

Snatched from obscurity

IT IS a sad but inescapable fact that many outstanding games of chess are destined to languish in obscurity. Sometimes even club-level players, in a splash of inspiration, can create a superb game worthy of a top grandmaster. Yet, because neither of the participants involved is famous, the masterpiece may never be noticed by magazine editors or newspaper columnists.

Surprisingly, this lack of recognition is not confined solely to the pawns of the chess world. So much top-class chess is being organised these days (more than 20 international grandmaster events in the first half of this year) that even brilliancies in these contests can lurk unsung in the depths of a tournament bulletin. Pressures of time and space usually restrict a tournament report to giving just the results and a game or two if the winners.

At the rate of 50-odd columns a year (fewer if one goes on vacation) it would probably take decades to comprehensively cover just the first six months of this year. Nevertheless, in this and next week's articles, I hope to make a small point by giving two games of exceptional interest that may otherwise have seen little daylight.

The winner of this following game is 22-year-old Hungarian International Master Attila Gropeter. His higher-rated opponent is the Cuban Grandmaster Amador Rodriguez. For a while the game follows an established opening variation, but then Rodriguez is mystified by a curious knight manoeuvre on moves 18 and 19. The next moment he is rocked back on his heels when Gropeter — normally the most phlegmatic of opponents — sacrifices his knight with stunning audacity. The game was played in the USSR earlier this year.

- 16. f5! h6
- 17. fxe6 fxe6
- 18. Nb5! Nf8
- 19. Nc7 Rac8
- 20. Nd5 ch!!



An inspired and courageous knight sacrifice. For his piece Gropeter nets just one pawn but he has intuitively assessed that the Black king cannot flee the crossfire of White's pieces.

- 20. ... eXd5
- 21. eXd5 g5?

Afterwards Gropeter gave the best defence as 21... Ra8 22. Rde1 Bc8 with the possible continuation 23. Nc3 Bxh3 (not 23... Bxc3 24. Bxc5 double check and mate) 24. Bg5 dbl ch Kd7 25. Rf7 ch Kc8 26. Bxd8.

- 22. Rde1

This quiet move threatens potential atrocities on the e-file. Black must move his king, and allow White's rook penetration to the seventh rank.

- 22. ... Kd6
- 23. Bxc8 Bxc8
- 24. Rf7 Be5

Or 24... Rd7 25. Re1:

- 25. Bd2! Bd7
- 26. Nc3

Consistent with the previous move, though 26. Re1 is even more accurate.

- 26. ... Nb7
- 27. Re1 Ng6

Black must return the two pieces for a rook.

- 28. R(1)f6 ch Bxf6
- 29. Rxf6 ch Ke5
- 30. Rxc6 Nd8!

The best chance — 30... Rh8 31. Rg7 would leave Black a pawn down and hopelessly passive.

- 31. Rxc6 Nf7
- 32. Rh7 Kf6!
- 33. Ne4 ch Kg6

Cunning defence by Rodriguez has snared the white rook. But Black is already two pawns down and a final sacrifice by Gropeter gives him a total of three pawns for the exchange — easily decisive.

- 34. Rxf7! Kxf7
- 35. Bxc6 Rh8
- 36. h4 Kg6
- 37. Kd2 Bf5
- 38. Nf2 Re8
- 39. g4 Bd7
- 40. Be3 Resigns

The two connected passed kingside pawns must ultimately decide matters, and Black would rather go and get some dinner than return to the adjournment session for more pointless suffering.

MURRAY CHANDLER

KING'S INDIAN DEFENCE

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| A. GROSPETER | A. RODRIGUEZ |
| 1. d4 | Nf6 |
| 2. c4 | g6 |
| 3. Nc3 | Bg7 |
| 4. e4 | d6 |
| 5. f3 | c5! |
| 6. dxc5 | dxc5 |
| 7. Qxd8 ch | Kxd8 |
| 8. Be3 | Nfd7 |
| 9. Nge2 | b6 |
| 10. 0-0-0 | Nc6 |
| 11. f4 | Bb7 |
| 12. g3 | Na5 |
| 13. Bh3 | e6 |
| 14. b3 | Ke7 |
| 15. Rhf1 | |

This is the drawback of such an early ...c5: Black's king must remain in the centre. Nevertheless there is no immediate danger, for queens have been exchanged, and White must play forcefully if he is to open up the game to advantage.

- 15. ... Rhd8

Also promising is the energetic 15.f5!, when Portisch-Torre, Rio Interzonal 1979, continued 15...Be5 16.fxe6 fxe6 17.Bf4 Nc6 18.Nb5 Nf6 19.Rd6! Bxd6 20.Bxd6 ch Kf7 21.Rf1 with excellent play for the exchange.