.

PROKOFIEV'S VARIANT

I have a copy of a manuscript letter dated 12th November 1922 written in English by the composer Sergei Prokofiev to Capablanca who was in America at the time. In it Prokofiev writes '... we are playing chess with Mr. Bash (?Bask) on 9 compound (word underlined) boards. My invention, which I explained to you in New York. One game is often lasting several nights.'

Not much to go on, but this suggests to me perhaps an extra piece and pawn a side and a three-dimensional 9x9x9 horror of a board which would explain the extended playing time. (Space chess was in vogue at the time.) For the record, Edward Winter tells me that Prokofiev faced Capablanca four times in simultaneous displays given by the Cuban, first in Russia and then in the Manhattan Club in New York. Of these, Prokofiev won one game (14th May 1914). Writing later in *Izvestia* (30th May 1936) the composer enthused 'Chess for me is a world apart, a world of combat, of plans and of passion.'

SIEGE CHESS

Thomas Hair has been experimenting with new boards whilst retaining the usual men and moves. His argument is that pieces and their moves have been modified over the centuries but the chessboard has remained unchanged. Hair's designs, in which the cells (whatever they are, they are not squares) are in four colours, are aesthetically pleasing but in my view are quite impractical. One design has a central castle hence perhaps the title. The designs can be viewed on the Patents Office web site

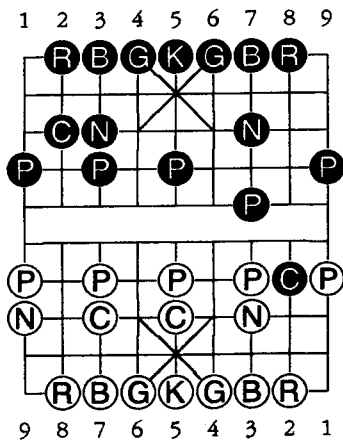
XIANGQI

by C.K.Lai

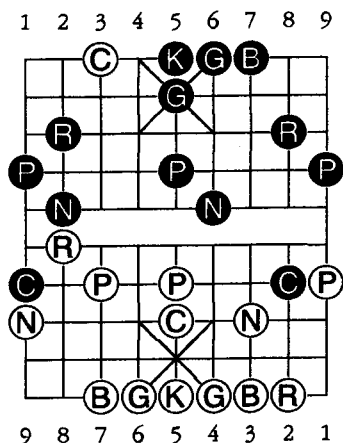
The Shunde Cup competition took place at Stockwell on the 2nd April 2000. Here is a first round game won by the eventual tournament winner. The first 21 (!) moves followed the game Hu Rong Hua - Bu Feng Bo from a TV quickplay tournament in Peking in July 1999. Comments by Chen Fa Zuo.

Red: Chen Fa Zuo
Black: La Khanh Hoa

- | | |
|---------|------|
| 1. C2=5 | N8+7 |
| 2. N2+3 | R9=8 |
| 3. R1=2 | P7+1 |
| 4. N8+9 | N2+3 |
| 5. C8=7 | R1=2 |
| 6. R9=8 | C8+4 |

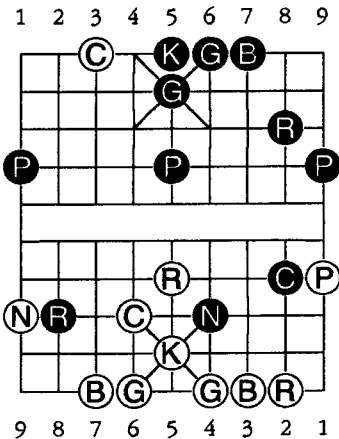


- | | |
|----------|------|
| 7. R8+6 | C2=1 |
| 8. R8=7 | R2+2 |
| 9. R7-2 | N3+2 |
| 10. R7=8 | N2-4 |
| 11. R8=6 | N4+2 |
| 12. C7+7 | G4+5 |
| 13. R6=7 | C1+4 |
| 14. P3+1 | P7+1 |
| 15. R7=3 | N7+6 |
| 16. R3=8 | R8+2 |



- | | |
|----------|-------|
| 17. C5=8 | N6+5 |
| 18. N3+5 | C1=5 |
| 19. R8=5 | N2+3 |
| 20. R5-1 | N3+4 |
| 21. C8=6 | N4-6 |
| 22. K5+1 | R2+5! |

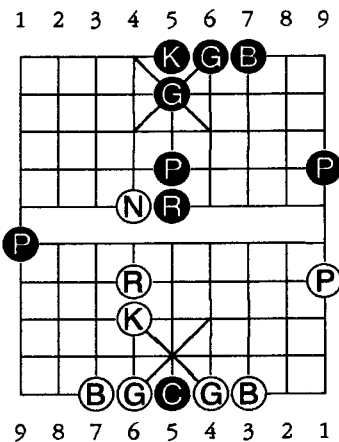
This is an improvement on Bu's ...R8=3.



- | | |
|-----------|-------|
| 23. C6=5 | R8=3! |
| 24. K5=4? | R3=6? |

Here Black should have checked with ...R2+1 and followed with ...R3=6 winning.

- | | |
|----------|--------|
| 25. K4=5 | R6=3 |
| 26. R5=6 | R3+6 |
| 27. R6-2 | R3-8 |
| 28. R2+2 | C8=5 |
| 29. K5=4 | R2=5 |
| 30. R2=4 | R5=6 |
| 31. K4+1 | R3+4 |
| 32. R6+2 | R3=6 |
| 33. K4=5 | R6=5 |
| 34. K5=6 | P1+1 |
| 35. N9+8 | P1+1 |
| 36. N8+6 | C5+3?? |



- | | |
|----------|------|
| 37. B7+5 | P1+1 |
| 38. K6-1 | P1=2 |
| 39. K6=5 | P2+1 |

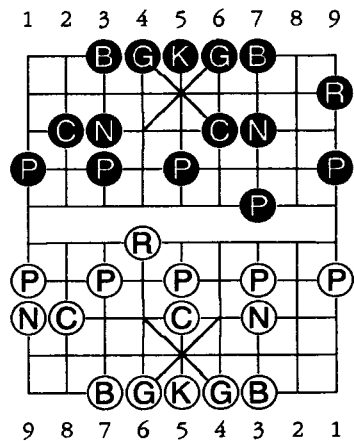
Black could have taken a bishop for nothing with ...C5=7. - He must have been terribly short of time (C.K.Lai).

- | | |
|----------|------|
| 40. K5-1 | P2=3 |
|----------|------|

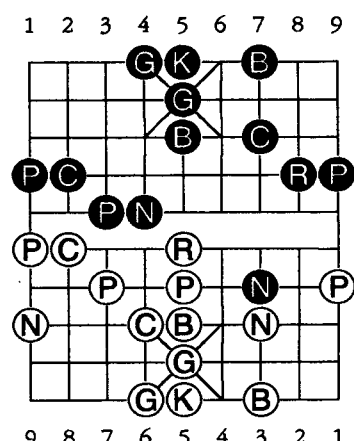
- | | |
|----------|------------|
| 41. N6+8 | 1-0 (time) |
|----------|------------|

Red: David Young
Black: Shao Nan Fei

- | | |
|---------|------|
| 1. C2=5 | C8=5 |
| 2. N2+3 | N8+7 |
| 3. R1=2 | P7+1 |
| 4. N8+9 | N2+3 |
| 5. R9+1 | R9+1 |
| 6. R9=6 | R1+1 |
| 7. R2+4 | R1=4 |
| 8. R2=6 | R4+4 |
| 9. R6+3 | C5=6 |

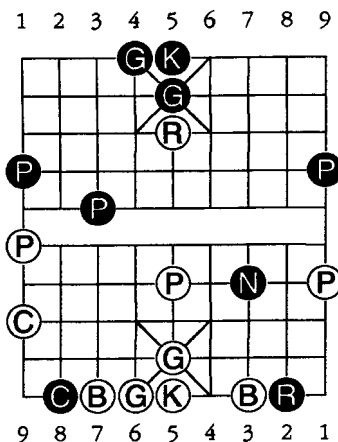


- | | |
|----------|------|
| 10. C8+4 | P3+1 |
| 11. C5=7 | B3+5 |
| 12. C8=7 | G6+5 |
| 13. P9+1 | R9=8 |
| 14. R6=4 | P5+1 |
| 15. C+=8 | R8+2 |
| 16. C8-2 | C2+2 |
| 17. B7+5 | P5+1 |
| 18. R4=5 | N7+6 |
| 19. P3+1 | P7+1 |
| 20. R5=3 | N3+4 |
| 21. C7=6 | C6=7 |
| 22. G4+5 | C2-1 |
| 23. R3=5 | N6+7 |

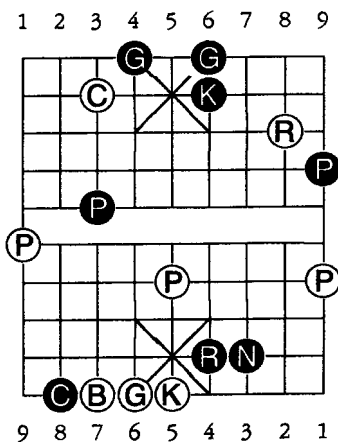


- | | |
|-----------|-------|
| 24. R5+1? | C2+1! |
| 25. C8=5 | N4+3 |
| 26. C5+3 | B7+5 |

- 27. R5+2 C7+5
- 28. C6=3 N3+1
- 29. C3=9 C2+5
- 30. B5-7 R8+6



- 31. C9+4 R8=7
- 32. G5-4 K5=6
- 33. R5=2 R7=6
- 34. K5+1 R6-1
- 35. K5-1 N7+5
- 36. C9=7 N5+7
- 37. C7+3 K6+1
- 38. R2+1 K6+1
- 39. R2-1 K6-1
- 40. C7-1 G5-6



- 41. R2-6 R6=4
- 42. R2=3 R4=7
- 43. P9+1 R7-2
- 44. K5+1 R7=5
- 45. K5=6 K6=5
- 0-1

**SPRINGTIME
IN PARIS**

by Paul Byway

From the 30th April to the 1st May 2000 the Association de Xiang-Qi en France held the 1st European Spring XiangQi Tournament (non-Asiatic) in

Paris - and a splendid event it was. The prize fund was 20,000 Francs and two Chinese banquets a day! The competition was, I believe, the brainchild of M. Laurent Kim and gave the Occidentals the chance to measure themselves against each other. He was surely right to look forward to the day when such a tournament is not necessary, but meanwhile there is no doubt that it's difficult to improve on a diet of certain losses against strong Oriental opposition.

There were twenty three players from Germany, France, Finland, Poland and England. It was a pity that Italy and Holland were not represented - and there could have been more from Germany.

I give the scores for the top ten, and their performance ratings for the event:

Claus Templeman	7
GER	ELO 2005
Olivier Thill	6
FRA	ELO 1767
Jouni Tolonen	4½
FIN	ELO 1662
Siegfried Huber	4½
GER	ELO 1550
Joel Janin	4½
FRA	ELO 1540
Joachim Schmidt Brauns	4½
GER	ELO 1564
Paul Byway	4
ENG	ELO 1565
Francis Corrigan	4
FRA	ELO 1527
Joern Tessen	4
GER	ELO 1401
Peter Wood	4
ENG	ELO 1378

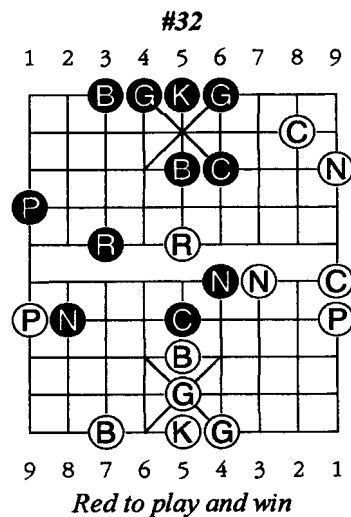
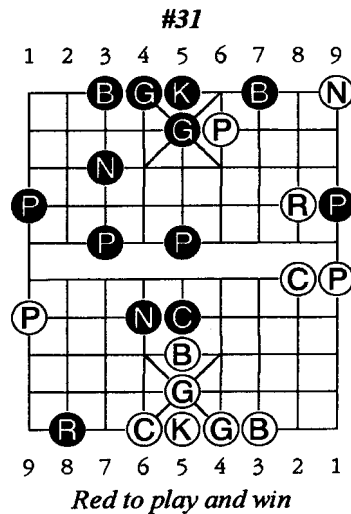
You can see from the table that the first three stand clear of the rest - and it's sobering to reflect that Germany also have Stefan Scholz, Michael Naegler and Norbert Schaefer of a similar strength to Claus Templeman.

Peter Wood had an excellent tournament, adding over a hundred Elo points to his rating. For myself I was disappointed since I made far too many gross blunders. The worst of these was to blunder a rook away against Jouni Tolonen, after which he was still happy to accept a draw! I really must learn to handle the clock

better. The results were available almost as soon as the tournament had finished, for which we are indebted to Siegfried Huber.

**MIDDLGAME
MATING TECHNIQUES**

From actual game positions. Try these examples of R/N/C manoeuvres to force mate before you look at the solutions at the foot of the page.



Solutions

- #31 1.P4+1 G5-6 2.N1-3 K5+1
3.N3-4 K5-1 4.N4+6 K5+1 5.R2+2
K5+1 6.R2-1! K5-1 7.N6-4 K5-1
8.N4+3 K5+1 9.R2=5 K5=6 10.C2+4
- #32 1.N1+3 C6-1 2.C1+5 K5+1
3.N+4 C6+1 4.C1-1 K5-1 5.N4+6!
C6=4 6.C1+1 K5+1 7.N3+4 K5=6
8.N4+3 K6+1 9.R5=4! R3=6 10.N3-
2 K6-1 C1-1

REVIEWS

Get Off, Move On or Stay Put!

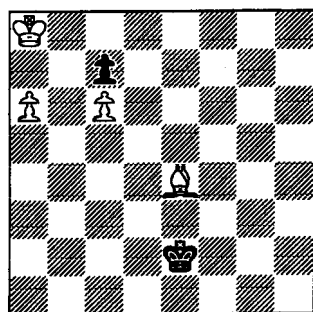
by George Jelliss

This is the title of a 24-page A5 booklet produced by Chris Tylor. It revisits his pioneering work that was published in several issues of *Chessics* in the 1980s, (issues 10, 11, 12, 17 and the final one 29/30) under the title of "Chess Reactions". The subtitle reads: "An investigation into chess variants arising from different effects of a move to an occupied square". It contains about 90 illustrative problems of which 60 are originals, thus considerably adding to the previous work, and several are new versions of those in *Chessics*, as well as examples from other sources.

There is a general introduction and three main sections, each with its own preamble: A. Destructive Reactions, in which one or both colliding pieces vanish; B. Transitive Reactions, in which one piece moves on, either under its own steam or helped on its way (the four types of move possible here are called Skip, Tag, Pass and Kick); C. Combinative Reactions, in which the two pieces combine forces in various forms of closer or looser alliance.

For a problem composer looking for uncharted regions to explore there is Terra Nova aplenty here. Some might make playable games, though no guidance is given on this aspect. Extra conditions restricting some of the possible actions would probably be necessary. As a taster I select one original problem from each section.

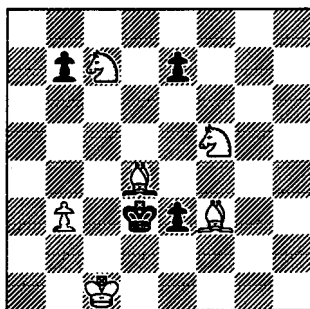
(A5.3) Oppo-Surrender Chess.



Mate in 6

In Oppo-Surrender Chess there are no normal captures, instead a piece attempting a capture is itself removed from the board. 'Check' is possible because a King is obliged to surrender itself to an adjacent enemy if it has no flight square.

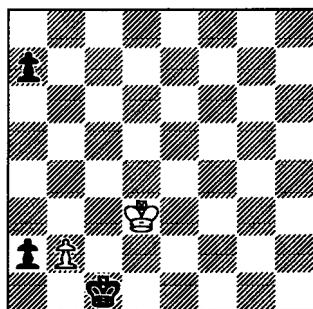
(B4.6) Free-Pass Chess.



Mate in 2

In Free Pass Chess a piece may move to a square occupied by a piece of either colour and then, as part of the same move, is moved on according to the powers of the other piece. Thus a white piece moving to a black pawn ends up on the square in front of the pawn. In the diagram for example, white could play, say, N-e7-e6 or B-e3-e2+.

(C1.3) Oppo-Additive Chess.



Serieshelpmate in 7

In Oppo-Additive Chess a piece moving to an enemy piece may either capture it or stick to it permanently. Each player then moves the piece according to the power of the component of appropriate colour. Pawn components can promote.

The booklet is available from:
Chris Tylor, 3 Meadow Close,
St Austell, Cornwall
PL25 3UD, UK
price £1.20.

Solutions to TYLOR problems:

(A5.3): 1.Ka7 Ke1 2.Bd3 Kf1/f2 3.Be2+ Kg2 4.Bf3+ Kh3 5.Ka8 Kh4 6.Bg4 mate. (1...Kd1/f1? 2.Bd3/f3 and mates next move). Other defences lead to similar mates on g4, g2 or e2.

(B4.6): 1.N-e3-e2 (waiting) Pb6/Pb5/Pe6/Pe5

2.B-b6-b5/Nb5-b4/N-e6-e5/B-e5-e4.

(C1.3): 1-3.a3, 4.a3-b2 (= WP+BP), 5.b1 (=WP+BR), 6.b8 (as BR, =WQ+BR), 7.h8(as BR) for a1(as WQ) mate.

Winning Chess Piece by Piece

by David Pritchard

The authors are Ted Nottingham, Al Lawrence and Bob Wade. This well-presented and lively-written book aimed at children must surely be the most basic of all primers - fifteen pages on the knight's move for example.

The surprise is four pages devoted to Progressive Chess (Italian rules, I note). These are largely taken up with a short game lost by Bob Wade. Here it is: 1. e4 2. e5,f5 3. d4,f4,Bc4 (losing: the simple 3. d4,Bg5,Bxd8 looks more than adequate) 4. Qg5,Qxg2,Be7,Bh4 mate. (The game was previously published - with one move different - in the *ECV*).

The novelty of introducing young beginners to a chess variant is commendable. May it bear fruit.

Sterling Publishing Co. Inc.
U.S.\$10.95 (no Sterling price given).

ETEROSCACCO 86/87/88 (1999)

by Paul Byway

This journal has now appeared after some delay. This volume contains articles on Hostage Chess, Magnetic Chess and Marseillais Chess among others. Fabio Forzoni describes a notation for Kriegspiel. Contact:-

Alessandro Castelli
62010 Villa Potenza (Macerata)
Italy

SOME DELIGHTS OF HOSTAGE CHESS

by Roger Smook

Hostage Chess, introduced by David Pritchard in the Summer 1999 issue, is now one of the twenty games in his *Popular Chess Variants* (Batsford). The inventor, John Leslie, is a friend, so we have been able to spend countless hours exploring the beautiful intricacies of this inspired variant on Shogi. I occupy myself here with "happy memories" — that is, with games won by me.

John has supplied the following quick guide, eliminating possible ambiguities of earlier rules statements.

Normal rules, except these:

(i) Each player owns two areas by the board: a 'prison' for captured men ('hostages') near the player's right hand, and an 'airfield' near the left hand. In any turn you may be able to rescue a man from your opponent's prison. You must choose between this and using the turn in some other way. Only one man per turn can be rescued.

(ii) To rescue a man, pick it up and then transfer a man of equal or greater value from your own prison to your opponent's airfield. Values run from *pawn* upwards to *knight* or *bishop* (equal in value), then *rook*, then *queen*.

(iii) In the turn in which it is rescued, a rescued man must be parachuted onto a vacant square, this ending the turn. The only restriction is that pawns cannot be parachuted onto first or eighth ranks, so parachuting may make your bishops stand on squares of the same colour.

(iv) A man on an airfield stays there until the airfield's owner chooses to use a turn just for parachuting the man.

(v) Castling and pawn jumps from the second rank can involve parachuted men, no matter what they did before being captured.

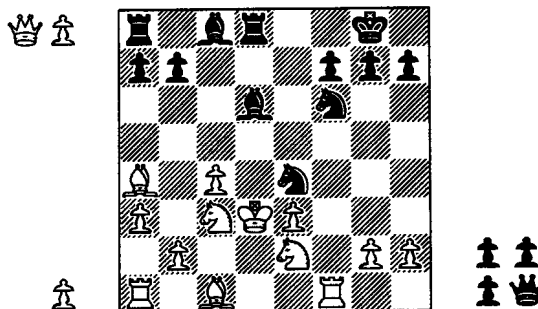
(vi) 'Promotion': A pawn can move to the eighth rank only if it can then at once change places with a queen, rook, bishop or knight in the opponent's prison. [Until there is a prisoner with which it could change places, a seventh-rank pawn does not give check to a king standing diagonally ahead of it. You of course cannot make any capture that would cause such a pawn suddenly to give check to your own king.]

Notation: N*c7 means a knight from an airfield parachutes onto c7. (B-N)N*c7 means an imprisoned bishop goes to the opponent's airfield, a rescued knight then parachuting onto c7. (R-P)*g3 means an imprisoned rook goes to the opponent's airfield, a rescued pawn parachuting onto g3.

The first game strikes me as highly aesthetic in its thematic exploitation of the square d3:

J.L. - R.S. 1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Nf6 3 c4 c6 4 dxc6 Nxc6 5 (P-P)*e3 (White worries about d4 with good reason. Consider an earlier brevity between the same opponents: 5 (P-P)*d5? Nd4 6 Nf3?? *c2 7 Resigns) 5 ... *d3 (The first of many incursions on d3. White wins the d-pawn but falls seriously behind in development.) 6 Qb3

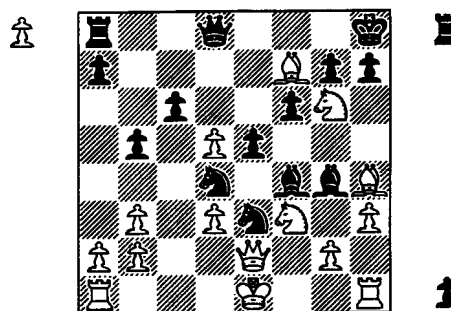
e5 7 Qxd3 Qxd3 8 Bxd3 e4 9 Be2 Bd6 10 a3 O-O 11 Nc3 Re8 12 d3 exd3 13 Bxd3 Ne5 14 Bc2 (P-P)*d3 15 Ba4 Rd8 16 *e2 dxe2 17 Ngxe2 Nd3+ 18 Kd2 (18 Kf1 leads to immediate mate.) 18 ... Nxf2 19 Rf1 N2e4+ 20 Kc2 (P-P)*d3+ 21 Kxd3:



21 ... Bg3+! (preventing the king from finding a relatively safe haven on e1 in the variation 22 Nd4 Nc5+ 23 Ke2 (Q-Q)Q*d3+). 22 Kc2 (Q-Q)Q*d3+ 23 Kb3 Nc5+ 24 Ka2 Nxa4 25 Rd1 (P-P)*b3+ 26 Kxb3 Nc5+ 27 Kb4 a5+ 28 Kxc5 Bd6+ 29 Kb5 Bd7+ 30 Kb6 (B-P)*c7+ 31 Kxb7 Rdb8 mate

White was a spectator in the previous game. In this one, both sides enjoy the active life:

J.L. - R.S. 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 Bc5 4 Nc3 Nge7 5 d3 O-O 6 Bg5 Qe8 7 Bxe7 Qxe7 8 Nd5 Qd8 9 Qd2 Kh8 10 (N-B)B*g5 f6 11 Bh4 Nd4 12 Bc4 c6 13 Ne3 d5 14 exd5 b5 15 Bb3 Nxb3 16 cxb3 Bxe3 17 fxe3 N*f5 18 (B-B)B*e6 Nxe3 19 (N-N)N*f7+ Rxf7 20 Bxf7 B*f4 21 Qe2? Bg4 22 h3 N*d4 23 (R-N)N*g6+:



23 ... hxc6 24 hxc4 R*h6 (Timid. Black wins easily after 24...Nxe2. For example, 25 Bxf6+ R*h6 26 Rxh6+ Bxh6 27 Bxd8 (R-R)R*f1+ 28 Kxe2 (Q-Q)Q*f2 mate.) 25 Nxd4 exd4 26 Bxc6 (P-P)*f7 (Shogi wisdom — parachute where the opponent wants to — but there may have been stronger moves. Now Black hangs on for dear life.) 27 Bxf7 (N-N)N*g3 28 N*g6+ Kh7 29 (B-N)N*f8+ Qxf8 30 Nxf8+ Rxf8 31 *g6+ Kh8 32 Qf2? (White blocks a crucial flight square and is forced to give Black a parachuting Queen.) 32 ... B*b4+ 33 Resigns

(The conclusion could have been 33 (Q-N)N*d2 Nxb1 34 Qxf4 Bxd2+ 35 Kxd2 Q*c2+ 36 Ke1 (N-P)*d2+ 37 Ke2 d1=B+ 38 Ke1 Qe2 mate.)

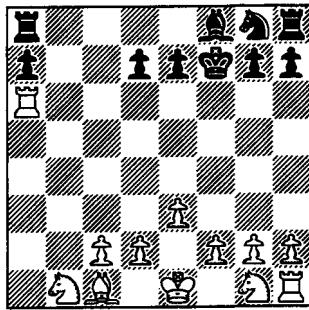
THE END IS NIGH !

by Paul Byway

LOSING CHESS

John Beasley draws our attention to a couple of positions from the Klüver-Dawson correspondence game. See his article earlier in this issue.

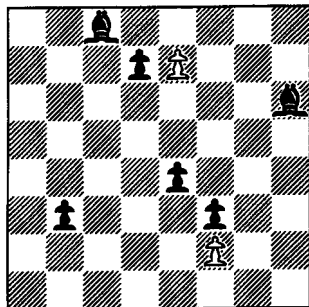
1) In the line 6.Qxf7 Kxf7 7.Rxa2 Qa5 8.Rxa5, after 8...Ba6 9.Rxa6:



Black to play and win in 10

Black actually has a win in 9, sacrificing nine men and stalemating the tenth, but the all-sacrifice win in 10 is simpler.

2) In the illusory threat line 22.Kc5 dxc5 23.Bb4, after 23...cxb4 24.d4 Bh6 25.e4 fxe4 26.d5 b3 27.d6 Ke7 28.dxe7:



Black to play and win in 7

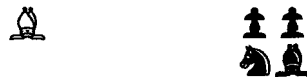
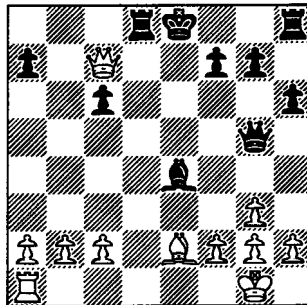
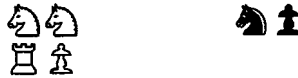
This time every promotion can be met by six sacrifices.

The solutions to these positions are given in full on the back page.

HOSTAGE CHESS

Roger Smook sends the following position, from a game against the inventor of Hostage Chess. I have taken the liberty of detaching this puzzle from the rest of Roger's article, which will be found elsewhere in the issue.

John Leslie - Roger Smook



Black to play and force mate

The solution is on the back page.

HEXAGONAL CHESS

A recent visit to the Chess Variant Pages of Hans Bodlaender revealed that Dave McCooey has been busy again. He did an extensive computer analysis of all endgames with two pieces (as well as kings of course) excluding pawns, on a hexagonal board. For our purposes I exclude the fairy pieces and therefore the data applies to a 91 hex board and to Glinski's and McCooey's Hexagonal Chess. In these two the moves of the pieces are the same, although the pawns and the layout differ. You can remind yourselves of the moves of the pieces by referring to ECV.

Summary

- 1) A queen does not defeat a rook in general.
- 2) A queen wins against knight or bishop.

- 3) A rook or two knights can checkmate a lone king.
- 4) A knight and bishop or two bishops cannot checkmate a lone king.

Percentage Breakdown

2:0	WW	SD	SM	LW
KQQ v K	99.5	0.0	0.5	7
KQR v K	99.6	0.0	0.4	8
KQN v K	93.9	6.0	0.1	16
KQB v K	94.0	5.8	0.1	16
KRR v K	99.8	0.0	0.2	11
KRN v K	94.4	5.5	0.1	26
KRB v K	94.5	5.4	0.1	26
KNN v K	89.7	10.2	0.0	72
KNB v K	0.5	10.2	0.0	39
KBB v K	0.1	10.1	0.0	12

The missing percentages in the last two rows are all 'fortress draws'.

Percentages for piece v piece

1:1	WW	BW	SD	FD	PC	LW
QQ	22.2	22.2	0.6	54.9	0.0	24
QR	36.6	16.9	5.1	37.2	4.3	47
QN	87.5	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	20
QB	86.7	0.0	13.3	0.0	0.0	20
RR	15.8	15.8	0.3	68.1	0.0	13
RN	88.0	0.0	12.0	0.0	0.0	81
RB	86.3	0.0	13.7	0.0	0.0	60
NN	0.1	0.1	0.0	99.9	0.0	9
NB	0.2	0.1	13.9	85.8	0.0	9
BB	0.1	0.1	0.0	99.9	0.0	7

The column headings represent: White wins, Black wins, simple draws, fortress draws, perpetual check and the longest White win in half-moves. In the first table the header SM stands for stalemate.

Simple draw: the weaker side can simplify by capture and draw.

Perpetual check: the weaker side cannot simplify but the stronger side cannot avoid check without either losing or allowing simplification.

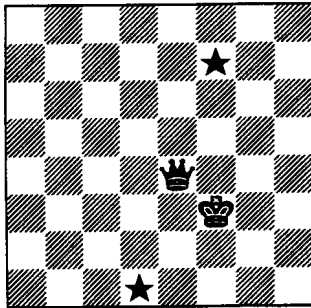
Fortress draw: the weaker side can neither simplify nor force perpetual check but can draw nevertheless.

Longest win: the maximum number of half-moves that it can require to force checkmate or conversion to a simpler ending that is also won.

PROGRESSIVE CHESS

This next position was published in Eteroscacco # 86/87/88 with the question 'Che pezzi ci sono in d1 e f7' which I take to mean: *which pieces are at d1 and f7?* But unless I'm very much mistaken we can ask a different question: *how many solutions? i.e. different arrangements of pieces on d1 and f7.*

#82 Boris Uglickih, Russia
Eteroscacco 86/88 (1999)

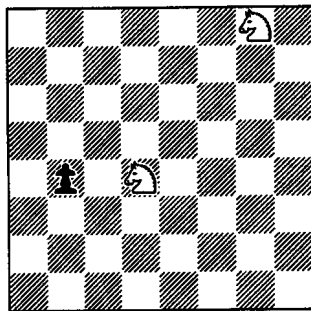


Italian Progressive
Mate in 9

Now a tricky offering from John Beasley. The solution to this and to the previous one are on the back page

LOSING CHESS

#83 John Beasley
(First published in the Problemist)



White to play and win

SOLUTIONS TO COMPETITION 10

#79 Two knights cannot beat two kings without a miracle: the win involves a whole series of special cases well worth studying. 1. Nd2 and Black has two moves:

1. ... Kh1 2. Ne4! Kg3 3. Nxd3 and the Black king will take both knights in succession.

1. ... Kh4 2. Ne5! (the same trick one rank higher) Kg4 3. Nxd3 Kh1 4. Nf2! (again!) Kh2 5. Nh1! Kxh1 6. Ne4 and knight beats king.

#80 This one is long indeed! The manoeuvre by the White knights seems to be unique:

1. Nec4! Kf6 2. Ne3! Qf8! (2. ... Kg7? 3. Nd3) 3. Nbd1! (heading for g3) Kf7 4. Ng2! (and this one for e2) Kf6 5. Nf2! Kf7! (better than 5. ... Qf7 6. Ne1! Qf8 7. Nf3 Kf7 8. Nd4 and wins) 6. Nf4! (6. Ne1? Qb8!) Kf6 7. Ne2! Qf7! (7. ... Kf7 8. Nd4!) 8. Nh1! Qf8 9. Ng3 Kf7 10. Nc1! (this knight must move to prepare the final combination, but c1 is its only square: 10. Nc3? Qe8! or 10. Ng1? Qd8!) Kf6 11. Nf5! Kxf5 12. Ne2! Kf6 13. Ng3 Kf7 14. Nh5! and wins!

#81 Precision is needed by White to stop Black from promoting all three pawns and reaching a won ending:

1. Kb1? f1(N) 2. Kb2 f2! leads to Zugzwang. Black to play would lose immediately (3. ... e1(K) 4. Kc3), but White to play must run into either 3. Kb1 Nd2! 4. Ka1 Nb3 5. Kb1 Na1 6. Kxa1 e1(B) or into 3. Ka2 Nh2! 4. Kb1 Nf3 5. Kb2 f1(B) soon followed by promotion of the last pawn. So:-
1. Kb2! f1(N) 2. Kb1 Nd2 (only move since 2. ... f2 3. Kb2! and 2. ... e1(K/B) 3. Kc1!) 3. Ka1 Ne4 (3. ... Nb3 4. Kb1 Na1? 5. Kxa1 e1(B) 6. Kb2 now leads to defeat) 4. Kb1 f2 (promotions are still impossible and 4. ... Nd2 only repeats) 5. Kb2! Nc3 6. Kxc3 e1(R) (this would win if the pawn was still on f3, but with the pawn on f2 White has an unexpected resource) 7. Kd4! Rb1 8. Kd3! Ra1 (8. ... e1(R)? 9. Kd2!) 9. Kd2 Rc1 10. Kxc1 e1(K/B) draw.

IR and DP were brave enough to try!

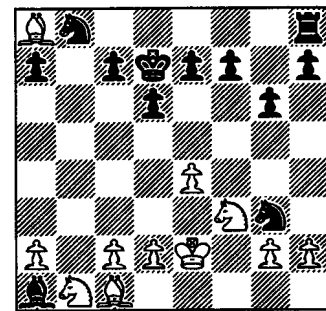
The scores are now:-

Ian Richardson	32
Fred Galvin	27
David Pritchard	16
Ronald Turnbull	10
John Beasley	3
Stefano Bruzzi	2

COMPETITION 11

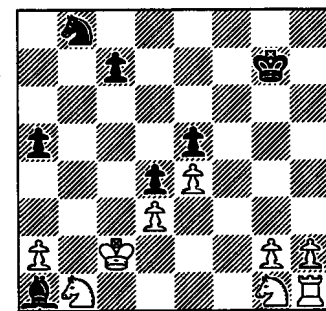
I fancy that the competition pieces have been quite difficult of late. All the more credit to those adventurers who attempted them. This time I return to the field of Italian Progressive Chess. Here are three more positions: in each case the mate was not seen by the player of the white pieces.

#84 Castelli - Scherf (1982)



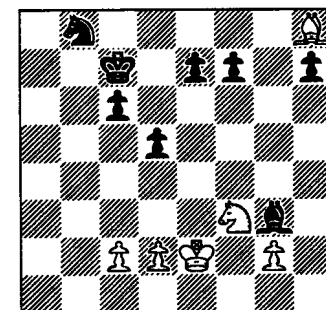
Mate in 7

#85 Cesaro - Barigione (1985)



Mate in 9

#86 Davide - Castelli (1979)



Mate in 9

Good luck with these! The informal tourney award 1997/8 by Hans Gruber will also be found in this issue. Enjoy!

PROBLEM PAGES

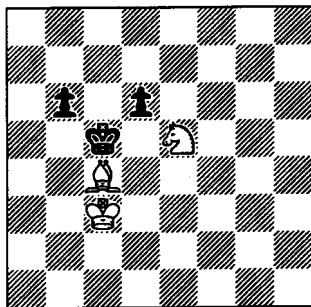
by Ronald Turnbull

With the generous endorsement of Dr Gruber ringing in my pink and embarrassed ears, I proudly present some Sturm, a modicum of Drang, and a fair bit of fairy fantasy. No credit to me - given a larger pile of originals to troll through, I might have deselected some of the stormier dranginess in favour of classic two movers with just one fairy stipulation at a time.

Hans Gruber's judgement appears on another page. I am most grateful to him for his enthusiastic and swift appraisal.

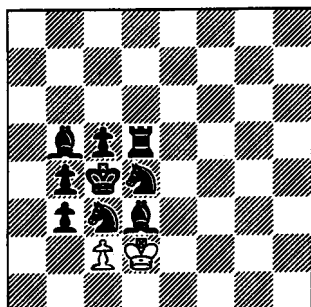
So out into the wild moors, my friends, along with King Lear and his fool (or Bishop, if Lear were French). The storm approaches, the drang is at hand. The disguised Knight will be along presently.

311 - Ian RICHARDSON



Helpmate in 1½, Magnetic Chess
b) wB -> c2

312 - Ian RICHARDSON

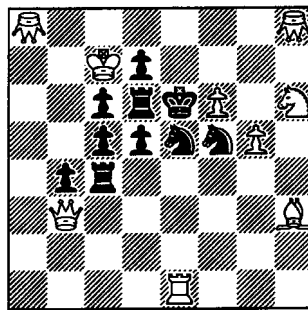


Series helpmate in 5, 2 solutions
Magnetic Chess

A real oddity to start: a couple of

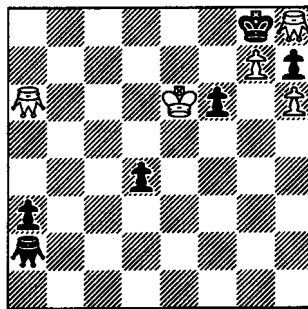
Magnetic Chess ones that are actually fairly easy. The piece moved attracts enemy pieces, repels friendly ones, along rook lines. So in Ian Richardson's first problem 1...Be2 would repel wN from e5 to e8, and 1...Bd3?? is illegal as it attracts bP from d6 to d4. Kings are not magnetic. Full details in VC 31. In the seriesmover 312, 1...Pxd3+ is not mate because Black has 2.Nf3(Pe3). Black makes 5 legal moves so that White may mate in one.

313 - M WITZTUM, A ETTINGER



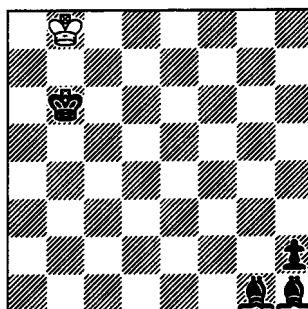
Helpstalemate in 2
b) bB on d5

314 - A ETTINGER



Helpmate in 2, 3 solutions

315 - S EMMERSON

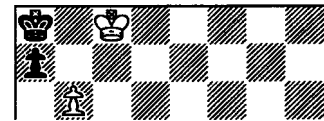


Mate in 10, Vögtlander Chess

The Grasshopper moves along Q-lines to the square beyond some intervening unit (the 'hurdle'). In 313 wGh8 could move to h5 or capture on e5.

Vögtlander: "White is in check if Black would be in normal chess, and vice versa." In the absence of bK, White could mate by moving his own K to b7: wK is attacked so Black is in check, and Black cannot counter the check as his B can't move away.

316-318 and X - S EMMERSON, RT and POPEYE



Familiar composer and diagram, but new stipulations! In Messigny Chess, instead of a legal move one may exchange two like units of different colours. Black could play P<P (exchanging bP and wP) or K<K (exchanging the Kings). The other side may not make an immediate re-exchange of a unit just exchanged.

Problem 316 is Helpmate in 4, Messigny Chess, with the added constraint that no promotions may take place during the play. 1.b7+ isn't mate as 1...P<P. The two sides collaborate to get rid of this annoying possibility. For the following two, we add Rois Transmutés - a K in check loses its normal move and moves as the attacking unit. King on home rank attacked by pawn has no move at all. 317 has Messigny + Rois Transmutés, a) series mate in 4 b) helpmate in 2; while 318 (Emmerson & Turnbull) has helpmate in 2½, two solutions. There is overlap. Which do you prefer?

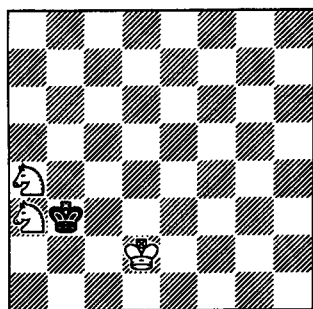
The normal convention is that computers, being inanimate, cannot compose chess - but Stephen Emmerson refuses to take any credit for (indeed, repudiates) Problem X, by Popeye the Program: Messigny + Rois Transmutés, Reciprocal helpmate in 5 - W & B collaborate for four moves, after which either W mates, or W can move so that B mates.

The program has assumed that pawns on home rank are immobile

- as is implied in Rois Transmutés - and has further supposed that a King in check from a pawn may perform a Messigny exchange with an enemy pawn. The resulting play is ingenious, and shows a twisted logic that is all Popeye's own.

1.Kd8 a6 2.P<P Kb8 3.a7+ K<P 4.Kc7 Ka8 5.P<P or Kxb6 K<K
Do you like it? Or is this one unattractive to protoplasm?

319 - P FAYERS



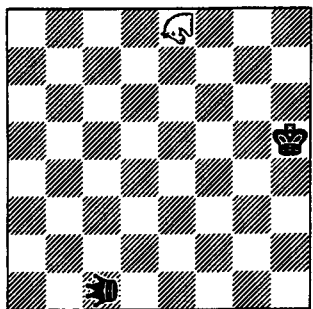
Helpmate in 2

- a) Messigny + Rois Transmutés
- b) Rois Transmutés + Messigny
- c) Both

Some of us won't let the computer decide our problem conventions for us. But Peter Fayers is quite content to pick up Popeye's idea and run with it...

320 - T LINSS

dedicated to Stephen Emmerson

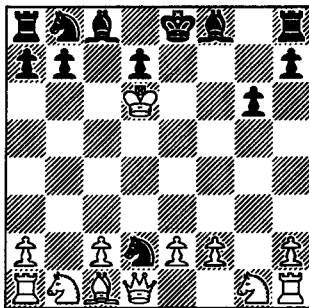


Selfmate in 11, Maxi, with set-play
Checkless Chess
Elephant c1, Royal Zebra e8

An elephant is a combination Queen and Nightrider - an alarming beast. There is set-play - if it were Black to move, he would have to start 1...Eh6, and White could mate on the

5th move. I'll give a solving point for the set-play and another for the full solution, if anyone can find it.

321 - P RAICAN



Zvolen Chess
Position after Black's 13th move
Game so far?

Zvolen Chess was expounded in VC 28. A defended piece (not King) is paralysed, and loses all powers including that of paralysing. Mutual or cyclical defences do not paralyse. In the game array, all units are blocked or paralysed except the pawns on the b-file and f-file. (Kings don't paralyse, so f-pawns are free, as are Queens. Queens paralyse their Bishops, so b-pawns are not paralysed.) All other units are blocked or paralysed, which makes things less difficult. But still not easy!

VC schedules are uncertain. Solutions within 3 weeks of receipt will ensure publication of comments; solutions within 6 weeks could do so; later solutions get ladder points only.

Solutions to VC 34

301 (Emmerson) 1.Kd5 (2.Lg7) 1...e4/c2/Vg7 2.Lxe4/Kxe5/Lb1. Nice clean position - RT. Pity set cross-check 1...c2+ 2.Kxe5 has to go - AE. One solver offers 1.Kf5+ e4 2.Lh7, but 1...e4 is check to W!

302 (Emmerson) 1.b4 (2.Nef6) ...Vg3/Vd4/Kd7 2.Nec3/Nc5/Nd6++ Perfunctory key; hopefully the play compensates a little - SE. All solvers think it does, but AE offers bBa4 to replace bNa1, Bc7 to g3, b2 to b4 with key 1.Bc7 (C+).

303 (Ettinger) 1.MOb6 d5 2.CCeF3 MAxe2 b) 1.MAf5 d5 2.CCc3 MAh3 New helpmate theme! Counterpart of the orthodox Mari Theme for directmate 2-movers: "each of 2 Bl defences leaves a Wh line, but Wh can only mate on the line not opened by Bl" - AE. Neat mates and

idea compensate for obvious defects such as the repeated strong 1...d5 - RT. I think these should be CAOS - has an animal sound about it - SE (composer has christened as CRAOS).

304 (Turnbull) 1.Ka5 (2.Nc2) ...Pb5+/c5+/Pxb5+ 2.Bc5/Nd5/Bg5 Three neat crosschecks granted by the key. Crosschecks are direct, rather than discovered, so a Chinese theme - SE. My instinct was K-move, but when I saw the checks I looked elsewhere - IR, unlike CL who knows the composer ("specialité de la maison, n'est-ce pas?") But maybe we could expose wK to 4 checks from bP - RT.

305 (Nebotov) White cannot stalemate - but Black can! 1.bKd8 Kb8 2.axb6 Ke8 3.Kc7=. Normally of course one would set with colours reversed. But the problem as set is so clearly insoluble that the trick is justified, I think - RT. A contrived stipulation if ever I saw one - or two hundred! - SE. CL duals 3.Kd7= (bP guards c6).

306 (Emmerson) 1...Kc7 2.a6 b7+ 3.Ka7 b8Q Messigny legalises White's starting (Black could have just played P<P) and prevents 1...b7 mate - SE. "Negative" Messigny! - AE.

307 (Emmerson) a) 1.a5 Kc7 2.K*b6(b7) 4.Kc8 P<P b) 1.P<P Kc7 2.K*b6(b7) 4.Kc8 5.P<P c) 1.K<K a*b6(b2) 2.P<P b1Q 3.b7+ Q*b7(b2). Very fair stipulations, not trivial to solve; well done that man! - CL.

308 (Richardson) 1.Be3-c5 Rc4-b4 2.Rc3-c4 Qf2-f3 + 3.Kd3-d4 Ba7 b6 = and 1.Be3-d4 Qf2-g2 2.Kd3-e3 Ba7-c5 3.Rc3-d3 Rc4-c3 = A beautiful echo - AE.

309 (Richardson) 1.Be4 Rh3 2.Bh1 Be4 3.Rh2 Bg2 and 1.Rd1 Bb3 2.Ra1 Ba2 3.Bb1 Rc2. Sadly, 3rd solution in NW corner couldn't be achieved - RT. Good move-order control, and the echo of the idea, probably preferable to an echo of the mate position - SE. I very much liked these two, and was inspired to compose myself - AE (as were SE, CL; see VC 36).

310 (Lytton) 1.b4 (no threat) 1...Nf8 2.Nxd2(Nd8,Pb2) 1...Nf6(Pf5) 2.Nc5 (Ne5) 1...Nxb5 (Nf5) 2.Nxb5 (Na5) 1...c3(Pd3) 2.Bd8 (Nd4) 1...Bb3(Pc3) 2.cxb3(Pb8=N) 1...Bb1(Pb2) 2.Nb4 1...d1(Bd2) 2.Nb3(Pb8=N). Luckily b4 was the first move I tried, else hopeless - RT. A beauty! - IR (who almost solved).

Stephen Emmerson 7; A Ettinger 8; Ian Richardson 5.5; CC Lytton 11 (=maximum. Very fine solving.) Late score VC 33 Mark Ridley 1; ladder amend CL VC 30 (9), VC 31 (12) late solutions found under dog blanket slipped the system.

**VARIANT CHESS INFORMAL
TOURNAMENT AWARDS 1997/1998**

by Hans Gruber

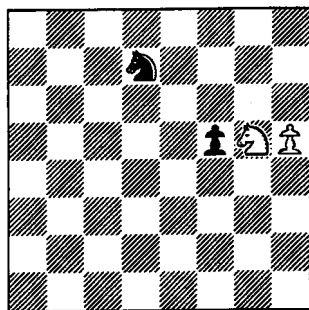
STUDIES

Hans offered to judge the studies as well as the problems, and at our request he has divided his award into separate sections. In respect of studies, there has been a recommendation that studies extracted from "total information" computer databases should not compete in the same tournaments as studies composed conventionally (see EG 135, pp 9-10). Some of the studies published in Variant Chess in 1997-98 were so extracted, and we asked Hans to exclude these studies from the main award but to treat them separately and award "Special Prize" and so on as he thought appropriate. - Ed.

A total of 26 fairy endgame studies participated in this tournament, an incredible number, and many of these excelled by high quality! Most studies were situated in the genre of Losing Game, some used Modern Courier Chess, two XiangQi, and one Progressive Chess. A couple of instructive theoretical contributions were published (e.g. KQ vs. KBF in Modern Courier Chess), but these lacked the uniqueness of solution that is necessary for being included in the award. (No rule without exceptions: see Honourable Mentions.)

I enjoyed judging this tournament, and finally concluded with the following prize-winners. In the solutions, only brief analyses are given; for further details, read the published solutions.

1st Prize - Fabrice LIARDET



Losing Chess; White to move and win

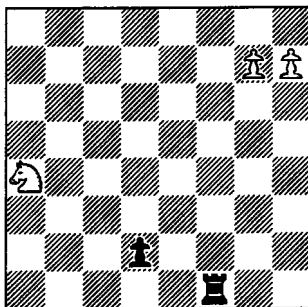
1.h6! (1.Nf3,Nf7? Ne5 2.Nxe5 f4 ... 5...f1K draw, e.g. 3.Nc4 f3 4.h6 f2 5.Ne5 f1K 6.h7 Kg1!; 1.Nh7? Nf8 2.Nxf8 f4 ... 5...f1K draw — WN is too far away, so the endgame R+N vs. K is only drawn, e.g. 3.h6 f3 4.h7 f2 5.h8R f1K 6.Ne6 Ke2 7.Rh4 Kd2 8.Rf4 Ke1! 9.Ra4 Ke2) f4 2.Ne4 Nf6 3.Nxf6 f3 4.h7 f2 5.h8R (despite WN's good position 5.h8Q does

not win: BK keeps on the squares e1 and f1) 5...f1K 6.Nd5 wins, e.g. 6...Kg2 7.Re8 Kh3 8.Rf8 Kh4 9.Rf6 Kh3 10.Rf5 Kh2 11.Rf4 Kh1 12.Rf3.

2...Nc5 3.Nxc5 f3 4.h7 f2 5.h8Q! (5.h8R? f1R wins!) f1K 6.Qh6! Reci-Zz, e.g. 6...Kg2 7.Qh1 Kxh1 8.Ne4 wins.

Interesting and attractive promotion play and valuable for the theory concerning the endgames R+N vs. K and Q+N vs. K, including a position of reciprocal zugzwang.

2nd Prize - Fabrice LIARDET



Losing Chess; White to move and win

1.g8B! Rf7 2.Bxf7 d1R (2...d1K 3.Nb2 K-- 4.Nd1 Kxd1 5.h8R wins) 3.Bh5 and now:

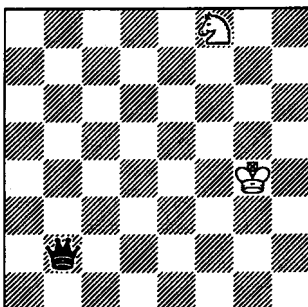
3...Rd2 4.Be2 Rxe2 5.Nb2 Rxb2 6.h8B! wins

3...Rd3 4.Bf3 Rxf3 5.Nc3 Rxc3 6.h8B! wins

3...Rd6,Rb1 4.Nb6 Rxb6 5.Bg6 Rxc6 6.h8N! wins

Triple setting of instructive white promotions after introductory promotions and sacrifices, so that the poor black rook loses against a "weaker" piece.

**Special Prize - John BEASLEY
(extracted from database)**



Losing Chess; White to move and win

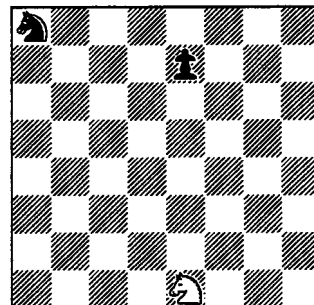
Set play (! Very rare in endgame studies): 1...Qa1 2.Kf3 Qa5 3.Kg2 Qa4,Qb5 4.Nd7 Qxd7 5.Kh3 wins.

1.Kh4! Qa1! 2.Kg3! Qc1! 3.Kh3! Zz. Qa1! 4.Kh4! Zz. Qb2! 5.Kg4! Zz. (diagram) Qa1 6.Kf3 Qa5 7.Kg2 Qa4,Qb5 8.Nd7 Qxd7 9.Kh3 wins.

An outstanding tempo (losing)

manoeuvre, with plenty of excellent moves and an extreme aesthetic value. This endgame study already deservedly received 3rd Prize *ex aequo* in the (worldwide) Minimanner Award 1998.

1st H. M. - John BEASLEY



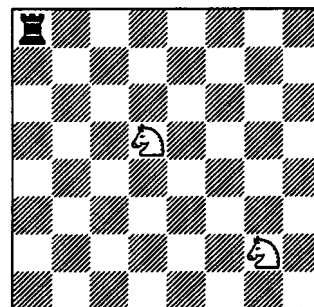
Losing Chess; White to move and win

1.Nc2? Nb6! — 1.Nd3? Nc7!
1.Ng2! Nb6 2.Nf4!; 1...Nc7 2.Ne3!
e.g., 1...Nc7 2.Ne3! Na6 3.Ng4 e6
4.Nf6 e5 5.Nh5 e4 6.Nf4

1...Nb6 2.Nf4! Nc4 3.Nh5 e6 4.Nf6 e5 5.Nh5 e4 6.Nf4 e3 7.Nh3 e2 8.Nf4! (8.Nf2? e1B 9.Nd1 Ne3! wins) e1B 9.Ne2.

A strategic endgame with deep analysis (see published solution). Most moves are not unique, but the first two white moves are. And these are so skilfully elaborated that a Honourable Mention is well-deserved.

**Special H. M. - John BEASLEY
(extracted from database)**

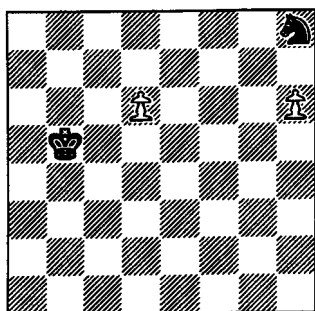


Losing Chess; White to move and win

1.Nf4 (or equivalently 1.Ne3) Ra1 2.Ng6 Ra2 3.Ne5 Ra8 (3...Rh2 4.Nb6 Rh1 5.Nf4 Rh8 6.Nb2 with an echo of the diagram position) 4.Ng4 Ra1 5.Ngf6 Ra2 6.Ng8 Ra1 7.Nge7 Ra2 8.Ng6 Ra1 9.Ngf4 Ra8 10.Ng2, diagram position with Black to move.

Black to play immediately loses; the WNN perform a 10-move manoeuvre to lose a tempo. Each move is unique — except the key in this symmetric position. The move order is breath-taking, but the authorized double solution made the evaluation difficult.

1st Comm. - Fabrice LIARDET



Losing Chess; White to move and win

1.h7 Ng6 2.h8any Nxh8 3.d7 Ng6 4.d8R! Nh4 5.Re8 (usually R vs. K+N is drawn, but K+N lose if not connected)

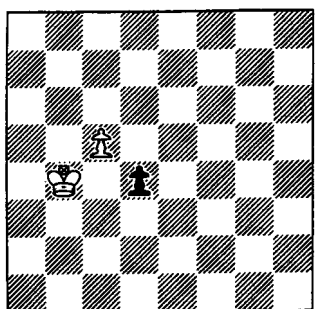
3...Kb6 4.d8K! Kc5 5.Kd7 Kd4 6.Kd6 Ke3 7.Ke5 Kf2 8.Kf4 Kg1 9.Kg3 (K vs. N is an elementary win).

1...Kc5 2.d7 Kd5 3.d8B! wins, e.g. 3...Ke4 4.Bc7 Kd3 5.Bb6 Kc2 6.Ba5 Kb1 7.Bd2 Ka2 8.Bc1.

1...Kb6 2.d7 Ka5 3.d8K!

Four white promotions, but 2.h8any is a pity.

2nd Comm. - Paul BYWAY



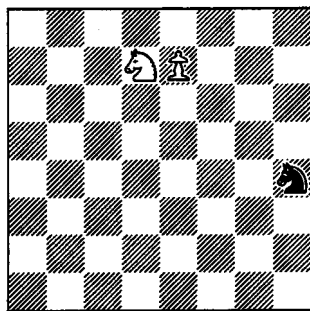
Losing Chess; White to move and win

1.c6 d3 2.c7 (2.Kb3? d2 3.Kb2 d1B 4.Ka1 Bc2 5.Kb1 Bxb1 6.c7 Be4 wins) d2 3.c8Q! (3.c8R? d1N 4.Kc5 Nb2 5.Kc6 Nd3 6.Kc7 Nb4 wins; 3.c8K? d1R 4.Kb7 Rd2 5.Kb6 Rd8 6.Kb3 Rd1 draw; 3.c8B? d1R 4.Bd7 Rxd7 5.Kb5 Rd3 wins; 3.c8N? d1B 4.Kc5 Be2 5.Kd6 Bf3 6.Ke7 Bd5 7.Kd8 Bc6 wins) d1N 4.Kc5 Nb2 5.Kc6 Nd3 6.Kc7 Nb4 (6...Ne5 7.Qg4) 7.Qa6 Nxa6 8.Kb8.

Elaborated white and black promotions.

3rd Comm. (see next diagram). Interesting play with theoretical value. It is based on the fact that the N vs. N endgame is won for the side to move if the knights are on squares of the same colour. In the endgame B+N vs. N the knight has to reach a square of the same colour as its own bishop, then the bishop has to be sacrificed. The interference idea 3.Nd7! adds artistic value.

3rd Comm. - Fabrice LIARDET



Losing Chess; White to move and win

1.Nf6! (1.e8K? Nf5; 1.e8R? Ng6; 1.e8N? Nf5 2.Nc7 Ng3 draw; 1.Nb8,Nb6? Ng6 2.e8B Nf8 3.Bg6 Nxc6; 1.Nc5 Nf5 2.e8B Ne7) Nf5! (1...Ng6 2.e8B; 1...N- 2.e8K) 2.e8B Nd4 (2.- Nh4 3.Bb5!) 3.Nd7! (the most important move) Nb5 4.Bf7 Na7 5.Be6 Nb5 6.Bc4 any 7.Bb5.

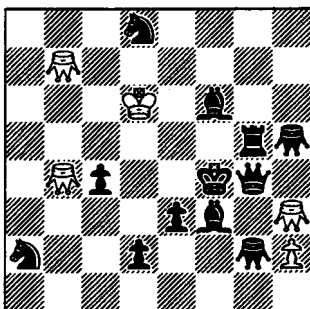
PROBLEMS

I have to admit: my pleasure when (solving and) judging the problems was one of the largest I ever experienced! This only partly was a consequence of the problems' quality (which was quite good), but mostly I enjoyed the richness of fairy fantasy that was presented. Often far away from the daily problem chess main stream! The wild *Sturm und Drang* reminded me of *Jeenschach's* Schiegl-era (that was just ending when my interest in fairy chess arose). Of course a rather crazy judgment resulted, with a couple of special distinctions, with honours for "small" problems that excel by their fairy pep, not by their deepness, etc.

Taken together, I had to deal with 137 problems. 11 were non-joint problems by the editor Ronald Turnbull, and he asked me not to include them. I decided to respect his will, but... you must have a second look on at least two of these, and they receive special distinctions.

I awarded 3 + 1 special prizes, 5 + 1 special honourable mentions, and 7 (unranked) + 1 special commendations.

1st Prize - Juraj LÖRINC

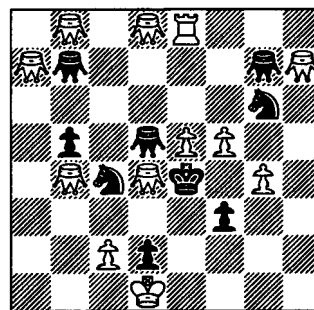


Helpmate in 3; b) bGg4 instead of bQ

a) 1.Qf5 Gb3 2.Gg6 Ge1 3.Bg4 Gh6
b) 1.Ge4 Ge7 2.Ghe2 Gf7 3.Rg4 Gf1

Incarceration of black rook and black bishop. A very innovative helpmate idea in good, open construction. It is astonishing that the white play is not only supporting the black manoeuvres, but includes a change of functions of the Grasshoppers b4 and b7, as well as the black ones g2 and h5. The black knights avoid cooks.

2nd Prize - Nikolay VASYUCHKO



Helpmate in 2; 2.1;2.1

1.Gxb4 Gf7 2.Ncxe5 Gxb4

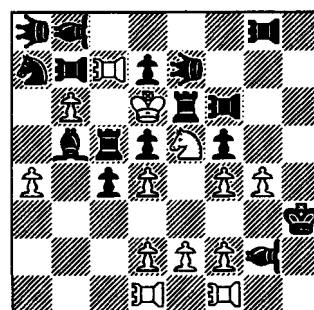
1...- 2.Ngxe5 Gh7

1.Gxh7 Gb6 2.Ncxe5 Gb4

1...- 2.Ngxe5 Gxh7

2 x 2 design with sacrifices, self-pins on e5, switchbacks, subtle changes between grasshopper functions - two pairs of variations cleverly connected by orthogonal-diagonal echo strategy. Very attractive and innovative, too. (WGd4 is only used as mass for grasshopper jumps.)

3rd Prize - Charles FRANKISS,
Juraj LÖRINC, Mark RIDLEY,
Brian STEPHENSON



Reflex mate in 2
King Circe, Chinese pieces

1.Kc6 (2.Kxb7 [PAb1] VAx7 [Ke1])

1...LExc6 [Ke1] 2.e4 LE(c)xe4 [Pe2]

1...Rexc6 [Ke1] 2.e4 LE(e)xe4 [Pe2]

1...dxc6 [Ke1] 2.Nxc6 Rxc6 [Nb1]

1...PAxc6 [Ke1] 2.Nf3 LEh4

1...Rxc6 [Ke1] 2.Nd3 LEB4

1...Nxc6 [Ke1] 2.axb5 [Bc8] LEa1

1...Bxc6 [Ke1] 2.bxa7 PAb1

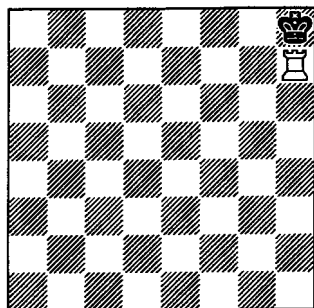
1...VAXc6 [Ke1] 2.gxf5 [Pf7] PAG1

Eight variations by capturing the key king

that defend against the good threat. A great and impressive task. (But nobody wants to talk about beauty when being confronted with this problem.)

(see FIDE Album 1989-1991) shows the same theme totally different, and more interesting, using only (rook- and normal) grasshoppers.

Special Prize - Paul RAICAN

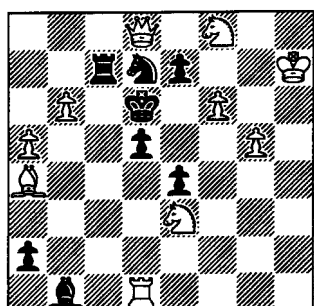


Alice Chess
Add wK bPP for Illegal Cluster
Position is a) board A b) board B

- a) wK f7B, bP g7A, bP h6B
- b) wK h5A, bP g7A, bP h6B

Sensational twinning — I couldn't believe it at the first moment! THE Wenigsteiner idea of the year, which delighted me extremely.

1st H. M. - Miroslav BRADA



Mate in 2, 3 solutions
Mate with a Free Field, One White Unit

MAFF: 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. (Normal mate illegal.)

OWU: 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.)

Mates: Qxc7=A, Qxe7=B, Rxd5=C

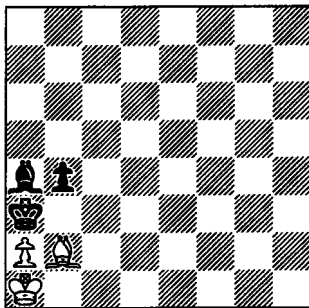
Flights: Kc5=x, Ke5=y

- 1. b7 (2.A) x/y 2. C/B
- 1. f7 (2.B) x/y 2. A/C
- 1. Nc2 (2.C) x/y 2. B/A

(I am not sure whether the set play's existence is an advantage or a disadvantage: * 1...x/y 2.A/B)

Threat form of Lacny 3x3. The matrix is quite simple. The extremely artificial conditions are not very attractive. Caillaud's 1st prize from Benidorm 1990

2nd H. M. - Stephen EMMERSON

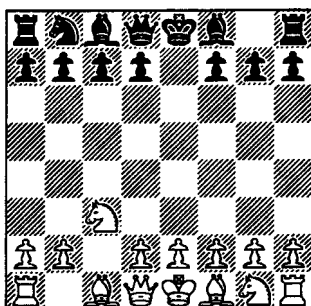


Helpmate in 3
Messigny Chess

- 1. B<B+ Kb1 2. Bc1 Ka1 3. Bb2+ B<B

Spectacular: The final seems to be identical with the initial position... how can this be? Well, it is the Messigny rule that a piece exchange may not immediately be reversed. A wonderful miniature construction.

3rd H. M. - Mario VELUCCHI



SPG in 7 plies, 2 solutions, Anti-Andernach Chess

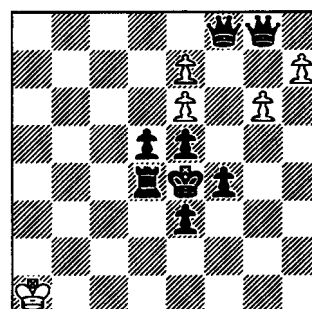
- 1. c3=b Nc6=w 2. Nxe7 Nxe7 3. Nxc3 Nc6=w 4. Nb8=b (Ng8 > b8)
- 1. Nc3=b Nd5=w 2. Nxe7 Nxe7 3. c3=b Nd5=w 4. Nxc3 (Ng8 > c3)

Funny: You just cannot convince BNg8 to disappear! Instead it is looking for a disguise. In the first solution, it transforms into BNb8, in the second into wNc3.

4th H. M. (see next diagram). Without large ambitions, but harmonic in excellent construction. Each group of pieces (BQ 2WP each) assassinates the respective other one in order to get the pieces into right Andernach colours.

5th H. M. (see next diagram but one). The aim of the solution: move bB a3/c1 to a2/b1 (!!) so that wB c6 can mate on e5 (!). This requires much effort and spirit shuffling!

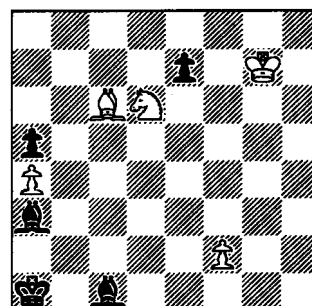
4th H. M. - John RICE



Helpmate in 2, Andernach Chess, b) bPe5 to d3

- a) 1. Qxh7=w exf8N=b 2. Nxc6=w Nh4
- b) 1. Qxe7=w hxg8B=b 2. Bxc6=w Bg4

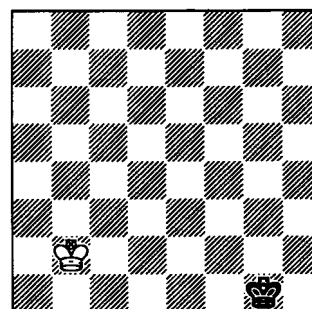
5th H. M. - Peter FAYERS



Series helpmate in 7, Spirits of the Knight

- 1. Bxd6 \$ 2. \$Bf7 3. Ba2 \$c1 4. \$Bf4 5. Bg6 \$e7 6. Bgb1 7. e5 \$c6 \$Bxe5

Special H. M. - Ronald TURNBULL



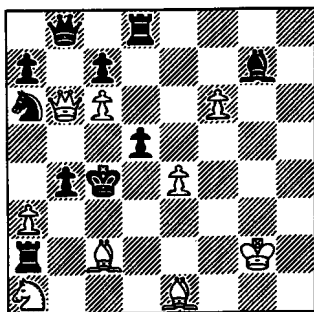
Helpstalemate in 2, N-spirits, Partial retro-analysis

If wK inspired, 1. Kf1 \$Kd3 2. Ke1 \$+ Ke3=

If bK inspired, 1. \$Ke2 Kc3 \$+ 2. Kd1 \$+ Kd3=

Excellent partial retro-analysis with only the two kings, resulting in an chameleon echo stalemate. Very surprising!

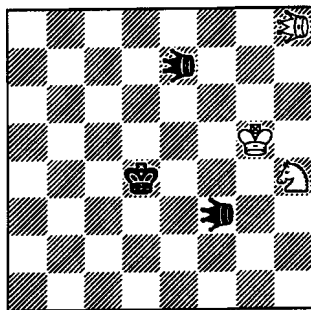
Comm. - John RICE



Mate in 2, Circe Chess

1. a4 (2. Qd4)
 1... Rxa4 [Pa2]/Qxb6 [Qd1]/Nc5
 2. Bd3/Qxd5 [Pd7]/Qxb4 [Pb7]
 1... Bxf6 [P2]/dxe4 [Pe2] 2. Bd3/Bb3
 Good indirect (Circe rebirth) unpins; it is a pity that the thematic mate Bd3 is repeated in the by-play.

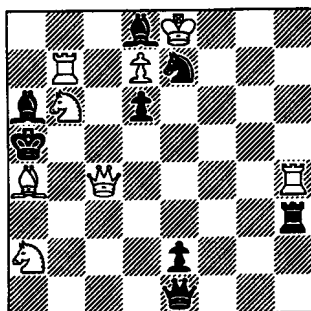
Comm. - Juraj LÖRINC



Helpmate in 3, 2 solutions, Lions

1. Ke4 Kg4 2. Lf3 Lh1+ 3. Ld3 Nf3
 1. Ke5 Nf5 2. Lf7 Kh6 3. Kh6 Ng7
 Thousands of echoes exist, but here we have one (more exactly: an almost-identical echo) that uses the width of the board especially well, including a twist of the mate position.

Comm. - John RICE



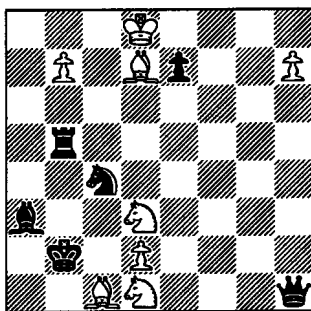
Mate in 2 (try), Circe Chess

1. Bc6? (2. Qa4) Qxh4 [Ra1]/Rxh4 [Ra1]

2. Nc3/Nc1 1... Qb4, Qd1/Bb5, Bxb7 [Rh1] 2. Q(x)b4/Q(x)b5, but 1... Ra3!
 1. Nb4! (2. Qxa6 [Bc8]) 1... Qxh4 [Ra1]/ Rxh4 [Ra1]/Bxc4 [Qd1] 2. Bb3/ Bd1/Nxc4 [Bc8]

Good construction, but rather conventional contents. Circe mainly is used to transport wR to the square a1 (but within a few minutes I did not succeed in producing a non-Circe#2 with wR already placed at a1).

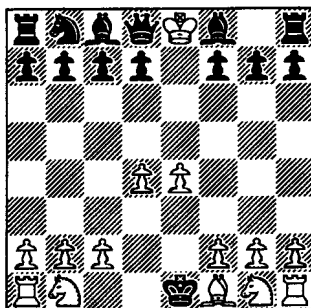
Comm. - Ronald TURNBULL, Stephen EMMERSON



Mate in 2, Isardam

1. Be6 (2. Bxc4) Rd5+/Qd5+ 2. b8R/h8Q
 Memorable: Check provocation, with black Q-R interferences and corresponding white promotions in the mating move.

Comm. - Paul RAICAN

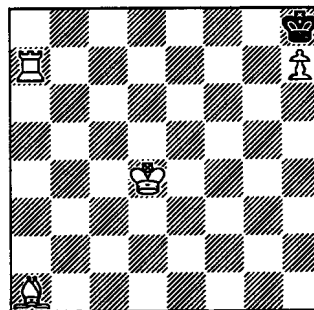


SPG in 16 plies, Rois Transmutés

1. d4 Nf6 2. Kd2 Ne4+ 3. Kxe4 e5 4. Kxe5 Ke7 5. Bg5+ Kb4 6. Qe1+ Kxe1 7. e4 Qxg5+ 8. Ke8 Qd8+
 Nice exchange of Kings, with all remaining officers being placed on their original squares, the BQ after switch-back.

Comm. (Liardet, see next diagram). The key offers six flights!
 Show this problem to your friends, and they will laugh, and they will like Messigny Chess!

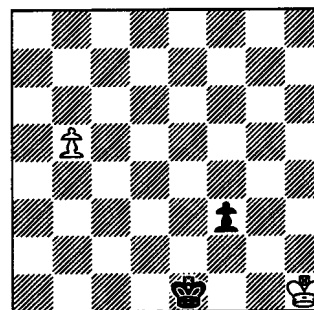
Comm. - Fabrice LIARDET



Mate in 2, Messigny Chess

1. K<K+! K any 2. K<K!!

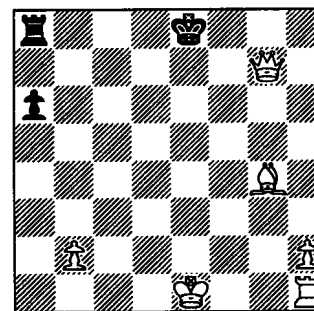
Comm. - Erich BARTEL



Helpstalemate in 2, Glasgow Chess, Mars Circe, b) wKh1 to c6

a) 1. f2N b6 2. Nd1 b7Q=
 b) 1. f2B b6 2. Bg1 b7R=
 We know the author's expertise in virtuoso handling of fairy conditions - and creating AUWs! Another good example.

Sp. Comm. - Ronald TURNBULL



Mate in 2, Zvolen Chess

If Black can still castle, last move was b7xa6 (not a7-a6, move of paralysed pawn). In the game array, only b-pawns and f-pawns are free to move. This game started with f pawns, and very soon a King had to move. eg: 1. f3 f5 2. Kf2 f4 3. g3 (WBf1 now being paralysed, so that WPg2 is freed) fxg3 or analogously with exchange of White's and Black's role! 1. 0-0 and 2. Qd7 or 2. Qf8; 1. Rf1? 0-0-0!
 You just have to find it (but few do)!

BCVS NOTICES

The 2000 AGM will be held at Badgers Wood, Hascombe Road, Munstead, Godalming, Surrey on Saturday 22 July. Do come and introduce yourselves. The formal business will start at 1130, and there will be a tournament in the afternoon. UK readers will find a formal notice of the meeting with this issue of VC.

'Popular Chess Variants'

by David Pritchard.

We have been able to get stocks of this book to sell to members of the BCVS at a significant discount. Anyone wanting one should write to the Treasurer enclosing a cheque / eurocheque / money order for £12.00. (US readers can pay by cheque on an American bank for \$22.00). This price includes postage (surface mail) worldwide. Price including airmail delivery is £13.50 (\$24.00).

SOLUTIONS

Losing Chess

1) The simplest win is probably 1...Re8 2.Rxa7 e5 3.Rxd7 Bd6 4.Rxf7 (4.Rxd6 Rd8 5.Rxd8 Ne7 is easy) Nh6 5.Rxg7 Rhf8! 6.Rxh7 Rxf2 7.Rxh6 (7.Kxf2 sets no problems) Rxxg2 8.Rxd6 and either capture wins for Black.

The nine-move win to stalemate is 1...Rd8 (or 1...Re8 and a waiting move later) 2.Rxa7 Re8 3. Rxd7 e5 4.Rxf7 Bd6 5.Rxg7 e4 6.Rxh7/Rxxg8 Bxh2 and Black can cope with all captures (perhaps the most interesting line is 6.Rxxg8 Bxh2 7.Rxh2 Rxxg8! 8.Rxh7 Rxxg2! 9.Rxh8 Rxf2).

2) 1...Bb7 and now (a) 2.e8K Bf4 3.Kxd7 Bd6 4.Kxd6 Bd5 5.Kxd5 b2 6.Kxe4 c1B(Q) 7.Kxf3 Be4, or (b) 2.e8N d6 (or ...Be3 at once) 3.Nxd6 Ba6 4.Nxe4 Be3 5.fxe3 f2 6.Nxf2 Bd3 7.Nxd3 b2, or (c) 2.e8B b2 3.Bxd7 Bc6 4. Bxc6 b1R etc, or (d) 2.e8R Ba6 3.Rxe4 Bf4 etc, or (e) 2.e8Q Ba6 3.Qxd7 (3.Qxe4 sets no problems)

Bd2 (say) 4.Qxd2 b2 5.Qxb2 e3 6.fxe3 f2 etc.

Hostage Chess

In the position below, from a game J.L.-R.S., Black missed an interesting forced mate. I give only the most determined defence in the hope that the reader will enjoy working out the other lines.

1 ...Rd1+ 2 B*f1 N*h3+ 3 gxxh3 Rxf1+ 4 Kxf1 (R-R)R*h1+ 5 (N-N)N*g1 *g2+ 6 Ke1 (N-B)B*d2+ 7 Kd1 Rxxg1+ 8 N*f1 Rxf1+ 9 Bxf1 Bf3+ 10 Be2 g1=R+ 11 R*f1 Rxf1+ 12 (N-N)N*e1 Rxe1 mate

Progressive Chess

#82 I haven't seen the solution to this one, but it seems to me that there are four possible solutions - as follows:

a) Kf7 and Nd1 with the solution: 9. Nf2, Ng4, Kf6, Kg5, Kh4, Kh3, Kh2, Kh1, Nh2 Italian mate.

b) Kf7 and Rd1 with the solution: 9. Rg1, Rg4, Kf6, Kg5, Kh4, Kh3, Kh2, Kh1, Rg3 Italian mate.

c) Kd1 and Nf7 with the solution: 9. Nd6, Nc4, Ne3, Ke1, Kf1, Kg1, Kh1, Nf1, Nh2 Italian mate.

d) Kd1 and Pf7 with the solution: 9. f8=N, Ne6, Nf4, Ne2, Ke1, Kf1, Kg1, Kh1, Ng1 Italian mate.

Losing Chess

#83 Try sacrificing on c2: 1. Nc2 b3 2. Ng~ bxc2 3. N~ c1(N) wins. The knight sacrifice on c1 has no better luck: 1. Ne2 b3 2. Ng~ b2 3. Nc1 bxc1(B/K) and Black wins. So White must play to win with two knights against Black's promoted piece. The try 1. Ne2 b3 2. Ne7 b2 3. Nf5 wins against 3. ... b1(N/B/R/Q) (for instance 3. ... b1(N) 4. Ned4 and the Black knight is dominated), but it fails to 3. ... b1(K). Now if White plays 2. Nf6 and 3. Ne4 he is close enough to deal with 3. ... b1(K) but is defeated by 3. ... b1(N) 4. Nd2 Nxd2 and Black wins the N v N ending. The same thing happens whenever White places both his knights within two knight moves of b1. A promising idea is 1. Ne6, 2. Nf6, 3. Ne4 which defeats a knight promotion (4. Nd6) and a king

promotion (4. N6c5 Ka1 5. Nb3 Kb1-6. Nc1), but this time 3. ... b1(R) is the refutation. The method that succeeds is 1. Nc6, 2. Nf6, 3. Ne4, as follows: 3. ... b1(N) 4. Nd6 and Black knight is dominated.

3. ... b1(K) 4. Nd2! Ka1 5. Nb3!! Kb1 6. Na1 Kxa1 7. Nd4 and Black king is dominated.

3. ... b1(R) 4. Ne5! with a standard (but not easy) win of NN v R. e.g.

4. ... Rh1(best) 5. Nd7 Ra1 6. Ndf6 Rb1 7. Nh7! Ra1 8. Nhg5 Rb1 (Ra8;Nd2) 9. Nf7 Ra1 10. Nd6 Rh1 11. Nb7 and Black rook is dominated.

4. ... Ra1 5. Nf6 Rb1 6. Nfg4 Rb8 (Ra1;Nd7) 7. Nf2 Ra8 8.Nd3 Rh8 9. Nb2.

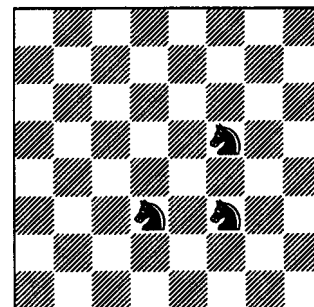
4. ... Rb8 5. Nf2 Ra8 6. Nd3 Rh8 7.Nb2.

And finally, White can try 1. Nf3, 2. Ne7, 3. Nc6, - but the b1-h7 diagonal is empty in this line and Black wins with 3. ... b1(B).

COMMENT

Losing Chess

John Beasley has the following to say about the article on *The Losing Chess 4-piece database* by Fabrice Liardet (he is referring to column 1, page 19 of issue 34): 'I think the last item in Fabrice's list of B v NNN fortresses should read "d3, f3, f5" and not "d3, f3, h5"'. Here is the position:



B v NNN fortress?

He continues: 'Consider: If B attacks Nd3 play ...Ne3, ...Nf1, ...Nh2 and wins. An attack on Nf5 is the same by symmetry. If B attacks Nf3 play ...Nf2, ...Nd1, ...Nd6. But with a Nh5, let B attack Nh5, and I think it will win'.