

Swindles and sacrifices

NO ONE had ever heard of Yugoslav Zlato Klaric when he appeared at the London Evening Standard Congress, but he scored 5½ points out of the possible six and sailed off home again clutching his £1200 — the richest purse on the English circuit.

Klaric, who is 22 and lives near Belgrade, had in fact, we

discovered, already two International Master title norms to his credit although he had never won an event of this magnitude. His ambition is "to become a Grandmaster" (sounds familiar) and he did beat one in the crucial penultimate round against English GM John Nunn. Uncharacteristically Nunn

suddenly ruined a better position by waltzing off on a pawn-gathering spree with his queen, and was duly mated in a blitz finish. A short draw in round six ensured Klaric of first place ahead of 180 players in the National Bank of Dubai Open, including two GMs and nine IMs.

This year organisers purposely raised the entry fees, but still had to turn players away from Britain's strongest and most popular congress.

John Nunn, the only British Grandmaster to compete

regularly in weekend tournaments, came second equal along with George Botterill (Wales), Craig Pritchett (Scotland) Alan Perkins, Nigel Short and Andrew Martin (all England), on five points.

Nunn also won the best game prize, and was hoping there might be a "best swindle" prize as well for his Houdini-like escape against Mark Hebden!

- 3. Nc3 Bb4
- 4. e5 c5
- 5. a3 Bxc3 ch
- 6. bxc3 Ne7
- 7. Nf3

Along with 7.a4 this is the positional treatment of the Winawer variation. The tactical line runs 7.Qg4 Qc7 8.Qxg7 with highly unclear complications.

- 7. ... Bd7
- 8. Be2 Ba4!

White frequently prevents this move with an earlier a4, as after Black gets ...Qc7 in he threatens to exchange on d4 opening the c-file, with combined pressure on White's c2 pawn.

However Kurajica follows an idea that Spassky played in a very similar position against Korchnoi in the 10th game of their Candidates match, Belgrade 1977-78.

- 9. Rb1! Qc7
- 10. dxc5 Nd7
- 11. Rb4!

The rook swings into action, ready to transfer to the kingside.

- 11. ... Bc6
- 12. 0-0 Nxc5?

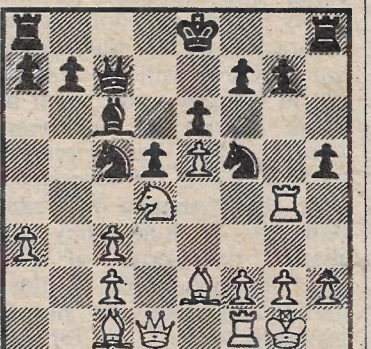
Taking the centre pawn with 12...Nxc5 is dangerous, but in this case preferable.

- 13. Rg4 Nf5

The Spassky-Korchnoi game had one difference — White's bishop was on d3, so this move was not possible. That game went 13...Ng6 14.Nd4! 0-0-0 (14...Qxe5 meets 15.f4 Qc7 15.f5 with an attack) 15.f4 and White had much the better of it.

If 13...Ng6 in the present game, Kurajica's bishop on e2 is a little more passive but nevertheless he can proceed 14.Nd4! with a similar initiative. The way Knott played allows a positionally crushing exchange sacrifice.

- 14. Nd4 h5



KURAJICA

- 15. Nx!f5! hxg4
- 16. Nd6 ch Kf8
- 17. f3! g3
- 18. hxg3 f5

Keeping the f-file closed (18...f6 19.Be3 Nd7 20.f4), but Black's problems have just begun.

- 19. Qd4 b6
- 20. Bg5 Ba4
- 21. c4 Bxc2
- 22. cxd5 Bb3
- 23. g4

If there is one sacrifice modern players are more prepared to make than their predecessors were, then it must be the exchange sacrifice. Here Black's rooks stand helplessly by as the centre crumbles.

- 23. ... Bxd5
- 24. gx!f5 Nb3
- 25. Qd3 a6
- 26. Rb1 Nc5
- 27. Qd1 Nd7
- 28. Rc1 Qa7
- 29. Qd4! Rh5

Of course 29...b5 30.Qxa7 Rxa7 31.Rc8 is checkmate.

- 30. Be3 Nc5
- 31. Qg4 Rh8
- 32. Bc4 Qe7
- 33. Bg5

Oh, when will he stop hitting me!

- 33. ... Qd7
- 34. Qf4 Kg8
- 35. Bxd5 exd5

- 36. e6 Qa4
- 37. Qxa4 Nxa4
- 38. e7 Kh7
- 39. Rc7 b5

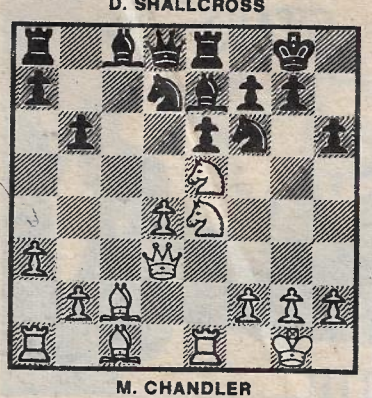
Half-heartedly seeking salvation in a queen exchange.

Allowing a killer, although 39...Rhe8 40.Rd7! Nc5 41.Rd8 was scarcely better.

- 40. f6! Kg6
- 41. f7 Resigns

Food for thought on opening theory, and an impressive follow-up by Kurajica. Still, I

thought I was in with a chance.



M. CHANDLER

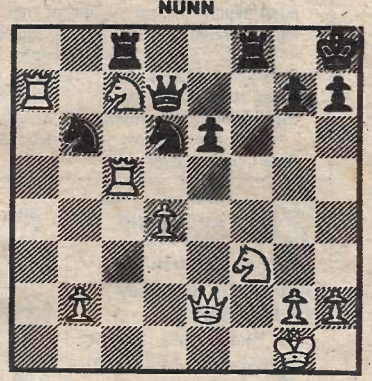
- 1. Bxh6 gxh6
- 2. Qg3 ch Kf8
- 3. Qf4! Nxe5

A curious conclusion to the kingside attack comes after 3...Kg7 4.Nc6! winning the queen, as 4...Nh5 loses to 5.Qg4 ch.

- 4. Qxh6 ch Kg8
- 5. dxe5 Nh7
- 6. Nf6 chl Resigns

Checkmate is forced after 6...Nxf6 7.exf6 Bxf6 8.Bh7 ch Kh8 9.Bg6 eh Kg8 10.Qh7 ch Kf8 11.Qxf7.

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HEBDEN

This position arose from a King's Gambit and Hebden missed several ways to win easily. Even now there is a path to victory with 1.Qxe6! Rxc7 2.Qxd7 Rxd7 3.Rxd7 Nxd7 4.Rd5 Rf6 5.Ne5! However play proceeded ...

- 1. Qa6 Ne4!
- 2. Qxb6 Rxc3!
- 3. Rc1?

The final mistake. Also losing are 3.Nxe6 Nxc5! 4.Rxd7 Nxd7 and 3.Rb5 Rf1 ch! 4.Kxf1 Qf7 ch 5.Ke2 Qf2 ch 6.Kd3 Qd2 ch and now (a) 7.Kxe4 Qe2 ch 8.Kf4 Rf8 ch 9.Kg3 Qe3 ch 10.Kg4 Rf4 ch 11.Kh5 g6 ch, mating on the h-file, or (b) 7.Kc4 Qc2 ch 8.Kb4 Qxb2 ch 9.Ka4 Nc3 ch mating on the a-file!

The only defence is 3.Nb5! Nxc5 4.gxf3 Qd5 5.dxc5 Qd1 ch with a draw by perpetual check. Hebden's move looks playable — after all it protects the d-pawn — but Nunn has something to do about that.

- 3. ... Rb3!
- 4. Qxb3 Qxd4 ch
- 5. Kh1 Nf2 ch
- 6. Resigns

All experienced players will recognise the well-known smothered mate occurring after 6.Kg1 Nh3 ch 7.Kh1 Qg1 ch 8.Rxg1 Nf2 checkmate.

My score of 4½ points felt worse than it was as I drew and lost in the first two rounds. Three of my remaining games averaged 20 minutes apiece, and I even sacrificed pieces in a forlorn hope I might get the brilliancy prize. Unfortunately there was a higher rated player who needed consoling — Grandmaster Boja Kurajica of Yugoslavia who also missed out on the main prizes with 4½. This is his brilliancy prize game.

- FRENCH DEFENCE
- B. KURAJICA S. KNOTT
 - 1. e4 e6
 - 2. d4 d5