A LEGEND ON THE ROAD:
BOBBY FISCHER'S 1964 SIMULTANEOUS TOUR

3rd edition - greatly enlarged
A Legend on the Road:
Bobby Fischer’s 1964 Simultaneous Tour
John Donaldson
Introduction to the Third Edition

This edition contains all the material relating to Fischer’s 1964 tour that previously appeared in the first and second editions of A Legend on the Road as well as The Unknown Bobby Fischer, plus new material gathered for this volume. Readers who have the first and second editions will have seen the book increase in size from 124 pages to 197 pages. The present work is almost double that.

What accounts for this?

- 26 new games.
- Newly discovered exhibitions that Bobby gave in Colorado Springs and Lawrence, Kansas.
- Many more remembrances and stories.
- Many more annotated games.
- Many more photos and images.

Fischer’s tour was held 51 years ago, but is still well remembered by those who were fortunate to meet him over the board and hear him lecture. Even more so for those who shared a meal with him, played host or provided transportation.

It’s natural for those not playing chess in 1964 to believe these fond memories are a byproduct of Fischer’s rise to the chess throne in 1972 and all the subsequent publicity attached to his name, but I believe they would be mistaken.

When Fischer started his tour in the winter of 1964 he had just won his sixth U.S. Championship with a score of 11-0 and his article The Ten Greatest Masters in History had recently been published in CHESSWORLD. His monthly column in Chess Life, Bobby Fischer Talks, was read around the world both for his analysis of games both ancient and modern and for his ongoing feud with the Soviets which was still going strong almost two years after Curacao. Fischer was already a legend among American chess players, despite most of them having never seen the man. The 1964 tour provided them a once in a lifetime opportunity to see Bobby in the flesh.

The United States was a much different place in 1964 than it is today. It had a population of 192 million in 1964 and 321 million fifty years later, but the number of chess players in the U.S. half a century ago was much, much fewer than it is now. The USCF has over 80,000 members today and in 1964 the number was less than 10 percent of that. And yet it is unlikely that a tour of 42 cities, facing over 2000 opponents, could be organized today.

The grandest of all transcontinental chess tours, eclipsing those of Lasker, Capablanca and Alekhine, occurred when American chess was still primarily club based. Weekend events were becoming more established in 1964, but the U.S. Open was the only major annual event (the
National Open would start a year after Fischer’s tour).

These factors were important for two reasons. First, the infrastructure was in place to host simul, and second most U.S.C.F. members had never seen a flesh and blood American Grandmasters as almost all of them lived in or near New York City. Outside of the U.S. Open, which had seen a then record 266 participants in 1963 (the current top mark is a seemingly unbeatable 836 set at Pasadena 1983), the only other chance to see the nation’s best was to visit New York every December for the U.S. Championship. Add to that Fischer had outgrown the U.S. Open after tying for first at Cleveland 1957. There were no World Opens let alone Millionaire Opens in 1964!

The 1964 Tour was held at a time when Bobby Fischer was still a private person. Appearing on the cover of Time and Newsweek and being a guest of Johnny Carson, Bob Hope, David Frost, Dick Cavett and Dinah Shore was in the future as was being swarmed by several hundred participants at the 1973 American Open. Right up until his defeat of Tigran Petrosian in 1971, Bobby was very much under the American public’s radar. Witness the modest attendance and mainstream media reporting for his matches with Taimanov (Vancouver) and Denver (Larsen).

The result was a special experience for the young Fischer (he turned 21 during the tour), who was passed along from town to town by the brotherhood of American chess players who housed, fed and provided transportation for him. Many of the chess players he met during the tour were around his age and all accounts indicate he got along well with them.

He also received over $10,000 (he was paid $250 for 50 boards and received close to $500 for his marathon 75-board simul in New Orleans). In 2014 dollars adjusted for inflation that is $75,000! Granted he had to spend some money on travel, but most of Bobby’s lodging was covered and many of those he played were honored to take him out for a meal or in the case of Sam Spikes cover all of his expenses for the better part of a week.

To put the $10,000 into perspective first place in the 1960 US Championship was $1000. It had risen to $2500 when Bobby won his last U.S. Championship in early January of 1967. Keep in mind this U.S. championship prize money was often the bulk of Bobby's yearly income up until the late 1960s. The money he received from the tour really helped Bobby financially.

The 1964 tour also provided Fischer with his one opportunity to really see the United States. Yes, he had taken the train to Lincoln for the 1955 U.S. Junior and Anthony Saidy remembers Jerry Donovan driving him and Bobby to the U.S. Open in Oklahoma City.

Everyone remembers the famous road trip to the 1957 Open where Bobby travelled in a car driven by future International Master William Addison that broke down twice along the way from San Francisco to Cleveland with the players eventually having to take a bus from Peoria to get to their final destination. This epic, close to 2,500 mile journey (pre-Interstate highway!), in a car without air conditioning in early August, with a group of fellow young chessplayers was likely well remembered by Bobby. He left DNA in the arm of National Master Gil Ramirez after one of the other occupants of the car compared Bobby once too often to the
cartoon character Crusader Rabbit (one surmises that the reference was to the size of Fischer’s ears in comparison to his height as he was not yet very tall, the growth spurt that put him over six feet still to come). Bobby’s biting Ramirez prompted an instant right hook from Gil that left Bobby with a shiner that had the New York contingent casting dirty looks at the San Franciscans when everyone met up in Cleveland.

Ramirez, whose family hosted Bobby during the U.S. Junior Open a few weeks before the incident, relates that the two got along well in the years to come and when he was transferred by the Air Force from Spain (where he had several successful tournaments) to Nebraska in 1964 he transited through New York City and spent a night with Bobby looking at chess and catching up on old times.

As much as the road trip to Cleveland was something not to be forgotten it can’t compare to the 1964 tour, which took Fischer all over the continental U.S. chess except the Pacific Northwest. This was a one-time experience; all available information suggests that Fischer’s future trips between New York and Los Angeles were by air.

A close examination of the cities Bobby visited makes clear there were a few gaps in the tour or some cities are missing. Our opinion, after 22 years of research on the subject, is the available evidence strongly suggests these were breaks and no cities are missing. However, it should be pointed out that the information about Bobby’s visit to Colorado Springs only surfaced in 2015.

The first part of the tour had Bobby starting in Detroit and working his way back to New York by a circuitous route through Canada and New England. One might guess by the gap in the dates between Detroit and Rochester (February 9 and 15) that the former was a one off event and that Fischer returned to New York before heading to Rochester, but then again Bobby had played in the Western Open in Bay City, Michigan, the previous summer and might have stayed with friends.

Bobby appears to have given only one exhibition (at Yeshiva University) between March 9th and 14th and likely spent his remaining time at home resting up for the big trip to come. During the better part of the next two months he was on the road, starting in Pittsburgh, then heading to Chicago before working his way down to New Orleans. From there it was pretty much non-stop action with days off devoted to travel until he arrived in Arkansas. We know he was in Hot Springs on March 30th and available information has him only returning to action again in Wichita on April 4th. The older Bobby loved onsens (hot springs) in Japan, so perhaps he first got a taste for it in Hot Springs. This is a nice thought, but unfortunately one we have not been able to confirm. What we do have is an explanation for where Bobby was between March 29th and April 4th – staying at the home of Sam Spikes, a successful Little Rock insurance agent and future member of the Arkansas Golf Hall of Fame.

Orval Allbritton, who played Bobby twice and is still going strong at age 87, recalled Bobby’s visit in a phone conversation with the author in late October of 2015. Allbritton remembers that Bobby stayed as Sam Spikes guest for at least four days and possibly longer. Spikes had a large and comfortable home and Bobby would have had his own room and bathroom.
Fischer visited the Hot Springs club on its normal meeting night (so March 30th is an approximate date) and a drawing was held to determine which player would face Bobby. Orval, one of the stronger players in Arkansas at the time (1787 May 1964 USCF rating list), was chosen to play and lasted 18 moves. He puts it, “I was strong enough to know when it was time to resign.”

The author of several well-received histories, including The Mob at the Spa which tells about mobsters who came to Hot Springs from approximately 1920 to 1965, Allbritton distinctly remembers Bobby did not stay over in Hot Springs. He definitely made the one hour drive back to Little Rock that night with Spikes who very likely covered all of Bobby’s expenses during his stay.

Spikes was not a particularly strong player, but he was keen on the game and Bobby was patient with him. Allbritton recalls Spikes telling him that the two played several “short” games.

Fischer did not give exhibitions in Dallas, St. Louis or in Oklahoma, but it is conceivable that at some time there were thoughts to hold simuls in these venues. That would help to explain the gap between exhibitions. Larry Evans father Harry appears to have done a very good job in designing a schedule that did not involve any back tracking, putting the last minute additions at the end of the tour.

Bobby gave an exhibition in Wichita on April 4 and did not see action again until April 8 in Ogden over a thousand miles away. Unfortunately the only cities of any size in between are in Colorado and we know for certain that Denver was April 26 and Colorado Springs was April 28 (from the date on Reid’s scoresheet).

One logical thought is that Bobby gave another exhibition in Utah in Salt Lake City, but two things rule that out. First, the newspaper account of the event is very precise mentioning players from as far north as Ogden and as far south as Provo participated - Salt Lake City is right in between them. Second the Ogden exhibition attracted 63 players and 200 spectators. That was an outstanding turnout, surpassing that of many other cities with richer chess traditions. It’s hard to imagine a second exhibition in Utah.

One possible explanation for where Fischer was spending the extra days between Wichita and Ogden is that his old friend Alex Liepnieks, 300 miles away in Lincoln, Nebraska, picked up Bobby and hosted him for a few days before sending him west. The Nebraska state capital not only has air service but is on the rail line to Salt Lake City.

One can imagine after Ogden Bobby went immediately to Los Angeles to visit friends from his visits in 1957 and 1961 (twice). He gave six exhibitions in California before heading on to Las Vegas where his good friend Larry Evans was living. One can easily imagine him spending a few days there both before and after his exhibition in Sin City on April 22.

Then came simuls in Denver (April 26), Colorado Springs (April 28) and Lawrence, Kansas
The latter town, home to the University of Kansas, is only about 40 miles to Kansas City making it highly unlikely Bobby gave an exhibition there. However chances are good he flew home from Kansas City, giving himself a short break before a simul in the Philadelphia suburb of Cheltenham.

Both this event and the simul in Boston on May 10 appear to be one off events that were not tied to any other simuls. It is conceivable that Bobby gave an exhibition in Baltimore. It’s hard to believe for those who have watched The Wire, but up until the early 1980s Charm City, aka Mobtown, was one of the ten largest cities in the United States and had a population of around a million in 1964. That said we have never heard any rumors of a Baltimore simul.

Mid-May saw Bobby go out on the road again for a short five city tour through the Midwest stopping in Milwaukee (where he played two tournaments in 1957), another simul in Michigan (Flint), his third in Ohio (Columbus – he does not seem to have made it to Cincinnati), a return to Chicago (Cicero) and finally Indianapolis. One can imagine that Robert Byrne, who was teaching philosophy at the University of Indiana 50 miles south in Bloomington at the time, was likely in attendance.

Bobby finished with an exhibition at the Flea House in New York City and then a week later his final stop of the tour in State College, Pennsylvania, where Donald Byrne taught English at Penn State and served as coach of the chess team from 1961 until his death in 1976.

This great tour was pretty much the end of Fischer giving simuls in the United States. While he would give many exhibitions in Europe and Argentina in the years to come, the only ones in the U.S. appear to be at the United Nations in 1965 and Westchester, New York in early 1972.

This review suggests that it is unlikely that any exhibitions have been missed and we can only hope that new games are forthcoming as most of the players to face Fischer in 1964 are now in their 70s or older.

On a last note we would like to point out what an interesting group of players Bobby faced. Some would become well-known in the chess world as players including Jude Acers, Andrew Karklins, Charles Powell, Dennis Allan, John Blackstone, Erik Osbun, Wesley Koehler, Eric Bone, C. Bill Jones, Andy Sacks and Bob Burger - all became masters or stronger. The latter gets double and triple credit as a chess author and first-rate problemist. Robert Brieger also gets a nod as well-known problemist and author with several books to his credit.

Another player that faced Bobby who contributed to chess literature was Bobby Patteson who produced a series of pamphlets on Bobby’s games and openings for Chess Digest in the early 1970s. Jack O’Keefe did not write many articles but his research helped many. Likewise Alan Benson contributed as well-known organizer as did Jim Warren assisting his wife Helen. Max Wilkerson served 16 years as head of the nation’s oldest chess club, the Mechanic’s Institute of San Francisco, while John Dedinsky invented the Chronos chess clock.

Some of the players that faced Bobby later became well-known for things they accomplished away from the chessboard. Perhaps the most famous is Jim Garrison, who took a board in the
New Orleans exhibition, but is remembered for his investigation into the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

Another is Boria Sax, son of the convicted spy Saville Sax, who defeated Bobby very convincingly at the age of 14 and went on to become a distinguished writer and thinker on human-animal relations.

Other who faced Bobby include Orval Allbritton, who was an active FBI agent at the time he played Bobby and later wrote several books on the history of his native Hot Springs, Arkansas. There was also mystery writer Gaylord Dold and future U.S. Ping Pong Hall of Fame member Chuck Hoey, the only player to defeat Bobby in the Pittsburgh exhibition. One could mention many others.

Bobby’s 1964 tour was indeed something very special and retains a special magic to this day.

Besides those who helped make the first and second editions possible, and who are acknowledged elsewhere, I would like to thank the following individuals for their assistance for this third and very likely last edition.


I would like to specially acknowledge the help of Jude Acers, promoter extraordinaire of chess in the United States for over 50 years. Jude remembers Bobby’s visit to Louisiana like it was yesterday.

The efforts of Frank Berry who scanned the slides of photos taken by Beth Cassidy in the mid-1960s, are greatly appreciated. Cassidy, who played for Ireland in the first Women’s Chess Olympiad in 1957, was a fine photographer whose work appeared in Chess Life and Chess Review in the 1960s. However many of her photographs have never been published. Many thanks for her permission to let them appear in this and future planned Fischer publications.

Special thanks to David DeLucia, the noted collector, who has been so generous in sharing his treasures. Four of the games in this book (Oakes, Rummel, Travis (Houston) and Pransky) appear on page 82 of Bobby Fischer Uncensored.

Andy Ansel, Eduardo Bauzá Mercére and Richard Reich are three of the great archivists of American chess history. They have rescued tens of thousands games from oblivion by entering them into electronic format from scoresheets, obscure chess magazines and forgotten newspaper chess columns. All three provided invaluable assistance in the preparation of this volume.

Every American chess player with an interest in the history of the game should pay at least one
visit to the John G. White Collection at the Cleveland Public Library, the World Chess Hall of Fame in St. Louis and the Mechanics’ Institute Library and Chess Room of San Francisco. The staff of all three institutions were most helpful in making materials available that were used in the production of this book.

I would like to thank Edward Winter and his readers. Winter’s Chess Notes (http://www.chesshistory.com/winter/) is must reading for anyone with an interest in chess history and it was here that Oliver Beck reported on Fischer’s visit to Colorado Springs, the last exhibition to be rediscovered.

A few words about the publishers of the first two editions. Yasser Seirawan needs no introduction. A two-time Candidate for the World Championship, publisher of Inside Chess, expert commentator and author of several classic works on the game, Seirawan is one of the most important figures in the history of American chess. He was also the one to give the first edition of this book a chance.

Hanon Russell, publisher of the second edition, has been a key contributor to American chess for over half a century. Many will be familiar with his publishing firm (Russell Enterprises, Inc.) and others will recall that he was the founder of Chess Cafe. Those with good memories might remember the Russell Collection (later sold to David DeLucia), which contained many important items including all of the original scoresheets from New York 1924.

Those with even keener recall will recall his translation of Tal’s famous work on his 1960 title match with Botvinnik. This was done when Russell was living in Portland, Oregon, in the early 1970s. During his short stay he not only managed to translate and publish this book and another on the Pirc, but also wrote a chess column and directed many tournaments including a US Junior Open. All this was done in Russell’s early twenties, but to go back to the beginning of his involvement as a publisher you have to return to 1965 when he first started publishing Shakmaty-in-English while in high school!

This is the first of a multi-volume work on Bobby Fischer that I am collaborating on with my fellow International Master and Tacoma Chess Club alumni Eric Tangborn. Eric provided a tremendous amount of technical help for this book and will be a co-author on subsequent volumes, the first of which will be devoted to Fischer’s non-1964 exhibitions games. These first two will soon be available in both Kindle and iPad, iPhone, and iPod touch – the latter produced by ePlusBooks.com

One hope of this book is that it will inspire further research. I would be very interested in hearing from readers with additional information on Fischer’s tour. They can contact me by writing to imwjd@aol.com.

This book is dedicated to Dr. Anthony Kwan Lee. I've known no one brighter or braver.

John Donaldson
Berkeley, December 2015
Introduction to the Second Edition

This edition contains all the material relating to Fischer’s 1964 tour that previously appeared in the first edition of A Legend on the Road and The Unknown Bobby Fischer, plus original material I’ve gathered for this volume.

This time around I would like to thank my editor Taylor Kingston and publisher Hanon Russell, as well as Jude Acers, Todd Bardwick, Frank (Kim) Berry, Gary Berry, Gary Bookout, Carl Brannan, Neil Brennen, Ojars Celle, Mark Donlan, C. Richard Long, Marty Lubell, Jeff Martin (John G. White Collection of the Cleveland Public Library), Hardon McFarland, Michael Morris, Robert Peters, Eric Tangborn and Val Zemitis for their help. I would especially like to thank Holly Lee. This book would not have been possible without their efforts.

I continue to be amazed at how warmly and vividly people remember Bobby’s tour of forty years ago.

John Donaldson
Berkeley, March 2005

Explanation of Symbols

(O.G.) Indicates the source is the original game score itself.
All editor’s notes are by John Donaldson.

Preface to The Unknown Bobby Fischer

The idea for The Unknown Bobby Fischer (1999) came shortly after the publication of A Legend on the Road (1994). The many readers who wrote me after the appearance of Legend offered a wealth of new material with games and anecdotes. Sometimes gold would appear in the most unexpected places.

Playing in the 1997 McLaughlin Memorial in Wichita, I was delighted to meet former Kansas Champion Robert Hart, who had kept his copy of the mimeographed bulletin of Bobby’s 1964 visit to Wichita. I had heard rumors of this bulletin, but until Mr. Hart generously sent me the games, I feared that all existing copies had disappeared. My Unknown Bobby Fischer co-author Eric Tangborn and I, with the help of Erik Osbun, were able, using a little detective work, to convert 18 of the games (one score was unreadable) from sometimes questionable descriptive notation into playable algebraic. Only D Ballard’s win, Fischer’s sole loss in the exhibition,
was previously known. The games from this exhibition offer a rare look at a typical Fischer simul — usually only a few wins and, more typically, his losses and draws, surface.


John Donaldson
Berkeley, October 1999
Transcontinental exhibition tours have a long and honored history in North America. World Champions Alexander Alekhine and José Capablanca were two of the first to make the 3,000-mile journey from one end of the continent to the other. These tours were very useful for popularizing the game in distant outposts, where masters were all but nonexistent. Reshevsky, Horowitz, Kashdan, Fine, and Marshall all became better known to those outside New York as a result of their barnstorming. The touring masters were well received and taken care of. Horowitz, in particular, kept his struggling Chess Review alive by periodically hitting the road and spreading the word to the faithful.

This type of tour became increasingly rare after World War II. Various explanations could be offered, but undoubtedly two major reasons were the proliferation of weekend Swiss tournaments and the simultaneous decline of local chess clubs. The result was that in recent memory only Walter Browne’s 1978 18-stop tour, and the “Church’s Chicken” journeys of Larry Christiansen and Jack Peters in the late 1970s and early 1980s, came close to some of the classic treks of the past.

Between the barnstormings of the 1930s and the late 1970s only one great tour was undertaken, but it was arguably the greatest of them all. Not even Alekhine and Capablanca, who were in high demand — each made several major tours of North America — ever came close to this granddaddy of road trips.

Starting in February of 1964 and going until the end of May, Bobby Fischer’s only major exhibition tour was record-breaking in all aspects, from the number of players he played (over 2000) to the fee he commanded (a then unheard of $250 an exhibition).

Bobby, of course, had prior experiences with exhibitions. In fact, his first chess event was playing Master Max Pavey in a simul at the Brooklyn Public Library in January of 1951. The first major exhibition Fischer gave, against 12 children, was written about in the January 1956 issue of Chess Review.

Fischer’s early opinion of simul play was not particularly high. A 1957 issue of Parade had this to say: “To make money, Bobby has taken on as many as 30 challengers simultaneously at $1 a challenger. But such games, he says, ‘don’t produce good chess. They’re just hard on your feet.’” Fischer’s feelings about the quality of play changed in the future with several games from the 1964 tour featured in the American Chess Quarterly and the game with Celle chosen for inclusion in My 60 Memorable Games.

Between 1956 and 1964 Bobby gave several exhibitions, but the only one that attracted major attention was one that was never held. The following announcement appeared in the first issue of the excellent but ill-fated Chessworld:

Fischer will attempt to break Gideon Stahlberg’s 1941 record of 400 opponents Wednesday,
November 27, 1963, 7:30 p.m., Grand Ballroom, Hotel Astor, Broadway and 44th, NYC. $3 to play, $1 to watch. Organized by CHESSWORLD.

Five days before the event it was cancelled because of the assassination of President Kennedy.

Chess promoter extraordinaire I.A. Horowitz in his later years.
(Photo by Beth Cassidy)

When 1964 began, Fischer was on a roll. The 20-year-old GM had just won his 6th U.S. Championship and he had done so in spectacular fashion, scoring 11-0! With the Amsterdam Interzonal scheduled for the spring there was much talk about Bobby’s run for the World Championship.

The genesis of the tour appears to be the following letter, which appears courtesy of the Hanon Russell Collection.

From: Bobby Fischer
To: Larry Evans
Date: Sept. 15, 1963

Dear Larry,

Nice talking to you on the phone Saturday. About the books, if you send me a list please mark down what condition they’re in. Another thing last December when you were in New York you said you were interested in setting up an exhibition tour if I brought my price down. How does $300 strike you: 35-40 boards plus lecture on a game or two. I don’t know what percentage or fee you would want for this but I think we can work that out if you agree to my terms above. If you’re not interested, what with $200 rolling in maybe you could set up something at one of the strip hotels for me.
By the way there IS one mistake in my next Chess Life article. I caught it when I was going over it for typographical errors. It’s in my annotations to my game with Berliner. It was not too late to have it corrected but Joe said that I had better leave well enough alone since the people in Iowa where it’s printed would probably mess it up altogether. If you catch it you’re pretty good, but it can be argued that it is not actually a mistake.

I am mainly occupying my time by studying old opening books and believe it or not I am learning a lot! They don’t waste space on the Catalan, Réti, King’s Indian Reversed and other rotten openings.

Best of Luck in your real estate!

Yours truly,

/s/ Robert Fischer

Between that letter and the following February many details had to be worked out. One of the primary issues that had to be addressed was what sort of fee Bobby could command. Today, when Kasparov receives $10,000 for a simul, it’s difficult to put Fischer’s 1964 fee of $250 per exhibition in perspective, but the December 1963 California Chess Reporter (p. 50) does a pretty good job:

Fischer has set an unprecedented $250 fee for his exhibitions. Relatively few years ago, the best players were lucky to get $50 for a simultaneous display. Recently, a fee of the order of $100 was in order. Our hat is off to Bobby for setting his fee at $250 and for making it stick!

GM Larry Evans’ father, Harry, who ran the business side of the American Chess Quarterly, was in charge of putting together the tour. Through the pages of Chess Life and the ACQ interested parties were given the conditions: $250 for a fifty-board simul plus a lecture.

For the uninitiated, the latter might have seemed a throw-in but those who showed up to hear Fischer speak were in for a real surprise. New Yorkers, of course, knew what a fine lecturer Bobby was, but the rest of the country had never before had the chance to see him in action.

A real natural, Bobby was a first-rate commentator who managed the almost impossible task of keeping beginner and master alike entertained. Without exception, of the 30-odd people we have contacted who played Fischer all agreed that he was an exceptional speaker who was both informative and entertaining, especially for someone who was only 20-21 years old.

Typical was the response of Lew Hucks, who heard him in Washington, D.C.: “Bobby’s demonstration of the Botvinnik game from the Varna Olympiad in 1962 was the best demonstration of a chess game I have ever seen. He was witty and quite entertaining. I have always believed that many of the Fischer quotes, to which people have taken exception, would have been funny if you heard him say them in person.”

Normally when a player goes out on tour he usually shows the same game every evening but
Bobby was different. Among the games he lectured on were: Botvinnik-Fischer, Varna Olympiad 1962; Fischer-Tal, 1959 Candidates (the game given in My 60 Memorable Games); Addison-Fischer, U.S. Ch. 1963-64; R. Byrne-Fischer, U.S. Ch. 1963-64; Fischer-Geller, Bled 1961; Fischer-Benko, U.S. Ch. 1963-64; and Fischer-Najdorf, Varna Olympiad 1962.

Every exhibitor sets his own conditions of play. Typically the master takes White on each board but after that things vary. The practice in the distant past was that the master’s move on a board wouldn’t be completed until he had made a move on the next board, a nice fail-safe measure against egregious blunders, but currently considered not very sporting. The major area of difference between exhibitors these days is usually in the area of passes — the question being whether they are allowed and if so how many.

The idea that players in the simul should have the opportunity for a little extra thinking time in critical positions would seem to be a fair one but in practice it can be abused. More than one exhibitor has been stuck with a player who quickly uses up his allotted passes and then conveniently “forgets” that fact.

At the beginning of the tour, in early February, it seems Bobby was quite liberal in his policies regarding passes and consulting, but this changed. Jude Acers, who organized Fischer’s visit to Louisiana, relates:

“A chess fan in Chicago had witnessed Fischer’s appearances and penned a harsh criticism of Fischer to my postal box. He never dreamed where it was going … I simply turned from the box and HANDED THE POSTCARD TO FISCHER!!

“Fischer turned crimson with surprise at the ‘slow’ Fischer play the card cited … ‘To begin with,’ said Fischer, ‘I allowed all those players unlimited passes all the way. They could think all they wanted on the moves. And this is the appreciation I get.’ After this Fischer allowed no passes.”

Fischer’s barnstorm generated a fair amount of publicity. Prior to the tour Bobby had not seen much of the country, his only trips west of the Mississippi being the 1955 U.S. Junior in Lincoln, the 1956 U.S. Open in Oklahoma City, the 1957 U.S. Junior in San Francisco, and two visits to California in 1961. What impression most chess players had of him could only be based on what they read and journalists were not particularly kind to Fischer. The tour proved to be a bit of a revelation for a lot of American chess players who were pleasantly surprised when they got to meet their young champion up close.

One example is Cleveland Chess Association President Craig Henderson writing in the April 1964 Cleveland Chess Bulletin:

“A word about Bobby Fischer. A number of articles have appeared in various magazines criticizing him for his attitude toward tournament officials and others with whom he has dealt. For the record, Bobby cooperated completely with all arrangements that were made for him during his stay in Cleveland. There were no ‘incidents’ of any kind. Sometimes our own local players seem to be much more temperamental about their chess matches.”
Another is James Schroeder in the June 1964 issue of the Ohio Chess Bulletin. “After meeting Mr. Fischer in Cleveland and driving him to Toledo, I received such a favorable impression of him that I organized the exhibition in Columbus.”

Fischer had his own style of playing in exhibitions. The California Chess Reporter reports that he seemed to play his opponents on an individual basis, defeating the stronger opponents but giving big chances to the weaker ones.

A steadfast diehard of 1.e4, he played it invariably in his exhibitions with only one exception. What caused him to adopt the Orangutan (1.b4) is a mystery that defies an easy answer. The tour produced lots of study material for devotees of double King Pawn openings with Fischer departing from his beloved Ruy Lopez to test out the white side of the Evans Gambit, Two Knights Defense, Vienna, and King’s Gambit.

While Kasparov is clinical in his preparation before a simul with sightseeing on the day of the event a no-no and ChessBase computer database review of the prospective opponents’ games de rigueur, Fischer was more relaxed. He was intense enough during the games, his 94% winning percentage over more than 2000 games one of the best results ever achieved, but he also found time to enjoy himself. He almost always stayed at the home of the local organizer and his mode of travel was a catch-as-catch-can with cars, trains, buses, and airplanes all being utilized.

Despite visiting over 40 cities in his four-month tour there were a few big cities that it seems Bobby didn’t get to. Particularly glaring by omission are St. Louis, Kansas City, and Miami. Lack of funds seems usually to have been the chief culprit. There are a few reports from places that were unable to arrange a visit from Fischer. The Arizona Woodpusher for May-June of 1964 has this to say under the headline No Fischer in Phoenix:

Club Secretary Ed Humphrey has been told by the Tours organization sponsoring the exhibition tours of Bobby Fischer that he has a full schedule. His commitments in the Southwest are such that he will not be able to include Phoenix in his itinerary.

One wonders what Southwest cities are being referred to. Bobby gave documented exhibitions in Houston and Los Angeles (two). Was he in Albuquerque? Did he visit Mobile, Arizona, where his family lived for a short while before moving to Brooklyn?

The December 1963 issue of the Georgia Chess Letter discusses the possibilities of bringing Bobby down. Lacking a sponsor the suggestion is to have several members band together to guarantee Fischer his $250 fee. Nothing seems to have come of it.

Two other areas with well-developed chess communities that didn’t enjoy a visit from Bobby were the Pacific Northwest and Minnesota. Bobby's absence in the former is explained by the following article that appeared in an unsigned piece in the Washington Chess Letter, March 1964, page 2. It's sad to think that an event that would have become a part of Northwest chess lore forever didn't take place because of a little financial risk.
Regarding Fischer Tour

Officers of the WCF feel that they would be going out on a shaky financial limb which could deplete the federation's hard-earned treasury by inviting Bobby Fischer to Seattle for a simultaneous. Possibly a free hall can be had but it is understood Fischer's fee is $250 which means 50 players at $5 per player. As most chess clubs seem to be "pockets" of poverty especially when it comes to spending money on the game they profess to love and the WCF has no "sugar daddy", it appears to be a risky piece of promotion for most of us who are not blessed with a surplus of the long green or the cold metal that jingles.

Some accounts have Bobby giving an exhibition in Rochester, Minnesota, but that seems to be confusing things with the Rochester, New York, simul. According to master Curt Brasket and fellow Minnesotan George Tiers, Bobby was never in the Land of 10,000 Lakes.

Of course, I must certainly have missed some exhibitions. The list of cities he visited shows some gaps, particularly for early May. The April 19, 1964, issue of the Toledo Blade mentions that Bobby’s visit to that city on March 19 was the 21st stop on the tour. Should that be the case that means that five cities are unaccounted for (Toledo is number 16 on our list).

Researching this tour wasn’t easy. The three national magazines Chess Review, Chess Life, and Canadian Chess Chat gave only spotty coverage. Surprisingly the American Chess Quarterly, which GM Larry Evans edited, Harry Evans managed, and to which Bobby frequently contributed, has very little on the tour.

State and club publications (e.g. Dayton Chess News) have yielded some gems of information but it is remarkable how few are readily available thirty years after the fact. The bibliography gives a list of sources consulted but an equally long one could be made of periodicals that were active in 1964 but are not in the John G. White Collection in Cleveland. Among these are the Louisiana Chess Newsletter, Rhode Island Chess Bulletin, and the Arkansas state publications. These magazines might well yield much valuable material.

Newspapers, particularly in the smaller cities, were quite helpful. While Horowitz’s column in the New York Times and Kashdan’s in the Los Angeles Times had surprisingly little information, papers like the Fitchburg Sentinel had excellent coverage.

But by far and away the best source of information for Fischer’s great tour was the people who actually played him. I was very pleasantly surprised by the number of people who responded to my appeals for help and I would like to thank them:

Chess Life Editor Glenn Peterson for very generously giving me permission to use material from Chess Review and Chess Life. This proved to be an excellent starting point. Drs. Alice Loranth and Motoko Reece of the John G. White Collection of the Cleveland Public Library were extremely helpful in making their extensive collection of state publications available.

I would especially like to thank John Blackstone and Eric Osbun for sharing their Fischer files.
with me. These contained over a dozen unpublished games. Hanon Russell was very kind in allowing me the run of his vast archives, which proved most useful in gaining some perspective on the tour.

Joe Sparks, Editor of Chess Horizons, did yeoman’s service in going through Jim Burgess’ column in the Boston Globe. Without his efforts the exhibition in Boston would have remained a mystery and several games from Fitchburg would have been unavailable.

Jim Warren, of APCT, came up with some rare items, the Illinois Chess Bulletin and the bulletin of the Chicago Industrial Chess League, which proved to be real finds yielding a large number of new games.

I would also like to thank the following individuals for taking time to help me. I apologize if anyone has inadvertently been left out: Jude Acers, Robin Ault, D La Pierre Ballard, Robert Barry, Alan Benson, Gary Berry, Roger Blaine, Frank Brady, Curt Brasket, Steve Brandwein, Richard Cantwell, Bob Ciaffone, Frank Cunliffe, Harold Dondis, Tom Dorsch, Bob Dudley, Alex Dunne, Sheila Gilmartin, Peter Grey, Lou Hays, Elliot Hearst, Ken Hense, Mark Holgerson, Lewis Hucks, Rabbi Steven Katz, IM Larry Kaufman, Wesley Koehler, Anthony Koppany, Barry Kraft, Harry Lyman, Tony Mantia, Henry Meifert, Najeed Mejas, George Mirijanian, Robert Moore, Bob Nasiff, Roger Neustaedter, Ross Nickel, Jack O’Keefe, John Ogni, John Owen, Richard Reich, Bill Robertie, Sid Rubin, Andy Sacks, Macon Shibut, Steve Shutt, Jeremy Silman, Chuck Singleton, Jennifer Skidmore, Joe Sparks, Peter Tamburro, Robert Tanner, Keith Vickers, Ed Westing, Edmund Wheeler, and Val Zemitis. This book would have been much poorer without their help. It goes without saying that any mistakes are my responsibility.

This book is dedicated to Bobby Fischer, who has done so much for American chess.

IM John Donaldson
Seattle, February 1994

We believe we have accounted for all the exhibitions Fischer gave but it’s possible we may have overlooked some. The list of cities Bobby visited shows some gaps, in particular February 10-14, March 9-14 and May 4-9. The April 19, 1964, issue of the Toledo Blade mentions that Bobby’s visit to that city on March 19 was the 21st stop on the tour. Should that be the case that means that five cities are unaccounted for (Toledo is number 16 on our list) although we strongly doubt this. We base this opinion on the research we have done the past 20 years that has led to an increase in the number of known exhibitions from 15 (as given in Profile of a Prodigy) to 43 and from a few dozen games to over 200.

### Bobby Fischer’s 1964 Tour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Results</th>
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<td>9</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Score (Change, Outcome)</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Hartford</td>
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Larry Evans (pictured) and his father Harry organized the 1964 tour.  
(Photo by Nancy Roos)

### Detroit, February 9

<table>
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<td>State College</td>
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</table>

Total (known games) 2097 (+1923, -67, =107) (94%)
On tour, Bobby Fischer put on a simultaneous display at the Chess-Mate Gallery in Detroit against 51 players, including several masters and numerous experts. He won 47 games, drew two and lost only two. That he would make a showing of this sort was no doubt expected, but the outstanding feature of the exhibition was the extraordinary rapidity of his play, insofar as he is reported to have consumed no more than an average of six minutes per game! (Chess Review, April 1964)

The Man Behind the Legend

by William Wilcock

Since the day when Robert Fischer first appeared on the American Chess scene he has been a controversial and misunderstood figure. A certified and authentic chess genius, capable of being classed with the greatest. It has been Fischer's misfortune to appear as something less than a hero to the general public.

Reporters and magazine writers, some of whom must have read about chess for the first time on the morning of their meeting with Fischer, have written articles that portray Bob as (a) a colossal egotist, (b) a moody illiterate, (c) a brash, over-bearing young man, (d) a dreamer from an ivory tower and (e) a sullen young genius.

Dr. Howard Gaba, CCLA's Second Vice-President, scoffs at these labels. “Robert Fischer at twenty years,” Dr. Gaba writes, “is six feet, two inches tall, lanky but well-proportioned and well-muscled. He is pleasant in appearance with a quiet, even-tempered manner.”

The rest of Dr. Gaba's letter follows:

Early in February, Robert Fischer staged a tremendous chess exhibition in Detroit. Over Sunday and Monday of that weekend we had him as our house guest. My wife, my son Arthur, my daughter Joanne, and I felt honored to have him with us for so many pleasant hours.

Fischer is not, as reports have it and many people seem to think, completely wrapped up in chess. He took a great interest in Arthur's demonstration of some old Edison cylinder phonographs. This led to a conversation on antiquities and relics which ended in a visit to Greenfield Village, the well-known Museum display near Detroit with its world-wide collection of historical objects.

The rest of the time at our home we watched TV, listened to the radio and recordings, including the Edison cylinders, talked a little, ate a little, and relaxed.

Away from the exhibition he played no chess but we did talk about the game. Robert learned chess quite early in life but did not take it up seriously until he began to visit the chess clubs. From then on his progress was rapid.
He has a photographic mind and can play a long game through from the score mentally, holding the main position in his mind while making side excursions into the footnotes. He can play one game blindfolded easily but has not pushed the development of playing multiple games sans voir though he felt it within his power.

His development against experts and masters is well recorded and his growth, mentally, has actually only started. At present he reads the major chess publications from all over the world and is in complete command of current master theory.

Fischer feels that he has no control over articles written about him and seems to be becoming philosophical about the situation. The pieces in the local press seemed, in the main, to be by writers who had not taken too much time to interview Fischer.

Fischer faced one of the strongest gatherings in Detroit in the last fifteen years. In spite of the strong opposition and the numerous consultation games Fischer lost only two games during the evening. He played fast and at the end of the exhibition the 200 people present seemed to realize that they had seen a great show by a great chess player.

One incident attracted favorable attention from the spectators. A player resigned in a position that could have been drawn, as Fischer pointed out. He then refused the win, credited the player with the draw and signed his score sheet to that effect.

One of the strongest Michigan players is Morrie Wiedenbaum, a rated USCF master. When I’m lucky I win from him perhaps ten percent of the time. Among his victims at one time or another are masters Bisguier, Popel, Poschel, Burgar, Finegold and Dreibergs.

Fischer played seven games of five-minute speed chess with Wiedenbaum, at which the latter is very good. Fischer made a clean sweep of the games, seeming to win them in systematic style, a pawn or so falling to him about every five moves. In nearly every game Morrie ended up a full queen down or its equivalent.

Of his visit with us I will say only that I enjoyed it and I hope Robert did, too. We were left with a feeling that he was an unusually alert and intelligent young man. He is quietly but deeply religious, carrying a Bible with him on his travels and reading it regularly.

From his speech and action you can see that he is strongly competitive in his chess and brilliant. As his career has already been it should be more so in the future. (The Chess Correspondent, July, 1964)

Jack Witeczek was born in Lodz, Poland, and came to the U.S. in 1958. He was the 1960 Ohio Champion, 1964 Michigan Champion and tied for 7th-11th in the 1961 U.S. Open in San Francisco.

(1) King’s Gambit C36
Fischer - Jack Witeczek
Detroit (simul), February 9, 1964

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.Nf3 d5 4.exd5 Nf6 5.Bb5+ c6

5...Nbd7 is not seen as often as the text but is playable.

6.dxe6 Nxc6 7.d4 Bd6 8.0–0 0–0 9.Bxc6?!

A rare continuation and apparently not that strong. 9.c4, 9.Nc3 and 9.Nbd2 are all more popular.

9...bxc6 10.Ne5 Bxe5

10...g5 is another way to handle the position - 11.Nxc6?? Qb6, but Witeczek's choice is also good and simpler.

11.dxe5 Qb6+ 12.Kh1 Nd5

12...Ng4 13.Qe1 Ne3 14.Bxe3 fxe3 would have given Black a small advantage. For example:

13.Qe2

13.Nc3

13...Ba6 14.c4 Qd4 15.Na3 Rfe8 16.Qf2 Qxf2 17.Rxf2 Rxe5

17...Nb4!

18.Bd2 Nb6

18...Ne3 19.Rxf4 Rd8.

19.Bxf4

Bobby has equalized. Now it's time to outplay his opponent step by step.

19...Re4 20.b3 Bb7

20...Rae8

21.Rd1 a5

Black wants to get rid of a weakness by advancing with ...a4 but there isn't time for this. 21...Rae8 was better with equal chances.
22.h3 Re7

22...a4 23.Bc7! axb3 24.Bxb6 wins a piece due to the weak back rank.

23.Rfd2 f6 24.Bd6

Bringing the knight back into the game with 24.Nc2 also made sense.

24...Rd7 25.Bc5?!

25.Nc2 kept an edge.

25...Rad8! 26.Rxd7 Rxd7 27.Rxd7

27.Re1 was objectively stronger.

27...Nxd7 28.Bd6

White has two advantages in this position, neither relating to the position which is dead even. First he is Fischer! Second by this time many of the players have already lost and Witeczek has less time to think as Bobby is coming around faster and faster.

28...Ne5?

28...Kf7 was correct with the point that if White insists on winning material with 29.Bc7 a4 30.bxa4 Black's excellent king position fully compensates for the material deficit. For example 30...Ke6 31.Kg1 Kf5 32.Kf2 Ke4 33.Ke2 Kd4 34.Kd2 Ba6 Black should not have any problems drawing after playing the move he chose but the position will require more care.


Black has managed to maintain material equality but at the cost of getting his knight semi-trapped. He should still be fine but needs to be alert.

32.Kg1 Kf7 33.Kf2 Ke6 34.b4 Kd6 35.g3 Bc8 36.h4 Bf5 37.Ke3 Ke5 38.b5 cxb5 39.Nxb5 Be6 40.c5 Bd7 41.Nd4 Kd5
42.c6!?

Tricky play by Bobby. The position is a draw but he sets practical problems for his opponent.

42...Bc8?

The text should not lose, but Black had a clear cut draw with 42...Bxc6 43.Nxc6 (43.Nf5 g6 44.Ne7+ Kd6 45.Nxc6 Kxc6 46.Kd4 Kd6 47.Kc4 Ke5 leads to similar play to the main variation.) 43...Kxc6 44.Kd4 Kd6 45.Kc4 Ke5. The knight is now lost, but the king saves the day after 46.Kb3 Ke4 47.Kxa2 Kf3 48.Be1 Ke2 49.Ba5 Kf3 50.Bc7 h5 51.Kb2 g5.

43.c7 Ke5

43...Kd6! 44.Ba5 (or 44.Kd3 Kxc7 45.Kc2 Kd6 46.Kb2 Kd5 47.Nb3 Ke4 48.Kxa2 Kf3) 44...Nc1 45.Kd2 Kd5 46.Bb6 Na2 and the knight is escaping.


53...Kh5 54.Kxf6 (54.Kf5 Bg6+ 55.Kf4 Bb1) 54...Kg4 55.Bf4 Nc3 was a chance to free the knight.

54.Ke7 Bd5?!
This is an unfortunate square for the bishop. 54...Bc4 had to be played with no clear path to victory for White. That said with the knight on a2 the position will never be pleasant for Black.

55.Ne6

55.g4! h5 (or 55...h6 56.h5+ Kg7 57.Nf5+ Kh7 58.Kxf6) 56.Ne2! wins.

55...Bc4

55...Bf3 (Black must stop h4–h5) 56.Nf8+ Kg7 57.Nd7 f5 58.Ke6 h5, and while White has chances there is no clear win in sight. Note how advancing the pawn to h5 avoids the suffocation of the king that occurs in the game.

56.Nf8+

56.g4!

56...Kg7

No better is as after 56...Kf5 57.Nxh7 Kg4 58.Nxf6+ Kxg3 59.h5 Bd3 60.h6 Bb1 61.Kf7 Bd3 62.Kg7 Black is helpless to prevent White's knight coming to g6. 62...Bb1 63.Nh5+ Kg4 64.Nf4 Nc3 65.Ng6 Ne4 66.h7.

57.h5 Bb3

Or 57...h6 58.Ne6+ Kh7 59.Nf4 (59.Kxf6? Be2) 59...Bb3 60.g4 Bc4 61.Kxf6.

58.h6+ Kg8 59.Nd7 f5 60.Nf6+ Kh8 61.Kf8 Be6 62.Nd5 1–0

There is no defense to Bf4 and Be5 mate!

(Detroit News, Feb. 16, 1964)

Fischer’s exploitation of the trapped knight on a2, in view of the greatly reduced material, was most instructive.

The following game is a smooth technical effort by Fischer, who occupies the hole on d5 (c4, Nb1!, Nc3, Ncd5) a step ahead of Black.

(2) Caro-Kann Closed B10

Fischer - Jeff Richburg,
Detroit (simul), February 9, 1964

This weakens the d5-square. See White’s 17th move.


The knight is heading for d5. Fischer’s knowledge of the structure e4 and c3 versus ...e5 and ...
c5 is unparalleled. During his career he won many games with it both as White (usually via the Ruy) and Black (King’s Indian). For one of the last examples of Bobby’s knack for finding the right knight maneuver to crack the enemy position see the first game of his 1992 match with Spassky where Ng3-f1-d2-b1, intending Na3, did the trick.


If 22...Bxc5 White has 23.b4 recovering the piece with much the better game.

23.Bxf8 Rxf8 24.Rc6 Ne8 25.Rdc1 Nd6 26.Qd2 Kg7 27.f4 f6 28.Qb2 exf4 29.gxf4 Kg8 30.e5 fxe5 31.fxe5 Nf5 32.Ng4 Kh8 33.e6+ Ng7 34.Rc7 1-0

(Detroit News, Feb. 16, 1964)
Boris Spassky (hand on chin) tied for first at Wellington 1988, one of his last tournament successes.

The following game is an amusing miniature in which Fischer disposes of his opponent in convincing fashion.

(3) King’s Gambit C30

**Fischer - J. Jones**
Detroit (simul), February 9, 1964

1.e4 e5 2.f4 f6? 3.fxe5 Nc6 4.d4 Be7 5.exf6 gxf6 6.Qh5+ Kf8 7.Bc4 Qe8 8.Bh6+ 1-0
(Detroit News, Feb. 16, 1964)
Bobby is pictured here receiving his prize from I’ve Got a Secret host Garry Moore.

The 1964 tour was for many American chess players outside the New York City area their first and only chance to see Bobby Fischer in the flesh. The one other nationwide opportunity, albeit of an electronic variety, was Bobby’s guest appearance on the show I’ve Got a Secret on March 26, 1958. No one was able to guess Bobby’s secret (being U.S. Chess Champion) and as a result he won tickets on Sabena airlines for him and his sister Joan to travel to Moscow (via Brussels) and Yugoslavia. The video can be seen at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t7JcwOJAdF8.

We believe Bobby’s opponent in the following game is the same player who defeated Paul Keres in the 1943 Estonian Championship.
(4) French Winawer C19
Fischer - Harry Kord
Detroit (simul), February 9, 1964

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4

“I may be forced to admit that the Winawer is sound. But I doubt it! The defense is anti-positional and weakens the kingside.” — Fischer, My 60 Memorable Games.

Keres played 4.a3 against Kord.

4.e5 Ne7 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.bxc3 c5 7.a4 Qa5 8.Bd2 Nbc6 9.Nf3 c4!?  

Conventional wisdom holds that Black should hold off on this move and maintain the tension in the center, while developing with 9...Bd7. The text has had a bad reputation since the 1940s, but is not an easy nut to crack.

10.Ng5

The classical way of answering 9... c4, but 10.g3 is probably equally good.

10...h6 11.Nh3 Bd7

Black can try to cut across White’s plan of Nh3-f4-h5 with 11...Ng6, but after 12.Be2, intending 13.Bh5, White has the advantage.


This move is natural, but 13.Nh5, attacking g7 and restraining ...f7-f6, is more thematic. Black might then try 13...Qc7, meeting 14.Nxg7 with 14...Nxe5. White should answer 13...Qc7 with 14.Be2 and a slight edge.


This allows White to get rid of his weak a-pawn. Better was 30...Nc6 31.Ra1 d4 with a complicated struggle. White has three connected passed pawns on the kingside, but Black’s minor pieces are very active.

31.axb6+ axb6 32. f4 Nf7 33.Rf3 b5 34.g4 Rh8 35.Kg2?

Asking for trouble on the diagonal. Bobby should have played 35.Rd1 Bc6 36.Re3.
35...Bc6 36.Re1 Nd6 37.Re7+?

This check leaves both of White’s rooks under attack. Instead, Fischer had to play 37.Kh2.

37...Kd8 38.Ra7 d4 39.f5

The last chance to continue fighting was 39.cxd4.

39...d3 40.cxd3 cxd3 41.Ra6 d2 42. Ra1 Bxf3+ 43.Kxf3 Rxh3+ 44.Kf4 Rxc3 45.Rad1 Nc4 0-1 (O.G.)

Rochester, February 15
+69, -1, =5

According to Chess Review (April 1964, page 103) the simultaneous exhibition by Bobby Fischer in Rochester pretty much resembled the story told at Detroit. He faced 62 adversaries, won 56 games, lost one, and drew five.

Editor’s Note: Because of the fact that Bobby let players jump in after others lost there are conflicting accounts of his final number of wins. Bob Nasiff in his history of Syracuse chess has it +59,-1,=5; the Rochester paper +55,-1,=5; the results given in Profile of a Prodigy for exhibitions in Rochester, NY and Rochester, MN are almost certainly for the same event. We’ve
decided to go with the score of +69,-1,=5 as given by Donald Reithel, who was there as a player and who stayed for the duration of the event.

Bobby carefully studies a position while National Master Erich Marchand keeps a close eye on things. (Photo courtesy of Shelby Lohrman)

A Woman is Just a Pawn, Bound to Lose in World of Chess, Champion Bobby Fischer Says

by Earl Caldwell

In the wide world of chess, a woman is bound to be a loser, according to Bobby Fischer, a bona fide winner.

And Fischer is in a position to know. He’s the young man who six years ago, at the age of 14, won the first of a half-dozen U.S. chess championships.

Not only that, the boyish-looking blond talks about the current world chess champion as though he were just a cut above the 60 opponents he took on last night in a visit to Rochester. “Chess,” Fischer says, “is something that is out of a woman’s line.” He listed a number of reasons but
ended up putting it like this: “A woman’s place is in the home and chess is a game where they just can’t excel.”

About World Champ Tigran Petrosian, Fischer doesn’t waste any words. “I think I can take him.” This may be something of a compliment because Fischer is a fellow who talks about “smashing” opponents.

Confident Fischer is, but he’s a realist, too, and says it will be some time before he gets a crack at the champ. Again, he puts it bluntly: “The Russians have the title and they are not anxious to lose it.”

Since winning his first title back in 1958, the slightly-built New Yorker has alternately been tabbed as being a genius and highly temperamental. He brushes the genius bit off, saying he just has the “natural skill” for chess. He also lets it be known that he works at it, almost constantly, but adds that he still enjoys playing. As for his temper, he attributes this to the press: “Some reporter had his story written before he talked to me.”

Bobby was in Rochester first to lecture and then take on 50 players. The exhibition was sponsored by Kodak Park Recreation Association. However, Fischer proved such an attraction that 60 players brought their chess boards and they weren’t exactly patsies. Fischer’s only loss of the evening was to Greg Grant, 17-year-old high school pupil from Jamesville, near Syracuse. Five draws were achieved by Dr. Thomas Noonan, Clarence Hurtubuse, Gerry Lubberts, Donald Reithel and Dr. Edwin Lefferts. (Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, February 16, 1964)

Donald Reithel had this to say about Bobby and the exhibition in Rochester: “In 1955 I played Bobby in postal chess — a prize tourney in Chess Review. I remember him as a typical American kid: Brooklyn Dodger fan, somewhat opinionated about school and somewhat desirous to exchange ideas and thoughts. He printed his name in lower case letters, ‘bobby fischer.’ He didn’t finish the event because he was starting to play over-the-board tournaments. He asked what it would take to be World Champion and he wrote that he one day would be! He also liked listening to the radio and religiously was reading and studying the Bible.

“Bobby hit the news in Chess Review playing chess with polio patients confined to iron lung machines and giving simultaneous exhibitions to kids’ groups. Soon he was scoring points in tournaments and began to win prizes and titles. Fischer attracted the news media, appearing on I’ve Got A Secret. He had personality and just about everything he did made news. Unfortunately news reporters sometimes misquoted him or treated him as an oddity — having only chess as an interest — and this was not true. Growing up he enjoyed things like all kids do.

“In 1964 Bobby came to Rochester, NY, and at Kodak Recreation Center took on 50 boards. Many more wanted to play and Bobby said he would play 25 more as games finished. Bobby scored better than 90 percent against many of the region’s best players in 3½ hours! What a brilliant performance! 75 games! He was tired. And on top of that before the simul he had given a great lecture.”

Rather than acquiesce to the weak pawn Black should play 10...Nd7 meeting 11.Bxe6 with 11...Nxe5, when White was only slightly better in Sax-Nunn, London 1980, after 12.Bxc8 Qxc8 13.Bf4 Nbc6 14.Nxc6 Nxc6 15.O-O.

11.Nxd5 exd5 12.Qf3 O-O

For 12...Be6 see Fischer-Sivitz, Pittsburgh, played exactly one month later, Game 38.


Draw offered immediately by Fischer and I accepted. What an end to an exciting evening! This was about the last game to finish. He kindly smiled and signed my scoresheet, R. Fischer, “Well played — good game.”

Bobby in action in Rochester. (Photo courtesy of Shelby Lohrman)

Here is Fischer’s sole loss in Rochester. It comes from NM Robert Nasiff’s monograph on Syracuse chess history.

(6) French Burn C11

Fischer – Greg Grant
Rochester (simul), February 15, 1964

g6 10.O-O-O Nd7 11.h4 Bxe4 12.Qxe4 c6 13.h5 Qc7 14.g4 O-O-O 15.g5 Be7 16.Bc4 Nb6 17.Bb3 Nd5 18.Rdg1 Qf4+

Grant wins a pawn.

19.Qxf4 Nxf4

20.Rg4??

This gross blunder is uncharacteristic of Fischer’s play in simuls.

While researching the first edition of A Legend on the Road we were unable to pin down the details of Bobby’s visit to Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts. Since then, two participants in the event, George Colman and Richard Lunenfeld, have stepped forward and helped fill in the gaps.

The exhibition, sponsored by the university and organized by Lunenfeld, was held on February 20. Bobby scored 39 wins and one draw against the 40-player field composed primarily of Brandeis students. Among his victims was NM Robin Ault. The two had played in the 1959/60 Championship (as U.S. Junior Champion, Ault was a seed); so it was a little unusual for Ault to be taking a board at Brandeis. Even a little more unusual was that the top five players (Ault was first board) on the university chess team had the first move against Bobby! Lunenfeld asked Fischer if some of the players could have White, and Bobby agreed, after a little reflection, to five boards.

Ault lost quickly after getting a bad opening, but Lunenfeld used the first move to good advantage. Aided by an opening surprise, he was slightly better in the early middlegame and lost his way only towards the end of the game.

(7) Sicilian B54
Richard Lunenfeld – Fischer
Waltham (simul), February 20, 1964


According to Lunenfeld, this rare gambit, which isn’t given in any standard reference work, was accidentally played by U.S. Women’s champion Lisa Lane a few years before this game.

5...Nxe4 6.Qh5

This is stronger than Lane’s try. Now Bobby thought for a few minutes.

6...e6 7.Bxe6?!

Tricky, but 7.Bb5+ was probably a better try.

7...Bxe6 8.Nxe6 Qe7 9.O-O Qxe6 10.Re1 Be7?

Black could have gained an edge with 10...d5, making White work to recover the piece. Now Lunenfeld obtains a small advantage.

17.Bf4!? 

White would maintain his small edge with 17.Bxe7, but he starts to drift, as Bobby, having already finished off many opponents, comes around faster and faster.


White should save his bishop either here, or on the next move, with 22. Be5 or 23.Be5.

22...Rxc4 23.Rd2? Nxg3

Bobby was always a masterful exponent of the rook-and-bishop-vs.-rook-and-knight ending.

24.hxg3 Bg5

The text tries to force weaknesses in White’s position.

25.f4 Bf6 26.Nd1 b5

Black grabs space on the queenside, while White can only sit.


Fischer fixes the white pawns on f4 and g3 as targets.

31.c3?

White finally cracks in a difficult position. The text not only loses a pawn, but violates the principle against opening lines on the side of the board where one stands worse.
31...bxc3 32.bxc3 Bxc3 33.Re2 Bb4 34.Rxc5 dxc5 35.Kd5 Be1 36.Kxc5 Ke6 37.Kb5 Bxg3 38.Kxa5 Bxf4 39.Kb6 g5 40.a4 h4 41.a5 Bh2 42.a6 Bg1+ 43.Kb7 g4 44.a7 Bxa7 45.Kxa7 f5 46.Kb6 Ke5 47.Kb5 Kd4 48.Kc6 f4 49.Nf2 h3 50.gxh3 g3 0-1

There has always been a question where the following game between Bobby and the well-known bridge expert Jeff Rubens was played with the guess being New York City. Now, thanks to Mr. Rubens, we have the answer.

"I did play against Fischer in a simultaneous at Brandeis University. I didn't play at all well. In fact, it was at the end of my chess "career"--actually the last game I played. I did better the previous year against Reshevsky; I had a won game but the rules were that the opponents were required to play within a few seconds after he was ready and had moved to the table, and after he had beaten everyone else I was required to play blitz and couldn't handle it.

I did play for Stuyvesant High School on a team with James Gore, and we played on weekends at either the Manhattan or Marshall, but I forget which. I was never a member of either or of any similar club and never played in a tournament except in school competition (where I did play against some future masters)."

(8) French Winawer C15

Fischer – Jeff Rubens

Waltham (simul), February 20, 1964

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.a3
Fischer normally played 4.e5, but he did play the text from time to time. His record in tournament games with it was two wins, one loss and one draw.

4...Bxc3+ 5.bxc3 c5

This move is uncommon, but not that bad. Petrosian, Vaganian and Furman have all played it.

6.Qg4

Kholmov-Furman, Tbilisi 1959, continued 6.exd5 exd5 7.dxc5, trying to open the position for the bishops.

6...Ne7

Here 6...Nf6, along the lines of Semenova-Khugashvili, USSR 1969, is more aggressive, but the text leads to a good position.


Taking time out to defend f7 with 16...Rf8 makes sense, especially as it threatens 17...Nf6, which would force the queens off.
17.Qxf7 Rxg2+??
Hallucinating. Better was 17...Rge8 with a reasonable game.

18.Kxg2 Nh4+ 19.Kg1 Qh3 20.Qg7 Nf6
Black threatens 21...Rg8 and hopes to drive the queen away from the defense of g2. However, in trying to generate threats against Fischer’s king, Black has been negligent in watching out for the safety of his own.

21.Nc6!
This threatens 22.Nxa7 mate and 22.Qc7 mate.

21...Nf3+
Black can try the tricky 21...e5, but Bobby has an adequate defense in 22.Nxd8 exf4 23.f3.

22.Kh1 e5 23.Ne7+ 1-0

Montreal, Feb. 23-24
+46, -5, =4 and +10, -0, =0

League Adjourns To Watch Fischer

by Moe Moss

Bobby Fischer arrived here yesterday to participate in two simultaneous exhibitions tomorrow afternoon and Monday night. In order that participants in the current city tournaments may have an opportunity to play against Fischer or to watch the proceedings, all Montreal Chess League games are postponed until next week.

Reader William B. Wilson of Detroit writes: “Last week, young Bobby Fischer put on a marvelous display here in a simultaneous exhibition. There were 51 players, including several masters and many experts, yet he won 47, drew two and lost only two games. He finished all the games in less than five hours, averaging six minutes per game! There were over 150 spectators and all tickets were sold out a week in advance.”

A similar story comes from Bob Lee of New York: “Bobby has just returned from Rochester,
winning 56, drawing five and losing one. He plays as though he were strolling along, stopping for only a couple of seconds at a board and then repeating the action at the next one. It is not that he is disdainful of his opponent’s play, but just that he is so sure of his own. You will see the same thing when he plays in Canada.”

Play will start tomorrow at 2:30 p.m. in the Student Common Room at Sir George Williams University, 1435 Drummond Street. Tickets have been sent to those with reservations, but a few places are still available. Sets, boards and score pads — the latter with the compliments of Office Affiliated Services Limited — will be provided. Players are requested to be at their tables by 2:15 so that the rules may be announced and the exhibition started at 2:30. Playing fee, $5 and the spectator fee, $1.

There will be two prizes for those who win or draw against Fischer: A year’s subscription to American Chess Quarterly, and the choice of a chess book from the titles on display at the two exhibitions.

Monday evening Fischer will play against 10 experts (maximum) with clocks. Readers may recall that a few months ago, Gligoric conducted a clock exhibition at the Boulevard Chess Club against eight experts and won every game. It would be interesting to see whether Fischer equals that record. So far, five of the top Montreal players have reserved boards for the exhibition, these being: Cayford, Garelick, Gersho, Kemper, and Witt.

The clock exhibition is scheduled for 7 p.m. Monday at the Jewish Public Library, 120 Mount Royal Avenue West (corner Esplanade). Playing fee is $15.00 and the spectator fee $1.00.

Fischer will probably be at the Boulevard Chess Club, 112 St. Joseph Boulevard West tonight, engaging in speed play. (Montreal Star, Feb. 22, 1964)

Bobby Fischer tackled 55 players simultaneously in Montreal, defeating 46, drawing with four and losing to five. Winners were H. Feldman, Paul-Emile Jacob, E. D. Stockton, I. Zalys and Henry V. Zizys. Draws were credited to George W. Hamilton, M. Cohen, Ernst Damian and George Gerlei. The next evening Fischer conducted ten games with clocks and won them all including games with most of the previous day’s winners. Sunday’s exhibition took three hours; Monday’s 3½ hours. (Canadian Chess Chat, March 1964)

Bobby Fischer Dismisses Montreal

by Raymond Heard

“I ain’t giving no interviews.”

With these words, Bobby Fischer, the cocky boy wonder of the chess world, made it clear last night that he has joined the ranks of celebrities who hate reporters.

The 20-year-old kid from Brooklyn who has won the United States championship six times,
sulked his way into Montreal at the weekend to meet Canadian chess addicts in a series of matches.

Mr. Fischer lived up to his reputation for being a one-track mastermind who eats, sleeps and breathes chess. No, he did not want to see the sights of Montreal. No, he didn’t want to meet interesting people. He just wanted to play chess.

So for five hours yesterday afternoon Bobby Fischer stalked around a crowded room in Sir George Williams University playing 56 [sic] people simultaneously. With one hand in his coat pocket and the other twirling a rubber band, he made an average of a move every six seconds.

When it was all over, five local players had beaten Bobby, and three [sic] had tied.

Why do reporters who approach him get the brush-off? The people who are organizing Mr. Fischer’s Quebec tour say that he believes news media have embarrassed him by asking political questions and wanting to know all about his private life. (For instance, Mr. Fischer has been widely quoted as saying that the reason why he lost games to the Russian master Tigran Petrosian is because the Communists rig matches.) [Editor’s Note: Considering the inane questions Fischer had to deal with from the press and their typical distortion of facts, it’s surprising he had anything to do with them at all. Heard, in just a few paragraphs, has managed to make a number of errors: the total number of players in the exhibition, the final result, and the year of Fischer’s last visit to Montreal.]

This is Bobby Fischer’s second visit to Montreal. He was last here when he was 13.

On arriving on Saturday, Mr. Fischer astounded his hosts by recalling exactly how he lost a match to a Montrealer seven years ago. [Editor’s Note: Fischer’s appearance in the 1956 Canadian Open was eight years before.]

Mr. Fischer is so addicted to chess that he carries a pocket chess set wherever he goes. He fiddles with the set whenever he has a spare moment.

Chess enthusiasts call Bobby Fischer “the Mozart of chess.” He has earned a comfortable living at it for six years. He is notorious for his anti-social remarks.

“High school,” he announced after he had flunked school, “is for dumb bunnies. The teachers are all nitwits. Why do I need a diploma to play chess?”

After growling at a Montreal Star reporter who sought an interview yesterday, Mr. Fischer was reminded that he had to go to CBC to tape a show.

“I’ll play chess for them on television,” he said. “But I’m not going to give an interview.” After a moment’s reflection, he added: “I’ll answer questions only if they submit them in writing.”

(Montreal Gazette, February 24, 1964)

(9) King’s Gambit C33
Fischer - Ignas Zalys
Montreal (Simul), February 23, 1964


The Lithuanian born Zalys, who moved to Canada in 1947, was a first-rate correspondence player for over half a century. Here he sees his d-pawn is attacked, but rather than waste valuable time by moving his bishop a second time to protect it, Zalys would have done better to continue in gambit fashion with 10...0–0 11.Bxd5 Re8 12.Qd3 Nc6 13.0–0–0 Nb4 with equal chances.

11.a3 Ba5 12.Qd3 a6 13.0–0–0 Be6 14.Ng3?! 14.Rhg1! 0–0 15.Rg5 Nf6 16.Rdg1 g6 17.Nf4 was crushing.

14...Nxg3 15.hxg3 h6 16.f4 Bxc3 17.Qxc3?!

Houdini points out Fischer could have maintained his advantage with the clever intermezzo 17.f5!. White has the makings of a promising attack, for example 17... Bd7 18.Qxc3 0–0 (18...Bxf5 19.Rh5 Be6 20.Bxd5! Bxd5 21.Re5+) 19.g4.

17...Nd7 18.g4

18.Qd3 Qf6 19.Rde1 0–0 20.Rh5 intending f5 was more precise.


The position is very sharp and White intends to do everything in his power to attack Black's king while it is in the center. To that end 21.Qe3 f5 22.Rxg4!? fxg4 23.Rh5 is very interesting, but ultimately seems to fall short after 23...g5 24.fxg5 Rf8 25.gxh6 Rxf2 26.Kb1 Rf3 27.Qe2 (after 27.h7 Rxe3 28.h8Q+ Kd7 Black's extra rook decides things) 27...Kd7 28.Bxd5 Ng3! 29.Qe6+ Kc7 30.Bxf3 Nhx5 31.Bxg4 Nf6 32.Qe4+ Kb8 and Black consolidates - Houdini.

21.Qd7

21...Nxf2 22.Qe1+ Be6 23.Qxf2 Qf6 was safer.
22.Bh4?

22.Rxg4 had to be played. After 22...Qxg4 23.Bxd5 Qxf4+ 24.Kb1 Black can easily go wrong with either 24...Nxf2 25.Re1+ or 24...Qxf2 25.Bxb7. Correct is 24...Nd6 25.Re1+ Kd7 26.Qa4+ b5 27.Bc6+ Kc8 (27...Kxc6 28.d5+) 28.Qb4 Qxf2 29.Bxa8 Kd7 which Houdini assesses as equal.

22...a5 23.Qe1 f5 24.Kb1 b5 25.Rg3 h5 26.Bg5 Kf7 27.Re3 Rhe8 28.c3?

28.Bh4 was more stubborn but after 28...Kg8 Zalys is in control.

28...Ra6!

This is the start of a nice maneuver to finish Fischer off.

29.Bc2 Rae6 30.Ka1

There is no answer as now 30.Bh4 is met by 30...Nxc3+.

30...Nxg5 0–1 (O.G.)
Montreal (simul), February 23, 1964


Like Alekhine, Fischer liked to use exhibitions as proving grounds for some of his opening ideas. The rare 5.Nc5!? was one line that got lots of tests on the tour. The Evans Gambit was another. For more on 5.Nc5!? see game 196 vs. Tony Mantia from the Columbus exhibition.

5...b6 6.Na6? Nxa6 7.Bxa6 Qc7

7…Qd5! is the reason 6.Nb3 is preferred.


Here 15...Qxb5 would have been met by 16.Qxb5 cxb5 17.Ra5 a6 17.Rfa1, winning a pawn (Horowitz).


If 19...Bxa5 then 20.Ng5 wins two pieces for a rook.

20.R5a2 Kh8 21.c3 Be7 22.Nd2 Rg8 23.Qf3 Qb6 24.g3 f5 25.b4!

Bobby plans to bring the knight to c5 with strong effect.

(New York Times, Mar. 19, 1964)

(11) Vienna C26
Fischer - Giles Jobin
Montreal (simul), February 23, 1964

1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.g3 d5 4.exd5 Nxd5 5.Qe2!?

This is a novelty that has escaped the attention of theory. White normally plays 5.Bg2. On 5.Nge2, Tartakower analyzed 5...Bg4 6.Bg2 Nxc3 7.bxc3 Nc6 8.d4 Qf6 as clearly better for Black.

5...f6?!

The more natural way to defend the e-pawn is by 5...Nc6. One trick behind 5.Qe2 is that 5...Nc6 6.Bg2 Nxc3? is met by 7.Bxc6+! bxc6 8. Qxe5+, winning a pawn. However, Black has a much stronger continuation in 6...Ndb4!. This move attacks c2 and threatens ...Nd4.

This weakens Jobin’s position. A more solid continuation was 13...Re8 14.Qf3 Qe7.


The mundane 23.Qxc6 was probably more effective. The text allows for some flashy tactics, but unnecessarily complicates.

23... Re6

It looks like Black is winning material, but Fischer has seen further.

24.Rd6!


24...Rae8 25.Bxe8 Qxc5 26.Rxe6 Bf5?

The immediate 26...Qxc4 is better.
27. Re3 Qxc4 28. Rfe1?!

The more patient 28. a3, preserving the pawn, was the right way to go.

28... Qxa2 29. Re7 Bg6 30. Bxg6 hxg6 31. Rb7 a5 32. h4 a4??

Jobin completely loses his sense of danger. He had chances to draw with 32... Kh7, meeting 33. Ree7 with 33... Qa1+ 34. Kg2 f5 and 33. Re8 with 33... g5 34. h5 g4.

33. Re8+ Kh7 34. Rbb8

The black king is caught in a mating net.

34... g5 35. h5 g6 36. Re7+ 1-0

Fischer gave only two clock exhibitions during his tour. All the games from Davis have been preserved, but only two full game scores have been saved from Montreal. Initially, we thought that the Montreal clock simul might be a treasure chest of Fischer gems. Advance publicity suggested the field would be strong and Bobby figured to be out for blood after a sub-par result the night before (+46 -5 =4) but conversations with two of the participants have not borne this out.

Denis Allan and Tony Cayford both remember the strength of the players being in the 1700-2100 range, as some masters had decided not to play at the last moment. Cayford, who was then an expert, but later became one of America’s top correspondence players, no longer has his game score, but clearly remembers that his game with Bobby was the last to finish; the time control was 40 moves in 2 hours.

The story of Fischer’s game with Denis Allan is more intriguing. Today, Allan is a strong master who represented Canada in the 1987 Interzonal in Szirak, Hungary, but back in 1964 he was an expert. When Bobby published the following game in 1964, he listed Black as “Opponent,” and subsequent Fischer game anthologies have used “N.N.” It seems likely that the organizers didn’t preserve a record of the games and that Bobby just relied on memory. Now we know Black’s real identity!
FM Dennis Allan is one of only four Canadians to play in their national championships in four decades (1960s to 1990s). He represented Canada in the 1968, 1980 and 1986 Olympiads as well as the 1987 Interzonal in Szirak.

Denis Allan writes:

Yes, I am indeed “N.N.” I have your book A Legend on the Road which I bought, because it includes this game, which seems to be surfacing in various places, such as the November 1996 issue of Chess.

After the simul, I was in Ben’s Delicatessen (an institution in Montreal) with Fischer, Leslie Witt and Moe Moss, a chess columnist who was involved in the organization of the Montreal visit. We looked briefly at the game and Fischer commented that 10...e4 was a new move. It certainly was to me … I had little knowledge of the Two Knights at that time, other than that ...b5 and ...Nd4 were playable. Consequently, I had used a great deal of time before … playing [13]...Nf4, which I did fairly quickly, as it seemed obvious and strong.

I don’t recall looking at the game after and lost the scoresheet. Several times when I lived in Toronto in the late sixties, an old-timer from Montreal would say to me, “Allan, you missed a win in that game with Fischer,” and I would say, “No, we looked at it afterward in the restaurant and if there was a win for Black, we would have seen it.” In 1974, while killing time at the St. Catharine’s library while my car was being fixed, I came across a book with all
of Fischer’s known games, and was surprised to see a section of about 30 exhibition games at the end, the first one being my game, and with a diagram showing the missed win. To my knowledge, no one had the score of the game. Later, I saw it in Estrin’s book in Russian on the Two Knights, with comments attributed to Fischer.

One of the things I remember Fischer saying while he was in Montreal was “you can learn something from any patzer.” Obviously, this was a case in point, where the famous player studies and learns from a game he plays in a simul, while the patzer, who should treasure the experience, forgets it!

Incidentally, Witt did not play in the clock simul — there may have been a place reserved which he gave to me, as I had just recently arrived in Montreal, but I don’t remember. Fischer did give an interview on a youth television program his first day in Montreal, which culminated with his playing a two-minute game against Witt. Fischer played 4...Qh4 against the Scotch and got a winning position, but Witt was an excellent speed player, certainly one of the best in Canada then, and he won the game.

I remember they played about a dozen five-minute games one night before Witt eventually won one. They played for some small amount, with Fischer giving money odds, I think 3 to 1. I recall him saying that money odds were all he would give — that material or time odds changed the nature of the game, which he would not do.

This game appeared with in-depth notes by Fischer in the Spring 1964 issue of the American Chess Quarterly.

(12) Two Knights C57
Fischer – Denis Allan
Montreal (clock simul), Feb. 24, 1964


5.exd5 Nd4

“After 5...Nxd5 6.d4! and White already practically has a won game! I guess I must have won, at the very least, 100 games or so with this line on my first chess tour, which took me across Canada and the United States. The move actually played is Ulvestad’s Gambit — sharp but unsound.” — Fischer.

Editors: Technically, 5...Nd4 is the Fritz variation, named after German player Alexander Fritz (1857-1932). According to The Oxford Companion to Chess, Fritz suggested it to Carl Schlechter, who analyzed it in the Deutsche Schachzeitung in 1904. The Ulvestad variation actually starts with 5...b5, but the two lines can easily transpose.
Olaf Ulvestad, a first-rate analyst, established his reputation with his Chess Charts in 1941. The highlight of his career was splitting a pair of games with David Bronstein in the 1946 USA-USSR match. For the next 45 years, he divided his time between the Pacific Northwest (Washington, Oregon and British Columbia) and Europe, pursuing his twin passions of chess and music. Ulvestad passed away in Retsil, Washington, on August 24, 2000.

Players looking for a sharp, albeit not airtight, answer to White’s main line of the Two Knights may wish to consider the following variation: 5... Na5 6.Bb5+ c6 7.dxc6 bxc6 8.Be2 h6 9.Nf3 (Bobby would, of course, play 9.Nh3.) 9...e4 10.Ne5 Qd4 (The games of NM William Schill of Seattle first brought this line to our attention. Spassky’s old trainer Vladimir Zak has recommended it.) 11.f4 Bc5 12.Rf1 Qd8 (getting out of the way of c3 and b4 and preparing to make use of the weakened d8-h4 diagonal) 13.c3.

The usual verdict is that the second player must grovel, but, if he is prepared to sacrifice a piece for a few pawns, a loose white king and development, interesting things may happen. One encouraging example is Formenko-Radchenko, USSR 1967, which saw Black win with a beautiful sacrificial attack: 13...Nd5 14.Qa4 (played not so much to attack, as to give the king the d1-square) 14...O-O 15.b4 Qh4+ 16. Kd1 Rd8 17.Kc2 Bf5 18.bxc5 e3+ 19. Kb2 Rdb8+ 20.Ka3 Qd8 21.Bb2 exd2 22.Rd1 Bc2! 23.Qxc2 Nb3! 24.Nc4 Nxa1 25.Qxd2 Qb6 0-1.

White can also try 13.d4 which got an outing in Mednis-van Oosterom, Antwerp 1955. The battle between the future GM and future multi-millionaire chess patron saw the former emerge with a winning advantage after 13...Bb6 14.c3 Nd5 15.Kf2! O-O 16. Kg1 c5 17.dxc5 Bxc5+ 18.Kh1 Be3? 19.b4!, as 19...Bxc1 is met by 20. Qxc1 Nb7 21.Rd1, with the unstoppable threat of 22.c4. Van Oosterom would later go on to own the largest software company in his native Holland. He now lives in Monaco where he has sponsored numerous events.

Edmar Mednis (left) and Bernard Zuckerman prepare in different ways for the start of their game at the Marshall Chess Club. (Photo by Beth Cassidy)
6. c3 b5 7. Bf1 Nxd5 8. cxd4

The main line is 8. Ne4.

8...Qxg5 9. Bxb5+ Kd8 10. Qf3 e4?

Fischer gives this move an exclamation mark, praising it for drawing the white queen out into the open where it will be a target for Black’s better developed pieces. This assessment was made at a time when a strong resource for White had yet to be discovered.

A better try is 10...Bb7, which led to Fischer’s shortest loss on the tour after 11. O-O (11. Nc3 is also quite playable) 11...exd4 (11...Rb8 12. Qg3!? Qxg3 13. hxg3 exd4 was equal in Shabalov-A. Ivanov, U.S. Championship 1996) 12. Qxf7?? (12. d3 is better for White according to Houdini) 12...Nf6 0-1, Fischer-R. Burger, San Francisco 1964. (See game 138)

Anyone can blunder in a simul. Bob Burger, a world class problemist, was one of the better players in California at the time and one of the strongest players Bobby faced on the tour.

Fischer indirectly includes this game in his commentary to Black’s tenth move: “By this dynamic move Black gives up a second pawn in order to give his pieces maximum scope, and also he hopes to catch White off guard by drawing the queen out into the open. 10...Bb7 would be weaker, but it contained a cute trap, i.e., 11. O-O exd4 and if White is naive enough to go Pawn-grabbing — 12. Qxf7 (11. d3 is correct) 12...Nf6; and he loses a piece.”

11. Qxe4 Bd6 12. O-O Bb7

Note the ominous portent of four black pieces ready to explode in White’s face! As an old chess friend once explained to me, “Three pieces are a mate — but four pieces!”

13. d3?

According to Fischer, the best try was 13. Re1!, forcing ...c6 and, in so doing, taking some of the pressure off White’s position by closing the diagonal. Bobby notes that 13. Nc3 was well met by 13...Rb8, when, after 14. d3 Qh5, Black would win a piece.
13...Nf4?

Brilliant! Beautiful! The only trouble is that it loses! With 13...Bxh2+!! Allan could have pulled off a neat win. 14. Kxh2 (14.Kh1 Bf4! leads to a smothered mate) 14…Nf4! 15.Bxf4 (not 15.Qxb7?, when 15…Qh4+ 16.Kg1 Ne2 mates) 15…Qh4+ 16.Kg1 Bxe4 17. dxe4 Qxf4 and White can play it out to the bitter end if he cares to, since he does have two pieces for the queen, but it’s a lost cause.

Houdini thinks Bobby was unduly pessimistic and that 17.Bxf4 (instead of 17.dxe4) 17…Qh5 18.Nc3 Bb7 19.Rfe1 Black is only slightly better. White has two pieces and a pawn for the queen. More importantly he threatens to activate his rooks with Re1 and Rae1 when all his pieces are working. Black will have a hard time coordinating his forces and his king is partially exposed.

14.Bxf4

Black’s point was that after 14.Qxb7, he had at least a perpetual by 14…Nh3+ 15.Kh1 Nxf2+!, etc.

14...Qxb5 15.d5! Qxb2 16.Bxd6 cxd6 17.Re1! Qf6

Black should have tried to head for an endgame with 17...Qe5.

18.Nc3 Rc8 19.Qb4!
Fischer is the master alchemist who knows how to transform his advantage. Here he allows simplification with 19...Rxc3 20.Qxb7 to get at Black’s king.

19... Re8? 20.Qa5+

This wins at least the exchange.

20...Kd7 21.Qa4+ 1-0

(13) Evans Gambit C51
Fischer - William Oaker
Montreal (clock simul), February 24, 1964


7...exd4 8.cxd4 d5 is the other way of handling this position.

8.dxe5 Nc6

8...dxe5 9.Nxe5 Nf6 10.0–0 0–0 with equal chances was Abrahamian-Baginskaite, US Women’s Championship 2011.

9.Qb3

MegaDatabase 2011 only gives four games with 9.exd6 The text may be new.


Bobby blunders. It should be noted that Black is fine after 13.Qxb7 Nf6 14.Qc6+ Kf7 and 13.0–0 Nf6 14.Nd2 Qc8.

13...Qd3! 14.Nd2

14.Bxe7 Qxe4+ is clearly not to White's liking.
14...Rd8?

14...0–0–0! was crushing. Black not only activates his rook but solves the problem of his king's safety. White has no satisfactory defense: 15.Rd1 (15.0–0–0 Bg5 16.Qc2 [16.f4 Bxf4!] 16...Qe2 - once Black gets in ...Nf6 it will all be over) 15...Bg5 16.Nf3 Qxe4+ 17.Kf1 Rxd1+ 18.Qxd1 Bh6 followed by ...Nf6 would leave Fischer struggling to survive.

15.0–0–0 Bg5 16.f4 exf4

The difference between 14...0–0–0 and the game continuation 14...Rd8 is glaringly seen as 16...Bxf4 allows mate in two.

17.Nf3 Qe3+ 18.Kb1 Be7?

Black has to give back material to solve the problem of his king's safety: for example: 18...Qxe4+ 19.Kb2 Rxd1 20.Rxd1 Be7 21.Re1 Qd5 22.Qa4+ Qd7 23.Qxa7 Bxa3+ 24.Qxa3 Ne7 25.Qa8+ Nc8 26.Qxb7 0–0 with equal chances (Houdini).

19.Rxd8+ Kxd8 20.Nd4?

Fischer very uncharacteristically overlooks a simple win with: 20.Rd1+ Ke8 (20...Kc8 21.Qxe6+ or 20...Bd6 21.Qxe6 Nf6 22.Ng5) 21.Qb5+ c6 22.Qh5+ g6 23.Qe5.
20...Qxe4+

20...Bxa3 21.Qxa3 Qxe4+ 22.Ka1 Nf6 23.Rd1 Nd7 24.Qxa7 Ke7 is assessed as winning for Black by Houdini but Fischer would have had practical chances against lower-rated opposition.

21.Ka1 Kd7 22.Rd1 Bxa3?

22...Bd6 was the last chance to try to survive. Now the board opens up with Oaker’s king still stuck in the middle.

23.Nxe6+ Ke7 24.Ng5 Qf5 25.Qxa3+ Kf6 26.Qf8+ Kxg5 27.Qxg7+ Kh5 28.Qxh8 Nf6 29.Re1 Kg6 30.Qd8 Qd5 31.Qxc7 Qxg2 32.Qxf4 Qg4 33.Qc7 Qd7 34.Qxd7 Nxd7 35.Re7 Nc5 36.Re7 Ne4 37.Rxb7 Nxc3 38.Rxa7 h5 39.a4 Kg5 40.a5 h4 41.a6 1–0 (O.G. published in Bobby Fischer Uncensored (page 82)).

(14) Two Knights C57

Fischer – N.N.
Montreal (clock simul), February 24, 1964


“It is interesting that in answer to 7...h6, Fischer had played his own 8.Nh7 in a clock simul in Canada, winning easily” – California Chess Reporter, May 1964, page 111.
It would be interesting to see the rest of the game as the fancy 8.Nh7 Nxf7 9.cxd4 Qxd5 10.Nc3 Qxd4 11.Bxb5 Bd7 is only equal while 8.cxd4 hxg5 9.Bxb5+ Bd7 10.Bxd7+ Qxd7+ 11.dxe5 Nxd5 12.0-0 Nf4 13.d4! is clearly in White’s favor.

….1-0

Quebec City, February 25
+48, -0, =0

Paul H. Nadeau writes from Quebec City that Bobby Fischer conducted a simultaneous exhibition there February 25. He played 48 opponents and won every game. The total time was three hours. Nadeau comments: “Several of the players, especially the younger ones, had better positions or were actually ahead in material at one time or another. However, they eventually became disconcerted by the speed with which Fischer played. There were 200 admiring spectators watching this unequal match between quality and quantity.” (Canadian Chess Chat, March 1964)

(15) Sicilian B20
Fischer - Michel Tordion
Quebec City (simul), February 25, 1964


Tordion trades off his only developed piece and brings White’s queen to a powerful position.

5.Qxd4 e6 6.Nc3 Qc7?

Safer is 6...d6, but White is still much better because of his lead in development.

7.Nb5 Qxc2 8.Bf4?


8...Bc5 9.Qd2


9...Qxe4+ 10.Be2?
Necessary is 10.Kd1 Kf8 with a slightly better position for White.

10...Bb4 11.Nd6+ Bxd6 12.Bxd6 Nf6?

Here Black misses his chance against the great Fischer. Correct is 12...Qxg2 13.Rf1 Nf6 with a big plus for Black. After the text the position is about equal.

13.O-O Qd5 14.Qf4 Qe4 15.Qg3 Qg6

Black continues to try to trade queens. If 15...Qxe2?, then 16.Qxg7 is crushing.

16.Qa3 Qg5

Better is 16...Ne4 17.Bd3 f5 (intending ...Kf7) with equal chances.

17.Rac1

White might have considered 17.Bf3 keeping the black knight out of e4.


Correct is 21...Rf8 to avoid what comes next.
(16) King's Gambit C31

**Fischer - Andre Bilodeau**

Quebec City (simul), February 25, 1964

1.e4 e5 2.f4 d5 3.exd5 e4

Fischer played the King’s Gambit many times, but to the best of our knowledge this is the only one against the true Falkbeer (2...d5 and 3...e4). In 1971 Bobby met Jorge Szmetan’s 2...d5 with 3.Nf3.

4.Nc3

4.d3 is much more common.

4...Nf6 5.Qe2

This position can also be reached by the Vienna move order 1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.f4 d5 4.exd5 e4 5.Qe2, as in Suttles-Lengyel, Belgrade 1969.

5...Bg4

More commonly seen are 5...Bd6 and 5...Bf5. An example of the latter is Kavalek-Zinn, Polanica Zdroj 1964, which saw sharp complications arise after 6.h3 h5 7.Nf3 Bc5 8.Ne5 O-O 9.g4 Bh7 10.Qc4 Nbd7 11.Nxd7 Nxd7 12.Kd1 Qh4 13.d4 Qf2.

6.Qe3


6...Be6 7.f5


7...Nxd5 8.Nxd5 Qxd5 9.g4 Bc5 10.Qb3?

The offer to trade queens looks logical, but better is 10.Qc3 Be6 11.Qxg7 Bd4 12.Qg5 Nc6 13.Bb5.

10...Be6 11.f5
Another option was 11.Qxd5 Bxd5 12.Ne2, meeting 12...e3 with 13.Rh2.


Better is 18...Bxc3 19.Bxc3 Qa4 20.f6 g6 21.Qe2 Na6 with a large advantage for Black. Bilodeau still has some advantage after the text.

19.f6 g6 20.h4 h6

Black should have captured on c3 again: 20...Bxc3 21.dxc3 Qe3+ 22.Qd2 Qxd2+ 23.Rxd2 Bxa2 with advantage.

21.g5 h5 22.Be2

22.Nxd5 offered White better chances.

22...Ne5 23.Nb5

Again White should play 23.Nxd5.

23...e3?!
(28.Kxa2 Qxc2+) 28...Qd5 or 24.Qg1 Nd3+ 25.Bxd3 exd3 26.Qxc5 Bxc5 with a substantial
plus for Bilodeau.

24.Bxd4 Bxg2 25.Rh2 exd2+?!  
Better is 25...Bxd2+ 26.Kb1 Nc6 27.Rxg2 a6 with an unclear position.

26.Kb2 Nc4+?  
Correct is 26...Nf3. After 27.Rxg2 Nhx4 28.Rf2 Nf5 Black has fighting chances.

b5 41.Ke4 Kc6 42.Be5 Bxe5 43.Kxe5 a5 44.Nf5 Kd7 45.Nd6 b4 46.cxb4 axb4 47.Nb7 1-0
(New in Chess #7, 1998 on page 88; originally published in L’Action Catholique, 1964)

(17) Vienna C25  
Fischer – Jules Guay  
Quebec City (simul), February 25, 1964


Toronto, Feb. 27
+40, -4, =6

Fischer in Toronto

by Wayne D. Komer

In the course of a three-month continental tour giving simultaneous exhibitions, Bobby Fischer swept into the University of Toronto’s Hart House on February 27th. The spectator and board tickets were completely sold out well in advance. It is doubtful whether Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, who were also in Toronto for Hamlet rehearsals, could have outdrawn him at the box-office, if there had been sufficient room!

Fischer prefaced the simultaneous exhibition with a 45-minute talk on his game with Pal Benko
in the tenth round of the 1963-64 U.S. Championship. He drew a large chuckle from the crowd when he commented that after studying the board in this position:

![Chess Diagram]

He decided not to play 13.Qxe5 and then sacrifice the queen for the bishop after 13...Ng4 (14.Qxg7+ Kxg7 15.hxg4) because he thought this game would then detract from his (brilliant) victory over Robert Byrne in Round Three when it came time for the judges to award the brilliancy prize!

The personal score between Pal Benko and Bobby Fischer was close until the Curacao Candidates tournament in 1962. Everyone remembers the former’s great victory with 1.g3, but
that was to be his last success against Bobby. The last seven games they played was decidedly (6-1) in Fischer’s favor. (Photo by Beth Cassidy)

Bobby then took on fifty players, including a handful of masters and experts; one of the interested spectators was Zvonko Vranesic, who will represent Canada at the Interzonal in Amsterdam this summer. Those who thought they would finally see Bobby play 1.d4 were disappointed, for his first move was invariably 1.e4. As a result, he faced either French or Sicilians on twenty boards. On the remaining boards where White called the shot in the opening, Fischer was doubtless experimenting with new lines in some very old openings — primarily the Petroff, Giuoco Piano, Bishop’s Opening and Vienna. In the latter he has revivified Paulsen’s 3.g3.

At the end of five hours the score for Bobby was 40 wins, 6 draws, 4 losses (to S. Ryan, M.W. Lister, D. Grimshaw, and an alliance Cozzi-Phillips). The twenty-year-old grandmaster turned down his king first to Professor Lister in a snappy Sicilian. The last game finished at the stroke of one a.m. and Bobby was whisked away to his hotel amidst a loud burst of applause that gave one the impression that Fischer was a bit like a magician appearing in a cloud of smoke, doing his tricks and then disappearing in a thunderclap. (Chess, March 28, 1964)

An Evening with Bobby Fischer

by David Grimshaw

On February 27, Robert Fischer gave a simultaneous display on 50 boards at Hart House. In spite of strong opposition he won 40, drew 6, and lost 4. Nearly all of Toronto’s (and Kitchener’s) leading players were present with the exception of Anderson, Füster and Vranesic. The latter, however, put in an appearance as chief kibitzer, thus adding considerably to the strength of the locals.

Winners were: Prof. Lister, D. Grimshaw, P. Cozzi and F. Phillips (in consultation) and S. Ryan (all of U. of Toronto!). Achieving draws were: E. Weinrib, J. Cook, J. Patty, J. Kegel and B. Myndiuk. [Editor’s Note: The name of one of the players who drew is missing.] Before the exhibition, Mr. Fischer gave a talk in which he described his victory over Benko in the last U.S. championship. His manner of combining matter with humor would put nine out of ten lecturers to shame!

Fischer took his losses very gracefully. In fact he conceals a very pleasant personality behind the Fischer “Image.” Fundamentally, I believe he feels insecure and lacks self-confidence. He feels that the world is out to show him up. He must realize what harm some of his press interviews have done him. The press is invariably hostile. They think of him as at best an idiot savant and at worst a freak. At Toronto, a reporter, totally ignorant of chess, was sent by the Toronto Telegram to interview Fischer. Fischer, however, with good judgment, refused to answer any questions. And what was the first question this reporter put one of the great geniuses of our time? “I have read somewhere that you don’t watch television because of the x-rays. Could you comment on this?” I’ll say this much for the reporter. He seemed embarrassed!
Fischer said not a word.

The Hart House Chess Committee gave a dinner for Fischer. It took some persistence to break through Fischer’s barrier of shyness. Once he relaxed, he proved to be quite a good conversationalist, although somewhat lacking in knowledge. I got the impression that he is trying to broaden his education on his own. At any rate, his conversation belied the impression I had got of him from assorted articles.

All in all I found Fischer quite impressive. Above all he has the ability to laugh at himself. (Canadian Chess Chat, April 1964, pp. 76-77)

Maurice Wolfenden Lister (1914-2003) was one of the top middle distance runners in England while attending Oxford in the 1930s. He served as a professor of chemistry at the University of Toronto from 1949-1982.

(18) Sicilian Keres B81
Fischer - Maurice Lister
Toronto (simul), February 27, 1964

Westerly, March 1
+44, -1, =2

On March 1st, American Grandmaster Bobby Fischer gave a whirlwind simultaneous exhibition at the Westerly Y.M.C.A. of Rhode Island. Sponsored by the Westerly Chess Club, Bobby won 44, drew 2 and lost one out of a total of 47. The victor was Stan King, U.S.C.F. Vice President from New London. Drawing with the internationalist were Carl Olson of Providence and Sanford Bolton from the University of Rhode Island. The opposition was tough and ranged all the way from master/expert Harry Lyman to the beginner who lost in 5 moves ($1 a move!). (Rhode Island Chess Bulletin, 1964)

John Ogni, who played in the exhibition in Westerly, adds: “Bobby arrived in Westerly by train from New York City and was the house guest of the late Matthew Grzyb, Sr. During a subsequent period, Matthew once remarked to me during the time when Fischer was his house guest that Bobby was a real gentleman during his stay. Once upon entering Bobby’s room, Matthew saw him reading the Bible.

“The on the day of the simultaneous, Fischer gave a move-by-move account of his game with Robert Byrne from the 1963-64 U.S. Championship in which Bobby won the Brilliancy Prize. After Bobby finished, he invited questions from all the spectators and players.”

(19) Sicilian Sozin B88
Fischer - Stan King,
Westerly (simul), March 1, 1964

10.O-O Na5 11.Qf3 b5

Fischer-Hammann, Netanya 1968, saw 11...Qc7 12.f5 e5 13.Nde2 Nxb3 14.axb3 b5 15.g4 b4 16.g5 bxc3 17.gxf6 Bxf6 18.bxc3 Bb7 19.c4 with a clear advantage for White. King’s move looks worth a try.

12.e5 Bb7 13.exf6 Bxf3 14.fxe7 Qxe7 15.Rxf3

Suetin, who gives 10...Na5 as dubious, assesses the position at this point as clearly in White’s favor. Black’s next move brings that into question.

15... Ne4
16.f5?

This walks into a very nasty pin.

16...Nxe3 17.Rxe3 Qa7 18.fxe6 Qxd4 19.exf7+ Rxf7 20.Rae1 Re8 21.Nd5 Kh8 22.c3 Qa7 23.g3 Rxe3 24.Rxe3 Rf3 0-1 (Chess Courier, April 1964)

(20) Alekhine B03
**Fischer - R. Barry,**
Westerly (simul), March 1, 1964


ECO doesn’t give this move, offering only 7.h3, 7.Be2, and 7.Be3.

“I was the last person still playing at this point in the simultaneous . . . I asked Bobby if he thought he could win. With the entire audience around me, he smiled and said, ‘Sure,’ so I resigned.” (Barry)

(21) Irregular B00
Fischer – Tom Schuch
Westerly (simul), March 1, 1964

1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nc6 3.Nf3 Nf6

3...Bg4?! is known to be bad because of the pretty sacrificial line 4.d5 Ne5 (better is 4...Nb8 5.h3 when White has a slight pull) 5.Nxe5! Bxd1 6.Bb5+ c6 7.dxc6 Qa5+ 8.Nc3 0–0–0 9.Nc4

Now 9...Qc7 10.Nd5 Bxc2 11.Nxc7 Kxc7 12.Be3 and 9...Qb4 10.a3 Qc5 11.Be3 Qh5 12.Rxd1 both lead to a substantial advantage for White.
4. Nc3 g6

4...Bg4 is more commonly seen, but the text is playable.

5. d5 Nb4?!

5...Nb8 was indicated nibbling away at White's center with ...c6 later on.

6. a3 Na6 7. e5 dxe5 8. Nxe5 Bg7 9. Bb5+ Nd7 10. Bf4 f6?

It was imperative to castle when White is better, but Black's position is quite playable.

11. Nxd7 Bxd7 12. 0–0 f5?


13. Re1

13. Qe2!, attacking a6 twice and preparing to zero in on the pawn on e7, would leave Black hard-pressed to defend.

13... Bxc3 14. Bxd7+ Qxd7 15. bxc3 Rd8?
Black's last chance was 15...0–0–0 16.c4 e6 when White is better, but Black is still in the game. White should then play 17.Bg5 and not 17.Rxe6 Qxe6 18.dxe6 Rxd1+ 19.Rxd1 Re8 20.Bg5 h6! 21.Bxh6 Rxe6 with decent chances to hold the ending.

Fitchburg, March 2
+49, -5, =2

Fischer traveled by car from Westerly to Fitchburg, Massachusetts, site of his next exhibition. Traveling with him were two members of the Wachusett Chess Club. Edmund Wheeler, treasurer of the club, recalls that it was an eventful ride. “Fred Lawrence, who put Bobby up in Fitchburg, was at the wheel and he was driving along back roads pretty fast. Once, when coming around a curve a dog ran into the road and Fred, in swerving to miss it, landed the car in a snow bank. I was a bit rattled, but not Bobby. Getting out to assess the situation he good-naturedly remarked, ‘Your friend’s a pretty good driver!’”

Fischer performing the simultaneous in Fitchburg. (Photo by Glen Wheeler)

Chess Ace Fischer, 20, Performs Here March 2

Robert J. “Bobby” Fischer, 20-year-old international grandmaster on his first transcontinental tour, will appear at the Wachusett Chess Club headquarters at the First Parish Church hall on Monday, March 2, at 7 p.m.

Fischer is the subject of a feature story in the current edition of one of the most popular national magazines.

This youthful chess genius, the only player to clean sweep the United States championship, will play simultaneously against 50 opponents and will deliver a lecture.
His appearance will be exclusive to this particular area since Fischer will perform in Rhode Island the day before coming here and in Connecticut the day following his local showing.

A general admission fee of two dollars will be charged here and since a full attendance is expected the sale of tickets will be limited. General admission and a reservation to play in the simultaneous exhibition will be five dollars.

Tickets may be purchased from any Wachusett Chess Club member, by being at the organization’s regular Wednesday night meeting at the church hall located at the Upper Common or by writing to Edmund N. Wheeler, 133 1/2 Blossom Street, this city. Checks should be payable to the WCC.

At the age of 14, Fischer became the youngest U.S. Champion in the history of chess.

Since that time he has proven his chessmanship in international tournaments and matches. His latest international triumph was in 1962 at Stockholm in the Interzonal, when he won by a handy margin against the leading players of the world. In 1963 he won the Western Open Championship at Bay City, Michigan, in a field of 160, and in the same year scored a clean sweep of 8-0 in the first N.Y. State Open, at Poughkeepsie, N.Y. [Editor’s Note: The score was actually 7-0.]

A six-time winner of the coveted U.S. Championship Crown, Fischer has become the most widely written about and controversial chess personality of this generation. Considered by many experts to be the greatest chess master of all time, Fischer gave credence to this contention by winning all his games against the strongest U.S. masters in the 1964 U.S. Championship. An incredible performance! Final score 11-0! This result electrified even the non-chess playing public throughout the entire world, and he is being acclaimed as the world’s greatest chess master.

The controversy engendered by his famous “unfinished” match with Reshevsky made worldwide headlines. It actually culminated in an even score, but in the two subsequent encounters with Reshevsky, Fischer won both games.

Having learned to play chess at the age of six, Fischer gave early evidence of amazing talent, and at the age of 13 became the youngest player ever to win the National Junior Championship. At the age of 14, he won the U.S. Open Championship in a field of 175. This victory made him eligible to play in the U.S. Chess Federation’s Championship Meet of 1958, when he succeeded Arthur B. Bisguier as U.S. Champion, making him the youngest player in history to achieve this monumental honor. Winning the Lessing J. Rosenwald and Frank J. Marshall Trophies, he qualified to enter the Interzonal competition, which was held in 1958 in Yugoslavia.

During 1959, 1960 and 1961, Fischer successfully defended his U.S. Championship title. He chose not to enter the 1962 tournament and Larry Evans, a former U.S. Champion, won the 1962 title. In 1963, Fischer became a 5-time winner by succeeding Evans as the title-holder.

There is no secret that Fischer’s greatest ambition is to meet the present world champion,
Tigran Petrosian, in a title match. A substantial purse to be the prize — and winner to take all! Fischer’s first encounter with a world champion took place in October 1962, at the Chess Olympics finals at Varna, Bulgaria. Here he played the then world champion, Botvinnik, and the encounter ended in a draw. Bobby had an easily won game, but his attention became distracted.

A serious student of the techniques of past and present masters, Fischer has achieved his own special niche in the technique hall of fame, by his masterful play in all stages of the game. His famous prize-winning “Game Of the Century,” at the age of 13, in the 3rd Lessing & Rosenwald Trophy tournament, 1956, is included in Bobby Fischer’s Games of Chess, published by Simon and Schuster. He also contributes to the literature of chess in articles for Chess Life, American Chess Quarterly, and other publications. Presently he is serving as editorial consultant to the American Chess Quarterly. (Fitchburg Sentinel, Feb. 22, 1964)

20-Year-Old Grandmaster Duels 56

A turnaway crowd, including 56 challengers and approximately 125 spectators from all over New England, gathered at the First Parish Church Hall last night to watch the International Chess Grandmaster Robert “Bobby” Fischer in an exhibition sponsored by the Wachusett Chess Club.

Playing 56 matches [sic] simultaneously, the 20-year-old Fischer won 49, lost five and played to two draws. The simultaneous play started at 8 and concluded at 11:40. From 7 to 8, Fischer lectured to the group and demonstrated his draw with former world champion Mikhail Botvinnik, explaining every move.

Among those succeeding in besting the International Grandmaster were: Harold Dondis of Belmont, president of the Massachusetts State Chess Assn., in 19 moves; Clarence Barber of Holden, George Bart of Concord (N.H.), Edward Martin of Harvard University in 36 moves and Dave Scheffer of Cambridge in 51 moves.

Steven Brandwein of the Boylston Chess Club, Boston YMCU with a 2132 rating and Leland Hamilton of Clinton played Fischer to a draw.

Among the challengers were two other experts besides Brandwein with USCF ratings. Patrick Eberlein of Harvard University (2046) and George Berry of Dartmouth College (2096) both went down to defeat.

The Wachusett Chess Club provided 12 challengers and all 12 were beaten. Miss Laurent Messier of Nashua (N.H.) was the lone feminine challenger. She lost too.

James A. Fitzgerald served as master of ceremonies. (Fitchburg Sentinel, Mar. 3, 1964)
Stephen Brandwein, one of only two players to draw Fischer twice during the 1964 tour, pictured here receiving his prize as the top-scoring expert in the 1964 U.S. Open held in Boston. Brandwein would soon see his rating climb to 2300 putting him among the top 50 rated players in the United States at the time. (Photo by Beth Cassidy)

A New Bobby Fischer Visits Fitchburg Club

by Parton Keese

The Cassius Clay of the heavyweight chess ranks, Bobby Fischer, took on 56 challengers the other night at the Wachusett Chess Club in Fitchburg. The usually outspoken and controversial U.S. Champion let his fingers do the talking as he set down 49, drew with two, and lost five.

The simultaneous exhibition lasted three hours and 40 minutes, made the 20-year-old prodigy $250 plus expenses, and left him limp as a rag.

The 6-foot, well-dressed strategist preceded his exhibition with a “lecture,” but any similarity to some of the things he has said in the past was nonexistent. Instead, he replayed a famous draw match [sic] with Botvinnik, former world champion from Russia.

The 5 Who Won: The five who beat Fischer, and may never let their friends forget it, were Harold Dondis, president of the Massachusetts Chess Association; Clarence Barber of Holden; George Bart, New Hampshire state champion; Ed Martin of the Harvard College chess team; and Don Scheffer, who tied for first place in the U.S. Amateur chess tourney.

Leland Hamilton of the Nashoba Valley Chess Club, Clinton, and Steven Brandwein of Boylston Chess Club, Boston, played Fischer to a draw.
Frank Hacker of Fitchburg, a Harvard junior, lasted the longest but lost in 60 moves.

**Champ Has Changed:** Fischer was in a good mood. When he first won the U.S. title at 14 he was a shy, awkward, temperamental boy who wore corduroy trousers, ski sweaters, scuffed shoes, and unmatched socks. Now after six titles, he is tall and assured, wears expensive Continental-style suits, Hungarian-made shoes, $35 shirts, and ties.

His vanity has amazed experts who are accustomed to the huge egos of chess players. In the past he has alienated and offended everyone in the chess world, including officials, patrons, and writers.

**Woman-Hater:** He dislikes women. They’re all weak, he says. Stupid, compared to me, he says. They shouldn’t play chess, you know. They’re like beginners. They lose every single game against men. There isn’t a woman player in the world I can’t give knight odds to and still beat. (Only one female opposed him in Fitchburg-a 17-year-old Miss Laurent Messier, who has been playing for one year and lost quickly.)

**On Chess:** My goal is the world championship. It is played every three years. That’s stupid, but there’s nothing I can do about it. I’m just marking time.

After 40 it’s all downhill in this game. You don’t have the physical stamina to last out a 24-game match where you play for five hours every other day and have to finish the adjourned games in between.

Success at chess comes from a good memory, imagination, ability to concentrate, psychological insight to figure how your opponent thinks, and most of all, the will to win.

**On School:** I learned chess at 6 and quit school at 16 when chess was all that mattered. I hated school except for maybe Spanish and geometry. They shouldn’t have coed schools. Girls ought to learn things like how to dress well and cook. Women don’t make good lawyers and doctors. They should learn to be housewives, a pretty good career.

**On Himself:** I live alone and like it. Most of my income comes from tournament chess and exhibitions like these. I don’t take advice from people. Everyone has ulterior motives. Besides, nobody knows as much about my problems — or cares — as I do.

I use to do weightlifting to keep myself in shape, but I gave it up as too boring. I like occult subjects like palmistry. I’m a good judge of people to begin with, and palmistry is a science.

I go to the movies, but most of them are the same. I like Tennessee Williams’ pictures. His characters are real. They’re the kind of people I’ve seen around myself.

Yes, I am self-confident. There is a big difference between thinking you’re good and knowing you are. (The Evening Gazette, Worcester, March 4, 1964)
Harold Dondis has been the chess columnist for the Boston Globe’s for over 50 years. In 1967, he co-founded the U.S. chess Trust with Ed Edmondson.

(22) Vienna C27
**Fischer - Harold Dondis**
Fitchburg (simul), March 2, 1964

1. e4 e5 2. Nc3

In tournaments Fischer almost always employed the Ruy Lopez, occasionally dabbling with the King’s Gambit and Evans Gambit/Two Knights Defense. Here Bobby, perhaps to honor the memory of the late great New England master Weaver Adams, author of White to Play and Win, adopts his pet opening against 1...e5.

2...Nf6 3. Bc4 Nxe4 4. Qh5 Nd6 5. Bh3 Nc6 6.d4

The main move here is 6.Nb5 which leads to long forcing play after 6...g6 7.Qf3 f5 8.Qd5 Qe7 9.Nxc7+ Kd8 10.Nxa8 b6. Fischer sidesteps this with a sideline that Adams tried for a while.
before going back to 6Nb5.

6...Nxd4 7. Nd5 Ne6! 8.Qxe5 c6


9. Nc3


9...Qf6

The first edition of ECO, Vol. C, ends here with the remark that Black has a clear advantage, according to GM Larry Evans.


(23) French Winawer C17
Fischer – Ed Martin
Fitchburg (simul), March 2, 1964

30.Rxa6?? Bxa6 31.Rb8 Bc8 32.Qc1 Ne7 33.Qa3 O-O 34.Qc5 Re8 35.Bh3 Rb7 36.Ra8 Qd7 0-1 (Boston Globe, March 15, 1964)
J. Camille LeBlanc is holding a cigarette in this photo. To his right is Robert Fortier, a former Wachusett club champion. (Photo provided by Jean LeBlanc)

(24) French Winawer C17
Fischer - Clarence Barber
Fitchburg (simul), March 2, 1964


Harold Dondis, chess columnist of long standing for the Boston Globe, had this to say about the exhibition: “Fitchburg, site of the simul, is a mill town which, perhaps due to organizers like George Mirijanian, was quite wild about chess. As I recall, Fischer had asked for as many boards as possible. There was not enough room for the overflow crowd and it was so enthusiastic about seeing a possible world champion that, when Fischer erred against me, and a move later graciously resigned, the crowd bore me out of the room on its shoulders! I’ve never ever seen that in chess.”
Hartford, March 3

+49, -2, =4

Letter from John C. Owen, Avon, CT:

This is in response to your search for information about Bobby Fischer’s tour of 1964, as reported in Chess Horizons.

I am enclosing a Xerox copy of my autographed game at the simul in Hartford on March 3. This score has never appeared anywhere. The event took place at Hartford’s over-heated Shoreham Motor Inn. Bobby started by delivering from memory the moves and commentary of his win over Najdorf at Varna. Regardless of the figures you quote, I remember distinctly that Bobby faced 55 opponents; he won 49, drew 4, and lost 2. He completed the display in just over three hours by walking slowly around the circle and hardly stopping at all. Toward the end he did stop at the board next to mine where he had a “hangnail” — a small boy who didn’t know enough to resign. Bobby stopped for a few seconds and then said to the boy, “It’s mate on any one of eight squares on the move; take your pick.” His opponent sheepishly put his pieces back in the box.
I remember the occasion vividly, because Bobby was our house guest during his stay in Hartford. I collected him along with his roll-up board at the bus station that afternoon. My wife served us dinner, and since Bobby was of age we thought it appropriate to offer him a drink and some potato chips beforehand. He approached the whiskey as if it were a strange animal, but the potato chips had met their match: he went in one side of the dish and they went out the other! When he walked around the house, we had a sudden fear that he might knock the furniture over. As a matter of fact he was unbelievably clumsy, except when he was talking about or playing chess. During the afternoon he waded into my chess books — I have about 2,000 volumes of periodicals and tournament books — for he was at the time studying the games of Steinitz and other 19th-century players. “Just look at this ‘lemon’ — if he does that, I do this!” I discussed the Wilkes-Barre Variation with him, for I had been fiddling with it in correspondence. I told him that I understood that he had found a refutation to the Ruy Lopez. (I thought at the time that it had to do with his analysis of the Classical Defense.) He replied immediately, “Yeah.” When I asked him what it was, he replied, “If I tell you, everybody will know!” We also discussed annotations and I asked him what he thought of Botvinnik’s notes. He replied, “As an annotator he’s a horse’s ass!”

At the simul it was so warm in the ballroom that after two hours I interrupted him to offer him a glass of water. He looked at me and remarked, “I kept looking for the Wilkes-Barre Variation; when I didn’t see it I thought you weren’t playing!”

When we returned home afterward, he was by no means interested in going to bed; he was interested only in food and drink. We ate up the fruit in the refrigerator, moved on to peanut butter crackers, and finally warm (?) home-brew beer. We discussed correspondence and he couldn’t believe that anyone could spend time with “anything so boring.” I offered to play him a two-game match with the proviso that he could quit any time he found it dull. He suggested that we make it interesting, say by a side bet of $100 per game! I reminded him that I played chess for different reasons. He was looking forward to playing at Tel Aviv that fall, but he wanted to receive at least $5,000 appearance money, which of course no one provided. He kept saying how hard it was to play chess at that level. The very thought of his 11-0 sweep at the recent Championship seemed to exhaust him! I got the impression that only large amounts of cash could change his reaction.

I had a business appointment the next morning, so when I returned shortly before noon, Bobby had arisen well rested and was working his way through a bowl of porridge. My wife had been alone with him and found that he had no idea how to converse with a woman. She also discovered that he had no idea how to take care of his clothes . . . when he sprung open his suitcase; the contents all but hit the ceiling and were in total disarray. Before leaving, he graciously signed several of my chess books and left me the address in Brooklyn where he was then living. Then after I introduced him to the staff in my office, it was off to the bus station and on to the next stop on his tour.

(25) Caro-Kann Closed B10

Fischer – John C. Owen

Hartford (simul), March 3, 1964


(26) French Winawer C19
Fischer - Larry Noderer
Hartford (simul), March 3, 1964

Larry Noderer (1918-2009) was a nuclear physicist who won the 1950 Tennessee state championship while working at Oak Ridge. He later won the 1964 Connecticut state championship. In addition to being a chess master he was also a Life Master in bridge.

From J. Platz:

In the spring of 1964 there appeared in the Chess Courier and in Connecticut Chess Light an article written by me under the heading “The Bobby Fischer Story.” My own headline was: “How Lucky Must One Be to Beat Bobby Fischer.” And the story went like this: The answer is “Very lucky.” Well I have sometimes been called the luckiest player in New England. How much of that is true I leave to the judgment of my opponents and critics. While it is no disgrace to be called “lucky,” one rather wins one’s games by force than with the benevolent aid of his opponent. My great teacher, Dr. Emanuel Lasker, was called the luckiest player of them all. Often in a tournament, half of his games were theoretically lost, yet somehow he managed to win most of them. Until the end his successes were never understood, could never be fully explained. He was accused of blowing smoke into his opponent’s face, of making bad moves on purpose to confuse him, of witchcraft, of hypnotism. Nothing of all that is true, of course. But it is so much easier for a simple mind to explain successes with a mysterious, unexplainable witchcraft, with sheer luck than with indomitable will power, with strength of personality, with psychological warfare. About Lasker they used to say, “Occasionally he lost a game, but never his head.” As his seemingly beaten army was retreating, he threw obstacle after obstacle into
the advancing enemy’s way, comparable to hidden trenches, camouflaged machine gun nests, tank traps, making him overextend himself, tiring him out mentally, and so Lasker would gain time to regroup his forces and suddenly he would lash out with such violence that the terrified and confused opponent would get bogged down in the mud or get lost in the jungles. So much for Lasker, my teacher and friend.

As for myself and my game against Fischer, I want to say this: Any player who takes part in a simultaneous exhibition against a master admits right from the start the great superiority of the master. Playing alongside so many others against one single man who walks by very casually and makes his moves quickly, deliberately and with ease makes one feel as small and insignificant as an ant. One simply can’t play his best, and the master knows it and takes full advantage of it. But for my game against Fischer I fully admit that this time I was lucky. Now for the game:

(27) French Winawer C17
Fischer - Joseph Platz
Hartford (simul), March 3, 1964

Notes by Platz.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 Ba5 6.b4! cxd4
This move is ascribed to Botvinnik, but I had played it 10 years before him.

7.Qg4 Kf8
It is better to move the king than to weaken the position.

8.bxa5 dxc3 9.a4 f5?
This move would only be good if White were forced to answer with 10.exf6. As this is not the case, the move weakens the black king position, and from here on White has a won game. Correct was 9...Nge7.

10.Qg3 Nc6 11.Nf3 Nge7 12.h4! Bd7 13.h5! Rc8
Serves no useful purpose.

14.h6! g6
This is forced. Black is so weak on the black squares that all White has to do is Bg5 followed by Bf6 in conjunction with Ng5 and Nhx7+ etc. There was no defense to that.

15.a6?
Unnecessary.
15...Nb4
A desperate counter action.

16.Qh4!
Threatening mate on one side and the knight on the other.

16...Nec6
White could now follow up with 17.Bg5 Qb6 18.Bd3 Nxd3+ 19.cd Qxa6 20.O-O with Bf6 to follow. Why did White fail to make use of this maneuver? I believe the reason is a psychological weakness. As long as he had played early in the game 9.a4, he felt he owed it to his ego to develop his QB to a3.

17.Ba3

This also should win because if now 17...Qxh4 18.Rxh4 d4 19.Rb1 simply wins a piece. I saw this variation at the last moment when Fischer stepped up to my table, and as a last desperate gamble I played:

17...d4! 18.axb7?
Instead 18.Qxd8+ Rxd8 19.Rb1 would have won quickly, and I would have had to resign. But Fischer did not see the smile of the goddess Caissa.

18...Rb8 19.Bb5


19...Qxh4! 20.Rxh4 Ke8! 21.Bxc6 Nxc2+

The start of the counterattack!


Black is not afraid!

25.Ke1


25...Bc6 26.Nxd4 Bxb7 27.Bd6

Better would have been 27.Bxa7.

27...Kd7 28.f3

The pawn on g2 was threatened. If instead 28.Nb5 Rc8 29.Nc7 Be4! 30.f3 c2 31.Kd2 Nb3+ etc.

28...Rc8 29.Ne2 Nb3 30.Ba3 Bd5 31.Ra4 a5 32.Nc1 Nxc1 33.Bxc1 Rc5

The smoke of battle has cleared and Black is two pawns ahead.

34.Ra3 Kc6 35.Be3 c2! 36.Ra1 Rb5 37.Rc1 Bb3 0-1

The end came so swiftly that I hardly knew what had happened when he threw his king over in disgust.

My victory over Fischer gave me a double satisfaction inasmuch as I avenged Dr. Lasker whom Fischer does not even rate among the ten greatest players of all time, and whom Fischer calls a “weak player.” Indeed, for 27 years he was a very weak player! (Chess Memoirs by Joseph Platz)

The well-known, author, correspondence player and chess philatelist Jon Edwards writes: “My great Uncle, Joe Platz, gave me my first lessons in chess strategy when I was eight years old. He himself had been a student of Emanuel Lasker, and I fancy that his lessons were similar
to those that he had himself received.”

(28) Sicilian Sozin B88
Fischer - Irving Pierce
Hartford (simul), March 3, 1964

27.a4 Rb7 28.Kb2 a6 29.Rc3 b5 30.axb5 axb5 31.c5 dxc5 32.Bxc5 Bxc5 33.Rxc5 Qxc5 34.Rxc5 Rxc5 Draw

I estimate Bobby spent four minutes on this game, while I spent four hours! (Irving Pierce, Chess Life, Nov. 1979, p. 644)

Richmond, March 5

+44, -2, =4

U.S. Champ Beaten Here at Chess

by George W. Ashworth

Robert Fischer, 20, “stalemated” the Richmond Chess Club until 11:10 last night. At 11:40 p.m., he proceeded to checkmate the club. Shortly before 1:30 a.m., however, he was checkmated by the city champion.

Fischer, the current United States chess champion, came here eight hours late yesterday to play 50 Virginia chess players at the Virginia Home. He was scheduled to lecture at 7 p.m., then to take on 50 players simultaneously.

He arrived more than four hours late for the games. After demonstrating a successful technique used against the Russians, he took on the state players shortly before midnight. They were still playing on into the morning.

Fischer, who received $250 for playing the 50 aficionados, originally had been scheduled to arrive at 3 p.m. At 6:10 he called Carl Stutz, a member of the club, and said the plane had been unable to leave because of fog. Fischer called again at 6:30 p.m. to say that he was on his way. At 6:55 p.m. a non-stop plane was scheduled to leave New York for Richmond.

Fischer took a plane for Washington. He arrived a little after 8 p.m. A plane for Richmond left Washington after 9 p.m. and arrived at Richmond at 10:25 p.m.

Members of the club met Fischer at Byrd Field and escorted him to the contest site. Meanwhile, back at the Virginia Home, 50 players and approximately 50 spectators had begun to gather a little after 6 p.m.

About 8:15, upon hearing that Fischer had made it to Washington, they voted to wait a little longer.

“Fischer has done this to wear us out,” one player commented. While biding their time, the contestants played each other. Finally, at 11:10 p.m., with approximately 80 persons still in attendance, the crowd rose and applauded their long lost champion onto the stage.
With hands planted firmly in pockets, Fischer thanked the crowd for waiting and apologized.

He then removed his right hand and moved the chessmen about the board with great rapidity to show how he had defeated a Russian opponent. He stopped periodically to back up on the board and show other possibilities. Although he moved many pieces to demonstrate how it might have been, he never forgot how it was, and progressed steadily for 20 minutes to checkmate.

Because he had White, Fischer had the first move. His first move was pawn to king four on his 50 boards. Variations followed.

Most players met him with standard systems. Several planned unusual approaches. Dr. Erwin Harlfinger said, “I really feel that if you play in a wild way, you stand a better chance.”

At 12:30 a.m., the Richmond champion, Charles Powell of Randolph-Macon College, had played Fischer to a draw. Powell declined the draw and elected to play to win. At this time, 50 minutes after the games began, only two of Fischer’s opponents had been checkmated. Less than an hour after the [possible] draw, Powell had won. (Richmond Times-Dispatch, March 6, 1964)

NM Macon Shibut, editor of the Virginia Chess Newsletter, was able to add the following information:

I grew up in Richmond and entered organized chess in 1971-72. Naturally there was plenty of “Fischer Talk” going around in those days, and I heard a lot of stories about his 1964 simul at the Richmond CC. Then last year when I took up the editorship of Virginia Chess Newsletter I began talking to old-timers about it again, thinking I might work up a feature article or something.

Everyone recollects that he lost three games — to Charles Powell, Julian Allen, and someone else but no one is sure who — and there were quite a few draws. Again, maybe Fischer agreed to some draws that he’d normally play out because of the late hour. Jesse Burke and Robert Vassar were among those who drew.

Fischer had requested that his opponents be seated according to rating. However, several prospective opponents had already gone home by the time the simul finally started, leaving some “gaps” along the row of tables. Charlie Powell, by far the strongest local player, also arrived late. Maybe he didn’t intend to play originally and came just to watch. But finding the simul still just getting underway with some spaces available, he slipped into an unoccupied board among the weaker players. Powell won the game and some people recall that Fischer was quite upset afterwards, maybe suspecting that the deviation from correct board order was an intentional deception.

At first I was amazed that no one seems to have kept their scoresheets — this was a game with Bobby Fischer after all — but Fischer in ’64, while a multi-time U.S. champion, was still not
the chess god that he would later become. Truth be told, I no longer have the score of the only simul game I’ve played either, which was also against a repeat U.S. champion (Lev Alburt).

After the simul was over, Fischer was concerned about his travel plans to the next event in Washington. Perhaps the late start and finish of the Richmond simul had caused him to miss a connection? But anyway, Charlie Powell and a few others wanted to inveigle Fischer into returning home with them for a night of speed chess. [Editor’s Note: Keith Vickers, a close friend of the late Charlie Powell, adds that Charlie often spoke of playing Fischer two blitz games and getting crushed in both.] To this end Powell assured Fischer that a bus to Washington would come through Ashland (a small town just north of Richmond, where Powell was living at the time) early the next morning. Which was true, except that he failed to mention that the bus didn’t normally stop in Ashland, it just rolled through. But Fischer bought the tale, and I have it on authority of several witnesses that as the sun came up the next day, Powell dumped the astonished future World Champion on the side of a deserted stretch of highway, with instructions that this was a good place to try to flag down the bus as it passed by!

He must have made it, though, because I’ve also talked to people who saw his Washington performance. [Editor’s Note: he did arrive later that day in Washington where he was met at the bus station by U.S. Olympiad Team Captain Eliot Hearst] According to Phil Collier, Fischer gave a lecture in which he discussed his game with Botvinnik from the 1962 Olympiad. You’ll recall the game began 1.c4 g6 2.d4 and in My Sixty Memorable Games Fischer remarked that White can prevent the Grünfeld if he wishes by 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.e4. However, in his lecture Fischer said that if Botvinnik had played 2.Nc3 he intended to reply 2...Bh6??! intending 3.d4 Bxc1. I’m sure this was intended as humor. But according to Collier, he said it with such a totally straight face that no one could tell whether he was joking or not.

Report by Spencer Matthews:

In the late afternoon of March 5, 1964, I traveled from Charlottesville to Richmond with a fellow graduate student, Jack Wright. A law student, Richard Callaghan, who was a member of the Charlottesville and University chess clubs attended also, but traveled separately. We had dinner in Richmond and arrived at the site of the exhibition well ahead of the scheduled hour. I must confess, I cannot now remember either the scheduled time or the site. What I do remember is that Fischer was very late. I think his plane had been delayed leaving New York and/ or Washington by snow. The assembled company feared that the exhibition might have to be called off. When we finally got word that Fischer had left Washington, Jack and I went to the Richmond airport to wait for him. We had him to ourselves, so to speak, for the roughly 20-minute drive back to the site. You can imagine what a high point that was for us. He was genial, but uncommunicative about any subject outside chess. When he talked about chess, his sentence structure got very intricate and precise. Jack was partial to the Slav Defense and Fischer offered to open 1.d4 against him, but Jack declined the favor telling Fischer that he also liked the Petroff. Fischer played the Vienna against Jack!

It was about 11:00 p.m. when Fischer began to address the players. I had imagined that he would do something to keep the length of the event manageable; but he began with a lecture as advertised. It took the form of a running commentary on one of his tournament games. The game
he chose is game 29 in My 60 Memorable Games, Fischer-Geller, Bled 1961.

My recollection is that it was about midnight when the exhibition actually began and close to 3:00 a.m. when it ended. It was explained that Fischer would permit each of us two “passes” during the evening if we needed extra time for particular moves. Otherwise, we were to wait until he arrived at the board and then make the move we selected. One elderly gentleman near me apparently was hard of hearing and repeatedly waved Fischer by. After several such instances, Fischer stood before the board, tapped on the table and said, “C’mon, fella, move! This ain’t postal chess!”

(29) Sicilian Dragon B76  
**Fischer - Spencer Matthews**  
Richmond (simul), March 5, 1964


Against 5...Nc6, Fischer preferred 6.Bc4 over 6.Bg5.

“Recently in a skittles game someone tried 6...g6!? against me. The game continued: 7.Nxc6 bxc6 8.e5 Nh5? (Correct is 8...Ng4. Not 8...dxe5 9.Bxf7+, winning the queen — that was another skittles game!); 9.Qf3! e6 10.g4 Ng7 11. Ne4 Qa5+ 12.Bd2 Qxe5 13. Bc3, Black resigns.” Fischer in My 60 Memorable Games, p. 87.


5...g6 6.Be3 Bg7 7.f3 O-O 8.Qd2 Nc6 9.O-O-O


9...d5 10.Nxc6 bxc6 11.h4!?

This is rare move has been tried only a handful of times. White usually follows 10.Nxc6 with 11.Bh6. GM Sergey Tiviakov, in his Chess informant monograph on the Dragon covering B75-76 (the Yugoslav Attack without Bc4), gives 11.h4 Qa5 as unclear and suggests 11...Be6!? This got a tryout in Sorri-Arnaudov, Kharrachov 1967, where Black got good play for the exchange after 12.e5 Nd7 13. Bh6 Bxe5 14.Bxf8 Qxf8. A similar idea was seen in Maiorov-Gaponenko, Krasnodar 1995, after 11...e6 12. e5 Nd7 13.Bh6 Bxe5. Matthews opts for the same theme of sacrificing the rook for the dark-squared bishop plus a pawn.

24...Nh5 may be stronger, as after the text White has 25.Bxf7+ Kxf7 26.Qxf4+ with approximate equality.

25.cxd3? Ne2+ 26.Kb1 Nd4?!

26...Nxg3 was a better try for the advantage.

27.Qh6??

Fischer completely overlooks Black’s threat. Correct was 27.f4 with equality.

27...Rxb2+ 28.Kxb2 Nf5+ 0-1 (O.G.)

Naturally, I was high as a kite. I almost ran the car off the road on the way back to Charlottesville thinking about the game. If Jack hadn’t warned me, I’d have hit a car pulling out on to the road from a country driveway. Jack and I had classes the next day (oops, I mean later that day) and so we were anxious to get back. Until I read your account, I had no idea Fischer had been dumped beside the highway to flag down a bus; but in those days in rural Virginia, that was a common way to get to cities. Fischer was very gracious in signing the scoresheet. I put the damn thing away so carefully when I moved from Charlottesville that I’ve never been able
to find it again. I can’t document it, but I have the very clear memory that Fischer played 44 games, won 37, drew 4, and lost 3. The reason the memory is so strong is that soon after the event, I read that he’d gone undefeated in a large exhibition “up north,” so I felt pretty good about Virginia chess. Actually, my memory is that he went 64-0 in Buffalo, N.Y. I see from your book’s schedule of exhibitions that he never even played in Buffalo, so maybe I dreamed the whole thing up.

Even though I don’t have Fischer’s signed score, I kept a good, legible copy to share with my friends, so I’m very confident of the accuracy of the game. I’ve often wondered whether Fischer “let” me have the win because of the lateness of the hour and because of the acquaintanceship we had on the ride from the airport. Clearly 28.Kxb2 is the only move that doesn’t allow mate in a few, so when he played it he might have intended to play on and force me to demonstrate that I could hold up under the pressure. Probably, I couldn’t have. He wasn’t so considerate of everybody. Sometime during the evening, a nearby player who had a queen against two rooks in an ending (I can’t remember the details of the position) asked Fischer, “Can you win this?” Fischer said, “Yes.” And the player said, “Okay, I resign.” I wondered what Fischer’s answer would have been if the question had been framed, “Is this a win?”

NM Macon Shibut of Virginia received gold in a stack of old papers and archival junk pertaining to chess in Virginia. He found a photocopy of a newspaper clipping on which the date March 10, 1964 had been rubber-stamped. Unfortunately, the provenance of the article which follows could not be determined.

Confidence Paid Dividend

by Charles Ashworth

The national chess champion knocked his king on its side. Although he moves so quickly that he frequently knocks over pieces, in this case it was for keeps. His king stayed on its side and Robert Fischer of New York acknowledged defeat by resigning. The winner was Charles Powell, the Richmond chess champion.

The victory came last Thursday at the Virginia Home here. Fischer came to Richmond to play chess with 50 Virginians simultaneously.

Earlier in the evening, before the games started, Powell had fidgeted uneasily behind his card table. His black pieces were before him. The white were beside an aisle to be used by Fischer.

The national champion arrived four hours late at 11:10 p.m. and gave a brief lecture on chess. At 12:10, the competition began, and, at 1:25 a.m., Fischer acknowledged that Powell had beaten him. Confidence had come to Powell during the game. Less than an hour after the match started, Fischer was willing to declare a draw. Powell decided to play on. “I just thought I could beat him. We both ended up attacking each other’s king, and it was a question of who got the other guy’s king first.” More than an hour after the Powell victory, the games concluded with three last-minute victories by Virginians: S.G. Matthews of Charlottesville, Julian Allen
of Richmond and Carl R. Nichols of Richmond. Two other players, Bob Vassar and Jesse Burke, both of Richmond, achieved draws.

Carl Stutz, a member of the club, later asked Fischer if such victories were common. Fischer indicated not, although, he said, there have been wins in several of his multi-game exhibitions.

Powell, 19, was graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School last June. He is now a freshman at Randolph-Macon College in Ashland. He plans to major in mathematics or physics. He learned chess from his father, B.G. Powell of 3106 Rendale Ave. He has been a member of the Richmond Chess Club for three years and is an avid promoter of the club.

He ran through the winning game the other day for a reporter. While moving the pieces with great agility and rapidity, he kept up a running commentary on the game, interspersed with plugs for the club. If it’s not too much, Powell said, he would like the story to mention that the 1964 city championships will begin at 7 p.m. Saturday at the Virginia Home and will continue on Thursday and Saturday nights for two weeks.

Having said this, his hand was on his queen, which had the opposing king in check. Although the game could have been prolonged, checkmate of his opponent was only a few moves away.

At that point the real game had ended. Powell mentioned that the Richmond Chess Club would like more members, put his chessmen away, folded his board and departed.

Charles William Powell (1944–1991) was only 19 at the time this game was played and at the beginning of what would turn out to be a distinguished career. A native of Richmond, he would win the championship of his home state of Virginia seven times (starting with 1964) before moving to San Francisco in the late 1970s.

Not long before making the move Powell played a key role for the winning team in the 1976 US Telephone League, the Washington Plumbers, scoring 5.5 points in the 7 games he played. He was featured on the cover of Chess Life (June 1976) along with his teammates which included Grandmaster Lubosh Kavalek and future Word Junior Champion Mark Diesen.
Mark Diesen (1957-2008) won the World Junior in 1976, the first American to do so since William Lombardy in 1957. (Photo by Jerry Hanken at Lone Pine in the late 1970s)

This was the second appearance on the cover of CL as he also appeared there in January of 1969 for winning the 1968 US Armed Forces Championship. Powell reached his peak in the 1980s, attaining a rating well over 2400 USCF and playing regularly in the Northern California Championship (the Bagby Memorial). He tied for first in 1982 with former US Champion John Grefe and fellow Senior Master Jeremy Silman, scoring 5.5 from 7 against a field rated over 2450 USCF.
Noted chess author IM Jeremy Silman shows Mikhail Tal the highlights at a must-see stop for citizens of the Soviet Union. (Photo by Gwen Feldman).

This game was first published in NOST (Knights of the Square Table) in July 1964 on page 1.

(30) French Winawer C18
Fischer – Charles Powell
Richmond (simul), March 5, 1964

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.bxc3 Qa5 7.Bd2 Qa4

Powell is anticipating a line that Lev Psakhis would make popular in the 1990s that is still played by strong GMs today. Black blockades the a-pawn to prevent a future a4 and Ba3.

8.Rb1

White has also tried 8.Qb1, 8.Qg4 and 8.Nf3.

8...c4

The text is the logical follow up to …Qa5-a4. If given a chance the second player will follow with the prophylactic …h6 which prevents a future Nf3-g5-h3-f4-h5 which is a thematic maneuver for White in the Winawer when Black commits to …c4.

9.Qg4

Bobby goes for the sharpest continuation. More circumspect is 9.Qc1.

9...Qxc2 10.Qxg7
There is no time for halfway measures: 10.Rc1 Qg6 keeps the extra pawn.

10...Qxb1+ 11.Ke2 Bd7 12.f3

On 12.Qxh8 Black has 12...Qe4+ 13.Be3 Qg6.


21.Qh8??

This blunder, possibly the result of the late hour, spoils an otherwise fascinating game. Critical was 21.Nh3 Qxh2+ 22.Ke3 when White looks to be drawing:

(a) 22...Qxh3 23.Qh8 Nxf6 24.Qxf6+ Kg8 25. Qg5+ Kf7 26.Qf6+
(b) 22...Qb8 23.Qxb8 Nxb8 24.Ng5+ Kxf6 25.Ne4+. The critical line appears to be to be 25...Kf5. After 26.Nd6+ Kg6 27.Nxb7 Bd7 Black is a pawn up in the ending, but the presence of opposite colored bishops suggests a draw is the most likely result.

21...Qxh2+ 0–1
Charles Powell was among the participants in the 1983 Bagby Memorial, the championship event for Northern California. Pictured left to right are: Vince McCambridge, Richard Lobo, Craig Mar, Dennis Fritzinger, tournament director Mike Goodall (standing), Jeremy Silman, Powell, Peter Biyiasas, and Alan Pollard (Mechanics’ Chess Club Archives).

National Master Erik Osbun, who was among those who faced Bobby at the clock simul in Davis, California, in 1964, offers his thoughts on this game, Charles Powell and Bobby Fischer.

- Two Queens capturing all four Rooks is an unusual occurrence. The game might make a good addition to a 2nd edition of Take My Rooks by Seirawan and Minev.

- The late Charles Powell, with whom I was acquainted, contrived the victory over the U.S. Champion. Charlie was a lawyer often assigned to defend unsavory bad guys in court, which Charlie did not like. Chess must have afforded great relief from those stressful tasks.

- The late Robert J. Fischer, World Chess Champion 1972 – 1975, met the U.S. chess public at many simultaneous exhibitions in 1964. I saw him in person only two times in my life, a day at the U.S. Junior in 1957 and taking a board at Davis on April 16, 1964. He was very popular. To the best of my knowledge he did not do anything like that after winning the world title. Instead, after an amusing skit with Bob Hope, he retreated to Garner Ted Armstrong’s religious establishment and its girls. Outside of any gratification that path may have provided, it became a financial disaster for Fischer.

- In my opinion, he should have done a tour of simultaneous exhibitions across the
U.S.A. in 1973. Greater popularity, higher fees, and continuing solvency would have been his just for the taking. It appears to me that he did not realize fully that he was a professional personality in the entertainment business. In that regard, the late Walter Browne was far more professional.

1973 U.S. co-champion John Grefe and six-time U.S. champion Walter Browne in 1975, the year of Browne's first tour around the United States. (Photo by Alan Benson)

The following letter, by Richard Verber, confirms that Bobby's 1964 tour, raised the simul pay scale for top American players. Browne received $275 for 30 boards (and $10 for every extra board) in 1978 while Bobby commanded $250 for 40 boards fourteen years earlier.

The late Richard Verber (1944-2001) was one of the top Chicago players of the 1960s and 1970s who represented the United States in three Student Olympiads. He was a noted organizer and tournament organizer who brought many top events to the Windy City. An obituary for Verber can be found at http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2001-12-16/news/0112160004_1_chess-master-chess-federation-chess-scholars.
Dear Walter,

I am writing on behalf of the Chicago Chess Club to express interest in your giving a lecture and chess simul at the Chicago Chess Club sometime during April or May. When do you expect to be arriving in Chicago as part of your nationwide tour? The $275 guarantee plus a night's motel for 30 boards would pose no problem if we can agree upon a date. A weekday night such as Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday, would probably be best from our point of view. Let me know when you will be in Chicago and we can arrange a date for the simul.

On another subject, let me mention that I have just submitted a bid to USCF to bring the U.S. Class Championship to Chicago this summer (July 21-23 at the Palmer House). We want to raise the prize fund to $1500 and add a masters-experts section. Unfortunately, the July 21-23 date is the only weekend available at the Palmer House and it may conflict with the U.S. Championship.

I support what Larry Evans is doing to found a Professional Chessplayers Association; I also agree with him about Hochberg: I think Hochberg should be replaced. I have been surprised that neither you nor Bill Lombardy have written to the top masters in support of Evans. Aren't you worried that people may think that Evans is without support, that you disagree with what he is doing? I hope that you will consider writing a short letter to players rated 2400 & above backing Larry. If you are interested, I can provide you with addresses.

Best wishes for your tour.

Cardially,

Dick Verber

Richard W. Verber
Walter Browne in action at the Boeing Cafeteria in Seattle on May 27, 1975. The man standing with glasses on is Angus Pitt, President of the Boeing Chess Club and directly below him, also with glasses, is Robert Karch. (Photo by Dan Bailey)

(31) French Winawer C19
Fischer- Jim Hughes
Richmond (simul) March 5, 1964


9...Qa5 10.Qd2 f6 is the main line. The text is often played, but works better if White hasn't played a4 and Black has blockaded that square with the bishop or queen. Now White will be able to bring his bishop directly to a3 with strong effect.

10.Be2 Qa5 11.Qd2 0–0–0 12.0–0 f6 13.Ba3 h5

The immediate 13...Nf5 was possible. Black gets kicked back after 14.g4 Nf6, but White's kingside is loosened.

14.Rfe1 Nf5 15.Bf1 Rdg8 16.g3 fxe5 17.Nxe5??

A rare tactical mistake by Bobby then goes unpunished. Forced was 17.dxe5 with a sharp fight
looming after 17...h4

17...Ncxd4??

The right idea but the wrong knight! Black should have played 17...Nfxd4! winning a pawn.

18.Bb4!

This in-between move, made possible by Black's knight leaving c6, wins a piece and the game.


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Washington, D.C., March 8

+52, -4, =9
Bobby Fischer of Brooklyn, who turns 21 today, is the Cassius Clay of the chess world. He is merely the greatest and he was at The Roosevelt, 3101 16th St. NW, yesterday to tell the Washington Chess Divan all about it.

Unhappily, as was once the case with Cassius, there is a small technical cloud on Fischer’s title as the greatest. The current World Champion is Tigran (The Tiger) Petrosian of Russia.

Fischer is only champion of the United States, a title he held back in 1962 as well, when he was serving “top board” for America in the International Team Olympiad at Varna, Bulgaria. Top board in the world at the time was Mikhail Botvinnik, a Russian, towards whom Fischer, then 19, felt little of the respect due the champ’s honors and great age — 51.

“I am going to demonstrate this game I played between me and Botvinnik,” Fischer told the cream of Washington chessdom yesterday. “He had written some things about me, so I was very happy when I got this opportunity to play him. The only thing was I thought maybe he wouldn’t want to play me. So I started spreading some rumors around that he wouldn’t show for the game. I figured that would get his dander up so he would show.”

Fischer’s pre-opening gambit worked. The champion of the world showed up for the match [sic], which Fischer replayed on a large wall board. For non-chessplayers, Fischer’s lecture was like listening to jokes in a foreign language. He would move pieces with bewildering speed, look up, and, as if on cue, the whole audience would dissolve in chuckles over the cunning of the trap into which the slow-witted Russian was about to blunder.

But Fischer talked, too, as follows:

“The point here is Botvinnik doesn’t play the center attack and he’s too old to change. This is the same error that Donald Byrne made against me in what has been called the Game of the Century. Now, according to what Botvinnik later wrote, this is carelessly played on my part. He recommends a miserable, passive move like this … but Botvinnik plays here. He doesn’t realize that he’s falling into a trap.

“So now Botvinnik comes up with his million dollar move. I’m surprised that the fans didn’t start clapping. If you’ll notice, he’s made what’s actually kind of a beginner’s mistake.

“Now, here I probably made, well, it’s not a mistake, but … I actually just made an elementary blunder. My opponent took a very big sigh of relief.” So who won? Nobody. It was, as often happens in championship chess, a draw.

Fischer also played simultaneous matches [sic] with 65 players, winning 52, losing four and drawing nine. The four to beat him were Mark Smith, Daniel Matthews, Henry Steinbach, and
Lew Hucks. (Washington Post, March 9, 1964)

Dr. Richard S. Cantwell, who edited the “Chess Challenge” column in the American Chess Quarterly, had this to add about Bobby’s visit to the nation’s capital:

Bobby arrived in Washington, D.C. at the bus station on Friday afternoon (March 6) where he was picked up by Eliot Hearst who took him to my home. During his stay over the weekend he played quite successfully against U.S. Championship participants Hearst and Hans Berliner in games where they played under normal conditions and he blindfold. Bobby also enjoyed going through my chess library of some 3,000 volumes and I remember that he was particularly eager to see Trifunovic’s book on the Grünfeld which he said was very hard to come by, even in Europe. Other books he ended up buying from me — I wasn’t particularly eager to part with them but felt it was for the good of American chess — were Levenfish’s Sovremenny Debiut [Editor’s Note: This rare and justly famous book, devoted entirely to 1.e4 e5, formed the starting point for the first ECO, Vol. C. Published in 1940, it was planned to be one in a series covering all the openings, but World War Two changed that.] and Bachmann’s four-volume series on Steinitz.

Levenfish’s famous Sovremenny Debiut.

At one point during the weekend Bobby offered to look over some of my recent games. I found his comments most instructive. He then asked if I would like to play some 5-minute chess. At 2100 I didn’t see that I had much chance of success and was a little taken aback when he set the clocks at 5-5. He said that having looked at some of my games I didn’t play that bad and we could start there and make adjustments after a few games. Not too soon later we were playing 5-1 and I didn’t win a single game.

The exhibition took place on Sunday afternoon. I remember that Bobby demonstrated his game with Botvinnik from the Varna Olympiad. He was a very fine lecturer. Extremely patient, he would let people interrupt him, politely answer their questions, then immediately head back into the lecture without missing a beat. He was very anxious to give people their money’s worth.
GM Larry Kaufman, who attended the exhibition in Washington as a spectator, remembers: “There are three things about the simul that still stand out clearly in my mind: 1) The large number of games with 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Bf5 5.Nc5; 2) A game with the line 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nd7 5.Nf3 Ngf6 6.Nxf6+ Nxf6 7.Ne5. This line is associated with Karpov and the early 1970s, but Fischer was well acquainted with it at least a half-dozen years before. I remember distinctly that one game in the exhibition went 7...Bf5 8.c3 Nd7 9.Nxf7 Kxf7 10.Qf3 e6 11.g4 and Bobby won in good style; 3) Bobby asked for the score of his game with Danny Collins, who was forced to resign after about 20 moves. It wasn’t immediately apparent why, but a close examination of the position revealed a rare full-board zugzwang.
John Evans

(32) Sicilian Sozin B88
**Fischer - John Evans**
Washington, D.C. (simul), March 8, 1964

Notes by I.A. Horowitz.


11.h3 h4 12.Qf3 Qh5 13.Qf2

After 13.Qf2, it is clear that White stands better. By advancing his king rook pawn, Black has committed himself on the kingside and weakened that flank. With his king in the center or on the right wing, Black had too many easily assailable targets.

13...Rc8 14.f5 Nxd4 15.Bxd4 e5 16.Be3
Here 16.Bb6 would have exerted a more lasting bind.

16...Bc6

John Evans comments: “After White’s 16th turn, Black was tempted to sacrifice the exchange for two pawns by 16...Rxc3 17.bxc3 Nxe4 18.Qe1 Bxf5. “But,” Evans continues, “I did not have the courage to play a ‘Fischer’ move against Fischer!”

It seems that in this case Evans’ discretion in avoiding the maneuver proved more than successful than his valor might have. In the prospective sacrificial line, White would surely have had excellent chances after 19.Bb6 threatening 20.Ba4+ disrupting the Black forces.

The sequence as played was sharply handled by both sides, and the draw against the champion was well earned.


Daaim Shabazz at his excellent website thechessdrum.net reports that Evans was a member of the Panamanian national team back in the 60s and later settled in New York.

The following game is one of the more convincing defeats Bobby suffered on his tour. Nothing flashy — White is just steadily outplayed.

(33) Sicilian Taimanov B42
Fischer - Lew Hucks
Washington, D.C. (simul), March 8, 1964


“Bobby knocked the king over as he passed. I was momentarily stunned. I had to chase him halfway around the hall to get him to sign my scoresheet. I had won before he had beat any of the other 64 players.” (Hucks)

The following game was part of a fascinating article on middlegame zugzwangs by Grandmaster Larry Kaufman that was published in Chess Life.

(34) Caro Kann B18

Fischer – Daniel Collins
Washington D.C. (simul), March 8, 1964


This move is so bad one might think that Black inadvertently touched his f-pawn and was forced to move it. 9...Ng6 10.0–0 e6 11.c3 was a quick draw in Nikolenko-Burmakin, Moscow 2009.
10.0–0 0–0–0 11.a4 Re8 12.a5 Qd8 13.Re1 g5 14.Bg3 h5 15.h4 g4 16.Nd2

As Kaufman points out, 16.Re6! would have hastened the end.

16...Nh6 17.Nc4 Nf5 18.a6 b5 19.Na5 Qb6

Collins could at least get his pieces out with 19...e5 (the reason why 17.Re6!, clamping down on the e-pawn, would have been so devastating).


This is a rare middlegame zugzwang. Black is defenseless against 27.Qf7 and 28.Ne6+ but his fate is even worse when he is forced to move!

26...Rh6 27.Qg8 Nxa6 28.Qxf8 Rh7 29.Nxc6 Nxc5 30.bxc5 Qxc6 31.Rxa7+ Qb7 32.Rxb7+ Kxb7 33.Qg8 Rh6 34.Qg7 Rh8 35.Qxb8 e5 36.d5 e4 37.Qxf6 e3 38.Qb6+ Ka8 39.c6 e2 40.Qb7 mate 1–0 Chess Life, September 2009, page 37.

(35) Sicilian B57
Fischer - NN
Washington D.C. (simul), March 8, 1964

The following two games come from an obscure pamphlet celebrating the 12th anniversary of the Pan American Chess Club of Washington D.C. which reports that club members Daniel Matthews and Mark Smith both won, while J. Fermoselle-Bacardi (the last game to finish) and Arthur Gropp drew.

The Colombian IM Miguel Cuellar had a close association with the Pan American Club having given exhibitions there in 1958 and 1964 (December). He headed club members on the USCF ratings for 1966 at 2448 followed by Kenneth Clayton at 2188, N. Ponce 2102 and Richard McClellan 1927.

(36) King’s Gambit Declined C30

Fischer – Mark Smith
Washington, D.C. (simul), March 8, 1964

1.e4 e5 2.f4 Bc5 3.Nf3 d6 4.Bc4

4.c3 Nf6 5.d4 has been played in hundreds of games. If White wants to try to build a pawn center this is the way to do it.

4...Nc6 5.c3

5.Nc3 is much more common and after 5...Nf6 6.d3 play has transposed to into a Kings Gambit Declined/ Vienna hybrid. Black can then choose between many moves with 6...Bg4 and 6...a6 (to preserve the dark-squared bishop from exchange) the most popular.

5.Nf6 6.d3


The only way White can try to use the weakening f4 in a positive way is by 11.Qe2+ as ...Be6 is not possible. However after 11...Nce7 12.Bxd5 Qxd5 13.Rc1, planning Rc5 and f5, Black has the simple answer 13...Qd8.

6.Qe7

6...0–0 planning ...Re8 and ...d5 was more ambitious.

7.Bb3 0–0 8.Qe2 Bd7 9.Nbd2 Rae8

Here 9...exf4 10.d4 Bb6 11.0–0 Na5 12.Bc2 c5 was an interesting attempt to play against White’s center.
10.f5 Kh8 11.Nc4 h6?
This creates a target for no reason. Instead, 11...d5 counterattacking in the center, was much more logical.

12.Ne3 Nd8 13.g4 c6 14.h4?!
Either 14.g5 hxg5 15.Nxg5 or 14.Qg2, preparing h4 and g5, were better choices.

14...Bxe3 15.Bxe3 Nxe4 16.0–0–0 Nxc3 17.Qxe3 a5 18.Rd1 Rg8?
This move deprives the king of vital breathing room. Smith should have launched his own attack with 18...b5

19.Rg3
19.Rg5!, intending Rh5, was much more to the point.

19...Qf8?
The note after Black's 18th move is applicable here, but even more so. With ...Rg8 and ...Qf8 Smith has constructed a coffin around his own king. Once again, 19...b5 was the best try. Black should be thinking of following up with...a4 if it chases White's bishop from the a2-g8 diagonal.

20.h5
The second player’s pieces are so bottled up that White could consider 20.Qa7 or 20.Qb6, picking off the a-pawn. 20.Rhg1 and 20.Rg5 are also not bad, but Fischer's move is best and sets up a devastating blow.

20...b5 21.Nh4 a4 22.Ng6+?
Oh no! 22.f6! gxf6 (22...axb3 23.fxg7+ Rxg7 24.Qxh6+ Kg8 25.Rhg1) 23.Ng6+!! fxg6 24.hxg6 forces mate. Fischer must have seen a ghost when he played 22.Ng6+.

22...fxg6 23.hxg6 axb3 24.Rgh3 bxa2 25.Qa7
If 25.Rxh6+ then 25...gxh6 26.Rxh6+ Kg7 27.Rh7+ Kf6 28.Qa7 Re7 and White has no more pieces to attack with.

25...Nb7 26.Qxa2 Ra8 27.Qf7 Ra1+ 28.Ke2 Rxa2 0–1

(37) King’s Gambit C38
Fischer - Daniel Mathews
Washington, D.C. (simul), March 8, 1964
1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.Nf3 d6

This might well have been played under the influence of Fischer's "Bust to the King's Gambit" article published in the very first issue of the American Chess Quarterly (Summer 1961).

4.d4 g5 5.Bc4 h6 6.0–0 Bg7 7.c3 Ne7

Fischer focused primarily on 7...Nc6 (the choice of Puc and Rabar, Euwe and Keres) in his article but was of the opinion that 7...Ne7! is best.

8.g3 g4

8... d5! 9.exd5 fxg3 10.hxg3 (if 10.Ne5 gxh2+! 11.Kh1 0–0 12.d6 Qxd6 wins) 10...0–0 11.Qb3 (? Houdini assesses 11.Ne5 and 11.Nbd2 as equal) 11...Qd6 12.Kg2 Nf5 winning, was Fischer's analysis.

Bobby wrote in 1961 “there is little experience with this subvariation”. This is still true 50 years later. One of the few master versus master tests in this line was Popovych-Karklins, Ventura (US Open) 1972 which saw 7...Ne7 8.g3 d5 9.exd5 fxg3 10.hxg3 0-0 11.Nbd2 b5 12.Bxb5 Bb7 13.Bd3 Bxd5 with equal chances.

9.Nh4 0–0?

9...f3 was more or less forced. White can sacrifice on f3 to open the f-file but Black is not without resources. For example: 10.Nxf3 gxf3 (10...d5 11.exd5 gxf3 12.Qx f3 0–0 13.Qh5 Qd6) 11.Qxf3 0–0 12.Qh5 d5.


12.Qd2! Nxf4 13.Qxf4 was very strong for White who will soon mass all of his pieces near the Black king.

12...Qxd5 13.Nd2

13.Ng2 intending Ne3 was another plan.

13...b6 14.Qe2 Nc6

The best move. Mathews could have played the dangerous-looking 14...Bb7, but it would turn out to be a bluff after 15.Qxg4 Qh1+ 16.Kf2 Qxh2+ 17.Ke1 when both Black's king and queen are in danger.

15.Qe4

15.Qg2 would have offered Bobby the better of it in the endgame after 15...Qxg2+ 16.Nxg2 Re8
17. Ne3.

15...Qd7

Here it was advisable to accept White's offer to simplify the position with 15...Qxe4 16.Nxe4 Re8 and equal play.

16. Bxh6!

16.d5! Ne7 17.d6 cxd6 18.Rae1! (18.Qxa8 Nc6 with ...Bb7 to follow is not as effective) 18...Nc6 19.Bxh6 Bxh6 20.Nf5 was also very strong.

16...Re8

16...Bxh6 17.Nf5 Bg7 18.Qg6 f6 19.Qg6 with Rf4 followed by Rg4 or Rh4 as well as Ne4 produces an overpowering attack.

17. Qf4 Nxd4

Matthews finds the best practical chance but it should not save him.

18. cxd4?

Bobby stumbles. There was a pretty win to be had after 18.Rae1! Ne2+ 19.Rxe2 Rxe2 20.Bxg7 Kxg7 21.Qf6+ Kg8 with 22.Ne4! Rxe4 23.Ng6! (a nice two-move sequence worth remembering) 23...fxg6 24.Qxg6+ Qg7 25.Qxe4 and Black has no answer to the twin threats of Qxa8 and Qe8+.

18...Qxd4+ 19. Qxd4?


19...Bxd4+ 20.Rf2 Re2 21.Raf1 Ba6?

21...Be6 22.Nb3 Bxb3 23.axb3 Rxb2 would have left Fischer hard-pressed to defend. The text offers White one last chance but Bobby fails to grab it.

22. Nb3?

22.Nf5 Bxf2+ 23.Rxf2 Rae8 24.Rxe2 Rxe2 25.Bf4 was the missed opportunity. White's minor pieces cooperate well together which is key for positions involving two pieces versus a rook in the endgame.

22...Bxf2+ 23.Rxf2 Re1+ 0–1
Bobby celebrated his 21st birthday the following day.

New York, March 9-14 (?)
+30, -0, =0

Beth Cassidy captures the Manhattan skyline circa 1965. Bobby is always associated with New
York City but he lived almost as long in Los Angeles spending roughly 1949-1972 in the former and 1973-1992 in the latter.
One of Fischer’s two exhibitions in New York was held in the far north of Manhattan around 186th street and Amsterdam Avenue. Yeshiva University, one of the leading schools for Orthodox Judaism in the United States, was host to Fischer in the middle of March.

The exact date isn’t certain but this much is known. The March 1964 issue of Chess Life has a picture of Bobby playing in Westerly, Rhode Island on page 55. Alongside the photo is a caption that lists the places that Fischer had visited and Yeshiva is there sandwiched in between Washington and Pittsburgh.

The Yeshiva University school paper, the Commentator, didn’t report on Fischer’s visit at the time, but the December 30, 1964 issue has a photo and story on a simul that GM Arthur Bisguier gave there. In the article it’s mentioned that Fischer went 30-0-0 in his simul.

This was confirmed in a conversation with Rabbi Steven Katz, who played against Bobby at Yeshiva. He remembers that it was held downstairs in the cafeteria at Rubin Hall. He further relates that at the end of the exhibition several members of the Yeshiva chess team gave Bobby a position to solve from a book on combinations that had stumped them. Looking intently at the position for several minutes Bobby finally looked up and said, “The position is wrong!”

Other players participating in the exhibition were Jerry Aronoff, Henry Horwitz, Larry Kaplan, Benjamin Tabori, Ira Rapaport, and Moishe Morduchowitz. The latter also remembers the exhibition being played in the lunch room at Rubin Hall and believes that it was held on a weekday, which would make T-Th (10-12) the most likely date.

Yeshiva University had a very active chess team that was well chronicled in the student paper in much the way that football teams might be at other universities. Besides participating in the Metropolitan Intercollegiate Chess League the team traveled to Philadelphia and Washington to play matches against teams such as the Franklin Mercantile Chess Club.
Pittsburgh, March 15

\[+50, -1, =2\]

Fischer Flashes

The simultaneous exhibition of U.S. Champion Robert J. Fischer on March 15 was a very successful venture. With sufficient advance publicity a crowd of well over 100 attended. Parts of the proceedings were later televised locally. In actual play, Fischer won 50 games, lost one (to Chuck Hoey, who got his picture in Sports Illustrated as a result) and drew two with Brad Ilsley and Art Sivitz.

Marty Lubell remembers the exhibition in Pittsburgh:

The best players at the club, Bob Bornholz, Bill Byland, Fred Sorenson and I did not play in the simultaneous event. I would have liked to play but I had to organize everything.

Fischer was in perfect behavior. He came in at night and went to his hotel by cab and we paid for it. I picked him up in the morning and brought him to the site of the simultaneous exhibition. A couple of the players had strange sets, one of Chinese pieces and another in silver and gold where it was hard to distinguish the pawns, bishops, and queens. I told Fischer that I would get these players Staunton chess sets which the club had in abundance but he said not to bother. It would not make any difference to him and the players were more likely to get confused than he
was (he laughed at his own remarks). I paid him the agreed fee after the exhibition and then I
and a number of the players at the club took him out to dinner. The conversation continued
without interruption and I believe he answered every question put to him even the silly ones.
He had a wonderful disposition at the time. Everyone really was delighted with him and
admired him. Incidentally the dinner was at a Jewish restaurant but he never indicated any
unhappiness over this fact. I do not believe at the time that any of the players were aware of his
anti-Semitism but maybe this all arose much later.

(38) Sicilian Sozin B87
Fischer - Art Sivitz
Pittsburgh (simul), March 15, 1964

Rdf7 24.Rxf6 Rxf6 25.Qe5 Qf8 26.Kg1 Qf7

27.Re1 Kg7 28.Rf1 h5 29.h4 a5 30.a3 Qf8 31.Rf3 Qf7 32.Bc2 Qf8 33.b4 axb4 34.axb4 Qd8
Qc6 42.d5 Qxc5+ 43.bxc5 Kf6 44.c6 b4 45.c7 Bd7 46.Kf2 Ke5 47.Bxg6 Kxd5 48.Bxh5 Kd6
Draw (En Passant, 1987)
Chuck Hoey pictured later in life with part of his famous table tennis collection. Hoey was inducted into the U.S. Table Tennis Hall of Fame in 2008.

Cleveland, March 18

+51, -0, =0

My Impression of R. Fischer

by Joseph Chavayda

Fischer without any doubt is the Stormy Petrel of Chess. Watching him move rapidly from board to board, not talking, sometimes smiling, he makes his moves seemingly without any compunction, but as each game progresses, the position after the first ten moves or so literally seems to lend itself to explosive-like moves. The fifty-one players were nervous — this is a psychological effect. The kibitzers (Bobby didn’t register any objections) had a field day of trying to help their buddies — and were amazed that if their recommended moves were made, the moves seemed to backfire.

Those of you who witnessed I. Viets’ (Youngstown) game, witnessed the position where Fischer with two Rooks had Viets’ queen and rook en prise, and no matter what Viets could do, he would lose material, and resignation was brought about.

After the simultaneous was over (Fischer 51, Cleveland 0), he received a standing ovation. We (Dave Hopkins, Jim Schroeder, Hart Fleming, Thomas Ellison, Craig Henderson and the writer) took Bob out for dinner at Boukair’s. So during the meal and our coffee, we talked — what else — about chess. We talked about various games of the simultaneous, and were amazed at his total recall of games played. During our conversation, we asked him many questions, such as:
BLINDFOLD CHESS: He commented that he could probably do some but it is a terrific strain.

RETURN ENGAGEMENT: He would like to play 100 or more players. (Capablanca during the 1920’s played 104 players and set a record for the time.)

INTERNATIONAL EVENT: He said he would play provided he was guaranteed $2,000.00. This too for me is way out of line. During the 1957 U.S. Open here in Cleveland, we tried to raise $4,000.00 and fell considerably short of our goal. (This is strictly my opinion.) Cleveland is not ready for an International Tournament.

NEXT INTERZONAL: Participation in the next Interzonal, Bob said he definitely will not participate. This to me is all wrong. While it is true he has many high ideals of what is his opinion in fair play. (The Folly of Youth.) We all read of his comments on the last Interzonal. He was bitterly disillusioned. In my opinion and as far as I am concerned he must enter the next Interzonal to prove that he is the greatest chess genius since Paul Morphy. He must as he did in the last U.S. Championship (won eleven, lost none, no drawn games) win all his games and shatter the Russian monopoly on chess.

All in all we were impressed with Bob. He must mature and find the right combination of philosophy and life.

This article and the following games come from the Cleveland Chess Bulletin, April 1964.

(39) Orangutan A00
Fischer - Donald Ina
Cleveland (simul), March 18, 1964


(40) Caro-Kann Closed B10
Fischer – Donald Zaas
Cleveland (simul), March 18, 1964

26.f4 Bg4 27.Qf2 Qe6 28.Bc4 Bh3+ 29.Kh1 Ng4 30.Bxe6 Nxf2+ 31.Rxf2 Bxe6 32.Bxd8 Rxd8 33.f5 gxf5 34.exf5 Bd5+ 35.Kh2 f6 36.Rd2 Rd7 37.c4 Be6 38.Rxd7+ Bxd7 39.Rd1 Bxf5 40.Rd8 c5 41.Rb8 Be4 42.Rc8 Bc6 43.a3 Kg6 44.b4 cxb4 45.axb4 a6 46.Kg1 Kf5 47.Kf2 e4 48.Ke3 Kg4 49.Rg8+ Kf5 50.g4+ hxg4 51.h5 1-0

We would like to think that after the exhibition in Pittsburgh Bobby came early to Cleveland to use the wonderful John G. White collection at the Cleveland Public Library but have no information supporting this thought. The world’s largest public repository of chess book, the John G. White should be visited by every chess player. It is truly the golden place for those with an interest in chess literature!

Cleveland Public Library - John G. White Collection. (Photo by Michael Negele)

(41) Orangutan A00
**Fischer - J. Gloger**
Cleveland (simul), March 18, 1964


(42) French Burn C11
Fischer - Thomas Ellison
Cleveland (simul), March 18, 1964


(43) Sicilian B56
Fischer - Zbigniew Kuberczyk
Cleveland (simul), March 18, 1964


(44) Sicilian B32
Fischer - William Costaras
Cleveland (simul), March 18, 1964


Entry to John G. White Collection at the Cleveland Public Library. (Photo by Michael Negele)

(45) Caro-Kann B18
Fischer - Howard Mobley
Cleveland (simul), March 18, 1964

Notes by Howard Mobley.


Eleventy-zin times I played Caro-Kann, but this was the first anyone tried this. It’s tricky, has a trap or two, interesting on the queenside to keep out of trouble, but I found it easier to parry than many lines — UNTIL, that is —

5...b6

This, later reading shows, seems to be the reply most gave to this opening Fischer apparently sported to advantage on his tour.
6.Na6?

Correct is 6Nb3

6... e6

6...Nxa6 7.Bxa6 Qd5! Threatens 8...Qa5+ and 8...Qxg2. White’s best might be 8.Bf1 as 8.Be2 Qxg2 9.Bf3 Qg6 doesn’t give the first player enough compensation for the pawn.


In post-mortem, I might note the eminent James Schroeder felt Black had a winning position at this point. Therefore, the rest is a demonstration by Fischer on how to win after Black’s next moves, deemed “Ugh!” by Mr. Schroeder.

This is the “UNTIL” I referred to earlier. Until here I’d felt “prepared” for any action. The rest is the parrying of a wounded and dying man.

30...Rxf4 31.Rxe6 Rfxd4 32.Rxd4 Rxd4 33.Rxc6 Qd8?

All rhyme and reason is lost.

34.Rc8 Rd1+ 35.Kb2 a4

All hope is thrust into this one last puny jab.

36.Rxd8+ Rxd8 37.bxa4 1-0 (Cleveland Chess Bulletin, 1964)
Toledo, March 19
+50, -3, =2

Fischer Defeated by Worthy Foes

by Robert W. Beach

When Bobby Fischer gave his 54-board [sic] simultaneous exhibition at the Toledo University Student Union on the evening of March 19 he lost three games and drew two.

Attestig to the excellence of the opposition he met, here are two of the games in which he was defeated. [Editor’s Note: Tom Mazuchowski was the other winner.] The first, an Evans Gambit, was against Dr. Weldon E. Dillard, of Rawson; the second, a King’s Gambit Declined, against Roger Underhill, a member of TU’s fine chess team. (Toledo Blade, April 19, 1964)

Roger Blaine, a leading chess organizer in Indiana today, recalls:

Yes, I played Fischer in 1964. I was a 15-year-old sophomore in high school, a rather pessimistic youth. My father, who did not play chess himself, read about Bobby Fischer’s coming exhibition at the University of Toledo, and asked me if I wanted to play. “Oh no, Dad,” I replied, “I’d lose in just a few moves and it would be a waste of three dollars!” I said I would like to go over and watch, however.

Fortunately, Dad went and signed me up anyhow. We went and heard Fischer’s lecture on endgames before the simul began. Then he began the 55 games, taking White on every board. Some of Toledo’s strongest players, including Dan Boyk, lost in less than 10 moves, so I was rather proud of myself for lasting 32, which took nearly five hours. Overall he won 50, drew 2, and lost 3.

A kid named Billy Fink, a junior at a rival high school, was sitting next to me and kept nudging me with his elbow. “I’m gonna get a draw!” he announced. “You, get a draw with Fischer?? Sure!” I retorted. But he did!

(46) Evans Gambit C51

Fischer - Weldon Dillard
Toledo (simul), March 19, 1964

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Be5 4.b4 Bxb4 5.c3 Be7 6.d4 d6

Fischer gives this move a question mark in My 60 Memorable Games in his notes to his game
with Celle (number 50), but it may not be that bad. Grandmaster Sipke Ernst of the Netherlands has played it at least twice.

7.dxe5

Invariably played, but 7.Qb3 as played against Boatner in the Houston simul, is also possible. Note that exhibition was held nine days after the one in Toledo which suggests that Bobby might have temporarily decided it was stronger. After 7...Na5 8.Bxf7+ Kf8 9.Qa4 c6 10.Bb3 (or 10.Bxg8 Kxg8 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.Nxe5 Be6) 10...b5 11.Qa3 exd4 12.cxd4 Nf6 White might be a little better, but nothing more.

7...dxe5

7...Bg4!? 8.exd6 (8.Qb3 Bxf3 9.Bxf7+ Kf8 10.gxf3 Nxe5 11.Bxg8 Rxg8 12.Be3 and now both 12...Nxf3+ and 12...Bg5 appear to be playable.) 8...Qxd6 9.Qb3 0–0–0 gave Black a promising position in Shabalov-Baczynsky, World Open 1996.

7...Na5? 8.Bxf7+! Kxf7 9.Qd5+ Be6 10.Qxa5 wins a pawn (Fischer).

7...Nxe5 8.Nxe5 dxe5 9.Qh5 is Fischer-Celle, Davis (clock simul) 1964 - number 50 in My 60 Memorable Games.

8.Qb3 Nf6

8...Na5 9.Bxf7+ Kf8 10.Qa4 is strong (Fischer).

9.Bxf7+

Natural, but possibly wrong. 9.Ng5 looks like a tougher test of Black's resources with one critical line continuing 9...0–0–0 (9...Na5 10.Qb5+ c6 11.Bxf7+ Kf8 12.Qxe5 h6 13.Ne6+ Bxe6 14.Bxe6 Qd6 15.Qxd6 Bxd6 16.f3 and Black does not have enough for the pawn.) 10.Nxf7 Rxf7 11.Bxf7+ Kf8 12.Bc4 and Black doesn't have enough compensation for the exchange as 12...Nxe4 can be met by 13.Bg8! Qe8 14.Bxh7.

9...Kf8 10.Ng5

White reinforces the bishop on f7, however 10.Nbd2 trying to develop another piece looks more natural as 10...Na5 can be met by 11.Qa4.

10.Bd6 11.0–0

11.Bg6 Qe7 12.Bf5 is a tricky way to aim for control of e6, but 12...Na5 is an adequate answer.

11...b6?

11...Na5 12.Qe2 Qe7 13.Bb3 h6 14.Nf3 g6 15.Nbd2 Kg7 and Black's king has found a safe
harbor.

12.Nd2?!


12...Na5 13.Qb5 a6

13...h6 14.Ne6+ Bxe6 15.Bxe6 g6 followed by ...Kg7 was another way to handle the position.

14.Qd3 Qe7 15.Bd5??


15...Nxd5 16.Qxd5

Or 16.exd5 Qxg5.


(47) King’s Gambit C30
Fischer - Roger Underhill
Toledo (simul), March 19, 1964

Roger Blaine has been an organizer and tournament director in Ohio and Indiana for close to 50 years and is still very active in the South Bend area.

(48) French C10

**Fischer - Roger Blaine**

Toledo (simul), March 19, 1964


(49) Ruy Lopez C92
Fischer - Billy Fink
Toledo (simul), March 19, 1964


Fischer Notes — Bobby said he will not take part in the next Candidates tournament, a necessary step to the world title, because no prize money is offered. When asked how he expected to become the world champion, he replied, “Who wants to be world champion?” … Dr. Dillard, the Rawson physician, did not record the moves of his game but when asked to submit them to Chess Corner, wrote them from memory. He used a defense which Fischer had outlined in his board talk before play began … Roger Underhill entered the lists at the last minute as a substitute … Peter DeNoel, Huron, who drew with Fischer, failed to report his draw and then left his notations on the table when he departed. A Toledoan, George Knight-Smith, who watched the game and saw the finish, had written down some of DeNoel’s moves,
but together they could not come up with the complete game. Bill Fink, the Waite High student who also drew with Fischer, was proud of his achievement. But his Dad was even more so. Said he wouldn’t take $500 for that draw.

The Toledo stop was the 21st on Fischer’s continental tour. (Toledo Blade, April 19, 1964)

Bobby studying the position before his 14th move against Aloni at the Varna Olympiad in 1962. (Photo by IM Nikolay Minev)

Chicago, March 22-23
+56, -4, =11 and +49, -1, =4

From the Illinois Chess Bulletin, April, 1964 (Frank Skoff, editor):

This issue will be devoted entirely to the first simultaneous exhibitions in Chicago of the nonpareil of American chess, the brightest star since the meteoric splendors of Morphy, 21-year-old Robert J. Fischer, U.S. Champion since he was 14 and an International Grandmaster at 15, the youngest in history!

On Sunday, March 22, there were 71 opponents and an appreciative crowd gathered in the spacious grand ballroom of the Edgewater Beach Hotel. Promptly at 2 p.m. Fischer entered and (after some preliminary remarks by the genial emcee, Bob Lerner) gave an hour’s lecture on a victory of his over ex-world champion Tal. He then went through 7½ hours of play, without sitting down or stopping to eat, and amassed a score of 56 wins, 4 losses, and 11 draws, a fine record against what he later called “the toughest” opposition he had ever faced in a simul. It
included 2 masters, 5 experts, 7 A’s, 13 B’s, 10 C’s, and 34 unrated (Bobby averaged about 10 seconds per move compared with 10 min. per move for his opponents).

On Monday, he repeated his performance at 7 p.m. in the Michigan Room of the Edgewater. His lecture covered a crucial game with Reshevsky. Then he polished off 54 games in 3½ hours (!), winning 49, losing 1, and drawing 4, another fine achievement. His opposition, though not as strong as Sunday’s, included 3 experts, 2 A’s, 5 B’s, 3 C’s, and 41 unrated.

Fischer, by the way, was born in Chicago on March 9, 1943, and learned the game at the age of 6 ... His lectures were received with close attention and applauded at the end, as was his exhibition play, by spectators and players alike ... He autographed score sheets, chess boards, etc. for young and old. Frequently he showed opponents who had lost or drawn how they could have drawn or won ... One must dismiss as untrue all the articles on Fischer depicting him as brash, offensive, impolite, a juvenile delinquent rampant. Actually, he was always courteous, though reserved; showed a sense of humor; answered questions as honestly as he could; and never lost his aplomb, even when the questions were foolish ones. He was very popular here and made a good impression on all ... He never objected to any of the oddly hued and shaped sets used by some players (Some sets were very confusing, especially in color; in fact, Bobby laughingly admitted that he made a capture on one board of what he thought was his opponent’s queen! It turned out to be a knight! But he won anyway.) ... After the grueling 8½ hours on Sunday, he wanted to go out and play billiards!! Unfortunately Bob Lerner couldn’t find a place open. But Bobby looked a bit exhausted after the Monday display; perhaps the accumulation of his efforts finally told on him ... He has tremendous energy and drive, a burning absorption in the game, a natural for a future world champion should he be given a fair chance.

On Sunday he gave 11 draws to the following: 1. F. Bender (A); 2. S. Crown; 3. W. Fulk (A); 4. W. Grombacher (A); 5. A. Karklins (Expert); 6. L. Manter Jr. (B); 7. N. Schoenfeld; 8. J. Sullivan; 9. S. Silverman (B); 10. N. Sturm; 11. J. Warren (expert). Losses were to Geo. C. Dibert, Chicago CC veteran; N. Goncharoff (A); B. Sax (A); R. Tobler Jr. (expert).

On Monday he drew with 1. C. Garwin (expert); 2. G. Kral (A); 3. W. Wagenhals (A); 4. P. Wolf (expert). His only loss was to Gary Thornell (C).

Combining both days, draws were garnered by 4 experts, 6 A’s, 2 B’s, and 3 unrated. Losses were to 1 expert, 2 A’s, 1 C, and 1 unrated. A-players obviously did most of the damage, but three losses were to Juniors (Tobler, Sax and Thornell) as well as 2 draws (Karklins, Manter), clearly indicating that Chicago’s younger generation may carve itself a mark in the future. [Editor’s Note: USCF ratings were quite low in 1964 compared to today. Add 100-200 points to bring things into perspective.]

In a simul the performer is one man vs. the team, the individual vs. the crowd. Naturally he moves as fast as he can so as to gain time on the players as a whole, who must move when he arrives at their board. Of course, a quick move on his part may turn out to have flaws — but it’s a chance he must take. Against the two masters who opposed him, Bobby took a little more time than usual; but he calmly threw the King’s Gambit against both. One resulted in a quick win; the other proved a long struggle, with Fischer winning by some neat endgame play in which the
knight outplayed the bishop. (He said afterwards that best play would have resulted in a draw.) Here are the two games.

The May 1964 USCF rating list has Angelo Sandrin (1922-2001) rated 2287 and his brother Albert (1923 - 2004) at 2232, so it is not possible to say for certain who was Black in the following game. We believe it might have been Albert, as reported by Al Horowitz in the NY Times on April 26, 1964, in his column entitled "Chess: Fischer in the Windy City". Chicago sources give A. Sandrin, so it is possible that Horowitz automatically listed the first name of the better known brother.

Albert Sandrin first came to national attention when he won the 1944 Illinois state championship and appeared on the October issue of Chess Review for that year. His greatest triumph was winning the 1949 U.S. Open in Omaha, but he is best remembered as one of the strongest blind players in the history of the game.

Sandrin had normal vision at birth, but is reported to have stared at the sun for a prolonged period of time when he was 6. His vision then continually deteriorated to the point that when Paul Little's article on him appeared in Chess (March 1965) he could only distinguish between light and darkness. He was totally without sight by 1968 and represented the United States in several Olympiads for the blind in the 1970s and 1980s.

Angelo, who like Albert, was a former Illinois champion, had played Bobby at the North Central Open in 1957 and nearly drawn. He was very close to his younger brother and it is quite possible that he made it possible for Albert to play in the simul by telling him Bobby's moves. This would have been necessary as Albert Sandrin, unlike most blind players, never used a special chess set for the visually impaired, instead having his opponent tell him what move had been made.

(50) King's Gambit C33  
**Fischer – Albert Sandrin**  
Chicago (simul), March 22, 1964


Kenneth Ormsby (K.O.) Mott-Smith (1900-1983) was a well-known figure in American chess who lived at various times in Boston, New York and Chicago. Along the way he played World Champions Emanuel Lasker, Alexander Alekhine and Bobby Fischer. He is not to be confused with his brother Geoffrey Mott-Smith, the author and cryptographer, who co-authored Point Count Chess with I.A. Horowitz.

(51) King's Gambit C38
**Fischer - K. O. Mott-Smith**
Chicago (simul), March 22, 1964

Notes by Hans Kmoch.

This game is from a simultaneous exhibition, but there is no reason to characterize it as such with the disdainful “only.” It is chess on a very high level for which both sides deserve ample credit. Black faces difficulties but puts up excellent resistance for a long time. Only at the very end when, probably, he had to move quickly, does he slip.

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.Nf3 d6

Of all the regular forms of the King's Gambit Accepted, the Hanstein Gambit is the least
promising for White. Such at least used to be the opinion of Spielmann and is Fischer’s opinion today. But for Black to achieve the Hanstein, it is necessary to avoid the Kieseritzki Gambit (3...g5 4.h4! g4 5.Ne5). Hence, 3...h6 as recommended by Becker, or 3...d6 as preferred by Fischer.

4.d4

On 4.Bc4, Black can play 4...Nc6 or 4...h6. 4...g5 is less commendable because of 5.h4! g4 6.Ng5.

4...g5 5.Bc4 h6 6.O-O Bg7

This is the Hanstein Gambit.

7.c3 Ne7 8.g3 Ng6

A sample of the main line is 8...g4 9.Nh4 f3 10.Nxf3?! gxf3 (interpolation of 10...d5, an idea of Fischer’s, probably serves better) 11.Bxf7+ (a drawish combination) Kxf7 (11...Kd7 may be better, e.g. 12.Qxf3 Qf8) 12.Qxf3+ Kg8 13.Qf7+ Kh7 14.Rf6: at this point White threatens 15.Rxh6 mate, but after 14...Nf5! he has only a perpetual: 15.Qg6+ Kg8 16.Qf7+ etc.

Black’s last is an unusual move, offering fair chances. It seems Black, who obviously knows a lot about this opening, is avoiding the main line in which problems and conceivable improvements are in store for either side. Now the gambit pawn is isolated and weak; and if it falls sooner or later, Black’s remaining pawn formation, with two isolated pawns, will be slightly inferior.


Black has the option of 16...c6 but apparently feels uncomfortable about the consequent middlegame. Hence this liquidation, though it involves the surrender of the extra pawn.


Black’s position is not so good as it may seem at first glance. For he lacks targets while his advanced pawn, apart from being vulnerable, hampers his pieces.
22.\textit{Bd2 Ne3} 23.\textit{Re2 Nc4} 24.\textit{Rae1! Rxe2} 25.\textit{Rxe2 Nxd2}

On 25...\textit{Nxb2} 26.\textit{Re7}, White recovers his pawn advantageously.

26.\textit{Nxd2 Rf6}

Not 26...\textit{f3}? 27.\textit{Rf2}.

27.\textit{Nf3 Bf8} 28.\textit{Re8 a5}

It is vital to deny the enemy rook any targets on the queenside.

29.b3 Bd6 30.c4 b6

Now the queenside pawns are unassailable by the rook, and their blackbound array, though basically wrong for the black bishop, is not extra harmful, at least not for the time being.

31.\textit{Kg2 Kg6} 32.\textit{Kf2 Kf5} 33.h3 \textit{Rf8}

Black is better off with his rook usefully on the board. But it isn’t, having no scope.

34.\textit{Nh4+ Kg5} 35.\textit{Rxf8 Bxf8} 36.\textit{Ng2! Bg7} 37.d5 \textit{Be5} 38.\textit{Kf3 Kf5} 39.\textit{Ne1}

Reduced to a knight vs. bishop affair, the game has reached its most critical stage. Black is in
serious danger but not necessarily lost.

39...Bc3

Another good line of play, one might even call it Black’s best, is 39...Bd6 so as to counteract a3, the move which White needs in order to make his majority tell. True, White can proceed with 40.Nc2 Ke5 41.a3 but Black obtains sufficient counterplay with 41...b5! (42.a4 bxa4 43.bxa4 and 43...Bc5 or 43...Bb4 but not 43...Kf5 because of 44.Ne1!). Nor can Black be subdued by zugzwang (40.Nd3 Kg5! or 40.Ng2 Be5 41.a3 Bd6!).

40.Nd3 Be5 41.a3

White has scored a partial success but not a decisive one.

41...Bd6 42.b4 axb4 43.axb4 Be7 44.c5 bxc5 45.bxc5 Bg5 46.Nb4

On 46.d6 cxd6 47.c6, Black holds his own with 47...Ke6 48Nb4 d5 49.Nxd5+ Kd6 50.c7 Kd7: e.g. 51.Kg4 Kc8 52.h4 Bxh4! 53.Kxh4 h5! 54.Kh3 Kd7 55.Kg2 h4 with a draw. White cannot both eliminate the enemy pawns and also retain his own pawn.

46...Be7

So far, Black has put up excellent resistance; but now he slips and loses. The position of the bishop enables White to gain a decisive tempo. Correct is 46...Ke5! 47.d6 cxd6 (47...Ke6 48.Nd5 cxd6 49.c6 leads to the same thing) 48.c6 Ke6 49.Nd5 h5 50.Ke4 (50.h4 Bxh4 leads to a draw) 50...f3 51.Kxf3 Bd2 and Black just holds his own. So, at least, it looks to this annotator.

47.Na6 Ke5 48.d6! cxd6

48...Bxd6 fails also, as Black subsequently loses all his pawns.

49.c6 Bd8

The bishop cannot be saved. On 49...Ke6, there is this delicate point: 50.Nc7+! Kany 51.Nd5! and White wins.

50.c7 Bxc7 51.Nxc7 d5 52.Na6 Kf5

Now nothing helps: Black’s pawns are too vulnerable.


(52) French Winawer C17
Fischer - Winton Fulk
“Return from the Other Side”

This game has a very exciting finish. Miraculously, Black escapes a seemingly irremediable mate, making his return from the other side, so to speak.


The opening is more or less routine. Black may not be a widely known player. But he makes none of those bleak moves which are the privilege of the unknown, average player.

10.Re1 Nxb4 11.bxc3 Nxd3 12.cxd3 O-O

The text is dangerous, yet best.

13.Ba3 Re8 14.Qd2

Not 14.Bxe7. By retaining bishops of opposite colors, White also retains attacking chances to compensate for his pawn minus.

14...Bd7 15.Nd4 Nf5 16.Bb4 Nxd4 17.cxd4 Rec8 18.Qf4

Now White obviously has excellent kingside attacking chances. The ensuing part of the game is extremely tense and exciting.

18...Qc2 19.Qg3 Qb2 20.Be7 Qxd4 21.Bf6 g6 22.Qg5

The threat is 23.Qh6. At first sight, it appears White is winning. At second, 22...Qc5 looks like an easy method of holding off White’s attack: 23.Qh6? Qf8; or 23.Re3? Qc1+ 24.Re1 Qxg5. Then it seems 23.h4 with a view to 23...Qf8 24.h5 gives White too much; but actually Black can rely safely on 24...h6. But appearances are not necessarily reliable. On 22...Qc5 White can counter with 23.g4 with the distant threat of Re3 and Rh3, and Black’s security certainly cannot be taken for granted, to put it mildly.
In the light of the comments above, it is remarkable our “unknown” rejects 22...Qc5 in favor of this decidedly non-bleak move. This counter-threat is quite strong. It almost turns the tables.

23.Rf1 Qc5

Here 23...Rxf2 is playable: e.g. 24.Rxf2 Qxa1+ 25.Rf1 Qd4+ 26.Kh1 Qxd3 27.Rgl Qa3 28.Be7 (28.Qh6 Qf8) 28...Qb2 (28...Qc3 29.Bf6 Qc8 meeting 30.Qh6 with 30...Qf8 is a winning try - editor) 29.Bf6 Qa3 with most likely a draw; or 24.Kh1 Rxf1+ 25.Rxf1 Qxd3 with like result. Black is not interested, however, in making matters more complicated than they are.

24.Rae1 Rc8 25.g4 Bb5 26.Re3

A threat to win is 27.Rh3.

26...Rc1! 27.Rxc1

On 27.Rh3 Rxf1+ 28.Kxf1 Qc1+ with a winning advantage for Black.

27...Qxc1+ 28.Kg2

Now again, White threatens 29.Qh6; and, this time, 28...Qc5 works out poorly because of 29.Rh3 Qf8 30.Qh4.
28...d4!

The saving continuation. With bishops of opposite colors, the bishop is strong in an attack on the king as its “opposite” cannot defend. Now Black brings his to bear in the nick of time.

29.Qh6 Bc6+ 30.Kh3!

There is nothing better for White: 1) 30.f3 Bxf3+ and Black wins (31.Kxf3 Qxe3+; or 31.Kf2 Qd2+; or 31.Kg3 Qg1+); 2) 30.Kg3 Qg1+ 31.Kh3 Bg2+ 32.Kg3 Bf1+ 33KF3 Qg2+ 34.Kf4 Qxf2+ 35.Rf3 Qd2+ 0-1.

30... Qf1+ 31.Kh4!

All the moves are forced now.

31...Qxf2+ 32.Rg3 Qxh2+ 33.Rh3 Draw (Chess Review, July 1964, p. 213)

Emanuel Lasker giving an exhibition in the Windy City forty years earlier. (Photo courtesy of the Cleveland Public Library, John G. White Collection)
Against Kate Sillars, Illinois Women’s Champion, Fischer went wild in a fantastic squandering of pieces. Don’t ask me if the queen sac was sound! The play strikes me as casual offhand chess played in the middle of a whirlwind. (Skoff)

(53) Sicilian Sozin B86
Fischer - Kate Sillars
Chicago (simul), March 22, 1964


14.Nxe5

Lacking a satisfactory reply Bobby decides to speculate.

14...Bxf3 15.Ncxe6 Bxh1

This should win, but 15...fxe6 or 15...Qb6 are even more convincing.

16.Nxd8 Bxd8 17.Nf5 d5??

A serious mistake that costs Black the game. The 17-year-old Sillars would have had every chance to win after 17...Be4 18.Nxd6 Bg6 19.f5 Bh5.

Fischer characterized his loss to George C. Dibert, local advertising executive, as “the best one played against me” in Chicago. (Skoff)

(54) French Winawer C19
Fischer - George Dibert
Chicago (simul), March 22, 1964


Here Fischer understandably falters in the grind of the simul. Instead of the text, 18.g4! Nh4 19.g5 Nxf3+ 20.Rxf3 Rh4 21.Qe1 Rg4+ 22.Kh1 will win material via the threat to the Rook with h3. If 22...Qc7 23.Qf2 maintains the threat while 22...e5 23.dxe5 Nxe5 24.fxe5 Rg5 (24...d4 25.Bxc4+ Kh8 26.cxd4 Bc6 27.d5 wins) 25.Qf2 and White will win (Richard Verber).
Rg4+ 33.Kh1 Rb1 34.Ne5 Rh4 35.Nf3


35...Rh3 36.Qe3 e5! 37.dxe5 Bf5 38.e6 Be4 39.e7 Rxf3 0-1

Boria Sax may be only 14, but he plays this one like a veteran; perhaps his youthful appearance lulled the young grandmaster into a false sense of security! (Skoff)

(55) Evans Gambit C51
Fischer - Boria Sax
Chicago (simul), March 22, 1964


Sax's father Saville was convicted of passing atomic secrets to the Soviets along with the
physicist Theodore Hall. Boria Sax is a noted academic best known for his writing on human-animal relations.

(56) Evans Gambit C52

Fischer - A. LoCoco
Chicago (simul), March 22, 1964


In this one Black gets in a perpetual check just when White is ready to escort a pawn to its queening square: another fighting draw! (Skoff)
Miguel Najdorf’s loss to Bobby at the Varna Olympiad may have found its way into My 60 Memorable Games, and Fischer did own a lifetime 6-3 plus score, but no one can take away the Argentine’s crushing tour-de-force win at Santa Monica. The veteran Najdorf schooled his much younger opponent in a Benoni that arose from an Averbakh King’s Indian. Pictured here at the 1983 Candidates Matches in London are (left to right) journalists Theo Schuster of Germany and Alexander Roshal of the Soviet Union, Viktor Kupreichik, Yury Averbakh (with glasses), Yury Bogdanov (Soviet team doctor), unknown, Leonxto Garcia (mostly hidden) and the great Miguel Najdorf.

(57) French McCutcheon C12

**Fischer - Stewart Silverman**
Chicago (simul), March 22, 1964


Another thriller was Larry Manter’s draw. The maneuver f5 in the Vienna is not considered good, but you have to counter it properly, and Larry did so to achieve a well-merited draw. (But did he miss a win?) (Skoff)

(58) King’s Gambit C30
Fischer - Larry Manter
Chicago (simul), March 22, 1964


(59) Scotch C44

Fischer - S. Crown
Chicago (simul), March 22, 1964


Expert Jim Warren played Fischer twice in 1964. Compare the game below with game 210 (Cicero exhibition). Jim was the last player to finish in both exhibitions and was twice forced to play Fischer “one on one,” having to move instantly. This explains why he didn’t win the following game.

(60) Sicilian Sozin B88

**Fischer - Jim Warren**
Chicago (simul), March 22, 1964


16.Qd3 Bxd4+

Improving over Fischer-Weinstein, USA (ch) 1958-59 which saw 16...d5 17.Bxf6 Nxf6 18.c4 dxc4 19.Qxd8 Rfxd8 20.Bxc4 e5 21.Rfe1 e4 22.Rad1 with a clear advantage to White. It’s interesting that in both games Warren was able to get the advantage against Fischer’s favorite 6.Bc4.


Incidentally, Jim Warren and Steve Brandwein appear to be the only two players that were able to score twice (both drew each time) against Bobby. All others who won or drew the first time lost the rematch.

(61) Sicilian Taimanov B44

**Fischer - Joseph G. Sullivan**

Chicago (simul), March 22, 1964

Bobby Fischer at Curacao, two years before the 1964 tour. (Photo by Nathan Divinsky)

The following article is from the Voice of Motorola, October 15, 1972.

“I Beat Bobby Fischer”

Without a moment’s hesitation Bobby Fischer pushed his king pawn forward two squares in the opening that has used in 99 percent of his professional games. Goncharoff thought a few moments, then moved his queen bishop’s pawn forward. Automatically Fischer brought out his king knight and watched smugly as Goncharoff continued to develop the Sicilian defense.

Goncharoff’s fourth move, P-K4, surprised Fischer slightly. Goncharoff was deviating from the traditional defense with a move which, while considered weak by chess theoreticians, upset Fischer’s smooth-flowing opening game.

Fischer quickly resumed his aggressive play. Goncharoff, meanwhile, seemed to be wasting moves, jockeying his queen from square to square trying to force a confrontation with Fischer’s queen. Fischer knew that he, as the stronger player, would have the advantage in a complicated game, and Goncharoff was trying to simplify early. The champion finally decided that Goncharoff’s tenacious queen was a thorn in his side, and on the eleventh move the players exchanged these most powerful pieces on the board.

Now Bobby Fischer began to show why he had become the youngest grandmaster in the history of the game. His white pieces assaulted his opponent relentlessly, never even giving Goncharoff breathing room to castle his king to safety. By the thirtieth move, Fischer’s rook and Goncharoff’s knight were the only major pieces left on the board.

It was at this moment that Fischer made a decision that was to prove fatal to him. Never one to accept poisoned pawns at the outset of a game, Fischer now chose to solidify his advantage by moving on Goncharoff’s unprotected queen-side pawns. Goncharoff made no pretense at
defense; instead he launched his knight on a long voyage across the board.

Three moves later, Fischer suddenly realized that something was wrong. While he had been scooping up inconsequential pawns, his opponent had been positioning his diminished arsenal for a do-or-die thrust by his king bishop’s pawn.

Fischer desperately tried to swing back on the attack, but it was too late. There was nothing he could do to prevent the solitary black pawn from reaching the other end of the board, where the lowly foot soldier would be reincarnated as a mighty queen. Fischer frantically tried to check his opponent into a mistake, but Goncharoff’s position was impregnable. After thirty-eight moves, Fischer picked up his king and laid it on its side.

FRANKLIN PARK SOUTH – The above is an account of a game in 1964 between 20 year Motorolan Nick Goncharoff and the then U.S. Chess Champion Bobby Fischer. Although this description of the game is accurate, one other detail should be mentioned. While Bobby Fischer was losing to Nik, he was also losing to three other players, drawing against eleven, and beating 56 in a simultaneous chess exhibition.

The fact that Fischer was playing 71 players at the same time colors the victory somewhat, but it still took an exceptional player to beat the man who was to become the champion of the world. Nik, a research engineer in the Automotive division, has been a Class A (1800+ tournament points) or Class B (1600+ tournament points) player for the past 12 years. In 1967, he was the Class B champion of Illinois, and in 1971 was Class B champion of greater Chicago. Nik is active in the Motorola Chess Club (Chicago) and the Chicago Industrial Chess League, groups in which he has been both a president and a leading player.

“The most I was hoping for was a draw,” said Nik of his game with Fischer, “but when I saw him go after my pawns I knew I had a chance to win. What made the victory especially nice was that I was the first player in the room to beat him.”

Nik added that Fischer did not live up to his reputation as temperamental eccentric. “Bobby was very polite to everyone,” said Nik. “He shook hands and congratulated me on my victory, and stopped to autograph the score sheet before moving on to his next game.”

(62) Sicilian Lowenthal B32

Fischer – Nick Goncharoff
Chicago (simul), March 23, 1964


The main line of the Lowenthal variation is 8.Qd1 which was seen in Fischer-Tal, Curacao 1962 Candidates, which continued: 8...Qg6 9.Nc3 Nge7 10.h4 h5 11.Bg5 d5 12.Bxe7?! (12.exd5 is best) 12...d4 13.Bg5 dxc3 14.bxc3 Qxe4+ 15.Be2 f6 (15...Bf5! would have kept Black’s advantage) 16.Be3 Bg4 17.Qd3 Qxd3 18.exd3 Bxe2 19.Kxe2 and the ending offered equal chances. Bobby went on to win it. Other commonly seen tries are 8.Qxf6, 8.Qc7, 8.Qd2 and 8.Qd3.
8...Qe7

The text has not been tested much. More commonly seen is 8...Nge7 with 8...Qg6 and 8...Nd4 both meriting attention.

9.Qg3 Qf6

9...f5!? 10.exf5 Nd4 was worth a try.

10.Nc3 Qg6 11.Qxg6 hxg6 12.Nd5 Rb8 13.Be3 Nge7 14.0–0–0

White's lead in development and bishop pair give him a clear advantage.

14...b5 15.f4?

15.Bc5! was the correct way to proceed.

15...Bb7 16.Be2 d6 17.h3 f5

Black could have equalized with 17...Nxd5 18.exd5 Ne7 19.Bf3 f6.

18.Bf3 Kf7?


22...dxe5 23.Bg5+


It's hard to believe that Fischer is not going to win this ending! 33.Kd2 Nxa2 34.Ke2 e4 35.Rxa5 was another road to victory.

33...Nxg2 34.Ra8

Or 34.Kd2 e4 35.Ke2 f3+ 36.Kf2 Nf4 37.Ra6+ Kf5 38.Rh6 when advancing the a-pawn will be decisive.

34...f3 35.Kd2 e4 36.Re8+ Kf5 37.c4??

The stiff resistance Black has put up pays off as White goes astray. By this point Bobby has
messed up the position enough that there is only one road to victory with a critical fine point.

37.b4! was correct: 37...Kf4 38.b5 e3+ 39.Kd1 e2+ (39...f2 40.Ke2 Kg3 41.b6 Nf4+ 42.Kf1 Kf3 43.b7 e2+ 44.Rxe2 Nxe2 45.b8Q and the queen covers g3!) 40.Rxe2 fxe2+ 41.Kxe2 Ke5 42.b6 Kd6 43.Kf3 Nf4 44.Kg4 Ne6 (44...Kc6 45.h4) 45.Kf5 Nf8 46.Kxg5 Kc6 47.h4 Kxb6 48.h5 Kc5 49.Kf6 Kc4 50.h6 Kc3 51.Kg7 Ne6+ 52.Kg8 Ng5 53.h7 Nhx7 54.Kxh7 Kxc2 55.a4 winning.

37...Kf4 38.Rf8+

38.c5 e3+ 39.Kd1 f2 40.Ke2 Kg3 41.c6 Nf4+ 42.Kf1 Kf3 43.c7 e2+ 44.Rxe2 Nxe2 45.c8Q Ng3# - the queen doesn't cover g3!

38...Kg3 0–1


A slightly garbled version of the following game is given up to White’s 45th move in Lou Hays groundbreaking complete game collection on Bobby.

(63) Evans Gambit C52

**Fischer - C. Garwin**

Chicago (simul), March 23, 1964


The player of the black pieces in the following game is the well-known National Open organizer and former USCF Vice President Fred Gruenberg.

(64) Two Knights C57

**Fischer - Fred Gruenberg**

Chicago (simul), March 23, 1964


(65) Two Knights C57
Fischer - Juergen Kuhn  
Chicago (simul), March 23, 1964  


Black's first initial is always given as F., but we suspect Black is Karl Panzer, who scored 6-7 in the 1963 U.S. Open held in Chicago. He was rated 1968 on the March 1964 U.S.C.F. rating list.  

(66) Evans Gambit C51  
Fischer - F. Panzer  
Chicago (simul), March 23, 1964  


(67) Two Knights C57  
Fischer - L. Redman  
Chicago (simul), March 23, 1964  


(68) Two Knights C57  
Fischer - T. Rouse  
Chicago (simul), March 23, 1964  


(69) Evans Gambit C52  
Fischer - P. Sugerman  
Chicago (simul), March 23, 1964  

Palma, a monster 24 player round robin Interzonal, was one of Bobby’s greatest triumphs and a harbinger of what was to happen in the Candidates Matches. The tournament book by Wade and Blackstock is excellent, fully capturing the atmosphere of the event.

(70) Alekhine B02
**Fischer - Gary Thornell**
Chicago (simul), March 23, 1964

1.e4 Nf6 2.Nf3?

The only explanation for this move is that Fischer thought Black had played 1...e5.


(71) Pirc B09
**Fischer - William Wagenhals**
Chicago (simul), March 23, 1964

38.Bxg6 Kxg6 39.Qg2+ Kf6 40.Rg1 Qf8 41.Qg6+ Ke7 42.Qh7+ Kd6 43.Qg6+ Kc5 Draw

(72) Irregular A43
Fischer - Peter Wolf
Chicago (simul), March 23, 1964


Fischer would get his revenge for the following draw a few months later in Cicero.

(73) French Rubinstein C10
Fischer - G. Kral
Chicago (simul), March 23, 1964


The only chance to fight.

30.Rb6 axb3 31.axb3 e5 32.Kf1 Rc8 33.Ke2 Rc7 34.Ke3 f5 35.f3 Kf7 36.h4 g6 37.h5 gxh5 38.Rxh6 Kg7 39.Re6

39...Kg6 40.Rh8 Rb7.

39...f4+ 40.gxf4 h4 41.Rxe5?

41.fxe5, with connected passed pawns, wins.


Baton Rouge, March 25
5-0-0 and 2-0 over Acers
Jude Acers, who was going to school at LSU at the time, arranged Bobby’s visit to Louisiana. He relates: “A call to Larry Evans’ father, Harry, set up a full program for Bobby including a five-board television simul and a two-game match with me in Baton Rouge, plus a 75-board simul in New Orleans.

“The televised five-board simul, which was shown on Channel 9, was held March 25 from noon to 1 p.m. It pitted Dr. Richard Anderson, James West, John Robinson, Gustavo Fernandez, and Dr. Carter Waid against Fischer, who went 5-0. I served as narrator for a program called ‘Bobby Fischer, Chess Champion,’ which consisted chiefly of footage from the simul. It was shown on local television in Baton Rouge for two weeks, and then, despite my pleading, was destroyed when a car commercial was taped over it.

“Later, at 3 p.m., Fischer played me twice and won both. The games were played at the home of Don Wagner who, with his wife Phyllis, hosted Bobby during his stay. They were stunned at his courtesy and first-rate conduct.”


Fischer playing Jude Acers in a two game match in March 1964.

Acer’s full account of Fischer’s visit, reproduced here with permission, is in his typically colorful, hyperbolic style.

Hurricane, part I
by Jude Acers

“A man’s life can depend on a mere scrap of information.” — Clint Eastwood, For a Fistful of Dollars

The “one hundred days” begin. William Grady Addison (1970 United States Chess Championship Interzonal World Title Qualifier) screeched his truck to a halt aside San Francisco’s Chinatown gate, windshield wipers flipping rain. Time for the talk of a lifetime, for the last time. It ends here. Acers listened.

Quaking realization. If grandmaster L. Evans had not refused an early draw offer, then tried to murder his great rival, U.S. chess immortal S. Reshevsky just three days earlier (N.Y. National) ... the chess champion of the United States would now be a-pumpin’ the pedals rather than a “mere” second official world title qualifier “candidate” — the pride of San Francisco ... Acers thought silently ... not even Fischer defeated Reshevsky, forfeiting $10,000 cold cash after 11 games ... Addison at the wheel. The man who played Fischer to a draw in world-rated play twice. “It’s expected, Jude.” Addison, San Francisco’s haunting shadow never to play again after the world championship tourney. “Jude, Fischer is definitely friendlier, more social after you have played him.” No doubt. “During the US Championship ... believe me he has you in mind every second — ‘YOU ARE NEXT!’ — but tries always to be perfectly proper. Never doing mind games, cheap stuff. Class. Good sportsmanship and I am talking a decade I watched him for real .... I mentioned to him that in all night speed chess he need not ever resign when he has, say a bishop and knight or the bishop pair versus the opponent’s queen. You know. Play it out Bobby, you will win it anyway ... Fischer instantly pushed the pieces to board center with a fiery annotation ‘If I can’t win it clean I don’t want it!’

“People talk, Jude. I WAS THERE, OK? Here’s how it came down. The 1964 US Championship starts out slowly, grinding wins for Fischer. Believe me, we never have an inkling what is coming up. Suddenly Fischer just mows down back-to-back people he had never defeated in his whole life: R. Byrne, L. Evans — quick thundcrushes. Jude, it was just incredible, swift, really — the fear, surprise, real devastation everyone felt.”

Yes, with great expectations everyone comes to the mountain, the New York national tourney, for one reason: to play Fischer. Now this ... Addison continued almost in a trance. “Fischer was a quiet church mouse a-comin’, always silent, a gentlemen. No matter. It would be like a freight train had penetrated the wall after his sixth straight win. Abject fear now. ‘HERE HE COMES!’ Believe me, Jude, we did not want to jinx Bobby in any fashion ... so we would gather at the water cooler outside .... I heard somebody whisper ‘MY GOD WHAT IS HAPPENING? HE IS WINNING EVERY GAME?’”

Addison rolled on. “I should note that despite a great effort not to be disconcerting, arrogant, Fischer has one impulsive, maybe unavoidable thing he does: the ‘FISCHER COBRA EYE.’
You will be passing him in the hallway, say, and for a chilly darting instant his eyes zero in on you. It’s like ‘YOU ARE NEXT TO DIE! Ha! Ha! Ha!’ You just know he has your welfare in his endearing chess thoughts ... until he plays you. Almost embarrassed, Fischer then pulls his fish eyes away as fast as he can move them. He means no harm but, Jesus, you KNOW what that look meant. It’s chilling, I admit. Surely he studies each opponent carefully before every game.”


Sports Illustrated ran EVERY GAME across six pages, all over the world. Overnight people everywhere were buying chess sets, learning to read the Sports Illustrated chess moves ... play over eleven straight epics, consecutive golf holes-in-one, the perfect chess world series for the new year.

Fischer now climbed aboard a Greyhound bus. Next, the Virginia exhibition, then ... Sitting in a farm field awaiting another bus ... abandoned after courteously playing all-night speed chess with local sponsors. “The bus will be along in an hour or two. Just wait here, don’t worry.” It does arrive. Winding to Chicago … the American chess tour of all time is suddenly happening, softly.

Now south. To New Orleans airport. March 1964. DON L. WAGNER picks up the telephone, “Hello?” — “Greetings, Bobby Fischer here.” — “Hi Bobby. Where will we pick up you and your luggage?” — “I’ll be playing pinball probably, a game room here in the airport.” — “Stay right there, Bobby. I’m in Baton Rouge and moving like a rocket right now.” This is how it began. The colossal legendary Louisiana chess race of all time was on.

Roly-poly FRANK M. REPASS, primo titanic Louisiana chess organizer was instantly frantic. Fischer had just left word of safe arrival. Repass, a feisty wondrous individual (“Jude Acers, if you do not resign right now, I’m ... I’m going to queen every remaining pawn.” And he did.) was justifiably seized with fear now. “Oh my goodness, I can see it all clearly now — the Acers danger. The LSU MENACE!” He must rush to the airport to steal Fischer now! BOOM! Now rushing madly to his car with the luscious, voluptuous train-stopping CAMERON THE CHESS DANGER GIRL riding shotgun. She grabbed his ear in order not to be left behind, dragged to the auto. Even decades later Cameron, a veritable chess cheerleader and ballerina, effortlessly recalled the wild ride and screamed with ear-pulling delight at the tidal wave of Repass offerings:

“Cameron my sweet, my lovely ... that dirty rat Jude Acers is trying to grab that Bobby Fischer from me, right beneath my nose. My goodness, we will see about those apples! Ho! Ho! Ho! To the airport, mighty gasoline steed! Forward, tally ho! Fear not Cameron, the lovely chess danger girl! All is not lost, my sweet — I will show that Acers, the LSU menace! Go petrol stallion, tally ho! We must deal defeat to that Acers, the LSU menace, but remember Cameron my sweet at all times, that Jude Acers is a very very tricky man. We must beware while speeding forthwith. Tally ho!”

Repass bitterly replayed the race forever: “I never dreamed that Acers would get 100 miles
before I, Frank M. Repass, could make a mere 20 miles to my own city airport. I am telling you that Jude Acers is just not mortal.” (1966)

How did Acers win the priceless race? The great secret? Acers never did. Mr. Repass died never knowing the unbelievable raw truth: DON L. WAGNER, promo marvel, master Encyclopedia Americana salesman, spilled red hot coffee all over his white trousers. Quickly he pulled up in front of his home for a world-record-quick change of wardrobe. Jude Acers waiting outside in a posture of prayer, frantically hoping they would make it to New Orleans in time to kidnap ... err ... make that transport, Fischer to Baton Rouge. That is when Fischer, the world’s youngest chess grandmaster, stuck his head out of the Wagner screen door and said “Hello, Jude.” By grace of twin miracles, Wagner had pulled it off — won the race and pulled off the practical chess joke of the century. “HEEEEERE’S BOBBY!” Acers was just shocked. Time to count our blessings. Two-game match with Fischer tomorrow afternoon at the Wagner home. Reality. The Channel 9 television program — Fischer against five LSU opponents — with Acers whispering “Once again ladies and gentlemen you are watching chess grandmaster Robert James Fischer of Brooklyn, New York, a player with serious claims to being the greatest of all time, versus five LSU players: Dr. Anderson, Mr. Fernandez, James West, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Waid.” Reality.

Years of lovingly staged puppet shows, “Howdy Doody” and “Buffalo Bill” children’s television programs had prepared Wagner for the chance of a lifetime — valued at 7 million dollars in 1992 Yugoslavian currency — and it was for two hundred dollars from channel 9 television ONLY. It was, stated simply, the Bargain of the Century. All those years of chess promo flash before your eyes: having LSU student Jude Acers play blindfolded aside a Baton Rouge street traffic light intersection, all these things for the nifty photo opportunities, front-paged (of course) in the Baton Rouge Morning Advocate with photo credit by DON L. WAGNER (of course).

Yes, Wagner, absolute promo master at the top of his game, had moved instantly 100 miles south to close out the rabid race. He had filled his gas tank — long in advance, of course. He had pontificated the Wagner credo: “When the door of opportunity opens, rush through it faster than anyone on the planet and never, never stop to close the door to bar others — that loses precious seconds. You are ahead, stay ahead!”

So ... Wagner was long GONE ... ZOOM! TO THE AIRPORT AND ... peril was imminent and obvious. Instantly upon arrival he heard the paging of “Mr. Robert Fischer” on the airport speakers. Mr. Repass is waiting at the snack bar. Calm, ruthless, swift Don Wagner moved to the soundproofed game room where, UNBELIEVABLY, THE AIRPORT SOUND PAGING SYSTEM DID NOT WORK! Not to mention, to boot, that it was drowned out by Bobby’s pinball frenzy. It was, stated simply, a veritable miracle. Years later Wagner distinctly remembered PASSING Mr. Repass “with this fabulously beautiful woman holding on to his ear, laughing hysterically. We went right by them, missed them by inches.” Having astutely tipped the startled sky cap ten dollars to hold his car (running, of course), Wagner now made the getaway of the century, Fischer in tow and luggage flying to the back seat. “Long gone, in three minutes flat after I first hit the airport entrance. Just unbelievable luck. I plan to rob banks next, Jude. Want to come along?”
1992. New Orleans. WWOZ public radio station does the interview. “If one thousand people and me are in a burning building and only one person can escape alive, then I feel very, very sorry for the other people — it would be me who survives. My life has been that lucky. Although it is a razor-thin margin, this calculation of being at the right place, right time in world chess history, this calculation that my entire life turned on a pinball machine.” But it did.

The irrepressible Jude Acers, one of the greatest chess promoters in the United States, wearing his trademark red beret.

Hurricane, part II

REPASS TAKES REVENGE
Fischer’s 1964 visit to Baton Rouge, Louisiana. REPASS TAKES REVENGE. Acers loads all the cannons and asks just the right question at Graham Hall/Louisiana State University campus. THE FISCHER INTERVIEW. CHESS: HOW TO PLAY IT — THE TWO GREAT FISCHER SECRETS. Shooting pool with Fischer in the Chimes Street billiards hall ... and heading to the highway en route to New Orleans where 74 players are waiting for the greatest Louisiana chess exhibition of all time ... and where Repass is waiting.

“The opening is the most important because every game has one. I am a great believer in Alekhine — get everything possible out of the opening because, believe me, you are going to need it later.” — Carroll Capps, author, and for a half-century, master chess player, top-board contestant at the Mechanics’ Institute Chess Rooms, San Francisco. (Last interview, Foster’s coffee shop, 1969)


Acers now rolls. “Oh don’t worry about that, Bobby. You haven’t been playing much. Mr. Barden has 52 weeks of Manchester Guardian chess columns to fill. Now, believe me, he has eleven shockers to publish — a Bobby serial week after week!” Fischer holds several chess columns in his hands, waves them gently. He brightens. “Jude, do you really think he will run all my games?” “Are you kidding? Move for move already in print, I guarantee you. Leonard Barden is certainly tap-dancing with delight toward the presses.”

O.K. Now is the time, Acers. ONE QUESTION ONLY. Do it now. It will be remembered forever. You have rehearsed it word for word ten times. First show research, show you have thought about the matter, and then ....

“Bobby, even cursory examination of your career shows fantastic self-improvement. Study? Talent? Written analysis after all your games? I have wondered. Please look back at one specific case for me: Bled/Belgrade/Zagreb 1959 international chess tourney. You lose by 6 games to the Soviet players, LOSE ALL FOUR GAMES TO MIKHAIL TAL. Then like a bomb flash two years to Bled, 1961. 19 games. You mow down Tal, Petrosian, plus score the Russians, go UNDEFEATED IN ALL 19 ROUNDS. Naked improvement, there it is. BOBBY, HOW DOES A PLAYER DO THIS? GET BETTER WHILE ALL OTHER PLAYERS ARE STANDING STILL?”

Fischer instantly said “Simple. First, learn the chess openings, really learn the ones you play for White and Black. Second, keep the pressure on them every second — THEY ALL CRACK. No exception, play every game to the end, never give up.”
Bobby and Boris analyze their draw at the Havana Olympiad in 1966 while Mikhail Tal and Lev Polugaevsky look on. (Photo by Nathan Divinsky)

THE POOL HALL: He taps you on the shoulder in Wagner’s car. “Jude, you said you spent eleven dollars on long distance phone calls to set up my exhibitions?” “Bobby I was just calling to brag, share glad tidings. Believe me a Fischer tour is on promo autopilot! Word spreads by smoke signal!” “Take this money anyway,” he said, shoving cash over my shoulder. We climbed out to play pool. The Chimes Street parlor was dim and Bogart classic. The house pro gives us two shots to his one, simply a HUGE advantage. We crawl to victory two games to one. On my last shot I gently nudge the cue ball into killer position aside the corner pocket 8-ball. Fischer instantly sees his dead-on shot will win it all. “Thanks,” and a cavernous smile blazes from him. I thought silently, he appreciates little things. He will travel alone everywhere as a world celebrity. He will have to work overtime to blow his life. Surely he will be happy. In 30 hours his voice will be on the telephone. I will never see him again.

FISCHER ON TELEVISION: Don L. Wagner’s magic continues. Fischer 5, LSU Opponents 0. It was a nightmare in the making. Fischer handled the matter gracefully. John Ferguson, “the voice of the LSU Fighting Tigers” football team opened up with — yes, I am not kidding — asked on the air, as his very first question: “Bobby you have been called a high school dropout. What about this?” Oh great. Promoter Don L. Wagner shook, jumped, swirled away from the camera, instantly red. Acers, already on camera, closed his eyes, posture glacial. Fischer: “Well I just feel I do not need a high school diploma to play chess all over the world.” And stopped. Acers whispers 30-minute commentary on the videotape. Ferguson whispers to Acers “I can detect no interest whatsoever for this program in Baton Rouge but here is Bobby Fischer’s two hundred dollar check as agreed.” Afterward the program aired TWICE that
week. The only video copy was taped over, ERASED, for a car commercial two weeks later. A blunder that would later cost Channel 9 millions of dollars. “Great Mistake” — Ferguson, 1972

PLAYING FISCHER A TWO-GAME MATCH: Acers remembers, the crowd was enormous in Wagner’s home. Wall to wall, two games. Echoes: Law professor Cary De Bessonet, always at the right place at the right time, saw both of my matches with Fischer and Browne. Remembered best: colored streamers running from the Wagner’s air conditioner. As I stepped back watching for Fischer’s quiet, always-the-same-hand-meter moves, I was surrounded by colored paper strips, apparently to show the direction of air flow. A frame with Fischer in the center. Really incredible.

FISCHER INTRODUCED TWO THEORETICAL NOVELTIES IN BOTH GAMES. Thunderstruck, wondering “Why me?” I resolved then and there to publish his quiet knight retreat in game one, his center pawn thrust in game two, end the game with his chess homework, personality forever. That is what I did.

Sportsmanship. Fischer wanted to be completely sure that I knew my time was running out. I did. Dead lost, I just let it run out quietly. A last note from Don and Phyllis Wagner, his hosts throughout: Fischer quietly asked if it was all right to move from room to room, careful not to intrude on family routine. The perfect guest.

Fischer holds the Graham Hall wall telephone, speaking to one thunderstruck lady, the mother of William Addison. She hears the pro’s advice from atop the mountain: “Mrs. Addison, when Bill rides across the country by bus to the New York US Championship to save money it tires him. I like to fly, arrive refreshed. I do not do this.” The marvelous idea to phone her clear out of the sky, hitting her with this million-volt shock of her life, went like a dream. He agreed instantly. “Hello Mrs. Addison. This is Bobby Fischer.” Fischer phones the boyhood home of William Addison, the Baton Rouge son who defeated soviet champion Leonid Stein at Caracas, fought out two draws with Fischer in world play.

Addison now sends this memorable echo, this Olympic proxy! Addison, traveling alone by bus like a shadow, bombing a Lafayette, Louisiana “spare change” tournament. Creeping on in the night on bus layover. Leaving the trophy aside his mother’s screen door, retreating in the night with a left note, always proper, with an always proper first prize attached. Born to run. One summer night. What are the unfathomable odds for her delight, this fifteen minutes, this call, the Mount Everest of the chess world, just for her? Fischer is a wonder. Hang up.

THEN ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE: Ring! “Hello, this is the New York Times calling for Bobby Fischer. Is he there?” “No I am sorry he is not here presently.” Hang up. Ring. “Hello. This is the New Orleans Times-Picayune. Mr. Acers, can you tell us where to find Mr. Fischer?” Ring. Time magazine. Houston Chronicle. Associated Press. Baton Rouge Morning Advocate. And on and on. Ten more news media. Frank Repass had provided the Acers LSU switchboard number to media ALL OVER THE WORLD, ASSURING THEM FISCHER WAS IN THE ROOM! And he was. Revenge by telephone .... and now it is over. No it is not...THE SECOND FLOOR GRAHAM HALL PHONES GO OFF ONE BY ONE. You can hear them just above: “CHESS? ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND? YOU WOKE ME UP FOR THIS??” “Oh no not again ... not this again ... chess .... Fischer ...” (expletives deleted).
Time to go. They are waiting. We are late. “With Sergeant’s book in hand, I once took half an hour here just to find the only way out. How Morphy could hardly be defeated, even though he gave away a whole rook odds at the start of the game. Imagine, with no obvious errors, a whole rook up, White still has to work to win. Morphy is the most accurate player ever. Against such a strong master you could only survive, as almost always was the case, by returning the extra material. The move matters to Morphy. He made things very difficult.” — R.J. Fischer, Gravier Street YWCA, lecture, New Orleans, Louisiana, March 26, 1964. Whisper: “Time to go.”

IN THE CAR NOW: Baton Rouge. Last moments. We are running two hours late for Fischer’s 74-opponent monster chess exhibition in New Orleans. Acers had caused it all but Fischer would shoulder all the blame. Naturally. Fischer was fascinated by two New Orleans “odds” games by immortal chess meteor-tragedy Paul Charles Morphy (1837-1884). A free Fischer public lecture “On Morphy” was suddenly promised out of the sky if we could procure The Games of Paul Morphy by P.W. Sergeant (1916). No dummies we. There was no way were going to leave Baton Rouge alive without that book. This was a first-run feature film, not a rerun. One time for a lifetime. Naturally Acers had forgotten that the Louisiana State University library does not necessarily stay open especially for Jude Acers after 6 pm. A priceless public address lost single-handedly by Acers but mutually saved in terrible time pressure by Mr. James West and Mr. John Robinson. “Don’t worry, Jude, we threatened the guy’s life and he gave it up.” Now roll, troops.

ROLLING NOW. 8 pm. Hear Don Wagner whisper “The whole world thinks you can play the top 50 players all at one time”. “I am sure you realize I could do it but the exhibition would take a whole day. Those guys are tough.” Acers now tombstone silent in the backseat. Racing in the deserted streets. Remembered for a lifetime: silhouettes in the streetlights, dim profiles of Wagner at the wheel, Fischer riding shotgun. With the night air blasting through all the open windows. Up ahead, the bend. The highway. La Carretera. There are doubts. Seize now the fool’s madness. Stop the hands of time. Turn back. Replay just 72 hours just one more time. No. Gone. The “one hundred days.”
Fischer en route to winning the 1963/64 US Championship.

(Chess Review)

New Orleans, March 26

+70, -3, =2

Acers continues “Fischer’s New Orleans appearance drew a large crowd of spectators. It started 2½ hours late as Don Wagner and I got him to New Orleans. Fischer had requested a copy of Sergeant’s book on Morphy as he planned to go over two of his odds games as part of his lecture and we weren’t able to find a copy in Baton Rouge until John Robinson located one around 7 p.m.

“Fischer received $485 for the greatest exhibition in the history of New Orleans chess.”

Chess Whiz Dazzles Here

Chess international grandmaster Robert J. Fischer played 75 games simultaneously in New Orleans last night and early today, winning 70 of them.

Fischer, a 21-year-old considered America’s greatest chess player since Paul Morphy, lost
three games and drew two in the six-hour marathon at the YWCA building. One who beat him was a 15-year-old New Orleans Class C player, David Levin. The others were Frank Chávez of New Orleans and Fenner Parham of Natchez, Miss., both of whom have held expert ratings. The draws went to Jude Acers of Baton Rouge, an expert player, and Frank Gladney of Baton Rouge, a former expert.

Fischer averaged five minutes a game during the performance, moving quickly from board to board, arranged in a rectangle around him. In most instances he moved almost simultaneously with his opponent, gliding then to the next board. At times, he paused to study the situation, resting on both hands on the table or standing back with one hand to his face.

Adrian L. McAuley, president of the sponsoring New Orleans Chess Club, said New Orleans player Matthew Dufaut was last to finish his game with Fischer at 3:30 a.m. today. (The Times-Picayune, New Orleans, March 26, 1964)

Sitting next to Frank Chávez in the exhibition was District Attorney Jim Garrison. The latter, who lost his game, is best known for his theories about the John F. Kennedy assassination.

(74) Sicilian Sveshnikov B33
Fischer - Frank Chávez
New Orleans (simul), March 26, 1964


Bobby has a big advantage here but Black succeeds in complicating the game and finally White blunders.


(75) Evans Gambit C52
Fischer - L. Fenner Parham Jr.
New Orleans (simul), March 26, 1964

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Be5 4.b4 Bxb4 5.c3 Ba5

Fischer, in his notes to his games with Celle (number 50 in My 60 Memorable Games), writes that on the 1964 tour most players answered 5...Be7 here.

6.d4 d6

This solid way to meet the Evans Gambit was favored by Emanuel Lasker. As far as we know this is the only game where Fischer faced this move. Most of his opponents played 6...exd4 here and quickly found themselves in difficulties.
7.Qb3
7.0–0 Bb6 was Lasker's idea with the point that after 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.Qxd8+ Nxd8 10.Nxe5 White has recovered the pawn but at a serious cost to his pawn structure.

7...Qd7 8.dxe5
This move does not promise much. Recent attempts to breath new life into the Evans Gambit include 8.0–0 and 8.Nbd2.

8...Bb6
Black stabilizes his bishop and introduces the threat of ...Na5, a standard motif for the defender in this opening.

9.exd6
This is a rare choice, perhaps chosen by Fischer as the more commonly played 9.Nbd2 leads to positions where Black is doing fine. For example: 9...Na5 10.Qc2 (10.Qb4 Nxc4 11.Nxc4 Bc5 12.Qb3 Ne7) 10...Nxc4 11.Nxc4 d5 12.exd5 Qxd5 13.Qa4+ Bd7 14.Nxb6 cxb6. 9.Bb5 is met by 9...a6.

9...Na5 10.Qb4 Nxc4 11.Qxc4 cxd6
Fenner Parham, a four-time Mississippi champion, loved to attack and often played the Evans Gambit as White as well as Black, which explains his familiarity with the opening. Here Black had a good alternative in 11...Qxd6 meeting 12.Ba3 with 12...Be6.

12.0–0 Nf6
Black understandably wants to catch up in development, but also playable was 12...Qc6 after 13.Qxc6+ bxc6 14.Bf4 Ba6 15.Rd1 Nf6 16.Nbd2 0–0–0 Black is doing fine. It's not often he can castle queenside in the Evans!

13.Ba3 0–0?!
Again it's understandable that Black wants to complete his development, but the text runs into a well-timed e5. Instead 13...Qc7, planning ...Be6 and ...Bc5 when needed, would have maintained equal chances after 14.Nbd2 Be6 15.Qxc7 Bxc7.

14.e5! Qg4
14...Ng4 15.Bxd6 Re8 16.Nbd2 clearly favors White, but sacrificing the exchange with 14...dxe5 15.Bxf8 Kxf8 was not out of the question. After 16.Nxe5 Qc7 (or 16...Qe7 17.Re1 Be6) Black's two bishops and better pawn structure provide some compensation.
15.Nbd2

Fischer might have done better with 15.Qxg4 which more or less obliges Black to later capture on f2. For example 15...Nxd4 16.Bxd6 Re8 17.h3 Nxf2 18.Rxf2 Bxf2+ 19.Kxf2 Be6 20.Nbd2 and White's chances in the ending are clearly better.

15...Nh5!

Black's knight heads to f4 where it will be well-placed for attack and defense.

16.Qxg4


16...Bxg4 17.Bxd6?! 

In retrospect 17.exd6 was better as the bishop ends up out of play on d6.

17...Rfc8

Black's two bishops, active knight and better pawn structure provide full compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

18.c4 Nf4 19.Ra1 Bf5 20.Rb3 Be6

20...Bd3 was also strong.

21.g3 Ne2+ 22.Kg2 Bxc4 23.Nxc4 Rxc4 24.Re1?

Bobby is starting to lose the thread of the game. Here 24.Rd1 was necessary, meeting 24...Rc2 with 25.Rd2.
24...Rc2

24...Nc1 was a good alternative but the text is more natural.

25.Rf1?

Nothing is more uncomfortable for the simul giver than being under attack with no counterplay - precisely the situation Bobby is in. His best chance was 25.Rd3 hoping to play Rd2 and relieve the pressure against f2. This would leave White a pawn down in the ending after a2 falls, but with some practical chances.

25...Rxa2

Again the unconventional 25...Nc1 was a worthy alternative.

26.Ng5?

26.Rfb1 to play Rb2 was necessary.

26...Rc8

Equally good was 26...h6 27.Ne4 Rc8 intending to double on the seventh rank.

27.Rf3 Nd4! 28.Rd3
28.Rf4 h6! 29.Nxf7 Ne6 30.Rf3 Rcc2 and with White completely tied up (his knight on f7 has nowhere to go) Black will win by advancing his a-pawn.

28...Rcc2 29.Ne4 Nf5 30.g4??

White finally cracks. 30.Bc5 was forced.

30...Ne3+ 31.Rxe3 Bxe3 32.Kg3 Rc1 33.Rxc1 Bxc1 34.f4 Re2 35.Nc5 b5 36.f5 Ba3 0–1

Louisiana Chess News Letter editor Woodrow Crew says Bobby F. turned his king over and said, “Thanks for the lesson.”

The American Chess Quarterly, October-December 1964 (pp. 84-86), where this game first appeared, had this to say in Fred Wren’s “Woodpusher’s Scrapbook”: “I don’t think that any grandmaster playing 75 games simultaneously should feel bad about losing three games, after winning seventy and drawing two. He must have been footsore, exhausted, hungry, and if he had been hunting for excuses for his losses there must have been dozens of them which he could have used. But no. No excuses at all. According to the report I received, after Black’s 36th move Bobby turned his king over and said, ‘Thanks for the lesson!’ No dramatic dashing of the pieces from the board. No frozen-faced passing of the board without having the courtesy either to make a move or resign. No complaint of food poisoning from the evening meal. No gripes about the sun being in his eyes. Just gracefully acknowledging a loss to a worthy opponent, exhibiting a brand of good sportsmanship which is not always forthcoming from his colleagues on the master and grandmaster levels of international chess.”

Some sources (Indianapolis Monthly, January 2007, page 74 and chessgames.com among others) claim it was the Indiana master Bernard Parham of 2.Qh5 fame who actually played this game and not Fenner Parham of Natchez, Mississippi. The explanation given for Fenner's name being credited with the win is that he was Bernard's uncle and registered his nephew, who was a minor at the time, for the exhibition.

Lacking a time machine we can only rely on the available facts which are as follows:

- Bernard Parham was born October 30, 1946, which would make him 17 when the exhibition was held. Chess Life, March 1964, has Bernard with a provisional rating of 1576 and listed as living in Indiana. If Fenner was Bernard's uncle one might construct a theory that the youngster was visiting family in late March 1964 and nephew and uncle made the three hour drive from Natchez to New Orleans together. Finally, that Fenner gave Bernard his spot in the exhibition at the last moment.

We do not believe this to be the case for many reasons any of which would be cause for dismissing this theory. In no particular order:

- Fenner's name was not only reported as a winner in The Times-Picayune, but also
in the Louisiana Chess News Letter. While it is conceivable that the main New Orleans newspaper made an error reporting on this huge exhibition (tied with Rochester as the biggest on the tour with 75 participants), it is very unlikely that a chess publication would have. Fenner Parham, Jr. was well known to Louisiana players having played many times in that state as Natchez, the oldest city on the Mississippi, is directly across the river from it. Parham played in the 1954 U.S. Open held in New Orleans.

- Jerry Krouse, a three-time Mississippi state champion and also a resident of Natchez, played thousands of games with Fenner and heard him speak of his game with Fischer many times. He always referred to it as a game that he had played. Mr. Krouse acknowledges that Fenner had a few faults, but misrepresenting the truth was not one of them. Quite the contrary he was honest to a fault.

- Fenner Parham was a noted aficionado of attacking chess, who played and defended the Evans Gambit on many occasions which explains the excellent opening play in the game against Fischer where Black played the opening like a master through the first dozen moves. Today, when opening theory is ever present, that might not seem like a big deal, but in 1964 it was. Fischer had several masters (and Reuben Fine in a skittles game) on the ropes within ten moves.

- Fenner Parham was Caucasian and Bernard Parham is African-American. While that doesn't mean they couldn't have been related the fact that Fenner was the only child of Fenner Payne Parham (incidentally also a chess player rated 1380 on the July 1964 USCF rating list) and Isabel Lamkin Lawrence does mean he was never anyone's uncle. It's conceivable that the reference to Fenner Parham being Bernard's uncle is being used in a less formal context where all males of the extended family are referred to as "uncle", but we have seen no such qualifiers used to define the relationship between the two men.

- Fischer-Parham was played in 1964 and there are no claims to Bernard playing the game prior to Fenner's death in 1993.

- There is strong evidence that there were no African-American participants in the exhibition held at the Gravier street YWCA. Ten years before in 1954, the U.S. Open was held in New Orleans and African-Americans were not allowed to play. This included the legendary William Scott III of Atlanta.

Sadly this tradition of segregation appears to have continued into the 1960s. Witness the following remembrance by Jude Acers:

- In 1962, when Jude was 18 years old, he rode with Adrian McAuley to a chess tournament in Natchez, Mississippi. McAuley had paid Jude’s entry fee, as was his custom. Ahead of Jude in line at the Natchez hotel was William Scott III. It was the first time Jude met Scott and they would become lifelong friends (Scott, for example, helped “save” a couple of Jude’s Atlanta exhibitions in the early 1970s).
In 1954, Scott had not been allowed to play at the U.S. Open chess tournament held in New Orleans because he was black. In 1945, Scott had served as an army photographer—a Reconnaissance Sgt. with the 183rd Engineer Combat Battalion—and documented the liberation of the Buchenwald concentration camp. Scott was also editor of the Atlanta Daily World. Behind Scott in line was Milan Momic. Formerly of Yugoslavia, Momic was an Alabama state champion.

“I’m sorry, sir, but the hotel will not admit you. Black players are not allowed in the tournament.”

“Why can’t he play?” asked McAuley, still in his Pelican Plumbing Supply uniform. “If he can’t play, I’m not playing.” He turned and walked out of the hotel.

“If McAuley’s not playing, I’m not going to play.” Jude turned to walk out.

“They no play, no me.” Momic followed.

- We note that National Master Adrian McAuley (1924-2000) was a 9-time Louisiana state champion and that Milan Momic (1935-1997) was the 1954 Croatian Jr. champion and the first player living in Alabama to become a U.S. Chess Federation rated Master.

- Thus ends our analysis of which Parham actually played Bobby that night in New Orleans in the spring of 1964. If it seemed a little lengthy it's only because we want to be as accurate as possible and because Fenner Parham played exceptionally well and deserves to be remembered for his accomplishment. Bobby lost fewer than 70 games out of more than 2000 and most were because he blundered horribly. There were a few cases, like the game with National Master Robert Burger from the San Francisco, where he lost quickly in the early middlegame. Even rarer were the games where he was beaten in a long closely contested battle like the one with Fenner Parham. Normally Bobby scored heavily in these games. There were fewer and fewer players in the latter stages of the exhibition, leaving him to race around the boards faster and faster with his opponents having increasingly less time to think.

- We finish our coverage of Fenner Parham with this excerpt from a tribute to him written by his friend Jerry Krouse (Mississipi champion 1970-72). The entire article entitled Fenner Parham Gives ME My First Real Chess Lesson can be found at http://www.mcachess.org/history.
- Note the title refers to Mr. Krouse's first forays into the world of organized chess at the age of 26 in 1966.

Little did I know that a newcomer is usually thrown to the fiercest wolf in the den to see what he is made of. And what a wolf! Fenner, at that time fifty-four years of age, worked a little, drank a lot of beer, worked out religiously with weights and weighed a muscular two hundred pounds, and played chess like an axe-murderer.
I would learn, later, that Fenner had won the state championship four times. In 1964, at a simultaneous exhibition in New Orleans, in which the future world champion Bobby Fisher played seventy-five players at one time, Fenner would be one of the three people able to win against the prodigy.

The game against Fenner wasn't short and sweet. It was short and ugly. So ugly, in fact, that I was then passed down the ladder to the weakest player in the club (Fenner's father!) who proceeded to whack me again. I sure was glad I hadn't used my "Does anybody in here play chess?" line!

It was a full year before I worked my way up the ladder and earned the right to face the formidable Fenner again. And it took a great deal more time before I could expect a reasonable chance of an even game with him.

Addendum after Fenner's death:

Fenner is gone now. Natchez, chess, and his friends, are the worse for his passing. Fenner was a strange man. He was ferocious at chess where he gave no quarter and never played for a draw, but was one of the kindest and gentle human beings I have ever met. He was shy and introverted to a degree hardly ever seen. Unfortunately, Fenner literally blossomed under the influence of alcohol, and I guess that is why it played a part in his demise.

Once Fenner told me he always left home to go to a bar with thirteen beer bottle caps in his left pocket. Why? I wondered. "It's simple you see," Fenn replied with an impish grin on his face, "every time I drink a beer, I transfer a bottle cap to the right pocket. When all are transferred I know it's time to go home!"

Fenner had had trouble in high school, but he was well read and extremely intelligent. He read and studied books on varied subjects such as mathematics, history, warfare, the stock market, martial arts, Chess, of course, and poetry. Liberated by a few beers, Fenner could, and did, expound on many subjects in great detail. He could just as easily quote many lines of various poems - especially those of his favorite Edgar Allen Poe.

Fenner never refused my requests for games - and in the early days they were numerous. Unlike me, Fenner was always a gracious loser and always willing to share his knowledge with anyone.

Fenner's friendship wasn't fickle; he was always there if I needed him, even after years of inattention on my part. He always allowed our friendship to resume as if it had only been a few days since we last contested a game.

I'll miss Fenner as a friend and a chess foe. I hope that wherever Fenn is now, he is seated at a chessboard, sipping a bottle of his favorite beer, contemplating a winning piece sacrifice, and quoting Edgar Allen Poe's "The Raven."
Andrew Lockett was a legendary figure in Louisiana chess for many years. During the period 1917 to 1937, Lockett was one of the dominant players in the state, though he considered himself more of a problemist than a player. He was also a major organizer. He faced many top players in simuls over the years including Capablanca, Torre, Edward Lasker, Denker, Horowitz, Emanuel Lasker, Dake, Reshevsky, Bisguier, Evans, and Koltanowski. Lockett was 68 years old when he faced Bobby.

(76) Modern B07
Fischer – Andrew Lockett
New Orleans (simul), March 26, 1964

1.e4 d6 2.d4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.f4

“Another interesting possibility is 4.h4, which I have played in some skittles games. For example, Fischer-N.N. went 4.h4 h5? 5.Nh3! Bxh3? (a common mistake in this line) 6.Rxh3 c5? 7.dxc5 dxc5 8. Bb5+ Nc6 9.Rd3 Qa5 10.Bd2 with a won game for White. If Black answers 4.h4 with 4...h5, then 5.Be2 c5 6.dxc5 Qa5 7.Kf1! Qxc5 8.h5 O-O with a double-edged game. I beat Tal in a five-minute game with this line.” — “Fischer talks Chess,” Chess Life, February 1964, p. 44.

4...Nc6


Correct is 32.Rh5 with an equal position.

32...Rxf3 33.Kc5 Kc7 34.Re5 Kd7 35.Kb6 Rf4 36.Rh5 Rf6?

Better is 36...Ng4 with advantage to Black.
37. Kxa6 Kc7 38. Ka5 Rd6 39. a4 Rd8

39...bxa4 is correct. White would then have a slight advantage after 40. Kxa4.

40. Bxb5 cxb5 41. Rxb5 cxb5 42. Kxa4 Ra8 43. b5 Ra8+ 44. Kb4 Ke7 45. Kb2 Rh8 46. Rh8 Rxh8+ 47. Kd5 Kd7 48. Kd4 c4+ 49. Kxc4 Rb4 50. Kc3 Kc6 51. Kc4 Rb8 52. Kb5 f6 53. c4 Rd4 54. c5 Rb4 55. Kc5 Kd8 56. Kb6 Kc8 57. b7 Ra4 58. c6 Rb4 59. Kb7 Rb2 60. Kc6 Ke7 61. b8=Q+ Rxb8 62. Qa8+ Kf7 63. Qf3+ Kg7 64. Qg4+ Kg6 65. Qg6+ Kg5 66. Qg5+ Kg4 67. Qg4+ Kg3 68. Qg3+ Kg2 69. Qg2+ Kg1 70. Qb7+ Kf1 71. Qf7+ Ke1 72. Qe7+ Kd1 73. Qd7+ Kc1 74. Qc7+ Kd1 75. Qb7+ Ke1 76. Qa7+ Kf1 77. Qb7+ Kf1 78. Qa7+ Ke1 79. Qb7+ Kf1 80. Qa7+ Kg1 81. Qb7+ Kf1 82. Qa7+ Ke1 83. Qb7+ Kf1 84. Qa7+ Kg1 85. Qb7+ Kf1 86. Qa7+ Kg1 87. Qb7+ Kf1 88. Qa7+ Ke1 89. Qb7+ Kf1 90. Qc7+ Kg1 91. Qe7+ Kf1 92. Qf7+ Kg1 93. Qg7+ Kh1 94. Qf7+ Kg1 95. Qg7+ Kh1 96. Qf7+ Kg1 97. Qg7+ Kh1 98. Qf7+ Kg1 99. Qg7+ Kh1 100. Qf7+ Kg1 101. Qg7+ Kh1 102. Qf7+ Kg1 103. Qg7+ Kh1 104. Qf7+ Kg1 105. Qg7+ Kh1 106. Qf7+ Kg1 107. Qg7+ Kh1 108. Qf7+ Kg1 109. Qg7+ Kh1 110. Qf7+ Kg1 111. Qg7+ Kh1 112. Qf7+ Kg1 113. Qg7+ Kh1 114. Qf7+ Kg1 115. Qg7+ Kh1 116. Qf7+ Kg1 117. Qg7+ Kh1 118. Qf7+ Kg1 119. Qg7+ Kh1 120. Qf7+ Kg1 121. Qg7+ Kh1 122. Qf7+ Kg1 123. Qg7+ Kh1 124. Qf7+ Kg1 125. Qg7+ Kh1 126. Qf7+ Kg1 127. Qg7+ Kh1 128. Qf7+ Kg1 129. Qg7+ Kh1 123. Qf7+ Kg1 123. Qg7+ Kh1 124. Qf7+ Kg1 124. Qg7+ Kh1 125. Qf7+ Kg1 125. Qg7+ Kh1 126. Qf7+ Kg1 126. Qg7+ Kh1 127. Qf7+ Kg1 127. Qg7+ Kh1 128. Qf7+ Kg1 128. Qg7+ Kh1 129. Qf7+ Kg1 129. Qg7+ Kh1

Credit serendipity for the following game turning up.

Jude Acers explains:

I left out David Levin in my original account of Fischer in Louisiana because I never really knew him or even faintly remember what he looked like. Almost 50 years after the exhibition, about 2008, I got off a St.Charles streetcar and a neat smiling man rushed up “Hello Mr.Acers I was there the night you drew with Fischer. My name is David Levin and my score against Fischer is still better than against you!” I had apparently played him a single tourney game somewhere. It was only this fabulously lucky one time only chance streetcar encounter that let me tip pro writer Tisserand about Levin who he tracked down like a bloodhound.

(77) Sicilian Sozin B86
Fischer - David Levin
New Orleans (simul) March 26, 1964


You will not find this move in any opening book where 8...Nc6, 8...Qc7, 8...0–0 and 8...b5 are the top choices. The reasons why are not hard to figure out. After White's next move Black is forced to concede the d5 square and the two bishops. However 8..e5?! is not without some bright spots. Yes, Black will be worse coming out of the opening, but on the plus side Fischer's great opening knowledge is no longer a factor and there is always the hope that White's pawn on f5 might become weak or Black achieves ...d5.
9.Nf5

The principled move, but 9.Nf3 is also better for White.

9...Bxf5 10.exf5 Nc6 11.0–0

11.Be3 might be more precise.

11...Qb6+ 12.Kh1 h5?

After 12...0–0 is only slightly worse. Maybe the text was designed to stop g2-g4-g5 by White, but the prevention is worse than the disease. 12...0-0 13.g4 Nd4 14.g5 Qc6+ 15.Kg1 Ne4 16.Nd5 Bd8 with a complicated game with mutual chances.

13.Nd5!

Thematic and strong. Fischer won many games in the Sozin (6.Bc4) Sicilian by controlling the d5 square.

13...Nxd5 14.Bxd5 Bf6 15.c3 Ne7 16.Bb3?

Much stronger was 16.fxe5 Bxe5 (16...dxe5 17.Be4) and now White has the pleasant choice between 17.Bb3 and the more complicated 17.Qa4+ Kf8 18.Bb3 d5 19.Bg5 f6 20.Bf4: in both cases he has a clear advantage.
16...Rd8

16...e4! allows Black to mobilize his central pawn majority. 17.Qe2 d5 18.Be3 Qc6 19.Rad1 Rd8 with chances for both sides.

17.Qf3


17...Qc6 18.Qe2?

18.Qxc6+ bxc6 19.fxe5 Bxe5 20.Be3 and White's two bishops give him a pull in the ending. After the text Black takes over the game with two fine moves.

18...e4! 19.c4 b5!

Black chips away at White's last pawn influencing the center.

20.cxb5?

20.Bd2 bxc4 21.Bxc4 0–0 22.Bxa6 was relatively better, although after 22...Nxf5 Black is on top.

20...Qxb5 21.Bc4

21.Re1 d5.

21...Qxf5 22.Bxa6 0–0 23.Be3 Nd5!

23...d5 24.Be5 d4 was also possible, but the text is even stronger as Black first activates his knight before getting his center pawns rolling.

24.Bg1 Rb8 25.Rab1 Nb4 26.Be4 d5 27.Bb3 Rfd8 28.Rfe1 Nd3 29.g3?

29.Rf1 was more stubborn and leaves Black to choose between several strong plans, with ...d4 and ...Nc5 followed by ...d3 the most natural.

29...Nxe1 30.Rxe1 Qg4 31.Qg2 Qf3 32.Qxf3 exf3 33.Rf1 Rbc8 34.Rxf3 Rc1 35.Kg2 Bxb2 36.Be3 Rcc8 37.a4 d4 38.Bd2 Bc3 39.Rd3 Rb8 0–1

As the forced sequence 40.Bxc3 Rxb3 41.Rxd4 Rxd4 42.Bxd4 Rb4 simplifies to an easily winning endgame for Black.
Snake-handling (!) Bobby and the Wagner kids.
The Fischer King: Recalling four days in 1964 when Bobby Fischer brought his game to Louisiana

MICHAEL TISSERAND (THE ADVOCATE, Sept. 12, 2015; 8:25 p.m.)

Fifty-one years later, Jude Acers can still hear the champion’s footsteps approaching him. It was late on a Thursday night — March 24, 1964 — at the Young Women’s Christian Association on Gravier Street. The YWCA’s old floor creaked when you walked on it, Acers recalls.

As night ticked on to early Friday morning, Acers and 74 other local chess players waited their turn as grandmaster and national champion Robert J. “Bobby” Fischer methodically — and a little noisily — made his way toward their boards. He was playing all of them simultaneously. Those who were there that night recall a very different Bobby Fischer from the international celebrity and Cold War icon whose brilliant career eventually unraveled in erratic behavior and forced exile — a story that will soon appear on the big screen in “Pawn Sacrifice,” a movie opening Friday that stars Tobey Maguire as Fischer and Liev Schreiber as Fischer’s
There was neither intrigue nor tragedy shadowing the Bobby Fischer who arrived in Louisiana for a four-day whirlwind tour of TV specials and chess games. Instead, local players welcomed a smart and personable Brooklynite who just happened to possess a fiercely competitive streak.

Acer, who was 20 at the time, remembers asking Fischer, who had just turned 21, his secret to the game. “Keep the pressure on them every second,” Fischer had told him. “They all crack.”

Today, Fischer’s trip to Louisiana is shrouded in myth and foggy memories. Some think that he was just a child when he came to town. Others remember him being here for weeks, not just 72 hours. The exact number of opponents he faced is in some dispute. But everyone agrees that they were well aware that a legend was in their midst.

The previous year, Fischer had won his sixth U.S. championship match, earning an incredible perfect score. Now, he had devised a barnstorming tour to cash in on his success. From February through May, he visited 40 cities in the United States and Canada, playing more than 2,000 documented games and earning an unprecedented $250 per appearance, according to “A Legend on the Road,” a book about the tour written by John Donaldson.

Acer remembers bringing a Sports Illustrated article about Fischer to Baton Rouge Chess Club President Don Wagner. Acer knew that if anyone could get Fischer to Louisiana, it would be Wagner.

“When you’re talking Don Wagner, you’re talking Phineas T. Barnum, you’re talking (Beatles manager) Brian Epstein,” Acer said recently. “The man was a promotional genius.”

When not playing chess, Wagner sold encyclopedias and carted his pet reptiles to a local TV studio for a weekly “Herpetology Day” on a kids’ program, “The Buckskin Bill Show.”

Acer and Wagner hatched a plan to televise a Fischer special, as well as host an informal match at Wagner’s home between Fischer and Acer, who was captain of the LSU chess team and the top-ranked player in the state.

Larry Wagner was only 7 at the time, but he can still remember when his father brought Bobby Fischer home. “I was just a kid, but I could tell that everyone treated him with reverence,” he said recently.

**Skill at another game**

Wagner mostly recalls the house guest’s fantastic talent at the “15 Puzzle,” a game in which 15 sliding numbers must be put in order in a small square tray. “It was a little flat plastic box — we got them in a cereal box. We’d mix it up and hand it back to him, and his finger would be a blur, he’d sort it out and hand it right back,” Wagner said. (In 1972, Fischer would demonstrate this skill for Johnny Carson on “The Tonight Show.”)

Fischer also was fascinated by Wagner’s collection of serpents, including corn snakes, rat snakes, indigo snakes and a python. Even after one bit him, Fischer wasn’t dissuaded from pulling a snake from an aquarium and carrying it around the house.

Wagner staged Fischer’s first games in Baton Rouge in the WBRZ-TV studio, with LSU’s chess team players and faculty members among Fischer’s opponents. Acer provided play-by-play commentary, and Wagner enlisted John Ferguson, the voice of LSU football, to introduce the matches and interview Fischer.

Acer remembers in horror how Ferguson began his remarks by calling Fischer a high school dropout. (Fischer had attended Erasmus High School in Brooklyn, where his classmates included Barbra Streisand and Neil Diamond, but left school as soon as he turned 16.)

Recalled Acer: “I just closed my eyes. Wagner turned red.”
Fischer won all his televised games, as well as the games against Acers at Wagner’s house. The TV special aired on Baton Rouge television twice that week, Acers says, after which the station, over his protests, reused the tape to record a car commercial. While in Baton Rouge, Acers took Fischer to shoot pool in a Chimes Street bar, and Fischer took a date on a riverboat cruise. Late Thursday afternoon, as Wagner was about to drive him to New Orleans, Fischer asked Acers to locate a particular book about New Orleans chess legend Paul Morphy. A frantic hunt through the LSU library produced the book — “Morphy’s Games of Chess,” by Philip Sergeant — and also made Fischer late to the Gravier Street YWCA. He finally arrived to find 75 opponents waiting for him, among them Orleans Parish District Attorney Jim Garrison, not yet a national celebrity. Each had paid $5 for the opportunity, with the proceeds going to Fischer. Attired in the same brown suit he’d worn on Baton Rouge television, Fischer started things out by confidently delivering a lecture about Morphy, declaring that the 19th-century New Orleans chess master could defeat any contemporary player. (A rare film clip of Fischer discussing Morphy can be seen on YouTube.) It was sometime between 8:45 p.m. and 10 p.m. when the games finally got underway. Fischer made the rounds, gradually eliminating his opponents, rapping on the table when players took too long. In the end, three of the 75 players emerged with wins.

Two of those three are now deceased. Fenner Parham Jr. sold insurance and lived in his parents’ home in Mississippi, recalls his friend, Jerry Krouse. He was muscular but shy and a bit eccentric, frequently reciting the works of Edgar Allan Poe.

“It was an attacking game, and Fenner was an attacking guy,” Krouse said.

Also winning his game was New Orleanian Frank Chavez. “He would always bring copies of the game to chess club meetings, even though we all already had it,” recalled local player Jules Le Bon.

**Improbable winner**
The most improbable winner that night was David Levin, a 16-year-old Fortier High School student who’d been playing chess for barely more than a year. A friend had taught him the game so he could help Fortier compete against its biggest rival, Jesuit High School.

“I had no expectation of winning” against Fischer, Levin recalled. “I just wanted to play against him.”

Levin remembers that he’d planned out a defensive line that Fischer himself liked to play. “I figured it would be good psychology,” he said. “Everybody kept coming to my game, looking at me, wondering when I was going to fold. He played a real aggressive game against me, and once his attack wore off, I had the advantage. That’s when he resigned. He was friendly about it.”

Levin’s game didn’t end until 2:45 a.m. His parents weren’t there, he recalls. He thinks he took the bus home. By the time the last game was over at the YWCA, it was 3:30 a.m.

Two local players also earned draws that night: Frank Gladney and Jude Acers. Acers made the most of his newfound reputation as a man who could stand up to Fischer. He went on to make ambitious chess tours of his own, twice setting a Guinness world record for the most opponents played in a single setting.

Now 72, Acers, adorned in a bright red beret, continues to hold forth at a card table on Decatur Street, where he plays passersby for a fee of $5, the same amount he’d once shelled out to take on Fischer.

In later years, those who had met Fischer in Louisiana were surprised to hear that the champion
had suffered breakdowns and become a fugitive. Acers said he knew something was wrong when he heard that Fischer had turned down hundreds of thousands of dollars to play a game of chess in the lobby of Caesars Palace. “The inability to do creative business is a sign of madness,” Acers said. Acers also remembers taking one last look at Fischer through the car windshield as the champion was on his way out of town. “The days I was with Fischer, I never realized that would be it,” Acers said. “I never realized I was never going to see this guy again. I never realized how lucky I was.”

Jude Acers gives an exhibition at the Lloyd Center in Portland, Oregon, on April 21, 1973. The marathon 117 player exhibition (+93, -13, =11) took 13 hours and 14 minutes! Acers has been one of the great chess promoters in the United States for close to 50 years. (Photo by Rusty Miller)

Houston, March 28

+51, -3, =3

Fischer wins 51 Games, Loses 3, Draws 3 Here

by George H. Smith

Chess in the United States received a tremendous boost over the Christmas holidays when Robert J. Fischer won the national title for the sixth time with a record-breaking 11-0
performance. This was well illustrated last Saturday night at the Shamrock Hilton Hotel where Fischer played in a simultaneous exhibition. He was scheduled to meet 50 players but when seven extra showed up, he graciously consented to play all comers. About 40 spectators also attended. This writer can recall no other exhibition so well attended here.

Fischer opened with a fine lecture on the difference between today’s master play and that of Paul Morphy’s day. He said Morphy’s dynamic qualities would have enabled him to easily hold his own today.

Grandmaster Fischer’s score in the simultaneous exhibition was 51 wins, three draws and three losses, with nearly all of the best in the Houston area competing. This is not as good a score as some masters have made here, but Fischer does not play chess as others do. He is not content to sit back and wait for his less experienced opponents to make a mistake, but tries to beat them by his own play. He lost to Eric Bone, former state champion from Baytown, to Bill Jones and to Ross Carbonell, both from the Houston Chess Club. Those who drew were Robert McGregor and Tommy Richardson of Houston and Alan K. Hale of Austin.

His loss to Bone was caused by an outright blunder in a winning position, when he overlooked a liquidating continuation which allowed Eric to emerge with a piece plus. Bill Jones obtained an early advantage in his game, and then completely outplayed the champion the rest of the way. The game with Carbonell also was well played.

The exhibition was sponsored by the Houston Chess Club and arranged by Rhodes Cook, club secretary. (Houston Chronicle, 1964)

My Fischer Experience

by Carl Branan

I hardly know where to start. I was the only out-of-town member of the Houston Chess Club. Having paid my $3.00 (non-members paid $5.00), I was waiting at the old club on West McKinney playing a few games. The simul was to be at The Garden Room of the now defunct Shamrock Hotel. Some of the guys asked me to go and help set up.

They had called Bobby at the hotel. Bobby was mad that no one had met him at the airport. All he would say to them was “Yep” and “Nope.” When we arrived at the hotel we phoned Bobby and asked him to dinner, and he accepted. He knew many chess players in Houston and one had given him the demo board he was using on the tour. We all ordered tea, coffee, water, etc. Bobby ordered a beer. Later we reflected that he was under-aged for a beer in Houston.

While at dinner someone mentioned to Bobby that Robert Brieger had prepared a wild variation to spring on him. The variation depended upon the knowledge that Bobby always opened with P-K4. Whereupon Bobby said, “Point him out to me when we get into the tournament hall and I will open with P-Q4 against him.” Weeks of preparation work down the drain! [Editor’s note: Editor’s note: the score of the Brieger game (game 78 below) does not
bear this out. Black, by transposition, played a rather quiet line of the French.

When Bobby entered the hall we were still not ready with the setup, so Bobby was wandering around in the lobby. My boss, who came up from Texas City to watch my game, spotted Bobby and said, “Hi Bobby, come into the bar and I will buy you a beer.” Now Bobby had at least two beers under his belt for his 60 game match.

Bobby was very tired since this was his last stop. He had been up late the night before in New Orleans. He really enjoyed seeing Paul Morphy’s home, which is now Brennen’s Restaurant.

Bobby being tired and wanting to wrap things up quickly, if you didn’t have your move ready when he appeared at your board, he would bang on the table and admonish you to move in a raised voice. I played a variation of the French that was in vogue in those days. This variation involved swapping off two minor pieces early in the opening. I figured that this would simplify things for me. It didn’t work, of course. At one point it looked like Bobby had trapped my knight. While Bobby was making his rounds, however, my boss saw where I could withdraw the knight, offering it to be taken by a pawn. If Bobby took it with the pawn, however, I would recapture with a pawn checking his king and attacking his queen at the same time. When Bobby arrived and I made the move, he gave me the most glaring stare that I have ever seen, as if to say, “Did you think that I, Bobby Fischer, would fall for a cheap trick like that?” Whereupon he moved his king over and moved on. I am sorry that I don’t have the game score. I am just a casual player and was even more casual then.

On my left, unfortunately, was a player that none of the players liked. He was an old veterinarian who was loud and obnoxious. He was especially rude to the younger players. He had brought a crazy set of strange-looking pieces. He said to me, “Watch him holler when he sees this.” On about the third or fourth time around the horn Bobby asked him, “What is that piece”? The old codger said, “A horse.” Bobby probably figured, “What an incorrigible rummy!” Bobby mated him in about ten moves. Then this jerk tried to move over and give me advice. My boss, standing behind, said “Get the hell out of here!” He left.

Prior to the simul Bobby gave a demonstration that he called “How the Russians Play.” The demo showed games of Russian players of that day losing quickly. Bobby’s descriptions were hilarious.

Bobby Patteson preserved the following games from the Houston exhibition.

(78) Caro-Kann B17
Fischer – Alan K. Hale
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964

Bobby has the two bishops and queenside pawn majority so one might reasonably expect him to collect the point. Such is not the case here, as Hale puts up a stout defense and Bobby gets a little too eager in advancing his queenside pawns without sufficient preparation.

24.b4 Be7 25.a4 a5 26.Be3 Qc7 27.bxa5 Qxa5 28.Qb5 Qxc3 29.Qxb7 Bb4 30.Bb6 Qa1+ 31.Kg2 Qxa4 32.Qc8+ Qe8 33.Qc4 Qe7 34.Bd4 Bd6 35.Qc8+ Qe8 36.Qb7 Qe7 37.Qc8+ Qe8 Draw

Steve Moffit shared the 1969 Texas State Champion title with Eric Bone.

(79) Caro-Kann B18
Fischer - Steve Moffit
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964

15.d5! cxd5 16.cxd5 O-O-O 17.dxe6 Nb6 18.exf7 Qxf7 19.Ne5 1-0


(80) Sicilian Dragon B57
**Fischer - C.H. Bone**
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964

21.Ra7 e6?? 22.fxe6 1-0

(81) Ruy Lopez C60
**Fischer - Clarence Bell**
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964


Bills won the championship of Texas in 1954 and 1959 and numerous tournaments in California. He died on November 16, 1980, in San Francisco where he resided for many years. Besides playing chess, he was an electrical engineer, assisting in the design of the Houston Astrodome among other projects.

(82) French Burn C11
**Fischer - William Bills**
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964

This rare sideline in the Burn variation was a favorite of Fischer’s.

7...f5


8.Nc3 c6?

This is too passive. Fischer-Petrosian, Buenos Aires (m) 1971, saw the more active 8...Bf6 with 9.Nge2 Nc6! 10.d5 exd5 11.Nxd5 Bxb2 12.Bg2 O-O 13.O-O leading to unclear play where Black’s extra pawn compensated for his structural deficiencies.

9.Bg2 b6 10.d5! Bb7

As 10...cxd5 would be strongly met by 11.Nxd5.

38. Rxc7 Rxc7 39. Ra6 Rc3+ 40. Kg4 a3 41. Ra8+ Kf7 42. g6+ Kf6 43. Ra6+ Kg7 44. Ra7+ Kf6 45. Rf7+ Ke6 46. f5+ Kd6 47. g7 a2 48. g8=Q a1=Q 49. Qd8+ Kc5 50. Rc7+ Kb4 51. Qd4+ 1-0

NMs William Bills (left) and Subu Subramanian on the way to Lone Pine in the 1970s. (Photo by Alan Benson)

(83) Evans Gambit C51
Fischer - J. Boatner
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. b4 Bxb4 5. c3 Be7

"Must be the trend. At least, on tour most players answered this way." (My 60 Memorable Games)


In the following game Bobby completely outplays his opponent in excellent fashion before committing a tragic blunder.

Eric Bone was one of the best players in Texas in the 1960s. He served as the U.S.C.F. rating statistician in the 1970s.

(84) French Alekhine-Chatard C13
Fischer - Eric Bone
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Bg5 Be7 5. e5 Nfd7 6. h4 a6 7. Qg4 f5 8. Qh5+ g6 9. Qh6 Bxg5 10. hxg5 Qe7
This appears to be a new try if not a successful one. ECO gives only 10...Kf7 11.Nge2! Nf8 12.O-O-O Rg8 (intending ...Rg7 and ...Kg8) 13.g4 with slightly the better game for White in Yanofsky-Gudmundsson, Reykjavik 1947.


21.Qd4??

21.dxc8=Q+ Kxc8 22.Bd3 leaves White with a decisive advantage due to Black’s exposed king.

21…Qe1+ 0-1

An interesting battle between a future World Champion and a first-rate problem composer:

(85) French C10

Fischer - Robert Brieger
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964

The game with Bills was not the only one from the exhibition in Houston where openings from the 1971 Fischer-Petrosian match were anticipated. The final game in Buenos Aires saw 6...Bg4 (to stop 7.Ne5) 7.h3 Bxf3 8.Qxf3 Be7 9.Bg5 a6 10.Bxc6+ bxc6 11.O-O O-O 12.Rfe1 with a small edge for White.


51...gxh4?? 53.f5+ Nxf5 54.Bxf5+ Kxf5 55.Qxe3 hgx3+ 56.Kxg3 Nd6 57.Kf3 Ne4 58.Qb6 Ng5+ 59.Ke3 Ne6 60.Qxb7 d4+ 61.Kd2 1-0

(86) Petroff C43
Fischer - Robert Chalker
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964

(87) Philidor C41
Fischer - K. Chaney
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964


(88) King’s Gambit C33
Fischer - Tommy Cunningham
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964


Bob Dudley was the founder and sole employee of Chess Enterprises, an important American chess publishing firm in the 1980s and 1990s.

(89) Sicilian Keres B81
Fischer - Bob Dudley
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964


[Diagram of chess game]


(90) King’s Gambit C30

Fischer - N. Ermidis
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964


(91) Two Knights C59
**Fischer - David Gould**
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964


Sidestepping Bobby’s favorite 8...h6 9.Nh3 but losing whatever compensation he had for the pawn.

(92) Ruy Lopez C70
Fischer - Charles Heising
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964


(93) Sicilian Dragon B76
Fischer - Steve Jacobs
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964


(94) Sicilian B29
Fischer – C. Bill Jones
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964

7.Nxb5?!


Future National Master C. Bill Jones had a USCF rating of 1870 in the January 1964 issue of Chess Life. (Photo by Alan Benson)

(95) Sicilian Scheveningen B84
Fischer - J. Kelley
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964


(96) Ruy Lopez C62
Fischer - E. Longcobe
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964


(97) Pirc Austrian B09
Fischer-Lynch
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964

21. Be5 Bxe5 22. Rxe5 Rf8 23. Qe2 Rf6 24. c3 Kg7 25. g4 Qc8 26. h4 h6 27. Qe3 Qd7 28. Qd3 Qc8 29. c4 Qb7 30. Qc3 Qd7 31. cxd5 exd5 32. Qb3 Qc7 33. Qe3 Qc6 34. Kh2 Qd6 35. g5 hxg5 36. hxg5 Rf8 37. Kg1 Re8 38. a4 a6 39. a5 1-0

Fischer addresses the audience at the closing ceremony of the 1966 Piatigorsky tournament held at the Miramar Hotel in Santa Monica. Tournament winner Boris Spassky and organizer and
Marshall Rohland (1925-1994) was USCF Secretary in 1964. He served as President in the late 1960s when the USCF experienced record membership growth.

(California Chess Reporter Archives)
17...Rf7? 18.Ng5 Qe7 19.Nxf7 Qxf7 20.Bg5 Qe6 21.Rxf6 Qe7 22.Rxg6+ 1-0

Billy Patteson (b.1938), who preserved the games from the Houston exhibition, has long been associated with chess in Texas, particularly Houston. He produced an excellent series of pamphlets on Bobby Fischer's games and openings that were published by Ken Smith's Chess Digest in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

(101) Nimzovitch B00
Fischer - Billy Patteson
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964


(102) Evans Gambit C52

Fischer-Peil

Houston (simul), March 28, 1964


The mid 1960s were happy times for Bobby, not only during his 1964 tour but also the 1966 Piatigorsky Cup. Here he is analyzing his round
14 game with Wolfgang Unzicker from the 1966 Piatigorsky Cup. This event saw Unzicker turn in the best performance of his career tying for fourth (with Portisch) and losing only a single game in 18 rounds. (Photo by Jerry Hanken)

(103) Sicilian Sozin B88
Fischer-Limoh (Pimoh?)
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964


(104) French Classical C14
Fischer - J. Plaster
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964


20.f5 exf5 21.gxf5 f6 22.e6 Be8 23.Rhg1 Kh8 24.Rg3 g6 25.Reg1 g5 26.h4 h6 27.hxg5 hxg5
George Smith was the longtime chess editor for the Houston Chronicle.
17.a4 Bb4 18.Bd2 a5


(107) King’s Gambit C30
Fischer - G. Staight
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964


(108) Evans Gambit C52
Fischer – Ross Carbonell
Houston (simul), March 28, 1964


8...d5

8...Ne5 9.Nxf7 Nxf7 10.Bxf7+ Kxf7 11.Qh5+ g6 12.Qxa5 was unclear in Sax-Honfi, Hungary
1971.

9.exd5 Ne5 10.Bb3

Much more common is 10.Qxd4. One wild possibility is 10.d6.

10...O-O 11.Nxh7


11...Kxh7 12.Qh5+ Kg8 13.Qxe5 dxc3 14.Nxc3 Bxc3 15.Qxc3 Nxd5 16.Qg3

Bobby shows he’s in a fighting mood. He could have bailed out with 16.Bxd5 Qxd5 17.Bb2 f6 18.Qxc7 with a very even game.

16...Be6 17.Bb2 Nf6 18.Bc2 Nh5 19.Qf3 Qd5

The immediate 19...Qg5 was to be considered.

20.Be4 Qg5 21.Bxb8 Rab8 22.Rae1 Qg4

Black misses the opportunity to keep his disadvantage to a bare minimum with 22...Bc4 23.Re5 Qf4 24. Re1 Qxf3 25.Bxf3 Rxb2 26.Rc5 Bxa2 27.Bxh5.
23.\textbf{Be5} Nf6 24.\textbf{Bxc7}??

Bobby makes a rare blunder. He’d have kept an advantage with 24.\textbf{Rc1}.

24...\textbf{Rxb7} 25.\textbf{Qxb7} Bd5 0-1

White must give up his queen to avoid immediate checkmate. (Oklahoma Chess Bulletin, November 1996, p. 25)

The following game was presumably played in Houston on March 28, 1964, as the scoresheet is on the stationery of the Houston Chess Club. The E. Travis who played this game might be the one who played Fischer in Wichita. The USCF rating lists which appeared in Chess Life for the period 1963–1965 do not give an E. Travis. They do list V. Travis of Oklahoma who was rated around 1700.

(109) Ruy Lopez C90

\textbf{Fischer- E.Travis}

Houston (simul), March 28, 1964


Black's inaccurate move order has allowed White to save a vital tempo by dispensing with h3 but allowing the knight to come freely to f5 is really asking for trouble. It was essential to play 13...g6.

\textbf{14.Nf5 Rac8} 15.d5 b4?

Travis overlooks White's powerful threat.

(a) 15...Rce8 (intending ...Bc8 to trade off the powerful knight) also fails: 16.Bxh6! gxh6 17.Qc1 Bc8 18.Qxh6 Bxf5 19.exf5 (White is planning Nd2/ Ng5 and transferring the rook to the third or fourth rank) 19...Nc4 20.Ng5 and there is no defense against Re1–e4-h4.

(b) 15...Rfe8, allowing ...Bf8, was the only defense and indeed after 16.Bxh6 gxh6 17.Qc1 Nh7 18.Qxh6 Bf8 Black is defending. However 16.b3, 17.Be3 and 18.Qd2 is a strong buildup. Black has no counterplay on the queenside and can only wait for the impending attack.
Little Rock, March 29
+36, -0, =0

On March 29, 1964, Bobby Fischer scored a perfect 36-0 in a simul in Little Rock, Arkansas. The sponsor of the event was Sam Spikes, with Gary Berry handling the organizational chores. Mr. Berry recalls that the venue was the Albert Pike hotel in downtown Little Rock and that Fischer lectured on his win over Tal from Bled 1961. The event was held at the conclusion of the Arkansas State Championship (won by Richard Long).
Mr. Berry recalls that besides himself the following people participated: David Coulter, Gene DeRossitte, Earl Eikerenkoetter, Bobbie Lee Taylor, Steve Korenblat, Joey Michalls, Sam Spikes, Ray Frankland, Craig Presson, A.C. Remmel, Wayman Coulter, Philip Wells, Orval Allbritton, Steve Balsai, Phil Leasure, Majeed Nehas, Richard Long, Charles Savery, Hunter Weaks, Troy Armstrong, Erwin Middleton, and John Hurt.

Gerald Koonce recalls:
I did not play Fischer, but my friend Steve Korenblat, who still plays in chess tournaments and carries a rating in the 1600s, played the Caro-Kann, which he had studied intensively in preparation for the event. The game followed the line Steve had most hoped it would, until they got to the end of what MCO had on it, with the notation "and black wins." From that point, Fischer wiped the floor with him and the game was soon over.

Another anecdote from Fischer's visit: His host was Sam Spikes, who also was an accomplished golfer. Spikes offered to give Fischer golf lessons in exchange for chess lessons, but Fischer was mostly interested in driving the golf cart, which he wrecked in a creek.
Frank Allen’s article in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette published on March 30th, 1964, adds a few more details about the event. He writes that the exhibition, in which passes were not allowed, lasted barely three hours. The cost to play was $5.

Allen mentions the lecture, in which Bobby analyzed his game with Tal from Bled 1961, was excellent but passed all too quickly. He quotes Bobby:

“I thought I was better than Tal but it was hard to convince anyone else after he had beaten me four times, said Fischer, exhibiting flashes of humor and none of the rudeness that has earned him a reputation for boorishness.”

Fischer lecturing on his game with Tal from Bled 1961 at Little Rock. Bobby is pictured in the act of making Black’s move 8…Ne5. (Photo by Dan Miller)
Three Boys from Arkansas Remember Bobby Fischer
In 1954 at the age of 14, I saw a movie where a chess game played an important part. After seeing the move I decided I wanted to learn to play chess, so I went to a local store, bought a chess set complete with a paper board for $1.25, and went home to read the instructions on how to play the game. Over the next several weeks I found a number of other teenagers to play with. Most significant were Ronnie Taylor and Bill Jones.

The three of us played quite frequently. Ronnie changed the future of the competition by going to the library and getting a chess book to read, and he soon was winning decisively. On learning of his new secret weapon I went to the library, and soon we were engaged in an arms race to read, study, and even buy chess books. I remember paying what at that time was the large sum of $7.50 for Practical Chess Openings by Reuben Fine. Bill, who was quite talented in playing chess as well as many other games, was soon brought into this struggle for chess supremacy. There was no chess club or organized chess activity in Fort Smith, so the three of us developed nearly exclusively by book study and competing with each other. I did have an occasion to visit the Dallas (Texas) chess club. To my surprise I was able to beat all but the strongest players there. Ronnie and I subscribed to Chess Review, the U.S. chess publication of the day, and we began playing correspondence chess. We remember 3-cent postcards. Ronnie and I also organized a chess club in our high school, but there were no other high school chess clubs to play matches against. In 1958, we did play in a two-round match against the Little Rock adult chess club, with Ronnie, Bill, and I scoring 5½ out of 6 possible points.

In 1956, the U.S. Open was held in Oklahoma City, only 200 miles from Fort Smith. Ronnie convinced his parents to allow him to play in it, his first tournament. My parents said they could not afford to send me to a two-week tournament, but that I could go over with Ronnie for the first weekend, and then return home after the weekend.

At the U.S. Open we were excited at the prospect of seeing famous players we had heard about, such as Arthur Bisguier and the newly famous Bobby Fischer, who had just won the U.S. Junior at the age of 13. Before the tournament Ronnie and I played skittles with lots of players and were relatively successful. Each of us got to play Bobby Fischer. Against Bobby, I obtained a winning position, but with all the pressure, and Bobby’s insistence that I move more quickly, I blundered and lost the game. I did not get a second chance to play him. Ronnie’s experience appears below.

Just before the tournament began, Jerry Spann, the local tournament organizer, approached me and made me an incredible offer. (He later became a President of the USCF). He said they wanted to encourage young players to enter the tournament, so he would waive my entry fee, and the hotel clerk, also a chess player, said I could stay in Ronnie’s room without paying, and he would give me the free lunch he got each day. With such a generous offer, my parents agreed I could stay for the whole tournament and they mailed me some additional money.
I.S. Turover (left with glasses) and Jerry Spann. Jerry Spann (1912-1968) was arguably the best president the U.S. Chess Federation has ever had. He possessed the rare ability to get everyone to work together. I.S. Turover (1892-1978) was a well-known American chess philanthropist who often donated brilliancy prizes. (Photo by Beth Cassidy)

In the tournament I ended up with a 6-6 score, losing to three masters, drawing one, and beating one expert. My first USCF rating was 1933. Ronnie did nearly as well, finishing with a 5-7 score and earning an 1800s rating. Bobby Fischer did not lose a game, but did draw seven. In a number of these Bobby cried after the game, when he only drew some experts. Quite a comedown for this 13-year-old! During the tournament, the Oklahoma City newspaper published an article with our picture about the young participants in the tournament. I still have that article.

While Bill did not play in the 1956 U.S. Open he played in a number of tournaments in the later years, including three U.S. Opens. Both Bill and Ronnie earned USCF master ratings. Ronnie finished third one year in the Marshall Chess Club Championship. Bill was featured as a correspondence chess player in Chess Life articles in 1991 and 1993. In the 1970’s he had chess compositions published in several international chess magazines. Although he won over a dozen tournaments in Texas, California, and Hawaii, Bill’s best performance was tying for seventh in the 1973 Louis B. Statham Masters Tournament in Lone Pine, California. While I never made it to a master’s rating, I did win the city championships when I lived in Dallas,
Texas, Nashville, Tennessee, and Atlanta. I won the Arkansas State Championship 3 times, the Tennessee Open, and the Iowa Open, as well as some smaller tournaments. Bill lives in Palo Alto, California, and I contacted him when my son decided to go to Stanford. Ronnie lives in Brooklyn, and the three of us are in contact by e-mail over 40 years after we graduated from high school in Fort Smith.

In 1964, Bobby Fischer came to the Arkansas State Championship in Little Rock, where he gave an inspiring lecture and a simultaneous exhibition. He was gentlemen and a scholar. Since I had just won the tournament, Fischer may have given me a little extra attention. In any event, he quickly took advantage of my failure to develop my kingside pieces with a knight sacrifice.

Ronnie related the following experiences he had with Bobby Fischer:

“The only game I won against Fischer was just a side game at the 1956 U.S. Open, the only person who might recall the whole game is Fischer. I remember that I was Black. Fischer played the Danish gambit, and not being familiar with it I took every pawn he offered. Somehow, his attack bogged down (unlike in the other dozen games we played) and I won the endgame. He seemed to start crying or at least was on the verge of crying, because he had lost a game to an unknown kid from some small town.

“He was 12 at the time and the U.S. Junior Champion, in the 1956 U.S. Open he finished tied for 4th to 8th with 5 wins and 7 draws, without losing a game. A year later, he began his string of winning U.S. Championships.

“About 1967, I was at the famous old Chess and Checker Club of New York (for those who know NYC, the club was near Times Square above the Amsterdam Theater). Around 11:00 one night, Bobby came in with a current copy of the well-known Russian chess magazine Shakhmatny Bulletin and I watched him analyze games for two or three hours, such speed and brilliance of analysis I don’t expect to see again. At one point, I suggested a move, which Fischer, after a minute or two, concluded was indeed an extremely good one, showing me all sorts of variations that I hadn’t seen at all. I did not really deserve credit for the move, because I hadn’t seen the reasons why it was so good. But Fischer wrote my name in the margin with the suggested move and two exclamation points and told me that if he ever published the analysis he would give me credit for it.

“About six or seven months later, I saw him at the Manhattan chess club and asked if he remembered that game and me. He told me “sure” and replayed the game for me from memory. White had lost the original game, and Fischer said he was disappointed that he could only find a draw for White and not a win.

“I know that Fischer’s personal reputation is not good now, but at that time I found him friendly and, at least as far chess goes, intellectually very honest.”

Bill had the following experience in Houston:

“I was fortunate when I played an offbeat opening against Fischer in a simultaneous. Although
he surely knew more about the opening than I, we were quickly “out of the book,” a distinct disadvantage for someone playing fifty other players at the same time. Bobby overlooked a simple move that gave me a strong positional advantage, and I was able to keep my composure long enough to garner a win. Bobby was most gracious when he signed the scoresheet after resigning.

“After spending several hours on his feet, Bobby went out for a late night dinner with several Houston chess players. They reported that Fischer was friendly and quite witty; they had a great time.

“The three of us all agree that Fischer in his prime dominated the chess world like no one has ever done before or since. On his way to the world championship, he crushed three top grandmasters in the qualification matches (made up of the top six placers in the Interzonal tournament: 6-0-0 versus Taimanov, 6-0-0 against Larsen, and 5-1-3 versus Petrosian for a total of 17 wins, one losses, and only five draws.

“Bobby also demanded that chess players be shown more respect. He even decided that he should dress well, because many would respect chess players more if they dressed like successful people. He also was one of the first to realize that good physical conditioning was important to perform well in tournaments. He also demanded optimum playing conditions for his matches. And he challenged practices that gave the top Soviet players unfair advantages in tournaments. To my own mind his aggressive pursuit of these goals, in many cases with very little support, led to immense pressures being placed upon him. Sticking to his principles led him to refuse to defend his crown under the conditions dictated by the FIDE, and he later dropped out of chess, and in a sense out of life. Like Paul Morphy, this great talent was cut short by tragic events. If only some things had been different.”
John F. Hurt (1914-1993) won the championship of West Virginia four times between 1939 and 1955 and dominated the Charleston City Championship from the mid 1930s to 1957. Soon after moving to Memphis in 1960 he picked up his old habits and over the next few decades won many events including a record eleven Memphis City titles between 1962 and 1977.

Known by the nickname Big Johnny, Hurt was not only a player but also a teacher, promoter, organizer and writer. Among the books he wrote were Center Gambits, Sicilian Wing Gambit, and The Games of John Hurt.

(110) French Winawer C15
**Fischer - John Hurt**
Little Rock (simul), March 29, 1964

Notes by John Hurt.


If 27...Bd7 28.Rxf6!

28.Qh5 Bd7 29.Rd6 Qe8
Maybe better is 29...Re7.

30.Kh2 Be6 31.a4 Qe7 32.a5 Rg7 33.a6 b6

Better is 33...bxa6!?

34.Qe2 Bd7 35.Qa2 Qe8

A hasty move. Better was 35...Be6 or 35...Rg6.

36.Rxf6 Re7 37.Be5 Rxe5 38.dxe5 Qxe5 39.Rf8+ Kg7 40.Ra8 f4 41.Rxa7 fxg3+ 42.fxg3 Qe6 43.Rxd7+ 1-0 (Tennessee Chess News, May 1964)

(111) Sicilian B46
Fischer - Richard Long
Little Rock (simul), March 29, 1964


(112) Caro-Kann B11
Fischer - Hunter Weaks
Little Rock (simul), March 29, 1964


13...Qb6 was better.


The day following the exhibition, Spikes and Fischer journeyed to Hot Springs, Arkansas. While enjoying the resort city, Bobby paid a visit to the local club where he played Orval Allbritton. One of the strongest players in Arkansas at the time, the Class A-rated Allbritton, who was an FBI agent, had played Bobby “tough” the night before in Little Rock but one-on-one he didn’t have a chance. (This information is based on the recollections of Majeed Nehas).

Orval Albritton, author and former FBI agent, was one of the top players in Arkansas in the 1960s. (Photo courtesy of Orval Albritton)

**Wichita, April 4**

+38, -1, =1
D La Pierre Ballard has this to say about the exhibition:

Bobby played 40 games that night at the University of Wichita Campus Activities Center. He lost to me, drew with future Kansas state champion Dan Prichard (We know Hart drew Bobby but unfortunately the game with Prichard is not available so we are not sure if Bobby drew two. Ballard received his information about the results secondhand. The author Gaylord Dold remembers 44 players participating.) and won the rest. His most notable game was against Keith Carson, who was the best player in Oklahoma at the time.

Bobby played the Vienna. Eventually an ending was reached in which Bobby had an f-pawn and an h-pawn. Keith had studied this rook and pawn type of ending previously and thought he could draw. Bobby played like Capablanca and by constant maneuvering managed a win.

I went with the man who organized the exhibition to pick up Bobby. I cannot remember that man’s name. He had been a Colonel. Bobby was very late — 45 minutes, I recall. On the way to the simul I sat with him and chatted.

I asked him about his recent article in the magazine Chess World, which only lasted three issues. He had listed the ten best players of all time. He had put Morphy as first. He told me that Morphy, were he alive, would have been then the best player in the world. The great accumulation of knowledge since 1860 would be assimilated and mastered by Morphy very quickly and then, were he alive in 1964, he would have been the best.

I asked him about Petrosian. He rattled off an ending from a game of Petrosian’s and said, “The man obviously did not know how to play that ending.”

Before the simul Bobby gave a talk about his famous game at Bled 1961 where he had beaten Geller in 22 moves. Bobby had White in a Steinitz Deferred Ruy. Bobby started the talk by showing 1.e4 on the board. He then said, “I always play pawn to king four for my first move just like Steinitz did before he got old!”

During my game Bobby made no comments until the end. He said after he turned over his king that 32.Qh7+ would have been much better than what he played. He did not say “I resign.” I noticed that when he played a pawn or bishop that he thoughtfully screwed it into the board, i.e. he twisted it between his thumb and forefinger.

It cost $5 to play Bobby. That was a lot for a 19-year-old college student then. I figured it was my one and only chance in my whole lifetime so I put a big effort into it. My game ran over three hours and I did not move a muscle the whole time, except to play my moves.
Bobby in Wichita, sitting with D La Pierre Ballard, Shakmatny Bulletin in hand.  
(Photo by Leola Ballard)

(114) Sicilian Accelerated Dragon B35

**Fischer - D La Pierre Ballard**  
Wichita (simul), April 4, 1964

Notes by D La Pierre Ballard.


Ballard was familiar with all this, having just read the article on this variation by Vladimirov and A. Geller in the January 1964 issue of Shakmatny Bulletin.

13...Bb7 14.h5 Kf7

A move unknown to theory in 1964. Today the focus is on 14...d5 (see Shabalov-Rausis, Riga 1989, NiC Yearbook 14, p.33).

15.Qg4 d5 16.exd5 Bxd5 17.O-O-O Be6 18.Qg3 Qb8 19.Qf3 Qc8 20.Ne4?

Fischer loses his sense of danger and blunders the exchange in an equal position.

20...Bg4 21.hxg6+ hxg6 22.Qd3

On 22.Ng5+ Black has 22...Kg8 23.Qe4 Bf5! (23...Bxd1?? 24.Qxg6) 24.Qe2 e5! (24...fxg5

22...Bxd1 23. Rxd1 Qc6 24. Rh1 Rac8 25. c3 Rh8 26. Re1 Rhd8 27. f4 Qd5 28. Kb1 Qxb3 29. f5

According to Ballard, who gives the move a double exclamation, White now dominates the light squares. Actually Black is just winning.

29... gxf5 30. Ng5+ fxg5 31. Qxf5+ Bf6 32. Bxf6

According to Fischer, White should have played 32. Qh7+ (Ballard), but 32... Ke8 33. Qg6+ (33. Bxf6 Rd1+ 34. Rxd1+ Qxd1+ 35. Ka2 exf6) 33... Kd7 34. Bxf6 exf6 35. Qxf6 (35. Qg7+ Kc6 heading for b5 and a6) 35... Rc5! and Black’s king has a safe haven on c8.

32... Rd1+ 33. Rxd1 Qxd1+ 34. Ka2 Rc5 0-1

White soon runs out of checks. Inside Chess reader Gordon Gribble gives 35. Qh7+ Kxf6 36. Qh6+ Kf7 37. Qh7+ Ke8 38. Qh8+ Kd7 39. Qh3+ g4 and it’s all over.
So, Bobby came to Wichita, where I was in school and living with my folks. At the University, a lecture and simultaneous exhibition was announced and I signed up right away. On the appointed day I was in the audience when Bobby appeared looking fairly impressive in brown suit and tie. He was tall and spoke in a dramatic authoritative voice, giving a lecture and demonstration about a game he’d played that year against one of the Russian players, Ewfim Geller. It was fabulous.

Then came time to play. There were forty-four of us ranged around a large, rectangular area. All the challengers played black, Bobby walking briskly from board to board, making resoundinglly quick moves after a glance at the game. At first, Bobby didn’t come by too quickly, and I felt I had a chance to think. I was nervous and wanted to give him a tussle. But, other players began dropping out and Bobby came by more and more often. It didn’t seem like I had any time. I lost a pawn and then another and maybe a piece or two, I don’t recall. After about fifteen moves or so, my position was utterly hopeless but I played on to the bitter end, getting checkmated in an embarrassingly horrid fashion.
One thing I remember clearly. I looked at his suit and tie and was impressed. But I noticed he wore mismatched blue socks and clunky shoes. So, when it came time to create Mitch Roberts, my Wichita private-eye, he was (like Philip Marlow) a chess playing sleuth and didn’t have much of a fashion sense.

(115) Alekhine B03  
**Fischer-Mechem**  
Wichita (simul), April 4, 1964


This move just loses time.


This is a difficult decision. Black creates a target on the kingside with this move, but passive defense with 18...Ne7 19.a4 Re8 20.a5 Nc8 wouldn’t be to everyone’s taste.

19.Ng5 Qg4 20.Re4 Qf5 21.Qe2 Nd7

This lets Black’s kingside get shredded, but 21...f6 22.Ne6 followed by d4-d5 is no picnic either.


A spirited try. The immediate 27...Qb1+ allows 28.Qf1 Qxa2 29.Rxf6. The text covers f6 and h2.


Bobby doesn’t want to draw.

30...c5

Black isn’t giving up. Now he wants to dislodge the knight.

31.dxc6 bxc6 32.Qf3 Re8

Here 32...c5 is tricky but White keeps the advantage with 33.Ne2 (33.Nc6 Rxc6; 33.Nc2 Nh6) 33...Nh6 34.Rxh5.

33.Kf1 Re6?

This is the fatal mistake. Necessary was 33...c5 when 34.Nc6 is forced. The position is
complicated but still looks like White for choice: 34...Nh6 35.Rd5 (forced) 35...Qb1+ 36.Qd1 Qxa2 37.Bxd6. Nonetheless this was Black’s best try.

34.Qd3

Bobby doesn’t fall for the trap: 34.Nxe6 fxe6 and the rook is attacked and ...Qb1+ followed by mate looms.

34...Ne5 35.Bxe5 Rxe5 36.Rf3 Qxd3+ 37.Rxd3 Be7?

It’s not pretty, but 37...Rc5 was the last chance to prolong the struggle.

38.Re3

There’s nothing wrong with 38.Nxc6, but Bobby prefers to simplify to a completely won knight versus bishop ending.

38...Rxe3 39.fxe3 c5 40.Nf5 Bf8 41.Ng3 1-0

(116) Two Knights C59

Fischer - Bill McLaughlin

Wichita (simul), April 4, 1964


This avoids Bobby’s favorite 8...h6 9.Nh3, but at a terrific cost. White now has the opportunity to bolster his knight with 9.d3. Black is now a pawn down for nothing as his play against the Ng5, the idea behind this line, is gone.


McLaughlin stands badly, but this self-inflicted wound only hastens the end.


The natural 25.Re2 followed by doubling rooks was indicated.

25... Kg7?

Black misses his chance with 25...Nxe4 26.dxe4 Qg6! 27.f3 f5 with good counterplay.

26.Re2 Nd5

Here 26...Nxe4 was still the best, though not under as favorable circumstances as the previous
move.

27.Rae1 g4

Here 27...f5 had to be played. Now Bobby has it all his way.

28.Qf1 Nc7 29.Bf5 h5 30.h3 Rxe2 31.Rxe2 Qf6 32.hxg4 Rh8 33.Qg2 hxg4 34.Bxg4 Qg5 35.Qe4 Re8 36.Qxd4+ Kg8 37.Rxe8+ Nxe8 38.Bd7 Ng7 39.Bxc6 Qc1+ 40.Kg2 Qxc2 41.Be4 Qc7 42.b4 Ne6 43.Qe3 a5 44.b5 Nc5 45.Bc6 Qd6 1-0

Bill McLaughlin was one of the people responsible for bringing Bobby to Wichita. An annual memorial tournament is held every year in Wichita in his honor.

(117) Sicilian Dragon B76

Fischer-Munzlinger
Wichita (simul), April 4, 1964


This plan is too slow. Black normally castles on move eight, but 8...Bd7 is possible if followed by 9...Rc8.

10.g4 b5?! 11.h4 b4?

Here 11...Rc8 looks a little better.

12.Nd5

White trades off the knight that defends Black’s king.

12...Nxd5 13.exd5 Ne5 14.h5

Bobby’s after much bigger game than the b-pawn. There’s not much Munzlinger can do at this point but await the inevitable.


(118) French Alekhine-Chatard C13

Fischer-Self
Wichita (simul), April 4, 1964

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7 5.e5 Nfd7 6.h4 a6 7.Qg4 f5 8.Qh5+! g6 9.Qh6 Bxg5 10.hxg5 Qe7??!
10...Kf7 11.Nge2! Nf8 12.O-O-O Rg8 13.g4, Yanofsky-Gudmundsson, Reykjavik 1947, gives White a small advantage.

11.Nh3 Nc6 12.O-O-O Qf8?

If Black wants to show the worth of 10...Qe7 he must continue with 12...Nd8 here. The idea is stop 13.Nf4 (13...Nf7 hits the queen and g5). Play after 12...Nd8 might continue 13.Kb1 Nf8 when White is better, but the position closed and there are no sacrifices on d5 in the air.

13.Qh4

Bobby has a nice alternative in 13.Nf4 but prefers to play for the attack.

13...Qe7

This walks straight into an uppercut. It takes good nerves to play 13...h5 but it makes sense to block the position. After 14.Nf4 Self must play 14...Qg8. This is hardly pretty, but much better than what happens.


This sacrifice is very common in the Alekhine-Chatard. The central pawns will roll right over Black.


It’s possible this is the same Travis that played in the exhibition in Houston (game 109).

(119) Evans Gambit C51
Fischer-Travis
Wichita (simul), April 4, 1964

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.b4 Bxb4 5.c3 Be7 6.d4 d6?

A mistake that was played quite often against Bobby.

7.Qb3

Later in the tour Bobby found the most effective way of dealing with 6...d6, i.e. 7.dxe5 Nxe5 8.Nxe5 dxe5 9.Qh5! (see Fischer-Celle). Maybe Black can improve with 7...Bg4!? meeting 8.Qb3 with 8...Bxf3 9.Bxf7+ Kf8 10.gxf3 Nxe5 11.Bc4 Nxf3+ 12.Ke2 Ne5 which seems fine for the second player.

7...Na5

Here Fischer-Boatner, Houston (simul), 1964 had a quick finish: 7...Nh6 8.Bxh6 gxh6 9.Bxf7+ Kf8 10.Bh5. Black can drag things out with 10...d5, but loses several pawns.


Travis might have considered 11...dxe5 12.Nxe5 Be6.

12.Qc2 dxe5 13.Nxe5 Bf6

Once again ...Be6 was the right move to put up resistance.

14.Nf3 Be6 15.O-O Qc7 16.Nbd2 c5 17.e5 Be7 18.a4 Nc4?

Black’s position wasn’t pretty, but he shouldn’t have given up a second pawn for nothing. He should have played 18...a6.

19.axb5 Nb6 20.c4 h6 21.Ne4

Angling for some fireworks. The prosaic 21.Bb2 was also good.

21...Nxc4 22.Ra6 Nb6 23.Nf6+ Kf7

Travis refuses the gift. If 23...gxf6 then 24.Qg6+ Kf8 25.exf6 Bd6 26.Bxh6+ Rxe6 27.Qxh6+ with Ng5 to follow, leaves White with an overwhelming position. On 23...Bxf6 White has 24.exf6 gxf6 25.Rd1 with a decisive initiative.


As 29...Bxf6 30.Qg6+ Kf7 31.Bxg5 is a brutal pin.

Fischer in action in Wichita. (Photo by Joyce Chaika)

(120) French Alekhine-Chatard C13

**Fischer-Wilson**

Wichita (simul), April 4, 1964

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7 5.e5 Nfd7 6.h4

This was Fischer’s favorite answer to the Classical French. He played the Alekhine-Chatard several times on the 1964 Tour.

6...c5

Black’s main try. The more cautious 6...a6, preventing Nb5, was seen in Fischer-E. Bone, Houston (simul), 1964, where the future U.S.C.F. rating director escaped with a win after a rare Fischer howler: 6...a6 7.Qg4 g6?! (for the superior 7...f5, see Fischer-Self from this exhibition) 8.Qh6 Bxg5 10.hxg5 Qe7 11.Nh3 Qf8 12.Qh4 c5 13.Nf4 Qf7 14.O-O-O cxd4 15.Nxd5! with a winning position that was later spoiled by a horrific blunder.

7.Nb5!?

A calculated bluff, or does Bobby have a big surprise in store? The line played by Fischer is trappy, but is considered to lead to a draw by force. The main theoretical continuation is 7.Bxe7.
7... Qb6?

The right way to take advantage of White’s seventh move was 7...f6! which leads after colorful play to a draw by perpetual check: 8.Bd3 a6 9.Qh5+ Kf8 10.Rh3


10...axb5 11.Bh6 Qa5+ (11...gxh6+ 12.Qxh6+ Kf7 13.Qh5+ is a draw by perpetual check)

8.Qg4 Qa5+?

This check is pointless. The only way to play was 8...f6.


Winning, as there is no good way to guard f7. If 16.Rh7 then 18.Ng5.


I was delighted to meet former Kansas Champion Robert Hart, while playing in the 1997 McLaughlin Memorial in Wichita. Rumors had been circulating of a mimeographed bulletin produced by Mr. Hart containing almost all of Bobby’s games from the exhibition and they proved to be true. Typically most games preserved from simul’s tend to be losses by the exhibitors so finding such a document as Mr. Hart’s was a real gold mine. Similar work in preserving a complete record was done by Bill Patteson in Houston and also for the Chicago exhibitions.

The author, with the help of Eric Tangborn and Erik Osbun, was able, using a little detective work, to convert 18 of the games (one score was unreadable) from sometimes questionable descriptive notation into playable algebraic. Only Ballard’s win, the sole loss Fischer suffered in the exhibition, was previously known.

(121) Alekhine B03

Fischer - Robert Hart

Wichita (simul), April 4, 1964
1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.d4 d6 4.c4 Nb6 5.exd6 exd6 6.Nc3 Bf5

More common here is 6...Be7, hoping for ...Bg4 after a later Nf3. White often takes time out to play h3 to stop the pin.

7.Nf3


This is a typical solid move for a simul. A sharper try is 12.d5 which leads to complications that seem to favor White after 12...Nb4 13.Qe2 Rae8 14.a3 Na6 15.Be3.

12...Re8 13.Bb2

13.a3 was worth considering, though the text seems more natural.

13...Nb4 14.Qd2 Qf5 15.Ne4?!

This throws away much of White’s advantage. Instead, 15.Nb5! is strong as Black has nothing better than 15...Na6: if 15...Ne2? 16.Nxc7 Nxe1 17.Rxe1 is winning.

15...d5 16.Ng3

A more active alternative is 16.Nc5 as 16...Nc2 is met by 17.Re5.


Hart threatens both 20...Nxc5 and 20...Nc2. It’s clear that the initiative has changed hands.

20.Nf3

If 20.Nh5, then 20...Nd3 21.Bc3 Re2 is very strong for Black.


This overlooks a tactical resource for White. The correct way to consolidate was 27...Ne8 intending ...Nd6.

28.b5! Nab8

If 28...cxb5??, then 29.Nxd7 exploiting Black’s weak back rank.
29.a4?! Nxe5?!

29...cxb5 30.axb5 Rb6 wins a second pawn for Black.

30.dxe5 Nd7 31.bxc6 bxc6 32.Bd4 Nxe5 33.Bxe5

Fischer feels that his best chance to draw lies in the double rook endgame.

33...Rxe5 34.Rxc6 g6 35.Rc5 Kg7 36.Kf2 Rd7 37.Rd2 Kf6 38.Ra5 d4 39.Ra6+ Re6 40.Ra5 Ke7 41.Rd3 Rc6 42.Re5+ Kf6 43.f4 Re6 44.Ra5 Draw

White has some compensation for the pawn with his active rook on a5, but Black should have made him prove it.

(122) Sicilian Najdorf B87
Fischer-Aker
Wichita (simul), April 4, 1964


White has an interesting alternative in 10.Re1.

10...Ne5?


Fischer getting ready to move in the Wichita exhibition. (Photo by Leola Ballard)

(123) Ruy Lopez C60
Fischer-Briggs
Wichita (simul), April 4, 1964


(124) Vienna C29
Fischer - Keith Carson
Wichita (simul), April 4, 1964

1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.f4 d5 4.d3

This position is more commonly reached via 4.fxe5 Nxe4 5.d3 Bb4.
11.Ke3

11.Kd2! Qg4 12.h3 Qf4 13.Qe1 Qg3 14.Qf2 is a slightly better for White; 12...Qf5!? is interesting.

11...Bxf3 12.Bb5+

This is a necessary move to clear the back rank. If 12.gxf3, then 12...Qe1+ 13.Kf4 Qh4+ leads to a draw by perpetual check.

12...c6 13.gxf3 cxb5

Normally played, but Black has experimented with 13...Qh6+, trying to keep the white king as a target. Two examples after 14.Kxe4 Qg6+ 15.Ke3 cxb5 are:


14.Qxe4 Qe7

It’s not clear whether Black should exchange queens or stay in the middlegame. The traditional move here, 14...Qxe4+, leads to an endgame that’s difficult to assess. One example is Blackburne-Zukertort, London 1887, which continued 15.Kxe4 O-O (before White has time to play Ba3) 16.Rb1 a6 17.Rd1 Nc6 18.Ba3 Rfe8 19.f4 f6 with a good game for Black.


15.a4 Nd7

Black improves on Wayte-Oxoniensis, London 1883, where 15...bxa4 was strongly met by 16.Ba3 Qc7 17.Qxa4+ Nd7 18.Bd6 Qxc3+ 19.Ke2 a6 20.Rhd1 and the king was stuck in the center forever.


Carson has played wonderfully to this point, but here he falters. The right way to continue was 22...f6 when 23.f4 Ng4+ 24.Kf3 Rxe1 25.Rxe1 Nh6 26.Re8+ (White has nothing better because of his inferior pawn structure) Rd8 27.Re7 Rd7 with a draw by repetition in the offing. Note
that Black cannot sidestep this with 26...Kc7 because of 27.Rh8. Carson’s plan is to head for the notorious rook versus rook plus f- and h-pawn. This ending is drawn, but it demands great accuracy from Black.

23.Rxe5 Rxe5 24.Bxe5 Rxe5 25.Rxa7 Rxb5 26.Rxf7 Rb2?! Black is still thinking about the rook plus f- and h-pawn ending, but he had a much simpler draw in 26...Rh5! 27.Kg2 g6. White’s king is tied down and he has no easy way of producing a passed pawn.

27.Rxg7 Rxc2+ 28.Kg3 Rxc3 29.Rh7 Kd8 30.h4 Ke8 31.Rb7 Kf8 Black decided several moves ago when he started moving his king over to the kingside, that he wanted to defend the f and h ending. Carson faces two handicaps here: 1) he’s playing one of the greatest players of all time; 2) the simul format means there are very few games left.

32.Rxb6 Rc1 33.Rb7 Rh1 34.f4 Rg1+ 35.Kf3 Kg8 36.f5 Kf8 37.Kf4 Rc1 38.Kg5 Rc6 39.h5 Kg8 40.h6 Kh8 41.f6 Rc8 42.Kg6 Rg8+ 43.Rg7 Rf8 44.Rh7+ Kg8 45.f7+ 1-0

Bobby in Wichita on April 4, 1964, flanked (left to right) by Keith Carson, Bob Michaelson, D La Pierre Ballard, and Charles Wayne Carson. (Photo by Leola Ballard)

(125) French Winawer C17
Fischer-Dockery
Wichita (simul), April 4, 1964

9...Nh6 10.Qf4 Nf5 11.Bd3 Nd7 12.h4 b6 13.h5 Qc7 14.hxg6 fxg6 15.Ng5 Nb8?

Black’s position isn’t pretty, but 15...Nf8 put up more difficulties. The idea is to meet 16.g4 with 16...h6 as 17.gxf5 is met by 17...hxg5 (the Nf8 means that Rxh8 is not check!). White should play 17.Nf3 Ng7 18.Rxh6 with a big advantage.


Like the movie Searching for Bobby Fischer, this book is well worth a look; but neither offers
the focus on Fischer their titles imply.

(126) King’s Gambit C30
Fischer-Edgington
Wichita (simul), April 4, 1964


(127) French Winawer C16
Fischer-Fusco
Wichita (simul), April 4, 1964

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 Nc6 5.f4 Qe7?

Black’s strategy is best served by leaving this square for the knight. Correct was 5...Ne7 or 5...Qd7.


Going from bad to worse Fusco squanders two more tempi.

12.a4 Nc6 13.c3 Kb8 14.b4 Qd7 15.a5

Bobby has the sort of automatic attack he could play in his sleep.


(128) King’s Gambit C30
Fischer-Greer
Wichita (simul), April 4, 1964


(129) Sicilian B32
Fischer - K. Isely
Wichita (simul), April 4, 1964


Quentin Isely was a P.T. boat commander in the SW Pacific during World War Two, according to Robert Peters who attended Wichita University with him in the early 1940s.

(130) Sicilian B32
Fischer - Quentin Isely
Wichita (simul), April 4, 1964


The only good move in this position is 6...d6, transposing into the Sveshnikov variation.

7.Nd6+ Bxd6 8.Qxd6 a6?

This move stops 9.Nb5, but costs valuable time. The immediate 8...Qe7 was stronger.

9.Bg5 Qe7 10.Qxe7+ Nxe7 11.O-O-O
White’s lead in development and bishop pair give him a pronounced advantage.

11...b5 12.Bxf6 gxf6 13.Rd6 f5 14.f4 fxe4?

This brings White’s knight into the game. A better try was 14...exf4.

15.fxe5 Bb7 16.Be2 O-O-O

Isely might have considered 16...Rg8 with the idea of ...Rg5, trying to get counterplay.


If 22...d6, then 23.a4! is strong.

23.Rf7 Ne7?

It’s understandable that Black wants to advance his d-pawn, but this really isn’t feasible. Better resistance was offered by 23...h6 intending to use the e-pawn for counterplay.


This photo was published in the Latvian-American Magazine Sacha Pasaule (hence the spelling of Bobby’s name) edited by Alexander Liepnieks from 1955 until his death in 1973. Liepnieks not only organized the 1955 US Junior, but he and his family also hosted Bobby, who remained close to them the next two decades. This makes one curious why there were no exhibitions in Nebraska during the 1964 tour.

(131) Two Knights C57

Fischer-Heckathorn

Wichita (simul), April 4, 1964


The score was reconstructed from this point on and may not be accurate.


Robert Peters was interviewed by the Bartelsville Examiner-Enterprise in conjunction with the release of the movie Pawn Sacrifice. In the article, which appeared on October 12, 2015, he recalls the following game, a once-in-a-lifetime chess experience for him, lasted about three hours.

(132) King's Gambit C31
Fischer - Robert Peters
Wichita (simul), April 4, 1964
1.e4 e5 2.f4 d5 3.exd5 e4 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.Qe2 Bf5 6.h3 Nxd5?!

Black needed to play the restraining 6...h5.

7.Nxd5 Qxd5 8.g4 Bd7 9.Bg2 Bc6 10.d3 Bb4+?!

The immediate 10...Be7 was preferable.


White is winning.


Fischer playing Robert Peters in Wichita.
(Photo by Joyce Chaika)

Ogden, Utah, April 8
+60, -1, =2

Ogden Games Tough on Chess Champion

National chess champion Robert (Bobby) Fischer lived up to his reputation as he won 60 out of 63 matches [sic] here Wednesday night. The youthful champion dropped one match [sic] to a local player and tied two Salt Lake players. The five-hour match was “tougher than usual,” said the national champ. The number of participants in the simultaneous match was greater than local
chess sponsors expected.

Claiming the only win over Mr. Fischer was George Girton of Ogden. Playing the current champion to a draw were Stanley R. Hunt, and John Archbold, both of Salt Lake City.

Preceding play, Mr. Fischer gave a short lecture and demonstrated several of his more challenging games played in national competition. Besides the 63 players, nearly 200 spectators lined the area.

Mr. Fischer has been national champion for the past seven years, taking the crown when he was 14. He has refused to play for the world championship, claiming Russian games and rules are rigged.

Players from as far south as Provo and north to Logan attended the exhibition in an attempt to match wits with the champion. The Ogden Chess Club, under president Carl Thorstensen, sponsored the event.

After Wednesday night’s play, Mr. Fischer will go to Los Angeles for a similar match and two-week tour. (Deseret News, April 8, 1964)

Ted Hartwell says: “There were no passes, you had to move when he came around. There were only three of us left when I was forced to play speed chess and blundered in what Bobby admitted was a winning position.”

(133) Sicilian Dragon B77
Fischer - Ted Hartwell
Ogden (simul), April 8, 1964


41...Rb7 and Black should win.

42.Qa7+ 1-0 (Chess Life, June 1986, p. 63)

Stan Hunt was the Utah state champion at the time this game was played.

(134) Sicilian Richter Rauzer B63
Fischer - Stan Hunt
Ogden (simul), April 8, 1964

Robert J. Fischer toured California in April, giving simultaneous exhibitions and lectures on selected games of his. Fischer proved to be a more mature young man than his publicity would indicate. He conducted himself with dignity and his comments were temperate. He had his ups and downs: in Los Angeles he won 47, lost 1, and drew 2; in San Francisco he won 38, lost 4, and drew 8; in Davis he won 10 out of 10. The chess was entertaining, much more so than if he had played routine simultaneous chess. He seemed to play each opponent on an individual basis, defeating the stronger players, but often giving the weaker opponents more of a chance than a veteran simultaneous player would have given them. (California Chess Reporter, May 1964)

Bobby gave more exhibitions (6) in California than any other state and the chess players there were very excited to see him. The December 1963 issue of the California Chess Reporter spelled out why.

Simultaneous exhibitions by world champions and contenders have been common in California. Alekhine, Capablanca, Pillsbury, Lasker, Maroczy, Reshevsky, Fine, Evans, Najdorf, Gligoric and many other great players have given displays and exhibitions in San Francisco and Los Angeles over the years, and many of our own players have become blasé about this kind of entertainment. Fischer’s tour, however, has all the elements of drama: Here is a young master of great talent who is evidently on the way toward the world championship. This road is full of pitfalls for any player, and for an American it is more hazardous than any other. Will he make it? Will the exigencies of earning a living in our free enterprise society take Bobby more and more away from the world of chess as it has our other great players? Or will Bobby succeed in his efforts to establish the right and capability of an American chess professional to subsist on chess earnings and stay with the game until his talent and technique mature to the full potential?

**Hollywood, April 12**

+47, -1, =2

Bobby’s first exhibition in California was held on Sunday afternoon, April 12, at the Knickerbocker Hotel (1714 Ivar). Sponsored by the Herman Steiner Chess Club, with a fee of $3.50 a board and $1 for spectators, the exhibition started at 1 p.m. Facing 50 boards he was +47 -1 =2. The three players who scored were junior members of the Herman Steiner Chess Club, sponsor of the event. Donn Rogozin was the sole winner with Andy Sacks and Nicholas Enequist drawing.
Fischer Simul at the Hollywood Knickerbocker Hotel
by NM Andy Sacks

It seems only natural, in retrospect, that Bobby Fischer's 1964 national simul tour would have a stop in the L.A. area, but that particular venue as well as the smooth and successful organization were a testament to the vision and skills of chess patron Jacqueline Piatigorsky.

The historic hotel (today having been transformed into the senior home Hollywood Knickerbocker Apartments) sits just off Hollywood Boulevard across the street and only a few blocks east of what was Grauman's Chinese Theater, still home of the footprints of the stars. The hotel has a long and rich history of catering to the elite of the show biz world. It was built in 1923 in Spanish Colonial style, and immediately became a meeting place of the stars. Rudolph Valentino was a regular at its bar, and on Halloween of 1936, the widow of Harry Houdini held a séance on its roof in hopes of contacting her lost legendary husband. Over the years, its guests have formed a Who's Who of Hollywood, from Marilyn Monroe to Joe DiMaggio to Elvis Presley, and on and on. Still today, walking into the lobby is like walking into a time machine the takes one back decades into the golden age of American cinema.

Mrs. Piatigorsky, a fine chessplayer herself, was in a phase of very active chess sponsorship and philanthropy, and was fresh from her and her husband's noteworthy success in organizing the 1963 First Piatigorsky Cup international tournament. (It might be remembered that Gregor, her husband, was an internationally acclaimed cellist and she was a member of the distinguished and nearly unimaginably wealthy Rothschild family, the European banking and finance dynasty.) She was the driving force behind the Hollywood simul, and was an active participant in every stage of its preparation and organization.

On April 12, Fischer would play 50 opponents, and the fee for participation was reasonable. Grandmaster Isaac Kashdan served as Director and Arbiter, as he had several months earlier in the first Cup tourney (which was, incidentally, held at an equally distinguished and historic site,
the Los Angeles Ambassador Hotel). Mrs. Piatigorsky, with her customary energy and attention
to detail, was at the site early in the morning the day of the exhibition. Everything was to go as
planned and scheduled—which it did.

As the hour of the display drew closer, the converted ballroom filled with participants and
quite a number of spectators jostling for good views of the coming action. Fischer arrived on
time, and without a hitch—in contrast to scores of incidents in later years, and a few already—and
met with Gregor and Jacqueline as well as GM Kashdan and a couple of others involved in the
organizational end.

When all 50 boards were accounted for, Kashdan walked to the middle of the large rectangular
playing area and made his comments. He graciously thanked the organizers, Fischer himself,
and then reviewed the simple rules of simultaneous play etiquette and decorum. He introduced
the young Grandmaster, and the display began.

A few points of interest there were in the composition of both the aggregate of participants as
well as the large group of spectators. First, there were more young players facing Fischer than
one might expect. At least 8 or 10 of the boards were occupied by youthful combatants not over
the age of 16 or 17, and several obviously younger. The explanation is again tied to Mrs.
Piatigorsky, this time in her role as patron and "manager" of the Herman Steiner Chess Club, at
that time, and of its "Steiner Juniors" section. Several of the boys were members of this
organization, and were already tournament-tested and improving rapidly. (This fact was to be
demonstrated with startling clarity a few hours later, when the final tally was made.)

The audience featured a Who's Who of local Masters, perhaps not surprisingly. For one thing,
simul etiquette prohibits Masters from competing, and for another, an event of this high level of
interest and excitement was rare indeed in the world of Southern California chess. No, there
was no analysis room, no demonstrations boards set up anywhere for review by strong players
of interesting ongoing games: the Masters were present as chess fans only. Selecting several
and arranging a clock exhibition by Fischer would have created quite an interesting scenario
itself—and given the playing strength of many of them it is unlikely the young lion would have
emerged unscathed. The hours passed, and opponent after opponent fell, but several of the
youngsters continued to hold their own surprisingly well. Fischer's final result was notable in
more than one way. First, the only three to score against him were members of the Steiner
Juniors: Donn Rogosin, the lone win; and Nicholas Enequist and Andy Sacks draws. It was
+47, -1, =2 for Bobby, a typically high percentage for him on the tour. (Earlier, for example, it
was +48, -0, =0 in Quebec City; +30, -0, =0 in New York; and in Cleveland another whitewash
on 51 boards.) He played every game to win, even in his "ambassadorial" role. No courtesy
draws were donated.

The exhibition had apparently gone without incident, without controversy, without the type of
distraction that came to characterize so many of Fischer's playing engagements in later years.
However, there were two rather quiet occurrences that foretold much about the future.

In my game, I was able to force a perpetual check. There was no reasonable way for Fischer to
avoid repeating moves. When I checked for the first time, I quietly and respectfully offered a
He looked at the board, made no expression or reaction to my offer, moved his King, and walked on. On the next check I refrained from speaking. On the third, I had the assertiveness to vocalize "Draw?" again. He looked at the board only, remained stock still for a few seconds, and then used both hands to scatter the pieces. He walked to the next board without glancing at me or showing any attention to anything but the position on that board. He was visibly peeved, but within himself completely.

On my very left at this point, the space was open. Earlier it had been occupied by Donn Rogosin, my fellow Steiner Junior and my friend. Against him, Fischer had made a fine and creative Queen sacrifice early in a Sicilian Sozin—but had blundered horribly about 10 moves later and had lost. The young Grandmaster's reaction at that time had been quite similar to his behavior when my game ended: not a word, but extreme frustration and anger at himself unmistakably evident. And no graciousness, no offer of handshake, nothing but directly on to the next board.

But the most intriguing and foretelling detail of the display was less obvious still. No spectator could have noticed it, and Donn and I learned of it only well after the day of the séance. It was communicated to me by Isaac Kashdan months later at a chance meeting I had with him visiting a local tournament. He revealed that in a little chat initiated by Fischer, just the two of them, and just after the very last game concluded that April 12, Bobby asked him if he (Kashdan) had noticed "those two kids," as he put it, discussing our games in progress or consulting in any unethical way during play. Fischer himself had not noticed it, he was quick to point out, but he was just wondering...

Incredible! And that was obviously the way Kashdan viewed it as well, as he offered the information to me. There was a sadness and a shaking of the head by the kindly and worldly wise old man. It was an early manifestation of the P word, which would progressively take and hold Fischer in its clutches for the remainder of his life.

(135) Sicilian Sozin B87
Fischer - Andy Sacks
Hollywood (simul), April 12, 1964


The position reached after 11.f5 is relatively uncommon, as Black normally plays ...Bb7 before ...Qc7. The two GMs who have played this position as Black, Igor Novikov and Roman Dzindzichashvili, both went in for 11...b4. This drives the knight to a4, but allows White to open up the position with c2-c3.

12.Nde2 Bb7 13.Ng3 Nbd7

One of the advantages for Black in this position is that the positionally desirable 14.Bg5 costs a tempo (Bc1-e3-g5) compared to some lines in the Sozin.

White tries to increase his control over the d5-square. His ideal plan is to trade off two pairs of minor pieces and be left with a knight on d5 against Black’s dark-squared bishop.

17...b4

This advance puts the question to the knight and ensures that White won’t have time to play Bg5xf6, Bb3-d5xb7 and Nc3-d5.


White has achieved some of the goals of the Sozin (6.Bc4) variation — control of d5 and the better minor piece — but Black has compensation in his queenside pressure.

20...Rac8 21.Rf2 Qa7 22.Kh1 Qd4 23.Rb1 Rc7 24.Re2 Rdc8 25.Qb3 a5 26.g3 Ra7 27.a3 Rb8 28.a4 Rc8 29.Qf3 Rac7 30.Bb3 Rc6 31.Kg2 R8e7 32.h4 Rc8 33.Kh3 R8e7 34. Rg2 h6 35.g4?

Correct is 35.Rd1 with complete equality. Then not 35...Qxb2 36.c4. Now, just when it appears that White is ready to crash through with g4-g5, Sack’s has a strong answer . . .

35...Re3!

Winning.

36.bxc3 Rxc3 37.Qxc3 Qxc3+ 38. Rg3 Qd2 39.Rbg1

An interesting alternative is 39.c3 with ideas like 39...bxc3 40.Bd5 c2 41.Rb8+ Kh7 42.Bxf7.
39...Qe2 40.Bd5 Kf8?

Young Sacks misses a chance to finish with glory. The winning move was 40...Bxh4! 41.R3g2 Bf2 or 41.R1g2 Qf1 42.Kxh4 Qh1+. If White plays 41.Kxh4, then Black has 41... Qh2+.

41.R3g2

Offering to repeat moves, as 41.g5 is met by 41...hxg5 42.hxg5 Qh5+ 43.Kg2 Bxg5.

41...Qf3+ 42.Rg3 Qe2 Draw

Black could have kept playing with 42...Qf2 43.R1g2 Qf1 44.g5 hxg5 45.hxg5 Bd8.
Few individuals have had more impact on American chess than Herman Steiner (1905-1955). Steiner was just one of many promising young players in New York in the early 1930s when he was advised by Mary Bain to seek his fortune out West.

Few suggestions have worked out better. Soon after arriving in the City of the Angels Steiner became the chess columnist for the Los Angeles Times. He used this position and his close ties with Hollywood to generate tremendous publicity for the game. Chess Review devoted many covers and ran plenty of stories involving Steiner and his friends in the film business, Humphrey Bogart being the most prominent. It was a very sad day when Steiner died of a heart attack while playing in the 1955 California State Open. He was so well loved that tournament was cancelled midway through out of respect for his memory.

Mrs. Jacqueline Piatigorsky, who was a pupil of Steiner’s, kept his memory alive by continuing to run the Steiner Chess Club until the 1970s. Steiner was especially fond of helping rising young talents and was involved in the 1946 and 1947 US Junior Opens. To honor his commitment to young American players, Mrs. Piatigorsky founded the Steiner Juniors. The most prominent member was future Grandmaster James Tarjan.
Donn Rogosin is the son of Hy Rogosin, who lost the famous “pawn game” against Marshall where the latter didn’t move a piece until move 15 (New York, 1940).

(136) Sicilian Sozin B88

**Fischer - Donn Rogosin**

Hollywood (simul), April 12, 1964


Fischer-Blackstone, Davis (clock simul), 1964, continued 8...Qc7 9.f4 b5 10.f5 b4 11.fxe6 (11.Nce2 e5 12. Nf3 Bb7 is bad for White, according to Fischer) 11...bxc3 12.exf7+ Kf8 13.Bg5 Ng4! and Black should win. Incidentally, California Junior Champion John Blackstone was the most active player in the United States in 1964, playing 117 games. Right behind him was New York expert Sam Sloan with 107. Blackstone scored 5.5/9 as second reserve for the U.S. Student Olympiad team in Ybbs, Austria, in 1968.


Bobby plans 23...Qxf7 24.Rxf7 Kxf7 with the imbalance of three minor pieces for two rooks. However, Rogosin has a simple reply which wins immediately.
23...a4 24.Bc2?

White’s best chance was 24.Bd4, but 24...Rxd4 25.Bxe6 Qxe6 26. cxd4 Qxf7 27.Rxf7 Kxf7 is a fairly straightforward win for Black.

24...Qxc2 25.Nh5 Rf8 26.Rxg7+ Kh8 0-1

San Francisco, April 13
+38, -4, =8

Chess — 50 against 1

San Francisco News Call Bulletin, April 14th 1964:

A tall, sandy-haired youth, his arms moving rhythmically as he moved from side to side, played chess with 50 opponents here last night.
This was Bobby Fischer, six times US Champion and at 21 this nation’s hope for its first world title.

Last night Fischer moved decisively in the middle of a big L lined with 50 chess boards and 50 chess players.

Thirteen moves along Fischer lost to 32-year-old Bob Burger, an advertising man from Layfayette and one of the top players in the Mechanics’ Institute Chess Club.

Then in rapid succession Fischer copped three victories as he moved through his third [sic] of some forty exhibitions on a current nationwide tour.

Kurt Bendit, who arranged the matches, said Fischer had certain advantages to make up for some of the opponents.

First, Bendit said, he gets White on each board which means first move, and second his opponents must move when he arrives in front of their board while he can linger over his moves.

“He sacrifices freely and yet acceptance of the sacrifice leads to certain doom,” explained Bendit as he watched Fischer and another player exchange queens.

The Brooklyn youth’s unprecedented 11-0 victory January 4th in the US Championship led many to acclaim him in terms Bendit seconded: “We all feel with his appearance on the scene that chess is going to get a boost in the United States.”

Bobby Fischer vs. Home Team — Moral Victory

From the San Francisco Chronicle:

San Francisco chess buffs lost 38 out of 50 games Monday night to the United States chess champion — a real triumph for the “home team.”

Bobby Fischer, 21, national title holder for the sixth consecutive year, took on 50 opponents simultaneously at the Mechanics’ Institute Chess Club. He lost four, drew eight and won the rest. He did much better in Los Angeles, losing only once and drawing twice.

The champion, this country’s hope for the international championship, is on a 40-city tour.

He lost to Robert L. Henry, Max Wilkerson, Michael Quinlivan, and Robert Burger. The contestants ranged in age from 10-year-old Norman Symonds of Palo Alto to players in their 70s.

Editor’s Note: Other players who participated were David Blohm (draw), Paul Vayssie (loss), and Tom Dorsch (loss). Dorsch was several pawns up in a French but blundered at the end.
when forced to play quickly.

**U.S. Chess King Rooked in S.F.**

The chess champion of the United States came to San Francisco Monday night and promptly got rooked.

Bobby Fischer, 21, who has won the national title six times, played 50 opponents simultaneously at the Mechanics’ Institute Chess Club.

He lost four, drew eight and won the rest.

That would be about par for the average master, explained Kurt Bendit, who arranged the matches, but not for Fischer. In Los Angeles, he was beaten only once and held to a draw twice.

But there were reasons why Fischer, the nation’s hope for its first world chess title, had a fairly rough evening in San Francisco.

At some tables, Bendit chuckled, he was playing not one, but several, opponents. They would hold little strategy conferences behind the board while Fischer moved down the line.

Also, it was the champion’s 20th exhibition of this type in the past two months, putting him halfway through a nationwide tour.

His conquerors here included Robert L. Henry, 19, of 3940 Casanova Drive, San Mateo, who took 22 moves to win; Max Wilkerson, 31 of 1927 Hayes Street, an artist, who did it in 30, and Robert Burger, an advertising man from Lafayette, who won in 13.

Henry said Fisher wasted his time in pawn-grabbing and failed to consolidate his position. Wilkerson said the champ blundered in an even situation.

Michael Quinlan, 18, of 1634 18th Ave., the fourth winner, attributed his victory to Fischer’s sportsmanship.

The champion made a careless, fatal move. He recognized it instantly, and within in a fraction of a second corrected it.

But, in the strict spirit of the game, he resigned at once, because he had left his king untouched on a losing square. San Francisco Chronicle, April 14, 1964

(137) Orangutan A00

**Fischer - Keith Walters**
San Francisco (simul), April 13, 1964


Walters has played very well up to this point but here 27...Rc7 was a little more exact.

28.Rd7 Qa3

28...Kf8 was simpler leaving Black two pawns up and White with negligible compensation.

29.Qd5+ Kf8 30.Bd2 h6

30...a5 was more direct.

31.Qe6 Re8 32.e4 b5 33.Be3 a5 34.Kh2 Qb4 35.Bb6 Qxe4??

Black would have won if he played 35...a4. A close escape for Bobby on a difficult night.

36.Bc5 Qf4+ 37.g3 1-0 (San Francisco Chronicle, April 14, 1964)

The following game has a story behind it. National Master Bob Burger, the only person to beat Bobby on the 1964 tour and later write a book on him, recalls that magic evening almost 50 years ago and the background behind it in an unpublished piece he wrote for Val Zemitis in 2008.

“In the fall of 1956 I happened to be in New York – earning my spurs, as they used to say, in the advertising business. I stopped by one evening at the midtown hotel where the Rosenwald III Tournament was under way. A youngster of about thirteen, from Brooklyn, was creating a
sensation – not because he was winning, but because he was jousting with the best. The game I watched was one of only two he won, but I immediately forwarded it to Guthrie “Mac” McClain, publisher of the California Chess Reporter, with notes and a wild guess that this was a future world champion.

It was, in fact, the first of Fischer’ “immortal” games – both with the black pieces and both against the Byrne brothers – in this case, Donald. Robert is, of course, the long-time chess editor of the New York Times and without question the foremost chess journalist ever.

A year later, Bobby Fischer’s mother called Mr. McClain to ask him if he would “look out” for her son in the U.S. Junior Championship scheduled to be played in San Francisco at the world-famous Mechanics’ Chess Club. Mac took Bobby under his fatherly wing as the 14-year-old cruised to the title.

Seven years later, Bobby, has come into his majority and is a GM with international conquests and several U.S. Championships. In the spring of 1964 he embarks on a grand U.S. tour, the length and breadth of the land. When he arrives in San Francisco he is again hosted by Mac and the denizens of the Mechanics’ Chess Club.

On that particular Saturday evening I was going home from a day’s work (no rest for the wicked) when I was intercepted at Harrington’s Bar and challenged to play in a simul. Over my strongest protestations (I had to get home!), Joe Harrington inveigled me into not only playing, and not only making a bet on the outcome, but shaking dice to see who got the odds. Joe did. I was doomed.

Fifty players were arranged around the hallowed hall. Spectators were bunched behind their favorites. Mac gave a brief introduction and Bobby swept along the tables. I dimly remember that Fischer liked to “bust” the Two Knights, and I thought I might have a chance if I picked an odd line. The Fritz! Ah, that's my chance.”

Robert Burger

(138) Two Knights C57
Fischer - Robert Burger
San Francisco (simul), April 13, 1964


It is interesting that in answer to 7...h6, Fischer had played his own 8.Nh7 in a clock simul in Canada, winning easily.


Here theory considers the natural 11...Rb8, but White has an easy time after the simple 12.dxe5 (if 12...Nf4 then 13.Bc6, or if 12...Ne3 13.Qh3, simplifying).
12. Qxf7??

12.d3 was necessary, but after 12...Qf6 Black has a satisfactory game. White threatens mate twice, but . . .

12...Nf6 0-1

The queen is lost as well as the bishop. This was Fischer’s quickest loss on the tour.

Burger writes about the end of the game:

At a dinner in Chinatown after the simul (+38, -4, =8), Mac asked Bobby why he resigned. “I lose a piece – 13.f3 Qxb5.” I nudged Henry Gross, the genial boxer-lawyer-bridge master–chess master. He said at once, “Bobby what do you do about …Bd5?”

I have never written about this game before, but whenever I have told the story I have always remarked on the gentlemanly, and rare, act of a Grandmaster in resigning on his thirteenth move when he believed he was only a piece down. Grandmaster playing Grandmasters have played on a piece down for sixty moves. Fischer’s act that evening convinced me forever that he is a rare breed of gentlemen – all the media hoopla notwithstanding. For that reason I did include this game in the book that I later wrote about Fischer, except as a footnote a variation …of the Fritz.
Master Robert Burger is a noted problemist and the author of the well-received The Chess of Bobby Fischer.

(139) Vienna C29
Fischer - Henry Gross
San Francisco (simul), April 13, 1964

1.e4

The last time these two players faced each other (U.S. Open 1957), Bobby opened with 1.Nf3 and the game ended in a draw.

1...e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.f4 d5 4.d3

This odd-looking line in the Vienna is attributed to Wilhelm Steinitz. John Collins writes in My Seven Chess Prodigies about Bobby’s admiration for the Austrian-American World Champion. Fischer often took opening ideas from the games of great players of the past, including Steinitz’s 9.Nh3 (1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5 d5 5.exd5 Na5 6.Bb5+ c6 7.dxc6 bxc6 8.Be2 h6).

4...dxe4


5.fxe5 Nd5

6. Nxe4 Ne6


Black had a solid alternative in 14... Qd7 connecting his rooks.


Fischer’s advantage has been declining for the last 10 moves and now he is at a disadvantage. Perhaps even stronger than the text, is 27...Re3 with a complete bind on White’s position. Now Fischer had a chance to escape from his troubles.

28.h3

White could have drawn after 28.Rxf5 Re2 29.Qg5 Rxb2 30.Qh6 Rxg2+ 31.Kxg2 gxf5 32.Qg5+ Kh8 33.Qf6+ with perpetual check.

28...Qb5?

Once again, Gross misses the opportunity to play 28... Re3, cutting off White’s queen from the queenside.

29.Qg5?

Fischer misses 29.Rxf5, which would win a pawn, as 29...gxf5? is met by 30.Qg5+ Kh8 (30...Kf8 31.Rxf5+ Qxf5 32.Qxf5+) 31.Qf6+ Kg8 32. Rxf5, hitting the queen and threatening 33.Rg5+.

29...Re1 30.Rxe1 Rxe1+ 31.Kh2 Qd5 32.Qf6 Re6 33.Qh4 Draw (O.G.)

(140) Caro-Kann Panov-Botvinnik B14
Fischer - Max Wilkerson
San Francisco (simul), April 13, 1964


Max Wilkerson served as chess director of the Mechanics’ Institute from 1980 to 1996. Founded in 1854, the San Francisco based Mechanics’ is the oldest continuously operated chess club in the United States.
George Kane represented the United States in the 1972 Olympiad and played in the 1973 US Championship.

(141) Center Counter B01
Fischer - George Kane
San Francisco (simul), April 13, 1964


This was a solidly played game by Black. (O.G.)
No photos survive of Fischer's visit to the Mechanics' Institute but these pictures of Vassily Smyslov in action in 1976 at the oldest continuously operated chess club in the United States (since 1854) give an idea of how popular such events were at the M.I. The two photos at the bottom show Smyslov making a move against future International Master Jay Whitehead.

(142) Sicilian Taimanov B44

**Fischer - John Blackstone**
San Francisco (simul), April 13, 1964


Alexander Alekhine in action at the Mechanics’ Institute Chess Club.
(M.I. Archives)
“I would consider the game between Robert Henry and Fischer to be a consultation game. Robert Henry and Robert Thacker take credit for the win; and I gather that Fischer was not pleased, since he was very sensitive about possible collusions three days later in his clock simul at Davis on April 16, 1964. Simple talking or alleged suggesting of moves was quickly protested by him perhaps because Duncan Suttles lurked behind us observing our games.” — Erik Osbun

(143) Two Knights Wilkes-Barre C57

Fischer - Robert Henry and Robert Thacker
San Francisco (simul), April 13, 1964


Noted Berkeley tournament organizer and book collector Alan Benson remembers the night of April 13, 1964 very well. That evening, Bobby chose to show the game Fischer-Tal, Candidates 1959 to the audience at the Mechanics’ Institute. After the exhibition, Benson was invited with fellow junior David Blohm (who drew Fischer) to join Mechanics’ luminaries Guthrie McClain and Henry Gross at a special dinner for Fischer at a restaurant in Chinatown.

(144) Caro-Kann B11

Fischer - Alan Benson
San Francisco (simul), April 13, 1964


7...Nxe4

The way to try to refute White’s risky play is: 7...Qxd4 8.Bd3 Nbd7! 9.Be3 Qd5 10.Rd1 e6 11.O-O Be7 12.Nxf6+ Nxf6 13.Qg3 Bd6! 14.Qh4 Qe5 15.g3 Bc5 with a clear advantage, Dubinin-Ilivitsky, USSR 1957. That said, it should be pointed out that taking such a pawn from Fischer is a dangerous undertaking and the text is quite solid and playable.


A better try to resist was 19...Kb8.
20.Rfd1 Ke7 21.Ba6 Rb4 22.Qa3 Qc5 1-0


National Master Alan Benson giving a blindfold simul at the Cherryland Cafe in Hayward in the early 1970s. (Photo by Richard Shorman)

My Game with Fischer

by Mike Morris

In the summer of my 14th year I stepped into the Mechanics’ Institute Chess Room for the first time. This venerable San Francisco institution is the oldest chess club in the West. Along the walls were photos of past events at the club — prominent was one of Capablanca giving a simul in the 1920s. The same wooden chess sets shown in the picture were on the tables, more than a little worn from hard play over the years.

I was greeted by Arthur B. Stamer, the club’s director. His picture was also on the wall playing in a radio match in the 1920s. He told me to play him to determine my starting rating on the club’s rating board. Even though he was still expert strength I held him to a draw and he gave me a position midway on the board. I was quite proud.

The chess club was actually overseen by Charles Bagby, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Mechanics’ Institute. Bagby was a pompous and portly lawyer with a raspy voice and a tyrannical manner. I heard that Bobby Fischer was going on tour and I asked Bagby whether the club would be bringing him to San Francisco. Bagby asked how much money Fischer expected and I told him $500 for his appearance. Bagby responded, “Tell Fischer that he can [expletive deleted].” This came not only as a shock to my young (16 years old) ears but also as a
disappointment that our club would be bypassed.

Apparently more influential club members prevailed on Bagby to bring Fischer, and his simul was scheduled for April 13, 1964. Fischer opened with a lecture on one of his recent games and then proceeded to play 50 boards. Our club had the best record of the tour. We won 4 and drew 8, as I recall. I definitely remember the sensation being Robert Burger’s victory with the Fritz variation of the Two Knight’s Defense. It was the first time I ever heard of the variation and the last time I have ever seen it played. Incidentally, this game was published in Larry Evans’ column in the August 1999 Chess Life.

Fischer played rapidly except when he stopped at the board next to me, occupied by a boy about 11 years old. Then he would look at the kid for a while before moving.

Even though a piece up, Fischer offered me a draw after 46 moves because he could make no progress.

Mr. Stamer died shortly before the event, and in May the club held the first A.B. Stamer Memorial tournament. My rating was 1863 but I beat a strong expert and an A-player, drew two other experts and I lost only to Robert Burger. I didn’t mind — I was in good company. The combination of these two successes hooked me on chess for life and provided enough momentum to overcome all the unsound combinations, time pressure blunders and lost opportunities that I have encountered since.

(145) French Rubinstein C10

Fischer – Mike Morris,
San Francisco (simul), April 13, 1964

Notes by the authors


Black wants to play ...c5, but needs to get his queen off the d-file. Besides the text, another way to prepare ...c5 — though in fact it was never played in the game — is 11...Qc8; 12.Bg5 h6 13.Bd2 Re8 14.b4 a5 15.b5 c6 16.bxc6 Qxc6 17.Rab1 Rab8 18.Bf4 Bd6 19.Bxd6 Qxd6 20.Ne5 Nd7 21.Qe3 with equality, Psakhis-Akopian, Halkidiki 1992.

12.b3 c5 13.Bb2 Rd8 14.dxc5 Bxc5 15.a3

GM Reshevsky used the plan of 15.Bxf6 gxf6 16.Be4 in an analogous position to try to steer for a better ending.

15...Qc6 16.b4 Bd6 17.Rac1 Rd7??

Morris overlooks a tactic. Better was 17...Bf4 with complicated play.
18.c5!


18...Bb8 19.Bb5?

Simply 19.b5, followed in most cases by 20.c6, wins material.

19...Rxd1+ 20.Rxd1 Qc7 21.exb6

21.c6 Bxc6 22.Rc1 Bxb5

21...axb6 22.h3

22.Ne5 looks better.

22...Rd8

22...Bxf3 23.Qxf3 Qh2+ 24.Kf1 Nd5 threatens ...Nf4. White may be forced to meet this move with g3 pitching the h3 pawn, but seeking compensation in the bishop pair, d-file and Black’s off-side pieces.

It might look illogical to surrender the bishop pair when the opponent has a queenside majority, but 29...Bxf3 makes some sense as after 30.gxf3 the white king has a hard time becoming active.

29...Nhx3+ 30.gxh3 Bxf3 31.Bxb6 Bd6

Morris stops Bobby from activating his majority with 32.a4.

32.Bg2 Bxg2

A difficult decision as 32...Bd1 makes it hard for White to activate his queenside pawns.

33.Kxg2 Kf8 34.a4

White can go into a pawn endgame with 34.Bc5 but after 34...Bxc5 35.bxc5 Ke7 36.a4 Kd7 37.a5 Kc6 38.a6 g5 it’s hard for him to break through. The best try might be 34.Kf3 bringing the king up the board to support the queenside pawns with the bishops on the board.

34...Bxb4 35.a5 Bxa5 36.Bxa5 f6

The reduced material guarantees that sensible play will draw for Black.


Mike Morris (wearing his Lowell High School jacket) playing Francisco Cardenas in round five of the Hamilton Air Force Base Open in late April of 1963. Future FIDE Master Frank Thornally is to the right of Morris. (Photo courtesy of Mike Morris)
Sacramento, April 15
+47, -2, =1

Chess Titleist Beats 47 Simultaneously

Sacramento Bee, April 16, 1964:

United States Chess Champion Robert J. Fischer of Brooklyn played a 50-board simultaneous exhibition last night at McClellan Air Force Base.

He defeated 47, a few of them this area’s stronger players, and drew one and lost two.

Winners were Marlon Sanders of Manteo, San Joaquin county, and Mark Holgerson of Sacramento. The draw went to Airman Second Class Charles Singleton of McClellan, who promoted Fischer’s appearance in the capital.

Chuck Singleton remembers Bobby’s visit well:

Bobby took the bus from San Francisco to Sacramento where I met him at the Greyhound station at 6:45 p.m. the night of the exhibition. A big crowd was there to meet him at McClellan Air Force base, site of the simul, and had he wanted to he could easily have played 75 to 100 boards. As it was, he made short work of the 50 who faced him, with the exhibition only lasting 2½ hours. My game was the last to finish and afterwards we went to Shakey’s for some pizza and beer, where we talked about chess until three in the morning.

The following day we went over to Colonel Ed Edmondson’s (USCF President) home for a cookout. Bobby played Las Vegas chess (a derivative of chess with dice) with Walter Harris, the first black player to achieve a master rating. Later that day I drove him to Davis for his clock simul. There I got to hear him give another great lecture. The night before, at the suggestion of Dr. Alex Janushkowsky, he had demonstrated his game with Addison from the 1963-64 U.S. Championship. Despite having no time to prepare, Fischer ad-libbed perfectly. At Davis he showed his game with Benko, another of his victories on the way to an 11-0 result at the Championship.

When the last game in Davis ended I drove him back to McClellan where he was staying at the Officer’s billets. The following morning he flew south for his next exhibition.

What follows is one amateur’s account of what it was like to beat Fischer.

(146) Caro-Kann B18

Fischer - Marlon Sanders
Sacramento (simul), April 15, 1964
Notes by Marlon Sanders.

1.e4 c6 2.Nc3 d5 3.d4

Seems like masters hate to play d4 on the second move but here we are by transposition.

3...dxe4 4.Nxe4 Bf5 5.Nc5 e6

His fifth move I had never seen. I questioned my 5...e6 at the time but it may have been the winning move?

6.Nxb7

What now, chump? You are playing a Grandmaster with one pawn down. He can beat you with that pawn. He can even beat you without it! Don’t quit now. Try to get a few pieces out.

6...Qc7 7.Ne5 Nf6 8.Nb3 Be7

You feel better now with eight moves on the board.

9.Nf3 h6

Ordinarily you would trade off his dangerous bishop but here it would only help him gain time.


The pawn cannot be defended directly.

14.g4 fxg4 15.Qxe4

Now you see that after 15...gxf3 he gets 16.Qxe7 and you can resign. He is coming closer to your board. Quick: think of something! You thought very seriously of resigning here.
15...Nf6

The surprise is you ever thought of it.

16.Qf5 gxf3 17.Qxf3 Bd6

You are two moves ahead and still a pawn down.

18.Bxh6 Bxh2+

You were afraid to play 18...gxh6; maybe there was more there than you can see.

19.Kh1 Qd7

You thought any other move loses. Now if 20.Qg2 or 20.Kxh2, you play ...Ng4+ and ...Nhx6 next.

20.Bxg7 Kxg7 21.Nc5 Qxd4

Still covering your g4.

22.Rg1+ Bxg1 23.Rxg1+ Kh8

He is looking at your board a long time the last few moves.
Fischer, like Alekhine, looked for new ideas wherever he could find them including the amateur ranks. Northwest Chess, the official publication of the Washington and Oregon Chess Federations, has been published continuously since 1947.

(147) Vienna C29

Fischer - Mark Holgerson
Sacramento (simul), April 15, 1964

1.e4 e5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.f4 d5 4.Qf3?!

A move that has escaped ECO’s attention, although we know of at least one other game where it was in played (Van Steenis-Tartakover, Baarn 1947). Whether it was a conscious attempt to try something new or an accident is hard to say. Holgerson, who was 17 at the time, mentions that he was playing with a red and white plastic set with the kings five inches tall. His metal board,
made by a friend in shop class, had copper and brass squares. An old Spielmann line in the Vienna goes 4.fxe5 Nxe4 5.Qf3.

4...Be5

4...dxe4 5.Nxe4 exf4 is a quieter way to handle the position.

5.exd5

White can win a pawn with 5.fxe5 Ng4 6.e6 Bxe6 7.exd5 Bd7 8.Qe2+ but Black gets reasonable compensation after 8...Be7 followed by ...0-0.

5...Bg4 6.Qg3 O-O?

7...exf4 8.Qxf4 and only then castling is better.

7.h3


7...Bd7 8.Nge2 e4 9.Qh4 Na6 10.a3 c6 11.b4 Bd6?

Setting up a potential attack on the queen with 11...Be7 is much better as it allows Black to recapture on c6 with his bishop. For example: 11...Be7 12. dxc6 Bxc6 13.b5 is strongly met by 13...e3!! 14.bxc6? Ne4 winning.


14.Qg5 Be7 15.Nxe4 was simpler and more effective. Castling queenside offers Black some practical chances against White's king.
14...Rfe8 15.g4??

15.Na4 had to be played. The text is too slow and Black's attack is very fast.

15...c5


16.g5 Nh5?

This works out well but shouldn't. The direct 16...cxb4 leaves White hard-pressed to defend.

17.Bg2?


The queen sac decides the day: 23.Bxb7 Ba3+ 24.Bb2 Qa1 (or Ra1) mate. (O.G.)

(148) Sicilian B27
Fischer - Chuck Singleton
Sacramento (simul), April 15, 1964


Sydney "Sid" Rubin was rated 1936 USCF when this game was played but would later improve, averaging around 2200-2250 the next few decades. He worked at Jet Propulsion Laboratory at Cal Tech and played on its chess team along with fellow Masters Diane Savereide and Julius Loftsson in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

(149) Center Counter B01
Fischer - Sid Rubin
Sacramento (simul), April 15, 1964

Notes by Sid Rubin.


As 19...Nc2? 20.Nd7+ mates.


Hastening the end.

37Nb3+ Kc4 38.Nxa5+ Kxb4 39.Nxb7 1-0 (O.G.)
In January 1964, the legendary Bobby Fischer won another U.S. Championship by going 11-0. The invincible Fischer squashed his leading American rivals like so many bugs. He then went on to demonstrate his prowess to crowds of admiring amateurs.

Reader George W. Flynn has sent us some interesting observations on Fischer’s 50-board simultaneous exhibition at McClellan Air Force Base, April 15, 1964.

“First of all, Bobby requested that absolutely no flash pictures be taken during the exhibition, although such pictures were permitted before play. To me this is early evidence that Fischer’s light sensitivity is entirely genuine and not a temperamental pose.

“Second, his memory is indeed photographic. In response to an audience question, Fischer played over on a demonstration board his game, originally played months earlier with Bill Addison. His comments were in depth and without notes.”

Even more revealing is the awe Fischer inspired in his opponents, Flynn continues: “About moves 25 to 30, I offered to draw! I was a pawn-grabber’s pawn ahead and yet reasonably certain the axe was going to drop on me sooner or later. I expected a display of Fischer temperament, since I doubted the etiquette of my own action. Fischer showed no irritation whatever. He even took the offer seriously … His eyes moved rapidly back and forth over the board, obviously calculating the endgame. Satisfied, he smiled and said, ‘Let’s play a little longer.’”

(150) Sicilian Hyper-Accelerated Dragon B27
Fischer – George Flynn
Sacramento (simul), April 15, 1964

1.e4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 c5

This move order is a favorite of Canadian IM Lawrence Day.

4.dxc5

This move is the only real try to attempt to refute Black’s setup. 4.Nf3 cxd4 5.Nxd4 Nc6 transposes into the Accelerated Dragon and 4.d5 is a Schmidt Benoni.

4...Qa5 5.Nf3

5...Nc6 6.Bd3 Bxc3+
This move might look risky, but Black didn’t have a lot of choice, as 6...Qxc5 was strongly met by 7.Nd5.

7.bxc3 Qxc3+
Going whole hog. Flynn wins a pawn, but White has excellent compensation.

Here 13...O-O was safer.

14.Qd2 Nde5 15.Nxe5 Qxe5
If 15...Nxe5, 16.Be2 is awkward for Black’s queen.

16.f4 Qa5 17.c3 b5
Flynn fearlessly leaves his king in the center. 17...O-O was better.

Bobby would have retained his advantage with 27.Bd5 Kg7 28.c6. The text blunders a pawn and leaves Fischer fighting for the half-point.

27...Bxe4 28.Qxe4 Qxc5+ 29.Kh2 e6 30.Re1 Qb5 31.Rc7 Kg7 32. Raa7 Rhf8 33.Rcb7 Rxb7 34.Rxb7 Qd5 35.Qxd5 exd5 36.Rxb4 Rd8 37.Rd4 f6 38.Kg3 f5 Draw

Flynn adds: “Fischer was very friendly to me. After the exhibition he hurried out into the hallway, put his hands on the wall above his head and seemed to be panting from exhaustion. He recovered quickly and started signing scoresheets. I was the second player to reach him and he commented that I had played ‘a nice game.’ The first player to have his scoresheet signed spoke up and said, ‘Say, you signed it “R. Fischer.” Can’t you sign it Bobby Fischer?’

“Bobby never replied, but his expression changed to complete disgust and he stared at the man for a long 30 seconds, then turned away and began a brief but pleasant conversation with me.

“It was the only sign of ‘The Fischer Temper’ and I thought it not entirely without justification.”

The following fragment is included in Fischer's notes to his game with Celle in My 60 Memorable Games. It was played in the tour prior to the exhibition in Davis. Exactly when and where is not known.

(151) Evans Gambit C51
9.Qh5! Fischer-Celle
9...Be6 10.Bxe6 fxe6 11.Ba3 Qd3!

This is a perfect example of Fischer's famous statement, "you can even learn from a patzer". Like Alekhine, Bobby was known to examine the games of amateur players for ideas, whether it be in the tournament hall or in a foreign chess magazine. Soviet players in the 1960s expressed major surprise when he showed familiarity with the games of some of their second tier female players.

Davis, California, April 16
+10, -0, =0

Fischer Here Tonight

Davis Enterprise, April 16, 1964:

Undefeated United States Chess Champion and International Grandmaster Robert J. Fischer will give a clock-simultaneous exhibition tonight, starting at 7 in Freeborn Hall, Room 26. Admission for spectators will be 25 cents. The event is sponsored by ASUCD and the Davis Chess Club. Fischer will play with the regular time limit, 40 moves in two hours, against a team of ten, ranking from top rated experts, almost masters, to high B-class players.

In order of their rating points they are as follows: Experts: Roy Hoppe, 2190; Erik Osbun, 2183; John Blackstone, 2177; Serge von Oettingen, 2119; Ojars Celle, 2092 and Max Wilkerson, 2024. A Class: Dr. Alex Janushkowsky, 1992 and Sidney Rubin, 1936. B Class: Dr. Moshe Shifrine, 1791 and Edward McCaskey, 1769. The USCF rating of Fischer is the highest in the United States and counts at the present time 2734 points.

Fischer Wins 10-0

Davis Enterprise, April 23, 1964:

More than 100 spectators watched the perfect performance of the United States Chess Champion and International Grandmaster Robert J. Fischer in simultaneous play against a team of ten here last Thursday. The young champion was introduced to the public by USCF president
Edmund Edmondson, an Air Force major from Mather AFB.

After that Fischer gave a half-hour lecture demonstrating one of his recent brilliant victories against Grandmaster Pal Benko.

Then the actual play began, in which Fischer was never in danger. [Editor’s Note: This was not actually true, as Fischer was in clear trouble against Blackstone.] In some of the games he quickly checkmated his strongest opponents, beautifully sacrificing his own pieces. In other games he gained material advantage and forced his opponents to resign. The longest resistance against the champ was given by both local B-Class players, Dr. Moshe Shifrine and UCD junior Edward McCaskey; but after three hours of play everything was finished and Fischer left Davis for his next show in Santa Barbara.

The authors have long been curious when it was decided to hold the Davis exhibition as a clock simul. After all Fischer gave over 40 exhibitions in the first half of 1964 but only two were with clocks. The caliber of opposition in Davis was comparable to those that Bobby faced in the Philippines (1967) and Greece (1968) but the event has never quite received its due even though Fischer chose to include one game (Celle) from it in My Sixty Memorable Games.

Interestingly, Karsten Müller, in his comprehensive The Career and Complete Games of the American World Chess Champion, which aims to present all of Fischer’s serious games, includes the events from Manila and Athens but not Davis or the one on one exhibition game played at a time control of G/60 against Pascual in the Philippines in 1967. Likely the reason for the omissions is that Müller wasn’t aware these events were different from regular simuls.

We asked two of the participants in the exhibitions, NMs Erik Osbun and John Blackstone, what they recall about that night and how the event came to be.

John Blackstone:

You ask about the Fischer simul to Davis, here is what I remember:

“I did not find out about it (Davis) until the simul at the Mechanics’. I think Edmondson got up and announced it to all that was there. Edmondson was there at Davis and stated that there was going to be another simul in Sacramento that upcoming weekend.

“The one thing that I do remember was after all was said and done and I was leaving I ran into Fischer and offered him my hand to thank him and his reaction for a split second was as though I was going to hit him. Strange!

“I and my wife (Julie), Don Steers, Rita Walker and Earl Pruner all went to his banquet at the LA Press club after he had won the world title (In November if I remember right). After the end of it, I and my party waited for him in the parking lot. When he came out with two women (one on each arm), I walked up to him and said you probably do not remember me. His reply was "Hello John. How have you been?" I then proceeded to ask if he would sign the books that he had written and he did sign gladly. He then got into the limo with the two women and off he
Erik Osbun remembers:

“I do not remember 100 spectators as we were in a relatively small room and only a few people circulated through it. I do remember Suttles spectating. Fischer, knowing Suttles, actually voiced objection to the possibility of him helping us. Suttles did not help me, that's for sure.

“I don't remember when I got the invite and made no preparation as I was a full-time science student at San Jose State. I do think it was always intended to be a clock simultaneous. No analyses with Bobby afterwards. I remember John Blackstone talking to him, but I was silent. John had a winning position at one point; maybe he can clarify that for you. Having seen Fischer one day at the U.S. Junior in 1957, I was more impressed with his new height in 1964 (I guess it was six feet two inches).”

Donald Byrne analyzes with Duncan Suttles while Byrne’s Penn State students watch. (Photo by Beth Cassidy)

The following games first appeared in the Spring 1964 issue of the American Chess Quarterly.

(152) Sicilian Sozin B87
Fischer - John Blackstone
Davis (clock simul), April 16, 1964

This isn’t sound. Objectively the knight had to retreat, but as Bobby points out in My 60 Memorable Games, 11.Nce2 e5 12.Nf3 Bb7 is good for Black.

11...bxc3 12.exf7+ Kf8 13.Bg5 Ng4!

This is a nice defensive move that sidesteps White’s attempt to complicate the game. According to Bobby, “Black should win.”


Three pieces for a rook is an overwhelming advantage but Black’s insecure king position offers Bobby some chances. Here returning some of the booty with 20...Nf6 makes sense. After 21.cxb5 Kxf7 intending ...Rf8 followed by ...Kg8, Blackstone looks fine.


The following game is number 50 in Fischer’s My 60 Memorable Games.

(153) Evans Gambit C51
Fischer - Ojars Celle
Davis (clock simul), April 16, 1964

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Be7 4.b4 Bxb4 5.c3 Bxc3 6.d4 d6?

This is a serious mistake according to theory, which argues that 6...Na5 was essential, meeting 7.Nxe5 with 7... Nxc4 8.Nxc4 d5 restoring the balance in the center.

7.dxe5 Nxe5

If Black has any chance to rehabilitate this line his chances lie in 7... Bg4, returning some booty to get his pieces developed.

8.Nxe5 dxe5 9.Qh5!

Fischer remarks that in an earlier exhibition game: "I played 9.Qb3 but got nothing after 9...Be6! 10.Bxe6 fxe6 11.Ba3!? (11.Qxe6 Qd6 is equal) 11... Qd3!.”

9...g6 10.Qxe5 Nf6

11.Ba3!

This ties up Black completely.

11...Rf8

Celle moves his rook to unpin his knight and Fischer suggests that this is the only move to offer Black relief.

GM Igor Zaitsev, writing in the unauthorized Russian-language version of My 60 Memorable Games suggests that 11...Be6 12.Bxe6 O-O deserves consideration. Black sacrifices a piece to trap White’s king in the center.

Zaitsev continues 13.Bb3 Bxa3 14.Nxa3 Re8 when White has no convenient square for his queen. He then gives 15.Qg5 Qd3 or 15.Qb5 c6 and goes no further.

The position after 15.Qg5 Qd3 looks dangerous for White at first glance but he has a resource in 16.Qd2 meeting 16...Qa6 by returning the extra piece to get his king to safety - 17.f3 Qxa3 18.0-0. Chances should be approximately equal. Black can try for more with 16...Rxe4+ 17.Kd1 Qa6 18.Nc2 when Houdini assesses the crazy position after 18...c5 as offering equal chances.

White can also try 15.Qb5. Zaitsev’s suggestion of 15...c6, trying to weaken White’s control of d3, works well enough after 16. Bxf7+ Kg7! (16...Kxf7 17.Qb3+ followed by 18.O-O is better for White) 17.Qb3 Qd3! (17...Rxe4+ 18.Kf1 Qd3+ 19.Kg1 and White’s king is safe) 18.Bxe8 Rxe8 19.f3 Nxe4, winning for Black. However, 16.Qxb7 seems like a simple refutation, e.g., 16...Rxe4+17.Kf1 Qd3+ 18.Kg1 Qxc3 19.Qxf7+ Kh8 20. Rf1 consolidates and 16...Re7 17.Qxe6 Rc8 18.Qa6 Rxe4+ 19.Kf1 leaves Black without a satisfactory follow-up.

Black has much better in 15...a6 when after 16.Qg5 he can play 16...Qd3 transposing to the position reached after 15.Qg5 Qd3 where the inclusion of ...a6 does not affect the position.

Theory has always assumed that Black’s opening play starting with 6...d6 was very weak. Could it be that Zaitsev’s 11...Be6 makes the line playable for Black? This will depend on practical tests of the lines given above (to date only the game Ovetchkin-Zherdov, Samara 2002, has seen 11...Be6 and Black immediately followed 12.Bxe6 with the weak 12...fxe6. The validity of 6...d6 will also depend on finding a good answer to 7.Qb3 when theory after 7...Na5 8.Bxf7+ Kf8 9.Qa4 c6 suggests that both 10.Bxg8 and 10.Bb3 are both a little better for White. While 6...d6 may not completely equalize it does not deserve a question mark.

12.O-O Ng4

Fischer suggests that 12...Nd7, intending ...Nb6, is worth a look.

13.Qg3 Bxa3 14.Nxa3 Qe7!
Latvian-American expert Ojars Celle continues to find his best chances to resist.

“Apparently Black has freed his game. If now 15.Nc2, 15...Qe5 virtually forces the trade of queens. 15.Nb5 is rendered harmless by 15...Ne5. How’s White to sustain the initiative?” — Fischer, My 60 Memorable Games.

15.Bb5+

Forcing Celle to weaken the d6-square.

15...c6 16.Nc4! Qe6!


17.Rad1!

“Piling on the pressure. White mustn’t amateurishly rush in with 17.Qc7, 17...Qd7!; and he is then forced to simplify by 18.Nd6+ Ke7 19.Nxc8+ Raxc8 20.Qxd7+ Kxd7, and his advantage has evaporated. Chess is matter of timing. It’s not enough to play the right move, you’ve got to play it at the right moment. Restraint is one of the most difficult things for the average chess player to learn.” — Fischer. Sage advice from one of the greatest chess players of all time.
17...cxb5 18.Qc7 Bd7 19.Nd6+ Ke7 20.Nf5+!

This adds fuel to the fire. Now 20... Ke8 is met by 21.Ng7+ and 20... Kf6 loses to 21.Rd6 gxf5 22.Qxd7.

20...gxf5

20...Qxf5 21.Qd6+ Kd8 (21...Ke8 22.Rfe1+ Be6 23.Qd7 mate) 22. Qxf8+ Kc7 23.Qxa8 ends the game.

21.exf5 Rac8 22. Rxd7+! Qxd7 23.f6+!

“Originally I intended 23.Re1+ Ne5 24.Rxe5+ Kf6 25.Qxd7 Kxe5 26.Qxb5+ with a won ending. But then I remembered Emanuel Lasker’s maxim: When you see a good move — wait — don’t play it — you might find a better one.” — Fischer

In the American Chess Quarterly, Spring 1964, Bobby points out that 26.Qxb5+ Kf6 “leads to an ending that I feel certain White can win, but it would still be a long haul, and in a simultaneous exhibition it would be the easiest thing in the world to get swindled out of.”

23...Nxf6

As 23...Ke8 24.Re1+ Qe6 25.Qxc8 is mate.
24.Re1+

“Note the amusing piece configuration. All the black pieces are blocking each other in a helpless position. Black has only one legal move — otherwise it’s mate!” — Fischer in American Chess Quarterly.

24...Ne4 25.Rxe4+ Kf6 26.Qxd7 Rfd8 27.Qg4  1-0

Ojars Celle was born in 1929 in Riga, Latvia. (photo by Val Zemitis)

Researching the second edition of A Legend on the Road, the author received an interesting e-mail from Mr. Celle in 2004, reproduced here somewhat condensed:

Dear Mr. Donaldson,

The day of the match is vivid in my memory not because of Bobby Fischer but for other reasons. My wife … was far away [due to a family crisis]. For several hours I was contemplating what to do with my promise to participate in the match. Finally I decided to go but really I was in no mood for chess.
Before the match Fischer, in his characteristic style, gave a lecture on a recent game with Pal Benko. After [our] game Fischer asked if he could have the score.

Quite a few months later I met my L.A. friend, poet and chess player Olafs Stumbrs who had returned from a trip to Latvia. He had brought a copy of the Riga chess magazine Sahs. To my great surprise Fischer had published our game in that issue. He knew that I was from Latvia.

I should add a short comment on the game — never before or since have I felt such chess-playing power coming across the board at me.

Sincerely,

/s/ Ojars Celle

Roy Hoppe (1943-2014) was rated 2190 when this game was played and would soon become a master, but it was bridge that was his true love and the game he taught and played most of his life. He first saw (but did not play) Bobby at the 1957 U.S. Junior Open in San Francisco.

(154) French Winawer C16

Fischer - Roy Hoppe

Davis (clock simul), April 16, 1964

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 Ne7 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.bxc3 b6 7.Qg4 Ng6 8.h4 h5 9.Qg3 Ba6 10.Bxa6 Nxa6 11.Ne2 c5

Deviating from ECO’s 11...Nb8 12.Bg5 Qd7 13.Qf3 Qa4 14.Ng3 Qxc2 15.Rc1 Qb2 16.Nh5
with a clear advantage for White in Bogdanovic-Matulovic, Yugoslavia (ch) 1957. The text challenges White’s center but runs the risk of opening up the game for White, who is the better developed player.


Bobby opens the game to exploit Hoppe’s backward development.

19...Ne7

If 19...dxc4 then 20.d5! exd5 21.f5! with the threat of e6 is crushing.


On 25...fxe6 26.fxe6 Qe7 White has 27.Qf7+ winning.

26.exf7+ Qxf7 27.Rde1+ Kf8 28.Qf6+ Kg7 29.Re7 Qxe7 30.Qxe7+ Kh6 31.Re1 Rg8 32.Qf6+ Kh7 33.Re7 1-0

Alex Janushkowsky (1922-2010) was born in Belarus, the son of a military officer in the Russian Army under the Tsar who was executed in 1937 during Stalin's Great Purge. He and his wife, who were both medical doctors, made their way to Sacramento after World War 2. During the 1960s and 70s Janushkowsky was one of the strongest members of the Sacramento Chess Club.

(155) Evans Gambit C52
Fischer - Alex Janushkowsky
Davis (clock simul), April 16, 1964


9.e5! dxe5

Safer was 9...Nxe5 trying to simplify. Now Black’s king is stuck in the center forever.


(156) Alekhine B03
Fischer - Edward McCaskey
Davis (clock simul), April 16, 1964


This move allows White to achieve a tremendous bind that McCaskey is never able to challenge.


San Jose State College won the U.S. 1964 Intercollegiate Team Championship. Team members, pictured left to right, are Len Hill, Jim Iwashita, SJS Chess Club Advisor Dr. Arthur Rogers, Erik Osbun, Ray Schutt and alternate Peter Kelemen. Erik Osbun led the team scoring 5 1/2 from 7. This photograph was taken by Osbun's roommate Steve Starr who later won the Pulitzer prize for photography in 1970.

The notes to the following game are by NM Erik Osbun of El Centro, California, who kindly granted permission to reprint them.

(157) Evans Gambit C52
Fischer - Erik Osbun
Davis (clock simul), April 16, 1964
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.b4 Bxb4 5.c3 Ba5 6.d4 exd4 7.0–0 d6?

Better is 7...Bb6 avoiding the Waller attack. Fine played worse versus Fischer in 1963 with 7...dxc3?

8.Qb3 Qd7 9.exd4?!


9...Bb6?

Keres gives 9...Nd8! Followed by 10...Ne7. My method is more "Houdini-like" according to Evans.


Not a good idea; better is 14...Ne7.

15.Nc3 Ne5 16.Qc2 Ne7

White is well off after 16...Nxd3 17.Qxd3. The d-pawn is a sitting duck.


Black has no better than to give back the pawn.

22.Nxd6 Rd8 23.e5 f6

Black tries his best to dispute the center.


Nicely prepared.
39...gxf6 40.Qh7+ Kg5 41.h4+ Kg4 42.Re4+ Kh3 43.Qf5+ Rg4 44.Rxg4??

A mistake, correct is 44.Qf3 Rxe4 (44...Rxe3+ 45.fxg3! Qxg3+ 46.Qxg3+ Kxg3 47.Re8 and White queens.) 45.Qh1+ Kg4 46.Qxe4+ Kh3 47.Qf5 mate.

44...hxg4??

After 44...Qe5 both 45.Rf4+ Qxf5 46.Rxf5 Rd8 47.Rxh5 Rxd7 48.Kf1 Kg4 49.Rc5 and 45.Qxe5 fxe5 46.Rg7 Rd8 47.Kf1 are better for White but Black is still fighting.

Fischer after winning the 1965/66 U.S. Championship (Chess Review)

(158) Caro-Kann Panov-Botvinnik B14

**Fischer - Sid Rubin**

Davis (clock simul), April 16, 1964

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Nf6 3.c4 c6 4.d4

Deviating from their game the night before (game 149) where Fischer played the unusual 4.dxc6.


Having achieved a thoroughly cramped position after only 14 moves Rubin adds to his difficulties by committing a cardinal error — opening the game for the better developed player. Note that the more plausible attempt to break out, 14...e5, would have been met by 15.Nc3! Nxd4 (15...e4 16.Nxd5 exd3 17.Nxc7 dxc2 18.Nxa8; 15...exd4 16.Nxd5 Qd8 17.Bf4 with the idea of 18.Bc7) 16.Bxd4 exd4 17.Nxd5 as 17...Qxe5? is strongly met by 18.Nxf6+ gxf6 19.Qd2 with a winning attack (analysis from the American Chess Quarterly, Spring 1964, p. 271).

15.cxb6 Nxb6 16.Rac1 Nxa4 17.Qxa4 Bb7 18.Bb5

This pin effectively ends the game.

Dr. Moshe Shifrine was a Professor of Immunology at the University of California at Davis when this game was played.

(159) King’s Gambit C30
Fischer - Moshe Shifrine
Davis (clock simul), April 16, 1964


(160) Caro-Kann Panov-Botvinnik B14
Fischer - Serge Von Oettingen
Davis (clock simul), April 16, 1964


This move, in conjunction with 13.Ne5 and 14.f3, guarantees White a clear positional advantage (control of the e5-square and play against e6).


A strong positional sacrifice justified by Black’s weak pawns on b7 and e6.

A sketch of Fischer from Tal’s Latvian magazine Sahs, circa 1964.

(161) Sicilian Sozin B57
Fischer - Max Wilkerson
Davis (clock simul), April 16, 1964


This move enjoys a poor reputation despite Dutch GM Gennadi Sosonko’s attempts to rehabilitate it.

7.Nxc6 bxc6 8.e5 Nd7?!

Sosonko’s attempt to resurrect the line was 8...Ng4 meeting 9.exd6 with 9...Qxd6 and 9.Bf4 with 9...Bh6. Although it’s a better try than 8...Nd7, Sosonko’s line also falls short of yielding equality.

9.exd6 exd6 10.O-O d5

Walking right into a combination, but with 11.Re1+ threatened and 10...Be7 met by 11.Bh6, Black had no good moves.

11.Nxd5 Ne5

As 11...cxd5 12.Qxd5 with a double attack on f7 and a8 is curtains.

Max Wilkerson won the New Mexico state championship in 1959, and tied for the second in the 1996 U.S. Senior Open. Directly behind him with silver hair is noted Blackmar-Diemer Gambit aficionado Ernst Rassmussen, one of the standard bearers of Tacoma chess in the 1970s. (Photo by John Hillery)

Santa Barbara, April 18

+49, -2, =1

Oxnard Youth Whips U.S. Chess Champion

An 18-year-old Oxnard youth defeated the six times U.S. Chess champion, Bobby Fischer, 21, in Fischer’s exhibition against 52 opponents Saturday at Santa Barbara Recreation Center.

Bruce Allen, vice president of the Ventura County Chess Club and son of William A. Allen, 714 C. West Fifth St., Oxnard, was one of only two winners. The other was Tom McDermott of Santa Barbara. Don Hansford was the only player to draw. [Note that this exhibition is given in some sources as +46,-2,=2] Jack Tanner was the organizer.

Young Allen is one of very few challengers who have defeated the champion in his nationwide exhibitions. Fischer is a “fabulous player,” in the estimation of Norman Lund, another member of the Ventura County club. He said Fischer is sure to become the future world’s champion.

Bruce’s father is president of the Ventura County club.

A similar exhibition is planned Wednesday at the Civic Recreation Center, Ventura, with George Soules, Ventura County Chess Club member and chess master, conducting the match. Prizes will be U.S. Chess Federation memberships. Admission fee will be 50 cents. Participants must bring their own sets.
Editor’s Note: This article, which was reprinted in The Chess Courier, June 1964, would appear to be from an Oxnard or Santa Barbara paper.

(162) Sicilian Sozin B57
Fischer - Bruce Allen
Santa Barbara (simul), April 18, 1964

22.Ng4 h5 23.Ne3 Rg8+ 24.Kh1 Nh3 25.Nd5 Bh4 0-1

Santa Monica, April 19
+45, -3, =2

Isaac Kashdan in the Los Angeles Times of April 19, 1964:

Local chess fans have a final opportunity this afternoon to see U.S. Champion Bobby Fischer in action. Starting at 2 p.m. he will tackle 50 opponents in simultaneous play at the Club Del Mar, 1910 Ocean Front, Santa Monica.

If he follows precedent, 21-year-old Fischer will walk continuously around the large room, pausing for a few seconds at each board to make his move. He will take no break, and allow his opponents none during the three to four hours the exhibition lasts.

Spectators are invited, with no admission charge. They can participate in a question and answer period, which will start the proceedings.

One subject of interest is whether Fischer will play in the Interzonal Tournament, scheduled for Amsterdam, Holland, from May 20 to June 25. This is the next step in the three-year cycle to determine a challenger for a world championship match.

Fischer has stated that he will not participate, mainly on the ground that the Russians have dominated the championship play, and that no one else has a fair chance to break through. [Editor’s Note: The first place prize of approximately $250 for the Interzonal was not much of an inducement.]

Fischer is almost alone in this view. True, there are more Russian grandmasters than those of any other nationality, but no individual has any more chances than any other, according to the present rules.

For Fischer to become world champion, he has to: 1) be one of the top six in the Interzonal; 2) win several successive matches in the Challenger’s series, and 3) win a match against titleholder Tigran Petrosian.
We are certain that Fischer does not lack confidence in his ability. He evidently feels that sometime he will gain a match for the championship without all the preliminaries. This we regard as highly doubtful.

Fischer is by no means giving up international play. He will be on the U.S. team in the World Students Team Tournament in Cracow, Poland, in July. [Editor’s Note: He didn’t play.]

He will also be on board for the U.S. in the Chess Olympiad in Tel Aviv, Israel, in November. This is of particular interest to your editor, who will be captain of our team. [Editor’s Note: Again, Fischer didn’t play.]

Bobby scored forty-five wins, three losses, and two draws against 50 opponents. James House, William Korst, and Jacques Masson were the winners with Charles Clement and Roger Neustaedter drawing. Opening remarks were made by Al Epstein, manager of the club. Alex Bisno introduced Fischer, and Isaac Kashdan served as referee.

Fischer at the Del Mar Club, Santa Monica, California. (Photo by Art Zeller)

(163) French Winawer C19

**Fischer - Charles Clement**
Santa Monica (simul), April 19, 1964


(164) Vienna C26
Fischer - James House  
Santa Monica (simul), April 19, 1964


(165) Sicilian Sozin B87

Fischer - Roger Neustaedter  
Santa Monica (simul), April 19, 1964


White has “won” the d5 square but has no way to exploit as Black has ample play on the queenside that prevents a knight from ever reaching the dream square.


Play has been balanced the entire game but now the 15-year-old high school student takes the fight to his famous opponent.

37.b4 d5!  
This is the logical follow up to Black’s last move which only looks like it involves a swap of pawns. In reality White must be very careful if he wants to hold the position.

38.cxd5 Rxb4 39.Rxb4?  
This natural looking capture should have been the losing move. Bobby could have saved himself with 39.f6 gxf6 (39…Rxb1?? 40.fxe7 Rb8 41.d6 and the pawns are on unstoppable). 40.Qc8+ drawing.

39… Bxb4 40.Qxa4  
There was no way out as 40.Nxe5 is met by 40…Bd6 41.Nf3 a3 and the a-pawn decides the game.

40…Qe2+ 41.Kh3 Qxf3 42.Qxb4 Qh1+ Draw  
This was an impressive performance by Black but it would been even more so if he had continued play as 43. Kg4 h5+ 44.Kxh5 Qf3+ 45.g4 Qf4 wins.

(O.G.)
Isaac Kashdan, pictured here in a 1950s North-South match playing Black against Imre Konig, was a big supporter of Bobby. He served as U.S captain in 1960 when Bobby made his Olympiad debut and the team took home silver. (Photo from Mechanics’ CC Archives)

(166) Sicilian Sozin B88
Fischer - J. Hunt
Santa Monica (simul), April 19, 1964


The following game, one of Bobby's more convincing defeats on the 1964 tour, was first published in the September 2015 issue of Chess Life (page 48) which also notes it can also be found at the website korstvsfischer.onfo.

(167) Sicilian Sozin B57
Fischer - William Korst
Santa Monica (simul), April 19, 1964


The game position, which started as a Sozin variation of the Sicilian, is now very similar to that reached after 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 g6 5.Nc3 Bg7 6.Be3 Nf6 7.Bc4 0–0 8.Bb3 d6 9.f3 Bd7 10.Qd2 Nxd4 11.Bxd4 b5, but with one important difference - the White's
bishop is on e3 instead of d4. This detail appears to have been overlooked by Bobby.

12.h4?!

This is the main line with the bishop on d4 but does not work well here. 12.a4, 12.0–0 and 12.Bh6 are better choices.

12...b4

This is the point. White's knight does not have a good square to go to.

13.Nd5?

13.Ne2 was forced but after 13...a5 Black is doing well.

13...Nxd5 14.Bxd5 Bxb2 15.Kf2?

15.Bd4 offered more stubborn resistance. Taking the exchange gives White a great attack after 15...Bxa1 16.Bxa1 Rc8 17.h5 but Black doesn't have to be so obliging. Instead 15...Bxd4 16.Qxd4 Rc8 17.h5 Qb6 18.Qd2 Ba4! with the point 19.hxg6 Rxc2! leaves Black in the driver's seat.

15...Bc3

Preserving the bishop is quite understandable, but objectively there was nothing wrong with immediately grabbing the exchange. For example: 15...Bxa1 16.Rxa1 (16.Bxa8?? Bc3) 16...Rc8 17.h5 e6 18.Bb3 Qh4+ 19.Kg1 a5 20.Qxd6 a4 21.Qxd7 axb3 22.cxb3 Rfd8 winning.

16.Qe2 Rc8 17.h5

17.Rad1 a5 preparing ...e6 and ...a4 hunting down the bishop.

17...e6 18.Bb3 Bxa1

Black does not need to be asked twice and wins the exchange under even better circumstances. Bobby gets no chances to make a comeback in the concluding stage of this game.


Ken Hense, who was present as a spectator at this exhibition, located only a ten minute walk from the Miramar Hotel, site of the 1966 Piatigorsky Cup, remembers Fischer being asked who was the best player in the world (excluding himself). “He said Spassky. Then he was asked to name the top 10 players of all time. His omission of Lasker was famous of course. Fischer
hated Lasker's openings.”
Agreement between Robert Fischer hereinafter to be known as Fischer and Alexander Bisno, hereinafter to be known as Bisno.

Whereas, Bisno has suggested to Fischer that if it can be arranged,

Fischer should play a match with one of the top Russian players.

Whereas, Fischer is agreeable to the playing of such a match and is hereby designating Bisno to represent him in the negotiations for the playing of such a chess match.

Whereas, Bisno proposes to proceed with the negotiations through the United States Department of State, Cultural Department, acting through the American Chess Foundation and
the United States Chess Federation.

It is therefore agreed between the parties Fischer and Bisno as follows:

1. That Bisno shall do what he feels is necessary to initiate negotiations with the proper chess federation in Russia and do what is necessary to complete successful negotiations for this match.

2. The match is to be between Fischer and one of the five top players in Russia, not excluding Petrosian, the present Champion of the World, if the Russians will agree to designate him. However, Fischer will play the match with anyone designated by the Russian authorities as long as he is one of the top five players in Russia.

3. The match is to be held either in Russia entirely, or in the United States of America entirely; or, part of the match in Russia and part in the United States of America.

4. Draws are not to be counted and the winner of the first eight or ten games — whatever is agreed upon — shall be declared the winner of the match.

5. The purse is to be $8,500.00, the winner of the match to get 80 percent and the loser to get 20 percent.

6. The referee or referees to be appointed shall be persons that are acceptable and agreeable to Fischer.

7. The match is to take place at any time agreeable to both parties but at such time as will not interfere with prior commitments of the players.

8. Bisno is given four months from this date to make final arrangements for this match. In addition to the prize money, Fischer is to get his transportation and food and lodging expenses paid for.

Signed and sealed this 19th day of April, 1964.

/s/ Alexander Bisno
/s/ Robert Fischer

The exhibition tour was not the only thing that was on Bobby’s mind while he was in California. Having decided not to participate in the FIDE World Championship cycle Bobby tried to work from outside the system, as the document overleaf from the Hanon Russell Collection shows.

Nothing came of this and it was not until Fischer went through the FIDE World Championship cycle that he finally got a shot at the title.

Ventura, California, April (??)

The first edition of A Legend on the Road suggested that Bobby gave an exhibition in Ventura on April 22nd, but that doesn’t seem to be the case as he gave one that same day in Las Vegas. The Ventura County Star Free-Press of April 24th, mentions that local master George W. Soules gave a simul two days before, defeating 28 opponents, losing three games, and conceding one draw at the Ventura Civic Recreation Center.

Oklahoma chess historian Frank Berry theorizes that the high turnout suggests that Bobby’s appearance was canceled with little notice. Otherwise why would so many players have shown up? Since the players were expecting a simul, the strongest player available stepped forward so as not to disappoint them.
The following game was played in one of Fischer’s exhibitions in California but the exact location is unknown.

(168) Pirc B08

**Fischer - Michael Bedford**

California (simul), April 1964


The January 1964 issue of *Chess Life* lists Michael Bedford as being from California with a rating of 1968.

**Las Vegas, April 22**

+34, -0, =1

NM Ken Smith, who played in it and drew, remembers about 35 players participating and Bobby scoring +34, =1, -0. Larry Evans, who was living in Las Vegas at the time, also remembers Bobby’s visit. Further confirmation comes from Bobby. The Dayton Chess Club Review of June 1964 relates that during his lecture in Columbus Bobby talked about his exhibition in Las Vegas and that the players there didn’t put up much resistance, only lasting 1½ hours.

The following is from the Las Vegas Review-Journal of April 15, 1964

**Boy Wonder of Chess Will Play in Las Vegas**

As local golf fans anticipate the forthcoming Tournament of Champions, Las Vegas will be visited by a champion of the world's most cerebral competition.

Bobby Fischer, current U.S. chess champion, will take on all comers in a simultaneous exhibition chess match sponsored by the Las Vegas Chess Club at the Desert Chess Club, April 22, at 7p.m.

Chess, originally contrived by Indian Buddhists as a substitute for war, is more like the real thing to Fischer, six-time U.S. champion.

Edward Lasker, unofficial dean of the American chess community, in his book entitled "Chess
for Fun and Blood," describes Fischer as belonging in the latter category. "He always wants to kill his opponent" Lasker said.

Reported to have a disposition much like that of Attila the Hun, Fischer has electrified the chess world, not only for his daring, slashing play, but also for his occasional disregard for the social amenities compatible with formal chess competition.

The 20-year-old boy wonder is a maverick among the chess elite. Unlike other international grandmasters - almost all highly educated scholars or mathematicians - he never bothered to finish high school.

Winning his first U.S. title at the precious age of 14, the "enfant terrible" of the American chess community is to many authorities, a stronger player than the current world champion, Tigran Petrosian.

At the U.S. Championship last December in New York, the boy from Brooklyn performed an unparalleled feat by winning 11 straight matches - everyone he played.

In Las Vegas, Fischer will probably be playing more than 11 players - simultaneously.

Tickets are available through chess club members Jerry Cole, Herman Estrada, Stan Zajac, Art Gamlin and G.M. Farnham.

Edward Lasker and friend, circa 1965. (Photo by Beth Cassidy)

Denver, April 26
+50, -1, =4

The simul was held at the Brown Palace West, Grand Ballroom, on Sunday, April 26th, starting at 2 p.m. The cost for the event was $5 for players, $1 for adult spectators, and 50 cents for junior spectators. The Denver Chess Club was the sponsor.
Wesley Koehler (see game below) recalls that George Pipiringos was the primary organizer of the simul and Fischer stayed at his home while he was in Denver. Koehler notes too that Fischer said to Pipiringos he would never have said he could give knight odds to any woman in the world (as had been attributed to him in the notorious Ralph Ginsburg “interview”) because he was not in fact that much stronger than the top woman players. The knight odds remark is routinely repeated but it is worth putting on the record that Fischer denied making this remark.
Koehler was the 1965, 1966 and 1971 Colorado State Champion. He later moved to Kansas where he won its state championship in 1977 and 1980. He was rated 2064 on the March 1964 USCF rating list but later went over 2300.

(169) Sicilian Scheveningen B83
**Fischer - Wesley Koehler**
Denver (simul), April 26, 1964


(170) French Winawer C18
**Fischer - M. Haskins**
Denver (simul), April 26, 1964


On 42...Nf3+ 43.Kh5 Qc2 44.Ne5+ Kc7 45.Na6+ Black must repeat moves with 45...Kd7. (O.G.)

Barry Kraft later became a well-known actor who has been associated for many years with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland.

(171) Alekhine B03
**Fischer - Barry Kraft**
Denver (simul), April 26, 1964

Notes by Barry Kraft.


Threatens to win my bishop by pushing g4 and then d5.

14...h5 15.Rad1 Nf6 16.d5 Qd7 17.Bd4 g5

A risky attempt to open lines to Fischer’s king. White dominates the center.
18. Qxg5 O-O-O

18...O-O-O offers the bishop, but Fischer doesn’t like 19.Qxg7 Rdg8 20.Qxf7 Rh7. His actual move 19.Bxa7 is a beauty, as you’ll soon see.

19. Bxa7! Bh6 20. Qh4 Rdg8

My threat is 21...Bxh3.

21. Ng3 Bg5 22. Qd4

Here is one of the nice points of Fischer’s 19th move: the only escape square the white queen has is the one the bishop vacated on move 19.

22...Bxh3

Here my attack really starts looking good. What is Bobby going to do? If 23.gxh3 Qxh3; and Black has all kinds of threats, for example ...Ng4 or ...h4 or ...Be3.

23. Na4

Absolutely elegant! I was literally stunned by this move. Here I was, attacking like a mob of maddened banshees down on his kingside, and Fischer, ever so gently, lifts his queen’s knight
and places it on a4, a square far removed from what I thought was the scene of the action. Not only does he threaten to fork my king and queen with his knight, but he also plans to drive my queen from the h3-c8 diagonal, and consequently from my marooned bishop on h3. Note also that Fischer’s 19th move paved the way for the knight fork.

23...Qg4 24.Qxg4+ Bxg4 25.f3 Bh4 26.Ne2 Bd7

Since I am a pawn down, I should have held onto the bishop pair for the endgame. 26...Bf5 would have been better.

27.Nb6+ Kc7 28.Nxd7 Kxd7 29.Bd4 Rh6 30.b4 e5 31.dxe6+ fxe6 32.a4 Ne8 33.c5

Fischer presses ahead with his queenside majority of pawns. Obviously 33...dxc5 loses a rook to 34.Be3+, but the pawn sacrifice of the actual game was to get my stalled kingside attack rolling once again.

33...e5 34.Bxe5 Re6 35.f4 Reg6

The point of my pawn sacrifice: Bobby no longer has the square f4 on which to place his knight for protection of g2.

36.g3 Bxg3 37.f5

The point I missed: 37.f5 both attacks the rook and uncovers an attack on my bishop.

37...Bh2+ 38.Kh1

If 38.Kxh2, Rg2+ regains the piece.

38...Rg2 39.Bxh2 Rxe2 40.f6 Rgg2 41.Bg1 Rg4 42.Rd4 Rxd4

This exchange of rooks is equivalent to resigning (which I do next move anyway). Once a pair of rooks have left the board, my mating threats vanish and I cannot prevent the f-pawn from queening. I should have kept the game alive by moving 42...Rg3, threatening checkmate in three moves. If Fischer replied 43.Bf2, Rf3 picks up that dangerous f-pawn. If 43.Rh4 Nxf6 44.Rxf6 Re1. Best for White seems 43.Rh4 Nxf6 44.Bh2 with a still wild and woolly game.

43.Bxd4 1-0 (Chess Life, June 1986, p. 63)

Colorado Springs, April 28
+31, -0, =1
Reid Held Fischer To Draw in Meet Here
By Linda Duval
Gazette Telegraph Staff Writer

A 1964 chess match played at the Broadmoor Hotel took on a new measure of accomplishment for a Colorado Springs man Friday after he learned that Bobby Fischer defeated Boris Spassky for the world chess championship.

Juan Reid, directory of alumni affairs at Colorado College, played the newly-crowned champion to a draw in their one meeting, eight years ago.

In April of 1964, Fischer was on a trans-continental tour playing matches against various chess notables. Fischer played 32 games on the tour, won 31 and had a draw with Reid.

Following the Reid-Fischer draw, the two and author Marshall Sprague, another chess buff, had dinner together at the Broadmoor.

Fischer had just won this sixth U.S. chess championship, Reid recalled, and was an international grandmaster at that time.

“He was most affable, certainly not at all contentious,” Reid said.

An after-dinner chat revealed a lot of Fischer’s unhappy childhood and personal insecurity which, Reid said, is the reason for his precise demands of the situation in which he plays chess.

In regard to Fischer’s antics in Iceland, Reid pointed out that Fischer has always been meticulous about the atmosphere of his games.

“When things aren’t quiet, it bothers him,” Reid said. “After all, chess is his only security.”

Fischer doesn’t own a home. He literally lives out of a suitcase.

Reid theorized that Bobby’s lateness at matches is designed “to show disdain for his opponent.”

The temper flare-ups and audacity shown in Reykjavik are outgrowths of the personal insecurity he feels as a results of a childhood without a father and an adolescence without any parent at all.

Reid pointed out an interview Friday that Fischer nearly raised himself.

As a result, “he fights for every advantage he can get,” Reid said. “He doesn’t play to be gentlemanly. He was never raised that way.”

“The only thing he knows is chess. He’s nearly self-educated. He dropped out of high school at 16 and didn’t spend much time in school before that.”
He was too busy playing chess.

At the age of 13, Bobby Fischer won a game against Donald Byrne, a champion chess players. It was termed “the game of the century.” Some of Fischer’s moves were recognized as “pure genius.”

Reid said that marked the real beginning of Bobby’s career.

“He is one of the great chess geniuses of all time,” Reid said. “There is no question about that.”

Source: Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph, September 2, 1972. See also Edward Winter's Chess Notes 9219.

(172) Philidor C41

Fischer – Juan Reid
Colorado Springs (simul) April 28, 1964


This variation of the Philidor has been played for over a hundred years, but it was the Soviet Grandmaster Antoshin who made it respectable in the 1960s. Today many Grandmasters use it including Mamedyarov and Bu. Black has rich strategical play with ...d5, .c5 and ...b5 breaks plus pressuring the e4 pawn.

6.f3

A rare treatment.


6...Nbd7 7.Be3 Ne5?!

7...0–0 8.Qd2 Nb6 9.0–0–0 d5 10.e5 Ne8 11Nb3 c6 12.Kb1 Nc7 and 7...0–0 8.Nf5 Ne5 9.Nxe7+ Qxe7 10.Qd2 Be6 11.0–0–0 Rfd8 both offer equal chances.

8.Qd2 c5 9.Bb5+! Bd7?

This move is a serious mistake as it loses control of f5. Black had to play 9...Kf8.

10.Nf5 0–0 11.Bxd7 Qxd7 12.0–0–0

Not bad but 12.Bxc5 won a clean pawn.

12...Nc4 13.Qe2 Nxe3 14.Qxe3 Rfd8 15.g4 Bf8 16.e5 Ne8 17.Ne4?

17...Qc7?

17...Qe6 18.exd6 Nxd6 offered equal chances.

18.exd6?


28...Re8 was more challenging. The forcing line 29.Rd8 Rxd8 30.Qxd8+ Kg7 31.Qxb6 Qxf3 32.Qxc5 Qxg4 favors Black after 33.b4 h5 and the h-pawn is very quick.

29.Qd5 Re8 30.Ka2 Re5

Black could safely continue a risk free pawn up.

½–½
Edward Winter points out the position on the demonstration board is the conclusion of Fischer’s win against Celle (Davis, CA, 16 April 1964 – game 50 in My 60 Memorable Games). See Chess Notes 9213.

(173) French Winawer C16
Fischer – John Wallace
In 1964 Fischer played numerous simultaneous exhibitions throughout the United States, and among the hundreds of opponents he faced that year was a young teenage boy from Pueblo, Colorado, named John Wallace. John and I were playing chess by mail at the time, and in his correspondence he shared with me the excitement of playing this game. Not only that, he mailed me the original autographed game score(!) in May of 1964, which I copied by hand (no photocopy machines back then), and from which I traced an image of Fischer’s hastily scrawled autograph. I mailed the score back to him with an offer of selling it to me, which he of course refused. John got his game score back, and a few months later he stopped writing, broke off our correspondence games without any explanation, and I never heard from him again - Bill Price.

We are not 100 percent certain the following game was played in Colorado Springs (as opposed to Denver), but think it very likely as the three cities are lined up on Interstate 25 with 69 miles separating Denver and Colorado Springs with Pueblo another 44 miles further south.


Wallace’s position looks solid enough but he is cramped with no counterplay.

13...Na7

Here he hopes to get rid of his bad bishop with ...Bb5 but this is easily prevented.

14.a4 c6 15.a5 Bc7 16.e3 0–0–0 17.Nc1 Be8 18.Nb3 Bh5 19.Ne5 Nb5 20.Qb3 Ng4

Trading off the bad bishop and simplifying the position with 20...Bxf3 made more sense.

21.Bg1 Bb8 22.c4!

Fischer opens the position to exploit his superior position.

22...Nc7 23.Rac1

Even stronger was the direct 23.b5 axb5 24.cxb5 cxb5 with 25.a6 b6 26.Nb7+- winning. White's principal threat is to pile up on the c-file with his heavy pieces.

23...Nh6?

23...Ba7 (to give the king b8 and to meet...) 24.b5?! with 24...dxc4 25.Bxc4 axb5 26.Bxe6+ Kb8 27.Bxf5 Bxe5 followed by ...Rhf8 when Black is still fighting.

24.cxd5 exd5 25.Ng5

25...Bf7 26.Na4
26...Ba7 27.Rc2 Be6 28.Rfc1 Bd7 29.Nb6+
29.b5!
29...Bxb6??
29...Kb8 30.Bf2 Rde8 31.Bh4 would have confined White to a large advantage.
30.axb6 Na8 31.b5!
The End.
31...axb5 32.Qxb5 Kb8 33.Qa5 Nxb6 34.Qxb6 Rc8 35.Ra1 Qd8 36.Qb4
36.Qa7+ Kc7 37.Rb1 (37.Ra6 Ra8 38.Raxc6+ Bxc6 39.Rxc6+ Kd7 40.Qxb7+ Ke8 41.Bb5 Kf8 42.Ne6+ Ke8 43.Rc8 mate)
36...Qf8 37.Qa4 Kc7 38.Qa5+ b6 39.Qa7+ Kd8 40.Qxb6+ Ke8 41.e6 Ke7 42.exd7 Kxd7 43.Ra7+ Kd6 44.Qc5 mate 1–0

Lawrence, April 30
+42, -0, =1

Chess
Players!

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US Chess King

Fischer Beats 42 Challengers

By Gary Noland

Forty-three college chess fans last night pitted their skill against a high school drop-out, and came out on the losing end.

But it was no ordinary school drop-out who played 43 games simultaneously in three hours, sending bewildered amateurs home carting chess sets under their arms, after Bobby Fischer, present U.S. Chess Champion, defeated 42 aspiring amateurs and drew only one game.

Fischer, considered by some chess experts to become the best chess master who ever lived, was a guest of the KU chess club. After giving a lecture on his 1962 draw with the Russian, Mikhail Botvinnik, in the world team championship in Bulgaria, Fischer confidently exhibited his skill against anyone who might have any doubts about the 20-year-old lanky Brooklyn lad who took up chess at the age of six because it was the only game he hadn't played.

The exhibition took place in the ballroom of the Kansas Union where at 25 tables, arranged in a large oval, 43 amateurs sat in studied concentration, trying to analyze the seemingly hasty moves of the young master.

Fischer, who dropped out of high school, in the middle of his junior year, calmly strode from one checkerboard to the next, seemingly taking in the situation in one swift glance, and hardly breaking his long stride as he would make what looked like an off-the-cuff move against each opponent. It took him only three to five minutes to make a play against each of his 43 challengers, and even less after the number of players became smaller.

One player, with a look of disbelief and amazement on his face, walked up to a friend, and said, "he took me in eleven moves."

Another, who managed to stay with Fischer for just about two hours, said: "He's just like a machine, doesn't make a mistake."

Fischer, who has already performed 30 exhibitions this year, made it all look relatively easy. Within three hours, the time that it takes many amateurs to finish one game, Fischer had played 43 games. He won all games except a draw to Jack Winters, a 24-year-old operator of a drive-in-restaurant in Kansas City.

The University Daily Kansan (May 1, 1964)

Piecing together information from various sources we know that among the 42 players Bobby
defeated were Professor Henry Horak, Fred Huff, Clarence Edmonson, Jr., and Joe Steffen while he drew with Jack Winters.

Expert Alan Anderson of Arizona found the following material on Bobby's stop in Lawrence, Kansas, in 2005 shortly after the publication of the second edition of A Legend on the Road. It was Alan that first alerted us to the existence of this exhibition.

Alan writes:

Hello John,

I talked with Fred Huff yesterday about the Bobby Fischer exhibition at the University of Kansas at Lawrence on April 30, 1964. Fred confirmed Professor Horak's information as to the date, April 30, 1964, and the location, although Fred refers to it as the University of Kansas Student Union building. Fred remembers the exhibition as taking place on the second floor. He also thought Horak's name "sounded familiar."

Fred has a very clear memory of the exhibition as being a 45-board exhibition; the fee for playing was $5.00 a board. Fred says Fischer won 44 games and gave up one draw, "because it was past Fischer's bedtime." Fred remembers Fischer moving instantly during the exhibition, in some cases having his hand on his piece (or pawn) ready to make his move while his opponent was in the process of completing their own move.

The person who wrote the following information about the Fischer exhibition and played in it is Henry G. Horak, a former professor at University of Kansas. His website is dated Christmas, 1998 and he was 79 at the time of writing. The URL to his website is:
http://www.physics.ku.edu/astronomy/history/horak.html

This next few paragraphs may seem out of place, but they do pertain to the visit of an interesting personality to K.U. My interest in the game of Chess developed when I was a teen-ager in the 1930's, and had the opportunity to learn the game and play against some strong players in Kansas City. We chessplayers met regularly at the Y.M.C.A. every Saturday afternoon, and in a few years I became rather proficient at the game, eventually winning a few tournaments there. My rating was about that of an "Expert" (just below a "Master"). From time to time a touring Grandmaster would visit us to give a simultaneous exhibition, and we would each invest a few dollars to play against him. Israel Horowitz, the one-time U.S. champion, visited us at least three times; I managed to draw the first two times, but the third time the exhibition wasn't completed because half-way through the simultaneous event (I suppose about thirty of us were there) one of the participants, Mr. Arthur Harris, a good friend of mine in his fifties, had a sudden heart attack and died (January 20, 1941). It was quite shocking to see the dark shadow move across his face, and his life disappear in just a minute. Indeed, it is not generally realized that Chess can be a very exciting game, so I took a quick look at his position. I didn't see anything there that would have particularly evoked stress, for his position seemed safe enough.
Now at K.U., at least as far as I could discover, there has never been much serious interest in Chess; this is understandable, since competing in it is hard sedentary work, akin to academic studying for a final, and students would rather participate in physical sports for their recreation. However, early in the year 1964 some of the students got together and were able to entice the International Grandmaster Robert (Bobby) Fisher to give a simultaneous exhibition on April 30 at the K.U. Union Building. Bobby was only twenty-one years old, and the strongest player ever produced in the United States; he was destined to become the World's Chess Champion in 1972, when he would decisively defeat the then World's Champion from the Soviet Union, Boris Spassky. Fischer had learned Chess in the New York environment of strong master players, and he had succeeded in besting all of them. His style was geared more to attacking than to defending, and he played all phases of the game (opening, middle and end games) equally well. His attitude towards the game was entirely practical, and he had studied very hard to attain his goals. He also possessed a rather low opinion of so-called intellectuals (I sometimes think he was right). When he played against us at K.U., he had about 50 or 60 opponents (I would guess), and he completed his exhibition very quickly in only a few hours; I was one of the last to go down in what to me was a difficult end game. I don't remember Fischer's total score against us; if he had lost a game, we would undoubtedly have heard about it. Nevertheless it was an interesting experience. I wonder how he would fare against the "Big Blue" computer that recently (1997) defeated the present (human) World's Champion, Kasparov. Unfortunately we'll probably never know, because Fischer retired from active competition immediately after gaining the World's Championship.

Jack Winters

A Life Member of the USCF who once held the highest rating in six states, Jack Winters (1939-2003) was a founding member of the Missouri Chess Association. He won many tournaments throughout the Midwest from the mid-1960’s to the late-1970’s.

The author of two opening pamphlets: The Classical Defense to the Ruy Lopez and The French Defense Tarrasch Variation, Jack Winter’s greatest contribution to the game was founding The Chess House at 39th and Main in Kansas City. Opening its doors in 1972 it was an immediate success both as a club and a mail order business. Among those who started their careers at The Chess House was future International Master Michael Brooks. Later in the 1970s a second location was opened in Chesterfield (St. Louis County).

Winters ran The Chess House at its original location and later 74th & Broadway for seven years before selling the business to Don Oswald who ran the mail order business until he died in 1994. The company was purchased by the Neff family of Washington State who are still running it today.
7.0-0 can be met by 7...Bb6 putting pressure on White's d-pawn and preparing ...Na5.

7...Qd7 8.dxe5 Bb6 9.Nbd2

9.a4 Na5 10.Qa2 Nxc4 11.Qxc4 Ne7 was Nakamura-Anand, London 2014 and Nisipeanu-Caruana, Dortmund 2015. Black has returned the pawn but obtained a solid position and the two bishops.

9...Nxe5?


The problem with 9...Nxe5?, is revealed after 11.Ba3!, when Black has no satisfactory way to
bring his king to safety. Note that after 11...Bxf2+ (11...Nh6 12.0–0–0) 12.Ke2 White has fantastic compensation for the two pawns.

10.Nxe5 dxe5 11.Nf3?

The problem with 9...Nxe5?, is revealed after 11.Ba3!, when Black has no satisfactory way to bring his king to safety. Note that after 11...Bxf2+ (11...Nh6 12.0–0–0) 12.Ke2 White has fantastic compensation for the two pawns.

11...Qe7!

The moment of danger has passed. Now Winters has no problems.


It's an indication of how things are going that Bobby decides to make this artificial looking move.

22...Rd8 23.Nf5 Bxf5 24.exf5 Rbc8 25.Qf3 h6 26.Be3 Bc7

The thematic 26...e4! 27.Qe2 Qe5 was quite strong.

27.Qb7 e4

Now this doesn't work as well.

28.g3 Rxd1+ 29.Rxd1 Rd8 30.Rxd8+?

The rooks need to stay on the board. After 30.Re1 or 30.Ra1 White should hold the position.

30...Bxd8! 31.Qa8 Kh7 32.Bxf7 Qxf7 33.Qxd8 Qd5?

33...Ng4! 34.Bxc5 Qxf5 35.Bd4 e3 36.Bxe3 Qb1+ 37.Kg2 Qe4+ 38.Kh3 Nxe3 39.fxe3 a4 would have been unpleasant for Fischer. Black's queen is perfectly centralized, his king is safe and the passed pawn is quite dangerous.

34.Qxa5 Qd1+ 35.Kg2 Qf3+ 36.Kg1 Draw (O.G.)
Cheltenham, May 3
+70, -2, =1

Anthony Koppany remembers, “Fischer played 73 of us at the Cheltenham (a suburb of
Philadelphia) Art Center on Sunday afternoon. He scored 70 wins, 2 losses, and one draw. My game was the last one, taking 7½ hours.”

(175) Pirc B09

**Fischer - Anthony Koppany**

Cheltenham (simul), May 3, 1964


Here 7...dxc5 8.e5 is better for White but preferable to dropping a pawn.


(176) Latvian Gambit C40

**Fischer - Ross Nickel**

Cheltenham (simul), May 3, 1964

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 f5

Fischer has seldom faced the Latvian Gambit in his career and it may well be that the only other occurrence was back in 1955 in the U.S. Junior Open in Lincoln, Nebraska. There the 12-year-old Bobby, playing in his first tournament away from home, scored 5-5 including a loss on the white side of the Latvian against Viktors Pupols of Tacoma, Washington. The game, incidentally, is one of the very few in Fischer’s career that he lost on time.


At this point Fischer spent a long time thinking before making his next move. (Nickel)

[Editor: Pupols played 6...Qg6 against Fischer.]


(177) Evans Gambit C51

**Fischer - H. McFarland**

Cheltenham (simul), May 3, 1964


(178) King’s Gambit C30

Fischer - Anthony Killian
Cheltenham (simul), May 3, 1964

"Playing Fischer was a gift from my father for my 11th birthday, which was the next day May 4." - Anthony J. Killian Jr.

1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Nf6 3.Nc3 Bc5 4.f4 d6 5.Nf3 0–0 6.d3 Nc6 7.f5 a6 8.Bg5 h6?

Since White will never capture on f6 this just makes a target for a future g2-g4-g5.

9.Bh4 b5 10.Bb3 Nb4?

10...Nb8 and 11...Nbd7 like in the Breyer variation of the Ruy Lopez makes a lot of sense in view of the threat of Nd5.


14...Ba7 15.Nxf6+ gxf6 16.Qg4+ Kh8 17.Rf1 followed by a rook lift to the third. Black has no defense.

(179) French Winawer C19

**Fischer – Allyn Kahn**
Cheltenham (simul), May 3, 1964

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.bxc3 Ne7

6...Qa5 7.Bd2 Qa4 8.Qb1 c4 is a popular modern line.

7.a4 Qa5

This move usually transposes to the main line reached by 7...Nbc6 8.Nf3 Qa5 9.Bd2 Bd7. Closing the center with ...c4 allows White to implement a classic knight maneuver: 9...c4 10.Ng5 h6 11.Nh3 Bd7 12.Be2 with Nf4-h5 coming. The knight on h5 hits g7, which is
awkward for Black to defend as he doesn't want to play ...g6, which would make it very difficult to implement the important break ...f6 advantageously.

8.Bd2 c4?!

Closing the center is premature as White's knight is able to reach its ideal square on h5 directly. Note that the only positions where ... c4 normally works well are when Black is able to blockade with a piece on a4, stopping White from putting a bishop on a3.


The more traditional treatment would be Be2 followed by castling. This leaves White very flexibly placed to meet any attempts by Black to break with ...f6.

The immediate 11.Nh5 may be even more testing. After 11...0–0 12.Qg4 Ng6 White plays 13.h4 Kh8 14.Nxg7 Kxg7 15.h5 Kg8 16.Rh3! (Silman) with the point that White frees the bishop from the defense of c3 and preparesBg5-f6.

He is in no immediate hurry to regain the piece. For example: 16...Nce7 17.Bh6 (the immediate 17.Bg5 is also possible: 17...Ng5 18.Qg5 Qb6 19.Qg5 Qb2 20.Rc1 h6 21.hxg6 Qxc3+ 22.Rxc3 hxg5 23.g4 Ng7 24.Rh3 fxg6 25.Ra1 preparing to double the rooks on the h-file with Rc6 followed by Ra3–h3.) 17...Rfe8 18.Bg5 Ng5 19.hxg6 fxg6 20.Qf4 Rf8 21.Bf6 and White is winning.

11...Kf8 12.Qg4 Ng6 13.h4 would lead to similar play.

11...0–0–0 12.h5?!

This shouldn't work well as it takes h5 from White's knight.

12...f5?!

In this sort of position it’s obligatory to play ...h6, preventing h5–h6 by White. Now Bobby grabs Black's dark squares.

13.h6 g6 14.Nh3 Rdf8 15.f4?!

This stops any potential idea by Black to play ...f5–f4. It might look like 15.f4 kills White's dark squared bishop, but he has plans to bring it to life on a3 or h4.

This said, f2–f4 doesn't look the most exact as ...f5–f4 is not really a threat. Either 15.Qc1 intending Qa3 (as in the game) or 15.Be2 followed by 0–0 with Qe1 and Bc1–a3 to follow look more logical. Black may win the pawn on a4 with ...Nc8–b6 and sometimes ...Nc6–d8, but this costs a lot of time and White gets a tremendous initiative.

15...Kb8 16.Ng5 Nc8 17.Qc1
Normally White protects the c3 pawn with Qe1 and follows with Bc1–a3, but here Fischer's plan looks better as he hasn't played Be2 and 0–0 yet.

17...Nd8 18.Qa3 Re8

Black sidesteps White's threat of Nxe7! For example, 18...Nb6 19.Qd6+ Ka8 20.Nxe7

19.Kf2 Re7

A more critical line is 19...Nb6 20.Be2 Nxa4 21.Rhb1 when White's initiative provides full compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

20.Qb4 b6

20...Qc7 might have been expected but there was nothing wrong with the move played.


White avoids trading queens as this would justify Black's play by giving him the b-file for his rook and b6 square for his knight.


31...Re8 or 31...Qxb4 32.Bxb4 Re8 had to be played.

32.Rf6! Rxf6+ 33.exf6 Rf7 34.Bxg4 Bd7 35.Qxa5 bxa5 36.Re1 Kc7 37.Bxe6 1–0
Signed scoresheets of Allyn Kahn’s games against Fischer.

Bobby's opponent in the following was rated 1998 USCF on the January 1964 rating list and was undoubtedly one of Fischer's strongest opponents in the exhibition. Ross Nickel was 1937 and Allyn Kahn 1854 on the same list.

(180) King’s Gambit C32
Fischer – Norman Canter
Cheltenham (simul), May 3, 1964

1.e4 e5 2.f4 d5 3.exd5 e4 4.Nc3 Nf6 5.Qe2 Bd6

5...Bf5 and; 5...Be7 are more commonly seen.

6.d3 0–0 7.dxe4 Nxe4 8.Nxe4 Re8 9.Qf3


9...f5


Objectively Black's position is not good but starting with the text he plays with great imagination and takes the fight to his famous opponent.

16.Kb1 Nb4 17.a3 a5!? 18.axb4

18.Rhe1 was a more practical decision, especially when facing over 70 other opponents, but Bobby was never one to back down from a challenge.

18...axb4 19.b3

This stops the threatened 19...Qa4, but Black has more tricks up his sleeve.

19...Be5!? 20.Bd4 e3!?

Canter continues to mix things up. Objectively his last few moves shouldn't succeed, but practically they work wonderfully. Fischer has to find the right move in a tricky position with very little time.

21.Qg3?

The refutation of Black's play was 21.Qe1!, but it would have been quite difficult to work out the following lines in a simultaneous exhibition. This is why 18.Rhe1 was a more practical choice, relying on technique rather than precise calculation. Games similar to this one indicate that Fischer was always willing to mix it up during his exhibitions and not try to win all his games by grinding down his opponents.

White is winning in all the following lines. 21...Rxf4 22.Qxb4 Qb8 23.c3 Bxd4 24.Rxd4 Rf2 (24...Qa7 25.Qa4 Qb8 26.Rxf4) 25.Re1 Qa7 26.Qa4 Qb8 27.Qc4 Qa7 (27...Kh8 28.Re4 Qa7 29.Qa4 Qb8 30.Qb5) 28.d6+ Kh8 29.Qa4 Qb8 30.dxc7.

21...Rxf4 22.Qxe3 Bxd4 23.Qxe8+ Rxe8 24.Bc4 Kh8 25.Rhe1

25.Rhfl offered more chances to resist.

25...Ra8 26.Rxd4

26.c3 Bxc3 27.Re2 was more stubborn. Now Black concludes the game very nicely.

26...Rxd4 27.Kb2 g6 28.Bd3 Rxd5 29.Re7 Rda5! 30.Kc1 Rc8 31.g4 Ra1+ 32.Kd2 Rh1 33.Re3 Rh2+ 34.Kc1 Ra8! 35.Kb2 Rh1 0–1(O.G.)
The event, which was organized by Frank Ferdinand and held at the Harvard Club, was one of the most difficult of all the exhibitions to track down. Steve Brandwein, who played in the exhibition, and Bill Robertie, who spectated, both remembered the event but couldn’t supply precise details. At the last moment, Joe Sparks, editor of Chess Horizons, found the following information in Jim Burgess’ column in the Boston Globe:

Robert J. Fischer, chess champion of the United States, played 53 games simultaneously at the Harvard Club May 10. He completed his appointed rounds in a shade under three hours, and after the smoke had cleared he had won 50, lost one and drawn two. Russell Codman, Boston, was the victor. F.G. Bemis, Brookline, and Stephen Brandwein, Boston, held the maestro even.

Fischer prefaced his whirlwind exhibition with an amusingly wry analysis of a game he won from Russian Efim Geller at Bled, 1961. The champion’s flipping of the magnetic pieces on the exhibition board was perhaps a mite too fast for some of the audience, but they were delighted by his dexterity.

Fischer is reaching the end of his first national tour which has taken him from coast to coast and into Canada. His most difficult task faced him, he said, in Chicago and Toronto. In those cities the big guns of local chess apparently turned out en masse and this led to long hours and arduous labor.

(181) French C00

Fischer - Russell Codman
Boston (simul), May 10, 1964
The following game, kindly forwarded by Boston Globe columnist Harold Dondis, shows Bobby’s skill in fighting the Classical French. Gale, in his letter to the Globe, mentions that the first simul he ever played in was against Frank Marshall at the City Club in Boston in October of 1930 and the last, versus Arthur Bisguier in Billerica in June of 1982. He won both of these games, but none in the 52 years between them, despite playing in many exhibitions!

(182) French Alekhine-Chatard C13
Fischer - Windsor Gale
Boston (simul), May 10, 1964

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Be7 5.e5
This initiates the Alekhine-Chatard Attack. Everyone knows Alexander Alekhine, but Chatard is another matter. The Oxford Companion to Chess by Hooper and Whyld mentions that Frenchman Eugene Chatard (1850-1924) looked at 6.h4 around the turn of the century, and that his analysis may have inspired Alekhine to give it a try (viz. Alekhine-Fahrni, Mannheim 1914), but that Romanian-born Adolf Albin was the real originator.

6...f6 7.Qh5+ g6?!
Theory prefers the less weakening 7...Kf8.

8.exf6 Nxf6 9.Qe2 Nc6

Better is 17...g5 18.Qd2 Ne7 19.Ne5 c5 20.dxc5 Kg7 with advantage to White. After the text, Fischer is winning.

This is an uncharacteristic bit of carelessness on Bobby’s part. The text costs White the exchange, but not the game. Correct was 24.g4 Ne8 25.g5 Qxf2 26.Qh3 with a winning advantage.

24...Nxf5 25.Qh7 Nxe3 26.fxe3 Nxd6?!
Gale considers this too hasty, preferring 26...Bd7 or 26...c6. For example, after 26...c6 27.Rh1 Nxe6 28.Nxe6 Rf7 29.Qh2 Bb7, the position is about equal. After the text, White is winning again.

27.Nxe6 Qf7?! 28.Nxf8 Qxf8 29. g4 c5 30.dxc5 Qxc5 31.g5 Ra7 32. Qh8+ 1-0 (O.G.)

Pransky of Sharon, Massachusetts played this game at the Harvard Club venue.

(183) French Winawer C19
Fischer – Kermit Pransky
Boston (simul), May 10, 1964

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.bxc3 Ne7 7.a4 0–0?!

Castling kingside is not normally associated with the Winawer variation of the French except the line 7.Qg4 0–0. More common are: 7...Nbc6; 7...Qa5; 7...Qc7; 7...b6 and 7...Bd7.

8. Nf3 cxd4?!

This exchange only helps White by undoubling his pawns and making his dark-squared bishop more active. More logical are 8...b6 (planning ...Ba6) and 8...Qc7.

9.cxd4 Qc7 10.Bd3 Nbc6??

Some of Black's previous moves might have been second best but the text just gets mated. It was essential to play 10...h6.

11.Bxh7+ Kxh7 12.Ng5+ Kg6


13.h4 Nxe5 14.h5+ Kf5 15.g4+ Kf6

15...Nxg4 16.Qf3+ Qf4 17.Qxf4 mate.

16.Nh7 mate 1–0 (O.G. published in Fischer Uncensored, page 82)

Milwaukee, May 14
+48, -4, =5
Fischer Compiles 48-4-5 Record
Against a Mass of Chess Foes

by Terry Bledsoe

Two heads may indeed be better than one, but 57 aren’t — not when the one head belongs to Bobby Fischer.

Fischer, the 20-year-old [sic — Fischer turned 21 on March 9]) who in eight years with the game has grown to become its dominant force, took on 57 foes at once at the Pfister Hotel Thursday night in an impressive show of mental gymnastics sponsored by The Journal and the Municipal Recreation Department.

Some 250 chess buffs showed up, paying $2 to play Fischer or $1 to kibitz those who were playing him, and to marvel at the brilliance, and the endurance, of the champion.

Five Tie Champion

There was some solace for the challengers. Four of them actually beat Fischer, and five more tied him — an accomplishment which loses a bit of its luster when it is considered that Fischer spent no more than 10 or 15 seconds on a move.

Two of the four who won were Marshall High School students — John Dedinsky, 19, the Wisconsin state champion, and Dave Luban, 15. The other winners were Charles Weldon of Milwaukee and Joseph Chabot. Draws were achieved by William Martz of Hartland, a University of Wisconsin student; city champion Fred Zarse, county champion Henry Meifert, Juris Zvers and Gregory Nowak.

All the others — 48 of them — were beaten. Fischer forced his first resignation in 10 minutes flat, his second in 45 minutes. After that it was tougher.

25 Resign En Masse

About 35 boards were still in play at 12:15 a.m., some three and a half hours after play had begun, but a majority of these were hopelessly outmanned. Officials asked all such trapped players to stop postponing the inevitable and about 25 of them resigned, saving Fischer the time needed to administer the coup de grace.

The last half-dozen games ended almost simultaneously, at 1 a.m., leaving the Pfister’s Fern Room a litter of overturned chess pieces, reeking of cigar smoke and awash with brain waves.

Fischer spent his evening on the inside of a rectangle formed by tables on which rested the 57 chess boards of his opposition. He moved ceaselessly around the perimeter, analyzing in a moment the strategic character of each board, snapping a pawn or a knight into position, moving
He continued his walk for more than four hours, never stopping, never taking a drink from the pitcher of water provided for him, never speaking.

He started with one move to each of the 57 — pawn to king four, and his first moves were gay and casual. But as strategy developed, Fischer’s progress began to slow. His left hand tucked in his pocket, he would rock from one foot to another as he plotted, his lips pursed, his cowlick of brown hair at attention.

Before the contests began, Fischer spent 15 minutes recounting a match two years ago with Mikhail Tal of Russia, a former world champion.

A tall youngster, Fischer is uncomfortable in conversation, and was uncomfortable as he sought to make small talk with the crowd. A 20-year-old’s expressions crept into his comments — “He had me down four to zip,” he said in explaining that Tal beat him the first four times they met; and, “I just rammed the rook four down his throat,” in explanation of one attack pattern.

But as Fischer began to immerse himself in chess, his speech grew firmer. He diagrammed the progress of the game on a board for all to see, and soon was tearing off on tangents to show alternative moves.

Sometimes, in seeming disgust at his inability to talk about moves as fast as he could think about them, he would lapse into silence as he and the imaginary Tal fought on.

When he had finished, and Tal was at last in check, Fischer stuck his left hand back in his pocket, grinned briefly, and fled the stage. He walked a straight line to the playing area, and made his first moves. He was obviously more comfortable there. (Milwaukee Journal, 5/15/1964)
1959 Candidates tournament. This drubbing understandably made Bobby especially proud of his victory at Bled 1961, a game he showed on more than one occasion during the 1964 tour. Surprisingly the two World Champions played no tournament games against each other after 1962. The lifetime score between them was 6 ½ - 4 ½ in Tal’s favor. Here Val Zemitis stands in front of the great Misha’s grave in the Tal family plot in Riga.

(184) Sicilian O’Kelly B28

Fischer - Henry Meifert
Milwaukee (simul), May 14, 1964


Normally this is delayed until White has castled.

11...Bb4

ECO gives only 11...Nb4 12.O-O Rb8 with unclear play in Romanovsky-Litvinov, USSR 1959.


Henry R. Meifert (1925-1998), who was still rated a master in his late 60s, was a pillar of the Milwaukee chess community for over 50 years. He was wounded while serving as a U.S. Army Infantryman during World War II and was awarded a Purple Heart with two Clusters.
Three Latvians who had a connection who Bobby Fischer are in this photo taken by Arturs Graudins in 1961. They are (l-r) Nikoljas Kampars who drew with Bobby in the 1957 New Western Open, Juris Zvers who drew in Milwaukee during the 1964 tour and Alexander Liepnieks who hosted Bobby during the 1955 U.S. Junior Open in Lincoln, Nebraska. Liepnieks organized the Junior, Bobby's first important tournament away from home, and became a good friend. He was in attendance during the 1972 match in Reykjavik and even translated some Soviet documents from Russian for the Fischer delegation. (Photo from Alex Liepnieks archives)

(185) Philidor C41

Fischer - Juris Zvers
Milwaukee (simul), May 14, 1964


Initiating complications favors the better developed player — White.


On 12.Nhx5 Zvers recovers the piece with 12...Qa5+ but now the white knight comes into play with strong effect.


Black’s saving grace, with threats of ...Nxa1, ...Nd2+, not to mention ...Bxf5.


Chess in Milwaukee

by Walter J. Boeyer

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, June 24, 1964

I just watched Fischer play at the Pfister Hotel here. He preceded his exhibition with a talk on his game with Tal.

He played 55 games, losing 4. It cost $1.00 to watch the exhibition. $5 to play. Our local newspaper, the Milwaukee Journal, co-sponsored the event so it only cost $2.00 to play: this newspaper is very generous to chess and backs an annual chess event for all the local children on the city play grounds — a big event. (Chess, August 20th 1964)
B. H. Wood, the editor and founder of Chess, notes, “Milwaukee has for decades been one of the world’s leading chess centers; in fact we understand that FOUR THOUSAND youngsters took part in the latest congress.”

John Dedinsky is the inventor of the well-regarded Chronos chess clock.

(186) French Winawer - C19

**Fischer – John Dedinsky**
Milwaukee (simul), May 14, 1964

Notes by John Dedinsky


I expected Qg4.

9...Nd7

I was trying to copy a plan of Botvinnik’s who used the knight to capture the a-pawn.
10.Ng5 h6 11.Qh5
White’s 14th makes this move clear.

11...g6
If 11...Ng6, then 12.Nxe6!.

Now it’s hard for Black to castle.

Editors’ note: Fischer should have played 14.Be2 with some compensation for the pawn after 14...Bxa4 15.O-O. The text, at best, loses several tempi.

14...Bxa4
I changed plans. I intended Nxa4, but decided the knight could be useful at d7.

15.Qf6 Rh7 16.h4?
Editor’s note: Bobby completely overlooks Black’s threat. He had to play 16.Qh4 though Dedinsky would still stand much better.
16...Nf5 17.h5

The queen has no escape.

17...Nd7 0-1

The white queen is trapped. On seeing Black’s last move, Fischer immediately, and with a smile, tipped his queen. (O.G.)

Report by David Luban:

Alas! The score of my May 14, 1964 game against Fischer vanished mysteriously sometime after the game, and my memory — usually good for chess games of yesteryear — isn’t up to task. At the time, the affectation of our high school chess crowd was to notate our games using Cyrillic (Russian) characters, and I suspect that when I went off to college in 1966 my mother decided to do a general clean-up of my room, came across a page of gibberish, and threw it away. But perhaps this might be useful for your book:

Fischer played an Evans Gambit against me, and after 18 moves had an overwhelming position. With nothing to lose, and hoping to stay at the table for a few more minutes at least, I sacked a bishop at f2 and drew his king into the fray. In the ensuing complications, Fischer allowed his queen to be trapped at g4 and resigned. My combination was no means a forced win of his queen, and a subsequent group analysis showed that it was doubtful even as a forced draw. Players were arranged at the table in order of Elo ratings, and, as your diagram places me, I was on the left side, not the bottom end. In any event, Fischer was spending mere seconds per move at my end, reserving his longer thought for the strong end. I don’t take much credit for the win, though my combination wasn’t simply silly.

Fischer was completely impassive as he turned over his king. He said only “I could have drawn if I’d done this,” and showed me the drawing maneuver. He autographed my score without further comment.

Flint, May 16

+53, -0, =5

The Flint Journal, May 18, 1964:

Nobody beat the champ. But five players were able to hold him to a draw. That was the result of a Flint performance Saturday night by Bobby Fischer, U.S. chess champion. He took on 58 players simultaneously. Earning the draws in the exhibition at the YMCA were Wilmer Gray and Norman Burns, both of Flint; Donald E. Dubois and Jack O’Keefe, both of Ann Arbor, and William Kerscher of Toledo. O’Keefe is rated as a master player.
When play ended at 1:30 a.m. Sunday, Fischer’s comment was that the competition here was tougher than he expected. He said Flint appears to be growing in stature as a chess community. His appearance in Flint was sponsored by the Flint Chess Club and the Mott Program.

Letter from Bob Ciaffone:

I was one of those chessplayers who played against Bobby at Flint, Michigan in 1964. He was awesome in both speed and accuracy of play. I have dueled with many chessplayers in simuls over the years, including Paul Keres, Viktor Kortchnoi, David Bronstein, Bent Larsen, and Mikhail Tal. Fischer was clearly the best at simul play.

Before the exhibition Bobby gave a chess lecture. He analyzed a game that he had played against a Canadian master in a simul. The game was an Evans Gambit which Fischer had won. At that time Bobby was quite interested in classical romantic openings.

Fischer faced about 60 players. He gave up a few draws, but no losses. There were at least two masters in the field, as well as a number of experts. I was at that time rated around 1900.

My game was very interesting. Fischer of course opened with 1.e4, and we played a Ruy Lopez. I played the Marshall Gambit against him. Through weak play I allowed a queen trade, and was down a pawn for nothing. Then Fischer made a blunder and allowed me a combination to win the exchange at the cost of another pawn. Fischer had been making all his moves instantly against me, including his blunder, but as he walked away from me he realized the error, although it was too late.

The endgame of rook vs. bishop looked tenable to me, although I was two pawns down. When Fischer came to my board, he went into deep thought for about 15 or 20 seconds. This was the only time in the entire game he did not make his move instantly. After thinking, he pushed a pawn forward with a thump. I could tell from the way he made the move that he felt confident the winning plan had been found. The pawn was sacrificed to lure my king to the side of the board. Fischer was then able to break through on the other wing.

My game lasted a long time, but there were still a few games going when it ended. Fischer’s rapid movement from board to board soon squelched the opposition. Finally, there was one board left. Bobby’s opponent had a totally lost game, both materially and positionally, but he wouldn’t resign. The fellow was taking at least 30 seconds a move, and excessively prolonging Fischer’s evening. I was embarrassed that one of our Michigan players was being so rude. Fischer, to his credit, said nary a word, and even kept a poker face. Finally the fellow gave up and Fischer was able to conclude his exhibition.

Fischer’s prowess at simultaneous exhibitions showed his tremendously quick chess reflexes. It is no surprise that his games were almost never in time pressure. But besides the obvious talent, Fischer will always be remembered in Michigan for his gentlemanly behavior.

The 1999 June-August issue of Chess Horizons featured the following article on Bobby by
former Michigan Junior Champion Thomas Richardson. It offers a unique first hand glimpse of what Bobby was like in 1964 through the eyes of a teenager.

When Bobby Fischer Stayed At My House

by Thomas Richardson

Bobby Fischer did not become world chess champion until 1972, but he was already famous when I first saw him in person at the Western Open held in Bay City, Michigan in July 1963. Although it would have been an almost certain loss for me, I was disappointed when I missed being paired against him in the first round by about ten boards. (I was doubly disappointed because the tournament director made a mistake in the pairings, and I ended up with a bye in the first round.) Even so, it was a treat to watch him play, particularly on the last day when he demolished the grandmasters Arthur Bisguier and Pal Benko after staying up all night playing speed chess for money (Editor - memories often play tricks after long periods of time. Bobby's last three opponents in Bay City were in order Bisguier, D.Byrne and Berliner - Benko did not play). Little did I know at that time that less than a year later he would be staying at my house.

Fischer playing in the 1963 Western Open in Bay City, Michigan.
My father was president of the Flint Chess Club in Michigan, and he arranged for Fischer to stay with us and give a simultaneous exhibition in Flint in May of 1964. I was in the tenth grade at the time and rushed home from school on the Friday that Fischer arrived. It was a surprise to see him in our backyard dressed in a gray suit and tie, which was his standard attire for the two days he stayed with us. He and my father were seated at a chess board, and my father, who was director of the Flint Public Library System, had brought home a newly released chess book that Bobby hadn’t seen before. Bobby was playing through the games as fast as he could move the pieces, often knocking them over in the process. He would make offhand comments like, “Of course, you know this variation.” Or “That’s not a good move.”

Before long my father proposed that Fischer and I play a game and Bobby suggested pawn and move odds. So I played White and Bobby removed his king bishop pawn. Although I had managed to win the Michigan Junior Chess Championship at age twelve in my first-ever tournament, I had only been playing seriously for about three years and expected to be soundly trounced. Much to my surprise I didn’t make any huge blunders, and although I lost my pawn advantage, I was able to hold a draw in the resulting endgame. I was walking on air, but unfortunately didn’t think to write down the moves, so that game is only a memory. Maybe it is partially as a result of this experience that I encourage younger players always to record their games.

One incident that occurred that evening indicates Bobby's competitiveness, even in offhand games. During this period of his life, Fischer was practicing some variant of the Jewish religion, and from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday he would not study or play chess or even talk about it. We had finished dinner and were sitting in the living room. The board with the final position from our game in the afternoon had been moved inside and was placed across the room from him. He was fidgeting and something was clearly bothering him. Finally noting that although it was after sundown on Friday and that he shouldn't do it, he walked to the board and removed any one of my pieces saying, "This is the piece that kept me from winning." After that he was much more relaxed.

The Exhibition

Because of Fischer's religion, the simultaneous exhibition was not scheduled to start until 8:00 Saturday evening. My recollection is that Saturday was a long day because Bobby couldn't talk about chess, and he really wasn't interested in any other subject. My parents took him to the store so that he could replace the shaving cream and other items he left at the previous stop on his simultaneous tour. He complained about the fact that the items he wanted were marked with the price for two, not realizing that he could buy only one of them.

Having grown up in New York City, Bobby did not know how to drive. On the way to the playing site at the local YMCA, he asked about the pedals on the floor of the car. He also wasn't comfortable with the fact that my mother was driving him, and told her not to get them killed on the way.

My recollection is that Fischer played 50 boards that Saturday night, although the caption on a
photograph from the Flint Journal indicates that 58 people opposed him. The event attracted a number of strong players from southern Michigan, but he defeated all except four who managed to hold him to draws. In my game I made positional blunders in the opening and should have resigned much earlier than I did. It was more difficult playing him in the simultaneous exhibition than in our backyard since you had to move every time he came to your board. By the end of the evening, he was running from board to board, so that the remaining players were forced to play speed chess. He completed all of the games in less than four hours.

Bobby Fischer was one of the fastest solvers of the Same Lloyd 15-Puzzle. He had been timed to be able to solve it within 25 seconds; Fischer demonstrated this on November 8, 1972 on The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson.

**Sam Lloyd's Puzzle**

On Sunday my younger brother and father took Fischer to the airport. While waiting for his plane, he absent-mindedly pulled out of his pocket the well-known puzzle created by Sam Lloyd. This puzzle is a 4x4 grid containing one blank space and fifteen tiles numbered from one to fifteen. Using the blank space, the tiles can be moved on the grid, and the object is to put the tiles in numerical order from left to right and top to bottom.

Fischer suggested that my brother mix up the tiles and asked him how long he thought it would take to put them in order. My brother facetiously responded "about a minute," but it only took Fischer twenty-two seconds! As my brother rearranged the tiles again, Fischer pointed out tiles that were still in order. This second time Fischer completed the puzzle in about fifteen seconds. He commented that he was a little rusty and that when he was in practice he could complete it in as little as eleven seconds.

Bobby related that the first time he tried this puzzle as a boy, it had taken him several hours to solve, and that made him mad! He apparently analyzed the puzzle to the point that he had the solution totally memorized. His copy of the puzzle was high quality and lubricated so that the pieces moved easily. He also indicated that it was better to move the tiles with the index finger rather than the thumb, because one had more control of the former. In other words Fischer
attacked this puzzle with the same kind of determination and completeness that he applied to chess. As he put the puzzle away, he commented, "I am also the world champion in this!"

Teenager Thomas Richardson studies his position against Bobby in Flint, Michigan. (Photo courtesy of Thomas Richardson)

(187) Sicilian Paulsen B42
Fischer – Thomas Richardson
Flint (simul), May 16, 1964


7...d5 or 7...e5 is a more solid way to play. Now Black’s knight gets kicked around.

8.e5 Nd5 9.c4 Nb6 10.Nc3 Qc7 11.Bf4 Bb7


12.Ne4

Fischer heads straight for the weakness on d6, but there was something to be said for straightforward development with 12.Qg4 followed by Rad1.
12...c5 13.Nd6+

Having said “A” (12.Ne4), White follows with “B” (13.Nd6+), but 13.Qg4, maintaining the pressure, was still a good alternative.

13...Bxd6 14.exd6 Qc6 15.f3 f6?!

Black tries to go after the pawn on d6 (...e6-e5). A reasonable alternative was 15...O-O.

16.Qb3 f5

Now it becomes apparent that 16...e5 isn’t possible, as 17.Be4 wins the knight.

17.Be5?!

This is not a bad move, but considerably more to the point is 17.Bxf5!. Here 17...exf5 walks into mate after 18.Qe3+ Kf8 19.Qe7+ Kg8 20.Be5. Richardson also has no good defense after 18... Kd8 19.Qe7+ Kc8 20.Qxg7 Rd8 (20...Re8 21.Rae1) 21.Qxh7: Black is completely paralyzed and 22.Rad1 with 23.Bg5 to follow are in the air.

17...O-O 18.Rad1 Nc8

This starts a long maneuver to get the knight into play on c6.

19.Qc3

White is clearly better so the challenge is how to open up the position to his advantage. The text starts preparations to advance the b-pawn.

Rf7 20.Bc2 Na7 21.Qe3 Qb6?

Black faithfully follows the above-mentioned plan, but overlooks a tactic. He had to play 21...a5 and only then ...Qb6 and ...Nc6.

22.b4! Nc6

Nothing works for Black: after 22... Qxb4??, 23.Rb1 wins a piece, and on 22...Rc8 23.bxc5, Black can’t capture the pawn, as 23...Qxc5 24.Bd4 picks up a knight and 23...Rxc5 24.Bd4, a rook!

23.bxc5

White wins not only a pawn, but a highway for his rooks to enter the Black position. The rest is very easy, as Richardson has no counterplay.

23...Qa7 24.Bc3 Rc8 25.Rb1 Ra8 26.Rb6 Rc8 27.Rfb1 Nd8 28.a4 Qa8 29.h4 Rc6 30.h5 h6
Black couldn’t allow 31.h6, opening the a1-h8 diagonal.


Bobby indirectly covers g2 (41... Bxg2? 42.Rg3!), and prepares to swing his rook over to the kingside for the attack.

41...Qe8 42.Rg3 Qf7 43.Rb3!

More space equals more mobility. Now that Black’s pieces are bunched around his king, Fischer decides to go the other way.

43...Ba4

Black gets to trade a pair of pieces, but loses his best-placed piece.

44.Rb1 Bxd1 45.Rxd1 Rb8

White was threatening 46.Rb1 followed by Rb6 or Rb7; so the text is understandable, but it walks into a nice tactic. If 45...Qxh5, Bobby had 46.Rb1 Rc8 47.Rb7 Qe8 48.Rb6 Ra8 49.c6! dxc6 50.Qc5 with a winning position.

46.c6! dxc6 47.d7 Rd8 48.Qc7 Qe7 49.Qxc6 Kf7 50.c5 Kf8 51.Qc7 Kf7 52.Qc6 Kf8

Since Black is helpless, Bobby takes time to safeguard his king so that after a future c5-c6 there are no complications with ...Qc5+

53.g3 Kf7 54.Kh2 Rb8 55.Qc7 Rd8 56.c6 Qf6 57.Qxd8 Qxd8 58.c7 1-0 (Chess Horizons, June-August 1999, pages 6-7.)

(188) Caro-Kann Panov-Botvinnik B14
Fischer – Donald Dubois
Flint (simul), May 16, 1964


Note: Twenty-eight years later, far removed from the pressure-filled atmosphere in Flint, it looks like Mr. Dubois should have played on with 24...d3, as 25.Qc3 (otherwise 25...Qf6+ is fatal) 25...Bg7 26.Qc1 Qf6+ 27.Kg3 (27.Ke3 Re8+ 28.Kxd3 Qf5+) 27...Qg5+ 28.Kf3 Qf5+
29. Kg3 Be5+ mates. (O.G.)

(189) Two Knights C57
**Fischer - R. Snuske**
Flint (simul), May 16, 1964


(190) Sicilian Dragon B70
**Fischer - Walter Murdock**
Flint (simul), May 16, 1964


The late Jack O’Keefe of Ann Arbor kindly passed on the following three games from Bobby’s exhibition in Flint, Michigan.

(191) French McCutcheon C12
**Fischer - Norman Burns**
Flint (simul), May 16, 1964

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Bb4 5.e5

Russian Grandmaster Igor Glek, who is a specialist on the black side of the McCutcheon French, had an interesting story to tell about the opening in the French magazine *Europa Echecs* (we found the story, as related by Dutch GM Hans Ree, on Hanon Russell’s Chess Cafe website). In 1988, when he was doing his military service in the Soviet Union, Glek was approached by Anatoly Karpov. The former World Champion was playing for the Red Army team at the time and asked Glek for advice about what to do against the McCutcheon. Glek compiled a small file on the line that starts with 5.exd5, which, of course, is not a refutation of the McCutcheon, but very safe and, according to Glek, gives White good prospects for a minimal positional advantage. Just what I needed, Karpov said. Glek was rewarded with two weeks extra leave from military service. (In the Soviet Union power and influence — blat in Russian — counted for everything. The world has changed since then and later Karpov had to pay his helpers.)

5...h6 6.Be3

Fischer faced the McCutcheon twice in tournament play. Each time he answered 6.Bd2 and after 6..Bxc3, he played the experimental 7.Bxc3 against Petrosian (Curaçao 1962) and the main line 7.bxc3 Ne4 8.Qg4 g6 9.Bd3 vs. Rossolimo (U.S. Championship 1965). The latter is
game number 52 in My 60 Memorable Games.

6...Ne4 7.Ne2

Here White normally plays 7.Qg4.

7...c5 8.a3 Nxc3


9.Nxc3 cxd4

This move, in conjunction with Black’s next, loses time. Normally, Black plays 9...Bxc3+ 10.bxc3 Qa5 with play reminiscent of the Winawer.


Fischer could have aimed for a more complicated game with 12.Bf2.

12...Bd7 13.Bxc6 bxc6

Making the bad bishop even worse, but Black wants to get in ...c5. White wants to put his knight there, which explains the following complications.

14.Na4 Qa5+ 15.c3 c5

Here, 15...Qb5 16.b4 Bc8 17.Bc5, meeting 17...Ba6 with 18.Bxf8 Kxf8 19. Nc5, gives Fischer the advantage.

16.Nxc5 Bxc5 17.b4 Bxb4 18.axb4

Bobby could try to profit from the opening of the c-file with 18.cxb4, but this allows 18...Qa4.

18...Qc7 19.O-O Bb5 20.Rf3 g6 21.Bc5

This allows Black to further blockade the game. More accurate was 21. Ra5 a6 22.Bc5, though the closed nature of the game makes a draw quite likely.


Black’s king is safe and the potential breaks to open the game are few.

29.Qh4 Rh8 30.Qf6 Rh7 31.h4 Rg8 32.Kh2 Ra8 33.Qe7+ Qc7 34. Qg5 Re8 35.Qg3 Ra8 36.Qe3 Rhh8 37.Rda1 Qc6  Draw (O.G.)
Nicholas Rossolimo, whose famous loss to Bobby in the McCutcheon variation of the French is game 52 in My 60 Memorable Games, is analyzing with the journalist and chess master Miro Radoicic (chewing a swizzle stick). Radoicic lost to Fischer's 9.Nh3 in the Two Knight's Defense at the 1963 New York State Open (the complete score is unavailable). To Rossolimo's immediate left is Dr. Edward Epp. (Photo by Beth Cassidy)

National Master Jack O'Keefe of Ann Arbor, Michigan, died on July 31, 2008. One of the greatest chess historians the United States has produced; O'Keefe was especially interested in everything pertaining to the US Opens, long the most important event after the national championship. He spent countless hours trying to locate games from the US Opens which did not have bulletins, especially Detroit 1950.

O'Keefe’s historical knowledge was not confined to chess played in the country of his birth. He also possessed a vast wealth of information about Soviet chess, much of it acquired during visits to the John G. White Collection in Cleveland, the world’s largest repository of chess literature.

Mr. O'Keefe was noted for his generosity in sharing his knowledge with others. To cite but a few examples: Nick Pope's book on Pillsbury and the works on Rubinstein by IMs Nikolay Minev and John Donaldson benefited greatly from his assistance.
(192) Sicilian Accelerated Dragon B35

**Fischer – Jack O’Keefe**
Flint (simul), May 16, 1964


This is a bit early. Black should castle here.
9.Nb3 Qc7 10.Be2

White could have obtained a clear positional advantage with 10.Nd5 Nxd5 11.exd5 Na5 (11...Ne5 12.Be2) 12.Nxa5 Qxa5 13.c3 d6 14.Bd4. The pressure against e7 is unpleasant.

10...b5 11.f4

Once again, the idea of Nd5 was strong. For example: after 11.a4 b4 12.Nd5 Nxd5 13.exd5 Nd8 (13...Na5 14.d6! or 13...Ne5 14.Bd4 with f4 in the offing) 14.Bd4 Bxd4 15.Qxd4 O-O 16.Rac1 a5 17.c3 leaves White with a big advantage.

11...d6 12.Nd5 Nxd5 13.exd5 Na5

This is the right square for the knight now that...d6 is in. Black needs to trade a second pair of knights to relieve some of the pressure on his position.

14.Bd4 Nxb3

Black wants to make sure the knights come off the board. Here 15.Bxg7 is met by 15...Nxa1 16.Bxh8 Qxc2.


Black chooses this over 17...Bd7, because he favors putting pressure on d5.

18.b4

Fischer hopes to stop the trade of queens, but better was 18.Rae1. If 18.Rfe8, White has 19.f5 Rac8? (Black should play 19...Qc5, as 20.Qxc5 dxc5 21.c4 is better for Bobby, but not so easy to break through) 20.b4 (to stop...Qc5 at some point) 20...Ba8 21.f×g6 h×g6 22.Rf4 Qb7 23.Bxg6 leads to a winning attack, e.g., 23...fxg6 24.Re6 wins. Bobby’s play on the queenside allows Black to simplify.

18...a5!

Black alertly seizes the opportunity to grab counterplay on the queenside before White’s play on the other wing gets too dangerous.

19.bxa5


better.

25...Rc3 26.Bxb5?! 
He should have tried 26.Rd7 with play similar to the previous note. Now the game peters out to a draw.

26...Rxc2+ 27.Re2 Rc3 28.Rb2 Bb7 29.Be2 Kf8 30.b5 Ke7 31.Bf3 Bxf3 32.gxf3 Kd7 33.b6 Kc8 34.b7+ Kb8 35.Rb6 Rc7 36.Rxd6 Kxb7 Draw (O.G.)

(193) Sicilian Accelerated Dragon B35
Fischer - Don Thackrey
Flint (simul), May 16, 1964

Bobby played 8.f3?! against Panno at the Portoroz Interzonal in 1958. Black instantly equalized with 8...Qb6 (8...e6!? is also interesting), threatening b2 and d4.

8...Qa5 9.f3 d5
This variation has a reputation of leading to a difficult ending for Black.


13...Nxd5 14.Bxd5 Rd8 15.Bb3

Fischer steers for the rook endgame where he is favored by his more active king and rook plus the queenside pawn majority.

This leads to Black’s immediate demise. The position is pretty bad, but Black could have put up more resistance with 31...h5, intending ...h5-h4-h3.

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32.a4 f5 33.Ra6 Rb7 34.Kd5 e4 35.fxe4 f4 36.e5 1-0 (O.G.)
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Here Michigan Expert (rated 2070 on the July 1964 USCF rating list) David Reynolds plays excellent chess until the ending. Then, facing Fischer on one of the last remaining boards, he falls apart.

(194) Sicilian Najdorf B86

**Fischer – David Reynolds**

Flint (simul), May 16, 1965

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This looks a classic Sozin dream position – an ironclad grip on d5 and good knight versus bad bishop looming. The reality is that matters are not so simple as Black’s play down the c-file gives him counterplay. The true verdict is White is slightly better. Note that 14.Bd5 (hoping to trade bishop for bishop) is met by 14...Nc6. **14...Bxd5 15.Bxd5 Ne6 16.Nc3 Rac8 17.Bxc6 Qxc6 18.Rf2 Kh8 19.Nd5 Qc5 20.c3 Bd8 21.Qg4?!**

If White has anything substantial here it must start with 21.f6.

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21...f6 22.Re1 Bb6 23.Nxb6 Qxb6 24.g3 b4
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Bobby has nothing. Black has completely equalized.

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This artificial placement of the rook is the first sign that Black is losing his way. Reynolds might have been the last game going and the tradition in simuls is the last survivor plays the exhibitor move on move. That likely explains Black’s collapse here after playing so well.

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Here 42...Rd2 and 42...a5 were easy draws as the rook stays active.
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43.a3 Kg7?!
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There is no need to retreat and allow White’s king to advance. Instead 43...a5 44.Ra6 e4 was the way to play.

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44.Kh5 Kf7?!
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The more active 44...e4 45.g5 fxg5 46.Kxg5 e3 47.Re6 Ra5+ 48.Kf4 Rb5 49.b4 (or 49.Kxe3...
Rxb2 50.Rxa6 Kf7) 49...a5 was a simple draw.

45.g5 fxg5 46.Kxg5 Ra5?

This move prepares 47…Rb5 which will completely immobilize the rook.

The last chance was 46...Rf4, meeting 47.Rxa6 with 47...Rf2 48.b4 e4 49.Rc6 Rf3 50.a4 Rb3 51.Rc4 e3 52.Re4 e2 53.b5 Rb4 54.Rxe2 Rxa4 55.Kf5 Rb4 56.Re5 Rb2 and a draw.


Columbus, May 18
+48, -0, =2
Robert Fischer Scores Double Victory in Simultaneous

Dayton Chess Club Review, June 1964:

Columbus, Ohio — Mon. Eve., May 18, 1964 at Central YMCA Auditorium.

All 50 players’ tickets had been sold and a few would-be players had to content themselves to watch. There must have been as many spectators as players.

The boards and pieces were set up by 7:15 p.m. but Mr. Fischer was delayed. It was 8:00 when he arrived, breathless and exuberant.

Before play began, Jim Schroeder explained that while he had arranged the exhibition with Fischer, it was the hard work of Mr. Holmes of Columbus which made it a success.

On introducing Mr. Fischer, Schroeder said that before the mid-April exhibition in Cleveland he had a low opinion of Fischer, but seeing him in person, talking before the group of people and in action over the boards, made him realize what a fine young man Fischer really is; the kind of man, Schroeder said, we can be proud to have represent us before the world.

In his haste Mr. Fischer had forgotten to bring his demonstration board so instead of what he termed “a dull chess lecture,” he gave us a brief but interesting and amusing account of his tour.

Fischer said he hadn’t thought about making a tour, but a friend advised him to make the tour at this time to ride the crest of his popularity and to take advantage of recent publicity about his exploits … that it would do him a lot of good, make a little money, and help chess movement in the United States.

He said that in New Orleans he had given a short talk in which he compared Paul Morphy with the Russians. He said that Morphy in his short 3-year-career had created more interesting and beautiful games and had done more for chess than Botvinnik had done in 30-odd years of dull plodding. “That made a hit with New Orleanders,” said Fischer (laughter).

He said his most difficult exhibition was one of his first, a 75-board affair in Chicago, in which he took on several masters, a whole “raft” of experts, and some “so-called fish” (laughter). The whole lecture and exhibition had consumed about 9 hours, and he found himself losing a few games, even to high school students, and one of them a girl! [Editor: While Fischer lost to two juniors in Chicago (Sax and Tobler) he didn’t lose to any females. Perhaps Bobby had in mind his sharp struggle with Kate Sillars, game 53.]

Fischer mentioned that among the easier stops on his tour, in Las Vegas his opponents lasted only an hour and 20 minutes. “They must have been anxious to return to the gaming tables,” said Fischer (laughter).

In Los Angeles, Fischer said he met a few old friends — from his match with Reshevsky (more laughter).
Fischer concluded his remarks by saying that he had recently learned from the pages of Chess Life that he is supposed to wind up his tour with a 100-board exhibition in New York. That should finish it for sure, he said, as he walked over to the first board to make his first move — 1.e4, of course — what else?!

Play began at 8:10 and before long the room echoed the groans of the players as Fischer rapidly built up pressure. At most boards he paused for only a few seconds. At some boards he stayed longer studying his moves, especially at Wendell Lutes’ for a record 1 min. 20 sec. Lutes had a winning advantage at one point according to Schroeder, but misplayed it, managing only to draw.

The match was all over by 11:45 p.m. In all, Fischer won 48, lost none, and drew two, to Lutes and Dayton’s Ed Lense, who is now at seminary in Columbus studying for the ministry.

It was very impressive watching Fischer. I, too, believe he is maturing into a fine young man. I believe the tour has been an education for him.

Mr. Fischer scored points in his exhibition, but more important, he scored a hit with every player and spectator present.

The Young Maestro at Work . . .

The following position occurred in one of the games of Robert Fischer’s exhibition at Columbus, May 18th. Player X had just moved his bishop from e4 to c6.

Fischer (White, naturally) calmly played Rc7. Player X, talking to himself (as were many
players present), said, “If I move ...Bb5 I’ll threaten mate, and what can he do?” Soon Fischer
had made his rounds and came up to the board. Player X reached out and played ...Bb5. With
hardly a moment of hesitation, and with a broad grin on his face, Fischer played a8=Q+ to
which Player X quickly replied ...Bf8 before Fischer had a chance to move on. As soon as
Fischer played h3 Player X resigned, with the statement that he probably should have moved
his king to h7 instead of ...Bf8. Fischer was kind enough to take a few moments’ time to point
out that if ...Kh7, then g3! saves the game.

(195) Alekhine B03
Fischer - Ed Lense
Columbus, Ohio (simul), May 18, 1964

Notes by Ed Lense.


Up to here this line is given in MCO 9. I prefer White’s move, since the N seems better posted
on f3 than at e2, where it ends up in MCO.

7...Be7 8.Bd3 Bg4 9.Be3 Qd7 10.O-O O-O 11.h3 Bf5

11...Bh5 12.Bxh7+ Kxh7 13.Ng5+ Bxg5 14.Qxh5+ Bh6 may be fairly safe, but Fischer’s attacks
tend to be one-sided, no matter how improbable they seem. 15.Ne4, for example, would be
rather entertaining, at least to the spectators — and Fischer.

12.a3 Bf6

Center pressure against the gathering Q-side attack. After 12...a5 13.Qd2 he gets a strong
queenside initiative anyway, and the early push would only make my defense less flexible.
(And who wants to be rigid and petrified, besides Goldwater?)

13.b4 a5 14.b5 Ne7 15.Rc1

Defending the knight. 15.Rb1 followed by Qd2 would be more “aggressive.”

15...c5 16.bxc6 bxc6 17.d5 Rab8 18.Bxf5

This series of exchanges is the most promising for White since Black has practically full
equality and can start his own exchanges if he wants to.

18...Nxf5 19.dxc6 Qxc6 20.Bxb6 Bxc3!

20...Rxb6? 21.Nd5 would be supremely not best.

Besides offering an exchange, this increases the range of the queen and cuts off such goodies as 24.Rg3.

24.Qxc5 dxc5

Best.

25.Rd1 a4 26.Rd7

Why not 26.Rd5 Rb3 27.Re3 Rc8? It probably wouldn’t win, but it would be a better practical chance; the rest now is simple.


Draw

The last 5 moves were played in a few seconds; the moves — and the outcome — were already obvious. After 32...a3 33.Ra5 Rxc4 34.Rxa3 Kf7 the position would be as drawish as an artist’s pencil.

The last 5 moves are also interesting because they’re probably the only time I’ll ever play rapid transit with a grandmaster!

Now, how I felt during the game, as if you wanted to know. Skipping the classical starry-eyed schmaltz, I was mainly sweating like a pitcher of lemonade in July, only not as cool, and I smoked nearly a pack of Between the Acts cigars (which proves I’m a real man!). Fischer’s acceptance of the draw before the cigars killed me was easily the biggest relief of my life.

(Dayton Chess Club Review, June 1964)

(196) Caro-Kann B18

Fischer - Tony Mantia
Columbus (simul), May 18, 1964


Fischer, in his My 60 Memorable Games, p. 303, had this to say about the text: “On tour (1964) I experimented with the weird 5.Nc5!? Most of my opponents countered with 5...e5 6.Nxb7 Qxd4 (if 6...Qb6 7.Nc5 Bxc5 8.dxc5 Qxc5 9.c3 White’s better, Fischer-Petrosian, five-minute game, Bled 1961) 7.Qxd4 exd4 8.Bd3 with the better ending. Some replied with 5...b6 6.Na6 Nxa6 7.Bxa6 Qd5!, others 5...Qc7 6.Bd3 Bxd3 7.Nxd3 e6. White has more space, but only experience can tell whether he has the edge; however, the knight on d3 discourages the normal freeing maneuver ...c5 and/or ...e5. At least it’s something to break the monotony.”

Hungarian Grandmaster Gedeon Barcza (1911-1986) is remembered for the opening system that bears his name (1.Nf3, 2.g3, 3.Bg2 and 4.c4) which he used to defeat Smyslov in a memorable game at the Moscow Olympiad in 1956. Noted for his skillful handling of knights and excellent endgame play, Barcza is remembered for the comment he made after drawing Bobby in an almost 100-move game at Zurich 1959. Fischer wanted to post-mortem from move one. Barcza begged off, pleading "I have a wife and children. Who will feed them in case of my premature death?"

5...e5 6.Nxb7 Qxd4


The tremendous activity of the knights and the weak black d-pawn offer Bobby excellent chances to win.


The Bobby that went on tour in 1964 was much different than the latter Fischer. He would not become a household name for another eight years and the controversies that followed him after he won the World Championship were far away. Many of those who interacted with Bobby during the 1964 tour remember him as friendly and approachable.

Wendell "John" Lutes (1938-2013) was rated 1987 USCF when this game was played. He would later go on to become a strong over the board expert and a master at correspondence chess. An adherent of the Weaver Adams school of attacking chess, Lutes was the author of nine well researched opening books that encouraged that attitude.

Theory prefers 7...Kxe7. The text obliges Black to sacrifice material.

8.Nb5 Na6??

This move fails to meet the requirements of the position. Necessary was 8...O-O. White wins the rook after 9.Nc7, but the complications that arise after 9...cxd4 10.Nxa8 f6 11. Qxd4 Nc6 12.Qd2 fxe5 13.O-O-O Nf6 14.f3 Qd6 (Bronstein - Stahlberg, Budapest (ct) 1950) are anything but clear.


Thanks to Grandmaster Alex Yermolinsky, who shared his insights on the following game.

1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 d5 3.d4 d6 4.c4 b6 5.exd6 cxd6

Fischer-Lense, from the same exhibition, saw 5...exd6 6.Nc3 Nc6 7.Nf3 Be7 8.Bd3 Bg4 with a draw in 32 moves.

6.Nc3 g6 7.Bd3
This sideline was Fischer’s favorite against the Alekhine. The main strategic idea is to place the king knight on e2 to take the sting out of ...Bg4.


This natural-looking move is, in fact, a serious positional error. Black kills his light-squared bishop, as Bobby will never allow ...f5-f4-f3!. Anything else would be better, including the recommendation 12...Re8! unclear, as given in Nunn’s Chess Openings.

14.f4!

Of course! Bobby fixes the black f-pawn in its tracks.

14...e4?

Now Black’s position loses all its vitality. White has a free hand to put his knight on e3 and play for breaks with c4-c5 or g2-g4. It was absolutely essential for Black to leave his pawn on e5.


This denies Black c5 for his knight and prepares an eventual c4-c5. Note that it is not easy to attack the c-pawn, as 18...Ba6 runs into 19.Nd4!.

18...a6 19.Rac1 Re8 20.Nd4 Nf6 21. Nd1 Bd7 22.Ne3 Rac8 23.a4?
This is an interesting decision. Bobby realizes that his position is strategically winning, but he wants to win quickly! By putting his pawn en prise, Fischer hopes to sucker Black into capturing on a4. The immediate 23...Bxa4 is refuted by 24.Ne6+, so Black goes into contortions to prepare ...Bxa4. We should mention that Bobby saw much deeper and knew that ...Bxa4 would always be a bad move.

23...Qc7 24.Qb2 Ra8 25.Rc3 Kf7 26.Rfc1 Bxa4?

This is a truly horrible move that quickly ends all chance of resistance. The bishop may not be lost, but the text loses control of the e6-square and requires the black pieces to use a lot of energy to keep a4-bishop alive. Black had to play 26...a5!, trying to clarify the situation on the queenside. Bobby would have probably answered with 27.b5, intending to break through later with g2-g4. In addition, the knight gets a huge outpost on c6.

27.Ne6 Qb7 28.b5 Rec8 29.h3!

Fischer shows admirable restraint. Instead of trying to hunt down the bishop he simply creates Luft, prepares a future g2-g4, and waits for Black to commit suicide by opening the c-file.

29...axb5

It’s hard to suggest better, but the text loses instantly.

30.cxb5 Rxc3 31.Rxc3 Nxd5

Equivalent to resignation, but 31...Rc8 32.Ra3 wasn’t pretty.

32.Nxd5 Qxd5 33.Ng5+ Kg8 34. Rc7  1-0 (O.G.)

Cicero, May 20
+44, -1, =5

Bobby Fischer took only 3½ hours on May 20 to play 50 simultaneous chess games with members of our League and a few guests. Bobby won 44 and there were 5 draws (J. Jackson, T. DeParry, A. Puchals, J. Warren, and J. Bikulcius). Only Erwin Puto was able to win from the champion.

About 100 spectators watched the exhibition. Bobby Fischer preceded the simultaneous play with a wallboard demonstration of various short games he played on his nationwide tour. The event was held at Western Electric’s Albright Gym and started at 7 p.m. (Chicago Industrial Chess League Bulletin, Vol. VII, #8, June 1, 1964)

The Microphone, publication of the Western Electric affiliate, the Hawthorne Works in
Chicago, reports: “Nineteen of the twenty Hawthorne chess players who battled the U.S. Chess Champion last month have heads ‘bloodied but unbowed’ by the contest. Mr. Fischer won in as few as 16 and as many as 41 moves. The twentieth player, Erwin Puto of development engineering, brought the champion down” … Says Louis Schriner, chess club president, “Mr. Puto played an excellent game. We were proud that of the 50 people who played Bobby Fischer it took a Hawthornean to beat him. But even the losers agreed that the contest was fun and they learned a lot.”

All credit to Mr. Puto; but we suspect that Mr. Fischer must have been momentarily distracted from his clear intention of 16.Bxf6+ and 17.Qxg4, winning. (Chess Review, Aug. 1964, p. 231)

(200) Vienna C30

**Fischer – Erwin Puto**

Cicero (simul), May 20, 1964


7.Na4 grabbing the bishop pair is the modern way of handling the position but the text also poses problems for Black.

7...Nd4 8.Bg5 c6 9.a3 h6

9...b5 10.Ba2 a5, makes sense as Black doesn't weaken his kingside, but Puto has a different idea in mind.

10.Bh4 b5 11.Ba2 a5 12.g4 g5?

And this radical attempt to break the pin is it, but 12...b4 was to be preferred.

13.fxg6 Bxg4 14.Bxf7+?

Houdini 4 gives the remarkable line 14...Rxf7 15.gxf7+ Kxf7 16.Rf1 Qg8! 17.Bxf6 Ke8! 18.Bh4 Ra7 and despite White's being a rook up the position is very complicated. The first player's pieces are completely tied up and the threat of ...Rg7 is quite strong. Houdini can find nothing better for White than offering to sacrifice his queen with 19.Rg1 Rg7! 20.Nxd4, but 20...Bxd4! (20...Bxd1 21.Rxg7 Qxg7 22.Nf5 Qg1+ 23.Kd2=) 21.Rxg4 Rxd4 22.Bg3 Rg3 23.Qh5+ Qg6 24.Qxg6+ Rg6 25.0–0–0 Rg2 and Black has a clear advantage in the ending.

15.Nxd4! Bxd4 16.Ne2??

An inexplicable blunder for Bobby and definitely one of his worst moves on the Tour. 16.Bxf6+ Qxf6 17.Qxg4 Qf2+ 18.Kd1 is an easy win for White.

16...Bxb2??

The pretty 16...Nxe4! would have instantly decided matters. Now the tables are turned once again.

17.Rb1??

17...Be3+ 18.Kf2??

18.Kf1 Qd7 19.Bxf6+ Kxf6 20.Kg2 Kg7 favors Black, but White can continue to fight. After the text it is all over.

18...Nxe4+ 19.dxe4 Qxh4+ 20.Kg2 Qh3+ 21.Kg1 Qe3+ 0–1

Youngsters who started playing during the “Fischer Boom” became one of the strongest generations in the history of American chess dominating U.S. Championships throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Here two of those future Grandmasters, Joel Benjamin (glasses) and John Fedorowicz, enjoy a friendly game of blitz in between rounds of the 1984 U.S. Championship. Legendary Washington state master Viktors Pupols (hand on chin) attentively follows the action. (Photo by Val Zemitis)

The following games were published in the Chicago Industrial Chess League Bulletin (July 17, 1964).

Editor’s Note: The following game is only given up to White’s 39th move in Hays.

(201) French Winawer C19
Fischer - Joseph Bikulcius
Cicero (simul), May 20, 1964


(202) Vienna C25
Fischer - J. Fajkus
Cicero (simul), May 20, 1964


Editor’s Note: The following game is only given up to White’s 35th move in Hays. In fact, 35.Kd3 and not 35.Kc3 was played.

(203) King’s Gambit C30

Fischer - W. Goranson

Cicero (simul), May 20, 1964


American chess fans had mixed feelings about Bobby's 1964 Tour. While they were happy for the opportunity to play him they were also sad that he was missing out on the 1964-1966 World Championship cycle as the Amsterdam Interzonal started in May. Back in 1964 there was no certainty he would be playing for the title in 1972.

Editor’s Note: The following game is only given up to White’s 16th move in Hays.

(204) French Rubinstein C10

Fischer - G. Kral

Cicero (simul), May 20, 1964

16...c5 17.Rd2 Bd7 18.Qe4 a4 19.Qe3 Qe7 20.h4 a3 21.b3 Bc3 22.Rc2 f5 23.c5 Qf6 
31.Rd2 Qe7 32.Bb5 Qc5 33.Qe6 Qf8 34.Ng5 Qf5+ 35.Qe4 1-0

(205) King’s Gambit C30
Fischer - David Kumro
Cicero (simul), May 20, 1964

Rf8 24.Nf5 Ng6 25.Rd7 Qb6+ 26.Kh1 Rbd8 27.Rxg7+ Kh8 28.Rd7 Qxb2 29.Qg4 Rg8 
30.Rhxh7+ 1-0

(206) King’s Gambit C33
Fischer - W. Nyman
Cicero (simul), May 20, 1964

b6+?
Safer is 9...Qxd1 10.Rxd1 Nxe4 11.Bf4 Nd7 when White is only slightly better in the ending, 
Blackburne-Pillsbury, Hastings 1895.

1-0

(207) French Winawer C16
Fischer - T. de Parry
Cicero (simul), May 20, 1964

Ra4 25.c3 h3 26.g3 Rha8 27.Bc1

Fischer has been outplayed positionally, a very rare occurrence on the tour, but the position is 
so closed that it is hard for Black to realize his advantage.

27...c5 28.bxc5 bxc5 29.dxc5 Re4 30.Bd2 Rxc5 31.Rdb1 Ba6 32.Rb6 Kf7 33.Rd6 Rac8 
34.Rd7+ Ke8 35.Rh7 R8c7 36.Rh6 Kd7 37.Rh7+ Kc6 38.Rh6 Re7 39.Rb1 Bd3 40.Rb4 Rb5 
41.Be3 Rxb4 42.axb4 Kd7 43.Rh8 b5 Draw

(208) Philidor C41
Fischer – Albert Sandrin

This Russian-produced, Spanish-published, three-volume series with multiple authors offers the best overall annotations to Fischer’s games.

(209) Sicilian Najdorf B90
Fischer - Kate Sillars and Larry Manter
Cicero (simul), May 20, 1964


(210) Sicilian Sozin B88
Fischer - Jim Warren

After this move, Fischer looked up from the board at me and said, “Didn’t I make this mistake against you before?” Bear in mind this was two months after the first game many simuls and hundreds of games later, as he was on tour through the country. What a memory! — Jim Warren.

13...Bxb5 14.Qxb5 Nxe4 15.f5 Bf6

15...e5 is more popular in recent practice.

16.Qd3 Bxd4+


17.Qxd4 d5 18.c4 dxc4 19.Qxe4

Fischer-Warren, Chicago 1964, (game 55) saw Bobby try 19.Qxd8. The text is a better try to eke out a draw.

Rxf1+ 26. Rxf1 h6 27. Rf8+ Rxf8 28. Qxf8+ Kh7 29. Qf5+ Kg8 30. Qc8+ Kh7 31. Qf5+ g6 32. Qa5 Qb6 33. Qa2 Qb7 34. Qa1 Qc7 Draw
Indianapolis, May 21
+48, -1, =1

Bobby gave a simul on May 21, 1964 at the Shadeland Chess and Checker Club located in the I.B.E.W. Union Hall, 6501 Massachusetts Ave. in Indianapolis. Fischer played 50 chess games and won 48 during the lecture, losing to Stasy Makutenas and drawing with Joe Coperus of the Indianapolis Chess Club. The games took about three hours. (Source: Indianapolis Star)

(211) Caro-Kann B11

Fischer - Gary Bookout
Indianapolis (simul), May 21, 1964


36...Rxe7 37.Rxf8+ Kxf8 38.Qh8 mate!

37.Qxf6 1-0 (O.G.)

New York, May 24
+34, -0, =0

Chess Tour reports that the first tour of simultaneous exhibitions by the 21-year-old champion proved to be an incredible success. Culminating in a 34-0 sweep at the Chess and Checker Club of New York against a strong field of amateurs and experts in only two hours and 28 minutes, it was reminiscent of Fischer’s 11 straight victories in the recent United States championship. His faultless technique in simultaneous exhibitions amazed the chess world and proved his adeptness at speedy play and also his good sportsmanship. The many offers of return engagements which Chess Tours received from all parts of the United States testify to the popularity of this young chess genius. (American Chess Quarterly, Spring 1964)

IM I.A. Horowitz’s column in the New York Times of July 12, 1964, had this to add:

“At the Chess and Checker Club, America’s ace played 1.e4 on every board. Any other first move is cowardly, Fischer asserted. The champion mowed down the opposition effortlessly, avoiding needless complications, and relied on positional niceties for his victories.

“Fischer, backed by faultless technique, played for superior development, control of the center, the bishop pair, and pawn majorities. The games below from this event are deceptively simple, but their professional efficiency is worthy of repeated study.”
The New York Chess and Checker Club, affectionately known as the “Flea House,” was a Manhattan institution. Located at 212 W. 42nd Street, not far from Times Square, it offered not only chess but also bridge and scrabble on a pay-by-the-hour system. The chess scene in the Stanley Kubrick film “The Killing” was filmed at the Flea House. Kubrick, reputed to be of expert strength, and one of his stars, Kola Kvarian — affectionately known as “Nick the Wrestler” (a player of A strength, according to Steve Brandwein, who often gave him odds) were regulars at the club. Owner John Fursa kept the club going till about the late 1970s. Note: Brandwein mentions that The Killing may have been filmed across the street at a competing games emporium called Fischer’s (!). You can find more information about the “Flea House” in Bill Hook’s memoir Hooked on Chess.

Transposing from the Bishop’s Opening, to the Vienna, to the King’s Gambit, Bobby catches McDermott in an old trap.

(212) King’s Gambit C30
Fischer – Mike McDermott
New York (simul), May 24, 1964


An old analysis of Chigorin’s ends with 14...Nh5 15.Bxf7+ Kd7 16.Qxe5 with a winning position.


(213) Ruy Lopez C79
Fischer - James Terrone
New York (simul), May 24, 1964


Alternatives fare no better: 16...Rf8 (to make room for the queen) 17.cxb6 Bxa3 18.b7 Rb8 19.Nxe5 or if 16...Qb8 then 17.cxb6 Bxa3 18.Qxd7. In both cases Black is lost (Horowitz).

17Nb7 1-0 (New York Times, July 12, 1964)

(214) Vienna C28
Fischer - Steven Morrison
New York (simul), May 24, 1964


This isn’t bad but 6...Qe7!, with the idea of meeting 7.Qe2 with 7...exf4 and 7.Qd5 with 7...d6!, is stronger.

7.fxe5 d6


Up to this point Black has been playing quite well but here he blunders away a pawn and the game. It may well be that he was forced to make a hasty move as Fischer normally didn’t allow passes and by this point many players would have already been eliminated.

Ed Westing, chess columnist for the Towson Jeffersonian, recalls the day quite clearly. “34 of us sat down to play surrounded by lots of spectators. When everyone was playing there was enough time to think but as Fischer started to win game after game and began appearing at my board with increasing rapidity things got much tougher. When Fischer came around and you didn’t move instantly he would immediately say in a loud voice ‘Move!’ Passes were definitely not allowed. As late as move 40 I could have drawn (according to Horowitz) but ultimately, pressed for time and being only a B player, I fell apart.

(215) Caro-Kann B18  
Fischer - Ed Westing  
New York (simul), May 24, 1964

23.Re1 Qd3 24.Kg2 Qxe2 25.Rxe2 Kf8 26.h3 Ke7 27.g4 h6 28.Rc2 b6 29.b4 a5 30.a3 axb4  
31.axb4 Re8 32.Nd4 Nd7 33.f4 g5 34.f5 Ne5 35.e5 bxc5 36.Rxc5 Rxc5 37.bxc5 Kd7 38.Kg3  
Nc6 39.fxe6+ fxe6 40.Nf3 Ke7?

“After 40.Nf3, Black stands well enough to draw. But he loses a vital tempo with 40...Ke7, which is quite irrelevant. Best is 40...e5 followed by ...Ke6. Then, White draws. But any attempt on his part to force a win would be dangerous. As the game goes, that one tempo is enough” (Horowitz).

41.Kf2 e5 42.Ke3 Ke6 43.Ke4 Ne7 44.Nxe5 Nc8 45.Nc6 Kd7 46.Kd5 Kc7 47.Ne5 Ne7+  

(216) Sicilian B29  
Fischer – Dr. F.J. Rummel  
New York (simul) May 24, 1964

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nc3 d5 4.Bb5+ Bd7 5.e5 Bxb5

5...Ne4 and 5...d4 are equally playable. Fischer had some tournament experience with the latter. His games with Sherwin (1962-63 US Championship) and Pomar (1962 Stockholm Interzonal) both continued 6.exf6 dxc3 7.fxg7 cxd2+ 8.Qxd2 Bxg7 and only now did Fischer vary, trying 9.Bc4 against Sherwin and (9.Qg5 versus Pomar.)

6.Nxb5 Nfd7 7.e6 fxe6 8.Ng5 Na6?

8...Qb6 9.Qe2 e5 10.c4 as seen in Aagaard-Landa, Politiken Cup 2008, is critical. The text lands Black in trouble right away.
9.Nxe6 Qb6 10.Qe2 Nf6?

This is the losing move. Black had to contest the knight before it could be reinforced. Now Dr. Rummel has no way to untangle his kingside pieces nor to bring his king to safety. 10...Kf7 11.Ng5+ Kg8 is not pleasant but at least Black is still fighting.

11.0–0 Rc8 12.a4 Rc6??

On neutral moves White will build up with Re1, d3, Bf4/g5 and so on.

13.a5 Rxe6 14.axb6 Rxe2 15.bxa7 Kf7 16.a8Q 1–0 (O.G. published in Bobby Fischer Uncensored, page 82.)

State College, May 31
+49, -0, =1

The terrible temper of a national chess champion is just a myth, according to those who observed the young New Yorker yesterday at the University.

All the local chess buffs who encountered the 21-year-old Fischer during his visit to the University had only the most complimentary things to say about both his skill and disposition.
This would be something of a contrast to many of the things which have been written about Fischer, known in the past for his abruptness.

The six-time U.S. champion played 50 matches at Waring Lounge. He was tied by Mordecai Treblow, coach of the Bloomsburg State College team and a former University faculty member. Included among his opponents were the best chess players in the area, including Stephen Shutt and Allyn Kahn, members of the University chess team, among others. The 50 games lasted 3¾ hour.

The young champion prefaced his exhibition with a lecture during which described his game with Miguel Najdorf from the Varna Olympiad.

Those who dined with Fischer and talked with him during his stay said they were impressed by his cordiality and patience and, especially by his sense of humor. He reportedly lost his temper at no time. (The Centre Daily Times, State College and Bellefonte, PA, June 1, 1964)

Penn State University had a situation unlike that of any college in the country. Dr. Robert G. Bernreuter, a high ranking figure in the university administration and chess enthusiast, had seen fit that IM Donald Byrne was hired not only to teach his normal academic subject of English but also chess, which was to be properly funded. Byrne coached the Penn State Varsity Chess Team and was Faculty Advisor to Penn State's Chess Club from 1961 to January of 1976.

State College turned out to be the last stop on Fischer’s tour. The projected finale, the 100-board exhibition in New York City scheduled for early June, never came off. Although Bobby later gave several exhibitions, including one at the U.N., he never made another tour like the one in 1964, which proved for many American players their one chance to meet a legend.
Penn State professor and chess coach IM Donald Byrne (1930-1976) is remembered as one of the brightest stars in American chess history and one of its greatest gentlemen. Byrne first came to worldwide attention when he defeated Yury Averbakh 3-1 in the USSR-USA in New York in 1954. A three US Olympian as a player (1962, 1964 and 1968), Byrne captained the American team that took home the silver medals at Havana 1966. There is no question he would have gone much further, certainly reaching the level of strong Grandmaster, had he not suffered from ill health most of his adult life. He died of lupus at the tragically young age of 45.

French Winawer C19

Fischer – Allyn Kahn
State College (simul), May 31, 1964

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.bxc3 Ne7 7.a4 Qa5 8.Bd2 c4 9.Nh3 Ng6

The text stops Nf4 but at the cost of putting the knight on an inferior square (instead of f5).

9...Bd7 was played in the first game between these two players contested earlier in the month where Black put up a great fight and only lost after a long struggle.

10.Be2 Nd7 11.Bh5 Nb6

How often do you see Black's knights on g6 and b6 in a French? Unfortunately this novel strategy is not particularly good.

12.Ng5 Bd7

12...h6 13.Nxf7 Kxf7 14.Qg4 is game over.

13.Qf3 0–0

There is nothing better but now the attack commences. Black has no defense.


16...Rf8 17.0–0 and there is no defense against Bxh6.


My day with Bobby Fischer

by Allyn Kahn

The Call

On the day that Bobby Fischer was scheduled to give a simultaneous exhibition at Penn State my roommate woke me up with "You have a phone call." It was Donald Byrne saying that he
wasn't feeling well. He wanted me and Stephen, the other chess team co-captain, to pick Fischer up from the small State College airport and show him around the campus.

Of course I agreed immediately. I had great respect for Donald Byrne, not only because he was one of the top chess players in the US, but also for his apparent carefree approach to life. Wherever he went, Donald Byrne was able to effortlessly capture attention in his light-hearted way, so that everyone in the room felt his positive energy. There was hardly any talk among our chess team about the fact that Byrne had Lupus. Even the large floppy hat that Byrne always wore as a necessary protection against the sun was viewed as a source of amusement and a symbol of his eccentricity.

Before hanging up Byrne said “Tell Bobby I’m not picking him up because I am still mad about that game.” To everyone who knew anything about chess no further explanation was needed. Six years earlier at age 13, in his first US championship tournament, Fischer played a spectacularly surprising and complicated queen sacrifice against Donald Byrne. That game, which became known as the Game of the Century, would be published throughout the world, alerting everyone of his great potential, launching Fischer's career as a player to be feared, admired, and respected.

At the airport I greeted Bobby Fischer with Byrne's tongue-in-cheek excuse over that game. Fischer laughed. So began a day of easy conversation with the future world chess champion, a title that would take another 8 years to achieve.

**Ping-Pong**

Fischer and I walked around the campus while I pointed out the key buildings, some very old stately structures and some newer brick buildings with classrooms and lecture halls. We both laughed at the posters plastered on the walls- Penn State is an Architectural Disaster!

Then we came to The Hub, which was the name for the modern looking student union building, the center for all kinds of non-academic events from impromptu folk concerts to collegiate chess tournaments.

We didn't spend much time in any one place until we came to a ping pong table in an out of the way hall in the Hub. Without a word we started a game. I was confident I could beat him, because that entire semester I played every night with my roommate as a break from studying. In what seemed like just a few minutes I was winning 11-7.

Then I really hit my stride. I played some excellent volleys, deftly combining attack and defense, returning shots with lightning fast reflexes, keeping Fischer off balance. At one point during our ping pong game, Fischer and I came to the sudden mutual realization that I was about to win! The score was 19-11.

Now it was his serve, and Fischer did something so strange and remarkable that I remember it vividly even fifty years later. He held the ball in one hand and his paddle in the other. He was standing with his knees slightly bent, arms at his side as if ready to serve. Then he just stopped.

He didn't look at me, but had a far off stare as his demeanor completely changed. For a fraction
of a second it seemed like all the muscles in his face and body tensed at the same time, and then completely relaxed again as he took a deep breath and quickly let it out. There was a complete sense of focus and seriousness that came over him. Although Fischer didn't move, it was as if a new person instantaneously entered the room, something like when someone is beamed down into the Star Trek transporter room. This all took place in a just a few seconds.

From that moment on Fischer was a different player. After a few more minutes the score was 20-18 in my favor. I was able to get one more point due to a lucky slam that hit the edge of the table and went in an unpredictable direction. I still felt confident that I could win. But that is not what happened. I could not win another point. Fischer became invincible. A few more volleys and Fischer won the game.

It never occurred to me at the time to ask Fischer what just happened. It is well known that an essential quality of all top chess players is a tremendous 'will to win.' But I think I witnessed something truly unique.

Years later a similar pattern could be seen in some of Fischer's Tournaments and matches, including his 1972 world championship match with Spassky. Fischer would start off badly and be facing insurmountable odds. Yet he would come from behind and suddenly appear unbeatable. I have read a lot about Bobby Fischer, but I have never seen any discussion of his ability to make such spectacular comebacks.

Humor

About an hour before Fischer’s simultaneous was to begin we headed over to the playing hall. The tables and chairs in the room were already set up and people were milling about, waiting for Fischer to arrive. Near the double door entrance there was an overstuffed leather chair that I placed a few feet away for Fischer, where he could see all the room activity as well as people entering the hall. Meanwhile I stood near him to greet people as they came into the hall, partly shielding Fischer from view. He indicated he was very happy with this arrangement.

At one point a student I knew came by and began asking me questions about the upcoming event. Fischer silently observed the conversation for several minutes. Then the student said he could not believe one person could successfully play 50 games at once. “How can Fischer do it?” he asked. I said “Why don’t you just ask him,” as I took one step back to reveal Fischer sitting there behind me. The student’s jaw dropped and he just stood there stammering. Fischer just laughed. After regaining his composure they had a brief conversation. Fischer clearly enjoyed this little joke.

Memory

After some introductions, Fischer gave a brilliant presentation of a tournament game that he played, going through all the game moves and variations entirely without notes. Then he proceeded directly to the first board and began the simultaneous exhibition.

After it was all over, Fischer and I walked to Donald Byrne’s house for supper. Along the way a girl stopped us and asked for Fischer’s autograph. He willingly obliged and struck up a conversation with her. He remembered that she was in the hall and knew exactly where she was standing. He observed all these details while demolishing all but one of his 50 opponents.
After we had supper at Byrne's house, prepared and served by Byrne's wife, Fischer invited me to go over my game with him. There was a chess set already out in the living room, and he began quickly playing the moves of the game for both sides from memory. I played the French Defense, which Byrne told me after the game was a good choice against Fischer.

Suddenly at the 9th move, Fischer hesitated. He tentatively made a move for Black and said, "Is that what you played." I said, "No, that's the move I played when you were in Philadelphia." He said, "That's right" and then played the move I had played that day. That other game was three weeks and about 300 games earlier, during the simultaneous exhibition Fischer played against 75 players just outside Philadelphia. Fischer then continued playing all the moves of the entire Penn State game for both sides without any more hesitation, making helpful suggestions as we went along. It did not occur to me to see if he remembered the rest of the moves of our Philadelphia game. I did not even have the other game score with me, as I only found out that morning that I would be spending time with Bobby Fischer.

During the entire day, I felt that I was simply hanging out with an old friend, someone who was easy to get along with, happy to share his vast knowledge, and possessing a great sense of humor. I will always be grateful for Donald Byrne and his wife for this opportunity to spend time with one of the greatest chess players the world has ever known.

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