

# Down and up

IT IS INTERESTING to compare how Anatoly Karpov and Viktor Korchnoi, the adversaries in the "Massacre of Merano" world championship late last year, have fared on the international circuit recently. Even though the match lasted just 18 games the stress upon each player must have been extreme. Surprisingly it seems that Korchnoi, now 51 years old, may once again have proved the more resilient.

After retaining his crown in Merano, Karpov has been understandably taking it easy and basking in the salutations the USSR has lavished upon him. These include his recent depiction on a Soviet postage stamp, an honour usually reserved only for such national heroes as astronauts. The few excursions that he has made back into the arena since November have, however, proved astonishingly dismal. The Clarin tournament in Mar del Plata, Argentina, saw him struggling to keep above 50 per cent — and being stretched by local masters he would normally dispatch with ease.

Afterwards Karpov stated that he was "not prepared" for the tournament, which, considering his active social life as a dignitary in Moscow, may well be valid. But any delusions that he could shake off Mar del Plata on his next stop, at the Phillips and Drew Kings in London, were quickly dispelled. As I write Karpov has conceded four draws from four games in London, and in one of them, against Speelman, he was clearly losing.

In contrast Korchnoi has scored victories in Rome and Lucerne. Rome was of comparatively minor status, for Korchnoi still suffers from the Soviet boycott that has plagued him since his defection in 1976. Tournament organisers have a straight choice from the powerful USSR Federation: if Korchnoi plays, we don't. Last year he resorted to arriving at the Californian Lone Pine Tournament secretly, on a Greyhound bus in the dead of night. Since two Soviet grandmasters were already there, Moscow allowed them to play.

The Soviets were not to be caught napping again. Korchnoi's exclusion from certain events has been total — that is until this year, at Lucerne, where Boris Spassky was playing. Although Spassky now lives in France, with his French wife, he still represents the USSR. The following gripping encounter was eagerly awaited by all.

## ENGLISH OPENING

V. KORCHNOI	B. SPASSKY
1. c4	e5
2. Nc3	d6
3. d4	e×d4
4. Q×d4	Nc6
5. Qd2	g6
6. b3	Bg7
7. Bb2	Nf6
8. g3	0-0
9. Nh3!	Re8
10. Nf4!	

Very clever. The point is that on the natural 10.Bg2 Black can break in the centre with 10...d5!, eg 11.c×d5 B×h3 12.B×h3 N×d5 13.N×d5 B×b2 14.Q×b2 Q×d5 15. 0-0 Qh5! winning a pawn. By bringing his knight to bear on d5 so early, Korchnoi eliminates this Black resource and gains an enduring bind.

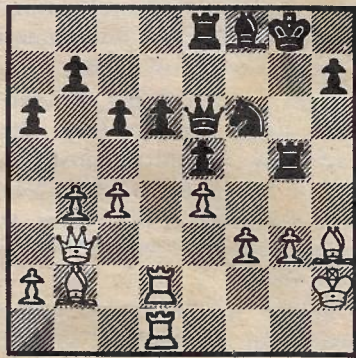
- 10. ... Bg4
- 11. Bg2 Ne5
- 12. 0-0

Not 12.B×b7? c6! (threat: 13...Nf3 ch) 13.0-0 Rb8 14.Ba6 Rb6.

- 12. ... Rb8
- 13. Rad1 a6
- 14. h3 Bd7
- 15. Ncd5 N×d5
- 16. N×d5 Be6
- 17. Qc2 c6

Spassky decides a weak d-pawn is more tolerable than the excellently posted White knight on d5, but now Korchnoi has a fixed weakness to aim at.

- 18. Nf4 Qe7
- 19. N×e6 f×e6
- 20. Rd2 Nf7
- 21. Rfd1 Rbd8
- 22. Ba3 Qc7
- 23. h4 Bf8
- 24. Be4 Nh6
- 25. Bb2 Qf7
- 26. Qc3 e5
- 27. b4 Ng4
- 28. Bf3 Nf6
- 29. e4 Qe6
- 30. Qb3 Rd7
- 31. Bg2 Rc7
- 32. f3 Rg7
- 33. Kh2 g5
- 34. h×g5 R×g5
- 35. Bh3!



Finally the bishop takes up its desired diagonal. With his next move Spassky appears to gain counter-chances against the White king, but they prove only fleeting.

- 35. ... Rh5
- 36. g4! Rg5
- 37. Rd3 Qf7
- 38. Bc1 Rg7
- 39. g5 Nh5
- 40. c5!

Brilliant liquidation — on 40...Q×b3 41.R×b3 d×c5 42.b×c5 B×c5 White has 43.Bd7 Rb8 44.B×c6 with advantage.

- 40. ... d×c5
- 41. Q×f7 ch R×f7
- 42. Bd7 Ree7
- 43. b×c5 Nf4
- 44. B×f4 R×f4
- 45. Rb1 Rf7
- 46. R×b7 Rg7
- 47. Rd6 R×g5
- 48. R×c6 Rh5 ch
- 49. Kg3 Rg7 ch
- 50. Kf2 Rh2 ch
- 51. Ke3 Re7
- 52. R×a6 Resigns

Black is two pawns down and 52...Bh6 ch 53.R×h6! R×h6 54.c6 forces the c-pawn through to promotion.

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