

Quick, it's an active match

by Murray Chandler

THE World Chess Federation, FIDE, has a new brainchild called "Active Chess", where each player has only 25 minutes to complete the entire game. Notwithstanding the misleading name (which implies that normal chess is somehow inactive), these exciting speed competitions could do much to capture the imagination of sponsors and the public. A quick time-limit adds a degree of urgency, helping to attract TV coverage, and many ordinary club players like the less serious atmosphere.

Already FIDE has set up qualifying events for an Active World Championship, and is planning a separate Active rating list. However, plans to award Active Master titles ran into protests and now await discussions at the Thessaloniki Olympiad. World Champion Garri Kasparov is one of many top players who believe giving titles for these quick-play events would seriously devalue existing master and grandmaster awards. At the Grandmasters Association AGM in Brussels last April, Kasparov even tried, unsuccessfully, to organise a boycott of Active Chess until FIDE relented on this point.

Another problem, I fear, is that the Active World Championship qualifying events will feature the same poor organisation and conditions as the real World Championship. Indeed, the inaugural New Zealand Active Championship, to find our representative for the Asian Continental Championship in Singapore, had to be cancelled. According to Gordon Chamley, secretary of the New Zealand association, the dates for Singapore were suddenly brought forward by several months, making it impossible for New Zealand to stage a qualifying competition in time. He has written to FIDE asking for an explanation.

The first European Active Championships during May in Gijon, Spain, also show how FIDE is inadvertently promoting Eastern European domination. The financial conditions offered to top players were poor, no very top Western grandmasters played, and nine of the top 10 places were filled by the East. Soviet former World Champion Anatoly Karpov, the winner, would have been more tested had Short, Timman or Hubner been there. Or John Nunn and myself for that matter. We both got better conditions playing in an English 30-minute tournament a month later, from where this week's brilliant and bold sacrificial encounter is taken.

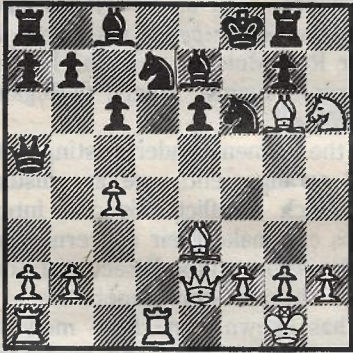
- 7. Nf3 Be7
- 8. Qe2 h6
- 9. Nxe6!?

Speculative knight sacrifices on e6 are very trendy at the moment. Smyslov's 4... Nd7 Caro used to be such a solid opening...

- 9. ... fxe6
- 10. Bg6 ch Kf8
- 11. 0-0

11. Qxe6 Qa5 ch 12. Bd2 Qd5 is bad, but interesting is 11. Ne5 Qa5 ch 12. c3 as in Chandler-Adams, played earlier that same day. As in the game, White has just one pawn for his sacrifice but Black is awkwardly tied up.

- 11. ... Nb6
- 12. Ne5 Qxd4
- 13. Rd1 Qc5
- 14. c4! Nbd7
- 15. Nf7 Rg8
- 16. Be3 Qa5
- 17. Nxh6!



- 17. ... Ne5

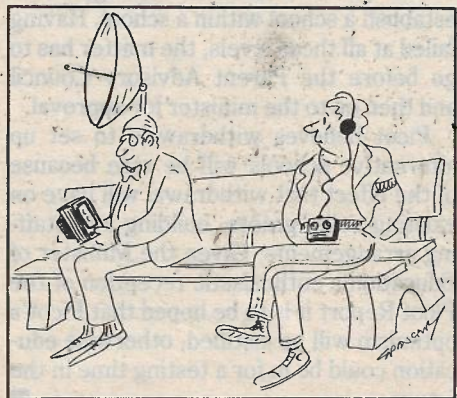
After this approximate material equality is restored, but 17... gxh6 18. Bxh6 ch Rg7 19. Qxe6 Ne5 20. Bxg7 ch Kxg7 21. Qxe7 ch Kxg6 22. b4! favours White. Remember this is a speed game, and to give an idea of Nunn's depth of analysis during the game, he also noticed the possibility 22... Qb6 23. Qxe5 (23. c5!?) Qxf2 ch! and if 24. Kxf2 Ng4 ch recovers the queen.

- 18. Nxe8 Nxe6
- 19. Nxe7 Nxe7
- 20. Bd4 Qf5
- 21. Bxf6 Qxf6
- 22. Rd8 ch Kf7
- 23. Rad1 Qf5
- 24. R1d3 Ng6
- 25. Rf3 Nf4
- 26. Rxf4!

This forces a decisive series of checks.

- 26. ... Qxf4
- 27. Qh5 ch Ke7
- 28. Qe8 ch Kf6
- 29. Qf8 ch Ke5
- 30. Qc5 ch Resigns

30... Kf6 31. Rf8 ch wins the queen and 30... Ke4 31. Rd4 is mate. ■



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CARO KANN DEFENCE

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|---------------|----------------|
| J NUNN | M ADAMS |
| 1. e4 | c6 |
| 2. d4 | d5 |
| 3. Nd2 | dxe4 |
| 4. Nxe4 | Nd7 |
| 5. Ng5 | Ngf6 |
| 6. Bd3 | e6 |