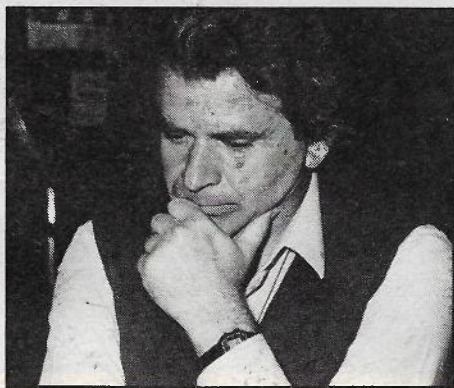


The bear stirs

by Murray Chandler

AMERICA HAS a unique style when it comes to tournaments. Unlike Europe, where elite grandmaster events are limited to 10 to 16 players, America goes for big numbers — and big dollars. At the New York International held last April a world record 45 grandmasters (out of 90 participants in the top section) competed for \$US61,000 in prizes. Over all six sections, graded according to playing strength, total prizes added up to \$US175,000. There was even a \$US6000 first prize for the under 1600 Elo rated section (many ordinary New Zealand club players have ratings higher than this). Professional “patzers” — who deliberately lose some games each season to keep their ratings down — are not unknown in the US!

This year's strong top section in New York was won jointly by GMs Yasser Seirawan from Seattle and Andreas Adorjan from Hungary, followed by GMs Spassky, Christiansen, Sax, Spraggett, Kudrin, and Fedorowicz. The congress is organised by Jose Cuchi through his Casa de Espana organisation, and all the top participating European players were flown in courtesy of the Spanish airline, Iberia. Two ex-world champions were present (Boris Spassky and Vassily



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Spassky: taking it easy.

Smyslov) and only a few late withdrawals stopped the number of grandmasters playing beating that of the Dubai Olympiad! I must confess that I was one of those late withdrawals, still suffering from the rare muckedupthebloodyzonal virus, which mysteriously affects certain players at three-year intervals.

In the first round bulletin of New York the editor dubbed Boris Spassky a slumbering bear, after his tame 16-move draw with American former priest William Lombardy. These days, it must be admitted, that is not always an entirely inaccurate metaphor for Spassky. In his heyday Spassky, now 51, was one of the world's greatest attacking players. Nowadays he takes life a bit easier, with a

liberal attitude to draws when playing his grandmaster contemporaries. The trouble is that he is still so immensely strong (currently ranked 11th in the world) that refusing any draw offer is extremely risky — one shouldn't wake the sleeping bear.

That the bear can still rouse himself when the occasion merits, however, is proved by this last-round game from New York. The opening is routine, none of White's moves seems particularly dangerous, and yet West Germany's Eric Lobron loses in just 30 moves.

SICILIAN DEFENCE

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| B SPASSKY | E LOBRON |
| 1. e4 | c5 |
| 2. Nc3 | Nc6 |
| 3. g3 | g6 |
| 4. Bg2 | Bg7 |
| 5. d3 | e6 |
| 6. Nge2 | Nge7 |
| 7. Be3 | Nd4 |
| 8. Rb1 | 0-0 |
| 9. 0-0 | Nec6 |
| 10. a3 | a5 |
| 11. a4 | d6 |
| 12. Nb5 | Nxb5 |
| 13. axb5 | Nd4 |
| 14. c4 | Nxe2 ch |
| 15. Qxe2 | Ra7?! |

This artificial rook move shows that Lobron has discerned underlying problems in this apparently innocuous position; nevertheless 15. ... Qc7 was preferable.

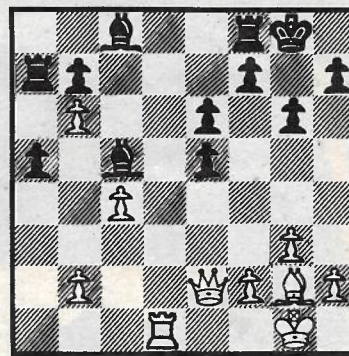
16. Rbd1 **Qf6**
White's positional threat is 17. d4 with

advantage, and the trouble is that 16. ... e5 17. f4 f5 (to stop f5 by White) 18. fxe5 Bxe5 19. exf5 Bxf5 20. Bd5 ch Kh8 21. Bxc5! wins for White.

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 17. d4 | cxd4 |
| 18. Bxd4 | Qxd4 |
| 19. Rxd4 | Bxd4 |
| 20. Rd1 | Bc5 |

Lobron's plan is now clear. Given one free move to consolidate with ... b6 he will have rook, bishop, and a solid position in exchange for his queen.

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| 21. e5! | dxe5 |
| 22. b6! | |



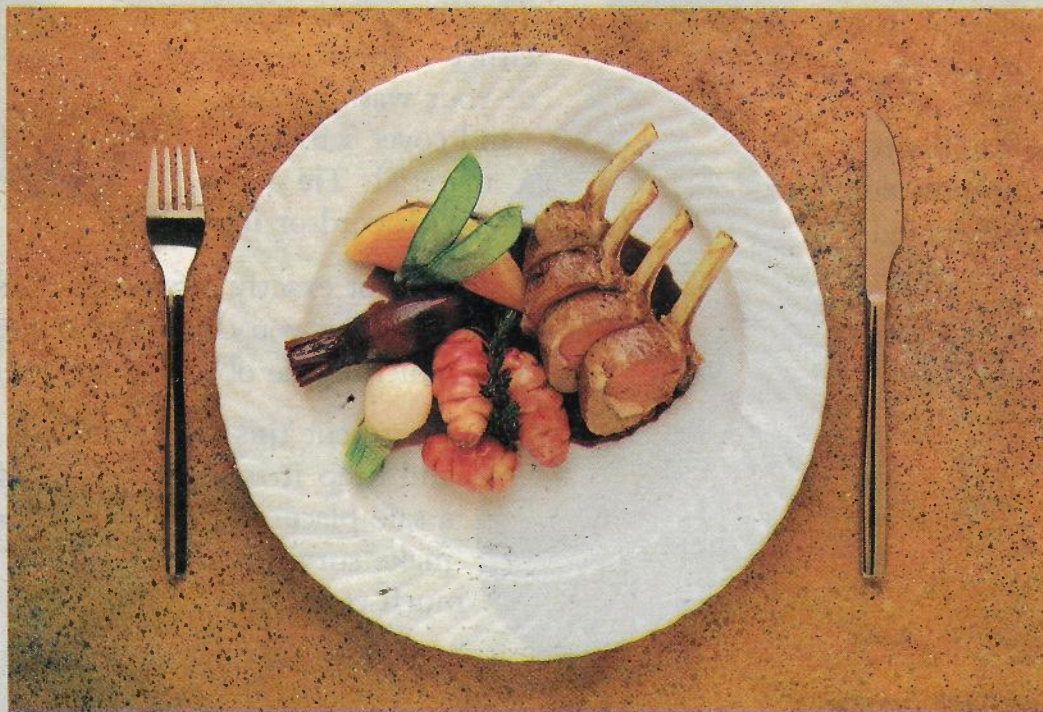
This key pawn sacrifice disrupts everything. Black's rook on a7 is kept out of the action and the bishop on c5 is denied an outpost.

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|-----------------|-------------|
| 22. ... | Bxb6 |
| 23. Qxe5 | Ra6 |
| 24. c5 | Bd8 |
| 25. h4 | h5 |

Or else 26. h5 and 27. h6 follow. But now Spassky effortlessly bares the Black king.

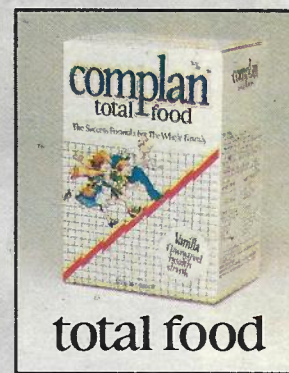
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|-----------------|----------------|
| 26. g4 | hxg4 |
| 27. h5 | Kh7 |
| 28. Be4 | Kh6 |
| 29. hxg6 | fxg6 |
| 30. Kg2 | Resigns |

The only defence is 30. ... Bh4 31. Rh1 g5 but 32. Qc7! threatening mate on h7 is decisive.



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