

Off-the-board gambits

AS EXPECTED the quarter finals candidate match between Victor Korchnoi (stateless) and Lev Polugayevsky (USSR) was a lively affair — and not all the incidents were on the chess board. Korchnoi defected from the USSR last year after complaining about his match with Karpov and that effec-

tively decided the World Championship. Now he's determined to play Karpov again, this time on neutral ground. But the Russians have been doing everything in their power since Korchnoi's defection to stop him challenging for the world title again. But after the World Chess Federation, FIDE,

refused the Russians' request to ban him, they have had to fall back on their top players in the candidates to try to prevent Korchnoi ever reaching the final.

The preliminary off-the-board manoeuvring began in Switzerland when the Russians vetoed Korchnoi's request to play under a

Dutch flag — he had been resident in Holland only 337 days instead of the 365 required by FIDE before he has the automatic right. The English GM Ray Keene then suggested a skull and crossbones but not surprisingly that was also vetoed by Baturinsky, so in the end Korchnoi played flagless.

Then the amazing start to the match. Korchnoi won the first four games. That is no mean feat against a player of Polugayevsky's calibre and no one could have predicted such a trouncing. After several spells of sick leave and a surprise brief comeback by Poly, Korchnoi cruised into the candidates' finals

effortlessly. The match result was 1111½10½½½½ to Korchnoi (16 game match maximum).

Korchnoi's almost obsessive desire to win is well illustrated by the following game which he wins brilliantly with black.

2nd Match game, Evian, Switzerland 1977.

QUEENS INDIAN DEFENCE

Polugayevsky Korchnoi

- 1. d4 Nf6
- 2. c4 e6
- 3. Nf3 b6
- 4. g3 Bb7
- 5. Bg2 Be7
- 6. 0-0 0-0
- 7. Nc3 Ne4
- 8. Qc2 Nxc3
- 9. Qxc3 f5
- 10. b3 Bf6
- 11. Bb2

So far it's all main line theory played in thousands of games before — most of them draws — but now Korchnoi plays an interesting alternative to the usual 11...c5.

11... Nc6!?

12. Rad1

The justification for Korchnoi's tenth move is based in the variation 12.Ne5 Nxd4! (threatening Nxe2 ch winning the Queen) 13.Qxd4 Bxg2 14.Kxg2 d6 regaining the sacrificed piece.

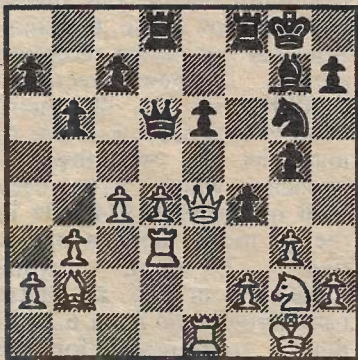
- 12... Ne7
- 13. Ne1 Bxg2
- 14. Nxc3 g5

Korchnoi spent a long time on this ambitious move but eventually he must have decided his attacking prospects were worth the kingside weaknesses created by...g5.

15. Qc2 Ng6

In such a position White wants to play e4 at some stage, while Black attempts to prevent this advance. However, if Korchnoi had played 15...d5 (to prevent e4) Polugayevsky would have 16.f3! preparing a now even stronger e4. As it is Korchnoi finds enough compensation on the flank.

- 16.e4 f4
- 17. e5 Bg7
- 18. Qe4 Qe7
- 19. Rd3 Rad8
- 20. Re1 d6!
- 21. exd6 Qxd6



A very interesting position has arisen. Korchnoi has saddled himself with a weak, isolated e pawn, and although it cannot immediately be taken

(22.Qxe6 ch Qxe6 23.Rxe6 Ne5! 24.Rd1 Kf7) is generally a liability in such positions.

22.Red1 Qe7

23. Ne1 Qf6

24. R(1)d2

Possibly 24.R(3)d2 is better.

24... Qf5

25. Qxf5 exf5

26. Ng2?!

And now 26.f3 was necessary.

26... g4!

27. Nxf4 Nxf4

28. gxf4 Bh6

29. Re2 Bxf4

30. Re6 Rfe8

31. Rf6 Rel ch

32. Kg2 Rf8

33. Rxf8 ch Kxf8

34. d5

34.Ba3 ch gave better drawing chances as now Korchnoi's bishop finds its best post.

34... Bd6!

35. Bc3 Rcl

36. Bd2 Rc2

37. a4 f4

38. h3 f3 ch

39. Kf1 h5

40. hxg4 hxg4

And here Polugayevsky sealed 41,Ke1 but after looking at it during the adjournment he resigned, leaving Korchnoi 2-0 up. After the sealed move, 41...Rb2 wins easily — well it's easy for those guys, anyway!

During the match Korchnoi did some stirring of his own by turning up at an international FIDE congress nearby, probably just to annoy the Soviet contingent present. When he appeared he was greeted by a standing ovation, but the Russians, among them Karpov, ignored him completely and soon after Karpov left.

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