

OPEN FILE



The Magazine of the UK Armed Forces Chess Association



GM Matthew Sadler decides if Dave Tucker can pass muster
Ian Gillan—The Deep Purple frontman and chess
Tucker-Portman Covid Correspondence

Danny O'Byrne in the 4NCL

Chess problems, Arthur Jackson, Greek gifts and book reviews

Editorial



It would be very easy to skip an issue of OPEN FILE this springtime. After all with the Covid situation over the last 12 months there's not been a lot in Services chess to write home about. Yet I know from experience that once the continuity is broken it can spell the end of something and it never gets picked up again.

Never in the history of chess - save for the wars - has so much disruption occurred. We had to contend with no over the board chess, or choose to play online, which is not to the taste of every member. We missed out on the UKAFCA finals in 2020 and NATO 2020 in Belgium. All because (allegedly) one man ate a dodgy horse shoe bat, extricated from a cave in China. Talk about a ripple effect.

Our heads may be bloodied but unbowed, and we shall not be defeated. I welcome you therefore to the spring 2021 edition of OPEN FILE. I admit that it is just a little bit lighter than normal but I have given you GM Matthew Sadler and Deep Purple singer Ian Gillan. What more do you want?

Okay then. The likes of Tucker, Portman, O'Byrne and Arthur Jackson will tickle your chess fancy as well, so get the chess pieces out and enjoy the games.

I do want to say a huge thank you to everyone, not just in the UK Armed Forces Chess Association but also the wider NATO community for all the good wishes that my wife Susan and I have received as we struggle to deal with her stage 4 cancer. Each and every good wish is added to the 'mountain of goodness' and it helps us to fight on. You are our wider family. It was just as much Susan's wish that I got this issue out as it was mine so I do hope it will be read and enjoyed on that basis.

I should finish with something more positive. I am going to have my chess memoirs published and this should be available from April 2021

I should be most grateful if you would support me by purchasing a copy. If I can sell all the ones I will have printed I am going to make a substantial donation to Macmillan Cancer.

Nil desperandum

Carl

Front Cover

I was desperate to bring some **colour** in to our lives, what with the dullness of Covid and lockdowns, so I have chose a cartoon that I commissioned the one and only Wadalupe to create for me. It depicts me playing my hero Anatoly Karpov in Red Square, a place I have always loved for it's architecture. I played 1...a6 to his 1.e4 and he is not best pleased. He thought that after Tony Miles played this against him - and beat him with it - in 1980 in Skara, that he would never see it again. Sorry Anatoly.



From the Chairman – Lt Cdr Dave Ross RN

Autumn 2021 - Open File.

Welcome everyone to the lockdown special edition of Open File, I hope that you are all in good health and in good spirits. As I write, it is twenty-four hours since the PM announced his plan to get the country out of lockdown, and I hope that this means we can get back to over the board chess in the summer. If you think you may be able to host an Armed Forces Championship this summer please drop me an email or give me a call. I don't want to jump too early but I also don't want to miss the boat, so perhaps having a plan we can implement at relatively short notice may be the order of the day.

Last week I received the invitation from the Belgian organisers of the NATO Chess Championship which is planned for October 11-15 in Floreal Blankenberge. Full details can be found on the NATO Chess website (www.natochess.com) and there are 'life time member' places available so if you are in that category please let me know if you would like to go, Covid restrictions permitting of course.

The absence of over the board chess has thrown up some new opportunities and we now have two 4NCL teams playing in the on-line competition. As I write, I am monitoring the games live on LiChess. Our first team *War and Piece 1* appears to be doing ok but *War and Piece 2* look to be under serious pressure, they are outgraded on all boards.

The 4NCL website gives the match dates and the links to the live games (game update Danny O'Byrne has had a good win against David Robertson (2057) of Spirit of Atticus B). This is a potential opportunity for the Association to grow players that want to play regular matches, so I would like to expand this in the future with more teams in order to bring in some of less experienced players.

Also, you may have noticed my regular email shot. We teamed up with the Armed Forces E-Sports Association who were interested in playing some games and getting some coaching, unashamedly enthused by the success of the Netflix series '*The Queen's Gambit*'. To date the coaching has been limited but we have been having much fun on a Wednesday night playing blitz online - again on LiChess. They also use an app called *Discord* which allows the players to chat (audio as well as text) and screen share. So far, Kevin Thurlow smashed the opposition off the park in week one and almost did the same in week two. However new boy (apologies Charles, artistic licence) Capt Charles Bird, Army, defeated Kevin (twice) and won four out of four games – so he is no mug. Watch out Onley *et al*.

I hope that you enjoy this edition of Open File. As ever, a great deal of effort goes into its production from the writers and the editor. We are incredibly lucky to have Matthew Sadler's analysis and to have an interview with Deep Purple singer Ian Gillan. If you are too young to know who Deep Purple are, then put them on YouTube – loud.

Above all stay safe! We are all part of a great Armed Forces Chess Community, I hope to see you fit and well later in the year for some over the board chess.

Yours Aye,

Dave

UKAFCA - Officers of the Association

Note: Officers will be happy to provide advice, but please note that emails might not be answered immediately. Committee Members will respond as and when they reasonably can.



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The Secretary must be informed of any changes to members contact addresses including emails. Failure to do this will result in the none arrival of correspondence.

Membership of the UK Armed Forces Chess Association is open to all serving and ex-serving members of HM Forces and MOD civilian staff. However, anyone may apply to the Secretary for a magazine subscription to Open File (£5 per annum) .



Please visit the UKAFCA website to check out what is happening and what chess activities are coming up. If you have any contributions or suggestions please contact Munroe who will be very happy to receive them. The address of the web site is:

<http://serviceschess.wixsite.com/home>

Do not forget that you can download copies of this magazine from the site too.

OPEN FILE DISTRIBUTION

We have moved from paper versions to online. Once I have completed the e-copy (after Dave Ross has proof read it) Dave will send it to our webmaster Munroe for posting onto the UKAFCA website.

Members will be notified when the magazine is uploaded. It is then your responsibility to access it.. Officially there will be two magazines per year. One for the UKAFCA Finals and one after the NATO Championships. However I intend to squeeze the occasional extra issue in if and when I am able to find the time and have the material. Contributions from members are obviously encouraged. **It is of great importance that changes to your email addresses should be sent to the Secretary or Chairman or even though we now publish the magazine electronically!**

You know what to do.



<http://ajedrezconhumor.blogspot.com/>

You may well have seen cartoons from 'Wadalupe' in the chess press. He is exceptionally talented and has designed a couple of personal commissions from me. He has kindly agreed to allow a cartoon to be featured in each edition of OPEN FILE so we thank him for that. Please visit his web site and check out (pun intended) the great artwork. He might even be available for a commission.

COVID CHESS- CORRESPONDENCE

Carl Portman and Dave Tucker

We talk almost every weekend on the telephone so as to stay in touch during the various Covid lockdowns. One day we agreed to play two games of correspondence chess, so that we could continue to stay in touch and be busy. Chess can help stave off the loneliness of isolation not just for single people but couples and families too.

We agreed some gentleman's rules. No chess engines! Other than that we could certainly avail ourselves of books and magazines as we did in the golden olden days. Carl has an extensive library and Dave has it all in his head. We played from May to August 2020.

Both players made annotations of their thoughts but it is Dave's that we will show here with an occasional note by Carl. The mission for OF readers is to slowly play through the games. Hopefully, there is something to be learned from Dave's annotations.

Off we go then.

Dave Tucker (White) - Carl Portman (Black)

**Covid Correspondence - Game 1
Sicilian Kan**

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 a6

The Kan system. It is also known as the Paulsen System because it was first played by Wilfried Paulsen back in the 19th century. The name has however stuck with Kan (b.1909) who was a minor Russian master but good enough to play in ten Soviet Championships with a best of 3rd place. It appears that he only played seven games this way. It is a flexible move which gives the possibility to transpose to other systems such as the Taimanov or Scheveningen later on. It does not develop a piece and White's best option is to develop rapidly himself. I always used to play 5.Nc3 here with the plan of following up with a Kingside fianchetto usually transposing to the Taimanov variation when Black puts his Queen on c7. Some time ago I thought that I needed to rethink some of my openings and here I decided on the most popular move 5.Bd3.

5.Bd3 Qc7

Black has a wide choice of moves here. The following are all quite playable 5...Nf6, 5...Nc6, 5...Bc5, 5...b5 and others have been tried as well.

6.0-0 Nc6?!



This move is not well thought of by theory. I had agreed with Carl that there would be no computer engine assistance in playing by e-mail but we could consult our books and magazines. He commented that he was playing entirely on his own intuition without help from an opening textbook. The normal move here is 6...Nf6.

7.Nxc6 dxc6

Black has three possible captures here. 7...Qxc6 is the move the books regard as best. I would have met that by Karpov's 8.c4 when White has a pleasant game and Black is cramped. 7...bxc6 would also be met by 8.c4. It has been out of favour for years after Fischer-Petrosian

1971 where Bobby won one of his best ever games. In that game Black's Queen was still on d8 and White had not castled. With the Black Queen on c7 the desirable freeing move d7-d5 is not possible. In reality the capture with the b pawn is not that bad and few if any players will meet the endgame skill of Fischer. The move played 7...dxc6 leaves Black with a problem of how to develop his Queenside pieces.

8.a4

This prevents Black playing b7-b5 because of the unguarded Rook on a8. There might also later be a possibility to play the pawn to a5 and establish a piece on b6.

8...Nf6

A logical move developing a piece. In the one grandmaster game I was aware of in this line, Short v Kamsky 1991, Black played a5 which to my way of thinking is too slow.

9.f4 e5 10.f5 Bc5+ 11.Kh1 h5



Carl commented here "I don't fancy you romping up the Kingside thank you" 11...O-O would indeed invite a subsequent pawn storm. This move provides the Black Knight with a foothold on g4. Note that 12.h3?? here would be a very bad move because it weakens the King position and does not stop 12...Ng4 after which Black wins the exchange.

12.Qe2

My calculation at this point was that I could fend off the potential Black square invasion after Black moves Ng4 and Qb6 by Nc3 followed by Nd1 and also by interposing a5 at an appropriate moment. Black will then have a problem as to where to place his King, If it is castled Queenside I might be able to develop a pawn onslaught. It may have to stay in mid board. Let us see what happens.

12...Bd7 13.Nc3

I felt uneasy that I had not developed my Queenside pieces so this seemed a natural move having Nd1 in mind to defend the f2 and e3 squares if necessary. 13.a5 was an alternative idea here aiming to eventually place my Knight on b6. I was worried that after

13...O-O-O 14.Nd2 Rdg8 15.Nc4 Ng4 (or 18...g6) 16.Nb6+ didn't look all that convincing despite White having the two Bishops. There are however some dangerous attacking ideas for White based on Bxa6 at an opportune moment and I think Black should play 13...a5 here to defuse that possibility.

13...O-O-O



Carl throws caution to the wind! Attacks on opposite wings now look very likely and in such circumstances every tempo can be vital. Black has some obvious moves such as Rdg8, Ng4, g6, Bd4 which could prove embarrassing to me because of the scanty defences on my Kingside. I also really need to address the fact that Black controls the long diagonal a7-g1 which leaves my King in a tight corner subject to potential mating threats.

14.Be3

It was only now that I realised that my plan to play 14.a5 then Na4 etc was too slow. I had seriously underestimated the threat to my King and the simple idea of Black playing h5, Nh4 and Ng3+ looks to be winning. It was therefore imperative now to contest the Black diagonal to give my King a bit more breathing space. In hindsight, it might have been better for me to have played this last move instead of Nc3.

14...Qa5

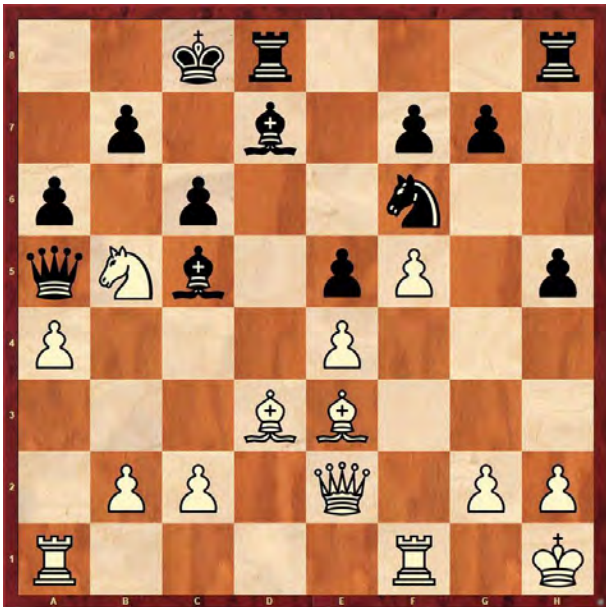
I was expecting 14...Bd4 to which I would have replied 15.Qd2. 14...Qb6? Would have been met by 15.a5. Yet another possibility was 14...Qd6 where again 15.a5 would fix the Black Queenside. Carl comes up with another move I had not considered. With the Queen on a5 the advance of my a pawn is stopped and also the Black a pawn is defended.

Given a few moves like Bxe3, c5 and Bc6 could see Black on top. I had decided to play here in response to 14...Qa5, 15.Bxc5 Qxc5 16.Qf2. Now if Black swaps Queens with 16...Qxf2 all would be well because after a subsequent Bc4, the weak pawn at f7 would need to be defended.

If Black played pawn to b5 to stop the White Bishop getting to c4 then he would have to concede an open a file. The problem is that Black can play 16...Qd4! and will be able to build up unpleasant pressure on my e pawn.

If 17.Ne2 Qxf2 18.Rxf2 c5 my pieces being awkwardly placed. It seems that Carl has achieved a good position by playing purely routine moves. Is there any way for me to turn the tide? Well what about the bold 15.Nb5?. This might be a good punt in an over the board game but I fear it is actually a bad move and Carl may well punish me for it. Let's see what he does in reply.

15.Nb5!?



Carl - in all honesty I never even looked at this move which came as quite a shock.

15...Bxe3

Black can win a pawn here with 15...cxb5 16.Bxc5 bxa4 but it leaves me with the two Bishops and attacking chances against the vulnerable Black King position. I spent a long time looking at this position without coming to a definite conclusion. I was thinking here of playing 17.Ra3 which dissuades 17...Qxc5 due to 18.Rc3 even if that is not entirely clear but also 17.b4 was interesting and if then 17...Qc7 (only move) 18.Qe3 etc when I can bring all my pieces towards the Black King before Black is able to do anything significant against my own King position. Carl decided to avoid all those complications by immediately capturing my Bishop. It would be

great now if I could win by playing 16.Qxe3 but we are not playing blitz! 16...cxb5 17.axb5 Qc7 18.bxa6 b6! 19.a7 Kb7 wins for Black.

16.Nd6+ Kc7

Not 16...Kb8? 17.Qxe3 Be8 18.Nc4 Qc7 and Black will have a hard time stopping a White Queenside attack after perhaps 19.a5 with the idea of Ra3 and Rb3 or maybe immediately 19.b4. I have not worked out the details but White is having all the fun.

17.Nc4

I rely on this Knight fork to regain my lost piece. 17.Nxf7? Ba7 18.Nxh8 Rxh8 19.c3 etc would hand the game to Black.

17...Qc5

Absolutely not 17...Qb4? 18.Qxe3 and Black will be hard pressed to prevent a White invasion on the Queenside. Now he will have access to the crucial d4 square.

18.b4(?)

I had planned this space gaining move a while back but on reflection I fear it is a mistake. The idea is again to push a5 and get a bind on the Black position. 18...Qxb4?? will lose in short order but after 18...Qd4 Black is well placed. He is still a piece up so I must recapture the bishop. The question is how to do it.

18...Qd4 19.Qxe3

It seems that 19.Nxe3 is ruled out by 19...Nxe4 but the move played was still part of my plan. Black has a weak pawn on f7 and potentially on e5 if the Queen moves away and I was hoping to later exploit these facets. I have however somewhat weakened my own a pawn. If Carl now swaps Queens all will be back as I anticipated but as I awaited his reply I noticed that 19...c5 was playable. On reflection it seems that 20.Qxd4 exd4 21.e5 Nd5 22.bxc5 is in White's favour but Black does get to mobilise all his pieces.

19...Qxe3 20.Nxe3 h4

I assume the idea is to play Nh5 and then Nf4 so that my Bishop is attacked. If Black already had his Rook on h7, Nh4 would threaten the venomous Ng3+. This all takes time and I believe that I can put him on the defensive with my next move.

21.Nc4

Attacking the e pawn. Black must defend it.

21...Rhe8

This is much better than 21...Rde8 which would weaken Black on the d file. The move played does relinquish the defence of the h pawn but nothing is in the air regarding its safety. If I managed to manoeuvre a Rook to h3, Black could counter with g5 exploiting the pin on my f pawn on the white diagonal.

22.a5

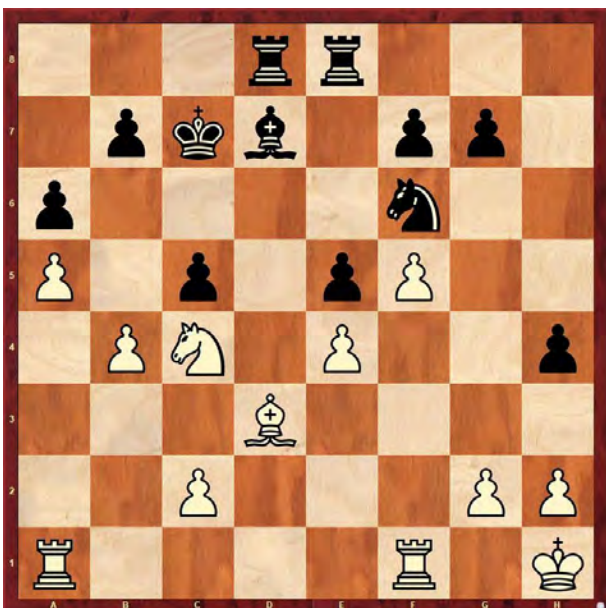
This fixes the Black Queenside to a certain extent. If Black plays c5 to free his Bishop then he just loses a pawn. It also rules out b5. Despite the fact that Black is a bit cramped, I don't think there is much of an advantage for me. While awaiting Carl's reply, I spent a lot of time thinking how best to proceed.

Another idea that occurred to me was to challenge the f4 Knight by playing g3. For example 23.Rf3 Nf4 24.g3 hxg3 25.Rxg3 (25.hxg3 displaces the Knight but 25...Rh8+ 26.Kg1 Nh3+ 27.Kg2 Ng5 28.Rff1 f6 is nothing) 25...g6 looks at least equal for Black. Again I have looked at various refinements to the move order such as playing over the Queens Rook to e1 then e3 prior to playing g3 but if Black is able to mobilise his Kingside pawns and free his Bishop then I may be opening my own King to an attack.

Perhaps the Knight on f4 should be challenged by my own Knight by playing 23.Nb2 Nf4 24.Bc4 f6 25.Nd3. That seems fine except 23...g6 or even 23...g5 might see the position open up with my Knight and Queen's Rook out of play.

After long consideration I came on 22...Nh5 23.Be2 Nf4 24.Bg4 f6 (Nxe5 was threatened) 25.g3 hxg3 26.hxg3 Rh8+ 27.Kg1 and I might eventually reach a good Knight v Bad Bishop ending.

22...c5



What's this, didn't I prevent it? It must be a deliberate pawn sacrifice on Carl's part to activate his Bishop and perhaps set up a fortress position. It therefore avoids getting a "bad" Bishop but in my opinion 22...Nh5 is a better try. I have no option now but to accept the offer.

23.bxc5 Bc6 24.Nd6 Re-f8

I expected 24...Re7 because it would allow Black to double rooks on the d file. It seems to me that my Knight is so strong that Carl will have to consider sacrificing the exchange to remove it. If so, he would want to plant his remaining Rook on d4. The square f8 where it is now is a long way away. Black can now oppose my Knight by playing Ne8 or can leave it on d6 and try Nh5 aiming again for f4. Both of those ideas appear to be problematic as I view it. If the Knight goes to the h file I may be able to play Bc4 and then Bd5 and c4 with a stranglehold on the centre. I think the Knight retreat is more likely but we will have to see. Black has boldly advanced his h pawn and it caused me to have serious doubts about my position a few moves back. It does now however appear to be hard to defend because the Black Rook is badly placed on f8 and if it moves, Nxf7 and Nxe5 are on the cards. This all however turns out to be a pipedream!

25.Rf3 Nd7

This is a much stronger idea than the other two possibilities mentioned above and gives Black excellent counter play. I have to watch my back rank in many lines which means I have to waste a valuable tempo. In retrospect my last move was premature and should have been prefaced by 25.Rae1 because the Rook at f3 is on the same diagonal as the Bishop at c6 and is therefore a tactical weakness. As I ponder my reply, I fear I am close to getting a losing ending whatever I do.

26.Nc4 f6 27.Rh3

I play this with a heavy heart because my position hangs by a thread. I could go all defensive and try to hold my e pawn and Bishop at d3 but after looking at that in some detail it seems that Carl can always develop a passed pawn on the Queenside while I have no breakthrough on the Kingside as a counter. Perhaps I can muddy the waters by capturing the h pawn. If he defends it by 27...Rh8 it will delay possible doubling rooks on the d file which is strong, if not winning, for Black.

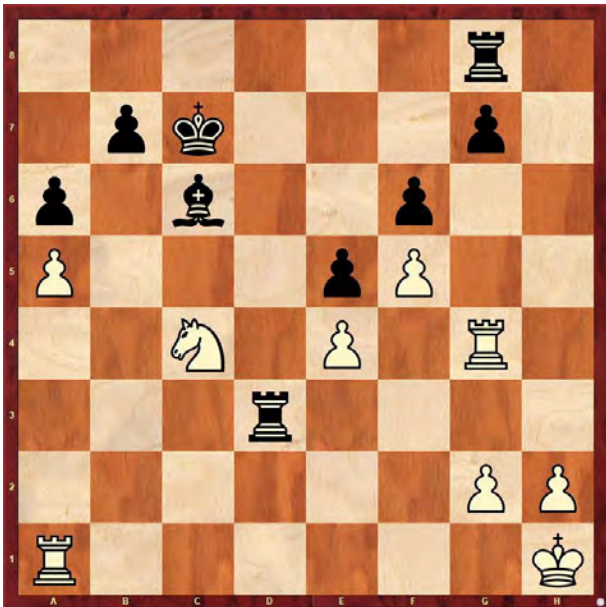
27...Nxc5 28.Rxh4 Nxd3

Obvious really but also snuffs out any idea I might have had to play Nb2 retaining the c pawn.

29.cxd3 Rxd3 30.Rg4

This attacks g7 and also maintains a hold for the moment on the e4 pawn. I assume that Carl will play 30...Rf7. If that is indeed played then I will have to rely on tactics to defend my weak e pawn. Other moves such as 30...Rfd8 or 30...Rd4 are possible but why give up the g - pawn and thus make my h - pawn a passer?

30...Rg8



Another move I failed to predict. The Rook doesn't seem so well placed as at f7 but if 30...Rf7 much as I would like to provide "luft" for my King, moves like 31.Kg1 or 31.h3 are too slow.

31 Rc1 Kd7

Another surprising move to me although it might just transpose. I had expected 31...Rd4 32.Nb6 (threat Nd5+ and Nxf6) 32...Kd6 33.Kg1 Ke7 (not 33...Rxe4?? 34.Rxc6+ wins or 33...Bxe4? 34.Nc8+ draws) and now I am still under pressure to defend my e pawn. 31...Rhd8 is another troublesome idea which I think will win for Black whether I take on g7 or not but why give up material and allow potential counter play from a passed White h pawn?

32.Kg1 Rd4 33.Kf2

It looks like the game is up for me. If I defend by Nb6+ followed by Re1 then Black will win easily by playing his King to f7 to release the Rook and then simply manoeuvre to win my a pawn in a few moves. I must try to confuse the situation and hope Carl falters. Therefore I give up a pawn immediately. I am relying on my tricky Knight to muddy the waters. I have to assume Carl will capture my e pawn with his Rook but there are other weaker moves notably 33...Bxe4? which allows 34.Nb6+ Ke7

35.Rc7+ Kd6 36.Rd7+ (or maybe better Rgxg7) Kc5 37.Rc7+ Kb4 38.Ke3 with very unclear play or if here 34...Kd6 instead of Ke7, 35.Nc8+ Kd7 36.Nb6+ with a repetition unless Black gives up the exchange by capturing on c8 but White should hold that comfortably. Another idea is to play 33...Rh8 attacking my h pawn and also moving the Rook away from any potential Knight forks but after 34.h4 Rh7 35.Ke3 I am alright and if he otherwise allows me to play Rxc7+ I must get counter play.

33...Rxe4

Obvious and good.

34.Nb6+ Ke7 35.Nc8+

This might provoke a blunder in blitz 35...Rxc8?? or 35...Kf7?? but is sadly of no avail after 35...Kd8.

35...Kd8 36.Rxe4 Bxe4 37.Nd6 Bc6 38.Rc2

The last moves were forced. I now wait to see how Black will proceed in winning the game. I might be able to get some counter play if I could force a passed pawn on the Kingside and particularly if I could exchange my Knight for the black Bishop leaving a Rook endgame. I don't think Black has to acquiesce in either possibility but the way ahead may not be trivial.

38...Kc7 39.Nc4

39.Ne4 would have been good if Carl replied 39...Rd8 when 40.Nc5 sends him back to g8!. However 38...Rh8 is much stronger and 39.h3 Rh4 40.Ng3 Ra4 etc wins easily for Black. 39.Kg3 (instead of 39.h3) Rh5 40.h4 Rxf5 41.Nc5 g5 also wins. So what else? 39.Rd2 Rd8 40.Nc4 Rxd2+ 41.Nxd2 Be4 42.Nf1 Kc6 43.Ng3 Kb5 44.Nh5 Kxa5 and the black queenside pawns will march forward much quicker than my h pawn because the Bishop can drop back to g8 at a convenient time.

39...Rd8 40.Ke3 Rd4 41.g3 Rd1 42.Nb6 Ra1 43.Nc4 Rf1 44.Rf2

I have to lose a couple of pawns so could resign now with a clear conscience. If he were to swap Rooks I might still have a faint chance because he has the "wrong" Bishop and Rook's pawn.

44...Rc1 45.Nb2 Rc5

White Resigns 0-1

'When will people realise that hard work
is talent?'

Garry Kasparov

What difference would using Fritz have made?

1. Going over this game I am surprised that there are not many hidden tactics.
2. 8.a4. I played this move because it was the choice of Nigel Short. The small database that comes with Fritz 13, my engine, contains just one example of 8.a4 and 23 examples of 8.Nc3. White scores well overall so I expect I would have played 8.Nc3 here with a different game.
3. 9.f4?! This move was based on the idea that Carl was unfamiliar with the Sicilian and I would crush him on the Kingside. Nigel Short played this way against Kamsky but there 8...a5 had been played for no obvious reason. Both 9.Nd2 or 9.Na3 are better choices here.
4. 9...e5 Black is already slightly better.
5. 13.Nc3?! Again both 13.Nc2 or Na3 are better and the position assessed as equal.
6. 15.Nb5?!. This led to a virtually forced sequence where I ended up somewhat worse. It would have been foolish for Carl to have accepted the offered pawn sac here. 15.Bd2=
7. 25.Rf3? This is effectively the losing move. Fritz recommends 25.Ra3 e.g. 25...Nd7 26.Rc3 f6 (not 26...Nxc5? 27.Nxf7) 27.Nc4 and White is better 27...Nxc5 28.Nxe5 Nxd3 29.Nxd3 etc although here Black has good drawing chances due to the scattered White pawns. I didn't consider 25.Ra3 in any depth.
8. 27...Nxc5 better 27...Rh8
9. 33.Kf2? 33.h3 although Black is still better



INTERVAL

Did you know?

In 1902, a Mrs Frideswide Rowland organised a correspondence tournament The contestants included Reginald Saunderson who was an aristocratic Irish murderer. He was detained in Broadmoor (a secure mental hospital) after being found insane at his trial in 1895. He loved to play in postal events.

Here is a little miniature from my correspondence database.

Gossip v Longman 1870

1. e4 e5 2. f4 exf4 3. Bc4 d5 4. Bxd5 Nf6 5. Nf3 Nxd5 6. exd5 Qxd5 7. Nc3 Qe6+ 8. Kf2 Kd8 9. d4 Bd6 10. Re1 Qf6 11. Nd5 Qf5 12. Re5 Bxe5 13. dxe5 Bd7 14. Bxf4 c6 15. Bg5+ 1-0

Before we go to game 2

A non-playing chess friend, who also happens to be an artist asked me if I could send her a photograph that depicted my relationship with chess.

It is amazing how one's creative mind responds to such a request. By chance, a friend of mine happens to be a fan of apps on his I-phone and he sent me this, at almost the same time that the lady gave me her request. It must have been fate.

I explained that whilst Caissa - the goddess of chess had embraced me at a young age there was always a dark side. I visit that blackness after really bad defeats, especially if I have blundered badly.

We chess players know how much pleasure chess gives us, but we also know the pain, and it is extremely difficult to explain to non-chess players just how this feels. Caissa provides the light but there is always the hand of doom (above) to pull us back occasionally.

Carl Portman (White) - Dave Tucker (Black)

**Covid Correspondence - Game 2
Sicilian Rossolimo**

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5



The Rossolimo Attack. This variation was first played by Winawer and later by Nimzovich but is most associated with the cosmopolitan grandmaster Rossolimo (1910-1975) who eventually became an American citizen. The idea is to develop quickly and generate an initiative while avoiding all the razor sharp variations of the more commonly played open games after 3.d4. It can't be regarded as a sideline these days because it appears regularly at the top level including recent world championship matches.

3...e6

Many reasonable moves have been tried here by Black. At one time I used to prefer 3...d6 and played that several times. Theory regards 3...g6 as the best reply and that is indeed favoured by Magnus Carlsen who used it 3 times without loss in the 2018 world championship match versus Caruana. I have played that too in the past but with mixed results and it is strange how that colours ones thinking. I therefore chose the second most popular move 3...e6. This has been a favourite of Boris Gelfand and was seen several times in the 2012 World Championship match against Anand. I aim to develop my King's Knight at e7 and then later recapture on c6 without spoiling my pawns if White decides to give up his Bishop by swapping for my Knight.

4. O-O

Carl goes for rapid development. It is a moot point as to whether White should play 4.Bxc6 here. From my point of view the White King's Bishop is a favourite piece and I would not readily swap it for a Knight so quickly. It was generally considered in the past that such an early exchange was premature. In more recent times White has tried to show that the doubled pawns can be a weakness if Black is kept cramped and can't make use of his two Bishops. 4.Bxc6 bxc6 5.b3 e5?! 6.Nxe5 Qe7 7.d4! d6 was Anand-Gelfand tie-break game in 2012 World Championship, won by White. I would not have repeated 5...e5 if that had happened in the game. From what I read. It seems that the early Bishop exchange is more effective after 3...g6 by Black than after 3...e6

4...Nge7 5.Re1

Another sound developing move. 5.c3 is also quite good. It prepares d4 and also allows White to retreat his Bishop on the queenside if he doesn't want to exchange it for the Knight.

5...a6

5...Nd4 might be a way to play for complications. If then 6.Nxd4 cxd4 7.c3 a6 8.Ba4 (or Bf1) Nc6 etc.

6.Bxc6

A slight surprise. I had expected 6.Bf1 which is the main move here. Black is a bit congested and some way from getting his King castled. The exchange frees it somewhat. White is however now poised to open the centre so I have to be careful to avoid my King getting in the firing line.

6...Nxc6 7.d4 cxd4 8.Nxd4 d6 9.Nc3

Carl said he considered 9.c4 here with the idea of a Maroczy bind cramp on Black. I would most likely have replied as in the game.

9...Bd7.

Black has the two Bishops as a long-term trump but they need to be developed. The g7 square would be a potential weakness after 9...Be7 if White is able to place his Queen on g4. To that end 9.Nxc6 bxc6 10.Qg4 could have been played immediately. My small ECO quotes a game Georgadze-Sveshnikov USSR 1979 where Black met this by 10...Qf6 and White felt compelled to stop e6-e5 by 11.e5 with sharp play) 9...Bd7 (9...Be7 is a reasonable alternative leading to tricky play after 10.Nxc6 bxc6 11.Qg4 g6 12.Bh6 or 12.e5 etc)

10.Nxc6 bxc6

10...Bxc6 is considered to be inferior according to ECO which quotes 11.Re3! Be7 12.Rd3 Qc7 13.Qg4 g6 14.Bh6 b5 15.Re1 Qb7 16.Qd1 O-O-O 17.Nd5! as better for White.

The recapture with the b pawn maintains a strong central pawn front and maybe later Black has some prospects on the b file. The Black a pawn is left a bit adrift and is a potential weakness and Queenside castling is pretty much ruled out)

11.Qg4

It might have been better to precede this by playing 11.e5 first) **11...h5!?** (The idea of this move is to push back the dominant White Queen and if now 12.Qg3 h5. It does however compromise my Kingside to some extent so is a bit risky. As an alternative 11...e5 looks reasonable but I rejected it because I thought that White might be able to get an initiative by advancing his f pawn. For example 12.Qg3 g6 13.f4 Qb6+ 14.Kh1 Bg7 15.Qd3 etc. Even here Black has counter play based on possession of the two Bishops.

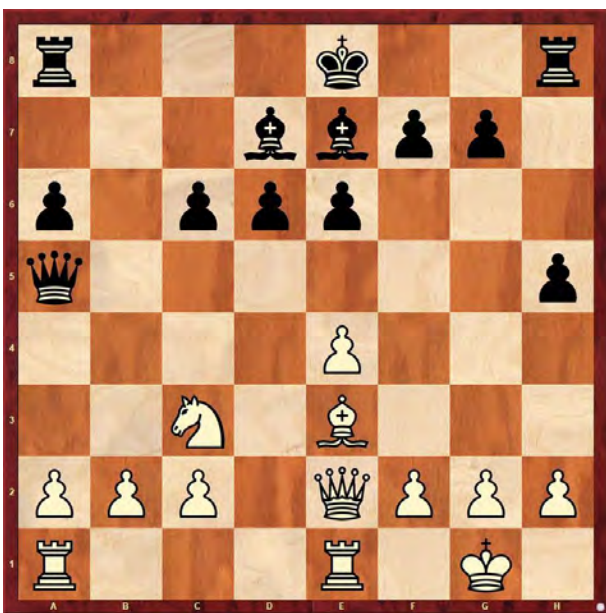
12.Qe2

This has taken some pressure off my Kingside but left me unable to move either Rook because the wing pawns are both under attack by the White Queen. 12.Qg4 would have been weak because after 12...Qxg4 13.Bxg4 f6 Black can look to develop his pieces and slowly advance the pawn centre. White would have minimal chances to win in that scenario. 12.Qf3 was playable and I would probably have replied 12...e5. Now with five of my pieces on their starting squares it is imperative to get some development going.

12...Be7

I envisage playing g6 and castling Kingside. It would be better if I could avoid the weakening g6 move with say first playing Qa5 then O-O but I doubt I can achieve that desirable objective.

13.Be3 Qa5



I was keen to get some activity. The Queen move defends both of my wing pawns and prevents both

e5 and Na4 by White. There are also possibilities to get in Rb8 or maybe h4 and Qh5. 13...e5 was a reasonable alternative to be followed by g6 or maybe g5. In that case the continuation might have been 14.Na4 d5 with unclear play.

14.Rab1

I had not considered this move. It does give cover to the b pawn ahead of a possible Rb8 (or perhaps Bf6) from Black. I expected Carl to play 14.Bd2 with the obvious threat of Nd5 in the air. I would then have played 14...Qc7 which would have gained a tempo in the event of 15.Be3 but still left me with problems to solve concerning my King position and h pawn. I now however have the possibility to switch my Queen over to the Kingside which might lead to a Queen exchange where I should be OK in the ending with the two Bishops and a strong centre. If White declines to exchange then I might get an attack by advancing my g pawn leaving my King in the centre.

14...h4 15.h3 Qh5 16.f3

It appears that Carl is not satisfied with playing an ending after 16.Qxh5. A possible continuation might have been 16...Rhx5 17.Na4 Rb8 18.Nb6 Rb4 19.Nxd7 Kxd7 20.b3 etc which looks pretty drawish.

16...O-O

Given another move or two I would be sitting pretty with a solid centre and the two Bishops. There are however a couple of weak points in the Black position namely the b6 square and also, if White places his Knight on b6, the Rook on a8 will have to move and the a pawn will fall. Carl goes for this possibility immediately because anything else would allow me to get the advantage.

17.Na4 Qb5

This allows me to avoid losing a pawn but with the likelihood of going into a drawish ending. I had initially thought about 17...a5 18.Nb6 Rad8 19.Nxd7 Rxd7 20.Qa6 but here 20...Qb5 again forces off Queens. Looking at it again, I am not sure why I discarded 17...a5. Perhaps I thought that if White exchanged Queens then after axb5 in return I would connect all my pawns into one big island or if I swapped Queens on e2 then I might get control of the b file.

18.Nb6 Qxe2

I can't really avoid this move because if 18...Rad8 19.c4 harasses the lady which will probably have to retreat back to h5.

19.Rxe2 Rad8 20.Rd1!

It is hard to see how I overlooked this strong move. I had lazily assumed that Carl would capture my Bishop by 20.Nxd7 when after 20...Rxd7 21.Rd1 Rb7 I might labour to exploit a tiny advantage of central pawn majority plus control of the b file.

I also assumed that if the Bishop was not captured, I could retain it by retreating to e8. If however, I now play 20...Be8? White has 21.e5! and if then 21...dxe5? 22.Rxd8 Bxd8 23.Bc5 Bxb6 24.Bxb6 f6 25.Bc5! etc Black will be lucky to hold on. Alternatively 21...d5 22.Na4 Rb8 and now not 23.b3 Rb5 but 23.c3! will secure a White piece landing on c5. It might be tenable if the Black Bishop redeploys to c8 but Black will be all on the defensive. What are my alternatives? 20...e5 will probably be met by 21.Nxd7 Rxd7 22.c4 Rfd8 23.Red2 and again White has pressure although Black may well hold by bringing his King to e6. 20...f6 looks passive and allows 21.Bc5. 20...f5 would be fine if White replied 21.exf5? Rxf5 but 21.e5 Be8 22.exd6 Rxd6 23.Red2 Rxd2 24.Rxd2 f4 looks ragged for Black although I would have counter play with the Bishop pair. Even stronger for White is 21.Nc4 so 20...f5 looks dubious. Finally 20...Bc8 comes into consideration but seems to lose a pawn if White continues with 21.Red2. I must get some air for my pieces so it will be 20...e5 despite misgivings.

20...e5 21.Nxd7 Rxd7 22.b3

This preparatory move forestalls any idea I may have had about controlling the b file. White can play his Bishop to b6 at any time without fearing rook either to the b file because there is no undefended pawn at b2. White has some obvious moves now such as Red2, c4, Bc5 which will pressurise my backward d pawn. I thought he might have played immediately 22.f4. I could then reply with 22...exf4 23.Bxf4 d5 24.exd5 cxd5 25.Red2 Rfd8 which should be OK for me. After 22.f4, 22...f6 is also playable 23.f5 Kf7 24.Bf2 Rh8 25.c4 Rdd8 again should hold but is uncomfortable for Black. Now after 22.b3 I have some options. Firstly 22...g5 with a follow-up of f6, Kf7, Kf6 and Rfd8 looks like a certain draw since White will not be able to break through on the Queenside. Black has no prospects whatever of a win. Secondly 22...d5 would be good if White allowed d4 and c5 but White will probably reply 23.c3 f5 24.exf5 Rxf5 with a more lively game. He could also play 23.exd5 cxd5 24.c3 Rc8 etc.

Thirdly 22...f5 when 23.exf5(?) Rxf5 with the Black King quickly moving to e6 will be fine for me. 23.Red2 looks harmless after 23...fxe5 24.fxe5 Kf7 etc. More challenging looks to be 23.Bc5 fxe5 24.Rxe5 after which the Rook can menace both my a and h pawns. I can play here 23...Rfd8 or maybe 23...g6 instead of the immediate pawn exchange. This third option appears to be less drawish so I will try it.

22...f5 23.exf5

As I noted above, I think this is not the best move here.

23...Rxf5

I feel my position is comfortable. My only weakness

is the a pawn but I can't see how that can be attacked any time soon. Meanwhile I have prospects to advance my d pawn and bring my King into the centre.

24.Bf2

It seems that White is planning to play 25.Re4 anyway. I would like to stop that by 24...Rf4 but that would lose my e pawn because of the pin on the d file. Also if I play 24...d5 it does not stop 25.Re4 for the same reason. So I must do something about the threat Re4, Ra4, Rxa6. 24...g5 solidifies my King-side but looks too slow and allows the White Rook to attack my a and c pawns. 24...Kf7 is a move I would like to play in general but is also too slow and would actually lose a pawn after 25.Re4 g5 26.Ra4 when the Bishop controls the a7 square. What else can I do then? 24...Bd8 also drops a pawn after 25.Re4 g5 26.Rc4. By a process of elimination I am left with 24...Rd8 which relieves the pin on the d file. White could play 25.Bb6 so that 25...Rb8 26.Bc7 wins a pawn but there either 25...Ra8 or Rd7 are obviously better moves.

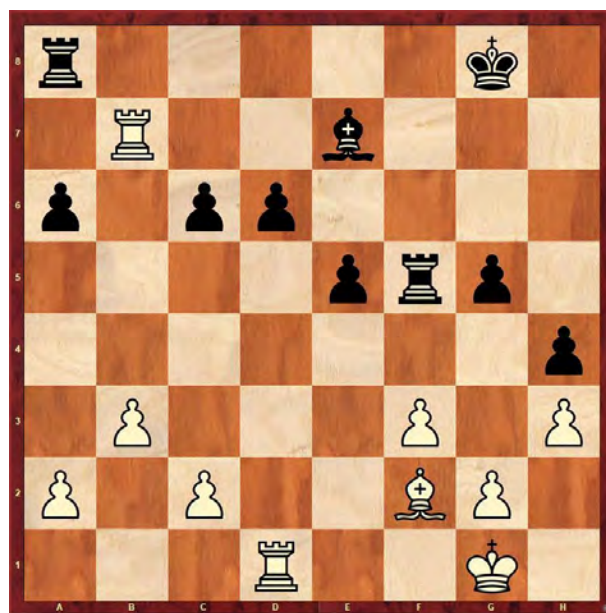
24...Rd8 25.Re4

As expected. I now have to defend my h pawn. I can do that by 25...Rf4 or 25...g5. I prefer to keep as many pieces on as possible so go for the latter.

25...g5 26.Rb4

This move is the most probing and threatens to win a pawn by Rb6. It also aims to get to the 7th rank and perhaps include the White Bishop so I have to be careful how to respond. My next move seems forced because I have to stop Rb7 and Ra7.

26...Ra8 27.Rb7



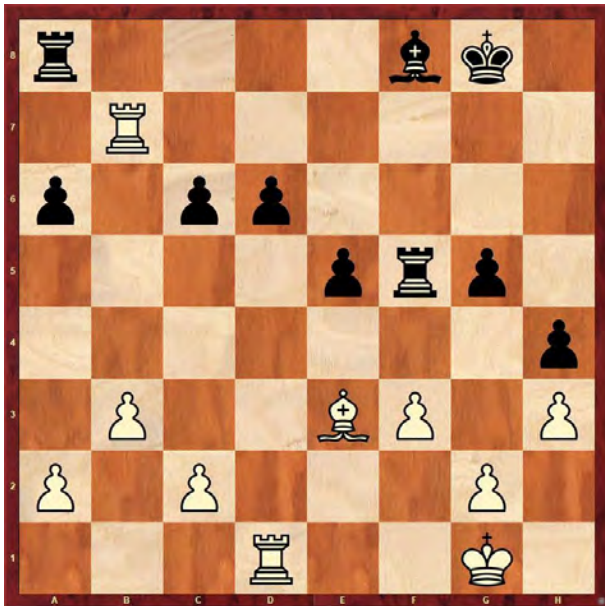
This is a strong move. In retrospect it looks like my 25...g5 was a serious error because it has allowed this Rook to infiltrate my position from the rear.

Now 27...Kf7 would be fine apart from the reply 28.Rxd3 and wins. I had missed in my earlier moves that White will soon threaten to sacrifice the exchange on d3 and then pick up my weak pawns which I have obligingly placed on Black squares)

27...Bf8

If I am allowed to play 28...Rf7 then all will be well but White moves first.

28.Be3



White eyes the g pawn which is now very weak after my 27...Bf8. With my King stuck on the back rank, I am close to losing this game almost immediately. What can I do? If 30...d5 then 31.Rc7 or 31.c3 is decisive as White will win at least a pawn without me having any counter play. Instead I have to try 29...Re8 bringing my passive Rook back into the game and hoping to generate some counter play by advancing my e pawn. There may even be some tactical possibilities on the Black diagonal a7-g1 which would give me continued hope in an OTB game but are unlikely to arise in the format of this game with plenty of time for consideration of moves.

28...Re8 29.Rb6 e4 30.fxe4

I thought previously that this was White's obvious move here but it does activate my Rooks to a certain extent. Alternatively if 30.Kf2 exf3 31.gxf3 Rfe4 32.Re1 (or 32.Rd3) Bg7! and Black is looking good for at least a draw. 30.Rxa6 (or 30.Rxc6) exf3 31.Bf2 c5 32.a4 is another idea.

30...Rxe4 31.Rd3

This seems the best move. White has to be careful here. 31.Bf2 Re2, 31.Bd2 Re2 or 31.Bc1 Bg7 all look to be certain draws for Black. The Bishop on e3 is still a tactical weakness however and White's King is a bit boxed in so it appears I have only one move worth playing.

31...Bg7 32.Rxc6 Rxe3

I think this will lead by force to a Rook endgame with me having a pawn less but still able to hold the draw.

33.Rxe3 Bd4 34.Rc8+ Kf7 35.Rce8 Ra5 36.a4 Rc5 37.c4 d5 38. Re7+

I had assumed that Carl would play 38.cxd5 but maybe he has seen a wrinkle. Otherwise this just improves the position of my King.

38...Kf7 (Carl - I wrote Kf6 here) 39.cxd5 Rxd5 40.Kf2 Rc5 41.Kf3 Bxe3 42.Rxe3 Rc2

Quite some moves back, I assessed this as a draw. That was based on the weakness of the White g pawn which would require constant defence. I now see that White can play g4. I must then capture or White's King will be able to cross over to the Queenside. This may still be drawable but is uncomfortable for me.

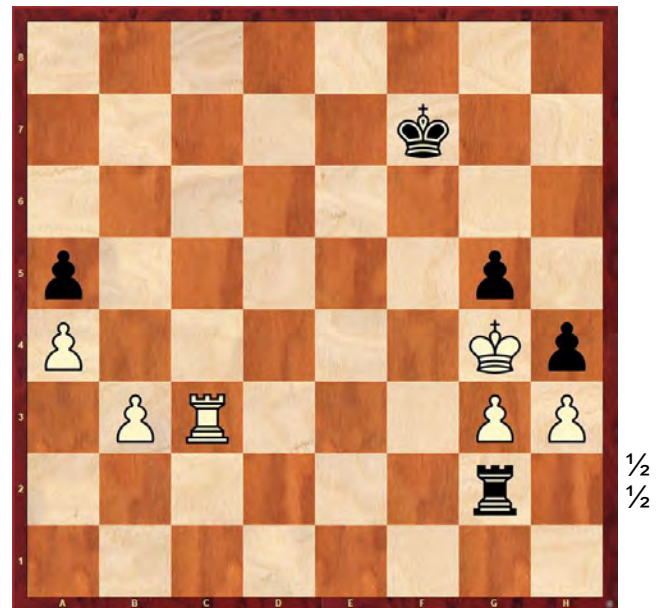
43.g3

Same idea as just mentioned but is it a slip?

43...Rh2 44.Kg4 Rg2 45.Rc3 a5

With the White g pawn requiring constant defence, I expect to draw this ending.

46.Rc6+ Kf7 47.Rc3



Here a draw was agreed.

Play might have continued 47.Kxg5 (what else?) Rxg3+ 48.Kxh4 Rxb3 49.Rc4 Rb4 50.Rg4 (50.Rxb4 must lead to a draw by perpetual because Black Queens first) 50...Kf6 51.Kh5 Rb8 52.Rg5 Rh8+ 53.Kg4 Rxh3 54.Rxa5 Ra3 55.Ra8 Ke6 56.a5 Ra4+ 57.Kf3 Kd6 and the a pawn will fall.

What would Fritz have done? It seems I made several mistakes in this game.

1. 6.Bxc6 or 6.Bf1? It is about 50:50 in the database and leads to differing strategies.
2. 9...Bd7. 9...Be7 is more popular here. My Small ECO gives 9...Be7 10.Nxc6 bxc6 11.Qg4 g6 (not 11...Bf6 12.e5!) 12.e5 d5 13.Bh6 Rb8 14.Rad1 Rxb2 15.Ne4 as unclear. While I doubt this would have occurred in the game, I didn't like the White Bishop at h6. Fritz shows several games where 11...Kf8 was played (instead of 11...g6) e.g. 12.Be3 e5 13.Qe2 Rb8 14.b3 g5!? Again with unclear play. As I suspected, Fritz gives 11.e5 as better than 11.Qg4 for White.
3. 13...Qa5. Fritz prefers 13...h4 14.h3 O-O=
4. 17...Qb5?!. I thought I had to play this or lose a pawn but 17...c5 18.Nb6 Bb5 19.c4 Rab8= and if here 20.cxb5 Rxb6 21.bxa6? Ra8 is somewhat better for Black.
5. 20...e5?! Better 20...Be8 =
6. 22...f5?! Better 22...d5 23.c3 f6 =
7. 24...Rd8? A serious error although White is also better after 24...d5 25.Re4! Rd6 26.Rg4 etc (not however 26.Ra4 Rg6=)
8. 29.Rb6. Stronger is 29.Rf1!
9. 31...Bg7 This was the start of my "drawing" defence. Fritz proposes 31...g4 32.hxg4 Rxc4 33.Bd2 Rf6! 34.Rxc6 Rfg6 35.g3 Rxc3+ 36.Rxc3 Rxc3+ 37.Kh2=. I remember looking at this and thinking White would win on the Queenside but maybe it is not so easy as there are tactics.
10. 35...Ra5. Fritz thinks 35...Rc5 is better although I looked at this and thought the way I played leaving the pawn on b3 was the way to go.

Comments from Carl

Playing Correspondence chess again after so many years brought back memories of just how much fun it was. With the Covid Lockdown, it is a marvellous way of staying in touch with our membership, especially if like Dave, you live alone.

The price of stamps these days means that for some the traditional snail mail method is expensive, but the magic of technology enables us to play more cheaply and more quickly by email. Also, correspondence does not get lost or damaged in the post.

Regardless of the results, I enjoyed the games and I wanted to learn more about the Sicilian Defence, so it was very useful. I would ask if there is anyone you might get in touch with dear reader to play a correspondence game. It's about more than the chess, it is a social pursuit and it keeps us busy in these weird times.

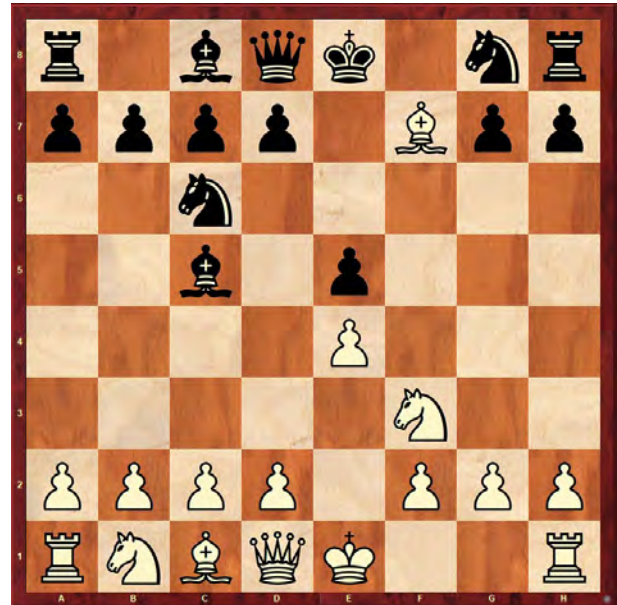
BITING THE BULLET

An opening trap



Carl Portman

The Jerome Gambit. If you play bullet chess then you are irresponsible anyway, and won't give two hoots about trying this for fun in at least a couple of games to spice up your chess life. I did not say it was good (it isn't) but if it comes off then just imagine how good you will feel.



1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. Bxf7+?

The starting point of the Jerome Gambit. I might suggest that this is best served for online bullet chess. You might have some fun.

4...Kxf7 5. Nxe5+?

Incredibly, this is an established line but of course it is awful, and very probably harmful.

5...Nxe5 6. Qh5+

6. d4 is certainly possible, but this is bullet chess, right? 6...Qh4 7. O-O Qxe4 8. dxc5 Nf6)

6... Ke6

6... Kf6?? 7. Qf5+ Ke7 8. Qxe5+ Kf7 9. Qxc5 {and White is winning handsomely.

7. f4 Nc6

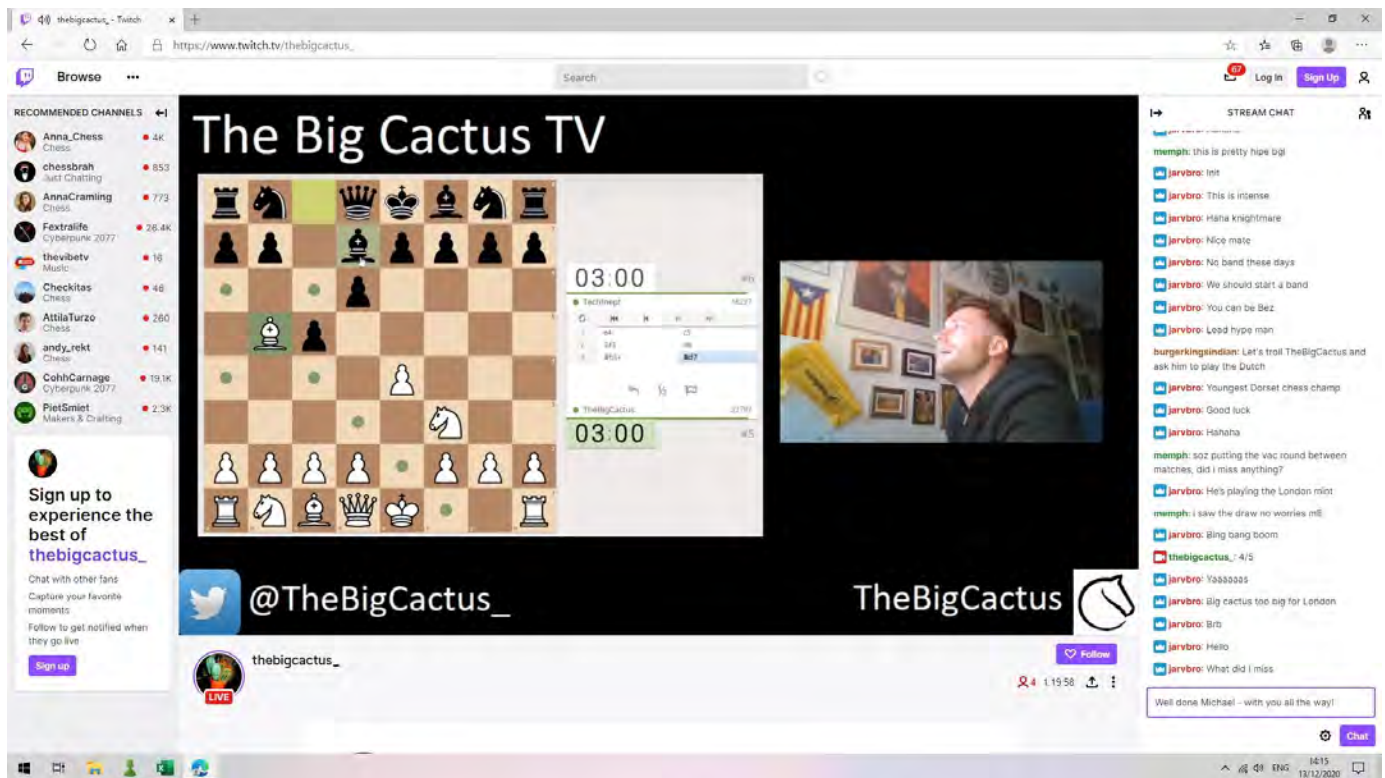
7... Nd3+ might be a laugh. 8. cxd3 d5 is still good for Black.

8. Qxc5 Qe7??

I bet that loads of people will play this. It might seem logical for Black to want to exchange queens. He is after all, a piece up, but this is wrong. So wrong.

9. Qd5+ Kf6 10. Qf5# 1-0

Get in the back of the net you beauty.



And you thought that a big cactus was a plant?

Certainly not! Our very own Michael Fielding has taken to online streaming. For the uninitiated this means that he appears 'live' to share his games online in a tournament that he is playing in. You get to see the chessboard and the moves/ Also, a camera shows Michael himself on screen.

I tuned into an early session of his - possibly it was his first, and he was having a whale of a time, mashing up some pretty strong players whilst also commentating on his moves.

Michael reinforced my own view on certain matters. I have always asserted that one does not have to be a master player to be a good chess coach. For that, one requires the ability to communicate with and build a rapport with people. Not everyone can do this, so strength is immaterial, although of course a reasonable knowledge of your subject matter helps.

But Michael adapted extremely quickly to this curious world of streaming. He is very adept at explaining his thoughts in a way that the listener/viewer can absorb and understand. There was no need for bad language and he didn't use any. Some streamers do this and it is extremely unprofessional.

I hope that we can all support Michael in building his dream - if dream it is - to raise the profile of his work far and wide. I offer him many congratulations on beginning this quest and look forward to tuning in for more entertainment in the future. If you have any questions for Michael about his streaming work, please contact him at his email address here: michaeljohnfielding@hotmail.co.uk

This is a definition of 'Streaming' from the BBC.

Streaming means listening to music or watching video in 'real time', instead of downloading a file to your computer and watching it later.

With internet videos and webcasts of live events, there is no file to download, just a continuous stream of data. Some broadcasters prefer streaming because it's hard for most users to save the content and distribute it illegally.

The Golden Dozen

12 Chess questions for Ian Gillan

Carl Portman

Chess is a game for everyone. The beautiful thing about it is, you can take it with you wherever you go, whoever you are. Many famous people play chess and the game has been mentioned in songs and films. In their famous song 'War Pigs' Black Sabbath wrote:

*Treating people just like pawns in chess
Wait till their judgement day comes, yeah!*

One man who fronted Sabbath for a while but is better known for his own solo work, and most of all fronting rock band **Deep Purple** is legend Ian Gillan.

I learned that he was a fan of chess and decided to take a punt and try to contact him to ask him some questions. Thanks to his friendly and affable manager Sally I was able to.

Ian was in Portugal, but we agreed a time for a telephone conversation where I asked him some quickfire questions.

1. **I know that you are a fan of chess. Can you tell us why?** I wouldn't say I'm a *serious* fan, but I really do enjoy a game when I can.

2. **When did you start playing?** It was at school, I was the junior member of the chess club and so had to make the jam sandwiches! I didn't mind at all.

3. **Do you have a favourite chess memory?** Yes, playing with my Dad. As soon as he got home from work, we would get the chess set out and have a game or two before dinner. It is a fact that I never beat him.

4. **Do you play nowadays?** Not really. There's a chess board in my bar (in Portugal) but it hasn't been used much recently.

5. **Do you play chess 'on the go' as it were, for example when travelling?** Not these days, but I used to carry a miniature travelling (peg) set back in the 60/70s. I certainly played on that.

6. **Do you have a favourite player or chess book?** Actually no, I never studied the game or followed it; diagrammatic chess challenges never appealed to my sense of drama; as in a face to face game.

7. **Do you follow chess at all?** No I do not. Chess is just a small but very important part of my life.

8. **You have said that all politicians should learn to play chess before taking up office. Can you explain what you mean?** Indeed, I think that we would all benefit from our leaders showing some proficiency at chess. Then we could be comfortable in the knowledge that at some point in their lives they had learned to think at least one move ahead.

9. **Do you have a favourite chess piece? (except for the Black Knight! - a play on the song Black night by Deep Purple)** If you exclude the most subtle piece, I'd have to choose a pawn for its strength in numbers and a preparedness to die for the cause.

10. **Do you think the discipline of playing chess can help in a musical world in any way?** I suppose it can, you have to stretch your mind in both cases. But in music there is no opponent other



than the previous generation.

11. **Can you solve this chess puzzle? White to play and checkmate Black in one move.** (*Ed-I sent it to Ian after the phone call and he came back to me*) Well, that's a tricky one for me; I've never done one of these before. The simple answer is no; if you're black, I can't find a way to escape check (how did that happen?) and mate you in one move. I can take your bishop or move my king. Oh dear, time for bed.

12. **Do you have a message for the members of the UK Armed Forces Chess Association?** Yes. Thank you and much respect with regards to your job you do and your games of chess.

Thank you, on behalf of the UK Armed Forces Chess Association.

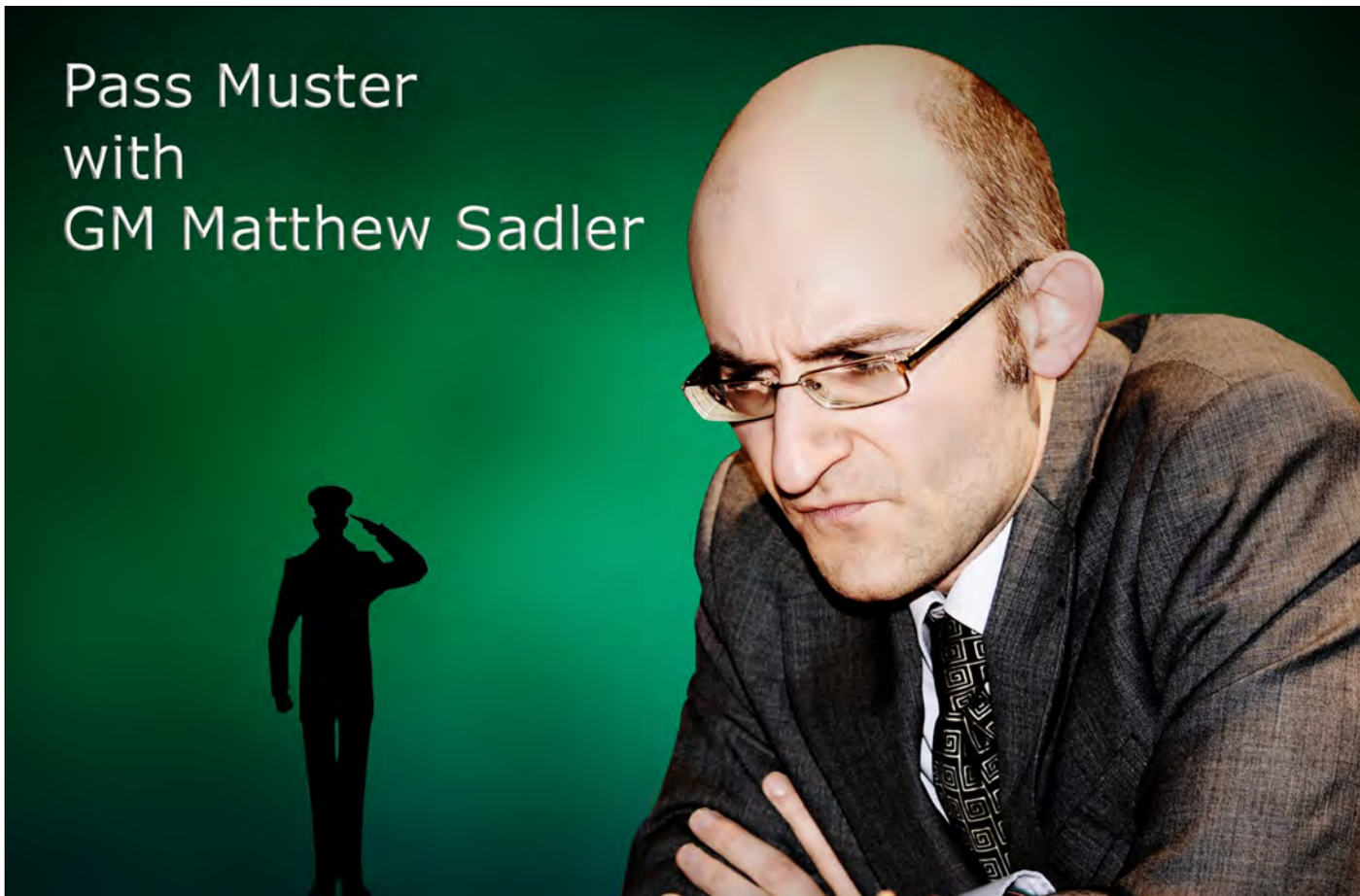




Ian Gillan

Tomasso Mei

Pass Muster with GM Matthew Sadler



Matthew takes a look at the game submitted by Dave Tucker. It was an interesting tussle against Mateusz Bobula at the NATO Championships in Texas. The discerning player, taking time to go over the moves and absorb Matthew's comments will doubtless learn something of value.

Notes by matthewsadler.me.uk

Dave Tucker (1992) UK

Mateusz Bobula (2342) Poland

NATO Chess Championships, Texas

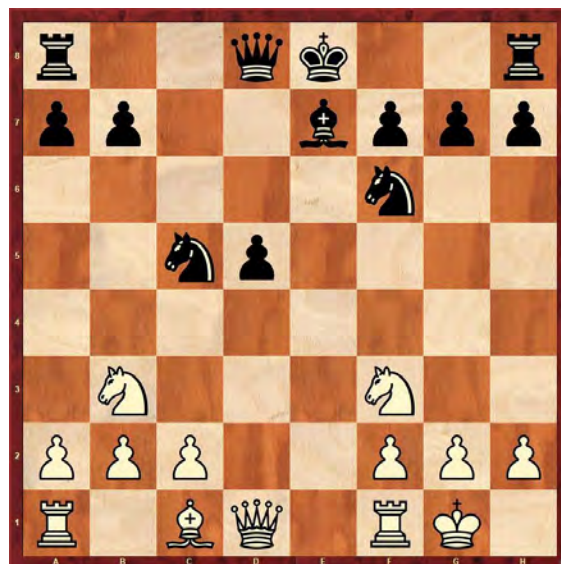
2018

**1.e2-e4 e7-e6 2.d2-d4 d7-d5 3.Nb1-d2 c7-c5
4.Ng1-f3 Ng8-f6 5.Bf1-b5+ Bc8-d7 6.Bb5xd7+
Nb8xd7 7.e4xd5 e6xd5 8.0-0 Bf8-e7 9.d4xc5
Nd7xc5**

This old-fashioned variation against the Tarrasch French (3.Nd2) has been a frequent choice of French experts Kortchnoi and Short. Black accepts an isolated pawn but also gains a firm outpost on e4 for its pieces: normally a knight, but also - as in this game - a rook. This was also the favourite system of superhuman strength AI AlphaZero when pressed to play the French defence and it won a number of fine kingside attacks with this line!

10.Nd2-b3

This is certainly not a mistake - what could be more natural than to bring the white knights into contact with the blockading d4-square? However, over the years White has discovered a more aggressive post for its knight, targeting the isolated d5-pawn and the f5-square. The latter square has been weakened by the exchange of Black's light-squared bishop. 10.Rf1-e1 0-0 11.Nd2-f1 Nc5-e4 12.Bc1-e3 followed by Bd4, Ne3, c3, Qb3 and Rad1 is quite awkward for Black to defend against. The white knight is very well-placed on e3, attacking d5 and threatening Nf5.



10...Nc5-e4 11.Bc1-e3 0-0 12.h2-h3 Rf8-e8
 13.Rf1-e1 Be7-d6 14.c2-c3 Qd8-d7 15.Qd1-c2
 a7-a6 16.Ra1-d1 Ra8-c8

Both players have played very naturally, developing all of their pieces to good squares. Neither side is in particular danger but neither side is yet threatening anything dangerous. I'd be tempted as White to play Bd4 and then bring my knight back to e3 via d2-f1! White plays for a plan of exchanges and this is also very reasonable although not too ambitious.

17.Be3-d4 Bd6-b8 18.Bd4xf6 Ne4xf6 19.Re1xe8+
 Qd7xe8 20.Qc2-d3 Qe8-a4 21.Qd3-b1 Rc8-e8
 22.Rd1-d4 Qa4-c6 23.Rd4-d1 h7-h6 24.Nb3-d4
 Qc6-c7 25.Rd1-e1 Re8-e4



Always a good square for a rook in this line: I saw many games of AlphaZero's where it played this move! White plays cautiously to eject the knight from this outpost. I would probably have gone for a slightly quicker approach with 26.g3 and then Nd2 but White's move does not spoil anything.

26.Qb1-d1 g7-g6 27.a2-a3 Kg8-g7 28.Kg1-f1

Bringing the king to f1 anticipates a future ...Qh2 from Black. White is intending to drive the rook on e4 back with Nd2 without weakening his kingside with g3.

28...Bb8-a7 29.Qd1-d3

A slightly sub-optimal move as it allows Black to give White an equivalent isolated d-pawn after which Black's slightly more active pieces guarantee a small advantage. Again 29.g3 would have been my choice, preventing ...Qh2 for good with a balanced position as White's knights are solidly

entrenched on d4.

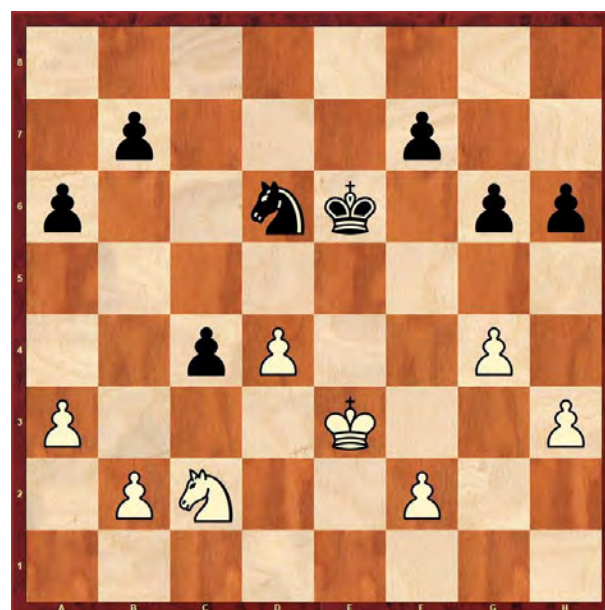
29...Ba7xd4 30.c3xd4

White is forced to recapture on d4 with a pawn as 30.Nf3xd4 Qc7-h2 wins material for Black.

30...Re4xe1+ 31.Nf3xe1 Nf6-e4 32.Qd3-c2 Qc7-c4+ 33.Qc2xc4 d5xc4

Black has made quite a bit of progress, turning its isolated d-pawn into a queenside pawn majority while also saddling White with an isolated d-pawn. However, White is still holding and plays the next moves well, bringing the king into the centre.

34.Kf1-e2 Kg7-f6 35.Ne1-c2 Kf6-e6 36.Ke2-e3
 Ne4-d6 37.g2-g4



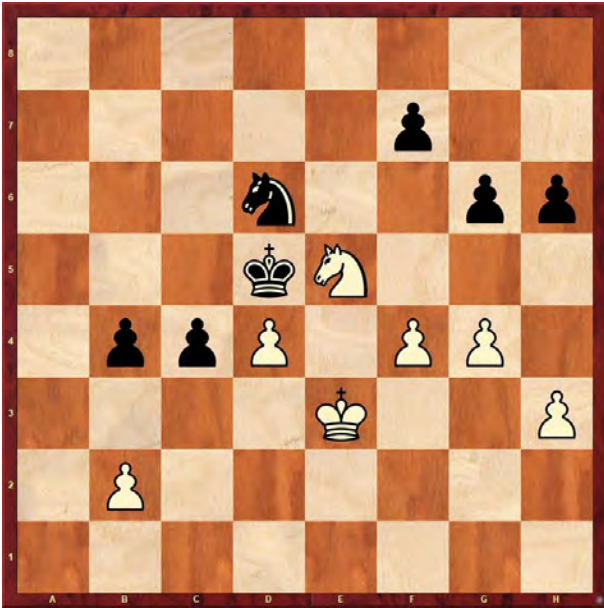
This is a very natural move, preventing the black knight from activating itself on f5. However Black's knight does still have plenty of other active squares (it can activate itself on d5 via b5-c7) so this is just a temporary inconvenience for Black. By contrast, after Black's next fine move, White's knight finds itself really short of active possibilities. 37.Nc2-b4 a6-a5 38.Nb4-a2 was a better try for White, when the knight reaches a good outpost on c3.

37...a6-a5 A fine move, preventing Nb4. The knight on c2 is now very passive.

38.f2-f4 b7-b5 39.Nc2-e1 Ke6-d5 40.Ne1-f3 b5-b4

Black's queenside majority is very powerful now and the black king and knight are well-placed to support any queenside passed pawn that Black creates.

41.a3xb4 a5xb4 42.Nf3–e5



43...b4–b3

Good technique: Black makes sure that its passed b-pawn will be created on the b-file, as far away from the white king as possible!

43.h3–h4 c4–c3 44.b2xc3 b3–b2

The b-pawn cannot be stopped.

0–1

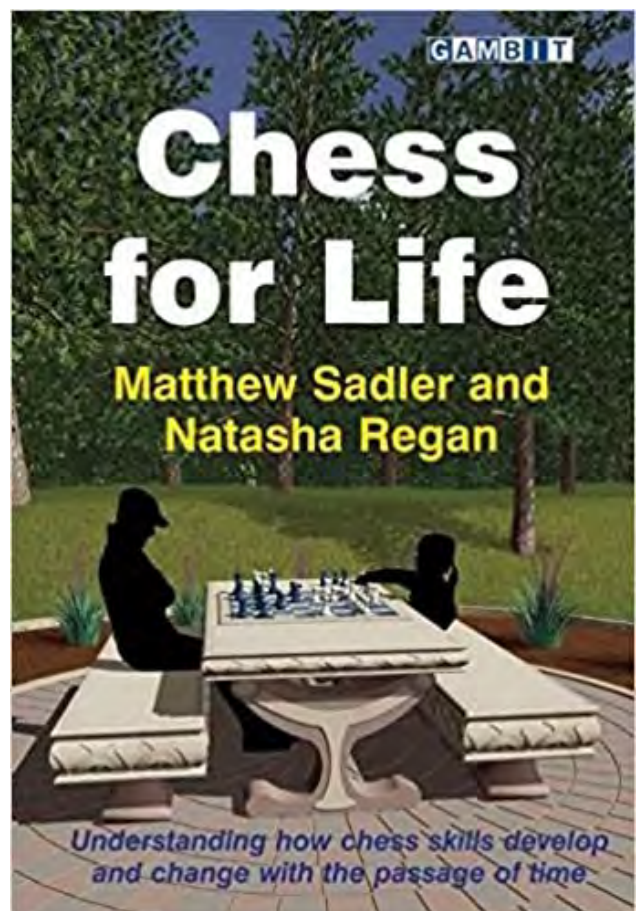
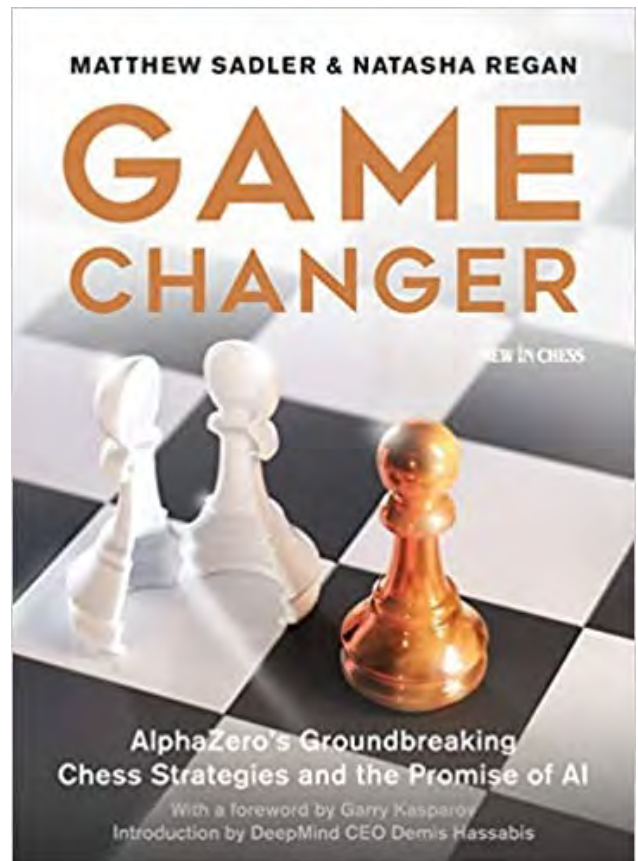
Ed, Our thanks to Matthew for giving of his time to annotate a game. We look forward to seeing which one he will annotate in the next issue. Could it be yours? You know how to contact me. It isn't every day that you get a elite grandmaster to look over your game, free of charge so take the opportunity whilst we still have him.

Meanwhile (and Matthew has not asked me to advertise these) if you have not heard of the two award winning books in the next column, you have obviously been living in a very small shed in the middle of Patagonia.

I can say with hand on heart that these are superb books that will change the way you look at chess, and at the way you play it yourself.

You can treat yourself, and support Matthew by way of thanking him for supporting us!

There are some fantastic games in both books as well as illuminating interviews with key players, from Yasser Seirawan to Nigel Short. The AlphaZero 'experiment' was astonishing, as the games will definitely reveal.





The Greek gift

Carl Portman

MOST CHESS PLAYERS will be familiar with the Greek gift Sacrifice. This is one of the oldest and most played sacrifices in the history of the game. It consists very basically of a bishop sacrifice on h7 (against a castled king) followed up by a Ng5+ and then bringing the queen in. The king has some options of where to go and there are plenty of lines to look at. White has to be ready for the moment of sacrifice and not just do it for the sake of it.

Certainly for players getting used to chess, this move can come as a shock, because we get so used to the values of pieces and do not imagine that someone would give up a whole bishop for a pawn, but it isn't a gift. There is a Trojan horse full of nasty threats if the unwary player is not very careful.

Let's look at a game to illustrate this. It is a well known one played in 1930.

White: Edgard Colle

Black: John O'Hanlon

NICE Masters (Round 9)

1930

1. d4 d5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. e3 c5 4. c3

What a surprise. This is the Colle System! Yes, named after the White player of this game.

4...e6 5. Bd3 Bd6 6. Nbd2 Nbd7 7. O-O O-O

with the Colle system White has to be prepared for several Black responses.

8. Re1 Re8 9. e4 dxe4 10. Nxe4 Nxe4 11. Bxe4 cxd4

And now Colle was ready for the Greek sacrifice.



12. Bxh7+

Crikey! The question is, 'was this the correct time to play this: was everything in place?' Look at the artillery that White has, pointing towards Black's king.

The other thing you should note is that Black would usually have a knight on f6, protecting the h7 square. Here he does not, so look out for this in your own games. If the defending knight is not defending, then consider how to strike.

12...Kxh7

If the king goes to f8 then the queen takes on d4. If the king goes to h8 then the White knight hops to g5. Either way the reaper sharpens his scythe.

13. Ng5+

Now let us be clear. There is only one square to go to here. Can you decide which one if it were you?

13...Kg6

The computer says that 13...Kg8 is the best move. 14.Qh5 Qf6 15.Qh7+ Kf8 16.Ne4 Qe5 is drawing. Now this just asks for it. You really have to consider which square you are going to have to put your king on once you have accepted the Greek gift. Sometimes g8 is best and sometimes g6 is.

Sometimes you might even want to take the bishop on h7.

14. h4!

This is the only move to keep up the pressure. If you play 14.Qg4 that is met by 14...f5 and Black is just much better, even winning.

14...Rh8?

An error and decisive mistake. Probably 14...f5 was better.

15. Rxe6+

Ouch - did you see it?

15...Nf6

15...f6 means that 16.Qd3+ is mate in 6 (good luck!)

16. h5+ Kh6

16...Kf5 17.Qd3+ Ne4 18.Qxe4#

17. Rxd6 Qa5 18. Nxf7+ Kh7 19. Ng5+ Kg8 20. Qb3+ 1-0

Beware then of any Greeks bearing gifts my friends, for there may be a Trojan horse in town!

FROM THE SHED

Arthur Jackson



(Unsplash) Ethan Sexton

From the shed is the page where new columnist and chess lover **Arthur Jackson** visits to burn the midnight oil and chuckle about aspects of the game and life. His only reward for his lucubrations is seeing his name in print.

⚠ Warning - expect any kind of random nonsense but do get used to it because that is Arthur's style.

Arthur's doppelganger...



Harry Hill



David Tucker

There I was, sewing hessian sacks in the shed, gently drawing on my pipe, watching a bit of telly, when I noticed that Harry Hill and a younger David Tucker were brothers.

I never realised that. Here they are (pictured above).

I continue to spend many days in the shed. It's been raining a lot but falling asleep listening to the gentle pitter patter of rain on the roof suits me just fine.

I have been reading several books including Savielly Tartakower's best games of chess. I also had Percy Throwers book of gardening tips, The Sky at Night (Patrick Moore version) and of course a copy of Eastbourne at War, the hardback version.

Covid is getting me down and I am looking forward to seeing everyone again in person. The wife keeps telling me to eat more greens and my doctor says I should give up the beer but what does he know of life? He is only 64.

I shall continue to imbibe, play chess and warm my feet on the lovely two bar fire I have set up. I share it with two little mice. They feed on the bread crumbs that I drop on the floor. Mind you, there was a bit of scandal in the village. The young woman who...

Crikey - got to go. The missus is on her way down the path...and she's got one of those faces on.



Thanks to Danny O'Byrne for responding to the editor's request to submit a game from the 4NCL. This one saw Danny defeat a player rated over 2000 and in fine style too. Danny remains a dangerous and difficult opponent when the mood takes him. This one was played in January 2021.

White: Steven Foister (2099)

Black: Danny O'Byrne (1844)

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. Nc3 Nc6 4. Be2 a6 5. O-O Nf6 6. d4 cxd4 7. Nxd4 Bc5

An idea of Mike Basman's, a contemporary of mine back in the day. It is not a bad plan, aiming to take white out of the normal lines.

8. Nb3

8. Nxc6 might be more accurate. 8...bxc6 9. Bf4)

8... Ba7 9. Bf4 e5

I wanted to prevent the bishop going onto d6.

10. Bg5 h6 11. Bh4 O-O 12. Nd5

This was expected, so it was time to bite the bullet. I have had some good results with this line, and it is difficult for White to generate the usual k-side attack.

12...g5 13.Nxf6+ Qxf6 14. Bg3 d6 15. c3 Rd8 16. Bc4

Moving away from protecting h5 in this way may allow my k-side pawns to roll.

16...Be6 17. Bd5 Bxd5 18. Qxd5 Qe6

I am happy to simplify because my central pawns look better.

19. Qxe6 fxe6 20.Rfe1 h5

as planned, forcing weaknesses non his k-side with that bishop on g3.

21. h4 g4 22. Rad1 Rd7 23. Kf1 Rad8 24. Rd3 Rf7 25. Red1 Rdf8 26. R1d2 ?!

I was more concerned with 26. Rxd6 or later on as an exchange sacrifice, so I thought I should offer a draw and see if my preparation bore fruit. I had seen that he often played on in worse positions and I thought I could rearrange my pieces and get the best of a growing time advantage.

26...Bb8 27. a3?!

Weakening b3, for my knight.

27...Bc7 28. c4 b6 29. Ke2 a5 30. a4?!

More weakening as time goes by with a big hole on b4.

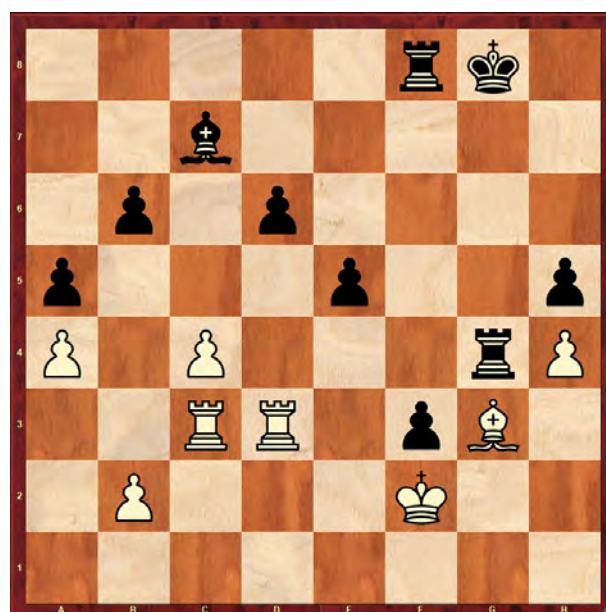
30...Rc8 31. f3

Not the best, at least if I can get his rooks onto the second rank, then defending f3 is impossible.

31...Nb4 32.Rc3 Na2 33. Rcc2 gxf3+ 34. gxf3 Rcf8 35. f4 exf4 36. Bf2

To keep an eye on his h4 pawn but it allows me to play f3+ and if the king goes backwards it prevents his rooks from going over to defend the k-side, and his e4 pawn is lost.

36...f3+ 37. Ke1 Rf4 38. Bg3 Rxe4+ 39. Kf2 e5 40. Nc1 Nb4 41. Rc3 Rg4 42. Nd3 Nxd3+ 43. Rdxd3



43...Rxc3!

Ed - very nice move.

44. Kxc3 The king is compelled to recapture but White missed that f2 wins the exchange.}

44...f2 45. Rf3 f1=Q 46. Rxf1 Rxf1 47. Kg2 Rf4 48. Rg3+ Kf7 49. Rg5 Rxh4 50. Kf3 Rf4+ 51. Ke3 h4 52. Rh5 Rxc4 53. b3 Rb4 54. Rh7+ Ke6 55. Rxc7 Rxb3+ 56. Kd2 Kd5.

White should have resigned but being a junior he played on for many more moves. Nice game Danny!

0-1

Ed - I would encourage other players in the 4NCL team to send me an annotated game for inclusion in this column. I cannot put in what I don't receive after all.

I don't play in it myself so I cannot use one of my own games as a filler.

Over to you!



Chess Books

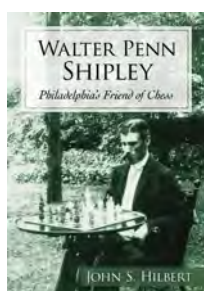
Carl Portman

PLEASE NOTE

I now have a blog page purely for chess book reviews. Here in OPEN FILE, I merely give the reader a taste of what the book is about but my **full reviews** can be read here:

<https://carlportman.blogspot.com/>

I hope they help you with regard to making your mind up if you might like to purchase a book or not.



WALTER PENN SHIPLEY
Philadelphia's friend of chess

What is the book about?

It tells the story of Walter Penn Shipley, a man who was deeply passionate about chess throughout

his life who played a significant role in the activities and development of chess in the Philadelphia area, serving (among many roles) as President of the Franklin Chess Club. He could count among his friends the likes of Steinitz, Lasker, Pillsbury and Capablanca, at one point even facilitating business matters between Lasker and Capablanca as they tried to agree terms for a World Championship match. The book profiles the life of an extraordinary individual who spread the gospel of chess to players in America and beyond at all levels across two Centuries. He was a fine chess player, writer and an outstanding organiser, Walter Penn Shipley stood alone as a trusted and indefatigable man of his time. His services to chess were known throughout the world.

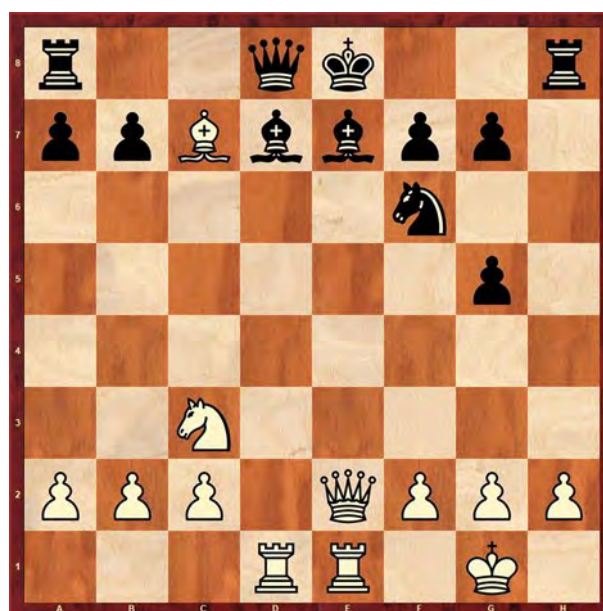
This book for me was about two aspects to enjoy. First and foremost, Shipley the man. Secondly the chess games. There are lots of correspondence games and one can imagine how long it took these games to conclude. America and the UK played cable games too and this is included here. The annotations are often light and easy to follow – just enough text to diagrams, all set out in the usual top-quality format by McFarland publishing. It's a joy to read.

I felt as I was reading the book that I was actually there, accompanying Shipley as his chess life

developed. I felt that I could have taken a seat in one of the Simultaneous exhibitions he gave or organised. I had no idea that he was friends with the luminaries of the day and entrusted with information from them all when it came to organising visits and games. What a great and true friend he must have been. He played the top players of the day and beat Lasker and Steinitz in a simul as well as Pillsbury in just seven (!) moves. True, Pillsbury erred, dropping a piece in a well-known but tricky line in the QGD, but that's chess. He also drew with Capablanca in a simul, twice.

Some of the games may not be perfect (who plays perfect chess?) but they are great fun. I enjoyed an attacking game against a clubmate, Joseph Palmer in November 1891, where Shipley was White and eagerly stormed the fortress.

1. e4 e5 2. Bc4 Nf6 3. Nf3 Nc6 4. d4 exd4 5. Ng5 Ne5 6. Qxd4 Nxc4 7. Qxc4 d5 8. exd5 Qxd5 9. Qe2+ Be7 10. O-O h6 11. Re1 Qd6 12. Bf4 Qd8 13. Nc3?! (optimistic. It may have been more prudent just to bring the knight back to f3. However, it is just possible that Shipley knew this full well but left a little worm dangling to see if the fish would take the bait – Carl) hxg5?? The bait was taken. 14. Rad1 Bd7 15. Bxc7 1-0 Sweet. Shipley's style was actually more conservative but he had his moments, for sure. Final position



NEW: CHESSBASE 16



Okay, it isn't a book, but...

You don't have to be a professional to be serious about chess. Speaking as a proud amateur I am as committed to getting the best out of my game (and therefore myself) as I can whilst having as much fun as possible. For me, chess enjoyment would be significantly diminished without ChessBase. I say this as a die-hard lover of hard copy books.

One of my chess passions is to promote chess in prisons, but like millions of chess players around the world I have also been 'locked up' with the Covid-19 Pandemic and could be for many weeks to come. This can be a seriously testing issue, but luckily, as a chess player I am never bored and there is always something constructive to do. ChessBase serves not only as a source of enjoyment in trying times but it is a fantastic information management tool to improve your chess.

I use ChessBase to assist me in all of my chess tasks. These range from writing chess columns, coaching, editing a chess magazine and storing/analysing my games. Now ChessBase 16 has landed. I am always excited when a new version is issued. Golfers relish a new set of clubs and footballers like new boots. I like my ChessBase upgrade.

Many players from beginner to strong county level are curious about ChessBase and ask 'What is it and why do I need it?' There is no simple answer apart from 'it depends'. The first thing I ask is 'what do you want from chess?' Well, ChessBase will always be there to help. What do ChessBase themselves say about the product? They assert that it is about fresh ideas, precise analysis and targeted training. I will now comment on some of the new features that I investigated that particularly interested me as a club player.

Whatever package you opt for you'll get the ChessBase 16 program, online database access, ChessBase magazine for at least 6 months and ChessBase Premium membership on Playchess for at least 6 months. With online chess being ever more popular, and the likelihood of visiting 'real' chess clubs still so uncertain there has never been a better time to purchase ChessBase in my view. You should use it a lot to get your money's worth and to build your understanding of the many options available for you in the program, but that's all part of the fun and creating your own journey. As they say interest is where you find it. See my full review here:

<https://en.chessbase.com/post/chessbase-16-a-tool-to-enjoy-and-to-improve-your-chess>

Do we chess fans need another book on endgames? Well I can speak as a chess coach. I have used and re-used many positions from the most recent (at that particular time) to the very old – the works of Reti and Kubbel for example to show aspects of endgames, but the fact that this book contains recent games certainly up to 2019 means that I had not seen the vast majority and it is great to have new material. Each time I flipped a page I found myself absorbed in the positions, some of which were from players that I know (and count amongst my friends) such as Trevor Brotherton and Nathaniel Paul from Shropshire who have a position from one of their games in Telford shown. There was therefore a real sense of the personal in this book.

I wonder, are YOU in it? Did the good doctor Nunn select one of your games? Who knows? You'll have to get it and find out.

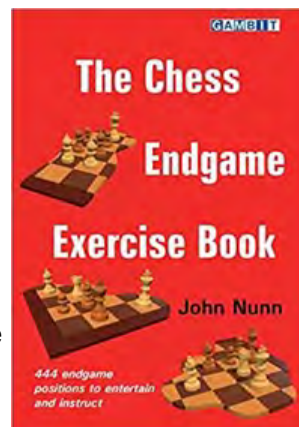
What this book did for me anyway was reinforce – as if I needed that – the fact that endgames are not boring. They are fun. They are fantastically rich in possibilities. You cannot tell me that any kind of magic in chess occurs in the opening. There's more in the middlegame but in my humble view the witchcraft and alchemy are to be found in the endgame. John Nunn is one of our own. He is one of England's long lasting and great chess inspirations, and we are very lucky to have him still writing, still sharing his ridiculously incisive wisdom with us.

I liked the idea of the test papers in chapter 10. I could visualize sitting at an old wooden school desk, fountain pen in hand, ink in the bottle and the chess test papers in front of me. Sitting at the head of the class in the finger of sunlight streaming through the window was the teacher, Dr Nunn, peering over his round spectacles like a wise old owl – getting ready to say 'turn over your paper and begin'. I would not have been his best pupil, that's for sure but he would hopefully have given me a good mark for endeavour. It took him a long time to put all of these puzzles together so the least I – and other readers - can do is switch off the infernal chess engine and apply ourselves. Just try. Have a go. Teacher Nunn is on our side! He wants us to do well.

I really enjoyed and will continue to enjoy this book. The layout is excellent. The style is very conducive to easy learning and of course it has the GAMBIT stamp of approval.

Watch a YouTube video in which author GM John Nunn presents a sample from this book. Cut and paste this address.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQ5GAikuslg>



CHESS PROBLEMS

By Carl Portman

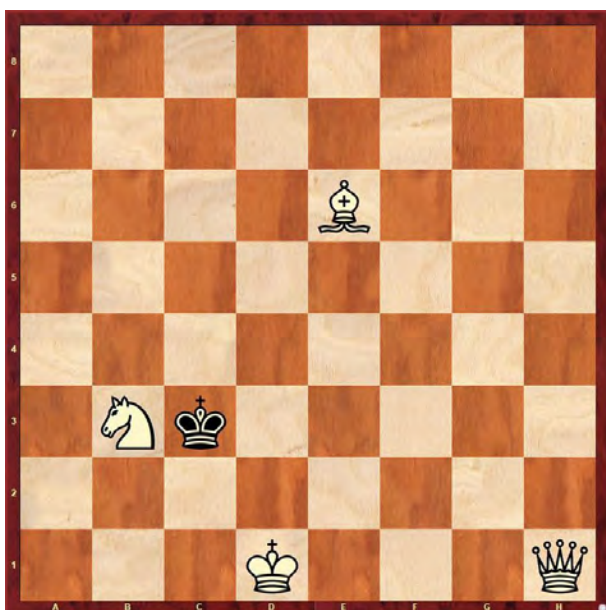


Just for fun. All four of the following puzzles are **white to play and checkmate in two moves**. I will give just the first move as the answer at the foot of the page but don't be tempted to peek. You should be able to work out the second move. Get the kettle on and enjoy it.

Position 1 (By Vladimir Bron 1966)



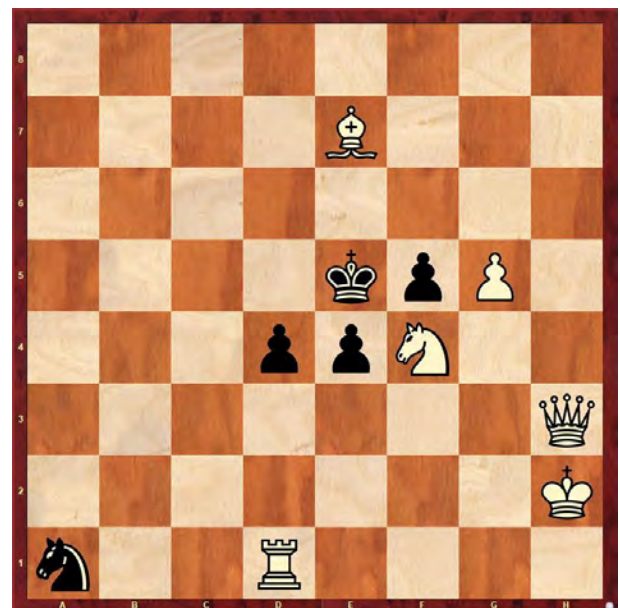
Position 2 (by K, Sujitno 2006)



Position 3 (by Geoffrey Mott-Smith)



Position 4 (by Frank W Martindale 1872)



We don't have problems here - we have solution start points.

Former work colleague

Position One 1. Ka3
Position Two 1. Qa8
Position Three 1. Nf1
Position Four 1. Qc3

Who ya gonna call?

We chess players need our kit. We get that warm fuzzy feeling when we purchase a new chess product, admit it. Well I thought I would make a little list of my most frequent visits (below). It's good to share - so what are you waiting for? Treat yourself today!



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100 YEARS AGO

CHESS AND THE MILITARY CONNECTION

Former World Chess Champion and all time great José Raúl Capablanca was the son of a Spanish Army Officer. One hundred years ago, he captured the title of World Champion, beating Emanuel Lasker. 'Capa' learned chess at the age of four and he beat his father soon after. One hundred years on, it seems appropriate to share one of the games from his WC victory.

White: Jose Raul Capablanca Black: Emanuel Lasker Round 11 1921

Queen's Gambit Declined

1. d4 d5 2. Nf3 e6 3. c4 Nf6 4. Bg5 Nbd7 5. e3 Be7 6. Nc3 O-O 7. Rc1 Re8 7...c6 is more popular.
 8. Qc2 c6 9. Bd3 dxc4 10. Bxc4 Nd5 11. Bxe7 Rxe7 11... Qxe7 is by far the more regular capture.
 12. O-O Nf8 12... Nxc3 13. Qxc3 supports pressure against Black playing ...e5. 13. Rfd1 Bd7 14. e4 Nb6 15. Bf1!? An interesting choice. 15...Rc8 16. b4 Be8 17. Qb3 Rec7 18. a4 Ng6 19. a5
 19. g3 was also playable. 19... Nd7 20. e5 b6 21. Ne4 Rb8 22. Qc3 Nf4 23. Nd6 Nd5 24. Qa3 f6
 25. Nxe8 Qxe8 26. exf6 gxf6 27. b5 Rbc8 (27... c5 28. dxc5 Nxc5 29. Bc4 and White is still a tad better. 28. bxc6 Rxc6 29. Rxc6 Rxc6 30. axb6 axb6 31. Re1 31. Bb5! 31...Qc8 32. Nd2 Nf8
 (32... Rc3!? 33. Qd6 Rc6 34. Qg3+ Kh8 35. Ne4 Qc7 36. Qh3 Nf8. 33. Ne4 Qd8 34. h4
 34. Qh3 f5 35. Qg3+ Ng6 36. Bb5 Rc8 37. Ng5! 34... Rc7 35. Qb3 Rg7 36. g3 Ra7 37. Bc4 Ra5
 38. Nc3 Nxc3 39. Qxc3 Kf7 40. Qe3 Qd6 41. Qe4 Ra4 42. Qb7+ Kg6 43. Qc8 43. h5+ is much stronger 43... Qb4 44. Rc1 Qe7 45. Bd3+ Kh6 (45... f5 46. Rc7 Qd6 47. Qe8+ Kh6 48. Qf7!?
 46. Rc7 Ra1+ 47. Kg2 Qd6 48. Qxf8+ 1-0



Bundesarchiv, Bild 102-07977 / CC-BY-SA 3.0

CHESS BEHIND BARS

CARL PORTMAN



'This is an original work and one that can be read and enjoyed on several different levels. All good books should make the reader think and perhaps even reassess their own take on certain issues and this one raises questions far away from our cosy 64—squared world. Carl is right when he says 'I do dream of better things and I am clear that actually doing something is a quantum leap from thinking about it'. His work in prisons is definitely making a difference, we just have to read the feedback to understand that—and this worthy book is required reading for anyone interested in the project.

Sean Marsh

Chess Monthly



day. Everyone is so encouraging and very helpful that I chose not to ever commit crime. Chess has improved my capabilities and increased my confidence because I learnt that I can do more. By noticing my progression on the board made me study more and my personal life improved significantly as well.

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