

Could do better

NEW ZEALAND'S final standing at the Lucerne Olympiad was probably slightly below our true position in the world rankings, but it was a solid and consistent performance that reflects well on the players and manager Peter Stuart. Our team finished in 46th place on 28 points, out of a total of 92 countries. The winners, with 42½ points, as I wrote last week, were the Soviet Union — a team New Zealand had the mixed honour of meeting in round one.

The table lays out the team's progress through the Olympiad, hosted so efficiently by the Swiss organisers for a mere 2.4 million Swiss francs. National champion Vernon Small held his own well on top board, though he did modestly confess to "being positionally outplayed for the first time in my life" after the first round; his opponent, of course, being world champion Anatoly Karpov. But the most outstanding individual performance came from Auckland journalist Robert Smith. Through dedication and resourcefulness he pulled back from several precarious positions, and ended up undefeated.

On the whole our Olympiad team now has considerable overseas experience between it, and as a young, up-and-coming squad it has a bright outlook for the future. Nevertheless, at the risk of repeating myself year after year, I ask: did we have the strongest team? I refer here, specifically, to the continued exclusion of one of New Zealand's strongest players, Craig Laird. Craig has recently been devoting himself full-time to the European circuit, and now has the highest rating of any New Zealander on the Fide (World Chess Federation) list. Before the Olympiad he scored the required norms to gain a Fide Master title — and yet he seems to have been hardly considered by the selection committee.

Meanwhile, here is an astonishing parallel game to last week's Gheorghiu-Liu encounter. In that game the Chinese player won by a sudden, devastating sacrifice of his queen on the g1 square to force an instant mate. This game comes from board three of that same Rumania v China match.

SICILIAN DEFENCE

V. STOICA (Rumania) Z. LI (China)

- 1. e4 c5
- 2. Nf3 e6
- 3. d4 cxd4
- 4. Nxd4 Nf6
- 5. Nc3 Nc6
- 6. Ndb5 d6
- 7. Bf4 e5
- 8. Bg5 a6
- 9. Na3 b5
- 10. Bxf6 gxh6
- 11. Nd5 f5
- 12. Bd3 Be6
- 13. Qh5 Bg7
- 14. 0-0 f4
- 15. c4 bxc4
- 16. Bxc4 0-0
- 17. Rac1 Kh8
- 18. Rc3 Nd4
- 19. Rfc1 Rb8
- 20. b3 f3!

White has misplaced his rooks and this pawn sacrifice gives a dangerous attack.

- 21. gxh3 Bxd5
- 22. exd5 Qf6
- 23. Kh1 Bh6
- 24. Bd3 Rg8
- 25. Rd1?

25. Rf1 is passive but better.

- 25. ... e4!
- 26. Bxe4 Ne2
- 27. Rc7

On 27. Rc4 Black doubles on the g-file with decisive effect by 27... Rg5

28. Qh3 Rbg8. Now White wants to answer 27... Rg5 by 28. Qxf7, but gets an unpleasant surprise instead.

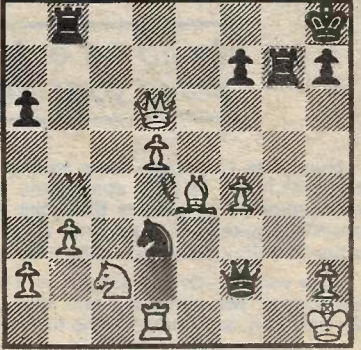
- 27. ... Qd4!
- 28. Rcc1

Naturally not 28. Rxd4 Rg1 mate, and 28. Rf1 fails to 28... Qxf2.

- 28. ... Qxf2
- 29. f4 Nxc1
- 30. Qxh6 Rg7
- 31. Nc2

Or 31. Rxc1 Qe3! and wins.

- 31. ... Nd3!
- 32. Qxd6



- 32. ... Qg1 ch!
- 33. Resigns.

33. Rxc1 Nf2 is, of course, check-mate.

MURRAY CHANDLER

	USSR	Algeria	Puerto Rico	Iceland	Mexico	Sri Lanka	Greece	Poland	Italy	Colombia	Trinidad	Ecuador	Dominica	Turkey	Played	Points	Percentage
V. SMALL	0	1	-	½	1	½	½	0	0	-	½	1	½	-	11	5½	50
O. SARAPU	0	-	1	0	0	-	½	0	-	0	1	1	0	½	11	4	36
R. NOKES	0	1	1	0	-	1	0	-	½	0	½	½	0	½	12	5	42
T. DOWDEN	0	1	1	-	0	1	-	0	½	0	1	-	-	½	10	5	50
R. SMITH	-	1	1	½	½	1	½	1	½	½	-	1	½	½	12	8½	71
TEAM TOTAL	0	4	4	1	1½	3½	1½	1	1½	½	3	3½	1	2	56	28	50