Richard Shorman

Chess

TAL TAKES TITLE

Former world champion Mikhail Tal, 36, played typically exciting, sacrificial chess to win the current USSR championship, two points ahead of his nearest rival.

In capturing his fourth USSR title Tal was the only competitor to wade through the grueling 21-rounds without losing a game.

Eleven grandmasters and eleven national masters participated in the annual event, which took place in Baku from Nov. 16 to Dec. 20.

Final Standings

XL USSR Championship

1. Mikhail Tal (Elo rating, 2625), 15 points out of 21.

2. Vladimir Tukmakov (2560), 13.

3. Gennady Kuzmin (2520), Mikhail Mukhin (2430) and Vladimir Savon (2595), 12½.

4. Yuri Balashov (2560) and Yevgeny Vasyukov (2575), 11½.

5. Vladimir Bagirov (2512) and Semyon Furman (2520), 11.

6. Anatoly Lein (2530) and Ratmir Kholmov (2550), 10½.

7. Yuri Razuvaev (2490), 10.

8. David Bronstein (2585), Roman Jinjikhashvili (2500), Albert Kapengut (2485) and Leonid Shamkovich (2535), 9½.

9. Karen Grigorian (2470), Eduard Gufeld (2525), Valery Zilberstein (2445) and Naum Rashkovsky (2430), 9.

10. Valery Zhidov (2490), 8½.

11. Lev Alburt (2440), 7.

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White: Mikhail Tal.   **Black: Leonid Shamkovich.**

XL USSR Championship, Baku, 1972

Caro-Kann Defense

1 P-K4	P-QB3	16 NxNch	NxN(h)
2 P-Q4	P-Q4	17 BxN	PxB
3 N-QB3	PxP	18 Q-N4ch	K-R1(i)
4 NxP	N-Q2	19 KR-B1	B-K4
5 N-KB3	KN-B3	20 BxKRP!(j)	P-B4
6 N-B3(a)	P-K3(b)	21 Q-KR4(k)	K-N2
7 B-Q3	P-B4	22 R-B3	R-K1(l)
8 Q-K2	PxP	23 P-N4	P-B5(m)
9 NxP	B-B4(c)	24 P-N5	K-B1
10 N-N3	B-Q3(d)	25 RxP!!	BxR(n)
11 B-KN5	P-QR3(e)	26 Q-R6ch	K-K2
12 O-O-O	Q-B2	27 Q-B6ch	K-B1
13 K-N1	O-O	28 P-N6	B-R3(o)
14 N-K4	B-K4(f)	29 R-KB1!!	Resigns(p)
15 P-KB4!	BxBP(g)		

(a) Probably no better than the usual 6 N-N3.

(b) Surprisingly, this move causes Black trouble, whereas 6 ... N-N3! allows the QB to be developed.

(c) If 9 ... N-B4, then 10 B-N5ch B-Q2 11 B-N5 BxB 12 QxBch Q-Q2 13 0-0-0, threatening 14 NxP.

(d) Both the natural 10 ... B-K2 or 10 ... B-N3 would prove superior to the "active" textmove, but Black did not want to surrender the QN1-KR7 diagonal.

(e) Black's "hanging" bishop already begins to play a behind-the-scene role (11 ... 0-0? 12 BxPch KxB 13 Q-Q3ch).

(f) It is hard to condemn Black for his move, since the alternative, 14 ... B-K2, simply leaves him wih a bad position after 15 P-KR4, e.g., 15 ... P-QN4? 16 NxNch NxN 17 BxN BxB 18 Q-K4.

(g) Forced in view of 15 ... NxN 16 QxN P-B4 17 Q-K2 P-R3 18 B-R4, etc.

(h) Of course not 16 ... PxN? 17 Q-K4.

(i) Black loses a piece after 18 ... B-N4 19 P-KR4 Q-KB5 20 Q-R5 B-R3 21 QR-KB1.

(j) Much stronger than 20 RxP R-N1 21 Q-R5 R-N2 22 R-R6 P-B4.

(k) Played on general principles, to keep K7 and Q8 covered, but 21 Q-R5 may be objectively best.

(l) Black now had the resource of 22 ... B-B3 23 R-N3ch QxR 24 QxQch KxB to avoid the mating attack, which would not have been possible with White's queen on KR5. Even so, Black is undoubtedly lost.

(m) Naturally, Black cannot survive an open KN file, e.g., 23 ... Q-K2 24 Q-R5! R-R1 25 PxP RxB 26 R-N1ch K-R1 27 QxRch!

(n) Or 25 ... P-B4 26 PxPe.p. BxR 27 B-N6, and if 25 ... R-Q1, then after 26 RxRch QxR 27 R-KB1 Black cannot defend his KB2 square.

(o) To stop 29 P-N7 mate.

(p) The end is in sight, e.g., 29 ... R-Q1 30 Q-R8ch K-K2 31 PxPch K-Q3 32 Q-Q4ch K-B3 33 Q-B5 mate.

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White: Mikhail Tal.   Black: Valery Zilberstein.

XL USSR Championship, Baku, 1972.

Irregular Indian Defense.

1 P-K4, P-KN3. 2 P-Q4, P-QB3. 3 P-QB4, P-Q4. 4 P-K5, B-N2. 5 N-QB3, N-KR3. 6 P-KR4, B-K3. 7 KN-K2, PxP. 8 N-B4, B-Q4. 9 P-QN3, PxP. 10 PxP, P-K3. 11 B-Q3, N-B4. 12 BxN, KPxB. 13 B-R3, B-B1. 14 BxB, KxB. 15 Q-Q2, B-K3. 16 R-Q1, Q-K1. 17 R-R3, N-R3. 18 P-Q5, PxP. 19 N(4)xQP, BxN. 20 NxB, QxPch. 21 R-K3, Q-Q3. 22 Q-B3, P-B3. 23 N-B7, Resigns.

Tal's comment regarding this "chess swifty" was that it is apparently better to play a pawn down than a pawn up, if one hopes to score a quick win.