

Chess Barbs

by Jude Alcers (US senior master)
 DIAGRAM: Mikhail Botvinnik has both won and lost more great games than any other player in chess history. The three-time world champion had ample training throughout his career by Soviet national master tournaments and training matches in between immense study sessions.

Botvinnik was famous for murderous self-discipline. He recommended practice clocked chess games with the radio blaring full blast and encouraged training partners to blow smoke into his face so that he could develop spartan tolerance to cameras, noise and other distractions.

During his 1948 World Title victory tournament at The Hague and Moscow, Botvinnik wore the same shirt, pants, shoes, socks and tie to every round. He walked the exact same path each day to the games and perfected a daily routine called winning. In this manner Botvinnik believed the world title would be decided totally by preparation at home and correctness at the board. No grandmasters had yet introduced psychological problems above all else, until Mikhail Tal and Robert Fischer began their careers.

At age 18 Botvinnik struggled for 57 moves against veteran Victor Sozin only to blow the win in a single move in the diagram

position above. White played 58 Ke8? Be6 59 Kf8 Bf5 60 Ke7 Bc2 61 Kd6 Bd3 62 Ke6 Bc4ch, and only now noticed to his horror that Black draws by force: 63 Ke5 Bd3 64 f5ch Bf5 65 h7 Kh7 66 Kf5, and the Black king gets to a8 in time to stop the remaining pawn. The move actually played was 63 Ke7, after Botvinnik discovered that his position could not be won (according to the above analysis), and the players agreed to a draw immediately.

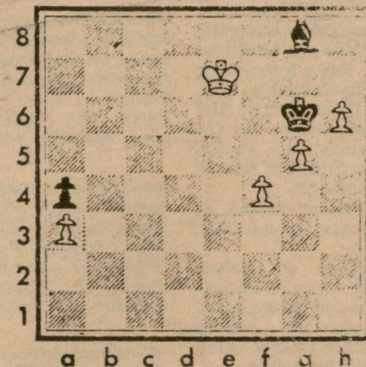
Later, Botvinnik found a forced win from the diagram position. Can you? Botvinnik's analysis elsewhere in this issue of THE BARB.

GAME: A shorty-sharp-superchess nova delivered by hand to the "old fox" of Argentina, Miguel Najdorf, by Yugoslav "unknown", Planitz. Watch this! (Sicilian Defense, Najdorf Variation).

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cd 4 Nd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6! 6 Bg5 e6 7 f4 Be7 8 Qf3 Qc7 9 0-0-0 Nbd7 10 Bd3 h6 11 Qh3! Nc5 12 Rhel Rg8 13 e5 de 14 fe hg 15 ef Bf6 16 Nd5! Qd8 17 Bh7! Rh8 18 Nf5! g4 19 Qg3 Kf8 20 Nf6 Resigns.

If 20...Qf6, then it is checkmate in three moves or loss of the queen immediately with the cheddar cheese maker, 21 Qd6ch, and not even I could save the position.

NEWS: For Every Thing There Is A Season...Turn! Turn!! Turn!!!
 Ed Edmondson, US Chess



Botvinnik--Sozin, Team Match, 1929. White to move and win. How? (Botvinnik missed it!)

Federation Executive Director, was sitting at a Board meeting and suddenly brainstormed an unbelievable plan to develop the world's strongest master chess team. On April 6, 1973 he wrote telegrams, letters and placed phone calls to the masters. Ed Edmondson has changed. I do not know why. Ah, yes...now to the goodies, the most incredible letter the Editor of Ye Olde Barb column has ever received.

By the way, April 6, 1973 was my birthday. Just thought you would like to know.

I cannot explain the following letter, which I now make public. QUOTE:

"Dear Jude;

"The U.S. Chess Federation Policy Board has approved a USCF International Chess Tournament for June 16-27 of this year. The site has not been chosen yet but everything else about the tour-

nament has been pretty well determined. There will be 12 players, including at least four foreign and four with FIDE (World Chess Federation) master titles. We expect the tournament to be FIDE Category 5. Its purpose, of course, is to give USA players an opportunity to gain international chess titles or at the very least FIDE-World Chess Federation ratings. The travel and stay expenses of all players will be paid and the prize fund will be \$3,000 total, 1st prize \$1,000, 2nd \$750, 3rd \$500, 4th \$400, 5th \$250, 6th \$100.

"As both a reward and an encouragement to those USCF Masters who have had little or no opportunity for international competition two places have been reserved in the USCF International Tournament for players who have no FIDE rating. There will be two qualifying tournaments, one held on the East coast, probably in New York (Acers note: All locations now definite!), and one held on the West coast of the United States, probably on Los Angeles. Each will be an eight-player round robin.

"The travel and stay expenses for the eight players in each tournament will be paid by UCSF. There is no prize fund, but the winner of each tournament secures a place for himself in the USCF International Tournament.

"You are cordially invited to participate in the West Coast International Tournament Qualification Tourney, scheduled from April 29-May 5, 1973. Attached is a list of the Primary and Alternat Invites to each of these two tournaments. Please let us know as soon as possible and not later than April 14 whether or not you

accept your invitation.

"Jude, I apologize for the rather short notice about these Qualifying Tournaments. The whole idea is quite new, an outgrowth of a March meeting at which the Policy Board found itself having difficulty selecting the players for our UCSF International Tournament. Qualifying events, to fill at least two places seemed like a good idea, and we could not issue the invitations until the March rating supplement had been distributed.

"E.B. Edmondson,
 Ex. Director."

Here are the 16 United States players invited to the two international qualifier tournaments, as well as the first two alternates. Players are selected solely on the basis of United States Chess Federation rating as of March, 1973.

EAST COAST New York Masters' Tournament, April 29, 1973: 1. Chellstorp (Illinois, 2437); 2. Kane (New York, 2435); 3. Formanek (Illinois, 2431); 6. Karklins (Illinois, 2391); 7. Peters (Mass., 2376); 8. Meyer (New York, 2365).

First Alternates: Matera (New York, 2357) and Kastner (New York, 2353).

And now, Ladies and Gentlemen, the WEST COAST Los Angeles Masters' International Qualifier Tournament, which will have chess masters, chess fans, chess widows packing by the dozens in the Bay Area for a trip south!!: 1. Vukcevic (Ohio, 2470); 2. Tarjan (Berkeley, CA, 2409); 3. Pavlovich (Ohio, 2405); 4. Acers (San Francisco, CA, 2399); 5. Commons (Los Angeles, CA, 2396); 6. Grefe (Berkeley, CA, 2394); 7. Jacobs (Texas, 2387); 8. Stoutenborough (Los Angeles, CA, 2383).

First Alternates; Christiansen (Calif., 2377) and Cunningham (Calif., 2356).

SOLUTION TO DIAGRAM

Botvinnik found that he had "only" to force this same position with Black, instead of White, to move in order to win. He gives 1 Kd7!! Kf5 (not 1...Bh7 2 Ke6 or 1...Kf7 2 f5 Bh7 3 g6ch Bg6ch 4 fgch Kg6, and White win the endgame by one tempo) 2 Ke8!! Kg6 3 Ke7!, and wins, wins, wins. All this looks very simple, true, but there is genius in such simplicity.