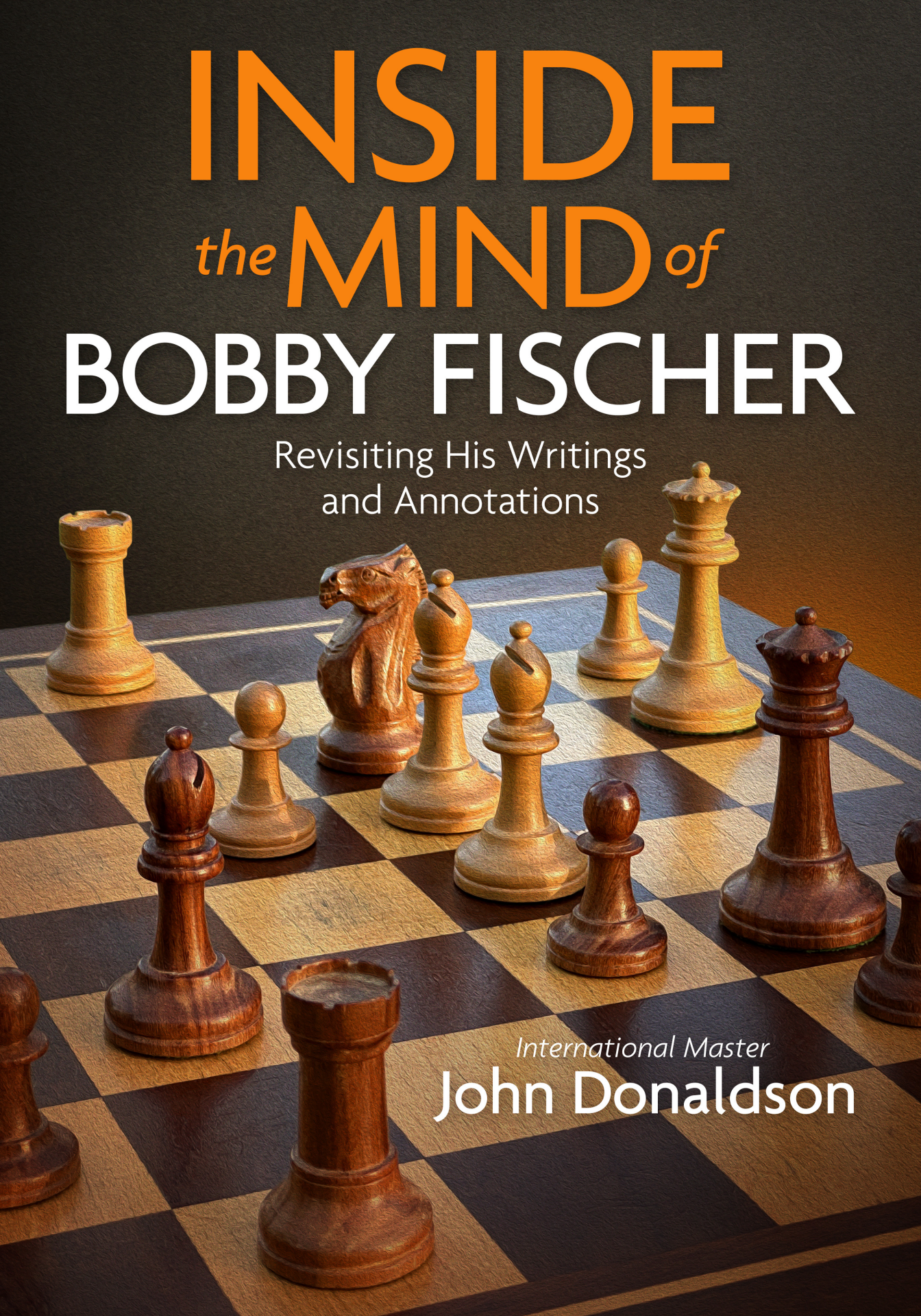


A close-up, low-angle photograph of a chessboard with alternating light and dark squares. Several wooden chess pieces are scattered across the board, including a king, queen, rook, knight, and pawns. The lighting is warm, highlighting the texture of the wood and the geometric patterns of the board.

INSIDE *the* MIND *of* BOBBY FISCHER

Revisiting His Writings
and Annotations

International Master
John Donaldson

INSIDE
the **MIND** *of*
BOBBY FISCHER

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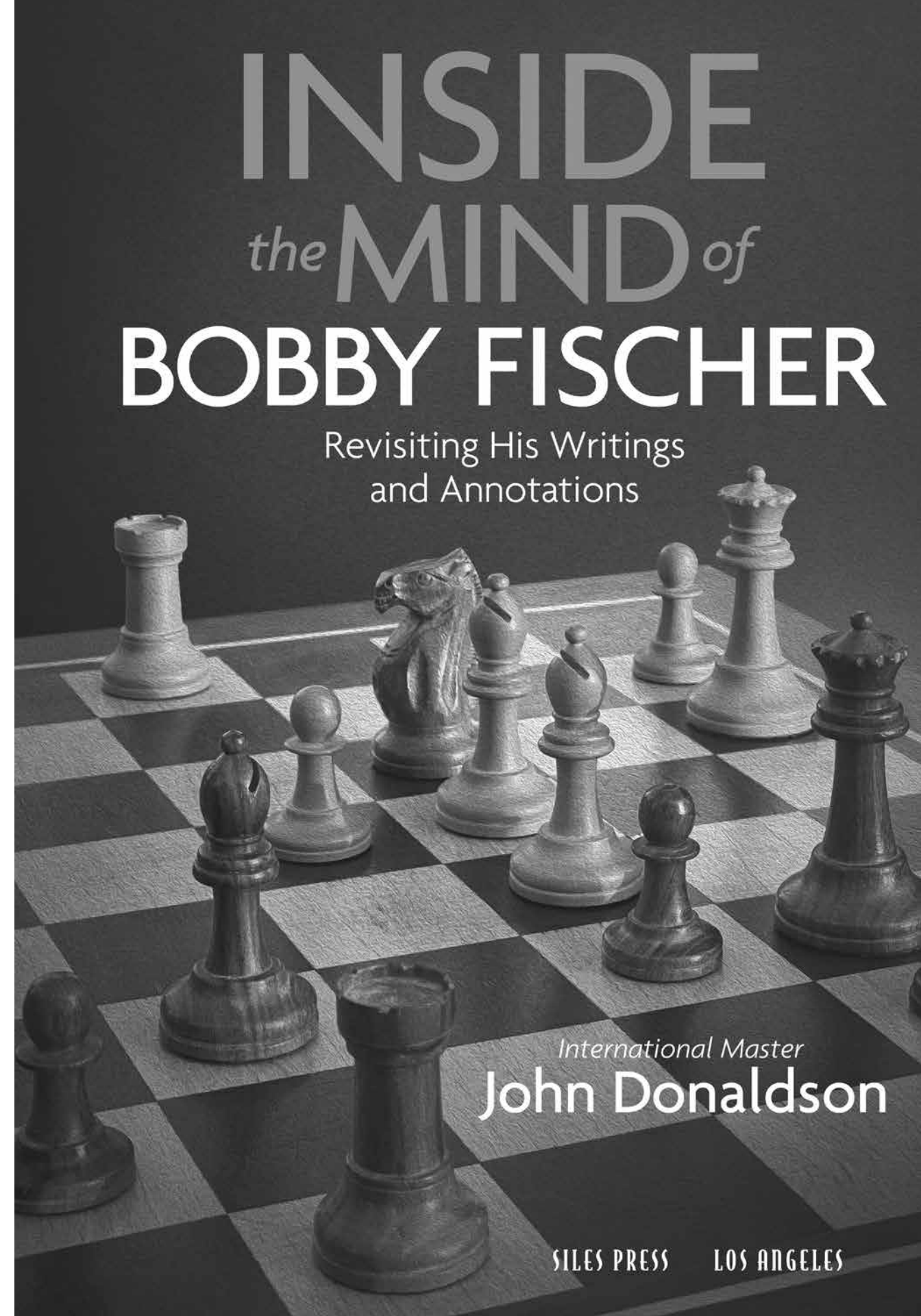
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INSIDE *the* MIND *of* BOBBY FISCHER

Revisiting His Writings
and Annotations

International Master
John Donaldson

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*In memory of International Master Jeremy Silman (1954-2023).
No one could have asked for a better friend.*

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Others have also helped with this book. In memoriam, thanks to Grandmaster Larry Evans for granting permission to use material which first appeared in his magazine the *American Chess Quarterly*. The same holds true for the U.S. Chess Federation (*Chess Life*), and Fischer's great biographer Frank Brady (*Chess World*) for permission to publish Bobby's articles which appeared in their publications.

Many thanks to the John G. White Collection at the Cleveland Public Library, the Mechanics' Institute Library and Chess Room of San Francisco, and the World Chess Hall of Fame in St. Louis. The staff of all three institutions, particularly Shannon Bailey, Emily Allred, and Nicole Tesmer at the WCHOF, were most helpful in making materials available. Every American chessplayer with an interest in the history of the game should visit these places.

Thanks to Edward Winter whose Chess Notes has been a tremendous resource for those interested in chess history for over forty years. His website was visited many times during the writing of this book.

Eduardo Bauzá Mercére translated the interview Fischer gave to Victor Brond and Irena Kavalek provided the unpublished transcript of the interview Bobby and her late husband Grandmaster Lubomir Kavalek did for Voice of America. Many thanks to both for their generosity.

I would like to thank Jeffrey Tanenbaum, Phil Wong, International Master Anthony Saidy, and especially Holly Lee for their proofreading assistance.

INTRODUCTION

Bobby Fischer is remembered as one of the greatest players in the history of chess. He is also credited with writing one of the most important books on the game, *My 60 Memorable Games*. Studying Fischer's writing is key to understanding the thinking of this exceptional chess mind.

My aim in writing this book was two-fold. First was to gather all of Fischer's articles, annotations, and miscellaneous writings in one place. *My 60 Memorable Games* and his other best selling book, *Bobby Fischer Teaches Chess*, are readily available whereas it's hard to find most of his other output.

Second, I took a fresh look and critically examined Fischer's writings. I repeatedly asked myself the question, "How relevant is this material to chessplayers today more than a half-century after the fact?" And my answer is, "very relevant."

Bobby Fischer prided himself on the quality of his annotations, and with a few exceptions, his analysis holds up well. Forthright, pulling no punches, and emphasized with his keen sense of humor (see Bobby's annotations to Reshevsky–Keres from the First Piatigorsky Cup if you doubt this), his writings offer a clear picture of his thought process while playing. Unlike others, Alekhine for example, Fischer honestly admits when he missed something and doesn't pretend to have seen things he didn't.

Although he was not as prolific a writer as fellow World Champions Mikhail Botvinnik and Garry Kasparov, Fischer's love for chess history shines through—what other top player of the twentieth century subjected the 1862 Steinitz–Dubois match to careful scrutiny? Fischer thoroughly studied the games and writings of his fellow American World Champion Wilhelm Steinitz and updated many of his opening ideas (5.d3 in the Ruy López and 9.Nh3 in the Two Knights Defense to give but two examples).

Almost all of Fischer's writings are confined to the period 1958–1971. During this time, he wrote *Bobby Fischer's Games of Chess* (1959), *Bobby Fischer Teaches Chess* (1966), *My 60 Memorable Games* (1969), and *Chess Meets of the Century* with D. Bjelica (1971).

Fischer also wrote articles and annotated games for a number of magazines, plus four tournament books: *XIV Schach Olympiade Leipzig 1960* (Szabo-Fischer);

XVII *Schach Olympiade Havanna 1966* (Fischer–Bednarski); XVII *Olympiade Des Schachspiels Kuba 1966* (Fischer–Jiménez) and the *Second Piatigorsky Cup* (Fischer–Najdorf). In each case, the annotations are a first draft for material later published in *My 60 Memorable Games*. Strangely enough, Fischer didn't annotate any of his games from the 1957/58 U.S. Championship for *Chess Life* or *Chess Review*. Readers of these publications had to be content with notes by Jack Collins (*Chess Life*) and Hans Kmoch (*Chess Review*).

During the 1960s, Fischer wrote two chess columns: *Fischer Talks Chess*, that ran in *Chess Life* from June 1963 thru December 1964, with the editor J.F. Reinhardt giving Bobby carte blanche to write on whatever topic he wanted. The column ended up being predominately a collection of well annotated games including several played by Fischer in American open tournaments. We would not have some of Fischer's games from the Western Open and the New York State Open if not for this column. Bobby also used this pulpit to take the Soviets to task following his cheating accusation after the 1962 Curaçao Candidates.

The second column, which appeared in *Boys' Life*, (the official publication of the Boy Scouts of America¹) ran from December 1966 to January 1970. Aimed at those new to the game, it featured material less advanced than the *Chess Life* column. However, Fischer also included annotations to several games he played in the late 1960s, a period not covered in *My 60 Memorable Games* (these appealed to the more advanced player).

In this volume, I have presented Fischer's writings as they originally appeared, the exception being some light copy editing for readability. Descriptive notation, popular in Fischer's time but little used by players today, has been converted to algebraic.

The game annotations are predominately Bobby's. Comments by me or others is clearly indicated. I chose to restrict myself to using computer engines only when pointing out significant discoveries that overturn Fischer's judgments. There are relatively few of these which speaks to the quality of Bobby's analysis.

One tricky question concerns the spelling of Steinitz's first name. He was born Wilhelm and used that name until he settled in the United States in the 1880s when he switched over to William. Fischer used Wilhelm when annotating the games of the Steinitz-Dubois match and in his article "The Ten Greatest Masters in History." The first world champion became a naturalized citizen in 1888, and played several title matches under the American flag. He wrote *The Modern Chess Instructor* and edited the *International Chess Magazine* while living in the United States.

¹ Now called *Scouting America*.

This is a book about Bobby's writings. However, as I did in *Bobby Fischer and His World*, I've taken the opportunity, when warranted, to shine a light on the many individuals who helped lay the foundation for Fischer's future success. Looking back, it might seem Fischer's march to becoming world champion was inevitable, but it wasn't. During Bobby's formative years his mother's decision to move to New York and his meeting and bonding with Carmine Nigro and Jack Collins were crucial to his future success. Later on, Ed Edmondson, Anthony Saidy, James Slater, Paul Marshall, Max Euwe, Bernard Zuckerman and Guðmundur Thorarinsson (to mention a few key individuals) all provided Bobby with invaluable assistance. I would even add the name of Boris Spassky to the list—how many other world champions would have resisted the temptation to go home with the title after Fischer's forfeiting game two? Bobby definitely didn't become world champion by himself.

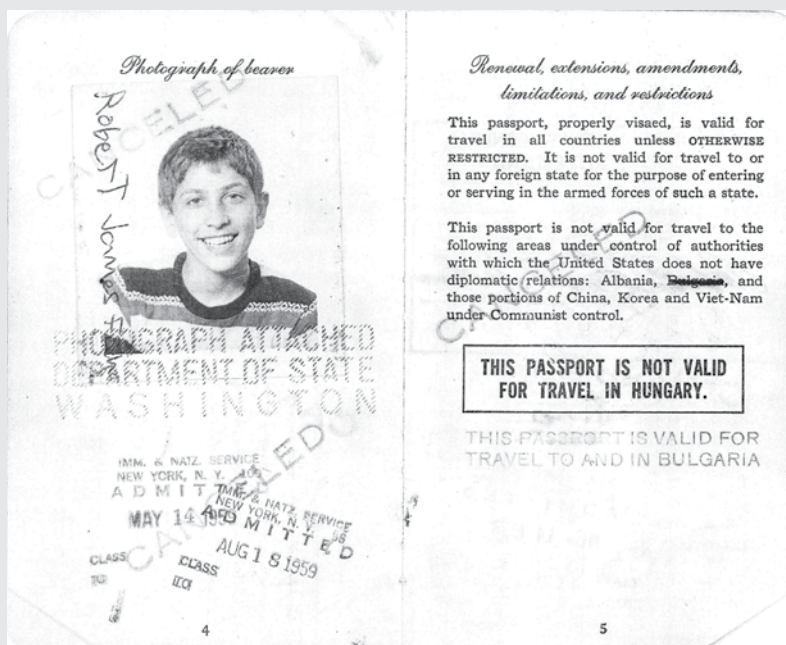
There is no question Bobby Fischer is one of the greatest world champions. He is also arguably the most tragic. Whatever one might think of Fischer as a person, there is no question that whenever he wrote or talked about chess he had something interesting to say. This holds true both when he was an active player and during his long absences from the game. I hope you enjoy reading this book as much as I did researching and writing it.

John Donaldson
imwjd@aol.com
Berkeley, California
September 2025

“Fischer is not afraid of the devil himself.”
—Herman Pilnik



Young Bobby is analyzing a position from the Sämisch variation of the Nimzo-Indian in the bathtub of the Fischer family home at 560 Lincoln Place in the Crown Heights neighborhood of Brooklyn.



The photo page of Bobby's first passport shows a stamp of May 14, 1959, the date of his departure from New York to play in the Zurich International which started on May 19. The stamp for August 18, 1959, is the date Fischer returned from a three month stay in Europe. A few weeks later he would fly to Yugoslavia for the Candidates tournament. One might think the prohibition to travel to Hungary for American citizens (noted on the passport) was connected with the 1956 Hungarian Revolution but in fact there had been a ban since 1951.

GAME OF THE CENTURY

Bobby Fischer's written words first appeared in print in the December 20, 1956 issue of *Chess Life*.¹ There, on page six, in collaboration with his mentor Jack Collins, he annotated his brilliancy. What a game to debut with!!

Christened "Game of the Century" by Hans Kmoch, it was later published with identical notes (except for one tiny change on Black's 11th move) in *Bobby Fischer's Games of Chess*.

Interestingly, while confirming Fischer's great potential, this game did not spark a sudden giant leap forward for him. That wouldn't occur for almost another year when he shared first at the 1957 U.S. Open. Seven months after the "Game of the Century" Bobby was only placed on board seven for the Manhattan Chess Club in its match with the Marshall Chess Club. Bisguier, Turner, Horowitz, Lombardy, Feuerstein, and Sussman all played above him.

Anthony Saidy,² six years Bobby's senior, vividly remembers he was Bobby's superior until the U.S. Open in Cleveland when the situation changed overnight. Soon after, Fischer pulled far ahead.

Game (1) on the following pages was played in the 3rd Lessing J. Rosenwald Trophy Tournament. The wealthy businessman Lessing Julius Rosenwald (1891-1979) sponsored this series of important tournaments in the United States from 1954 to the late 1960s. The first three (1954/55, 1955/56, and 1956) were stand-alone events while from 1957/58 on they doubled as U.S. Championships.

Lessing was not the first chess patron in his family. His father Julius helped fund Sammy Reshevsky's education and chess career.

¹ In Jack Collins' column "Games by USCF Members."

² Fischer, in his draft for the Introduction to *Bobby Fischer's Games of Chess*, writes about his experiences at the 1956 U.S. Open in Oklahoma City. "I roomed with Anthony Saidy, at the time about eighteen or nineteen, a premedical student at Fordham University, whom I liked well. He is a quiet and reliable sort of fellow, not a sarcastic type, and we got along well."

***Chess Life*, December 20, 1956**

(1) Grünfeld D97

Donald Byrne¹ – Fischer

3rd Lessing J. Rosenwald Trophy Tournament (8) 1956

Annotations by Bobby Fischer and Jack Collins

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.d4 0-0 5.Bf4 d5

The opening has transposed into a Grünfeld Defense.

6.Qb3 dxc4 7.Qxc4 c6 8.e4 Nbd7Another system, popularized at Saltsjöbaden,² is 8...b5 9.Qb3 Qa5.**9.Rd1**

If 9.e5 Nd5! 10.Nxd5 cxd5 11.Qxd5 Nxe5!

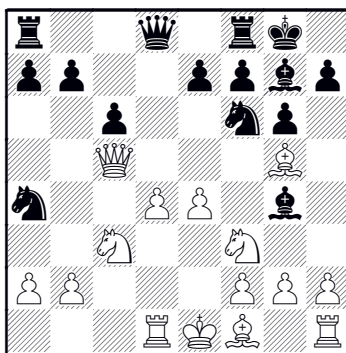
9...Nb6 10.Qc5?

A risky move, simpler is 10.Qb3.

10...Bg4 11.Bg5?

The object of this move is to apply pressure on the e-pawn. However, it neglects development and White immediately finds himself in serious trouble.

[JD]: Amazingly enough, this move loses the game, though it requires superlative play on Fischer's part to prove it. Necessary was 11.Be2 preparing to castle.

11...Na4!!

¹ Donald Byrne (1930-1976), the younger brother of Robert, was one of the best-liked and most respected players of his era who served three times as U.S. team captain. Never a professional player (he was an English professor at Penn State), Byrne was unable to realize his potential as a player due to poor health (lupus) that plagued him for much of his adult life.

² Bobby is referencing Saltsjöbaden, Sweden, host of the 1948 and 1952 Interzonals. The 1948 event saw Soviet players (Bronstein twice, Lilienthal, and Flohr) play the variation Fischer used in this game on four occasions.

With this strong and surprising move, Black quickly exploits the lag in White's development and the position of the queen.

[JD]: In *Bobby Fischer's Games of Chess*, this move receives only one exclamation mark.

12.Qa3

If 12.Nxa4 Nxe4 13.Qb4 (13.Qxe7 Qxe7 14.Bxe7 Rfe8 and wins) 13...Nxc5 14.Nxc5 Bxd1 15.Kxd1 Bxd4 16.Qd2 Bxf2 and with a rook and three pawns for two knights Black has a winning material advantage.

12...Nxc3 13.bxc3 Nxe4

Black sacrifices the exchange for a pawn and a strong attack.

14.Bxe7 Qb6!

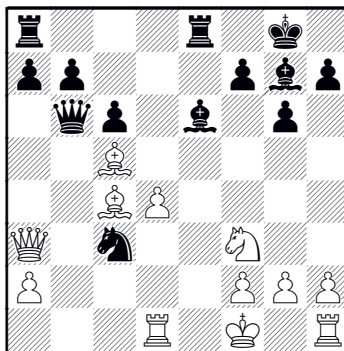
White overlooked this move.

If 14...Qe8? 15.Rd3!.

15.Bc4

If 15.Bxf8 Bxf8 16.Qb3 Nxc3! 17.Qxb6 (17.Qxc3?? Bb4 wins) 17...axb6 18.Ra1 Re8+ 19.Kd2 Ne4+ 20.Kc2 Nxf2 21.Rg1 Bf5+ wins.

15...Nxc3! 16.Bc5 Rfe8+ 17.Kf1 Be6!



A startling queen sacrifice which wins by force! Not, however, 17...Nb5? 18.Bxf7+! Kxf7 19.Qb3+ Be6 20.Ng5+ Kg8 21.Nxe6 Nxd4 22.Nxd4+ Qxb3 23.Nxb3 and White wins.

18.Bxb6

There is nothing better. 18.Bxe6 Qb5+ 19.Kg1 Ne2+ 20.Kf1 Ng3+ 21.Kg1 Qf1+! 22.Rxf1 Ne2 mate!; 18.Qxc3 Qxc5 wins. And if 18.Be2 Nb5! wins easily.

18...Bxc4+ 19.Kg1 Ne2+ 20.Kf1 Nxd4+ 21.Kg1

EVENT Rose 1/2 mile Round 8
DATE Oct 17 1935 COUNTRY G. Gruenfeld
WHITE Byrne BLACK Fischer

WHITE		BLACK		WHITE		BLACK	
1 N-K63	N-K63	21 K-N1	N-K71				
2 P-Q64	P-KN3	22 K-B1	N-B64				
3 N-Q63	B-N2	23 K-N1	PXB				
4 P-Q4	O-O	24 Q-N4	R-R5				
5 B-B4	P-Q4	25 QXNDN	NXR				
6 Q-N3	PXP	26 P-R3	RXR				
7 QXP	P-B3	27 K-R2	NXBP				
8 P-K4	Q-N-Q2	28 R-K1	RXR				
9 R-Q1	N-N3	29 Q-Q7	B-B1				
10 Q-B5	B-N5	30 NXR	B-Q4				
11 B-N5	N-R5	31 N-B3	N-15				
12 Q-R3	NXN	32 Q-N8	P-QN4				
13 P-XN	NXP	33 P-KR4	P-KK4				
14 B-XKP	Q-N3	34 N-K5	K-N20				
15 B-B4	NXBP	35 K-N1	B-B4+				
16 B-B5	R-K1+	36 K-B1	N-N6+				
17 K-B	B-K3	37 K-K1	B-N5+				
18 B-XQ	BXB+	38 K-Q1	B-N6				
19 K-N1	N-K7+	39 K-B1					
20	NXP+	40 K-N1					

The “Game of the Century” between Donald Byrne and Bobby Fischer was played in round 8 of the 3rd Rosenwald Trophy Tournament held October 17, 1956, at the Marshall Chess Club.

Immediately after the game was played, Hans Kmoch, the tournament director, gave both players the bottom (carbon) copy of their scoresheets and kept the top half (the original). This was, and remains, standard practice—the organizer keeps the original scoresheet and the players get the copies.

According to Frank Brady's *Endgame*, it was the great Paul Morphy biographer David Lawson who bought the original scoresheet from Kmoch. Exactly where the scoresheet went after this is not 100% clear. Burt Hochberg was definitely in possession of the relic around 1980, as a photograph of it appeared in Fred Wilson's *A Picture History of Chess* the following year, credited to Hochberg. The same decade, the long-time editor of the U.S. Chess Federation magazine *Chess Life*, sold the scoresheet to Hanon Russell.

Hochberg may have purchased the scoresheet from Lawson, but this is not certain. It's possible there were other owners in between. What we do know, with zero doubt, is that Russell sold the scoresheet to its current owner, David DeLucia. A photograph of the scoresheet appears in David and Alessandra DeLucia's book *Bobby Fischer Uncensored* (p.44). There is also the question of what happened to Bobby's carbon copy. The catalog for Jack Collin's papers at the Lilly Library, part of Indiana University, states it has the scoresheet from the "Game of the Century" with Fischer's annotations.

WHITE		BLACK	
41	K-B1	R-B2	56
42		Mate	57
43			58
44	3. B B y Fischer		59
45			60
46			61
47			62
48	This score and these notes were hand-		
49	written by Bobby at my home soon after		
50	the game was played. They are the first		
51	notes (in collaboration with me) he has		
52	ever written. -- JWC		
53			66
			67
			68
			69
			70

This is true, but it is not the original scoresheet, nor is it the carbon. This scoresheet is a reconstruction that Bobby wrote not long after the “Game of the Century” was played.

The analysis referred to in the Lilly Library catalog is also by Jack Collins, not just Bobby. This collaboration appeared in Collins’ column in the December 20, 1956 (p.6), issue of *Chess Life* and the notes were the first by Fischer to appear in print.

These annotations appeared verbatim in *Bobby Fischer’s Games of Chess* (pp. 64-67), the draft of which is part of the Marshall Chess Club/Russell Targ donation, housed at the World Chess Hall of Fame in St. Louis.

So, what actually happened to Bobby’s carbon scoresheet of the game? In *Endgame* (p.68), Frank Brady writes: “That night (October 17, 1956) Bobby kept his copy—the carbon—which he wouldn’t part with for many years. Indeed, upon request, he’d take out of his pocket the folded and slightly worn scoresheet and show it to admirers.”

Brady writes Fischer eventually parted with his copy, but would a carbon scoresheet have survived for long crumpled up in thirteen-year-old Bobby’s pocket? Looking back, the request by Jack Collins for Bobby to make a backup copy of the “Game of the Century” was a prescient one.

Two scoresheets in Bobby’s hand of the “Game of the Century” survive, one (the original) with David DeLucia in Florida and the other (the reconstruction) at the Lilly Library in the Collins Manuscripts.

If 21.Rd3 axb6 22.Qc3 Nxf3 and Black comes out a rook and two bishops ahead.

(23.Qxc4 Re1 mate.)

21...Ne2+ 22.Kf1 Nc3+ 23.Kg1 axb6 24.Qb4 Ra4! 25.Qxb6

If 25.Qd6 Nxd1 26.Qxd1 Rxa2 and 27...Ra1 wins.

25...Nxd1 26.h3 Rxa2 27.Kh2 Nxf2 28.Re1 Rxe1 29.Qd8+ Bf8

30.Nxe1 Bd5 31.Nf3 Ne4 32.Qb8 b5 33.h4 h5 34.Ne5 Kg7

Threatening 35...Bd6 36.Qe8 Be6 and the win of the knight.

35.Kg1 Bc5+ 36.Kf1

Now Black mates in six moves. But on 36.Kh1 Black mates in three.

36...Ng3+ 37.Ke1 Bb4+ 38.Kd1 Bb3+ 39.Kc1 Ne2+ 40.Kb1 Nc3+

41.Kc1 Rc2, 0-1.

LEAVES OF CHESS

Fischer followed up his tie for first in the 1957 U.S. Open with a win in the New Jersey Open over Labor Day weekend. He then played an eight-game match with Filipino junior champion Rodolfo Cardoso, winning 6-2. Sponsored by the Pepsi-Cola Company, it was held at the Manhattan Chess Club on Friday nights and weekends (Bobby was still in high school) from September 6-22.

The financial situation of Bobby and his family in the 1950s has been described as difficult and lower middle class (at best) by Frank Brady and Russell Targ, but late summer of 1957 must have seen an uptick in the family's situation. Wins in the U.S. Open, New Jersey Open, and the Cardoso match saw Bobby bring in \$1,200, the equivalent of almost ten times that amount today.

Bobby annotated one of his games from the match with Cardoso, but not in *Chess Life* or *Chess Review*. Instead, it appeared in the little-known *Leaves of Chess*, which ran from 1957 to 1961. This magazine, published by Ordway Southard, was primarily a scholarly publication, but clearly had a fondness for Bobby. It printed all the games from the Cardoso match in its July-October 1957 issue and subsequently published a number of his games from different events. Fischer was listed as a life subscriber near the end of the publication's run.

Rodolfo Cardoso (1937-2013) was the first Asian player to earn the International Master title (1957). This was due in part to his result in the 1956 Olympiad, where he had the second-best result on board four, scoring 13 out of 17.

Cardoso represented the Philippines in the 1957 World Junior held in Toronto (at the same time the U.S. Open was going on in Cleveland three hundred miles south) and was seconded by future FIDE President Florencio Campomanes. Campomanes had come to the United States a decade earlier on a Fulbright Fellowship to study for his master's at Brown University and later pursued a doctorate at Georgetown. Campo was well-known in American chess circles during his time living in the United States (roughly 1947 to 1954), but likely met Bobby for the first time during the match with Cardoso. The two would be in contact for almost half a century.

Game (2) that follows is the first Bobby annotated by himself.¹

¹ *Leaves of Chess*, July-October 1957, (p. 19).

Leaves of Chess, July-Oct 1957

(2) Réti A07

Fischer – Rodolfo Cardoso

New York (8) 1957

1.Nf3

After seven Sicilians, with the last two drawn, I thought it was timely to change the opening.

1...Nf6 2.g3 d5 3.Bg2 Bf5 4.0-0 e6 5.d3 Bd6

The bishop is misplaced on this square. Better was 5...Be7.

6.Nbd2 h6?

Due to misplacement of the bishop, Black has no time for this move.

7.e4!

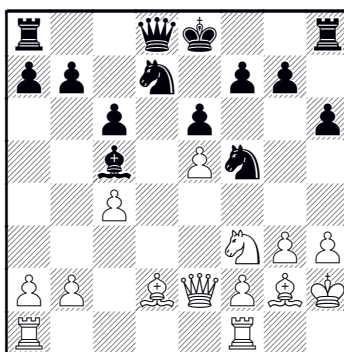
Careless playing of the opening by Black gives White unexpected opportunities. For example, if 7...dxe4 8.dxe4 Nxe4 9.Nxe4 Bxe4 10.Qd4, and White regains the pawn with advantage.

7...Bg4

This is the only alternative to 7...dxe4, on account of the threat of 8.e5.

8.h3 Bxf3 9.Nxf3 Nbd7

If 9...dxe4 10.dxe4 Nxe4 11.Nd4 Nc5 (11...f5 12.Nxe6) 12.b4 wins.

10.Qe2 dxe4 11.dxe4 Bc5 12.e5 Nd5 13.c4 Ne7 14.Bd2 Nf5 15.Kh2 c6

Trying to strengthen himself on the white squares, he weakens himself on the black ones. 15...a5 was better.

16.b4 Be7 17.Bc3

Overprotecting e5, and making way for the attack on the gaping hole at d6.

17...g5?

In desperation at the unfolding of White's plan, Black is dreaming of an attack of his own on the kingside.

18.Nd2 Qc7 19.Ne4 Rg8

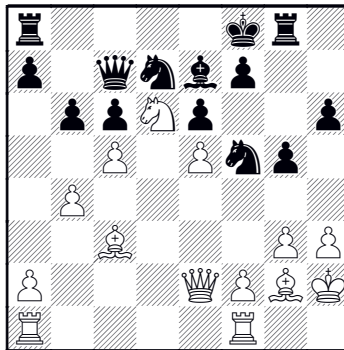
19...Nxe5 loses a piece after 20.f4. White would also do well after 20.Nxg5.

20.c5 Kf8

20...Nxe5 loses a piece after 21.Nd6+

21.Nd6 b6

Black now weakens himself on the white squares as well, while he is thinking of trying to dislodge the knight. Meanwhile, White is not planning to use the knight for a bind, but a breakthrough.



22.Nxf5! exf5 23.e6!

A crushing blow. Black's whole center is demolished, and with all White's pieces in play he can hardly hope to survive.

23...Bf6 24.Rad1 Ne5 25.Rfe1

Black fights back gamely, but this puts an end to his defensive resources.

25...Ng4+ 26.hxg4 Bxc3 27.Rd7 Qc8 28.Rxf7+ Ke8 29.Red1

29.Qd3 also wins, but I have found that over the board it is better not to make unnecessary sacrifices.

29...Rg7 30.Rxg7 Bxg7 31.gxf5 Kf8 32.e7+, 1-0.

Fischer's victory in this match was his fourth consecutive success following previous wins in the U.S. Junior, U.S. Open, and New Jersey Open. It would be natural to assume he was only going in one direction with his brilliant victory in the U.S. Championship right around the corner. This was not the case. He had a mediocre result in the 1957 North Central Open held over the Thanksgiving holidays in Milwaukee.

His score of 6-2 included a loss to Charles Kalme,¹ who three years later would be one of the stars for the American student team in Leningrad. Kalme, a two-time U.S. Junior winner and four years older than Bobby, had a 50% lifetime score against Fischer (1½-1½). He also had the distinction of being the last player to defeat him in a Swiss system event.

Fischer's score could have been worse. In round six he would have lost (not drawn) with Martin Harrow² if the latter had played 30...dxc2 instead of 30...Qxc2. Harrow (1933-2023) remembered in a March 2022 phone call with the author that both players were in mild time pressure for the last dozen moves. Milwaukee was not their first meeting. A year earlier, they drew in a Petroff in an unpublished game played in New York. Bobby got the better of the opening as White, but when two pawns up agreed to a draw as Black had strong attacking possibilities.

The North Central Open was Bobby's last tournament before the U.S. Championship, but he almost got invited to play another event. Dallas 1957 is mostly forgotten today, but the eight-player double round-robin was the strongest tournament held on American soil between New York 1927 and the First Piatigorsky Cup in 1963. All the best players in the West participated, with Reshevsky and Gligorić tying for first. Bobby, whose success in the U.S. Open was in the future, was understandably not considered when the invitations for Dallas went out earlier in the summer. However, when it appeared Miguel Najdorf might be a last-minute no-show for Dallas, Fischer was considered as his replacement. Najdorf did make it, so one can only speculate how Bobby might have done, Dallas 1957 being considerably stronger than the U.S. Championship.

¹ Mikhail Tal was not the only Latvian to give Bobby a hard time early in his career as Latvian-Americans Viktor Pupols (1955), Charles Kalme (1957), and Edmar Mednis (1962) also defeated him.

² Dr. Harrow, known to all as "Marty," was born in New York City. He was a top ten finisher in a number of U.S. Opens in the 1950s and early 1960s and more importantly a giant in the fields of psychology, psychiatry, and phenomenology.

BOBBY FISCHER'S GAMES OF CHESS

and the 1957-1958 U.S. Championship

Sometime in the early part of 1959, a slender hardback book with a dust jacket made its appearance. Originally scheduled to appear in 1958, *Bobby Fischer's Games of Chess* was conceived to be a 66-page work consisting of a biographical introduction, Bobby's thirteen games from the 1957/58 U.S. Championship and his "Game of the Century" with Donald Byrne.¹ Shortly before going to press, Fischer had a great success at the Portorož Interzonal, qualifying for the Candidates, and a decision was made to include all twenty games from the event without diagrams or annotations, pushing the total page count to 116.

Fischer worked on his first book during the winter and spring of 1958 and finished it when he was fifteen, making him a contender for the title of youngest chess master and published author. Others on the short list are Larry Evans (age sixteen) *Vienna International Tournament 1922*, Murray Chandler (age fifteen) *A White Pawn in Europe*, and Daniel Naroditsky (age fourteen) *Mastering Positional Chess: Practical Lessons of a Junior World Champion*.

Determining the absolute record holder in this category is difficult—does one consider when the book was finished or when it was actually published? A trickier question is, to what extent was the author helped? Typing and editing assistance are admissible, but to qualify for consideration, the youngster must have actually written the book.

There has never been an argument regarding the titles by Chandler, Evans, and Naroditsky, but there has been much debate about *Bobby Fischer's Games of Chess*. Edward Winter's Chess Notes 543² quotes a contribution from a U.S. correspondent, John Rather, that included the following remark:

¹ This game won the tournament brilliancy prize for which Bobby received \$50, the equivalent of close to \$600 today. Sammy Reshevsky won \$1,000 for finishing first.

² Also see Winter, Edward, *Chess Explorations*. London: Cadogan Books, 1996, (p.108).



Bobby punches his clock after play 15...h6 in his game against Eliot Hearst in the Metropolitan League championship final on May 26, 1957. Fischer, playing for the Manhattan, won this game. Photo: Richard Shorman.

AUG.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Date <u>6-7</u> 1957	
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THE CITY OF NEW YORK

—1957 TENNIS PERMIT—\$5.00

MALE-FEMALE ISSUED TO: Bobby Fischer
RESIDENCE: 560 1st Ave. Apt 38

	JULY	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
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Bobby was a keen tennis player in his teens and twenties and even participated in the Dewar's Sports Celebrity Tennis Tournament in June of 1972, competing against the likes of O.J. Simpson and Joe Frazier.

"Pomar's *Mis Cincuenta Partidas con Maestros* (1945) and *Bobby Fischer's Games of Chess* (1959) were published when their nominal authors were fourteen and fifteen respectively, but the extent of their involvement in preparing the books is in doubt."

Rather (1920–2013), who enjoyed a long and distinguished career with the Library of Congress and was for many years one of the preeminent chess book dealers in the United States, makes a serious charge. Did Collins do all the work with Bobby's name included only for sales?

A close examination of the annotations in *Bobby Fischer's Games of Chess* does not support this position for a number of reasons. First, Bobby thanks Collins for his assistance in the preparation of the manuscript. Throughout his life, Fischer was always a stickler for giving proper credit in his chess writing. Shortchanging the efforts of Collins would not have been consistent with this.

Second, both Fischer and Collins are credited with the annotations to D. Byrne–Fischer. The other annotated games in the book, from the U.S. Championship, are not treated this way.

Third, the notes to the Cardoso games, which appeared in the *Leaves of Chess*, are similar in style to those in *Bobby Fischer's Games of Chess*. They read like the work of a young teenager and not the more mature Fischer who penned *My 60 Memorable Games*. In *Endgame*,¹ Brady mentions *Bobby Fischer's Games of Chess* was criticized for its sparse annotations.

Fourth, throughout *Bobby Fischer's Games of Chess* one can find the word Black appearing two times and occasionally three times in a single sentence. This is not forbidden, but it's hard to believe that Collins, who writes admiringly about *The Elements of Style* in his *Maxims of Chess* (p. xi), would annotate Fischer's games in such a way.

Fifth, Fischer did not play in any tournaments between the end of the U.S. Championship and the training matches with Matulović and Janošević (January through July 1958). Shortly before the Interzonal, Fischer wrote in his introduction:

"Writing this book was a big job, the annotations required practically every weekend from February to June and sometime in between."

Lastly, there is no reference to Collins' effectively ghostwriting *Bobby Fischer's Games of Chess* in either *Profile of a Prodigy* or *Endgame*. These are the definitive works on Fischer's life and what the author Frank Brady does write in the second edition of the former is the following:²

"Most of Bobby's spare time through the first six months of 1958 was spent preparing (with the help of Jack Collins) a book of his games. He dictated his

¹ Brady, Frank, *Endgame: Bobby Fischer's Remarkable Rise and Fall—from America's Brightest Prodigy to the Edge of Madness*. New York: Crown Publishers 2011, (p.162).

² Brady, Frank, *Profile of a Prodigy*. New York: David McKay Company, 1973, (p. 23).

annotations into a tape recorder and his mother transcribed them. It was a difficult task for Regina Fischer since she did not play chess, having what Bobby described as an ‘anti-talent’ for the game...”

Interestingly, Brady also mentions in *Profile of a Prodigy* that Bobby first took the book to World Publishing Company to see if they would publish it. Only when they passed did it end up in the hands of Simon & Schuster (also the publisher of *My 60 Memorable Games*). While *Bobby Fischer’s Games of Chess* is not a lengthy work, writing it on spec without a publisher lined up was a risky endeavor.

Two items in the possession of the World Chess Hall of Fame strongly suggest the majority of what would become *Bobby Fischer’s Games of Chess* was already completed in May of 1958. That month, Bobby and Regina received a letter acknowledging the book was copyrighted. The WCHOF has the kit Bobby used to make the diagrams, a very labor intensive process at the time.

In *Endgame*¹ Brady writes when Fischer landed at Idlewild (later renamed John F. Kennedy International Airport) after the 1958 Interzonal, his mother and sister were not the only individuals present. Norman Monath,² an editor at Simon & Schuster, was there to deal with last-minute details regarding the book, specifically whether the Interzonal games should be added.

With neither Fischer nor Collins alive, it’s impossible to know with absolute certainty exactly who did what. We can say, taking into account the known facts, it seems very likely this was Bobby’s book, at least as far as the annotations to the games go. Where Collins may have helped Bobby is in the Introduction. It reads well and is one of the primary sources for information about Fischer’s early life.

The biographical information which appears in *Bobby Fischer’s Games of Chess* varies considerably from an earlier draft in the possession of the WCHOF. Written before the contract with Simon & Schuster was signed, it was likely judged too informal for publication by Monath. It is referred to as the Bobby Fischer Autobiographical Essay by Frank Brady in *Endgame*.³

The Lessing J. Rosenwald Tournament for the U.S. Championship was held from December 15, 1957, to January 5, 1958.⁴ All rounds were played at the Manhattan Chess Club (then located at the Hotel Woodrow at 35 W. 64th street near Broadway) except for rounds

¹ Brady, Frank, *Endgame: Bobby Fischer’s Remarkable Rise and Fall—from America’s Brightest Prodigy to the Edge of Madness*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2011, (pp. 105-106).

² Monath, Norman (1920-2011) is best known as the composer for *The Muppet Show* (1976) and *The Pogo Special Birthday Special* (1969). He also wrote a number of instructional books.

³ Among the tidbits Bobby shares is that he was a big baby. Regina told him he weighed 9¼ pounds at birth.

⁴ Because of a school exam conflict Fischer pre-played his game with Feuerstein on December 8. The official playing schedule was December 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 29, 30, January 2 and 5. The other dates were used to play adjournments or were free days. Most rounds started at 6PM with games adjourned after five hours of play.

seven, eight, and nine which were held at the Marshall Chess Club (23 West 10th street). The tournament was organized by Maurice Kasper of the Manhattan Chess Club, with the American Chess Foundation (now Chess in the Schools) and the U.S. Chess Federation (USCF) as sponsors.

According to Bobby, in his unpublished Introduction to *Bobby Fischer's Games of Chess*, the tournament was not ideally arranged. He writes:

First of all, it must be said that the conditions under which the tournament was played were downright impossible. At the Manhattan Chess Club there are two rooms. The room in the back is much smaller than the one in the front. So, we were put in the back room. We were seated back-to-back with each other. As if this were not bad enough, seats were lined up right next to our tables so that we could barely move. If you wanted to leave the table you had to ask permission of the onlooker, who generally thought he was doing you a favor by moving. There was also far too much noise. This had a bad effect on some of the players in the tournament.

At the Marshall Club the conditions were even worse. Although we played in the middle of winter it was absolutely stifling. No one could move, even with permission. The onlookers were invited to sit right next to you and if you asked them to leave or be quiet, they were highly insulted. So much for the conditions.

This was the strongest U.S. Championship in decades, according to *Chess Life* in its report on the event. Among those participating were two grandmasters (Arthur Bisguier and Sammy Reshevsky) and the reigning World Junior Champion, William Lombardy. The event could have been even stronger if not for the last-minute substitutions of Sidney Bernstein for Larry Evans, and Attilio Di Camillo for Robert Byrne.

Many have mentioned Fischer would never have become such a great chessplayer if his family had not moved to New York in the late 1940s. This is unquestionably true, but just as important as moving to the center of American chess was the timing.

The period from the end of World War II to the mid-1950s was a sorrowful time for American chess. Losses to the USSR in team matches (1945, 1946, 1954, and 1955) left no question that the glory days of the 1930s, when the United States dominated the Chess Olympiads, were long over. Not only was the United States no longer number one, but it also wasn't even number two. Witness a defeat by the Yugoslavs in a 1950 radio match and fourth- and fifth-place finishes, respectively, in the first two chess Olympiads after the war, Dubrovnik 1950 and Helsinki 1952.

Even more disturbing was the dismal state of chess organization in the United States, which led to not sending teams to the 1954 and 1956 Olympiads and only sporadically holding the U.S. Championship. Prior to Fischer's debut in the 1957/58 event, the Championship had been held only twice that decade (1951 and 1954). Objectively speaking, neither event was that strong, with over half the field consisting of 2300-2400 rated masters. The standard bearer for American chess, Sammy Reshevsky, didn't play in either tournament. Fortunately, by the time Bobby got good, things had changed.

The first bright spot for American chess in the post-World War II period was the emergence of Robert Byrne (born 1928), Arthur Bisguier (1929), Donald Byrne (1930), and Larry Evans (1932). These four talents showed their ability early on, with the results of D. Byrne (3-1 over Averbakh) and Evans (2½-1½ over Taimanov) the American highlights of the 1954 USA-USSR match held in New York City.

By the late 1950s an even more promising trio would emerge in William Lombardy (born 1937), Raymond Weinstein (1941), and Bobby Fischer (1943). Lombardy entered the 1957/58 U.S. Championship as the reigning World Junior Champion and Fischer held the titles of U.S. Junior Open and U.S. Open champion. Weinstein made a breakthrough in 1960, playing a key role for the American entries in the World Student Team Championship (team gold) and the Olympiad (team silver), winning the first of three consecutive Marshall Chess Club Championships as well as finishing third in that year's U.S. Championship.

The performance of the U.S. team at Leipzig 1960 was particularly impressive. Playing with three youngsters (Fischer, 17; Weinstein, 19; and Lombardy, 22) backed by R. Byrne, Bisguier, and Rossolimo, they not only took home the silver medals, but did it in convincing fashion, scoring 29 points from 44 and winning 8 of their 11 matches in the finals. The team was two points ahead of Yugoslavia, the silver medal winner in 1956 and 1958.

Substituting Reshevsky for Rossolimo would have potentially strengthened the United States team, but it is doubtful it would have improved the final result. The Soviet Union fielded one of the strongest Olympiad teams ever with Tal, Botvinnik, Keres, Korchnoi, Smyslov, and Petrosian. They steamrolled the opposition, scoring 34 points and losing only one individual game. Still, American chess fans could look to the future with three such promising young talents. Sadly, only Fischer would realize his full potential, with the priesthood robbing Lombardy of some of his best years, and Weinstein being stricken with mental illness just a few years after the Olympiad.

It should be noted Pal Benko, who defected from Hungary in the summer of 1957 after the World Student Team Championship in Iceland, and who attended

the 1957/58 U.S. Championship as a spectator, did not officially represent the United States internationally until 1962.

Before the 1957/58 U.S. Championship, most prognosticators picked Fischer to finish in the middle of the pack, but right from the start he was among the leaders and never relinquished his position. Objectively speaking, Bobby's final score of 10½-2½, a full point ahead of Reshevsky, exaggerates his domination of the field. Playing over the games he won against Berliner and Lombardy (both of which he could have lost), one realizes that if the strong don't make their own luck they certainly take full advantage of their opportunities. Fischer, despite his youth, shined in his analysis of adjourned games and achieved the maximum possible.

Arthur Feuerstein (1935-2022) was one of the more promising young American players in the late 1950s, tying for third in the 3rd Rosenwald Trophy Tournament and playing on the 1957 and 1958 U.S. entries in the World Student Team Championship. Feuerstein then focused his attention on his professional career and family, though he did win the 1971 Manhattan Chess Club Championship.¹

(3) French Closed C00

Fischer – Arthur Feuerstein

U.S. Championship (1) 1957/58

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.g3

Transposing into a King's Indian reversed, which I played three times in this tournament.

[JD]: When Bobby made the transition from club to tournament play in 1955 he was already a King's Indian player and by the next year had decided to try it with colors reversed (1.Nf3 and 2.g3). He pretty much gave up playing the King's Indian Attack after his first U.S. Championship but returned to it in 1966-1970. During this period, he won many famous and classic games which still serve as model examples of how White should handle the middlegame in such structures.

Fischer's later adoption of the King's Indian Attack was marked by one important difference from his earlier days. His opening move was 1.e4, not 1.Nf3, and he only transposed into the KIA when Black had committed to ...e6, either on the first move (1.e4 e6 and then 2.d3) or in the move order seen in this game.²

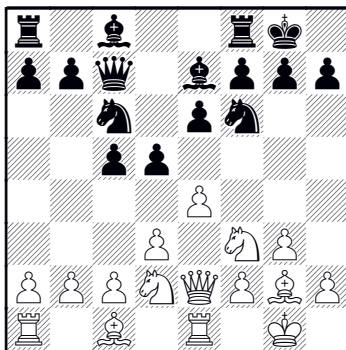
¹ See *Chess Life*, January 2012, pp.20-25 for more on Feuerstein.

² Fischer was not as successful in his use of the King's Indian Attack against the Caro-Kann.

3...Nf6 4.d3

If 4.e5 Nd5.

4...d5 5.Nbd2 Be7 6.Bg2 0-0 7.0-0 Nc6 8.Re1 Qc7 9.Qe2



9...Rd8

Better is 9...Bd7. Then if 10.e5 Ne8 followed by 11...f6 challenging the center.

10.e5 Ne8 11.c3

If immediately 11.Nf1 Nd4! 12.Qd1 (12.Nxd4 cxd4 and Black has good play on the c-file.) 12...Bd7 13.c3 Nxf3+ 14.Qxf3 Bc6 or 14...b5 with a good game for Black.

11...b5

On the right path.

12.Nf1 b4 13.Bf4

Overprotecting the e-pawn, preventing ...f6 and preparing a kingside attack.

13...Qa5?

A strategic mistake. Correct is 13...bxc3 14.bxc3 Rb8. As played, Black does not obtain enough play on the queenside to counterbalance White's coming attack on the other wing.

14.c4! Nc7

Where's the knight going?

15.h4

The key move to White's attack. White's plan is to (a) advance the h-pawn to h6, forcing a weakness at f6; (b) maneuver a knight to g4; (c) trade off Black's king bishop. The outcome of the game depends on the execution of this plan.

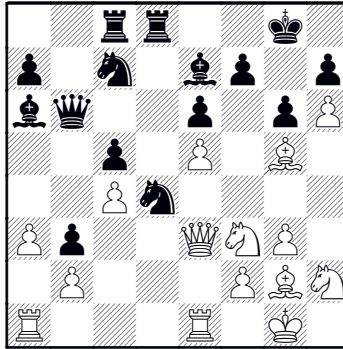
15...Qb6 16.h5 b3

With the idea of artificially isolating White's c-pawn.

17.a3 dxc4 18.dxc4 Ba6

Better is 18...Bb7 followed by 19...Nd4.

19.N1h2 Rac8 20.h6 g6 21.Bg5 Nd4 22.Qe3



22...Bxg5

Of course, not 22...Nc2 23.Qf4 with an overpowering attack.

23.Qxg5 Ne8

Reinforcements. If 23...Bxc4 24.Ng4 with a strong attack.

24.Ng4 Nf5 25.Rac1 Qc7 26.Nd2 Rd4

If instead 26...Qb6 27.Ne4 (threatening Ngf6+), and Black's queen is too far away to defend the kingside.

27.Nxb3 Rxc4 28.Rcd1

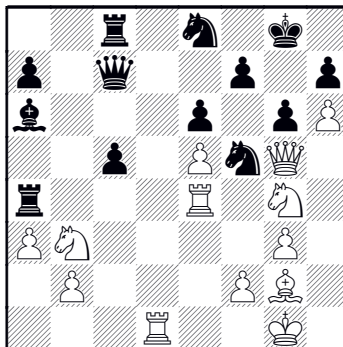
Gaining control of the d-file and leaving Black's rook stranded.

28...Ra4

If 28...Rc2, 29.Be4 is killing. And if 28...Qe7 29.Qxe7 Nxe7 30.Ne3 Ra4 31.Rd7.

29.Re4!

With the indirect plan of dislodging Black's knight on f5.



29...Bb5 30.Rc1

In order to draw Black's queen away from the defense of the kingside.

30...Qb6 31.Nd2

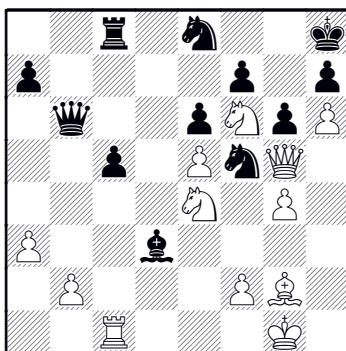
This brings White's knight into the game with decisive effect. There is no adequate defense against 32.Rxa4 and 33.Ne4.

31...Rxe4 32.Nxe4 Bd3

Loses flatly. The only way to avoid immediate disaster is 32...Qd8 33.Qxd8 Rxd8 34.Rxc5 with an easy endgame win.

33.Ngf6+ Kh8

If 33...Nxf6 34.Nxf6+ Kh8 35.g4 Nd4 36.Ne4! Qd8 37.Rxc5 wins.

34.g4!

34...Bxe4 35.Bxe4 Nd4 36.Nxe8 Qd8 37.Qxd8 Rxd8 38.Nd6 Ne2+ 39.Kf1 Nxc1 40.Nxf7+ Kg8 41.Nxd8 Nb3 42.Ke2 Nd4+ 43.Kd3 Kf8 44.Nc6, 1-0.

Herbert Seidman (1920-1995) is little remembered, but for over two decades (roughly 1942-1962) was rated among the top dozen players in the United States. He played in nine U.S. Championships, with his best result in 1961/62. In that event he tied for third but had the distinction of winning more games than any other player. Such combativeness was typical of Seidman, whom David Daniels and William Lombardy in their book *U.S. Championship Chess*¹ refer to as “one of the most imaginative attacking players in the country.”

Like most of the players in this event (Reshevsky, Lombardy, Fischer, and out of towners Berliner and Di Camillo being the exceptions), Seidman worked during the tournament. This meant a grueling schedule as weekday rounds for the event, played at a time control of 40 moves in 2½ hours, were from 6 to 11PM (2 to

¹ Lombardy, William and David Daniels, *U.S. Championship Chess*. New York: David McKay Company, 1975, (p. 41).

7PM on weekends). Also keep in mind that many of the players did not live in Manhattan and had a thirty- to sixty-minute commute home on the subway.

Adjournments were played off on Fridays, but no set time was given in the schedule. Since more than half the field worked during the day, these were likely played in the evening.

December 24, 25, and 31 were free days providing the players a much-needed break.

Seidman, a six-time Marshall Chess Club Champion and board 8 for the Americans in the 1945 USA–USSR radio match, emerges with a very promising position when Bobby deviates with 10...Nc6 in the opening. Fischer points out in his notes that 15.Rhe1 was much stronger than the move Seidman played (15.Rhf1), as were 15.e5 and 15.Bxf6. This was the first, but not the last, bullet Bobby dodged in this event.

(4) Sicilian Najdorf B98

Herbert Seidman – Fischer

U.S. Championship (2) 1957/58

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6

The Najdorf variation.

6.Bg5

The most popular variation nowadays. Other moves are 6.Be2, 6.Bc4, 6.g3 and 6.f4.

6...e6 7.f4 Be7

On 7...Qb6 White would answer 8.Qd2 Qxb2 9.Rb1 Qa3 10.e5 with a strong attack.

8.Qf3 Qc7

Avoiding the complications of 8...h6 9.Bh4 g5 10.fxg5 Nfd7 11.Nxe6! fxe6 12.Qh5+ Kf8 13.Bb5 as in the games Keres-Najdorf, Geller-Panno, and Spassky-Pilnik, in which the Argentinians suffered a triple catastrophe.

9.0-0-0 h6 10.Bh4 Nc6?

Better is 10...Nbd7 as I played against Bernstein in a similar position.

[JD]: The game with Bernstein was played in round 4 of this tournament.

11.Nxc6 Qxc6

If 11...bxc6 12.e45 with advantage to White.

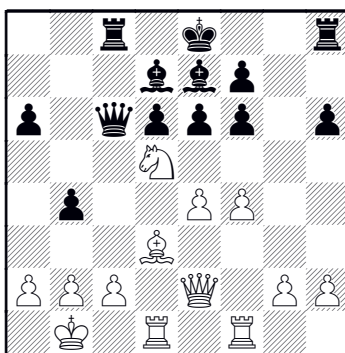
12.Bd3 Bd7 13.Qe2

A strong move. Now Black must worry about such moves as e5, f5, and Nd5.

13...Rc8 14.Kb1 b5 15.Rhf1

Although the text move is not bad, it is hard to understand why White did not go one square further. 15.Rhe1 b4 16.Nd5 and White has a very strong attack.

15...b4 16.Bxf6 gxf6 17.Nd5



17...exd5 18.exd5 Qc7

It would be very dangerous to take the d-pawn. 18...Qxd5 19.Bxa6 Qe6 20.Qd3. And the various defensive tries ...Rc6, ...Rc5, and ...Rd8 lead to extremely complicated positions.

19.Bxa6 Rb8 20.Rfe1 Bc8 21.Bxc8 Rxc8 22.Rd4!

The key move to White's attack which threatens 23.Rc4 and 23.Re4.

22...0-0

The only defense. Black still has one trump left—his pressure on c2.

23.Re4

White must not allow Black's bishop to get free by ...f5 and ...Bf6.

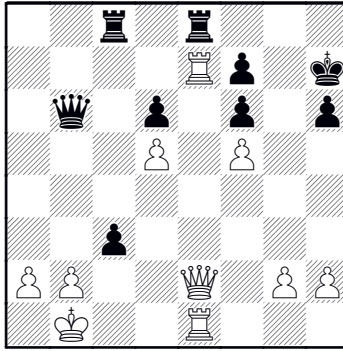
23...Rfe8 24.f5 Kh7

A strange position. White can't seem to remove the pressure from c2 and free his queen for action.

25.c3

This allows Black to immediately force a draw.

25...bxc3 26.Rxe7 Qb6



27.Rxf7+

If 27.b3 c2+ 28.Kc1 Qd4 29.Rxf7+ Kg8 and Black wins!

27...Kg8 28.Qg4+ Kxf7, ½-½.

Fischer beat Sammy Reshevsky on June 13, 1957, in a ten-second a move game, but Sammy played blindfolded, and Bobby did not! Six months later they met on even terms due to Fischer's dramatic improvement.¹

Reshevsky, who tied for first in the big international event at Dallas which ended December 16 (his first-round game in the U.S. Championship was postponed allowing him to travel back to New York), played 27 games in a little over a month at the end of 1957.

Larry Evans, twenty-one years Sammy's junior, was originally scheduled to play in the U.S. Championship but dropped out at the last moment. This may have been due to fatigue, or possibly disappointment in his performance in Dallas where he shared last place with Najdorf.

(5) Sicilian Paulsen B41

Fischer – Sammy Reshevsky

U.S. Championship (3) 1957/58

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 a6

Reshevsky played this variation a few times during the tournament.

5.c4

¹ Fischer seems to have considered the experience gained by playing lots of blitz chess to be a key reason for his improvement. In a letter to Shernaz Kennedy, from December 29, 1981, he writes: "I can tell you now in my opinion a very good way to improve is with 5 or 10 second a move chess. I have always felt this was better training than five-minute chess. I grew up playing that kind of chess and attribute much of my skill to it."

Since Black has not forced White to play Nc3, White tries to get a type of Maróczy Bind.

5...Nf6 6.Nc3

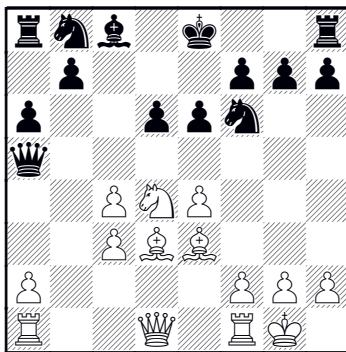
White allows his pawns to be doubled in order to gain the two bishops and secure rapid development.

6...Bb4 7.Bd3 Qb6?

A weak move which loses a few tempi for nothing. Possibly Reshevsky was hoping for 8.Nde2? Bc5! 9.0-0 Ng4 10.Qe1 Qd6! 11.Nf4 g5 12.Be2 Nxf2!.

Black should have played 7...Bxc3+ 8.bxc3 d6 with an approximately even game.

8.Be3 Bxc3+ 9.bxc3 Qa5 10.0-0 d6



Of course, Black cannot take off the White c-pawn, for after 10...Qxc3 11.e5, Black's development lag is too great.

11.c5!

Very strong. White undoubles his pawns and opens the game up for his two bishops—all with tempi.

11...Qc7

Not 11...dxc5 12.Nb3 Qc7 13.Bxc5 and Black's king is trapped in the center of the board.

12.cxd6 Qxd6 13.f4 Qe7

Black's fifth queen move. White has a clear advantage in development and space.

14.c4?

A mistake. White wanted to play e5 and not allow Black to play his knight to d5. White should have played 14.e5 Nd5 15.Bd2 maintaining his advantage.

14...e5

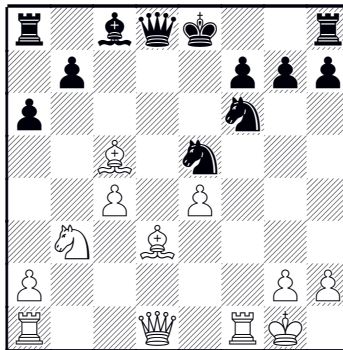
The move I overlooked. On 15.fxe5 Ng4! and Black regains his pawn with a good game.

15.Nb3 Nbd7 16.fxe5

Another mistake. White should have played 16.f5 and White still has some advantage. Now Black gets the advantage.

16...Nxe5 17.Bc5 Qd8?

And now Black throws away his advantage. Correct was 17...Qc7 followed by 18...Be6 and 19...0-0-0. Now by a few sharp moves White manages to neutralize his pawn weaknesses.

**18.Bd4 Qc7 19.Qd2! Be6 20.Qf4! Nfd7 21.Be2 f6**

White was threatening 22.Nc5! White's next move gives Black a little weakness on his kingside.

22.Bh5+ g6 23.Be2

Unfortunately for White, 23.Nc5 does not work: 23...Nxc5 24.Qxf6 Nf7 and Black remains a piece ahead.

23...0-0 24.Rac1 Rac8 25.c5 Nc6!

Black gains a little space by this move.

26.Qe3 Nde5 27.Bb2 Rcd8 28.h3

So do me something!

[JD]: This expression from the 1950s translates to: "I dare you to try to stop me or do what you will to try to stop me." Its meaning here is understandable. Bobby makes it clear he is holding his ground and challenges Reshevsky to come up with something in the balanced position.

28...Rd7 29.Kh1 Qd8 30.Rfd1 Rff7 31.a3 Rxd1+

Black cannot improve his midgame position any longer and decides to play an endgame which is quite even.

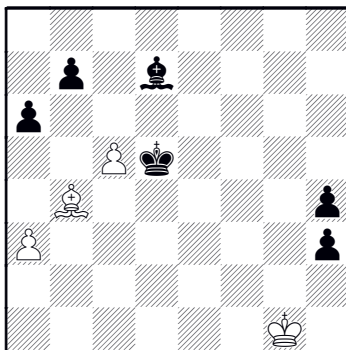
32.Rxd1 Rd7 33.Rxd7 Qxd7 34.Nd4 Nxd4 35.Qxd4 Qxd4 36.Bxd4 Kf7 37.Kg1 Bc4

This move is equivalent to offering a draw. The game goes for another twenty moves, but the outcome is already decided.

38.Bxe5 Bxe2 39.Bd6 Bd3 40.e5 f5 41.Kf2 g5 42.g3

Here the game was adjourned.

42...Be4 43.Ke3 Bd5 44.Bc7 Ke7 45.h4 f4+ 46.gxf4 gxf4 47.f5 h3 48.Bd6+ Kf7 49.Kf2 Be4 50.Kg3! Bxf5 51.Bc7 Bd7 52.Ba5 Ke6 53.Bb4! Kxe5 54.Kh2 h5 55.Kg3 Kd5 56.Kh2 h4 57.Kg1, ½-½.



Winner of both the Marshall and Manhattan Chess Club Championships and an eight-time U.S. Championship participant in a span stretching from 1936 to 1961, Sidney Bernstein (1911-1992) tries the same Nd5 sacrifice as his friend and fellow Marshall clubmate Herbert Seidman. Here the circumstances are not as favorable for White and Bobby defends perfectly.

Bernstein wrote a well-regarded collection of his games, *Combat: My 50 Years at the Chessboard* and co-authored *Kemer International Tournament, 1937* with Fred Reinfeld.

(6) Sicilian Najdorf B99

Sidney Bernstein – Fischer

U.S. Championship (4) 1957/58

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Bg5 e6 7.f4 Be7 8.Qf3

So far, the same as my game against Seidman. But this time I tried a different plan of development.

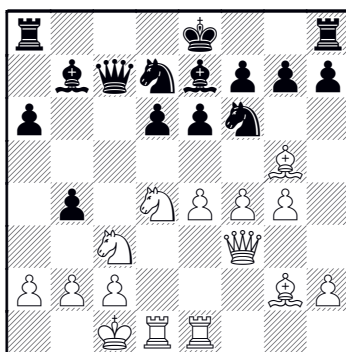
8...Nbd7 9.0-0-0 Qc7 10.g4

White begins a kingside advance and also makes way for fianchettoing the KB.

10...b5 11.Bg2

Naturally not 11.e5? Bb7. Now White does threaten 12.e5.

11...Bb7 12.Rhe1 b4



Even as I played this move, I wondered if White would sacrifice his knight in almost the same manner as Seidman did against me.

13.Nd5 exd5

If 13...Nxd5 14.exd5 Bxg5 15.fxg5 Ne5 16.Qb3 with the better game for White.

And if 13...Nxd5 14.exd5 Bxd5? 15.Qxd5! exd5 16.Rxe7+ Kd8 (16...Kf8 17.Bxd5) 17.Rde1 Kc8 18.Bxd5 Kb8 19.Nc6+ and wins.

14.exd5 Kf8

The only move.

15.Nf5 Re8 16.Qe3

White must play with direct threats.

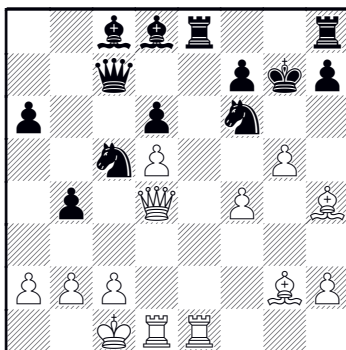
16...Bd8 17.Qd4 Bc8!

The key Black's defense. White will not be able to maintain his knight on f5.

18.Bh4 Nc5 19.Nxg7

Otherwise, White's attack will be completely finished.

19...Kxg7 20.g5



20...Bf5

A nasty threat. All of a sudden Black threatens mate in two by 21...Nb3+.

21.gxf6+ Kh6

What, me worry?¹ This move is better than the tame 21...Kf8, which surrenders control of the e-file. Actually, Black's king is quite safe on h6.

22.Qc4

White avoids immediate disaster, but only at the cost of trading queens. If 22.Kb1 Bxc2+ 23.Kxc2 (23.Ka1 Nb3+) 23...Ne6+ and wins.

22...Nd7

Forcing the trade of queens, which puts an end to all of White's hopes, for after 23.Qb3 Bxf6 White is lost.

23.Qxc7 Bxc7 24.Bf3 Bd8! 25.Bg5+ Kg6 26.Rg1 Bxf6 27.Bh4+ Kh6

28.Bxf6 Nxf6 29.Rg5 Be4 30.Rf1 Bg6 31.Rfg1 Re3 32.Bd1 Ne4

33.R5g2 f5

White could just as well resign at this point.

34.Be2 a5 35.h4 Rh3 36.h5 Bxh5 37.Bd3 Bg6 38.Rf1 Rf8 39.Kd1 Nf6

40.Re1 Nxd5 41.Rf2 Re3 42.Rg1 Re7 43.Kd2 Kg7 44.Rf3, 0-1.

Here the game was adjourned, but White of course, resigned without resuming play.

When one talks of great American talents in the first two decades after World War II, Bobby Fischer and William Lombardy are always mentioned. Larry Evans, who made his debut for the U.S. Olympiad team at 18 and won the first

¹ "What, me worry?" was the motto of Alfred E. Neuman, the main character of *Mad*, a popular humor magazine at the time.

of five U.S. Championship titles the following year, is also sometimes included in the conversation. However, if you had spoken to their contemporaries, they would have selected another player as the most talented—Arthur Bisguier. Art was never a serious student of the game and fell far short of realizing his potential as a player, but his great intuition enabled him to compete successfully for many years.

Bisguier won his first meeting against Bobby a year earlier and they drew in the U.S. Open a few months before the U.S. Championship. This game, the start of 13 consecutive wins for Bobby over Arthur, was a clear indication their relationship had changed.

(7) French Winawer C16
Fischer – Arthur Bisguier
 U.S. Championship (5) 1957/58

1.e4 e6

The first time I have ever seen Bisguier playing the French Defense.

[JD]: Indeed, this is one of only a handful of games where Bisguier met 1.e4 with 1...e6 in his seventy-year career. Their six other games where Bobby was White saw a Two Knights Defense, a Petroff, and four with the Ruy López.

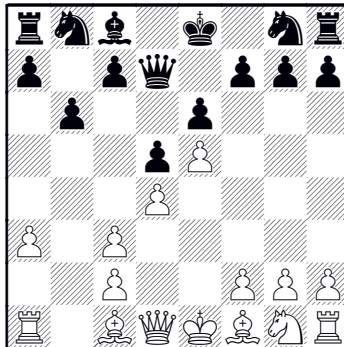
2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 b6

A hypermodern move. The main idea is to trade off Black's bad bishop.

5.a3

On 5.Qg4, Black should play 5...Bf8! followed by 6...c5, attacking White's center.

5...Bxc3+ 6.bxc3 Qd7



If Black immediately plays 6...Ba6, then 7.Bxa6 Nxa6 8.Qg4 and Black will either have to give up castling or weaken his kingside pawns.

7.Qg4 f5 8.Qg3 Ba6 9.Bxa6 Nxa6

The exchange of bishops has put Black's QN in a very awkward position, and also Black has trouble in developing his kingside.

10.Ne2 0-0-0

This move, as they say, castles into it. But Black does not seem to have anything better. For example 10...Qf7 (in order to play ...Ne7) 11.Qd3! Nb8 12.c4 and White undoubles his pawns with the far better game.

11.a4

Beginning the attack on the king.

11...Kb7 12.0-0 Qf7

In order to develop the KN.

13.c4

Opening the queenside and undoubling White c-pawns.

13...Ne7

If 13...dxc4 then 14.Qc3 regaining the pawn.

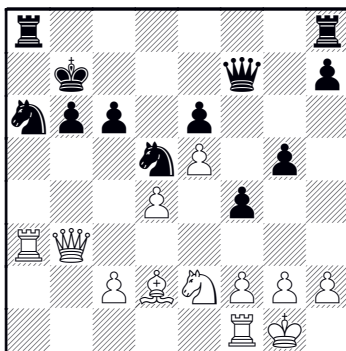
14.Bg5 dxc4 15.Qc3 Nd5 16.Qxc4 Ra8 17.Bd2

Otherwise, White's bishop gets into trouble after 17...f4.

17...f4 18.Ra3

To prevent Black from getting any counterplay.

18...g5 19.a5 c6 20.axb6 axb6 21.Qb3



White has weakened Black's queenside and is now ready to drive Black's KN back. If instead of the text, White plays 21.Rfa1, Black plays 21...Nac7 and trades rooks off, ending White's attack.

21...Nac7 22.c4 Rxa3 23.Qxa3 Ra8 24.Qb3 Ne7 25.Nc3

Threatening 26.Ne4, followed by 27.Nd6+.

25...Qf5 26.Qb4 Nc8 27.Na4 f3

A counterattack which almost works. Black threatens 28...Rxa4!

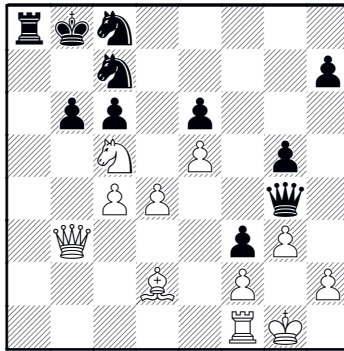
28.Nc5+ Kb8 29.Nd7+ Kb7 30.Qb3

Keeping an eye on Black's pawn on f3.

30...Qg4

With a double threat of 31...Qxg2 mate and 31...Qxd4 winning a piece.

31.Nc5+ Kb8 32.g3



32...Qxd4

Suicide. This move no longer wins a piece but gives the bishop a new diagonal hitting on the Black b-pawn.

Black's best chance is 32...Ra2! White should play 33.Bxg5! (33.Qxa2 Qh3 draws) 33...Rb2! 34.Qc3 Rc2! 35.Qd3 Rxc4! 36.Bd8! Now White threatens 37.Bxc7+ Kxc7 38.Qxh7+ and mate in a few moves.

If Black plays:

- a) 36...Rxd4 37.Bxc7+ Kxc7 38.Qxd4! wins.
- b) 36...bxc5 37.Qxc4 Qh3 38.Qb3+ and 39.Qxf3.
- c) 36...Qh3 37.Qxf3 even stronger than (37.Nd7+) 37...bxc5 38.Qxc6 Nd5 39.Qb5+, etc.
- d) 36...Nb5 37.Na6+ Kb7 (37...Ka8 38.Qxc4) 38.Qxh7+ Kxa6 39.Ra1+ Na3 40.Rxa3+ Kb5 41.Qb1+ and wins.
- e) 36...Nd5 37.Na6+! Kb7 (37...Ka8 38.Qxc4) 38.Ra1, wins (38...Qxd4 39.Qa3!).

33.Be3 Qa1 34.Rb1 Ra3

If 34...Qa2 then 35.Nd7+ Kb7 36.Qxa2 Rxa2 37.Nxb6 Nxb6 38.Rxb6+ Kc8 39.h3 Kd7 40.Bxg5 and White should win.

35.Nd7+ Kb7 36.Qd1

The bone crusher. Black loses everything.

**36...Qa2 37.Nxb6 Nxb6 38.Rxb6+ Kc8 39.Qxf3 Qxc4 40.Qf8+ Kd7
41.Qxa3, 1-0.**

Hans Berliner (1929-2017) is remembered today as the 1965-1968 World Correspondence Chess Champion and as a pioneer in the field of computer chess. He was also a strong over the board player who competed in four U.S. Championships. Berliner, along with fellow U.S. Chess Hall of Famer Milan Vukcevic, shares the distinction of being the strongest American player never awarded the International Master title.

(8) King's Indian Sämisch E88

Hans Berliner – Fischer

U.S. Championship (6) 1957/58

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 e5 6.Nge2

Better is 6.d5. The knight on e2 is not too well placed. Trading queens leads to nothing, i.e. 6.dxe5 dxe5 7.Qxd8+ Kxd8 8.Bg5 c6 9.0-0-0+ Kc7! or 8.Be3 Be6 9.0-0-0+ Nbd7.

6...0-0 7.Be3 c6 8.d5

Or 8.Qd2 exd4 9.Nxd4 d5 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.e5 Ne8 12.f4 f6 with a good game for Black.

8...cxd5 9.cxd5

9.Nxd5 would be better, as White's king knight would get into play more easily through c3.

9...Ne8 10.Qd2 f5 11.0-0-0

The seventh match game Smyslov-Geller, Moscow 1955, continued 11.h3 Nd7 12.g3? Nb6 13.b3 f4! and Black stands better.

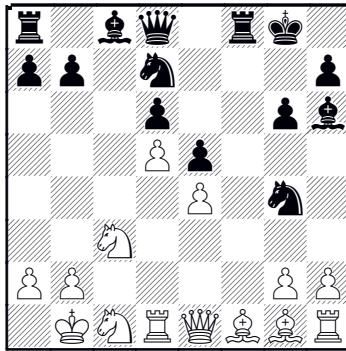
11...Nd7 12.Kb1 Nef6

A strong move. Black threatens 13...fxe4 14.fxe4 Ng4 and no matter how White plays, he will not be able to maintain his very valuable QB. 13.exf5 would cede the center to Black. And if 13.h3 Nc5 with a fine game for Black.

13.Nc1 fxe4 14.fxe4 Ng4 15.Bg1 Bh6

Gaining an important diagonal.

16.Qe1



16...Nc5 17.Nd3

If 17.h3 Nf6 18.Bxc5? dxc5 19.d6 a6 20.Bc4+ Kg7 and White's d-pawn is a weakness rather than a strength.

17...Nxd3 18.Bxd3 Bd7 19.Bb5

White wants to trade off as many pieces as possible, figuring on a draw. If instead 19.h3 Nf6 20.Be3 Bxe3 21.Qxe3 Nh5, Black would still have a little advantage.

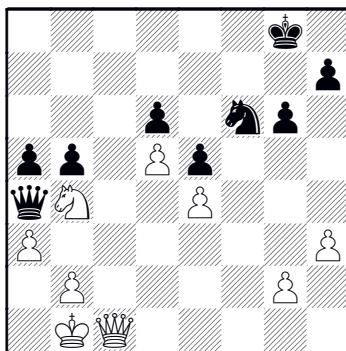
19...Bxb5 20.Nxb5 a6 21.Na3?

This move is completely wrong. The knight does nothing on this square. Now White's e-pawn becomes a grave weakness. After 21.Nc3 Black, however, would have a slight edge.

21...Rc8 22.h3 Nf6 23.Be3 Bxe3 24.Qxe3 Qa5 25.Rhe1 b5 26.Rc1 Qa4

Black just keeps piling up the pressure. Sooner or later White will have to lose something. The next moves are easy to understand.

27.Nc2 Rf7! 28.a3 Rfc7 29.Nb4 Rxc1+ 30.Rxc1 Rxc1+ 31.Qxc1 a5!



Wins a pawn.

32.Qc8+ Kg7 33.Qc7+ Kh6 34.Qc1+

34.Qxd6 axb4 35.Qxf6 Qd1+ 36.Ka2 b3 mate!!

34...g5 35.h4 Nxe4 36.Nc6 b4

The killer. White's game is collapsing all over.

37.Qe1

If 37.axb4 axb4 White would have no way of defending himself from the double threat of 38...Qb3 and 38...b3. White is now in extreme time pressure.

37...bxa3 38.hxg5+ Kg7 39.Nxa5 a2+?

It was only necessary to play 39...axb2 40.Kxb2 Qb5+ 41.Ka1 Qxd5 and White of course would resign. But I had to get fancy.

40.Ka1

Played with a split second on White's clock.

40...Nc5

Confidently expecting White to resign, since I thought there was no defense against 41...Qxa5.

41.b4!

The move I overlooked.

41...Nb3+

And now Black's best chance was 41...Nd3, although White might draw with 42.Qf1 Nf4 43.Qc4.

42.Nxb3 Qxb3 43.Qe4!

The saving move.

43...Kg8

Unfortunately for Black, 43...Qb1+ does not win. 44.Qxb1 axb1(Q)+ 45.Kxb1 Kf7 46.Kc2 Ke7 47.Kd3 Kd7 48.Kc4 Kc7 49.Kc3 Kb6 50.Kc4 Ka6 51.Kb3 Kb5 52.Kc3 e4 53.Kd4 Kxb4 54.Kxe4 Kc4 55.g4 Kc5 56.Kf5 Kxd5 57.g6 hxg6+ 58.Kxg6 Ke5 59.Kf7 and draws. In this variation it was White's doubled g-pawn that saved him.

44.g6

Endangering the draw. White should have played 44.g4 Kg7 45.Qf5 with a draw.

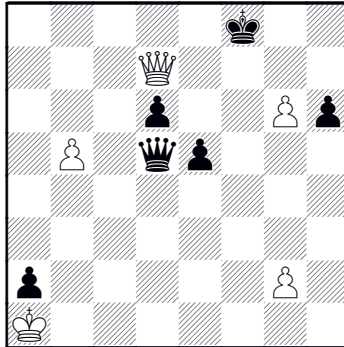
44...h6 45.Qf5 Qxd5?

Black should play 45...Qd1+ 46.Kxa2 Qa4+ 47.Kb2 Qxb4+ 48.Kc2 Qc4+ 49.Kb1 Qxd5 50.Qf6! Qb7+ 51.Kc1 Qd7 52.g7 Qxg7 53.Qxd6 and White would draw anyway.

46.Qd7! Kf8?

A very strange move. Now Black comes very close to defeat. Correct was to take a draw by perpetual check: 46...Qd1+ 47.Kxa2 Qc2+ 48.Ka3 Qd3+ 49.Ka4 Qa6+, etc.

47.b5



Now Black does not have perpetual check.

47...Qd1+ 48.Kxa2 Qa4+ 49.Kb2 Qb4+ 50.Kc2 Qc5+ 51.Kb3

The only winning attempt.

51...Qd5+ 52.Ka3 e4!

The only move to hold the game.

53.Qh7!

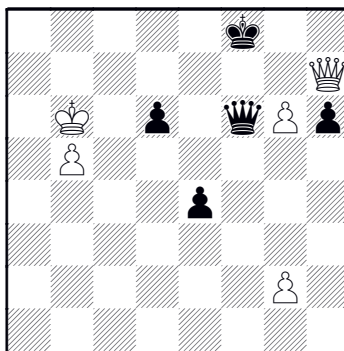
A seemingly crushing move, but Black has a way out.

53...Qd3+ 54.Ka4 Qd4+ 55.Ka5 Qa1+!

Forcing White to lose a tempo by blocking his own pawn.

56.Kb6 Qf6??

The last move of the second time control was played by Black with only a split-second left on the clock! It loses by force!! Correct was 56...Qg7! with a draw.



57.Kc7??

The time control is over and White had plenty of time to analyze but instead played the text move after one minute's thought. After 57.g7+! Qxg7 58.Qxe4 Black might as well resign, as White's b-pawn will eventually prove too strong.

57...Qg7+!, ½-½.

58.Kxd6 e3 59.b6 e2 60.b7 Qd4+ could follow. A very interesting game in spite of its mistakes.

James Sherwin (born 1933) was one of the most successful U.S. Chess Championship participants of the 1950s and 1960s. Competing in eight events, several of which included Bobby Fischer, he finished third or fourth on six separate occasions.

Sherwin's third place finish in the 1957/58 U.S. Championship qualified him to play in the Interzonal when Sammy Reshevsky withdrew. Held in Portorož, Yugoslavia (now Slovenia), the 21-player event was a qualifying stage in the world championship cycle.

Game (9) is arguably Fischer's most famous from the 1957/58 U.S. Championship and the game he chose to show when he gave a lecture and simultaneous exhibition at the Marshall Chess Club soon after the event. It might well have been chosen for inclusion in *My 60 Memorable Games* if it hadn't already been published in *Bobby Fischer's Games of Chess*. Although the ending of the game is very pretty (the famous 31.Qf1!), the first of many(!) famous wins by Bobby in the Sozin featured several ups and downs. These were not appreciated by the young Fischer in his annotations.

This game was awarded the second brilliancy prize behind Lombardy's last round victory over Reshevsky.