

MINIATURES



Escalante

A MINIATURE ESSAY

Here is the definition of a miniature curtailed from decades of reading chess literature (And occasionally writing).

“A Miniature is a game lasting 25 moves or less. Grandmaster draws (which are draws with only a few moves played) and time forfeits are excluded. Ideally, they should be both educational and/or entertaining.”

The last two sentences are two that are implied, but usually not explicitly stated.

Note this definition does not exclude all draws. There have been many games which perpetual checks have been included in miniature collections as one side has an otherwise winning advantage but his opponent does not let him use it.

Having said that, here is a brief history of the word miniature, as it applies to chess.

NOTE: This history of chess miniatures is necessarily incomplete. Please feel to email me to make this history more complete.

www.ajschess.com/lifemasteraj/short_games.html states,

“A Chess Miniature is commonly accepted as:

Games that were won in 25 moves or less!

(Soltis uses the standard of 20 moves or less. Chernev says that 24 moves is the limit.)

But this is NOT the universally accepted standard.

Chess writers in Europe & Russia have used the 25-move-limit for nearly 200 years.”.

However, I am unable to verify the last claim. If true, it would supersede much of the following.

So let's go back to what is verifiable.

The word miniature, as it applies short game, does not seem to exist until the beginning of the 20th century. You won't find it Sergeant's book, "Morphy's Games of Chess", nor anywhere else in the 19th century.

Moffatt's book, *Memorable Chess Games, Brilliants and Miniatures, with Notes, Queries and Answers* was the first publication to use the word miniature (1913). He didn't specify how many moves constituted a miniature, preferring to use brilliancies for his games selections.

A more refined approach first appeared in *Chess Review*, which sometime in the 1940's limited their miniatures to 20 moves or less.

During the 1950's more writers and publications started to use this definition of a miniature. The 25 move limit was added later.

Please also note that prior to the 1980's most English chess publications used Descriptive Notation (DN) instead of Algebraic Notation (AN).

Let's now take a closer look at some of these publications in further detail and list some more recent publications.

The 1947 Yearbook of *Chess Review* had a monthly column of "Chess Caviar" with the byline of "Miniature games are the hors d'oeuvres of chess" All of their games are 20 moves or less.

This column had been going on for years, so the definition of 20 moves or less is pre-1947.

Du mont's "200 Miniature Games of Chess" and "More Miniature Games" have a limit of 25 moves. Both books were published in the 1950's. He is considered to be of IM strength.

Chernev's book, "1000 Best Short Games of Chess" first published in 1955, has a limit of 25 moves. He was a US master.

“100 Soviet Chess Miniatures”, written in 1963 by P. H. Clarke has a stated limit of 25 moves or less. He was a FIDE master and a GM in correspondence.

In 1966, IM Kurt Richter published “666 Kurtpartien”, which had a limit of 25 moves for the games. The book is in German, but it is possible for anyone who reads English (or German!) to follow the games and notes. This delightful and fine book is, unfortunately, is out of print.

John Curdo, who is believed to have won the most tournaments in history with over 800, wrote a book in 1982 titled, “Chess Caviar”. From the cover, “- all under 25 moves/most under 20”. Curdo is a FIDE Master.

Bill Walls’s series of miniature books (500 King’s Gambit, 500 Sicilian, 500 English, etc.) published in the 1980s and 1990s, also has a limit of 25 moves. Note that I am partial to his collection – I have some games published in his series ;) He is also apparently a NM, but I can’t verify that.

GM John Nunn’s “101 Brilliant Chess Miniatures” also sets a limit of 25 moves.

For over 20 years FM Alex Dunne has been writing a correspondence chess column for Chess Life. Every December his column features a list of miniatures. His limit is 20 moves and yet he has an amazing number of of games each year.

Encyclopedia of Chess Miniatures (2014) by Tadic, Branko, and Arsovic. These is published by the same people who also publish the Chess Informant series. There are over 1600 games in this book.

Bill Wall was kind enough to lend me his list of books that feature both short games and miniatures from his website to copy and share .

This list is provided so you can further study this subject and play over some incredibly enjoyable short games.

Chess Skirmishes: Chiefly Light, Short Parties (1889) by John Taylor

Chess Sparks: Or, Short and Bright Games of Chess (1895) by John Ellis – 400 games under 21 moves

Chess traps and Stratagems (1903) by Edward Cunnington

Memorable Chess Games, Brilliants and Miniatures, with Notes, Queries and Answers (1913) by William Moffatt

Paul Morphy and the Golden Age of Chess (1934) by William Napier – section call Chess Caviar

Chess Combinations and Traps (1936) by V. Sozin and Fred Reinfeld

Traps on the Chessboard (1938) by Greig and Znosko-Borovsky

200 Miniature Games of Chess (1941) by Julius du Mont

More Miniature Games (1953) by Julius du Mont

Chess Traps: Pitfalls and Swindles (1954) by Al Horowitz and Fred Reinfeld

1000 Best Short Games of Chess (1957) by Irving Chernev

Combinations and Traps in the Openings (1960) by Vaynshteyn

Great Short Games of the Chess Masters (1961) by Fred Reinfeld

100 Soviet Chess Miniatures (1963) by Clarke

Two Hundred Modern Chess Traps in the Fianchetto Openings (1971) by J.B. Howson

Modern Chess Opening Traps (1972) by William Lombardy

Sahovske Minijature (1973) by Maric

New Traps in the Chess Opening (1973) by Horowitz

Great Short Games of the Chess Masters (1973) by Reinfeld

100 Miniatur (1974) by Bouwmeester

Modern Chess Miniatures (1977) by Barden ad Heidenfeld

Winning Chess Traps (1979) by Irving Chernev

400 Kurzpartien (1980) by Roizman

300 King's Gambit Miniatures (1982) by Bill Wall

500 Sicilian Miniatures (1983) by Bill Wall

500 French Miniatures (1984) by Bill Wall

120 Miniatures (1984) by Ruvolo

500 Queen's Gambit Miniatures (1985) by Bill Wall

500 Ruy Lopez Miniatures (1986) by Bill Wall

Miniatures form the World Champions (1985) by Anatoly Karpov

50 World's Champion Miniatures (1986) by Karpov

500 Italian Miniatures (1987) by Bill Wall

500 Sicilian Miniatures II (1987) by Bill Wall

500 Queen's Gambit Miniatures, Collection II (1988) by Bill Wall

Chess Openings: Traps and Zaps (1989) by Bruce Pandolfini

300 Miniatures (1990), by Roizman

500 Indian Miniatures (1990), by Bill Wall

500 English Miniatures (1990) by Bill Wall

500 Caro Kann Miniatures (1991) by Bill Wall

500 Pirc Miniatures (1993) by Bill Wall

Traps in the Openings (1993) by Chernev

More Chess Openings: Traps and Zaps 2 (1993) by Bruce Pandolfini

500 Alekhine Miniatures (1994) by Bill Wall

Modern Chess Miniatures (1995) by Neil McDonald

500 French Miniatures: Collection II (1995) by Bill Wall

500 King's Gambit Miniatures (1996) by Bill Wall

500 Scotch Miniatures (1997) by Bill Wall

333 Opening Traps (1997) by Zavyalov

700 Opening Traps (1998) by Bill Wall

The Quickest Chess Victories of All Time (1998) by Graham Burgess

22 Classic Opening Traps (1999) by Allen

500 Blackmar Diemer Gambit Miniatures (1999) by Bill Wall

101 Brilliant Chess Miniatures (1999) by John Nunn

Startling Correspondence Chess Miniatures (2000) by Tim Harding

500 Center Counter Miniatures (2001) by Bill Wall

555 Openings Blunders (2002) by Matsukevich

500 Vienna Miniatures (2003) by Bill Wall

150 Short Chess Games (2004) by Radhakrishnan

**101 Chess Opening Traps (2006) by Giddins
100 Short Chess Games (2006) by Pak**

150 Short Chess Games (2006) by P. Radhakrishnan

Winning Chess Traps (2007) by Robert Snyder

Winning Quickly at Chess (2007) by John Nunn

David Bronstein – 50 Great Short Games (2007) by Minev

222 Eroffnungsfallen nach 1.e4 (2007) by Knaak and Mueller

1000 Miniature Chess Traps (2008) by Andras

The Greatest Ever Tricks and Traps (2008) by Lane

Rudolf Spielmann – 50 Great Short Games (2008) by Minev

200 King's Gambit Declined Miniatures (2010) by Bill Wall

200 King's Gambit Accepted Miniatures (2011) by Bill Wall

Chess Traps and Sacrifices (2011) by Mark Lanin

Teaching Chess the Easy and Fun Way with Mini-Games (2011) by Price and Zupan

Combinations and Traps in the Opening (2012) by Kalinichenko

2000 Sozin Miniatures (2013) by Rob Escalante (that's me!)

Winning Chess Traps: 300 Ways to Win in the Opening (2013) by Irving Chernev

Chess: 5334 Problems, Combinations and Games (2013) by Laslo Polgar – a section on short games

Chess Superminiatures (2013) by Nick Pelling

The 193 Shortest Chess Games Never Win Against the Chess Computers (2014) by Grenon

www.chess.com (2014) – “Post your Own Miniatures Here” Game Showcase Forum

www.chessgames.com (2014) “Modern Chess Miniatures” collection

www.chessgames.com (2014) “Short Games of Chess” collection

Encyclopedia of Chess Miniatures (2014) by Tadic, Branko, and Arsovic – 1,636 games under 21 moves

Chessminiatures.com

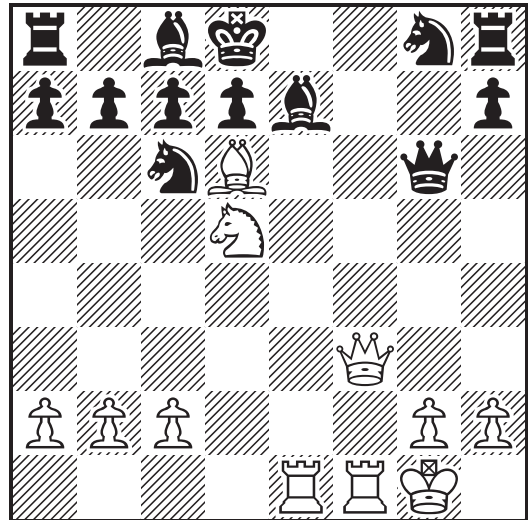
Chess Miniatures & Caricatures by Jovan Prokopljevic

<http://www.chessmaniac.com/index.php/2012/07/13/chess-miniatures/>

Here are a few miniatures to whet your appetite.

**Casero-Chiosso
corres.
Italy, 1981**

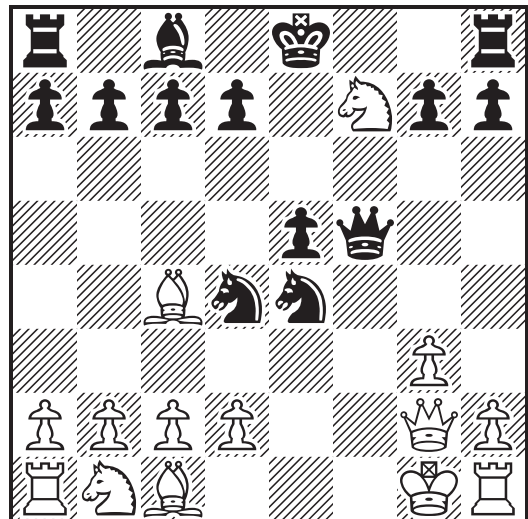
1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♘f3 g5 4.♙c4 g4 5.O-O
gxf3 6.♖xf3 ♗f6 7.e5 ♖xe5 8.d3 ♙h6 9.♘c3
♘e7 10.♙d2 ♘bc6 11.♞ae1 ♗f5 12.♘d5
♗d8 13.♞e4 ♘xd5 14.♙xd5 ♘e5 15.♞xe5
♖xe5 16.♙c3 ♗d6 17.♙xh8 ♖c5+ 18.d4
♖xc2 19.♙f6+ ♗e8 20.♖h5 ♗g6 21.♖e5+
♗f8 22.♖e7+ ♗g8 23.♖e8+ ♙f8 24.♙e7 ♗g7
25.♞xf4



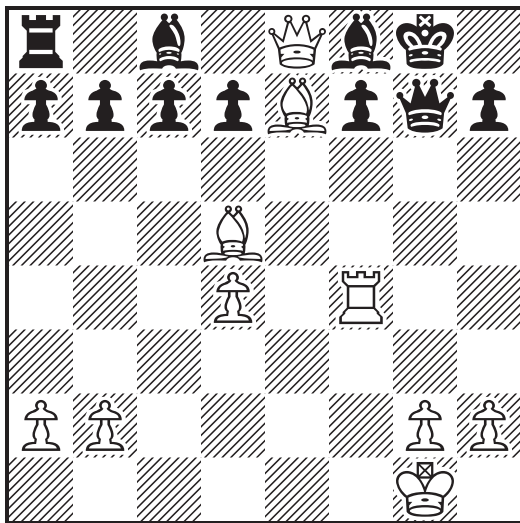
16.♖f8+! ♙xf8 17.♙xc7mate 1-0

**Iannacone-Kirshner
Cupertino, 1992**

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙c4 ♘f6 4.♘g5 ♙c5
5.♘xf7 ♙xf2+ 6.♗xf2 ♘xe4+ 7.♗f1 ♖h4
8.♖f3 ♘d4 9.g3 ♖h3+ 10.♖g2 ♖f5+ 11.♖g1



11...♘f3+ [Here, Black resigned in three other games; Nandor Bozsik-Richard Lilja (2140), Eger Agria Open 1994; Alla Frolovich-Svetlana Zerzhalova, Russian Cup, 1/2 Finals, Tula 2005 and Yury Krasnov (2200)-Mikhail Leonov (2411), Donskoj 2007. Let's see why.] 12.♗f1 ♘h4+ 13.♖g1 ♘xg2 14.♖xg2 ♖f2+ 15.♖h3 d5+ 16.♖h4 ♖f6+ 0-1



1-0

**GM Shirov (2500)-Lapinski (2200)
Daugavpils, 1990**

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♘f3 g5 4.♙c4 g4 5.O-O
gxf3 6.♖xf3 ♗f6 7.e5 ♖xe5 8.♙xf7+ ♗xf7
9.d4 ♖xd4+ 10.♙e3 ♖f6 11.♙xf4 ♖e8
12.♘c3 ♘c6 13.♘d5 ♖g6 14.♞ae1+ ♙e7
15.♙d6 ♗d8

Ikkonnikov (2560)-Vitoux (2264)

Port Erin Open

Isle Of Man, Sept. 24 005

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.c4 c6 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 c5 6.d5 ♘f5 7.e4 ♘xe4 8.♘xe4 ♘xe4 9.♘xc4 ♖d6 10.O-O ♘d7 11.♞e1 ♘f6 12.♘b5+ ♖d8 13.♘c4 h6 14.♘d2 a6 15.♘c3 ♖f4 16.♘e5 ♖c8 17.f3 ♘g6 18.g3 ♖g5 19.f4 ♖h5 20.♘e2 1-0

Vandenburg (1979)-Blechar (2237)

corres.

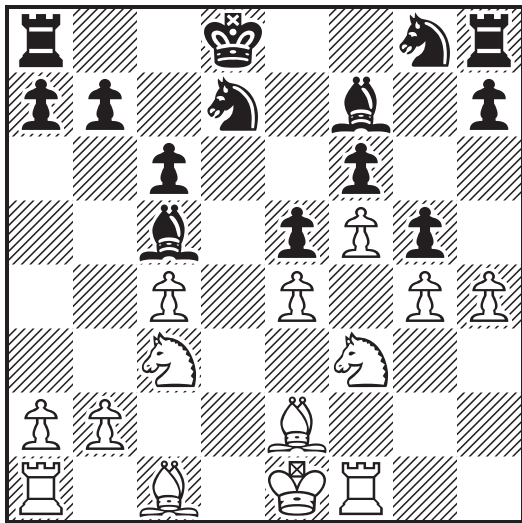
CCLA Team Ch., 1999

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 ♘f5 6.♘e5 e6 7.♘g5 ♘b4 8.♘xc4 ♖d5 9.♘xf6 ♖xc4 10.♖d2 ♖b3 11.♘xg7 ♞g8 12.♘e5 c5 13.♘xb8 cxd4 14.♘e5 O-O-O 15.♘xd4 ♞xd4! (16.Qxd4 Qxb2) 0-1

GM H. Olafsson-D. Mayers (1908)

US Summer Open, 2001

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 g6 3.d4 d6 4.dxe5 dxe5 5.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 6.f4 ♘e6 7.e4 ♘d7 8.♘f3 f6 9.♘e2 ♘c5 10.♞f1 c6 11.f5 ♘f7 12.g4 g5 13.h4?

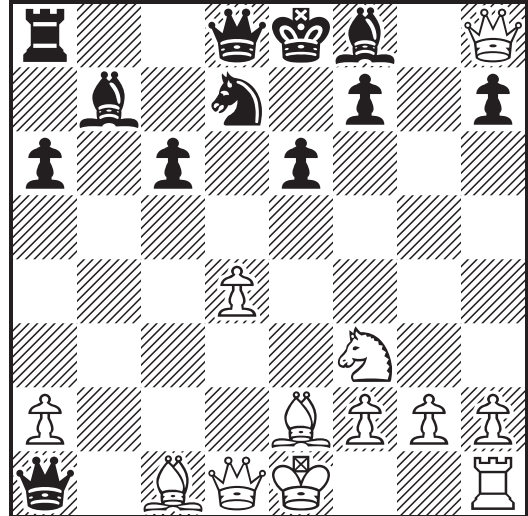


13...h5! 14.hxg5 hxg4 15.g6 gx f3 16.gxf7 f2+ 17.♖d2 ♘h6 18.♘d1 ♘xf7 19.♘xf2 ♖e7 20.♘g4 ♘d6 21.♘d3 ♞ag8 22.♘e3 ♞g3 23.♖e2 ♘xe3 24.♘xe3 ♞hh3 0-1

Z. Polgar-V. Dimitrov

Bulgaria, 1984

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 c6 5.e3 ♘bd7 6.♘d3 dxc4 7.♘xc4 b5 8.♘e2 ♘b7 9.e4 b4 10.e5 bxc3 11.exf6 cxb2 12.fxg7 bxa1=♖ 13.gxh8=♖



13...♖b1 14.O-O (White's best) 14...♖f6 15.♖xf6 ♘xf6 16.♘e5 ♖xa2 17.♘c4 ♖a5 18.♖f3 ♘e7 19.♘g5 ♖d8 20.♘xe6! fx e6 21.♘xf6 +- ♖xd4 22.♖h5+ 1-0

Keep playing and winning!

Rob Escalante

www.TheNewChessPlayer.com