

Thinking Out Loud

By BILL WOESTENDIEK

(Bill Woestendiek is on vacation. In his absence, this column will be written by guest. Today's column is by Marshall Sprague, local author who wrote among other books, "Newport in the Rockies.")

By Marshall Sprague

JUAN REID AND I were talking the other day about the incredible Bobby Fischer and his bad manners while beating Boris Spassky for the world chess championship at Reykjavik. Juan, who is alumni secretary at Colorado College after serving many years as dean of men brought Fischer to the Broadmoor on April 28, 1964, to play 32 of us at five dollars a board. His manners then could not have been better. He had just turned 21 and already the experts were saying that he was the greatest chess player on earth. I believed them because he had just won the U.S. championship for the sixth year, winning eleven games and losing none — an unbelievable performance.

Juan and Andy Marshall and I took Bobby to dinner in the Tavern before the matches in the ballroom. I must have felt that it was a historic occasion. I made these notes of Bobby's visit:

"ANDY AND I found Fischer in the lobby about 5:45 p.m. Very tall, monosyllabic talker, strong Brooklyn accent but not particularly "dese and dese"; mainly ungrammatical in use of verb "do"—"He don't know nothin'" idea. Very broad shoulders, lankiest of the lank, loose-jointed. Has peculiar and not ungraceful lunging walk, leading with right shoulder, hands gangling and large, flopping at ends of wrists and often folding over one another in front. Light blue-gray gabardine suit, dark tie, black shoes. Hair uncombed in back, parted on side, plenty of it, not unkempt but certainly not tidy. Large hazel eyes, sallow skin. He seems to take in everything but doesn't ask many questions. He ordered a large dinner but did not want a cocktail. Drank two glasses of ice tea. Had fish hors d'oeuvres, veal, butterscotch ice cream. Says "yeah" frequently and that is about all. Hesitant in speech as though nothing can be answered properly. Laughs easily and with a looking away. Occasionally looks at you hard and guilelessly, like those king penguins at the zoo. Expressed interest in studying the Bible.

"Very diffident in manner during his lecture in the ballroom. He talked to us with a sort of sad abstraction, explained combinations simply, his long fingers moving deftly on his ancient magnetic board. No elaboration, and when the lesson was over he just dropped it

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without an ending. He played the thirty-two of us in a square around him, always opening king to pawn four. Moved with extreme rapidity, lunging from board to board, stopping to teeter on feet, sometimes fingering a pawn gently while deciding. Took pieces with a snap of wrist and a slap. After beating us all in about an hour — except Juan Reid who drew him — he just went off to bed with a slight nod to Juan.

"I PICKED HIM up next morning at 10 a.m., fed him griddle cakes and more iced tea. He is almost totally uneducated but told me that he has thought of going to school somewhere but doesn't know how to go about it at twenty-one. I took him to NORAD and he listened raptly to the explanation of how the planes are charted. During lunch in the Penrose Room back at the Broadmoor he ordered a beer and laughed when Bill Roub asked him for his ID. Very curious about the Napoleon wall paper. At the Air Force Academy he shook his head in wonder at how all that money got spent. The academy's chess expert, Captain Davis, took us around. Bobby did not remember having met Davis before, though Davis had played him to a draw two nights earlier in Denver. But Bobby remembered every move of that drawn game. He was fascinated by the academy computers and by the faint crackling made by the metal spires of the academy chapel. I returned him to his room at the Broadmoor and suddenly, with a shyness that upset me, he offered me a little ragged book of chess openings that he had picked up at a second-hand book store in Los Angeles. I don't know why I turned down this offering I have been kicking myself ever since. A little later I delivered him to the airport bound for his match that night at Lawrence, Kansas. I wished him well and said goodbye, and that was

that."

I think Juan Reid understands Bobby's bad tournament manners better than most people. Juan told me, "Chess is the sum total of Bobby's life. He has never had a family. He has never had a home. He barely got beyond the eighth grade. From age twelve he has spent practically his entire time at the Marshall Chess Club, or the Manhattan, or the Brooklyn, or at tournament tables. He has no friends—only chess seconds and kibitzers. So he clings to the game with all his body and soul. And it is only in a major tournament that he feels threatened. That is why he behaves badly. It is a symptom of his fierce determination not to lose the only thing he has."

JUAN, PRESIDENT OF THE Colorado Springs Chess Club for many years, was ranked as one of the strongest players in Colorado

In the Fischer-Reid game below, players will note that Reid was a pawn up and in a strong position at move thirty. But he believed that Bobby's vast experience would beat him in the end game and so he offered a draw. The international grandmaster accepted instantly, with a grin.

Fischer (W)	Reid (B)
1. P-K4	P-K4
2. N-KB3	P-Q3
3. P-Q4	N-KB3
4. N-QB3	PXP
5. NXP	B-K2
6. P-KB3	QN-Q2
7. B-K3	N-K4
8. Q-Q3	P-Q4
9. B-N5	B-Q2
10. N-B5	O-O
11. BXB	OxB
12. O-O-O	N-B3
13. Q-K2	NxB
14. QXN	KR-Q1
15. P-KN4	B-B1
16. P-K3	N-K1
17. N-K4	Q-B2
18. PXP	NXP
19. N(K4)XM	BXM
20. NxB	RXM
21. RXR	QXR
22. R-Q1	QXP
23. Q-K7	Q-N1
24. R-Q7	Q-B3
25. K-N1	P-KN3
26. Q-K2	P-N3
27. P-QR1	P-QR3
28. Q-Q3	PON4
29. Q-Q3	R-K1
30. K-R2	R-K1
Draw	