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	1/201/21/2	11/211/2	7
Hubner	1/2 1/2 1/2 0		0101/2	111/21	61/2
Korchnoi	1/2 1 1/2 1/2	1011/2		0011/2	61/2
Nunn	01/201/2	001/20	1101/2		4

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 walkout "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

VING 2 III	IDIAN DEF
/. KORCHNOI	J. NUNN
1. c4	Nf6
2. Nc3	g6
3. e4	d6
4. d4	Bg7
5. Be2	0-0
6. Nf3	Nbd7
TI	

The modern system against the classical variation that Korchnoi has chosen runs 6...e5 7.0-0 (7.d×e5 d×e5 8.Q×d8 R×d8 9.N×e5 does not win a pawn because of 9...N×e4) 7...Nc6 putting pressure on the d4 square.

7. 0-0 e 8. Qc2!?

Unusual — Nunn was probably familiar only with the customary 8.Rel. One idea with the text is to bolster e4, so that after 8...e×d4 9.N×d4 Nc5 White can challenge the knight by 10.Nb3! N×b3 11.a×b3 with advantage as in Korchnoi-Timman, Leeuwarden 1976. Best is 8...c6.

8. . . . a5? 9. Rd1 . e×d4 10. N×d4 . Nc5 11. Ndb5!

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

Diuck	n quite u	crump.
11		Re8
12. Bg	5	Bd7
13. f3		Ne6
14. Be	3	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. e×f5 17. Bf2 g×f5

Not 17.Q×f5 Nef4 winning material.

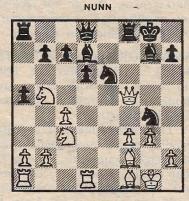
17. ... 18. g3 19. Q×f5?!

Rf8 Nf6

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

19 . .

Ng4!!



KORCHNOI.

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

20. Q×g4 21. Qh5

The queen has no escape = 22.Qg4 h5! or 22.Qh4 N×f3 ch.

22. ... Q×g5 23. N×c7 R×f3! 24. N×a8 R×f2 25. K×f2 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! B×e2 29.N×e2 Q×e2 ch 30.Kh3 when White may hold the draw.

26. Kg2?

B×c3

Now 27.b×c3 Bc6 ch 28.Kh3 Qh5 is mate.

27. Nc7 Bg6
28. Nd5 Be4 ch
29. Kh3 B×b2
30. Rab1 Qf2
31. R×b2 Q×b2
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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