

34 years on

by Murray Chandler

THE challenge match between myself and Ian Rogers last month was the first between New Zealand and Australia for 34 years. In 1952 eternal New Zealand champion Ortvin Sarapu clashed with the famed Cecil Purdy in a 10-game contest in Auckland, which was drawn 5-5 despite Sarapu having a lead of two points after four games. Proving that we Kiwis do learn from the past, chief organiser Ab Borren this time cunningly kept this match short. After winning the first game with White, I had a 1½-½ lead when play transferred from the lecture room of the Wellington library to the Little Maidment Theatre in Auckland. A further White win gave me an uncatchable lead by game three, but even so our fourth and final game proved a dramatic struggle of fluctuating fortunes before a draw was reached on move 75.

It is a tribute to New Zealand chess, and in particular to Borren and national association patron Sir John Marshall, that this match was held at all. With Rogers and myself our respective countries' only grandmasters, the original concept called for half the contest to be played in Australia. When that fell through, the full brunt fell on sponsors Canon, while the national association and New Zealand Chess Supplies generously underwrote Rogers's airfare. Such matches have many spin-offs for the benefit of chess in New Zealand, quite apart from the immediate publicity. Paul Spiller and Bob Gibbons, runners of the *Howick & Pakuranga Times* quickplay, were pleasantly surprised to find their tournament had become probably the strongest ever held in Auckland. It featured two participating grandmasters plus a host of championship stars, including Sarapu, Small, Garbett and Green.

Rogers became a grandmaster only last year after tying for first in Biel, Switzerland. As we are both the same age, 26, we have met many times in the past — in early junior competitions in Tasmania and France, and numerous international events. Consequently a match like this becomes a subtle psychological duel. Rogers neatly succeeded in out-preparing me by essentially dictating the openings — two Catalans and, in a surprise departure, two French Defences. But the disadvantage of this policy was his lack of experience in these complex systems. This was particularly so in the first game, when I was able to win quickly in spite of choosing an inferior variation.



Ian Rogers (left), organiser Ab Borren (back), patron Sir John Marshall (front) and Murray Chandler.

Continuation 6. a×b4 d×c3 7. Nf3!, when White is said to have excellent play for the pawn after 7. ... c×b2 8. B×b2.

- | | |
|---------|------|
| 6. a×b4 | d×c3 |
| 7. b×c3 | Qc7 |
| 8. Nf3 | Nd7? |

Rogers said afterwards he had accidentally mixed up his move order. 8. ... Q×c3 ch 9. Bd2 Qc7 10. Bd3 gives White compensation, but 8. ... Ne7! 9. Bd3 Nd7 is correct (10. Qd4 Nc6 etc).

9. Qd4!
By overprotecting the e-pawn White gains a powerful bind.

- | | |
|---------|-----|
| 9. ... | Ne7 |
| 10. Bf4 | Nb6 |
| 11. Bd3 | Bd7 |
| 12. 0-0 | a6 |
| 13. Bg5 | Na4 |

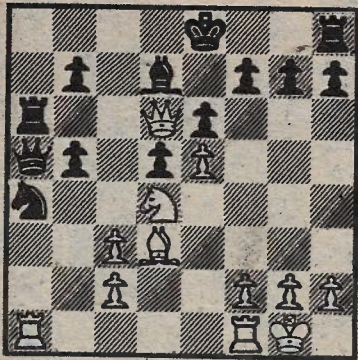
After the game, arbiter Lev Aptekar, a former Soviet coach from Kiev, suggested 13. ... Nc4 as a better chance.

- | | |
|------------|------|
| 14. b5! | a×b5 |
| 15. B×e7 | K×e7 |
| 16. Qb4 ch | Ke8 |

16. ... Qc5 17. R×a4 wins a piece, and 16. ... Nc5 17. Qh4! ch f6 18. R×a8 R×a8 19. Q×h7 is terrible for Black, but after the game move I got too ambitious. Simply 17. B×b5 would be very strong here.

- | | |
|----------|------|
| 17. Nd4? | Qa5! |
| 18. Qd6 | Ra6? |

After the correct 18. ... Qa6! Black might have held on. Now White can finish matters tactically.



- | | |
|--|---------|
| 19. R×a4! | b×a4 |
| If 19. ... R×d6 20. R×a5 or 19. ... Q×a4 | |
| 20. Qb8 ch. | |
| 20. B×a6 | b×a6 |
| 21. Nc6 | B×c6 |
| 22. Q×c6 ch | Ke7 |
| 23. Qd6 ch | Resigns |
| On 23. ... Ke8 24. Rb1 is decisive. ■ | |

Wellington 1986
FRENCH DEFENCE

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| M Chandler | I Rogers |
| 1. e4 | e6 |
| 2. d4 | d5 |
| 3. Nc3 | Bb4 |
| 4. e5 | c5 |
| 5. a3 | c×d4 |

I had never met this unusual line before and did not know the recommended con-