

# THE MIDDLE GAME

Volume 1, Issue 18

September 2005

## MCCU HALF YEAR MEETING

This meeting will take place on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2005 at The Church Hall Lower Church St Syston Leics, starting at 2.30pm. If you are a county delegate please make a note of this date. If you cannot attend yourself, please try and ensure that your county has at least one representative present. Most counties have more than 1 delegate, so please let's have some liaison between delegates, so at least we don't have a situation where all delegates assume someone else is attending, but on one actually does.

If anyone has any items for the agenda please let me have these at least 28 days before the meeting. Child Protection Policy and Correspondence competition rules will certainly be discussed. I still seek comments on the draft Child Protection Policy included in the previous newsletter. Information on the correspondence rules will be posted on the website.

## BYE, BYE BCF

By the time the next newsletter comes out the BCF will have ceased to be the umbrella organisation for chess in England. It will still exist to fulfil certain specific functions, but most of its' activities will be part of the ECF or English Chess Federation, which will be a Limited company. The transition will happen on 22<sup>nd</sup> October when the BCF holds its final AGM, followed by the first AGM of the ECF.

It is interesting to note that the BCF has, in all its 101 years, never actually truly been an umbrella for British Chess. Until earlier this year Ulster was part of the Irish Chess Union, an all Ireland organisation, which was never affiliated to the BCF. The forerunner of the current Scottish umbrella organisation actually pre-dates the BCF being formed in 1884. Whilst it did affiliate to the BCF for a time, the Scots have largely maintained their independence.

The Welsh had closer links with the BCF than their Scottish cousins. The Welsh Chess Union was formed in 1954, as part of the BCF. The South Wales Chess Association (1888-1954) was affiliated to the BCF before this. It was an organisation which clubs could join, not individuals. There were long periods when none did, or just a few. The WCU became independent in 1970, and immediately applied to join FIDE. Confusingly the FIDE website lists Wales as members from 1926, presumably because they were part of the BCF.

The British Championships are in fact not the sole preserve of the BCF, they are run by the BCF by agreement with the other British chess bodies, including those representing the smaller islands, which make up the British Isles Consultative Committee. The ECF will take over that role from the BCF.

As explained in previous newsletters the change of

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- + **Events Results Supplement** including:-
  - Local Congresses, British Championships,
  - England Teams, UK Chess Challenge Finals

## POSITIONAL PUZZLES

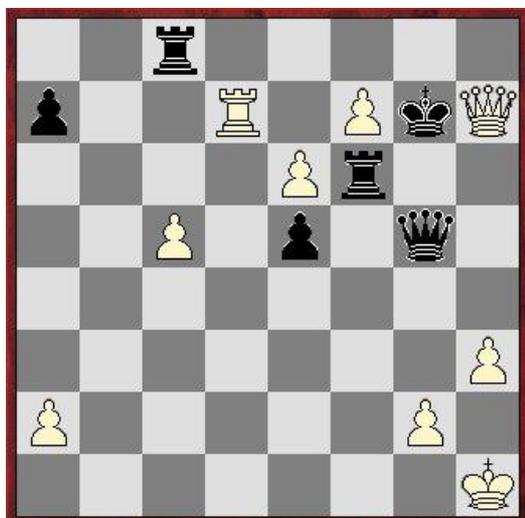


Negyesy v Honfi Budapest 1955 0-1

These are all positions which were resigned as lost, closer inspection reveals they were not. Solutions Page 12



Sanguinetti v Najdorf Mar Del Plata 1956 1-0



Romi v Staldi Trieste 1954 1-0



Sznepik v Van Gils Liege 1986 1-0



Samarin v Antoshin Berdiansk 1985 0-1



Van Popiel v Marco Monte Carlo 1902 1-0

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

2 Oct - [All England Girls' Eastern Regional Tournament](#), Nottingham. Claire Summerscale (Tel: 020 8874 0135, Email: [chessuk@btinternet.com](mailto:chessuk@btinternet.com))

9 Oct - [3rd Leicester Rapidplay](#), Countesthorpe College, Winchester Road, Countesthorpe, Leicester LE8 5PR. Sean Hewitt, 21 Smeeton Road, Kibworth, Leicester LE8 0LG (Tel: 0116 279 1030, 07845 518 972, Email: [sean@leicesterchess.co.uk](mailto:sean@leicesterchess.co.uk))

16 Oct - [Birmingham & District Chess League Rapidplay](#), Four Dwellings School, Dwellings Lane, Quinton, Birmingham B32 1RJ. K Langston, 8 Clent View Road, Bartley Green, Birmingham B32 4LN (Tel: 0121 550 3729, Email: [kenneth.langston@bopenworld.com](mailto:kenneth.langston@bopenworld.com))

29-30 Oct - [33rd English Deaf Chess Association Congress & National Championship](#), Birmingham Centre for the Deaf, Ladywood Road, Birmingham B16 8SZ. James Kelberman, 71 Valley Road, Kenley, Surrey CR8 5BY.

12-13 Nov - [British Rapidplay](#), North Bridge Leisure Centre, Halifax. Brent Kitson, 6 Tall Trees, Leeds LS17 7WA (Tel: 0113 266 2330, Email: [ruthbrent@kitson82.freeseerve.co.uk](mailto:ruthbrent@kitson82.freeseerve.co.uk))

12-13 Nov - [Spectrum Chess - 8th Dudley Congress](#), The Ward Arms Hotel, Dudley, West Midlands DY1 4RN. Norman Went, 53 New Zealand Way, Rainham, Essex RM13 8JT (Tel: 01708 551617, Mobile: 07905 360659, Email: [spectrumchess@hotmail.com](mailto:spectrumchess@hotmail.com))

20 Nov - [Bolton Rapidplay](#), Bolton Excel Centre, Lower Bridgeman Street, Bolton R Middleton, 97 Dovedale Road, Brightmet, Bolton BL2 5HS (Tel: 01204 383634, Email: [Roderick.Middleton@tesco.net](mailto:Roderick.Middleton@tesco.net))

11 Dec - [Bury Rapidplay](#), Elizabeth Suite, Town Hall, Bury BL9 0SW. Bernard Sharples, 7 Euxton Close, Bury, Lancs BL8 2HY (Tel: 0161 764 6353 before 10 p.m., Email: [burychessclub@pcfp.co.uk](mailto:burychessclub@pcfp.co.uk))

### BCF NATIONAL CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS

Entries for the Open, Major & Minor events are currently being taken. The deadline for entry is 19<sup>th</sup> October. I would remind you that MCCU representation over recent years has been pathetic compared to the SCCU, and the NCCU, which for the size of our Union compared to the other 2, is pretty poor.

Entry forms are on the BCF website (see link below) or can be obtained from the BCF Office on 01424 775222 [www.bcf.org.uk/events/bcfnatteam/club2006/index.htm](http://www.bcf.org.uk/events/bcfnatteam/club2006/index.htm)

name goes hand in hand with the move to company limited by guarantee status. A number of people in English chess would have preferred to stay with British Chess Federation and become the British Federation Ltd, but the majority of those who responded to various polls favoured the move to English, and the vote at the AGM was very heavily in favour. There are those who are unhappy with the decision, but, in my view it was a proper democratic decision, and as one who would have preferred to keep BCF, I am happy to accept that the majority vote must hold sway. All too often people do not contribute to the debate on a matter, only to complain about the decision after it has been taken. Sorry, but in my view if you don't make your views known, you don't have any right to complain. If you do make your views known, but your view turns out to be in the minority, you should accept that with good grace.

## HELLO ECF

The ECF will comprise a slimmer Board than its predecessor with President, Chief Executive, Directors of Finance, Home Chess, Junior Chess, Marketing & International Chess and 2 non-executive Directors. The Directorates that currently have seats on the Board – Grading, Women's Chess, Coaching & Congress, will no longer be Director level posts in the EFC. The work will of course still be there, and there will still be people responsible for those tasks, but they will report to one of the remaining Directors. Currently the Unions and large independent leagues appoint someone of their choosing to the Board, instead for the EFC, there will be 2 non-executive directors elected by the AGM.

Unions, Counties and all the other organisations that currently make up the BCF can become members of the ECF. Indeed they should already have received applications to do so. These applications are legal documents and must be completed and returned to receive voting rights within the EFC. There is no automatic transfer from BCF to EFC because of the legal requirements of Limited Company status. Members will still have the right to attend an AGM and Finance Meeting, and vote on issues put before those meetings in much the same way as under the BCF.

Fuller details on the ECF set up may be found on the BCF website by clicking onto the ECF link on the home page.

**(PAPERS FOR THE AGM HAVE GONE OUT SO IF YOU ARE A DELGATE AND HAVEN'T RECEIVED ANYTHING YOU SHOULD CONTACT THE BCF OFFICE URGENTLY)** see next page for EFC nominations

## EFC Nominations

POST	Nominee (s)
President	G. Walsh
FIDE Delegate	G. Walsh
Chief Executive	R. Heppinstall
Director of Finance	R. Richmond
Director of Home Chess	C Johnson C Majer
Director of Junior Chess and Education	C Johnson
Director of Marketing	R. Lawrence
International Director	R. Jones
Non-executive Directors	A. Leadbetter B. Smith J. Wickham M. Truran
Manager of Women's Chess	C Summerscale
Manager of Congress Chess	D. Welch
Manager of Coaching	M. Turner
Governance Committee	See list below
Finance Committee	See list below
Company Secretary	Geoff Steele

### Governance Committee

John Dunleavy, John Philpott, John Paines, Richard Haddrell, Andrew Leadbetter

### Finance Committee

Mike Adams, Ray Clark, Alan Martin, David Rowe J. Philpott

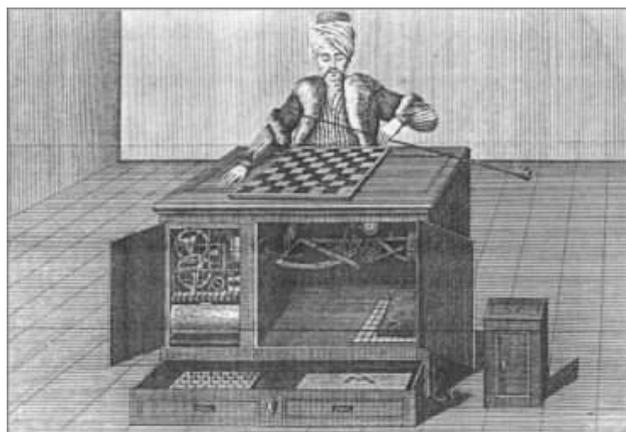
## AUTOMATON CHESS

By C. GILMORE

The facts, as far as may be ascertained, are as follows. In 1769, Wolfgang van Kempelen, at that time in Vienna, was invited by the Empress Marie Theresa to attend certain magnetic experiments shown at the Court by a certain Frenchman, M. Pelletier. He went but said he could invent a machine far more surprising. In 1770 he returned with the automaton, a machine which could play chess and beat really good players. He exhibited it in Vienna in 1770, in Russia in 1776 and in Paris in 1783 where Benjamin Franklin, the American statesman-scientist, studied it. In 1783 it was possibly shown in London. In 1805 von Kempelen's son sold it to Johann N Maelzel, himself a mechanical genius, said by some to have invented Beethoven's metronome. Maelzel took it on tour and in 1809 Napoleon is said to have played a game against it during the Wagram campaign.

Prince Eugene de Beauharnais bought the machine for 30,000 francs and Maelzel gave part of the money to Beethoven. In 1817 Beauharnois sold it back again to Maelzel for the same sum. No cash was handed over but Maelzel was to pay from any profits he might make. About 1825 the heirs of Prince Beauharnais sued Maelzel for the balance so he went to the U.S.

John Dickson Carr, the detective story writer, describes the machine in one of his stories. In appearance it consisted of a human figure sitting down at a board which stood on a wooden chest. This chest had three doors in front. The owner of the affair always opened these doors one at a time to "prove" that the chest was empty of anything save a little mechanism and, anyway, could contain nothing larger than a child. The secret was that the machine did actually contain a man, at first a Polish expert called Worowski, said to have lost his legs in the wars. No one realized that his legs were artificial and so his presence inside the machine without legs was never suspected. In Paris in the 1820's M. Mouret was said to be in the machine. He gave pawn and move to all comers, and is supposed to have won 99% of his games.



Different players worked the machine in Paris but when Maelzel went to the U.S. he had no expert to help him. At the first exhibition he gave in the U.S., on Thursday, April 13th, 1826, at the National Hotel, 112 Broadway, a young Frenchwoman was inside and played only set end games. It was shown in Boston and again in New York. Maelzel then wrote to France for an expert and a certain Schlumberger accepted the contract.

In 1834 Maelzel showed the automaton in Philadelphia with a mechanical orchestra. Then he took it on tour to Boston, New York,

Baltimore, Pittsburg, Washington and Richmond. Edgar Allen Poe saw it at Richmond and described how it worked in the *Southern Literary Messenger* in April, 1836. His logical mind dissected the "spooof" very quickly.

In November, 1837 Maelzel and Schlumberger sailed to Cuba but Schlumberger died of yellow fever on the way there and Maelzel on the way back. To pay his debts, Maelzel's effects were sold and the automaton was bought for 400 dollars by a Mr. Ohl who soon disposed of it. It was kept in various museums, finally to be destroyed in the great fire which devastated Philadelphia On July 5th, 1854.

Since that date similar machines have been invented. An American named Walker copied the idea from Maelzel and exhibited it in 1827 in New York, Saratoga and other places but as the machine was often beaten it attracted little attention.

A more famous machine called "Mephisto" was built by C. G. Gumpel and shown in London in 1879. It was worked by remote electrical control by Gunsberg. The figure, Mephisto, was clothed in red and black and worked in a room framed with mirrors. It was shown for 12 months only and then broken up. When playing with ladies it would obtain a winning position and then lose the game, offering to shake hands afterwards.

A similar machine was "Aheeb," built by Charles Arthur Hopper and exhibited at the Royal Polytechnical Institute in 1868. It was lodged at the Crystal Palace between 1868 and 1876 and then went to the Royal Aquarium at Westminster till 1877. Then it was taken to Berlin where over 100,000 saw it in three months. It played at Breslau, Dresden, Leipzig, Hanover, Magdeburg, Cologne, Elbefeld, Dusseldorf, Frankfurt and Wiesbaden. Afterwards it visited Brussels and Paris and here Zukertort is said to have played against it. Rosenthal played it twice, winning one and losing one. In 1885 Aheeb visited New York and Minneapolis, Chicago and Kansas City. Charles F. Moehle and Charles Francis Barker, U.S. draughts champion, worked the machine in turn. It remained in New York from 1895 till 1916. Then it was set up in Coney Island and was destroyed by fire on March 15th, 1929. Between 1898 and 1904 Pillsbury is said to have worked it.

Aheeb's eyes were fixed so as to meet one directly if one looked up from the board and it

continued to stare while moving the pieces. The concealed player looked out through a screen in the figure's breast and moved his head when the supporting chest was opened, lowering some dummy wheels and wires to take his place. The figure could not be inspected during a game. The player's legs went down into the stand on which the board rested. After apparently showing the machine and closing the doors, there would be a clanking of cogwheels which was a signal to the player to get ready. According to the *Scientific American Supplement* of November 6th, 1915, a Spanish engineer named Senor Luis Torres y Quevedo made a more remarkable machine still. It automatically played the end game of King and Rook against King from any position without any human agency at all and if an illegal move were made it would signal it.

CHESS January 1947

## WORLD CHESS CHAMPIONS

In complete contrast to the subject of the previous champion in our series, Tal, our next subject is regarded by many as the complete antithesis to his compatriot.

## TIGRAN PETROSIAN



**Tigran Vartanovich Petrosyan**, often more commonly spelled PETROSIAN, was born on June 17<sup>th</sup> 1929. in the town of Tbilisi, (Russian-Georgia); his parents were of Armenian descent. He learned the Russian form of draughts, backgammon and other "table games" before the age of four, and he believed that this is what prepared him for chess. His formal introduction to chess came when he was somewhere from age six to age eight, although many historians believed it likely he might have

seen the game before then as he had an uncle who was a keen chess player.

Tigran's parents died when he was just a teenager, (16) and he took over his Father's job as caretaker of an officers' home. (This period coincided with the years of devastation that occurred during WWII.) He found comfort and consolation in the game of chess, and began playing as often as possible. His first Georgian Championship attempt saw him rising early to undertake his caretaking duties, playing in the tournament and then going home to further his studies. He scoured book shops for second hand chess books, which he devoured and then took back to part exchange for more. However, there was one author, Nimovich, he would never consider trading in, especially "Chess Praxis" which he knew by heart and which underpinned his whole chess career. In 1946, he moved to Yerevan, and then won the Armenian Championship in 1948. He was urged to move to Moscow to further develop his talent, and he did so in 1949.

His talent and enthusiasm for chess were unmistakable; in 1951 he won the Championship of the city of Moscow. That year he also came EQUAL SECOND (with Geller and Keres) in the Championship of the U.S.S.R. (This was the national or premier championship at that time.) At the Saltsjöbaden Interzonal in 1952, he tied for second place with Mark Taimanov. (Score: +7, =13) Of course Saltsjöbaden was the scene of one of Alexander Kotov's greatest triumphs. He was the youngest of all the Candidates at Neuhausen-Zurich in 1953, one of the three or four strongest tournaments ever played up until that point in chess history. (Petrosian took 5th place.)

Petrosian did not come to the fore for a while, although he continued to play successfully in the Interzonal competitions. He played - and qualified in both Göteborg, 1955 and Portoroz, 1958. (This last event was the one in which Bobby Fischer burst upon the world's chess scene.) Petrosian played solidly in the Candidates tournaments that followed these competitions, but he did not go on to the next stage.

He continued to score well in other tournaments; he again convincingly won the Championship of Moscow in 1956. He also played VERY good and solid chess in the USSR Championships. (1958, second place; 1959, FIRST; 1960, tied for second; and in 1961, he was again in first place. (A VERY Impressive run!!! NO other champion ever played

in four consecutive USSR championships during that period, and did so well!

At the Stockholm Interzonal in Sweden in 1962, he tied for second place. (Bobby Fischer ran away with this one, 2.5 points ahead of Petrosian and Geller.) Fischer faltered in the Candidates Tournament in Curaçao, where Petrosian simply continued to play very good, super-solid chess, to win the tournament and qualify.

The match for the World Chess Championship - with GM Mikhail Botvinnik - began in 1963. It was a titanic and nerve-wrenching affair, but eventually Petrosian emerged the victor by the score of + 5, =15, -2. After the match, he paid tribute to Boleslavsky's 'invaluable help' as his trainer and as his second.

In 1966, Petrosian became the first FIDE-era player to successfully defend his World title against **Boris Spassky**. However In 1969, Spassky gained his revenge.

Petrosian won few tournaments as World Champion, most of the time he was too content to coast with draws. When he did win, many felt he was not impressive, he rarely dominated a world-class field. **From 1952 to 1984**, Petrosian played in more than 50 strong international tournaments. He won more second prizes, (**17**) than he did first prizes.

It is probably this that gained him the reputation of a boring player, even today this myth persists. Others would not describe Petrosian this way, whilst his penchant for quick and easy draws could certainly be labelled as dull, they hail Petrosian as the greatest defender who ever lived,( though others argue that he has been overtaken in this respect by some later era players, Kramnic in particular).

A further misconception amongst some was that Petrosian was slow, even slightly stupid! Petrosian **WAS** hard of hearing ( though he used this to his advantage by switching off his hearing aid if tournament conditions became noisy). He was also introverted and shy. These problems were probably what led to the observations about his intelligence. Petrosian was NEVER slow at the chess board! Most of the time, he was ahead of his opponents on the clock. Many different GM's, players and historians have confirmed that during the late 1950's, and the early 1960's, Petrosian was PROBABLY the fastest and certainly one of the very best blitz players in the whole world!!!

Bobby Fischer felt that Petrosian was one of the greatest players at prophylaxis who ever lived. Some would argue that he surpassed Nimsovich, the original master of this genre. He was probably better at preventing whatever idea his opponent was trying to execute, than he was at winning earth-shattering brilliancies. Needless to say, this quality did not endear him to the chess public. The spoiler who stifles play is never likely to be as popular as the flamboyant innovator.

In more recent years Petrosian has become accepted as a great genius and master of POSITIONAL PLAY. His understanding of chess strategy and planning have gained greater acclaim. Many chess historians have already noted that in closed positions, few could equal Petrosian's ability to manoeuvre and outflank his opponents. His games are being studied rather more, instead of simply being recorded unannotated as they once tended to be.

**On August 13th, 1984**, Petrosian unfortunately passed away, he was only 55 years old. The cause of death was reported to be cancer, probably brought on by years of smoking. Something not even the "Iron Tiger" could defeat.

He has two major opening systems named after him: the Petrosian variation of the King's Indian Defence (1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. Nf3 O-O 6. Be2 e5 7. d5) and the Petrosian system in the Queen's Indian (1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 b6 4. a3).

Here are 2 examples of the Tiger demonstrating his prowess against World Champion opposition.

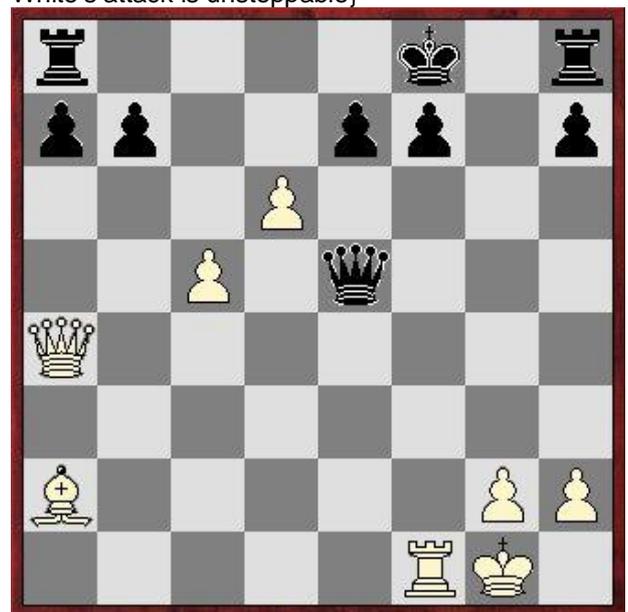
Event Tilburg  
Date 1981  
White Kasparov Garry  
Black T Petrosian

1. d4 d5 2. c4 dxc4 3. Nf3 Nf6 4. e3 Bg4 5. Bxc4 e6 6. h3 Bh5 7. Nc3 a6 8. g4 Bg6 9. Ne5 Nbd7 10. Nxc6 hxg6 11. Bf1 c6 12. Bg2 Qc7 13. O-O Be7 14. f4 Nb6 15. g5 Nfd7 16. Qg4 O-O-O 17. Rb1 Kb8 18. b4 Nd5 19. Na4 f5 20. Qg3 Nxb4 21. Bd2 Nd5 22. Rfc1 Ka7 23. Qe1 Ba3 24. Rc2 Qd6 25. Rb3 Qe7 26. Qe2 Rb8 27. Qd3 Bd6 28. Nb2 Rhc8 29. Nc4 Bc7 30. a4 b5 31. axb5 cxb5 32. Ra2 Kb7 33. Bb4 Qe8 34. Bd6 Ra8 35. Qb1 {Rc2 would have been better for White} Kc6 36. Rba3 bxc4 37. Rxa6+ Rxa6 38. Rxa6+ Bb6 39. Bc5 Qd8 {making the Bishop on b6 a strong point and the pivot of Black's defence.} 40. Qa1 Nxc5 41. dxc5 Kxc5 42. Ra4 {An unusual finish, with the Black King being one of the most advanced pieces.} 0-1



Event Buenos Aires  
Date 1971  
White Petrosian Tigran  
Black Fischer Robert

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 d5 4. Bf4 Bg7 5. e3 c5 6. dxc5 Qa5 7. Rc1 Ne4 8. cxd5 Nxc3 9. Qd2 Qxa2 10. bxc3 Qa5 11. Bc4 Nd7 12. Ne2 Ne5 13. Ba2 Bf5 14. Bxe5 Bxe5 15. Nd4 Qxc5 16. Nxf5 gxf5 17. O-O Qa5 18. Qc2 f4 19. c4 fxe3 20. c5 Qd2 21. Qa4+ Kf8 22. Rcd1 Qe2 23. d6 Qh5 24. f4 e2 25. fxe5 exd1=Q 26. Rxd1 Qxe5 27. Rf1 {Although the exchange down, White's attack is unstoppable}



27 ...f6 28. Qb3 Kg7  
29. Qf7+ Kh6 30. dxe7 f5 31. Rxf5 Qd4+ 32. Kh1 1-0

## **XYLOTHISM**

### **A NEW DESCRIPTION OF AN OLD DISEASE**

It is very strange that this malady; now existent for several centuries, should have received no attention from the medical profession. Such curious affection has certainly deserved scientific observation and record, and this negligence on the part of my colleagues I now proposed to remedy by describing, as accurately as possible, its incidence, its symptoms, and its clinical course.

We note, to begin with, that this disease affects chiefly males, beginning usually in the second decade and continuing into middle life and beyond. Occasionally the female sex is attacked, but this occurrence is rather rare.

The earliest symptom is observed as a tendency on the part of the patient to foregather with some fellow sufferer and with him to sit in a hunched position for hours at a time, in almost total silence and without uttering a word or engaging in any useful or entertaining conversation, and with eyes glued constantly to one spot. At rare intervals a harsh guttural sound will be emitted by one or other of the victims, a noise somewhat resembling "chk", but even this may not be audible except to the acute observer.

As the disease progresses, these patients show an inclination to congregate together, not as common sense would dictate, for the relief of symptoms, but, instead, for their aggravation. Such meeting places may indeed be found in almost any city, constituting, as it would seem, sanatoria in reverse.

Individuals attacked by this virus gradually lose their liking for other activities, if indeed that in which they sit and glare and ponder and growl can really be called one. Wine, women and song, the normal objectives of the male, no longer absorb their interest. Their wives sit at home in loneliness, wearily wondering what sort of queen could have so much more attraction for their mates. In truth these neglected creatures must hate the disease but are powerless either to allay or cure it.

For it is my observation that of all sicknesses, this is by far the most chronic. Once contracted, it is apt to last for years and years, and when the patient begins to have acute attacks which are, I believe, called by them "tournaments", there is no relief or remedy. The mania continues I its unvarying course and vision becomes so affected that the whole universe appears only as a chequered maze upon which curious forms move in interminable patterns. It seems that the power to resist this fatal attraction must become as weak as that of the opium addict, or the dipsomaniac, and the spell as strong as that which lured the ancient mariner to the Isle of Sirens.

I have searched medical and psychiatric literature in vain for a description of this malady and am convinced it has hitherto been neither noted nor even named. I have therefore decided to give it an appellation, as is my due, in the approved scientific style, basing my term "xyltothism" on the main symptom, with derivation from the Greek. "xylon" wood, and "othismos" pushing.

Julius S Weingart M D 1946

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Darwin Chess Festival**

**17-24 September 2005**

### **The Darwin Shopping Centre Shrewsbury**

The event started with a lightening tournament on Saturday 17 September and concluded with a similar event. While these events were played matches also took place on a large board set up on the ground floor of the centre. Games were also played on this board during the week. Social chess was also available for members of the public.

It may sound a crazy idea, chess in a busy shopping mall, but this was the third year we in Shropshire Chess have staged the event, and it has proved very popular.

During the week long event 12 people have come forward and shown an interest in joining a club in the county. The whole object is to promote chess, and to this end I feel chess has been the real winner.

While competitive chess is played, all games are ungraded, and non playing members are available to advise interested bystanders. Flexibility is the name of the game, by that I mean on the last day a buzzer tournament had been planned, but due to the opening of a shop adjacent to the chess, and checkout bingo announcements over a loudspeaker, clocks were reverted to.

Trophies were provided by the centre management, and the opening day's event was won by Nigel Farrington 6/6 runners up Nick Rutter 5/6 and Francis Best 4/6 on the last day Nick Rutter went one better winning with 5/5 with Micheal Sokolov 4/5 runner up. There was also a junior event won by Christopher Lovejoy with 6/6 followed by his sister Katherine with 5/6.

Next years event is scheduled for 23-30 September.

I am happy to discuss the idea we have developed with anyone looking to do something similar.

John Casewell tel 01743 871172

## CHESS VARIANTS

In the last issue Blindfold Chess and related Kreigspiel appeared. In this issue we look at another variant, which has a number of names and even variations within it. At my own chess club, we play a version we refer to as "Variable Baseline Chess"

Do you play any variations of standard chess at your local club? If so tell me about them with a view to inclusion in a future issue.

### Fischer Random Chess (Chess960)

**Fischer Random Chess** (also called *Chess960*, *Chess 960*, *Fischerandom chess*, *FR chess*, or *FullChess*) is a chess variant created by Grandmaster Bobby Fischer (the World Champion of chess from 1972 until 1975). It was originally announced on June 19, 1996, in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

#### The Need for Fischer Random Chess

In the 20th century, professional chess underwent a development in that knowledge of opening theory or book moves became more and more important. This development has not yet, or will never, come to an end. A lot of players spend - maybe even waste - their time analyzing opening theory and trying to invent new variations. It is amazing to see that average club players have intimate knowledge about the latest developments in complicated openings or defenses such as the Sicilian systems, but their creativity and knowledge about middle and endgames are insufficient and leave much to be desired. Once someone becomes a 2300+ rated player, they inevitably have to learn something about classical opening theory. Bobby Fischer himself who has a super-human photographic memory, had to work very hard on his openings to become world champion in 1972.

Even a player such as former world champion Garry Kasparov who has incredible memorization capabilities, complained that he could not always remember his opening preparation. GM Vladimir Kramnik showed the importance of having perfect knowledge of the opening system when he beat Kasparov in the Braingames world championship last year. The "Berlin Wall" variation of Ruy Lopez proved to be an excellent choice of defence against Kasparov, who could not break through. Although creativity within well-known openings is still possible, if you don't work on your openings, like former world champion Anatoly Karpov, who relies on his strength in the middle and endgame, you will lose rating points.

Fischer Random Chess (FRC), is actually Fischer's own invention or variant of shuffle chess. In this kind of chess, knowledge about openings is irrelevant.

#### Starting Position

The starting position for Fischer random chess must meet the following rules:

- White pawns are placed on their orthodox home squares.

- All remaining white pieces are placed on the first rank.
- The white king is placed somewhere between the two white rooks.
- The white bishops are placed on opposite-colored squares.
- The black pieces are placed equal-and-opposite to the white pieces. For example, if white's king is placed on b1, then black's king is placed on b8.

Note that the king never starts on file a or h, because there has to be room for a rook.

There are many procedures for creating this starting position. Hans L. Bodlaender has proposed the following procedure using one six-sided die to create an initial position; typically this is done just before the game commences:

- Roll the die, and place a white bishop on the black square indicated by the die, counting from the left. Thus 1 indicates the first black square from the left (a1 in algebraic notation), 2 indicates the second black square from the left (c1), 3 indicates the third (e1), and 4 indicates the fourth (g1). Since there are no fifth or sixth positions, re-roll 5 or 6 until another number shows.
- Roll the die, and place a white bishop on the white square indicated (1 indicates b1, 2 indicates d1, and so on). Re-roll 5 or 6.
- Roll the die, and place a queen on the first empty position indicated (always skipping filled positions). Thus, a 1 places the queen on the first (leftmost) empty position, while a 6 places the queen on the sixth (rightmost) empty position.
- Roll the die, and place a knight on the empty position indicated. Re-roll a 6.
- Roll the die, and place a knight on the empty position indicated. Re-roll a 5 or 6.
- Place a white rook on the 1st empty square of the first rank, the white king on the 2nd empty square of the first rank, and the remaining white rook on the 3rd empty square of the first rank.
- Place all white and black pawns on their usual squares, and place Black's pieces to exactly mirror White's (so Black should have on a8 exactly the same type of piece that White has on a1).

This procedure generates any of the 960 possible initial positions of Fischer Random Chess with an equal chance; on average, this particular procedure uses 6.7 die rolls. Note that one of these initial positions is the

standard chess position, at which point a standard chess game begins.

It's also possible use this procedure to see why there are exactly 960 possible initial positions. Each bishop can take one of 4 positions, the Queen one of 6, and the two knights can have 5 or 4 possible positions, respectively. This means that there are  $4 \cdot 4 \cdot 6 \cdot 5 \cdot 4 = 1920$  possible positions if the two knights were different in some way. However, the two knights are indistinguishable during play; if they were swapped, there would be no difference. This means that the number of distinguishable positions is half of 1920, or  $1920/2 = 960$  possible distinguishable positions.

## Castling

### Rules for Castling

Once the starting position is set up, the rules for play are the same as standard chess. In particular, pieces and pawns have their normal moves, and each player's objective is to checkmate their opponent's king.

Fischer random chess allows each player to castle once per game, a move by potentially both the king and rook in a single move. However, a few interpretations of standard chess games rules are needed for castling, because the standard rules presume initial locations of the rook and king that are often untrue in Fischer Random Chess games.

After castling, the rook and king's final positions are exactly the same positions as they would be in standard chess. Thus, after a-side castling (notated as O-O-O and known as queen-side castling in orthodox chess), the King is on c (c1 for White and c8 for Black) and the Rook is on d (d1 for White and d8 for Black). After h-side castling (notated as O-O and known as *king-side castling* in orthodox chess), the King is on g and the Rook is on f. It is recommended that a player state "I am about to castle" before castling, to eliminate potential misunderstanding.

However, castling may only occur under the following conditions, which are extensions of the standard rules for castling:

1. **Unmoved:** The king and the castling rook must not have moved before in the game, including castling.
2. **Unattacked:** All of the squares between the king's initial and final squares (including the initial and final squares) must not be under attack by any opposing piece.
3. **Vacant:** All the squares between the king's initial and final squares (including the final square), and all of the squares between the rook's initial and final squares (including the final square), must be vacant except for the king and castling rook.

These rules have the following consequences:

- If the initial position happens to be the standard chess initial position, these castling rules have exactly the same effect as the standard chess castling rules.

- All the squares between the king and castling rook must be vacant.
- Castling cannot capture any pieces.
- The king and castling rook cannot "jump" over any pieces other than each other.
- A player may castle at most once in a game.
- If a player moves his king or both of his initial rooks without castling, he may not castle during the rest of the game.
- In some starting positions, some squares can stay filled during castling that would have to be vacant in standard chess. For example, after a-side castling (O-O-O), it's possible for to have a, b, and/or e still filled, and after h-side castling (O-O), it's possible to have e and/or h filled.
- In some starting positions, the king or rook (but not both) do not move during castling.
- The king may not be in check before or after castling.
- The king cannot move through check.

### How to Castle

When castling on a physical board with a human player, it is recommended that the king be moved outside the playing surface next to his final position, the rook then be moved from its starting to ending position, and then the king be placed on his final square. This is always unambiguous, and is a simple rule to follow.

Eric van Reem suggests that there are other acceptable ways to castle:

- If only the rook needs to move (jumping over the king), you can simply move only the rook.
- If only the king needs to move (jumping over the castling rook), you can simply move the king.
- You can pick up both the king and rook (in either order), then place them on their final squares (this is called "transposition" castling).
- You can move the king to its final square and move the rook to its final square as two separate moves, in either order (this is called "double-move" castling). Obviously, if the rook is on the square the king will occupy you'll need to move the rook first, and if the king is on the square the rook will occupy you'll need to move the king first.

In contrast, Reinhard Scharnagl strongly recommends that, since castling is fundamentally a king's move, the king should always move first.

Generally, when playing with human player on a physical board, it's wise to announce "I'm going to castle" before castling. If you're playing a timed game, once you're done castling press the appropriate button on your chess clock to show your move has completed.

When castling using a computer interface, programs should have separate a-side (O-O-O) and h-side (O-O) castling actions (e.g., as a button or menu item). Ideally, programs should also be able to detect a king or rook move that cannot be anything other than a castling move and consider that a castling move.

When using an electronic board, to castle you should remove the king, remove the castling rook, place the castling rook on its new position, and then place the king on its new position. This will create an unambiguous move for electronic boards, which often only have sensors that can detect the presence or absence of an object on each square (and cannot tell what object is on the square). Ideally, electronic boards should detect a king or rook move that can only be a castling move as well, but users should not count on this.

#### **Castling Rule Ambiguities**

Many published castling rules are unfortunately ambiguous. For example, the rules first published by Eric van Reem and chessvariants.com, as literally stated, did not specifically state that there must be vacant squares between the king and his destination except for the participating rook. As a result, those rules appeared to some to allow the king to "leap" over other pieces.

In 2003 David A. Wheeler contacted many active in Fischer Random Chess to determine the exact castling rules, including Eric van Reem, Hans-Walter Schmitt, and R. Scharnagl. All agreed that there must be vacant squares between the king and his destination except for the participating rook, clarifying the castling rules.

#### **Playing Fischer Random Chess**

Examining openings for Fischer Random Chess is in its infancy, but opening fundamentals still apply. These include: protect the King, control the center squares (directly or indirectly), and develop your pieces rapidly starting with the less valuable pieces. Some starting positions have unprotected pawns that may need to be dealt with quickly.

Some have argued that two games should be played with each initial position, with players alternating as white and black, since some initial positions may turn out to give white a much bigger advantage than standard chess. However, there is no evidence that any position gives either side a significant advantage.

#### **History**

The first Fischer Random Chess tourney was held in Yugoslavia in the spring of 1996, and was won by Grandmaster Peter Leko.

In 2001, Leko became the first Fischer Random Chess world champion, defeating Grandmaster Michael Adams in an eight game match played as part of the Mainz Chess Classic. There were no qualifying matches (also true of the first orthodox world chess champion titleholders), but both players were in the top five in the January 2001 world rankings for orthodox chess. Leko was chosen because of the many novelties he has introduced to known chess theories, as well as his previous tourney win; in addition, Leko has played Fischer Random Chess games with Fischer himself. Adams was chosen because he was the world number one in blitz (rapid) chess and is regarded as an extremely strong player in unfamiliar positions. The match was won by a narrow margin, 4.5 to 3.5.

In 2002 at Mainz, an open Fischer Random tournament was held which attracted 131 players. Peter Svidler won the event.

Other interesting events happened in 2002. The website ChessVariants.com selected Fischer Random chess as its "Recognized Variant of the Month" for April 2002. Yugoslavian Grandmaster Svetozar Gligoric published in 2002 the book *Shall We Play Fischerandom Chess?*, popularizing this variation further.

At the 2003 Mainz Chess Classic, Svidler beat Leko in an eight game match for the World Championship title by a score of 4.5 - 3.5.

#### **Naming**

This particular chess variant has a number of different names. The first names applied to it include "Fischer Random Chess" and "Fischerandom Chess".

Hans-Walter Schmitt (chairman of the Frankfurt Chess Tigers e.V.) is an advocate of this chess variant, and he started a brainstorming process to choose a new name for it. The new name had to obey the following requirements on the parts of some leading grandmasters:

1. It should not use parts of the name of any Grandmaster colleague
2. It should not include negatively biased or "spongy" elements like "random" or "freestyle"
3. It should be understood worldwide.

This effort culminated in the name "Chess960", deriving from the number of different initial positions.

R. Scharnagl, another proponent of this variant, has consistently used the term FullChess. He believes "FullChess" to also satisfy these premises, and that it also emphasizes the compatible embedding of the traditional game of chess.

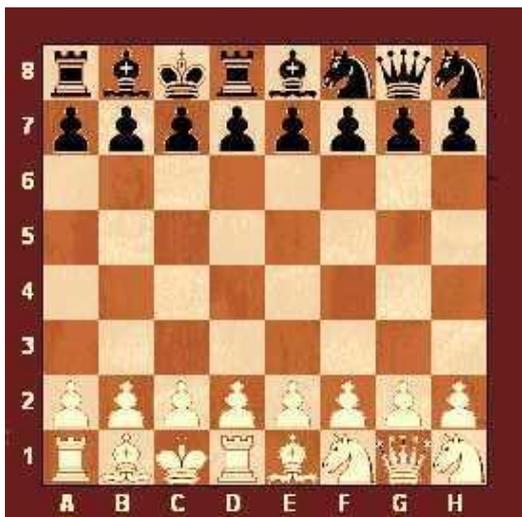
At this time the terms "Fischer Random Chess" or "Fischerandom chess" are more common. It is not yet

clear if these other, newer terms, or yet another one will replace it.

Here are 2 games from the World Championship event of 2001

**Game 7**

White: GM Michael Adams  
Black: GM Peter Leko

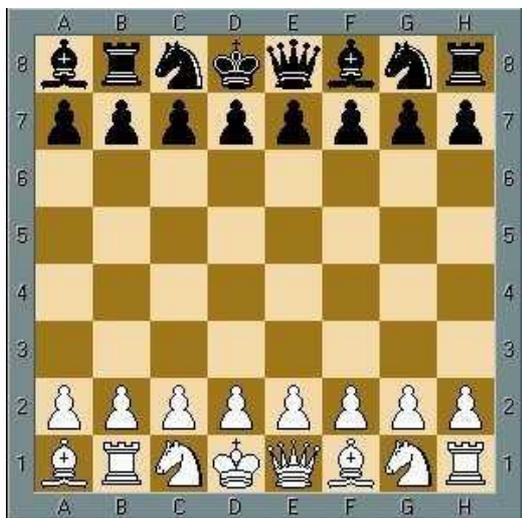


Starting Position

1.d4 d5 2.c3 f6 3.e4 dxe4 4.Bxe4 Bg6 5.Nhg3 c6 6.f3 Nf7 7.Ne3 Nd6 8.Nef5 Qf7 9.Nxd6+ Bxd6 10.Qf2 Nd7 11.Bd2 0-0 12.0-0 Bxg3 13.Qxg3 e5 14.Bxg6 Qxg6 15.Be3 Qxg3 16.hxg3 exd4 17.Bxd4 c5 18.Bf2 b6 19.g4 Ne5 20.Rfd1 Rad8 21.b3 Nd3 22.Bg3 Rd7 23.Rd2 Rfd8 24.Re2 Kf7 25.Kf1 Rc8 26.a4 c4 27.b4 a6 28.Re4 Re7 29.Rd4 Ree8 30.Ra2 Red8 31.Re4 Re8 32.Rd4 Red8 33.Re4 Re8 34.Rd4 1/2-1/2

**Game 8**

White: GM Peter Leko  
Black: GM Michael Adams



Starting Position

1.d4 g6 2.Nd3 Bg7 3.Nf3 b5 4.e4 Nf6 5.Nd2 d6 6.b3 Qd7 7.f3 0-0 8.g4 Nb6 9.Qe3 Rbc8 10.Bg2 c5 11.dxc5 dxc5 12.0-0 c4 13.Ne5 Qc7 14.bxc4 bxc4 15.Bd4 c3 16.Nb3 Nxe4 17.Nxg6 Nc4 18.Qd3 hxg6 19.Bxg7 Kxg7 20.fxe4 Qe5 21.Rf2 Rfd8 22.Qf3 f6 23.Re1 a5 24.Nc1 Rd2 25.Nd3 Qd4 26.Nf4 Kf7 27.Ne2 Qe3 28.g5 Qxf3 29.Rxf3 Ne5 30.Rh3 Rxc2 31.Nd4 Rd2 32.Nb3 Rxa2 33.Rh7+ Kg8 34.Rxe7 Nd3 35.Rd1 Nf4 36.Bf1 fxg5 37.Rdd7 Nh5 38.Bc4+ Kf8 39.Rf7+ Ke8 1/2-1/2

**POSITIONAL PUZZLES**

Solutions - puzzles on page 2

**Negyesy v Honfi**

A case of mutual blindness, based on the overburdening of the Nc3. It has to guard against Rd1+ and Qxa2+. But 19...Rd1+ 20.Nxd1 Qxa2+ 21.Kc1 and Black has nothing. Therefore: 19...Qxa2+ The other way round! White resigned in view of 20.Nxa2 Rd1 mate. Both overlooked the fact that the deflected knight has a new defence: 21.Nc1!

**Romi v Staldi**

This is a classic case of "resignation due to sacrificial shock". After 51...Kxh7 52. f8=Q+ Kg6 53. Rg7+ Kh6 White has nothing. He has less than nothing after 53.Qxc8 Rf1+ 54. Kh2 Qf4+ 55. g3 Qf2#.

**Samarin v Antoshin**

36. e6 Rh5+ 37. Qh3 Rxh3 38. Kxh3 demolishes black's attack, and leaves white up a rook.

**Sanguineti v Najdorf**

This is a famous example of resigning in a won position. Black defends against mate and keeps a large material advantage with 58...Rg4.

**Sznepik v Van Gils**

Blindness of a special kind; forgetting the rules. Black didn't see how he could avoid losing a Bishop without being mated by Qxg6+, and resigned. The Polish master then pointed out 20...O-O to him ('and Black is better'), a possibility that had not occurred to Van Gils. 'Black is better' was a euphemism, to use a euphemism. After 21.Bxg7 Kxg7 Black, with his royal extra pawn and White's weaknesses on b4 and e6, is winning. Van Gils suggested to me that White's title's authority might have contributed to his blunder.