

CHESS BARBS

HALFWAY THERE

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HALF-TIME RESPITE

Commentary and notes by international grandmaster Lev Polugaevsky, translated from "64", No. 32, Aug. 11-17, 1972, pp. 10-11.

If you go back and carefully examine Fischer's tournament games over the past few years, you come to the inescapable conclusion that Fischer does not react well to defeat; his play loses much of its luster and becomes less clear-cut. In short, individual setbacks, as everyone knows, throw the American grandmaster off his usual pace. Thus, in light of the previous result, the 12th game, which marked the halfway point of the match, took on special meaning. Would Fischer immediately go all out for revenge trying to erase the unpleasant memory of his recent loss? Knowing Fischer and his desire to win at any cost, it is easy to imagine him pressing too hard in this encounter. But another rational, and opposite, course was also plausible. Ahead in points, Fischer could become extremely cautious and strive to reduce the element of risk to a minimum. The game itself tends to bear out this contention.

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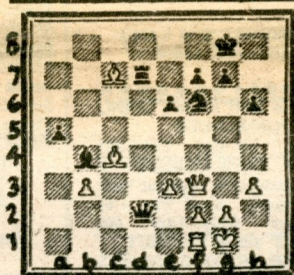
White: Robert Fischer. Black: Boris Spassky. World Championship, Match Game No. 12, Reykjavik, Iceland, Aug. 8-9, 1972. Queen's Gambit Declined.

1 c4(A) e6 2 Nf3 d5 3 d4 Nf6
4 Nc3 Be7 5 Bg5 h6 6 Bh4 0-0
7 e3 Nbd7(B) 8 Rcl c6 9 Bd3 dc
10 Bc4 b5 11 Bd3 a6(C) 12 a4 ba(D)
13 Na4 Qa5ch 14 Nd2 Bb4 15 Nc3
c5(E) 16 Nb3(F) Qd8(G) 17 0-0 cd
18 Nd4 Bb7 19 Be4(H) Qb8 20
Bg3(I) Qa7 21 Nc6 Bc6 22 Bc6
Rac8(J) 23 Na4 Rfd8 24 Bf3 a5
25 Rc6(K) Rc6 26 Bc6 Rc8 27 Bf3
Qa6 28 h3 Qb5 29 Be2 Qc6
30 Bf3 Qb5 31 b3(L) Be7 32 Be2
Qb4 33 Ba6 Rc6 34 Bd3 Nc5
35 Qf3(M) Rc8(N) 36 Nc5 Bc5
37 Rcl Rd8(O) 38 Bc4 Qd2 39 Rf1
Bb4(P) 40 Bc7 Rd7(Q) 41 Qc6(R)
Qc2 42 Be5 Rd2 43 Qa8ch Kh7

44 Bf6 gf 45 Qf3 f5 46 g4 Qe4
47 Kg2 Kg6 48 Rcl Ba3 49 Ral
Bb4 50 Rcl Be7 51 gfch ef
52 Rel Rf2ch 53 Kf2 Bh4ch 54Ke2
Qf3ch 55Kf3 Bel 56 Drawn.

(A) Fischer's very first move of the game sufficiently demonstrates his desire for a quiet positional struggle and shows that he is prepared to settle for a minimal opening edge.

(B) Avoiding the Bondarevsky-



Position after 40...Rd7.
White sealed his 41st move.

Makagonov system (7...b6), which lost for Black in the sixth match game. Spassky plays a fairly seldom seen line of the Queen's Gambit Declined called the "extended fianchetto" variation. It used to be employed regularly by Alekhine and Capablanca.

(C) Black wants to carry out an idea typical of the Meran Defense: 12...c5 and 13...Bb7, with good prospects on the queen side. What is White's best plan? Theory recommends both 12 0-0 and 12 Bb1 plus the move made by Fischer. Most energetic at first glance seems to be 12 e4, but the game Euwe--Alekhine (Match, 1935) refuted this attack by 12...Ne4! 13 Be4 Bh4 14 Bc6 Ra7 15 0-0 Nb6!

(D) Suggested by Capablanca.

(E) This long variation has been well analyzed. Theory considers the chances equal for both sides.

(F) Another line was tested in the game Fine--Belavenets (Moscow, 1937): 16 Nc4 Qc7 17 Bg3 Qb7 18 0-0 cd 19 ed Rd8 20 Na4.

(G) Possible is 16...Qb6 17 dc Bc5 18 Nc5 Qc5 19 Bg3 Bb7 20 0-0, and White possesses only a microscopic advantage (Stahl-

berg--Capablanca, Margate, 1936).

(H) Exploiting his opportunity. After 19...Be4 20 Ne4 the pin of the knight and the weakness of c6 make things unpleasant for Black, and so his reply is practically forced.

(I) White's premature attempt to make use of the diagonal h2-b8 with tempo does not cause Black much trouble and, in fact, helps him to connect his rooks. Correct is 20 Nc6 Bc6 21 Bc6 Ra7 immediately, and now 22 Bg3 can be played with more authority: 22...Qb6 (better 22...Qd8) 23 Na4 Qa5 24 Qd4. If 20...Qd6, then White has a choice of 21 Ne7ch Qe7 22 Bb7 Ra7 23 Bf3 or 21 Qd6! Bd6 22 Rfd1!

(J) True, White has obtained the two bishops, but Black's knights are active enough (threatening 23...Nc5 with pressure on d3 and b3). White parries the threat by removing his knight to the edge of the board, where, as we shall see later, it stands out of play. Probably best is 23 Ne4.

(K) Hard to understand. Why not 25 Qe2?

(L) There can be no talk about an advantage for White here. Black controls the "c" file and White's bishops have yet to acquire sufficient range.

(M) White strives to regain the initiative through tactical devices and partially succeeds due to Black's imprecise play prior to time control.

(N) Giving up the "c" file without a fight, when 35...Nd5! guarantees an easy game. Serious attention should also have been accorded to 35...Nce4.

(O) Unfortunately, 37...Qb3? loses out to 38 Rc5.

(P) Safer is 39...Qd7.

(Q) Upon resumption of play following the adjournment on move 40 the game lasted another 15 moves. Spassky deployed his forces actively, executed a little combination that won a pawn, but an ending with bishops of opposite colors resulted and the contest was agreed drawn.

(R) The sealed move.