

Espresso explosion

ALTHOUGH South Africa was suspended from Fide (the World Chess Federation) in 1977, it has continued to host international events. Indeed, this year's Oude Meester Grand Prix in Johannesburg was of super-class stature, featuring top grandmasters Viktor Korchnoi (Switzerland), Robert Hubner (West Germany), Ulf Andersson (Sweden) and John Nunn (England).

The rather unusual format — each player meeting each of the others four times — made it a sort of combination between a match and a tournament, and the results are interesting reading:

OUDE MEESTER GRAND PRIX 1981						
Andersson	----	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	7
Hubner	1/2	1/2	0	----	0	10 1/2
Korchnoi	1/2	1/2	1/2	10 1/2	----	0
Nunn	0	1/2	0	1/2	110 1/2	----

Korchnoi's mediocre performance, coming just before his world championship challenge against Anatoly Karpov, boded ill for the Soviet defector's prospects in the match. Andersson's solidity clearly paid off — it was the number of losses rather than the number of wins which decided the outcome. Hubner broke down Korchnoi's Tarrasch French opening in one game, but suffered two reverses with Black. Nevertheless it was encouraging to see him pitted against Viktor again so soon after his walk-out "for personal reasons" halfway through their candidates match earlier this year.

Nunn started as clear underdog and, as could be expected, took last place convincingly. At this level, in which John admits he has had little experience, the slightest weakness is ruthlessly exploited. His Achilles heel turned out to be the King's Indian Defence, an opening Nunn has only recently adopted, and it cost him five losses out of six games with it.

John did, however, have the satisfaction of virtually deciding first place with his two wins over Korchnoi, and he must also have gained consolation from the following sensational game.

KING'S INDIAN DEFENCE

V. KORCHNOI	J. NUNN
1. c4	Nf6
2. Nc3	g6
3. e4	d6
4. d4	Bg7
5. Be2	0-0
6. Nf3	Nbd7

The modern system against the classical variation that Korchnoi has chosen runs 6...e5 7.0-0 (7.dxe5 dxe5 8.Qxd8 Rxd8 9.Nxe5 does not win a pawn because of 9...Nxe4) 7...Nc6 putting pressure on the d4 square.

7. 0-0	e5
8. Qc2!	

Unusual — Nunn was probably familiar only with the customary 8.Re1. One idea with the text is to bolster e4, so that after 8...exd4 9.Nxd4 Nc5 White can challenge the knight by 10.Nb3! Nxb3 11.axb3 with advantage as in Korchnoi-Timman, Leeuwarden 1976. Best is 8...c6.

8. ...	a5?
9. Rd1	exd4
10. Nxd4	Nc5
11. Ndb5!	

Stopping ... c6 for good and leaving Black in quite a cramp.

11. ...	Re8
12. Bg5	Bd7
13. f3	Ne6
14. Be3	Nh5
15. Bf1	f5

Working up counterplay. It is strange that John should have done so poorly with the King's Indian in Johannesburg, since the opening, which works rather like a compressed spring, certainly suits his dynamic style. Perhaps it was simply his inexperience with it, as in this game he strikes back with a vengeance.

16. exf5	gxf5
17. Bf2	

Not 17.Qxf5 Nef4 winning material.

17. ...	Rf8
18. g3	Nf6
19. Qxf5?	

After 19.Nd4! White continues to stand better. Korchnoi probably didn't realise the pawn was still poisoned...

19 ...	Ng4!!
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KORCHNOI.

Black explodes into life — if White declines the knight by 20.Qd3 then 20...Ne5 is strong.

20. Qxg4	Ng5!
21. Qh5	Be8
22. Qxg5	

The queen has no escape — 22.Qg4 h5! or 22.Qh4 Nxf3 ch.

22. ...	Qxg5
23. Nxc7	Rxf3!
24. Nxa8	Rxf2
25. Kxf2	Qc5 ch

White has a lot of material for his queen, but Nunn was clearly on the warpath now. The last chance was 26.Kf3 here, and if 26...Bh5 ch 27.Kg2 Qe3 28.Be2! Bxe2 29.Nxe2 Qxe2 ch 30.Kh3 when White may hold the draw.

26. Kg2?	Bxc3
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Now 27.bxc3 Bc6 ch 28.Kh3 Qh5 is mate.

27. Nc7	Bg6
28. Nd5	Be4 ch
29. Kh3	Bxb2
30. Rab1	Qf2
31. Rxb2	Qxb2
32. Nf4	Bf5 ch
33. g4	Qf2
34. Resigns	

"Coffee-house chess!" was Viktor's dismissive end-of-game comment. But then, he did once also opine, "If I cannot win against the King's Indian then something is seriously wrong."

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