

The wizard of Oz

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IT IS ALWAYS a pleasure to see a deserving young talent finally achieving the title of international Grandmaster, especially so in the case of Australian Ian Rogers. By coming first equal in Biel, Switzerland, in the open event accompanying the World Championship Interzonal, Rogers fulfilled the third and final qualification norm to become Australia's first Grandmaster — a tremendous feat considering that 10 months ago he did not even have one norm towards the title.

Rogers, 25, has long been at the top of Australian chess, although acquiring a degree in meteorology means that he has been a full-time professional only for three years. But in those three years he has commuted to Europe with a frequency that must have astonished his bank manager, gaining experience in England, Yugoslavia and the USSR. Aided by a draw in the BBC *Mastergame* with World Champion Karpov, his reputation and world ranking also grew. He gained his first GM result by scoring seven points from nine games playing for Australia at the Greece Olympiad, followed soon after by a similar performance in Sardinia. At Biel he said: "It becomes easier when you have a high ranking. You get more respect — and players are more likely to give you a draw in a difficult position."

To qualify for the life-time title of Grandmaster, it is necessary to score two, or three top results (24 games or more) in tournaments of a certain strength. It is not easy! Statistically these peak performances require one to perform to the level of the top 10 players in the world. At Biel Rogers was faced with the daunting task of scoring two-and-a-half points from his last three games — and needing to beat either the strong English GM Tony Miles, or the strong Czech GM Vlastimil Hort. He chose Hort, gritted his teeth, and won a brilliant game. In typical style he chose the speculative Budapest gambit (1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e5) to surprise Miles in the last round. The gamble paid off when Miles, fearful for his prize money, hastily agreed the draw.

Here is one of Rogers's short but attractive efforts from Switzerland. Note White's bold clearance sacrifice on move 23, designed solely to keep his white-squared bishop in action.

INDIAN DEFENCE

I ROGERS (Australia)	A ARAPOVIC (Yugoslavia)
1. d4	g6
2. e4	Bg7
3. c4	Nc6
4. Be3	d6
5. Nc3	e5

- 6. d5 Nce7
- 7. g4 Nf6

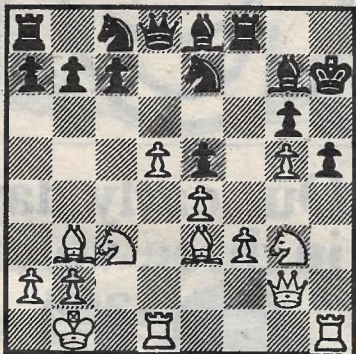
Normal (though still slightly better for White) is 7... f5 8. gxf5 9. gxf5 Qh5 ch Kf8 followed by 10... Nf6 gaining time on the White queen.

- 8. f3 h5
- 9. g5 Nh7

Better is 9... Nd7.

- 10. h4 f6
- 11. Qd2 fxg5
- 12. hxg5 0-0
- 13. 0-0-0 Rf7
- 14. Kbl Nf8
- 15. c5 dxc5
- 16. Bxc5 Nd7
- 17. Be3 Kh7
- 18. Bc4 Rf8
- 19. Qg2 Nb6
- 20. Bb3 Bd7
- 21. Nge2 Be8
- 22. Ng3 Nbc8?

In principle Black has a very good idea — if he could blockade with... Nd6 he would have good defensive chances. Unfortunately for him, Rogers foils the scheme by sacrificing the d-pawn.



- 23. d6! Nxd6
- 24. Rdg1 Nxe4

Intending 25. fx e4 Qd3 ch and 26... Qxe3 regaining the piece.

- 25. Nxe5!
- Beginning a sacrificial finale...*
- 25. Nxc3 ch
- 26. bxc3 gxh5
- 27. g6 ch Bxg6 ch

Perhaps Rogers had planned 28. Rxe5 mating, forgetting he was in check? If Arapovic was hoping this his dreams were soon shattered.



- 28. Qxg6 ch! Resigns
- 28... Nxe5 29. Rxe5 ch Bh6 30. Rxe6 ch Kg7 31. Rgxe6 checkmate.*