

A class of his own

WORLD CHAMPION Anatoly Karpov pulled back the field after a disastrous start of 2/5 to win the Soviet championships by a full point. With nearly all of the players world renowned grandmasters, this further impressive victory proves Karpov to be in a class of his own.

Tigran Petrosian, former world champion and one of the favourites, had a steady tournament, finishing third equal. But it was unlucky round 13 for him when he was crushingly defeated, as white, by young GM and fellow Armenian Rafael Vaganian, Karpov's boyhood rival. Moscow, USSR Championship 1976.

ENGLISH OPENING

T. Petrosian	R. Vaganian
1. c4	Nf6
2. Nc3	c5
3. g3	d5
4. cxd5	Nxd5
5. Bg2	Nc7
6. d3	e5
7. Nf3	Nc6
8. Nd2	

This is all well known. White now threatens to capture on c6 and then put pressure on Black's e pawn, using c4 as a strong base for his knight. The doubled c pawns would be weak, hence Vaganian's next move.

8. . . .	Bd7
9. O-O	Be7
10. Nc4	O-O!?

This pawn sacrifice is considered unclear in theory. Black's bishops will become very powerful if the position is ever opened up, but of course "a pawn is a pawn!"

11. Bxc6	Bxc6
12. Nxe5	Be8
13. e4	

When in Switzerland at the Biel Interzonal I saw Smejkal try a new move against Portisch, with 13, Be3!? Play continued 13 . . . Ne6. 14, Qb3 b6. 15, Qd5 Qc8. 16, f4. I thought White's position was better, but Smejkal got into time trouble and eventually lost.

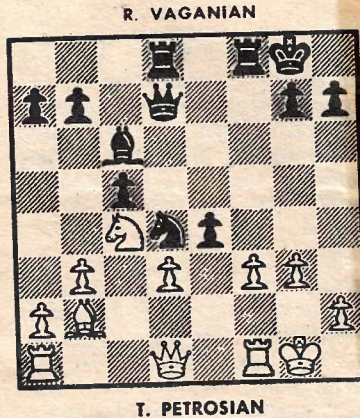
13. . . .	Bf6
14. Ng4	Bd4
15. Ne3	Bc6
16. Nf5	

This appears to waste too much time. Eliminating Black's bishop pair at the expense of giving him a strong knight on d4 is costly, and White's knight does little otherwise. Better is the developing 16, Bd2.

16. . . .	Ne6
17. Nd5	Re8

Threatening to capture on d5 as there is no knight fork on e7 at the end.

18. Nxd4	Nxd4
19. Ne3	Qd7
20. f3	R(a)d8
21. b3	f5
22. Bb2	Rf8
23. Nc4	fxe4!



Karppv	X	1	1/2	1/2	1	1/2	1/2	0	1/2	1/2	1	1	1	1/2	1/2	1	1	1	12
Balashov	0	X	1/2	1	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1	1	1	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1	1/2	1	11
Petrosian	1/2	1/2	X	1/2	1/2	1/2	0	1/2	1	1	1	0	1/2	1	1/2	1	1/2	1	10 1/2
Polugayevsky	1/2	0	1/2	X	1/2	1	1/2	0	1/2	1	1	1	1/2	1	1	1	1	1	10 1/2
Dorfman	0	1/2	1/2	1/2	X	1/2	1/2	0	1	0	1	1	1/2	1	1	0	1/2	1	9 1/2
Smyslov	1/2	1/2	1/2	0	1/2	X	1/2	1/2	1	1/2	1/2	0	1	1	1/2	1	1/2	0	9
Tal	1/2	1/2	1	1/2	1/2	1/2	X	1/2	0	0	1/2	1/2	0	1/2	1/2	1	1/2	1	9
Geller	1	1/2	1/2	1/2	1	1/2	1/2	X	0	0	1/2	1	1	1/2	0	1/2	1/2	0	8 1/2
Romanishin	1/2	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	X	0	1	0	1/2	1	1/2	0	0	1	8 1/2
Sveshnikov	1/2	0	0	1/2	1	1/2	1/2	1	0	X	1/2	1/2	1	1	1/2	1/2	1/2	0	8
Gulko	0	0	0	0	0	1/2	1/2	1/2	1	1/2	X	1/2	0	1/2	1	1	1	1	8
Vaganian	0	1/2	1	1/2	0	1	1/2	0	1/2	1/2	1/2	X	1/2	0	1	1/2	0	1/2	7 1/2
Grigorian	0	1/2	1	0	1/2	0	1	0	0	0	1	1/2	X	1/2	1/2	1/2	0	1	7 1/2
Rashkovsky	1/2	1/2	0	1/2	0	0	1/2	1/2	1/2	0	0	1	1/2	X	1	1/2	1	1	7
Taimanov	1/2	1/2	1/2	0	0	1/2	1/2	1	1	1/2	0	0	1/2	0	X	1/2	1	0	7
Tseshkovsky	0	0	0	1/2	1	0	0	1/2	1	1/2	0	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	X	1	0	6 1/2
Zakharov	0	1/2	1/2	0	1/2	1/2	1/2	0	1/2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	X	1	6 1/2
Kupreichik	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1/2	0	1/2	1	1	0	X	6

aged to drop a piece in the opening against Yuri Balashov.

ENGLISH OPENING

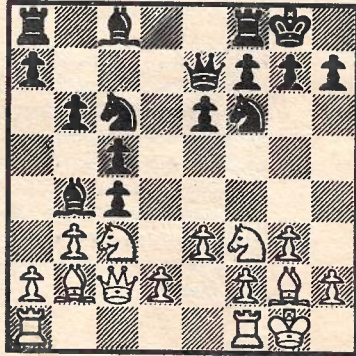
- Y. Balashov O. Romanishin
 1. Nf3 Nf6
 2. c4 e6

Transposing to the English opening — popular among grandmasters because of its deep positional aims. But what happens to Romanishin isn't exactly subtle.

3. Nc3 Bb4
 4. Qc2 c5
 5. g3 Nc6
 6. Bg2 O-O
 7. O-O Qe7
 8. e3 b6
 9. b3 d5
 10. Bb2 dxc4?

Having examined the forcing 11, Ne5 Nxe5. 12, Bxa8 Ba6, where Black wins material, Romanishin overlooked an excellent reply.

O. ROMANISHIN



Y. BALASHOV

11. Ng5!

With the threat of 12, Nd5! and 13, Bxf6 followed by 14, Qxh7 checkmate, Romanishin was forced into making an escape hole for his king by 11... Rd8, and was a piece short after the prosaic 12, Bxc6.

Admittedly a deep combination... but in grandmaster chess?

MURRAY CHANDLER

Vaganian calculates correctly that 24, Ne5 is unplayable because of 24... Qe6! ... Nxc6 Nxf3 ch! 26, Rxf3 f3. 27, Nxd8 f2 ch. 28, f1 Qh3 ch. 29, Ke2 f1=Qch! ... Qxf1 Qxh2 ch winning, after capturing the queen Black also picks up the bishop b2.

Refusing to give Petrosian a chance to develop his major pieces, which do little on their home squares.

28. Ne5 Nxe5
 29. Bxe5 Qe6
 30. Bb2?

Trying desperately to keep his bishop active (after 30, Bf4 c4 should win) Petrosian overlooks a killer reply.

- 30... Rf2!
 31. Resigns.

Whatever White does with his attacked bishop, Vaganian has 31... Bxe4 ch! mating in all lines.

EVEN grandmasters can miscalculate badly, and in round 14 the exciting young Soviet player Oleg Romanishin man-

RIGHT: How the players scored in the 44th USSR championships last year.

- fxe4 Rxf1 ch
 Qxf1 Rf8
 Qd1 Nf3 ch
 Kh1 b5!

