

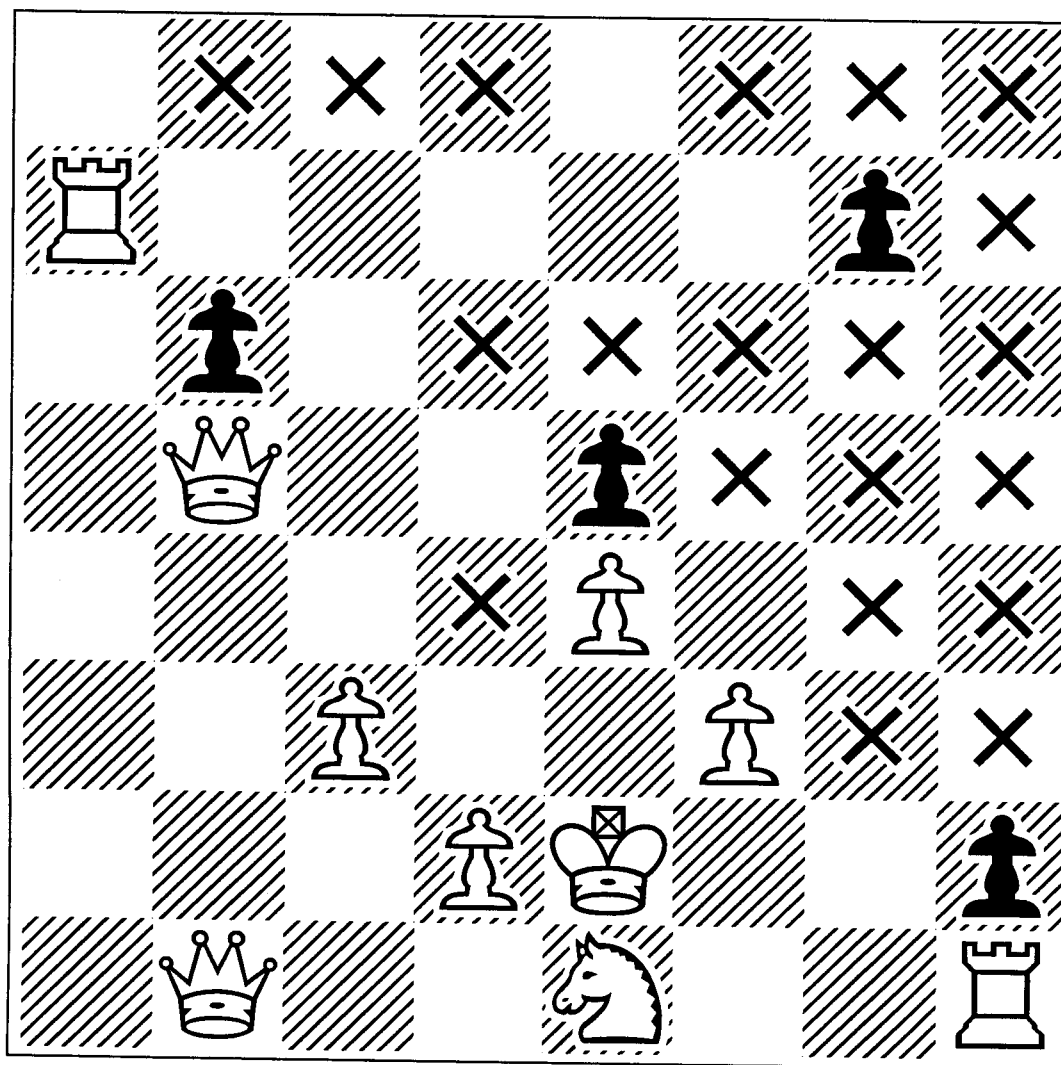
# Variant Chess

THE MAGAZINE TO BROADEN YOUR CHESS HORIZONS

Volume 7, issue 58

ISSN 0958-8248

October 2008



## Lao Tzu Chess

Drawing against three ferses

Beating Fritz at Giveaway

# LAO TZU CHESS

material from John Kipling Lewis

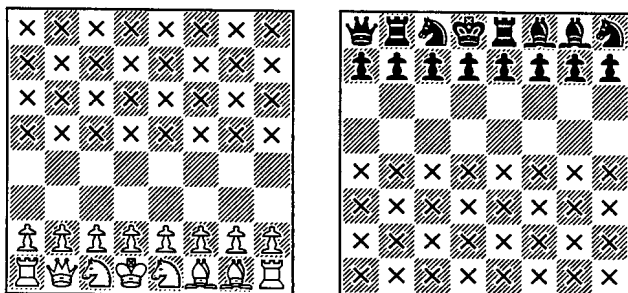
John Kipling Lewis of New York (he gently asks me to include his middle name as he very much dislikes being confused with someone who is "never knowingly undersold") has produced an interesting composite game called Lao Tzu Chess, which combines the ideas of Dark Chess (a Kriegspiel variant using a computer as umpire), Double Fischer Random, and Crazy House (Chessgi). It can be played on the SchemingMind web site

<<http://wiki.schemingmind.com/LaoTzuChess>>

and he has sent me a specimen game score. The game is still new to its players and the score is not of particularly high quality, but it does well illustrate the nature of the game. Indeed, for a first look at a game, a moderate game score is often more instructive than a masterpiece.

The basic rule of Dark Chess is that a player can "see" only the squares that he can legally move to; all other squares are "dark". So, unless another of the player's men can move there, the square immediately in front of a pawn is either empty or dark, and the squares diagonally in front of a pawn are either occupied by a visible opponent or dark (unless the pawn can capture *en passant*, when an empty square is shown). Pawn promotion is not announced. Checks are announced, but not by what nor from where. (These rules differ from those in force on the BrainKing web site.) In Double Fischer Random, the computer assigns the players' back ranks at random, subject to the constraints that the bishops be on opposite colours and the kings be somewhere between the rooks, and Chessgi is chess with shogi drops (a captured man changes sides, and its new owner can drop it on any vacant square square instead of playing a normal move). Captured promoted pieces revert to pawns, pawns may not be dropped on the first or eighth ranks, and a player may drop a man only on a square which he can see to be empty.

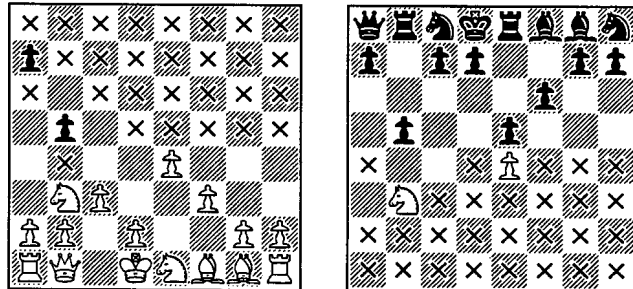
The game was played between "jackcheiky" and "asperse", who were given the following starting arrays :



John sent the game with this comment: "Counter-attack in the fog - thanks to the fog of war, black manages to turn around the very difficult game. Note moves 35, 36, and 37 for black where he repeats a King retreat that would not be possible without hidden movement and then launches a vicious counter attack. White first finds the Black King on move 11 and attempts to build up an attack on the back

rank from that point on." As sent, there were no further annotations, but I raised various questions with him after playing it through and his replies are incorporated in what follows.

- 1 c2-c3 b7-b5
- 2 f2-f3 f7-f6
- 3 e2-e4 e7-e5
- 4 Nc1-b3

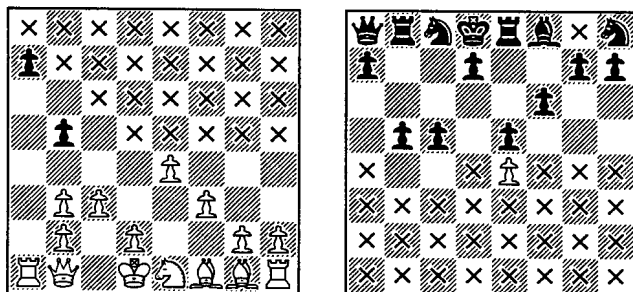


Black's bishop can see this, and bishop for knight is often a good swap at Chessgi (a knight in hand tends to be more useful than a bishop). Whether the advantage carries over to Lao Tzu, where a piece can only be dropped on a visible square, is perhaps another matter. At any rate, Black takes:

- 4 ... Bg8xb3+

White will merely have been told "check", but his a-pawn can see the bishop.

- 5 a2xb3 c7-c5



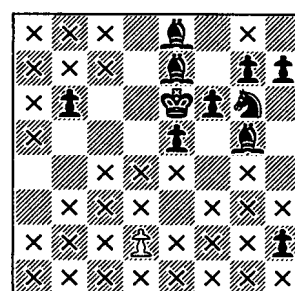
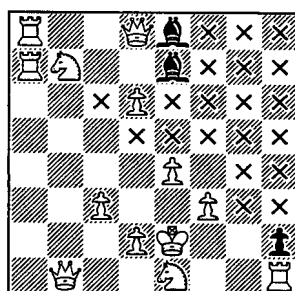
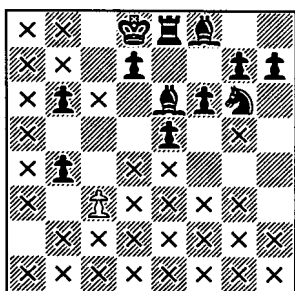
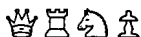
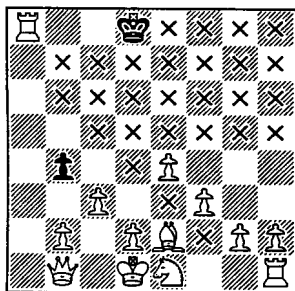
I queried this move, which seemed to be gratuitously exposing Black's king, and received an interesting reply. "5...c5 is a baiting move, designed to get a minor piece to capture and then allow the Bishop on f8 to take (and possibly lose a minor trade). As for opening a line to the King, the opening in these games is often about misdirection. By advancing those two pawns he's basically saying 'My King is clearly not on this side of the board, he's behind the nice pawn structure near g8'."

- 6 B @ a6 Nh8-g6
- 7 Ba6xb5 Rb8xb5
- 8 Bf1xb5 B @ e6
- 9 Bb5-e2 Nc8-b6
- 10 b3-b4 c5xb4
- 11 Bg1xb6+ a7xb6

Taking a risk...

- 12 Ra1xa8+

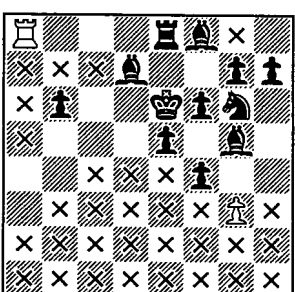
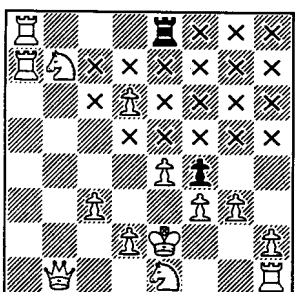
Ouch!



12 ... Kd8-e7  
13 N @ b8

I instinctively queried this, thinking it a very passive use of a knight drop; why didn't White exchange rooks on e8, getting another rook to drop and possibly gaining more information about the disposition of Black's men? However, this was thinking in Chessgi terms, where men in hand can be dropped anywhere. In Lao Tzu, they can only be dropped on visible squares, and John soon put me right: "Simply trading rooks, while gaining information, loses all sight and thus dropping opportunities. By blocking with the Knight (the lowest piece he could place there at the time) he keeps his rook lighting the A column and gains some information from the Knight. He is also aware that he can further drop his other Rook on a7 giving him a very powerful rear rank attack."

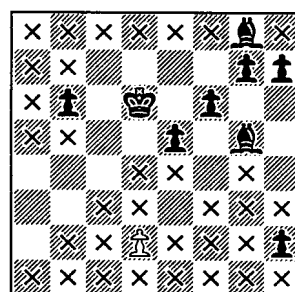
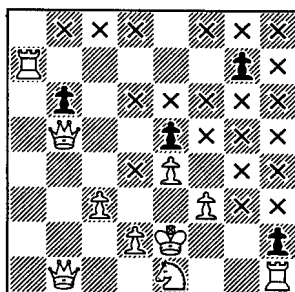
13 ... N @ f4  
14 R @ a7 Nf4xe2  
15 Kd1xe2 b4xc3  
16 b2xc3 B @ f4  
17 g2-g3 Bf4-g5  
18 N @ b7 P @ f4  
19 Nb8xd7 Be6xd7  
20 P @ d6+ Ke7-e6



This allows a mating drop on d5, and had to be queried; why didn't Black move to f7 and keep his king back? John: "I see this move as a blunder. However since there is an element of bluff involved it may simply have been a matter of least likely move. It's also clear from White's previous attacks that the back rank is not a safe place."

21 Ra8xe8+ Bd7xe8  
22 R @ a8 f4xg3  
23 Q @ d8 g3xh2  
24 P @ e7 Bf8xe7

25 Qd8xe8 B @ f7  
26 Qe8-b5 Be7xd6  
27 Nb7xd6 Ke6xd6  
28 B @ h8 Ng6xh8  
29 Ra8xh8 R @ g8  
30 Rh8xg8 Bf7xg8



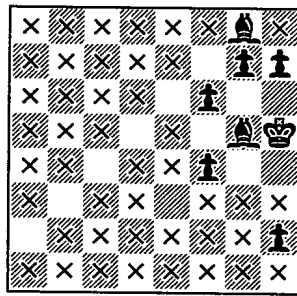
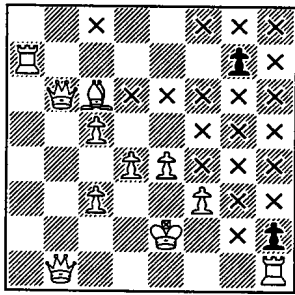
31 Ne1-d3

I questioned why White had not moved this knight earlier. John: "The Knight at e1 is protecting the King from a drop on f1 or g1 should there be a probe attack, and also allows for protection of the Queen (which is likely the more important reason) on c2 or d3."

I also wondered why the players seemed to be playing so little attention to central control and development. In my experience, these are at least as valid in chess variants as ordinary chess, particularly when the variant is relatively new to both players. John, notation converted: "Central control is less important in games where you can drop pieces. What tends to happen, in my experience, is that a player creates a localized imbalance near the opposing King and leverages it. This is clearly only one style of play for games like Chessgi and Bughouse, but with the trading and semi-hoarding of captured pieces these players are doing, it appears they both are looking to find the opposing King and then swarm. This requires exploiting weak positioning regardless of where it's found, but that's often not in the middle of the board in Fischer Random."

31 ... B @ f4  
32 Qb5xb6+ R @ c6  
33 P @ c5+ Kd6-e6  
34 Nd3xf4+ e5xf4  
35 B @ d7+ Ke6-f7  
36 Bd7xc6+ Kf7-g6  
37 d2-d4 Kg6-h5

# TORUS TOURS



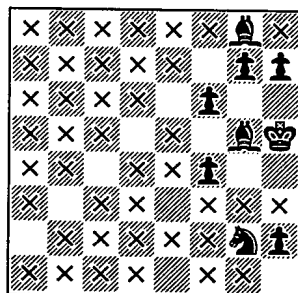
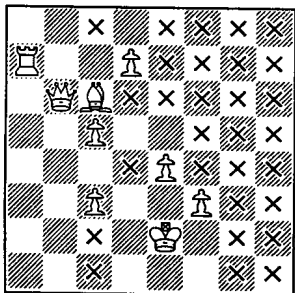
The last three moves have seen the king retreat that John mentioned in his opening comment. Now comes the counterattack.

- 38 d4-d5 N @ h4
- 39 d5-d6 P @ g2
- 40 d6-d7 g2xh1Q
- 41 Qb1xh1

This queen, having arisen through promotion, now reverts to being a pawn.

- 41 ... P @ g2
- 42 Qh1xg2 Nh4xg2

This one remains a queen.



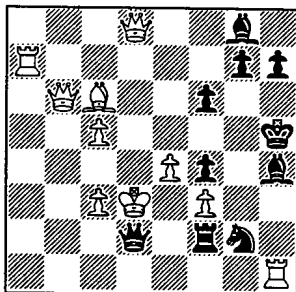
- 43 R @ a1 h2-h1Q
- 44 Ra1xh1+

Finding that this move had given check must have been something of a surprise.

- 44 ... Bg5-h4
- 45 d7-d8Q R @ f2+

Found him at last!

- 46 Ke2-d3 Q @ d2 mate



And Black, unlike White at move 21, guessed correctly.

In VC 57, we looked at some knight's tours discovered by C. F. Jaenisch in which the rows and columns added to 260, the long odd diagonal and parallel odd broken diagonals to 256, and the long even diagonal and parallel even broken diagonals to 264, and I asked the question: on a cylinder or torus, could we find a tour such that all the odd diagonals in both directions added to 256 and all the even diagonals in both directions to 264? Alternatively, could some mathematician prove the task to be impossible?

George Jelliss responded to this by sending me some work he had been doing on torus tours in general, not only with knights. In particular, if on a 7x7 torus we make six knight moves in a straight line, one move at right angles, and so on round, we get a tour that adds to 175 on each row, column, and diagonal in either direction :

1	24	47	21	37	11	34	00	32	64	26	51	13	45
12	35	2	25	48	15	38	14	46	01	33	65	20	52
16	39	13	29	3	26	49	21	53	15	40	02	34	66
27	43	17	40	14	30	4	35	60	22	54	16	41	03
31	5	28	44	18	41	8	42	04	36	61	23	55	10
42	9	32	6	22	45	19	56	11	43	05	30	62	24
46	20	36	10	33	7	23	63	25	50	12	44	06	31

The matter is made clear in the representation on the right, where we have replaced the numbers 1 to 49 by 00 to 66, and it is soon seen that the digits 0 to 6 appear once in the "sevens" position and once in the "units" position in each row, column, and diagonal.

The same technique works for  $n = 11$  ("T" stands for the digit "ten"):

00	95	7T	54	39	13	T8	82	67	41	26
42	27	01	96	70	55	3T	14	T9	83	68
84	69	43	28	02	97	71	56	30	15	TT
16	T0	85	6T	44	29	03	98	72	57	31
58	32	17	T1	86	60	45	2T	04	99	73
9T	74	59	33	18	T2	87	61	46	20	05
21	06	90	75	5T	34	19	T3	88	62	47
63	48	22	07	91	76	50	35	1T	T4	89
T5	8T	64	49	23	08	92	77	51	36	10
37	11	T6	80	65	4T	24	09	93	78	52
79	53	38	12	T7	81	66	40	25	0T	94

Indeed, it works for any  $n$  of the form  $6k + 1$  and  $6k + 5$  for  $k = 1$  upwards, but it is soon seen to fail for any other  $n$ .

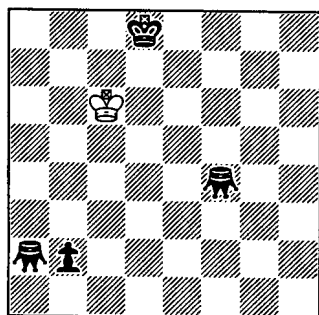
As regards the 260/256/264 task on an 8x8 torus, Guenter Stertenbrink wondered why I didn't just ask the computer. Yes, it could indeed tell us the answer for this particular board, and perhaps somebody is doing it as I write. But I wonder if there is not a general proof to be found somewhere. The task has obvious echoes of the task "Place  $n$  objects on an  $n \times n$  torus or cylinder so that each appears once and once only in each row, column, and diagonal in either direction", which was proved long ago to be solvable by a line of knight's moves if  $n$  was of the form  $6k + 1$  or  $6k + 5$  and not to be solvable at all for any other  $n$ . Perhaps a similar effect occurs here.

# KING AND THREE FERSES AGAINST KING

material from Noam Elkies

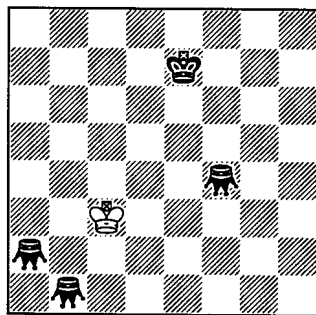
When discussing Thai Chess endings in VC 48, I stated that in the absence of blunders, a king and three ferses (which move one square diagonally) would always win against a bare king unless the weaker side could capture a fers before the stronger side could gather its men together. Noam Elkies has pointed out two more cases where the weaker side can draw, and he has embedded them in attractive studies. These are not Thai Chess studies because Thai Chess pawns promote on rank 6, nor are they Shatranj studies because the stronger side would already have won by bare king. But we are "Variant Chess", so we are entitled to vary. Let us therefore simply say "Promotion only to fers".

1 - Noam Elkies

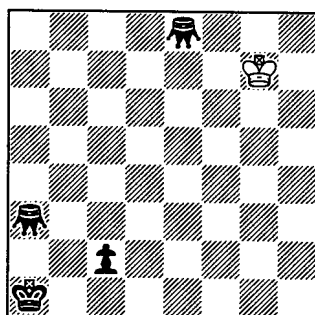


Draw (promotion only to fers)

White starts **1 Kc5!** threatening both **2 Kb4** and **2 Kd4** (we shall see the force of these moves in a moment). Suppose first that Black plays **1...b1F** promoting at once. White plays **2 Kd4** threatening to hunt down the fers on f4, and if Black plays **2...Ke7** or **2...Fg5** to save it (**2...Ke7 3 Ke4 Fg5 4 Kf5 Ff6**) we see that White has a second threat: **3 Kc3** with the first of Noam's exceptional draws (see top of next column). White will play to b2 and then oscillate between b2 and a1, preventing either of the light ferses from moving, and if Black tries to approach with either his king or his dark fers he will give stalemate.



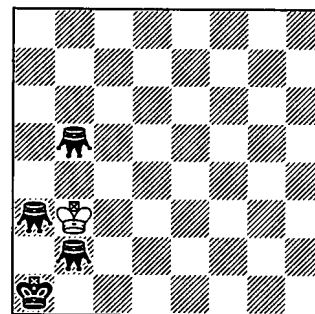
2 - Noam Elkies



Draw (promotion only to fers)

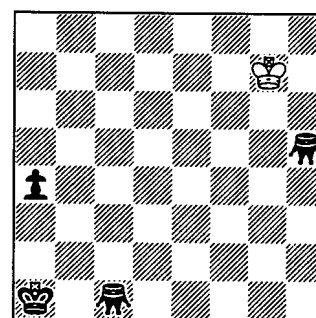
Play starts **1 Kf6 Fd7 2 Ke5 Fc6 3 Kd4**, and if **3...Fb4** to prevent **Kc5** then **4 Kc4** and one fers or the other will fall. Hence **3...Fb5**, and if **4 Kc5** then **4...Fa4** and Black is secure. **4 Kd3 Kb2** is no better, but White has **4 Kc3**, and **4...Kb1** is soon seen to fail (**5 Kb3 Fb2 6 Kb4** and the light fers will be hunted down).

So Black plays **4...c1F**; which of the two ferses should White attack? Try **5 Kb3**; no, **5...Fcb2** gives the position at the top of the next column, and after **6 Kc2 Ka2** White will be squeezed away. So the move must be **5 Kc2**, and **5...Fcb2 6 Kb3** gives the same position but with Black to play.



2a - Noam Elkies

A move by a dark fers will drop a fers at once, a move by the light fers will let it be hunted down, and **6...Kb1** will be stalemate. It is a quite unexpected reciprocal zugzwang.

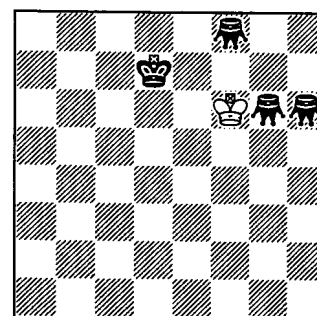


Draw (Thai Chess)

Noam subsequently reset this second study to work in Thai Chess: **1 Kf6 Fg4 2 Ke5 Ff3 3 Kd4 Fe2 4 Kc3 a3F** (**3...Ka2 4 Kc2 Fb2 5 Kd2** etc) **5 Kb3** (**5 Kc2? Fab2** winning) **Fab2 6 Kc2**.

Noam also sent a third position, where the stronger side does win but must be careful :

3 - Noam Elkies



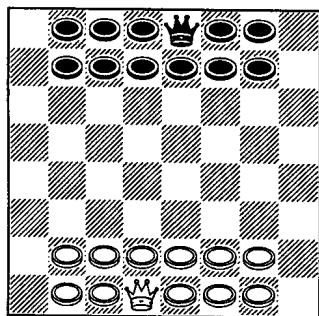
Black to play and win

Answer (Black's first move and the reason for it) on page 71.

# MILLER'S DAUGHTER CHESS

by Andrew Perkis

*We have not had any Miller's Daughter Chess since VC 54, so a brief reminder of the rules. Each player has a Miller's Daughter and eleven Princes:*



*The moves are step moves (any piece may move one step as a chess king) and jump moves (any piece may jump a diagonally or orthogonally adjacent piece of either colour). Sequences of jumps are allowed, but in the case of a Prince a jump or the overall effect of a sequence of jumps 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 now the only way of winning the game (there used to be another, which Andrew has discontinued as described below). Additionally, a player can draw by moving his MD to a square adjacent to the opponent's MD and declaring an "alliance". - JDB*

In July I got together with Alain Dekker to play Miller's Daughter's Chess and his new game Jump Chess (see page 00). In our MDC games we tried out a couple of rule changes. First and foremost was to make the construction of a fortress illegal! I had balked at this previously, since it seemed less straightforward - and

more unnatural - than according a value (either a win or a draw) to the achievement. However, having found a way to frame the rule which ties in reasonably well with the theme of the game, I decided to give it a go.

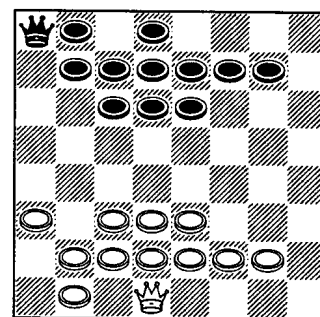
Readers will recall that an MD must always have a "liberty" - a square to which she has a step move. A player's first move must create this liberty, and subsequent moves must preserve it or give another in its place. We can call the MD's square, together with it's adjoining liberty, her "domain". (It may be worth noting here, for the benefit of any readers who play Go, that depriving your opponent's MD of a liberty is a legal move, but does not end the game.)

The new rule can now be expressed as follows: the domain of an MD must never be enclosed by her own Princes. In other words, there must always be access, from an MD's domain, to at least one other square, either by step or by jump move, unless this is blocked by an enemy piece. The rule fits with the "storyline" of the of the game if we say that the MD must remain eligible, the only exception being if she and her counterpart declare an "alliance"! The concept of the fortress, which an MD may gather round her, has been replaced by that of an "enclosure" which she may not enter.

The second new rule concerns the mobility of Princes. The ruling so far has been that Princes must advance across the board whenever making a jump move. The new rule allows Princes to make sideways jumps when placed on their seventh or eighth ranks (the opponent's two home rows). I conceived this rule initially as the solution to certain deadlock situations - ones that would probably never occur in actual play! Perhaps it was also inspired by the way pawns in XiangQi gain horizontal mobility after crossing the river. Be that as it may, after studying the two games given below, it seems that the main impact of this new ruling may be to strengthen the link between attack and defence in a way that I had not anticipated...

**Game 1, Andrew Perkis (White) v Alain Dekker.** This was my first MD game for a couple of years. Previous experience had suggested that early "castling" (removing the MD to one side or the other fairly early) was the safest policy - but I decided to re-check this.

- |   |          |          |
|---|----------|----------|
| 1 | c1-e3    | MD-c6-a8 |
| 2 | e1-c1-a3 | f8-d6    |
| 3 | g1-e1-c3 | c8-c6    |
| 4 | f1-d3    | g8-e6    |

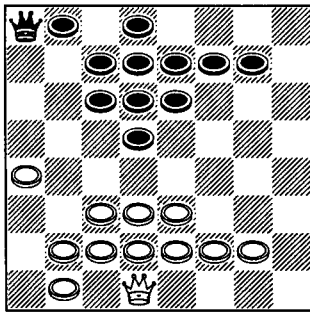


At this point in the game White still has a number of options. Leaving the MD in the centre, as played, does not work, and this would still have been the case even if I had played g2-f3 immediately. Although this would close up one line of attack, Black would merely need to get a Prince to g3 to gain an unstoppable attack.

Best for White at this stage is probably 5 b1-a2, intending MD-b3-b1 (and playing g2-f3 as and when it becomes necessary). This delayed "castling short" would have taken the game into new - and unclear - territory.

More interesting - though less sound - would have been 5 a3-a4, an attempt at a single Prince attack. Ultimately this should fall short - but it is instructive to work out how and why.

At first sight this attack looks quite plausible, especially with the new jump rule, and, after 5...b8-b6 6 a4-a5, White seems to have a winning attack already. Much better for Black, however, is 5...b7-d5! (diagram at top of next page) Now there are no black Princes on the a or b files for the sole White Prince to gain speed by jumping over. Simultaneously, Black has begun his own attack. White's only chance would seem to be to



continue the attack, but 6 a4-a5 c6-e4 7 g2-f3 e6-c4 soon wins.

Alternatively, if 6 a4-b5, then 6...d5-e4 7 g2-f3 d8-b6-b4, with the double threat b4-b3 and e7-c5-a3-c1, is even quicker for Black. Finally, if 6 c3-c1-a3-a5, then 6...e6-c4 with a winning double threat (and if 6 e3-c1-a3-a5, 6...c6-e4 is similarly decisive).

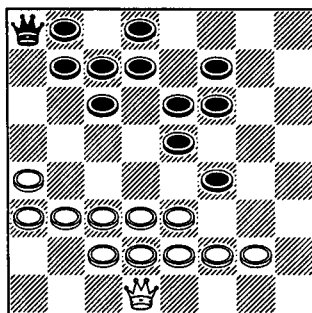
A similar situation would arise if White tried 5 MD-f3-h1. Black replies 5...b7-d5 with c6-e4 to follow: eg 6 a3-a4 c6-e4, and White has no appropriate Prince to place on f3. I think this may often be a vital resource - defending one's MD by leaving her isolated in a corner!

My actual continuation in the game was also disastrous, but less interesting. Put a4/d5 back on a3/b7 :

- 5 b1-b3 g7-f6
- 6 b2-a2 e7-e5
- 7 a2-a4?

This attempt at an attack merely speeds up White's defeat.

- 7 ... d6-f4



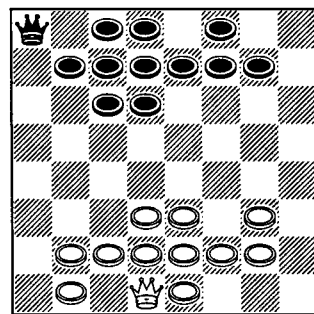
- 8 d3-f3-f5 e5-e4
- 9 g2-f3 c7-e7-e5-g3-e1
- 10 MD-d3-b1 f4-d4-b2
- 11 Resigns

This game, and our brief look at 5 a3-a4, seems to confirm that the danger of leaving the MD in the

centre arises because the defence requires too many Princes, reducing the attacking potential. Although a single Prince may be able to carry off an attack in certain circumstances, this is likely to be too slow if the opponent's MD has a relatively safe haven.

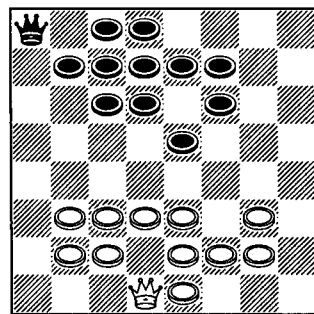
**Game 2, AD v AP.** Although we did not plan this, Alain also decided to see if he could get away with keeping his MD in the centre ...

- 1 c1-e3 MD-c6-a8
- 2 f1-d3 g8-e8-c6
- 3 g1-g3 b8-d6

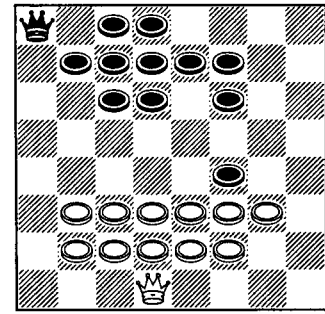


This seems an ideal defensive formation for Black. At any appropriate moment the MD can be left isolated in the corner.

- 4 b1-b3 f8-f6
- 5 d2-c3?! g7-e5



This is the critical position. White can try to build a defensive wall with 6 e1-d2 e5-f4 7 g2-f3 (diagram at top of next column), but at this point Black probably has a won game. Without the new jump rule it would be necessary to get another Prince or two into action, and with this in mind b7-d5 may well be best. With the new rule it may even be possible for Black to win this using a single Prince attack, simply because White's counter-attacking chances are virtually

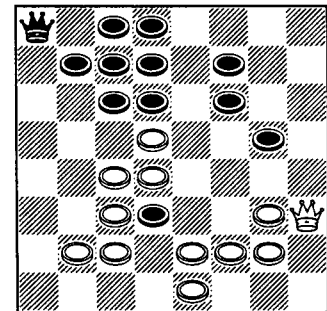


non-existent. After 7...f4-h2, all White's attempts at aggression misfire, eg 8 b2-b4 e7-c5-a3 and wins. Alternatively, 8 b3-a4 h2-g1 9 a4-a5 c8-a6-a4, and if the Prince a5 advances to a6 or b6, Black can use it in a jump move to play c7-...-c1 with a very quick win.

However, if White just waits, Black can simply advance with the one powerful Prince, and, with the new jump rule, White cannot block off its advance along the first rank.

In the game, Alain avoided this scenario - but lost even more quickly. Back to diagram after 5...g7-e5 :

- 6 e3-d4 e5-e4
- 7 d3-d5?! e4-d3
- 8 MD-f3-h3 e7-g5
- 9 b3-c4



- 9 ... d3-f1

This or ...g5-g4 result in White's MD being captured in four more moves.

- 10 Resigns

On the evidence of these two games it would seem that single Prince attacks may sometimes be successful (at least under circumstances where counter-attacks can be parried). This, it seems to me, makes it more necessary than ever to develop improved defensive techniques - otherwise games will continue to be as short and as brutal as these two!



# MODERN COURIER CHESS

by Paul Byway

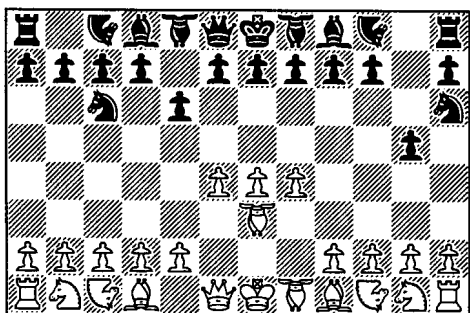
Fers (inverted B in diagrams) moves one square diagonally, Courier (inverted N) leaps two squares orthogonally or diagonally. Unmoved K or F can make a double move, but not to capture nor through check. - JDB

White Paul Byway, Black Roy Talbot; by post.

- |   |        |       |
|---|--------|-------|
| 1 | f2-f4  | e7-e6 |
| 2 | g2-g4  | k7-k5 |
| 3 | Fe1-g3 |       |

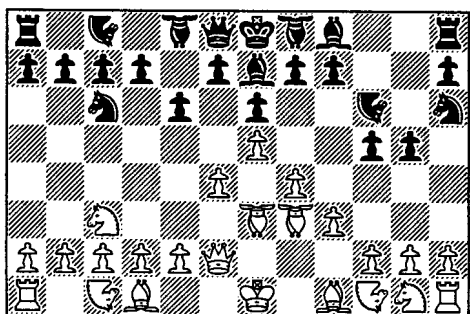
I decided to experiment with a central opening; there are many paths to be tried yet. Roy goes his own provocative way.

- |   |       |        |
|---|-------|--------|
| 3 | ...   | Nb8-c6 |
| 4 | h2-h4 | Nk8-16 |



This looks like a good choice, retaining the option of Nk4, Nj5 as well as j7-j5. After a later g6 the queen and knight can combine against the K-side.

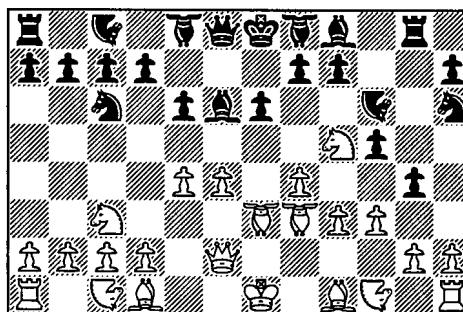
- |   |        |        |
|---|--------|--------|
| 5 | Fh1-h3 | j7-j5  |
| 6 | Qf1-f2 | Cj8-j6 |
| 7 | i2-i3  | Bd8-f6 |
| 8 | Nb1-c3 | g7-g6  |
| 9 | g4-g5  | Bf6-g7 |



Black found a harmonious development of the kingside. I felt strongly that 8 c3 was the right move but was nervous of making too broad a centre. That was the reason for 9 g5 for I planned to exchange it for any passing pawn. There is now strong pressure on my kingside after the novel bishop shift to an adjacent diagonal. I thought carefully before offering 10 Nj3 k4 11 Ni5 Bxi5 12 hxi5 Qxi5 13 Fh4 Qg7

14 Fi5 with a possible Ne4 to follow.

- |    |         |        |
|----|---------|--------|
| 10 | Nk1-j3  | k5-k4  |
| 11 | Nj3-i5  | f7-f5  |
| 12 | g5xf6ep | Bg7xf6 |
| 13 | j2-j3?  | Rl8-k8 |
| 14 | e2-e4   |        |

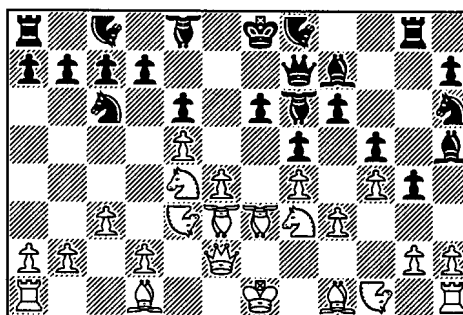


13 j3 was a terrible move. Tempted by the idea of Bk3 I overlooked the blow ...j4! which causes the collapse of my kingside. After 13...Rk8 Black decides when the position should be opened. 14 e4 attacks the Rk8 and begins a planned reorganisation after the expected ...h5.

- |    |        |        |
|----|--------|--------|
| 14 | ...    | h7-h5  |
| 15 | Fh3-g4 | i7-i6  |
| 16 | Cc1-e3 | Fh8-h6 |
| 17 | Ni5-h3 | Qf8-e7 |
| 18 | e4-e5  | Bf6-h8 |

18 e5 reduced the pressure on h4/i3 and screened the weakness d4. I can now see a way of making sense of my position with Ne4, c3, d4.

- |    |        |        |
|----|--------|--------|
| 19 | Fg4-f3 | Bh8-i7 |
| 20 | j3-j4! | Qe7-h7 |
| 21 | Nc3-e4 | Cj6-h8 |
| 22 | c2-c3  | Bi8-15 |



20 j4 was an ugly move, but it left a heavy Black battle group offside. I can now work with outposts at f6, g5 and expand on the queenside while he attempts to disentangle.

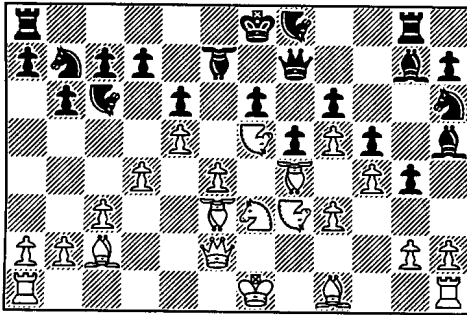
- |    |        |        |
|----|--------|--------|
| 23 | d2-d4  | b7-b6  |
| 24 | Ce3-g5 | Bi7-j6 |
| 25 | Bd1-c2 | Nc6-d8 |
| 26 | Nh3-i5 | Fh6xi5 |

The threat was 27 Nxc6 Qxc6 28 Nf6+ winning the queen. Now a fers can enter on the dark squares and other pieces have more room to manoeuvre.

- |    |        |        |
|----|--------|--------|
| 27 | h4xi5  | Bj6-k7 |
| 28 | Fg3-h4 | Cc8-c6 |

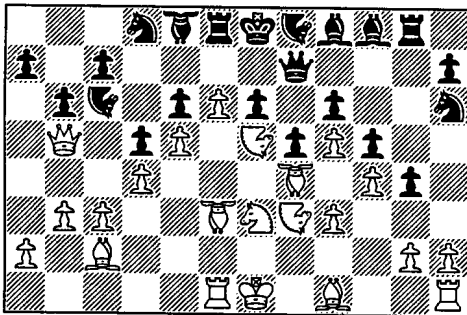


29 Ne4-g3 Nd8-b7  
30 Cj1-h3 Fe8-f7



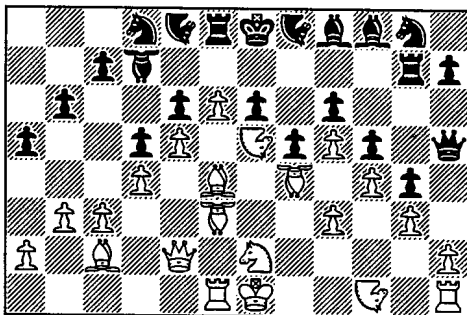
How can White increase pressure on the light squares?

31 f4-f5! Ra8-f8  
32 Qf2-e2 d7-d5  
33 b2-b3 B15-i8  
34 Ra1-f1 Bk7-j8  
35 Qe2-b5 Nb7-d8  
36 f5-f6 Ff7-e8



Pressure on the f-pawn forced a decision. I didn't want to give Black the e6 square or bring his fers forward. I think he must give the courier for two pawns. We now enter a period of heavy manoeuvring.

37 Ng3-e2 Fe8-d7  
38 Ne2-f4 Cc6-e8  
39 Nf4-g2 Qh7-j7  
40 Qb5-e2 Rk8-k7  
41 Bi1-f4 Qj7-15  
42 k2-k3 N16-k8  
43 Ch3-j1 a7-a5



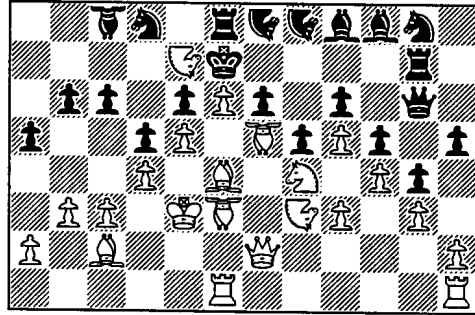
It was necessary to secure the kingside before returning to the assault. Black is preparing to advance with the l-pawn. White's next is a key move cutting the rook's lateral

defence of the queenside.

44 Cg5-e7! Fd7-c8  
45 Fh4-g5 Q15-k6  
46 Ng2-h4 17-15

A touch of follow-my-leader from White, and Black's advance on the kingside gets under way. Before I begin my assault I want to safeguard king and Bf4.

47 Qe2-g2 c7-c6  
48 Cj1-h3 Kg8-f7  
49 Kg1-e3 Ce8-g8

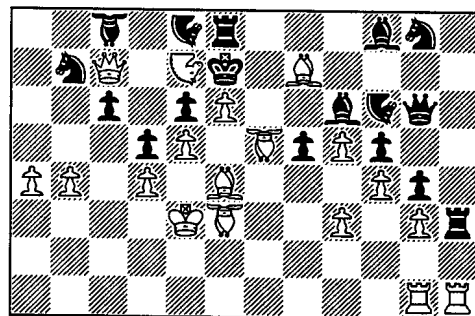


I have been exploring the possibility of a break through with Cxh5 or j5. Black is alert to this danger and the courier shift also gives his king a bolt hole. But the moment has arrived; I break through on the queenside in a way that cannot be blockaded.

50 b3-b4! Nd8-b7  
51 Qg2-e2 15-14  
52 Qe2-a6 a5xb4  
53 Qa6xb6 Cg8-e8  
54 c3xb4 Rk7-17

Now I can simply push the a-pawn if I have nothing else.

55 a2-a4 14xk3  
56 12xk3 R17-13  
57 Rf1-k1 Ch8-j6  
58 Nh4xi6 Bi8-j7  
59 Ch3xh5+ g6xh5  
60 Bc2-h7 Bj7xi6  
61 Qb6-c7 Resigns



There is no escape from the mating net. 61..Bxh7 62 Cc5+ Kg6 63 Qg7+ Kf5 64 Qxh7+ etc.

I found White's N-for-F sacrifice at move 26 particularly interesting. I have often written that the availability of F-for-2P or even F-for-P makes this game more fluid than ordinary chess, and N-for-F gives another example. - JDB

## LOSING CHESS : BEATING FRITZ

When reviewing Fritz 11's playing of Giveaway (Losing) Chess last time, I remarked that it had beaten me 4-0 with Black despite always choosing a line known since 2001 to give White a forced win. The thought occurred to me that it might be instructive to play the winning book line against Fritz, and to see what happened. My original source, Lenny Taelman's site as reported in VC 41, is no longer available, but an alternative source

<<http://voronet.francu.com/~cata/nilatac/book.php>>

now exists. Interestingly, the "books" do not appear to be identical.

Fritz, like all other practical playing programs, uses a "variator" to prevent it from playing the same line every time. It is therefore possible that somebody trying this experiment on a different machine, or with a different time limit, might find it playing differently. On my machine, however, and with its default time limit, it has always played the same as far as move 20. Fritz plays to the traditional rule that stalemate is a win for the player stalemated; its opponent here, Nilatac, plays to the FICS rule (stalemate is a win for the player with fewer men left) and its openings book was presumably calculated accordingly, but I don't think this affects the analysis here.

1 e2-e3 b7-b5  
2 Bf1xb5 Bc8-b7?

A fatal error. According to Nilatac's openings book, all moves here apart from 2...Ba6, 2...e6, and 2...Nh6 have now been proved to lose.

3 Bb5xd7 Bb7xg2

Other moves lose by force.

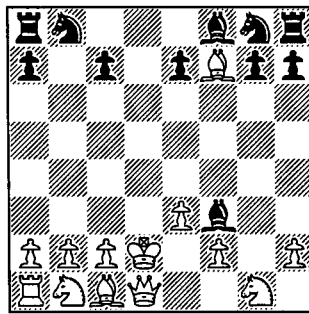
4 Bd7xe8 Bg2xh1

4...Qxe8 loses by force, and 4...Qxd2 5 Kxd2 Bxh1 6 Bxf7 transposes.

5 Be8xf7 Qd8xd2

6 Ke1xd2 Bh1-f3

This is the first point at which a future experiment might vary, since 6...Bd5 allows no win within the horizon of Stan Goldovski's *Giveaway Wizard* when running on my machine. All other moves lose by force.

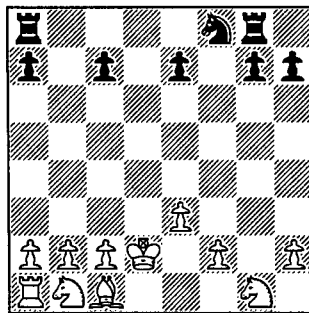


7 Bf7xg8 Rh8xg8  
7...Bxd1 loses by force.

8 Qd1xf3 Nb8-d7

After any other move, Black has to answer 8 Qxf8 with 8...Rxf8, and he gets a rampant rook.

9 Qf3xf8 Nd7xf8



The cut and thrust of the opening is over, and even without the computer's proof of loss we would assess Black's prospects as poor. White can hope to probe forward in the centre and force Black's knight to move, after which Black's rooks will be linked and White can aim his own rook at the eighth rank. Black, in the meantime, is condemned to passivity.

10 e3-e4 Rg8-h8

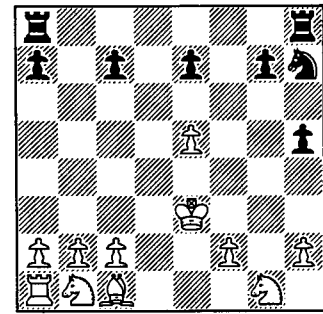
10...e5 would prevent a further pawn advance, but 11 Kd3 releases the bishop and leads to a forced win (for example, 11...Rh8 12 Bh6 gxh6 13 f4 exf4 14 Ke3 fxe3 15 Nd2 exd2 16 Rc1 and White can cope with any promotion).

11 e4-e5 h7-h5

12 Kd2-e3

An immediate advance to e6 would presumably not have worked (or at least has not been proved to work), but now it can be followed by Kd4 and so it becomes a threat. The blocking move 12...e6 can be shown to lose to 13 Nc3, so Black hides his knight.

12 ... Nf8-h7

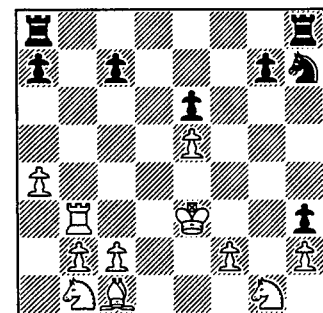


Now White goes for the eighth rank.

13 a2-a4 h5-h4

14 Ra1-a3 e7-e6

15 Ra3-b3 h4-h3



Black has successfully stopped White from playing Rb8, but now he has to prevent his own rook from being lured through to h2.

16 Ng1xh3 Nh7-f6

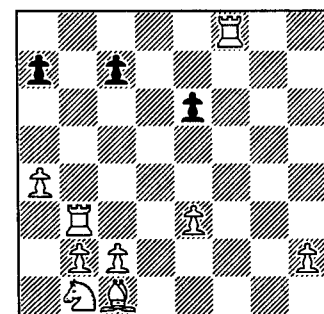
16...Ng5 loses off-hand (17 Nxcg8 Rxc2 18 Nxe6 Rxf2 19 Nxcg7 Rxc2 20 Rb6 etc).

17 e5xf6 Rh8xh3

18 f6xg7 Rh3xe3

19 f2xe3 Ra8-f8

20 g7xf8R



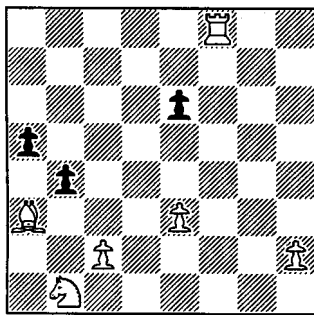
We have reached the ending, and this is the first point at which Fritz played different moves on different runs. Let us therefore stop and take stock.

White will have to let at least one Black pawn promote, but he has plenty of time to plan for its arrival. Promotions to queen, rook, bishop,

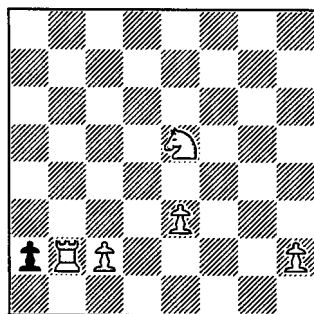
and even knight can probably be met by mass giveaways. Promotions to king probably cannot because of the distant h-pawn, but White can hope to give away everything else, promote this pawn to a rook, and win with rook against king.

The first move Fritz played was  
 20 ... c7-c5,  
 after which the analysis which I had downloaded from Lenny Taelman's site gave

- 21 Rb3-b6 a7xb6
- 22 b2-b4 c5xb4
- 23 a4-a5 b6xa5
- 24 Bc1-a3 .



At this point, it stopped, presumably because it could see a forced path to a position known to be won. (I don't know the background, but it would appear that the definitive results for all three-man and four-man endings were available during the calculation.) But what is obvious to a computer is not always obvious to you and me (there are positions even with three men whose correct evaluation had to await computer analysis), so I asked *Wizard* to prove it. It gave me  
 24...bxa3 25 Nxa3 a4 (25...e5 see B) 26 Rb8 e5 27 Nc4 a3 (27...e4 see A) 28 Nxe5 a2 29 Rb2 :



29...a1K (other promotions allow mass giveaways) 30 h4 Kxb2 31 Nd3 Kxc2 32 h5 and wins with R v K, or

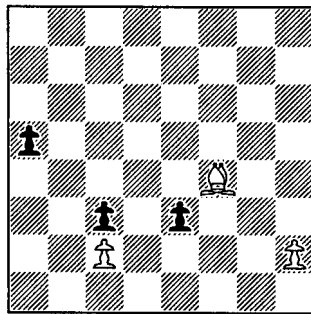
(A) 27...e4 28 Nd2 a3 29 Nxe4 a2 30 Rb2 and much the same (we have the previous diagram with the knight on e4 instead of e5), or (B) 25...e5 26 Rb8 e4 (26...a4 rejoins the main line) 27 Nc4 a4 rejoining line A.

Back to the diagram after 20 gxf8R. Nilatac's book replied to

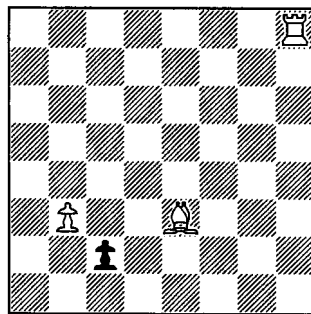
- 20 ... c7-c5
- by
- 21 Rf8-f5 e6xf5
- 22 Rb3-b6 a7xb6
- 23 e3-e4 f5xe4
- 24 b2-b4 c5xb4
- 25 a4-a5 b6xa5
- 26 Nb1-c3 b4xc3
- 27 Bc1-f4 ,

and after Fritz's

- 27 ... e4-e3
- it said "No further information in this branch" :



Again, I asked *Wizard*, and it gave me  
 28 Bxe3 a4 29 h4 a3 30 h5 a2 31 h6 a1K (other promotions are easy) 32 h7 Ka2 (32...Kb1/Kb2 are clearly bad) 33 h8R Kb3 (33...Ka3 34 Rh5 Ka2 35 Rd5 Ka3 36 Bb6 Ka2 37 Rd4 Ka1 38 Bc5 etc, or 37...Kb3 38 cxb3 c2 39 Rd2) 34 cxb3 c2 :



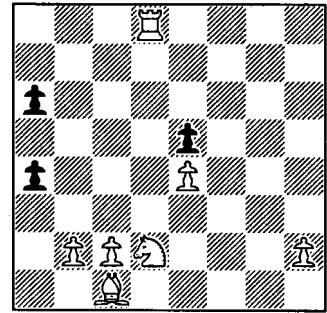
35 Bc5! (other moves lose to a bishop promotion, because even if White can give his bishop and rook away Black can play to give his bishop on c7) c1K 36 Rh3 Kd1 (36...Kb1 37 Bb4 etc)

37 Rg3 Kc1 (37...Ke1/Ke2 38 Bf2 as below) 38 Bf2 Kd1 (38...Kb1 39 Be1 etc) 39 Bd4 Ke1 40 Bf2 Kxf2 41 b4 and again wins with R v K.

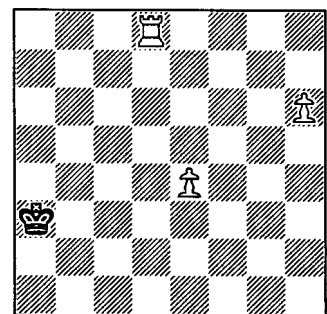
I have to say I prefer the line that Lenny Taelman's site used to give.

Fritz also played 20...e5 and 20...c6 on occasion, and

- 20 ... e6-e5
- appears the more testing. The analysis on Lenny Taelman's site gave 21 e4, and stopped; Nilatac's book gave
- 21 e3-e4 a7-a6
  - 22 Rb3-b6 c7xb6
  - 23 a4-a5 b6xa5
  - 24 Rf8-d8 a5-a4
  - 25 Nb1-d2 ,
- and again "No further information" (after a White move this time).



Fritz chose 25...a3 (25...a5 26 Nf3 a3 27 Nxe5! axb2 28 Bxb2 a4 29 Bd4 a3 30 Rb8 a2 31 Rb2 etc), and *Wizard* eventually found 26 bxa3 a5 27 Nb3 a4 28 Bb2! axb3 29 Bxe5 bxc2 30 h4 c1K (30...c1N 31 Bd4 Na2/Ne2 32 Bc3 Nxc3 33 Rd3 Nxe4 34 Rc3 Nxc3 35 a4 Nxa4 36 h5 and wins by promotion to bishop) 31 Bb2 Kxb2 32 h5 Kxa3 33 h6 :



I don't have access to the definitive four-man results, but it appears that Black cannot stop White reaching a standard win with 2R v K, R + B v K, or R v K.

# IN THE LIBRARY : CHESSGI

Among the books and magazines of David Pritchard's that were passed on to us by Elaine and Wanda was an almost complete run of *Nost-algia* from issue 142 onwards. *Nost-algia* was the bulletin of NOST, the Knights of the Square Table, an American postal chess and games club which thrived for many years, and from issue 143 it included a variants column "Olla Podrida" written by Philip Cohen.

Among the many variants played in NOST tournaments was Chessgi, which is chess played with shogi drops (a captured man changes sides and becomes the property of its captor, who can drop it on any vacant square instead of a playing a normal move). One of its leading exponents was John McCallion, who "is good at more than Giveaway; look what he does to me in Chessgi" (Philip Cohen, introducing the following game in issue 289). Notes are by John, who was White, and I am standardizing notation even within quotations.

- 1 e2-e4 e7-e5
- 2 d2-d4 e5xd4
- 3 Qd1xd4

"Weaver Adams once claimed that in conventional chess White had a forced win after 1 e4 e5 2 Bc4. I feel even more confident of White's position after 2 d4 in the Chessgi game: I would not reply 1...e5 as Black. I cannot see how White's open position, especially with the prospect of a pawn drop on d5 or g5 to attack a knight, can be threatened, let alone nullified. Nevertheless, Black played something I had not envisaged, so theory might eventually prove me wrong..."

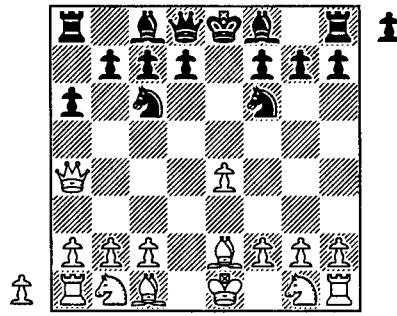
- 3 ... Nb8-c6
- 4 Qd4-a4 Ng8-f6

"Eminently plausible, but the knight proves to be exposed on this natural square. I would prefer ...Bc5 followed by ...Nge7 and ...0-0."

- 5 Bf1-e2

"Here I chose the immediate P@d5 against Paul Yearout, but I saw this as a restriction of the Black knight with a view to P@g5." The game against

Paul Yearout is scheduled for VC 59.  
5 ... a7-a6



"I was a little disappointed to see that after 6...b5, 7 Bxb5 fails against 7...axb5 8 Qxa8 B@b7! winning the queen. So..."

- 6 c2-c3

"Not only providing a useful haven for the queen, but defending d4 against a tiresome incursion by the QN."

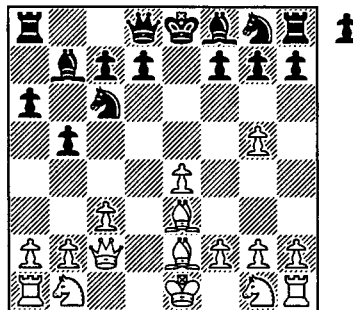
- 6 ... b7-b5
- 7 Qa4-c2

"Still defending the e-pawn. Magic!"

- 7 ... Bc8-b7?

"Despite a possible pawn drop on d5 now or later, the bishop might still have a lot of potential on the long diagonal, especially if White is over-ambitious - although a fianchetto seems as out of place in such an open Chessgi position as it would in a similar conventional one. However, it was imperative to prepare against White's next. 7...h6 or 7...d6 (allowing the KN to retreat to d7) came into consideration."

- 8 P @ g5 Nf6-g8
- 9 Bc1-e3



"Above a friend's door a notice says: 'Atavism must be fought with ruthlessness'. The classical precept might be 'Knights before Bishops', but this not only deprives Black's dark bishop of c5, but envisages the

possibility of Nbd2 and castling queen's side."

- 9 ... Bf8-e7

"This restricts the Black KN even further and, besides, the White g-pawn is easily defended, but I find it very difficult to find anything palatable for Black. This and the next few moves seem to confirm that his strategy has failed."

- 10 h2-h4 b5-b4
- 11 Ng1-f3

"Perhaps castling on the king's side is not bad after all, although I have other ideas for the knight."

- 11 ... P @ g4?

"Simply driving the knight where it wants to go. The defensive 11...P@g5 would have been much better."

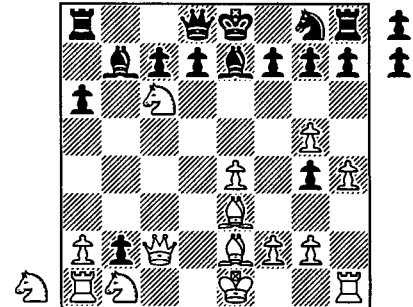
- 12 Nf3-d4

"Inviting an exchange of knights. I saw a knight in hand as of much greater value to me."

- 12 ... b4xc3

"Embarking on complications which are hardly destined to end in Black's favour."

- 13 Nd4xc6 c3xb2!?



"Even in the midst of such euphoria, I had the presence of mind to consider 14 Qxb2, but after 14...Bxc6, 15 Qxg7 not only allows 15...N@c2+ but also the possible discomfort of 15...Bf6 16 gxf6 N@g6 to threaten 17...P@f8 [sic - see below]: this might be refuted by 17 B/P@e7, but I leave it all to the judgement of the reader - being a rich man, I decided not to pick unnecessary quarrels." Most of us do not allow pawn drops on the first or eighth rank; NOST appears to have allowed them to be dropped on the first rank, but I am not sure what they were allowed to do when they had got there.

- 14 Nc6xd8 b2xa1Q
- 15 0-0 (!)

"I concluded that I could well afford this precaution. Even after capture of my knight, leaving a balance of two rooks and pawns for Black against my extra queen, his exposed king would comply with my intentions."

15 ... Ra8xd8

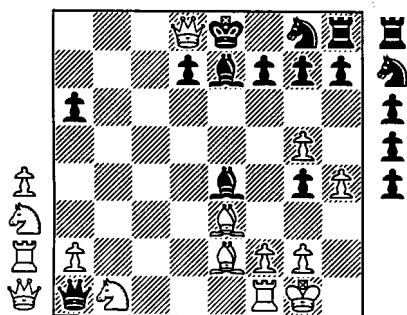
16 Qc2xc7!

"Good Chessgi defensive players are probably born rather than made. In this variant, one must attack, attack, and attack again!"

16 ... Bb7xe4?

Philip Cohen inserted a note here: "My 5th straight capture; much good it does me."

17 Qc7xd8+!!



"I now offered two possible conditional continuations, both of which were acknowledged without question: (a) 17...Bxd8 18 N@d6+ Ke7 19 R@e8+ Kxd6 20 Q@c5 mate, and (b) 17...Kxd8 18 Q@b8+ P@c8 19 P@c7+ Ke8 20 Qxc8+ P@d8 21 c7xd8Q+ Bxd8 22 N@d6+ Ke7 23 R@e8+ Kxd6 24 Qc5 mate. It is pleasing that in one case a queen drops on c5 to mate, whilst in the other it moves there. I expressed a preference for variation (b) because Black ends with so many pieces in hand, but there is a flaw in it: 21 N@d6+ mates, on d8 with the queen or e8 with the rook, next move." I thought it was only study composers and problemists who were worried when a spectacular winning line was not forced.

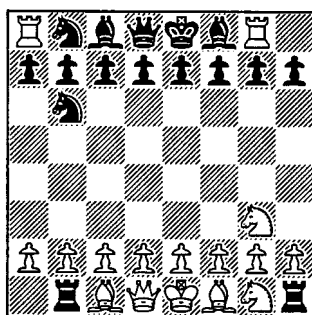
Be it noticed that prohibiting first-rank pawn drops makes no difference here; Black merely sacrifices rook and knight instead.

John's game against Paul Yearout, which he apparently considered the best he had ever played, will appear in this slot next time.

## PROOF GAMES

Peter Coast sent us his 59 below not as a deliberate proof game but merely as a curious question: in **Magnetic Chess** (kings excepted, when a man lands on a square, any man of the opposite colour on the same rank or file is attracted to it, and any man of the same colour is repelled as far as possible), how quickly can the players combine to reach a position where all sixteen pawns are back on their original squares? Peter had found a way of doing it using nine moves by each player, and it seemed to both Peter Fayers and myself that the sequence of moves was uniquely determined and hence that the result was valid as a proof game.

59 - Peter Coast, Original



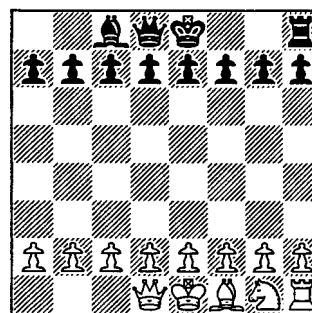
After Black's 9th. Game score? Magnetic Chess

Question: can the task be achieved in fewer moves?

(It is easily seen that we can never play to get all 32 men back home. The last move must have been made by a knight, say Nb1, and on landing it will have pushed the b-pawn to b6. To get all 16 pawns back home, and a motley collection of the rest finishing on one square or another, is therefore the best for which we can hope, and some pieces will almost certainly have to finish on the "wrong" back row so that they can suck the enemy pawns back home.)

Peter Fayers himself has been inspired by Alain Dekker's **Jump Chess** (VC 57, page 56), in which Q, R, and B can jump over an immediately adjacent man of either colour :

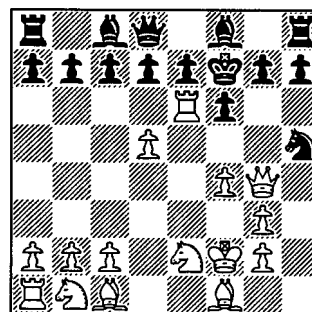
60 - Peter Fayers, Original



After Black's 7th. Game score? Jump Chess

61 shows a famous orthodox twin :

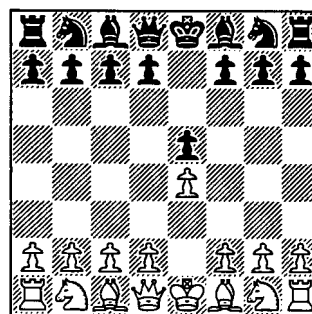
61 - Gerd Wilts  
U. S. Problem Bulletin, 1997



Orthodox chess: after (a) White's 9th, (b) Black's 13th. Game scores?

In 62, Peter Fayers gets no fewer than five uniquely determined game scores, and the chief task is to find the variant (this done, the rest is easy). It is in the *Encyclopedia*, and has featured in *VC*.

62 - Peter Fayers, Original



After (a) Black's 1st, (b) White's 2nd, (c) Black's 2nd, (d) White's 3rd, (e) Black's 3rd, all unique. Variant?

Answers on page 71.

# THE END IS NIGH !

by Paul Byway

## Solutions to competition 33

#207 8 Nf5 Nxd4 Ne6 Nf4 d4 d3 d2 d1Q mate.

#208 8 Nxf5 g5 g4 g3 gxh2 hxg1Q Rxh1 Qd1 mate.

#209 8 Be4 Nxf1 Kd7 Kc6 Kb5 Ka4 Nd2 Nb1 mate.

#210 10 exd4 Ne7 Nxf5 Ne3 f5 f4 f3 fxg2 g1Q Qd1 mate.

#211 8 Kc7 Ba4 d4 Ne7 Rb8 Rb1 Rxa1 Rd1 mate.

#212 8 Kc8 Rc6 Rc3 Nd3 Nf6 Re8 Re1 Ne4 mate.

#213 1 Cc9 Gd10 2 Pf7+ Kf9 3 Cc5 G10e9 4 Cf5+ Gf8 5 Ea3 Pb2 6 Cf4 Pc2 7 Cf2 Pb2 8 Cxb2 Gfe9 9 Cb4 and wins.

#214 1 Ec5 Kf9 2 Ea3 Pa6 3 Ch2 Pa5 4 Eb5 Pb5 5 Ee3 Kf10 6 Ch5 Kf9 7 Eg5 Pb4 8 Ch4 wins the pawn and then the game.

It turns out that in #208 the Qd1 can also be supported by Nf2; in #209 one can finish with ...b5, b4 mate; in #212 put the rooks on c1 and e1 and finish with Ne4 mate. In #212 Fred Galvin points out an Italian mate after Rc6 Nf6 Kd6 Kc5 Kd4 Rhc8 Rc1 R8c2.

The Chinese Chess pieces were very difficult this time; more difficult than intended. In each case the play is directed to achieve a subordinate goal and this depends on knowing the outcome of simpler endings. In #213 it seems that 6 Cf8 doesn't win although this is not obvious - compare the two pieces in VC 56. #214 is devoted to reaching the known win given opposite as #222.

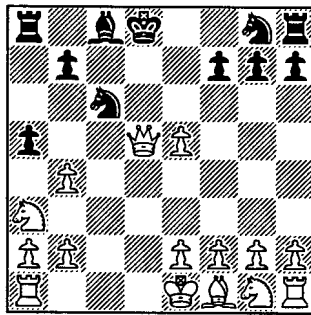
#221 is a rather simpler exercise.

The current scores:-

FG 154, IR 129, JB 62, RC 53, PW 35, CL 24, RT 19.

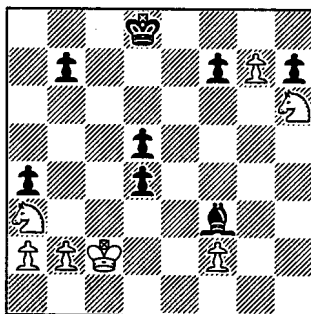
Competition 34 is alongside.

#215 Trusov - Lesnicenko (1992)



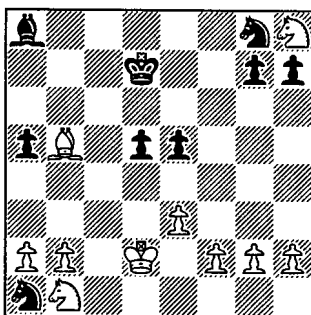
Black wins (series 6)

#216 Gatto - Castelli (1991)



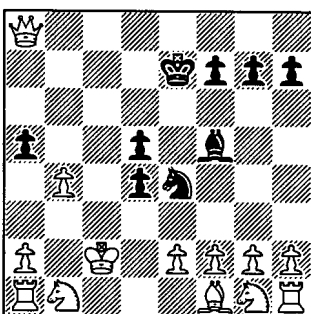
Black wins (series 10)

#217 Benedetto - Dipilato (1989)



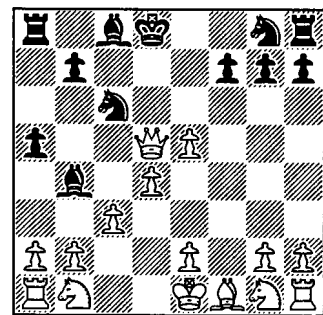
Black wins (series 8)

#218 Magari - Dipilato (1988)



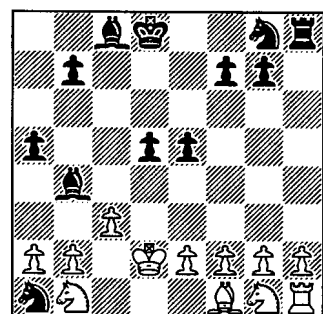
Black wins (series 8)

#219 Kyncl - Miliunas (1991)



Black wins (series 6)

#220 Prokopenko - Kocan (1993)



White wins (series 7)

#221 Cannon + Pawn #48

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

Red to play and win

#222 Cannon + Pawn #57

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

Red to play and win

## ISOLATED PAWNS

David Sedgwick and I tried out **Bidding Chess** (see *VC* 57) after the annual meeting. I noted down the games with a view to quoting at least some of them, but in truth we did not play particularly well and I don't think they would add appreciably to what we saw last time. However, we came to a few conclusions which may be of interest.

We spent far too much time trying to calculate how many chips the next move was worth. In ordinary chess, an experienced player recognises a range of standard situations at once, and this gives him a sound basis from which to start analysing. We had only the very elementary knowledge expounded in last time's article. A good Bidding Chess player needs more than this; seeing on the board a combination of one-move, two-move, and three-move threats, he must have at his fingertips the number of chips he needs to win, and he must know this for all the combinations that are likely to turn up in a normal game. Expert players would surely evaluate positions very similarly, and so make bids within a few chips of each other. Ours were sometimes wildly apart (I have notes of 10 against 36 and 18 against 40).

For chips, we started by using Monopoly money, £100 each, but this proved not to be particularly convenient and after a couple of games we just kept tallies on the pads we were using for the bids. The games that Noam Elkies had watched in Banff used sets of dominoes, but I wrote last time that the game would seem to be more subtle if the number of chips was relatively large. I still think this, but practical considerations seem to pull in the opposite direction. Perhaps we should have tried using Monopoly hotels and houses instead of money, hotels counting as ten.

For the record, we played four games, winning two each. Since I had previously studied the game in order to write the article in *VC* 57, whereas David merely knew what he had picked up from reading that article, this has to be regarded as a good result for David.

**Endings with variant pieces.** Václav Kotěšovec has been doing more work on variant piece endings: (a) two grasshoppers and a leaper (various) against bare king, (b) rook and grasshopper against one minor piece, (c) two minor pieces against "Chinese" piece (Pao and its bishop and queen equivalents), (d) rook or queen against lion or "Chinese" piece, (e) rook or queen against two lions or "Chinese" pieces.

As a preliminary step in the analysis of group (b), he looked at rook against one minor piece on boards smaller than 8x8, and found the result, very surprising to me, that **rook against bishop is a WIN on a 6x6 board**. Has this been reported before? If so, it has escaped my attention. As a taster, try Kc2 + Ra6 against Ka1 + Ba2, which is a standard draw on the 8x8 board, but be warned: it took me a fortnight, and had Václav not told me that the win was there I would probably have given up.

There will be more about this next time. If you don't want to wait, visit Václav's site

<<http://web.telecom.cz/vaclav.kotesovec/>>

(note "web" and not "www"), click on "Articles", and look for "Fairy chess endgames - new results".

"**Anne Watson's Chess**". The May 13 sale at Bonhams, Knightsbridge, advertised an 1891 patent taken out by Anne Watson for "a variation on the game of chess". Alas, this was merely an auctioneer's puff. The item offered was U.K. patent 20,614 for a naval strategy game called "Straits", and the inventor did not herself claim it as a chess variant. The game was played on a board with eleven rows of lengths 9, 9, 9, 7, 5, 3, and out again, and each player's object was to get his (or her) flagship to the central square, from where it commanded the straits.

## SOLUTIONS

**King and three ferses** (page 58). Black's winning move is 1...Fh5; not 1...Fh7, when White plays 2 Kf7 and each of the three moves which save the fers on f8 gives stalemate.

**Proof Games** (page 69). 58 (Fayers, in *VC* 57): intention RKNNBQRB, 1 Nb3 Nd6 2 Kc1 Ne4 3 Rb1 Nxf2 4 Na1 Nxb1 5 Nf2 g6 6 Nxb1 etc, but alas also NRKNBBQR, 1 f4 g6 2-3 Be3 Nd5 4 Qf2 Nxf4 5 Qe1 Nh5 6 Nf2 Ng3 7 Qd1 Nxf1 8 Rxf1 etc.

59 (Coast): 1 Na3 (Pa7-a4) Nh6 (Ph2-h5) 2 Rb1 (Pb2-b6) Rg8 (Pg7-g3) 3 Rb5 Rg4 4 Rh4 Ra5 5 Rg5 (Ra5-f5) Rb4 (Rh4-c4, Pb6-b5) 6 Rg8 (Pg3-g7) Rb1 (Pb5-b2) 7 Rc6 (Nh6-d6) Rf3 (Na3-e3) 8 Ra6 (Nd6-b6, Pa4-a5) Rh3 (Ne3-g3, Ph5-h4) 10 Ra8 (Pa5-a7) Rh1 (Ph4-h2). The symmetry is briefly broken at move 5, but reinstated next move.

60 (Fayers): 1 Be3 Nh6 2 Bxb8 Ra6 3 Bxf8 Ra3 4 Bd6 Rxa1 5 Bxb8 Rxb1 6 Qxb1 Qxb8 7 Qd1 Qd8. One queen slides to and from the b-file, the other jumps.

61 (Wilts): (a) 1 d4 Nc6 2 d5 Nd4 3 f4 Nxe2 4 Kf2 Ng3 5 hxg3 Nf6 6 Rh6 Nh5 7 Re6 f6 8 Qg4 Kf7 9 Ne2; (b) 1 d4 Nc6 2 d5 Nd4 3 Kd2 Nxe2 4 Ke3 Ng3 5 hxg3 Nf6 6 Rh6 Nh5 7 Re6 f6 8 Qg4 Kf7 9 Qh3 Kg6 10 Ne2 Kg5 11 f4+ Kh6 12 Kf2 Kg6 13 Qg4+ Kf7.

62 (Fayers): It's **Einstein Chess** (*ECV* 2 page 163, *VC* 24 page 75, *VC* 25 page 99). On moving, pieces mutate Q to R to B to N to P, pawns and kings remaining the same (they mutate up similarly on capturing, P to N to B to R to Q, but this is not relevant here). So only the kings and the e-pawns can have moved, and we have (a) 1 e4 e5, (b) 1 e3 e5 2 e4, (c) 1 e3 e6 2 e4 e5, (d) 1 e4 e6 2 Ke2 e5 3 Ke1, and (e) 1 e4 e5 2 Ke2 Ke7 3 Ke1 Ke8. If you successfully solved this, you are a lot better at lateral thinking than I am.

Here's an odd thought. The normal Fool's Mate doesn't work in Einstein Chess because the queen becomes a rook. I cannot find an Einstein Fool's Mate on Black's 2nd move, but I can find at least five on White's 3rd: 1 e3 f6 2 Qg4R h6 3 Rg6B, 1 h4 g5 2 hxg5N f6 3 Rh5B, 1 e3 e5 2 Qh5R Ke7 3 Rxe5Q, 1 d3 h6 2 Bxb6R f6 3 Rg6B, and 1 d3 g5 2 Bxg5R f6 3 Rh5B. Apart from interchanges of moves and "pawn-one or pawn-two", can anyone find more?



## CONTENTS

Lao Tzu Chess	58
Torus tours	60
King and Three Ferses	61
Miller's Daughter Chess	62
Modern Courier Chess	64
Losing Chess : Beating Fritz	66
In The Library : Chessgi	68
Proof Games	69
The End Is Nigh!	70
Isolated Pawns	71
Solutions	71

**Hnefatafl in Shetland.** On August 16, Fetlar in Shetland hosted what appears to have been the first modern World Championship in the revived Norse game of Hnefatafl. A total of twenty competitors took part, Wendy Sutherland from East Yorkshire defeating George New in the final. Sadly, she apparently claims no Viking blood of her own, though her husband's forebears came from the nearby island of Unst (where they play to slightly different rules). More next time. (Grateful acknowledgements to Peter Kelly, George Jelliss, and the web sites of *The Shetland News* and *The Shetland Times*.)

This year's **Circular Chess World Championship** saw yet another new winner in Neil McInnes with 4½/5, ahead of Francis Bowers and perhaps one or two others with 4. I arrived at lunchtime to discover that six-times winner Francis had already dropped half a point and two-times winner Herman Kok a whole point, and when Neil met Francis in the final round he needed only to hold the draw. Sadly, the Old Rosie was not quite its usual self, though Stowford Press provided an entirely acceptable substitute.

## BCVS NOTICES

**Sue's e-mail** has changed (see below). *VC* 59 is scheduled for January, and copy date is **December 1**.

**George Jelliss** now has all issues of *Chessics*, *The Games and Puzzles Journal*, and *Variant Chess* (Volume 1) for download from the publications page of his web site

<<http://www.mayhematics.com>>  
The article on "Magic Torus Tours", from which the information on page 60 was taken, can be found on the Knight's Tour Notes page.

**Credit where credit is due?** After writing last time's article on magic knight's tours, I noticed that Guenter Stertenbrink's catalogue attributed tour 42 to "Jelliss". George had made no claim in his own catalogue, so I queried the matter, and Guenter said that when the computer produced tour 43, which is 42 starting at f5, George looked at it and said that 42 would also exist, "so we attributed it to him."

In suppressing his own name in this context, George was being consistent with his attribution of other tours with multiple starting points to the discoverer of the first tour in the set (we normally attribute tours 1-5 to Jaenisch even though he overlooked tour 2 starting at f1, and tours 6-9 to Udayar though only tour 8 starting at c6 is in *Indian Chess*), but I think I ought to record the matter.

I have received Volume 1 of **Scacchia Ludus** (Studies in the History of Chess), beautifully printed and with much variant material. Please will a German speaker among our readers help me to review it for *VC* 59?

## EVENTS

Mike Adams ran a **Variants Evening in memory of David Pritchard** at the **British Championship** meeting, but as last year the distance between the tournament venue and players' accommodation caused the evening events to be poorly supported. However, they had a five-round all-play-all, playing Extinction, Pocket Knight, Avalanche, Rifle, and Static Chess. Sam Osborne won with 4/5, with Subin Sen and Peter Horlock equal second with 3.

Mike will be running a similar tournament at **Guildford** on **Monday 22 December** starting at 1930 at the club venue (the Guildford Institute), and I understand that Mike Gunn hopes to run one at **Hastings** in the **White Rock Hotel** on **New Year's Eve**. Contact Mike Adams

<[mike@guildfordchess.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:mike@guildfordchess.fsnet.co.uk)>  
for confirmation and further details.

I assume that the **Circular Chess "Chrimbo Challenge"** will again be held at the Tap and Spile, Hungate, Lincoln, on a **Sunday in January**. It is always a good afternoon, and if interested readers care to get in touch I will gladly forward information.

This year, the French problemists again chose **Magnetic Chess** (see page 69, also *VC* 44) for their blitz tourney at **Messigny**. Axel Gilbert won with 4/5, followed by Etienne Dupuis and Alain Villeneuve with 3. I was also told that the food was back to its old standard.

And the international problemists' meeting included what seems to have become a regular **Bughouse** evening. This year's winners were Vladimir Podinić and Klemen Šivić with 8/10.

**Variant Chess** is the journal of the **British Chess Variants Society**

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