

POINT OF VIEW

By Raymond Boger

First of all; I must apologize for the magazine being a little bit late due to my post-summer vacation this year, but better late than never.

It's been difficult coming up with material for this issue due to very few contributions. I've managed to dig up some stories myself and had them translated from different languages. I am certain that there are many good stories "out there", in various languages, waiting to be shared with the rest of the CC-community. Bring them to me!

Even though there were few contributions, I must thank those of you who took the time to contribute to this number of ICCF AMICI, in particular Eric Ruch, who I've written a few words about. Nor must I forget to thank my Norwegian friends and Franklin!

There will be no President's Column this time. No surprise, since there currently is no President... I sent e-mails to three different ICCF officials, in which I asked whether they could contribute to the Magazine, but I didn't get any response... Shame on you... you know who you are.

ICCF is going into exciting times. Hits on our web-server keep setting new records, and soon it is time for the ICCF Congress in Argentina. I agree with Tim Harding – Give your vote to Med Samraoui. (I would if I had one!) I've personally met Med twice, and I have had the honour of beating him in once. I know him as a true gentleman.

Correspondence Chess Reminiscence (6)

By Eric RUCH

The John G. White Chess and Checkers Collections Fine Arts & Special Collections of the Cleveland Public Library.

I had recently the opportunity to spend some days in Cleveland, Ohio. Everyone interested in Chess history, and probably most of the chess players around the world know that Cleveland hosts the most wonderful chess library in the world! and of course, I spent there a couple of days, searching for new elements that will help us to better understand the history of correspondence chess.

The John G. White Collection of Folklore, Orientalia, and Chess at the Cleveland Public Library is the largest and most comprehensive chess library in the World. The John G. White Collection of Chess and Checkers was officially established in 1928, when White bequeathed his famous chess collections to the Cleveland Public Library. John G. White (1845 –1928) signed his last will and testament on May 11, 1905 and attached a codicil on February 9, 1928, the year he died. Through his will he donated his personal library to the Cleveland Public Library and established the John G. White Trust Fund. The income from the Trust Funds was to be used for the acquisition of new materials. He stipulated that his chess and checkers collections was to be kept together:

“ keeping with all articles and books belonging hereto, even although the more important contents of such books might indicate a place elsewhere. A list of this collection is formed by the entries in my interleaved copy of the van der Linde's Jahrtausend, which are marked with a red star or a dagger... Each edition or separate state of a book or pamphlet is to be acquired”

He also charged the trustees:

“ to complete the chess collection by acquiring books, pamphlets, lithographs, etching, engravings, etc. relating in whole or part to chess and checkers, which I have not been able to obtain”



A portrait of John G. White in the reading room.

The list of John G. White effects transferred from his home to the library included 11 892 chess and checkers books, pamphlet and single number of periodicals, 300 loose leaves of manuscript, 428 chessmen, 86 chess pictures and 11 boxes of newspapers. The collection was evaluated by Thomas J Holmes, librarian of the W.C. Mather Library and appraised the collection to \$ 300 000. Today the collection includes more than 70 000 books and manuscripts of incalculable value.

Unfortunately, you cannot see all the fabulous collection, since the stacks are closes for security reasons. But all the member of the library are very helpful and will bring you in the reading room all the material that you are locking for! You can probably find there many unique items found no where else in the world.



A view of the reading room.

If you have a chance to stay some hours in Cleveland, have a look at the John G. White Library!



The Public Library building in Cleveland.



The entry of the John G. White exhibition corridor.

It would not be wise to conclude this article, without presenting to you a chess game. In the last issue of the ICCF Amici magazine, I have presented an interesting correspondence game played on the radio, between M. Jeanton – Lamarche and the listeners of Radio Limoges, in 1949.

Meanwhile I have found another correspondence game played on the radio by two strong OTB masters, M. Alexander and Bernstein. The initiative of this game is due to M. Leca, director of the French section of the BBC. The game was played between the 15 February 1946 and the 20 April 1946, and a move was given every day on the BBC channel. One of the opponent gave a short analysis of the game every Saturday on the radio.

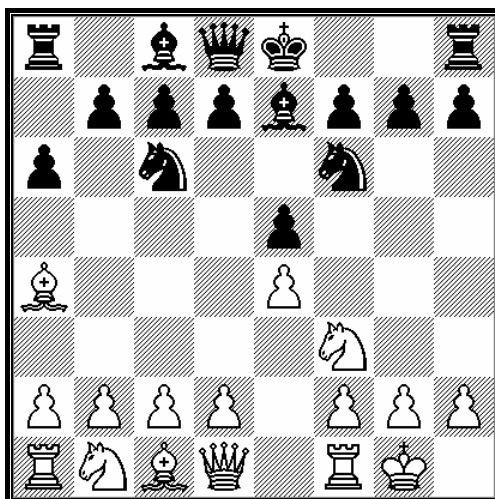
Alexander (1909 – 1974) was one of the major English chess player in the mid of the last century. The same year, in 1946, he achieved a very convincing win against Botvinnik in the radio match Great – Britain against USSR.

Bernstein (1882 – 1960) was also a very strong player, second only to Chigorine in the 1903 Russian OTB championship before he settled in France in 1917.

The game has been published in l' *Echiquier de Paris* in 1946 (pages 44 to 46) with the annotations of Dr. Bernstein.

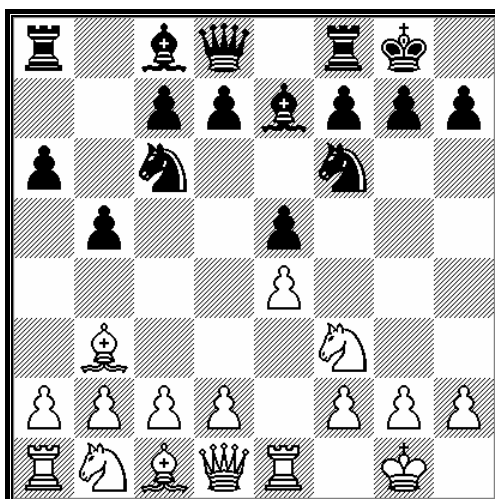
Conel Hugh O'Donel Alexander – Dr Ossip Samoilovich Bernstein
corr (radio) 15/02/1946 – 20/04/1946
Ruy Lopez C88
Annotation by Dr. Bernstein

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7



The most recent variation is 5...♖xe4 6.d4 b5 7.♗b3 d5 8.dxe5 ♗c6 9.c3 ♗c5 10.♖bd2 0-0 11.♗c2 ♖xf2 12.♗xf2 f6 Black will have a Rook and a pawn for Bishop and Knight and a slight attack. It is not yet easy to give a definite answer about the value of this line of play. My impression is that White has the better prospects.

6.♗e1 b5 7.♗b3 0-0



This move gives Black more possibilities than 7...d6 as for instance: 7...0-0 8.c3 d5 9.exd5 ♖xd5 10.♖xe5 ♖xe5 11.♗xe5 ♖f6 (or 11...c6) with the attack in compensation of the sacrificed pawn.

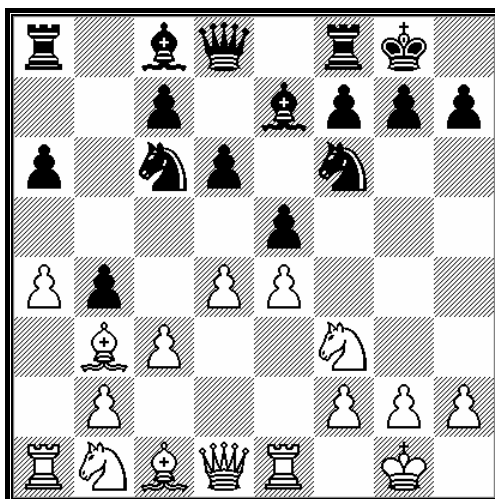
8.a4 b4

Better than 8...♗b8

9.d4 d6

The best move After 9...exd4 10.c5 would be difficult to meet.;
If 9...♖xd4 White could probably play 10.♗xf7+ ♗xf7 11.♖xc5 with a strong attack.

10.c3



White continues to play as if the moves 8.a4 b4 have not been played, and this slight detail is the main cause of their loss. After 10...bxc3 and the following text moves, the squares b3 and b4, and the pawn a4 become very weak. The long dark diagonal will eventually open to the Black Bishop and White has no compensation at all. 10.♔d5 would lead nowhere, due to 10...♙b7 followed by 11.dxc5 ♖xd5 It seems that 10.h3 was preferable, leaving Black with a weak pawn at b4 and the need to find a suitable square for the light square Bishop. Black could have played 10...♖xd4 11.♗xd4 exd4 12.♙xd4 c5 13.♙d3 ♙b7 14.— d5 but the game is now more or less equal.

10...bxc3 11.bxc3 ♙g4 12.♙e3 exd4

If 12...♗xc4 13.♙d5 ♙d7 14.dxc5 and White is better.

Note the curious variation 14...♗c5 15.♙xc5 dxc5 16.h3 ♙xf3?? 17.♙xf7+ winning Black Queen.

13.cxd4

White misses the last chance to maintain equality. After the text move, the white central pawns become too weak. They should have played 13.♙xd4

13...d5 14.exd5

This move had to be played due to the weakness of the squares c3 and b4.

In the standard line (without the moves 8.a4 b4), White could now play e5, and if Black replies ♗e4, White could play ♗c3, threatening the Knight at e4 and the pawn at d5. Black would have no other choice than the exchange of the Knights, that would increase the strength of white central pawns.

This line is now impossible, due to the missing pawn at b2.

On the other hand 14.e5 ♗e4 15.♗bd2 would be bad due to 15...♙b4

14...♗xd5 15.♙c2

White has no good move to play. If 15.♗bd2 ♙b4

15...♗db4

This move maintains the central tension, which favors Black, that has a better development of the pieces - White Rook at a1 and Knight b1 are out of the play.

15...♙xf3 is bad due to 16.♙xc6

15...♗xc3 16.♙xc6 ♗f5 is better, but Black would have no more than an equal game.

16.♙e4 ♙d7

16...♙c8 would be better in some variations, but White could have continued with 17.♙d1 and save the d pawn and maintain an equal game.

After 16...♙d7 the move 17.♙d1 would be bad due to 17...♙f5 18.♙f4 ♙c2 19.♙xc2 ♗xc2 20.♙a2 ♗6b4 21.♙b2 ♙xa4 and Black has won a pawn, while maintaining a strong attack on the queen side.

17.d5 ♖a5 18.♙d1

If 18.♗c5 ♗f5 19.♗xg4 ♗xg4 (19...♗xc5 would be bad due to 20.♙d2) 20.♗xg4 ♗xb3 21.♞a3 ♗c2 and Black wins the exchange and the game.

18...♙f5 19.♗e5

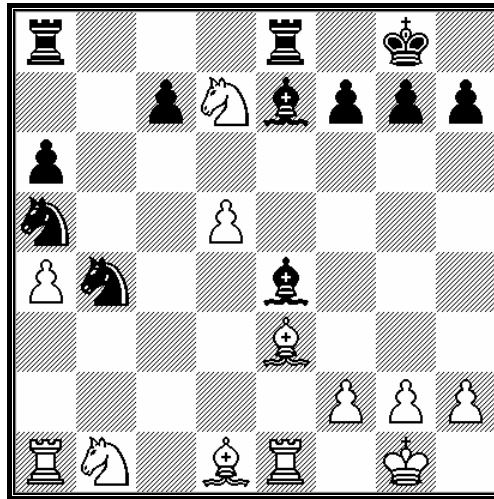
The only move. If 19.♗d4 ♗d3 wins

19...♙xe4

The best reply. If 19...♗c8 White seems to be hopeless after 20.♗d4 ♞d8 21.♗c3 c5 22.♗d2 f6 23.♗f3 ♗c4 24.♗c2 ♙d3

In fact, White can save the game with 23.g4 Black would win a pawn, but it would be difficult, if not almost impossible to win the game, due to the bad position of the Black pieces.

20.♗xd7 ♞fe8!!



Black Rook threatens the opposing rook through the three Bishops!

The position of the Knight at d7 has become difficult and White cannot avoid anymore some loss of material. The pawn d5 is lost and Black can win a second pawn after ...♙f5 followed by ...♙f6. Again the long dark diagonal !

21.♙b6

This is not the best move, and loses very quickly. White had probably overlooked the very strong 22nd move of Black.

21.♙d2 was better. Black would have replied 21...♙d6 with the threat ...♙f5.(A strange variation would occur after 21...♙f5 22.♞xe7 ♞xe7 23.♙xb4 ♞xd7 24.♙xa5 ♞xd5 25.♙f3 ♞ad8 26.♙xd5 ♞xd5 27.♙d2 f6 and Black wins the piece back. It would however be difficult to win the game, due to the opposite color Bishops.

21...cxb6 22.♞xe4 f5!

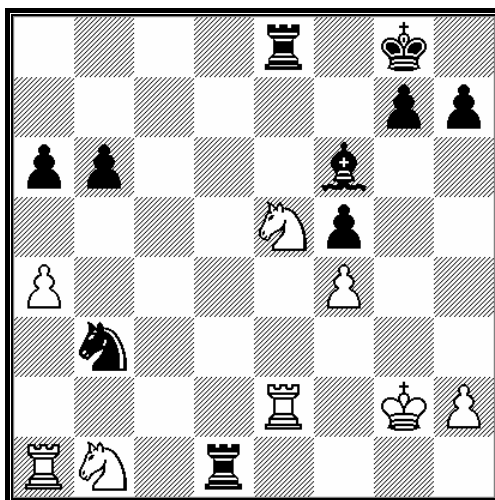
Otherwise, White could protect the Knight with ♙g4.

23.♞e2

23.♞c6 was a little better, but the outcome of the game would have been the same 23...♞ad8 24.♗e5 (24.♗xb6? ♙f6 wins at once.) 24...♙f6 25.♞xc8+ ♞xc8 26.f4 and Black wins two pawns.

23...♞ad8 24.♗e5 ♙f6 25.f4 ♗xd5 26.g3 ♗xf4 27.gxf4 ♞xd1+ 28.♙g2 ♗b3 0-1

A very instructive game about the Ruy Lopez.



Adjudications.

By Ruth Ann Fay

The Tournament Rules Commission has spent its summer working on a document that we hope will be useful to all Tournament Directors, Arbiters, Tournament Organizers and hosts, and to the players. One of the juicy topics has been Adjudications.

Before I get into the topic, I think it might be useful to explain the ICCF rule making process. The appropriate committee discusses its proposals during the year and presents them to Congress. That sounds simple enough, but what has happened in the past, is that many of the committee members were not able to come to Congress. Congress then attempted to discuss (in multiple languages), shred, and rewrite before running out of time. The process was improved several years ago by changing the Sunday afternoon meeting into committee meetings. Everyone was assigned to a committee. In some cases, it was not the same one that he may have worked on during the year. Many delegates, especially new delegates, hadn't worked on any committee during the year. This change did improve the process as the Committee Chair, the Tournament Rules Commissioner, for example, could then present his report to Congress and have at least those delegates on the Sunday committee understand, discuss, and support the reasons for the proposals. This has helped, but not always avoided, the shredding, rewrites, and running out of time problems.

The World Tournament Director drafted "Arbiter Rules" several years ago. It was an extremely ambitious document filled with good ideas, but it has never made it out of Congress. The problem was that some of those ideas should have been handled by the Tournament Rules or the Playing Rules Committees, and some suggestions fell in the Statutes area that is under the President's Commission. The Tournament Rules Committee has redrafted what we hope will be the handbook that the Tournament Directors and Arbiters have needed. It has moved the suggested Rules to the appropriate Rules or Statutes areas.

One of those topics dealt with Adjudications. How to avoid them, how to handle them. ICCF tournaments in general do not have end dates. The USA and NAPZ do use end dates. This has the advantage of the TD being able to say, I don't care how much time you have left, you have to finish the games

by xx/xx/xx, Then we tell the players that “Max the Axe” is the Adjudicator. But, when it comes down to determining winners and titles, though, we extend the date. We haven’t been able to avoid all adjudications.

One problem is that some players think they have a win somewhere (and sometimes they do) but they cannot find it. So they hang on in the hopes that some GM Adjudicator will find it for them. Others think they are winning and do not realize that they are dead lost and stalling until they try to write the analysis to support their claim of a win. It has put a burden on Adjudicators. They are sometimes faced with analysis that shows the player hasn’t a clue that there is a win, maybe even a forced win, 30 moves away. There have been cases where the player hasn’t even submitted analysis, he’s just hoped that the Adjudicator would find the win that he’s given up trying to find. Isn’t having some GM win the game for you just to good to be true? Yes, we think so.

This year’s attempt to solve the Adjudication problem will be along the lines of “the default decision is a draw.” No analysis or poor analysis means no win. That’s all the teaser you get for now. We all have to wait for Congress to vote.

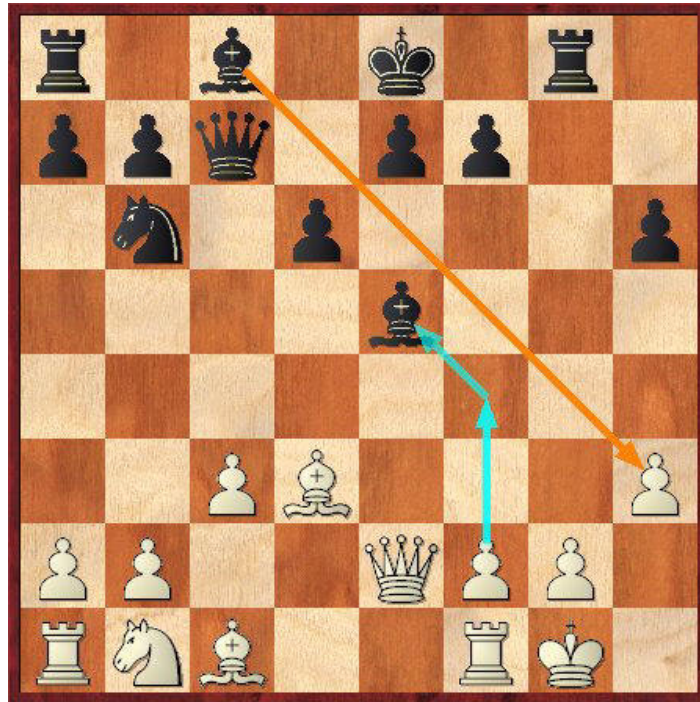
Ruth Ann Fay
NAPZ Director

Dobrei,Gheorghe (ROM) (2357) - Hradecky,Simon (AUT) (2200)

WC27SF10 ICCF Email, 01.12.2003

B22: Sicilian: 2 c3

1.e4 c5 2.c3 Nf6 3.e5 Nd5 4.Nf3 Nc6 5.Bc4 Nb6
6.Bb3 c4 7.Bc2 Qc7 8.Qe2 g5 9.h3 Bg7 10.0-0 Nxe5 11.Nxg5 h6
12.Nf3 d6 13.Nxe5 Bxe5 14.d4 cxd3 15.Bxd3 Rg8N



[15...Be6 16.Bb5+ Nd7 17.f4 Bf6 18.f5 Bd5 19.Rd1 Bc6
 20.Be3 0-0-0 21.Bxc6 Qxc6 22.Na3 a6 23.Qc4 Rdg8 24.Qxc6+ bxc6
 25.Nc4 Ne5 26.Nxe5 Bxe5 27.Rd2 f6 28.Rad1 Rg3 29.Re2 h5 30.c4
 Deschamp,G-Ingersol,H/IECG 2002/Telechess CBM 99/1/2-1/2 (53)]

16.Bh7??

A natural looking move, however the decisive mistake, loosing a valuable tempo to defend against the threat of Bxh3 and therefore loosing the wholegame

[>=16.Kh1 Be6 17.Na3 Qc8 18.Qh5 Nd7 19.Rg1 a6 20.Be3=]

16...Rg7-+ 17.Be4

[probably better is 17.Qd3]

17...Bxh3 18.Bxh6 Rg8 19.Na3

[more resistance and some counterplay promised 19.Re1 Bg4
 20.Bf3 Bxf3 21.Qxf3 Rg6 22.Be3 0-0-0 23.Nd2 Rdg8 24.Kf1 Rxc2-+]

19...d5 20.Bf3 Bh2+

all black forces already eye White's king, now the final attack launches.

21.Kh1] Bxg2+ 22.Bxg2] Rh8 23.Qb5+

[slightly better is 23.Nb5 Qe5 24.Qxe5 Bxe5 25.Kg1 Rxh6
26.f4 Bb8 27.Rad1 e6 28.f5 a6 29.Nd4 Bh2+-+]

23...Nd7 24.Rfd1 Rxh6 25.Rxd5 a6 26.Qe2 Ne5 27.Rad1?

trying to confuse the opponent? [much better is 27.Rd4 e6 28.Nc2 Ke7]

27...e6 28.R5d4?

enabling a beautiful final combination by Black [significantly better is
28.Rxe5 Bxe5+ 29.Kg1 Rh4 30.Qd3-+]

28...Ke7

Black needs both rooks at the king side for the final blow

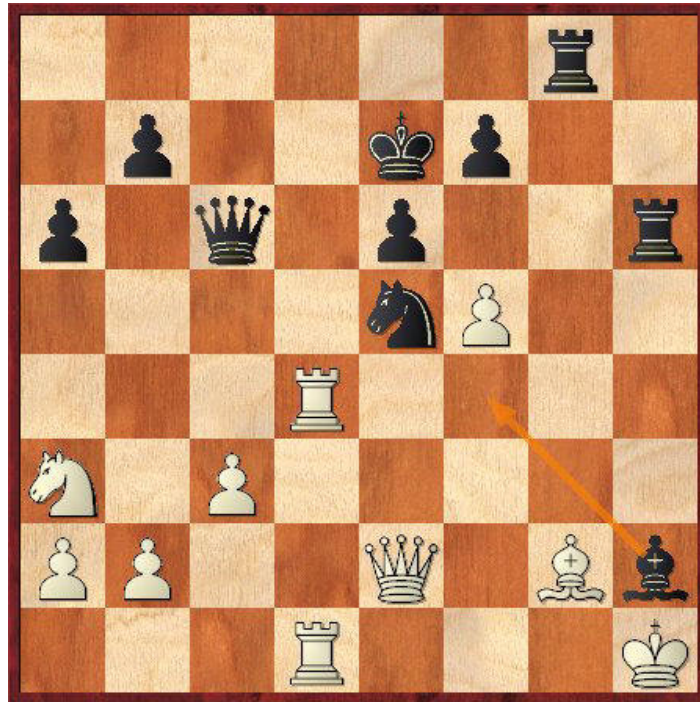
29.f4

[29.Nc2-+ a feasible alternative]

29...Rg8 30.f5

[30.fxe5? loses the Queen on top of all pain 30...Bxe5+ 31.Kg1 Bxd4+
32.Rxd4 Qh2+ 33.Kf1 Rxg2 34.Qxg2 Rf6+ 35.Ke2 Qxg2+ 36.Kd3]

30...Qc6!



this queen sacrifice, vary rare in correspondence chess of this level anyway, sends the strongest possible message to the opponent, that he's lost the game.

White promptly resigned. [30...Qc6 31.f6+ (31.Bxc6 Bf4+ 32.Qh2 Rxh2#)

31...Kxf6 32.Rf1+ Ke7 33.Nc2 Rg7-+ 34.a3 Qc8 35.Qe4 f5 36.Qh4+ Rxh4

37.Rxh4 Bg3 38.Rh3 Nd3 39.Nb4 Nf2+ 40.Rxf2 Bxf2 41.Nd3 Qe8 42.Rh6 Qa4

43.Nxf2 Qc2 44.Rh7 Rxh7+ 45.Kg1 Qc1+ 46.Nd1 Qxd1+ 47.Kf2 Qd2+ 48.Kf3 e5

49.b4 e4+ 50.Kg3 Rg7+ 51.Kh4 Qh6#]

0-1

Simon Hradecky

<http://www.nomissoft.com/chess>

What is Correspondence Chess?

By Morten Lilleøren

A good number of years with switching between correspondence(corr.) and over-the-board (OTB) chess have given me a certain amount of experience that I'd like to attempt to put into print. I'm choosing to do this in the form of some conceptual definitions where I'll try to clarify what corr. chess is and is not. These definitions are tentative, for the time being, and should therefore be seen as a starting-point for further discussion.

1. All forms of chess are played by the same rules, on the same board, and with the same number of pieces. This means that the same factors pop up everywhere – opening, middlegame, and endgame theory; tactics and strategy – the same evaluations and conclusions apply in all forms of chess. But that's the end of the unity.

2. I'm aware that there are large differences between blitz-, rapid-, and full-time chess. In my experience, the shorter the time available, the more important a role is played by nerves and skill/calculating ability (see below). All the same, I'll continue to refer to these forms collectively as OTB. But when I talk about OTB, I will mainly be thinking of clock-controlled chess with notation and a playing-time of several hours. And before we go further – by calculating ability I mean the ability to visualize positions and calculate variations, the ability to evaluate positions and find candidate moves.

3. There is one unessential and two essential differences between OTB and corr. chess.

4. To take the unimportant one first – in corr. chess one's opponent is not physically present. Nowadays this difference is, however, disappearing completely in certain arenas, e.g. as OTB is played more and more over the internet.

5. The two essential differences are the 'touched piece' rule and the available thinking-time. These have such great consequences that one can to a certain degree describe corr. and OTB chess as two different events or disciplines. They take place on the same arena, but are performed in different manners. The difference is not so great as that between a 100 and a 10,000 metres on a running-track, more like the difference between sprint and distance events in speed-skating. It is possible to be good in both types of events (Eric Heiden, Ids Postma / Ulf Andersson, Curt Hansen), but it is more likely that one is good in one type of event and passable in the other (Ådne Søndral, Bart Veldkamp), or good in one and either very poor or non-practising in the other (Shimuzu, Wotherspoon, Storelid, Bob de Jong).

6. The most important difference is the 'touched piece' rule. As it doesn't apply while analyzing a postal position one may make extremely detailed consequence-analyses. In later years this difference has been accentuated by the increasing use of computers. While OTB-players, regardless of their calculating abilities, must make decisions based on the existing position at the board and their more or less fallible mental calculations, the corr.player can eliminate this uncertainty. This difference is easily recognisable when preparing games for publishing: While one adds analysis to OTB games, detailing variations, points, and plusses, things one didn't see during the game, one has to do the opposite with postal games! To make a game readable one has to cut out huge amounts of analysis in variations that lay there only as a possibility and never became a reality.

7. Therefore - in OTB it is calculating ability that is the most important factor with regard to an individual's strength. 'Chess is 99% tactics', which seems to have been coined by Teichmann, is a somewhat imprecise formulation - it should have been 'Chess is 99% calculating ability'. **THIS DOES NOT APPLY IN CORR. CHESS!** You only need parts of this ability: Evaluation is still necessary, as is finding candidate moves, but the ability to visualize and calculate mentally is not needed.

8. Paradoxically, the possibility for extensive analysis means that tactics and forced series of moves have less importance in corr. chess than OTB. The time when one could beat one's opponent tactically are about to become history in postal chess. That tactical possibilities still arise in postal chess is due to totally different reasons than in OTB - while visualization and calculation are required in OTB, plenty of time (e.g. retirement) and a structured method, and in later years, enough computer skills to fully utilize software, are the important factors in postal chess. As the power of personal computers increases, the tactical possibilities will almost vanish - games will be decided because of long-term strategic choices - always based on extensive analysis of course, but these will be an aid to move choice, not the main criterion for move choice.

9. The most important weapon in a postal-player's playing-strength armoury is herefore the ability to evaluate positions, and the subsidiary ability to make (strategic) plans. This is, in contrast to visualization ability, a knowledge and theory-based ability. While chess-knowledge and understanding needn't necessarily lead to being a good OTB-player (e.g. if one lacks calculating ability), these are the abilities that differentiate between good and bad corr.players.

10. Knowledge is, as mentioned, the most important factor in corr.chess. Postal chess has therefore more in common with academic pursuits than OTB chess has. What type of knowledge is needed? Chess is a rational goal-based game - the effect decides the cause, the end justifies the means. Put another way, while we play move for move forwards in time, the game has to be understood **BACKWARDS**, based on the final position. It's the position after the move that decides whether the move is a good one. Therefore, the most important form of knowledge is that of the endgame. It is not possible to lay correct strategic plans without this knowledge. As fewer and fewer games are decided (by tactical means) in the middle-game, endgame knowledge will increase in importance. Even more so since chess software is not so good at evaluating non-trivial endgame positions. One has to have knowledge of often quite complex endgame theory to make the full point or to save the draw. This is the most important type of knowledge. Next comes the ability to evaluate middle-game positions and the methods of playing them. This has a lot to do with experience, but even this part of the game has been the subject of massive theoretical treatment.

This means that even the ability to evaluate middle-game positions has to be regarded as theoretical knowledge. The learning one has least need for is that of opening theory in the form of concrete variations. One should have a reasonably assorted library in the form of printed material, and, in these computerized times, updated databases of games to do research in.

A postal-player must know which types of middle-game positions come from which opening lines, together with a method of avoiding poor opening choices.

11. The conclusion is that if one wishes to be a good corr.player, one studies endgame theory, while also learning the art of evaluating middle-game positions (even verbally). If one has in addition a good method to avoid disadvantageous forced-move series, either manual (piece-moving procedures) or artificial (software), and a database of games, then one is fit for fight.

12. The second great difference between OTB and corr.chess is the clock. In e-mail chess one usually has 60 days for ten moves, while in OTB one usually has at best two hours for forty moves. This means that time has little or no importance in corr.chess. The effective use of time, which can be critically important in OTB, is unimportant in postal chess, as long as one can prioritize and set time aside for chess. While in OTB one makes uncertain decisions in a continuous stream, in postal chess one has time for research and reflection.

13. THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING IN A FIGHT SITUATION IS THEREFORE RADICALLY MODIFIED. While blitz for this author has great similarities with a boxing match (I lose all the time on KO), and OTB otherwise reminds me of football, where the game flows back and forth and first one team is leading, then the other, postal chess is nearer to being an academic pursuit, where one studies (types of position), does research, and disputes on whether one's position is defensible. The disputation here is not a verbal argument, but is made up of moves.

14. While OTB-players must have good nerves and the mental toughness to withstand the pressures of being in a fight situation for hours, these are qualities that are superfluous in a corr.player. Though an adrenalin-rush can sometimes occur, it doesn't affect the game. OTB is more 'macho' than postal, it's Sylvester Stallone versus Woody Allen. Other necessary qualities for an OTB-player are the ability to maintain coolness under pressure and the ability to maintain a high level of focus.

15. Corr.players, on the other hand, must have patience as their major characteristic - it can be months or even years before anything really happens in a game. One thing is that because of tactics losing their importance, the likelihood of any real action is far lower than in OTB, and should it happen, it is likely to occur far later in the game than in OTB. The other is that even if something HAS happened, it can be months or even years before one can cash in. It can be a long, long time between knowing what the result of the game will be and actually receiving the point.

16. The importance of results is therefore much less in corr.chess as opposed to OTB. Aggression and fighting spirit can even be negative factors, while patience, stability, self-discipline, and structured working methods over time are important.

17. CONCLUSIONS

- A. OTB and postal chess are different events within the same sporting 'arena'.
- B. The differences are so great that it can be a problem to be really good in both disciplines as some of the factors leading to success are also so different.
- C. The differences arise mainly from two circumstances - 1) the 'touched piece' rule in OTB, and 2) the enormously different rules concerning thinking time.
- D. These circumstances mean firstly that while OTB is primarily an ability-based pursuit, where the most important ability is that of calculation, corr.chess is a discipline based on knowledge, where it's important to know types of positions, and have the ability to use this knowledge to evaluate the positions that arise.
- E. The second difference is the conditions under which the games takes place: While the fighting aspects can be all-dominating in OTB-chess - and, as a consequence, demands good competitive nerves - this aspect is almost non-existing in corr.chess. Postal-players, on the other hand, must have other qualities, not needed in OTB, namely patience (stamina), and structure (and plenty of time

Translated by Chris Hinman and Morten Lilleøren.

ICCF Server Tutorial

by Franklin Campbell

Introduction

The **ICCF Tutorial** is a guide to using the **ICCF Chess Webservice**. Since I posted this tutorial it has been by far the most popular feature at my web site **The Campbell Report** with approximately 1500 people visiting already. Why did I create this tutorial, and why is it popular? Here is a description of what the tutorial is and how it came into existence.

Why was the tutorial created?

Some of the readers may not be familiar with the ICCF server. It is a fantastic way to play correspondence chess. When you play cc via the ICCF server you simply go to the webserver web site, log in with your ICCF ID# and password, and you can check all your server games with a few clicks of the mouse. The server tells you which games are waiting for moves, keeps track of the time used, automatically generates crosstables for the events, registers wins/losses/draws immediately (no need to report to the TD), and does all your bookkeeping. You don't need to send your opponent an email or postcard (no writing required), you don't need to be concerned with notation errors, you won't mistakenly make a move in one game meant to be made in another, etc., etc. There are all sorts of attractions to playing on the server. Personally, I believe in the very near future that email chess will

practically disappear as people with Internet connections will use the webserver instead of using the much more cumbersome email.

I have been active working with the ICCF-U.S. office. First I started keeping crosstables of USA events at my personal web site. Then I was appointed webmaster for the [ICCF-U.S. web site](#) and later as the archivist for the USA and NAPZ events. Due to my enthusiasm for the server and my work for the USA office I started getting emails from the USA players, sometimes referred to me by the ICCF-U.S. office, asking questions about the ICCF webserver. I responded to these emails, one by one. After a while I set up some screen shots of the webserver pages to illustrate what the players could expect to see if they signed up for server events. You can see my first efforts at [Server Screenshots](#). This reference was a precursor to the tutorial and proved useful in my descriptions to the players about what they could expect to see if they signed up for a webserver event.

As the webmaster for the [ICCF Champions League](#) I was quite disappointed by the limited number of players who opted to play in a server section. I believe this was due to lack of knowledge ... players didn't know what the server was and preferred to play with a familiar form of the game. I also believe many players didn't have confidence in their ability to quickly adjust to this new form of chess competition. Lack of understanding and lack of confidence in an unknown method of cc competition meant that many players would miss out on the opportunity to play on the server. Clearly there was a need for an educational tool to encourage players to try the server. I hoped the tutorial would help popularize the server and encourage players to move to this remarkable ICCF facility.

I have also been a big advocate of "live" coverage of cc games on the Internet. By "live" I mean that the positions of on-going games would be displayed on web pages. In practice this usually requires some restrictions, such as a delay of a few moves from the actual current positions. The issue of "live" coverage can best be covered by a separate article, but because I wished to encourage it I decided it was important to explain how it works with the server. Most people would find it confusing, perhaps even impossible to understand, without a detailed explanation. Just how can you view a game "live" at the server? This information was an essential ingredient for the tutorial and provided some of the incentive.

Many people with good knowledge of how to use the server also have good knowledge of using computers in general. In my computer programming career I have discovered how easy it can be for the "experts" to not understand the needs of those less familiar with computers. I worked for over a year on the help desk for a Ford Motor Company web site with a large variety of users, and this was a good learning experience for me. I learned the importance of clear instructions to the users. Step by step instructions can help the novice user to gain understanding and experience using a new computer tool. I felt there was a real need for such "step by step instructions" for the new ICCF chess webserver. I knew enough about the official plans for the development of the ICCF server to believe there was no intention to create a tool like this. So ... I decided to do the job myself!

What is the tutorial?

Hopefully the tutorial fulfills the objectives listed above by publicizing the ICCF server and educating users on how to use it. My approach was to provide "screen shots" of all important functions. I.e., each feature is explained in words with a picture of the feature on the server web page to illustrate the feature very clearly. For example, in explaining how to move a piece on the board (on the chess diagram displayed on the web page) I show the following snapshot of a portion of the screen showing the board, the piece being moved, and the cursor operated by the computer's mouse:

For some people, particularly experienced computer users or people who have used other chess servers, my explanations may seem overly detailed or too wordy. However, I decided I preferred to provide too much detail as opposed to possibly too little detail. Those who don't need the detail can skip over it (and possibly don't really need the tutorial anyway). If I left out the detail some users probably wouldn't find the information they needed.

Of course, it is possible that I have overlooked some important features or left out some important details. I have already added a number of additional screenshots and description, and I will continue to update the tutorial as I become aware of missing or incomplete descriptions. The server will undoubtedly change in the future as new features are added and old features are refined. It's clear that work will continue on the server for some time making it more useful, user-friendly and attractive. ICCF is committed to the server. It is the future of ICCF. Already features are being added to do things like document email/postal events and include calculation of the rating lists. The server will become the primary tool for administrators to handle all sorts of ICCF tasks. These features will certainly be documented in the on-line help files but will not be part of this tutorial. The tutorial is aimed at regular users of the server for playing their games, not at tournament directors or other administrators. However, if this tutorial proves successful, perhaps a tutorial for administrators may be in the future.

So if you have questions about the ICCF server, are curious about how it works, or just have one specific question, I invite you to drop by and take a look. The material is currently divided into seven sections listed on the main tutorial page, so you should be able to locate what you are looking for. The final page has a lot of miscellaneous information. Eventually, the server will have material in different languages, not just in English. First there will be translations of the on-line help files, then the server pages themselves will probably be provided in different languages. Till that happens non-English speakers will be able to read translations of (or descriptions inspired by) this tutorial in German, Dutch, Spanish, Czech and French. Hopefully the tutorials will help people all over the world to learn more about the ICCF server and to enjoy correspondence chess via the server. It's a great way to play chess and is a tremendous step forward by ICCF. If you haven't tried the server yet, I suggest you sign up for a tournament as soon as possible. Take my word for it ... you'll love competing this way. Personally, I found the switch from postal to email very difficult. My results suffered and my rating plunged. I just never felt comfortable with email chess. However, I instantly took to server chess and have started to improve my results. Your results may vary, but I strongly suggest giving it a try. You can review the tutorial to get a flavor of the server. If you have questions about server play, hopefully they will be answered in the tutorial. The tutorial reflects my enthusiasm for the server.

Here are links to all the current versions of the ICCF Server Tutorial with the name of the person who translated or used the original English version as a model:

In English - J. Franklin Campbell: [Tutorial for using the ICCF Server](#)

In Nederlands (Dutch) - Marc Smet: [Handleiding ICCF webserver](#)

In Czech - Josef Mrkvička: [Průvodce užíváním webserveru ICCF](#)

En español (Spanish) - Raúl Polo Molina: [Traducido el Tutorial del Webserver](#)

auf Deutsch (German) - Uwe Bekemann: [Benutzungshilfe für den ICCF-Webserver](#)

En français (French) - Marc Smet & Charles Moeykens: [Manuel d'emploi pour le serveur ICCF](#)

CHESS SOFTWARE - THE CC PLAYERS' GOD, DEVIL - OR JUST PLAIN SERVANT?

By Hans Olav Lahlum

The subject of "Software and correspondence (CC)" has been disputed at least for as long as I have been involved in CC. The so-called optimists who claimed 15 years ago that computers would have no influence on CC, have obviously been mistaken. Chess programs quickly grew strong enough to influence CC and indeed they have done so. In CC as in all other walks of life: the introduction of new technology cannot be stopped. Even though there are surprisingly many exceptions out there, particularly among older players without Internet access, a great majority of CC players today take advantage of chess software of some kind. The two main results have been:

An improvement in general playing strength: fewer games, at all levels, are decided by blunders or simple tactical oversights.

An equalising of playing strength in the sense that chess software improves the weaker players more than they do the stronger players. ICCF has learnt its lesson from this and sensibly enough has reduced the number of classes from five to two.

The pessimists who feared that chess programs would make CC players a dying race and/or be collectively changed into computerised messengers, have also been proved wrong. The biggest change is more due to Internet than to chess software: CC has become all the more synonymous to email and server chess, a development that both for time-saving as well as economical reasons in all probability will continue until one day the postal authorities in a still distant future will be made superfluous. The principle of CC, or "Fernschach" as our German-speaking friends prefer to call it, is the same whether the moves are transferred by snail- or e-mail - and whether in our times of "ideal chess with all available help allowed" a move is found with the help of opening books, game data bases, family, friends or software, does not make much difference, does it?

In practice the chess programs probably play a more important role behind the drawn curtains in today's CC than what the other help channels are able to, but they are still no way decisive in games between Master players. It is interesting to note that the top CC players of 20 years ago still are active and to a surprisingly high degree hold their own today. Also of interest is the fact that top over-the-board (OTB) player Ulf Andersson immediately rose to the top of CC once he joined the CC community. It can be argued that OTB play has been more influenced by computers than CC has. Adjourned games have disappeared completely over a few years, fighting electronic cheating is becoming an advanced science, and opening preparations have been the subject of a technical revolution that often can decide games even on an international top level. In fact, it is not unthinkable that the future position of CC will be strengthened because of the chess programs: the critical stage where the best chess programs are so much better than the best humans that games between humans are uninteresting, will come later in OTB with "normal" time limits than in blitz or speed games, and even much later in CC. This applies even to the hypothetical scenario where humans play without the help of chess programs: the greatest asset of the programs is their ability to evaluate relatively short and "hard" variations quickly and exactly, and the importance of that is inversely proportional to the time limits in the game.

Undoubtedly there are players today, as there were 10-15 years ago, who in any position blindly mail the chess programs' first choice to their opponent, even though I still do not understand what their meaning of life is. But I do not believe there are more such players now than five years ago, or that they obtain better results than they did five years ago. A computer administrator without any chess understanding or critical mind will still experience unpleasant surprises in games where the opponent has access to the same chess programs but in addition has a better chess understanding and a critical mind.

My own CC experience strengthens the impression that chess programs can influence CC games, but very seldom decide them on their own. My use of chess programs in CC tournaments has been constant: I have never used any. I won my first Master group in 1993-94, and my second in 2001 - with several mediocre and downright failures in-between. I have consequently on my own, without the help of chess software, and definitely without any deep chess understanding, qualified for a CC World Championship Semifinal. Over a decade where chess programs claim to have undergone a revolutionary evolution, my results without computer assistance have, if anything, slightly improved. Why don't I use Fritz 7 during my CC games, since I received it as payment/fringe benefit for writing a

rules column some years ago? It is not for religious reasons, but partly because I want to train my analysis skills, partly because so far I have not played a CC tournament mainly for the result, and partly because I want to celebrate my approximately two yearly wins with a pizza party without having to invite the computer as honorary guest. Do I sometimes miss the company of Fritz in critical CC positions? Of course, it happens, as in the following game from the match Canada-Norway. I believed White obtained a positionally won game in the opening, but it took me a whole year before I could come up with something tactically decisive - and I suspect a strong chess program would have found it much earlier. When the Canadian's "I resign" somewhat surprisingly dumped down in my mail box I lost no time in feeding my game into Fritz - and was very relieved that I hadn't done it sooner..... Hans Olav Lahlum (NOR) - Raymond Stone (CAN). Queen Gambit Accepted, with 3.e4. Stone is a taciturn but nice and young air-plane mechanic who wanted to play by traditional snail-mail, claiming he lived isolated with a fish tank but no computer. When I start a new CC game I am only interested in new friendships and interesting positions, so I don't care if my opponent receives help from chess programs at home, chess programs at work, other air-plane mechanics or his goldfish. Far more irritating was the fact that he played the dead boring exchange variation in the French in his white game - that yawn of a draw might have been avoided if he had used a chess program with at least a iota of self respect.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4

This ambitious central thrust has given me many advantages but very few points OTB. Luckily, the problem in CC is usually the other way round....

3... e5

Most common, but 3... c5 is a sound alternative. Switched off his opening library Fritz blows his materialistic horn by trying to hold on to the pawn with 3...b5.

4.Nf3 exd4

The principal reply; 4....Bb4+ and 4.... Nf6 are wait-and-see alternatives

5.Bxc4!?

The sharpest move - White develops quickly and gets a nice view towards f7, but he must be prepared to sacrifice a pawn in many variations. 5.Qxd4 Qxd4 5.Nxd4 is safer, but there is no advantage to White after exchanging Queens.

5.... Nc6!?

Possibly more playable in CC than OTB, but still very risky: White invariably gets a strong initiative for the pawn. 5....c5? 6.Ne5! Be6 7.Bxe6 fxe6 8.Qh5+ is not playable in CC (either). 5.... Bb4+ 6.Bd2 Bxd2+ 7.Nbxd2 Nc6 or 6.Nbd2 Nc6 7.O-O Nf6/Be6 is supposedly the slightly safer main variation of accepted opening theory.

6.O-O g6?!

We are entering a very open landscape, more akin to Guico Piano or Scotch than Queen's Gambit. That Black has to look after f7 is clearly seen in 6... Bg4? 7.Qb3 Qd7 8.Bxf7+! Qxf7 9.Qxb7 Rc8 10.Qxc6+ (Pytel - Castro, Dortmund 1977) and 6.... Bc5? 7.Ng5 Nh6 8.Nxf7 Nxf7 9.Bxf7+ Kxf7 10.Qh5+ g6 11.Qxd5 (Stein - Kvyatosky, Ukraine, 1959), in both cases with a clear attacking advantage for White after he has reclaimed his pawn and Black has lost his castling rights. After the main variation 6.... Be6!? 7.Bxe6 fxe6 8..Qb3 Qd7 White can win back his pawn with 9.Qxb7 Rb8 10.Qa6 or 9.Ng5 O-O-O Nxe6, but it is not quite clear who is best after this. The text move holds on to the pawn provided correct play on Black's part, but White gets a strong and lasting initiative.

7.e5!/?

Fritz cowardly refuses (for as long I cared to wait) to even check this positionally critical pawn break and prefers 7. Bb5?! to regain the d4 pawn.

7.... Bg7 8.Qb3

Consistently following up with pressure on f7. Fritz nurtures no particular warm feelings for the a2-g8 diagonal and once again prefers to hold on to the pawn with 8.Bb5?!

8.... Qe7?!

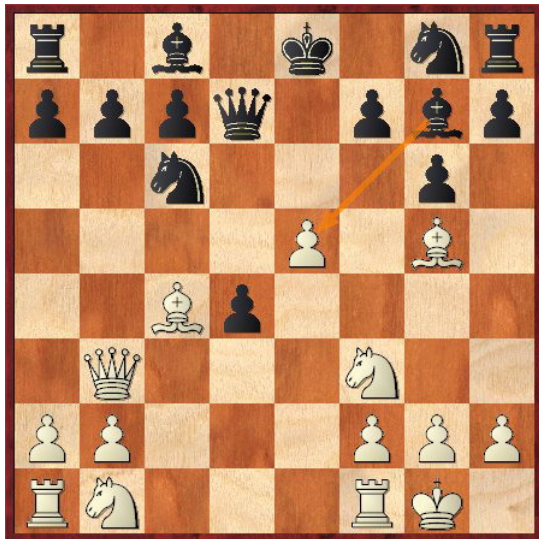
Surprisingly a TN and a clear improvement to accepted theory - but not clear enough to save the variation. The only earlier known attempt with 6.... g6?! is Lehmann - Bellon, Malaga 1970, where the later IGM lost decisive material after 8.... Qd7? 9.Ng5! Nd8 10.Nxf7 Nxf7 11.e6. I give Fritz his first plus mark due to his second choice as 8.... Be6!? 9.Qxb7?! (9.... Bxe6 is probably better, but even if White regains his pawn on b7 or e6 the advantage is not obvious.) Nge7 10.Bb5 O-O! 11.Bxc6 Rb8 12.Qxa7 Nxc6 actually gives compensation for the pawn and is Black's most active attempt to save the variation. On the other hand Fritz does not believe in Black's positional compensation after 12.... Nxc6 and therefore prefers - as Stone does - 8.... Qe7?!

9.... Bg5

This rather obvious move is given by FIDE-IM Jakov Neistadt, in his spare time a leading theoretician on Queen's Gambit Accepted - but now we left the Cape Farewell of the theory map. Fritz is afraid of losing the e5 pawn and prefers to give it extra support with Bf4 or Re1.

9.... Qd7

9.... Na5?? 10.Qb5+, in case anyone was wondering.



10.e6!?

It was difficult to assess the consequences of this second pawn sacrifice - so difficult that I soon gave it up and instead simply concluded that the half-open e-file, a wide open a2-g8 diagonal and in general active pieces should give first-class compensation for two hanging central pawns: especially since it is difficult to see where Black in the foreseeable future can hide his King. A good alternative was 10.Bd2 threatening 11.Ng5 Nh6 12.Nxf7! Nxf7 13.e6 - or to prepare the e6-break with 11.Re1. However, Black can then invite to move repetition by 11.... Qe7, which in some variations allows Black to counter e6 with f6/f5 if White deviates, or even to capture on e5. 11.Bd2 Qe7 12.Bg5 Qd7 13.e6!? would be obvious OTB, but in CC I preferred to take the e6 path right away rather than paying a fee of 2 stamps at the toll plaza and taking a detour. Fritz has no plans involving e6 and no misgivings in allowing Na5xc4, giving 11.Re1 and 11.Na3?! as equal alternatives with a small advantage in both cases.

11,... fxe6 11.Bd2!

At first this felt like admitting not only the fact that White has no directly decisive plan, but also admitting my, in the OTB community, well-known direction blindness. What will become of Nb1 and Ra1 in life was also a source of worry here. However, it doesn't look much better for Black's Bc8 and Ra8, and he was ready to exchange one of his main problems with Na5 followed by Nxc4: 11.Re1? Na5! 12.Bxe6 (12.Rxe6? Qxe6 13.Qa4+/Qb5+ Bd7!) Nxb3 13.Bxd7+ Kxd7 14.axb3 and it is doubtful whether White has full compensation for the pawn at the threshold to the end-game: Black's exposed King is in far less danger after the exchange of Queens, while the Bishop pair as well as the pawn structure will be to his advantage in the long run. The text move weeds out Na5 (with an iron rake), and threatens friendly, but determinedly to increase the pressure on e6 with Re1 or Ng5, in some variations even a tactical Bxe6. Fritz considers the variation played in the game, but cannot find anything better than 14.Bf7+ - concluding with advantage for Black!

11.... Nge7 12.Ng5 Nd8

Probably not posted with a light heart, but against 12... e5?, 13.Be6 followed by 14.Bxc8 and 15.Qf7+ is the simplest lock on the mailbox.

13.Re1 e5 14.f4!?

Fritz wants to play 14.Bf7? Kf8 (possibly to deny Black the right to castle, which anyway is only hypothetical at the moment), but cannot find any better continuation than 15.Bc4, whereupon Black threatens to win material by 15... h6. 15.Qf3 is met with Qf5, and 14.Nf7? Nxf7 15.Bxf7+ Kf8 and 16... Nc6/Qf5 was even less tempting: White has - without collecting an exchange fee - swapped the active Ng5 for its passive counterpart at d8. Better then to park the pieces in their present active positions, discretely awaiting how Black intends to develop his pieces - and threatening less discretely to win back one of the pawns and/or to open the f-file as well.

14.... Nec6!

Planning Qe7 and developing Bc8 - the only good plan I can see in this position. 14.... a6?! might help black after 15.a4?!, but as pointed out by Fritz white can roll on with 15.fxe5 since 15... b5? 16.Bf7+ Kf8 17.Rf1 is a one way driven road to chess Hell. I rejected on principle opening the e-file with 14... exf4?!, since it doesn't even win another pawn. Fritz at first flags clear advantage for Black after capturing on f4, but characteristically turns around to clear advantage for White when he eventually discovers some concrete tactics in the shape of 15.Bb5! c6 16.Bb4 Bf6 17.Nxh7! Rxh7 18.Qg8 mate.

15.fxe5

Winning back a pawn, threatening the reappearing 16.Nxf7 Nxf7 17.e6 theme. Closing the e-file feels a little bit dubious, but it is very temporarily.

15.... Qe7



16.Ne4!

Sacrifices pawn number two for the second time - this time with the intent to open both the e- and f-files against Black's King, and also immediately threatening 17.Nf6+. Possibly White has compensation for one pawn after 16.e6??, but that move is a grave positional misunderstanding that allows Black to castle out of his biggest problems. Black's main problem is still the King, and White should rather give another pawn to open the e-file, than to close the a2-g8 diagonal and holding on to the pawn. Fritz impresses by actually finding 16.Ne4! Nxe5 17.Bg5 Qf8, but refuses to admit that White has an advantage afterwards.

16.... Nxe5?!

In a difficult position Black should concentrate on closing the a2-g8 diagonal rather than opening a file to hang on to pawn number two. 16.... Be6 17.Nf6+ (17.Bg5?! Qb4) Kf8 or 16... Ne6 17.Nf6+ Kd8 are definitely not pleasant but give slightly better chances of survival. After the text move the variations are too numerous for my notebook, but I lacked the fantasy to imagine that Black could survive for long with the e- and f-files as a double-barrelled gun aimed at him. Ne5 never has time to capture on c4 due to discovered checks along the e-file and the Knight is hanging loose itself. In defence of the text move it could be said that Black's position has become a 64-headed nightmare, in addition to the fact that 16... Qxe5? 17.Ng3 and 16.... Bxe5? 17.Bg5 threatening 18.Nf6+ immediately lose decisive material.

17.Bg5 Qf8 18.Nbd2!

I looked for a win after 18.Rf1 Bf5, but found none. With 6 black pieces crowding the 8th row I then prefer to develop my remaining light piece, delay Rf1 until Rae1 is available, and launch Nf3 as a new critical possibility. I ask nothing more - for this move.

18.... d3?!

This was about the last legal move I expected: Black seems to settle down to the idea that he has a lost position on his hands, and instead of trying to get his pieces into play he dreams of swindles based on d2, Bd4+ and/or Qc5+ in a later variation. What I actually expected at this stage I cannot really say. Opening the e-file for White's Rook with 16.... Nxc4?? is just as suicidal as it looks: 16.Nf6++?! Kf7 20.Qxc4 Ne6 21.Rf1 wins, but even simpler is 19.Qxc4! threatening several decisive discovered checks. Even in the age of computers the threat is often stronger than its execution. Against the direct 18.... Bf5?! White can capture on d6 or b7, and after the quiet 19.Nf3 or 19.Bf4, Ne5 begins to look unstable. Fritz admits to a clear advantage and gives in to the - at best - very patiently 18.... a5? (White can capture on d8, or if he wants to be a sadist he can insert 19.a3 a4 20.Qg3, but after 19.Nf3 Black cannot play Qb4 because of the threatening an avalanche in the e-file!) Instead he will then try to force a declaration from Bg5 with 18.... h6!?, possibly Black's best try. Fritz once again underestimates White's compensation when he only gives a small advantage after 19.Bxd8 Kxd8

20.Rf1 Qe7 21.Rae1 and must eventually admit that 19.Bh4 g5 20.Bg3 Ndc6 21.Bb5/Bd5 quickly hurts in the e-file.

19.Rf1

Fritz's 19.Nf3 d2 20.Re3 surely also wins, but White's position becomes completely overwhelming when Ra1 is transferred to the f-file.

19.... Bf5 20.Rae1

Or 20.g4 Nxg4 21.Rae1, but now White's pieces have occupied nearly optimal squares - and 21.g4 winning a piece is only one of several threats.

20.... Kd7!?

Under very difficult conditions the most creative try: the King leaves the e-file and if he reaches c8 the game may be a long one.



21.Bxd8!

As a die-hard chess dogmatic I at first had principal objections against this move. It should not be correct to exchange an active Bishop on g5 against a flattened Knight on d8. However, Black's position has reached the critical stage where the position can be brought down by concrete computations, and with all of White's remaining pieces in good positions it is only logical to exchange a piece - even a good one - for the active defender Nd8. Having moved his King to d7, Black makes a Queen invasion on b7 look more tempting. The Bishop's use of the key square g5 is a story within the story of this game: Both 9.Bg5-d2 and 17.Bd2-g5 were good moves increasing White's advantage - and when the Bishop finally leaves g5 the advantage becomes decisive.

21.... Rxd8?!

21.... Qxd8? 22.Nc5+ or 21... Kxd8 22.Qxb7 Rc8 23.Be6/Qd5+ doesn't last long - but the pin in the f-file can be utilised after the text move as well. Fritz points out an opportunity to capture on c4 at last: 21.... Nxc4! 22.Nxc4 Rxd8 is possible since 23.g4? Bd4+ doesn't win material, but as he admits, Black has decisive attack after the simple 23.Qxb7.

22.Be6+ 1-0

Fritz flags clear advantage after 22.Qb5+ Nc6 23.g4 Bd4+ 24.Kh1 Qb4 25.gxf5 or 22.Qxb7, which also should win. Even though it was on a day nearly (but note: only nearly) as beautiful as my ex-girlfriend, I was surprised when two weeks after the Bishop check I found "My position in the A game is

hopeless. Well done”, postmarked Canada, in my mailbox. After quarrelling a bit with Fritz I concluded that the resignation was in place. 22.... Ke7?/Ke8? 23.Bxf5 gxf5 24.Ng5 wins material and/or mates in a few moves. If Black gives up his Queen with 22.... Bxe6, 23.Qa4+! Kc8?! 24.Rxf8 Rhx8 25.Nc5! Bd5 26.Qxa7 b6 27.Na6 is The Ultimate End. (23.Qb5+? also looks natural. After 23.... Nc6? White must not play 24.Nc5+?? Qxc5! 25.Qxc5 Bd4+, suddenly giving Black jackpot for 18.... d3 - but 24.Rxf8 Bxf8 25.Nf6+ Ke7 26.Qg5 looks convincing. 23.... Kc8! 24.Rxf8 Rhx8 25.Nc5 Bd5 is much less clear because a7 isn't *en prise* anymore). Fritz first hinted that Black should be perfectly happy with Rook, Bishop and two pawns for the Queen after 23.... Nc6 24.Rxf8 Bxf8, but let himself relatively soon be convinced that White still has a decisive advantage when 25.Nf6+! Ke7 26.Qf4 (with the idea 27.Qg5 or 27.Nfe4) Rd4 27.Qe3 Rd6 28.Nfe4 or 27.... Kxf6 28.Qxe6+ Kg7 29.Rf1 were banged (somewhat irritated) onto the keyboard. The conclusion of this line is no coincidence: the Queen is more valuable when the opponent's King is roaming the streets in the centre and White's pieces are still waiting on every corner with loaded guns.

The moral of this story is:

Fritz is, as its predecessors a clever tactical pathfinder, but as them far less trustworthy as strategic advisor. You may hire it in a temporary position as secretary, but do not forget that you yourself are the boss. Also, think critically over Fritz's suggestions.

Fritz is more clever testing moves you serve him than suggesting move himself. You can only (and then still only "maybe") trust him if you are very active in suggesting candidate moves, and also testing the final positions in the variations suggested by Fritz.

Fritz often underestimates initiative and attacking chances compared to material balance until he sees the danger on the variation radar - but then it is often too late. Evaluate critically his suggestions, particularly when you or your opponent has sacrificed material to obtain positional compensation.

Fritz can still be a valuable advisor in your CC games, but if he decides them it is still because of errors on your or your opponent's side - and exaggerated beliefs in chess programs is probably the most frequent error committed in 21st century CC games....

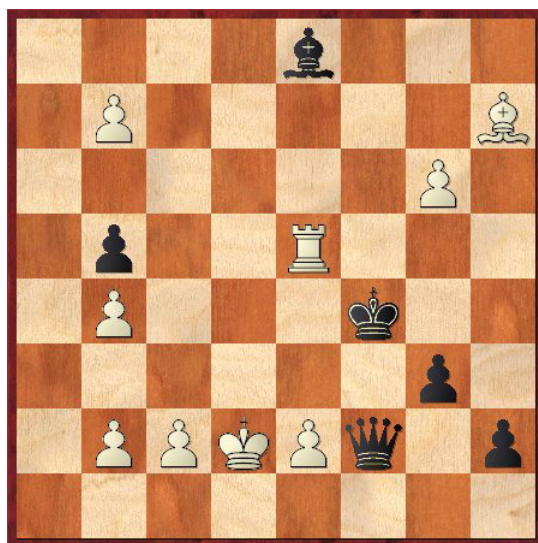
PS: Three years after this article was first published in Norwegian, the author has tested out Fritz as an advisor during the North Sea Team Tournament II. As the result became his first IM-norm, the Lahlum without looking too depressed admits Fritz might be a very helpful advisor - but still upheld the rest of his conclusions from the Stone-game too...

Bonnie and Clyde

from a Transylvanian coffee shop

By Olimpiu Urcau
Translation by ICCF-IM V Eugen Demian

I was visiting again this quiet Transylvanian city, like a romantic man returning to his first love over and over again. A superb day of autumn with incredible colours around me and a few moments of free spirit time guided my steps to the local coffee shop. I already knew it was the regular meeting place of well-known local chess masters and amateurs, as well as young poets, artists, or university students. Coming through the door, I noticed something unusual that day: at one of the tables, a pair of retired people, a little old man and his lady, were engaged in an odd chess game in which the result seemed inevitable. Grandpa had an all around elegance and a calm expression despite the rather inappropriate strains of music which I recognised to be the voice of the legendary Edith Piaf. I advanced to the bartender and ordered my coffee, with my interest now directed toward the position played by those two.



It seemed to be the ending of an extremely sharp tactical battle; this idea came as a surprise to me and I decided to sit at a nearby table to follow the game. Both players were not looking like much of a challenge, plus grandpa clearly had very little chance to save his White position. I looked at the game for a few more seconds. Satisfied with my assessment, I concentrated my attention on obtaining the desired mix of coffee and milk. All of a sudden, my sixth sense gave me a brief warning signal: I've seen this position before, but when and where? Hmm... Looking again at both players, I dismissed the signal; there's no way these guys could have known this position, right? After all, we were sitting in a coffee shop with two unlikely players – grandma who seemed much more interested in the ashtray on the table and grandpa with a delicate smile, perhaps looking for the fastest way to end the game. It seemed there was no hope whatsoever for the White player.

While analysing the position, my concentration was broken when the door swung open and a group of young local chess players entered the coffee shop. They were very vocal and noisy, clearly disrupting the peaceful atmosphere around us. One of them – a young master who lately was showing encouraging signs of improvement – noticed the odd couple as well and approached the table. Grandpa was ready to finally make a move; the young man took a quick look at the board and said:

“Why are you wasting this woman's time? Don't you see how lost you are?”

Surprisingly, grandpa didn't seem upset by this completely out of line intrusion, but replied rather politely: “Maybe my young friend would care to help the lady win this game? Also you should consider agreeing to a little bet now, to make it worthwhile. Are your moves as sharp as your tongue?”

His words, hmm... I quickly looked at the board again and that thought of seeing something familiar came back, more persistent than ever. Yes, of course! I've seen this before, but where? I couldn't put my finger on it as much as I tried to...

Obviously grandpa's words had the desired effect. The young man had a short discussion with his friends and agreed to play as Black with one condition: the stakes - double or nothing! Grandpa agreed with a short gesture and grandma delicately moved away emptying the chair for the new combatant. The entire group of friends formed a curious, excited crowd. They were all ready for this unexpected show, with the young man bursting with confidence and pleasure at the chance of winning that money under such easy circumstances. On my part, all those preparation helped me successfully finish my mental search; I already knew the answers about that position!...

Grandpa made his first move:

1.Re4+ ...

The audience looked as if they were hit by the storm. What is this? Even the young man's girlfriend could see that White's Rook was unprotected! She looked at him, all smiles, just to notice him concentrating more than expected on such a silly looking move. Maybe he was beginning to understand the complexity of the situation?

A while later, he decided to reply and his move was made with a deflating gesture of someone who really knew what he's doing:

1... Kxe4

The next few moves were made in a blitz tempo, the audience struggling to follow the events.

2.g7+ Kd4 3.c3+ Kc4

One of the waitresses went to the bar and informed the bartender: "I don't understand anything anymore". People in the crowd, some of them pretty good chess players, were starting to look at grandpa with admiration: he was going to get his Queen back! As the game progressed, they realised that he had no intentions whatsoever in continuing that way.

4.Bg8+ ...

Some were very intrigued by this move. However the young man obviously knew already that 4.g8Q+ ... would have been followed by 4... Bf7, with Black taking the initiative.

4... Bf7 5.b8=Q h1=Q

The crowd quickly gathered a couple of Queens from a nearby board, interrupting that game which was nowhere near as exciting as this one. By now, everyone – chess players or amateurs alike – was deeply enthralled by this game.

6.Bxf7+ Qxf7 7.Qc7+!! ...

What a sensational move! It was becoming clear to a lot of people that now we were at the climax of the contest. Oh, how far away from the truth this impression was. The young man was clearly shaken by the move; he took his time to analyse all consequences. A few minutes later his face showed calm and determination; things were not as bad as they seemed.

7... Qxc7 8.g8Q+ Qd5+

The only move and the simplest one to solve this puzzle in front of this strange old man showing no signs of admitting his folly. The young man relaxed; his friends were starting to poke each other exchanging smirks and giggles. Indifferent to all this, grandpa replied:

9.Kc2!! ...

Complete silence! Nobody could understand this strange lack of interest White showed for his Queen. Grandpa finally raised his eyes looking around for his lady while the young man was now sweating profusely now, with a despairing look on his face in spite of the huge material advantage. With a shaky hand, he replied:

9... Qxg8

Grandpa moved immediately with a candid smile on his face:

10.e4! ...

