

## A l'aveugle Raymond Keene

Last week I discussed the art of playing chess without sight of the board and pieces. It is widely regarded that the greatest exponent of blindfold simultaneous chess was Alexander Alekhine. On 1 February 1925 in Paris, Alekhine played 28 boards simultaneously blindfold, scoring 22 wins, three losses and three draws. Although later players have surpassed Alekhine's total of opponents, Alekhine's display against players of national master strength still survives as the gold standard of opposition for such an exhibition.

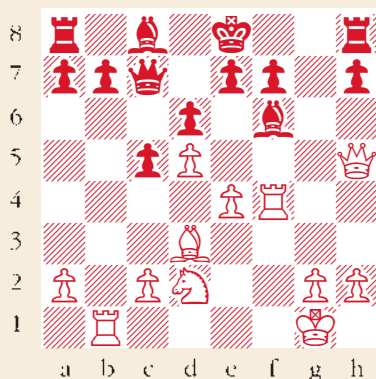
Harry Nelson Pillsbury, the American grandmaster (1872-1906), regularly played 12 games of chess and six games of draughts at the same time, without sight of the boards, whilst simultaneously playing one hand of sighted whist. Before one such display he also memorised 30 outlandish words, which he was able to recall perfectly, forwards and backwards, at the end.

The Polish grandmaster Miguel Najdorf, who remained in Argentina after the 1939 Buenos Aires Olympiad, was also an impressive exponent of blindfold simultaneous displays. He utilised the publicity surrounding such stunning events to alert surviving relatives in Europe that he remained alive. Here is an attractive blindfold miniature won by international master Byron Jacobs.

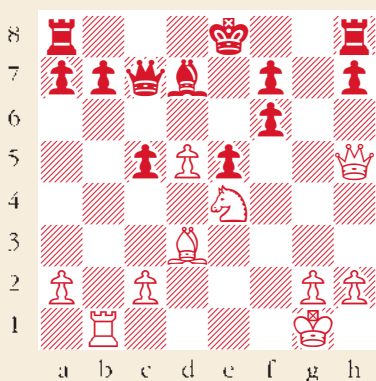
**Jacobs-Kluth: Brighton 1993; Trompovsky Attack**

**1 d4 Nf6 2 Bg5 c5 3 Bxf6 gxf6 4 d5 Qb6** The snatching of White's b-pawn with the queen in the early stages of the game whilst neglecting development has been the common theme of many rapid black losses. The further course of this game is a bijou demonstration of the energy White's dispositions gain when the b-pawn is jettisoned in this fashion. **5 Nd2 Qxb2 6 e4 Qb6 7 Bd3 Bg7 8 Qh5** A clear indication of aggressive intentions. **8 ... d6 9**

**Ngf3 Nd7 10 0-0 Ne5 11 Nxe5 fxe5 12 Rab1 Qc7 13 f4** Bringing up the reserves. **13 ... exf4 14 Rxf4 Bf6**

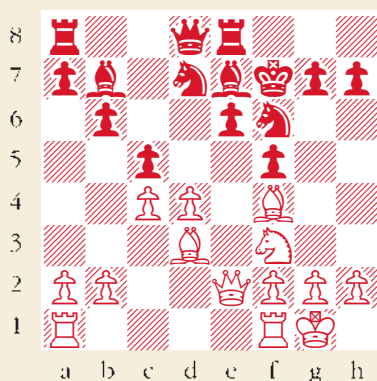


**15 e5** White continues with impressive energy. **15 ... dxe5 16 Rxf6 exf6 17 Ne4** The climax of the game has been reached and Black must now take his life in his hands with **17 ... Qe7**, even though it allows the thrust **18 d6**. Oblivious to the full range of tactical possibilities at the disposal of his unsighted opponent, Black commits tactical hari-kiri. **17 ... Bd7**



**18 Rxb7** Black resigns If **18 ... Qxb7 19 Nd6+** wins the queen or **18 ... Qd8 19 Bb5** is overwhelming.

### Puzzle No. 66



White to play. This position is from the game Alekhine-Feldt, Odessa 1916. Can you spot Alekhine's wonderful finish? Answers to me at The Spectator by Tuesday 21 April or via email to victoria@spectator.co.uk or by fax on 020 7961 0058. The winner will be the first correct answer out of a hat, and each week I shall be offering a prize of £20. Please allow six weeks for prize delivery.

**Last week's solution:** 1 Rxe7+  
**Last week's winner:** Robin Thompson, Sevenoaks, Kent