

COMPUTER CHESS

Black-box war

... A minor conflict between the country's two most popular computerized-chess-boxes has broken out. Seems that *Chess Challenger-10* played a game against *Boris* at its home-office for the announced intention of testing its new, updated, *Challenger-10* model against *Boris*. Fidelity Electronics, manufacturers of *Chess Challenger*, claims it played 7 games against *Boris* and beat *Boris* 7 times. It sent around a copy of only Game No. 5 in which *Boris* looked rather silly. According to a representative of the Chafitz Company, manufacturers of *Boris*, such a game was not possible because it could not be duplicated on another *Boris*. All *Boris*'s, claimed the representative, have precisely the same program which have (at date of letter) never been changed. The Chafitz head office had a further angry reaction after these initial remarks and submitted the letter below. When Fidelity Electronics saw the Chafitz reply, it responded with its own retort. Both letters are reprinted here. Regardless of what position readers may take after studying the exchange of letters, one fact remains undisputed: both *Chess Challenger* and *Boris* are doing more to popularize the game of chess than even nationally publicized chess matches by international grandmasters for purses in six figures. Both companies deserve to be awarded commendations from the chess world for promoting the game which is currently being played by more than 20 million Americans (estimation).

Letter from Steven R. Chafitz, Pres. Chafitz Co., 1055 First Street, Rockville, MD 20850:

Since the game of chess has always been looked upon with some "reverence", I felt it was important that I send this letter to you.

As you are well aware, there are a variety of personal chess computers available in today's marketplace. During the recent Consumer Electronics Show held this past June at McCormick Place in Chicago, manufacturers of

these computer chess games exhibited their product lines.

Unfortunately, one of these manufacturers began a propaganda attack on another. The material, which was released at the show, alleged that one chess computer easily defeated another. In evaluating the game supplied by Fidelity Electronics, which claims that their unit defeated BORIS, we at Chafitz, along with several other recognized chess experts, concluded that the game which they released at the show could not have occurred. Rather than spending much time to discuss this matter in detail, we elected to forward you our analysis of this game and invite you to perform your own "comparative testing".

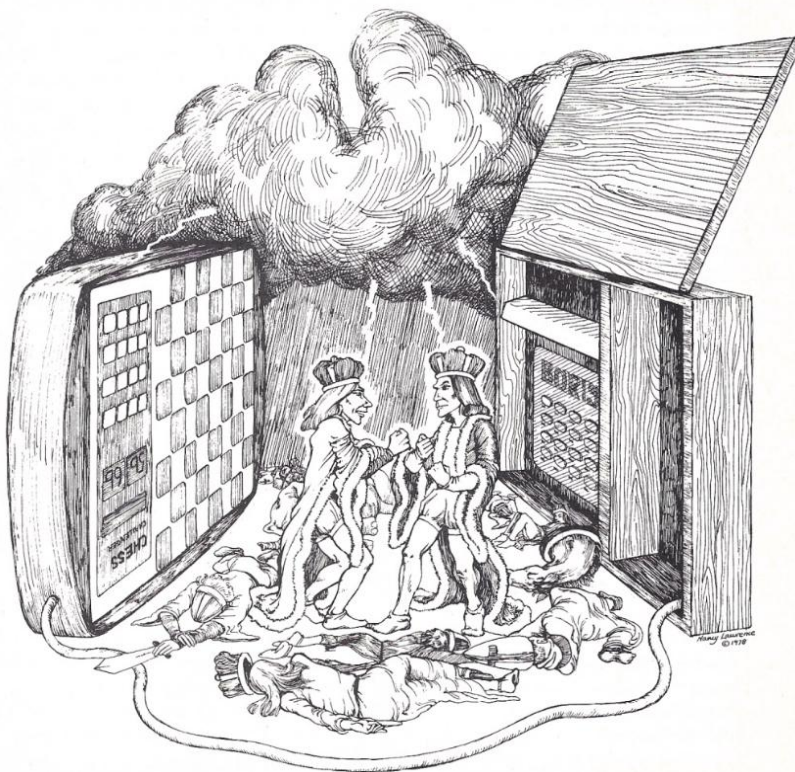
It is with reservation that we have decided to disseminate this information to the chess community; however, we feel it is important that the

facts be known. Our primary objective is to discourage further practices of this nature, which, in our opinion, would only degrade the high character of chess.

Below is the report which Fidelity claims is a re-cap of a game between BORIS and Chess Challenger "10".

THIS GAME WAS NEVER PLAYED! I invite you to prove for yourself that BORIS is incapable of playing this game.

The pivotal move is #8. If BORIS made the move, F8-B4, (see Fig.) which Fidelity claims, it leads to the eventual loss of BORIS' queen. But BORIS will not make this move with his timer set on 3 minutes. Set up the board position shown, on your own BORIS. Set his timer at 3 minutes and turn him loose. You'll note that BORIS considers F8-B4 but then decides on A5-D2 long before his 3



A minor conflict between Fidelity (Chess Challenger 10) & Chafitz (Boris)

Source: Personal Computing – November 1978

minutes are up. This move, of course, leads to a trading of queens. But on his next move, BORIS will capture the white bishop (F5-E4), thus putting BORIS ahead in both position and material.

At 3 minutes BORIS will always move A5-D2 because he sees it as clearly the best move. There are six other moves on this sheet which BORIS cannot make at 3 minutes. I don't claim that Fidelity never makes "dumb moves". He may, but he is incapable of making the particular move by which Fidelity claims he lost this game, at 3 minutes.

We at CHAFITZ do not feel that game strength is the only important feature in a chess computer. BORIS has so many advanced features that he would still be "king" even if a competitor comes up with a unit that could defeat BORIS. We also realize that other manufacturers may feel that the only way they can compete with

BORIS is to claim a stronger game. But we are truly saddened to think


that anyone would find it necessary to distribute false information.

White – CHESS CHALLENGER 10 Black – BORIS

Time set at 3 minutes per move.

1. e2-e4	e7-e5 *
2. g1-f3	d7-d5 *
3. d2-d4	f7-f6 *
4. f1-b5+	c7-c6
5. b5-d3	d5-e4
6. d3-e4	f6-f5
7. c1-g5	d8-a5
8. d1-d2	f8-b4 ***
9. c2-c3	f5-e4 *
10. c3-b4	a5-d5
11. b1-c3	e4-f3
12. c3-d5	f3-g2 *
13. h1-g1	h7-h6
14. d5-c7+	e8-d7
15. d4-e5+	Resign

Controversial moment in game between Boris and Chess Challenger-10. Position after White's 8th move of D1-D2.



Comments by Chafitz: "The mark (*) indicates moves that BORIS cannot make! and the mark (***) indicates a pivotal move that BORIS will never make!"

Response from Sidney Samole, Pres. Fidelity Electronics, Ltd. 5245 Di-versey Ave., Chicago, IL 60639;

In response to Mr. Chafitz's letter, Fidelity held a tournament between Boris and Chess Challenger "10" only after Boris advertised and displayed comments about Chess Challenger.

As you know, Boris is a computerized chess game which uses PROM's for its program and, therefore, can be reprogrammed with each unit. Chess Challenger "10" uses ROM's and, therefore, all purchasers receive the same quality chess game.

The Boris unit used in this tournament was purchased at retail from Horchow. We accept the fact that one Boris game may be different from another. However, the game we used did in fact lose seven games out of seven to Chess Challenger "10" and we invite you or any member of your staff at our expense to come to Chicago and examine the unit and replay the games.

Our company, which is a world-renowned manufacturer of sophisticated biomedical equipment supplied to the Veterans Administration and other institutions of this stature, has a long standing reputation that we would never jeopardize by releasing false or misleading information.



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