



# THE PUZZLING SIDE OF CHESS

Jeff Coakley

## Smorgasbord VII: THE IDES OF MARCH

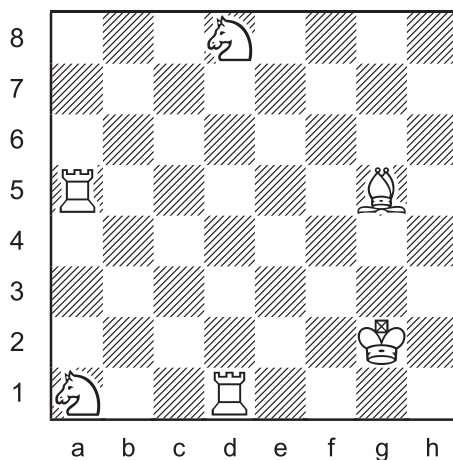
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March 13, 2015

Our mid-March smorgasbord features the usual assortment of chess puzzles. The special side dish this week is a collection of quotes that begin with the word *I'd*.



### Triple Loyd 42



Place the black king on the board so that:

- Black is in checkmate.
- Black is in stalemate.
- White has a mate in 1.

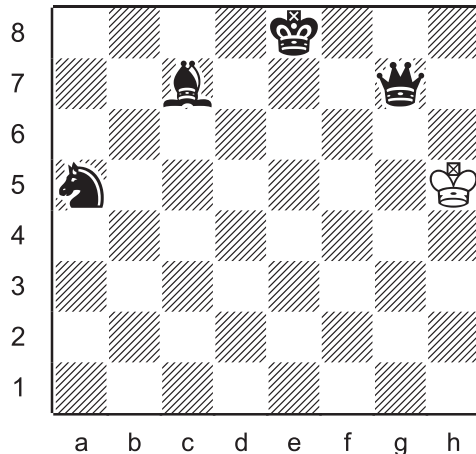
The contraction *I'd* is short for either 'I would' or 'I had'. Its most quotable usage is the former, normally followed by the word 'rather', as in these lyrics by Paul Simon from the song *El Condor Pasa*.

*I'd rather be a sparrow than a snail.*

*I'd rather be a hammer than a nail.*

Hard to disagree with those sentiments. Would you?

### Inverted Loyd 15



Add a white rook, bishop, and knight so that White has mate in one.

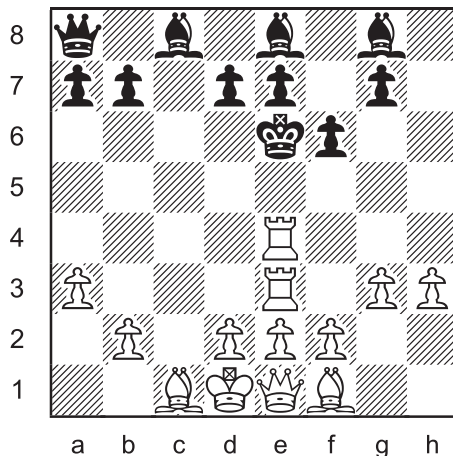
The next quote, by Hall of Fame baseball pitcher Lefty Gomez, is easily applied to any human endeavour, including chess.

*I'd rather be lucky than good.*

Vernon Louis Gomez (1908-1989) played for the New York Yankees from 1930 to 1942. "Lefty" was not his only nickname. He was also known as "El Gofo" and "Goofy Gomez". For being funny, not for dropping the ball.



## Who's the Goof? 29



Why is this position illegal?

Continuing with the baseball theme, the legendary Babe Ruth had this to say before the grand opening of Yankee Stadium on April 18, 1923.

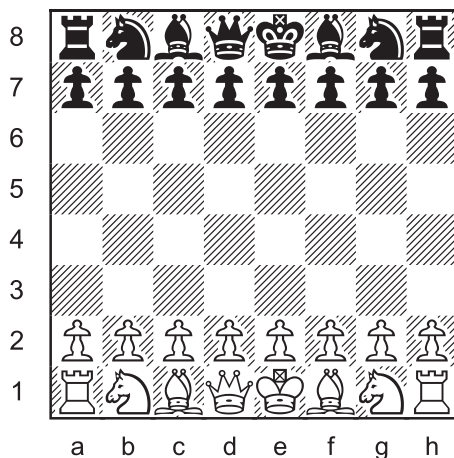
*I'd give a year of my life if I could hit a home run on opening day of this great new park.*



The New York Yankees, led by Babe Ruth (left), march onto the field for the first game in their new stadium. They won 4-1 over the Boston Red Sox, thanks to a three-run homer by the "Sultan of Swat", George Herman Ruth, Jr. (1895-1948).

The 2015 baseball season starts in a couple weeks. Can any sports expert answer this riddle: What do baseball and chess have in common?

### Synthetic Game 13



Compose a game that ends with the move **6.Rh1#**.

American grandmaster Reuben Fine (1914-1993) was from the Bronx, the northern borough of New York City where Yankee Stadium is located. Perhaps he was a fan of the “Bronx Bombers”, as the team is often called.



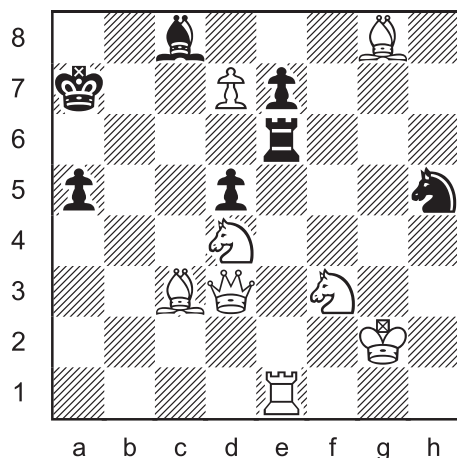
Reuben Fine

Fine was one of the world's elite chess players from 1935 to 1950 and had a positive score against world champions Alexander Alekhine and Mikhail Botvinnik. A recognized authority on endgames, he once said:

*I'd rather have a pawn than a finger.*

Probably not a wise exchange, but obviously he valued the advantage of an extra pawn!

### Chess Maze 12



#### Pawn Maze

Which kind of promoted piece gets through the maze fastest?

Rook, bishop, or knight?

Only the white pawn moves. When it reaches the last rank, it may become a rook, bishop, or knight. But not a queen. After the promotion, only the promoted piece moves. Find the shortest path to capture the black king, without taking any pieces or moving to a square attacked by a black piece. It is possible to go through the maze with a rook, bishop, or knight. Figure out which piece has the shortest path, and which the longest.

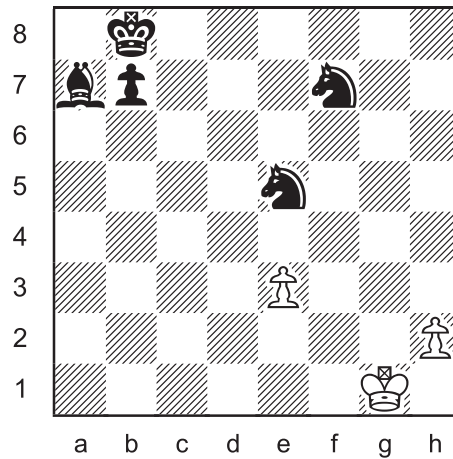
This puzzle is a *Toronto style* chess maze. Captures are not allowed. For more details, see column 69.

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On a serious note, here's a thoughtful quote by Kurt Cobain (1967-1994), lead singer and guitarist of Nirvana.

*I'd rather be hated for who I am, than loved for who I am not.*

## Multi-Wham 21



series-mate in 15

White plays fifteen moves  
in a row to mate Black.

*Only the last move may give check. Captures  
are allowed. White may not place their own king  
in check. Black does not get a turn.*

Have you seen this bumper sticker from zazzle.com?



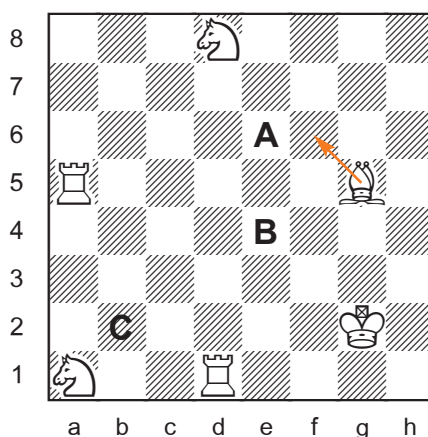
## SOLUTIONS

All problems by J. Coakley. The maze is from *Winning Chess Puzzles For Kids Volume 2* (2010). The others are *ChessCafe.com* originals (2015).

**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.

**Archives.** Other columns with similar problems can be found in the Puzzling Side archives.

### Triple Loyd 42



- A. Ke6#
- B. Ke4=
- C. Kb2 (Bf6#)

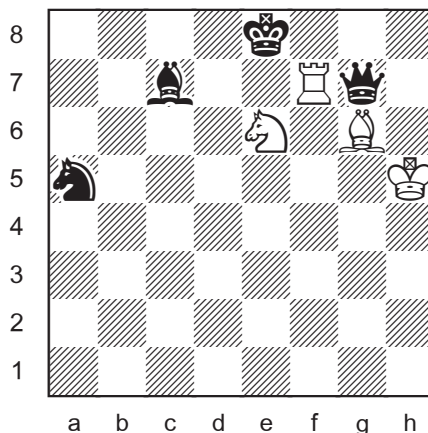
### The Ides of March

The term 'ides of March' comes from the Latin *idus Martiae*. 'Idus' is a noun that means the day of the full moon. The adjective 'Martiae' refers to the month March, named for Mars, the god of war.

In the Roman calendar, the Ides of March fell on the 15th of the month. In older versions of their calendar, March was the first month of the year and holiday celebrations in honour of Mars were held from the 1st until the Ides.

Significant historical events on March 15 include the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BC by a group of Roman senators and the return of Christopher Columbus to Spain in 1493 after his first voyage to the New World.

## Inverted Loyd 15

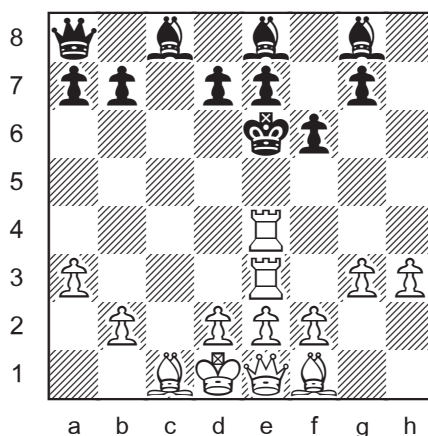


Rf7 Bg6 Ne6 were added.

1.Rxg7#

The Ides of March is also the name of a rock band from Chicago. Their funky pop song *Vehicle* climbed near the top of the charts in 1970.

## Who's the Goof? 29



The position is illegal because there are not enough missing black pieces to explain the number of captures made by the white pieces.

### *Analysis*

- An initial survey of the position shows that White is missing three pieces (NNp).
- Based on the unmoved bishop at c1 and pawns at a3, b2, d2, we know that the original white rook from that corner was captured on a1, a2, or b1. Which means one of the white rooks is a promoted c-pawn and the three missing white pieces are actually RNN.



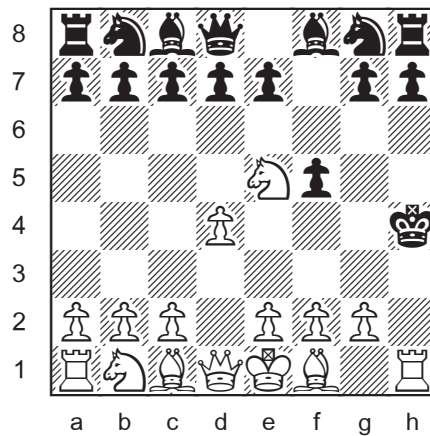
- c) Black has eleven pieces on the board, but three of them are light-square bishops. Two of the bishops are promoted pawns. So the five missing black pieces are RRBNN.
- d) Because of the unmoved bishop at c8 and the unmoved pawns at a7, b7, d7, e7, g7, we can deduce that one black rook was captured on a8 or b8 and that the dark-square bishop was captured on f8. That leaves **three** black pieces (RNN) available for capture elsewhere.
- e) The white c-pawn required **one** capture to promote to a rook on d8. The black c-pawn got out of its way by capturing a white knight on the b- or d-file. The black pawn later captured the other white knight on the c-file (or on a2) before taking a white rook on b1 and promoting to bishop. That sequence accounts for the capture of all missing white pieces.
- f) The promotion of the black h-pawn and the escape by a white rook from behind the “wall of pawns” can be explained with **two** captures by white pawns on g3 and h3. First White played hxg3. Then the rook from h1 exited the 1st rank. Next the black h-pawn advanced and promoted on h1. Afterwards White played gxh3, which allowed the black bishop to leave h1.

So everything seems to be in order. White needed to make three captures with pawns (d8, g3, h3) and Black has three missing pieces available for capture. But there is one other feature in this weird position that also required a capture.

- g) Black is in check, so the last move had to be by the white rook on e4. But if it moved there without capturing, then the black king would already have been in check by the other rook at e3. And of course, as I’ve written a monotonous umpteen times, *it cannot be White’s turn if Black is in check*.
- h) Since no missing black pieces are available for capture on e4, the position is illegal.

It is not possible to pinpoint an exact goof which makes the position illegal. The most accurate way to describe the “violation” is that the number of captures required by White is greater than the number of pieces that Black is missing.

## Synthetic Game 13

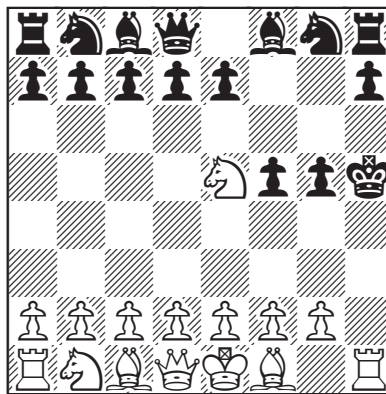


1.Nf3 f5 2.Rg1 Kf7 3.h4 Kg6 4.Ne5+ Kh5 5.d4 Kxh4 6.Rh1#

The game is not unique. White's moves can be played in almost any order, and d4 can be replaced by d3. Black can play 1...f6 instead of 1...f5.

The mate can also be arranged with the black king on h5.

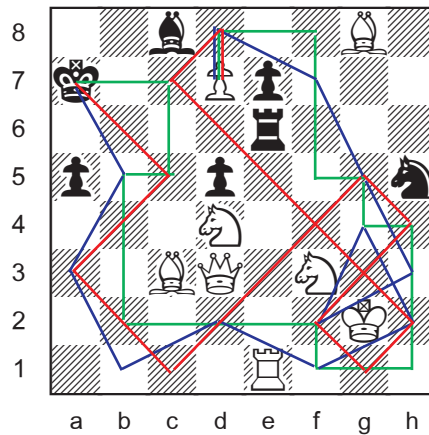
1.Nf3 f5 2.Rg1 Kf7 3.h4 Kg6 4.h5+ Kxh5 5.Ne5 g5 6.Rh1#



Hopefully, Babe Ruth's wish for a home run on opening day of the 1923 season did not cost him a year of his life. It certainly added to his legend. A newspaper report on the team's victory that day referred to the new stadium as "The House That Ruth Built", a name that stuck. And it must have brought them good luck. The Yankees went on to win their first World Series that year.

The answer to the riddle is **sacrifices**. Baseball has sacrifice flies and sacrifice bunts. Chess has glorious queen sacrifices.

## Chess Maze 16



The bishop is the fastest. Eleven moves.  
 $d7-d8=B-c7-h2-g1-f2-h4-g5-c1-a3-c5xa7$



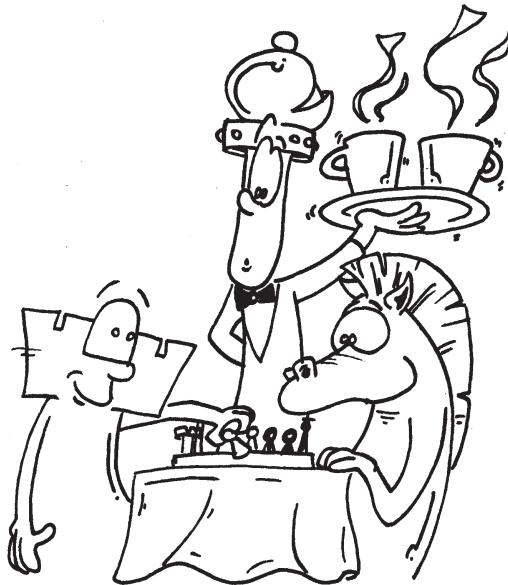
The rook is slowest. Fourteen moves.  
 $d7-d8=R-f8-f5-g5-g4-h4-h1-f1-f2-b2-b5-c5-c7xa7$



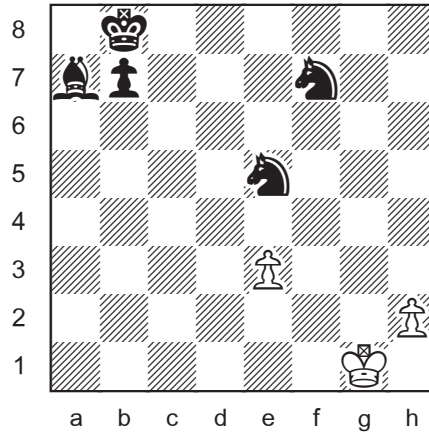
The knight is middle of the road. Thirteen moves.  
 $d7-d8=N-f7-g5-h3-f2-g4-h2-f1-d2-b1-a3-b5xa7$

Promoting to a queen would take just three moves.  
 $d7-d8=Q-c7xa7$

NYC trivia. The Bronx gets its name from the river that runs through it. Originally called Bronck's River after the colonist Jonas Bronck (~1600-1643), the spelling eventually changed from -cks to -x.



## Multi-Wham 21 (series-mate in 15)

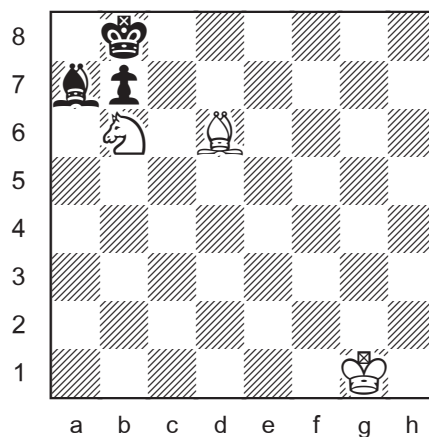


- 1.h4
- 2.h5
- 3.h6
- 4.h7
- 5.h8=N!

Obstructing the 8th rank with the king in order to queen the pawn takes one move too long. 5.Kg2 6.Kg3 7.Kf4 8.Kf5 9.Kf6 10.Ke7 11.Ke8 12.h8=Q 13.Qg7 14.Qxf7 15.Qe7 16.Qd8#

- 6.Ng6!
- 7.Nxe5
- 8.Nc4
- 9.Nb6
- 10.e4
- 11.e5
- 12.e6
- 13.exf7
- 14.f8=B
- 15.Bd6#

The knight on f7 must not be captured yet.  
 Unpinning the e-pawn and attacking a8 and c8.  
 Necessary to become a dark-square bishop.



William Claude Dukenfield (1880-1946), the world class juggler and comedian, was a man of many quotes. His stage name was W. C. Fields. He grew up on the streets of Philadelphia, and died a star on Hollywood Boulevard. The epitaph he jokingly suggested for himself is given below.



W. C. Fields

*All things considered, I'd rather be in Philadelphia.*

Until next time!

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