

Olympian overthrow

AFTER SEIZING the lead in the 12th round, Hungary clung on to win the 23rd Chess Olympiad — and in so doing shattered more than a quarter of a century of Soviet domination of the World Team Championship. Led by experienced 41-year-old Lajos Portisch, the Hungarians fielded a brilliant young team of attacking players and fully deserved their first victory in an Olympiad since 1928. But the question on everybody's mind is — what went wrong

for the USSR?

Admittedly the Russian team was weakened by the absence of world champion Anatoly Karpov and his seconds Yuri Balashov and Mikhail Tal — all exhausted after battling Korchnoi in the Philippines. But still, the Soviet Union has so many tremendously strong grandmasters to choose from.

I think the reason for almost all the setbacks to Russian chess over the past year is not so much any failing on

their part, but simply that there has been such an upsurge in the standard of chess in countries outside the Soviet bloc. Certainly the Russians have many more grandmasters to choose from — but in an Olympiad the teams are of six men, and only four of those can play each day. Several countries in the West can now strongly challenge the USSR over a few boards — Holland, West Germany, the United States and even England — all have

a few top-class players each, and in an Olympiad these days that may be all you need.

Therefore, despite the tremendous depth of strong players in the USSR, no combination of those is going to be able to walk over, say, a Hungarian quartet like Portisch, Ribli, Sax and Csom. And judging by the ovation at the closing ceremony, we may be seeing a possible turning point in the future of world chess; the Soviets may

never have it all their own way again.

Results: 1st, Hungary — 37 points/14 rounds; 2nd, Soviet Union — 36; 3rd, United States — 35; 4th, West Germany — 33; 5th equal, Israel and Rumania — 32½; 7th equal, Denmark, Poland, Spain, Switzerland and Canada; while half a point below were England, Bulgaria, Holland; and following them on 31 points were Yugoslavia, Sweden and Argentina. (65 countries competed.)

But of course, all of this doesn't mean the Rusksies have forgotten how to move the pieces! In the final round, against Holland, they were still in with a chance of catching the Hungarian team which was a half-point in front, and 28-year-old Oleg Romanishin produced the following fine win over Dutch grandmaster Jan Donner.

Olympiad, Buenos Aires, 1978

PIRC DEFENCE

ROMANISHIN USSR DONNER Holland

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| 1. e4 | d6 |
| 2. d4 | Nf6 |
| 3. Nc3 | g6 |
| 4. Bg5 | |

This flexible developing move usually signifies castling queenside by White. Black usually counters with expansion on that wing, but the position can be dangerous and Black must be careful not to create too many weaknesses.

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| 4. . . . | Bg7 |
| 5. f3 | |

More usual is 5.Qd2 immediately. However Black could then play 5. . . . h6 6.Be3 Ng4! 7.Bf4 e5 with a reasonable game, so Romanishin does some shadow boxing.

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| 5. . . . | c6 |
| 6. Qd2 | h6? |

But I think . . . h6 now is out of place as Donner has no useful follow up. The pawn simply becomes a nuisance preventing Black from castling which, in turn, makes it difficult for him to free his game as the Black king is in the centre.

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| 7. Be3 | b5 |
| 8. Bd3 | Nbd7 |
| 9. Nge2 | Nb6?! |

Seeing that Donner has difficulties castling because of his pawn weakness on h6, plans to operate on the queenside will fail because of under-development. A slower idea of playing 9. . . . a6, followed by . . . Bb7 and, eventually c5, probably was better.

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| 10. b3 | a5 |
| 11. a4 | b4 |
| 12. Nd1 | Nfd7 |
| 13. c3 | e5 |
| 14. cxb4 | axb4 |

Clever play by the Dutchman — 15.Qxb4 fails to 15. . . . exd4 and c5 is coming, but the Black king still has not a too comfortable abode.

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| 15. Rc1 | Bb7 |
| 16. 0-0 | exd4 |
| 17. Nx d4 | c5 |
| 18. Nb5 | Nc8 |
| 19. Be2 | |

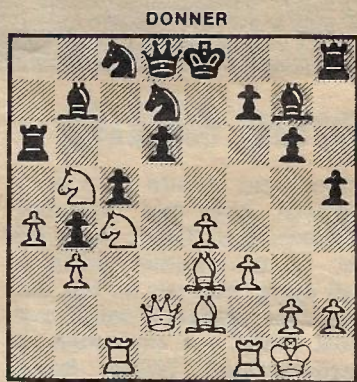
Pressuring the d-pawn.

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| 19. . . . | Ra6 |
| 20. Nb2 | h5 |

"Threatening" to castle, but Romanishin does not give him a moment's chance.

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| 21. Nc4 | |
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ALGEBRAIC NOTATION
The algebraic notation in this chess column is that used almost exclusively in Europe and in many countries elsewhere. Each square has one designation only. The vertical files are labelled a to h from White's left. In horizontal rank the squares are labelled 1 to 8 from White's end. Normal symbols are used, except that pawns as such are not mentioned; just the arrival square is given for a non-capturing pawn move.



Attacking the d-pawn again.

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| 21. . . . | Ne5 |
| 22. Rfd1 | Nxc4 |
| 23. Bxc4 | Qe7 |

For if 23. . . . 0-0 then 24.Bxc5! completely ruins Black's position.

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| 24. Bg5 | Qd7 |
| 25. e5! | Bxe5 |
| 26. Re1 | Resigns |

The nasty thing about this position is that still Black's only plausible move is to castle — only now he loses a whole piece to 27.Rxe5.

MURRAY CHANDLER