CORRESPONDENCE

PERSONAL CHESS ENDGAMES

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As a computer-database fan I was glad to see the 'advertisement' in the *ICCA Journal* (Vol. 14, No. 1, p. 22) about Ken Thompson's Chess Endgames Volume 1 CD-ROM. When the CD-ROM arrived I had several options. The most obvious ones are just putting it between all the other audio CD's because of its nice picture on the CD or just play it in an ordinary CD-player (the sound is horrible, I would have expected to hear a short explanation by Ken Thompson).

After inserting the CD-ROM in the appropriate hardware I was able to read the 'readme' file, which contains instructions about the program 'code.c' and the endgame examples.

The program 'code.c' is written in ANSI C and was, with some modifications in the I/O routines, easily transferred to an IBM mainframe. It took some more time to transfer the code to a PS/2 running the OS/2 1.3 operating system. Especially the function calls which required 16 bits integers gave some headaches and also some casting had to be added to the program to avoid truncation of a variable.

As I do not have a CD-ROM at home, some databases were moved to a 200 MB WORM (write once-read many) device which is attached to my PS/2 model 70 386. This WORM can not contain all databases (the total CD-ROM is more than 500 MB), but some WORM-disks can be used. The biggest database on the CD-ROM is less than 50 MB.

After installing the databases the *ICCA Journal* becomes an abstract and it is great fun to play the examples and find alternative solutions. I played the KQKRB endgame (Vol. 14, No. 2, p. 68) and found some alternative solutions, which may be worth explaining. As I am only a poor chess player someone may help me with the explanation.

WQc5 WKe2 BBb3 BRg4 BKh3 gave some equivalent moves (between parentheses): **1. Qa3 Kh2 (Re4+) 2. Qd6+ Kg2 3. Qc6+ Kh2 4. Qc7+ Kh1 5. Qd7 Rg3 6. Kf2 Rg2+ 7. Kf3 Rg8 8. Qd3 Kh2 9. Kf4 Rf8+ 10. Ke5 Bg8 (Re8+, Rb8) 11. Qg6 Rb8 12. Kd4 Rb4+ (Rd8+) 13. Kc5 Rc4+ 14. Kb6 Rc8 15. Kb7 Rd8.** Now the article gives the move 15. ... Rf8 as equivalent, but it will lose one move earlier, so it is not an alternative. **16. Qh5 Kg3 17. Qg5+** and wins.

The second Stiller position consists of 23 forced moves by White and Black. At move 24. Qe2+ and Qh5+ are given. The move Qc4 has to be added to this list. The alternative 34. ... Ba1 should also be mentioned.

As the computer endgames become available for the personal market, what will be the end? Some speculation may be the addition of a CD-ROM player to the commercially available chess programs, so it will play most of the 5-piece endgames in an optimal way. And how about losing a 5-piece endgame in a computer-chess tournament, because only the opponent had the database connected to the program? The only mandatory use I see for now is supplying the database to all computer chess-tournament directors, so the adjudication can follow the present state of the art.

A MISSING RULE

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The Hungarian Chess Federation organized from March 7 to March 15, 1991 the 7th Spring Festival Tournament in Budapest. There were 276 participants playing 9 rounds according to the Swiss system. The results have