

WAR OF NERVES

BOBBY BLOWS IT TO BORIS

by Jude Acers
(US senior master)

A fantastic war of nerves moved into the payoff stage this week in Reykjavik, Iceland as two intellectual giants clashed headlong over the board in \$400,000 mind-to-mind mortal combat. Challenger Robert Fischer, incredibly intense and calculating, seems to have tried everything humanly possible to rattle champion Boris Spassky's psyche and to play havoc with his nerves. So far Fischer's primary weapon has been the devastating use of time to delay and confound the whole question of whether or not there would be a world title match at all.

In the beginning, back in 1970, no one really knew if Fischer would actually play for the title that he considered was his all along for the past decade anyway. Much colorful controversy marked all phases of his absolutely phenomenal rise through the candidate series. He refused to participate in the US Championship (among other reasons, because the organizers would not give in to his demand to double the length of the tournament from 11 to 22 rounds), supposedly a mandatory requirement for advancing into the inter-zonal competitions. Yet he was presented with a special berth into the world championship cycle when a highly irregular deal was made to trade places with one of the legitimate qualifiers. Spectacular performance thereafter left no doubt whatsoever in the eyes of the people that Fischer was the most powerful crown prince ever to rush the previously unassailable "Soviet school of chess".

It's just unbelievable what Fischer has accomplished since 1970: registered 3-1 over former world champion Tigran Petrosian (2 wins, 2 draws) in a short but impressive "match" on board two (1) of the exciting USSR vs. the world contest; succeeded in a total blitz of what must be considered the strongest rapid transit tourney ever held, with a margin of victory in front of 2nd-place Mikhail Tal (another former world champion) that amounted to 4½ points (11); finished with a 2-point lead over grandmasters Hort, Gligorich, Smyslov and Korchnoi at the very serious "Tournament of Peace" in Zagreb; ran away from the field with no losses and only 4 draws (15-2) against the likes of Tukmakov (11½), Panno (11), Gheorghiu (10½), Najdorf (10½), Reshevsky (10½), Smyslov (9), Mecking (8½) and many others at Buenos Aires; beat just about everybody in the world candidates' inter-zonal tournament at Mallorca by a score of 18½-4½, some 3½ points ahead of Huebner, Larsen and Geller, 4½ points in front of Uhlmann and Taimanov, not to mention great players like Portisch, Smyslov, Gligorich and Polugaevsky trailing far behind; virtually smashed grandmaster Mark Taimanov 6-0 (11) in quarter-final candidates' match play; absolutely crushed super grandmaster Bent Larsen 6-0 (11) in semi-final competition; thoroughly demolished Tigran Petrosian 6½-2½ (including a 4-0 spurt at the end) in the final match to determine the ultimate chal-

lenger for a world championship contest with titleholder Boris Spassky.

The tremendous excitement generated by these unprecedented exploits was marred only by Spassky's individual victory over Fischer in the 1970 Chess Olympics (although the Brooklyn bomber still managed to chalk up 10 points out of 13 games) and a bitter, one-and-only loss to Larsen at the Mallorca event, which he more than made up for during their subsequent match.

No man on his way to the world's chess crown has ever blazed such a fiery trail of stormy disputes with tournament organizers over improving playing conditions for professional players like Fischer. All the while that he was churning

Beverwijk (1967). Then, in a shattering re-run of world chess ability, Spassky qualified for the candidates' series again, beat Celler 5½-2½ in the quarter-finals, overcame Bent Larsen by the same score in the semi-final match and eliminated Viktor Korchnoi 6½-3½ in the finals contest. The great difference was that this time Spassky harvested the fruits of his immense 6-year labor by conquering Petrosian 12½-10½ in a long, hard world championship bout.

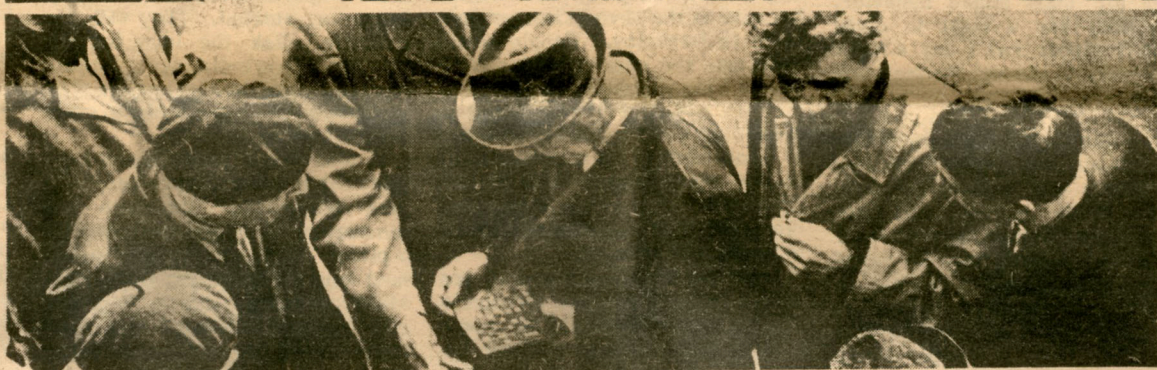
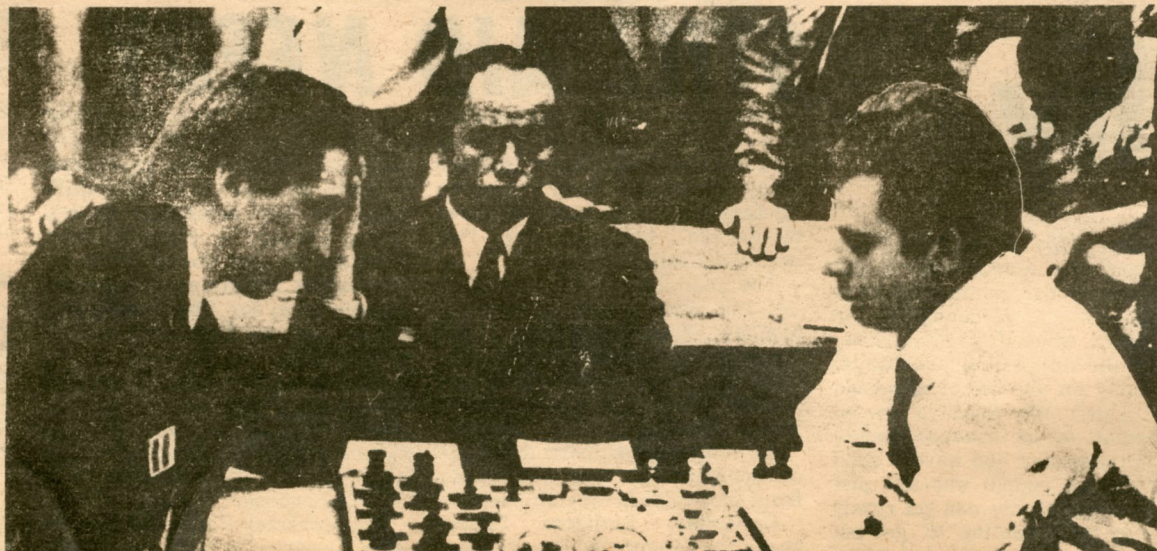
For another thing, Spassky has always come out on top or split the point whenever he and Fischer have met in the past for a career tally of 3 wins and 2 draws. In the current match for the world's chess crown this lifetime record must necessarily confer a certain

tainty and controversy, the long awaited match for the chess championship of the world has begun in earnest...with Fischer showing up late, as usual! Spassky, playing White, opened with 1 d4, tacitly inviting Fischer to repeat the moves of the Gruenfeld Defense (1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5) that led to his defeat in Siegen 1970. But Fischer surprised everybody with 1...Nf6 2 c4 e6, a sharp departure from his regular opening variations. With 3 Nf3 Spassky offered to transpose into a Queen's Indian Defense (3...b6 and the fianchetto of the white squared bishop) and got 3...d5 4 Nc3 Bb4, the Nimzo-Indian, in reply. The classical main line variation was reached by the 8th move, 5 e3 0-0 6 Bd3 c5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 a3, when

made it clear that he would never get out alive. So Fischer could get only two pawns for the piece, 32...Ke7 33 Kg2 hg 34 fg Bg3 35 Kg3, to enter an endgame in which Spassky had all the winning chances, whereas Fischer would be lucky to salvage a draw: 35...Kd6 36 a4! Kd5 37 Ba3! Ke4 38 Bc5 a6 (if 38...b6?, then 39 Bb6! ab 40 a5! wins in a walk) 39 b6 f5 (threatening 40...h5) 40 Kh4 f4. At this point the time control was met (40 moves in 2½ hours) and the game was adjourned after Spassky sealed his next move, which has to be 41 ef, with the forced answer 41...Kf4. Both sides spent all night and most of the following day analyzing the position in depth before resumption of play. For example, should Spassky ever push a4-a5, then Fischer squeezes out a draw by racing for b8 with his king. But the win is certain in the long run after 42 Kh3! (Acers). Fischer searched frantically for some way to save the game without success, and Spassky forced his resignation on move 56: 41 ef Kf4 42 Kh5 Kf5 43 Be3 Ke4 44 Bf2 Kf5 45 Bh4 e5 46 Bg5 e4 47 Be3 Kf6 48 Kg4 Ke5 49 Kg5 Kd5 50 Kf5 a5 51 Bf2 g5 52 Kg5 Kc4 53 Kf5 Kb4 54 Ke4 Ka4 55 Kd5 Kb5 56 Kd6 resigns. Detailed annotations to all the games of this historic match, including full translations from Soviet chess sources to give different viewpoints, will appear right here in the Berkeley BARB for fullest coverage of the greatest chess event of all time!!!

BERKELEY CHESS TOURNAMENT: The chess championship of Central California takes place this weekend, July 15-16, at the Student Union Bldg., 4th floor, beginning at 10:45 a.m. (sharp!), Saturday. There are two divisions: Amateur (\$5 entry fee) and Open (\$15 entry), organized as a four round Swiss with a time control of 40 moves in 2 hours for all rounds. First prize in the Open Division is \$150 plus the title of Chess Champion of Central California; 1st Expert makes \$125; 1st A or below receives \$100 and 2nd A earns \$75. The Amateur Division prize fund has \$100 earmarked for the best B, with \$25 for second best B. Identical money goes to class C. There is even a \$50 D/E prize and an extra \$50 for the best unrated player of the tournament, so weakies take note! The whole affair will be USCF rated and Calpoints will be awarded to those eligible. Bring sets and clocks. Call Martin E. Morrison, Tournament Director, 582-1973, for any questions you may have about how YOU can participate in your home-town Berkeley tournament.

WHERE TO PLAY CHESS: Berkeley YMCA, Fri., 7:30 p.m. ... Hardcastle Coffee Shop, 2516 Telegraph, all hours... In Oakland: "The Loft", 5422 College, all hours... East Asia Book & Game Center, 5897 College, 6 p.m. to midnight... S.F. Mechanics' Institute Chess Room, 57 Post, 4th floor, all hours.



out wins in one competition after another Fischer argued incessantly for better lighting, bigger money prizes, fairer pairings, modified playing schedules, no press reporting during games, proper temperature in the playing hall, complete isolation from spectators, etc., etc.

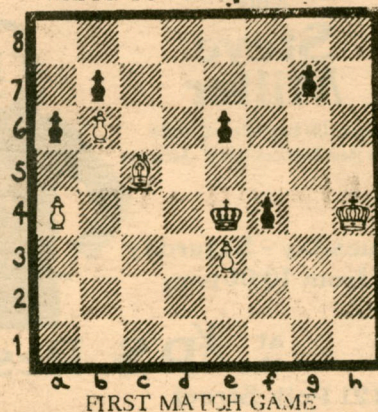
Does Spassky have anything that could possibly top Fischer's astonishing record? Yes! For one thing, he made World Champion the hard way: in 1964 Spassky took 1st in the Soviet zonal tournament and then went on to win the inter-zonal event in Amsterdam. Next, even though he had never before played match chess, Spassky soundly defeated Paul Keres 6-4 in the quarter-finals, downed Yefim Geller 5½-2½ in the semi-final encounter and knocked out Mikhail Tal 6½-3½ in the finals only to lose the match for the world title against champion Tigran Petrosian (11½-12½) in 1966. During this erratic period Spassky won international tournaments at Hastings (1965-66), Santa Monica (1966) and

psychological advantage on Spassky even when Fischer supporters insist that these results were gained from a younger, less potent player than he is today.

In contrast to Fischer, one of Spassky's major assets has been a well-balanced, gentlemanly personality that has shone through to make him an extremely popular world champion, win or lose. It is this imperturbable mental calm of Spassky's that Fischer appeared to be attacking with his emotional, tension-filled delays and displays during the pre-match negotiations. That certainly was the effect, at least, if not the intent, of Fischer's unpredictable behavior, since shortly after snapping at reporters attempting to interview him Spassky showed signs of cracking under the strain. Frequent trips to the gray, three-story Soviet embassy in Iceland by Spassky and Geller (his second) produced an official demand that Fischer be punished for arriving late for the match in violation of the rules and that he apologize publicly for his insulting conduct. Moscow was apparently so worried about Fischer's success of seizing the psychological initiative over Spassky before such an all-important test of Soviet chess hegemony that the Soviet news agency TASS actually resorted to accusing Fischer and his backers with working out an arrangement with a computer center to transmit each move of the match and have the computer calculate a counter-move in order to win Spassky's title, believe it or not! When, at last, Fischer did deliver a hand-written note of apology to Spassky (during the wee hours of the morning), it contained more self-justification and chess match propaganda than apology. So, after two weeks of uncer-

instead of the standard 8...Bc3, Fischer tried the less popular 8...Ba5 with the idea of preserving the bishop from exchange against a knight. A liquidation of center pawns, 9 Ne2 (best) dc 10 Bc4 Bb6 ll dc, cleared the way for an early trade of queens, 11...Qd1 12 Rdl Bc5, that left Spassky with a slight pull for the ensuing middlegame: 13 b4 Be7 14 Bb2. More exchanges kept the situation pretty much the same for the next dozen moves or so, 14...Bd7 15 Racl (not 15 Bf6 Bf6 16 Rd7 Bal) Rfd8 16 Ned4 Nd4 17 Nd4 Ba4 18 Bb3 Bb3 19 Nb3 Rdch 20 Rdl Rc8 21 Kf1 Kf8 22 Ke2 Ne4 23 Rcl Rcl 24 Bcl f6 25 Na5! Nd6 26 Kd3! Bd8 27 Nc4 Bc7 28 Nd6 Bb6 29 b5. Now Fischer may have fell victim to his consistent philosophy of striving to press every game to win, or he may have lost patience with himself under the pressure of protracted defense and decided to undertake some positive action, or he may simply have miscalculated the key variation. Whatever the reason, he elected to snap off the wing pawn, 29...Bh2? Naturally, 30 g3 trapped the bishop and 30...h5 31 Ke2 h4. 32 Kf3

WHITE TO PLAY, AND WIN



SPASSKY AND HIS SECONDS



PONDERING