

IN THE LIBRARY : CHESSGI (2)

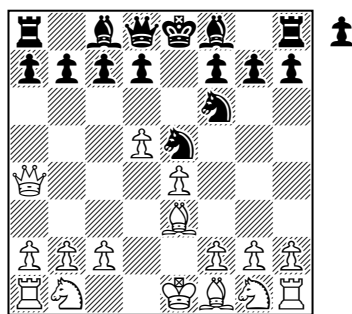
Here is the second of a pair of games played by John McCallion in the Chessgi tournaments of NOST (the Knights of the Square Table, an American postal chess and games club which thrived for many years) and reported in the NOST bulletin *Nost-algia*. David Pritchard had an almost complete run of this from issue 142 onwards, which was passed on to us by Elaine and Wanda.

Chessgi is chess played with shogi drops (a captured man changes sides and becomes the property of its captor, who can drop it on any vacant square instead of a playing a normal move). John considered this game against Paul Yearout the best he had ever played. Notes are by John, who was White, and I am standardizing notation even within quotations. The game was played around 1984-86.

- 1 e2-e4 e7-e5
- 2 d2-d4 e5xd4

“My favourite Chessgi opening, which I praised so highly in annotating the game against Philip Cohen. The result of this game does not change my opinion, but it might delight the reader who has tired of my dogmatism.” The game against Philip Cohen appeared in *VC* 58.

- 3 Qd1xd4 Nb8-c6
- 4 Qd4-a4 Ng8-f6
- 5 P @ d5 Nc6-e5
- 6 Bc1-e3



“My ambitions do have their limits: 6 f4 seemed to be exposing White’s position just too much.”

- 6 ... Bf8-d6

“Blocking the d-pawn may look strange, but I could not fault this

move, both provocative and preparing to castle, e.g., if 7 h3, then 7...0-0 8 f4 Ng6 and 9 e5 does not seem possible.”

- 7 Nb1-d2 Ne5-g4

“Hmm...”

- 8 Ng1-f3

“I was as usual unsure if I would castle queen’s-side or king’s-side.”

- 8 ... 0-0

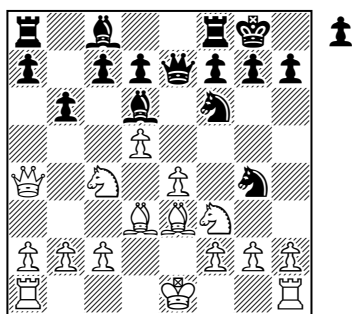
- 9 Bf1-d3 b7-b6

“The same interesting fianchetto used by P. Cohen...”

- 10 Nd2-c4

“I decided to forget about castling, which I had later to regret, in the hope of sacrificing a pawn for attack.”

- 10 ... Qd8-e7



- 11 e4-e5!?

“Beginning the middle game. Black is given two pawns in hand, but I did not think they could stand against my attacking formation.”

- 11 ... Ng4xe5

- 12 Nc4xe5 Bd6xe5

- 13 Nf3xe5 Qe7xe5

- 14 B @ c3

“Three bishops beautifully aligned, bearing down on the Black king’s-side.”

- 14 ... Qe5-e7

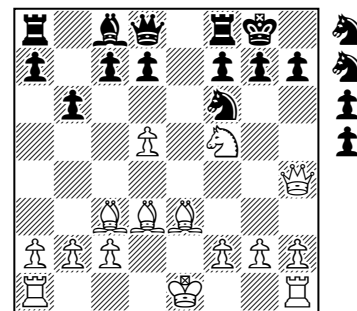
- 15 N @ f5

“I did not mind having to use both pieces in hand, as I felt Black was on the run.”

- 15 ... Qe7-d8

- 16 Qa4-h4

“Making this move felt like running one’s finger all the way across a piano keyboard. The queen glides effortlessly from an obscure outpost on one side to another on the other flank on the enemy king. My game seemed to be flowing like a beautiful melody and I was blissfully happy, until Paul’s reply reached me...”



- 16 ... N @ f3+!!

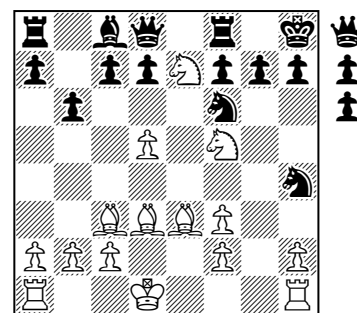
“The first part of a beautiful two-knight drop. Despite my regular lofty paeans to Art and Beauty before result, it is just as well that I am a bachelor; I might have been very unpleasant to live with for the next few weeks!”

- 17 g2xf3 N @ g2+!

“I had no choice but to accept Paul’s conditional continuation. With his fiendish cruelty still scurrying grouchily through my being, and the memory of the 1984 US Presidential election still fresh, I thought it would only be a case of making a few more fruitless moves as a chessic tribute to Walter Mondale, but how wrong I was! I completely underestimated my power to initiate a fierce counter-attack, a sequence of moves that would leave us both breathless and, still to this moment, bewildered!”

- 18 Ke1-d1 Ng2xh4

- 19 N @ e7+ Kg8-h8



- 20 Be3-h6

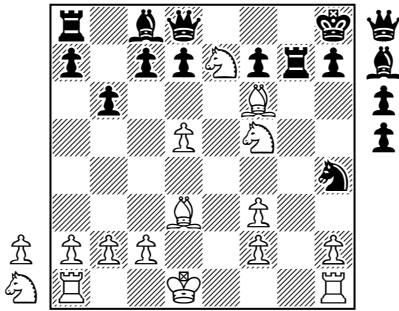
“The beginning of the fireworks. 20...gxh6 of course allows 21 Bxf6+ followed by mate.”

- 20 ... Rf8-g8

“On 20...Nxf5, I was prepared to play 21 Bxg7+!? whereupon 21...Nxf7 is best, which is answered by 22 Bxf6 and over to you, dear reader.”

- 21 Bh6xg7+ Rg8xg7

- 22 Bc3xf6



22 ... P @ e2+
 “Paul, with his usual modesty, believes that this was a simple oversight. I prefer to see it as a superb interposition with the intention of drawing the White king to an unfavourable square for later variations. In any event, I was now so fascinated by the position that I wanted nothing but perfection for both sides. Nevertheless, it must have been a terrible chore for Paul to have to defend after such a seemingly successful attack.”

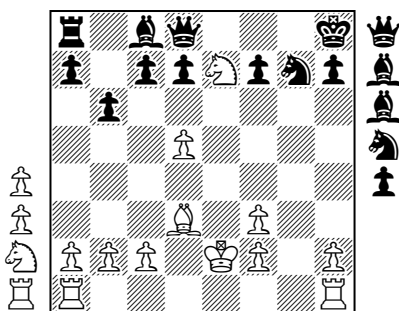
23 Kd1xe2 Nh4xf5

24 Bf6xg7+

“24 Ng6+ also came into consideration.”

24 ... Nf5xg7

“The reader is welcome to take a look at 24...Kxg7 25 Nxf5+...”



25 R @ g8+

“Regains a queen, but Black is left with a fierce array of pieces in hand.”

25 ... Qd8xg8

26 Ne7xg8 R @ e8+

27 P @ e7!

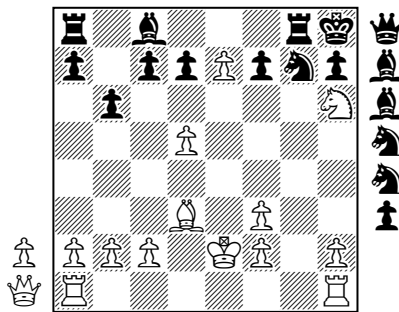
“The doomed knight still performs a useful defensive function! It looks as if the impetus has gone from White’s counter-attack, but things are far from simple.”

27 ... Re8xg8

28 N @ h6!

“Probably the best move at this stage, which I decided upon after much

thought: the simple threat is Nxf7 smothered mate.” Smothered mates are quite common in drop games.



28 ... N @ d4+

29 Ke2-d1

“The only move, I think. The tension was nearly killing me by now, but as it turned out I did not have long to wait.”

29 ... Q @ f6

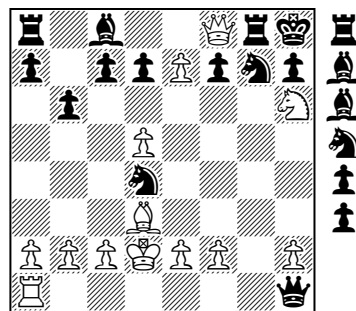
30 Q @ f8

“Yippee!!!! Not only having another look at the f-pawn, but also threatening Qxg8 mate. The queen is of course immune from capture.”

30 ... Qf6xf3+

31 P @ e2 Qf3xh1+

32 Kd1-d2



“The critical position. I could see no ultimate profit [for Black] in a check by dropping a knight, and noticed that 32...B@b4+ 33 c3 Rxf8 34 exf8Q+ Bxf8 35 R@g8 mate allows a blast on the trumpets and the thunderous applause of an appreciative chess world. I do not know why, but Paul’s reply did not cross my mind.”

32 ... B @ g5+!!

33 Resigns!!

“Both moves deserve at least two exclamations. 33 e3 leads to mate after 33...N@f3+ and 33 Kc3 loses to 33...B@d2+. I do not regret the result - only that the wonderful game did not last longer!”