

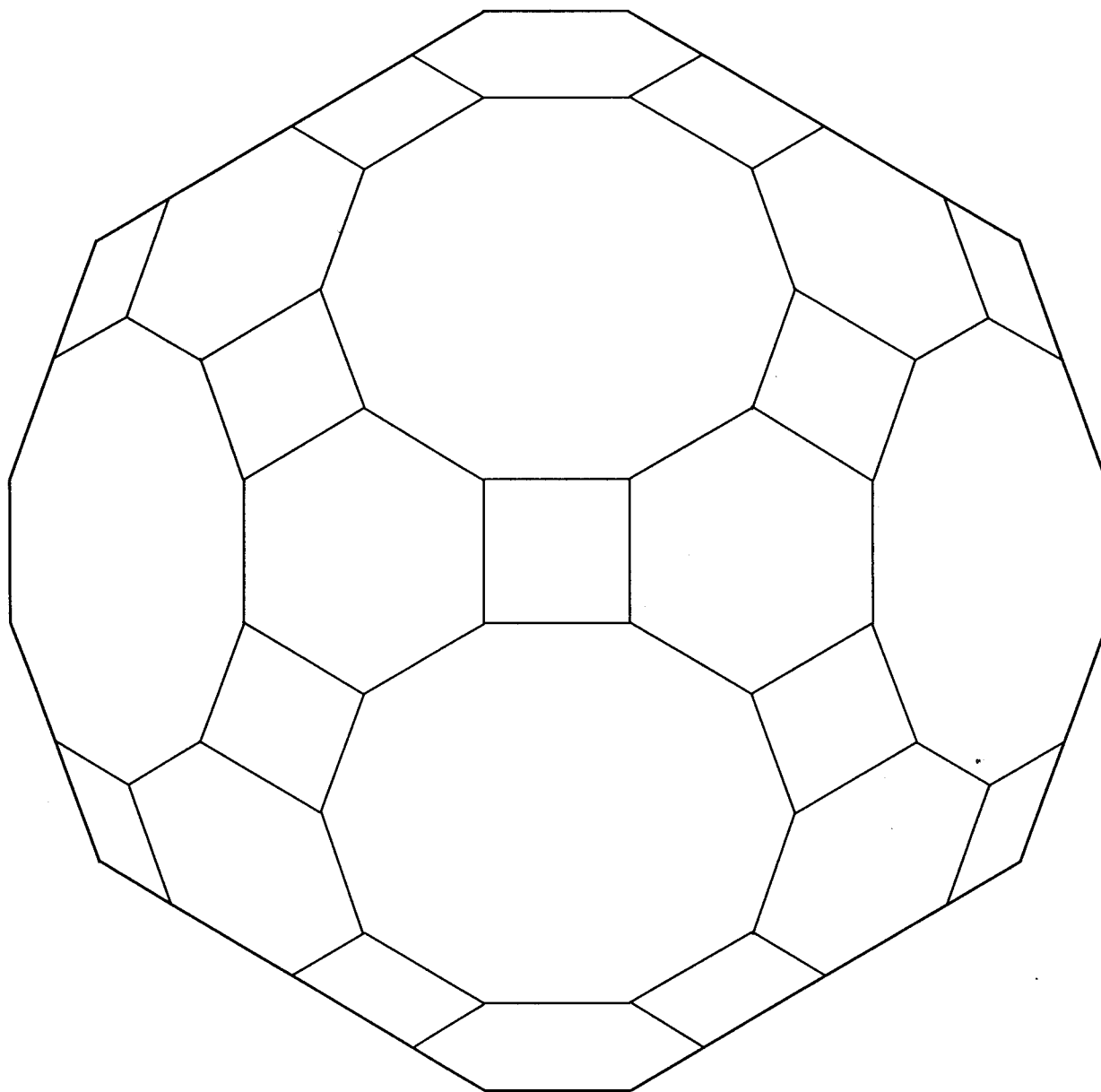
Variant Chess

THE MAGAZINE TO BROADEN YOUR CHESS HORIZONS

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Chess on a football?

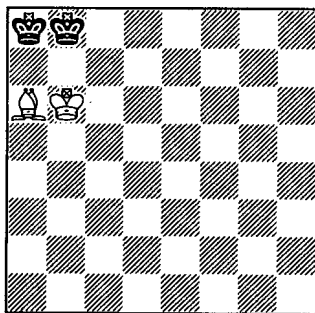
Bishop endings in Kriegspiel

Ambiguous Chess

BISHOP ENDINGS IN KRIEGSPIEL

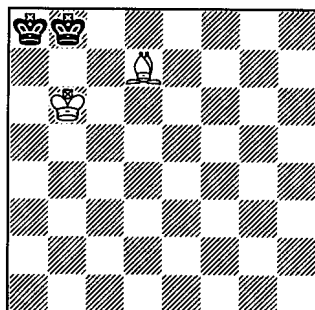
I had not intended to return to the Kriegspiel ending **king, bishop, and knight against king** (see "In the Library" in VC 48), but Ishak and his 1926 Los Angeles team seem never to have published their full analysis, and some writers have questioned whether they genuinely found a complete solution. I think they did, and I hope that what follows will convince.

Let's start at the end, with **A** :



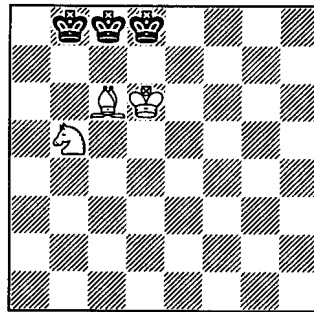
This is a simple win for White wherever his knight may be, but he must locate the Black king exactly in order to ensure that his penultimate move gives check and not stalemate. So try Kc7, and if No we know Black's king is on b8. If Yes, Black must reply ...Ka7, White continues Bc8, Black's ...Ka8 gives a reflection of the opening position, and this time we know Black is on a8.

Almost as easy is **B** :



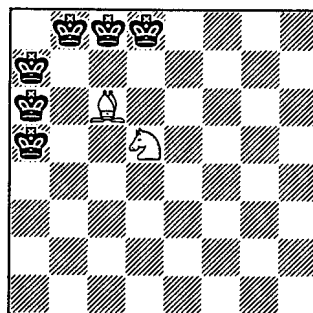
Try Kc7, and if Yes continue with Bc8 giving **A** (we ignore reflection). If No, Black must be on b8, so we tempo with the knight and follow with Bc8 and Ba6, again reaching **A**.

Another useful win is given by **C**, which we had last time :



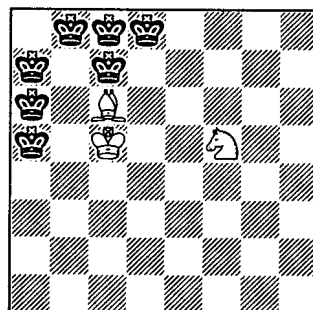
This is a reflection of the position in last time's final diagram, after White's move Ke6 and Black's reply, and the winning method was given then.

More difficult is **D** :



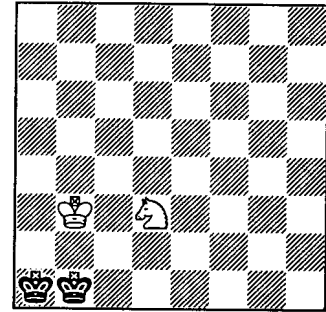
The White king may be anywhere. This is a routine win in ordinary chess, but in Kriegspiel it is not so easy. A solution appears on page 79, but simpler and more elegant answers will be welcome.

Having solved **D**, we can attack **E**, where the king controls b4 and the knight looks after e7 :

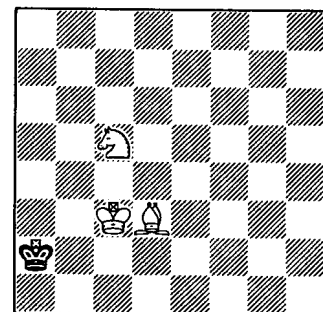


Try Kb6. If No then Black is not on d8, and Ne7 followed by Nd5 gives **D**. If Yes then he is on b8/c8/d8, and we can continue Kc5, Kd6, Ne7, and Nd5, shutting the door on b4 just before Black can get there.

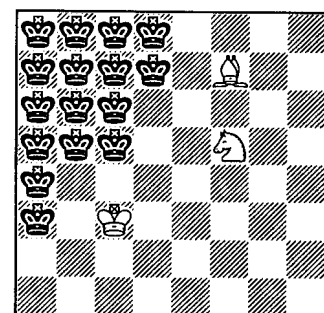
This has given us some target winning positions. Now let us look at getting him out of the "wrong" corner. Suppose we have reached **F** :



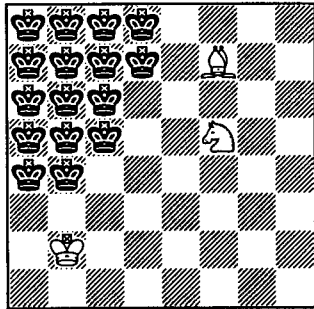
The White bishop may be anywhere, but this doesn't matter because the first step is to play it to the diagonal e4-h7 (so that it will guard b1 after the knight has moved). Now try Kc2, and if No then tempo with the bishop and try again. Black necessarily replies ...Ka2. Now play Nc5 (guarding a4), Kc3 (guarding b4 and leaving the bishop to hold b1), tempo, Bd3 (guarding b5 for later on), and after Black's ...Ka2 we have **G** :



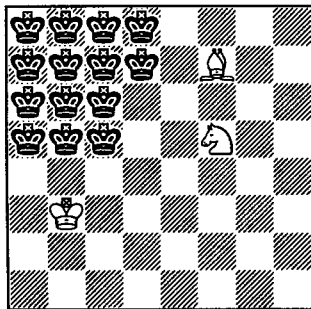
Now comes Nb3 (guarding a1), Nc1 (guarding a2), Bc4 (taking over the guard of a2 and also delaying Black's flight eastward by holding b5), Ne2, Ng3, Nf5 (guarding d6 just in time), Bf7 (ditto e8), and we have **H** :



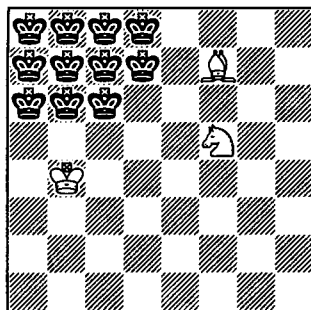
The next task is to push the White king up the b-file. The first step is easy: try Kb2, and if No then tempo with Kc2 and then try again. Black can of course reply ...Kb4, which gives us **I** :



Try Kb3, and if Yes we have made progress. If No, play Bb3, and if no check is announced he must be on b4 and his necessary retreat will allow Ka3, Bf7, and Kb3. If Bb3 is check, try Ka3, and if Yes follow up with Bf7 and Kb3; if No (Black on b4) then tempo with Be6 and try Kb3 again; if again No (Black now on a4) tempo with Bf7 and try once more; if still No, Black must be back on b4, and Bb3 won't be check and will force him to retreat. Eventually, therefore, we can achieve Kb3, giving J :

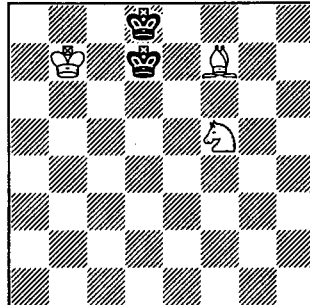


Do much the same, repeatedly probing with Kb4, using Bc4 to control b5, and triangulating with the bishop if necessary, and we arrive at K :

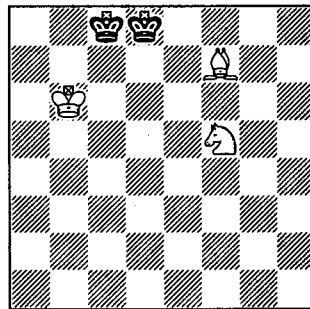


White's next few steps are a little easier. Try Kb5, and if No play Kc4 to take over the guard of d5. Now try Kb5 again, and if still No Black must be on a5/a6/b6/c6; play Be8, follow up with Kc5 (tempoing with Kb4 if

No first time) and Bc6, and we have E. So if Black is not to let White reach E, he must allow Kb5. Similar arguments force him to allow Kb6 and Kb7, which brings us to L :



Now try Kc6. If Yes, Black must reply ...Kc8, and White will play Ne7 and Nd5 and (with care) soon reach D. If No (Black on d7), substitute Kb6, and after Black's reply we have M :



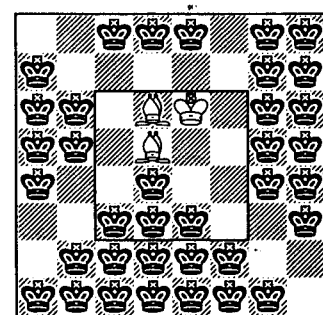
For a long time, I could now find nothing better than choosing at random between Kb7 (which works if Black is on c8) and Kc6 followed by Kb7 (which works if he is on d8), returning to M as long as the umpire says Yes to Kb7 and substituting Kc6 with a win as soon as he says No. However, the 1926 Los Angeles team claimed to have found a win within a fixed number of moves, which this is not, and at last the penny dropped: from M, play Kc6, then withdraw the bishop by Bg6 or Bh5, and only now try Kb7. If No, Black must be on a7/a8/b8/c8, and White can substitute Ne7 and soon reach D; if Yes, Black must be on d8, and after his forced ...Kd7 White can return with Bf7 and force him back to d8. Now we have L but with Black known to be on d8, and Kc6 gets a Yes and wins.

This has outlined a proof of the win from F, and the wins from other "wrong corner" positions can be

proved similarly. It remains to show that White can always force Black back to the edge and then to a corner, but it seems to me that the analysis so far establishes the key points and that completing a proof in full detail would be merely a matter of routine. I have assessed this routine work as "tedious and time-consuming" and I have no present intention of doing it, but I am satisfied that the Los Angeles team of 1926 were correct in their claim.

We now come to the ending **king and two bishops against king**. Every writer from 1914 onwards seems to have described this as a relatively easy win, and I have had no hesitation in accepting this conclusion. The bishops can set up an impassable barrier against the enemy king and can place themselves so that he can never attack them; surely a win can be based on this? But Fred Galvin has drawn my attention to a demonstration by Thomas Ferguson that there are simple and natural positions from which a win cannot be guaranteed within a finite number of moves.

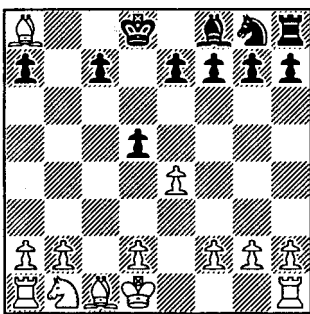
Ferguson points out that if all three White men are within the central 16 squares and the position of the Black king is unknown, White can never safely move a man out of this central 16-square region. A typical position is shown below :



If White tries say Kd7 and Black is on d4, he loses his bishop; if he tries Be7 and Black is on e8, he gives stalemate. White can probe repeatedly with Ke5, substituting Be7 as soon as he hears No and eventually plucking up his courage and playing Ke6 and Kd7 if he always gets Yes, and by this means he can make the probability of failure as small as he likes; but there seems to be no way to eliminate it entirely.

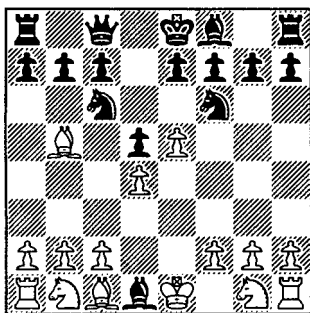
PROGRESSIVE CHESS

Opening play in Progressive Chess has tended to become even more stereotyped than in ordinary chess, but Noam Elkies appears to be willing to experiment, and against Norbert Geissler in the 1996 First Internet World Championship he tried 1 Nf3. Black naïvely replied 2 Nc6? d5, and after 3 Nd4 Nxc6 Nxd8 it became clear that his move Nc6 had merely thrown away a knight and a tempo. Play continued 4 Kxd8 Bf5 Bxc2 Bxd1 and there was no mate, but 5 Kxd1 e4 Ba6 Bxb7 Bxa8 left White well ahead :

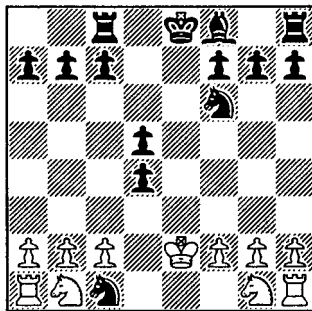


Black tried 6 d4 d3 a5 e5 Bd6 Ne7, when there appears to be no mate, but 7 a4 Bc6 Ra3 Rxd3 Rh3 Rxh7 Rxh8+ left him hopelessly behind on material and he resigned. Conclusion: while 1 Nf3 may or may not be good, Nc6 as part of Black's reply certainly isn't.

Noam also experimented as Black against Hugh Brodie, meeting 1 d4 2 d5 Nf6 3 e4 e5 Bb5+ with 4 Nc6 Bg4 Bxd1 Qc8 :

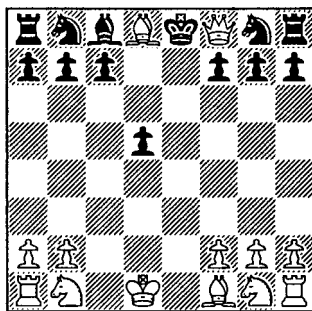


To capture the queen is obvious but takes three moves, and after 5 Ba6 Bxb7 Bxc8 Kxd1 Ke2 6 Rxc8 Nxe5 Nd3 e5 exd4 Nxc1+ Noam assesses Black's position as apparently strong :



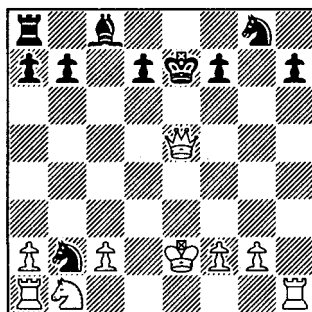
White actually blundered and lost at once, but can any reader find a good continuation for him?

Another line which turned out unexpectedly badly was played by Hugh Brodie against Scott Gordon. After 1 e4 2 e5 d5 3 d4 Bg5 Bxd8 the sequence 4 exd4 d3 dxc2 cxd1Q+ seems reasonable enough, but White answered 5 Kxd1 e5 e6 e7 exf8Q+ :



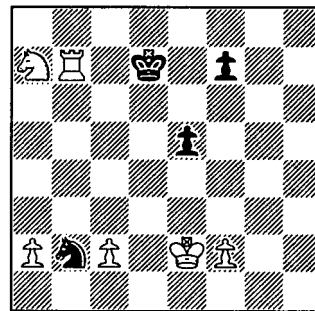
Taking the queen and bishop will now occupy three moves, leaving only three for doing something positive. Black's actual reply lost at once; can any reader find a saving line?

Norbert Geissler's game against Fred Galvin started 1 d4 2 e5 cxd4 3 e4 e5 Bd3 4 e6 Qg5 Qxc1 Qxd1+ 5 Kxd1 Nf3 Nxd4 Nxe6 Nxf8 6 Kxf8 Ke7 Nc6 Nxe5 Nxd3 Nxb2+ 7 Kd2 h4 h5 h6 hxg7 gxh8Q Qe5+ :



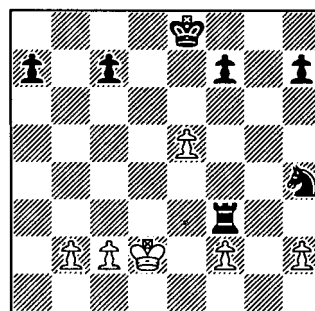
Getting out of check and taking the queen will cost Black three tempi, but 8 Kd8 d6 dxe5 Bh3 Bxg2 Bxh1 Kd7

Rb8 prevented White from promoting and set up many threats. Play continued 9 Nc3 Nb5 Nxa7 Rxh1 Rxh7 Rh8 Rxc8 Rxb8 Rxb7+ :

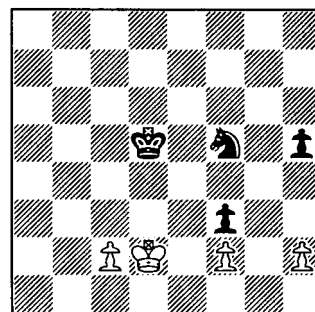


Fred's actual 10 Kd6, Nxf2, Nxb7, Nxa7, Kd5 won comfortably enough, but his son David found something crisper. Answer on page 79.

Fred's win against Juha Kivijarvi came down to what Bill Taylor' called "a fascinating slo-mo ending" in his report. 1 d4 2 d5 e5 3 Bg5 Bxd8 Bh4 4 g5 gxh4 Nc6 Bb4+ 5 Qd2 Qxb4 dxe5 Qxh4 Kd2 6 Nh6 Nf5 Nxh4 Bh3 Bxg2 Bxh1 7 e4 exd5 dxc6 cxb7 bxa8B Bxh1 Na3 8 Rg8 Rg1 Rxh1 Rxf1 Rxa1 Rxa2 Rxa3 Rf3 :



Now came 9 b4 b5 b6 bxc7 c8N Nxa7 Nc6 Nd4 Nxf3 10 f6 fxe5 e4 exf3 Kd7 Kd6 Kd5 Nf5 h5 h4 :

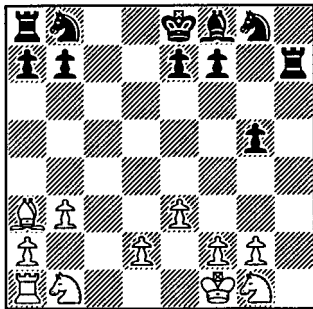


White might have resigned here (Kxf5 will take ten moves, leaving only one more), and he duly did so next turn.

LOSING CHESS

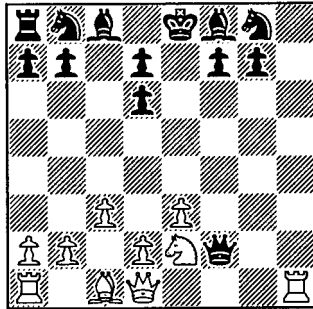
A popular modern defence to the standard opening 1 e3 is 1...c5 seeking to gain space, and several of the games in the 2001 "First Unofficial Losing Chess World Championship" featured it. We looked at one in VC 46; here are some more. As usual, I am relying on Stan Goldovski's invaluable program *Giveaway Wizard* for the analysis.

One of the games was Tim Rimmel's win in Round 5. The opening exchanges 1 e3 c5 2 Bd3 c4 3 Bxc4 d5 4 Bxd5 Qxd5 5 Qh5 Qxh5 6 b3 Qxh2 7 Rxh2 Be6 8 Rxh7 Rxh7 9 Kf1 Bxb3 10 cxb3 g5 appear to have given no particular advantage to either side and can be regarded as playable pending deeper analysis, but now White blundered by 11 Ba3? :

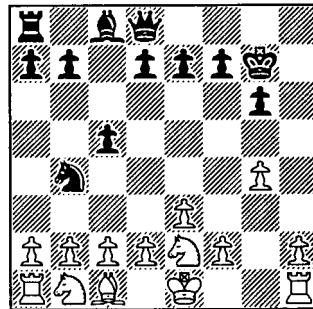


No doubt he thought he was getting rid of his bishop, but... Answer on page 79.

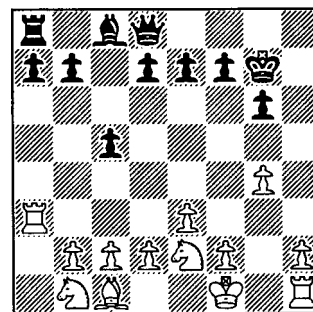
Lenny Taelman won with White in Round 6. 1 e3 c5 2 Bd3 c4 3 Bxh7 Rxh7 4 Na3 Rxh2 5 Nxc4 Rxg2 (5...Rxh1 loses to 6 d4 Rxg1 7 Qf3 with Qxb7 to follow, Black soon getting a rampant bishop) 6 Nd6 exd6 (other moves lose off-hand) 7 Ne2 Rxf2 8 Kxf2 Qf6 (players of my generation would automatically have played 8...Qh4 to get rid of the queen, but modern players realise that a superiority of material is normally an advantage and they do not get rid of it unless they must) 9 c3 Qxf2? (but this loses and only 9...Qxc3 was perhaps playable, so maybe the instincts of my generation had some merit after all). The position now reached appears at the top of the next column, and the game continuation can be found on page 79.



Two variations in Johan Snuverink's Round 6 game showed how sensitive Losing Chess can be to a minor change in the position. 1 e3 c5 2 Bd3 Nf6 3 Bxh7 Nxh7 (3...Rxh7 4 Qh5 is a forced win) 4 Qh5 Rg8 5 Qxh7 g6 6 Qxg8 Na6 7 Qxf8 Kxf8 8 g4 Kg7 9 Ne2 Nb4 :

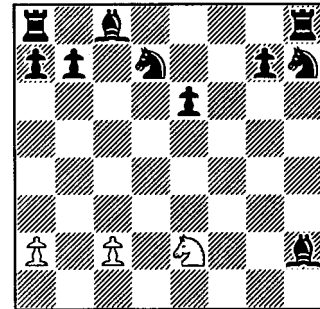


White saw that 10...Nxa2 would win for Black (simplest after 11 Rxa2 is 11...Qa5 12 Rxa5 d5 13 Rxa7 Bxg4 and White's rook will soon be left rampant), and play continued 10 a3 Nxc2 11 Kf1 Nxa3 12 Rxa3? :

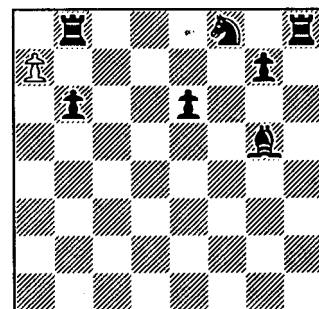


White presumably reckoned that the above line no longer worked, and indeed it doesn't (after 12...Qa5 13 Rxa5 d5 14 Rxa7 Bxg4 15 Rxb7 Bxe2 the Black bishop now attacks the White king, and White can play 16 Rxe7 Bxf1 17 Rxf7 getting rid of his rook). However, Black had a second option, and this does still work; answer on page 79.

Johan's Round 7 game provided an instructive example of what can happen when a player miscalculates or misplays a forced win. White should have won, but he let Black off the hook, and after Black's 17th move the players had reached this position :



Black now threatens 18...Bf4 followed by a complete giveaway to the knight (see page 79 for a line which works after any White pawn move), so the knight must move away. White can of course get rid of it, but this reduces him to two very backward pawns and Black will be able to organize a suitable reception for their eventual promotion. If for example 18 Nf4 then 18...Bxf4 19 a4/c4 (waiting gains nothing) b5 20 axb5/cxb5 Ba6 21 bxa6 Nf8 22 c4/a4 Rb8 23 c5/a5 Nb6 23 cxb6/axb6 axb6 24 a7 Bg5 and Black can meet any promotion (main lines on page 79) :



18 Ng3/Ng1 can be met similarly, 18 Nc3 b5 19 Nxb5 Rb8 20 Nxa7 Nb6 21 Nxc8 Nxc8 turns out to be no better, and 18 Nd4 attacks e6 and loses at once. This leaves only 18 Nc1, after which White is wholly passive and Black will be able to advance and arrange a multiple giveaway. There is no forced win within my computer's horizon, but I am sure the experts would adjudge White's game to be lost.

MODERN COURIER CHESS

by Paul Byway

A game from our latest postal tournament. Fers (inverted bishop on diagrams) moves one square diagonally; courier (inverted knight) jumps two squares laterally, vertically, or horizontally. Board 12 x 8; back rank RNCBFQKFBCNR; king or fers can make a double move at its first turn, but not to capture nor out of or through check. White was Robert Reynolds, Black John Beasley.

1 f2-f4 h7-h5

2 Nb1-c3

More forceful is 2 e4 Bxe4 3 Bxh5 i6 4 Qe2 Bxc2 5 Bxi6+jxi6 6 d3 Bxd3 7 Qxd3.

2 - f7-f6

3 e2-e4 i7-i6

4 Fe1-e3 e7-e6

5 d2-d4

This is a little loose for my taste; I would prefer to spend the tempo on development.

5 - g7-g5!

Now 6 f5 is desirable but thanks to 5 d4 it fails after 6...d5!

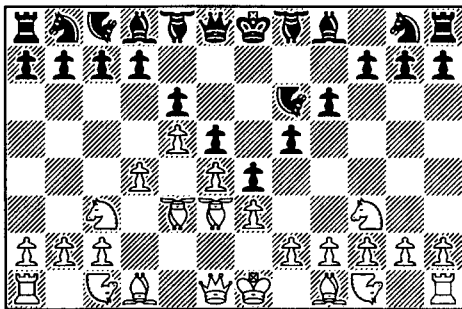
6 g2-g3 g5-g4

7 Nk1-j3 f6-f5

This looks strong. In MCC a pawn on the 5th is better than in chess because it cramps the opponent's courier and fers.

8 e4-e5 Cj8-h6

9 Fh1-f3



Bravo! this sort of move is possible - and also necessary because of the strong Black centre.

9 - Nk8-j6

Quite right. Taking the fers would increase White's activity markedly for a minimal gain.

10 d4-d5 e6xd5

11 Nc3xd5 Qf8-c5

...Fe6 at once is better.

12 c2-c4 Fe8-e6

13 Nd5-c3 Cc8-c6

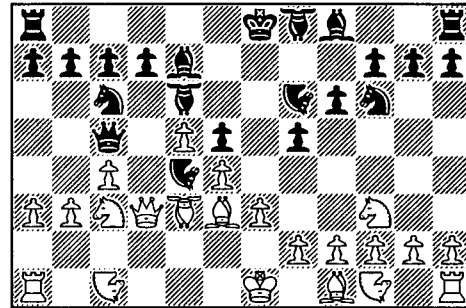
14 b2-b3 g4xf3

15 Bd1xf3 Cc6-e4

In the current crop of games there are several examples of a courier outpost; this is the first. I suspect that giving C+P for N is (marginally) a bad bargain, all else being equal.

16 Qf1-d3 Nb8-c6

17 a2-a3 Bd8-e7?



Cutting off the queen's retreat cannot be right. ...Cg4 would be better.

18 Nc3xe4

18 Na4 Qa5 19 Cc3 Qa6 would be interesting.

18 - f5xe4

19 Bf3xe4 Bi8xe4

20 Qd3xe4 Fh8-g7

A cool customer! Black's attention to development is admirable. I would like to have seen 21 Ni5.

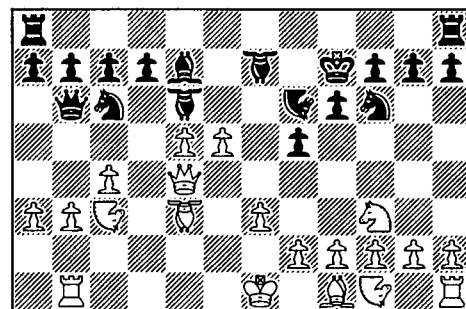
21 Cc1-c3 Qc5-b6

22 Ra1-b1

Why not 22 b4. Did White fear to give up two pawns for a knight perhaps?

22 - Kg8-i7

23 f4-f5?



White lost the game here. Black has completed his development and now only wants employment for his rooks - and here it is! Why does White open a file against his own king with half his forces undeveloped?

23 - Fe6xf5

24 Qe4xf5 Be7xa3

This is justified by Black's overwhelming advantage in active pieces.

25 Cc3xa3 Qb6xe3+

26 Qf5-f2 Qe3-d3

27 Rb1-e1 Qd3xb3

28 Ca3-c5 Qb3xc4

29 Cj1-h1

Ch3 is more forward looking - and leaves a square for the king.

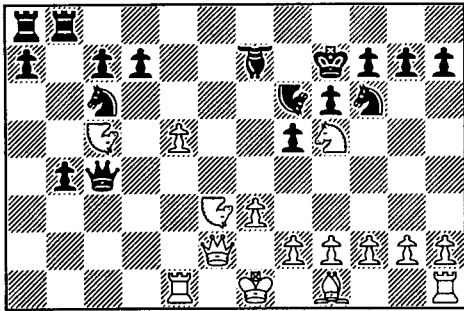
29 - b7-b5

30 Ch1-f3 b5-b4

31 Nj3-i5 Rl8-b8

Ouch! White must try to sacrifice both couriers for the pawns. He could start with Cxc7, and then Cxa7(5) unless Black plays ...a6.

IN THE LIBRARY



32 **Ni5-g6+** **Ki7-j8**
 33 **j2-j3**

This is all going to be far too slow.

33 - **a7-a5**

Ideally this pawn should be taken so that the other courier can still stop the b-pawn.

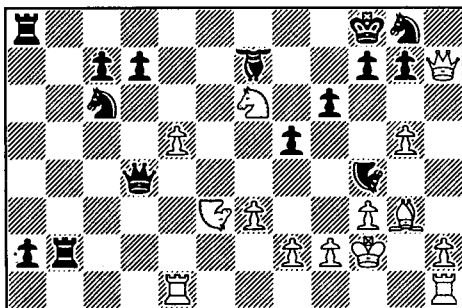
34 **k2-k4** **a5-a4**
 35 **Bi1-k3** **a4-a3**
 36 **Cc5xa3** **b4xa3**

The other courier is useless against the a-pawn.

37 **Kg1-i1** **a3-a2**
 38 **Ki1-j2** **Qc4-d4**

The end!

39 **Qf2-f1** **Rb8-b2**
 40 **k4-k5** **Nj6-k8**
 41 **Qf1x17** **Ch6-j4+**



42 **Kj2-k2** **Rb2xh2**

As so often happens, such overpowering force starts nibbling across to the other side of the board.

43 **Rl1-i1** **a2-a1=Q**
 44 **Resigns**

Key points: central pawn wedge; courier outpost; rash queen sortie; development; suicidal opening of the position.

Note added by JDB. I normally encourage contributors to feature my losses rather than my wins, but this game had several points of interest. Black's attack from move 29 might have been more incisive, and I seriously considered 30...Rlf8 and if 30...Qe3 unpinning then 31...Rxf3 32 Qxf3 Qxc5+ wiping out both White's couriers. Can Black now clinch the game on the Q side before White can bring his extra rook into play? And I completely overlooked 40 k5 and 41 Qxl7, and was very lucky that the blocking move 41...Cj4+ was available. Had White been able to play Bi5, his counterattack would have become very strong.

Chess in Three Dimensions (photocopy of page 24 of *Picture Post*, 9 February 1946)

Picture Post was an English illustrated weekly of the 1940s and 1950s, and this appears to have been one of several contemporary articles which publicized Charles Beatty's "Total Chess". This game is played on a stack of four boards, the lowest being an ordinary chessboard and the remainder being made of glass or some other transparent material. Moves are of three kinds: (a) ordinary moves on a board, (b) up-or-down moves to the corresponding square on another board, and (c) "total" moves, being an ordinary move followed by an up-or-down move. In addition, the pawns cast up-and-down shadows, and no man other than a knight can move through such a shadow. For greater detail, see pages 318-9 of *The Encyclopedia of Chess Variants*.

Creating a good three-dimensional chess is not easy; for example, if the rooks just have their normal straight-line moves, far too many are needed to mate a lone king. Beatty's rules increase the power of the pieces without making them excessively strong, and the game strikes me as thoughtfully and intelligently designed. Yet it did not catch on, and I suspect that it failed for practical reasons. The stack of boards is somewhat cumbersome (there is a need for the players to get their hands between the boards, and if the vertical separation is large the squares must be reasonably large to conform), and if I had been playing I would have wanted to keep getting up and looking at the stack from above to get a better feel for the position.

But of course the article didn't talk about chess other than in general terms, and it was the incidental background material that I found of greatest interest. The main picture shows Beatty and his wife perched over a board, and the furniture and fittings of the room are in a variety of styles which will delight historians of interior design. The caption under the picture reports that he had been invalidated out of the Royal Welch Fusiliers in 1940, and that he had been farmer, big-game hunter, radio announcer, and in the port wine trade. He appears as a handsome and well-groomed man in his forties or late thirties, apparently wearing dinner jacket and black tie even in the privacy of his own home, and I was delighted to be able to show Sue that someone else's husband rucks up the rug when he pulls up his chair.

Beatty also applied the same principle to draughts, producing a "Double Draughts" on two levels, and a subsidiary picture shows this game being played in the local pub near his home. Would board games of pure skill be played in local pubs today? Well, yes, because Circular Chess is regularly played in the Tap and Spile in Lincoln, but this was still a glimpse of a past age. Men only, mostly with cloth caps and of mature years, dark beer in proper glasses with handles, no gaming machine, no telly...

Three-dimensional chess has long fascinated mainstream popular journalists, but no version has really taken off. Beatty's version strikes me as better thought out than most, even if its fate was to be no better than that of the others.

AMBIGUOUS CHESS

by Fabrice Liardet

Ambiguous Chess is a very simple chess variant that I invented in January 2005. Its rules are as follows.

- Instead of making a move on the board, the player points at the square he intends to move to; of course, he must have at least one man able to reach this square. The opponent then chooses which of the possible men will indeed move to the square. If only one man can move to the square pointed at, the move can be played at once.
- Winning is by capturing the opponent's king. A move leaving the king open to capture is legal, and if such an option is available to his opponent a player may choose it (and instantly win the game).
- Castling is forbidden. The promotion piece is chosen by the promoter's opponent.

Simple ideas don't always arise in a simple way. Ambiguous Chess derives from a variant I invented as Unambiguous Chess, a notation-independent form of the existing Unambiguous Three-symbol Chess. In the latter game, the only possible moves are those which can be written using only three symbols in the English notation. In Unambiguous Chess, the move must be deducible from the arrival square only. It is allowed to play a man to a square only when no other of the player's men can reach this square.

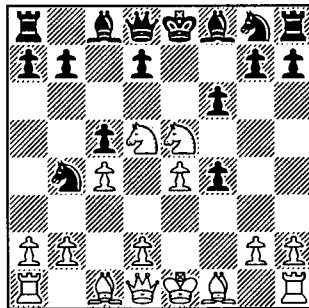
Unambiguous Chess cannot be played as I had intended, with the rules of disregarding checks and winning by king capture, because White would then have a forced win (answer on page 79). The game can be rescued by stating that moves leaving the king in check don't count as "possible moves", but even in this form it seems to be a cramped game to play, with few legal moves available. It is certainly of more interest for problem composition (with the original rule of disregarding checks) than for play.

The idea of switching to Ambiguous Chess came from the

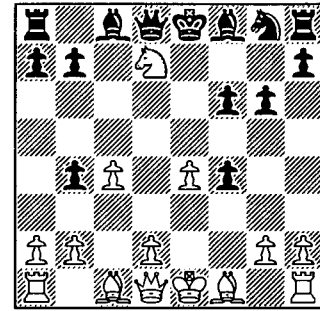
board game of Quarto, although the idea is in fact more closely related to Compromise Chess, a form of Refusal Chess where two moves have to be submitted at each turn, and the opponent chooses between these two.

There follows a short but lively sample game, showing some of the typical tactics - and blunders - of the game.

Fabrice Liardet - Jochem Snuverink (casual game, Geneva, 2005). **1 f4 c5 2 Nf3 f6 3 e4 e5 4 Nc3 Nc6 5 Nd5 Nb4!** Exchanging White's powerful central knight. **6 e4** Avoiding **6...e4** and preparing an unexpected assault. **6...exf4 7 Ne5!?** Black forces this sacrifice; he could also have chosen to pull the e-pawn to the same square, but that would have left him with a cramped position.



After the text move, White is threatening **8 Nf7! Kxf7** (the queen cannot escape to a5 because his a7 pawn would be moved there instead) **9 Qh5+ Ke6** (...g6 would be replaced by ...Kg6 leaving the king still vulnerable!) **10 Nxf4** which is already mate: the black king cannot escape to e7 or d6, for instance, because one of his other men can be made to go there instead. **7...g6!** The knight cannot be taken because of **7...fxe5 8 Qh5+ g6 9 Qxe5+** with a crushing attack. At this point it was completely unclear to both players whether the advanced white knight was menacing or would merely be soon lost. **8 Nxb4 cxb4 9 Nxd7!** seemed at first glance to clarify matters in favour of White, because of **9...Kxd7?** (don't forget that White, not Black, is choosing which black piece recaptures) **10 c5!** with the two threats of **11 Bb5+ Ke6 12 Bc4+** and mate soon, and **11 c6+ Kxc6** (or **11...Ke6** as above) **12 Qc2#**.



Black doesn't have any major threats to cope with, but neither does he have many useful moves. The toughest defence is probably **9...Kf7! 10 Nxf6!?** (another desperado move, giving White a strong attack after **10...Kxf6 11 e5+**) **10...Qd4!?** with a complicated position. **9...f5?!** An even cleverer move, intending to play on f2 the trick that White had tried on f7 before. The idea is **10...f3** followed by **11...f2+ 12 Kxf2 Qh4#**, while **11 gxf3** would allow the same mate; but White can still get the upper hand with the prosaic **10 exf5**, when Black's counterplay to the threat of **Qc2-e4** is just too late: **10...f3 11 g3! f2+ 12 Kxf2 Bc5+ 13 d4! 10 Nc5??** A classical Ambiguous Chess mistake. I of course intended to push my pawn on c5 with strong threats, and completely overlooked that my advanced knight could retreat to this square. Now White's initiative backfires instantly. **10...Bxc5?!** Even stronger is **10...f3!** when White can do nothing against the double mating threat of **11...f2+ 12 Kxf2 Qd4#** or **Qh4#**. **11 Qf3?!** White could survive with **11 d4 Qxd4 12 Qxd4 Bxd4**, but would remain one piece down in a hopeless position. **11...Bf2+** Haven't we seen this trick before? **12 Kxf2 Qh4#**.

As far as the few games played (only a dozen) can tell, Ambiguous Chess has been very well received, with players seeming to enjoy the unusual patterns of the game. The French variant enthusiast Lionel Belin has even started to write a computer program for it.

For my part, I may within the next few months offer a bilingual interface on my web site <www.pion.ch>, allowing the playing of Ambiguous Chess and my other pet variants.

FALCONRY

by David Pritchard

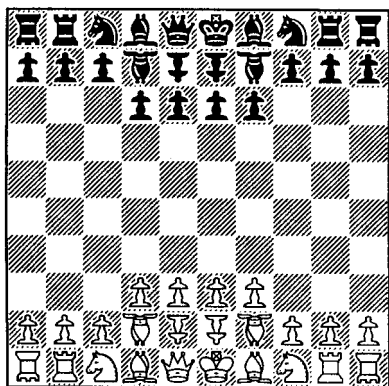
This variant was invented in the early 1980s. It is played on a 10 x 10 board with 24 men a side: The extra pieces on each side are two Dolphins, Falcons and Princes plus two additional pawns.

Dolphin: Moves like a rook but up to three squares only. It may leap intervening men.

Falcon: Moves up to three squares as a bishop or as a camel (3-1 leaper), hence is confined to the squares of one colour.

Prince: Moves one square ahead either straight or diagonally (two-square option initially; *e.p.* permitted). The Prince captures like an orthodox pawn, and may promote to any piece.

The new men are distinctly coloured, blue on the White side, red on the Black. This is to assist recognition, and, more obscurely, because together with white they are the colours of the Three Muses and also the national flag. The other men behave normally but I could find no mention of castling which however would appear to be orthodox. Here is the starting position (white square left corner):



Notice that none of the new pieces challenges the power of the queen. (A fault of several large variants is that they are overloaded with ultra-strong men.) It is evident that on this board the powers of the line pieces (Q,R,B) are increased and those of the N and P are diminished. Fool's mate is just two moves: 1 Fe5 f7 2 Fg7.

Considerable thought has gone into the game and on the whole this is well argued. A little fantasy appears also to have crept into the decision-taking. The Dolphin is described as a symbol of virtue and intelligence and we are reminded that the dolphin was a favourite of Athena, Goddess of Wisdom. The Princes, as children of the monarchs, rightly stand directly in front of them, whilst the Falcon is seen to have many virtues. Sokol, the Russian word for falcon, is described as 'the most beautiful word in the Russian language' which is perhaps debatable.

Falconry appears to have quite a pedigree. In 1982 it was demonstrated to the Tchigorin club in Leningrad by Boris Troschichev, Vasily Varkentin, Yuri Ribakov and Oleg

Skaletsky, apparently the co-inventors. Russian design patents 42591 (1995) and 54537 (2004) were approved for the game. Tournaments have been running for the past 15 years and in 2002 the Falconry Chess Club was founded in St. Petersburg. In 2004 the authors were honoured with laureates by the Russian and European Academies of Natural Sciences and were awarded the Pyotr L. Kapitsa and Albert Schweitzer medals. I have copies of the diplomas specifically naming Yuri Ribakov.

All the communications I have seen are headed The Fund for Support of a 100-square Chess-Board Game but I have no other reference to this Fund or its accounts. Most strangely of all, it is alleged that in 1987-1990 thousands of sets were manufactured and exported to the U.K., Netherlands and other countries. Specifically, Ribakov, in reply to my query, states that one thousand sets were sent to the U.K. in 1988 but he does not remember to whom they were sent. Since the value of these must have been approaching £10,000, I find this a little perplexing. Neither I, nor any of my correspondents in Europe, appear to have heard of, or come across a set. Has anybody got one?

TWO CURIOSITIES

by David Pritchard

Hexagonal Chess. This rather curious variant, adapted for two or three players, is the invention of Valery Trubitsyn who argues that there are flaws in both Shafran's game (*ECV* p.141) and Glinski's. Both Trubitsyn's games use the Glinski board of 91 hexes (six cells a side). In the two-player version the two sides are composed of 21 men arranged in an asymmetrical array: 1 x K,Q; 2 x R; 3 x B,N; 11 x P. The moves of the pieces appear to correspond to those of Glinski but the pawns do not all have the same distance to travel to promotion. The three-player version is more bizarre with 20 men a side thus occupying two thirds of the board in the initial array. (Compare the proprietary three-player game Hexchess which has only 16 men a side on a 127-cell board.) The pieces are: 1 x K,Q; 3 x B,N; 4 x R; 8 x P. Three of the rooks are on the queen's side in the starting position, one on the king's side.

A Chinese Puzzle. Chap jee kee is a well-known Chinese gambling game in which punters have to forecast through the medium of playing cards a combination of two numbers out of twelve. Commonly 10 of the 12 cards (nos. 2-11) are from the piah suit whilst the remaining two are from the bun and sok suits. Needless to say, the house has a decided advantage. The game is said to have been a major factor in the downfall of the babas and more particularly the nonyas (Straits Chinese). All common knowledge. However, I find this in *Forgotten Armies* by Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper: 'Chap je (sic) kee ... Chinese literary riddle-puzzles based on twelve pieces used in Chinese chess ...' A new one on me. Presumably (I am guessing) the twelve are one each of the red and black pieces (excluding pawns)? Any ideas?

PROOF GAMES

by Peter Fayers

I am afraid that I will soon have to curtail these forays into the world of Proof Games, cutting back from a full page (and perhaps skipping the odd issue) - this for the simple reason that I have run out of suitable material. True, I have over 240 Variant PG problems on my database, and so far have only used a fraction of these, but the rest would be inappropriate for this column. They are either long-range heavyweights, or in unplayable variants (invented by problemists for problemists). Or both.

I had hoped that our composing competition would provide some interesting material to present here, but at the time of writing I have not yet received a single entry. There's another four weeks to go, though, so I live in hope. My recourse has been to scan through *ECV* and old magazines, searching for inspiration.

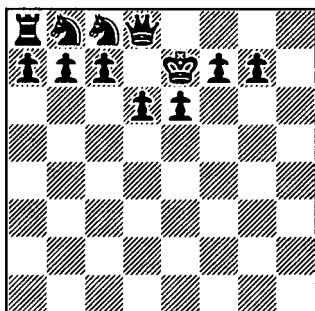
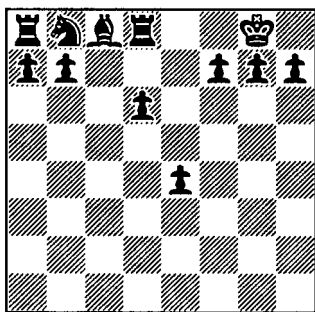
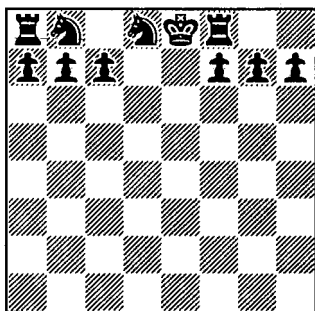
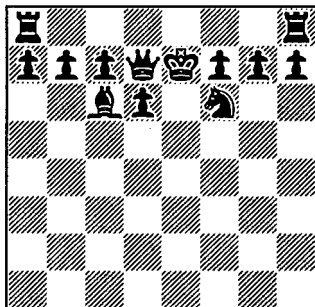
The article on Kriegspiel last time gave me an idea - the game involves not knowing what the other side is doing, and trying to work out his moves from the information available. Can we put this in the past tense and apply the same principles to proof games? I rapidly came to the conclusion that any such problem, to be sound, would have to be about 6 moves long and involve lots of captures; only by having units captured can we hope to identify the other side's moves.

I came up with this set of four problems, which I hope you enjoy. They are not at all difficult - just ask yourself "what could have captured xxx?", and "did it move first, or was it captured on its home square?". You'll soon get the hang of it.

I originally submitted these as Kriegspiel proof games, but our editor objected - the essence of the variant as played over-the-board is to use the information made available by having moves disallowed, a feature entirely missing from these problems. So instead I have dubbed them "Editor's Nightmare" games, a hark-back to the pre-computer days when

we used Letraset for the diagrams. Remember how we always seemed to run out of the White pieces first?

18 - 21 - PF Original



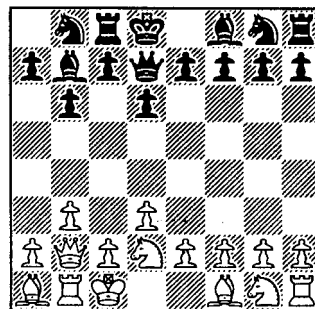
All after Black's sixth. Game scores? Editor's Nightmare Chess

Not all such ideas lead anywhere. Browsing through an old problem magazine I came across *Kazan Chess* (not in the *ECV*). In this, whenever a unit moves, if a friendly unit can move to the square it has vacated, it does so.

If another unit can move to the square that one leaves, it also does so, causing a chain reaction. Any unit only moves once during a player's turn. If more than one unit can move to a vacated square, the weakest does so, in the sequence P<N<B<R<Q<K. If equal-value units can move, the player may choose.

This appealed to me: lots of things happening on a single turn gives scope for some fancy effects - see previous problems in *Avalanche* and *Dynamo*. So I sat down at the chessboard, and started experimenting.

I got precisely nowhere. The sheer complexity of the chain reaction would lead to problems that were unsolvable. (Even if I could get one sound, which is doubtful.) I'll show an example. The diagram is the position after the game 1 b3 d6 2 d3 b6. Black has made the same two moves as White, but the other way round. Compare the resulting arrangement of the Queenside units in the two cases. And this is after just two moves each, with no interaction between the sides.



After 1 b3 d6 2.d3 b6, *Kazan Chess*

So, not every idea comes to fruition. *Kazan chess*, I fear, must stay in the realm of the "mate in two moves" problem, or a fun end-of-the-evening game (with the same health warning as *Magnetic Chess* - "Not to be played when sober").

Sample opening: 1 b3 (Bb2, Qc1, Kd1) d5 (Nd7, Rb8) 2 Bxg7 (Qb2, Kc1). White thinks he has won a Pawn, as the Queen now guards the Bishop. But 2...Bxg7 (Kf8, Qe8) turns the tables; the guard on the Bishop was illusory. In this position, not only is the wQ attacked, but it is pinned! 3 Qa3 (Kb2)? is illegal self-check.

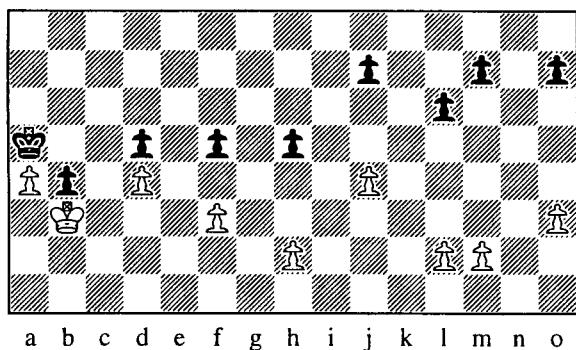
VC 48 solutions on page 79.

GAMES OF NO CHANCE

Last time, we surveyed the chess-related material in the second edition of *Winning Ways for your Mathematical Plays* by Elwyn Berlekamp, John Conway, and Richard Guy. Two subsequent books, *Games of No Chance* and *More Games of No Chance* (both edited by Richard J. Nowakowski and published by Cambridge University Press) have carried the subject forward. However, whereas *Winning Ways* was conceived as a book, these successors are merely collections of papers presented at academic conferences, and some of the writing is deplorably opaque.

Not all, though. *Games of No Chance* starts with a beautifully clear presentation by John Conway of the Angel Problem. On an infinite chessboard, the Angel's move is to leap to any square a distance of not more than N king moves away, the Devil's is to eat one square; can the Devil eventually surround the Angel with a barrier it cannot cross? The answer would seem to be No, but a general proof was lacking, and Conway offered \$100 for a proof that a sufficiently high-powered Angel could always keep going, and \$1000 for a proof that the Devil could eventually trap an Angel of any finite power. To the best of my knowledge, neither sum has yet been claimed.

Much of *Winning Ways* expounds "combinatorial game theory" (CGT), which covers games subject to the rule "if you can't move, you lose" and examines what happens when two or more such games are played in combination. A game of chess normally remains a single coherent entity throughout play, and several writers, including myself, have said that CGT has little relevance to such games. Not so, says Noam Elkies, demonstrating that certain pawn positions behave exactly like the elementary games of CGT, and hence that CGT can be used to simplify working out who will run out of pawn moves first when the board holds a composite of such positions. In the diagram below, the kings are in reciprocal zugzwang, and the first player to run out of pawn moves will lose. Try it by conventional analysis, with White to play and with Black, and then turn to page 79 to see how CGT can make it easier.



Most of the other papers on chess and similar games are merely reports of computer progress, and while such things have considerable interest at the time they go out of date very quickly. *Games of No Chance* contains an account by Lewis Stiller of his famous 1991 parallel-processor attack

on six-man chess endings, but this will now be of interest to chess players only for its excellent historical section since his results have been reproduced and surpassed on ordinary equipment (there was even news earlier in the year of the first successful computation of a seven-man ending). *More Games of No Chance* includes a report by Ren Wu and Donald Beal on the computer analysis of various XiangQi endings, but this is less informative than it might have been; it merely prints percentages of "wins" and "draws", which may be significantly influenced by immediate captures of loose men, and does not try to clarify indecisive percentages by identifying subclasses of "usually good" or "always good" positions for which the players can aim. It doesn't even identify or count positions of reciprocal zugzwang (Black to play loses but Red to play cannot win), and while such positions may be much rarer in XiangQi than in ordinary chess any that exist will throw valuable light on the behaviour of an ending.

Both books end with a list of unsolved problems, the numbering being deliberately the same in each so that progress is apparent, and some of the limitations of the mathematical approach are highlighted by problem 29, "Prove that Black doesn't have a forced win in Chess". All right, we know many chess positions where whoever is to move *does* lose, but the game array is surely so open that it is hardly likely to be one? Indeed not, yet a rigorous proof of even a proposition as obvious as this may be vastly difficult. And a note to problem 30 says that "Simon Norton's problem" (see VC 48 page 57) was indeed older; it apparently started as a Kriegspiel problem "with unspecified position of the WK, and W to win with probability 1" proposed by Lloyd Shapley around 1960.

THE JESTER'S GAME

This curious three-handed game appears on a web site which has been drawn to my attention by George Jelliss. The board cells are triangles, and the game is played on a 100-cell board in the form of a hexagon with six added ears. The men comprise KQRBNP, each of which behaves more or less conventionally, and a "Jester" which is not conventional at all. I quote: "The Jester is the only piece that can't capture other pieces. She can only be captured when threatened by two colors at the same time - and the capturing piece also has to leave the board. The Jester moves like Queen and Knight." The rule for winning the game is also curious, in that the player giving checkmate wins and *both* his opponents lose. At first sight, this prevents the standard three-handed game malpractice in which two players secretly gang up against the third and then divide the spoils, but on a closer look it seems to facilitate it: what is to stop two players agreeing to give mate to each other alternately, each thus winning half the games while the third player always loses?

I have no idea whether this is a genuinely playable game, or whether somebody merely wrote down a few rules that took his fancy. If you want to find out, visit the web site <www.jestersgame.com> and try it.

CHESS ON A SPHERE

by David Pritchard ...

Globe Chess, which is protected by patent, was invented a few years ago by János Boholy. It is chess, as you guessed, played on a sphere. The board is wrapped round a globe so that files a and h are contiguous, forming a cylinder. The poles are single octagonal cells designated X (South) and Y (North) giving a playing area of 66 cells. A well-illustrated book on the game, now apparently in its third edition, entitled *A Gömb Sakkjáték Alapjai*, runs to some 150 unnumbered pages. It appears that the pieces are held in place by magnets but I cannot be sure as my Hungarian is a bit rusty.

Three games are offered, from beginner to advanced. In the first, the poles are ignored so that in effect the game is Cylinder Chess. The second version allows pieces to pass over the poles but not to alight on them, whilst in the third version the poles are extra squares. Thus a queen, rook or bishop on X or Y in the third version in effect covers the whole board, the bishop uniquely being able to change square colour. An asymmetric array is recommended for the second and third versions. White pieces placed as usual but Black pieces (a8-h8) KBNRRNBQ. Pawns in front of the pieces.

Spherical chess is not a new concept. A number of similar games have been invented and marketed going back at least 50 years. The polar anomaly is addressed for example in Yaspan's game (1970), also called Globe Chess, by banning occupation of the polar cells (as in the second version above) and forbidding capture, and hence check, in crossing a pole. Gramlot's game, Chessball, marketed in 1998, is identical except that there is a version which allows one pole only to be used. There is also a similar French game of the same era whose name escapes me at the moment.

I hope to find out more in due course. Alas, the inventor's claim for originality cannot be sustained.

... and by JDB

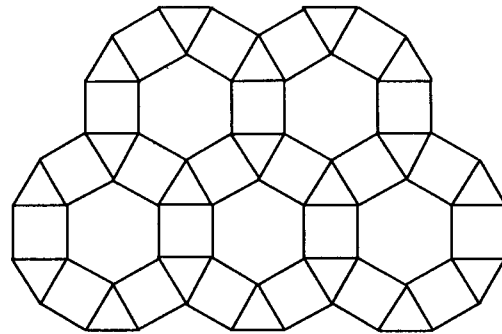
The receipt of this contribution from David started me thinking. Spherical chesses of the kind described above, which merely try to map the ordinary chessboard on to a sphere, strike me as unsatisfactory for two reasons: (a) the polar anomaly, and (b) the vast difference in size between cells near the poles and those next to the equator. What would be the effect, I wondered, of abandoning the conventional square lattice, and trying to base a game on one of the so-called "semi-regular solids"?

A little thought suggested three prime candidates.

- 5-6-6 (one pentagon and two hexagons around each vertex). This produces cells of very much the same size (it is the construction used for the modern soccer ball), but has two disadvantages: the board has only 32 cells (12 pentagons, 20 hexagons), and there is no natural "rook move" (a point to be explained in a moment).

- 3-4-5-4 (triangle, square, pentagon, square around each vertex). This gives 62 cells (30 triangles, 20 squares, 12 pentagons) which can be made reasonably equal in size by giving the triangles longer sides than the pentagons and making the squares into rectangles, but again we shall see that we do not have a natural rook move.
- 4-6-10 (square, hexagon, decagon around each vertex). This again gives 62 cells (30 squares, 20 hexagons, 12 decagons) and we shall see that it gives us a natural rook move, but the cells are necessarily rather unequal in size. Squares and hexagons can be equalized by giving the squares longer sides, but the decagons have to be larger.

To see what is meant by a "natural rook move", consider 3-4-6-4, which produces a plane tessellation and enables the point to be illustrated without trying to visualize what happens in three dimensions :

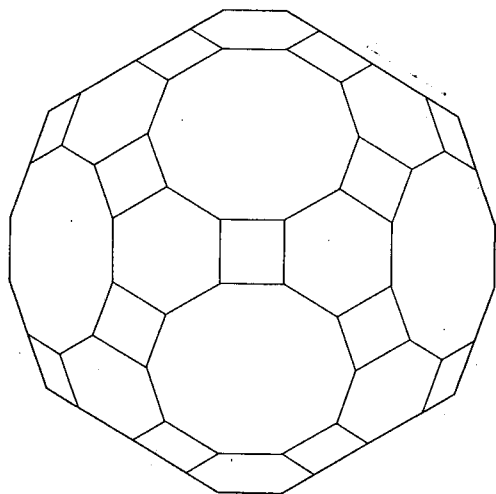


Put a "rook" on a hexagon or a square, and it can make a straight-line move of any length crossing squares and hexagons alternately. On a triangle, it cannot; it can cross a square and reach another triangle, but now it is facing a vertex and it can no longer cross a unique "far edge" and proceed in a straight line. The same is true on a 5-6-6 solid (the longest "rook move" is from one pentagon to another through two hexagons) and on a 3-4-5-4 (longest is triangle-square-triangle or pentagon-square-pentagon). But on a 4-6-10, all the cells have even numbers of sides, and a rook can carry on in a straight line right round the board.

Such a "great circle path" round a 4-6-10 solid goes through 12 cells, typically sq-hex-dec-s-d-h-s-h-d-s-d-h and back to the start, and pairs of cells six steps apart behave like opposite poles. Pictures of the solid from various angles can be found in books on mathematics (the splendid *Mathematical Models* by Cundy and Rollett, which I knew at school, appears to be out of print, but I am sure it has had successors), but for present purposes it is perhaps most helpful to draw it as seen when viewed from directly in front of one of the squares. Our front-page diagram, repeated opposite, shows it from this viewpoint.

In this diagram, 25 cells (13 squares, 8 hexagons, 4 decagons) are fully visible, a further 12 (4 squares, 4 hexagons, 4 decagons) are edge-on around the outside, and the remaining 25 (13-8-4) are on the far side. If the top and bottom squares are taken as the poles, the great circle across the middle forms the equator; alternatively, we can regard the near and far squares as the poles, in which case

the equator is the edge-on great circle around the outside. Tilt the diagram and we see it with a pair of decagons as poles, but now the equator is no longer a great circle but a wavy line of hexagons joined by squares (ten of each), and the hexagons are tilted towards each pole alternately. Tilt it further and we have a pair of hexagons as poles, and the equator is a wavy line of decagons joined by squares.



So much for the underlying geometry. How practical is this board as a medium for chess? It will be recalled that we chose it in preference to the other semi-regular solids because it gave us a natural rook move. A rook on a decagon is in fact fiercely powerful, because five great circle paths are open to it and these cover the whole board apart from ten squares (if we regard the decagon occupied by the rook as one of the poles, the only cells it does not command are the ten squares on the equator). From a hexagon, a rook commands seven more hexagons and all twelve decagons, but only twelve squares; from a square, five more squares, eight hexagons, and eight decagons.

A weakness of many chess games on boards without edges is that mating a lone king may demand several men, but there is no such problem here; if we give the king its natural power of moving to any adjoining cell, a rook on an otherwise empty board can mate a lone king in two moves at most. Indeed, if the king is on a square or a hexagon the rook can mate it in one. If the king is on a decagon there is no mate in one, but any check from a decagon will force it to move to a square, and now a mate is always available. A king can always draw against king and pawn if it can occupy a square (not a hexagon or decagon) immediately in front of the pawn; otherwise, the result appears to depend whether the stronger side has or can gain the opposition (which on this board is the right to move second when the kings are on cells of the same shape).

A quick look in the *Encyclopedia of Chess Variants* has failed to disclose any mention of this board, but the examination above has shown that the fundamentals are right and I am sure that a playable chess game using it could be devised. Perhaps one of our readers will be tempted to try.

TIME FOR A QUICKIE

by David Pritchard

Short, dramatic games — Fool's mate and its close relatives — have their own appeal, whatever the variant. A few, like the three-move Alice classic and Ian Richardson's delightful two-mover in Magnetic Chess, are too well known to bear repetition, but here are some perhaps less familiar triumphs and tragedies (depending which side you are). A gross blunder by one player provides entertainment for everyone else.

Progressive Absorption C (a piece making a capture absorbs the power of his victim) 1 e4 2 d4, dxe5 3 Qe2, Qxe4 (Q+P), Qxe7 mate.

Almost C (the Q is a chancellor = R+N) 1 Cc3 d5 2 Cxc7 mate.

Ambition C (after moving, a player may promote or demote any piece one rank in the sequence P-N-B-R-Q) 1 e4 (g7=N) f5 (g7=B) 2 Qh5 mate.

Avalanche C (after each move, advance an opponent's pawn one square) 1 e4/f6 h5/f3 2 Bb5/b6 Bb7/c3 3 f4/f5 fxe4/a3 4 Qxh5/d6 mate (Fool's mate is shorter but less spectacular).

Columbia Cannon C (rooks both move and capture like cannon in xiangqi) 1 Rh5 Bf5 2 Re5 or, more subtly, 1 d4 Bb4 2 Ra3 Qa5 mate.

Progressive Cylinder C (a & h files are joined) 1 Nf3 2 Nh6 Na6 3 g3 Bg2 0-0 4 c5 Qxg3 Nh4 Qxg2 mate.

Progressive Kamikaze C (capturer is removed with its victim) 1 e3 2 f6 g6 3 Bd3 Bxg6 Qh5 mate.

Knight Relay C (knights relay their powers to friendly men a knight's move away) 1 f3 e5 2 d4 Qh4 (mate??) 3 fxh4.

Kriegspiel 1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Qg4 Qa5 (suspecting Nc3) 4 Qxc8 mate.

Marseillais C (two consecutive moves per turn) 1 e4/e5 d6/dxe5 2 Qh5/Bb5+ Bd7/Bxd5 3 Qxh7/Qxh8 Qd3/Qf1 mate.

Monkey C (Black must copy White's moves) 1 c4 c5 2 Qa4 Qa5 3 Qc6 Qc3 4 Qxc8 mate.

Monochromatic C (pieces can only move on squares of same colour as in array) 1 f4 e5 2 fxe5 Qh4 mate.

Ms Alice C (Alice C but piece can move directly to corresponding square on second board) 1 Qd1(B) d5(B) 2 Qa4(A) mate.

Must-check C 1 e4 f6 2 Qh4+ g6 3 Qxg6+ hxg6.

Plaid C (Progressive Grid C) 1 e4 2 d5 Na6 3 Bxa6 Bxb7 Bc6 mate.

Scottish Modern C (Progressive C, but turn ends on move to square attacked by hostile piece) 1 d4 2 e6 Bb4+ 3 c3 4 Nf6 Ne4 Qf6 Qxf2 mate.

More of the same will be welcomed. David also asks me to repeat his request for new material for the second edition of the ECV. Surely there is something somewhere that a reader is aware of and he may not be?

THE END IS NIGH!

by Paul Byway

Three solvers were tempted by the Chinese Chess endgame in VC 48 - which is very encouraging, so I have provided another example for your delectation - #151. They are very similar to our Chess endgames, once you master the unfamiliar moves. I have avoided any complications to do with the obscure rules on repetition - and, of course, you must remember that Stalemate is a win. Position #137 started with the Black king stalemated by a Red pawn, so the problem is to trap the elephant - and as you discovered, Red must lose a move. The solution goes as follows:-

- 1 **Ce1-f1** **Ee8-c6**
- 2 **Cf1-g1** **Ec6-e8**
- 3 **Cg1-e1** **Ee8-g6**
- 4 **Ee3-g5** **Eg6-i8**
- 5 **Ee1-g1**

and wins. If 3...Ec6 then 4 Ec5 etc. Cannon endings have the peculiarity that Red needs screens to match Black's defensive pieces if he is to win.

Solutions to Competition 24

- #138 9 g4 g5 g6 gxf7 f8Q Ne2 Rg1 Rg8 Qc8 mate
- #139 8 Kb6 Kc5 Kc4 Nc6 Rd8 Rd2 Nd4 Rxe2 mate
- #140 9 c4 cxb5 bxa6 axb7 bxa8Q Nf3 Ne5 Rb1 Qb8 mate
- #141 11 Kf2 Ng3 Ne4 Ke3 Kd2 Kc3 Kb4 Ka5 Kb6 Kb7 Nf6 mate
- #142 6 d4 d3 dxc2 cxb1B Bg4 Bb4 mate
- #143 7 h4 f4 f5 f6 Rh3 Rc3 Rxc8 mate
- #144 7 Bb4 Bxd6 Nc4 a4 axb5 Rxa8 Nxe5 mate

Fred Galvin found two more solutions to #144. Both ideas were also given by others. (a) 7 Kd2 c3 cxd4 Rac1 Rc8 Rhc1 R1c7 mate; (b) 7 Nxd4 g4 g5 g6 gxf7 fxg8Q Qxe6 mate.

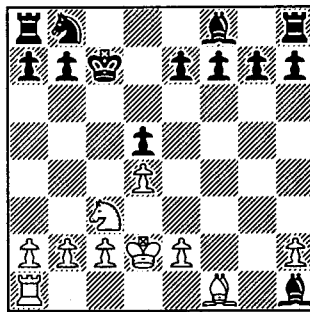
The current scores:- FG 84, IR 77, DP 54, PW 29, CL 24, JB 23, RT 19,

NE 2, SB 2. I have corrected an error from the last issue in which I omitted David's score; my apologies for that!

Competition 25

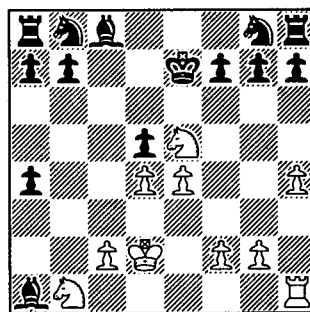
Colours have been reversed in #150. In #151, from the treatise on Cannon plus Pawn, king one step vertically or sideways, guard one step diagonally, both confined to the palace; pawn one step forwards or sideways; cannon as rook, but can capture only if there is one man between it and its target.

#145 Gatto - Salvadori (1982)



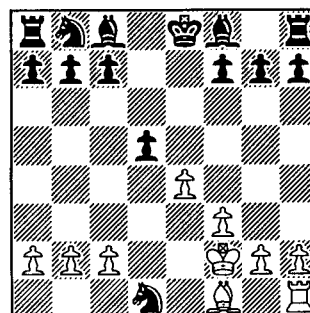
White wins (series 7)

#146 Gatto - Castelli (1988)



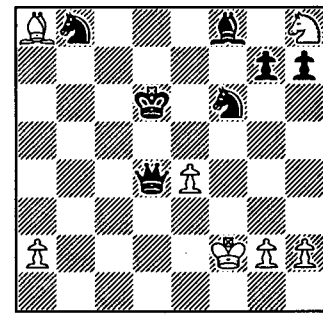
White wins (series 7)

#147 Picasso - Galimberti (1984)



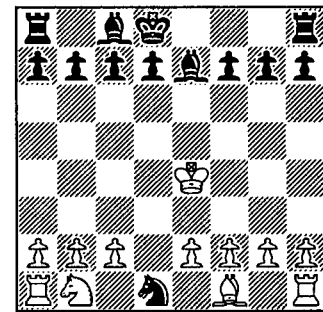
White wins (series 7)

#148 Kustrin - Sarali (1982)



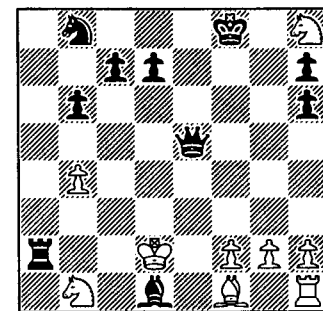
White wins (series 9)

#149 Bellucci - Ervetti (1984)



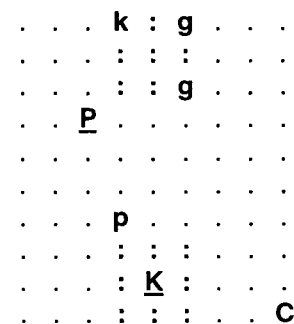
White wins (series 7)

#150 Simoncini - Scovero (1987)



White wins (series 7)

#151 Author unknown



Red to play and win

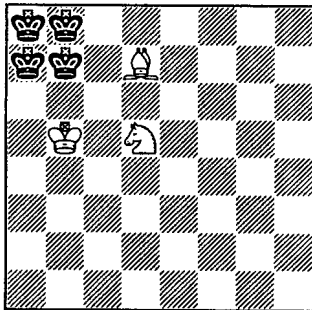
SOLUTIONS

VC 48 proof games (page 58).
15 (Tüngler) 1 Rd1-d2 (Bd1) Nd7
 2 Rxd7 (Pd2) Bb7 3 Rxc7 Qa8
 4 Rxb7 0-0-0 (Ra8, bQ to d8!)
 5 Ra1-b1 Kxb7 6 Rc1 (Nb1) Ka6
 7 Rd1 (Bc1).

16 (Velucchi) 1 c4 d5 2 cxd5 c5
 3 dxc6 e.p. Bh3 4 cxb7 Bxg2 5 bxa8B
 Bxf1 6 Bg2 Kd7 7 Bxf1.

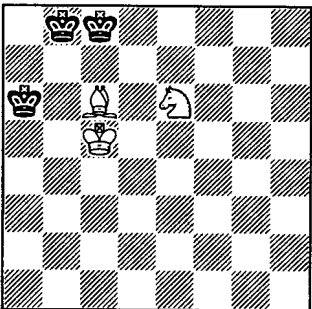
17 (Sick) 1 Nc3 d5 2 Nxd5 (Pb1N)
 Qxb5 (Nd8) 3 Rxb1 (Nh6) Nxg1
 (Nb1) 4 Rxg1 (N off) Qxd8 (Nh1).

Kriegspiel (page 66). From **D**, play Ke7 and Bd7, and then bring the king to the b-file and push upwards to **D1** :



Try Kb6, and if Yes we have **B**. If No, try Kc6, and if still No (Black on b7) tempo with Ka5 and then try Kb6 again. If once more No, Black must now be on a7, and Bc8 followed by Ba6 soon gives **A**.

If Kc6 gets Yes after Kb6 got No, Black must be on a7. Try Kb6 again next move, and if once again No he must now be on a6. Substitute Kc7 (Black replies ...Ka7/a5), and continue Bc6 (...Ka6), Kd6 (...Ka5/a7), Kc5 (...Ka6/b8), Nf4 (...Ka5/a7/c7/c8), and Ne6 (...Ka6/b8/c8). This gives **D2** :



Try Kb6 and if No substitute Nf8 followed by Nd7, giving **C**. If Yes,

continue Bb5 and Kc6, then try Kc7. If Yes, we have **B**; if No, substitute Ba6, and we soon arrive at **A**. But while I naturally started from what Ishak's team had done, in fact **C** plays only a very minor role in this, and an analysis of **D2** from first principles would not be difficult.

Crisper solutions welcomed!

Progressive Chess (page 68). Giessler - Galvin, after series 9: 10 Kd6 Na4 Nb6 Nc8 Nxa7 Kc6 Kxb7 Nc6 f5 f4 defends or blocks everything, and leaves White helpless.

Losing Chess (page 69). First diagram. Black played 11...Bg7, giving himself the option of taking the rook instead of the bishop, and after 12 Bxe7 Bxa1 13 Bxg5 the White bishop soon became rampant.

Second diagram. White played 10 Qb3 with the idea of capturing on b7 and then removing Black's queen, forcing ...Bxb7 and giving him a rampant bishop. Black's 10...Qxe3 11 Qxb7 Qxe2 prevented this, but 12 Qxc8 Qxd2 13 Qxb8 gave him a rampant rook instead.

Fourth diagram. 12...Qb6 13 Rxa7 Qxb2, and each of White's three captures is bad. If 14 Rxa8 then 14...Qxb1 15 Rxc8 Qxc1 16 Rxc5 Qxf1 17 Rxf1 b5 etc; if 14 Rxb7 getting rid of the rook then 14...Bxb7 15 Bxb2 Bxh1 16 Bxg7 and the bishop will rampage; and if 14 Bxb2 as in the game then 14...Rxa7 15 Bxg7 Ra3 and the knight does the damage.

Fifth diagram. A pawn move loses to (for example) 18...Bf4 19 Nxf4 Nf6 20 Nxe6 Nb8 21 Nxg7 Be6 22 Nxe6 Rd8 23 Nxd8 Nfd7 24 Nxb7 Nc5 etc.

Sixth diagram. 25 axb8K (else six immediate giveaways) Rh3 and either 26 Ka8 Rc3 27 Kb8 Rc8 28 Kxc8 Rd7 29 Kxd7 g6 30 Kxe6 Bf6 and 31-35...b1R or 26 Kc8 Nd7 27 Kxd7 g6 28 Kxe6 Bf6 29 Kxf6 Rh7 and 30-34...b1R.

Unambiguous Chess (page 72). Play 1 e4 intending 2 Bb5 and 3 Bxd7 mate. Black holds out longest by 1...c5 and 2 Nc6, but 3 Bxc6 renews the threat, and even the flight-giving move 3...f5 doesn't help: 4 Bxd7+ Kf7 5 Be8 mate.

CGT (page 75). I am not sure I can cover the essentials of "Chess CGT" in a single column, but let's try.

Among the elementary games of CGT are 0 (neither player can move), "*" (each player can move but only to 0), "↑" (White can move to 0, Black only to *), and "↓" (the reverse). Additionally, a fundamental theorem of CGT states that if a sum of games $A + B$ is a win for the player not due to move next, the games A and B , even if different in form, are equal and opposite in value. The game \uparrow is a win for White, but $\uparrow + *$ is a win for the player due to move next; $\uparrow + \uparrow$ and $\uparrow + \uparrow + *$ are both wins for White. Equal and opposite values such as $\uparrow + \downarrow$ can be cancelled out, as can 0 and $* + *$.

If we now look at the diagram, we see that the d-file holds 0, the f-file *, the h-file \uparrow , and the j-file \downarrow . The position on the lm-files is more difficult, but if we analyse the position on the jklm-files as a composite we find it to be a win for the player due to move second, and since the j-file holds \downarrow the "equal and opposite" theorem states that the position on the lm-files must have value \uparrow . Similarly, if we set up the o-file together with two copies of \uparrow and one of $*$ we again find that the player due to move second wins, so the o-file must have value $\downarrow + \downarrow + *$.

Having evaluated the components of the diagram individually, we can find the best-play result of a composite position simply by adding the component values. In particular, a composite position containing just the lm- and o-files has occurred in master play. This has value $\uparrow + (\downarrow + \downarrow + *)$, which simplifies to $\downarrow + *$, and with perfect play a game with this value is a win for the player due to move next (and White to move duly won). The complete diagram position has value

$0 + * + \uparrow + \downarrow + \uparrow + (\downarrow + \downarrow + *)$
 which simplifies to \downarrow , and your analysis should have shown that Black has a win with or without the move.

Most of the work in this particular example lies in evaluating the position on the lm-files, and CGT is rarely of practical use on the 8x8 board. It may be a very different matter on wider boards.

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As usual, there are some new games and ideas among our offerings, and I draw particular attention to Fabrice Liardet's Ambiguous Chess. George Jelliss, David Sedgwick, and I tried this out after the AGM, and found it most enjoyable. Needless to say, much of the play said more about the inexperience of the players than about the game itself, but I am sure that others who are tempted to try it will find it equally entertaining.

Short review. I recently received a copy of a book *Outrageous Chess Problems* by Burt Hochberg (Sterling Publishing, New York, 2005, US \$6.95) for review, to discover on looking inside that this was not a new book but a reissue of his 1999 book *Chess Braintwisters* with a different title and cover. I do not know if there has been any significant change in content, but none was apparent on a brief examination. For a review by David Pritchard at the time of original publication, see VC 33.

BCVS NOTICES

VC notation. Paul Byway, who is a regular XiangQi player, regrets that I am using algebraic notation for our XiangQi examples, instead of the descriptive notation used in normal XiangQi literature. He points out (a) that left-to-right algebraic notation is very confusing if you normally use right-to-left descriptive, and (b) that anyone intending to study the game seriously will have to learn descriptive notation since all the books use it.

Both points are valid, and I am sure that other regular XiangQi players among our readers will sympathize with them. Yet I stand by the decision, and I ask regular players please to accept it. Our XiangQi articles and examples are not written for you who already know and play the game; they are written to introduce its subtleties to those who know it not, and I don't want to have to preface the necessary explanation of new rules and pieces by explaining a new notation as well.

My policy in VC is therefore to use a standardized algebraic notation for all games played on a rectangular or square lattice board, however well established a different notation may be in the game's own specialized literature. If our examples and articles prompt readers to investigate the game more closely, they will have achieved their objective, and that will be a suitable point at which to learn the game's own specialized notation.

Calendar continued. A final reminder about this year's **Bughouse** weekend: Genève, **August 19-22**, contact Fabrice Liardet (nabla@pion.ch) for further information.

CALENDAR

Circular Chess. This year's Circular Chess World Championship will be a special tenth-anniversary event in **Lincoln Cathedral** on **Saturday August 20**. Entry forms went out to known enthusiasts in mid-July. If you didn't get one and would like to take part, send the entry fee of £10 to the Circular Chess Society, 11 North Parade, Lincoln LN1 1LB, to arrive not later than August 13.

Orthodox Chess. I think we can regard ordinary chess as a chess variant, in which case I can pass on information from David Sedgwick that the **World Senior Championship** will be held at Lignano Sabbiadoro, Italy, from **September 27 to October 10** and that potential competitors will include our own Paul Byway.

Notices for VC 50 should reach me by **September 15**, though notices received later will be fitted in if it is at all practicable.

Abstract Games. Sadly, I fear that the splendid magazine *Abstract Games* has suspended publication. For some time, its web site

<www.abstractgamesmagazine.com> was continuing to express hope of a resumption, but when I visited it early in July it merely displayed a standard test page, and I have received no reply to an e-mail sent to the address given thereon. If I hear better news in the future, I shall be delighted to pass it on. None of us knows what may have happened; we can only offer our sympathy, and express our appreciation of the stream of first-class material that the magazine has provided up till now.

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