

# Spassky Is Tops—But

6TH ARTICLE

# Fischer Is Just A Little Bit Better

Sunday, August 20, 1972

THE SAN DIEGO UNION

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Time is running out for world chess champion Boris Spassky of Russia. The relentless, remorseless play of Bobby Fischer, the volatile U.S. champion, has been almost perfect and Spassky has not been able to take advantage of the very few mistakes that Fischer has made.

Spassky is playing at the top of his game — but Fischer appears to be just a little bit better — and that's all it takes when two Grandmasters meet.

After last week's two draws, Fischer now leads Spassky 9-6 and needs only 3½ points more to win the match. There are nine games to go and Fischer needs draws in only seven of them. (A win gains a point; a draw, a half point.)

On the other hand, Spassky could win the next three matches and by this time next week could be even. But I feel this is unlikely, considering how the two masters are playing.

On at least one occasion in both games last week Spassky could have made a move that with best play would have defeated Fischer — but he didn't and had to settle for draws in both games.

However, I must also add that in the second game last week Fischer had victory in his grasp before he, too, made a mistake and had to settle for a draw.

Fischer doesn't make that many mistakes, though, and that's what is beating Spassky.

One other point must be mentioned, that of Fischer's constant carping about the conditions of play... Noise in the room, movie cameras, size of the chess board, etc., etc. Every day, a new demand from Fischer.

It has been asked, "How is this affecting Spassky's game?" Very little, I truly believe. Spassky is a veteran

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competition and the only thing that is bothering him is the caliber of Fischer's play.

The 14th match game scheduled for Sunday was called off when Spassky postponed the game for medical reasons. Professional observers who know the strains on the players in such a match were not surprised. The previous 13th game was a long 9½ hour struggle that must have exhausted both players. Although Fischer won this game, Spassky deserves supreme credit for his resourceful play in an apparently lost ending. However, he had fought back and was on the verge of a draw when Fischer pounced on a Spassky inaccuracy, and went on to win the game and became 3 points up in the match.

The 14th game, rescheduled for Tuesday, turned out to be

a missed opportunity for Spassky. Fischer, apparently somewhat over-confident, played an easy-going move at his 20th turn, allowing Spassky a fine initiative. The latter took advantage by winning a pawn shortly afterwards. This should have been sufficient in World Championship play for a win, although Fischer would put up a stout battle. However, a Spassky error, on his 27th move, allowed Fischer to neatly exchange a number of pieces and win back the pawn he had lost earlier. The game went to 40 moves, and in an equal position, both players agreed to a draw.

The 15th match game played Thursday and Friday was another stirring battle with each player giving no quarter in a wide open melee. Fischer sacrificed a pawn after long thought, planning to get a counter-attack for his material loss. However, Spassky consolidated and, with a strong central position, had the better of the play in mid-game maneuvering. By the 26th move, Spassky had an excellent winning chance if he had avoided exchanging rooks. Going after the win of a second pawn lost time for Spassky and exposed his king, which had previously been quite secure. Fischer leapt to the chance of starting

a dangerous attack and, by the 38th move, Fischer had a possibly winning attack. The game was extremely complicated with both players in severe time pressure. Fischer was two pawns down, but had an attack on the exposed white king sufficient to gain the draw by perpetual check. Spassky could not avoid sharing the point with Fischer and a draw was agreed after the adjournment.

A number of readers of these articles have submitted questions concerning this historic chess match. Readers are invited to send in more queries, the most interesting of which will be answered here.

Q. In what way would winning the World Championship affect Bobby Fischer's personality? Dick Haddock, Newport Beach. PHILCO FORD

A. Fisher has received a great deal of unfavorable publicity in the early stages of this match. His personality has not been shown in the most favorable light as he has dedicated himself to the lonely task of winning the

highest chess honor. Our guess is that the securing of the World Championship crown would relax Fischer and enable some of his finer attributes to show more clearly. Of course he still would have psychological quirks that would make his interpersonal relationships unpredictable. Previous World Champions, after securing the title, have noticeably eased up in their life and become "more human." We can only hope that Fischer would follow in similar manner.

**Q. What will happen to Spassky if he loses this match? Karen Harville, Carlsbad.**

**A. Siberia!** Seriously, this has no possibility of occurring. Spassky would still be considered one of Russia's strongest players. No doubt the World Champion would be chided and criticized by his countrymen for a poor performance if he loses. This has happened in the past with Russian sports heroes, but he would be given plenty of opportunity to redeem himself by entering a number of tournaments in the next few years — probably before the three year world championship match cycle renews. Spassky, as the deposed champion, would have the right to participate in these future preliminary matches without going through the long qualifications. There is a fair chance that we may see another Fischer-Spassky match three years hence.

**Q. "Gems are usually formed under heat and pressure." This favorite quote of mine seem to apply to some of the fine games in this great chess match. Which one so far is "the gem of the match" in your opinion?**

Stuart M. Rupp, Ocea-

nographer, Intersea Research Corp., San Diego

**A. There have been a number of gems in this match. The outstanding battle so far, in this writer's opinion, has been the 13th game in which these players produced a 74-move masterpiece that will be published in many future anthologies. At the adjourn-**

**ment, Spassky seemed hopelessly lost. He fought back with a brilliance rarely seen in defensive play. Fischer used every opportunity he had to win the game and finally the pressure gave the victory to Fischer. An outstanding performance by both players.**

14th Match Game		19 QxB	N-QB3
Queen's Gambit Declined		20 B-KB4	Q-B3
White: Bobby Fischer		21 B-QN5	QxP
Black: Boris Spassky		22 BxN	N-B6
		23 Q-N4	QxQ
		24 PxQ	PxB
		25 B-K5	N-N4
		26 R-B1	R-B1
		27 N-Q4	P-B3
		28 BxP	BxN
		29 BxB	NxB
		30 PxN	R-N1
		31 RxP	RxP
		32 K-B1	RxP
		33 R-R6	K-B2
		34 RxPch	K-B3
		35 R-Q7	P-R4
		36 K-K2	P-N4
		37 K-K3	R-K5ch
		38 K-Q3	K-K3
		39 R-KN7	K-B3
		40 R-Q7	K-K3
		Draw Agreed	

15th Match Game		20 B-B2	PxP
Sicilian Defense		21 NxBP	B-KB3
White: Boris Spassky		22 P-KN3	P-KR4
Black: Bobby Fischer		23 P-K5	PxP
		24 PxP	B-KR1
		25 N-B3	R-Q1
		26 RxRch	RxR
		27 N-KN5	BxP
		28 QxP	R-Q2
		29 QxRP	BxN
		30 PxB	Q-N3ch
		31 K-B1	Q-R4
		32 Q-R8ch	K-R2
		33 P-QR4	N-Q6ch
		34 BxN	RxB
		35 K-B2	R-Q4
		36 R-K4	R-Q1
		37 Q-N7	Q-KB4
		38 K-N3	Q-Q4ch
		39 K-R3	Q-Q7
		40 R-QN4	Q-B8ch
		41 R-N2	Q-R8ch
		42 R-R2	Q-B8ch
		43 R-N2	O-R8ch
		Draw Agreed	