

Protests and point scoring

RIDICULOUS PROTESTS and allegations by Viktor Korchnoi during the early part of the World Chess Championship match seemed, to me, to turn the tremendous early public support for the challenger into mixed apprehension.

But in round 11 something happened. Soviet defector Korchnoi scored a fine first win to draw level with world champion Anatoly Karpov. At the same time, his outspoken head of delegation Petra Leeuwerick observed a day of silence, because of a scathing attack on her and Korchnoi that morning by the Russian delegation.

On the preceding days she had accused just about everyone, including match organisers and most members of the FIDE jury, of being pro-Soviet.

Applause broke out in the auditorium when Karpov resigned and it appeared (at the time) that a major turning point in the match had arrived after almost four weeks of competition.

That night I drank champagne with a jubilant Korchnoi camp, although the challenger himself refused the bubbly. "Why should I be happy," he said, grinning from ear to ear. But he was right — as subsequent events showed — it was just one win in a gruelling struggle for the

title. In the game Karpov made an inexplicable 25th move, and after his follow-up on the 26th he was totally dead. The victory was a result more of poor play by the champion than brilliance on Korchnoi's part, but in a match as strenuous as this, either player could crack up, and Karpov seemed, then, to be suffering most.

World championship Match
Baguio City, Philippines
CLOSED SICILIAN

KORCHNOI Stateless
KARPOV USSR

1. g3

This non-committal move keeps White's options open, but it is also an admission by Korchnoi that he had nothing outstanding prepared in his usual queen's pawn opening.

1. ... c5
2. Bg2 Nc6
3. e4!?

Transposing into the closed Sicilian, an unusual choice for a world championship match.

3. ... g6
4. d3 Bg7
5. f4 d6

The last time a closed Sicilian appeared in a world championship was when Spassky drew against Petrosian in their 1966 match in the USSR.

6. Nf3 Nf6
7. 0-0 0-0
8. c3 Rb8
9. Qe2!?

Korchnoi's unconventional idea is to build up a pawn

centre. Karpov should strike out immediately with the thematic 9... b5 and if 10.e5, Nd5, but instead he dilly-dallies with a rather passive knight retreat.

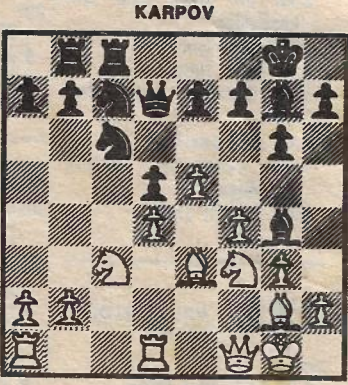
9. ... Ne8
10. Be3 Nc7
11. d4 cxd4
12. cxd4 Bg4
13. Rd1 d5

Black must make White commit his centre pawns. 13... Ne6 to pressure them with pieces fails however to 14.Qf2 Qb6 15.d5 Qxb2 16.Nbd2.

14. e5 Qd7
15. Nc3 Rf8

Korchnoi in post-mortem analysis said Karpov's best move was 15... Bh3! preventing White's imaginative following move. In that case Korchnoi had the idea of 16.Bh1 followed by the manoeuvre Rde1 and N-df2 to embarrass the Black bishop.

16. Qf1!



A beautiful conception

which breaks the pin on White's knight and prepared the bishop pair chase with 17.h3. Amazingly Korchnoi is also eyeing the queenside for his pieces!

16. ... b5
17. h3 Bx13
18. Bx13!

Also 18.Qxf3! preparing for the standard kingside pawn storm, but Korchnoi's tremendous innovative idea is for action on the queen's wing — apparently Karpov territory! Flustered, Karpov allows a neat finesse and loses equality.

18. ... b4?!
19. Bg4! e6
20. Na4 Na5?!
21. Nc5 Qe8
22. Be2 Nb7
23. Nxb7 Rxb7
24. Rdc1 Qd7
25. Rc2 b3?
26. axb3 Rxb3?

The point of White's 19th is that, were his bishop still on f3, Black could snatch a pawn with 20... Nxd4! 21.Nc5 Nxf3 check! As things stand young Karpov should make do with 20... Bf8 preparing to exchange bishop for knight.

21. Nc5 Qe8
22. Be2 Nb7
23. Nxb7 Rxb7
24. Rdc1 Qd7
25. Rc2 b3?
26. axb3 Rxb3?

None of us could believe Karpov was cracking up like this, even if he was looking like he was in some agony on the stage. 26... Rcb8 still gave drawing chances.

27. Qc1 Rb7
28. Ba6! Rcb8

Black has almost forced White's pieces to pressure him unbearably along the open bishop and rook files and something had to give. Karpov is now the exchange down for zero and completely dead.

29. Bxb7 Rxb7
30. Ra3 h6
31. Rac3 Nb5
32. Rc8 ch Kh7
33. R(2)c6 f6
34. Kg2 Qf7
35. Qc2 a5
36. g4 fxg5
37. fxg5 a4

Korchnoi; 2 hours and 6 mins; Karpov; 1 hour and 25 mins and a hopeless position. Harry Golombek's comment: "Karpov played quickly in order to have time to regret it!"

38. Ra8 Na7
39. Ra6 Qe7
40. Rxa4 Rc7
41. Qb3 Nc6
42. Ra1 Nb4
43. Rc1 Rc4
44. Rb8

Best avoided is 44.Rxc4 dxc4 45.Qxc4 Qb7 ch.

44. ... Rxc1
45. Bxc1 Qc7
46. Rxb4 Qxc1
47. Qd3

Bye, Bye, even one single check...

47. ... h5

Karpov decides his best chance lies in baring Korchnoi's king position, but the idea is easily parried.

48. Rb6 Bh6
49. gxh5 Qg5 ch
50. Qg3 Qd2 ch

Black resigns

Korchnoi was about to seal 51.Qf2 when Karpov tossed in the towel. Korchnoi's second Raymond Keene commented that in the first half of the game "Korchnoi's pieces seemed eccentrically placed but in typical Korchnoi fashion they exhibited a mystical sort of cooperation!"

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