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THE CONNECTION BETWEEN ART AND CHESS

Interview with Francis M. Naumann

CHESS, CHOICES, AND CHANGE:
HOW LEARNING CHESS IN PRISON
HELPED CHANGE A YOUNG MAN'S LIFE

TOURNAMENT REPORTS:

| EUROPEAN TEAM CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

| SCARBOROUGH CONGRESS | SINQUEFIELD CUP





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A BALKAN TRIUMPH AT THE EUROPEAN TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS

By GM Aleksandar Colovic; www.alexcolovic.com; Photo: ETCC Official

Serbia wins gold in the Open, Bulgaria in the Women's. England finished sixth in the Open while the women's team finished in the same place they were ranked at the start

The European Team Championship was held in Budva, Montenegro, from 11 to 20 November. It featured 38 teams in the open section and 32 teams in the women's section.

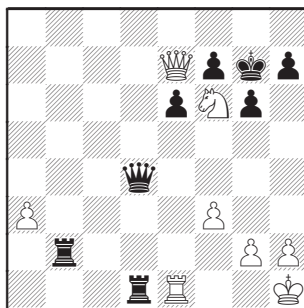
Played soon enough after the FIDE Grand Swiss, the tournament continued what seemed like an endless streak of top-level chess. One of the players missing at the Isle of Man, former World Champion Magnus Carlsen, decided to represent his country (Norway) in Budva, and played eight games for his team on board one. Jumping a bit ahead, this proved to be a good decision as he won the gold medal for best performance on his board, something he'd never done before. He also won one rating point for his efforts.

Britain was represented by two teams in the open section, England and Scotland, and one team, England, in the women's section. Scotland didn't have a good tournament. They ended up in last place, losing all their matches, and only managed to win one game - Graham Morrison beat Mehmeti Dritan from Albania!

England fared better, though the tournament started with an unpleasant situation in round one.

Baadur Jobava – David Howell

24th European Teams Budva MNE (1.6)



Howell obtained a winning position, but he was in his customary severe time-trouble. He decided to repeat moves in order to get closer to the time control on move 40, but this allowed a three-fold repetition...

35. ♖e8+ ♔g8 35... ♖h6 was the winning move, as the king escapes the checks after 36. ♜f8+ ♔g5 37. ♜e7+ f6

36. ♖f6+ ♔g7

½-½

However, it seemed that Jobava made an irregular claim for the threefold repetition and the arbiter accepted it, much to Howell's chagrin. An invalid claim should be rejected and then after the check on e8 Black could have played ...♗h6 and won the game. This didn't happen and the game was declared drawn.

What happened immediately after Howell himself best described it.

"Today was one of the most unpleasant experiences of my career. Not only did the arbiter not know the laws of chess, but he patted me on my bum while trying to usher me out of the playing hall. Surely this is harassment?"

These unfortunate events must have had negative impact on Howell's tournament as instead of starting with a win he went into a drawing rut - his next four games all ended in a draw. He managed to beat Max Warmerdam before finishing off with three more draws, for a solid +1 score on board two.

The English team was reinforced with Nikita Vitiugov, one of the many Russian players who decided to change their federation. Representing England must have been inspiring for him as playing on board one he scored an undefeated +2 over nine games.

The English team had a strong tournament but finished in sixth place



Michael Adams had a solid event, but it seems that fatigue must have caught up with him. After becoming a 50+ World Champion a mere week before the European Team Championship, Adams played eight games in Budva. He only faltered in the last one, but this turned out to be a crucial game for a good finish. England lost their last-round match to Armenia, which gave their opponents the bronze medal, while they finished sixth.

On board four Luke McShane was the only other player, apart from Vitiugov, who won rating points. He scored 4.5/7 and was his usual stable self.

Ravi Haria couldn't settle down in the team. He started with 1/3 and was given a second chance only in round eight, when the tension and the pressure were already very high. He lost to Serbian GM Ivic and this loss cost England the match and a chance to fight for gold. Perhaps it's a coincidence, but he also lost in the last round of the previous European Team Championship, in Slovenia in 2021, when he was defeated by Esipenko. Whether it's a question of nerves or something else it's hard to say not knowing the details, but a young player like Haria should be able to overcome these problems and raise his game to a new level.

The most impressive victory scored by the English players was Vitiugov's demolition of Jorden van Foreest.

Jorden Van Foreest - Nikita Vitiugov

24th European Teams Budva MNE (6.4)

1.c4 ♖f6 2.♗c3 e5 3.♗f3 ♗c6 4.♔c2 Van Foreest has a lot of interesting opening ideas. That was the reason he was included in Carlsen's team for the match against Nepomniachtchi. A recent one saw 1.d4 d5 2.♗f3 ♗f6 3.a3!? against Ter Sahakyan in the second round of the Grand Swiss. The queen move is less weird, but it introduces move-order subtleties in the position.



4...g6 Black opts for a King's Indian set-up. The queen's position allowed for a move like 4...♖d4, while the standard 4...♗b4 was also possible.

The idea behind White's fourth move is seen after 4...d5 5.cxd5 ♖xd5 6.♗xe5! ♗xe5 7.♖e4 when White wins a pawn, but this is still possible to play for Black, for example after 7...♗b4 8.♖xe5+ ♗e7 Black has compensation for the pawn.

5.g3 ♗g7 6.♗g2 0-0 7.d3 d6 8.0-0 Now we have a standard position in the English Opening with a somewhat awkward queen on c2. Usually White has a rook on b1 in this position.

8...♗g4 Black fights for control over the d4-square. Now the threat is ...♗xf3 and ...♗d4.

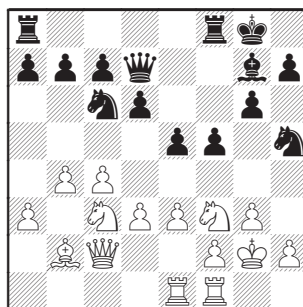
9.e3 ♖d7 With the d4-square under control by White, Black now wants to exchange the light-squared bishops with ...♗h3.

10.a3 White prepares the standard queenside expansion with b4.

10.♖e1 avoids the exchange of the bishops. 10...♗h3 11.♗h1 h6 prevents ♗g5. 12.a3 ♗g4 with ...f5 to come gives Black a strong initiative on the kingside.

10...♗h3 11.b4 ♗h5 Black plans ...f5-f4.

12.♗b2 ♗xg2 13.♖xg2 f5 14.♖ae1



White feels he should counter Black's play with a strike in the centre.

14.♖b3!? with the idea of c5 is the engine's suggestion. White wants to open the c-file and continue play on the queenside. 14...h6 15.c5+ ♖h7 16.cxd6 cxd6 17.♗d5 ♖ac8 is balanced, but the strong knight on d5 and the open c-file make it difficult for Black to concentrate solely on the kingside.

14...♗d8 Relocating the knight, since it wasn't very useful on c6.

15.d4 e4 16.♗d2 ♗f7 17.b5 The queenside is empty now, so White cannot achieve much

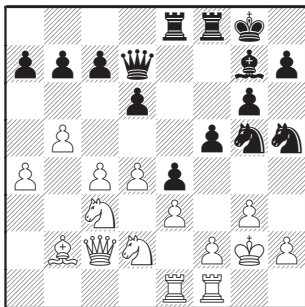
there. It appears that White underestimated Black's activity on the kingside as it can be observed in the next two moves.

Play in the centre after 17.f3 exf3+ 18.♟xf3 ♖ae8 weakens the e3-pawn, but White is OK after 19.♙c1 (*19.e4? f4! gives Black the initiative.*) 19...♙h6 20.e4 ♙xc1 21.♖xc1 f4 22.e5! with sufficient counterplay thanks to the play in the centre.

17...♖ae8 18.a4 This really doesn't make any difference on the queenside, so it made sense for White to take a better look at the other wing.

18.h3 ♜g5 19.♞h1 is a nice prophylactic sequence that defends against ...f4. Black doesn't have a breakthrough on the kingside, neither White has one on the queenside, resulting in a dynamic equilibrium.

18...♜g5



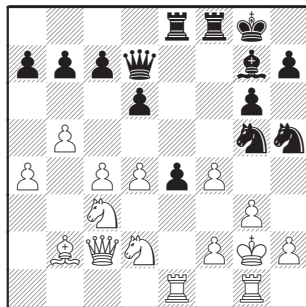
19.♞g1? Panic, but it doesn't defend against Black's powerful next move.

19.♞h1 was the only way to stay in the game. It looks dangerous after 19...♜f3 20.♜xf3 exf3 21.♖d1 f4! 22.exf4 ♖g4 but White is objectively fine, for example 23.♙c1 ♖xe1 24.♞xe1 ♜xf4 25.♙xf4 ♖xf4 26.♞e8+ ♜f7 27.♖e1 and White obtains enough counterplay on the e-file.

19...f4! Now Black's attack is irresistible. It's instructive to note how the trend in the position shifted in Black's favour, first

slowly after the closing of the centre, then a bit faster on moves 17-18, when White could have easily taken measures against Black's kingside play, and then culminating in the blunder on move 19, after which there was no turning back for White.

20.exf4



20...♜xf4+! 21.gxf4 ♖xf4 The threat is ...♖h3.

22.♞e3 White covers the h3-square, but after Black's next he cannot sustain that defence.

22...♙xd4 23.♞h1 23.♞g3 ♖xf2+ 24.♞h1 ♜f3 is even worse.

23...♙xe3 24.♜d1 24.fxe3 ♖f2 and ...♖h3 comes next.

Magnus Carlsen played eight games for Norway and won individual gold



24...♖h4 The most forceful. The inevitable ...♗h3 will decide the game.

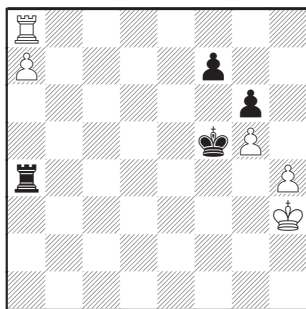
25.♘f1 ♕f4 26.♘de3 ♖h3 An impressive tour de force by Vitiugov.

0-1

An instructive rook endgame appeared in the game McShane-Nikolozzi in the first round.

Luke McShane - Nikolozzi Kacharava

24th European Teams Budva MNE (1.6)



The position is a draw, but McShane tries a nice trick.

57.h5!? The idea behind the pawn move is a basic one - White wants to open the file on which the black king is in order to give a check with the rook and promote his pawn. Black must be careful now...

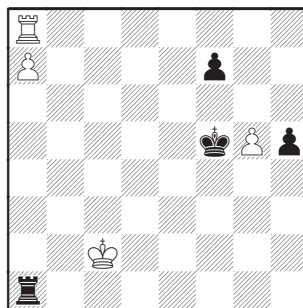
57...♖a3+? Faced with an unexpected move, Black makes the decisive mistake.

57...♙xg5! 58.h6 f5!! was the saving resource, but this is far from easy or obvious. The point is that White cannot advance h7 because after ...♖h4xh7 the black rook still controls the a7-pawn and doesn't allow the white rook to move. 59.♙g3 Now White threatens h7. 59...♖g4+ 60.♙f3 ♖f4+ 61.♙e3 ♖e4+ 62.♙d3 ♖e7! the saving idea. The rook on the seventh rank controls

both white pawns. 63.♙c4 f4 64.♙c5 f3 65.♙b6 ♖e6+ and Black will give perpetual check.

58.♙h2 Now the white king will approach the rook and then Black won't be able to prevent the opening of the f-file.

58...♖a2+ 59.♙h1 ♖a1+ 60.♙g2 ♖a2+ 61.♙g1 ♖a1+ 62.♙f2 ♖a2+ 63.♙f1 ♖a1+ 64.♙e2 ♖a2+ 65.♙e1 ♖a1+ 66.♙d2 ♖a2+ 67.♙d1 ♖a1+ 68.♙c2 gxh5



68...♖a2+ 69.♙b3 ♖a6 70.h6 and the h-pawn promotes.

69.g6! Now the rook will give a check either on the f or the g-file.

69...fxg6 Or 69...♙xg6 70.♖g8+.

70.♖f8+ ♙g4 71.a8 ♖xa8 72.♖xa8 The position is winning for White because he can bring back the king in time to stop Black's pawns.

72...♙f3 73.♙d2 ♙f2 74.♖h8 g5 75.♖xh5 g4 76.♖f5+ ♙g2 77.♙e2 g3 78.♖g5 ♙h2 79.♙f3

1-0

England finished shared 6th (ended up 6th on tie-break) and it was a good result for the team, taking into consideration that they were in contention for medals until the end.



The Russians who helped Serbia win gold: Predke (left) and Sarana (right)

Magnus Carlsen's Norway didn't fare well, but he managed to win individual gold on board one. Nevertheless, Carlsen's play was far from impressive. The tendency that started in Qatar, whose essence was that playing weaker opponents leads to lower level of play (see the November issue of BCM for the details) continued.

Carlsen couldn't beat Shitco (2503) and was lost against Dragnev (2589) and Bjerre (2633). These games were drawn and he beat Pechac (2580), Gretarsson (2518), Keinanen (2527), Georgiadis (2556) and van Foreest (2700).

In terms of rating performance, this year was Carlsen's worst since 2008. It was the first time his rating performance was under 2800, standing at 2787, with his overall score in classical being +30=27-6. On the other side, he did achieve remarkable results, like winning the World Cup, the European Club Cup (ECC) with his team Offerspill, with two individual gold medals in that same ECC and now in Budva.

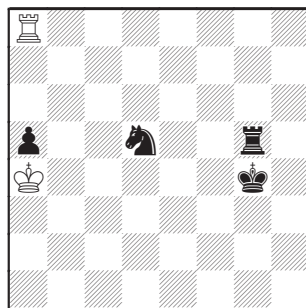
Another player who achieved a unique feat was Alexey Sarana. After moving to the Serbian federation, the 23-year-old won the European Individual Championship in Vrnjacka Banja that was held in March and now with the Serbian team became a European Team Champion! For the first time in history, a single player is both an individual and team champion of Europe in the same year!

The Serbian team had a magnificent event. Strengthened by two Russians - Sarana and Predke, both of whom had an excellent showing at the Grand Swiss, together with Indjic, Markus and Ivic they won seven matches, drew one and lost one, for a total of 15 match points. This tied them with Germany (to whom they lost the direct duel in round three) but thanks to a better tie-break they won gold.

Speaking of tie-breaks, the decisive game for Serbia's win on tie-break was the following one:

**Gudmundur Kjartansson -
Cemil Can Ali Marandi**

24th European Teams Budva MNE (9.12)



77. ♖xa5

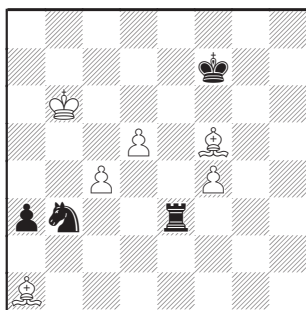
1/2-1/2

Played on board 11, the match between Iceland and Turkey was crucial for determining the winner. In case of a win for Black Germany would have had the better tie-break, but luckily for Serbia Kjartarsson drew this theoretically drawn endgame to give Serbia the first place.

In the dramatic last round Serbia played Greece. The score was 2-1 in their favour, but the wild swings on board three could have sent the match in any direction.

Stamatis Kourkoulos Arditis - Aleksandar Indjic

24th European Teams Budva MNE (9.4)



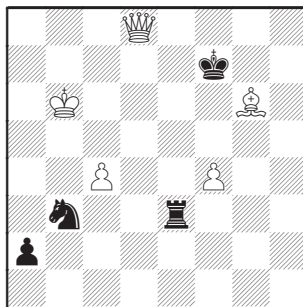
The game was wild up to this point, but there was no intent in stopping the ride.

58.d6 ♖xa1? After this Black should lose.

58...♞e1! 59.d7 ♞d1 keeps the game balanced. The rook controls the d-pawn from behind. A sample incredible line is 60.♙e5 a2 61.♙c2 ♞xd7 62.♙xb3 ♞d3 and the light-squared bishop is trapped after 63.♙xa2 ♞a3 with a draw.; 58...♞e8 was another move that should lead to a draw. 59.d7 ♞f8!! The only move! (59...♞g8 loses after 60.c5 ♙e7 61.c6 and here Black cannot take the bishop on f5.) 60.c5 ♙e7 61.c6 ♞xf5! this is the point of having the rook on the f-file.

59.d7 ♖b3 **60.d8** ♞ a2 An incredible position! White is a queen up, but Black threatens to queen himself.

61.♙g6+?



After this mistake the game should be drawn again.

61.♙d7+ ♙f6 62.♞c8!! leads to a win. White threatens mate with ♞f8 so Black doesn't have time to promote his pawn. 62...♙f7 63.♞b7+ ♙f6 64.♞a8! again the threat of mate doesn't allow Black to promote. Now he wins the bishop, but after 64...♙xf5 65.♞xa2 ♙xf4 66.c5 White would obtain a queen vs rook endgame, which while difficult in practice, is still a theoretical win for the stronger side.

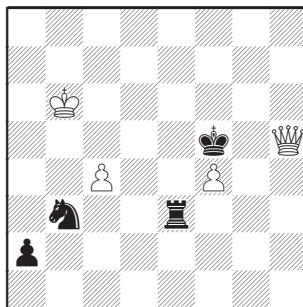
61...♙xg6 **62.♞g8+** ♙f6 **63.♞f8+** ♙g6 **64.♞g8+** ♙f6 A draw would have secured a win in the match for Serbia.

65.♞h8+? Avoiding the draw White ends up losing.

65.♞f8+ was still a perpetual check.

65...♙f5 Now there is no perpetual and Black will promote his pawn for a decisive material advantage.

66.♞h5+



66...♟e4! 66...♟xf4?? 67.♞h2+ wins for White as he picks up the pawn on a2.

67.♞d5+ ♟xf4 68.♞f7+ ♟g3 69.♞g7+ ♟f2 70.♞b2+ ♜e2 71.♞f6+ ♟e3 The king is on the way to the queenside, once there the checks would soon end.

72.c5 a1♞ Black is up rook and knight, so the game is over.

73.♞g5+ ♟d3 74.♞f5+ ♜e4 75.♞f3+ ♜e3 76.♞f5+ ♟c4 77.c6 ♞d4+ 78.♟b7 ♜c5+

A fitting final game for a first European title!

Second-placed Germany didn't lose a single match, but they drew three. Consisting of young players and led by Vincent Keymer, they had a consistent tournament, losing only two games overall.

Armenia finished third. Their heroic last-round win over England proved that even in the absence of a world-class player like Levon Aronian they can perform miracles in team events.

0-1

EUROPEAN TEAM CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP 2023 - OPEN FINAL RANKING AFTER 9 ROUNDS											
Rk	SNo	Team	Games	+	=	-	TB1	TB2	TB3	TB4	TB5
1	10	Serbia	9	7	1	1	15	228	24	172	140.5
2	3	Germany	9	6	3	0	15	227	21.5	179.5	150
3	5	Armenia	9	5	3	1	13	196.5	20	180.5	127.8
4	11	Poland	9	5	2	2	12	179.5	19.5	175.5	115.5
5	13	Czech Republic	9	5	2	2	12	165	20	175.5	114.8
6	4	England	9	4	3	2	11	204.5	20	184	109.8
7	7	France	9	5	1	3	11	196.5	21.5	174.5	104.3
8	2	Romania	9	4	3	2	11	193.5	19.5	175.5	104.3
9	12	Hungary	9	4	3	2	11	185.5	20.5	171	97.8
10	14	Croatia	9	4	3	2	11	177.5	19	173.5	99.3
11	23	Georgia	9	5	1	3	11	169.5	22.5	155.5	87.8
12	17	Greece	9	5	1	3	11	68.5	19.5	173.5	102
13	8	Norway	9	4	2	3	10	150.5	20	157.5	85.3
14	26	Moldova	9	4	2	3	10	150	19	168	88
15	15	Israel	9	4	2	3	10	149.5	20	165.5	87.5
16	18	Italy	9	4	1	4	9	165.5	19	174.5	83.8
17	6	Spain	9	4	1	4	9	157	19.5	162	78.5
18	1	Azerbaijan	9	4	1	4	9	156.5	19.5	164	80
19	25	Lithuania	9	3	3	3	9	150	19.5	167	78.3



EUROPEAN TEAM CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP 2023 - OPEN

FINAL RANKING AFTER 9 ROUNDS

Rk	SNo	Team	Games	+	=	-	TB1	TB2	TB3	TB4	TB5
20	21	Austria	9	4	1	4	9	150	17.5	176	87.8
21	9	Netherlands	9	3	3	3	9	150	17.5	176	84.3
22	16	Turkey	9	3	3	3	9	149.5	20	157.5	73.5
23	37	Slovakia	9	3	3	3	9	148.5	19.5	167	78.8
24	39	Iceland	9	4	1	4	9	100	15.5	159	67
25	19	Slovenia	9	3	2	4	8	139.5	18	163.5	57
26	24	Montenegro	9	3	2	4	8	126.5	18.5	156	61.5
27	22	Sweden	9	4	0	5	8	116.5	15.5	171	70.5
28	28	Switzerland	9	3	2	4	8	100	16.5	149	58
29	30	Belgium	9	2	3	4	7	105.5	17	147.5	47
30	35	Montenegro C	9	3	1	5	7	66	14	147.5	43.5
31	37	Kosovo*	9	3	1	5	7	63.5	14	136.5	42.5
32	20	Denmark	9	3	0	6	6	132	17	164	50.5
33	33	Albania	9	3	0	6	6	90	16	132.5	34
34	32	North Macedonia	9	3	0	6	6	87	14	157	42.5
35	31	Finland	9	1	4	4	6	86.5	15	137.5	36.8
36	34	Montenegro Youth	9	3	0	6	6	70.5	14.5	142	36
37	36	Faroe Islands	9	1	2	6	4	72	14	129.5	20.5
38	38	Scotland	9	0	0	9	0	37	6	138	0

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence



BULGARIA WINS THE WOMEN'S TOURNAMENT

In the women's section, the winners were Bulgaria.

The Bulgarian federation has been in turmoil for many years, leading to exclusion from ECU and FIDE. Various efforts over the years led to nothing, as the warring factions of different chess federations in the country couldn't come to a solution. This meant that their national teams couldn't compete in European Championships or Olympiads.

It was only last year that some progress was made. It led to accepting Bulgaria back to FIDE and ECU and after playing in Chennai, this year they were allowed to take part in the European Team Championship. Bulgaria decided to field only a women's team, giving a chance to their crop of young talents.

Former World Champion Antoaneta Stefanova led a team of promising players who already had success on the world stage. Nurgyl Salimova (20) was a runner-up at the World Cup, Beloslava Krasteva shared first (third on tie-break) at this year's U20

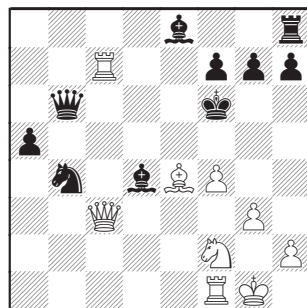
World Junior Championship. Viktoria Radeva (22) and Gergana Peycheva (20) are also very strong players who performed well in Budva.

Bulgaria won seven matches, drawing the remaining two. The curious fact is that they drew their matches from rounds two and three and then went on to win the remaining six matches!

Here is a pretty queen sacrifice by Salimova from the penultimate round.

Nurgyl Salimova - Oliwia Kiolbasa

24th European Teams Women Budva MNE (8.1)



White is an exchange up and has a winning attack. The way Salimova concludes the game is aesthetically pleasing.

36. ♔d1! A pretty mating combination.

36...♖c2 The point is that after 36...♙xc3 White sacrifices a rook with 37.♙d6+! to force a mate after 37...♙xd6 38.♗g4+ ♕e6 39.f5#.

37.♙xc2 ♙xf2+ 38.♖g2 ♙d4 39.♖c4 The bishop is trapped, White will be a rook up, so Black resigned.

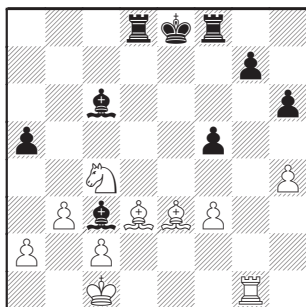
1-0

The English team won four matches, drew two and lost three, for a score of 10 points and shared 10th place.

Jovanka Houska had a rough time on board one, winning two games and losing four. However, Lan Yao on board two had an excellent tournament, scoring 5.5/8 and winning bronze medal on her board. She also made an IM norm with her last-round win over the legendary Pia Cramling.

Yao Lan – Pia Cramling

24th European Teams Women Budva MNE (9.8)



The position is complicated. White has compensation for the exchange in view of her very active pieces.

29.♙c5 ♖f7? The mistaken way to return the exchange.

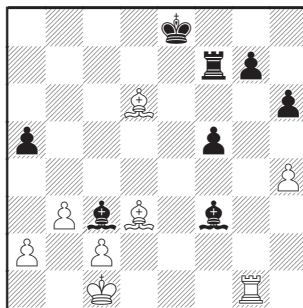
29...♖f6 gave away a second pawn, but after 30.♙xg7 ♖d7 Black threatens to take on f3 and obtain a passed f-pawn. After



Still going strong: Former World Champion Antoaneta Stefaova led her team to victory

31.♙g3 f4 White must give up the f3-pawn as after 32.♖h3? ♖e6 Black suddenly threatens mate on d1, when White again needs to give some material back, this time under worse circumstances.; 29...♖d5 was a better way to give up the exchange. After 30.♙xf8 ♖xf8 it is now Black who has compensation for the material deficit. Her bishop pair is particularly active. 31.♗e3 ♖e5 32.♗xf5 ♙xf3 33.♗xg7 h5 leads to a curious position where in spite of being two pawns up White is paralysed because of the monster bishop on c3.

30.♗d6+ ♖xd6 31.♙xd6 ♙xf3?



This was Black's idea. She regained the pawn, but she must have overlooked that after

31...♙d4 was more resilient, though after 32.♞e1+ ♘d8 33.f4 White remains a clear pawn up, with excellent winning chances.

32.♙b5+ ♘d8 33.♞g3 She loses a piece thanks to the skewer on the third rank.

33...♙f6 34.♞xf3 ♙xh4 35.♞d3 ♙g5+ 36.♙f4+ ♙e7 37.♙xg5+ hxg5 38.♞d7+

1-0

The 22-year-old won 26 rating points and is on course to top England’s women’s rating list in December.

Harriet Hunt on board three (scoring 4/8) and Akshaya Kalaiyalahan as a reserve player (scoring 2.5/6) lost rating points, while Katarzyna Toma on board four scored 5/8 and won 12 points.

It wasn’t a great result for the English team, but it wasn’t bad either - their initial ranking was 13th and on tie-break they also finished 13th.

Next for all the teams is the Olympiad in Budapest, already announced for 10-23 September 2024.

EUROPEAN TEAM CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP 2023 - WOMEN											
RANKING AFTER 9 ROUNDS											
Rk	SNo	Team	Games	+	=	-	TB1	TB2	TB3	TB4	TB5
1	5	Bulgaria	9	7	2	0	16	236	23	179	160
2	2	Azerbaijan	9	7	1	1	15	227	22.5	183.5	149.3
3	6	France	9	5	2	2	12	210	22.5	184	116.3
4	4	Ukraine	9	5	2	2	12	199	23.5	167	109.3
5	19	Greece	9	5	2	2	12	181.5	20.5	180.5	118.5
6	8	Poland	9	6	0	3	12	175.5	19.5	175.5	111.5
7	3	Germany	9	4	3	2	11	178	20	172.5	99
8	15	Serbia	9	5	1	3	11	171.5	18.5	182	104.8
9	11	Switzerland	9	4	3	2	11	169.5	20	173.5	100.8
10	1	Georgia	9	4	2	3	10	180	19.5	181	95.5
11	7	Armenia	9	4	2	3	10	174.5	20	171.5	91
12	9	Spain	9	5	0	4	10	169	20	172	89
13	13	England	9	4	2	3	10	138	19	168.5	82.8
14	18	Slovenia	9	4	1	4	9	160.5	20.5	160.5	71.3
15	21	Turkey	9	4	1	4	9	137	18.5	162	67.8
16	20	Italy	9	4	1	4	9	126	17.5	163	69.8



EUROPEAN TEAM CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP 2023 - WOMEN

RANKING AFTER 9 ROUNDS

Rk	SNo	Team	Games	+	=	-	TB1	TB2	TB3	TB4	TB5
17	14	Romania	9	4	1	4	9	122	19	159.5	73.5
18	17	Israel	9	3	3	3	9	115.5	18	152.5	69.5
19	10	Netherlands	9	3	2	4	8	164	20	172.5	72.8
20	12	Hungary	9	3	2	4	8	152.5	18	174.5	75.8
21	22	Estonia	9	3	2	4	8	126.5	16.5	168.5	67.5
22	24	Sweden	9	4	0	5	8	122.5	18.5	146	56.5
23	26	Croatia	9	3	1	5	7	100	15	157.5	53.3
24	23	Czech Republic	9	3	1	5	7	95.5	17	139	47.3
25	29	Belgium	9	3	1	5	7	81	14.5	147	52
26	27	Iceland	9	3	1	5	7	73.5	14	142	44.3
27	32	North Macedonia	9	3	1	5	7	64	12.5	148.5	51
28	16	Slovakia	9	2	2	5	6	104.5	16.5	149	43.8
29	31	Montenegro	9	3	0	6	6	75.5	13.5	136	43
30	30	Norway	9	2	1	6	5	64	11	141	34
21	25	Austria	9	1	2	6	4	89.5	15	139	26
32	28	Finland	9	1	1	7	3	67.5	12	135.5	21



TOURNAMENT REPORT: CARUANA WINS SINQUEFIELD CUP 2023

By GM Aleksandar Colovic; www.alexcolovic.com

Photo: Saint Louis Chess Club Official / Lennart Ootes

The Sinquefeld Cup was moved from the usual dates of August/September and took place in November. This year's dates were 19 November - 3 December.

Apart from the dates, everything else remained the same - a massive prize fund of 350,000 USD, ten elite grandmasters, a mix of rapid, blitz and classical.

The Sinquefeld Cup formed part of the Grand Chess Tour, together with the Superbet events of rapid and blitz (in Warsaw) and classical (in Bucharest) and Super United rapid and blitz in Croatia.

The main criticism these events draw is the inherent "elitism" in them - only a handful of players participate in them and it's "all the same all over again." While the introduction of local talent aims to stir things up a bit, it rarely succeeds in disturbing the peaceful balance in classical events.

In Saint Louis the rapid and blitz combination was won by Fabiano Caruana. It was an exciting race: the rapid was unexpectedly won by Robson with 5.5/9, ahead of Caruana and Vachier-Lagrave half a point behind.

The first day of the blitz was dominated by Vachier-Lagrave, who scored 7/9, two points more than Caruana, but on the second day he managed only 3.5, while Caruana scored 6, half a point behind winner Le Quang Liem.

The combined scores gave Caruana overall victory in the rapid and blitz ahead of Vachier-Lagrave and Nepomniachtchi.

The classical part's main intrigue was the rating and FIDE Circuit point gains that So, Firouzja and Giri could gain to win the race for the Candidates tournament. So and Giri were fighting for Circuit points, while all three were fighting for rating and a spot in Toronto via the ratings qualification route.

After all the games were drawn in the first round, Duda had to withdraw from the tournament at the start of the second. The official reason was that he was forced to do so due to “serious health issues” (as Duda himself tweeted). This meant that except for Giri, who played Duda in the first round, all the players got a day off when paired against him, while Giri’s draw was annulled.

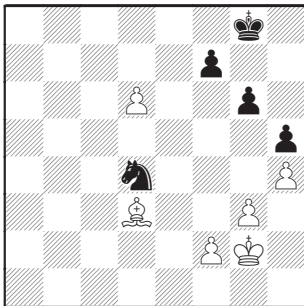
The tournament started with all draws in the first three rounds. It wasn’t for the lack of trying by the players, though.

In round one Dominguez was a pawn up against Caruana in a double-rook endgame. It was notable that Caruana varied from his usual Ruy Lopez in favour of the Najdorf. The defence was exemplary and the draw was agreed on move 65.

In round two Nepomniachtchi obtained a winning endgame against Dominguez, in a game that had its ups and downs for both players.

Ian Nepomniachtchi – Leinier Perez Dominguez

10th Sinquefeld Cup Saint Louis USA (2.1)



White is winning, but he needed to exercise a bit more patience...

69.d7? ... which Nepomniachtchi apparently still doesn't have. This impulsive move allows Black to escape.

69.f4 with the idea of bringing the king into the centre is winning. A sample line is 69...♔f8 70.♔f2 ♕e8 71.♕e3 ♖e6 72.♖b5+ ♔d8 73.♕e4 and the king makes his way to f6, when Black's kingside pawns will eventually prove defenceless, especially in view of White's idea of f5.

69...♖c6 70.♖b5 ♖d8 71.♔f3 ♔f8 72.♕e4 ♕e7 73.f4 ♖e6 74.♖c6 ♔d6 With ...♖c5xd7 next with a drawn pawn endgame.

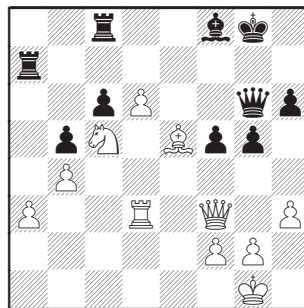
½-½

An important game for Dominguez. Saving an important half- point gave him a boost and he went on to have an excellent tournament.

Caruana played enterprising chess against Aronian, first rejecting a move repetition and then sacrificing an exchange, which gave him an advantage. It put Aronian under pressure, but finding the breakthrough even after the time control turned out to be very complicated even for Caruana.

Fabiano Caruana - Levon Aronian

10th Sinquefeld Cup Saint Louis USA (2.4)



White's position is dominating, but breaking through isn't easy.

41.♔d1!? Caruana frees the way for the undermining move f4, but he should have

undermined Black's kingside with the h-pawn instead.

41.h4! was stronger and winning. White threatens h5 (to remove the black queen from the sixth rank), followed by d7, attacking the rook on c8 and, when the rook moves, the pawn on c6 will be left without defence. 41...g4 42.h5! The important zwischenzug! 42...gxf3 (after 42...♖f7 43.♖f4 ♜d8 44.f3 Black's kingside falls apart.) 43.hxg6 ♜d8 44.gxf3 and the pawns on d6 and g6 completely paralyse Black's position.

41...♜d8 Now Black manages to hold, in spite of still being under severe pressure.

42.f4 gxf4 43.♙xf4 ♜g7 The open g-file gives Black counterplay.

44.♖d2 ♖f6 45.♖a2+ ♖f7 46.♖xf7+ Agreeing to a draw. White could have kept the queens on the board, but no clear win is still possible.

46...♙xf7 47.♘b7 ♜d7 48.♘c5 ♜d8 49.♘b7 ♜d7 50.♘c5 ♜d8

½-½

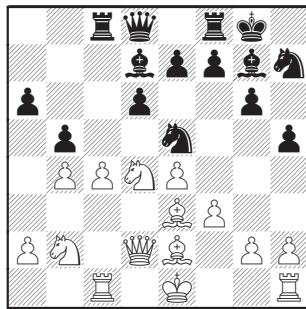
In round three Rapport and Firouzja played a wild game in the Petroff (yes, this is sometimes possible) in a position with opposite castling. It was Rapport who had more to regret when the game fizzled out to a draw as, in the complications, he had more than one good opportunity for a solid advantage.

Round four finally saw the first decisive game.

Most probably it wouldn't have happened if Rapport hadn't provoked So with the King's Indian. In the Saemisch variation, the position transformed to one resembling the Maroczy Bind that usually arises from the Accelerated Fianchetto in the Sicilian Defence. Black actually had good counterplay as he managed to execute the ...b5 push.

Wesley So - Richard Rapport

10th Sinquefeld Cup Saint Louis USA (4.3)



Black has good play here, but he had to keep the tension on the queenside.

17...♜xc4?! Premature. Black embarks on a tactical operation, but it works out in White's favour.

17...♖c7 18.0-0 ♖b8 was a nice manoeuvre. The queen lends support to the pawn on b5 and Black is in no hurry to take on c4.

18.♘xc4 e5 18...bxc4 19.♙xc4 exposes the pawn on a6.

19.♘b3 Keeping it simple.

19.♘xb5 axb5 (19...♙xb5 20.0-0 gives White a stable plus; Black has no compensation for the weaknesses on a6 and d6.) 20.♘xd6 ♜xc1+ 21.♖xc1 ♙h3!? sharpens the game, though after 22.♘xf7! ♜xf7 23.gxh3 ♖h4+ 24.♙f2 ♖xh3 25.♙g1 White is better. It's possible to understand So, who didn't want to play with an unsafe king.

19...bxc4 20.♙xc4 ♜xc4?! Putting too much fuel on the fire leads to Black getting burned.

20...♙b5 was better, when White is better after 21.♙xb5 ♜xc1+ 22.♘xc1 axb5 23.0-0 but Black can defend. That defence is rather passive, so perhaps Rapport wasn't in a mood for that type of play.

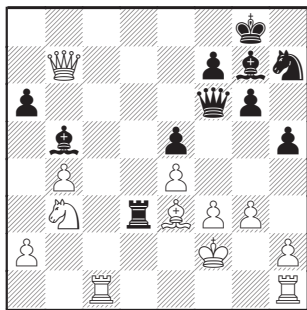


A solid performance: Wesley So

21.♖xc4 ♠b5 22.♖c1 d5 Unfortunately for Black, his pieces are too far away to do anything about the fact that the white king cannot castle.

23.♗xd5 ♗h4+ 24.g3 ♗f6 25.♕f2 Black has no compensation for the exchange and the pawn.

25...♖d8 26.♗b7 ♖d3



27.♗b6! Precise defence by So. White either exchanges queens or forces Black to retreat.

27...♗xb6 27...♖d6 28.♗b8+ ♖d8 (28...♗f8 29.♖hd1 exchanges rooks or allows ♖d8 or ♗d8.) 29.♖c8 is decisive, exchanging Black's active rook.

28.♠xb6 The rest is easy for White.

28...♗g5 29.h4 ♖xf3+ 30.♕g2 ♖xb3 31.axb3 ♗xe4 32.♖he1 ♗d2 33.♖c8+ ♕h7 34.♖c7 ♗g8 35.♖c8+ ♕h7 36.♖c7 ♗g8 37.♖e3

1-0

Giri and Vachier played a wild game in the QGA endgame (you don't get to read that sentence very often). Giri managed to catch Vachier in his preparation but failed to capitalise on it. Then he was even in danger of losing for one move, but Vachier missed the win and eventually the game was drawn.

In the sixth round, Aronian beat Firouzja, thus seriously denting his chances to qualify for the FIDE Candidates by rating. When So won again in round seven, beating Aronian, and Firouzja lost again (to Caruana), it was So who emerged as the leader in the ratings and the FIDE Circuit race.

Alireza Firouzja - Fabiano Caruana

10th Sinquefeld Cup Saint Louis USA (6.2)

1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♗c6 3.♠c4 ♗f6 4.♗g5 A rare guest at elite level, as the sharp positions that ensue are considered good for Black. However, Nakamura successfully caught Caruana in the Two Knights in the last round of Norway Chess, so Firouzja also tries his luck in the same opening.

4...d5 5.exd5 ♗a5 6.♠b5+ c6 7.dxc6 bxc6 8.♠d3 ♗d5 9.h4 Here he deviates. Nakamura had played 9.♗f3. You can find the analysis of that game in the July issue of BCM.

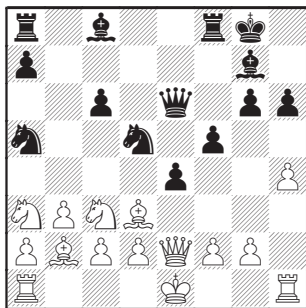
9...h6 One of the many options that Black has in this position. The others are 9...♗f4, 9...♗c7, 9...♠e7 and 9...g6.

10.♖h5 ♖f6 11.♘e4 ♗e6 12.b3 White had the option of repeating the position and forcing a draw with 12.♘g5 ♖f6 13.♘e4, but he chose to play on.

12...g6 13.♖e2 f5 14.♗ec3 ♘g7 Caruana deviates from an earlier game where Firouzja played with Black.

14...♘f4 15.♖f1 e4 The move 15...♙b7 is an interesting alternative. 16.♙e2 ♘g7 17.♙b2 ♘d3+?! Tempting, but not very good. (17...0-0 18.♘a3 ♖b8 was better, with very good compensation for Black. Caruana achieved something similar in the game.) 18.cxd3 exd3 19.♙d1 dxe2+ 20.♖xe2 ♖xe2+ 21.♙xe2 ♙a6+ 22.♙d1 and White had a better endgame, though Black has some compensation for the pawn. 0-1 (86) Nepomniachtchi,I (2771)-Firouzja,A (2777) Chess.com INT 2023.

15.♙b2 0-0 16.♘a3 e4

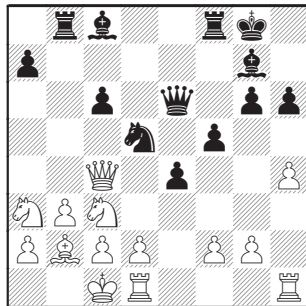


Black's compensation is obvious and it is White who needs to tread carefully in order not to lose immediately.

17.♙c4 ♘xc4 18.♖xc4 ♖b8?! An imprecision that allows White to untangle.

18...♖f7! The point is to have the move ...♙f8 in case White plays ♖c5. 19.0-0 a5 is still unclear. Black threatens ...♙a6.

19.0-0-0?!



Not bad, but missing a good chance.

19.♖c5! was the way to take advantage of Black's last move. The queen is safe on c5 when Black doesn't have the ...♙f8 move. If now 19...♖f7 20.0-0-0 ♙f8 21.♖d4 ♘g7 White can avoid the repetition with 22.♖a4 when White has good squares for his pieces after ♘c4 and can undermine Black's centre with f3.

19...♖b4 Now the game is unclear again.

20.♖e2 a5 21.♖he1?! The simplifications after 21.♘xd5 cxd5 22.♙xg7 ♙xg7 don't solve the problem with the knight on the rim, but they were still better than the game move.

21...a4?! Giving White a second chance to take on d5.

21...♘f4! 22.♖f1 a4! was much better, with the idea 23.♘xa4 (23.d4 this is better, but after 23...axb3 24.axb3 c5! 25.dxc5 ♙a6 Black has a tremendous initiative.) 23...♖xa4! 24.bxa4 ♙xb2+ 25.♙xb2 ♖f6+ 26.♙b1 ♘d3! 27.cxd3 ♙a6, with a winning attack.

22.g3 Missing the second chance to take on d5. The position is very complex, so it's not a surprise that both players had problems correctly evaluating the consequences of different variations.

22...axb3 23.axb3 ♖d6 Black removes the queen from the e-file, but it was better to

play 23...♖f7, as then the ...♖a7 idea is at Black's disposal.

24.f3! Finally undermining the black centre.

24...♖c5 25.♘ab1 White keeps the tension and threatens ♔a3. That will win an exchange, but White will lose the best defender of his king.

After 25.fxe4 ♘xc3 26.dxc3 ♙xe4 27.♖d2 the position simplified a bit, but remains dynamically balanced. A possible line is 27...♙f7 with the idea of ...♙d7. 28.♘b1 ♙d7 29.♔a3 ♖e5 30.♖f2 ♙xd1+ 31.♙xd1 ♙e2 32.♖a7 and the complex middlegame continues.

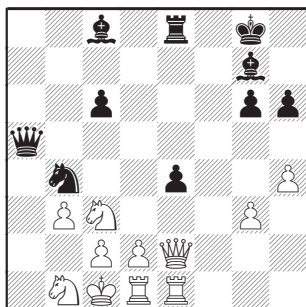
25...♙e8 26.fxe4 This allows Black to avoid the exchange sacrifice.

26.♔a3 ♖a5 27.fxe4 fxe4 leads to a transposition to the game.

26...fxe4 Black insists.

26...♙bxe4 would have led to a beautiful perpetual after 27.♘xe4 ♖xc2+! 28.♙xc2 ♘b4+ 29.♙c1 ♘a2+

27.♔a3 ♖a5 28.♔xb4 ♘xb4



White is an exchange and a pawn up, but Black has again managed to establish a grip on the position. The dark squares around White's king are weak and White still cannot break free.



A loss in round six to Aronian left Firouzja a step further away from the Candidates

29.d4 An attempt to close the long diagonal and obtain some breathing space for his pieces.

29.♖c4+ was an alternative. It could have led to a perpetual after 29...♙h7 30.♙e3 ♔e6 31.♖xe4 ♔xb3! 32.♖xe8 ♘a2+ 33.♘xa2 ♔b2+! 34.♙xb2 ♖xa2+ 35.♙c3 ♖xc2+ 36.♙b4 ♖c4+ 37.♙a3, with a curious merry-go-round perpetual check.

29...e3 Keeping the knight on b1 without squares.

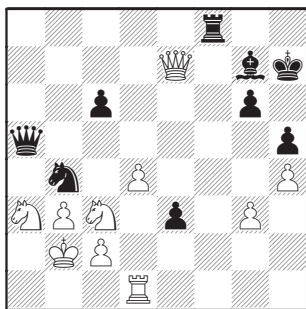
30.♙b2? Possibly Firouzja missed the strength of Black's next move.

30.g4! was necessary to avoid ...h5. The position is tense and objectively equal, with both having their problems - Black lacks material and White lacks space for his pieces.

30...h5! The threat is ...♔g4. The dormant bishop finally joins the game on move 31 (!) and it immediately decides the game.

31. ♖a3 ♗g4 32. ♖c4+ ♔h7 33. ♖f7 33. ♖a1 ♗e6! shows the power of the bishops: 34. ♖c5 (34. ♖e2 ♗xd4 is over immediately.) 34... ♖xc5 35. dxc5 ♘d5 36. ♗ab1 ♗e5 White is completely tied down. Black can simply take on g3 and perhaps h4 and win by pushing the pawns forward. Defending the pawn on g3 doesn't work as 37. ♖g1 e2 ties the rook down to the first rank.

33... ♖f8 34. ♖e7 ♗xd1 35. ♖xd1

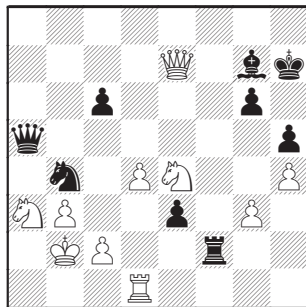


35... ♖f2? Allowing a saving chance.

35...c5! was strong, opening the long diagonal. After 36. ♗c4 ♖a6 37. ♖xc5 e2 38. ♖c1 (38. ♖e1 ♖f1 wins material or mates), 38... ♖f3! is decisive, but some tactics still need to be worked out, for example, 39. ♗e5 ♖xc3! 40. ♖xb4 ♖xg3 41. ♖e1 ♖e3 and the combined threat against the white king and the power of the passed pawn win for Black. Far from an easy line, so perhaps Caruana shouldn't be judged too harshly for missing it.; 35... ♗d5 was another option, but it's not that easy to understand that after 36. ♗xd5 ♖xd5 37. ♖xc5 ♖f3 38. ♖e2 ♖xg3 Black is actually winning!

36. ♗e4?

The main criticism these events draw is the inherent "elitism" in them – only a handful of players participate in them and it's "all the same all over again."



White misses the last chance.

The surprising 36. ♗c4! ♖xc2+ 37. ♗b1 ♖f5 38. ♗xe3! and like a true jumping artist the knight from the rim (going only to b1 and a3 up to this point) jumps right back and saves the game. 38... ♖f2 39. ♖xb4 ♖b2+ 40. ♗a1 c5! the only move for Black not to lose! 41. ♖a3 (41. ♖xc5 ♖xb3 42. ♖b1 ♖xb1+ 43. ♗xb1 ♖xe3 should also be a draw.) 41... ♗d2 42. ♖xd2 ♖xd2 43. ♗ed5 here comes the knight again! 43... cxd4 44. ♖e7 dxc3 45. ♗f6+ ♗h6 46. ♗g8+ ♗h7 47. ♗f6+; the heroic steed triumphantly ends the game with a perpetual check. A fascinating line!

36... ♖xc2+ 37. ♗b1 ♖f2 Now it's over.

38. ♗g5+ ♗h8 39. ♖e8+ ♖f8 40. ♖xg6 ♖f5+ 41. ♖xf5 ♖xf5 The e-pawn decides the game.

42. ♖e1 ♗xd4 43. ♗c2 ♗c3 44. ♗xe3 ♖xg5

0-1

A far from perfect game, but extremely dynamic and full of tension. The remainder of the tournament showed that this game was a turning-point for Caruana. After this first win, he could no longer be stopped.

The sixth round changed the fortunes of two players.

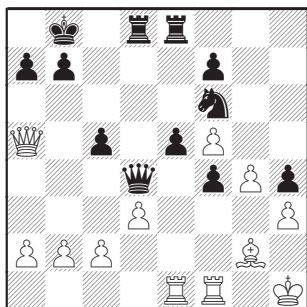
In an attempt to increase his rating and improve his standings in the tournament

(and by doing so his standings in the FIDE Circuit), Giri started with 1.g3 against Dominguez.

It was an attempt to take the game off the beaten track, with the idea of setting the *zeitnot*-prone Dominguez thinking from the start. He achieved his aim and a sharp battle ensued. The critical moment arose on move 24.

Anish Giri - Leinier Perez Dominguez

10th Sinquefeld Cup Saint Louis USA (6.4)



The position is balanced, but here Giri makes a mistake in his evaluation.

24.c3? 24.♖e2! was best, though the alternatives 24.♜b5 or 24.a3 were also fine. 24...♘h7 (24...♜xb2?! 25.♜xc5 is good for White, as he can use the open b-file later on.) 25.♞e4 ♜d6 26.b4!? with very sharp play with mutual chances.

24...♜xd3 25.♜xc5 ♜g3 Threatening ...♞d2.

26.♜f2 ♜xf2 27.♞xf2 ♘h7! With the knight coming to g5 Black's e and f pawns will eventually be unstoppable. Black is winning and the game ended in 56 moves.

The result of this game practically annulled Giri's chances of reaching the Candidates by rating, while suddenly Dominguez entered the fray.

In the next round, Caruana beat the leader So and replaced him in the lead.

Fabiano Caruana - Wesley So

10th Sinquefeld Cup Saint Louis USA (7.1)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e3 After qualifying for the Candidates, Caruana started experimenting more in the openings. He rarely plays the Nimzo-Indian with White, but in this game he managed to surprise So, who is usually excellently prepared.

4...c5 5.♘ge2 d5 Black can also take on d4 first before pushing ...d5. That is how the line was played in the past (for example, Karpov played it in his matches with Korchnoi) but modern players prefer the immediate 5...d5.

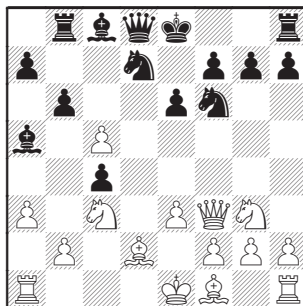
6.a3 ♙a5 The alternatives are to take on c3 or d4.

7.dxc5 dxc4 8.♙d2 White could also exchange on d8, but he prefers to keep the queens on the board.

8...♘bd7 9.♘g3 b6? A rare opening disaster from So.

9...♘xc5 10.♙xc4 ♙c7 is acceptable for Black.

10.♜f3! ♞b8



0-1

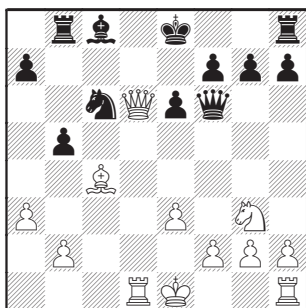
11.c6! Caruana immediately pounced on the mistake and doesn't give So respite until the end.

11...d5 12.f4 dxc3 12...dxc6 13.fxc4 b7 14.b4 b5 Black manages to save the bishop, but after **15.dxb5 b6 16.dxc3** he has no compensation for the pawn. This was still better than the game.

13.dxc3 dxc6 14.Rd1 e7 15.dxc4 b5 Unfortunately, Black cannot castle as **15...0-0 16.b5 b7 17.dxc6 dxc6 18.dxb4** wins an exchange for White.

16.dxf6! fxf6 16...gxf6 17.dxe4! is decisive.

17.fxd6!

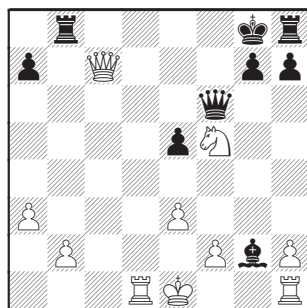


Powerful conversion by Caruana.

17...e5 18.dxf7+! fxf7 18...fxf7 19.fxc6+ d7 20.fxc5 White is a pawn up with in addition to a strategically winning position.

19.fxc7+ e7 20.fxc6 White has an extra pawn and a continuous attack on the king. The end is nigh.

20...b7 21.fxb5 dxc6 22.fxc4+ e8 23.dxf5 f6 24.fxc5+ g8 25.fxc7



Enough is enough. So resigned.

1-0

An unexpected game in the duel of the top two contenders. This win made Caruana the leader and made things more complicated in the rating race

FINAL STANDINGS

POS.		GCT POINTS	PRIZE MONEY
1	GM Fabiano Caruana	13.0	\$100,000
2	GM Leinier Dominguez	WC	\$65,000
3	GM Wesley So	8.0	\$48,000
T-4	GM Ian Nepomniachtchi	6.0	\$26,333
T-4	GM Levon Aronian	WC	\$26,333
T-4	GM Maxime Vachier-Lagrave	6.0	\$26,333
7	GM Anish Giri	4.0	\$18,500
8	GM Alireza Firouzja	3.0	\$13,000
9	GM Richard Rapport	2.0	\$13,000



for the Candidates since So lost rating points and his advantage became minimal over Firouzja.

Dominguez continued his run and beat the dejected Rapport. Dominguez offered a repetition on move 19, but Rapport rejected it. In search of sharp play, Rapport overstepped the limit and Dominguez won another game.

The difference in the live ratings between So and Dominguez was less than one point!

In the last two rounds, all games except one were drawn.

In the last round Caruana beat Rapport to clinch sole first place, half a point ahead of Dominguez. With this win he had been victorious in the Saint Louis rapid and blitz, the Sinquefeld Cup (with classical time control) and the Grand Chess Tour. An incredible finish of the year for Caruana, who after the slump from last year has rediscovered his passion and has his eyes firmly set on Toronto.

Who will join him there?

One spot will go to the highest-rated player on 1 January 2024. The live rating list sees So at 2757.4 and Dominguez at 2756.2.

FIDE came up with "clarification" of the qualification criteria for the Candidates that stipulated that Dominguez had to play another event "outside of USA" if he were to be eligible for the rating spot. This criterion didn't exist in the previous regulations, so it is perplexing why FIDE decided to tinker with the regulations this late in the cycle.

In view of this situation, Dominguez will be likely to seek an event outside of USA in December to try to increase his rating and overcome So.

As for the FIDE Circuit, Giri leads (if we take out Caruana, who has already qualified) with 84.31 points ahead of So with 83.40 and Gukesh with 79.50. Gukesh will play at the London Classic and a win there can easily give him the top spot and the ticket to Toronto.

At the time of writing, it is still unconfirmed whether Giri and So will play at the World Rapid and Blitz Championship (26-30 December) in Uzbekistan, a tournament that is also valid for Circuit points. According to the official site, Gukesh has registered to play.

A lot of excitement lies ahead before we reach Toronto!

FINAL GRAND CHESS TOUR STANDINGS

(WITH BONUSES)

POS.		GCT POINTS	PRIZE MONEY	EVENTS PLAYED
1	 GM Fabiano Caruana	46	\$310,000	4
2	 GM Maxime Vachier-Lagrave	28	\$148,583	4
3	 GM Wesley So	27.75	\$148,750	4
4	 GM Ian Nepomniachtchi	25.5	\$91,833	4
5	 GM Alireza Firouzja	24.75	\$98,750	4
6	 GM Richard Rapport	19.75	\$77,750	4
7	 GM Jan-Krzysztof Duda	19	\$59,250	3
8	 GM Anish Giri	17.75	\$79,250	4
9	 GM Ding Liren	3	\$16,000	1



SINQUEFIELD
CUP

SCARBOROUGH CONGRESS 2023

DANNY GORMALLY'S SHARP PLAY

By IM Shaun Taulbut

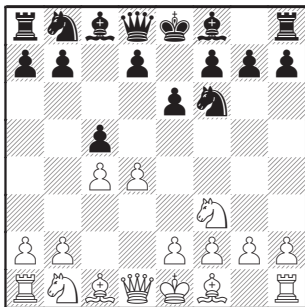
There were five tournaments as part of the 46th Scarborough Congress; in the Open section, Danny Gormally and Sooraj Raju shared the first place with 4.5/5 each winning £525.

We look at a sharp win by Danny Gormally in the first round where Black played an aggressive ..b5 pawn sacrifice in the Benoni

Danny Gormally - Luke Gostelow

Scarborough Congress 2023
Scarborough ENG (1.1)

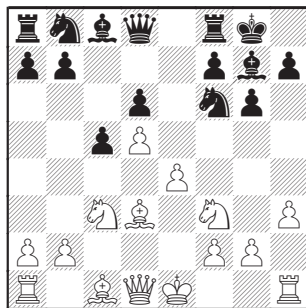
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c5



White now decides to go into a Benoni with d5 and take the initiative rather than allow Black to capture in the centre with ...cxd4.

4.d5 d6 5.♘c3 exd5 6.cxd5 g6 7.e4 ♙g7 8.h3 Preventing the pin with ...♙g4 makes the Black development more difficult as he has no easy square for his queenbishop.

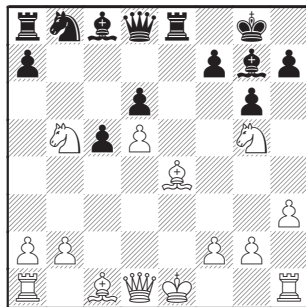
8...0-0 9.♙d3



9...b5 Black plays this sacrificial line which is very sharp; After the slower 9...a6 10.a4 ♘bd7 11.0-0 b6 12.♙f4 ♖c7 White is slightly better because of his space advantage.

10.♘xb5 ♘xe4 Playable is 10...♖e8 11.0-0 (After 11.♘c3 ♘xe4 12.♘xe4 f5 Black has a slight edge) 11...♘xe4 12.♖e1 ♘f6 13.♖xe8+ ♘xe8 14.♙g5 when White is slightly better. The knight capture is dangerous but White has sufficient resources.

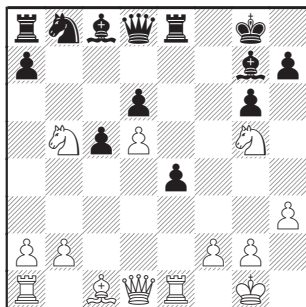
11.♙xe4 ♖e8 12.♘g5



A good alternative is 12.♘d2 f5 13.0-0 fxe4 14.♘c4 which is better for White with a double attack on d6 eg 14...♙f8 15.♙f4 ♙a6 16.♘xd6 ♙xd6 17.♘xd6 ♙xf1 18.♘xe8 ♙xe8 19.♙xf1 when White is much better.

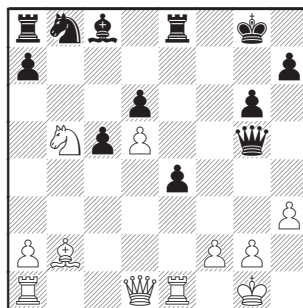
12...f5 After 12...h6 13.♘e6 fxe6 14.0-0 White has a decisive advantage, but playable is 12...♙a5+ 13.♘c3 ♙xc3+ 14.bxc3 ♙xc3+ 15.♙d2 ♙c4 16.f3 f5 17.♘f2 h6 18.♙b3 ♙xb3 19.axb3 hxg5 20.♙d3 when White has an advantage.

13.0-0 fxe4 14.♙e1



14...♙xb2 After 14...♙f5 15.g4 h6 16.gxf5 hxg5 17.fxg6 is strong for White; better is 14...a6 15.♘c3 when White captures on e4 with advantage.

15.♙xb2 ♙xg5



16.♙e3 Best is the direct 16.♘xd6 ♙xh3 (16...♙f8 17.♘xe4 ♙f4 18.♙c2 ♘d7 19.♙c3 is winning) as 17.♙f3 is winning because 17...exf3 is met by 18.♙xe8#

16...♙e7 17.♙d2 ♘d7 18.♙ae1 The prosaic 18.♘c7 nets the exchange eg 18...♙b8 19.♘xe8 wins but White aims for a quicker win.

18...♙e5 19.♙xe4 ♙f5 20.♙4e3 Also strong is 20.♘xd6 ♙xe4 (20...♙xd6 21.♙xe5 ♙xe5 22.♙xe5 ♙b8 23.♙c3 White is winning) 21.♘xe8 ♙xe8 22.♙xe4 ♙d6 23.f4 wins a piece.

20...♙g5 21.♙xe5 ♙xe5 After 21...♙xd2 22.♙xe8+ ♙xe8 23.♙xe8+ ♘f7 24.♘xd6#.

22.♙xg5 ♙xe1+ 23.♘h2 ♙b1 24.♙f6 ♙xb2 25.♙xb2 ♙b8 26.♙e2

1-0

SCARBOROUGH CONGRESS 2023 - LEADING FINAL ROUND 5 STANDINGS:

Rk	SNo	Name	FED	Rtg	TB1
1	1	Gormally, Daniel W	ENG	2479	4.5
	8	Raju, Sooraj Menothuparambil	IND	2209	4.5
3	2	Large, Peter G	ENG	2317	4
	4	Jackson, Edward	ENG	2262	4
	7	Badacsonyi, Frankie	ENG	2212	4
6	6	Badacsonyi, Stanley	ENG	2234	3.5
	11	Milson, Samuel A	ENG	2169	3.5
	18	Alldritt, Nigel Re	ENG	2095	3.5
	19	Karumazondo, Rangarirai Ernest	ENG	2086	3.5
	21	Hutchinson, Paul A	ENG	2057	3.5
	32	Fellowes, Billy	ENG	1996	3.5



CHESS, CHOICES, AND CHANGE: THE HECTOR GUIFARRO STORY

By Milan Dinic

Photos: Stev Bonhage

HECTOR GUIFARRO HAD A TROUBLED CHILDHOOD. AT THE AGE OF 19 HE “MADE A BAD CHOICE” WHICH LANDED HIM IN PRISON. CHESS WAS HIS WAY OUT. THIS IS HIS STORY.

Hector Guifarro (29) was born and raised in Waukegan Illinois, an industrial suburb of Chicago. A predominantly working-class area, with a slightly lower crime rate than other US neighbourhoods. Unfortunately, at an early age, Hector started going down one of life’s darkest alleyways.

“I was a troublemaker as a teenager and got kicked out of school. My mum sent me to military school when I turned 18. I then got a job at a bank and competed in amateur boxing. Even though I was starting to do well for myself, I was still involved in the streets and - I ended up in prison”.

It wasn’t long before the law caught up with him. The crime was such that it warranted 14 years of prison. Hector took a plea deal, served seven and spent the other seven on parole. It was in prison that he found his path “to becoming a better person”, thanks to chess.



“Prison is where I found the game of chess. My chess became my island. It kept me out of trouble. It built my confidence, and made me believe in myself”.

Hector had never played chess before. He heard about the game, but it “wasn’t on the radar” for him. Until Statesville.

Stateville Correctional Center is a maximum-security state prison for men in Crest Hill, near Chicago. Some of the most notorious criminals served their time there, and some ended it there. Stateville is one of three sites in which executions were carried out by electrocution in Illinois.

“County jails are different than prisons. When I was in prison, we only got out for an hour a day and every day I would play chess for that hour.”

A lot of people play chess in prisons, Hector notes.

“As I entered Stateville, I remember walking and I heard inmates yelling out numbers. At first, I didn’t know what they were doing. Later I found out they were playing chess throughout the whole time, even in their cells”.

Some of the inmates who played chess showed it to Hector.

“At first, I was having a hard time understanding how the pieces move but a friend of mine helped me understand. He broke it down to me. And after that, I just kept playing with everybody who wanted to play. Some inmates are very serious and competitive. But for me, it was always a healthy competition”.

Discovering chess in prison helped Hector get on track with his life - starting to plan his moves and take responsibility for the mistakes knowing they were a product of his choice, not somebody else's.

After seven years - on May 29 2020 - Hector left prison.

"I've been out of trouble ever since. I completed my parole, with no incidents with the law. Now I'm getting ready to graduate from college. Chess helped me think differently and changed my whole thought process. It also helped me deal with losses, which was difficult for me to do before".

One of the first things Hector did after leaving Stateville was to contact FIDE.

"When I saw that FIDE was doing something for chess in prisons, it related to me so much. I then sent them an email and told them everything about my life and they got back to me, and got me involved in the project for prisoners".

Hector took part in chess competitions in the US and has been a chess coach for the past three years.

"My ELO now is 1330. My main goal is to bring chess to my community and to offer it to the youth and give them a platform where they could experience competitive chess".

In January 2021 Hector co-founded the Chess for Fighters Program at the Angels Boxing Academy.

"Angel Lopez who is the founder of Angels Boxing Academy reached out to me about a chess program. I visited the gym and I liked what I saw. He and I teamed up and created the Chess for Fighters program. Together we created something special for our community, and we introduced the game of chess to the youth and also gave the students a platform to experience competitive chess. We are now doing chess tournaments and all our students are members of the US Chess Federation. Pretty soon we're going to be having chess champions coming out of the academy".

Apart from running five chess programs at schools, Hector has this summer taken up a job as an outreach specialist with the Lake County Peacemakers working on reducing gun violence in Waukegan and working with at-risk individuals to help them find resources.

Many of the kids he deals with never saw a chess piece in their life, but have already held a gun. He tries to explain how chess will help them, even if they choose life on the streets.





"I try and explain that chess can help them to think about the moves they make in life. If you're living that lifestyle on the streets, you'll always have to think about a lot of things that can happen. The point is teaching people that they have choices - like moves in chess. And if I mess up, well, that was my choice. And I apply that to life and that kept me out of trouble".

Hector Guifarro will soon graduate with an applied science degree from the College of Lake County. He has been accepted to two universities where he applied to do his BA in cybersecurity, and he also got a scholarship.

When reflecting on how prison and chess changed his life, he sums it up with the following: "In prison, I learned to believe in myself. Chess made me believe and after that, I thought I could do anything. Coming out of prison I felt more confident. I had that mindset that I wanted a better life and that I never want to come back to where I was".

Apart from Hector, the happiest person for him is his mother.

"I know I'm making my mum and family proud and I want to continue making them proud. I also want to make my community proud. I also have a little brother who just graduated high school and turned 18. I need to set an example for him. He also plays chess and does boxing and I'm really happy he's getting on a good path to life".

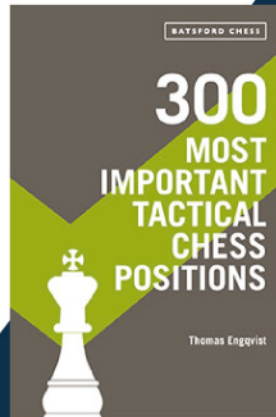
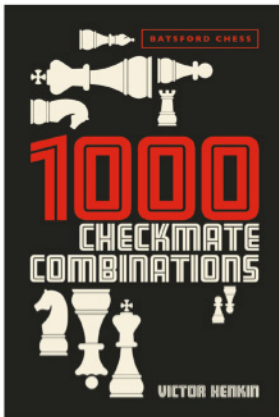
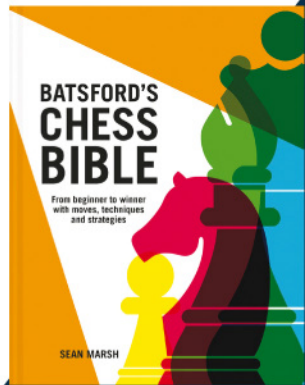
As for Hector's chess ambitions - "of course, I'd like to become a grandmaster", he says with a laugh. "But my main goal is to finish my education and help create chess champions."

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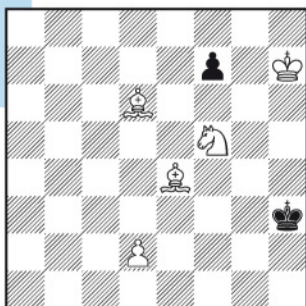
PROBLEM WORLD

by Christopher Jones

cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk

Grandmaster of Chess Composition

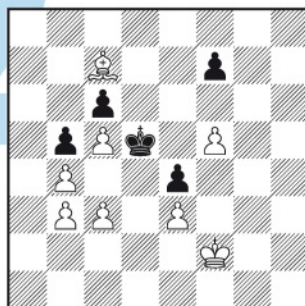
Solutions are given on page 765



Paul Michelet (London)

Mate in 4

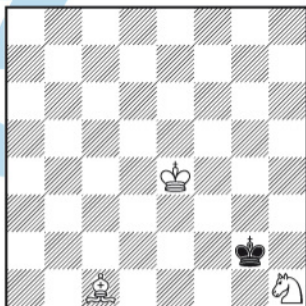
ORIGINAL



Paul Michelet (London)

Mate in 11

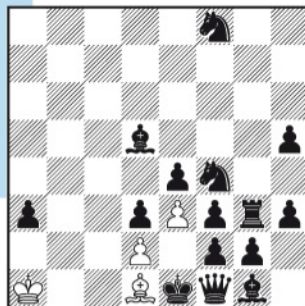
ORIGINAL



Stanislav Hudak (Slovakia)

Helpmate in 3 - 2 solutions

ORIGINAL



Yuri Bilokin (Ukraine)

Helpmate in 5 - 2 solutions

ORIGINAL, after C.J.Feather

The Master of Art and Chess – A Conversation with Francis M. Naumann

By Larry List and Celia Rabinovitch

For over four decades Francis M. Naumann has been a leading curator and scholar of the Dada and Surrealist art movements as well as a dedicated chess player. With both an M.F.A. from the Art Institute of Chicago and a Ph.D. from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, he has taught art history and operated a New York City gallery for twenty years showing the work of artists Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray and others with related aesthetic sensibilities, several of whom were avid chess players.

Naumann has organized many exhibitions including *Making Mischief: Dada Invades New York* of American Art, 1996), *Beatrice Wood: A Centennial Tribute* (American Craft Museum, New York, 1997), and *Conversion to Modernism: The Early Work of Man Ray* (Montclair Art Museum, 2003).

Among his numerous publications are *Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Making Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1999) and *The Recurrent, Haunting Ghost: Essays on the Art, Life and Legacy of Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Readymade Press, 2012). His book *Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Chess*, (New York: Readymade Press, 2009)—written in conjunction with Bradley Bailey and with game analysis by Jennifer Shahade, U.S. Woman Grandmaster—examines Duchamp's chess activities in relation to his art.

Fellow chess enthusiasts and art writers Larry List and Celia Rabinovitch recently spoke with Naumann about his life with chess and art.



Francis M. Naumann, 2005
Photo by Tom Keller

British Chess Magazine: *You are a chess player. When did you first encounter the game?*

Francis M. Naumann: Yes, I do play chess. I learned the movement of the pieces from my mother, probably at around age nine or ten.

BCM: *Did your family play chess?*

FMN: My first serious games were with my brother, but I no longer remember the outcome. We are identical twins, so I would imagine that there was a real sense of competition, as it was, naturally, with everything else we did together.

BCM: *And, beyond that, what about your own chess history – how did it develop?*



Francis M. Naumann vs. GM Maurice Ashley at artist Glenn Kaino's 2014 *Burning Boards* Chess Performance. Photo © Carmody Creative & World Chess Hall of Fame, Saint Louis, MO.

FMN: I stopped playing chess altogether when I went to high school. There was no one else interested in the game. Some years after graduating from college, while in my mid-twenties, I stopped into a chess club in Los Angeles and started playing some kids at random. I surprised myself by beating most of them. It was only then that I thought I might be a fairly good player, but that illusion would be shattered when I played anyone who studied the game and took it seriously.

BCM: *Have you played against any major figures in chess? Please describe the encounter(s) and the games.*

FMN: Yes, I have on occasion. I did play against GM Maurice Ashley at artist Glenn Kaino's *Burning Boards* Chess Performance at the World Chess Hall of Fame, Saint Louis, in 2014. Against experienced players, I tend to lose quickly, more than for any other reason, because I've never really studied openings. You can imagine the results at *Burning Boards*: I burned my fingers and quickly lost the game. The picture with Maurice Ashley was taken before the games in Saint Louis.

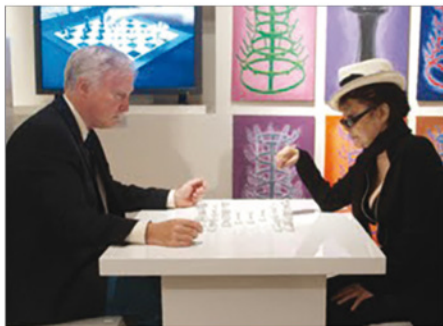
Over the years, my game has unquestionably weakened. I am now the equivalent of what Duchamp described himself in his old age: a wood-pusher. Still, like him, I enjoy reviewing games, especially those by players who are far better than I could ever be.

I did teach the game to the actress Hilary Swank and to her husband at the time, Chad Lowe, as well as to Chinese dissident artist Ai Weiwei.

Francis Naumann introduces Chinese artist Ai Wei Wei and his cat to chess, Beijing, April 24, 2013
Courtesy of Artnews: www.artnews.com



I also played Yoko Ono on her special all-white chess set and board called *Play it by Trust* that I borrowed from her in 2009 for my gallery exhibition called “Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Chess.” During the two-month duration of the show, I challenged everyone who came into the gallery to a game. Over time, I got pretty good at playing with the all-white pieces and board, because I see the game as positions frozen in space. Consequently, I always knew where my pieces were positioned on the board, even though during the course of the game, I was often interrupted by phone calls or other people coming into the gallery.



Francis Naumann at “Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Chess,” at Francis M. Naumann Fine Art, New York (September 10–October 30, 2009), faces off against artist Yoko Ono on the 1999 version of all-white Play It by Trust chess set and board (original version 1966)

In my game with Yoko, as the endgame approached, she asked if a pawn was mine

or hers, at which point I knew that I was in an advantageous position. We played for quite some time and, when the game ended, I said to her “You are really a good player,” whereupon she became visibly incensed and asked gruffly: “Are you saying that just because I am a woman?” “No,” I responded. “I said that because I just spent two hours trying to beat you.” She apologized for the question, and then proceeded to buy a work from my gallery.

Only later did I learn that she and her son Sean had been serious enough about the game to study with a noted New York chess tutor, IM Saudin Robovic.

BCM: How did you arrive at your interest in the connections between art and chess?

FMN: That occurred while I was a student at the Art Institute of Chicago in the early 1970s. I was devoted to the work of Marcel Duchamp and thought I might gain an insight into how he thought as an artist if I studied his recorded games. It was then that I made an attempt to gather as many games scores as I could find, but the process was then difficult, as most were buried in obscure and hard-to-find French chess magazines.

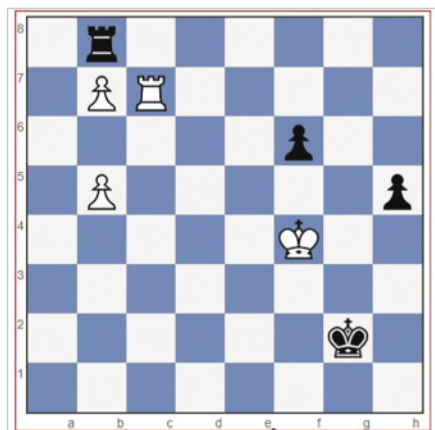
I approached the Duchamp scholar and author of the artist’s catalogue raisonné, Arturo Schwarz, whom I learned has assembled quite a few games, but he refused to cooperate. It was only upon the intercession of Marcel Duchamp’s widow, Alexina Duchamp (known to friends as “Teeny”) that I eventually received them. After studying the games carefully, I determined that not much could be learned about him as a player, since in the tournaments in which he participated—as a member of the undefeated 1922 Marshall Chess Club Team in New York and the 1925 French National Team—he was usually up against far superior players, and, as a result, had to remain cautious in order to survive.

I did, however, come across an endgame problem that he had printed on an announcement for an exhibition at the Julien Levy Gallery in New York in 1943, which I became fascinated with, because after months of studying it, I was unable to solve it.

I set that endgame position up on my chessboard and, whenever the occasion permitted, I attempted to solve it, but to no avail. When I moved to New York, I wrote a letter to the international grandmaster Larry Evans, who published the endgame problem in his column in *Chess Life &*



Marcel Duchamp.
Cupid and "White to Play and Win" as
seen through front and back sides of the
Through the Big End of the Opera Glass
exhibition announcement.
Julien Levy Gallery, New York, 1943



"White to Play and Win,"
endgame position devised by Duchamp
and published in the announcement
Through the Big End of the Opera Glass,
Julien Levy Gallery,
New York, 1943

*Review*¹. I offered a \$15 reward to anyone who could solve it, but no one could

¹ "Larry Evans on Chess," *Chess Life & Review* (October 1976): 580.

(although many attempted). Eventually, after submitting the position to various high-power computer programs, I came to the conclusion that the problem could not be solved.

I wrote an article entitled "A Problem with No Solution," as it turned on its head Duchamp's famous statement about art: "There is no solution because there is no problem." Since Duchamp linked a possible first move to solving this endgame problem with the figure of a cupid, I realized that he was intentionally setting up a metaphor with a situation he had confronted in his personal life: he had fallen in love with a married woman, Maria Martins, who was unwilling to leave her husband, which gave him, in effect, a problem for which there was no solution.²

BCM: *What prompted your transition to from art practice to art history and then the art world, the business of running an art gallery?*

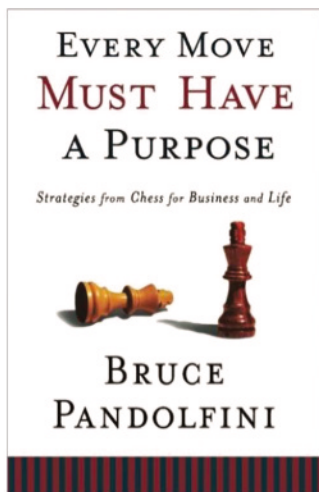
FMN: My work as an artist was derivative, unquestionably devoted to the precedence of Marcel Duchamp. At some point, I realized that the explanations I provided for whatever I made were better than the work itself, so I started studying art history and devoting myself increasingly to writing about art.

BCM: *Are there parallels between the art world and the chess world?*

FMN: There are countless parallels between the worlds of chess and art, but there are countless parallels between chess and everything else in life. One of the best books on the subject was written by the great writer on chess, Bruce Pandolfini.

² My article appeared in the literary magazine *The Sienese Shredder* #1 (Winter 2006-2007): 180-87. At the time when my article appeared, I had not known that a year earlier, GM Pal Benko had already published an article on this same endgame problem, concluding, as I did, that it had no solution ("Duchamp Solved!?", *Chess Life* [August 2005]: 48-49).

The title of his book tells you what it is about: *Every Move Must Have a Purpose: Strategies from Chess for Business and Life* (New York: Hyperion, 2003).

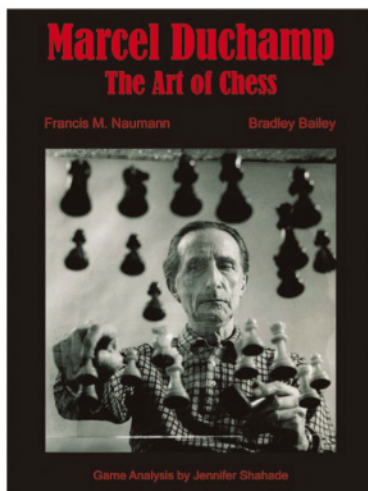


Every Move Must Have a Purpose: Strategies from Chess for Business and Life,
Bruce Pandolfini
(New York: Hyperion, 2003)

The work of nearly any artist of accomplishment—whether he played chess or not—can be divided into beginning, middle and end, just as the game of chess can be divided into an opening, midgame, and endgame, although, admittedly, where one phase begins and another ends is a matter of interpretation.

In my book *Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Chess*, I divided Duchamp's career as an artist into these three separate categories. In Duchamp's case, I added one stage that preceded them, "Learning the Rules," because I thought it was important to emphasize the fact that Duchamp had been taught the game by his two older brothers, Jacques Villon and Raymond Duchamp-Villon, who were then artists of note living in Paris.

The reason this was important to me is because as many psychoanalysts have



Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Chess
Francis M. Naumann & Bradley Bailey
With game analysis by Jennifer Shahade
Readymade Press, New York, 2009



Marcel Duchamp. *Bicycle Wheel*, 1950
(replica of work from 1913)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York,
gift of Harriet and Sidney Janis

pointed out, playing chess is a symbolic reenactment of the Oedipal Complex. Most chess players are taught the game by their fathers, and it is the son's role to sublimate

the authority of the father (in this case, trap the movement of the King on a chessboard).

Duchamp was not taught the game by his father, but instead by his two brothers, one a famous painter, the other a famous sculptor. It could be argued that Duchamp's invention of the readymade "killed" both the art of painting and of sculpture. A readymade was not an artwork made from scratch by the artist, but rather was a typical object from everyday life chosen by the artist and "designated" as art by the artist simply adding his signature. Duchamp's 1913 *Bicycle Wheel* is among the most familiar of his readymade artworks.

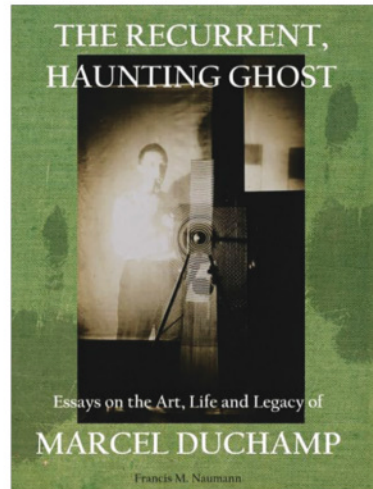
When Duchamp was asked what advice he would give to emerging artists, he said "The son must hate the father in order to be a good son. Such hatred seems to be the only means of producing the necessary reactions against the achievements of the previous period."¹ I suppose the same could be said of chess players who attempt to climb through the rankings, although both serious artists and chess players show a great deal of respect for the great artists and chess players who preceded them.

When my book appeared, not everyone agreed with this approach.² Duchamp's stepdaughter, for example, Jacqueline Matisse Monnier, thought that my division of his career into these separate phases indicated that he had done this consciously, which I never meant to imply. Certainly, in the beginning he would not have been aware of these parallels between his career and the game of chess, but I do believe that at the end of his life, he was very much aware of them. His decision to not reveal the *Étant donnés*—a large environmental tableau he had been working in secretly

for twenty years—until after his death was very much the equivalent of a surprise endgame move in chess, and a brilliant one at that.

BCM: *Does a chess metaphor inform your own life?*

FMN: I never gave this thought, but as I approach the final chapters of my own life, I suppose it is possible to establish parallels between my own career and the game of chess. When I gathered all of my



The Recurrent, Haunting Ghost: Essays on the Art, Life and Legacy of Marcel Duchamp

Francis M. Naumann

(New York: Readymade Press, 2012)

essays on Duchamp into a single volume, I was doing so with the intent of "ending the game," that is to say, concluding my career of writing about Duchamp.³ Within a year of its publication, however, the opportunity arose to write about the entire family of Duchamp artists, and I jumped at the chance.⁴ I have since continued to write articles about Duchamp, but only

1 Laurie Eglinton, "Marcel Duchamp, Back in America, Gives Interview," *Art News* 32 (18 November 1933): 11.

2 Francis M. Naumann and Bradley Bailey with game analysis by Jennifer Shahade, *Marcel Duchamp: The Art of Chess* (New York: Readymade Press, 2009).

3 Naumann, *The Recurrent, Haunting Ghost: Essay on the Art, Life and Legacy of Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Readymade Press, 2012).

4 Naumann, *The Duchamp Family of Artists*, The Baker Museum, Naples, Florida, January 4-April 6, 2014.

when I make a discovery, as I did recently in identifying a painter's cap that Duchamp wore in the last photograph taken by Man Ray of him dressed in the guise of his female alter ego, Rose Sélavy.¹

BCM: *Do you own chess-related works? Chess Sets? Which ones?*

FMN: I am a modest collector of chess sets, but they are mostly confined to those designed by Marcel Duchamp or Man Ray. I do have a wonderful colored chess set by Sophie Matisse, but when I play or analyze games, I prefer a standard Staunton chess set.

BCM: *Like Duchamp, who once said “I am just a missionary for chess...” you have played a role in the development of chess culture in the USA in your collaborations with the Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis, haven't you?*

FMN: I am a great supporter of the Chess Club and Scholastic Center in St. Louis, because they also have a museum devoted to chess: The World Chess Hall of Fame. Only serious chess players seem to understand the aesthetic qualities of the game, although Duchamp understood it intuitively. He once famously remarked “I have come to the personal conclusion that while all artists are not chess players, all chess players are artists.”²

BCM: *Do you have any special chess-related projects going on now?*

FMN: I have just completed the text for an essay to appear in the catalogue for a Duchamp exhibition at the gallery of Larkin Erdmann in Zurich called “Marcel

Duchamp: Non-Artist but Artistic Chess Player,” which attempts to disprove the notion that Duchamp completely ceased his activities as an artist in 1923 in order to play chess.

BCM: *In your book, Mentors you focus on understanding and learning from the biographies of others. Can you offer something about these mentors with regard to art and chess? Did any of them play chess?*

FMN: Of those whom I have identified as my mentors, only art historian Leo Steinberg played chess. I never played with him, but he told me he was quite good, which I have no reason to doubt, because he was positively brilliant. He had a great memory and could recite long passages from books he had read. Having a keen memory is unquestionably a great asset when playing chess, although your memory must be one capable of envisioning potential future moves and remembering how they functioned within the scope of a given position.

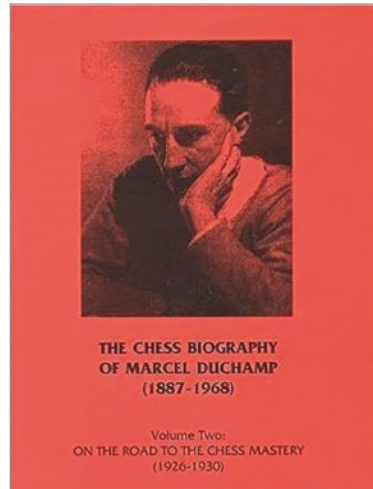
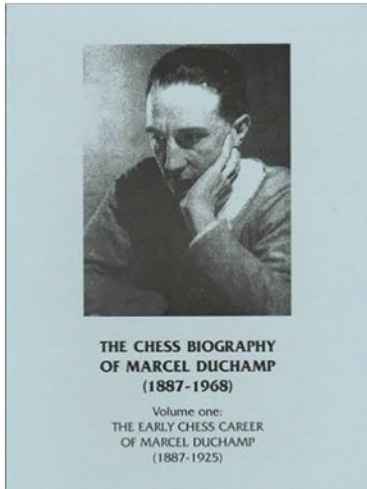
BCM: *Do you have favorite chess players – past or present?*

FMN: I can't really say that I have a “favorite” chess player, although it is impossible to not admire the brilliant games played by Bobby Fischer and now Magnus Carlsen. I also love reviewing the often daring and adventurous playing style of Hikaru Nakamura.

I suppose my favorite activity as a chess fan is to watch the nearly daily videos posted on YouTube by Antonio Radić on his chess channel called *agadmator*. For me, he can explain the complexities of a game better than anyone else. I think I have learned more about the game of chess from him than from any books I have read or lessons I have taken. I even wrote to him some years ago and asked if he would consider analyzing one of Duchamp's games—offering to send him a complimentary copy of my book—but, unfortunately, he never responded.

1 Naumann, “Rose Sélavy as house painter,” *The Burlington Magazine* 165 (May 2023): 533-535.

2 From a lecture delivered at the New York State Chess Association Convention, Cazenovia, New York; quoted in Pontus Hultén, ed., *Marcel Duchamp* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), Jennifer Gough-Cooper & Jacques Caumont, “Ephemerides on and about Marcel Duchamp and Rose Sélavy 1887-1968,” entry for 08/03/52.



Vlastimil Fiala, *The Chess Biography of Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968)*, vol. I: *The Early Chess Career of Marcel Duchamp (1887-1925)* (Olomouc, Check Republic: House Moravian Chess, 2002), and vol. II: *On the Road to the Chess Mastery (1926-1930)* (Olomouc, Check Republic: House Moravian Chess, 2004)

BCM: *Do you have an opinion about what influence A.I. may have on across-the-board and online chess in the future?*

FMN: A.I. has already influenced the game of chess, because even rudimentary computer programs can now beat the best players. Despite this fact, it has not stopped a fascination with the game, and I don't believe it ever will.

BCM: *Do you think Duchamp was as good a chess player as he was an artist?*

FMN: Absolutely not. He was a great artist—to some, the single most influential artist who ever lived—but he was a mid-level chess player. The pinnacle of his career in chess came during in the 1920s, when he played for the Marshall Club and French National Team. People have often asked me “What was Duchamp’s rating?” There were no rating systems back then, but if there were, my guess is that he would be somewhere beyond 2000, but I’m not sure where. I was told by scholar Adam

Papier Black that his correspondence chess rating was around 2400.

Vlastimil Fiala, *The Chess Biography of Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968)*, vol. I: *The Early Chess Career of Marcel Duchamp (1887-1925)* (Olomouc, Check Republic: House Moravian Chess, 2002), and vol. II: *On the Road to the Chess Mastery (1926-1930)* (Olomouc, Check Republic: House Moravian Chess, 2004).

I was only able to study about twenty of Duchamp’s games, but others were subsequently found by Vlastimil Fiala and presented in a two-volume book called *The Chess Biography of Marcel Duchamp*, which covered his games up to 1930. I understand that Adam Black, artist Barry Martin, and GM Ray Keene are now preparing a more comprehensive volume based on an extensive archive of Duchamp’s game notations compiled by the late American chess scholar Allan Savage. This may enable us to make a fuller assessment of Duchamp, the chess player.



Anatomy of a Chess Set Collection

TOUCHING HISTORY

Collecting chess sets from different periods is a great way to appreciate the rich history of the game and the people who have played it. Each set tells a story of a different era and can be a reminder of significant events both globally and personally.

By Chuck Grau

In his recent book, *On The Collecting Of Chess Sets*, Holger Langer identifies six organizing principles for a chess set collection. According to Holger, one can organize a collection by:

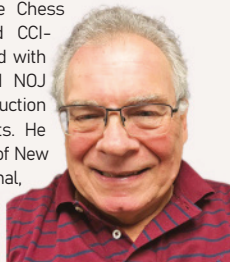
- a type or style of set, Staunton pattern sets being the most common;
- the materials used – wooden sets, ivory sets, or plastic sets, for example;
- the maker or makers – Jaques, British Chess Company, or Calvert among them;
- geography – American, British, French, Eastern European, or Soviet sets;
- time period – seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, or twentieth century sets; and
- specialized sets or equipment – travel sets, sets for the blind, chess clocks, and so on.

How collectors embrace these principles is highly idiosyncratic. My own collection is a good example. In this column, we will explore the varied dimensions of chess collecting through the prism of my collection, supplemented with specimens from the collections of others.

I was born not long after the end of the Second World War and came to chess as a player during the height of the Cold

Photos from Chuck Grau Collection.

Chuck Grau is a chess collector and retired attorney. His collection emphasizes Soviet chess sets, and he publishes the website sovietchesssets.com. He founded the Facebook group *Shakmatnyye Kollektionery*, dedicated to Soviet and Late Tsarist chess collecting, and is an administrator of three other Facebook chess collecting groups. He is a member of Chess Collectors International and has published articles on Soviet chess sets and history in *The Chess Collector Magazine* and *CCI-USA*. He has collaborated with House of Staunton and NOJ Slovenia in the reproduction of various historical sets. He has served as the editor of *New Hampshire Chess Journal*, and as a trustee of the *New Hampshire Chess Association*.



War. My appreciation for chess pieces is very much rooted in this history. I collect playing sets. I am particularly interested in sets that I played with in the 1960s and early 1970s and have acquired specimens for my collection. The very first set that I owned was a 3.25" plastic Lowe's "Tournament" set that my mother bought for me when I was home sick from school. My first non-school chess club met at the Racine, Wisconsin YMCA, where we played with Gallant Knight sets.

American Chess Sets

Not much later I journeyed north to Milwaukee to play in rated tournaments – the Wisconsin Open, the North Central Open, and the Western Open. There we played with the iconic Windsor Castle chessmen. To my knowledge, Windsor Castle chess pieces are the only chess pieces ever to grace the cover of *Sports Illustrated*, where they appeared with Lisa Lane in 1961. The historical record is replete with photos of Lane and of Bobby Fischer with Windsor Castle sets.



Windsor Castle chess pieces

Through the United States Chess Federation's *ChessLife* magazine and catalogs, I learned of the Drueke Player's Choice set, and then Pacific Game Company's Cavalier plastic set, and ordered them. Specimens of these famous American sets now reside in my collection.

A chess set can be more than just a game – it can be a window into the past and a source of inspiration for the future. The sets that have actually been played with hold an even greater value, as they have been touched and moved by the hands of history. Each mark, scratch, and dent can be a reminder of the battles fought on the board and the players who fought them. Owning one of these sets can feel like owning a piece of history, and each touch can bring back memories of the past.

Pictured bellow is a No. 36 Drueke Player's Choice set that I obtained from former U.S. Women's Champion Lisa Lane. Introduced in 1965 at the National Open in Las Vegas to replace aging armies of brittle Windsor Castle Chessmen, these well-made pieces quickly became popular. Bobby Fischer's 1971 Candidates Match with Mark Taimanov was played with Player's Choice pieces. Their dominance was short-lived, as they soon faced competition from Pacific Game Company's Cavalier plastic chess pieces and were displaced as the go-to set of American clubs and tournaments by the ubiquitous "Club Set," a Lardy knock-off first introduced by Adult Leisure Products Corporation in 1964.

My friend, mentor, and perennial Racine City Champion, Wally Teubner owned a beautiful wooden Lardy set that we often played on. At the University of Wisconsin, where I ran the chess program for several years in the early 1970s, we played with the already ubiquitous plastic club set, its many iterations plastic copies of a wooden Lardy design.



My play in American events with American sets fueled my later collecting interest in all these sets, broadening to include other American playing sets of significance – American Chess Company sets circa 1900, the W.T. Pinney sets of the 1940s and 1950s, and the Steiner sets of the 1960s and used in the Piatigorsky tournaments. For these reasons, American tournament sets of the 20th century comprise one major group of my collection. I describe them as “Iconic Sets of the American Chessboard.”



Early 1940s W.T. Pinney Club chess pieces. Unweighted for wartime



American Chess Company chess pieces, circa 1900.



1960s Steiner chess pieces

Soviet Chess Sets

My blossoming interest in chess coincided with the height of Soviet domination of the sport, and the drama of Bobby Fischer's challenge to it. My junior high school library subscribed to *Chess Review*, which I devoured for stories and games of Fischer, Botvinnik, Smyslov, Petrosian, Tal, and Spassky, as well as other American stars – Sammy Reshevsky, William Lombardy, Robert Byrne, Lisa Lane, and others. My fascination with Soviet chess was in some ways ironic, as not long before we were being taught in school to duck and cover in anticipation of nuclear war, a terrible possibility made very real by the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. I imagine that my interest in Soviet chess sets and chess history may be my way of working through my childhood anxieties about nuclear war, but such ruminations are perhaps best left to psychoanalysis.

Soviet chess sets have become the primary focus of my collection, an avenue for exploring the history of Soviet chess and its role in establishing the ideological hegemony of the Soviet state. I have begun to explore them systematically in my website sovietchesssets.com and Facebook group, *Shakhmatnyye Kollektionery*, which as of this writing has 3,000 members. Here are a few of the Soviet sets in my collection.

The first Soviet set pictured below has come to be known as the *Botvinnik-Flohr II* set because sets in this design were used in the famous 1935 Second Moscow International Tournament where Botvinnik and Flohr shared first place among an illustrious field. The “II” distinguishes the design from that of the set used in their 1933 match. The design evolved and remained a workhorse of high-level Soviet chess for decades, its last major iteration being used in the 1956



Mid-1930s Botvinnik-Flohr II chess pieces

Moscow Olympiad and Bobby Fischer's famous blitz matches at the Moscow Chess Club in 1958. World champions who played with one version or another include Lasker, Capablanca, Euwe, Botvinnik, Smyslov, Tal, Petrosian, Spassky, Fischer, and Karpov. I have yet to see a photo of Kasparov playing with it, but it would not surprise me to find one. From a design perspective, the set incorporated several elements of Modernism and broke with various conventions of traditional Staunton design, thereby reflecting the Soviet conception of art as a tool of politics. The pictured set was made by a Leningrad artel named Prometheus. Artels were collectives of artisans, recognized under Soviet law, that shared costs and revenues and exhibited a great deal of creativity in their designs.

The next Soviet set was born of the need to provide pieces to the hundreds of thousands of new players Nikolay Krylenko's program of *Political Chess* brought to the game. The design is elegant, but quite simplified to facilitate its quick and economical mass production by a semi-skilled work force. The design first appeared in the late 1930s and was produced in a Gulag by children. It has come to be known by collectors as the *Mordovian* design as the most attractive versions were produced in Mordovian prison camps after World War II. Later versions, like the one used in the climactic Moscow tournament in the fictional

television series *Queen's Gambit*, were manufactured in factories by wage laborers.

The pictured pieces, of second quality, were made in Berezovsky Children's Penal Colony in Siberia, close to Krasnoyarsk. It is not surprising that Soviet Authorities turned to Gulags to manufacture the large number of sets needed for the exponentially expanding numbers of players. The old



Late 1930s Gulag-made chess pieces



1952 Mordovian chess pieces

Artel system simply could not come close to supplying the numbers needed. Pieces in this style were produced from the late 1930s to the end of the Soviet Union, and it is safe to say they are the most numerous of any Soviet wooden set design.

I have an odd connection to the sets produced in the Mordovian prison camps. While in law school, I became familiar with the writings of a Bolshevik legal scholar by the name of Pashukanis. Several years after I graduated, I was working at the American Judicature Society in Chicago when a delegation of the Soviet Supreme Court, led by its Chief Justice, Mr. Chairman Lev Smirnov, paid us a visit as part of a tour organized by then U.S. Chief Justice Warren Burger. Smirnov was well-decorated, having been awarded the Order of Lenin, the Order of the October Revolution, the Red Banner of Labor, and other honorifics I no longer remember. He made his fame as the Soviets' Deputy Prosecutor at the Nuremburg war crime trials, but ascended to the pinnacle of the Soviet judiciary in no small measure by having presided over the 1966 show trial of two famous Soviet dissidents, Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel, who were prosecuted for satire they had authored. Despite my junior status, I begged to be included in the tea my superiors were hosting in the Soviets' honor. I sat next to the friendly KGB officer accompanying the Soviet justices. I surmised he was KGB because he wasn't introduced, said nothing, looked ominous, and wore white socks. We each got to speak with Mr. Chairman Smirnov in order of seniority, so I naturally spoke dead last. The conversation had focused on mundane matters of judicial administration, and Mr. Chairman Smirnov was drifting off as I stepped to the plate. At the mention of Pashukanis's name, Smirnov rose from the dead like Lazarus, and regaled us with tales

of the old Bolshevik, who had been one of his law school professors. Pashukanis was an ally of Nikolay Krylenko, who we know as the father of Soviet Chess. But Krylenko's day job was Chief Prosecutor of the Soviet Union, in which capacity he had staged more than a few show trials himself, sending many unfortunates to the Gulag or the executioner. Throughout the early and mid-1930s, Pashukanis and Krylenko battled Andrei Vyshinsky over the nature of Soviet criminal law, a matter of great importance to Stalin. Vyshinsky won the argument and went on to ascend the heights of the Soviet power structure. Pashukanis and Krylenko were shot. Like Vyshinsky, Smirnov was a survivor. He convicted Sinyavsky and David and banished them to a prison camp in Mordovia. Perhaps they made some of these chess sets there or knew those who did.

A fourth example of Soviet design is the "Tal" set, so named because it appears on the cover of the former World Champion's autobiography *The Life And Games Of Mikhail Tal*. The book's cover bears a photo of Tal contemplating his position after Black's 32nd move in his game with Krogus, played in the 30th Soviet Championship in Yerevan in 1962, a Ruy Lopez won by Tal. The design first appeared in a 1940 friendship match between Estonia and Latvia, held in Tallinn before the annexation, but in an evolved form it soon became a staple of major Soviet tournaments held in and around Georgia SSR. Pictured below is the version used in the 1959 Soviet Championship held in Tbilisi, Georgia.

The Tal set is a good example of what collectors call "Soviet Stauntons." Among the typically Soviet design elements of Soviet Stauntons are the opposite colors of the king, queen, and bishop finials (here much of the black paint has worn off the bishop and queen finials);



1959 Tal chess pieces

the modification of the king's cross to one not quite recognized by Christian iconography; and, with one notable exception, a knight not patterned after the Elgin Marbles. Among the features that distinguish the Tal set are the hefty wide and tall bases; the thick rook

towers; the crisply carved angled merlons; the squat pawns; and the jaunty knights, which appear to lean backwards with their heads tilted upward. The traditional and idiosyncratically Soviet elements of Soviet Stauntons are illustrated above.

Olympic Chess Sets

My collection also includes smaller groups of Latin American, Western European, and Eastern European playing sets. My interest in them stems from my family's roots in Germany and Slovakia, the Olympiads and Interzonals held in those regions, and my namesake Roberto Grau, for many years the Argentine champion and an organizer of the fateful 1939 Buenos Aires Olympiad.

This, then, is an overview of my chess set collection and the thinking behind its composition. As you can see, what I collect is very much a function of my personal history and experience. In future columns, I will explore various sets in their historical and cultural contexts and discuss issues that confront every collector: deciding a focus, establishing provenance, restoration, reproduction, display and storage, and beyond.



CHESS GIFTS FOR CHRISTMAS

SOME OF THE BEST CHESS BOOKS TO CONSIDER FOR XMAS PRESENTS!

By Grandmaster Raymond Keene OBE

I had hoped this festive month to pose an exciting question, such as: does Santa Claus play chess? Or unearth a startling revelation, for example a reindeer chess piece discovered in Lapland, which can only move when dragging a sleigh piece behind it, much as the (real) Xiangqi (Chinese chess) piece, the cannon, can only capture *through* another piece. No such luck, sadly, so I shall instead focus on items to fill the Christmas stocking for chess enthusiasts.

When we come to the classics, books which inspired me as a teenager. Second-hand copies exist, of course. However, an invaluable service has been rendered to the chess community by the publishing house co-founded by Julian Simpole (teacher of prodigies Josh Altman and Shreyas Royal, as well as budding and future Grandmasters Luke McShane and David Howell) in tandem with Lord Hardinge of Penshurst, in the form of Hardinge Simpole Publishing. Hardinge Simpole is a publisher which has adopted the preservation of major English language classics as a kind of mission statement. Usefully, Hardinge Simpole Publishing offer a full menu of chess desiderata.

In my regular columns for the *British Chess Magazine* I have often expressed my admiration for the games and writings of Aron Nimzowitsch, exploits which exerted a significant influence over my early personal development as a chess player. Nimzowitsch excelled at chessboard strategy, long-term planning deriving from the particular openings which he developed, including 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 against the French Defence, 1.Nf3 d5 2.b3 in the form of the Nimzowitsch Attack, and of course his signature Nimzo-Indian Defence: 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4. Nimzowitsch's *magnum opus* is his book of chess strategy, *My System*.

Somewhat paradoxically, given the diametrically opposite nature of their styles, another major influence was Nimzowitsch's fellow Latvian, and also citizen of Riga, Mikhail Tal. In contrast to Nimzowitsch, Tal was primarily a tactician. I first became aware of Tal's extraordinary power and energy from his victory in the 1959 Candidates Tournament which decided the challenger to the throne of World Champion and Red Czar of the Soviet Chess Imperium, Mikhail Botvinnik.

The book which introduced me to the Wizard of Riga, as Tal came to be known, was Harry Golombek's first-hand account of that self-same Candidates Tournament. There, Golombek himself acted as Chief Arbiter, a most signal international honour for the distinguished British Master, later to become Grandmaster Emeritus. The book had, in fact, been originally published in a somewhat primitive offset format, which looked for all the world as if it had been produced in the editor's back room on a duplicating machine, as it probably had.

The *arte povera* design of the initial book belied the depth, elegance and insights of Golombek's contents, writing which had already earned Golombek numerous accolades for his books on Réti, Capablanca, and the World Championships of 1948, 1954 and 1957. One of life's great pleasures over Christmas would be to play over Réti's elegant masterpieces from Golombek's book *Réti's Best Games of Chess*, with an accompanying glass of Dow's Port 1977, listening to Schubert's "Trout Quintet" and, possibly, with a large wedge of Colston Bassett Stilton.

It is also interesting to compare Golombek's reportage of the 1948 Championship

(which I used to carry around with me as an aspiring youngster) with his treatment of the 1959 Candidates.

Golombek enjoyed a unique gift for conveying the drama of battles on the chessboard, elevating chess commentary to the bardic literary level of the Icelandic epic sagas which Golombek had studied for his Doctorate. Tal's performance, 61 years ago, must be rated as one of the most outstanding tournament performances of all time. Against the leading grandmasters of his time, excluding of course Botvinnik (waiting in Moscow to discover the identity of his challenger), Tal's restless energy notched up a huge plus score, including thirteen wins and just three draws out of sixteen encounters against Bobby Fischer, Svetozar Gligoric, Fridrik Olafsson and Pal Benko. Against Fischer, Tal scored 100 per cent. Indeed, Tal could also easily have defeated Benko in the one draw permitted him, had he not agreed in the final round to split the point in an overwhelming position, where Benko could have safely resigned. Tal once said that there are two types of sacrifice, sound ones and his! Oddly enough, Tal triumphed in 1959 largely through sound attacks, creating a tsunami of energy and dynamism which simply swept away the opposition. The waves of kinetic force in Tal's conduct of his games bring to mind those lines from Shakespeare's *Othello* Act III, Scene 3, one of the most impactful descriptions of raw energy ever to appear in English literature:

*"Like to the Pontic sea,
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne'er keeps retiring ebb but keeps due on
To the Propontic and the Hellespont"*

The contrast with the elite of 1948 is dramatic. Eleven years before Tal's advent, the top players were heavily into deep strategic manoeuvres and battles which unfolded, by and large, at a relatively slow pace. Tal, on the other hand, demolished even the greatest with a Napoleonic élan, rarely seen before on the chessboard.

Golombek's book, *4th Candidates' Tournament*, 1959 remains in print in a much-improved edition, both visually and in terms of design. Hardinge Simpole Publishing have also reissued Peter Clarke's anthology of Mikhail Tal's Best Games of Chess, which takes the Rigan Wizard's meteoric career up to and including the World Championship match victory against Botvinnik, which crowned Tal, albeit briefly, as World Champion. I found Clarke's book just as inspiring and instructive as Golombek's account of the 1959 Candidates Tournament. In fact, it was the book which taught me to play Tal's signature defence, the Modern Benoni, which rewarded me with fifteen straight wins from my first fifteen games with it.

Masterpieces and Dramas of the Soviet Championship Volume 1 (1920-1937) by Sergey Voronkov, published by Elk and Ruby, with a foreword by former World Champion and one of the greatest chess players in history, Garry Kasparov. This book fully lives up to its title, including accounts of the daunting problems of organising anything in the chaotic times of the post-Russian Revolution. The tournaments were of high quality (greats such as the mighty Alexander Alekhine, Efim Bogoljubov and Mikhail Botvinnik were amongst the winners) and there are many historical, dramatic and competitive games to enjoy. A book of considerable importance, but also an absorbing read.

Next, *Smyslov, Bronstein, Geller, Taimanov and Averbakh* by the prolific American Grandmaster, Andrew Soltis, published by McFarland. Subtitled '*A Chess Multibiography with 220 Games*', Soltis says he wanted to explore the lives of five exceptionally talented chess players, but very different men, who survived the horrors



of the Second World War and of the brutal Soviet regime, and to examine why only one of them, Vasily Smyslov, became World Champion. The way their lives entwined in the competitive, political, Russian chess world after the World War II is fascinating.

The Chess Saga of Fridrik Olafsson by Oystein Brekke and Fridrik Ólafsson is published by Norske Sjakkforlag. A tribute to the Icelandic Grandmaster who, besides being strong enough to play in the 1959 Candidates' Tournament, is an iconic figure in his native Iceland. A tribute to an elegant attacking player, the book contains 118 games, many annotated by Olafsson himself. The book is much more than a collection of games; many writers contribute to describe his long life (87 years) and varied career, not all in chess. A Saga, indeed, and an affectionate and beautiful book in every way.

And finally, an important, no holds barred book, which heralds Nigel Short's entry into the field of chess literature.

Winning by Nigel Short is published by Quality Chess. Tournament books have traditionally been an important part of chess culture. Short has taken an unusual approach - this is a book giving ALL the games he played himself in eight tournaments he won dating from 1987 to 2016. The games are thoroughly annotated and show the drama, the good play, the practical play and sometimes survival play required to win tournaments. This is Short's first book and his personal approach, along with his lively style, engenders hopes that he will follow up with a sequel.

There is, indeed plenty of scope for a second volume, which might include Short's bid for the World Title, as well as his exploits against the British elite, even before he reached his teens. Now picture this: a 12-year-old boy sits at a chessboard. Facing him is a formidable and deadly opponent. The man is an experienced master, a player who has beaten, nay annihilated, one World

Champion (Mikhail Tal) and himself won the British Championship a record 10 times. The scene is Brighton in the summer of 1977. The boy is Nigel Short, the first pre-teenager ever to compete in the British Championship, and the hardened veteran is Dr. Jonathan Penrose.

After a few moves of play, to the amazement of the onlookers, Penrose offers the boy a draw. To the even greater consternation of those looking on, the boy declined the offer. The game proceeds. First, Penrose almost loses his queen, and then, faced with an inevitable checkmate, on the 41st move, the shattered Master concedes defeat.

That sensational game announced the advent of a new chess prodigy, in the tradition of young geniuses of the calibre of Paul Morphy, José Capablanca and Bobby Fischer. Since his own auspicious debut, Nigel Short progressed with meteoric brilliance to become indisputably the greatest British chess player in the history of the game. He has reached a world ranking of number 3 and has been the inspirational leader of the grandmaster-packed English team, spearheading them to three Olympic silver medals, behind only the hitherto dominant Russians.

The highlight of Nigel Short's career was his victorious challenge in April 1992, to the living chess legend, Anatoly Karpov, in the semi-final of the World Chess Championship Qualifying Competition. Karpov held the World Title for 10 years until he was deposed by Garry Kasparov. He is one of the three or four greatest chess players the world has ever seen.

Beating Karpov raised Short to the pinnacle of world chess, a position he reinforced in January 1993 by his victory over the formidably talented Dutch Grandmaster, Jan Timman in the final of the World Championship Qualifying Competition, a result which enabled Nigel to challenge Garry Kasparov himself in a match for the

World Championship Title. Sponsored by *The Times* newspaper, this challenge took place in 1993 and resulted in honourable defeat for Short. It should, though, be remembered that no native-born British player had ever come that close to world domination since Howard Staunton demolished the leading players of Europe between 1843 and 1846.

So, what made Nigel so devastatingly effective over the chessboard? Short is a tough pragmatist, self-educated and self-reliant. His physical appearance belies his ruthlessly aggressive and starkly individualistic approach when in play. Short is tall, softly spoken and mild, not at all the stereotype of the mad genius which Bobby Fischer fitted so well. However, in a particularly endearing trait, he not only means what he says, he also acts upon it.

Short's career has been studded with glittering successes, first prize in tournaments and match victories around the world, but there have also been, as distinct from the careers of Garry Kasparov and Anatoly Karpov, the occasional equally stunning setbacks. When he was only 14, Short was thrown, by well-meaning chess officials, who wanted to encourage and accelerate his progress, into the shark pool of the 1980 London International Tournament, with a line-up including the World Title Challenger, Victor Korchnoi, who was not even able to win first prize, such was the strength of the competition. Short was unable to avoid a disastrous last place; he was just too young and inexperienced for this murderous field. In a time characterised by national engines of pre-teenage Grandmaster creation, this might sound anomalous, but four decades ago pre-pubescent Grandmasters were not then as numerous as Milton's leaves in Vallombrosa. However, Nigel overcame these early problems, developed enviable mental toughness and, when he went one down in the semi-final against Karpov, he did not become discouraged.

In fact, Nigel had a grand strategy for the all-important match against Karpov. Both he and Karpov, as opposed to the brilliantly destructive Kasparov, are architectonic players, pure stylists, who seek to expose and make visible the inner harmonic workings of the dynamic interplay of the pieces. Where others would simply see a discordant chaos of clashing chessmen, Short and Karpov perceive almost infinitely beautiful patterns, networks and fields of force. In the past, Short had laid the accent on such pure thought - the superiority of his thinking apparatus - over that of his opponents. But defeating Karpov required a new dimension of combat: physical as well as mental fitness now became of vital importance - it may even have proved to be the deciding factor.

For the showdown against Karpov, the 26-year-old Short was determined to be at the peak of physical strength. The plan was to play longer games and wear down his 41-year-old (and slightly paunchy) opponent. The war of attrition, to drain Karpov's energy, would suddenly transform into a Blitzkrieg when the former Champion was suitably enervated. This did, indeed, happen. Games three, four and five of this 10-game match were mind-exhausting marathons, but then Short struck to take games six and eight with lightning victories. Chess may seem all in the mind, but the mind is connected to the body.

The challenge to Karpov took place in the Andalusian city of Linares in southern Spain. Linares is famous for two other things apart from chess. It was the birthplace of Himilce, the wife of Hannibal, and the city also boasts a fountain from which Hannibal is reputed to have drunk. Local legend has it that those who, emulating the Carthaginian general, drink from this fountain, will inevitably return.

Turning from over the board chess to chess politics, Nigel in 2018 made brilliant use of every opportunity to make a bid to become elected as President of FIDE, the World

Chess Federation. Disgracefully, that self-same English Chess Federation which is now pondering the merits of Nigel's book, failed to support him and, sadly, even obstructed him. Nevertheless, Nigel emerged from the electoral process with the glittering prize of FIDE Vice-President to his credit.

One of the reasons for my admiration of Nigel is that he succeeded in two areas where I harboured ambitions, but ultimately failed. These are winning the World Championship and taking a high post in FIDE. As far as the former is concerned I never made it past the first qualifying stage (known as the Zonal) while I spectacularly failed to be elected as FIDE General Secretary in 1986.

Short's travails with his National Federation bring to mind an episode from an illuminating book from Elk and Ruby: *Yakov Vilner, the first Ukrainian Chess Champion and the first USSR Chess Composition Champion: a world champion's favorite composers* by Sergei Tkachenko.

Here we learn the truth about a brush with death at the hands of Soviet executioners, by the immortal Alexander Alekhine. Tkachenko writes:

"Gradually, I managed to put together a true account of those events. I found clear evidence that the versions that Alekhine was saved by important Soviet functionaries were incorrect. Historical facts and memoirs pointed to the undoubted fact that his salvation was down to the modest Jewish lad Yakov Vilner, who, at the time the Grandmaster was arrested, was working as a clerk in the Odessa Revolutionary Tribunal."

How did the modest clerk save Alekhine? This book does not give details: perhaps by eating the charge sheets against Alekhine, as does the loyal clerk, Tristan Fleuri, working in the Department of Public Safety, from Abel Gance's 1927 epic *Napoleon*. In the case of the

Gance movie, it is, of course, Napoleon and Josephine who are saved by the intervention of the sympathetic 'docuphage'.

The episode of conflict with the National Federation, to which I refer, arose when the Soviet chess authorities began to undermine Vilner, in a way that foreshadows the social media storms nowadays which are often a prelude to a campaign of Cancel Culture. I quote *"In fact, the attacks on Vilner started according to a well-developed procedure - with angry letters from ordinary chess fans. The aim of such "signals" was to provide an official excuse to the relevant organs and services to take actions against an awkward person."*

Plus ça change, indeed!

Short, however, not only survived but also prospered in the teeth of official opposition. Vilner, sadly, did not, succumbing at a relatively young age to the asthma which had bedevilled his entire career.

With Christmas just around the corner, the time has come to nominate some recent chess books for chess enthusiasts. A real heavyweight is the latest Elk and Ruby disquisition on the inside stories of the Soviet Chess Imperium, *Masterpieces and Dramas of the Soviet Championships Volume III (1948-1953)*, compiled by Sergey Voronkov. In the final throes of Stalin's dictatorship, Botvinnik, Bronstein, Smyslov and Keres imposed their stamp on world chess. Botvinnik had conquered the world title in 1948 and retained the supreme accolade against Bronstein in 1951. Meanwhile, Bronstein and Smyslov carried off the laurels in the first two FIDE Candidates tournaments, while a phalanx of young talent — including Petrosian, Taimanov, Geller and Averbakh — was rising to the fore.

Yet, paradoxically, internal intrigue and division were rending this mighty empire apart, resulting in some inconsistent

messages to the world chess community. In spite of their overwhelming force, the USSR team boycotted the 1950 Olympiad, or world team tournament, an omission not repeated until the Haifa Olympiad in 1976. More recently, Russia was excluded from the 2022 Olympiad, in the wake of the illegal invasion of Ukraine. Astoundingly, for the 1952 Olympiad, world champion Botvinnik was voted off the squad — which nevertheless still won gold, with Paul Keres on top board. For the student of Soviet life during the embers of the Stalin era, this book is a must.

Which brings me to my next choice: *The Most Exciting Chess Games Ever* by Steve Giddins. This book is subtitled: The Experts' Choice in *New In Chess* magazine. Twenty years ago, *New In Chess* started its own Questionnaire, entitled "Just Checking". In this back page column, chess players and personalities named their favourites, preferences, moods, life mottos and so on. One of the questions has always been: What was the most exciting chess game you ever saw? Chess greats such as Anand, Shirov and Ivanchuk, and authors and commentators such as Jeremy Silman, Jennifer Shahade, and Tania Sachdev, nominated their choice of the most memorable games.

This anthology now presents the 45 most exciting of these games. Besides the usual suspects — such as Kasparov-Topalov (Wijk aan Zee 1999) or the 'Immortal' Anderssen-Kieseritzky (London 1851) — readers are treated to a wide variety of lesser-known gems. You'll see Ding Liren revelling in an all-out attack, Ivan Saric juggling a knight and five pawns versus two rooks, and Sergei Radchenko chasing the white king all over the board. Every game is a showcase of the richness and resourcefulness of chess. The ever-reliable Steve Giddins edited this selection (200pp, *New in Chess*, ♖22), a job he immensely enjoyed: "I hope that every reader will find games here which bring a smile to their face and a lift to their heart."

There is of course a debate about what constitutes an ideal book for the general chess reader and, indeed, what constitutes an exciting game. In terms of the first category Giddins' work scores very highly: clear printing and layout, a powerful narrative, notes not overburdened with computer analysis print-out and a definite personal character driving the commentary. It reminds me of the best days of Harry Golombek, king of chess annotators, whose books on Réti and Capablanca (both published by Hardinge Simpole) remain classics of the game anthology genre.

Personally, I think there can be a quite different dimension to excitement. For example, the 24th and final game of the 1987 Kasparov v Karpov world championship in Seville. In many ways unremarkable, the game was adjourned overnight with Kasparov in a superior position, but could he break down Karpov's fortress, win the game and salvage his world title?

During the overnight adjournment, the chess world, divided into supporters of Kasparov or Karpov, were on tenterhooks, with *Nessun dorma* applying to everyone who could get their hands on a chess set to analyse the unfinished game. When the Spanish TV programme on the game, hosted by the world's leading chess journalist, my good friend Leontxo Garcia, resumed live transmission next day, it was avidly followed by millions of viewers.

As the great Praeceptor Germaniae, Dr Siegbert Tarrasch, rightly said: "Chess, like love, like music, has the power to make men [and women] happy."



QUOTES AND QUERIES

AN OBSCURE GAMBIT!

By Alan Smith

6243 I would like to introduce readers to an obscure gambit. White starts with 1.f4 d5 2.c4 ♟f6 3.cxd5 ♟xd5 and now rather than the passive 4.d3 or 4.g3 White has 4.e4! ♟xf4 5.d4. This was the brainchild of Dr Max Sturm of Trinidad.

Here is an early example, played against a Spanish player.

Dr Max Sturm - Girod

Correspondence 1952

1.f4 d5 2.c4 ♟f6 3.cxd5 ♟xd5 4.e4 ♟xf4 The columnist suggested 4...♟b6.

5.d4 ♟g6 5...e5 was worth a try.

6.♟f3 e5 6...e6 is a plausible alternative, but Black did no better in the 1951 game Sturm - Lynch, which continued 7.♟c4 ♟b4+ 8.♟c3 ♟xc3+ 9.bxc3 0-0 10.0-0 b6 11.♟g5 and Black was soon to rue the weakening of the dark squares round his king.

7.♟c4 ♟g4 8.♟c3 ♞e7 9.0-0 ♟e6 10.♟d5 ♞d6 11.♟g5 0-0 12.♞h5 h6 13.♟f6+! gxf6 14.♟xe6 fxe5 15.♞xg6+ ♟h8 16.♞xh6+ ♟g8 17.♞xg5+ 1-0

Victoria Weekly Times, 6th May 1953

6244 The idea of 2.c4 is older than that. The French player Laroche had a good understanding of the f4 and c4 structures and seems to have played them for a decade or so with good results. The following is probably his best game with the line.

Jean Adolphe Laroche -
Jules Arnoud de Rivière

Paris 1855

1.f4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.e3 Improving on an earlier game with de Rivière 3.♟f3 c5 4.b3 ♟c6 5.♟b2 d4 6.g3 f5 7.♟a3 ♟f6 8.♟c2 ♟e4 9.♟g2, Laroche still went on to win in 58 moves.

3...♟f6 4.d4 c5 5.♟f3 ♟c6 6.a3 a6 7.♟c3 ♟e7 7...b6 is definitely stronger 8.♟d3 ♟b7 9.cxd5 exd5 10.0-0 ♟e7 11.♟d2 Laroche - Tassinari Café de la Régence 1855.

8.dxc5 ♟xc5 9.b4 ♟b6 10.c5 ♟c7 11.♟d3 b6 12.0-0 bxc5 13.bxc5 ♞e7 14.♟a4 ♟e4 15.♞c2 f5 16.♟b2 0-0 17.♞ab1 ♟d7 18.♞fc1 ♞fb8 19.♟xe4! fxe4 20.♟d4 ♟xd4 21.♟xd4 ♞xb1 22.♞xb1 ♟b5 23.♟b2! The start of a clever regrouping which increases the pressure on Black's game.

23...a5 24.♞d2 ♞d7 25.♟d1 ♞c6 26.♞c3 ♞a7 27.♟f2 a4 28.♟g4 ♟d3 29.♞b2 ♟c4 Black has dangled the carrot for too long: White had seen further.

30.♟xg7! ♟xf4 31.♞b8+! 31...♟xb8 32.♟h6# , 31...♟f7 32.♞f6#.

1-0

Illustrated London News, 12th January 1856

Four years later, Harrwitz preferred 2...d4 which proved successful after 3.d3 c5 4.e4

e6 5.♙e2 ♘c6 6.♘f3 a6 7.a3 ♙d6 8.0-0 ♘h6 9.♙d2 0-0 10.h3 ♘f7, but Laroche's seventh move was a positional mistake, as it takes away a good square for White's queen's knight, which was still on b1 at the end of the game.

Further down the road Pollock tried 2.c4

William Henry Krause Pollock - James Moore Hanham

New York 1892

1.f4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.e3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 d4 This is playing White's game; 4...c5 is better.

5.exd4 ♗xd4 6.♘f3 ♗xf4? Snaffling the f pawn was not a wise decision; 6...♗d8 was correct.

7.d4 ♗g4 8.♙d3 ♙e7 8...♗xg2 does not appeal! Rev Macdonnell advocated 8...♗h5 or 8...♙d6.

9.♙f2! 9.0-0 ♘c6 10.♙e3 is met by 10...e5.

9...♘h5 10.♘e2 f5 10...♘f6 11.h3 ♗h5 12.♙d2 Pollock: Black's queen is not escaping.

11.h3 ♗g6 12.g4 ♗f6 Black can't play 12...♘f6?? because of 13.♘e5, so he is already lost.

13.gxh5 0-0 14.♙g5 ♗f7 15.♙xe7 ♗xe7 16.♗d2 ♘c6 17.♖ag1 ♙d7 18.h6 g6 19.h4 e5 This helps Black avoid getting mated, but opening the position makes it easy for Pollock.

20.dxe5 ♘xe5 21.♘xe5 ♗xe5 22.♗c3 ♗e7 23.c5 ♙e6 24.♘f4 ♖f6 25.♘xe6 ♖xe6 26.♙c4 ♗xc5+ 27.♙f1

1-0

Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News,
30th April 1892

6245 This variation can also arise from other move orders.

Relja Krstic - Josip Pete

Yugoslavia 1957

1.c4 ♘f6 2.f4 d5 3.cxd5 ♘xd5 4.g3 Not as much fun as 4.e4, but by no means toothless.

4...♘c6 4...c5 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.♙g2 e6 7.0-0 ♙e7 8.♘c3 Krstic - Smederevac, Portoroz 1957.

5.♘f3 ♙g4 6.♙g2 ♙xf3 7.♙xf3 e5 8.fxe5 ♘xe5 9.♙g2 ♗d7 10.♘c3 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 c6 12.0-0 h5? This always appeals when White lacks a knight on f3, but in this case it is way too ambitious.

13.d4 ♘g6 14.♗b3 h4 15.♖b1 ♖b8 16.♖xf7! 1-0 16...♗xf7 17.♙xc6+! wins Black's queen, while 16...♗d6 is met by 17.♙a3! ♗xa3 18.♗e6+ ♘e7 19.♙xc6+!

Montreal Gazette, 30th August 1958

6246 Black has other options at move 1, but be warned, players of 1...e5, the From Gambit, must be prepared for 2.e4, transposing to a King's Gambit. Black can imitate White's set-up with 1...f5, but then White can try 2.e4 fxe4 3.d3 exd3 4.♙xd3 which led to a speedy debacle in Bird - Gelbfuhs Vienna 1873. Black lost in 15 moves after 4...♘f6 5.♘f3 e6 6.♘g5 g6 7.h4.

Endgame Studies

SYNTHETIC STUDIES:

FIND THE POSITION BASED ON THE SOLUTION!

For your Christmas present - your Christmas challenge - I am going to do the opposite of what I usually do in this column.

Instead of giving you the diagrams and asking you to find the moves, I am giving you the moves and asking you to find the diagrams. In other words, I give you the full solution of each study, and your task is to reconstruct the starting position of the study!

This is sometimes done with chess problems: in a 'synthetic problem' - say a three-mover - you are given the key move, the threat, Black's defences, and White's reply to each black defence; the challenge is to find the starting position. In our 'synthetic studies', I'll give you the composer's solution line; I won't give you any of the sidelines, though.

Some parts of the position will be obvious. For example, if the first move were 1.f4 you would immediately know that there was a pawn on either f2 or f3. If it were 1.0-0, the king and king's rook positions would be trivial. Captures help too. On the other hand, if the first move were 1.♖d8, you would have a lot of options for the queen's position.

All these studies are sound; White's moves are unique (meaning they are the only ones that achieve the stipulation). Remember that there might be pieces that never move in the solution. There might be pieces that are inactive and are only present to prevent alternative solutions - 'cook-stoppers'. Saying the study is sound doesn't imply that the composer's starting position is the only one consistent with the solution moves, so it's possible your answer might be slightly different from the position I give in the solution section and still be valid.

As a simple example of how to solve synthetics, suppose the solution was "1.♔g7 ♖b6 2.♖f6 h4 3.♔e5 ♜xc6 4.♔f4 and draws", then you know Black has a pawn on h5, and there is probably very little material on the board, but White has a piece on c6. The white king could have started on any of eight squares, but h8 looks like a good candidate. Where was the black king? Well, if the c6 piece was a pawn, then the black king probably started on a7 or a6. You can't be sure yet that there weren't any other pieces on the board, but composers strive for economy, so it's reasonable to try with just those four and see if the resulting study is sound. Suppose the black king started on a7, then White loses, because Black's king can, when necessary, go to b8 and c8. So, you've fixed three of the pieces and only need to check if the study works with the white king on any other starting square than h8. If it started on h7, then both 1.♔g7 and 1.♔g6 would work, so the study would have a major dual. As it happens, in the solution line there is a dual (4.♔f4 or 4.♔e4), so if this weren't just an example, I would have chosen 3...h3 4.♔d6 as the solution line. I expect you recognise the resulting position; it's Réti's classic 1921 study which first appeared in the *Deutschösterreichische TagesZeitung*. Even if you recognised the study from the solution moves, you may well not have been confident about the position of the black king, so still may have had some sleuthing to do.

by Ian Watson; ian@irwatson.uk

Here are your tasks (possibly in increasing order of difficulty, but I'm not sure because I obviously haven't had to do them myself!)

- A)** "1.b6+ ♖b8 2.h4 a5 3.h5 a4 4.h6 a3 5.h7 a2 6.h8 ♖ a1 ♖ 7.♗g8 ♖a2 8.♗e8 ♖a4 9.♗e5+ ♖a8 10.♗h8 and wins".
- B)** "1.♖a3+ ♖e2 2.♖c2+ ♖d1 3.♖h2 ♖d4 4.♖a1+ ♖xa1 5.♖h1+ and wins".
- C)** "1.♖h3+ ♖g7 2.♖g3+ ♖h6 3.♖d3 ♖f3+ 4.♖a7 d1 ♖ 5.♖xd6+ ♖xd6 stalemate".
- D)** "1.♖f6 ♖h6 2.d6 ♗e8+ 3.♖xe8 e3 4.d7 e2 5.d8 ♗ e1 ♗ 6.♗c6 any 7.♗e7 any 8.♗g8 mate".

Happy Christmas synthesising!



The solutions are on page 766.

Openings

for Amateurs By Pete Tamburro; ptamburro@aol.com

THE SYMMETRY TRAP



**SYMMETRY IS A DANGEROUS GAME
BECAUSE YOU ARE ALWAYS
ONE MOVE BEHIND**

When we first start out in chess, an early lesson is 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3. ♘xe5 ♘xe4 4.♙e2 ♙e7 (4...♘f6 5.♘c6+) 5.♙xe4 d6 6.d4 dxe5 7.dxe5 - and you're a pawn down as Black trying to keep the position symmetrical. Symmetry is a dangerous game because you are always one move behind.

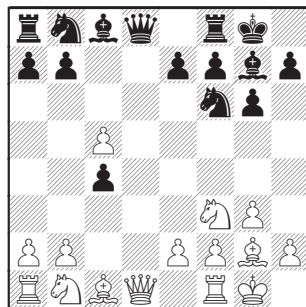
In our game today symmetrical positions occur on move 8 and move 14 and might very well lull two amateur players to agree to a draw. After all, the position is "equal".

Way back in 1947, Sammy Reshevsky gave a chess lesson on what White can do with a symmetrical position. Take a look.

Samuel Reshevsky - Gideon Stahlberg

Radio Match NY v. Argentina (3), 1947

1.♘f3 d5 2.g3 ♘f6 3.♙g2 g6 4.d4 ♙g7
5.0-0 0-0 6.c4 c5 7.dxc5 dxc4



In a roundabout way, we have arrived at our symmetrical position. At this point a spectator might have concluded that Reshevsky had respect for the great Gideon Stahlberg. Radio matches taking longer could also be a motivating factor. However, Reshevsky goes for a winning try.

8. ♖c2!? If 8. ♖a3 c3 9. ♖b5 ♖a6 10. ♖xc3 ♖xc5 11. ♗e3 ♖ce4 12. ♗d4 ♖xc3 13. ♗xc3 ♗e6 14. ♗a4 ♗d5 15. ♖ac1 there are a good many ways for the game to go. What White picks has a little edge to it.

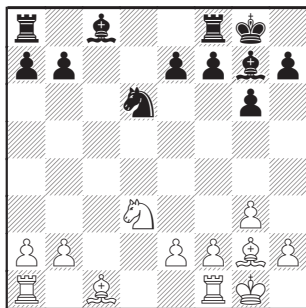
8... ♗d5! Seemingly nailing down the draw.

9. ♖a3 ♗xc5 10. ♗xc4 ♗xc4 11. ♖xc4 ♖c6 12. ♖ce5 And Reshevsky seems to be cooperating!

12... ♖xe5 13. ♖xe5 ♖e8?! Stahlberg, perhaps convinced of where this is headed, gets a little lazy here. Why not just be active in attaining a draw with 13... ♖d8 14. ♗g5 ♖d5 15. ♖fd1 ♗e6 16. ♖d3 ♖ac8

14. ♖d3 Sammy could have been sharper with 14. f4 ♖d6 15. ♗e3, but he probably had a more solid approach in mind.

14... ♖d6



And here we are again! Think about it. If you were White at a tournament, and your opponent played ♖d6 and looked up and said, "draw?" in a certain obvious tone, what are the odds you would take it?

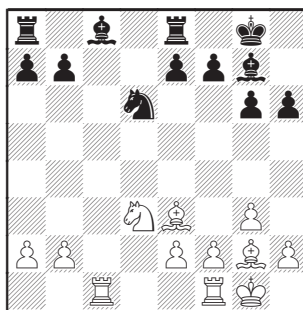
15. ♗g5! So, what do you do as White when your opening has resulted in symmetry? Reshevsky's answer is to make a threat. It's not a devastating threat. It just requires Black to make a response: ♖f5; e6; ♗f6; ♖e8, ♖c4. Thinking in general terms for future application, you present several choices to your opponent. He may pick

the right one out of many or he may pick a second-best one, perhaps to be followed by another second-best one. Suddenly, the altering of the symmetry becomes dangerous for the second player if he's not precise. At amateur levels, this happens not infrequently. Here, Stahlberg picks the precise response, but Reshevsky is not done posing challenges.

15... ♖e8 Let's take a look at what might happen if a player decided to counter the threat with a threat of their own: 15... ♖c4 16. ♖ad1 ♖xb2 17. ♖xb2 ♗xb2 18. ♗xe7 ♖e8 19. ♗c5 ♗g4 20. ♗xb7 ♗xe2 21. ♖b1 ♗xf1 22. ♗xf1 ♗e5 23. ♗xa8 ♖xa8 24. ♖b7 and with material even, White has his rook on the seventh and a dark-squared bishop capable of hitting the weak squares around the black king, while Black's bishop can't do that. Also the black rook is tied to the a-pawn's defence. It's not a mating attack, but it's definitely some substantial pressure.

16. ♖ac1 Of course, threaten to occupy the 7th rank. Doubling on the file is not a threat, though, as Black can offer to exchange rooks on c8.

16... h6 17. ♗e3



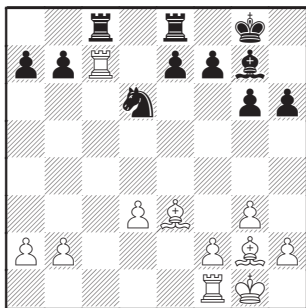
At this point, it's good to notice the two white bishops raking the black queenside pawns. Again, it's pressure, and Black has to deal carefully with it. Reshevsky also makes the most out of having occupied the c-file with his rook. Both these factors loom large in what is to come.

17...♙f5!? Stahlberg chooses a quite reasonable move. He gets his last minor piece out and threatens to exchange to create an isolated d3 pawn. He had two other reasonable options: 17...a5; 17...♙g4.

18.♖c7! The rook's ability to get to the open file first and thus occupy the 7th rank is the initiative that comes from the player who has the move to break the symmetry.

18...♙xd3!? Better was 18...♙g4 19.♖fc1 ♙xe2 20.♟f4 ♙g4 21.h3 ♙c8. Instead, Stahlberg makes another "reasonable" move. He creates an isolated pawn. However, he underestimates White's slight initiative.

19.exd3 ♖ac8??



A serious positional error because what may have worked before on c8 may not work now. A better try was 19...♙xb2 20.♖b1 ♙f6 21.♙xb7 ♟xb7 22.♖xb7 a5 23.♙xh6 ♖ed8 24.♙e3 ♖xd3 25.a4 ♖a3 26.♖c4 ♟f8 27.♙c5 ♖a2 28.♟g2± and White is a bit more active and may even, down the road, end up with a passed h-pawn. Black's a-pawn is more vulnerable because of these better rook placements by White.

20.♖fc1! ♖xc7 Remember the note about the potential of the bishops on move 17? Look at this possibility: 20...♙xb2 21.♖xc8 ♟xc8 22.♖b1 ♙e5 23.♙xb7 ♟d6 24.♙xa7± The outside passed pawn will cause all sorts of troubles for Black.

21.♖xc7 And, just like that, there is really very little Black can do.

21...♙xb2 22.♙xb7 ♙f6 If 22...♟b5 23.♖c4 ♖b8 24.♙a6 ♙e5 25.♙xb5 ♖xb5 26.♙xh6±.

23.♙c6 ♖b8 24.♙xa7 ♖b1+ 25.♟g2 ♖a1 26.a4 White is ready to escort the pawn all the way down to its coronation.

26...♟f5 27.♙b6 ♙d4 28.a5 ♙c3 29.♖a7 ♟d4 30.♙e4 ♟b3 If 30...♟b5 31.♖xe7 ♙xa5 32.♙xa5 ♖xa5 33.♖e5+-

31.a6 ♙d4 32.♙xd4 ♟xd4 33.♖d7 f5 34.♙d5+ Black resigns.

1-0

A fine example of Reshevsky's positional skills. There were a few critics back then who criticised Sammy for playing boring chess. What he played was a form of winning chess involving the accumulation of small advantages.

In this game his use of having the move in a symmetrical position was utilised as well as could be expected. He presented problems involving many choices to his opponent, which were not handled as precisely as possible. He also seized the c-file and seventh rank for his rook and positioned his bishops so they attacked the queenside pawns. It ended up creating a passed pawn. His game was won on move 21.

The method he used was just as valid as a Tal or Shirov attack where an aggressive assault on their opponents' king might win against less than accurate defence. Both methods are valid. I would recommend you playing through positional players like Rubinstein or Capablanca rather than just looking at the geniuses of sharp attacking play. It will make you a more complete player.

SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS

(See page 745)

This month's problems

Our last selection of originals for consideration by our judge, Hans Gruber, in the 2022-23 BCM composing tourney. Paul Michelet's eleven-mover may not be as daunting a solving task as you might think, though Yuri's helpmate probably does live up to its daunting appearance! But never fear, do read on (after having a go at solving some of these problems, if you're up for it), as there are one or two points arising from this month's problems that are interesting to consider.

A fly in the ointment - or not?

Paul writes: "1.♔h6! ♘g4 2.♖e3+ ♘h4/♘h3 3.♙f5 (+) and 4.♖g2 with a model mate. This is nice, but the star variation is, after 1.♔h6!, 1...f6 2.d3! ♘g4 3.♙g2 ♘xf5 4.♙h3, which is an ideal model mate." Very nice indeed, and I especially like the way that the white knight plays a vital part in the play after 1...♘g4 but is cannon fodder after 1...f6. However, the computer, annoyingly, points out that if Black meets 1.♔h6 ♘g4 2.♖e3+ with 2...♘3 (rather than 2...♘h4) there is an alternative line that also works: 3.♙h5!, threatening 4.♙g2+ and 4.♙f5#. It would be very good to eliminate this dual, but it appears that it isn't possible to do so without sacrificing some of the charming play. (There's a setting with the black pawn at f6 instead of f7, and only one line of play, in which the move ♘x♖f5 occurs - but it's unappealing to have a white knight on the board that is captured in the *only* line of play.) Paul points out that in problem solutions there's a presumption that Black plays his best defence, and on this basis we can say that 2...♘h4 is a better move than 2...♘h3, to some extent casting a veil over the other possibility allowed by 2...♘h3. What do you think?

An unusual Indian...

...is how Paul characterizes his second problem. If you're in any doubt about the definition of the Indian theme you'll find it exemplified in the play - 1.♙h2 f6 2.♘g3 (Indian) ♘e5 3.♘g4+ ♘d5 4.♙g1, and now the white bishop makes its lugubrious zigzag route all the way to the south west corner, culminating in 9.♙b2 ♘d5 10.♙a1! ♘e5 11.c4#. Paul's problems often feature such systematic manoeuvres, which is why the

difficulty of the problem is not commensurate with its length - though if you were stumped by this one you may beg leave to differ!

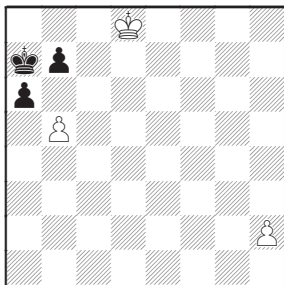
Back to helpmates - more light relief?

A creature of habit, I've saved a few keystrokes by using the same heading as for the two helpmates we had in the last issue. And probably "light" is apt for Stanislav's nice ultra-miniature - the two collaborative lines of play (Black moves first) are 1.♔f1 ♘d3 2.♙e1 ♙d2+ 3.♘d1 ♖f2# and 1.♔h3 ♘f5 2.♘h4 ♙g5+ 3.♙h5 ♖g3#.

I said that our last helpmate would be found difficult, but I think you will find the solutions attractive. (Congratulations if you found them yourself!) The lines of play are 1.♖e2 ♙b3 2.♘xd2+ ♘a2 3.♙e1 ♙xd5 4.♘d1 ♘b1 5.d2 ♙b3# and 1.♖4e6 ♙xf3 2.♙e2 ♙xh5 3.♙g4 ♙e8 4.♘e2 ♙a4 5.♘f3 ♙d1#. (It's well worth studying why the sequences of these moves are absolutely forced). You'll have noted that this problem is "after C.J.Feather" (one of my predecessors as editor of Problem World). This is because in 2002 my predecessor published a problem which was identical apart from placing the f8 knight at c5. Now the 1.♖e2 solution won't work and we have just one solution, 1.♖4e6 etc... I strongly suspect that Chris Feather was aware of the 1.♖e2 possibility but judged that it would be better for the 1.♖4e6 solution to stand alone. There is an interesting debate (with no definitive answer) to be had here - is it sometimes the case that 'more is less' - or is it the case that the second solution, suppressed by Chris Feather, is so ingenious that it too deserves to see the light of day? Answers on a postcard please, or preferably to my email address!

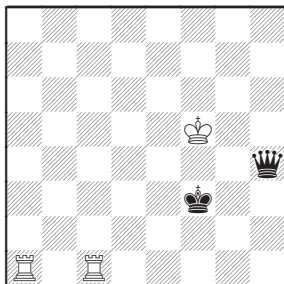
SOLUTIONS TO ENDGAMES

A)



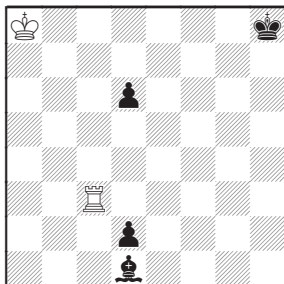
This is another classic; it's Joseph's 1921 study in the enhanced version that appeared in *Ceskoslovenska Republika* in 1923. The position of the white king can be inferred from the later play, notably from the fact that 6.h8♖ isn't check.

B)



H. Lommer, *Rochester, Chatham & Gillingham Journal*, 1946. Here the main difficulties are in correctly positioning the white king and black queen, but 3.♖h2 helps a lot. The databases show that the white rooks can start on various other squares on the a- and c-files; Lommer would have known that, and probably opted for a1 and c1 as the most aesthetic choices.

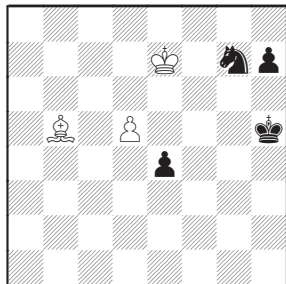
C)



V. & M. Platov, *Deutsche Schachzeitung*, 1907. It's clear that Black is about to promote, and presumably the bishop starts on d1 (otherwise Black could promote without moving that bishop). The white king is on a white square, which can't be b7 as then it could go on move four to c7 and take the black pawn. Black is trying to get his king down the board, so it needs to start on the eighth. Where does the white rook start? The databases show that most squares on the third rank are okay, so you get your points if you chose any of a3, b3, c3, e3, f3, or g3.

(See page 760)

D)

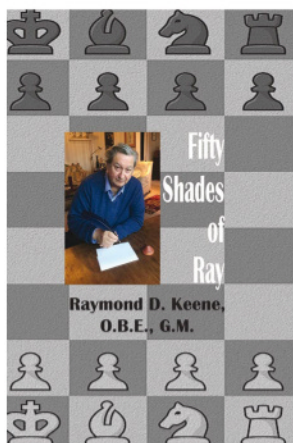


E. Pogosyants, *Shakhmatnia Moskva*, 1964. White is clearly trapping the black king, so a black pawn on h7 is required. That implies that the black king starts on h5. Apart from that h-pawn, it's reasonable to hypothesise that the only pieces on the board are the ones that move. The d- and e-pawns' positions are trivial. Putting the knight on g7 is now easy. That compels the white king to be on e7 not e5 - if it were on the latter White would just push his d-pawn. The bishop is on a4/b5/c6/d7, but unless it's on b5 Black will be able to push his e-pawn. So, I guess that the composer's position is forced, but I haven't tested all the very many variants.

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