

Ulf in sheep's clothing

AT FIRST SIGHT Swedish Grandmaster Ulf Andersson could almost be mistaken for a rather harmless pawn-pushing elf. From his chirpy nature and modest physique one gets the impression he might rather hide under a toadstool than dare to capture your queen.

This illusion quickly vanishes, however, when you face him across the board. Andersson is in fact one of the great fighters of the modern chess arena. His specialty is building on infinitesimal advantages. His favourite hobby is grinding down opponents in long, drawn-out endgames — an experience that can mar the victim's whole tournament.

Having faced Ulf twice in as many months recently I gained an intriguing insight into his unique style of play. He appears to intuitively grasp when time can be spent to simply improve the positioning of his pieces. For example in our game at the Hastings congress in England we reached a complicated four-bishop endgame. At one point he expended several tempi cutting down my king movement instead of routinely developing his own king, calculating that I could do little in the meantime. Some hours later my king struggled free, but then, under mutual time pressure, Andersson laid a subtle trap and induced the decisive mistake.

It is this practical, fighting approach, as well as his great skill, that has earned Andersson the nickname "Ulf the Wolf" at Hastings, which he won this time for the third successive year. The following game, from a vital stage of the tournament, illustrates his mixture of positional play and hand-to-hand combat.

CATALAN OPENING

L. ALBURT - U. ANDERSSON

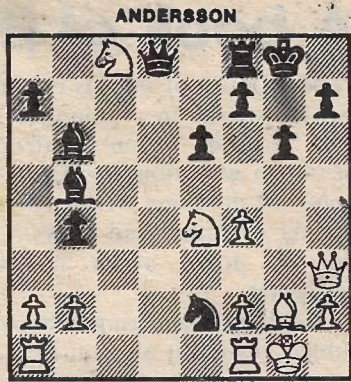
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| 1. d4 | Nf6 |
| 2. c4 | e8 |
| 3. g3 | d5 |
| 4. Nf3 | dxc4 |
| 5. Bg2 | c5 |
| 6. 0-0 | Nc6 |
| 7. Qa4 | Bd7 |
| 8. Qxc4 | b5! |

An aggressive alternative to 8...cxd4 9.Nxd4 Rc8 10.Nc3 when White holds a slight pull. Now 9.Qxb5 would be a mistake because of 9...Nxd4 10.Qd3 Bb5.

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| 9. Qd3 | Rc8 |
| 10. dxc5 | Bxc5 |
| 11. Nc3 | b4 |
| 12. Nb5 | 0-0 |
| 13. Nd6 | Nd4 |

This sharp response involves the eventual sacrifice of the exchange. The reply to 14.Nxd4 would now be 14...Bxd6, while 14.Nxc8? Bb5! 15.Qd2 Ne4 would win for Black.

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| 14. Bf4 | Nd5 |
| 15. Ng5 | g6 |
| 16. Nge4 | Nx14 |
| 17. gxf4 | Bb6 |
| 18. Nxc8 | Bb5 |
| 19. Qh3 | Nxe2 ch |



ALBURT

After the game Andersson criticised this move as too dangerous and said that after 19...Qxc8 chances would be roughly balanced — eg 20.e3!? (returning the exchange to save the e-pawn) 20...Bxf1 21.Bxf1 Nf5.

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| 20. Kh1 | Qxc8 |
| 21. Qh6! | f6 |
| 22. f5! | |

By giving up his sickly, doubled f-pawn Alburt opens lines against the Black king.

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| 22. ... | exf5 |
| 23. Nd6 | Qc5 |
| 24. Nxb5 | Qxb5 |
| 25. Rad1 | Nd4 |
| 26. Rfe1 | Qd7 |

With a knight and two pawns for rook Andersson holds a slight material superiority, but should Alburt get a rook to the seventh rank his attack would be decisive. Accurate defence is essential. Now 27.Bd5 ch (with the idea of queen takes, 28.Re7) fails only because Black captures the bishop with check.

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| 27. Rd3 | Rd8 |
| 28. a3 | bxa3 |
| 29. bxa3 | Qf7 |
| 30. Red1 | |

Here 30.Rde3 would be met by 31...Bc5. Running into time pressure, Alburt begins to drift without a plan — fatal against Andersson who now starts getting organised.

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| 30. ... | g5 |
| 31. Rc1 | f4 |
| 32. Rcd1 | Qe7 |
| 33. Qh5 | Kg7 |
| 34. h4 | h6 |
| 35. hxg5 | fxg5 |

Not 35...hxg5 36.Rh3.

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| 36. a4 | Qf6 |
| 37. Be4 | Rd7 |
| 38. Rc1 | Re7 |
| 39. f3? | |

A blunder losing a rook. White's position was getting difficult anyway, and on 39.Bg2 Ne2 40.Rf1 Qe6 is strong, with ideas of g4 and f3.

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| 39. ... | Ne2 |
| 40. Rg1 | Bxg1 |
| 41. Kg2 | Ng3 |
| 42. Resigns | |

Final scores at the 1980/81 ICL Hastings International were: 1, Andersson (Sweden) 10½; 2, Torre (Philippines) 10; 3, Lein (USA) 9½; 4-6, Alburt (USA), Ftacnik (Czechoslovakia) and Sunye (Brazil) 8½; 7, Liberson (Israel) 8; 8, Popovic (Yugoslavia) 7½; 9-11, Chandler (New Zealand), P. Littlewood and Speelman (both England) 7; 12, Mestel (England) 6½; 13-14, Peters (USA) and Pinter (Hungary) 6; 15, Bellin (England) 5; 16, Brito (Brazil) 4½.

MURRAY CHANDLER