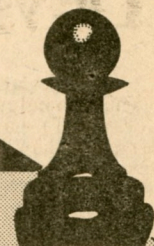


CHESS BARBS



White to move and win

by Jude Acers, US Senior Master

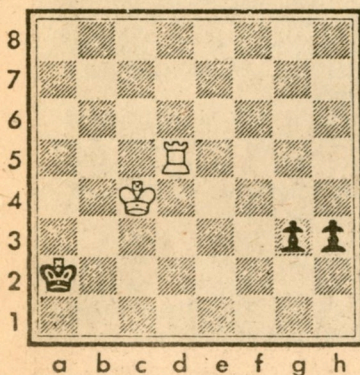


DIAGRAM: White to move and win. The passed pawns of Black are knocking on the door and White must work out a first-rate plan to stop them. Experts and masters, 30 minutes; amateurs, one hour. Don't touch the pieces; work out every theme and learn a great deal. Yes, it can be done! Remember, use your mind, not your fingers. . .

NEWS: Despite great excitement throughout the chess world when Fischer and Spassky had their last showdown in Iceland, there is no real change in the absurd prize funds and poorly organized player selection of professional chess tournaments. The international chess tournament in Houston, Texas that began on December 6 and finished on December 20 last year illustrates the typical idiocy of both local and international chess organizers.

Notwithstanding the most herculean efforts of Ms. Lynn Babcock and the Houston Chess Club to produce a first-rate international opportunity tournament that will qualify our top young chess masters for international titles, everything is bananas.

Let's start with the home-town heroes of Texas and the

Southern United States. Where are they in the tournament? The answer is they are not. Yes, because of the grandmaster crazy, "big name" mania of people like Ed Edmondson of the US Chess Federation, not one place in the tournament was accorded to living legends like Milan Momic (Alabama), John Hall (Dallas, Texas), John Jacobs (Texas) or Adrian L. McAuley (Louisiana). So what do the people of Houston, Texas yes, the chess amateurs of the southern and southwestern United States have in common with that event? Nothing, period. A bunch of foreigners, who fly in like the gods they are not.

The gate attraction of watching John Hall or Milan Momic kill many top players is not to be underestimated. The press coverage would be greatly helped with a home-town boy playing the big boys. But no, their presence in the lineup would, to use Edmondson's words, "cheapen our tournament." Ha, ha. What a joke. Edmondson can give you a hundred reasons. None apply.

And just who are McAuley, Momic, Hall, Jacobs? They are people who have scored against grandmasters and international masters dozens of times, that's who. Shhhhh! Forget about it. What a joke.

First prize for the tournament is only \$1,000. Period. This comes at a time when our United States Chess Federation has allocated \$100,000 for a computer rating system, another \$100,000 for a new building, new address, total relocation. Just brilliant. As Fischer has said repeatedly, it is better to spend the money on players rather than banks and buildings. If the United States Chess Federation must be run from a shed

in the Florida swamp, then so be it. Without the international horses, with no grass roots publicity and forsaking regular city versus city team match-blood rivalry, there will never be progress in American chess.

One world champion is USCF's monument. They intend to go to their graves with that one-liner for their tombstone. I would like to remind you that our US Champion received less than \$3,000 for his title. (???)

Because there is no other place to play, no other choice, several great young masters are playing for peanuts, no glory and future starvation in Houston, Texas. They are Kim Commons of Los Angeles (2417), John Grefe of Berkeley (2464), Craig Chellstorp of Chicago (2416), William Martz of Hartland, Wisconsin (2392) and Sal Matera of Brooklyn (2402). There is a word for this. It's "disaster."

These players need only an even score to qualify once for the international master title, the calling card needed to get into international tournaments. They need 5-1/2 - 5-1/2 and will play 11 games in search of it. Nevertheless, even if these players secure the title, the European tourneys are not willing to shell out the money to import these US players for the biggie events. With 200 grand for nothing already shelled out, neither will USCF. Brilliant, huh?

In the end, Commons, Grefe, Karklins, Martz, Chellstorp will do what is necessary to survive: leave professional chess.

Norman Weinstein was the first American "opportunity" player to score big, winning the Chicago International (1973) ahead of a tough field. He "told

me like it is" during an interview with the Christian Science Monitor: "I don't intend to keep this up forever unless the rewards are more immediate. I'll give professional chess a try for awhile, but if winning tourneys doesn't provide a living I'm getting out." You tell 'em, Norm!

I got out in 1970. I saw an incredible situation. Grefe, Tarjan, Addison and Vuckevich were staying home while Dr. Anthony Saigy attended many international chess tournaments! This was solely because Saigy's financial means allowed him to pay all of his own expenses. Believe me, the USCF loves Saigy! Because they had no money, players universally regarded as stronger than Dr. Saigy, even rated above Saigy, had to stay home! This would never happen in the Soviet Union. Only in America. . .

Yes, I got out in 1970. I have absolutely no regrets. Fortunately for the USCF, there is a sucker born every minute.

Two final notes on the Houston tournament. The top grandmasters are Huebner of West Germany, Damjanovic and Matanovic from Yugoslavia. They are concerned with winning the tournament and have nothing else in mind. The other players are occupied with securing the "norm" required for their titles and have nothing else in mind. Our international masters in the event are Julio Kaplan and Edmar Mednis of New York. They need a 7-1/2 - 3-1/2 score to qualify for the grandmaster tourney. First prize means nothing.

It's that title that will secure plane tickets overseas, as Norman Weinstein will certainly tell anyone who will listen. It's all nonsense, believe me. I can name 20 grandmasters who

would have no chance against Vuckevich or Addison or Tarjan or Grefe in a 20-game match.

The most horrible problem faced by Ed Edmondson of the USCF is that there is no contract system by which the world's leading players can be signed to a chess tournament six months in advance. This is an absolute must for publicity. Instead, the organizers rush crazily to telephone at the midnight hour, stealing one player from a European team tournament, praying that a biggie tournament will collapse so they can get the "names" without having to pay cash guarantees for them. It harms both players and the organizers. Players need cash badly between tournaments. This could be the only way to get it.

Will professional chess make it in America? Not unless Edmondson wises up, and very pronto, too. He is an organizational genius, but we cannot afford to wait. Spending \$200,000 on a computer system and a new building equals a mere castle of sand. There will be no soldiers to guard it. Along will come the tide. I will tell you that I told you so. My back pages. . .

Mr. Edmondson is the J. Edgar Hoover of the United States Chess Federation. Now you know why I do not have to telephone.

SOLUTION TO DIAGRAM: White wins by 1 Rd5-d2ch Ka2-b1 (If 1... Kd1, then 2 Kb3 and mate) 2 Kc4-c3 Kb1-c1! (Not 2... Ph3-h2? 3 Rd2-d1ch Kb1-a2 4 Rd1-h1!, winning) 3 Rd2-a2 Kc1-d1! (Else 3... Kc1-b1 4 Ra2-e2 wins) 4 Kc3-d3 Kd1-cl 5 Kd3-e3 Ph3-h2 6 Ra2-a1ch Kc1-b2 7 Ra1-h1 Kb2-c3 8 Ke3-f3, and all pawns fall. The side variants employ all the themes illustrated. Analysis by Shapiro in 1920.