

by Jude Acers (US senior master)

SPECIAL: Condensed text of former world champion Mikhail Tal's Moscow lecture on the mechanism of analysis. Super!!

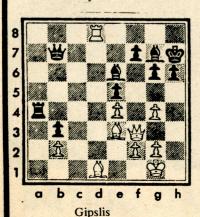
"Is the calculation of a combination a matter of technique of of tactics?

"Every chess player has his personal style. Korchnoi and Polugagaevsky, for instance, most clearly represent the calculators. To them, everything is very exact. No position is known that they would accept as level without debate or demonstration. They confirm or reject a point of view on the basis of a stream of concrete variations.

"On the other hand, there are many players, also of a very high class, who devote comparatively little time in the course of a game to precise calculation of variations.

"For example, once I received a great surprise during the post-mortem of my game with Botvinnik (World Championship, Tal-Bot-

DIAGRAM # 1 Smyslov



vinnik, Moscow, 1960, 9th match game). I had sacrificed my bishop at e6 in the Caro-Kann, the first time this had been done.

"After the game I showed Botvinnik some of the interesting variations I had worked out. He agreed with my analysis, out of courtesy I believe, but went on to remark: Everything you say is correct, but I am guided by other considerations. I just thought it was necessary to exchange rooks while keeping the queens on the board." (!?)

"I was astonished at his taking so general a stance; it seemed to me that such an assessment was too abstract. Later, when I began to reanalyze the game, I was stunned to find that he was absolutely right. If I had managed to trade queens, my pawns would have been much stronger than the enemy knight. With queens still present, however, Botvinnik could always create disagreeable threats against my king.

"Naturally, without both a grasp of general positional principles and the aid of strategy, it is not possible to switch advantageously from one tactical idea to another. In other words, one must not be concerned during a game solely with the calculation of particular variations.

"Yet positional insight by itself is not enough. The most subtle appreciation of a position, the most profound penetration into its secrets, can boomerang on any player if it has not been soundly based upon exact analysis.

chess barbs part two continued from part one

"In the 34th Soviet championship at Tiflis, an interesting fact was noted: after 25-28 moves, former

world champion Smyslov had achieved a positional and strategic advantage in almost all his games. Nearly imperceptibly, however, many of them had become positionally lost only a few moves later. His final score showed only four wins. The reason is that when he reached the point of exploiting the advantage he had built up, he could not avoid tactical continuations.

"For a long time Smyslov has been one of those players who do not like to involve themselves in the calculation of precise variations, and in this tournament it became particularly obvious.

"Incidentally, when playing Smyslov, I have at times found myself in quite dire straits and have lashed out desperately with tactical lines that were objectively unsound but which have helped me more than once to escape defeat.

"Nowadays this weapon is finding a place in the arsenal of many players. Gipslis once found himself in this difficult position against Smyslov in the 1967 USSR championship (DIAGRAM #1) and sacrificed a piece, none too hopefully, with 34 Bh6?!

"All who were following this game saw that Black could hang on to the extra piece by capturing the bishop, 34... Kh6 (not 34... Bh6? 35 Qf6 Bg7 36 Qh4ch Bh6 37 g5, and White wins) 35 Qh3ch Kg5, but that his king would have to tread a very dangerous path.

"I was quite certain that Smyslov would not take the bishop if he could find any other continuation whatsoever, since he is not at home in the evaluation of precise variations.

"And, in fact, he played 34 ... Qe4, giving up all hopes of winning the game. As he rose, he turned to

me and said, 'You would have taken the bishop without hesitation. I, too, know that this wins, but it seems to me that some difficult variations might arise.'

"It is just this lack of relish for precise calculation that explains Smyslov's poor showing in that tournament.

"One further example. During a simultaneous exhibition with clocks I reached this position on one of the boards. (DIAGRAM #2)

"Black's last move, 17 ... Nd5, appears to present White with an opportunity to carry off a winning combination.

"I would have sacrificed a piece now almost without thinking if I had not known that my opponent was a candidate master, but I could not believe that he could have overlooked such a simple thematic move as 18 Nf7.

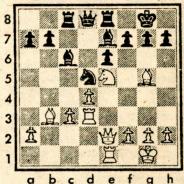
"Exercising the right of the simultaneous player to ponder, I sat down at the table and did not rise again for half an hour, absorbed in the fascinating variations.

"After 18 Nf7 Kf7 19 Qe6ch Kf8, Black's defensive forces are well situated, i.e., 20 Rf3ch Bf6! or 20 Be7ch Re7! 21 Rf3ch Ke8, in both cases with a plus for Black.

"The only winning move is 20 Bc1! and the rest is easy (FOR TAL!—Acers): 20... Bf6 21 Ba3ch Re7 22 Re4 Ke8 23 Be7 Ne7 24 d5! Bb5 25 d6! Bd3 26 d7ch! Black resigned.

"Obviously the essentials of a position can rarely be summed up in general terms. More often the most precise analysis will be called for to reveal its secrets."

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FINAL RESULTS: The second interzonal tournament in Petropolis, Brazil to seed three players into the world championship candidates' series has produced only one clear winner, Henrique Meching, who went through the grueling competition without losing a game. The talentet 20-year-old Brazilian mathematics student scored 12-5. Second through fourth places were shared by Portisch, Polugaevsky and Geller with 11 1/2 points each. A play-off will determine who drops out of the winner's circle.

The also-rans finished in staggered sequence: 5th, Smyslov, 11; 6th, Bronstein, 10 1/2; 7th, Hort, 10; 8th, Savon, 9 1/2; 9th-10th, Ljubojevic and Ivkov, 9; 11th, Reshevsky, 8 1/2; 12th-13th, Panno and Keres, 8; 14th, Gheorghiu, 7 \$!1; 15th, Biyiasas, 6 1/2; 16th-18th, Tan, Kagan and Hug, 3. Details and games next week. . . .