

THE MIDDLE GAME

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John Robinson

The fact that John was ill and unable to attend the MCCU half year meeting was reported in the previous newsletter. I am sure you will all be sorry to hear that his condition has deteriorated and he is quite poorly in hospital.

For many of us John seemed to be one of those indestructible people who hardly ever mentioned feeling the slightest bit under the weather. For him to have been struck down so suddenly with illness seems almost unbelievable.

If anyone was unaware just how much John did in chess terms, the fact that numerous events organisers are having to search for someone to fill his shoes speaks volumes.

THE MCCU - WHAT NEXT?

I posed the question at the MCCU half year meeting, what do Midlands chess players actually want from the MCCU? I am now looking for some answers to that question. However, it occurs to me that not all of you may be aware of what the MCCU currently does. So I feel a good starting point is to summarize the current activities.

COUNTIES CHAMPIONSHIPS

The MCCU runs Midland county team tournaments at all grading levels. These decide the Champions at the various levels, and act as qualifying events for the National Counties Championships. The number of teams competing in the MCCU events makes the region one of the most active, vying with the SCCU for the largest entry.

COUNTY U18 TEAM EVENT

This event has been poorly supported over recent years, but has in the not too distant past had a dozen teams competing. The question has been raised previously about whether the event would be more successful if run at a different time of the year (currently it is either the first or second Saturday in February), but no one has come back with any firm views on this.

COUNTY TEAM CORRESPONDENCE EVENT

Such an event has run for many years. The current controller is stepping down, so if the competition is to continue a new controller is needed.

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WE LOVE TO GO A-WANDERING

Anyone who has played county chess will know that finding the opposition venue is not always easy. A couple of players I know have merrily stated, having been told the venue for a match, that yes they've been there before and no, they don't need a map'; only to then go to a different venue in the county concerned, albeit one that has hosted county matches. Occasionally a car breaks down, and more than once there have been motorway holds ups. All of which adds to the joys of running a county team.

A concerned Warwickshire U100 captain, Pauline Woodward, was wondering where a car with 3 of her players had got to. Having rung the home phones of 2 of the players and received no reply, it seemed likely that they were at least on their way. Over half an hour later there was still no sign of them, concern was heightened when another player indicated that they had spoken to one of the players at 11.50am that morning, when the car was about to set off for the journey to Syston to play Leicestershire B team..

Default time approached with still no sign, and went, with still no sign. The home captain rang asking her other half to check teletext travel pages for any indication of problems on their likely route, to be told there was nothing reported. Just as this conversation was going on a car turned up, it was the missing trio! What had befallen the occupants to be so late!? "We got to Syston at 10 to 2" said one of the occupants - one major problem; it was Syston Lincolnshire they had got to!! The maps provided by the team captain had been swept aside in favour of the drivers SATNAV, which had been followed unquestionably. I think I will steer clear of any speculation on the matter of whether the operator or the equipment was at fault.

The irony is that the car's route to Syston Lincolnshire, must have taken the vehicle within a couple of miles of the right venue in Syston Leicestershire. I have a feeling that those who know the players concerned won't let them live this one down for a while!

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COUNTY INDIVIDUAL JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

This event has run off and on, with entry levels varying considerably. There have been some years when the event has been cancelled due to lack of support, and it did not run for several years because it was not felt support would be sufficient to make it viable. Sections covering age groups from U18 down to U8 have been included. The event has run for the last couple of years and is scheduled to run again this year.

COUNTY INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

At one time the MCCU ran 2 weekend congresses, which included qualifying places for the British Championships. This then reduced to 1. Historically the events sometimes made a profit, sometimes not. However, over recent years it has become increasingly difficult to find suitable venues at a reasonable price, and obtain sponsorship of the levels that mean the event is likely to make a profit. The MCCU does not have large enough reserves to subsidise this type of event indefinitely. The question has been raised of whether there is a need for an MCCU individual event, or whether there is already a surfeit of congresses in our area.

INDIVIDUAL CORRESPONDENCE CHAMPIONSHIP

The P C Gibbs Trophy has been contested by the top correspondence player nominated by each county. Most counties have nominated a player over recent years. A new controller took over this year following a break without an event last year.

MCCU CLUB COMPETITION

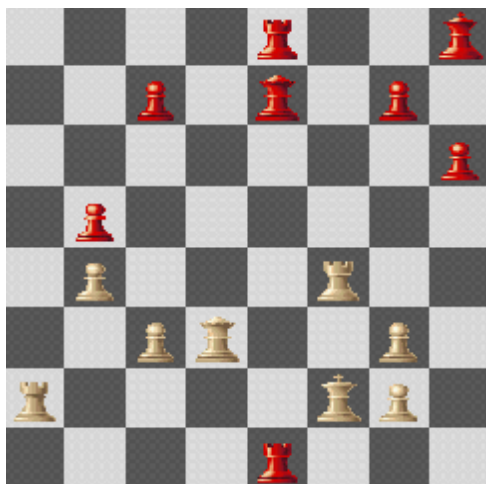
It is a number of years since any sort of Midlands Club event has run. An attempt was made at a quickplay handicap, but too few entries were received to make it viable. Following requests from some quarters another attempt at a club event will be made this year.

MCCU NEWSLETTER

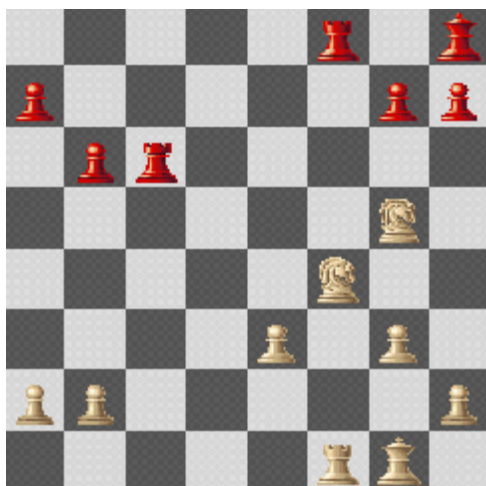
This has been produced on and off over the years. As this edition demonstrates it is currently on. Use of the website and email means this can be produced and

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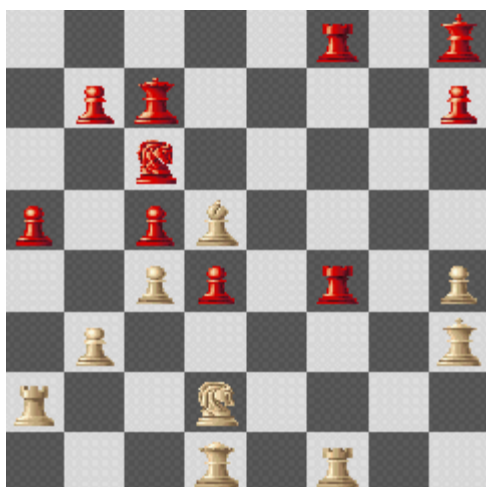
POSITIONAL PUZZLES



a) Black to move & win in 2



b) White to moves & win in 2



c) Black to play & win in 4



d) White to play & win in 5



e) White to play & win in 3



f) White to play & win in 5

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distributed quite cheaply. Currently the costs are limited to those few clubs who do not admit to having anyone with internet facilities.

MCCU WEBSITE

This has been running for a number of years to provide a variety of Midland chess information, including county captains, fixtures & results, local congress details & links to county websites.

DONATIONS

Over the years the MCCU has provided modest donations to various players representing their country in international events.

GRADING

Changes in the grading arrangements at national level have led to a decrease in the amount of grading work done at MCCU level, but some games are still processed, e.g. the county team results.

MCCU MEETINGS

The current constitution commits us to 2 meetings a year. Changes to rules for all of the competitions can be put forward at these meetings, along with Constitutional changes. There are of course the usual discussions over finances and setting of county affiliation fees.

BCF/EFC

The MCCU is entitled to attend and vote at EFC council meetings, of which there are normally 2 a year.

The following are areas which are on my "wish list"

MCCU CONGRESS DATABASE

I floated the idea of an MCCU database of congress entrants a while ago; the aim being to provide a list that would be available to local congresses. Due to data protection requirements we cannot simply merge any existing data held by various organisers. However, if congress organisers seek the agreement of those on any lists they hold, this would give us

compliance with legislation.

INTER-UNION TEAM RAPIDPLAY

The staging of such an event was agreed in principle. The main stumbling block has been an inexpensive venue in the right sort of location. Finding a date in what is already a full calendar is also difficult.

So, what is the MCCU doing that you want it to continue doing?

Is it doing, or trying to do anything you don't want it to do?

What isn't it doing that you would like to see it doing?

Feedback please by email to

juliedjohnson@yahoo.com; by mail to 105 Central Avenue Syston; by phone to 0116 2609012. This is YOUR chance to influence the future of the MCCU, if you don't take it; you have no right to complain about the outcome of this review. Please don't just sit back and leave it to others.

THE LEWISMEN ARE IN TOWN!!

For anyone interested in chess, board games and /or history, I would recommend a visit to a travelling exhibition appearing Leicester (until 30th April), which then moves on to Lincoln (26th May – 30th September). I was fortunate enough to be invited to the preview of "Across the Board", the centrepiece of which is part of the Isle of Lewis chessmen collection, owned by the British Museum. This exhibition covers chess and a number of other ancient and more modern board games from around the world. Chess is very much the focal point, being regarded as the most popular, widespread and enduring.

In conjunction with the displays, a number of other events are scheduled at Leicester, including, Nansi Hemming recreating 2 large scale Lewis pieces in wood (10th-19th February), the chance to make a chess piece from clay (13th February), or Lewismen puppets (4th March), & a talk about the Lewis chessmen (27th February).

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In addition a Leicestershire chess player will be attending sessions when school groups are visiting the exhibition, in the hope of stimulating further interest.

The Museum has very kindly offered to host the Leicestershire & Rutland Junior Championships on April 1st free of charge, for which the LRCA are very grateful. For other related events visit the museum website at

www.leicester.gov.uk/museums

I had seen pictures of the Lewismen, such as the one below before, and have handled reproduction sets, but these do not adequately show the actual level of detail on the original pieces. Considering these pieces date back to around 1150 and were probably made by craftsmen in Norway, without benefit of sophisticated tools the workmanship is amazing.



The chess pieces consist of elaborately worked walrus ivory and whales' teeth in the forms of seated kings and queens, mitred bishops, knights on their mounts, standing warders and pawns in the shape of obelisks. The skilled craftsmanship shows us some of the culture of the Vikings that often gets overlooked in favour of the "more appealing" stories of rape and pillage. Indeed, in the past, the Hebrides were ruled by the Vikings and the area was rich in natural resources providing both an area for settlement and the

Hebrides were an important part of the extensive trade routes that the Vikings developed.

The Lewismen were found in the vicinity of Uig on the Isle of Lewis in mysterious circumstances. Various stories have evolved to explain why they were concealed there, and how they were discovered. (see below for one version). All that is certain is that they were found some time before 11 April 1831, when they were exhibited at the Society of Antiquaries at Scotland.

Who owned the chess pieces? Why were they hidden? While there are no firm answers to these questions, it is possible that they belonged to a merchant travelling from Norway to Ireland. This seems likely since there are constituent pieces - though with some elements missing - for four distinct sets. Their general condition is excellent and they do not seem to have been used much, if at all.

The Lewis chess pieces form the largest single surviving group of objects from the period that were made purely for recreational purposes.

A board large enough to hold all the pieces arranged for a game played to modern rules would have measured 82 cm across. Records state that when found, some of the Lewis chessmen were stained red. Consequently the chessboard may have been red and white, as opposed to the modern convention of black and white.

Of the ninety-three pieces known to us today, eleven pieces are in Edinburgh at the National Museum of Scotland, and eighty-two are in the British Museum.

One of the most interesting Isle of Lewis Chess Set Stories is in the Morrison Manuscripts, which tells of murder and greed and the contrasting hospitality shown to some unfortunate sailors.

George Mor MacKenzie was tacksman of the farm of Balnacille and of other lands in the parish of Uig. At one time he had geld cattle at a remote sheiling in the southern end of the parish, called Aird Bheag, near the entry to Loch 'Resort. MacKenzie employed a young man to herd the cattle there and on a stormy night, a ship was

driven ashore at Aird Bheag. On the following morning, MacKenzie's herd saw, from a hiding place, a sailor swimming ashore with a small bag upon his back. The herd pursued the sailor, overtook him and slew him without ceremony, hoping to find riches and money on him. Burying the sailor's body in a peat moss, he went to Balnacille to inform his master of the fate of the ship, advising that they should kill the crew and possess themselves of the wealth the ship was supposed to contain. But MacKenzie reprimanded his herd for this barbarous advice and directed him by no means to do them any harm, but to conduct the survivors to his house. So the crew all safely arrived at Balnacille, excepting the sailor whom the herd had murdered. MacKenzie showed all manner of kindness to the strangers, who stayed about a month with him, and in that time saved as much from the ship as more than satisfied MacKenzie for their keep.

When the shipwrecked seamen left the country, the wicked herd, always afraid of detection, though living in a remote corner of the parish, went to where he had concealed the bag for whose sake he had murdered the sailor, to examine the contents. These turned out to be carved relics of various descriptions, and fearing the figures might be turned to proof against him, he travelled not less than ten miles on a dark night and buried the carved images in a sandbank in the Mains of Uig. This herd never prospered thereafter but went on from one degree of vice to another, until for his abuse of women; he was sentenced to be hanged on the Gallows Hill at Stornoway. When he was brought forth for execution, he told of many wicked things he had done, and among others, how he had murdered the sailor and where he had buried the images. Thereafter, in AD 1831, Malcolm MacLeod, tenant of Penny Donald in Uig, found upwards of eighty of these carved relics and those images were sold in Edinburgh by the late Captain Ryrie, for Thirty Pounds, for the above Malcolm MacLeod.

It is then reputed by some that, in 1831 a crofter discovered that the tide had eroded the

sandbanks and had uncovered what appeared to be a small stone-built cairn or chamber. Upon further investigation he discovered that inside the chamber lay the chessmen carved from Walrus ivory.

Whoever it was that actually found the Lewismen, I doubt that they realized they had stumbled upon a genuinely priceless treasure that would prove to be one of the British Museums top 10 favourite exhibits.

A History of Anglicisation

Following on from the first AGM of the ECF, here is a summary of the background to the name change.

The question of the possible change of name of the British Chess Federation (BCF) to English Chess Federation (ECF) occupied the deliberations of the organisation for a period of over two years. These notes summarise the discussions and actions taken during that period.

At the Management Board Meeting (MB165) held on 28th June 2003 the Director of Congress Chess urged that action be taken through a Council Meeting to approve a name change to English Chess Federation with effect from 2005. He proposed the motion that a Special Council Meeting be held to change the name of the BCF to ECF in 2004. This motion was seconded by the representative from the West of England and passed by a vote of 18-2.

At the Council meeting held in September 2003 the President, on behalf of the Management Board proposed

"That Council believes in principle that the name and Objects of the BCF should be changed to reflect the essentially English nature of the Federation in the 21st Century and will take steps to give substance to this belief"

In making this proposal the President pointed out that the Federation's activities were already largely confined to England and that the other Countries comprising the UK already had their own independent organisations. The President stated his intention to move immediately to a "multiple vote" and the proposal was carried with 133 in favour and 48 against (including postal votes in both cases).

Following the successful passage of this, proposals were laid before the meeting detailing the establishment and terms of reference of a working party to be set up to implement the agreed changes. Detailed discussion on this proposal followed and after some time the President asked that rather than

continue to debate the minutiae of the proposals, the matter be put to the vote and on so doing the proposals (as amended) were carried by a large majority.

During the period from November 2003 to January 2004 a consultation questionnaire was sent to all BCF affiliated organisations (Unions, Counties, Leagues, Congresses and other organisations). A series of questions were asked the first one being:-

Do you/your organisation endorse Council's view that the BCF's name and objectives should be essentially 'English'

Forty-six organisations responded with 34 in favour of the change, 11 were against and 1 did not express an opinion. Additionally 3 non-Council bodies and 20 individuals submitted responses. Only two of the 23 responses were against change – the remaining 21 were in favour or at worst neutral.

Subsequently at the Council Meeting held in April 2004, Paul Buswell reported that the working party had found broad support for the change of name. It was envisaged that we would retain our leading role in organising the British Championships, but would no longer seek to support Commonwealth members unless they lacked a FIDE presence in their own right. It was also reported that the costs of the change would be far less than had been feared. They would be more or less confined to the production of a new logo.

The subject was further discussed at the Council Meeting held in October 2004 when it was agreed to take soundings from the grassroots as to what the new name should be. It was noted that the N.C.C.U. had already considered this and unanimously favoured the name "English Chess Federation".

The survey was done by including a questionnaire in the November/December 2004 issue of Chessmoves, (which was distributed to all members of the BCF) This questionnaire sought the views of the members on a possible change of name. Of the 256 responses received 59% were in favour of a change and 41% were not. A large percentage (79%) of those in favour of a change were in favour of becoming English Chess Federation (ECF)

The Management Board held in March 2005 discussed the situation and decided (with only one vote against) to recommend to Council a change of name to English Chess Federation.

At the Council Meeting held in April 2005 the Management Board firmly recommended to Council that the name "English Chess Federation" be adopted.

The CEO advised that in surveys taken the favoured name was "English Chess Federation". A request for a card vote was rejected and on a show of hands the required two-thirds majority was clearly achieved. Motions put to the Council Meeting were:

15.4.1 That a Company Limited by Guarantee ("the Company") be constituted to undertake the administration of chess in England in succession to the British Chess Federation ("BCF"). This was carried by a substantial majority with one vote against.

15.4.2 That the Company be called "English Chess Federation". This was carried by a substantial majority with one vote against.

Between April 2005 and October 2005 a mountain of work was done culminating in the holding of the first Annual General Meeting of English Chess Federation on October 22nd 2005.

Alice Chess

Here is another in the series looking at variations on the standard chess game. The additional twist here is that the inventor is MCCU born.

Any chess variant enthusiast is familiar with the name of V.R. Parton (1897-1974). Born in Cannock, Staffordshire, England, he lived there up to 1960 when he moved to Liverpool. He was a very active chess variant promoter and has invented some of the most famous and most remarkable games. His interests were wide and he was a great believer in Esperanto. He was particularly passionate with Lewis Carroll's world.

Here is his own explanation of the most popular of his variants-

Certain philosophers may perhaps be skilful enough to apply their art of word analysis successfully to the logicalities and illogicalities of Lewis Carroll's two stories about the young maiden Alice. Others may be successful in their endeavours to reveal the profundity of the metaphysic which the symbolism of these two stories so well disguises from the dull-mind adult who reads them to a child in boredom maybe.

In case the reader has forgotten or is ignorant, then he or she is reminded that in the second story

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"Through the Looking-glass" (one modern little girl commented that only the vulgar people say "looking-glass" for "mirror") Alice enters into the world of chessmen and thus becomes involved in very strange game.

The fantasy "inspired" me to the creation of a curious form of Chess to which the name Alician Chess, or Alice Chess, has therefore been given. Just as Alice encounters strange situations by passing through that looking-glass from reality to its reflection, so for Alician Chess a strange game is created by playing it on two separate boards! One board being as a looking-glass to the other, the resulting play is a game which has a character as fantastic perhaps as Alice's own game in "Through the Looking-glass." What a great loss it has been that Lewis Carroll never left his stamp on some idea for Chess! Whether he would approve of my using Alice's own name of the present game is an unsolvable problem.

The chessboards used in Alician Chess are placed side by side between the players. At the start of play the pieces of both players are arranged in the normal manner on one of the two chessboards, termed Board A, the other Board B being of course, unoccupied.

The basic rule of the Alician game is this: After a player has moved one of his pieces, whether it is a simple move or take, this piece played cannot remain on that board where it has just been moved, but at once must be transferred to the corresponding square on the other board. Any piece moved in Alician Chess thus vanishes strangely off its board to appear suddenly on the other board, magically out of thin air! For this special move to be "legal" the corresponding square to which the piece is transferred on the other board must be vacant. If that corresponding square is occupied, even by an enemy, then the whole movement is forbidden, as the transfer of the piece played is compulsory. Naturally, the piece must make a legal move or take on its own board before it is transferred to the other board. For example, the King may never move to a checked square on his board, even though the

transfer to the other board immediately afterwards might actually move the King to a safe square.

The ordinary notation requires no alteration for this Alician Chess. For instance, the move P - K4 simply implies that the K pawn make the proper advance to square K4 on his own board and immediately transfers to the corresponding square K4 on the other board. The regular opening of (1) P - K4, P - K4, will, for example, leave the two Kings facing one another in open file on their board, as their pawns are now on the other Board B, the one initially empty of pieces.

A piece attacks or checks only squares of the board on which it is actually standing. It does not attack and check their corresponding squares on the other board. This particular point follows from the rule that any piece should be transferred only to the corresponding squares on the other board if these are not occupied at the time.

A brief examination of what happens when the popular opening in ordinary Chess of (1) P - Q4, P - Q4 is played for the Alician, may indicate a little of the strangeness of my idea. After the opening, White plays Q x Q! It will be noted that the White Queen cannot be captured by the Black King, as she has been transferred to the square Q8 on Board B after she captured the Black Queen. Moreover, the White Queen on Q8 of Board B does not check the Black King, though in one sense they are on adjacent squares! Another brief example (1) P - KR4 Kt - KB3, (2) R x P but Black retorts with Kt x R.

Obviously, the ordinary notation does not require the further mention of the particular board on which a piece is standing, because one in a pair of corresponding squares must at least be unoccupied. Naturally, a piece which has moved an even number of times in play is on board A (its original board) and a piece which has moved an odd number of times is on Board B.

The checkmate of the enemy King is orthodox as far as possible, but the rules of the Alician idea can bring certain unpleasant surprises for the

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player whose King is hard pressed. Though a King checked may be able safely to move out of that check in his own board, he may nevertheless find his escape route barred on the other board; either the corresponding square on that board is already occupied, or else it is under attack from an enemy piece on that board.

The player will frequently find an illusion due to his customary interpretation of a Chess position on a single board. He may think quite unconsciously that one of his pieces is protected by another on the same board--just from habit! In the Alician it is not the actual square on which a piece stands that needs guarding, but the corresponding square on the other board, for an enemy will, after seizing that piece, transfer to this corresponding square.

The opening (1) P - KR4, P - K4. (2) R x P, will illustrate the illusion of the Black King's Rook guarding the pawn before him. The Black Rook cannot take the White Rook in retaliation; they are now on opposite boards. However, in the opening (1) P - KR4, Kt - KB3, the Black Knight guards the square corresponding to that on which the threatened pawn stands, and consequently, if White plays R x P, it is sharply answered by Kt x R.

When a player wishes to interpose a piece between his King checked and the enemy checking, he may forget that his pieces on the same board as his Kings are useless for such a purpose. For this intervention he must find a piece on the other board able to move there legally and then transfer to a position between the King and the checking enemy.

The Alician game is really a pair of complementary positions. It resembles the task of a painter who has a pair of uncompleted paintings on which he is working, simultaneously. When the artist has decided to paint a certain detail on one of the pair of pictures, he is obliged by his task to paint that detail exactly as it ought to be, not on that picture, but in the same spot exactly on the other picture.

To simplify the Alician game a little by playing it on a smaller scale, one can easily regard the ordinary chessboard as separated into two rectangular boards 4 x 8 by the central vertical line. A player has twelve pieces, four pawns being omitted from his normal force. The twelve chessmen are initially arranged on the left-hand rectangle. A piece of red cord can be placed round the board to mark the central vertical dividing line; but the players must remember, of course, that the two "half boards" are completely independent with no communication whatever by rank or diagonal.

Alician Chess can also be played on three boards of identical size. In this case the player has now a choice between two corresponding squares to which the piece that he plays may be transferred, though of course one these may sometimes happen to be occupied, thus allowing no choice.

The Alician game has a character which is really intermediate between a game played in a plane (on the flat) and a game in space, where the vertical dimension is also involved.

Fools Mate in Alician style.

(1)P - K4, P - Q4, (2)B - K2,PxP, (3)B - Q Kt5 and the black monarch is checkmated.

Here it will be seen that the move Q - Q2 (as well as B - Q2) fails to intervene as the Q (or B) would be transferred to the other board, still leaving their King in check to the White Bishop.

Naturally, the move K - Q2 is forbidden, because the King would break the Alician rule that he must make a legal orthodox move before being transferred. (This quick mate was given by Mr. C. H. O. Alexander on radio.)

Players will find Alician fascinating as a game, to get their minds into maddening difficulties!

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"A sensation, hidden in the depths of my emotional memory, was suddenly revived: what if... What if for me The Variation is not dead? If The Variation is alive?!"  
**Lev Polugayevsky, *Grandmaster Preparation*, 1981**

# Time Management During a Chess Game

By Dan Heisman

If like me, you tend to find yourself rushing to get those last few moves in before the time control, and often making a blunder in the process. This article I stumbled across might be of interest. Whilst some of the references are parochial to the USA, the basic advice is universal.

**1. Before any tournament, look at the time controls and the relevant rules (Is the insufficient losing chances rule allowed? If you use time delay, do you have to start with less time on your clock?). Figure out about what pace you should play. While it is illegal to have analysis notes on your score sheet, making "milestone" time marks is not (at least thus far). So you can mark down in a G/90 tournament that, ideally, you would like to have 45 minutes left at move 20. Just put a line under move 20 and circle "45." This preparation is similar to readying your opening repertoire before the tournament starts.**

**2. Try to find the best move given the time available!** What it means is that the theoretically best move often cannot be determined by a human in a short time. So therefore your goal is to find the best move you can, given how much time you have left; taking inordinate amounts of time to prove the best move in every position will probably get you into time trouble even in a slower game. Sometimes you just have to be practical and say to yourself, "Well, after some analysis of my candidates moves, this move is safe (or interesting, or reasonable); let's play it and see what happens." That is not to say that you shouldn't analyze properly or look at other moves; it's just that doing so to the Nth degree on every move is not always practical. —On the other hand, sometimes the best move can be determined in a reasonable amount of time. In that case, sometimes players waste time after they have determined the best move, trying to figure out what might happen. That extra analysis is unnecessary; if you have proven that a move is the best one, play it now! - worry about what might happen next during your opponent's move or your next one. As a trivial example, suppose your opponent gives a check and you only have 4 legal replies. You analyze the first 3 and see that each leads to an "easy" mate-in-one for your opponent. You can then play fourth move instantly, because it cannot be any worse than the other three, even if you have no idea what might happen next!

**3. Avoid playing too fast or too slow, no matter how fast your opponent plays. When one of my students says he played too fast because his opponent played fast, I ask him, "Would you jump off a cliff if your opponent jumped off a cliff?" On the other hand, it is helpful not to fall too far behind a reasonably-paced opponent. One of my better students was playing a G/45 game and fell behind a good opponent in a complicated position, 37 minutes to 7 (!). Needless to say, even though his position was about even at that point, he eventually lost. I will give a big tip: in any long game where the battle still remains in doubt, try to have 15 minutes left when your opponent has 5 minutes left. I asked several players how well they would do against their clone if they had to give 5 to 15 odds. Most said they could only win about 25%. This seems correct. Since 25% indicates about 200 rating points, then if you can get 15 minutes left to 5 in an even position, it is like adding 200 points to your rating, or raising a 50-50 chance to 75-25!**

**4. Take (almost) all your time every game!** Go to any Open tournament and you will see that the best players are the ones who use almost all their time, every game. Just as in the previous note, I also asked some of my students, "If I cloned you and you had to play your clone, but you took 5 minutes for the game and your clone took 90 minutes, what percentage would you win?" Most give the reasonable answer of 0-5%; this means that if you are a very fast player and some of your opponents take their time and beat you 19 games out of 20, then they might not be any better than you would be if you took your time! There is only one exception to the advice of taking almost all your time: If you are completely lost, but are playing on only because your opponent is short on time, it is not good strategy to play slowly and let him think of how to win on your time; you should play quickly and hope for the best (because otherwise you lose). However, don't confuse this with a game where you are NOT hopelessly lost and your opponent is short on time; in that case it is very wise to make use of your extra time to think.

Remember, your opponent may anticipate your move and make some use of your time, but you surely know which move you can/will make, and thus can use that same time (when your clock is running) much more efficiently.

**5. In a sudden death time control, speed up a little if the game is very even and it looks like it is going to be a long game. You may need that time later if things get complicated or it does become an exceptionally long game.**

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**6. In a sudden death time control**, start speeding up when most of your time is done (but don't wait until almost all of your time is done). For example, if you are playing G/90 and you are getting down to less than 20 minutes and the game looks like it is far from over, start speeding up then, and not when you have 3 minutes left

**7. If you are playing a short sudden death time control**, like G/30, don't take a lot of time over subtle moves which are unlikely to effect the evaluation much. For example, if nothing much is happening and you want to play Rad1 and Rfe1, don't take two minutes to decide which you want to do first. Just look at any possible tactics and make a quick decision.

**8. On the other hand, if the game is very tactical**, that is when you want to use your time (no matter what the time limit). A tactical opening, like the Traxler variation of the Two Knights Defense (my book on computer analysis of this opening is due out in March 2000), is likely to be decided within the first 20 moves, so it makes good sense to use most of your time trying to ensure that you are the one who is winning at move 20. A general guideline would be "save you time for when the game is most complicated; the player who outplays his opponent when the impact of errors is greatest (during the tactical phase) is most likely to win. For example, when I am analyzing a game with the computer, the difference between the first, second, and third best moves is often well less than 0.1 pawns during the development phase, but can be as much as a pawn or two during a tactical melee! So if you think the 2<sup>nd</sup> best move might be a lot worse than the best, that is a good place to use more time.

**9. When in time trouble**, if everything else is equal, make "safe" moves. Put your pieces that are on squares that are protected, move pieces two squares diagonal from Knights, make "luft" for your King, put pieces on the opposite color of your opponent's Bishop, etc. That way you can arrive at safe decisions more quickly. Try not to run your clock under 1 minute except in an emergency, or when playing with a time delay clock. If you are not playing with a time delay clock, then at some point you have to realize that it is more important to move fast than it is to make a good move! In this circumstance, sometimes the side which moves faster, but not better, just wins on time. For example, when you have 1 minute left and no time delay, it is hardly ever worth 30 seconds to figure out if you can save a pawn, except in the deep endgame. Similarly, very few moves are worth 90 seconds when you have 4 minutes left.

**10. Practice at a mixture of time controls.** Play slow games to pace yourself and to learn good

analysis techniques. Play fast games to practice your openings and get time pressure experience. And instead of playing the traditional G/5-minute with your friends for fun, play G/2 minute with a five second time delay!

**11. Know the rules!** There are different rules for non-sudden death, sudden death, non-sudden death with less than 5 minutes left, and sudden death with less than 5 minutes left! For example, FIDE recently passed a rule that you have to play with one hand all the time - it used to just you had to just when in time pressure. Also, both sides have to keep score until either side has less than 5 minutes left. And if you are playing without a time delay, the US Chess Federation will not allow you to claim "insufficient losing chances" until you have less than 5 minutes left. Your national chess federation's rules can usually be found at their web site, or you can buy a copy of the rule book.

## WORLD CHESS CHAMPIONS

The next in the series brings us to perhaps one of the most well-known of players outside chess circles. A player who continues to be surrounded by controversy and mystique; despite not lifting a chess piece in public for many years. A classic example of genius tinged with madness.

## Bobby Fischer



*This picture shows a 1970 meeting between Fischer & Spassky.*

**Robert James "Bobby" Fischer** (born March 9, 1943, is considered by most to have been one of the hardest working and most gifted chess players of all time. He is also well known for his eccentricity, unconventional behaviour, and outspoken, anti-Semitic political views. Despite his prolonged absence from competitive play, or perhaps because of it, he still is among the best known of all chess players.

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At the age of six, when the family had moved to Brooklyn, New York, Fischer taught himself the game of chess from the instruction booklet of a chess set. He practiced with his sister, but within weeks he proved far too strong a player for her. Fischer joined the Brooklyn Chess Club, at age 7, and was taught by the club's president, Carmine Nigro.

When Fischer was 13, his mother asked John W. Collins to be his chess teacher. Collins had taught several top players. Fischer spent much time at Collins's house, and some have described Collins as a father figure for Fischer.

Fischer's first real triumph was winning the U.S. Junior Championship in July 1956, which at that time qualified him for the invitational U.S. championship.

In January 1958, Fischer became the U.S. champion. Along with the title, he qualified to participate in the Interzonals, the next step toward challenging the World Champion. Nobody gave the young Fischer much of a chance of qualifying from the Interzonal (the top six places qualified for the Candidates Tournament), so it was a surprise when, after a good finish, Fischer tied for fifth place and qualified. His result also earned him the title of Grandmaster. At the time, he was the youngest Grandmaster in the world.

It was at this stage, during the Candidates' Tournament in Yugoslavia in 1959, that Fischer came face to face with the Russian chess juggernaut, which was to set the tone for the rest of his playing career. It is alleged by Fischer and others, because of the number of Russian players involved in the tournament, it was in principle possible for them to agree on short draws among themselves and concentrate their full efforts on the non-Russian contingent. Once the non-Russians were effectively eliminated, the Russians would then be left to fight against each other for the right to challenge the reigning World Champion Mikhail Botvinnik. Fischer believed that the Soviet players had in fact chosen to arrange the tournament in this way. Aside from the Russians' conduct, however, Fischer, still only 17 years old, did not have the maturity level required to survive in a super-tough competition like the Candidates Tournament (eight players playing four games against each of the others). He finished in the middle of the pack (12.5/28) and lost his four games against the winner of the tournament, Mikhail Tal.

For many years Fischer remained one of the strongest non-Soviet players, but for different reasons did not qualify for a world championship match. In the 1962 cycle he confidently won the Stockholm interzonal (17.5/22) but in the Candidates tournament in Curaçao

he finished 4th with a score of 14 out of 27. This was a big disappointment for him, since he had been playing very strongly in the previous year and thought himself to be the favourite.

In the next cycle, Fischer did not compete. He reaffirmed his conviction that the Soviet players had a non-aggression pact and concentrated on playing against him. Therefore, he decided not to participate in the Amsterdam interzonal in 1964. He held to this decision even when FIDE changed the format of the eight-player Candidates Tournament from a round-robin to a series of knockout matches

At home, Fischer won all eight U.S. Championships that he competed in, beginning with the 1957-1958 championship and ending with the 1966-1967 championship. His string includes his win in the 1963-1964 championship, which he won with an 11-0 record, the only perfect score in the history of the Championship.

The 1967 Interzonal tournament was played at Sousse, Tunisia, and was the first major chess tournament to be held in Africa. Fischer got off to a good start, winning five games, and drawing two. However, he had complaints about the tournament conditions: the lighting was poor, he was unsatisfied with the way people could take photographs during the game and he had concerns that his round nine game against Efim Geller had been needlessly rescheduled in such a way so that, as he understood it, he had to play six games in six consecutive days, an inconvenience most players did not have to suffer. When the tournament's organizing committee refused to change Fischer's schedule to insert an extra rest-day, he announced his intention to withdraw from the tournament.

Fischer's round eight game against Viktor Korchnoi had been postponed owing to Fischer's religious beliefs, so, with his round nine game against Geller also postponed, his next scheduled game after this announcement was in round ten, against Aivars Gipslis. Fischer did not appear for this game, and a forfeit loss was recorded against him. Before his round eleven game however, he was persuaded to return to the event. Fischer turned up just short of an hour late for this game, which was against Samuel Reshevsky, but won anyway. Fischer then drew against Korchnoi in their postponed game and beat Robert Byrne in round twelve. However, throughout all this he was protesting that his forfeit loss against Gipslis was incorrect, and when he was informed that said forfeit had to stand, he once again indicated his intent to withdraw. He forfeited his next scheduled game against Vlastimil Hort, despite various officials trying to convince him to play.



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The day after this second forfeit, Fischer indicated that he intended to complete the rest of the tournament after all. The official tournament report states that "The upheaval among the players on receipt of this news was indescribable." The organizers sent a communiqué to all players, stating that if Fischer was to continue in the event, he must acknowledge in writing his forfeit losses against Gipslis and Hort, and that if he forfeited a third game, he would be expelled from the tournament. According to the official report, the players agreed to this, but, because Fischer was observing his Sabbath, he apparently did not receive the communiqué until shortly before his next scheduled game, against Bent Larsen.

Fischer was not present at the start of that game, so, as is usual in such cases, Larsen played his first move, started Fischer's clock, and waited for his opponent to arrive. Around twenty-five minutes into the game, Fischer telephoned the organisers from Tunis restating his intention to rejoin the event and saying that he would like to play Larsen as soon as he could get to Sousse, which would require a further postponement of the game. Since his clock had already been started, the request was refused. Fischer therefore forfeited this game as well and was consequently expelled from the tournament. All of Fischer's results were annulled, and he returned to America three days later.

It was the candidates' cycle that started in 1969 that put Fischer on the road to the world championship. The U.S. Championship that year was also the zonal, with the top three finishers qualifying for the next stage, the Interzonal. Fischer, however, had sat out the U.S. Championship because of disagreements about the tournament's format and prize fund. To enable Fischer to compete for the title, the third-place finisher, Grandmaster Pal Benko, gave up his coveted place in the Interzonal. All the other participants also had to agree to defer to Fischer, which they did. This unusual arrangement was the work of Ed Edmondson, then the Executive Director of the USCF.

Fischer's dominance before the World Championship match began with the USSR Vs. The World Match. Although Fischer had the highest rating on Arpad Elo's list of anyone playing for the World, he allowed Bent Larsen to face Boris Spassky on first board, while he played Tigran Petrosian on second board. Fischer defeated Petrosian with a score of two wins, two draws, and no losses.

Fischer proceeded to win the Interzonal by a remarkable 3.5 points, finishing with seven consecutive wins (one by default). He continued his awesome display of chess prowess in the Candidates matches, annihilating his

opponents with a lopsided series of results which still has not been equalled by the world's top players. Only former World Champion Tigran Petrosian, Fischer's final opponent in the Candidates matches, made any impression against Fischer's skill and strength. Fischer won the first game to complete a remarkable streak of twenty consecutive wins. Petrosian broke the streak by beating Fischer in the second game. After three draws, however, Fischer won the next four games to win the match by a comfortable score, 6.5 to 2.5. Fischer had finally earned the right to challenge the World Champion, Boris Spassky.

Fischer's career-long stubbornness about match and tournament conditions was manifest in the run-up to his match with Spassky. Of the possible sites, Fischer preferred Yugoslavia while Spassky preferred Iceland. For a time it appeared that the dispute would be resolved with an unusual split schedule, putting some games in each location, but that arrangement fell through. At one point Fischer announced that he would not play the match. In answer to Fischer's objection that the prize fund was inadequate, London financier Jim Slater donated an addition of \$125,000, bringing the prize fund to \$250,000. Fischer eventually decided to go ahead. The "Match of the Century" between Spassky and Fischer took place in Reykjavík, Iceland, from July through September 1972.

Game one only increased the tension surrounding the match. Fischer, who had never defeated Spassky in their few previous encounters, appeared to have a comfortable game with the Black pieces when he committed a stunning blunder of a type not usually seen at master level chess. Following his loss Fischer made further demands on the organizers, and when they were not met he refused to appear for game two, giving a default win to Spassky. It looked like Fischer was going to disappear.

Fischer, however, won game three after Spassky sportingly agreed to his demand that the game take place in a back room, away from spectators and cameras. After that, Fischer never looked back as he carved out a 12.5 - 8.5 win against Spassky. This cemented two milestones in Fischer's career--the ambition of being the World Chess Champion, and being the highest ELO rated player ever. The win over Spassky was also considered something of a Cold War propaganda victory for the United States, confirming as it did that the strongest player in the world, in a sport dominated by the Soviets since World War II, was now an iconoclastic American who defeated the mighty Soviet chess establishment almost single-handed.

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Fischer's winning of the title brought both him and chess tremendous publicity in the United States. The U.S. public went wild over Fischer's victory against Spassky. Fischer became an instant celebrity whose name became known by people who knew nothing about chess. Membership in the United States Chess Federation tripled, and in the U.S. countless people took up the game, creating what is commonly called the "Fischer Boom" years.

In 1975 the time came for Fischer to defend his title, against Anatoly Karpov. Fischer had not played a single official game since winning the title and laid down strict conditions for the match. FIDE agreed to a number of his demands, but did not accept Fischer's demands on how the match would be won. Since the 1949 FIDE congress, the FIDE rules had been that World Championship matches would be made up of 24 games, with the first player to 12.5 points the winner. In the event of a 12-12 tie, the champion retained his title. Fischer, however, claimed this system encouraged the player in the lead to draw games, which was not good for chess. He instead wanted a match of an unlimited number of games, with the first player to score ten wins winning the match, draws not counting. In the event of the score reaching 9-9, the champion (Fischer) would retain his title - in effect, this meant that Fischer only needed to win nine games, while Karpov had to win ten. FIDE did not accept these conditions, instead selecting a format in which, unlike all prior matches, the challenger would have no greater burden to unseat the defending champion. Fischer refused to accept and was held to have resigned his title. Karpov became champion by default. Unfortunately, after his defeat of Spassky, Fischer disappeared and did not publicly play chess for nearly twenty years.

Fischer emerged from isolation to challenge Spassky to a "Revenge Match of the 20th Century" in 1992 after 20 years of non-competition. This match — which was played with his new clock— took place in Budva, FR Yugoslavia, in spite of a severe UN embargo which included sanctions on sports events. He insisted that organizers bill the match as "The World Chess Championship," although at this time Garry Kasparov was the recognized FIDE champion. The purse for this match was reported to be \$5 million.

In a pre-match press conference, filled with histrionics, Fischer spat on a document from the U.S. State Department forbidding Fischer to play in the Balkan state because of economic sanctions in place at the time. In response, Fischer was indicted and a warrant was issued for his arrest. Fischer won the match, although he

managed to collect only a portion of the \$3.3 million prize. Then he disappeared again.

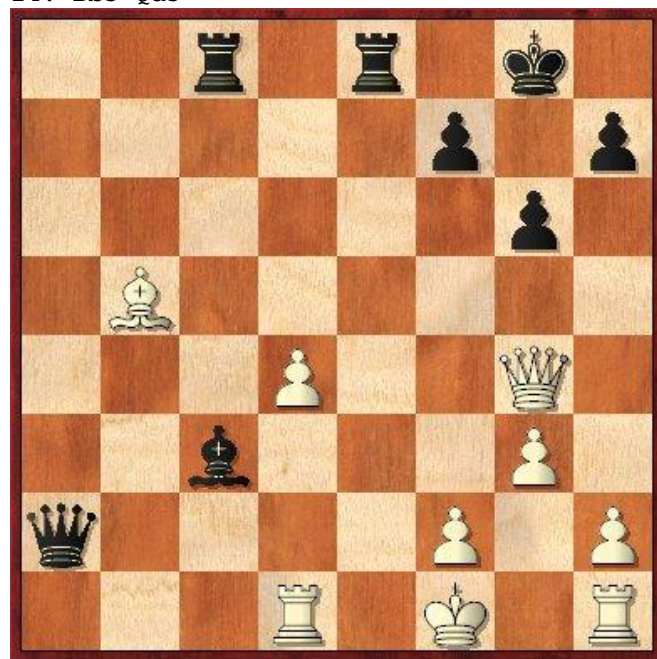
Although Fischer has not played chess in public since 1992, there have been a number of rumours about him playing on the Internet, including one such suggestion from Nigel Short . When asked about the Internet reports, Fischer stated he never plays online.

On August 16, 2004, it was reported that Fischer would be marrying Miyoko Watai, the President of the Japanese Chess Association, with whom he has been living since 2000.

After being held in jail in Japan for several months he was rescued by an Icelandic team including his friend Saemi Rokk (famous Icelandic policeman and a rock and roll dancer). As of 2005 Fischer lives in Iceland and has an Icelandic citizenship.

Event "Candidats Tournament"  
 Site "Bled/Zagreb/Belgrade"  
 Date "1959.10.03"  
 White "Keres, Paul"  
 Black "Fischer, Robert James"

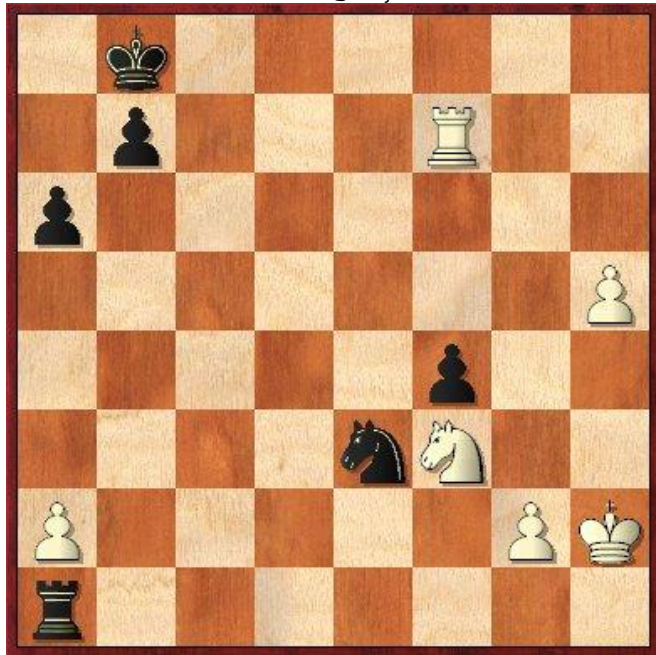
1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 g6 3. Bf4 Bg7 4. Nbd2 c5  
 5. c3 cxd4 6. cxd4 d5 7. Bxb8 Rxb8 8. Qa4+  
 Bd7 9. Qxa7 Ne4 10. e3 Nxd2 11. Nxd2 e5  
 12. Nb3 O-O 13. Qc5 Rc8 14. Qb4 Re8  
 15. Be2 exd4 16. Nxd4 Qh4 17. Qxb7 Bxd4  
 18. Qxd7 Bxb2 19. Rd1 Bc3+ 20. Kf1 d4  
 21. exd4 Qe4 22. Qg4 Qc2 23. g3 Qxa2  
 24. Bb5 Qd5



25. Bxe8 Qxh1+ 26. Ke2 Rxe8+ 27. Kd3 Be1  
 0-1

Event "Candidats final"  
 Site "Buenos Aires"  
 Date "1971.09.30"  
 White "Fischer, Robert James"  
 Black "Petrosian, Tigran V"

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nc6  
 5. Nb5 d6 6. Bf4 e5 7. Be3 Nf6 8. Bg5  
 Be6 9. N1c3 a6 10. Bxf6 gxf6 11. Na3 d5  
 12. exd5 Bxa3 13. bxa3 Qa5 14. Qd2  
 O-O-O 15. Bc4 Rhg8 16. Rd1 Bf5 17. Bd3  
 Bxd3 18. Qxd3 Nd4 19. O-O Kb8 20. Kh1  
 Qxa3 21. f4 Rc8 22. Ne4 Qxd3 23. cxd3 Rc2  
 24. Rd2 Rxd2 25. Nxd2 f5 {Re8 would have  
 been better. The text move allows two very  
 strong connected pawns} 26. fxe5 Re8  
 27. Re1 Nc2 28. Re2 Nd4 29. Re3 Nc2  
 30. Rh3 Rxe5 31. Nf3 Rxd5 32. Rxh7 Rxd3  
 33. h4 Ne3 34. Rxf7 Rd1+ 35. Kh2 Ra1  
 36. h5 f4 {Rxa2 would have been better  
 with the threat of Rxg2+}



37. Rxf4 Rxa2 38. Re4 Nxc2 39. Kg3 Ra5 40.  
 Ne5 1-0

### Bobby Fischer Quotes

"If I win, I'm a genius. If I don't, I'm not." –

"You can only get good at chess if you love the game." –

"I like to make them squirm."

### POSITIONAL PROBLEM SOLUTIONS

a) 1. Rf1+ Kxf1 (or if Qxf1 then 2.Qe3++) 2. Qe1 ++

b) 1. Ng6+ Kg8/hxg6/Rxg6 2. Rxf8++

c) 1. Rxh4+ Kxh4 (if Kg2 then 2. Qh2++) 2. Qh2 Kg5 (if Kg4 then 3. Ne5+ Kg4 4. h6++) 3. h6+ Kg4 (or if Kg6 then Ne7++) 4. Ne5++

d) 1. Rh8+ Kxh8 2. Rh1+ Kg8 3. Rh8 Kxh8 4. Qh1+ Kg8 5. Qh7++

e) 1. Qf8+ Bxf8 2. Nf6+ Kh8 3. Rxh7++

A century or so ago chess was one of the few past times in which ladies could be unchaperoned, the benefits of this are obvious from this series of old pictures



Now this just looks like a perfectly innocent game of chess.



Just what move would you call this then?





Perhaps she broke a nail on a rook?



Now who knocked the pieces off I wonder?



What happened to opposite sides of the board?

### THE CHESS RABBIT

Although I like playing Chess  
I don't seem to have much success  
Every game that I play  
Seems to go the same way  
With my King in a horrible mess

My pawns disappear one by one  
And my bishops and knights are soon gone  
My rooks and my queens  
Then depart from the scene  
And only my king is left on

And a few of these efforts of mine  
Have been over by move eight or nine  
And, sad to relate, it was actually MATE  
I did not get the chance to resign

But each week I keep "plugging away"  
And hoping to win one fine day  
Though it isn't unique  
To play once a week  
It's amazing how "weakly" I play

But, though I've lost more than I've won  
I think chess is jolly goods fun  
And I hope I may play  
Till that last Fateful Day  
When my work on this planet is done

And when it's all over I guess  
I shall still be the same (more or less)  
When the friends that I know  
Come to meet me below  
I'll be "playing the devil" at chess.

