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As a true BELIEVER, it is a joy for me to wish you ALL... a very happy CHRISTmas!

COMPUTER CHESS NEWS SHEET

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EDITORIAL NOTE from Eric Hallsworth: The purpose of the NEWS SHEET, established by me in 1985, and produced continuously by me since then, is to survey the CHESS COMPUTER scene, with special emphasis on reliable assessments of the PLAYING STRENGTH of the machines and programs available.
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PLUS separate 28-page ANNUAL REVIEW and BUYERS GUIDE for 1994

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Deep BLUE v. Judit POLGAR

This 2 game Match was played on 20 August 1993 in an IBM Design Lab in Manhattan. Spectators were there on an invitation basis and Danny Edelman (I.M. elect) provided commentary with some input from Robert Byrne (G.M.) and others.

Judit was reported to have had some slight 'Computer-preparation' for the Match having reportedly squashed FRITZ2 in Blitz games 'without any difficulty'. She had also spent a week with Boris GULKO who has had some success against Deep THOUGHT.

The Deep BLUE program was essentially the same as that which lost 2½-1½ recently to Bent LARSEN, with a few additional software mods and fixes.

DEEP BLUE (2550) - J POLGAR (2650)
IBM (Active Chess Match), 1993

[One might feel that DB was playing into Judit's hands, exchanging almost to an endgame already]

[20...Rd7 trying to hang on to the a-Pawn leads to 21Nb6 Ne7 22.Bd6 and Black's position is becoming distinctly uncomfortable]

21.exd6 cxd5 22.Rf4
[22.Bxa6 was available of course, but would be followed by 22...Ra7 23.Rb5 Ba6 24.Bxa6 Rxa6 25.b3 Rc8 26.Rd3 Rac8 if Black can win the c3/Pawn, his on d5 will become very dangerous. So DB chooses a more sophisticated continuation!]


32.c4 Rcb 33.Ba5 dxc4 34.Nb6 Rb8 35.Nd7 Rc8 36.Bb4

[There is little fluency about DB's play - just spot tactics, sometimes slightly weird, which seem to simply shuffle Black's pieces around to little effect. But will Judit misplace something during the merry-go-round?]

36...cxb3
[36...c3 37.Nxd8 Rxb8 38.Bxc3 (38.Bxe7?! Kxe7 39.Rc1 Rb8 with the threat of Nf4 is an interesting idea) 38...Rf8 looks a good alternative.
DB now wins the exchange for a Pawn]

37.Nxf8 Rxf8 38.axb3 Rb8 39.Bxe7 Kxe7 40.Rd4 a5 41.Rc4 Bc6 42.Rxa5 Rxb3 43.Ra7 + Kf6
[43...Rb7 44.Rxb7 + Bxb7 45.g3 Kd6 looks to hold out better drawing chances]

44.Rxh7 Nf4 45.g3 Bb5 + 46.Kg1 Nh3 + 47.Kg2 Ng5 48.Rh6 + Ke7 49.Re5 Bc6 + 50.Kf1 Rb1 + 51.Re1 Rb2 52.Be2 Ne4 53.Rd1 Bd5 54.Rc1 Nd2 + 55.Ke1 Ne4 56.Ra1 Nd3 57.Bd3 Nc2 58.Kf1 Nb4?
[58...Rd2 was better. Judit has entangled DB's pieces, cleverly keeping the h6/Rook quiet for a dozen moves. The Knight at a2 heavily restricted any Rook co-operation and individual scope, forcing White to find a solution to this problem. But now they are free!]

59.Bxf5
[59.Ra7 + Kd6 60.Bxf5 is the same idea]
59...Nc6 60.Rd1 Bc4 + 61.Bd3 Bb3
Bc6 68.f4 Ng7 69.g4 e5 70.g5 + Kg7
71.Rh7 + Kg8 72.g6 exf4 + 73.Kxf4
and Judit resigned 1-0

Looking outwardly calm, Judit claimed to be quite nervous and rue'd the fact that she 'couldn't confuse it... it is hopeless once you are down'. However she was keen to avenge the loss immediately, but the spectators wanted a break.

J POLGAR (2650) - DEEP BLUE (2550)
IBM (Active Chess Match), 1993

1.Nf3
[Judit is normally a 1.e4 player, but GULKO had
bested DT with Nf3]

1...g6 2.g3 d5 3.d3 Nbd7 4.Nbd2 e5
5.Bg2 c6 6.0-0 Bd6 7.Nh4 0-0 8.e4 Nc5
9.Re1 Bg4 10.f3 Be6 11.Nf1 Qb6
12.Kh1 dxe4 13.dxe4 Rfd8 14.Qe2
Ne4 15.g4 Bc5
[Threatening 16...Bf2]

16.Ne3 Bd4 17.c3?!

17...Nxc3
[She can't have expected Bxe3? so must have thought the compensation for the material deficit which results to be adequate]

18.bxc3 Bxc3
[And one of the Rooks must fall... though both players choose to maintain various tension spots for a few moves, and the exchange is delayed]


22.Nf5 Qa4 23.g5 hxg5 24.Bxg5 Bxe1
[At last!]

25.Rxe1 Bxf5 26.exf5 Rd6 27.Ne3
[27.Qxe5!? Rd5 28.Qg3! (Better than protecting
the Knight by Qb2, as this threatens 29.Bxf6)
28...Nh5 29.Qf2 (29.Qg4 Qxc4 30.Qxh5 Rd1
31.Rf1 Rxf1 + 32.Bxf1 Qxf5 is +/-) 29...Rxf5
30.Be3 Rd8 looks +/- ]

27...Re8 28.Rg1 Nh7 29.Bf1 Nxc5
30.Rxg5 Qf4 31.Rg4 Qh6 32.Rg1 Kf8
33.Qe1 Rd4 34.Bg2 Qf4 35.Ng4?! [35.Qe2 looks better]

35...Qxf5 36.Qh4 Qg6 37.Qh8 + Ke7
38.Qh4 + Kd6 39.Qf2 c5 40.Ne3 Kc7!
41.f4 exf4 42.Nd5 + Kd8 43.Nc3 Qd3
44.Qb2 Re3 45.Nb5 Rb4 46.Qxg7
Qxb5

[Diagram. A piece
count-up suggests that
White has 'had it'... and
'it's hopeless once you're
down' as Judit herself
said earlier. But there is
help on its way from DB which proves otherwise,
due to time shortage]

47.Qf6 + Ke7 48.Qxf7 + Qd7 49.Qf8
Rao? 50.Qa8!
[A position requiring a moment's care - some of
the commercial Computers are fairly quick to spot
the good drawing chances after 50...Rxa2?? See
how long yours takes - and does it find a true
winning line - or just allow another way to draw?
DT needed 10secs and hadn't got it to spare]

50...Rxe2?? 51.Qb7 + Kd8 52.Qb8 +
Ke7 53.Qxf4 Qd4 54.Qc7 + Kf8
55.Rf1 + Kg5 56.Qf7! Re1 57.Qf5 +
Kh6 58.Qf8 + Kh5 59.Qf5 + Kh4
60.Qh7 + Kg5 61.Qf5 + ½-½. 'I need some
practice - then I will kill it' said Judit afterwards.
Let's hope there's a re-Match to find out!
There was every reason for excitement before the 12th. WORLD COMPUTER CHAMPIONSHIPS at the beginning of November. Not only had they been carefully organised by an experienced group of German chess computer professionals, headed by Frederic Friedel and the SCHACHSPIELE team, but the organisation and entry list promised the most open and worthwhile competition for quite a few years.

There were 2 SECTIONS:

1. **A MANUFACTURERS Group** - a 16 Round Event (yes) between MEPHISTO GENIUS2, TASC R30, KASPAROV RISC 2500 and KASPAROV SPARC.

   GENIUS2 was to run on undisclosed hardware - NOT a 68030. It was probably an 80486/80MHz inside the Mephisto board, but some reckon it was a Pentium 586 chip! The TASC R30 was an R40, being a 40MHz RISC chip. The RISC 2500 was to run at double-speed, i.e. around 28MHz, but I am told it was a standard 14MHz in some rounds. The SPARC was presumably to be their 50MHz version (the commercial is 20), but as it was withdrawn at the last moment, we'll never know. The remaining entrants were re-scheduled to play 8 games v. each other.

2. **A SOFTWARE Group**, which contained almost all the worthwhile programs currently available commercially, or soon to be so.

   COMMERCIAL programs: THE KING (running on some 150MHz DEC Alpha equipment!), HIARCS and KASPAROV SPARC (running on fast SPARC systems); MEPHISTO GENIUS2, QUEST (FRITZ), M CHESS PRO X (all running on 586/60 Pentium chips I believe); GIDEON (PC hardware not known to me at present).

   SOON-TO-BE-COMMERCIAL: NIMZO (Chiffly Donninger's program which has had some very good amateur results, and running here on a 486/80 with super cache).

   OTHER WELL-KNOWN entrants, that have achieved 50% scores in major Tournaments from time-to-time were: PANDIX, KALLISTO, BOBBY2, ULYSSES, and NOW.

   There was to be a PLAY-OFF at the end, over 2 rounds, between the WINNER of each Group, to determine the ABSOLUTE CHAMPION.

   We'll look at it briefly in this Issue, showing the major round-by-round results - with a full cross-table and games coverage in NS/50.

**ROUND 1**

**MANUFACTURER'S GROUP**

TASC R30 1-1 RISC 2500 (wins with Black!)

**SOFTWARE GROUP**

HIARCS 1-0 MIRAGE (29 moves)
ULYSSES 1-0 QUEST (just 23 moves?!) KASP SPARC 1-0 BB VIKTOR2 0-1 NIMZO GENIUS 1-0 NIGHTMARE GANDALF 1-0 M CHESS PROX (43 moves)
METH GIDEON 1-0 CHESS BRAIN NOW 0-1 THE KING

So early shocks for QUEST (FRITZ) and M CHESS PROX, but most much as you'd expect.

**ROUND 2**

**MANUFACTURERS GROUP**

TASC R30 3½-½ RISC 2500 (good for TASC1)

**SOFTWARE GROUP**

NIMZO 1-0 KASP SPARC (a long 64 move, but Nimzo goes to 2/2)
THE KING 1-0 PANDIX (37 moves)
M CHESS PROX 1-0 DIogene (29 moves)
ECUMEC ½-½ MEPH GIDEON KALLISTO 0-1 GENIUS2 (32 moves)
QUEST 1-0 MIRAGE (32 moves)
GREIF 0-1 HIARCS

2/2: NIMZO, GENIUS2, HIARCS, THE KING, and BOBBY2 having played two tail-enders.

**ROUND 3**

**MANUFACTURERS GROUP**
TASC R30 2-0 RISC 2500

The first 8 game Match has ended with a resounding 6½-1½ win for TASC. Of course both programs are by Johan de Koning, but the TASC machine contains a later version and was running faster at 40MHz whether the 2500 was on 14 or 28MHz. Even so a theoretical 15 BCF gap gives a 5-3 score, so TASC folk will be pleased with this.

SOFTWARE GROUP
GENIUS2 1-0 BOBBY2 (36 moves)
NOW 0-1 M CHESS PROX (77 moves)
M Eph GIDEON 0-1 NIMZO (68 moves, and NIMZO has wins over SPARC and GIDEON. No doubt everyone was sitting up and taking notice!)
GANDALF 1-0 QUEST (an unhappy start for the Franz Morsch program, now with 1/3)
HIARCS ½½ THE KING (a pleasing 56 move draw for HIARCS against the program with the most powerful hardware - and a big reputation)
SPARC ½½ BREAKTHROUGH (I cannot resist questionning whether the Spracklens have yet made a 'breakthrough' with their Saltex program, noting this 1½/3 start on very good hardware)

LEADERS/3:
3 NIMZO, GENIUS2
2½ ECUME, THE KING, HIARCS
2 EXPERIMENTAL, GANDALF, BOBBY2, M CHESS PROX, KALLISTO

ECUME draw with GIDEON in round 2 you'll remember and has 2 wins against mid-table opponents, so another to watch out for perhaps?!

ROUND 4

MANUFACTURERS GROUP
M Eph GENIUS 0-1 TASC R30
M Eph GENIUS ½½ RISC 2500 (not the best of starts for the GENIUS2 program)

TOTALS:
TASC R30 7½/9
RISC 2500 2/9
M Eph GENIUS ½½

SOFTWARE GROUP
ULYSSES 0-1 GIDEON
BOBBY2 0-1 HIARCS (only 25 moves between table-toppers!)
NIMZO ½½ GENIUS2 (4½ moves - another excellent result for the 486/80 NIMZO)

KALLISTO 1-0 GANDALF
QUEST 1-0 CENTAUR
GREIF 0-1 SPARC
THE KING ½½ ECUME (another fine result for ECUME programmers Weill and Baudot)
M CHESS PROX 1-0 EXPERIMENTAL

LEADERS/4:
3½ NIMZO, GENIUS2, HIARCS
3 THE KING, ECUME, M CHESS PROX, KALLISTO
2½ BREAKTHROUGH, SPARC, PANDIX, GIDEON

ROUND 5

MANUFACTURERS GROUP
M Eph GENIUS 0-1 M Eph GENIUS (61 moves)
M Eph GENIUS 1-0 RISC 2500 (46 moves)

TOTALS:
TASC R30 7½/10
M Eph GENIUS 2½/4
RISC 2500 2/10

SOFTWARE GROUP
GENIUS2 ½½ THE KING (a major clash this, 64 moves. GENIUS had a +100 midgame advantage, but KING held on)
PANDIX ½½ QUEST
ECUME ½½ M CHESS PROX (ECUME continues to get good results as MCP's hopes of 1st place remain rather in the balance)
SPARC 0-1 KALLISTO
HIARCS 0-1 NIMZO (wow! 53 moves. HIARCS mis-evaluates an exchange sac. that looks inviting but doesn't work out)
GIDEON 1-0 BREAKTHROUGH

LEADERS/5:
4½ NIMZO
4 KALLISTO, GENIUS2
3½ ECUME, M CHESS PROX, THE KING, GIDEON, HIARCS
3 BOBBY2, PANDIX

The LEADER BOARD takes on real meaning as potential winners keep meeting each other and every game becomes critical.

ROUND 6

MANUFACTURERS GROUP
M Eph GENIUS 1½½ RISC 2500
M Eph GENIUS 1-1 TASC R30 (wins with Black)
TOTALS:
TASC R30 8½/12
MEPH GENIUS 5/8
RISC 2500 2½/12

SOFTWARE GROUP
BOBBY2 1-0 PANDIX
NIGHTMARE 1-0 SOS (not critical to the top places, but the shortest game of the Champs at just 20 moves. SOS indeed!)
MIRAGE ½-½ SPARC
QUEST 1-0 NOW (QUEST/Fritz is fighting its way back onto the Leader Board)

THE KING 1-0 M CHESS PROX (37 moves, probably ending MCP's hopes, but The KING restates its challenge after a run of 3 draws)
GENIUS2 0-1 GIDEON (44 moves. GIDEON has been a little quiet, but this severely damages Richard Lang's hopes in the Software Group)
NIMZO 0-1 KALLISTO (50 moves - and a shock as NIMZO seemed set fair following good results against many of the expected top contenders!)
ECUME 0-1 HIARCS (60 moves. An important recovery win for HIARCS over a dangerous opponent, making up some for its 5th. round loss)

LEADERS/6:
5 KALLISTO
4½ GIDEON, NIMZO, THE KING, HIARCS
4 BOBBY2, GENIUS2
3½ GREIF, ECUME, M CHESS PROX, QUEST

The NIMZO defeat opens it up at the top again, and it's looking as exciting as anyone (except the Programmers, perhaps!) could have hoped.

ROUND 7

MANUFACTURERS GROUP
MEPH GENIUS 1½-½ RISC 2500 (2 long games)

TOTALS:
TASC R30 8½/12
MEPH GENIUS 6½/10
RISC 2500 3/14

It's clear that this, too, is going to be a close call for someone, with TASC just favourite!

SOFTWARE GROUP
GIDEON 0-1 THE KING (39 moves - a key result for both entrants, pushing GIDEON backwards)
SPARC ½-½ CENTAUR
PANDIX 1-0 ECUME (ends ECUME hopes)
GREIF 0-1 QUEST (the QUEST revival continues)
NIMZO ½-½ BOBBY2 (a second NIMZO setback)
KALLISTO 0-1 HIARCS (52 moves. Top place seems a dangerous place to be, and KALLISTO gets knocked-off very quickly)
M CHESS PROX 0-1 GENIUS2 (80 moves. Marty Hirsch is definitely out of it, but Richard Lang's chances are still alive while leaders keep falling)

LEADERS/7:
5½ THE KING, HIARCS
5 KALLISTO, NIMZO, GENIUS2
4½ BOBBY2, QUEST, GIDEON
4 MIRAGE, PANDIX

The commercial programmers probably breathed a sigh of relief in round 7, with ECUME and KALLISTO both losing. My friend Mark Uniake has pulled his way back with HIARCS, but will have to play two of GENIUS2, GIDEON and QUEST in his final games. It's still wide open!

ROUND 8

MANUFACTURERS GROUP
MEPH GENIUS 1½-½ TASC R30 (a 35 move win for GENIUS and the balance swings his way)

TOTALS:
TASC R30 9½/14
MEPH GENIUS 8½/12
RISC 2500 3½/14

It will all depend on the last round, when GENIUS plays 2 games against each of its opponents! TASC may need to win at least one of them.

SOFTWARE GROUP
HIARCS 1-0 GENIUS2 (What a critical result! A Bishop sac by HIARCS on move 20 wins it, though GENIUS plays on to move 43)
M CHESS PROX 1-0 GREIF
QUEST 1-0 KALLISTO (2 losses in a row for the usurper, and QUEST/Fritz has come back well!)
BOBBY2 ½-½ GIDEON (B2's had a good week)
NOW 0-1 SPARC
PANDIX 1-0 MIRAGE
THE KING ½-½ NIMZO (a good ½ for NIMZO which costs the Alpha 150MHz KING its share of top place)

LEADERS/8
6½ HIARCS
6 THE KING
5½ QUEST, NIMZO
5 BOBBY2, KALLISTO, PANDIX, GIDEON, GENIUS2
4½ SPARC, ECUME, M CHESS PROX

THE KING drew with HIARCS in an early round, so must hope for the re-vitalised QUEST to get a 'result' now. Programmer de Koning could be 2nd. in both Groups and miss the PLAY-OFF!

ROUND 9

MANUFACTURERS GROUP
MEPH GENIUS 1½-½ RISC 2500
MEPH GENIUS 1-½ TASC R30 (2 draws)

TOTALS:
1 MEPH GENIUS 10½/16
2 TASC R30 10
3 RISC 2500 3½

SOFTWARE GROUP
KALLISTO ½-½ GIDEON
BOBBY2 0-1 THE KING (a quick 3½-mover, and THE KING has done it’s best. If QUEST beats HIARCS then THE KING’s 7/9 wins!)
SPARC 0-1 M CHESS PROX (hardware failure)
ECUME 0-1 GENIUS2
HIARCS 1-0 QUEST (60 moves. Excitingly QUEST seemed to be fighting back from a poor position only to see HIARCS assert its authority)
NIMZO ½-½ PANDIX

FINAL LEADERS/SEEDS
7½ HIARCS
7 THE KING
6½ GENIUS2, NIMZO
5½ GIDEON, PANDIX, QUEST, KALLISTO, M CHESS PROX
5 BOBBY2, MIRAGE, ULYSSES
4½ ECUME, NOW, SPARC, GREIF, NIGHTMARE

So to the PLAY-OFF between the two CHAMPIONS: Richard LANG’s MEPHISTO GENIUS2, and Mark UNIACKE’s HIARCS... an all-British programmers FINAL!

MEPH GENIUS ½ 1 = 1½
HIARCS ½ 0 = ½

And the ABSOLUTE CHAMPION TITLE goes to Richard LANG with his GENIUS2 program. The NEWS SHEET sends its congratulations and admits to great pleasure and pride not only in this ALL-BRITISH victory, but in having had some personal involvement with both programming teams over the years. But Richard and Mark have done the HARD work, and VERY WELL DONE indeed!

From round 8 of the SOFTWARE GROUP

HIARCS Sparc - GENIUS2 58/60

6.0-0 Be7 7.Re1 f5 8.exf6 Nxf6 9.Nc3 0-0 10.Ng5
Nxc3 15.bxc3 Nc6 16.Qh5 Ba5 17.Ng4 Qf6
18.Ne4 Qd8 19.Ra1 Ne7 20.Qxh6!! gxh6
21.Qxh6 Nxg6 22.Qxg6+ Kg8 23.Qh6 + Kg8
24.Re3 Kf7 25.Rf3 + Ke8 26.Qg6 + Ke7
27.Qg7 + Ke8 28.Rxh6 + Rxh6 29.Nf6 + Qxh6
30.Qxh6 Bd5 31.a4 Bd5 32.b4 a5 33.a5 Qf6 + Ke7
34.Qg7 + Ke8 35.Rb5 Bf8 36.Qg8 + Kf7 37.Rxh5
exd5 38.h4 c6 39.h5 Re8 40.h6 Bxh6 41.Qxh6
Kd8 42.Kf2 Kc7 43.14 b5 (1-0)

The HIARCS evaluation playing 20.Bxh6 was +190 (expecting Bxh6 as a matter of interest); by 23.Qh6 + it was showing +736.

The second PLAY-OFF game, with the score standing at ½-½.

Mephisto GENIUS2 - HIARCS Sparc

1.Nf3 d5 2.d4 Bg4 3.Bg5 f6 4.Bf4 g5 5.Bg3 c6
6.e3 Qb6 7.b3 Bb5 8.Bf5 Bb6 9.0-0 h5 10.h3 h4
11.Bb2 e6 12.c4 Rd8 13.a3 dxc4 14.b4 Rd71
h3 19.Nxc4 Qd8 20.Qg4 hxg2 21.Qg6 + Rf7
22.Rh1 Ke7 23.Bd6 + Kc8 24.Bg3 Qd7 25.Kxg2
Rh6 26.Qe4 Rhh7 27.Rh1 Rg7 28.Cf3? Rhg6
Qc6 33.Qxc6 + bxc6 34.Kf1 a5 35.bxa5 Ra7
36.Np3 Rb7 37.Kc2 Bxa3 38.Ra1 Bb8 39.a6 Kd7
40.Bd8 Ra8 41.a7 Bd6 42.Rh8 Bh4 43.Ra6 Rg1
44.Bg3! e5 45.dxe5 fxe5 46.Bxe5 Re1 +? 47.Kf3
Rg1 48.Nd4 Rg6 49.Nxb5 Bc5 50.Rh7 + Ne7
1-0 giving GENIUS2 the title of ABSOLUTE
World Computer Champion for 1993!

These and more games WITH NOTES in NS/50.
Philip GOSLING and 'Meph' continue their, thus far, quite brilliant BCCS Correspondence performance. With 8/9 and 1st place with still 1 to finish in their initial Tournament (earning a 2517 BCCS Grading) a second set of games is now well under way.

Here is the continuing game from Tournament 1.

**BCCS 2495 (2445) - Vancouver 020 (2275)**

Readers please note that we are sticking with the NS grading for MEPH from when the Tournament started, rather than the 2517 figure given by the BCCS calculations.

24...Nd5
[NS48. Eval +183 -> Qc1]

MEPH seems to have various threats now: perhaps Qb6 and d3+ for one... or Nxf4 stopping Rh3. Is White's Qb1 defensive or offensive?

With 24...Nd5 White can hardly be hoping for the 25.Bxg6 sac, to work: 25.Bxg6 hxg6 26.hxg6 fxg6?? 27.Qxg6+ Kh8 28.Rh3 mate! MEPH would NEVER play 26...fxg6

25.Rf3 Qb6 26.Kg3 c3
[NS48. Eval +186 -> hxg6. MEPH has not managed to forecast any of his opponent's last 6 moves! Has he got this right, or will it be 27.bxc3 Nxc3 28.Qc2. Perhaps we are being lined-up for mass suicides on the King-side? If BCCS2495 has found a drawing method, he will have done very well for himself in this one]

Vancouver 020 (2275) - BCCS 2495 (2445)

21...Rxc6
[Along with this expected move you may recall we received this admission from our Iranian opponent: 'Your friend MEPH is putting me under pressure. He is a Pawn up in both our games - I have committed a few mistakes already']

22.Rb4
[NS48. Eval +284 -> g5. The evaluation goes up and up, and the end of this one seems near]

22...g5 23.Nxc6 Rxc6 24.Ra4 Be5

25.h4
[NS49. Eval +275 -> Bd3, against which MEPH plans 26.hxg5. When one or two more files open up, life will get very difficult for Black]

Vancouver 020 (2275) - BCCS 2324 (2320)

25.Rf1
[NS48. Eval +21 -> Be5, and 36.a4 from MEPH who had been expecting Black to offer the Q-exchange a move or two ago. The amiable Mauritian says his original plan had been to play Be5, pressuring g3, rather than the many Knight moves which have been his response to MEPH's play. So will our opponent complete the Be5 part of
his plan at the moment MEPH expects it? Will MEPH need his Queen back on the K-side and, if so, how does he get it there? If Be5 36.ax4, the Erciforecast is 0-1]

NS48. Eval + 100 -> Kh3. Despite the good '+' estimate it will be very difficult for MEPH to get anywhere against a player of Roy THOMAS' calibre. If MEPH over-reaches through optimism, Roy is just the man to turn the tables!

41.Kh3 Re6 42.Rd3 Ne5 43.Rd8+ Kg7 44.Be4 Ng4 45.Bf3 Nh6 46.Rd3 c5!
[Philip has awarded this move its exclamation mark. 'A key move in the great positional battle, that gives MEPH the lead!]

47.Ng3 Re1 48.Rc3 Ro1 49.Rxc5 Rxa3 50.Rg5 + Kf8 51.Rb5 Nd7 52.h5?!
[52.Bc6 looks better, leading to 52...Nf6 53.h5 which MEPH considers keeps Black's advantage to a minimum. The Computer's evaluation and grip on the game now improve steadily]

52...Kg7 53.Kh4 Ro2 54.Ne4 f6 55.Rb7 Ne5 56.Kg3 Nf5 + 57.Kf4 Nd4 58.Bd1 Nce6!
[Excellent Knight play by MEPH, making the B+N look quite inferior on this occasion]

59.Nc3 Rh2
[NS49. Eval +154 -> Nd5]

BCCS 2326 (2325) - Vancouver 020 (2275) [B00] Corr.16, 1993

This game began: 1.d4 Nf6 2.Nc3 d5 3.e4 dx4 4.f3 exf3 5.Nxf3: agreed moves at the request of Roy Thomas - a BCCS player and NEWS SHEET reader! Roy uses the Blackmar Diemer Gambit quite often in his games, and wanted to see how MEPH would cope! It's been very interesting!

40...Rg6 +

[Is the position that favourable to Black?' I wrote in the last issue. 'Does he have an identifiable target?'
Fortunately I noted that, if 21.Nxh5, Bxh5 22.g4 Rh4! gives White plenty of headaches]
21. Nxe5 Bxh5 22. Qh1
[Preferred by our opponent and Meph to my suggestion of g4. I had brilliantly stated that 'the Queen MUST protect c4 and f2, so CANNOT move'!]

22...Rf7 23.g3 Qe4 + 24.Kd2 b5
[Phil hopes that NS readers can see how well Meph has planned this attack 'in some depth', and how beautifully it works out]

25.Bb3
[25.Bxb5 Bg6! (25...Rb8 26.Bd3 Rxb2 + i)]

25...Rf3 26.Rh2 Re8 27.Re1 Qg6!
28.Kc1 Qg5 + 29.Kb1 Bg6 + 30.Ka1
Qxg3 31.Rh1
[31.fxg3 Rxh1 32.Rh1 was the play expected by Meph, and may have salvaged more for White]

31...Qxf2
[NS49. Eval +263 -> Qxb5. If so then Rxd3, and how will White stop the passed-Pawn on e5?]

JUST BEFORE THE FLAG FELL!

The name for our 'LATE NEWS' column!
Appropriate this time as one of the newest models on the market is the Mephisto NIGEL SHORT.

This is an UPGRADE of the Mephisto MILANO and includes all of that machine's excellent features and graphic display - the price of £269 is the SAME as Milano cost before the reduction to its current £199 price... but the NIGEL SHORT looks to have an extra 10 BCF from my first series of test games, so I rate it worth the extra.

I now have the Kasparov SPARC module up and running in my RENAISSANCE board. This whole set-up new will cost £799, which is obviously rather less than the TASC R/30 and Mephisto GENIUS 68030, with which it is intended to compete.

Sweden is showing a rating for the SPARC which is within a few Elo of the RISC 2500. My own early games indicate it may be about 5 BCF/40 Elo lower. Running on no less than a 20MHz SPARC chip (+ to a RISC at 30MHz?) I'd have expected it to be above rather than below the

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Our newest game against a Computer Scientist (wanting to 'have a go at my Openings') had just started in NS48, with the following opening moves:-

1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.d4 d6 4.Nf3 Bg4 5.Be2 e6 6.0-0

The latest moves are...

6...Be7 7.c4 Nb6 8.h3 Bh5 9.Nc3 0-0 10.Be3 d5 11.c5 Bxf3 12.Bxf3 Nc4
13.Be2
[Meph departs from book by its own choice! It has b4 and Bf4 still in book. However its independent (i.e. dependent on Richard Lang!) choice evaluates Be2 better (+27 -> Nxe3), and Phil uses it!]

13...Nxe3 14.fxe3 b6 15.b4 a5 16.cxb6
[NS49. Eval +42 -> cxb6, planning 17.bxa5]

RISC 2500: perhaps more results will change the position? I should also report that there is a fan running inside the SPARC module - it doesn't bother me, but not everyone will appreciate the constant hum!

The TASC R/30, out for a couple of months now, has latest results now pushing it up towards the KING/30-PC, with which it should be equal.

The Mephisto GENIUS 68030 will not be available until mid or late-December, according to my latest information.

Some readers may have read that, much to the aggravation of British Distributors seeking to make the most of the KASPAROV-SHORT match and the run-up to Christmas, a serious fire in
acomputer chip and equipment Warehouse in Hong Kong has thrown part of the Computer market into a minor panic.

Both Chip prices and availability are affected, but it's completely out of our hands of course. Frustrated customers, waiting for machines like the GENIUS 030, will share a little of what we feel. Most of us are folk who have sought to make a livelihood out of a chief hobby/interest, and are affected by the delays on both counts!

Still with Mephisto: the CHESS SCHOOL is now only available with its quality Carry Case, so sells at £129. But the MANHATTAN provides the same playing program in a sleeker board, without the Training book features and Carry Case, for £89.

The MONTREAL is a lovely wood board, 15"x15", with a version of the ROMA 68000 program in it. The price is £399 and strength probably 182 BCF. Non-upgradeable, but with sliding draw to give option on whether Keyboard and Display are visible, this looks to be the best strength/price combination in wood at present.

A rush of PC PROGRAMS has just come out. I use the word 'rush' deliberately as it seems in at least one case that the urge to get product onto the shelves during the KASPAROV-SHORT match has overcome any need to make sure the programs work properly.

Kasparov GAMBIT takes up nearly 12MB of Hard Disk space so that a bitmap picture of Gary himself can appear on screen telling you (if you have digitised video and speech) what a good move you just played, with remarkable (if you have colour) 3D screens. But the Chess program from its SOCRATES2 source has been sacrificed.

Mono screens produce Gary and the 3D, but you need the 2D to play chess properly. If you want GAMBIT to play at 'its best', then it will think in opponents time etc., but NO game info, analysis or evaluations are available. If any or all of the latter are to be visible (which most want, of course) then the program is slowed somewhat...and doesn't think in opponents time!

Whilst on the question of time, KG generally ignores the time controls you have set anyway. The very first game I played was with GAMBIT on my 486/25 (it's a 386/486 program only) against HIARCS2 on my old 286/12. Time setting was 40/40, but at 40 mins on its own clock the GAMBIT had only played 32 moves. Despite the benefit of the 486 and playing slower than allowed, it was already evaluating at -200 (I had set it up to show analysis etc. for its first game, not realising the effect on KG). For the next 8 moves it played at 2 secs a move and then, on move 41 showing 40m16 on its clock, we reverted to ultra slow again! I don't know what move it would have reached by the next time control as HIARCS2 on the 286 had mated it by move 56 anyway. NOT recommended by me, I think this will be found on the Computer Shop shelves only, as I can't imagine any Chess Computer retailer with pride selling it to anyone!

Why is it that the CHESS programmers can give us good chess, all the features we need, and working programs, while the self-styled specialists in the fields of graphics, sound and features can muck even that up? Are they used to getting away with bugged and poor quality programs?

SOCRATES3 is supposed to be a SOCRATES2 upgrade with the emphasis on the chess side. It's better than Kasprov GAMBIT, and has a board display I can see with clocks, evaluations and analysis running nicely alongside. And it thinks in my time. But its playing standard is still below my expectation and the endgame is suspect.

Features are minimal, and if failed (like REX often used to) when I asked it to save a game. When doing overnight analysis it wanted to analyse the Book moves, so wasted a couple of hours getting through the opening. Laptop owners will be frustrated to find that the copy protection method necessitates the owner ALWAYS having the original SOCRATES disk to hand at boot-up...

your 80MB hard disk can carry everything around you'll ever need except SOCRATES3!

ChessMASTER 4000 is the best of these three newcomers. You get plenty of working and interesting features, board designs and more for your 12MB and £49.95. The chess features are also good with the JOHAN DE KONING program.

The 'CHESSMASTER' personality won't show analysis etc. (simulating Tournament conditions), so play your games against the 'EXPERT' as the difference is not great - anyway you can modify the Expert's rating up from 98% to 100% and re-name him 'ERIC' to get absolutely top play! More next time. HAPPY CHRISTMAS!