

A Chess Addict by Bill Wall

Ok, I admit it. I am a chess addict.

I have played thousands of games over 40 years (actually 77,951, but who's counting). Why, I played over 4,000 games on the Internet last year alone. I have over 8,000 chess books. I can't possibly read them all. I have millions of games on DVD, CD, removable drives, thumb drives, Zip drives, 3.5 inch diskettes, and 5 1/4 inch diskettes (they are still good). I can't possibly play them all. I have all the chess programs and all the databases. I have ChessBase and NICBase and Chess Assistant and Bookup and Fritz and GNU and TascBase and HIARCS and Rybka and Shredder and Komodo.

I am playing so much on the Internet or at clubs, I don't have the time to look at them. My games are in PGN, CBF, CBH, CBV, TXT, ZIP, DOC, DOCX, PDF, RTF, etc. And I have 65 chess books and thousands of chess articles. And I haven't run out of ideas yet.

I have organized dozens of events, been involved in chess politics at all levels, and have won my fair share of tournaments. I have my own chess web site with hundreds of links and dozens of chess trivia articles. I guess I am a hopeless chess addict. I read chess blogs instead of news and *This Week in Chess* instead of keeping up with current events this week. My wife tries to break me of it with cards or sports or TV or movies or sex or seeing relatives, but nothing works to cure me. I have withdrawal pains if I don't play a game after a few days. I am on the computer playing chess or at the local chess club or looking at some postal game all the time. Don't let this happen to you. Identify the signs early.

You know you are a chess addict if:

- you bump into someone or something and say "J'adoube." And you don't even know French.
- you set up a chess set with salt and pepper shakers and food items when you sit at a checkered tablecloth.
- you calculate 8x8 faster than 7x7 and navigate like a knight - one block up and two blocks over.
- you have more chess clocks than watches or normal clocks and you use the chess clock as a kitchen timer.
- you buy the biggest, fastest, most expensive computer and monitor just to play blitz or bullet chess on it or use it as a chess database.
- mate, mating positions, exposed bishops, and forking the queen have nothing to do with sex.
- you take a chess set and chess book to the bathroom, and forget to go to the bathroom. And if you do go, you count all 32 pieces on your magnetic chessboard before flushing and panic if you flushed, then discover a piece missing.
- you meet someone, your first question is, "What's your Elo rating?"
- every week you downloaded every game from The Week in Chess.
- you buy a newspaper only if it has a chess column in it.
- you still think Bobby Fischer is the greatest person ever, despite his radio interviews and his 9/11 comments. You don't really believe he is dead, just hiding somewhere.
- you have more chess books than any other book or magazine combined.

- the Olympics have always been every two years.
- you spot the chessboard set up wrong in every movie with a chess scene.
- you know exactly what James Bond movie the above scene was taken from.
- you name any of your pets Fischer, Tal, Karpov, Kasparov, Fritz, Chess (not Checkers) or Alekhine.
- your favorite movie is *Searching for Bobby Fischer* or *The Queen's Gambit*.
- you have checkered underwear with "It's your move" on the front.
- you have fantasies of mating one of the Polgar sisters or (that's checkmating).
- have a crush on Irina Krush.
- your favorite snack is Pepperidge Farm's Chessmen cookies.
- you have the 2009 International Chess Calendar hanging up in front of you with your name on one of the calendar dates and know what famous chessplayer was born or died today.
- you have the "Chessplayers make better mates" bumper sticker on your car or briefcase.
- you know what BCO, ECO, MCO, NCO, PCO, UCO all mean and have all these books.
- you ask an attractive (or any) girl if she plays chess and what her rating is before you ask her out for a date. And if it didn't work out, you explain the two of you were "like bishops of opposite color."
- you end your letters and email with "P.S. 1.P-K4 (or 1.e4)" hoping to start a game.
- you drop everything and quickly spin around if you hear someone say, "Hi, Bobby" at a chess tournament (You still don't believe he is dead).
- you take a test, and 5 minutes before you run out of time, you mentally tell yourself that your flag is about to fall.
- you have your name on a brick in front of the Chess Hall of Fame in Miami.
- you go to any Barnes & Noble in the world and know exactly where all the chess books are located.
- you reply to messages found on rec.games.chess (unless it's from Sam Sloan).
- you post new messages looking for your only friends on rec.games.chess (unless it Sam Sloan).
- when the cashier says, "Check?" you wink and say "mate."
- you have a chess logo on your letterhead or shirt.
- you try to play cards blindfolded.
- wants the child's nursery to have black and white squares and all your tiles in your house are black and white squares.
- uses chessboard cufflinks and tie clips.
- only time voted was in the USCF election.
- has a chess mug for coffee.
- a Bishop scandal is someone who puts his Bishop on the wrong colored diagonal.
- fantasizes of also beating Mr Spock in 3-D chess.
- still thinks Magnus Carlsen is world champion
- going to a chess tournament and can't wait in saying "Look at those chess nuts boasting by an open foyer."
- looks for three other friends to play bug-house.
- have used any of these aliases while on the Internet: Buttvinik, Caissa, Gata, Bobby Fischer, IvanCheck, Polgar, Jadoube, Kapablanca, KnightStalker, KibitzandBlitz, KnightRider, Pawnographer, Philidork, Queenforker, Rookie Player, Roy Lopez, TarraschCan, Zukertort, KillerMate, the Turk (wait, those are all my handles).
- you have played the ghost of Geza Maroczy or challenged God with pawn odds.
- you own a Harry Potter or Civil War chess set.
- you played in over 100 chess tournaments all your life and have almost made \$100 (spending thousands on entry fees, hotels unless you slept in your car, travel, and cheap food).

- You have read all of this. And didn't laugh!