

MAD MATE

A Chess Diversion

MAD MATE is a chess variation in which captured pieces may be entered again by the captor. (The variation takes its inspiration from SHOGI, or Japanese chess, a distant relative of the Western game, in which a similar practice is permitted.) When a piece is captured in MAD MATE it becomes a turn-coat and fights for its captor. This is made possible by a minor modification of the chess pieces: the MAD MATE chessmen are cylinders of different heights - depending upon their power - with the usual conventional symbols marked on the ends: on one end in one color and in the opposite color on the other; thus any piece on the board, excepting only the two kings, may belong to either one or the other player, depending upon which end is "up". (Incidentally, nothing prevents players from playing the ordinary game with the MAD MATE chessmen.)

HOW TO PLAY

1. Prerequisite is a reasonable understanding of the rules and aims of ordinary chess. Starting positions, moves of pieces, and main objective - checkmating the opposite king - are the same. The difference between MAD MATE and the familiar game does not appear until a piece is captured.
2. When a piece is captured it is removed from the board and turned over; at this point the piece changes color and becomes part of the captor's reserve forces: on his next move, or at any subsequent time when it is his turn to play, he may enter the piece again on the board on any vacant square of his choice - such entry constituting his move. (Notice, however, a limitation on pawn entries in Rule 3, below.)
3. Entering pawns. Pawns may be entered from the reserve forces on any vacant square except squares of the eighth rank.
4. Pawn Promotion. When a pawn reaches the eighth rank, it may be exchanged for any piece in the opponent's reserve forces. This exchange may only be made immediately upon promotion. If a pawn reaches the eighth rank at a time when there are no major pieces in the opponent's reserve forces, it does not promote - it simply remains motionless on the eighth rank without further possibility of action.
5. All other rules are the same as in ordinary chess.

COMMENT

MAD MATE is a dramatic game that allows for brilliant combinations and sacrifices. Exchanges are frequent - and players must keep in mind that the one who initiates the exchange will also be the one who will have the first chance to bring the new piece into play. (Thus a player might sacrifice his Queen for a Knight - and on his next move enter the captured Knight to checkmate the opposite King, etc.) As in

real war, the contingency of fresh troops coming into battle must always be watched for - and the eye must be fixed not only on the pieces held in reserve by the enemy, but on the squares of the board where their entry would be most damaging. Peculiar to MAD MATE is that there is no end-game in the sense of a thinning out of the pieces; the board remains crowded to the last and the stage of the game cannot be judged from the number of pieces on it.

(A second glance at the board, though, is likely to reveal a number of unusual situations - such as that one player might have three Knights and his opponent three Bishops, at least two of which will be on squares of the same color; and there might be defensive pawns on the first rank, etc.) Also unique in MAD MATE is that there can be no stalemate - indeed that there can be no draw except by agreement of the players (a most unlikely eventuality): all games end by checkmate or by resignation because a checkmate has become inevitable.