

# FORTNIGHT

THE NEWSMAGAZINE OF CALIFORNIA

KOLTANOWSKI CHECKMATES AGAIN



A  
NEW  
CHESS  
COLUMN  
by  
CHAMPION  
GEORGE  
"KOLTY"  
KOLTANOWSKI

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# Game Without Luck

WITH this issue FORTNIGHT inaugurates a regular feature, chess problems selected by George Koltanowski, international chess master and world champion at simultaneous "blindfold" play.

"Kolty," as he is known in the chess world, has been instrumental in suddenly increased popularity of the game in the West, a game with a unique history.

The truth of its origin is really unknown, though it's traceable back to about 3000 BC. Traders and merchants are supposed to have brought the game to Europe from India and the Middle East. It has been passed down through the centuries with almost the same rules and pieces as were used in the beginning; minor differences in the rules have been gradually adjusted so that today chess is played with the same rules the world over. An Irishman and a Chinese, if both can agree on a word for "check" or "checkmate," can meet minds across a chessboard despite their lack of common ground in almost every other way. Chess seems to be a really universal game.

So when Russian Mikhail Botvinnik, present world champion, came out recently with the solemn observation (probably Politburo-inspired) that the names of the chess pieces—king, queen, rook, bishop, knight, pawn—were "decadent, capitalistic antiques of the bourgeoisie classes" he set off a belly laugh that really rippled around the world. If Comrade Botvinnik could advance a new nomenclature for the chessmen—possibly Mr. and Mrs. Commissar for the king and queen (it would be interesting to see how he'd unfrock the bishop)—he would set for the chess world the monumental task of changing the present names as they're inscribed in more than 50,000 different volumes published in every language on the royal and ancient game. Bibliographers claim that this is the largest number of volumes printed on any one subject.

**Pieces.** The names of the chess pieces are self-explanatory. The king, of course, is just that, the leader of the white or



George Koltanowski

black forces. As such he is the most vulnerable piece on the board. The ultimate goal of the game is to get the opponent's king in such a position that he cannot escape capture, though this capture is never actually effected. When the king has been put in such a position he is "checkmated" and the game is over.

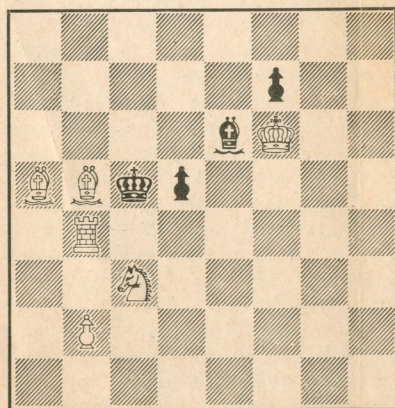
The rest of the chessmen are valued according to their mobility. The queen, who has the greatest range, is the most powerful weapon in the chess arsenal—"the female of the species." She moves horizontally, laterally or diagonally on the chess board's eight files and ranks of alternate black and white squares. The royal stronghold, the rook (or castle as it's sometimes called), is considered the next most powerful piece, moving up and down the files or sidewise.

The knight, in keeping with the man on horseback, can jump over other pieces in his peculiar dog-leg move, and is a good piece to have for close in-fighting. The long-range bishop wields its power on the diagonal and like Richelieu, sometimes masked behind the scene.

Last of all comes the lowly pawn, chess' "GI Joe," who paves the way for the heavy artillery of the other pieces and holds the framework of the position. The pawn, unlike his superiors, can move only one square at a time, though he can optionally advance two squares on his first move. The other pieces move as far as they wish on the particular file, rank or diagonal ahead of or behind them. They can't go through any men, though the knight can jump over them.

**"Anyone Can Play."** Contrary to the popular notion, chess is not a game limited to large-domed intellectuals. Somewhat like bridge, its infinite levels enable two beginners to get as much if not more fun out of a game as two masters.

Reshevsky, Fine, Steiner, Kashdan, Horwitz, Dake, Denker, Koltanowski are present-day US players whose names command respect, but they are products of what has been, till recent years, a dwarf-sized US field. As chess in this country snowballs along and as through the impetus of a free competitive development among a free competitive people, the US starts pooling untapped sources of chess talent, it will be interesting to see how long it takes us to produce an American chess champion of the world. At the rate we're going now it may not take very long.



White to play and mate in two moves

## Chess by George Koltanowski

(S.F. Chronicle Chess Expert)

### Can You Solve This?

Problem No. 1

By Dr. Hermann Sommer, San Francisco  
First Publication.

Solutions should be mailed in by Feb. 26. For each correct solution submitted to a two-mover the solver will receive two points. For a three-mover, three points. If solution is incorrect the solver will receive one point. Only key moves should be sent for two-movers. Solvers who reach 50 points will receive a chess book.

You can find out how many points you have in the competition, at any time—or inquire about chess in general—by sending a self-addressed card to "CHESS," FORTNIGHT, 68 Post St., San Francisco 4, California.