

Floorplay

Belgrade 1977-78

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Total
Korchnoi	½	1	1	½	½	½	1	1	½	1	0	0	0	0	½	½	1	1	10½
Spassky	½	0	0	½	½	½	0	0	½	0	1	1	1	1	½	½	0	0	7½

THIS CRAZY score tells the story of one of the most turbulent candidates' matches in history. After defecting from the USSR last year, Korchnoi had vowed to show the Russians how to play. According to reports, Spassky received a message from the Kremlin halfway through the

match telling him to "win at all costs".

Korchnoi began the match, as he had against Polugayevsky, with a brilliant stream of victories. After the ninth round Spassky's usual gentlemanly behaviour changed abruptly. He began to play each game by looking

at the demonstration board from his private box at the side of the stage, coming to the board, often with one hand in his pocket, only to make a move. He refused to shake hands with Korchnoi before each game.

Korchnoi lodged a protest, but psychologically Spassky had succeeded and scored victories in games 11, 12, 13 and 14, narrowing Korchnoi's lead to just one point. After leaving his queen *en prise* in game 13, Korchnoi resorted to Spassky's tactics in one of the most ridiculous spectacles ever seen in the candidates' matches. For the 14th game both players sat in their private boxes. A candidates'

final with neither player on the stage! Every now and then one of them would emerge to make a move, press his clock, and then retreat.

Late in the game Spassky showed up on stage wearing a silver visor and sat down in a display of showmanship. Korchnoi protested and three moves later the curtain in front of the players inexplicably dropped and the 3000 strong Yugoslav public began booing. Not surprisingly Korchnoi blundered again and left the arena broken and humiliated.

But in the final four clashes Korchnoi regained his nerve, and his almost fanatical

desire to win pulled him through to score 7/4 to take the match and thus earn the right to challenge World Champion Anatoly Karpov.

8th Match Game — Belgrade 77-78

Candidates' Final

FRENCH DEFENCE

SPASSKY (USSR)	KORCHNOI (stateless)
1. e4	e6
2. d4	d5
3. Nc3	Bb4
4. e5	c5

The main line Winawer, a knife-edged variation the individualist Korchnoi used frequently in the match. Theoretician John Moles has devoted an entire book to just

this variation and concludes it to be at present "sounder now than ever before".

5. a3 Bxc3 ch
6. bxc3 Ne7
7. Nf3

A major alternative is 7. Qg4. Spassky is also well acquainted with the Winawer having played it for both Black and White in the past.

7. . . . Bd7
8. dxc5!
Moles's book recommends 8.a4! Spassky played 8.dxc5 in three of the match games but had minimal success.

8. . . . Qc7
9. Bd3 Ba4
10. 0-0

The 6th game went 10.Be3 Nd7 11.Qb1 Nc6 12.Nd4 Ndxe5 13.Bb5 Qa5 and was drawn in 44 moves.

10. . . . Nd7
11. Nd4 Nxc5
12. Bb5ch Bxb5
13. Nxb5 Qxe5
14. Re1

Things look good for White; a retreat of the black queen with 14. . . . Qb8 is punished by 15.Qd4! with multiple threats.

14. . . . Ne4!
Hey, that knight was supposed to be pinned! In fact this move illustrates an elementary but important point, the difference between an ordinary and an absolute pin. In an absolute pin (against the king) the piece cannot move in any circumstance, however, in an ordinary pin, as in this case, the pinned piece can occasionally move with a vengeance! Now it's a "you take my queen, I'll take yours" situation. So . . .

15. f3 a6
16. Nd4 Nxc3!
17. Qd2 Qc7
18. a4

Cutting off the knight's escape via b5.

18. . . . Rc8
19. Bb2 b5
20. Bxc3 Qxc3
21. Qxc3 Rxc3
22. axb5 axb5
23. Nxb5 Rxc2
24. Nd6ch Kd7
25. Nxf7 Rb8

Time to take stock of the position. Black has won a pawn, but his king is vulnerable in the centre and his pawns are slightly loose. Clearly Spassky can still fight.

26. Ra7ch Ke8
27. Ne5

But not 27.Ng5? Rbb2! when (a) 28.Rxe6 Rblch and mates, or (b) 28.Ra8ch Nc8 29.Rxe6ch Kd7 with a winning advantage.

27. . . . Rbb2
28. Ra8ch Nc8
29. Nd3! Rb6

Avoiding Spassky's trap of 29. . . . Rxc2ch 30.Kf1 Rbc2 31.Rxc8ch! winning a piece.

30. h4 Kd7
31. Ra4 Kd6
32. Rg4 Rd2
33. Nf4 e5
34. Nh5 g6
35. Nf6 Rb7
36. Ne8ch Kd7
37. Rxe5

Spassky has played well to

recover his pawn and now the game should really be drawn.

37. . . . Rblch
38. Kh2 Ne7
39. Ra4 Nc6
39. . . . Kxe8? 40.Ra7
40. Nf6ch Kd6
41. Rg5 Rb7
42. Ra6!

Amazingly almost zugzwang. Black has no really constructive move; some of the worst are 42. . . . Kc5? 43.Ne4ch or 42. . . . Kc7? 43.Ne8ch. As it is Korchnoi must allow Spassky his combination.

42. . . . Rf7
43. Nxf7!

Planning 43. . . . Rxf7
44.Rxg6ch regaining the knight with interest.

43. . . . Kc5
Now the knight has no squares!
44. Rxg6 Ne5
45. Ng5!

Passive defence with 45.Rh6 is bad because of 45. . . . Nxf3ch.

45. . . . Nxf3ch
46. Rxg6!
The straightforward 46.Nxf7 Nxf4 47.Kg3

assures White of the draw. Instead Spassky sets off for the full point.

46. . . . Ra7
47. h5 Rda2!

Again the genius on defence. Now Spassky should reply 48.h6 R(2)a6 49.Ne6ch with at least a draw, but under pressure he errs.

48. f4 d4
49. h6 d3
50. Rg8 R(2)a6
51. h7? Rxh7ch!
52. Kg3
52.Nxf7 d2 53.Rd8 Rd6
52. . . . Rd7

53. Rc8ch Kb4
54. Rb8ch Ka3
55. Ne4 d2
56. Nxd2 Rxd2
57. Rg8 Kb4
58. Kf3 Kc5
59. g3 Ra3ch
60. Ke4 Re2ch
61. Kf5 Kd6
62. g4 Ra5ch
63. Kg6 Re6ch
64. Kh7 Ra7ch
65. Rg7 Rxg7ch
66. Kxg7 Re4
67. Resigns

MURRAY CHANDLER