

Small wins big one

MURRAY CHANDLER

THE HUGE silver rook, symbol of New Zealand chess supremacy, was clearly destined for Christchurch well before the finish of the latest national championship in Upper Hutt. What was not so clear was which of the two leading players — Vernon Small or Adrian Lloyd — would have the task of adding it to those suitcases of chess books. In the final round Small was a half-point ahead but playing Black against his leading rival. Obtaining a promising opening, the 30-year-old part-time lecturer at Canterbury University wisely accepted Lloyd's proffered draw to secure his fourth New Zealand title.

Final scores in the Dominion Breweries 1984/85 Championship were: V. Small 8½ points; A. Lloyd 8; P. Garbett (Auckland), J. Sarfati and A. Ker (both Wellington) 6½; P. Green (Auckland), L. McLaren (Wellington) and L. Cornford (Auckland) 5; P. Stuart (Auckland) and M. Freeman (Christchurch) 4; A. Dowden (Dunedin) and A. Pomeroy (Wellington) 3½. Lloyd's second place was a vast improvement over his performance last year (last!), but the 20-year-old psychology student did feel he could have played better with more preparation. In contrast Small has been devoting himself to chess study and journalism since finishing his PhD in English literature last May, and had just played board one for New Zealand in the Olympiad in Greece.

In spite of the margin separating the top two Canterbury players from the field, there were good performances from several young Wellington players. Jonathan Sarfati and Anthony Ker finished equal third with former champion Paul Garbett, and Ker's personal victory over Garbett utilising the eccentric "Grob's Attack" (1.g4) may well earn him a Fide swindler's norm by itself! Mark Noble found a solid streak to tie for first with Pat Cordue in the Premier Reserve tournament, and the former Wainuiomata wins on tie-break the coveted qualification spot into next Christmas's 12-player championship.

It is to be hoped that the switch of the New Zealand Chess Association headquarters from Auckland to Wellington, finalised at Upper Hutt, will result in a more positive attitude in many different aspects nationally. Just how active a role former Prime Minister Sir John Marshall will fulfil as the new NZCA president is unclear, but the involvement of experienced professional people can only help.

A crisp attacking miniature from the new champion:

SICILIAN DEFENCE

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| V. SMALL | P. STUART |
| 1. e4 | c5 |
| 2. Nf3 | e6 |
| 3. d4 | cxd4 |
| 4. Nxd4 | Nc6 |
| 5. Nc3 | Qc7 |
| 6. Be2 | a6 |
| 7. 0-0 | b5?! |

A risky pawn advance when Black is behind in development. Safer is 7... Nf6.

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| 8. Nxc6! | Qxc6 |
| 9. Bf3 | Bb7 |
| 10. Bf4 | d6 |
| 11. Re1 | e5 |
| 12. Be3 | |

The Batsford opening monograph Sicilian



Vernon Small: study paid off.

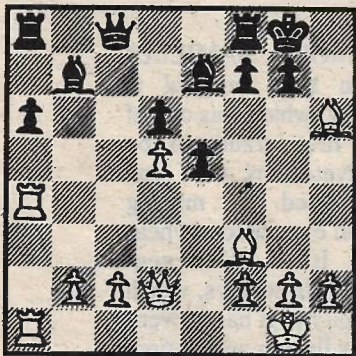
Paulsen by Taimanov recommends the immediate thrust 12. a4!, as accepting the piece sacrifice with 12... exf4 13. e5! is exceptionally dangerous.

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| 12. ... | Be7 |
| 13. a4 | bxa4 |
| 14. Rxa4 | h6? |

Although the objective of this move is understandable, it represents a serious loss of time. After the correct 14... Nf6 15. Bg5 0-0 16. Bxf6 Bxf6 17. Nd5 Bg5! a standard Sicilian formation is reached where White's control of d5 is not really dangerous for Black.

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| 15. Qd2 | Nf6 |
| 16. Re1 | 0-0 |
| 17. Nd5 | Nxd5 |
| 18. exd5 | Qc8 |
| 19. Bxh6! | |

STUART



SMALL

Punishment for Black's 14th move.

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| 19. ... | gxf6 |
| 20. Qxf6 | f5 |
| 21. Qg6 ch | Kh8 |
| 22. Rg4! | fxg4 |
| 23. Be4 | |

Small's investment of a rook and a bishop now pays off: to avoid mate in one Black begins desperately shovelling back material.

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| 23. ... | Rf7 |
| 24. Qxf7 | Qg8 |
| 25. Qxe7 | Resigns |

Counting the pawns, Stuart realises he is two down with more dropping off. Time for a drink...