



—Photo by Nancy Roos

As their wives look on tensely, the challenger and the champion indulge in some skittles play by way of preparation for the ten-game match. Sitting on the sidelines during an important game can often be more nerve-wracking than playing the game itself.

## DENKER RETAINS UNITED STATES TITLE

By **FRED REINFELD**

FOR the second time in less than a year, California was the scene of a major chess event, as U. S. Champion Arnold S. Denker successfully defended his title against Challenger Herman Steiner by the score of 6-4. The outcome of the ten-game match was decided with the completion of the first nine games, when Denker had already scored  $5\frac{1}{2}$  points—which made his victory mathematically certain. The tenth game ended in a draw, which of course did not affect the final result.

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The match was one which had been eagerly welcomed by both players—by Denker because of his disappointing performances in the recent tournaments at Hastings and London, and by Steiner because of his splendid victory at London. Hence the match was a real head-on clash.

Curiously enough the contest, despite its brevity, fell into two sharply demarcated stages. The first, consisting of the initial four games, was catastrophic for Steiner. Playing in top form, Denker hammered out three wins and a draw in these first four games. Everyone thought it was all over but the shouting

—and even that isn't permitted at a chess match!

In such situations, the man on the losing end is usually so crushed that he is unable to offer any respectable resistance. But Steiner deserves high praise for his play from this point on. Seizing the initiative, he actually forced Denker on the defensive and made a plus score in the remaining games by winning one and drawing five games. All the games, regardless of result, were hard-fought; the draws were not of the kid-glove variety. Both players deserve great credit for having produced interesting, fighting chess all the way.