



THE PUZZLING SIDE OF CHESS

Jeff Coakley

PROOF GAMES: QUEENSIDE FIANCHETTI

number 52

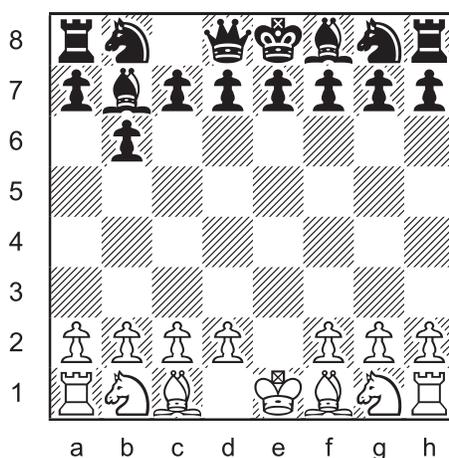
November 16, 2013

The task in a *proof game* is to show how a given position can be reached in a legal game.

The puzzles in this column have a *move stipulation*. The position must be reached in a precise number of moves, no more and no less. They are proof games in 4.0 which means four moves by each side.

There is a definite lack of strategy in these games. But the moves are legal.

Proof Game 28

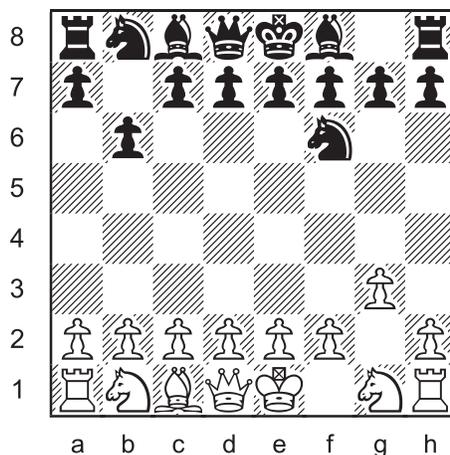


The diagrammed position, with White to play, was reached in a game after each player made exactly four moves. Can you figure out how?

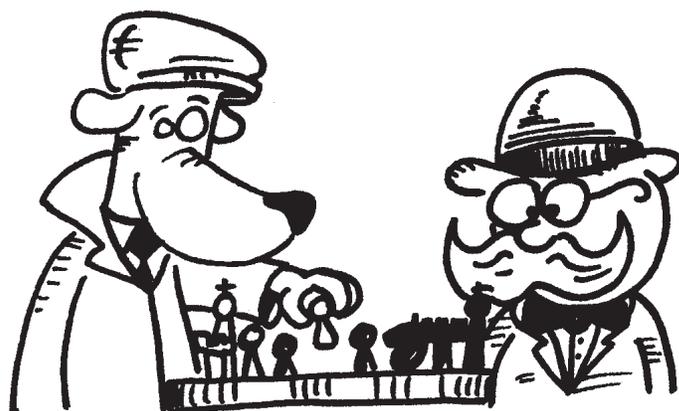
For problems 1-27 and more information on proof games, see columns 3, 8, 14, 22, 29, 37, 38, 46 in the archives.

All the proof games in this column include the black move ...b6, a prelude to a queenside *fianchetto*.

Proof Game 29



This position was reached after Black's fourth turn. What were the moves?



The Puzzling Side of Fianchettoes part A

As most chess players know, the word 'fianchetto' is of Italian origin and means *little flank*. It is the diminutive form of 'fianco', their word for *flank*.

After centuries of use, 'fianchetto' is now an established word in the English language. But there are curious differences in the way we form its plural.

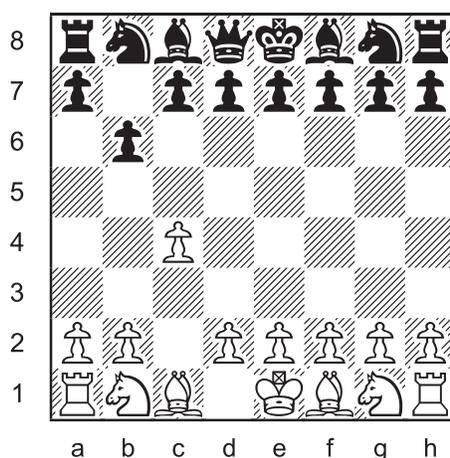
The Italian plural is 'fianchetti' and several online dictionaries give this as the English form as well. However, except for the title of this column, I have never seen 'fianchetti' used in an English text.

Some dictionaries, including *Collins*, give two plural forms, either ‘fianchetos’ or ‘fianchetti’. But *Oxford* only gives one form: ‘fianchetoes’.

There is no general rule for forming the plural of English words ending in ‘-o’. But in most cases, there is agreement on the correct forms. Common examples are ‘potatoes’, ‘photos’, ‘heroes’, and ‘solos’. The plural of ‘tempo’, another word of Italian origin, is either ‘tempi’ or ‘tempos’.

As a noun, ‘fianchetto’ is usually used in its singular form, so our preferences on how to pluralize go unnoticed.

Proof Game 30



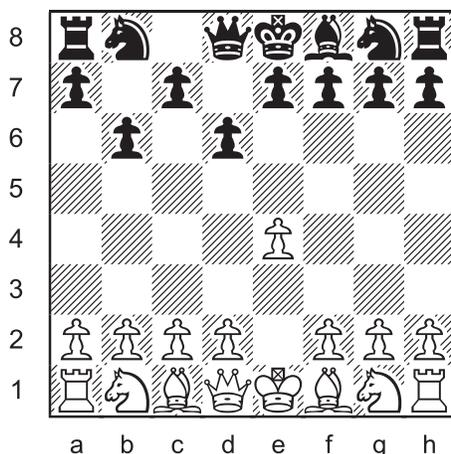
This position was reached after Black’s fourth turn. What were the moves?

Puzzling Side of Fianchettoes part B

‘Fianchetto’ is often used as a verb in English. Everyone agrees on how to spell the past tense and the present participle: ‘fianchettoed’ and ‘fianchettoing’. But there are differences for the third person singular of the present tense. According to *Oxford*, it is ‘fianchettoes’. Most other dictionaries give ‘fianchetos’. Surprisingly, *Collins* has ‘fianchettoes’ as the verb form, despite giving ‘fianchetos’ as the plural noun.

The following proof game is a version of a problem by Danish composer Henrik Juel.

Proof Game 31



This position was reached after Black's fourth turn. What were the moves?

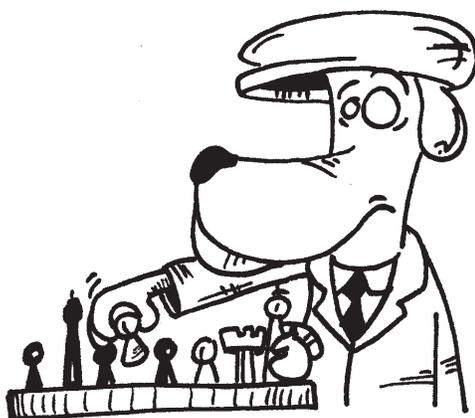
Puzzling Side of Fianchettoes part C

Since our topic is the word 'fianchetto', we might as well talk about how to pronounce it. Do you say "fian**CH**etto" or "fian**K**etto"?

Most dictionaries give both pronunciations. *Oxford* and *Collins* list the "CH" version first. *Merriam-Webster* gives "K" precedence, perhaps because that is the way Italians pronounce it.

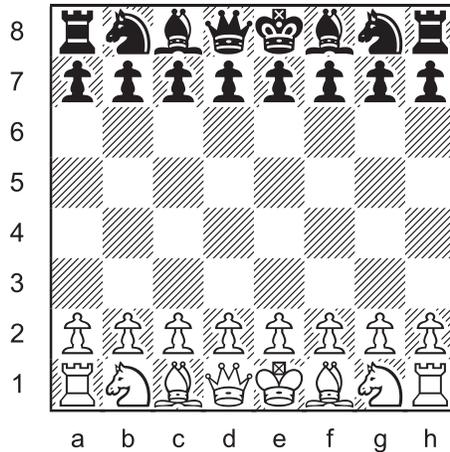
Numerous chess books admonish us against "fian**CH**etto". But my own experience in clubs and tournaments across North America is that nobody says "fian**K**etto".

Are there any *fianchettoists* out there?



Each column on proof games concludes with a *synthetic game*. Instead of finding the move sequence that leads to a given position, the task is to compose a game that ends with a particular move.

Synthetic Game 06



Compose a game that ends with the move **4...f5#**.

For synthetic games 1-5, see columns 14, 22, 29, 38, 46.

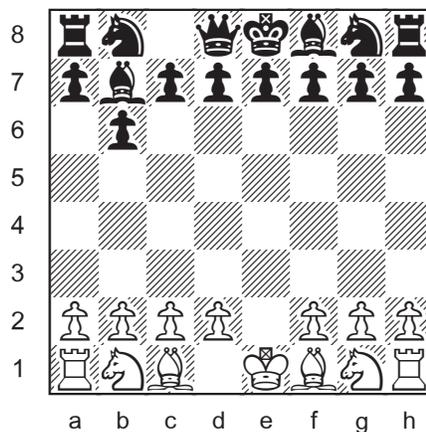
SOLUTIONS

In case you're wondering, the last syllable in "fianchetti" sounds like "tea", and not "tie".

Proof games 28, 29, 30 by J. Coakley. 28, 29: *ChessCafe.com* (2013). 30: *Winning Chess Puzzles For Kids Volume 2* (2010).

PDF hyperlinks. You can advance to the solution of any puzzle by clicking on the underlined title above the diagram. To return to the puzzle, click on the title above the solution diagram.

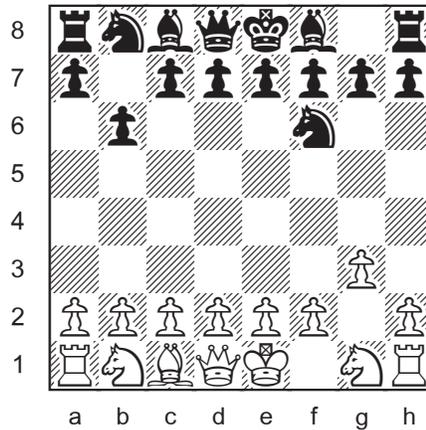
Proof Game 28



1.e4 b6 2.Qe2 Bb7 3.Qa6 Bxe4 4.Qb7 Bxb7

A switchback capture by the happily fianchettoed bishop.

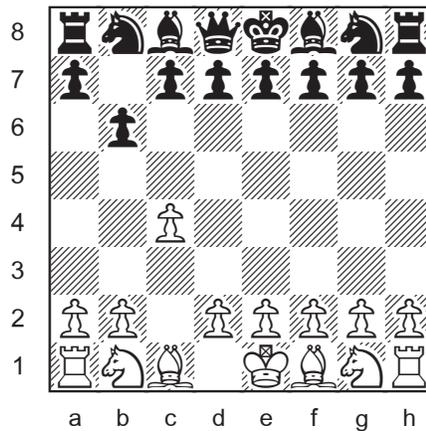
Proof Game 29



1.g3 b6 2.Bg2 Ba6 3.Bb7 Nf6 4.Bc8 Bxc8

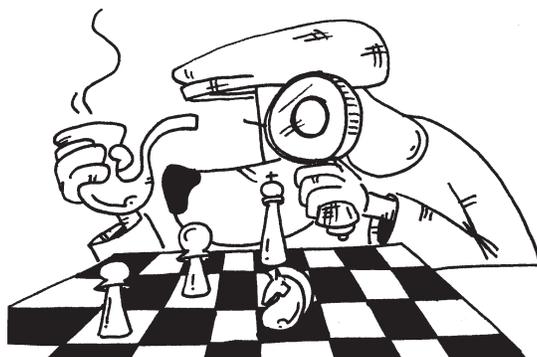
Tricky play by the black bishop. First he “overfianchettoes” to clear c8 and then he *switches back* with *Orbán effect* (capturing on his original square). See column 3.

Proof Game 30



1.c3 b6 2.Qa4 Bb7 3.Qa6 Bxa6 4.c4 Bc8

Tempo moves by both sides (c3-c4 and Bb7xa6-c8). Looks like the *English Defence* (1.c4 b6) with queen odds.



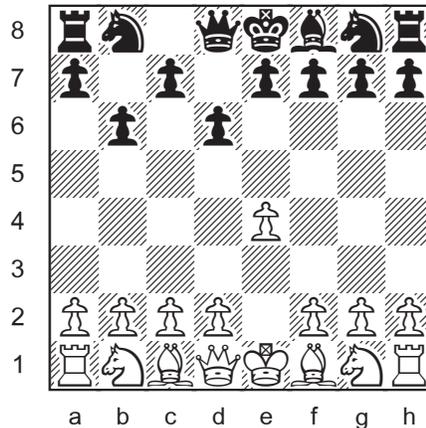
Proof Game 31

Henrik Juel 1996

Thema Danicum

version J. Coakley 2006

Winning Chess Puzzles For Kids



1.e3 d6 2.Qh5 Bg4 3.e4 Bd1 4.Qxd1 b6

A *tempo* move from the white e-pawn and another great example of the *Orbán effect* by the white queen.

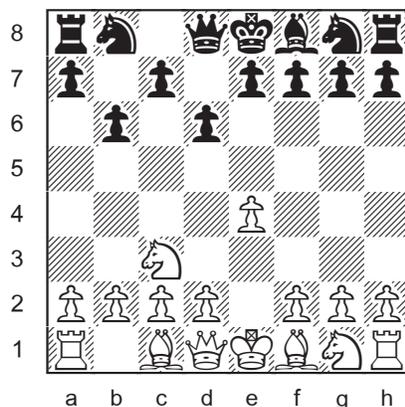
The position can be reached in 3.5 moves by various move orders. For example, 1.e4 b6 2.Bc4 Ba6 3.Bxa6 d6 4.Bf1 or 1.e4 d6 2.Qf3 Bg4 3.Qxg4 b6 4.Qd1. The challenge in many proof games is to find an extra tempo.

The original composition by Henrik Juel was a proof game in 3.5, without Black's last move. Besides converting the problem into my favourite 4.0 length, the addition of 4...b6 also adds several light square distractions.

The same position with a white knight on c3 has a similar solution.

Proof Game 31b (4.0 moves)

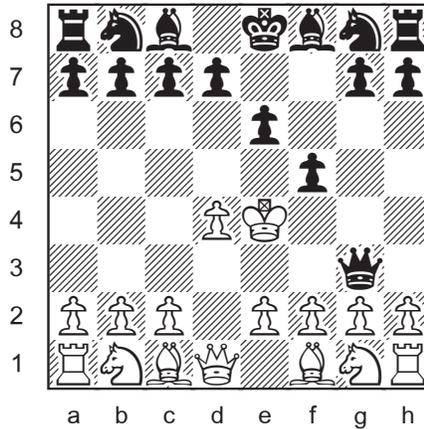
J. Coakley 2013 (version of Henrik Juel 1996)



31b: 1.e4 d6 2.Qh5 Bg4 3.Nc3 Bd1 4.Qxd1 b6



Synthetic Game 06



1.d4 e6 2.Kd2 Qg5+ 3.Kd3 Qg3+ 4.Ke4 **f5#**

Hermann Stamm-Wilbrandt of Germany established in 2004 that there are five solutions to this problem. Here are two other lines which reach the same position.

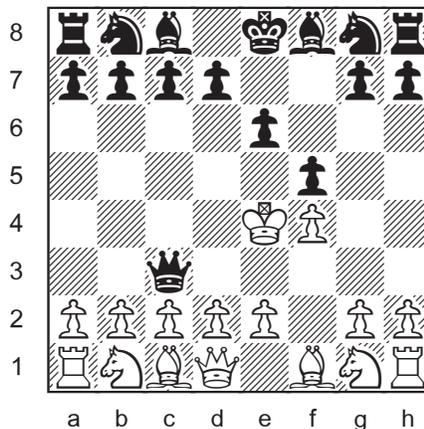
1.d4 e6 2.Kd2 Qh4 3.Kd3 Qg3+ 4.Ke4 **f5#**

1.d4 e6 2.Kd2 Qh4 3.Ke3 Qg3+ 4.Ke4 **f5#**

White can also play the *Bird Opening*, with two variations leading to the diagram below.

1.f4 e6 2.Kf2 Qf6 3.Kf3 Qc3 4.Ke4 **f5#**

1.f4 e6 2.Kf2 Qf6 3.Ke3 Qc3 4.Ke4 **f5#**



The Puzzling Side of Pasta

The Italian language has many words with the diminutive suffix '-etto'. The chess term 'fianchetto' is not the only one that has made its way into English. There is also 'spaghetti'!?

The Italian word for *cord* is 'spago'. A small cord or *string* is a 'spaghetto', with the plural form 'spaghetti'.

So you can add this fact to your list of culinary trivia. A single strand of spaghetti is called a spaghetto.

Until next time!

© Jeff Coakley 2013. Illustrations by Antoine Duff. All rights reserved.