

Chess Barbs

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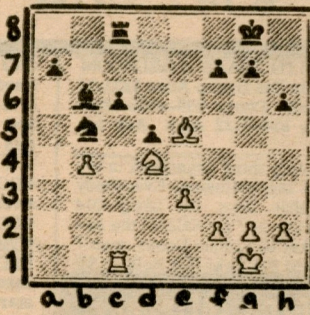
MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

White: Robert Fischer. Black: Boris Spassky. Reykjavik, Iceland, Aug. 15, 1972. World Championship Match Game No. 14. Queen's Gambit Declined.

1 c4(A) e6 2 Nf3 d4 3 d4 Nf6
4 Nc3 Be7 5 Bf4(B) 0-0 6 e3 c5
7 dc Nc6 8 cd ed 9 Be2 Bc5(C)
10 0-0 Be6 11 Rcl Rc8 12 a3 h6(D)
13 Bg3(E) Bb6 14 Ne5 Ne7(I)(F)
15 Na4 Ne4 16 Rc8 Bc8 17 Nf3(G)
Bd7(H) 18 Be5 Ba4(I) 19 Qa4
Nc6 20 Bf4(J) Qf6 21 Bb5(K)
Qb2 22 Bc6 Nc3(L) 23 Qb4 Qb4
24 ab bc 25 Be5 Nb5 26 Rcl Rc8
27 Nd4 f6??(M) 28 Bf6Bd4 29 Bd4
Nd4 30 ed Rb8 31 Kfl Rb4
32 Rc6 Rd4 33 Ra6 Kf7 34 Ra7ch
Kf6 35 Rd7 h5 36 Ke2 g5 37 Ke3
Re4ch 38 Kd3 Ke6 39 Rg7 Kf6
40 Rd7 Ke6 41 Drawn.

(Notes by international grandmaster Lev Polugaevsky, translated from "Sovetsky sport", Aug. 17, 1972, pg. 3)

(A) The character of the match games has been determined to a large extent by the choice of the



(14th game) Position after 27 Nd4.

first move. When 1 e4 was selected, sharp and tension filled games have been the rule. Opening with the "d" or "c" pawn, however, has usually meant a rather more subdued struggle. Given the advantage of color, Fischer works for simple, clear positions in which the risk of losing is reduced to a minimum. In other words, he plays to keep the draw in hand.

Remembering that playing hard for a win can increase the danger of a loss, Spassky also prefers solidity with the Black pieces, setting his goal to equalize fully first and then, if the opportunity presents itself, to seize the initiative.

(B) Many opening systems have been seen in this match: the Ruy Lopez, Sicilian Defense, Nimzo-Indian Defense, English Opening, Alekhine's Defense and the Benoni Defense. Instead of 5 Bg5 that he played before, Fischer now employs a new version of the Queen's Gambit Declined.

(C) A typical position with an isolated pawn and the blockade square in front of it. If White can reach an ending, then the pawn could become a convenient target. With a large number of pieces on the board, however, it is more often a strength than a weakness, because it allows Black to control important squares in the center. White's queen bishop generally goes to b2 in this system, whereas here it operates along a different diagonal.

(D) Depriving White of both 13 Ng5 and 13 Bg5, providing the black king with an escape route from the back rank and setting a trap in case White should fall for 13 Nd5? Qd5 14 Qd5 Nd5 15 Rc5 Nf4 16 ef Nd4! 17 Re5

Ne2ch 18 Re2 Bc4.

(E) Marking time. The natural choice is 13 Ne5 and if 13...Ne7, then 14 Nd3.

(F) Excellent. Black does not permit simplification and prepares 15...Nf5. Now White should abandon any thought about an advantage and maintain the balance by 15 Nd3. His attempt to forge ahead only gets him in trouble.

(G) Admitting his mistake, as it would be too dangerous to leave d4 unguarded. After 17 Nb6 Qb6 Black begins to build up serious threats on the queen side.

(H) Nor does 17...Ng3 18 hg Bc7 look bad, but Spassky's move is good, too.

(I) An imaginative and interesting idea. Black's knights prove stronger than White's bishops in the ensuing battle.

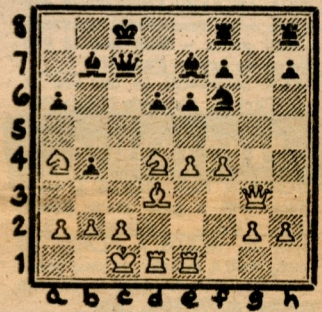
(J) Serious problems have developed with White's black-squared bishop. His best was retreating with 20 Bc3 and not fearing 20...Nc3 21 bc. Now, however, the scales clearly tip in Black's favor.

(K) Loses a pawn and places his game on the verge of disaster. But how else is White to parry 21...g5 22 Bg3 h5? On 21 Qb3, unpleasant is 21...d4.

(L) A triumph of Black's subtle strategy! He obtains a material advantage and, it would seem, real winning chances...

(M) With one stroke Black wipes out the result of his previous splendid work. As he has done too often in this match, Spassky once again commits an elementary, one-move blunder. Unbelievable, but true!

(N) The storm has passed, leaving a level rock ending behind. A draw is the inevitable outcome.



(15th game) Position after 16 Na4.

White: Boris Spassky. Black: Robert Fischer. Reykjavik, Iceland, Aug. 17-18, 1972. World Championship, Match Game No. 15. Sicilian Defense.

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cd 4 Nd4
Nf6 5 Nc3 a6 6 Bg5 e6 7 f4 Be7(A)
8 Qf3 Qc7 9 0-0-0 Nbd7 10 Bd3
b5 11 Rhel Bb7 12 Qg3 0-0-0(B)
13 Bf6 Nf6(C) 14 Qg7 Rdf8 15 Qg3
b4 16 Na4(D) Rhg8(E) 17 Qf2 Nd7
18 Kbl Kb8 19 c3 Nc5 20 Bc2 bc
21 Nc3 Bf6(F) 21 g3 h5 23 e5(G)
de 24 fe Bh8(H) 25 Nf3 Rd8
26 Rd8ch Rd8 27 Ng5 Be5 28 Qf7
Rd7 29 Qh5(I) Bc3 30 bc Qb6ch
31 Kcl Qa5(J) 32 Qh8ch Ka7
33 a4 Nd3ch(K) 34 Bd3 Rd3 35 Kc2
Rd5(L) 36 Re4(M) Rd8(N) 37 Qg7
Qf5 38 Kb3 Qd5ch 39 Ka3 Qd2
40 Rb4 Qclch(O) 41 Rb2 Qalch
42 Ra2 Qclch 43 Rb2 Qalch

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44 Drawn.

(Notes by international grandmaster Salo Flohr, translated from "Sovetsky sport", Aug. 19, 1972, pg. 3)

(A) Profiting from his experience in the eleventh game, this time Fischer wants nothing to do with the pawn on b2.

(B) Many of Fischer's games show him playing the 9...Nbd7 system, with his opponents usually launching a pawn storm by 10 g4 and 11 g5. In this game the challenger evacuates his king to the queen side, a rare event in the Sicilian Defense.

(C) Unlike his earlier encounters, here Fischer himself generously sacrifices a pawn. He probably did not care for 13...Bf6 (and not without reason) because Spassky would have given up a piece with 14 Bb5!

(D) A slip on Spassky's part that Fischer fails to notice or exploit. The knight should go back to b1.

(E). It is easy to prove that 16...Qa5 17 b3 Nh5, followed by 18...Nf4, recaptures a valuable

pawn for Black.

(F) Now what does Fischer have for his pawn? Very little, almost nothing!

(G) Getting nervous. Why offer an opponent counterchances when it is possible to play the methodical technical 23 Re3, after which White has a free hand? It seems hard to imagine that in only ten moves Spassky will be under attack.

(H) Spassky correctly calculated that after 24...Be5 25 Ndb5 ab 26 Nb5 White secures a considerable advantage. Of course, Fischer also felt the same way.

(I) The queen moves out of the main battle zone. Would it not have been better to test whether Fischer would take a draw by repetition after 29 Qf8ch Rd8 30 Qf7?

The reader may be surprised that our notes rather severely criticize the players' moves in this match. Any one of us would gladly embellish the moves of Spassky and Fischer with exclamation points. But what can you do? It is not possible to play errorless chess. Mistakes were made in Havana, 1921 and in Buenos Aires, 1927...But no match has contained such an abundance of blunders as Reykjavik, 1972.

(J) How drastically the picture has changed in Black's favor! Now Fischer has a very dangerous attack.

(K) Also sufficient is 33...Na4.

(L) After 35...Rd8 White would be in sad shape, although even now he has no cause for joy.

(M) Already Spassky is content to answer 36...Rg5 with 37 Qd4ch and 38 Re6, which would yield excellent drawing changes.

(N) It would be hard to give Spassky good advice after 36...Bc6.

(O) The game was adjourned here. Fischer has a guaranteed draw, but so, I believe, does Spassky.