

Richard Shorman

Chess

BOTVINNIK SPRINGS BACK

Surprisingly, the only English language book of Botvinnik's games still in print omits this clever tale of "the fox outfoxed."

White: Mikhail Botvinnik
 Leningrad Championsip, 1932.
 Nimzo-Indian Defense

Black: Leonid Savitzky

1 P-Q4	N-KB3
2 P-QB4	P-K3
3 N-QB3	B-N5
4 Q-N3(a)	P-B4(b)
5 PxP(c)	N-B3
6 B-N5(d)	P-KR3(e)
7 B-R4(f)	N-Q5(g)
8 Q-R4!(h)	BxNch
9 PxB	N-B4
10 BxN	Q-xB
11 R-B1(i)	Q-N4(j)
12 Q-R3	P-QN3(k)
13 N-B3	Q-K2
14 P-N4!(1)	N-R5
15 NxN	QxN
16 B-N2	R-QN1
17 QxP	Q-N4
18 O-O	Q-K4(m)
19 PxP	Resigns (n)

(a) Labeled the Spielmann Variation after the renowned attacking player Rudolf Spielmann, this aggressive queen sorties tormented Nimzo-Indian buffs during the early 1930s. Improved Black defenses then exposed the minus side of White's premature commitment of a heavy piece, and the line soon fell out of grandmaster favor.

(b) An almost automatic response at the time, in order to engage White's center while freeing a diagonal for his Black majesty. Nowadays, 4 . . . N-B3 would be preferred, followed by pawn advances in the center.

(c) Positionally forced in view of Black's threat to obtain quick equality after 5 N-B3 N-B3 6 P-K3 P-Q4.

(d) The most active reaction toward 6 . . . N-K5, but a modern master would probably mobilize even faster by 6 N-B3 N-K5 7 B-Q2 NxB 8 NxN O-O 9 O-O-O.

(e) Prior to this game Black had tried for counterplay with 6 . . . Q-R4 and failed against 7 BxN PxB 8 N-B3 QxBP (weaker than 8 . . . BxP) 9 P-QR3 B-R4 10 P-K3 P-QR3 11 B-K2 R-KN1 12 O-O B-B2 13 N-K4 Q-K2 14 Q-B3 R-N3 15 P-B5! (Botvinnik—Myasoeodov, Leningrad, 1932).

(f) "Simplest now was 7 BxN, but whether White can count on an advantage from it was not known. White's actual move is certainly consistent, although somewhat risky" (Botvinnik).

(g) Later in this same tournament Ragozin achieved a positional plus versus Botvinnik with 7 . . . P-KN4! 8 B-N3 N-K5 9 P-K3 BxNch 10 PxB Q-B3 11 N-K2 P-K4. The text-move looks reasonable, until Botvinnik shows why not.

(h) "Very clever. Of course he cannot capture the bishop at once, but by staying within capturing range, he prevents . . . N-B4 unless Black is willing to interpolate . . . BxNch" (Reinfeld).

(i) Black must have felt quite smug at the way he seemed to be pushing Botvinnik around. White has acquired tripled isolated pawns (on a half-open file, no less!), which he is now obliged to defend with his pieces.

(j) A necessary prelude to developing his bishop on the long diagonal, but he should have settled for the more modest 11 . . . Q-K2 12 Q-R5 P-Q3.

(k) Black still thinks he is winning, else he would have rushed back with 12 . . . Q-K2, hoping for the line in the previous note. White can play stronger this time, however, with 13 R-N1!, answering 13 . . . P-QN3 by 14 RxP and 13 . . . P-Q3 by 14 P-N4! (Reinfeld). The textmove sets a crafty trap, 13 PxB PxB1 14 Q-N2 (naturally not 14 QxR?? QxRmate!) RxP!, which, unfortunately, merely serves to augment Black's false sense of security.

(1) Like lightning out of a clear blue sky! Black had reckoned on 14 P-K4 N-R5 15 NxN QxN 16 B-Q3 Q-K2 at worst. The remaining moves are all forced, as Botvinnik finally reveals the utter bankruptcy of Black's position.

(m) Just barely saving the rook, but not in time to save the game.

(n) If 19 . . . P-Q4 (to parry 20 P-N7), then 20 P-B5 completes the comedy by transforming the "weak" isolani into expansive passed pawns.

NEW CHESS CLUB FOR SAN LEANDRO

A meeting of chess players and those interested in the game of chess will be held at the home of Robert Manners, 395 Haas Avenue, San Leandro (tel.: 569-4089), on Monday, Jan. 10, at 7:30 p.m. for the purpose of forming the San Leandro Chess Club. Come and play chess!

WHERE TO PLAY CHESS

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

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

The Fremont Chess Club, 40204 Paseo Padre Parkway (Fremont Central Park Community Center, near City Hall at Lake Elisabeth). Thursday, 7-11 p.m.

The Livermore Chess Club, Fourth and J Streets. Evenings, the 1st and 3rd Friday of the month.