

Richard Shorman

Chess

DRAWN AND HALVED

A sizeable proportion of the games played under tournament conditions cannot be won by either side, despite the best efforts and intentions of the combatants. Intruding on the coldly scientific and subtly artistic components of chess are the hard sporting and erratic human elements which comprise the variables of over-the-board competition.

Inconsistent performance notwithstanding, however, some drawn games contain enough heavy fighting, complete with narrow escapes and missed opportunities, to compensate for the lack of a definite result.

White: Paul Whitehead (2336). Black: David Smith (1936).

Holiday Congress Open, Oakland, Dec. 27, 1977.

Balogh Defense

1 P-K4	P-Q3	22 RxKP	RxQ
2 P-Q4	P-KB4	23 RxQ	RxRP
3 N-QB3	N-KB3	24 N-K6	RxP
4 B-Q3	PxP	25 RxPch	K-N1
5 NxP	P-K3	26 R-B7(k)	B-N4
6 B-KN5	B-K2	27 RxQP	R-K1
7 BxN	BxB	28 P-KB4	B-R3
8 Q-R5ch	P-N3	29 P-R4	R-K7
9 Q-R6	N-B3(a)	30 P-B5?(l)	PxP
10 N-KB3	NxP(b)	31 N-Q8	B-N4
11 NxN	BxN	32 RxPch?	K-B1
12 0-0-0(c)	Q-Q2l(d)	33 R(7)-Q7	BxN?
13 P-QB3l(e)	B-N2	34 RxKRP	R-K8ch
14 Q-B4l(f)	Q-K2(g)	35 K-R2	B-B2
15 B-N5ch	B-Q2	36 R-KB6	R(8)-K4
16 BxBch	KxB(h)	37 R(6)-B7	R-B4
17 KR-K1l(i)	QR-KB1	38 K-N3	K-N1?(m)
18 N-B5ch	K-B1	39 K-N4	R-B3(n)
19 Q-KN4(j)	B-R3ch?	40 RxP	R-N3ch
20 K-N1	R-B5	41 Drawn	
21 Q-R3	R-KR5		

(Annotations contributed by David Smith)

(a) Too risky is 9...BxP?! 10 0-0 N-B3 11 N-KB3. If Black's KB leaves the long diagonal (11...B-N3), then castling long will take three moves, and White is already two tempi ahead.

(b) Safer now, as the knight threatens Nf5! and then 0-0, so White is obliged to ease Black's defense by trading another pair of minor pieces.

(c) The two additional moves delay in Black's castling compensate White for his pawn sacrifice. Apparently, White threatens to win immediately with 13 B-N5ch P-B3 14 RxB Px B 15 NxPch.

(d) Superficially awkward, but actually best. The loss of a move on the queen side will be regained on the king side. White can no longer play 13 B-N5, on account of 13...BxPch 14 KxB QxBch, while Black also threatens 13...Q-N2, forcing White to exchange queens or lose his QNP with check.

(e) Saves the QNP and keeps the queens alive.

(f) The only way to maintain the pressure while preventing 0-0. Now 14...R-B1! looks bad after 15 Q-R4, when 15...B-R1 (15...B-K4? 16 P-KN3 P-Q4 17 P-KB4 B-R1 18 N-N5) 16 N-N5 is dangerous and 15...R-R1 involves a clear loss of tempo.

(g) When playing 13...B-N2, I thought 14 Q-B4 could be answered by 14...Q-B2, followed by 15...0-0 if the queen retreated. Just in time I realized that 15 B-N5ch BQ2 (15...P-B3?? 16 NxPch) 16 QxQch KxQ 17 BxB wins a piece. White consumed 15 minutes on both 13 P-QB3 and 14 Q-B4 after the 12...Q-Q2 surprise.

(h) Otherwise Black cannot hold onto the pawn, although the best that White can do after 16...QxB is 17 N-B5 Q-B2 (not 17...Q-B1? 18 NxKP and 19 KR-K1) 18 QxQch KxQ 19 NxNP QR-QN1 20 N-R5 R-N4. Still worse in this line would be 18 NxKP QxQch 19 NxQ B-R3 20 KR-K1ch K-Q2 21 R-K4 KR-KB1 22 P-KN3 (22 QR-Q4? P-B4 23 R-B4 P-QN4) BxNch, smashing White's pawn majority.

(i) Definitely not anticipated. I was calculating what to do after 17 N-B5ch, but the threat of 18 N-B5ch is even stronger. White's 17 KR-K1, along with his earlier 8 Q-R5ch and 9 Q-R6, were the only moves thus far not considered by Black before White played them. Nimzovich's maxim, "the threat is greater than its execution," certainly applies here. If Black loses back the pawn in this position, then White will win by virtue of his active pieces.

(j) Now Black cannot capture the knight because of the disastrous sequel, 19...PxN?? 20 RxP Q-B2 21 R-K8mate. Black could have won, however, with 19...P-KR4!, as seen first by White after he had already moved. Both players were heading for time trouble at this point. All things considered, White would have done well to have left his knight on K4 and to have moved his queen on the 18th turn. After 19...P-KR4!, 20 Q-R3 Q-N4ch 21 K-N1 QxN wins the knight and the game. Equally conclusive is 20 QxNP R-B3 21 RxKP RxQ 22 RxQ PxN 23 QR-Q7 B-R3ch 24 K-B2 B-B5. White's best, though hopeless in the end, appears to be 20 QxPch QxQ 21 NxQ B-R3ch 22 K-N1 RxP 23 R-N1 R-K1, when Black has not only retained his extra pawn but also has achieved a superior position for his pieces.

(k) Moves 20 to 26 were virtually all forced, and here Black's chances are much less in view of his uncoordinated pieces in contrast to White's centralization.

(l) White should have tried 30 N-Q4 (30 N-B5? B-B1) R(7)-K2 31 R-Q7 RxR 32 RxR BxP 33 RxRP P-KN4, although Black preserves an edge. Recovery of control over White's seventh rank or a trade of rooks makes it easier to meet time control safely. The next ten moves for both players were made in about 60 seconds elapsed time, after which the game was adjourned and a draw agreed without resumption.

(m) Mission the last chance to win by 38...P-B5. Out of the total of 20 moves played by both sides in 60 seconds only four moves were tactically inaccurate: 30 P-B5 (30 N-Q4), 32 RxPch (32 NxP, keeping three pieces), 33 BxN (33 RxN, trading rooks and holding both passed pawns) and 38 K-N1 (38 P-B5, winning easily). Both players kept complete scores while playing out the last minute.

(n) If 39...B-N3 instead, then 40 R-R5 R(1)-K4 41 R-R8ch R-B1 42 R-R5 R(1)-B4 43 R-R8ch, and to avoid a three-fold repetition of position Black must lose his passed pawn anyway, which allows White to draw.

SPASSKY MAKES COMEBACK

After trailing by the seemingly hopeless margin of 2½-7½, former world champion Boris Spassky slugged his way back to within a single point of Soviet defector Viktor Korchnoi at the end of game 15 in their 20-game match in Belgrade to field a challenger for titleholder Anatoly Karpov. The score now stands at 8-7 in Korchnoi's favor, with 10½ points needed to win.

White: Boris Spassky. Black: Viktor Korchnoi.
Belgrade, 1977; 2nd match game. French Defense 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 e5 c5 5 a3 Bc3 6 bc Ne7 7 Qg4 cd 8 Qg7 Rg8 9 Qh7 Qc7 10 Ne2 Nbc6 11 f4 Bd7 12 Qd3 dc 13 Be3 d4 14 Bf2 0-0-0 15 Nd4 Nd4 16 Qd4 b6 17 Bh4 Bb5 18 Qe4 Bf1 19 Rf1 Rd5 20 Be7 Qe7 21 Rf3 Kb8 22 Kf1 Rd2 23 Rf2 Rgd8 24 Qf3 Rf2 25 Kf2 Rd2 26 Kg3 Qd8 27 Qe4 Qg8 28 Kh3 Qh8 29 Kg3 Qg7 30 Kh3 Rd8 31 g4 Rh8 32 Kg3 Qh8 33 Qg2 Qh4 34 Kf3 Rd8 35 Qg3 Qe7 36 g5 Rd2 37 Kg4 Qb7 38 Qc3 Rg2 39 Kh3 Rf2 40 Kg4 Qe4 41 Resigns.