

MURRAY CHANDLER

The female of the species

SHE STANDS a petite 150cm (5ft 1in) with blonde hair, modest, unassuming and Swedish. Sounds like a young chessplayer's Ingrid Bergman. In fact it is Pia Cramling, who cuts a rather unlikely figure challenging one of the strongest bastions of male domination and the Soviets at the same time. In the past 18 months she has gained the international master title (that's the real one, not the easier women's one) and pushed her rating to number one on the women's list. Now this 20-year-old, from the outskirts of Stockholm, is making the most of an amusing case of "reverse sexism". "As a woman I get much better invitations than the average International Master," she said. She has already played one fully-fledged grandmaster tournament this year, in Iceland, and now lucrative club contracts in Sweden and West Germany beckon, as well as a possible tour of Australia.

It is easy to see why someone like Cramling is in hot demand. Until now organisers could only dream of young women scunching up distraught male masters before a barrage of cameras. Of course the top Soviet women, such as present world champion Maya Chiburdanidze, do it with some regularity, but their appearances in the West are limited. Although women's chess is gradually gaining momentum the world over, only Cramling and the 14-year-old Hungarian Zsuzsa Polgar look like troubling the Georgians. According to one of Polgar's trainers, Yugoslav Grandmaster Knezevic, Zsuzsa will make the Hungarian men's team before she is 20.

One former Soviet, later Bulgarian, woman player who decided to defect for career reasons is 36-year-old Tatiana Lemachko. When she first came in from the cold, at the end of the 1982 Lucerne Olympiad, collections and donations were sought to help her begin again in Switzerland. At a recent competition in Lugano, Lemachko showed the benefits a free tournament schedule can reap. She finished top of the Swiss players; not just women, but everybody, including Viktor Korchnoi! (See also this week's game.) So how do women fare against men in the battle of nerves that a top-class struggle invariably produces? Cramling: "Men don't want to lose to me because of the publicity, and often try harder to win. That's often an advantage as my opponents can't relax. Sometimes I do have a psychological advantage, especially when my opponents haven't played against women or girls before." Most male grandmasters, especially those who have had losses to Chirburdanidze voted "Soviet game of the year", would agree with that.

Cramling advises the girls: "Just go on playing and enjoy it. Play against men in men's tournaments and don't care what the men say."



Pia Cramling: "Don't care what the men say."

- 8. d3 Bb7
- 9. Nbd2 Re8
- 10. Nf1 Bf8
- 11. a4 Na5
- 12. Ba2 b×a4?!
- 13. Bd2 c5
- 14. Ne3 Nc6
- 15. Ng5!

Winning material, as Black cannot satisfactorily protect the f7 square; if 15...Re7 then 16.Nf5.

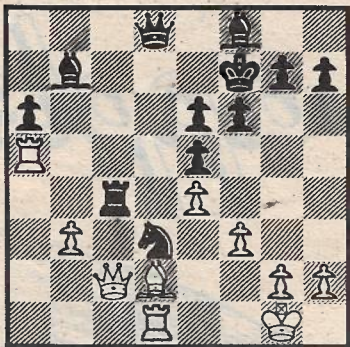
- 15. . . . Re6
- 16. N×e6 d×e6
- 17. Bc4 Na5
- 18. R×a4 N×c4
- 19. N×c4 Nd7
- 20. Bc3 Qc7
- 21. Qa1 f6
- 22. Qa2 Re8
- 23. Ra1 Kf7
- 24. Rb1 Rb8
- 25. b4?

After gaining a winning position Nunn, the English men's number two, starts to go astray.

- 25. . . . c×b4
- 26. Bd2

Now White realises that 26.B×b4 is countered by 26...Bc6.

- 26. . . . b3!
- 27. c×b3 Nc5
- 28. Ra5 N×d3
- 29. Qc2 Qd8
- 30. f3 Rc8
- 31. Rd1? R×c4!
- 32. Resigns



Black delivers a standard mate after 32.b×c4 (32.Q×c4 Qb6 ch is similar) Qd4 ch 33.Kf1 Qf2 mate or 33.Kh1 Nf2 ch 34.Kg1 Nh3 double ch 35.Kh1 Qg1 ch! 36.R×g1 Nf2. White can avoid the smothered mate by defending with 33.Be3 Q×e3 ch 34.Kf1, but Nunn had calculated the decisive 34...Bc5! 35.R×d3 Qg1 ch 36.Ke2 Qf2 ch 37.Kd1 Qf1 ch 38.Kd2 Bb4 ch! and wins. ■

RUY LOPEZ

J. NUNN (England)	T. LEMACHKO (Switzerland)
1. e4	e5
2. Nf3	Nc6
3. Bb5	a6
4. Ba4	Nf6
5. 0-0	Be7
6. Re1	b5
7. Bb3	0-0