

**05-2003 [A-4793] Excalibur - Talking Robotic Chess** (never released)

On the Excalibur website, on March 26, 2002, the text "Buy It Now" with an image of a chess robot with a moving gripping arm that independently places the pieces on the correct squares.

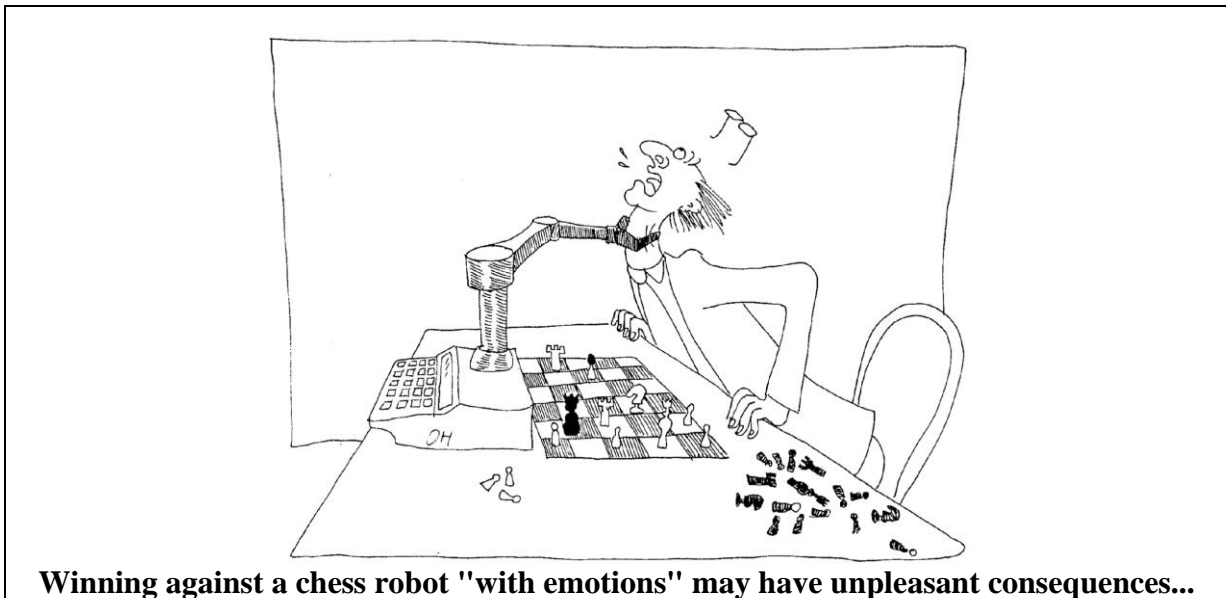
**Like a real human opponent, Robotic Chess talks and moves its own pieces! All other chess computers require you to make moves for both armies. But now Excalibur Electronics after years of research and a partnership with the University of Hong Kong brings you the world's most sophisticated chess computer! Its 500-word speaking vocabulary, powerful play, teaching features, and more than 100 selectable levels make this the choice for chess players of any strength from masters to beginners!**



## **Excalibur Talking Robotic Chess**

**Large 500 word speaking vocabulary. Uses speech to give encouragement, chess information, comments and hints to help improve your playing skills. Sound can be disabled by a button. Super strong chess programs capable of beating over 99% of all chess players. Rating estimated to be over Grandmaster playing strength. Opening book library contains standard chess openings. 100 Levels of Play from Beginner to Master rated. Extended Teach Modes - For beginners or Experienced players. Hint feature. Takeback move function - lets you experiment and change a move. Save game feature. Includes instructions for the following languages; English, French, German, Portuguese, Italian, and Spanish. Powered by 4 AA batteries. A/C Adapter Optional. Board Size 24x24.**

In the USA this robot should cost about 499 Dollars and in Europe 499 Euros. According to Excalibur, this robot should be on the market in the USA in the summer of 2002. In Germany, the robot should be available from August 2002 onwards, according to its chief distributor Rudolf Bayerl (TCS-GmbH). The chess program would be identical to the Excalibur Grandmaster with about 1850 Elo. After a long silence, it suddenly became clear in May 2003 that this chess robot would not be built. Excalibur did not give an explanation for this step. What a deception for all those who were waiting for this robot. A Novag Robot Adversary was unattainable for many collectors because of its rarity, so this news really hit them hard!



It was not until 20 January 2016 that Ron Nelson himself answered the question of why this chess robot had never come to market. This was done via the HIARCS forum.

**Bryan,**

**Ron, can you remember why Excalibur never released this robot? Plus whatever happened to the prototype the university made for Excalibur? What was your personally involvement with it?**

**ChessChallenger (Ron Nelson),**

**No, Excalibur never produced that robotic chess. The unit design concept was done by DAKA, a Hong Kong based design and manufacturing company. Excalibur bought a few of their products, a vertical rotating CD Case storage unit was one, so Shane asked them if they could make a robotic auto sensory chess unit. They started working on it and presented that photo rendering of their concept. I was to supply my Grandmaster H8 software & chip to communicate with their robotic chip they would design. I was skeptical of the size factor, since Shane insisted it be Grandmaster size. DAKA worked with a University of Hong Kong professor in their robotics area to build a prototype hand to pick up and move pieces. We went there for a demo when the prototype was finished and it worked "OK". When Daka started quoting the units high cost, Shane started losing interest, and the product development died.**

**Bryan,**

**Thanks Ron. Shame it never went into production as the design is excellent.**