



COLUMNISTS

New Stories about Old Chess Players

Jeremy P. Spinrad



The Scandal of 1880, Part Two

Synopsis: [Part One](#) of this article discussed the 5th American Chess Congress, held in New York in 1880. There, one of the contestants, Preston Ware Jr. of Boston, testified to the tournament committee that his last-round opponent, Englishman James Grundy, offered him \$20 if he agreed to play for a draw in their game, so that the cash-poor Grundy could clinch at least 2nd-place prize money. Ware agreed, but complained that Grundy then reneged on the deal and went on to win the game (and thereby tie for 1st place). Research revealed that this was not the only case of bribery in the tournament, and that various forms of unethical conduct were fairly common around that time, in both America and Europe, some incidents involving top-rank players such as James Mason and George Mackenzie. Part two begins with an examination of charges stemming from the previous American Congress, Philadelphia 1876:

We are left with one other serious charge, that Mason and Ware were guilty of crooked behavior in the 4th American Congress, the centennial tournament of 1876. (Which was also tainted by a major scandal in the problem tournament; this is discussed at length in *Forest and Stream*, Sept 12 1878 and Oct 24, 1878.) Looking only at game scores and comments, the Mason-Ware game is actually the clearest example of cheating of all these, in my opinion.

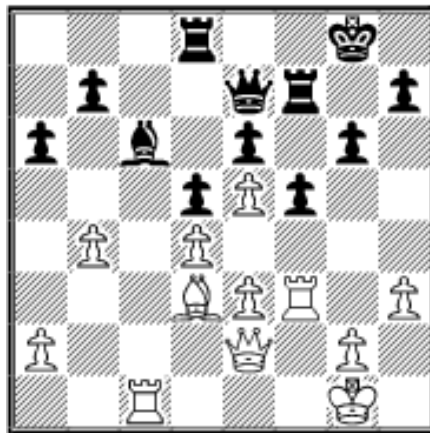


In the centennial tournament, games were not played strictly a round at a time. Play was to be completed by August 31, and by the 28th there were only a handful left to play. The scores stood as follows, giving each player two wins by forfeit vs. Martínez, even though Martínez actually had drawn two games with Davidson as well as losing two against Mason before withdrawing for personal reasons:

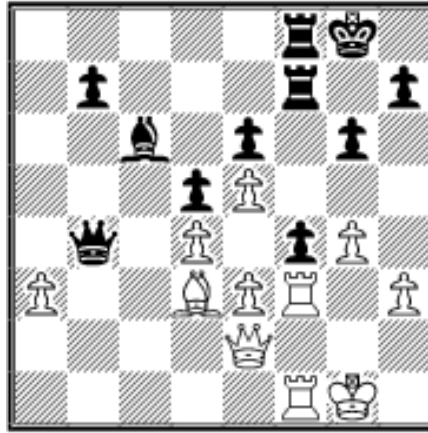
- Judd 11½ (1 game vs. Mason remaining)
- Mason 9½ (2 games vs. Ware, 1 game vs. Judd remaining)
- Bird 9½ (2 games vs. Elson, 1 game vs. Davidson remaining)
- Davidson 8½ (2 games vs. Ware, 1 game vs. Bird remaining)
- Elson 8½ (2 games vs. Bird remaining)
- Roberts 7½
- Ware 5 (2 games vs. Davidson, 2 games vs. Mason remaining)
- Barbour 4

Thus, the tournament was still very much up for grabs. Two games were played on August 29th. Bird drew with Davidson, which eliminated the small possibility that Davidson could tie for first, and also made it less likely that Bird would win the tournament. The other game, which follows, was played between Mason and Ware; notes are from the tournament book.

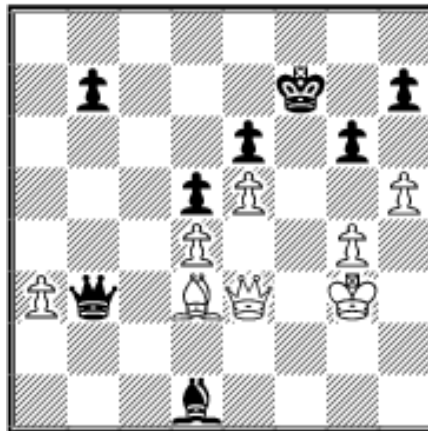
Mason-Ware, Philadelphia 1876, Aug 29, 4 hours, Game 52 174-6, notes by W.H. Sayen (*notes in italics by Fritz8*): **1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6** Generally regarded as the best move, when the gambit is declined. **3.Nf3 c6** We prefer 3.Nf6 and if 4.Bg5, then Be7. **4.Nc3 f5** Weak. Nf6 is much better. **5.Bf4 Nf6 6.e3 Be7 6...Bd6** at once saves time and is stronger. **7.Bd3 0-0 8.0-0 Bd6 9.Bxd6 Qxd6 10.Ne5 Nbd7 11.f4 Qe7 12.cxd5 cxd5 13.Qe2 Nxe5 14.fxe5 Ng4 15.Nb5 Bd7 16.Nd6** This N though apparently in a fine position is harmless to Black's game. **16...Bc6 17.Rf3 Rad8 18.Raf1 g6 19.h3 Nh6 20.b4 a6 21.Rc1 Nf7 22.Nxf7 Rxf7**



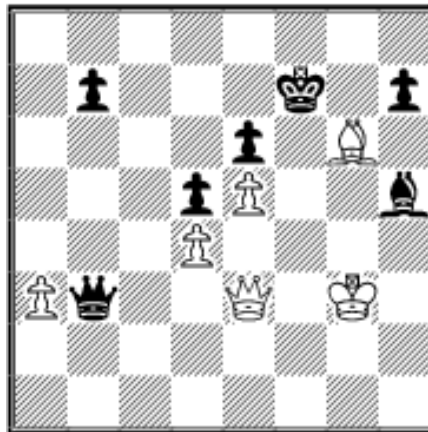
23.Bxa6 White was desirous of breaking up the queenside. We think Black now gets the best of it. **23...Qxb4 24.Bd3 Ra8 25.g4 f4 26.Rcf1 Raf8 27.a3**



27...Qb6 It is evident that if he takes the pawn, he loses the valuable f-pawn.
 28.Kh2 fxe3 29.Rxf7 Rxf7 30.Rxf7 Kxf7
 31.Qxe3 Ba4 This move occupied 1½ hours. Leading as it did to such a fine combination, and losing by such a glaring oversight, when victory was possible, was a misfortune attributable alone to the ill health of the New England champion.
 32.h4 Bd1 33.Kg3 Qb3 34.h5



34...gxh5 He should have played 34...Kg7, and it is difficult to see how W can escape loss, as ...Bc2 is threatened. If 35.Kf2 Bxg4 etc. *Completely erroneous. White is in no real danger, and in fact after 34...Kg7 35.h6+ Kf8 36.Qd2! White has whatever winning chances there may be. In any event, there is nothing wrong with the text if it's followed by 35...Ke7, and Black is in no immediate peril. And even after 35.Kf2? Bxg4?! (better Qb2+) 36.h6+! Kg8 37.Qc1! White has perpetual check. 35.gxh5 Bxh5?? 36.Bg6+ 1-0*



Incredible but so.

So after a 1½ hour think on move 31 to try for advantage, Ware throws his queen away in a couple of moves. Of course, this is attributable to another possible reason besides ill health. Why, if he was bribed, would he lose in such a clumsy fashion, making a much more obvious blunder than in his confessed misdeed against Grundy? I speculate that it is harder to play

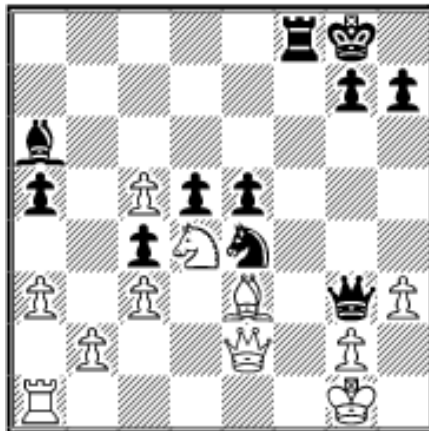
convincingly for a loss rather than a draw, though other reasons are certainly possible.

Three games were played on the 30th. Elson scored a win and a draw against Bird, which left the championship as a struggle between Mason and Judd. Of course, Mason first had to win his second game against Ware, or he would be at a serious disadvantage when playing Judd. They produced the following weak game, which took just one hour to complete.

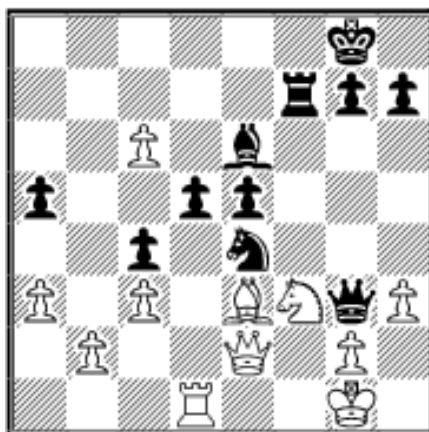
Ware-Mason, Philadelphia 1876, Aug 30, 1 hour, Game 53, 177-8, notes assisted by Fritz8: **1.e4 e6 2.f4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.Nf3 Nc6 5.Bb5 a5 6.Bxc6+ bxc6 7.O-O Nh6 8.Kh1 Ba6 9.d3 c4 10.d4 c5 11.c3 Be7 12.Na3 O-O 13.Nc2 f5 14.exf6 Bxf6 15.Ne5 Qb6 16.a3 Bxe5 17.fxe5 Rxf1+ 18.Qxf1 Rf8 19.Qe2 Ng4**



20.h3? Better is 20.Kg1, and if 20...Nf2, 21.dxc5! Qb8 (21...Qxc5?? 22.Be3) 22.Nd4 Nd3 23.Bg5 with perhaps a slight advantage to Black, much less than he actually obtains. **20...Nf2+ 21.Kh2 Ne4 22.dxc5? Qb8! 23.Nd4 Qxe5+ 24.Kg1 Qg3 25.Be3 e5?!** Better is 25...Nxc5 or Bc8.



26.Nf3? Completely missing a chance for some counterplay with 26.Nc6!? Bb7 27.Ne7+ Kh8 28.c6. **26...Bc8 27.Rd1?? Be6?!** It's unclear why Black refrains from 27...Bxh3+. **28.c6 Rf7**



29.b4?? An error that would be understandable from someone who had been playing chess for, say, 25 minutes, but from a veteran of 25 years? **29...Nxc3 30.Qe1 Rxf3 31.Qxg3 Rxg3 32.Bf2 Nxd1 33.Bxg3 c3 0-1**

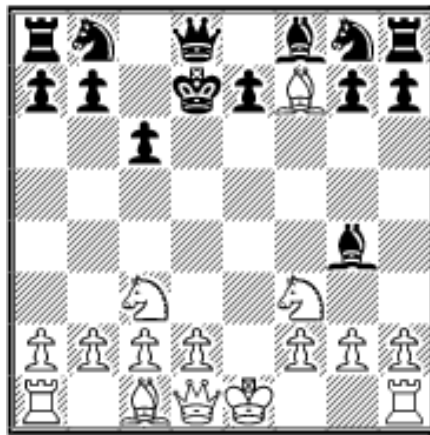
“It is but justice to Mr. Ware to state, that in his two games with Mr. Mason, he was laboring under a severe attack of indisposition, and but for the delay that would have occurred through his absence, he would have kept to his house, instead of being abroad. We have consequently given few notes to either game, as they were too full of glaring oversights on the part of Mr. Ware.” — Sayen, in the tournament book.

I agree that Ware labored under severe indisposition. However, I feel that he

may simply have been indisposed to win the game, rather than suffering a more general malady.

On the last day, Ware and Davidson split two games, while Mason beat Judd to win the tournament.

How sure can we be that these games were thrown? Despite Ware's remarkably poor play, the issue is not completely clear from the game scores alone. Ware was capable of some spectacularly bad play, even when he was not paid to do so, and even starting from conventional openings. For example, here is the opening from *Elson-Ware*, August 16, 1876, from the first round of the centennial chess tournament. The game drags on for 39 moves, but there is nothing of interest beyond the first six: **1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Qxd5 3.Nc3 Qd8 4.Bc4 c6 5.Nf3 Bg4?? 6.Bxf7+ Kd7??**



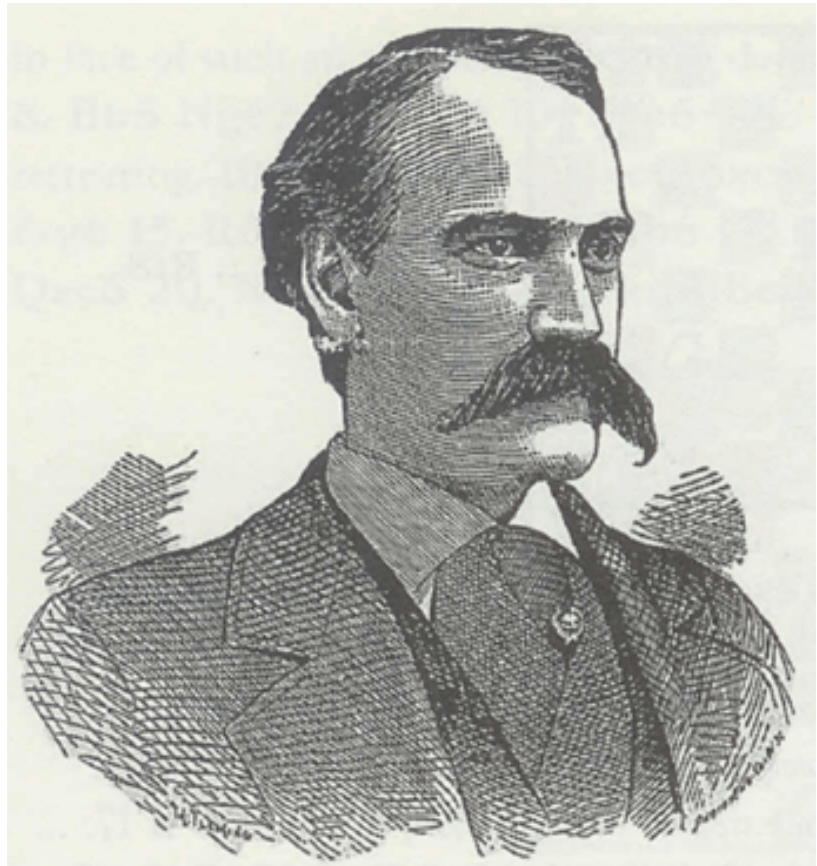
And Black might as well resign after **7.Ne5+**. Although the 1876 tournament book says that the games were “with few exceptions, the finest ever witnessed in this country,” this would be considered very poor play in an elementary school game. In the same tournament, Ware barely escaped losing to the hapless Barbour, who did not win any games, when Barbour inadvertently stalemated him!

So despite Ware's supposed indisposition, taking into account the accusations of the *Eagle* writer with the weakness of Ware's play and his later willingness to accept a bribe in a similar situation, I feel fairly confident that Ware did take money to lose to Mason.

Returning to our main subject, the 5th Congress, New York 1880, what happened as a result of the accusations against Grundy? First, I should mention some evidence that I have not given above, and for which we do not know the full details. According to the *Eagle*, March 8, 1880, there were four witnesses against Grundy: Ryan and Ware, as listed above, ex-District Attorney Allen, and a Chaplain Bengless. According to the *New York Times* Feb 26, 1880, Grundy admitted to the secretary of the chess association that the charges were fundamentally correct, though Grundy seemed to continue to proclaim his innocence in all other venues. Using in part information said to be known to the secretary, the committee determined the charges to be true, and came out in favor of expelling both players, though it was noted that Grundy could not really be expelled since he was not a member. Grundy was forbidden from ever again taking part in an American tourney.

Grundy wrote a letter saying that the accusations would end his chess career in America, and I do not know of any later tournaments for him. Indeed, this

is a remarkable career if we look at Gaige's *Crosstables*: one tournament, tying for the American Championship, and no other appearances important enough to be listed. A few minor events involving Grundy have been claimed in other books. *The Myers Openings Bulletin* (volume 2, number 5) states that Grundy had won one tournament in Manchester before coming to the US. It also relays information from Frank Skoff claiming that Grundy was known to play under false names, including Grover and Sloper, and that he played some tournaments in Colorado and elsewhere in the west after the scandal. Soltis says in his [book](#) on US Championships that Grundy lost on 6th board for Manchester in a match against the City of London Chess Club in 1910. Winter's [A Chess Omnibus](#) gives an obituary for Daniel Starbuck of Cincinnati in 1884, which says that Starbuck defeated Grundy in a match. It's worth noting that another *Brooklyn Eagle* article, on June 10, 1880, accused Grundy of mishandling money when he was the stakeholder for Blackburne in a match, and also mentioned the charge of playing under false names.



Eugene Delmar

While Grundy claimed Ware's charges were a put-up job, Ware wrote a contrite letter (*New York Times*, March 7), saying that he was influenced by the claim that Grundy was about to be kicked out of his boarding house because of lack of money. Ware's letter persuaded the committee, after some discussion, to change his sentence from expulsion to a year's suspension. The only opponents of this punishment for Ware (*Eagle*, March 8) were Mackenzie (the only vote against the suspension) and Delmar, who felt only a simple reprimand was necessary. The *Eagle* writer, no friend of Mackenzie and Delmar, notes that these two seemed very eager to punish Grundy, as

opposed to their defense of Ware.

After his one-year suspension from chess, Ware continued to play. Indeed, my feeling is that Ware's most impressive result came at Vienna 1882, a major international event. Although he finished 16th of 18 contestants, this was a very strong field, and Ware did manage a win over Steinitz (in 113 moves), a draw against Tchigorin, and two wins over Max Weiss (later among the world's top five or six, according to the *Oxford Companion*), scoring +9 –21 =4 overall. Once again, Ware managed to affect the result of the tournament: his win against Steinitz allowed Winawer to tie Steinitz for first prize. I will not give any Ware wins, since these often involve long games in Stonewall positions which, quite frankly, bore me to distraction.

The 1880 scandal ruined what would have otherwise been considered to be a successful and exciting tournament. One amusing effect seems to have been on the temper of Gilberg, the editor of the book of the tournament. Whereas Sayen, author of the 1876 tournament book, is always willing to put a positive spin on events, Gilberg's 1880 account is full of little signs of irritation. In the preface, Gilberg confesses that while he may have "been led, at times, to wield the cudgels of adverse criticism in a manner that may appear to indicate undue violence, that exercise was forcibly imposed upon him by the aggravated nature of circumstances which, in the performance of his duty, could not be ignored or palliated, and against which milder measures were inadequate to cope." This comes out not only in his treatment of the Grundy-Ware incident, but also in his many little gibes aimed at earlier chess congresses and associations when discussing the history of American chess.

For example, on page 97, his comments on the 3rd American Congress include "The spirited efforts of the committee deserved a more generous and widespread acknowledgement; but it seems to have become a lamentable fact that the patronage accorded to any measure to promote the welfare of the game of chess can only be acquired from languid, hesitating hands, by a persistent course of repugnant mendacity." The remarks on the 4th Congress, held in Philadelphia, are a platform for a whole string of attacks on its management by the Philadelphia club; for example (page 102) "The tournament which resulted from this train of adverse circumstances has, through a too zealous endeavor to magnify its undue importance, been termed 'International;' but such a misnomer can only serve to heighten the ludicrous coloring of many passages which appear in a work purporting to commemorate 'the finest collection of chess talent ever brought together in this country!'"

As for Gilberg's comments on Grundy and Ware, he introduces the controversy by remarking that "We wish that we could draw a veil over the lamentable portion of the history of this tournament that now remains to be related; or, let us rather say, that we wish that moral rectitude and incorruptibility would have spared us the painful duty of referring to an episode which cast a pall over an event that had borne every promise of terminating under the happiest auspices." Fair enough, but it seems a bit of

overkill to end his coverage of the minor tournament by stating that “Among the few pleasant reminiscences which this Congress can offer to the gentlemen who devoted their time and labor, and their earnest, anxious efforts to its welfare, and have reaped the bitter essence distilled from the inglorious deeds of Messrs. Ware and Grundy, the many kindly tokens of fraternal sympathy which reached the committee from foreign lands will be cherished as pure, bright lilies plucked from a wilderness of thorns.”

According to his obituary in the *Washington Post* (January 22, 1898), Gilberg died from suffocating on his pillow; a strange cause of death in my opinion, but I would not claim that it is linked to any of the enemies he skewered in the tournament book.

Finally, we turn to the crucial game in which Grundy perpetrated his “infamous fraud” upon Ware. Before looking at the game itself, let’s summarize the circumstances:

- The final games were played 26 January, 1880.
- The standings among the leaders at this point, with one game each left to play: Mackenzie, Grundy, and Mohle $12\frac{1}{2}$; Sellman $11\frac{1}{2}$; Judd $10\frac{1}{2}$. Further back were Delmar ($9\frac{1}{2}$), and Ryan and Ware (both $5\frac{1}{2}$).
- Final game pairings were Ware vs. Grundy, Mackenzie vs. Delmar, Mohle vs. Judd, and Sellman vs. Ryan.
- Therefore, any of the top three (Mackenzie, Grundy or Mohle) could conceivably finish anywhere from clear 1st to =3rd-4th, while Sellman had an outside chance to tie for 2nd, or even share =1st-4th should all three leaders lose.

My point here is to highlight certain contradictions between the facts of the tournament situation, and Ware’s account of how and when the fix with Grundy was proposed and agreed. Ware clearly says this was on Sunday, January 25th, after Grundy’s loss to Ware in their first game, but the day *before* their second and final game. Yet Ware also reports Grundy as saying “that I had, in beating him, knocked him out of the first prize,” and that the point of the fix was “to give [Grundy] the second prize.” However, on the 25th none of that was certain — Grundy could still have won clear or shared first as things stood then. Furthermore, assuming he did not take 1st, the agreed result, a draw, would not have assured him 2nd prize, either sole or shared, as it was possible for Mackenzie and Mohle to tie at $13\frac{1}{2}$ ahead of the 13 Grundy would then have.



George Mackenzie

Therefore, it's my belief that the fix was agreed not on the 25th as Ware stated, but on the 26th, and not prior to the start of play, but *during adjournment*, by which time Mackenzie had beaten Delmar and Mohle drawn with Judd, so that Grundy knew a draw would give him clear 2nd. Ware cannot be right about both the date and the standings situation, and it seems more likely to me that he simply got the date wrong.

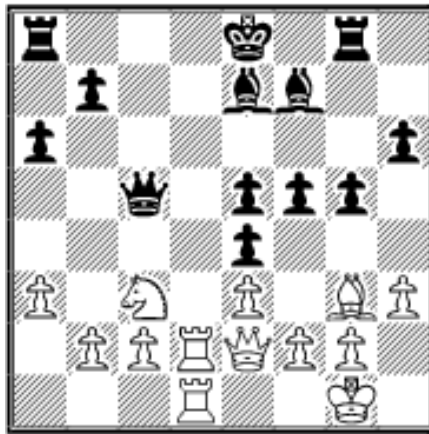
Those things in mind, let's look at the game:

Ware-Grundy, New York 1880, 7 hours 30 minutes, notes by A.P. Barnes (*notes in italics by Fritz8*): **1.d4 d5 2.Bg5** An eccentric course which should tend to benefit the 2d player. **2...Nc6** In openings on the queenside, it is generally better to advance the c-pawn before bringing out the knight, and in the present case Black appears to have at least 2 lines of play superior to that adopted. In the first place, he might have proceeded with g6, and secondly, which looks better, with f6; and if, in reply, White plays 3.Bf4, then Nc6, threatening the advance e5 with a good game. **3.e3 a6 4.h3 Nf6** Again, f6 seems preferable. **5.Nc3** It may be presumed that the object of White's curious 2d move was to prevent the king's knight from coming into play, under a penalty of a doubled pawn, and it seems the capture of the knight would be best play now. **5...Bf5 6.Bd3 Bg6 7.a3 Qd7 8.Nf3 Ne4 9.Bf4 f6** It would have been more prudent to double his adversary's, rather than his own, pawns. **10.Bxe4 dxe4 11.Nd2 f5 12.d5 Nd8** The cramped nature of Black's position is apparently due to his 9th move. **13.Nc4 Nf7 14.Qe2 14.Na5** looks very troublesome for Black; if he should reply Rb8 then follows Qd4, threatening Na4 etc. *Actually, 14.Na5 Nd6 does not appear very troublesome.* **14...h6 15.Ne5** A more unwise move would be difficult to discover. The reason for exchanging a piece in formidable play for one of Black's which is cramped up, and at the same time releasing into action another penned up piece of the enemy's, is not easily divined. **15...Nxe5 16.Bxe5 Bf7 17.Rd1 c6**



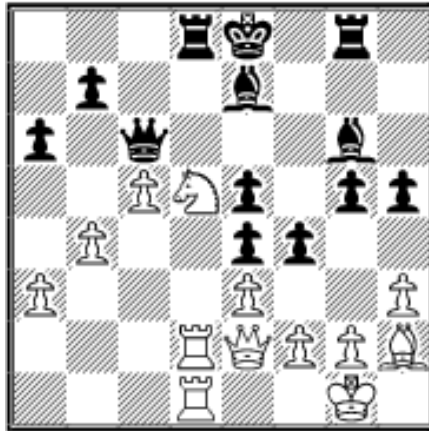
18.dxc6 18.Na4 appears to gain some advantage, e.g. 18.Na4 cxd5 19.Nb6 Qe6 20.Nxa8 (*Correct is 20.Bc7! Rc8 (or 20.Rb8 21.c4 dxc4 22.Qd2+-) 21.Nxc8 Qxc8 22.Bg3*) 20...Qxe5 21.Nb6 and if 21...Qxb2 (*Much better is 21...e6! with considerable compensation for the exchange.*) 22.Nxd5 Bxd5 23.Rxd5 and Black cannot take the a-pawn. If Black should play 18...Qd8, then follows 19.dxc6 etc. **18...Qxc6 19.0-0 Rg8 20.Qd2 e6 21.Qe2 Qc5 22.Qd2 Qc6 23.Qe2** The

result of these 4 moves has been to present Black with 2 moves viz. e6 and Be7. **23...Be7 24.Rd2 Qc5 25.Bg3 g5 26.Rfd1 e5**



27.Nd5 Here Rd7 was proper play. Actually strongest was 27.Rd5!, viz. 27...Bxd5 28.Rxd5 Qc6 29.Rxe5 Rg7 (or 29...Rd8 30.Rxf5 Rd7 31.Re5 Rg7 32.Nxe4+-) 30.Qh5+ Kf8 31.Rxf5 Kg8 32.Be5 Rf8 33.Rxf8+ Bxf8 34.Bxg7+-.

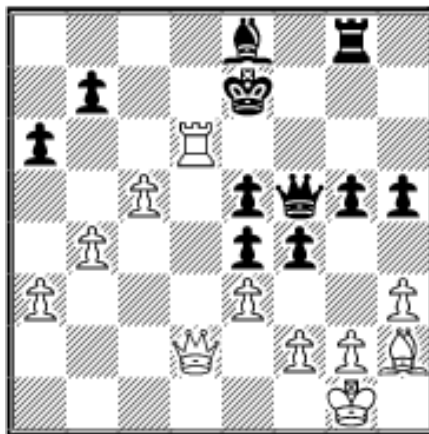
27...f4 28.b4 Qc6 29.Bh2 Rd8 30.c4 Bg6? Passive and bad. 30...f3! 31.gxf3 Bh5! 32.c5 Bxf3 gives Black counterplay. White is now winning (assuming he wants to win). 31.c5 h5



These pawns are assuming a formidable appearance, but their advanced position leaves the king too much exposed.

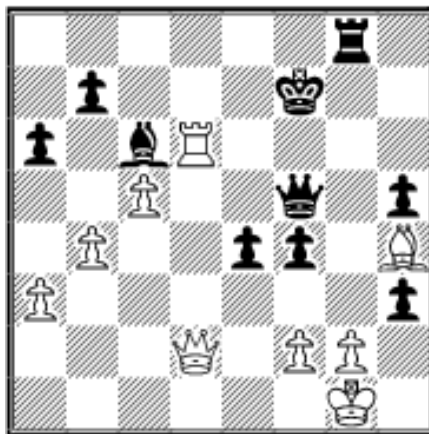
32.Nxe7 Even stronger seems 32.Qc4 Bf7 33.Qxe4 Rxd5 34.Rxd5 Bxd5 35.Rxd5 Qg6 36.Rxe5+-.

32...Kxe7 33.Rd6 Rxd6 34.Rxd6 Qc8 35.Qb2 Qf5 36.Qd2 Be8??



Necessary was 36...Bf7, though even then White is winning after 37.Rb6. 37.Qc3?! 37.Qd5! was crushing, e.g. 37...Rg6 (or 37...Qc8 38.Qxe5+) 38.Qxb7+ Bd7 39.Qxa6+-.

37...Bc6 38.Qd2 g4 39.exf4 gxh3 40.Bg3 exf4? Better is 40...Rg6. 41.Bh4+ Kf7??

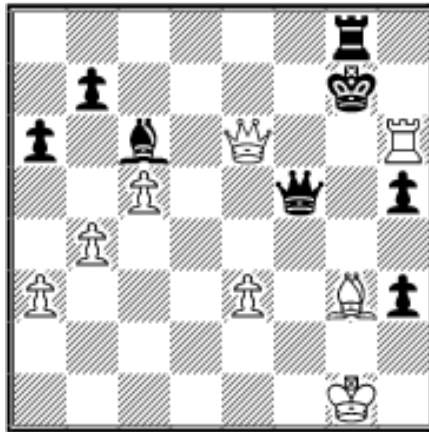


Better is 41...Kf8. 42.g3?!? At this point White had an easily won game. White should have checked with queen at a2, to which Black has clearly but the option between Kg7 and Bd5; to the latter White answers 43.Rxd5, and Black cannot save himself by 43...Rxc2+; and if 42.Qa2+ Kg7 43.Bf6+ Kf8 44.Rd8+ Be8 45.Rxe8+ Kxe8 46.Qxg8+ and wins. (Agreed!)

42...e3?! 43.Qa2+ Kg7 44.fxe3?? Even now 44.Bf6+ would at least draw, and there would be chances of winning.

Correct, though Barnes may overestimate the winning chances . 44.Bf6+ Qxf6

45.Rxf6 Kxf6 and (A) 46.Qxg8 exf2 and White must take perpetual check, (B) 46.Kh2Rg4! 47.Kxh3 exf2 48.Qxf2 Rxc3+ 49.Kh4 Kg6 drawing, or (C) 46.Qa1+ Kf5 47.fxe3 Rxc3+ 48.Kh2 Rxe3 and while White can probably still draw, it seems doubtful he can win. **44...fxg3 45.Bxg3 Kh7 45...h4!** is even stronger: 46.Bf4 Kh7+ 47.Kh2 Rg2+. **46.Rh6+ Kg7 47.Qe6**



47...Qxe6 Objectively, stronger is 47...Qg5 48.Kh2 Re8 49.Qd6 Qxh6, but the text forces simplification to an easy R-vs.-B ending. **48.Rxe6 Kf7 49.Rxc6 bxc6 50.Kh2 Kg6 51.e4 Kg5 52.Kxh3 Rf8 53.a4 Rf3 54.Kg2 Kg4 55.Bd6 Rb3 56.b5 axb5 57.axb5 Rxb5 58.e5 Rb2+ 59.Kh1 Re2 60.Kg1 h4 61.Kf1 Kf3 62.Kg1 h3 63.Kh1 Kg4 64.Kg1 h2+ 0-1**

When this result was first reported (*Brooklyn Eagle* Jan 28, 1880), there was

no suspicion of foul play; in fact, the game was highly praised. “The last game of the last round in the international chess tourney was finished at ten o’clock Monday night, the contestants being Messrs. Grundy and Ware, two good specimens of the English and Yankee chess players. It was the toughest encounter of the tourney, and the closing moves were eagerly watched by a crowded assemblage of chess players. The ending was a brilliant exhibition of chess strategy, and the final success of the Britisher, Mr. Grundy, was greeted with a well merited round of applause. Mr. Ware, too, came in for his just share of approbation for his gallant fight with the strongest player of the tournament. The position of the game about an hour before its close, was a very interesting one indeed.” They then give the position after Black’s 41st move, and the next few moves, commenting (and missing, in my opinion, all the key turning points of the game) that while Grundy missed the chance to take the rook on move 46 with advantage to finish it more quickly, he nevertheless had the game in hand.

It is interesting to note that although the accepted history seems to be that Ware had an easy win, which turned into a loss when he played passive moves as part of an odious agreement while his opponent sneakily tried to win, this account is hard to square with the actual game score. As stated above, I believe the fix was arranged mid-game, during adjournment, but under the tournament rules, adjournments came at a fixed time of day, rather than a fixed move. Specifically, sessions ran from 1 to 5 PM and from 7 to 12 (analyzing during adjournment being forbidden, incidentally), with a 15 move per hour time limit.

There is a clear point at which Ware shuffles his pieces about purposely, as noted in the annotations above after move 23. Ware had a positional advantage around this point, and this is the clearest place where he seems to “move back and forth as agreed,” so it is tempting to place adjournment around move 20. However, this does not seem to jibe: with four hours of play

at 15 moves per hour, the game would have had to reach at least move 30.

The only other place I might guess that Ware is purposely moving aimlessly is around moves 35-38, in particular 37.Qc3?! instead of the crushing 37.Qd5!. Here we may be seeing Ware deliberately pulling his punch to keep his side of the bargain, or he might simply have failed to consider 37.Qd5 at all. By the end of this sequence, Ware had squandered his advantage, though by move 41 he was winning again.

Ware's final error, which definitely turned a win into a loss, came when tactics were flying on both sides, and his moves could not be characterized as "moving back and forth," in particular his 42.g3 when he had the winning 42.Qa2+. Both players made several blunders circa moves 40-44 that could have turned wins into losses, with the final error being Ware's failure to play 44.Bf6, which should at least hold the draw.

In my opinion, Ware lost the game because he couldn't find the correct combination at the key time, and there is no reason to be confident that he would have beaten Grundy if an agreement had not been made. Would Ware have complained if he had beaten Grundy during the tactical phase of the game? I sincerely doubt it, even though Grundy would have been just as guilty of double-crossing Ware under this account. I cannot justify my own feelings on the matter, but somehow realizing that Ware lost not because of Grundy's trickery, but because of his own blunders, and then went to the committee to complain, lowers my opinion of Ware.



Henry Bird

So, finally, we are left with a complex story rather than a simple one. Who is guilty and innocent? It isn't a simple decision, and there is a range of questionable practices. It isn't just Ware and Grundy: you can choose on your own whether to disapprove of Mason, Mackenzie, Delmar, Bird, and perhaps

even Ryan. Perhaps it was just a reflection of a corrupt time; in the same paper in which the chess scandal was reported, you can read about all kinds of election and financial misdeeds. Was Morphy, who around this time was a forgotten man wandering the streets of New Orleans, right when he tried to avoid mixing money and chess? Are things better or worse now, when Ware and Grundy's current equivalents would probably just have agreed to a draw without bothering to talk of concocting a series of moves shuffling pieces back and forth so they wouldn't be criticized for lack of fighting spirit in taking a draw when the game still had plenty of fight?

To me, the ambiguity is interesting. I disliked the fact that the movie *Searching for Bobby Fischer* turned the game between Josh Waitzkin and his opponent into good kid vs. bad kid, rather than the book's more complex story of Waitzkin as a well-rounded child unlike his opponent who was made to focus only on chess, with Waitzkin's father wondering at times which approach would be best for his son's development. Even the game — in the book a wonderfully described story of a complex struggle which Waitzkin barely managed to draw after an early mistake had forced him to retreat tearfully to the bathroom to recover his composure — was simplified in the film to a much cleaner, but more boring win for Josh. For me, studying what happened between Grundy and Ware shows again that the real history can be more interesting than the colorful story.



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