

CORRESPONDENCE

PERSONAL CHESS ENDGAMES

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As a computer-database fan I was glad to see the 'advertisement' in the *ICCA Journal* (Vol. 14, No. 1, p. 22) about Ken Thompson's Chess Endgames Volume 1 CD-ROM. When the CD-ROM arrived I had several options. The most obvious ones are just putting it between all the other audio CD's because of its nice picture on the CD or just play it in an ordinary CD-player (the sound is horrible, I would have expected to hear a short explanation by Ken Thompson).

After inserting the CD-ROM in the appropriate hardware I was able to read the 'readme' file, which contains instructions about the program 'code.c' and the endgame examples.

The program 'code.c' is written in ANSI C and was, with some modifications in the I/O routines, easily transferred to an IBM mainframe. It took some more time to transfer the code to a PS/2 running the OS/2 1.3 operating system. Especially the function calls which required 16 bits integers gave some headaches and also some casting had to be added to the program to avoid truncation of a variable.

As I do not have a CD-ROM at home, some databases were moved to a 200 MB WORM (write once-read many) device which is attached to my PS/2 model 70 386. This WORM can not contain all databases (the total CD-ROM is more than 500 MB), but some WORM-disks can be used. The biggest database on the CD-ROM is less than 50 MB.

After installing the databases the *ICCA Journal* becomes an abstract and it is great fun to play the examples and find alternative solutions. I played the KQKRB endgame (Vol. 14, No. 2, p. 68) and found some alternative solutions, which may be worth explaining. As I am only a poor chess player someone may help me with the explanation.

WQc5 WKe2 BBb3 BRg4 BKk3 gave some equivalent moves (between parentheses): 1. **Qa3 Kh2** (Re4+) 2. **Qd6+ Kg2** 3. **Qc6+ Kh2** 4. **Qc7+ Kh1** 5. **Qd7 Rg3** 6. **Kf2 Rg2+** 7. **Kf3 Rg8** 8. **Qd3 Kh2** 9. **Kf4 Rf8+** 10. **Ke5 Bg8** (Re8+, Rb8) 11. **Qg6 Rb8** 12. **Kd4 Rb4+** (Rd8+) 13. **Kc5 Rc4+** 14. **Kb6 Rc8** 15. **Kb7 Rd8**. Now the article gives the move 15. ... Rf8 as equivalent, but it will lose one move earlier, so it is not an alternative. 16. **Qh5 Kg3** 17. **Qg5+** and wins.

The second Stiller position consists of 23 forced moves by White and Black. At move 24. Qe2+ and Qh5+ are given. The move Qc4 has to be added to this list. The alternative 34. ... Ba1 should also be mentioned.

As the computer endgames become available for the personal market, what will be the end? Some speculation may be the addition of a CD-ROM player to the commercially available chess programs, so it will play most of the 5-piece endgames in an optimal way. And how about losing a 5-piece endgame in a computer-chess tournament, because only the opponent had the database connected to the program? The only mandatory use I see for now is supplying the database to all computer chess-tournament directors, so the adjudication can follow the present state of the art.

A MISSING RULE

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The Hungarian Chess Federation organized from March 7 to March 15, 1991 the 7th Spring Festival Tournament in Budapest. There were 276 participants playing 9 rounds according to the Swiss system. The results have

been published but one publication is not quite identical with the officially established publications. The participation of the computers – as well-known – is not recognized by FIDE, and as a result they are not taken into consideration when calculating the participants' Elo-points. (The computers themselves also have no official points.)

Beyond this fact, the lack of an adequate FIDE ruling in this matter may lead to unacceptable situations. I call the readers' attention to the following game, played in the 1st round, in which the new MM5 program excelled against a strong Hungarian international master.

Mephisto Exclusive V - IM László Zsinka (2375) English opening.

1. c4 c5 2. Nc3 Nc6 3. Nf3 e5 4. e3 d6 5. d4 Bg4 6. d5 Nce7 7. Be2 Bxf3 8. Qa4+ Qd7 9. Qxd7+ Kxd7 10. Bxf3 f5 11. Bd1. Not humanlike, but a good move. **11. ... a6 12. Ba4+ Kc7 13. e4 Nf6 14. exf5.** Positionally doubtful, permitting the occupation of d4 by a Knight, although White will disrupt the opponent's Pawns. **14. ... Nxf5 15. f4! Nd4 16. fxe5 dxe5 17. 0-0 Bd6 18. Bh6!** Winning a Pawn. Such a move can be easily overlooked by a human, but never by a computer. Black will exploit his chances on the opened g-file. **18. ... Rhg8 19. Bxg7 Nh5! 20. Rf7+ Kb6 21. Bh6 Rg6 22. Be3 Rag8 23. g3 Nf6.** The master considered the sacrifice on g3, but knowing the perfect defending ability of the computer, and not seeing a forced win after 23. ... Nxc3 24. hxg3 Rxc3+ 25. Kf2 Rg2+ 26. Kf1, he decided to be rather cautious. **24. Rf1 Ng4 25. Bd2 Nxe2!? 26. Kxh2 Rxc3 27. R7f6 Kc7 28. R1f2 R3g4 29. Kh3 e4! 30. Rf7+ Kb6 31. Bc6!** Even if not a complicated, but not an obvious move either. **31. ... bxc6 32. Na4** checkmate would not be bad indeed; **31. ... Nxc6 32. Na4+ Ka7 33. bxc6** is also strong for White. **31. ... Rg3+ 32. Kh4 R3g7!** Best, threatening Bg3+, thus avoiding also Bxb7. **33. Na4+ Ka7 34. Kh5 Nf3 35. Rd7 Bg3.** Seems to be dangerous, but the computer finds the simplest and safest way. **36. Re2 Kb8 37. Rxc3 Rxc3 38. Bxb7!!** Exchanging the surplus piece for three Pawns, resulting in an easily won endgame. **38. ... Kxb7 (38. ... Rxb7 39. Nxc5 Re7 40. Nxa6+ would not be different) 39. Nxc5+ Kc8 40. Nxe4 Be5 41. Rf2 Rf7 42. c5.**

In this position the international master claimed the full point from the Tournament Director, having been disturbed by some people from the public, who gave advice and helped the operator. The Tournament Director accepted the protest, and declared Black as winner. Not having been close to the event, I asked the participant what happened. Mr. László Lobotka, the operator, an experienced amateur of chess computers, said that he did not need nor ask for any help. It is not his responsibility when unauthorized people mix themselves into the game. Mr. Zsinka said that the computer had been "either mad or a genius", but independently from this, he felt disturbed by the fact that some people reached into the computer. He added that if he lost this game, it made no sense for him to continue playing in the tournament. He participates in order to win Elo-points. With 0 points, in the 2nd round he would probably have to play against an unrated opponent, and a possible win would be useless to him.

The Tournament Director, Mr. Miklos Engler said that according to the rules, nothing bound him to declare Black as winner. But he did not want a Hungarian international master to withdraw from the tournament. Even if Mr. Zsinka received the point, it would not influence his Elo-points, but he has the chance indeed to play against a rated opponent in the next game. Moreover, for the computer it had no importance to have had lost a point.

And this is just my point! It had no practical importance indeed. The results of the computers not being official in practice, I decided, as "captain" of the computer team, to declare in my reports Mephisto Exclusive V as winner in this game. This is realistic and corresponds to justice. (Its official result on the tournament was 3/9.) Important is for me and I assume several others that the computer played an excellent game and obtained a winning position against a high-rated international master. It is quite sure that it would have won the game, if continued.

I consider, it is time to clear up this situation with FIDE, and propose to Mr. Kevin O'Connell, President of the Computer Committee, to put the question on the agenda. Even if it is accepted (for the time being) not to grant Elo-points to computers, it goes against reason to punish masters being prepared to play against them in open tournaments by not assigning them Elo-points for their win. Indeed, as a consequence lost games should also be calculated.