

"Intensely engaging, riotously funny, indefatigably inventive... A rollicking cajol through the mysterious shennanigans of the coldest of cold, cold wars."

- Zemstev Havarola,
UzChess Times Weekly, Uzbekistan

"More invigorating than a Punchdrunk show!"
- Clementine Michaels, Southbank Chess Alliance

"Life is full of grey areas but this digest isn't."
- Damien Wurzle, Grandmaster, Principality of Sealand

**A curated collection of highlights from
the Great East West Open Chess
Championships (GEWOCC)
in cities across former Soviet Union,
Europe and the United States from
1932 to 1990.**

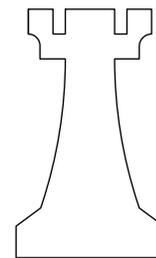


Coming soon:

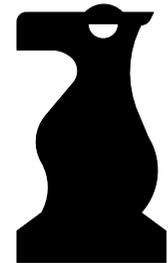
QUEEN A ROOK AND A HARD PLACE
Chess Variations Across the European Project

*"The human element, the human flaw and the human nobility,
those are the reasons that chess matches are won or lost."*

- Viktor Korchnoi



**COLD
WARS**



**A Compendium of Sixteen
Game-Changing Matches**

by Josephine Burton and Bryan Woltjen

Highlights from the Great East West Open Chess Championships (GEWOCC)

About the Authors

Josephine Burton

Josephine is Artistic Director of international cross-arts organisation Dash Arts, making new work with artists that aims to change the way we see chess.

Bryan Woltjen

A Designer of Stage, Costume and Puppetry, Bryan collaborates with performance makers across the globe to animate new chess theories.

Between 1932 and 1990, there were over 50 annual meetings of the Great East West Open Chess Championships in cities across the former Soviet Union, Europe and the United States. These tournaments featured Chess Grandmasters from across the region and took place against the extraordinary backdrop of the Cold War.

Each precarious moment in the Cold War affected the lives of our players and began to shape the game of chess as we know it today, evolving its rules as the twentieth century rolled on. The matches themselves were no strangers to the rivalries, tensions and scandals of the era.

Over the last few years, working closely with international academics and game master theorists, Dash Arts has researched the games and players of these tournaments and exhumed the personal stories that led the charge in this much cherished game.

Enjoy.

Boris Spasiuk vs. Frank Graham

1945

Yalta. The Crimean Peninsula.

This match took place in a storage cupboard after the intended room for the match was abruptly claimed for the conference between Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill to discuss Europe's post-war organisation.

Spasiuk and Graham met each other previously in 1932 at a match which lasted long into the night and ended with both sides hurling abuse at each other. Despite a friendly beginning at the re-match, these earlier tensions bubbled back to the surface.

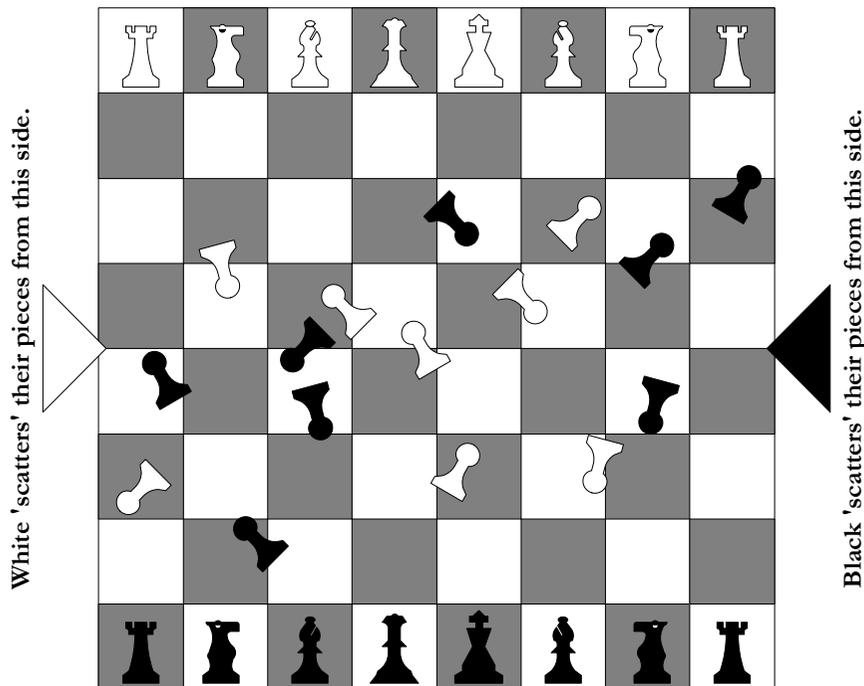
Both players stormed off mid-game. It was continued by bored media aides from the conference next door, permissible under GEWOCC rules at the time.

AFTER YALTA

AIM: Work together to clear the board of scattered, fallen pawns then turn upon each other to place your oppositon's King in check.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Upper rank pieces begin in usual positions (King, Queen, Bishops, Knights, Rooks)
2. Each player spills their pawns 'at random' across the board so that they lay scattered haphazardly across the board.
3. Players then take turns to move their Upper Rank pieces using traditional chess moves 'kicking' the pawns off the board. Each move must be a single simple effective swing, *ie no zigzagging moves, wide sweeps or exaggerated follow through*. NB: Taking of opponent pieces is halted until pawns are cleared from the board.
4. Once all pawns are off the board, the game switches to traditional play, from the positions that the pieces find themselves in.

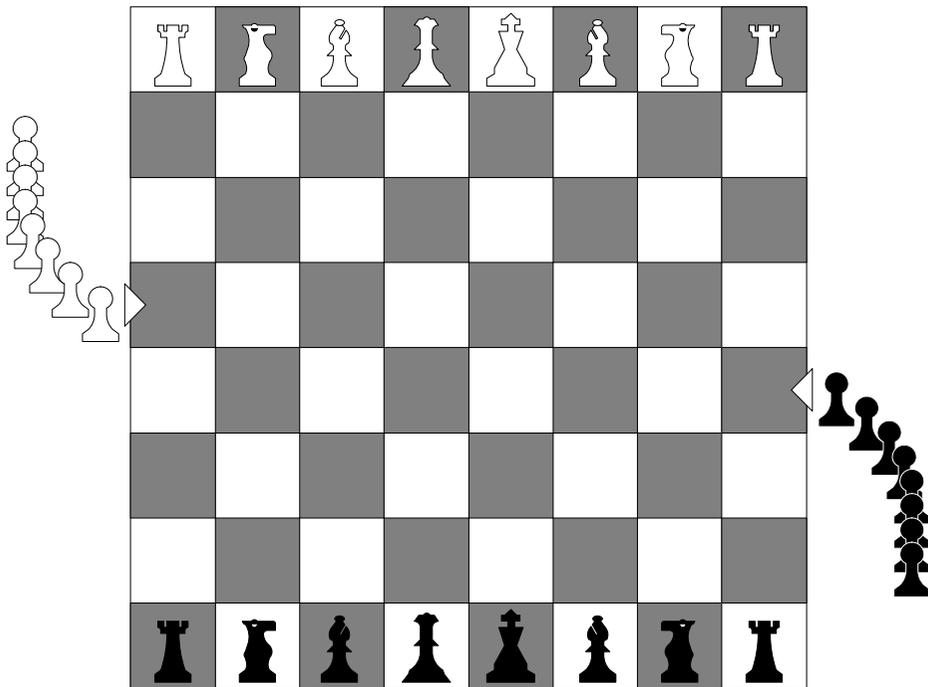


Maxim Blok vs. David Bornstein.

1946

Blok managed to avoid his minders and defected to the West shortly after the completion of this GEWOCC match in Oslo, giving up a promising career at what would become MESM, the early Soviet foray into AI.

His former colleagues would later develop the prototype that eventually became Tetris. Recent leaked correspondence fuels speculation that the idea was originally Blok's.



IRON CURTAIN

AIM: Move as many pieces over the border before it closes.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Upper Ranks in their usual positions. Pawns begin off-board, cued ready to file in from each side.
2. Each player takes two moves. The first is pre-determined. At the beginning of every turn, move a pawn one square into the board in the fourth row. Secondly, move any of the upper rank pieces to make it past the impending 'wall'.
3. Pieces can capture or be captured as they cross the wall, but not once they've reached the other side. Pawns can not be captured.
4. Game ends when pieces can no longer cross the double layer of pawns.

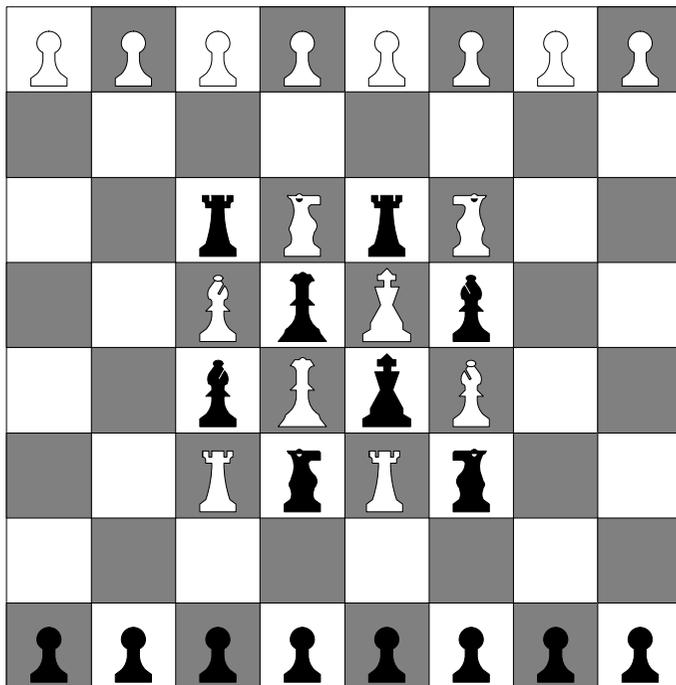
The winner is the player who has the greater number of their pieces on the other side of the wall.

Yitsak Kramer vs. Alan Goldberg

1948

Friends for more than 20 years, Kramer and Goldberg played their match in Berlin during the 1948 Blockade, struggling to continue the match under disruptive conditions.

GEWOCC officials evacuated the match at news of an imminent contraband search. The board was hidden upright and intact inside a piano, before being painstakingly brought to Sarajevo under the guise of medical organ donor freight, where Kramer and Goldberg were also brought to finish the game.



SIEGE

AIM: Work with your opponent to eliminate the Pieces, before turning upon each other's pawns.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pieces arranged in a 4x4 'blockade' at centre of board (see illustration).

2. Players take it in turn to annihilate the Pieces with their pawns moving in the traditional way (forward or diagonal take). *The Pieces are defunct in this game and only await their imminent capture.*

3. Once all Pieces are removed, opponents then take each other's pawns from whatever position on the board they find themselves.

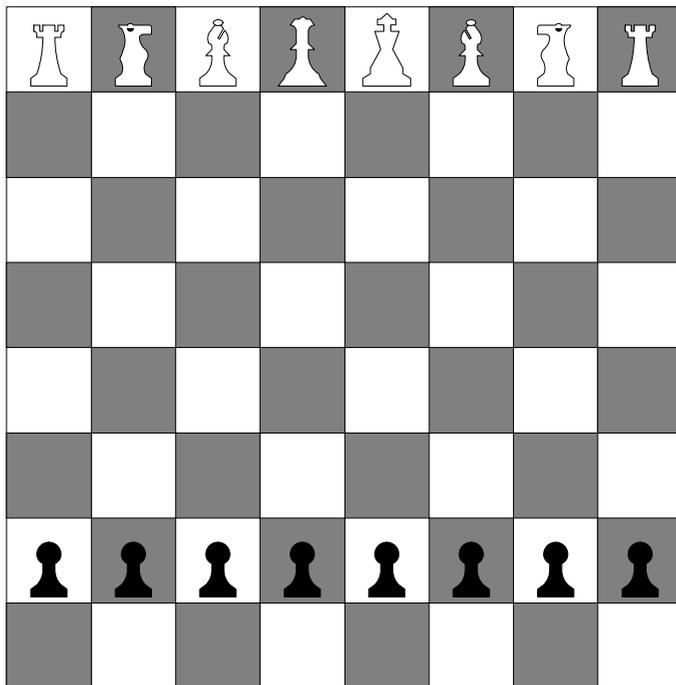
4. The winner is the one who has the greater quantity of pawns left on the board.

Vladimir Bialik vs. Daniel Graham

1949

This match took place in April in Washington DC and coincided with the signing of the NATO Pact. The match brought together two mismatched rivals: Graham flew to Washington from Massachusetts with his professionalised support team of masseuse, trainer and manager.

Tractor Factory worker Bialik from Dniepropetrovsk arrived by bus, alone, with nothing to lose.



ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE

AIM: Defeat your opponent.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Board is set up so that one side has only pawns, the other has only Upper Ranks.
2. The remainder of the game happens normally with pieces moving in their traditional ways. Pawns can become Queens if they make it to the other side.

Redundant Upper Ranks or Pawns are not used.

Pawns can move forward or backwards.

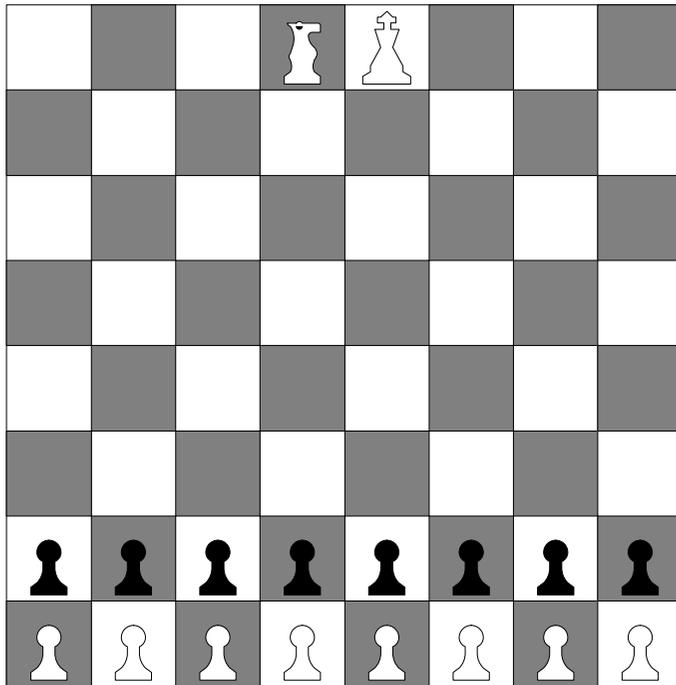
Winner is the side that captures the entirety of the opposition.

Mikhail Brodsky vs. Joseph Rajlich

1955

This match took place in Warsaw, on the day of the signing of the Warsaw Pact. Born in Brno, Czechoslovakia, and based in the States, this was Rajlich's first time back across the iron curtain.

It later emerged that Brodsky had received and delivered presents for Rajlich's family who had remained in Czechoslovakia. As this was against all official policy of the time, there were widespread public protests held to renounce the outcome of the game. GEWOCC officials intervened and the rest is history.



PACT

AIM: To form a 4x4 square of pawns, or to prevent your opponent from doing so.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Board is set up so that one player has ALL the pawns, and the other uses a Knight and a King (refer to illustration). Black or White pieces are interchangeable (ie redundant Upper Ranks are not used).

NB:

- There is no 'capturing' in this game.
- Pawns move in all eight directions (as if they were Kings).

2. Pawns must try to form a 4x4 square anywhere on the board. Opponent must seek to confound this by strategic placement of their pieces.

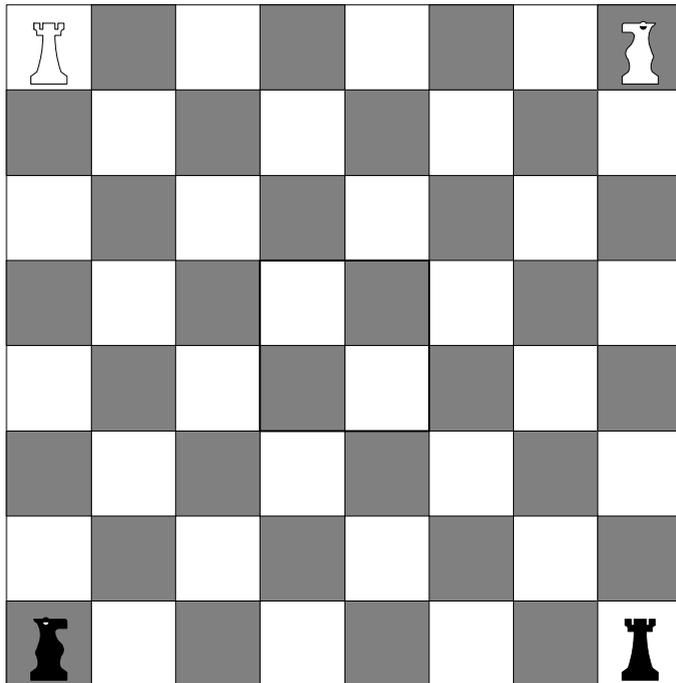
4. The Knight and King cannot put themselves in a position when they are *entirely* surrounded on all eight sides. If the Knight or King is surrounded AND its exits blocked, they lose the game.

Vidya Javasingh vs Ibrahim Khalitum

1956

Relations between East and West were at a historic low and both the United States and Soviet Union boycotted the games.

These GEWOC Championships were held in Brijuni Islands, Yugoslavia, coincidentally in the same hotel complex as the signing of the Declaration of the Non-Aligned Movement in the presence of international chess-loving Presidents including Nasser, Nehru and Tito.



A FINE BALANCE

AIM: Exit the board via a corner, any corner, a silently agreed corner, as a group. Do this after first meeting in the centre four squares.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Position a Knight and Rook at each corner of the board.
2. Players move each of their 2 pieces alternating in regular chess moves to meet in the central 2 x 2 area of the board.
3. Move as a troupe to a corner. Agree on which corner silently and without debate. Move as tight-knit and as closely as you can.
4. As each piece lands on the cornermost square, it escapes the board.

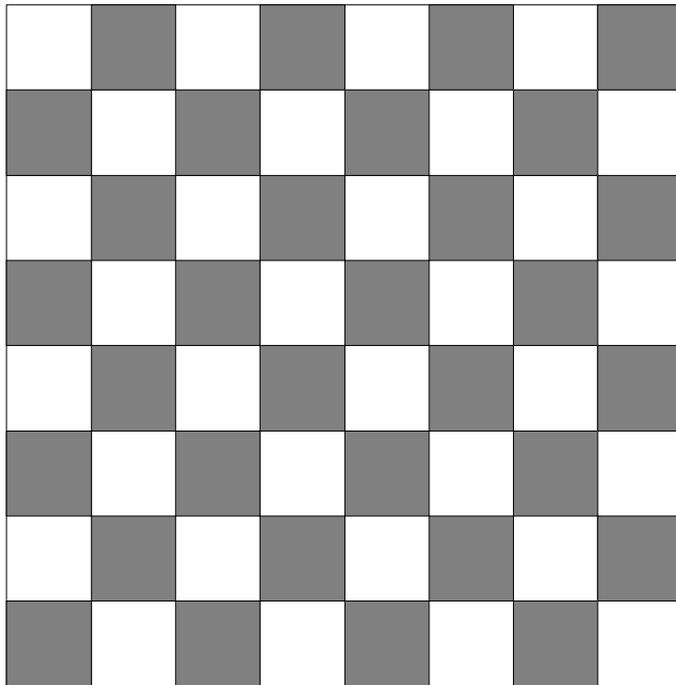
NB: When both players have negotiated a complete escape via one corner, they have both won.

Alexander Martynov vs. Terence Clark

1959

Held in Moscow as part of the American National Exhibition whilst Khrushchev and Nixon famously debated in the next door pavilion.

GEWOCC records of this match suggest that things were at first frosty between the two. Despite this, Martynov and Clark formed a firm friendship and chess-correspondence relationship which continued for the rest of their lives.



COMRADERIE

AIM: To arrange pieces in the board in an arrangement pleasing to the mutual sensibilities of the players, as discovered through alternating questions.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. The board is cleared at the beginning of this game.
2. Players ask each other a yes/no question which will lead to a decision on where to place any piece on the board. Pieces can come out in any order, and on any square. A mutual sense for their placement must be gleaned from questions.

Game continues until all pieces are laid out on the board.

NB:

Questions must be Yes or No.
Players must act upon the answer given.
Player misses a go if the question is not Y/N.
No question can be repeated.

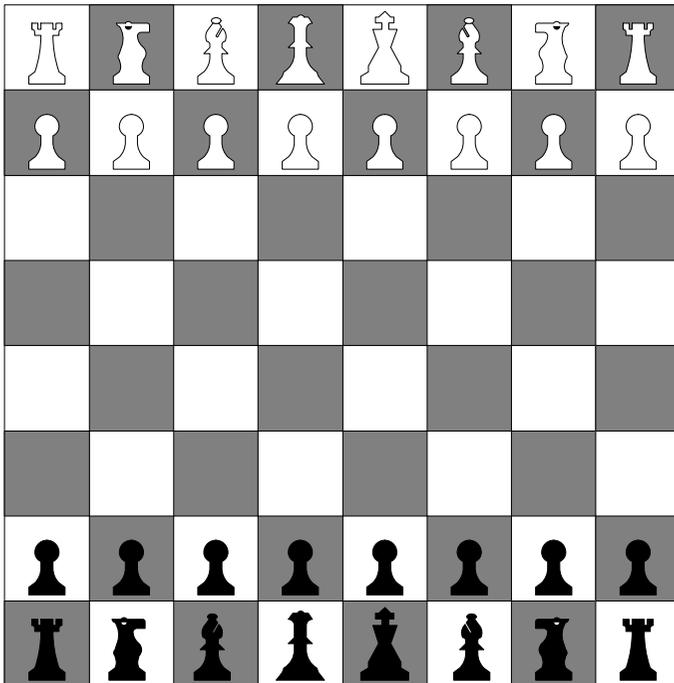
Sergei Fedorov vs. Robert Whittaker

1960

In a background of rising tensions over nuclear expansion, this was the first scandal of the GEWOC Championships.

A small ear-piece was discovered behind Whittaker's left ear. Whittaker was accused of cheating and the match was aborted.

Whittaker insisted that the item was a hearing-aid, but his protests went unheard.



ARMS RACE

AIM: Put your opponents King in check with the help of some nuclear boost.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Board is set up in the traditional format.
2. Players can 'cash-in' two pawns for an extra piece at the beginning of each go.

These can be exchanged in order:

Knight.
Bishop.
Castle.
Queen.

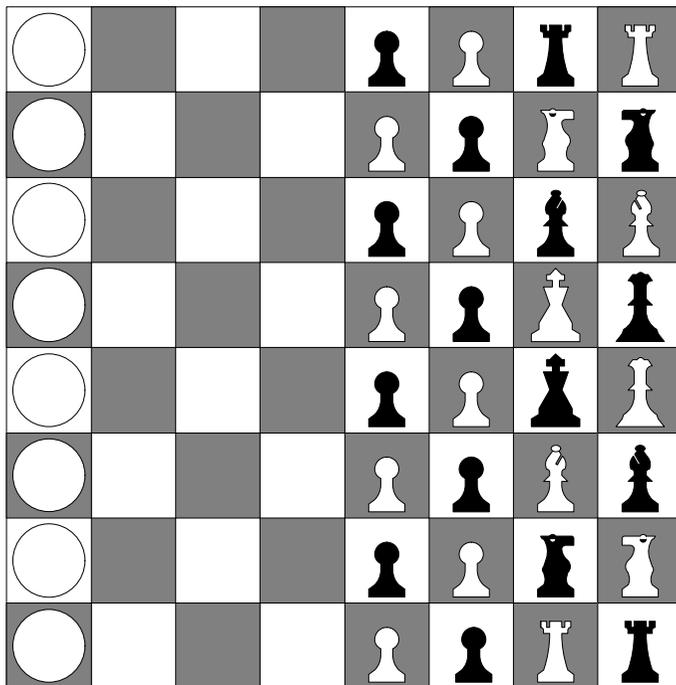
An upgrade of arsenal can only happen when the player has at least 2 pawns to swap.

Lena Mikhailova vs. Clare Johnson

1961

Johnson was the firm favourite to win but lost heavily to Mikhailova. Mikhailova's success was largely attributed to the euphoria which gripped the Soviet Union as Yuri Gagarin became the first man in space.

How she actually won is still the subject of much debate in the post-GEWOCC community. Was it Lena's closely guarded preparation style? Was it an obvious trajectory that was all but eclipsed by other events of the day? Some have put it down to a rigorous training regime, while others contend it she was simply the brighter star.



SPACE RACE

AIM: Occupy the far column of the board with as many of your own pieces as possible.

INSTRUCTIONS

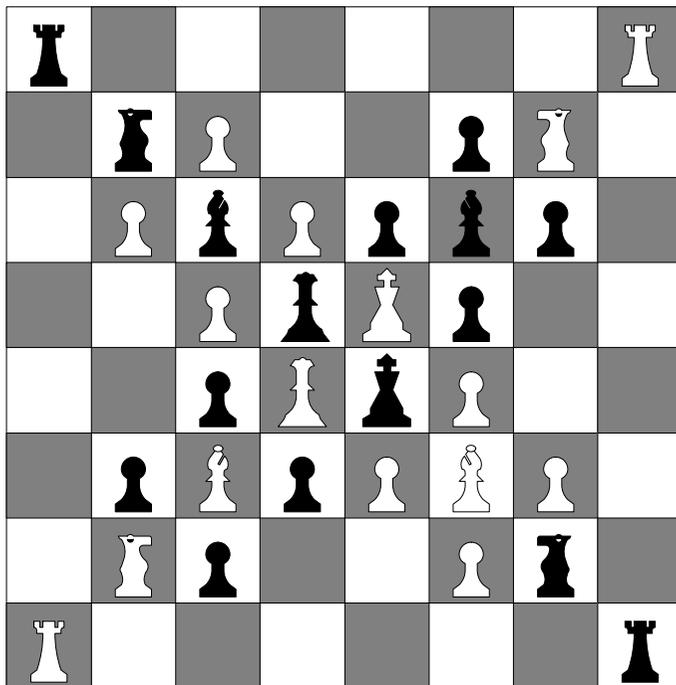
1. Lay out the pieces on one side of the board alternating colours, as per the image.
2. Players race in regular chess moves to the other side of the board.
3. Once a piece arrives in 'space', it can't move but can be taken by approaching pieces.
4. Game finishes when one player can no longer move. Winner has the most pieces in the far column.

Leonid Petrov vs. Raphael Katznelson

1962

The year of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

This has famously been remembered as the longest match in the history of the GEWOC Championships. Upon its completion, both players retired from chess and vowed to never play again.



BREAK THE DEADLOCK

AIM: Be the first player to return your chess pieces to their traditional starting positions.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Lay out pieces in a diagonal cross as illustrated in the image.

NB: Both players swap the position of one bishop so that they now sit on the correct colour.

2. Take turns to move your pieces back into their traditional starting positions using normal chess moves.

There is no capturing.

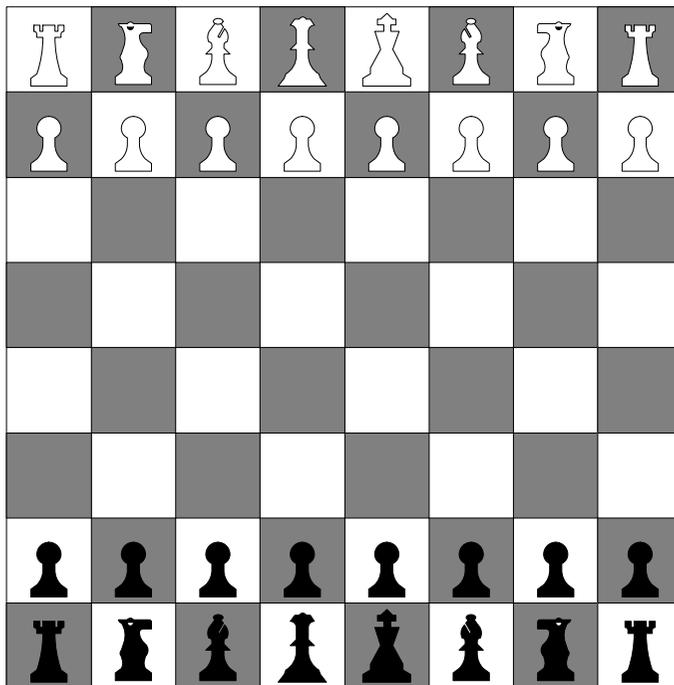
NB: Pawns are able to move as Kings do. They can jump two squares only in their final move.

Lena Pavlova vs. Charles Wolfson

1963

Lena Pavlova vs. Charles Wolfson. The 1963 tournament held in Leningrad featured the first mixed gender match, deliberately scheduled to coincide with the announcement of the first direct hotline between Moscow and Washington.

Famously the pair married a year later and moved to Boston. The marriage unfortunately lasted only a short while. It later emerged that Pavlova had seen the match as a springboard to defection to the West and Wolfson, a publisher, had used his participation in the tournament in the Soviet Union as an opportunity to discover the next Dr Zhivago.



SECRET
MISSION

CROSS WIRES

AIM: Be the first to complete your secret mission.

INSTRUCTIONS

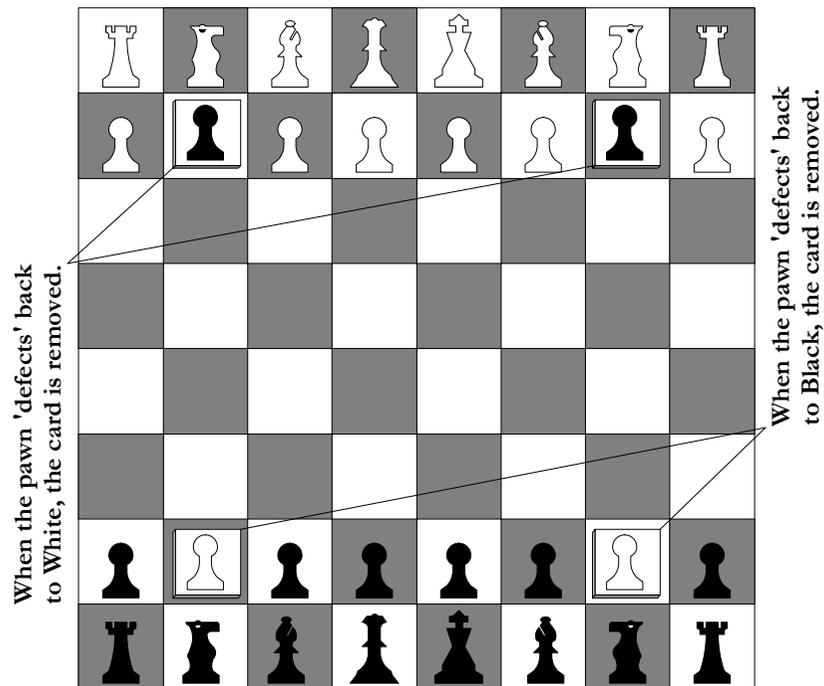
1. Each player takes a secret mission card from the side of the board.
2. Players play chess as usual whilst attempting to complete their task.
3. Game ends either when one player achieves their mission OR reaches check mate.

Petr Surkov vs. James Fox

1971

The 1971 Tournament was held in London, amid heightened tensions after 100 UK-based spies were sent back to the Soviet Union in Operation Foot. The Match was repeatedly stalled to allow the Tournament's umpires to correct Surkov's moves.

Surkov is now widely suspected to have been a KGB operative. GEWOCC has steadfastly denied any knowledge of these accusations.



ENEMY AGENT

AIM: Defeat your opponent with the help of some secret agents.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Players set up the board with two pawns planted on the other side of the board beside their opponents pawns (see picture).

2. Players take turns to play chess as normal. The embedded agents can be used by the side they are embedded in.

A piece of card remains under them while they are embedded for the sake of clarity.

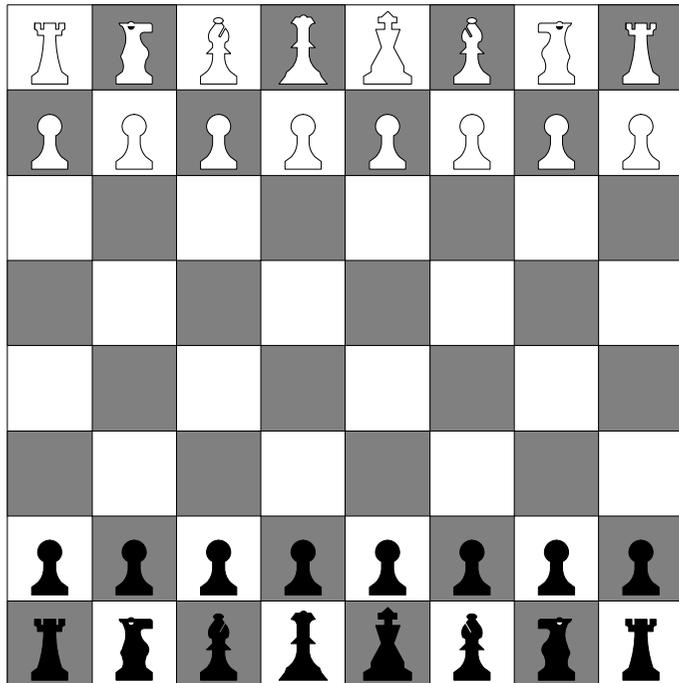
3. Anytime after the third turn, players can 'turn' their agents so they can start acting for them from within enemy territory.

Elena Riaboshenko vs. Elaine Redbush

1972

Held a week before the famous match between Bobby Fischer and Boris Spassky in Reykyavik (a rival tournament to GEWOCC), first cousins Riabashenko and Redbush met for the first time.

Overshadowed by the later Fischer-Spassky match, this game has also entered history books for its almost constant interruptions as the players were called away to the phone in order to speak to long-lost family members.



WILD
CARDS

UNCERTAIN ALLIES

AIM: Against the barrage of incoming challenges, defeat your opponent.

INSTRUCTIONS

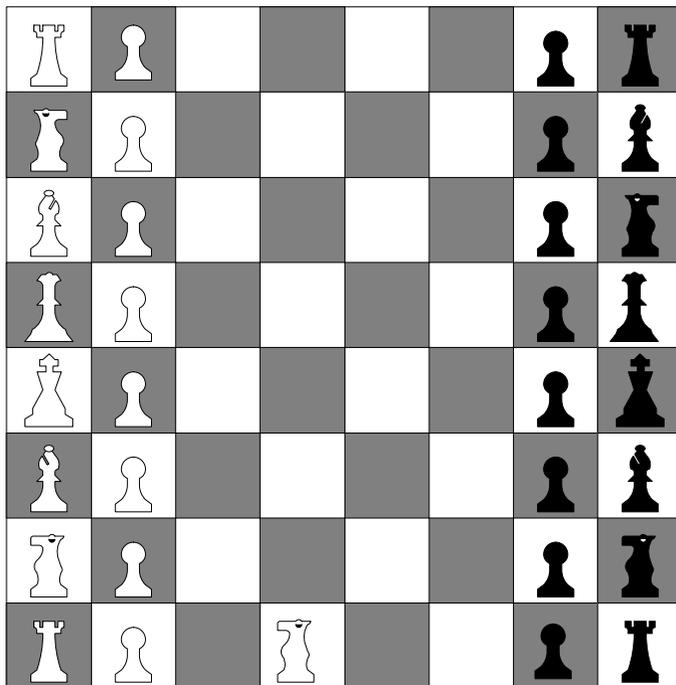
1. Each player must pick up a wild card at the start of each go. Player must act on the directions of their card.
2. Game finishes when one player reaches check mate or wins the game according to their 'wild card'.

Kevin Costello vs. Benas Zagorskis

1978

This notorious GEWOC Championships Tournament is remembered for the exposure of the Murmansk Smugglers Ring which occurred in the days after the match.

It is now widely believed that innumerable Siberian precious metals, disguised as chess pieces were carefully trafficked through the Tournament.



BLACK MARKET

AIM: To keep the smuggling route alive.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pieces are set up along columns. There is a singular extra smuggler Knight.
2. Player One looks after the singular Knight. Player Two looks after the remaining pieces, playing BOTH opposing sides, who are respectively defender and impeder of the knight.
*The Knight cannot capture, or be captured.
For Player 2, this will very much be like playing against ones self.*
3. Player One moves Knight with traditional movements up and down the board in the central four columns. Player Two moves twice each go.
4. Each time the Knight reaches the far side, the defense are able to claim back a piece. Each time the Knight reaches the near side, the Impeding ranks are able to claim back a piece.
5. Game continues until the Knight has made as many journeys up and down the board as possible before being fully impeded from reaching the other side.

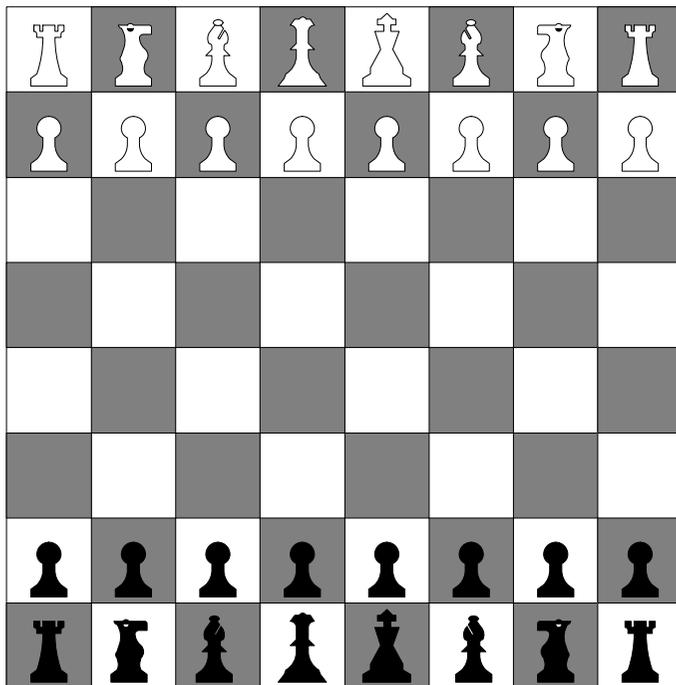
Gregor Volkov vs. Tom Woolf

1984

The atmosphere of rising nuclear tensions between East and West appears to have affected 1984's tournament, even in the isolated city of Almaty, Kazakhstan.

After only 10 moves, Woolf suffered from a minor stroke. The game was adjourned. Woolf recovered sufficiently to win the match several days later. Volkov tragically succumbed to pneumonia in the ensuing Winter.

His funeral was attended by Woolf and GEWOCC officials.



EARLY WARNING SYSTEM COLLAPSE

AIM: Keep your pieces alive!

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Set up board as usual. Pieces move in their usual ways, except BOTH PLAYERS PLAY AT THE SAME TIME. There is no particular need for check, unless you are both very, very fast.

This is a game where speed is of essence.

2. Start the 30 sec timer. During the 30 second interval, players simultaneously must move all their pieces OFF the white squares to safety on the black squares.

All pieces left on white square when the timer goes off are 'blown up' and removed from the board.

3. Start the timer again. During the next 30 seconds, move all remaining pieces onto the white squares. Any pieces remaining on black are removed.

NB: Players can take their opponents pieces during their moves.

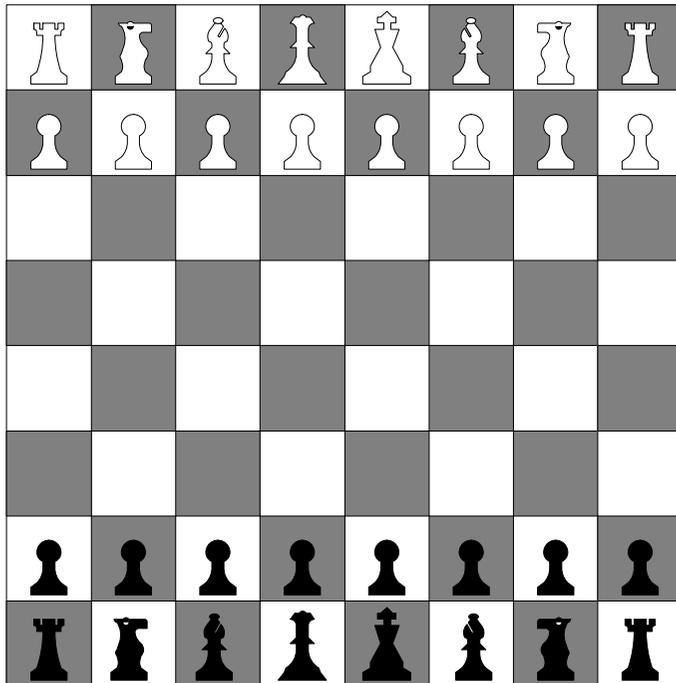
Game continues until one player loses all their pieces.

Lina Vassilyeva vs. Elizabeth Owens

1989

This Malta Tournament coincided with the off-coast Malta Summit between Presidents Gorbachev and Bush, now seen by some as the official end to the Cold war.

Vassilyeva and Owens formed a life-long friendship after the match. Owens later married Vassilova's ex-husband.



WORLD PIECE

AIM: Be the first to move your queen to your opponent's queen's position on the board.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Set up board as usual.
2. Pieces move in their traditional way except for the king, who cannot move or be captured. There is no check.
3. Game ends when a player's queen achieves its objective: moving into the opposing Queen's beginning position.