

A holding operation

LIKE King Canute trying to turn back the waves, Ortvin Sarapu now faces the task of holding back the rising tide of New Zealand talent. It is not, of course, that our "champion of the century" has anything of the arrogance of that monarch of old. But the end result is inevitable.

For a quarter of a century Sarapu totally dominated the top of New Zealand chess, and only recently has this supremacy been seriously challenged. He still, however, retains a nostalgic grip on the national championship and for the past several years has succeeded to some extent where Canute failed.

In this year's Burroughs Computers New Zealand Championship Sarapu featured once again in a triple tie for first, his third in the past six congresses. Co-winners were Vernon Small, also a co-champion from 1980, and newcomer to the title Roger Nokes. The Premier Reserve tournament was won by Tony Dowden.

Our most promising new talent to emerge for some time, Nokes led most of the way but coasted home at the end. Both he and Small represent a generation that might have been expected to catch "the Great Ort" several years back. It is a tribute to Sarapu, now 56, that he has continued to stave off the challenge for so long, and his amazing total of 18 firsts from 21 championships speaks for itself.

But how much longer can the tide be kept at bay? As Ortvin says, "Chess has been and is my life. If anyone thinks I should retire, they'll have to prove it over the board."

This week's game features the round-one upset caused by Kees Dekker, recently arrived from Holland, when he beat New Zealand international Small.

SICILIAN DEFENCE

K. DEKKER	V. SMALL
1. e4	c5
2. Nf3	e6
3. d4	cxd4
4. Nxd4	Nc6
5. Nc3	a6
6. Be2	d6
7. 0-0	Nf6
8. Be3	Be7
9. f4	0-0
10. Qe1	Bd7
11. Qg3	Nxd4?
12. Bxd4	Bc6

Safer is 11...Qc7.

13. Rad1!

Posing Black greater problems than the routine queen's rook development at e1.

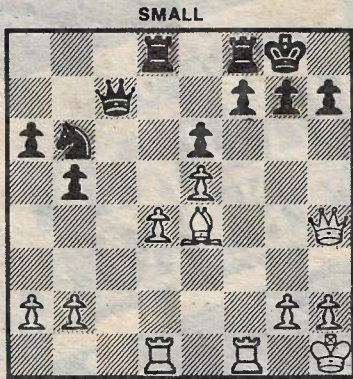
13. ... Qc7
14. Bd3 b5

The trouble is that the standard Scheveningen break with 14...e5 15.fxe5 Nh5 fails in this position to 16.Qe3 dxe5 17.Bb6! Qb8 18.Nd5 with a large advantage to White.

15. e5 dxe5
16. fxe5 Nd7
17. Ne4 Bxe4
18. Bxe4 Rad8
19. c3 Bc5?

A serious error of judgment! Understandably Small is keen to reduce White's attacking forces, but this bishop performs an important defensive function and should not be swapped.

20. Kh1 Bxd4
21. cxd4 Nb6
22. Qh4



Dekker induces the fatal kingside weaknesses. On 22...h6 now, White would continue 23.Rd3 followed by the transfer of his rook to g3.

22. ... g6
23. Rd3! Rd7

To answer 24.Rh3 with 24...f5 25.exf6 Rxd4.

24. Qh6 Qd8
25. Rf6!

Preparing the efficient finishing combination. Small's reply is forced, in view of the threat of unavoidable mate by Rh3.

25. ... Rxd4
26. Bxg6! Resigns

After 26...hxg6 White mates by 27.Rxg6, ch! fxe6 28.Qxg6 ch Kh8 29.Qh5 ch Kg7/g8 30.Rg3 ch etc. A fine debut by Dekker in the championship.

MURRAY CHANDLER

NEW ZEALAND CHAMPIONSHIP 1980/81

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
1. Nokes R. I.	X	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1	1	1/2	1	1/2	7
2. Sarapu O.	1/2	X	1/2	1	1/2	1/2	1	0	0	1	1	1	7
3. Small V. A.	1/2	1/2	X	0	1/2	1	1/2	1/2	1	1	1	1	7
4. Dekker K.	1/2	0	1	X	1/2	0	1/2	1	1	1/2	1	0	6
5. Green E. M.	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	X	1	0	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1	6
6. Levene M.	1/2	1/2	0	1	0	X	1	0	1	1/2	1/2	1	6
7. Aptekar L.	1/2	0	1/2	1/2	1	0	X	1/2	1/2	1/2	1	1/2	5 1/2
8. Watson B. R.	0	1	1/2	0	1/2	1	1/2	X	1/2	0	1/2	1	5 1/2
9. Smith R. W.	0	1	1/2	0	1/2	0	1/2	1/2	X	1/2	1	1	5 1/2
10. Stuart P. W.	1/2	0	0	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1	1/2	X	1/2	1/2	5
11. Jackson J. R.	0	0	0	0	1/2	1/2	0	1/2	0	1/2	X	1	3
12. Anderson B. R.	1/2	0	0	1	0	0	1/2	0	0	1/2	0	X	2 1/2