



SKITTLES  
ROOM

## *From the Archives*

Hosted by  
Mark Donlan



## From the Archives...

Since it came online many years ago, [ChessCafe.com](http://ChessCafe.com) has presented literally thousands of articles, reviews, columns and the like for the enjoyment of its worldwide readership. The good news is that almost all of this high quality material remains available in the [Archives](#). The bad news is that this great collection of chess literature is now so large and extensive – and growing each week – that it is becoming increasingly difficult to navigate it effectively. We decided that the occasional selection from the archives posted publicly online might be a welcomed addition to the regular fare.

Watch for an item to be posted online periodically throughout each month. We will update the [ChessCafe](#) home page whenever there has been a “new” item posted here. We hope you enjoy *From the Archives*...

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In 1949 G.H. Diggle, a British chess author and historian created a record in London Banks League Chess by losing a game in seven moves. Later, he sent the score on a Christmas card to the late C.H. O’D. Alexander who, with a flash of genius, sent a card in return awarding him the title of “Badmaster.” Proudly adopting the appellation, the Badmaster went on to contribute regular columns to the British Chess Federation. As the Badmaster himself notes: “[The Badmaster] has now mingled from time to time with three generations of eminent players ranging Isidor Gunsberg to Nigel Short, and rambled extensively round the highways and byways of provincial chess. It is in these obscure haunts, as well as in the higher circles, that he has observed great Chess Characters and overheard many weird chess utterances...” G.H. Diggle passed away several years ago; we were delighted to receive permission from the then 90-year old Badmaster to use items from his Badmaster series. The following article first appeared in a column written by G.H. Diggle in November, 1976. It is reprinted here by permission.

## Lionel Kieseritzky

by G. H. Diggle

Of the four great French masters of his day (the other three being LaBourdonnais, St. Amant and Boncourt) Kieseritzky was by far the most learned player, and knew more about “book” than all the others put together. But his record does not show him a successful player in his own class, and though he has left behind some magnificent if isolated wins, he is best remembered for two famous losses, the “Immortal” against Anderssen and the one where he attempted to give Buckle “pawn and move” on one of the great historian’s most brutal days at the chessboard. Kieseritzky was never the man for the big occasion – his “miserable want of nerve” doomed him at the outset. In the great 1851 Tournament he lost to Anderssen in 20 minutes by “not only playing away the only piece guarding his King from mate, but doing it in such a manner that his opponent (even if he missed the mate) could still have won his Queen instead – a sort of double-barrelled blunder” commented Staunton “that I have never seen equalled even among beginners of the game.” He was also “the most wayward and crotchety of players,” infatuated with “mostrous defences” such as 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Bd6, and “Irresistible Gambits” which crashed a few moves after take-off. In this respect he was a fantastic forerunner of Steinitz without the Austrian’s solidity.



A man of “livid complexion, with melancholic and afflicted appearance,” he was nevertheless a cultured chess writer, as his brief period of Editorship of *La Regence* shows, and it is to his lasting credit that he (the loser) saved the Immortal Game for posterity by publishing it in the July 1851 number. Neither Anderssen nor anyone else, it seems, had bothered. Kieseritzky was completely hooked on chess and little else. An utter Bohemian, he once (during the 1851 Tournament) walked from the Strand to Soho Square in his dressing-gown and slippers. George Walker writes that the poor man “thought he was the Messiah of Chess – and died in a Paris workhouse.” “The Messiah” and Horwitz were once breakfasting at a coffee house but found themselves ignored by the waiter. “Could he but know who we are!” cried K., “s’il pourrait savoir!” [sic]. Born on January 1st 1806, he died in 1853 after a brief mental illness.


[TOP OF PAGE](#)

[HOME](#)

[COLUMNS](#)

[LINKS](#)

[ARCHIVES](#)

[ABOUT THE CHESS CAFE](#)

[\[ChessCafe Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Review\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)  
[\[Endgame Study\]](#) [\[Skittles Room\]](#) [\[Archives\]](#)  
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