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chess

by richard shorman



Black, a noted Soviet theoretician and expert on open games, thoroughly outmaneuvers his opponent in a wild and confusingly complex variation of the Two Knights' Defense.

Played in the semi-finals of the USSR Central Club Championship.

White: S. Kurkin. Black: Y. Estrin.

Moscow, 1967.

Two Knights' Defense

(Notes by Yakov Estrin in *Shakhmaty v SSSR*, No. 12, 1967, p. 11).

1 P-K4	P-K4	14 K-K2 (e)	QxQP (f)
2 N-KB3	N-QB3	15 R-N1	P-K5! (g)
3 B-B4	N-B3	16 P-Q4	PxPch
4 N-N5	B-B4	17 K-Q1	B-B7
5 NxBP	BxPch	18 R-B1 (h)	QxNP
6 K-B1	Q-K2	19 RxB	Q-N8ch
7 NxR	P-Q4	20 K-Q2	QxRch
8 PxP	N-Q5 (a)	21 KxP	0-0-0
9 P-KR3	B-N6! (b)	22 Q-KB4	N-K4ch
10 P-B3	N-B4 (c)	23 K-K4	N-N6ch
11 Q-R4ch	B-Q2	24 KxN	Q-B4ch
12 B-N5? (d)	Q-B4	25 K-K6	Q-Q4ch
13 BxBch	NxB	26 Resigns	

(a) A game played in the East German Team Championships between Ulrich and Beyer also illustrates Black's attacking possibilities: 8...B-N5 9 B-K2 BxBch 10 QxB N-Q5 11 QxB 0-0-0! 12 N-R3 R-B1 13 K-K1 N-K5!, with overpowering threats.

Czechoslovakian theoretician Y. Rokhlichek looks upon 9 B-K2 as an error, recommending instead 9 P-Q6 QxP 10 N-B7? After 10...Q-B4 11 B-K2 B-R5! 12 P-Q4 NxP, however, Black can safely resign. But Black has yet another attacking resource on tap.

(b) After 9...B-R5 10 P-B3 N-B4! (In his openings manual Ludek Pachman examines only 10...P-QN4 11 PxN PxB 12 PxP QxP 13 N-B3 B-B4 14 P-Q4 PxPe.p. 15 B-Q2 B-K5! 16 B-K1 BxPch!, with a draw by perpetual check.) 11 P-Q4 B-Q2! 12 P-KN4 Black cannot advantageously win back the exchange with 12...N-N6ch. Black played 12...N-Q3! 13 B-K2 0-0-0 in the game Estrin-Yezhek (correspondence match, USSR-Czechoslovakia, 1965-67) and retained the initiative. Since Black's Knight does not go to KN6 anyway, 9...B-N6!, blocking White's freeing P-KN4, turns out to be more accurate than 9...B-R5.

(c) The critical position. Although a Rook up White loses his Knight on KR8. Moreover, he is seriously behind in development and his King position is insecure. All this justifies evaluating the game in Black's favor.

Interestingly enough, for many years this position was considered good for White. Undoubtedly, this is partly due to the world's strongest chessplayers being little concerned with forced opening variations. But when I asked Mikhael Tal what he thought about this position, he hardly glanced at the board before commenting, "White should resign." In fact, Black won quickly after 11 P-Q4 B-Q2 12 Q-K2? B-R7! (Estrin-Noon, World Correspondence Team Championships, 1965-66). On 12 B-KN5 my opponent had prepared 12...Q-B1!, and White cannot last long.

(d) White trades off his only developed piece with disastrous consequences.

(e) There is nothing better: 14 P-Q4 is met by 14...NxP and 15 B-K3 fails against 15...Q-B1ch 16 K-N1 N-K7mate.

(f) Probably more precise than 14...Q-B7ch and 15...QxNP.

(g) If 15...0-0-0, then White organizes a defense by 16 P-Q3 N-B4 17 Q-QB4 or 16...N-N3 17 Q-K4. Now Black threatens mate in two, 16...Q-Q6ch and 17...N-K6mate.

(h) Or 18 Q-N3 QxQch 19 PxQ BxR, followed by the win of White's Knight on KR8.

PENINSULA OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

The third annual Peninsula Open Championship Tournament, directed by George Koltanowski, will be held in the LERA Main Auditorium (corner of N. Mathilda Ave. and Java St., seven blocks north of Bayshore, opposite Sunnyvale), Saturday and Sunday, April 27-28. If permission is granted to make the USCF Open Division a California State Championship Qualifier Tournament, then first prize will be \$150, which includes \$50 entry fee to the State Tourney and \$50 expenses, and second prize will be \$50. In the CFNC "A," "B" and "C" Divisions prizes are \$75 first, \$40 second, plus five trophies. At least three trophies will be awarded in the Junior Division (16 years old and under with a CFNC rating no higher than 1500). Entry fees are \$10 plus membership for the USCF Division, \$7 plus membership for the CFNC Division, and \$3 for the Junior Division. Round one of this five-round Swiss system tourney begins at noon, April 27.