

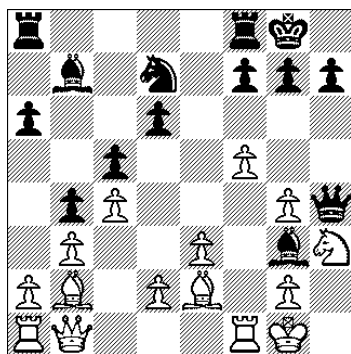
## A SENSE OF ADVENTURE

By Bob Basalla

For chess to really be fun it must not turn into just some dry mathematical exercise where you have rote responses to each on the board situation. What would be the fun in that? Tic-tac-toe would do you just as well. (You've all learned the few rules you need to never lose a Tic-tac-toe game, right?) True, sometimes there is one and only one good way to play a position, but many times there are a number of playable paths that a game may take. And the more creative the player, the more ways he/she can discover to carry on. The creative possibilities in chess are what make practitioners of the Royal Game akin to artists, where the best players can often exhibit distinctive, yet sound, styles. It is also what makes chess fun.

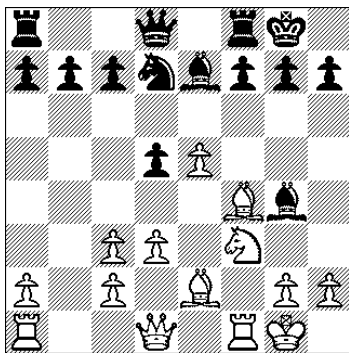
Now, while I am not a good enough player to be said to have a "distinctive, yet sound, style" of my own, I do try to be creative in my chess adventures. It should be mentioned that playing creatively often means taking risks. Here are some examples of original play.

The first position is from the 1991 Ohio Chess Congress. Both my master opponent and I tried hard to blaze new trails in the opening and on into this middlegame.



Despite being a sacrificed pawn down, my opponent (Black) has a good position and seems about ready to flood more of his pieces toward my somewhat open kingside. It is my move, though, so I decide my best chance is to continue my enterprising play.

So I went **22.f6** offering the extra pawn back to break open the Black king's fortress. Note also I have opened the b1-h7 line, and especially the f5 square, a point my opponent did not fully appreciate when he responded with **22...gxf6**. His idea was to keep all of his attacking pieces on the board. However, **22...Nxf6** was perfectly acceptable. And if he still desired not to subject his men to capture he could just play **22...g6**. Amazingly, the move he did play appears to lose the game by force! Do you see how? First I go **23.Rf5** which threatens **24.Rh5** trapping the queen! (I saw this possibility when I essayed **22.f6**, of course.) And if he gives himself an escape square by **23...Be5** then **24.Rh5** still wins as after **24...Qg3** threatening mate on g2, I get to checkmate him first with **25.Qxh7#**! Seeing this he tried **23...Qh6** but after **24.Rh5 Qg6 25.Bd3 Qxg4** (Note that Black has a real threat in **26...Bh2+** so my moves must also prevent him from getting to my king ahead of my snaring his.) **26.Bxh7+ Kg7 27.Rg5+** I had won his queen because of the long range pin on the f-pawn by my bishop on b2. If instead of **26...Kg7** he had tried **26...Kh8** I still have **27.Rg5** defending his threats and creating dangerous ones of my own. My opponent played a few more moves before just giving up. Now, if the beginning of the game had been a little sounder I would have a nice little combo gem to brag about. As it is, it is more like a pretty swindle though I prefer to think of it as a fortunate adventure.

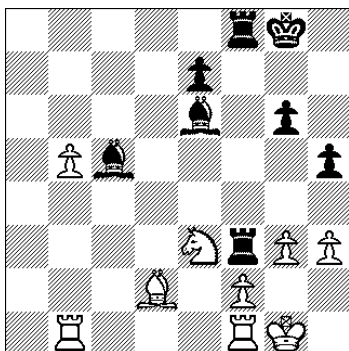


This game is from the 1990 Ohio Chess Congress.

Black, looking to equalize the game right away played the careless **10...f6** which White refuted outright with **11.Nd4 Bxe2 12.Qxe2** and the threat of a fork on e6 causes Black no end of troubles as White gets a dangerous initiative leading to a strong attack. **12...Nc5 13.e6** This pawn is like a bone in the throat, very uncomfortable and difficult to dislodge. **13...Bd6** Since this does not work and considering in hindsight what will happen in this game, maybe a move such as **13...g6** would be a better defense. **14.Rae1** and Black does not even get to whittle down the pieces with **14...Bxf4** as **15.e7** is deadly. **14...Re8 15.Qg4 Bxf4 16.Rxf4** White's pieces keep taking up better and better posts. **16...Kh8 17.Nf5 Rg8 18.Qg6** Excellent play, keeping Black from getting any more kingside room with a pawn advance and threatening the killer **19.Rh4**. Need I point out that **18...hxg6** fails to **19.Rh4#**? But after Black's next forced move it looks as if White must retreat. **18...Qe8** What is the next move in the attack? White creatively found the very pretty and adventurous **19.Ne7** Now if **19...Qxg6 20.Nxg6+ hxg6** and **21.Rh4** is still the same mate. So Black must take the knight and hope to find a loophole. The sacrifice gains a crucial tempo for the attack. **19...Qxe7 20.Rh4 h6 21.Re3** and here **21...Nxe6** loses to **22.Rxe6** as **22...Qxe6** is followed by **23.Rxh6** and mate next. Black finds an ingenious defense to survive the attack, but it does not save him. **21...Rgf8 22.Reh3 Rf7** This "neat move" as it was called in annotations published in the Ohio Chess Bulletin stops White's mating attack as the second rank is now defended, and **23.exf7** is met by **23...Qe1#**! Unfortunately, going down the exchange still loses for Black in the long run, so after **23.Qxf7 Qxf7 24.exf7 Rf8 25.Rh5 Rxf7 26.Rxd5** and despite heavy exertions by Black, White ground out the exchange up win.

Oh, by the way, I forgot to mention that I was on the losing side in this game. But my opponent played such a pretty game he deserves some recognition. His name is Eric Butler and he was a 2100 rated player at the time. Nice job, Eric.

The final example comes from the 1981 Ohio Chess Congress. I was White against a somewhat lower rated opponent and I really, really wanted to win.



However, my opponent had played pretty well, and after the smoke cleared at time control I (White) was up a pawn but Black had serious counterplay against f2, not to mention two very active bishops raking the open position. Barring an outright blunder, I figured my only way to win was to somehow promote my passed b-pawn. That I determined to do at all costs. Here is how this adventure unfolded.

**41.b6** (Giving up the h-pawn just to ensure my passer's advance.) **41...Bxh3 42.b7** (I reckoned **42...Bxf1 43.b8Q** would come out to my advantage. Black thought so too.) **42...Bd6 43.Ng2** (The only way to defend the **Rf1** and the pawn on **f2**. But now Black figures his active bishops will foil my plans.) **43...Bf5 44.Rb2 Bd3 45.Bf4** (Again, single-mindedly going after my goal of

queening the pawn. I both cut off his doubled rooks and attack one of the defenders of the Holy Grail square b8.) **45...e5** (The situation gets critical. But I figured, hoped was more like it, that I had a reply to this.) **46.Rd1 exf4 47.Ne1 Be5** (Black has other options here, but his desire to escape the skewered bishops by attacking my rook is understandable. But now White gets his piece back right off.) **48.Nxf3 Bxb2 49.Rxd3 Rb8** (Note how the bishop and knight keep one another from reaching their key squares or diagonals, in this case d4 and e5. I now think I have a clear way to force the win and I go for it. He probably should have maneuvered his bishop over to take up the b8 blockade.) **50.Rd7 fxg3 51.Rc7 gxf2+ 52.Kxf2 Rf8** (Now if I step out of the pin of my knight Black has time to relocate his bishop to a3 to get back to d6 just in time. In hindsight I might I have been better off not sacrificing the g3 pawn. Luckily a pretty winning method is handed me by Fate. Fortune favors the brave, they say. Well, sometimes that's true.) **53.Rc8 Bd4+** (My opponent thought he had the draw in hand now that his bishop was getting back. However...)  
**54.Kg2 Ba7 55.Ne5 Kg7 56.Rxf8 Kxf8 57.Nc6** (And White wins this game by one tempo as the bishop is stuck on such a short diagonal it has no place to escape the knight and keep an eye on b8 at the same time. 57...Bb8 is no help. The finale of this game played out like one of those endgame studies. I didn't see all the way through all of those initial complications (a computer would have a field day with the first half of these moves) but I never wavered in my determination to win this game by promoting my b-pawn. In this case at least there was a hidden treasure waiting at the end of the adventure.

So be bold. That doesn't mean be crazy. Be bold. That is the territory where many chess wins lie. And sheer fighting spirit can go a long way toward getting you there.