Miles better

IMPROVEMENT at chess has a curious habit of coming in great surges. Many players experience a dormant period of mediocre tournament results — perhaps for even a year or longer — before (often for no visible reason) a breakthrough is made.

My own career follows this peculiar pattern. I found myself not achieving particularly much in 1978, then in early 1979 I switched my openings from 1.e4 to 1.d4. Not that the opening positions I achieved were necessarily any better, but the breath of fresh air seemed to cause everything to "click" and my exceptional season continued through to peak with my New York grandmaster norm in April this year.

Among other members of the younger generation, Garri Kasparov of the Soviet Union has also experienced a tremendous improvement jump. In 1977 he was third in the world under-17 tournament. A year later, at age 15, he was half-way up the USSR senior championship and on the road to the grandmaster title he now holds.

English grandmaster Tony Miles is another who fluctuates with indifferent results before scoring a whole string of successes. This tendency of his is getting stronger — his latest run is 10 tournament wins in a row spanning top events in London, Las Palmas, and most recently a category 13 event in Vrbas, Yugoslavia. On current form Miles could well be fifth or sixth in the world when the new Elo rating list appears in January.

The following game against Ulf Andersson shows Miles notching up his second win in a matter of weeks over one of the most difficult men to beat on the professional circuit. It illustrates that a strong attack need not necessarily suffer from an exchange of queens, as Miles's remaining heavy artillery pounds down the h-file at the Swede's king.

FIANCHETTO OPENING

A. J. MILES	U. ANDERSSON
1. g3	c5
2. Bg2	Nc6
3. Nf3	g6
4. c3	Bg7
5. d4	cxd4
6. cxd4	d5
7. Nc3	

Since 7...Nf6 8.Ne5 is known to favour White, Andersson tries a different tack, planning ... Nge7-f5 to try to force the weakening move e3.

| 8. Bf4 | Nge7 |
| 9. Qd2! | 0-0 |

The point is that 9...Nf5 is met by 10.Nb5 0-0 11.g4 forcing Black on the defensive. With his next move Miles proceeds to exchange dark-squared bishops, weakening Andersson's kingside and justifying his own aggressive follow-up on the 14th move.

10. Bh6	Bxh6
11. Qxh6	Nf5
12. Qd2	b6
13. Rd1	Ba6
14. h4!?	Na5?

Confused by Miles's "beginner's strategy" of keeping his king in the centre and launching a wing attack, Andersson commits a serious error of judgment. On the edge of the board this knight never returns to active play; better was 14...Rc8 or 14...Qf6.

15. g4	Nd6
16. h5	Qf6
17. hxg6	fxg6
18. Qh6	Rf7
19. g5	Qg7
20. Ne5!	

Forcing an exchange of queens, as on 20...Rff8 comes 21.Nxd5! Qxh6 22.Ne7 ch, and 20...Rb7 21.e4 is strong.

20. ...	Qxh6
21. Rxh6	Rff8
22. Nd7	Rf7
23. Nf6 ch	Kh8
24. Bh3	Bc8

An ugly move to have to play, but 24...Re7 fails to 25.Bxe6 while 24...Nf5 25.Bxf5 gxf5 26.Kd2 Nc4 ch 27.Kc1 Rc8 28.Rdh1 Rcc7 29.Ne8! followed by g6 wins.

25. Kd2!	Rg7
26. f4	Rb8
27. Rh1	Nac4 ch
28. Kd3!	

The king begins its decisive march. Of course Black cannot play 28...Nxb2 ch 29.Kc2 Nbc4 because of 30.Bxe6 and Rxh7 mate is threatened.
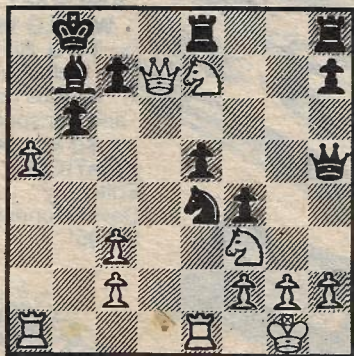
28. ...	Rbb7
29. b3	Na3
30. e4	

The final assault.

30. ...	dxe4 ch
31. Ncxe4	Nxe4
32. Kxe4	Nb5
33. Ke5!	Rbe7
34. Bf1	Resigns

After the Black knight is moved or defended, 35.Bd3 carries the unstoppable threat of Bxg6 and penetration to h7.

*   *   *

Black to play.

Stalflinga v Green, Esbjerg 1974. Both sides have dangerous attacks, but with threats of axb6 and Nc6 ch White probably thought his was quicker. Ewen Green proved otherwise with one of the most brilliant combinations ever played by a New Zealander. What was it? (Solution upside down below.)

SOLUTION: Black sacrificed rook for knight, and then his queen by 1...Rxe7! 2.Qxe7 Qxf3!! 3.gxf3 Rg8 ch 4.Kf1 Nxf2 mate! (4.Kh1 Nxf2 ch 5.Re2 Nd2 ch 6.Kel Nxf3 ch 7.Kdl Rg1 ch 8.Resigns, as mate follows next move.

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