

Korchnoi marches on

BY DEFEATING Soviet former World Champion Tigran Petrosian, self-exiled Russian Grandmaster Viktor Korchnoi has qualified once more for the semi-finals of the World Championship Candidates matches. Their match, the best of 10 games, proved to be a contest between Korchnoi's fluent attacking style and Petrosian's unambitious but cunning defence. Korchnoi took several gigantic risks to force the play and some commentators believed that, although one game up, Korchnoi had had enough bad positions by round eight to have lost the contest.

But it was psychologically that the 50-year-old Petrosian lost the match, perhaps even before he started. Even the Russian Federation seemed to believe he could not contain the ebullient Korchnoi — they provided only a tiny delegation and a sole Grandmaster second, Alexei Suetin.

Petrosian looked strained and under intense pressure near the end of each day's five-hour playing session. Korchnoi, playing with resourcefulness and characteristic energy, ended the contest on the 18th day with a convincing win in round nine.

It was Korchnoi who knocked Petrosian out of the previous Candidates quarter-finals, subsequently going on to challenge Anatoly Karpov unsuccessfully for his world crown in 1978.

The seventh game of the match featured Petrosian's most aggressive response to Korchnoi's over-ambitious play, deliberately aimed at getting him out of his shell.

ENGLISH OPENING

V. KORCHNOI (now Switzerland)	T. PETROSIAN (USSR)
1. c4	c6
2. Nf3	d5
3. e3	Nf6
4. Nc3	e6
5. b3	Nbd7
6. Bb2	e5!

The first sign of things to come — this prepared and committal move came as a surprise to Korchnoi. Game three had continued 6...Be7 7.d4 O-O.

7. d4	e4
8. Nd2	Be7

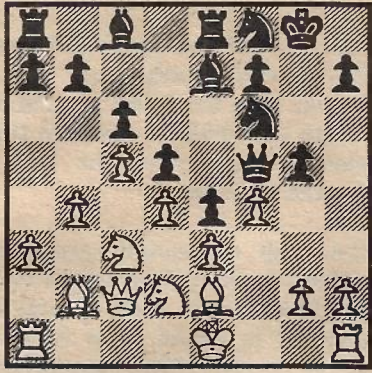
The position resembles an advanced French defence with colours reversed.

9. a3	O-O
10. b4	Re8
11. c5?!	Nf8
12. Be2	Qd7!

By closing the position with 11.c5 Korchnoi has invited Petrosian to take the initiative on the kingside, and here the former World Champion does so in a most original way.

13. Qc2	Qf5
14. f4	g5!

Petrosian's most aggressive move of the match, and entirely correct strategically — Black's play is on the kingside.



15. g3	g×f4
16. g×f4	Qh3
17. Rg1 ch	Ng6
18. Nf1	Qh4 ch ?!

More accurate is 18...Ng4! immediately, e.g. 19.B×g4 B×g4 20.Qg2 Q×g2 21.R×g2 f5 with good control of the game, and an infiltration square via h4.

19.Ng3	Ng4
20.B×g4	

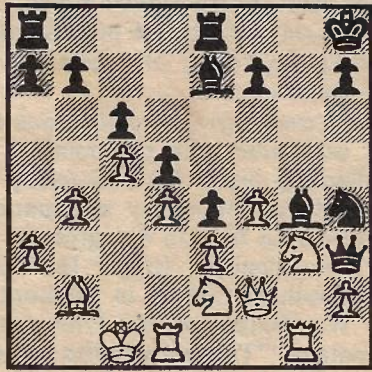
By offering a draw here, Korchnoi spoke to Petrosian for the first time in the match.

20... B×g4	
21. Qf2	Qh3
22. Nce2	Nh4

22...f5! leaves Black with a large advantage.

23. O-O-O	Kh8?
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Overlooking a combination. 23...Nf3 24.Rg2 is still advantageous for Black, although White has some chances involving the idea Ng1.



24. N×e4!	Qf3
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24...B×e2 (24...d×e4 25.Rg3 traps the queen) 25.Q×e2 d×e4 26.d5 ch f6 27.d6 Bd8 28.Qh5 Rf8 29.Rg3! Q×h2 30.Qg4 Ng6 31.Rh3 and wins.

25. Q×f3	B×f3
26. N4g3	Bf6

So White has won a pawn, but his cramped position, weak e-pawn and bad bishop still leave him at a disadvantage.

27. Rd3	Re7
28. Bc3!	Rae8
29. Bd2	h6

The question still remains as to whether Petrosian can make anything of his position. Under mutual time-pressure Korchnoi gives back the pawn to activate his pieces and secure the draw.

30. Rf1	Kh7
31. Rb3	Bg4
32. Rf2	Nf3
33. h3!	N×d2
34. K×d2	B×h3
35. Nh5	Bh8
36. f5	Rg8
37. Neg3	Bg4
38. Rb1	

Draw agreed

MURRAY CHANDLER

AUSTRIA 1980

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

KORCHNOI	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	½	½	1	5½
PETROSIAN	½	½	½	½	0	½	½	½	0	3½	