

# What Next For Bobby?

Sept 10/72

By FRANK ANDERSON  
International Chessmaster

The big chess match just concluded in Iceland between Bobby Fischer and Boris Spassky has focused the world's attention on this intellectual pursuit. The press reported every move and every grimace of the two contestants. Fischer, as new World Chess Champion, won his title at the same time other Americans were winning gold medals in the Olympics. At the Olympics, most sporting events last only minutes, whereas Bobby's ordeal lasted three months. Those three months of fierce intellectual concentration are as wearing physically as any other sport, and this torture can only be borne by dedicated men. Fischer is such a man, dedicated to play perfect chess, to win every game if at all possible. Since he demands perfection of himself, it is easy to see why he is so demanding of his external surroundings when playing chess.

The phrase "playing chess" perhaps does not do Fischer justice, for he considers chess not only a game and a sport but also a science and an art form. Certainly chess is an art, because the best games are recorded and printed around the world for all other budding chess artists to view and enjoy. It is also a sport because of the basic competitive nature of the battle. Chess is a science too, for a vast body of knowledge has been accumulated on how best to play against different positions and different playing styles.

Everyone seems to be playing chess these days. As evidence of the interest in the San Diego area, five new chess clubs have been formed in the past month. The new membership rosters of other chess clubs is booming. Plans are underway for television chess matches between leading players. In Texas, a million dollar tournament is in the planning stage. Of course, Bobby will be there!

What will happen to Bobby in the future months? Will the World Chess Championship go to his head? Will he again resume his hermit role and study chess in the solitary confines of his lonely hotel room? We think that Fischer will relax to a certain extent now and become a more likeable individual, able to relax and enjoy non-chess pleasures to a greater extent. Fischer has had hundreds of offers to give simultaneous chess exhibitions around the world. Perhaps he will go on

tour and at each major city compete against a few hundred of that city's chess enthusiasts, each eager to say "I played against Bobby Fischer" (and lost!).

Not many people realize that every day in the year has at least one major chess tournament underway at some place in the world. Clearly, he will be invited to the most prestigious tournaments whether they occur in South America, Russia, Europe, or Indonesia. Only one fly in the ointment with these exciting possibilities has presented itself. The organization of a large international English tournament is underway and it is reported that Spassky has received an invitation, but not Fischer. This perhaps is understandable, for the organizers of such tournaments would like to avoid as many organizational problems as possible. Fischer, of course, presents some unusual problems in that his lengthy list of demands are usually difficult to completely accede to. Maybe this will limit his invitations, but we think not, for everyone will be eager to have "Mr Chess" competing in their tournament.

What about the possibility of women in Fischer's life? As a new American folk hero, Bobby has already attracted numerous offers from the opposite sex. Will we soon see a Mrs. Fischer accompanying her eminent husband on his world-wide jaunts? Fischer has an eye for beauty with the female form, other than just a well-formed queen on his chess board, and we think he will undoubtedly meet some interesting prospects in his public travels.

What will happen to Boris Spassky now that he has lost the world chess championship? Can he make a comeback in the future? Only one other world chess champion has ever done this. His name is Mikhail Botvinnik, also a Russian, who recovered his title an unprecedented two times. Spassky has the strength of character to do this, but we question whether he has the real desire. As a multi-talented man who loves his literary career as a journalist in Russia, he has felt

the strains of holding of the World Chess Championship. Although he is very competitive in nature, Spassky would not surprise us to continue a successful chess career, but never rise to the top in the chess world again.

Apropos of this comment is the story told about Mark Taimanov, one of the Russian players that Fischer beat in one of the preliminary matches for the world title. Taimanov is an extremely talented pianist, and highly regarded in the Soviet Union for that talent as well as his chess playing ability. After Fischer beat him 6-0, Taimanov was quoted "Well, at least I have my music." Spassky may very well feel now that "at least I have my family, my literary career, and my chess talent."

This World Championship Match has produced some of the most exciting play seen in the past 10 years of world title events. Both Fischer and Spassky are fighters who do not hesitate to mix it, and wide open positions are their forte. Previous world champions have, for the most part, been eager to play a tight, close-to-the-vest brand of chess, with deep and intricate maneuvering behind walls of pawns. Ultimately, of course, contacts will be made with their opponent, but not before interminable maneuvering and cautious play. However, both Spassky and Fischer do not hesitate to break the position open, exchange or sacrifice pawns, and engage in daring tactics at an early stage.

Each player produced many opening innovations in this match, and was obviously well prepared before starting. In retrospect, it is clear that Fischer was the better prepared, for Spassky's bad play in the beginning of the match was in marked contrast to his quality efforts in the final ten games. True enough, Fischer got off to a really bad start by losing the first game because of an overly aggressive attempt to conquer. His second straight loss by default did not help

his cause either. But from that point on, Fischer took command and managed to secure by surprise openings the better position in the middle game in many cases.

Forceful play is characteristic of Fischer at his best, and he didn't let Spassky loose from the vise of perfect play. Fischer's skill in this match mainly was in steering clear of opening variations for which Spassky was clearly prepared. This constant shifting of opening selections by Fischer must have upset

Spassky, for there seemed to be no way to pin Fischer down and trap him in one of the Russian prepared variations.

Bobby Fischer clearly is the best tournament chess player of our era and now, after these series of matches, can be called the World's best match player. This requires deep knowledge of the psychology of chess and of the nature of your adversary. Fischer has just proved he deserves the degree of "Master of Chess Psychology".



# Chess At The Summit:

## Game By Game

Here is a panoramic review, game by game, of the struggle for the 1972 World Chess Championship between Bobby Fischer and Boris Spassky.

**Game 1** — Spassky played cautiously; a strategy that was successful, but Fischer miscalculated in an aggressive attempt to win. Score 1 point for the Russian World Champion.

**Game 2** — For the first time in World Championship play, a player was forfeited for non-appearance. Fischer objected to the TV cameras and temporarily stayed away from the playing hall. It looked like a runaway match for the World Champion. He was leading 2-0.

**Game 3** — With the black pieces, Fischer quickly assumed the initiative and by precise attacking play, he won a brilliant game. Fischer was back in the match. The score was now 2-1 in favor of Spassky.

**Game 4** — Spassky clearly didn't like the previous game result, for he played ultra aggressively with his Sicilian Defense and at one point could have beaten Fischer. In time pressure, he missed his way and a draw was the logical result. A close call for Fischer. The score:  $2\frac{1}{2}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$ , Spassky's favor.

**Game 5** — One of the shortest games of the match. Spassky could make no headway against Fischer's Nimzo-Indian Defense. Cleverly, the latter forced Spassky's pieces on the defensive and, in a difficult and probably lost position, Spassky erred and was forced to resign before Fischer checkmated him. The match was tied  $2\frac{1}{2}$ - $2\frac{1}{2}$ .

**Game 6** — A big surprise. For the first time in his career, Bobby played the Queen's Pawn opening. This surprised Spassky, who was outplayed from start to finish. Another win for Fischer put him in the lead for the first time in the match with the score  $3\frac{1}{2}$ - $2\frac{1}{2}$ .

**Game 7** — The always aggressive Fischer played a very risky opening. It paid off for him and he probably had a winning position in the middle game. Spassky's superb defense, however, held Fischer to a draw. Fischer still led 4-3.

**Game 8** — Again Fischer surprised the spectators with a different opening, this time with the English opening. In an innovation at an early stage, he outplayed Spassky, winning material and the game. Score 5-3. Fischer had a strong early lead.

**Game 9** — Spassky had the white pieces, but played conservatively and drew in attempting to recover his mental equilibrium after recent bad run of results. The score was  $5\frac{1}{2}$ - $3\frac{1}{2}$ , Fischer still led.

**Game 10** — Fischer switched openings and a Ruy Lopes was played for the first time in the match. In a marvelous tension-filled battle, Fischer outplayed Spassky with precise mid-game and end game tactics. A big victory for Fischer, for he now led by 3 points,  $6\frac{1}{2}$ - $3\frac{1}{2}$ .

**Game 11** — It looked all over for the World Champion, but he came up with a smashing victory in 31 moves over Fischer's Sicilian Defense. Undoubtedly the best game of the match for Spassky, who needed a few more to hold his title. The score was now closer at  $6\frac{1}{2}$ - $4\frac{1}{2}$  in favor of Fischer.

**Game 12** — Both sides played a close-to-the-vest game, each trying for small advantages. Fischer was more successful, but still could not break through Spassky's iron defense. The 55 move battle ended in a draw with the match score 7-5 in Fischer's favor.

**Game 13** — Thirteen was an unlucky number for Spassky. This was the most outstanding game of the match. Both Spassky and Fischer played heroically, with Spassky on the defensive in a long extremely difficult end game. After nine hours play, Spassky made a little slip, giving Fischer his chance. The win gave Bobby back his three-point lead. The score was 8-5 for Fischer.

**Game 14** — This turned out to be a missed opportunity for Spassky. Fischer was apparently overconfident and allowed the World Champion a fine initiative. However, Spassky overlooked a Fischer tactical play that allowed the challenger to win back a pawn he had lost earlier. This draw still left Fischer in the lead with the score  $8\frac{1}{2}$ - $5\frac{1}{2}$ .

**Game 15** — Another missed opportunity for Spassky. He outplayed Fischer and had excellent winning chances in the middle game. However, Spassky lost time in trying to win another pawn and Fischer's counter attack turned the tables and enabled him to draw and secure the half point. A very satisfactory result for Fischer, who still led 9-6.

**Game 16** — Spassky continued to play much better than in the early stages of the match. Here he had the initiative and, in fact, even won a pawn. However, the forces were too depleted for real winning chances, and after 60 moves, they had to shake hands, agreeing to a draw. Score,  $9\frac{1}{2}$ - $6\frac{1}{2}$ .

**Game 17** — A fighting game in which Fischer defended very well against Spassky's king side attack. Wisely, at one point, Fischer sacrificed a rook for a bishop and pawn. Without this resource, Fischer was lost. With precise play he managed to draw against the surging Spassky. The score: 10-7, Fischer.

**Game 18** — Fischer needed only one more win to really produce an overwhelming lead. He tried very hard for the full point in the game, as did Spassky. Near the end the World Champion had very strong mating threats on Fischer's back rank. However, Fischer, with active piece play, managed to keep the balance and forced a draw. Spassky saw his title drifting away for the score was  $10\frac{1}{2}$ - $7\frac{1}{2}$ .

**Game 19** — A marvelous battle — some would say lucky for Fischer. Spassky played natural sound opening moves and secured a very strong central pawn formation with good attacking chances. At one point, Spassky had numerous attacking alternatives which was what seemed to be a winning line, but Fischer's superb defensive skills managed to eke out a draw. With the attack or with the defense, Fischer has a superb positional instinct. His skill gave him the draw in this fighting game. Now his three-point lead loomed ever larger. The score was now 11-8.

**Game 20** — Spassky's back was to the wall. Striving for complications, he threw his pawns forward in an assault on both sides of Fischer's well-entrenched position. The latter was not giving away easily and managed to stop Spassky, even though the World Champion had a slightly superior position. However, there was no way for Spassky's pieces to infiltrate and Fischer sighed with relief at another draw, bringing him only one point away from his life-long goal! The score  $11\frac{1}{2}$ - $8\frac{1}{2}$  in Fischer's favor.

**Game 21** — The final game was a splendid example of the qualities that placed Fischer on the World Championship throne. Spassky made several slightly inferior moves. None could be considered serious errors. At worst they were positional misjudgments. That was all Fischer needed to wrap up the match. He got a mobile pawn center and two active bishops. Spassky made a good fight but had to resign on the 41st move. Fischer was chess champion of the world, beating Spassky  $12\frac{1}{2}$  to  $8\frac{1}{2}$ , a decisive margin.

—Frank Anderson