

The mice that roared

NEW ZEALAND was represented at the Chess Olympiad in Haifa, Israel, by, perhaps on paper not our strongest team, but certainly one with determination and fighting spirit. The result was New Zealand had our best ever placing, and results like taking one and a half points from England mean that any future Kiwi team will be watched very carefully.

We finished in 21st place of the 48 countries competing and our 27 points left us 10 behind the winners, USA. Second was the Dutch team, which had been at the front all the way, and the bronze medals were carried off by England — no, in fact, due to a mix up, they were given silver instead at the prize giving!

The players were:
Board 1 M. Chandler (Wellington); Board 2, E. Green (Auckland) Player/Captain; board 3, V. Small (Christchurch); board 4, R. Smith (Auckland); board 5, L. Cornford (Gisborne); board 6, W. Leonhardt (Auckland) Player/Manager.

The Olympiad is played over four boards so, each round, two of the team would stand down.

Vernon Small played very good chess and narrowly missed out on a board prize. One of his most interesting games from the event was a draw with R. Beyen of the Belgian squad.

Haifa 1976.

RUY LOPEZ

V. Small R. Beyen

1. e4

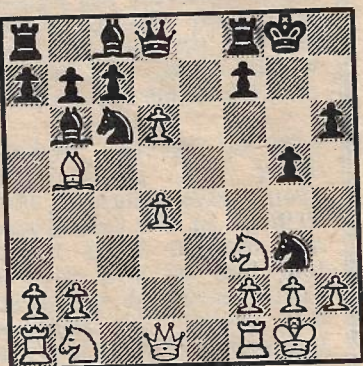
The man's move.

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| 1. . . . | e5 |
| 2. Nf3 | Nc6 |
| 3. Bb5 | Bc5 |
| 4. O-O | Nf6 |
| 5. c3 | O-O |
| 6. d4 | Bb6 |
| 7. Bg5 | h6 |
| 8. Bh4 | e×d4?! |

A theoretical novelty, not given a mention in the Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings.

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| 9. e5 | g5 |
| 10. Bg3 | Ne4 |
| 11. c×d4 | d5 |
| 12. e×d6(ep) | N×g3 |

BLACK



WHITE

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| 13. d×c7! | Qf6 |
| 14. h×g3 | Bg4 |
| 15. Nc3 | B×f3 |

Bad is 15 . . . N×d4. 16, Nd5! Eg 16 . . . N×f3 ch. 17, g×f3 Q×f3. 18, Q×f3 B×f3. 19, N×b6 a×b6. 20, Bd7! and wins the exchange.

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| 16. Q×f3 | Q×f3 |
| 17. g×f3 | N×d4 |

From now on the game seems to waltz from one dilemma to another with White seemingly gaining an overwhelming position. But Black defends brilliantly, thrusting forward again after each knockback.

Small's problem here is how to defend both his f and c pawn.

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| 18. R(f)d1! | Ne6 |
| 18 . . . | N×f3 ch. 19, Kg2 |
| and 19 . . . | Nd4. 20, Bd7 |
| or 19 . . . | Ne5. 20, Nd5 are |
| <i>both winning for White.</i> | |
| 19. Nd5 | B×c7 |
| 20. Bd7 | Be5 |
| 21. Re1! | |

Black seems to be in trouble. If, say 21 . . . Bg7. 22, R(a)d1 gives White a bind. But the resourceful Belgian has yet another defence.

21. . . . Nd4!

The bishop is indirectly defended and Small is forced to cover both the N×f3 ch and Nc2 threat. He had of course foreseen . . .

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| 22. Re4! | R(f)d8 |
| <i>By side-stepping 22 . . . N×f3 ch? and 22 . . . f5?, against which Small would have replied 23, Kg2 and 23, Ne7 ch respectively, Beyen sets yet another teaser. How do the white pieces untangle themselves?</i> | |
| 23. Kg2 | |

Attacks the bishop!

23. . . . f6

Vernon looked to be in a spot of trouble here, but the old brain was working at full capacity by this stage and he found a final finesse.

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| 24. Rd1! | R×d7 |
| 25. R×e5 | Kf7 |
| 26. Re4 | |

And they decided to split the point here.

When asked to describe Small's play Bill Hartston instantly replied: "neo-Gothic"!

MURRAY CHANDLER