

Action replay

THIS YEAR'S Lloyds Bank Masters tournament in London followed a rather unfortunate pattern. The day before the tournament began, grandmaster Borislav Ivkov of Yugoslavia telegraphed to say he was not coming, for as yet undisclosed reasons. Last year the same thing happened with grandmaster Vlastimil Hort of Czechoslovakia. Once again this meant that the 14 International Masters playing could gain Grandmaster norms only by meeting all three remaining Grandmasters — not easy in a field of 100.

Of the remaining Grandmaster lineup, admittedly this time two were top-class: Gyula Sax of Hungary and Florin Gheorghiu of Rumania, rated 10th in the world. Then the unthinkable happened. Sax lost in round one to an English junior, and next day the invincible Gheorghiu, undefeated winner of virtually every major American tournament in 1979, lost to 18-year-old Willie Watson!

Although these two, and Grandmaster Leonid Shamkovich of the United States, hauled themselves back to respectability by the finish, for masters doing well it was too late to play them all.

Results: 1st equal Gheorghiu (Rumania), Chandler (New Zealand) and Ligterink (Holland), all 7 points out of 9; 4th-6th, Gutman (formerly Latvia, now Israel), Lederman (Israel) and Sax (Hungary), 6½.

So, as last year, I shared first place with two others, but, despite beating Shamkovich, no title norm. Oh, there was one difference — this time Gheorghiu sneaked the trophy from me, winning by half a tie-break point.

Gheorghiu's seven points was composed of two losses and seven wins — he went down to International Master Craig Pritchett of Scotland in round seven as well. The game before that Lev Gutman had him on the ropes too:

KING'S FIANCHETTO OPENING

L. GUTMAN	F. GHEORGHIU
1. Nf3	c5
2. g3	g6
3. Bg2	Bg7
4. d4	cxd4
5. Nxd4	Nc6
6. Nxc6	bxc6

While this slow fianchetto opening may seem a strange choice for someone who was Tal's second at the Riga interzonal, Gutman handles these systems with some skill.

7. 0-0	Ba6
8. Nd2	Nf6
9. c4	Qa5
10. a3	0-0

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.

- | | |
|----------|------|
| 11. b4 | Qe5 |
| 12. Rb1 | d5 |
| 13. b5 | cxb5 |
| 14. cxb5 | |

Already White's queenside majority is better than Black's central pawn mass.

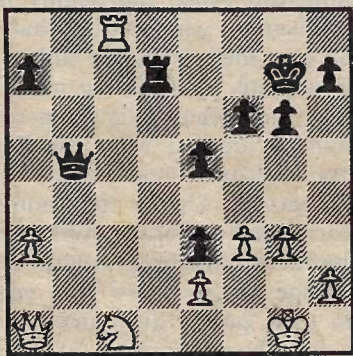
- | | |
|----------|------|
| 14. ... | Bc8 |
| 15. Rb4 | Bf5 |
| 16. Nf3 | Qc7 |
| 17. Bf4 | Qb7 |
| 18. Be5! | Rac8 |
| 19. Nd4 | Bd7 |
| 20. Nb3! | Rfd8 |
| 21. Bd4 | Ne4 |
| 22. Bxg7 | Kxg7 |
| 23. Bxe4 | dxe4 |
| 24. Rd4! | e5 |

Not 24...Qxb5 25.Rd5! Qc6 (25...Qb7 26.Nc5) 26.Qd4 ch Kg8 27.Rfd1 Rc7 28.Nc5 winning the bishop.

- | | |
|------------|-----|
| 25. Rd5 | e3 |
| 26. f3 | Qc7 |
| 27. Qa1 ch | f6 |
| 28. Rc1 | Qb6 |

Gheorghiu parts with a piece (!) to relieve the terrible pressure on the d-file that would result after 28...Qb7 29.Rcd1, eg 29...Qc7 30.Qc1! Qxc1 31.Nxc1 Rc7 32.Nb3 Kf7 33.Nc5 Ke7 34.a4 followed by a5 and b6 winning.

- | | |
|--------------|------|
| 29. Rxd7 ch! | Rxd7 |
| 30. Rxc8 | Qxb5 |
| 31. Nc1 | |



Black is quite busted. What follows next can only be described in chess terms as an enormous swindle.

- | | |
|---------|--------|
| 31. ... | Rd1 ch |
| 32. Kg2 | Rxc1 |

After White recaptures Black will be a whole rook down, with some chances against the White king. But after 33.Rxc1 Qxe2 ch 34.Kh3 Qxf3 35.Rf1 Qh5 ch 36.Kg2 Qe2 ch 37.Kg1 there is no sane check, let alone a perpetual, to be seen.

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 33. Qxc1? | |
|-----------|--|

Now Black can scrape a draw.

- | | |
|------------|---------|
| 33. ... | Qxe2 ch |
| 34. Kh3 | Qxf3 |
| 35. Rc7 ch | Kh6 |
| 36. Rc4 ?? | |

Still playing to win, Gutman self-destructs. Instead 36.Rc3 obliges Black to administer perpetual check by 36...Qh5 ch 37.Kg2 Qe2 ch 38.Kg1 Qf2 ch 39.Kh1 Qf3 ch etc.

- | | |
|---------|-----|
| 36. ... | g5! |
| 37. Qc2 | |

Now 37.Rc3 is too late — 37...Kh5 38.Rxe3 g4 mate.

- | | |
|-------------|----|
| 37. ... | e2 |
| 38. Resigns | |

Black threatened, among other things, 38...Qf1 ch 39.Kg4 f5 check-mate.

MURRAY CHANDLER