

SACRAMENTO CHESS NEWS

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Although it may have appeared that "Chess News" was out of publication, we are still in business, stronger than ever. (As you can see from the size of this) Ye Ed was simply much too busy to play, read, or mimeo chess. On one weekend I went to SF for my second game with Pafnutieff, which I lost in about 25 moves. But as he had finished second in the recent East Bay Area Championship, I was rather pleased at making him play a second game by drawing the first. Then for two weekends I was out of town - on vacation. Another was spent in working. So I've been busy.

But all chess material on hand is to be used in this issue, and I hope it turns out to be a humdinger. Rather surprising that more local players haven't sent in articles for use in the Chess News. How about Milt Meyer sending in some stuff? And Flagg from Fresno? And others? Everyone is welcome to send in material for this News, as long as it is about chess. How about it, fellows?

And if your address isn't correct on the envelope, let us know. If you know of other "chessnuts" let us know about them too. And bring them to the Club!

A balance of \$63.63 was given in the last Treasurer's report. Only change has been the cost of 8th & 9th bulletins, plus a few dollars in dues collected. A full report will be issued at our Annual Dinner. Speaking of dues, have you paid YOURS, and have YOU and YOU joined the local chess(nut) club? Well, why not? Here are our star members, who have contributed the necessary yearly fees: S. E. Spaulding, S. G. Johnson, N. E. Talcott, George Flynn, Milt Meyer, Neil Austin, C. J. Carey, Dick Chapman, Roy Daily, Jim Marianos, Walter Schmidt, Vern Gilman, Bill Yersin, Richard McDonald, R. E. Russell and Melvin Neeley. --- How about the rest of us paying up in full - as another year's dues will be payable on Sept. 1. If you do not know how your dues stand, ask the Treasurer (Gee) at the next meeting.

Our popular tournament director, Neil Austin, says a "newcomers" tournament will be started this coming Wednesday night. This is for our many new members who were unable to compete in our last Championship affair. So don't miss Club this week, if you wish to get into this tournament! Neil has the details, so ask him.

THE CHESS DIAGRAM

Solution to #6 (in last issue): 1...R-R3ch. 2. K-N, R-R8ch! 3. KxR, Q-R6ch. 4. K-N, QxP mate. Easy except for second move which is a handy trick to remember. This same sacrifice on R8 by a Rook is often found in combinational play where it is necessary to bring the opponent's King within the range of your Queen.

#7 (in this issue) occurred in the 1950 British Boys' Championship and Black missed his opportunity. In the actual game he played K-Q3 and eventually lost. What is the one move which kills?

HOW ABOUT JOINING THE CHESS CLUB?

right now!

By the way, this bulletin goes to a couple of San Francisco players, darned good ones too. Seems they could send us a short article or two, say on how to keep a Club active. And we would like to know the final results of the Northern California Championship, which Gee and Austin lost out in.

Of course this problem demonstrates, in its best form, the clearest function of the pieces and concentrates on the fundamental idea of a game of chess, checkmate, it actually represents the theory of the game. In any study or art, theory is not an outgrowth of experience, but the basis of practice. It follows, then, that problems study should improve over-the-board play.

A bad misconception of chess problems is that they are oddities, poor-looking moves that somehow turn out all right. In wellknown problems, the key is often a move that pushes a Rook over into a corner, or a Bishop from one corner to the other, clearance stratagems that one would think would never come up in real play. The first thing to note about these strange key moves is that they stress the very points that are unnoticed in practice, and deserve some little attention: they round out the field of successful chess maneuvers. It's a common enough experience that what you study in a textbook about, say, Engineering, actually never comes into use. The second thing to note is that the modern trend in composing is not to set out for a startling first move, but to disguise the key with subtle follow-up play. The emphasis is on artistic values: economy, echoes, double themes, etc. That's the reason why the well known problems are usually the ones with fantastic-looking keys, because they appeal to the curiosity hunter, an unfortunate majority. But there is real value in the artistic problem, which in these days is finally getting recognition and following.

A clear example of the connection between problems and practice is the Queen mates. Ordinarily, in a Queen-Rook-Pawn Endgame with the Kings exposed, a player can't tell what will happen as the result of checks. This is where the ordinary player gives up and checks at random, hoping everything will come out all right after all. A common psychological fault comes up when the Queen checks from any square right next to the King: The Queen-checker has it in the back of his mind that his opponent can move to several squares behind him, whereas in all cases he has only two squares to move to. When the Queen checks one square away from the King not diagonally, the King can move to four squares. And it so happens that these four squares, in the second case, and the two squares, in the first case, can be covered nicely by Bishops, Knights, or Rooks, since they are symmetrical. Notice in this problem, a deservedly famous one, mate in three. White: Rooks at QN1 and KB2, King at QR8, Queen at K7, Bishop at KB7. Black: King at Q5, Pawn at Q6, and Knights at K7 and KR4. The key is not spectacular, even commonplace, though concealed by the follow-up play. 1. R-K1. The King can always move to B6. If he does there would follow 2. Q-B5ch. The King on such a check could ordinarily move to four squares, but the two on either side are covered, one by the Bishop, the other by his own Pawn. So the King has to go to N7 or Q7: in either case, 3. Q-B mate. At N7, the King's two escape squares are covered cleanly by the Bishop, while at Q7 they are blocked by his own Knight and Pawn. If, on his first move, Black goes anywhere with his King's Knight, he relinquishes control over the square White's KB4, and so 2. Q-N4ch and the King must go to either K4 or K6, because his two other moves are again blocked by the Bishop and his own Pawn; then Q-KB4 mate. At K4 Black's two escapes are controlled by the Bishop, and at K6 they are blocked by his own Knight and Pawn. There are other mates, but these are the most satisfying, being beautiful echoes. Note the complete similarity between the final positions of the two variations. It's an exactly symmetrical setting, with the pin on the Knight for interest. And not one man too many on any square.

Such a delicate position probably never comes up in practice, but the idea is plain. The next time you feel inclined to drop the "painstaking" search into variations and check at random, you can take courage and block a few escape squares, and drive the Black King where you want him. At least you will have a clearer idea of what is happening and when that very difficult end game approaches, why.

A final consideration is the natural question: why aren't all, or any, of the masters great problem devotees? You would think that if problems are definitely helpful for any player, the masters have gone through that routine. The fact is, they have gone through that routine; they have learned, if from other sources, what problems have to teach. The fact that there are no composers who are players of some importance is not significant, genius is not to be compromised by being spread over too wide a field. It may be heartening to know that Alekhine enjoyed problems very much, with his practical outlook; the utility and beauty of any art form are not denied to chess.

ZYLOTHISM

(A new description of an old disease)

It is very strange that this malady, now existant for several centuries, should have received no attention from the medical profession, such a curious affliction has certainly deserved scientific observation and record, and this neglect on the part of my colleagues I now propose to remedy by describing, as accurately as possible, its incidence, its symptoms and its clinical course.

We note, to begin with, that this disease affects chiefly males, beginning usually in the second decade and continuing into middle life and beyond. Occasionally the feamale sex is attacked, but this occurrence is rather rare.

The earliest symptom is observed as a tendency on the part of the patient to foregather with some fellow-sufferer and with him to sit in a hunched position for hours at a time, in almost total silence and without uttering a word or engaging in any useful or entertaining conversation, and with the eyes constantly glued on one spot. At rare intervals a harsh, guttural sound will be emitted by one or the other victims, a noise somewhat resembling "chk" but even this may not be audible except to an acute observer.

As the disease progresses, these patients show a tendency to congregate together not, as common sense would dictate, for the relief of symptoms, but instead, for their aggravation. Such meeting places may indeed be found in almost any city, constituting, as it would seem, sanitoria in reverse.

Individuals attacked by this virus gradually lose their liking for other activities, if indæed that in which they sit and glare and ponder and growl can really be called one. Wine, women, and song, the normal objectives of the male (according to Dr. Martin Luther and the German verse) no longer absorb their interest. Their wives sit at home in loneliness, wearily wondering what sort of Queen should have so much attraction for their mates. In truth, these poor, neglected creatures most hate the disease, but are powerless either to allay or cure it.

For it is my observation that of all sicknesses, this is by far the most chronic. Once contracted, it is apt to last for years and when the patient begins to have the acute attacks which are, I believe, called by them "tournaments", there is no longer hope of relief or remedy.

The mania continues in its unvarying course and vision becomes so affected that the whole universe appears only as a checkered maze upon which curious figures move in interminable patterns. It seems that the power to resist this fatal attraction must become as weak as that of the opium addict or the dipsomaniac and the spell as strong as that which lured the ancient mariner to the Isle of Sirens.

I have searched medical and psychiatric literature in vain for a description of this malady and am convinced that heretofore it has neither been noted or even named. I have therefore decided to give it an appellation as is its due, in the approved scientific style, basing my term "zylothism" on the main symptom, with derivation from the Greek, "xylon" wood, and "othismo" pushing.

By Dr. Julius S. Weingart, 4331 Harwood Drive, Des Moines 12, Iowa

ANNUAL DINNER!

President Jim Marianos has advised us that our Annual Dinner will be held this coming Friday at the Old Tavern, 28th Street & Capitol Avenue. We can meet at 6 or 6:30 for cocktails (lets have a beer, boys!) and dinner will be served at 7:30. Of course, the idea is to have the dinner over soon enough so we can have some chess or special events afterwards. Here are the meal choices: Steak, fillet or New York cut, \$3.00; chicken \$2.00; fish \$1.50. We must know in advance how many are coming to the dinner, and what the choice of meal is. So if you plan on coming to the dinner and can't make it to Club this Wednesday, please phone Marianos at GI 2-3526, or Gee at HI 5-1821. And come if possible, because this dinner is one of the highlights of the year, and we really have a good time. I'll be at the Old Tavern at 6 PM this Friday, will I see you there?

ON IMPROVING SACRAMENTO CHESS

by Geo. Flynn

Chess strength is composed of native ability, interest, and practice. It is obvious that native ability cannot be improved--but forward strides can be made through increased interest and harder practice. Our "Sacramento Chess News" is doing a great deal to step up interest in local chess, and I think there is a very simple way to get practice in serious games.

Basically, each player (from weakest to strongest) has to improve his game slightly to lift up the level of Sacramento play. The weaker players are just as important in this process as the stronger players, and their improvement is easier to achieve. There are many ways to improve--correspondence play, playing over of master games, the challenge ladder, study of chess books and magazines, etc. One especially important method is to play harder! Look for those traps and blunders! The more of them you see, the easier it is to see others.

First of all, let us play at least one hard game every time we go to chess club. Personally, I usually play the first game of the night very hard--then, to relax, I experiment and try dangerous moves in the remaining games. So, in that way, I can have serious chess and skittles too. One of the best ways to insure a serious game is to keep a score, and turn it in! Even if you lose the game, turn it in anyway. Gee will decide whether the game has enough interest to print, and both you and your opponent will play much harder if it becomes general practice to turn in game scores.

And let's get away from the idea, if we ever had it, that you are doing your opponent an injustice when you turn in a score. Actually, you are helping yourself and him. We are all friends in this club and have a mutual interest in bettering Sacramento Chess. So when player A challenges player B, he is not putting him on the spot. Instead he is paying him a great compliment. He is saying in effect, You're a pretty good player, Mr. B, and I am going to try to defeat you because I think you are worthy of my game. And if Mr. A does beat Mr. B, then B has an opportunity to challenge back in the same friendly spirit.

Now let us say, for an example, that player B is definitely weaker than A--but has been studying and playing harder than ever before. Let us say that he does win from A and moves up the challenge ladder. What is the effect on A? Mr. A says to himself, "Here, here, this will never do. I'm going to have to work a little harder than that next time." So "A" in turn goes to work and soon is playing a little better. Pretty soon he finds himself winning a game from player "X" whom he never could defeat before. And "X" in turn is stimulated to better chess.

It is easy to see that this process, started by a weaker player, mind you, is like a stone thrown in a pond--the ripples spread out wider and wider throughout the entire club. And everyone benefits thereby.

What we need to do is to improve our weaker players until they would be average players in another club, our average players until they would be top players, and our top players until they are the best.

If we can do that, we need not fear any club in the State.

As the leading editorial in the "British Chess Magazine" for June put it: "The great strength of Russian chess derives from the iron-hard practice their players get; theirs truly is a fortunate, rather than vicious, circle in which strength breeds strength in ever increasing degree."

Here in Sacramento, we can too, if we all work together, establish a "fortunate circle in which strength breeds strength in ever increasing degree."

From PSYCHOLOGY AND LIFE

by Floyd L. Ruch

"There is no apparent physiological limit in the learnign of mathematics, physics, foreign languages and chess. With such subjects, it may even be that, as we gain knowledge, further learning becomes easier. When the subject matter is rich enough or the game complex enough in its strategy, a highly intelligent person can probably continue indefinitely to learn."

EIDETIC IMAGERY--SECRET WEAPON OF CHESS?

by Geo. Flynn

"Eidetic imagery?" -- Grandma, what big words you have!

Anyway, the "secret weapon" we're talking about is the ability to see things accurately in the mind's eye...a vivid power to reconstruct the chessboard and men mentally and to shift the pieces about, meanwhile remembering all changes accurately.

Two or three years ago I started wondering about the strange coincidence that nearly all championship class chessplayers are also very good at blindfold play. I asked myself, Why? And I also asked everybody who would listen, Why?

And I came up with my theory of Eidetic Imagery as the secret of master chess. Charles Dickens, the English writer, possessed this trait in remarkable degree. He wrote his novels by picturing his characters mentally. He has stated that he could fill an imaginary room with people, whom he could see clearly, and whose conversation sounded as real to him as the conversation of ordinary people. He wrote his books by merely writing down what these creatures of his imagination said and did.

There are many examples of geniuses in various fields who have had this power, which resembles hallucination more nearly than anything else. It is distinguished from hallucination only by the fact that the person who uses eidetic imagery realizes he is doing so, and that what he sees and hears is not actually true.

My whole theory pivots on the central issue: Does a blindfold chessplayer actually see a board and men mentally? I have never been able to answer that question satisfactorily. In the first place, I can't see them myself. In the second, championship blindfold players tend to make a mystery out of their performance. I have never seen anywhere in chess literature a clear explanation of the not uncommon ability of good chessplayers to play 8 games simultaneously, blindfolded. Koltanowski, I know, remembers the entire game scores, because I have heard him rattle them off when there is doubt about a position. Does he also see 8 mental boards, and merely make his moves upon them? I don't know.

Reuben Fine recently played 8 blindfold games simultaneously, at ten seconds a move! Surely, there is something more to this than merely memorizing game scores. The only logical answer would be this unusual, but not extremely rare, ability to picture things mentally.

Knut Monssen, Secretary of the Norwegian Chess Federation, wrote me that there is a player in his club who can play 8 games blindfolded, but is not an unusually strong player. One time he saw this player look away from the board for several minutes in a match game. Later, he asked the man why he looked away from the board. The reply was that he could see the combination better and deeper if he did not have the actual pieces to look at!

Perhaps Reuben Fine is the man to clear up this mystery since he is not only a great chess artist and writer but also a psychologist.

Maybe we should send him a copy of this little piece.

In any case, I think the coincidence that champions almost inevitably are good blindfold players is worthy of serious investigation.

VISUALIZATION IN CHESS

(From B. F. Winkelmann's MODERN CHESS)

The maneuvers of Capablanca, of Alekhine or Kashdan, are based on that sixth sense we call position judgment, which in turn does not rest solely on general principles, but on a study of thousands of master games, of experience in similar positions, as well as an ability to mentally move the pieces for many moves in advance; and finally--what is more important, to accurately visualize the resultant positions. The grand master who plays twenty games simultaneously, blindfolded, performs mental processes of extraordinary depth when he plays a single game slowly. He is constructing position after position in the distant future.

--see you at the annual dinner--

COMMENTS & COMMENTS

(2 issues)

by Flynn

21 at the last meeting, including many new faces. We're gonna have to get acquainted all over again down at the Club.

R. E. Russell and Jim Hardy were down from Auburn, bringing with them another player whom I didn't get a chance to meet--I was too busy with Bob Burger of Lafayette. Bob is an ex-member who still gets up to Sacramento once in a while to say "hello". He showed me a game he has with Koltanowski (postal) and all I can say is, Koltie had better look out! Bob has also started composing problems, had three published. All in all, Bob Burger is in my opinion one of the most promising younger players in the State.

Several other younger players showing exceptional promise were also down at the Club. Which we like to see. If they can take it on the chin and learn in the process, they have bright chess futures ahead of them. But remember, fellows, you have a lot of games to lose before you get on to some of those tricks and traps.

Sam Johnson showed me a card he got from David Malig of San Jose, whom he is playing in correspondence. Dr. Malig says there is not too much interest in a postal match down at San Jose, but he feels that a regular match, either here or there, would be enjoyed.

"Chess Digest" in its last issue published complete results of our city championship, also results of North-South match. It was interesting to me to see that Sacramento had four players, the second largest group from any Northern club. Modesto and San Jose each furnished three, and did very well. The Modesto players scored $2\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ to make the best Club record. Sacramento, with $1\frac{1}{2}$ - $2\frac{1}{2}$, had the honor of having our two best players, Gee and Meyer, among the gallant thirteen which took on the best the South had to offer.

I was wrong on the number of players Mechanics Institute furnished. It was not two, it was one! And they won the Bay Area team championship. Their chess spirit is apparently red-hot only on their home grounds. On the other hand, maybe they're more than a little afraid to meet the best the South has to offer, preferring instead to leave it to the gallant thirteen. Mechanics prefers to be the big frog in their own puddle, but when it comes to players like Herman Steiner and Jim Cross, they don't seem too anxious to join combat.

Herman Steiner, by the way, got into the biggest chess controversy of recent years when, as U.S. champion, he insisted on playing Board #1, not Board #6, in the Yugoslavia match. Apparently Herman wasn't scared at all. The battle was amusing to me since I have always observed that poets not prizefighters put up the most vicious fight when their principles are involved. Chessplayers may be more savage than poets, at that.

Dick McDonald and I were talking. One of us said about some player, "He's got good possibilities but he's still in that stage where he makes outright blunders." The other replied, "Yes, it takes a long time to get out of that stage." Jim Marianos spoke up, "Yes, it sure does. Wonder how long it is?"

And we all went Yakkity, yakkity, yak.

New faces keep turning up at the club, and they're sure welcome. Old members come back, and, again, welcome.

Bob Holten is a new player at the club and he has a sharp eye for the game. I had the pleasure of playing him two very tough games a couple of weeks ago. Bob is something of a student of the game, and if he gets any better, we'll have to work on him in pairs, like waterfront policemen, to keep our greybeard dignity.

Another chessplayer, also a sharper, is Ralph Stagg, formerly of the Fresno Chess Club. Probably some of you have seen Ralph in the valley league matches at Modesto. Ralph is a dyed-in-the-wool chess enthusiast, and he can't play too much of the game. He should be a help to the team in the fall. Ralph also was handball champ at Fresno State College, and he is full of the old vim, bounce, and vigor.

(continued next page)

Seen at the club recently...N. E. Talcott battling with William Trousdale, Jim Hastings, the new county auditor ("Hurray for Jim, I voted for him, too") playing Sam Johnson. Gene Gray was down recently, also Bill Yersin. C. A. Iverson was at the club the last couple of times I was there. Neil Austin too. And many I'm forgetting.

By the way, did anybody every thank Neil for running off the city tournament? If not, here goes a big "Thank you, Neil". It is really a difficult job to handle. And as far as I know, there was not a single complaint.

J. B. Gee in his game with Pafnutieff, played at the YMCA here one Sunday, made the best fighting move I have seen in a long time. Those of you who have the last issue will have the game score. After Pafnutieff won a pawn, Gee promptly sacrificed a second pawn to gain in development. His courage was rewarded by a fighting draw.

Old friend Harold Soligan has been in the hospital. I went out one day and took along a chessboard. Harold may have been sick but his game didn't show it. The final blow came when some visitors came in to see him just when Harold had me in a desperate situation. Harold casually talked to them, meanwhile glancing carelessly at the board. The he picked up a knight from nowhere, set it down, and by gum, I was mated! No moves left for me at all. I'm still wondering where that knight came from.

Three weeks ago I had a series of fine, rough-house, games with Jim Hardy of Auburn. Both Jim and I threw caution to the winds, and had a lot of fun. Jim has the darndest ability to distract my attention. He gets me all interested in winning a piece or a pawn, and then, Wham!, he springs the trap on my King. It happened so often it couldn't be accidental, So look out for decoys, everybody, when you play Jim Hardy--or if you want real fun, try to set some of your own for him to snipe at.

1950 Tournament, White, Iverson; Black, Johnson

1. P-K4	P-K3	16. BxR	KxB	31. P-QB4	P-KN4
2. N-KB3	P-QB4	17. Q-Q2	Q-QN3	32. K-B	B-QB3
3. N-B3	N-QB3	18. Q-R6ch	K-K	33. R-Q3	P-K7ch
4. P-Q4	PxP	19. QxRP	NxN	34. KxP	BxNP
5. NxP	P-QR3	20. Q-R8ch	K-K2	35. K-B2	B-QB3
6. B-K3	B-QN5	21. QxN	Q-QB3	36. R-Q	K-B3
7. B-Q3	P-Q3	22. R-Q	B-K3	37. R-K	K-B4
8. O-O	BxN	23. P-QR3	R-QB	38. R-K7	P-KB3
9. PxB	N-KB3	24. Q-N4ch	Q-B4ch	39. R-K	K-N5
10. P-KB4	O-O	25. K-R	QxQ	40. R-Nch	K-R6
11. R-KB3	P-Q4	26. RPxQ	P-KB5	41. R-Q	KxRP
12. R-KN3	NxQP	27. R-KN5	RxQBP	42. R-Q5	P-N5
13. BxN	PxB	28. R-QB5	RxR	43. RxRP	P-N6ch
14. P-KB5	PxP	29. PxR	P-K6	44. K-K	P-B6
15. B-KR6	P-KN3	30. K-N	B-Q2	45. R-R6ch	K-N7

Resigns

The challenge ladder shows the names in this order: Gee, Flynn, Meyer, Johnson, Marianos, Spaulding, Trousdale, Applegate, Iverson, Talcott, McDonald, Yuke, Simonson, Soligan, Burns, Rochelle, Chapman, Austin, Daily, Carey, Schmidt, Gilmour, Yersin and Russell. That's all the room we have on the board, so if you're name isn't there, you'll just have to beat someone on the board and take his place. How about those on the board trying to climb a bit higher? Match games and tournaments will soon be with us again, so a little serious practice would be in order.

Have you paid your dues?

Coming to the dinner?

Finis