

The professional approach

IT IS DIFFICULT to pinpoint exactly what triggered the amazing English chess explosion that began last decade. Perhaps it was the inducements to become a grandmaster offered by financier Jim Slater — for gaining the nation's first title back in 1976 Tony Miles pocketed £5000. But now, seven grandmasters later, the Slater fund is dry and there is still no sign of a let-up. There are too many international masters in the country to count, and with talented youngsters like Nigel Short, Jim Plaskett and Mark Hebden the GM tally is heading the same way. Meanwhile the elite continue to boldly go where no Englishman has gone before: namely over the magic 2600 barrier on the latest Elo rating list that distinguishes the geniuses from the mortals. At 2610 Miles is ranked 13-15th in the world, and at 2600 John Nunn is 16th equal.

England's continuing success story is one that other nations could learn from, for the change has been as much in attitude as in increased sponsorship and training programmes. Look, for example, at the scandal created by Miles's refusal to play the 1977 European Teams Championship because no fees were offered. Nowadays, as a matter of course, all top English team members are remunerated for their efforts — the public and officials seeing the position of professional players with new understanding. Along with the over-the-board achievements, a revitalised British Chess Federation has emerged. Four years ago they took over the *British Chess Magazine* (£21.48 a year from 9 Market St, St Leonards on Sea, East Sussex, TN38 0DQ) and nowadays take a much more positive role in the promotion of all chess activity.

On my New Zealand tour during November and December I did try to pass on advice, when asked by local organisers, on basic techniques to attract and keep sponsors. One essential thing to do is to send a press release from your tournament (containing one or two publishable games) to all relevant newspapers, magazines and chess columnists. This should be done immediately the event ends. Enclose a note asking if the journalist would be so kind as to send you a clipping if any article does appear — especially one mentioning the sponsor's name. It is not mercenary or devious, just elementary public relations, and a pile of newspaper cuttings certainly lets a company know its support is appreciated.

Back to the south coast of England for this week's game, played in the Computer Games Ltd Brighton Grandmaster Tournament. Jim Plaskett had a brilliant year in 1983, winning the £2000 Leigh Grand Prix circuit and scoring two grandmaster norms (out of three required for the title). Here, however, his luck runs out against the talented William Watson, who destroys him with some fabulous opening preparation. English GM Jonathan

Mestel first uncovered this resource for Black in the double-edged Dragon variation in Plovdiv 1983, but never had a chance to use it. Mestel showed it to Nunn, Nunn showed it to Watson and Watson "showed" it to Plaskett...

SICILIAN DEFENCE

J. PLASKETT	W. WATSON
1. e4	c5
2. Nf3	d6
3. d4	c×d4
4. N×d4	Nf6
5. Nc3	g6
6. Be3	Bg7
7. f3	0-0
8. Qd2	Nc6
9. g4	Be6
10. 0-0-0	N×d4
11. B×d4	Qa5
12. a3	Rfc8
13. h4	Rab8
14. h5	

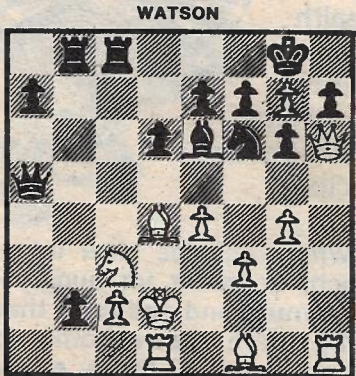
Attention turned to this move after the ending with 14.Nd5 Q×d2 ch 15. R×d2 was shown to be rather unclear.

14. ...	b5
15. h6	b4

After 15...Bh8 16.Nd5! the endgame really does give White a pull, as in Tal-Sax, Moscow 1982.

16. h×g7	b×a3!
17. Qh6	a×b2 ch
18. Kd2	

"White is winning" was Mikhail Tal's comment in Informator. As Plaskett discovers, even Soviet ex-world champions are not always right.



PLASKETT

18. ...	B×g4!
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The point of this sacrifice offer is to block the h-file long enough for Black to storm the centre. If 19.f×g4 e5! is immensely strong.

19. B×f6	Bh5
20. Bd4?	

White's best try was 20.Bh3 when Black must find 20...e×f6! (20...Rc7 21.Bf5! wins) 21.B×c8 R×c8 22.Qe3 Qb4! and, remarkably, White is helpless against the advance of the Black a-pawn. Such is the extent of modern opening preparation.

20. ...	e5
21. R×h5	g×h5
22. Qg5	Qb4

Also good was 22...b1=Q.

23. Bd3	Q×d4
24. Nd5	Qf2 ch
25. Be2	R×c2 ch!
26. K×c2	Q×e2 ch
27. Kc3	Q×f3 ch
28. Kc4	

Or 28.Rd3 Q×d3 ch 29.K×d3 b1=Q ch etc.

28. ...	Qb3 mate
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MURRAY CHANDLER