

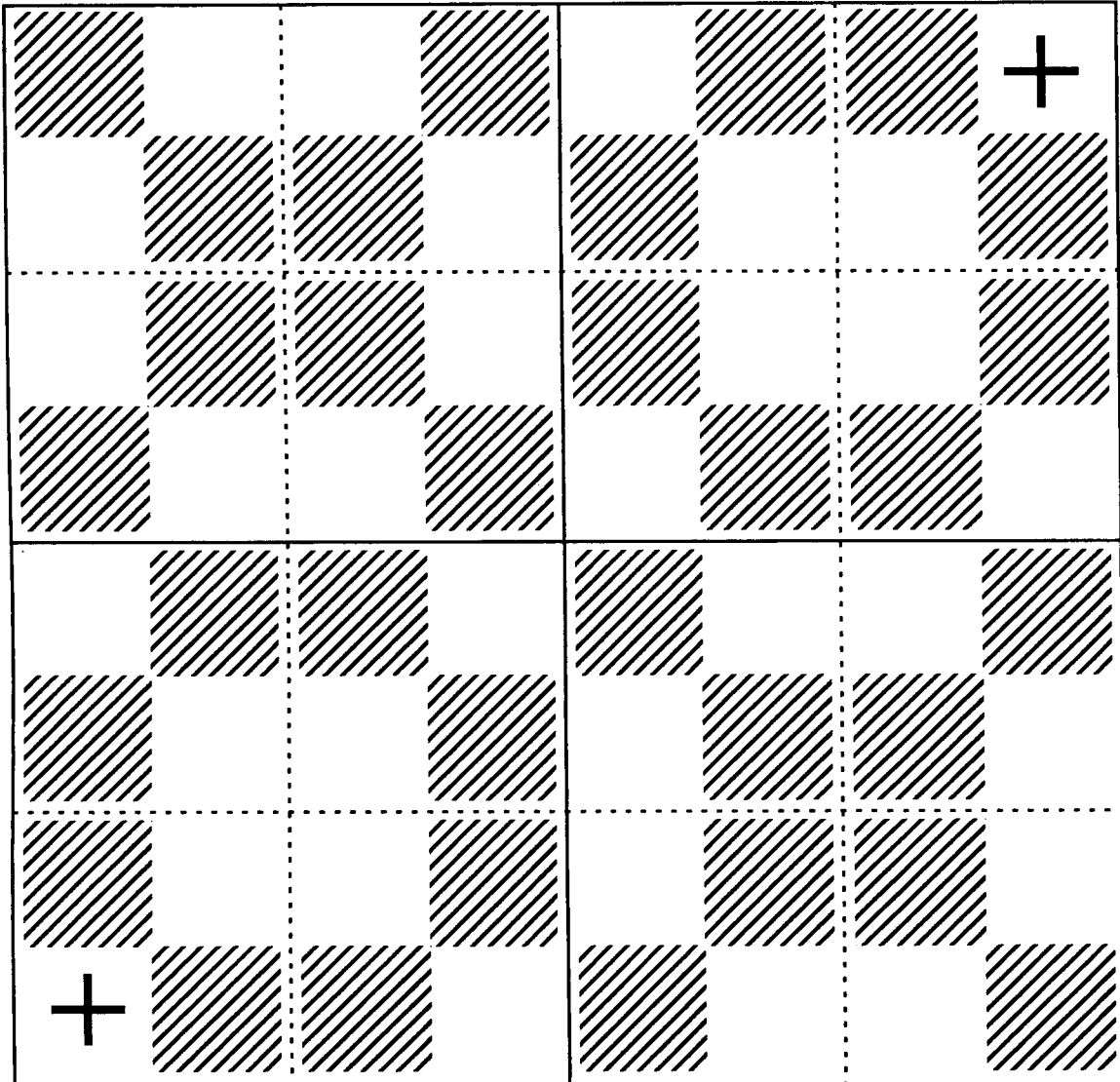
Variant Chess

THE MAGAZINE TO BROADEN YOUR CHESS HORIZONS

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ECV 2 in print !

Ecila made playable

Retrograde Othello

ECV 2

The Classified Encyclopedia of Chess Variants by D. B. Pritchard, being the second edition of *The Encyclopedia of Chess Variants* completed and edited by myself. **384pp hardback, £15.99** plus postage and packing from **Chess Direct, P O Box 18, Mexborough, South Yorks S64 9AR, <www.chessdirect.co.uk>**. No enquiries to Peter Fayers or myself, please; Chess Direct holds all the stock (ISBN 978-0-9555168-0-1, trade enquiries welcomed).

No, not a purportedly independent review; I don't think I can properly commission a review which will appear in a magazine which I myself am editing. But David was our President for many years, the book is 95% his, and it would have been the culmination of a major part of his life's work. I think I can fairly devote a page of our magazine to an extended description.

So, if you already have the first edition of the *Encyclopedia*, why should you buy this new edition? I suggest that there are two reasons. Firstly, there are over 200 new games; secondly, everything appears by type instead of in alphabetical order. David would in fact have retained the alphabetical order of the first edition, with lists of related variants at the end of each entry, though he would have backed it up with an index by type. However, checking and updating these cross-reference lists would have been a major exercise, and it soon became clear that it would be quicker to rearrange the variants by type and provide an alphabetical index than to retain the alphabetical order and make sure that all the new cross references were included.

The book is therefore divided into eight major parts: games using an ordinary board and men (479 variants), other games using square lattice boards (482), games using boards of other kinds (143), regional and historical games (101), games using dice or cards (68), games with objectives other than the capture of the enemy king (102), partnership and

team games (88), and everyone-for-himself multi-player games (131). These eight parts contain a total of 38 chapters divided into over 200 sections, each consisting of anything from one or two games to over 30. For example, the opening 47-game chapter "More than one move at a time" is divided into seven sections "Two moves at a turn, intermediate check observed" (Marseillais Chess and its derivatives), "Two moves at a turn, intermediate check ignored" (Fred Galvin's double-move game), "Two moves against one" (games such as the King and Pawns game), "Three to ten moves at a turn" (Triplets etc), "One more move each time" (Progressive Chess in its various manifestations), "Every man can move", and "Other kinds of multiple movement". Allowing for the fact that some "variants" are families rather than single games, the result is a classified exposition of over 1,600 games embracing nearly every significant chess variant that has been invented, and it is now relatively easy for a designer (or a magazine editor) to see whether such-and-such an idea is genuinely new or whether it merely repeats something which we have seen many times already. David could of course have told you from memory.

Most of the variants in the first edition have been carried across, but between forty and fifty have been dropped: usually because they were unplayable in game form (some were merely conditions invented to restrict play in problems), but sometimes for some other specific reason. As regards the new variants, David had sent me a list in June 2004 of the games he intended to include, and I decided at a very early stage to include a variant not on that list only if there was clear evidence that he had subsequently intended to add it. So any game which appeared in VC 1-44 is present, or if it isn't then David had decided to omit it; games which first appeared in VC 45-52 may or may not be present, though in fact most are; games which did not appear until VC 53 certainly won't be. But a line has to be drawn or the job is never done, and I chose to draw it so that the book remained clearly David's.

The actual text is usually David's, give or take some routine editing for layout and other reasons, but he had left some 25-30 entries unwritten and perhaps twice as many more were only in embryonic form and needed to be filled out. I have identified all these additions and expansions, so that readers can see at a glance which parts of the book rest on David's authority and which rest merely on mine. There were also a handful of cases where I knew something about a game from personal experience that apparently had not come to David's attention, and there were a few cases where it seemed to me that he had been led astray by errors in his sources and that alteration was needed. But these alterations have been made explicitly, so David's reputation will not suffer if future generations should decide that the error has in fact lain with myself. And every entry has a note identifying the source of the information (even *The Oxford Companion to Chess* doesn't have this), so if a particular source should prove unreliable the integrity of the rest of the book will not be compromised.

Wherever possible, games are described in such detail as will allow them to be played, but there are inevitable exceptions. Some games are too complicated for brief exposition, and the only option is to give an outline and cite a reference where full detail can be found; some information is subject to copyright or other restriction; and there are a few games which demand inclusion for historical reasons but whose details have been largely or completely lost. But in general, if a game is in the book, you can sit down with a friend, knock up a set from some conveniently available material, and play it; and I hope you will enjoy doing so.

I have spent a year on this. David had spent twenty, and the author's royalties will go to Elaine. If you want to honour his memory in a practical way, buy yourself a copy, and persuade your friends to do the same. £15.99 plus the mailing costs is hardly an exorbitant price for an excellently printed 384-page book in hardback, whose like will not be seen again for a very long time.

GAMES, GAMES...

I notice David's loss most when it comes to reviewing. Two new three-dimensional games recently came my way.

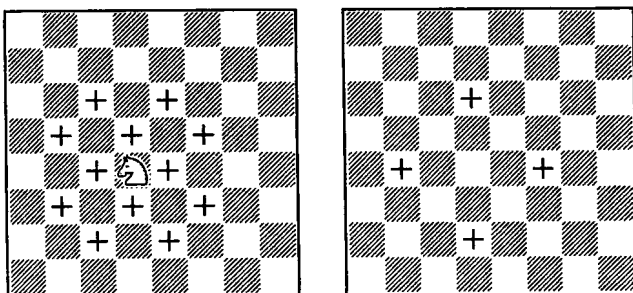
Zöllmer 3D-Schach is an 8x8x8 game which appears to have been launched in Germany late in 2005. Dan Glimme saw it at an exhibition and sent its publicity leaflet to David, and Wanda duly forwarded this to me.

In fact it appears to offer little new except by way of constructional detail, and I am not too sure even about that. As shown in the leaflet, the playing space consists of a normal chessboard (which seems to be only a reference since no piece appears actually to be resting on it), above which is a frame holding an 8x8 array of horizontal wires. On each wire are eight rings, and the men have hooks and are suspended from the rings. All this is at least somewhat reminiscent of Dufresne's description of Kieseritzki's game and of Miller's realisation of Kogbetliantz's game (see *ECV* 2, section 25.6), though no doubt something is patentably different. The king and queen appear to hang appreciably lower than the other men, which looks odd in the picture but may seem more sensible with an actual set.

The leaflet shows a normal array at the bottom level and a double row of pawns on the next level (so 32 men a side of which 24 are pawns). As for rules of play, it says only "Die neuen 3D-Spielregeln sind mit den bekannten Spielregeln des 2D-Schachspieles nahezu identisch", which if true would suggest that the fundamental problems of three-dimensional chess have not been properly addressed. Contact **Waldemar Zöllmer, Im Hof 4, D-72655 Altdorf, <www.3dschach-zoellmer.de>**, if you want to know more.

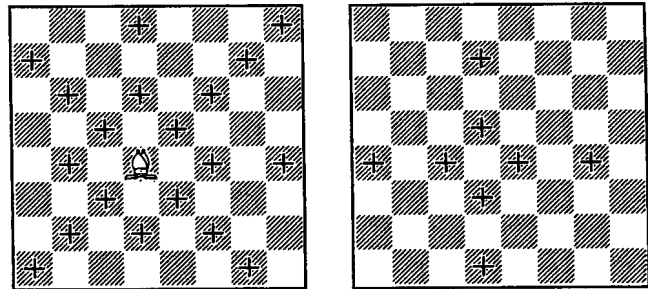
Mapped Chess, by Stéphane Burkhart, does address the fundamental problems of 3D chess, and does so in a manner both imaginative and (I think) original. Burkhart's idea is to condense the 8x8x8 board down to two normal boards, one representing all the odd levels and the other all the even levels. These two boards are then placed side by side, the second rotated through 90 degrees so that light squares on one correspond to dark squares on the other.

A knight has three kinds of move in three dimensions: a 2-1 move remaining at its own level, a two-step orthogonal move at its own level coupled with a one-step change of level, and a one-step move at its own level with a two-step change of level. In Burkhart's game, the one-step changes of level map into each other and the two-step changes map back to the original board, and we have :



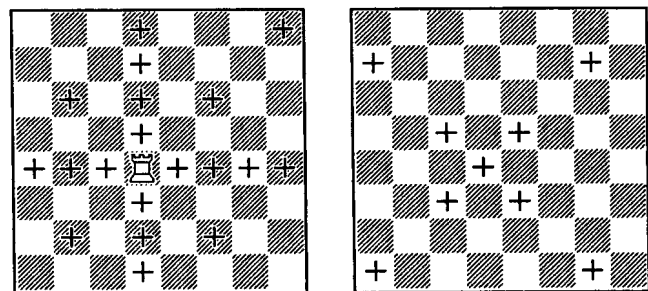
We note that the normal colour-alternation property of the knight's move is retained.

The bishop's move maps similarly :



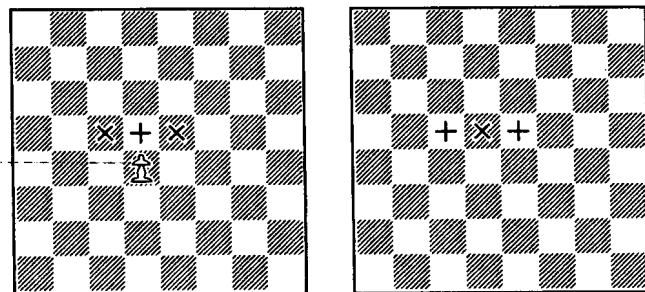
The normal colour-invariant property is preserved, as are the line-obstruction properties (a move Bd4-d6 is blocked by a man on d5 on the other board, but ignores a man on d5 on the same board). If the notion of mapping is difficult to grasp, the bishop's move between boards can be thought of as a zigzag reflection, up and down at successive steps.

The rook's move suffers most from the mapping, and to increase its power Burkhart supplements its normal move with that of the unicorn (the three-dimensional piece which moves through cell corners). This gives



and again the diagonal move may be thought of as a zigzag reflection between upper and lower boards. The queen moves as R + B and the king has a one-step Q move, and K + Q v K is soon seen to be a win.

The pawn moves one step forward as R, captures one step forward as B :



Pawn-two, promotion, and castling are all as normal.

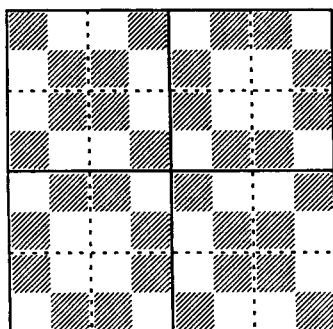
The author has sent me two computer-against-computer game scores, one of a basic test game and the other "more instructive", which I can forward to interested readers. I am not sure how much should be read into them, but at least they show that the game appears to be practicable. It would seem to be well worth a closer look.

EXCAVATIONS

Ecila (V. R. Parton, 1970)

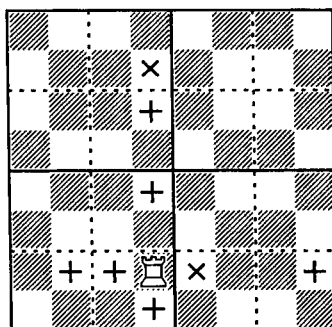
David described Ecila as 'a mind-crushing 6-dimensional variant played (?) on a 2x2x2 array of 2x2x2 cubes', and I fear that his '(?)' was all too justified; there seems to be no evidence that even its originator ever tried to play it. (I am afraid this was all too typical of Parton, who at least in his later years seems merely to have scribbled down rules in bulk without making any attempt to see where they might lead; even in Alice Chess, which was his most celebrated creation, the example of play given by Dennison Nixon, in his March 1954 *British Chess Magazine* review of Boyer's *Nouveaux Jeux d'Echecs Non-orthodoxes*, is much better than anything in Parton's own works.) But there is another six-dimensional game in the *Encyclopedia*, due to C. G. Lewin, and Lewin's game is played on a normal 8x8 board. It therefore occurred to me, while working on the second edition, to see if Lewin's approach could be applied to Ecila, and I found it surprisingly fruitful.

The basic idea is that if we divide the board into 2x2 regions as for Grid Chess, the six Ecila dimensions of movement from any square can be represented by the two one-square orthogonal moves within the same 2x2 region, the two two-square orthogonal moves within the same quarter of the board, and the two four-square orthogonal moves. The matter can be made clearer by rechequering the board so that each step takes the man to a square of the opposite colour :



There are several ways of looking at this. A one-square move cannot cross

any line; a two-square move can cross a dotted line, but not a full line; a four-square move can (and indeed must) cross one of each. Along a rank or file, a one-dimensional move can take a man to any of the squares of opposite colour *except* the mirror-image square. Suppose we call the piece with a one-dimensional move a rook. From d2, it can move on the rank to b2, c2, or h2, but *not* to the mirror-image square e2; on the file, to d1, d4, or d6, but *not* the mirror-image square d7 :



On a rank or file, a rook can reach any square of opposite colour except the mirror-image square in one move, any square of the same colour in two moves and by either of two possible paths, and the mirror-image square in three moves (six paths). A square not on the same rank or file is reached by making the "file" and "rank" steps separately, and they can be made in any order. To get a rook from d2 to f7 takes five steps, two on a rank and three on a file, and there are 120 possible paths.

To every square there is an antipode which is six rook moves away, and in the case of a corner square the antipode is at the far corner. It is therefore natural to give each player a corner square as his base, and to set the board cornerwise between them. For present purposes, we shall continue to display the board as usual so that we can use our normal algebraic notation, but we shall put '+' signs on a1 and h8 (when they are otherwise unoccupied) to indicate that these are the home squares of the two sides.

Having given each side a base, we find that each square has a 'level' which measures its distance from these bases. Suppose White's base a1

is at level 1; then the other squares are at the levels shown below :

4	5	5	6	5	6	6	7
3	4	4	5	4	5	5	6
3	4	4	5	4	5	5	6
2	3	3	4	3	4	4	5
3	4	4	5	4	5	5	6
2	3	3	4	3	4	4	5
2	3	3	4	3	4	4	5
1	2	2	3	2	3	3	4

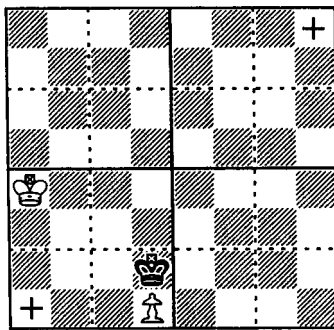
These 'levels 1-7' turn out to behave very much like the ranks 1-8 in ordinary chess, though there are obvious superficial differences. We may notice that the even levels are all dark squares, the odd levels all light; that there are six 'level 2' squares one step from White's base, six 'level 6' squares one step from Black's, and 20 'level 4' squares which form the board's equator; and that all the light squares in 'White's half' of the board are at level 3 apart from d4, which is nearer to Black's base h8 just as e5 is nearer to White's base a1.

This has dealt with the geometry. What about the chess?

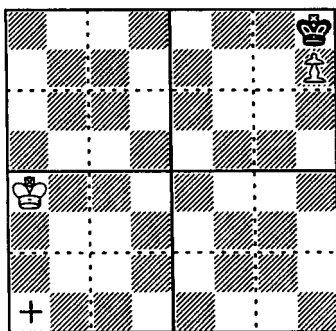
Parton defined various men, but for the moment let us confine ourselves to the natural elementary pieces: rook (moves in one dimension), bishop (moves in two dimensions, and we notice that it is confined to squares of one colour just like its cousin in ordinary chess), and queen (R + B). If a capture-the-king game is to be realistic, the king must be relatively weak, so suppose we give it only the rook's one-dimensional move. K + R v K is now hopeless (it takes K + 3R to mate a lone K). K + Q can mate a lone K, but the mate cannot be forced. However, if we borrow an idea from various historical forms of chess and give a king on its home square the option of a double move, K + Q can force *stalemate* against a lone K (all that is necessary is to play the K to its own home square and the Q to its opponent's, which forces the enemy to the equator, and triangulate). So if the king has this option and we count stalemate as a win, we have the germ of a playable game.

If $K + Q \checkmark K$ is a win, we can start looking at $K + P \checkmark K$. Let's give the pawn its natural powers (advance by a forwards R move, capture by a forwards B move), and let it promote on the opponent's home square. A pawn at level 2 now has five possible forward moves excluding captures, at level 3 four moves, and so on to level 6, where it has only one forward move and a man at level 7 will block it. We note that 'forwards' for White is to the right on the rank and upwards on the file, and conversely for Black.

Suppose first that the pawn is under attack from one of its frontal squares, and that its king is too far away to come to its defence :

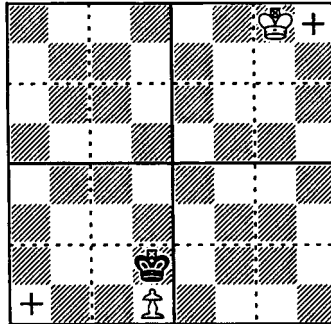


The pawn cannot be defended, so it must run. The square d2 may be blocked, but three other squares are open to it (d3, d5, h1); let us try Pd3. Black naturally plays ...Kd4 reinstating the attack. Continue say Ph3; Black plays ...Kh4. Continue Ph7 (which is now White's only choice, since Black is blocking h4); Black plays ...Kh8, and the pawn is dead since it cannot be defended and its only forward move is blocked :



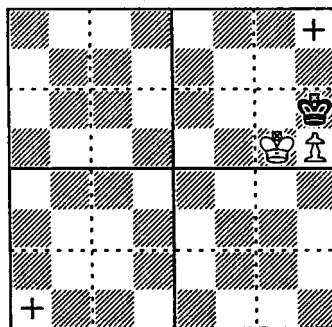
The pawn would still be dead even if White's king was closer, since Black's king on its home square has its double-move option and so can prevent the enemy king from coming

forward to defend it. However, if White's king was already at level 6, say on g8, the pawn would win, because Black could never get back to h8 :



Here, the pawn plays to h7 as before, but Black cannot now reply ...Kh8 and the pawn will promote next move. More generally, if White is given time to play his king to g8, or to any other square at level 6, without forfeiting his pawn, he will win.

This has dealt with the cases where the pawn can safely reach level 6. What happens at level 5?

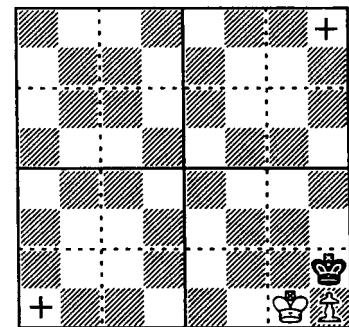


The answer is shown by the position above, where Black is attacking the pawn from a frontal square and White is defending it. (All such positions are equivalent, and the only reason for choosing this particular one as an illustration is that it is the easiest to visualize.) White to play cannot win; a king move concedes the pawn at once, and if instead Ph7 then ...Kh8 and Black draws as we have just seen. However, Black to play loses. He cannot retreat to h8 because the pawn commands this square (it is a B-move away from h5), so he must move elsewhere. Suppose he plays ...Kf6. White replies Kg6, preventing Black's return to h6, and Black cannot usefully renew his attack on White's pawn (the only

other square from which he can attack, it is f5, but this takes him too far from h8 and the pawn will walk in). So Black must play some move which puts him in touch with h8, say ...Kf8, but White now has time to play Kg8 and he wins as we have just seen. Much the same is soon seen to happen if Black tries a move other than ...Kf6.

So this position is reciprocal zugzwang, and so are the equivalent position with Black on h7 and the similar position with Black on g8. In this last case the pawn is not under immediate attack and so White to play can move his king, but he cannot advance it (two of its three 'forward' squares, g6 and g7, are controlled by Black's king, and the third is occupied by the pawn), and Black will have time to play to g6 and h6 or to g7 and h7. However, all other positions with White Kg5/Ph5 and White to play are wins for White, and something equivalent is true for all other cases where White has a defended pawn at level 5.

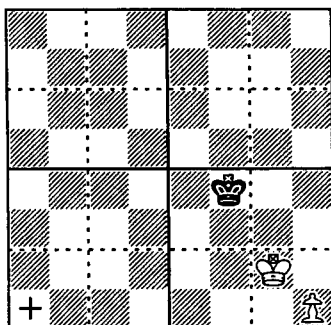
What happens if we move everything down a level?



We might expect this to be a simple win with White to play (two White moves and one Black will bring us to Kg5/Ph5 v Kh6 and it will be Black to play), and so it proves. White plays Ph5, Black has indeed nothing better than ...Kh6, and Kg5 gives what we want. Does it follow that Black to play will draw?

Perhaps surprisingly, no. A retreat on the file will put him in check to the pawn and a move on the rank to g2 is prevented by the White king, so he must go further to the left, say ...Kf2. White now plays Kg2, preventing Black's return to h2, and if Black plays downwards or further to the left he puts himself too far from h8 and

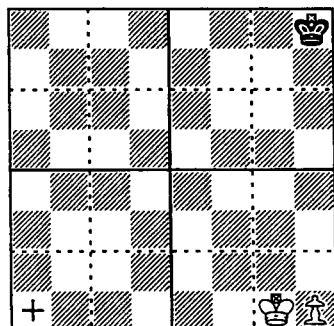
the pawn will walk in. He must therefore retreat, say by ...Kf4 :



However, he is now three moves away from the pawn, and White is only two moves away from g8. White can therefore play his king to g8, controlling h8, and then promote the pawn.

White's ability to play to g8 in this line is a simple case of the 'king opposition', which is held by whoever has the move when the kings are on squares of different colour. On a two-dimensional board, with kings restricted to one-square rook moves, whoever has the king opposition can force his opponent back to a corner and stalemate him. On a board with more than two dimensions, the opponent can escape the stalemate by moving in another dimension, but the player with the king opposition still has the upper hand and can play to put his king on any square he chooses.

White can in fact force a win by playing to Kg1/Ph1 (or to some equivalent configuration) whatever Black does in reply. The most instructive case occurs when Black replies ...Kh8, putting his king on his home square :



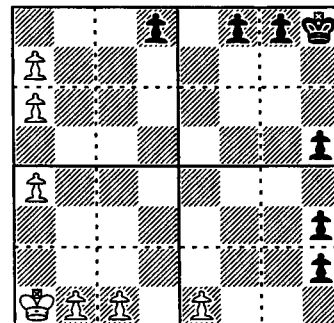
Black now has his double-move option, and so can play to take or concede the king opposition as he chooses.

White therefore starts by playing Ke1 (or Kc1), moving towards his own home square so that he too can make a double move. Black cannot now make a one-step move on the file (it would put him in check from the pawn), and if he makes a one-step move on the rank (say ...Kg8) things are easy. White advances his pawn, Ph5 say, claiming the king opposition and preventing Black's return to h8, and the follow-up moves Kg1 and Kg5 give White one of the winning cases with Kg5 and Ph5.

More interesting are the cases where Black makes a double move. If he makes it on the file, say ...Kh2, White moves his king back to g1, and we have the win we saw earlier. If Black makes any other double move, the simplest for White is to advance his pawn to cover h8 while simultaneously positioning it four moves from the Black king (at least one suitable move is always available - if for example Black plays ...Kg7, White advances his pawn to h2). White now has time to play Ka1 and Kg1 (double move) regaining the king opposition, Black will be unable to take it back because his own home square is now barred to him, and again White will reach one of the winning positions with the pawn at level 5.

So K + P v K is won if the pawn can be defended at level 4, and this is enough for it also to be won if the pawn can be defended at level 3 or 2. I haven't looked into endings with more pawns, but if K + P v K is normally won there is at least a chance that a general one-pawn advantage will also be winning. This would seem to give at least a realistic possibility of a playable game, and perhaps it is time to look at how the men might be set up.

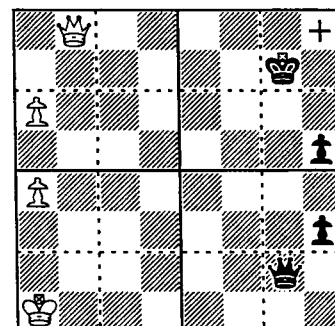
In ordinary chess, the pieces start on ranks 1/8 and the pawns on ranks 2/7. Here, we only have one square at levels 1/7, and if we put the pawns at levels 3/5 they are attacking each other. However, it occurs to me that we might take an idea from Burmese Chess, where half a player's pawns start on rank 4 and the rest on rank 3, and put three pawns at levels 2/6 and three more at levels 3/5 :



It will be noticed that the pawns on the a and h files are mutually passed, as are b1/g8, c1/f8, and e1/d8, but that any advance by an a or h file pawn will put it en prise to an 8 or 1 rank pawn and vice versa.

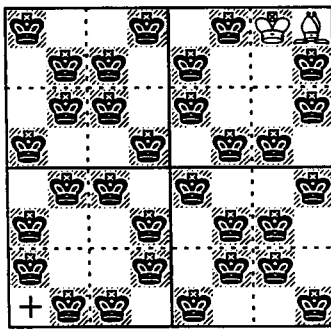
Setting up the pieces isn't quite so easy. Three squares are available at level 2, a2/a3/a5, but all are dark and every free square at level 3 is attacked by a Black pawn. So if a light-square bishop is to be used, there seem to be only four options: (a) to withdraw one of Black's level 5 pawns to level 6, thus making a square at level 3 available; (b) to set it at a1, putting the king elsewhere; (c) to omit it from the initial array, and instead to allow its introduction later in the play; (d) to permit a bishop to make a single-step move to or from its side's home square, thus allowing it to change colour. I have no feel for which of these options is likely to lead to the best game.

The queen presents an even bigger problem. The position below turned up in the course of an exploratory essay. It is (I think) a mate in two, and if a position like this yields a quick mate then perhaps the queen is a little too powerful for comfort. Those who have not dropped out may care to solve it for themselves (answer on page 167). We are looking for a simple check and mate, not for problemistic subtlety.

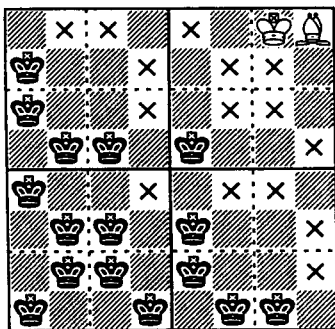


The point now belatedly occurred to me: do we need queens at all? Even K + B can stalemate a bare king. Can such a stalemate be forced?

Yes, it can, at least if the bishop runs on light squares (which it will if it has arisen by promotion), and the method is not without elegance. Suppose that the pawn has just promoted, that White's king is on say g8 protecting it, and that Black's king has replied to the promotion by moving to a dark square (if it has moved to a light square, the initial triangulation will not be needed):

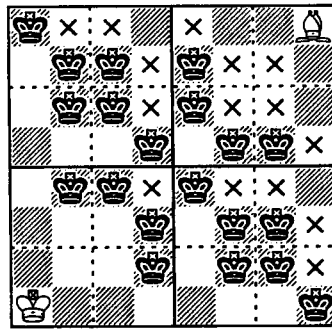


White plays say Be8 or Bh5 (at least one of these moves will be safe), and Black moves to a light square. White continues with Bf7, remaining in touch with h8, and Black moves to a dark square. If he chooses a square at level 6, White's move back to h8 will stalemate him at once, so suppose he chooses a square at level 4 or 2. White's bishop returns to h8, Black's king moves to a light square, and we have one of the positions below:



The Black king can be on any of the 16 light squares marked, the bishop controls all 15 squares at level 5 (marked with a cross), and it's White's move. White therefore has the king opposition, and his king can march down to a1 secure in the knowledge that the bishop is confining

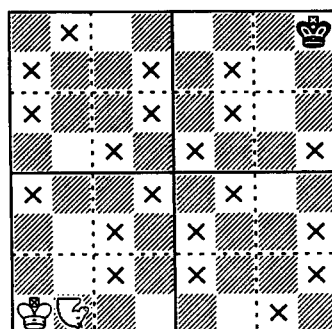
the Black king to level 4 and below. Black must meet White's eventual Ka1 by playing to somewhere on the equator:



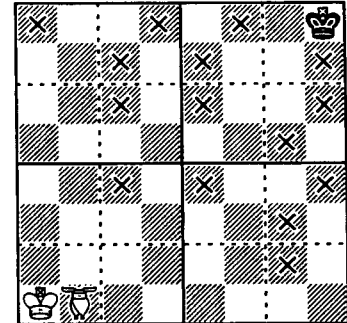
and this would be stalemate if it was Black's move.

White must therefore triangulate again, but any bishop move will give Black access to level 5, and if his king exploits its double-move option he concedes the king opposition and he won't be able to get back to a1. Or will he? White plays say Kd1 or Ka4 taking his double-move option (one of these will always be possible), Black plays to level 3, White continues with Kc1/Kb1 or Ka3/Ka2 ready to return to a1 (again, one of these will always be possible), and Black must come down to level 2 if he is to stop him. Now Black is well away from level 5, and the bishop can move (it doesn't matter where). This gives White back the king opposition. Black plays to level 3; the White king regains a1; Black plays to level 4; the bishop goes back to h8; and the triangulation has been achieved.

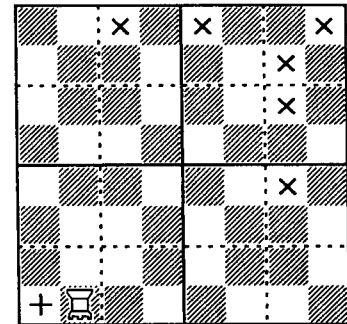
So the game is playable without queens. What about the other members of Parton's menagerie: the unicorn (moves in three dimensions), narwhal (R + U), hippogriff (four dimensions), and wyvern (five)? Let's put a unicorn at level 2:



Well, it attacks ten of fifteen squares at level 5, but at least it leaves five untouched and it doesn't attack levels 6 and 7. But a hippogriff at level 2 attacks five of six squares at level 6:



while a wyvern at level 2 attacks the opposing home square and the enemy king has to start somewhere else:



I doubt if such obtrusive pieces have a role to play in a practical game.

So: kings, rooks, bishops, pawns, and just possibly unicorns, but no queens. Much remains to be explored - apart from the details of the starting position, possibilities to be considered are the introduction of pieces during play either on the home square or elsewhere, the use of one-step moves to or from the home square to change a bishop's colour, and perhaps the redefinition of the bishop's move as two rook moves in succession instead of a direct leap to the destination square (so that its own men must get out of its way and its opponent's men can block it). This last would make no difference to the endings we have been considering, but it might enrich the early play. But for those who are tempted to experiment, there is a board on the front page, and this can easily be put under a photocopier if something larger is needed. Have fun, and tell us how you get on.

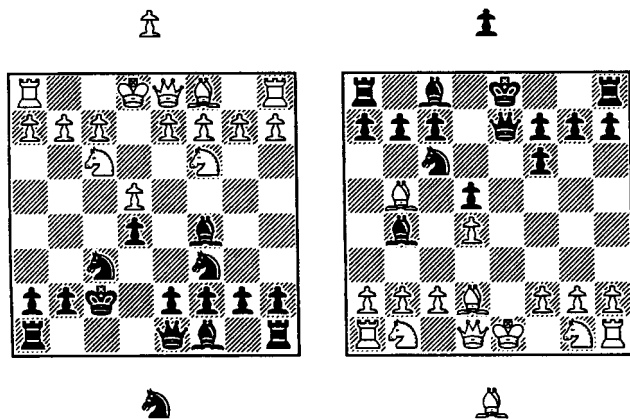
BOOK REVIEW

Bughouse Chess edited by Georg von Zimmermann (ISBN 978-3-8334-6811-7, 252pp). 20 euros plus postage and packing from Libri.de or Amazon.de; for more ordering options see <www.bughouse-book.com>.

A **book** on Bughouse? Surely it is the ultimate fun game, and not something to be played and studied seriously? But played and studied seriously it certainly is, and it has devotees at a surprisingly high level.

The rules are very simple. Teams of two sit side by side, one player having White and the other Black. They play normal chess against their immediate opponent, but when a player captures a man he passes it to his partner, who can subsequently drop it on any vacant square instead of making a normal move. Play is with clocks, always to a fast time limit (three minutes is now customary on the Internet), and first mate or flag-fall decides the team result. The game has acquired several names, not all of which were known to David Pritchard: Tandem-Chess, Team-Chess, Exchange-Chess, Hungarian-Chess, or simply "bug".

The special flavour of the game is shown by the following example.



The upper team's White, on the left, had sacrificed a bishop for the initiative, and the lower team's White unwisely covered the check on his own board by playing Qe2. His opponent immediately grabbed the queen and passed it to his partner, who used it to deliver mate in four (1 Ng5+ Kg6 2 Q@f7+ Kxg5 3 h4+ with either 3...Kf4 4 g3 or 3...Kh6 4 P@g5).

A blunder, yes, but an instructive one. It comes from an extended chapter "Initiative vs material" which is one of the most interesting in the book. In ordinary chess, a player rarely sacrifices more than a pawn without being able to see his way through to a mate or material gain. In bug, sacrifices such as upper White's Bxf7 above are almost routine. There isn't a mating attack *at the time of making the sacrifice*, and at ordinary chess the move would be absurd; but at bug, a player takes account not only of what is already present on his board but on what may eventually come to him. Of course he doesn't play for a blunder such as Qe2 above - this wouldn't be strategic planning, it

would be wishful thinking - but the mere fact that his partner's opponent cannot now afford a queen trade limits his options. By sacrificing on his own board, upper White put his partner's opponent under pressure on his.

Now suppose that the position on the right is different, and that something like Qe2 is White's only legal move. We now have a not uncommon situation where neither White wants to move: lower White because his move will allow his opponent to take the queen and pass it to his partner, upper White because his attack won't succeed until a queen becomes available to him (all right, he can play Ng5+, but Black will reply ...Kf8 and White still needs a queen to make progress). So both Whites would like to sit without playing, and the resulting "sitzkrieg" will be lost by the side whose flag will fall first. And if mate is inevitable, again you sit, and your side will still win if your partner's opponent's flag falls first. Small time advantages are therefore far more important than in ordinary chess. The book contains graphs based on analyses of Internet games played between 2000 and 2005 which show that the wasting of as little as a second reduces your side's chances of winning by about 2%, and that a team with a time advantage of 20 seconds will win four times out of five.

Enough about the game; what about the book? It's a team effort, and looks at all aspects of the game. There is an introductory chapter on strategy for the beginner, followed by more penetrating chapters on the attacker's perspective, the defender's perspective, ways to attack, defensive strategies, mating techniques, and the matter of "initiative vs material" already mentioned. These amount to some 70+ pages, and I imagine they will be regarded by most readers below expert level as the most valuable parts of the book. There are chapters on advanced opening theory, and others which deal with the transition from reasonably good to genuinely expert. There are three illustrative games which are annotated in depth with a generous provision of diagrams. There is a chapter of puzzles ranging from the relatively easy to the desperately difficult. And for lighter reading, there are entertaining accounts of European meetings in Berlin and Genève and an American bughouse tour, and a fascinating interview with the top-board Armenian grandmaster Levon Aronian.

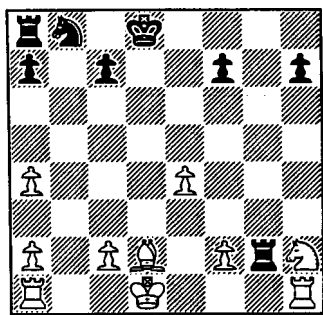
The realities of chess publishing have caused the book to be in English, even though this has compelled many of its contributors to write in what is not their native tongue. But they have done so very well, and far be it from me to snipe at the occasional glitch. (No foreigner need apologize to me for his English unless I can write his language better than he can write mine, which is a situation that does not normally arise; when I was writing the endgame study column for the French composition magazine *diagrammes*, it was no secret that everything was corrected and gently polished by a native speaker before it appeared in print). There are only a few parts which are difficult to read, and the difficulty of these lies in the subject matter and not in any deficiency of the writing.

At the moment, the book has no competitor, and I cannot see one becoming likely. Its preparation has been a remarkable effort, and I hope it does well.

LOSING CHESS

The solitary drawn game in the 2001 "First Unofficial Losing Chess World Championship" was the last-round meeting between Johan Bosman and Andrzej Nagorko, and although both sides missed wins it had several points of interest. As usual, I am relying on Stan Goldovski's *Giveaway Wizard* for the analysis.

Play started 1 e3 b5 2 Bxb5 e6 3 Bxd7 Bxd7 4 Na3 Bxa3 5 bxa3 Bc8 6 a4 Qxd2 7 Bxd2 e5 8 Qh5 Bg4 9 Qxe5 Kd8 10 Qxg7 Nf6 11 Qxg4 Nxc4 12 Nf3 Nxc2 13 Nxc2 Rg8? and White missed a not too obvious win by 14 Kd1. Black would have had to play 14...Rxc2 as in the game, and now what?

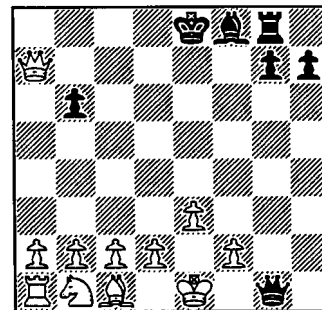
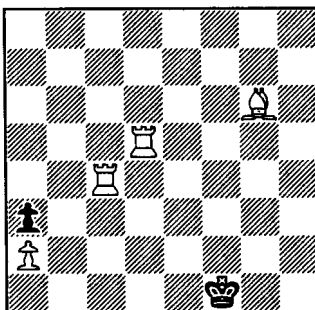


Answer on page 165.

In practice, White preferred 14 Kf1 ready to meet 14...Rxc2 by 15 Kxc2, and play continued 15...Nd7 16 c4 Nf8 17 Bc1 Ke7 18 Kf1 Rd8 19 Bd2 Rxd2 20 Rb1 Rxf2 21 Kxf2 a5 22 c5 c6 23 Rb5 cxb5 24 axb5 a4 25 Rb1 a3 26 b6 h5 27 Nf1 h4 28 b7 Ng6 29 b8K h3 30 Nd2 Nf4 31 exf4 f5 32 Kc7 Kf8 33 Kd8 Kg7 34 Rb8 h2 35 c6 h1K 36 c7 Kg1 37 Kxc1 Kf8 38 Ne4 fxe4 39 f5 e3 40 f6 e2 41 Ke7 Kxe7 42 fxe7 e1K (the only move not to lose at once) 43 Kf1 Kxf1 44 c8R Ke2 45 e8B. Without the pawns, this would be a standard win for White (all he has to do is to advance with caution and to make sure that all three pieces can always be given away in succession), but after 45...Ke3 46 Rb5 Kf2 47 Bg6 Kf1 48 Rd5 Kf2 49 Bh7 Kf1 50 Rc4 Kf2 51 Bg6 Kf1 he could presumably see no way of driving Black away from f1/f2 and so he conceded the draw. In fact the key to the win does not seem unduly

difficult, at least not when studied at home with computer assistance, but this was the last game of a tough tournament and I don't know how the clocks stood.

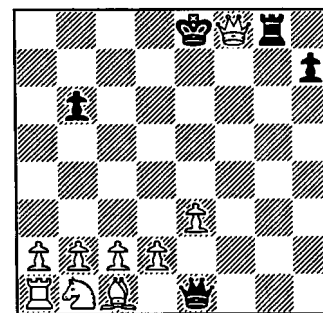
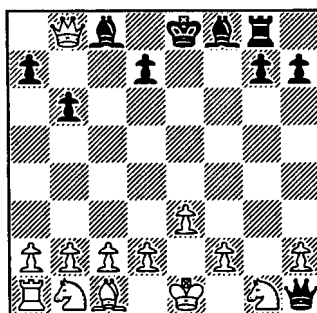
10...Qxg1 (the position after 10...Kd7 is unclear, while 10...Qxf2 would allow the queen exchange 11 Kxf2 Kxd7 after which White would stand considerably better) 11 Qxa7 :



Answer (or at least the key element of it) again on page 165.

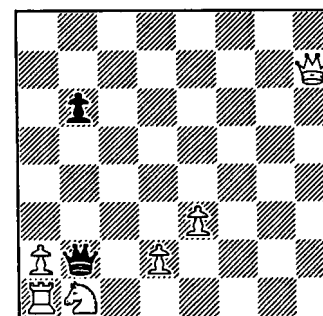
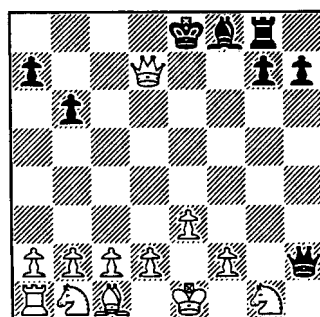
The Round 5 game between Marten Wortel and Lenny Taelman developed into to a typical Losing Chess queen fight. 1 e3 b6 2 Qf3 c5 3 Qxa8 c4 4 Qxb8 e6 5 Bxc4 Qg5 6 Bxe6 Qxg2 7 Bxf7 Qxh1 8 Bxg8 Rxc8 and which queen can be made to do the more damage?

11...Qxf2 (this lets White take the queen, which Black has so far been avoiding, but the winning lines after 12 Kxf2 Kd7 are easy and if the queen is left alive Black can take on e1, c1, and then b2 or c2 with the continuing option of a safe or a giveaway capture next time) 12 Qxg7 (12 Qxb6 Qxd2 is easy) Qxe1 (Qxe3 and Qxd2 also win but are less clear) 13 Qxf8 :



As a rule, in Losing Chess he who has the more material has the advantage, but in a queen fight the possessor of more material may find himself at a disadvantage because his opponent has a greater choice of capture at the crucial moment. Here, Black has a forced win. Play continued 9 Qxc8 Qxh2 (Qxg1 also wins) 10 Qxd7 :

13...Qxc1 14 Qxe8 (if White captures on g8 and then on e8 or h7, Black can throw his queen and then give away his last two men on h5/d7 and b5) Qxc2 15 Qxg8 Qxb2 16 Qxh7 :



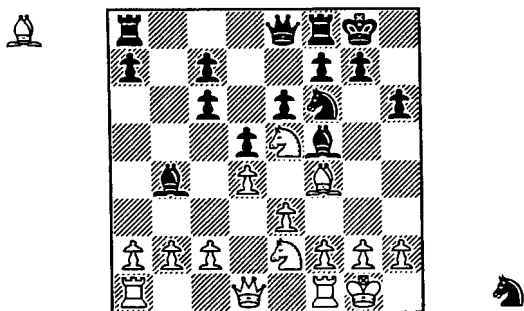
The chain of captures by the White Q has come to an end, but no matter: 16...Qxb1 and White resigned.

HOSTAGE CHESS

material from Paul Yearout

Hostage Chess isn't just played in our postal tourneys, and Paul Yearout recently sent me the annotated score of an interesting game he had played against Eric Tohtz. A quick reminder of the rules: when a man is captured, it is put in prison, and when its owner has a captured man of equal or higher value in his own prison (Q > R > B = N > P) he can make an exchange and recover it. The recovered man must be dropped back into play at once; the man given in exchange is placed in reserve ("held on its owner's airfield" is the official terminology) and can be parachuted back into play when its owner wishes. Eric was White, Paul Black; notes in quotation marks '...' are by Paul.

- | | | |
|----|--------|--------|
| 1 | d2-d4 | d7-d5 |
| 2 | Bc1-f4 | Nb8-c6 |
| 3 | Ng1-f3 | Bc8-f5 |
| 4 | e2-e3 | Ng8-f6 |
| 5 | Bf1-b5 | e7-e6 |
| 6 | Nb1-c3 | Bf8-b4 |
| 7 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| 8 | Bb5xc6 | b7xc6 |
| 9 | Nc3-e2 | h7-h6 |
| 10 | Nf3-e5 | Qd8-e8 |



- 11 (N-B) B@b7

White reclaims his lost bishop by exchange (N for B is regarded as an equal swap) and drops it on b7, the knight given in exchange going to Black's airfield whence he can drop it at leisure.

- 11 ... N@a5

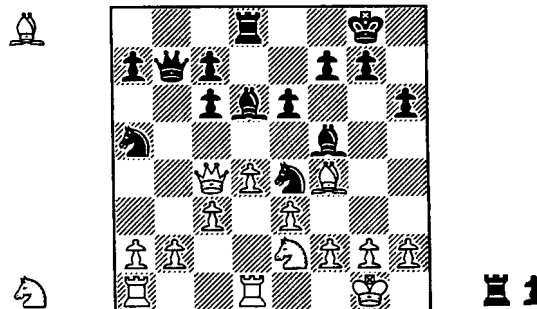
In fact Black drops it at once to prevent White from committing mayhem on c6. This concedes rook for bishop, about which Paul makes an interesting comment. "Winning the exchange" is a left-over from orthochess which is less significant in Hostage. Each side always has a full complement of pieces, just disposed variously. The rook's immediate value is greater purchasing power, which must be used carefully, it being offset by the rook's appearance on the opposing airfield.'

- | | | |
|----|--------|--------|
| 12 | Bb7xa8 | Qe8xa8 |
| 13 | c2-c3 | Bb4-d6 |
| 14 | Qd1-a4 | Na5-c4 |
| 15 | Ne5xc4 | d5xc4 |
| 16 | Rf1-d1 | Rf8-d8 |

- | | | |
|----|--------|--------|
| 17 | Qa4xc4 | Qa8-b7 |
| 18 | Rd1-d2 | |

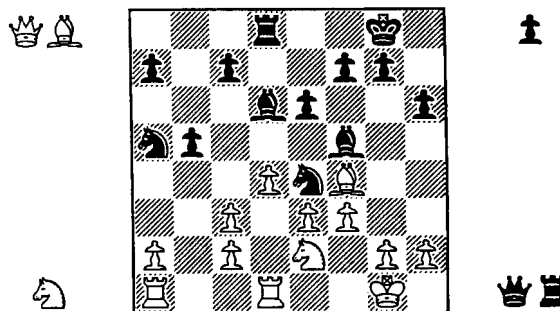
'Careless!'

- | | | |
|----|--------|-------------|
| 18 | ... | Nf6-e4 |
| 19 | Rd2-d1 | (N-N) N@a5? |



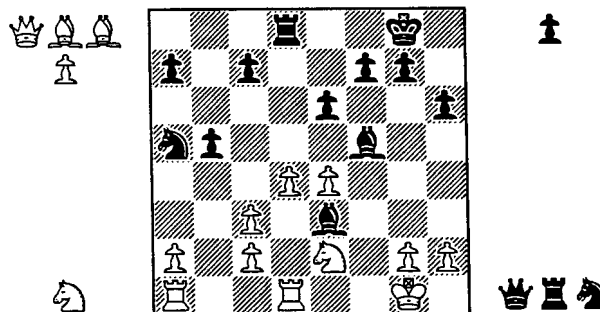
'White's prematurely exposed queen begs to be harassed, but an airfield knight is more potent than one on the board, particularly placed on a rook file. It is preferable to hoard off-the-board pieces in anticipation of a later spate of drops.'

- | | | |
|----|-----------|--------|
| 20 | Qc4-a4 | Qb7xb2 |
| 21 | (P-P) @c2 | Qb2-b5 |
| 22 | Qa4xb5 | c6xb5 |
| 23 | f2-f3 | |



'Hazardous. f2 is even more dangerous in Hostage than in orthochess. Trying to drive off White's knight at e4 is not worth leaving f2 vacant, especially when no pawn is available to drop there. Black's strategy henceforth is aimed at that empty square.'

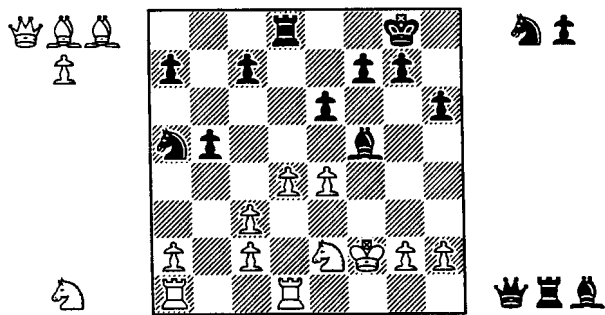
- | | | |
|----|-------|---------|
| 23 | ... | Bd6xf4 |
| 24 | f3xe4 | Bf4xe3+ |



'White's capture is futile, the imprisoned knight now being more threatening, not less. This is Black's first attempt at a

Philidor-derived mate. If 25 Kh1, (Q-Q)Q@g1+, 26 ?xg1, (B-N)N@f2 mate.' (I too was brought up to regard this smothered mate as "Philidor's Legacy", but in truth it was discovered much earlier; it is in Lucena's book of around 1497, and can reasonably be regarded as the first classic discovery in the modern form of chess.) To avoid this, White plays

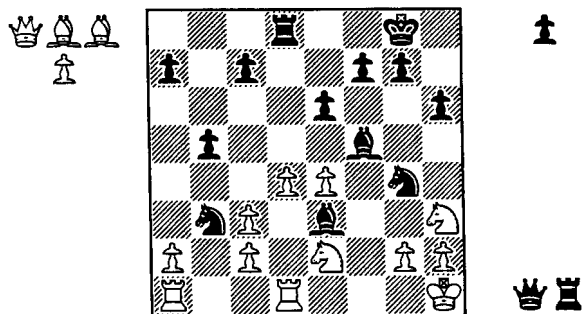
- 25 (N-B)B@f2
- Be3xf2+
- 26 Kg1xf2



Black now played 26...N@g4+ 27 Kg1 (B-B)B@e3+ with a second Philidor try, and we shall examine this in a moment. However: 'But he is simply too enamored with dropping that queen at g1. John Leslie pointed out that 26...P@e3+ is much better than his knight drop. 27 Kxe3 leaves no refuge against Black's array of off-board pieces. The only other choice is 27 Kg1. Then 27...N@h3+! 28 Kh1 gives Black his coveted Philidor, while 28 gxh3 (Q-Q)Q@f2+ 29 Kh1 (B-B)B@g2 mate uses all of Black's resources, a desideratum in the parental Shogi.' (This is a reference to the aesthetics of the "tsume-shogi" problem, an example of which we saw in VC 42.)

This 'charming ending' having been missed, play actually continued

- 26 ... N@g4+
- 27 Kf2-g1 (B-B)B@e3+
- 28 B@f2 Be3xf2+
- 29 Kg1-h1 Bf2-e3
- 'Third attempt.'
- 30 N@h3 Na5-b3!



'Fourth attempt. The fastest way for the knight to reach f2 is through White's prison, so White dare not take it.'

- 31 e4xf5 e6xf5

'This recapture seems necessary. Anticipating a possible capture of a white knight, its dropping at e7 with the pawn

looking down the diagonal toward h7 is risky for Black's relatively weak king.'

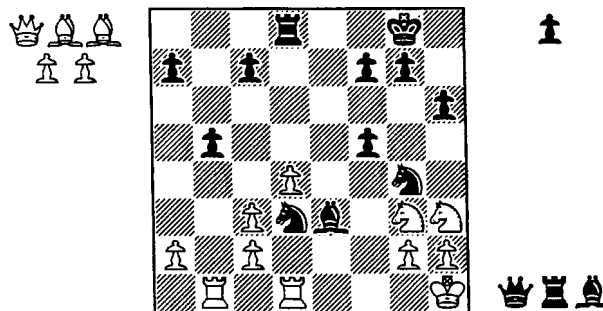
- 32 Ra1-b1 Nb3-c1

'Not 32...Nxd4, the knight having pinned itself against the sole defender of its king.'

- 33 Ne2-g3

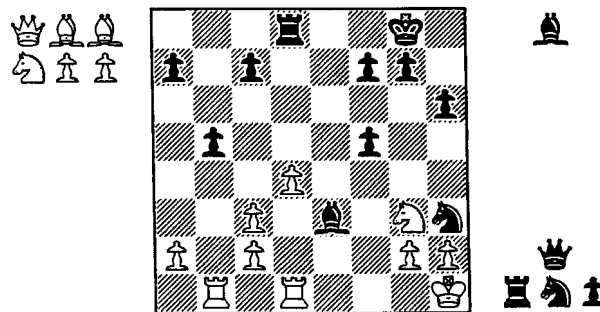
'This pair of white moves are orthic remnants. Black is not interested in capturing either piece as that would distract him from the knight's attempt and, as prisoners, enhance their value to White. Using Rf1 or (B-B)B@f3 for White's 32nd or 33rd moves would help with the defense of f2 or remove the knight at g4.'

- 33 ... Nc1-d3



'Black's knight has arrived in view of f2, setting up his fifth attempt. There is a Shogi proverb, "Drop where your opponent wishes to", also pertinent in Hostage.'

- 34 (B-B)B@g1
- P@f2
- 35 Bg1xf2 Nd3xf2+
- 36 Nh3xf2 Ng4xf2+
- 37 Kh1-g1 Nf2-h3+
- 38 Kg1-h1



- 38 ... (Q-Q)Q@g1+

'At last!!'

- 39 Rd1xg1 Nh3-f2 mate

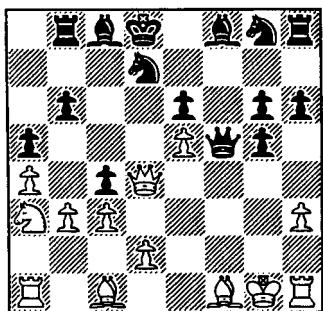
'Sadly, as John Leslie remarked, the queen drop is still unnecessary. 38...(Q-N)N@f2 mate is a somewhat flamboyant gesture ending the game a move sooner.'

'Extrapolating from a single game is unwarranted, but this game hints that truly proficient Hostage players (if any ever arise) may be more reticent about captures, which actually increase the value of a piece for their opponent, and that trying to force a desirable capture of one's own piece may lead to tactics unlike those of either parent game.'

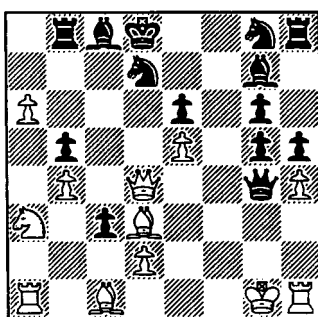
AVALANCHE CHESS

material from Peter Coast

The following Avalanche game, from the 3th Heterodox Olympiad, was one of several which readers sent me as possible examples for ECV 2. In the event, I chose another game to represent Avalanche, but I think readers will like to see it now. White was initially Zbigniew Woronowicz, but he had to drop out part-way through due to blindness and Wieslaw Pilat took over; Black was Peter Coast. Notes in quotation marks '...' are by Peter. We take up the game after Black's 10th move, when Wieslaw has taken over but Black is still a piece ahead.



- 11 b3-b4/b5 a5xb4/a5
 12 c3xb4/c3 Bf8-g7/h4
 13 Bf1-d3/h5 Qf5-g4/a6+

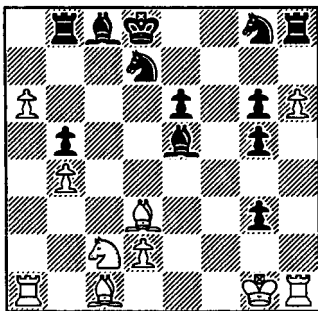


'Even though I had the next two moves planned, I am not at all sure this is good. The a6 pawn becomes dangerous, and the Q exchange relieves the tension.'

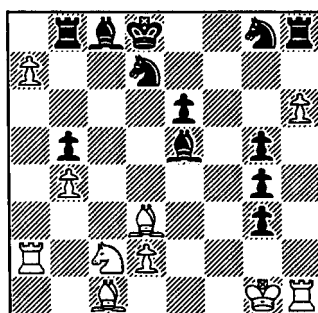
- 14 Qd4xg4/c2 h5xg4/h5
 15 Na3xc2/g3 Bg7xe5/h6

'I somehow have managed to give White two passed pawns each supported by a Rook! Both will promote.' But if Black doesn't pull

the h-pawn to h6, he must pull the a-pawn to a7, and this is even more unpleasant.



- 16 Ra1-a2/g4 g6-g5/a7

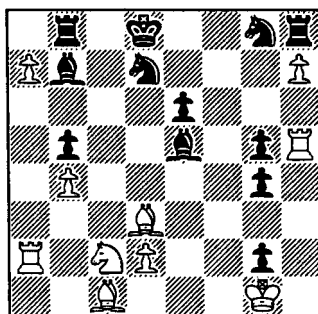


'The idea here is 17 axb8Q/g2 gxh1Q/h7+ 18 Kxh1/g3 Bxb8/- is dangerous for Black, and I have retained my material advantage.'

- 17 Rh1-h5/g2!

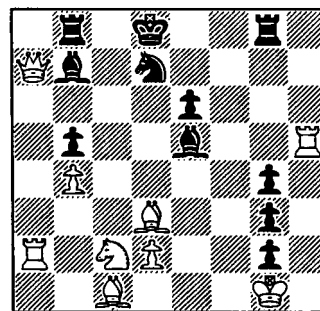
'This was an ugly shock. His king seems safe for a while and the two R pawns survive. I need to keep the game alive. So...'

- 17 ... Bc8-b7/h7!



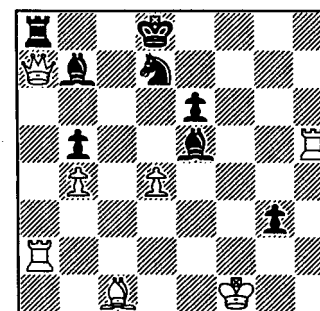
'Now, at least, his K cannot move and any check may be fatal.' (Kf2 cannot be played because the accompanying pawn pull g4-g3 or g2-g1Q would give check; it is the pawn's owner who decides the promotion when a pawn is pulled to its eighth rank.)

- 18 h7xg8Q/g3+ Rh8xg8/a8Q
 19 Qa8-a7/g4



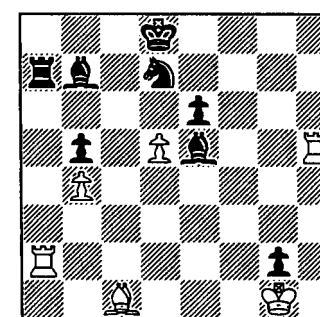
'I'm not sure if it's right for W to keep his Q. Qxb7 may be best because he can win the g-file pawns with his king and the material is level. As it is, there are serious mating threats.'

- 19 ... Rg8-f8/-
 20 Nc2-e3/- Rf8-f1/- +
 21 Ne3xf1/- g2xf1Q/- +
 22 Bd3xf1/g2 g2xf1Q/d3+
 23 Kg1xf1/g3 Rb8-a8/d4



'The point. White must either block the g2 pawn or move his king.'

- 24 Kf1-g1/g2 Ra8xa7/d5



- 25 d5xe6/-

'White is now desperate for a diversion, as Bd4 is fatal.'

- 25 ... Kd8-e8/e7
 26 Rh5xe5/- Ra7xa2/-
 27 Re5xb5/- Bb7-e4/-
 28 Rb5-g5/- Ra2-a1/b5

'Here time ran out, but Black has an easy win, e.g. 29 Rg8/+ Kxe7/b6 30 Rxb7/- Rxc1+/b7 31 Kh2/- Bxb7/-.'

MDC : WHY A SUCCESSFUL FORTRESS SHOULD BE A WIN

by Andrew Perkis

We met Andrew's "Miller's Daughter Chess" in VC 52 and looked at it further last time, and while I liked the game I queried the rule that the successful creation of an impregnable fortress should count as a win. Andrew stands by his guns, and I have offered him space to present his case. I have had to abridge what he sent, but I hope I have done so fairly.

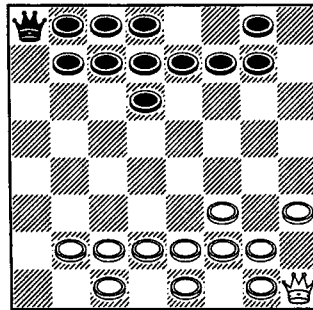
A reminder of the rules. Each side has a Miller's Daughter and eleven Princes, White b1-g1/b2-g2 (MDd1), Black diametrically opposite (MDe8). A piece may move one step as a chess king, or may jump an orthogonally or diagonally adjacent piece of either colour. Sequences of jumps are allowed, but in the case of a prince the overall effect must be towards the opponent's back line. Additionally, an MD must always have a "liberty", namely an empty square to which she has a step move. The player's first move must give her this liberty, and each later move must preserve it or give another in its place. A prince cannot be captured; an MD can, by moving a prince to her square, and this is the normal way of winning. In addition, a player can win by surrounding his MD with an impenetrable fortress, and he can draw by moving his MD to a square adjacent to his opponent's MD and declaring an "alliance". - JDB

At the end of the last article, John questioned whether the successful construction of a fortress should really count as a win, rather than a draw. My intuition had been that a ruling "fortress = draw" would make the game far less interesting. Now I had to check this out.

In the last article we saw how the attempt to construct a fortress during the opening moves is frequently a losing strategy. Players who persist in such a strategy can quickly come

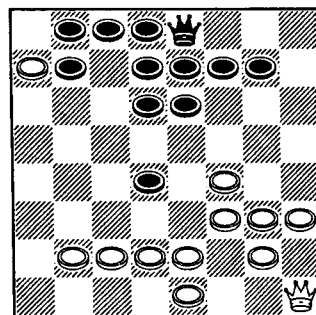
unstuck. While under construction, a fortress can be weak (a single layer of princes makes the MD more vulnerable to capture by jump). This may not be fatal if one has also played some attacking moves - but if one's opponent is not under fire himself, he will be in a perfect position to exploit this intermediate weakness.

A scenario we did not look at last time arises if both players commence with defensive moves. A cautious - but playable - opening would be as follows: 1 MDd1-f3-h1 f8-d6 2 f1-h3 MDe8-c6-a8 (playable, but c7-e5 is more aggressive) 3 b1-d1-f3 :



At this point it would be suicidal for Black to continue with a fortress building race. He would simply lose it! After 3...g8-e6-c6, White would play 4 c1-e3. Now there seems to be no way to prevent White forming a fortress (4...c7-e5 5 g1-h2 d6-f4 6 e1-g3 followed by e2-f1 and d2-e1).

So, under the current ruling, Black is forced to continue more aggressively. Play might continue 3...g8-e6 4 g1-g3 c7-e5 5 f2-f4 with even but lively prospects. A possible further continuation would be 5...e5-d4 6 c1-c3-e5-c7-a7 MDa8-c6-e8 with astoundingly complicated possibilities :



Black's choice, then, is between losing a fortress building race or

forcing a situation in which very sharp play seems likely. The latter choice, however, does not go hand in hand (as in previous examples we have looked at) with Black ending up clearly better. Chances seem roughly even.

Now if such a "choice" can present itself after a few moves, it seems likely that this would commonly occur later in games also. With the current ruling the player does not really have a choice at all. To attack may lead to hair-raising complications, but at least one is still in the game! If, on the other hand, a fortress were to count as a draw, then I believe there would inevitably be games where players took the easy way out. Part of the character of MDC as I conceived it is that it does not allow players to stay in a comfort zone for more than about two moves at the start of games - and I would be reluctant to alter that.

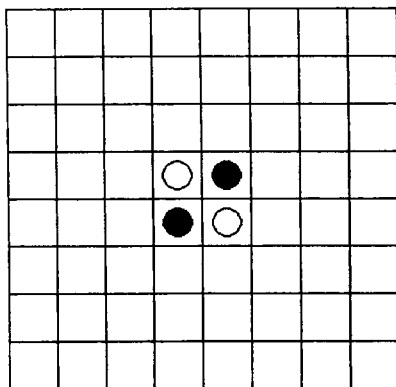
We might look at this differently if draws could otherwise be arranged, or if pacific "dead" positions - where an agreed draw could at least appear to be honorable - ever occurred. In the 20+ games I have played so far, there has been only one (very unpeaceful!) draw - by alliance. Analysis of two recorded games showed variations which could have ended in perpetual check. In one it was a missed resource but in the other it would have been an inferior choice for the player who was better.

Although there are as yet no examples from actual games which show play enhanced by the "fortress threat", I think they will not be long in coming. As temporary guardian of the game, I would say that the "fortress = win" rule should stand, perhaps pending further research and further study of games. Play without it would probably be quite different. The objection that a secondary objective such as this can be unnatural in a CV may have some weight. However, the technical problems in combining Halma mechanics with a chess objective are such that they cannot be brushed aside. If it enhances the game to make the fortress a win, I hope players can live with it. Further developments may be possible, but first we need more players.

RETROGRADE OTHELLO

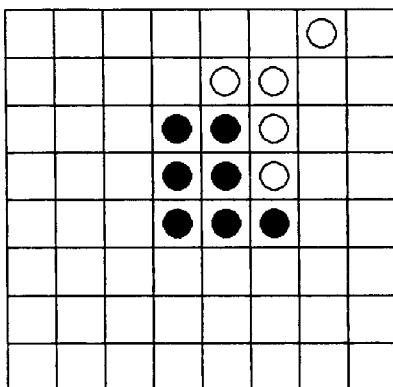
Peter Fayers has not been able to contribute his usual "Proof Games" page this time, but he has drawn my attention to a web site article by Alain Brobecker containing some Othello proof games which he thought might be of interest. I have certainly found them so myself, and perhaps others will as well. They are similar to chess proof games in some ways, and quite different in others.

The rules of Othello (a modern proprietary version of the old game "Reversi") are very simple. Play uses an 8x8 unchequered board and 64 counters, each of which is black on one side and white on the other. The board is set up as below :



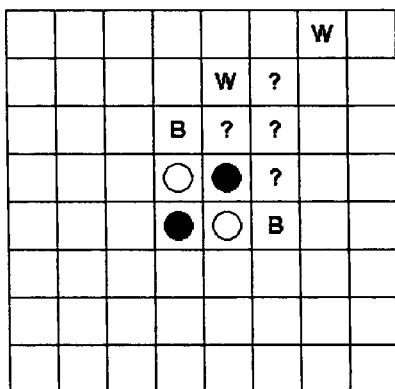
and the players divide the remaining 60 counters between them. Each player in turn, Black starting, places a counter so as to grip one or a line of his opponent's counters between the counter just placed and a counter of his own colour already on the board, and turns over the counters thus gripped. For example, Black could start by playing at c5, gripping the white counter at d5 between the new black counter at c5 and the existing one at e5 and turning it over; White could reply by playing at c4, turning over d4 similarly; Black could continue by playing at e3, gripping e4 between e3 and e5 and the now white d4 between e3 and c5, and turning them both over; White could reply by playing at f4, gripping d4 and e4 (now both black) between f4 and c4 and again turning them both over. If a player can place a counter, he must; if he cannot place a counter, he passes;

when both players have to pass, the game finishes, and the winner is the player with the larger number of counters showing on the board.



Alain's interest in Othello proof games was sparked off by the position above, which was composed by Erich Friedman. If this position has been reached in play, what were the moves?

It's not too difficult to work out. Once a square has been occupied, it stays occupied; furthermore, unless the man placed on it is later gripped by two opposing men, it does not change colour. The man at d6 has never been gripped, so it must have been placed by Black and never subsequently turned; similarly the man at f4; the men at e7 and g8 must similarly have been placed by White. This immediately tells us four of the eight moves, though not their order :

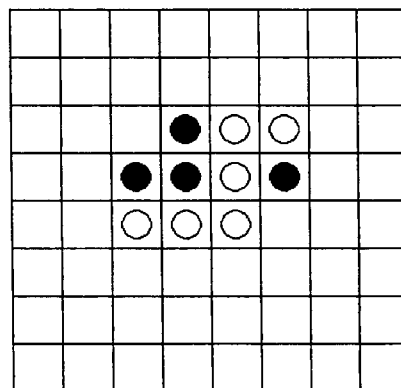


More sophisticated arguments are possible; for example, f5 must have been placed by White (had it been placed by Black, there is no way it could have subsequently been turned), and f7 by Black (because only by gripping a Black man at f7 could White have placed a man at g8). However, it is easy to make an

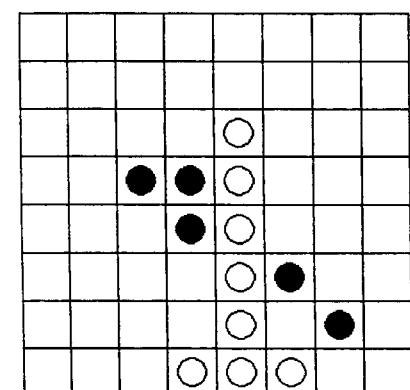
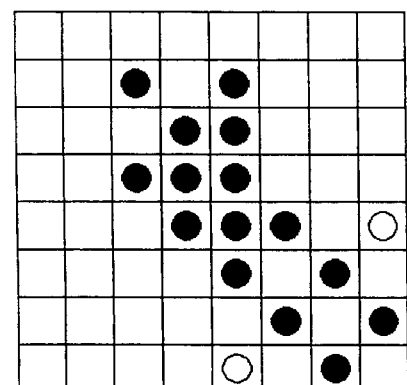
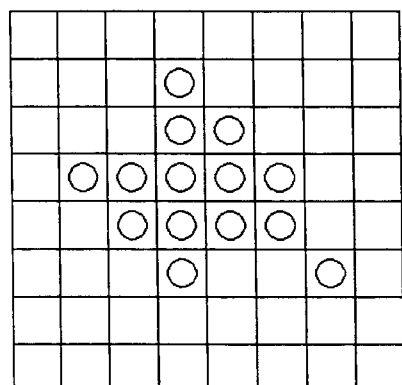
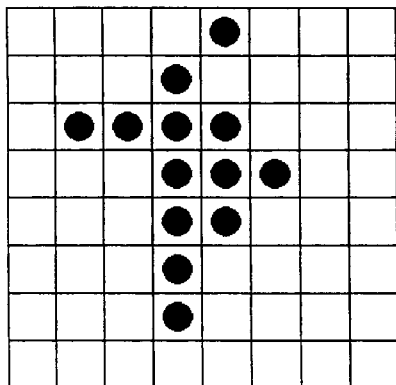
assumption of this kind which is in fact not true, and in my experience so far it is safest to construct a simple set of obviously forced moves such as is shown in the diagram and then to analyse forwards from the starting position, probing and backtracking as necessary. The answer, which is unique, will be found on page 166.

Is this uniqueness fortunate? Not really. The main difference between Othello and chess proof games lies in the frequency of uniqueness of play. Around 50,000 chess positions can be reached after two moves by each side, but in only about one per cent is the move order forced. A mere 60 Othello positions can be reached after two moves by each side, and in only three of them is the move order *not* forced.

If this has appealed, try the five positions that follow. All but the last were found by Alain's exhaustive computer analysis, but although they were discovered by computer I think they are solvable by hand. The first is a gentle introduction in which the play is confined to a 4 x 3 rectangle; the second and third show the shortest winning positions for Black and White respectively; the fourth shows another winning position, though this time the loser still has some men on the board. The final position owes a little to myself, in that I took one of Alain's computer discoveries and extended the play. I have to say that I failed on one and had to look up the answer, and Alain himself couldn't do another and the solution given is my own; his computer only listed positions which were uniquely derivable, it didn't give the games leading to them. However, at least one of us has successfully solved each of these problems, and I think they are a fair test.

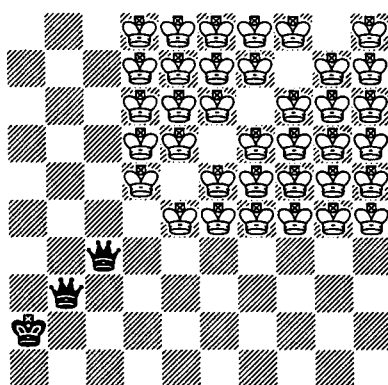


MORE ON TWO QUEENS AGAINST TWO MOVES

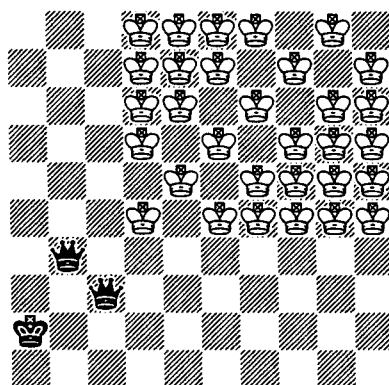


In VC 53, we looked at the final stage in the "King and Pawns Game" where White is allowed to make two moves to Black's one, and showed that Black could force mate with $K + 2Q \checkmark K$ on a normal 8x8 board. However, the method was dependent on the board size, and it occurred to me to wonder on how large a board the mate could be forced. Much to my surprise, I found that there was a different and rather simpler procedure which would force the mate on a board of any size.

We assume that the queens are diagonally adjacent, and that they are confining the enemy king to a sector of the board with their own king safely shielded. There are two cases, depending on the orientation of the queens with respect to the occupied region :



and :

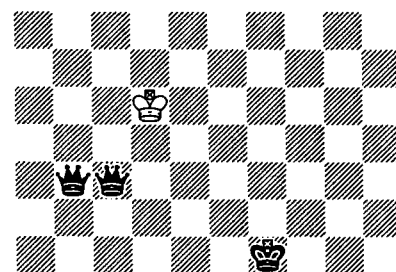


We shall show that in each case Black can play to advance a queen and

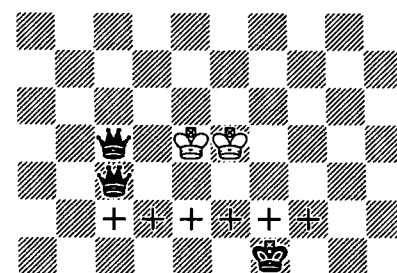
obtain another such position one rank further up or one file to the right. We shall use normal algebraic notation, so 'a1' will be the bottom left-hand square as portrayed even though this is no longer a corner square.

The first case is very easy. If White is not on the fifth rank, Black can play $\dots Qbb5$, gaining a rank upwards; if White is not on the d-file, Black can play $\dots Qbd3$, gaining a file to the right. One or other of these moves will always be possible.

A similar advance will be possible in the second case unless White is on d5. In this case, Black brings his king across to g1 and then plays $\dots Qbb3+$:



White does best to play $Ke4$ or $Kf4$, since any other move will allow Black to play $\dots Qcc4$ and set up the first case. With White on e4 or f4, Black continues $\dots Qbc4+$:



We notice how the Black king and queens between them just cover all the accessible squares on the second rank. White must therefore retreat, and only $Kd6$ prevents an immediate $\dots Q4d4$ gaining a file to the right. But after $Kd6$ Black can play $\dots Q3b3$ once more obtaining the first case, and the advance will duly follow. It's a very simple five-move repetitive sequence, counting the queen advance at move 4 and a parallel king move at move 5, and it ends with the defender scrunched into the top right corner.

So $K + 2Q \checkmark K$ is in fact a win however large the board may be.

Answers on page 166. If you want more, look at Alain's web site

<<http://abrobecker.free.fr>>

or try to find the three positions after two moves by each side which can be reached in more than one way.

PROGRESSIVE 007

While looking further into what last time we called "Progressive Orthodox Chess", I noticed that the game had been invented a couple of years earlier by Edward Jackman under the name "Progressive 007". The rules were apparently identical. In Jackman's "007 Chess", each player makes three moves per turn: own man, opponent's man, own man. In Progressive 007, White moves a White man, Black moves a Black and then a White, White's series 3 moves BWB, Black's 4 WBWB, White's 5 WBWBW, and so on. All moves must be legal for the side on whose behalf they are made, and each series must be played in full unless mate intervenes.

A natural and standard tactic is to move the enemy king into danger. Here Norbert Geissler (my apologies for "Geisler" once last time) merely centres it, but this is enough to win. Square brackets show moves made by the opponent, "/" the end of a series.

- 1 b2-b4 / h7-h5
- 2 [f2-f3] / [f7-f6]
- 3 a2-a4 [d7-d6] /
- 4 [Ke1-f2] Nb8-c6
- 5 [Kf2-g3] e7-e5 /

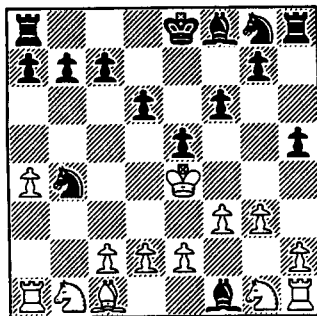
Black brings White's king forward ...

- 6 Kg3-f2 [Qd8-d7]
- 7 g2-g3 [Qd7-h3]
- 8 Bf1xh3 /

... White tries to take it back ...

- 8 ... Nc6xb4
- 9 [Qd1-f1] Bc8xh3
- 10 [Kf2-e3] Bh3xf1
- 11 [Ke3-e4] /

... but Black insists :

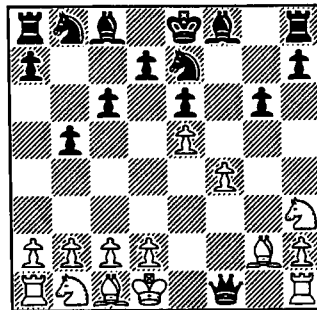


White tried 11...[Nd3] 12 Kxd3 [Bxe2+] 13 Kxe2 [f5] 14 Ke1 [g5] getting his king right back, but Black, with four moves for each side, simply

moved it to d1 and promoted on f1.

A win by Gabriel Cornacchini ended in a typical mid-board mate.

- 1 g2-g4 / b7-b5
- 2 [f2-f3] / [f7-f6]
- 3 e2-e4 [Ke8-f7] /
- 4 [Ke1-e2] g7-g6
- 5 [Ke2-d3] e7-e6 /
- 6 e4-e5 [f6-f5]
- 7 Ng1-h3 [Qd8-g5]
- 8 Nh3xg5+ / Kf7-e8
- 9 [f3-f4] f5xg4
- 10 [Qd1-f3] g4xf3
- 11 [Ng5-h3] / [f3-f2]
- 12 Ke3-e2 [c7-c6]
- 13 Ke2-d1 [Ng8-e7]
- 14 Bf1-g2 [f2-f1Q+] /



A mid-board mate from here, Black being forced to waste a move taking his own queen? But yes :

- 15 [Bg2xf1] Bc8-a6
- 16 [Kd1-e2] b5-b4+
- 17 [Ke2-e3] d7-d5
- 18 [Ke3-d4] Ne7-f5#.

The tournament winners, Fred Galvin and Norbert Geissler, shared the points against each other and won all their other games. In the preliminary pool, Fred had White :

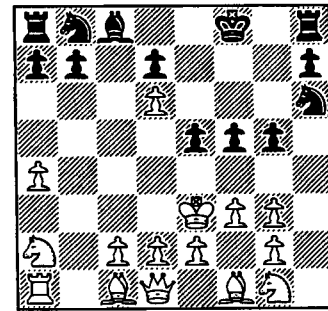
- 1 a2-a4 / e7-e5
- 2 [f2-f3] /

We saw last time that 2 [b3]? allows 2...[Qh4] 3 Nf3 [Qxf2+] forcing Black to take his own queen.

- 2 ... [Qd8-g5]
- 3 Nb1-c3 [Qg5-g3+] /

The queen still goes, but this time Black appears to get compensation.

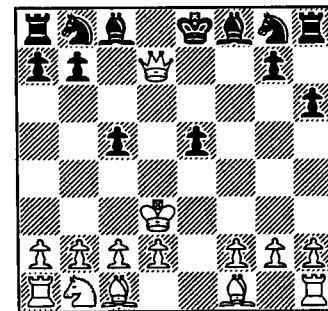
- 4 [h2xg3] c7-c5
- 5 [Rh1-h6] Ng8xh6 /
- 6 b2-b4 [Bf8-d6]
- 7 b4xc5 [Ke8-e7]
- 8 c5xd6+ / Ke7-f8
- 9 [Ke1-f2] f7-f5
- 10 [Kf2-e3] g7-g5
- 11 [Nc3-a2] /



I'll let Fred take up the story. "After Norbert's last series, I couldn't find any way to avoid being checkmated on the next turn, so I had to resign. If anybody can find a good move for White in the final position, I'd like to see it!"

When they met again in the championship pool, it was Norbert who had White :

- 1 e2-e4 c7-c5
- 2 [Ke1-e2] / [f7-f5]
- 3 e4xf5 [h7-h6] /
- 4 [Ke2-f3] e7-e5
- 5 [f5-f6] Qd8xf6+ /
- 6 Kf3-e2 [Qf6-f3+]
- 7 Ng1xf3 [Ke8-f7]
- 8 Nf3xe5+ / Kf7-e8
- 9 [Ke2-d3] d7-d6
- 10 [Qd1-g4] d6xe5
- 11 [Qg4-d7+] /



and again White resigned.

In the tournament report, Norbert commented that in his opinion a game with best play by both sides should end with a mate by Black at series 8. He pointed out that all the tournament games which were not decided by earlier blunders showed this behaviour with a single exception, where a mate was possible but Black missed it. Fred Galvin subsequently suggested that if the idea was tried again, Black should start with a White move (1 [f3] being a natural choice), but I do not know if this has been put to the test.

THE END IS NIGH !

by Paul Byway

Solutions to competition 29

#175 8 Kd7 d4 d3 dxc2 h5 hxg4 Rxh2 c1Q mate. #176 7 a3 axb4 Rxa7 Ba6 Re1 Rxe7 Rad7 mate. #177 7 Nxd5 Nb6 d5 dxc6 cxb7 Re1 bxa8Q mate. #178 7 g3 Rxh4 Bh3 Rxh7 Nc3 Nxd5 Rxh8 mate. #179 7 Ke3 Rg1 Rxc5 Rxf5 Kf4 Kg5 Rf7 Italian mate. #180 7 Ne6 Ng7 Ba6 Bxb7 Na3 Ke2 Rd1 Italian mate. #181 1 Cf3 Hc9 2 Pd9+ Ke10 3 Ce3+ G10e9 4 Pd10+ Kf10 5 Cf3 mate. #182 has 3 guards (spotted by Ian Richardson). Remove Gf8 and play 1 Cb7 Rb10 2 Cg7 Rb1+ 3 Ke2 Rb2+ 4 Ke1 Re2+ 5 Kxe2 Cg1 6 Cb7 Pf3 7 Cb10 mate.

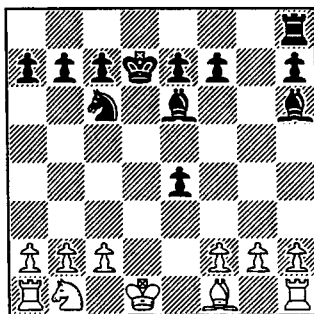
Fred Galvin gave 6 solutions to each of #s 179,180 - see if you can find them all. Ian Richardson gave an alternative solution to #181:- 1 Ce3+ Kf9 2 Cf3+ G8e9 (2...Ke9 3 Pe8 mate) 3 Pf7+ Gf8 4 Pe8 Pc2 (or Ge9) 5 Pxf8 mate.

The current scores:- FG 128, IR 109, PW 35, JB 35, RC 33, CL 24, RT 19, NE 2.

(The third guard in #182 was my fault - sorry. I should perhaps have asked Paul to specify "Italian Progressive" if the solutions were going to involve Italian mates, but I noticed nothing when solving myself and on looking again I see why: both #179 and #180 allow ordinary mates as well. - JDB)

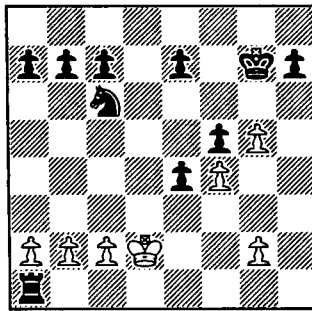
Competition 30

#183 Lesnicenko - Bratcenko (1992)



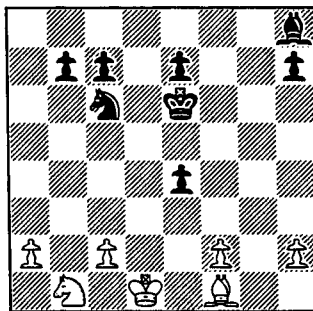
White wins (series 7)

#184 Guerrini - Buccoliero (1991)



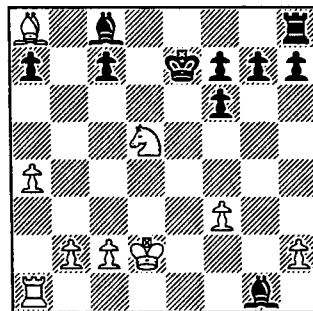
White wins (series 9)

#185 Castelli - Buccoliero (1991)



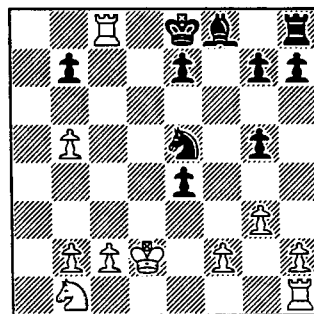
White wins (series 9)

#186 Del Frate - Palmieri (1988)



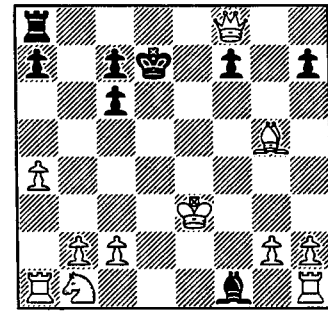
Black wins (series 8)

#187 Lantillo - Biagini (1989)



Black wins (series 8)

#188 Genik - Korsakov (1993)



Black wins (series 8)

#189 Cannon + Pawn #6

10	.	.	.	g	:	:	.	.	.	.
9	.	.	.	P	h	:	.	.	.	.
8	.	.	.	:	e	k	.	.	.	.
7	.	.	.	.	.	.	P	.	.	.
6	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
5	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	r	.	.
4	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
3	E	C	:	:	:	:	.	.	.	.
2	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1	.	.	.	:	K	:	.	.	.	.

XiangQi : Red to play and win

#190 Cannon + Pawn #10

10	.	.	.	g	:	:	.	.	.	.
9	.	.	.	:	h	k	.	.	.	.
8	.	.	.	:	P	g	.	.	.	.
7	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
6	.	.	.	.	.	.	r	.	.	.
5	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
4	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
3	.	.	.	:	K	:	.	.	.	.
2	.	.	.	:	G	:	.	.	.	.
1	.	.	C	:	:	:	.	.	.	.

XiangQi : Red to play and win

SOLUTIONS

Losing Chess (page 157). First diagram: 15 Rg1, giving Black a third option but allowing any of his three captures to be met by a mass giveaway.

Second diagram: the secret is to play Bc2 and Bb3 blocking the third rank, after which ...Kf1 can be met by Rd3. Black must now abandon the f-file, since ...Kf2 will allow Rf3 etc, and he will soon succumb.

SOLUTIONS CONTINUED

VC 53 proof games (page 144). **41** 1 Nf3 a6 2 e4 Ra7 3 Bb5 a5 4 Ng1 a4 5 Bf1 a3 6 Ke2 Ra4 7 Kd3 Rc4.

42 1 pB*g3 pB*c3 2 bxc3 e6 3 Ba3 Bxa3 4 Qc1 Ke7 5 Qb2 Kf6 6 Qb4 Kg5 7 Qf8 Qe7 8 Bd6 Qxd6 9 Qe7+ Nf6.

43 1 Nf3/c1:c8 cxb1N/b1:b8 2 Rxb1/c1:c8 Bxb7/a2:b2.

44 1 g4 h5 2 gxh5 Ng6 3 hxg6 b6 4 gxf7 Kb7 5 fxg8N Rb8 6 Nxc7 Kc8 7 Nxa8 Bc7.

45 1 Nb3 a5 2 Nxa5 c6 3 Nxc6+ Kc7 4 Nxd8 Rb8 5 Nxf7 Kc8 6 Nxb8 Rf7 7 Nxf7 Nc7.

46 1 d4 a5 2 Bxa5 c5 3 Bxd8 cxd4 4 Bxe7 Kc7 5 Bxf8 Rb8 6 Bxg7 Kc8 7 Bxh8 Qg7.

47 1 c4 d5 2 cxd5 b6 3 Rxc7 Bc6 4 Rxc6 Kb7 5 Rxc8 Bc7 6 Rxa8 Rb8 7 Rxa7+ Kc8.

48 1 c3 c5 2 Qxh7 c4 3 Qxh8 Rc5 4 Qxg8 Kc7 5 Qxf7 Kc6 6 Qxe8 Bc7 7 Qxa8 Rb8.

Retrograde Othello (page 162). Friedman: 1 d6 (d5 now black) e6 (e5 white) 2 f7 (e6 black) e7 (e6 white) 3 f4 (e4 and e5 black) g8 (f7 white) 4 f6 (e6 black) f5 (f6 white).

4 x 3 position: 1 d6 (d5 black) e6 (e5 white) 2 f5 (e5 black) c4 (d4 and d5 white) 3 c5 (d5 black) f6 (e5 white).

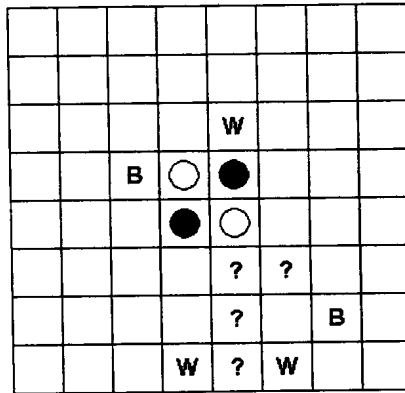
All-black position: 1 d6 (d5 black) c6 (d5 white) 2 b6 (c6 black) d7 (d6 white) 3 e8 (d7 black) d3 (d4 white) 4 d2 (d3/d4/d5/d6 black) e6 (e5 white) 5 f4 (e6/e5/e4 black).

All-white position: 1 f4 (e4 black) d3 (d4 white) 2 c4 (d4 black) b5 (c4 white) d6 (d5 black) d7 (d6/d5/d4 white) 4 c5 (d5 black) g3 (f4/e5 white) 5 e6 (e5 black) f5 (e5/d5/c5, e6, and e4 all white). I went wrong here by being too clever. White must play at d3, b5, d7, f5, and g3, so the man placed at c5 must be black, and I assumed that the placement on b5 would be needed to turn it and so must be held back until the man on c5 was present. I overlooked that a placement at f5, gripping e5/d5/c5 from the far end, would do just as well.

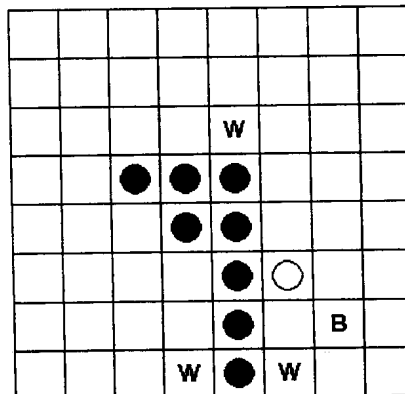
15 + 2 position: 1 c5 (d5 black) e6 (e5 white) 2 f4 (e4 black) e3 (e4

white) 3 f2 (e3 black) g3 (f4 white) 4 e7 (e6/e5/e4 black) e1 (f2 white) 5 h2 (g3/f4 black) h4 (g3 white) 6 g1 (f2 black) d6 (e5/f4 white) 7 c7 (d6/e5/f4/g3 black).

Final position. I'll spell this out since uniqueness has not been verified by computer. Basic cannot-be-turned arguments give us the following:



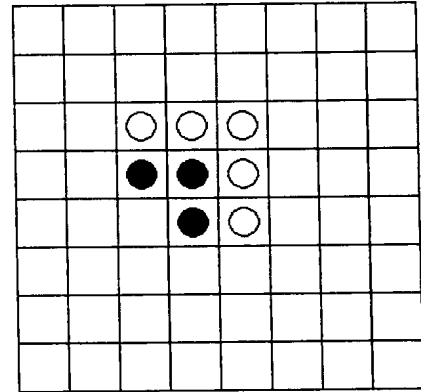
If 1 c5 (d5 black) then 1...e6 (e5 white) 2 f3 (e4 black) e3 (e4 white) and there is no move for Black. Hence 1 e3 (e4 black) f3 (e4 white) 2 c5 (d5 black), and it is White who has the choice. Try 2...e6 (e5 white) 3 g2 (f3/e4 black) e2 (e3/e4 white) and again there is no move for Black. So 2...e2 (e3 white). If now 3 g2 (f3/e4 black) then White has only 3...e6 (e5/e4 white), and this repeats the position we have just seen. Hence 3 e1 (e2/e3/e4 black), but again we seem to be in trouble; we have four men to play, and three of them must be white:



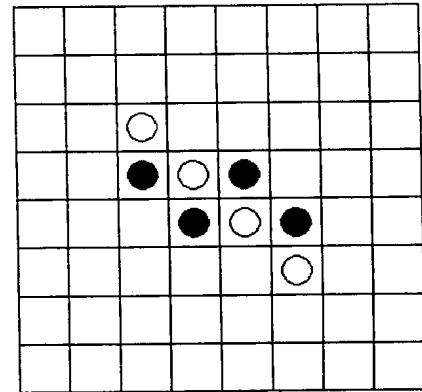
However, if after 3...d1 (e2 white) 4 g2 (f3 black) White plays 4...f1 (e1 white), Black has no legal move and must pass, and White can then play 5...e6 (e5/e4/e3 white) and reach the given position. Alain's computer had identified the position after 4 g2 as

one of the earliest positions in which a player had to pass; my contribution was to observe that if we added a white move, we would have a 13-man position which could be reached only by a sequence including a pass.

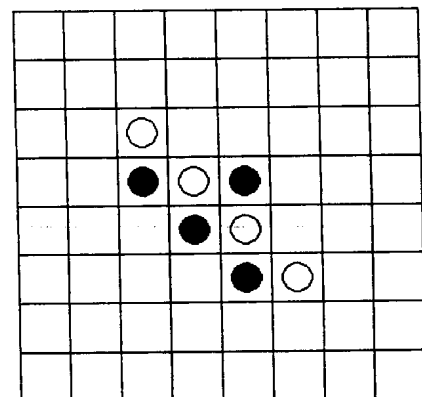
The three four-move positions reachable in more than one way are



which is reachable by 1 c5 (d5 black) c6 (d5 white) 2 d6 (d5 black) e6 (d6 and e5 white) or by 1 d6 and 2 c5,

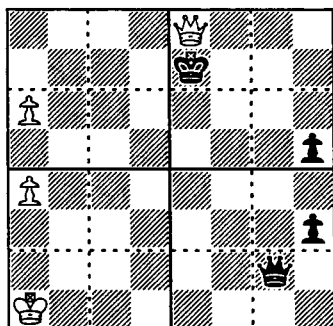


which is reachable by 1 c5 (d5 black) c6 (d5 white) 2 f4 (e4 black) f3 (e4 white) or by 1 f4 etc, and



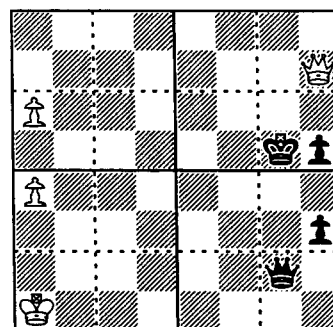
which is reachable by 1 c5 (d5 black) c6 (d5 white) 2 e3 (e4 black) f3 (e4 white) or by 1 e3 etc.

Ecila (page 154). White plays Qh8+, and if ...Ke7 he mates by Qe8 :



The pawns guard the queen, and the queen guards everything else. If Black plays ...Kc7, Qc8 is mate similarly.

If Black plays ...Kg5, the mating move is Qh7 :



The leading pawn guards g6, and the White king, with his double-move option, guards c5/e5/e1. And if...Kg3, the same move Qh7 is again mate.

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Our leading item speaks for itself, and I hope readers will regard it as excusing the recent reduced frequency of VC. That said, once again we have a 20-page issue to reward your patience, and I have taken the opportunity to round off Volume 7 with an index. My thanks to all who have contributed.

VC 55. Although the completion of the *Encyclopedia* has taken the main load from me, I propose again to leave a six-month gap and not to produce VC 55 until October. Frankly, I need the break. Contributors' copy date for VC 55 will therefore be **September 1**, though early receipt of material is always welcome.

Next year, I hope we shall get back to quarterly - or would readers prefer a 20-page issue every four months to a 16-page issue every quarter?

Let me know, please. The editorial demands would be similar, the labour of distribution somewhat reduced.

BCVS NOTICES

Annual General Meeting. The AGM will take place at **7 St James Road, Harpenden, Herts AL5 4NX** on **Saturday June 16 at 11.00 a.m.** UK readers will find a formal notice with this issue of VC, and we shall be pleased to see any readers abroad who are in the UK on the day.

Presidency 2007-08. It has seemed to some of us that **George Jelliss**, as the founder of VC, is the natural person to succeed David Pritchard, and I am delighted to say that he has accepted the nomination. No other nomination having been received, George's election at the AGM will be automatic, and he will take office at its conclusion.

Kriegspiel endings. In most forms of chess, a player with a won game seeks to finish things off as quickly as possible. This is not always so in Kriegspiel, where there are endings where the stronger side can *improve* its chances by dragging out the game. We saw an example last time.

Thomas Ferguson tells me that the "West Coast Kriegspiel milieu" in America has dealt with this problem by abandoning the 50-move rule and instead declaring as won any ending where the stronger side can play so as to reduce its probability of failure to below any pre-assigned non-zero *p*. Apparently this is akin to the practice of the Japanese Go Association, which declares the values of certain endings so that they need not be played out. It would seem to need players who are capable of doing or at least of understanding the analyses, but perhaps there is an agreed list.

EVENTS

Mike Adams and Mike Gunn organized a **variants tournament in David's memory** at **Hastings** on New Year's Eve from 8pm "until late" and attracted 15 participants. Eight variants were played, chosen from Pocket Knight, Replacement, Triplets, Three-Check, Avalanche, Extinction, Static, Rifle, and Progressive. The winner was Jack Rudd with 8/8, ahead of Damir Urban from Germany and Ryan Rees-Griffiths. The report which Mike Adams copied forward to me included thanks to the White Rock Hotel for free use of their function room, and it seems to have been very much the friendly sort of event that David would have hosted himself.

Mike and Mike intend to run a similar event in the second week of the **British Championship in Great Yarmouth**, date to be confirmed. Contact Mike Adams
<mike@guildfordchess.fsnet.co.uk>
for further details.

Mike Adams also ran an event at the **Guildford Chess Club** on the Monday before Christmas, when eight of the same nine variants were played. The winner was Alan Punnett ahead of Trevor Jones, with Clive Frostick and Mike Smart equal third.

This year's **Circular Chess World Championship** will be held at the **Tap and Spile in Hungate, Lincoln** (a return to the venue of the first championship back in 1996, and very much the game's spiritual home) on **Sunday May 20**. Visit the Circular Chess web site

<www.circularchess.co.uk>
for further details.

Variant Chess is the journal of the British Chess Variants Society

The **Presidency** has been left vacant for 2006-07 in honour of David Pritchard

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