

The one that got away



THERE HE IS. That's world champion Anatoly Karpov, and you're about to play him, at short notice, with the black pieces. Recently in London, on the verge of departing for exhibitions in Wellington, I was phoned by the producer of the BBC's *Master Game* programme, who was in a mild panic. "Quinteros has had to pull out of our series," he said. "If you can substitute for him the game starts at 2pm tomorrow. Incidentally, you'll be Black against Karpov in round one."

The first thing you notice when you sit down opposite the reigning world champion is a surprising lack of what is commonly called charisma. The first thing you worry about is that style which has made him one of the most successful players of all time. It is really quite simple — Anatoly makes outstandingly strong moves consistently and very quickly. Naturally he can calculate variations at least as well as the next grandmaster, but there is no doubt that the 32-year-old Soviet number one is happiest when in positional control.

The BBC time control stipulated 40 moves in two hours (rather than the standard two and a half hours), which, even at the pace Karpov moves, made time-trouble a more relevant factor. Karpov eschewed his favourite king pawn opening and we transposed into a line neither of us knew exceptionally well. In time-trouble play became extremely sharp and, flustered, Karpov overlooked the possibility of a remarkable queen sacrifice for only two pawns. I saw it — but didn't play it! Later we couldn't find a defence.

QGD TARRASCH DEFENCE

A. KARPOV	M. CHANDLER
1. c4	e6
2. Nc3	d5
3. d4	c5
4. e3	Nf6
5. Nf3	Nc6
6. cxd5	exd5
7. Bb5	Bd6
8. dxc5	Bxc5
9. 0-0	0-0
10. b3	Bg4
11. Bb2	Rc8
12. Be2	Bd6?!

More accurate is 12...Re8 13.Rc1 Bd6 as White could now try 13.Nd4 with advantage.

13. Nb5?! Bb8!
Gambling that White will not snatch the d-pawn with 14.Bxf6 Qxf6 15.Qxd5. After 15...Rfd8 16.Qe4 Bf5 17.Qh4 Qb2 Black has an unclear amount of compensation for the pawn — too unclear for Karpov.

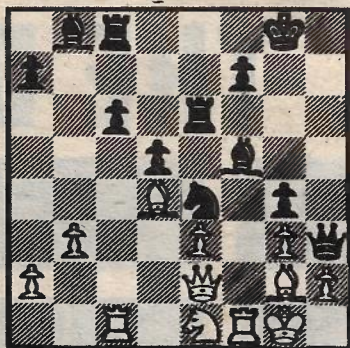
14. Rc1 Re8
 15. Qd3 Ne4
 16. Nbd4 Qd6
The position is unclear, with Black's piece play and kingside pressure compensating for the isolated d-pawn.

17. g3 h5!
 18. Nxc6?! bxc6
 19. Nh4 Bh3
 20. Rfd1 Qh6
 21. Bf3 g5

I felt a bit cheeky throwing my kingside pawns at Karpov like this, but nothing ventured nothing gained.

22. Ng2 h4
 23. Qe2 Bf5
 24. Bd4 hxg3
 25. fxg3 Re6
 26. Rf1 Qh3
 27. Ne1 g4
 28. Bg2?

This could have been a fatal mistake, played when Karpov had only two minutes left and myself one. 28.Bxe4 Bxe4 29.Qf2 is still mucky.



Here is the position where Black has the incredible 28...Qxh2 ch! 29.Kxh2 Nxg3! threatening 30...Nx2 discovered check. I analysed it as much as my time would allow, but ultimately rejected it on the grounds that one cannot sacrifice a queen for two pawns on intuition — there must be a flaw! In post-mortem analysis, however, Karpov and I failed to find a defence, eg 30.Qa6 Ne2 dis ch 31.Rf4 Bxf4 ch 32.exf4 g3 ch! 33.Kh1 Rh6 ch 34.Bh3 Be4 ch and ... Rxh3 will mate. Karpov's amazing try 30.Qb5 (planning 30...Ne2 dis ch 31.Qxb8!) fails to 31...Rh6 ch and then 32...cxb5. Back to real life, however...
 28. ... Nxg3?

I had thought this other sacrifice gave me chances of perpetual check, but it is based on an hallucination.

29. hxg3 Qxg3
 30. Rx15
Of course. Now 30...Qh2 ch 31.Kf1 is nothing, and 30...Rh6 (threatening ...Rh1 ch followed by ...Qh2 mate) loses to 31.Rg5 ch. Black could resign.

30. ... Qh4
 31. Bxd5 Rh6
 32. Qg2 Rc7
 33. Nf3 Qh3
 34. Rg5 ch Kf8
 35. Bg7 ch Ke8
 36. Bxh6 Resigns

MURRAY CHANDLER