

SACRAMENTO CHESS NEWS

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Ye Ed missed Blub meeting week before last. Was all set to go down, when a rush job came in, so worked until 10:30. Too late to go then, but made it this last week and we had a swellelegant time too! Played some fierce games at the Club and a few even fiercer afterwards. Never did figure where all the beer came from!

Incidentally, Goerge Flynn is back in the fold again; work has slacked off a bit to where he now has a day off a week, so he comes down to the Club on that evening. He sure likes chess, to spend his only free evening of the week at the Club. (He works from four to midnight!) Haven't seen Hilt Meyer out for some time, guess the Canasta bug has ruined another chessplayer. Where is Steve Kozen these days? We could surely use him in some matches coming up soon. And a lot of you fellows receiving this "Sacto News" had better wake up and come to the meetings, for several reasons. First, we'd like to meet some of the "names" on our list; second, might even like to play you a few games; and most of all the Club needs your support. How about it? Just received a five buck bill from Colonel Carey for a year's dues. He can't get to the Club often, but he continues to support it financially. Hope he wanders down soon. And where is Art Cartier? At the Annual Dinner he said he was to retire the first of Nov. and would then be around. Come on down, Art.

Financial report this week is short and sweet. Last balance reported \$47.25. Received \$5, paid out \$5 for 14th News and \$5 for this one, leaving \$42.25 balance.

Third round of the Central California Chess League is coming up on Nov. 19th. We play Modesto on their home grounds. Modesto beat us last year by a point, and it is up to the Team to rectify this defeat. We need about six stalwart chess-players to go down and take Modesto about 5-1. We can do it. Gee is going with his car, Russell and Hardy will be down from Auburn, Flynn, Meyer and Austin should be available. How about Chapman, Kozen, Johnson and a few more? As our Club is larger and stronger from the fifth board or thereabouts on down than is Modesto, the more men we can take the better chance we have of winning. Our top ten men will give us just twice the chances of beating Modesto as will the fir six men playing. So how about contacting Team Captain Meyer and letting him put your name down?

A few readers have joined the United States Chess Federation as a result of the pamphlet in last week's bulleting. Hope some more of you send in \$3, this is a chess bargain you just can't afford to be without, whether a duffer or expert.

THE CHESS DIAGRAM

Solution to #12 (in last issue)...1. RxBch, KxR, 2. B-R6ch!!! KxB. 3. Q-N5 mate. That Bishop Move was the best part of the combination.

#13 in this issue is taken from the Pittsburg-Sacramento match. Grandmicerter Flynn vs. Frank (Stonewall) Olvera. Frequently, the objection is raised that combinations do not come up in actual play on a club level. Capablanca may find combinations, but not Joe Doakes. This is not true. The combinations are there, Joe doesn't see them, that's all. Here is one that even Joe Doakes found....

1. P-QB4 N-KB3 2. N-QB3 P-KN3 3. P-KN3 P-QB3 4. B-N2 B-N2 5. P-Q3 P-Q4 6. PXP PXP 7. N-B3 P-Q5??? Now, this pawn advance is obviously premature, but how to prove it? White wins the Queen Pawn by force in three moves. What are they?

COMMENTS

by Flynn

Thirteen players at the last meeting. But not an unlucky thirteen, because each one, before the evening was over, had some good games.

It was encouraging to see Dick Chapman, a former city champion, pushing pawns (How about playing in the Modesto match, Dick?). Jim Marianos wasn't skeered, champ or no champ, and pushed pawns right back at him.

William Trousdale was right in there pitching with Jim Hardy. I had some good games with Norman Talcott, even if Norm does have a nasty habit of winning a piece from me in the opening.

N. Simonson and Sam Johnson were battling away--both of them too busy even to look up. What about it, Mr. Simonson? Did Sam throw that King's Gambit at you? He's a rough man with a King's Gambit, all right, all right.

Young Keiffer wasn't skeered at all. He tangled with de champ--J. B. Gee himself. Well, Keiffer figured, SOMEBODY'S got to play him. Poisonally, O do better with de champ when we get over to the Traveller's Chess Divan. Then Ja gets kind-hearted and lets me win one out of five.

It has a pleasure to see Gene Gray again, and Steve Spaulding. Steve has been tied up most of the summer just like I have. Now we're getting around to more important business, like playing chess.

R. E. Russell was there and, I understand, needs only a draw in his adjourned game with Ralph Stagg to win the Newcomers' Tournament. Keiffer's game with Stagg is also adjourned, and there haint nobody seen Stagg. Where is you, Ralph? We missed you afterwards, over at the Travellers.

And where was young Scheuerman? I wanted especially to meet him. Doggone. Maybe he'll be there next time.

Say, has anybody got a copy of the issue of our magazine that had the article on San Luis Obispo and the North-South match? I'd powerful like to get that issue, if you're not saving them. Ken Chambers of Paso Robles and Stanford University was mentioned in that issue, and he'd like it for a souvenir.

Both Russell and I joined up with the U. S. Chess Federation and now we'll have some of those "Tricks and Traps" from CHESS LIFE to try out on our opponents.

Here is something you didn't know, I betcha. J. B. Gee is not only a Vice-President of the U. S. Chess Federation but is in charge of their national "Chess for Veterans" program, which aims at a definite chess activity in every veterans' hospital in the country. It is probably the biggest deal in chess today and the first time the U. S. government EVER put out any funds for the game. And our man is running the show. How about that?

The mostest fun last Wednesday for me was after the regular meeting when Russell and Gee took on Marianos, Hardy, and me. Now, it was three of us against two of them, and we aint a-saying how many games the two won, but there was one game we won for sure. THAT'S the game we want to talk about.

After it was over, Jim Marianos says: "It just goes to show you--three heads are better than two, anytime."

How many heads you got on your side, Pal?

Ed's Note: Flynn now has a commentary column of his own in "Chess Digest" put out monthly by George Koltanowski, Box 682, Santa Rosa. \$2 a year. How about that? Course we know George is good, but it came as a surprise anyhow!

Re the Newcomers' Tournament: Gee looked at the adjourned game of Russell-Stagg, and the position easily warrants a draw. In the Keiffer-Stagg game, Keiffer is a piece up and has a forced win. If these games are officially adjudicated as such by Neil Austin (and we see no reason why not) Tournament Chairman, the affair will be over with Russell the winner and I believe Keiffer in second place. Nice going fellows, you both are welcome additions to the Club's roster - Gee.

MORE ABOUT PROBLEMS

by R. E. Russell

This two cents worth of additional to our present interesting discussion of problems will be neither profane nor much-embracing. 'Tis only my opinion.

I don't find it easy to become interested in most problems, especially composed problems, for at least a couple of reasons. Firstly, as J. B. Gee wrote not long ago, because of the usual artificiality of position and disparity of material. Where the side for which one is asked to find a mate is a Queen or more ahead and the contest as such has long since been decided, I would find it more enjoyable to help find a draw for the weak side (better still, start another game).

Secondly, the time to be spent upon the difficult problems would seem to be, speaking for myself, better spent on thoroughly learning the fundamentals of the game. There is no denying the beauty of incisive and economical play but the tyro generally finds enough satisfaction in a forty-move win to erase the sorrow of having missed a win at move thirty-five.

There are two kinds of problems which are both enjoyable and instructive. George Flynn pointed out the value of end game problems and I concur, especially if the position is life-like. The most valuable of these to me are the kind which illustrate the ability of a materially inferior side to draw. The talent of forcing a draw with a losing game is one of the hall-marks of a good player and is one of the most difficult to acquire for the average.

The other type of problem I like is that taken from a middle game in which the opening is either given or is discernible. Apart from the question of finding the win or mate it is interesting to trace the general line of opening play for both sides and an added incentive is thereby furnished to seek the solution as one springing from a particular line.

The most instructive of these problems are those which illustrate one of the several basic mating motifs or primary tactical maneuvers. For I don't think a problem need be or should be so devious as to require even one hour to solve, but only difficult enough to give some satisfaction with instruction rather than merely a sense of relief from compulsion. The wins buried an hour or more deep are apt to be of little use in a game.

There are many positions to be derived from ordinary off-hand games which, to me, have a sufficiently problem-like challenge to be interesting, are not too difficult to fathom and are illustrative of motifs which even duffers might find useful (these I like).

How about the members sending in their pet positions. We might get some useful discussion started as well as sharpening our powers of analysis. In case others like the idea here are three positions that may be interesting without being difficult: No. 1 from a Berlin Defense to the Ruy Lopez: White has Pawns at QR2, QN3, QB4, K6, KB2, KN2 & KR2; R @ K5, Q @ K4, B @ QN2, R @ QR and K @ KN. Black has Pawns at IR2, KN2, QB4, QN3, QB2 and QR2. N @ QB3, QOK2, KCKN, ROKB and RQO1. White moves and Black is lost.

No. 2 from an Exchange Variation of the Ruy Lopez: White has Pawns at QR2, QN2, QB2, Q3, K4, KB3, KN4 & KR4. N@QB3, R@QR, Q@Q, R@KB & K @ KN. Black has Pawns at KR2, KN2, K4, QB3, QR3, QB2 & QN2. R@KB3, B@Q5, Q@Q2, KCKN & R@KB. Black moves and with a simple combination obtains a winning position.

No. 3 from an "Unclassical" Defense to the Ruy Lopez: White has Pawns at QR2, QN2, Q4, K4, KB2, KN2, & KR2. N@Q5, NCKN5, QOKR5, B@QN3, R@QR, B@QB, KCK & R@KR. Black has Pawns at KR3, KN3, KB2, Q2, QB2, QN4 & QR3. N@QB3, NCK2, B@QR2, R@KR, KCK, Q@Q, B@QB & R@QR. White to move and mate in six. This is easy enough that it was announced. A hint, the Queen sits still for four moves and then does not give mate. (Ed's Note: These positions have been carefully checked from the standpoint of typing errors only. Above is as given to me by Russell, I have not checked the actual chess positions nor the solutions, which will be given next week. I intend to see if I can figure them out - or maybe find a better solution. Let's have some more of these "pet" positions, as suggested by Russell.)

I. Alekhine: His Strength of Planning

There is currently in Chess Digest a series of articles on Planning in Chess by Dr. Euwe. The one-time world Champion, together with such one-time contenders as Bogoljubow and Reti, have been praised by Dr. Lasker for their strength in this field of long-range planning. In fact, they are superior to Alekhine in the precision and deftness of their winning schemes, if not in all-round tactical ability. But Alekhine's strength in evolving winning maneuvers was not the same type of planning as is the long-range, systematic process of overcoming each obstacle to the plan step by step. Rather, Alekhine aimed at establishing a position from which a variety of possibilities presented themselves, depending on how his opponent played.

In some of his games, you will notice how a general exchange quickly brings the game to an ending; in an endgame, a plan is essential. The crucial point of the game came when the exchanges started: Alekhine had already found his aimed-at position. In other games, you will see the combinations coming on so suddenly and naturally that you will wonder if it wasn't a great deal responsible to the lucky placement of the pieces. And in the remainder of his games, you will find Alekhine floundering around with a poor position from which he finally emerges safely and sometimes victoriously.

The reason is simple: Alekhine's first consideration in a game is the fundamentals. Development, avoidance of weaknesses, and good placement, nothing can take their place. Alekhine or anyone else couldn't work from a basically unsound position. Euwe seemed to start with a plan at the beginning of a game and try to refine it from the start. Bogoljubow demanded results and went all out to push his plan. Reti was unbeatable against topnotch competition but lacked the psychological factor that makes any game a challenge. But Alekhine knew the safety rules that are contained in any primer of Chess are essential to success. That is how he could undergo an attack successfully or direct one.

Spielmann has said that he could see all Alekhine's combinations at the usual diagrammed positions, but the trouble was in working up those positions in the first place. How did he go about finding the winning setup? All we can do is make generalizations from what we see in his games.

It seems that the basic idea is the centralization of pieces, another well-known term. Not that Alekhine was the only one who used these principles to their finest result, all of the masters mentioned above were masters because they knew when and how to use the principles, but the thing is, Alekhine was superior to each one in that he blended the principles and produced a finer alloy of the whole. For instance, one cannot centralize the pieces mechanically; one must consider such things as, how is the pawn position coming along at the same time? or where can I place the Queen, etc. The strength of a player depends on his ability to juggle all the considerations to his benefit.

But if Alekhine aimed at a position from which he could continue in several directions, why aren't his games very similar in general appearance, like Pillsbury's were? The reason is that Alekhine did not have a standard position in mind, like Pillsbury, but a variety of positions, some of which he had never pre-analyzed or seen before, but worked out over the board. You may say, that's a big order; it was - only a well-developed mind could be expected to handle the numerous and equally interesting possibilities that presented themselves to his eager and open mind.

In fact, in studying any of the facets of Alekhine's prominence, the prime consideration is that genius is self-sustaining and not subject to analysis. But we can look to the method if not to the man, and the lessons to be gained are proportional to our understanding of our own weakness and our willingness to eliminate that weakness.

By Bob Burger, concluding article.

A very fine series of articles, Bob, and we appreciate having them to publish. In our own simple way of figuring Alekhine, he was the best because he was the most interested in chess, and actually lived for the game always. It was a guiding passion of his life. There is nothing to replace experience in chess, and Alekhine gathered more of that than any other player; add that to his natural aptitude, and it made him the greatest player of his time.