

CHESS NOTES by J.H.J.

AS I play both chess and bridge to a good standard I am often asked by other players which is the more difficult game. Although it is not easy to compare the individual nature of chess with the partnership requirements of bridge, I invariably reply that chess is the harder game to master.

Both games require that concentration be extended over many hours, but bridge offers a respite with a new game (deal) every seven minutes, or so, whereas this is not usually available in a protracted game of chess.

Bridge only starts with 13 men (cards) a side and quickly reduces in force as the hand is played, making analysis progressively easier. The chess player starts with 16 men and this material might remain intact for many moves thereby compounding the problems of analysis.

Players at both games rank from novice to expert, but grandmaster (of chess) is a title to make the lesser player quail, whereas at bridge the title of grandmaster, although indicating a measure of excellence, is almost a term of endearment.

To beat a chess grandmaster requires talent, but at bridge, although talent is a help, luck is a predominant factor. Many years ago Britain's top bridge pair — Terence Reese and Boris Shapiro — (top five world-wide) were eliminated from a

tournament by an unknown pair of suburban housewives who had the good fortune to be dealt all the cards.

Chess players of the ilk of P. N. Lee (ex British Champion), D. Sherman (Southern Counties Champion), and M. Horton (Midlands Champion) have all made their mark at bridge.

I cannot recall a strong bridge player who has made a similar transition to chess. This more than anything else should reinforce my contention that chess is the more demanding game.

This week a study by F. Simkhovitch (1927) with White to move and draw.

