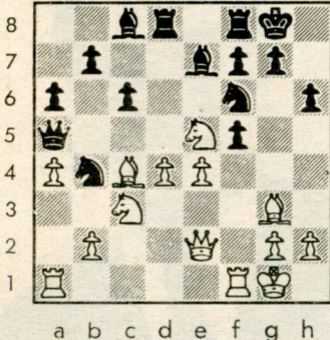


Chess



By Frisco Del Rosario
BOTVINNIK-STEPANOV
 White to play and win.



BEFORE THE CLOCK STARTS

Preparing for a tournament or match is more than memorizing the latest wrinkle in your favorite opening. Mikhail Botvinnik, world champion for nearly 15 years in the mid-century, spent a few weeks in the fresh country air before an event for health.

There Botvinnik would study games by his forthcoming opponents, noting their chosen openings and other distinctions in their play. He was thorough — for specific opponents, he asked his training partners to blow smoke in his face.

Finally, five days before the event, Botvinnik would cease all chess activity in order not to lose his thirst for battle.

Mikhail Tal challenged Botvinnik for the world championship in 1960. In Tal's preparation, his trainer told him a new joke before each game. It worked — Tal won the title (but lost the rematch).

The ninth game showed that Botvinnik was ready for a Tal sacrifice.

Moscow 1960

World Championship Match, Ninth Game

White: Mikhail Tal

Black: Mikhail Botvinnik

Caro-Kann Defense

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| 1. e4 c6 | 31. Kf2 Ke6 |
| 2. d4 d5 | 32. Rd7 Kd7 |
| 3. Nc3 de | 33. Kf3 Kd6 |
| 4. Ne4 Bf5 | 34. Kf4 Ke6 |
| 5. Ng3 Bg6 | 35. g4 Nd5 |
| 6. Nge2 Nf6 | 36. Ke4 Nf6 |
| 7. h4 h6 | 37. Kf4 Nd5 |
| 8. Nf4 Bh7 | 38. Ke4 Nb4 |
| 9. Bc4 e6 ¹ | 39. a3 Nc6 |
| 10. O-O ² Bd6 | 40. h5 g5 |
| 11. Ne6 ³ fe | 41. h6 Kf6 |
| 12. Be6 Qc7 | 42. Kd5 Kg6 |
| 13. Re1 Nbd7 ⁴ | 43. Ke6 Na5 |
| 14. Bg8 Kf8 | 44. a4 Nb3 |
| 15. Bh7 Rh7 | 45. Kd6 a5 |
| 16. Nf5 g6 ⁵ | 46. Kd5 Kh6 |
| 17. Bh6 Kg8 | 47. Kc4 Nc1 |
| 18. Nd6 Qd6 | 48. Kb5 Nd3 |
| 19. Bg5 Re7 | 49. b3 Nc1 |
| 20. Qd3 Kg7 | 50. Ka5 Nb3 |
| 21. Qg3? ⁶ Re1 | 51. Kb4 Nc1 |
| 22. Re1 Qg3 | 52. Kc3 Kg6 |
| 23. fg Rf8 ⁷ | 53. Kc2 Ne2 |
| 24. c4 Ng4 | 54. Kd3 Nc1 |
| 25. d5 cd | 55. Kc2 Ne2 |
| 26. cd Ndf6 | 56. Kd3 Nf4 |
| 27. d6 Rf7 | 57. Kc4 Kf6 |
| 28. Rc1 ⁸ Rd7 | 58. g3 Ne2 |
| 29. Rc7 Kf7 | 59. Resigns |
| 30. Bf6 Nf6 | |

NOTES:

1. Botvinnik played less solidly in Game 7 with 9...e5 and Tal had a small advantage after 10. Qe2 Qe7 11. de Qe5 12. Be3 Bc5 13. Bc5 Qe2 14. Ke2 Nc5 15. Rhe1 Nf6 16. b4 Nd7 17. Kf1 Kf8 18. Bb3.
2. A slight improvement over 10. Qe2 of Game 5. The queen may be better developed elsewhere.
3. Tal takes his chance to expose the enemy king, but there are no concrete threats and no active squares for the queen bishop.
4. Black very calmly continues his development. Knowing the discovered check is relatively harmless is the result of homework. It would be far too risky to try such analysis over the board.
5. The pawn sacrifice clears the rank for the rook.
6. White's attacking chances are considerably lessened by the exchange of heavy pieces and the doubling of the g-pawn. 21. g4 also falls short to 21...Rae8 22. Re7 Re7 23. h5 Re4.
7. Black judges to keep his rook on the board to assist the short-hopping knights in the ending rather than play ...Re8. Also, Black may now set up a king-side blockade with ...Ng4 and ...Ndf6 since Re7 is now met by ...Rf7.
8. Re7 immediately loses the pawn.

SOLUTION: 1 Bf7! Rf7 2. Nc4! wins.