

# Chinese checkers

LIU WENZHE and Liang Jin Yong have just become China's first International Masters at a tournament in Malta. They made their second and final norms within five minutes of each other in the final round, and finished third equal on 9½/14 points, turning a reception at the Chinese embassy in Malta into a celebration.

Beginning with the Asian teams championship in Auckland in 1977, China's increasing involvement in international chess has taken them from the Far East to the Olympiad in South America, and finally to Europe. With China a fellow member of Zone 10, the emergence of one or two exceptional individuals has particular relevance to New Zealand and will undoubtedly provide stiff opposition in next year's Zonal tournament.

One of the most convincing games from Malta was Liu's crushing victory over English junior, James Plaskett.

Malta 1980

## SICILIAN DEFENCE

<b>H. J. PLASKETT</b>	<b>LIU W.</b>
1. e4	c5
2. Nf3	Nc6
3. d4	cxd4
4. Nxd4	Nf6
5. Nc3	d6
6. Bg5	e6
7. Qd2	a6
8. 0-0-0	Qb6
9. Nb3	Qc7

### 10. Bd3?

White's subsequent troubles can be traced to this move. Although seemingly well posted for a potential attack on the opposing king, the bishop can turn into a liability should Black ever play ...Ne5. To be considered is 10.Bxf6 gxf6 11.Be2 h5 12.Kb1, or even the plan Plaskett adopts in this game with f3, g4, Be3 and g5, without moving the king's bishop.

10. . . .	Be7
11. f3	0-0
12. g4	b5
13. Be3	Ne5
14. g5	Nfd7
15. Qg2	b4
16. Ne2	a5
17. Kb1	a4
18. Nbd4	Nc5
19. h4	

Black's attack is coming very fast, assisted by White's misplaced bishop on d3. In reply to 19.f4 Black would continue 19...Nexd3 20.cxd3 b3 ! prising open the queenside, as 21.a3 e5 22.fxe5 dxe5 23.Nf5 Bxf5 24.exf5 Nxd3 ! wins Black a pawn.

19. . . .	b3
20. a3	bxc2 ch
21. Bxc2	Nc4
22. Bc1	Rb8
23. Ka1	Qb7

With the unstoppable threat of capturing on b2.

24. Rdg1	Bd7
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There is no hurry — 24...Nxb2

25.Nc6 Qxc6 26.Bxb2 might give White hopes of survival.

### 25. Nf4 Ne3!?

Not to be tempted by material gain (with 25...Nxb2), Liu continues positionally. Once the king's bishop is captured the light squares around White's king become hopelessly weak.

26. Qf2	Nxc2 ch
27. Qxc2	Rfc8
28. Qe2	Nb3 ch
29. Nxb3	Qxb3
30. Rg2	

Black was threatening ...Rc2. Now Liu would like to play 30...Bb5, followed by ...Bc4, but 31.Qe3 defends. So first an elegant preparatory move.

30. . . .	Rc3!
31. g6	fxg6
32. h5	Bf6
33. Nxg6	Bb5
34. Qd1	Rxc1 chl

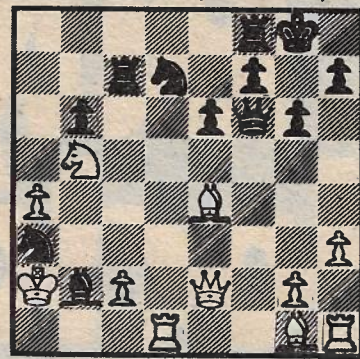
Mercifully ending the onslaught, as checkmate is forced after 35.Qxc1 Qxa3 ch 36.Kb1 Bd3 ch 37.Rc2 Rxb2 ch etc. So . . .

### 35. Resigns

Leading scores at Malta were: GM Tukmakov (USSR) 12½; GM Karaklaic (Yug) 10; Liu, Liang, and Toth (Italy) 9½; Plaskett (Eng) 8½; Povah (Eng) 8.

Plaskett, one of England's most talented and forthright players, last year finished 4th-5th in the European Junior Championships. As part of his training schedule for that event I played a four-game match with him, resulting in some fascinating encounters. I won by 2½ points to 1½, assisted by a successful king hunt in game two.

M. CHANDLER (New Zealand)



H. J. PLASKETT (England)

Here I continued:

1. . . .	Rc4!
2. Rxd7	
2.Nxa3 Bxa3! 3.Kxa3? Qc3 ch	
leads to mate.	

2. . . .	Rxa4
3. Nd4	

The pretty point of the combination is that 3.Ra7 fails to 3...Nxb5 discovered check, 4.Rxa4 Nc3 ch forking king and queen. In the game continuation Plaskett hoped to bamboozle me after 3...Nc4 ch with 4.Kb3 Ra3 ch 5.Kxc4 and hairy complications evolve, but there is a double to the line quoted above.

3. . . .	Bxd4!
4. Kb3	Bxg1

The king is enticed from his lair. Now if 5.Kxa4 he is shot down with 5...Qc3! and ...b5 ch to follow.

5. Rxc1	b5
6. c3	Rc8
7. Rc1	Nc4
8. Rf1	Na5 ch
9. Resigns	

MURRAY CHANDLER