

Furthering chess understanding for the purpose of increasing your Elo and winning \$\$\$ prize funds. All contents © 2007, R.B. Lange's.

**Q: Is it useful to know Chess Traps?**

Of the top of my head I can't think of an example where I won a game by knowing a trap. I also can't think of an example where I lost by falling into a trap. However, I do know I had lost games by TRYING to set traps.

But just as strange, I knew a guy name Tom who won more than his share of games by knowing a number of traps. He studied Irving Chernev's *Winning Chess Traps*, and he used them whenever he could. Sometimes I would look at his board as someone was about to fall into a well.

Don't let some people tell you that traps have no value. They do. Here are some of MY reasons that I have observed:

- a) finish up a game more quickly, allowing rest and vitality for later games;
- b) get some of your money back for the time you invested;
- c) make opponents aware

you are not to be trifled with;

d) It is always good to be aware of the "weaknesses" of the systems you are playing or which could be played against you.

There's one last thing to mention: you may be an inventor of traps yourself. Certainly you have played in ways that allowed quick kills when someone overreacted, or won something they shouldn't have. Thus, traps are not a matter of finding a book of traps and then pumping them out at every opportunity.

**Q: Sometimes I try to set a trap but my opponent seems to stupid to fall into it!**

Or, maybe he/she is too smart to fall into it.

I get the drift of this comment however.

I have tried to "force" my opponents to fall into the 4. e3 trap of the Albin Counter Gambit, and they wouldn't SIMPLY because they never saw it! If you think THAT

makes you crazy, how about when you try to set a trap, your opponent doesn't see it, but in the very next round, you see someone else set the SAME trap you wanted to exploit, on the same opponent, and the guy who avoided yours falls into the second one! Same trap. Lasker Trap, Albin Counter Gambit. One of my early examples of chess unfairness.

There's a 5th [an (e)] reason for chess traps too: they usually cut the game short and make you feel "super up" for the next contest.

**Q: A quick history?**

There are (4) obvious books in English on this subject, maybe five if you count Reinfeld and Horowitz' *Chess Traps, Pitfalls and Swindles*.

The others are: *Winning Chess Traps* by Chernev, already mentioned; *Modern Chess Opening Traps* by Lombardy (where examples were found to have been taken from

books in the German series by Schwarz, and often centered around the “mere” winning of a pawn); Al Horowitz’ *New Traps in the Chess Opening*; and Eugene Znosko-Borovsky’s *Traps on the Chessboard*.

If you want to count DVDs as part of the picture, you will have to include GM Karsten Müller’s *1000 Opening Traps*, traps which are of a much more sophisticated nature.

I’m sure there are book(s) from England which I have failed to note, but this is what immediately comes to mind.

**Q: What should I study?**

First, I recommend traps in the openings you play. I don’t mean to imply you should steer toward these traps, just know them so you won’t fall into them, AND, if the opportunity drops in your lap, beware of a BIG time-saver.

Secondly, while you can get something out of almost anything you study chess-wise, there are time limitations. Hence, unless you play the King’s Gambit, it is doubtful if studying “traps” in that opening is going to help you anywhere else except perhaps in the Vienna Game, and then the question is: KG or Vienna?, make up your mind.

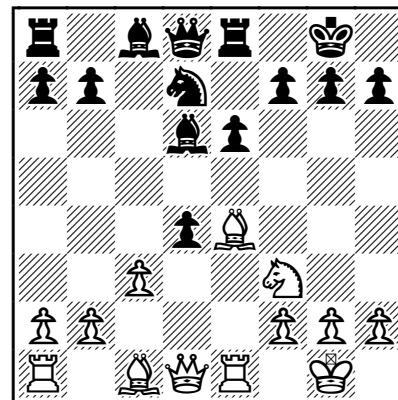
Third, unless you are just studying or “playing” for fun (not really the purpose of these *Chess Reports*), study or look at stuff that can do you some good. When I pick out examples that follow, hopefully they are in systems which are being played today by you or your opponents.

Here are some examples from a variety of sources:

**♣ Ever wonder why people play the Colle System? Look at this one. The fact that this usually only gets pulled off once in a blue moon is why they are willing to lose a lot of games just for the thrill of THIS! They have to remember very little, and hope the rest can be figured out over the board. Also, the same move orders are used over and over without asking themselves the question, “What if Black plays this differently?”**

- |          |      |
|----------|------|
| 1. d4    | d5   |
| 2. Nf3   | Nf6  |
| 3. e3    | c5   |
| 4. c3    | e6   |
| 5. Bd3   | Bd6  |
| 6. Nbd2  | Nbd7 |
| 7. 0-0   | 0-0  |
| 8. Re1   | Re8  |
| 9. e4    | dxe4 |
| 10. Nxe4 | Nxe4 |

**11. Bxe4 cxd4?**



White is “living” for this move—part of his “Hope Chess” arsenal.

**12. Bxh7† Kxh7**

**13. Ng5† Kg8**

The most “principled move” as Loek van Wely would put it.

**14. Qh5 Qf6**

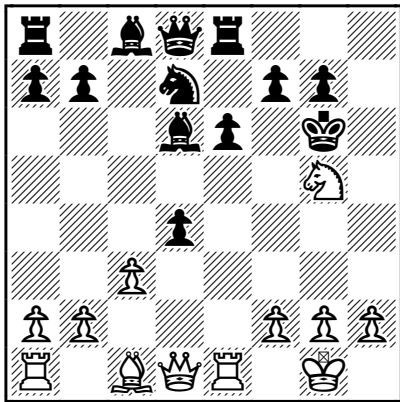
About here Black might try this B sac idea for himself: 14... h2†! If 15. Kxh2, then 15... Qc7† 16. g3 Nf6 (protecting the P/f7) and White has nothing (maybe a little of exposure-pain). If 15. Kh1!, then 15... Qf6 16. Qh7† Kf8 17. Ne4 and White is threatening to pick up the P/h2 after a Qh8†.

It’s hard to see that after 15. Qh7† Kf8 16. Ne4 Qe5 17. cxd4 Qxh2† 18. Qxh2 Bxh2† 19. Kxh2 Nb6, White has anything.

So why does the player of the white pieces get a wedgie over this game: Colle v. O’Hanlon (Nice, 1930)? Because Black played:

**13. ... Kg6?**

This is where the REAL trap is located, not with 17... Kg8.



- 14. **h4!**           **Rh8**
- 15. **Rxe6!**       **Nf6**
- 16. **h5!**           **Kh6**
- 17. **Qd3!**

As you can probably see, if 17... fxe6, then 18. Qg6#. Or if 17... Bxe6, then the Q/d8 is lost to 18. Nxf7 dis. check!

The problem with these brilliant sacs? They were originally done by someone else—and after Colle, many, many, times.

♣ **I've heard 1400-1600s talk about the Queen's Gambit as if they are experts, when, they are only experts in talking about it. In the next example we see the problem of Black trying to hold on to the extra pawn.**

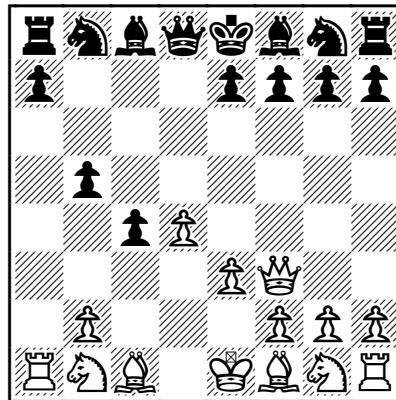
- 1. **d4**           **d5**
- 2. **c4**           **dxc4**
- 3. **e3**

Actually, 3. Nf3 is recommended first, to avoid 3... e5.

- 3. ...           **b5?**

I have seen stronger players "dare" White to try and refute their pawn grab, and then try to protect it.

- 4. **a4**           **c6?**
- 5. **axb5**       **cxb5**
- 6. **Qf3!**



♣ **I've seen this next one too. When someone is offering to give up their Q, you better look a little closer. Black has a piece for a pawn, and, a WON game.**

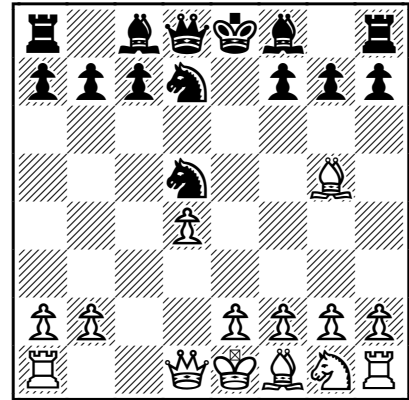
- 1. **d4**           **d5**
- 2. **c4**           **e6**
- 3. **Nc3**       **Nf6**
- 4. **Bg5**       **Nbd7**
- 5. **cxd5**       **exd5**
- 6. **Nxd5?**

Hoping the "pin" will win this extra pawn. Unfortunately, things ARE rotten in Denmark.

- 6. ...           **Nxd5**

Right here is the TIPOFF! Yet, it is already too late as Black has won White's N/d5. It's downhill

now.



- 7. **Bxd8**       **Bb4+**
- 8. **Qd2**       **Bxd2+**

Right! If White wasn't in CHECK he would be okay. But he is!

- 9. **Kxd2**       **Kxd8**

♣ **Club players need to learn this next one. Black does NOT play the "automatic" ...Na6, he sacs his Q!**

- 1. **d4**           **d5**
- 2. **c4**           **e6**
- 3. **Nc3**       **Nf6**
- 4. **Bf4**       **c5**
- 5. **Nb5?**

Good enough would have been 5. Nf3, but White doesn't know this trap.

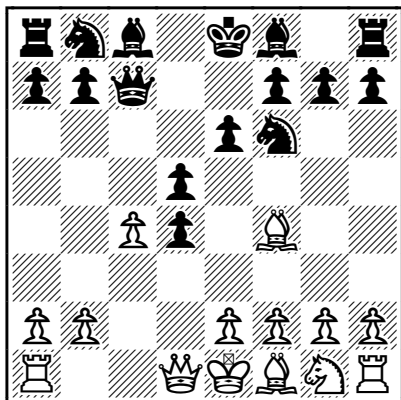
- 5. ...           **cxd4**
- 6. **Nc7!**

I can see it now. White gets up from the table and tells his friend, "I'm whipping up on this dummy." Premature burial.

- 6. ...           **Qxc7!**

Now White's probably "seen

it," but it's too late.



**7. Bxc7 Bb4†**

Man those checks on b4/b5 can be treacherous. Always keep an EYE out for them.

**8. Qd2 Bxd2†**

That damn check again!

**9. Kxd2 dxc4**

Black is up two center pawns. White's gonna die!

♣ **White has it sewn up, once again?! NOT! Black MAKES room for his K (keep that idea on your RADAR too).**

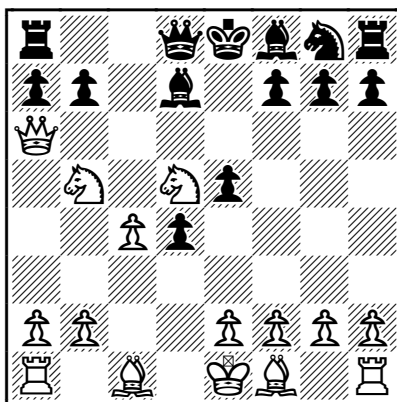
- 1. d4 d5**
- 2. c4 e6**
- 3. Nc3 c5**
- 4. Nf3 cxd4**
- 5. Nxd4 e5**
- 6. Ndb5 d4**
- 7. Nd5 Na6**

White needs to ask himself, "Why is Black playing like such an idiot?"

- 8. Qa4 Bd7**
- 9. Qxa6?**

I can see this shaking up the

troops. But, don't start counting the chickens yet.



**9. ... Bb4†**

I think we are beginning to see a "pattern" here!

Recently I mentioned to a few members of the local chess club that many games there can be won in the opening, but one side or the other gets "freaky" when they "see" material going down the chute, but, in reality, they could turn the tables themselves, and END the game!

Clearly White was "hoping" for 9... bxa6. You CAN win a lot more games IF you don't play "Hope Chess." Ask yourself, "Do I have to take back with the OBVIOUS (natural) move?" Sometimes the answer is "no," an emphatic NO.

**10. Bd2 Bxd2†**

That OLD check again!

**11. Kxd2 bxa6**

**12. Nbc7†**

But THIS check is worthless. Probably bounced!

**12. ... Kf8**

At this point White has a LOST game. Don't screw it up by going after MORE stuff. Get your pieces out, then beat him up. White's K is on d2 and he is going to have a devil of a time getting his pieces out.

♣ **My point with these games is to disprove the notion that the Queen Pawn openings are safer, and less tactical than 1. e4. I've heard that a lot! Too many players with the white pieces are AFRAID of losing with 1. e4, so they prefer to lose with 1. d4. "Well," you say, "at least the tactics in the 'Indian Systems' don't start until much later!" REALLY???**

- 1. d4 Nf6**
- 2. c4 e6**
- 3. Nc3 b6**
- 4. e4 Bb4?**

Too early. 4... Bb7 is best at this point, yet the allure of winning that P/e4 is overwhelming to some!

**5. e5**

Ah! Doesn't this make Black's task even easier? Er, no.

- 5. ... Ne4**
- 6. Qg4! Nxc3**

Black's thinking: "What a moron. I just move my R to f8, win a pawn on c3 with check and

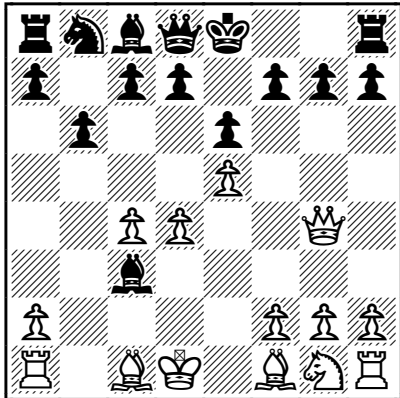
White's toast." Someone is toast all right, but it's not White.

**7. bxc3**

As Znosko-Borovsky points out in a book I am "working" on, "7. a3 is even better."

**7. ... Bxc3†**

**8. Kd1**



A common enough square in these types of situations; why move to e2 and prevent the B/f1 from getting out?

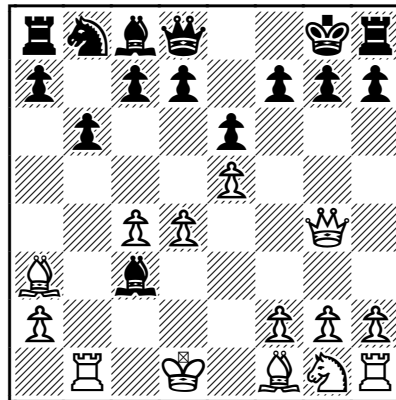
**8. ... Kf8**

Okay, okay, what about 8... Bxa1? A little calculation will show that White definitely has the upper hand: 9. Qxg7 Rf8 10. Bg5!! (not obvious, but Black has NO good answer) f6 11. exf6 Bxd4 (to nail the Q/g7 if given half a chance) 12. Be2. The Quiet Killer.

**9. Ba3† Kg8**

If 9... c5, Black has a small edge after 10. Rc1 Bb4 11. Bxb4 cxb4. But, Black is trying to get away from the dark squares where he thinks he will be safe (eternal vigilance??).

**10. Rb1**



**10. ... Nc6**

10... Nc6 doesn't really seem that forced, does it? So let's try some other moves:

a) 10... d6, 11. Qf3!, and Black drops a piece;

b) 10... Bb7, 11. Rb3! (forward ho!) and it's grim for Black;

c) 10... Ba5. I admit, the idea behind this one is HARD to see, but after 11. Rb3 c5, that mate on g7 doesn't look so likely. 12. Rg3, and I don't see a clear way to break through.

That's WHERE these so-called traps come in. Because one side or the other has that job of playing "perfect chess" in defense, there is usually a chink in the armor, and the "Wily Coyote" will find it—that's WHY practice does make perfect, whether you want to go to Carnegie Hall or play great chess.

10... Nc6 is one of those moves to get a piece into play, and it really doesn't work as well as taking a piece OUT OF

PLAY (another principle has just been run over in a roughshod fashion)!!

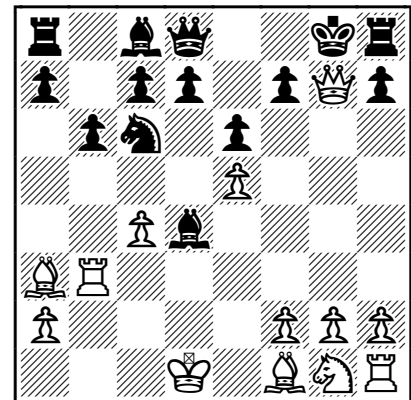
**11. Rb3!**

The point will be to swing this R to the K-side, as is often the case when a R goes to the third rank.

**11. ... Bxd4**

It used to be thought that 11... h5 saved Black, but, it doesn't: 12. Qg3 Bxd4 13. Qxg7+!! Kxg7 14. Rg3†.

**12. Qxg7†**



It shocked me too!

**12. ... Kxg7**

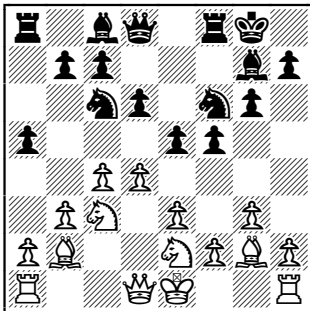
**13. Rg3†**

And similar to the previous note about ...h5. If 13... Qg5, then 14. Rxg5†, and be "Vewy careful" as Elmer Fudd would say; as 14... Kh6 has to be followed up with 15. Rg3, or it is easy to get that B/d4 back into play and throw all your hard work down the drain.

The point (!) of this traps essay is: You are NOT SAFE (enough) in any opening. ♚ED.

## FEEDBACK

### PAWN STRUCTURE from Richard Bohms (MI)



#### Bob H.—John Williams *Chess Reports #4, pg. 5* The Losing Move 9... e5

This is partly “Fritzting” to make sure there’s no glaring errors in analysis, partly looking for improvements for Black, and partly a class D player trying to understand what’s going on: Why, exactly, is 9... e5 the losing move?

I know that the long-term strategic plan is to give up the Bishop pair in order to double Black’s Q-side pawns, after which White tries to win a pawn. But that’s the same idea that White has in the Exchange Variation of the Ruy Lopez, but nobody says that 3... a6 is the losing move when white wins one of those games. In fact, theory’s recommendation of 4. Ba4 for white indicates that the Exchange variation is at least slightly inferior for White. So what is it about the position that makes these doubled pawns a losing proposition? I know it can’t be the recapture towards the center, since that’s how Black captures in the Scotch, when both sides retain two Bishops. There has to be something that’s obvious to experts here that isn’t to a D player. Since I’d like

to not stay a D Player, somebody please help me understand the differences.

So, I use *Fritz* to look for improvements for Black later in the game, even though this ignores the point about heuristic vs. algorithmic thinking. What about 21. e4 g4? *Fritz* then gives 22. fxg4 Bxg4 23. exf5 Nxf5. It’s still  $\pm$  for white, but that’s better than  $\pm$  after 21... fxe4. I still don’t like the black pawn structure in the new line, though.

#### from Bob H.:

To Rich’s question about ...e5 being the losing move. This not only allows me to fracture Black’s pawns into 3 islands, the “c-pawns” have no natural defense as they do in the Exchange Ruy where Black has a b7-pawn. When a master reaches a position such as that he just goes into auto-pilot (at least I do); some guys/gals still look for a quick kill. I’ll take the extra 20 more moves for a more sure win. (Is that a sufficient answer?)

#### from the Editor to Bob H.:

The idea of the pawn on b7 in the Lopez is HELPFUL—true.

The phrase “autopilot” scares “them” because they are not yet good enough to see the so-called “simplicity” of trading off and making sure Black has NO counter chances.

Thus, if you could fold some of my comments into YOUR answer.

#### from Bob H. to Rich:

Rich asks a good question about “what if” in my game with John Williams. His specific is how about 21. e4 g4.

The pivotal thing to keep in mind here is that in this fractured pawn structure and Knight v. Bishop ending, the Knight will be better.

White must only concern himself with making sure that the remaining black Bishop cannot access the a2-c4 pawn chain before the pawns are secured. By putting the pawn on g4, Black closes down one access point on the board. Granted he has others, but here’s the problem. Let’s say Black decides to block the now passed white f-pawn by Kf7, then his B/h5 has no moves. White can regroup around the extra black pawn after ...e3, Re2 Bh6; Bc1, and if White puts his Knight on c5, then it can go to e6 being supported by the soon-to-be pawn on f5.

After 21... g4, best is 22. fxg4 (on 22. exf5, *Fritz* finds a way to worm the two black Bishops into White’s position, to win; or, if 22. f4, White tries to make the B/h5 bad by leaving the P/g4, but he doesn’t succeed). Then on 22... Bxg4, White gets the advantage with 23. exf5 Nxf5 24. Ne4 Nd4 25. Rdf2 Bh3 26. Re1 $\pm$ .

These become long term strategic concepts—way past the ability of *Fritz* to understand. Now I am not saying it can’t calculate this, but what I am saying is that from move 18 or 19 it does not evaluate the position on move 23 or 24, only the algorithm that it has been given to use.

Many decades ago RHM published a book titled *How To Open A Chess Game*. In it World Champion Tigran Petrosian made a comment about exclamation points. To wit:

**Oh those exclamation points! How they erode the innocent soul of the amateur, removing all hope of allowing him to examine another player’s ideas critically!**

Same problem with *Fritz*—it’s a

tactical thing, but horrid at positional concepts. Look at what Kasparov did with *Deep Blue* from 1996. How did he beat the machine? By applying strategic and positional play. The rematch was another story, and of course there is also the debate about his "blunder."

### from Don Griffith (WV)

Some comments on issue 4

1) I tried once (over several days) playing through all of an Informant. I found it rough, lots of games that were not in an opening I would ever play or just not that interesting. Give me a well annotated game collection any day over that.

2) 25 problems a day and time needed 10-15 minutes. You must be doing all mates in one to get done in 10 min. I can't do that with problems like say

3) this week's problem number #2. I don't see a win for Black, Looks like the idea is 1... Rxe2. But, after 2. Bxe2 Qf4† 3. Kh1 Rg1† wins the Q, but not the game, as best I can tell. Another try is 2. Bxe2 Rg3 3. fxxg3 Qxxg3, and a perp.

4) I can't figure out what Richard Bohms is going on about. First he says he wants to play the BDG, then he says he opens 1. e4. I am sure you will get a lot more BDG's with 1. d4 than by playing 1. e4, and hoping to transpose from an Alekhine.

### from the Editor:

I have been unable to track down the correct diagram. I was sure there was a B/d3, but Don is right, that helps White with 1... Rxe2 2. Bxe2. I did a search in *Chessbase* with and without several pieces and I cannot locate my original

diagram. It works the way I remember it WITHOUT a B/d3. My apologies. I also sent out a revised issue for leaving a R off of a1 in one problem. I wonder if I had a B/d3 from another problem I was working on.

Whatever it is, it's my fault, and I apologize for wasting people's time. Try it without the B/d3 and I bet you get the answer.

It's not much consolation, but even banging your head on the wall increases your mental strength, but this was not my intention.

About a year ago a friend and I sat down for 2-3 hours with a problem from a book (Emms/Flear?) which we discovered had a value of 15 (the highest point amount). We tried everything, and came to the conclusion that it really must have been the OTHER side which had won. Amazingly, I had not looked at the small description below the diagram—it WAS the other side which had won! When we went through the whole solution it was incredible the things we found which matched what the author had intended—but we didn't mean to "solve it" that way.

I'll do better the next time. I have been triple checking the problems this issue and I will try them out once more BEFORE making them solid gold.

As to Richard's 1. e4/d4 dilemma he says: "...since I began playing chess, 1. e4 has been my overwhelming preference. I use the BDG as a full-time answer to the

as a result), and frequently transpose into the BDG or related lines of the French, Caro-Kann, and Alekhine (although I am also willing to try the main lines in those openings as well.) But, I'm also willing to play mainline Open Games, and keep trying to learn the white side of the Sicilian, since those lead to tactical positions as well." (More in issue 6)

### from Julian Wan (MI):

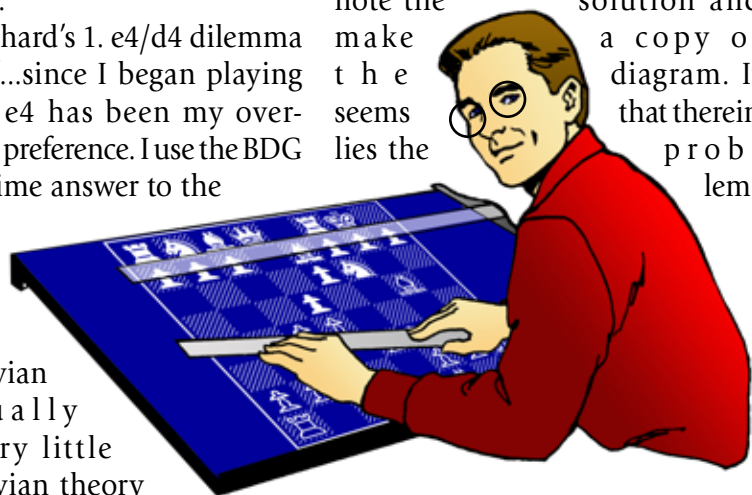
Trying to work through the Games and the quizzes. I'll admit that a few got me stumped—I think I see the ones with forcing lines, but the ones which require a quiet move I'm probably missing.

### from the Editor:

I've tried to avoid "quiet" answers Julian. What you probably have is my making some mistakes. When I've done that, I've corrected the issue and re-PDFed everyone who got the mistaken ones. It makes you wonder how I've been able to put out thousands of diagrams over the years with only a small number of mistakes.

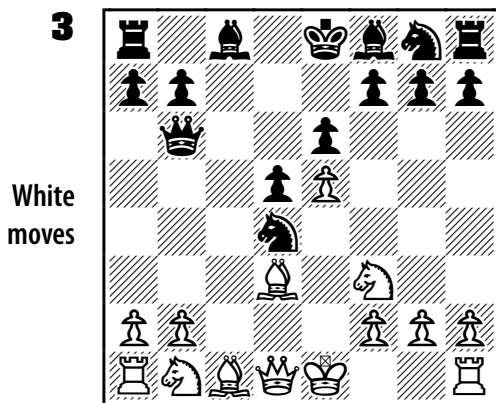
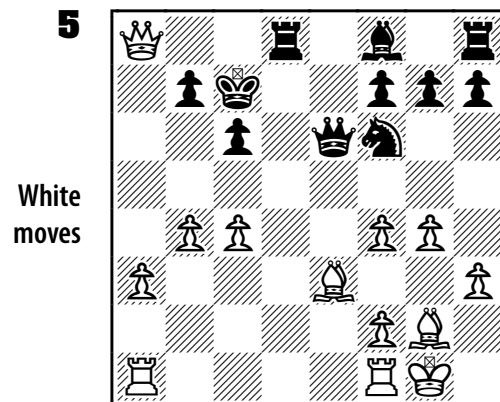
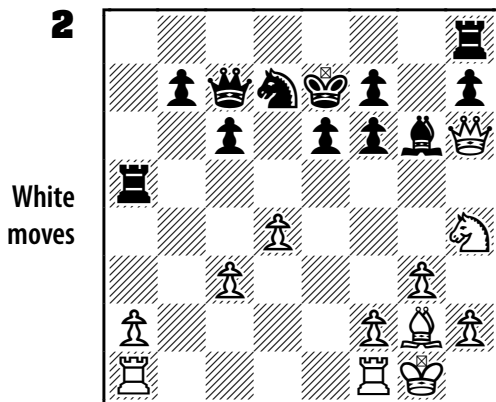
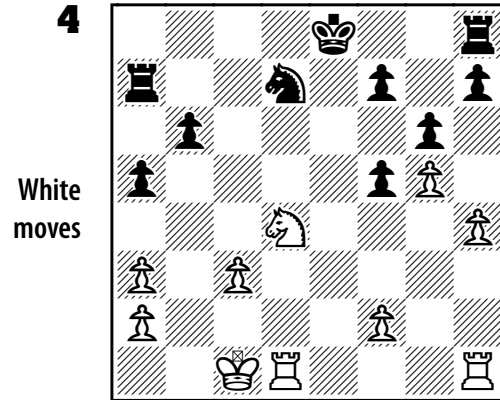
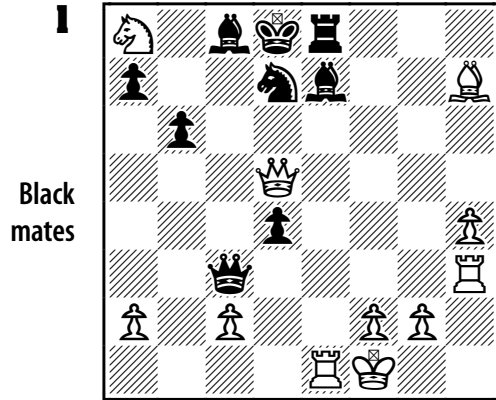
I take all these "problems" from REAL games in the *ChessBase* database for 2004 or 2007. I go through 100s of games until I find something that looks good. I then note the solution and make a copy of the diagram. It seems that therein lies the problem.

Scandinavian (I actually know very little Scandinavian theory



# The **QUIZ** Page (side to move wins)

Try to solve these in 5 minutes or less. Put down the first move on the "report" sheet supplied with "Chess Reports" issue #1. Do not use any kind of help, just your own brain. Visualize the solution without moving the pieces. We are trying to HELP you!



**Q**uizzes are an excellent way to warm up, stay in shape, and discover new possibilities. They are part of the Course. Some are not too hard, others are harder. There may be 1-2 which tax you.

They are also necessary for you to get a refund in case you are unhappy with what we are trying to do. If you don't have a filled out sheet, how can we help you? Please, help yourself!

(Be sure to enter the FIRST move on your Score Sheet, sent with issue #1).

## Serious Opening Theory from GM Alexander Khalifman

Khalifman became a world champion, the 14th, and in all honesty, he's played as well as many. What he HAS done in the past 5-6 years is to produce a series of openings books which are unsurpassed, anywhere, for a REAL opening repertoire WITH content.

First he did it with 1. Nf3 as a method by Kramnik, and then he did it as 1. e4, as a system by Anand. If you "knew," relatively well, ALL the material he has covered so far, you would be one very strong grandmaster.

So, it is with great fanfare that Vol. 8 has just been released. *Opening for White according to Anand 1. e4.*

In 320 pages he takes on: 1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 in the following Sicilian lines:

Nimzovich-Rubinstein, O'Kelly, Counter Attack, Paulsen/Kan, and good old Miscellaneous (to me, many of those lines he just mentioned ARE miscellaneous!).

What he is really getting at when he mentions miscellaneous is stuff like: 2... Qa5; 2... Qb6; 2... d5, and 2...

Qc7. The "other" misc. moves are: 2... g6, 2... b6, and 2... Nf6, all of which have a little more pedigree.

The Sicilian Counter Attack is simply: 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 ...

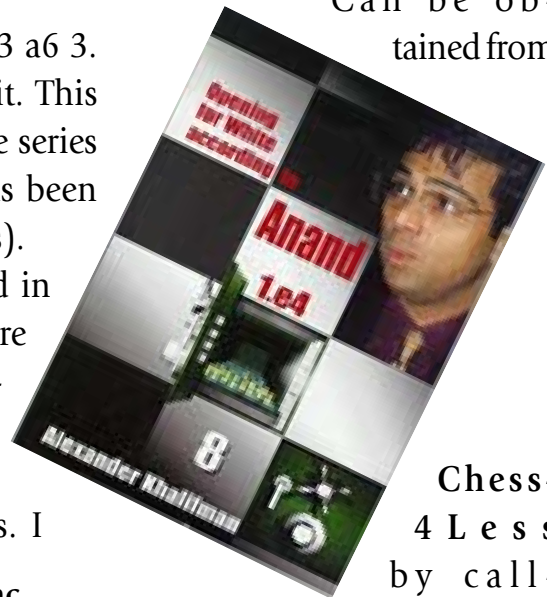
The Paulsen/Kan has some very serious lines which have to be known cold or you will be knocked cold!

The O'Kelly is 2. Nf3 a6 3. c3 as Khalifman sees it. This is the 14th book in the series (vol. 1 of Kramnik has been broken into two books).

As Don Aldrich said in an e-mail to me: "There is a lot of great writing about chess in general in them not just opening analysis. I

have not seen the Sicilians yet, just the Spanish and Ruy, but lordy, if you ever play either side of the Ruy or Caro I would think you would want to take a hard look at these. The summaries at the end of the chapters are almost worth the price of admission."

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