

# THE MIDDLE GAME

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## CHESS COLUMN UNDER THREAT – AGAIN !!!

It was a little over 18mths ago that Midlands chess players were mobilised to protest over plans to axe the weekly chess column in the Birmingham Post. The outcry caused a rethink and the column was saved. It is therefore disappointing to report that the column is again under threat.

Let's see if we can save the column again, the editor is still Fiona Alexander, who can be contacted by email [fiona\\_alexander@mrm.co.uk](mailto:fiona_alexander@mrm.co.uk) or phone on 0121 234 5617. Please let her know that chess players feel no differently about the possible demise of the chess column than they did before.

## MCCU AGM

Barn Social Club Witton Birmingham

26<sup>th</sup> June 2005

A disappointing 11 delegates attended the AGM, coupled with very little feed back to information circulated about the meeting.

In inviting the President to give his address, the meeting Chairman expressed his pleasure that despite his continuing ill-health Roy Woodcock was able to attend and congratulated him on his award of a Life Vice-Presidency from the BCF.

Roy thanked Cyril for his kind words and thanked the Union officers for their work. He was sorry that his health had prevented him from doing much for the MCCU this year. He had been disturbed that issues relating to the formation of the Greater Manchester chess bodies had re-emerged some 30 years after the event. He had considered resigning the Presidency during the year, but had been persuaded not to do so, and had indeed was quite willing to carry on next year.

The CEO commented that MCCU events had had their ups and downs. The inter-Union match with the EACU had been postponed at their request, and a suitable venue for the jamboree involving all Unions in the right location, at the right time and the right price had not been found. However, it was hoped that the event could take place next year. Clubs failed to respond to the opportunity of a Midlands club event, and continued to put out a poor representation in the National Club events.

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## CONGRATULATIONS

To Manchester, who retained their County Open team title; Nottinghamshire, winners of the U150 event; & to Derbyshire & Staffordshire in reaching the finals of the Minor & U100 respectively.

Well done to Newark who won the National Club Minor Plate. 2 Nottingham High School teams reached the National Schools finals (the first time 2 teams from the same school had done so) along with Oakham & Oldham Bluecoats. The Notts A team beat the holders Oldham Bluecoats in the Championship final. Their B team were Plate runners up with Oakham taking 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Nottingham HS also had teams in both the U9 & U11 EPSCA Finals, winning the U9's and taking runner up spot in the U11's. Beaver Road School in Manchester also reached the U9 finals.

On the individual junior front well done to Craig Whitfield of Staffs at the World Junior Event.

For more details see the results supplement

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

26-28 Aug - [33rd Herefordshire Congress](#), The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School, Hampton Dene Road, Hereford [HR1 1UU](#). Nigel Beveridge, Ridgeway, Rectory Road, Hampton Bishop, Hereford HR1 4JU (Tel: 01432 870218)

9-11 Sep - [Leek Congress](#), Westwood High School, Westwood Park, Leek, Staffordshire. Robert Milner, 411 Cheadle Road, Cheddleton, Leek, Staffordshire ST13 7BH (Tel: 01782 550112)

11 Sep - [19th Leamington Rapidplay](#), Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa. Jonathan Rashleigh, Longeaves, Norton Lindsey, Warwickshire CV35 8JL (Tel: 01926 842523, Email: [jonathan.rashleigh@virgin.net](mailto:jonathan.rashleigh@virgin.net))

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Organisations continued to be poor at notifying changes; as a result information did not always get to the right people. Even when it did it was all too often ignored. A significant number of Midland Counties and Midland chess organisations entitled to do so, fail to send delegates to BCF meetings, even when they were on their own doorstep. They compounded this by not even sending proxies. Attempts to gain input on MCCU and BCF issues over the last year had largely been met by silence. It was therefore more than a little galling to hear people moan about decisions that had been taken, when they had made no attempt to influence them.

What was believed to be a fully revised MCCU constitution had been produced and had led to proposals for updating the appeals procedures. A draft Child Protection Policy had also been formulated.

On the junior front, it was hoped that more counties can manage to field an under 18 team. There appears to be an attitude in some quarters that unless a team are potential winners it isn't worth entering, or that "our players are inexperienced so we won't enter" Players will not gain experience unless they do play in such events, it's a circle that needs to be broken.

Andrew Leadbetter presented the accounts that showed a small loss. This was mainly due to the 2004 Midland Open Congress, though this had been partly mitigated by unexpected profits from an MCCU grading list, which had been produced when it transpired that the BCF could not publish an on-line list. Donations of £100 each had been made to 2 participants representing England in international events, though in one case this had come from a separate junior fund.

The Junior Director Graham Humphries was unable to attend the meeting due to ill health. He was again disappointed over the low turnout in the under 18 event, but was pleased that the individual event had gone well. The date for the 2006 U18 team event had already been published and a move of date was being considered for the

individual event. He thanked Cyril Johnson and Andrew Leadbetter for their help.

The Grading Director John Robinson felt that there would be little point in having a printed MCCU list, as the BCF would be putting the grading detail on their website. He did not feel the demand would make production viable, the smaller the print run the more expensive it would be. However, Andrew Leadbetter felt there may be enough demand. After some discussion it was agreed that the Finance and Grading Directors and the CEO would evaluate the demand before making a decision. John indicated that he was willing to do the necessary work extracting the detail should we decide to go ahead with a printed list.

The Events Director Cyril Johnson explained that a Midland Club Championship along the lines of the National Club Rapidplay had only attracted 3 entries so was cancelled. The Midland Open Championship had suffered venue problems, Hinckley fell by the wayside due to a double booking on the Saturday afternoon. A replacement venue offer was withdrawn just before entry forms went to press, and no other venue could be found at short notice for less than £1000.

There had been too many defaulted boards and conceded matches in the County Championships. An U125 place in the National stages had been lost because Nottinghamshire did not play their matches. The half year meeting had voted for the U175 event to be run as a jamboree. Cyril felt that the event should take place on just 1 day as the last time jamborees were tried they had been skewed by teams playing on the first of 2 dates and withdrawing for the second.

A number of complaints had been received about defaults on high boards and board orders. The need for consistency in board orders was accepted, allowing for late subs, and the fact that gradings are often based on 2 years results and do not reflect current playing ability. Proposals on the agenda had been made to address these issues.

Neil Beasley, the Inter-Counties Controller, echoed concerns over the disruptions caused by team withdrawals and failure of others to complete their fixtures. He was also disappointed that the Open and Minor titles went by default, instead of being played for over the board. He felt that the change to Open and Minor divisions with no play-offs was a must. However, he was unhappy at the prospect of an U175 jamboree due to previous experiences with these. However, with only 2 teams competing in the 2004/5 event a jamboree proposal may be academic. The U150 event was very close, but was marred by the bickering of captains about board order, and a dispute concerning failure to keep score with still more than 5 minutes left. Neil sincerely hoped that counties would only enter teams for 2005/6 which would complete their fixtures.

Neil switched hats to report that he felt someone with more technical expertise should take on the role of webmaster. He was quite happy to maintain the site until someone else came forward. It was commented that the MCCU website is much better and more up to date than most.

Peter Gibbs reported on progress in reinstating the MCCU individual correspondence event which bears his name. Phillip Beckett of Nottinghamshire will control the event, with Peter overseeing matters on behalf of the Events Director. 10 entries had been secured, with hopes of an 11<sup>th</sup>.

Chris Lee reported that the Ritson Morry team event had not yet been completed. A problem had arisen with 2 players who had started a game by email, where one player wished to change to post. The controllers ruling that having begun by email the game should be completed by email was upheld on appeal. However, as a result of this situation Chris made proposals to change the 2005/6 rules to clarify matters. These were discussed, along with a proposal to adopt the email rules used by the BCF for the 2006/7 event. It was unclear whether the 2005/6 event had already started, as was scheduled, even if it had

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not, players would have entered on the existing rules. It was felt that the rules for the current event could not be changed at this late stage. It was agreed that the proposals be circulated to correspondence captains with feedback brought to the half year meeting. Any rule changes/additions will then be in place for 2006/7.

We have had no Publicity Director for the past 12 months, but the former director, now CEO, had continued to publish the bi-monthly newsletter The Middle Game. Although an expression of interest in taking on the Publicity post had been received following the AGM of 2004, and a similar expression had been received leading up to the 2005 AGM, the persons concerned had not followed this up. The CEO was willing to continue producing the newsletter. A request for a cut down version of the Middle Game sent by email was made, on the grounds that it took too long to load from the website. However the majority present did not seem to regard download times as a problem. It was explained that an email attachment had originally been used to distribute copy, but the consensus had been to switch to the alert message currently used to avoid clogging up mail boxes. A small number of people still received a copy via email; additions to this circulation could be made on request.

The report on the BCF Council meeting formed the bulk of the AGM report. There had been a Management Board meeting the day before the AGM so a verbal update on that and developments immediately following was given. John Robinson's nomination for the Presidents Award for services to chess had been heartily endorsed. Various concerns about the Northern Members Scheme had been resolved and initial responses were looking promising.

It was decided that enhanced CRB clearance would be sought for the main BCF officers dealing with children. There was discussion regarding the Junior Chess Directorate, with concerns expressed on various issues. The Director Alan Ruffle tendered his resignation following the meeting. (As some of you will be

aware Cyril Johnson is combining Home Chess & Junior roles until the AGM)

There was also discussion concerning the set up of an ethics committee and update on progress towards changes to EFC and Limited Company.

Cyril Johnson was persuaded to continue as Events Director, with all other officers willing to continue, and no one else nominated for posts, the elections were straightforward.

Neil Beasley had carried out consultation concerning the county open event and the consensus was in favour of a split between championship and minor. This required revision of the county competition rules, which were put before the meeting. There was a suggestion that promotion/relegation be decided on a playoff between the top team in the minor section and the bottom team in the championship, but this did not find favour. The revisions were agreed without amendment.

It was proposed that a county defaulting a board without prior warning be fined £5 for each board defaulted. This suggestion did not find favour and was rejected. A further proposal was that county captains submit their proposed board order at the start of the season, giving explanations for variances between grading order and board order. Changes could be made to this during the season with the consent of the Controller. Despite the disquiet expressed by some captains regarding board order in the 2004/5 season, not only was this rejected, but no alternative proposals were made.

The meeting accepted that the appeals procedures in the MCCU constitution needed updating, apart from some minor amendments to the wording, but not the substance; the revisions proposed by the CEO were agreed. In essence this means that appeals made within the scope of this part of the constitution can be processed without the need for a formal hearing, but with the option of appellants insisting on a formal hearing. To dissuade

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frivolous requests for a formal hearing, a fee of £25 would be payable, but would be returned where an appeal was upheld.

Draft Child Protection policy based on the BCF equivalent was put before the meeting. A delegate presented various suggestions, which were a combination of proposed amendments and comment. The delegates did not feel that these could be properly considered within the confines of the meeting and felt that the issues raised should be looked at, and the matter brought back to the half year meeting.

A request had been received from the Braille Chess Association for financial support for Bill Armstrong in representing England in a forthcoming international tournament. A donation of £50 was agreed. It was resolved that if any other requests for support are received in the period between General Meetings, the CEO would select a panel of 3 officers not involved with the county of the applicant to reach a decision.

The half year meeting will be held on either the 20<sup>th</sup> or 27<sup>th</sup> November at Syston, with the AGM on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 2006 also at Syston.

If anyone would like copies of officers reports or other AGM documents emailing to them just ask. I plan to get revised constitution posted to the website shortly and hopefully the county rules will be amended on the website as well

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

In the next column is the draft policy put before the AGM. Comment is sought, especially from anyone with particular experience in this field. I can be contacted -

By email [juliedjohnson@yahoo.com](mailto:juliedjohnson@yahoo.com)  
By post 105 Central Ave Syston Leics LE7 2EG  
By phone 0116 2609012 preferably before 10.00pm

## **MIDLAND COUNTIES CHESS UNION (MCCU)**

### **POLICY**

Whilst the primary function of the MCCU is to promote chess, it recognises its responsibility for the welfare of children and vulnerable adults attending events it organises. It is the policy of the MCCU to safeguard the welfare of all people attending its events by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

### **OFFICIALS**

The main posts of Director of Junior Chess and Events Director are those likely to involve a degree of contact with children or vulnerable adults. In general the type of work will involve regularly caring for and supervising them. Persons elected to these posts will be required to undergo a CRB clearance and provide a suitable reference.

### **AFFILIATED ORGANISATIONS**

The MCCU strongly recommends that Affiliated Organisations have a suitable Child Protection Policy.

### **GUIDELINES**

These guidelines apply to any person acting in an official capacity on behalf of the MCCU at an MCCU organised event. In particular this includes officers, controllers and arbiters.

#### ***What happens if.....?***

##### **a) If you suspect a child is being abused:-**

- 1) immediately inform the MCCU official in charge of the event
- 2) record the facts as you know them and give a copy to the MCCU official
- 3) ensure that the child has access to an independent adult
- 4) ensure that no situation arises which could cause further concern
- 5) ensure access to confidential information is restricted to appropriate officials on a 'need to know' basis.

##### **b) If a child tells you about abuse by someone else**

- 1) allow the child to speak without interruption, accepting what is said.
- 2) alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgment

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- 3) advise that you will try to offer support, but that you must pass the information on
- 4) same steps as 1 – 5 above

**c) If you receive any allegation of abuse about any adult or about yourself**

- 1) Immediately inform the MCCU official in charge of the event
- 2) record the facts as you know them and give a copy to the MCCU official
- 3) try to ensure that no-one is placed in a position which could cause further compromise

The MCCU official will take action which may include contacting the social services or the police. The MCCU official will also submit a report to the MCCU Chief Executive Officer, unless the matter relates to the Chief Executive Officer, in which case the report will be submitted to the MCCU President.

***Code of Conduct***

- Do** put the guidelines into practice
- Do** treat everyone with respect
- Do** provide an example you wish others to follow
- Do** plan activities which involve more than one other person being present or at least are within sight or hearing of others. This applies to such activities as travelling to or from chess events.
- Do** respect a young person's right to privacy
- Do** provide access for young people to talk to identifiable responsible adults about any concerns they may have. Deal with any concerns in a sympathetic and appropriate manner.
- Do** encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- Do** avoid situations that compromise your relationship with young people and are unacceptable within a relationship of trust.
- Do** remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned
- Do** recognise that caution is required even in sensitive moments of counselling
- Do** recognise that children with differing abilities have differing requirements.
- Do** recognise that children from different backgrounds may have differing values.
- Do NOT** permit abusive peer activities (e.g. bullying, ridiculing)
- Do NOT** play physical contact games with young

people

**Do NOT** have any inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others

**Do NOT** allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour such as tantrums

**Do NOT** show favouritism to any individual

**Do NOT** make suggestive remarks or gestures even in fun

**Do NOT** let suspicion, disclosure or allegation of abuse go unrecorded or unreported

**Do NOT** rely on just your good name to protect you

**Do NOT** believe 'it could never happen to me'

***Notes on Unacceptable Behaviour by Children***

- Participants should be encouraged to develop a sense of right and wrong behaviour.
- Where unacceptable behaviour does take place, appropriate sanctions, decided by the MCCU Official and /or responsible people present, should be applied to modify the behaviour
- Sanctions applied to each case should take account of the age and stage of development of the young person, be given at the right time, be relevant to the action and be fair
- The participant must always be told why the behaviour is unacceptable and the reasons for applying a particular sanction
- Corporal punishment (smacking, slapping or shaking) is illegal and therefore should never be used. It is permissible to take necessary physical action in an emergency to prevent personal injury, either to the young person, other participants or adults, or serious damage to property
- Participants should not be shouted at directly, though raising of the voice is permissible in instances where it is necessary to be heard

## BLINDFOLD CHESS

Mention the idea of blindfold chess to many and they shake their heads, "I have enough problems playing when I can see the board!" Chess is often thought of as a very visual game, taking "visual" in its' narrowest sense of being able to see with the eyes. However, if you consider the skill of analysis several moves ahead, then it is more appropriate to use the term "visual" in a much wider sense. In doing so the concept of blindfold chess does not seem so strange.

Blindfold chess, or more accurately playing chess without sight of the board, has roots in the early days of the forerunners of the modern game.

The skill of picturing or visualizing positions, without the benefit of the pieces being so placed on a board, was recognized as a valuable technique in improving proficiency as a player, quite early on in the development of both chess and its' forerunners. Playing without sight of the board was recognized as a method of honing this technique. That said blindfold chess also has a long history as a "party piece" to impress, and a way for a strong player to handicap themselves against weaker opposition.

The concept of playing a board game without sight of the board is referred to in early Buddhist times as "games played by imagining boards in the air". Board sports had always been popular among Muslims and the 8<sup>th</sup> Century produced a black African Said b. Jubair, who excelled in blindfold play. In fact, he allegedly took up chess to make himself ineligible for an appointment as a judge, which he thought would conflict with his religious beliefs. Under Muslim law, chess (once played with dice) was *mukarrah* or disapproved of, though not *haram* or forbidden, but was regarded as incompatible with judgeship. The ploy was unsuccessful and he spent several years "on the bench" so to say. He was the first blindfold player to turn his back on the board and play without sight of the board in contrast to the contemporary custom of feeling the pieces. Jubair was condemned for his part in a revolt, and his executioner is said to have dreamed that God would kill him once for every man he had killed, but 70 times for the death of

Jubair. Muhammad b. Sirin, a Persian, and ash-Shafi'i, a great lawyer of his time, are both credited with reputations in this field during the same Century.

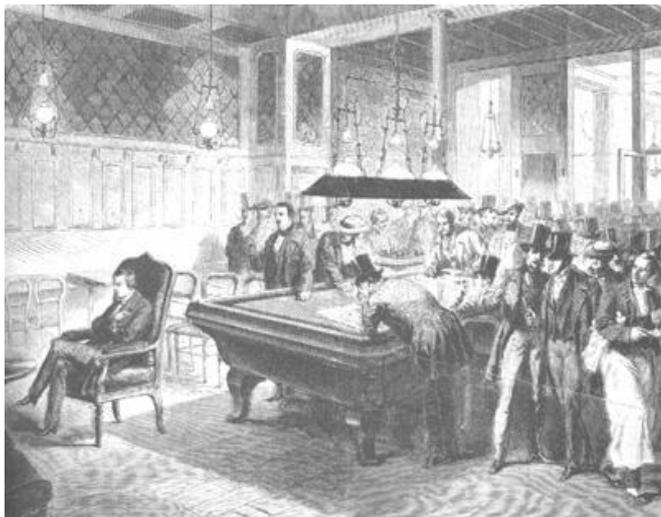
11<sup>th</sup> century chronicles recount the skill of an Egyptian soldier Ala'addin, who was blind, and played chess with the nobles and beat them convincingly. The chronicler goes on to say that Ala'addin would withdraw from games to talk to those gathered around, even reciting poetry and telling stories, only to return to the game having forgotten nothing about it. Later 16<sup>th</sup> Century writings mention a blind player in Damascus playing in the presence of the Sultan Sulaiman, the Sultan is said to have removed one of the blind player's pieces, a fact that he quickly detected. He remarked that if the Sultan had done it there was nothing to be done but play his best, if anyone else had done it he would appeal to the Sultan.

By this time blindfold chess had already been documented in Europe, a 13<sup>th</sup> Century chess master named Buzecca is reported to have visited Florence and is to have played 3 of the cities leading players simultaneously, 2 of them blindfold, the other over the board. A century later a Florentine player, Mangiolino gained notoriety as a blindfold player. The first references to a well known player involved with blindfold chess arise in 16<sup>th</sup> Century Spain with Lopez, he and his nearest Spanish rivals Alfonso Ceron and Medrano were all noted for the skill in blindfold play.

The first top flight "modern" player to take up blindfold chess was Philidor, who in 1744 he played 2 opponents blindfold simultaneously in Paris. This was the first time blindfold play against two opponents was fully recorded. He said he had learned how to play blindfold chess when he could not sleep at night, so he played chess in his head without site of a chess board. He bettered this in 1751 playing 3 such games in Berlin. His record stood for over 100 years until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century when both Paulsen and Morphy increased the number of simultaneous games. In 1857 Louis Paulsen played 4 opponents blindfold simultaneously, this was bettered by Morphy in

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early 1858 when he played 6 opponents blindfold simultaneously in New Orleans and later in the same year 8 of the strongest players in Paris. The games were played in the Cafe de la Regence and the exhibition lasted 10 hours. Morphy won 6 and drew 2.



*Morphy during his Paris simul*

Paulsen won the record back in 1861 playing 10 opponents in London. He won 9 and lost 1 after six hours of play.

The record stood for 15 years until in 1876 Zukertort played 16 opponents and held the record until the appearance of Pillsbury, who in 1900 he played 17 (New Orleans) then 20 (Philadelphia). A few years earlier he had played 15 chess and 15 draughts blindfold games at the same time. The record continued to climb during the first half of the 20th Century. In 1919 Reti played 24 opponents in Haarlem, the Netherlands. In 1921 Gyula played 25 opponents in Berlin. He won 15, drew 7, and lost 3 games. Alekhine went one better in 1924. He had learned how to play blindfold chess when he was confined in a hospital in World War II after a spinal injury. The following year he played 28 opponents, winning 22, drawing 3, and losing 3. Reti regained the record in the same year played 29 in Sao Paulo. After the exhibition, he was going home and forgot his suitcase. When somebody reminded him about it, Reti said, "Thank you very much. My memory is so bad..." The see-saw between Reti and Alekhine closed in 1933 when the latter played 32 opponents.

Blind fold chess suffered some problems when the Russian authorities banned simultaneous displays, having labelled them a cause of mental illness, as result Russian players did not become involved with this activity. The rest of the world took these claims with a pinch of salt and top players continued to engage in such displays and stretch the record further. An exception was George Koltanowski, who was not generally regarded as being in the same league as the top over the board players. He relied more on supreme memory skills than chess ability. In 1937 he played 34 opponents in Edinburgh. He won 24 games and drew 10 games. The exhibition lasted 13 1/2 hours.

The record was again stretched in 1943 when Najdorf played 40 opponents in Rosario, Argentina. He was trying to gain publicity to let his family members in Europe know that he was still alive. In 1947 Miguel Najdorf broke this world record by taking on 45 opponents simultaneously at Sao Paulo, Brazil. The display started at 8 pm on January 24, 1947 and finished at 7:30 pm on January 25. He won 39 games, drew 4 games, and only lost 2 games. In October 1960 Janos Flesch of Hungary played 52 opponents in Budapest. He won 31 games, drew 3 games, and lost 18 games in 12 hours play. However, this record attempt has been somewhat sullied by the fact that Flesch was permitted to verbally recount the scores of the games in progress. As a result many regard Najdorf as the holder of the record rather than Flesch. As no one has beaten either record, there is some dispute as to which is the current record holder.

Whilst George Koltanowski never recaptured the record for the highest number of opponents, 1951 saw him then aged 51, play 12 opponents blindfold simultaneously in Vancouver, British Columbia. This secured the record for the most games blindfolded for a player that had reached 50+. The same feat was achieved in 2004 by Jonathan Barry again in Canada. Koltanowski claimed a 3<sup>rd</sup> record in December 1960 when he played 56 opponents blindfold consecutively, rather than simultaneously, in San Francisco. He won 50 games and drew 6 games. The exhibition lasted 9 hours. The moves were made at 10 seconds a move. As soon as a game was over, another person took his place.

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Whilst blindfold simuls have never died out completely, the mystic they held in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century seemed to dissipate. However, top players are still involved in the modern equivalent of blindfold chess. Rather than the traditional blindfold and verbal announcement of moves, they are relayed between players by computer and notation. Today there are Blindfold Chess Tournaments held throughout the year, with the highest profile event being the Melody Amber Tournament, held in Monte Carlo. This event is partly funded by the billionaire Correspondence Chess Champion Joop van Oosterom, in memory of his daughter Amber. It attracts many of the world's chess elite to compete in unique circumstances. Of the modern day players, Alexander Morozevich and Viswanathan Anand have proven themselves to be particularly strong at Blindfold Chess, winning the 2004 and 2005 Amber Tournaments respectively.

Vladimir Kramnik and Veselin Topalov, despite the handicap of being unable to see the board, produced perhaps one of the greatest blindfold games ever in the Amber event of 2003. In the final position, black cannot prevent mate: if 39 ..Be7 40 fxe7+ Ke8 41 Kd6; 39 ..hxg5 40 Ra7.

V Kramnik - V Topalov Amber Blindfold, 2003 (2)

Sicilian Scheveningen

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nc6 5 Nc3 d6 6 Be3 Nf6 7 f4 a6 8 Qf3 Qc7 9 0-0-0 Bd7 10 Nb3 Rc8 11 Kb1 b5 12 Bd3 Nb4 13 g4 Bc6 14 g5 Nd7 15 Qf2 g6 16 Rhf1 Bg7 17 f5 Ne5 18 Bb6 Qd7 19 Be2 Qb7 20 Na5 Qb8 21 f6 Bf8 22 a3 Nxc2 23 Kxc2 Bxe4+ 24 Kb3 Ba8 25 Ba7 Qc7 26 Qb6 Qxb6 27 Bxb6 h6 28 Nxb5 Kd7 29 Bd4 Bd5+ 30 Ka4 axb5+ 31 Bxb5+ Bc6 32 Bxe5 Bxb5+ 33 Kxb5 Rc5+ 34 Kb6 Rxe5 35 Rc1 Rxa5 36 Rc7+ Kd8 37 Rfc1 Rc5 38 R1xc5 dxc5 39 Kc6 1-0

## Kriegspiel

Linked to blindfold chess is this variation, a sort of half-way house between standard chess and blindfold.

This was invented in 1899, by Henry Michael Temple, in South-Africa. Members of the chess club *Knights Lights Club* proposed to play a war game, and Temple suggested what we now call kriegspiel.. The game spread

around the world quickly, and was played by several famous chess players, including Lasker. Its early popularity has diminished, but the game still has its enthusiastic followers.

### Rules

Kriegspiel is a battle between two players. However, a third person is necessary to act as a referee.

One needs three boards for the game. The main idea of Kriegspiel is that players only see their own pieces, do not see the pieces of their opponent, and do not know what moves the opponent has made - they only have some partial information (see below) that allows them to guess where the opponent's pieces are. Only the referee knows exactly the real position of both sets of pieces.

Players move turn-wise, just as in normal chess. Each turn, a player attempts a move. When this move is legal, the referee announces that the player has moved, and the turn is done. When the move is not legal, the referee also announces that the player attempted an illegal move, and the player must make a new attempt to move, until he makes a legal move.

All announcements by the referee are heard by both players.

When a move gives check, the referee announces this, and also announces the direction in which check is given: either on the row, on the column, on the small diagonal, on the large diagonal, or by a knight. However, the place of the checking piece is not told (but sometimes can be guessed or deduced correctly.)

When a piece captures another piece, the referee announces this, and also the field where the capture has taken place. For instance, the referee could announce: *White has captured on d3*. The referee does not announce with which type of piece the capture has been taken place, or which type of piece is taken. There is one exception to this latter rule, namely en-passant capture is announced, for instance, the referee could announce: *Black has taken en-passant on f3*.

To avoid that players have to make long series of wrong guesses of pawn captures each turn, a player may ask: *Are their any pawn captures?*, usually abbreviated to *Any?*. The referee either answers *No*, if the player cannot capture a piece with a pawn, or *Try!*, if there are one or more possible capturing moves with a pawn of the player. In the latter case, the player must make at least one attempt to capture with a pawn (if unsuccessful, the player may continue such attempts or attempt other moves at will).

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In case that a player makes moves of which he knows that are illegal (for instance, asking *Any* when he has no pawns left), (which he might do to confuse the opponent; this is considered 'bad manners'), the referee says

*Impossible*, such that the opponent is not confused by this.

### Comments

The game is a game of great skill and deduction, and less luck than one would expect at first from the rules. That said, a game can provide a good deal of entertainment for the referee and spectators having benefit of the complete picture. The better the players' visualization skills, the better they are likely to play, but there are ample opportunities for pieces "en priz", and captures and checkmates missed.

## POSITIONAL PROBLEMS

INSTEAD OF THE USUAL "POSITIONS ON THE BOARD" & LINKED TO OUR BLINDFOLD THEME, HERE ARE SOME PROBLEMS TO TRY AND SOLVE WITHOUT BENEFIT OF A BOARD.

1. After the moves 1.f3 e5 2.Kf2 Nf6 3.Kg3 Nh5+ 4.Kg4 d5+ 5.Kxh5 what is black's best move here?
2. After the moves 1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 e6 3.Nbd2 d5 4.g3 c5 5.dxc5 Bxc5 6.Bg2 What should black play here?
3. After the moves 1.d4 d6 2.c3 Nf6 3.Bg5 Bg4 4.d5 e6 what is white's best move?
4. After the moves 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Be7 4.d4 exd4 5.c3 dxc3 What should white play here?
5. After the moves 1.d4 c5 2.dxc5 e6 3.b4 a5 4.c3 axb4 5.cxb4 What should black play here?
6. After the moves 1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.c4 Nb6 4.d4 Nc6 5.d5 Nb4, what should white play here?
7. After the moves 1.g3 g6 2.Bg2 Bg7 3.e4 c5 4.d3 Nc6 5.c3 d6 6.Be3 Qb6 7.Qd2 Ne5 8.Na3, what should black play here?
8. After the moves 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 Ng4 4.Nf3 Qe7 5.Bf4 Qb4+ 6.Bd2 Qxb2 7.Bc3, what should black play here?
9. After the moves 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 d6 6.Bc4 g6 7.Nxc6 bxc6 8.e5 dxe5, what should white play here?
10. After the moves 1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.cxb5 a6 5.Nc3 axb5 6.e4 b4 7.Nb5 Nxe4, what should white play here?

See pages 11 & 12 for solutions

## WORLD CHESS CHAMPIONS

The next in our series concerns one of the briefer holders of the world title. Although yet another of the line of Soviet holders, he most certainly did not fit the then Soviet mould.

### Mikhail Tal --- 1936-1992



*An appreciation by Bill Marshall*

The story of Mikhail Tal is a one that would hardly be believed if it were written as a fictional tale. Too fanciful, couldn't happen in real life; and yet in some ways it is a sad tale for those who love the game of chess, for, having been granted the impossible, Tal was denied the natural development of his style that, even more than he achieved, would have delighted the fans and admirers who watched for his every game.

Chess players the world over will always argue about who was the greatest player who ever lived, who the finest attacker, who the best all rounder, who the most imaginative, with each putting forward his own favourite. Books have been and will be written, comparing Alekhine and Kasparov, Capablanca and Fischer. Whatever the answer, there will always be a place in the hearts of anyone who loves the game for this Latvian genius who blazed across the chess world in the late 50's, sweeping aside the solid, safe, "correct" players of the time and captured the highest prize itself at the age of 23: until Kasparov, the youngest ever world champion.

Perhaps not everyone will be so conversant with his later career when although continually dogged by ill-health he remained a fearsome opponent and a challenger for the top honours until relatively late in his career. Many otherwise excellent books on the history of the modern game, speak as if his career finished after the 1962 Candidates

*Continued from previous page*

tournament when he had to be hospitalised with the kidney trouble that was to dog him for the rest of his life. Yet he was only beaten by Spassky for the right to challenge Petrosian in 1966, losing the final of the Candidates to his life long friend and opponent in a match that his doctors had tried to persuade him to play in a sanatorium. Later he lost in the semi-finals to Korchnoi in '68 or we might have seen a return final with Spassky & who knows... a Tal-Fischer match in Reykjavik!! Fantasy you say, and yet how much of his life already seems fantastic. It is surely only a small "what if" to wonder what such a match would have been like. They were after all good friends, and there are few who can say that they were friends with that enigmatic American genius.

As late as 1979 Tal took 1st= with Karpov in Montreal in what was then reckoned to be one of the strongest tournaments ever staged, then went on to win the Riga Interzonal by a clear 2½ points. In the 80's he surprised many by playing quite successfully in the Grand Prix tournaments after a period which had seen rumours of his death. He was 3rd in the 1985 Interzonal thus qualifying for Candidates at the age of 49. The strength sapping grind of match play was perhaps too much for him by now against the very best however, but tournament play was a different matter and even when he wasn't coming in first he could still enliven a tournament with sparkling sacrifices to demolish a Candidate or a fancied youngster. Indeed in 1988 he astonished everyone by not only coming third in the Reykjavik World Cup but also winning the World Blitz Championship.

He was still playing right to the end. His last tournament game was a fine win against GM Akopyan in Barcelona. A few weeks later he played in a quickplay in Moscow and defeated a certain Garry Kasparov in their game. To universal regret he died in hospital a few days later.

The list of famous Tal victories is a long one. When in good health he seemed to be able to win any tournament he entered. In 1972 he went 86 games without loss. Unfortunately this finished just before the Interzonal, largely due to the after effects of another operation. Near the end of 1973 he embarked on another run which was even longer. His record in Olympiads is incredible. Out of 8 tournaments he scored Best Board on 5 occasions and 3 times recorded the absolute best score! His record in the USSR championship is just as

remarkable: 6 times champion of the strongest nation in chess history - a feat matched only by Botvinnik.

The games of course are the stuff of fairytales. Tal was variously described as a Sorcerer, a Calculating Machine, the Magician of Riga. He could conjure up fantastic combinations in the most placid of positions; find a sacrifice where none seemed possible, produce activity in the most threadbare collection of pieces. Give him a complex position, the initiative, and the attack would seemingly flow of its own accord, the pieces apparently endowed with extra capabilities. His imagination (he himself used the word fantasy) was unparalleled, even in an era that had marvelled at David Bronstein. The diehards criticised his play as too risky and said his sacrifices were unsound (having usually taken 3 months of analysis worldwide to prove them so!). Yet especially in the early years, no-one could withstand his ferocious assaults. I well remember, at the age of about 13, the first time I read Peter Clarke's excellent book of Tal's best games up to 1960. I had read about the great romantic period, seen games of Anderssen and Morphy, a few of Alekhine and Frank Marshall. But that was in the past - you couldn't do that now. By the time I got past the first few games I was already mesmerised, and then I came upon the 1959 Candidates game with Smyslov. Vassily Smyslov - a name to strike fear and respect into any chess player. He had been involved in three World Title matches with Botvinnik: drawing in 1954, winning in 1957, and losing the return in 1958. The pair had dominated chess during that period. He was the very epitome of logic, secure in defence, stylish in technique, a giant of the game. I remember reading Clarke's introduction to the game;

"It was scarcely credible; here was the mighty, impassive Smyslov, ex-Champion of the World, torn to pieces in just 26 moves".

26 moves! How could this be? Was it some wild gambit? Had Smyslov blundered? No, it was that most solid of openings, a Caro-Kann defence and some of Smyslov's moves had exclamation marks as well!

The game is stunning, magnificent, full of the most incredible complications and sacrifices.

Grandmasters argued and analysed for months over it. It is one of the finest games I know. Yet 3 years earlier Tal was unknown outside the Soviet Union, not even an I.M. (in fact he never was - he was one of the very few people ever to be directly

Continued from previous page

awarded a GM title.) He went on to win that Candidates Tournament ahead of Keres, Smyslov, Petrosian, Fischer, Gligoric. A year later having never met him over the board before, he had beaten Botvinnik and was World Champion. Even Jeffrey Archer would not dare produce such a story.

### Some Interesting Facts

- Youngest World Champion until Kasparov.
- Played in 8 Olympiads, 5 Best board Results, 3 times absolute best score.
- 6 times USSR Champion.
- Lost only once to Kasparov & once to Karpov.
- A countback of ELO ratings revealed that Tal's rating during his peak around 1960 would be 7th in the all time rankings with 2700 behind Fischer, Kasparov, Capablanca, Botvinnik, Lasker, & Karpov. In fact in 1979 following his wins in Montreal & Riga he went up to 2710.
- 3rd in 1985 Interzonal thus qualifying for Candidates at 49
- Only 3 men played in both USSR-Rest of the World matches - Tal, Larsen, & Polugaevsky.

### Quotes about Tal

- If Tal had really studied Chess in the late fifties and early sixties he would have been impossible to play against - *Botvinnik*
- How does Tal win? - He develops all his pieces in the centre and then sacrifices them somewhere - *Bronstein*
- If Tal has an open file it will be mate - *an onlooker at a Tal post mortem analysis session.*

### Tal quotes

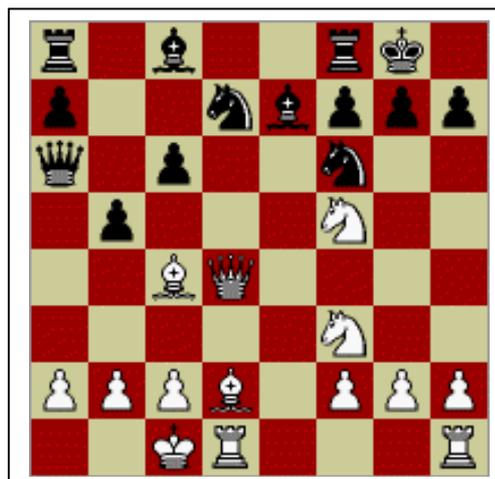
- "If you wait for luck to turn up, life becomes very boring."
- "There are two types of sacrifices - sound ones and mine."

*In the next column is the game that so impressed Bill Marshall, along with many others.*

Tal M. - Smyslov V. [B10]

Candidates Tournament 1959

1. e4 c6 2. d3 d5 3. Nd2 e5 4. Ngf3 Nd7 5. d4 dxe4 6. Nxe4 exd4 7. Qxd4 Ngf6 8. Bg5 Be7 9. O-O-O O-O 10. Nd6 Qa5 11. Bc4 b5 12. Bd2 Qa6 13. Nf5



13... Bd8 14. Qh4 bxc4 15. Qg5 Nh5 16. Nh6+ Kh8 17. Qxh5 Qxa2 18. Bc3 Nf6 19. Qxf7 Qa1+ 20. Kd2 Rxf7 21. Nxf7+ Kg8 22. Rxa1 Kxf7 23. Ne5+ Ke6 24. Nxc6 Ne4+ 25. Ke3 Bb6+ 26. Bd4 1-0

### POSITIONAL SOLUTIONS

Question 1 - The king trekked on a suicidal march in open terrain and met his end to a lowly pawn after 5... g6 mate.

Question 2 - Exploiting the fianchettoed kingside, black cracks the whip with 6... Bxf2+! and after 7.Kxf2 Ng4+, white will lose the queen to Ne3 after either 8.Ke1 or 8.Kf1, or get mated after 8.Kg1 Qb6+.

Question 3 - The concept of undermining occurred after 5.Bxf6! as white will pick up the undefended bishop after 6.Qa4+ and 7.Qxg4.

Question 4 - While players have resigned after white's crude 6.Qd5!, black actually has 6... Nh6! 7.Bxh6 O-O! Now white plays 8.Nxc3! in lieu of 8.Bc1? Nb4! with several threats.

Question 5 - An example demonstrating the pitfalls of neglecting development to hang onto material. Black wins a piece with 5... Qf6! Motto... develop your pieces!!

*Solutions for questions 6-10 on next page*

Question 6 - This old trap in the Alekhine can be found in any book. Black's 4...Nc6 looks natural, but meets disaster after 6.c5! winning a piece after 6...Nxd5 7.a3

Question 7 - The sortie 8...Qxb2! is a nice tactic to look for when weaknesses are present. The point is that after 9.Qxb2, black nets a pawn by 9...Nxd3+!

Question 8 - Out of the Budapest Gambit, this trap is fairly common. After the natural 7.Bd2, black plays Bb4! winning material.

Question 9 - The shocker is 9.Bxf7+! winning the queen... a common motif in many openings when bishop is on c4.

Question 10 - The move 8.Qe2 wins in lieu of the deadly Nd6+. Benko players aren't supposed to grab material, they'd supposed to give material!! Black would've landed in a Nescafe-Frappe Attack after the more common 7...d6 8.Bc4.

## LAWS OF CHESS (past, present & future)

A reminder that the revised FIDE Laws came into force on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Changes were highlighted in Issue 14 of The Middle Game. Recent events I have been involved with suggest that many players are blissfully unaware of the changes.

In his new role as BCF Junior Director Cyril Johnson had cause to highlight the BCF Code of Conduct relating to players with impairments. A Welsh competitor had problems at the FIDE World Junior Championships, the BCF code was sent to the Chief FIDE arbiter and FIDE secretary, as part of attempts to ensure the youngster received better treatment. The upshot was that the organisers were instructed to ensure the player was allowed the assistance he needed, and the Code will be put forward for inclusion in the next FIDE Laws revision as an appendix.

I would strongly endorse the BCF request for the Code to be implemented for all chess events. The Code will be posted on the MCCU website, and for those who receive a hard copy newsletter a copy will be included.

I have heard a few horror stories involving chess players and their attempts to play in events, especially those with mobility problems. With a little thought and effort on the part of clubs and events organisers, options can usually be found to meet the needs of those with impairments.

## HARRY'S GAME

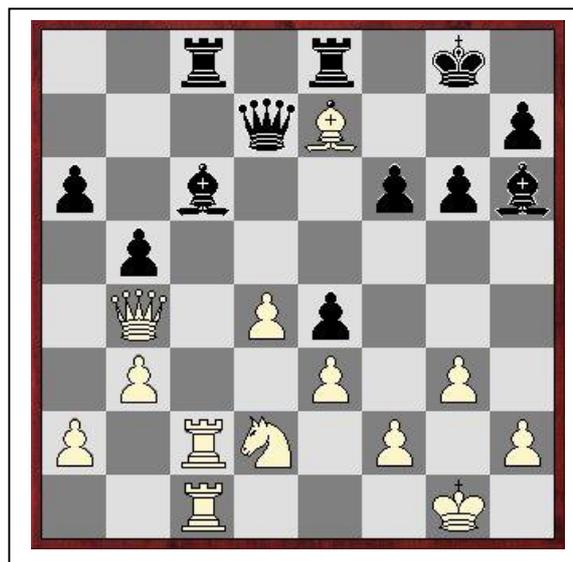
Over recent years various benefactors have donated a prize for the best game played on County Finals Day. This year Chess Direct, who operated the bookstall on the day, kindly offered a gift voucher. The award was judged by John Littlewood, who was impressed by this game in the Open section –

White "H Lamb" Manchester

Black "M Whitehead" Lancashire  
Neo-Grunfeld [ECO "D78"]  
Event BCF County Championship Finals

1. Nf3 g6 2. g3 Bg7 3. d4 d5 4. Bg2 Nf6  
5. O-O O-O 6.  
c4 c6 7. b3 Bf5 8. Nc3 Ne4 9. Bb2 Nd7 10. cxd5  
Nxc3 11. Bxc3 cxd5 12. Nh4 Be6  
13. Rc1 Nf6 14. Bb4 Bh6 {a5 might have been  
better} 15. e3 Bg4 16. Qd3 Bd7 17.Rc2 Re8 18.  
Rfc1 {Now White's control of the c file becomes  
very strong} a6 19. Qd2 Bc6 {Ne4 would have been  
better} 20. Nf3 Ne4 21. Qe1 f6 22. Nd2 Nd6  
{black offered a draw here} 23. Nb1 Qd7 24. Bc5  
Rac8 25. Qb4 {Nc3 better} Ne4 26. Bxe4 dxe4  
27. Nd2 b5 {Bd5 better} 28. Bxe7 {the start of an  
excellent attack} Rxe7 29. Rxc6 Rxc6 30. Rxc6  
Qxc6 31. Qxe7 Bf8 32. Qxe4 Qc1+ 33. Nf1 Qa3 34.  
Qc2 a5 35. Nd2 a4 36. Ne4 Be7 37. bxa4 bxa4  
38.Nc3 1-0

Below is the position at the start of Harry's attack



## THAT LOST BOARD

By George Koltanowski

The blindfold expert mentioned in our earlier article shows he has another string to his bow with this short story.

Lionel Berry was a methodical man, a punctual man who lived by the clock and paced himself in his daily life as he did when he played chess, effortlessly. Now, as he entered the club for the main event of the match between the Kings of Kentbury and the Knights of Richland, he was unpardonably late. What was worse, he was on the wrong side of his one superstition. He wouldn't be playing with his own chessboard because he hadn't brought it.

Alice, his wife, liked to tease him about that board with its king-sized squares and king-sized pieces. But even the beautiful Alice had to admit that, playing with it, he had become the number one man on his team, a team that, if it won tonight, would be at the top of its league.

Tom Smith, captain of the Knights, bustled up to him "Lionel, for heaven's sake, where have you been? You'd better start right now or the clock will get you!"

They drew up their chairs and battle commenced. Lionel had only 37 minutes on his clock for 40 moves. Tough, he thought, but he could make it. He played 1. P-K4 Tom replied with ... P-K4 and the game went on:

2. N-KB3 NQB3 3. B-B4 N-B3 4. P-Q4

Tom paused and Lionel frowned at the unfamiliar board "Damn" he thought "what happened to mine? The thought of it was bugging me when I left the office in that frantic rush. Come to think of it, I didn't even answer Pete in the shipping department when he asked me why I was in such a hurry"

The play went on 4...PxP 5. N-N5 N-K4 6. QxP NxB 7. QxN (B4) P-Q4 8. PxP NxP "if he had played 8...QxP I would have countered with 9. QxP and things would have looked brighter. What time is it?" he looked at his watch "8.28! But that's impossible. I left the office at 6 and it shouldn't have taken more than an hour to get here even with that lousy traffic tonight"

9. O-O P-KR3 10. N-KB3 B-K2 11. R-Q1 P-QB3 "Oh hell, of course, that's what took the time, I drove home to pick up my lucky board. But the

kitchen closet where I keep it was locked. Why would Alice do that? Alice ..."

12. N-B3 B-K3 13. NxN BxN 14 Q-KN4

"That's it, I threaten the knight's pawn or BxP followed by q-KB4 Tom will never get out of this alive, board or no board..."

14... B-K3

"How can he play that? Doesn't he lose his Queen? All I have to do is play 15 RxQch RxR 16. Q-K4 and I should win easily. But let's take a look at the position and make sure it isn't a double trap. Or is it just a great bluff?"

"Alice...Alice. What happened when I went home? The closet was locked and I went into the living room and turned on the light. That's when I heard Alice laugh from the bedroom. And there was another laugh a deeper laugh, and then a man saying "Come on, we don't have to get up; he'll be gone for hours. You said so yourself" That's when I got the gun out of the desk and went into the bedroom and ..." He looked at his clock. There were only 50 seconds left.

15.RxQch RxR

There they were. I pointed the gun at them ... my time's running out

16 QxP A gasp went up from the crowd that had gathered round the players.

"Mate" said Tom.

Lionel sat stunned. Then he rose and bolted for the door. Outside, he fumbled for his keys, opened the car trunk, closed it, and then weeping uncontrollably, got in the car and drove off.

The police were waiting for him at home. Alice's lover, killed by a shot in the head, lay on the bed where he had been slain. Alice, with one shot in her chest and another through a leg, had been rushed to hospital.

At the trial, which resulted in Lionel's conviction for murder, the question was raised as to the whereabouts of the lucky chess board. Had it indeed been in the locked closet in the kitchen?

"No" said Lionel "When the game ended, I suddenly remembered that I had never put it back in its regular place at all. It was in the trunk of my car all the time"

*Are there any writers out there with a chess tale to tell, fictional or true? Maximum length 2 A4 pages. If so, please send your contributions to the editor.*