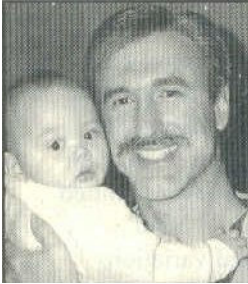




The Check Is in the Mail

November 2006

Stephen Ham
Our newest ICCM
(on the right)



Our newest International Correspondence Chess Master is Stephen Ham. Stephen was born Aug. 27, 1954 and began playing chess around age 8. Due to being raised in rural Minnesota where OTB chess was scarce, he began playing CC around age 12. After Steve's first forays into CC his conservative style evolved into a more aggressive stance, trying to force errors from his opponent by incisive play. Hundreds of speed games played during lunch breaks with the Minnesota State chess champion further honed his game. His return to CC in the 1993 Absolute Championship where he finished with an even score bolstered his confidence. He took his more active style to finish second, though rated last, in the 1994 USCF Absolute championship only half a point behind the winner. Stephen then decided to concentrate more on

international play. He won a 7-man ICCF tourney in '97, played 4th board in North America vs. South America match, and now has gained his ICCM and SIM title in his last two tournaments. Congratulations, Stephen!

GAME OF THE MONTH

Steve annotates in depth a game previously published in Chess Today.

Dutch Defense (A80)

White: Steve Ham (2497)

Black: Manfred Wallinger (2464)

ICCF 2004

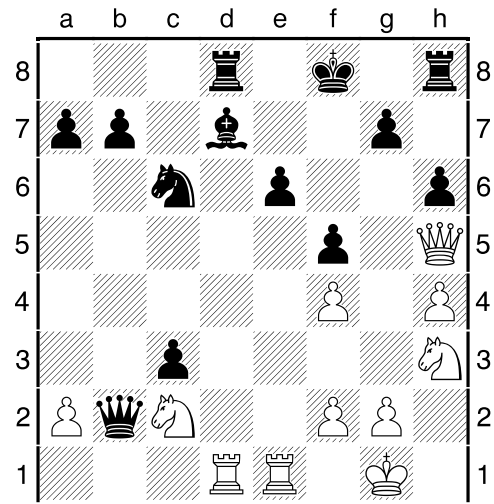
1.d4 f5 The Dutch Defense is one that players either believe in strongly or consider dubious. I'm in the latter camp. Tigran Petrosian once stated, "If your opponent wants to play the Dutch, then don't talk him out of it!" That said, even Botvinnik played it when young, although later abandoning it. As I see matters, those willing to play the Dutch should also play it in "reverse" via 1. f4 (Bird's Opening) as White. But if that system still looks dubious (and maybe it should!), then why would one accept playing Bird's Opening with a tempo loss (the Dutch)? That's my oversimplified "big picture" perspective regarding this system. Still, I've done my homework on the details and still find the Dutch Defense lacking. **2.Bg5** White can play for an opening advantage in several ways, including playing into main lines via 2. g3 and 3. Bg2. But, those who play the Dutch Defense do so because they're satisfied with the positions resulting from these main lines. Therefore, I try to leave the main lines whenever equally attractive side lines are available. My assumption is that Black has spent less time investigating these side lines, and is hence likely to be less prepared for the resulting positions. Also 2. Bg5 leads to positions with different tactical and strategic motifs than Black obtains in main lines. So what knowledge that Black has accumulated regarding the Dutch motifs will be of little value here. Both 2. Bg5 and 2. Nc3 lead to positions where I think White gains an edge. In fact, both moves often transpose, although some unique lines exist. I've played 2. Bg5 for the past 25 years with great success. Therefore, I see no reason to change now. As such, it's possible that I'm better prepared for the resulting positions than my opponent. **2...h6** Several

options are available to Black, such as 2...d5, 2...g6, and 2...Nf6, 2...c6 and even 2...Nc6. Many of these lines transpose and several of these will transpose into the game. My opinion is that 2...h6 is best in principle, forcing White to immediately determine the fate of his dark-squared Bishop. **3.Bf4** I think that both 3. Bf4 and 3. Bh4 lead to a White edge, with the latter probably being stronger. However, I was influenced by a fine report by Leon Pliester in New In Chess Yearbook 72, where he advocated playing the less popular 3. Bf4. Although White can lose a tempo in this line, he's also better able to exploit the hole that just now appeared on g6. Again, the fact that this line is less common suits my desire to remove Black from all lines that he is prepared for. **3...Nf6 4.Nc3 d5** Black has options such as 4...e6 5. e3 Bb4 6. Ne2 and 4...d6 5. e4 (5. e3!?) fxe4 6. Nxe4 e5 (6...Nxe4?! 7. Qh5+ Kd7 8. Qf5+ e6 9. Qxc4, when White has a clear advantage, Ward-Hansen, Port Erin 1994) 7. Qe2 Nc6 8. 000. In both cases, White retains an edge. Instead, the text move seems the strongest. It thus transposes to lines also reached via 2. Nc3 d5 3. Bg5 h6 4. Bf4 Nf6 and 2. Bg5 d5 3. Nc3 h6 4. Bf4 Nf6. **5.e3 e6** Black can also play 5...c6 6. Nf3!? Rg8 7. h4 g6 8. Ne5 Nbd7 9. Nxd7 (9. Bd3 and 9. Be2 also have their merits) 9...Nbx7 10. Qd2 (10. Qf3!?) Nf6 11. Be2 Be6 12. 000 Bf7 13. f3 when White has an advantage thanks to Black's pieces being constrained by his own Pawn structure. **6.Be2** Both 6. Nf3 Bd6 7. Ne5 (7. Bd3!?) 00 8. Nb5 (8. Ng6!?) and 6. Bd3 lead to positions where I prefer White. However, the tactical motifs in these lines differ from the one I had in mind, which specifically was to exploit the hole on g6 with a subsequent Bh5+ **6...Bd6** Black also has 6...Bb4 Bh5+ Kf8 8. h4 and 6...g6 7. Nf3 when White has some advantage due to superior development and the placement of Black's King in the center. **7.Bh5+ Kf8** The alternative is 7...Ke7?! 8. Be2 (8. Bg6? seems natural, by after 8...Bxf4 9. exf4 h5 10. Nf3 Rh6 11. Ne5 Ne6 favors Black) 8..., g5 9. Bg3 Nbd7 10. Nf3 when White enjoys a clear advantage due to the defects in Black's kingside Pawns and inferior development. Black's light-squared Bishop probably represents a long term liability, making development of his Queen Rook problematic. **8.h4?!** This is the tactic that I had prepared from the start. White prevents ...g5 and creates options of prying open Black's kingside Pawn wall. However, in hindsight, I now think that White should play 8. Be2 g5 9. Bg3 Kg7 10. Nf3 Bd7 11. ne5 (11. a3!?) to retain his edge. Instead, it feels natural to occupy

Black's weak spot with 8. Bg6?. but after 8...Bxf4 9. exf4 h5 10. Nf4 Rh6 11. Ne5 c5 (11...Nc6!?) 12. dxc5 Nxc5 White loses material. **8...Bxf4** This move is best. During the game I thought that Black shouldn't allow White to open the e-file since I didn't see Black's subsequent fine defense. So I expected 8...c5?! 9. Bxd6! (9. dxc5 Bxf4 10. exf4 transposes back to the game line) 9...Qxd6 10. Be2 (10. Bg6? again allows Black to trap the Bishop after 10...h5) 10...Nc6 11. Nf3 with a very slight edge due to Black having to relocate his King to safety in order to develop his King's Rook and his weak light-squared Bishop. **9.exf4 c5** Black again finds the best defense. Instead, 9...Qd6 10. Be2 c5 (10...Q!xf4? 11. Nb5 a6 [11...Na6?? 12. Nh3 Qe4 13. Kf1 traps the Queen.] 12. Nh3 Qe4 13. Nxc7 Ra7 14. Qd2 Qxg2 [14...b5?? 15. Nf4 Rxc7 16. c3 Ng4 17. 00 (17. Kf1!?) again traps Black's Queen.] 15. 000 leads to a vicious White attack. Black must also beware 14...Kf7? 15. Nf4 Nc6 [15...b5?? 16. Nxb5 axb5 17. f3 wins Black's Queen] 16. c3 [White again threatens 17. f3] 17...e5 18. dxe5 Qxe5 18. Nxd5 Nxd5 19. Nxd5 Re8 20. f4 Qe4 21. Kf2! when White will centralize his Rooks en route to a victorious attack.) 11. Nb5 Qb6 12. dxc5 Qxc5 13. Qd4 (13. Nf3!?! Nc6 14. 00 and 14. c3 both give White a slight advantage). Now the options are: 1) 13...Qxc2? 14. Bd3 Qc6 15. Nf3, when White has a clear advantage due to superior development and the ability to exploit the open c-file. 2) 13...Qxd4 14. Nxd4 Bd7 15. Ngf3, when White has an edge due to superior development. Black's light squared Bishop remains confined by his own Pawns, and it will cost Black time to relocate his King to extract his King Rook. 3) 13...Nbd7 14. Nf3 (14. Qxc5+ Nxc5 15. Nf3 also generates a White edge) 14...Qxc2 15. Bd3 Qc5 16. Ke2 when White has more than sufficient compensation for the c-Pawn. **10.dxc5** White has several options here. But again, White must not fall for 10. Bg6?? h5 when the Bishop is again trapped. Instead, White can regain the light-squared Bishop after 10. Be2, but this involves a loss of precious time after 10...cxd4 11. Qxd4 Nc6 allowing Black fairly easy equality. Nonetheless, Black is objectively equal after the text move too, but must work much harder to prove it. **10...Qc7** The text move seems best. Instead 10...Nc6 11. Be2 Qa5 (11...d4!?) 12. Nf3 Qxc5 13. Ne5 Nxe5 14. fxe5 Nd7 *14...Ne4 15. Nxe4 fxe4 16. c3!?! Bd7 17. f3 Ke7 18. Qd4 Rac8 19. 000 Qxd4 20. Rxd4 creates a White edge) 15. f4 Qb4 16. Qd2 Qxb2 17. Rb1 Qa3 18. Nb5 Qe7 (18...Qc5 19. Nd6

Nb6 20. Rb3 [20. c4!? dxc4 21. 00 is a White advantage] 21. Rf3 Rb8 22. Rd1 represents a White edge due to Black's inactive pieces and Pawn weaknesses. Instead 10...Qa5 11. Be2 Qxc5 12. Nf3 Nc6 and 11 ...Nc6 12. Nf3 Qxc5 both transpose to the 10...Nc6 lines. **11.Nh3** The only reasonable alternatives here are 11. Bf3 Qxf4 12. Nge2 Qc7 (12...Qc4!?) and 11. Be2 Qxf4 12. Nh3 Qb4 13. Qd2. In both lines, complex play results, but I couldn't find any advantage for White. But after the text move, I incorrectly thought I might hold a microscopic edge by maintaining my f4 Pawn. One of the complex features of chess is that it's not enough to calculate correctly. One must also assess the position accurately too. **11...d4 12.Nb1 Nxb5** Black elects to remove my dangerous Bishop. Still he had a viable alternative via immediately grabbing the Pawn. After 12...Qxc5!? 12. Bf3 Qb4+!? (13...Kf7!? seems safest and equalizes) 14. Nd2 Qxb2 15. 00 Nc6 16. Nc4 Qb5 (16...QB4 17. Ne5 gives White an edge) 17. Qd3 Kg8 18. Bxc6 (18. Ne5 Qxd3 19. cxd3 =) 18...bxc6 19. Qxd4 c5 (both 19...Ba6 20. Nd6 and 19...Kh7 20. Ne5 give White an edge) 20. a4 Qb4 21. c3 cxd4 22. cxb4 is totally unclear to me. **13.Qxh5 Qxc5 14.0-0** White can head for a Queen exchange via 14. c3!? Qb5 (Black prevents 15. 00. A reasonable alternative is 14...Nc6). 15. Qe2 Qxe2+ 16. Kxe2 Nc6 17. Rd1 b6 18. cxd4 Ba6+ but the position is probably equal, with minimal winning opportunities for White. Instead I perceived greater dynamic opportunities for White by castling to safety and aiming for rapid development. **14...Nc6 15.Na3** White had several options here, but I already saw tactical opportunities including the line that later won the game. The key is rapid development based upon making a target of Black's Queen. A less exact option is 15. Rc1 (15. c3!? 15. Nd2!?) 15...Qb4 16. Na3 Bd7 (16...Qxb2? 17. Nc4 Qb4 18. Ne5 Nxe5 19. fxe5 Bd7 20. Nf4 gives White an edge) 17. Rab1 Kg8 18. c3 when matters are unclear. **15...Bd7** Again, Black plays with the utmost precision, also preferring development. Instead 15...b5?! 16. Rad1 Kg8 17. Rfe1 (17. c3!?) b4 18. Nb2 Bd7 19. Qe2 Kh7 20. Qd3 Qd5 (20...Rad8!?) 21. Qb3 Qxb3 22. axb3 Rad8 23. Nd2 d3 24. c4 Bc8! 25. Re3 Nd4 26. Kf1 Nc2 27. Re5! is extremely messy. Still, the awkward position of Black's pieces and Pawns create some opportunities for White. For example, 27...Rhe8!? 28. Ng1 Bb7 29. Ra5 Re7 30. Ngf3 Nd4 31. Ne5 favors White. **16.Rfe1 Rd8** Black continues to develop. He would like to transfer

his King to h7 in order to free his Rook. But doing so immediately leads to a disaster. For example, 16...Kg8 17. Rad1 Kh7?? 18. Ng5+ Kg8 19. Qf7 checkmate. Instead 17...Rd8 18. Rd3 Qd5 19. Rb3 b6 20. Qc2 Kh7 21. Nc4 Rc8 22. Nd2 Rc7?! 23. Nf3 Rhc8 24. c4! Qc5 25. Nfg5 Kh8 (25...Kg8? [25...hxg5?? 26. Qh5+ Kg8 27. Nxe6 gives White a clear advantage) 26. Nxe6 Bxe6 27. Qxe6 Na5 28. Rb4 Qxc4 29. Qxf5 gives White an edge. Black can improve though with 22...Rhd8 23. Nf3 Be8! planning ...Bf7 with an unclear position. Also 21...Rhe8!? was playable, also creating an unclear position. **17.Rad1 Qb4** Wallinger recommended 17...Qe7!? as best after the game, returning the Queen to the defense of his King. Nonetheless, I prefer White after 18. Nc4 Be8 19. Qe2 since Black's King Rook remains inactive. Instead 17...Kg8 transposes to the wild 16...Kg8 17. Rad1 Rd8 line. **18.c3** This move is a "sucker" punch, inviting Black to err with a Pawn grab. Black's last move threatened White's b-Pawn. But protecting that Pawn via 18. Rb1?! Kg8 19. Qe2 Kh7 20. Nc4 gives Black safe equality. Instead, the text move relies upon White's superior development to create great complications in which Black has the opportunity to lose. **18...dxc3** Again Black displays precision. Instead 18...Qxb2?? 19. Ng5 g6 20. Qxg6 hxg5 21. Nc4 Qxa2 22. Rxd4 gxf4 23. Nd6 wins immediately. **19.Nc2!** I tried hard to make the natural looking 19. Ng5 work. But after 19...g6 20. Qxg6 hxg5 21. Qf6+ Kg8 22. Qg6+ Kf8 the position repeats. Then I noticed that if Black's Queen can be deflected, then there are opportunities for victory. **19...Qxb2??**



After playing virtually perfect defense so far, Black finally errs, electing the worst of the four candidate moves available. However, my winning tactic is difficult to see. The best defense is 19...Qe7! (similar to Wallinger's recommendation on the 17th move) 20. bxc3 (now 20.. Ng5?? g6 wins for Black) 20...Be8 21. Rxd8 Nxd8 22. Qe2 Qxh5 23. Qe5 (23. Nd4!?) when the position remains unclear. Another deflection is 19...Qa5? 20. Ng5 g6 21. Qxg6 hxg5 22. b4! when Black has four alternatives: 1) 22...Qxa2? 23. Nd4 Nxd4 24. Qf6+ wins, 2) 22. ...Nxb4? 23. Rxe6! Bxe6 24. Qf6+ wins. 3) 22...Qb6 23. Qf6+ Kg8 24. b5! Ne7 (24...Qxb5? 25. Nd4 Qa5 26. Nxc6 bxc6 27. Qg6+ Kf8 28. Rxe6 Bxe6 29. Qf6+ wins) 25. Qxe7 Rh7 26. Qxg5+ Rg7 27. Qf6 Rf8 28. Qe5 with a clear White advantage, 4) 22...Qc7 23. b5 Ne7 (23...Na5? 24. Nd4 and 24. Qf6+ Kg8 25. Rxe6 both win for White) 24. Qf6+ Kg8 25. Qxe7 Rh7 26. Qxg5+ Rg7 27. Qf6 Rf8 28. Qe5 with a clear White advantage. A similar Queen deflection is 19...Qc5? 20. Ng5 Qe7 (20...g6? 21. Rxd7! Rxd7 [21...gxh5 22. Nxe6+ wins] 22. Nxe6+ Kf7 23. Nxc5 gxh5 24. Nxd7 wins) 21. Rxd7 Rxd7 25. Rxe6 cxb2 23. Na3! g6 (23...Qd8? 24. Rxc6! Qe8 25. Ne6+ wins for White) 24. Qxg6 bxc5 25. Rf6+ Qf7 26. Rxf7 Rxf7 27. Qd6+ Kg7 28. hxg5 Rd8 29. Qh6+ Kg8 30. Qg6+ Kf8 31. Qh5 gives White a clear advantage. **20.Ng5** Thanks to the Queen deflection with 19. Nc2! the Ng5 motif that didn't work just one move earlier now proves deadly. **20...g6** Black also loses after 20...hxg5 21. Qxh8+ Kf7 22. Qh5 Kg8 (22...Kf8 23. Nd4 wins) 23. hxg5 **21.Qxg6 hxg5 22.h5!** Black resigned due to 22...Rg8 (22...Qxc2 23. h6 Rg8 24. Qf6+ Ke8 25. h7) 23. Qf6+ Ke8 24. h6 Rf8 25. Qg6+ Ke7 26. h7. So my ill-timed Pawn push on the 8th move set up the decisive blow at the end. **1-0**

CALL FOR MINIS

It is almost that time of year again –the annual miniature column. If you have an interesting, exciting, or unusual game of twenty moves or under, please send it to me now for possible inclusion in my annual miniature column.

October Tournament Winners

Trophy Quads

Joe Plesha	04QD18	5 ½-½
LaVerne Gildner	05Q23	5-1

Swift Quads

Daniel Duke	05SQ21	6-0
-------------	--------	-----

John Collins Tournament

Marin Gonzalez	05CD28	6-0
John Steele	04CA34	4½ -1½
Robert Thunelius	04CB15	5-1
Philip DeAugustino	04CB15	5-1
Frank Spooner	04CB42	4-2
Franklin Castle	05CD18	5-1
Philip Kelsey	04CB17	5 ½-½
Thomas Delehantly	05CM01	4-2
Brian Stewart	05CM19	5-1
Michael Daniel	04CC35	5-1

Walter Muir eQuad

Randy Rowell	06W08	6-0
Joe Hoffmann	06W10	6-0

Express Tournament

John Ward	04ET04	6-0
Robert Cross	06ET01	5 ½-½

Quote:

I am tired of getting postcards with checks on them. - John Phythyon

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

Here is an example of our new World Champion's play as he defeats one of his nearest rivals in the Finals.

ENGLISH OPENING (A16)

White: Christophe Leotard (2655)

Black: A. Gozman (2590)

19 World Championship, 2004

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5
5.Qa4+ Bd7 6.Qd4 Nf6 7.Qc4 Bg7 8.e4 0-0
9.e5 Ng4 10.d4 Be6 11.d5 Bf5 12.Bf4 Nd7
13.Qe2 f6 14.e6 Nde5 15.Rd1 Qd6 16.Nd4
Nd3+ 17.Rxd3 Qxf4 18.Rd2 Nh6 19.g3 Qe5
20.h3 g5 21.g4 Bg6 22.Qxe5 fxe5 23.Nde2
Kh8 24.Bg2 Ng8 25.Be4 Nf6 26.Bxg6 hxg6
27.h4 gxh4 28.Rxh4+ Kg8 29.g5 Nh7
30.Ne4 Rfd8 31.Rh3 c6 32.dxc6 Rxd2
33.Kxd2 bxc6 34.Rc3 Rc8 35.Ra3 Nf8
36.Rxa7 Nxe6 37.Rxe7 Nf4 38.Nxf4 exf4
39.b3 Kf8 40.Rb7 Be5 41.a4 Rd8+ 42.Ke2
1-0

White's methodical play features some mad Knights against empty Bishops

ENGLISH OPENING (A13)

White: James Ellis (1752)

Black: Freddie Burklow (1740)

2005 Golden Knights, 2006

1.c4 e6 2.Nc3 c5 3.e4 Nc6 4.g3 Nge7
5.Bg2 d6 6.Nge2 Ne5 7.d3 N7c6 8.f4
Ng6 9.0-0 Be7 10.Be3 0-0 11.Qd2 Rb8
12.b3 e5 13.f5 Nh8 14.Nd5 f6 15.a3 Nd4
16.Rfb1 b6 17.b4 Nf7 18.b5 Ng5 19.Kf2
Bb7 20.Nec3 Qe8 21.h4 Nf7 22.a4 Bd8
23.Bf3 Nxf3 24.Kxf3 Nh8 25.g4 Bc8
26.Qg2 g5 27.hxg5 fxg5 28.Qd2 Nf7
29.Rh1 Kg7 30.Qh2 Rh8 31.Bd2 h6
32.Ne3 Rh7 33.Ncd5 Nh8 34.Qh5 Qf7
35.a5 bxa5 36.Bxa5 Qd7 37.Bxd8 Qxd8
38.Rxa7+ Rb7 39.Rxb7+ Bxb7 40.Ra1
Qb8 41.b6 Nf7 42.f6+ Kh8 43.Ne7 Qd8
44.N3f5 1-0

The play of these two swashbucklers reminds me of a Jackie Chan movie – they both do their own stunts.

KING'S GAMBIT (C34)

White: Dean Barclay (2114)

Black: Brian Stewart (2232)

Walter Muir eQuad, 2006

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.Nf3 d6 4.Bc4 Nf6
5.d3 Nc6 6.Bxf4 Na5 7.Bb3 Nxb3
8.axb3 Be7 9.0-0 0-0 10.Nc3 a6 11.Qe1
Re8 12.Bg5 c6 13.Qg3 h6 14.Be3 d5
15.Bd4 Bd6 16.e5 Bc7 17.Na4 Ng4
18.h3 Nf6 19.Nh4 Nh7 20.Rxf7
Kxf7 21.e6+ Rxe6 22.Qxg7+ Ke8
23.Ng6 Qd6 24.Qxh7 b6 25.Qh8+ Kd7
26.Nf8+ Ke7 27.Nxe6 Qh2+ 28.Kf1
Bxe6 29.Qxa8 c5 30.Bf2 Be5 31.Nc3
Qh1+ 32.Bg1 Bd4 33.Ne2 Bxg1
34.Qb7+ Kf6 35.Nxg1 Qh2 36.Qxb6
Qf4+ 37.Nf3 a5 38.Re1 Qf5 39.Qxe6+
1-0

CORRESPONDENCE CHESS RATED EVENTS

Postal events you can enter:

2006 Golden Knights

Correspondence chess match

Trophy Quads

Victor Palciauskas Prize Tournament

John Collins Memorial Tournament

eMail Events Available:

2006 Electronic Knights

Lightning Match

Swift Quads

Walter Muir eQuad

Express Tournament