

**News Archive 2008**

**A Game of 'Space Chess' - ISS v Mission Control**

*24 July 2008*



Chess on the ISS

It is a well-known fact that chess has a venerable history behind it. It was being played before the sixth century in south and east Asia from where it spread to Persia, and then the rest of the world; and now even beyond: Since the start of July 2008, an unusual game of chess has been taking place in space, between the crew of the ISS and the staff at the six mission control centres.

US astronaut Gregory Chamitoff opened the game for the crew of the ISS, offering a classic queen's gambit: pawn to d4. Mission control neutralised that move with pawn to d5 and, since then, each day has seen a move from one of the ISS crew and a counter-move from one of the mission control staff.

The various mission control centres rotate turns, as it were, so that Houston, Huntsville, Oberpfaffenhofen, Tsukuba, Korolev and Toulouse all get a go. During the daily 'morning planning conference' (midday, German time) the ISS crew plays its move and at the 'evening planning conference' it is mission control's turn.



Chess at mission control, Oberpfaffenhofen

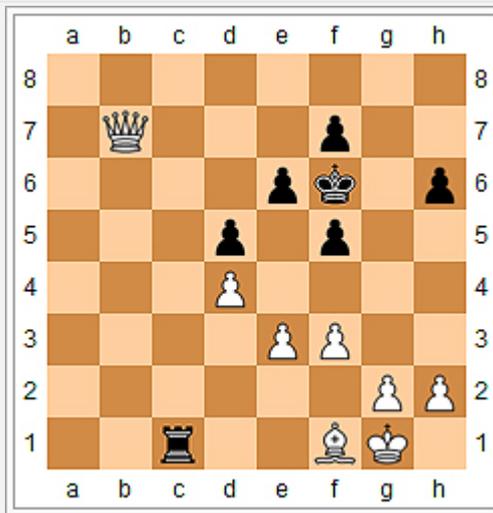
### "Houston, we've got your queen"

"The game was the idea of the Russian members of the ISS crew," says Roberto Passini. He made the first move in the Columbus Control Centre at the German Aerospace Center (DLR) in Oberpfaffenhofen. "The crew of the ISS are going to win," believes Prashant Shukia, also from the Columbus Control Centre.

"We are playing with six different strategies – up there in the ISS, they have just one. They clearly have the advantage."

In the course of the game, mission control (playing black) has sacrificed its queen, but that does not seem cause for undue concern – this game still has a long way to go!

**Note: The game has been resigned after 30 moves!**



The crew of the ISS (playing white) in a notable game of correspondence chess with the staff of the mission control centres (playing black). State of the board after 30 moves (12 August 2008).  
Image: Wikipedia/GPL.

English Notation			Algebraic Notation	
Crew	MCC	Mission Control	Crew	MCC
P-Q4	P-Q4	MCC-H	d4	d5
N-QB3	P-QB3	POIC	Nc3	c6
B-KB4	N-KB3	COL-CC	Bf4	Nf6
N-KB3	N-Q2	SSIPC	Nf3	Nbd7
P-K3	P-K3	MCC-M	e3	e6
N-K5	Q-QR4	ATV-CC	Ne5	Qa5
B-Q3	N-K4	MCC-H	Bd3	Nxe5
B-K5	B-QR6	POIC	Bxe5	Ba3
Q-QB1	B-QN5	COL-CC	Qc1	Bb4
Castle	P-QN3	SSIPC	O-O	b6
P-QR4	B-QR3	MCC-M	a4	Ba6
N-QN5	Castle	ATV-CC	Nb5	O-O
B-KB6	P-KB3	MCC-H	Bxf6	gxf6
P-QB3	P-QN4	POIC	Pc3	Pxb5
R-Q1	R-QB1	COL-CC	Rd1	Rc8
PxQN5	BxR	SSIPC	Pxb5	Bxc3

RxQR5	BxR	MCC-M	Rxa5	Bxa5
Q-QN1	B-QN2	ATV-CC	Qb1	Bb7
P-QN4	P-KB4	MCC-H	b4	f5
PxQR5	PxQR4	POIC	Pxa5	Pxa5
R-QB1	P-QP5	COL-CC	Rc1	a4
RxQB8	BxQB1	SSIPC	Rxc8	Bxc8
Q-QN4	B-Q2	MCC-M	Qb4	Bd7
QxPR4	R-QB1	ATV-CC	Qxa4	Rc8
QxPR7	R-QB8+	MCC-H	Qxa7	Rc1+
B-KB1	B-QB1	POIC	Bf1	Bc8
P-QN6	K-KN2	COL-CC	Qa8	Kg7
P-QN7	BxPb7	SSIPC	Pb7	Bb7
QxBb7	K-KB3	MCC-M	Qb7	Kf6
P-KB3	P-QR6	ATV-CC	f3	Ph6

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