

FORMER WORLD CHAMP PRAYS FOR SPASSKY



By JUDE ACERS (U.S. Senior Master)

THE EIGHTH MATCH GAME FROM THE SOVIET POINT OF VIEW Comments and Notes by Former World Champion Vasily Smyslov

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The match is already better than one third over. Following a successful start, the world champion was unable to maintain his lead and now has to fight an uphill battle with a negative score, exactly the same situation Fischer faced after the first two games.

Will Spassky surmount this crisis and mobilize his inner resources to go on and win the match? Chess players all over the world are asking themselves this question. In analyzing the match games, I have come across some gross oversights, disrupting the normal course of the struggle. This applies to Fischer in the first game, but considerably more to Spassky. At times the world champion has committed errors that can be described only as completely out of character. Particularly grievous is the impression left by the eighth game, in which 19...Nd7? for all practical purposes lost instantly. The match distance of 24 games is a long one, and the history of world championship chess contains

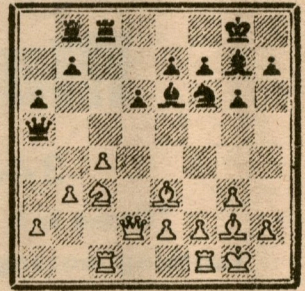
many instances of the scales of battle tipping first in one direction and then in another. Fischer's play, too, is not error free. (For example, in the seventh game he squandered his advantage in the technical phase of the ending.) Much, then, depends not only on opening preparation but also on tenacity and coolness under pressure. Victory in a match with a dangerous opponent requires the full mobilization of one's spiritual and physical powers. We trust that Spassky will display the temperment and persistence necessary for the realization of this high aim.

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World Championship, Match Game No. 8. Reykjavik, Iceland, July 27, 1972. White: Robert Fischer. Black: Boris Spassky. English Opening 1 c4(A) c5(B) 2 Nc3 Nc6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 g3 g6 5 Bg2 Bg7 6 0-0 0-0 7 d4 cd(C) 8 Nd4 Nd4 9 Qd4 d6 10 Bg5 Be6 11 Qf4 (D) Qa5 (E) 12 racl Rab8 13 b3 Rfc8 14 Qd2 a6 15 Be3 (F) b5 (G) 16 Ba7 bc (H) 17 Bb8 Rb8 18 bc Bc4 19 Rfd1 Nd7? (I) 20 Nd5 (J) Qd2 21 Ne7ch Kf8 22 Rd2 Ke7 23 Rc4 (K) Rblch 24 Bfl Nc5 25 Kg2 a5 26 e4 Bal 27 f4 f6 28 Re2 Ke6 29 Rec2 Bb2 30 Be2 h5 31 Rd2 Ba3 32 f5ch (L) gf 33 efch Ke5 34 Rcd4 Kf5 35 Rd5ch Ke6 36 Rd6ch Ke7 37. Rc6 Black resigns.

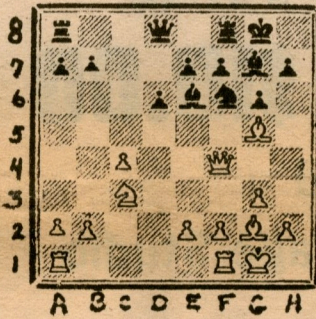
17 Nc6 Qe8 18 Qb6, and White's pressure mounts. (F) Fischer has failed to extract the slightest advantage out of the opening and so turns to positional maneuvering. First of all, the threat of 15...b5 is parried in view of the reply 16 Ba7. (G) The world champion takes this highly committing decision anyway. Sacrificing the exchange for a pawn, he disturbs the quiet chain of events. Naturally, Black obtains compensation for the material, but there was certainly no need for such extreme measures. Simple and good is 15...Bd7, intending to bring the bishop to c6, e.g., 16 Ba7 Ra8 17 Bd4 Bc6 18 e4 b5, and Black's chances are in no way inferior.

POSITION after 15 Be3



(H) The alternative leads to a favorable ending for White: 16... Ra8 17 Ba8 Ra8 18 Bd4 bc 19 Ne4 Qd2 20 Nd2. (I) A gross oversight that ruins Black's position utterly. Instead, with 19...Qh5 Spassky still retains good piece play and tactical possibilities. (J) This obvious sequence was missed by the world champion. Now Black loses the pawn on e7 and with it all hope of resistance. (K) White enters an ending the exchange up and with no serious technical difficulties associated with the realization of his advantage. (L) The pawn breakthrough widens the sphere of action for the heavy pieces. Now the rooks penetrate into Black's position.

POSITION after 11 Qf4



(A) The second time that Fischer has departed from his favorite 1 e4 and embarked upon an English Opening. (B) In the sixth match game Spassky defended with 1...e6, whereas here he adheres to symmetrical development. As a matter of fact, Fischer willingly adopts this formation himself. The challenger thus is confronted with the problem of how to handle the opening from the White side of the board. (C) With this exchange the symmetry has been broken and a familiar opening position reached. White's game is somewhat freer, but Black has sufficient counter resources on the queen side. (D) An original queen maneuver. Objectively speaking, there is no cause to overestimate the theoretical worth of the move. The further struggle demonstrates that Black can equalize without much trouble. (E) Spassky is reported to have spent more than 50 minutes in thought here and chose the most natural plan of development. Black organizes his forces and gradually prepares the advance b7-b5. An attempt to complicate by 11...Rc8 12 b3 Nh5 13 Qe3 b5 does not succeed, e.g., 14 Nb5 Bal 15 Ral a6 16 Na7 Rc7