

Chapter 9

Games using unorthodox initial arrays

[The games in this chapter are orthodox in everything except the starting array. A large number of variants satisfy this description, frequently differing from one another only in minor detail. Alexandre, the author of the *Encyclopédie des Echecs*, experimented with the form in the first half of the 19th century, and was stated by Kraitchik in *Les Mathématiques des Jeux* to have well understood the theory - something of an accomplishment, if true. A game of dubious authenticity was recorded in Brighton around 1903 between Father Christmas and St. Nicholas, and was widely published.

Because of their closeness to the normal game, these variants often appeal to players who find more radical variations uninteresting, but by the same token their interest from our point of view is limited; once the opening is over, the players are playing ordinary chess. There are three general kinds: (a) the opposing arrays mirror each other either vertically or diametrically; (b) the opposing arrays do not mirror each other, and may not even be composed of the same men; (c) the initial position is wholly or partly free, and players enter the rest of their men as they please. The chapter also includes games at odds, and games from the normal array where one or more moves are specified in advance.]

9.1 The opposing arrays mirror each other vertically

In the present section, opposing men of the same kind face each other on the file. We start with games where the normal pawn line is retained but the piece order is changed. Variants of this kind date back at least to the middle of the 19th century, and probably considerably further. A game played at Baden-Baden in 1851 between E. van der Hoeven and T. von Heydebrand und der Lasa used the curious baseline BRKRBNQ with the opposing bishops out of touch with each other (*Dizionario Enciclopedico degli Scacchi*, quoted in *Chess Notes*). It is not certain whether the disposition was determined by choice or chance. The examples that follow observe the constraint that each side should have a bishop on a square of each colour.

Knights and Bishops (suggested by 'R' in a letter to the *Illustrated London News*, 11 April 1857). Baseline RBNQKNBR. Used in a game between Blackburne and Potter in 1875 (*City of London Chess Magazine* 1876) and in a tournament in 1879 (*Chess Monthly*, September 1879). Editorial comment in the latter (Zukertort's?) was hostile: 'We cannot approve of any kind of displacement. The beaten tracks of known openings are, of course, thereby avoided, but this small

advantage is purchased at the price of destroying the spirit of the game. However, this particular displacement is vicious in principle ... the first player has such a great advantage that it simply upsets the basis of a fair game'. Regrettably, this great advantage was not revealed. The arrangement was subsequently used in a six-game match between Showalter and Leman, at least one game of which was reproduced in *La Stratégie* in 1890.

Rooks and Bishops (suggested by D. Forbes in reply to the above, *Illustrated London News*, 9 May 1857). Baseline BNRQKRNB. The idea was subsequently revived by Capablanca, allegedly reacting to the large number of draws in his World Championship match with Lasker. [The first edition then quoted a 'righteous' reaction from Réti that 'Every true chess lover must be averse to Capablanca's casual suggestion', but while the quotation itself is accurate enough - the passage will be found on page 176 of the English edition of *Modern Ideas in Chess* - I think the word 'righteous' is belied by the context. What Réti dislikes is the fact that the change doesn't go to the heart of the matter, and will merely produce a temporary

reduction in the number of draws due to the exploitation of ignorant play in the openings. He isn't objecting to change in itself, but to a change which is only superficial. The same objection could be made and has been made to all games of this type.]

Mongredien's Game (A. Mongredien, 1868). Baseline RBBQKNNR with the bishops on the queen's side and the knights on the kings. Used in a tournament in 1868-9 (*Chess Player's Quarterly Chronicle* 1868, also *British Chess Magazine*, July 1945), and also in a correspondence match between Halle and Magdeburg in 1876.

Van der Linde's Games [1] (A. van der Linde, 1876). Several deviant arrays are quoted by van der Linde (*Geschichte und Literatur des Schachspiels*). One has the K and KR change places, a second offers the new baseline KQRNBRRN. Others are considered later in the chapter.

Neuschach [Lengfellner] (Dr Lengfellner, 1911). Baseline NBQRRNBK. Frank Marshall tested the game successfully in Vienna against an unknown master, whilst Erich Cohn of Berlin, shortly after killed in World War I, won a Neuschach masters tournament. (*Wiener Schachzeitung*, November-December 1911)

Parton's Game (V. R. Parton, 1952). Baseline NBRRKQBN. Suggested to overcome the problem of developing the rooks and also to strengthen the king's side. (*Chess*, May 1952)

Four-Knights Chess (NOST, date unclear). Baseline RNNQKNNR with no bishops. The same idea was put forward by Anthony Paletta as **Double Knight Chess [Paletta]** in *Chess Spectrum Newsletter*. It is not clear who had the priority.

Knight Supreme (NOST, date unclear). Baseline NNNQKNNN with neither bishops nor rooks.

Guardian Chess (George Jelliss, 1982). Baseline NQRBBRKN. This gives the only array with a normal complement of pieces in which all 16 men are guarded at least once. (Winter, *Chess Notes*)

The normal set of men allows 24 different baseline arrays if the king's side is required to reflect the queen's, and 2,880 if it is merely demanded that the bishops be on squares of

different colour. A selection from among these can be made by lot, thus providing a random choice from 24 or 2,880 different starting positions according to taste. In **Fischerandom Chess** (Robert Fischer, 1995), also known as **Shuffle Chess** and **Chess 960**, the bishops are required to be on squares of different colour and the king is required to stand somewhere between the rooks, which reduces the number of possibilities to 960. Castling is permitted, with the castled position on either side of the board normally corresponding to the orthochess arrangement although there are other options. The first progressive tournament of Fischerandom on the Internet (1996-7) attracted players from 11 countries, and was won by Alfred Pfeiffer. The game has been praised by some prominent players, possibly out of respect for its inventor, but Karpov commented that Fischerandom 'did not produce the harmonious positions of normal chess' and added that the game was 'negative', with which most variant players would probably agree.

Hopscotch Chess (Alan Parr, 1980s), intended for postal play, allows a random choice from the full set of 2,880 baselines with bishops on different colours, after which Marseillais Chess is played. Games tend to be short. (Author's rule sheet)

All the games considered so far have a full row of pieces on the first rank and a full row of pawns on the second. There have been variants in which these constraints are not observed.

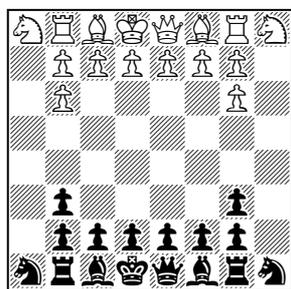
The Pawns Game [Endgame], also known as **Endgame Chess**. Origins unknown; at least one, and perhaps many centuries old. King and pawns v king and pawns in initial array. Played by Russian schoolboys as a practice game. (Fox and James, *The Complete Chess Addict*)

Van der Linde's Games [2]. One of van der Linde's arrays omits the b, c, f and g pawns, another has only 8 men a side: K, R (a-file), N (g-file), Ps a, d, e, f, g files. There are also three arrays with advanced pawns: (a) baseline NNBQKBRR, Ps c4/5 and g3/6, other Ps on usual array squares; (b) baseline RBNQKNBR, Ps b3/6 and c3/6, other Ps on usual array squares; (c) baseline RQBNKBNR, Ps a2/7, b2/7, c23/67, e2/7,

g23/67, h3/7 (sic). The asymmetry of the h-pawns may be a mistake. (Verney)

Bolshevistic Chess (F. J. Wallis, 1918). Humorous (?) proposal that the ranks of pieces and pawns in the initial position be reversed in order to bring justice to a game in which the people 'are mishandled and murdered at the behest of your Queens, your Kings and your Aristocrats'. No captures and no piece checks until a pawn has checked a king; however, a pawn can capture a pawn if this gives check. Once a pawn has checked a king, play reverts to normal. A suspect game was published in the *British Chess Magazine* in 1919.

Patt-Schach (Erich Bartel, c. 1960). White NRBKQBRN on rank 8 (!), Ps b7-g7, b6, g6, Black mirroring as usual :



Both sides are stalemated (White is playing up the board as usual), so each side puts one man on a different square (captures and checks barred). Thereafter play is normal except that promotion is only to a piece previously lost; if there is none, a pawn move to an end rank is illegal. Games are an orgy of premature deaths

9.2 The opposing arrays mirror each other diametrically

An alternative to vertical mirroring is provided by diametral mirroring, where like men are at opposite ends of an imaginary line through the centre of the board. An example is given by **White King and Queen Interchanged**, which has been suggested many times (e.g. in the *Chess Amateur*, December 1916). A correspondence tournament started in 1935 was won by E. Ancsin of Budapest (+10 -1 =0) with P. Keres and H. Muller as joint runners-up (+9 -1 =1) (*Fernschach* 12/1937, quoted in *Chess Notes*). Lord Brabazon

and pawn-promotions. (*Variant Chess* 5)

Melf's Game (Frank Melf, 1978). Kings on usual squares; eight queens replace pawns; no other pieces. Described as a quick chess variation, the game is flawed: 1 Qaxf7+ leads to mate at move 4. (*Games and Puzzles* 72) [A delightful picture in the first edition showed some distinctly quarrelsome queens brandishing rolling pins, frying pans etc.]

Advance Chess (Tony Paletta, 1980). As normal chess except that pawns start on the 3rd and 6th ranks. There is no double pawn move. (*Chess Spectrum Newsletter*)

Corridor Chess (Tony Paletta, 1980). White baseline (b1-g1 only occupied) NRQKRN, bishops on c2/f2, pawns (six only) on b3-g3, Black mirroring as usual. No castling or two-square pawn move. Early play is often a fight for control of a- and h-files. (*Chess Spectrum Newsletter*)

Pawn-Snatcher's Delight (originator unknown). All pawns start on the 4th/5th ranks. A variant suggested (1982) by Philip Cohen is to move all men one rank nearer the opponent in the initial array, leaving the 1st/8th ranks empty. No two-step pawn moves or castling. (*Nost-algia* 263)

Crowded Chess (quoted by C. Pickover, 1992). Each player has two rows of pawns (2nd/3rd & 6th/7th ranks) and the usual pieces. (*Mazes for the Mind*)

Hecatomb (Kevin Maroney, 1994). Each player has a king in its normal position, plus 31 queens filling the rest of his half of the board. (*Nost-algia* 347, also *Eteroscacco* 67/68) [Text editorial]

subsequently suggested that it be officially adopted for a trial period (*Chess*, April 1944), but readers' letters (17 published) were predictably conservative.

Little Chess was the name attached by Gollon to a classic pawn puzzle (Kd1, Pabc2 against Ke8, Pfgh7, White to play and win). This dates back at least to Carrera in 1617 and was definitively solved in 1836 by Szén, who made quite a bit of money out of it (*The Oxford Companion to Chess*, entry 'Three pawns problem'). [Text revised]

9.3 The opposing arrays do not mirror each other

Van der Linde once offered (a1-h1/h8-a8; i.e. facing kings) KQRNBRRN and RNBQRBNK. How he arrived at these baselines is not known, but many techniques exist for placing men in a line at random. **Fully Randomized Chess**, in which the White and Black baselines are randomized independently and without restriction of any kind, seems to have been played only occasionally, but **Symmetric Fully Randomized Chess** (George Jelliss, 1998) has been used as the vehicle for at least one tournament. The four pairs of men (KQ, RR, BB, NN) are arranged symmetrically on the back rank even though the White and Black baselines may differ, thus ensuring that the bishops are on squares of opposite colour and that one side does not have all its heavy pieces concentrated on one wing. There are special rules for castling. But it was felt that some starting positions were either very favourable or very unfavourable, and appeared to give one side a significant advantage from the word go; a probable flaw in this variant with a contradictory title (*Variant Chess* 33). [Text largely editorial]

Transcendental Chess, also known as **TC** (Maxwell J. Lawrence, 1978) allows players to make a limited adjustment to the baselines they are given. Starting positions (different for each side) are generated by computer. Bishops on different colours; no castling. Games are arranged in couplets (two games against the same opponent, one as W and one as B with the same array) with an important additional rule: both players have the option, on the first turn only and instead of moving, of transposing any two pieces in their array. A thriving TC club in the U.S., run for many years by the inventor, offered a range of correspondence tournaments and a regular publication, *Transcendental Chess*. In one tournament alone over 2,000 games were played.

Auction TC is a variant of Transcendental Chess employed when a single game, as against the usual couplet, is desired. The system is valid for any game where the initial array is not mirrored and is outside the control of the players. The array is made available to both players who then bid in turn. The procedure is formalised: W or B - the bidder is

opting for white or black, W or B 1,2,3 ... - the bidder is opting for a side and is prepared to cede 1,2,3 ... tempi for the privilege. A tempo is translated in practice into the right to transpose two pieces, or to make a pawn (not piece) move, at the player's choice; thus a player receiving two tempi could make two pawn moves or transpose two pieces and make one pawn move. As in TC, a player may only transpose on the first move of a game. It is usual for the bidding to advance in stages, until one player passes. Good bidding calls for skill in evaluating the array.

In **Dutchess** (Al Helzner, 1982) each player secretly selects a number in the range 0-3. These numbers are added, and that number of pieces (not king or pawns) is removed from the array of each side. The players in turn nominate a piece which each then removes from his opponent's forces, selecting if there is a choice (*Nost-algia* 264). Other suggestions have included the **shedding of a rook's pawn** by each side (Menard, 1890s). [I haven't traced the source for the Menard suggestion.]

Since the late 19th century, draughts (checkers) has optionally been played with a two-move or three-move restriction rule: a list of two-move or three-move openings is made available, and the players select one by lot and take each side once. **Restricted Chess** (Stasch Mlotowski, 1917) applied the same idea to chess (*BCM*, September 1917). Mlotowski advocated allotting an opening to each of the 52 cards in a standard pack. Two games would be played with the opening drawn, reversing colours. His selection of openings was startling, even for the period: two cards (red aces) placed no restriction on the players; one card (ace of clubs) required White to open with other than d4 or e4; three cards (!) required White to open d4; two cards (!!) allowed Black to respond to 1 e4 with other than e5, and the remaining 44 cards carried a mandatory 1 e4 e5 with divergences at the second and subsequent moves. 'It will be noted,' commented the author, 'that I have a leaning to the more interesting debuts'. *The Gambit* commented (December 1927) that 'The limited number of debuts offered was probably the reason his idea did not receive

wider recognition at the time'. In the interim, Mlotowski drew up a list of 200 opening variations, including all those then recognized as giving a playable game. The opening to be played was decided by drawing numbered cards, prompting the name **Ballot Chess**.

Games At Material Odds. The giving of odds was common until relatively recent times. The practice, which however never gained popularity in Germany, peaked early in the 19th century according to Golombek (*Penguin Encyclopedia of Chess*). The leading players of the 18th and 19th century, from Philidor to Steinitz, often gave odds against weaker players; indeed, most of Philidor's games were played at odds. There is no definitive listing, but odds commonly given were, in ascending order, (1) The move (stronger player takes Black); (2) Two moves (White opens with two consecutive moves); (3) Pawn and move (Black removes his f-pawn); (4) Pawn and two moves (f-pawn removed); (5) Minor piece (usually QN); (6) Rook (usually QR); (7) Q. Several other material imbalances were occasionally practised. Against rank beginners, 'crutch odds' were sometimes employed, the stronger player being without minor pieces and the four central pawns.

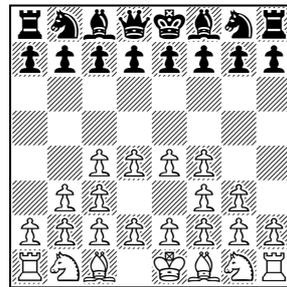
The odds of pawn-and-move provide many interesting examples of expert play because the difference in playing strength is small and orthochess opening knowledge is of little use. Black is immediately handicapped in not being able to reply to 1 e4 with either e5 or Nf6 and in consequence has a difficult defence; on the other hand, if he is able to consolidate his position he has the advantage of the half-open f-file. Opening play at odds of pawn-and-move suggests that White's best move to retain the advantage is 1 e4 with possible replies for Black: d6, e6, Nc6, Nh6, c5, g6, b6. Not all these responses may stand up to modern analysis and theoretically of course White's advantage is huge.

Completely unbalanced games have been practised at least since the 18th century, and many versions have been recorded.

The Pawns Game [Legal], also known as **Legal's Game**. Attributed to M. de Legal, Sire de Kermur, according to *Le Palamède* (1837).

A game which tests the theory that a queen is worth nine pawns, in practice reduced to eight to compensate for their advanced position in the array. No WQ, but eight extra pawns on the 3rd/4th ranks. Only pawns on the second rank can move two squares. The game is finely poised and enjoyed considerable popularity in the Régence where Labourdonnais and Deschappelles are alleged to have played hundreds of games. White's aim was to advance in a phalanx, depriving Black of space; Black's aim was to neutralize the pawn chain, usually with sacrifices, opening a path for the queen to penetrate the position.

Five initial positions, each with their own strategies, were common. Position I (additional pawns on a3-h3) is weak; White has difficulty in developing. Position II (pawns on a4-h4) is also weak for White as the front row of pawns is open to attack. The asymmetrical Position III (pawns on cefg4, bcfg3), known as the Boar's Head, was considered inferior, offering Black good attacking chances. Position IV (pawns on bcfg3/4) is advantageous for White unless Black strikes quickly. Position V (pawns on cdef4 and bcfg3, see below), known as the Trapeze, was considered best for White: the bishops were normally developed at d3/e3 and the knights at d2/e2, and Black had to play cautiously.



Sometimes a pawn more or less was agreed by way of handicap. (*Schachzeitung* 1849-50)

An extreme form of the game was tried out by Walter Browne and Ralph Betza at the Manhattan Chess Club in the 1960s. White had a king and seven queens on the first rank, Black a king and 47 pawns, the rank between the two sides being empty. Black won each time. (*Nost-algia* 162)

[In spelling 'Legal' with no accent, David is

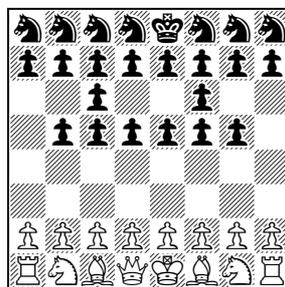
at one with *Le Guide des Echecs* (Giffard and Biénabe, 1993, page 37), though the name is given there as ‘Kermur de Legal’. The *Oxford Companion* has ‘Legall de Kermur’ with a double ‘l’. *Le Palamède* has ‘Légal’ with an accent and this has understandably been copied by other writers, but apparently it is quite wrong. Ken Whyld once told me that Harry Golombek was most distressed when an editor ‘corrected’ his text by inserting an accent after he had signed off the proofs: ‘My French friends will think I am ignorant!’]

Van der Linde’s Games [3]. Two unbalanced arrays using normal men are given: (a) White has Ke1, Bc1 and the four central pawns against Black Ke8 and the six central pawns, (b) White has Ke1, Nb1, Ps b2, d2, e2, f2 against the same. Van der Linde also gave a position with sixteen white pawns against a Black K with powers of all men combined, which will appear in a later chapter.

Peasants’ Revolt [Frey] (R. L. Frey, 1947). White has K + 8 x P (the peasants) on original squares; Black has four knights (the nobles) on b/c/f/g8, Ke8, Pe7. Object is mate. Black has better chances but must avoid being left with

two knights. (Koch, *Spiele für einem Allein*)

Weak! (Ralph Betza, 1973). Inspired by Week (see chapter 19) and the Pawns Game. White has his normal array, Black Ke8, seven knights on a8-d8/f8-h8, 16 pawns on a7-h7, c6/f6, b5-g5 :



The two sides are said to be roughly equal in strength but the array suggests that Black is appreciably stronger. White’s tactics are to break through by sacrifices, Black’s to advance en masse, the knights forming chains to cover vital squares. Best played at speed, Weak! has been endorsed by dozens of tournament players. (*Nost-algia* 162)

9.4 The initial position is partly or wholly free

In these games, there is no initial array as such, and the players place their men largely or wholly as they wish. Many such games exist and new ones are continually being invented, sometimes with more hype than originality. There are two general approaches: the players start with a line of pawns, or with a completely empty board, and each places one man at a time in full view of his opponent, or they set up their positions completely independently and bring the two together. Games with the normal pawn array are listed first, then empty board games, then games in which the players set up their positions independently.

Free Chess [Brunner], also known as **Permutation Chess [Brunner]** (Erich Brunner, 1921). Pawns in normal array. White places a piece on any square of 1st rank; Black places equivalent piece on 8th rank either on same file or on corresponding file (e.g., WRc1; BRc8 or f8). Now Black chooses a piece and the same procedure is followed until

all pieces are placed when play is as in orthochess (*Das Brunnerbuch*, also *Nouveaux Jeux d’Echecs Non-orthodoxes*). Tournaments held in Switzerland and England. Karl Kaiser (*Funkschach*, September 1926) proposed to introduce some order into the process by requiring the pieces to be placed in sequence (W followed by B): K, Q, R, R, B, B, N, N.

Free Chess [Felisch], also known as **Paul-Felisch-Schach** (Paul Felisch, 1926). The pawns and kings are placed as normal and both players set two pieces anywhere on their respective back ranks. White and Black make one move; thereafter a player can elect on his turn to place one or two pieces at will on his back rank and then move normally. Players must enter pieces at least every other move so that by the 10th move at the latest, all are placed. Bishops on different colours; no castling (*Funkschach*, July 1926). Nimzowitsch remarked that ‘the idea of Herr Paul Felisch is not without wit’ but then went on to decry it (*Kagans Neueste Schachnachrichten*, July 1927).

Real Chess (E. I. Csaszar, 1934). Pawns arrayed as usual; players take it in turns to place a piece on any empty square on their back ranks; no restrictions on bishops. Castling permitted, subject to orthochess rules, over any distance; thus WKb1, WRa1, h1; castle Kb1/Ra1 (sic) or Kg1/Rh1. (*Nouveaux Jeux d'Échecs Non-orthodoxes*)

Chess With Reserves (E. Slater, 1950s). Pawns and kings are set in their usual array; pieces are kept in reserve. On each turn a player may move in the normal way or enter one piece from his reserve on any vacant square of his first rank. (*Nouveaux Jeux d'Échecs Intéressants*)

Free Chess [Slater] (E. Slater, 1950s). Players in turn place a piece on an empty square on their respective back ranks. No castling; bishops can be on same-coloured squares. (*Nouveaux Jeux d'Échecs Intéressants*)

Placement Chess [Koskela] (Ron Koskela, 1976). Each player in turn locates an opponent's piece; the process being repeated four times. (*Chess Life*, September 1976)

Pre-Chess (1978, advocated by Pal Benkő who credits David Bronstein with the idea). Pawns are set up as usual, then each player in turn, White starting, puts a piece on a vacant square on his first rank until all are in place; bishops must be on opposite-coloured squares, and castling is permitted only if K and R are both in their orthochess positions. Endorsed initially by Euwe as 'an interesting new idea' and 'worth trying' (*Chess Life*, August 1978). A four-game match (1978) between Benkő and Arthur Bisguier was won convincingly, if with a slice or two of luck, by the latter.

The *Chess Life* articles sparked an interest in the game across America. Tournaments were held (one, in 1979, won by Joel Benjamin). *Schema*, a games magazine, ran a feature article, re-naming the game **Meta-Chess [Schema]** and describing the initial deployment as a Meta-phase. Philip Cohen had suggested a 'Super' version in 1977 in which both sides had advanced pawns in the initial position, as in the Burmese game (White f3, g3, h3; Black a6, b6, c6) (*Nostalgia* 240). Meanwhile Burt Hochberg, former *Chess Life* editor, in an interview that received wide publicity, declared the articles had generated an enthusiastic response ('readers

loved it') but that no letters or follow-up articles appeared in *Chess Life* apparently because the USCF had disapproved of space being allocated to chess variants.

Placement Chess [Jelliss] (George Jelliss, 1980s?). Jelliss observed that once a player knew where his opponent's king was he could place his men so as to focus on it. He favoured placing the men in the sequence N, N, B, B, R, R, Q, K, the second player each time matching the placement on the same file. (Winter, *Chess Notes*)

The Game of Calculation (originator unknown, 1806 or earlier). Forces are selected independently by the players based on a points system and an agreed allocation, men to be set up according to a fixed procedure. It was suggested (*Easy Introduction to Chess*) that Q=10, R=5, B=3.5, N=3, P=1, and an example is given of a selection based on an allocation of 20 points. An article in *Recreational Computing*, a century and three-quarters later, proposes an almost identical game with point values Q=25 (sic), R=7, B=5, N=3, P=1 with an initial allocation of 60 points per side.

Jubilee Chess (H. F. L. Meyer, 1885). Each player in turn places a man on any empty square on his first three ranks, bishops on opposite colours. In this stage, a check must be covered immediately; if impossible, the player has lost. Pawn starting on back rank moves 1-3 squares and may be taken e.p.; no castling. Promotion to captured piece only; if none, pawn is permanently immobilized. Meyer was a well-known editor of the time. [Manuscript note 'Picture (magazine page, mounted)', but no copy in David's Encyclopedia files]

Reform Chess [Békey] (Emerich Békey, 1908). Players place men alternately on vacant squares, White anywhere on ranks 1/2/3, Black ditto 6/7/8. Pawns (which have no two-step right) can be placed on back rank; both bishops on same colour. A player is not obliged to use all his men (but K must be on board). Békey offers other 'improvements'; for example, he renames certain men: Vezier (Q), Hussar (N) and Bastion (R) as being more in accord with the spirit of the game. (*Reform-Schach*)

Crown Chess [Ritzen] (Anton Ritzen, 1914). White deploys on ranks 1,2,3 and

Black on ranks 6,7,8. White starts with the K, Black follows ditto, then Q, Rs, Bs, Ns, Ps in order. No pawns on ranks 1/8; pawns on 2/7 have two-square option; no restriction on bishops. If one player, in placing a piece, gives check, the second player must cover it. Stated to have had a big following in Cologne in the early days of World War I. (*Das unsterbliche Schachbuch*)

Game of Pawn Placing (anonymous inventor in Belfast, 1922). Each player has a king and three pawns. White places his K anywhere on his first rank; Black does likewise. The players then alternate, placing a pawn anywhere on their respective 2nd, 3rd and 4th ranks. A normal game ensues with considerable advantage to Black as having placed the last pawn. Parton suggested that each player should also have a B and N. (*Chess Amateur*, July 1922, also *Nouveaux Jeux d'Echecs Non-orthodoxes*)

Freak Chess (D. S. Ellis, 1933). The names of the squares apart from c1/f1/c8/f8 are written on 60 slips of paper and shuffled. Each man apart from the bishops and kings is taken in turn, and a slip drawn for each. When all 26 men have been placed, any pawns on their 7th and 8th ranks are removed, and the bishops are placed on their normal home squares. White now places his king where he likes, Black does the same, and play proceeds. Black can lose his queen at move 1, but according to the inventor disasters are rare. (*Australian Chess Review*)

Neo-Schaak, also known as **Placement Chess [van Dien]** (E. van Dien, 1941). In a speech in September 1941 introducing his game to the Vereenigd Amsterdamsch Schaakgenootschap the inventor claimed that the most difficult problem in chess, the best initial array, is assumed to have been solved already whereas it has known weaknesses (the c- and f-pawns, castling, rooks out of play). He also pointed up the parallel of war where the opponent's deployment is not disclosed before the battle. Hence Neo-Schaak, in which the board is empty at the start of a game. The first move for both players is to place the king on any square of their first two ranks. Thereafter a player may move a piece on the board or introduce a new man on an empty space on his first or second rank. Pawns may be introduced on the first rank and bishops on

same-coloured squares. There is no double pawn move or castling. (Pamphlet *Neo-Schaak* by the originator, also *Nouveaux Jeux d'Echecs Non-orthodoxes*)

Blackout Chess (W. J. Joret, 1942). The board is empty to start. Each player takes K, Q, B, N, R, 4xP and places them freely on the board, one man at a time alternately in the order given, until all 18 are located and the game can start. B. H. Wood suggested some additional rules: (1) No man may be placed to check the opposing K; (2) No man may be placed so as to put an opponent's piece (not pawn) en prise; (3) Pawns may not be entered beyond the fourth rank; (4) Black to move first. (*Chess*, June 1942)

Identific (V. R. Parton, 1970). Each player starts with 12 counters or tokens and places them on any 12 squares in his own half of the board. These represent the usual eight pieces plus four pawns, as yet unallocated, which he keeps in hand. White starts by moving a counter like a chessman and then replacing it with that man; Black does likewise. Thereafter a player may move a counter and replace it with an unallocated piece, or move a chessman on the board in the normal way. Unidentified counters, even if known by the fact that only one type of man remains to the player, cannot recapture or check, but they are subject to capture by chessmen in play. Before the start, players agree on a turn (the 4th and 6th have been suggested) by which the kings will be disclosed. Without such early revelation much of the interest of the game is lost. (*Chesshire Cat Playeth Looking-Glass Chessys*)

Paratroop Chess (C. G. Lewin, 1970). Empty board at start. Players first place king anywhere in own half. Thereafter a turn consists of moving a man on the board or placing a man not in play on an empty square in own half of board. No man may be dropped to give check; bishops on opposite colours; no pawns on the first rank. (Manuscript notes presumably deriving from personal communication)

Placement Chess [Lewin] (C. G. Lewin, 1970, 'after Boyer'). Empty board at start. Players decide on colours then at each turn place any man of either colour on the board; white in one half, black in the other. No pawns on end ranks and bishops must be on opposite-

coloured squares. A player may not place an opponent's king nor put either king in check. Play begins when all men are placed. (Manuscript notes presumably deriving from personal communication)

Deployment Chess. This game (inventor unrecorded) won first prize in a competition for new chess variants (*The Gamer* 5). The board, otherwise empty, is dressed with 24 white and 24 black counters, covering respectively all squares of the first three ranks on either side. These are known as creation points. Both players start by replacing an own-colour marker with one of their men (no pawn on first rank). On each subsequent move a player may either enter a man to replace one of his own markers or make a move on the board. There are a few restrictions: (1) Both kings must be entered by the 5th move. (2) A pawn cannot be entered on a file on which a pawn of that colour already stands; a pawn entered on the second rank has the right to the two-square move. (3) Bishops must be on opposite coloured squares. (4) A moving man destroys the creation point (of either colour) that it lands on and also any of its own colour that it crosses. (5) No castling. Captured men are eliminated from the game. Both creation and movement call for subtlety, the play apart. (*The Gamer*, also Addison, *100 Other Games to Play on a Chessboard*)

Creative Chess (Marco Meirovitz, 1980s). Players introduce their men alternately in their own halves of the board. Kings are placed last. No restrictions on B, P placements. Introduced as part of the inventor's books-and-software programme for developing thinking skills, *The Gym of the Mind*.

Chaos [Koch] (Karl Koch, 1986). The players start with an empty board and each in turn places a man on an empty square in his own half of the board. The king is placed first (another version has the king placed last), the other men in any order. There are no restrictions except that a player whose king is in check after all men have been placed loses the game. When all men are on the board White starts and orthochess rules apply. In another variant, the men may be placed anywhere on the board (but no pawns on end ranks). (*Spiele für Zwei*)

Bosley Chess (John Bosley, 1987). Empty board to start; White places 7 men, Black 7,

White 5, Black 5, White 3, Black 3, and then the kings. Men apart from kings may be placed in any order and on any empty square with the following limitations: pawns only on ranks 2-4, queen must be placed during the first turn, bishops must be on opposite colours. Play then continues under Progressive Chess starting at turn 3 (so White plays 3 moves, Black 4, White 5, and so on). (*Eteroscacco* 53)

Unachess (Jeff Miller and Edward Jackman, 1994). Empty board to start; player on turn may place a man on an empty square or move man on the board. The K must be placed before any capture is made. There were three versions. In **Unachess I** (Miller), pawns could be entered on 2nd, 3rd or 4th ranks only, with P-2 subsequently possible if on 2nd rank. In **Unachess II** (Jackman), pawns could be entered on ranks 1-4, but no P-2 or castling. **Unachess III**, also known as **Parachute Chess** (Jackman), had the additional rule that no man could be entered so as to attack an enemy man. By April 1995 there was a consensus that White should always win with reasonable play. (*Variant Chess* 17, also personal communications)

Free Programme Chess (Gela Guraspasvili, 1995). Board starts empty; players then place usual men alternately starting with White in own half of board; Ks are placed first. Pawn-two allowed only if P on second rank. White may not capture on first move. Tournament involving two grandmasters and ten other masters held in Tbilisi in 1995. (Booklet *Free Programme of Chess*, also *Variant Chess* 26/28)

Games in which the players set up their positions without knowledge of what their opponent is doing are known generically as **Screen** or **Barrier Chess**. A screen or barrier, real or imaginary, is placed across the middle of the board, and each player deploys his forces in secret according to the rules of the version being played. The screen is then lifted (or the position assembled on a single board) and orthochess is played. **Crazy Screen Chess** allows the players a completely free hand; other versions impose some discipline. Screen Chess may be played to decide only the baselines, the pawn array being normal. Deployment may be confined to the first two ranks, the first three ranks (usual) or the entire

half-board. Some variants require orthodox positions (pawns on each file, none on first rank, bishops on opposite coloured squares). A popular condition is that the kings be placed first and their positions revealed before secret deployment begins. Another system is to start with a standard array and then, with the screen erected, for each player to make a number of moves (Boyer suggests 10) in his own half of the board. The screen is lifted and the game proper begins. Some further games are detailed below. Since development can be considered completed before the start of play, with open lines probable and a balanced position improbable, games tend to be vigorous and tactical.

Viennese Kriegspiel, also known as **Schach-Kriegspiel** and **German Chess Kriegspiel** (Ritter von Korwin-Dzbancki, 1908). Before the game, the position of the kings on one of the first two ranks of each player is decided by lot. The players are then granted 20 minutes to deploy their men as they wish in their own halves of the board; bishops on opposite colours, no pawns on back rank. When both players are ready, the forces are revealed. The player to move first is then chosen by lot. (*Wiener Schachzeitung* 1909, *Nouveaux Jeux d'Échecs Non-orthodoxes*)

Surprise Chess (E. E. Slosson, 1916). The players secretly deploy their men as they please on the first three ranks of their own sides of the board before play starts (*British Chess Magazine*, January 1917). According to Felix Snider, who reissued the game (1930s) under the name **Blitz-Chess [Snider]**, no reference to it is to be found in the inventor's science fiction books. Snider reasonably suggested certain disciplines: (1) Pawns permitted on first rank and can then move three squares initially (e.p. allowed on move of two or three squares); (2) Castling only under regular game conditions; (3) Bishops on opposite-coloured squares.

Welbeck Chess (Hubert Phillips, c.1917). Each player has a board screened from his opponent. Each player places his king anywhere within his own half of his board and

writes down its position on a piece of paper. The papers are then exchanged. Now the players set up their own men anywhere within their two halves of the board with the one proviso that bishops must be on different-coloured squares. Pawns can be placed on the first rank if desired. The boards are then brought together and one player's pieces are transferred to the opponent's board, and the game begins. (*Indoor Games for Two*)

Prepared Chess (Jed Stone, 1982). The players arrange their pieces privately on the first three ranks in any order or position (three pawns may stand on a file, both bishops on same colour). The positions are then combined, and play starts. No castling or privileged moves. (Stone)

Instant Chess (Bruce R. Trone, 1986). An attempt to speed up postal play. On an agreed day, players send each other a diagram showing the positions they would like their men to occupy. No pawns on end ranks; bishops on opposite colours. Where both players have occupied the same square the higher-ranking piece achieves an instant capture (rank order K, Q, R, B, N, P). If men are of the same value, or kings occupy adjacent squares, new positions are sent, and repeated as necessary. When all men are placed and captured pieces removed, play starts. [Personal communication assumed; source material missing from David's files. A quick calculation suggests that if each side places his men at random, the odds are not far short of four to one that there will be a clash between a pair of pawns somewhere, quite apart from the possibility of a piece or king clash; but of course players will tend to put their pawns in advanced positions and their pieces on ranks 2 and 3 hoping to knock out an opponent who is doing the same, and in that case clashes will be rare. What happens if Black's king is left in check? A possible variation might be to require the checking man to be removed, thus giving Black something to set against the probably substantial advantage of first move.]