

THE BRAIN OF A CHESSPLAYER ?

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This is the strange story of a riddle.

In March 2001, I have seen the following riddle : On a chessboard 5x5, how to put five white queens and three black queens such as none queen can be taken in one move by an opposite colour queen?

I solved it in about 15 minutes, without great difficulty.

Up to now, I gave the problem to 48 chessplayers (with a time of 20 minutes).

The results are incredible :

- 13 international masters and international grandmasters : only one found the solution.
- 15 experts and masters (including myself) : none of the others found the solution.
- 20 "average chessplayers" : two found the solution.

Four of the experts asked for more time and solved the problem in about one hour.

This result is very astonishing : One could say that this problem has nothing to do with what happens in a normal chess game. Or, in retroanalyse (in chess, it means – by logical deductions – to find the last (or several lasts) move(s) that have been played), which is a very difficult field, and has nothing to do with a normal chess game, there is a strong correlation between the ability to solve problems and the strength of the player. For the 5+3 problem, the correlation looks very low!

Among non chessplayers, I think (I did not have a sufficient large sample to assert this) there will be a positive correlation between the I.Q. and the ability to solve this riddle.

This is of course only one item, but the question of the relation between I.Q. and chess strength comes up again.