

Chess and Junior High

In my Junior High School, my history teacher Mr. Eissner and I squared-off over many a chess game before an epiphany struck us of starting a Chess Club -- hardly original as other schools had theirs. Recruitment began, we struck gold with an ace player, we competed amongst ourselves to settle rank, and then we set about testing our mettle against other Junior Highs.

Several months into competitions, we travelled to a school for such a meet, wherein I was squared against a player with a frame -- and frankly an attitude -- more suitable to the Wrestling Club, and I harbored serious doubts about whether this ape could even spell "Checkmate" much less bring one about. Turns out he could play.

How this competition is structured is that individual schools establish rank, and clubs compete accordingly: our #1 plays their #1, our #2 plays their #2, and so on, with one point per win, ties allowed. I mentioned our ace -- who usually won -- relegating me to the inconsistent #2 spot, often competing against #2's who often were only a smidgeon in ability behind their #1. And if our #1 fell, and if I was still playing -- and if I didn't know already -- I *then* knew I was in trouble.

So just this scenerio came to pass here: our #1 fell, but we held on for 4 - 4 tie, with all eyes upon our game. As I said, he could play and we *were* evenly matched, and both reluctant to simply exchange pieces in a shoot-out. Hence our game was the last done, and thus to be the deciding game of the Chess Meet.

And then I espied a possible quick kill...if only I could dislodge that one piece...but surely too obvious that way...unless. I didn't mention this yet, but at 13 years-old I was small for my age...and this cocky gorilla was built for this ploy. [Download the "Solution" PDF to display board as I kind of remember.] I exclaimed, "I see it! Check! *And* I get your Rook!" I shot my Queen forward two spaces, arrogantly announced Check.

I lifted my hand and dramatically despaired upon "suddenly realizing" I had inadvertently parked my Queen to the forward diagonal of his Pond, easy capture for "stupid move". All my teammates sickly groaned in concert, the opposition caustically smirked. For me, I didn't know how they were *visually* smirking, for I fell into my Academy Award role: "Ah, you gotta be effin' *kidding* me? Didn't even *see* that stupid Pond!" I exhaled loudly and emotionally, collapsed into the back of my chair, slumped, just *stared* at my knee-caps.

And then...I furtively raised an eyebrow and trained an eye on the board...and lusciously...so sumptuously... watched Godzilla smugly capture the Queen.

Pounce! His Pond cleared, I thrust my Rook the length of the board: Check! He *could* have blocked with the Bishop, and then Mate, but ooh no...he blocked with his Rook first. I don't so much as capture his Rook as dismissibly flick it off the board -- we are afterall on their turf; their equipment *should* be able to take it.

Now the Bishop, sent to block inevitable Rook mate, via their #2 having En Passanted his King behind wall -- and my Knight. Bang! Into the cheap seats! At this point, Mr. Eissner bade us execute a hasty withdrawal. We heartedly agreed and immediately implemented this wise chess strategy. [There *is* a lesson here, right?]