

Young and hungry

WITH ALL of the publicity and promotion of English junior chess nowadays, the question is often asked — "Just how good are English junior players?"

My answer, particularly when confronted with a newspaper clipping of some British kid munching an apple while he disposes of yet another "Grandmaster", tends to be spluttered and rather uncomplimentary, but, to be

fair, England now have one of the most formidable junior squads in the world.

I don't believe there are any really outstanding individual players, no matter what enthusiasts and the press may say. As a group, however, the junior squad are like a pack of hungry marauding wolves!

Recently an exhibition was organised by Leonard Barden in conjunction with sponsors

— the London Evening Standard, the National Bank of Dubai and the Slater Foundation — in which the top players from the London junior championships were unleashed on assorted Russians, New Zealanders and English masters. IGMs Evgeny Vasukov and Alexander Kochiev from the USSR both took on 30 players simultaneously, as did I, British IM Harry Golombek and David Rumens. But the battle of the day was "living legend" Boris Spassky fighting the cream of English junior chess.

And his result was not impressive. Spassky won only 13

games out of 30, conceding five losses and 12 draws, and looked exhausted after his seven-hour battle. Afterwards he was quoted as saying he wouldn't play them again for double the money — which is quite something, as he got around £500 for the exhibition:

"This was my toughest ever simultaneous," he said. "Until this I had never lost more than four games in an exhibition in my life."

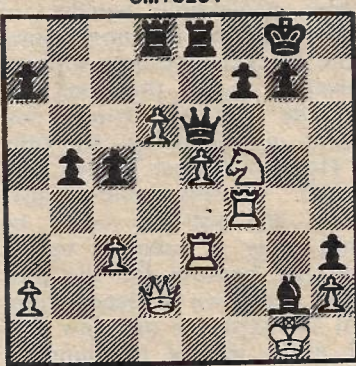
I understand how he must have felt — my 30 juniors were bad enough. In one of my less successful games, when I was forced to give up my queen, I think my opponent almost snatched it out of my hand before I had finished making my move!

WORLD v ENGLISH KIDDIES

- Results:—
 Boris Spassky (USSR) 13 wins, 12 draws, five losses.
 Evgeny Vasukov (USSR) 20 wins, 10 draws, no losses.
 Alexander Kochiev (USSR) 19 wins, eight draws, three losses.
 Murray Chandler (NZ) 19 wins, seven draws, four losses.
 Harry Golombek (England) 24 wins, one draw, five losses.
 David Rumens (England) 33 wins, three draws, four losses.

WHILE HE WAS playing the simultaneous exhibition Spassky may have cast his mind back to when he was a junior prodigy. He reached the following position against Smyslov at just 15 years of age.

BUCHAREST 1953



White to play; how did Spassky win quickly?

Solution: He played 1.Nxg7! Rxd6 (1...Kxg7 2.Rg3 ch Kf8 3.Rxf7 ch Kxf7 4.Qf4 ch and mates) 2.Nxe6 Resigns. 2...Rxd2 allows an elementary mate with two rooks beginning with 3.Rg3 ch.

AN EXTRA problem. The following position was brought back from the third Malta international ratings tournament and shown to me by English chess author Les Blackstock. Incidentally, it now seems Malta will be the site of the next chess olympiad in 1980.

White to move. What is the result?



BARLOV (Yugoslavia)

TRAPECHINI (Italy)

Well, White thought he had the draw sewn up, as after 1.Kg1 Rg2 ch 2.Kh1 he figured on the stalemate 2...Rxe3 3.Rxe6! and drawing. But he was in for an unpleasant surprise. 1.Kg1 Rg2 ch 2.Kh1 R2! 3.Kg1 (forced) R6! Zugzwang! White can't move his king because of the mate threat, and any rook move loses the knight's pawn, so White had to resign!

MURRAY CHANDLER