

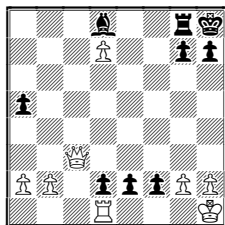
Happy New Year!

Chess Today wishes all its readers Happy New Year! May the next year see you all in good health, with increasing prosperity and chess ratings going through the roof!

Chess Wonders

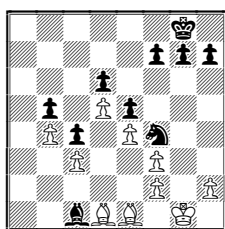
The first day in the year has magic in it, so today we will look at some beautiful, unusual or just weird positions:

A McDonnell – L De Labourdonnais London, 1834

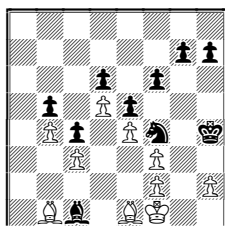


Black has just played 37... e2 and White resigned. The diagrammed position is a beautiful confirmation of Philidor's saying that pawns are the soul of chess!

J Kliavinsh – V Ragozin USSR Ch semi-final Lvov, 1951



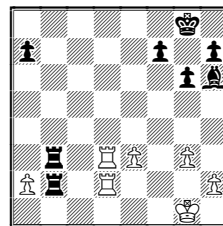
This is an amazing position – White's bishops are completely paralyzed! So much for the '2 bishops advantage'...
 29.♙c2 f6 30.♖f1 ♔f7 31.♙d1 ♖g6
 32.♙c2 ♖g5 33.♙b1 ♖h4



Black is in control and calmly advances his king. The finish is near:

34.♙c2 ♖h3 35.♖g1 h6 36.♙b1 h5
 37.♙c2 ♖d3 38.♖f1 ♖xh2 39.♖e2 ♖g2
 40.♙xd3 cxd3+ 0-1

Y Porat – G Barcza Moscow OL Moscow (3), 1956



Black has just played 29... ♖8xb3 and a very picturesque position has arisen – with four rooks looking at each other! Luckily for Black, he has yet another piece looking at the scene!

30.axb3 ♖xd2

White resigned as 31.♖xd2 ♙xe3+ 32.♖f2 ♖g7 33.♖g2 ♙xf2 34.♖xf2 ♖f6 is clearly hopeless for him.

Finding Your Chess Future

What makes a good chess player? Some say it is talent or hard work ... or both. Nonsense – what distinguishes a good chess player from a bad one is the precise knowledge of his chess horoscope! You need to know your good and bad days – when to trade off queens early and when to get involved with the Najdorf Variation. Not many know their chess horoscopes though – this precious knowledge is carefully protected by Tibetan monks, KGB agents and Chess Today editors. But once a year we lift the cover of the future and let our readers look into it! Actually, we can do it on a regular base – provided you are prepared to cough up a modest fee of \$999 for an individual assessment. If interested, please send your money as soon as

possible (your chess future won't wait!) to our accounts in Moscow Chase or Credit Russia First Novgorod banks. This is a really small price to pay, as you will soon see!

Before we start, a legal disclaimer is in order. You see, we are so honest that we don't bury it in a small print in the end of the article – instead we say it out openly: all our predictions are 99% accurate (so many people have confirmed that to us last year!), but we refuse to take any responsibility for any of them!

Capricorn - The Goat

December 22 to January 20

Well, you did not expect anything good, did you? The truth is that this year you will learn the all of the following sayings are correct: “doubled pawns are weak”, ‘knight on the rim is dim’, “rook endings are always drawn” and so on. And on all those occasions you will be on the receiving end... Sad, really, but there is hope – move to chess composition and you will avoid bitter defeats, while making beautiful positions for which you will be remembered! If you are still itching to play chess, try correspondence chess, but use the slowest rate of play possible – so the games won't be finished till 2003 – by then you chess luck might change. And do not say we did not warn you!

Aquarius - The Water Carrier

January 21 to February 19

A rocky year is ahead of you: you will find that changing from Alekhine Defence to the Berlin Wall is not as easy as you once imagined. Avoid gambits, particularly if FIDE succeeds in implementing its desired time-control: 1 second per move with a 0.3 second increment – you may not have enough to

digest all those snatched pawns! For you, Internet Publishing (particularly chess!) is an ideal business to be in this year – prepare to a great windfall – you may find that by the end of the year Garry will abandon all his plans to challenge Vladimir and will want to play you instead. Accept the match only if:

- ◆ The prize fund is not less than \$3m
- ◆ It is distributed 51-49 between the winner and you
- ◆ You use the desired FIDE time control

Pisces - The Fish

February 20 to March 20

Good year all round for you: you will succeed in studying all those books in the wonderful ‘Beating the...’ and ‘Smashing the...’ series. In the FIDE knockout of 2002 your middlegame play will be worthy of Rubinstein, your endgame technique will make Capablanca jealous and Garry Kasparov will want you in his team as an opening expert – great success awaits you! No FIDE knockout this year?! Sorry, pal – try to practice in your local club, while waiting then!

Aries - The Ram

March 21-April 19

It is time for a radical change this year – we hope that you followed our advice last January. If so, now you are truly fed up with the Colle, the Torre, the London and all other boring stuff. Good news: this year you can play gambits! A little hint: The Latvian Gambit is good on Sundays (and no other day!) – your opponent might still have a hangover



from the previous night, thus greatly increasing your chances to pass move 20. The Smith-Morra is good for Fridays, when the adrenaline is low in your opponents. On all other days of the week stick to the trusted Queen's Gambit!

Taurus - The Bull

April 20 - May 21

You are the Bull and this is a year of the Dark Horse – you know what this means for you, don't you?! Yet, there is hope – if you choose the right colour. Study the writings of a certain Hungarian Grandmaster to find the correct answer. If you fail, at the end of the year you can write a book 'White is not OK' – the massive honorarium (\$482 – typical for chess authors, you know!) will help you to get by.

Gemini - The Twins

May 22 - June 21

Danger is creeping around every corner – in openings, in middle game and, worst of all, in endings... Try to avoid queen endings, unless a queen up. Rook endings will be indeed all drawn, but only if you are 2 (or more) pawns up. You will not be successful with your bishops, so try the following manoeuvres: Bf1-b5xc6 and Bc1-g5xf6. Beware that this may not work well against the Karo-Cann and 1.d4 e6.

Cancer - The Crab

June 22 to July 22

Difficult year for you – you will blunder a lot, particularly when playing in last rounds in USA, when big money is at stake. But there is a solution: exchange pieces as much as your can and as early as possible. Remember: the more you trade off, the less you can blunder! Recommended openings: Exchanged Ruy and Exchange Slav. Bright spots: your endgame technique will be superb, particularly in pawnless and pieceless

endings – refer to John Nunn's latest book to improve it further!

Leo - The Lion

July 23 to August 22

This is a good year for you. We hope that you studied your defences against 1.b4 and 1.g4 last year. This year it is time to broaden your repertoire: analyse 1.a3 and 1.h3. These are vastly different openings, so do not examine them during the same week. You may start playing them with White too – at least you are not hanging anything loose! This opening will work particularly well against Geminis (you'd be surprised how often they will play ...Bb4 and ...Bg4) and Cancers. The latter will blunder a lot, so it does not matter what you play.

Virgo - The Virgin

August 23 to September 23

You will get great success in chess over the Internet this year, if you can prepare for the tournaments properly. I hear you say "opening study, endgame work and over-the-phone lessons with Alexander Baburin". Wrong! All nonsense!! The correct preparation involves having two computers at home – one is Pentium-75, which you shall use for connecting to the FIDE server (that is a clean machine – even the arbiters will pity you!) and the other one is for 'consulting'. It should be Pentium-9 with 4096 Mb of RAM and the latest databases. Having a few GM-friends is useful too. Practice on Net chess servers. Don't be afraid of ethical problems – soon most others will have no choice but to cheat while playing on the Net too!

Libra - The Scales

September 24 to October 23

In January introduce The King's Indian Defence to your repertoire, but avoid playing 1...Nf6 to 1.e4 – that is not exactly the KID, as you might find out!

February is good for a bishop pair in the ending, particularly against a lonely knight. May will be a difficult month for you, so play only on the Internet. However, avoid Virgo then – his ‘consultant’ is too powerful! Try not to get (or take!) isolated pawns, particularly in September. Study rook endings – although with new time controls you will get them in 0.05% of all your games, they will still represent 50% of all your endings!

Scorpio - The Scorpion
October 24 to November 22

Be brave: play the Sicilian, Gruenfeld, KID and the lot – no boring stuff, no endings, nothing but attack! You may lose a lot, but you can always boost your rating using our old formula – a holiday break in Burma or a training (but rated!) tournament in Macedonia. If you can afford it, play a few matches in Romania, if you can find the right opponent. Visiting Tula (Russia) might help too – the city is famous not only for its samovars and handguns, but also for generous rating hand-outs!

Sagittarius - The Archer
November 23 to December 21

This year your best area is certainly South Africa – you will certainly qualify from there to all world championships! Try to relocate, if you don’t live there already. But beware that your Petroff Defence will show serious cracks in June and switching to the French will not help much either – it will be virtually refuted by then. Try Caro-Kann instead. Don’t forget to exchange your prize winnings (peso) into dollars on the same day as the tournaments end, before it loses most of its value!

To all our readers: please do not forget that staying with Chess Today is the best way to make sure that your chess future is bright!

And do not be selfish – introduce all your chess friends to the paper – bring it to your club or to tournaments where you play. Or simple e-mail it to your friends once in a while, encouraging them to join us!

Please note that we have changed numeration of CT issues - today with start with issues No. 1, while in brackets we will give the actual number of each issue beginning from the very first one.

However CT files (PDF, PGN and CBV) will have continuous numbering – for obvious (computer related) reasons.

Contact information. Do you want to report a tournament or have a suggestion concerning Chess Today? E-mail us at ct@gmsquare.com. We always appreciate your comments and feedback!

Please tell your chess friends about Chess Today. Feel free to send them our newspaper to sample – with more readers the price will go down, while the quality will go up!

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