

FISCHER DOES IT AGAIN

The fifth match game for the world's chess title, with personal comments and annotations by former world champion Mikhail Tal, translated, from "64," No. 30, 28 July-3 Aug. 1972, pp. 8-9.

The second week of the world championship match went very badly for Spassky. I find it quite hard to determine the reasons for his setback. There is every justification to assume that the challenger's escapades affected Spassky's nerves. I am absolutely convinced that Boris did not want to take another point without play, as happened in the second game, even though he did not have the right to dispute the chief arbiter's decision.

It is also possible that the champion's state of mind was influenced by the discovery of a win somewhere in the post-mortem analysis of the fourth game. Whatever the cause, Spassky's conduct of the fifth and sixth games was most uncertain. As his long-time friend, I simply had no desire to annotate such games as these. However, the history of these marathon competitions has shown that such a match cannot be played at the same high level of strength throughout. Along with his moments of triumph every chess player, whether he be world champion or challenger for that rank, must expect some reverses.

White: Boris Spassky. Black: Robert Fischer.
World Championship, Match Game No. 5.
Reykjavik, July 20, 1972.
Nimzo-Indian Defense.

1 P-Q4	N-KB3	15 O-O	O-O
2 P-QB4	P-K3	16 P-QR4(g)	P-QR4
3 N-QB3	B-N5	17 R-N1(h)	B-Q2
4 N-B3	P-B4	18 R-N2	R-N1
5 P-K3	N-B3	19 R-KB2	Q-K2
6 B-Q3	BxNch(a)	20 B-B2	P-KN4(i)
7 PxB	P-Q3	21 B-Q2	Q-K1

8 P-K4(b)	P-K4	22 B-K1	Q-N3
9 P-Q5	N-K2	23 Q-Q3	N-R4(j)
10 N-R4	P-KR3	24 RxRch	RxR
11 P-B4(c)	N-N3(d)	25 RxRch	KxR
12 NxN	PxN	26 BQ1(k)	N-B5
13 PxP(e)	PxP	27 Q-B2(l)	BxP
14 B-K3(f)	P-N3	28 Resigns(m)	

(a) The Nimzo-Indian is a rare choice for Fischer, but he has never played this variation of it before this game. Black plans to keep the position closed in order to limit the range of White's two bishops. Nimzovitch himself used to treat similar positions in his own opening the same way. In recent tournaments this system has been employed by Korchnoi and Huebner.

(b) Selection of a plan here is largely a matter of taste. Botvinnik, for example, prefers to hold back the KP, so that after Black's P-K4 he can use the square K4 for his pieces.

(c) Superficially, very active, but as Fischer's next move demonstrates, probably not the strongest continuation. It seems to me that both 11 P-B3 and 11 P-N3 are at any rate no worse.

(d) A quick glance at the position is sufficient to prove that winning material by 11 . . . PxP 12 BxP P-KN4 could lead to disastrous consequences for Black after 13 PK5. Fischer promotes the exchange of the last enemy minor piece that could disturb the closed character of the position. As far as the doubled pawns are concerned, in the first place Black's king security will not be compromised in the least after castling and, in the second place, White's own doubled pawns are no better than Black's.

(e) In my opinion, White should not have clarified the position in the center so fast. After all, if Black swaps pawns, then White's bishops will make some headway, so there was no cause for fearing 13 . . . PxP. My choice would have been 13 O-O O-O 14 P-KR3.

(f) Black probably stands better after this move. Spassky fails to find any sort of effective plan and allows Black to set up an ideal arrangement of force without hindrance. I believe with Polugaevsky that White can fight for

the initiative only by 14 O-O O-O and 15 P-QR4. Then Black must either permit the pawn to advance to R5 or, after 15 . . . P-QR4 16 R-QN1, make it considerably easier for White to coordinate his pieces because of the possibility of deploying the queen to KN3.

(g) Plays into enemy hands. In the given situation Fischer's virtually forced reply is just a strong move. The weakness on Black's QN3 cannot be exploited, while both now and later White will be tied down to the defense of his QRP.

(h) Really played without a plan. It must be obvious that Black can easily cover his QNP. Perhaps this was the time to think about transferring the white-squared bishop over to KB3 in order to prevent Black from occupying KR4 with his knight.

(i) The American grandmaster gradually strengthens his position. A situation to Fischer's liking has arisen: his opponent must await developments.

(j) There is no other way to augment the pressure. Black retains a tangible positional advantage after the rooks have been liquidated, but, apparently, it should not yet have been enough for any real progress.

(k) One gains the impression that Spassky has lost contact with the train of events in this game. Simply 26 P-N3 would maintain a fully acceptable defense in my opinion. By allowing the hostile knight to reach KB5 White risks losing to direct threats.

(l) Such oversights occur extremely rarely in the world champion's play. Personally, I can recall only one instance, which happened during the third round of the "Match of the Century" against Larsen. Even so, White's game has become quite serious. On 27 Q-N1 (best) Black bring his king to QB2, depriving his opponent of further counterplay, and then either pushes his king-side pawns or tries to plant his knight on its best blockading square, Q3. Driving the horse from White KB4 by P-N3 does not work out well in this case, since the knight can re-locate comfortably at White's KR3. Of course, we can only speculate as to whether or not the world champion could save this position. Now, however, the game comes to an abrupt end.

(m) After 28 QxB QxP defeat is certain.

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Chess