

The draw that lost

HUNGARIANS Zoltan Ribli and Andreas Adorjan tied for third in the Riga interzonal tournament, necessitating a play-off match to decide which of them remained in the world championship elimination series and progressed to the candidates matches.

Ribli won the first and third games of the six-game match and looked almost certain to qualify. But from being down 1/2-2 1/2, Adorjan hit back with wins in the fourth and fifth games. Ribli was suddenly left with the daunting task of winning the final game with the Black pieces, since in the event of a tied match Adorjan would qualify for the candidates series by virtue of his better tie-break score in the interzonal.

Ribli lost a pawn and offered a draw in a poor position, putting 29-year-old Adorjan through to join Korchnoi, Spassky, Portisch, Hubner, Petrosian, Tal and Polugayevsky in the candidates matches to decide a challenger to world champion Anatoly Karpov in 1981.

Ribli had been a full point ahead going into the last round of the Riga interzonal and was not a little upset at losing the play-off as well. The sixth and final match game in Budapest saw Ribli offering a draw in a somewhat controversial situation.

ENGLISH OPENING

A. ADORJAN	Z. RIBLI
1. c4	g6
2. Nc3	Bg7
3. g3	d6
4. Bg2	e5
5. d3	Nc6
6. e4	f5?!

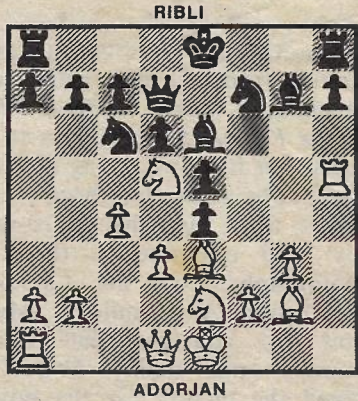
Ribli seems determined to play a Dutch defence set-up, usually an aggressive formation. But in view of Adorjan's previous move, preferable is 6...Nd4 hopping into the weak square, and if 7.Nge2 then 7...Bg4.

And this sideways knight development meets a strong riposte.

8. h4!	Be6
9. Nd5	Nf7

White threatened 10.Bg5.

10. Be3	Qd7
11. h5	g×h5
12. R×h5	f×e4



A complicated but risky alternative is 12...0-0-0, eg 13.e×f5 B×f5 14.R×f5!? Q×f5 15.Qa4! with a dangerous attack and the immediate threat of 16.Q×c6.

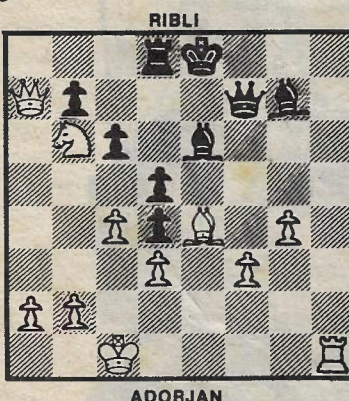
13. B×e4	h6
14. Qb3	Rb8
15. f3	Ng5
16. B×g5	h×g5
17. R×h8 ch	B×h8
18. 0-0-0	Nd4

This allows the e-file to be opened, but with Black's king stuck in the centre the alternatives are also unappetising.

19. N×d4	e×d4
20. Qa3	c6

Giving up a pawn, but after 20...a6 21.Qa5 Rc8 22.Rh1 Bg7 23.Rh7 White clearly dominates.

21. Q×a7	Rd8
22. Nb6	Qf7
23. Rh1	Bg7
24. g4	d5



At this point, with two minutes left on his clock for 16 moves, Ribli offered a draw. Adorjan accepted, assuring himself of a place in the candidates matches. There has been some discussion as to whether Ribli should

in fact have played on — despite a pretty minute chance of winning (or even drawing!) — as the candidates matches are so important.

Is the position sufficiently unclear to justify a last-ditch try? A conclusive line for White seems to be 25.c×d5 c×d5 26.Bf5! when there could follow 26...B×f5 27.g×f5 Qc7 ch (27...Q×f5 28.Re1 ch followed by Q×b7) 28.Kb1 Rd6 29.Re1 ch Kf7 30.Qa8! (intending mate with Qe8 ch and Qg6) Rd8 31.N×d5! Qd7 32.Nb6 with two extra pawns.

In my view Ribli was justified in using the exceptional nature of the match to salvage a draw from a terrible position. He saved Elo rating points, and, more importantly, prestige. It could be important that he drew the match as far as future Hungarian selection policies for teams go, and also psychologically for when he has to face Adorjan again.

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.