

BOBBY N BORIS TOE TO TOE

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THE FINAL HOURS:

Waiting for the Greatest Sporting Event of all Time to really happen

It has all been waiting really. Only days before the \$125,000 match in Iceland Robert Fischer has disappeared, but I believe he is somewhere on this planet and will reappear in sprite, nifty whizzer fashion on time. He will score 8 wins, 4 losses, 9 draws and become the first American chess champion of the world. Right?

Yes, if everything goes according to form, but then, America, words are all we have to take your heart away. You must hope that Fischer's fantastic recent results are really real, truly true. Do you believe, really believe?

Let's look at the problems which Robert Fischer faces on the eve of this, the greatest sporting event of all time.

PROBLEM ONE is that Fischer plays to win as Black with second move, rather than to equalize. This is very unsound strategy against the present world champion and virtually guarantees unobjective treatment of equal positions.

I believe Fischer will change totally and defend equality as Black. As William Addison said, "Chessplayers will always do what is necessary to win, whether it be calisthenics, hostile behavior, beating up your mother or playing sterile theoretical games and grandmaster draws." Winning is Fischer's sole desire.

I believe Fischer will play many defenses as Black that Spassky does not really expect. Fischer is a money player pure and simple, and will do what is necessary to win. Changes are necessary against Spassky. Fischer must play to survive as Black. We are not talking about sugar cookies. It's the world title and \$125,000.

PROBLEM TWO is that Fischer is a variation player, rather than a general principle player, so Spassky will be incredibly booked for Fischer by the great theoretician Efwyn Geller and the chess historian Iwo Nei. Fischer simply must avoid repeated use of the Gruenfeld Indian and Najdorf Sicilian variations, which are clearly dubious against the world's most dangerous tactician, Spassky.

I have seen Spassky make moves against Bronstein, Geller, Fischer and Tal that defied months of analysis and were proven sound in all cases. Spassky, not Fischer, is the player with the one move bomb that can defeat the strongest. Spassky has played far more strong or "super grandmaster" category players than Fischer and has won far more games from the world's strongest than any player of his generation. He is a time bomb, not ye olde run of the mill waterbed maker.

So you are going to see some new goodies from Robert Fischer that will pop thy eyeballs. He is not called the renaissance man of chess for nothing. The bones of Lasker, Morphy, Anderssen and Steinitz are going to shake, rattle and roll.

PROBLEM THREE is that Boris Spassky is simply the strongest world champion ever to face probable loss of his world title. Fischer has not helped matters by calling Spassky a "mediocre world champion" on Yugoslavian radio and in press interviews. If Spassky is angered or "up" for this match of the century, then Fischer could be turned away while forcing Spassky to become the richest titleholder moneywinner ever.

Spassky likens himself to a "lazy, slumbering bear," who awakens gradually. He is famous for murderous closeouts. Fischer warms up much faster and should be red hot by rounds eight or ten. Spassky may have a palace, all the king's horses and all the king's men, if he holds the Brooklyn colossus to a drawn match and retains the world title. The Russian people love Spassky even

more than Fischer has struck their national fancy.

And if Spassky wins everything, it could not happen to a nicer chap! He enters this match as an underdog, belittled with no reason. Spassky's record is awesome. He has beaten Petrosian, Fischer, Keres, Larsen, Geller, Tal, Korchnoi, etc., in matches or tournament games in a manner no living player can approach. But Fischer's 1970-1972 form is simply stronger, it appears.

I do not wish to disillusion his fanatical supporters, but I must mention that I have met several cool-headed US masters who doubt



closed, mind open and appears happy. He is a great general principle player and knows how to use analysis and advice of other chess masters. He is happily married, with varied interests such as pop music, acting, comedy and remaining chess champion of the globe. While Fischer's killer instincts are keener than those of Boris Spassky, the compsure, resourcefulness and, above all, endurance of Spassky stand like a mountain in July heat. Getting interested now? Don't just sit there--scream!

Spassky can absorb terrific mind punishment and grind opposition to pulp tomorrow. Once he lost a "critical" first round world title game against Petrosian after 2 days and ten hours of play because of a split second blunder. A hysterical fan screamed as he left, "Don't give up, Boris. It's not important!" Spassky whirled in a flash, showed a toothy smile and beamed vibrations of class, "What do you think I am made of--putty?!"

And so, it looks like Fischer 8--

seriously that Fischer has any real chance in a match with Spassky. Their consensus is that Fischer is the most logical, studied, flashy player alive, but Spassky is a total world title performer, who will not crack under the avalanche, which is certainly what R. J. Fischer is going to be--both night and day. I certainly was among those who did not believe Fischer had even remote title possibilities as recently as a year ago. 6-0 scores do a lot to establishing whether Fischer is in earnest, believe me.

I am sure of one thing--countless millions of dollars are riding on the match one way or the other. Even Grandman is reaching into her cookie jar to bet on Spassky at the odds Fischer fans are giving. I myself have witnessed a 6-1 bet odds proposition against Spassky and was reaching for my purse when the offer was already snapped up.

Last year Walther Browne was frantically trying to wager \$5,000 on Fischer, giving 3-1 odds vrs. Petrosian when Fischer was not doing at all well. Lord only knows what the international Australian gambling playboy grandmaster has cooked up to lure Spassky followers into the den by title match day! I believe Fischer must play better than against Petrosian if he is to win this match. But Fischer should rise magnificently to the occasion because the climb is more stimulating, challenging and exciting than arriving at the destination.

Most Americans and fans worldwide feel Fischer must win on no evidence of past Fischer--Spassky games, all of which decided games

the present world champion won. These are hunches expressed best, I think, by the San Francisco veteran expert Albert Raymond. The elderly gentleman told me with pork and beans formality how thinking on Fischer's ability and chances really are: "Jude, I don't have any time to study all of Fischer's games and thousands by his opponents. All I can say is never underestimate a man who rose to the occasion. Remember how Fischer came from nowhere to win 7 games out of 8 in the Piatogorsky cup tournament? Remember his 11-0 US Championship? The boy is just plain good. He always wins when he must." I suppose we must agree now.

And now we come to the **FOURTH** and most significant **PROBLEM** for Fischer and the one that will probably cost Fischer the title if the match is not completed. Want it in one word? Environment. Fischer must know that this is no picnic and in such a mammoth

undertaking (my God--you can't get a bed or room in Iceland with a shotgun) things are bound to happen and things are bound to be said that cannot be helped. That's part of the excitement. Fischer must endure the enormous mental strain, annoyances of all types if he wants to become world champion. It seems that Fischer could play the match in the 59th Avenue subway station in New York City now. Yet the past keeps coming to mind. Lighting, the weather, the color or the view from his room, girls, photographers, conversing Russians, religious concerns, reporters, rising opponents, chess sets, chairs, tables, and losing and drawing have all seriously affected Fischer's play and attitude in the past. The stakes are too high for Fischer to blow his cool now. If he has to win by candlelight in a lion's den, then may it happen.

Fischer is going into the match alone. You may believe that Ed Edmondson, "Executive Director" of the US Chess Federation, or Larry Evans are in Fischer's corner and will help him in crisis times. No. Fischer has abandoned every one and is going it solo. He will undoubtedly change hotel rooms a dozen times as well to insure isolation as in Buenos Aires. And Fischer has all those hysterical lady fans, who really do want to touch him or kiss him to drape themselves about him, as he is rushing to round 24. It's really true. The intellectual Joseph Namath of our age! Fischer has a right to make the choice of isolation. Elvis in 1972!

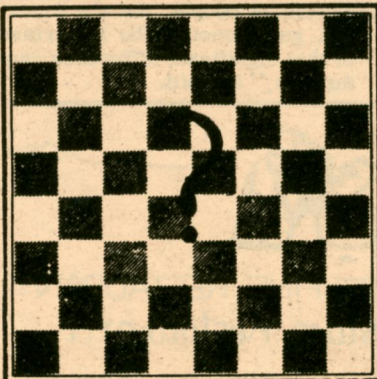
As for Spassky, he is deeply loved by the chess public throughout the world. He keeps mouth

Spassky 4 with 9 drawn games. I really regret seeing Spassky lose his world title. Fischer has paid the price in a 20-year wait to be numero uno. Get ready, folks. The show is about to begin. My seat belt is already buckled. I hope that both players and officials live through the match. Some of the fans most certainly will not. The excitement is merited.

And afterward? The love you take is equal to the love you make. Let Fischer do it!

Final notes: George Koltanowski, the San Francisco international master, polled these last minute predictions.

Walter Browne (Australia), "Fischer will have no trouble, 12½-7½." Svetozar Gligorich (Yugoslavia), "Bobby will win, but it could be very close, 12½-10½." Oscar Panno (Argentina), "Spassky will win by 12-7. Fischer is all sparkle, but Spassky is solid." Bent Larsen (Denmark), "This match should be won by Spassky." Miguel Quinteros (Argentina), "Easy win for Fischer." Bruno Parma (Yugoslavia), "Always thought it would be a toss up, but with latest form showing, I must lean toward Fischer winning, 12½-11½." Lubomir Kavalek (US), "If draws don't count it might run 1,234 games! Joking aside, Fischer will win by a wide margin, 12½-6½." Henrique Mecking (Brazil), "Fischer will win by 3 points, 12½-9½." Harry Golombek (noted English critic and master), "It should be Fischer if he can overcome his nerves in the first 4 games. He has to have a plus score to play with ease and sureness. If he is behind in points, then he could easily lose the match. Spassky is no weak sister. Fischer has not been successful in the last five encounters."



**SPASSKY, YES!
FISHER, MAYBE!**