

Not all beer and skittles

WOMEN'S CHESS has come a long way since the day Bobby Fischer is said to have claimed he could give any female player odds of a knight and still win. The leading women grandmasters, most of them from Georgia in the USSR, frequently finish highly in open international tournaments — and occasionally win them. And in London last year the Swedish girl Pia Cramling even had the great Viktor Korchnoi in a mating net before letting the men's world championship challenger escape with a draw.

This game was no one-off fluke either. Over the past year Cramling has emerged as the West's leading challenger to the traditional Soviet domination of the game — a state of affairs even more pronounced in women's chess than men's. Regrettably, Pia has missed her chance to qualify for the world championship candidates series, currently in progress, because of schoolwork. Of the eight candidates in this present series there were five Soviet players, one ex-Soviet, one Chinese and one Rumanian. Even this was an unusually high ratio of non-Soviets, but after the first bout of knock-out matches the normal balance was regained — the surviving four are from the USSR.

In the quarter-final matches Lidia Semenova (USSR) beat Margareta Muresan (Rumania) 5½-4½, Nana Ioseliani (USSR) beat Liu Shi Lan (China) 5½-3½, Irina Levitina (USSR) beat compatriot Nona Gaprindashvili 6-4, and Nana Alexandria (USSR) beat Tatiana Lemachko (stateless) 5½-4½. The best chance for a "Western" candidate was probably Lemachko, who has lived in both the USSR and Bulgaria but defected to Switzerland during the Lucerne Olympiad last year. Perhaps she was lured by the glamorous portrait of life in the West painted by Russian defector Ivan Ivanov, her frequent bar companion during Lucerne. But the professional circuit for a woman is far different from the opportunities open to a grandmaster of Ivanov's status. During her candidates match the West German weekly *Schach Woche* mounted a campaign to assist Lemachko financially, one of several collections taken on her behalf.

The semi-finals of the candidates matches will now see Alexandria playing Levitina and Semenova playing Ioseliani, with the ultimate winner challenging the Georgian and world number one Maya Chiburdanidze. On ranking Chiburdanidze has slipped to 2355, and now shares top women's spot with Alexandria, Gaprindashvili and Cramling. With her outstanding performance at Dortmund recently, however, Maya has clearly regained form — finishing fourth behind Suba, Hort and myself, and only half a point adrift of a men's GM norm. She played with authority and accuracy, and caused at least one German player to buy his friends a case

of beer after entering an incautious bet regarding her ability to defeat him. Afterwards in the Flaming Sable, an Eastern European emigre pub, she rubbed more alcohol into fresh wounds by repeatedly demolishing a German olympic player in skittles (blitz) chess.

This week's game, from Dortmund, shows the resourcefulness Chib is also capable of if things don't go her way at first.

CARO KANN DEFENCE

M. CHIBURDANIDZE	N. SHORT
1. e4	c6
2. d4	d5
3. Nd2	dxe4
4. Nxe4	Nf6

It is questionable whether the extra piece play Black gets in this variation is sufficient compensation for the doubled pawns incurred.

5. Nxf6 ch	gxf6
6. Be2	

As Black's counterplay in this system invariably involves the g-file I prefer 6.Nf3 Bf5 7.g3!, though 6....Bg4 can be tried.

6. ...	Qc7
7. Nf3	Bg4
8. c4	e6
9. 0-0	Nd7
10. d5	0-0-0
11. dxe6?	

A serious error; 11.Nd4 was best.

11. ...	Ne5!
12. Nd2	

If 12.Qb3 then 12....Bxf3 13.Bxf3 Rd3 wins.

12. ...	Bxe6
13. Qa4	Rg8
14. Ne4?	Bxc4!

White should have played 14.g3. Now 15.Bxc4 allows mate by 15...Nf3 ch 16.Kh1 Qxh2.

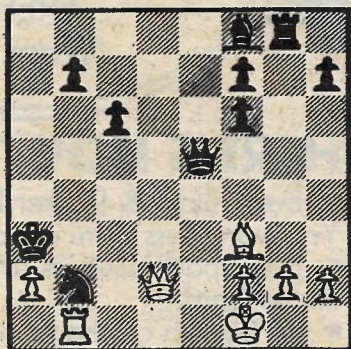
15. Bh5	Bxf1
16. Kxf1	Nd3
17. Qxa7	Qe5

17....Qxh2 should succeed comfortably, but Short, suffering an hallucination, thought this won even more easily.

18. Be3!	Qxe4?
19. Qa8 ch	Kc7
20. Bb6 chl	Kxb6
21. Qxd8 ch	Kc5?

The king rushes headlong to his doom. Instead 21....Ka7 forces White to take a draw by perpetual check with 22.Qa5 ch.

22. b4 chl	Kxb4
23. Bf3	Qe5
24. Rb1 ch	Nb2
25. Qd2 ch	Ka3



26. Rxb2!	b5
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If 26...Qxb2, 27.Qa5 is a neat mate.

27. Rb3 ch	Ka4
28. Bd1	Resigns

MURRAY CHANDLER