

Chess notes by J.H.J.

THIS WEEK by way of a change I offer two diagrams, both Black to move. For the reader the problem is to discover the link between them and the following brief game may provide a clue.

White: J.H.J., Black: Anon: 1, e4, e5; 2, Nf3, Nc6; 3, d4, exd4; 4, Bc4, Nf6; Nf6; 5, 0-0, Nxe4; 6, Re1, d5; 7, Bxd5, Qxd5; 8, Nc3 (all "book." Now theory recommends 8, . . . , Qa5!; or 8, . . . , Qh5; or even 8, . . . , Qd8) 8, . . . , Qc5?? (but theory has yet to discover this move); 9, Nxe4, Qa5 (9, . . . , Qe7; would prolong the game); 10, Nf6+, Kd8; 11, Re8+, (1:0).

In the first diagram it is obvious that Black is coming under pressure on the King side. Black could try 21, . . . , Qb6; 22, Qxb6, Nxb6; 23, Rxd6, Bc6; or perhaps 21, . . . , Qc5; 22, Qxc5; dxc5; 23, g5, hxg5; 24, hxg5, Ne3; 25, gxf6, Nxd1; 26, Rxd1 or better 21, . . . , Rfd8; 22, g5, hxg5; 23, hxg5, Ne8 with the intention of doing a runner with the Black King.

The game continued 21, . . . , b6 (so that after Qc5 the b-pawn will recapture); 22, g5, hxg5; 23, hxg5, Nh7; 24, Qh4, Qd8(!);

(24, . . . , Qc5+; 25, Kh1, Qe3; 26, g6, fxe6; 27, fxe6, Rxf3; 28, Qxh7+, Kf8; 29, Nd5!! wins); 25, f6!? Ne3?? (Black had to play 25, . . . , gxf6 or Nxf6); 26, Rf2, Nxd1; and after 27, Rh2, Black could not avoid mate.

In the second diagram most players would recognize that the Black King's Rook was about to be incarcerated and therefore try 17, . . . , Kg7!; or 17, . . . , h6, even 17, . . . , Ng8 but not this opponent.

Play continued 17, . . . , a5? (yes, we all know that passed pawns must be pushed); 18, Bh6+, Kg8; 19, Kb2, Be6; 20, Ba4 (stopping a-pawn nonsense while controlling d7), . . . , Bc4; 21, Rd4, Rb8+; 22, Ka3, Be6(!) (else 23, e5!); 23, Rb1!, Rc8; 24, Rb5, Nd5; 25, c4 and Black was mated many moves later.

And that connecting link? Well, in each case, Black was a computer chess programme. On the evidence of this type of play we humans have little to fear from the "machine." However, when more powerful micros become available at a competitive price then we may not remain complacent: the challenge will have arrived.

