

Anatoly Karpov: The Dragon Slayer

By ALAN BENSON

At the Trade Union Hall in the former Noblemen's club near Red Square in Moscow, Anatoly Karpov decisively defeated Viktor Korchnoi in the second game of their World Championship Candidates Match.

After 6 games the score stands at 4-2 (including four draws) in favor of Karpov. The winner of the 24-game match (or the first to win 5 games) will be the challenger for the World Chess Champion Bobby Fischer in 1975, although the issue is in doubt at the present as Fischer has resigned his FIDE title effective when his proposals were voted down by the recent FIDE congress at the Chess Olympics in Nice.

White: Anatoly Karpov Black: Victor Korchnoi

Match Game No. 2. Sicilian Defense,

Dragon Variation.

1. P-K4 — P-QB4
2. N-KB3 — P-Q3
3. P-Q4 — PxP
4. NxP — N-KB3
5. N-QB3 — P-KN3

This move constitutes the Dragon Variation, so named because the black pawn formation resembles the silhouette of a dragon.

6. B-K3 — B-N2
7. P-B3 — N-B3
8. Q-Q2 — O-O
9. B-QB4 — B-Q2
10. P-KR4 — R-B1
11. B-N3 — N-K4
12. O-O-O — N-B5
13. BxN — RxB
14. P-R5 — NxRP
15. P-KN4 — N-B3

The strategy for both sides is clear. White has sacrificed the KRP in order to attack along the open file. Black's resources lie in the counterattack on the queenside. In the game Yefim Geller vs. Viktor Korchnoi, Candidates match 1971, Moscow, Geller played here 16. B-R6. This variation was examined in detail in the article "Possibly... R-B1 is still playable?", by Utyatzky and Berkin in Shakhmatny Bulletin 1970:9. After 16... NxKP! 17. Q-K3 (Geller was a point down in the match so he didn't play the drawish 17. Q-R2, RxN/5 18. BxB, RxR ch 19. NxR, KxB 20. Q-R6ch, K-B3 21. Q-B4ch with perpetual) 17... RxN/6 18. PxR N-B3 19. BxB, KxB

20. R-R2! This move was not considered in the above mentioned article. Korchnoi now set a world record for time taken on a single move in the Candidates Matches by considering his response for 103 minutes! After 20... Q-R4 (20... R-N1 21. N-K2, K-R1 22. N-N3, R-N2 23. QxRP, B-B3 was played in the game Jansa-Osnos, 1971, with black on top.) 21. N-N3, QxRP 22. QxKP. Geller won the game (lost the match 5½-2½ however) after a gross blunder on the 37th move by Korchnoi.

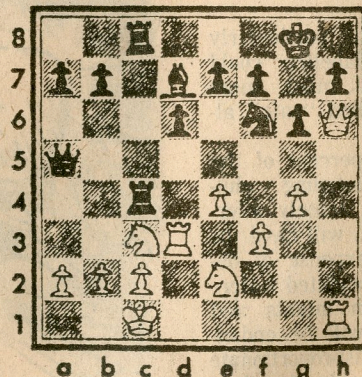
16. N/4-K2 — Q-R4

International Master Jim Tarjan of Berkeley has played here 16... R-K1 17. P-K5, NxP 18. PxN, BxNP as in Martin-Tarjan, 1974, and Ostojic-Tarjan, 1974, went 17. B-R6, B-R1 18. P-K5, NxP 19. PxP, NxB 20. QxN, B-N2 21. QxPch, K-B1 with black better.

17. B-R6 — BxB

18. QxB — KR-B1

19. R-Q3



Both players have played rapidly up to this point. In the article "Dragon under Fire," by Chamuk, in Shakhmatny Bulletin 1972:10, consideration is given only to the move 19. R-Q5 which according to the author leads to an advantage. Two questions arise—Why did Karpov not play this move and what did Korchnoi plan to play against it? In a critical variation after 19. R-Q5 R/1-B4 20. K-N1, Q-Q1 21. P-K5, PxP 22. R-Q2, Q-K1 23. P-N5, N-R4 24. N-N3, Chamuk now considers only two replies 24... R-B2 and 24... R-B3 in both cases his analysis leads to an advantage for white. He overlooks a third possibility, 24... R-Q5! for example 25. RxR, PxR 26. N/3-K4, R-N4 27. NxN, PxN 28. N-N3 (1f 28. RxP, B-B4 holds) Q-KB1 29. QxP, Q-N2 30. P-KB4, P-Q6! Another possibility is 25. NxN, PxN 26.

P-N6, RPxP 27. N-K4, RxR 28. N-N5, P-K3 defending against the mate. Or 25. R-2-R2, Q-KB1 26. NxN, QxQ 27. N-B6ch, PxN 28. RxQ, P-B4! (Much better than 28... PxP 29. RxP, P-B4 30. R-K7 threatening to double rooks on the 7th rank. Or 29... K-B1 30. N-K4 with play) 29. RxP, K-B1 with excellent end-game prospects.

So both Karpov and Korchnoi knew about this error. Karpov's new move is well planned supporting the Non Q-B3 against the possible RXN by black. Korchnoi spent 36 minutes on his reply.

19. R/5-B4

20. P-N5!!

Korchnoi's last move was designed to prevent this advance. Karpov has seen much further into the position however.

20. RxP

No choice, the sacrifice of the second pawn must be accepted as after 20... N-R4 21. N-B4, RxP 22. R-Q5! wins.

21. R-Q5! — RxR

22. NxR — R-K1

The alternative 22... Q-Q1 23. NxNch, PxN 24. N-B4, B-K3 (If instead 24... B-B3 to cover also the square Q5 from the white knight then 25. N-R5!, PxN 26. R-N1ch and mates) 25. QxRPch, K-B1 26. NxBch, PxN 27. Q-R8ch, K-K2 28. R-R7 mate.

23. N/2-B4 — B-B3

Resistance can be prolonged with 23... B-K3 24. NxB, PxN 25. NxNch, PxN 26. QxRPch, K-B1 27. QxQNP, Q-N4ch (Old Russian proverb: There are many checks but only one mate) 28. K-N1, R-K2 29. Q-N8ch, R-K1 30. QxPch (Not 30. R-R8ch, K-N2 31. QxR, Q-N8 mate!) 30... K-B2 31. R-R7ch, K-N1 32. Q-R2 covering the square KN1 and proceeding to victory.

24. P-K5!

Strike three and you're out! The third pawn sacrifice, leading to a well deserved win.

24. BxN

Accepting the pawn with 24... PxP leads to mate after 25. NxNch, PxN 26. N-R5!, PxN 27. R-N1ch.

25. PxN — PxP

26. QxRPch — K-B1

27. Q-R8ch — Resigns

After 27... K-K2 28. NxBch, QxN 29. R-K1ch wins the rook. Naturally 29... Q-K3 or K4 is hopeless. The Dragon breathes fire no more!