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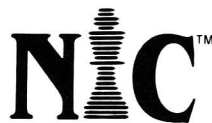
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CONTENTS

NOTES AND COMMENT / 6



PROFILE

The World's Best Chess Trainer / 10

Russia's Mark Dvoretsky

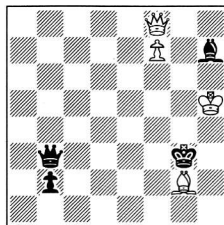
Timothy Hanke

ANALYSIS

Lein-Dvoretsky, Moscow 1973 / 39

Whose Strategy Will Triumph?

Mark Dvoretsky



ESSAY

Chess Art in the Computer Age / 48

Noam D. Elkies

THEORY

The Mystery of Bad Bishops / 63

Boris Gulko

NUMBER 2

ON THE SCENE

Winning the U.S. Championship / 72

Reflections and Annotations

Patrick Wolff

MEMOIR

The Education of a Chess Anthologist / 99

Burt Hochberg



MOVIES

A Great Chess Movie / 105

Searching for Bobby Fischer

Frank Brady

BOOKS

Kasparov Revealed / 109

Mortal Games by Fred Waitzkin

Christopher Chabris

Instant Fischer / 115

Six Books on Fischer—Spassky 1992

Edward Winter

BRIEF REVIEWS / 122

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NOTES AND COMMENT

THE POLITICS OF CHESS

Chess often appears in the media as a crude metaphor for maneuvering in sports and politics, so we found it refreshing to see the language of contemporary politics used to describe a recent chess game.

During a visit to Boston in August, Judit Polgar played a 10-game, \$7,500 blitz match against Patrick Wolff. She won convincingly, 6-3. (In the undercard, Zsuzsa Polgar edged Boris Gulko 4½-3½, and Zsofia Polgar crushed Jorge Zamora 3½-½; other events included an outdoor tandem simultaneous exhibition and an open blitz tournament.)



Before the evening's big matches, Judit and Patrick played blitz against Massachusetts governor William Weld, a Republican who was an avid player in his youth and remains an enthusiast. Scot Lehigh provided creative coverage in *The Boston Globe* the next day (13 August 1993):

"Weld used the imaginative but unproved supply-side opening gambit, a slashing across-the-board attack. But Polgar, entrenched in the Sicilian De-

fense, proved harder to displace than a payroll of walruses ... Polgar then stole a page from the governor's own game plan, systematically downsizing his team. She privatized his important pieces. Could Weld really manage with fewer resources?"

Weld lost both games. Perhaps he should stick to playing Democratic politicians.

HALL OF FAME

On 27 February 1993, the U.S. Chess Hall of Fame and Museum was rededicated in its new home at the U.S. Chess Center in Washington, DC. Allan Savage sent a report on the ceremony.

About 70 people attended. Speakers included Gerald Dullea, the former U.S. Chess Federation Executive Director who helped establish the original Hall and Museum at uscf headquarters; John McCrary, current Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Hall of Fame, who with David Mehler was responsible for bringing it to the U.S. Chess Center; and Macon Shibut, author of the new book *Paul Morphy and the Evolution of Chess Theory* (which will be featured in a future issue of *ACJ*).

The Hall of Fame and Museum was created in 1986. The uscf had been receiving various artifacts and a permanent facility was needed to house them. The attractive new center is big enough for lectures or small tournaments. The walls are adorned with photographs; glass cases throughout the room display the collection. Items on display include memorabilia of early U.S. champions such as Charles Henry Stanley, George Henry Mackenzie, and Paul Morphy; a signed portrait of Frank Marshall; Hermann Helms's famous letter replying to seven-year-old Bobby

Fischer's mother; Edward Lasker's chess set; the postcard with the losing move from Yakov Estrin that made Hans Berliner World Correspondence Champion; and a 45-rpm recording of "The Ballad of Bobby Fischer."

Not only chess theory but chess organization is the product of individual contributions over time. The Hall of Fame recognizes outstanding individual contributors to both aspects of chess in the United States. Charter members in 1986 were Reuben Fine, Robert Fischer, Isaac Kashdan, George Koltanowski, Frank Marshall, Paul Morphy, Harry Nelson Pillsbury, and Samuel Reshevsky. Each year since then, new members have been added: Sam Loyd and Wilhelm Steinitz in 1987; Arpad Elo and Hermann Helms in 1988; I.A. Horowitz in 1989; Hans Berliner in 1990; John Collins and Arthur Dake in 1991; Arnold Denker and Gisela Gresser in 1992; and Victor Palciauskas and Pal Benko in 1993.

Savage writes: "The U.S. Chess Hall of Fame and Museum is a celebration of democracy, a place where both players and non-players can be enriched by American chess history—a history that has invited professionals and amateurs to work and compete together." He believes that through the center, "our game's origins in this country will be preserved and its contribution to our culture forever sealed," and recommends a visit whenever you are in the area.

You can make financial contributions to the U.S. Chess Hall of Fame and Museum through the U.S. Chess Trust, 186 Route 9W, New Windsor, NY 12553. You can donate historical artifacts by writing to R. John McCrary, 1520 Senate Street #129, Columbia, SC 29201.

GOING ONCE ...

On 29 April 1993 an auction of sets and other chess collectibles, including a few books, was held in New York City. Auctioneer Geza von Hapsburg

conducted the proceedings with impressive efficiency and a bit of humor. Although many lots did not draw their minimum bids, several went for over \$1,000. The highest price, \$4,400 (including the 10% premium), was paid for a complete Waterford crystal set with a 6¼-inch king. According to Claudia Strauss of the sponsoring Metropolitan Arts & Antiques Pavilion, the auction demonstrated that there is a good market for chess collectibles, and more are planned.



FISCHER UPDATE

In our on-the-scene account of the Fischer–Spassky rematch last issue, we reported the widely-shared suspicion among respectable Yugoslavs that Jezdimir Vasiljevic, the mysterious entrepreneur who sponsored the match, was a crook and that his Jugoskandic Bank, which paid up to 15% a month on deposits, was a scam. We speculated that perhaps he was financing the chess spectacle "with the hard-earned savings of bank depositors." One reader wrote to us that it was irresponsible journalism to publish such rumors and speculation. Perhaps it was. But *Time* reported that in April 1993, about five months after the end of the "Revenge Match of the Century," the Jugoskandic Bank failed and Vasiljevic absconded to Israel with \$1 million in cash in a suitcase.

Fischer, according to *USA Today*, had deposited most of his \$3+ million of prize money in the Jugoskandic Bank. When the bank failed he apparently lost his money. He is under in-



dictment by the U.S. government for violating U.S. law in playing the Spassky match in Yugoslavia. The fugitive Fischer may now wonder what he has actually gained by playing the match with Spassky.

Press reports have created a sketchy picture of Fischer's reclusive life after the match. Apparently he remained in Belgrade for several months, renting suites in a luxury hotel for himself and his bodyguards. During this time he seems to have negotiated with Laszlo Polgar for a match with Judit Polgar, to be sponsored by Vasiljevic. This would have been an interesting match, but despite widespread rumors, negotiations were never close to being finalized. Vasiljevic ended up sponsoring a match between Judit Polgar and Spassky, won by Judit 5½-4½.

After the Jugoskandic Bank crashed, Fischer moved north to a small village near the Serbian border with Hungary. The August 1993 issue of *Cbess* carried a peculiar letter from Hungarian grandmaster Andras Adorjan, who claimed to have visited Fischer at the Aquamarine Health Center on the Serbian/Hungarian border. He said that Fischer was being held prisoner there, guarded by four bodyguards and the Serbian secret police. Fischer (said Adorjan) was being cheated, betrayed, and abused. Deeply depressed about being cheated of his prize money, he was being poisoned by drugs and moved and talked like a broken man.

On 6 August the Associated Press

reported that Fischer was definitely in Hungary negotiating seriously for the long-mooted Polgar match. According to Hungarian state television, Fischer was staying at a well-guarded house owned by Laszlo Polgar in the town of Nagymaros, north of Budapest. The Budapest sports daily *Sport plusz foci* quoted Laszlo Polgar as saying that conditions for a match had been agreed to and "all we need now is the right sponsor." The sports daily also printed a photograph of Fischer in Budapest. Later, conflicting reports suggested that Fischer wanted to play either blitz chess or "shuffle chess" (with the pieces rearranged on the first rank before starting each game), against either Judit or both Judit and Zsuzsa Polgar, for a \$5 million purse.

Perhaps Fischer can't bear all the publicity that Garry Kasparov is once again getting after breaking with FIDE in and founding the Professional Chess Association (PCA). The veteran Anatoly Karpov, recipient of Fischer's title in 1975, is also back on the scene playing for the vacant FIDE world title.

It is ironic that Kasparov seems to be succeeding in his fight against FIDE where Fischer failed 18 years ago. One difference is that Kasparov, despite his occasionally abrasive personality, is a genuine hustler who backs up his decisions with concrete actions. Kasparov went out and found new sponsorship for his PCA title match. Fischer by contrast sulked in his tent. Of course, Kasparov has the cooperation of a British opponent who was already mad at FIDE for allegedly botching the bidding process and costing the players significant prize money. In 1975 Fischer had to contend with Karpov, a tool of the Soviet state.

NEW YORK 1927

Grandmaster Arnold Denker sent an interesting letter about Hanon W. Russell's article on the New York 1927 tournament (*ACJ*, #1, pp. 89-104). Regarding Emanuel Lasker's dispute

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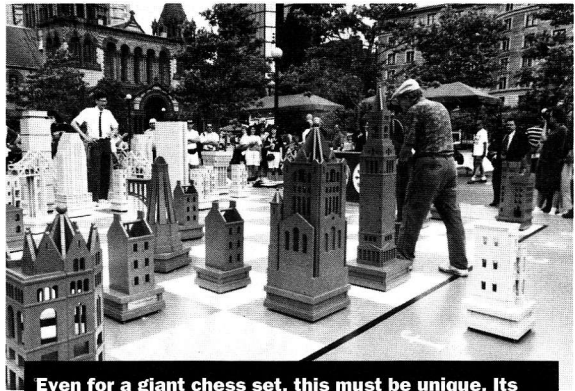
with Norbert Lederer, he says, “Although Lasker was capable of blowing up, as he often did with me as his bridge partner, his wonderful sense of humor and fairness lead me to believe that he would not have made any claim unless totally justified.” He also warns that “Lederer was one of Capa’s greatest admirers. A worshipper might be closer to the truth, so you would have to take that into consideration when reading many of his letters.”

On Russell’s doubts about the story that Capablanca declared he would draw his last three games, and in fact fed moves to Nimzovich to make it look plausible, Denker says “Russell is right on the mark ... [Capablanca’s] Columbia buddies Al Link and Charlie Saxon must have repeated it at least a hundred times.”

Perhaps this is how it got into a small book called *New York 1927* (apparently the only English-language work on the tournament). Originally published in 1955 by Jack Spence as volume 15 of “The American Tournament Series,” the booklet was reprinted in 1972 by Chess Digest. Each time it carried the somewhat misleading byline “Alexander Alekhine.” Spence writes in his Editor’s Note that he pared down Alekhine’s original annotations, deleted most of his introduction, and inserted round-by-round summaries of his own. In the round 19 summary (p. 70) he claims that “Capablanca, in pursuing his non-aggression policy, had to assist Nimzovich in saving a probable lost position by dictating the last four moves of the game ...” No supporting documentation is given. Could this be the primary printed source for the spread of this odd rumor?

CORRECTIONS

Chess historian Louis Blair writes that there is a mistaken generalization on page 46 of *AC7* #1 (*Finding Bobby Fischer* by Timothy Hanke). According to Mr. Blair, it is not true that *all* of Steinitz’s world championship matches



Even for a giant chess set, this must be unique. Its pieces are carefully crafted wood models of architecturally interesting structures in Boston—the white pieces newer, the black pieces older landmarks. The set, along with an outsized board and clock, was designed and built in 1992 and was displayed in Copley Square as part of the Boston Chess Festival organized by Dr. Michael Charney.

were played to 10 wins, draws not counting, with the match to be declared a tie if the score reached 9-9. These are indeed called the “Steinitz rules” nowadays, and all of the Steinitz matches approximated them, but it is not clear whether any followed them exactly. Some were played under a best-out-of-20 system, with draws included in the 20 games; others were played on a first-player-to-win-10-games format, but without the 9-9 tie provision. Steinitz’s last title match (his second defeat by Lasker in 1896) came closest to Bobby Fischer’s version of the “Steinitz rules”: it was a first-to-win-10 match and did include the 9-9 tie provision, but Mr. Blair finds nothing about anybody being declared champion in the drawn case.

A future issue will include updates to the game analysis in *AC7* #1 based on reader comments.

Finally, on page 113 of *AC7* #1 Fred Wilson inadvertently reported that material from a letter by F.M. Edge had been removed in the second edition of the *Oxford Companion to Chess*. In fact it is still there, listed under “Edge” rather than “Morphy,” where it was originally. ♣

The World's Best Chess Trainer

Timothy Hanke

Mark Israelevich Dvoretsky has a calling in life and answers it brilliantly. He is a chess trainer. In recent years he has often been called the best in the world at what he does, which is to develop talented players and prepare them for important competitions.

He wasn't always a trainer, of course; he started as a player. Born in Moscow on 9 December 1947, he won the Moscow Championship in 1973 and tied for fifth in the 1974 USSR Championship. He received the International Master title in 1975, the same year that he won the masters' tournament at Wijk aan Zee (from which grandmasters were excluded) with a score of +9=6, 1½ points ahead of the field. Dvoretsky was the highest-rated IM in the world for three consecutive years in the mid-1970s, peaking at 35th place on the FIDE rating list.

Nevertheless, he was having even more success coaching younger players than he was as a competitor. He coached three World Junior Champions in four years: Valery Chekhov in 1975, Artur Yusupov in 1977, and Sergei Dolmatov in 1978. From 1977 to 1982 he worked with Nana Alexandria, coaching her to an 8-8 tie with Maya Chiburdanidze in the 1981 Women's World Championship match. His work as a coach and trainer gradually took over his time and attention, and he never earned the grandmaster title that, if he had continued his playing career, would in due course have been his.

Throughout the 1980s Dvoretsky devoted himself to advanced chess work of several kinds. He continued coaching his star pupils, such as Yusupov, who has now been a candidate in four consecutive world cham-

Timothy Hanke is the Managing Editor of American Chess Journal.



pionship cycles, Dolmatov, who was a candidate once (losing in the first round to Yusupov!), and Alexei Dreev, who was also a candidate once. He managed a chess school in Moscow for talented youngsters who were selected from throughout the Soviet Union. He worked for a Moscow sports club which paid him a salary for teaching.

All this time he was collecting chess positions on index cards and classifying them by theme according to a system he devised. He used these positions to teach his students and especially to drill them in areas where they were weak. Today his collection includes over 3,000 positions; he is always looking for more.

As Dvoretzky became a deep scholar of chess theory, like any scholar he began to write articles and books. His reputation grew and his writings began to be translated from Russian into other languages. Now he has three books in English: *Secrets of Chess Training* (1990, with a foreword by Garry Kasparov), *Secrets of Chess Tactics* (1992), and *Training for the Tournament Player* (1993, written with Yusupov). He has also published several articles in *New In Chess*. To stay in step with the times, he is now working on a monumental computer program incorporating all of his positions.

The collapse of the Soviet Union has turned chess culture, like everything else in Russia, upside down. "We used to say, 'You get paid for

The collapse of the Soviet Union has turned chess culture, like everything else in Russia, upside down.

nothing and you work for nothing,” Dvoretzky told me, laughing, but times have changed. The Moscow sports club no longer supports him. His chess school for promising young players has closed its doors. Fortunately, along with the new freedom to starve, Russians have also received the freedom to travel abroad and earn hard currency. Dvoretzky now visits the United States a few times a year to meet with students here, usually promising juniors. The American Chess Foundation has been instrumental in arranging these trips. The American players with whom Dvoretzky has worked include Patrick Wolff, IMS Maurice Ashley and Josh Waitzkin, and several senior masters and national masters including Bobby Seltzer of Boston, now 17 and Massachusetts co-champion. He also teaches every summer at Sunil Weeramantny’s Castle Chess Camp for youngsters in Tarrytown, New York.

What is Dvoretzky like in person? He is a large man who cuts a slightly awkward figure in a suit, obviously not a subscriber to *GQ* magazine. He is very polite, at times almost shy, perhaps because he is not entirely comfortable speaking English. However, he makes himself understood and his thorough professionalism is obvious in everything he says. He is modest about his own achievements and prefers to talk about the successes of his students. However, as I got to know him during our series of interviews, his quiet self-confidence became apparent. He knows the quality of his own work and takes pride in it.

Dvoretzky takes the standard Russian (or Soviet) line in his basic approach to chess training. He agrees with Botvinnik that improvement in chess requires rational, rigorous, and continual self-assessment. Weaknesses are to be eliminated or minimized through study and practice tailored to a player’s specific needs. During a game, a player must strive to understand the key ideas in every position including the basic plan for each side. Once he understands the key ideas and plans, he should seek a concrete solution based on the requirements of the position.

The opponent is not ignored. His personality, temperament, and chess idiosyncrasies are all relevant to the struggle on the chessboard. A rational player will consider his opponent when making decisions.

Although Dvoretzky might object to such a broad label, we may see him as an exemplary product of the Soviet School of Chess along the lines laid down by Botvinnik in articles published during the 1930s and 1940s, in Botvinnik’s autobiography *Achieving the Aim*, and in such books as Kotov and Yudovich’s *The Soviet Chess School*.

On the other hand, Dvoretzky’s collection of positions arranged by theme is the unique and principal tool he uses to diagnose and remedy a player’s weaknesses. He once remarked, almost sadly it seemed, “There is not much more I can do for Yusupov and Dolmatov. They already know almost all of my positions—at least 2,800 or 2,900—so there is little more that I can show them.”

Another innovation of Dvoretzky’s is the use of studies for training

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purposes. “Many players like solving studies,” he observes in his book *Secrets of Chess Training*. Dvoretsky introduced a new wrinkle to increase the practical benefit of such work. He sets up the position on a board without telling his student the stipulation of the problem (e.g., “White to play and win”) and has the student play the position against him as if it were a real game. Sometimes the result is surprising: 11-year-old Alyosha Dreev, now a strong grandmaster, found a win in a study labelled “White to play and draw”! Such incidents prompt Dvoretsky in *Secrets of Chess Training* to quote the humorous aphorism, “There are no sound studies, only those that haven’t been busted yet.”

Dvoretsky is a superior trainer not only because of his collection of positions and innovative methods, but also because he is a strong player in his own right. Patrick Wolff, who worked with Mark Dvoretsky for one week in October 1992 and coincidentally won the U.S. Championship two months later, commented, “He is very strong, upper 2500s FIDE strength probably. His understanding of chess is very deep—easily on the level of a strong 2600s player. Training with Mark was useful. He got me to work in directions I hadn’t thought of before. He is rare in having a very clear conception of chess.

“I don’t think he could do for me what he could for some players—take them in hand and manage their entire development,” continued Wolff. “I’m too far along now for that and responsible for myself. But he’s very empathic; he’s a sensitive person who can relate to other people; he can tell how a person is strong and weak, and devise a program for him. He can take someone and create an entire training program: what and how to study, when and where to play.”

Dvoretsky himself considers his practical strength to be a significant asset to his work as a trainer. I asked him about *Positional Chess Handbook* by Israel Gelfer, who has represented Israel in five Olympiads and coaches the Israeli national team. “His book seems a little bit like your books,” I told Dvoretsky. He replied, “Maybe; I don’t know him. But if he is not a strong player, he may not explain things the right way. Or he may understand the positions in his book very well, but not understand other positions.” I did not detect any vanity in his comments. He was merely pointing out the possible limitations of this book and its author, which he clearly does not believe apply to his own work or to himself.

One tends to trust Dvoretsky’s statements because he is not pretentious. He doesn’t try to make it appear that he knows more than he does, nor does he make snap judgments when he is not informed about a matter. When I asked him about the quality of play in the Fischer–Spassky 1992 match he refused to comment, saying he hadn’t analyzed the games yet. Dvoretsky is an empiricist who likes to have information before he ventures an opinion, and he likes to weigh the evidence himself rather than adopt received wisdom. His integrity is so fundamental that it goes beyond ethics: it is a way of looking at the world.

Dvoretsky's integrity is so fundamental that it goes beyond ethics: it is a way of looking at the world.

Dvoretsky the Player

From what has already been said about Dvoretsky's methods, one might conclude that he is a rather dry technical player, a dogmatist who lacks imagination. This would be a great mistake. Perhaps he is not Tal, but Dvoretsky is a very creative player as well as a great fighter who specializes in counterattack. As a player, he considers himself more of a tactician than a strategist.

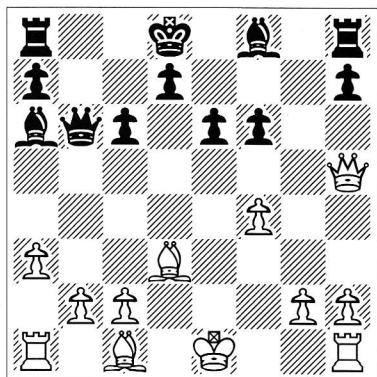
To some extent, his style has been forced upon him because of his lack of opening knowledge. "Opening theory and I [do] not get on well," he remarked ruefully in one of his *New In Chess* articles (1991, #4). As a result he often emerges from the opening with a worse position and must fight an uphill battle. (The book of the 1974 USSR Championship commented, "Dvoretsky had a reasonable score, but too many of his points had come from saving dubious positions for him to hope to challenge for first place.")

The following game is a classic example of Dvoretsky's uninspired opening play redeemed by imaginative middlegame tactics and good endgame technique. In *Secrets of Chess Tactics* (pp. 117-118), Dvoretsky describes the context of this game:

It should be said that I began this tournament without having done any training at all, and this showed primarily in my openings. In the first round I had an absolutely hopeless position as early as move ten, although I subsequently outplayed my opponent and managed to win. In the second round, with White, I emerged from the opening with a clearly inferior position, but eventually almost won the endgame. This was now the third round ...

KAPENGUT-DVORETSKY, ORDZHONIKIDZE (USSR CUP) 1978 SICILIAN DEFENSE B45

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 ♘c6 6 ♘xc6 bxc6
7 e5 ♘d5 8 ♘e4 ♖c7 9 f4 ♖b6 10 ♘d3 ♘a6 11
a3 f5?



1 ♖ Kapengut-Dvoretsky, after 14 ... ♖d8

A mistake. As Dvoretsky points out, better was 11 ... ♘e7 and if 12 c4 then 12 ... f5!

12 exf6 ♘xf6 13 ♘xf6+ gxf6 14 ♖h5+ ♖d8 (D 1)

White could now secure the advantage with the simple 15 ♘xa6! ♖xa6 16 ♘d2. Dvoretsky writes, "The d7-square is very weak, and White intends to play the moves 0-0-0, ♘c3 (or ♘a5+), and ♖f7, in one order or another. I don't even know what I would have then done." Instead came:

15 ♘d2?

White thinks he will gain a tempo by threatening 16 ♘a5.

15 ... ♖×d3!!

"I heard my team-mate Yuri Razuvaev say to our trainer in some distress: 'Well, Mark isn't exactly in form—he's just thrown his queen away.' I had to go up to them and calm them down: 'Maybe I'm not in form, but I didn't blunder the queen—I sacrificed it!'"

16 ♖a5 ♖×c2 17 ♜f1 f5 18 ♖×b6+ a×b6 19 ♜f3 ♜c7 20 ♜g3 ♜a4 21 ♜f3?!

Better was either 21 ♜f7 or 21 ♜c1.

21 ... ♜c4! 22 ♜c1?

"After this, the initiative passes conclusively to Black. Stronger was 22 ♜e2 ♜e4 23 ♜e3 with unclear play."

22 ... ♖d6 23 ♜e2 ♜e4 24 ♜×c2 ♖×f4 25 ♜g7 ♖×h2 26 ♜×e4 f×e4 27 ♜d2 ♖d6 28 ♜d4 c5! 29 ♜×e4 ♜c6 30 b3 h5 31 ♜h4 b5 32 ♜e2 ♖e5 33 ♜g5 ♖d4 34 ♜h×h5 ♜a8 35 ♜h3 ♜×a3 36 ♜g8 e5 37 g4 ♜a2+ 38 ♜f3 ♜f2+ 39 ♜g3 ♜b2 40 g5 ♜×b3+ 41 ♜g4 ♜×h3 42 ♜×h3 ♜d5 43 g6 e4 44 ♜b8 b4 45 ♜g4 ♜c4 0-1

"After this game some of the players began to tease my opponent, saying that anyone could give him odds of a queen and get away with it. 'I have told them that the position was unclear, but they don't believe me,' Kapengut complained to me over dinner." (p. 119)

Despite his problems in the openings, Dvoretzky scored +4=3 in this team event, the best result on any board among the men.

"Chess Is a Very Good Career After All"

How did Dvoretzky become a chess trainer?

He told me that originally he had not intended to pursue chess seriously. He studied mathematics and economics for five years at Moscow University (1967-1972), did very well, and intended to work in one of those fields. "Besides, I did not think chess was a good career. At this time I studied chess as an amateur does." However, as a Jew in the Soviet Union he discovered that his job opportunities would be limited. One can only imagine the anger and humiliation he must have felt.

Well, many of us find that life after graduation is not what we expected. While still a student he had given some lectures for the chess faculty at the Institute of Physical Culture in Moscow. Although he turned down their offer of a job, he had enjoyed the experience. Faced with reality after receiving his diploma from Moscow University, he decided: "Chess is a very good career after all."

He started to study and play seriously and immediately enjoyed successes. He may have been attracted to chess in the first place because he felt it was a field in which the individual controls his own destiny. Of course, every player has opponents, but by hard work and strength of character he has the opportunity to overcome them in hand-to-hand combat. Probably many people are drawn to chess because of the aspect of self-determination.

Originally he had not intended to pursue chess seriously.

However, even as he was having his best results in the mid-1970s, he began turning his primary attention to training others. Why this change? There is a sarcastic saying, "Those who can't do, teach," but in Dvoretsky's case this hardly applies.

We have already seen that he did not relish studying the openings, a serious handicap in practical play. He also told me that his health was not good enough for the strain of frequent competition. Perhaps most importantly he had come to competitive chess at the age of 12, a late start for a Russian, and did not receive the IM title until his late 20s.

He also felt frustrated as a player, having discovered that even in chess there were bureaucrats who limited his opportunities. His problem was shared by almost all Soviet chessplayers in those days. The authorities did not like to grant many travel visas to foreign events, and the very top players tended to receive most of the visas.

Foreign organizers, too, were not willing to invite too many Soviets for fear that they would take all the prizes, reducing opportunities for Western players and endangering local interest and support. For example, Yusupov found it difficult to get as many invitations to foreign tournaments as he would have liked even after he had been a world championship candidate.

So Dvoretsky not only limited his own development as a player by starting late, he also saw that he would have few opportunities to play in major events. However, Soviet chess was a house with many mansions; he realized that he could find work as a trainer. His first students were successful, which meant that he would have further opportunities for interesting work with strong players. He already had a strong talent and appetite for analytical work; these qualities would be extremely useful to him as a chess trainer and second. Not the least of his strengths as a trainer is his nurturing spirit. He found that he genuinely enjoyed helping others and seeing them improve and succeed.

Finally, he was ambitious. Beneath the man's modest and polite exterior lies a strong personality driven to excel. He believed that he could not become the world's best player, but as a trainer it was a different matter ...

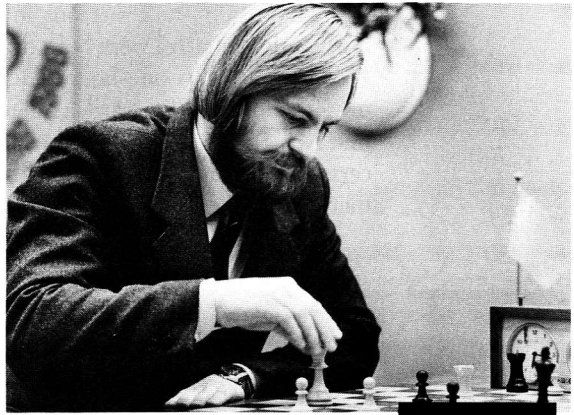
Dvoretsky's Star Student

One way to judge a trainer is by his students' practical results. Accordingly I asked Mark Dvoretsky how he trained his star pupils for their matches. I asked specifically about his work with Artur Yusupov, his best-known student.

Artur Yusupov, born in Moscow in 1960, won the World Junior Championship in 1977 and became a grandmaster in 1980. His style is reputed to be solid and accurate. He is not particularly known for sharp openings, but for sound positional play backed up by incisive tactics when the position demands them. He is considered goodnatured, mod-

Dvoretsky was ambitious. He believed that he could not become the world's best player, but as a trainer it was a different matter ...

est, and gentlemanly, with a balanced personality very different from the popular notion of chessplayers and other creative people as temperamental and erratic. At the same time, Yusupov has a fierce fighting spirit and a keen sense of justice. It is not too much to say, perhaps, that Yusupov both at the chessboard and away from it is close to Mark Dvoretsky's ideal of a chessplayer.



Artur Yusupov

Yusupov himself gives proper credit to his teacher. In an interview with *New In Chess* (1988, #1), Yusupov said, "In 1975, when I was 15 years old, I started to work with Mark Dvoretsky. At that time I was a candidate master, but I think that only this work with Mark Dvoretsky helped me to become a real chessplayer."

Dvoretsky can see in Yusupov's career the practical proof of the value of his own methods—and a justification, perhaps, for giving up his own playing career. For even if a chess trainer finds pleasure in studying and teaching his subject, he must seek fulfillment primarily through his students' achievements. In chess every lesson has a practical impact, and results are defined objectively by games won and titles achieved.

After several years of good results, Yusupov scored +4-1=10 in the Montpellier Candidates Tournament in 1985 to place equal first with fellow Soviets Andrei Sokolov and Rafael Vaganian. He beat Jan Timman of The Netherlands handily in their 1986 semifinal candidates' match +4-1=4. "In this match, with the possible exception of [the] first game, I was in my best form," said Yusupov in the *NIC* interview. "Not only as far as the chess was concerned, but also psychologically speaking. I was prepared to fight in any situation."

Then came disaster: after blowing a big lead he lost to Sokolov +3-4=7 in their 1986 final candidates' match. Sokolov was crushed by Karpov the next year in a special candidates' "superfinal." (Karpov had not been able to enter the cycle earlier because of his 1986 rematch against Kasparov. Thus FIDE decided to seed him directly to a "superfinal" against the winner of the candidates' matches.)

Yusupov's high placing in this cycle caused him to be seeded into the next set of candidates' matches at the round of 14 players in Saint John, Canada 1988. He beat fellow Soviet Jaan Ehlevest rather easily +2=3 in a best-of-six games match. The candidates' quarterfinal match against Canadian Kevin Spraggett in 1989 was a different story. Spraggett, clearly the weaker player, was well-prepared psychologically and benefited during the match from the help of the Deep Thought computer.

Dvoretsky can see in Yusupov's career the practical proof of the value of his own methods—and a justification, perhaps, for giving up his own playing career.

The match result was long in doubt; finally, after two tiebreakers at normal time control were both drawn, Yusupov outlasted Spraggett +2-1=6 by winning a one-hour-sudden-death tiebreaker game. At a joint press conference afterward, a relieved Yusupov said graciously: "It seems that Mr. Spraggett has the same strength as I. He is a topnotch player, certainly among the 10 best in the world." Then Yusupov lost a close match to Karpov in the 1989 candidates' semifinal, +1-2=5.

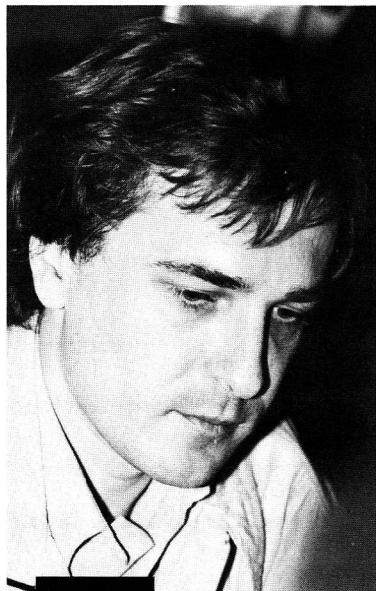
In mid-1990 Yusupov's career was temporarily checked by a non-chess incident. After being shot in the stomach by a thief in Moscow, he almost died.

In the latest world championship cycle, Yusupov was again seeded to the candidates'. He began with a difficult match against Dolmatov in 1991. The situation must have been uncomfortable for both players and for Dvoretzky as well, because the two opponents were both his students. In the best-of-eight-games match, Yusupov drew the first four games, lost the fifth, and drew the next two games. He had to win the eighth game to send the match into overtime and did so. The tiebreak games were all played at a rapid time control. Yusupov won the first of two tiebreak games and lost the second, so a second pair of rapid games was played. He won the first game and drew the second to win the match by a narrow score of +3-2=7.

Yusupov's candidates' quarterfinal match against Ivanchuk in August 1991 was the high point of his career. Observers considered Ivanchuk a shoo-in to win; with a 2735 FIDE rating he was ranked #2 in the world and had recently won the category 17 tournament at Linares ahead of Kasparov and Karpov. In fact at Linares, Ivanchuk had defeated both Kasparov and Karpov as well as Gelfand, Anand, Kamsky, and Mikhail Gurevich. Insiders like Dvoretzky undoubtedly were aware of counterbalances, such as Yusupov's superior match experience and the personalities of the two players: Yusupov was considered calm and stable while Ivanchuk was known to be a nervous person.

As events unfolded, Yusupov turned out to be the one more susceptible to non-chess influences. During this match the coup against Mikhail Gorbachev took place in the Soviet Union. According to Dvoretzky, Yusupov's play was strongly affected by the political events in Moscow. News of the coup threw Yusupov into despair and he could not concentrate on chess. In the best-of-eight match, once again after seven games Yusupov faced elimination with the score +1-2=4 against him.

The plot failed within days, and Yusupov responded ebulliently with perhaps the two best chess games of his career. He won the eighth game



Sergei
Dolmatov

to force the match into overtime; this game was later voted the second-best out of 658 games published in *Informant 52*. Then in the first overtime game, played at a rapid time control, Yusupov with the black pieces produced a beautiful attacking fantasy that was later voted the best game of *Informant 52*, receiving 86 of 90 possible points from a panel of grandmaster judges.

After defeating the second-ranked player in the world in two of the best games of the last decade, Yusupov needed a draw in the 10th game to win the match. After many adventures, with both players skirting the edge of defeat, a drawn position was reached—but Ivanchuk had only seconds on his clock to make the next 15 moves to time control. In *Secrets of Chess Tactics* (pp. 184–185) Dvoretsky writes:

Artur offered a draw, but in reply his opponent ... resigned and immediately left the playing hall. The judges were confused.

“How did the game end?”—the arbiter asked Yusupov.

“It was drawn.”

“But I heard him resign!”

“It isn’t important. I offered a draw, and the position is in fact drawn”—the Grandmaster replied.

The game was ruled a draw. Afterward Yusupov told Dvoretsky “I could have played on until my opponent’s flag fell, but why spoil an interesting game with senseless moves in time-trouble?”

In a disappointing anticlimax, Yusupov then lost to Timman +2–4=4 in their 1992 best-of-10 candidates’ semifinal match. Yusupov led early in the match but lost games 4, 6, 8 (stubbornly playing the Petroff Defense each time), and 10 (on the black side of a Sicilian, an uncharacteristic defense for Yusupov). According to Dvoretsky, Yusupov has had less energy since he was shot. As Dvoretsky explains it, the political events in Russia gave Yusupov enough positive energy to beat Ivanchuk. In the match against Timman, Yusupov’s depleted physical and psychological condition received no such artificial boost.

I asked Dvoretsky about his work with Yusupov.

Let’s say Yusupov is about to play an important match. How would the two of you train?

First of all, the training must be conducted in a place where it is possible to relax and to engage in physical sports such as tennis. Sport is always an important part of our preparation. It is a way to focus nervous energy. As for the chess work, it is very important that it be not only good theoretical work, but also very interesting work that engages the player’s attention.

It is important, obviously, to analyze positions. Sometimes after analyzing an opening position we would test it by playing training games at a quick time control, each of us taking turns playing White and Black.

**Yusupov’s match
against Ivanchuk
in 1991 was the
high point of his
career.**

Such games are very valuable for finding new ideas. Even during short games, you find some ideas you wouldn't think of while analyzing.

Another kind of work consists of analyzing special positions which are designed to train the intuition, to develop the ability to make good decisions quickly. Starting many years ago, I have developed a special category within my collection of positions just for this purpose.

If you play a series of short training games against Yusupov and do very well against him, what does that do to his confidence?

These are not real training games with a real time control. It is only training for the opening, to help him understand the ideas. The result is not as important as checking new ideas and solving the problems of the opening. The last time we did this the result was good for me, approximately 60%, but it meant absolutely nothing; it was not a competition.

So you played sports, you also analyzed opening positions, you played short training games, then you had intuition exercises from your collection of positions. How did you prepare specifically for the opponent?

Of course, we analyzed his games. We used to collect games from various printed sources. Now there is ChessBase!

For Yusupov's matches against Timman [1986] and Spraggett [1989], I analyzed the games of his opponent carefully, with particular reference to the opponent's style. In studying Timman's games, I saw that Timman often did not see danger. Also he would play too actively when such play was not called for. I discussed two possible strategies with Yusupov. The first strategy was to play very solidly and wait for Timman to destroy his own position. The second strategy was to attack Timman and take advantage of Timman's blindness to danger.

Yusupov decided to play actively. For this reason it was very important to train Yusupov's attacking abilities, because from his childhood he had been primarily a positional player.

Sounds like Botvinnik. He was a positional player who had to train himself in tactics.

Yes. And Yusupov was able to make the adjustment. He played very well against Timman and won the match.

In the Spraggett match, we knew that Yusupov was a much stronger player. But Spraggett was very clever. He knew that he could not fight against Yusupov; he was not strong enough. So he tried to limit Yusupov's activity and avoided sharp positions. Even with the white pieces, Spraggett did not fight for the initiative. It was a very difficult match.

How did Yusupov finally win?

In the final game, Yusupov was lucky because Spraggett got a very good position! Spraggett played actively, but didn't know what to do and lost. It wasn't a matter of the time control.

What about the match against Sokolov?

Sometimes good preparation isn't enough. We had a perfect understanding of Sokolov before the match. The chess magazines were writing

"We knew that Yusupov was a much stronger player. But Spraggett was very clever. He tried to limit Yusupov's activity and avoided sharp positions."

that Sokolov was a very active attacking player, a combination player and so on. When I analyzed his games I saw that this was nonsense. He had great intuition but he was not able to calculate anything. Players like this are not able to realize an advantage well. When you have an advantage there comes a moment when you must calculate a solution to the position, and psychologically he was not able to do it.

At the start Yusupov outplayed Sokolov, but after that he played very weakly. He had a great advantage in many games but wasn't able to win them. He was the stronger player but was in very bad form.

Why was he in bad form?

It was due to a very serious problem [in his personal life] that I was not able to overcome. Such details are very important to a chessplayer. One problem like this can ruin a whole career. Up to this point in the world championship cycle, he had won every tournament and every match. He might have been able to beat Karpov.

You mentioned that you yourself analyzed Sokolov's games. So you and Yusupov would prepare separately, each working on your own, and then come together and discuss what you had found?

Yes.

How many hours a day did you work together?

During serious training, quite a lot. Every day we worked several hours at chess and spent several hours in sport.

Was it the same routine every day, say 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. ...

It depended on how he felt. It was different every day, because we wanted to work when he was fresh. And it is different preparing for each match. Before some matches we did very serious work. Before his last match we did not work so hard, because we wanted him to have energy and be in good form.

How much time do you spend together before a match?

In the first candidates' cycle, we spent a lot of time together and trained very hard. Now he is living in Germany and playing in many competitions; we don't see one another as often and we can't spend as much time together. Perhaps two to four weeks.

From the conclusion of this interview we can glimpse the profound impact on Russian chess culture of the Soviet Union's disintegration. In the old days, the state paid a salary to trainers like Dvoretsky and players like Yusupov. Now they both have to hustle to make a living. Yusupov has moved to Germany where he plays for the Bayern München club in the Bundesliga, and Dvoretsky travels to the U.S. and other countries to find students for his lessons and publishers for his books. In the old Soviet Union, politics was a unifying force that focused substantial state resources on chess. Recent political events have been a centrifugal force, scattering individuals around the world who were formerly concentrated in one place. Now the critical mass of personnel and resources necessary

In the old days, the state paid a salary to trainers like Dvoretsky and players like Yusupov. Now they both have to hustle to make a living.

to support high chess culture may no longer exist. Many players whom the Soviet state developed are now living off their earlier training, but how will they maintain their forward momentum? And who will develop and support the next generation of players?

A Survey of Dvoretsky's Published Work

Dvoretsky has published several English-language articles in the Dutch magazine *New In Chess*. Most of them appeared several years ago when *New In Chess* was not so full of tournament reports and gave more space to theory. As mentioned already, Dvoretsky has also published three books in English and is working on a computer program.

Articles

"Instructive Moments for a Trainer" (*NIC*, 1984, #3) discusses "how a professional trainer approaches the analysis of games." The trainer is concerned with critical points in the game—what Dvoretsky, ever the didact, calls "instructive moments"—which he can lift out of the game and study. "If it is a game by one of his students, he directs [the student's] attention to the possible causes of mistakes and to the strong and weak sides of [his] play." Instructive moments may pertain to technical or psychological issues.

In "Searching for Practical Chances" (*NIC*, 1984, #4), Dvoretsky emphasizes "pure sport aspects" of chess "to make things as difficult as possible for the opponent, taking into account playing strength and style, the current tournament standings, time left before the time control, etc." He analyzes three games by students of his, Schubert–Dolmatov from Groningen 1977–78, Mascolo–Yusupov from Innsbruck 1977, and Dreev–Saeed from Kiljava 1984. In each case the Russian player managed to win an endgame that was drawn with best play.

By the way, all three games were adjourned and in each case Dvoretsky was instrumental in discovering the winning plan. As recently as the late 1930s it was considered unethical for a player to seek help with an adjourned position (for instance, see Botvinnik's account in *Achieving the Aim* of his adjourned game with Levenfish during their 1937 match). It was Soviet chessplayers who most flagrantly broke these gentlemen's rules, forcing other players to follow suit. And yet the Soviets always seemed to have greater resources, providing their best players with coaches and seconds and encouraging Soviet players in the same event to help one another in games against non-Soviets. In this article we see how crucial it can be to have a strong, motivated ally to help with the work. Today Fischer and others are pushing to eliminate adjournments, mainly because of chessplaying computers. However, this article reminds us that adjournments led to unequal competitive situations long before computers entered the picture.

"The Feeling for Danger" (*NIC*, 1985, #8) elaborates on Dvoretsky's

The critical mass of personnel and resources to support high chess culture may no longer exist in Russia.

theory of defense. He argues that a player whose position is markedly worse must not simply play “normal” moves that lead inexorably to a loss, but must search for “a way of unexpectedly and dramatically altering the character of the struggle.” One unusual way for a player to escape from a bad middlegame, where all the complications look dangerous, is to trade down into an inferior endgame which, nevertheless, he knows he can defend. After Dvoretzky achieved a draw in this manner against Bakulin in Moscow 1974, Boris Gulko joked that he had never before seen a player make a combination to lose a pawn and go into a bad ending!

“Refinements and Additions” (*NIC*, 1986, #4) presents Dvoretzky’s criticism of published analyses by Jan Timman. Dvoretzky undertook this work in preparation for Yusupov’s successful 1986 match against Timman.

In “Some Rules for Practical Endgames” (*NIC*, 1987, #4), Dvoretzky analyzes a few sharp rook endings with passed pawns, transposing into the endgame of rook versus two passed pawns.

“Beyond Theory” (*NIC*, 1991, #4) is quite a long article—12 pages—in which Dvoretzky deeply analyzes several games with related ideas. In it he states one of his recurring themes: “It sometimes happens that ... the opening moves ... determine the final result. However, much more frequently the outcome depends on the skill that the rivals display in the phases that follow.” He adds that even booked-up players may have surprising gaps in their understanding of openings, because “they are often unwilling to spend their time on a thorough analysis of the games they examine, or on a scrutiny of the accompanying annotations.”

Books

Dvoretzky’s success as a trainer for top players has given him a worldwide reputation that has trickled down to the rank and file (so to speak). All three of his books have been published in several languages; he has found a good market in Western chessplayers who have never met him but are willing to spend \$15 to \$20 to learn the *Secrets of Chess Training* or *Secrets of Chess Tactics*. Perhaps Western players believe that Dvoretzky will reveal Russian shortcuts to victory they can use in their own games.

If so, they will be disappointed. In fact, I doubt many U.S. players will take the trouble to plow through any of his books. They will buy them for their author’s reputation, feel a brief glow of virtue, and put them on their bookshelves to gather dust with their other chess books.

This is not because Dvoretzky’s books aren’t good. They are superb. The trouble is, they require effort on the part of the reader. Not for nothing did Dvoretzky tell me, “My system of studying positions is very good but not easy to employ without a coach.” These are interactive works that force the reader to think, to search for concrete solutions in complicated positions, to learn more sophisticated positional ideas, to

Perhaps Western players believe that Dvoretzky will reveal Russian shortcuts to victory they can use in their own games. If so, they will be disappointed.

open his mind to the possibility that chess is broader and deeper than he has previously imagined. I am convinced that the conscientious reader who works his way through these books two or three times—they are that rich—will look at the game with new eyes.

Bobby Seltzer says of Dvoretsky's books: "They're excellent, but aimed at a limited audience, not the average club player. They're very good for me; I can get a lot out of them. He's putting his whole life's knowledge into them without making much money. It's a great sacrifice for him, but he's doing it because he believes it's the right thing. That's one reason I respect him so much."

Secrets of Chess Training was Dvoretsky's first book available in English. In 1991 it was acclaimed as "Book of the Year" by the British Chess Federation. However, a friend of mine rated about 2000 uscf told me with disgust, "I thought I was getting a book on how to train and found that I had bought one on rook endings." Of course it isn't really only about rook endings, but the title was not particularly suggestive of the actual content. Perhaps the publisher took liberties with the title to capitalize on Dvoretsky's reputation as a trainer. If so, the strategy was not a complete success. The uscf reportedly dropped the book from its catalog after a number of copies were returned by players who said it was too advanced for them.

The book is divided into three main parts: Analysis of Adjourned Positions, The Endgame, and Studies. Since most adjourned positions and nearly all studies are endgames, the entire book is really about endgames. Kasparov writes in the last sentence of his Foreword, "It seems to me that any class of player can find much that is interesting and valuable for himself if he studies Dvoretsky's book carefully." This bit of canned rhetoric, while perhaps literally true, is less revealing than Dvoretsky's own statement two pages later: "This book is meant for advanced players—many of the examples chosen are extremely difficult. But I think that a less experienced player will find in it many pages that are accessible and interesting." There are exercises for the reader with solutions in the back of the book.

As a point of interest, in "Mark Dvoretsky Versus the Silicon Oracle" (*New In Chess*, 1991, #6), English grandmaster John Nunn discusses an experiment in which he tested Dvoretsky's analysis of rook + pawn vs. rook in *Secrets of Chess Training* against an infallible computer database. "I had found Dvoretsky's analysis to be of a very high standard (the book is strongly recommended)," writes Nunn, "but how would it fare against the Silicon Oracle? I was particularly interested to see whether there was any pattern in the type of mistakes made by a human being, even if he was a good analyst." Not surprisingly, Nunn discovers a few subtle mistakes by the human. He concludes: "Human beings think in terms of patterns and experience, but this type of thinking may blind one to the exceptional situation which does not fall into any pattern." In 1992 Nunn

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published a very interesting book, *Secrets of Rook Endings*, devoted entirely to rook + pawn vs. rook and dependent on the same computer database just mentioned.

In 1992 Dvoretsky's second book, *Secrets of Chess Tactics*, became available in the U.S. To all appearances it is a more "normal" chess handbook than the previous volume, containing many complete games with analysis of tactical positions and ideas. Like the previous work, though, it is written on a high level likely to exceed the grasp of most chessplayers.

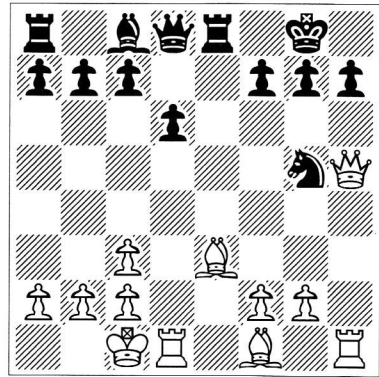
The games are sharp and combative, rich in possibilities. Most were played either by Dvoretsky's two best-known students, Yusupov and Dolmatov, or by Dvoretsky himself. Consequently the author has analyzed the games deeply and has profound insights to offer, besides being in a unique position to provide anecdotal perspective. Dvoretsky writes: "I invite the reader into our creative and analytical laboratory by offering here material which is original and unfamiliar, not available from other books." Particularly compelling is the author's insider account of key games in the 1991 Yusupov–Ivanchuk match.

The book is studded with "Questions," which are answered in the following text, and "Exercises," with solutions at the back of the book. The exercises are no easier than those in the previous book, but highly interesting and instructive for strong players. English grandmaster Murray Chandler wrote in his book review, "Reading the text, and just attempting the analysis, will start you thinking in a new way."

One exercise that started me "thinking in a new way" is #2.5 (p. 217), shown in **Diagram 2**.

The only information the reader is given is "Black to move." To this reader, Black's position looked grim indeed. I am used to solving Reinfeld-and-Chernev-type problems in which one side or the other forces mate or wins a piece by employing a basic motif such as smothered mate, knight fork, or skewer. To me this looked more like a typical White-to-play-and-win position (of course 1 $\text{Q} \times \text{g}5$ would be completely trivial), and I was baffled.

In the solution at the back of the book, we learn that the diagrammed position is from a game Kupreichik–Yusupov, USSR Championship 1980–1981. Dvoretsky notes: "This is the sort of sharp situation which Kupreichik—a brilliant attacking player—could only have dreamt about." Yusupov played 14 ... $\text{R} \times \text{e}3!$ 15 $\text{f} \times \text{e}3$ $\text{Q} \times \text{e}7$. Dvoretsky then comments: "Black has full compensation for the loss of the exchange—a pawn, a better pawn structure, and strong squares for his knight on the e-file. Objectively the game is roughly equal, but psychologically Black is in a better position—the attack has been stopped



2 ■

Kupreichik–Yusupov

and Kupreichik now has to switch to the sort of 'boring' positional struggle he dislikes." Dvoretzky gives the rest of the game with light notes through move 53, when Kupreichik resigned. Instructive, yes ... but hardly the sort of exercise or solution to which an American player is accustomed.

Dvoretzky's latest book, *Training for the Tournament Player*, is written with Yusupov and based on the work of their Moscow chess school for talented youngsters aged 8 to 14. This is more like the book my 2000-rated friend thought he was getting when he bought *Secrets of Chess Training*.

The Moscow chess school had six sessions, each one devoted to a different topic. *Training for the Tournament Player* recapitulates the school's first session, on how to study and improve one's weak areas. Dvoretzky told me that he planned a series of six books based on the six different sessions of the school, or perhaps five books if he

decides to combine two of the sessions. The next book in the series will discuss opening preparation.

Training for the Tournament Player is divided into several sections. The first chapter of each section seems to be based on an actual lecture from the chess school. The lecturers include, beside Dvoretzky and Yusupov, the Russians Mikhail Shereshevsky (who writes about "The Technique of Studying the Classics") and Alexei Kosikov ("Assessing a Position and Choosing a Plan in the Middlegame").

Chapters written by Dvoretzky include "A Chessplayer's Strengths and Weaknesses" and "Finding New Ideas." With Yusupov he writes about "The Technique of Working On Your Own Games and Those of Other Players." Yusupov's contributions include "How to Play as Black" and "Analyzing Your Own Games." He notes:

The authors are totally convinced that the serious study of one's own games is an essential requirement for any chessplayer who wishes to improve. Therefore the theme "analyzing one's own games" occupies a central place. This book contains specific recommendations on how such analysis should be carried out.

Training for the Tournament Player may be Dvoretzky's most accessible book yet, and the series it initiates may be a breakthrough to a new stage of his career. When all six (or five) volumes are in print, Dvoretzky will have presented a complete chess training course for masters and



Dvoretzky teaching at the final session of his Moscow chess school in 1992.

Training for the Tournament Player may be Dvoretzky's most accessible book yet.

ambitious amateurs, available to anybody for about \$100. Since there is nothing else like it in English, the series could remain in print for many years with an impact on generations of students. He will have staked perhaps his most impressive claim to a place in the literature and history of chess.

Computer Program

Without a doubt his new series of books will sell well in the West. However, even while he prepares the books, Dvoretzky has another major project approaching completion. It was foreshadowed by two sentences he wrote in 1985 ("The Feeling for Danger," *NIC*, #8, p. 44):

Of utmost importance is to solve a series of problems on one's own, but this is exactly where one is confronted with a basic problem. As far as I know, no chess reference book exists in which the problems are arranged according to the skills which could be developed in solving them.

Dvoretzky is now hard at work on an interactive computer program that will solve this "basic problem" by incorporating his entire collection of positions organized by theme. Titled *Chess Training System by Mark Dvoretzky*, the program is already operational though not yet complete. The code is still being written by Russian programmers; Dvoretzky hopes that the first commercial version will be available in 1994. He demonstrated a preliminary version for me in June 1993. The program has nice color graphics and runs on MS-DOS systems. All the text is in English. Bill Kelleher, a USCF senior master who has tried it out in depth, pronounces it "Fantastic!"

The program explores such themes as prophylaxis, pawn structure, exchanging, fantasy and the calculation of long lines, and positional sacrifices. The endings are classified by material, structure, and thematic devices such as double threat, interposition, and passed pawn. Basic structures are classified by opening including the French Defense, King's Indian Defense, and so on.

The program has several modes including exercise solving, intuition training, and playing-mode training. The level of complexity may also be selected. The program cannot actually "play chess" against the user, but the positions for solving come with several variations that the program "knows." (It seems that the program could be improved by the addition of a chessplaying engine.) If the user types in a move that is part of the program's book, the program will respond. Of course, the variation chosen by the user may not be the correct one, in which case the program will hold the draw or even defeat the user—as in a real game.

"You can select studies or practical positions," notes Dvoretzky. "I have now input about 350 positions [as of June 1993] for training play against the computer. There are still 1,500 positions for solving to be

Dvoretzky is now hard at work on an interactive computer program incorporating his entire collection of positions.

input, and over 1,000 positions for training intuition. There are many games with several questions in each one. This is a program to help you train yourself without a coach.”

I asked Dvoretzky what the program will cost. “It will be very expensive,” he told me. I suggested that he might sell more copies and make more money if he offered it at a lower price. He replied, “I don’t care if I sell more copies. This material is not for everyone.” He is proud of his work as a trainer over the past 20 years and considers this computer program to be a kind of summation of his achievement. It seems to be a matter of principle for him that his work must not go cheap.

A Lesson With Mark Dvoretzky

In the end, it seemed that the best way to understand a chess trainer was to take lessons from him. So it was arranged that I would take two lessons while he was visiting Cambridge in June 1993.

Part of the first lesson is described here. (In the second lesson we analyzed one of my games, which would not be of interest to readers.) We looked at two positions, presumably from his famous collection, and discussed in detail one of Yusupov’s games. (Discussion of this game, Gavrikov–Yusupov from the 1985 Tunis Interzonal, is not included here because it would take too much space. Interested readers can find a detailed analysis in Dvoretzky’s article “Beyond Theory” in *New In Chess*, 1991, #4.)

Inevitably the lesson was rather artificial because we both knew that the training relationship would last for only two days. After Dvoretzky left town, I would be on my own again. He told me, “It’s not so easy to give advice to someone who must work alone. You should gain practical experience against slightly better players. To this you must add book study. It is very important to acquire basic knowledge from good books and articles that do not just explain simple concepts in a systematic way, but how real players, strong players, actually think about the position.”

I asked him for a list of books that he recommended for home study. He suggested the following titles:

- Alekhine, *My Best Games of Chess 1908–1923* and *My Best Games of Chess 1924–1937*. “These books and Fischer’s book *My 60 Memorable Games* have very good, clever annotations.”
- Bellin and Ponzetto, *Test Your Positional Play*.
- Bronstein, *Zurich International Chess Tournament 1953* (also published as *The Chess Struggle in Practice*). Garry Kasparov has singled this out as his favorite book.
- Hort and Jansa, *The Best Move*. “They offer practical positions, not just combinations, with very good explanations by strong players who understand the game very well.”
- Keene, *Learn from the Grandmasters*. “Not all of his books are good but this one is.”

In the end, it seemed that the best way to understand a chess trainer was to take lessons from him.

- Mednis, *Practical Endgame Lessons*. “Anything by Mednis is good.” Mednis’s work seems to exemplify the careful, empirical approach that Dvoretsky teaches.
- Polugayevsky, *Grandmaster Preparation*. Dvoretsky spoke highly of Polugayevsky’s analytical ability and his realistic depiction of how a player copes with home preparation, tournament strategy, and practical problems at the board.
- Shereshevsky, *Endgame Strategy*.

In “Check Your Library” (*New In Chess*, 1990, #5), Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam asked Dvoretsky about his favorite books. Dvoretsky said that he preferred “books that reveal the methods of thinking of the great masters,” not just lists of variations. This interview is highly recommended reading. Not only does Dvoretsky suggest specific books and authors, but his discussion of why they are good will help the reader to form his own opinions about other chess literature he may encounter.

In our lesson, Dvoretsky proceeded to show me a position from the game Alekhine–Tartakower, Vienna 1922 (**Diagram 3**), saying, “Alekhine gives very concrete evaluations, not just general considerations. He had a great chess logic, and would not calculate every variation, but the most important variations very deeply.”

“In this position,” continued Dvoretsky, “White is to move. He is ahead by the exchange, but Black has two dangerous connected passed pawns. Can White win? Can he even draw? There are various possibilities and plans for him, each beginning with a different first move. This is a dynamic position requiring not only calculation but an understanding of key ideas.”

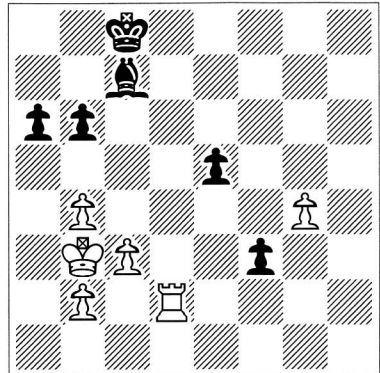
We examined various candidate moves for White, for example:

a) White approaches the pawns directly with his king. 1 ♔c4 e4 2 ♔d4 ♗f4 3 ♖f2 e3! and Black wins after 4 ♖xf3 e2.

b) White tries to get in front of the pawns with his king. 1 ♔c2 e4 3 ♖d4! e3 4 ♔d1 if 4 ♔d3 e2 5 ♖e4 ♗f4! and White is in zugzwang, with only pawn moves left! 4...♗g3 5 ♖e4 e2+ 6 ♔d2 ♗h4 7 ♖e5 to cover the square g5 7...♗g3 with a draw by repetition.

c) White tries to queen his own pawn while moving his rook behind the black pawns. 1 g5 e4 2 ♖d5 if 2 g6 ♗e5 wins for Black, e.g., 3 ♖f2 ♔d7! 4 ♔c2 ♔e6 5 ♔d1 ♔e6 6 ♖f1 ♔f5 wins 2 ... ♖2 3 ♖f5 e3 4 g6 e2 5 g7 f1/♖ 6 g8/♖+ ♔b7 7 ♔d5+ ♔a7 and White cannot win because of Black’s two threats ... e1/♖ and ... ♔d1+.

d) White immediately moves his rook to the f-file behind the pawns. 1 ♖h2 e4 2 ♖h8+ ♔d7 3 ♖f8 ♗g3! 4 g5 ♗d6! 5 ♖f6 ♗e5! 6 ♖f7+ or 6 ♖f5 6...♔e6 and draws by chasing the white rook back and forth.



3 □

Alekhine–Tartakower

Yet there is a winning move for White in the starting position. The solution begins with **1 ♖d5!**—“a problem-move, the only move to win,” in Alekhine’s words. (Oddly enough, this was the first move I suggested to Dvoretzky, but I had no idea how to continue.) White combines attack and defense in a flexible plan. It is important to understand that the black passed pawns will be harmless if they can both be forced onto black squares, because then the white king can blockade them. White’s first move also prepares to move the rook behind the pawns after the e-pawn advances, while cutting off the black king from the g-pawn. For example, if now **1 ... ♔2 2 ♖d1** (the rook retreats having lured Black to commit his pawns to unfavorable squares) **e4 3 ♖c2 ♗f4 4 ♖f1** and **5 ♖d1** blockades the pawns and wins. Or **1 ... e4 2 ♖f5 ♗g3 3 g5 e3** (for **3 ... ♖d7** see the game continuation below) **4 ♖xf3 e2 5 ♖e3** wins because the bishop will not be able to get back to stop the g-pawn.

The game actually ended **1 ... e4 2 ♖f5 ♗g3 3 g5 ♖d7 4 g6 ♖e6 5 g7! ♖xf5 6 g8/♗ ♗f4 7 ♖f7+ ♖g4 8 ♖g6+ ♗g5 9 ♖xe4+ ♖g3 10 ♖g6 ♖g4 11 ♖xb6 1-0**

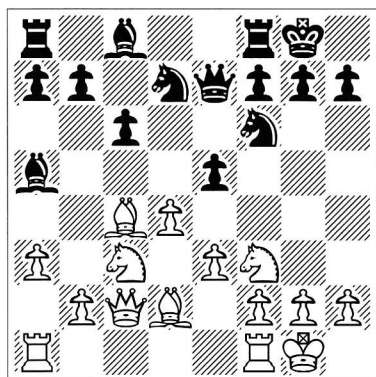
For those who are interested, Alekhine gives the entire game with excellent notes in *My Best Games of Chess 1908–1923*.

I was entertained by the Alekhine–Tartakower position, but also dispirited. The truth is that even after Dvoretzky showed me the winning moves, I was not confident I could play the position myself. After the lesson I studied the position at home for a couple of hours. In the game continuation after **6 g8/♗**, for example, what if Black plays **6 ... ♖f4** instead of the obviously weak **6 ... ♗f4** chosen by Tartakower? Black threatens to advance the e-pawn and win; I couldn’t find a good plan for White. Everybody says it’s a win for White, but the solution went right over my head. Later a friend and I analyzed the position and found what seemed to be a clear winning method starting with **7 ♖b8+** and the queen approaches the black king with checks, eventually winning the e-pawn and/or blocking the pawns’ advance by controlling key white squares.

It was not a trivial solution for a player below master level.

Next Dvoretzky showed me the position in **Diagram 4**, from the Semi-Slav Defense (D46), arising after the moves **1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♗f3 ♗f6 4 ♗c3 c6 5 e3 ♗bd7 6 ♗d3 ♗b4 7 a3 ♗a5 8 ♖c2 ♖e7 9 ♗d2 dxc4 10 ♗xc4 e5 11 0-0 0-0**.

“Simagin showed me this position long ago in the Pioneer Palace in Moscow. The moves played so far look normal. In fact, this same position was reached twice in the 1948 World Championship Tournament, in the games Botvinnik–Euwe [Round 2] and Reshevsky–Euwe [Round 5]. Simagin told me there is a winning move for White in this position. A winning



4 □ White to play and win?

move! I could not believe it. I could imagine various plans for White, yes, but a winning move?

“What are White’s possible plans here? Botvinnik tried a kingside attack beginning with 12 Eae1 . The attack was dangerous, but Black could have defended. Instead Euwe played several weak moves and the game was soon over. Later in the tournament, Reshevsky tried a different plan for White. This plan featured aggressive play in the center starting with 12 d5 . Euwe immediately made a mistake, 12 ... c5 ? [Wade, Whiteley, and Keene, in *The World Chess Championship Botvinnik to Kasparov recommend 12 ... xc3 , 12 ... b6 , and 12 ... c7 as all being better than Euwe’s move]* and after 13 d6 ! White obtained the advantage. Black cannot play 13 ... xd6 because 14 b5 b6 15 b4 wins. Nevertheless with correct play Black did not have to lose the game after 12 d5 .

“I told Simagin I could not find the move. Nevertheless it was there! After 12 a2 !! Black is practically lost. This is why: to fight against White’s kingside attack and create counterchances, Black needs to place his bishop on c7 without loss of time. Therefore the ideal next move for Black is 12 ... c7 . But if 12 ... c7 ? 13 b5 ! and Black is lost. White threatens not only 14 xc7 but also 14 b4 winning the exchange. [ECO reveals that 12 a2 was played in a game Rogoff–Lombardy, U.S. Championship 1978, which continued 12 ... xc3 13 xc3 exd4 14 xd4 with a clear advantage for White.] When Simagin showed me this idea, I began to understand the concept of prophylaxis for the first time. You must not only have a plan yourself, you must understand the opponent’s plan. Before you make a move, you must consider not just how to advance your own plan but how to frustrate the plan of the opponent.”

I was impressed by the refinement of Dvoretsky’s ideas, particularly in the Slav example. At the same time I asked myself: *How relevant are these ideas to me? Will they help me score more points? I don’t know.* The Alekhine–Tartakower position was just a bit beyond my depth and the Slav position left me with more questions than answers. Yes, undoubtedly it is a good thing to understand and foil the opponent’s plan. However, at my level—2100 uscf—I don’t even know how to make a plan for White in the diagrammed position, let alone figure out Black’s best response and then prevent it.

It isn’t Dvoretsky’s fault that I am too weak a player to grasp his examples. Dvoretsky prefers to work only with strong players; he picks and chooses his students. When I first heard this, I thought he was being a little snobbish. Perhaps he was, but if so he was also being thoroughly practical and professional. What Dvoretsky has to teach is not equally valuable to everyone. His collection of 3,000 positions is too advanced for most amateurs. Beginners and very young players can do as well with other teachers who know more than enough about chess to address their relatively simple training problems. The same goes for older players below master level, like me. Players below master simply don’t need

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Dvoretsky's sophisticated services because their problems are too crude.

If this assessment is correct, then it is ironic that Dvoretsky's books seem to sell so well in English. Certainly they are very fine books, by all accounts. But do they really address the problems of the people who buy them? I wonder.

My own example may be typical. From examining my own games, it seems to me that I lose mainly from blunders due to tactical oversights. Even when I get a bad opening, that does not normally cause me to lose. This evaluation suggests that my limited study time would best be spent sharpening my tactical sense by solving tactical problems. There are many elementary books available to serve this need, such as Reinfeld's two diagram collections *1001 Brilliant Ways to Checkmate* and *1001 Winning Chess Sacrifices and Combinations*. In 1986 I raised my uscf rating over 2000 by working through the first of these two books and then playing sharply at the New York Open and National Open. In both events I surprised myself by saving lost games, games I "deserved" to lose, with timely tactics.

Tarrasch once wrote, "Tactics is the most important element in the middlegame." We might add, "and in the opening and the endgame." Think about it: chessplaying computers are so hard on humans because they are better at tactics. Some of them are positional idiots, but they beat most people anyway because they are so good at solving short-term problems within a two- or three-move horizon.

For what it's worth, I believe that when the amateur has learned to hold on to his own pieces and pick up his opponent's loose pieces, he has made a giant step forward and will probably play at the uscf Class A or even Expert level.

Even then, it is probably too soon to call in Mark Dvoretsky. For the average amateur to become a uscf master, he will need to learn a certain amount of endgame theory and opening theory. He doesn't need a trainer; he only needs a few good books. Of course, independent study of endings and openings calls for self-discipline of a higher order than most amateurs possess.

When a master has a good understanding of tactics, a certain base of knowledge in the opening and endgame, and wants to improve further—then he needs a trainer!

I have intentionally oversimplified a chessplayer's development process to make a point. Mark Dvoretsky teaches on a level that most players will never reach. I probably don't need him yet. You probably don't, either. Bobby Seltzer told me, "When I worked with Mr. Dvoretsky at Sunil Weeramantry's Checkmate Chess Camp this summer [1993], I saw him teaching 1300-rated players. Someone his strength shouldn't be doing that; it's a waste of his ability." Dvoretsky took pains to talk down to the level of these players, and did a good job, too. Seltzer praised him highly for his kindness and generosity even to beginning students. But

"One reason Dvoretsky is such a great teacher is that he is so empathic. He is very sensitive to human factors and has a keen sense of individual differences."

for the man who has guided grandmasters through candidates' matches, it was undoubtedly a long way down.

On the other hand, Seltzer thinks that any master who is ambitious to rise higher would do well to "spend as much time as possible with him. I have the highest opinion of him not just as a trainer but as a man."

Larry Tapper, another strong local master who has studied with Dvoretsky, echoes Seltzer's advice as well as Patrick Wolff's comments. "If I had the time and money, I would definitely take as many lessons with him as possible," says Tapper. "He has taken Kotov's 'steely-warrior' approach—you know, forcing yourself to work in a disciplined manner through all the branches of the analytical tree—and given it a human face. One reason Dvoretsky is such a great teacher is that he is so empathic. He is very sensitive to human factors and has a keen sense of individual differences. He will tailor his approach to the player. But you still have to work hard. His exercises are not for wimps; these are not Shelby Lyman positions we're talking about. He's used to working with strong masters."

In fairness to Dvoretsky, our two lessons together were not a true test of what he could have done for me. He told me that if I were a real, long-term student of his, "Probably I would begin by looking at your games to determine your problems. Then it would take two to three years to create a real base and begin to achieve good results. But for quick improvement we would just look at your weaknesses and I would give you exercises."

Dvoretsky told me a cautionary tale about Chekhov, the first World Junior Champion he trained, that sheds light on his methods. I had asked him, "What ever happened to Chekhov? We never hear anything about him now." Dvoretsky said, "He is a weak grandmaster. After he won the championship, other Soviet chess coaches were jealous of me—I was young, only 27. They persuaded him to give credit to his previous coach and not to mention me at all. He is not a bad guy, but he thought he should do what he was told. As a result I did not receive the Soviet Coach title that is given to people who train world champions. I had worked with him for two years to fix his problems ... he had many problems because his previous coach was very bad. They only studied openings. And even his openings were bad! I helped him improve his endings, his positional play, but after we stopped working together he no longer practiced these things, and he forgot them." Dvoretsky's method requires years of work to build a base of knowledge and experience. Chekhov lacked the character to follow this demanding path and he fell by the wayside. Yusupov and Dolmatov stayed the course.

Dvoretsky's bad experience with Chekhov was a severe blow to his pride and may have made him more cautious and reserved. Now he says, "I almost never invite students. I agree to work with them." The evidence indicates that he prefers to work with students who share his high

**"I almost never
invite students.
I agree to work
with them."**

moral standards, like Yusupov. His policy of waiting for students to come to him once led to a comical situation. Dvoretzky saw that the young Dolmatov, whom he admired, did not have a coach. Perhaps afraid of rejection, "I did not want to invite him, so I told some friends of his that if he wanted to work with me, he could call me ..."

When he visits the U.S. Dvoretzky may lower his usual standards, taking on weaker students to earn hard currency. That doesn't mean he hasn't got standards. It turns out that Dvoretzky has a young son back home in Moscow, so I asked the obvious question: "Do you plan to train him in chess?"

His answer was matter-of-fact: "No. He has no talent."

Pandolfini on Dvoretzky

"Dvoretzky is a system-builder; he tries to break down a player to zero and rebuild him."

Bruce Pandolfini, the prominent American chess teacher and writer who is best-known these days for working with Josh Waitzkin (the hero of the book and movie *Searching for Bobby Fischer*), spoke with me at length about Dvoretzky.

Pandolfini distinguishes among three types of people who work with chessplayers: the *teacher*, who instills basic principles and fundamentals; the *coach*, who prepares people for tournaments and may also advise them during tournaments; and the *trainer*, who works with advanced players. "I know nobody who does all three things," he said.

Pandolfini considers Dvoretzky the best chess trainer in the world. "There is nobody else like him anywhere. He is unique in having developed his own training system. The positions he's collected are very sophisticated, containing many nuances and subtleties.

"However, there are relatively few players who can benefit fully from working with him. For one thing, the games of most players are decided by simple errors. For another thing, he has very well-defined methods that don't suit everybody. He's a system-builder; he tries to break down a player to zero and rebuild him. Whereas most American teachers will take a player as they find him and try to build on his strengths, Dvoretzky has a more Germanic teaching style.

"Some players may do well with this style, others less well. For example, Mark has worked with Josh [Waitzkin]. He taught Josh greater objectivity and helped him overcome certain negative tendencies. But Josh isn't the type of player who should be broken down and rebuilt."

(Pandolfini didn't offer any more details, but two other sources told me that Fred Waitzkin, Josh's father, had quarrelled with Dvoretzky over Josh. According to their story, Dvoretzky told Josh that he had talent and with a great deal of hard work could become a grandmaster. Fred was used to more enthusiastic assessments of his son's potential and threw Dvoretzky out of his apartment.

I called Fred Waitzkin to ask him if this was true. He told me, "That never happened. Mark worked with Josh a few times over a three-year

period and helped him a lot. Josh has a lot of respect for Dvoretsky as a teacher. However, they have very different personalities. Dvoretsky often thinks that there is only one way to do something. He's very prescriptive."

It is hard for us to know what really happened between Dvoretsky and the Waitzkins. However, even if the more dramatic story is not true, the fact that some people believe it says something about Dvoretsky's reputation for plain speaking.)

"Nobody in America can do what Mark Dvoretsky has done in Russia," continued Pandolfini. "We are paid by individual students who don't have the money to hire a real trainer. As a result, none of the American chess teachers consistently work with such strong players as Dvoretsky is used to. Here we have to work with everybody so we must be more flexible in our approach.

"I have worked with masters and it's very hard. There's no monetary reward because it takes so much time to prepare for a lesson: I need to do at least three hours of research for every hour of paid teaching time."

Pandolfini has hit on the major problem of integrating a trainer like Mark Dvoretsky into the American chess scene. In America, chess teachers receive their pay from individuals, not from the government. We probably have many potential Yusupovs and Dolmatovs here, but none of them have the money to pay Dvoretsky for all the time he would need to spend on their training and development.

Chess Culture in the U.S.

Dvoretsky has visited the U.S. frequently in recent years, so I asked him what he thought of our chess.

"Chess culture here in America is very low!" he replied with some heat. "The best [native] American players, like [grandmaster Joel] Benjamin and [grandmaster John] Fedorowicz, from the European point of view are not very strong. They can beat you in a game or maybe win a tournament, but they are not long-term threats. They don't understand how to work, they don't have real chess culture. There are many sides of chess they don't think about. Benjamin got a chess fellowship [the American Chess Foundation's Samford Fellowship], but he didn't use it to get coaching help. He thought he didn't need it. Compared to European players there are many problems that Benjamin doesn't understand; there are many things I understand that Benjamin doesn't.

"Look at [Gregory] Kaidanov. In Russia Kaidanov was nobody special, but here he was immediately successful. Maybe Benjamin has more talent, but Kaidanov is a professional.

"There are also many things that the chess organizers here don't understand. Young players with talent should receive serious training and support, because if one of them developed into a great player it would be very good for chess in America. When Fischer came along, he

"The best American players are not very strong. They don't understand how to work, they don't have real chess culture."

was very good for chess development in this country. I believe that America must find a new Fischer. Or maybe not a world champion, but at least a candidate. But the organizers here do nothing. When [Max] Dlugy won the World Junior Championship, the World Open, the New York Open, I believe that the best policy would have been to support him, to pay for his coach, to arrange special training for him. He had a chance to become a top grandmaster—maybe not world champion, but a top grandmaster. It would have been great for this country.” [Of course, Dlugy did get a Samford Fellowship, but no one receives more than two years of support from the Samford.]

In an interview with *Chess Horizons* (September/October 1992, p. 18), Dvoretzky echoed Pandolfini: “It is a question of money. Parents of talented youngsters have enough money for a few lessons, but it’s not enough. It’s necessary to have enough money for work for many years.”

He told me, “The Samford Fellowship is a great idea, but some players don’t use it well. I mentioned Benjamin. Patrick [Wolff] was more clever; he used it to get some coaching. It was also excellent for Patrick to work with Anand last year. It helps a practical player to train another practical player, because it exposes him to new ideas. These situations are usually very good for both players.”

Chess culture in America may soon get a boost. Dvoretzky is thinking about moving here permanently. He is worried about the unstable political situation in Russia, not to mention the chaotic economy. But it won’t be easy for him to get permission to immigrate. For one thing, he must prove to the authorities that he will be able to make a good living here. The American Chess Foundation, which has sponsored his lessons with young players, has been quietly involved on his behalf, as have various individuals in the Northeast. If Dvoretzky is able to defeat the bureaucratic obstacles, Russia’s loss will be America’s gain. And perhaps high chess culture, which he fears will decline sharply in Russia due to the loss of state support, will be transmitted through Dvoretzky and other emigrés and preserved in the capitalist West.

A Modest Proposal

The American Chess Foundation has approached a few wealthy individuals to see if they would guarantee Dvoretzky an income, but these negotiations have not succeeded.

What if the ACF were to hire Mark Dvoretzky as their Chief Trainer, with a guaranteed salary?

Some people speculate that the ACF might be reluctant to take this step because of criticism they received for extending special support to Boris Gulko and Gata Kamsky, two earlier Russian emigrés. The ACF actually raised a special fund to help Gulko, but an inaccurate perception was created that he received help at the expense of American-born chessplayers. Supporting the prodigy Kamsky after his defection to the

Chess culture in
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U.S. was supposed to be a promotional move that would help to popularize the game in America, but unfortunately, Kamsky and his father turned out to be difficult and unpleasant people instead of glamorous media stars.

Mark Dvoretzky, however, would be a great force for improving the level of chess culture in America. Instead of selfishly taking from the system and giving nothing back—like the Kamskys—he might revolutionize it with his teaching.

Here are the nuts and bolts of the plan. The ACF would give Dvoretzky a full-time job as their Chief Trainer for, say, \$35,000 per year. At first the money might be raised through private, tax-deductible donations to the ACF.

However, as the ACF publicized the services of their Chief Trainer, requests would come in for lessons (for individuals and groups), lectures, simultaneous exhibitions, coaching for U.S. teams, and so on. The ACF would serve as a clearinghouse for these requests and might set up a sliding scale for lesson fees depending on the ability of students to pay. Since Dvoretzky prefers to work with strong players, a good portion of his time would be reserved for that type of work. The rest of his time would be allocated to other activities, including research, writing, working with promising juniors, and especially training other teachers, coaches, and trainers. Quite soon, the income from Dvoretzky's various activities would be high enough to pay for his salary. Whatever the details, supporting the work of Mark Dvoretzky through such an arrangement would be an excellent use of ACF funds, fully consistent with their mission.

What if the ACF were to hire Mark Dvoretzky as their Chief Trainer, with a guaranteed salary?

The World's Best Chess Trainer?

The list of strong players that Dvoretzky has worked with in just the past year is very long. Aside from those already mentioned, he has also worked with grandmasters Evgeny Bareev, Gregory Kaidanov, Joel Lautier, and V. Bologan; international master Zsotia Polgar; and the strongest team in the German Bundesliga, Bayern München, which includes Yusupov, Robert Hübner, and others.

At the end of our series of interviews I asked Mark Dvoretzky the one question I had wanted to ask all along: is he really the best chess trainer in the world?

"I have read many magazine articles that have called me that!" said Dvoretzky with a laugh. More soberly he continued, "It's not possible to be the best chess trainer in the world. There are coaches who work with beginners and young players; there are others who work with older players. There are many sides to chess including positional judgment, calculation of tactics, and these days it is very important to have good opening preparation. It is also very important to be a good psychologist. I am not a good psychologist and openings are not my specialty. I work with very strong players and I have my own methods."



**Dolmatov,
Dvoretsky,
and Yusupov.**

That was a clever answer, typically modest, and not easily refuted in its main points. It is clear, however, if we consider Dvoretsky's achievements as a player, his innovative training techniques, his successful students, his articles and books and forthcoming computer program, his professional posts in Moscow at the sports club and Pioneer Palace, his famous chess school for talented young players, the testimony of those who have studied with him or heard him lecture, and his great reputation among strong players the world over, Dvoretsky is at the very top of his profession. Bobby Seltzer says simply: "Mark Dvoretsky is a genius who just happened to become a chess trainer." But he is both less and more than a genius. His talent for chess is perhaps not of the very highest order, but he has compensated by hard work. He is a man of integrity who sees in chess not just a game, but a struggle between two individuals in which character matters. As long as people like Mark Dvoretsky see value in chess, it will transcend sport and take a worthy place in our culture along with music, art, literature, and the other creative expressions of humanity. ♣

Lein–Dvoretsky, Moscow 1973

Whose Strategy Will Triumph?

Mark Dvoretsky

At the first session of our Moscow chess school, Artur Yusupov showed two of his games (against Anatoly Karpov and Jan Timman) in which many moves revolved around a single core topic—some sort of key strategical problem. In these games the solution of this problem determined the outcome of the battles. It was very important to maintain the tension—while not conceding anything to the opponent—in order to make the most of the tactical opportunities.

I would like to show one of my victories of this nature. For me, it is notable for its sporting character. It took place during the fourth from the last round of the 1973 Moscow Championship. Grandmaster Anatoly Lein and I had broken away from the pack and were leading with 8½ points out of 11. This game would determine who won the title.

LEIN–DVORETSKY, MOSCOW (CH) 1973

FRENCH DEFENCE C11

1 e4 e6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 e5 ♘fd7 5 d4

The “normal” move order is 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 e5 ♘fd7 5 ♘f3, although more dangerous for Black is 5 f4.

5 ... c5 6 dxc5 ♘c6 7 ♗f4 ♗xc5 8 ♗d3 f6

8 ... 0–0? 9 ♗xh7+!

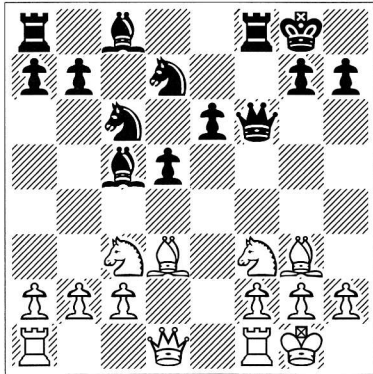
9 exf6 ♖xf6

Mark Dvoretsky is an international master, a professional chess trainer, and the author of several books. He lives in Moscow.

Theory recommends 9 ... ♖xf6. However I did not like to play according to theory (partly because I did not know it well) and frequently played outside of it at the first comfortable opportunity.

Objectively the knight capture is the most reliable and my move is risky. But I had tried 9 ... ♖xf6 in two games prior to the Moscow Championship, and had acquired some experience with it. Lein certainly had not faced it before.

An opening's success often comes not from objective circumstances but from your (and your opponent's) preparation for the game which unfolds at the board. Understanding this, I chose without hesitation a risky variation.



1 ■ Lein–Dvoretzky, after 11 0–0

10 ♖g3

Another possibility is 10 ♖g5!? Valeev–Dvoretzky, Minsk 1972 continued 10 ... ♖f7 11 ♖d2? (the beginning of a bad plan) 0–0 12 0–0–0 ♗de5 13 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 14 f3 ♗d7 15 ♖he1 ♗xd3+ 16 ♖xd3 ♖ac8 17 ♗e3 ♗b4 18 ♗d4 ♖c4 19 ♖b1 ♖fc8 20 ♖e3 b5, and Black had the initiative.

Instead of 11 ♖d2? White could have tried 11 ♗h4 or 11 0–0–0 12 ♗h4. It is here, in my opinion, that one might find a refutation of 9 ... ♖f6.

10 ... 0–0 11 0–0 (D 1)

Already each side's strategic plans can be shown; these will determine the fight for many moves to come.

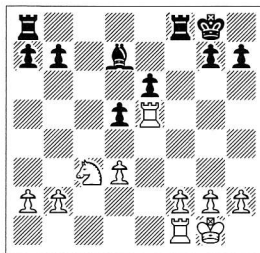
Black would like to advance the e-pawn, creating a mobile pawn center, but this is a long way off. Black must first complete his development, exchange White's most useful pieces (the knight on f3 and the bishop on d3), and strengthen his d5 square. White on the other hand hopes to maintain his control of the d4 and e5 squares and blockade the center, leaving Black with a "bad" bishop on c8.

11 ... ♗d4

Not 11 ... ♗de5? 12 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 13 ♗xh7+.

12 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 13 ♖d2

At Moscow 1972, R. Kimelfeld played more purposefully against me: 13 ♖e2 ♗c5 14 ♖ae1 (14 ♗b5 ♗xb2 15 ♖ab1 ♗d7 gives White nothing) ♗xd3 15 cxd3 (now the pawn grab 15 ... ♗xc3? 16 bxc3 ♖xc3 is suicide—after 17 ♗e5 White with his dark-squared bishop develops an attack on g7 while Black's light-squared bishop is useless) 15 ... ♗d7 16 ♗e5 ♗xe5 17 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 18 ♖xe5 (D 2).



2 ■ Analysis

At first glance, White's strategy seems to have worked; he occupies e5 and has a knight against a "bad" bishop. If White could play f4 and transfer the knight to d4 my situation

would have been hopeless. However my opponent did not have enough time to carry out this plan, and my bishop was not as bad as it appeared. Black has dynamic resources—namely, the move d4 and play on the open c-file. I honestly do not see a way for White to obtain equality. Let's follow this game for a few more moves.

18 ... ♖ac8 19 f4.

The following variation epitomizes Black's successful struggle versus White's blockading strategy: 19 d4 ♖c4 20 ♖d1 b5 21 ♖d2 b4 22 ♗e2 ♖fc8 23 ♖f1 ♖c2 24 ♖e1 ♖f7 (intending 25 ... ♗b5) 25 ♖d1? ♗a4! 26 b3 ♖a2! There's a bad bishop for you!

19 ... d4! 20 ♗e2 ♖c2 21 f5?!

Preferable was the simple 21 ♗xd4 ♖xb2 22 ♗xe6. I probably would have entered a sharp four rook endgame, since both 22 ... ♗c6 23 ♖f2 and 22 ... ♖c8 23 ♗c5 followed by ♖f2 get Black nowhere.

21 ... exf5 22 ♗xd4 ♖xb2

If now 23 ♖e7, then 23 ... ♖f7 24 ♗xf5 ♗xf5 25 ♖e8+ ♖f8 26 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 27 ♖xf5+ ♖e7 give Black a better endgame.

23 ♖c1 g6! (D 3)

And I enjoyed a comfortable advantage. Now let's return to Lein–Dvoretsky.

13 ... ♗c5 14 ♖ae1 ♗xd3?!

More exact is 14 ... ♗d7 with an excellent position for Black. The hasty exchange gives White extra possibilities.

15 cxd3 ♗d7 (D 4)

From this moment a tense struggle begins for control of the central squares.

16 ♗e2 ♗b6

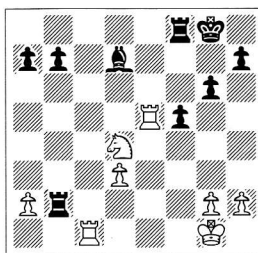
White threatened 17 ♗xd4 ♖xd4 18 ♗e5. Dubious is 16 ... ♗xb2?! 17 ♖b1 and the rook reaches the seventh rank.

At this point White could have played 17 d4, but after 17 ... ♗b5 he would have at best a slight advantage, for example after 18 ♗e5 (or 18 ♖c1!? intending 18 ... ♗xe2 19 ♗e5) ♖g6 (18 ... ♖e7 19 ♖c1) 19 ♖c1 (19 ♖d1 ♖ac8 hitting c2) ♖d3 (19 ... ♖ac8 20 ♗f4!?) 20 ♖xd3 ♗xd3 21 ♖fe1. Lein, wanting more, plays a subtle central move.

17 ♖h1!

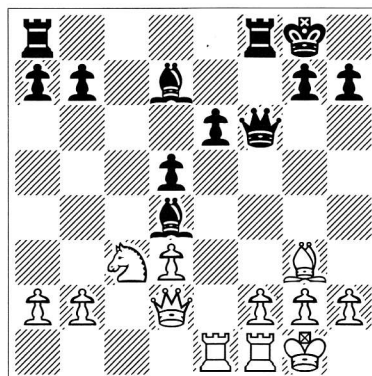
A multifaceted move! The threat is 18 ♗d6 ♖f7 19 f4 followed by ♗e5 and ♗d4. 17 ... e5? is not playable because of 18 ♗c3 and both central pawns are under attack.

17 ... ♖ae8



3 □

Analysis



4 □

Lein–Dvoretsky, after 15 ... ♗d7

Black parries the threat (18 ♖d6 ♜f7 19 f4 e5!) and prepares e5.

18 ♖g1!

The logical followup to the the previous move. Suddenly I am not able to play 18 ... e5 due to 19 ♗f3 ♖c7 (19 ... e4 20 dxe4 dxe4 21 ♜xd7) 20 ♜c3! (better than 20 d4 e4). At the same time I have to defend against 19 ♗f3 and 19 ♖e5 followed by 20 f4 (20 ♗f3).

18 ... ♖b5!

Counterattacking the d3 square: 19 ♖e5 ♜f5 or 19 ♗f3 ♜f5 20 ♗e5 ♖d4.

Note that both players are conducting a strategical battle, yet the means are tactical: concrete strong moves, short variations, threats, counterthreats ... This is conclusive proof that there is no real difference between tactics and strategy—weaknesses in either of these two areas will inevitably affect the overall quality of a chessplayer's game and sporting results.

19 ♖d6 ♜f7 20 f4 ♖d4!

Black guards against 21 ♖e5 (now answered by 21 ... ♖xe5 22 ♜xe5 ♜xe5). Less accurate is 20 ... ♜f5 21 ♜f3 followed by ♖e5 or ♜e5; White can also try sacrificing a pawn to improve the position of the queen with 21 ♗f3!? ♖xb2 22 ♖e5 (If 22 ♜b1 ♖c3, and not 22 d4? ♖xf1 23 ♖xf1 ♖xd4! [23 ... ♜d8 24 ♖b4 a4 25 ♖xa5 b6 26 ♖b4 with a clear edge; 23 ... ♜d8 24 ♖e5; 23 ... ♖a3 24 ♖xa3 ♜xf4 25 ♜xf4 ♜xf4 26 ♜c1 with advantage] 24 ♜xd4 e5 25 ♗b5 a6 26 ♗c7 ♜d8 winning] ♜xd4 25 ♗xd4 e5 with a clear advantage for Black) ♖xe5 23 ♗e5 ♜ff8 (23 ... ♜c7 24 ♜a5) 24 ♜b4 (or 24 ♜a5).

21 ♗e2

Not the best square for the knight, but White has a definite idea. If here 21... ♖xb2? then 22 ♜b1, and on 21 ... ♖b6 22 ♖e5 ♜f5 23 ♜f3 the battle for the center has not ended in my favor.

21 ... ♜d8! (D 5)

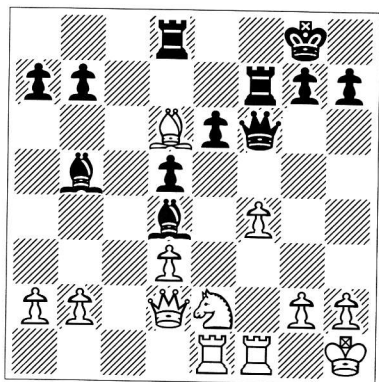
An important in-between move. It would have been a mistake to attack the bishop with the other rook: 21 ... ♜d7? 22 ♖e5! ♖xe5 23 fxe5 ♜xe5? 24 ♗c3.

Now 22 ♖e5 is not possible (the rook on f1 hangs) and 22 ♗xd4 ♜xd4 23 ♜xe6 ♜xd3 24 ♜xd3 ♖xd3 leads to a better endgame for Black. 22 ♜b4, though, is tougher to meet. If 22 ... ♖xd3?! 23 ♗xd4 ♖xf1 (23 ... ♜xd6 24 ♜xd6 ♖xf1 25 ♗xe6) 24 ♖e5! ♖xg2+

25 ♜xg2 White has the advantage because of his strongly placed pieces.

But 22 ... ♖xb2! changes the picture. For example: 23 ♜b1 ♖xd3 24 ♜xb2 ♜xd6, or 23 d4 ♖xe2 24 ♖e5 ♜e7! 25 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 26 ♜xe2 ♖a3. The critical response is 23 ♜f3, with the following possibilities:

a) 23 ... ♖c6? 24 d4 (24 ♖c5 d4 [24 ... b6 25 ♖f2 g6 26 ♜b1 with a



5 □ Lein-Dvoretzky, after 21 ... ♜d8

big plus; 25 ... d4] 25 ♖xb2 ♗xf3 26 gxf3 e5 with a slight edge for Black) a5 (forced, as White threatened ♗e5) 25 ♖c5 a4 26 a3! and the bishop is trapped on b2.

b) 23 ... ♗a6

b1) 24 ♗c5 b6? (24 ... ♖c8! 25 ♗xa7 ♗c3 26 ♗xc3 ♖xc3 with equality) 25 ♗g1 ♖c8 26 ♖a4! with a small advantage.

b2) 24 ♗b1 b6! intending 25 ♖xb2 ♖xd6; if 25 ♖a4 ♖xd6 (25 ... ♗xd3? 26 ♖xd3 ♖xd6 27 ♖b3 ♗e5 [forced] 28 fxе5 ♖xe5 and White is better) 26 ♖xa6 ♖c7 27 ♖a4 ♖dc7 is unclear. If instead 24 ... ♖fd7?! 25 ♗c5 ♖c7 (25 ... ♖c8?? 26 ♖xb2 ♖xc5 27 ♖xc5 ♖xb2 28 ♖c8+) 26 ♗xa7 (if 26 ♗d6 ♖cd7 is forced but equalizes) ♖c2? (26 ... ♗c3!) 27 ♗d4 ♖c1+ (27 ... ♗xd4 28 ♗xd4 ♖f7 leaves White with the advantage) 28 ♖xc1 ♗xc1 and Black's position looks very suspicious because of the bad bishop on c1.

c) 23 ... a5!? 24 ♖c5!? ♗a6! and Black is OK, as is the case after either 24 ♖xb5 ♖xd6 or 24 ♖xa5 ♖xd6 25 ♖xb5 ♖c6.

22 ♗a3 ♗b6

I can breathe more easily. White's pieces have been driven away from e5, and I have a strategic advantage. Of course that does not mean I have a won game.

The grandmaster M. Matulovic paid a great deal of attention to opening theory. He is said to have kept scrupulous records of the outcomes of his opening duels and derived a lot of his pleasure in chess from them. His tournament results, though, were notably worse. I wanted to win this game, but not at the hasty expense of skipping the middlegame. For that to happen I could not relax—I had to work further.

23 ♗c3 ♗c6 24 ♖e2

A new problem. The pawn is under attack, but 24 ... ♖e8 allows 25 ♗d6 and my positional advantage is a memory.

24 ... ♗c7!

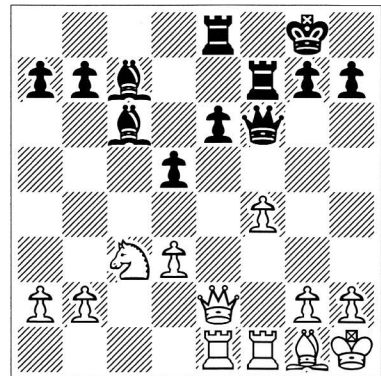
Another important in-between move. After 25 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 26 ♖xe6 ♗xf4 or 26 ... ♖xf4 the two bishops give Black an endgame advantage.

25 ♗c5 ♖e8 26 ♗g1 (D 6)

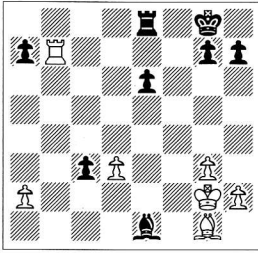
Evidently, White is ready to quit trying to block Black's pawns with his pieces and is preparing to play d4, forever preventing the break e5. Since my opponent did not have much time left, I decided to switch from strategy to tactics. Can you find and calculate a combination for Black here?

26 ... ♗xf4!?

I saw quickly enough the variation 27 g3 ♖xc3!! 28 bxc3 d4+ 29 ♖g2! (worse is 29 ♖e4 ♗d2 30 ♖xf7 ♗xe1) ♗xg2+ 30 ♖xg2 ♗d2 31 ♖xf7 ♗xe1 32 ♖xb7 dxc3 (D 7), and pinned my hopes on the strength of the pawn on c3. For example, if 33



6 ■ Lein-Dvoretsky, after 26 ♗g1



7 □ **Analysis**

♖xa7? ♜c8, or 33 ♝f3? ♜c8 (33 ... c2? 34 ♜c7) 34 ♙e3 c2 35 ♙c1 (a series of “only” moves) ♙c3 36 ♖xa7 (36 ♝e2 ♙d4 37 ♝d2 ♜f8 with a clear advantage) ♜f8+ 37 ♝g2 (37 ♝e2 ♙d4 38 ♜c7 ♜f2+ 39 ♝e1 ♖xh2) ♙d4 38 ♜c7 ♜f2+ 39 ♝h3 h5! and Black is clearly better.

All the same, after the superior 33 ♜c7 White should still be able to draw, but from a practical point of view Black’s decision was correct. White did not have enough time to calculate all the consequences and simply took me at my word.

27 ♙xa7?! ♝h4 28 ♙g1 ♙d6 29 ♖xf7 ♝xf7

Black’s advantage is beyond doubt. He has two strong bishops, and the e5 break I have been dreaming about since the opening can no longer be stopped.

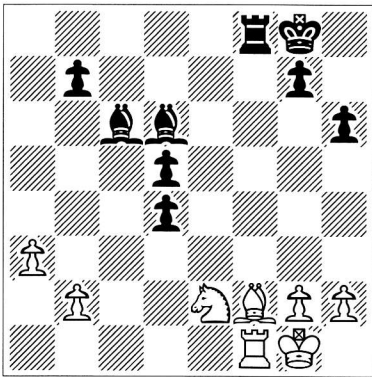
30 d4 ♝g8 31 ♜f1 h6

A threat is often strongest when it is hanging in the air! Black is not in a hurry to advance in the center, preferring at first to make quiet moves that improve his position. Such tactics are especially effective during an opponent’s time pressure.

32 a3 e5! 33 ♝f2?

Losing, but White’s position is already difficult. My light-squared bishop threatens to enter the game with great force.

33 ... ♝xf2 34 ♙xf2 ♜f8! 35 ♝g1



8 ■ **Lein–Dvojetsky, after 36 ♙e2**

Lein counted on this move when he exchanged queens. Grim is 34 dxe5 ♙xe5 35 ♝g1 d4.

35 ... exd4

Only here did my opponent realize that he could not recapture on d4 due to 36 ... ♙xh2+.

36 ♙e2 (D 8)

Unfortunately, a major flaw in my chess at this time was a tendency to make superficial decisions after the game had already been decided. (I do not like to even think about how many points got away!) This is a classic example. I saw that I had a won position and considered two moves: 36 ... ♙b5 and 36 ... d3. I instantly calculated 36 ... ♙b5 37 ♜e1 ♙xh2+ 38 ♝xh2 ♜xf2 39 ♙xd4, dismissed it due to my opponent’s having good positional compensation (strong knight versus bad bishop), and chose 36 ... d3. But this evaluation is wrong. First, after 39 ... ♜xb2 in the variation above I would have not one, but two, extra pawns, and second, it would have been possible to transfer the bishop to the strong post e4 via d3.

36 ... d3? 37 ♙d4

To my unpleasant surprise I found it difficult to break through White's fortress. He is going to play h3 and ♖d1, and what am I supposed to do? If 37 ... ♗c5, then 38 ♜f3.

37 ... ♗a4!? 38 b3 ♗d7

The bishop is going to g4. The hanging flag on Lein's clock makes this threat so dangerous that he gives up the a-pawn.

39 ♖d1 ♗xa3 40 ♖x3 ♗d6 41 h3 ♖a8

The game was adjourned here, with White sealing his 42nd move. Black has a healthy extra pawn and the advantage of the two bishops. It appears that the win is a matter of technique. That is at least what I thought before analyzing the position. Closer examination bore this out, but it took me a long time to find the winning plan.

42 g4 ♖a2 (D 9)

Very bad here is 43 ♜f3? ♖a1+ 44 ♜g2 ♗b5, but fascinating is 43 ♜f5!? While analyzing this I made a serious mistake which could have cost me dearly.

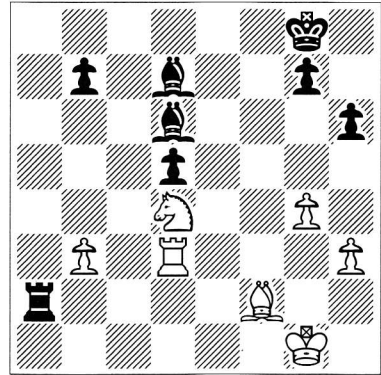
I planned to enter a rook endgame, leaning towards a variation which I thought was a forced win.

Because of this I did not seriously consider the bishop endgame after 43 ... ♗h2+!? 44 ♜g2! (44 ♜xh2? ♖x2+ 45 ♜g3 ♗xf5 46 ♖xd5 [46 ♖c3 ♖c2; 46 ♖e3 ♖c2 47 gxf5 d4 wins for Black] ♗e6 47 ♖d6 [47 ♖d8+ ♖f8] ♖f6 and Black is winning) ♗xf5 45 gxf5 ♗f4 46 ♜f3 (46 ♖xd5?? ♗e3) ♖d2 47 ♖xd2 (Not 47 ♖c3 ♗e5) ♗xd2 (D 10); I did not see how I could break through with my king.

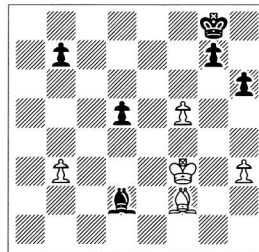
Many years later (after a "hole" had been found in the analysis of the rook endgame) I looked at the bishop endgame again and found that there was indeed a win.

48 ♗d4 ♜f7 49 ♜e2 ♗g5 50 ♜d3 ♗f6 (not 50 ... h5 51 ♗e5 ♗f6 52 ♜d4) 51 ♗f2 ♗e5 52 ♗h4 g6 53 fxg6+ ♜xg6 54 ♗f2 h5 55 ♗e3 (or 55 ♜e3 ♜g5 56 ♜f3 ♜f5 57 ♗b6 d4) ♜f5 56 ♗d2 ♗f4! 57 ♗e1 ♗c7 58 ♗d2 (58 ♜d4 ♜f4 59 ♜xd5 ♜f3 followed by ♗g3 and ♜g2 wins for Black) ♗b6 59 ♗c1 ♗g1 60 ♗d2 d4! 61 ♗c1 ♜e5! (61 ... ♗e3? at once does not work because of 62 ♗xe3 dxe3 63 ♜xe3 ♜e5 64 ♜f3! with a draw—the pawn is on b7) 62 ♗d2 ♗e3 63 ♗xe3 (otherwise 63 ... ♜f4) dxe3 64 ♜xe3 b5! (D 11)

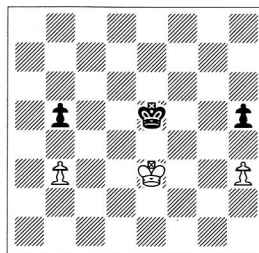
In this position 65 ♜f3 ♜d4 loses for White, as do 65 b4 ♜d5 66 ♜d3 h4 and 65 h4 ♜f5 66 ♜f3 b4.



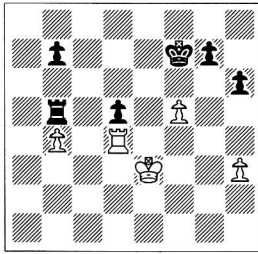
9 □ Lein–Dvoretzky, after 42 ... ♖a2



10 □ Analysis



11 □ Analysis



12 ■ Analysis

Back to the rook endgame. This is the variation I planned to play: 43 ... ♖xf5 44 gf (44 ♖xd5? ♖a1+) ♖a5 (positionally threatening 45 ... ♗e5) 45 ♗d4 ♗c5! (until now, the White king could not approach the e3 square) 46 ♜f2 ♗xd4+ 47 ♖xd4 ♖b5 48 b4 ♜f7 49 ♜e3 (**D 12**) 49 ... ♜f6 50 ♜f4 h5 51 h4 b6. White is in zugzwang and must lose a second pawn. However, I. Smirin noticed while studying this variation in my book *The Art of Analysis*

(the original Russian-language edition of *Secrets of Chess Training*) that after 52 ♜f3 ♜xf5 53 ♜e3 ♜e5 53 ♜d3 Black is unable to use his two extra pawns due to the tragicomic position of his rook. Black can try 51 ... ♖b6 (instead of 51 ... b6) 52 ♖xd5 ♖xb4+ 53 ♜g3 b6 54 ♜h3 ♖b3+ 55 ♜g2, but to no avail.

An important topic at the Dvoretsky/Yusupov school was the study of contemporary endgames in master practice. One homework assignment was to verify my analysis of 43 ♗f5. I expected that after the above mentioned mistake was found, my students would concentrate on the bishop endgame. To my surprise Vadim Zvyagintsev and Maxim Boguslavsky found a way to improve Black's play in the rook endgame.

In place of 49 ... ♜f6? correct is 49 ... ♜e7! If 50 ♜f4, then 50 ... ♜f6 51 h4 h5 leads to the zugzwang, but with the pawn on b7. Then after 52 ♜f3 ♜xf5 53 ♜e3 ♜e5 Black's rook can escape to the b6 square. And if 50 ♜f3, then 50 ... ♜d6 51 ♜f4 (hopeless is 51 ♖g4 ♜e5 52 ♖xg7 ♖xb4) ♖b6 followed by ♖c6 and ♖c4.

Thus 43 ♗f5!?! ultimately would have not saved the game, but it would have given Black serious problems. However, the move Lein actually played proved no less difficult to crack.

43 ♜g2!?

Lein's moves have logic. He wants to maintain his king at f3, and then, having played his bishop to g3 or f4, offer an exchange of dark-squared bishops. If Black declines he wants to leave the bishop on e5. Then all of White's pieces are ideally placed, the pawn on d5 is securely blockaded, and Black has to guard against the threat ♗f5.

How can I improve my position? It is obvious that if I can get my bishop to e4 the game will be over. But what do I do about ♗f5?

At first I had hopes for 43 ... h5 44 g×h5 ♗e8 (intending 45 ... ♗xh5 followed by ♗g6 and ♗e4) 45 ♗e6 (45 ♗f5 ♗c5) ♗f7! 46 ♖xd5 ♗e7! But I saw nothing decisive after 45 ♜g1! ♗xh5 46 ♗f5.

I looked at 43 ... ♗c5 44 ♜f3 ♗e8 (44 ... ♗b5? 45 ♗xb5 ♖xf2+ 46 ♜g3) 45 ♗e3 ♗g6, but the rook endgame after 46 ♗f5 ♗xf5 47 g×f5 ♗×e3 48 ♜×e3 gave me nothing more than a draw.

Eventually, after examining these and other variations, I found the right way to win.

43 ... ♖c5 44 ♜f3

If 44 ♜g3, then 44 ... ♗e8 45 ♗e3 ♗g6 46 ♜f5
 ♗xf5 47 gxf5 ♗xe3 48 ♖xe3 ♜f7.

44 ... h5!!

Here my opponent thought for a long time. Clearly he did not expect this move.

45 ♗e3

Insufficient is 45 g×h5 ♗×h3. I planned to meet 45 ♗g3 with the waiting move 45 ... ♜h7 in order to meet 46 ♗f4 or 46 ♗e5 with, as in the game, 46 ... h4!

45 ... h4! (D 13)

Black fixes the pawn on h3 and makes it a real weakness; the threat is 46 ... ♖h2 (the king is barred from the square g3). If the bishop moves from e3, ♗b5! can be played. The tactical justification of Black's plan can be seen in the variation 46 ♜f5 ♖h2! 47 ♗xc5 ♖×h3+ 48 ♜e2 ♗b5 49 ♗e3 (or 49 ♜e3) ♖h2+.

46 ♖c3 ♗b6

46 ... b6?! would give White counterplay after 47 b4! ♗×b4 48 ♖c7 ♗a4 49 ♜f5 (but not after 49 ♜e6? ♗d1+ 50 ♜f4 ♗d6+).

47 ♜f5?!

Lein overlooks my tactical idea. More stubborn is 47 ♜e2 (against which I intended 47 ... ♗d8) or 47 ♖c2.

47 ... ♖h2! 48 ♜e7+

48 ♗×b6? ♖×h3+.

48 ... ♜f7 49 ♜×d5 ♖×h3+

The game is decided! The position has opened up and the two bishops can finally show their true strength.

50 ♜f4 ♗d8! 51 ♖c1 ♗c6 52 ♗b6

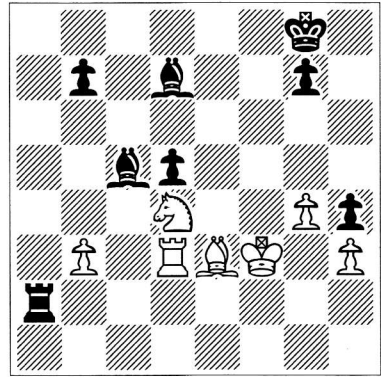
52 ♖d1 ♜e6!

52 ... ♖f3+

Also possible is 52 ... ♗×b6 53 ♜×b6 ♖×b3 54 ♜c4 ♜f6! 55 g5+ ♜g6 56 ♜e5+ ♜h5.

53 ♜e5 ♗g5 54 ♖c3? 0–1

White resigned after making his 54th move. I remember this game as one of the best of my career. ♣



13 □

Lein–Dvoretsky, after 45 ... h4

Chess Art in the Computer Age

Noam D. Elkies

Chess, the cliché reminds us, is at once sport, science, and art. Over the past decade, computer technology has greatly affected all three aspects of the game. Many a chessplayer has felt the computer's impact on the competitive sport of chess: minutes after being paired as White against grandmaster John Nunn, one can list the moves of all of Nunn's recent games against 1 e4, then call up the latest theory on the Marshall Gambit and later, if the game is adjourned, have the assistance of a 2400-rated handheld computer in analyzing the position. (The widespread availability of strong chess-playing computers has even more radically transformed the world of correspondence chess, where computer-assisted analysis is forbidden but practically undetectable.) The computer's powers of exhaustive analysis have also pushed back the frontiers of chess science, revealing unexpected possibilities and outcomes in many positions with only four, five or (most recently) six men on the board, and bringing about a new appreciation of the inexhaustible depth of our ancient game. The artistic side of chess—comprising the glorious combinations and subtle maneuvers of tournament play as well as the distilled beauty of composed endgames and problems—has likewise been profoundly influenced by the computer. If the computer's contribution here is not as familiar as its opening databases or 244-move forced wins, it is because chess art *gratia artis* is itself hidden from the eye not only of the public but also of too many chessplayers.

Thus I devote the next section of this article to a brief exposition of the nature of the art, comparing it with the competitive and the scientific

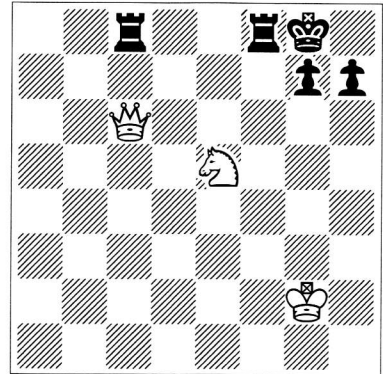
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aspects of the game as well as with more familiar arts such as music or poetry. I then outline the revolution that modern computers have brought to the art, whether as destroyers of classic and contemporary works, as assistants to today's composers and judges, or as partners in the creative process. I conclude with some predictions and speculations on the future of the art and its interaction with ever more powerful and versatile computers.

What is Chess Art?

The early Arabic manuscripts on chess, predating by centuries the adoption of the modern rules of the game, already contain composed positions ("mansubat") alongside opening analysis and illustrative games and combinations. These compositions served the practical purpose of illustrating ideas and stratagems in purer form than could be found in most actual games, but the construction of such positions was itself a creative act and soon became an aspect of chess pursued and enjoyed for its own sake.¹ For instance a chess manual might nowadays use a position like **Diagram 1** to show the stock smothered-mate combination **1 ♖e6+ ♜h8 2 ♘f7+ ♚g8 3 ♘h6+ ♜h8 4 ♚g8+! ♝xg8 5 ♘f7 mate.**

Note that this is not an actual game position but a paradigm from which all the pieces not involved in the combination have been stripped except the white king, without which the position would be illegal, and the black rook on c8, without which White already has an overwhelming advantage and wins easily even without the queen sacrifice. Diagram 1 already shows some of the aesthetic features of a chess study: an economic and natural initial position, and a brilliant and (to the uninitiated) surprising finale balanced by a fine distinction in the first move (1 ♖d5+? ♜h8 2 ♘f7+ ♝x7!). On the other hand, the play is short and entirely forced, an uninterrupted sequence of checks with no room for Black counterplay. Even worse, there is an alternative win in 3 ♘d8+! ♜h8 4 ♚xc8. This may make the position more valuable for chess instruction, *since it now shows two distinct tactical motifs; but the queen sacrifice loses its artistic standing once exposed as a gratuitous brilliancy in a prosaically won position.*²

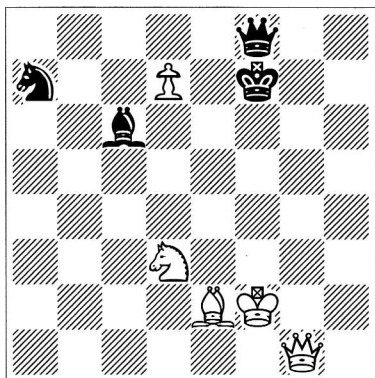


1 □

White to play and win

1. Much more information about the history of chess composition can be found in the second edition of Hooper and Whyld's excellent *Oxford Companion to Chess* (Oxford University Press, 1992), especially in the entries "composition," "mansuba," "problem," "problem history," and "study."

2. The *Oxford Companion* cites under "Philidor's legacy" a position by Lucena c. 1497 (over 200 years before Philidor's birth!) similar to my Diagram 1; I tinkered with the position to bring out a few further points. After 1 ♖d5+? ♜h8 2 ♘f7+ ♝x7! 3 ♚xf7 (White no longer has ♚xc8+mating) Black can likely draw with 3 ... h6, intending to set up a blockade with ♜f6. Adding a black pawn on f2 would eliminate the dual solution 3 ♘d8+ ♜h8 4 ♚xc8.



2 □ Seletsky

White to play and win

We turn to **Diagram 2** for a refined artistic setting of this theme. A smothered mate seems, next to zugzwang, the least likely denouement in such a wide-open position; and yet ... 1 ♖g5! ♜e6+! The advanced extra pawn is doomed, but White can still activate his pieces by threatening to promote it. The other defense 1 ... ♜×d7 lands Black in a surprising mating net after 2 ♜f4! 2 ♜g1! The only square where the king will not later be vulnerable to checks. Black's next four moves are forced on pain of mate or loss of the queen, e.g. 2 ... ♜×d7 3 ♜g4+ ♜f7 (♜d6 4 ♜c5 mate) 4 ♜h5+ and 5 ♜e5 mate, or 3 ... ♜d6 4 ♜g3+! ♜d5 (♜e7 5 ♜e5+ ♜f7 6 ♜c4+ and 7 ♜d3+) 5 ♜c4+! ♜×c4 6 ♜b3+.

2 ... ♜×d7 3 ♜c5+ ♜c8 4 ♜a6+ ♜b8 5 ♜g3+ ♜a8 Black's king seems to have staggered to safety, but 6 ♜b7+! ♜×b7 7 ♜d7! forces ♜d8 to stop mates on b6 and b8, when the smothered mate materializes: 8 ♜b8+!! ♜×b8 9 ♜b6 mate! Note the rich content Seletsky created with only 9 chessmen: sharp tactical play on both sides, several subtle quiet moves by White, and a final crescendo of sacrifices climaxing in a novel picture of smothered mate with all three escape squares blocked by pieces rather than pawns.³

Diagram 2 is an example of a chess *study* or endgame composition, where White must demonstrate a win or draw against best play, but without a fixed limit on how many moves it takes. (The word "endgame" may be somewhat misleading here: while most studies do in fact use the sparse material typical of an endgame to achieve economy of force, they tend to be more clear-cut and often much more tactical than most endgames arising in actual play.) This distinguishes a study from a *problem*, where the goal must be achieved within a set number of moves. Thus in a direct-mate problem (the oldest and most familiar genre), White typically starts with a clearly winning position but must give mate in at most a specified number of moves against best defense. Diagram 1 would not qualify as a mate in 5 because Black can delay the mate with the ridiculous 1 ... ♜f7; but even if this were fixed (say by adding a Black bishop at d8) the problem would grate on aesthetic tastes, not only because of the forced play but also because the only side variation 2 ... ♜×f7 allows a shorter mate. For a genuine problem setting of this theme, consider **Diagram 3**, a miniature (a composition with seven or fewer pieces) by Belschan: After 1 ♜f1! moving the bishop allows the mates 1 ... ♜×f1 2 ♜×f1+ ♜h2 3 ♜d6 mate or 1 ... ♜d5 2 ♜f2 and 3 ♜g1(h2)

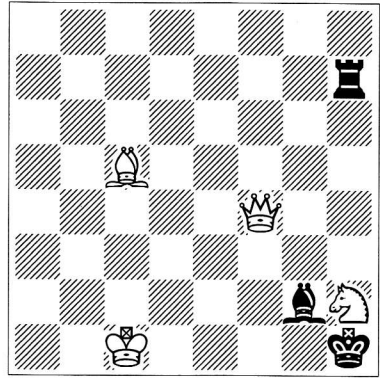
3. Seletsky's study (Diagram 2) won First Prize in the 1933 composition contest of *Shakmaty v SSSR*; it is #1096 in Sutherland and Lommer's *1234 Modern End-Game Studies* (1938, reprinted in 1968 by Dover), where the try 2 ♜e1 (instead of 2 ♜g1) is refuted by 2 ... ♜×d7 3 ♜c5+ ♜c8 4 ♜e5 ♜h6! and Black holds.

During the past century, chess composition has flourished to a full-fledged art form.

mate, and otherwise White carries out the threat 2 ♖h2+! ♜xh2 3 ♘g3 mate.⁴

Especially during the past century, chess composition has, unbeknownst to most Western chessplayers,⁵ flourished to a full-fledged art form, complete with a variety of genres, schools and styles, a canon of classic compositions, dozens of competitions each year, and many books and several periodicals devoted to the art. There are also avant-garde composers who, not satisfied with the classical forms, invent new (“fairy-chess”) stipulations or pieces. Most of these innovations are soon forgotten, but a few have entrenched themselves (typically because they let composers show otherwise impossible effects), and a handful have even been elevated from “fairy” to “orthodox” status. For instance problemists have long granted orthodoxy to helpmates, in which Black and White cooperate to get Black mated in a set number of moves, and recently FIDE’s Commission on Chess Composition officially raised selfmates, in which White has a set number of moves to force Black to administer checkmate against his will, to the same status.

Yet an important feature distinguishes our art from that of the sculptor or novelist: in addition to subjective standards such as originality and beauty it must also submit to the objective criterion of soundness. (This, as we shall see, is why computers affect our art much more directly.) A Rembrandt painting might be declared a classic one generation and pass out of critical fashion the next, but it will never be summarily discarded because it does not follow the laws of perspective; nor will a Brahms intermezzo be disqualified from the repertory because it flouts the counterpoint rule against parallel fifths. Yet we will and do deny a brilliancy prize to a beautiful combination played in a position easily won by mundane methods, let alone an incorrect combination that succeeded only because the opponent did not find the best defense. Even worse, then, for a composition created away from tournament stress to succumb to a “cook” (an alternative solution or a refutation): the composition, however venerable and beautiful, will be cast out in disgrace. We shall see several examples of this later in the article, so I illustrate the point here with a couple of recently discovered alternative wins in over-the-board combinations that had been copied many times from one anthology to the next without comment.

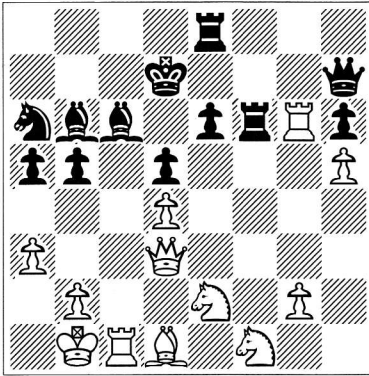


3 □ Belschan

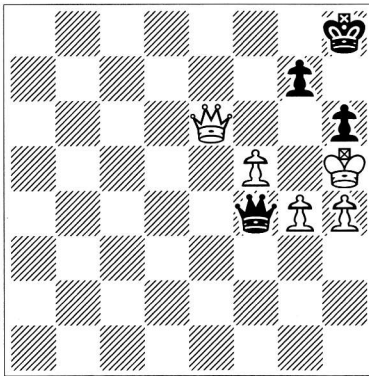
Mate in 3

4. Belschan’s mate in 3 (Diagram 3) is taken from Brown’s “Key Crackers” column in the October 1992 issue of *Chess Life*; it originally appeared in *Chess Review*, where it won 2nd Honorable Mention in 1938.

5. The art is probably more widely recognized as such in Eastern Europe; indeed the *Oxford Companion* reports that already in 1928 the Russian government bestowed on the endgame wizard Troitzky the title “Honored Art Worker.”



4 □ Tietz-Ramisch, Carlsbad 1898



5 □ Augustin-Bongrantz

From **Diagram 4** play concluded 1 ♖×c6! ♜×c6 2 ♜×b5+!! ♜×b5 3 ♜a4+! The point: 3 ... ♜×a4 4 ♜c3+ ♜b3 5 ♜d2 is mate. Black opted for the scenic route to his doom: 3 ... ♜c4 4 b3+ ♜d3 (now the rook on g6 is no longer pinned) 5 ♜b5+ ♜e4 6 ♜g4+ ♜f5 7 ♜e3 mate! Gorgeous—and entirely superfluous, since as Avni noted White had an elementary win with 1 ♜c2 when either the rook on f6 or the bishop on c6 must fall (1 ... ♜×f1 2 ♜×c6+ and ♜×b6).

Diagram 5 (Augustin-Bongrantz) might pass for an endgame composition: 1 f6! ♜h7! A subtle defense, disposing of the mating threats ♜g6 and ♜e8+ and preparing 2 f×g7 ♜f7+! 3 ♜×f7 stalemate! 2 f7 ♜e5+! This queen sac seems to turn the tables, as 3 ♜×e5, 3 g5 ♜×e6 4 f8/♜, and even the intended 3 ♜f5+ all meet g6 mate. Still White laughs last with 3 g5! ♜×e6 4 f8/♜+! and wins. Three queen sacrifices, a stalemate defense, and an underpromotion within four moves in a queen endgame! But I noticed some years ago that 2 ♜f5+ immediately forces a won pawn endgame (2 ... ♜×f5+ 3 g×f5 g×f6 4 ♜g4 ♜g7 5 ♜f4 ♜f7 6 ♜e4 ♜e7 7 ♜d5 ♜d7 8 h5), so none of the fireworks after 2 f7 was needed.⁶

Our discussion of the computer's influence on chess art begins with such demolitions found by or with the aid of computers.

The Computer as Destroyer

There are several different ways to use the computer to look for flaws in a chess composition or combination. First and most obviously, the computer can exhaustively search all continuations from a given position up to some given depth. Second, one can evaluate a position with sufficiently scant material by having the computer investigate all possible positions with exactly that (or less) material. Finally a computer program that plays a strong tournament game of chess can also deeply analyze an endgame study or combination, and occasionally find a resource that human commentators have overlooked.

6. Both Diagrams 4 and 5 can be found, for instance, in Chernev's *Combinations, the Heart of Chess* (Dover, 1967). Amatzia Avni announced his improvement on Tietz-Ramisch in an article "Shattering myths: The glorious combinations of yore" (in Hebrew) in the June 1992 issue of the Israeli magazine *Shabmat*. The combination, while superfluous, is at least sound: declining the Queen with 2 ... ♜b7(c7) lands Black in a hopeless position after 3 ♜×e8 ♜×f1 4 ♜×e6 (4 ... ♜×d1+ 5 ♜c2). In Diagram 5 it is not entirely trivial for White to exploit the extra pawn, as witness the plausible attempts 1 ♜e8+ ♜h7 2 ♜g6+ ♜g8! 3 f6 ♜e5+ 4 ♜f5 ♜e8+ and 1 ♜g6!? ♜×g4+ 2 ♜f7 ♜h7 3 h5! ♜d4! and Black draws.

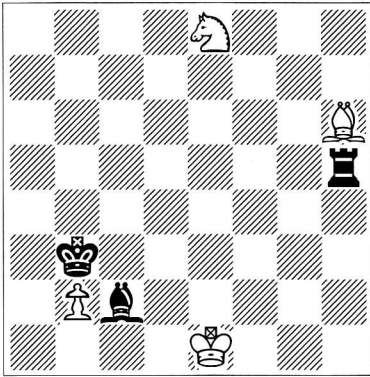
The first approach is the most straightforward application of the computer's prodigious data-crunching speed, which allows it to try literally all possibilities in a problem (be it a direct mate problem, a helpmate, or a more exotic species) and thus unequivocally rule on its soundness. Nowadays it is entirely feasible to solve a two- or three-move problem this way on an ordinary home microcomputer, and even many four-move problems can be done within an hour. Helpmates have proven especially vulnerable to this brute-force approach: in many helpmate anthologies compiled before the computer age one readily finds problems with one or more alternative routes to mate despite the composer's best efforts to assure a unique solution.

The second approach intensively exploits also the computer's great storage capacity, since all positions with the given set of pieces must be accessible simultaneously. This has been applied most spectacularly to endgame analysis, though with slight changes the algorithm can investigate problems too, and some progress has been made in that direction. Almost all endgames thus analyzed turned out to contain resources not seen by human experts, and in many cases the computer has overturned human expectations of a win or draw from a general starting position. Still, with a few notable exceptions such as queen and pawn against queen (♔♗♕♖♗♘ in computer endgame shorthand), the hundred or so endgames that have yielded to complete computer analyses occur only rarely if at all in master practice: tournament endgames usually feature much pawn play, but the algorithms work best with endgames that have at most one pawn.⁷ For instance none of Lewis Stiller's 6-man endgames with optimal lines stretching over 100 moves is known to have occurred in practical play. But many endgame studies, which tend to use few pawns for the sake of economy of material and feature a greater variety of material imbalances than is typical of practical play, have crucial side-variations that reach positions amenable to complete computer analysis. Before the computer age, composers of necessity relied on fallible human analysis and judgment to evaluate these positions; now their compositions must be scrutinized anew.

For instance, the soundness of Seletsky's study (Diagram 2) hinges on the evaluation of the endgame of queen versus bishop and knight arising after 3 ... ♔d6 4 ♗g3+ ♔d5 5 ♖c4+! ♗xc4 6 ♗b3+ ♔xc5 7 ♗a3+ (or 5 ... ♔xc5 6 ♗a3+). Fortunately here the computer vindicates the study by confirming human analysis that considered all such endgames won for the queen (except for a few known positional draws). Other

Before the computer age, composers relied on fallible human analysis and judgment. Now many of their works must be scrutinized anew.

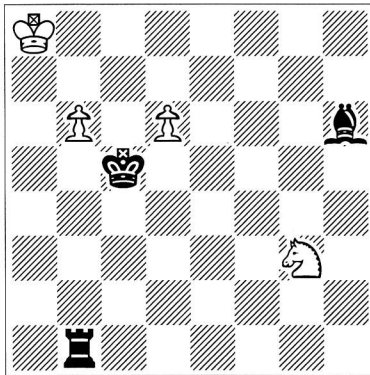
7. Exhaustive analysis of chess games becomes harder with each additional pawn because one must consider each of the four endgames resulting from the pawn's promotion. Thus a 6-man endgame including one or two pawns would generally be about four or 4² = 16 times harder than one with no pawns. The only such endgames that have been attempted on the computer have a pair of pawns blocking each other, so a piece or pawn must be captured before either pawn can promote. For instance Chéron's analysis of the endgame ♔♗♕(a2)♗♖♕(a3) with a dark-squared Black bishop has been checked by exhaustive computer analysis.



6 □ Shigis White to play and draw

studies, both classic and modern, have not fared so well. Two examples follow:

In the position of **Diagram 6** White is only down the exchange, but both his minor pieces are loose and one must fall after 1 ♖g7 ♜h7 2 ♜f6 ♜f7 3 ♜g5 ♜f5 because if White stops ♜e5+ with 4 ♜f6 then 4 ... ♜f4 (intending ♜e4+ or ♜g6) decides; but White has an ingenious defense in 4 ♜c1! ♜e5+ 5 ♜d2 ♜×e8 **stalemate!** In 1986 I found an improvement for Black: 5 ... ♜g6! soon wins a piece without allowing stalemate, e.g. 6 ♜f6 ♜e6 7 ♜g4 ♜h5 8 ♜e3 ♜c6! 9 ♜any ♜c2+. But recent exhaustive supercomputer analysis by Lewis Stiller of the endgame ♜♜♜♜♜♜ revealed the unexpected fact that the stronger side always wins from generic positions provided the bishops move on squares of opposite color! Thus the entire analysis of Diagram 6 is based on a false premise: After 3 ... ♜×b2 Black must win in due course even without any immediate threats.⁸



7 □ Gillberg White to play and draw

In Gillberg's study (**Diagram 7**) the main line runs 1 d7 ♜d1 2 b7 ♜f4 3 ♜e4+! ♜c6! 4 ♜d6!! and White is stalemated on either 4 ... ♜a1+ 5 ♜b8 ♜×d7 (else 6 ♜c8) or 4 ... ♜×d6 5 b8/♜! ♜×b8 6 d8/♜ ♜×d8. Several variations depend on the outcome of borderline rook versus knight endgames, e.g. 3 ... ♜b6 4 b8/♜+ ♜×b8 5 ♜×b8 ♜×d7 6 ♜c8 ♜c6 7 ♜f6 draws, but after Black's 3 ... ♜c6! White must avoid 4 b8/♜? ♜×b8 5 ♜×b8 ♜×d7 6 ♜c8 ♜e7 and the knight falls. This study was submitted to a composition contest in Israel judged by Dr. Lars Falk, who consulted a computer database at the University of Limburg to check all these ♜♜♜♜ possibilities

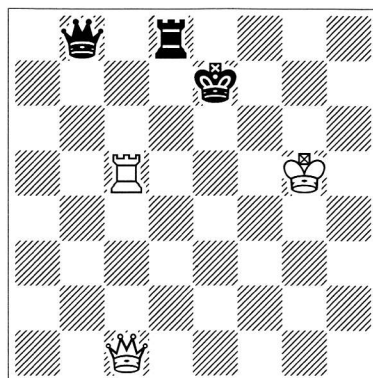
and found a decisive error: after 1 ... ♜g5! 2 ♜e4+ ♜×b6 3 ♜×g5 ♜c7 4 d8♜+ (4 ♜e6+ ♜×d7 is even worse) ♜×d8 White was supposed to draw, but Black wins in at most 26 moves with best play starting 5 ♜a7 ♜d7! 6 ♜b ♜d1 7 ♜b6 ♜d6 8 ♜h4 ♜b1+ etc. Thus Black can force a win after all, and the composition was disqualified.⁹

Finally, any study may be analyzed by a general-purpose chess-playing computer. Note that programming such a computer is, at least conceptually, much harder than the straightforward algorithms used for our other two approaches (exhaustive analysis of problems and complete

8. The Shigis study (Diagram 6, #868 of 1234) appeared in 1928 in *Zadachi & Etudy*. 1234 lists it as an "amended position," meaning it was already modified to fix a previous cook. My refutation (5 ... ♜g6 etc.) was published in Larry Evans' column in the May 1986 *Chess Life*.

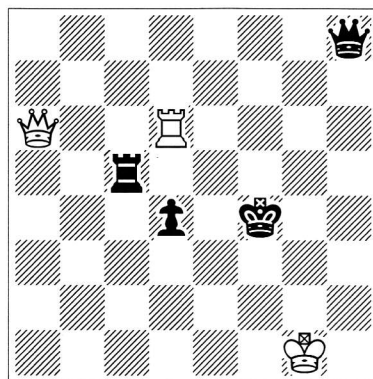
9. Gillberg's Diagram 7 is from the October 1987 *Shahmat*.

database generation), and furthermore little might seem to be gained by it: while no human has the speed or patience to try literally every possible sequence in a mate-in-four or list all positions with two Bishops against a Knight, we do already have very strong human chessplayers, so adding a handful of champion computers appears to offer no qualitative improvement to the analysis. But a strong computer does not play like an equally-rated human: weaker in strategic evaluation and planning, it compensates with much more accurate tactical analysis, and being less prone to “chess blindness” it may see through optical illusions that have snared strong humans. Also, once a strong chessplaying program has been created for tournament or research use it takes negligible further effort to have it analyze an endgame composition. Thus, especially in tactical positions, the computer has a good shot at uncovering possibilities that have escaped the composer and later analysts, and occasionally will refute the composer’s basic idea.



8 □ Rinck White to play and win

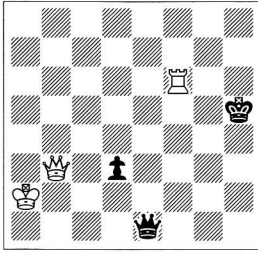
One of my own compositions, based on a well-known Rinck study, was demolished in this fashion. Rinck’s original, shown in **Diagram 8**, is far from easy despite its short solution because there are many blind alleys—of which 1 ♖c7+ ♜d7 2 ♚c5+ ♜d8 looks like a typical example, until one finds the wondrous 3 ♜h6!! winning by mutual zugzwang!



9 □ Elkie White to play and win

In **Diagram 9** I tried to elaborate Rinck’s idea by adding several quiet moves and a “thematic try” wherein White is foiled by the same zugzwang. The main line of my intended solution runs 1 ♜f6+ ♜g5 2 ♜g6+ ♜h5 3 ♚e6! ♜g5+ 4 ♜f2!! Not 4 ♜f1!? ♜h7! (forced) and the zugzwang is on the wrong foot, e.g. 5 ♜f2 d3 6 ♜f6? ♚a7+. 4 ... ♜h7! Forced since 4 ... ♚f8+ 5 ♜f6 ♚a3 (else 6 ♚h3 mate) allows 6 ♜h6 mate, but now 5 ♜f1!! produces the Rinck zugzwang, with the additional point that 5 ... d3 6 ♜f6! wins (the pawn blocks checks on d3 and b1). If instead 3 ... ♜c1+ 4 ♜f2! ♚f8+! Not 4 ... ♜c2+ 5 ♜e1 ♜c1+ 6 ♜d2 etc. 5 ♜f6 ♜c2+ 6 ♜f1 ♜c1+ 7 ♜e2 d3+! 8 ♜d2 wins the rook (8 ... ♜c2+? 9 ♜d1 and the mate threats decide), but Black can still try for perpetual check: 8 ... ♚b4+! 9 ♜xc1 ♚c3+ 10 ♜b1 ♚b4(c2)+ 11 ♜a2(a1) ♚a4+ 12 ♜b2 ♚b4+ 13 ♚b3 ♚d2+, since 14 ♜a3 ♚a5+ 15 ♚a4 ♚c3+ wins the rook. My analysis continued 14 ♜b1! ♚e1+ 15 ♜a2! (**Diagram 10**) and White finally escapes after 15 ... ♚d2+ 16 ♚b2 ♚a5+ 17 ♚a3 ♚d2+ 18 ♜b3 etc.

But when in January 1990 I wrote Peter Jansen at Carnegie Mellon University challenging the computer Deep Thought to solve my end-



10 ■ After 15 ♖a2

game, the machine found that Black can draw after all with 15 ... ♚e2+! 16 ♚b2 (not 16 ♚a1 ♚e1+ 17 ♚b1 ♚a5+, nor of course 16 ♚a3 ♚e7+) when Black is out of checks but has the resource 16 ... d2!! One hardly expects Black, fighting for a perpetual check, to pause for such a move; yet White cannot exploit the respite: there are no useful checks (the Black queen on e2 covers b5 and e5, and 17 ♜f5+ ♞g4 doesn't help), and meanwhile Black threatens d1/♚, so White has nothing better than 17 ♞d6 d1/♚ 18 ♞x d1 ♚x d1 drawing. Chess (and chess composition) is tough!¹⁰

The Computer as Assistant and Partner

The computer's contribution to the art has been constructive as well as destructive. Naturally the same computer programs that demolish old chess compositions can help today's composers create sound ones, in many cases freeing composer, solver and judge from worrying about refutations and alternative solutions. Likewise new theoretical discoveries about the endgame undermine old studies but also suggest possibilities for new ones. Finally, exhaustive databases often contain positions of surprisingly rich artistic content, which the composer can dig out by in effect collaborating with the computer, combining its immense capacity for storage and precise calculation with his own aesthetic sensibilities.

Edison's Rule dictates that for every moment a composer takes to hit on a new idea, 99 moments will be spent refining it into a finished setting. Many of these 99 are spent looking for and fixing cooks, often in vain as we have seen. But now the computer can free problemists of much of this drudgery by automatically screening prospective settings, allowing humans to not only spend their time more productively but also have the certainty that their creations, whatever their artistic merit, are sound. But artistic quality tends to rise too as deeper and more difficult themes can be realized without increasing the risk of error. Competition judges, too, can relegate the clerical task of verifying soundness to the computer and concentrate instead on gauging the artistic content and originality of the problems. Once the computer has certified a problem, human solvers can still turn off their own computer and enjoy the challenge and discovery of puzzling it out with the added assurance that the intended solution, and only that solution, works; a solver who prefers cook-hunting can still work on long-range problems beyond the

Exhaustive
databases often
contain positions
of surprisingly rich
artistic content.

10. Rinck's study (Diagram 8, #1115 of 1234) appeared 1926 in *Basler Nachrichten*. To verify the zugzwang after 3 ♚h6!! note the lines 3 ... ♚xc7 4 ♚f8 mate, 3 ... ♞xc7 (♚a8) 4 ♚f8+, 3 ... ♚b1(2,3) 4 ♞c8 mate, 3 ... ♞d1(2,3) 4 ♚e7 mate; were it White's turn he could not maintain the bind: 4 ♚g5(h5) ♞d5+! or 4 ♚g6? ♚b1+. My ill-fated study on the same theme was published in *Shahmat* (April 1990). Black's alternatives on moves 1 and 2 allow White to bombard the king with checks leading to mate or decisive material gain, e.g. 1 ... ♚e3 2 ♚e6+ ♚d2 3 ♚a2+ ♚d3 4 ♞f3+ ♚e4 5 ♚g2! ♚e5 6 ♚g5+ ♚d6 7 ♚g6+! ♚d5 8 ♞f5+ ♚c4 9 ♚a6+.

computer's reach and the more open-ended endgame compositions.

The computer cannot in general certify the soundness of an endgame composition, though it may corroborate it by not finding any cooks; but it can otherwise contribute to the creation of new studies. When Troitzky broke new ground in the endgame of two knights versus pawn he illustrated many of his discoveries by composing studies whose analysis depends critically on the fine points of his theory. New computer-generated theory can likewise inspire new endgame compositions. For instance, when Ken Thompson and (independently) Ofer Comay found the forced win of two bishops against a knight they not only cooked many old studies but also spawned a new generation of endgame compositions that rely on the correct evaluation and thus would not have been possible before the computer age. It will surely not be long before studies also exploit Stiller's work on ♖♘♙♚♛♞ and other recent results on 5- and 6-man endgames.

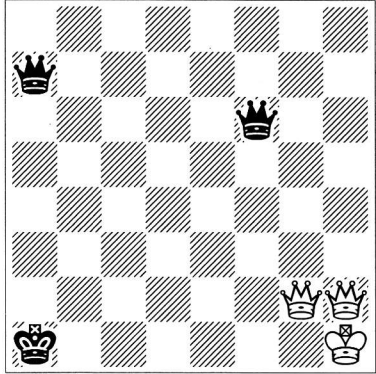
Some of these endgames cannot be evaluated in general by the material balance alone; we have seen in connection with Gillberg's study (Diagram 7) that this is already the case with rook against knight. When this happens, it means that there are some positions with that material requiring precise play to avoid crossing the line separating the drawn from the won or lost positions; occasionally the play will be so interesting that the position may be a suitable climax for an endgame composition (not only a supporting variation as above), or may even be regarded as a study in its own right—in which case, of course, the database can confirm its soundness. But such positions must be extremely rare among the literally billions of database entries. How to pick them out of that huge haystack?

New computer-generated theory can inspire new endgame compositions.

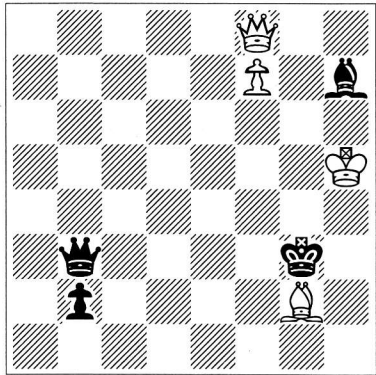
The same difficulty occurs when searching for problems with few pieces: One can easily enumerate, say, all helpmates with king and knight versus king and knight, or all mates-in-two with queen and two knights against a bare king, but there will be only a few gems hidden among the scads of sound yet pedestrian problems we will find. Indeed, it is as present too hard a challenge for artificial intelligence to teach the computer what makes a problem or study interesting to us. Instead we impose a few further conditions that the computer can readily test; for instance for the mate-in-two we might require that White's first move not be a check and either sacrifice a piece or give the Black king an additional flight square, and that at least one of the mates occur away from the edge of the board. This cuts the space of merely sound problems down to a manageable size while preserving most of the good ones, so that the human programmer/problemist can search the remaining list for the positions he likes best.¹¹

11. Nice ♖♙♚♛♞ mates-in-two and ♖♙♚♛♞ helpmates have in fact been found more than a decade ago by weeding exhaustive lists as outlined here. More recent work along these lines include my investigation of fairy help-stalemates with king against king and grasshopper, which revealed a considerable variety of effects given the extreme paucity of material.

In endgame databases one fruitful approach is to generate a list of mutual zugzwangs—those rare positions that are won only when it is the opponent's turn to move. Even in six-man endgames with all pieces distinct, with a total of over 100 billion positions, one usually finds at most a few hundred mutual zugzwangs, many of which give rise to the kind of distinctive play prized by composers and solvers of studies. For instance, consider the endgame with a king and two queens on each side (♔♚♚♚♚♚♚). Most chessplayers would expect that with such material any position must produce either a short flurry of checks ending in mate or a forced queen trade and a draw. But Stiller has found positions where against best defense it takes more than 40 checks to beat the king into submission, and even more incredibly positions of mutual zugzwang where neither side has a useful check but any move will allow one!



11. ♖/♜ Stiller Mutual zugzwang!



12. ♖ Elkies White to play and win

Diagram 11 gives one of these positions. Black's queens keep a long-distance eye on all the approaches to Black's king, but cannot maintain the guard with Black to move: if the queen on a7 budges then ♖hg1 or ♚a2 mates, while if the queen on f6 moves then ♖f1 or ♚b2; ♚b1 loses to ♚c2+, and Black has neither a reasonable check nor a miraculous stalemate escape. White to move can certainly force a draw by trading queens on g1, but cannot maintain the bind: most moves allow Black to start checking and at least force a pair of queens off the board, and ♚hh3(h5) is adequately met by ♚b2 since after ♚d1(f1)+ ♚b1, pinning the queen, White can make no further progress.¹²

To reach this position in an endgame composition (**Diagram 12**) I rotated it by 90 degrees so that each side can a promote to a queen during the introductory play, avoiding "obtrusive force" (promoted pieces in the initial position). The solution is 1 ♚g7+

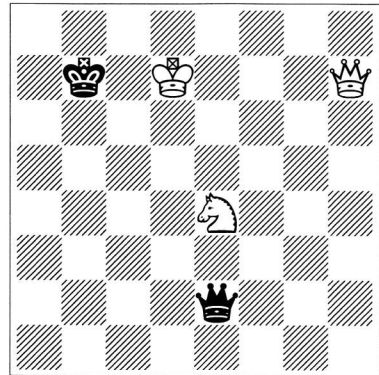
Not 1 ♚d6+ ♚xg2 2 f8/♚ (interpolating further checks does not help) when 2 ... ♚h3+ 3 ♚g5 ♚e3+ forces either perpetual check or a queen trade, drawing. 1 ... ♚h2 2 f8/♚ If 2 ♚e5+ ♚xg2 3 f8/♚ ♚h3+ 4 ♚g5 b1/♚ with ♚h1 and ♚e4 draws, but now 2 ... b1/♚ loses to 3 ♚f4+ ♚g1 4 ♚e4+ and mate. Thus, Black tries for perpetual check, and not with 2 ... ♚d1+? 3 ♚f3. 2 ... ♚b5+ 3 ♚h6 ♚b6+ 4 ♚c6! Not yet 4 ♚xh7 b1/♚+ 5 ♚h8 ♚b8! drawing. Now Black must take the bishop

12. The mutual zugzwang shown in Diagram 11 was discovered by Lewis Stiller in the summer of 1992.

because 4 ... ♖e3+ 5 ♗g5 ♗xg5+ 6 ♜xg5 b1/♗ 7 ♗f2+ mates. 4 ... ♗xc6+ 5 ♜xh7 b1/♗+ So Black does manage to give the first check in the four-queen endgame, but he is still in mortal danger. 6 ♜h8 ♜h1! Black not only cannot continue checking, but must play this modest move to avoid being himself checked to death! For instance, 6 ... ♗g2 7 ♗c7+! ♜g1 8 ♗fc5+! ♜h1 9 ♗h5+ and the Black king soon perishes from exposure. But against the quiet 6 ... ♜h1 White wins only with 7 ♗fg8!!, a second quiet move in this most tactical of endgames, bringing about the Diagram 11 zugzwang.¹³

For this study I used the computer only to find the key zugzwang, working out the analysis of that and related positions on my own. I was fortunate that the analysis was reasonably straightforward, since at present the data for a single 6-man endgame are too unmanageable to store and inspect later at one's leisure. But 5-man databases are small enough (only a billion or two positions ...) to explore interactively, and likely contain many beautiful studies, with solutions clear-cut enough for human minds to comprehend yet intricate enough to inspire wonder and admiration. I close this section with such a study discovered (this seems here more accurate than "composed") by John Nunn in the ♜♗♘♙♚♛ database. As with my Diagram 12, this one is based upon a position of mutual zugzwang, but here it is augmented with several quiet tempo moves, some of which invite check, and a variety of king- and queen-trapping motifs. Many dozens of studies have been composed with this material before, but Diagram 12, aesthetically at least comparable with the best of them, has the additional merit of guaranteed soundness. The analysis below is based on Nunn's commentary and information extracted from the database.

The setup in **Diagram 13** is clearly better for White than the typical drawish queen and knight versus queen position, but the win still requires incredible subtlety. For starters the natural discovered check throws away the win, since after 1 ♜d6+? ♜a8 Black can keep the knight from ever joining the attack. 1 ♘d6+! ♜a6! The first point is that 1 ... ♜b6 2 ♗f5! is a mutual zugzwang, White winning only because it's Black's turn; e.g. 2 ... ♗a6 3 ♗f2+ ♜a5 4 ♗d2(e1)+ ♜b6 5 ♗b4+ ♜a7 6 ♜c7 or 2 ... ♜a6 3 ♜d8 when 3 ... ♗b2 4 ♗d3+ ♜a7 5 ♘c8+, 3 ... ♜a7 4 ♜c7 ♗e7+ 5 ♜c6, and 3 ... ♜b6 4 ♗d5! ♜a6 5 ♗b7+ ♜a5 6 ♗b3! ♜a6 7 ♜c7! all spell Black's doom. If instead 1 ... ♜a7 White transposes to the last line with 2 ♜d8+ ♜b6 3



13 □ Nunn White to play and win

13. I composed Diagram 12 especially for this article. If 3 ♜g4 then not 3 ... ♗b4+ 4 ♗f4+ ♗xf4+ 5 ♗xf4 or 3 ... ♗f5+ 4 ♗xf5 ♘xf5+ 5 ♜f4(h4) winning (5 ... b1♗ 6 ♗g3+) but 3 ... ♘f5+! 4 ♜f4(h4) ♗c4+ and draws. If 5 ... ♗e4+ 6 ♜h8 wins since after 6 ... ♗h4+ 7 ♗h6 Black can no longer promote his pawn.

♔c7+ ♕a6 4 ♖b7+ etc. 2 ♗h3! But not 2 ♖f5 ♕b6! and having lost the move Black draws. Now besides 2 ... ♕b6 3 ♖f5! Black has only two defenses that do not lose to a sequence of forced checks: 2 ... ♕a7 and 2 ... ♕a5 when 3 ♗a3+ reaches the same position two moves earlier. Now 3 ♗a3+ ♖a6 4 ♗c5+ ♕a8 holds, so 3 ♖c8+ ♕a6 4 ♗a3+ ♕b5 5 ♖d6+ ♕b6 6 ♗b4+ ♕a6 and now the only way to win is 7 ♗c3!, surprisingly allowing ♗g4+ but threatening to close in decisively with 8 ♕c7 (8 ... ♗e7+ 9 ♕c6) when the white queen's position leaves Black no chance. Thus 7 ... ♕b6 and White must find 8 ♖d8!, when Black can no longer avert the loss of queen or king, e.g. 8 ... ♗f1 9 ♖c4+ ♕b5 10 ♗a5+! or 8 ... ♗h5 9 ♖c4+ ♕c6 10 ♖e5+! ♕b5 (10 ... ♕d5/d6 11 ♗c4/c6+ again skewers the queen) 11 ♗b3+! ♕c5 12 ♗c4+ ♕b6 13 ♗b4+ ♕a6 14 ♗a4+ and the queen finally falls after 14 ... ♕b6 15 ♖d7+ or 15 ♖c4+.¹⁴

The Stained-Glass Ball

The speed and storage capacity of computers continue to grow rapidly, and will probably not reach their ultimate limits for decades. In the process they will surely bring new and often surprising developments to chess art. While specific details cannot be predicted with any assurance, general trends can be discerned or foreseen. In this closing section I consider the computer's future effect in three spheres: the exhaustive analysis of increasingly complex endgames, the compilation of anthologies of chess studies and problems, and the eventual understanding and creation of chess art by the computer.

The large and growing list of exhaustively analyzed endgames poses an increasingly acute challenge to devotees of endgame composition: many studies created by humans for the enjoyment of humans now stand or fall on reams of analysis much too opaque for humans to comprehend. It is no wonder that endgames such as ♖♔♗♕♖♗♘, now known to take typically over 100 moves and in the worst case over 200 moves to win against best defense, could not be accurately evaluated by human experts: Who can with any degree of confidence analyze a sequence of 223 moves, itself containing innumerable side variations? Even worse, how can we judge whether an instance of ♖♔♗♕♖♗♘ is won or drawn when the difference can depend on a 244-move winning procedure or a long delicate defense of a barely drawn position? Yet study composers working on a difficult theme often have no choice but to allow some side variations involving such unfathomable endgames. We can hardly expect every composer and solver to have access to an idle supercomputer with nothing to do but evaluate a 6-man chess position, or to wait for the 21st-

14. Nunn published Diagram 13 in *Schakend Nederland* 11/1991. Jan van Reek used it in a short note on "Computers and the Endgame Study" in *EG* 104 (2/92), which also brings up some of the issues I discuss in the concluding section of this article. Nunn has used the databases to deeply probe several other 5-man endgames, notably ♖♔♗♕♖♗♘ (see his book *Secrets of Rook Endings*).

New endgame databases are being generated much faster than they are understood.

century machine that will resolve an 8-man endgame. Even if and when that becomes possible we have, if we're lucky, a sound but fundamentally incomprehensible study.

It may be that the same computers that produce these vast databases will also help us understand them. For instance the English endgame guru A. J. Roycroft has recently deduced from the ♔♙♙♙♙ analysis a step-by-step guide through the maximum 66-move winning process for human chessplayers, and a few other such endgames may soon yield their secrets. Still, new databases are being generated much faster than they are understood, and it will be a long time if ever before we can look (with human eyes only) at a ♔♖♙♙♙♙ position and tell whether it is drawn or not with best play. The endgame community may soon find itself forced to adopt a radical proposal due to Roycroft: When a study depends on the outcome of an unclear variation that can only be determined by computer analysis, the composer should be allowed to assume any desired outcome, provided it is reasonable and consistent among different variations of the same endgame, even if future or even present exhaustive databases contradict this assumption. This very controversial proposal would sacrifice the standard of absolute soundness to preserve study composition as an art made by and for humans. Such an assumption would still be a (nonfatal) aesthetic infraction, detracting from the study's artistic effect much like a very long and extraneous side-variation. Note that compositions such as Nunn's Diagram 13, even though found with the aid of the computer, need not be penalized if humans can follow and appreciate all the relevant analysis *a fortiori*.

Besides soundness and aesthetic merit, a chess composition is also judged on originality. For instance, a study or problem showing all four promotions becomes less impressive if one knows an earlier composition that achieved the same task and with a cleaner setting—this even if the newer composition was created independently, without knowledge of the earlier effort. But there is at present no foolproof way to detect such anticipations: we can only rely on the individual and collective memory of composers and solvers, and the handful of thematic indexes compiled before the computer age at great personal effort and treasured as invaluable, albeit incomplete, resources by judges of composition contests. The difficulty is not transferring the diagrams and solutions to digital format, which is a straightforward if tedious project; indeed, a collection of over 20,000 endgame studies, said to represent over half the published literature, is already in production. But we are still a long way from being able to locate all known endgames showing two Novotny interferences or a specific stalemate pattern. There is as yet no satisfactory design for a computerized anthology that would allow for such thematic search, but such an anthology would be a great boon, not only putting the judgement of originality on a much firmer footing but also making possible a complete survey of the state of the art and its frontiers.

While computers can easily be programmed to solve many chess problems, they have yet to be programmed to recognize the features we value in them.

In such an anthology the themes associated with each composition would probably have to be recognized and entered by hand, together with the diagram, stipulation and solution: While computers can easily solve many chess problems, they have yet to be programmed to recognize the features we value in them. Indeed, with some trivial exceptions like counting material or flight-squares, teaching a computer to *understand*, as opposed to just solve, a chess problem or study is a refractory problem of artificial intelligence, probably on a par with the appreciation of any other art form. Perhaps the only way we will surmount this hurdle is by working on what must be the ultimate challenge in the application of the computer to chess art: programming a full-fledged composer. ♣

The Mystery of Bad Bishops

Boris Gulko

It was very difficult to understand chess before Wilhelm Steinitz came along. Then Steinitz gave us rules to follow. But is it really that much easier to understand chess after Steinitz?

Who could use all of Steinitz's rules in practice? Perhaps only one man—Steinitz himself. To prove that the king is a fighting piece, he sometimes began the game 1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 ♖c3 ♔h4+ 4 ♚e2. He liked to keep all his pieces on the back rank because there they were best placed for defense. He preferred to keep his pawns on their original squares; according to his theory this conferred an advantage in the end-game, where the option of moving them either one or two squares increased the chances of bringing about zugzwang. But these were very idealistic rules, and only a genius like Steinitz could consistently create positions where they worked.

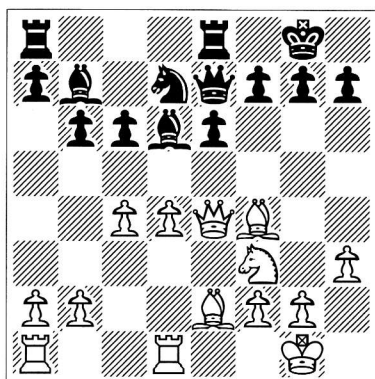
Still, some of Steinitz's rules survive and are commonly followed today. One of them is to keep your pawns on squares opposite in color to those of your bishop; a bishop that travels on the same color squares as your pawn structure is thus called a "bad" bishop. Let's begin to explore the mystery of bad bishops with one of the best illustrations from recent practice of this simple, almost obvious rule.

KARPOV-LAUTIER, BIEL 1992

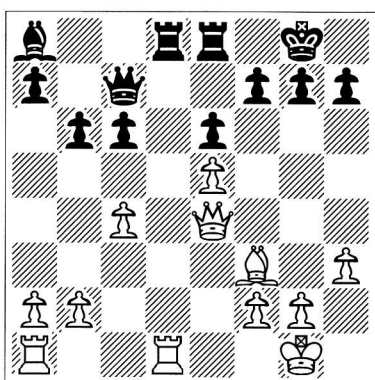
SLAV DEFENSE D45

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘c3 ♗f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♗f3 ♗bd7 6 ♚c2 ♗d6 7 ♗e2 0-0 8 0-0 ♞e8 9 ♞d1 ♚e7 10 h3 b6 11 e4 ♗xe4 12 ♗xe4 dxe4 13 ♚xe4 ♗b7 14 ♗f4 (D 1)

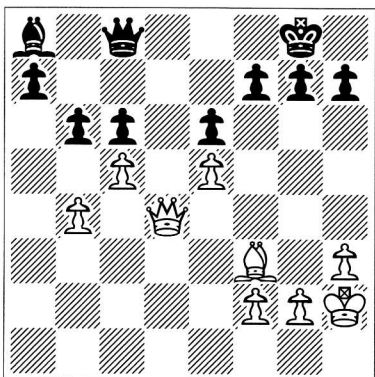
Boris Gulko is a former champion of the Soviet Union who emigrated to the United States in 1986. From 1987–1989 he was Grandmaster in Residence at Harvard University. He now lives in New Jersey.



1 ■ Karpov-Lautier, after 14 ... f4



2 □ Karpov-Lautier, after 18 ... a8



3 ■ Karpov-Lautier, after 27 c5

With his last move, White begins a logical plan: He wants to exchange as many pieces as possible, except for the light-squared bishops. If White can do this, and also prevent Black from playing c5, Black will be left with a bad bishop on b7.

14 ... ♖ad8 15 ♗d6 ♜xd6 16 ♘e5! ♗xe5

Black cannot prepare c5 with 16 ... ♗a8 because of 17 ♗xd7 ♖xd7 18 c5! and the bishop is shut in anyhow.

17 dxe5 ♜c7 18 ♗f3 ♗a8 (D 2) 19 ♖xd8!

By exchanging rooks White yields the initiative to Black and even loses a pawn, but he keeps the bishop on a8 restricted by the pawn on c6. This illustrates another rule: If your opponent's position contains a weakness, exchanging pieces that are not related to that weakness will increase your advantage.

19 ... ♖xd8 20 ♖d1 ♖xd1 21 ♗xd1 ♜d8 22 ♗f3 ♜d2 23 b3 ♜xa2 24 b4! ♜a1+ 25 ♖h2 ♜a6 26 ♜d4!

The natural 26 b5 ♜c8 27 bxc6 g6 would not have promised much, since both of White's pieces would be forced to protect the pawn on c6, while the black a-pawn would be free to advance.

26 ... ♜c8 27 c5! (D 3)

White realizes his plan—the bishop on a8 is now desperately bad. It is remarkable that even with an extra pawn, Black cannot survive.

27 ... bxc5 28 ♜xc5 a6

The most stubborn defense was 28 ... ♜b8, after which the bishop would have some chance of escaping prison on a8 via b7 and a6.

29 ♜e7! g6 30 h4 h5 31 ♜g3 ♜b7 32 ♜xb7 ♗xb7 33 ♜f4 ♜f8 34 ♜g5 ♜e7 35 ♗e4 (D 4)

A classic illustration of the advantage of a good bishop versus a bad bishop. Black is defenseless.

35 ... ♗a8 36 f3 ♗b7 37 g4 ♗a8 38 gxh5 gxh5 39 f4 ♗b7 40 ♗f3 ♗a8 41 ♜xh5 1-0

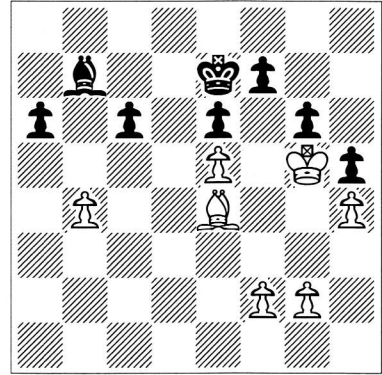
Karpov, as he often has, made victory seem easy once he had a positional advantage. But chess would be too simple a game if any of these "rules" worked very often, or even more than half of the time. Let's consider the typical French Defense pawn structure, with white pawns on c3, d4, and e5 against black pawns on c5, c5, and e6.

It is commonly thought that Black's light-squared bishop is bad,

and his dark-squared bishop is good. Obviously, this is because Black's center pawns on e6 and d5 restrict his light-squared bishop, while at the same time staying out of the way of the dark-squared bishop. Thus, in the French Defense, Black often tries to exchange his light-squared bishop and retain his dark-squared bishop.

But if we examine White's basic pawn structure, we reach the opposite conclusion: The light squares are weak, whereas the dark squares are guarded by pawns. So if it can infiltrate behind enemy lines, Black's light-squared bishop can become more active than his dark-squared bishop!

The next, rather unusual game, played shortly after I arrived in the United States, illustrates this possibility.



4 ■ Karpov–Lautier, after 35 ♖e4

CHESNEY–GULKO, SOMERSET (U.S. OPEN) 1986
FRENCH DEFENSE C16

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 ♗b4 4 e5 b6 5 ♜g4 ♘f8 6 a4 ♗c6 7 ♗h3 ♜d7 8 ♗b5 a6 9 ♗xc6 ♜xc6

Now the light squares in White's camp will be weak, but White's plan is to avoid the f1-a6 diagonal with his pieces, and thus keep Black's light-squared bishop "out of work." (This idea will recur, with considerably more success, in one of our later examples, Petrosian–Gufeld.)

10 0-0 a5 11 ♗f4 ♗a6 12 ♞e1 0-0-0 13 ♗e3 ♗h6 14 ♜h5 g6?

An error. I could have obtained an excellent position with 14 ... ♗b4 15 ♗d3 ♗xc3 16 ♗xc3 ♗f5, but I overlooked White's next move.

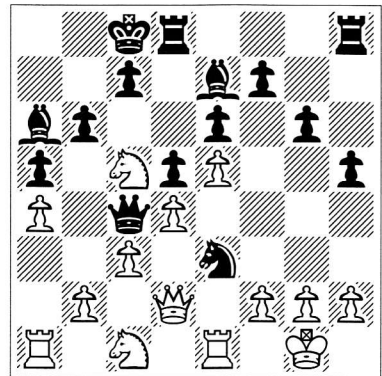
15 ♜d1! ♗f5

A position typical of our theme could have arisen after 15 ... ♗b4? 16 ♗xe6 fxe6 17 ♗xh6 ♗xc3 18 bxc3 ♜xc3 19 ♞e3 ♜c6 20 ♞f3 with advantage for White, as Black's dark squares are weak and White's "bad" bishop on h6 is very strong.

16 ♗ce2! h5 17 c3 g5 18 ♗d3 ♜c4 19 ♗ec1 ♗e7 20 ♜d2 ♗xe3 21 ♗c5! (D 5)

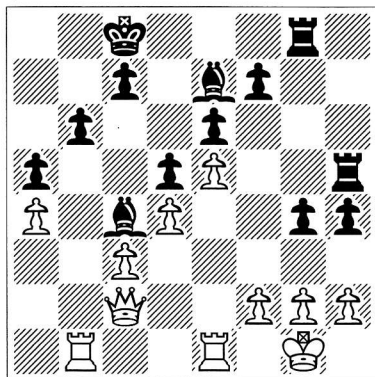
A beautiful combination—White is ready to sacrifice a rook and two pieces for the queen. The main variation runs 21 ... bxc5 22 b3 ♜f1+ 23 ♞xf1 ♗xf1 24 ♜c2 cxd4 25 ♗d3! dxc3 26 ♜xc3 ♗b4 27 ♗xb4 axb4 28 ♜c6! ♗b7 29 ♜b5 ♗d2 30 a5! with a dangerous attack, but after 30 ... ♗xb3 31 ♞b1 ♗d2! 32 ♞xb4 ♗c4 a strange position arises in which Black should be able to defend. If instead 31 a6 (31 ♞a2!? is also interesting) then:

a) 31 ... ♗a8 32 ♞d1 (32 ♞b1 ♗d2 33 ♞xb4 ♗c4) c5 is also strange, but Black is probably better.



5 ■ Chesney–Gulko, after 21 ♗c5

b) 31 ... ♖xa1 32 ♗xb7+ (32 a×b7+ ♖b8 33 ♗a6 c5) ♖d7 33 ♗b5+ ♖e7 34 ♗b4+ is at least equal. But White could improve earlier with 25 c×d4! ♗b4 (forced, as White threatened ♖d3) 26 ♖a2 (26 ♗c6 ♗b7 27 ♗b5 ♖d2) ♖b7 27 ♖×b4 a×b4 28 ♗c5 with a clear advantage—White will hit Black's weak pawns and king, and the two rooks are terribly passive, although Black might be able to organize a defense with 28 ... ♖b8 and ... ♖h8.



6 □ Chesney–Gulko, after 29 ... ♗c4

So rather than enter these complications, Black turns down the rook and prefers to get for the queen just two bishops, one “bad” and one “good.”

21 ... ♗×c5 22 b3 ♗e7 23 b×c4 ♖×c4 24 ♗c2 g4! 25 ♖d3 ♖dg8 26 ♖b2 ♖×b2 27 ♗×b2 h4 28 ♗c2 ♖h5 29 ♖ab1 ♗c4! (D 6)

White is running out of useful ideas. Now we can compare the power of Black's two bishops. The dark-squared one is restricted by White's pawns, and will play a minimal role in the coming attack. By contrast, the light-squared bishop is crucial in exploiting White's weak light squares, and is in fact worth much more than a rook.

30 ♖e3 ♗g5 31 ♖d3 ♗h6

31 ... ♗×d3 32 ♗×d3 would be a bad bargain, gaining an exchange but leaving White with the advantage.

32 ♖f1 ♖f5 33 g3

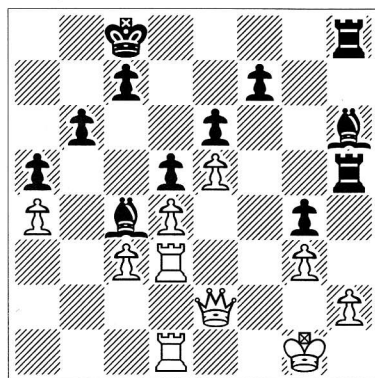
It is easier to criticize this move than to find a better one. 33 h3 is bad because of 33 ... ♖fg5, after 33 f3 ♖b7 34 f×g4? ♗e3+ White is mated, and the quiet 33 ♖dd1 h3 34 g3 ♖f3 followed by ♖g8-g5-f5 would give Black full control of the entire board.

33 ... ♖h8! 34 ♖fd1 ♖fh5 35 ♗e2 h×g3 36 f×g3 (D 7) ♗e3+

A modest role for a “good” bishop—deflecting White's queen from e2—but in the resulting position Black's “bad bishop” on c4 is superior to White's queen. (Black's rooks of course play their parts as well!)

37 ♗×e3

After 37 ♖×e3 ♗×e2 38 ♖×e2 ♖f5 White, down a pawn with several more weak, is lost; stubborn defense with 37 ♖h1 would land White in an equally hopeless endgame after 37 ... ♖xh2+ 38 ♗×h2 ♖×h2+ 39 ♖×h2 ♗g5, when after a) 40 ♖3d2 ♗×d2 41 ♖×d2 ♗b3 42 ♖f2 ♗×a4 43 ♖×f7 ♗c2! or b) 40 ♖g2 b5! (40 ... ♗b3 41 ♖a1!, but not 41 ♖f1? ♗×a4 42 ♖×f7 ♗c2) 41 a×b5 a4 42 ♖f2 (42 ♖3d2 ♗b3! wins; 42 b6? a3! 43 ♖3d2 [43 ♖f2 ♗×d3 44 ♖×d3 ♗c1 wins] ♗b3! wins) ♗×d3! 43 ♖×d3 ♗c1! in each case Black wins on the queenside.



7 □ Chesney–Gulko, after 36 f×g3

37 ... ♖xh2 38 ♜g5

There are no other moves: If 38 ♜f4 ♖h1+ 39 ♜f2 ♖8h2+ 40 ♜e3 ♖xd1 41 ♖xd1 ♖e2 mate, or 38 ♖f1 ♖8h5 and White has no defense against 39 ... ♖h1+ 40 ♜f2 ♖f5+. But after the last chance, 38 ♜d2 ♖xd2 (38 ... ♖h1+? 39 ♜f2 ♖8h2+ 40 ♜e3 ♖xd2 41 ♖3xd2 needlessly activates White's king) 39 ♖3xd2 Black, who might try 38 ... b5!?, is better, but at least White is fighting.

38 ... ♗xd3 39 ♖xd3

If 39 ♖d2 ♖h1+ 40 ♜f2 ♖f1+ 41 ♜g2 ♖f5 42 ♜xg4 ♗e4+ 43 ♜g1 ♖h1 mate.

39 ... ♖h1+ 40 ♜f2 ♖8h2+ 41 ♜e3 ♖e1+ 1-0

White will be mated on his weak light squares.

The King's Indian Defense has a characteristic pawn structure analogous to that of the French. White's pawns on e4 and d5 are opposed by Black's on e5 and d6, so according to classical theory Black's bishop on g7 is bad. But is this always true? Let's look at how the world champion handled that bishop.

KAMSKY-KASPAROV, MANILA (OLYMPIAD) 1992

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE E88

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♗c3 ♗g7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 ♗e3 e5 7 d5 c6 8 ♜d2 cxd5 9 cxd5 a6 10 ♗d3 ♗h5 11 g4

This is a new and interesting idea, probably prepared especially for this game. White prevents Black's plan of obtaining counterplay with the normal f5 push, since after multiple exchanges on f5 White would have a significant advantage due to his strong knight outpost on e4 and the weakness of Black's dark-squared bishop and light squares.

11 ... ♗f4 12 ♗c2

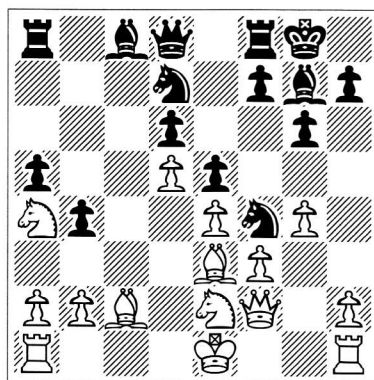
The second part of White's plan is to force Black to exchange his knight on f4 for his own once it reaches e2. But Black has a plan of his own: to force White to take the knight, allowing exf4 and the liberation of the bishop on g7.

12 ... b5 13 ♜f2

I don't like this move, since it takes the queen from a good square to a worse one. White is preparing ♗g1-e2, which was impossible right away because of ♗g2+, but it was possible to reach the same goal with 13 0-0-0, a move that will have to be played eventually.

13 ... ♗d7 14 ♗ge2 b4 15 ♗a4 a5 (D 8) 16 ♗xf4

Strategic triumph for Black! White could not bear the pressure from the knight on f4 any longer. Attempting to simplify with 16 ♗b6 was not suffi-



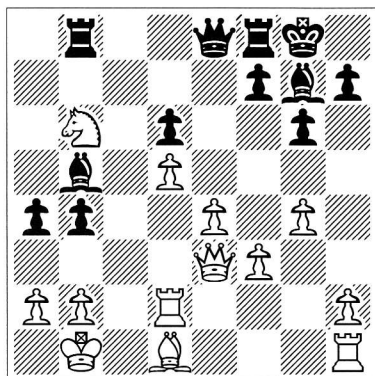
8 □ Kamsky-Kasparov, after 15 ... a5

cient, as after 16 ... ♖h3 17 ♔g3 ♗x♖b6 18 ♔xh3 ♗c4 Black would have a strong initiative. And if 16 h4, Black could still force the exchange on f4 with 16 ... ♗a6! It is interesting to see in this variation a “good” bishop on c8 (which is generally not a very active piece in the King’s Indian) help its “bad” compatriot improve its position.

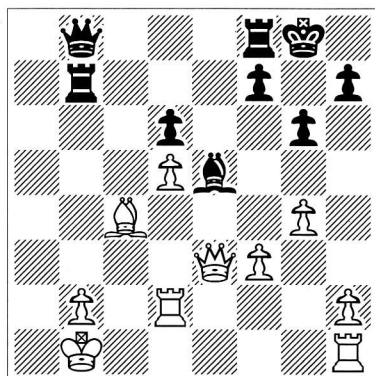
16 ... exf4 17 ♗xf4 ♗e5 18 0-0-0

The more careful method of castling, 18 0-0, would allow 18 ... ♗a6 19 ♖fc1 ♔f6 20 ♔g3 g5! 21 ♗xe5 ♔xe5 and Black dominates on the dark squares.

18 ... ♗c4 19 ♗e3 ♗xe3 20 ♔xe3 ♖b8!



9 ♖ Kamsky-Kasparov, after 25 ... ♖b7



10 ♖ Kamsky-Kasparov, after 30 ... ♗xe5

The knight on a4 has become, after the dark squares, a second headache for White.

21 ♗b3 ♗d7 22 ♔b1 ♔e8 23 ♗b6 ♗b5 24 ♗d2 a4 25 ♗d1 (D 9) ♖b7!

A very beautiful solution! Black could win the trapped, lonely guy on b6 with 25 ... ♗f6 (threatening ♗d8), when after 26 ♖c2 b3 27 axb3 axb3 28 ♖c6 ♔e5! (the struggle would continue after 28 ... ♗xc6 29 dxc6 ♔xc6 30 ♗d5) 29 ♖c3 ♖xb6 30 ♔xb6 ♗d3+ mate is inevitable, but he prefers to exchange the knight on b6 for the “good” but useless bishop on b5 and then use all his remaining pieces, especially the monster on g7, for the decisive attack. And it provides us with a better illustration of our theme!

26 e5 b3 27 axb3 axb3 28 ♗xb3 ♔b8 29 ♗c4 ♗xc4 30 ♗xc4 ♗xe5 (D 10)

Black preferred this position to the one with an extra piece because here his advantage is more than a piece: It is possession of all the dark squares on the board. Here we can safely repeat an old rule, that the presence of opposite-color bishops is an advantage for the attacking side. This is a clear example—the bishop at d3 cannot protect the squares attacked by the bishop at e5. But we can also introduce a new rule: A “bad” bishop is much better in attack than in defense. When defending, such a bishop can protect only the same squares as its own pawns, leaving the other color squares weak. But in an attack, the bad bishop controls the squares that are weakest in the

enemy’s camp. Again, compare the bishops at d3 and e5 in this position. The pawns on d5 and d6 make these bishops “bad” in the formal sense, but if they were moved one rank down, to d5 and d4, Black’s bishop would become “good” but useless.

31 ♔e2 ♔a7 32 ♖c1 ♖a8 33 b3 ♗f4 34 ♔c2 ♖e7 35 ♔d3 ♔c5 36 ♖b1 ♖e3 37 ♔d4 ♖a2 38 ♔d1

38 ♖b2 ♖×d4 39 ♖×d4 ♖×b2+ 40 ♜×b2 ♙e5 with a decisive advantage.

38 ... ♖×f3

The end of this game is quite cruel. Resignation about five moves ago would have been the only merciful escape for White.

39 ♖×f4 ♖×f4 40 ♖×a2 ♖g1+ 41 ♜c2 ♖×h2+ 0-1

In this game, Kamsky had to open the diagonal for the bad black bishop, and the beginning of White's disaster was the push 11 g4! But what are the prospects of the g7 bishop if White makes a better effort to keep it bottled up? "Miserable," answers the following classic game.

PETROSIAN-GUFELD, LENINGRAD (USSR CHAMPIONSHIP) 1960

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE E92

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♙g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♙e2 e5 7 d5 ♘h5

Not a very good idea. Black will be forced to retreat the knight before he can get in the f5 break.

8 g3! ♘a6

Bad is 8 ... f5? 9 e×f5 g×f5 10 ♘×e5.

9 ♘d2 ♘f6 10 h4! c6 11 ♘b3 ♘c7 12 ♙g5 c×d5

I think this move, though it clarifies the central situation, is a crucial mistake. Now it becomes easy for White to undertake operations on the queenside.

13 c×d5 h6 (D 11) 14 ♙×f6! ♖×f6 15 ♙g4!

White intends to bring about a position with no active possibilities for the bishop on g7, and if he succeeds, he will effectively have an extra piece for his attack on the queenside. Thus, he gets rid of his bad light-squared bishop.

15 ... h5 16 ♙×c8 ♖a×c8 17 ♖e2 ♙h6

The bishop has found an open diagonal, but it has no targets and cannot participate in any active operations.

18 ♘a5 ♖b8 19 0-0 ♖fc8

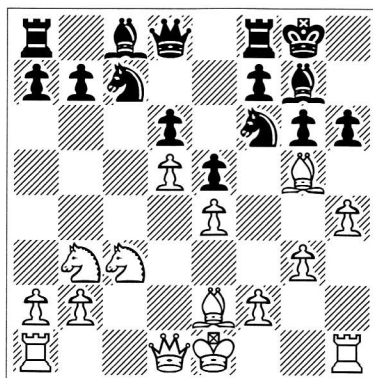
A senseless move. Black is not following a reasonable plan. It was essential to create a struggle with the immediate 19 ... ♖e7, followed by ♘e8-f6-g4 (or ♘e8-g7) and f5.

20 a4 ♖d8 21 ♘c4 ♘e8 22 ♖a2 ♖c7 23 b3

The last White pieces are leaving the dark squares.

23 ... ♖d7 24 ♖g2 ♖c5 25 ♖b1 ♖5c8 26 ♖c2 ♘c7 27 ♖1b2 ♖f8

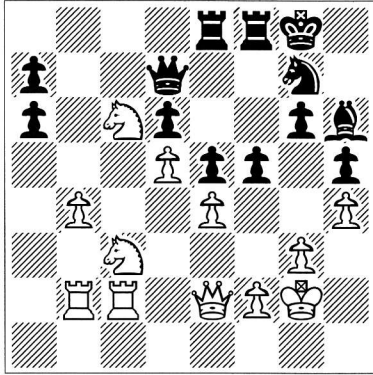
At last Black has found a plan, but it is too late. White's army has already prepared for the decisive attack on the queenside and made the necessary prophylactic moves to protect the kingside.



11 □ Petrosian-Gufeld, after 13 ... h6

28 b4 ♖e8 29 a5 ♖g7 30 a6 bxa6 31 ♖a5 f5 32 ♖c6 ♜be8 (D 12) 33 ♖b1!

This stops all black counterplay. Now, if 33 ... f4 34 ♜b3 stops the black pawn, whereas if Black tries fxe4 White's knight at b1 will gain access to the potentially important e4 square. The game is heading toward a sad ending for Black on the queenside.



12 □ Petrosian–Gufeld, after 32 ... ♜b3

33 ... ♜h7 34 ♜b3 fxe4 35 ♜xe4 ♜f5 36 ♜a3 ♜b7 37 ♖c3 ♜ef8 38 ♜c4 ♜f3 39 ♜xa6 ♖e3 40 ♖e4

As did Kasparov against Kamsky, Petrosian improves his position instead of capturing unnecessary pieces.

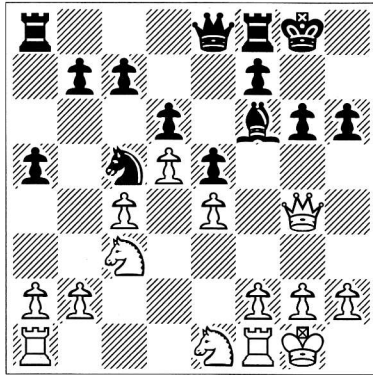
40 ... ♖h6 41 ♜xa7 1-0

Petrosian played this game very clearly and logically. Did he, in effect, refute the King's Indian? It seemed so easy for White to exchange the unnecessary pieces while keeping the inactive g7-bishop on the board, after which his implicit extra piece brought automatic victory. But let's look at the next game before drawing any hasty conclusions.

**I. IVANOV–BENJAMIN, JACKSONVILLE (U.S. CHAMPIONSHIP) 1990
KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE E92**

1 c4 g6 2 e4 ♖g7 3 d4 d6 4 ♖c3 ♖f6 5 ♖e2 0-0 6 ♖f3 e5 7 d5 a5 8 0-0 ♖a6 9 ♖g5 h6 10 ♖h4 ♜e8 11 ♖e1 ♖c5 12 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 13 ♖g4

Ivanov is copying Petrosian's plan. With hindsight of 30 more years of opening knowledge, Benjamin has reacted better than Gufeld did. Still, what will he do about the fundamental problem of his bad bishop?



13 ■ Ivanov–Benjamin, after 14 ♖xg4

13 ... ♖xg4 14 ♜xg4 (D 13) ♖d8!

A very deep idea! Black transfers his bishop to the queenside, where from a5 or b6 it will emphasize the weakness of the dark squares in White's position.

15 ♜e2 c6 16 ♜d1 ♖c7 17 h4?!

White continues to imitate Petrosian's scheme, but 17 ♖d3 or 17 b3 would have been more appropriate, with an unclear position in either case.

17 ... ♜e7 18 g3 ♜g7 19 ♖f3 a4! 20 h5 ♖a5 21 ♜c1 ♜d7 22 ♜fd1 ♜ae8 23 ♜g2 f5!

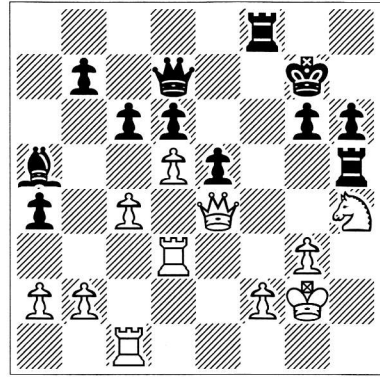
This push gives the advantage to Black. All of his pieces are actively placed, with the "bad" bishop on a5 playing a key role in the ensemble.

24 exf5

White sacrifices a pawn to gain control of the light squares. The alternative 24 ♖h4 ♗xc3 25 bxc3 fx4 26 hxg6 ♖f6 would give Black a strong attack on the f-file.

24 ... ♖xf5 25 ♗e4 ♗xe4 26 ♖xe4 ♖ef8 27 ♖d3 ♖xh5 28 ♗h4 (D 14) ♖xh4!

This shot ends White's chances for counterplay on the light squares. Now 29 ♖xh4 ♖f5 30 ♖dd1 (30 ♖cd1 e4!) ♗d8 31 ♖h3 ♖xf2+ 32 ♖h1 ♖f3+ 33 ♖g2 ♖h5+ 34 ♖h2 ♖g4 35 dxc6 ♖f5 36 cxb7 ♖f3+ 37 ♖g2 ♖h5+ 38 ♖g1 ♗b6+ results in mate, with the help of the "bad" bishop.



14 ■ Ivanov-Benjamin, after 28 ♗h4

29 g×h4 ♖f4 30 ♖e2 ♖f5 31 c5

A desperate attempt to close the a7-g1 diagonal to the black bishop. In case of 31 ♖g3 ♗b6 32 ♖f1 cxd5 33 cxd5 e4 Black wins easily because his bishop is much stronger than either of White's rooks, and if 31 dxc6 bxc6 32 ♖xd6 ♖g4+ 33 ♖f1 ♖xh4 with a decisive advantage (34 ♖c2 ♖g4).

31 ... cxd5 32 cxd6 ♗b6 33 ♖f1 e4 34 ♖g3 d4 35 ♖d2 e3 36 ♖e1 ♖d5+ 37 ♖h3 ♖e6+

Of course, 37 ... ♖xh4+ 38 ♖xh4 ♖h5 mate was also very strong.
38 ♖g2 ♖d5+ 39 f3 ♖xd6 0-1

So what can we conclude from these games? There appears to be only one common thread: Perhaps the solution to the mystery of bad bishops is that bishops keep the qualities of their owners, so stronger players have better bishops than weaker players. But even this cannot always be true.

In 1989 I gave a lecture at the Harvard Chess Club, where I discussed the game I won against Bent Larsen at Hastings 1988-89 (see *Informant* 47, game 609). In that game my bad bishop played an important role in my attack. One listener told me afterwards, "Before your lecture I thought I understood one element of chess strategy—good and bad bishops. Now I realize that I don't understand anything." I was proud to have raised at least one player's understanding of chess strategy to a higher level. Have I done the same for you? ♣

Winning the U.S. Championship

Reflections and Annotations

Patrick Wolff

When I arrived in Durango, Colorado for the U.S. Championship in December 1992, I used my first few hours alone to write a list of things I would do to earn more money from chess once I got back home. The first 11 months of 1992 had not been successful as far as earning money from tournament prizes was concerned. I had been reasonably well-paid for playing in Wijk aan Zee in January when the appearance fee and the second place money were counted together, but since that tournament I had hit a dry spell. I was making much of my living as a writer and by engaging in other chess-related activities, not by winning prizes.

It may sound strange to the amateur, but many professional chessplayers make the bulk of their money from other activities and use it to supplement the “hobby” of actually playing. I do not like to travel through Europe for months at a time, nor do I enjoy competing in the Grand Prix circuit of American opens. For me, the only worthwhile way to play chess has been to play in good, top-quality international tournaments plus the strong American Swisses. That’s fine and dandy if you win enough money in those events, or if you are a Samford Fellow. But during the year 1992 neither of those conditions had applied to me, so I needed to search for new ideas to supplement my earnings.

The brainstorming list took me a couple of hours to finish. When I put it down, I stood up to stand by the large picture window of my hotel room. The view outside was beautiful. It really is true that when you are

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brought close to nature, it can have a transcendental effect upon your thoughts. I looked at the river flowing by my room and the mountain rising above on the other side and was awed. The beauty and seclusion of the place seemed right for the setting of the U.S. Championship.

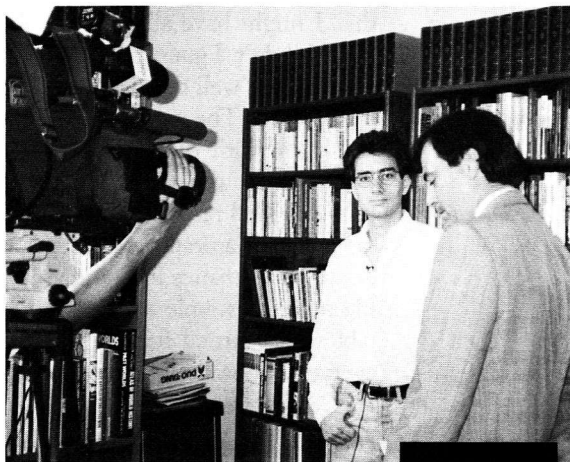
When I was four years old I was introduced to chess when I saw my father playing over the moves of the Fischer–Spassky match. When I was five, my father taught me the moves. But it was at the age of eight that I fell in love with the game. It was then that my parents gave me Bobby Fischer’s *My Sixty Memorable Games*. That book made chess seem alive and exciting to me. Each scoretable represented a secret and mysterious place. Every game was an adventure. And each game in sequence was one more step in a journey that would never finish.

Now I was at the U.S. Championship in a zonal year. Even for Fischer, this would have been a worthy enough event to mention in his book. If someone had told me when I first opened that book that I would be here now ... how improbable it would have sounded! And it struck me how important this tournament was. Never mind how I would arrange my finances in the coming months—I had my list of things to do when I got back home. For the next three weeks I would be fed and housed in Durango, and I was playing in the most important tournament so far in my life. There were 16 players competing for five interzonal spots. One of them, Ilya Gurevich, had already qualified by winning the World Junior Championship; Gata Kamsky, who did not play in Durango, had qualified by rating. That meant there was a one out of three chance to make it to the next level. I had to get to work to try to make it happen.

Inner Space

I find that if a tournament is going well, I feel like I am in a separate world. I don’t want to know how the other players are doing, and I don’t want to think about how many points separate me from the players near me. I just want to think about the game at hand. Mornings are spent in preparation, the game takes up the day, and then the evening affords time to enter the game, along with notes from the post mortem, into my computer. Each day is sharply defined by the game played that round, and chess permeates the air. I breathe it, eat it, hear and see it constantly.

Which is not to say that I necessarily play it successfully! In the first



Wolff meets the press in Cambridge.

This was the most important tournament so far in my life.

The tables had turned for the last time and I won the game. Of course, everyone knows there is no such thing as luck in chess ...

round I had a lucky escape against John Fedorowicz. They say that there is no luck in chess. Baloney. What else can you call this game? Did I escape my troubles because of a brilliant tactical maneuver or with tenacious defense? No. He offered me a draw in a virtually winning position. But at least I returned the favor in the next game, against Alex Sherzer. I failed to continue my attack in the correct and fairly obvious way, and he was able to find a defensive resource in perpetual check. Not only is there luck, but a weird sort of justice, I guess.

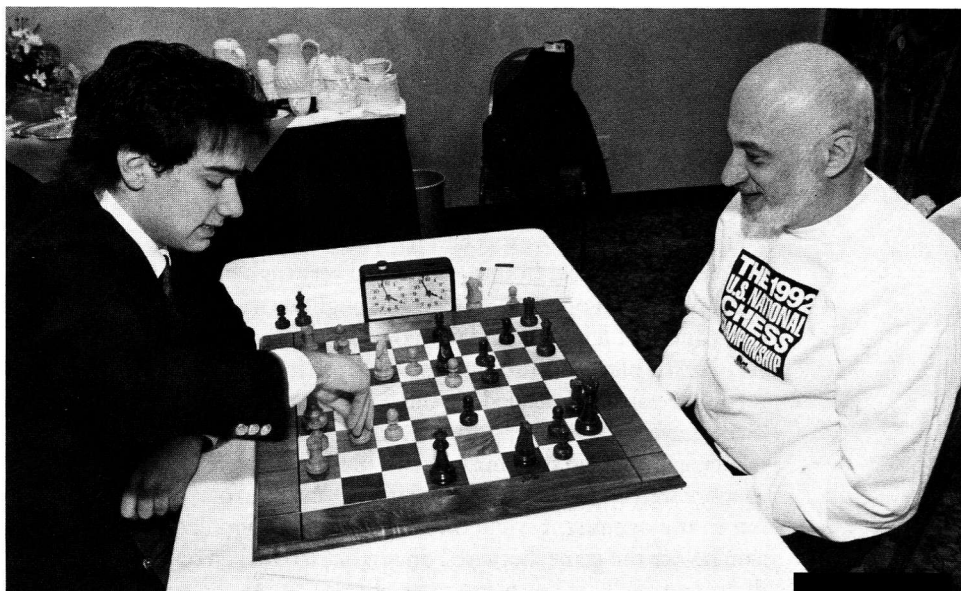
The next game was embarrassing. Kamran Shirazi had lost his first two games. This was nothing special, but it got everyone joking about the possibility that he would lose them all, as he nearly did in the 1984 championship. At another tournament I might have thought more about this. I might have allowed myself to care about such extraneous stuff. Here I didn't. I guess the only reason I can give is that I cared too much about doing well to do anything but play chess. So I came to the board and played. The opening was quite interesting, and in fact I got an advantage with the black pieces after 20 moves. But Kamran played excellently to get counterplay, and I was the one who had to defend. I found a good resource, but I followed it up badly, and suddenly I was lost. Then Kamran showed the unfortunate form that was to mark his entire performance in Durango, where he finished with only one point. He missed a simple winning move and lost a piece in the process! The tables had turned for the last time and I won the game. Of course, everyone knows there is no such thing as luck in chess ...

My game against Roman Dzindzichashvili was a quick draw. Many people think that all quick draws are "grandmaster draws," amicable arrangements between friends who don't really want to play, or competitors splitting prize money instead of running the risk of earning nothing. This is not always true. Sometimes you just get nothing from the opening. If the position is objectively equal and there is no reason to take risks to win, it makes perfect sense to agree to a draw. Still, I had played four games now that didn't make me particularly proud.

Win Some ...

My fifth-round game against Igor Ivanov was a good battle. I was lucky here, too, in that Igor simply blundered at a critical moment, but the opening was the Catalan, which I knew nothing about. It was a tough fight and a pretty well-played game.

I think this game made me bolder in the opening, because from this point on I started playing openings that I had never used before in my life. When I did play the openings that I knew, I would draw or lose! In my next game I played 1 d4 against Stuart Rachels. For me, this was like switching my college major from literature to physics. But as crazy ideas go, this one was hatched in a sane way. I knew that Stuart was playing only the Queen's Gambit Accepted, an opening I also play as Black. I



Blitz with
Boris Gulko
in Durango.

knew that Stuart had a very narrow opening repertoire because he was spending most of his time studying at Oxford. And I had an idea I wanted to try against it. Stuart fell right into my preparation and I won my easiest game of the tournament.

... Lose Some

Why, then, did I have to lose the next game, where I played one of my best novelties ever? After beating Stuart, I prepared for Ilya Gurevich with relish. I knew that Ilya would play right into a very important novelty in the Sicilian that I had prepared earlier that year when training with Viswanathan Anand in Spain (see *AC7*, Number 1, pp. 6–38). This move changed a position thought of as better for White into one where he is challenged to equalize. Ilya walked right into it and I quickly got a big advantage. Then I blundered into a lost position. A few moves later he blundered back into a position that was clearly better for me, after which I blundered again into a losing position, from which he put me away. It was the novelty of the year, and I lost the game!

Losses are tough to deal with, but some are more painful than others. Losing this game, which I knew I had played very badly, drained my confidence. That sounds odd in a way, because you would think that it is the game you lose despite your best efforts that would sap your confidence. I mean, if you go in there and give it your all, you work like a demon and you know that you played well and even so you get beaten, that is a very limiting experience. You can't lie to yourself and say that you are really better than your performance, and it would seem that it

If you fulfill your own expectations, you will feel "strong," even if you encounter a setback.

would be that experience that would hurt more than being able to write off a bad game due to crossed circuits in the brain. But when I lost to Gulko a few rounds later in a game where I just got my butt whacked, I did not feel nearly as drained as I did after this loss to Ilya. I think it is because true strength or weakness comes from a feeling about yourself, and not which games you win or lose. No one feels “weak” because he can’t lift a truck, because no one is expected to be able to lift a truck. If you fulfill your own expectations, you will feel “strong,” even if you encounter a setback. In this game I had very high expectations. After all, I was playing an opening which I felt ought to win on its own. Yet I lost the game, so I felt weak and temporarily lost confidence.

Next I played White against Yasser Seirawan. Ironically, this was a fortunate pairing. I needed to “catch my breath” in this game. The white pieces gave me a good opportunity to do so, and my opponent seemed to be playing it safe in this tournament. It was clear that Yasser wanted only to score well enough to qualify, so if I got any kind of reasonable position out of the opening, I could offer him a draw. I agonized over this decision before the game, because I do not like to chicken out, but sometimes discretion really is the better part of valor. After the game with Yasser there would be a rest day, and then I could come out swinging again. And if I had any doubts about this decision the day before, the fact that I only slept about three hours that night certainly removed them! I offered a draw in a position from the Caro-Kann Defense which was even, or perhaps slightly better for Black, but Yasser had already taken a lot of time, so he shook hands. Maybe this was an appropriate way to resolve this eighth and middle game of the U.S. Championship. This calm, uneventful game separated two very bloody halves of the tournament.

**if I had any doubts
the day before
about the plan to
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removed them!**

Inspiration?

Taken together, the next two games were bizarre. I had the “inspiration” to play the Caro-Kann myself for the first and only time in my life against Alexander Ivanov. My intention was to reach the same position that Yasser had against me in the previous round. I figured that not only would I thus know the position better than Alex, but it was also not bad for Black. Plus, it would certainly take him by surprise! I played it, and of course Alex deviated from what I had hoped for on move three. By move five, I had a position that I barely knew. I had spent the entire morning preparing the Caro-Kann, so I had an idea against almost every possible line, but of course Alex played one of the few lines that I had not prepared anything against. Great. If Alex had not had such chronic trouble with the clock during the tournament, I could never have gotten away with such a risky opening choice. He steadily outplayed me, getting a large positional advantage. However, he also used an enormous amount of time. I purposely steered the position towards a risky sacrifice. It could not be sound, I knew, but it would give me a lot of play. Since by now he

had about 10 minutes for 25 moves, that suited me just fine. I uncorked the sac, and sure enough in his time pressure he drove a winning (but difficult) position into the ground. Fortune favors the brave, they say, but this was pretty damn fortunate.

Why did I follow such a risky opening strategy? Partly, I think, because I was still suffering the effects of losing the game to Ilya. I felt I had to prove something to myself. This was stupid, of course. The only thing I had to prove was that I could win the game. In that respect, my decision was based on recklessness. However, there was something else at work, a curious effect of the time I spent working with Anand. It would seem on the surface that the most important thing I got out of that time was a lot of new opening knowledge, such as the novelty I played against Ilya. But I think now that I got something else even more valuable. I got the confidence to play any type of position, even one that I knew nothing about beforehand. Anand has an amazing talent for chess; he is able to learn almost any opening quickly and understand the essence of it. When we spoke about making progress as a chess player, he told me that he thought his most important “leap” came when he decided to learn opening system after opening system just for the benefit of learning more about chess. This had the effect of challenging me both during and after our work together to broaden my conception of the game. Even though it led me to do stupid things sometimes—like playing this silly Caro-Kann game—even the silly things had beneficial effects on my ability to play. Maybe it was because of this that I was able to weasel my way out of my troubles against Alex.

From Anand I got the confidence to play any type of position, even one I knew nothing about beforehand.

Pop Goes the Weasel

Nothing, however, could help me weasel my way out of my game against Boris Gulko. My biggest mistake was to play an opening that I thought I knew. Gulko knew it better, and played an impressive novelty against me. From that point on he outplayed me and overcame my resistance to win a fine game. I was not happy after this game, but I also was not angry with myself, or worried about my ability to play. I guess I understood that I had simply been outplayed and that this happens sometimes.

So I had taken one step forward and one step back. Meanwhile, Alex Sherzer was winning games at a breakneck pace: he had 8 points after round 10! I was trying to play my games in my own separate world, as I said before, but now everyone was talking about Alex’s performance and it was impossible not to know that he was leading by a wide margin. I knew also that I was in second place, or maybe third, with Gulko, and that I had excellent chances to qualify if I continued to play well.

My next round game was against Joel Benjamin. In marked contrast to how wimpy I felt after losing to Ilya Gurevich, I was ready to fight hard after losing to Gulko.

BENJAMIN-WOLFF, DURANGO (U.S. CHAMPIONSHIP) 1992
SICILIAN DEFENSE B90

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 ♗f6 5 ♗c3 a6

I had already played two different lines of the Rauzer, as well as the Caro-Kann, so it was clearly time for a Najdorf!

6 a4 ♗c6

This is a very good move in this position, because the inclusion of a4 and ... a6 precludes White from playing a Sozin or Rauzer effectively.

7 ♕e2

Joel and I played a game in the last round of the 1992 World Open that went 7 f4 e5 8 ♗b3 d5? (8 ... ♕e7 is a normal Najdorf) 9 exd5 ♗b4 10 fxе5 ♗fxd5 11 ♗xd5 ♖h4+ 12 g3 ♖e4+ 13 ♖f2! and White was clearly better, although we eventually drew the game.

7 ... g6!?

7 ... e6 is a Classical Scheveningen, and 7 ... e5 is the “theoretical equalizer.” Both are quite good moves, but the text mixes it up the most. From a theoretical standpoint it should be slightly dubious, because we reach a Classical Dragon where now the inclusion of a4 and ... a6 should help White. Still, Black has pretty fair chances, and variety is the spice of life!

8 ♕e3 ♗g7 9 0-0 0-0 10 f4

Joel was struggling with the clock in this event. Sometimes that can be caused by bad “sporting form,” but sometimes only nerves can explain it. Why else would Joel have used more than half an hour by this point?

10 ... ♖b8!?

This is an interesting attempt to make some use of the inclusion of a4 and ... a6. By the way, it is well known that the move Black should play without the two a-pawn moves— ... ♖b6—is a mistake here: 10 ... ♖b6? 11 a5! ♗xa5 (11 ... ♖xb2 12 ♗a4 ♖b4 13 c3 ♖xa5 14 ♗xc6 bxc6 15 ♕b6 +-) 12 e5 ♗e8 13 ♗f5 ♖d8 14 ♗xe7+ ♖xe7 15 ♗d5 ♖d8 16 ♕b6 with a large plus for White. Black could just retreat the queen, but this too gives White a big edge.

11 ♖d2

White can play other moves here, too.

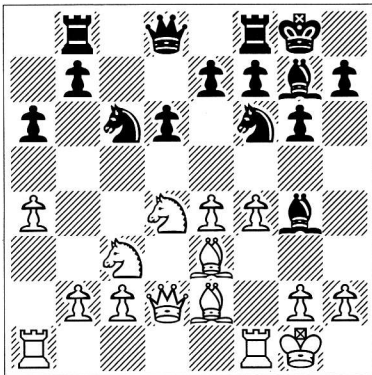
11 ... ♗g4 (D 1) 12 ♖h1!?

Joel burned up a lot more time thinking about this passive move. I expected 12 ♖ad1 ♗xe2 13 ♖xe2, and now:

a) 13 ... ♗xd4?! 14 ♗xd4 is slightly better for White, and if Black tries to justify it with 14 ... b5, then 15 axb5 axb5 16 e5 (also 16 ♗d5!? is better for White) dxе5 (16 ... ♗e8 17 ♗xb5 ±) 17 ♗a7 is clearly better for White.

b) 13 ... ♖c8 (with the idea of 14 ... ♗g4) and now:

b1) 14 h3 ♖e8!? or 14 ... ♖d8!? is unclear, but Black still cannot



1 ♖ Benjamin-Wolff, after 11 ... ♗g4

free himself by taking on d4 and playing ... b5: 14 ... ♖xd4 15 ♗xd4 b5 16 axb5 axb5 17 ♗xf6! ♗xf6 18 ♖d5 ±.

b2) 14 ♖d5 ♗e8 is okay for Black because White still has to do something about his e-pawn.

b3) 14 f5!? looks a little better for White. If Black tries to free himself with 14 ... ♗d8, then 15 ♖d5! clamps down on that, although even here 15 ... ♗e8 is unclear. Black wants to play ... e6, but it has to help White that he has gotten the tempo f5 in for free.

c) 13 ... ♗a5!? was suggested by Elliott Winslow, and it looks quite reasonable. The obvious move is 14 ♖b3 (14 f5 is met strongly by 14 ... ♗b4), and Elliott here pointed out that 14 ... ♗b4 can be met by 15 e5! dx e5 16 ♗c5 +-. Black could meekly retreat the queen to c7 (when White should have an advantage because the queen is in the way of a future ♖d5 hit), but I think that by 14 ... ♗h5! Black can solve most of his problems. The possibility of ... ♖g4 forces White to trade queens, when Black should be fine.



- 12 ... ♗xe2 13 ♖dx e2
- 13 ♗xe2? ♖xe4 14 ♖xc6 ♖xc3 ♞.
- 13 ... b5

Black has equalized. Or, to put it another way, if this position is not fine for Black, then the entire idea with 10 ... ♗b8 cannot be good, because what could Black possibly be aiming for if not this position?

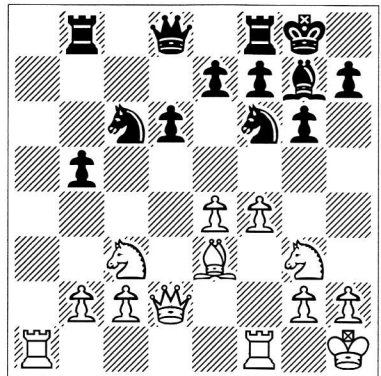
14 axb5 axb5 15 ♖g3 (D 2)

A sensible move, to protect the e-pawn against the coming ... b4. White could also have tried 15 ♗a6 ♗c8 (15 ... ♖b4 16 ♗a7 ♖c6 17 ♗a6 ♖b4 etc. is equal) 16 ♗f1 ♗e8!? threatening 17 ... b4, although after 17 ♖g3 "the game goes on." The idea of doubling the rooks on the a-file is certainly not as aggressive as Joel played in the game, but it does have the virtue of shoring up the queenside.

Notice that if instead of 16 ... ♗e8 Black plays 16 ... b4 17 ♖d5 ♖xe4? (17 ... ♗e8 =) then instead of 18 ♗xc6? ♖xd2 (18 ... ♗xc6 19 ♖xe7+) 19 ♗xc8 ♗fx c8 20 ♖xe7+ ♗f8 21 ♖xc8 ♖c4, White simply plays 18 ♗d3! winning a piece because of the threat ♗xc6.

15 ... ♖d7!?

After some thought, I chose the most aggressive move for Black,



2 ■ Benjamin-Wolff, after 15 ♖g3

anticipating the coming pawn sacrifice. Black had other ways to play, however:

a) 15 ... b4 16 ♖d5 (or else White is just passively worse) e6 (16 ... ♗g4 17 ♙g1 e6 [17 ... ♗xb2 18 ♖a6! ♖c8—forced, since if 18 ... ♗c8?? 19 ♖xc6!—19 ♗b6 ♖b8 20 ♖d5 =] 18 ♖a6 exd5 [18 ... ♗a5!? is interesting, because 19 ♗b6 can be met by 19 ... ♗h4! so White can play 19 ♗b6 ♗xb2 20 ♖xa5 ♖xb6 21 ♗xb6 ♗xb6 and win the exchange, but Black has compensation here] 19 ♖xc6 dxe4 20 ♗xe4 [20 ♖xd6 ♗e7 is slightly better for Black] ♗e7! [20 ... d5 21 ♖d6 ♗e7 22 ♗xd5 and now White's pieces coordinate well enough to give him an advantage]; the idea of 20 ... ♗e7! came from Ferdinand Hellers, who felt that Black should be equal here) 17 ♗xf6+ (17 ♖a6!? exd5 18 ♖xc6 ♗xe4 19 ♗xe4? dxe4 20 ♖xd6 ♗c7 should be slightly better for Black, since he has a much better pawn structure, and White's control of the d-file is not enough to compensate; however, 19 ♗xd5! ♗xg3+ 20 hxg3 ♗xb2 21 ♖xd6 should be equal) ♗xf6 18 ♖ab1 d5 (**D 3**) and now:

a1) 19 exd5 ♗xd5 ♖.

a2) 19 e5?! ♗e7 is a fantastic French-type position for Black.

a3) 19 ♖fd1 d4 20 ♙g1 e5 ♖.

a4) 19 f5 dxe4 (19 ... exf5 20 ♗xd5 ±)

20 fxex6 (20 ♗xe4 exf5 21 ♗xf6+ ♗xf6 ♖; 20 ♗xd8 ♗xd8 21 fxg6 [21 fxex6 f5 ♖; 21 f6 ♗c7 ♖] hxg6 22 ♗xe4 ♗e7 ♖) ♗xd2 21 exf7+ (21 ♗xd2 fxex6 ♖ with the idea that 22 ♗xe4 allows 22 ... ♗xb2!) ♖xf7 22 ♗xd2 ♖e8 ♖.

b) 15 ... ♗g4 16 ♙g1 b4 17 ♖d5! transposes to line (a).

c) 15 ... e6 16 f5 b4 17 ♗a4 d5!? 18 fxex6 fxex6 (18 ... dxe4 19 exf7+ ♖xf7 is a mess, but I am inclined to think that White stands well after, say, 20 ♗e2) 19 ♗c5 ♗e7 is probably a little better for Black, but not 19 ... d4? 20 ♗xe6 dxe3 21 ♗xd8 exd2 22 ♗xc6.

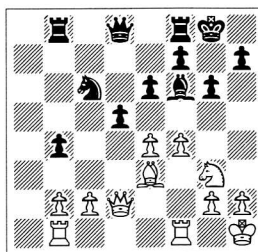
Keep in mind here, as throughout this article (and indeed, whenever you work through a piece of chess analysis), that evaluation symbols like ♖ and ± should be viewed as guidelines for examining positions, not as the absolute proclamations they may seem to be. Independent judgment and investigation are essential.

16 f5

16 ♖a6 ♗c8 17 ♖fa1 ♖e8 is comfortable for Black.

16 ... b4 17 ♖d5!

Joel understands that he has to play actively, even at the cost of the b-pawn. For example, the passive 17 ♗d1 b3 (17 ... ♗f6!? with the idea of ... d5 is also interesting) 18 c3 ♗ce5 gives Black easy play. The text move starts an attack on the kingside to compensate for the loss of a pawn. It gives Black the chance to go wrong, and even if Black defends



3 □

Analysis

well White should have enough play for the pawn to draw, so Joel's decision was correct.

17 ... ♖×b2 18 ♖a6 ♖c8

18 ... ♖c8?? 19 ♖c6! Also interesting is the prospect of moving one of the knights to e5, but in either case 19 ♖h6 ♖e8 20 f×g6!? with the idea of 21 ♖f5 looks dangerous for Black.

19 ♖h6 (D 4) ♖e8!

Here it was possible to fall into a devilish trap: 19 ... ♖g7? 20 ♖h5! ♖×h6 (20 ... g×h5 21 ♖g5 +-, relatively best is 20 ... ♖c3 21 ♖×c3 b×c3 22 ♖f4, but White has a monstrous attack) 21 ♖×h6 g×h5 22 f6! e×f6 (22 ... ♖×f6 23 ♖×f6! gives White a strong attack with the idea of ♖f5 and ♖×h5, since Black can't take the rook on f6) 23 ♖f5! and Black cannot defend, e.g. 23 ... ♖e8 24 ♖×h5 ♖f8 25 ♖×f6+ ♖h8 26 ♖×h7+ ♖×h7 27 ♖×h7 mate.

20 ♖h5

Does White have a stronger move?

20 ... ♖f6!

Not 20 ... g×h5 21 ♖g5+ ♖h8 22 f6 mating.

21 ♖h×f6+ e×f6 22 ♖b6?!

With this move White had less than five minutes to reach move forty. White no longer has an attack, but he can bail out into a slightly worse endgame with 22 ♖×b4 ♖×b4 23 ♖×b4 ♖×c2 (23 ... ♖e5 ♖) 24 ♖×d6! (but 24 ♖×d6 ♖a8! looks more uncomfortable for White) The text move is not yet a mistake, but it makes life more difficult for White.

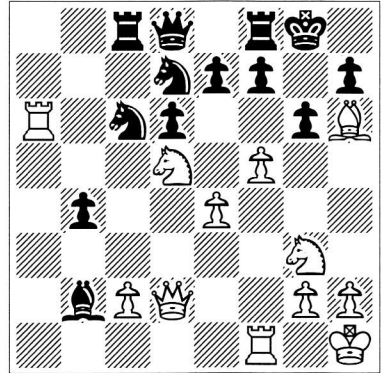
22 ... ♖c3 23 ♖d1 ♖b8

23 ... ♖c7 24 ♖d5 ♖c8 25 ♖b6.

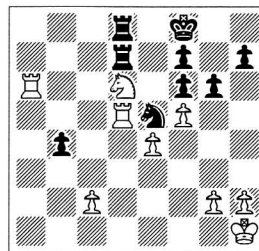
24 ♖c4 ♖c8 25 ♖a2 ♖c7 26 ♖f4

Not 26 ♖×d6? ♖ed8 -+, but even after 26 ♖×d6 Black is better: 26 ... ♖×d6 27 ♖×d6 ♖ed8 28 ♖f4 (28 ♖d1? ♖e5 29 ♖a6 ♖bc8 -+; 28 ♖c4 ♖d4 29 ♖e3 ♖×e4 30 ♖d5 [30 f×g6 h×g6 31 ♖d5 f5 ♖] g5!?) ♖e5 (28 ... ♖e5 29 ♖a6 [29 ♖×e5? ♖×e5 30 ♖c4 ♖c3 is clearly better for Black, with the strong bishop and White's weak pawns, and 29 ♖d1? ♖b6 30 ♖h6 ♖g4 just loses] ♖g7 ♖) 29 ♖×e5 ♖×e5 (29 ... f×e5?! 30 ♖d1 ♖b6 31 ♖aa1 =) 30 ♖a6 ♖f8 31 ♖d1 (31 f×g6 h×g6 32 ♖×f6+ ♖e7 -+) ♖d7! (31 ... ♖c4?! 32 ♖d3 ♖b6? 33 ♖a8+! [33 ♖×c4? ♖×a6!] ♖e7 34 ♖×c4 +-) 32 ♖d5 (32 ♖a5 ♖c4! 33 ♖ad5 ♖e3) ♖bd8 ♖ (D 5) 33 ♖b6 ♖e7; White's knight on d6 is in jeopardy and will escape only at the cost of a pawn:

a) 33 34 ♖b5 (also 34 ♖b7 ♖×d5 [34 ... ♖b8 35 ♖×d7 ♖×d7 36 ♖b5] 35 e×d5 ♖×d5 36 h3 ♖d4 ♖) ♖×d5 35 e×d5 ♖×d5 ♖.



4 □ Benjamin-Wolff, after 19 ♖h6



5 □ Analysis

b) 35 $\text{d}\times\text{b}7$ $\text{f}\times\text{d}5$ 36 $\text{e}\times\text{d}5$ $\text{d}\times\text{c}4$ 37 $\text{f}\times\text{g}6!$ (37 $\text{d}\times\text{c}5$ $\text{d}\times\text{e}3$ \mp) $\text{f}\times\text{g}6$ 38 $\text{d}6+$! (38 $\text{d}\times\text{c}5$ $\text{d}\times\text{e}3$) $\text{c}\times\text{d}7$ (38 ... $\text{d}\times\text{d}6$ 39 $\text{d}\times\text{c}5$ intending 40 $\text{d}\times\text{d}3$) 39 $\text{d}\times\text{c}5+$ $\text{c}\times\text{d}6$ 40 $\text{d}\times\text{c}3$ $\text{d}\times\text{e}3$ 41 $\text{d}\times\text{b}4$ $\text{c}\times\text{c}5$ (**D 6**) and Black will win the c-pawn. However, White still has good drawing chances in the endgame.

26 ... $\text{d}\times\text{e}5$ 27 $\text{d}\times\text{e}3$ $\text{d}\times\text{c}4!$ 28 $\text{d}\times\text{d}5$ $\text{c}\times\text{c}5$ 29 $\text{c}\times\text{d}3$ (**D 7**) $\text{c}\times\text{d}4?$

It is obvious that one's own time trouble makes it difficult to think clearly, but sometimes even your opponent's time trouble can get to you! This is what happened to me here, as I moved too quickly and gave White the chance to equalize. The best move here is 29 ... $\text{d}\times\text{b}2!$ 30 $\text{c}\times\text{f}3$ (30 $\text{c}\times\text{g}3$ $\text{f}\times\text{e}4$ 31 $\text{d}\times\text{d}6$ $\text{c}\times\text{c}4$ \mp ; 30 $\text{f}\times\text{b}2?$ $\text{d}\times\text{b}2$ 31 $\text{f}\times\text{g}6$ $\text{h}\times\text{g}6$ 32 $\text{d}\times\text{d}6$ $\text{c}\times\text{d}6$ 33 $\text{d}\times\text{f}6+$ $\text{c}\times\text{f}6$ \rightarrow ; 30 $\text{c}\times\text{e}2??$ $\text{c}\times\text{d}5$ \rightarrow) $\text{c}\times\text{c}4$ and Black keeps some pressure.

30 h3?

Not 30 $\text{f}\times\text{g}6$ $\text{h}\times\text{g}6$ 31 $\text{d}\times\text{f}6+$ $\text{c}\times\text{f}6$ 32 $\text{c}\times\text{c}4$ $\text{f}\times\text{bc}8$ 33 $\text{c}\times\text{d}3$ $\text{c}\times\text{e}6$ 34 $\text{f}\times\text{a}6$ $\text{c}\times\text{e}4$ 35 $\text{f}\times\text{d}6$ $\text{d}\times\text{g}7!$ and Black still keeps a large advantage as White's c-pawn is weak, but White should play right away 30 $\text{d}\times\text{f}6+$! $\text{c}\times\text{f}6$ 31 $\text{c}\times\text{c}4$ $\text{g}\times\text{f}5$ (31 ... $\text{f}\times\text{bc}8$ 32 $\text{c}\times\text{d}3$ and now Black does not have e6 at his disposal) 32 $\text{e}\times\text{f}5$ $\text{c}\times\text{f}5$ 33 $\text{d}\times\text{d}6$ $\text{f}\times\text{bc}8$ 34 $\text{f}\times\text{f}5$ $\text{f}\times\text{c}4$ 35 h3 with a probable draw.

30 ... $\text{c}\times\text{e}4$ 31 $\text{d}\times\text{c}3$ $\text{b}\times\text{c}3$ 32 $\text{c}\times\text{c}3$ $\text{d}\times\text{e}5$

Black has a clear edge here, because he has consolidated his extra pawn. True, it is doubled, but in addition White's pieces are badly placed and he has lots of weaknesses in his position.

33 $\text{d}\times\text{g}3$ $\text{f}\times\text{bc}8$ 34 $\text{c}\times\text{d}2$ $\text{d}\times\text{c}4$ 35 $\text{c}\times\text{f}2$ $\text{d}\times\text{e}3$ 36 $\text{f}\times\text{e}1$ $\text{c}\times\text{c}4!$ (**D 8**)

Forcing White to improve Black's pawns.

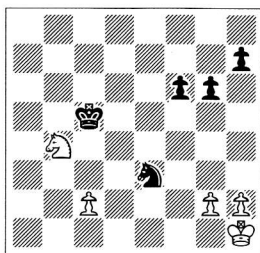
37 $\text{f}\times\text{g}6$ $\text{h}\times\text{g}6$

It is messy to take the rook on a2, but this also seems to win: 37 ... $\text{c}\times\text{a}2$ 38 $\text{g}\times\text{h}7+$ $\text{c}\times\text{g}7$ (38 ... $\text{c}\times\text{h}7$ 39 $\text{f}\times\text{e}3$ $\text{f}\times\text{e}3$ 40 $\text{c}\times\text{f}5+$! forces a perpetual check by checking on g4 and h4 since if the king goes to f8, $\text{c}\times\text{c}8+$ is good for White) 39 $\text{f}\times\text{e}3$ $\text{f}\times\text{e}3$ 40 $\text{c}\times\text{e}3$ $\text{c}\times\text{c}2$ with a large advantage to Black, particularly since 41 $\text{d}\times\text{d}6$ is met by 41 ... $\text{c}\times\text{d}1+$. Still, Black's

open king and shattered pawns give White some cause to hope. The move played is cleaner.

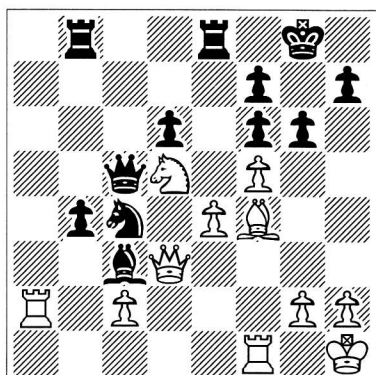
38 $\text{f}\times\text{a}1$ $\text{d}\times\text{f}5$ 39 $\text{f}\times\text{e}8+$ $\text{f}\times\text{e}8$ 40 $\text{d}\times\text{h}2$ $\text{f}\times\text{e}2$

The time scramble is over and Black is easily winning.



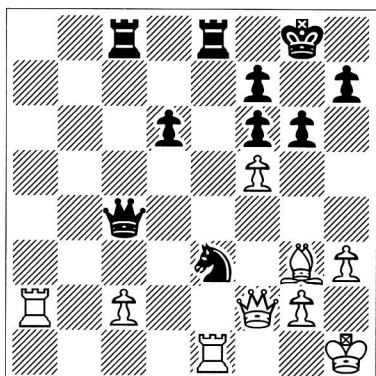
6 □

Analysis



7 ■

Benjamin-Wolff, after 29 $\text{c}\times\text{d}3$



8 □

Benjamin-Wolff, after 36 ... $\text{c}\times\text{c}4$

41 ♖f3 ♜xc2 42 ♜d1 ♜c1! 43 ♜xc1 ♖xc1+ 44 ♜g1 ♖c4 45 ♜f2

45 g4 ♘h4 -+.

45 ... d5!

This had to be calculated carefully.

46 g4 ♘d6 47 ♖xf6

47 ♜h4 g5!? 48 ♜e1 (48 ♖xf6 ♘e4 49 ♖d8+ ♜g7 50 ♜xg5 ♖f1+ -+; 48 ♜g3 ♘e4 -+) ♖e4 49 ♖xe4 dxe4 50 ♜g2 ♜g7 51 h4 gxh4 52 ♜xh4 ♜g6 with the idea of ... f5 and Black wins.

47 ... ♘e4 48 ♖d8+

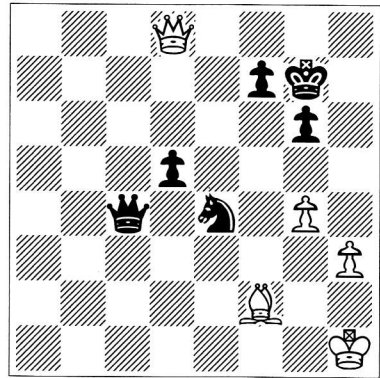
48 ♖h4 g5 -+.

48 ... ♜g7 (D 9) 49 ♜b6

If the bishop moves to most other squares, it gets picked off. If 49 ♜h4 then 49 ... g5 wins, and if 49 ♜g1 then 49 ... ♖f1 50 ♖xd5 ♖xh3+ 51 ♜h2 ♘g3+ 52 ♜g1 ♖f1 mate!

49 ... ♖f1+ 50 ♜h2 ♖f4+ 51 ♜g2 ♖g3+ 52 ♜f1 ♖xh3+ 53 ♜e1 ♖g3+ 54 ♜f1 ♖d3+ 0-1

White resigned, since after 55 ♜g1 ♖d1+ 56 ♜h2 ♖e2+ 57 ♜h1 ♖f3+ 58 ♜h2 ♖g3+ 59 ♜h1 ♖h3+ 60 ♜g1 ♖xg4+ he is three pawns down and has still not escaped the checks.



9 □ Benjamin-Wolff, after 48 ... ♜g7

“One By One I Mowed Them Down”

After this victory I scored three and a half points in my last four games. I wish that I could say that I was inspired, or that I was playing the best chess of my life, but I don't think it's true. Certainly I didn't feel this way. I just kept doing the only thing I knew how to do at a chess tournament: I played the best chess I could. It was a combination of some pretty good chess plus some luck plus keeping my nerves a little better than my competitors' that enabled me to win.

For example, take my next round game against Walter Browne. This was an interesting, hard-fought game where I was in some trouble, then I was okay, and then I was slightly better in an endgame that should have been drawn. Luck came to my aid, however, and Walter gave back a pawn to enter an endgame that we both erroneously thought was drawn. This comedy of errors continued with both of us allowing and eschewing the correct drawing and winning ideas before the adjournment. Although I had smoother games, this one was a real fight, and featured some fascinating positions.

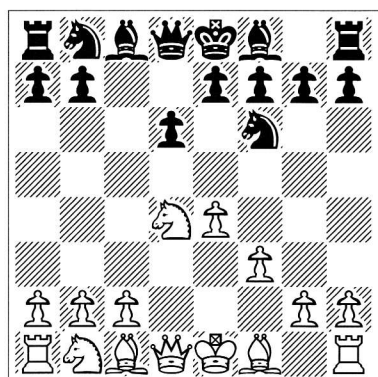
Yasser Seirawan published an interesting story on the U.S. Championship in *Inside Chess* (volume 6, number 1). He annotated my game against Browne (pp. 37–39) and said that it demonstrated the quality that he felt I showed most in winning the championship: determination. I was flattered by his assessment. Later, I annotated the game myself, in greater detail and from a different perspective. My original notes appeared in

Chess Horizons, March/April 1993, pp. 16–23. The version below has been significantly revised and expanded, based on subsequent work by me and others, as well as on a letter from Seirawan to *Chess Horizons* (July/August 1993, pp. 3–4) commenting on my original annotations.

WOLFF–BROWNE, DURANGO (U.S. CHAMPIONSHIP) 1992 SICILIAN DEFENSE B54

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 ♗f6 5 f3!? (D 10)

This move needs some explanation. Walter and I have had two topical fights in the main line of the Najdorf Variation (5 ♗c3 a6 6 ♕g5). I would have gladly continued this tradition, except that I think these lines are good for Black! Before this game, I agonized over my opening choice. I wanted to try for some advantage while hopefully avoiding the stuff he knew well.



10 ■ Wolff–Browne, after 5 f3

During the last six months, I have been experimenting with 5 f3. It is not, of course, a real challenge to the theoretical soundness of the Sicilian, but it does have the advantage that it is better than it looks. Black must still play well to equalize. In addition, there are many transpositional tricks for a Najdorf player to deal with. Given that I had some ideas about the finer points of this move, and also given that Walter is notorious for getting into time trouble, I thought that this would be the right moment to use my knowledge and essay this line.

5 ... e5!

This is the critical positional test of 5 f3. Fifty years ago, people hit upon the idea of playing, after 5 ♗c3, 5 ... e5. The problem is that this move turns out to be a mistake because 6 ♕b5+! gives White a clear advantage. So Miguel Najdorf realized that if Black played 5 ... a6 first, then he could play a useful positional move and also prepare 6 ... e5. This is the underlying positional idea of the Najdorf Variation. Since 5 f3 is much slower than 5 ♗c3, it follows that 5 ... e5 should at least be a critical test of this line, if not in fact the best response by Black. Some other moves are:

a) 5 ... a6 6 c4! is White's basic idea, to set up a Maroczy bind. It turns out that 5 ... a6 is a bit slow,



and also now if Black plays 6 ... e5, then White can retreat the knight to the better square c2.

b) 5 ... ♖c6 6 ♖c3!? was my idea for Walter. The consistent response would be 6 c4, but the problem is that Black can free himself by a quick ... d5: 6 ... e6 7 ♖c3 ♗e7 8 ♗e3 0-0 9 ♖c2 d5! went the famous game Lombardy–Fischer, U.S. Championship 1960–61, as quoted in *My Sixty Memorable Games*. After 6 ♖c3, however, Black faces a difficult decision, especially for a Najdorf player. He can play 6 ... g6, but of course this is just a main line Dragon. He can play 6 ... e6, but this leads to a position which is more of a Scheveningen than a Najdorf. True, against the 6 ♗e3 Najdorf Black can play this way, but it is not as good as the ... ♖bd7 lines, and anyway I knew that Walter didn't like these lines. Finally, Black can play 6 ... e5, and from a "theoretical" standpoint, this is why this position should not be good for White, but still, a Najdorf player would much rather have the knight on d7!

c) 5 ... e6 forces White to be even trickier: 6 ♗e3!? Now if 6 ... ♗e7 or 6 ... ♖c6, White can play 7 ♖c3, again transposing to lines that a Najdorf player would rather avoid. By the way, there is an interesting line here that deserves to be analyzed: 6 ... ♖c6 (6 ... ♖b6 7 ♖c1) 7 ♖c3 ♖b6? 8 ♖d2 ♗xd2 9 ♖b1! ♖a3 10 ♖cb5! ♖xa2 11 ♖d1 and White has too strong an attack. This may seem simple, but to my knowledge no one has ever analyzed this position before, and this is the only way to punish 7 ... ♖b6 that I could see, so it has some theoretical importance. At any rate, if Black still tries to play a Najdorf with 6 ... a6, then White can play 7 c4!? and get a more favorable Najdorf. Perhaps 6 ... ♖bd7!? is the way for Black to try to get the position he wants.

So these were my ideas when playing 5 f3, but they never got used in this game!

6 ♖b3 ♗e7!

The obvious move here is 6 ... d5, but after 7 ♗g5 it is not clear how Black equalizes, and some recent practice has suggested that White can play for an advantage. Before the game, my basic idea was that if Walter did not push 6 ... d5, then I would play 7 c4 and just play the game. What I was not counting on was that he would outplay me in the opening afterward!

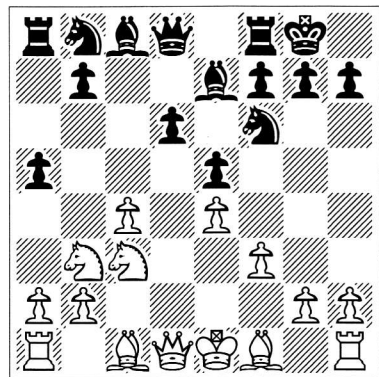
7 c4

Compare this position to similar ones in the Najdorf, and I think it is clear that White must play this move to be able to claim any advantage.

7 ... 0-0 8 ♖c3 a5! (D 11)

Very nice chess, and also a novelty by the way. Black can use his lead in development to gain space on the queenside. A positional move of the highest order.

9 ♗e3



11 □

Wolff-Browne, after 8 ... a5

9 a4 ♖b6! is strong, whereas last move 8 ... ♖b6 could have been met by 9 ♗d3 with the idea of 10 ♗e3.

9 ... a4 10 ♗d2 ♗a5 11 a3

I thought about 11 ♖c1, but it gives Black the extra option of ... a3 at some point, and I didn't see what White gained by having the rook on c1. Gregory Kaidanov later made the reasonable suggestion that White also could have played 11 ♖b1!? to meet 11 ... a3 with 12 b4.

11 ... ♗d7

Seirawan in his notes suggests 11 ... ♗c6, with the idea of ... ♗d4. This is interesting, e.g. 12 ♗d3 (12 b4!? a×b3 13 ♗×b3 ♗×c3+ [13 ... ♗d8 14 ♗e2 ±] 14 ♗d2 ♗b2 15 ♗c1 and either the game is a draw or Black plays 15 ... ♗×a1 with unclear play) ♗d4 13 0-0 ♗e6 14 ♗×d4!? e×d4 15 ♗b5 with a mess for both sides. Yasser thought that Walter was playing it safe, and if he was I can't fault him for it!

12 ♗e2 ♗a6

More ambitious is 12 ... ♗d8, but White has two interesting responses to that: 13 b4 (13 c5!? d×c5 14 ♗c4 ♗c7 15 ♗d5 ♗×d5 16 ♗×d5 gets back the pawn with counterplay) a×b3 14 ♗×b3 is unclear.

13 0-0 ♗c5

Again 13 ... ♗d8 is interesting, especially since now 14 c5 d×c5 15 ♗c4 ♗c7 16 ♗d5 ♗×d5 17 ♗×d5 ♗f6 is just clearly better for Black. White could play 14 b4 a×b3 15 ♗×b3, with unclear play, or even 15 ♗×b3 ♗×c3 16 ♗d2 etc. again. Also, White now has time to shunt the king out of the a7-g1 diagonal with 14 ♖h1 so that 14 ... ♗b6 15 ♗g5 is possible. All in all, Walter's move is more consistent, and just better.

14 ♖h1

John Nunn calls this move "chess laziness" in the majority of cases, and he is right, but nevertheless I think that it is a reasonable move here. I didn't know what I wanted to do yet, but I was pretty sure that this move would be useful no matter what.

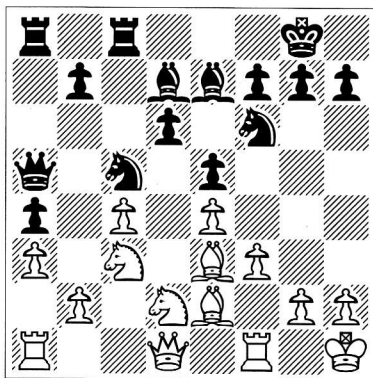
14 ... ♖fc8 (D 12)

Better than 14 ... ♗c6, which allows 15 ♗d5 under better circumstances for White, e.g. 15 ... ♗×d5 16 c×d5 ♗b5 17 ♗×c5! ♗×e2 (17 ... d×c5 18 ♗×b5 ♗×b5 19 ♗c2) 18 ♗×e2 ♗×c5 19 ♖fc1 etc.

Now, however, after the text move, if White plays 15 ♗d5 then 15 ... ♗×d5 16 c×d5 ♗b5!? (the simple 16 ... b5 is also possible) 17 ♖c1 (17 ♗×c5 ♖×c5 gives Black a very strong initiative down the c-file) ♗b3! 18

♗×b3 a×b3 19 ♗×b5 ♗×b5 20 ♖f2 (White must fight for the c-file and stop ... ♖c2!) ♗a4! gives Black all the play on the queenside.

At this point, I faced a dilemma. While it is true that my position is not in any immediate danger of assault, it is also clear that it is much easier for Black to undertake action than White. I didn't want to play



12 □ Wolff-Browne, after 14 ... ♖fc8

listlessly, so I searched for an active idea and came up with the text move. The move I played does in fact activate my pieces, and it even opens lines against the king that has just been deserted by the rook going to c8, but it also wrecks the structure of my game, so that if my active play doesn't compensate, I'm doomed. I still can't say whether what I did was right, but it worked. A calmer person might have played 15 ♖c1, which is a move that legitimately improves my position, although it does not initiate any kind of plan for the middlegame.

15 f4 ♗c6

Seirawan suggests that 15 ... exf4 would have given Black an easy game after 16 ♗xf4 ♗c6 17 ♗d5 ♗xd5 18 exd5 ♗fe4 19 ♗xe4 ♗xe4, but White would do better to play 16 ♖xf4! as I had intended. White might well be better in this position. Another idea is 15 ... ♗e6, but then, among other ideas, White could play 16 fxе5 dxe5 17 ♗d5 ♗xd5 18 exd5 ♗c5 (18 ... ♗d4 19 ♗xd4 exd4 20 ♗f3) 19 ♗g4! with active play.

16 fxе5

16 ♖c2!?

16 ... dxe5 17 ♗d5 ♗xd5

The right move, but also part of my idea: at least I am getting the light-squared bishop for my troubles. If 17 ... ♗xd5? there follows 18 cxд5 ♗b5 (18 ... ♗d7 19 ♗c4) 19 ♗xb5 ♖xb5 20 ♖h5! ♗f6 (20 ... f6 21 ♖f3 gives White a good attack on the kingside) 21 ♖xf6 gxф6 22 ♗h6 ♖d7 23 ♖h4 and White wins.

18 exd5 ♗e8!?

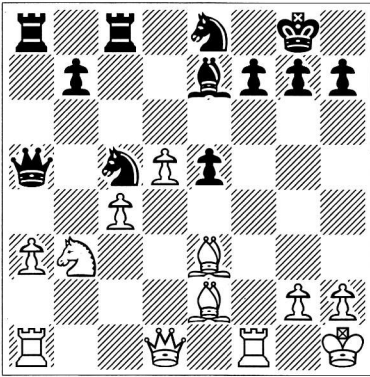
If Black can set up a position with his knight on d6 and pawn on f5, he will be strategically winning, so this is the most principled move. However, I had a much stronger alternative to the reply I made.

19 b4?

A very committal decision, based on the idea that White must achieve active play at all costs. Seirawan points out that 19 ♗g4 ♖d8 (I think that 19 ... ♖c7! is even better) 20 ♗xc5 ♖xc5? 21 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 22 ♗e6+ ♖f8 23 ♖h5 leads to checkmate, but also that 20 ... ♗xc5! is better, to clear the e7 square for the king.

Several months later, I did some analysis with Gregory Kaidanov as part of a mutual training session. We gave each other games and positions that we had analyzed and pushed each other to solve them. Kaidanov suggested that White might play 19 ♖e1! here, and together we analyzed this move out to advantage for White. The point is that 19 ... ♗d6? fails to 20 ♗xc5! (but 20 ♖g3 can be met by 20 ... ♖e8!?) and after 21 ♖xe5 ♗f6! Black stands well, e.g. 22 ♖xd6 ♖xe3 and White has two pieces en prise and the queen is also in danger of being trapped, or 22 ♖g3 ♗xb2 23 ♖ab1 ♗e5 24 ♖f2 b6) ♖xc5 21 b4! and White has a strong initiative. If Black does not continue with 19 ... ♗d6, though, White lifts the queen to the kingside and carries out an attack.

19 ... axb3 20 ♗xb3 (D 13)



12 ■ Wolff-Browne, after 20 ♖xb3

This is a critical position. Black's game is "prettier," because his pawn structure is so much better, but he must play very precisely. White has two bishops and strong c- and d-pawns, and if they ever play in the game, Black will have difficulties. What should he play here?

20 ... ♖c7!

Two alternatives:

a) 20 ... ♗xb3?! 21 ♖xb3 ♕c5 (21 ... ♖c7? 22 d6! is a good example of the danger in the position for Black; no matter how he takes the pawn, 23 c5 will be strong for White, hitting f7) and after either 22 ♕xc5 ♖xc5 23 ♖xb7 ♗d6 24 ♖b4 or 22 ♖xb7 ♗d6 23 ♖b3, the game is messy, but White's pawn should be worth Black's blockade.

b) 20 ... ♖a4 is even more ambitious than the text move. White has two choices:

b1) 21 ♗xc5? ♖xd1 (21 ... ♕xc5 22 ♖xa4 ♖xa4 23 ♕g4 ♖c7 24 ♕xc5 ♖xc5 25 ♕d7 ♖a8 ±) 22 ♖fxd1 and Black maintains an iron blockade after 22 ... ♕xc5, e.g. 23 ♕g4 ♖c7 24 ♕xc5 ♖xc5 25 d6 ♖d8 26 d7 ♗f6. White needs to keep more tension.

b2) Better is 21 ♖b1!—

b21) 21 ... ♖xa3 22 d6! ♕xd6 (22 ... ♗xb3 23 dxe7 ±; 22 ... ♗xd6 23 ♕xc5 ♖xc5 24 ♖a1!) 23 ♖d5 ♗f6 (forced) 24 ♖xd6 ♗xb3 25 ♖xe5 and White has good compensation for the pawn.

b22) 21 ... b6 22 ♗xc5! (White could also find another move to keep the tension) ♕xc5 (22 ... bxc5 23 ♖b7) 23 ♕xc5 bxc5 24 d6 with a mess, but I don't believe that White should be worse.

Walter's choice in the game looks best. In addition, either 20 ... ♖a6!? or 20 ... ♖d8!?, both suggested by Kaidanov, would have been sensible.

21 ♖b1

Still keeping as much tension as possible, and simultaneously hitting b7 and h7.

21 ... b6

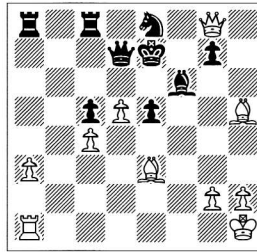
To protect b7, and not believing there is any threat on the kingside.

22 ♗c1

Chickening out on the kingside, and trying to use the newly weak c6 square as a home for the knight. About that kingside attack: 22 ♖xf7? ♖xf7 (22 ... ♗xb3? 23 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 24 ♖xb3 gives White full compensation for the exchange) 23 ♖xh7 ♕f6! (23 ... ♗f6 24 ♖f1 is a real attack) 24 ♗xc5 bxc5 25 ♕h5+ ♖e7 26 ♖g8 and now 26 ... ♖d7! (D 13) should win for Black.

If 22 ♕g4, then not 22 ... ♗xb3? 23 ♖xb3 ♖xc4 because 24 ♖d1! is strong, and wherever Black moves the rook, White plays 25 ♖xf7!, e.g.

24 ... ♖d8 25 ♗xf7! ♕xf7 (25 ... ♗xd5 26 ♖f3!)
 26 ♗e6+ ♖f8 27 ♖h5 ♗d6 28 ♖xh7 ♗f6 29
 ♖c1 and Black will have to give up the queen
 for the rook. However, Black can play simply
 22 ... ♖d8, and the sacrifice is still not sound:
 23 ♗xf7 ♕xf7 24 ♖xh7 ♗f6! 25 ♗h5+ ♕e7
 26 ♗xc5 bxc5 27 ♖g8 ♗d6 28 ♖e6+ ♖f8 -+.



13 □ **Analysis**

22 ... ♗d6?

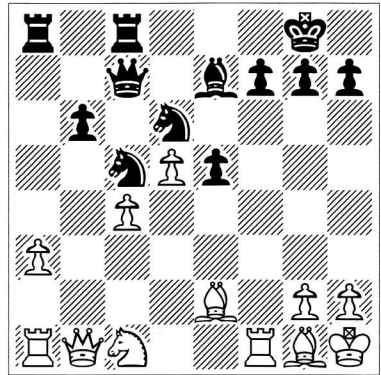
This is too lackadaisical; 22 ... ♗a4! is stronger. I don't see any real compensation after 23 ♗a2 ♗xa3, and 23 ♖b3 ♗c5! is clearly better for Black.

23 ♗g1 (D 14)

Another move like 14 ♖h1, just to improve the position, mainly with the point that now a future ... ♖xa3 will not hit the bishop on e3.

23 ... ♗a4

Here Seirawan suggests 23 ... g6, with the idea of ... f5 and ... e4. This is certainly a logical plan, and probably better than the text, but White could fight on with 24 ♗a2! ♖xa3 25 ♗b4 ♖b3 26 ♖e1. White is down a pawn, but he has significantly activated his game and Black's rook is stuck behind enemy lines. Of course Black could have played 25 ... ♖xa1 26 ♖xa1 or 25 ... ♖ca8 26 ♖xa3 ♖xa3 27 ♗c6, but in both cases White still has a lot of active play.



14 ■ **Wolf-Browne, after 23 ♗g1**

24 ♗a2! ♖d7

The point is that 24 ... ♗xc4 25 ♖c1 ♗ab2 26 ♗g4! snags the exchange, albeit in very weird circumstances after 26 ... ♗xa3 27 ♗xc8 ♖xc8. Tactics dominate and predominate!

25 ♗b4!

Seirawan seems to think that this was a desperation shot. In truth it was partly inspired by my opponent's time trouble, but I also think that it is a good move! Seirawan suggests an alternative 25 ♖b3 f5 26 ♗b4 ♗f6 27 ♗c6 e4 as being clearly better for Black, but I think that even here 28 ♖a1 minimizes the damage. Black is better, but White is not without counterplay.

25 ... ♗c3

25 ... ♗xc4 26 ♗c6 ♗c3 (26 ... ♗d2 27 ♖f5! is a vitally important tactic that makes 25 ♗b4 possible) 27 ♖c2 (now 27 ♖f5 ♖xf5 28 ♗xe7+ ♖f8 29 ♗xf5 ♗xe2 is just winning for Black) ♗xd5 28 ♗xe7+ ♖xe7 29 ♗xc4 ♖c7 (29 ... b5? 30 ♖d2 +-) 30 ♖f5 ♖xc4 31 ♖xf7+ ♖h8 32 ♖a1 and I don't believe that White should be in any trouble here, as Black is very exposed, and his extra pawn very weak.

26 ♖c2 ♗xe2 27 ♖xe2 ♗xc4

This is better than 27 ... ♖xc4 for two reasons. First, White can play

28 ♖c6 f6 29 ♗xb6 with an interesting position; second, he can play 28 ♗xe5 with the point that 28 ... ♗f6? 29 ♖xf6 is very strong.

28 ♖c6 b5?

Better was 28 ... ♖xc6! 29 dxc6 ♗xc6 30 ♖fc1 ♖a4! (30 ... b5? 31 a4!) 31 ♗xb6! ♗e6! (31 ... ♗xa3? 32 ♖xa3!) and Black has full compensation for the exchange.

29 a4

29 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 30 ♗xe5 ♖xa3 ♠, e.g. 31 ♖xa3 ♗xa3 32 ♗d4 f6.

29 ... ♗f6 30 axb5

30 ♖fd1 e4! 31 ♖a2 ♖b2! 32 ♖xb2 ♗xb2 33 ♗xb2 bxa4 is clearly better for Black; 33 ... ♖xc6 34 dxc6 ♗xd1 35 axb5 ♖a1 may be winning but it is very murky.

30 ... ♖a1 31 ♖xa1 ♗xd5 32 ♖d1

At this point I had about five minutes, and Walter had about three, to reach move 40.

32 ... ♗e6

32 ... ♗xb5? 33 ♖a7 ♗b2 34 ♗e4! works out for White.

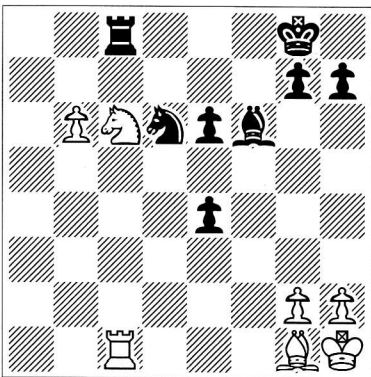
33 ♗a2!

White has sacrificed a pawn to activate everything and create a monster on b5. Of course if White had a pawn on f3, White would be strategically winning, but since he does not, Black will always have the threat of pushing the e-pawn. So probably Black should have some way to use the extra pawn, but from a practical point of view I was very happy.

33 ... e4

Yasser suggests 33 ... ♗g5 as better, giving 34 ♖d3! (to go to c3) e4 35 ♖c3 (?) ♖d6 36 ♗xe6 fxe6 and Black has put his pieces on better squares than in the game, e.g. 37 b6 ♖h8! No doubt he remembered these lines from watching the post mortem, but later Walter and I found the simple 35 ♖d4! which obviously makes the whole 33 ... ♗g5 idea fail. It's not so easy to play Black's game, even with the extra pawn!

34 ♖c1 ♖d6 35 ♗xe6 fxe6 36 b6 (D 15) ♖a8



15 ■

Wolff-Browne, after 36 b6

I still find it amazing that this move does not lose, especially as Walter had maybe two minutes left! White's threat here is 37 ♖e7+! ♗xe7 38 ♖xc8+ ♖xc8 39 b7 winning. Black should not play 36 ... ♖f8, as 37 ♗c5 will be very strong, but either 36 ... ♖h8 37 ♗e3 or 36 ... ♖f7!? 37 b7 (but not 37 ♖e5+?? ♗xe5 38 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 39 b7 as the bishop covers b8!) ♖xb7 38 ♖e5+ ♗xe5 39 ♖xc8 holds Black's disadvantage to a minimum. The text leaves Black with a few more problems, but should still lead to a draw.

37 ♖d1 ♖b7 38 ♖d7 ♖a1! 39 ♖xb7 e3 40 ♖a7

Did I say that I was amazed that Black is not losing? Walter was amazed that White was not losing! It was easy to go wrong on this final move of the

time control, as 40 ♖b8+? ♜f7 41 b7 e2 42 ♖f8+ ♜g6! in fact wins for Black, as 43 b8/♜ ♖xg1+! 44 ♜xg1 e1/♜ is mate!

40 ... ♖b1 41 ♖a2!

Not 41 ♖a3? ♖xb6 42 ♖a5 e2 43 ♖e3 ♖b1 44 ♖xe2 ♖d4 --.

41 ... ♖xb6 42 ♖a5

I agonized over this move for a long time, because I saw the drawn endgame that was approaching, I wanted to play for the win, and I didn't see a direct refutation to 42 ♖a7. Finally, after fifteen minutes of thought, I just didn't trust the move.

As it turns out, it would also have led to rough equality: 42 ♖a7 ♖d4 43 ♖e2 (43 ♖c8 e2! --) ♜f7 44 g3 (44 ♖xe3 or 44 ♖xe3 is refuted by 44 ... ♖b1, and 44 ♖c8 ♖c6 is also winning) ♖b3 (44 ... e5 45 ♖xe3 +-) 45 ♖c6 (45 ♖c8 ♖c5 cuts the knight off and eventually wins it, as 46 ♖c2? e2! 47 ♖c1 ♖d3 is --) e5 46 ♖a5 (46 ♖xe5+ ♖xe5 47 ♖xe3 =; 46 ♜g2 ♜e6 47 ♜f3 ♜d5 gives Black either equality or enough compensation for the piece) ♖c3 47 ♜g2 ♜e6 48 ♜f3 ♖b6 49 ♖b7 (49 ♖a2 e2+) ♜d5 50 ♖xe3 ♜c6 51 ♜e4 ♜xb7 (51 ... ♖xe3? 52 ♖a5+! ♜b5 53 ♖xe3 ♖xe3+ 54 ♜xe3 ♜xa5 55 ♜e4 +-) 52 ♖xb6 ♜xb6 53 ♜xe5 is a little better for White, but should be drawn.

42 ... ♖a6

Now of course 42 ... ♖d4? 43 ♖e2 wins for White because the knight comes back to take the e-pawn.

43 ♖xe3 ♖c3 44 ♖a3

There was no reason to refrain from 44 ♖c2, which forces the issue.

44 ... ♖b4 45 ♖a4 ♖c3 46 ♖c4 ♖xa5 47 ♖a4

This is the point. Black will be forced to give the exchange up because of the pin.

47 ... ♜f7?

As I will explain below in detail, Black should make the endgame a dead draw by playing 47 ... h5! immediately.

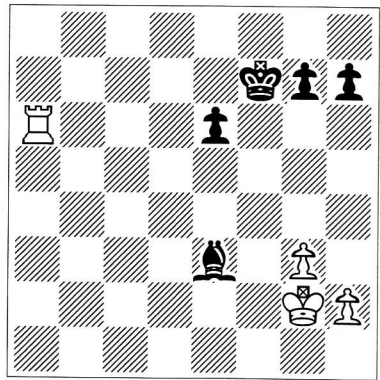
48 g3?

And here 48 g4! was best. Again, this will become clear below.

48 ... ♖b6

Not waiting for me to win the exchange, but there was no reason to wait, except that as before, 48 ... h5 was best.

49 ♖xa6 ♖xe3 50 ♜g2? (D 16)



16 ■

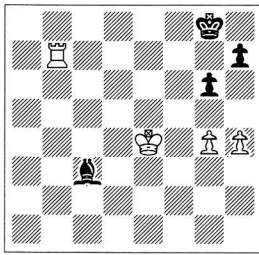
Wolff-Browne, after 50 ♜g2

You Must Remember This

Immediately after the game I consulted existing endgame theory on this type of position, and the notes from here to the end of the game were originally written based on that information. But theory turns out to be wrong! I suggest that the reader play through these notes and try to

ascertain what the mistake is. (Hint: It has been assumed in the past that a certain endgame formation is drawn when in fact it is winning for White.) Other commentators worked under the same assumptions and made the same mistakes. After looking at how the game went we will return to the critical position and see what's wrong with the conventional wisdom (and these notes).

If Black did not have the e-pawn, then this would be a book ♖♙♙♙ versus ♗♙♙♙ endgame. (For example, see pp. 255–256 of *Basic Endgames* by Balashov and Prandstetter.) The correct drawing procedure is to put the pawns on g6 and h5. That way, Black can always maintain the pawn on g6. When White plays g4, Black must take it. Regardless of how White recaptures, Black keeps the pawn on g6 and uses the bishop to patrol the a1–h8 and c1–h6 diagonals, keeping the White king out of g5 and f6. White will get the rook to the seventh rank, restricting the Black king, and try to break through, but if Black defends well, White cannot succeed. At the right moment Black may even bring the bishop to g5 to patrol the h4–d8 diagonal as a way of keeping the White king at bay. One way or another, Black constructs a fortress that cannot be broken.



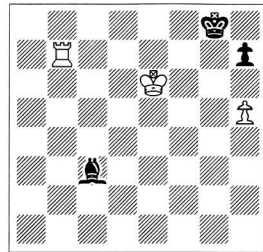
17 ♖/■ Analysis

It is best to play ... h5 right away, because if White succeeds in getting the rook to the seventh and the pawns on g4 and h4, Black can no longer hold the position. For example, consider the position in **Diagram 17**.

If it is Black's move, he cannot stop White from pushing h5 because 1 ... h5 2 g×h5 g×h5 3 ♖f5 just loses the h-pawn. (You may have heard that even this endgame is difficult to win, but that only applies when the bishop is the opposite color to the square of the relevant corner. In other words, if Black had a light squared bishop then the endgame of ♖♙♙♙(h) versus ♗♙ would be extremely difficult to win, but against an h-pawn the dark-squared bishop cannot put up a fight. Try it if you don't believe it.)

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White to move plays 1 h5! and then brings the king to e6. Black must then take the pawn on h5, because if White plays h6 then he checkmates the king, and if Black puts the bishop on the c1–h6 diagonal to stop it, then White plays h×g6 and ♖f6 and takes the g-pawn. So Black takes the pawn and White takes back with the g-pawn. That leads to the type of position shown in **Diagram 18**.



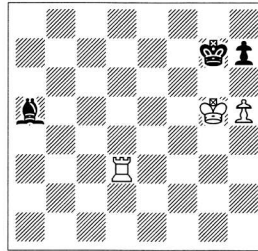
18 ■ Analysis

It is Black to move. White threatens to play 1 h6 and give checkmate. Black can try to stop this in two ways.

a) Black can play 1 ... h6 himself. This endgame is lost, although the

winning procedure is *very* long. Let's play a few moves: 2 ♖f5 ♘d2 3 ♜g6 ♜f8. Now White has to figure out a way to take the h-pawn without letting the Black king get back to the corner in time. The procedure is too long to go through here, but it can be done, essentially by driving the king over to the a-file (!) and kicking the bishop around to worse and worse squares. You can look this one up in a good endgame book if you are curious, as bulletin editor Alex Fishbein and I were the night after the game was played.

b) Black can try to cover the h6 square with the bishop, but this loses much more easily: 1 ... ♘d2 2 ♜f5 ♘e3 (2 ... ♘c1 3 ♜d7 ♘e3 4 ♜c7 is the same thing; 1 ... ♘h6 2 ♜f6 and 1 ... ♜h8 2 ♜f6 are easy) 3 ♜c7 ♘d4 (any other bishop move along the g1-a7 diagonal allows 4 ♜d7 when Black will have no hope of stopping both ♜f6 and h6, either one of which, if Black cannot immediately attack from behind the king or pawn that penetrates, will checkmate Black; e.g., 3 ... ♘b6 4 ♜d7 and now 4 ... ♘e3 5 ♜f6 +-, while 4 ... ♘f2 5 ♜f4! ♘c5 6 h6 ♘a3 7 ♜d1! [the normal method is 7 ♜g7+ ♜h8 8 ♜c7, but here that allows 8 ... ♘d6+] ♘c5 [the best try] 8 ♜d3! and White dominates the bishop sufficiently to penetrate with the king) 4 ♜c4! ♘b6 (4 ... ♘b2 5 h6 +-, 4 ... ♘f2 5 ♜f6 +-, 4 ... ♘g7 5 ♜e6 ♘h6 [5 ... ♘b2 6 h6 +-, 5 ... ♘f8 6 ♜g4+ ♜h8 7 ♜f7 +] 6 ♜c8+ ♜g7 7 ♜c7+ ♜g8 8 ♜f6 +-) 5 ♜g4+! ♜f8 (5 ... ♜h8 6 ♜f6 +-, 5 ... ♜f7 6 h6 +- with the idea of ♜g7+) 6 ♜g3 ♘a5 (other moves lose more quickly, e.g. 6 ... ♘c7 7 ♜d3! intending h6) 7 ♜d3! ♜g7 8 ♜g5! (**D 19**) and with the bishop relegated to the sidelines White can penetrate and win.



19 ■ Analysis

If you have had the patience to work through all this analysis, you now have enough background information to understand what is really going on in this endgame. Now, the fact that Black has an extra e-pawn should make life much easier for him, and the sooner he plays ... h5 and ... g6 together with ... ♜f6, the sooner he assures himself of the draw.

Now Back To Our Show

But both Walter and I were under a curious delusion: we thought the position was drawn no matter what, even with the pawns on g6 and h7. So Walter just casually jettisoned the pawn on e6 to achieve the “easy draw,” and my main strategy was to play as quickly as possible so that he could not adjourn, since I thought that my only chance to win this “easy draw” was to deny him the opportunity to look at it during the adjournment! These mutual misconceptions explain the mistakes we made in the next dozen moves.

50 ... ♘d4 51 ♜f3 g6?

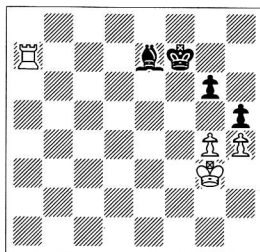
Of course Black should be going for ... h5 as soon as possible in any case, but with the e-pawn on the board the best idea is to play ... h5 and put the king on f6 while keeping the pawn on g7. The e-pawn is an excellent pawn and should not be lightly tossed away!

52 ♖e4 ♗f6 53 ♖a7+ ♜g8 54 g4!

Now the e-pawn is becoming a liability, because White can force it to e5 where it gets in the way of the bishop.

54 ... ♗c3 55 ♜e7 ♗f6 56 ♜x e6 ♜f7 57 ♜a6 ♗c3?

Black has one more defensive resource left in the position. He can transfer the bishop to the h4–d8 diagonal to stop White from playing h4. I wanted to do a detailed analysis of this endgame, but I have discovered



20 ♞/♟ Analysis

that it is too difficult to do in just one day! After spending several hours at it though, I think that it is more probably drawn than won. Black can also put his h-pawn on h6, which might be an even more solid fortress. The problem is that White not only has to kick the bishop out to play h4, but he has to restrict the king at the same time, because a position like **Diagram 20** is drawn.

In other words, Black can bring his king up, wait for White to play h4, and then play ... h5 himself. White still has enormous practical chances to win the endgame, but my bet is that it is theoretically drawn.

58 ♖a7+ ♜g8 59 ♜d7?

59 h4! +-.

59 ... ♗f6 60 ♜f4 ♗b2? 61 ♜c7? ♗f6 62 g5?

This makes Black's life easier. Now the game is clearly drawn.

62 ... ♗d4

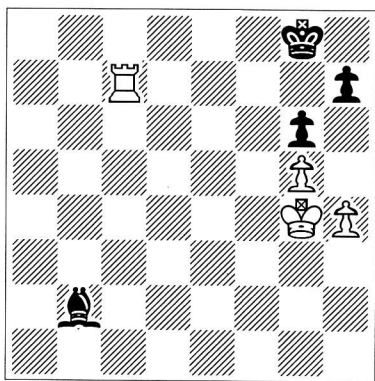
The sealed move. More precise is 62 ... ♗b2, but this is good enough. White's only try is to play h4 and h5.

63 h4 ♗b2! 64 ♜g4 (D 21)

64 ♖a7!? keeps the game going but Black should just play 64 ... ♗c3.

64 ... ♗e5??

Would you have guessed that this is the losing move? The point is this: White can only make progress by trying to play h5. When he does so, Black must be able to take the pawn and then have his bishop on a good square on the a3–f8 diagonal so that if White penetrates with the king to h6, Black can chase it out with ♗f8+. But also, Black must be careful that if White plays g6, Black can take the pawn and get the king out of any mating nets by ... ♜f8. So Black should play 64 ... ♗a3! right away, e.g. 65 h5 g×h5+ 66 ♜×h5



21 ■ Wolff–Browne, after 64 ♜g4

♖b4 (66 ... ♗f8?? 67 g6 +-; 66 ... ♜h8?? 67 g6 +-) 67 ♖a7 ♗c5 68 ♖a6 ♜g7 etc. Black has a fortress that cannot be breached. The problem with the text move is that it puts the bishop on a bad square, so that the only square through which it will be able to transfer to the right diagonal will leave it vulnerable to a tactical trick.

65 ♖c6! ♗b2

65 ... ♗g7 66 h5 g×h5+ 67 ♜×h5 ♗f8 (67 ... ♗e5 68 g6; 67 ... ♗b2 68 ♖c8+ ♜g7 69 ♖c7+ ♜g8 70 ♜h6 +-) 68 g6 +-.

66 ♖a6 ♗c3

66 ... ♗d4 67 ♖a5 ♗c3 68 ♖a4 is the same thing.

67 ♖a4! ♗e5

67 ... ♗g7 68 ♖a8+ ♜f7 69 ♖a7+ ♜g8 70 h5 g×h5+ 71 ♜×h5 ♗f8 (71 ... ♗d4 72 ♖c7 and g6 wins; 71 ... ♜f8 72 ♖b7 ♜g8 73 g6) 72 g6! and White wins.

68 h5! ♗c3

Loses, but also 68 ... g×h5+ 69 ♜×h5 ♗d6 70 ♖a8+ ♜g7 (70 ... ♗f8 71 g6+-) 71 ♖a7+ ♜g8 72 g6 h×g6+ 73 ♜×g6 ♜f8 74 ♜f6 ♜g8 (74 ... ♜e8 75 ♜e6 threatens mate and hits the bishop!) 75 ♖g7+ ♜h8 (75 ... ♜f8 76 ♖d7) 76 ♜g6 and checkmate very soon.

69 h6

Now Black cannot stop White from winning the h-pawn.

69 ... ♜f7 70 ♖c4 ♗e5 71 ♜f3 ♗d6 72 ♖c8 ♜e6 73 ♖h8!

This is why it is so fatal to allow the pawn to get to h6, because Black needs the g7 square to protect the h-pawn.

73 ... ♜f5 74 ♖×h7 ♜×g5

74 ... ♗e5 75 ♖e7.

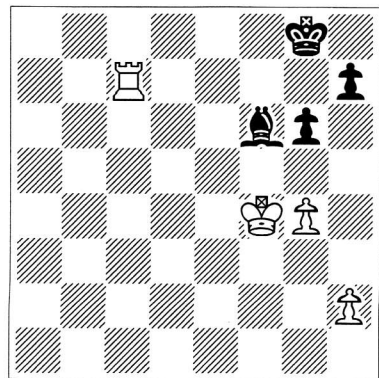
75 ♖d7 1-0

Black resigned, because 75 ... ♗e5 (75 ... ♗a3 76 h7 +-) 76 ♖d5 wins. Not a perfect game by any means, nor a pretty one, but definitely a hard and rich fight!

Just For the Record

After the game was over, we all published annotations critical of White's 62nd and Black's 64th moves based upon a faulty premise. Take a look again at the position after Black's 61st move (**Diagram 22**).

I played 62 g5, a move that was afterward thought to have thrown away what winning chances White has. In fact, though, it is probably the easiest way to win! After the further moves 62 ... ♗d4 63 h4 ♗b2 64 ♜g4, Browne's 64 ... ♗e5 was universally condemned, including by me in the notes above. The conventional wisdom was that Black could have drawn with 64 ... ♗a3, thereby shifting the bishop to the correct diagonal. Indeed, this has been "known" endgame theory

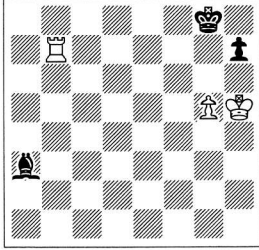


22 □

Wolff-Browne, after 61 ... ♗f6

for over fifty years. (See Keres' *Practical Chess Endings*, algebraic edition, p. 185: "It is difficult to see how White can make any progress." Also, the relevant section of the *Encyclopedia of Chess Endings* shows a fragment of Ljubojevic-Keene, Palma de Mallorca 1972 [Black was the strong side], evaluating the position as a draw.)

Three months after this game was played, I got a phone call from Noam Elkies, an endgame composer of considerable repute (and the author of this issue's "Chess Art In the Computer Age"). The assessment



23 □

Analysis

of this endgame as a draw seemed suspect to him. Sure enough, he was able to work out a clear win for White, even if Black gets the bishop to the correct diagonal immediately. Consider **Diagram 23**, a standard position of a type that Black cannot avoid, even after the "correct" 64 ... ♖a3.

White wins as follows: 1 ♖b3 ♘d6 (or 1 ... ♘c5, but not 1 ... ♘f8 2 ♖b8 ♜g7 3 ♖b7+ ♜g8 4 g6! h6 5 ♖b8 and 6 ♖xh8!) 2 ♜g4 and on any move that does not hang the bishop, 3

♖b5! "White's move order prevented Black from answering this with ... ♘c1," explained Noam, "and no other bishop placement is good enough."

The proof is in the variations:

a) 3 ... ♘h2(c7) 4 ♖d5! followed by ♜h5 and ♜h6.

b) 3 ... ♘f8(a3) 4 ♜f5 and:

b1) 4 ... ♘g7 5 g6! h6 6 ♖b8+ ♘f8 7 ♜f6 +-.

b2) 4 ... h6 5 g6 [5 g×h6? ♜h7! 6 ♜f6 ♜×h6 =] ♘d6 [5 ... ♘e7 6 ♖b8+ ♜g7 7 ♖b7 ♜f8 8 g7+] 6 ♜f6 and 7 g7 +-.

b3) 4 ... ♘e7 5 ♖b8+ ♜f7 6 ♖b7 and because Black's bishop and king are so badly tied to the h-pawn, White can leisurely bring his king to h6 and win.

c) 3 ... ♘d4(c3) 4 ♜h5 ♘g7 (or else ♖b8+, ♖b7+, ♜h6) 5 g6! h6 6 ♖b8+ ♘f8 7 ♖xh8+ ♜xh8 8 ♜xh6 +-.

d) 3 ... ♘d6 4 ♜f5 ♘c7 5 ♖d5! ♘b6 (5 ... ♘g3 6 ♜f6 ♘c7 is the same thing) 6 ♜f6 ♘c7 7 ♖d7 ♘a5 8 ♖g7+! ♜h8 9 ♜f7 and wins.

Noam suggests that Black has one last defense, but it also fails: 2 ♜g4 ♘f8!? sets the trap that if 3 ♖b5, then 3 ... h6! 4 g6 ♘d6 5 ♜f5 ♘g3! sets up a tough defense (e.g., 6 ♖a5 ♘h4 7 ♖a8+ ♜g7 8 ♖a7+ ♜g8 9 g7 ♜h7 10 ♜e6 ♜g8 =). White wins, though, by playing instead 3 ♜f5! ♘c5 4 ♖d3! ♘b4 (4 ... ♘e7 5 ♖c3! ♘b4 6 ♖c8+ ♜f7 7 ♖c7+ ♜g8 [7 ... ♘e7 8 ♜g4 etc.] 8 ♜f6 and Black has no bishop check to drive the king away, so White wins) 5 ♜f6 ♘a5. Black has set up a last ditch defense by covering the d8 and c3 squares, but not surprisingly, the bishop is awkwardly placed on a5 and White can win: 6 ♖b3 ♘d8+ 7 ♜f5 ♘a5 (7 ... ♘c7 8 ♖b5, or if 6 ... ♘c7 7 ♖b5 ♘d8+ 8 ♜e6! +-) 8 ♜g4 ♘c7 (Black must swing the bishop around quickly enough to be able to

check the White king off of h6) 9 ♖b5! and depending upon where Black moves the bishop, he loses, as shown above.

So I was doubly lucky. Not only did Walter defend badly, but my bad decision on move 62 turned out to be correct after all!

Much To My Surprise

Thus it went throughout the remaining games. In my next game, against Alex Yermolinsky, I equalized quickly out of the opening and then got outplayed. But Alex failed to find the killer on move 40, and should have been content with a draw. He was not, and went to considerable trouble to stretch his position to the losing point, whereupon I collected the point. Then, against Dmitry Gurevich, I played an important novelty to gain a large advantage out of the opening. As you might expect, this turned out to be a mistake, and I could only draw this game.

And somehow, I found myself tied for second place with Gulko, just a half point behind Alex Sherzer going into the last round. Gulko's nerves gave out, and he was unable to win a position that was comfortably better for him. Sherzer's nerves gave out, and he failed to find a winning shot in time pressure in a crazed battle against Fedorowicz. When the pieces settled onto their squares after the time pressure was over, Sherzer was busted, and quickly resigned. And somehow I managed to squeeze victory out of an equal endgame against Boris Men to win the tournament. Much to my surprise, I was the U.S. Champion, and along with Sherzer, Gulko, Seirawan, and Dmitry Gurevich, a qualifier for the 1993 FIDE interzonal.

Somehow I found myself tied for second place with Gulko, just a half point behind Alex Sherzer going into the last round.

Middle-Class At Last

The immediate effect of this victory was that I would actually have to report normal, middle-class earnings for 1992 on my tax returns. It was very nice to have my immediate financial crunch alleviated. (I think that the people for whom I did my last-minute Christmas shopping were also very happy!) This meant also that my original brainstorming list had to be completely revamped since the title of U.S. Champion makes it possible to do many more chess-related projects.

From an emotional perspective, the fact that I had climbed literally to the top of American chess was a strange and awesome fact. I still don't believe that the little boy who first opened *My Sixty Memorable Games* at the age of eight has grown up to be the man who became U.S. Champion. From a "grandmaster point of view," the title is nothing special. It is a very good result, but that is all—a 2650 performance in a category 12 tournament. And that is all that I expect any chess player to think of it. Yet to me it is something more. It is a justification, an achievement that I can take out of the chess world and show to people who know nothing of chess to explain what I've been spending my years working for.

I said, for the first time in my life, "I am the U.S. Chess Champion." It is a time to take stock of what I want to do in the future.

Dining Out

Several days after the tournament was over, I was eating Christmas dinner at the home of my girlfriend's boss, Stephen Breyer. He is the chief judge of the U.S. First Circuit and gained fame as a "finalist" when President Clinton was choosing a new Supreme Court Justice earlier this year. Seated immediately to my left was Charles Fried, the former Solicitor General in the Reagan Administration. We were exchanging pleasantries, when he asked me what I "do." What I "do," of course, is play chess. Just like, say, Dee Brown plays basketball. But if I try to explain this to someone I find that his eyes will glaze over. I had come to falling back on what I "am"—that is, a chess grandmaster. This time, I responded, for the first time in my life, "I am the U.S. Chess Champion." Ah, of course. To merely "play" chess is silly. But if you are the U.S. Champion, then it all makes sense. Never mind what your rating is or what category tournaments you play in. The world turns on credentials to all but the initiated few, and in this highly credentialed atmosphere my explanation made perfect sense.

For me, it is a stopping place. Not to say that I intend to stop playing chess! It is merely a place to stop and look around, to know that I have actually accomplished something that I am really proud of, and a time to take stock of what I want to do in the future.

Lacing Up

As it turned out, two months after the U.S. Championship ended the schism occurred between FIDE and the new Professional Chess Association (PCA). *The New York Times* may be right in saying that chess has adopted the "anarchy and attitude of boxing." Now, dueling world championship matches are underway in England (where I am serving as a commentator and bulletin editor for Kasparov–Short) and The Netherlands/Oman, and the entire future of professional chess is up in the air.

The FIDE interzonal took place as scheduled in Biel, Switzerland in July. Although I played well at the beginning of the tournament, I finished with a +1 score, not enough to qualify for the candidates matches. (Gata Kamsky was the only American player to make it through.) So my chess future now consists of the next U.S. Championship and the PCA cycle qualification tournament, both scheduled for December. Naturally, I hope to succeed in both events.

The chances of repeating as U.S. Champion and of becoming a candidate for the PCA world championship are not large. If the chance of qualifying for the interzonal was one out of three, plus some weight in my favor because I was rated in the top half of the field, then the chance of advancing from the PCA tournament is at best more like one in seven. So all I can do is work hard before the event and work hard during the event and hope things go my way. As a professional chessplayer, I'm ready to put on the gloves. ♁

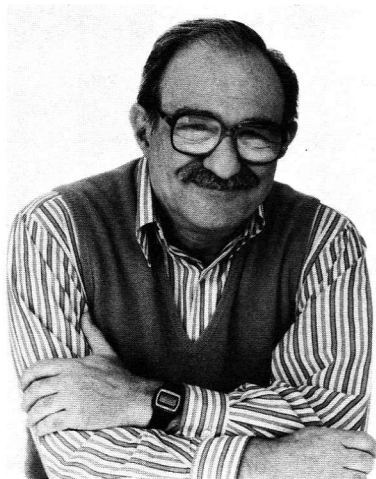
The Education of a Chess Anthologist

Burt Hochberg

For centuries writers great and small have found in chess a rich source of narrative, dramatic, metaphoric, and psychological possibilities. Yet the best of this literature, especially that produced in the second half of this century, has remained virginally unanthologized and virtually unknown to those readers who would most appreciate it.

The best “modern” chess anthology, Jerome Salzman’s *The Chess Reader*, was published way back in 1949; Salzman can hardly be blamed for not including what was yet to be written. But despite his book’s considerable virtues, it is burdened by numbing stretches of ancient poetry and too many snippets of little or no significance. Marcello Truzzi’s excellent 1975 anthology *Chess in Literature*, though more contemporary, is limited to short stories.

The compilers of two collections published in England—*Chess Pieces* by Norman Knight (1949, second edition 1968), and *King, Queen and Knight* by Norman Knight and Will Guy—scratched tentatively at the jewels buried in full-length works of literature, but they relied too heavily on very short excerpts and second-rate writers and not at all on the services of a competent editor. (While scouring these books for leads, I was elated to discover in *King, Queen and Knight* a



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terrific chess scene in one of the major works of Russian literature, Gogol's *Dead Souls*. But why didn't I remember it? Checking my copy of *Dead Souls* I found out why: the scene is about checkers!) The much more recent 1991 collection by the Englishman Richard Peyton, *Sinister Gambits*, contains only short stories that deal with murder or mystery, all of which, I believe, have been anthologized before.

I knew that I
would have to dig
deep into my own
pockets.

So to my knowledge, there has never been a collection of chess literature consisting of stories and entire scenes drawn from the work of the best modern writers. And while preparing a new anthology of chess belles lettres, *The 64-Square Looking Glass* (published earlier this year by Times Books), I found out why: money. My publisher and I had agreed that *The 64-Square Looking Glass* would be a serious effort to do justice to the literature, and I was paid a relatively serious advance. But by the time I knew what I wanted in my book, I knew also that I would have to dig deep into my own pockets to pay for it.

Currently, copyright law protects works published in the previous 75 years, and places anything older in the public domain. Excerpts from more recent works may generally be freely reprinted if they do not exceed 250 words, though there are significant exceptions. For everything else you have to pay. The fees that writers and their publishers and

WISE CHOICES: THE 64-SQUARE LOOKING GLASS, INSIDE AND OUT

Christopher Chabris

The 64-Square Looking Glass (Times Books, New York, 1993, \$25.00 hardcover) blends classic and modern writing, skilfully mixing fiction, poetry, and nonfiction.

It opens with a surprise, an essay on "The Romance of Chess" by syndicated columnist Charles Krauthammer, who takes a hard look at the popular psychology—not to say psychopathology—of the game. Other surprising but excellent inclusions include Nobel prizewinner Sinclair Lewis and younger novelists Julian Barnes and Martin Amis.

The standards are well-represented, beginning with Vladimir Nabokov (excerpts from *The Defense* and *Speak, Memory*) and Stefan Zweig. "The Royal Game" has a reputation as the ultimate chess novel, but factors other than intrinsic merit may be at work. It was Zweig's last work, completed before his suicide, and its protagonist uses chess to survive imprisonment by the Nazis—a positive image for the game. *The Defense*, by contrast, presents an

eccentric grandmaster who goes crazy during a key game; and as one of Nabokov's earlier works, it is often compared unfavorably to later achievements like *Lolita* and *Pale Fire*.

Walter Tevis's *The Queen's Gambit* tells an obliquely prophetic story of a young woman who rises to world-class heights, although her career resembles that of Bobby Fischer more than Judit Polgar. Also relevant to current issues is Brad Leithauser's *Hence*, about a future match between a powerful computer and the world champion. Both are excerpted, along with familiar writers like Lewis Carroll, Ian Fleming, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., and Woody Allen. Less is more: the book benefits from omitting Jeffrey Archer's "Checkmate," as well as Amy Tan's much-anthologized "Rules of the Game" (part of the book and movie *The Joy Luck Club*), a contemporary story that resonates with Chinese Americans but has chess aspects consistent only with fable or fantasy.

I am sure that I will return to Burt Hochberg's fine anthology again and again.

agents ask for permission to reprint their work are often substantial. I'm not complaining—most of them deserve every penny of it—but when you add up all those fees it's easy to see why previous anthologists filled their books with musty old poetry and one-paragraph bites.

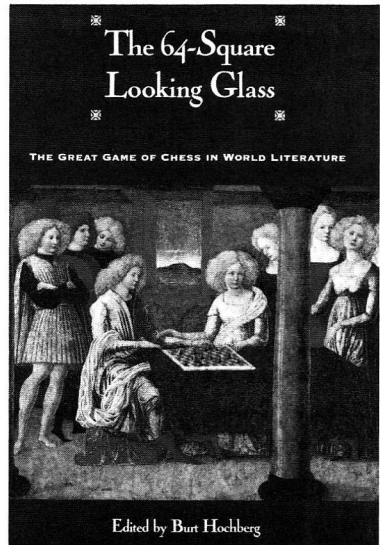
But books like this aren't expected to make money, I told myself. What's really important is to create something good, something to be proud of. But pride is a very expensive commodity. In the end, the rights to all the material in my book, plus various incidental fees, travel expenses, phone bills, etc., came to almost fifty percent more than my advance. And in many cases I was given permission to use the material only in a single edition of my book, which means that for a second edition or a paperback reprint, I'll have to repeat the whole process and reach into my pockets again.

Money was only one of several hurdles. Although I am pleased with the way my book turned out, its creation was an ordeal I don't think I would ever undertake again. (Well, hardly ever.) Maybe my experiences as detailed here will save another chess-loving fool from spending pots of his own money and a year and a half of his life dealing with literary agents and other disagreeable and/or incompetent people in order to create a book that pitifully few people will buy, that may never see a reprint or paperback edition, and that places itself and its editor at the mercy of reviewers who know little about chess and nothing at all about its great literature.

The Greatest Of Them All?

If you've seen my book and wondered why your favorite story isn't in it, the reason may be that your favorite story is not my favorite story. For example, one reviewer was surprised that I had omitted "the greatest chess story of them all," Dunsany's "The Three Sailors Gambit." I omitted it, of course, because I had a different opinion of it.

Theoretically, an anthology reflects the personal taste of its compiler, since it is he who decides what to include and what to leave out. I say "theoretically" because, in the event, some decisions are taken out of his hands. I wanted to include Agatha Christie's story "A Chess Problem," starring Hercule Poirot. But although it had already appeared in at least two anthologies (Truzzi and Peyton), Christie's daughter (and literary executor) refused permission to reprint it. I was told that all of Christie's Poirot material had been placed under a print embargo. No reason was given, but I suspect her literary heirs want to avoid diluting the Poirot franchise, which has much greater commercial potential in film and television.



Faxing Sweden

That was only a minor disappointment. Much more stressful was the episode concerning Ingmar Bergman's 1957 film masterpiece *The Seventh Seal*. In the film, Antonius Block returns from the Crusades to find his country ravaged by the Black Plague. When Death comes for him in the person of a cloaked and hooded old man, Block offers to forfeit his life only if Death is able to defeat him at chess. The game, which takes place outdoors, is split into several scenes that are inserted at strategic points in the film. At one point, Death disguises himself as a priest and inveigles Block, during confession, to reveal his game plan, and thus armed achieves a winning position. In the final scene, Block, seeing that a nearby young couple and their child are in danger of being noticed by Death, distracts Death long enough for the innocent family to escape.

I wanted to end my book with that final scene. I asked the American publisher of the screenplay for the usual world English-language reprint rights to a couple of excerpts, but I was granted only U.S. rights; those for the rest of the world were held by Svensk Filmindustri in Stockholm. This is a common situation—to obtain world rights it is often necessary to get permission from publishers or agents in several countries. I duly wrote to Stockholm expecting a contract in return.

Instead I was told that Bergman had denied my request. Assuming some misunderstanding, I called his agent. If I knew the reasons for Bergman's decision, I coaxed, maybe I could persuade him to change his mind. I asked to speak with him personally. I was told that Mr. Bergman lives on a remote Scandinavian island and communicates only through his representatives; that his birthday was coming up that week, he hates his birthdays, he is being visited by all his children, he is quite depressed about the whole thing, it would be a very bad time to ask for anything; and that he is weary of seeing *The Seventh Seal* always associated with chess.

I wanted to appeal to Bergman in my own words. If I faxed a letter to his Swedish representative, would she be good enough to see that Bergman himself read it? She agreed, and I spent an entire evening composing an impassioned plea.

Six days later my fax machine dispensed the bad news: "Apart from his [Bergman's] personal wish not to include the requested passages, he also feels his publishers might react. So I am afraid that there is nothing more to be done." Since I had already received U.S. rights, which Bergman did not control, his concern for his publishers was baffling. But when the game is clearly lost, you have to resign. Since my book was to be distributed throughout the English-speaking world, it would have to do without Bergman. I was profoundly disappointed.

Agents and Other Creatures

Anthony Saily kindly sent me a story by the Soviet emigré writer Vasily Aksyonov. Aksyonov's 1961 novel *A Ticket to the Stars*, which dealt with

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such taboo subjects as teenage sex, made him one of the leading and most controversial writers of his generation in the Soviet Union. In 1979 he tried to create an uncensored literary anthology entitled *Metropol*, and in 1980, after resigning from the Writers' Union following the expulsion of two fellow editors, he left the Soviet Union and eventually settled in the United States.

His story concerns a young grandmaster who, recognized by a stranger on a train, is persuaded to play a game of chess with him, which he intentionally loses. Originally published in the Soviet Union in 1965, it subsequently appeared in two different English translations. The first translator was unfamiliar with English idiom, the second was unfamiliar with chess, and neither appreciated the irony of the story, which the author had loudly proclaimed with his use of quotation marks around the second word of the title: "The 'Victory'—A Story With Exaggerations." The first translator omitted the quotation marks; the second changed the title to the insipid "The Grand Master."

Despite its inadequate translations, the story intrigued me, and I resolved to use it. But I would need a truer translation and, need I mention it, the permission of the author.

Aksyonov teaches at an American university, and I eventually managed to obtain his home phone number. He was delighted with the prospect of reaching a new audience and promised to send me the Russian original of his story at once. He gave me the number of his agent and asked me to contact her to take care of the formal arrangements.

His agent and I agreed on a fee, and I awaited the contract. When Aksyonov's Russian manuscript arrived a day or two later, I decided to have a go at translating it myself. My knowledge of Russian is limited, but with the aid of three Russian/English dictionaries, the two previous translations, and Russian-language experts Hanon W. Russell and Emanuel Sztejn, I succeeded after many hours of enjoyable labor in producing a good version. I submitted it to Aksyonov and later called him to clear up a couple of small points.

Weeks passed and still no contract from Aksyonov's agent. My increasingly urgent phone calls to her had no effect except to raise my blood pressure. Feeling the hot breath of my deadline, I called her to plead for the contract right away: the book could not be published until all contracts were signed.

"Mr. Aksyonov is unavailable," she blithely replied. "He's in Moscow for the summer and I can't get him to approve the contract until he gets back."

I could feel the ulcers forming, and I did not maintain a professional calm. "I've got a goddam deadline coming up!" I shouted. "There's no time to revise the whole book. What the hell am I supposed to do *now*?"

"Maybe you should drop the story," she suggested.

It seemed to me that a literary agent's job does not include sabotag-

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professional calm.**

ing the client. I imagined putting my hands around her neck and squeezing; instead, I called Aksyonov's home and spoke to his son, who gave me his father's number in Moscow. When I reached him and told him the story, he was silent for a moment. "She said 'drop it'?" he asked, incredulous. I said I could no longer work with his agent and now needed his personal permission. A few days later he cabled his assent.

And a few days after that, *mirabile dictu*, with Aksyonov still "unavailable" in Moscow, I received the contract from his agent.

Sorting the Men Out From the Boys

The 64-Square Looking Glass consists of 44 items by 43 authors (two are by the incomparable Vladimir Nabokov), so a few glitches in its preparation were to be expected. I was prepared for some inefficiency on the part of clerical personnel at the biggest publishing houses, but not for casual unconcern and gross incompetence.

Although publishers receive thousands of permission requests every year, their rights and permissions departments are often inadequately staffed to handle the volume. One harried young woman at a major publisher complained to me: "They make an incredible amount of money from selling rights, but they don't give a damn about us."

It can take six to eight weeks, even longer, to get a response to a permission request. The long delays are bad enough, but what can you say when you've waited a couple of months only to be told that foreign rights are held by some other publisher and you realize you have another two-month delay in store? Or that the rights to the work you are interested in have reverted to the author, present address unknown?

Or when finally a contract arrives and it's for something you didn't request? I wrote to Faber and Faber in London for permission to use a poem by Ezra Pound that had appeared in his *Collected Shorter Poems*. They sent me a contract for a poem by W.H. Auden, whose own collection of poems had the same title and was also published by Faber. A careless but understandable mistake. I wrote back to ask for a corrected contract, which I soon received along with a humble apology. More than a year has now passed, and every few months I get a dunning letter from Faber insisting that I pay for the Auden poem even though the mistaken contract had been voided long ago.

After a particularly galling experience with an incompetent clerk, I aired my frustrations in a letter to Howard Watson, a friendly and particularly helpful permissions director for a publishing group in England. Mr. Watson replied, in part: "You think you have a bad time. I have to do this for a living! Yes, it is indeed a bit of a bummer, this permissions lark. However, it does sort the men out from the boys."

As I said before, I wouldn't want to go through it all again. But when I look at my book sitting so handsomely on my shelf, I'm glad I didn't know what I was getting into. ♣

"You think you
have a bad time.
I have to do this
for a living!"

A Great Chess Movie

Frank Brady

Searching for Bobby Fischer

Directed by Steven Zaillian; written by Steven Zaillian based on the book by Fred Waitzkin; starring Joe Mantegna, Laurence Fishburne, Joan Allen, Max Pomeranc, and Ben Kingsley
Paramount Pictures, 1993, 110 minutes, rated PG

Viewing a film is like having a dream. We're in the dark, passively reclining. The roles and situations of the characters, exhibited to us in full panorama, are virtually limitless in number and type: abstract and real, joyous and horrific, existential and delusory. Dreams and films can both produce deep emotional reactions, and sometimes we assume the personalities of their leading characters.

Searching for Bobby Fischer, a film based on the book of the same name by Fred Waitzkin, is the true story of his son Josh's initiation into the ancient cabals of chessplayers. This epic ramble through the world of chess shows realistically how the game can elicit our fascination and love, and sometimes our bitterness and frustration. It is a pleasant but intense dream, much more than a treatise on the game's immense appeal: the film examines the anxiousness and desperation lurking in the labyrinthine path to excellence, and probes the sacred relationships of father to son, student to teacher, and prodigy to himself.

Josh Waitzkin, a New York chess *wunderkind* who is now 16 years old and has recently completed the requirements for the International Master title, started playing the game when he was six, after learning the moves—like Capablanca—simply by watching others play. Genius, or

Frank Brady founded *Chessworld* magazine, edited *Chess Life*, and wrote the bestselling *Profile of a Prodigy: The Life and Games of Bobby Fischer*. He is a film scholar and a professor at St. John's University in New York.

Searching for Bobby Fischer is an homage to difficulty mastered, perseverance rewarded.

the gift of prodigy, sometimes comes from God, or the head of Zeus, the film seems to say. But the second necessity for the development of a great chessplayer is a lifelong study of the game. We watch Josh as he confronts this daunting regimen. The movie follows the basic plot of the book, which describes Josh's rise from chess beginner to challenger for the national primary school championship, while omitting chapters concerning trips to Moscow, Bimini, and Pasadena, and other side issues that would have impeded the film's narrative flow.

The eight-year-old who portrays Josh in the film (Max Pomeranc, also a New Yorker) is perfectly typecast. He not only looks remarkably like Josh did at the same age, but is currently among the top 100 chessplayers of his own age group in the country. His manner of handling the chess pieces and clock is completely authentic, right down to the way he uses a captured piece to hit the button. Best of all, his performance is more than an impersonation. He *becomes* Josh Waitzkin, and gets inside him as only a precocious chessplayer who has shared similar formative experiences could. His body language illustrates some of the angst and range of feelings that chess creates in its devotees: he bites his lips when he is tense, stares off into space when bored, and looks proud, almost defiant—but not arrogant—after making a strong move.

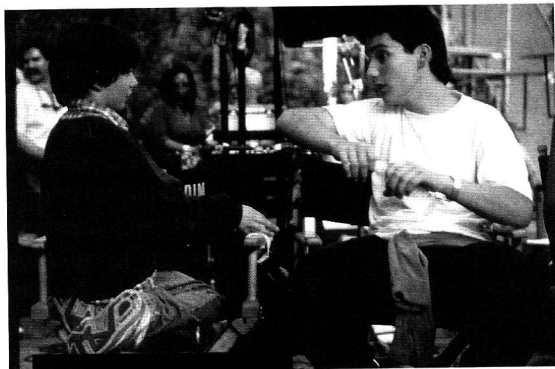
He wears dirty sneakers, reminiscent of the once sartorially slipshod Bobby Fischer, whom the young Josh takes as his idol. Sporadically, we

actually see and hear the real Bobby in this film—in footage taken for the most part from old television news and talk shows. This glimpse of the “old” Bobby just before and after Reykjavik has a ghostly feel.

One of the most piquant aspects of *Searching for Bobby Fischer* is the way it elevates the game. It is a homage to difficulty mastered, perseverance rewarded. Other films about chess, such as the Swiss-made *Dangerous Moves* and the recent

American thriller *Knight Moves* (reviewed in *ACJ* #1, pp. 105–107), tend to banalize the game and turn chess into nothing more than a backdrop for a psychological drama or torrid romance. In *Searching for Bobby Fischer*, though, we actually see

the Latvian Gambit being played and a Rubinstein ending being studied. All the moves are real, not screen concoctions. Look fast and hard and you'll notice the famous Réti-Tartakower 11-move grandmaster checkmate. When Josh is playing in the national championship against the character Jonathan Poe (based on the odd Canadian prodigy Jeff Sarwer from the book), he is a tempo behind in a pawn race; although his



Max Pomeranc (left) and the real Josh Waitzkin (right) on the set of *Searching for Bobby Fischer*.

opponent queens first, Josh is able to check, forcing his opponent to move his king, which lets Josh pick up the queen.

Similarly, there are also discussions of chess theory, almost unheard of in other films that touch upon chess. Like many young players, Josh enjoys bringing his queen out early in the game. His chess coach Bruce Pandolfini, brilliantly played almost like a Zen master by Ben Kingsley (Oscar winner for *Gandhi*), tries to teach Josh the reasons why such maneuvers are unsound. As he and legions of others have written, Pandolfini explains to Josh that early queen moves can waste time and hand the initiative to the opponent, who can develop new pieces while attacking the queen at the same time. Elementary, of course, but probably enlightening to most of the film's audience. Probing more complex chess issues, during one meditative lesson Pandolfini asks Josh to explain why Black stands better in a position they are examining. Josh responds categorically, "Black has the advantage because White has more islands. If you have more pawn islands, you have weaknesses."

The relationship between Josh and his teacher is explored deeply in the film, with the result that neither character is a one-dimensional caricature; they are both revealed to have strengths and weaknesses, on and off the board. The coach agrees to accept Josh as a student primarily because he, Pandolfini, is searching for another Bobby Fischer in his own life. "Your son creates like Fischer," Pandolfini tells Josh's father during an intimate moment. "He sees like him. I want back what Bobby Fischer took with him when he disappeared." Josh wants to excel but also intermittently feels trapped and bullied into study and memorization. Pandolfini wants Josh to take the game more seriously, to concentrate, to visualize. In one dramatic moment, he sweeps the pieces to the floor and demands that Josh solve the problem at hand by staring at the empty board. At times, Josh wants nothing more than a quick vacation to play with his adult friends, the chess hustlers in Washington Square Park (one of whom, Vinnie, is played by Laurence Fishburne).

In a particularly brutal scene, Pandolfini tries to convince Josh that it is wrong to judge a move on the basis of how it affects us emotionally. He makes light of the "Master Chess Certificate" he has devised for excellent students, so coveted by Josh. He wants the boy to play the next move, rather than waste time talking of future rewards. He tells the boy that the certificate is worthless. On the verge of tears, and without empty bravura, Josh demands his accolade. Josh and his teacher are hardly stick



Bruce Pandolfini (Ben Kingsley, left) and Josh Waitzkin (Max Pomeranc, right) study together.

"Your son creates like Fischer. He sees like him. I want back what Bobby Fischer took with him when he disappeared."



figures. They are flesh and blood characters, true to themselves and to the dialectic of their relationship.

Josh's father Fred, played by Joe Mantegna in a less world-weary interpretation than most of his previous acting performances, is a man at odds with himself. He is proud of his son, hoping that the boy will someday become world champion. But he is torn because he wants Josh to lead a happy life, and he is un-

sure of himself as a guide and mentor. In this sense, the film departs from the book, in which Fred's mix of emotions runs to greater extremes: love and pride alternate with rage and near-hatred as the father struggles to accept his son's superior talent.

The look, or *mise-en-scène*, of *Searching for Bobby Fischer* is one of verisimilitude. The chess clubs and tournaments, the players themselves (one can spot such real-life stars as Joel Benjamin and Roman Dzindzichashvili), and the smoke and din of the chess world are so accurately created that one can almost smell and taste the hallowed and combative places where serious chess is played. The ambient sound is enhanced and echoed as the chess clock is hammered and the pieces banged onto the board, louder and louder, like so many gunshots: the result is striking and unforgettable. Extreme closeups of Josh in concentration, filmed in shadowy lighting, lend an expressionistic feeling to the film. At one point, Pandolfini's voice is heard over closeups of the pieces, suggesting that each pawn and knight and rook is charged with a life of its own in a world in miniature.

Searching for Bobby Fischer cleanly captures the essence of a little boy's struggle to become a champion. The episodic narrative of his life and times has a faster pace than in the book, giving the story more impact and believability. Even though the film relied on a few fictive additions to achieve points of drama, it deserves praise for its heroic theme and for so handsomely apprehending the reality and persona of Josh Waitzkin.

Indeed, the film is most powerful when depicting the expressive sparks in Josh as he engages in combat on and off the board with his father, his teacher, and his opponents. But the boy is a decent and loving child, disturbed by Pandolfini's edict that in order to succeed, he must have contempt for his opponent. "Bobby Fischer shows contempt," the teacher intones. "I'm not him," Josh retorts bravely. Through Josh's life, *Searching for Bobby Fischer* for the first time brings the true world of the chess struggle triumphantly to the screen. ♣

**Searching for
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Kasparov Revealed

Christopher Chabris

Mortal Games: The Turbulent Genius of Garry Kasparov

Fred Waitzkin

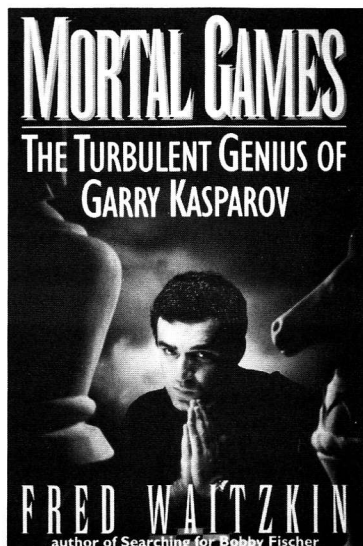
G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1993

302 pp., hardcover, \$24.95

Garry Kasparov may be the strongest chessplayer of all time, but he is certainly the most overexposed. The 13th world champion writes constantly about his life, his politics, and his games, appears on television wherever he goes, readily grants interviews, and meets his fans with an eager public face. He is no Arnold Schwarzenegger, but compared to Anatoly Karpov, who for years answered only pre-screened questions with the caution of a born bureaucrat, or Bobby Fischer, who limits his accessibility and offers insults or absurdities whenever he does meet the press, Kasparov is a traditional celebrity, a virtually open book in his professional life.

So what can we expect to learn from Fred Waitzkin's new book? Surprisingly, a lot. *Mortal Games* contains no chess moves, no diagrams, no annotations, no charts listing tournament or match results, not even any photographs (except the stylized cover image of Kasparov seemingly praying to the reader). Nevertheless it contains more insight into the man than any previous work in English, including Kasparov's several autobiographies.

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In fact, *Mortal Games* (the title is apparently a word play on the “immortal game”) is not a biography at all, but a portrait, or perhaps an extended profile, that could easily have appeared as a series of *New Yorker* articles rather than a book. A portrait is more appropriate than a biography for a 30-year-old subject whose career is still moving forward, far from ready to be summed up and dissected. The narrative is essentially structured as a look at Kasparov’s peripatetic, globetrotting life during the period from

early 1990 to mid-1991, with a few detours into the past, and an epilogue updating events through early 1993. (The first news of the “breakaway” from FIDE appears in a footnote.) Thus, the material does not overlap significantly with the periods covered in Kasparov’s own popular accounts, *Child of Change* (published in 1987) and *Unlimited Challenge* (1990).

Like Waitzkin’s previous all-prose book on chess, *Searching for Bobby Fischer* (now in print as a Penguin paperback), *Mortal Games* has an active

EXCERPTS FROM *MORTAL GAMES*

I was nervous about going to see Garry after the loss of game 7 [in New York]. I had heard from [his wife] and members of the coaching team that it was better not to be around him while Kasparov was digesting defeat. I had called to suggest visiting another night, but he asked me to come. Garry was so pleased to be visited; he walked quickly across the room to shake my hand. He looked at me with the guilty smirk of a little boy: What can I do? I was bad. Do you still think things will turn out okay? I rubbed the back of his head, as though he were [my son] Josh. “Yesterday was a bad time for me. It was the worst blunder of my career.” He shook his head slowly. “Fred, I was in a black hole. A black hole.” He was still in a black hole. Things had gone wrong and he didn’t have the answers. Garry seemed physically diminished. His shoulders were stooped. His body felt soft. He was like a puppy. You could tell him to sit or stand, suggest turning on the television or taking a walk,

and he would do it without question. He had broken trust with his sense of timing. “I feel shattered,” he said. Chess masters know that life tips on edge after a crucial loss. The game itself—the sixty-four squares, the little men, years spent memorizing variations, planning elaborate tricks—feels idiotic, absurd, useless. Particularly when a player has been feeling immortal, as if he cannot lose, defeat can throw him into a state of chaos and blackness.

I must admit that there was something wonderful about seeing Kasparov cut back this way. He was entirely without pomp or pretense and not at all embarrassed about his condition; this was part of him, as well, like a gimpy leg. In his body English and bedraggled expression, Garry said, I am shit. Kasparov hated losing more than anyone I had ever known, but when he lost he wanted to feel it all through him, to embrace it—perhaps this was the only way he had learned to get defeat out of his system. But also, it seemed to me

narrator who participates in the events he is describing and continually ruminates on his own role and relationship to his subject. We learn of the difficulties and frustrations Waitzkin found in covering Kasparov, such as the champion's tendencies to arrive late to every meeting and to put off time-critical conversations for apparently arbitrary reasons.

Powerful Opening

The book opens just before the 1990 world championship match, at Kasparov's secluded training camp in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. Waitzkin tells us that he helped to select the particular house Kasparov used, that soon after meeting Kasparov he became the champion's friend and confidant, and that Kasparov played a large role in shaping Waitzkin's view of chess and its world. These are appropriate admissions by the author that help readers to place his view of Kasparov in perspective.

Chapter 2, "Chess Training and Genocide," is easily the most powerful. Waitzkin temporarily suppresses his own presence and lets Kasparov take over for an extended quotation in which the champion describes what happened to himself and his extended family early in 1990. The news that reached the West was generally abbreviated to "Kasparov charters plane to save his family from ethnic fighting in Azerbaijan," but the champion's gripping, 12-page account makes us marvel that he was able to play chess at all for the rest of the year.

The champion's gripping account of "Chess Training and Genocide" makes us marvel that he was able to play chess at all during 1990.

fair for the champ to take his turn on the mat. He had crushed so many egos over the board, and I found myself thinking of instances when I had seen him wither men with a remark or a disgusted expression. When I suggested that there was something just about his having a taste of this side of life, Garry seemed to glimpse it for a moment, but then he sighed and said, "I hate losing." (pp. 171–172)

The postmortem is a venerable tradition. It is an opportunity for players who have been guarding the most exquisitely-crafted secrets to share them, to learn how closely the opposing mind had shadowed the decisive plan and the scores of other plans that had been rejected. It is a time to learn from mistakes, and for the loser of a game it is a form of catharsis. Working through interesting ideas begins to make the loser feel whole again.

But for Karpov and Kasparov, [when they analyzed their draw at Linares in 1991,] it was a larger occasion. Dialectically, each had shut

the other out of his life. The number one and two in the world could never be friends, but the postmortem was a singular opportunity to explore one another, apart from the statements they had made in anger and for political effect, and apart from the hype of journalists. Garry was a virtuoso in this hour-long analysis session. He pointed his forefinger at a thousand squares, dismissed deep possibilities with a raised eyebrow. But occasionally Karpov demonstrated a powerful move and Garry nodded without argument. I said to one of the grandmasters that Garry seemed to see much more than Karpov, and the man answered, "Yes, but it is Garry's manner to tell everything that he sees. Karpov will only tell a little." Although twenty people surrounded them, the two world champions acted as though they were alone. During one stretch, Grandmaster Ljubomir Ljubojevic, a loquacious man and a bold attacking player, kept interrupting with plans that he couldn't keep to himself. Finally, Karpov said, "Yes, we know," in his most imperial and dismissive voice. (p. 263)

In Chapters 3 and 4 we follow Kasparov and Waitzkin through France on an exhibition tour in April 1990, culminating in the Immopar Trophée rapid tournament in Paris. Here chess gradually takes over from politics, and we read fascinating descriptions of several key games. As a chessplayer, during these sections I often wished that game scores, or at least a few diagrams, were included. But if I really wanted to replay the games, I could probably have found the scores elsewhere, perhaps in back issues of *Inside Chess*, and certainly their incorporation would have scared away readers with a more casual interest in chess.

Unfortunately, after beginning so strongly, Waitzkin pauses for all of Chapter 5 to tell the story of Gata and Rustam Kamsky. It is surely an interesting story, skillfully told, of two bizarre characters—and by Waitzkin’s account, dangerous ones—but it does little to illuminate



The chapter on the Kamskys casts Kasparov’s subsequent antics into relief, making him look entirely normal by comparison.

Kasparov’s life. The champion appears only briefly in this chapter, to crush Kamsky in their 1989 two-game match at the New York Public Library. The chapter does cast Kasparov’s subsequent antics into relief, making him look entirely normal by comparison to the Kamskys.

At any rate, by Chapter 6 the book gets back on track, describing Kasparov’s training regimen for the 1990 championship match and investigating Karpov’s side of the rivalry. Waitzkin accurately describes the ex-champion’s projection of “sincerity and charm” when you meet him in person, and he admits difficulty in accepting all the bad things people say about Karpov.

I experienced the same surprise at the variance between Karpov’s public and private images earlier that same year when he visited Harvard University. (Waitzkin erroneously calls Harvard “Howard University,”

and describes a press conference Karpov gave there as a “speech.”) During our lunch at Harvard, Karpov spoke enthusiastically about two subjects: his own political activities in the “peace movement” and alleged flaws in Kasparov’s character. In particular, he claimed that Kasparov’s book *The Test of Time*, often hailed as a modern classic, is riddled with errors. Supposedly a Candidate Master in the Soviet Union had sent to Karpov a 300-page manuscript picking apart Kasparov’s opus. “Of course, we didn’t have time to check it all, but we picked 10 of his claims and found that he was right in six cases,” said Karpov.

Just Look At the Pictures

Ironically, Karpov had come to Harvard hot on the heels of his nemesis, whose own visit took place in late 1989 (around the time of Waitzkin’s first meeting with Kasparov, too early to be included in the book). At the time, Kasparov was taking a lot of heat from the media regarding his views on female chessplayers’ abilities, or inherent lack thereof, which he stated in his controversial *Playboy* interview and repeated in a question-and-answer session at Harvard. Just before his last public appearance during that trip to the United States, Kasparov collared me as I was escorting him into the room where he was to speak. In front of a hundred or so spectators, he blamed me personally for his difficulties with the local press. *The Boston Globe* had highlighted the “women issue” in its otherwise positive coverage, and the campus newspaper reporters were asking what he perceived as inane and repetitive questions. I had already experienced his moodiness and unpredictability, qualities Waitzkin portrays vividly, but not his temper. Naturally I was taken aback, and did not manage to offer any coherent defense to Kasparov’s complaints, which were punctuated with piercing stares of disgust. According to him, it was my job as assistant organizer to make sure that the press was properly managed and that his time was not wasted. Perhaps our distributing copies of the *Playboy* article as background material was not what he had in mind. Fortunately, Kasparov’s British agent Andrew Page quickly smoothed things over, and the show went on more or less as planned.

Page, as well as members of Kasparov’s family and his chess team during the early 1990s, appear as supporting characters in Chapters 7 and 8 of *Mortal Games*, titled “New York” and “Lyon,” which together comprise over one-third of the book. These chapters provide wonderful background and perspective on the fascinating chess produced in the fifth Kasparov-Karpov match, but they are marred by digressions about a New York newspaper reporter who is interesting but peripheral to the action. The final two chapters, “The Traveling Chess Salesman” and “Linares,” cover the public-relations and tournament-circuit sides of Kasparov’s life, and the epilogue ties everything together nicely.

Throughout the book, we see in Waitzkin’s closeup lens a different Kasparov from the media version: a Kasparov who can sympathize at

Karpov claimed that Kasparov’s book *The Test of Time*, often hailed as a modern classic, is riddled with errors.

times with his archrival Karpov, a Kasparov who can step back occasionally from the day-to-day chess wars to look at the larger context, a Kasparov who can confide that Rustam Kamsky “is a character. The chess world is better for him being there.” We also see the dark side of Kasparov. While the book’s extremely favorable portrayal hardly makes Kasparov out to be the “criminal” or “pathological liar” described by Bobby Fischer, it gives some credence to Nigel Short’s milder description of an “unpleasant” person. Waitzkin’s account acknowledges Kasparov’s moodiness, his voluble personality, and his considerable temper from the subtitle on, and does not shrink from pointing out some inconsistencies in Kasparov’s positions and attitudes over the years.

Eat Like a Supergrandmaster

Mortal Games also presents some revelations. Kasparov told Waitzkin in January 1993 that he had planned to break with FIDE, but in 1996 rather than just one month later. Waitzkin notes that Kasparov’s wife regularly packs a pistol when walking the streets of Moscow, and reports (on the lighter side) that Kasparov practiced jokes in advance for his “Late Night with David Letterman” appearances. But the book’s greatest strength is in describing afresh people and events with which we think we are already familiar, and not just Kasparov, Karpov, and the 1990 world championship match. Some of the most memorable passages show how the changing fortunes of the players at Linares 1991 were reflected in their appearances at dinner after each round, descriptions of the kind that rarely appear in magazine coverage of tournaments and will never make it into *Informant* symbols or ChessBase data files:

Following the Anand game, Kasparov picked at his food and wouldn’t answer when I spoke to him ... Beliavsky sat, holding his head between his hands ... the Kamsky-Karpov table radiated loathing, although Ivanchuk existed apart from it ... [after a devastating loss, Gelfand] hid behind a local newspaper, with one shoulder slung six inches below the other, his neck bent uncomfortably ... he poured scalding tea all over himself.

What is missing from *Mortal Games*? Not much, though it does not have an index, or even a table of contents. It is written to be read as a single narrative, like a novel. But with its wealth of unique information and quotations, it is bound to do considerable extra duty as a reference work, and should have been designed to serve that function. Beyond adding these elements and further sharpening the focus on Kasparov by eliminating the detours to Kamsky and other side-issues, not much more could be done to improve this excellent book. Except writing a sequel. ♣

This excellent book’s greatest strength is in describing afresh people and events with which we think we are already familiar.

Instant Fischer

Edward Winter

Bobby Fischer vs. Boris Spassky: The 1992 Rematch

Jack Peters

Los Angeles Times, Los Angeles, 1992

AN, 72 pp., \$6.00 paperback

Fischer–Spassky 1992: World Chess Championship Rematch

Leonid Shamkovich and Jan R. Cartier, edited by Lou Hays

Hays Publishing, Dallas, 1992

AN, 334 pp., \$19.95 paperback

The Art of War Revisited—Robert J. Fischer vs. Boris V. Spassky 1992

Mitchell R. White

ChessCentral Publications, Midland, MI, 1993

AN, viii + 208 pp. (oversized), \$17.95 paperback

Bobby Fischer: The \$5,000,000 Comeback

Nigel Davies, Malcolm Pein, and Jonathan Levitt

Cadogan, London, 1992

FAN, 131 pp., \$16.95 paperback

Fischer–Spassky II: The Return of a Legend

Raymond Keene

Henry Holt, New York, 1993 (Batsford, London, 1992)

FAN, 130 pp., \$14.95 paperback

No Regrets

Yasser Seirawan and George Stefanovic

International Chess Enterprises, Seattle, 1992

FAN, 313 pp., \$24.95 paperback, \$34.95 hardcover

Instant books on important chess events are not a new development, but today's technology allows authors to gather and emit information at record speeds. As soon as it was confirmed that Fischer was indeed returning to the center stage after 20 years in the wings (or even outside the theater), a number of writers set to work. Their task was relatively difficult, given the short time available to prepare background material, and the almost inaccessible, not to say proscribed, venues of Sveti Stefan and Belgrade.

Edward Winter is a noted chess historian. He edits the internationally syndicated column "Chess Notes" and has published several books. He lives in Switzerland.

The six books being considered were published during the four months or so following the match, the first of them (the Cadogan volume) about two days after Fischer won game 30. Although no perfect correlation is detectable between the books' merits and their order of publication, the best one was among the last to appear. (A seventh book in English, the 41-page *Fischer–Spassky 1992*, privately published by F.E. Condon in New Jersey, arrived much later than the others, and is anyway notable only for its cumbersome structure, with games presented by opening rather than chronologically.)

The 1992 Rematch by Jack Peters (a book henceforth called “Peters”) is the smallest of the works and the most modest in production values. The games are given with a smattering of information and gossip, other brief textual matter, and three photographs.

Fischer–Spassky 1992: World Chess Championship Rematch by Leonid Shamkovich and Jan R. Cartier (“Shamkovich and Cartier”) has a roomy, single column format. All the previous Fischer–Spassky games are given, with very brief notes, followed by general background information, and then the 30 match games, each introduced by a page of quotes from chess personalities and others. The notes are clear and fairly detailed. Most games are followed by a set of “Supplemental Games” with the same opening. The book, which has 19 contemporary full-page photographs, ends with transcripts of the first two press conferences.

The Art of War Revisited—Robert J. Fischer vs. Boris V. Spassky 1992 by Mitchell R. White (“White”) is oversized and unillustrated. It features 68 pages of unannotated “Supplementary Games,” a much more extensive selection than the comparable material in Shamkovich and Cartier.

Bobby Fischer: The \$5,000,000 Comeback by Nigel Davies, Malcolm Pein, and Jonathan Levitt (“Davies et al.”) has 48 pages on Fischer, Spassky, and their rivalry, plus four pages of background on the match itself. Pages 53–125 give the 30 annotated games, and the book ends with notes about the Fischer clock and extracts from the first press conference. The only illustration is the cover photograph of Fischer and Spassky at the board.

Fischer–Spassky II: The Return of a Legend by Raymond Keene (“Keene”) has brief background material, including the scores of earlier encounters, and then 99 pages on the 1992 games. Its only illustration is a caricature dating from the 1972 Reykjavik match on the front cover.

No Regrets by Yasser Seirawan and George Stefanovic (“Seirawan and Stefanovic”) has 12 pages of introduction, 270 pages on the match games, 19 pages of Seirawan’s thoughts on Fischer, and a six-page glossary of terms and individuals. The middle section combines into a single sequence annotations, substantial background information, the text of all nine press conferences and the players’ post-game comments, and short interviews with over 30 leading figures, such as Anand, Botvinnik, Geller, Gligoric, Zsuzsa Polgar, Schmid, Short, Smyslov, Timman, and Torre.

A number of the books have unwelcome frills; Shamkovich and Cartier compute Fischer and Spassky’s “hourly pay to sit at board.”

Page 1 specifies that Stefanovic's contribution was to write "the color commentary for games 12–30." The book has a dozen illustrations.

A number of the books have unwelcome frills. Keene, at the end of each game, moves the players' Elo ratings up or down, but since the starting point for Fischer is his 1972 rating and for Spassky his 1992 one, the exercise is of even less interest than the Shamkovich and Cartier computation of Fischer and Spassky's "hourly pay to sit at board."

Examining the game annotations offered by each book reveals immense variety. Consider game 30 as an example. Seirawan and Stefanovic give it some 190 lines of notes, about six times as many as Keene (32 lines), even though the latter claims to have concentrated on analyzing decisive games. Of course, simple word counts may be misleading; White, for example, may take a paragraph where other writers would prefer a sentence or silence. There is also considerable difference of opinion on which moves should be criticized and praised.

The books generally avoid analytical dogmatism, but not all of them make use of the players' own comments on the games. Although Spassky said at the concluding interview (quoted on p. 272 of Seirawan and Stefanovic) that in game 30 his knight was bad on b3, only Shamkovich and Cartier speak against its move there, calling it "dubious." After describing 13 g4 as "probably positionally a losing move," Fischer pointed out 16 ... ♖e5 17 h6, a line given only by Seirawan and Stefanovic.

Naturally there are contradictory views about the players' overall performance. Peters (p. 49) writes, regarding game 20: "Whenever it appeared that Fischer had regained his old form, he would throw in a game like this one. Inaccurate openings, inferior middlegame strategy, tactical oversights—how can a great player commit so many mistakes? Thanks to Fischer's own chess clock, he cannot use time pressure as an excuse." But despite these severe words, Peters' own annotations to game 20 criticize little in Fischer's play. Davies et al. provide even less indication as to why Black lost the game.

None of the books gives the individual time taken for each move. Comment on Fischer's clock is broadly favorable, with Davies et al. remarking that "It solves the problem of adjournments and desperate time trouble, but cannot remedy human exhaustion" (p. 103). According to Shamkovich and Cartier, "It will without a doubt eventually become the accepted method of timing chess games," and pages 28–29 of their book also declare: "It is most significant that not one mention of time trouble has found its way into the coverage of the Fischer–Spassky 1992 match ... The new clock has great merit."

The quality of language and general presentation varies greatly. Peters' inconspicuous book affords little cause for complaint or enthusiasm. It opens with a two-page explanation of notation, yet by p. 12 (in the notes to game 2) jargon is being used: "Black has an extra passer ..." Many sentences in the sparse notes lack a finite verb, yet they retain a

**Comment on
Fischer's clock is
broadly favorable.**

certain attractive dryness. The general textual matter tends to have a sharper edge; on pages 71–72 Peters says that “Two factors prevented this match from bringing unanimously favorable attention to chess. First was Fischer’s nasty temperament, as shown by his vicious accusations and conspiracy theories. Second was his decision to start his comeback in an outlaw nation.”

The back-cover blurb of the Shamkovich and Cartier book unconvincingly congratulates itself on being “THE complete account of the richest and most talked about match in the history of chess.” The book suffers generally from a poor prose style, and despite emphasis on proofreading in the publisher’s note, it has the most typographical errors, particularly in the closing pages. (The runner-up is probably White’s book, which is marred by a typographical defect whereby many foreign names have spaces instead of letters.) More than any other work, this one is engrossed by gossip, a sort of “hear and print” style of journalism, as on p. 107: “There are rumors circulating about future Fischer matches. One undocumented report claims that nineteen million dollars has been raised for future matches by Fischer.”

The White book is larded less with rumors than with ruminations; e.g., sententious quotations from ancient Oriental philosophers such as Sun Tzu (“Thus, what is of supreme importance is to attack the enemy’s strategy”—p. 15). Alongside is White’s own writing, a painful amalgam of coarseness and pretension. For example: “White has been forced to ‘pack ‘em in’ like sardines on the kingside” (p. 25), and “If this game included a studio soundtrack, then Black’s move would sound like a freight train hitting a buffalo” (p. 128). The chess pieces are often called “Cleric,” “Hopper,” “Button,” “Padre,” and “Cardinal,” etc. There is a juvenile overuse of exclamation points, and when nothing is to be said, White is the man to say it. In *Chess Life* Ilya Gurevich wrote of a move in game 28, “If I did not know any better I would say that this game is fixed.” After quoting this, White (p. 121) adds the following even more trite comment: “Eh? Fixed, you say?? Marvelous! Suffice it to say that young Master Gurevich’s impetuosity is no match for his perceptivity.” White himself has a perceptivity and logic all of his own, as in his comment, “Spassky has never played this position before, *and consequently* blunders” (p. 109, emphasis added). Most of White’s annotations are notably dependent on the comments of others, and no other book has less background material.

The notes in Davies et al., which are by Malcolm Pein and Jonathan Levitt, are quite well written, and the authors concede that they do not always agree (as in game 12 on pp. 90–94). A central contention of this book is that for Spassky “fighting Fischer on his 1960s and 1970s territory is a bad idea” (p. 82). Lack of time shows in the presentation of background material on Fischer and Spassky, which has a dishearteningly unimaginative selection of information and games. Once again the

White’s writing is a painful amalgam of coarseness and pretension. The chess pieces are often called “Cleric,” “Hopper,” “Button,” “Padre,” and “Cardinal.”

reader is served up Fischer's brilliancy against Donald Byrne, who is pointlessly accused of playing on in a hopeless position: "perhaps he thought that by lengthening the game in this way he could make it less publishable" (p. 5). It is a pity, and this criticism applies to all but one of the works being reviewed, that so little use is made of the large quantity of Fischer facts available; apart from his writings, both known and neglected, over a period of more than 30 years, there are, after all, his extensive comments at the surprisingly frequent press conferences during the 1992 match. Davies, whom the introduction credits with writing the background sections, is nonetheless a sufficiently astute commentator to discern more in Fischer than the barren clichés of old. He suspects that "the rough exterior may conceal a man of warmth, sensitivity and integrity for whom the world has never been a very easy place to live" (p. 29). Not knowing for sure, Davies makes a virtue of simply acknowledging the problem: "It is certainly not easy to sift through the morass of rumour and speculation. Many of the stories have emanated from journalists looking to make a quick buck on a 'crazy chess champ' article and happy to sacrifice accuracy to achieve the desired effect" (p. 25). He might have added that so-called specialized chess writers have been only slightly less guilty in this respect than journalists without a background in the game.

Davies is a sufficiently astute commentator to discern more in Fischer than the barren clichés of old.

Next on the list is a book whose first introductory page (p. 7) describes Fischer as "the greatest mind-warrior in the history of the planet," whose last two pages (pp. 129–130) call Fischer "the most extraordinary chess player ever to have walked the planet," and whose final sentence says that a Kasparov–Fischer match will establish "who is the supreme mental gladiator on Planet Earth." The prose is unmistakably that of Raymond Keene in full cry. Frantic overemphasis pervades *Fischer–Spassky II: The Return of a Legend*. Spassky's king is not just cornered, it is "utterly cornered, with no hope of escape;" in other games Fischer has to "acquiesce in a completely hopeless endgame" and Spassky's "attacking prospects had utterly vanished." Similarly, the background commentary comprises histrionics rather than history. In a typical example, the second paragraph of the Introduction (p. 7) avers that the 1992 match "blasted the chess world, as well as those fascinated by the mind-bending eccentricity of the game's most superb practioner (*sic*), into frenzies of excitement and anticipation." Page 15 says that earlier games caused "unprecedented levels of anticipation and excitement." But such flummery cannot disguise the author's insufficient familiarity with Fischer's life. On page 8 the reader is informed that Fischer "began to distribute scurrilous pamphlets whenever the opportunity arose." Did he? When? What "opportunities" arose? What were the scurrilities? How many such pamphlets has Keene himself seen? How many has *anyone* seen?

The slapdash prose, replete with misused vocabulary and grammar, cheapens whatever it touches. In game 25, as so often elsewhere, Keene

has the bombast while others (Seirawan and Stefanovic in particular) have the analysis. At move 18, the Keene book has nine lines, beginning “Spassky has been so shell-shocked by 15 Nb6!! that he has been rendered witless and cannot gather his thoughts.” We learn that “Black must strike back quickly with either ... e5 or ... d5,” but no variations are offered. Seirawan and Stefanovic, in contrast, give several possible lines.

Seirawan’s *No Regrets* is of outstanding quality, and probably even better than his monograph, highly praised by Fischer, on the last Kasparov–Karpov match. The annotations are magnificently detailed, and Seirawan is the only writer to cover Fischer’s declarations fully. He publishes the complete transcripts of all nine press conferences, whereas Shamkovich and Cartier give only two and Keene provides a summary of just the first, labeling it “The Press Conference” as if the other eight never existed. Fischer’s insistence on selecting press conference questions stifled discussion, but the issues raised are of enthralling interest, even to historians. For example, Fischer said (as quoted on p. 116 of Seirawan and Stefanovic), “Morphy, I think everyone agrees, was probably the greatest genius of them all ...” His honesty is exemplified by the now-familiar quotation, “That’s chess, you know. One day you give a lesson, the next day your opponent gives you a lesson” (p. 52).

The transcripts in *No Regrets* highlight Fischer’s aversion to Kasparov, who is described as a “pathological liar” (p. 55) and “an outright crook” (p. 151). After stating that Kasparov wrote a letter to him signed “your co-champion,” Fischer remarked, “He is not my co-champion, he is a criminal and should be in jail” (p. 282). Having announced (p. 212) that he will write a book to justify his allegations of prearranged world championship games, Fischer can hardly now do otherwise, but whatever supporting “proof” he may have should in any case have been presented concurrently with the accusations.

The books, all written before the Kasparov–Short world championship controversy arose, show a surprising willingness to entertain Fischer’s claims to the world championship. Shamkovich and Cartier indicate (p. 131) that Kasparov is “FIDE World Champion,” and their book has “World Chess Championship Rematch” on the front cover and title page. Davies et al. too (p. 23) call Kasparov the “reigning FIDE champion,” adding (p. 24), “... Fischer’s anger at the three K’s becomes altogether reasonable when you start out from the premise that FIDE had no right to take Fischer’s title away.” Seirawan says (p. 5), “To Fischer, Kasparov is merely FIDE champion. It is a compelling argument. Until the wondrous day when they play a match, the chess world has room for *two* World Champions.” On page 84 he adds, “I completely recognize and support Bobby Fischer as a World Champion. I also completely recognize and support Kasparov as FIDE Champion.” Nonetheless, on page 26 of his 1992 book *Winning Chess Tactics* Seirawan referred to “America’s former World Champion, Robert Fischer.”

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The match books naturally accord Fischer far more esteem than do the media in general. One reason for Fischer's bad press is his tendency to keep reporters off balance with statements which, without warning, switch from perspicacity to absurdity and back again. Cliché-loving journalists can be at ease in covering Fischer only if they ignore the perspicacity, emphasize the absurdity, and add a dose of invention. "A lot of these quotes about me are not correct," protests Fischer on page 117 of Seirawan and Stefanovic's book. Seirawan is doubtless right to say (p. 290) that "Bobby is a *pure* person in the sense that he goes straight to the heart of a topic, no beating around the bush." In other words, Fischer is neither diplomatic nor hypocritical, and, right or wrong, he has kept his beliefs and principles intact for 30 years. Kasparov has trouble not contradicting himself over what he said last Tuesday.

Among the 10 authors, only Seirawan and Stefanovic went to the match. Seirawan spent time with the players, and his book is able to demolish numerous myths. On page 291, he writes, "After September 23rd, I threw most of what I'd ever *read* about Bobby out of my head. Sheer garbage. Bobby is the most misunderstood, misquoted celebrity walking the face of the earth." Hyperbole aside, it is hard to resist the force of this argument. We learn that Fischer is not camera shy (p. 85), that "He smiles and laughs easily" (p. 96), and that "... Bobby is a wholly enjoyable conversationalist. A fine wit, he is a very funny man" (p. 303). On page 293 Brad Darrach's savage book *Bobby Fischer vs. the Rest of the World* (Stein and Day, New York, 1974) is identified as the *coup de grâce* for Fischer's reputation. He fought Darrach and his publishers in the courts and lost. It is regrettable that apart from some sketchy newspaper accounts, few details are available about Fischer's litigation activities since the Reykjavik match. Peters claims (p. 9) that "Fischer filed frivolous lawsuits, seeking tens of millions of dollars, then blamed the U.S. government when they were thrown out of court," but here, as elsewhere, the reader's thirst for hard facts is not slaked.

The preface to *No Regrets* by the editor, Jonathan Berry, warns that readers will not find "a politically correct, blanket condemnation of Bobby Fischer" but will be left to make up their own minds on the basis of the exhaustive accounts of Fischer's views. Seirawan qualifies as an objective chronicler of Fischer, though he is certainly—to borrow from Tom Stoppard—"objective-for" rather than "objective-against." An important component that helps *No Regrets* to remain balanced is the series of mini-interviews with leading players; diametrically opposed views abound.

Seirawan and Stefanovic have produced the inside story, and their book's superiority over the other five is such that even the best of them look shallow and almost irrelevant by comparison. *No Regrets* should serve as a model for future world championship match books, whoever the champion and challenger may be. ♣

Seirawan and Stefanovic have produced the inside story, a model for future world championship match books.

BRIEF REVIEWS

King & Pawn Endings, by Alex Fishbein, American Chess Promotions, Macon, GA, 1993, FAN, vii + 137 pp., paperback, \$16.95. A complete course in pawn endings, including multiple illustrations of important ideas and a set of exercises. The material was published previously in software format, and could have been better served by the translation process. (For example, the exclusive use of bold type is harsh.) But Fishbein is a welcome new member of the ranks of top chess writers.

The Chessplayer's Laboratory, Volume 1: Polugayevsky-Nyezhmetdinov, Sochi, 1958, by Eric Schiller, Hays Publishing, Dallas, TX, 1992, AN, 47 pp., paperback, \$8.95. This book treats a single, fascinating game in exhaustive detail, examining hundreds of variations that never happened in the 33 moves that were actually played. The game is annotated twice, first with 70 questions for the reader to work on, then with the answers, including new analysis by Garry Kasparov. While the pedagogical value of Schiller's method is unknown (and likely to depend greatly on the student's will to grind through all the analysis), the entertainment value of Polugayevsky-Nyezhmetdinov is not. This is the definitive work on one of the greatest games ever played.

Sicilian Defense: O'Kelly Variation, by W. John Lutes, Chess Enterprises, Coraopolis, PA, 1993, AN, xvi + 238 pp., paperback, \$14.95. Lutes's mistitled opus contains much more than an analysis of the position after 1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 a6. It opens with an exhaustive history of the Sicilian Defense, covering 76 pages with 434 footnotes. The quotations from 18th- and 19th-century literature are fascinating. The rest of the book covers not only what is traditionally known as the O'Kelly

Variation, but also many more conventional lines that can arise through its move order, such as the Kan and Taimanov variations. However, the transposition into the Najdorf Variation is not addressed. Nevertheless, and despite whatever analytical errors will inevitably turn up in a work this ambitious, Lutes has produced a superb trove of material on many aspects of the Sicilian Defense.

Impact of Genius: 500 Years of Grandmaster Chess, by R.E. Fauber, International Chess Enterprises, Seattle, WA, 1992, AN, viii + 390 pp., paperback, \$19.95 (hardcover, \$29.95). A book that tries to paint a large picture but has trouble with the details. Fauber uses portraits of great players to present the history of chess theory—a good idea—but punctuates them with abrupt conclusions and sharp opinions on debatable issues. His cliché-ridden style is more appropriate for light entertainment than serious history, and his notes are weak despite their low ambitions. Discussing one of the 1974 Byrne-Spassky match games, he comments, "The strength of [Black's] sacrifice lies in the lack of an immediate Black threat," adding later, "Byrne decides instead to go directly for a losing ending." Games and openings are indexed, but no photographs, citations, or reference lists are included.

Bobby Fischer: Complete Games of the American World Chess Champion, compiled and edited by Lou Hays, Hays Publishing, Dallas, TX, 1992, AN, 346 pp., paperback, \$19.95. Collecting every available game of a single player is a useful activity, but diminishing returns may set in once too many 10-move crushes start showing up. Fortunately, Lou Hays's compilation on Fischer, the most "complete" so far, does not suffer much in this respect. The serious games are

Lutes has produced a superb trove of material on many aspects of the Sicilian Defense.

given with dates, events, locations, openings, ECO codes, endgame classifications, *very* light notes, and at least one diagram each. The offhand games are of course less well-documented, but include some humorous comments. Tables of results and numerous indexes round out a valuable reference work.

The Chess Games of David Lees, by David Lees, Chess Enterprises, Coraopolis, PA, AN, xxviii + 126 pp. (oversized), paperback, \$9.95. Biographies of regional celebrities are rare but often reflect greater care in their creation than run-of-the-mill productions on international stars. This well-written book is no exception.

The Black Knights Tango, by Georgi Orlov, International Chess Enterprises, Seattle, WA, AN, 22 pp. (oversized), paperback, \$5.95. Inventive and necessarily tentative analysis on the opening 1 d4 ♖c6 2 c4 ♗f6.

Chess for the Rank and File, by Tony Rubín and John Emms, Tournament Chess, Brighton, England, 1992, figurine AN, 182 pp., paperback. Entertaining chess autobiography of a British patzer, with game notes by IM Emms. In "Earliest Recollections," Rubín recalls his first game, when he answered 1 e2-e4 with 1 ... a7-b6, "an opening you will not find in any recognized chess literature." Until now.

My System: 21st Century Edition, by Aron Nimzowitsch, Hays Publishing, Dallas, TX, 1991, AN, xii + 260 pp., paperback, \$17.50. Vladimir Kramnik is only the latest superstar to credit this classic (modernized with algebraic notation and more diagrams in this edition) as a key influence.

More on Alekhine

Alexander Aljechin, Genius der Kombinationen, by Walter K.F. Haas, Rochade Europa, Maintal, Germany, 1993, 79 pp. (in German). This book gives 120 familiar short games, virtually unannotated. Its only originality concerns the many errors. For example,

it is involuntarily claimed that the games against Drewitt and Potemkin (pp. 44-45) were played after they died.

Alexander Alekhine, by Dimitrije Bjelica, Zugarto Ediciones, S.A., Madrid, Spain, 1993, 205 pp. (in Spanish). This book contains 203 games (some annotated) and shapeless biographical/anecdotal material. It cites few sources for its assertions and is very careless. For instance, the person identified as Lasker in a photograph on p. 31 is Bernhard Kagan, and Borocho's name is spelled "Bodohov."

Alekhine in Europe and Asia, by John Donaldson, Nikolay Minev, and Yasser Seirawan, International Chess Enterprises, Seattle, WA, 1993, AN, 118 pp. (oversized), paperback, \$15.95. An excellently researched book offering marvelous entertainment and instruction. There are 619 non-tournament games, many annotated, together with much historical background information. The first 96 games are a supplement to *Alekhine in the Americas*. The earlier volume was a fine work, but this one is bigger and better in nearly all respects.

Alexander Alekhine, by Y.N. Shaburov, Golos, Moscow, 1992, 254 pp. (in Russian). A detailed biography that includes 30 games and, more importantly, fresh material from the author's examination of Soviet archives.

226 Short Games of Alexander Alekhine, by V. Charushin, Nizhny Novgorod, 1992, 144 pp. (in Russian). A familiar selection, but nothing more.

Alekhine: My Struggle, by V.D. Chashchikhin, Moscow, 1992, 96 pp. An examination of Alekhine's alleged anti-Semitism, with Russian and English text on alternate pages. The inadequacy of the argumentation and the English prose is almost total.

World Chess Championship 1937, by Alexander Alekhine, Trafalgar Square, North Pomfret, VT, 1993 (B.T. Batsford Ltd., London, 1993), DN, xi + 203 pp., paperback, \$24.95.

Rubín answered
1 e2-e4 with 1 ...
a7-b6, "an
opening you will
not find in any
recognized chess
literature."
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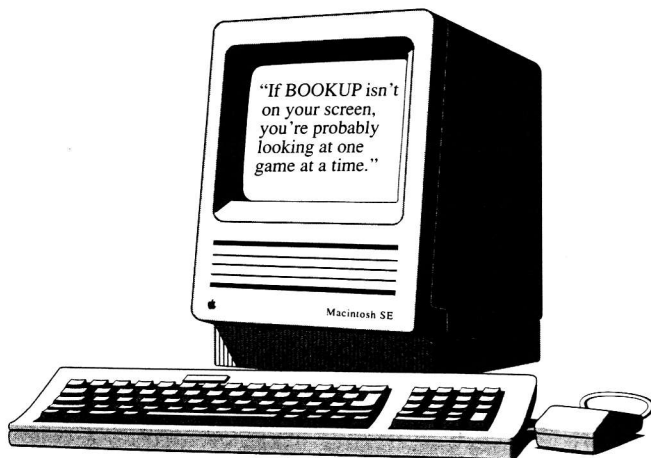
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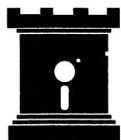
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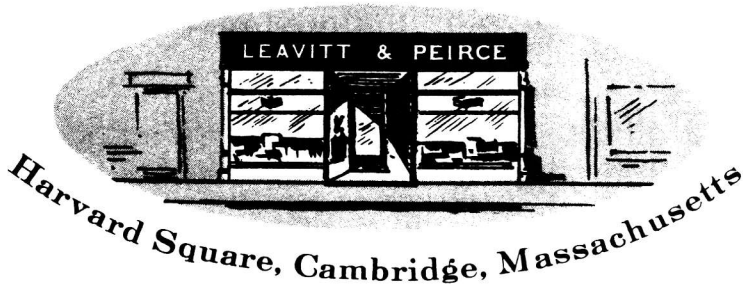
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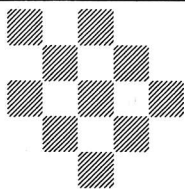
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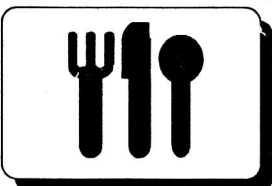
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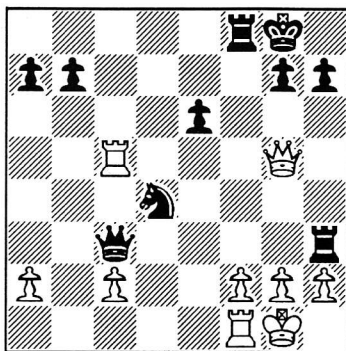
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