

FURNESS ON CHESS

The second part of the late Richard Furness's reminiscences of his life in chess. Part one appeared in the May issue. Games annotations are by John Saunders.

FOR ENGLAND, TONY AND ST GEORGE

Flags have always appealed to me and early in the Benedictine days I began to display them beside the boards of as many games as possible. I felt that emphasising the international nature of the event would impress the sponsors and encourage them to continue their support. They also added colour for photographic interest. Usually the Lord Mayor of Manchester would open the proceedings and on one occasion he was accompanied by his wife. As we surveyed the scene soon after the start, the Lord Mayor's wife said to me, "You have a lot of Swiss players" I was puzzled since we had none. She pointed to a flag with a cross on it. I responded by telling her that was the flag of England. Now she was puzzled. "But it isn't the Union Jack" she replied. I explained to her that the Cross of St George was the flag of England. She remained bewildered.

The use of the English flag was much appreciated by our first grandmaster Tony Miles. He told me that at most international events whilst Irish, Welsh and Scottish players were generally given their own national flag, he was invariably given the Union Jack. When, a day or two later, he attended our prize-giving as a guest, I presented him with the English flag for him to take with him and use at events where he was given the other.

Prior to the start of one "Benedictine" a player came up to me holding the Canadian flag which he had found beside his board. "Can I have the flag of Quebec instead of this one?" I realised the French connection with that one Canadian province. Suddenly I had an idea. "Is Quebec a member of

FIDE?" I asked. He shook his head, so I was able to say he would have to have the Canadian flag. Dejectedly, he returned to his seat, placed the flag beside him and lowered it to half-mast.

Years later whilst I was the organiser of the prestigious Oakham Young Masters tournaments, two Romanians came to me holding their flag. The three vertical stripes were correct but the yellow section down the centre bore an emblem relating to Ceausecu, who had just been overthrown. They asked if they could have scissors to cut that bit out. Instead I agreed to cover the central strip with yellow card and they were satisfied.

LUNCH WITH THE KGB

Although the Benedictine events ended over 20 years ago, I still have many memories of them. In an attempt to get a leading Soviet player, my good friend from Martini and Rossi who handled the promotion of Benedictine in Britain arranged for us to visit the Soviet Embassy to put our case. We were received by the First Secretary. We were unsuccessful but tried again the next year when we were greeted as old friends. After the bear hugs it was a toast to HM The Queen and then to President Brezhnev. We took the First Secretary for lunch at a West End restaurant. This time we did get a Soviet player but not one of the high-standing ones we had hoped. About a year later I watched a documentary on BBC TV which exposed the Head of the KGB in the United Kingdom. Yes, it was my friend, the First Secretary. Imagine, from Miss United Kingdom to the Head of the KGB in four years. Unfortunately I received no bear hugs from the former.

ARISE, SIR RICHARD

My involvement with Benedictine brought a great surprise in 1981 when my wife and I were invited to spend a few days in the Renaissance splendour of the Benedictine Palace at Fecamp in Normandy. I had been led to believe the purpose of the visit was to meet Bruno le Grand, the managing director of the family firm, in order to consolidate the place of chess in the international promotion of their liqueur. This turned out to be a carefully planned cover for the real purpose of the visit. After presenting Bruno with an elaborate chess set in the style of Louis XIV and his Court, the tables were turned and a number of people in long purple robes came into the room and a proclamation was read out. Before I could recover from the surprise I found myself standing in front of an ancient charter and taking the Oath of Allegiance. The Grand Chancellor then invested me with the insignia of a Chevalier of the Grand Brotherhood and I became a Benedictine Knight.

Benedictine International 1981

□ Nigel Davies

■ Klaus Berg

French Exchange C10

1 d4 e6 2 e4 d5 3 ♖c3 dxe4 4 ♗xe4 ♗d7
5 ♗f3 ♗gf6 6 ♙d3 b6 7 ♗xf6+ ♗xf6 8
♗e5 a6?

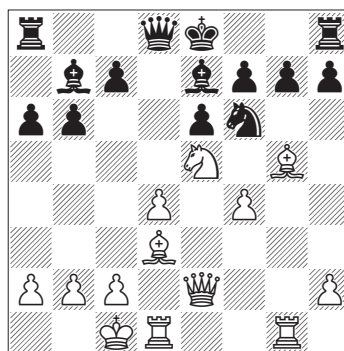
There is no necessity to delay 8...♙b7 since if White then continues with 9 ♙b5+ Black plays 9...c6! and White is unwise to capture on c6. If 10 ♙xc6+? ♙xc6 11 ♗xc6 ♗d5 12 ♗f3 ♗xf3 13 gxf3 ♗c8 14 ♗xa7 ♗xc2 and Black has major compensation for the pawn, while 10 ♗xc6 ♗d5 11 c4 ♗xg2 12 ♗e5+ ♗d8 13 ♗f1 ♙b4+ should also turn out in Black's favour.

9 ♙g5 ♙b7 10 ♗e2! ♙xg2?

White was offering two pawn sacrifices but Black should not have accepted either. If 10...♗xd4? 11 0-0-0 ♗a4 12 ♙c4 and White has some big threats. The right plan was to

develop with 10...♙e7 although White is still better.

11 ♗g1 ♙b7 12 0-0-0 ♙e7 13 f4



13...g6

The best of a bad job. Black's king cannot hide anywhere. If 13...0-0 14 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 15 ♗h5 g6 and now 16 ♗xg6 is both crushing and obvious. And, if he tries to castle queenside, he would first have to do something about the vulnerable a6 pawn.

14 f5! ♗d5?

If 14...gxf5 White continues 15 ♙xf5! because, if 15...exf5? 16 ♙xf6 and 16...♙xf6 allows 17 ♗c6+ and Black loses his queen for two bishops. But the text move allows a crisp finish.

15 ♗xf7 ♙xf7

Falling on his sword.

16 ♗xe6+ ♙e8

The most attractive finish is 16...♙g7 17 ♙h6+! ♙xh6 18 ♗xg6+! ♙h5 19 ♗e2+ and mate next move.

17 fxg6 ♗d6 18 g7! ♗xe6 19 gxh8 ♗+
1-0

CONTROLLER OR ARBITER?

In the earlier days of my chess activities we did not have arbiters. Instead we were controllers and the interpretation of rules varied a good deal from one part of the country to another. This caused many incidents where a controller in the North-West might interpret a law a little differently from

one from the South. Gradually we all came together, this being helped by the mixing of arbiters from various parts of the country at events such as the British Championship or Hastings. The formation of the Chess Arbiters' Association also played its part.

What are the differences between the terms "controller" and "arbiter"? My dictionary says; "controller: a person or thing that controls". I suppose if the decision has gone against you, then the use of the word "thing" is appropriate. Definitions of arbiter include "one who has absolute control", "an arbitrator in a dispute" and simply "a judge". Probably the latter comes closest to reality. Doubtless some players would quite reasonably consider one of the definitions of the related adjective "arbitrary", namely "not bound by the rules, random choice, despotic, capricious" to be more appropriate.

Arbiters are not always correct. We simply do our best. My most recent error occurred in the Crewe Bentley Congress in February 2003. Mark Hebden was in the closing stages of a quickplay finish. He had several minutes remaining; his opponent had 25 seconds. The opponent claimed a draw on the grounds Mark was making no progress. I immediately rejected the claim, restarted the clock and said "play on." Mark demanded extra time be added to his clock. I refused, believing the time taken to adjust the digital clock would benefit the player whose claim I had rejected. Mark's opponent resigned about four moves later. My waiving of the rule could be said to have been justified by the precise nature of the game and its quick outcome, but Mark was correct in stating that if such a claim is rejected rather than a decision deferred, then time should be added to the opponent's clock.

The 1990s was my busiest period of chess activity with between 15 and 20 events a year, a number of them such as Hastings, Oakham, the British, Monarch Assurance and the Owens Corning tournament at Wrexham being lengthy competitions. This

has meant thousands of games, and yet there were very few problems or disputes; a tribute to the fairness and honesty of players and to the integrity of the arbiters. The incidents I remember tend to be the amusing ones.

GOOFING AROUND

One of the characters at the Hastings International Congress was the elderly Russian grandmaster Eddie Gufeld. As he moved around the playing hall it was always easy to recognise where he was by the rustling of the bags he carried which contained varied items of East European chess goods he was seeking to sell. On one occasion his opponent Tony Kosten claimed a draw by repetition, the sequence of moves being quite lengthy. Eddie refused to help in the reconstruction simply saying, "You the arbiter". The claim was upheld. I think Eddie knew that that was going to be the outcome. In another round he lost on time in a winning position. Thereafter, every time we passed each other he would mutter, "I unluckiest Russian in England. All my life I unlucky".

Lloyds Bank Masters 1994

□ David Norwood

■ Eduard Gufeld

King's Fianchetto A03

1 g3 g6 2 ♖g2 ♖g7 3 f4 d5 4 ♗f3 ♗d7 5 0-0 e5 6 fxe5 ♗xe5 7 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 8 d4 ♖g7 9 ♗c3 c6 10 e4!?

This game was played at the high tide of the 'English Chess Explosion'. Like Short and Hodgson before him, Norwood is strong on imagination, self-confidence and tactical flair. Here he is eager to get to grips with his veteran opponent, and a pawn sacrifice followed by a queen exchange is not going to put him off.

10...dxe4 11 ♗xe4 ♖xd4+ 12 ♖xd4 ♖xd4+ 13 ♖h1

Better development and some readily-exploitable dark squares are Norwood's return on his pawn investment.

13...♖e6 14 c3!?

White avoids the obvious pawn recapture after 14 ♖d6+ when his initiative is liable to fizzle out.

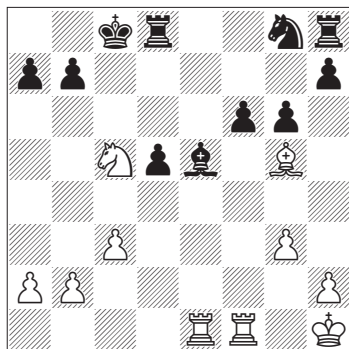
14...♙e5 15 ♖c5 ♙d5?

A serious error. Black should play 15...♙c4 when 16 ♖e1 is answered by 16...0-0-0 when Black's back-rank play will give him the better game if the e5 bishop is captured.

16 ♙xd5 cxd5 17 ♙g5!

Fritz wants White to play 17 ♖e1!? f6 18 ♙f4 0-0-0 19 ♙xe5 fxe5 20 ♖xe5 when White gets his pawn back and some pressure against the isolated d-pawn. But Norwood's plan turns out to be far more potent.

17...f6 18 ♖ae1 0-0-0



Curiously, both Fritz and Gufeld seem to regard this as an adequate defence, but it soon becomes apparent that it is not.

19 ♖xe5! fxe5 20 ♙xd8 ♙xd8 21 ♖f8+!

Fritz is still reluctant to acknowledge any more than a slight edge for White here. But the human eye is immediately drawn to the plight of the rook and knight bottled up in the corner. Black can only relieve this siege by shunting his king across to f7 or g7 and in practice it is not easy to achieve.

21...♙e7 22 ♖a8 b6 23 ♖d3 ♙f6 24 ♙g2

Another sign of a confident player – he's in no hurry.

24...g5 25 ♖b4 d4 26 cxd4 exd4 27 ♙f3 ♙e6

White cannot advance his king any further for now, because of the threat of ♖f6 with check. But it is only a minor inconvenience.

28 ♖c6 a5

It is only around now that Fritz starts waking up to the dismal state of Black's game.

29 ♖xd4+ ♙e5 30 ♙e3 g4 31 ♖f8 h5

This costs Black his knight but the position is already beyond repair.

32 ♖e2!

En route to g6 where it will dislodge the rook from the defence of the knight.

32...h4 33 ♖f4 hxg3 34 hxg3 ♙d6 35 a4

The immediate 35 ♖g6 allows Black to molest the queenside pawns with 35...♖h2 so White first arranges them the way he wants them.

35...♖h7 36 ♖xg8 ♖c7 37 ♖xg4 ♖c4 38 ♖g6+ ♙d7 39 ♖d5... 1-0

Black finally called it a day after another six moves (not all recorded).

During the 1992-93 Hastings International Congress a dishevelled old man would frequently drift into the playing area at the Falaise Hall in the evening and sit some distance from the few games which remained. Thinking he was just seeking a quiet and warm haven for a few hours, we let him be. One evening he appeared at the Cinque Ports Hotel as we were having dinner and poked a rolled piece of paper through the trellis which separated the dining area from a passageway. It was a sketch he had made during those hours in the Falaise. It showed Gerry Walsh, myself and John Robinson working at our table.

One of my first British Championships was at Eastbourne in 1990. In one of the lower sections there was a fierce battle between two female players. When I was called in, the conversation went as follows:

Player A: "She keeps stopping her clock without making a move."

Player B: "I made a move but you weren't looking."

Player A: "What was it?"

Player B: "I'm not telling you. You should have been watching!"