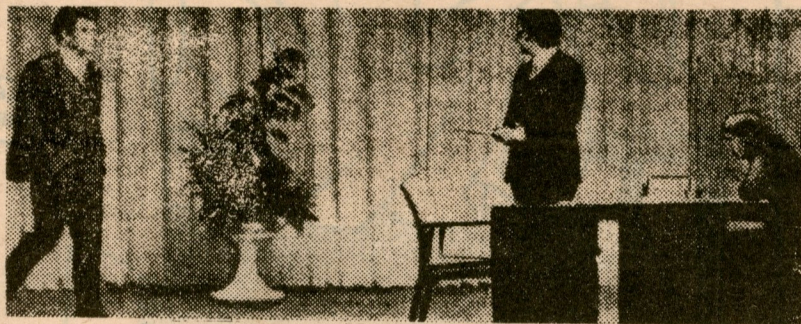


# Spassky Dangerous

by Jude Acers  
(US Sr. Master)

Last year Larry Evans reviewed a game in which Fischer won a pawn against Taimanov and played the endgame badly to allow a dead draw for Taimanov, which Taimanov kindly refused to take, losing the game a second time! Unimpressed, Evans said, "There will be no second chance against Spassky." I did not really understand the true meaning of Evans until looking at this game. Fischer won the next day and observers count his two-point lead near decisive. Actually, Fischer is not playing his very best in even or absolutely won positions, as here. He needs that two-point lead terribly in my opinion, because Spassky is getting stronger, more confident. I now favor Fischer to win by one game. Again, unless Spassky collapses completely, Fischer has many difficult games remaining. I am enjoying the games immensely as I travel about the US on tour. I am sorry to hear that Najdorf and many others in Iceland have left, disinterested, sure that Spassky is already entombed. Spassky is very dangerous, and, like Fischer, one of the truly great players of all time. I would rank them both in the top half dozen players ever to live. The others are Botvinnik, Alekhine, Capablanca and Keres. All were full-time professionals at one time or another.



Spassky-- Plant-- Referee Lothar Schmidt-- Fisher

f4 Qb6(E) 8 Qd2 Qb2(F) 9 Nb31 (G) Qa3(H) 10 Bd3(I) Be7(J) 11 0-0 h6 (K) 12 Bh4?!(L) Ne4 13 Ne4 Bh4 14 f5!(M) ef 15 Bb5chl (N) abl(O) 16 Nd6ch Kf8 (P) 17 Nc8 Nc6!(Q) 18 Nd6?!(R) Rd8 (S) 19 Nb5(T) Qe7!(U) 20 Qf4 g6 21 a4(V) Bg5(W) 22 Qc4 Be3ch 23 g3(Y) g5 25 Rael Qb4(Z) 26 Qb4 Nb4 27 Re2 Kg7(AA) 28 Na5!(BB) b6 30 Ncd6 Bc5 31 Nb7 Rc8 32 c4!(CC) Ne3 33 Rf3 Nc4 34 gf g4 35 Rd3(DD) h5 36 h3(EE) Na5(FF) 37 N7d6 Bd6(GG) 38 Nd6 Rclch 39 Kg2 Nc4 40 Ne8chl (HH) Kg6(II) 41 h4!(JJ) f6(KK) 42 Re6!(LL) Rc2ch(MM) 43 Kgl (NN) Kf5(OO) 44 Ng7ch Kf4 45 Rd4ch Kg3(PP) 46 Nf5ch Kf3(QQ) 47 R6e4!(RR) Rclch 48 Kh2 Rc2ch 49 Kgl Drawn(SS).

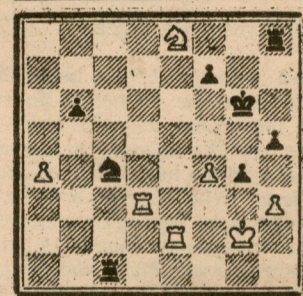
(Annotations by IGM Svetozar Gligorich in the Icelandic chess magazine "Skak" with supplemental notes by Jude Acers)

(A) Spassky has not tried this against Fischer since 1960! Fischer switched unexpectedly to closed systems in the 6th game. Spassky does the opposite now. In fact, the "e" pawn was Spassky's favorite weapon in his match against Petrosian in 1969. (B) Accepts the challenge to play his favorite defense. (C) Najdorf's line, in which Fischer is the greatest expert. (D) One of the sharpest lines. (E) More ambitious than 7...Be7. Now the game takes the most interesting course. (F) The "poisoned pawn" variation, Fischer's best weapon. His last win was against Parma at Rovinj, 1970. (G) 9 Rbl Aa3 has been played many times, but the move in the game very seldom. The threat is to capture black's queen with 10 a3 and 11 Ra2. (H) Brings the queen into safety. (I) For the sacrificed pawn, White has compensation in better development. The alternative was 10 Bf6 gf 11 Bd3, but White prefers to keep more pieces on the

board for the attack rather than to weaken Black's pawn structure on the king side. (J) Why did Black play immediately 9...Qa3? After 9...Nc6 10 Bd3 (not immediately 10 a3 Na5!) he would be obliged to play 10...Qa3 but would have a different position than the one reached now. Black with the move in the game has secured the king side better. (K) Forcing White to give his strong bishop away in less favorable circumstances (no weakening of Black's pawn structure). But at the same time the pair of bishops could cost Black another loss of time. Is White able to open the position favorably and launch a dangerous attack? ACERS NOTE: Yes. The whole variation Fischer is playing is old book and appears to lose by force. As Spassky is not playing well, Fischer tries to exploit this with sharp, even dubious variations. He again survives! It's hard to believe. (L) Does not comply with the opponent's wishes. After 12 Bf6 Bf6 13 e5 de 14 Ne4 it is not clear whether White has a sufficient attack. Therefore, White offers another pawn, hoping to get more thanks to the temporarily displaced Black KB. (M) White has no time to count the material in order to open files and try to penetrate with his pieces. (N) The only move. On 15 Qf4 Be7 or 15 Qc3 0-0 White has nothing. By offering the piece White keeps the black king in the center and thus may continue with the attack. (O) The other choice, 15...Ke7, was unpleasant to Black. (P) In case of 16...Ke7 17 Nb5 Qa6 18 Qb4ch, and Black has no good escape. (Q) Black played fast in spite of a very complicated position. Is it all sound? White has his piece back and the unsafe position of the Black king looks almost worth more than the two pawns. (R) 18 Qd7! looked very attractive, but with 18...g6! Black may live. Black's position is more stable than it appears. 18 Rf5 Rc8 19 Qd7 is less clear. (S) Time: 1:58--1:00. (T) White did not find a win in the attack and tries to recapture the material for the endgame. (U) Black wants more than 19...Rd2 20 Na3 Rd5 21 Nc4

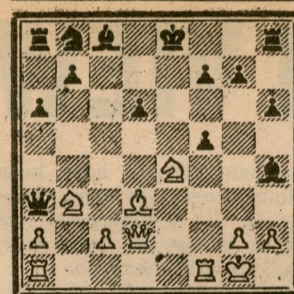
g6 22 Rad1 Rd1 23 Rd1 Ke7 24 Nc5, with counterplay for White in the endgame. (V) The attack is over and Black has the material and positional advantage, as White's knights are slightly displaced. (W) 21...Kg7 looks natural also, making it more difficult to get the White rook to the "c" file. (X) The activity of White's pieces is very limited now. (Y) Trying desperately to open files and activate pieces. ACERS NOTE: In a clearly lost position, Spassky now begins a fantastic plan and totally outplays Fischer in the ending. I, for one, cannot understand how Fischer could be playing below best strength and winning by two games (three, if the forfeit is not counted) in this match. Is it because Fischer is so strong or because Spassky is playing some games terribly? The answer is, of course, both. (Z) Looking for a superior endgame. 25...Rd4?? was wrong because of 26 N5d4 Qe5ch 27 Rf3. (Time: 1:57--1:20) ACERS NOTE: Fischer is playing far too fast and tries to blitz Spassky in the endgame. The way to exploit a time advantage is to use it! (AA) 27...Nc6! would deprive White of any center continuation. ACERS NOTE: Simple, huh? But the highest rated player of all time missed it, because he was playing too fast! (BB) The only chance. ACERS NOTE: It's hard to believe Fischer allowed this. Spassky's pieces are everywhere in the endgame and draw. If only Spassky can avoid blunders, this match could still be unbelievably exciting in the stretch. And Fischer would, of course, be forced to play much better as well. (CC) A crucial attempt to break the chain of black pawns. (DD)

would just like to mention that Botvinnik, Capablanca or Lasker would not have allowed White to breathe in the lost endgame Spassky saved here. A small point, perhaps totally meaningless in forecasting future games, however. For that matter, Julio Kaplan (Puerto Rico) and William



Position after 40...Kg6 (Spassky spent 40 min. on his next move and found the best and only one to save the game).

Addison (San Francisco), two ferocious endgame specialists, would have carted White off in a small box. As Fischer says, he is by no means perfect! (EE) Fighting for more air on the king side. (FF) Forcing the unpleasant white knight to make a decision. ACERS NOTE: Fischer's move looks pathetic, but why don't you try to find a better way to dislodge white's four-piece assault on the two center files? 36 ...Kg6 is the other try. (GG) In order to free the file for the rook, but White gains a tempo to approach his knight to the king side. (HH) A surprise! Black played rather rapidly during the whole endgame and White has obtained more counterplay than he had after the exchange of queens. (II) Time: 3:10 -- 2:02. The game was adjourned and White sealed his 41st move. White was left with only 20 minutes for the next 15 moves!



Position after 14...ef

Trying to get on the seventh row, having both central files. ACERS NOTE: All of Spassky's pieces are active. The escape is complete, as the practical problems of converting Black's pawn plus are far too great. "I never study endgames, just openings. Most endgames are easy to figure out anyway," Robert J. Fischer was quoted as saying in 1964. Although I believe Fischer is the strongest player in the world today and will win this match. I

(JJ) Forty minutes were not spent in vain! After the obvious 41 Rd5? f6 42 h4 Rc3! (42 Rc2 is not bad, either) Black would win because the white rook left the third row too early (Black's threat is Ne3chl). (KK) After 41...Kf5 42 Ng7ch Black would have to repeat moves (42...Kf4?? 43 Rd4matel). 41...Rf8 was an interesting possibility. (LL) Everything well timed now. (MM) 42...Kf5 43 Ng7ch offers nothing. (NN) Not 43 Kg3 Rf8 44 Rd5 Rc3chl, getting the rook on the 6th row without spending a move. (OO) In case of 43...Rf8 44 Rd5 White has excellent counterplay (on 44...Kf7 45 f5 Re8 46 Rd7ch with a draw), but with 43...Re8! 44 Re8 Nd2! Black keeps chances for a win (threat: Nf3). (PP) The last try. 45

...Kf3 46 Rd3ch is a draw. (QQ) Hoping for 47 Rd3ch Kf4, attacking the knight and gaining a tempo. Not 46...Kh3?? 47 Rd3ch with mate to follow. (RR) All these moves were made in two minutes by White. (SS) Black has nothing else: 48...g3ch 49 Ng3 leads nowhere.



GAME NO. 7

White: Boris Spassky. Black: Robert Fischer. World Championship, Match Game No. 7. Reykjavik, Iceland, July 25-26, 1972. Sicilian Defense 1 e4(A) c5(B) 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cd 4 Nd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 a6(C) 6 Bg5!(D) e6 7