

# Richard Shorman

# Chess

## JUST FANTASTIC

The quality of Alekhine's blindfold play was not just great, it was just fantastic. Far from striving to keep his positions "under control", Alekhine went in for grand offensives that would challenge the analytical capabilities of many a grandmaster with full sight of the board. Nor did he sacrifice any of the tremendous originality and creativity that characterize his tournament games. In fact, Alekhine regarded himself as an artist, and in his view exhibition chess was as worthy of his best effort as world-class competition.

**White: Alexander Alekhine.**

**Black: Amateur.**

**Simultaneous blindfold exhibition (8-0), Paris, 1928.**

**Queen's Gambit Declined**

1 P-Q4	P-Q4	15 QxB	QxKN
2 P-QB4	P-K3	16 QxN(d)	N-K2
3 N-QB3	P-QB3	17 KR-K1	N-N3
4 N-B3	PxP	18 N-Q5!	P-N3
5 P-QR4	N-Q2	19 Q-B3	K-B2
6 P-K4	B-N5	20 N-B7	Q-N5(e)
7 BxP	Q-R4	21 B-N3!	R-QN1
8 B-Q2	P-K4	22 P-R3	Q-Q2
9 O-Oll(a)	PxP	23 QR-Q1	Q-K2
10 NxP	Q-QB4	24 B-Q6	Q-B3
11 BxPchl	KxB	25 P-K5	Q-B4
12 Q-N3ch	K-K1(b)	26 P-K6ch	BxP(f)
13 N-K6	Q-K4	27 NxB	Resigns
14 B-B4!	N-B4!(c)		

(Notes by Nikolai Grekov, translated from "Shakhmaty", Dec. 1928, pg. 263)

(a) Initiating a complex and deeply calculated combination designed to win a pawn. If 9 PxP, instead, then Black would reply not 9 . . . NxP 10 NxN QxN 11 BxPch but 9 . . . N-N3 and recover his pawn after 10 . . . B-N5.

(b) Or 12 . . . K-N3 (not 12 . . . K-K2? 13 N-Q5ch!, and wins) 13 N-K6 Q-Q3 (better than 13 . . . Q-K2 14 N-B4ch K-B3 15 QN-Q5ch) 14 N-B4ch K-B3 15 P-K5ch! KxP 16 KR-K1ch K-B4 17 Q-B2ch, etc.

(c) Forced, since 14 . . . Q-B3 loses straightaway to 15 N-B7ch K-Q1 16 B-N5.

(d) White now has an extra pawn and a superior position.

(e) Black's last chance. On 21 NxR? Black traps the knight after 21 . . . NxR 22 Q-B3 QxQ 23 PxQ B-N2 24 N-B7 R-QB1.

(f) Equally hopeless is 26 . . . K-N1 27 P-K7 (or 27 N-K8).

## **BLINDFOLD PRACTICE**

**By C.J.S. Purdy,**

**World Correspondence Chess Champion, 1953-58**

You don't have to work hard at chess, but if you feel like it here is a way you can infallibly improve your chess ability: Force yourself to play through published games blindfold. I know it's hard when there's no necessity. It would be a good idea to go camping with a book of games and "forget" to take a chess set.

It's like rowing. In my student days, cars were a rarity for young people. There was more hiring of row boats. Now, one thing about rowing is that you may go with the tide but come home against it. Moreover, a strong wind may get up and fight you, but you just have to return the boat to shore, not to mention the girl. Thus, because you have to, you become an almost tireless rower. And afterward, rowing in calm water is a pushover.

Same with blindfold chess. When you have to, because you have undertaken it, you can play quite a number of games blindfold simultaneously. When you don't have to, it seems irksome to play over even one game blindfold, but if you make yourself do it, it soon gets easier.

Why does blindfold chess help? Because a vital element of chess skill is to force yourself to visualize positions several moves ahead. In one way, that is harder than blindfold chess, because you have the present position before your eyes to distract you. In another way, it is easier, because at least part of your future picture is the same as now; you have less to fill in. But if you want to practice visualizing future moves while distracted by the position before you as in actual games, you can do so by making a practice of religiously plowing through the strings of analysis given by tough annotators and making sure you really do "see" the position as it changes move by move. Do not give up half way through a note.

If you find it very hard to play right through a game blindfold, do not be discouraged. Begin by playing with a blank board and no men. Also, when lying in bed, spend a minute or two each morning saying the names of squares, like c6 (White's QB6) and immediately telling yourself whether it is black or white. Koltanowski, the great blindfold expert, learned this way. It shows that blindfold chess is not something you either can or cannot do. You can learn it and improve at it. We all know that h1 and a8 are white. Therefore, g2, f3, e4, d5, c6 and b7 are white. And, of course, so are f1, d1, b1, c8, e8 and g8. From that you can work out the rest. But with practice you stop working them out, you just know.

**("Chess World", Jan. 1967, pp. 3-4)**

## **MODERN CHESS THEORY**

In January 1978, international master David Levy and Kevin O'Connell are starting a new monthly magazine called "Modern Chess Theory", devoted entirely to the latest advances in the openings. Each issue will contain five articles, all by international grandmasters, including Hort, Keene, Olafsson, Botvinnik, Polugaevsky and Tal on a regular basis. Articles will comprise a 100-200 word introduction in English to explain the ideas behind the opening variation under consideration, followed by 3-4 pages of analysis in coordinate chess notation (as used by "Chess Informant" and "The Chess Player"). In addition, a page will be devoted to readers' questions, which will be answered by a grandmaster contributor.

An airmail subscription to the first year of publication costs \$22, sent to "Modern Chess Theory", P.O. Box 50, Romford RM6 6 DP, Essex, England, if ordered before the end of February 1978.

## **BAY AREA HOLIDAY CONGRESS**

Three tournaments in one will take place at Laney College, 900 Fallon St., Oakland (right opposite BART's Lake Merritt Station), from Dec. 27-31. The main event is a five-round, USCF rated Swiss system tourney in three sections: Open (no restrictions), Premier (under 1800 or unrated) and Reserve (under 1500).

Lower rated players are eligible for all prizes above their own rating. Prize fund consists of 85 per cent of entries, less expenses. Entry fee is \$35 (\$25 for seniors over 60) if received before Christmas; otherwise, \$5 more. Rounds 1-4 (one game a day) start at 7 p.m., Tuesday through Friday, Dec. 27-30; round 5 begins at noon on Saturday, Dec. 31.

The Bay Area Holiday Quads, a four-player Round Robin sectional competition for USCF members, will be held Saturday, Dec. 31, beginning at 11 a.m. First prize in each section is \$25. Entry fee is \$9 before Christmas, \$10 at the site.

A separate four-round Holiday Beginners Tournament, open to all non-USCF members who have never played a rated game and USCF members rated below 1200, will get under way at 10 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 31. Only non-USCF members are eligible for prizes, which consist of a one year membership in the United States Chess Federation, including the national magazine "Chess Life & Review" (worth \$15), for each player who scores 75 per cent or better (3-1, 3½-½ or 4-0). Entry fee is \$6 before Christmas, \$7 afterward. Mail entries to Bulletin Chess Club, 1009 MacArthur Blvd., Apt. 6, Oakland, Calif. 94610.