

The Bishop's new vestments

FORMER world champion Mikhail Botvinnik once expressed the view that the top masters of today play too much, and care too little for theory, preparation and the game itself. When asked what he thought of this in an interview at Skara last year, current world champion Anatoly Karpov replied: "It is sad that such a great master as Botvinnik does not understand modern chess. He withdrew from active chess years ago when you needed not play as much as now. He exploited the slow spreading of chess news around the world. Having spotted a good idea he was able to use it for maybe a whole year until other players were able to defend themselves against it. When I come up with something new, the whole world will know the following week."

In Karpov's frank criticism of his fellow Russian he has made a valid point. News of the latest opening ideas and innovations does travel much more quickly nowadays. Today's professional has to be alert, versatile and constantly updating his opening repertoire.

If your name is not Karpov, however, it is still possible to keep a variation fairly secret by playing it only in minor national and international events. A good example is the now fashionable Bg5 system against the Benoni (1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.Nc3 eXd5 5.cXd5 d6 6.e4 g6 7.f3 Bg7 8.Bg5) which Ray Keene and I pioneered for several months. The chess press finally woke up when one of my Hamburg club mates carelessly won a game that was almost identical to an earlier one of mine!

The relative obscurity of the English Swiss-system circuit is a natural breeding ground for new ideas. The fastest-growing opening there at the moment is probably the Bishop's Opening. Once a favourite of Philidor, Staunton and later Larsen, it can hardly be considered new, but it is the modern treatment that is interesting. Instead of regarding it as a naive attack on f7, White is following up more subtly as if it were a retrained Ruy Lopez. The king's bishop is dropped back to b3 and c2 as required, and meanwhile White avoids the labyrinth of theory that comprises the Lopez.

One of the Bishop's most prestigious exponents is Grandmaster John Nunn, who utilised it on the way to his overwhelming victory at the Wiesbaden international recently.

BISHOP'S OPENING

JOHN NUNN (England)	RALF HESS (West Germany)
1. e4	e5
2. Bc4	Nf6
3. d3	c6
4. Nf3	d6
4...d5 5.Bb3 dXe4 6.Ng5 Be6	
7.BXe6 fXe6 8.NXe4 is marginally better for White.	
5. 0-0	Be7
6. c3	0-0
7. Nbd2	Kh8?

A waste of time as Black never gets

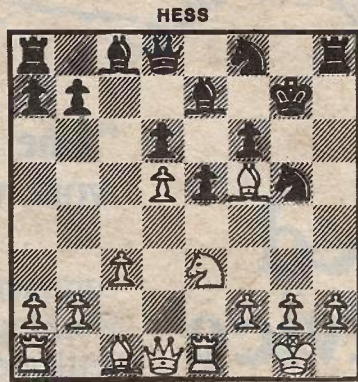
in ...f5. Nunn now proceeds to build up Lopez-style kingside pressure.

8. Re1	Nbd7
9. Bb3	Nc5
10. Bc2	Ne6
11. d4	Nd7
12. Nc4	f6
13. d5!	cXd5
14. eXd5	Ng5

Forced, for on 14...Nc7 15.Nh4 g6 16.NXg6 ch hXg6 17.BXg6 Kg7 18.Qg4 Rh8 19.Bh7 ch! KXh7 20.Re3 leads to mate. Nunn could now gain a clear advantage by 15.NXg5 fXg5 16.Nd2 and next Ne4, but decides instead to go all out for the kill.

15. Nh4!	g6
16. NXg6 ch	hXg6
17. BXg6	Kg7
18. Bf5	Rh8
19. Ne3	Nf8

For his knight sacrifice Nunn has gained two pawns and control of the dominating square f5, and has denuded the Black king of its pawn shelter. On 19...Qe8, which he considered to put up more stubborn resistance, John had intended 20.Qg4 e4 21.Nc4 b5 22.f4!



20. Qc2!	
Preventing 20...Ng6.	
20. ...	Qe8
21. BXc8	RXc8
22. Nf5 ch	Kg8

22...Kf7 makes the fight longer — after 23.h4 Ngh7 24.Qe4! Black can try:

(a) 24...b5? (planning ...Rc4) 25.Qg4! threatening mate by Qg7 or Nh6.

(b) 24...Nd7 25.Re3 Bf8 26.Rg3 Rg8 27.NXd6 ch! BXd6 28.QXh7 ch Kf8 29.RXg8 mate.

(c) 24...Qd7 25.c4 Ke8 26.Be3 followed by the positional breakthrough b4, Rc1 and c4-c5.

23. h4	Nf7
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23 ... Ngh7 is met by 24.Re3, but now White wins a rook back.

24. Qe4	Rh7
25. Qg4 ch	Kh8
26. NXe7	QXe7
27. QXc8	RXh4
28. Be3	Nh6
29. BXh6	RXh6
30. Re3	Kg7
31. Rae1	Qf7
32. c4	f5
33. c5	dXc5
34. QXc5	Nd7
35. Rg3 ch	Kh7
36. Qa3	Ra6
37. Rh3 ch	Kg7
38. Qg3 ch	Rg6
39. Qh4	Kf8
40. Qd8 ch	Resigns

MURRAY CHANDLER