



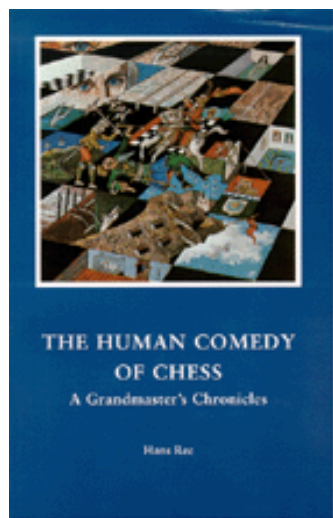
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From the Archives

Hosted by
Mark Donlan



by Hans Ree

From the Archives...

Since it came online over eight years ago, ChessCafe.com has presented literally thousands of articles, reviews, columns and the like for the enjoyment of its worldwide readership. The good news is that almost all of this high quality material remains available in the [Archives](#). The bad news is that this great collection of chess literature is now so large and extensive – and growing each week – that it is becoming increasingly difficult to navigate it effectively. We decided that the occasional selection from the archives posted publicly online might be a welcomed addition to the regular fare.

Watch for an item to be posted online at least once each week, usually on Thursday or Friday. We will update the [ChessCafe](http://ChessCafe.com) home page whenever there has been a "new" item posted here. We hope you enjoy *From the Archives*...

Dutch Treat by Hans Ree

Chess Perversions

Chessplayers tend to think that all the world plays their game, but this is not true. Millions play shogi, the Japanese form of chess, and tens or maybe even hundreds of millions play xiangqi, the Chinese form. And then there is Korean chess, Thai, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Burmese, Persian, Indian and Batak chess and who knows what other regional variants. Sprigs from one tree, grown apart through the centuries, but still with unmistakable family resemblances. But much bigger is the number of chess variants that have been worked out by individual inventors. There are tens of thousands of these, maybe hundreds of thousands. Only a few are known by the ordinary chessplayer. In an Amsterdam chess café I used to play a game which we called "Can I?" and which is better known as Kriegspiel, where the players see only their own pieces and not the opponent's. Alcoholic Chess, where the pieces are bottles that have to be drunk by the player who captures them, has little to offer intellectually and is only suitable for festive evenings.

A quite different case is Progressive Chess, where white starts with one move, black replies with two, white plays three, black four and so on. It is not permitted to capture the king during a move. There exists an extended opening theory of this game. Databases with many games. A magazine that follows the latest developments. In this game the superiority of the Italians is as striking as

that of the Russians in our kind of chess. Of course, games tend to be short. An example:

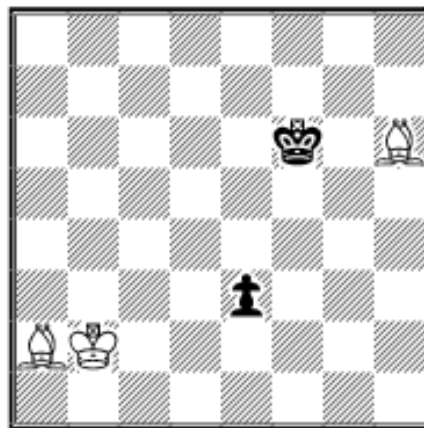
White *Murphy*-Black *Fierek*, Correspondence 1988

1.d4 2.d5, Nh6 (two Black moves) 3.Nc3, Nf3, Bxh6 4.Bg4, Bxf3, Bxe2, Bxd1? 5.Nb5, Bc4, Bb3, Ba4, Nxc7 mate. One can imagine that a forced win may be found in the initial position, and that will be the end of this game. Pity for Dutch GM Van der Wiel, who studied it extensively.

These are relatively well known chess forms, but who is familiar with Bear Chess, Billiards Chess, Bombalot (our century gave us many chess variants in which a bomb, nuclear or other, destroys a whole area of the board), Brecht Schach (where in the revolutionary spirit of Bertolt Brecht the pieces gain or lose in power during play), or Blood-brother Chess? You can see that my knowledge is that of a slow autodidact who has finally arrived at the letter B of his reference work.

The work in question is a book that appeared in 1994, *The Encyclopedia of Chess Variants*, by D.B. Pritchard, published by Games & Puzzles Publications. The Bible of chess perversions. A monument of scholarship. Thousands of chess variants are described here. Many more had to be left out by the author because they were not important enough. Leafing through this book one realizes that the orthodox chessplayer occupies a small corner of an immense chess universe, inhabited by strange and unknown tribes.

The bear, we learn, combines the powers of the knight and the squirrel. A surge of interest among the young in Bear Chess has been reported, especially in Central Russia. Billiards Chess, also known as Reflection Chess or Snooker Chess, is also popular. Of course different aberrations can be combined. AISE (Associazione Italiana SchacchiEterodossi) has organized tournaments for Billiards Progressive Chess or Billiards Loser-wins Chess. Try your wits on the following Billiards Chess problem:



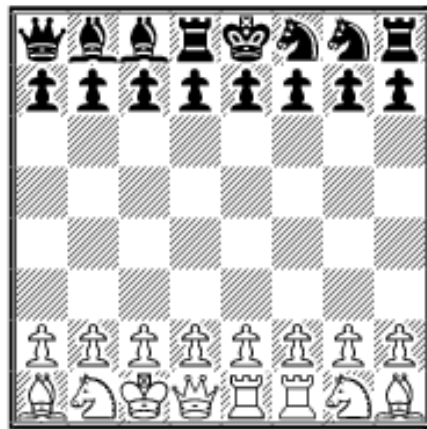
F.F.L. Alexander, 1932

White to move and mate in two

The bishops can move as normal, but they can also be reflected like billiards balls on the edges of the board. E.g. the bishop on h6 can reach all the squares

of the diagonal a3-f8 in one move. In this problem reflection is only allowed once during a move.

And now comes Robert Fischer, demonstrating his Fischerandom Chess, in which the pieces are shuffled randomly on the first rank. You may have guessed from the preceding that the idea is hardly new. There have been scores of proposals for all kinds of shuffle chess. The new ingredient of Fischer may be his provision that the king will always be in-between the rooks in the initial position, and the possibility for some kind of castling in all configurations. But for the rest he is firmly based in a tradition that is quite rich, if not very respectable. As an illustration, here is a game recorded in 1903 in Brighton. First we set up the pieces. The initial position was like this:



White: *Father Christmas*

Black: *St. Nicholas*

Brighton 1903

1.e2-e4 e7-e5 2.f2-f4 e5xf4 3.g2-g3 f4xg3
4.Rf1xf7 Ke8xf7 5.Qd1-h5+ Nf8-g6 6.Re1-f1+ Ng8-f6 7.e4-e5 d7-d6 8.e5xf6 g7xf6
9.Bh1-d5+ Bc8-e6 10.Rf1xf6+ Kf7xf6
11.b2-b3+ Ng6-e5 12.Qh5-h6+Kf6-f7
13.Qh6xe6+ Kf7-g7 14.Qe6-f7+ Kg7-h6
15.Qf7-f6+Ne5-g6 and here Father

Christmas announced mate in two (by Nf3 or Nh3 followed by Qg5 mate) Brilliantly played by Father Christmas and St. Nicholas can be forgiven for not spotting the dangers in time in these unusual circumstances.

Even a great player like Paul Keres has dabbled in shuffle chess, baseline chess, randomized chess, displacement chess or whatever you call it, though in a less extreme version. In 1935 he participated in a correspondence tournament in which the white king and queen changed places in the initial position. The black king and queen stayed on their normal squares. The tournament was won by one E. Arcsin from Budapest with 10 points from 11, and Hans Mueller (an IM in orthodox chess); Paul Keres shared second place with 9.5 points. Regrettably, Pritchard, who is my source for practically everything in this article, does not give a game by Keres.

White: *Ancsin* Black: *Mueller* Correspondence 1935

White with Kd1 and Qe1.

1.e2-e4 c7-c5 2.e4-e5 Nb8-c6 3.Nb1-c3 d7-d5 4.f2-f4 Bc8-g4+ 5.Bf1-e2 Bg4xe2+ 6.Qe1xe2 e7-e6 7.Ng1-f3 Ng8-h6 8.0-0-0 (Castling long does not seem advisable in this form of chess) 8...Nh6-f5 9.d2-d3 Bf8-e7 10.Nc3-d1 0-0 11.c2-c3 Qd8-c7 12.Nd1-e3 Nf5-h4 13.Nf3xh4 Be7xh4 14.g2-g3 Bh4-e7 15.Kf1-g2 Ra8-d8 16.c3-c4 Nc6-d4 17.Qe2-f2 d5xc4 18.d3xc4 Qc7-c6+ 19.Kg2-h3 Rd8-d7 20.Bc1-d2 Nd4-f3 21.Re1-d1 f7-f6 22.Ne3-d5 Nf3xd2 23.Nd5xe7+ Rd7xe7 24.Qf2xd2 f6xe5 25.f4xe5 Qc6-e4 26.Qd2-d6 Rf8-f2

27.Rd1-g1 Qe4-e2 White resigned.

Solution of the Billiards Chess problem. 1.Ka1. Black has only two legal replies. 1...Ke5 2.Bg7 mate. 1...e2 (the main variation) 2.Bb2 mate. The provision that only one reflection per move is allowed avoids alternative solutions.

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