

Eye openers

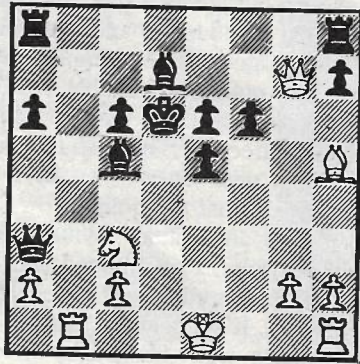
by Murray Chandler

MODERN TOURNAMENTS where the openings are specified in advance, as in a recent event at Utrecht, Holland, are surprisingly rare. Perhaps everybody has been put off since the mammoth King's Gambit tournaments of Vienna 1904 (10 players, double rounds) and Abbazia 1912 (11 players, double rounds). Fortunately the 1986 Utrecht club centenary "theme-tourier" was divided into three groups of six players each. Each group contained two strong international players and four locals, and each round a different set opening was played.

The resulting struggles were interesting not only for the opening theory of the five variations concerned. All of the Utrecht club players had obviously been analysing the lines together for many weeks before the competition. How would they, players of approximate FIDE master strength, do against the likes of grandmasters Vlastimil Hort, Tony Miles and co? There is a popular myth that professionals maintain their high rankings largely because of their enormous openings knowledge, but here this was shattered. On a number of occasions the visiting celebrities received severe frights in the opening, but pulled through in the ensuing hand-to-hand combat.

Had the locals been just a little bit

stronger things might have been different. An example of the disparity in analytical strength occurred in one of the two specified variations of the Sicilian defence. The set position was reached after the moves 1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 a6 6. Bg5 e6 7. f4 Qb6 8. Qd3 Qxb2 9. Rb1 Qa3. Here several of the grandmasters, doing their homework, noticed a dramatic improvement in the known continuation: 10. f5 Nc6 11. fxe6 fxe6 12. Nxc6 bxc6 13. e5 dxe5 14. Bxf6 gxf6 15. Be2 Bc5 16. Bh5 ch Ke7 17. Qg3 Bd7 18. Qg7 ch Kd6.



The Soviet grandmaster Gavrikov asserts, "Black is much better" in the March 1986 *Informator 41* journal. But White has a brilliant win with 19. Rd1 ch Bd4 20. Rxd4 ch! exd4 21. Qg3 ch! and

21... Ke7 22. Nd5 ch or 21... e5 22. Ne4 ch win the queen. Black must play the ghastly 21... Kc5 22. Ne4 ch Kb4 23. Qd6 ch Ka4, and after 24. Nc5 ch White has a winning attack. At Utrecht the diagram position was reached in the game between locals Etmans and Bor but, oblivious, White missed the win and eventually lost. The young Hungarian Zsuzsa Polgar, now the highest ranked woman in the world, spotted this combination instantly.

This week's game from Utrecht shows the top Dutch GM Jan Timman earning his appearance fee of \$1700 per game.

SICILIAN DEFENCE

J TIMMAN

- 1. e4
- 2. Nf3
- 3. d4
- 4. Nxd4
- 5. Nc3
- 6. Be3
- 7. f3
- 8. Qd2
- 9. Bc4
- 10. 0-0-0
- 11. Bb3
- 12. h4
- 13. Bg5
- 14. f4
- 15. Qd3

A SCHENK

- c5
- d6
- cxd4
- Nf6
- g6
- Bg7
- Nc6
- 0-0
- Bd7
- Rc8
- Ne5
- h5
- Rc5
- Nc4
- b5

This was the set starting position in round three — an extremely heavy mainline Dragon position. Now the game van der Wiel-Etmans continued 16. e5 Nd5!, a very strong novelty that shocked grandmaster John van de Wiel into around an hour's thought (although he too beat the unfortunate Etmans in the end!).

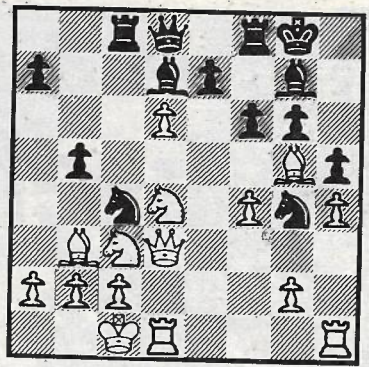
Andre Schenk's choice of knight move runs into some high-class Timman preparation.

16. e5

Ng4?!

- 17. Ne4
- 18. exd6
- 19. Nc3!

- Rc8
- f6



A cool retreat by White, considering his bishop on g5 is doomed. If 19... fxg5 his plan is 20. Ncxb5, and the pinned Black knight will fall in return.

19... Nf2

Now everything is attacked, and the complications escalate into global thermonuclear war.

- 20. Qxg6 Be8
- 21. Qxg7 ch Kxg7
- 22. Ne6 ch Kg8
- 23. Nxd8 fxg5
- 24. dxe7 Rxh4
- 25. Nd5! Nxh1

The attacked Black rook has no good squares; 25... Rf5 26. Rhf1! Nxh1 27. Rxh5.

- 26. Nxf4 Ne3
- 27. hxg5 Rc7
- 28. Re1 Rxh7
- 29. Bxc4 ch bxc4
- 30. Nde6 Ng4
- 31. g3 Rd7
- 32. Nc5 Rd8
- 33. Nb7 Resigns

Black counts the bits and finds he is two pawns down with a third on the way out (33... Rb8 34. Nd6). Maybe we should have tried the King's Gambit after all...