



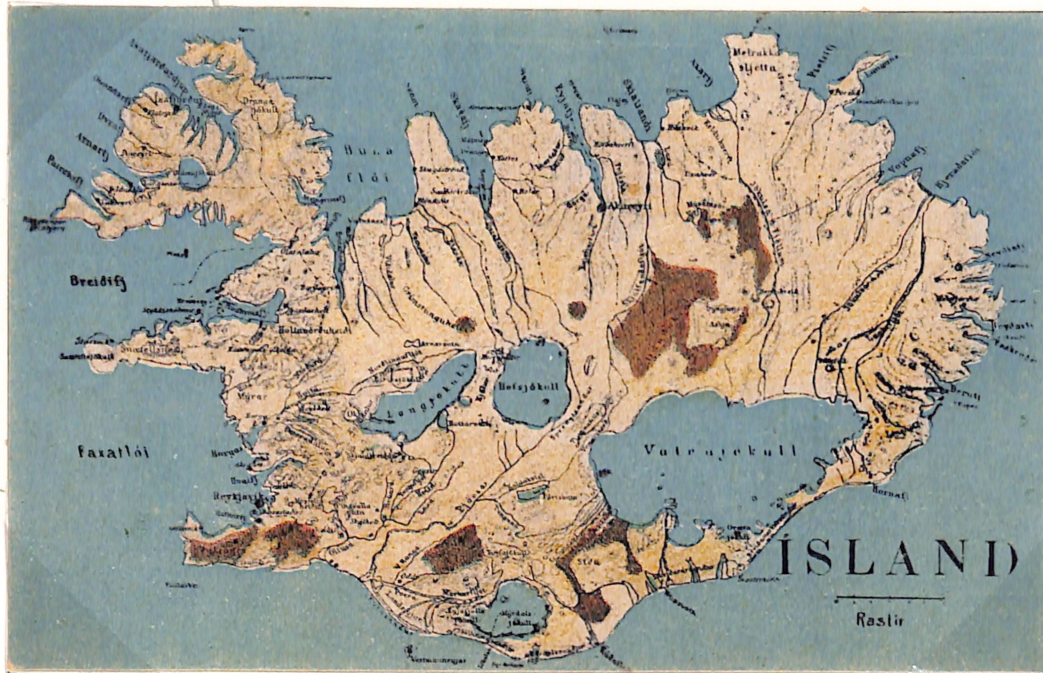
It is hard to remember the extent of the publicity and public awareness of the World Championship Chess match between the Russian champion, Boris Spassky, and the American challenger, Bobby Fischer. The match took place in Reykjavik against a background of the Cold War where there was little trust between the two sides. Spassky was the latest in a chain of Russian domination dating back to the 1948 championship. The 'America versus Russia' narrative in the Cold War context sparked unprecedented media interest and excitement. Fischer was also something of an eccentric and conspiracy theorist ... which made for an interesting backdrop to the match.

The first game was played on **11 July 1972**. The 21st and final game began on **31 August 1972**, with Spassky resigning the next day without resuming play. **Fischer became the 11th undisputed world champion.**

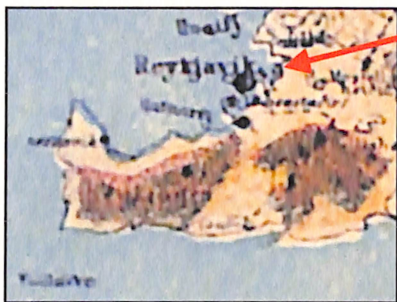
Halldór Pétursson was a renowned Icelandic artist and illustrator, known for his caricatures and drawings that were very widely known in Iceland. He gained international recognition for his 1972 illustrations of the Fischer / Spassky Championship.

The designs show the warriors in various forms of conflict, reflecting the deep antipathy between the two parties. There were 18 cards in the set (Copyright Artist). This exhibit shows 9 cards from the set. They are marked

HP



Antique map
postcard of
Iceland
Reykjavik is
situated in the
South West
corner
Publisher:
Egill Jacobsen
& Verzlunin
Björn
Kristjánsson



Postcard franked with Iceland **F.501** issued for the Championships, cancelled "REYKJAVIK HEIMSMEISTARAEINVIGI I SKAL 3.IX.1972" ('World Champion in Chess')
Artist Gisli Sigurðsson, Litho by LITBRA



1 Let battle commence! (although it got off to a bad start, with Fischer missing the opening ceremony and the draw for colours)

STRUCTURE OF EXHIBIT

Page	Description	Summary
1	Introduction	<i>The Match of the Century</i>
2	The Opening	<i>Spassky takes early lead</i>
3-4	The Development	<i>Fischer fights back</i>
5-9	The Middle Game	<i>Fischer gradually imposes himself</i>
10-12	The Endgame	<i>A new champion is crowned!</i>



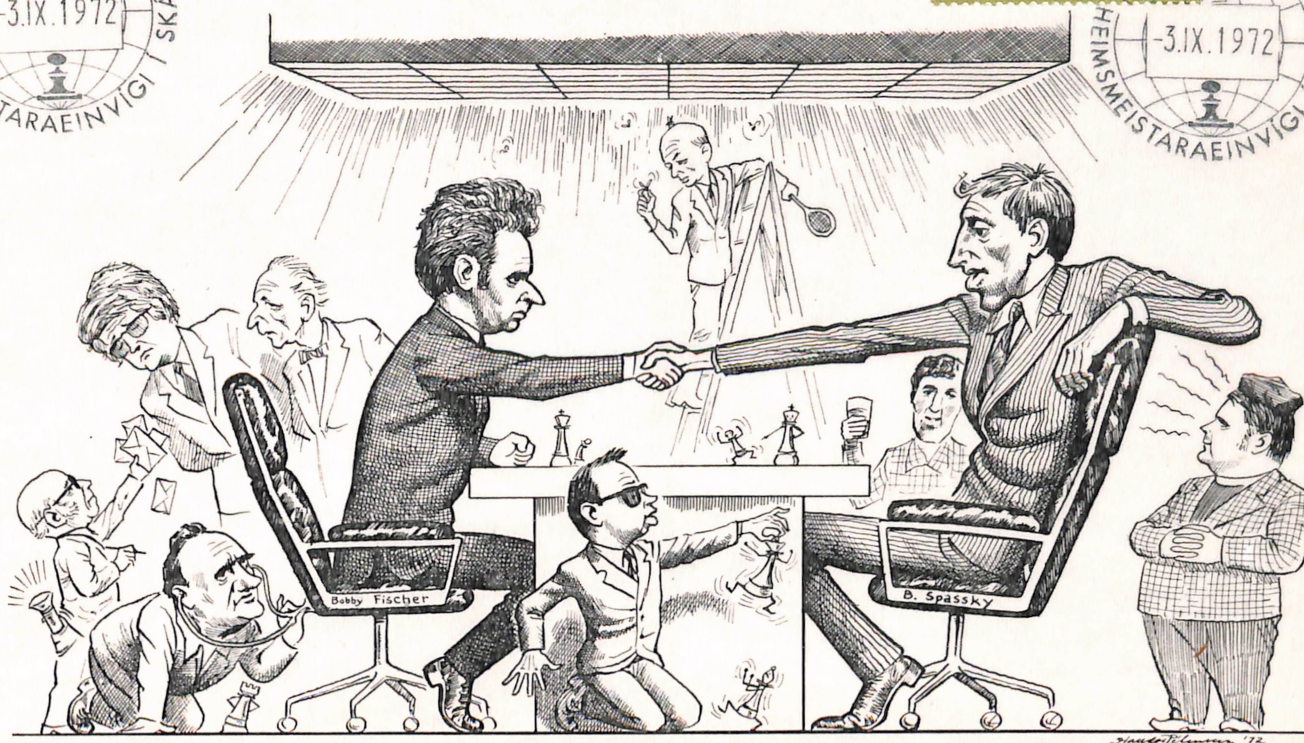


The match was the best of 24 games; the winner would be the player to reach 12½ points.

If the match was tied 12-12, the defending champion, Spassky, would retain the title.

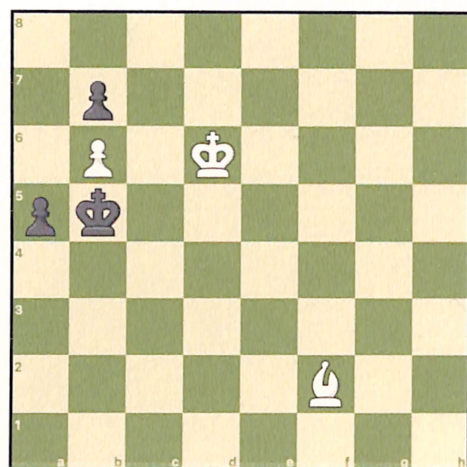
Three games per week were scheduled with a rest day.

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The match begins despite Fischer's paranoia

Match 1 11/7/1972
Spassky [W] / Fischer [B]



Match position after 56 moves
Black resigns
Match Score Spassky 1 Fischer 0

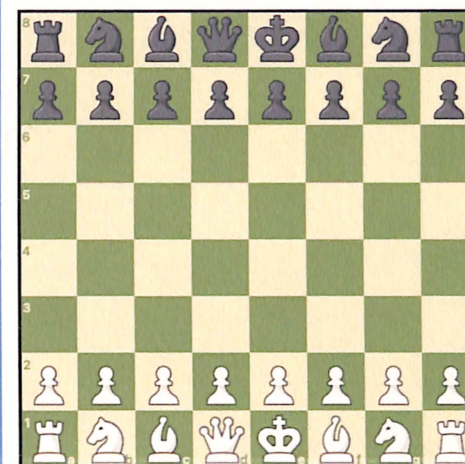
Spassky takes an early lead

Game 1 did not get off to a perfect start; Fischer was nine minutes late and was therefore behind on the clock. The game was heading for a draw when Fischer made a mistake which led to Spassky's win.

Fischer claimed that the television cameras distracted him.

Game 2 proved even more controversial as Fischer was unhappy with changes to the camera positions and he felt there was a conspiracy against him by the Icelandic Chess Federation which he believed was a communist front. He failed to turn up for the game and it defaulted to Spassky.

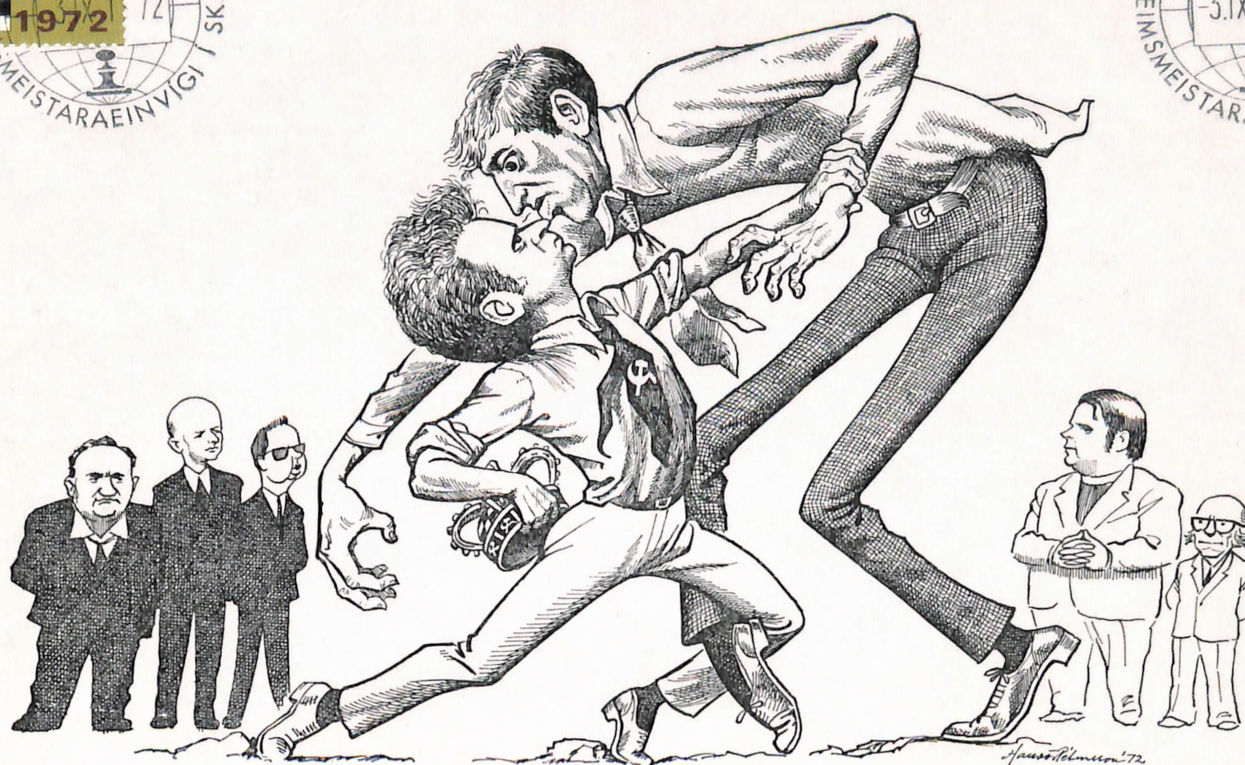
Match 2 13/7/1972
Spassky [B] / Fischer [W]



Fischer refused to play
Black wins by default
Match Score Spassky 2 Fischer 0



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Fischer fights back

Match 3 16/7/1972
Spassky [W] / Fischer [B]

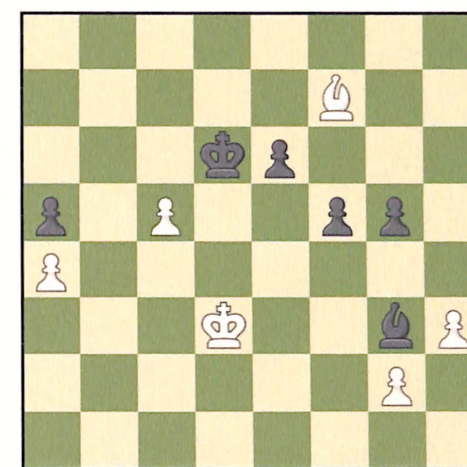


Match position after 41 moves
White resigns
Match Score Spassky 2 Fischer 1

Game 3 is recognised as a turning point in the match with Fischer's unusual 11th move seizing the initiative. The game was adjourned and Spassky resigned the following day after seeing Fischer's sealed move.

Game 4 went ahead after Spassky agreed to play in a backstage room with no cameras. Spassky had a small advantage but could not convert it to a win.

Match 4 18/7/1972
Spassky [B] / Fischer [W]



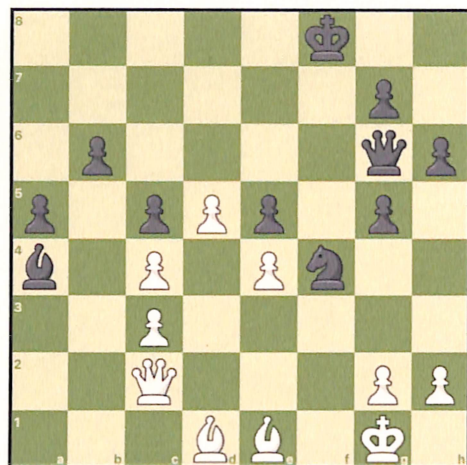
Match position after 45 moves
Draw
Match Score Spassky 2½ Fischer 1½



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Spassky tries to keep Fischer at bay

Match 5 20/7/1972
Spassky [W] / Fischer [B]

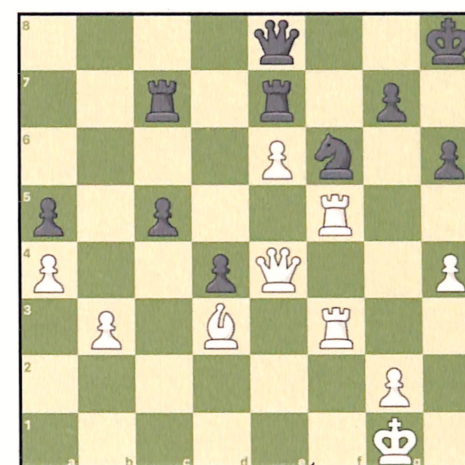


Match position after 28 moves
White Resigns
Match Score Spassky 2½ Fischer 2½

Game 5 was an even game until Spassky blundered on Move 27 and immediately resigned after Fischer's reply. Match now even!

Game 6 was an unusual opening by Fischer and Fischer steadily gained momentum, eventually taking the win. After the game, Spassky joined the audience in applauding Fischer's win, astounding Fischer who called his opponent "a true sportsman". Fischer now leads for the first time.

Match 6 23/7/1972
Spassky [B] / Fischer [W]



Match position after 41 moves
Black resigns
Match Score Spassky 2½ Fischer 3½

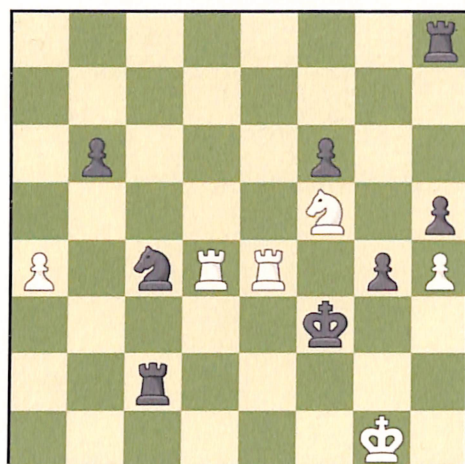


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Fischer takes advantage

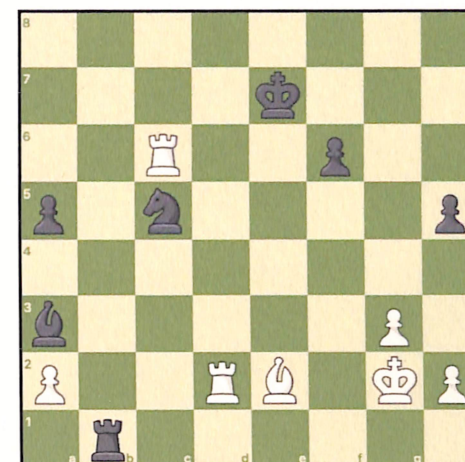
Match 7: 25/7/1972
Spassky [W] / Fischer [B]



Match position after 49 moves
Match Drawn
Match Score Spassky 3 Fischer 4

Game 7 was defended stoutly by Fischer who reached a winning endgame but then played carelessly, allowing Spassky to salvage a draw. The match ended in a draw by perpetual check.
Game 8 was another game where Spassky blundered, giving up rook for bishop. His position further deteriorated and Fischer took full advantage, winning the game and now leading the match by two points.

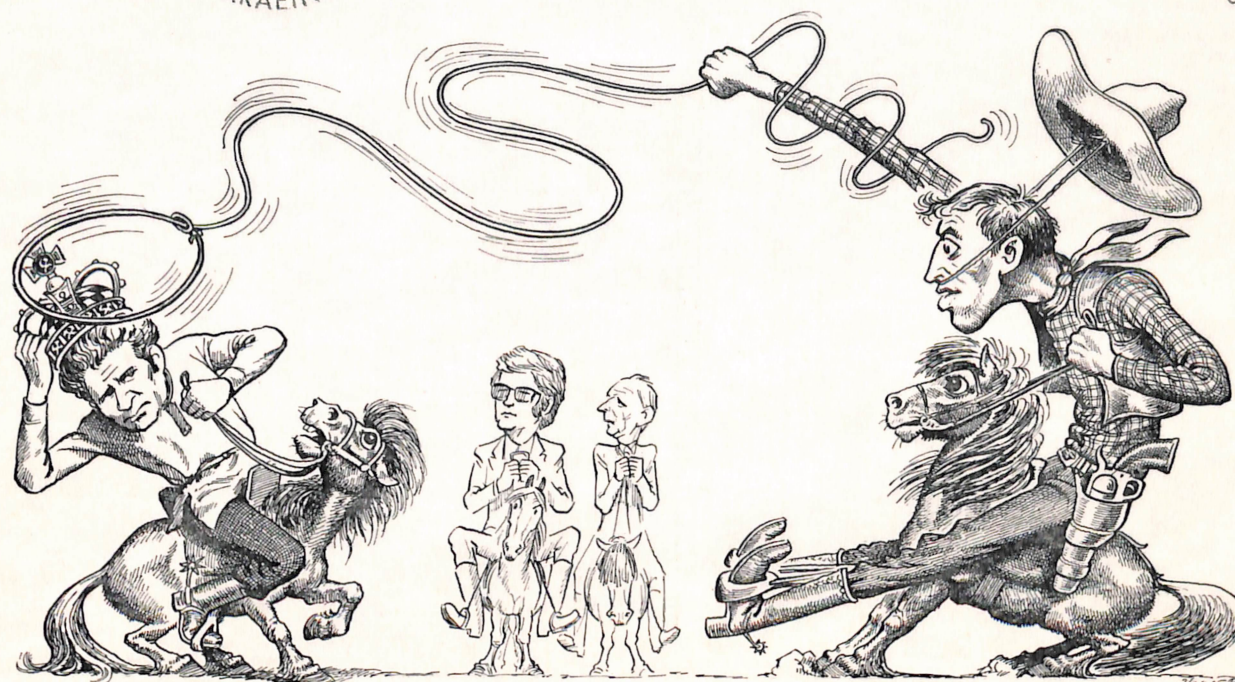
Match 8 27/7/1972
Spassky [B] / Fischer [W]



Match position after 37 moves
Black Resigns
Match Score Spassky 3 Fischer 5

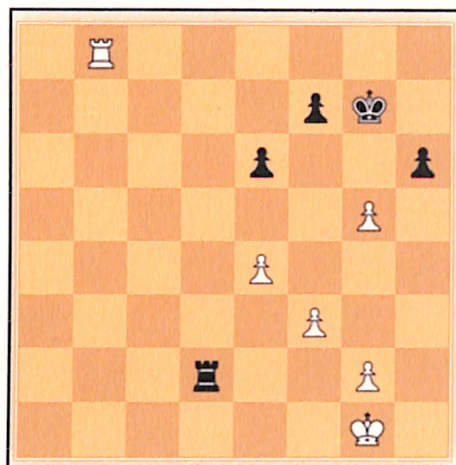


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Fischer edges further ahead

Match 9 1/8/1972
Spassky [W] / Fischer [B]



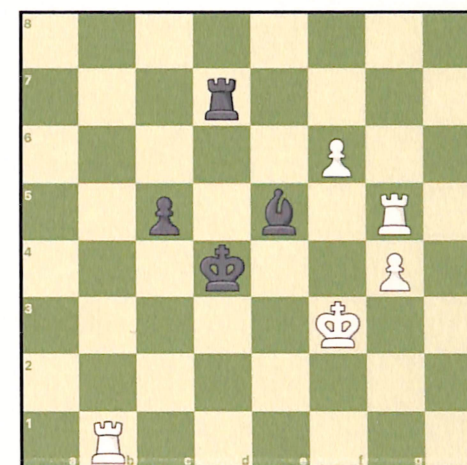
Match position after 29 moves
Match Drawn

Match Score Spassky 3½ Fischer 5½

Game 9 was delayed by two days (Spassky citing an illness) but the opening was quickly even and, after several exchanges, the game proceeded to a quiet draw.

Game 10 was won with Fischer's Ruy Lopez opening which gave him the upper hand. Spassky had chances to draw but Fischer won with precise play. Fischer increases lead to three.

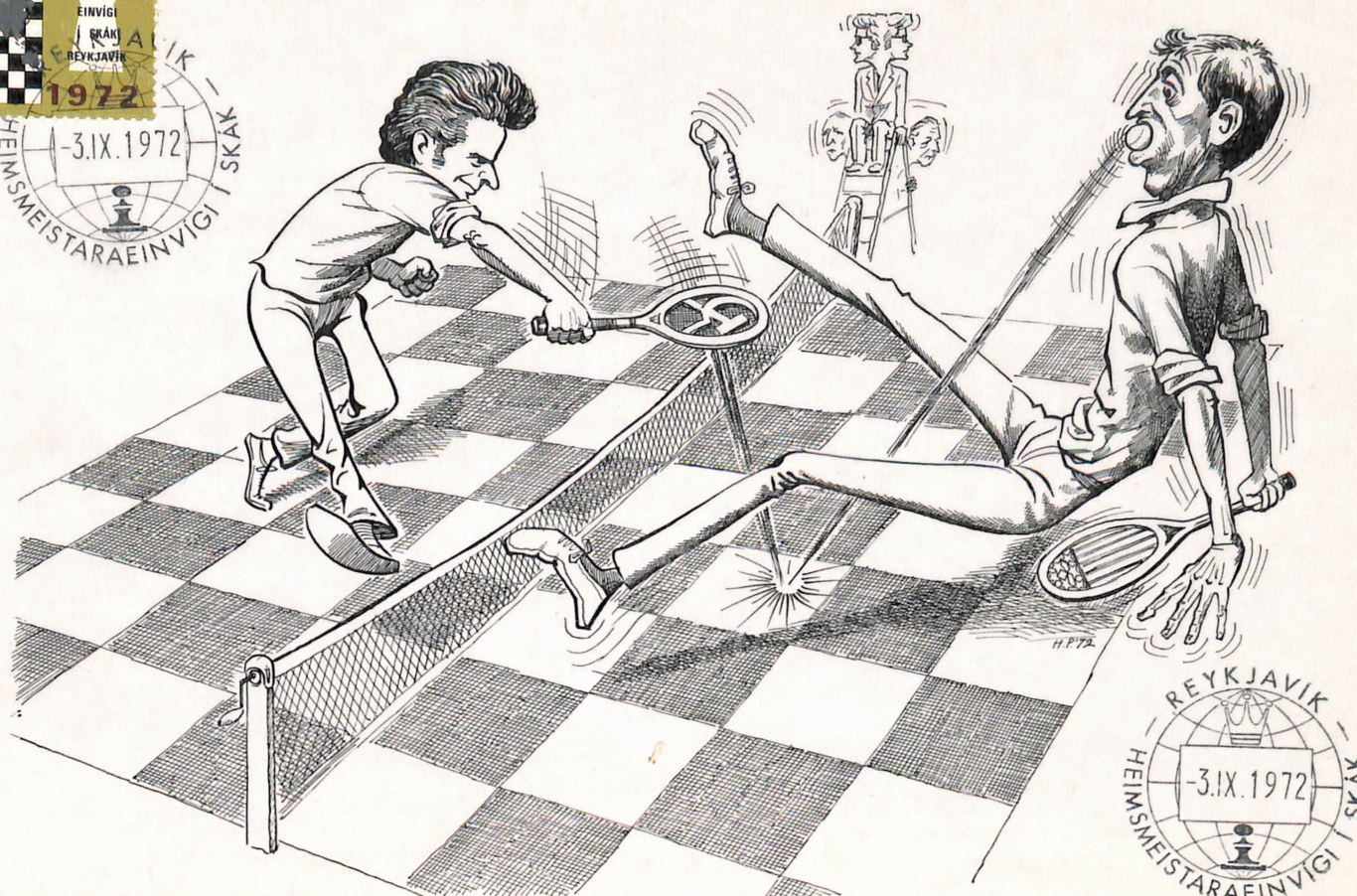
Match 10 3/8/1972
Spassky [B] / Fischer [W]



Match position after 56 moves
Black resigns
Match Score Spassky 3½ Fischer 6½



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Spassky strikes back!

Match 11 6/8/1972
Spassky [W] / Fischer [B]

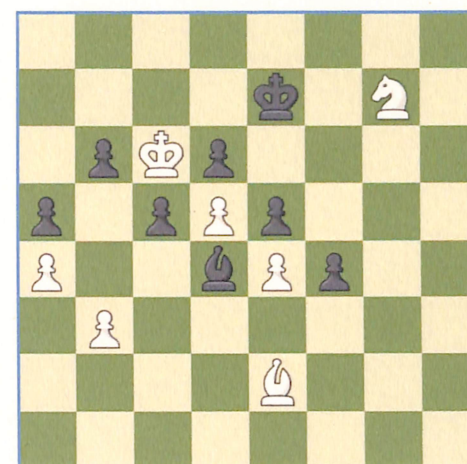


Match position after 31 moves
Black resigns
Match Score Spassky 4½ Fischer 6½

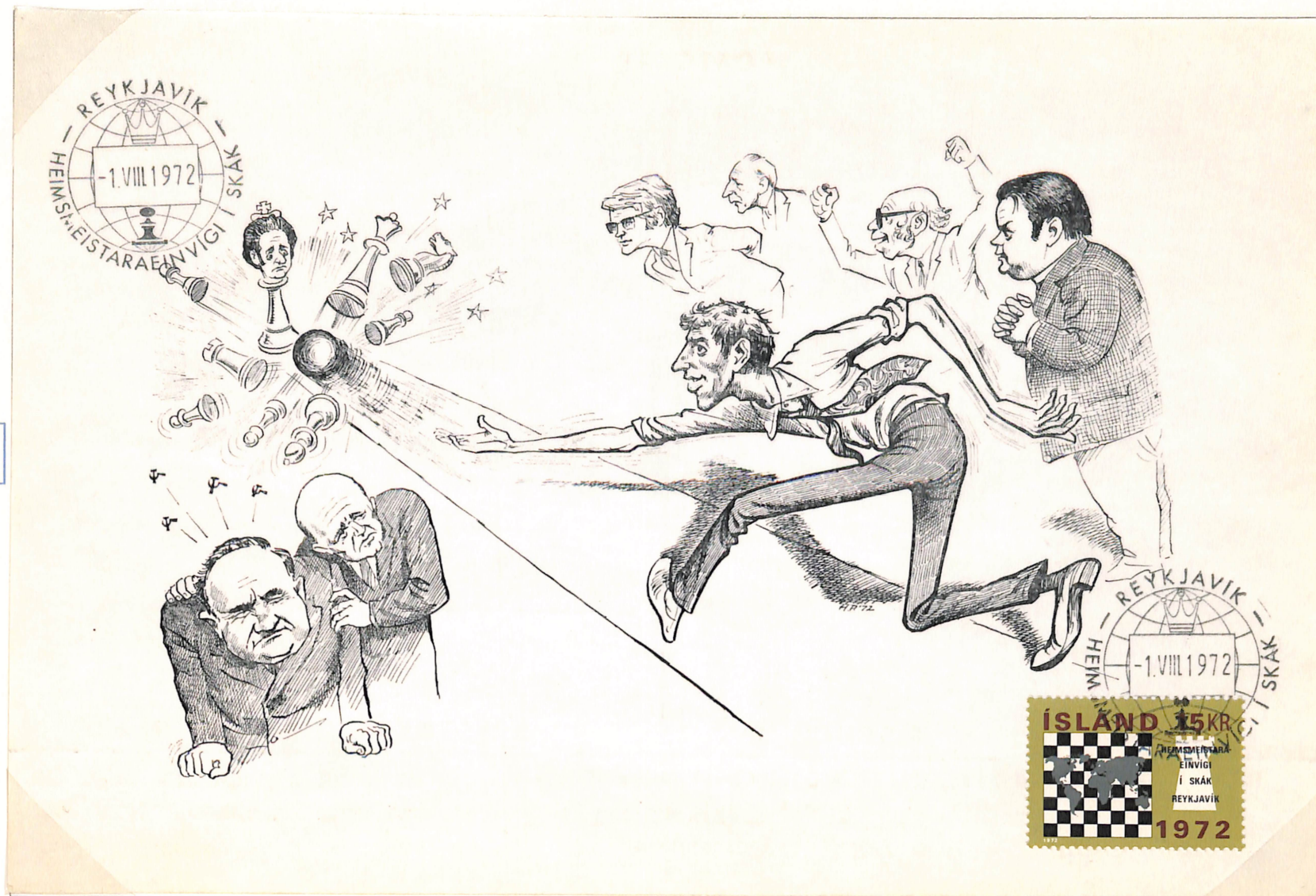
Game 11 was won by Spassky by introducing an unexpected move in the opening for which Fischer had not prepared. This was the only time in Fischer's career that he lost using the Poisoned Pawn variation in a competitive game.

Game 12 proved a quiet game where neither player was able to gain an advantage. Honours even! But Fischer still leads by two.

Match 12 8/8/1972
Spassky [B] / Fischer [W]



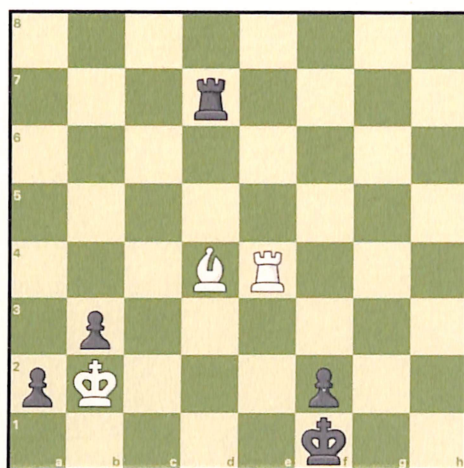
Match position after 55 moves
Match drawn
Match Score Spassky 5 Fischer 7



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Fischer increases the pressure

Match 13 10/8/1972
Spassky [W] / Fischer [B]

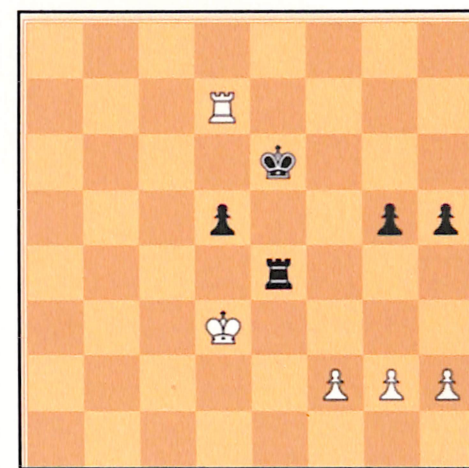


Match position after 74 moves
White resigns
Match Score Spassky 5 Fischer 8

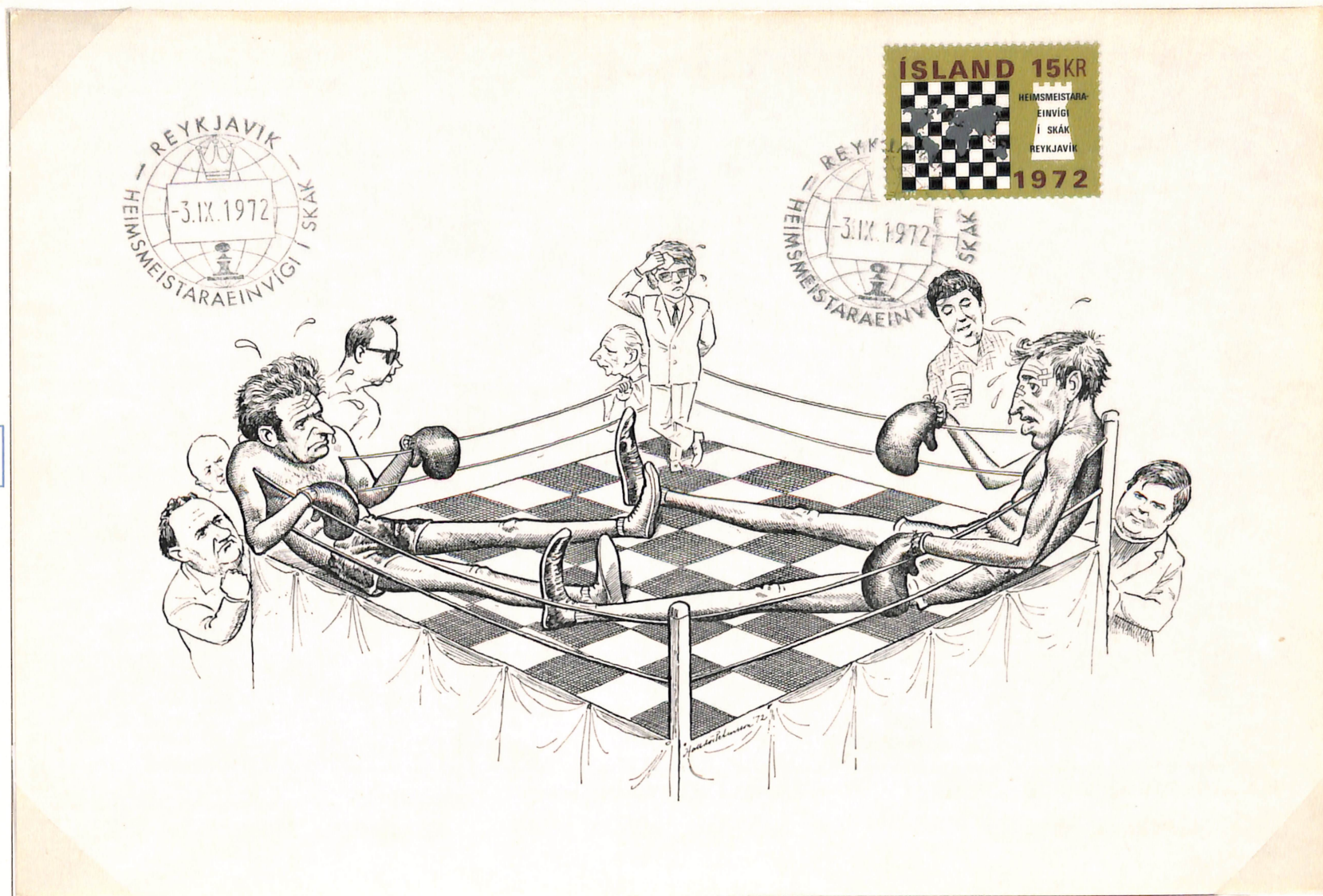
Game 13 was won by Fischer who took an advantage in the opening although both players subsequently had chances. Although the adjourned position looked like a draw, Spassky again blundered, losing to his dismay. He was obviously 'in shock' after the game. Fischer leads by three again.

Game 14 was postponed at Spassky's request but it turned out to be the first of a series of 7 games which were drawn with Spassky choosing safe lines which Fischer was unable to break. The three point lead remained unchanged throughout.

Match 14 15/8/1972
Spassky [B] / Fischer [W]



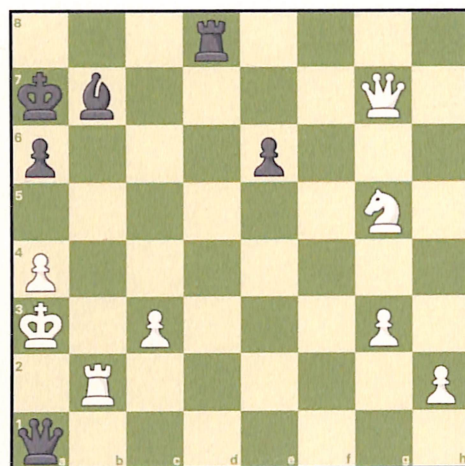
Match position after 40 moves
Match Drawn
Match Score Spassky 5½ Fischer 8½



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Tiredness is creeping in

Match 15 17/8/1972
Spassky [W] / Fischer [B]

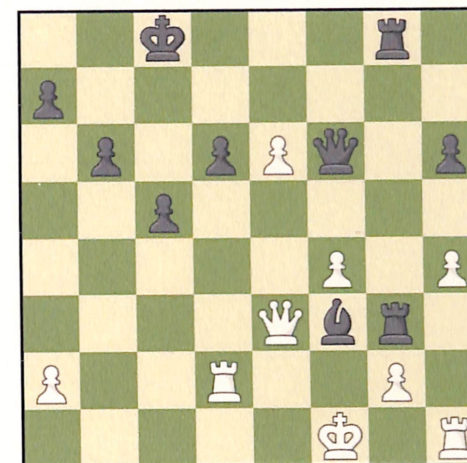


Match position after 45 moves
Match Drawn
Match Score Spassky 6 Fischer 9

Game 15 was drawn after Spassky gained an early advantage, but Fischer found a strong attack which was rebuffed by Spassky and Fischer only drew by repetition after 43 moves.

Game 16 was an equal game which ended in a prolonged draw.

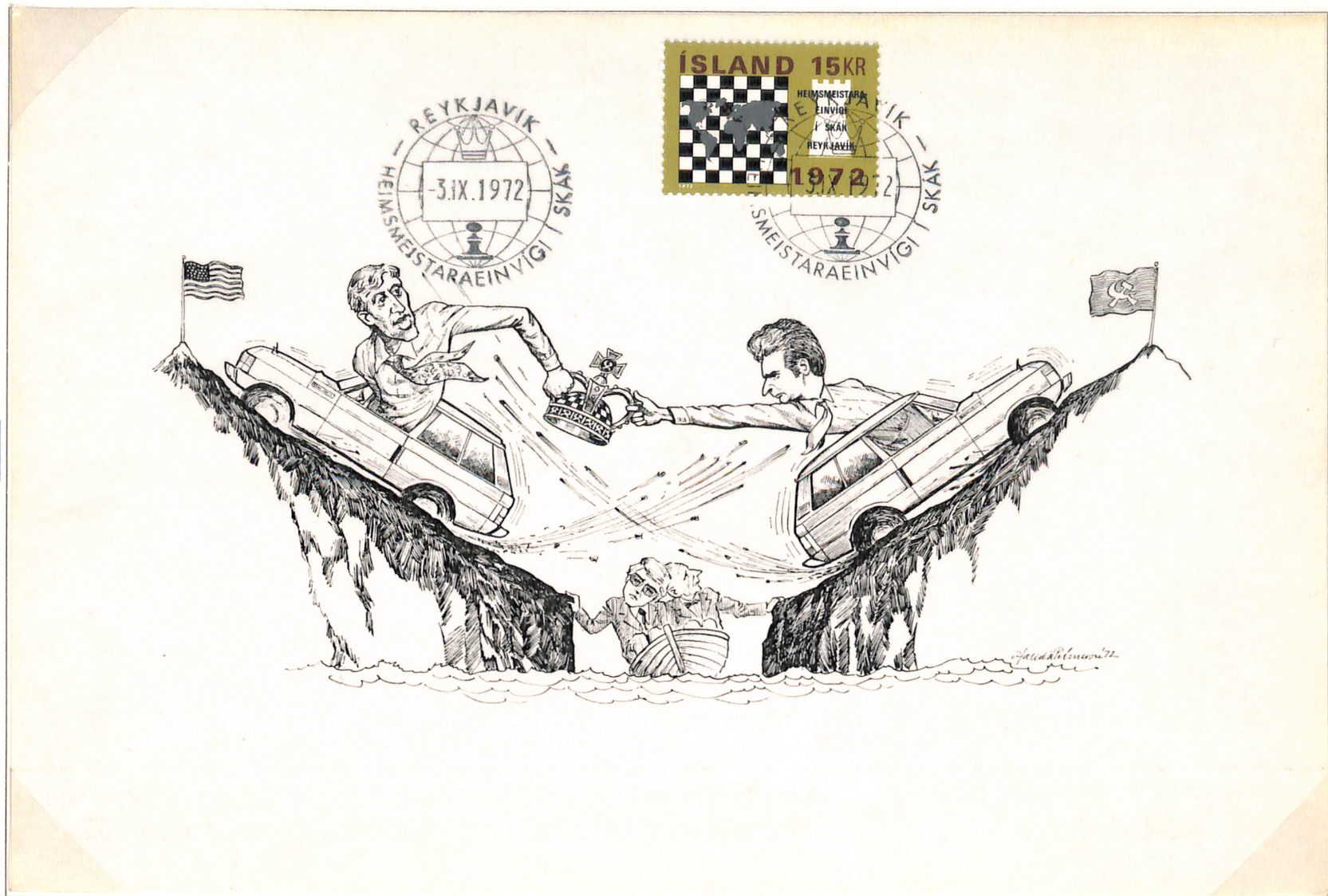
Match 16 20/8/1972
Spassky [B] / Fischer [W]



Match position after 60 moves
Match drawn
Match Score Spassky 6½ Fischer 9½

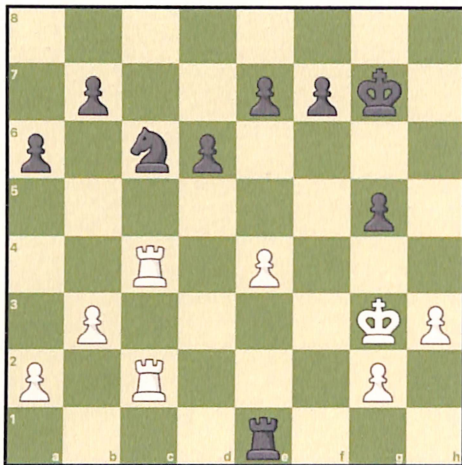


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No quarter given

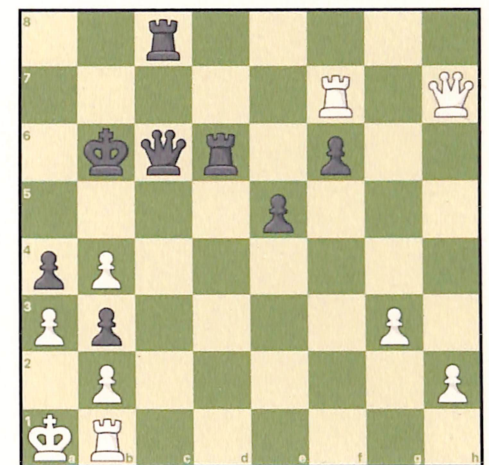
Match 17 22/8/1972
 Spassky [W] / Fischer [B]



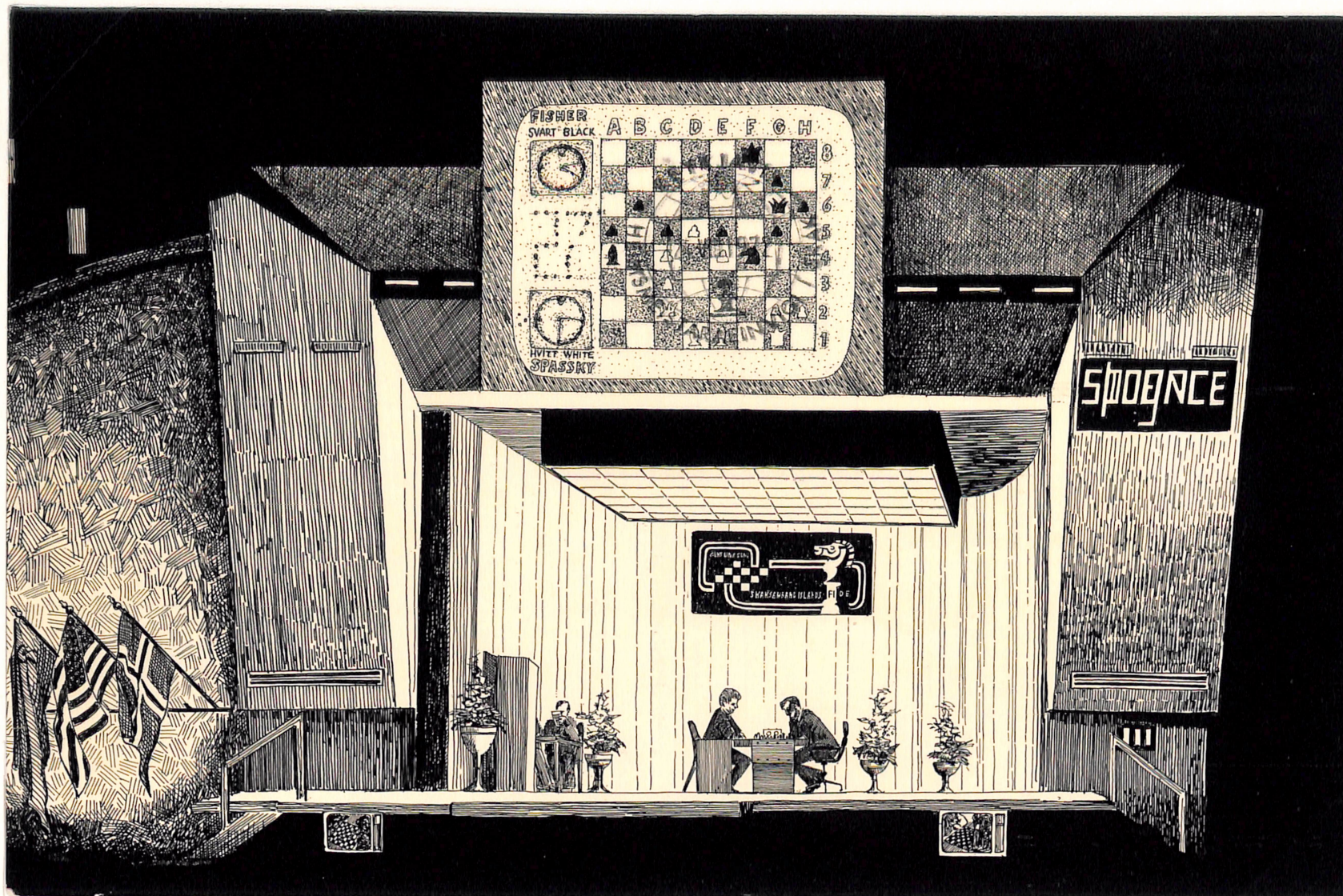
Match position after 45 moves
 Match Drawn
 Match Score Spassky 7 Fischer 10

Game 17 again ended in a draw by repetition
 Game 18 was an equal game after the opening and
 was again drawn by repetition

Match 18: 24/8/1972
 Spassky [B] / Fischer [W]



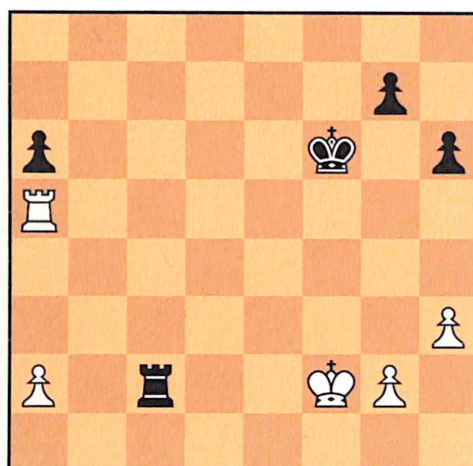
Match position after 47 moves
 Match Drawn
 Match Score Spassky 7½ Fischer 10½



From reverse of card c. 33%

It looks serene but Spassky resists, to no avail

Match 19 27/8/1972
Spassky [W] / Fischer [B]



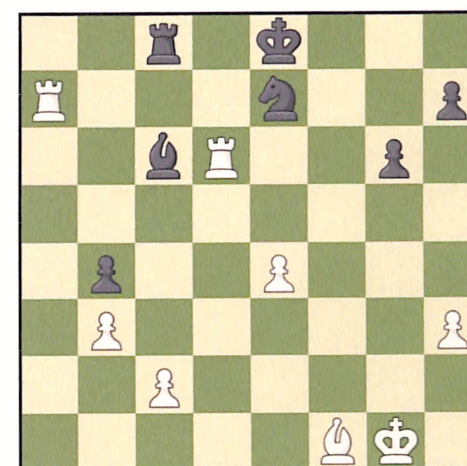
Match position after 40 moves
Match Drawn
Match Score Spassky 8 Fischer 11

Published by Icelandic Chess Federation
Artist Gisli Sigurðsson, Litho in Iceland by Endurprent

Game 19 was again drawn although both players
had opportunities and sacrifices were made by both
sides ... to no avail.

Game 20 was drawn although Spassky had the
upper hand and Fischer seemed content to play for
the draw, which Spassky eventually agreed.

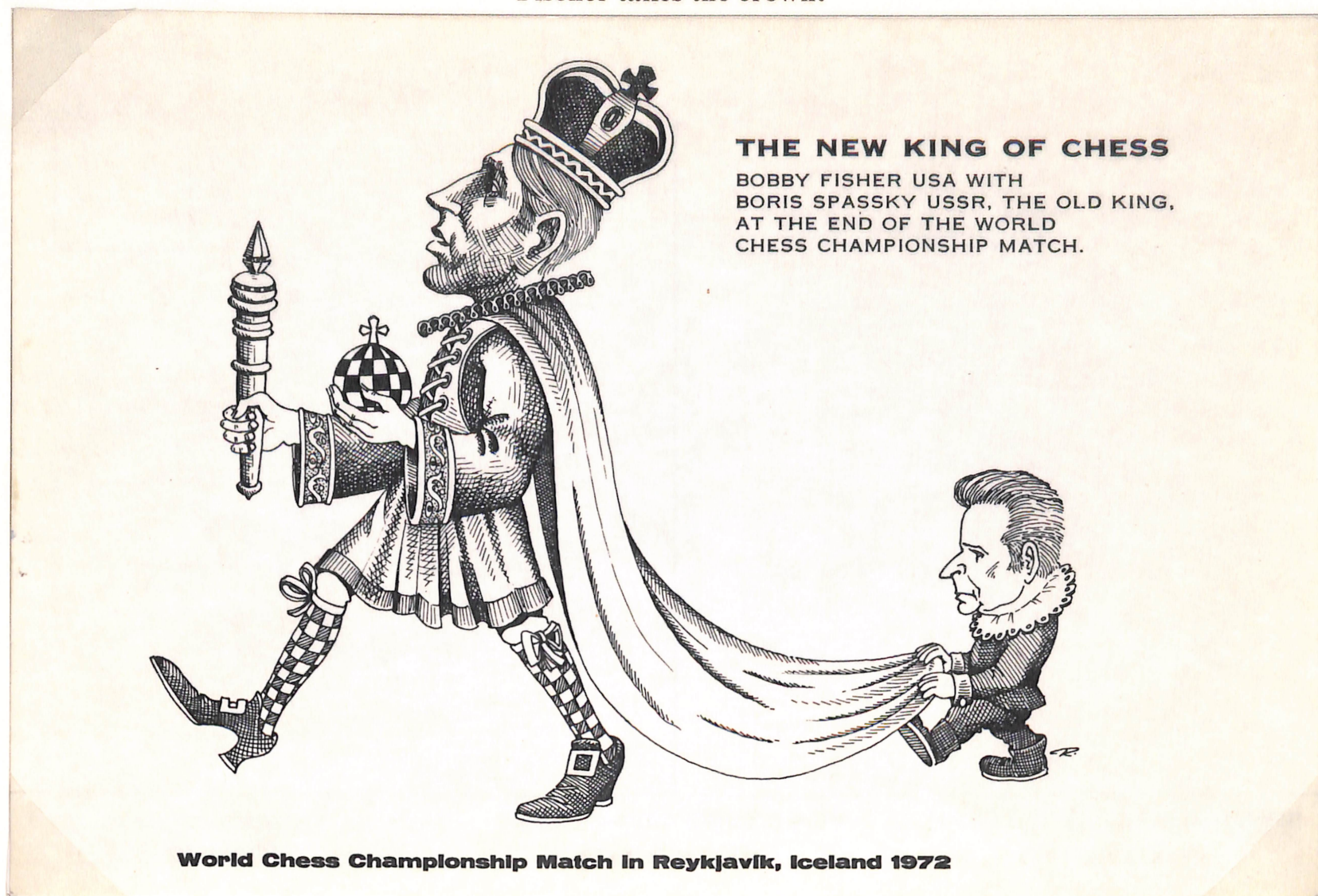
Match 20 29/8/1972
Spassky [B] / Fischer [W]



Match position after 54 moves
Match Drawn
Match Score Spassky 8½ Fischer 11½



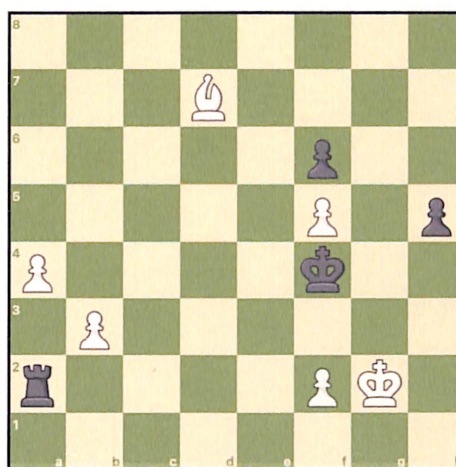
Fischer takes the crown!



World Chess Championship Match in Reykjavik, Iceland 1972

Game 21 saw Fischer use an unusual defence which surprised Spassky. Spassky played badly in the endgame and the game was adjourned with a big advantage for Fischer. Spassky's sealed move was not the strongest and would have allowed Black to win comfortably. On the day scheduled for the resumption of the game (1 September), arbiter Lothar Schmid informed Fischer and the audience that Spassky had resigned the game by telephone, making Fischer the winner of the match. FIDE President Max Euwe expressed disappointment that Spassky did not go to the playing hall to congratulate Fischer who became the game's 11th world champion.

Match 21 31/8/1972
Spassky [W] / Fischer [B]



Match position after 41 moves
White resigns!

FINAL MATCH SCORE
Bobby Fischer 12½
Boris Spassky 8½

Fischer, already the highest ranked player, is crowned World Champion, a title he would hold until 1975 when he refused to defend his title when an agreement could not be reached with FIDE, chess's international governing body, over the match conditions