

The professionals

THERE IS SOMETHING about the label "professional", in any sport, that means more than just someone who plays for money. It implies a certain type of approach to the task at hand, a sort of combination of excellence, talent and ruthless determination. In chess it means particularly psychological strength, including the ability to strike back after setbacks.

A good example of this was provided by the Dutch Grandmaster Jan Timman at the recent IBM tournament in Amsterdam. Shrugging off his disappointing performance at the super-tournament in Moscow just a few weeks before, Timman led all the way to take first place on 7½ points, ahead of world champion Karpov (USSR) and Portisch (Hungary) 7; Hort (Czechoslovakia), Smyslov (USSR) and Kavalek (USA) 6½; Ree (Holland) 6; Ljubojevic (Yugoslavia) and Miles (England) 5; Polugayevsky (USSR) 4½; Donner (Holland) 2½; Langeweg (Holland) 2.

In a sense Karpov's result was also a recovery, after a rather pathetic 26-move loss to Hort in round one, but he could not catch the flying Dutchman out in front whose score included a 3-0 clean sweep over his compatriots.

It is not always so easy to recover one's composure during the middle of a tournament, however, and the following game involving another Dutch Grandmaster is a case in point. Gennadi Sosonko evidently suffered so much mental anguish from this crushing defeat at the hands of Viktor Korchnoi at Bad Kissingen this year that in their next game of this double-round event he folded virtually without a struggle.

CATALAN OPENING

G. SOSONKO (Holland)	V. KORCHNOI (Switzerland)
1. d4	Nf6
2. c4	e6
3. g3	d5
4. Bg2	dxc4
5. Nf3	a6
6. 0-0	b5
7. Ne5	Nd5
8. Nc3	

This is all known opening theory, with which Sosonko has scored several notable victories — one such being Sosonko-Hubner, Tilburg 1979, which continued from here 8...c6 9.Nxd5 eXd5 10.e4 Be6 11.a4 b4 12.eXd5 BXd5 13.Qg4! and White won in 18 moves.

However Korchnoi, once notorious for his grabbing of hot pawns, has long been a practitioner of the Black side of this opening.

8. ...	Bb7
9. NXd5	eXd5!

An improvement on 9...BXd5? 10.e4 Bb7 11.Qh5 g6 12.NXg6! fXg6 13.Qe5 Nd7 14.QXh8 Qe7 15.h4 0-0-0 16.Bg5 Qf7 17.d5! Sosonko-Schneider, Buenos Aires Olympiad 1978. The similarities between this line and the game continuation will soon be seen, however, and it becomes apparent that

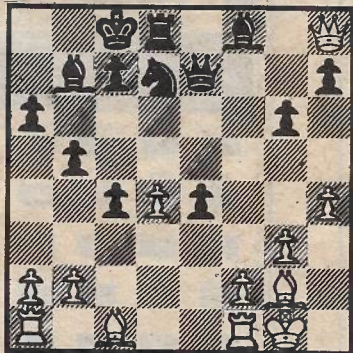
Sosonko is staring down the barrel of some top-calibre home preparation.

10. e4	dXe4
11. Qh5	g6!
12. NXg6	fXg6
13. Qe5 ch	

In contrast to the Schneider game, White forks Black's pieces with a check. This is immaterial, however, considering that Black's rook was lost in that game in any case — and here Korchnoi has the extra pawn on e4.

13. ...	Qe7
14. QXh8	Nd7
15. h4	0-0-0!

KORCHNOI



SOSONKO

16. Bg5	Qf7
17. Bh3	

Perhaps the best chance was to give up the queen by 17.BXd8 Bg7 18.QXh7 Nf8! 19.QXg7 QXg7 20.Bg5 Ne6 21.Bh3 Bd5 although Black still stands well. Instead 17.d5, as in the Schneider game, fails here as the d-pawn lacks support.

17. ...	Re8
18. Rad1	Kb8

On 18...Bg7 19.QXh7 Rh8, 20.Be6! saves White.

19. d5	Bc5
20. Be6	RXh8
21. Bxf7	Ne5
22. Be6	Nd3

Despite the exchange of queens, Sosonko's troubles have just begun. His material advantage (rook v knight and pawn) is nominal, while Korchnoi's minor pieces dominate the centre. Black also threatens 23...NXb2, which White averts only at the cost of conceding Black a passed pawn.

23. b3	c3
24. Kg2	Rf8
25. f3	c2
26. Rc1	

Returning the exchange — if 26.Ral comes 26...e3.

26. ...	NXc1
27. Bxc1	e3
28. Re1	c6
29. d6	Rf6
30. d7	Kc7
31. Bh3	Bd4
32. RXe3	

Sacrificing a second exchange in a desperate bid for counterplay — simply 32...c5 was threatened.

32. ...	BXe3
33. Bxe3	c5!
34. b4	RXf3
35. Bc1	cXb4
36. Kh2	Bc6
37. Bg4	Rf1
38. Resigns	

MURRAY CHANDLER