

14.♙e3 An improvement on 14.♙d2, which Aditya probably prepared after his game against Jovanovic. The only other game went 14.♙d2 ♖e7 15.b4 axb4 16.axb4 ♙f6 17.♗c2 ♙g5, when Black was doing pretty well. After 18.♙a1 ♙f4 19.♙xa8 ♙xa8 20.♙d1 ♙g5 21.♙e2 h4 22.♙e1 ♙f6 Black's position looked more appealing in J.Zhou 2583 - B.Jacobson 2526, Saint Louis 2022, which ended in a draw.
14...♙f6 15.g3 ♙g5 16.♙xg5 ♙xg5 17.♙g2 ♖e7



Although White can claim to have a nominal edge, Black's position is very solid and he won on move 49 after a long battle.

E94

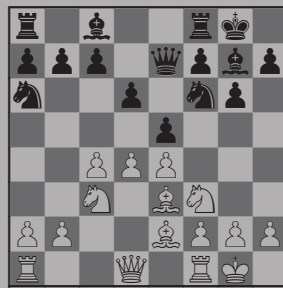
Mahammad Muradli	2560
Sam Shankland	2671

Sharjah Masters 2024

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♙g7 4.e4 d6 5.♙f3 0-0 6.♙e2 e5 7.0-0 ♘a6 This is one of the oldest ways for Black to avoid the main lines, yet still obtain a fighting game. For a long time, the consensus around this move was that it is slightly dubious but can give Black a playable position if the second player doesn't mind being slightly worse.
8.♙e1 This is one of the main lines against 7...♘a6.

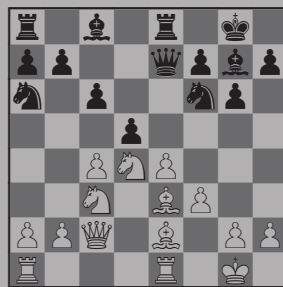
The other way is 8.♙e3, when 8...♗e7! is a new move that changes the way in which Black plays this line. I can only assume that this is what Shankland had in store. (The main move for Black is 8...♙g4, when after 9.♙g5 f6 10.♙h4±

the subsequent positions are considered slightly better for White.)



White has a bunch of options here.

- A)** After 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.♘d5 ♗d8 11.♙g5 c6 12.♘xf6+ ♙xf6, Black's pieces look better than their counterparts, and Black later won in H.Nakamura 2794 - D.Naroditsky 2619, Internet blitz 2024.
B) Or 9.d5 ♘g4 10.♙g5 f6 11.♙h4 g5 12.♙g3 f5, when Black gets an active position quite quickly. 13.exf5 ♙xf5 14.♙e1 ♘h6 15.♘d2 ♙g6 16.♘de4 ♙f5= was W.So 2753 - M.Carlsen 2839, Internet blitz 2023, which ended in a draw.
C) Upon 9.♙e1, one of Black's main ideas behind his queen move is 9...♘xe4!. Then, 10.♘xe4 exd4 11.♙xd4 ♗xe4 12.♗d2 ♘xd4 13.♘xd4 ♗h4 14.♙f3 c6= was V.Karthik 2528 - M.Chigaev 2628, Dubai 2023, which ended in a draw.
D) After 9.♗c2, Black quickly strikes in the center with 9...exd4 10.♘xd4 ♙e8 11.f3 c6 12.♙fe1 d5



Then followed 13.cxd5 ♘b4 14.♗b3 ♘bxd5= with an unclear position in J.Tin 2570 - M.Chigaev 2617, Singapore (blitz) 2023, which ended in a draw.

8...♙g4



9.♙e3 Now Black initiates a series of forcing moves.

Nepo has played 9.d5 multiple times and I think this is White's best chance for an advantage. 9...♘c5 10.♗c2 (10.♘g5! ♙xe2 11.♗xe2 a5 12.♙e3 b6± with nothing more than a nominal edge for White in I.Nepomniachtchi 2779 - M.Chigaev 2616, Internet rapid 2023, which White later won.) 10...a5 11.♙e3 b6 12.a3 a4 and Black's position was preferable in I.Nepomniachtchi 2771 - A.Firouzja 2777, Saint Louis (blitz) 2023, which Black eventually won.
9...exd4 10.♘xd4 ♙xe2 11.♗xe2 ♙e8 12.f3 c6 13.♙ad1 We are following in the footsteps of Nodirbek Yakubboev, who employed this line to secure an important draw as Black to contribute to Uzbekistan's winning run in the 2022 Olympiad.
13...♘d7



14.♙d2 The above-mentioned game went as follows: 14.♘c2 ♙xc3! 15.bxc3 ♗e7 16.♙d4 ♘e5 17.♙ed1 ♙ad8, when Black was doing quite well after 18.♙c1 ♘c7 19.♙d2 ♘e6= in S.Vidit 2714 - N.Yakubboev 2620, Chennai 2022, which ended in a draw.

14...♗e7 15.♗d1 ♙ad8 Black has managed to solve all his opening problems and from here on Shankland instructively outplayed his opponent.
16.♘de2 ♘e5 17.b3 ♘c5 18.♗c2



18...a6! 19.♙f2 b5! 20.cxb5 axb5 21.a4 bxa4 22.♘xa4 ♘a6 23.h3 d5 24.exd5 ♘b4 25.♗d1 ♘xd5 Black went on to win on move 59. ■



HISTORY OF CHESS NOTATION

The Great American Struggle to Switch to Algebraic

A question for our younger readers: do you know what is descriptive chess notation? Then a question for those of you who are a little less young: do you remember reading books and magazines which actually used descriptive chess notation? Although the appearance of the new – and shorter – algebraic chess notation seemed to be a natural and more practical successor, it took over 30 years and a huge debate on whether or not the old descriptive notation should be relegated to history!

■ By Pete Tamburro

It's

hard for the younger generation to understand the struggle that took place for over 30 years to get an American magazine into being exclusively an algebraic notation magazine. Watch these youngins pick up a descriptive book, look at it as though they picked up a Chinese or Russian manuscript and toss it down as though it contained the COVID virus.

I swear on all that's holy that I personally recall old-timers complaining how hard algebraic was to figure out. They were probably the same people who had a mental block in algebra class in high school. Back then, in the 1970s, I was teaching grade school kids of all abilities algebraic. In about 20 minutes they had it down pat. I wonder if the descriptive notation we used in most of the late 19th and most of the 20th century was greeted more warmly since notation before that was, well, lengthy. As Assiac said in *The Pleasures of Chess* (Wonderful book still in DN!), "They seem to have had no paper shortage in those days." He gives the notation by Philidor himself from 1805:

*"Mr. Leycester's Party
He received the King's Bishop's Pawn and the Move.*

1.

*White: King's pawn two squares.
Black: Queen's Bishop's Pawn two squares.*

2.

*W: The Queen at the adverse King's Rook's fourth square, giving check.
B: King's Knight's Pawn one square."*

In the 1840s, the generally recognized American champion, Henry Stanley, came out with the *American Chess Magazine*, which got another name, *The Chess Player's Magazine*. You can see from the illustration that this was a bit better. By the time Morphy was playing, it was recognizable to 20th century players. See image 1

In 1932, future USCF president and popular master George Koltanowski started *Chess World: International Chess Review* in October of 1932 – in English! It was a great magazine – instructive, entertaining and newsworthy. It had one flaw – it was in algebraic notation. It ceased publication with the July/August issue of 1933. At the U.S. Open in 1986, he signed my volume of those issues and said that despite the result he nevertheless had fond memories of the magazine. The British and American readers that supported algebraic notation were simply not enough.

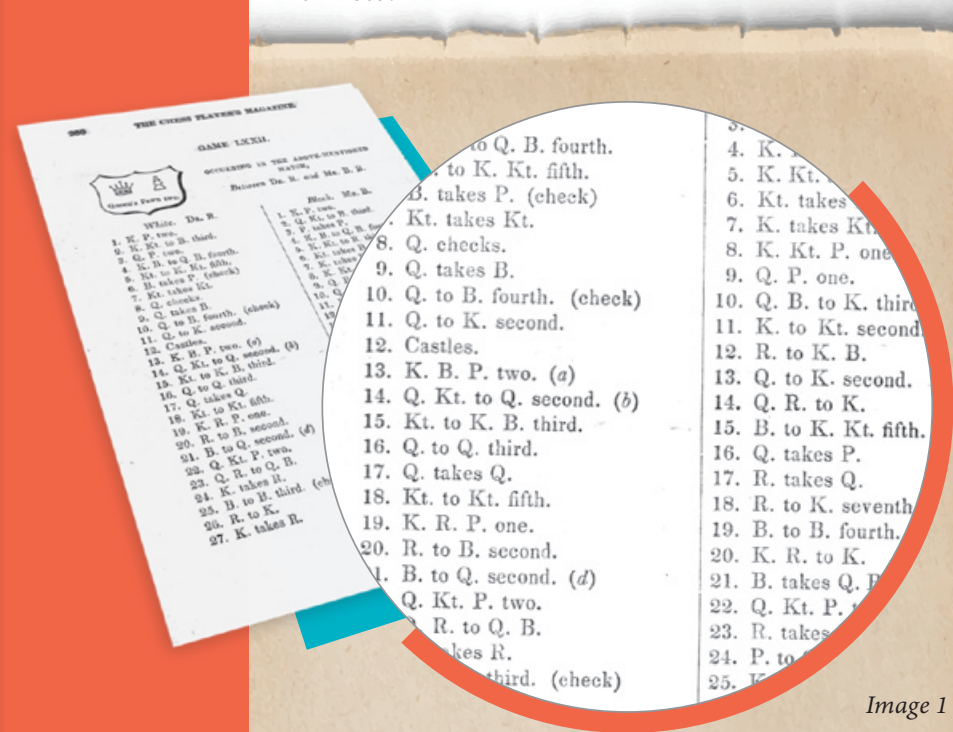


Image 1



Some 30+ years later, the AN-DN issue starts to bubble in the chess pot. It's best to go by year:

1965

Chess Informant comes out with its "pilot" issue – a games collection from recent tournaments, not annotated, but divided into openings. It is, of course, in algebraic. I call my copy *Chess Informant* 0. Apparently, that encouraged the publishers to make a historic move.

1966

Chess Informant comes out with *Chess Informant* 1. It creates a bit of a stir in the U.S. among stronger players who are hungry for the latest theoretical opening advances. That sentiment goes a long way to fostering calls for *Chess Life* to change over to algebraic.

1969

A big year in chess periodicals. *Chess Review*, which had put out its last issue in October of 1969, merged with *Chess Life* and becomes *Chess Life and Review* in November of 1969. Lots of old timers were *Chess Review* subscribers. In researching this, my more frequently foggy memory could not let go of the idea that before the historic USCF directive of 1972, Benko tried algebraic for a few of his puzzle columns. So, we paged through the 60s and were finally rewarded.

Under Burt Hochberg's editorship, the January 1969 issue of CL&R (page 19) spends 2/3 of a page explaining algebraic notation (AN) and couples it with Pal Benko's "Benko's Bafflers" column. Burt explained that it would be "restricted to Benko's Bafflers for several reasons: 1) many readers not familiar with the system would be confused if we used it in game scores 2) readers wishing to familiarize themselves with it now will have a 'painless' opportunity to do so; 3) problemists are used to it anyway." Benko's column holds out through November of 1969, skips two months, and then resumes in February of 1970. Then, in the fateful April 1970

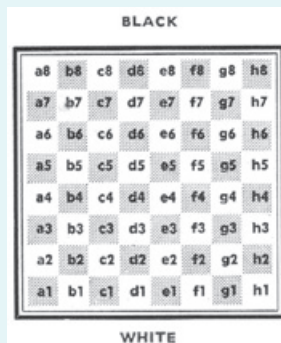
A note on algebraic notation

**from Chess Life, January 1969, used with permission*

This month we begin the use of algebraic notation in *Chess Life*. For the present, its use will be restricted to Benko's Bafflers for several reasons: 1) many readers not familiar with the system would be confused if we used it in game scores; 2) readers wishing to familiarize themselves with it now will have a "painless" opportunity to do so; 3) problemists are used to it anyway. We hope that by exposing readers to it who have not previously had the opportunity to try it, we will gain their support for the use of algebraic notation in other parts of the magazine.

Readers already familiar with algebraic notation will, of course, be familiar with the following explanation. However, we recommend that they read it anyway, since we will be using an abbreviated form of the notation system.

The diagram below indicates the name of every square in algebraic notation. Simply memorizing these names, however, is not all there is to it.



To record moves in algebraic, you write the initial of the moving piece (the same initials as used in descriptive notation), followed at

once by the name of the square to which it moves. No punctuation is used except to indicate captures (see below). Thus, the move "B-KN2" is written algebraically "Bg2." (Note that that initial of the piece is capitalized and the name of the square is not, to avoid confusion.) If either of two similar pieces (e.g. Knights) can move to the same square, the distinction is made as follows: "N4d6" or "N8d6." In all of these cases, as can be seen, the arrival square, d6, is the same; only the "address" of the moving piece need be distinguished.

Captures are indicated in much the same way, with the difference that the initial of the piece and its arrival square are separated by a colon (:). Thus, to return to the previous example, if White captures on d6, his move would be written: "N:d6." And of course, if either of two Knights could make the same capture, the capturing piece is distinguished: "N4:d6" or "N8:d6" or "Nf:d6" or "Nb:d6", etc.

Pawn moves are different: the initial is not used, but only the name of the square to which the pawn is moved. Thus, if White plays P-K4, the move is written algebraically as "e4." On the other hand, if Black plays P-K4, his move is written "e5" since the arrival square of the Black pawn is the e5 square.

Pawn captures are another matter. Here we show only the letters of the departure and arrival files, using rank numbers only to avoid ambiguity. Thus, after 1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4, Black's usual Pxp is written simply "cd," meaning that the

pawn on the "c" file captured something on the "d" file. Since only one piece or pawn occupies any given square, it is not necessary to indicate what is captured, only where. Note further that the colon is not used in pawn captures. The rank number, as we explained, is used only when necessary, as in the following example: suppose there are White pawns on f2 and f5, and that there are Black pawns (or pieces) on e3 and e6. The description "fe" does not impart enough information; it is necessary to write either "fe3" or "fe6."

Note: do not confuse upper-case "B" indicating Bishop, with lower-case "b" indicating the Queen Knight file.

The moves "0-0" and "0-0-0" remain unchanged, as do annotative symbols (!, ?, etc.). Check is indicated by a plus sign (+). The "e.p." designation is superfluous.

Here is a short game as a further example, given first in good old descriptive notation, and then in good old (older!) algebraic.

1.P-Q4, N-KB3; 2.P-QB4, P-KN3; 3.P-KN3, P-Q4; 4.B-N2, B-N2; 5.N-QB3 P-B3; 6.P-N3, 0-0; 7.B-N2, B-B4; 8.N-B3, Q-B1; 9.P-KR4, Pxp; 10.Pxp P-B4; 11.Q-N3?, N-B3; 12.P-Q5, NQR4; 13.Q-N5?, Q-B2; 14.N-R4, P-N3; 15.N-K5, N-K1!; 16.NxNP, PxN; 17.N-B6, N-Q3, White resigns.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 d5 4.Bg2 Bg7 5.Nc3 c6 6.b3 0-0 7.Bb2 Bf5 8.Nf3 Qc8 9.h4 dc 10.bc c5! 11.Qb3? Nc6 12.d5 Na5 13.Qb5? Qc7 14.Na4 b6 15.Ne5 Ne8! 16.N:b6 ab: 17.Nc6 Nd6 White resigns.

Note that the algebraic takes up about 15% less space than descriptive!

the U.S., many of whom were strong players, were not going to let that be the final word.

1972

At the U.S. Open in Atlantic City a majority of USCF directors voted to "educate" the U.S. chess membership on algebraic. It is reported in the August 1972 *Chess Life & Review*.

1972, December CL&R, p 762: An algebraic board is displayed along with an explanation. Unfortunately, it wasn't much of an education.

It was a little box! And that little box would appear frequently, but it was nowhere near the 2/3 of a page Hochberg had dedicated to it back in 1969.

1973

March CL&R, p148: Lots of letters to the editor! Go into the archives online. Oh, my! Follow the debates in the magazine to get the flavor of it all.

1973, April CL&R, p202: Another box with the board and some moves.

1973, May CL&R, On page 266, you will find even more letters to the editor. The debate heats up.

1973, May CL&R, On page 257, Larry Evans uses both DN and AN in his "What's the Best Move?" column.

1973, June CL&R, Dr. Anthony Saidy, in his report on "Tallinn 1973" (pp.303-306) gives three of his games (one partial, two complete) in AN – with accompanying instructional box.

1973, August CL&R, GM Paul Keres annotates his own game from Tallinn with algebraic notation (box provided).

See image 2

1973, October CL&R, GM Lubosh Kavalek, reporting on the IBM tournament, on pages 558-566, all in AN (box provided). In the same issue, Dr. Saidy reports on Netanya (pp. 568-570) in AN.

1973, November CL&R, GM Larry Evans' column, "Larry Evans on Chess" has a policy: if you write in your question in DN, you get an answer in DN; if you write in your question in AN, you get an answer in AN. Now, that WAS clever and instructional. Too bad more of that wasn't done.

1975

British Chess Magazine puts out its last index in DN for its bound volumes, even though there is a mix of DN and AN in their issues. BCM is in full algebraic long before the ex-colonists who, if you think about it, had originally rejected continental Europe's algebraic notation for the English notation.

1980s

Back to calling itself just *Chess Life* in 1980, the magazine is in transition – a mix, but DN is holding out bravely. GM Andy Soltis, in his *Chess to Enjoy* column will give die-hard DNers a haven in CL until 2002 by doing his column in DN. In 1980, the "Ask the Masters" column is in DN.

2002

CL is at long last in full algebraic mode. It only took 30 years! And I can assure you there were still people upset about it. Soltis' column was the last one in 2001 to use descriptive. I emailed Andy to ask him what brought about the change.

Andy Soltis:

"On AN: When I started the column I got two instructions from Burt Hochberg, 1. "Make it interesting" and 2. Do it in descriptive. When Burt left/got fired I asked each of his successors whether it was time to switch. They all said no. I made it clear it wasn't up to me, as a freelancer.

I never got a clear answer of why they stuck with descriptive for so long. I suspect it had to do with the ancient problem of long-term members and short-term members. The long termers were divided on notation. (I started using algebraic on my scoresheets in 1962. But there were others, like Bisguier and, of course, Fischer, who wouldn't change.)

The short termers were almost exclusively algebraic users. From the federation's viewpoint, the attitude might have been "Why annoy the most loyal members for the sake of short termers who won't be playing chess in two years?" Even when FIDE made algebraic official policy they wanted me to keep descriptive. (I don't know what the story was with Evans.)

In any event, an editor came along, Peter Kurzdorfer, who wanted me to change. I was happy to do so. I had switched my newspaper column well before that, back in the 1980s. Unlike Byrne and the Times, I didn't have to get this approved by a committee of editors. I just did it. No one at the Post seemed to notice the change."

That is our long, sad history of evolving into simplicity and sanity. I will admit to being happy that we didn't do the old international correspondence notation with moves like 1.52-54. Too arid for me.

However, it is worth noting that the intractable foes of algebraic who

Algebraic Notation

The horizontals (ranks) are numbered from 1 to 8, starting from the rank nearest White. The verticals (files) are lettered from a to h, starting at White's left (the QR file in algebraic is the a-file). The intersections of the horizontals and verticals give the individual squares their names. Study the diagram.

Captures are indicated either by "x" or "ch." and check is indicated by "+" instead of "ch." Pawn captures are given by naming only the two files involved. Study the sample game and use algebraic often—it's easier than you think.

Descriptive		Algebraic	
White	Black	White	Black
1 P-K4	P-K4	1 e4	e5
2 N-KB3	N-QB3	2 Nf3	Nc6
3 B-N5	P-QR3	3 Bb5	a6
4 BxN	QPxB	4 B:c6	dc
5 0-0	P-B3	5 0-0	f6
6 P-Q4	B-KN5	6 d4	Bg4
7 Pxp	QxQ	7 de	Q:d1
8 RxQ	PxP	8 R:d1	fe

etc. etc.

Image 2

complained it was too complicated have been replaced by intractable foes of descriptive. I try to tell them that DN is easy to learn as well (except for maybe Spanish descriptive – the adjectives come after the nouns), and you get to read some great books that haven't been converted to algebraic. The publisher, Hannon Russell, has converted to algebraic many descriptive classics, but there are still some gems out there in DN. I mentioned *The Pleasures of Chess*. There is also the great classic *Fireside Book of Chess*. Hours of enjoyment in both. There are more than a few old Horowitz books that are incredibly instructive.

Don't wait 30 years to try taking a look at them! ■