

# CHECKERS

## MADE EASY



**by Arthur Reisman**

For 35 years a leading tournament  
player, coach, and writer.

A self-instruction course in the game of checkers. Openings —  
Position Play — Smart Stratagems — Traps — Championship Play.  
Includes: Rules, Complete Sample Games — over 100 Illustrations.

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*A self-instruction course  
in the game of checkers.*

by ARTHUR REISMAN

KEY PUBLISHING CO.

New York, N.Y.

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# NOTES ON ELECTRONIC PUBLICATION, REVISED EDITION

*Checkers Made Easy* surely is *the* classic beginner's text on the tactics of checkers. It has long been out-of-print and available only infrequently in the used book market, usually at a hefty price. The copyright expired some years ago and was never renewed; and so this seemed an opportune time to move forward with a new, electronic edition that would be available without cost to the checker-playing public worldwide.

In developing this new edition, I have made as few changes as possible. I have corrected obvious typographical and spelling errors, and made those changes necessary for (hopefully) attractive typesetting with L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X. In a few places, I have slightly relocated the diagrams. But otherwise, I have tried to retain all of the feel and much of the look of the original. I have left alone minor matters of grammar or punctuation, as making such alterations would detract from the author's engaging and charming style.

Special acknowledgements go to Richard Pask, eminent draughts grandmaster and match play champion of Britain, for his generosity in supplying a working copy of the book, as well as an important correction to one of the settings presented herein; and to Dr. Matthias Kegelmann of the University of Darmstadt, for graciously providing his draughts MetaFont files to use in typesetting the diagrams. For the revised electronic edition, thanks are due to Wesley Loewer, for providing not only corrections to the text but additional commentary and analysis.

I take full responsibility for any errors which I may have introduced in the course of preparing this edition, and would very much appreciate having these, or any other issues, brought to my attention by email at the address given below.

I sincerely hope that renewed publication of this marvelous work brings pleasure and instruction to checker players everywhere.

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*Santa Fe, New Mexico*

*Original Edition December, 2004*

*Revised Edition October, 2005*

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## IT'S A GRAND OLD GAME

Checkers is unquestionably the most scientific of all games of skill and also ranks among the most ancient pastimes, having been traced back thousands of years to the days of Egypt's early civilization. Widely popular with the multitudes from the middle of the nineteenth century on up to the present time many today are not aware of its scientific, pleasure producing qualities, believing it to be only a childish hit-or-miss pastime. This is because true mastery of the game requires strenuous mental effort and the expenditure of much time while the financial rewards are negligible compared to other popular games, hence fewer top notch exponents and little notice by the press. One of the saddest truisms of our day is that time is money and our way of life must be patterned accordingly.

This materialistic, jet-propelled, atomic age in which we find ourselves has engulfed mankind in a sea of restlessness and tension. Man has forgotten how to relax and enjoy the simple tastes of his grandparents. Supersonic speed and the fantastic devices of modern technology bring about a superficial form of existence that distorts the true values of life.

Inevitably, the pendulum is due to swing back. Now that automation is here and the shorter work week is just around the corner, the game of checkers may well experience a vigorous revival. Dyed in the wool fans by the thousands have never forsaken the game and one never went far to find a genuine expert. Sociologists and others qualified to read the signs predict the return to a more leisurely way of life, in sharp contrast to our present hectic ulcer-producing, nerve-exhausting tempo. In a quieter climate checkers will again resume a role of leadership among the recreational pastimes of the people.

And no game is more eminently suited to furnish a harmless outlet for man's fighting instincts. As the writer declared in his article on Checkers (Draughts) in the Encyclopedia Britannica, "It is the inherent desire to combat against opposing forces, whether they be physical or intellectual, that makes the battle of checkers fascinating. Educators see in it a ready medium for developing the faculties needed for life's rigors and organize clubs at school. Physicians recommend it as a therapeutic to nervous patients and convalescents. Clergymen like to see the game played, knowing that the urge to gamble which debases so many amusements gets little impetus here. Civic leaders recognize this popularity and foster activity at recreation centers and play areas." Any way you look at it checkers is a great game.

# Chapter I

## CHECKER BOOKS ARE NOTHING NEW

A goodly number of writers on checkers introduce their books with apologetic excuses for exposing their wares to the public's attention. They state the fact that scads of books have already been published on the subject but, notwithstanding, they are moved by an insuppressible belief that their book is a worthy contribution to the game's literature. And they are right for almost every issue of printed matter enriches the grand old pastime, adding something fresh. My only apology is that I did not write this book sooner for I have long sensed the need for a bona fide beginner's guide.

The majority of checker books issued in the last three or four decades lay claim to having been designed for beginners and, in a few cases, the author made a genuine attempt at elementary instruction. In every instance these efforts fizzle for, no matter now they start out, somewhere along the way every book that is proclaimed to be a guidepost for the rank outsider turns into a manual for the player who, if not already an expert, has advanced well beyond the primary grades. Upon examination of these volumes we find a few general principles and bits of advice, an explanation of "THE MOVE," a word description of "Shots" or strokes and then a quick transition into the meat of their material. This always consists of page after page of full length games, selected for their high level playing standard and offer much too heavy a diet for absorption by the out and out beginner. These books all skim over the vital primary phases of the game, vaulting in one giant leap from the rudimentary to the elite class of play.

What the raw recruit needs is a simple, logical course in the fundamentals—a sort of basic training—to prepare him for the tougher grind should he elect to go out for the advanced expert classification. He must learn the A, B, C's before he can begin to understand the X, Y, Z's. Too quickly, if he follows the usual pattern, he will plunge into the task of memorizing games in books, move for move, only to realize he is incapable of analyzing intelligently to make effective use of his study. He tries to become a "walking encyclopedia" instead of a reasoning player who uses principle and judgment along with his memorized data. Accordingly, his progress is haphazard and he may get discouraged and quit.

My thirty-five years as a leading tournament and match player, coach, and writer have taught me there is a better way to start out and this book is the result of that conviction. This is strictly an elementary book and a radical departure from the regulation format. Being solely a beginner's guide you will find no large games section filling the bulk of these pages. Nor will you find any complicated problems involving long series of moves or highly advanced end-game settings. A few complete games are included as specimens to help demonstrate basic board formations, both visually and verbally, not to serve as a playing manual. In the main, you will note something like a hundred diagrams showing one or two pieces on each side, each representing an important basic technique or theme of play, some stratagem that scores a telling blow in a contest. These ideas or plays are usable throughout the game, anywhere from the first move to the last. Here is the essential science of checkers, reduced to its simplest, most elementary form. The explanatory text fills in what single pictures cannot convey, the whys and wherefores, the know-how of expert checkers. These ideas must be learned before any real progress can be made toward mastery in checkers.

No one will become a master checker player by reading this volume but I am confident that

almost anyone, even with no previous knowledge of checkers whatever, can derive enough useful information to make it valuable as a real springboard—to expert checkers.

## Chapter II

# TO BEGIN—YOU GET A BOARD

On the thousand to one chance that someone may scan these pages who has never heard of checkers, an explanation of the bare rudiments of play is here inserted.

### Who and What

The game of checkers, which the British call draughts, is played by two persons on a square shaped board divided into sixty-four alternate light and dark colored squares. It is the same board used in chess. Presenting a checkered appearance, which may be the source of its name, the squares are technically called black and white, though in reality they may be a combination such as green and buff, the official color scheme for United States tournament and match play. The twenty-four playing discs are likewise known as black and white with red and white being the rule since they are a long-time choice of the American fraternity of initiates.

*Note:* Red and black boards and men, the traditional colors for millions of toy sets distributed annually, are to be religiously avoided due to their poor visual characteristics. They are seldom used in serious competition.

### How

At the start of a game the opposing players each arrange the twelve men constituting their “side” on the black squares of the board in accordance with figure No. 2 on page 13. Diagrams in this book, as in most checker literature, show the black squares as white and vice versa to accommodate the printer in the use of standard mats in place of much more expensive plates. With the Black side making the first move and each side alternating thereafter they enter the playing field of unoccupied mid-board squares by moving their men, one piece and one square at a time, diagonally forward along the black playing squares. Subsequent moves are made to vacant squares only but if an opposition piece is situated on an adjacent forward square and a vacant square lies immediately beyond, the move consists of “jumping” over the opposing piece and settling in the vacant square—removing and retaining the jumped piece. Multiple jumps involving the capture of consecutively spaced men and kings are effected by continuing in the same manner. Refer to rule 10 about the forward and backward movement of kings on page 15.

### Object

The object of the game is to capture the opponent’s entire forces or bottle them up in such a way that no movement is possible. Either condition produces a win. A draw game results when neither method of winning can be accomplished and the play becomes repetitious in nature, as for instance with equally shared kings, and the players mutually agree on a split decision.

So much for the primitive ingredients of play. Now on to some tested recipes in the form of diversified instructions for blending the raw material into a reliable working knowledge of the checker board.

## Chapter III

### YOU NUMBER THE BOARD

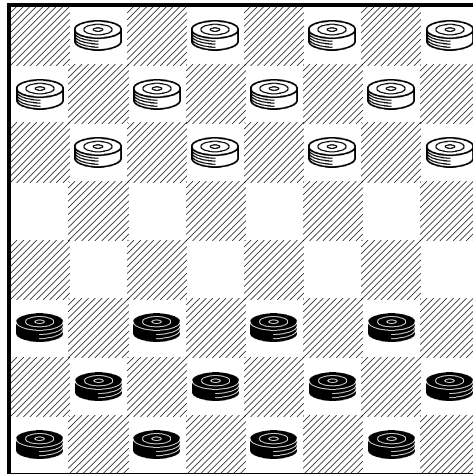
To record a game on paper, other than by means of pictorial diagrams, is an easy matter by the use of a simple number code, recognized throughout the English speaking world as the language of the checker player. This system of numbers provides a convenient ever-ready device for preserving the move-by-move plays of championship matches and tournaments, also conveying problems and critical positions. Checker books and magazines, generally, add color to the games with notes by the players or other reviewers considered qualified to work out a sound analysis of the play.

Looking at the printed diagrams below we see in picture No. 1 how the playing squares of the board are numbered from 1 to 32 and that the pieces are assembled for the start of a game as shown in illustration No. 2. Be sure to note that at the beginning the Black men invariably occupy squares 1 through 12 while the home base for the White pieces is always located in the section between squares 21 and 32.

*No. 1 The Numbered Board*

	32		31		30		29
28		27		26		25	
	24		23		22		21
20		19		18		17	
	16		15		14		13
12		11		10		9	
	8		7		6		5
4		3		2		1	

*No. 2 Ready for Play*



The symbol for a move consists of a hyphenated pair of these numbers, the first portion representing the square of departure for the piece being played, the second portion denoting the destination square. Thus, 11-15 means the Black man on square 11 is being moved to 15 and 22-18 signifies White is replying by going from square 22 to 18. In this particular opening the next move would be the compulsory jump whereby Black leaps from square 15 over the man on 18, coming to a stop on 22. This jump is shown simply as 15-22 and the sequence would be written 11-15, 22-18, 15-22. White's answering jump and the continuing moves to the end of the game would follow in rotation with a conclusion reading "White Wins," "Black Wins" or "Draw" as the case might be.

Customarily in books the moves are stacked up in columns and arranged so that the play reads downward, commencing with the column at the left of the page. Letters and figures adjacent to these numbers pertain to the analytical notes or review accompanying the game or problem being covered. In the annotations any plays discussed are given either in linear sequence along with the commentary or in columns, depending on the amount of moves to be treated and the whim of the writer. Older works on the game offer almost no explanation, only stark rows of figures reflecting the mightiest efforts of the early day checker board monarchs.

Should the reader be a member of that army of laymen to whom the science of checkers is a baffling foreign art, the question which may naturally vex him is, "Do I have to memorize the numbers of the board?" My answer would be in the negative, albeit a somewhat qualified "No." Make no attempt whatever to learn the numbers at first but do procure a numbered board or mark the ordinary one you already own with figures at the corners of the squares. Uniform bits of paper cut from gummed labels will serve the purpose. This will enable you to tune in and translate the numbers in any checker book into moves on your own checker board. Almost before realizing it, and with scarcely any conscious effort on your part, the numbered square locations will be firmly imprinted in mind so that, if desired, you can dispense with the numbered board. Nothing helps orientate the new player to the game as rapidly as memorization of the numbers. The effect is to transform the playing field of the board from an uncharted wilderness to a clearly mapped arena.

## Chapter IV

# YOU CAN'T PLAY WITHOUT RULES

To drive a car in Detroit, the Motor City, you must have obtained a license by passing tests which satisfy the police that you know the local traffic laws and can operate a car properly on the streets and highways. These measures insure a uniform standard of intelligent, safe driving through obedience to law and order.

Obviously, before you can play checkers with any resemblance of order you must become acquainted with the rules, for they embody a vital part of the game's rudiments. Should you learn nothing regarding checkers other than its official rules you will at least have taken the first step toward proficiency and know more about the game than multitudes who believe they can play. Countless thousands of so-called checker games are played in blissful ignorance of the official laws; even experienced amateurs who should know better carelessly or willfully disregard certain regulations dealing with the etiquette of play, the most flagrant violation being the retraction of moves. Another is the abuse of talking during play which can be distracting and lead to disagreements. Those rules covering tournament and match play that require the services of timekeepers and referees are ignored in friendly games and do not concern the beginner.

The beginner should get familiar with the rules right at the start and plan on strict adherence to those affecting its manners and the mechanics of play. By so doing he will cultivate good playing habits and uphold the dignity of the game—preventing it from becoming a farce or a childish pastime. Knowledge of the rules not only provides a marked advantage over those without this information but is also the initiation into the peculiarities of checker board strategy. More about that in the hints after the rules.

Following are the up-to-date official laws which initiates abide by for national, sectional and local tournaments and matches. Tagged on are some observations, beamed for the beginner's guidance, interpreting and reviewing the rules with respect to formal and casual contests.

### These Are the Rules of Checkers

1. The checker board to be used in national tournaments and official matches shall be of green and buff, two-inch squares. The board shall be placed for playing so that the green Double Corners are on the right-hand side of the players.
2. The official checkers to be used in national tournaments and official matches shall be turned and round, and of red and white in color, and of a diameter of not less than one and one-quarter inches, nor more than one and one-half inches. The pieces shall be placed on the green squares.
3. At the beginning of a contest the players shall toss for colors. The first move is made by the player having the Red (called Black in textbooks) pieces. Thereafter, the players shall alternate in leading off with Red in each succeeding opening balloted.
4. At the end of five minutes (if the move has not previously been made) "Time" must be called in a distinct manner by the person appointed for that purpose; and if the move

is not completed on the expiration of another minute, the game shall be adjudged as lost through improper delay. When either player is deaf or partially deaf, a card on which the word "Time" is printed in large letters shall be placed or laid on the playing table facing the player when it is his time to move.

5. When there are two or more ways to "Jump," five minutes shall be allowed for the move. When there is only one way to "jump" Time shall be called at the end of one minute; and if the move is not completed at the end of another minute the game shall be adjudged as lost through improper delay.
6. At the beginning of a game each player shall be entitled to arrange his own or his opponent's pieces properly on the squares. After the game has opened (a move has been made), if either player touch or arrange any piece, without giving intimation, he shall be cautioned for the first offense, and shall forfeit the game for any subsequent offense of this kind. If a person whose turn it is to play touch one of his own playable pieces, he must either play it or forfeit the game.
7. If any part of a playable piece be played over the angle of the square on which it is stationed, the play must be completed in that direction. Inadvertently removing, touching or disturbing from its position a piece that is not playable, while in the act of "jumping" or making an intended move does not constitute a move; and the piece or pieces shall be placed back in position and the game continued.
8. The "Huff" or "Blow" is hereby abolished. All "jumps" must be completed, and all "jumped" pieces must be removed from the board.
9. When a single piece reaches the crownhead of the board, by reason of a move, or the completion of a "jump" it becomes a King; and that completes the move, or "jump." The piece must then be crowned by the opponent by placing a piece on top of it. If the opponent neglects to do so and makes a play, then any such play shall be put back until the piece that should have been crowned is crowned. "Time" does not start on the player whose piece should have been crowned until the piece is crowned.
10. A king, once crowned, can move in any direction as the limits of the board permit. A King can "jump" in any direction one or more pieces, as the limits of the board permit. When a piece is not available for crowning, one must be furnished by the Referee.
11. A Draw is declared when neither player can force a win. When one side appears stronger than the other, and the player with what appears to be the weaker side requests the Referee for a Count on Moves, then, if the Referee so decides, the stronger party is required to complete the win, or show to the satisfaction of the Referee at least an "increased" (instead of the old wording "decided") advantage over his opponent within forty of his own moves, these to be counted from the point at which notice was given by the Referee; failing in which he must relinquish the game as a draw.
12. After an opening is balloted neither player shall leave the board without permission of the Referee. If permission is granted his opponent may accompany him, or the Referee may designate a person to accompany him. "Time" shall be deducted accordingly from the player whose turn it is to move.

13. Anything which may tend either to annoy or distract the attention of the opponent is strictly forbidden, such as making signs or sounds, pointing, or hovering over the board either with the hands or the head, or unnecessarily delaying to move a piece touched. Any principal so acting, after having been warned of the consequences, and requested to desist, shall forfeit the game.
14. Players shall be allowed to smoke during the course of a game, but care must be exercised not to blow smoke across the board lest it annoy an opponent. If a player is thus annoyed he may object to his opponent smoking, in which case neither player shall be allowed to smoke.
15. Any spectator giving warning either by signs or sound or remark on any of the games, whether playing or pending, shall be ordered from the room during the contest. Play shall be discontinued until such offending person retires. Spectators shall not be allowed to smoke or talk near the playing boards.

## **IVa. HIGHLIGHTS ON THE RULES**

### **1-2-3: Equipment**

Self-explanatory and already discussed in Chapter III on primary instructions.

### **4: Time Limit for Moves**

Away from serious match and tournament play, this rule is seldom invoked and can be shelved so far as ordinary casual games are concerned. The writer has participated in interstate team matches and early rounds of tournaments where this rule was held in abeyance due to insufficient attendance of non-players to serve as timekeepers.

In this respect the chess players have an advantage. They regulate their important games by stipulating a certain number of moves be played per hour and keep track of their own time by means of special dual clocks. A similar timing arrangement should win acceptance among the checkerists inasmuch as the moves in a checker game vary in the degree of analysis required to reach a determination, the same as in chess. Some situations are relatively easy to decipher while others are almost unsolvable. A movement for timeclocks in checkers has been started, but except for a few trial balloon attempts at popularizing this change, little headway has been made.

By and large, the percentage of games played without conformance to the rules governing time is overwhelming. As a new player, you have no compelling reason for concern with this rule, nevertheless it might be interesting to check on yourself during games with friends or relatives. By glancing at your watch now and then you can learn to gauge the passage of time fairly closely. This will be valuable later should you grow to the status of a genuine expert and compete in officially sanctioned contests.

## **5: Time Limit for Jumps**

The above comment on Rule 4 also applies to jumps. Where only one way to jump is presented, the move is compulsory, hence the full time limit is not deemed necessary. With more than one jump you have freedom of choice and can ponder over the position, before selecting your move.

## **6-7: Touching and Moving Pieces**

A cause of controversy among the ignorant. The language regarding the moving of pieces is crystal clear and there should never be an issue over taking back moves or “Not having taken the hand off the piece,” the lament of the uninformed. Advanced checkerists feel these infractions are an imposition and consider it a nuisance if required to act as a policeman in enforcing the letter of the law but that is the only way to cure habitual offenders. It’s touch and move with no rubber bands to snap them back.

## **8: It Is Compulsory to Jump**

This regulation has a direct bearing on strategy for once a man or king is placed on a square where the next move may be a capture the freedom of choice vanishes during the interval of the jump play. Unless of course there is more than one way to jump in which case you can exercise the option of selecting what you believe is the best take. But you will have to jump. Consequently, it is essential to develop an attitude of extreme caution about moving into spots where the next play might be an automatic, involuntary act of capturing. Your opponent may capitalize on the inning being spent in jumping by deploying his pieces so as to gain an advantage, either gathering up more men than your jump yields or exchanging “even-steven” in such a way that the “Move” becomes transferred to his side of the board. Any number of hostile stratagems, while you are performing a jump, may shatter your game. Never forget that damage can incur as readily from jump plays you instigate as from those the other side triggers.

## **9: Pausing When You Reach the Kingrow**

Checker board strategy is also affected by this delay in the action (for the coronation ceremony, as it were) by the pause when a piece enters the kingrow. The extra step gained at this point is the keystone of a master maneuver known in the parlance of the game as an in-and-out shot or a compound stroke. A characteristic example of this type of play is pictured in figure 64.

## **10: King Moves in Any Direction**

Privileged to move backward as well as forward, a king has much greater power than an ordinary man, therefore smart players go all-out to obtain the first active king. Sacrifices of one and sometimes two men are made to get a king which may raise havoc in back of uncrowned opposition men. A free-wheeling king is well worth two commoners in many

positions but this is not to be taken as an infallible precept. Many examples are given later demonstrating the power of kings.

### **11: Draw Games—The Forty Move Count**

Rarely invoked in tournament and match play, the forty move count is something you as a fledgling need not worry about. Between you and your “playmate” it should be a simple matter to agree if an ending is “no decision” or should be prolonged to try for a win. If you can’t force the issue and the play gets repetitious that’s the signal to rack them up again.

### **12-14: Taking Time Out—Smoking**

There is nothing of any real concern to the freshman in these articles. Scan them and make a mental note of their text for future reference.

### **13-15: Player’s and Spectators’ Conduct**

Explicitly worded so there can be no mistaking the intent, these articles are designed to dignify the game by controlling the behavior of spectators equally with that of the players. It is to be noted that kibitzers are extremely unpopular and onlookers are warned to heed the ancient axiom, “silence is golden.” No comment or interference in any form by sight or sound is tolerated at official events. Offenders are bluntly warned and if persistent in their bad manners, are given the “bum’s rush.” This is not to imply that all checker players, as a class, are wooden Indians for many an ace player indulges in a bit of harmless banter during a hard game. But they are careful not to abuse the privilege and annoy their opponent.

## Chapter V

### WHAT IT TAKES TO WIN (The Tangibles)

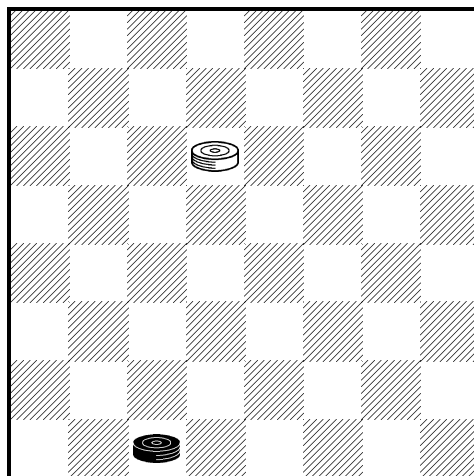
Our society lays heavy emphasis on success in all areas of endeavor; thus every normal person who plays checkers wants to win. But defeating an honest-to-goodness expert takes a particular brand of knowledge and skill that the man in the street has no conception of whatsoever. However, any teen ager or adult who likes a challenging mental game can easily acquire a respectable degree of checker knowledge and playing skill, and have fun in the process, by following the simple instructions printed hereon. “Respectable degree” means a status where one has digested the fundamental principles and basic playing techniques to a point where he is a fit candidate for progression into the advanced expert class.

The champions’ recipe for winning checker games boils down to the four specific ingredients outlined below. These stepping stones to success play a leading role in this project and will be set forth in clear detail later in separate chapters.

#### A. What Having the Move Means (Chapter XII)

What the expert means by having “THE MOVE” is such a relationship of the men on the board as to give you the last play. Not having the move signifies you can only play so as to give your pieces away or that you are blocked tight with no open squares upon which to go. The move is an elemental factor in checkers and its influence is vital to the end result of almost every game which winds up with equal numbers of Black and White pieces. It also has a bearing on many games with unequal pieces in the endings. Here are simple examples of the move showing both cases.

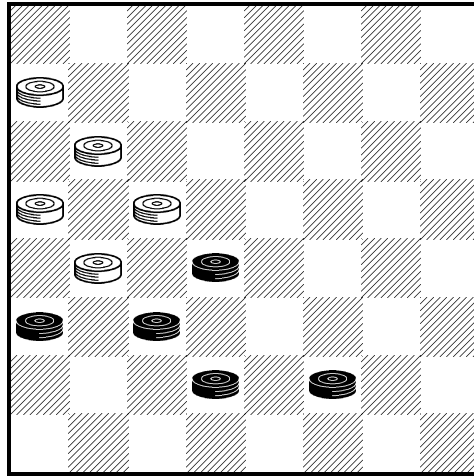
*No. 3*  
*Wins on the Move*



Black to Play and Win

Very simple and direct—Black moves 3-7 and steps in White’s way by either 7-10 or 7-11, depending on White’s reply.

No. 4  
Total Stoppage



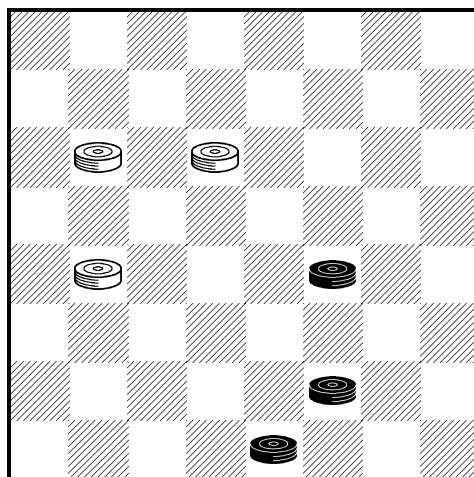
Black to Play and Win

All is over by moving 6-10. White is completely blocked.

## B. Superiority of Forces (Chapter XIII)

How to gain pieces is the clue to accomplishing a superiority of forces and is an interesting aspect of the game since it chiefly involves “shots” or strokes whereby you give pieces to the other side in return for a larger number. The commonest are two-for-one, three-for-one and three-for-two shots. They are the spectacular, surprise plays of checkers and provide a thrill to novice and expert alike. A typical shot is given below.

No. 5  
Three Bagger



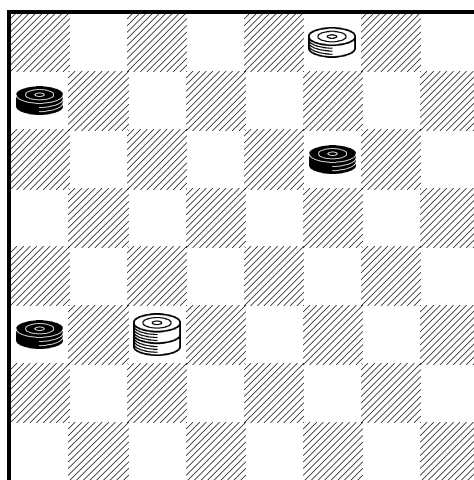
Black to Move and Win

A clean sweep of the board is made by going 14-18, 23-14, 6-10, 14-7, 2-27, Black Wins.

## C. Clever Plays (Chapter XIV)

Checkers has a flock of tricks, traps, catches and coups involving one to three pieces on each side. These miniature tactics are the basic tools of the expert who uses them as short and long range threats in his overall strategy. The expert always tries to force his opponent's moves, restricting the action as much as possible to his own choice of playing lines, and these small but brilliant ideas help him succeed. Naturally, when greater numbers occupy the board, other more intricate tricks and traps are possible and the scope of the play increases enormously, but, it is also true that you must learn to crawl before you learn to walk. Observe the sparkling stratagem underneath.

*No. 6*  
*Indian Gift*



Black to Play and Win

This is a high caliber stratagem and indicative of the game's science. Black is ahead in numbers but faces the loss of the man on 22 by the approaching White king on 11 and sacrifices the piece at a judicious moment to arrest White's action. Proceed 28-32, 11-15, 32-27, 15-18, 22-26, 30-23, 12-16, Black Wins.

## D. Superior Position (Chapter XV)

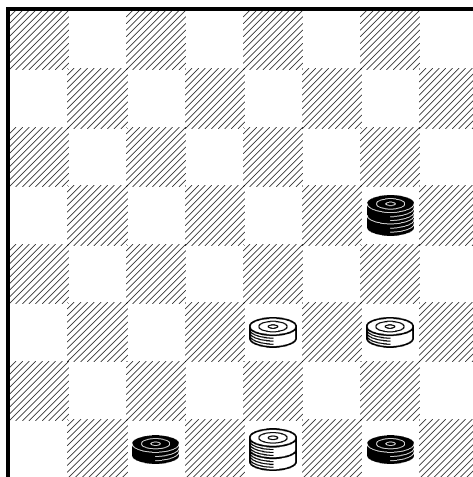
Because of the checker board's size and shape, certain formations have a way of showing up repeatedly in the hands of strong players and over the years have become established as significant to the art of the game. From a score of major game formations that comprise this group, several have been selected and listed as being especially appropriate to teach the beginner the implications of superior position. Herewith is the listing.

1. Center game vs. side game (Chapter XVa)
2. The Dyke (Chapter XVb)
3. Bridge Position (Chapter XVc)

#### 4. Triangles (Chapter XVd)

A typical Bridge Position is pictured hereon.

*No. 7*  
*Typical Bridge Position*



Black to Move and Win

Black plays 17-13 (not 17-14 which allows a trade by 9-5 and would lose), 9-5 (if 2-6, 1-5 traps the man on 9 and wins; if 9-6, 13-9 wins), 13-9, 2-7, 9-6, Black Wins.

## Chapter VI

# GETTING A DRAW IS BETTER THAN LOSING

Next to winning a game, nothing compares with the satisfaction of gaining a draw when you are in a tight fix and appear on the brink of defeat. Avoiding a loss may not create the same thrill that a win does among those who fail to understand the depth of checkers, nevertheless a draw sustains the status quo and among outstanding players signals a well executed, gratifying game. A critical draw entails much the same techniques that a win does—using the move, tricks, traps and stratagems of every sort and a special assortment of stand-off ideas when caught short of pieces.

In a realistic sense, a win is the result of a mistake, albeit the mistake may take the finest playing endeavor to uncover and capitalize. Armed with the procedures set forth in this volume the novice can force many wins in playing with those minus this information, but against stiffer competition will quickly discover this data is not exclusive.

Application of the basic winning techniques summarized in the preceding chapter will bring about many game situations where an apparent winning edge is gained but the loss can be forestalled by interposing the right play. To the player schooled in the wiles of checkers, a draw earned by the employment of a scientific escape motif is one of the most fascinating facets of the game.

Any number of novice games are lost because the players press on recklessly for a win that is not available against ordinary correct play, hoping for a childish blunder, when the use of an ounce of judgment would cause them to make a bee-line for a draw. There is no honor lost in drawing a hard fought game and even if it is marred by errors the result still counts. Scoring systems usually allocate two points for a win and one point to each player for a drawn game. Thus a draw has half the intrinsic value of a win and is not to be spurned.

As the board is symmetrical about the centerline and the men are shared equally, no advantage exists at the outset of a game except the slight theoretical pull that Black is supposed to have by starting 11-15 and this is more alleged than real. It follows then that no system of play can insure wins for the same ideas and formations appear on both sides of the board and two can play at the same game. A checker axiom holds that the ratio of draws increased in direct proportion to the degree of playing excellence attained and the win ratio shrinks accordingly. The high percentage of draws among masters is due to the uniformly high quality of their play and not, as some critics would have us believe, because of an ultra conservative policy.

A representative group of basic escape themes in simplest form that draw by scientific moves in positions which unskilled players would inevitably lose are scattered throughout this book. Assimilation of the draw ideas enclosed herein is recommended heartily to the beginner as a stimulant to appreciation of the game's beauty and this know-how will rescue many a game that would otherwise have to be written off.

## Chapter VII

# THE HEAD MUST DIRECT THE HAND

### (The Intangibles)

A couple of chapters back we dealt briefly with the four main factors contributing to the winning of checker games. These are, so to speak, on-the-board tangibles of basic expert play—concrete examples of actual positions presented later with minute attention to their ideas, theoretics and sequence of moves. Before expanding into a detailed, individual chapter treatment of these key factors to playing success, it would be fruitful to discuss the elements of skilled play which are more abstract in nature but nevertheless important. Roughly, the intangible elements are the various mental processes and activities which are a preliminary step to the physical act of moving the pieces and a list of these is indicated in the subject headings appearing below. These more or less advisory lessons are presented in succeeding sections and will furnish the beginner with substantial playing pointers and usable playing techniques.

I consider these sections exceedingly important to the starting novice, for their informative hints so plainly reveal the expert's playing practices and methods of conducting a game that the novice cannot help but improve his own checker board craftsmanship. As a means of adding interest and further enhancing the value of each section, a group of diagrams are included showing ideas which, though they may not be altogether relevant to the text matter, nonetheless represent essential, scientific themes of play.

1. How to Study the Diagrammed Problems (Chapter VIII).
2. You Need an Efficient Routine (Chapter IX).
3. Visualization—The Long-Range Look (Chapter X).
4. Practical Playing Pointers (Chapter XI).

## Chapter VIII

# HOW TO STUDY THE DIAGRAMMED PROBLEMS

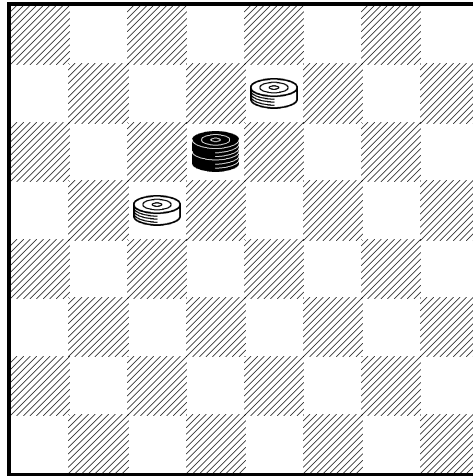
Checker problems are usually composed positions that are difficult to fathom and require a precise combination of moves to fulfill the terms of a win or a draw. There should be only one way to solve the position or it is not a problem in the truest sense. As nearly all the elementary stratagems and themes in this manual fit this description, it is not out of order to consider the diagrammed positions herein as problems. They are puzzles and enigmas to the uninformed but not exactly in the same category as cross-word puzzles, charades and allied mental quiz games. Neither are they mathematics problems, although there is a kinship in that the processes of checker board play are, in a broad sense, arithmetical in nature. I trust no one gets the impression these checker problems are not amenable to ordinary intelligent attention but they do represent unique ideas—ideas embracing perplexing concepts outside the average person’s range of experience—ideas that are neither flesh or fowl.

The reader will no doubt prefer trying his hand at these examples before consulting the solution below the figures and will have no trouble in solving a fair percentage. Checkers affords a splendid opportunity to exercise creativeness which, in the players’ shop talk is better known as “cross-board” ability, the knack of improvising and discovering subtle combinations, making high-grade plays extemporaneously. The beginner may discover he has good native ability for the game. However, top flight checkers is to a large degree an application of known data—memorized lines of play—rather than a test of skill on strange battle grounds.

I do not recommend the expenditure of an excessive time-and-trial effort in solving these problems. Excessive time would be anything beyond fifteen or twenty minutes per item. Do not be reluctant to look at the solution after a reasonable study period in search of the answer. This is the sensible and efficient approach to acquiring knowledge of any new subject. Few of us nowadays can afford the luxury of unbudgeted time. Moreover, you may be exploring for something that is not within your scope of knowledge and therefore unrecognizable. Don’t be surprised to find some of your solutions are incorrect and do not match the proper continuations underneath the diagrams.

To be persistent and hang on with bulldog tenacity is a commendable trait, especially in competitive games and enterprises, and gratifying when crowned with success. But one must adopt a different policy in reading a book than when playing a game. The objectives are dissimilar. We read for pleasure and profit. We play against an opponent to satisfy the primitive urge to do battle and conquer. If you are like most folks you will race through this book, skipping here and there as your fancy directs. Then you will return for a second, third and fourth look, pausing at the originally bypassed sections with increased interest and reviewing the previously scanned sections to discover new facets of information, new shades of meaning. Each new theme learned opens up new vistas in the horizon of playing technique, adding usable playing ideas to the students’ repertoire. You want to learn and you want to learn quickly, so why not turn to the solution if you can’t find it on your own? Let the proper moves of each problem sink in and then go on to the next one. You will make pleasingly fast progress.

*No. 8*  
*The Breeches or Pants*



Either to Move and Draw

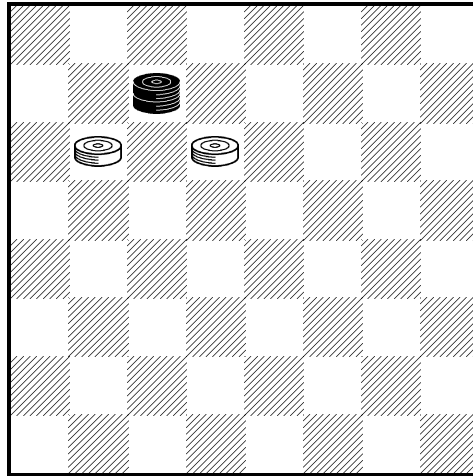
The Breeches or Pants as it is sometimes called is definitely a primary theme. In the above setting the Black king breeched the opening between the two White men by moving either from 18 to 23 or from 27 to 23. There are sixteen locations on the board where this stratagem can arise, going in both directions, so the idea is often seen in novice games and a better player is caught napping once in a while.

Every diagram in these pages is placed with the Black pieces occupying the bottom squares and moving upward while the White men are located at the top portion of the board and coming downward.

The learner should also note that every problem and virtually every position can be reversed as to colors, the ideas working for White just the same as for Black.

Getting back to the pictured breeches, if it is White's turn to play he will go 19-15 and draw by continuing into the Double Corner and crowning. He also has access to the Double Corner by moving 26-22 instead of 19-15. If Black moves first he may jump 23-16 and White then has THE MOVE, forcing the Black king away by going 26-23 and proceeding unhampered for a draw.

*No. 9*  
*The Straddle*

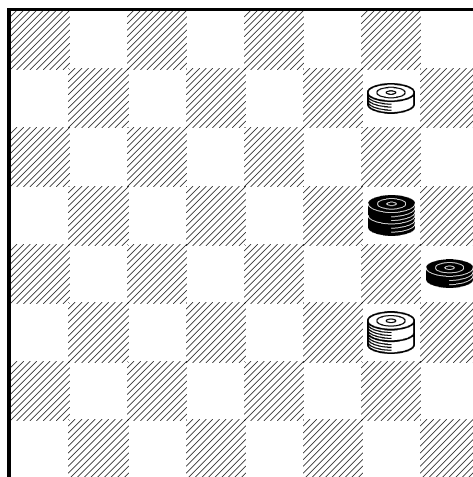


Either to Move and Draw

Closely resembling the breeches, this trick likewise often catches the unwary and heedless “wood pusher.” (Initiate’s slang for players of average or sub-average skill; they are also called “scrubs” by players in the upper echelon.) The Black king has straddled a pair of White men and since both of these can’t be moved at the same time, one will be liquidated. Do not move 24-20 or 24-19 if it is White’s turn to play or Black will win on the move. If Black moves first White gets the move and draws either way the king jumps.

The straddle also is a very elementary catch but a handy idea because it can be located at ten different points on the board for both the Black and White sides.

*No. 10*  
*Forced Breeches*

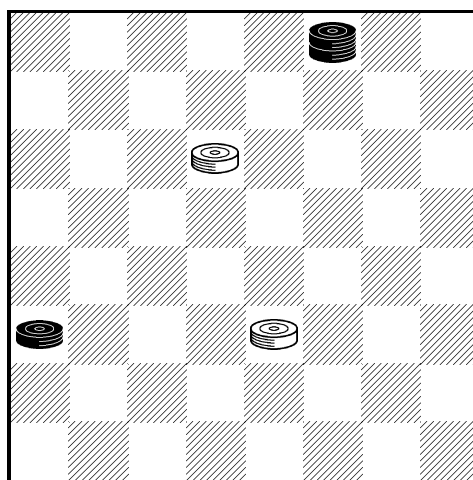


Black to Play and Win

It is not enough to spot a trap that can be immediately sprung. You must be able to see these tricks in the offing by visualizing the upcoming moves well in advance and employing

the principle of forced play to channel the contest into problems and positions you know. That is the experts' method of operation. Here is a good example of how a simple winning idea can be forced from an apparently safe position by two "squeeze" plays. Black squeezes 17-21 and White is compelled to play 25-22. The second squeeze by 21-17 causes White to move 22-18 and form the breeches which should by now be an old friend. 17-14 wraps it up for a win as Black steals a man. Refer to Problem No. 15 showing how two kings beat one.

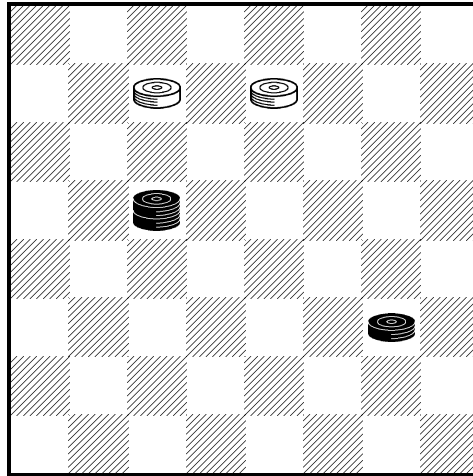
*No. 11*  
*Forced Straddle*



Black to Play and Win

Like No. 10 this reveals the practical use to which a simple idea can be put. The game abounds in opportunities for displaying the brilliant touch but it takes practice and skill to ferret them out. Three booster moves by the Black king on Diagram 11, nudging the White man on 23 and a straddle is forced. Play 30-26, 23-19 (23-18 is no better), 26-23, 19-15, 23-18, 15-11, 18-15, Black Wins.

*No. 12*  
*Double Trouble*

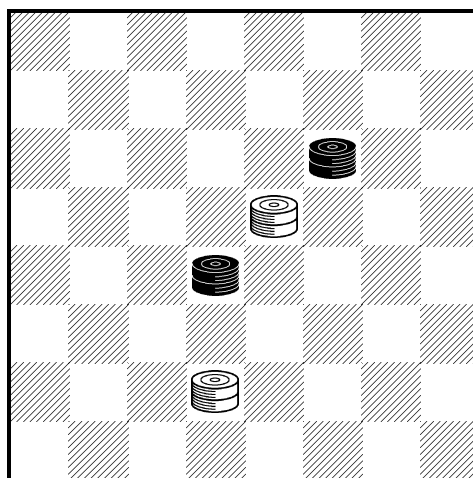


Black to Play and Win

The subject problem contains a double barrel blast, demonstrating the advantage that a king has over a single man. In this one you either get the move on a trade or win by a straddle. Advance 9-14, making White go 27-23. If he prefers 26-22 you trade 14-18 and gain the move on the other White piece. Proceed 19-24 (this is a star move—explanation below), 26-22, 24-27, 22-18 (23-19 loses by 27-31, 19-15 or 19-16, 31-26), 14-17, 23-19, 27-23, Black Wins.

Authorities differ as to the interpretation of a star move, generally designated by an asterisk, but it denotes either (1) a brilliant move or (2) an essential move; at any rate not an ordinary push.

*No. 13*  
*Tit for Tat*

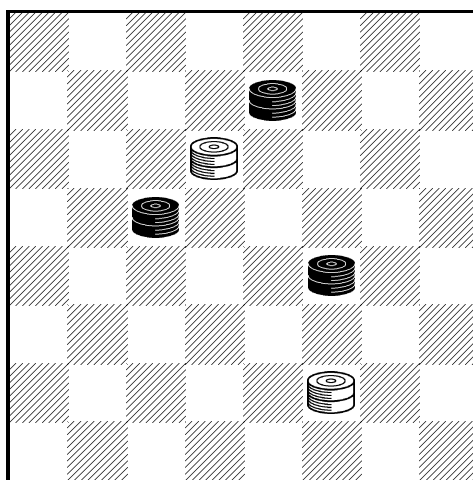


Black to Play and Draw

The Black side may appear to have fumbled by allowing the breeches but the position admits of a scientific escape theme familiar to every expert. You merely play 15-11 (15-10 also draws but 15-11 gives White a chance to go wrong which is standard policy with the expert), 18-25 (nix on the other jump—it loses), 11-2, 25-22, 2-6, 22-18, Drawn.

Several variations of this theme can and do arise in regular play, or to put it another way this same escape idea appears at a number of different locations on the board, multiplying its utility. A few examples herewith: replace the White king on 7 to 16; rearrange all four thusly—put Black kings on 11 and 18, White kings on 15 and either 17 or 26 with Black to play and draw. The reader should have no difficulty finding other locations by himself.

*No. 14*  
*Coup de Main*



Black to Play and Win

White has just pounced on the breeches and seems able to retrieve a lost warrior. However, Black has a jolting countermaneuver up his sleeve that puts the quietus on such endeavors, netting either a one-for-one or a two-for-two, retaining the edge in numbers and winning fast. This is a one-move blitz; just be nonchalant and go 14-10, giving White a choice of three jumps. If he captures 6-24, you clean the board with 26-28; either of the other jumps and you take 10-1. Rather heady, isn't it?

## Chapter IX

# YOU NEED AN EFFICIENT ROUTINE

An efficient procedure in the conduct of a game is as necessary in checkers as in any other operation. Nothing is more helpful in the development of good playing habits than the practice of careful deliberation which should be followed at all times, not just during a critical or complicated situation. The apparent simplicity of the position at hand or the seeming limitation of choice of moves should not lead to a relaxation in attentiveness. The nature of the game requires constant vigilance and the repression of any tendencies toward rapid-fire moves on penalty of a sudden knock-out loss.

No one has ever devised a better routine for determining which move to make than the selective elimination method. Under this procedure, when it is your turn to play, you examine every possible move for each of your playable pieces before selecting the one you deem best suited for that specific situation. Naturally, your selection has taken into account all possible countering moves from the opposite side of the board. To speed up the process and maintain the maximum efficiency of the routine it is advisable to analyze the very worst appearing moves first. In this way you can rapidly determine and discard all moves that are obviously bad or impractical. However, care must be exercised not to overlook a move that seems bad on the surface yet has hidden potentials of subtle cunning and strength, such as the apparent donation of one or two men which, when analyzed more fully, is not the foolish play that first glance would indicate but a solid move with profitable repercussions. Excellent examples are problems 79 and 84. Notice how silly the key move appears when viewed superficially and the difference in import after a more comprehensive scrutiny. Usually, however, the bad moves can be quickly spotted and as quickly dropped from consideration. Next to be eliminated are the weak and dangerous moves and those allowing the other side an advantage, leaving the balance of moves for concentrated attention. I must warn the reader that it takes a little playing experience of sorts to enable detection of moves that are not glaringly bad but still are unsatisfactory for reasons plain to an expert.

Despite the foregoing wordy explanation of the routine for the moves not to be made, the time thus spent should be brief—not over a minute on the average position—leaving the bulk of the study period for deciding which move will finally be employed. Where two or more moves of about equal strength are available the choice must be narrowed down to one and the decision should be made in all promptness to avoid any undue delay. Some players by nature are slower than others but rare indeed is the expert who can move instantly and make few errors. The amount of time spent on any particular move should be consistent with the complexity of the position and the player's knowledge, not losing sight of the time limit if the game is being played under official rule conditions. The ideal condition would be to make each move only upon absolute conviction that it is the best, regardless of the time involved.

You can put this routine into action before your turn to move, beginning the procedure during the interval your opponent is studying the board preparatory to making his move, by anticipating his play and planning how you will reciprocate. And this period can be advantageously used by watching for unusual moves, sacrifices, hidden strokes and the like so as not to get caught flat-footed by an unexpected thrust. Never let your attention drift from the board as it takes extra energy to concentrate anew each time you must move; also

be mindful that a careless attitude produces mistakes.

A word of advice: Don't pin your hopes on a move that will function brilliantly if your opponent falls asleep. Avoid disappointment by planning your strategy with the supposition that the other side will make the strongest, most error-free play each time without falling for booby traps or land mines. That is how the game's foremost exponents operate.

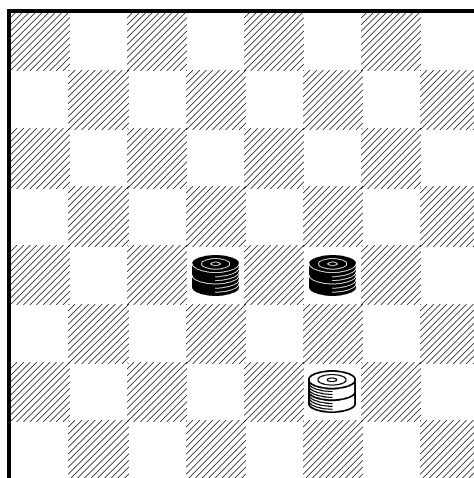
It can be advantageous to learn swiftly that you are restricted to one move, if it is a safe one, for you can then devote your entire analysis to a single line of play exclusive of any other combination and, with care along the way, stand up against the strongest attack your opponent can muster. Conversely, nothing tends to so demoralize a player as to realize he has spent the greater portion of his time allotment on a line of play that looks plausible but at the last moment discovers it is unsound he is forced to use another play on snap judgment. If he succeeds in negotiating a critical draw or win, it is more by luck than skill. A situation of this kind is inclined to make a good player look bad.

Hasty, ill-considered moves are to some extent the jinx of all classes of players; experts and masters occasionally slip on this score, like a professional fighter forgetting to duck when a "haymaker" is aimed at his chin. Many an otherwise brilliantly played game is reduced to rubble by single careless move. Many a trap is sprung not because of its subtlety but simply because the victim did not take the time to scan every section of the board. The practice of calculating with the utmost speed is almost second nature to the expert player. In official meets he is more apt to be under pressure from the time limit than from the intricacies of the play.

Time permitting, it is well to go back over some of the other possible moves after you have made up your mind. A second and third look may disclose a hitherto unseen kink or twist in the play that may improve on your contemplated move.

While the routine outlined hereabove is substantially an exposition of the manner in which champions go about the business of playing a game the essential mechanics are so simple that the greenest youngster at checkers can immediately start utilizing it. The value of this routine to the novice increases proportionally with his growing understanding of the finer points of the game.

*No. 15*  
*The Last Round-Up*

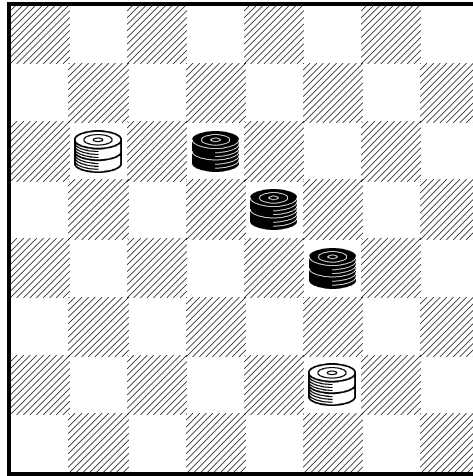


Black to Play and Win

Hardly anyone, no matter how unversed at the game, has trouble in polishing off an opponent when he has two kings against one in either Double Corner. The moves for dislodging the sole survivor seem naturally to suggest themselves, the two kings working back to back in effecting the eviction and cornering of the lone adversary. Perhaps this ending occurs more frequently than any final winning combination on the board. Move 15-18, forcing the White king onto square 1. Follow with 14-9, 1-5, 18-14 (the ouster is under way), 5-1, 9-5, 1-6, 5-1, 6-2, 14-18, 2-7, 18-15, 7-2, 15-11, Black Wins.

The four problems in this group (Nos. 15-18) are standard endings that are probably encountered oftener in play than any other end-game situations and a thorough mastery of their principles will compensate the beginner in satisfying results.

*No. 16*  
*The Mystic Maze*



Black to Play and Win

A surprising number of laymen are under the impression this standard ending is a draw and I have heard of cases where they offered to wager on that misbelief. Their fallacy can be attributed to the fact that the win is rather scientific, necessitating the execution of four forcing moves made in exact order to maneuver the two kings into a position where a trade-off is imminent in both Double Corners at the same time. Upon trading one-for-one the position narrows down to the preceding problem.

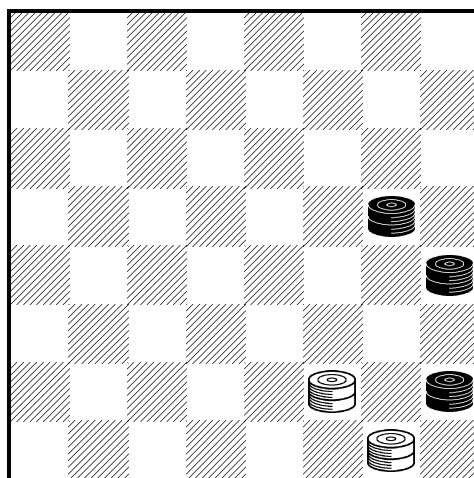
The reason why the answer seems so mysteriously elusive until it is thoroughly clarified is because any time a wrong move is made in the series of four, the entire sequence is broken and the procedure to corral the two defendings must begin anew with at least four correct moves to be made in a row. So each move has to be a forceful play that is pin-pointed to obtain one of two specific lineups for an exchange indicated in the solution below.

Incidentally, whichever side moves first, the routine is the same except for location on different diagonals. Eventually, the position swings around to that in our diagram above with the pieces reversed on the two diagonals, permitting the same kind of a combination to win.

From the diagram, play 18-15, compelling White to retreat into one of the Double Corners. Suppose he goes 6-1. You then immobilize that king for the next play by 14-9, which prevents 1-5 on account of the double choice of exchanges. White must go 24-28 and you follow with 23-19, threatening to trade the king on 1 by 9-6. To prevent this, White is forced sidewise 1-5 and you thereupon make the decisive move of the series by playing 9-6. Now either way White slides you set up a line of exchange with two potent ends. If 5-1 you pull back 6-10 and one of the two kings must remain in the line of exchange. If 28-32 instead of 1-5 you get the same end result by moving 19-24. Now whichever king White moves is the one you allow to jump your adjacent king which gets backing from the furthest of the three kings. i.e.— 5-1, 24-19, or 32-28, 6-10.

I would advise the beginner to go over this problem on his board several times and memorize the exact routine as it is explained in the above paragraph. I think it will be helpful to remember that each move has to be a forced play having a definite motive—to reach a specific lineup or line spread position where a swap looms at both ends simultaneously.

*No. 17*  
*Twilight of Kings*



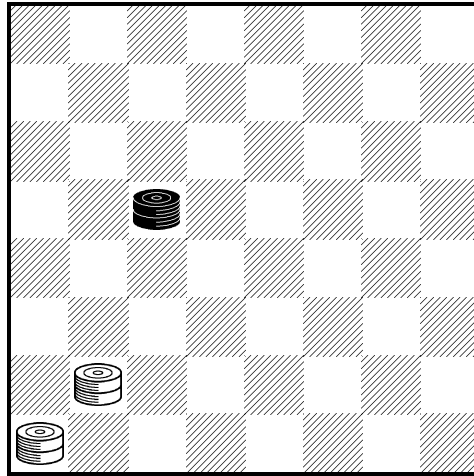
Either to Play—Black to Win

Three kings grappling with two united in one Double Corner is another basic ending problem that has its own peculiar style of maneuvering needed to slip over a K.O. It comes up often, too. Its ideas are not the simplest but the least skilled players have been known to stumble on the win because different variations will resolve the problem. There is a direct exchange which whittles the forces down to two kings against one and a couple of sacrificing plays that equalize the pieces in such a way that the move can be utilized on the remainder. If you will review the Mystic Maze problem you will observe that the three kings can win only by one idea, forcing the exchange when the two kings choose to defend in each Double Corner. Thus this ending provides less scope for the defending kings and more variations for the attacking kings. But neither position will prevent a knowing player from scoring promptly.

How does it go? Well, suppose Black moves First. He can bring the end-game to a head by coming 17-14 which at first sight appears bad because it allows White a two-for-one by 6-9. However, by completing that play you will notice the White king on 1 jumps to square 17 and is defeated by the move, Black playing 5-9 and shortly winning on a block. The alternate move against 17-14 is 6-2; then Black goes 13-9. Now, of course if White plays 2-7 Black exchanges by 14-10, so he tries 1-6 in the hope that Black will blunder by retreating 9-13 which would grant a two-for-one shot by 6-9 and an unearned draw. But the climactic move in reply to 1-6 is 5-1, letting White even up the pieces by 6-13, then the final thrust by 14-9, 13-6, 1-10 and hemming in the remaining White king.

If it is White's turn to play from the diagram he will withdraw 6-2 (not 6-10 which would give Black a trade by 17-14), 13-9, 1-6 (2-7 would allow both kings to be cornered by 17-14, etc.), 17-14, 6-13, 5-1 and White has nothing left but 2-7 which gives Black a clean-up two-for-one shot by 14-9.

*No. 18*  
*Single Corner See-Saw*



Black to Play and Draw

The inherent restrictiveness of the Single Corner zone is strikingly realized in this prolific game saver ending. Crowning pieces in the Single Corner or “dog hole” (squares 4 and 29) is a last resort action with the foresighted player who prefers to avoid this corner of the board and its attendant cramping of movement as reflected in this standard position. Move 19-16, 8-12, 16-11, 12-8, 11-7, 8-3, 7-11, Drawn. White can do nothing to activate the extra king if Black maintains a constant vigil between squares 7, 11, and 16. Giving one of the White kings away is a meaningless gesture.

## Chapter X

# VISUALIZATION—THE LONG RANGE LOOK

Regarding the subject of visualization, it is not my intention to be facetious in pointing out that dabblers and duffers cannot or will not look ahead before selecting their moves; they leap before they look. Carefully premeditated calculations into the upcoming possible lines of play are so habitual with the first stringer that it is almost second nature to him. The learner must discipline himself, consciously exerting an effort to visualize the checker board scene in progressive stages, looking onward one, two or move moves forward as far as he can train his mind's eye to follow. Nothing in checkers is more fundamental.

On that topic, a bit of joshing comes to mind which Louis T. deBearn, the colorful Detroit master, liked to indulge in. When a curious rookie or non-playing bystander at one of his playing sessions would ask how far ahead he could see the straight-faced reply would be, "Fifty moves; I can see the end of this game and twenty moves into the next game."

But seriously, it is possible for a well booked player to see fifty moves and more into the future during games where certain situations allow the application of forcing tactics that will channel the plays into memorized problems which are a part of the upper class competitor's repertoire. These master problems are routine play to those who stock them in their bag of tricks, even though the execution may require a long sequence of precise moves to bring them to realization.

How to visualize the placement of men on the board just one move hence is a problem at first, thought there may be but a few pieces thereon. By using the normal concentrative powers and following the progressive steps of learning set forth in the pages, the starter will in a short space of time make noticeable advancement in his knack of visualizing. Visibility, after all, is clear when the fog of ignorance is dissipated by the burning light of knowledge. You will see more with less effort when you know what to look for.

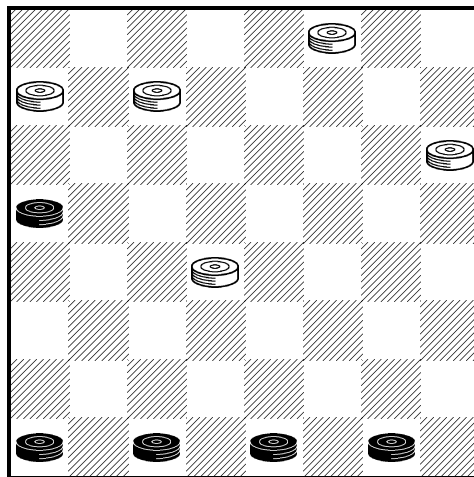
Further, in this connection, you may have heard about blindfold play, having perhaps attended a performance by a simultaneous play exhibitionist like Newell W. Banks, who is the most famous present-day exponent of this phase of the game. Like others, you marvelled at this seemingly magical display of master checkers. And like others you suspected trickery or collusion. What you saw was no fake. Blindfold checkers, as demonstrated by the great Banks, is a brilliant exposition of the game's science by one blest with extraordinarily acute memory and visualization faculties that have been groomed to near perfection in this field. Still this particular talent is nothing more than a physical attribute. As the slang expression so aptly puts it, either you have it or you don't.

So do not feel inferior or frustrated if you find you cannot turn your gaze away from the checker board and retain a vivid picturization of the squares and pieces thereon. You are in no way handicapped and by keeping your eyes fixed on the board the normal operation of mind will enable you to see ahead surprisingly well. Know, also, that not all blindfold checkerists are masters; there are fourth raters who can play without sight of the board, yet this power does not strengthen their game.

Four typical situations which can be encountered frequently in actual games, along the late mid-game or ending phases are spotlighted in this group of exercises from No. 19 through 22. The strategy outlined for each is an important scheme in the experts' plan of battle and

not likely to be independently discovered by those new at the game nor apt to be learned until their points are driven home convincingly by repeated contacts with skilled players. That is because the kernel of the stratagem is cloaked and not a one or two move poser but a lengthier tactical device demanding a telephoto vision.

*No. 19*  
*Tactics of Kingrow Exposure*



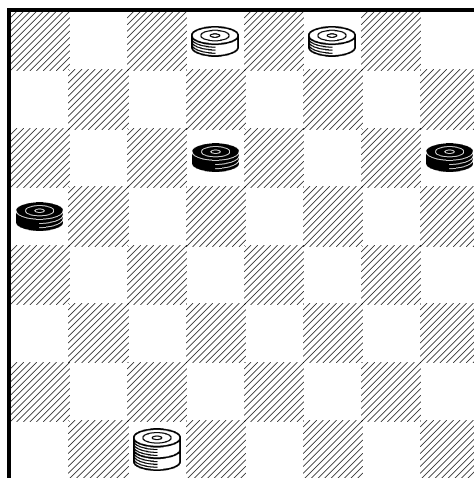
Black to Play and Draw

Problem 19 is a synthetic composition designed solely for the purpose of demonstrating the right and wrong way of uncovering the kingrow when the proximity of an opposing man can prove dangerous to your cause. The White pieces in back of that on 15 could be arranged in many different ways and Black, too, could have pieces elsewhere than on square 20 and with a bigger total on the board. But this diagram reveals the gist of the plot succinctly.

Supposing it is Black's turn to move, we have seven possible ways to break the solid crown row. Of these, three are bad in relation to the White man perched on 15. The worst is 1-5 which allows White to crown soon by 15-10, getting aid from the piece on 21, the latter advancing to 13 and exchanging 10-6 for an all-powerful king. 2-6 allows 15-11, pinning down the two pieces on 3 and 4 while 3-8<sup>1</sup> similarly gives White a holding advantage on the two Black men on 1 and 2. The effect of one man holding two in these instances is detrimental because liberation of the two pieces usually results in an opposition king that is quick to return and attack from behind, more often than not winning the game.

Four of the seven choices mentioned for Black are comparatively safe, strong moves, keeping the White man on 15 from approaching any closer to the kingrow and by following through properly soon building up an attack against that piece. Black should play either 4-8, 3-7, 1-6, or 2-7 from the position shown above. Actually, a combination of these would be good, such as 4-8 first, 3-7 next and then 1-6. Various continuations can be played from the initial setting to a draw conclusion, presupposing sharp play, especially on the part of White which is on the defensive and must plot the moves carefully. One line could feasibly run as follows: 4-8, 30-26, 3-7, 21-17, 1-6, 17-13, 7-10, 27-23, 10-19, 23-16, 8-11, etc. Drawn.

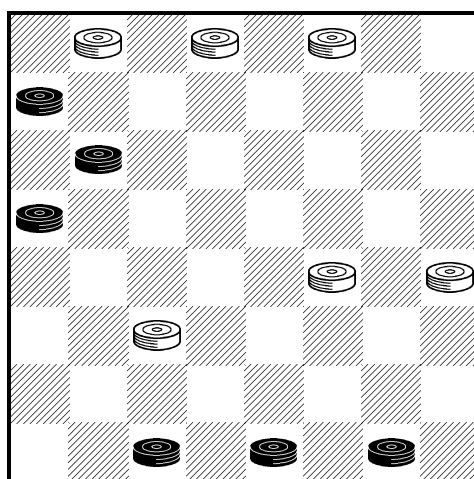
*No. 20*  
*Dead-end Street*



Black to Play and Draw

The novice who cannot visualize the changing board array clearly four moves hence is prone to lose this simple ending because he adopts an idea theoretically plausible but unsound in practice. He reasons that two kings are better than one and gets trapped in a dead end street when he tries to move in agreement with this logic. By crowning one king only he has access to the cleanest kind of draw but believes he can obtain superiority with two kings, a gross mistake. 23-27 draws for Black but 20-24, 3-8, 23-27, 8-11, 27-32, 11-15, 32-28 (or 32-27), 15-19 wins for White on a strangulation finish. Variations of this idea figure prominently in expert games.

*No. 21*  
*Effective Double Corner Breakthrough*



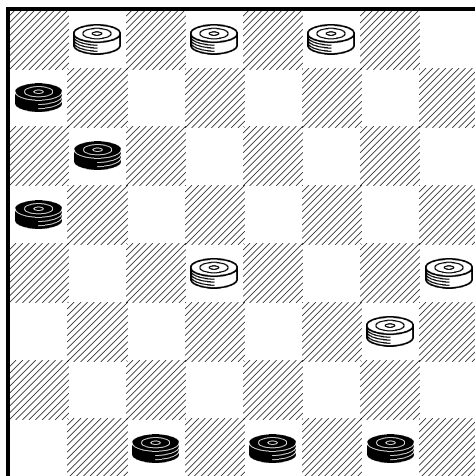
Black to Move and Draw

More subtle than either of the foregoing positions is the tactical plan of this Double Corner break-through which comes as close as anything in this manual to being an exposition of

the masters' technique in playing the vital part of an actual game formation under certain conditions. The object in including it and the allied position that follows is not so much to give the learner specific board settings, for an identical piece arrangement may never materialize in a month of Sundays, as to spell out a principle of play which he can adopt in similar game conditions. The principle is the sacrifice of a man to gain a king which returns subsequently to recapture the piece or maintain a positional advantage, thereby equalizing the game and preventing the side with the extra piece from scoring a win. The sacrifice, as exemplified hereabove, is not merely serviceable; if not made Black would lose the game.

Moving the men on 1, 2, or 3 would lose as White is given entry for a king, thus reversing the situation and securing the whip hand since his own kingrow is defensively tight. By sacrificing 24-27 Black is assured of a draw and has many winning possibilities. If I were playing White, I would not try to cling to the surplus piece, but would seek a way to give it back quickly with some compensation, perhaps as follows: Jump 32-23 and Black undoubtedly will crown 28-32 at once. Now 14-10, 20-24, 10-7, 3-10, 23-19 and then crowning two White kings and carefully nursing the ending should draw. However, the purpose of this setup is to teach what Black should do when he gets an opportunity of this kind. White has his inning in the next example.

*No. 22*  
*Ineffective Double Corner Breakthrough*



Black to Play—White Wins

Rearranging two pieces to adjoining squares would make this position identical with No. 21. But this slight variation points up the fact that nearly every position is a law unto itself. No theory or precept can be broadened to apply for the infinite number of positions in checkers, the differences in pattern, slight though they may be, causing vast divergences in the playing characteristics. The present layout yields no hope for Black inasmuch as the sacrifice in the Double Corner now comes too late in the day. White can jump either way<sup>2</sup> after 24-27 and on his next play moves 23-19, creating a double exchange opportunity on the succeeding play by 10-6 which Black can do nothing about. Having crashed through for a king and retained possession of the odd piece, White continues onward to a routine win.

Discarding 24-27, none of the other moves will put life in Black's game, White going 31-26 and simply waiting for Black to play out the string. This won't take long for there is no

fight in the position, Black already having three pieces bunched at the side and out of play while the others are too restricted and undeveloped to help. The continuation would run something like 2-7, 31-26, 3-8, 9-5, 8-12, 13-9, 12-16, 15-11, etc., White Wins.

## Chapter XI

# PRACTICAL PLAYING POINTERS

Master checker players have no secret formula or system that will furnish the answer to the riddle an intricate situation presents. The move for each position has to be worked out individually, although a certain amount of repetition is expected and planned by experts whose long suit is knowledge of published games that have been public property for generations. There is but one infallible secret to mastery at checkers and that is never make a move inferior to any played by your opponent.

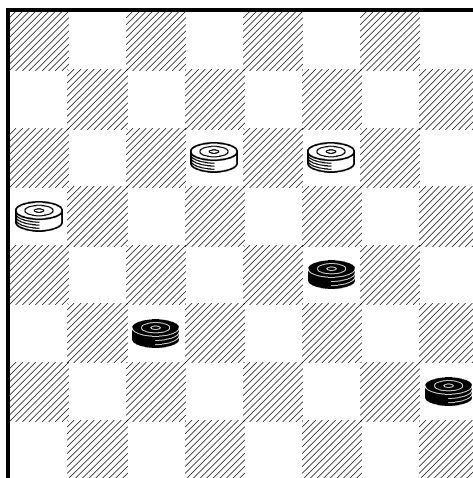
A widespread but false belief among hit-or-miss players maintains that a sure way of frustrating a superior player is by executing early exchanges to materially reduce the sides. By cutting down the forces they expect to minimize their opponent's scientific ability and thus equalize the contest. As a matter of fact, by keeping the board well stocked and the position as complicated as possible, the rookie may have some chance of being lucky through the veteran going wrong if the position is a strange one to him. But it is a slender possibility at best. In reality, the expert's greater knowledge and cross-board skill stacks the odds highly in his favor whether the board contains a few pieces or the full quota.

Movement of the pieces should be engineered in such a manner as to outmaneuver the opposition; never with the thought of outguessing or outsmarting the other player. Checkers is not a guessing contest and it is best to forego the use of a crystal ball. Reliance on knowledge or playing technique and a painstaking study of the situation at each turn will be rewarding in the satisfaction that only a game played with a measurable degree of skill can provide. A game that can be reviewed afterward with pride in accomplishment. An understanding of the game's precepts, acquired either from studying its literature systematically and playing with adepts or solely through the process of playing with those having that knowledge and thus absorbing some of it, is absolutely essential.

Precisely calculated play must supplant indiscriminate "wood pushing" if any demonstrable measure of skill is to be achieved. Shoving the men onto squares merely because they happen to be unoccupied requires no mental effort and the results inevitably spell out mediocrity. Infrequently, an upper class player will deliberately make a move he knows is incorrect in a tense situation, but this is in the nature of a calculated risk that takes into account various factors including the psychology of the specific occasion. Moreover, it requires mature playing judgment for a venture of this type to be profitable. Just as often, the attempt will back-fire.

There is a breed of devotee who harbors a prejudice about consulting a checker book, as though it were a disgrace, and is inclined to brag that he is a self-made player. His kind may develop some degree of rough and tumble skill, assimilating the principles of the game through laborious trial and error effort or alternately by learning "book" from cross-board contact with those having that advantage. One method is slow and primitive while the other is like a second-hand vehicle which, if not traded in for a new model, will keep the rider permanently a length behind the studious opponent.

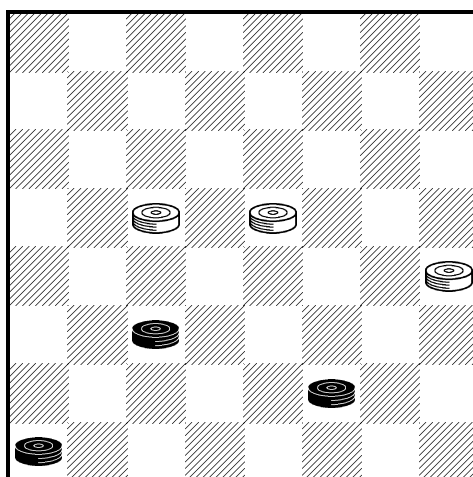
*No. 23*  
*Cooked Goose*



Black to Play and Win

An opportune positioning of the men gives Black an opening to squeeze the White piece on 23 and earn a bonus by getting the first and last jump. Black moves 11-15 and White has no alternative but to play 20-16 which brings on the aforementioned squeeze by 15-19, 22-18, 19-26, 18-9, 5-14. The Black piece on square 5 is the anchor man in this tug of war between two factions. Coups of this category should be the result of premeditation, not left to blind chance.

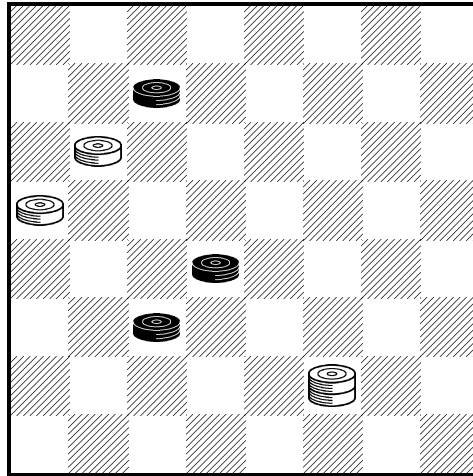
*No. 24*  
*Gone Gosling*



Black to Play and Win

Twin idea to No. 23, transposing the pieces on the board so that the anchor man which helps collect two jumps to one is located in the Single Corner instead of the Double Corner. It is won by 6-10, 13-9, 10-14, 19-15<sup>3</sup>, 14-23, 15-8, 4-11, Black Wins.

*No. 25*  
*The Vise*



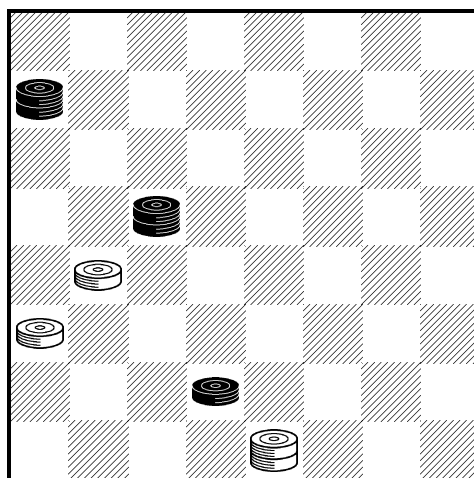
White Plays—Black Wins

In the problems that follow are other examples of a basic idea being transposed and relocated elsewhere on the board. It is important to know and recognize these different settings for what they are—variations of the same parent idea.

Two pieces in tandem immediately forward of a vacant edge square are susceptible to a vise-like grip if a king can be transported to the open square. This idea is shown in three practical applications, two variations of which follow, and the student should watch for this theme during the playing of games when additional pieces dot the board. Experience will teach the recognition of every basic idea at the earliest approaches when the theme is disguised by the presence of additional unrelated pieces in the most unlikely arrangements.

Number 25 is resolved by moving 6-10, 27-32, 10-19, 32-28, Black Wins. If White shies away from 6-10 Black gains the piece on 24; for instance, 6-2, 27-32, 2-6 (2-7 elicits a two-for-one by 32-28), 32-28, 6-10, 28-19, 10-7, 19-16, 7-10, 15-19, etc., Black Wins.

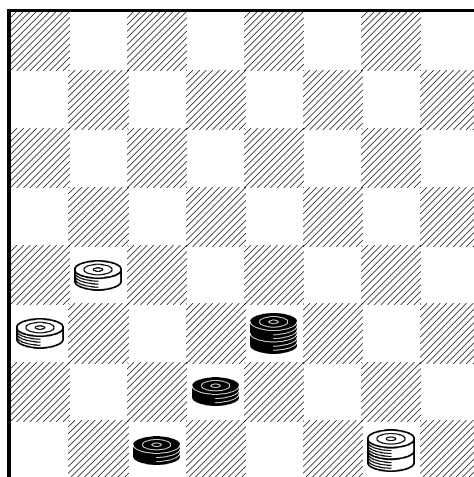
*No. 26*  
*The Clamp*



Black to Play and Win

By moving 28-24 as White jumps 2-11 and then 24-20, Black though a piece short puts an air tight clamp on the hostilities. Either of White's possible moves thereafter costs him the loss of two pieces.

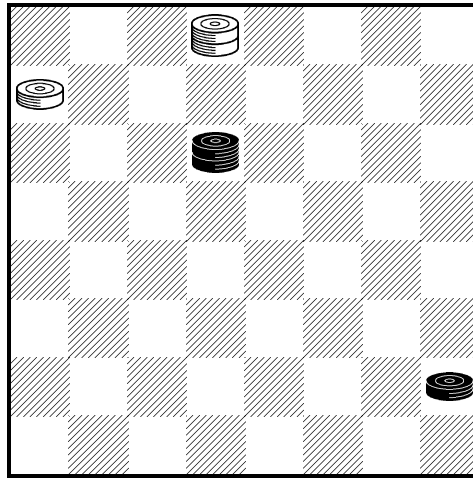
*No. 27*  
*The Grip*



Black to Play and Win

The third setting of the vice principle is one that has been instrumental in winning games for many in both serious and friendly contests. It is a natural position that may spring from any opening or type of game. Black assures the outcome by playing 10-15 and the ending continues 1-6, 15-19 (15-11 only draws by 6-2), 6-2, 19-24, 2-11, 24-20, Black Wins.

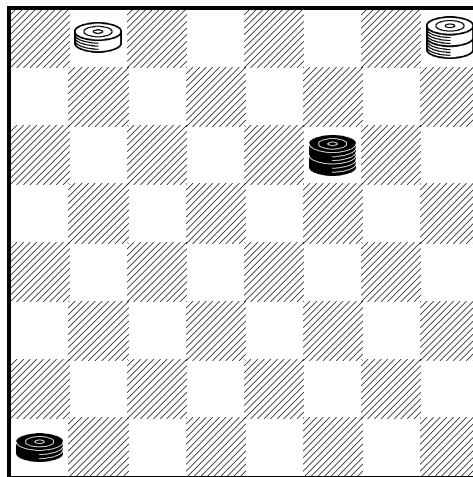
*No. 28*  
*Changing Guard (Setting A)*



Black to Play and Win

As befits the title, a dextrous manipulation of the pieces enables the Black man and king to change places and hog-tie the Whites by means of the move. The fourth and fifth moves are the key to this twister. Proceed 5-9, 28-24, 9-14, 24-20, 14-18, 20-16, 23-19, 16-11, 18-23 (mission accomplished), 11-7, 19-15, 7-2, 15-10, Black Wins.

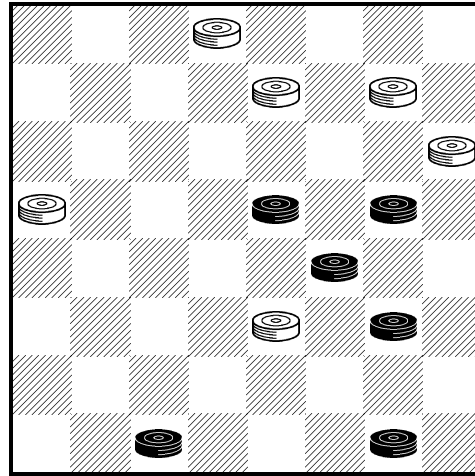
*No. 29*  
*Changing Guard (Setting B)*



Black to Play and Win

Similar in theme to No. 28 but the solution is a few moves longer and has a different kink which is just as interesting. Go 4-8, 32-28, 8-11, 28-24, 11-15, 24-20, 15-18, 20-16, 22-17, 29-25, 17-21, 25-30, 18-22, 16-11, 21-17, 11-7, 17-14, Black Wins.

*No. 30*  
*Pitch and Squeeze*

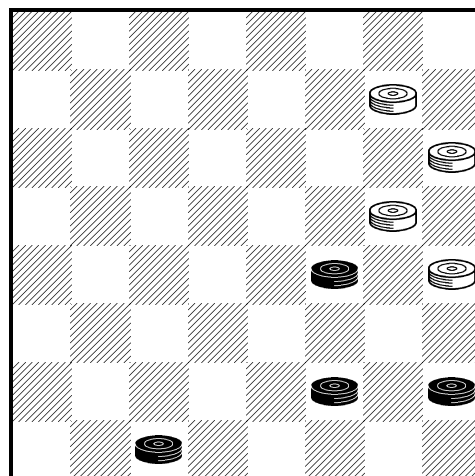


Black to Move and Win

More often encountered in the mid-game and earlier stages of play than at the ending, the pitch and squeeze is a combination of two maneuvers married to form a thrust which frequently changes the complexion of a game in an astonishing manner. As diagrammed above, Black is apparently beaten, threatened by a shot via 26-22 that would unbalance the sides but steals a march through the pitch and squeeze techniques, emerging as conqueror instead of vanquished. It is a simple play, going 17-22 (the pitch), 26-17 and 9-13 (the squeeze), rendering two White men captive and thereby winning.

In this and other problems herein we have examples of sacrifices that provide quick dividends. The expert also makes judicious use of sacrifices where the benefits accrue slowly over a period of moves and no motive may be discernible to the novice at the beginning. Later the reasons become obvious.

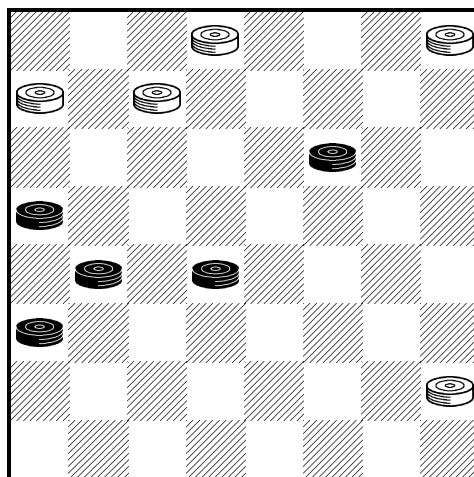
*No. 31*  
*Broken Ranks*



Black to Play and Win

Black has still another type of pitch play available in this situation which destroys the enemy ranks, leaving White so disorganized that two men must be returned, and the game resigned. The moves are 14-18, 17-14, 3-7, 21-17, 18-22, 25-18, 7-11, Black Wins.

*No. 32*  
*Beaten to the Punch*



Black to Play and Draw

Playing prosaic checkers will lead Black into a two-for-one in three plays or less as White takes control by 27-24 and jumps from 31 to 15 when a Black piece gets exposed on 19. Continue from the diagram with 16-19, 5-1, 12-16, 1-6, 15-18 and you see the shot I mentioned. But there is a clever play which beats White to the punch by tossing 22-26 and lining up so that a two-for-one recovers the man for Black and secures a draw. Simply move 15-19 after White jumps 31-22 and 19-24 on the next play is decisive. This is one of the standard escapes which experts rely on in heavyweight competition.

## Chapter XII

### WHAT HAVING THE MOVE MEANS

When the expert speaks of THE MOVE he is referring in checkeristic lingo to an elemental force in the game—a condition of play in which the side located without this factor becomes totally obstructed or has access only to give-away moves. It means having the last playable move. When you don't have the move you are forced to retreat with your kings. In the final stages of a game when only one or two pieces remain on each side, it is comparatively easy to see who has the move by the way the pieces face up to each other but by that time it maybe too late to do anything about it. The move is a potent factor in both offensive and defensive play. Nine out of ten times the move wins the game and is the end result of superior play, or, in the viewpoint of the perfectionist, play that is less punctuated with errors. About once in ten times will appear the exceptions—positions where possession of the move is like a “kiss of death.” These positions center around trick stratagems that win for the side lacking the move and will be discussed below. Simple examples of the move are shown in diagrams 3 and 4.

Positions with equal kings in the Double Corners are not influenced at all by the move because of the odd trait of the double diagonal ends, allowing a see-saw action that prevents a decision being forced. The Double Corner, however, does affect the move with uncrowned men in a peculiar way as explained farther on in the paragraph telling how to change the move.

Following are two questions in connection with the move which always puzzle checkerists just starting out.

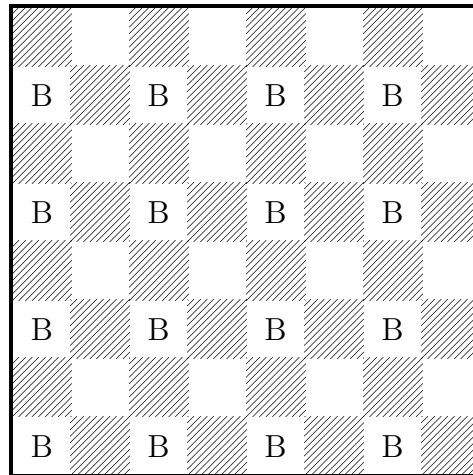
1. How can I tell who has the move?
2. How can I get the move when the other fellow has it?

In response to the first question, experts determine who has the move in most instances simply by visually aligning the men one by one against the opposition and noting who has the decisive last play. They never worry about the move during the first half of the game and oftentimes go through the move finding process only as a side issue in their overall analysis of the situation. They also have a mathematical formula for establishing the move which is given below and can be adopted by the beginner as it is not difficult.

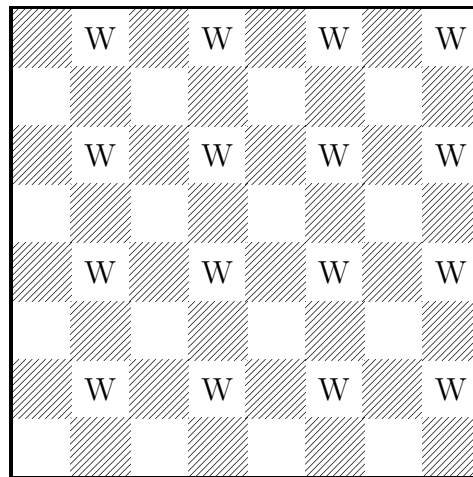
#### System for Determining the Move

The columns of squares which indicate by the counting formula whether you have the move are pictured in two diagrams.

*Your Columns*



*Your Opponent's Columns*



Surveying the above figures you will observe that by utilizing the four columns having the bottom square based along your kingrow, you can learn who has the move thusly:

It being your turn to play, add up all the pieces on these squares, and if the sum is odd, you have the move; if the sum is even, your opponent has the move. Should there be no pieces on your counting squares, then use your opponent's columns and add all thereon. In this case the solution is reversed—an even sum of pieces denotes you have the move and odd indicates the other side has it.<sup>4</sup>

A word of caution—be sure that each side has the same number of pieces when applying this rule.

Now to answer the second query above regarding the way you wrest the move from your competitor. Shifting the move from one side of the board to the other is done by exchanging pieces, one for one. However, one well defined exception should be noted; if the capturing pieces land so that the count in the formula columns remains unchanged, the move will remain the same. See figures 39 and 41. Ordinary exchanges which transfer the move to the

other side are reflected in figures 37 and 38. Another play that changes the move in an odd way and is the nucleus of some important end-game maneuvers is to proceed from square 9 to 5 with a White single man and from 24 to 28 with a Black man. Immobilizing the piece in the Double Corner in this manner has a reversing effect on the move. An illustration of the way this idea can be forced is given in Problem 44.

For all practical purposes the foregoing is all you will need to know about the subject of the move during the period of breaking in to scientific checkers. Later upon reaching the more advanced expert level you will come in contact with multiple jump plays and situations where the sides are unequal in numbers which are very complicated in the way they affect the move. Understanding the changes in the move in these circumstances requires considerable experience with highly advanced play and the proper follow-up combinations call for a master's skill.

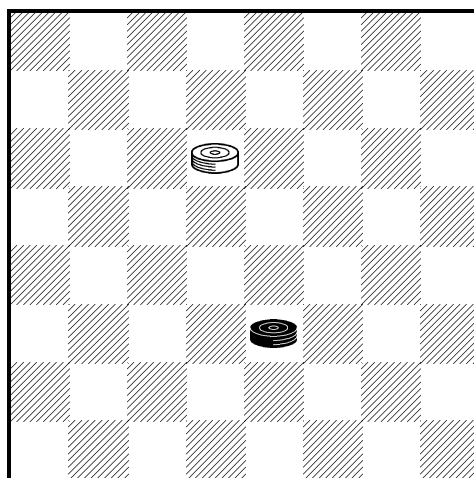
Now that we have discussed the mechanics of the move at some length it might be profitable to note what this factor means insofar as the playing of a game is concerned. A summarized consensus of seasoned expert's views on the implications of the move would read as follows and the student will do well to heed their advice.

1. Forget about the move in the early stages of a game; normally, it will travel from one side of the board to the other with every swap and assume prominence only in the end phase of a game when its ownership can be controlled.
2. Remember that retention of the move cannot always be maintained as desired nor can possession always be obtained when most wanted.
3. You may have possession of the move and yet be so placed on the board that it acts as a handicap which will cost you the game. Refer again to diagram 25 and also turn to diagram 43 for examples.
4. Keep a vigilant eye on the move as the game nears the ending and the sides have been reduced to five or six apiece, or less. Now more often than not it is an advantage to either have the move or be in control of it.

Boiled down still further, your treatment of the move during the second half of the game should be in line with these key points:

- A. A small part of the time it is vital not to have the move in order to win.
- B. A large part of the time possession of the move is a distinct advantage.
- C. Nearly all the time it is essential to control the location of the move in relation to one side or the other.

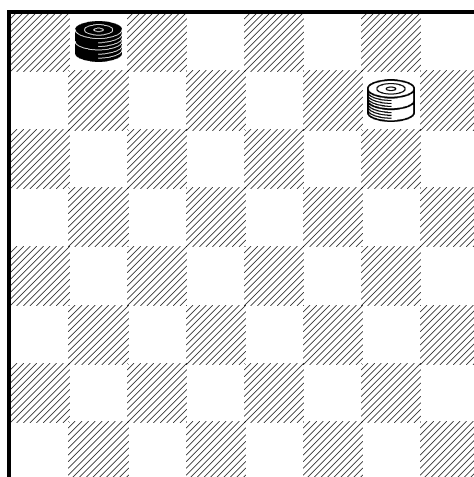
*No. 33*  
*Simple Simon*



Black to Move and Win

Depicted above is the simplest position demonstrating the working principle of the move. Black makes one forward play, 10-15, and because he has the move or opposition, stands squarely in the path of White's contention. Were it White's turn to play the shoe would be on the other foot.

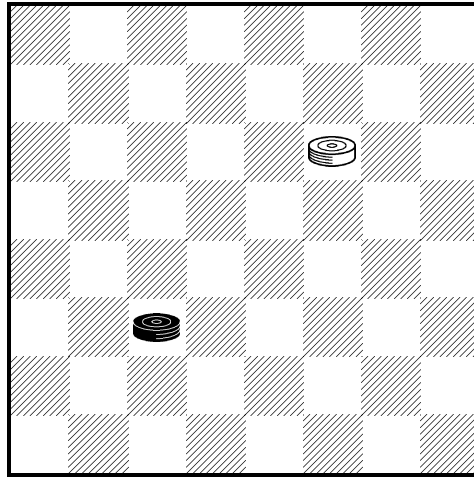
*No. 34*  
*Padlocked*



Black to Play and Win

Problem No. 34 portrays the disadvantage a king labors under in not having the move and being unable to reach the Double Corner diagonals for refuge. The critical zones in this dilemma are the two triangles formed by squares 2, 4, and 20 in the lower left area of the board and 13, 29, and 31 in the upper right area. Placement within the squares of these zones can lose by the move by pitting king against king as in this example. Play 32-27, 25-22, 27-23, 22-17 (22-25 is no better), 23-18, 17-13, 18-14, Black Wins.

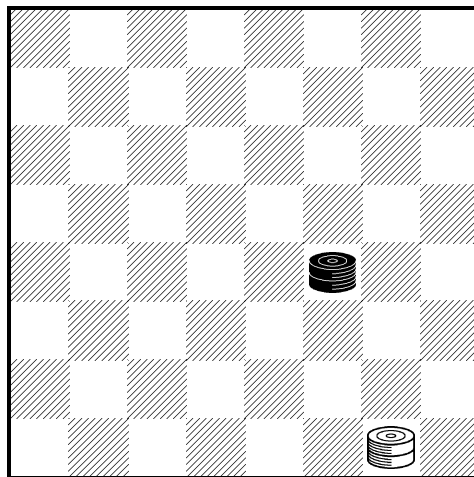
*No. 35*  
*The Detour*



Either to Move and Draw

In this exercise, whoever plays first has the move on the other man but the angulation prevents getting in front to block him from detouring and reaching sanctuary in the Double Corner. There he crowns and perpetually slides to and fro between 1 and 5 (or 32 and 28). If Black moves first from the diagram and goes 11-15, White detours 22-17 and continues as indicated above. The same play for Black is available if White starts from the pictured position.

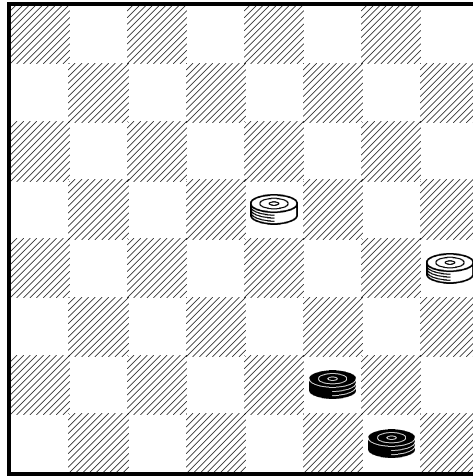
*No. 36*  
*Zigzag*



Black to Play  
White Draws

Black has the move but due to the oddity of the Double Corner it is utterly useless. You can push the king on 14 to either 9 or 10 and White goes back and forth between 1 and 5 as noted at the end of position No. 35.

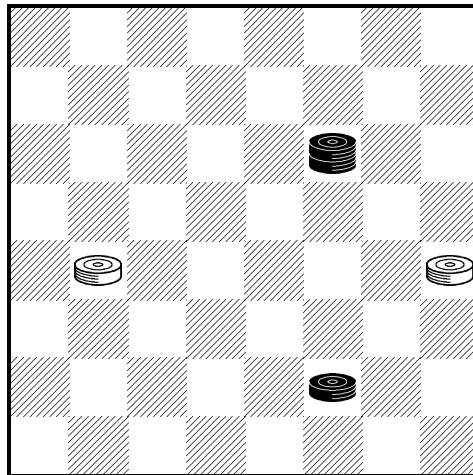
*No. 37*  
*Swap and Stop*



Black to Move and Win

A curious feature of this modest position is that Black has three possible moves, one wins, one draws and one loses. The exchange by 6-9, 13-6, 1-10 wins while 1-5 would lose as White has the move and final play by 18-14. Against 6-10 White moves 13-9 and then 1-5 or 10-14 will do no more than draw.

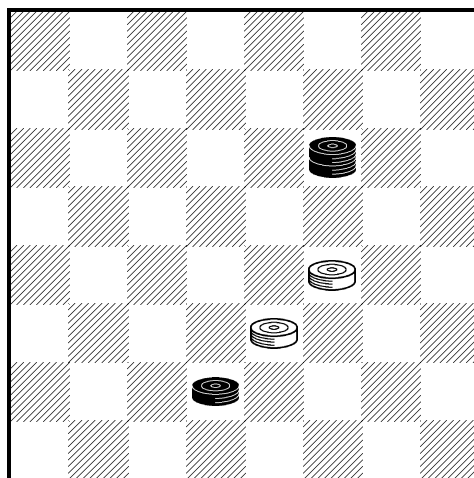
*No. 38*  
*Timely Trade*



Black to Play and Win

Unveiling a more advanced version of the one-for-one trade to enable procurement of the move. This idea bobs up consistently in games of every grade and should for that reason be added to the beginners' playing arsenal. Proceed 22-18, 16-11, 18-15, 11-7, 15-10, 7-3 (7-2 loses the same way), 6-9, 13-6, 10-1, 3-7, 1-6, etc., Black Wins.

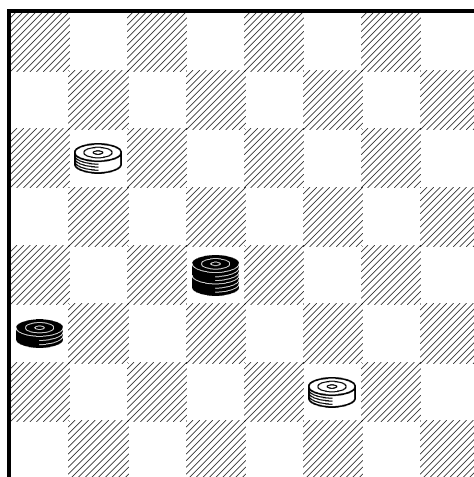
*No. 39*  
*Indirect Take*



Black to Play and Win

Already owning the move, Black permits White to jump the squeezed man on 7 while he captures the one on 14 (moving 22-17) and wins by keeping possession of the move. Contrast this type of exchange with those of Nos. 37 and 38 and you will notice that both capturing pieces in this instance remain on the board after the jumps, not just one. This is identified as an indirect take and the above problem confirms another important rule in the formula for calculating the move—that the indirect take will not change the piece count in the formula columns. (Refer to foregoing portion of this chapter for particulars.)

*No. 40*  
*So Near and Yet So Far*

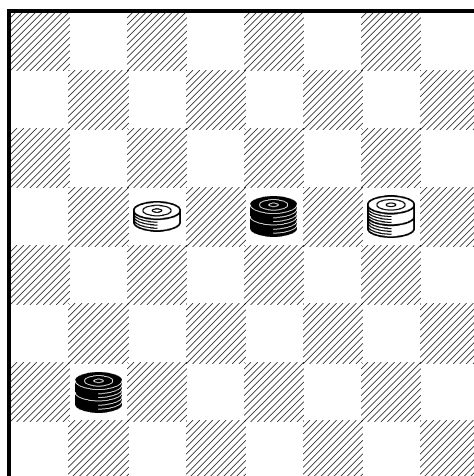


Black to Play and Win

Imprinted above is a deeper concept of the indirect take, one that dips into the profound science of the game. Black makes a star move maneuver by 12-16 which forces 24-20 as 16-20 next would capture that White man. The interim while White jumps from 20 to 11

is just timely enough to permit overtaking the White man on 6 by 15-10, which move Black makes in response to 24-20. After this indirect jumping Black still emerges with the move and corners the last White man soon after the latter crowns.

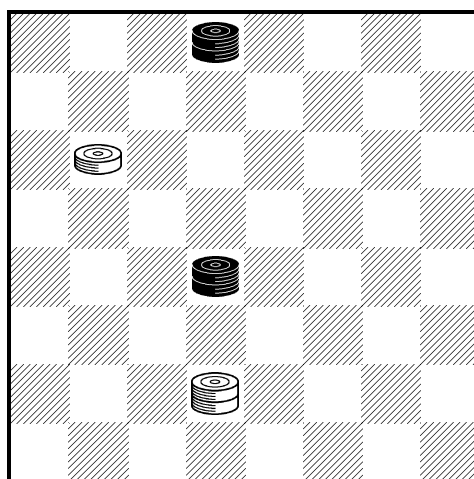
*No. 41*  
*Rose Between Two Thorns*



Black to Play and Win

Still another maneuver involving the indirect take is taught by the above problem. Having the move, Black goes 8-11 (not 18-23 which lets White draw by 19-16; here 19-15 would still lose by 23-18, 15-10, 18-14), 19-15, 18-22, 15-8 (or 17-26, 11-18, Black Wins), 22-13, 8-3, 13-9, 3-7, 9-6, Black Wins.

*No. 42*  
*On the Firing Line*

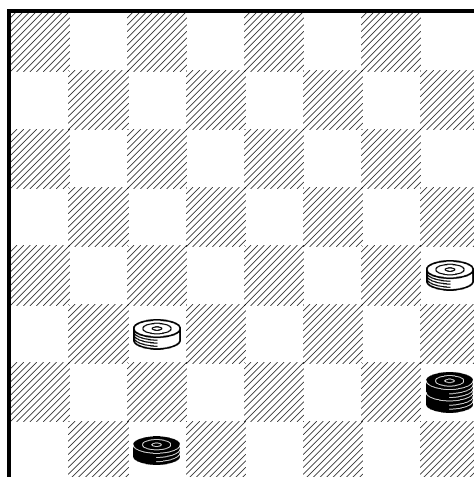


Black to Play and Win

Crafty calculation extending over a six-move span is required for solving this classical proposition. Minus the move at first you win by exchanging. The substance of the procedure is to

ignore the uncrowned man and concentrate on the White king on 7. That means you start 31-26 (very essential) and White replies 24-20 (7-3 loses by 15-11, Black holding both pieces with his king; 7-2 runs back into the next play), 26-22, 7-2 (forced, as 20-16 is the breeches), 15-10, 20-16, 22-17, 16-11, 17-13, 11-8, 10-6, 2-9, 13-6, 8-3, 6-2, Black Wins. Every so often this wily win accents a well known expert's game.

*No. 43*  
*The Guillotine*

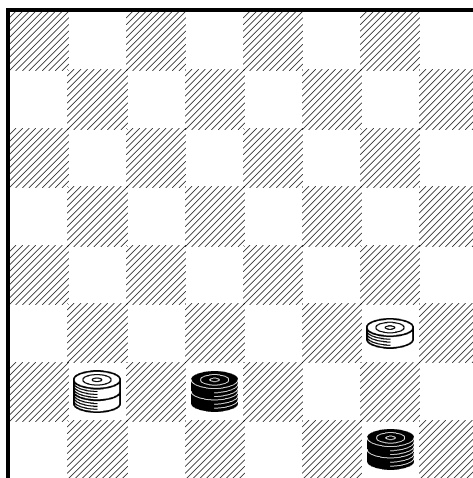


Black to Move and Win

White has the move and Black cannot make an exchange to take it away. You would think White's position is safe under these conditions as the Black king must let the White man on 13 advance toward the kingrow but a cataclysmic trick play nullifies the move and abruptly puts an end to White's progress. Play 5-1, 13-9, 1-5, 9-6, 3-7!, 11-2, 5-1!, Black Wins.

The selfsame position and a few variations are no strangers at the tournament tables. A former Detroit city champion had this position with the benefit of a White king instead of a man on 11 and fell asleep at the wheel by moving 13-9 when I went 5-1. He should have played his king and the draw would have been conceded.

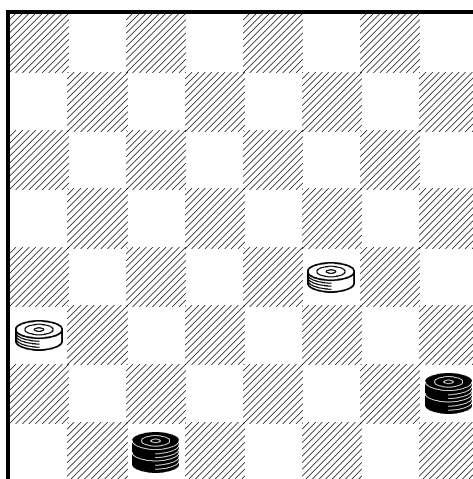
*No. 44*  
*Immobilization*



Black to Play and Win

A puzzling characteristic of the move is the manner in which it changes over when a piece becomes immobilized by going into the Double Corner square 5 and 28 while the adjoining squares 1 and 32 are occupied. Forcing an opponent's piece thus out of commission to attain the move is the basis of the maneuver that accounts for its share of wins. By bringing the Black king on 7 back to square 2 the White man on 9 has to move upon 5 as the loss of same would follow if 1-5 were allowed. After 9-5 Black moves 2-7 and pins the White king by virtue of the move.

*No. 45*  
*The Jaws of Death*

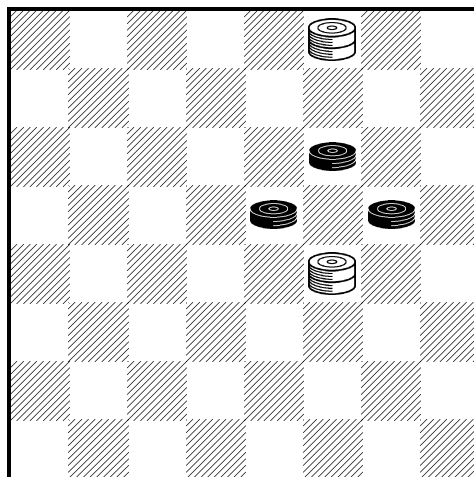


Black to Play and Win

Here again it might not be amiss to study a complex board arrangement of a comparatively simple problem that stresses the practicability of these small plays. This is Problem No.

44 at long range. Observe how White is under constant compulsion, Black dominating the scene and making the opposition dance to his tune. Black moves 3-7 and the continuation is 12-8, 7-11, 8-3, 11-15, 3-8, 5-1, 14-9 (if White moves the king this piece is captured by 1-6 followed by 15-18), 15-18, 8-11, 18-14, 9-5, 14-10, Black Wins.

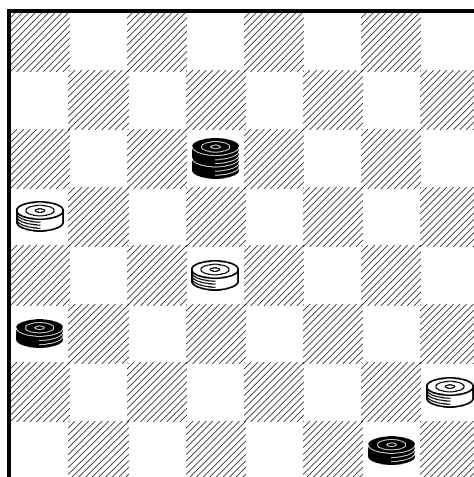
*No. 46*  
*Crime and Punishment*



Black to Play and Win

An ancient gem that is likely to stump the novice who has not been tipped off as to its particular twist is No. 46. Though armed with two kings and about to confiscate an apparently helpless, exposed man, White pays the penalty for larceny. Black loses one man, a coincidental event, and places the other in position for an inevitable swap that wins by obtaining the move. Solution: 18-23, 14-21, 23-27 (now the plot becomes clear), 21-17, 27-31, Black Wins.

*No. 47*  
*Masterwork*



Black to Play and Win

To complete this series of problems which have the move as their central theme, I have decided that this masterful position submits a fitting lesson and should be included. It will introduce the beginner to a new, exciting maneuver in what to the layman seems an endless chain of scientific plays which the game encompasses. Not blessed with the move Black pitches 12-16 and the play unfolds with 20-11, 23-18, (23-19, 11-8, 19-10, 8-3, draws), 15-10, 18-15 (ingenious, isn't it?), 11-7, 15-6, 7-2, 6-9, 2-7, 9-14, 7-2, 14-18, 2-7, 18-15, 7-2, 15-11, Black Wins. Precise play such as this substantiates the game's claim to being the truly scientific pastime.

## Chapter XIII

### SUPERIORITY OF FORCES

Our subject heading refers to predominance of numbers rather than superiority of position which can occur with equal pieces and sometimes happens with a numerical deficit. An equal position not thrown out of balance by the advancing movement of a game becomes a winning position if a piece advantage can be manipulated through trick, trap, or stratagem. With the gain of a piece a continuing process of exchanges, barring loss of position, will deplete the sides until a standard ending such as two kings against one (diagram 15) is reached. Thereafter the win should be a matter of routine.

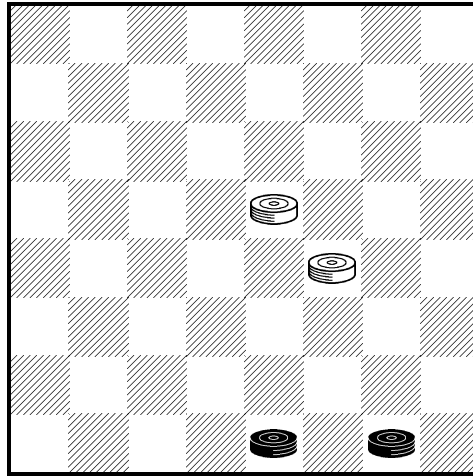
It is a display of sheer ignorance to complain about the chopping down process or voice remarks impugning the player's sportsmanship for so doing. In a race the runner having gained the lead will not glance over his shoulder and deliberately slow down so that the gap can be closed; he is running against time and opposition. The same is true in checkers. You play to win and you try to do so in the least number of moves—the most scientific way—whether by exchange or blockade. Many positions where you have a piece advantage cannot be won at all if you do not further reduce forces. Three kings against two in the Double Corners shown in diagram 16 is a perfect illustration. It is impossible to force a blockade of the two kings in this situation. Thus, it is not only proper but common sense to reduce the field when ahead, ending the game as quickly as possible.

For the most part, the gain of pieces is accomplished by the use of strokes or shots—unequal exchanges with a David Harum character—whereby you give one or more and, in return, recoup a larger number of pieces. These shots are designated in accordance with the numbers involved, as two-for-one, three-for-two, three-for-one, etc., and comprise an interesting branch of the game that appeals mutually to expert and dub. The expert forces his shots or conceals them so they have a good chance of escaping detection, whereas the duffer sets up traps that are shallow and not compelling, though they do snare players likewise inept.

Shots occur at every stage of the game, the two-for-one appearing as early as the second Black move; to wit—9-14, 24-20, 12-16 and White grabs the double by 23-18, 14-23, 26-12. Shots assume any number of shapes and variations, depending on the amount of pieces on the board. For this reason almost no verbal advice can be offered in conjunction with shots except the lame cliché that experience is the best teacher. Still, a morsel of general advice can be given here. During a game should you plan to spread your pieces thin and away from the edges of the board do so guardedly for the spacing that allows successive jumps in any direction is an invitation to defeat by way of a stroke.

The twenty elementary examples that follow contain only a few pieces but reveal an assortment of stroke ideas which the learner will find interesting and instructive. Shots get more complicated and hidden with increased numbers of men and kings; some are so knotty that even masters cannot see the correct moves and find themselves cleverly trapped and rooked.

*No. 48*  
*Toddler Two-for-One*

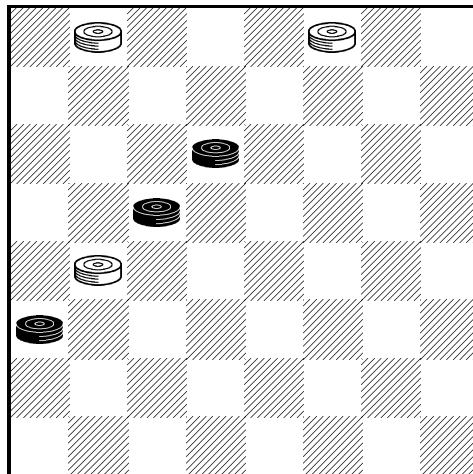


Black to Play and Win

Simple as this shot is, it can be formed several ways, basing the Black pieces on 2,3 and 3,4 in addition to the above position. Playing 1-6 from the diagram forces White into the shot by 18-15, 6-10 unless he chooses to give up a man by 14-9 and bow out that way.

It is to be noted that the move has no significance whatever insofar as obtaining a shot is concerned but the move may vitally affect the after play as confirmed by Problem No. 50 and others in this series of strokes.

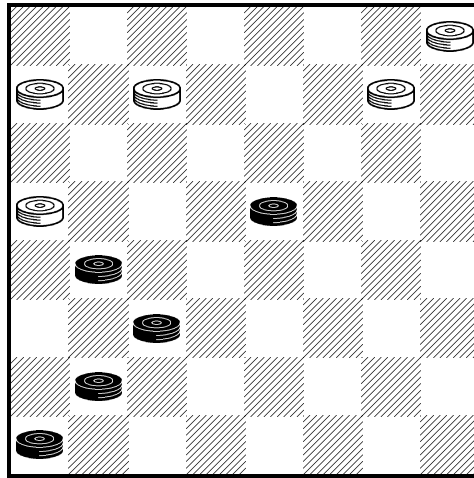
*No. 49*  
*The Ricochet (Variation A)*



Black to Play and Win

The ricochet or rebound shot as some checker problemists call it has the dual value of finesse and versatility. Four variations are grouped here in settings that bear little resemblance to each other, yet all are controlled by the same playing device. No. 49 wins for Black neatly by 23-27, 32-23, 19-26, 30-23, 12-26.

*No. 50*  
*The Ricochet (Variation B)*

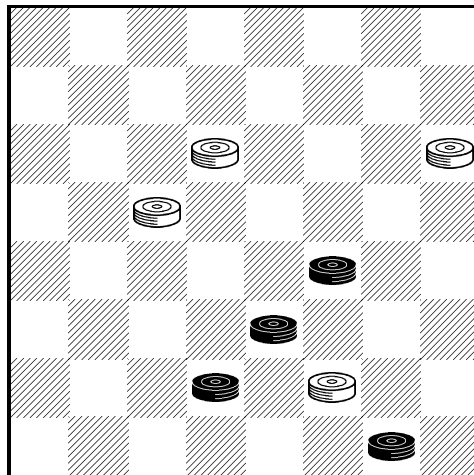


Black to Move and Win

Play 11-15, 20-11, 18-23, 27-18, 15-22, 25-18, 8-22, 28-24, 4-8, Black Wins.

Today's tournament expert plays what is known as Three-Move Restriction or the American Restriction, a style of game in which Black's first and second moves and White's first move are determined by ballot. This makes for great complication and replaced Two-Move restriction which in turn superseded unrestricted or Go-As-You-Please checkers, the original mode of the early day champions. Regardless of the restriction imposed, so long as the board size and shape is unchanged, the basics of play as set forth in this book will hold true.

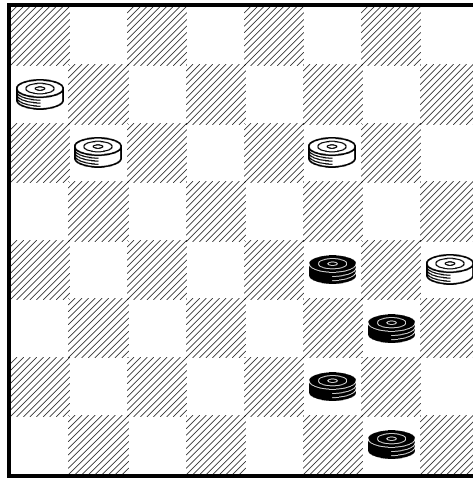
*No. 51*  
*The Ricochet (Variation C)*



Black to Play and Win

In this position Black has five possible moves and all but the winning move, which is 14-18, would lose. These losses are not difficult and were left out to give the reader cross-board practice.

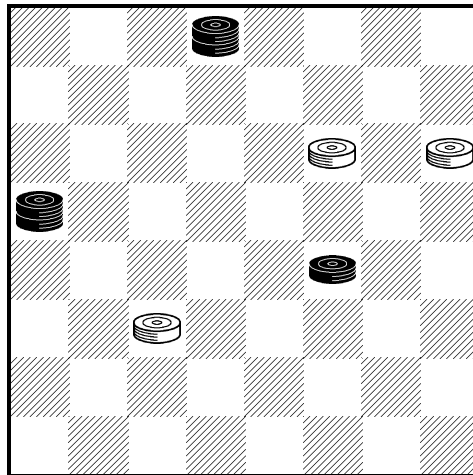
*No. 52*  
*The Ricochet (Variation D)*



Black to Play and Win

The fourth problem featuring the ricochet is not the last card in the deck. For instance, the same idea works with the Black man on 15 instead of 14. Also with the man on 9 placed back on 5 and the one on 6 situated on 10. Black wins by 6-10, 13-6, 14-18, etc., pocketing the last White man.

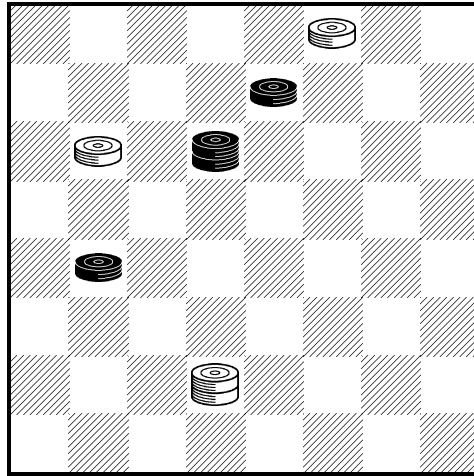
*No. 53*  
*Forced Two-for-One*



Black to Play and Win

A forcing play, 31-26, makes White move into a jumping station, 22-17, giving Black the needed step by 20-16 to gather up the pair of men as White is compelled to capture one.

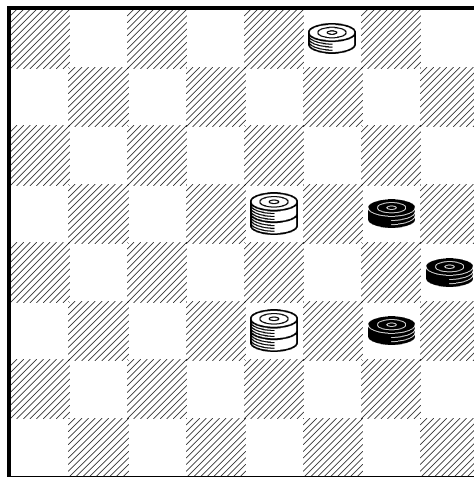
*No. 54*  
*Onside Three-for-Two*



Black to Play and Win

Two jumps and White is out of ammunition. Move 16-19, 24-15 and 23-27, 30-23, 27-2 captures the White forces.

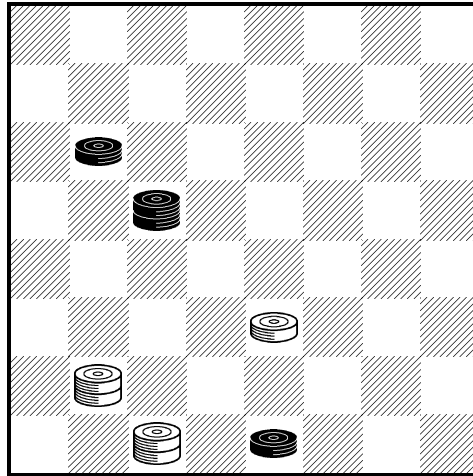
*No. 55*  
*Booby Trap*



Black to Play and Win

For some inexplicable reason this type of a two-for-one ambushes better than average players with provocative regularity. It's a deceptive two-mover and probably owes its effectiveness to a false sense of security by reason of having two kings in hot pursuit of ordinary men, a circumstance conducive to carelessness. The play is 17-22, 18-25, 9-14, 10-17, 13-29 and the remaining White man on 30 is cornered on square 12 for a Black win.

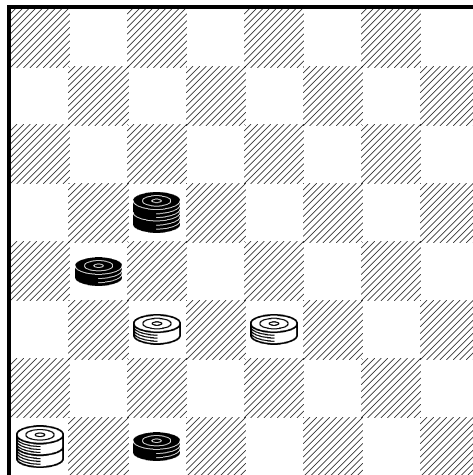
*No. 56*  
*Push on Shot*



Black to Play and Win

A prevalent mistake in this position is to move 19-15, expecting to capture the White man on 10. If this is done, White pitches 10-7, 2-11 and regains the piece by 3-7, 11-16, 7-11. The winning play is 2-7, crowding the White man on 10 to 6, whereupon 7-11 wins by the two-for-one.

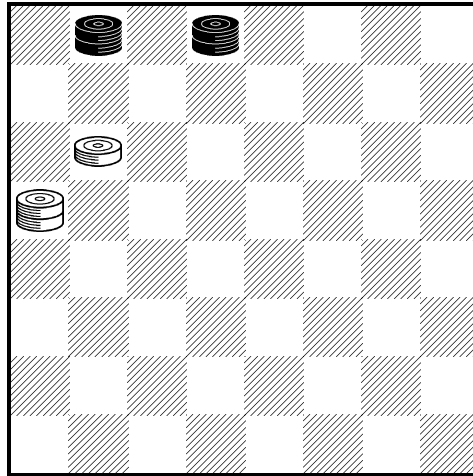
*No. 57*  
*Sleeping Beauty*



Black to Play and Win

This venerable problem embraces another idea beside the two-shot that usually ends the contest by 16-20, 11-7, 19-16, 7-2, 3-8, 4-11, 16-14, Black Wins. If White tries to extricate himself by 10-6 in reply to 16-20 Black then goes 20-24 and when White crowns 6-2 presses the piece on 11 by 19-16. White is in the awkward predicament of having no spare move for the exchange and loses the piece on 11.

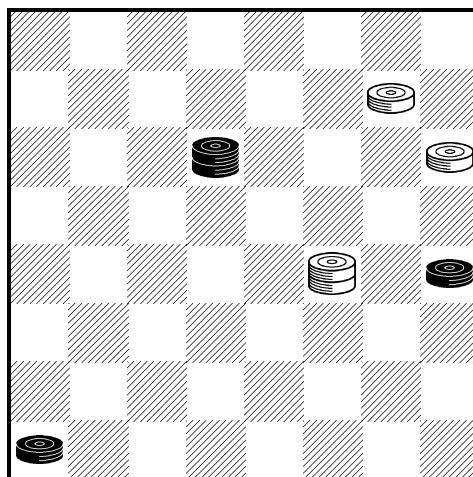
*No. 58*  
*The Backlash*



Black to Play and Win

Of the four possible Black moves only 31-26 fails to win. Either 32-28, 32-27 or 31-27 forces 24-19, after which 27-24 gains an overhaul action two-bagger. Taking it for granted that White's previous play was 28-24, the position stresses the need for knowledge rather than blind dependence on logic which would spur one on for a second king, with negative results. Theory and logic must be blended with knowledge and visual acuteness for proficiency at checkers.

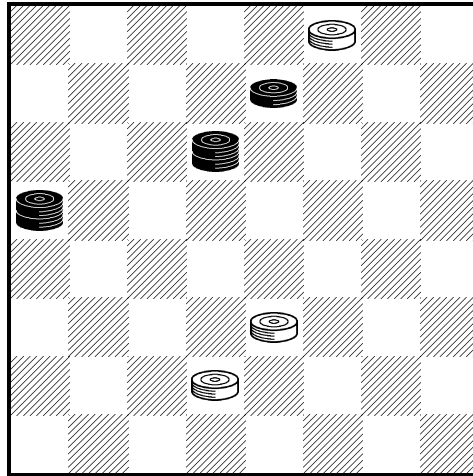
*No. 59*  
*Interposition*



Black to Play and Win

Here we have a unique arrangement of pieces which grants the White king no haven from a two-for-one when 13-17 is interposed. Upon moving the White king, 17-22 is a winner.

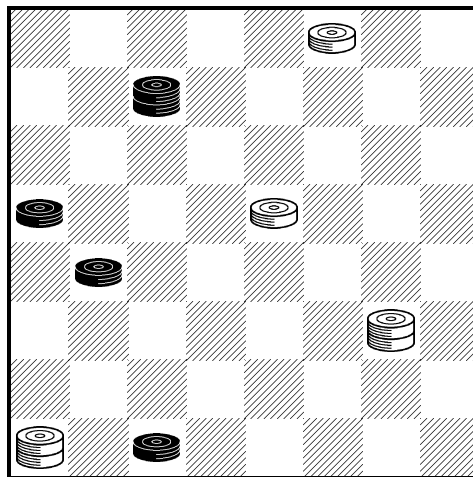
*No. 60*  
*The Stretch*



Black to Play and Win

As the caption implies, Black stretches out with 23-19 and the ensuing two-for-two jumps win on the move.

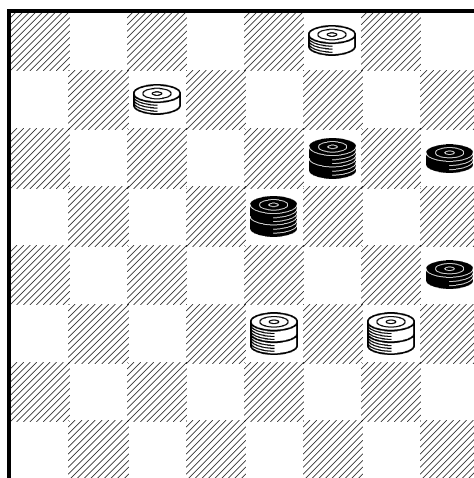
*No. 61*  
*Cross-Country Shot*



Black to Move and Win

The mechanics of this three-for-three stroke are an eye-opener to the beginner. It is solved by 3-8, 4-11, 20-24, 11-20, 27-32, 20-27, 32-5, and the Black king has the move on the last White man.

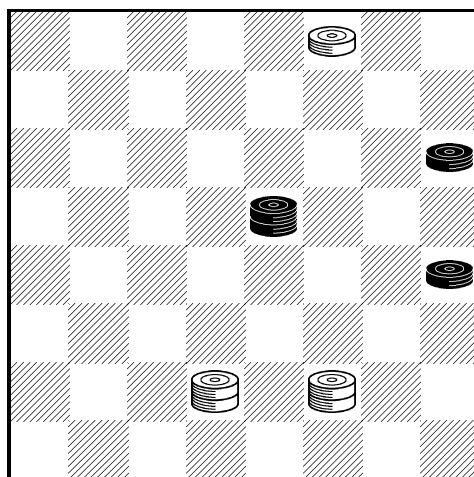
*No. 62*  
*The Whirligig Shot*



Black to Play and Win

Nothing exactly simple about the mechanism of this one, either. It merits the stamp of approval as a specimen of scientific checkers. Play 21-25, 30-21, 13-17, 21-14, 18-23, 27-18, 22-13, Black Wins.

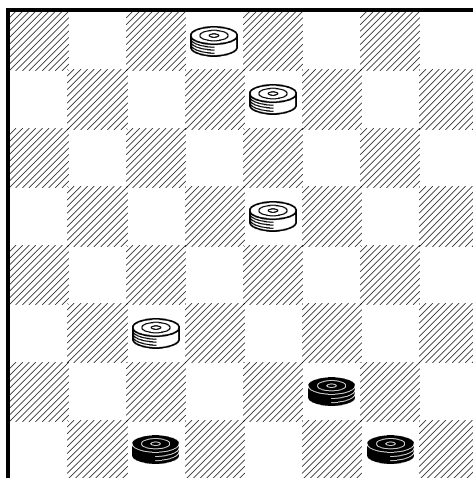
*No. 63*  
*Long Distance Call*



Black to Play and Win

This type of three-for-two shot is seen often in the medium and lower range of games; also once in a while in higher playing circles. It wins by 21-25, 30-21, 13-17, 21-14, 18-11.

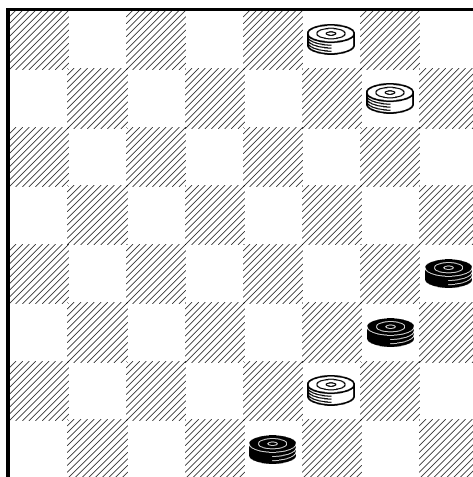
*No. 64*  
*In-and-Out*



Black to Move and Win

In and out strokes are among the classics of checkers and excellent bait to trap the unskilled pastimer. The basic principle is the waiting move or pause which was mentioned back in the Highlights on the Rules; item 9. Play 3-7, 11-2, 1-5 (the pause that wrecks), 2-9, 5-30, Black wins.

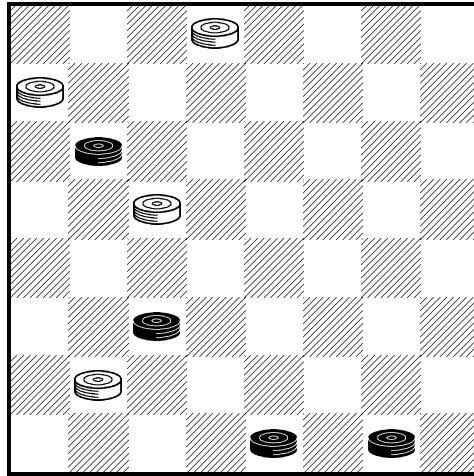
*No. 65*  
*Exposed*  
*Two-for-Two*



Black to Play and Win

Black hurls a sweeping curve by moving 9-14 and exposing the man on 6. When White plays 6-1 Black strikes him out with 2-6, 1-17, 13-29, winning on the move.

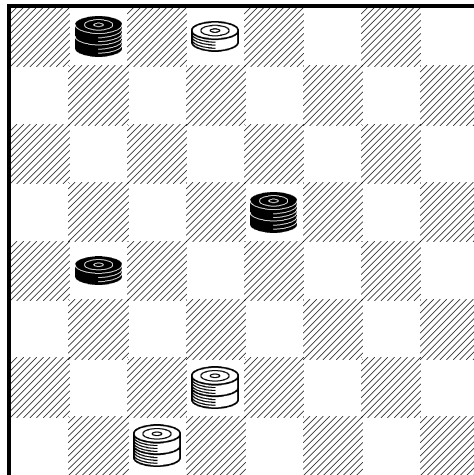
*No. 66*  
*Waiting Move*



Black to Play and Draw

Another useful application of the waiting move idea is presented here. The principle is a life preserver in the subject position as any other play than the one shown will lose. Black equalizes by 11-15, 19-10, 2-6, 28-19, 6-24, Drawn.

*No. 67*  
*Around the Corner*



Black to Play and Win

After studying the balance of shots in this group, the student should be able to solve this one right off the diagram as it is not fundamentally different from the others. Just go 32-27, 31-24, 16-19, 24-15, 18-2, Black Wins.

## Chapter XIV

### CLEVER PLAYS

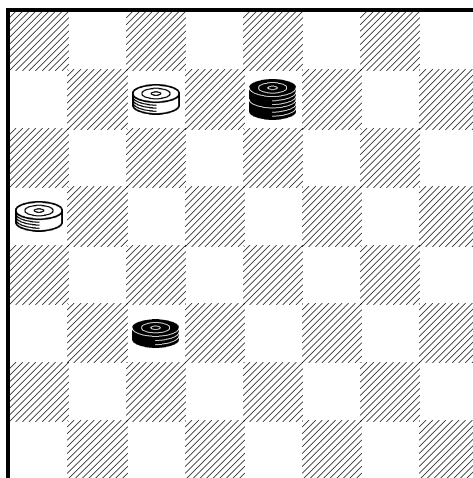
Although the division of winning ideas into the four groups outlined in Chapter V is made for the purpose of facilitating the beginner's grasp of checkers and his resultant transposition into a budding expert, these categories are not distinctly separated. It is not easy to catalogue the various problems illustrated and place them in specific classifications, knowing they would fit just as readily into other groups. It is within the realm of possibility to select examples which overlap all four classifications—where the move is a factor, superior position is evident, superiority of forces shows up and the *modus operandi* definitely fits the description of clever play. However, classification is not important. Of greater importance than group arrangement are the themes and their treatment.

A serious attempt was made to compile a useful presentation of winning end-game themes, combined with a sprinkling of draw ideas covering a wide range of playing concepts which cut right to the heart of scientific checkers. The main characteristic of these situations is that they call for clever play—not long, deep combinations—but a key move or two that can easily be learned and added to a beginner's repertoire. In reality, nearly every problem in this treatise fits that description.

The champion's bag of tricks is loaded with these cuties plus a generous helping of more complex ones. They are the stratagems he visualizes far ahead and strives to force from earlier points in the game and, conversely, seeks to avoid in replying to his opponent's moves. Because of the extreme diversity of settings in this category, with so many unique ideas, it is virtually impossible to give any principles or generalize for the beginner regarding clever plays. These problems must be viewed one at a time and committed to memory. Each will be found to possess a charm all its own and because of the individualistic nature of the themes will prove delightfully easy to learn. Once learned, they will never be hard to recall.

I must confess that these problems are not the most difficult among the small settings for that was not the purpose of their selection. There are several dozens of positions with only two checkers on each side which require fifty or more moves to solve, their ideas being so subtle that they test the skill of a genuine master. The full scope of checkers is beyond the compass of man's intellect and therein lies much of its fascination. Checkers is chiefly a game of knowledge, but that knowledge is boundless.

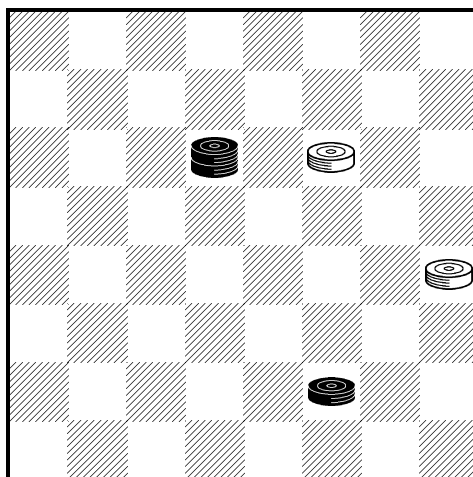
*No. 68*  
*Meat Ball*



Black to Play and Win

Black does not have the move but holds a two-edged sword over White on the strength of a king and a propitious position. The winning move is 11-15 and White has the unwelcome choice of two losing moves. 20-16 surrenders the man on 27 by 15-19, 27-23, 26-22 and 27-24 in response to 11-15 also loses a White man on a play resembling the breeches by 26-23, 20-16, 23-19, Black Wins.

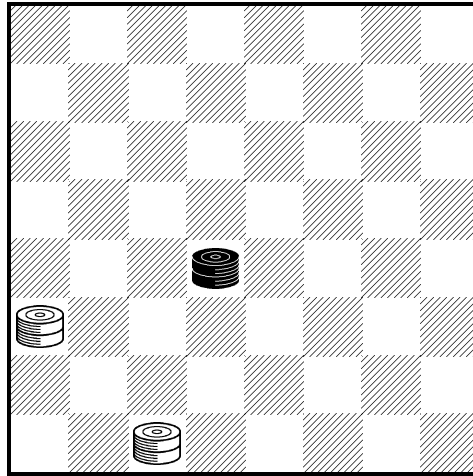
*No. 69*  
*Mincemeat*



Black to Play and Win

An exact counterpart of No. 68 on the other edge of the board, the method of winning is identical. Play 6-10, 22-17 (if 13-9, 10-14 wins), 23-18, 13-9, 18-14, Black Wins.

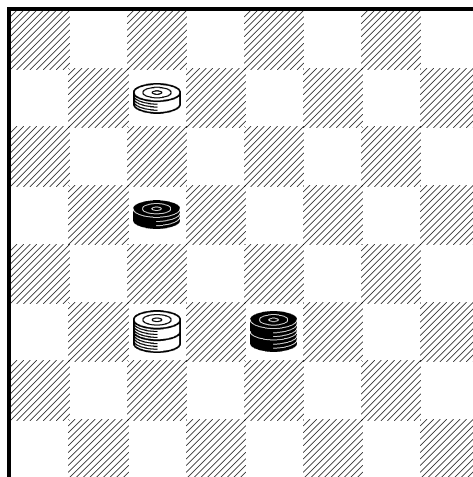
*No. 70*  
*Single Corner Spread*



Black to Play and Draw

Generally, the vigilant player will avoid spanning the Single Corner with two kings when his opponent's king is able to guard both by going 11-15 as in this problem and obtain a draw. At times, though, it can't be avoided without running into Problem No. 18 when hustling men into the kingrow. Pieces in the Single Corner area have a tendency to get in each others' way and become subjected to control by smaller forces as per several examples scattered throughout this monograph.

*No. 71*  
*Mexican Standoff*

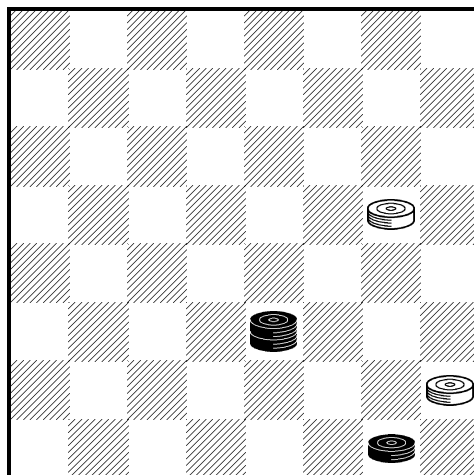


Either to Move  
Black to Draw

Loss of the Black man on 19 seems a foregone conclusion in view of the hotly pursuing White king on 11 but deliverance is only a matter of one shrewd move. If Black moves first he forms

the breeches by 19-23, 27-18, 10-15, getting his piece back. Assuming it is White's turn to move, two attacks are open by 11-15 or 11-16; if 11-15 then 19-24 draws and if 11-16 you throw 19-24, 27-20 and draw by 10-15, 16-12, 15-11, 12-16, 11-15, etc.

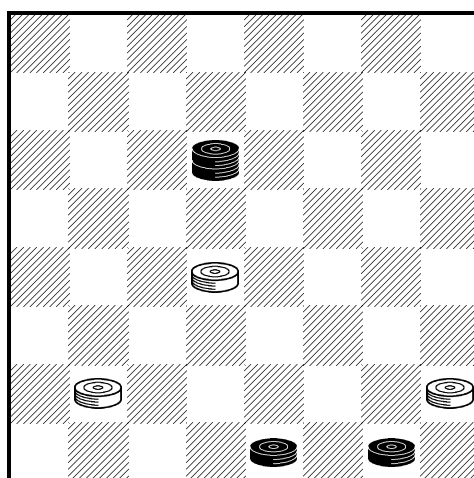
*No. 72*  
*Double Corner Lockup (Setting A)*



Black to Play and Win

A basic and useful stratagem that is a standby of the expert and wins without the move in certain endings involving the Double Corner is the subject problem shown above. The next problem is an altogether different setting of the same delightful theme (to the victor—not the victim). Play 10-7, 17-14 (17-13 gets nowhere, either), 1-6!, 5-1, 6-9!, 14-5, 7-10!, and Black wins on a lockup.

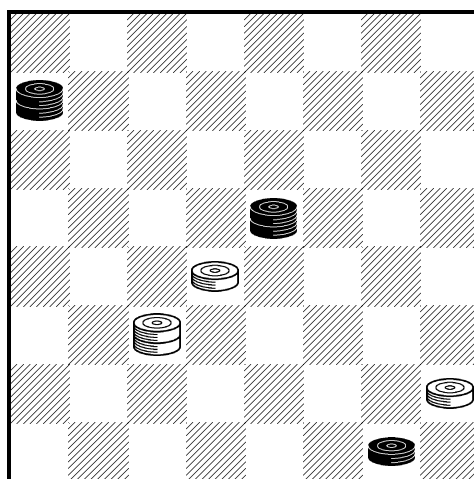
*No. 73*  
*Double Corner Lockup (Setting B)*



Black to Play and Win

As an inexperienced player you might be flattering yourself for having gotten beyond Black's clutches, were you handling the White side in this position. A rude awakening would be in store for you if the other side played 2-7 here, threatening the piece on 15 with the Black king if 8-4 is made. You will be forced to go 8-3 and then 23-19, 3-10, 1-6 would win for Black on the very same idea as Problem No. 72.

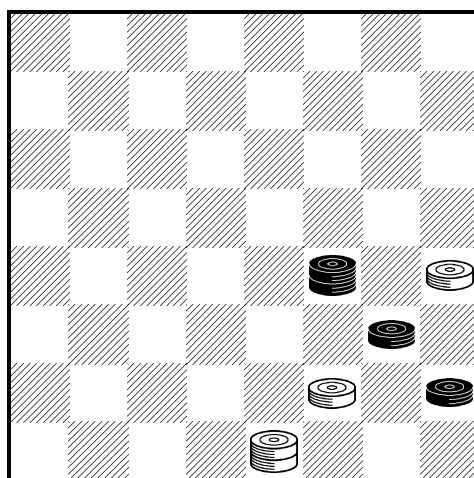
*No. 74*  
*Suspended Animation*



Black to Move and Win

Pieces can be suspended in mid-board as well as along the edges and here is a sample of how it can be accomplished. Move 1-6, 5-1, 28-24, 1-10, 24-19, and Black wins since the only remaining play for White is to donate two for nothing. Note the kinship to Problems 25, 26, and 27.

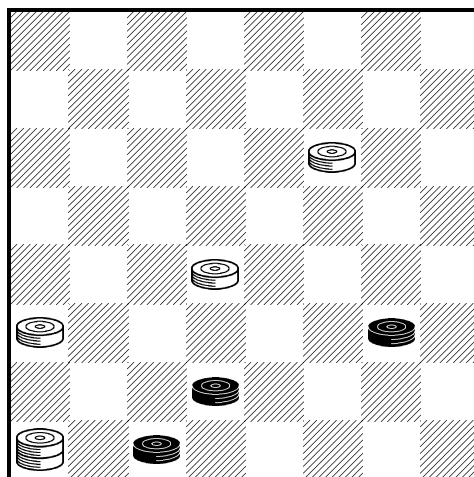
*No. 75*  
*Strangle Hold*



Black to Play and Win

Above is a representation of another type of lockup in the Double Corner not uncommon in actual competition. Again it is the idea that counts and should be remembered during games for this smother theme may appear in other board arrangements. From the picture the play goes 14-10, 6-1 (2-7, 10-1, 13-6, 1-3, curtains), now either 10-14 followed by 14-9 or 10-15 followed by 15-11 as White jumps 13-6 and is hopelessly jammed.

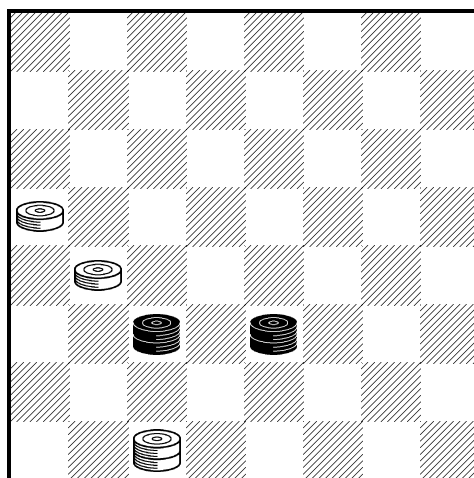
*No. 76*  
*Deep Freeze*



Black to Play and Win

Lockup plays are also common in the Single Corner area of the board. In this example two Black moves finish the game by 7-11, 15-8 and 9-14, burying the White king beneath a man whose action is frozen and making the remaining loose man bow to the move.

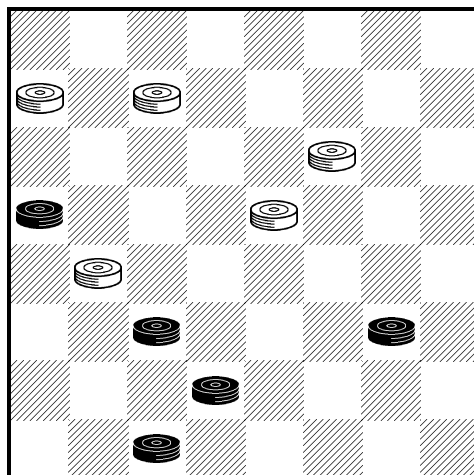
*No. 77*  
*Suspended Double*



Black to Play and Draw

Faced with an exchange threat on top of a deficit Black has a smother type maneuver at hand which recovers two men and secures a draw by 10-6, 16-7, 6-2 (one is the equal of three here), 20-16, 2-20, 3-7. Compare with No. 43.

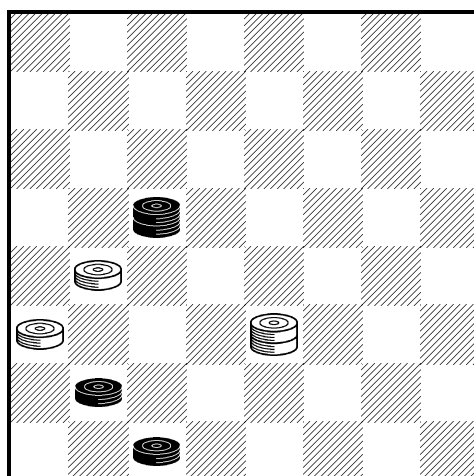
*No. 78*  
*Double Exposure Slip*



Black to Play and Win

The late William F. Ryan, outstanding as a player and writer on checkers, called this type of maneuver a double exposure slip, an appropriately descriptive title. Two slip moves by Black via 7-10, 16-7, 10-14, leave White exposed to two jump plays at the same time and hopelessly beaten, though a piece up. White must yield two pieces and if he wants to prolong the game can continue with three against four until the bitter end. Black progressively decreasing the pieces by equal swaps at the earliest opportunity.

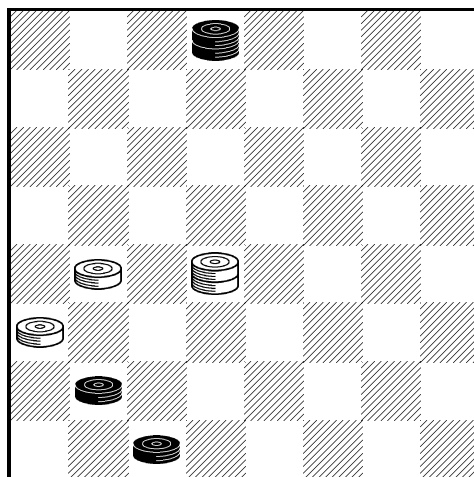
*No. 79*  
*Timely Sacrifice*



Black to Play and Draw

Checked by a critical position, Black has to forfeit a piece momentarily by 3-7, 10-3 and White must return it at the next move, 19-24, playing 16-11 in reply as 3-7 would lose by 24-20. In the diagram Black cannot move his king as White has a two-for-one shot by 16-11, so the indicated sacrifice is the only way to restore the balance of power.

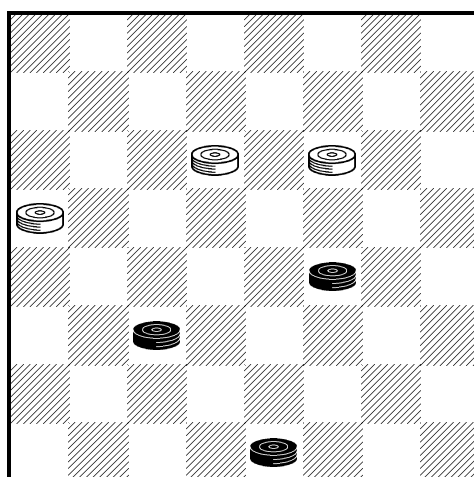
*No. 80*  
*See-saw Snare*



Black to Play and Draw

Precise timing is a vital factor in the game, especially in critical situations, and this problem is a fine example of being in the right place at the right time. There is a marked resemblance to the preceding problem but no similarity in theme. Facing loss of the man on 8 by 16-11, Black throws 8-11, 15-8, and crowds the White pieces into the Single Corner section. The Black king is just in time to force the breeches or a see-saw cramp by 31-27, 8-11, 27-24, 11-15, 24-20, 15-11 (if 16-11, 20-16, 11-8, 16-11 draws), 20-24, 11-15, 24-20, Drawn.

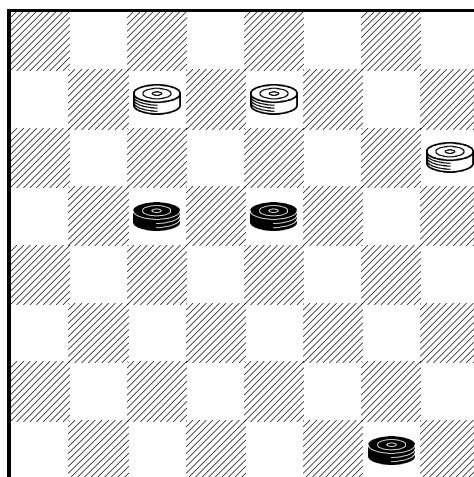
*No. 81*  
*Supported Two-for-One (Setting A)*



Black to Play and Win

Unwilling backing comes from the enemy in this classic problem which has made the rounds of checker circles for many years. The idea continues to be a win producer. It is solved by 11-15, 20-16, 2-7, 16-12, 7-11, 12-8, 15-18, Black Wins.

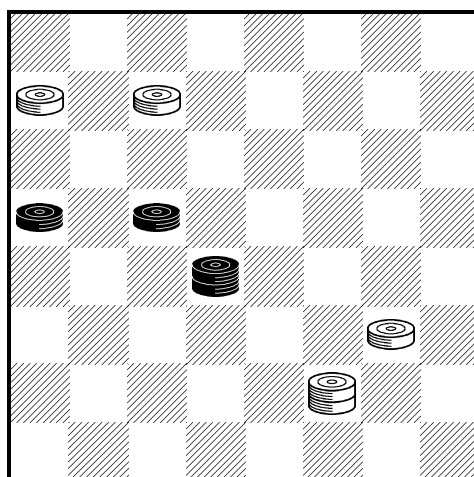
*No. 82*  
*Supported Two-for-One (Setting B)*



Black to Play and Win

The same idea as No. 81 in a different layout is shown for utility purposes. Move 1-6, 21-17, 6-10, 17-13, 10-14, 13-9, 18-23, Black Wins.

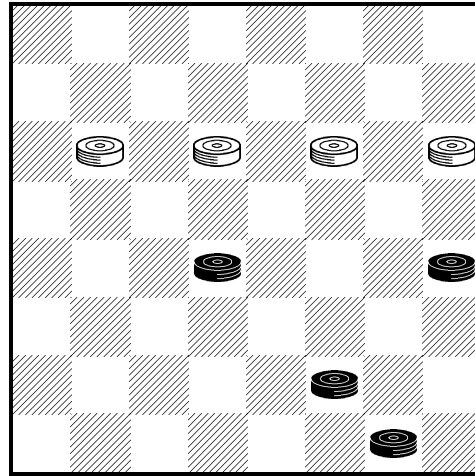
*No. 83*  
*Double Breeches*



Black to Play and Draw

This exceedingly clever trick has given many a shaky game the blood transfusion it needed to stay alive. Already one down Black sacrifices another in order to move in position to recapture two and draw. The play is 15-18, 6-10 (to protect the man on 27 against 19-23), 19-24, 28-19, 15-11, and wherever White moves Black gets a double jump.

*No. 84*  
*The Mirage*



Black to Play and Draw

The Black piece on 15 has every appearance of being an orphan as White squeezes 23-18 but a high class escape mechanism comes to the fore. This play has been missed in important match and tournament games, although it is an established finish in certain book games. To draw Black goes 1-5 and if 23-18 is made the star move is 13-17, giving White a choice of three jumps. Two of these result in obvious one-for-one trades but 21-14 is a trifle deeper, calling for 6-9 and a two-for-two windup. White also has two alternates against 1-5 by 21-17 and 24-20 but these exert no greater pressure as Black will continue with 15-18, 23-14, 6-9, 14-10, 9-14 against 21-17 and 6-9, 21-17, 15-18 when 24-20 is tried.

## Chapter XV

### SUPERIOR POSITION

Many students of checkers are in the dark about the fact that the quantity of squares and design of the board, with its Single and Double Corner peculiarities, dictate the formational aspects of the game. The contestants manipulate and mold the shape of the dozen pieces in their jurisdiction, but are subject to the confines and characteristics of the playing field. This restriction, though broad, affects the game in a general way by causing certain patterns to come up regularly through what the expert calls “natural play”; that is, the movement of pieces in a way that seems logical and in line with theory—in other words, good “form.”

A sampling of the top grade games played in the past hundred years will disclose the predominance of about twenty major formations; layouts that occur frequently in important contests. An interesting side light is that these formations have near duplicates in great profusion—variations that are seemingly endless. These similarities spread confusion among a host of novices and a modicum of near experts. Positions can be so deceptively alike yet differ in the turn to move or the placement of a man on the board.

Collectively, the mentioned formations are the subject of a sizable portion of the game’s voluminous literature and leading players pore over many books to select and memorize their routine of moves on these positions. For obvious reasons, comprehensive treatment of the entire group of major formations cannot be undertaken here, however the following key formations have been picked as the most suitable for giving the beginner an introduction to what the expert means by superior position. The listed items are the subject of larger sections that follow.

XVa. Is the center game or the side game best?

XVb. The Dyke attack.

XVc. Just how strong is a Bridge Position?

XVd. The triangle theory.

## XVa. IS THE CENTER GAME OR SIDE GAME BEST?

Ever since the days of the earliest champions the theory of moving the men toward the center of the board has been expounded as the best policy for the beginner. Somewhere, in almost every checker book, the student is advised to play centerward for greater freedom of movement. None can deny that away from the sidelines the pieces are capable of forward movement in two directions—to the right and left—whereas at the sides they can march only in one forward direction. Out in mid-board the pieces are endowed with the freest mobility, can support one another in many formational schemes, and can often bull-doze their way through the opposition defenses, scattering rival pieces to the sides. But these tactics do not always win, as the attack can fizzle against firm kingrow resistance, such as the Bridge Position explained in the next chapter.

The consensus opinion of experts indicates that the best opening move for Black is 11-15, regardless of White's reply, the best starting move for White is the counterpart 22-18, no matter which of the seven initial moves Black selects. These center moves issue from the Single Corner section where the defensive strength is the greatest of any zone on the board, hence the rear position is seldom endangered by the early forward development of all three pieces in the Single Corner file—that is, bringing Black pieces 4, 8, and 11 (or 22, 25 and 29 for White) centerward in a sound formation. Thousands upon thousands of games recorded in the literature of checkers will bear out the traditional practice of moving to the center of the board.

Pieces herded to the sides are not only restricted in the mid-game maneuvers but are susceptible to a number of group confinement plays by smaller quantities of enemy forces which, if not liberated by your own kings, will result in losing endings. The figures at the end of this section graphically convey such predicaments.

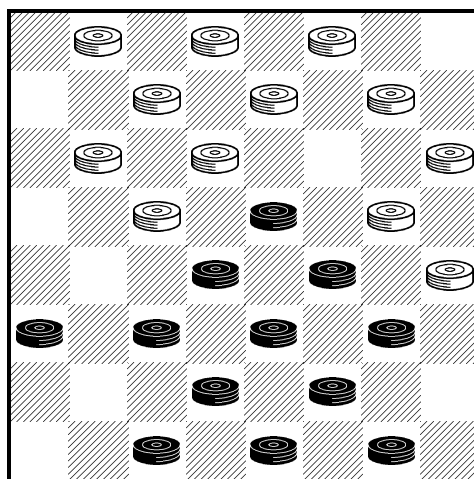
After reading the preceding paragraphs you might get the notion that every center move is good and every side move bad; or that by concentrating on center moves you will invariably win and that by sticking to side moves you will always end up losing. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Both methods of play have their strong and weak points. Before reciting the side game virtues it may be worth pointing out that although the records lean toward the center game as best the winning edge is very small, probably not over one or two per cent. Another good reason for the center game's popularity is that it is better for attacking purposes.

Men at the side edges of the board are sheltered from direct attack and also somewhat less vulnerable to shots or strokes. They also can effect exchanges by the use of two men instead of three as required out in the middle and this factor can be instrumental in clearing a congested area of play, opening up the game for further developments. In several positions, side pieces can break through to the kingrow by the sacrifice method, giving up a man to crown a king that may be used to good advantage. Once a king gets behind uncrowned pieces they may become easy marks for breeches and straddles if caught out in the middle. In a setup where you are being closely trailed by kings it is better to run the pieces along the sides, so long as they are not stopped from going forward. Generally, though, since the nature of the center game is essentially an aggressive one, that of the side game is inclined to follow a defensive pattern with the side pieces endeavoring to flank and undermine the

center pieces.

The mere launching of an attack does not guarantee victory in checkers any more than it does in other sports or pursuits. Center attacks can misfire with the men caught in a web of congestion spun by the side pieces from which no escape is possible. Such a dilemma is shown in diagram 85 and reveals an overplayed center game defeated by a combination of strong side game moves.

*No. 85*  
*Center Game Loss*

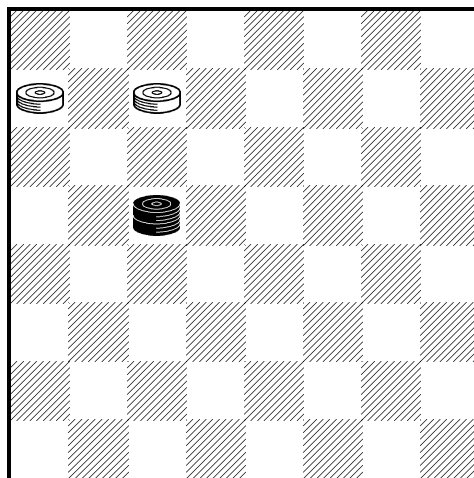


White to Play and Win

The above position comes up by playing 11-15, 22-17, 9-14, 25-22, 8-11, 29-25, 4-8, 17-13, 5-9, 22-17, 15-18, 24-19, 11-15, 28-24, 8-11, (forms dia. 85), 26-22, 1-5, 30-26, 3-8, 32-28, 11-16, 24-20, White wins.

A number of the most enduring standard games, such as the Ayrshire Lassie, Old Fourteenth and Bristol, consist of a sound center game on one side of the board arrayed against an equally good side game rebuttal on the opposite side. One should therefore have some reservations in claiming that the center game is best, although the evidence leans slightly in that direction.

*No. 86*  
*Left Side Compression (Phase A)*

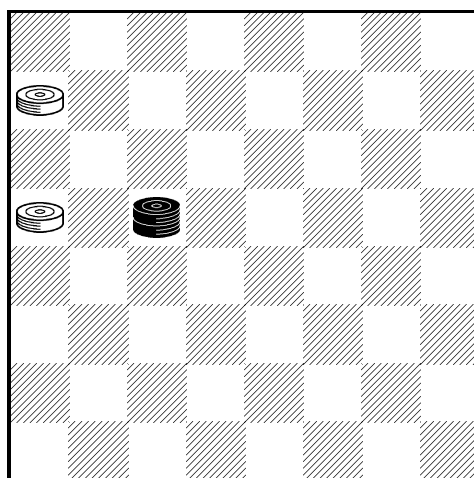


White to Play  
 Black Draws

Problems 86 through 93 all have the same basic idea, that of holding two pieces against the side of the board with one king. The advantage is such that the side compressed is forced to surrender one of the pinched pieces and even this will not prevent losing the ending in some instances as shown below.

Number 86 continues 27-24, 19-16 (or 19-23) and now that star move is 24-19 for White since 24-20 would lose as indicated in Problem No. 87. In the above illustrated position the Black king could be located on 26 and force the same draw or an alternate by 26-31 if White went 28-24.

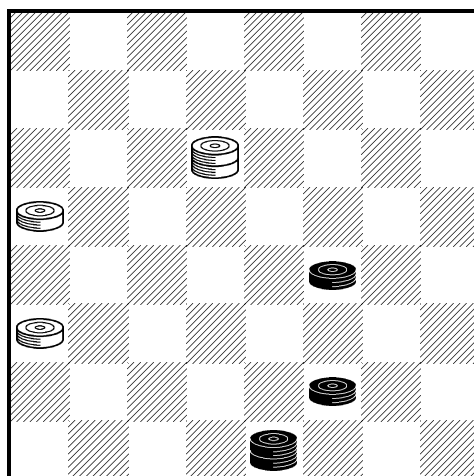
*No. 87*  
*Left Side Compression (Phase B)*



White to Play  
 Black Wins

Despite the advantage of a piece, White is helpless in this position. Either way White gives up a piece the other gets obstructed by the Black King which has the move. The same idea wins if the two White men are on 12 and 20 and the Black king on 11.

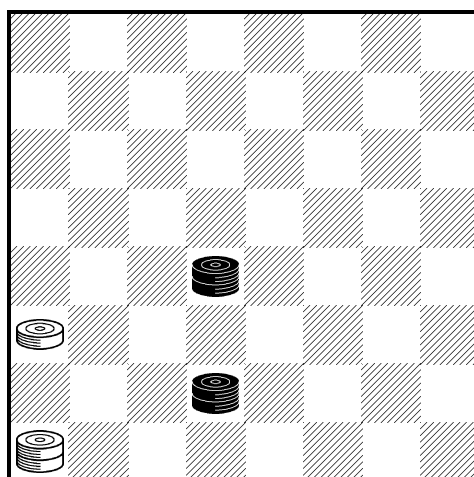
*No. 88*  
*Corraled*



Black to Play and Win

This is a practical setting of the preceding idea. Black wins by 14-18, 23-14, 6-10, 14-7, 2-11. The freshman player soon learns that if you trust to luck in checkers you will find most of it bad.

*No. 89*  
*Dog Hole Detention*

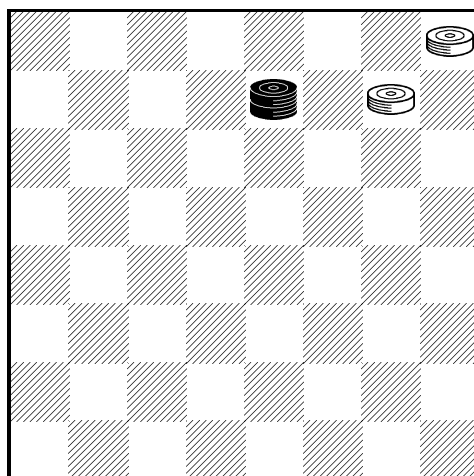


Either to Move  
Black Wins

As a rule, this sort of ending is won by detaining the White pieces with a Black king fixed on 7 while another Black man is busy crowning and returns to square 15, forming the above

position. Meanwhile, White can only see-saw between 4 and 8. When this position is reached and it is White's turn to play the 4-8 move loses by 7-3. If Black goes first, 15-11 wins by 12-8, 7-3.

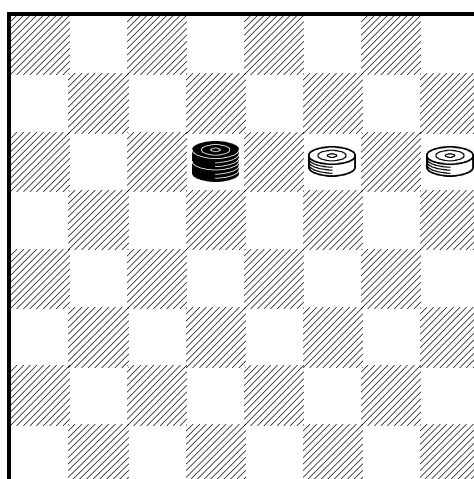
*No. 90*  
*Right Side Compression (Phase A)*



White to Play  
Black Draws

White is in no danger of losing on this side of the board as the Double Corner is within reach so can either pitch 25-22 now or go 25-21 and toss 29-25 after Black moves 26-22.

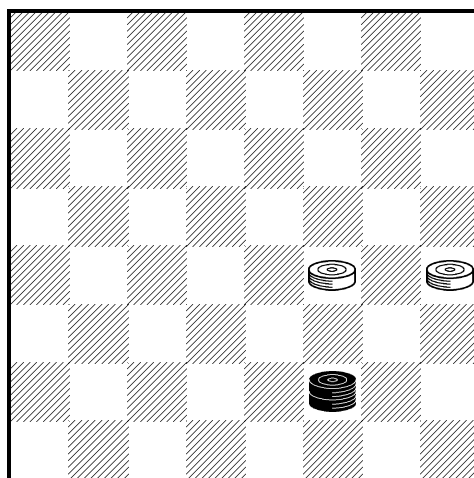
*No. 91*  
*Right Side Compression (Phase B)*



White to Play  
Black Draws

Almost the same as No. 90, White can vary here by 21-17 but the draw is certified by 23-26. If 22-17, 23-18 draws. Note that at the point where 22-17 is made the Black king could be located on either 18 or 19 and draw.

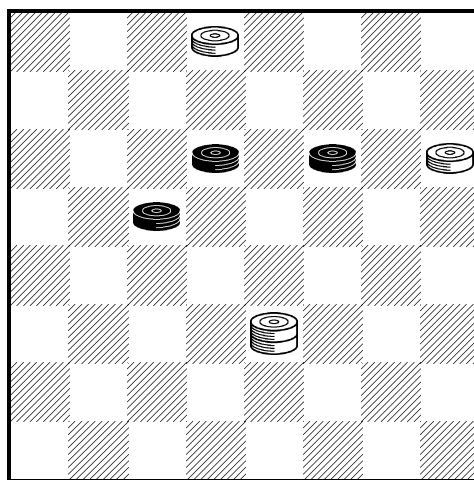
*No. 92*  
*Decompression*



White to Play and Win

Unless Black has another piece away from this area, in which case they can win by moving 6-1 and staying there, Black cannot hold White at bay. It's some more of the Double Corner idiosyncrasies. White slips through to the kingrow with both pieces and wins by 14-9, 6-1, 9-5, 1-6, 5-1, 6-10, 13-9, etc.

*No. 93*  
*Crucial Crossing*

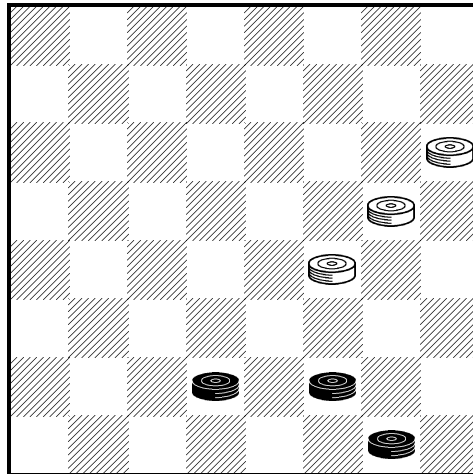


Black to Play and Draw

How the experts utilize the “baby” themes in their stratospheric calculation is suitably shown here. Play 19-24, 10-15, 24-28 (the only out), 15-18, 22-26 (a deft touch), 18-27, 28-32, 31-22, 32-23 and now the position is identical with No. 91.

*No. 94*

*Two Holds Three—Right Side*

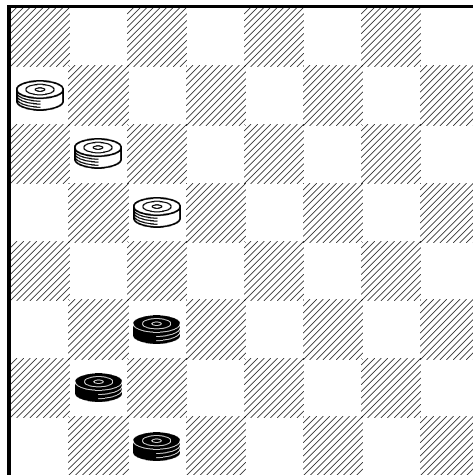


Either to Move  
Black Wins

Immobility of pieces on side squares is an inherent weakness to which the three White men are unexempt. Black has the extra centerward moves needed to win by 7-11 and 11-16, after 1-5, regardless of which side plays first.

*No. 95*

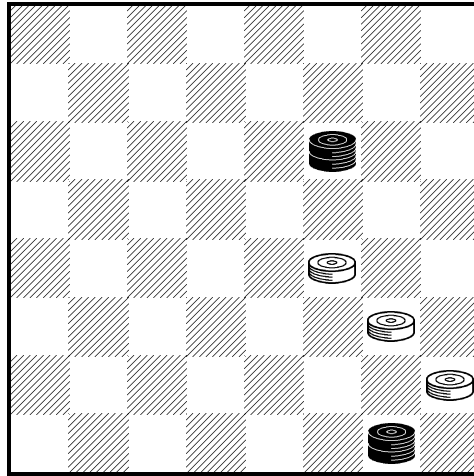
*Two Holds Three—Left Side*



Either to Move  
Black Wins

The method of play is the same as for Position No. 94, Black moving 8-12, 3-7, and 7-10 in rotation, whether White or Black starts. White has no breathing space. Although three men on the side can be stopped by a like number and sometimes by only two opposing men, they cannot be contained by one king on either right or left edge, with one exception. That is the “deep freeze” trick shown in Problem No. 76 which is seldom accomplished without preliminary sacrificing to get into position where one man or king blocks three.

*No. 96*  
*Point of No Return*



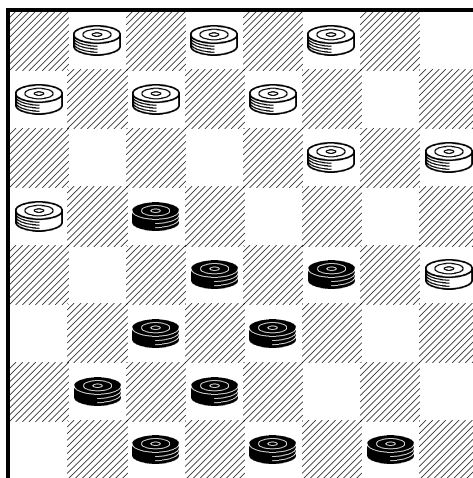
Black to Play and Draw

Three White pieces appear to have shaken off the disadvantage of the side edge and seem about to cross over to the kingrow and win. Black has designs of his own and squeezes twice to get the piece on 14 out of the way by 22-17, 14-10, 17-14, 10-7 and then returns to steal the man on 9 by 14-17 and 17-13, drawing with dispatch. White must yield his piece advantage for want of a spare move.

## XVb. THE DYKE ATTACK

Deriving its name from the wall-like appearance of the formation, the Dyke attack is extremely popular with all classes of players. The object of the Dyke is the establishment, preferably at an early stage, of a Black man on 19 or White on 14 which acts as a spearhead in attacking the opponent's Double Corner. A fully developed Dyke will have Black men on 19, 15 and 10 or White on 14, 18, and 23 with supporting pieces in the background. Diagrammed below is a typical Dyke pattern. This particular position is a phase of the Bristol game and the run-up, together with a standard continuation, is given underneath.

*No. 97*  
*Typical Dyke Layout*



Black to Play and Draw

Arrange the pieces to start a game and move as follows: 11-16, 24-20, 16-19, 23-16, 12-19, 22-18, 9-14, 18-9, 5-14, 25-22, 10-15, 22-17, 6-10, 29-25, 8-11, 17-13, 4-8, 25-22 (forms above diagram), 2-6, 22-17, 8-12, 27-23, 3-8, 23-16, 12-19, 26-23, 19-26, 30-23, 8-12, 28-24, 15-18, 24-19, 18-27, 31-24, 11-15, 20-16, 15-18, 24-20, 18-22, 19-15, 12-19, 20-16, 14-18, etc., Drawn.

The Dyke formation develops between the opening and mid-game phases of play but since the mid-game is the most complicated and difficult portion of the game to handle and requires the experts' profoundest attention, instruction for the new enrollee on Dyke theory and practice is accordingly limited. However, some pertinent tips are given here in line with the opinions of the game's foremost players and analysts. Newell W. Banks and the late Louis T. Ginsberg, of New York, are among the leading advocates of the Dyke, the former stressing it in "Scientific Checkers" and the latter devoting his "Principles of Strategy" to this formation. Banks' book is out of print but Ginsberg's work is still available and acknowledged as the most erudite and informative treatise written on this system of play.

In advancing to the key Dyke square 19 (or 14) you must be prepared to undergo counterattacks by 27-23 and 27-24, which moves may be employed to evict the piece on 19. For every attempt at dislodgement of this Dyke piece you must have reinforcements stationed so as to recapture and replace the jumped man on 19 at each squeeze play. You must visualize and evaluate the strength or weakness of the remaining pieces in the continuing series of

exchanges that the Dyke may invite. To handle the Dyke successfully you must thoroughly analyze the situation before proceeding to the key squares and clearly foresee the benefits or handicaps that this formation will create in the end-play.

Notwithstanding the complex nature of the Dyke attack in the scale of checkeristic values, some definite principles have been determined by the results of championship games, which, after all, are the acid test of any system of play. These principles can be applied instantly by any intelligent beginner to improve his technique.

1. Dykes are strongest when most of the starting pieces remain on the board after their formation.
2. Thus ten-man Dykes are supposed to provide an edge whereas nine-man Dykes are even and those with eight men are detrimental to the Dyking side.

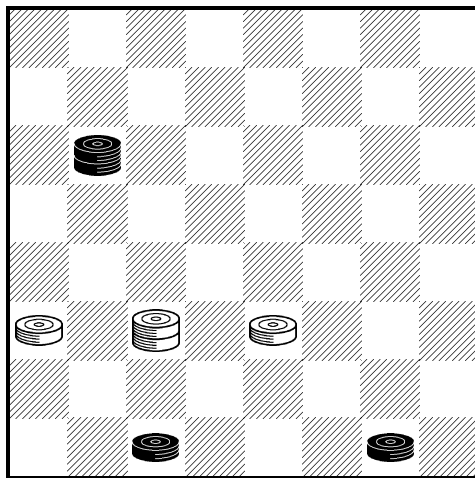
While these are broad generalizations they do furnish the beginner with serviceable playing hints.

## XVc. JUST HOW STRONG IS A BRIDGE?

One of the basic formations providing a tower of strength in the end-play of a game is known as the Bridge Position. Erecting this structure is a top defensive strategy which can usually be converted to offensive power after getting one or more kings. The Bridge consists of retaining two pieces when breaking your kingrow—holding a man on square 1 and another on 3 if playing Black; the counterpart for White would be men kept on 30 and 32. The “Bridge” designation stems from the natural countering play of parking a White man on 10 to form an archway so that other White men can gain entry into Black’s kingrow by passing through square 6 or 7. Corresponding maneuvers are generally executed against a White Bridge on that side of the board.

With the man camped on 10 and one or more Black kings returning to attack that area, it is difficult to save the stranded man from capture. The man on 10 is a target for possible attack from all four directions—18 to 15, 18 to 14, 11 to 7 and 9 to 6. Having a Bridge and the move wins if each side has a king as in diagram 98. With or without the move the Bridge is more productive of wins than draws if combined with two or more kings for attacking purposes. Interesting situations occur in which the sides tend to neutralize each other when Black and White both have Bridges.

*No. 98*  
*Basic Bridge*



Black to Play and Win

From the above position Black wins by forcing the White king to retreat so that the White man on 10 can be captured. Play 24-20 (not 24-19 which permits White to draw on a clever escape by 10-6, 1-10, 11-15), 11-7, 20-16, 7-2, 16-11, 2-6, 11-7, Black Wins.

A secondary or minor type of Bridge Position is also obtained by keeping men on squares 2 and 4 when playing Black and on 29 and 31 when playing White. While good, this formation is less effectual than the regular Bridge and it will be reviewed at the end of this chapter.

## Strong Points of a Bridge

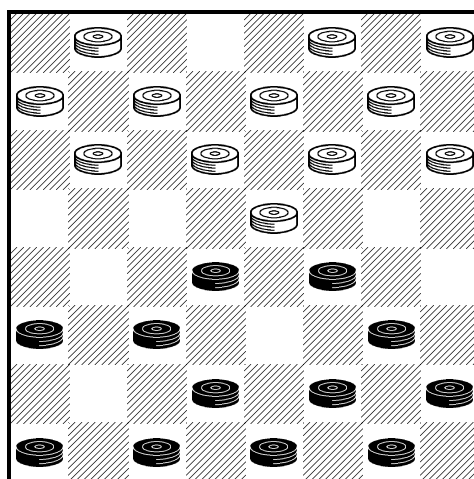
These are the positive attributes of the Bridge:

1. Ordinarily, to break the Bridge, it takes a series of moves to wheel three pieces in line on squares 10, 15 and 19 or 10, 14 and 17 in order to crash into the kingrow by exchanging one-for-one. (Corresponding play is required to break a White Bridge).
2. Failure to destroy the Bridge leaves the man on 10 (or 23) out on a limb and necessitates defensive tactics unless otherwise compensated for, as with superiority of numbers.
3. Entry into the Single Corner for a king requires the setting of a man on 12 (or 21) and still leaves the pieces on 1 and 3 undisturbed and strong. If the opponent fixes a man on 5 (or 28) the Bridge increases in strength, also.
4. A Bridge Position in some instances is the equivalent of owning an extra man, there being a number of Bridge endings that will draw with a piece down.

## The Bridge Is Not Invincible

Although the Bridge structure with at least one king proves consistently solid in the closing phases of a game, it is quite possible to go wrong in creating a Bridge early in the game when most pieces are still on the board. Unskilled players are especially vulnerable in the opening stages, breaking their kingrow quickly to form a Bridge, only to emerge with an elbow formation that turns out indefensible. Samples follow.

*No. 99*  
*White Elbow*

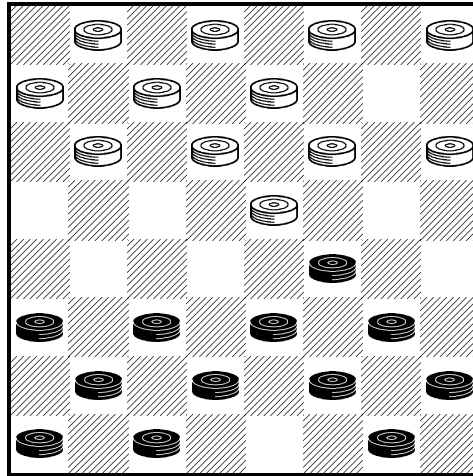


Black to Play and Win

Set the pieces for play and move thus: 11-15, 23-18, 8-11, 26-23, 10-14, 31-26 (forms position above), 6-10, 24-20 (A), 14-17, Black Wins.

(A)—23-19, 14-23, 27-18, 11-16, 18-11, 16-23, 26-19, 7-23, Black Wins.

*No. 100*  
*Black Elbow*



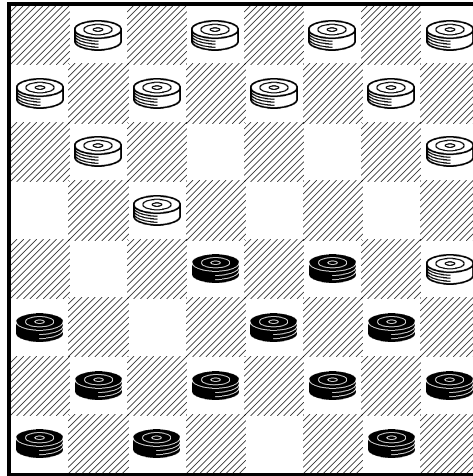
White to Play and Win

Arrange the pieces for a game and play these moves: 9-14, 22-18, 6-9, 25-22, 2-6 (A), 24-19, 11-16 (10-15, 19-10, 6-15, 22-17 gains a man and wins), 28-24, 16-20, 22-17, 8-11, 26-22, 4-8, 32-28<sup>5</sup>, 11-16, 30-26, 8-11, 29-25, 10-15, 19-10, 6-15, 17-10, 7-14, 24-19, 15-24, 28-19, 9-13, 18-9, 5-14, 19-15, 11-18, 22-15, 16-19, 23-16, 12-19, 15-11, 19-24<sup>6</sup>, 25-22, White Wins.

(A)—Now the position on diagram 100. Black is handicapped from here on though they can stretch out the game. Black cannot play 9-13 by reason of the elbow.

It is not to be inferred from the above that an early Bridge is never feasible. I wish to emphasize only that it is not the wisest choice for the inexperienced novice. Experts know how to open games that run quickly into a Bridge formation and still command an equal position. An old standard game known as the Souter (Scotch for cobbler), is that kind of an opening and a time-honored model contest follows.

*No. 101*  
*The Souter*

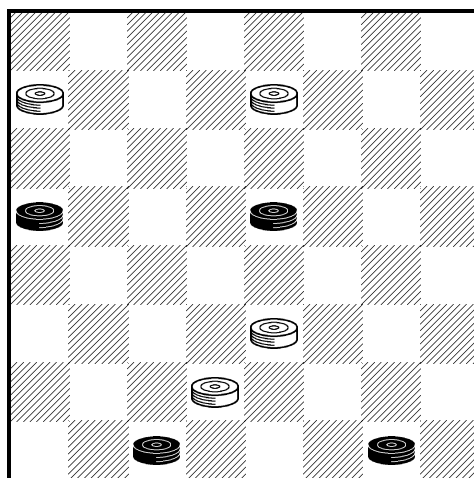


White to Play and Draw

The Souter game starts out and continues as follows: 11-15, 23-19, 9-14, 22-17, 6-9, 17-13, 2-6 (now above diagram), 25-22, 8-11, 29-25, 4-8, 24-20, 15-24, 28-19, 11-15, 27-24, 14-17, 21-14, 9-18, 26-23, 18-27, 32-23, 10-14, 19-10, 6-15, 13-9, 7-11, 23-18, 14-23, 31-26, 5-14, 26-10, 11-15, 30-26, 14-18, 10-6, 1-10, 24-19, Drawn—Drummond.

As a rule it is better for the beginner not to form a Bridge prior to a few trades which will reduce the field and lessen the risk of a game-wrecking elbow formation. Generally, it is better to wait until the man on 4 (or 29) has been brought forward to develop a firm center position. Do not move 2-6 as warned in figure 19 if White has a chance to advance on 11 and hold you at a disadvantage by guarding both pieces on 3 and 4. A final consideration is that the Bridge cannot be maintained if your front ranks are stalled and need support because you can't find a soft spot in your opponent's defenses to break through for a king. You will then have to bring the Bridge pieces out to bolster the front line men that are in trouble. A couple of such predicaments are illustrated and, with the text underneath, graphically stress the point.

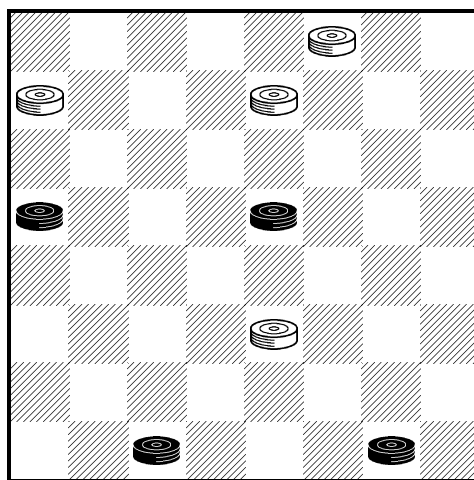
*No. 102*  
*Spent Bridge*



Black to Play and Draw

Having run up against an impasse with the forward pieces, Black in diagram 102 is aware of an upcoming White king which spells growing pressure, leaving no choice but to dismantle the Bridge and scoot for the draw. This can be accomplished by 1-6, 10-1, 3-10, 1-6, 10-15 (10-14 also draws), 6-10, 15-19, 10-15, 18-23, 15-24, 23-30, 24-27, 30-26, 28-24, 26-23, Drawn.

*No. 103*  
*Misspent Bridge*



Black to Play  
White Wins

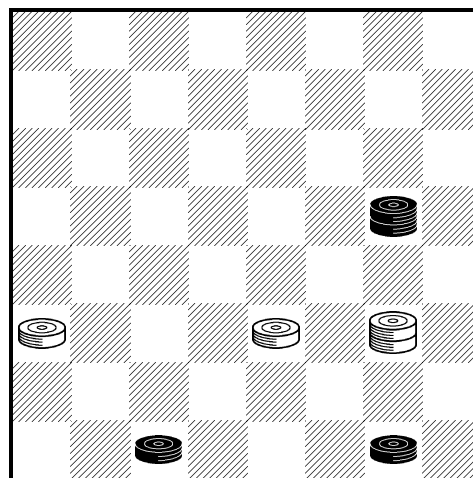
An unbalanced piece distribution of the sort diagram 103 exemplifies teaches us that the retention of certain Bridges can be a misspent endeavor. Black has two men on his half of the board that are a liability instead of an asset due to the hold exerted by the White man on 10. Since White has three pieces on his side of the board against two Blacks, the king

which the man on 10 will shortly convert to becomes a powerhouse that Black cannot cope with. Although Black can extend the game for thirty or forty moves after relinquishing the Bridge, White wins by scientific precise play, continuing from the above figure: 3-8, 10-7, 8-11, 7-2, 11-15, 2-7, 15-19, 7-11, 18-23, 11-16, 1-5, 26-22, 5-9, 22-18, 9-13, 18-14, 13-17, 14-9, 17-22, 9-5, 22-26, 5-1, 26-31, 1-6, 31-26, 6-9, 26-22, 9-13, 20-24, 13-9, 24-27, 16-20, White Wins. While this may seem complicated because of its length, the ideas are only moderately advanced and will give the beginner a preview of the game's depth and beauty.

## How to Break the Bridge

Lacking the material or time for moves to line up three pieces for a swap as outlined in article 1 above, we must resort to alternate ways for destroying the Bridge Position by utilizing the stalled man on 10 or 23 as a temporary gift, followed by a quick recovery maneuver. One trick, and the term is used advisedly since the idea is not a forced play, would be to pitch this man to form a breach if, for instance, the Black king on diagram 98 were played from 24 to 19. We would throw 10 to 6, jump 1 to 10 and then interpose 11 to 15, getting back our sacrificed man and nailing down a draw. The same idea works on the right flank of the board if White's king waits on 9 and the Black side errs by going upon 17 with the king as pictured below.

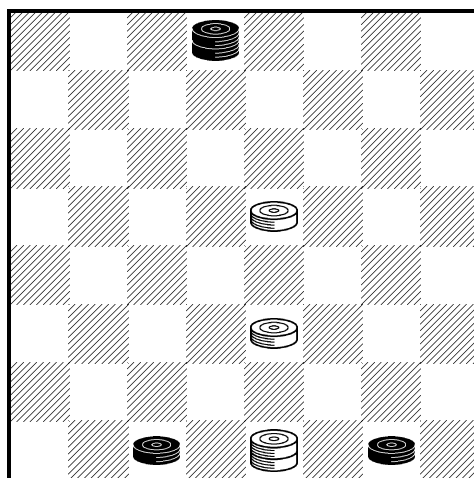
*No. 104  
Loophole*



White to Play and Draw

Here the toss would be from 10 to 7—not 10 to 6 which allows no recovery— then 3 to 10 and 9 to 14. The next Bridge buster is a short-term loan theme that often can be forced. In this combination, as shown in diagram 105 below, you receive the help of a second man or king on square 18 as a guard to block the path of the man that has just taken your sacrifice. You will pitch either 10 to 6 or 10 to 7 in this case but might be compelled to make a specific choice in some other Bridge situation where additional pieces and different conditions are involved. Obviously, after Black jumps to 10, White comes behind with his king and redeems the loaned man.

*No. 105*  
*Helping Hand*



White to Play and Draw

In diagram 105 White looks safe on another pathway, having the move and apparently on the road to crowning a second king but it's an illusory plan and loses if the sacrifice is not made as described above. Any other procedure and Black wins on a cramp in the kingrow or pilfers the man on 10. For instance, move 18-14, 31-26, 14-9, 26-22, 9-6 (if 9-5, 22-17, 2-6, 17-13 and the man on 10 is gone), 22-28, 2-7, 18-15, Black Wins.

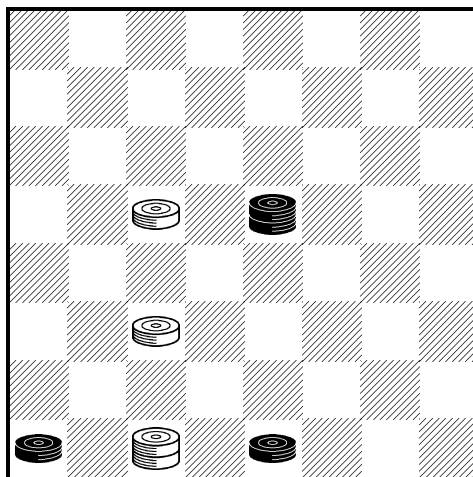
There is a third and even more intricate combination for breaking the Bridge which uses the pitch and squeeze play followed by a forced two-for-one shot that comes up infrequently in expert games. Details of this complex procedure would be out of place in a beginner's exercise.

## The Secondary Bridge

The Bridge formed by keeping men on 2 and 4 or 29 and 31 incorporates one strong feature of the regular Bridge in that the man stationed on square 11 or 22, as the case maybe, is susceptible to capture by hostile kings. However, for reasons disclosed below, less pressure can be exerted against this Bridge and therefore it is not quite as sturdy a weapon in end-play. To crack this defense, three men must be placed in a row on 11, 16 and 20 or 11, 15 and 18 for a swap off. In the former line-up the man on 20 is at the edge of the board and immune to attack from the rear as in the latter and other line-ups that are out in the open. The piece on 11 is also less vulnerable to capture, being open to attack by pursuing kings from three directions instead of four as in the regular Bridge—from 10 to 7, 18 to 15 and 19 to 16. There is scant likelihood of a king attacking from 12 to 16 though it can happen. But the chief reason this Bridge is relatively inferior to the other is that the opposition can by-pass and enter the kingrow in the Double Corner, moving from 5 to 1. The man on 2 can also be eliminated by exchange in various ways that require the services of only two pieces; say with a man on 13 and another on 9 or 10 which moves to 6 or with a king on 1 which moves 1 to 6. In addition, we have a similar delayed action trade to that shown in diagram

105. We anchor a man on 19 as shown in figure 106 below and pitch 11 to 7, then go behind with the king, playing 3 to 7, and retrieve the sacrificed man.

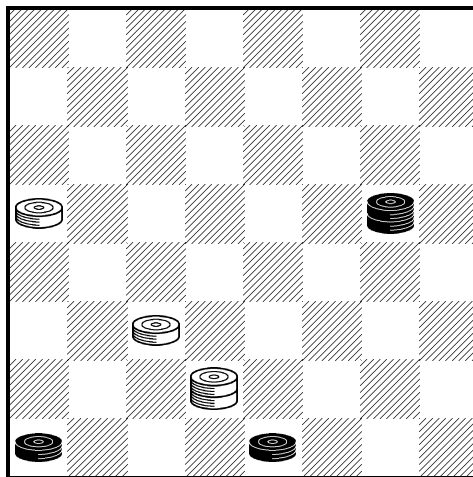
*No. 106*  
*Secondary Bridge*



White to Play and Draw

Despite the scaled-down value of the Secondary Bridge, it has merit and is instrumental in winning games. The following problem reveals one of the winning plans.

*No. 107*  
*Man Overboard*



Black to Move and Win

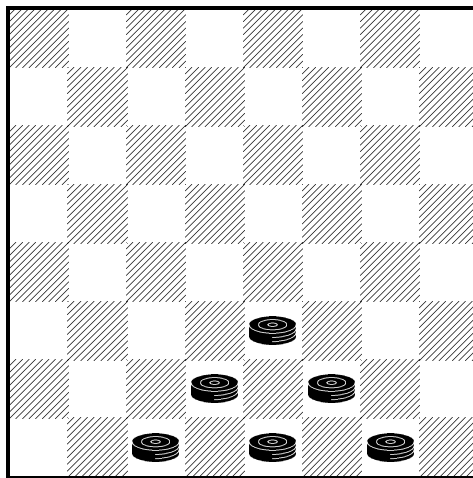
The solution is short and snappy: 17-14, 7-3, 14-10, 20-16 (if 3-8 then 2-7 corners White), 10-15, 3-8, 2-7, Black Wins.

## XVd. THE TRIANGLE THEORY

Authorities on the game have long been intrigued by the triangle playing theory, a famous old-time player named Julius D'Orio being its number one proponent and most articulate press agent. D'Orio, however, advocates the triangle system for both offensive and defensive play to a degree not consistent with its real worth which, although considerable, has the limitations of all checker systems and theories. None are foolproof.

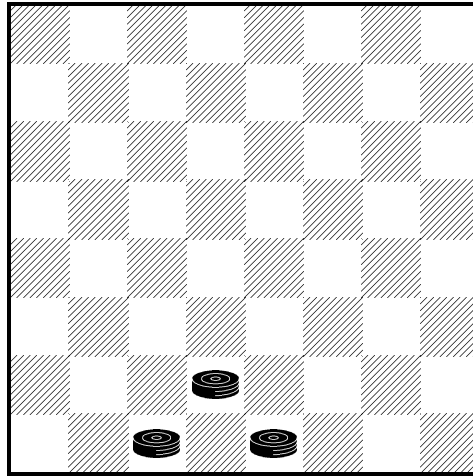
Triangle formations are ever-present in the course of what experts call natural play—the advancement of a piece forward along a diagonal, then supporting it as quickly as possible with men brought up to the two trailing squares—creating an equilateral triangle. As other pieces are filled in from the rear the triangle expands and assumes a “flying wedge” shape that is a sturdy attacking formation, dominating the center of the board and forcing the opposing men to play sideward. At the sides the pieces lose one direction of movement which limits their scope, as explained before. It is logical to form these phalanges which are like the forward line of a football team and deploy the men in tight ranks for concentrated power. Obviously, a man left unsupported—that is with a vacant square on either of the diagonals behind him—is liable to be taken by any of his opponent's men that get in a position to jump.

*No. 108*  
*Big Triangle*



Defensively, with respect to guarding the kingrow, it is presumed smart policy to retain first a triangle of pieces on squares 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 10 (shown in figure 108) and as the game evolves toward the closing phase to condense this figure into a smaller triangle on squares 2, 3 and 7.

*No. 109*  
*Little Triangle*

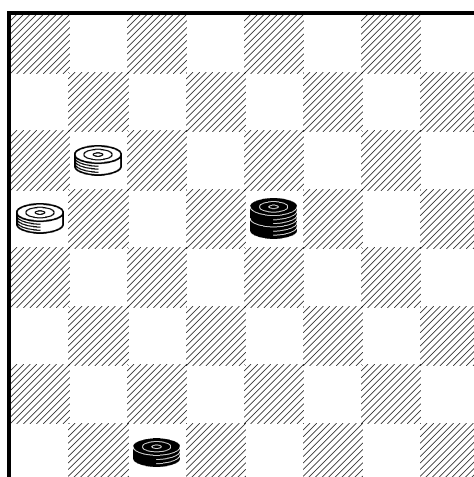


This diminutive triangles (see figure 109) have inherent virtues of mobility due to their strategic location midway along the base line of the board. For instance, the man on 2 is the potential occupant of twenty-six different squares in the march toward the kingrow while the man starting from 3 is capable of landing on twenty-five squares in this journey. The man on square 7, which is called the apex piece, may commandeer any of twenty-two separate squares while crossing the board, a span of two more spaces than the kingrow piece on 4 and only one less than the man on 1. Because of its central location the man on 7 can co-operate closely with those on 2 and 3, as in the removal of hostile kings that may be crowned on either 1 or 4. This swap by 2 to 6 or 3 to 8 is often the timely intervention in a threatened king attack from the rear. The White side, of course, has access to matching triangle play on the other side of the board. Some concept of the triangle's utility can be gathered from the above audit of its scope.

Repeating the advice given for the Bridge Position, the formation of these triangles must not be carelessly or hastily conceived, otherwise the benefits that might accrue in the end-game will never materialize. Every move in checkers is of parallel importance in relation to the final result, there being no place along the line for indifferent play.

The concluding batch of problems are unpretentious two-by-two placements that further explore the restrictiveness of the Single Corner zone, a trait already discussed. Nevertheless, it is a point worth stressing once again. To avoid any chance of misconstruction, the beginner should note well that the opposite Single Corner is the area of restrictive action and that the opposite Double Corner provides easier entry and greater freedom of movement. Quite the reverse is true on your own side of the board—the Single Corner is strong and the Double Corner, by comparison, is weak. Problems 110 to 113 inclusive and 116, however, reflect ideas with and without the move which cancel this inherent pull and insure a draw under certain favorable conditions by carefully picking the correct plays.

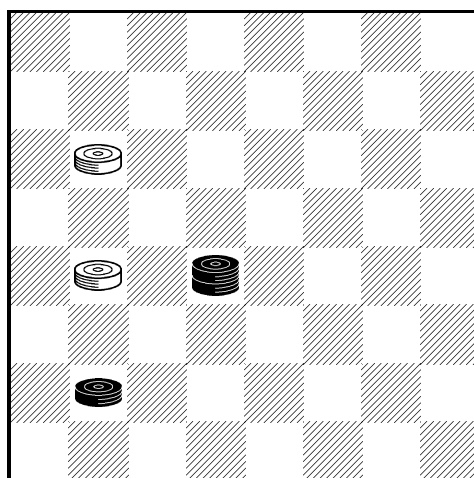
### No.110 Innocents Abroad



White to Play and Draw

Draws with the move by keeping it. The play uncovers scientific board generalship by 24-19, 18-14 (or 3-7, 20-16, 7-10, 16-12), 19-16 (star move—19-15 loses by 3-8, 20-16, 8-12, 16-11, 14-18, Black Wins; 20-16 also loses at this stage by 3-8), 14-10, 16-12, Drawn.

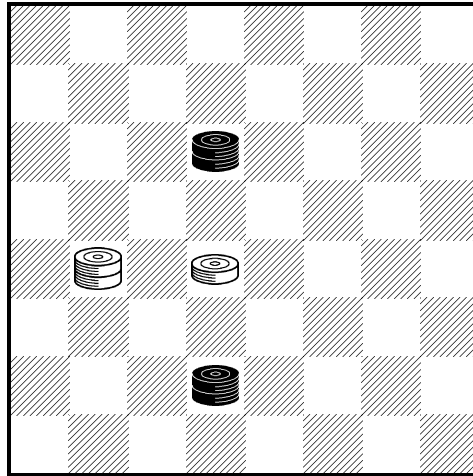
### No. 111 Neck and Neck



White to Play and Draw

Two clearcut moves unerringly lead White out of the woods. White does not have the move but draws by forcing Black's single man onto 11 where it interferes with the Black king, giving White the opportunity for a tie. The sequence is 16-12 (24-20 loses by 8-12 and 16-11 likewise is a flop by 8-12, 11-7, 12-16, 24-20, 15-10, Black Wins), 8-11, 24-20 (not 12-8 which loses by 11-16), 15-10, 12-8, Drawn.

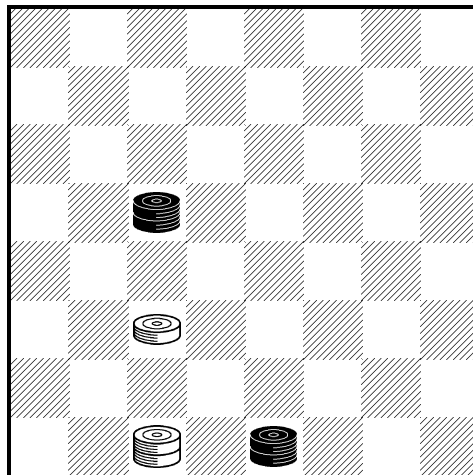
*No. 112*  
*Stalemate*



White to Move and Draw

Again White does not have the move but has a compensating factor in that he commands square 11 by an exchange threat. Control of 11 is usually vital in play hinging around the Single Corner as this problem and the four that follow will demonstrate. Play 16-20 (15-11 loses by 7-3), 7-2, 20-16, 2-7 (if 23-18, 15-11, 18-15, 16-12, draws), 16-20, Drawn.

*No. 113*  
*The Straight and Narrow*

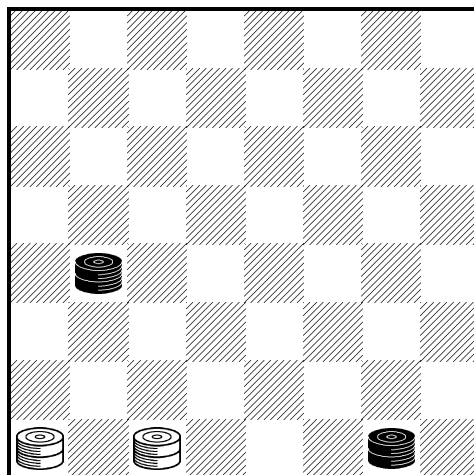


White to Play and Draw

In the same class as No. 112, this has a turning point somewhat dissimilar but still involving square 11. It goes 3-7, 2-6, 11-8, 19-16, 8-3, Drawn. The common garden variety of player might move 11-8 or 3-8 instead of 3-7 and get trapped by the American position which is the subject of the next two problems. This is a major problematic theme and a preview here only lends emphasis to its scientific by-ways. After 11-8 the proper follow-up is 19-16, 8-4,

2-6, 3-8, 16-12, 8-3, 6-10, Black Wins. If 3-8 is played at the position shown, the winning moves are 2-6, 11-7 (8-12, 6-10, 11-8, 10-7, Black Wins), 6-10, 7-3 (8-3, 19-15), 19-16, Black Wins.

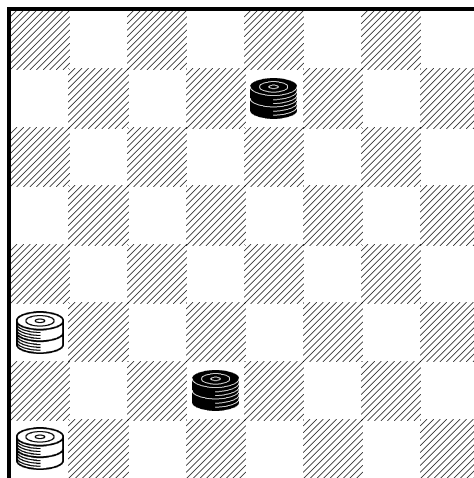
*No. 114*  
*American Position (Variation A)*



Black to Play and Win

The salient points about the American Position, beside having the move, are that the winning side (Black in this instance) can get on square 12 (or 3 if need be), has effective control of square 11 so as to avoid trades and ultimately hems in both White kings. It should also be noted that the Black king on 1 could be on 2, 9, 10, 17 or 18 and win the same way. From the pictured setting the play is 1-6, 4-8 (or 3-8, 16-12, 8-11, 6-10), 6-10, 8-4 (if 8-12, 16-11), 16-12, 4-8, 10-15, Black Wins.

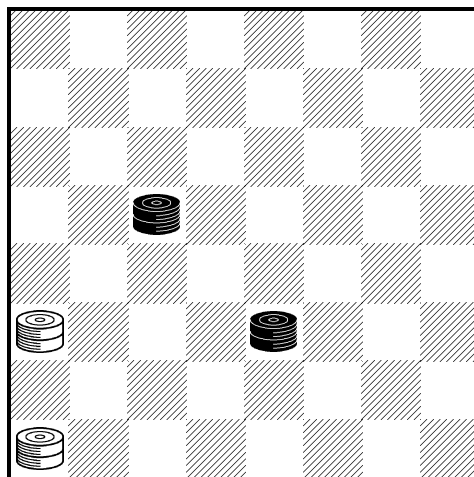
*No. 115*  
*American Position (Variation B)*



Black to Play and Win

Although the pieces are situated on different squares, this variation of the American position is basically the same as Problem No. 114. Additional variations occur with the Black king on 26 relocated to any of squares 18, 19, 20, 27 or 28 and the win is accomplished similarly. Black wins by 26-23, 12-16 (12-8, 7-3, 8-11, 23-19), 7-3, 16-12, 23-19, etc.

*No. 116*  
*Avoiding American Position*



White to Play and Draw

Slight positional variations cause gaping differences in the necessary treatment and in the end results as observed in an earlier statement. No better example can be found than the above problem which is on the borderline of being the American Position. The keynote of this problem is that the Black kings cannot occupy squares 3 or 12 except when a swap by 8-11 is possible. Incidentally, the Black kings could be on squares 2 and 20 with the same draw resulting. White draws by 12-8 (not 4-8 which is back into the American Position and loses by 10-7), 19-16 (if 10-7, 8-3 draws), 8-12, 16-11, 12-8, 11-7, 8-12, 10-15, 12-16, etc.

## Chapter XVI

### WHERE NOW?

If you knew as little about checkers heretofore as the average layman, reading this book and assimilating its substance would qualify you with respect to the real science of the game as an embryonic expert. You have just put your foot inside the door, in a manner of speaking, but haven't taken possession of the house yet.

You have been exposed to expert checkers in as simple and practical a form as could be conceived and, as the title suggests, enough of the contents should have rubbed off so that you ought to be able to Start Playing Expert Checkers. To be sure, you have some distance to travel and rugged hurdles to overcome before you can qualify as an expert of championship caliber. Still you should have become well briefed on the fundamentals so that you can, having the desire, make the transition from novice to expert smoothly, provided you will enter into the necessary further study of master games in the standard text books and supplement your book learning by cross-the-board competition with better players.

Even if you never take a step to go beyond your present playing set, the scores of themes incorporating the "master touch" depicted in the preceding diagrams should have entertained as well as enlightened you. These stratagems have charmed and held lovers of the silent game everywhere that English is spoken for generations.

With the knowledge of scientific checkers made so conveniently available here, it will be a simple matter for you to Start Playing Expert Checkers.

# Notes

<sup>1</sup>Wes Loewer used the KingsRow computer program to demonstrate that 3-8, though perhaps a bit inferior, actually draws.

<sup>2</sup>Wes Loewer used the KingsRow program to show that White must jump 32-23 to keep the win. 31-24 is a draw.

<sup>3</sup>Grandmaster Richard Pask has recently pointed out a flaw in this setting, namely, that 9-6 will draw for White.

<sup>4</sup>This is incorrect and misleading. Zero is an even number; if there are no pieces in your counting system, the sum is even and your opponent has the move if it is your turn to play.

<sup>5</sup>32-28 dissipates the advantage and leads to a draw. The win could be held with 29-25 according to KingsRow.

<sup>6</sup>This move loses, whereas 1-6 would draw.