



The Check Is in the Mail

January 2007

The first 19 moves of the game below follow Shirov-Nisipeanu, 1999 FIDE World Chess Championship, Knockout Matches, Las Vegas. Nisipeanu as Black won that game. Here, therefore, White tries a theoretical novelty on move 20, thereby changing the game's outcome.

GAME OF THE MONTH

Readers are invited to submit their annotated games for possible publication in "The Check."

CARO-KANN: ADVANCE VARIATION [B12]

W: Dean Barclay (2115)

B: William Jemty (2091)

2005 Electronic Knights Semifinals

Notes by Dean Barclay

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 Bf5

To counter the advance variation of the Caro-Kann, Black implements a French-like strategy, planning to undermine White's center by means of ... c5, but placing Black's light-squared Bishop outside Black's d5-e6 pawn chain. In return, White will gain time and space for development by harrying Black's Bishop.

4. Nc3 e6 5. g4 Bg6 6. Nge2 c5 7. h4

h6 8. f4!?

White's "hyper-aggressive"¹ eighth move eschews the usual 8. Be3.

8. ... Be7 9. Bg2

Further targeting the d5-square, White sacrifices his h-pawn and relinquishes his right to castle.

9. ... Bxh4+ 10. Kf1 Be7!

Retreat of Black's Bishop both guards the c5-pawn and frees up Black's Queen to perform tasks other than merely protecting the h4-square.

11. f5 Bh7

If instead 11. ... exf5, White gets a strong attack after 12. Nxd5 fxe4 13. Nef4 or even Ndf4.

12. Nf4 Qd7

Not 12. ... cxd4? 13. fxe6! dxc3 14. exf7+ Kxf7 15. Qxd5+, when White wins material on the long diagonal.

13. Nh5 Bf8

If 13. ... Kf8, then 14 fxe6, and White's Queen and light-squared Bishop will attack Black's King down the f-file and along the a2-g8 diagonal.

14. dxc5 Nc6

¹ This word comes from GM Michael Rohde's annotations of the Shirov-Nisipeanu game posted at: <http://www.uschess.org/news/world99/games/990813game4/> (last visited July 22, 2006).

Black develops another piece and takes aim at White's e5-pawn.

15. Nb5 Bxc5!

Black's capture of the c-pawn prevents White's threatened 16. Nd6+. This c-pawn capture defends better than taking the e-pawn immediately with 15. Nxe5, which gives White a strong attack after 15. ... Qe2.

16. c4!?

Before the game, White had interpreted an article in a foreign-language (Czech) internet chess journal² as saying that 16. Nxc7 Kf8 17. fxe6 fxe6 18. Nxe6+ Qxe6 19. Bxd5 Qe7 20. Qf3+ Ke8 21. Bxc6+ wins for White. After receiving Black's 15th move, though, White noticed 20. ... Kg7, which thwarts White's plan in that line. The text move therefore keeps following the Shirov-Nisipeanu game, opening lines of attack still further.

16. ... Nxe5

Noting that Nisipeanu thus fearlessly shreds Shirov's center and embraces complications, Rhode appears to prefer 16. ... O-O-O 17. Bf4, though he also describes the resulting position as "messy."

17. Qe2 Nxc4 18. Bxd5! Qxb5

Naturally not 18. ... Qxd5?? 19. Nxc7+.

² See Josef Maxant, Šachový program Chessmaster 6000, in Chess Journal at: <http://www.chessjournal.cz/cz/pocitacovy-sach/sachovy-program-chessmaster-6000-article.html> (last visited July 22, 2006).

19. Bxc4 Qb6

Black cannot play 19. ... Qc6??, hoping to win a tempo by attacking White's Rook at h1, because 20. Bb5 would skewer Black's Queen against Black's King.

And now, after 19. ... Qb6, Shirov as White against Nisipeanu as Black played the natural-looking 20. fxe6, allowing 20. ... O-O-O 21. exf7 Ne7, when "White is clearly better," according to Rohde. In Shirov-Nisipeanu, White subsequently played 22. Qe6+? Kb8 23. Bf4+ Ka8! 24. Qxb6 axb6 25. Be5 Rhf8! 26. Ke2?! (not 26. Bxg7? Bd3+!). Then came 26. ... Nd5 27. Rhf1? Ne3, as Black won the exchange and eventually the game. Rohde therefore recommends the "improvement" 22. Bf4!! Bd6 23. Qd6+ as "good for White." But Black could respond instead with 22. ... Nd5 23. Bxd5 Rxd5 24. Qe8+ Rd8 25. Qe5 Bd3+ 26. Kg2 Qc6+ 27. Kh2 Bd4! 28. Qe7 Bc5 and at least a draw by repetition.

In the game at hand, White avoids that outcome by playing a theoretical novelty that prevents Black from castling Queenside.

20. Nxc7+!N

Calling 20. fxe6 "strong," Rohde's annotations on Shirov-Nisipeanu characterize 20 Nxc7+ as "not clear," because after 20. ... Kf8 21. Nh5 "all White has done is pick up the g-pawn, but then Black can play 21 ... exf5." After 21. ... exf5?, however, White might play 22. Qe5, winning with either 22. ... Qc6 23. Bxh6+ or 22. ... Bd4 23. Qd5 Bg6 24. Nf4 Nxc6+ 25. fxc6 g5

26. Qg7 gxf6 27. Qf6 Bg5.
Accordingly, 20. Nxf7+ looks like a good move.

20. ... Kf8 21. Nh5 Qc6 22. Rh3 Bd4

Black's Bishop at d4 hopes to guard the long diagonal a1-h8. In vacating the c5-square, however, Black's Bishop also opens up a new diagonal for White's attack, from a2 to g8. This opportunity explains White's next move.

23. Bd2 Rd8 24. Rd1 Qb6 25. Rb3 Qc6 26. Rf3

A remarkable position: All of White's pieces now target Black's King.

26. ... a6? 27. Bb4+ 1-0

2006 ABSOLUTE TOURNAMENT

If the updated CC ratings are not published by February 1, I will take the highest 13 players rated over 2200 who apply for a position in the tournament. There is no entry fee for this tournament, the strongest tournament offered by the USCF. Only if I do not get 13 applicants will individual invitations be sent out, and then just to make the requisite number. So if you would like to be the 2006 Absolute Champion, I highly recommend you submit your name now.

December Tournament Winners

TROPHY QUADS

Joseph Daudish	04QCD05	4 ½-1 ½
Mike Pickel	05QA22	3 ½-2 ½
Marshall Whitecotton	04QA27	5-1
Laverne Gildner	04QB10	4 ½-1 ½

JOHN COLLINS MEMORIAL

Thomas Haggard	04C39	4 ½-1 ½
Glenn Mogavero	04C39	4 ½-1 ½
Gary Tressler	05CC22	5 ½-½

SWIFT QUADS

Alan Wortham	05SQA14	4-2
Herbert Vaughn	96SQ12	5 ½-½

PALCIAUSKAS TOURNAMENT

Howard Hudspeth	04UA06	5-1
Crawford Daniels	04UA06	5-1

EXPRESS TOURNAMENT

David Pendergast	06ET04	5 ½- ½
Jaime Calvin	05ET02	5 ½- ½

BOOK REVIEW

COLLECTION OF CHESS STUDIES

by A. A. Troitzky

With a Supplement on the Theory of the Endgame of Two Knights Against Pawns

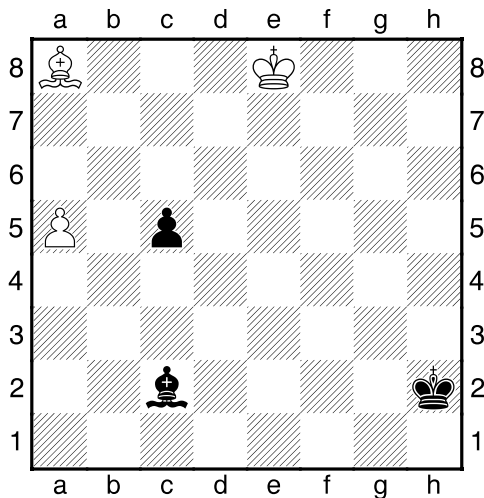
With an introduction by Sam Sloan,
ISBN 0-923891-10-2, Ishi Press
International

A REVIEW by Alex Dunne

Chess aficionados have long sung the praises of the beauties of chess, the stunning sacrifice, the brilliant attack, the intricate combination. Mostly these are middlegame complications involving a lot of pieces with much of the army standing on the sidelines, their only job to cheer their cohorts on. Imagine, then, a landscape so stark,

so full of imagination, that every actor has his part, and every role is a starring one.

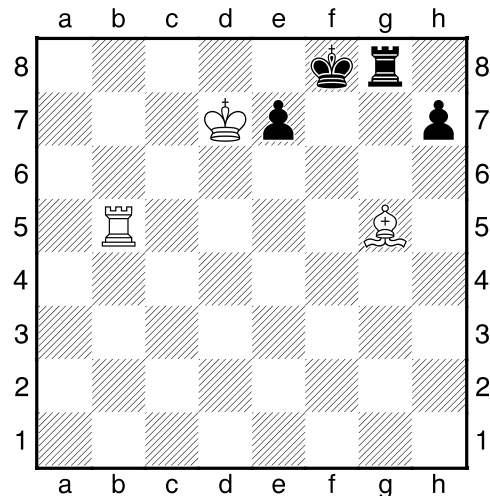
Euclid may have looked upon Beauty bare, but Alexey Troitzky has danced with her on the chessboard. Chess, after all, is not a verbal game. My trying to express my admiration for these studies with words is better served by letting a few of the studies shine with their own light.



1. a6 c4 2. a7 c3 3. Bh1 Ba4+ 4. Kf7 Bc6 5. Bxc6 c2 6. a8(Q) c1(Q) 7. Qa2+ Kg3 8. Qg2+ Kf4 9. Qf3+ Kg5 10. Qg3+ Kf5 11. Qg6+ Kf4 12. Qh6+ wins

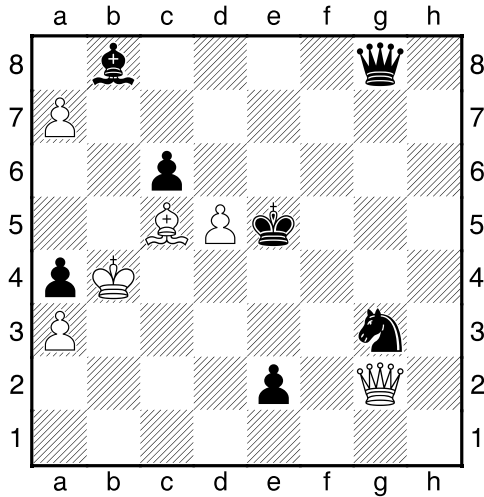
I have read this book before, thirty some years ago, and I was affected then as I am now. I remember another position that excited me deeply. The finish challenged a fundamental truth that I had about chess. It was the first time I had heard of one Troitzky. It would not be the last. I remember setting up the position to show to several friends at different chess tournaments. If you have never seen this before, I believe you, too will be

impressed – and Troitzky has more of them !



1. Bh6+ Kf7 2. Rf5+ Kg6 3. Rg5+ Kf7 4. Rxc8 Kxc8 5. Ke6 Kh8 6. Kf7 e5 7. Bg7 mate

But there was more. Troitzky could make the impossible happen. I remember thumbing through 360 Brilliant and Instructive End Games watching two Bishops of the same color patrolling the chessboard – pure magic.



1. Qxg3+ Qxg3 2. axb8(B)+ [2. axb8(Q)+ Kxd5 3. Qxg8 e1(Q)+ 4. Qxe1 stalemate] 3. Bg3 Ke6 4. Ka5 Kd7 5. Kb6 Kc8 6. Ka7 Kd8 7. Kb8 Kd7 8. Kb7 Kd8 9. Kxc6 Kc8 10. Bcd6 Kd8 11. Bh4+ Kc8 12. Bh2 e1(Q) 13. Bxe1 Kd8 14. Kb7 Ke7 15. Bh4+ Kd7 16. Bg5 Ke6 17. Kc6 Kf7 18. Kb5 Ke6 19. Kxa4 and wins

Yes, the book had a different name back then – 360 Brilliant and Instructive End Games by A. Troitzky with an introduction by Fred Reinfeld published in 1968. So what is different about the book now and what is the same? All the same glory is there now, but Reinfeld had excised seventy-two pages where Troitzky examined the ending of two Knights versus a Pawn. These excised pages thoroughly examine this ending; as Troitzky writes, “This endgame contains no more secrets.” Some improvements in Troitzky’s analysis have been discovered, but Troitzky’s analysis established important practical and theoretical ground. The addition of this section improves the older edition.

But there is a major drawback to Collection of Chess Studies. It is not a drawback to chess players with over twenty years of experience but it is a serious problem to younger players. The book is written in Descriptive Notation (DN). Editor Sloan writes, “A plan for the future will be to convert this work into algebraic notation, rather than the older descriptive notation which is in this book but is no longer used. That will be a huge project for another day.” It should have been a project before republication. I have seen many young chess players frustrated by DN, putting aside classic chess literature because of their lack of chessic bilingualism. It is too bad. The younger generation needs to be exposed to the brilliance that is Troitzky. If you have DN as a second (or first) language, you will enjoy this book.

Quote: Correspondence chess has one great advantage on over-the-board play, in that, normally, you can choose the time and place to work on it. -- Allen Sheldon

CLASSIFIED ADS

LEARN CHESS BY MAIL ! Lessons given by mail, telephone, ICC – many different ways. I specialize in players rated 800-2100 who would like to improve their game. Contact me for information. Alex Dunne, 324 West Lockhart St., Sayre, PA 18840 or alex.dunne@cqservices.com

RATINGS UPDATE

As far as I can determine, there was no progress on implementing the ratings this month. I could very well be mistaken, but I fail to see any progress. Stay tuned for further developments.

TOURNAMENTS I WOULD LIKE TO FILL

All these tournaments need one member to fill – first come, first served!

Swift Quad – 0000-1599
Trophy 0000-1399
John Collins 0000-1399
1600-1799
Express 1600-1999

David Bronstein, who died in December 2006, showed his combinative vision in this wild game, full of fangs and claws.

SEMI-SLAV DEFENSE (D44)

White: Gideon Stahlberg
Black: David Bronstein
Correspondence 1955

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6 5.Bg5 dxc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.Bh4 g5 9.Nxg5 hxg5 10.Bxg5 Nbd7 11.g3 Qa5 12.exf6 b4 13.Ne4 Ba6 14.Qf3 0-0-0 15.Be2 Bb7 16.0-0 Qd5 17.Qg2 Qxd4 18.Rad1 Qxb2 19.Rd2 Qa3 20.Bxc4 Ne5 21.Rxd8+ Kxd8 22.Bb3 c5 23.Rd1+ Kc8 24.f4 c4 25.Qe2 Nf3+ 26.Kf1 Nxe2+ 27.Kg2 cxb3 28.Qc4+ Bc5 29.Qxc5+ Kb8 30.Qd6+ Ka8 31.Qd8+ Rxd8 32.Rxd8+ Bc8 33.Rxc8+ Kb7 34.Nd6+ Ka6 35.Rc6+ Ka5 36.Nc4+ Kb5 37.Nxa3+ Kxc6 38.f5 exf5 39.axb3 bxa3 40.Bc1 a2 41.Bb2 Ng4 42.Kf3 Kb5 0-1

The mark of the master -- A tense middle game, and then Black swaps a few pieces, waves his King, and presto ! All White's Pawns are about to fall.

SICILIAN DEFENSE (B90)

White: Gerald Weiner (2357)

Black: Gino Figlio (2434)

2004 Electronic Knights Final

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Be3 e5 7.Nf3 Be7 8.Bc4 0-0 9.Qd3 Be6 10.0-0 Nc6 11.a3 b5 12.Ba2 Na5 13.Ng5 Bxa2 14.Rxa2 Nc4 15.Bc1 Qc7 16.Nf3 Rac8 17.Nh4 d5 18.exd5 e4 19.Qh3 g6 20.Bg5 Qe5 21.Qg3 Nxd5 22.Qxe5 Nxe5 23.Bxe7 Nxe7 24.Re1 f5 25.Nf3 N5c6 26.Nd2 Nd4 27.f3 Nxc2 28.Re2 Nc6 29.fxe4 N6d4 30.Rf2 Ne1 31.Nf3 Ndx3+ 32.gxf3 Nd3 33.Rf1 fxe4 34.fxe4 Rxf1+ 35.Kxf1 Kf7 36.Nd5 Rc2 37.h4 Ke6 38.Nb4 Nxb4 39.axb4 Rc6 40.Ke2 Ke5 41.Kf3 Rf6+ 0-1

Black's King is the hero of this game, overcoming all in his march to White's baseline.

FRENCH DEFENSE (C18)

White: Brian Stewart (2178) Black:

Louis Tremblay (2136)

2006 Express Tournament

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.bxc3 Ne7 7.Qg4 0-0 8.Bd3 Nbc6 9.Qh5 Ng6 10.Nf3 Qc7 11.Be3 c4 12.Bxg6 fxg6 13.Qg4 Qf7 14.Ng5 Qe8 15.h4 h6 16.Nh3 Ne7 17.Nf4 Rf5 18.Rb1 Rb8 19.0-0 Kh7 20.Rb2 Rf8 21.h5 gxh5 22.Nxh5 Nf5 23.Bd2 Bd7 24.Rfb1 b6 25.Kh2 Qe7 26.Nf4 Qf7 27.Ne2 Ne7 28.Be3 Qf5 29.Qxf5+ Nxf5 30.Bc1 Rf7 31.Ra1 g5 32.a4 Ne7 33.Be3 Rbf8 34.a5 b5 35.a6 Kg6 36.Rab1 h5 37.Rf1 Rb8 38.Ng1 Nf5 39.Bd2 h4 40.Nh3 Ng3 41.Re1 Ne4 42.Rxe4 dxe4 43.Bxg5 Rh7 44.Bf6 Kf5 45.Ng5 Rh5 46.Nf7 Kg4 47.Nd6 h3 48.g3 Kf3 49.Nxc4 Kxf2 50.g4 Rh7 51.Nd6 e3 52.Ne4+ Ke2 53.c4 Rg8 54.Ng5 Rh4 55.cxb5 Rxg4 56.b6 axb6 57.a7 Bc6 58.Kxh3 R8xg5 59.Bxg5 Rxg5 60.d5 exd5 61.Kh4 Rxe5 62.Rxb6 Kd2 0-1