

Richard Shorman

Chess

KORCHNOI WINS USSR CHAMPIONSHIP

World championship contender Viktor Korchnoi won the Soviet national chess competition (Riga, 1970) by a 1½-point margin over a field of 22 players, finishing strongly with a score of 16-5.

Young Vladimir Tukmakov fulfilled the promise of his fine showing at Buenos Aires by leading the tournament for the first 11 rounds and defeating Korchnoi in their individual game. His final tally of 14½-6½ secured both second place and an international grandmaster rating for himself.

Three times winner of this event (in 1963, 1965 and 1967), Leonid Stein came in a solid third with 14-7.

When asked in an interview ("Sovetsky sport," Dec. 17, 1970) whether earning his fourth gold medal as USSR champion had been hard on him, Korchnoi replied, "I don't advise anyone who values his health to try it. Frankly, I had intended to conserve my strength and use the tournament mostly for training (for his 10-game match series with world championship candidate Efim Geller toward the end of April), without becoming involved in the struggle for first place, but apparently I didn't know myself very well.

"Although I played well, the effort required was greater than I had anticipated because of the stiff competition coming from Tukmakov," he said.

White contemplated his 12th move over an hour before finally deciding to sacrifice his knight for a speculative attack. Even former world champion Mikhail Tal expressed the opinion that Black should win with best play. But Black consumed 45 minutes in an unsuccessful search for a refutation on move 15. Subsequent analysis has yet to reveal a flaw in White's combination.

Notes to the game are by the winner, translated from "Sovetsky sport," Dec. 2, 1970.

White: I. Zaitsev. Black: O. Dementev.
XXXVIII USSR Championship, Riga, 1970.

Sicilian Defense

1 P-K4	P-QB4	11 P-B5	P-K4
2 N-KB3	P-Q3	12 N-K6!(b)	PxN
3 P-Q4	PxP	13 PxP	N-B4
4 NxP	N-KB3	14 NxN	PxN
5 N-QB3	P-QR3	15 O-O	P-B5(c)
6 B-QB4	P-K3	16 RxN!	PxR(d)
7 B-K3(a)	P-QN4	17 Q-R5ch	K-K2(e)
8 B-N3	Q-B2	18 Q-B7ch	K-Q3
9 P-B4	P-N5	19 P-K7	QxP
10 N-R4	QN-Q2	20 QxQBP	Resigns (f)

(a) As a rule 7 B-N3 is played here, but the text move cannot be inferior.

(b) The slow-motion strategy of 12 N-KB3 did not suit White, as after 12 . . . B-K2 13 N-N5 O-O he finds it difficult to organize a king-side attack.

(c) Post-Mortem analysis confirmed a win for White in all variations, e.g., 15 . . . Q-Q3 16 RxN! QxQ 17 RxQ PxR 18 B-R4ch K-K2 19 BxPch KxP 20 B-N3mate. The best defense, 15 . . . B-K2, encounters a problem-like retort in 16 B-R4ch K-B1 17 RxNch! BxR 18 Q-Q5 B-N2 19 Q-B4!! Now Black loses, although a rook ahead, as White threatens 20 BxPch B-K2 21 Q-B1ch! (the point behind Q-Q5-B4!). Insufficient is 19 . . . P-N3 20 BxPch K-N1 (20 . . . K-N2 21 B-B8ch will cost Black his queen) 21 P-K7ch K-N2 22 P-K8/Nch KRxN 23 B-B8ch, and White wins the Queen anyway. Finally, 19 . . . R-B1 fails against 20 R-Q1 B-B3 21 R-Q7! Q-R4 22 BxB RxB 23 Q-Q5 P-N6! 24 P-B3! PxP 25 R-B7ch K-N1 26 P-K7 PR8/Qch 27 K-B2, and it soon becomes clear that Black's extra queen and rook cannot prevent checkmate: 27 . . . B-R5ch 28 P-N3 QxPch 29 K-B3 P-R4 30 P-K8/Qch K-R2 31 RxPch KxR 32 Q/8-B7 mate.

(d) Or 16 . . . PxB 17 Q-R5ch P-N3 18 RxP RxR 19 QxPch K-K2 20 R-Q1, with mate next move.

(e) Black is also defenseless after 17 . . . K-Q1 18 R-Q1ch B-Q3 19 BxP R-QN1 20 P-K7ch.

(f) Black has fallen into a mating net.

WHERE TO PLAY CHESS

The Hayward Chess Club, Palma Ceia Park (corner of Miami Avenue and Decatur Way in old Palma Ceia Village). Monday and Friday, 8-12 p.m.

The Cherryland Cafe, 22472 Meekland Ave. (corner of A Street and Meekland Avenue), Hayward. Evenings, 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.

The Fremont Chess Club, 36025 Fremont Blvd. (Westridge Park Community Center). Thursday, 7-11 p.m.

The Livermore Chess Club, Fourth and J Streets (in the old library of the Carnegie Building). Evenings, the first and third Friday of the month.