Sarapu yet again

by Murray Chandler

RTVIN SARAPU's record number of national championship titles will never be beaten, except by the grand old man of New Zealand chess himself. His shared victory with Adrian Lloyd at the 1985/86 congress in Christchurch over Christmas was win No 19. The absence of defending champion Vernon Small left the 24player Swiss-system competition wide open. Going into the final 11th round, Sarapu stood level with fellow Aucklander Bob Smith. He safely drew but Smith lost, and 21-year-old Lloyd — runner-up to Small the previous year — seized his chance to catch up. Final leading scores were: 1-2, Sarapu (Auckland) and Lloyd (Christchurch) 71/2 points: 3-6, R Smith, A Love (Dunedin), J Sarfati (Wellington) and R Nokes (Christchurch) 7.

New Zealand chess has changed a lot since 62-year-old Sarapu, a former Estonian, arrived in 1950. The emergence of a new chess-literate generation means those days of near maximum scores in the championship are well and truly over. The average level today, thanks to the wide availability of books and magazines, is unquestionably much higher. But I sometimes wonder whether the game has increased in popularity that much here. The 1972 Fischer v Spassky rumpus and all subsequent World Championship matches were fabulous boosts, while the more recent advent of the chess computer has also rekindled interest worldwide. Yet in the past, these surges in popularity have largely been wasted through the lack of any energetic follow-up. I wait in vain for even a pressrelease from this latest national championships, yet I do not imagine that Robert Jones Investments, the sponsors, wish to remain totally anonymous.

Compared to the amounts of money pumped into something as insane as boxing (with apologies to Bob Jones), the figures for chess are minute. Yet, properly presented, the image of chess is not an unattractive one for many major corporations such as banks and insurance companies. Publicity is long-lasting, with games and results still being published months after an event concludes. Furthermore, chess is a sport many executives take a personal interest in. We have had such sponsors here in New Zealand in the past but, not too surprisingly, most have drifted off. Elementary public relations calls for results and a game or two of all tournaments to be sent out to interested publications - even Listener columnists.

ST GEORGE DEFENCE Christchurch 1985/86 O SARAPU

1. e4

R NOKES

The greatest living exponent of this bizarre opening is ex-Armenian Michael Basman, international maestro and inventor of Audio Chess, who lives in London. But these days he prefers the move order 1. e4 e6

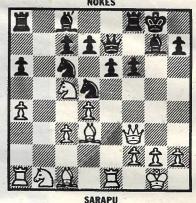
2. d4	b5
3. Nf3	Bb7
4. Bd3	Nf6?
5. e5	Nd5
6. a4	b4
7 Nasi	

Now Black will be forced into contortions to defend the f7-square (7... h6? 8. Qh5 g6 9. B×g6 wins). 4. . . . e6 was correct.

7.		e6
8.	Qf3	Qe7
9.	c4!	b×c3e
10.	b×c3	Nc6
11	NoA	

Playing safe. Instead 11. N×h7 would allow dangerous counterplay with 11. ... N×d4 12. c×d4 Qb4 ch, eg 13. Kf1 Q×d4 14. Ra2 Nc3! 15. Q×b7 Q×d3 ch and mates.

11		f5
12	. e×f6ep	gx
13	. 0-0	Bg
14	. Nc5	Bcl
15	. Re1	0-0



16. Ba3 Qf7

If 16. ... d6 White has the combination 17. N×e6 B×e6 18. Bc4 Qf7 19. R×e6! and if

19.... Q×e6 20. B×d5 wins a queen.

17.	Bc4		Kh8
18.	Nd2		Rg8
19.	Nde4		f5
20.	Ng3		f4
21.	B×d5		exd!
22	N42I	- 1	

The start of a neat rounding-up operation on the f-pawn.

22.		Bh6
23.	Bc1	Rf8
24.	Nh5	d6
25.	B×f4	Qg6
26.	Q×d5	Bf5
27.	B×h6	Q×h
28.	Ndf4	Bd7
29.	Ne6	Rg8
30.	Ng3	Ne7
31.	Qh5	Of6

With queens on there is more hope of a saving swindle. But a pawn up with a good game, the experienced Sarapu won't give away even a sniff of a counterchance:

32.	Qe2	Ng6
33.	N×c7	Raf8
34.	Nd5	Qf7
35.	c4-	Nh4
36.	Ra3	Bg4
37.	Qc2	Nf5
38.	Qd2	Rg6
39.	N×f5	0×f5
40.	Ne7	Resig
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