

## Chapter 10

### Different objectives of play

[The normal objective of a game of chess is to give checkmate. Some of the games which can be played with chessmen have quite different objectives, and two of them, Extinction Chess and Losing Chess, have proved to be among the most popular of all chess variants.]

#### 10.1 Capturing or baring the king

**Capturing the king.** *The Chess Monthly* hosted a lively debate (1893-4) on the suggestion of a Mr Wordsworth Donisthorpe, whose very name seems to carry authority, that check and checkmate, and hence stalemate, should be abolished, the game ending with the capture of the king. The purpose of this proposed reform was to reduce the number of draws then (as now) prevalent in master play. Donisthorpe claimed that both Blackburne and the American master James Mason were in favour of the change, adding 'I have little doubt the reform would obtain the support of both Universities' which says something about the standing of Oxford and Cambridge at that time. Mason confirmed his support, observing, quaintly, that 'the divinity that doth hedge a King in stalemate is of a particularly low order'. An apoplectic Mr Blunt took the traditionalist side, ably supported by the German master Teichmann. It was pointed out that White Kh8, Ph7 (2), Black Kf8 (1) was a loss for White - a pawn up - whoever had the move. The editor came up with White Kg7, Ph7 (2), Black Ke7, Ra8 (2), a clear draw in orthochess, but a win for Black under the new rule with 1...Rh8!

[In truth, I suspect that the remark about 'the support of both Universities' said less about the standing of Oxford and Cambridge

than about the snobbery of Mr Donisthorpe!]

**Baring the king.** The rules of the old chess allowed a (lesser) win by 'bare king' and stalemate, and Réti and Bronstein have favoured its reintroduction. [I haven't traced the Bronstein reference, but Réti's will be found on page 178 of the English edition of *Modern Ideas in Chess*. It is in fact explicit only in respect of stalemate, though the words 'the original rules' within it can be read as supporting bare king as well, and perhaps I ought to quote it in full. After expounding the ancient rules, he continues: 'Those were romantic times for chess. Today, when chess technique is in such a condition of refinement, what is there more natural than that we should revert to the original rules. Lasker has made such a proposal with which I associate myself in full conviction. In order to prevent the decay of chess by the frequent occurrence of drawn games finer nuances of execution must show themselves in the result, and stalemate should be considered and counted in the estimation of scores for tournament purposes, wins by them to count less than enforced mates. It would be a matter for congratulation if the managers of tournaments just for once decided as an experiment to promote a tournament on these lines.']

#### 10.2 Changed or multiple kings

**Knightmate** (Bruce Zimov, 1972). The royal piece at e1/e8 is a knight and there are two non-royal kings where the knights normally stand. The object is to checkmate the knight. Castling between knight and rook is legal subject to the usual restrictions. The knights are vulnerable to checks on adjacent squares.

K or Q alone can mate a N. The first Knightmate Open (Ohio, October 1991) was won by David Moeser. The game is said to have been popular at Sheffield University during the early 1970s under the name of **Mate The Knight**, perhaps as a result of independent invention. (*J'Adoube* 34, *Nost-*

*algia* 328 and later, *Eteroscacco* 56, manuscript note presumably deriving from personal communication)

**Three Kings Chess** (Adam Sobey, 1988). Normal set-up except that the rooks are replaced by additional kings. Object is to capture any one of the opponent's kings (there are no checks). The inventor observes that the game is similar to a balancing act: all goes well until a latent instability sets in and total collapse follows. Difficult to make moves that uniformly defend all three kings. Invented for the Christmas entertainment of the Haslemere Chess Club ('Voted good'). The inventor resisted the temptation to call it Magi Chess. (Notes presumably deriving from personal communication)

**Kinglet Chess**, also known as **Imperial Fiddlesticks** (V. R. Parton, 1953). Standard array but random set-up if preferred. Check and checkmate abolished, the king being treated like any other piece. The object of the game is to capture all the opponent's pawns

### 10.3 Other objectives based on mate, check, or stalemate

**Pion Coiffé** (capped pawn). A handicap system whereby one side contracts to deliver mate with a nominated man, a common practice between players of disparate strength until towards the end of the 19th century. The origins of the capped pawn can be traced back to at least the 16th century (Murray). The receiver of the handicap could not lose if he succeeded in capturing the pawn which was usually obliged to deliver mate without promoting. The handicap was often equated with giving the odds of a queen (*Oxford Companion to Chess*). The g-pawn was most commonly nominated (*Schachzeitung* 1856). A piece might be chosen instead of a pawn.

**Multi-Mate Chess**. A variant played in 17th century Iceland allowed a player giving mate to deliver further mates provided the situation changed at each move, apparently by moving a different man, although a pawn could move twice if it promoted on its second move. The first three such mates were known as 'low' mates, all thereafter 'high' mates. Murray gives an end-position in which seven

(kinglets). Pawns promote to kings, thus a player forced to promote his last pawn loses. Stalemate is a draw. There is a Marseillais version of the game in which two moves are made on each turn, one at least of which must be a pawn move. A Progressive version has also been played. (*Chess - Curiouser and Curiouser*, also *Nost-algia* 132 and later)

**Co-Regal Chess** (V. R. Parton, 1970). An early blow struck on behalf of sexual equality. Queens as well as kings are subject to check and checkmate and the fall of either monarch wins the game. (The Q retains an additional privilege: she can cross attacked squares.) The rules (incomplete) have been amplified by NOST: (1) promoted queens are royal; (2) queens can check kings from a distance but may not check queens; (3) both kings and queens may castle long or short. A sensible amendment is that queens may not cross attacked squares except to capture an attacker. Double check assumes a new meaning. (*Chesshire Cat Playeth Looking Glass Chessys*, also *Nost-algia* 156 and later)

consecutive mates are given and quotes Eggert Olafsson (1772) as stating that nine is the maximum possible. This number is also quoted by Boyer (*Jeux d'Echecs Non-orthodoxes*) but a legal position can be constructed in which 15 consecutive mates can be given without promoted pieces.

**Check Chess**, also known as **Presto Chess** (Frank Hopkins, 1916). As originally devised, the first player to give check won, but Marshall showed that White could win by 1 Nc3 followed by an attack by the other knight (*British Chess Magazine*, July 1916, p 201, quoting the *Brooklyn Eagle*). To balance the chances, it was suggested that the pawns started on the 3rd/6th ranks, but 'we are inclined to think that White still has a considerable advantage' (*BCM*). The most popular adjustment however was to require the check to be given by an uncapturable piece. A further refinement required the queen's move to be limited to two squares (*Chess Spectrum Newsletter*) but in all cases it seems that White retains an advantage. Much subtler

is **Three-Check Chess**, which is probably of Soviet origin. The first player to deliver three checks wins. Said to be very skilful: two checks can be achieved fairly easily at the expense of piece sacrifices after which the prospects of a third check with severely weakened forces are close to zero. Karpov is said to have been invincible at the game in his youth (manuscript note presumably deriving from personal communication).

**Dunce's Chess** (V. R. Parton, 1961). Three versions. (1) Players have a king, two bishops and two knights in their normal starting positions. Pieces can only advance. The win is by mate or stalemate. If a king gets through the opponent's forces it is invulnerable. Version (2) is as (1) except that pawns are added (no promotion) whilst (3) has the usual

#### 10.4 Wiping out the opponent's men

**Chess-Draughts [Charosh]** (Mannis Charosh, 1946). Problem theme converted to a game. Normal chess except that the king is treated like any other piece and a capture, if available, is compulsory. If, after a capture, a further capture is possible by the same piece, this must also be made, and so on. The player has a choice between alternative captures. Win by taking all opponent's men or by leaving him without a move. (*Fairy Chess Review*, August 1946)

**Scacia** (V. R. Parton, 1961) King has no royal powers; object is to take off all enemy men. Capture is compulsory but a player may choose if more than one possible. Parton recommends pawns on 3rd/6th ranks and pieces repeated on 2nd/7th ranks, thus 24 men a side. In a later version, **Mock Chess [Parton]** (1969), the normal array is used but a pawn must move two squares initially unless capturing. (*Chess - Curiouser and Curiouser*, also *Chesshire Cat Playeth Looking Glass Chessys*)

**Take-All** (origins unknown) is the same game as Mock Chess but without the compulsory pawn-two and without compulsory capturing. The king has no royal powers and there is no castling. Because the game is rather slow and tends to be stereotyped, it is now usually played in

array without sideways or backward movement, and again pawns do not promote. (*Chess - Curiouser and Curiouser*)

**Truce Chess** (Nathaniel S. Hellerstein, 1970s). As orthochess but with an additional climax: a truce (both kings mated). A mutual check (tryst) is also possible. The standard form is called **Dilemma Chess** in which a truce ranks between a draw and a win. In a variant, **Chicken Chess**, a draw rates zero and a truce scores between a loss and a win. The situations arise through legalising adjacent kings. Example: WKa1, Bc3; BKa3 Bb3; 1 Bb2+ Ka2 truce. In Dilemma Chess, both players would cooperate for a truce rather than agree a draw. Hellerstein made a study of endings in which this can be achieved. (Originator's pamphlet)

Progressive form as **Progressive Take-All** (Giuseppe Dipilato, 1979). Popular in Italy, where AISE ran national championships, Progressive Take-All was the chosen game of the Canadian team in the 1st Heterochess Olympiad. Games tend to develop capturing patterns involving queens and bishops in particular. Promotion is commonplace. Rooks and knights are less effective in the early stages but devastating in endings in which bishops are weak. Draws are not uncommon under the same circumstances as orthochess - blocked pawns with bishops of opposite colours. (*Eteroscacco* 12 and later)

**Blot-Straight Chess** (V. R. Parton, 1970). A chess-merels hybrid with a graceless name. Board starts empty; each player has the normal eight pieces (no pawns). The players in turn set a piece on the board. No piece may stand next to another piece of either colour; no check or checkmate. When all pieces are placed the players move in turn (normal chess moves but no capturing) with the object of forming a line of three of their own men orthogonally or diagonally. The three must stand adjacent to one another. On completion of a line, the player removes (captures) the last man moved by the opponent. If two or more lines are formed simultaneously, only one piece is removed. A line may be broken and

reformed. Object is annihilation of the opposition. In another version the first player to assemble a line of five wins. (*Challenge and Delight of Chessical and Decimal*)

**Flick Chess** (origins unknown). Object is to flick your pieces so as to knock over your opponent's, using finger and thumb only. Any

### 10.5 Wiping out all the men of a kind

**Extinction Chess** (Paddy Smith, 1985). Originally called **Survival of the Species**, this variant was popular with NOST members. Standard set-up; the king can be taken like any other piece, hence no check or checkmate. The object is to eliminate any one of the opponent's species (types of piece), thus capture any of K, Q, 2xR, 2xB, 2xN, 8xP to win. Pawn promotion (including to K) can prolong the life of an endangered species. Games tend to be brief and often go critical in the early stages with the minor pieces most at risk. Orthochess openings are playable but with caution. 'Paddy Smith' was a pseudonym of R. Wayne Schmittberger, editor of *Games* magazine, where the suggestion appeared. An instructive game won by Fabrice Liardet: 1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qa5 4 a3 e5 5 b4 Bxb4 6 axb4 Qxa1 7 Bc4 Nf6 8 Ba2 0-0 9 Nge2 Rd8 10 Bc4 Nc6 11 b5 Nd4 12 0-0 Nxe2 13 Nxe2 Rd4 and White resigned

### 10.6 Playing for material gain

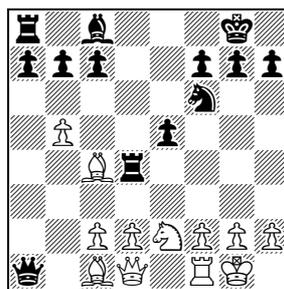
**Quantity Chess** (origins unknown). A game is played to an agreed number of moves (commonly 25, 30, 35). If neither player has been checkmated, the game is stopped and the player with more men is the winner; thus a

### 10.7 Reaching a fixed goal

**Lincolnshire Pawn Chess** (Bob Wade and Ted Nottingham, 1989). Instructional game. Pawns only in initial array; first player to get one to 8th rank wins. A slightly more challenging variant adds the two kings, WBf1 and BNg8 with the same objective. A player unable to move loses in both games. **Philidor** (origin unclear) has just the kings and pawns with the same objective. An improvement is **Fast Philidor** (George Jelliss, 2004), where

man that does not have the whole of its base on a square is removed from play. After an attack, any man may be 'adjusted' on its square so as to offer a smaller target. Object is to annihilate the opposition. Men should ideally be weighted. Tournament at Imperial College, London, 1971-2. (Notes presumably deriving from personal communication)

because both bishops will go :



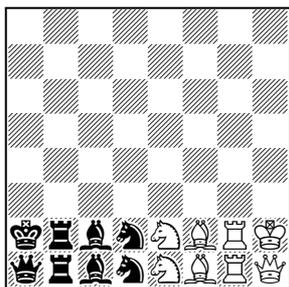
'Winning the exchange' is usually bad in this variant, hence White's willingness to concede rook for bishop, but Black judged that this particular opening would favour him. White underestimated the effect of the pin on the first rank, and also the rapid arrival of the Black rook on the d-file. (*Nost-algia* 298 and later, *Eterosacco* 38 and later, *Variant Chess* 31)

player with two pawns for the queen wins if the forces are otherwise equal in number. If the numbers balance, another five moves are played, and so on. (Correspondence between John Gollon and Philip Cohen)

pawns can move two squares at any time (en passant permitted). (*Check Out Chess, Variant Chess* 45)

**Bishop Chess** (origin unknown). Bishops neither capture nor can be captured; no promotion to bishop. Kings have no royal powers. The first to move a bishop to the end rank wins. (Manuscript note presumably deriving from personal communication)

**Racing Kings** (V. R. Parton, 1961, initially as 'Dodo Chess'). Array :



The object is to be the first to get one's king to the eighth rank. Neither side may check nor expose the king to check. To compensate for the first move, if Black succeeds in getting his king to the eighth rank immediately after White has done so, the game is a draw.

### 10.8 Playing to exhaust the available resources

**Static Chess**, also known as **Fill-Up Chess** and **No-Threats Chess** (origin unknown but pre-1970). Start with empty board. Each player in turn places any man of his own colour on a vacant square to meet three requirements: pawns may not be placed on end ranks; bishops must be on opposite-coloured squares; no man may be placed which either attacks or is attacked by an enemy man. The position need not be legal. Men once placed are not moved. The winner is the last player to put a man on the board but the game is drawn in the event that all 32 men are placed. Another version counts one point for each man placed. If one player is unable to move, the other can optionally go on adding men. The first player re-enters the game if a legal move becomes available. Pieces should be posted to command maximum number of squares. A knight on one of the four central squares appears to be the best opening move. It is unclear which player has the advantage.

### 10.9 Playing to lose

'Losing' is a perverse objective, frequently trivial but sometimes highly sophisticated. The logical 'losing' chess game would seem to be **Self-Mate Chess**, but a player can force his opponent to mate him only if in possession of

An extended version of the game requires the kings, after reaching the eighth rank, to return to the first. The name **Dodo Chess** was subsequently transferred to a 1970 simplification by the same inventor with kings on a1/h1, rooks on a2/h1, bishops on b1/b2/g1/g2, knights on c1/c2/f1/f2. (*Chess - Curiouser and Curiouser*, also *Chesshire Cat Playeth Looking Glass Chessys*)

**Outpost Chess** (origin unknown). Each player nominates a square in his own half of the board as his outpost. Object is to occupy the opponent's outpost for one move. Kings have no royal powers. A variant, **Double Outpost Chess**, is the same except that both players nominate two outpost squares only one of which need be occupied to win the game. (Correspondence between John Gollon and Philip Cohen)

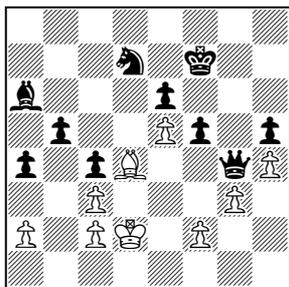
There is a four-player version. (Berloquin, *100 Jeux de Table*)

**The Game Of Circuits** (J. Boyer, 1958) The game starts with the board empty. Each player has two knights and 30 pawns or tokens. The players place the four knights in turn; thereafter players move one of their knights putting a pawn on the square vacated. This square may not be visited again. The first player unable to move loses. Variations are possible using any combination of pieces. (*Nouveaux Jeux d'Echecs Intéressants*)

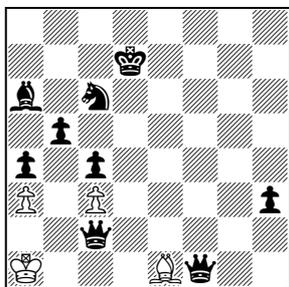
**Contact** (quoted by David Silverman, 1971). White puts a knight on any square of an empty chessboard. Black moves the knight and places a marker on the square vacated. Play alternates. The knight may only be moved to vacant squares. The object is to make the last move. The game can also be played with any of the other pieces. (*Your Move*)

a massive material superiority and the idea is normally seen only in problems. There was however a correspondence game between Paris and Marseilles in 1878 in which White started without the Q and Black successfully

undertook to force him to give mate. 1 d4 d5 2 Nc3 c6 3 Nf3 g6 4 e4 e6 5 e5 Bb4 6 Bd2 Bxc3 7 Bxc3 b5 8 h4 h5 9 0-0-0 a6 10 Ng5 f5 11 g3 Nh6 12 Bd3 Nf7 13 Bxf5 (apart from the pawns, the bishops are potentially White's greatest liabilities) gxf5 14 Nxf7 Kxf7 15 Bd2 Nd7 16 Rhe1 c5 17 dxc5 Nxc5 18 Bg5 Qg8 19 Re3 Bb7 20 Rc3 Rc8 21 Be3 Nd7 22 Bd4 Rxc3 23 bxc3 a5 24 Kd2 a4 25 Rb1 Ba6 26 Rg1 Qg4 27 Rb1 Rc8 28 Rb4 Rc4 29 Rxc4 dxc4 :



White is now reduced to a bad bishop and some largely immobile pawns. 30 a3 f4 31 Kc1 fxg3 32 fxg3 Qxg3 (for 'largely immobile' read 'totally immobile') 33 Kb2 Qxh4 34 Kc1 Qe1+ 35 Kb2 Qd1 36 Ba7 Nxe5 37 Bc5 h4 38 Bd4 Nc6 39 Be3 e5 40 Bf2 h3 41 Bg3 e4 42 Bf4 Ke6 43 Bg3 e3 44 Bf4 e2 45 Bg3 Kd7 46 Bh2 e1(Q) 47 Bf4 Qee2 48 Bg3 Qdxc2+ 49 Ka1 Qf1+ 50 Be1 :



Now the bishop is immobile as well, and White's remaining moves will be forced. 50...Qd2 51 Kb1 h2 52 Ka1 h1(Q) 53 Kb1 Qf8 54 Ka1 Qxa3+ 55 Kb1 Qad6 56 Ka1 Qf6 57 Kb1 Kc7 58 Ka1 b4 59 Kb1 b3 60 Ka1 Kb6 61 Kb1 Ka5 62 Ka1 Ne7 63 Kb1 Nc8 64 Ka1 Bb5 65 Kb1 Qa6 66 Ka1 Nb6 67 Kb1 Qh7+ 68 Ka1 Qxc3+ 69 Bxc3 mate (*Brentano's Chess Monthly*, January 1882).

More practical is **Reflex Chess**, which was developed by William Geary and B. G. Laws in the 1880s (*Oxford Companion to Chess*). The aim of each player is still to be checkmated by the opponent, but it is mandatory to give mate on the move if able to do so. This too is primarily a problem theme, but it is playable as a game. A common strategy for both sides is to advance the kings to try and penetrate enemy territory.

Two further flavours are given by the **Game of Codrus**, which is mentioned in Brede's *Almanach* of 1844, and by two of the varieties of **Les Echecs Battu-Battant** listed by Boyer in *Jeux d'Echecs Non-orthodoxes* (1951). In the game of Codrus, there are no checks, and the winner is the player who obliges the opponent to take his king; capturing is compulsory but a player may choose between alternatives. The game is named after the Athenian king who sacrificed himself to save his people. 'Les Echecs Battu-Battant' is basically Losing Chess as described below and again capturing is normally compulsory, but in two versions the king retains royal powers and escaping check has priority over a capture. The aim is either (1) to give checkmate or to be left with bare king, or (2) the same but the checkmated player wins.

All these games retain the royal properties of the king. In **Losing Chess**, also known as **Giveaway Chess** (a more logical name), **Killer Chess**, the **Losing Game**, and **Suicide Chess**, the king has no royal powers, and can be taken just like any other man. The origins of the game are uncertain, but it is believed to be older - perhaps much older - than a closely-related game, **Take Me** (Walter Campbell, 1876). In **Take Me**, a player can require his opponent to take the man just moved by saying 'Take me', and can also nominate the man that is to make the capture. The object is to give away all one's men, including the king, which has no royal powers. A player can only compel the capture of the man moved. A pawn is promoted to any piece lost, including the king, at the choice of the owner. (Verney)

Losing Chess has become one of the most popular of all variants, and rules have inevitably proliferated. In the basic game, (1) capturing is compulsory but the capturing player chooses when more than one capture is

possible, (2) there is no check or checkmate and the K can be captured like any other man, (3) a pawn can promote to K, and (4) the object is to lose all one's men or to be left without a move (stalemate). Major variations involve the treatment of stalemate (some play it as a draw or as a win for the player who is left with the smaller number of men) and promotion (some prohibit promotion to K, some allow promotion only to Q). Some players prohibit castling, but this is rarely of importance. What follows relates to the basic game (all promotions allowed, stalemate is a win for the player stalemated), but most of it carries over to other versions. In particular, the treatment of stalemate as a win for the player with the smaller number of men seems to make little difference, since it is unusual for a small group of men to stalemate a larger.

Play is critical from the outset. Bishops are the main danger, and the 16-man giveaway after 1 e3 d6?? has been rediscovered many times (simplest is 2 Qg4 Bxg4 3 Kd1 Bxd1 4 a3 Bxc2 5 Ra2 etc). 1 e4, 1 d4, and 1 d3 were found to be losing even in pre-computer times, and a report in *Variant Chess* 41 (January 2003 but quoting material published some eighteen months earlier) listed 1 Nc3, 1 Nf3, and 1 h4 as losing also. Known losing replies to 1 e3 (apart from 1...d6) include 1...Na6, 1...Nf6, 1...a5/a6, 1...e5, 1...f5/f6, 1...g6, and 1...f5/f6. The favourite opening among the leaders at a 'First Unofficial Losing Chess World Championship' held in 2001 was the classical 1 e3, but 1 g3 and 1 c4 were both played. With Black, the most common reply to 1 e3 was 1...b6, but 1...b5 was played twice and there were also instances of 1...e6 and 1...c5. The line 1 e3 b5 2 Bxb5 c6, played in the frequently quoted correspondence games Klüver-Dawson 1924 and Slater-Klüver 1955, has now been proved by computer to be lost for Black (the analysis goes to move 34), but 2...e6 still appears to be thought playable.

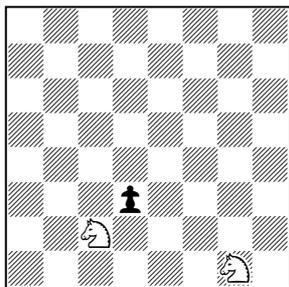
Given that the ultimate objective is to have no men at all, the instincts of inexperienced players are to get rid of material as quickly as possible, but this is poor strategy; until you can see your way right through to the final capture, it is usually better to have *more* material on the board than your opponent. As in most games, he who has more moves available tends to have the advantage, so the

more men you have, and the more space they control, the better your position is likely to be. In particular, it is nearly always bad to come down to a single pawn and hope for the best. Your moves up to promotion will be completely predictable, and all too often your opponent will be able to marshal his forces so as to meet any promotion by a mass giveaway. Instead of throwing men away, you should aim to take control of space, pushing ahead as far as you safely can and hoping that your judgement as to what can be risked is better than your opponent's. It is also usually correct to remove your opponent's king if a safe opportunity arises, and to take all reasonable steps to preserve your own. The king is a strong piece in Losing Chess, and good players try to keep it until it can be given away as part of a decisive combination.

The endgame is the most appealing stage of the game, a garden of surprises. Even one-against-one endings are not always straightforward. Excluding 'trivial' endings where the player on move must make an immediate capture or can make an immediate giveaway, the general results without pawns are as follows: N v K/B/R/Q loses, N v N is won by whoever is to move when the knights are on squares of the same colour; K v K/B is drawn, K v R/Q loses. There are however exceptions, which can be divided into two classes: the 'losses by domination' Ka1 v Nd4, Bd1 v Nd6, Ka1 v Ba4, Kc1 v Bc4, and Kd1 v Bd4, where the first-named piece, if on play, must put itself within range of a giveaway, and 'must move away' losses typified by K/Bc1 v Na2 and Rc2 v Na1, where the K/B/R has no immediate giveaway and the knight will win by moving to the square it has just left. Endings with B/R/Q v B/R/Q are normally trivial, but there are 'must move away' losses typified by Bd1 v Q/Rd6 and Rc3 v Ba1. The last case can arise by promotion, a promotion to bishop having been Black's only winning move.

The result of any two-man ending with pawns can be worked out from these pawnless results. The most interesting case is N v P. Suppose that the pawn has just moved. If the men are now on squares of different colour, the knight may be able to give itself away while the pawn is still unpromoted; if it cannot do this, the pawn will win by promoting to

knight. If the men are on squares of the same colour, the knight cannot give itself to an unpromoted pawn, and an a-pawn or b-pawn will win by promoting to bishop; against a c-pawn or d-pawn, the knight may be able to meet this by playing to one of the exceptional winning positions (Na2 v Bc1, Nd6 v Bd1). In the following study (Gyorgy Evseev, *Rex Multiplex* 1992, version by John Beasley), White makes use of both.

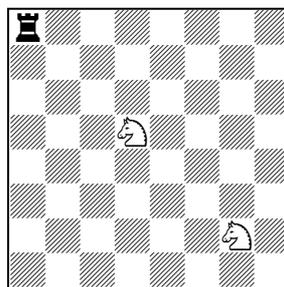


White starts 1 Ne2 (other moves can be shown to lose), and if 1...dxc2 then 2 Nc3 c1(B) (other promotions lose at once) 3 Na2 with the first exceptional position. If instead 1...dxe2 then 2 Nd4 e1(B) 3 Ne6 with the second.

If two-man endings are less than straightforward, a complete resolution of three-man endings had to wait for the computer. The endings most important in practice were however evaluated early. Not only is R v K normally a win, but so is 2R v K, and so also is R+B v K though a little care may be needed to ensure that the bishop is given away first. Promotions to rook and perhaps to bishop therefore provide a standard way of winning with distant pawns against a king, a situation which is not uncommon. When promoting a pawn, it is usually best to choose a rook unless this is provably bad or something else is provably good; if a rook is bad, a king is often the next best choice, though for each promotion a position can be constructed where it is the only way to win or save the game. Pawns far from promotion are usually a liability, and those that cannot be given away should be rushed forward as quickly as possible.

Endings with up to five men had been definitively analysed by 2003. Explaining the resulting mass of data was a different matter, but a pamphlet *Three-man pawnless endings*

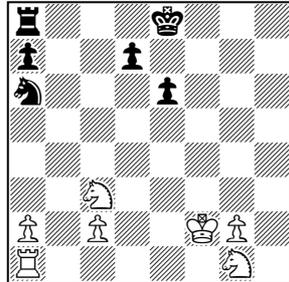
in *Losing Chess* (Beasley, 1999) attempted to expound this particular set of results in a comprehensible way. Here is one of the many remarkable positions that the computer brought to light.



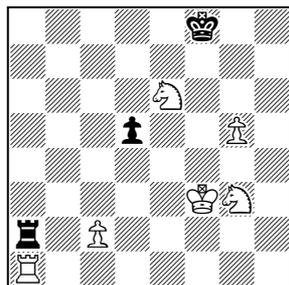
Black to play would have to allow two immediate giveaways. White to play starts 1 Ngf4 (or 1 Nge3 by symmetry) Ra1 2 Ng6 Ra2 3 Ne5, and there are three lines. If 3...Rh2 then 4 Nb6 Rh1 5 Nbc4 Rh8 6 Nb2, and we have a reflection of the diagram but with Black to play. If 3...Ra1 then 4 Nf6 Ra2 (say) 5 Nfd7 Ra1 (if 5...Rh2 then 6 Nb6 transposes into the first line) 6 Ng4 and we have another position where Black to play must allow two immediate giveaways. This leaves 3...Ra8, which is met by 4 Ng4 Ra1 5 Ngf6 Ra2 6 Ng8 Ra1 7 Nge7 Ra2 (if 7...Rh1 then 8 Nb4 and we have a reflection of the position after 6 Ng4 in the preceding line) 8 Ng6 Ra1 9 Ngf4 Ra8 10 Ng2 and we are back at the diagram but with Black to play. Moving only a knight, White has contrived to transfer the move to his opponent.

The game was one of those nominated by Italy for the 1st Heterochess Olympiad. More recently, most top-class play has taken place through the Internet, but there was an international weekend meeting in Geneva in 1998, and the 'First Unofficial Losing Chess World Championship' held in Utrecht in 2001 brought together the leading European players for a seven-round tournament under championship conditions (air-conditioned accommodation, two hours per player per game). The winner was Tim Remell, who beat Fabrice Liardet in a play-off. Here is the main tournament game between them (Remell had White), with annotations condensed from those that subsequently appeared in *Variant Chess* 47. The opening was fiercely

complicated, 1 e3 e6 2 b4 Bxb4 3 Qg4 Bxd2 4 Qxg7 Bxe3 5 Bxe3 c5 6 Bxc5 b6 7 Bxb6 Qxb6 8 Qxh7 Rxh7 9 Nc3 Qxf2 10 Kxf2 Rxh2 11 Rxh2 Nh6 12 Rxh6 Ba6 13 Bxa6 Nxa6 14 Rxe6 fxe6, and after the smoke has cleared we see that White may have a slight plus due to his extra knight :



However, Black's pawns will give him more space in the centre, and any advantage is marginal. Play continued 15 Na4 Kf7 16 Nb2 Kf6 17 g4 Nc7 18 Ne2 a5 19 Kf3 d5 20 Ng3 Ke7 21 g5 Na6 22 Nh5 Kf8 23 Ng3 and 23...Ke7 would have offered a draw, but Black went for the win with 23...a4. There followed 24 Nxa4 Ne5 25 Nxc5 Rxa2 26 Nxe6 :



26...Rxa1 (26...Rxc2 also can be shown to lose) 27 Nxf8 Rh1 (27...Rf1 28 Nxf1 d4 29 c3 dxc3 30 Ne6 c2 31 Nd2 c1(K) 32 Nd4 Kxd2 33 Ke3 Kxe3 34 g6 Kxd4 35 g7 and White will win with R v K) 28 Nxf1 d4 29 c3 dxc3 30 g6 c2 31 Nd7 c1(K) (the only chance) 32 Kg4 Kd2 33 g7 Ke3 (Black will draw if he can get down to K v 2N, K v K+N, K v K+R, or K v N+R) 34 Nf2 Kxf2 35 Kf5 Kg2 36 Kg6

Kf3 37 g8(R), after which White had K+R+N v K and ground out the win (he gradually gained space, and eventually Black had no safe move). So it would seem that Black's attempt to win at move 23 was mistaken.

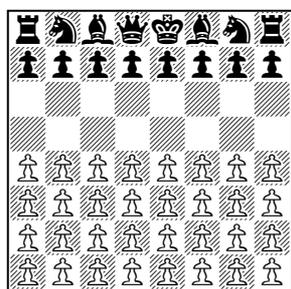
There has been no book dedicated to the game as a whole, but Ralf Binnewirtz's *Schlagabtausch im Räuberschach* (2000) is a delightful collection of problems and endgame compositions, and a pamphlet *A first survey of Losing Chess endgame material published up to the end of 1999* (Beasley, 2000) adds references to theoretical endgame material. It claims to be reasonably complete as regards what has been published in England, though it is 'less complete' in respect of foreign material and its coverage of Russia and Eastern Europe is 'almost nil'. The production of a full-length book covering all aspects of the game is long overdue.

[Losing Chess is one of the few games which I know better than David did, and I have taken it on myself to revise his intended entry. The opinion that Losing Chess is believed to be older and perhaps much older than Take Me is David's (see *Variant Chess* 35, page 39), as is the description of the endgame as 'the most appealing stage of the game, a garden of surprises', but I will take responsibility for everything else.]

**Progressive Losing Chess.** Losing Chess was successfully combined with Progressive Chess by AISE which ran a number of correspondence championships for which the hybrid is eminently suitable. With AISE's usual thoroughness, the game was diligently researched (by Dipilato, Kustrin, Manzini and Sala amongst others) and the Italians long stood supreme in this, as in many other variants. It is odd that 1 e3, the most popular start move in Losing Chess, is fatal in Progressive Losing, as was first demonstrated by Kustrin. In **Reversed Progressive Losing Chess**, an idea of Agostino Braca and Roberto Cassano, a player loses if he cannot complete a turn, a reversal of the usual rule. (*Eterosacco* 8 and later)

### 10.10 Games in which the two sides have different objectives

**Dunsany's Game** (Lord Dunsany, 1942). 32 White pawns on rows 1-4 face a normal Black array :



The pawns move one square at a time and promote normally. Black starts and wins if the pawns are eliminated; White wins by checkmating Black. **Horde Chess** (Filip Rachunek, 2002) is the same except that Black has the pawns and Ps d8/e8 are on d4/e4. Ps on second rank have two-move option. (*Fairy Chess Review*, August 1942, also Chess Variant Pages)

**Unirexal Chess** (V. R. Parton, 1961). Only one king is present. Parton gives the usual array but with a second black queen replacing the king. (The black king disappeared, explains Parton, because he was fed up with always being mated in problems.) If Black does not mate White within an agreed number of moves, White wins. Another version has White with the usual array and Black with 20 knights (the extra array squares are a6, b6, g6, h6). Black must mate within 50 moves or he loses. (*Chess - Curiouser and Curiouser*)

**High-Low Chess** (Ralph Betza, 1968). Each player secretly records before the start of a game which result will give him 1 point, which .5 and which 0. (Example: Win = .5, Draw = 0, Loss = 1.) There are a few rules: (1) resignation is an offer which can be declined; (2) a player who is able to checkmate,

### 10.11 Solo games

**Chess Patience**, also known as **Automatic Chess** (Chris Tylor, 1970s). A system for solo play rather than a specific game. It involves

stalemate or give perpetual check on the move can be required to do so; (3) the 50-move rule is reduced to 15 moves. Based on high-low poker. (*Nostalgia* 211) [David had intended to omit this from the new edition, and perhaps I am wrong to reinstate it. It's an amusing idea between two, but in tournaments would surely be open to collusion whereby one player agreed to claim the full point for a win and the other to claim it for a loss: 'grandmaster draw' replaced by 'grandmaster fool's mate'!]

**Defensive Chess** (originator unknown, 1975). White's array is normal; Black sets up his men without restriction in his own half of the board. The white K has no royal powers and can be taken like any other piece; the black K is normal. Black (the defender) can never move a man beyond his fourth rank except the K, and then only to avoid checkmate. White must mate within 50 moves otherwise he loses. (Correspondence between John Gollon and Philip Cohen)

**Maharishi** (Karl Koch, 1987). Black has usual array, White has Nd3 only. Black starts and moves so that White can (and must) capture. Thereafter Black moves so that White captures; where White has a choice of captures, Black chooses. White wins if all Black's men are taken; Black wins if he is unable to offer a man for capture. Adjudged 'a very deep game' (*Spiele für einen Allein*). [In fact Black would seem to have a simple win by giving away 15 men and leave himself with Ke8 against a distant knight, and giving White choice of capture doesn't help because Black can leave only one capture available at a time. Something must be wrong somewhere.]

**Kamikaze Chess [Tapson]** (Frank Tapson, 1989). White array normal, Black has only Qh8. White wins if the Q is captured, Black wins if he delivers check. (Notes presumably deriving from personal communication)

playing a game for both sides, using some prepared rule to determine the rules. The game can be inflexible (moves are determined

unambiguously) or flexible (the player has an element of choice). For example, the rule might specify that the man moved is always to be that closest to the antipodean square of the last arrival (the 'antipodean' square is the square four files and ranks away, which always exists and is uniquely determined), and a subsidiary rule might specify which man is

to be moved if two or more are equally close; alternatively, this subsidiary choice might be left to the player. The player 'wins' if he can achieve some preset objective such as a mate for one side or the other, 'loses' if he cannot. If he wins, he may try again, seeking to win in as few moves as possible. (Author's expository document) [Text revised]

### 10.12 Other games

**No-Capture Chess**, also known as **Drive Chess** (origins unknown, reinvented in Germany in the 1960s as **Treib Chess**). Standard game except that first player to make a capture loses. Jed Stone gives as an exception a capture that is the only move to avoid mate. Boyer also legalizes a capture that delivers mate and prohibits perpetual check (too easy to achieve). C. H. O'D. Alexander remarked that even with these concessions a draw was all too frequent, and that further rule relaxations were needed. He suggested allowing a capture that led to mate in 2, but more radical measures seem necessary. A variant ripe for development. (*Nouveaux Jeux d'Echecs Non-orthodoxes*, Stone, *Variant Chess* 9)

**Knight Chase** (Alex Randolph, 1960s). Place a black knight on a8, a white knight on h1, and 30 markers beside the chessboard. Each player, Black starting, moves his knight to a vacant square and places two markers, one on the square vacated and another on any empty square, except that a marker may not be placed so as to deprive either player of his only move. A knight may not be moved to a square occupied by a marker. When all 30 markers have been placed a turn consists of moving the knight. White wins by capturing the black knight, Black wins if he survives for 10 moves after the last marker has been placed or if either player cannot move (self-smother was permitted in the original game, making it easy for Black). Sid Sackson (*A Gamut of Games*) gives a 'Fool's Mate': 1 Nb6/a8,g3 Nf2/h1,c8 2 Na4/b6,d3 Ne4/f2,b2 and the only squares Black can move to are commanded. (*Nostalgie* 186)

Widely played in Germany, **Pferdeäppel** (Proprietary game, Bütthorn Spiele; Alex Randolph, 1981) is a development of Knight

Chase. Two horses (knights), one light, one dark, occupy opposite corners of a vacant chessboard. Forty pellets (28 brown, 12 gold) are placed beside the board. The horses move like knights, White starting. A play consists of moving a horse to a vacant square and then dropping a pellet through it. (There is a vertical hole through each piece: English-language rules translate the title freely as 'Plop!'). The player may, but is not obliged to, then place a second pellet on any vacant square. Players must use the brown pellets while they last, then the gold pellets. The aim of the dark horse is to capture the light horse. Dark wins if this is achieved before all the brown pellets are used. His score is the total of brown pellets remaining. Light wins as soon as a gold pellet is dropped, his score being the number of gold pellets dropped. If Light can still move after all gold pellets have been dropped, or Dark is unable to move, Light wins by 24 points. If the light horse is captured after all brown pellets have been used but no gold, the game is drawn. (Notes presumably made from a set in David's game collection)

**Knight Factor Chase** (Curt Gibson, 1975). Board 8x8 with squares numbered from 11(a8) to 88(h1). Place a black knight on 11, a white knight on 88. Black starts and moves his knight (to 23 or 32) and play now alternates. Players may elect to move once or twice per turn. When a player lands on a square whose number has a given prime factor (there are 21) the player may claim it if it has not already been claimed. No player may claim more than two factors per turn (a NOST rule states that a player who claims two factors on his first move forfeits the second). Squares 11 and 88 are not used. The first player to claim 11 factors wins the factor game. No square may

be occupied more than once, so ties are possible. The first player unable to move loses the chase game (the opponent may continue to move in an effort to win the factor game). Each game contributes two points, so the result can be 2-2, 3-1 or 4-0. A second version of the game (Creede Lambard 1975) allows a player to claim any number of factors in a move or turn except that a player who claims two or more factors on his first move forfeits his second move. Other variations suggested have been the use of a 10x10 board, prefixing square numbers with a '1' or a '2' (giving respectively 33 and 41 factors), and even a space game. (*Nost-algia* 186/7)

**Gay Chess** (A. S. M. Dickins, 1982). Kings, bishops, knights and pawns are males, queens are females and rooks are hermaphrodites. Pieces may only capture or be captured by pieces of their own sex or hermaphrodites except that only a king can capture a king (known as Gaymate) and then only if it is unguarded. The object is gaymate; there is no check and checkmate is a draw. A few problems have been published. (*Feenschach*, August 1984, quoting *Eteroscacco*)

**People's Chess** (Andrew Squire, 1986). Conceived as a political statement. Published by Leeds Postcards (1987) 'How the pawns of each nation sacrificed their entire ruling class and lived happily ever after'. The inventor has tried to evolve rules 'to enable it to be played as a meaningful game'. He states: 'the two principles of the game are, first, that the hierarchical symbols be overthrown as quickly as possible, and second, that the pawns from both sides form a coherent and harmonious pattern'. Array (a1-h1/a8-h8) P P P P P P P P, (a2-h2/a7-h7) R N B K Q B N R; play as in chess with the exception that the pawns can move one square in any direction. 'Each player engineers the downfall of his own hierarchical pieces by exposing them to those of the opponent, who

must take the pieces then exposed'. When all hierarchical pieces have been eliminated (presumably there is no check or checkmate, and an element of collaboration) the pawns move to the finishing pattern (staggered alternately on the 4th and 5th ranks). If a winner is required, it is the player who is first to achieve their half of the pattern. As the inventor says, 'in terms of refinement and subtlety, the game has some scope for development'.

Jim Winslow (1989) suggested less class-conscious rules for play: No captures or checks in the first X moves, X being a number agreed by the players beforehand. No castling. (Specimen card and accompanying correspondence)

**Pacifist Chess** (Hilario Long, 1996). A player may neither capture nor threaten an opponent's man. The game ends when a player has no legal move. The winner is the player whose king is farthest from its initial position measured in orthogonal moves. (*Variant Chess* 23)

**Chego** (Alfred Pfeiffer, 1997). A chess-go hybrid. Usual board and men but the object is to control most vacant squares. Empty board to start. Players place a man of their own colour in turn on a vacant square. The move must attack at least one neutral square (defined as a square not under attack by either side) and the man played must not attack a hostile man nor defend a friendly man. Kings are non-royal (no checks); pawns are allowed on first rank; bishops can be on same colour. If a play leaves a hostile man without control of any square, that man is captured. Either player may pass a turn; when both pass on the same turn, the game ends. Count one point for each empty square controlled (attacked by more of your own men than of the enemy's) and one for each enemy man captured; the player with the more points is the winner. (Cazaux)