

70p

THE GAMER

BRITAIN'S PREMIER MAGAZINE FOR GAMESPLAYERS

CHAD

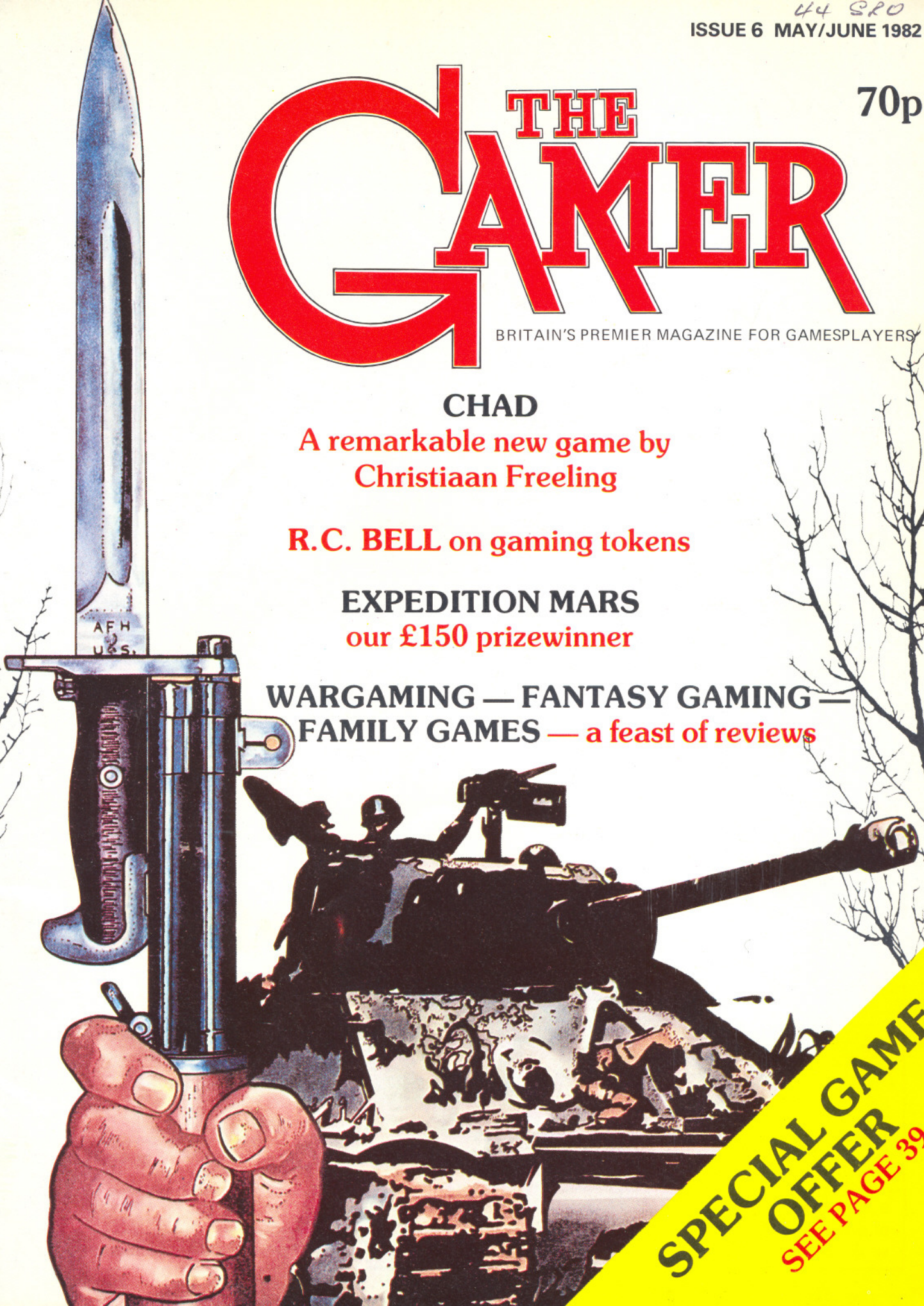
A remarkable new game by
Christiaan Freeling

R.C. BELL on gaming tokens

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FAMILY GAMES — a feast of reviews

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ENTHUSIASTS

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THE GAMER

BRITAIN'S PREMIER MAGAZINE FOR GAMES PLAYERS

EDITORIAL

THE balance of this issue is not as we would like it!

Wargamers will not be disappointed; Nicky Palmer offers historical mayhem in profusion: fantasy fanatics, too, will find much to their liking, while the abstract board gamer (a powerful lobby amongst our readership) is well provided for—including a remarkable new game from Christiaan Freeling.

Good specialist stuff beyond dispute, but perhaps a little too much of it. That is not as we planned it. As we said in our first issue, we want to cover the whole field of indoor games but, frankly, we are just not getting enough articles on the simpler family games—and these are often the most popular ones.

If you are the local Queen of *Cluedo* or Mogul of *Monopoly*, why not write and tell us how you do it? And what about that little game you invented which your friends flatter you by calling 'the next best thing to Tupperware'? Share your pride with other readers but please drop us a letter first—and you may be surprised how responsive we are.

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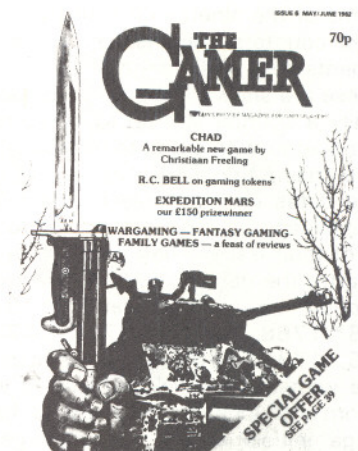
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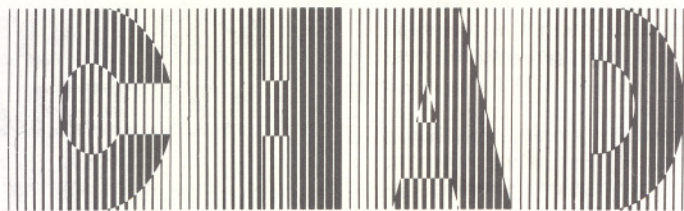
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readers' games and comments



Our front cover this issue shows an artists interpretation of the Battle of the Bulge. It is taken from the box lid of Avalon Hill's game of that name. Don't miss Nicky Palmer's article, A Tale of Two Bulges on page 24.



a fundamental chess
game by
Christiaan Freeling

CHRISTIAAN FREELING is the inventor of **Havannah**—already widely acclaimed as an outstanding game—and **Chakra**, which appeared in issue 3 of *The Gamer*.

In **Chad** the author has created another remarkable game—a 'pure' chess game as he describes it, the result of a logical thought process which he explains in engaging detail. The simplicity of the rules add to the appeal of **Chad**—and you can easily make your own set.

And if that takes you back to **Chakra**, we still have a few sets available at £1.50 including postage—address to the editor.

The Anatomy of Chess games

IF we look at the anatomy of Chess-type games we notice that despite the many differences a number of key-ideas are common to all such games.

- 1) At the heart of each system we find the 'absolute' piece. We will call him the king, though his name may vary. The king's role is, at least in this one respect, always the same: he is the opponent's ultimate target, and 'mate'—the king under attack and unable to escape—decides the game. A king under attack is said to be in check. The idea 'mate' implies that a player may neither put nor leave his king in check. With the exception of Shogi, all systems do in fact formalize this condition.
- 2) Each system features a number of different pieces with different powers.
- 3) Each system has a pawn-structure. Pawns are one-step pieces that initially shield the—often long—

range—forces from each other.

In some systems they are, in this respect, more effective than in others. The pawn-structures in the four best known Chess-games—Chess, Shogi, Xianggi and Hexchess—are widely different in character.

- 4) The presence of the king lends 'direction' to a system. But all systems know direction in another sense: Pawns move *forward*, or at least not backward. Shogi is literally pervaded by this idea of direction, and I would pursue its consequences if I were not looking for similarities rather than differences.
 - 5) Connected with direction in the above sense is the idea of promotion. Again the differences are manifold. In Shogi the idea is given full scope: with the exception of king and gold all pieces have promotion ranks. All other systems know only pawn promotion but vary considerably in the details.
 - 6) In each system any piece may capture any other piece (including the king, in Shogi).
 - 7) Capture is always, or almost always, by replacement.
 - 8) Zugzwang. All systems demand that a player *must* make a move if it is his turn. Rotary (a new game which it is hoped will soon appear in *The Gamer*) and, occasionally, Chakra (*The Gamer*, issue 3) know the pass as an implicit right, i.e. a legal 'move'.
- Now these may all be Chess essentials, but are they all essential to embody the idea of mate, the essence of Chess itself? 'Home is where the heart is, home is so remote', sings Lene Lovich, and though she doesn't mean Chess, she certainly hits the truth. Is it possible to strip the mate of the additional ideas that make it 'so remote', to make it an ever-present threat? The answer is—you guessed it—yes, it is!

Genesis

I decided to pursue the idea using an or-

thogonal tessellation, because I had this crazy notion that the hexagonal tessellation was less suited to the purpose. Glin-ski's Hexchess cured me of that one, but that was later.

The first idea that came to mind in making the mate less remote, was to make the king a more-or-less fixed target. Of all the other systems only Xianggi takes this obvious step—to give the king a castle that he may never leave—and the game derives much of its unique character from it.

The size of this domain is the natural 3x3, leaving room for eight identical pieces to join him.

Now remember we're still trying to avoid any idea that isn't directly related to the mate. Thus we need a king and pieces. But only *one kind* of piece and no pawns.

A number of ideas come in quite naturally: we want a fast-moving game so we need a fast-moving piece. A piece, moreover, that is basic with regard to the orthogonal tessellation. Did I hear 'rook'? Very good.

And the king. How does he move? Shall we say . . . the king's move? Thus, from his initial square, he covers his whole domain.

Now the relationships. The piece must—theoretically—be able to capture the king, though the mate of course ends the game prior to that move.

Likewise the king should be able to capture a piece. He can of course only do so inside the castle.

But there is, for the moment, no reason why one piece should be able to capture another piece. This form of capture is in no way directly related to the mate and will therefore be abandoned. A piece, to another piece, is just an obstacle!

So here we are. The piece gives check along rooklines and the king must parry in one of the three well-known ways:

- (1) Capture. The—as yet—exclusive right of the king.
- (2) Moving out of the line of attack.
- (3) Interpositional of a piece.

Promotion is directly related to the mate. If you're not convinced just take any Chess-type game and do away with promotion. Now we have really only one promotion area to be considered: the opponent's castle. It is at the same time the implicit 'direction' of the pieces and the only area where they run—as yet—the risk of being captured.

So we state: If a piece *ends* its move on a square inside the opponent's castle, it instantly promotes to 'queen'. Which is, of course, a queen. There's hardly an alternative for promoting a rook. And yes, let's make promotion definite. One must, after all, be able to get away with it.

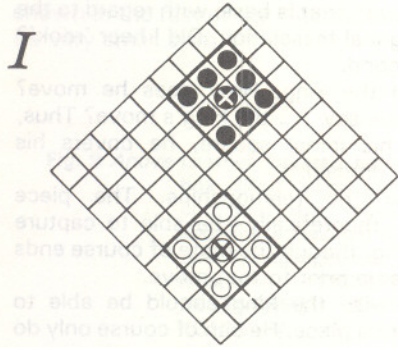
If a piece is reversed it shows a mark to indicate promotion. Note that the king can 'see' the rooks, but—due to the promotion rule—can never 'meet' one. Anything hostile inside his castle must necessarily be a queen!

A Chad-queen that is. Which means that she has no capture-relationship with any piece but the opposing king. To any other piece she is, like the rook, an obstacle.

Finally, at the risk of labouring the obvious, a piece may pass through the castle, but is not promoted in the process.

Development

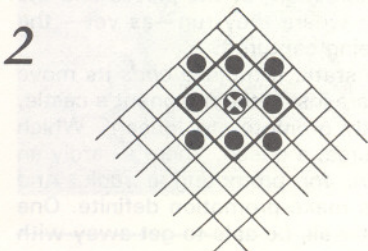
THOUGH we are left with some minor problems—repetition of moves, stalemate—we won't let them bother us for the moment. After all, we haven't even played yet. But we're going to, so we need a board. Figure 1 shows one that seems logical enough. The castles



are 'floating' to allow attack from all sides, and diagonally placed to clear the sight-lines of the roofs with regard to each other so that no pieces get pinned beforehand. Moreover it creates the maximum distance between the castles, which is a good thing on a board that, for reasons of principle, has the minimum size for meeting these conditions.

One fine evening my friend Ed van Zon, who is allergic to inconsistency, dropped by, and I said so and so, and he said 'Well, let's give it a try'. And so we did.

In the first game we both attacked and I won (generally considered a bad omen among inventors). In the second game Ed's position after four moves looked like figure 2. Then he impassively started



moving his king about, occasionally retreating a rook to bring the message home: How could I ever get into the castle . . .

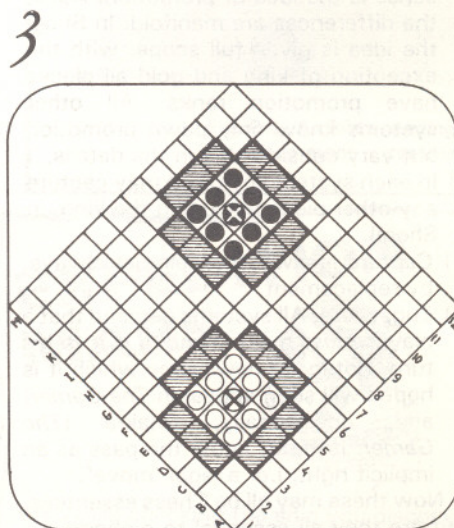
Now don't panic! It's only, or rather is almost, a game. For the moment however one conclusion seemed inevitable: to get into the castle one must be able to attack the defending pieces. Thus mutual capture of pieces turns out to be directly related to the mate after all!

But we can't have the rooks swarming all over the place, slaughtering one another. There'd be no piece left. So we will certainly have to restrict mutual capture to a very limited area. And since the objective is to expose the castle, the squares directly adjacent to it are waiting for the job.

Figure 3 shows the Chad-board and the pieces in the initial position. Each castle now has a 'wall' consisting of the twelve directly adjacent squares. The size of the board increases accordingly.

To meet the need to eliminate Ed's impregnable strategy we now have a rule: *If a piece is on the wall of the opponent's castle, it may capture any hostile piece inside the castle that is in its line of attack.*

And, of course, vice versa:



If a piece is inside its own castle, it may capture any hostile piece on the wall that is in its line of attack.

I've put this in italics because this rule, as it turns out, is the heart of the entire game. Not only does it solve the problem of exposing the castle, but it virtually releases the full attacking power of the pieces. It even allowed me to add one little twist of my own that, though not based on any implicit logic, improves the game's balance by counteracting this

END OF AN ERA

Over the course of the next few months you will be seeing quite a few changes appearing in *The Gamer*. For one thing, our new supplement, *Computer Gamer*, begins in issue No. 7. For another, we will be welcoming a new Editor. But, as a new era begins, so must one end.

Almost from the beginning, *Games & Puzzles* (as we were called then) has had the benefit of the firm hand of David Pritchard to guide the magazine through the oceans of fashions and changes seen by the world of games, a course which he has steered with expert skill and judgement. So it is with much regret that we announce the retirement of our revered mentor. Issue 6 will be the last issue bearing his name as Editor.

One of the few really authoritative voices on the subject of games throughout the world, David has decided to concentrate his editorial efforts on his other great love, the world of puzzles, and I am happy to say that we have managed to retain his invaluable services as Editor of our sister magazine, *Top Puzzles*. So at least we will still feel the benefit of his sharp wit and incisive viewpoint in that field.

His reputation as a gamesplayer and critic has been one of the cornerstones on which the success of *The Gamer* and its predecessor has been built. Without him, that reputation would have been much harder to achieve and the world of games would be much poorer should he decide to retire from it altogether. Fortunately, he has offered his services as a consultant to the magazine and we look forward, too, to contributions from him on occasion.

His retirement does indeed signal the end of an era in which he helped in no small way to chart the progress of gamesplaying in this country, and helped to create the magazines which have become the forum and guide of gamers everywhere.

With heartfelt thanks we say Goodbye David. We can replace you — but there will never be anybody to take your place.

power to some extent. The inventor's signature as it were. Read all about it in the rules.

Rules

CHAD is an abstract board-game for two players, Black and White. Three pieces participate: The king, the queen and the rook.

Figure 3 shows the board and the pieces in the starting position. Each king is surrounded by eight rooks. The areas thus covered are called the castles. Each castle has a wall consisting of the twelve squares that are orthogonally adjacent.

Players move—and must move—in turn. White moves first.

The king may never leave his castle. Inside he moves and captures using either the king's move in Chess or the knight's move in Chess. Except for the king when using the knight's move, no piece is allowed to jump over another piece.

The rook moves like the rook in Chess. If he ends his move, whether capturing or not, inside the opponent's castle, he instantly promotes to queen, when he is turned over to indicate this. Promotion is permanent. The queen moves like a queen in Chess.

Capture

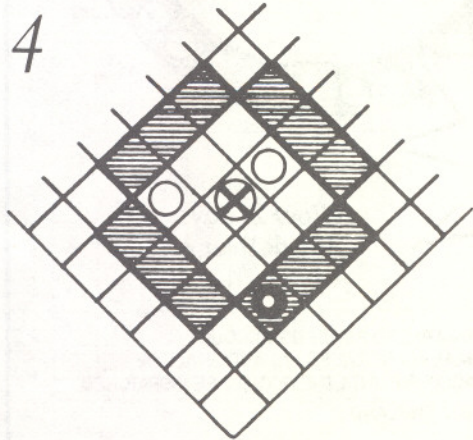
Mutual capture of pieces may only take place under the following conditions:

—If a piece is on the wall of the opponent's castle, it may capture any piece inside the castle that is in its line of attack.

—If a piece is inside its own castle, it may capture any piece on the wall that is in its line of attack.

Figure 4 gives an example. The queen may capture either rook. If it is White's turn instead, he may capture the queen with the rook in the corner. All capture is, as we have said, by replacement.

These conditions apart, remember that a piece is just an obstacle to another piece. Therefore, if Black takes (fig. 4),



White can only take back with the king (provided he doesn't move into check), and if White takes, Black cannot take back at all (the white rook being on its own wall). The castles and the walls themselves are no obstacles and pieces are free to move onto or over these squares.

Check

The king may be attacked from any position and at any distance. A king under attack is said to be 'in check'. A player may neither put nor leave his king in check. He escapes check by:

- (1) Capturing the attacking piece
- (2) Moving out of the line of attack
- (3) Interposal of a piece between the attacker and the king.

If none of these is possible the player is 'mate' and loses the game.

Perpetual check or, in a wider sense, repetition of moves, is a draw. This provides a well-known but ever-so-small emergency-exit after a failed attack. Stalemate cannot occur.

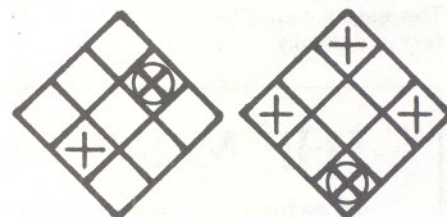
Strategy

The twist, you may have noticed, is the increased power of the king. The additional knight's move makes him a most flexible piece. Though imprisoned in his castle, he cannot be blocked in and covers most of his domain. Special attention should be given to the squares depicted in illustration 5.

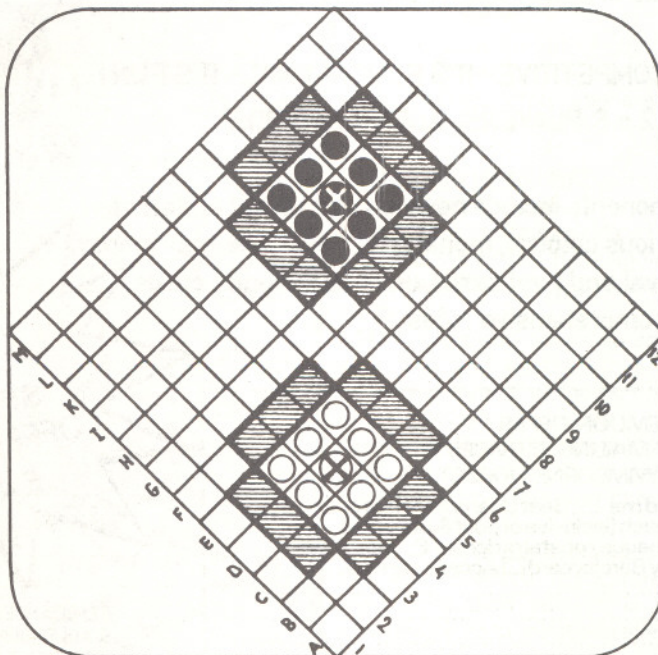
These are the squares the king does not cover. They therefore hold the danger of a rook entering without support. This is the key-idea in many combinations. It is usually worth a sacrifice, sometimes a double sacrifice to force the king onto the side or into the corner, if it clears the way for promotion on one of these squares.

Chad is a system aimed at the heart, and only at the heart. Attacks have a very imperative character and if you don't want your opponent to start one, you must strike early. However, the advantage of the first strike holds the danger of its being not decisive. You simply cannot always wait till you are in a position where you can actually see the mate. And quite often a queen justifies the investment of one or even two pieces, without the mate being immediately apparent. But sometimes she doesn't the treacherous wretch, and you'll be in trouble.

Chad is not a 'wide' system. Nor was it ever meant to be. But it offers—to the experienced player—clarity and depth. The problem depicted in illustration 6 may



6



serve to show how deep the game is and how delicate its balance. Of course a simple problem would hardly be convincing. This one requires a board, quite a number of games and a lot of analysis. White to move and mate in 13 moves or less.

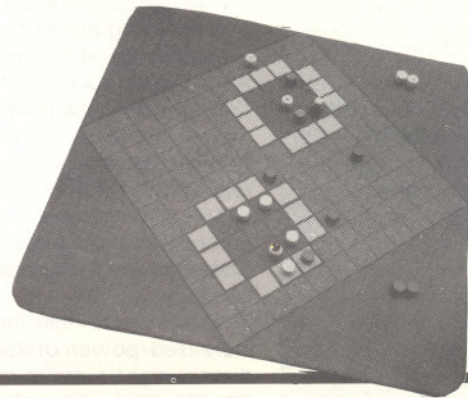
Note that White has a problem: Black too has a decisive attack. Mate in 9 moves actually, if it were his turn. And not a very hidden attack either. To give an idea of its impact: B10-B5 attacks the rook on C5 which is pinned on the C-line and therefore unable to take. The only escape is C6, which also deprives C5 from its cover. But now Black captures on E5, threatening, among other things, E5-B5 + , which clears the way for the rook on E10 to promote under its cover.

So White has to walk a very thin line. Later I hope to discuss the solution in detail and also to tell you of some remarkable discoveries when the game system is transposed to the hexagonal board.

Meanwhile making a copy of *Chad* is not too difficult, so here's your chance to enjoy a game that almost devised itself. The essence of Chess—pure and light, fast and deadly.

WIN A CHAD SET!

Christiaan Freeling has donated this handsome set, signed by the inventor, to the sender of the first correct 13-move solution received by the editor of the game problem posed (figure 6). Entry implies acceptance of the editor's decision. A shorter solution, should one be found, will take precedence over the composer's solution, but only if submitted before an entry giving the composer's solution has been received.

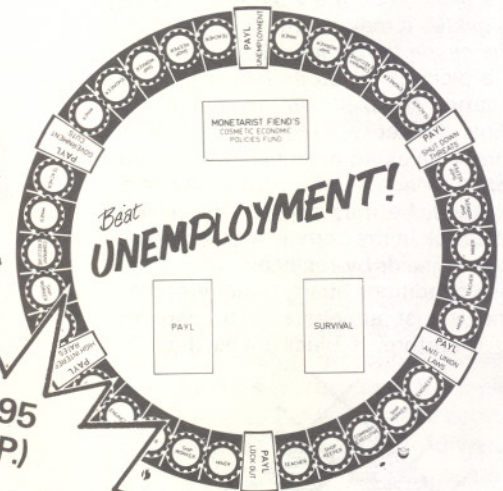


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