

ONCE IS ENOUGH



Cecil John Seddon Purdy
27 March 1906 to 6 November 1979
Australia
I Correspondence Chess World
Champion (1953 to 1958)

Over the board achievements:

- He won many tournaments, among them the Australian championship four times.
- 1951 International Master
- In 1970 at the age of 63 he was for the first time member of the Australian olympic team in Siegen and played in 1974 in Nice, too
- 1939 and 1948 Australian correspondence chess champion.
- 1951-1976 International Correspondence Chess Federation Vice-President.
- 1979 honorary member of the ICCF.

None of the later correspondence chess world champions dedicated their whole lives so exclusively to the royal game as Purdy. His name was synonymous to chess for millions of Australians. As strange as it may seem this was the reason why Purdy did not participate in any correspondence chess tournaments after winning the world championship. As editor of a chess journal and an exceptionally ambitious pedagogic author of many chess books and countless articles he felt obliged to practically prove his theoretical theses. Therefore he took each game very seriously in the preliminaries and the final. This cost a lot of time – more than Purdy actually could afford. Finally he had to give up his chess journal, which had changed names several times for marketing reasons. Dependent on the whole English speaking market it could not compete from remote Australia with the more up-to-date competition.

Purdy's approach to correspondence chess as a superior form of chess was affected by an experience he had during a friendly match in 1936. Purdy had just won the Australian championship, but soon after he lost a casual against an old friend who was familiar with playing correspondence chess. „I had to admit that my play at the board was relatively superficial” Purdy explained later. „Today I know that this is true for the great in chess, too.” The awareness that in correspondence chess much deeper analysis and more exact play are required was the foundation of his later success. Another valuable method he adopted from his friend McIntosh; to write down all his analysis for each move. „When I

I world champion: Cecil Purdy

started to play correspondence chess seriously I followed this advice and discovered it to be very beneficial” said Purdy. „Of course, one writes down many moves which one soon discovers are bad. But it saves oneself from addressing it again and again because the refutation has already been listed.” That there are other successful methods is proven by the biography of later correspondence chess world champions.

In his younger years Purdy organized competitions by cable to give himself and the other Australian masters an opportunity to compete with strong foreign masters. In the field of chess organization Purdy earned recognition internationally, too, such as in the revision of the rules for international chess competition. Purdy’s name will be mainly connected for ever with winning the first correspondence world championship. He had prepared psychologically very well. So, he answered 1.e4 with 1... e5 as a matter of principle (despite playing 1... c5 in over the board chess) because he was of the opinion that this made the fewest concessions. It is interesting that he criticized his opening choice as White after becoming world champion. Although he was quite successful with 1. c4 he thought later that one should not begin restrained like that if one wants to be successful. He recommended 1. e4 energetically which he applied only twice in the world championship.

Purdy was living with and for chess until his very last day. When he was already 73 he made plans full of vitality. He wanted to participate in the Australian championship and to travel to the Olympiad in Malta as well as to finalize his correspondence chess book with its world championship games as focus. However death surprised him during a

game in the chess center of Sydney, where he succumbed to a heart attack. His last words to his son John were: „I am winning but it will take some time.”

Purdy won his most critical and famous game in the final of the first correspondence world championship against his main competitor Dr Napolitano from Italy.

Nimzo-Indian (E 26)

□ C. Purdy

■ Dr M. Napolitano (Italy)

I correspondence world championship

[annotations after *How Purdy won* by F. Hutchings and K. Harrison and *64 great chess games* by T. Harding]

1. c4 ♖f6 2. d4 e6 3. ♘c3 ♙b4 4. a3 ♙xc3+ 5. bxc3 c5 6. e3 ♘c6 7. ♙d3 e5 8. ♘e2 d6

[RK: 8... e4!? 9. ♙b1 b6 10. ♘g3 ♙a6 is thought to be OK for Black today.]

9. e4 ♘h5

[RK: 9... h6 is today’s most frequent choice here.]

10. 0-0 g5 11. ♙c2 ♘f4 12. ♙a4 ♙d7 13. ♘g3 cxd4N

The text move was recommended by the annotators of Bronstein-Smyslov, candidate tournament Budapest 1950. There followed 13... ♗f6. Purdy was prepared for the novelty and considered White’s position advantageous.

14. ♙xc6 bxc6 15. cxd4 ♗f6 16. ♙e3 h5! 17. dxe5 dxe5 18. ♗b1 ♗d8

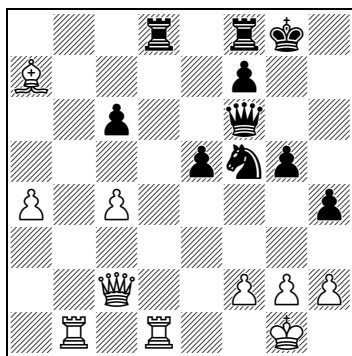
The direct 18... h4 would have led to a bad position after 18. ♘f5 ♙xf5 19. exf5 ♗xf5? 20. ♗d6. Therefore Black interrupts his king attack for a moment and gives up his a7 pawn.

19. ♗c2 h4 20. ♘f5 ♙xf5 21. exf5 0-0!

Part I

Despite the advanced pawns this is the right place for the king. Black wants to continue his attack only after winning the f5 pawn because 21... h3 can be answered with 22. g4.

22. ♖fd1 ♗h5 23. ♕xa7 ♖g7 24. a4 ♗xf5



Purdy writes about this position that there was a difficult decision to make, whether the h4 pawn should be stopped with 25. h3.

He remembered a statement by Dr. Tarasch saying that for the ending it is advantageous to wait and after h4-h3 to pass with g2-g3 because the pawn h3 will be weak then. On the other hand God has put the middle game before the endgame and then the h3 pawn allows mating threats. In an over the board game Purdy certainly would have followed the advice by playing 25. h3. This would have been the best move securing a small advantage.

25. a5?! h3 26. a6 ♖a8

The rook has to retreat to a8 because the free pawn can be controlled with two rooks only.

[RK: Black seems to play for the win, too. 26... ♗h4 27. ♕c5 ♗f3+! draws.]

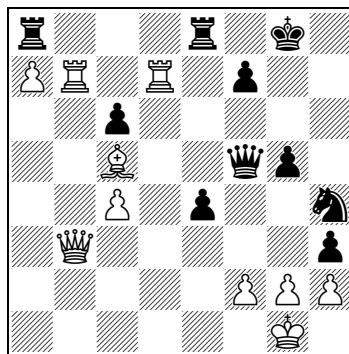
27. ♕c5 ♖fe8 28. a7 e4! 29. ♖b7

[RK: Noteworthy is the prophylactic 29. ♖e2! (or 29. ♖b2 first) even in the next move. After the text moves White slides into a worse position.]

29... ♗h4 30. ♖b3 ♖f5!

After long analysis Purdy had to take into account that his advantage on the queen side is not sufficient for victory. For instance 31. ♖b8 ♖g4! 32. g3 e3! is even good for Black. He sent the following move only reluctantly as there was nothing better. The reason was that his opponent could reach a draw by force.

31. ♖dd7!



The climax of the game. Both players have realized their plans.

[RK: The evaluation of this position has changed considerably over the years. Black had a winning, a promising, a drawing and a bad move to chose from.

a) 31... hxg2! 32. ♖d1 ♗f3+ 33. ♗xg2 ♖g4+! (33... ♗h4+ only leads to a position where White is a rook down 34. ♗g3 ♖xc5 35. ♖xf7 ♖e5+ 36. ♗g4 36... ♖e6+ 37. ♗xg5 ♗f3+ 38. ♖xf3 exf3 39. ♖d4 ♖e5+ 40. ♖xe5 ♖xe5+ 41. ♗f6 but is able to hold!) 34. ♗f1 ♗xh2+ 35. ♗e1 ♗f3+ 36. ♗f1 ♖h3+ 37. ♗e2 ♗e5 38. ♖d6 and here the two moves e4-e3 and ♗e5xc4 win played in either sequence.

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b) 31... ♖xc5!? 32. ♜xf7 ♕e5! (after 32... e3?! White can even play on with 33. ♖b1!? exf2+ 34. ♜xf2 and after the only 34... ♗f5! 35. ♜b8 if someone then only White can win.) 33. ♜fd7 ♖a1+ 34. ♕d1! (Not 34. ♜d1? ♜xa7! 35. c5+ ♖h8 36. ♜bd7 e3!) 34... ♕xd1+ 35. ♜xd1 and the White rooks on the seventh rank seem just to hold.

c) 31... e3 (threatening 32... e2) 32. fxe3! ♖xc5 33. ♜xf7 and White has to give perpetual check after 33... ♜xe3.]

Dr. Napolitano had to consider the tournament standings for his answer. He was leading with 8:1 and could expect 10 or even 10½ points. Purdy had finished only three of his games (2½ points) because of the long transmission time to Australia, however all his positions were promising.

So with a win in this game Dr. Napolitano would almost certainly have won the world championship title. Therefore he decided to play on, having the draw up his sleeve. Two moves later the drawing possibility was passed up. However, the following move cannot be assigned a question mark only. The exclamation mark is because playing for a win in a game or tournament inevitably involves some risk.

31... ♗f3+?! 32. gxf3 exf3 33. ♖f1!

Black had overlooked this move. After 33. ♗e3 ♜ad8 34. ♕d1

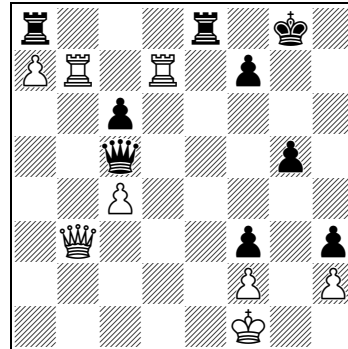
[RK: or even 34. ♜xd8 ♜xd8 35. ♗d4!]=]

34... ♕g4+ 35. ♖f1 ♕xc4+

[RK: or 35... ♕g2+ 36. ♖e1 ♜xe3+ 37. ♖d2! ♜xd7+ 38. ♖xe3 ♜xd1 39. a8♕+ ♖g7 40. ♖a7 ♖g6! 41. ♜xf7 ♖h5!]=]

the point would have been shared. The idea behind the text move is that the transposition 33... ♕g4 34. ♗e3 ♜ad8 can be answered with 35. ♕d3!

33... ♖xc5



34. ♕c3

A courageous decision.

[RK: With hindsight 34. ♜xf7! ♕e5 35. ♜g7+ ♕xg7 36. c5+ ♖h8 37. ♜xg7 ♖xg7 38. ♖b7+ would have been best. This ending seems to be won in the long run.]

34... ♜f8 35. ♕d3 ♕e5 36. ♖xf3 ♜ae8!

With the fine queen maneuver ♕b3-c3-d3xf3 White has captured the f3 pawn. However, Black strikes out for another attack. 37. ♕xh3 would have been dangerous because of 37... ♖a1+ 38. ♖g2 ♜e1.

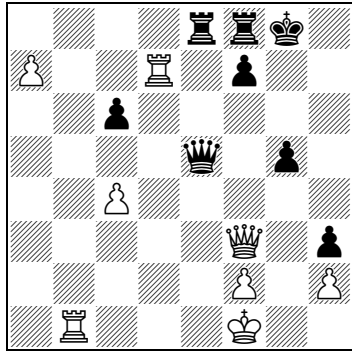
[RK: Probably White can make a long king journey here: 39. ♕f5! ♜g1+ 40. ♖f3 g4+ 41. ♖f4 ♕c1+ 42. ♖e5 ♜e1+ 43. ♖d6 ♖a3+ 44. ♖c7 ♜e6 45. ♕xg4+ ♜g6 46. ♕f5 ♜e6 47. ♕g5+ ♖h7 48. ♕d2 and wins. So, the following text move seems to be a mistake.]

Meanwhile, the tournament situation had changed, because Purdy lost against Mitchell after analyzing the wrong position. (He had put a pawn on b4 instead of b5 by mistake.) With that half point lost unexpectedly, Purdy had to win this game at all costs.

37. ♜b1

-- diagram next page --

Part I

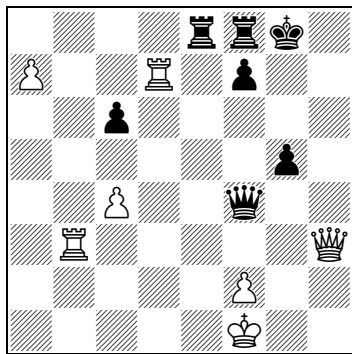


37... ♖xh2?

The question mark comes from Dr. Napolitano who indicated 37... ♖e6 as better after the game. But then White retains his advantage with 38. ♜db7 ♖xc4+ 39. ♔g1.

[RK: There is no White win in sight after 39... ♖e6! (not 39... g4? 40. ♖f5!) 40. ♖c3 ♜a8 41. ♖g3 ♔h7 or 41. ♖e3 ♖f5 42. f3 ♜fe8.]

38. ♜b3! ♖e5 39. ♖xh3 ♖f4



In this position Purdy analyzed 20 possibilities exhaustively and as usual recorded the analysis in written form. The move with the number 15 – 40. c5! – originally did not please him because of the answer 40... ♖c4+ (not good is 40... ♖c1+ 41. ♔g2 ♜e1 42. ♖f3 ♜h1 43. ♖xf7+!) 41. ♔g2 ♖xc5 42. ♖g3 ♖f5 43. ♜b8 ♖xd7 44. ♖xg5+ and White cannot win despite the two queens that will appear.

During the repeated check of each move he finally discovered a hidden win in option 15, which allowed him to breathe a sigh of relief: 40... ♖c4+ 41. ♔g2 ♖xc5 42. ♖h6! This is the point! After 42... g4 to prevent ♜h3 follows 43. ♜g3 ♜e4 44. ♖h4 ♖f5 45. ♜d8 and the game is over.

[RK: In this variation 42. ♜g3! ♖e5 43. ♖h4 wins even more directly.]

40. c5! ♖c4+ 41. ♔g2

Now, Black can only chose between different losing continuations.

41... ♜e4 42. ♖f5! ♖xb3 43. ♖xe4 ♔g7 44. ♖f5 g4 45. ♖xg4+

Black resigned.

1-0