

Variant Chess

Founded 1990

The magazine to broaden your chess horizons

Volume 6, issue 43

ISSN 0958-8248

November 2003

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† KEN WHYLD (1926-2003)

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Ken Whyld was devoted to chess, not simply the game (although he was a strong player) but more particularly to its history, its personalities, its literature, its curiosities and its variants. Everything that somehow, sometime, somewhere, had a link to chess. His early involvement with *The Chessplayer*, Nottingham, and his several tournament books were overshadowed by his *Quotes & Queries* column in the *BCM* sadly brought to an abrupt close after a quarter of a century, and the book which he co-authored with David Hooper and for which he will for many be best remembered, *The Oxford Companion to Chess*.

His involvement with variants is less well recorded but nothing in chess stood outside his interests. When I was putting together *The Encyclopedia of Chess Variants* we had a lengthy correspondence, Ken's letters always arriving with the unmistakable Whyld hallmark: the re-used envelope. I have a sheaf of these letters before me now, many of them lengthy, full of interesting and obscure quotes and facts drawn from almost every European language, research which he gave freely and with obvious enthusiasm and dedication. Recently Ken visited us and only a week or so before his death he referred me to an advertisement in the *South African Commercial Advertiser* of 1841 in which the first reference to chess in that country was recorded. Curiously, not the orthodox game but an unidentified German variant played with 56 men on an 11x11 board. The closest I could come to this was Silberschmidt's Game (1827), also on an 11x11 board but with 27 pieces a side.

Others will record Ken's private and public life. I recall a charming man with a rich and enquiring mind, lost to us all. (DBP)

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Variant Chess is the journal of the British Chess Variants Society

Subscription rates (one year, four issues)

UK £8, Europe £9, Rest of World £9 surface mail, £11 air mail

Cheques payable to 'British Chess Variants Society'

Please note that we can no longer accept Eurocheques

BURMESE CHESS (SITTUYIN)

by David Pritchard

Burmese chess is the orphan of the oriental chess games, ignored by lexicographers like Bruce, Dossena, Eales, Golombek, Lhote and Veselý who accord it no more than a mention or two between them. And perhaps with good reason, as strictly speaking there is no such game as Burmese chess but rather a close family of games differing only in detail. Indeed it was not until the second decade of the 20th century that a serious attempt was made to codify the rules of the game with the aim of achieving a degree of uniformity across the country. Sadly, sittuyin is in terminal decline and is now confined, in so far as it is played at all, to the extreme north-west of the country.

In 1987 I was in Burma, my fourth visit to the country. The great stairway of the Shwe Dagon pagoda in Rangoon was, as always, flanked by traders one or two of whom displayed sets of crudely-carved Burmese chessmen, stained red and black, clearly made for the (negligible) tourist trade. Nowhere did I witness Burmese chess being played nor could I find anyone who could give me any information on the game; the chess clubs in Mandalay and Rangoon in central Burma having long since gone over to the international game. Then my luck turned: one day I was in a bookshop and the owner said he knew a family who he thought had an old book on the game. Would I come back another day? I did and was shown *Myan-gyin bayin lan-nyunt sa-ok gyi* (Burmese Chess Guide part 1) by Shwe-gyin U Bha, a retired education officer, in consultation with a number of Burmese chess masters (here followed an impressive list of names). The date of publication was unrecorded but references in the book suggested 1924 or thereabouts. I was clearly a wealthy foreigner ripe for plunder. I was quoted £30 for what was, as it turned out, correctly described as 'a unique book'. I paid up without a quibble. To compare the price, the previous day I had been on a day trip up river which, together with a drink and a snack, had cost me the equivalent of just 12p.

As far as I can ascertain, this is the only book on the Burmese game and the only known copy of the book in existence. Indeed, the author states categorically that there has been no previous book on the game which would help to account for the diverse rules previously recorded. The book is divided into 17 chapters including elementary game positions (56), advice to beginners, elaborate rules covering transgressions which one must presume were common, and knights' tours (117!). A total of 23 sections scheduled for part 2 of the work are listed but I have found no evidence that this second book was ever published. Subsequently I circulated bookshops throughout the country (there are only a few) enclosing a copy of the title page with a 'buy' request. Only one bookshop replied; 'We think we may be able to get a copy but since this will involve us travelling far up country, please send us a lot of U.S. dollars in advance'. I subsequently wrote to the Burmese Sports Council who I was told were responsible for chess organisation in the country but unsurprisingly got no reply.

Rules

The rules of the game described here are those of the Burmese Chess Guide.

Board

The board is 8x8, unchequered. Normally the two long diagonals are marked; sometimes the four squares in each corner of the board also carry diagonal markings but these latter, which are unexplained, have no bearing on the game and may be survivors from an earlier game.

Pieces

Each player has 16 pieces: 1 x King (*min*), General (*sikke* or *chekoy*: queen); 2 x Carriage (*hitha*: rook), Horse (*myin*: knight), Elephant (*sin*: bishop); 8 x Soldier (*ne*: pawn).

Moves

The king, carriages and horses move exactly like their chess counterparts. The general is the old queen of Shatranj: it moves one square diagonally in any direction. The elephant moves as the general but can also move one square straight forward with the significant advantage of being able to change square colour. It is sometimes said that its move reflects the four feet and trunk of the animal. The elephant is present in early Indian chess in the Punjab and Kashmir according to Murray. The piece is also found in makruk (Thai chess) and equates to the silver general of shogi all of which suggests an historical linkage.

The pawn moves one square straight forward but captures diagonally forward like our pawn. A pawn can promote only when it stands on the diagonal line (thus the number of squares to promotion varies from pawn to pawn). A pawn can only promote to general and then only if the player has no general on the board. Further, promotion is not immediate but on any subsequent turn. The pawn can be promoted without moving (which counts as a turn) or it can promote and move to any diagonally adjacent square provided that this does not involve a capture or a check. A pawn that advances beyond the diagonal line cannot promote. All pieces capture as they move with the exception of the pawn.

Ending the game

Checkmate (*hwke that* - check and killed, or *hwke the* - check and dead) is as in chess but there are certain restrictions. For example, king and rook facing bare king must mate within 15 moves or the game is a draw. If the king stands on one of the four central squares (known as 'the four squares of the death of the king') counting does not start until the defender's fifth move. This is called 'five moves in four squares'. Check (*ka hwke*) must be announced. There is no stalemate: a player may not deprive his opponent of a move. Draw by perpetual check and by repetition of moves are valid. King + piece v. king + piece is also a draw. Resignation is described as 'common'.

Sides

The two sides are Red (who moves first) and Black.

Initial position

Burmese chess stands unique amongst all other chess games in that the initial position, defined as the point at which play starts, is not fixed but is chosen by the players subject only to certain minor restrictions.

The pawns are placed first and their positions are immutable. The red pawns stand on a3, b3, c3, d3, e4, f4, g4, h4 and the black pawns on a5, b5, c5, d5, e6, f6, g6, h6. Now Red distributes his pieces on any of the 20 vacant squares behind his pawn line. Then Black does likewise. There are certain restrictions on Black's deployment; if there were not he would obviously be at a considerable advantage. For example, Black may not place a rook on the same file as the red king nor may he place both rooks on the same file if Red objects. It is permissible for a player to replace any one pawn with a piece and then to relocate the pawn anywhere within his own territory. It is stated that on average this occurs in 15% of games. Now both sides are free to relocate their pieces, one at a time in turn. When either player moves a pawn however the game starts and no further adjustments can be made by either side.

The Burmese Chess Guide records 33 common starting positions with eight given special emphasis. These eight are:

		K	Q	Rs	Bs	Ns
[1]	(R)	g2	e3	c1,e1	d2,g3	f2,f3
	(B)	c7	d6	e8,g8	c6,e7	d7,f7
[2]	(R)	c2	e3	f1,g1	b2,d2	e2,f3
	(B)	e7	d6	f8,g8	c6,e7	b6,d7
[3]	(R)	c2	e3	b1,c1	d2,f3	e2,g3
	(B)	c7	d6	e8,g8	c6,f7	d7,e7
[4]	(R)	f2	e3	b1,d1	c2,f3	d2,e2
	(B)	b7	d6	c8,f8	b6,e7	c6,d7
[5]	(R)	g2	e3	c1,f1	d2,g3	e2,f3
	(B)	b7	d6	d8,f8	b6,e7	c6,c7
[6]	(R)	f2	e3	b1,d1	d2,f3	c2,e2
	(B)	c8	c6	e8,f8	e7,g7	d6,d7
[7]	(R)	f1	f3	c1,d1	b2,f2	e2,e3
	(B)	b7	d6	d8,f8	b6,c6	c7,e7
[8]	(R)	g2	e3	c1,e1	f3,g3	d2,f2
	(B)	b7	d6	d8,f8	b6,e7	c6,c7

Notice that there is a measure of uniformity in the deployment: experience dictates practice. The king is almost always placed on the second rank, and if not then on c1/c8 or f1/f8. A bishop stands in front of the king with a knight adjacent. The king and his consorts are reminiscent of the shogi castles. In all but one of the above positions the red queen is on e3 and the black queen on e6; the theory being that the queen advances through the pawn chain. The rooks are naturally placed on latent open files. Note that in every example there is a black rook on g8 or f8. These preferences are extended into the remaining 23 positions (recorded in the *ECV*). There is a local saying that general and elephant (queen and bishop) should never be separated (they are adjacent in all the arrays). Most remarkable perhaps is that not a single one of the 33 preferred positions listed in the Guide has been quoted at any time by any European writer on the game.

The similarities between sittuyin and makruk are many. The pieces and their moves (though not their placements) are identical in both games. Further, the endgame restrictions of sittuyin have their parallels in makruk. In view of their geographical proximity one might suspect that makruk was developed from sittuyin.

Piece values

The values of the pieces are given as Pawn 1, Queen 2, Bishop 3, Knight 3, (the bishop is described as best in defence, the knight in attack), Rook 5.

The Game

The fact that openings in the Guide have names, together with the fact that the game apparently had accredited masters in the 1920s, suggest that sittuyin enjoyed at least a measure of popularity at the time and perhaps for several decades previously. If a series of games was to be played, it was a practice apparently for the winner to give the loser a dab on the cheek with the soft powdered lime that the Burmese always carry to prepare the betel nut for chewing, to keep account of the score.

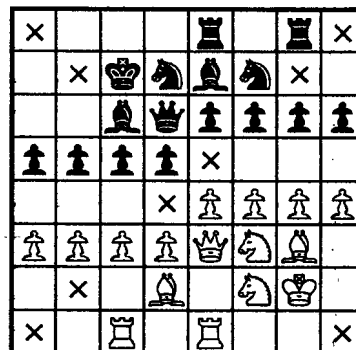
Burmese chess, like makruk and xiangqi, lacks a long-range diagonal-moving piece (hence the absence of board chequering). The reduced danger allows the kings to assume the role of fighting pieces.

On the plus side, the initial array and particularly the advanced pawns, promise early conflict. Indeed, Captain Hiram Cox in a letter to J.H.Harrington (1799, but not published until 1801) described the game as 'more the appearance of a real battle than any other game I know of' and 'in the Burma game, the first dawn of perfection appears', adding, perhaps as an afterthought, 'no human invention is so perfect that it may not be improved'. Falkener, on the other hand, dismisses sittuyin as 'a heavy, wearisome, uninteresting game' (*Games Ancient and Oriental* - 1892).

Amongst tips offered to beginners, the author advises 'One should never hesitate if one sees an opportunity for a good move: act at once! Hesitation can result in the loss of the game'. (see a good move, look for a better one?)

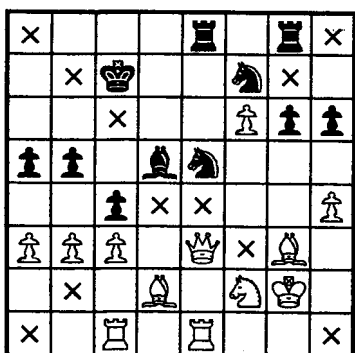
Here is the only game published in the Burmese Chess Guide. It probably dates from the early 1920s.

Red: U Sein Hytin (Kemmerdine) *Black:* U Hmat (San Chuang) (Kemmerdine is a suburb of Rangoon, San Chuang I have been unable to locate.) The starting array is as in [1] above. Red's position is described as 'Horses front and back' and Black's as 'Horses either side'.

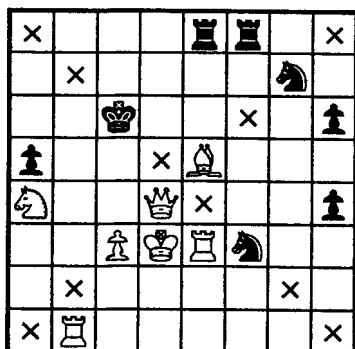


1.g5 e5 2.gxf6 Ee7-e6 3.exd5 Ec6xd5 4.fxe5 Qd6xe5 5.d4

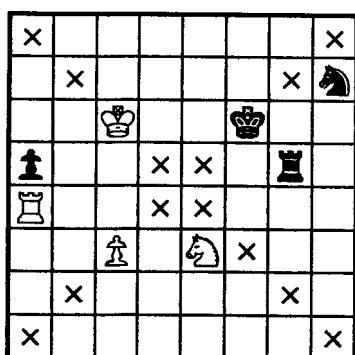
c4 6.dxe5 Ee6xe5 7.Nxe5 Ndx5:



Black's queen sacrifice demonstrates the limited value of the piece. Notice that the pawn f6 cannot promote because Red's queen is still on the board. 8.Qe3-d4 Nd7 9.a4 bxa4 10.bxc4 Ed5xc4 11.Eg3-f4 Nxf6 12.Ef4-e5 Nh5 13.Ed2-d3 Ec4xd3 14.Nxd3 g5 15.Nc5 Kc6 16.Nxa4 gxh4+ 17.Kf2 Ng5 18.Ke3 Rgf8 19.Kd3 Nf3 20.Re3 Ng7 21.Rb1:



21...Nxe5 22.Qd4xe5 Rb8 23.Rg1 Nf5 24.Rg6+ Kb5 25.Re4 Rfd8+ 26.Kc2 Rg8 27.Rf6 Rgf8 28.Rxf8 Rxf8 29.Kb3 Ng3 30.Rc4 Rf1 31.Rc5+ Ka6 32.Kc4 Ne4 33.Rc6+ Kb7 34.Rxh6 Ra1 35.Nb2 Ra3 36.Qe5-d4 Kc7 37.Nd3 Kd7 38.Nf4 h3 39.Nd5 Nd6+ 40.Kd3 Ra1 41.Ne3 h2 42.Qd4-e5 Nf7 43.Rh5 h1 44.Ke4 Re1 45.Qe5-d4 h1=Q.Qg2 (the black pawn promotes) 46.Kd5 Qg2-f3 47.Rh7 Ke7 48.Rh4 Ng5 49.Rf4 Rg1 50.Kc6 Qf3-e4 51.Qd4-e5 Ke6 52.Qe5-f6 Nh7 53.Rxe4+ Kxf6 54.Ra4 Rg5 draw:



Red can here play Nd5+ and the black pawn falls but this is insufficient to force the win.

A competent performance that illustrates well the nature of the game.

Variations and Aberrations

For our early history of the game, we have no record of any native authority that I have been able to trace. Instead, we must rely on European travellers whose Burmese informants spoke, one suspects, with questionable knowledge. Throughout this lengthy period of more than a century, we are confronted with a confusion of rules which suggest either the ignorance of those local players whose descriptions are recorded or, perhaps more likely, a fragmentation of the game in the country at large. Indeed, the Burmese Chess Guide hints at this, stating that 'the rules of the game may vary in Upper and Lower Burma, particularly with regards to sitke (pawn promotion)'. In this respect it is worth bearing in mind that Burma is a huge country of diverse regions and poor communications.

Cox (1799) has the white pawns on a3, b3, c3, d3, e3, f4, g4, h4 (i.e., staggered 5/3) with black pawns correspondingly on a5, b5, c5, d6, e6, f6, g6, h6 and states that only the five pawns on the right (i.e., excluding those on the a, b and c files) can promote and that the bishop (elephant) cannot capture straight ahead. The Chess Players Chronicle (vol VI 1846) gives the favoured starting position of the local players as r6r/1kbnn3/1bqppppp/ ppp5/5PPP/PPPPQB1/3NNBK1/R6R. Notice that the deployment for both sides is identical. Forbes (*A History of Chess* - 1860) merely echoes Cox.

Dr Adolphus Bastian, reported in *The Chess Players Magazine* (1863), is the first writer to give the modern pawn structure (staggered 4/4) but states that the pawn captures straight ahead (as in shogi), the queen moves as our bishop and the bishop moves one square diagonally but leaps to capture. He gives the favoured opening position of the leading players as r6r/1kb2n2/1bnqppppp/pppp4/ 4PPPQ/PPPPN2/6RR (Notice that Red has replaced a pawn with the queen.)

Next, Larousse (1870) confuses the pieces, when we come to the controversial Edward Falkener whose description of the game Murray described as 'worthless'. Falkener gives two versions of sittuyin in the book quoted above. In both he reverts to Cox's 5/3 pawn line and repeats Cox's statement that bishops can only capture diagonally. In the first version he gives the scores of two worthless games. In one, Red is a piece and two pawns up after seven moves whilst in the other Black leaves a knight *en prise* on move 5. In the second version, pawns can promote to rooks (perhaps someone's attempt to introduce orthochess rules?). 'A game of his own invention' is the dismissive observation of Murray and certainly there is no record of this game anywhere else.

Now to Sir George Scott (Shway Yoe) who has a chapter on chess in his book *The Burman: his life and notions* (1896). He has the 4/4 pawn line but with the queen moving diagonally in advance only and also straight back one square. He further states that a pawn cannot promote on the diagonal but must move to one of the adjacent squares to do so. He quotes the favoured opening of the Rangoon players as that of Cox (above)

almost a century earlier, with the exception of the pawn lines. Scott observes that the Burmese would be more likely to have got their game from the Mongols rather than the Hindus, which seems a little unlikely. He goes on to say that sittuyin is far superior to both the Indian and the Persian game lining up with Cox against *The Chess Players Magazine* who, following Bastian, dismissed Burmese chess as 'centuries behind the Indian game'. Scott adds that there is always heavy betting and 'when a famous player comes over from Moulmein to measure strength with the Rangoon cracks, the excitement is wonderful, and often furnishes occasion for free fights'.

The new century sees a degree of conformity. Enter Max and Bertha Ferrars (Burma - 1900) who observe that sittuyin was 'probably introduced from China in ancient times'. Their description of the game generally matches that of the Guide but with an eccentric starting position. Murray's description (*A History of Chess* - 1913) also conforms closely with the Guide. With regard to starting positions, he remarks, no doubt with prescience, that 'previous observers have recorded the favourite arrangements of their native informers'. The *Chess Amateur* (April 1920), quotes a correspondent in *The Times* resident in Rangoon, who muddies the water with a bastard game in which the players place their 16 men anywhere within their own half of the board and the queen, rook and bishop move as in the international game but capture only on an adjacent square(!). The pawns are orthodox Burmese, promoting (to what?) on the diagonal lines.

Bell (*Board & Table Games II* - 1969) goes with the Guide but says that the players place their major pieces on the board alternately, an old practice.

Berloquin (*Le Livre des Jeux* - 1970) is a disaster. He has the old 5/3 pawn line, allows the bishop to move (but not to capture) one square in either direction on the file, and pawn promotion regardless as to whether or not the queen is still on the board and quotes the 1846 favoured starting position of Cox! Perversely, the Italian games magazine *Pergioico* devotes two pages in 1981 to Falkener's flawed account including one of his abysmal game scores.

In summary, Burmese chess has always suffered from a lack of codified rules and the national organization essential for their acceptance. A praiseworthy attempt in the 1920s to overcome these disabilities is advanced by the author of the Guide: 'We should try to bring about a definitive set of rules which embraces all the rules from all parts of Burma'. An admirable aim, but the clock stood at ten minutes to midnight and to-day the game has ceased to be a national pastime.

An old Burma hand, 54 years in the country, in an interview at the Burmese Embassy, London, in 1990 stated that the game had died out in the cities and the south but was still seen in the coffee-shops of Bhamo and Katha where 'it is played by old men with vehemence and always with argument'.

CASTLES IN THE AIR

by Jed Stone

The year is well on and it's about time we had an up date on the state of the chess competitions. I have calibrated the new positions in the Alice and Hostage Ladder leagues from the results that I have received. A couple of lucky wins at Alice have shot me to the top of the Alice Ladder (an honour that won't last long I'm afraid) and John Leslie has taken the place of Paul Yearout on top of the Hostage Ladder.

Both the Hostage and the Alice Tournaments were knock out ones. Players needed three wins to go through to the next round. Two players have been knocked out of the Alice one and Dale Sullins and Ivan Dirmeik are through to the next round. The final match in the series will decide if it's to be a three way or a two man second round. In the Hostage KO Peter Coast is through to round two with a perfect score. Reports from the remaining matches indicate that it is likely that Paul Yearout will be the only other player to join him in round 2.

In the other matches, the Courier chess competition has been drawn to a successful conclusion. Paul Byway beat both Roy Talbot and Robert Reynolds while Roy beat Robert in their match. Paul is thus the overall winner. There is a strong possibility of the competition being repeated so if anyone would like to join in please let me know as soon as possible. The games in the Hexagonal Tourney are still on going.

A new Progressive Tournament started in early in September. The players involved are Colin Muskett, Allan Brown, Paul Byway, David Pritchard and myself. It's bound to be a pretty quick and slick affair if the last one was anything to go by so the book will probably be open for another one in the new year but you can get your name down now if you like. Two Move chess and Avalanche chess were on offer last time but there were not sufficient interest to make it worth while setting up a tourney of any sort in either one. I do know of several friendly - off the record - games that are in progress so it may be a good time to implement the idea of a Challenge Ladder that was put forward a while ago.

The Challenge Ladder works the same way as the Hostage and Alice ones do. Players start with a thousand points and move up and down as they win or lose matches. The difference is that the play is not confined to a particular variant. Players challenge each other to a game of a particular variant either directly or through 'The Castle'. The game is logged with me and given a ref number. When the match is completed send me the result with a score sheet and I'll make the necessary adjustments on the Ladder and publish the result in the next issue of 'The Castle'. The only real requirements are that both players are registered on the 'Challenge Ladder' and the game is not part of an on-going competition.

As to future competitions I shall open a book on XiangQi (Chinese Chess). No particular competition in mind but I will look to setting one up if there is enough interest shown. If you are interested let me know. Any ideas for future tournaments are always welcome. Till next time...

Alice Knockout Tournament

Player	G	W	D	L	?	
Paul Yearout	5	4	0	0	1	(Through)
Dale Sullins	5	2	0	3		(Out)
Ivan Dirmeik	5	4	0	0	1	(Through)
Peter Coast	5	2	0	2	1	
Allan Brown	5	1	0	3	1	
Mike Nowicki	5	0	0	5		(Out)

Results

T3/1 P. Coast v M. Nowicki (1-0) T3/2 P. Coast v I. Dirmeik (0-1) T3/3 P. Coast v P. Yearout (0-1) T3/4 M. Nowicki v A. Brown (0-1) T3/5 M. Nowicki v D. Sullins (0-1) T3/6 A. Brown v P. Coast (?) T3/7 A. Brown v I. Dirmeik (0-1) T3/8 A. Brown v P. Yearout (0-1) T3/9 I. Dirmeik v M. Nowicki (1-0) T3/10 I. Dirmeik v D. Sullins (1-0) T3/11 D. Sullins v P. Coast (0-1) T3/12 D. Sullins v A. Brown (1-0) T3/13 D. Sullins v P. Yearout (0-1) T3/14 P. Yearout v M. Nowicki (1-0) T3/15 P. Yearout v I. Dirmeik (?)

Hostage Knockout Tournament

Player	G	W	D	L	?	
Peter Coast	4	4	0	0		(Through)
John Leslie	4	2	0	1	1	
Paul Yearout	4	1	0	1	2	
Allan Brown	4	1	0	2	1	(Out)
Mike Nowicki	4	0	0	4		(Out)

Results

T4/1 P Coast v A. Brown (1-0) T4/2 P. Coast v J. Leslie (1-0) T4/3 A. Brown v M. Nowicki (1-0) T4/4 A. Brown v P. Yearout (?) T4/5 M. Nowicki v P. Coast (0-1) T4/6 M. Nowicki v J. Leslie (0-1) T4/7 J. Leslie v A. Brown (1-0) T4/8 J. Leslie v P. Yearout (?) T4/9 P. Yearout v P. Coast (0-1) T4/10 P. Yearout v M. Nowicki (1-0)

Alice Ladder

Player	Rating	G	W	D	L
Jed Stone	1083	3	2	0	1
Paul Yearout	1036	3	2	0	1
Ivan Dirmeik	1001	2	1	0	1
Mike Nowicki	1000	0	0	0	0
Dale Sullins	1000	0	0	0	0
Allan Brown	956	1	0	0	1
G Davis (inactive)	953	1	0	0	1

Results

A1 J. Stone v G. Davis (1-0) A2 J. Stone v P. Yearout (0-1) A3 P. Yearout v J. Stone (0-1) A4 I. Dirmeik v A. Brown (1-0) A5 I. Dirmeik v P. Yearout (0-1) A6 I. Dirmeik v J. Stone (?) A7 J. Stone v P. Yearout (?) A8 M. Nowicki v Dale Sullins (?) A9 I. Dirmeik v P. Coast (?) A10 D. Sullins v I. Dirmeik (?) A11 I. Dirmeik v P. Yearout (?)

Hostage Ladder

Player	Rating	G	W	D	L
John Leslie	1094	5	5	0	0
Paul Yearout	1085	5	4	0	1
Allan Brown	1013	2	1	0	1
Peter Coast	1000	0	0	0	0
Ivan Dirmeik	940	2	1	0	1
Jed Stone	883	3	0	0	3

Results

H1 P Yearout v J. Stone (1-0) H2 J. Stone v P. Yearout (0-1) H3 P. Yearout v P Coast (?) H4 J. Stone v I. Dirmeik (?) H5 J. Leslie v J Stone (1-0) H6 J. Leslie v P Yearout (1-0) H7 P. Yearout v J Leslie (1-0) H8 I. Dirmeik v P. Yearout (1-0) H9 A. Brown v J. Leslie (0-1) H10 I. Dirmeik v A. Brown (0-1) H11 I. Dirmeik v P. Coast (?) H12 I. Dirmeik v J. Leslie (0-1) H13 J. Leslie v P. Yearout (?) H14 J. Stone v J. Leslie (?) H15 J. Stone v P. Yearout (?) H16 I. Dirmeik v P. Yearout (?) H17 M. Nowicki v D. Sullins (?) H18 P. Coast v P. Yearout (?)

PS Fred Galvin points out that a move (b4) is missing from series 5 in the game Brown - Stone (T2/8) in VC42

TOE-TO-TOE CHESS

by David Pritchard

This game, based loosely on Burmese Chess, was invented by Peter Aronson and published on the Chess Variant pages of the Internet. Board 8x8 uncoloured; each side has 1 x King, General; 2 x Chariot, Elephant, Horse; 8 x Pawn. The king and horse (knight) are orthodox; the general moves up to 2 squares in any direction; chariot as rook but maximum 4 squares; the elephant one square diagonally or straight forward (as Burmese elephant). Pawns are a little more complex. No double move or e.p., but a blocked pawn may leap, without capturing, over the blocking man (either colour) to vacant square immediately beyond. Pawns promote on end rank to any piece previously captured but the actual promotion counts as a (static) move (so move to end rank and next or subsequent turn, promote). Pawns are placed on the board initially as in Burmese chess (a3-d3/e4-h4 facing a5-d5/e6-h6), when Black starts by placing any two pieces on any empty squares behind his pawns. White then places four pieces followed in order by Black 4, White 4 and Black 2. Now each player, starting with White, may interchange any two of his men. This is repeated three times, when play starts. Aim is checkmate as usual.

VARIANT PROOF GAMES

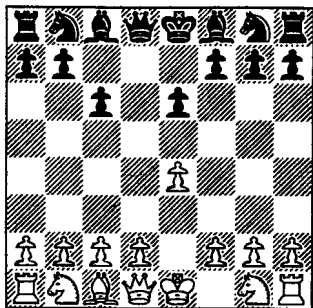
by Peter Fayers

Welcome to a new (hopefully regular) column where I will be presenting a selection of Proof Games. I hope to entice readers into trying these problems, and will initially give copious hints to get you started.

I usually introduce players to the world of problems by playing a quick game 1 e4 e6; 2 Bc4 c6; 3 Bxe6 dxe6 to reach position 1. I then relate how I had come across this position in a junior game, and commented on the blunder, losing a Bishop after only three moves. "No, four moves" came the reply, "we've played four moves each". What were the four moves?

1 - Tibor Orbán

Commend, Die Schwalbe, 1976



After Black's fourth. Game score?

Players see immediately that White can lose a tempo easily, by playing e2-e3-e4, but then spend fruitless hours trying to see how Black loses one, before giving up. This is where problemists come in - they look at the position, and work backwards, rather than thinking about the game working forwards. Let's try.

Black Pawns c6 and e6 have moved once each, so Black has made two other moves. These two moves must have been with the same piece, either by the Pawn that was captured, or by one of the back-rank pieces. The missing Black Pawn was captured by the Bishop from f1, so the Bishop was not captured by the missing Pawn. After a bit of trial-and-error you will realise that the missing Pawn was captured at home, and this must have been on the light square d7. Hence neither c6 nor e6 have captured, and

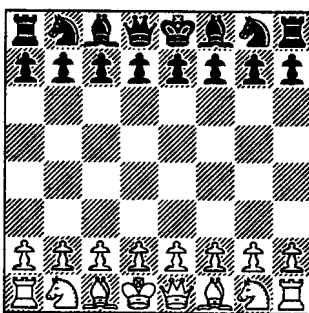
the Bishop was captured by a back-rank unit. Take it from there....

The joy of this problem is that, whereas the game to the diagram in three moves has alternatives (Black could have started 1 c6), the solution in four moves is unique; no transposition of moves will work. This is what we call a "proof" game.

With chess variants, of course, we can get some to some very intriguing positions. Here is one by our esteemed secretary.

2 - John Beasley

British Chess Magazine, 1992



After Black's fourth. Game score?
Optional Replacement Chess

In Optional Replacement Chess, a player making the capture has the option of replacing the captured piece anywhere on the board (Pawns must be on ranks 2 - 7). So how did we get to this position in four moves on each side? Where do you start? - At the end, of course!

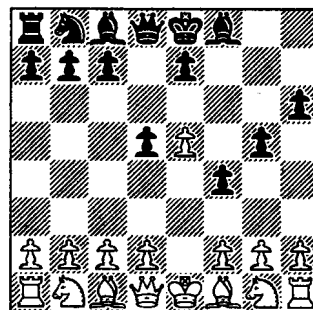
Black's last move must have been with one of his Knights. Did it involve a capture? If not, then White's last move must have been with a Knight, which must have moved previously to get out. We have only got four moves for White, so this isn't going to work.

So, Black's last move was probably a capture, but not of a Pawn (it was on the eighth rank). We have very little time to organise the White force, so a reasonable hypothesis is that the Queen has moved out, the King has moved over, and the Queen has just been replaced on e1 after capture by a Knight.

So a White Pawn has moved to let the Queen out, and this Pawn has also been captured and replaced. Over to you....

Elsewhere in this issue is an article on losing chess, which can provide some very tricky proof game analysis.

3 - Marco Bonavoglia
feenschach 1988



After White's seventh. Game score?
Losing Chess

For example, in 3, how did the Pawns d5 and f4 get past the Pawn e5 - why weren't they captured? The only answer is that, at the time the captures were possible, White had multiple captures available, and took one of the missing Black units.

What White piece did the capturing? The Knights haven't had time to get out and back, the Queen would have been forced to keep on capturing, so everything points to Bf1 as the unit that did the damage. Which means the Rh8 has moved to a light square, probably h7, so now we know all six of Black's moves. Note, too, that the White Bishop could get home from h7 without ever attacking another unit. Getting the idea now?

Although Proof Game problems in orthodox chess have been around for a while, and are a regular feature of problem magazines the world over, those in chess variants are quite rare - to my knowledge, fewer than two hundred have been published; this is still fertile ground for problemists. I will welcome comments and suggestions of games to present here - even originals, if you like, but there will be no tournaments, nor awards. Also let me know if you find the hints helpful, too revealing, or just downright confusing!

The solution to problem 1 is on page 48; the other solutions will be in the next issue.

RECENT ADVANCES IN MAGIC KNIGHT'S TOURS

by George Jelliss

Editorial introduction. Readers who have come to Variant Chess through Chessics and The Games and Puzzles Journal (now an internet journal) will know of George's enthusiasm for knight's tours. The main vehicle for recording research in this field is now his Knight's Tour Notes website. Having heard of significant new developments, we have asked him to give us a summary.

A 'magic rectangle' is an arrangement of the numbers 1, 2, ..., mn in m ranks and n files in such a way that the ranks all add to the same sum (nA) and the files all add to the same sum (mA) where A is the average value $(mn + 1)/2$ of the numbers. For these sums to be whole numbers it follows that m and n must both be odd or both even.

In the case of a 'magic square' ($m = n$) the rank and file sums are the same and the extra requirement is often added that the two diagonals also add to the magic constant. The simplest diagonal magic square, the 3 by 3, was known in China possibly as long ago as 2000 BC. The earliest knight's tours date from around 850 AD. The idea that it might be possible to combine these two feats was suggested in 1759 when the mathematician Leonhard Euler constructed a 5 by 5 knight's tour in which the four lines through the centre (but not the other ranks and files) add to the constant.

Around 1825 the key to combining the two feats on the chessboard was found in the form of the 'squares and diamonds' method. In this the knight's paths through each 4 by 4 quarter of the board form either a square or a diamond shape, having one entry in each rank and file. The first magic knight's tour, found by William Beverley in 1848, also used a third (zigzag) type of path with the same property. Magic tours that use only these three types of path are now termed 'regular'.

In 1986, in a special issue of *Chessics*, I published a complete catalogue of all known magic knight's tours. This led Tom Marlow to apply computer methods to the problem, resulting in a complete enumeration of all the 78 magic tours of regular type. He found five new tours that were published in *The Problemist* in 1988. This left only 'irregular' tours to be found. At that time 23 were known. Incidentally, none of these tours was diagonally magic, although diagonally magic tours had been found on 16 by 16 and larger boards.

No new 8 by 8 magic tours were discovered until January 2003 when Tim Roberts (Australia) devised a computer program that found two. Following that Günther Stertenbrink (Germany) proposed a scheme for a comprehensive search using distributed programming, splitting the problem up into 136 parts according to the possible pairs of end-cells of the tours. Jean-Charles Meyrignac (France) wrote the program, and a number of

computer users applied it. Most of this work was done by Hugues Mackay (Canada). This project generated all the known tours and five new ones. So we can now say with confidence that all magic knight's tours on the chessboard are known, and can confirm, what has long been suspected, that a diagonally magic tour on this board is impossible. Numerical diagrams of the seven new tours are appended. They are shown in order of discovery.

Independently of this work Awani Kumar (India), inspired by the 12×12 magic tour constructed by the Rajah of Mysore some time between 1852 and 1868, and by the work of T. H. Willcocks who some years ago found 12×12 tours with one diagonal magic, solved the long outstanding problem of making a tour on this board with both diagonals magic. In fact he found four solutions, published in April this year. We show the most complex one of these four.

During the same period the author has also made some progress in this field by devising a proof that magic knight's tours on rectangles $4m + 2$ by $4n + 2$ are impossible. A stronger result can probably be proved, namely that magic knight's tours on rectangular boards are only possible when the sides are $4m$ by $4n$ (with m and n greater than 1), but the final step in the proof eludes me. Perhaps a reader can see the trick that will complete the proof, or alternatively come up with a counter-example (i.e. a magic tour on a board $4m$ by $4n + 2$).

The above theorem shows, in particular, that no magic knight's tours are possible on the 10×10 board. However interesting results are still possible. Tom Marlow was able to find a unique 10×10 tour with quaternary symmetry that is semi-magic (i.e. adds to the magic constant in the ranks but not the files). In the case of this tour especially you should get some squared paper and draw a diagram of the knight's moves. If you also colour in the cells occupied by numbers of the form $4n + 2$ or $4n + 3$ you will find there is an even number in every rank (this is a requirement for these lines to be magic) and five in every file (which is why the files are not magic) though their sums do have a certain regularity.

All the above workers were brought into communication through the Knight's Tour Notes website maintained by the author. Much of this work might not have been done without the internet which is able to bring together widely separated people of similar interests, and to make otherwise obscure knowledge more widely accessible.

In showing the tours here I have followed a slightly different rule from usual, namely orienting the tours with the smallest ODD corner at the top left. The codes 01i, 14e, 00n etc are the names given to the tours in my catalogue. The tours with the 00 prefix have the extra property that they remain magic when numbered from a different origin by a cyclic shift of the numbers along the knight's path. The shift must be a multiple of 8; in 00n and 00o the shift is 16 or 48.

The catalogue of 8 by 8 magic knight's tours can be found on the Knight's Tour Notes website. It consists of an introductory page and three pages showing the tours in arithmetical and geometrical forms. There are also pages on the history and methods of construction, as well as much else on other aspects of tours - and not only by knights!

01i (Roberts)

31	46	33	18	43	62	11	16
34	19	30	45	12	17	42	61
47	32	13	36	63	44	15	10
20	35	52	29	14	9	60	41
53	48	21	2	37	64	27	8
22	3	56	51	28	1	40	59
49	54	5	24	57	38	7	26
4	23	50	55	6	25	58	39

27t (Mackay, Meyrignac & Stertenbrink)

1	30	47	52	3	28	45	54
48	51	2	29	46	53	4	27
31	12	49	14	21	34	55	44
50	37	32	35	60	15	26	5
11	62	13	20	33	22	43	56
38	19	36	61	16	59	6	25
63	10	17	40	23	8	57	42
18	39	64	9	58	41	24	7

14e (Roberts)

3	22	49	56	5	20	47	58
50	55	4	21	48	57	6	19
23	2	53	44	25	8	59	46
54	51	24	1	60	45	18	7
15	36	43	52	17	26	9	62
42	39	16	33	12	61	30	27
35	14	37	40	29	32	63	10
38	41	34	13	64	11	28	31

07a (Mackay, Meyrignac & Stertenbrink)

27	30	39	16	59	64	11	14
38	17	26	29	12	15	60	63
31	28	19	40	61	58	13	10
18	37	32	25	20	9	62	57
47	24	41	36	45	56	3	8
42	33	46	21	4	7	52	55
23	48	35	44	53	50	5	2
34	43	22	49	6	1	54	51

00n (Mackay, Meyrignac & Stertenbrink)

11	46	51	40	9	38	31	34
52	41	10	45	32	35	8	37
47	12	43	50	39	6	33	30
42	53	48	1	44	29	36	7
55	20	13	28	49	64	5	26
14	17	54	23	2	27	60	63
21	56	19	16	61	58	25	4
18	15	22	57	24	3	62	59

10x10 semi-magic quaternary (Marlow)

27	8	95	6	91	10	97	100	69	2
94	23	26	9	96	5	68	3	98	83
25	28	7	92	11	90	99	82	1	70
22	93	24	29	14	87	4	67	84	81
35	30	15	12	63	38	89	86	71	66
16	21	36	39	88	13	62	65	80	85
31	34	17	54	37	64	79	74	43	72
20	51	32	49	40	61	42	57	78	75
33	48	53	18	55	46	59	76	73	44
52	19	50	47	60	41	56	45	58	77

00o (Mackay, Meyrignac & Stertenbrink)

11	14	51	40	9	38	63	34
52	41	10	13	64	35	8	37
15	12	43	50	39	6	33	62
42	53	16	1	44	61	36	7
55	20	45	28	49	32	5	26
46	17	54	23	2	27	60	31
21	56	19	48	29	58	25	4
18	47	22	57	24	3	30	59

12x12 diagonally magic (Kumar)

1	70	107	112	5	66	103	116	9	64	99	118
108	111	2	69	104	115	6	65	100	117	10	63
71	106	109	4	113	102	67	8	61	98	119	12
110	3	72	105	68	7	114	101	120	11	62	97
73	142	35	40	77	140	17	60	93	122	13	58
36	39	74	141	32	41	92	121	16	59	96	123
143	34	37	76	139	78	51	18	129	94	57	14
38	75	144	33	42	31	130	91	52	15	124	95
81	136	29	44	79	138	19	50	89	128	21	56
28	45	80	137	30	43	90	131	20	53	88	125
135	82	47	26	133	84	49	24	127	86	55	22
46	27	134	83	48	25	132	85	54	23	126	87

14f (Mackay, Meyrignac & Stertenbrink)

7	24	41	58	19	10	63	38
42	57	8	23	62	39	18	11
25	6	59	40	9	20	37	64
56	43	22	1	48	61	12	17
5	26	47	60	21	16	49	36
44	55	2	29	34	51	32	13
27	4	53	46	15	30	35	50
54	45	28	3	52	33	14	31

References to websites:

The Games and Puzzles Journal:
<http://www.gpj.connectfree.co.uk> (issues 25 and 26).
 Knight's Tour Notes:
<http://www.ktn.freeuk.com> (magic tours section).

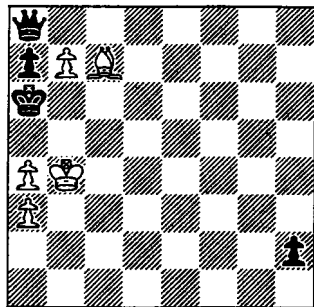
VARIANT CHESS 7-7 LEAPER AWARD

by Ronald Turnbull

You might have expected that a Tourney with only 4 entries and just a single honoured problem would be fairly quick and easy to judge. In Variant Problemism, however, nothing is simple. To start with, Chloe the Program strongly suspected that single awardee of unsoundness. But would it be correct to reject the problem on the say-so of an Abstract Entity? Happily, an extra pawn satisfied Chloe as well as ourselves.

Noam ELKIES

Prize, *Variant Chess* Theme Ty 2003



Pawns may promote to any of the 35 Leapers from (0,1) through (7,7) in addition to the usual QRBN. White to move and win

Brief summary:

1.ba=Q? a1Q! 2.QxQ stalemates. So only a leaper will prevent Black's promotion.

1.ba=02+? Kb7 2.Bxh2 Kxa8 leads to a book draw with a rook's pawn and the wrong Bishop.

1.ba=16 a1Q? 2.16g7+ gives a winning fork, while 1...h1=63+? 2.Kb3 traps the 6-3 Leaper. However, Black's 1...h1=16! leaves the two Leapers mutually trapped in what's essentially the same old draw.

So finally we turn to the least useful Leaper: 1.ba=77! Kb7 2.77h1! Kxc7 - and the 77's control of a8 turns out to be just enough to let White promote eventually, though only by way of careful K-play and no fewer than 4 positions of mutual Zugzwang. (Though without the added wP on a4, it turned out to be just not enough.) Full analysis by the composer.

Clearly White must begin 1 b7:a8=something. Let's dispose of the orthodox promotions first: 1. ba8=Q(B)? h1Q 2. Q(B):h1 stalemate, or 2. Qc8+ Qb7+ 3. Q:b7+ K:b7 and a theoretical draw as White can win the remaining Black pawn but cannot force promotion of a Rook pawn with a Bishop that does not control the promotion square. The same draw saves Black after 2. Qd8 Qb7+, while 2. Qc8+ Qb7+ 3. K-any Q:c7+ forces 4. Q:c7, stalemate.

So, we must promote to a Leaper of some kind and still deal with 1...h1Q. 1. ba8=(0,2)+? gains a tempo with check, but after Kb7 2. B:h2 K:a8 we're back to the theoretical draw. 1. ba8=(1,6)!? is a thematic try: h1Q 2. 16g7+ Kb7 3. 16:h1 K:c7 leaves a White win (the 1,6 Leaper can assist in the capture of the Black a-pawn and then control the promotion square); and even 1...Kb7!? 2. 16b2(g7)! K:c7 3. Kb5 wins much as we'll see in the solution. Nor does 1...h1=(6,3)+?! refute, since 2. Kb3 lets White trap the (6,3) and hold on to his crucial (6,1), e.g. 2...Kb7 3. a8-b2 (also a8-g7) and now K:c7 4. b2(g7):h1 etc., or 3...h1-e7 4. Bd8 e7-b1 5. Kc2 Kc8 6. Bg5 and the (6,3) Leaper is lost for nothing. The right defense to 1. ba8=(1,6)!? is 1...h1=(1,6)! which traps White's new Leaper, leaving White nothing better than 2. Be5 Kb7 3. 16b2(g7) 16:16 4. B:16 and we're back to the theoretical draw.

The key is 1. b:a8=(7,7)!! Kb7 2. 77h1! (and not B:h2? K:a8; White would rather have the weakest Leaper for Black's h-pawn than a Bishop for nothing) K:c7, and now White will exploit Zugzwang and the Leaper's control of a8 to win Black's pawn and force his own a-pawn through to Queen: 3. Ka5! (threat 4. Ka6 Kb8 5. a5) Kb7 4. Kb5! (mutual Zugzwang) a6+ 5. Kc5 (so is this) Kc7 6. a5 (and again) Kb7 7. Kd6 Kb8 (or Ka7 8. Kc6!, avoiding 8.Kc7? stalemate) 8. Kc6 Ka7 9. a4! (the final and decisive mutual Zugzwang) and wins.

If Black tries to counterattack with 3...Kd6 4. Ka6 Ke5 (with the extra a-pawn White has nothing to fear from 4...Kc5) 5. K:a7 Ke4 6. Kb6 Kf3 7. a5 Kg2, White wins by playing 9.77a8, advancing the pawn to a7, and then either playing 12.77h1 K:h1 13.a8Q+

(which is a simple win with the a3-pawn in reserve) or sending the King to g3 (Black cannot stop this, since his King must oscillate between g1 and g2 to stop 77h1 and a8Q).

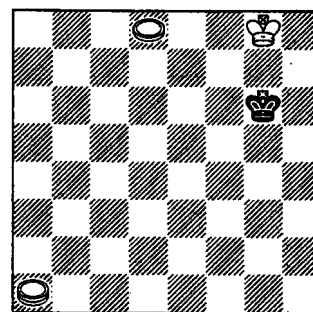
Moves other than 3. Ka5 only draw, e.g., 3. Kb5? Kb7 4. a5 a6+ 5. Kc5 Kc7 and White must play his last tempo move a4 too soon, or 3. Kc5? Kb8! etc. counterattack.

In awarding the Prize, our judge C C Frankiss comments: "Although rather artificial, this study does take the 7-7 Leaper into a field which, frankly, I didn't expect it to go."

A problem can lack the particular qualities required for an award while still being interesting and entertaining. Such to my mind is Dr Lytton's A in Wenigsteiner (4 men only). The two Leapers are neutral (can be moved or captured by either side): a1 is the 7-7 while d8 is a root-50, which can leap either 5-5 or 7-1. Circe applies, with a Leaper captured by Black/White reborn on the same file and 1-rank/8-rank promotion squares - fairy pieces such as long Leapers are deemed to have arisen by promotion. Additionally in this problem, check is forbidden except in the case of mate.

Check from a neutral can usually be averted by the victim's simply moving the checker away. Here White will mate by capturing the 7-7; which, reborn on a1, gives check to h8 and cannot be moved away by Black.

A - C C LYTTON

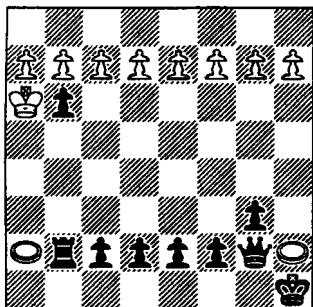


Neutral root-50 Leaper d8,
neutral 7-7 Leaper a1
Circe, Checkless, Helpmate in 6

1.77h8 Kxh8(77h1) 2.RFe1 Kg8
3.RFf8 Kxf8(RFf1) 4.Kh7 77a8 5.Kh8
RFa6 6.RFh7 RFxa8(77a1) mate.

The other reason for the slow award was the wealth of material I and the judge Charles Frankiss were uncovering with Leapers shorter (but longer in consequences) than the 7-7.

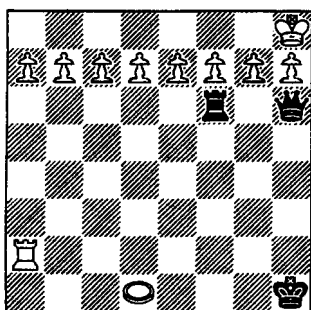
B - C Frankiss, R Turnbull



7-0 Leapers a2, h2: selfmate in 9

In B, fairly straightforward use is made of the 7-0 Leaper. Here the usual convention applies: promotions may be made to QRBN, and to any Leaper present in the diagram but no other. The solution requires no great leap of the imagination and, in the event, only one leap by a Leaper: 1.h8=07+ Kg1 2.g8=07+ Kf1 ... 7.b8=07+ Ka1 8.07h1+ Qxh1 9.a8=07+ Qxa8. The slightly more subtle C has its solution at the end.

C - C C Frankiss



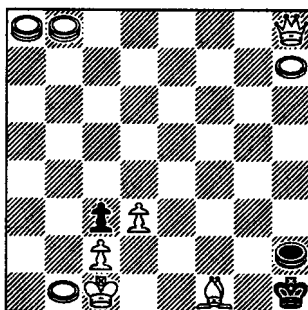
3-7 Leaper d1: selfmate in 7

In Strict Circe, a capture is only legal if the appropriate rebirth square is vacant (so no unit ever leaves the board). In D this condition is used to herd the black 1-7 round the edges like that mythic creature of physics the perfectly elastic billiard ball.

1.17a1 - and Black can't capture as the rebirth square a8 is occupied, so 1...17a3. Now 2.17h2 and again the rebirth square h8 is occupied, so

2...17h4. Continuing, 3.17a3 17a5

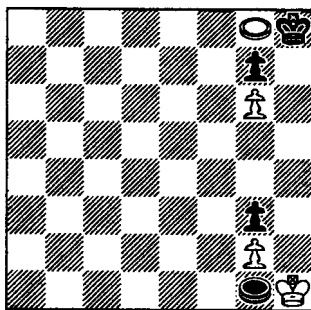
D - C C Frankiss



1-7 Leapers b8, h7, h2, b1
6-7 Leaper a8
Strict Circe; selfmate in 10

4.17h4 17h6 5.17a5 17a7 6.17h6 17xh8(wQd1) 7.17a7 17g1 8.17h8 (and again, h8 is occupied so that 8...17xh8 forbidden) 17f8 9.17g1 (and 17xg1 leads to rebirth on g8, with self-check) 17e1 10.17f8 17d8 mate. (I hoped to start this one move earlier, with 1.g7-g8=71 71a1-h2, but this led to cooks with Black mating on b8.)

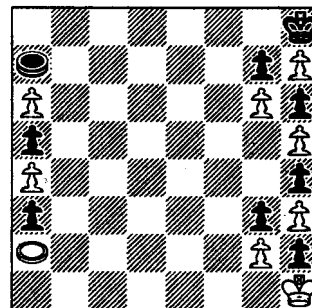
E - C C Frankiss



1-7 Leapers g8, g1
Helpdoublestalemate in 12; Sentinels

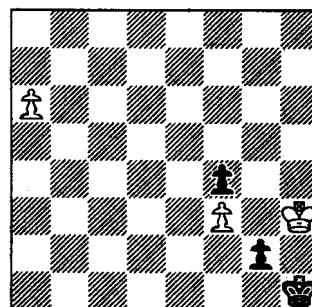
In Sentinels, a piece (not pawn) that moves (not from the 1-rank or 8-rank) leaves an own-colour pawn on the departure square, unless there are already 8 such on the board. Stalemate could be achieved in 4 moves: but the aim is double stalemate: Black is stalemated, but White, were it his move, would also be in stalemate. The solution involves matching leaps: using L for the Leaper as there's only one sort, 1.Lf8 Lf1 2.Le1 Le8 3.Ld8 Ld1 4.Lc1 Lc8 5.Lb8 Lb1 6.La1 La8 7.Lh2 Lh7 8.La3(bPh2) La6(wPh7) 9.Lh4(bPa3 Lh5(wPa6) 10.La5(bPh4)

La4(wPh5) 11.Lh6(bPa5) Lh3(wPa4) 12.La7(bPh6) La2(wPh3):



One more for solving. It involves simple play but a 7-leap of the imagination... F asks for helpstalemate in 1 - which really is fairly easy: b) helpstalemate in 2 exactly (so the solution to a) is too short) and finally for helpmate in 2. Promotions may be to any orthodox unit and any Leaper (not just n-7 ones).

F - Noam Elkies



anyleaper promotions
a)H=1 b)H=2 c)H#2

Thanks to Noam Elkies and Charles Frankiss for helpful comments as well as their entertaining diagrams.

C: 1.e8=37+ Kg1 2.d8=37+ Kf1 3.c8=37+ Ke1 4.b8=37+ Kxd1 5.a8=37+ Kc1 6.f8=37+ Rxf8+ 7.gf=37+ Qxf8. Easier to solve than to compose: could we achieve the same task with anyleaper promotions?

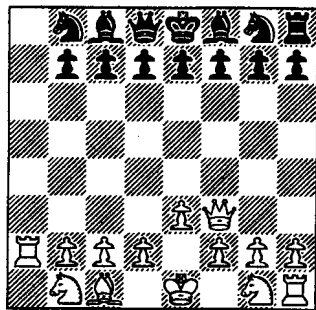
F: a) 1.g1=77 a7= - not hard! b) 1.g1=75 a7 2.75b8 ab=75 - matched promotions to 7-5 Leaper... c) Try 1.g1=77 a7 2.?? a8=77 mate... but Black needs another move. Play 1.g1=00 a7 2.00g1 a8=77 mate! Black promotes to the sole Leaper less useful than the 7-7 one.

LOSING CHESS : WHAT IF ... ?

by John Beasley

Here are some more games from the 2001 "Unofficial Losing Chess World Championship". Analysis is by Stan Goldovski's program *Giveaway Wizard*; answers to questions are on page 48.

From Round 1. White Tim Rimmel, Black Johan Snuverink. 1.e3 a6 2.Bxa6 Rxa6? 3.Qf3 (a powerful move which always comes into consideration once the rook in the far corner has gone, because Black cannot now play ...b5/b6 offering it) 3...Rxa2 4.Rxa2:



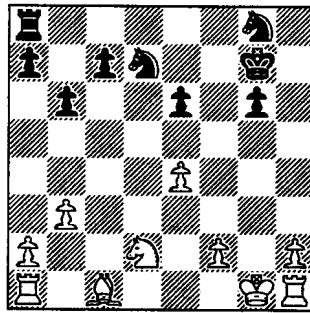
White threatens 5.Qxb7 giving Black a rampant bishop and the natural counter is 4...c6, but what would have happened had Black played 4...b6/b5?

In the game, Black did indeed play 4...c6, but it was to no avail. White continued 5.Qxc6, when 5...dxc6 gives Black a rampant bishop and 5...bxc6 allows a win similar to that after 4...b6. Nor was Black's actual 5...Nxc6 any better: 6.b4 Nxb4 7.Ra4 Nxc2 8.e4 and he resigned.

All this amounts to a proof that 1.e3 a6 2.Bxa6 Rxa6 is a losing line, and that 2...bxa6 is necessary.

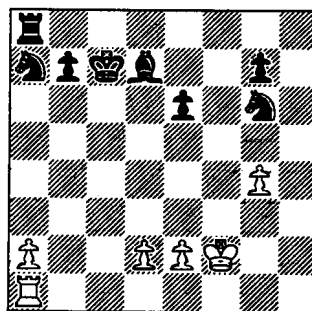
White Jaap Kamminga, Black Fridrik Sandström. 1.e3 e6 2.Be2 Ba3 3.Nxa3 h5 4.Bxh5 Rxh5 5.Qxh5 b6 6.Qxf7 Kxf7 7.Nb1 (White presumably feared 7...b5, but it doesn't seem immediately disastrous and yielding space like this can hardly be good) 7...g6 8.g4 Ne7 9.b3 Kg7 10.Ke2 Ng8 11.g5 Qxg5 12.Kf1 Qxg1 13.Kxg1 (13.Rxg1 loses offhand) 13...Ba6 (Black seizes the chance to get rid of his second bishop) 14.d3 Bxd3 15.cxd3 d5 16.Nd2 Nd7

17.e4? dxe4 18.dxe4:

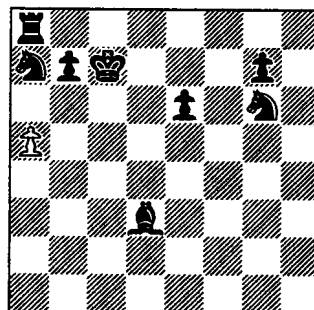


We seem set for a long game, but in fact there was only one more move.

From Round 2. White Fridrik Sandström, Black Tim Rimmel. 1.c4 e6 2.c5 Bxc5 3.b3 Bxf2 4.Kxf2 Qh4 5.g3 Qxh2 6.Rxh2 Kd8 7.Rxh7 Rxh7 8.Nh3 Rxh3 9.Bxh3 c5 10.Bxe6 dxe6 11.b4 cxb4 12.Na3 bxa3 13.Bxa3 Kc7 14.Bc5 Nc6 15.Bxa7 Nxa7 16.Qb3 Ne7 17.Qxe6 fxe6 18.Rh1 Ng6 19.Ra1 (the once automatic 19.Rh8 is now seen as weakening) 19...Bd7 20.g4 and the bishop starts to look vulnerable:

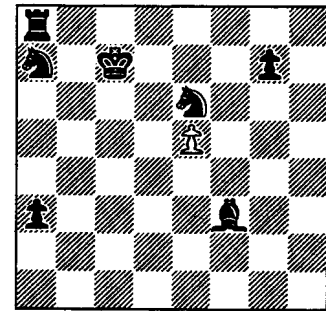


Amazingly, *Wizard* thinks it can now play 20...Ba4. There is no immediate win, and after say 21.Rd1 Bxd1 22.e4 Bxg4 23.Kf3 Bxf3 24.a4 Bxe4 25.d3 Bxd3 26.a5 it is *Black* who wins:

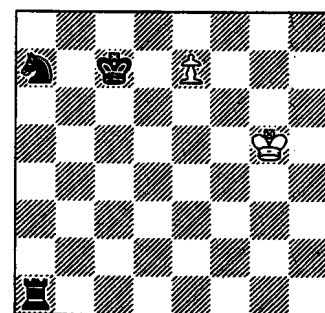


But no human player is going to risk

lines like this, and play continued 20...b5 21.Rf1 b4 22.a3 bxa3 23.e4 Nf8 (*Wizard* reckons it can get away with 23...Nh4) 24.d4 (setting the bishop loose at last, but the effect is not what was hoped) e5 25.dxe5 Bxg4 26.Rd1 (surely White wins this?) 26...Bxd1 27.e6 Nxe6 (maybe not, 28.Kf3/e2 BxK 29.e5 and again Black wins - the case 28.Kf3 etc is shown):



Put bBf3 back to d1 and wPe5 to e4, reinstate wKf2, and continue 28.Kf1 Nf4 29.Kg1. Black's plan now is to give his eN/R/B/gP to White's king, making sure that he can still meet a king sacrifice by winning against the last pawn, and then to promote his a-pawn to a rook and give his remaining men to the pawn. White's only hope is to promote as quickly as possible, and play continued 29...Rh8 30.e5 Rh2 31.Kxh2 Nh3 32.Kxh3 Bg4 33.Kxg4 g5 34.Kxg5 a2 35.e6 a1R 36.e7:



Black now won by 36...Rb1 (37.Kf6 Nb5 38.Kf5 Rc1 39.e8N Nc3! 40.Nxc7 Nb5 and White resigned) but (a) what would have been quicker and (b) why not 36...Kd8?

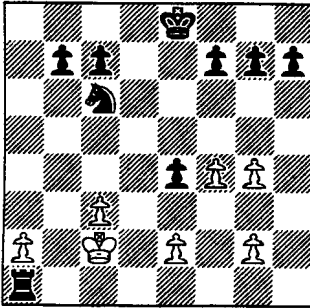
This was one of the crucial games of the tournament. Black went on to win, White, one of the pre-tournament favourites, ended in the lower half; yet on studying the game I felt, perhaps unjustly, that Black had sailed very close to the wind.

THE END IS NIGH!

by Paul Byway

I recently came across the following ending. I don't have any answers for you on this one - but you might find it of interest. Could White reach a draw?

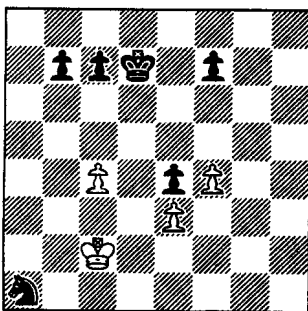
#118 Dziel - Khajrullin (1995)



White to play (series 9)

Play continued with 9.g5, g6, gxh7, h8=B, Bxg7, c4, Bxa1, e3, g3 and Black's series 10 was illegal; but it was bad handwriting or some such, for the printed score clearly shows that he intended to play 10.Ne7, Nf5, Nxc3, Ne2, Nc3, Nxa2, Nc1, Nb3, Kd7, Nxa1+ giving #118b

#118b



After Black's intended series 10 should White resign?

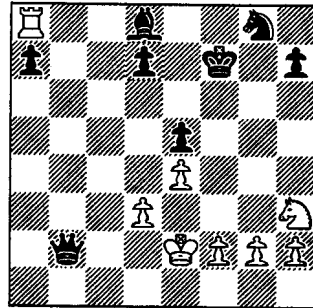
White has the following possibility:- 11.Kb1, Kxa1, Kb2, Kc3, Kd4, Kxe4, Kd5, Kc5, Kb5, c5, c6+. Another interesting line is:- 11.Kc3, Kd4, Kxe4, Kf5, Kf6, Kxf7, Kf6, Ke5, Kd5, Kd4, c5

COMPETITION 19

Three more positions from Italian Progressive Chess for solving. This time there is a sort of unity: every game started 1.e4 2.e5, f6 and Black created a queen at series 8. In each

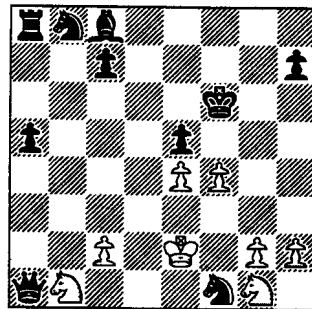
case White has but two pieces with which to weave a mating net at series 9. Curiously enough the e-pawns are still standing head to head in all three.

#119 Manzini - Caressa (1987)



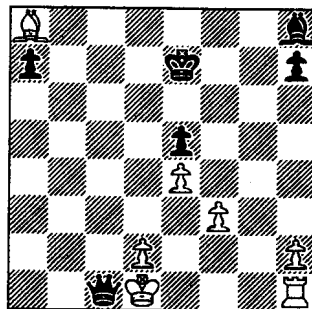
White wins (series 9)

#120 Davide - Sarale (1979)



White wins (series 9)

#121 Viola - Figura (1988)



White wins (series 9)

SOLUTIONS TO COMPETITION 18

#115 8.Kxc6, Nxe4, Nd2, Bxe2, Kd5, Ke4, Ke3, Rc8 mate

#116 8.Bg7, Bxe5, Nc6, Nxd4, Rg8, Rg1, Re1, Nf3 mate

#117 8.Nxc6, Bb4, Rf8, Rxf3, Rd3, Rxd1, Nxe5, Re1 mate

There was an alternative solution to #115 from IR and CL: 8.Kxc6, Rd8, Rxd4, Rd1, Kc5, Kb4, Ng4, Ne3 mate. #116 caused difficulty. PW suggested the brilliant 8.b4, b3, bxc2, a5, Ra6, Rb6, Rxb2, c1=Q mate (?) It took me a few moments to realise that all is illusion: 9.Kxc1, etc. CL offered 8.a5, Ra6, Rg6, Rg1, Re1, Nc6, Nxe5, Nf3 mate, overlooking 9.Kc3, etc. For #117 CL found a doubled Italian mate: 8.Ke6, Kf5, Kg4 (K can also play to c4), Bb4, Rf8, Rxf3, Nxc6, Nd4 - but I've just noticed that White escapes with 9.Kf1, etc. DP had the right idea with 8.Nxc6, Nxe5, Bb4, Rc8, Rc3, Rd3, Rxd1, Re1 - but White plays 9.Nxe1, etc.

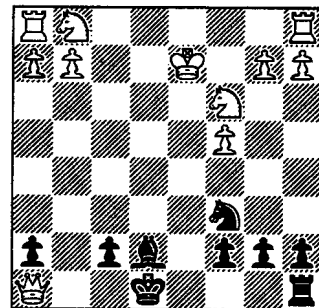
The current scores

IR 51, FG 49, DP 35, CL 21, RT 16, PW 8, JB 3, SB 2.

PROGRESSIVE CHESS TOURNAMENT 2002

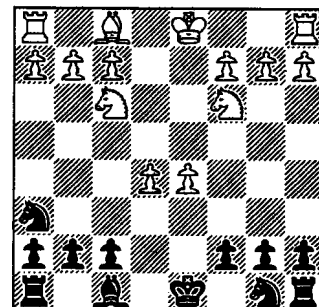
Fred Galvin brings to our attention a couple of missed mates from this recent competition.

T 2/5 Stone - Brown (2002)



Black wins (series 8)

T 2/11 Muskett - Stone (2002)



Black wins (series 6)

Solutions will be found on page 48

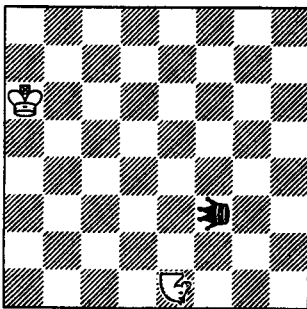
ANTIPIECES

Roger Smook

(The convention in this article is that antipieces are rotated by 180 degrees and royal pieces are rotated by 90 degrees - Ed.)

I use the prefix *anti*, not as in 'anti-tank gun', but as in 'antilogarithm'. In other words, an antipiece is more or less the inverse of its orthodox counterpart. An antiknight, for instance, can basically move to or capture upon all and only squares that a knight *cannot* move to or capture upon. I say 'basically', because the inverse relationship has to be qualified slightly: an antipiece cannot move to a square that would leave the friendly king (or other royal piece) subject to capture, nor can it move to a square already occupied by a friendly unit. These pieces are very powerful. Thus an antiknight can mate a royal orthodox queen, but it may not be immediately obvious just how. (A royal piece is checkmated if threatened with immediate capture and if all squares to which it could move are under attack).

No. 1
Mate in one

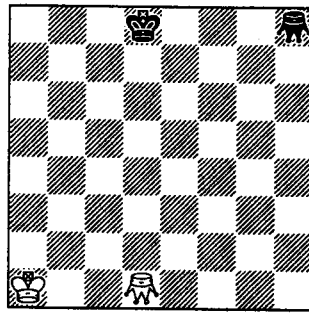


Among 'inverses' of orthodox pieces, the antiqueen is the weakest, yet considerably stronger than her orthodox counterpart. Here's a simple but neat quartet in which, not only the opposing antiqueens, but also the (orthodox) kings, play a fascinating role.

No. 2
Mate in one

- (a) As next diagram
- (b) Move d1 to d2 in (a)
- (c) Move a1 to h1 in (b)

(d) Move d2 to d1 in (c)

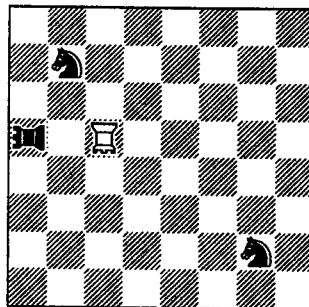


Matter vs. antimatter? Then surely also rook vs. antirook! But in this little quartet, it's a case of *one-sided* annihilation. The Black rook is far too straightforward a fellow for his slippery counterpart.

No. 3

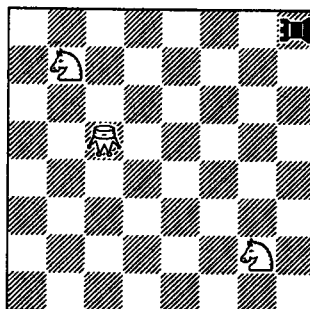
Mate in two

- (a) As diagram
- (b) Move a5 to h5 in (a)
- (c) Move h5 to c8 in (b)
- (d) Move c8 to c1 in (c)



The next is a thematic transmogrification of the previous one. In other words, the two belong, in a certain sense, together. In a serieshelpmate Black makes a series of so and so many moves allowing White to then give immediate mate.

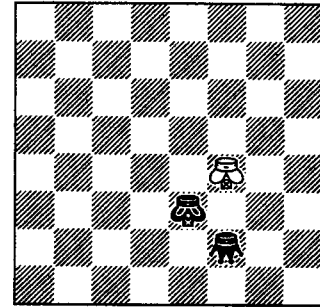
No. 4



Serieshelpmate in five
2 solutions (Black is in check)

The next is a neat triplet composed together with Ronald Turnbull. In *Inverse Chess* all pieces on the board are antipieces. This will not be easy unless one can picture in advance the piquant stalemate motif.

No. 5

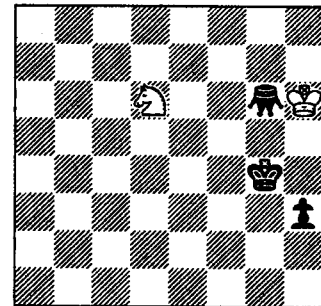


Inverse chess

Black moves first and helps White stalemate in 2 (three solutions)
(Helpstalemate)

Ronald makes his independent contribution with the next one. In my opinion the deep and beautiful point vindicates this problem against a possible philistine objection.

No. 6

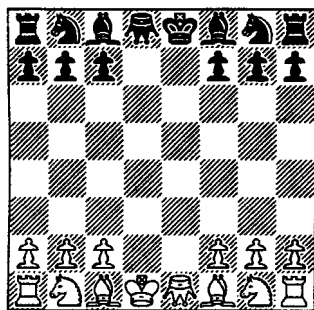


Black moves first and helps White mate in 3 (two solutions)
(Helpmate)

I showed my antipieces to my jazz-musician friend Ezekiel T. Hornblower. (You won't believe this, but the middle initial stands for Tesseract!) Zeke loves five-minute variant chess because of its highly improvisational character and came up with the following game-array. (There's a special rule to prevent early exchange of AQs, but I needn't discuss that.). This is in many ways a typical Zekian inspiration; both sides have their front teeth out and White has king and queen switched. I hated

to disillusion him, but I had to point out a cute mate in two. In other words, Black will be 'fool's-mated' without enjoying the luxury of being a fool. Perhaps someone can help poor Zeke by proposing a better array. (any combination of orthodox men and antipieces allowed—and any initial configuration and special rules.)

No. 7



Mate in two

Solutions will be found on page 48

REVIEWS

by David Pritchard

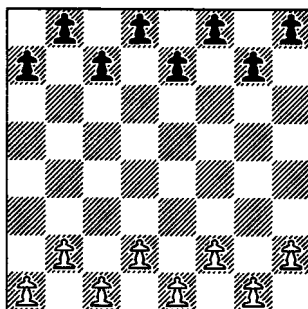
Proteus

Proteus is a new offering (August 2001) from Steve Jackson Games Inc. who marketed **Knightmare Chess** (VC21) and **Tile Chess** (VC36). Knightmare Chess was the English-language edition of the hugely successful *Tempête sur l'Echiquier* (the German version is sold as *Tschach*) which seems to prove there is some commercial mileage in small, cheap chess variants.

Proteus was invented by Francis K. Lalumière (who presumably saw the light?). What you get for your money (how much? I have no information - perhaps \$5?) is 16 dice, eight each of white and black. The dice are identical: they display on their six sides a queen, rook, bishop, knight, pawn and a triangle with a dot near the apex. This last is the Steve Jackson logo (a pyramid with the all-seeing eye). Notice that there is no king.

The dice move according to the piece symbol on the top face. The triangle is a block: it cannot move and cannot be captured. At the start of the game each player's dice are placed on

the black squares of the first two rows with pawns uppermost.



On your turn, you must move a man and rotate another man one step either up or down. Rotation is in strict sequence: triangle, pawn, bishop, knight, rook, queen. Thus you cannot move a triangle down or a queen up. A triangle has no value, a pawn is worth 2 points, a bishop 3 points, a knight 4 points, a rook 5 points and a queen 6 points. Capturing as in chess. The game ends when one player is reduced to one man. The player with the most points (sum of captured men) is the winner. Pieces behave normally with two exceptions: a pawn has the 2-move option on any starting square regardless of whether or not it has been previously moved; and, a novel rule, a queen can be 'stabbed in the back' by any hostile piece that moves to the file square immediately behind it. This rule has the effect of making the queen more vulnerable than in chess. There is no mention of *en passant* by the way, perhaps because Steve Jackson Games haven't heard of it.

Strategy is not obvious (at least, not to me) but it would appear that a quick rotation to queen would allow the piece to run amok. The knight is valued above the bishop presumably because forks are easier: a well placed bishop or rook rotates to knight. A doomed piece can be rotated down (for example, queen to rook) to deny the opponent a point. If you are down to two men, there is no point in them defending each other as the capture of one ends the game.

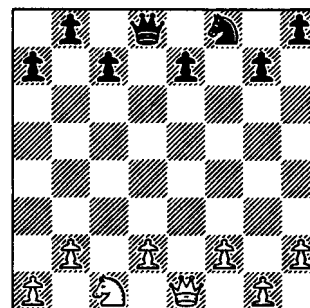
As if all this wasn't enough, the rule sheet offers no less than six variants. The one I like best is called **Trade-off**. This allows you to forego your move but rotate any die two steps up or down - giving emphasis (in

attack) for a quick promotion from knight to queen and (in defence) of double rotation downwards of a doomed piece.

Chess Draughts

This game was invented by Henry Richter and published by John Leon (1883) in a 3d rule book (4d in Slovenian!!). The inventor declares 'Draughts are worn out', adding that his game will 'meet with the approval of the great majority of competent judges'.

Usual board; eight men on each side, a Lady, a Knight and six pawns. The starting position is shown.



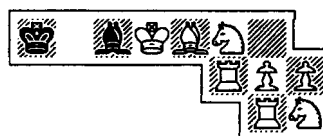
The aim of the game is to checkmate the Lady (the inventor observes 'I do not deem it compatible with the dignity of a lady to entangle with any kind of doubtful positions'). Play is on the black squares only. Pawns move forward one square and promote to Knight on the end rank. The Lady moves one square in any direction (like a draughts king) whilst the Knight, just to make things difficult, moves like a bishop. Capture is by displacement (no leaping).

ISOLATED PAWN

from Peter Fayers

The sliding-block puzzle to which Ken Whyld refers in his letter (VC42) is in fact by T R Dawson. The solution will be found on page 48

Bolton Football Field, 1911
"Revolver Practice"



White mates in 21

FIFTY YEARS AGO

from John Beasley

An e-mail out of the blue from Eric Ratcliffe in Stevenage (greetings!) reminds me that he was one of the original subjects in Boyer's second book as originating **Caterpillar Chess** (*Encyclopedia of Chess Variants* page 42, Boyer's *Nouveaux jeux d'échecs non orthodoxes* pages 86-8). I don't know whether it has received attention recently, but he and his friends used to play it some fifty years ago, and "it works well, there are no chairs, and everyone moves around standing". He also refers to **Kidnapping Chess** by H. C. Garner, "who was a colleague of mine" (*ECV* pages 158-9, Boyer page 98), and he attributes the invention of **Capapranka** (credited to himself in *ECV*, page 40) to Garner. *ECV*, quoting *Chess*, describes this as "very amusing" at 15 seconds a move. There is more. "You will see reference to the board I made with **changeable squares**. Long lost worse luck" (we know the feeling). This refers to Boyer page 99, which describes a 16x16 board where any square can be turned upside down to match its surroundings (the phrase "de couleur semblable à celle du cadre" is one I haven't met before, and I hope I have interpreted it correctly). This enables the realisation of a chessboard of any size and shape, and "works well" (as I can well believe). "We found **Kriegspiel** hilarious but it takes a bit of organizing. Is it ever played on-line?" I suspect so, and indeed I have a memory of a "Kriegspiel umpire" program being published as an algorithm in one of the academic computer journals of the 1970s. And regular readers of *VC* will know that at Messigny we often play **Kriegspiel Madras** (like men paralyse each other, and cannot subsequently be moved until one of them is taken or something interrupts the line of communication) which is even more hilarious than ordinary **Kriegspiel**. The games that are fashionable nowadays may be different in detail, but I suspect that their spirit is very much the same. Eric, thank you.

TEIN - SOLUTIONS

from page 45

T 2/5 8.Kd7,Nb4,f5,f4,f3,f2,f1=Q,Bg5#
T 2/11 6. Nc6, Nxe5, Nxf3, Kd7, Re8, Re1 mate.

LOSING CHESS SOLUTIONS

from page 44

First diagram (Rommel - Snuverink, what if 4...b6/b5). Suppose 4...b6 first. *Wizard* plays 5.Qxf7 Kxf7 6.Ra6 Nxa6 (6...Bxa6 gives Black a rampant bishop) 7.b4 Nxb4 8.h4 Nxc2 9.e4 Nxe1 10.Nh3 Nxc2 11.f3 Nxc4 12.d4 Nxf3 13.Nf2! Nxd4 14.Rxa7 Rxa7 and the Black rook does the rest. If 4...b5 then again 5.Qxf7 Kxf7 6.Ra6 and now 6...Nxa6 loses as before, but Black can apparently risk 6...Bxa6 since the bishop is blocked in. Not so: 7.c4 bxc4 8.b3 cxb3 and the bishop is loose once more.

Second diagram (Kamminga - Sandström, after 18.dxe4). 18...Nc5! and White resigned. Black threatens 19...Nxb3 and 19...Nxe4 releasing White's bishop or rook, and there is no defence: 19.b4 Nxe4 20.Nxe4 g5 21.Nxc5 Ne7 22.Nxe6 Kh7 and the knight is just as dangerous, or 19.f4 Nxb3 20.Nxb5 e5 and the bishop's line is clear.

Fourth diagram (Sandström - Remmel, what if 20...Ba4 etc). 26...Kb6 27.axb6 Rc8 (say) 28.bxa7 Rc5 (say) and Black can organize six giveaways to any promoted man.

Fifth diagram (same game, what if 28.Kf3 Bxf3 29.e5). 29...Kd6 30.exd6 Nc8 31.d7 Ra7 and either 32.dxc8K 33.Rd7 Kxd7 34.Bh5 Kxe6 35.Bf7 Kxf7 36.a2 Kxg7 37.a1R & wins with R v K or 32.dxc8N Re7 33.Nxe7 g6 34.Nxc6 Nf4 35.Nxf4 Bh5 36.Nxc6 a2 36.N-- a1B & wins with B v N.

Sixth diagram (same game, after 36.e7). (a) Quickest is 36...Ra6. All promotions can now be met and a king sacrifice merely postpones matters for one move, but Black must be careful after neutral moves such as 37.Kh5: 37...Kd8?? 38.exd8B! and it is White who wins. Instead, 37...Nb5 intending 38...Kd8 etc, and White is helpless. (b) *Not* the apparently natural 37.exd8K, when Black plays 37...Nc8 38.Kxc8 Ra5! and wins; 2K v R is a draw once the kings are in contact with each other and away from the edge, but here the rook can capture one king and then win against the other. Instead, 37.exd8B! Nb5 (other moves lose, for example 37...Rd1 38.Bc7 Rd8 39.Bxd8 Nb5 40.Bc7 etc) 38.Bc7/Ba5 and draws with K v R+N.

ANTIPIECES - SOLUTIONS

from page 46

No.1: 1.ANc8#.

No.2: (a) 1.AQh6#, (b) 1.AQh1# (c) 1.AQa1#, (d) 1.AQb2#.

No.3: (a) 1.ARg1 rRa1 2.ARg7#, (b) 1.ARb8 rRh8 2.ARb2#, (c) 1.ARh2 rRh8 2.ARb2#, (d) 1. ARa7 rRa1 2.ARg7#.

No.4: 1-5. rRh5-e5-e3-a3-a7 for AQh2, 1-5.rRf8-f2-c2-c1-g1 for AQb8.

No.5: 1.AQd3 AKxd3 2.AKc2 AKc1=, 1.AKg3 AKxf2 2.AKg1 AKh1=, 1.AKg5 AKf6 2.AQh5 AKxh5=.

No.6: 1.Kg3 Kg5 2.AQg4 Kg6 3.Kh5 Nf5. 1Kh5 Kg7 2.AQg8 Kg6 3.AQg4 Nf5. The setting is "formally flawed", since the two lines lead to the same mating position. The point is that the wK has to get to g6, and it is possible, just, for the AQ to move off that square without guarding it against him—but *only*, the solver must discover, if she hops over him. Thematic unity and economy unexceptionable.

No.7: 1.AQh4+ Ke7 2.Bg5#.

PROOF GAME - SOLUTION

from page 39

1.e4 e6 2.Bb5 Ke7 3.Bxd7 c6 4.Be8 Kxe8.

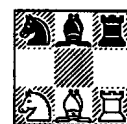
"REVOLVER PRACTICE" SOLUTION

from page 47

The Black king oscillates, while White moves successively:- N,R,N,R,B;R,N,R,N,B;N,R,N,eR,K;N,K,R,K, N; RxB.

REVIEW

The following appeared in the Feb. 2003 issue of *Chess* (Addicts Corner):

Knight Court Chess

The object is to checkmate the opponent's knight which is the royal piece. Play is normal but with one exception: a captured piece can be dropped back in the game (a la shogi!) on any subsequent turn by the original owner of the piece. White starts. (DBP)