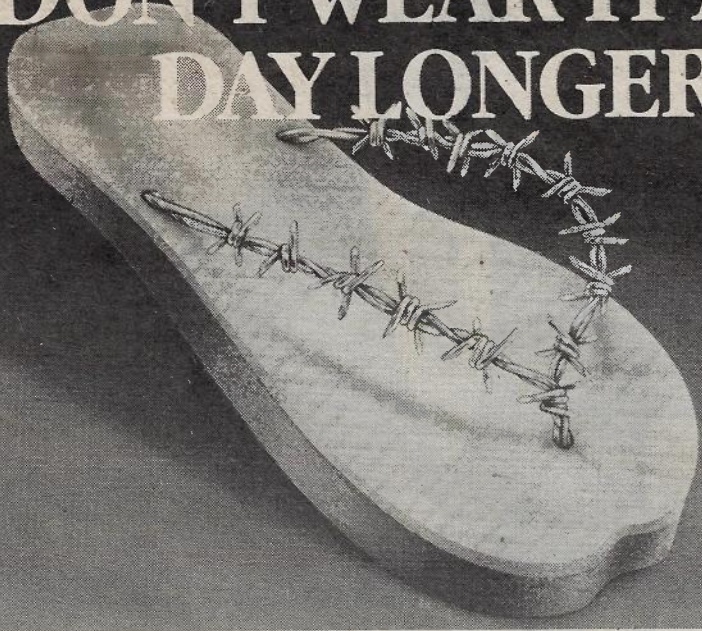


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## CHESS

# Sudden death

by Murray Chandler

**N**OW THAT Hungarian Lajos Portisch has won the play-off match with England's John Nunn, all 14 World Championship Candidates for the next cycle are known. The pairings for the first round of six-game knockout matches, scheduled for Saint John, Canada, in February are: Sokolov (USSR) v Spraggett (Canada); Yusupov (USSR) v Ehlvest (USSR); Korchnoi (Switzerland) v Hjartason (Iceland); Short (England) v Sax (Hungary); Timman (Holland) v Salov (USSR); Portisch (Hungary) v Vaganian (USSR); Seirawan (US) v Speelman (England).

Sokolov, Yusupov, Timman and Vaganian qualified by virtue of their performances last cycle, while the Canadian Kevin Spraggett takes up a free place awarded to the organising federation.

If the Nunn-Portisch match was anything to go by, anything could happen in such short elimination contests. I accompanied John Nunn to Budapest as his second, but the match ended almost before it began. For a start, the tie-breaking system carried over from the Szirak Interzonal favoured Portisch, which meant that a 3-3 result would put Portisch through. Nunn lost the first game to an opening novelty, became flustered, and blundered and lost a winning position in game two. Portisch, veteran of several previous Candidates matches, played for draws in the remainder of the games to win 4-2. "I didn't realise a match was so different to a tournament," said Nunn afterwards. "In a match, after you've lost, you still have to play the same opponent the next day. It is psychologically very difficult."

Portisch concurred and told me that he thought the quality of play in matches was generally lower. I am not so sure; individual match-games (particularly in World Championships) tend to be scrutinised more closely than tournament games. However, I would certainly agree that this play-off match in the Budapest Hilton was something special. In game four both grandmasters were oblivious to the fact that Black (Portisch) could have trapped White's bishop at one moment — until a Hungarian spectator pointed this out to them after the game! Here is game one of the match. Nunn unveils a Grunfeld defence in place of his habitual King's Indian, only to lose the psychological gambit to an unexpected fourth move.

<b>L PORTISCH</b>	<b>J NUNN</b>
1. c4	g6
2. d4	Nf6
3. Nc3	d5
4. Bf4!	

For many years Portisch has countered the Grunfeld Defence with an early Qb3 for White. It is remarkable that he had an innovation ready in this unusual sideline.

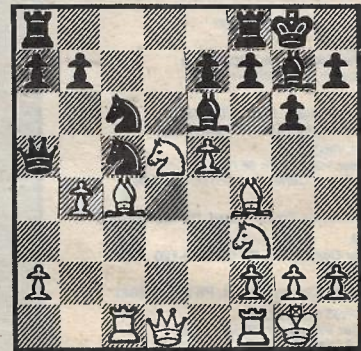
4. ...	Bg7
5. Rc1	dxc4
6. e4	c5
7. dxc5	Qa5
8. Bxc4	0-0
9. e5	

The novelty, intending 9... Ne4 10. Qa4!

9. ...	Nfd7
10. Nf3	Nxc5?

Correct is 10... Nc6! when 11. e6 fxe6 12. Bxe6ch Kh8 13. Bxd7 Rxf4 gives Black excellent counterplay, eg 14. 0-0 Nd4! or 14. Bxc8 Bxc3ch 15. Rxc3 Re4ch 16. Kf1 Rxc8. Instead 11. 0-0 Ndxe5 is about equal.

11. 0-0	Nc6
12. Nd5	Be6
13. b4!	



Initiating a long forcing sequence.

13. ...	Nxb4
14. Nxe7ch	Kh8
15. Bd2	Rad8
16. Bxe6	fxe6
17. a3!	Qxa3
18. Rxc5	Na6

So Nunn gets his piece back with a skewer (if the c5 rook moves Black has 19... Qxe7), but his king position is now unpleasantly weakened by a desperado sacrifice.

19. Nxc6ch	hxg6
20. Rc2	Nb4
21. Bxb4	Qxb4
22. Qc1	Qe7
23. Qe3	Rf5
24. Rfc1	Kg8
25. h3	b6?
26. Nd4!	

Black's 25th was the final inaccuracy; 26... Rxe5 27. Nc6! Rxe3 28. Nxe7ch Kf7 29. Nc6 Red3 30. Nxd8ch Rxd8 31. Rc7ch is a comfortable win.

26. ...	Rxd4
27. Qxd4	Rxe5
28. Qg4	Resigns



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