

# CHESS BARBS

by Jude Acers (U.S senior master)

(continued from last week.)

Horowitz made many bets on himself before tournaments and matches. He won his bet about his performance at Milwaukee (I believe he made the bet after he had lost two early games but he lost when betting on how well he would score against Geller in the USA-USSR match). Horowitz made Chess Review the best magazine of all time, with nothing else even close to it. He was a Grandmaster with plenty of 'nerve' (he won the decisive last-round game in the 1935 World Team Tournament), but he didn't have much time for tournaments because he was busy promoting. He made many tours of the country, giving lectures and exhibitions. He was gracious and tactful. His lectures were like seances, and he played for the attack in his games, not hesitating to sacrifice a piece or two for a nebulous King-side attack. He was the best.

Some of the other great players of that time were: Arthur Dake, Herman Steiner, Abraham Kupchik. And someone named Tholfsen played on our team one year.

In the late 40's there was Weaver Adams, Anthony Santasiere, Albert Pinkus, Alexander Kevitz and Arnold Denker, who won the USA Championship in 1944, after playing full-back on his college football team. Does John Wayne know?

Now we come to the players who would dominate USA chess for twenty years. Larry Friedmann of Cleveland, Ohio, won the first two USA Junior Championships in 1945 and 1946, but he quit chess soon after. In 1950, at the Ohio Championship Tournament, he said: "You're interested in chess, and you're interested in chess, but I'm interested in girls." And that's why he had a much happier life than almost anyone else. Al Sandrin won the 1949 USA Open, ahead of George Kramer, Santasiere and Larry Evans. But Al became blind a few years later, even though he keeps playing tmt. chess.

Detroit 1950 was the first 'big' USA Open, and the first one I played in. The prize money attracted

many of the best players and Arthur Bisguier won first prize. Hesse won second prize when the tournament director cheated on the last-round pairings, giving Hesse a 'fish' and pairing all the Masters together. They drew and Hesse won.

The World Team Championship was resumed at Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia in 1950, and you can still buy the tournament book, which contains many great games. Reshevsky and Horowitz were on the USA team, which finished Fourth, and Larry Evans won 90 per cent of his games. This was the event where Reshevsky opened with 1 P-K4!, after a lifetime of 1 P-Q4. Unfortunately, he continued with the RUY LOPEZ, instead of the KING'S GAMBIT, thus setting chess theory back another fifty years.

Larry Evans won the USA Open in 1951 and 1952. In 1951 he achieved the 'impossible' by winning the USA Championship, ahead of Reshevsky, who lost his first game in five Championship tournaments when he grabbed the QNP with his Queen, vs. Ariel Mengarini.

The 'bigger' USA Open was held in Milwaukee in 1953 and I was there. The prize fund was so big that Al Horowitz played. Donald Byrne won by beating Max Pavey in the last round. Pavey had beaten Rossolimo the round before. Curt Brasket was the sensation, beating a raft of Masters and he was later cheated out of representing the US in the World Junior Championships. James Sherwin of New York being sent instead.

'New York Politics' ruled US chess then, just as it does now. In 1972 Milan Vukcevic, 1969 USA Co-Champion, and a player of Grandmaster strength with considerable international experience, was invited to play on the USA team. After making preparations he was told, at the last instant, that he could not play and he was replaced by a patzer, George Kane of New York, who had no experience and made a horrible score.

I lost to Anthony Saidy in the

1954 USA Open in New Orleans, which was won by Larry Evans and Arturo Pomar. 'Bigger' again was the 1955 USA Open in Long Beach and locals were hopeful for yung Larry Remlinger, who justified their confidence by winning a really big tournament 17 years later. I'm not going to repeat the story of how Reshevsky was cheated out of first prize, but the incident made me so disgusted I refused to play in the 1955 Open, where Robert Fischer scored 4 wins and 8 draws.

The best five-minute player I ever saw was 16-year-old William Lombardy, at Long Beach 1955. The only reason Lombardy didn't become World Champion is that he thinks too much. When he doesn't think he is unbeatable.

Pal Benko came to the USA around 1956, after winning the Zonal Tournament in Ireland. Pal was a refugee from the Hungarian rebellion. He lived in Cleveland first, but the petty and jealous players here drove him away. Instead of welcoming a player of his talent and trying to help him, they treated him like an ignorant used-car dealer. But there are many persons of another type in Cleveland. So many, that I won't begin to mention who they are.

When did the USA Team win the Junior World Championship? Lombardy beat Spassky. Eliot Hearst and Charles Kalme were also on that team.

I recall that Walter Shipman beat Reshevsky with the Budapest Defense in a New York tournament.

Then New York chess disintegrated. The Manhattan and Marshall chess clubs stopped being the meeting place of the best players in the world. Robert Byrne went to Indiana, Donald Byrne went to Pennsylvania, Larry Evans went elsewhere, and so on. Whoever was driving force behind the Manhattan Chess Club stopped driving, and new masters came from strange places like California and Chicago.

The 1973 USA Open was won by Norman Weinstein of Massachusetts, and the 1973 USA Champion-

ship ended with CO-Champions Lubomir Kavalek and John Grefe. Kavalek came from Czechoslovakia a few years ago and is one of the ten best players in the world, but who is Grefe? The new names are Ken Rogoff, Kim Commons, Graig Chellstorp, James Tarjan, Andy Soltis, and the immortal Walter Browne, who is from Australia.

You saw these names in the West and East Coast Candidates' tmts., and the Leight-Gambone International tmt., and the Chicago International tmt. How 'good' they are is something to be proven later. I advise you to study their games now, because they are the best in the world.

The USA school of chess has been the best in the world since the time of Morphy. It is a school of individualists who don't play as a 'team' during tournaments, but play to beat each other. It's survival of the fittest, instead of promotion of the mediocre (which is what the Soviet School is). Fischer didn't become World Champion because of what he learned from players of other countries, he became World Champion by beating the great antagonistic defensive player: Larry Evans; the great attacking player: Arthur Bisguier; the positional genius: William Lombardy; the endgame artist: Robert Byrne; the baroque tactician: Donald Byrne; the obstinate Anthony Saidy; the tactical George Kramer, and by having the person I have continually seen credited for being the great teacher of New York players -- John W. Collins.

What I think about American chess is that we can dominate world chess for the next twenty years, if we find some way of organizing many international tournaments in the USA (and if we eliminate the petty, selfish 'New York politics' which corrupt our system).

This will give our young players experience in international style events, which is different from Swiss-type stuff. We need an International Tournament Tour, just like the golf tour -- a tournament every

week, with some satellite tournaments at the same time. You can get a national company to sponsor this tour, because it's the best publicity they can get for the money.

The Louis Statham tournaments in California have been a big help, and I note that the Manhattan Club Champion, Sal Matera, won a match from George Kramer, Marshall Club Champion, 2-1/2 - 1/2, and received \$1,000!

The USA should have a Match Championship, similar to the USSR Gold Cup. What could TV do with eight matches being played at the same time, going from one to the other with demonstration boards and commentators?

We very badly need a USA Team Championship Tournament. Instead, we have a so-called team championship which is nothing but a monument to stupidity and failure.

We need a USCF President who is not a fuddy-duddy, or an incompetent, or a figure-head, which is all I have seen for the past several years. Jerry Spann was the only USCF President who really did anything useful.

Ken Smith has performed an invaluable service by making available almost every chess book that's in print, and he has also reprinted some of the classics from the past. Rook Endings is the most important book in English since Fine's Basic Chess Endings.

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There's Ed Edmondson at last. He thinks big and makes big plans and carries them out. I only wish he could get an intelligent Editor for Chess Life & Review. When you have read Horowitz, B. H. Wood, Pudy and Spackman, you know what a good Editor does. Every article by the gross Editor of CL&R reeks of stupidity, ignorance and arrogance. He completely lacks any understanding of correct grammar. It is excruciatingly painful to read such inane comments as "No kidding. Consult your horoscopes, men." "...usual other goodies". Oh goody, goody, let's play hopscotch.