

Accidents will happen

THE APPEARANCE of the Fide (International Chess Federation) Elo rating list every six months is a nail-biting time for many of the thousands of players listed on it. In four simple figures it tells, about as subtly as a weighing machine, whether one has been rising to grandmastership or sliding to patzerdom over recent tournaments. The scale ranges from a 2200 minimum (which is actually already strong club player level) up to 2700 plus where the world champion and occasional genius reside. At 2300 a player now automatically becomes a Fide master (upon payment of the appropriate number of Swiss francs), 2400 plus is international master strength, and a rating of around 2500 is usually grandmaster territory. At 2600 we enter the rarefied domain of the super-grandmaster, an unofficial but widely used label to describe the Anderssons, Timmans and Portisches of this world.

As a player's rating has direct consequences on the quality and quantity of tournament invitations received, it is vital that the rating system be accurate and fair. One major fear following the Fide presidency coup in Lucerne last year was that, with a completely new incoming administration, inexperience could cause havoc in the list. Fortunately this fear was proved largely unfounded, though not everybody is satisfied. Two huge misprints listing Grandmasters Sosonko and Razuvaev at 2375 and 2325 respectively make it look as though some bright spark has tapped into the Fide computer and gone berserk, in *War Games* style. Dutch players also claim an informal blitz tournament on a chess cruise to Leningrad was rated, and that Linares, one of the great tournaments of the year, was overlooked.

On the present list world champion Anatoly Karpov leads at 2710 ahead of his Soviet rival and compatriot Garri Kasparov on 2690. But the next list, scheduled to appear this January, could see Karpov toppled from the number one spot he has held since Bobby Fischer was struck off through inactivity. Kasparov scored brilliantly at Niksic with 11 points out of 14 against a top-class field. In the weaker Hanover event Karpov saved his bacon by scraping first place, as a Fide rule stipulates that a player may not lose rating points in a tournament if he wins it (even if he scores worse than his expected performance). More recently at Tilburg Karpov again took first place, this time against powerful opposition (average Elo rating of 2613). He collected 6000 Dutch guilders but probably no rating points, again because of a low winning score.

Final scores at Tilburg were: 1, Karpov 7 points; 2-3, Ljubojevic (Yugoslavia) and Portisch (Hungary) 6½; 4-5, Sosonko (Holland) and Vaganian (USSR) 6; 6-8, Hubner (West Germany), Polugayevsky and Spassky (both USSR) 5½; 9-10, Andersson

(Sweden) and Timman (Holland) 5; 11, Seirawan (USA) 4; and 12, van der Wiel (Holland) 3½.

Although 24-year-old John van der Wiel finished last he did have the consolation of this incisive win over Yugoslavia's leading player.

CLOSED SICILIAN

L. LJUBOJEVIC	J. VAN DER WIEL
1. e4	c5
2. Nc3	Nc6
3. g3	g6
4. Bg2	Bg7
5. d3	d6
6. Be3	e5
7. Qd2	Nge7
8. Bh6	0-0
9. Bxg7	Kxg7
10. f4	Nd4
11. Nf3	Bg4
12. 0-0	Qd7
13. Nh4	exf4
14. gx4	f5!

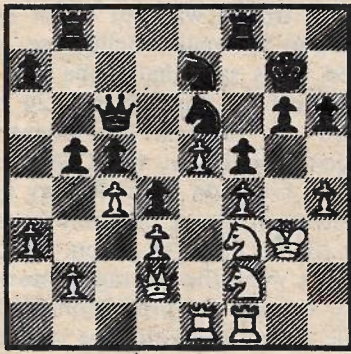
A typical thrust in the Closed Sicilian, which usually stymies any aggressive kingside intentions White may have.

15. Rae1	Rae8
16. h3	Bh5
17. Nd1	d5
18. c3	Ndc6
19. e5	d4
20. c4	h6
21. a3	Nd8!

White has a protected passed pawn on e5, it is true, but the knight will be a superb blockader on e6.

22. Nf2	Ne6
23. Bf3	Bxf3
24. Nx3	b5
25. h4	Rb8
26. Kh2	Qc6
27. Kg3	

Ljubojevic also tried this remarkable manoeuvre of putting his king on g3 against Portisch later in the tournament. That time, in a closed Lopez position, he got away with it, but the idea is a bit like playing tricks with the ball in front of your own goal in football. It is not always fatal — but it certainly increases the chance of a serious accident.



27. ... g5!

If van der Wiel has a forte it is causing serious accidents to happen to other people's kings.

28. hxg5	hxg5
29. cxb5	Rxb5

The zwischenzug 29... gx4 ch is possible, but Black wants more.

30. Nxg5	Nxg5
31. fxg5	f4 ch
32. Kh2	Qf3!

33. Resigns
33... Rh8 mating is threatened and 33.Nh3 fails to 33... Qg3 ch.

MURRAY CHANDLER