

Richard Shorman

Chess

American standard bearer Robert Fischer, seated opposite chess champion Boris Spassky at the conclusion of their first match game for the world title, folded his score sheet carefully and deliberately, turned to face the audience and shrugged his shoulders in a helpless gesture. Then he walked off the stage of the Reykjavik sports palace without even bothering to resign his hopelessly lost position.

Originally scheduled for July 2, the great contest was delayed repeatedly by Fischer's demands for more money and better playing conditions. When, at least, the prize fund had been doubled and forced apologies tendered, the opening game officially got under way at precisely 5 p.m., July 11. Predictably, Fischer showed up late . . .

White: Boris Spassky.

Black: Robert Fischer.

World Championship, Reykjavik, 1972, Match Game No. 1.

Nimzo-Indian Defense

1 P-Q4(a)	N-KB3	29 P-N5	BxKRP?(m)
2 P-QB4	P-K3(b)	30 P-N3(n)	P-KR4
3 N-KB3(c)	P-Q4	31 K-K2	P-R5 ...
4 N-B3	B-N5(d)	32 K-B3	K-K2
5 P-K3	O-O	33 K-N2	PxP
6 B-Q3	P-B4	34 PxP	BxP
7 O-O	N-B3	35 KxB	K-Q3(o)
8 P-QR3	B-R4(e)	36 P-R4!(p)	K-Q4
9 N-K2(f)	PxBP	37 B-R3	K-K5
10 BxBP	B-N3(g)	38 B-B5	P-R3(q)
11 PxP!	QxQ(h)	39 P-N6	P-B4(r)
12 RxQ	BxP	40 K-R4	P-B5(s)
13 P-QN4	B-K2	41 PxP	KxP
14 B-N2(i)	B-Q2(j)	42 K-R5!(t)	K-B4
15 QR-B1	KR-Q1	43 B-K3	K-K5
16 N-2-Q4	NxN	44 B-B2	K-B4
17 NxN	B-R5(k)	45 B-R4	P-K4
18 B-N3	BxB	46 B-N5	P-K5
19 NxB	RxRch	47 B-K3	K-B3(u)
20 RxR	R-QB1	48 K-N4	K-K4
21 K-B1	K-B1	49 K-N5	K-Q4
22 K-K2	N-K5(1)	50 K-B5	P-R4
23 R-QB1	RxR	51 B-B2	P-N4(v)
24 BxR	P-B3	52 KxP	K-B5
25 N-R5!	N-Q3	53 K-B5	K-N5
26 K-Q3!	B-Q1	54 KxP	KxP
27 N-B4	B-B2	55 K-Q5	K-N4
28 NxN	BxN	56 K-Q6	Resigns(w)

(a) Psychologically effective. Spassky dares Fischer to play into the same line that lost for him at the Siegen chess olympics in 1970 (1 P-Q4 N-KB3 2 P-QB4 P-KN3 3 N-QB3 P-Q4).

(b) A surprise. Fischer rarely strays from his favorite opening systems.

(c) Inviting a drawish Queen's Indian Defense (3 . . . P-QN3 followed by fianchettoing the QB on N2).

(d) Choosing the Nimoz-Indian in preference to the Tarasch defense, with which Spassky had so much success against Petrosian in their 1969 title bout.

(e) Thus far the opening has kept to normal classical lines, but this retreat of the bishop (instead of 8 . . . BxN 9 PxB PxBP 10 BxBP Q-B2) is deservedly unpopular, as the further course of the game shows.

(f) Sharpest is 9 PxQP! KPxP 10 PxP BxN (else 11 P-QN4) 11 PxB B-N5! 12 P-B4 or 12 P-QR4 (Rolf Schwarz, "Nimzo-Indisch," Hamburg, 1965, pp. 135-36), but Spassky has experimented with the textmove before.

(g) Positionally unattractive would be 10 . . . PxP 11 N-2xP.

(h) Another psychological moment. Trading queens makes it difficult for Fischer to display his aggressive style to its best advantage.

(i) Clearly White has won the opening battle. Spassky actually reached this same position in a 1958 tournament against grandmaster Nikolai Krogius, who just happens to be Spassky's match psychologist in Reykjavik, Iceland!

(j) Krogius tried 14 . . . P-QN4 and found himself under king-side pressure after 15 N-B4 B-N2 16 N-N5!, but Fischer's move is too passive to be considered an improvement.

(k) Striving for activity leads nowhere, as Spassky snuffs out Fischer's attempts to seize the initiative at every turn.

(l) Forcing White to defend against 23R-B7ch.

(m) Cracking under the strain of protracted defense, Fischer undertakes something positive and runs into Spassky's negative. Of course, Fischer saw that he must sell his bishop for two pawns, but he probably felt convinced that his remaining passed pawns guaranteed at least a draw.

(n) Naturally there is no reason to refuse the challenge.

(o) Black must activate his king and penetrate to White's pawns for survival.

(p) Bringing the bishop to life.

(q) Not 38 . . . P-QN3? 39 BxP! PxB 40 P-R5 and White wins.

(r) Threatening 40 . . . P-N4.

(s) The last move before time control. Spassky sealed his reply and the game was adjourned until the next day. The consensus of opinion about the likely outcome was that Spassky had whatever winning chances the position held and that Fischer would be very lucky to escape with a draw.

(t) The product of a night's work by a team of Soviet analysts. Probably sufficient to win as well are 42 B-K7 and 42 K-R3.

(u) Now Black can no longer keep the White king away, but the alternative, 47 . . . P-R4, looks even worse.

(v) Giving up the pawn to deflect the enemy king temporarily.

(w) All Spassky has to do to wrap it up is attack Black's QNP with his king and then tempo Black to death with his bishop.