

Martial chess / continued from page one

The kung fu student is going to draw a crowd at work with his statement. It rings of centuries of tradition and mystique; it speaks of action and fury. The chess student is going to wind up sitting by himself at lunch, because he doesn't seem to be speaking an intelligible language.

Terms like French Defense and Four Knights Game just don't boil the blood. True, there are a few cool names in chess -- Sicilian Dragon and King's Indian Attack come to mind, and "gambit" would be catchy if anybody spoke Italian. Overall, though, we're due for a terminology overhaul. (I vote we borrow heavily from professional wrestling and start calling chess maneuvers "the pile driver" and "the nutcracker").

But the problem runs deeper than mere words. After some thought, I realized that most of these chess terms refer simply to openings or very simple strategic elements. What martial arts have -- and what I think chess desperately needs to regain -- is *style*.

Kung Fu is a style of fighting. There used to be styles in chess: Classical, Romantic, Hypermodern. A "romantic" player could be counted on to charge recklessly for your king, tossing trivial concerns like *material equality* or *positional considerations* to the wind in pursuit of checkmate. Classicists like Staunton always went for central pawn control and open center lines for doubled rooks. Hypermoderns like Nimzovitsch were happy to let you set up your Classical center so they could blockade and dismantle it with their wing pawns and fianchettoed bishops.

(I'm fairly certain my cat Werner is a Hypermodern. He almost always cedes me the central squares, feigning disinterest and waiting for me to carelessly overextend my pawn phalanx.)

Alas, today's grandmasters are purely "pragmatists". Certain players might lean a bit towards attacking chess (Kasparov) or strategic chess (Karpov), but they are happy to beat you however you allow. Thus top-level chess has no players with distinctive, cool styles to compare to Tiger Crane Kung Fu.

Are you a relentless attacker ("the Heat-Seeker")? An opportunistic swindler ("Blackbeard")? What would opponents call *your* style of play?

///

Nevin Grimsley calls his style "Weasel Chess". You can seek his advice or assail his views via email at harmony@ixl.net.

Player of the Year

standings as of July 1

1. Phil Wilkins	11.5
2. Jeff Penta	11.0
3. Al Ward	9.5
4. Jorge Godoy	9.0
Ben MacHolmes	9.0
6. Larry Eldridge	8.5
Ivan Heller	8.5
8. Michael Barry	7.5
9. Menno Koenig	7.0

Puzzle solutions (from cover):

Easy: 1.Ne7+ Kh8 2.Qh7+ Kh7 3.Rh3++
Stumper: 1.Rh7+ Kh7 2.Qf7+ Kh6 3.Rh3+ Kg5 4.Ke1++

Upcoming Tournaments

Sept. 3, 10, 17, 24 1996	4-SS	EQUINOX SWISS Prizes: Open: \$50 / \$25 U1750: \$50 / \$25 Up to two half-point byes available for all rounds (round 4 requires two weeks notice).	Two Sections:	Time Control: 40/90, SD/30 EF: \$15 MCC, \$20 Others
Oct. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 1996	5-SS	TRICK N' TREAT SWISS Prizes: \$70 / \$40, U1800 \$30, U1600 \$30, U1400 \$30 Up to two half-point byes available for all rounds (rounds 4 and 5 require two weeks notice).	One Section	Time Control: 40/90, SD/30 EF: \$20 MCC, \$25 Others
Nov. 12, 19, 26, & Dec 3 1996	5-SS	STANLEY CROWE MEMORIAL TOURNAMENT Prizes: Open: \$80 / \$50 U1750: \$70 Up to two half-point byes available for all rounds (rounds 4 and 5 require two weeks notice).	One Section	Time Control: 40/90, SD/30 EF: \$20 MCC, \$25 Others

