

Solid seconds

DESPITE ALL the disputes, fights and protests of the World Chess Championship, some people in the rival camps managed to remain at peace with each other. They were the professional grandmaster seconds of champion Anatoly Karpov and challenger Viktor Korchnoi, whose job it was to help their player with preparation.

That involved work on openings for each game and often night-long sessions of

frantic analysis on adjourned games that were to be resumed the next day. The theory is that the player wakes refreshed the next morning and is shown the product of the night's work by the exhausted aides. Karpov had as his aides Soviet grandmasters Igor Zaitsev and Yuri Balashov, who earlier this year won the USSR zonal qualifying event for the next world championship cycle. Former world cham-

pion Mikhail Tal attended as a journalist for Russian chess weekly 64. Later in the event, this formidable bunch was strengthened by GM Evgeny Vasuikov who had just won the Indian leg of the 1st Asian Grandmasters Chess Circuit.

On paper, Korchnoi's seconds were weaker but they were no less dedicated; English grandmasters Raymond Keene and Michael Stean and Soviet emigree Yasha Murei who now lives in Israel. Soon after the start a valuable addition, Argentine grandmaster Oscar Panno, arrived. After the challenger defected to the West in 1976 by walking into

a Dutch police station and asking for political asylum, Korchnoi has not always had the best seconds to assist him. Several top Western grandmasters feared boycotts by the powerful Soviet federation.

Generally the seconds in the match avoided rash actions about protests between Karpov and Korchnoi and their respective warring delegation chiefs Viktor Baturinsky and Petra Leeuwerik. However, Keene was angered when Karpov snubbed Korchnoi by refusing to shake hands before the eighth game, and was quoted as saying: "Now Korchnoi does not have to take soap with him to the games in order to wash his hands."

Soviet delegation chief Baturinsky was offended when he heard the quote, and later Keene apologised by sending him a personalised cigar with "R. D. Keene" engraved on it. "Batters" sent it back, accompanied by a cake of soap engraved with the words "Viktor D. Baturinsky".

For this weeks column I asked Soviet GM Yuri Balashov for a game of his. He agreed to find one, but two weeks later he still hadn't coughed up. As a reprisal I turned to the Korchnoi camp and Michael Stean said he had had a nice win against Balashov some years ago. But he couldn't remember the game. Now disillusioned with both sides, I've managed to turn up a fighting draw between "diplomat" Keene and "reporter" Tal.

HASTINGS 1973/74 ENGLISH OPENING

Notes based on those by Raymond Keene in Informator.

KEENE (England)	TAL (USSR)
1. Nf3	c5
2. c4	g6
3. d4	Bg7
4. Nc3?	

We will see why 4.e4 is more accurate in this position.

4. ...	cxd4
5. Nx d4	Nc6!

Now what is White to do with his attacked knight? If he had moved his king-pawn he could play the obvious 6.Be3 with a good game, but here that is not possible. Retreating with 6.Nc2 allows a well-known bust up of White's pawn formation with 6...Bxc3 ch, while other knight moves are similarly ineffectual. The move Keene chooses has the disadvantage of blocking his queen's bishop.

6. e3	Nf6
7. Nc2	d6
8. Be2	Be6!

Tal threatens the freeing break ...d5, and at the same time prevents Keene seizing a bind on the position with 9.Nd5 — after 9.Nd5 Nx d5 10.cxd5 Qa5 ch and Black has won a pawn.

9. e4	Nd7
10. Nd5	Nc5

11. f3	f5
12. exf5	Bxf5
13. 0-0	0-0
14. Nce3	e6!
15. Nx f5	gx f5
16. Nf4	Bd4 ch
17. Kh1	e5

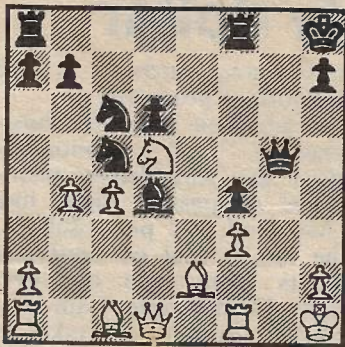
Also possible is 17. ... Qf6!?

Tal's idea is Qh4, Rf5, Qxh2 ch mating next move.

19. g3	Qg5
20. gx f4	ex f4
21. b4!	Kh8?!

21. ... Ne6! is dangerous for White — but of course not 21. ... Bxa1 22.Rg1. Now Keene

manages to extricate himself from his difficulties with a further exchange sacrifice offer.



22. Rg1!!

But not the greedy 22.Bxf4 Rxf4 23.Nxf4 Qxf4 24.bxc5 dxc5! and Black's position is too strong. After the text Keene's two bishops really start to combine.

22. ...	Qxg1 ch
23. Qxg1	Bxg1
24. Kxg1	Nd7

After 24. ... Ne6 Tal would get pinned and skewered all over the diagonals with 25.Bb2 ch Kg8 26.c5 dxc5 27.Bc4.

25. Bb2 ch	Nce5
26. Rd1	Rf7!
27. Rd4	

27.Nc7! gives excellent winning prospects, but Keene probably calculated he would win the way he played, ie if Tal defends 27. ... Raf8 28.c5 dxc5 29.Re4 Re8 30.Bb5 etc.

27. ...	Kg8!
28. Nc7	Rc8
29. Nb5	Nc6

Oh, just imagine if Black's king was still on h8!

30. Rd5	Re7
31. Rg5 ch	Kf8
32. Rf5 ch	Kg8

Draw agreed.

MURRAY CHANDLER