

# Digging pits for Heffalumps

by Murray Chandler

LOSING A GAME that has been thoroughly played before is every chessplayer's nightmare. Falling into a known openings trap not only gives the opponent a free point, it also makes one feel rather foolish. For a club player the prospect of suffering amused sniggers from fellow members is bad enough. For a grandmaster on the international circuit the possible humiliation of having such a defeat plastered across every magazine is simply terrifying. Of course, grandmasters being grandmasters, it does not happen especially often — though some seem more accident-prone than others. Catching one opponent a year in a decisive book trap would be about my average.

The most common way to snare your Heffalump (as Simon Webb calls grandmasters in his excellent book *Chess for Tigers*) is to dig a pit in an unfamiliar opening. This is exactly what happens in the two following games, both from top-class events in 1985. The victim of this first game is opening theoretician John Nunn, the 11th rated Heffalump in the world. We met in the second round of the Nimzowitsch Memorial tournament in Denmark.

## RUY LOPEZ

M CHANDLER	J NUNN
1. e4	e5
2. Nf3	Nc6
3. Bb5	a6
4. Ba4	Nf6
5. 0-0	Nxe4
6. d4	b5
7. Bb3	d5
8. dxe5	Be6
9. Nbd2!	

Having played many tournaments with Nunn, I knew the Open Lopez (with 5...Nxe4) was not normally in his repertoire. 9. Nbd2 spoilt any nasty surprises he might have prepared for me in my normal 9. Be3 line.

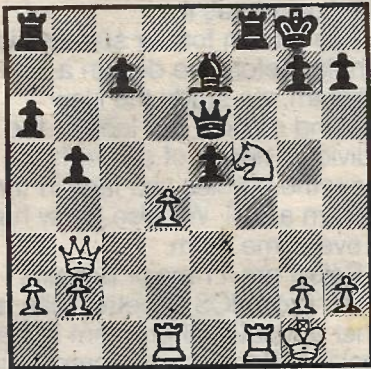
9. ...	Nc5
10. c3	d4
11. Bxe6	Nxe6
12. cxd4	Nxd4
13. Ne4	Be7
14. Be3	Nf5
15. Qc2	0-0
16. Rad1	Nxe3

16. ... Qe8? 17. Nf6 ch! was a Karpov-Korchnoi match game from 1978. Astonishingly, the "updated" 1981 Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings gives nothing at all on this whole line after move 11.

17. fxe3	Qc8
18. Nd4	Nxd4
19. exd4	Qe6
20. Ng3!?	f6
21. Nf5	

At this point former world champion Mikhail Tal, onlooking, became so excited I feared he might alert Nunn's suspicions!

21. ...	fxe5?
22. Qb3!	Resigns



Black must lose a piece; 22. ... Qxb3 23. Nxe7 ch Kh8 24. axb3 or 22. ... Rf6 23. Nxe7 ch. As Tal and I both knew, this whole encounter, up to and including 22. ... Resigns, had previously occurred in a Soviet game Tseshkovsky-Yusupov, Everan 1982!

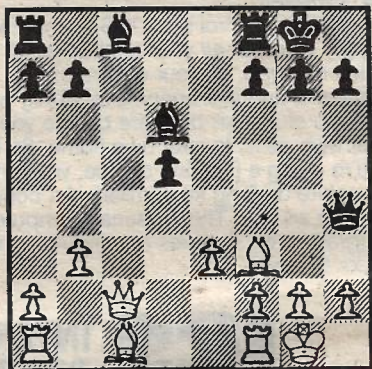
In this next disaster Hungarian Lajos Portisch (sixth ranked Heffalump) does not even have an excuse. Even worse, the game was played in the important 1985 Candidates Tournament in Montpellier.

## QUEEN'S GAMBIT

L PORTISCH	Z RIBLI
1. d4	Nf6
2. c4	e6
3. Nf3	d5
4. Nc3	c6
5. e3	Nbd7
6. Qc2	Bd6
7. b3	0-0
8. Be2	e5
9. cxd5	Nxd5
10. Nxd5?!	cxd5
11. dxe5	Nxe5
12. 0-0?	

A remarkable blunder. Now Black has a forced win.

12. ...	Nxf3 ch
13. Bxf3	Qh4!



14. h3  
This time ECO is not the culprit! The 1977 edition gives 14. g3 Qf6 15. Bxd5 Bf5! 16. e4 Bh3 17. Rd1 Be5! and White resigns. Teuchman-de Carbonnel, postal game 1960 (if 18. Rb1 Qf3 mates).

14. ...	Bxh3!
15. Rd1	Bh2 ch
16. Kf1	Qf6

16. Kxh2 Bf5 discovered check wins White's queen.

17. Bxd5	Bf5
18. e4	Bg4
19. Ba3?	Qa6 ch
20. Resigns	

The bishop is lost, but 19. f3 Bxf3 20. gxf3 Qxf3 ch was winning anyhow.