

**CHESS**

# And then they were seven

by Murray Chandler

**T**HE SEVEN knock-out matches in Saint John, Canada, proved just how unpredictable these short competitions can be. Veteran Viktor Korchnoi lost to the inexperienced Johann Hjartarson, and Soviet Andrei Sokolov was eliminated (also after a quick-play tie-break) by Kevin Spraggett, beneficiary of the host nation's complimentary place. The amazing English duo of Nigel Short and Jonathan Speelman massacred their respective opponents, both of whom suffered from trying to catch up after initial defeats.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Sokolov (USSR)	½	1	½	½	0	½	3
Spraggett (Can)	½	0	½	½	1	½	3
Yusupov (USSR)	1	½	1	½	½	—	3½
Elvest (USSR)	0	½	0	½	½	—	1½
Korchnoi (Sw)	0	½	½	0	1	1	3
Hjartarson (Ice)	1	½	½	1	0	0	3
Short (Eng)	1	1	½	½	½	—	3½
Sax (Hung)	0	0	½	½	½	—	1½
Timman (Hol)	½	½	½	½	½	1	3½
Salov (USSR)	½	½	½	½	½	0	2½
Portisch (Hung)	½	½	1	½	½	½	3½
Vaganian (USSR)	½	½	0	½	½	½	2½
Seirawan (US)	½	0	0	½	0	—	1
Speelman (Eng)	½	1	1	½	1	—	4

According to the FIDE (World Chess Federation) president, Florencio Campomanes, the pairings for the next round of knock-out matches will now be Karpov v Hjartarson, Yusupov v Spraggett, Short v Speelman, and Timman v Portisch. Anatoly Karpov joins at this stage as previous challenger, and the ultimate winner should challenge Garri Kasparov in 1990.

The Saint John festival (which included numerous supporting tournaments) was brilliantly organised. One feature proved to be a new range of drinks at a nearby restaurant named after famous players, such as the Christiansen Combo, Karpov Connector or the Short Nip. After diligent research John Nunn has informed me that the Special Special and Kasparov Express were particularly notable.

After the following game, from the first round of the matches, Korchnoi must have been tempted to try the lot.

**CANADA 1988**

Ruy Lopez

**HJARTARSON**      **KORCHNOI**

- |          |      |
|----------|------|
| 1. e4    | e5   |
| 2. Nf3   | Nc6  |
| 3. Bb5   | a6   |
| 4. Ba4   | Nf6  |
| 5. 0-0   | Nxe4 |
| 6. d4    | b5   |
| 7. Bb3   | d5   |
| 8. dxe5  | Be6  |
| 9. c3    | Be7  |
| 10. Nbd2 | Nc5  |
| 11. Bc2  | Bg4  |

The legendary Korchnoi Open Lopez appears again.

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|---------|-----|
| 12. Re1 | Qd7 |
| 13. Nf1 | Rd8 |
| 14. Ne3 | Bh5 |
| 15. b4! |     |

This strong innovation improves on 15. Nf5 0-0 16. Nxe7 Nxe7 17. b4 Ne4! unclear, Sokolov — Korchnoi, Tilburg 1987. The point is that 15. ... Ne4 now fails to 16. Nxd5.

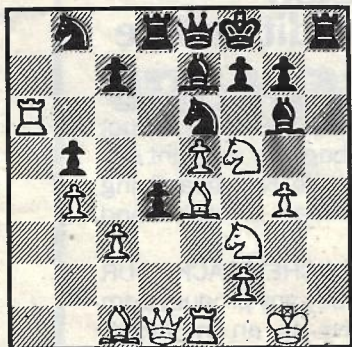
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|---------|-----|
| 15. ... | Ne6 |
| 16. Nf5 | d4  |

16. ... 0-0 is natural, but White is better after 17. a4.

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|----------|-----|
| 17. Be4! | Bg6 |
| 18. g4!  |     |

A bold thrust; White's kingside is exposed but Black's pieces prove too cramped to exploit this. 18. ... dxc3 is still impossible due to 17. Qxd7 Kxd7 20. Bxc6 ch Kxc6 21. Nxe7 ch.

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|----------|------|
| 18. ...  | h5   |
| 19. h3   | Kf8  |
| 20. a4   | hxg4 |
| 21. hxg4 | Qe8  |
| 22. axb5 | axb5 |
| 23. Ra6  | Nb8  |



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|-----------|------|
| 24. Rxe6! | fxe6 |
| 25. Nxe7  | Bxe4 |
| 26. Rxe4  | dx3  |

If 26. ... Qxe7 27. Bg5 Qe8 28. Bxd8 Qxd8 29. Rxd4 and 30. Rd8 ch or 26. ... Kxe7 27. Bg5 ch Kf7 28. Rf4 ch Kg8 29. Bxd8 Qxd8 30. Rxd4 Qe7 31. Rd8 ch Kh7 32. Qd3 ch g6 33. Rxe8 ch Kxe8 34. Qxg6.

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|------------|------|
| 27. Ng6 ch | Kg8  |
| 28. Rd4!   | Rxd4 |
| 29. Qxd4   | Rh3  |

The point is that 29. ... Qxg6 30. Qd8 ch Kh7 31. Ng5 ch costs the Black queen. Material down and his King exposed, Korchnoi struggles on.

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|----------|------|
| 30. Ng5  | Rh6  |
| 31. Nf4  | Nc6  |
| 32. Qxc3 | Qd8  |
| 33. Nf3  | Nxb4 |
| 34. Bd2  |      |

34. Qxb4 Qd1 ch 35. Kg2 Qxc1 36. g5 Rh1 37. Kg3 is also winning.

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|----------|---------|
| 34. ...  | Qa8     |
| 35. Kg2  | Nc6     |
| 36. g5   | b4      |
| 37. Qc5  | Rh7     |
| 38. Nxe6 | g6      |
| 39. Qd5  | Kh8     |
| 40. Ned4 | Qe8     |
| 41. e6   | Nxd4    |
| 42. Nxd4 | c5      |
| 43. Bf4  | Ra7     |
| 44. Nc6  | Resigns |

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