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ERIC SCHILLER

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INTRODUCTION

In chess, the question of who is the greatest American player of all time is easily answered: Bobby Fischer. Bobby Fischer not only became World Champion, he changed the entire chess world in the process. Fischer's games can teach you almost anything you need to know about the game of chess. In this book, I'll show you some of these games and try to extract the nuggets of wisdom.

I present a selection of Fischer's greatest games with clear explanations of the thinking behind all of the significant moves. Unlike most collections of Fischer's games, this book does not explore alternative strategies not actually played in the game, except when necessary to demonstrate an instructive lesson. You are encouraged to enjoy the game and to absorb tips that will help provide better results at the chessboard, even if you are not gifted with Fischer's incredible chess genius.

Fischer's games have fascinated chess players for decades. Many fine books have been written that study these games in detail and try to present definitive analysis of all of the moves and alternatives.

I try to bring the beauty, grace, wisdom, and sometimes jaw-dropping amazement of Fischer's play to those who are just starting out in the game, or who have only been playing for a little while.

My goal is to present the games so that even those just starting in chess can follow the action and appreciate many of Fischer's fine moves. The explanations are presented in prose, with some chess notation. Those who've been playing chess for a little while may even be able to follow the main lines of the games without the use of a chess board, thanks to the many diagrams showing the state of play.

In each highlighted game, you'll find tips and strategies

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that you can apply to your own games. By playing through these games and reading the explanations I provide, you will sharpen your own chess skills. Of course, you'll still make mistakes, but then, as you will see, even the incomparable Bobby Fischer made his share of mistakes too. All chess players, even the very best, make mistakes. The goal is to learn from those mistakes and avoid repeating them.

This book is devoted to the instructional value of Fischer's games. I have not provided a great deal of biographical or historical information. Since Bobby Fischer is considered by virtually all chess players to be among the greatest of all time, there are many, many books about him. Those looking for deeper analysis than what is within these pages should consult the recommended reading list at the back of the book.

As for his off the board antics and controversies, I see no need to include them here as they only distract from the instructional value and artistic beauty of the games. That material is available in a variety of books or simply through an online search. My own brief meetings with Fischer did not provide any special insights. I want the reader to be able to concentrate on the beauty and wisdom of Fischer's actual chess moves. I hope that this book provides a pleasant and enjoyable experience of a sort previously unavailable to beginners.

Eric Schiller
Moss Beach, California
November, 2003

THE TALE OF AMERICA'S GREATEST PLAYER

Wherever you go you'll find chess players and wherever you find chess players you'll find people who know of Bobby Fischer, the greatest chess player in the history of America, and without doubt one of the greatest chess players of all-time. Fischer's adventures, on and off the board, have been heavily chronicled, and all chess fans should take some time to familiarize themselves with the career of America's greatest player.

In case you haven't come across one of the fine biographies of Bobby Fischer yet, here are the basic facts: Robert James Fischer was born March 9, 1943 in Chicago, Illinois. While the world was embroiled in a war, Bobby's domestic life didn't get off to a great start. His parents separated when he was just two years old. Bobby's mother, a registered nurse, raised him, moving to Brooklyn where she was hoping to further her education. The New York area was certainly the hub of chess in the country and so it is hardly surprising that Fischer came into contact with the game at an early age. Bobby's fascination with chess began when he was just six years old. In fact, as a child, he didn't even want new friends unless they played chess. Replying to a letter from Mrs. Fischer, the venerable chess figure Herman Helms invited the Fischers to come to the chess club at the Brooklyn Public Library. He also offered an introduction to the Brooklyn Chess Club, one of the leading chess institutions of the time.

Fischer quickly made a sensational impact. In the 1954 club championship he tied for third to fifth-place even though most of his competition was several times his age. It didn't take long for Bobby to leap into the national tournament scene. In 1955 he participated in the U.S. junior championship in Nebraska, getting

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a respectable even score considering he was only twelve years old. In 1956 he won the U.S. junior championship in Philadelphia by winning eight games, drawing one, and dropping one.

That same year he came to the attention of the entire chess world by winning a brilliant game against Donald Byrne at the Rosenwald Memorial in New York City. This was the game that earned the title "Game of the Century," an astonishing accomplishment for a 13-year-old. A year later he not only won the U.S. Junior Championships in San Francisco, with eight wins and just one draw, but also won the U.S. Open on the other side of the country in New Jersey, with eight wins and four draws. Next he won a tournament in New Jersey on his way to the stunning achievement of winning the United States championship, held in New York City, with eight wins, five draws and no losses.

In 1958 it was time for major international competition and he was invited to a qualifying stage for the World Championship. The tournament, known as an Interzonal, was held in Portotoz, Yugoslavia. Despite the chattel and new experiences of being in Yugoslavia, he managed a very impressive tie for fifth and sixth place. Then he came back to New York and won the U.S. championship again, something that turned out to be quite routine for him. He did it again in 1959, 1960, and 1962. In that year (1958) Fischer won the Interzonal tournament in Stockholm, qualifying to move on to a tournament of World Championship candidates in Curacao. He finished fourth in that event, and then went off to win the U.S. championship yet again.

In 1963, Bobby achieved a result never matched in the history of American chess. He not only won the United States championship again, he won all eleven games: no draws, no defeats! To win a twelve player tournament with a perfect score is an almost impossible achievement, especially when all of the opponents are qualified chess masters. The next year Bobby participated in the Casablanca Memorial Tournament in Havana, one of the strongest annual tournaments. He was not allowed to

THE TALE OF AMERICA'S GREATEST PLAYER

travel to Cuba so he had to play by teletype, sitting at a board in the Marshall Chess Club in New York City. Even so, he managed to tie for second place.

It was time to make a serious bid for the World Championship. In 1966 he took on many of the world's top players in the famous Piatigorski Cup in Santa Monica, California. He finished second there, and then dominated the chess Olympiad in Havana (this time the Americans received State Department clearance to travel) scoring fourteen wins, two draws, and only a single loss. Next, it was off to win yet another United States championship in New York. The stage was set for him to participate in a qualifying phase for the 1969 World Championship. That started with the Interzonal tournament in Sousse, Tunisia. Things were going quite well, but, after winning seven games and drawing three, Bobby withdrew from the event. Though he won every tournament he played in 1967, 1968, and 1970 (he barely played in 1969), he had to sit on the sidelines as Boris Spassky won the World Championship title from Tigran Petrosian.

Fortunately, in 1970 he was able to participate in the Interzonal tournament in Palma de Mallorca, Spain. He tore through the field, winning fifteen games, drawing seven and losing only two to take first place. Now he had to defeat three players in individual matches before he could challenge Spassky. Fischer not only achieved the goal, but he did so in a way that has never been duplicated and almost certainly never will. He smashed Mark Taimanov, a top Russian player, 6-0 with no draws. This remarkable achievement was followed by shutting out Bent Larsen, the highly talented Danish player, by the same score. Against Tigran Petrosian – the World Champion who held the title until Spassky took it away – he did lose one game, but won five and drew three to easily take the match. The stage was set for the dramatic confrontation between the famous Russian Boris Spassky, World Champion from the Soviet Union, and Bobby Fischer, the brash, unpredictable American.

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When Bobby defeated Spassky by winning seven, drawing eleven, and losing three, he drew attention from the entire world. The Communist side in the Cold War considered themselves invulnerable at the chess board. A single American smashed this notion, and although Russia has continued to more or less dominate the world chess scene, the domination could never again be complete. Of the first ten World Champions, the Soviet Union had produced five in a row. The defeat was a major psychological blow to the Soviet government. Bobby Fischer had clobbered the Soviet “army.”

In a dispute over regulations for his title defense, Bobby had the title taken away from him by the World Chess Federation. He did not show up to defend his title and so it went to the winner of the Candidates' Match between two Russian players. As a result, Anatoly Karpov became the twelfth World Champion. Unfortunately Karpov never played Fischer. Bobby went into self-imposed exile from the game, not to play chess for twenty years.

In 1992, Bobby did play a match against his old nemesis Boris Spassky and defeated him handily. He hasn't played a public game since and it is not expected that he will ever return to a public chess board. And that's just a sketch of a Bobby's career. There are so many fascinating elements that large books have been written just describing his path through life. The magnificent book by Frank Brady, *Bobby Fischer: Profile of Prodigy*, is the best place to start if you really want to get to know Bobby Fischer, the man.

In this book you will see some of Bobby's best games, and learn important chess lessons. But if you're a fan of chess, you owe it to yourself to discover more about this fascinating American champion. Even now, in retirement, the subject of Fischer dominates many chess discussions. It is a pity this discussion involves not the moves Bobby has made on the chess board, but rather the outrageous comments he has made. I am going to stick to looking at the brilliant, instructive play of the greatest American ever to play the game.

GAME #1: THE GAME OF THE CENTURY



THE PLAYERS: Bobby Fischer (Black) vs. Donald Byrne (U.S.A.)

THE LOCATION: The Rosenwald Memorial, in New York, U.S.A., on 10/17/1956

THE RESULT: The game was played in round 8, with a score of 1 win, 3 draws, and 3 losses. Fischer finished in eighth place out of 12, scoring 2 wins, 5 draws, and 4 losses.

THE OPENING: Gruenfeld Defense, Hungarian Variation

LESSON: THE FOUR RULES OF THE OPENING

An experienced player should aim for four goals.

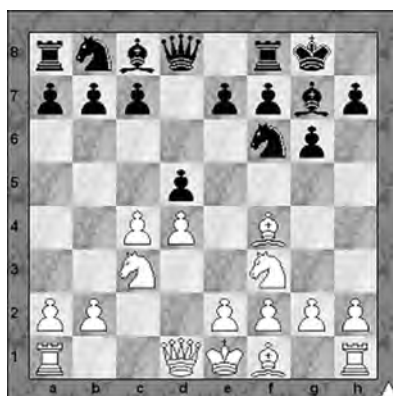
1. You want a pawn, or two, in the center of the board (e4, d4, e5, d5).
2. Your king must be castled to safety.
3. Your rooks should be able to see each other (no pieces in the way).
4. At least one rook should take up a position on an open line, preferably on the d-file or e-file.

Although it isn't necessary to do these in a particular order, beginners should generally use them in the order of the list. Sometimes you may want to move a rook to the center before moving out all of the knights and bishops.

The process of mobilizing your forces and getting them into position is known as "development." Your development is complete when you have castled and the two rooks are connected.

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1.Nf3. The game begins with a flexible move that can lead to just about any opening. Although White does not place a pawn in the center, there is no way to stop that from happening on the next move. Black can place a pawn at d5, but moving a pawn to e5 requires preparation. **1...Nf6.** Fischer similarly refuses to disclose his intentions. However, he takes away any possibility of White getting a second pawn to the center at e4, at least for a few moves. **2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.d4 O-O 5.Bf4 d5.**

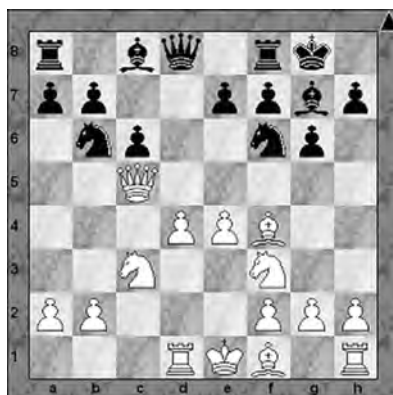


Now we reach the Gruenfeld Defense by transposition. Both sides have a pawn in the center. Black has already castled, and only three moves are needed before the rooks will see each other.

6.Qb3. Byrne chooses to play a Russian strategy, one of the richest and most interesting variations available to White. **6...dxc4; 7.Qxc4.** In the Russian Variations, Black has many defensive schemes. White's move order, playing Bf4 before e4, avoids some of them. **7...c6; 8.e4.** White has the ideal pawn center, and it is up to Black to destroy it. **8...Nbd7. 8...b5; 9.Qb3! Qa5; 10.Bd3 Be6; 11.Qd1 Rd8; 12.O-O Bg4; 13.e5 Nd5; 14.Nxd5 cxd5; 15.Rc1** was played in Miles vs. Kasparov, Basel (2nd match game) 1985. After 15...Qb6, Kasparov obtained a small advantage with 16.Rc5, but could have gotten even more with 16.e6! The alternative 9...Be6; 10.Qc2 Qa5 is Kasparov's suggestion for Black.

GAME #1: FISCHER VS. BYRNE, 10/17/1956

9.Rd1 Nb6; 10.Qc5. This seems to be an odd location for the queen, but in fact it is seen in many examples of the Russian Variation. She can be driven back by moving a knight to d7, but that only gets in the way of the other Black pieces.

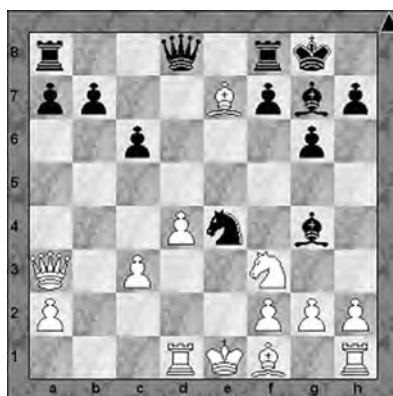


10...Bg4. Black uses a threat on the knight at f3 to place indirect pressure on the pawn at d4. **11.Bg5?** It is generally unwise to reposition pieces that are already in the game until you have castled. White's move is effectively an admission that he's already made a mistake. The other bishop should have entered the game. **11...Na4.** If White captures 12.Nxa4, then Black grabs the e-pawn with 12...Nxe4!, attacking the White queen. The queen can eat the pawn at e7, but after 13.Qxe7 Qa5+ White is in trouble. The open e-file, leading to the White king, is a real problem. **12.Qa3.** As usual in the Gruenfeld, Black's action is at c3, d4 and e4. The fun begins now. **12...Nxc3; 13.bxc3 Nxe4; 14.Bxe7.**

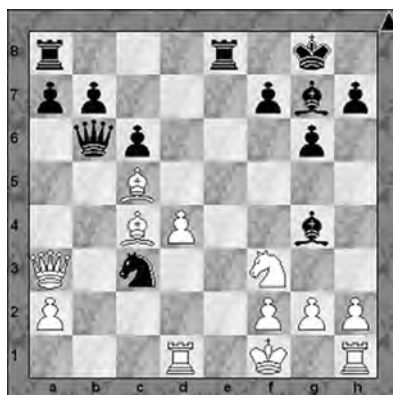
Black offers a rook for the White bishop. Trading a rook for a bishop or a knight is known as "an exchange," which is one of chess's more confusing phrases. In some languages they use a word which means "quality," which is a bit better. The idea is that the rook is worth more than the bishop, so it isn't an even trade. Traditionally, the rook is worth five units and the bishop only three. This is a simplistic generalization that is largely ignored by

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advanced players. Here, the invading dark-squared bishop is far too valuable to give up for the relatively inactive rook at f8.



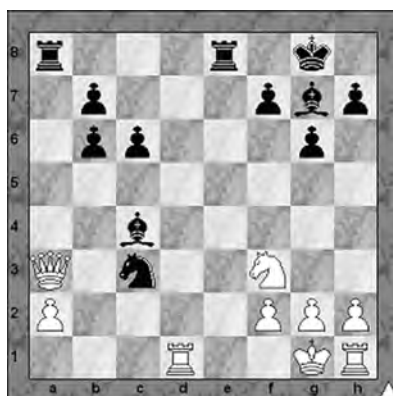
14...Qb6; 15.Bc4 Nxc3. Mission accomplished! White cannot capture the knight at c3 because then Black can move a rook to e8 to pin the bishop. **16.Bc5 Rfe8+.** White is forced to abandon castling and Black has threats against all three back-rank squares. The rook at e8 controls e1, the knight can come to d2 to attack g1, and the bishop can swing from g4 to the queenside, where the a6-f1 diagonal can be used. The key to White's hopes is the powerful defensive ability of the bishop at c4. **17.Kf1.**



17...Be6!! A truly stunning move. In return for the queen, Black gets access to all the critical squares. **18.Bxb6.** 18.Bxe6

GAME #1: FISCHER VS. BYRNE, 10/17/1956

just draws in the powerful White queen. 18...Qb5+; 19.Kg1 Ne2+; 20.Kf1 Ng3+; 21.Kg1 and the end comes with the famous smothered mate. 21...Qf1+; 22.Rxf1 Ne2. Checkmate. **18...Bxc4+; 19.Kg1 Ne2+**. This knight cannot give checkmate, but it can inflict mortal damage. **20.Kf1 Nxd4+; 21.Kg1 Ne2+; 22.Kf1 Nc3+; 23.Kg1 axb6**. Now Black has two pieces and two pawns for the queen, with the White queen and rook under attack and the rook at h1 locked out of the game.



24.Qb4 Ra4!; 25.Qxb6 Nxd1; 26.h3. This creates a new home for the king, so that the rook can enter the game. **26...Rxa2**. A rook on the seventh rank is a mighty attacking force, and without moving until the very end of the game, it leads the attacking forces. **27.Kh2 Nxf2**.

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28.Re1 Rxe1; 29.Qd8+ Bf8; 30.Nxe1 Bd5. This position is an easy win for Black, who has a rook, two bishops and three pawns for the queen. **31.Nf3 Ne4; 32.Qb8.** The queen is out of play here, so Fischer will be able to use his massive forces to checkmate the White king.



32...b5; 33.h4 h5; 34.Ne5 Kg7. Black unpins the bishop at f8. It will play a leading role in the attack. **35.Kg1 Bc5+; 36.Kf1 Ng3+; 37.Ke1 Bb4+; 38.Kd1 Bb3+.**

Black's bishops are simply overpowering, especially when combined with a rook on the 7th rank. **39.Kc1 Ne2+; 40.Kb1 Nc3+; 41.Kc1 Rc2. Checkmate.**

GAME #1: FISCHER VS. BYRNE, 10/17/1956



Game notes: This game was awarded the Brilliancy Prize for the tournament. It has been called “The Game of the Century” for good reason. It is an absolutely incredible performance by a thirteen year-old future World Champion!

GAME #2:

OWN THE CENTER, DOMINATE THE BOARD



THE PLAYERS: Bobby Fischer (White) vs. James Sherwin (U.S.A.)

THE LOCATION: Played at the New Jersey Open Championship, in East Orange, New Jersey, U.S.A., on 9/2/1957

THE RESULT: The game was played in round 7, with a score of 5 wins, 1 draw, and 0 losses. Fischer finished in first place, scoring 6 wins, 1 draw, and 0 losses.

THE OPENING: Sicilian Defense, Closed Variation

LESSON: CONTROLLING THE CENTER OF THE BOARD HELPS WHEN YOU ATTACK ON THE FLANK!

The chessboard is a battlefield. Although the board is flat, it is important to think of the center (e4, e5, d4, d5) as a platform offering excellent views. From the center of the board, pieces, even slow-moving knights, can get to either side of the board quickly.

If you put your pieces in the center of the board, they are subject to attack from enemy forces. That's why you have to try to control as much of the center as possible. If you have pawns in the center, they can not only defend your other pieces, but also guard squares so that enemy forces can't use them.

It is often said, wisely, that the best way to counter a flank attack is to counterattack in the center. To prevent that, control the center when attacking on either side, so that the opponent can't mount the necessary central operations. Study of the different types of center is a rather advanced topic. Beginners should just remember to keep an eye on it. Don't let your opponent seize control of the center, even if you can't dominate it yourself.

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1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 e6; 3.d3. Normally, White moves the pawn to d4 here. Fischer decides to play a “closed” system. There will be no early skirmishes. Both players will get their pieces into the game before the real battles begin. **3...Nc6; 4.g3 Nf6; 5.Bg2.** The formation on the kingside is known as a “fianchetto.” The bishop sits inside the triangle of pawns, defending important squares at f3 and h3 that were weakened when the pawn moved up to g3. The bishop can eventually operate along the a8-h1 diagonal, but should generally remain in place for defensive purposes. **5...Be7; 6.O-O O-O; 7.Nbd2.**



The knight moves to this square, temporarily, because the natural home at c3 is destined to be occupied by a pawn. **7...Rb8.** Fischer remarked that Sherwin slid the rook to this square with his pinky, as if to emphasize the mystery of the move. It isn't the best, however. In 1967, the Mongolian player Miagmarsuren showed a better plan against Bobby at the Interzonal Tournament in Sousse, Tunisia.

7...d5 is the natural move in the Sicilian Defense. In this case, play would take place in the French Defense, which normally starts 1.e4 e6. The game against Miagmarsuren continued 8.Re1 b5; 9.e5 Nd7; 10.Nf1 b4; 11.h4 a5 with play on opposite wings. The position is satisfactory for both players, who can attack at will. If White cannot take out the enemy king, Black's queenside

GAME #2: FISCHER VS. SHERWIN, 9/2/1957

advances will soon lead to a superior game.

8.Re1 d6; 9.c3. This is played to prepare the advance of the d-pawn to d4. Then, if it is captured by Black's c-pawn, White will be able to recapture with the pawn.

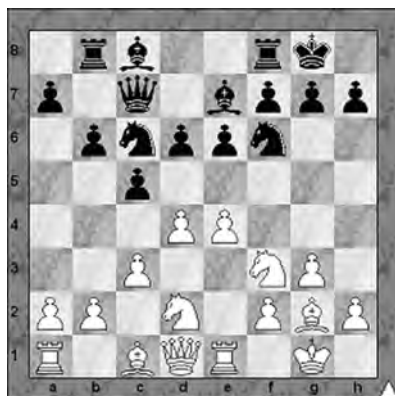


9...b6; 10.d4. This establishes the “ideal pawn center.” The pawns in the center control many important squares along the fifth rank. Black can't use those squares to maneuver pieces. White uses a strategy of attacking on the kingside, since Black cannot easily maneuver forces into defensive positions.

10...Qc7?! With this move, Black evacuates the d-file and prepares to transfer a rook to d8, to support action in the center. The queen adds support to d5, which is already covered by the knight at c6 and pawn at d6. But White, with a pawn at d4, rook at e1 and knight at f3, has equal influence there.

The game might have seen 10...cxd4; 11.cxd4 and now Fischer proposed 11...d5. Huebner's 11...Bb7 would lead to a modern style position with pressure against White's center. When the game was played, such an approach would have been considered too much of a concession.

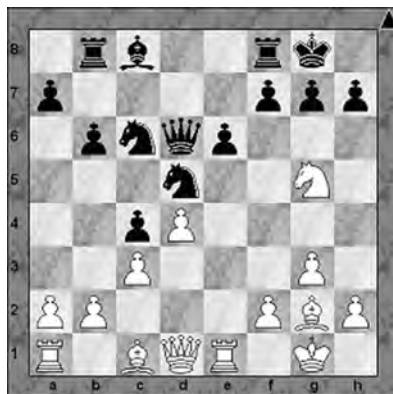
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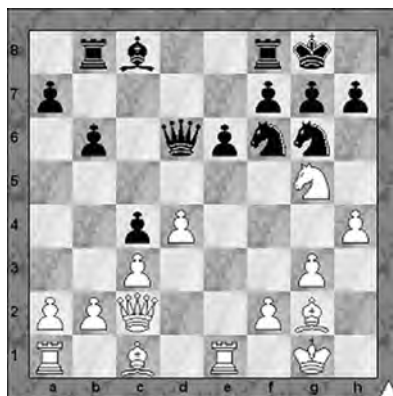
11.e5! Fischer takes control of e5, and chases the knight from f6. This means that the kingside pawns are defended only by the king himself. That's always a dangerous situation. **11...Nd5.** If the knight retreats to d7, then White uses the same strategy seen in the game, and it is even worse for Black, since the knight is awkwardly placed. Sherwin might have tried capturing the pawn and then retreating the knight. **12.exd6 Bxd6; 13.Ne4!** Black is faced with a dilemma. There are no good options.

13...c4. 13...Be7; 14.c4 Nf6; 15.Bf4 skewers Black's queen and rook. 13...cxd4; 14.Nxd6 Qxd6; 15.c4! Nf6 (or ...Nde7); 16.Bf4 is a variation on the same theme. **14.Nxd6 Qxd6.** Black has parted with the useful dark square bishop and is left with a "bad bishop" at c8. Perhaps the remaining bishop can be used on the a8-h1 diagonal, eventually, but Black can't afford slow plans if his kingside is under attack. So Bobby starts to move in for the kill. **15.Ng5!** The knight stares menacingly at h7.

GAME #2: FISCHER VS. SHERWIN, 9/2/1957



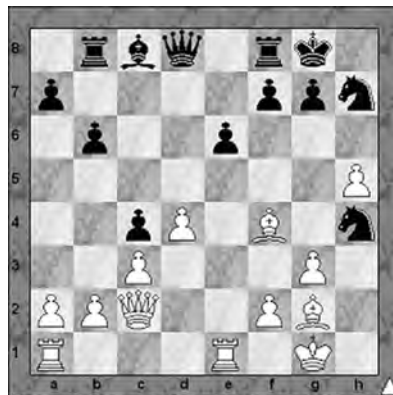
15...Nce7? Sherwin rushes his knight to the kingside to help with the defense. In general, this is a wise strategy. In this particular position, Black should kick out the invading knight right away. **16.Qc2!** The queen is a long range piece and can attack as effectively from c2 as from h5, where it might get chased away by ...Nf6. Fischer threatens immediate checkmate at h7. **16...Ng6; 17.h4.** The pawn plays a major role in the attack. It threatens to chase the enemy knight from g6, allowing checkmate at h7. **17...Nf6.**



18.Nxh7! Fischer does not hesitate to sacrifice the knight. He was able to calculate all the possible defenses, of course. For mere mortals, the calculations might be difficult, but all you really need

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to see is that Black will not be able to control f4, and that means that White will get a bishop there and win material at some point. **18...Nxh7; 19.h5**. The knight must move and White gains access to the critical square. **19...Nh4; 20.Bf4 Qd8**. White could now simply capture the rook at b8, but then Black would eliminate the bishop at g2 and White's king might find himself in some danger. Fischer is intent on a kingside attack, and cannot be bought off by mere material.



21.gxh4! Rb7! A clever move. Black offers the rook to the White bishop at g2. This bishop is needed for defense, so Bobby resists the temptation and continues with the attack. **22.h6!** Black is faced with a difficult decision. Bobby does have a way of making opponents feel uncomfortable!

22...Qxh4. 22...g6; 23.h5 is hopeless. 22...f5 is proposed by Huebner but after 23.Bxb7 Bxb7; 24.f3! White can bring the queen to defend the kingside, and the consequences of capturing at f3 are disastrous. 24...Bxf3; 25.Re3! Be4; 26.Qh2 and soon the rook at a1 will join the battle and finish things off.

23.hxg7! The second of the three barrier pawns is removed. Black is going to have to defend the king with more important pieces. **23...Kxg7?** Black missed a trick here. By moving the rook to d8, the White pawn could be used as a shield against attack! Sometimes an enemy piece can actually help defend. **24.Re4.**

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Fischer uses a “rook lift” to get the rook to a position where it can join the attack. Once the bishop moves from f4, the rook can move along the fourth rank. If Black isn’t careful, the game will be over quickly after the bishop moves to e5 with check. Black has to do something about the check, so White will then capture the queen at h4. This tactic is known as a “discovered attack.” **24...Qh5; 25.Re3.** Since Sherwin didn’t fall for the trick, and still covers g4, the rook slides back, ready to slip over to the g-file or h-file. **25...f5.** This move is necessary to enable the king to flee to the center without leaving the knight at h7 subject to attack. The threat was simply Rh3.

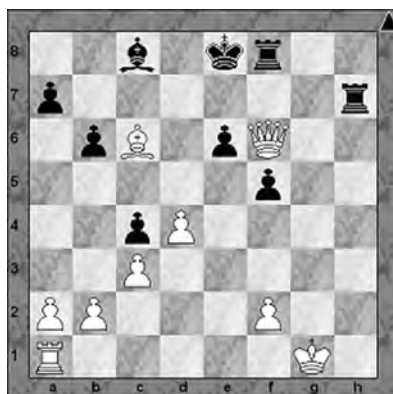
26.Rh3 Qe8; 27.Be5+. Once again, Fischer rejects the materialistic win of the exchange, this time via Bh6+, in favor of a continuing attack. He could have grabbed two exchanges, capturing at b7 as well. But then he wouldn’t be able to use the attacking force of his bishops. In this case, the bishops are just as strong as the rooks.

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27...Nf6. The only move. 27...Kg8 is eliminated by 28.Rg3+ Kf7; 29.Rg7. Checkmate. **28.Qd2 Kf7; 29.Qg5 Qe7.** On 29...Ke7, 30.Rh7+ wins. The knight at f6 is pinned, so the rook cannot be captured. 30...Rf7 loses to 31.Qxf6+! Here it is the rook at f7 that is pinned by its counterpart at h7.

30.Bxf6 Qxf6; 31.Rh7+. White is going to pick off the Black rook at b7, after the queens come off. **31...Ke8; 32.Qxf6 Rxh7.** 32...Rxf6 33.Bxb7 Bxb7; 34.Rxb7 leaves Black a rook down. **33.Bc6+.** Sherwin resigned, because if the bishop interposes at d7, White simply plays Qxe6+ and the queen cannot be captured because the bishop is pinned.



GAME #3:

DEATH TO DRAGONS



THE PLAYERS: Bobby Fischer (White) vs. Bent Larsen (Denmark)

THE LOCATION: The Interzonal, in Portoroz, Slovenia on 8/16/1958

THE RESULT: The game was played in round 8, with a score of 2 wins, 4 draws, and 1 loss. Fischer tied with two others for fifth place out of 22, scoring 6 wins, 12 draws, and 2 losses.

THE OPENING: Sicilian Defense, Dragon Variation

LESSON: OPPOSITE WING CASTLING

If you prefer a peaceful contest, castle on the same side of the board as your opponent. If you are in the mood for a brawl, then placing your king on the opposite flank from your opponent is the way to go.

In the Sicilian Defence (1.e4 c5), White often castles on the queenside, while Black almost always castles on the kingside. This allows each side to attack the other using pawns. The White king, on the queenside, is not weakened when the g-pawn and h-pawn advance. Black, on the other hand, can throw the a- and b-pawns up the board, without having any worries for the king.

When kings are on opposite flanks, there usually isn't much time for patient maneuvering. The race is on, and the winner survives while the losing king dies. Sacrifices are common, and are used to accelerate the attack.

Such a fight is usually a lot of fun, at least for the winner. The winner is usually the player who can calculate more accurately. However, there is always the danger of a knockout blow which can lead to victory even for a player of limited skills. When facing a top player like Bobby Fischer, it is dangerous indeed!

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1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6.



The famous Dragon Sicilian! Bobby didn't have much respect for this exciting line. He claimed that all White had to do is open the h-file, sac a few pieces, and deliver checkmate! Well, it isn't quite that simple, and the Dragon remains a popular opening at all levels of play. The bishop will take up residence at g7 and eventually wreak havoc on the a1-h8 diagonal. If, that is, the Black king can survive a massive kingside assault.

6.Be3 Bg7; 7.f3 O-O; 8.Qd2 Nc6; 9.Bc4. The standard continuation, known as the Yugoslav Attack, sees queenside castling by White, so that the kingside pawns can be hurled forward without exposing the White king to attack. Black has many choices here, but Larsen adopts one that was popular at the time.

9...Nxd4. The exchange of knights brings the White bishop to d4, so that Black doesn't have to face an invasion at h6. These days, it is considered wiser to develop the queenside, and in particular, get a rook to c8. Later, that rook will be sacrificed for the White knight at c3, and Black will attack furiously on the queenside. 9...Bd7 is the modern preference. The knight will go to e5, and later c4, forking the White queen and bishop, so that White will have to exchange the light square bishop for it.

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10.Bxd4 Be6; 11.Bb3 Qa5; 12.O-O-O. The problem faced by Black is that the White king enjoys the protection of two bishops, a knight, and a healthy pawn structure. Although White has no pieces directly attacking the kingside, the pawnstorm develops very quickly.



12...b5. This is the most active plan. Black has also successfully played 12...Rfc8. Black is not concerned about a White capture at e6, because that would get rid of a great defender, the bishop at b3. The damage to the pawn structure would not be significant. **13.Kb1.** White almost always plays this move. It sets up a tactical threat of Nd5, since if Black captures at d2, White takes the e-pawn with check before recapturing the queen. That won't work if the king is still at c1 because the queen at d2 would be captured with check.

13...b4; 14.Nd5 Bxd5; 15.Bxd5 Rac8. 15...Nxd5; 16.Bxg7 leads to 16...Nc3+; 17.bxc3 Rab8. Here 18.cxb4 Qxb4+; 19.Qxb4 Rxb4+; 20.Bb2 Rfb8 was Fischer's analysis. White would lose the bishop and have an inferior endgame. 18.c4 has been played. 18...Kxg7; 19.h4 Rb6; 20.h5 Ra6; 21.Qd4+ e5; 22.Qb2 was tested in Fernandez vs. Lerch, in Catalunya, Spain, 1992, over three decades later! Black has enough pressure at a2 to survive a kingside attack, but White managed to win anyway. 16.exd5 Qxd5; 17.Qxb4, however, was what Fischer intended to play.

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16.Bb3! Bobby keeps the valuable defender. Commenting on this position, he made his famous comment that he “had it down to a science: pry open the KR[h]-file and sac, sac ... mate!” **16...Rc7.** This move protects the a-pawn so the queen can get out of the way. Then, Black can advance the a-pawn and create his own pawn storm. **17.h4.** Here we go! **17...Qb5.** 17...h5; 18.g4 hxg4; 19.h5 leads to a decisive attack. It is fun to hand such positions to a computer, which will start out favoring Black’s extra pawn, and then soon start realizing the danger faced by the Black king, despite the presence of two defenders. Fischer gives the line 19...gxh5; 20.fxg4 Nxe4; 21.Qe3 Nf6; 22.gxh5 e5; 23.h6 and White will win. **18.h5.**



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18...Rfc8. Black just can't keep the h-file closed.

18...gxf5 sees the kingside ripped open with 19.g4! hxf4; 20.fxf4 Nxe4 when 21.Qh2 places Black in a hopeless situation. Fischer finishes elegantly: 21...Ng5; 22.Bxg7 Kxg7; 23.Rd5 Rc5; 24.Qh6+ Kg8; 25.Rxg5+ Rxg5; 26.Qxh7. Checkmate.

18...Nxf5 is a tougher nut to crack, and Bobby didn't mention it. Neither do most other analysts. The solution involves an instructive example of a pawnstorm. 19.Bxg7 Kxg7; 20.g4 Nf6 is a typical Dragon maneuver. 21.Qh6+ Kg8; 22.g5 wins the knight, since Black has to shift the rook from f8 to avoid mate at h7 before the knight can move away.

19.hxg6 hxg6; 20.g4 a5. The race is on. It is no contest.



21.g5 Nh5. 21...Ne8; 22.Bxg7 Nxf7 gets demolished, as Bobby demonstrated: 23.Rh6! Threatening to double rooks on the h-file and checkmate at h8 and h7. 23...e6; 24.Qh2 Nh5 where the kingside explodes after 25.Bxe6! fxe6; 26.Rxg6+ Ng7; 27.Rh1 and Black could resign. White also wins the race after 21...a4; 22.gxf6 axb3; 23.fxf7 bxc2+; 24.Qxc2 Rxc2; 25.Rh8. Checkmate.

22.Rxf5! A standard exchange sacrifice in the Dragon Variation of the Sicilian Defense brings the game to a swift and brutal conclusion. White can invest bits of material, since his bishop at b3 holds off the entire enemy army! **22...gxf5; 23.g6!** Not only does the bishop defend, it also participates in the attack

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by pinning Black's f-pawn. **23...e5**. The pawn must take two steps. On **23...e6**; **24.gxf7+ Kxf7**; **25.Bxg7 Kxg7**; **26.Rg1+** Black's king cannot survive. **24.gxf7+ Kf8**; **25.Be3**. Black's condition is critical, but Larsen comes up with a clever attempt to stay in the game.



25...d5! Larsen gives up a pawn to blunt White's bishop at b3. This was his best chance. **26.exd5?** **26.Bxd5?** falls into the trap. **26...Rxc2**; **27.Qxc2 Rxc2**; **28.Kxc2 Qe2+**; **29.Bd2 Bh6** and Black's h-pawn is more dangerous than the pawn at f7!

26...Rxf7; **27.d6!** The discovered attack on the rook also sends White's passed pawn into the red zone, just two steps away from promotion, **27...Rf6**; **28.Bg5**. The game is effectively over. Not only does Bobby get his exchange back, but with Black's forces occupied with the passed pawn, the king is a dead duck. **28...Qb7**; **29.Bxf6 Bxf6**; **30.d7 Rd8**; **31.Qd6+**. **31.Qh6+** was more efficient, mating in three, but Larsen **resigned** anyway.

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