

John Nunn — forgotten man

ENGLISH GRANDMASTER John Nunn, age 25, might justifiably soon start to feel jinxed, as the finer moments of his chess career have tended to coincide with other great events. He was the "unknown" third man in the last British championships — Robert Bellin won on tie-break and 14-year-old Nigel Short got all the publicity.

At Hastings over Christmas his first equal ahead of a strong foreign contingent again took a back seat — this time to Short gaining the International Master title.

And recently Nunn's five points from seven games, convincingly winning the board three prize at the European team's championship in Sweden, suffered relative obscurity

because of England's fine overall performance. If ever there wasn't a day to slaughter Russian Lev Polugayevsky, it was the day Nunn's countryman Tony Miles beat World Champion Anatoly Karpov!

However, Nunn did win the 1979 Cutty Sark £2000 grand prix all to himself, for being the most successful player on the UK circuit. I got the considerably smaller second prize and a quantity of whisky, presumably to console myself.

Here is Nunn's destruction of Polugayevsky in Sweden:

BENONI DEFENCE

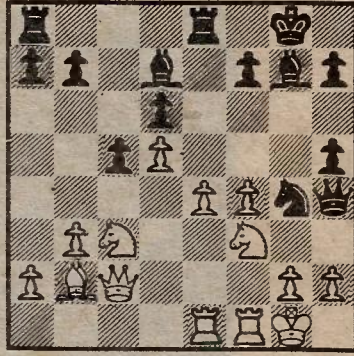
L. POLUGAYEVSKY	J. NUNN
1. d4	Nf6
2. Nf3	c5
3. d5	e6
4. c4	e×d5
5. c×d5	d6
6. Nc3	g6
7. e4	Bg7
8. Be2	O-O
9. O-O	Re8
10. Nd2	Nbd7
11. Qc2	Ne5
12. b3?!	Nh5!

This knight manoeuvre was Fischer's idea against Spassky in their 1972 match in Reykjavik, played here in more refined form. The drawback of Polugayevsky's 12th move is that he cannot now reply with the standard 13. B×h5 g×h5 14. Nd1! due to the weakness of the long diagonal.

- 13. B×h5 g×h5
- 14. Bb2 Bd7
- 15. Rae1 Qh4

For his broken pawns Black has the initiative on the kingside. White's next move is over-ambitious — consolidation with 16. f3 or 16. Nd1 is called for.

- 16. f4?! Ng4
- 17. Nf3



- 17. ... Bd4 ch
- 18. Kh1 Nf2 ch
- 19. R×f2 Q×f2
- 20. Qc1

Polugayevsky's threat is to trap the queen with 21. Re2. Nunn has a brilliant resource.

- 20. ... Bh3!
- 21. Rg1 Kf8!
- 22. N×d4 c×d4
- 23. f5

On 23. Nd1 could follow 23... B×g2 ch! 24. R×g2 Qf1 ch 25. Rg1 Qf3 ch 26. Rg2 Rac8 27. Qd2 R×e4 with the threat of 28... Rc2 29. Q×c2 Re1 mate.

- 23. ... d×c3
- 24. Q×c3 R×e4
- 25. g×h3 Ke8

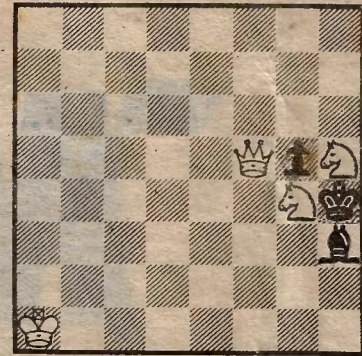
White had 26. Rg8 ch! in mind.

- 26. Qd3 Re1
- 27. R×e1

Nunn's counter-attack has succeeded in exchanging a pair of rooks. 27. Qb5 ch would have lost neatly to 27... Kf8 28. Bg7 ch Kg8.

- 27. ... Q×e1 ch
- 28. Kg2 Rc8
- 29. f6 Kd7
- 30. Q×h7 Qd2 ch
- 31. Kg3 Q×d5
- 32. Kh4 Re8
- 33. Resigns.

The following puzzle comes from John Nunn's problem section in *International Chess*, a new magazine which I mentioned in this column several months ago. Unfortunately, despite a great need for this type of publication, it does not seem to have survived its teething troubles, and the publisher tells me he is going to compensate all who subscribed.



Checkmate in 3. White to play.

SOLUTION: (F. Hladik) 1. Kb2! (a waiting move — Black was already in zugzwang) and now 1... K×h5 2. Nf6 ch; 1... B×g4 2. Qe4; 1... Bg2/f1 2. Nf2.

MURRAY CHANDLER

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.