Chess

Soviet hegemony in Europe

THE EIGHTH European Teams Championship in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, saw the team from the Soviet Union relentlessly upholding the perfect score they maintain in this competition. Their 10-man squad (eight players and two reserves) was, as usual, simply too powerful and too consistent, notwithstanding Garri Kasparov's absence. Even world champion Anatoly Karpov seemed to be there only in case of emergency. The Soviet number one played just four games (scoring 2½ points) and spent the other days playing tennis or watching the other competitors battle over second place.

This time that place was filled by Yugoslavia, partly by virtue of having hammered the hapless West Germans (playing minus Robert Hubner) by 6½ points to 1½. The Danes, as usual without their top board Bent Larsen, had similar problems to the Germans. Because of the pounding received by the two bottom teams in Plovdiv, it was a higher scoring championship than the previous one in Skara in 1980. England's fourth place, behind Hungary, was the top Western European spot — but was achieved with more points than they had needed for third in Skara. It was, perhaps, unfortunate for England that the USSR met Hungary in the final round, when seven of the eight games were agreed drawn in under an hour.

Final scores were: 1, USSR 38 points; 2, Yugoslavia 33; 3, Hungary 31; 4, England 30; 5, Holland 29½; 6, Bulgaria 25; 7, Denmark 20; 8, West Germany 17½.

England did, however, take the award for the finest individual performance with Jonathan Mestel's outstanding score of six points from the seven games. Mestel, who only recently gained the grandmaster title, surged ahead with some brilliantly creative chess. His daring play with the black pieces was particularly noticeable. In the following game from Plovdiv he inflicts on Vladimir Tukmakov one of just two defeats suffered by the Soviet players during the championship.

KING'S INDIAN DEFENCE

V. TUKMAKOV	J. MESTEL
1. d4	Nf6
2. c4	g6
3. Nc3	Bg7
4. e4	d6
5. Be2	0-0
6. Bg5	c5
7. d5	h6
8. Bf4	e6

This situation can also arise from the Benoni defence move order. Black offers a pawn sacrifice for a lead in development and active piece play.

9. d×e6	B×e6
10. B×d6	Re8
11. Nf3	Nc6
12. 0-0	Nd4
13. Bg3!?	

A new move. Previously known was 13.e5 Nd7 14.N×d4 c×d4 15.Q×d4 N×e5 leading to an equal endgame.

13. ...	Qb6
14. e5	Nd7
15. N×d4	c×d4
16. Na4	Qa6
17. f4	f6!

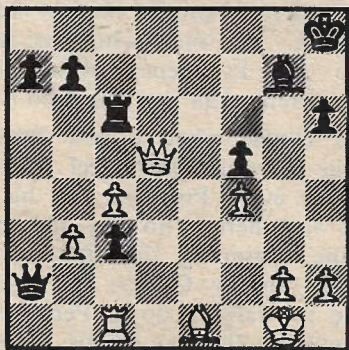*Black's active pieces and passed d-pawn give excellent compensation for the material deficit.*

18. e×f6	N×f6
19. Rc1	Bf5
20. Bf3	Rac8
21. b3	Ne4
22. Bh4	Qd6
23. Be2	Qa3?

A double-edged queen sortie exploiting the fact that White cannot defend his a-pawn (if 24.Rc2 Nc3). However, safer and stronger is 23...b5! 24.c×b5 R×c1 25.Q×c1 d3. Mestel told me he had overlooked the point 26.Qc4 ch Kh8 27.Q×d3 Bd4 ch! 28.Kh1 Nf2 ch winning the queen.

24. Bd3	Q×a2
25. Re1	Nc3
26. N×c3	d×c3
27. B×f5	g×f5
28. Qd7	R×e1 ch
29. B×e1	Rc6
30. Qd5 ch	Kh8

A critical moment. 31.B×c3 allows 31...B×c3 32.R×c3 Qa1 ch winning the rook, but would 31.R×c3! have turned the tables? 31...B×c3 32.B×c3 ch forces mate, and on 31...Qa1 32.Re3 Bd4 33.Q×d4 ch! Q×d4 34.Bc3 gives White a winning endgame. That leaves 31...Qe2, but then White defends with the incredible variation 32.Bd2 Qd1 ch 33.Kf2 Re6! 34.Be3!! and again Black is struggling.

MESTEL

TUKMAKOV

| 31. Qd3? | Rg6 |
| 32. Rc2? | |

Best was 32.Qc2 with a probable draw.

32. ...	Qb1
33. Kf2	Rd6!
34. Q×f5	

Or 34.Q×d6 Q×c2 ch and the passed c-pawn decides.

| 34. ... | Rf6 |
| 35. Qd3 | |

If 35.Qe4 R×f4 ch anyway.

35. ...	R×f4 ch
36. Kg3	Be5!
37. Resigns	

For if 37.B×c3 Rd4 discovered check wins the queen.

MURRAY CHANDLER

ALGEBRAIC NOTATION

The algebraic notation in this chess column is that used almost exclusively in Europe and in many countries elsewhere. Each square has one designation only. The vertical files are labelled a to h from White's left. In horizontal rank the squares are labelled 1 to 8 from White's end. Normal symbols are used, except that pawns as such are not mentioned; just the arrival square is given for a non-capturing pawn move.