

When to be scared

WHEN BJORN BORG thwacked the tennis ball straight down the sideline, nobody asked him if he had anticipated his opponent's next shot. He put the ball there on general principles. Not for one moment did he think: "If I loft the ball medium height in the centre, he will smash me off the court." He knew without thinking.

Much the same thing happens in chess. From a wide choice of legal moves in a complicated middlegame position, a good player can select just five or six "candidate moves". These he will then analyse into variations, again selectively pruning the various responses, before finally choosing his move to play. He will discard, without thought, certain positionally inferior ideas, irrelevant moves, or blunders equivalent to the tennis player's "lofted ball in the centre".

It is the lack of this essential ability — selective intuition — which still, for example, makes computers no match for the top masters in chess. Despite the thousands of dollars and man-hours poured into research projects, computers must still analyse a vast array of legal moves in any given position, a task which can go literally to infinity.

Perhaps the most vital "feeling" that a player must have is a sense of danger. We can all see when the opponent is amassing his lumps to point straight at our undefended king. The top master, however, uses his highly refined intuitive judgment to assess whether an impending attack — too distant as yet to be calculated in variations — is dangerous or not.

This judgment is in part acquired from knowledge of similar situations in previous games — perhaps from meeting a number of sticky ends as a learner. The following game, from this year's Burroughs Computers New Zealand Junior Championship, is a classic example. Mark Noble, the eventual winner of this game, went on to take a first equal in the championship with fellow Wellingtonian Jonathan Sarfati. But in some ways it is a shame that Black's original (though over-ambitious) strategy meets such a violent end.

KING'S INDIAN DEFENCE

M. NOBLE (Wellington)	A. LLOYD (Christchurch)
1. d4	Nf6
2. Nf3	g6
3. c4	Bg7
4. Nc3	d6
5. Bg5!	

Unusual, but mortals are just as entitled as grandmasters to try new ideas. Standard is 5.e4.

5. ...	Nbd7
6. Qd2	h6
7. Bh4	0-0
8. Rd1	c6
9. e4	Qc7
10. Bd3	e5
11. d5	g5!

A bold decision. Although Black weakens himself by advancing his king-

side pawns, his intention is to eliminate White's important dark-squared bishop.

12. Bg3	cxd5
13. cxd5	Nc5
14. Bc2	a5
15. a4	Nh5
16. Qe2	Bg4
17. h3	Nxg3!
18. fxg3	Bd7
19. g4	Na6
20. Rb1	Nb4
21. Bd1	

Noble must have realised by now that the opening has not gone well. Lloyd's extended kingside cannot easily be exploited, while White is seriously weak on the dark squares, particularly the diagonal g1-a7.

The most natural strategy for Black to follow here is 21...Rac8, followed by perhaps ...Qb6, etc. In his desire to exploit White's weakness to the full, however, Lloyd embarks on a complex manoeuvre.

21. ...	Bf6?!
22. 0-0	Qc5 ch
23. Kh2	Bd8?!
24. Nd2	f6
25. Nb3	Qa7
26. Rf3	Bb6?

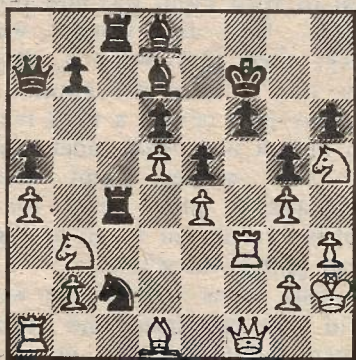
So Black has achieved his objective — the activation of his dark-squared bishop. Unfortunately the chess player's sixth sense of danger has let him down. On general principles one should be hesitant to transfer a fianchettoed bishop away from the king's defence. When the scheme also involves locking your own queen out of play on a7, however, the experts have a specialised name for it: suicide!

27. Qd2	Rac8
28. Ra1	Kf7
29. Ne2	

Heading for more succulent pastures, namely the holes on f5 and h5.

29. ...	Rc4
30. Ng3	Rfc8
31. Nh5	Bd8
32. Qe2	Nc2
33. Qf1	

It has become apparent that Black's king is hopelessly exposed. Now if the rook offer is accepted by 33...Nxal, then 34.Rxf6 ch Bxf6 35.Qxf6 ch leads to mate.



33. ...	f5
34. Rxf5 ch!	Bxf5
35. Qxf5 ch	Ke8
36. Qe6 ch	Kf8
37. Qxh6 ch	Ke8
38. Qe6 ch	Kf8
39. Bxc2	Rxc2
40. Rf1 ch	Resigns

Because 40...Rf2 41.Rxf2 ch Qxf2 42.Qxc8 leaves White a knight ahead.

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