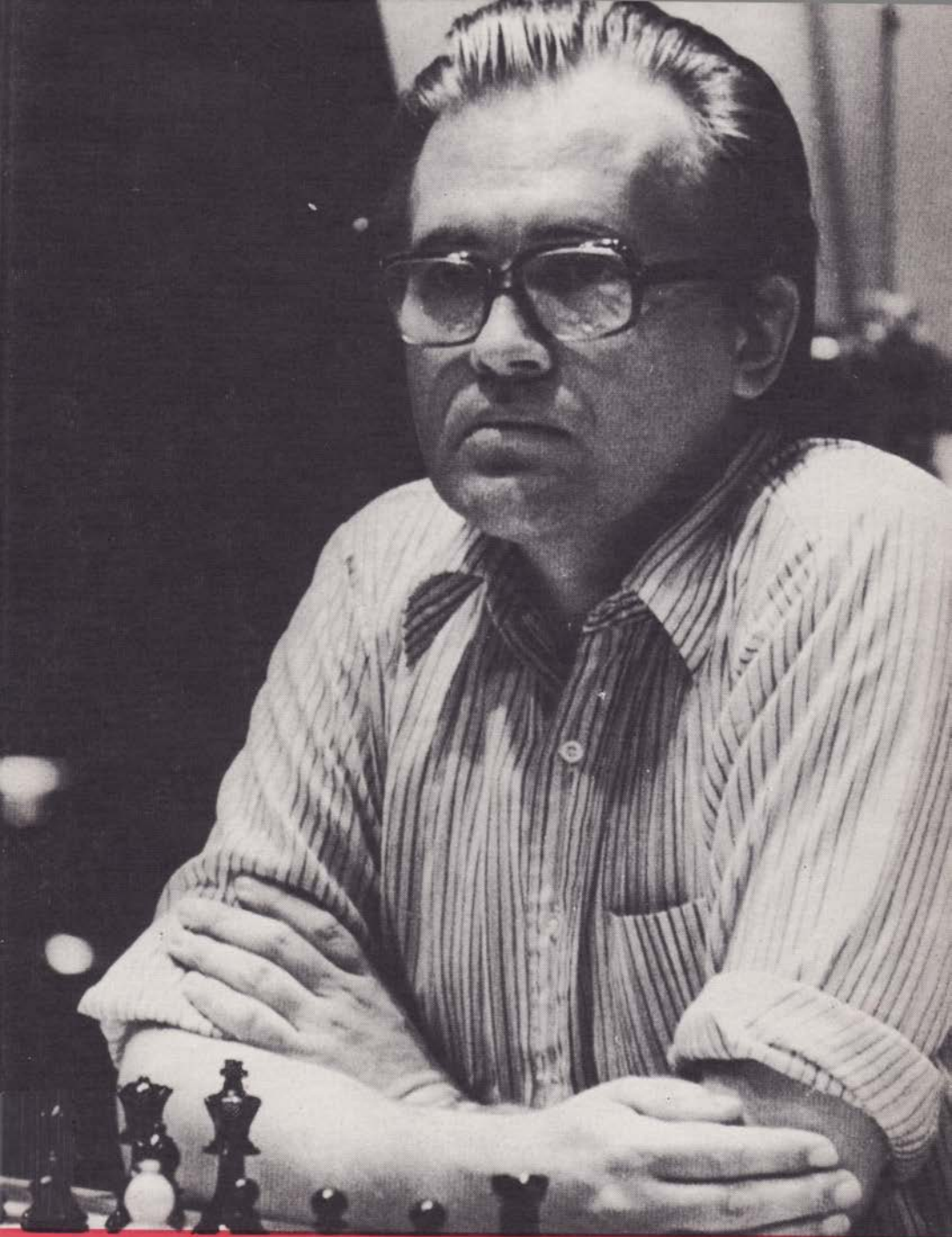




Eric Brondum

Bent Larsen – the Fighter

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»Chess is a beautiful mistress to whom we keep coming back, no matter how many times she rejects us«.

Bent Larsen

Eric Brondum

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CONTENTS

Foreword	7
Code System	9
Biographical Informations	11
The Unexpected Move	13
1956-64 Just an Ordinary Grandmaster	19
1964-67 On Everyone's Lips	31
1967-70 The World's Best Tournament Player	47
1970-77 A Real Professional	81
Find the Winning Combination!	163
Solutions	165
Larsen's Winning Record	167
Index of Openings	169
Index of Opponents	171

FOREWORD

One of the most dynamic and interesting players of the last twenty years is BENT LARSEN. It is therefore strange that no one has capitalized on this, but perhaps the reason is the relatively simple one that the best book on Larsen has already been written, and that by the very best, namely Bent Larsen himself! (BENT LARSEN »My 50 SELECTED GAMES« 1948-69)

The purpose of this book is therefore mainly to try to portray Larsen from another point of view, but also to bring the games of collection up to date. You will find that most of the games are from the period 1966-77.

I have desisted from choosing such a title as »Larsen's Best Games«, partly because it is a subjective assessment likely to be in contradiction with the master's own opinion of what he believes to be his best games! and partly because many of the so-called »Best Games« may not yet have been played!

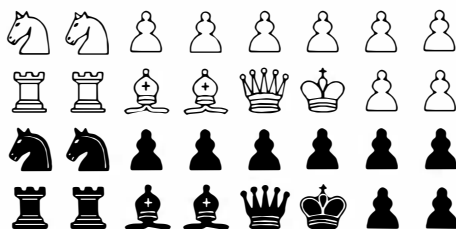
I want to thank Bent Larsen for good advice and Stellan Persson, the owner of the CHESS HOUSE, for suggesting to me I write this book. I also want to thank Christian Nilsson for reading the proofs and last but not least, I want to thank my wife, Birgit for her endless patience during the writing of this book.

Finally, I hope the book will give you as much pleasure as it has given me compiling it.

Eric Brøndum
Copenhagen, 1978

CODE SYSTEM

±	White stands slightly better
∓	Black stands slightly better
±	White has the upper hand
∓	Black has the upper hand
+ -	White has a decisive advantage
- +	Black has a decisive advantage
=	The game is even
†	Check
††	Mate
!	A good move
!!	An excellent move
?	A mistake
??	A blunder
!?	A move deserving attention
?!	A dubious move



No	A novelty
K	King
Q	Queen
R	Rook
B	Bishop
N	Knight

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Bent Larsen was born March 4th, 1935 in Tilsted, situated in north-western Jutland. In 1942, his family moved to another town, Holstebro, and here he learnt how to play chess. He claims he showed no special talent at an early stage, such as e.g. Capablanca, Reshevsky or Pomar. In 1950 he was undoubtedly the strongest player in that part of the country, and now things moved fast. At nineteen, he won the Danish championship for the first time, (and did so again in 1955, 1956, 1959, 1963 and 1964). Later the same year (1954) Larsen played the top board in the Danish team at the Amsterdam Olympiad, and scoring $13\frac{1}{2}$ out of $19 = 71$ per cent, he made an IM norm, confirmed at the FIDE congress the following year. 1955 was also the year when Larsen won the Scandinavian ch. tieing for first place with Olafsson later defeating him in a little play off ($4\frac{1}{2}-3\frac{1}{2}$)

In 1956, at the Olympiad in Moscow, Denmark went to the Final Group A, and this was lucky, especially for Larsen, who went on to play with the strength of a grandmaster. He made the highest score of first board players (14 points in 18 games.) and at the end of the Olympiad he was awarded the title: *International Grandmaster*.

8 years passed before Larsen took the next important step forward. The 1964 Interzonal (Amsterdam) was quite a sensation, Larsen tieing for first place together with the three Russians: Smyslov, Tal and Spassky. Since this event Larsen has been considered one of the three best non-Soviet players (Fischer and Mecking being the two others.)

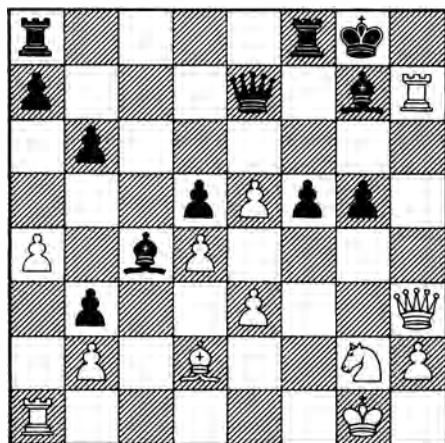
Larsen is perhaps the most successful tournament player in chess history! Some results from the years 1967-68 tell their own story. Five consecutive first places(!) in very strong tournaments sounds unbelievable but here they are: HAVANA, WINNIPEG, SOUSSE, MALLORCA and MONACO. He has also won first prize of Mallorca 1969, Busum 1969, Lugano 1970, Vinkovci 1970, Manila 1973 and Biel 1976, and many, many others!

Since 1964, Larsen has been a regular candidate for the World ch. In 1965, he won matches against Ivkov and Geller but lost to Tal. Again in 1968, he defeated both Portisch and Tal only to lose against Spassky, who went on to be the next world ch. - In 1971 he beat Uhlmann, but then lost horribly to Fischer. Finally, in the 1976 IZ at Biel, Larsen won first prize ahead of: Petrosjan, Portisch and Tal. In the 1977 Candidates' his first opponent appeared to be Lajos Portisch of Hungary, and for the fourth time Larsen failed to qualify for a match against the world champion.

Larsen is one of the most ingratiating grandmasters and a very popular personality. He has written several books, of which his »Selected Games 1948-69« is the best known. A recent success is a series of booklets called »Larsen's Chess-School«. He also contributes columns to several papers and magazines (Skakbladet, Schack Nytt, Chess L&R etc.) - It will be interesting to watch this uncrompromising player in the years to come, after all, Larsen is perhaps the most winning grandmaster ever!

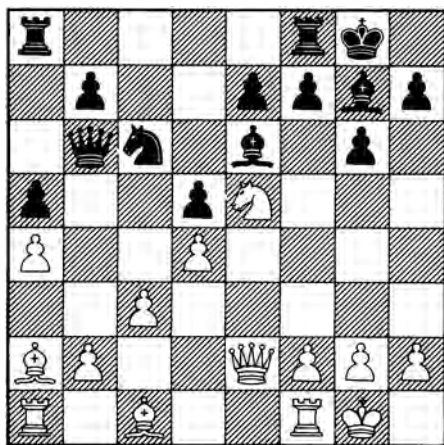
THE UNEXPECTED MOVE

Every great player introduces to chess something new, something special, previously unknown. For one player this innovation may be in the opening stage of the game. Another may discover and formulate strategical and theoretical laws hitherto unknown. A third may surprise the world by his excellent results based upon his research in the field of chess psychology. The greatness of Bent Larsen lies, in my opinion, in the fact that his chessmastery covers all aspects of the game. Many an opening variation bears his name, and he has also given the world many beautiful endgames. It should not be difficult to write a book dealing with Larsen's excellent endgame play, paying special attention to one of his favourite themes: **THE OPPOSITE COLOURED BISHOPS**. But it is in the field of chess psychology that you will find Bent Larsen as one of the most outstanding who has ever lived. To the wondering chess world Larsen has introduced the brand new theme: *THE UNEXPECTED MOVE*, which has become an integral part of his »style«. In his book »Larsen's Selected Games«, Larsen questions the word »style« as being too superficial. Nevertheless, a common denominator of his play should be possible to find without too much difficulty. Larsen is an aggressive player (»I play for a win«). His play is based upon sound strategical ideas, but with an element of risk! Unlike many of his grandmaster colleagues, he also plays for a win with the black pieces (I think he would do so even if they were green!!) I have devoted this chapter to: *THE UNEXPECTED MOVE*, here are some examples:

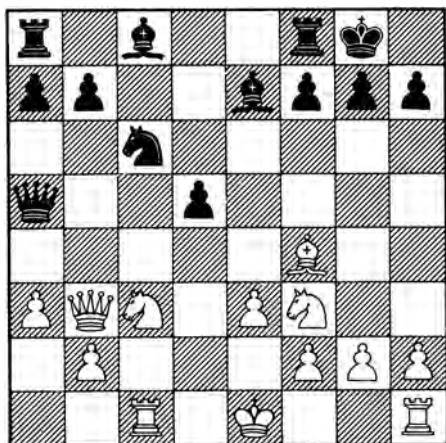


The diagrammed position is from the game Larsen-Van Scheltinga, Wijk aan Zee, 1964. Van Scheltinga has just answered Larsen's »desperate« 28. c4!? with the blunder 28. — Bxc4?? thinking white's move to be an attempt to fish in troubled waters and seeing no danger at all

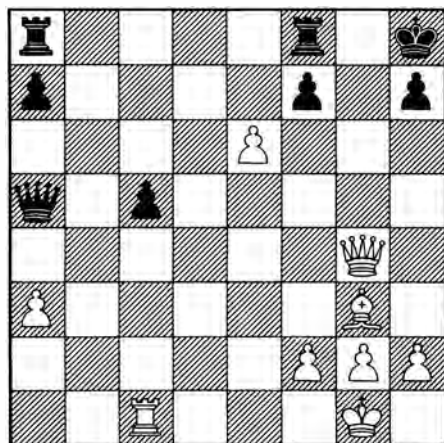
in accepting that innocent pawn sacrifice. He is ready for the surprise! 29. Nf4!! The master touch! Black, who wanted to avoid complications, is now in the middle of them! Here, Van Scheltinga decided to accept this further »gift«, and it is hardly possible to blame him for that, since Larsen gets a nice attack anyway; but white's answer is shocking! 29. — gxf4 30. Kf2! The true point. Black has no defence against the murderous Rg1. 30. — fxe3† 31. Bxe3 f4 32. Bd2! (even better than 32. Rg1, when black would have the reply 32. — Bd3!) 32. — Kf7? The final error in a troublesome position and with only a few minutes left on the clock! 33. Qh5† Ke6 34. Qg4† Resigns - A lovely game for the spectators, and a fine example of how inventive Larsen is, when he has to face a difficult position.



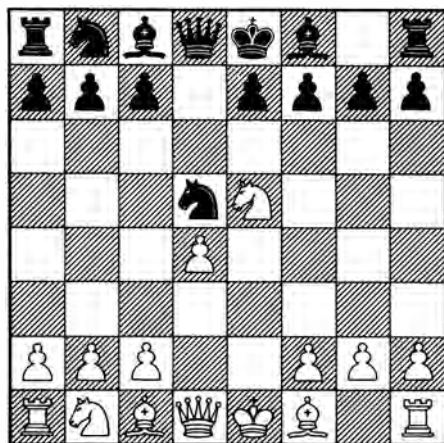
This example is taken from the game Jimenez-Larsen, Mallorca, 1967. Jimenez has been able to establish an outpost on e5, and now, by means of f4 and Be3, he intends to increase his spatial advantage and build up a dangerous initiative on the king's side. However, Larsen is in the move, and he proceeds in a way which would have pleased the great Nimzovich, who always spoke against play according to a set pattern. Judge for yourself, but do not call the move »routine!« 14. — Bxe5!! A very surprising exchange. Normally this bishop must stay in order to protect the king, but here the exception seems to be well justified. It is hardly possible for white to build up any sort of attacking possibilities, and more important, Larsen gains a firm control of the center. 15. dxe5 d4† Larsen already has the better of it and eventually won. It is good to know the rules in chess, but better to understand and find the few exceptions to these rules!



The famous game Tajmanov-Larsen from Vinkovci, 1970 - Larsen is in trouble because it seems impossible to guard the isolated d-pawn in a satisfactory way and white only needs to castle in order to have a perfectly safe and promising game. But still, white's king is in the center and that is the main reason behind Larsen's following unexpected blow, probably the most remarkable in his entire career!!! 14. — g5!? It is hardly difficult to understand that Tajmanov was horrified seeing this move, but is it good or bad?? In the Danish chess magazine, »Skakbladet«, no. 1-2-4-5, 1971, Larsen and IM Ole Jacobsen had a little »discussion« about the game in general and the above mentioned move in particular and since their points of view are quite opposite it may be relevant to quote them here: (Larsen) »Of course this is a serious weakening of the king's defence, nevertheless, completely justified because it solves black's problems with his weak d-pawn. It is also worth mentioning that in some variations it is of significance that white's king is still in the center. «... (Jacobsen) »A bad move in a bad position! The only merit of the move is that it transposes a weakness from the queen's side to the king's side!« Those were the words. Now, let us have a look at the analysis, (L) = Larsen, (J) = Jacobsen - 15. Bg3 g4 16. Nd4?? Both (L) and (J) are of the same opinion claiming this to be a bad move, but (L) only attaches one question mark to the move given as an alternative: 16. Ne5 Bf6 17. Nxc6 bxc6 18. 0-0 Be6 19. Qc2 Bxc3 20. Qxc3 Qxc3 21. Rxc3 Bd7 ... »with a likely draw, but white can hardly hope for more.« (L) also mentions a Tajmanov suggestion: 19. Qd1 c5 20. Na4 Rac8 21. Rxc5! Rxc5 22. b4 Rc1! 23. bxa5 Rxd1 24. Rxd1 Rc8!, and here he claims black to be better. All this seems to be right, but what happens if white plays the much better 20. e4!-? (J) gives the following interesting variations: 20. — d4 21. Nd5! with a winning advantage to white. 20. — dxe4 21. Nxe4 Bd4 22. Bd6! Rfd8 23. b4! Qxa3 24. bxc5, Bg7 25. c5 again, with a probably winning advantage. Finally, he also analyses: 20. — Bxc3! (Both (J) and (L) are of the same opinion about this particular move.) 21. exd5 Bxb2 22. dxe6 Bxc1 23. Qxg4† Kh8 24. Rxc1



A very fascinating position. (L) claims it to be better for black, and gives the move 24. — Rae8! »with advantage to black.« (J), however, questions this because of 25. Be5† f6 26. Qf5!! »with a winning advantage to white!« It is still an open question if Larsen, or Jacobsen, is right, but the reader is invited to judge for himself!



This, the final example, is taken from the match: Larsen-Tal, Bled 1965. (4th game) It is difficult to find a player as brave as Larsen, but to play: 5. — Nd7!!? against Tal that is really something! Tal is reported to have spent over fifty minutes pondering over his next move, but at long last he decided not to »risk« the obvious 6. Nxf7!? and played the simple 6. Bc4. A lot of masters have given their comments to the above diagrammed position, but why not listen to Tal himself who in his excellent book: »Life and Games of Mikhail Tal« has the following to say:

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»If this had been in a simultaneous display, I would have decided that my opponent had simply overlooked the stroke 6. Nxf7 Kxf7 7. Qh5†, when, against his will, the black king is forced to »go for a walk«. But Larsen could not have missed this, and I began examining the possible variations, which were, of course, pretty complicated«. Later in the article, he continues: »Of course, the position did not require such consideration. Either my opponent's »offer« should have been immediately declined, or else the problem should have been tackled without prejudice, and the knight sacrificed at f7. But I rejected the sacrifice after prolonged thought, and this was a psychological blunder« ... - »After 6. Bc4, black has no problems« (Larsen) - So Tal rejected the spectacular 6. Nxf7!? because he was playing for a win, but the position after 6. — Kxf7 7. Qh5† Ke6 certainly offers him much more winning chances than anything he got in the actual game! Still without taking any »risk«, because 8. Qg4† Kf7 (Kd6 9. c4! is too dangerous for black) would be a draw by perpetual check. Of course Tal analysed all this, and he also memorized the game from the Enshede Zonal, 1963 between Kupper-Popov, in which the former tried 8. c4!?, but after 8. N5f6 9. d5† Kf7 10. Qf7?! Nb8!! Popov was able to defend his position and eventually won. He also analysed white's second possibility, the unclear 8. g3!? but in one of the innumerable variations he found a defence for black. Unfortunately he does not give this particular variation, and Larsen's article in the Danish chessmagazine »Skakbladet« (1964) only gives the variation: 8. — b5! 9. a4 c6 10. bxc6 g6! - What a pity that Tal did not choose upon 6. Nxf7!? because if anyone should be able to prove white's attack decisive, he would certainly be the man! - (As a result of his fighting spirit and combinative skill Larsen's mastery of the endgame is often overlooked. And yet, in this area Larsen is second to none and has produced a wealth of brilliances. You will find a lot of unexpected Larsen moves in this book, and not a few are to be found in his endgames).

1956-1964

JUST an ORDINARY GRANDMASTER

At the Olympiad in Moscow 1956, a young fair-haired man is name on everyone's lips. Who was this boy fighting among the grandmasters on equal terms and even beating one of them in marvelous style? True, at this time Bent Larsen was already an international master, but his play on this occasion was not that of an IM! In every game he tested his coming colleagues, even the great Botvinnik was in trouble, and finishing the OL with $14/18 = 77,8$ per cent, he was awarded the title: international grandmaster.

Now, if you think that this young star should win everything after the Olympiad, you are quite wrong! Returning to Denmark, Larsen continued his studies, and, as Larsen explains, the next couple of years were a constant struggle, not only with his rivals at the chess board, but also with himself being attracted both by a career as a chess professional and a career as an engineer. His results in these years are very fluctuating, from a depressing 16th in the Interzonal, Portoroz 1959, to a convincing 1-2 (together with Petrosian) in Wijk aan Zee 1960. Moreover, problems with a former president of the DSU (Danish Chess Union), and a sudden break in career due to some military service were things which undoubtedly stopped Larsen's run for the summit for a longer period. In the Zonal at Halle, 1963 Larsen finished second after L. Portisch and from that time things began to change.

In the Danish (ch) 1964, Larsen won 8 games in succession, but it was not so much this, but the way in which he won them that compelled admiration. Larsen's repertoire in those days contained rarities such as: 1. e4 e5 2. Bc4 and 1. e4 c5 2. f4 - perhaps harmless, but to opponents booked-up with brand new theory they were a very dangerous weapon, and so this turned out to be an excellent rehearsal for the Interzonal later the same year.

1
Olympiad, Moscow, 1956
Black: Gligoric
Sicilian

1. Nf3 c5
 2. e4!?

Not a bad move indeed, but to Larsen quite unusual! In those days the Catalan 2. g3, was his favourite.

2... d6
 3. d4 cxd4
 4. Nxd4 Nf6
 5. Nc3 a6

The Najdorf variation. One of Larsen's favourite lines, but with Larsen playing the black pieces!

6. Be2 e5
 7. Nb3 Bc7
 8. 0-0 0-0
 9. Bg5!?

At once putting pressure on the central square d5. Other possibilities are: 9. a4 and 9. Be3

9... Nb-d7
 10. a4 b6?

It would have been better to ask the B. at once with: 10. — h6! If then: 11. Bxf6 Nxf6 12. Bc4, black has 12. — Be6 with =. White would play: 11. Bh4, but that was a much better line to black. (See move 15)

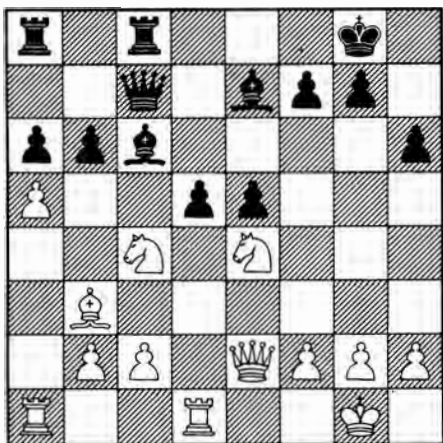
11. Bc4 Bb7
 12. Qe2 Qc7
 13. Rf-d1 Rf-c8
 14. Nd2 h6
 15. Bxf6!

Not 15. Bh4? g5 16. Bg3 Nc5 17. f3 Ne6 18. Bf2 Nf4 (Bisguier-Donner, Budapest 1961)

15... Nxf6
 16. Bb3 Bc6
 17. Nc4!

With the positional threat: Ne3-d5±. Another nasty threat is: 18. a5!±

17... Nxe4
 18. Nxe4 d5
 19. a5!



A very nice move forcing black to take on c4, thereby winning a new tempo due to the threat on f7.

19... dxc4
 20. Qxc4 Rf8

The only move! If 20. — Bxe4 21. Qxe4 b5 22. Qf5! with an almost won position!

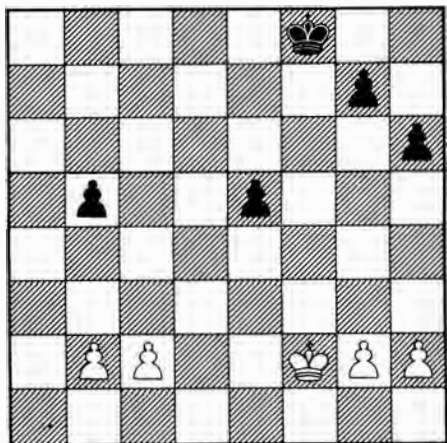
21. axb6 Qxb6
 22. Nd6 Bb5
 23. Nxb5 axb5
 24. Qd5 Rxa1
 25. Rxa1 Bc5?

Playing with dynamite! He should have tried 25. — Qc5! with chances of a draw. White would properly play: 26. Qb7! with good chances, but now black comes out of the frying-pan into the fire!

26. Ra8! Bxf2!??

Obviously planned some moves ago, but somewhere black must have missed something! (Perhaps 28. Qxf7†)? - The best defence would have been: 26. — Rxa8 27. Qxa8† Bf8 28. Qd5 Qa7, of course leaving white on top, but the win would still have been far away. - After 26. — Bxf2?? black is lost. -

27. Kf1	Qf6
28. Qxf7†!	Qxf7
29. Bxf7†	Kxf7
30. Rxf8†	Kxf8
31. Kxf2	



This position is a win for white! - The possibility of creating a distant passed pawn would sooner or later force black's king to leave his pawns, slipping in the white king.

31...	Ke7
32. Ke3	Kd6
33. Ke4	b4
34. c3	b3!?

The only way to puzzle white!

35. c4	g6
36. g4	h5
37. gxh5	gxh5
38. h4	Kc6!?
39. Kxe5	Kc5
40. Kf5!	Kd4

But not: 40. — Kxc4 41. Ke4!+-

41. Kf4	Kc5
42. Ke5	Kxc4
43. Ke4!	

Now it is black to move, but that is not so pleasant because there are no good moves at all!

43...	Kc5
44. Kd3	Kd5
45. Kc3	Ke4
46. Kxb3	Kf5
47. Kc3	Resigns

This was Larsen's only victory against the grandmasters at the Moscow Olympiad (drawing all the others!) but a very fine one indeed! - Larsen himself claims this game to be one of the finest he has ever played. -

2 Olympiad, Moscow 1956 Black: Botvinnik Sicilian Defence »Only a draw«!

1. Nf3	c5
2. e4(!)	

Playing in this way Larsen avoids two of Botvinnik's favourite lines: the French, and the Caro-Kann

2...	Nc6
3. d4	cx d4
4. Nxd4	Nf6
5. Nc3	d6
6. Bg5	

This is the Rauzer-variation, normally leading to very complicated positions. Other possibilities are 6. Bc4 or the modest 6. Be2

6...	e6
7. Qd2	h6?! chessstudies.com

Leading to a very difficult position not unfavourable to white. Botvinnik has used this line now and then, but his results with it have not been promising! Undoubtedly Larsen knew the game Bronstein-Botvinnik (6th match game, Moscow, 1951) and was ready with some ideas of his own!

8. Bxf6 gxf6
9. Rd1

Here it is! Well-known is: 9. 0-0-0, but Larsen's move, and the idea behind it, are very interesting. - Another fine game in this variation was played some months later by Keres, who beat Botvinnik very instructively (Moscow 1956)

9... a6
10. Be2 h5

Not allowing the white bishop to enter h5.

11. 0-0 Bd7
12. Kh1 Qb6?

According to Botvinnik this is a mistake. What would have been better was 12. — Qc7, but still white would have kept the better prospects.

13. Nb3 Be7
14. f4 h4
15. Na4 Qa7

(If 15. — Qc7 16. Qc3±)

16. Nac5 dxc5!?

Played only after very long thinking, but 16. — Bc8 17. Nd3, intending 18. f5 or 18. c4-c5, would leave black in a very cramped position.

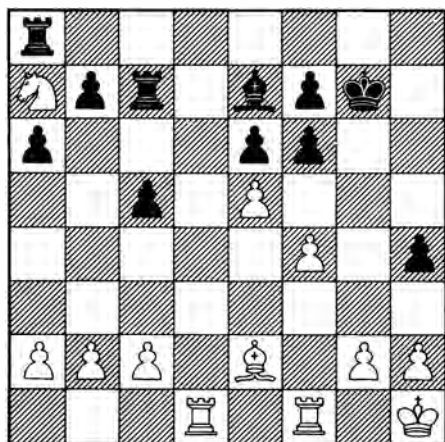
17. Qxd7† Kf8
18. e5!

After this fine move black is fighting for his life! Realizing this, Botvinnik, after almost one hour's thinking, decides to enter a difficult ending rather than being mated!

18... Kg7
19. Na5!

Leaving black with no choice at all!

19... Rhd8
20. Nxc6 Rxd7
21. Nxa7 Rc7



22. g3?!

White was left with the pleasant but very difficult choice: Which of two good moves should one select? Larsen's first intention was to play 22. f5! which seems to win, e.g. 22. f5 Rxa7 23. fxe6 fxe6 24. Bc4 with a terrible attack.

22... Rxa7
23. gxf4 f5
24. Rg1† Kh7
25. a4

Admitting that white has no threats of mate down the g-file. Black would simply play his bishop to h6 from where it not only protects »everything«, but also would be threatening to capture white's weak f-pawn.

25... Ra8
26. a5 Rd8
27. Rxd8 Bxd8
28. Rd1 Bxh4
29. Rd6

Larsen is still playing for a win, but ... in vain the position being too drawish.

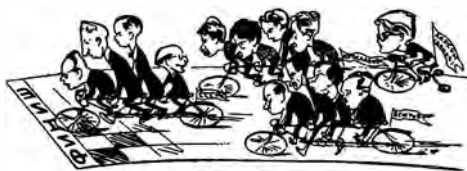
29...	Be7
30. Rb6	Bd8
31. Bf3	Re7
32. Rxb7	Rxb7
33. Bxb7	Bxa5
34. c3	f6!

Simplifying the position to such a degree that further white dreams of a win should be impossible!

35. Bc8	fxe5
36. fxe5	Bc7
37. Bxe6	Bxe5
38. Bxf5†	Kg7
39. Kg2	Bf4

Draw agreed.

With 14 points in 18 games, (77,8 per cent) Larsen got the best score among the top board players, even better than Botvinnik himself! At the end of the Olympiad, he was awarded the title: International Grandmaster. By the way, he got the top prize too!



Larsen in the finish of the Moscow race. Unfortunately he is alone, since the other members of the Danish team have lost a round! First the four Russians: Botvinnik, Smyslov, Keres and Bronstein. Second, Yugoslavia with: Gligoric, Matanovic, Ivkov and Milic. Third is Hungary with: Szabo, Barcza, Benko and Dely.

(Komsomolskaja Pravda)

3

Wageningen, 1957 White: Stahlberg King's Indian Defence

1. Nf3	Nf6
2. c4	g6
3. g3	Bg7
4. Bg2	0-0
5. 0-0	c5
6. d4	Nc6

Trying to reach a line deeply analysed by some of the leading Yugoslavian grandmasters and at that time very popular.

7. d5

Of course, this is the natural continuation, but 7. Nc3 was not bad either!

7...	Na5
8. Nfd2	a6
9. Nc3	

Now, all black had to do was to play the natural 9. — d6, when they would have reached just another wellknown position, but this was exactly what Larsen did not want! so he played:

9...	Rb8!
10. e4?!	

Forcing black's reply, but at the same time weakening some vital squares in the center. It would have been better to play 10. a4

10...	d6
11. a4	e6!

At once taking advantage of the inaccuracy 10. e4?!

12. dxe6

Almost forced! e.g. 12. Qc2 exd5 13. cxd5 b5! ♖ or 12. Re1 exd5 13. exd5 Bf5 ♖

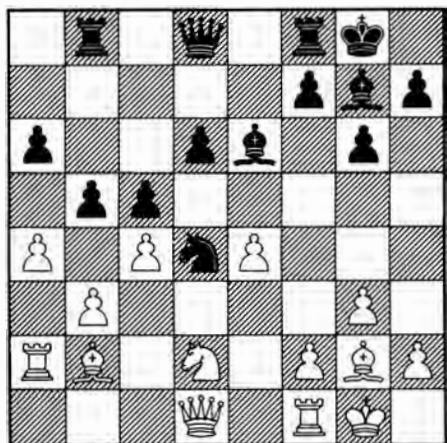
12...	Bxe6
13. b3	Ng4
14. Qc2?	

A careless move allowing black to re-develop on his knight thereby gaining an important tempo.

14... Nc6
15. Bb2

Of course not: 15. Nf3 Nd4 16. Qb2 Nxf3†
17. Bxf3 Qf6! ±

15... Nd4
16. Qd1 Ne5
17. Ne2 Nec6
18. Nxd4 Nxd4
19. Ra2 b5!



With this nice move black keeps his advantage. White has serious trouble guarding his weak pawns on the queen's wing. Besides, time trouble is knocking on the door!

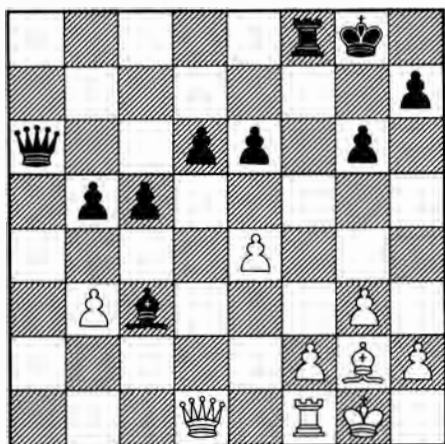
20. cxb5 axb5
21. a5!?

It is obvious that this pawn must be lost, but Stahlberg puts his confidence in the drawing chances based upon the theme: Opposite coloured bishops.

21... Ra8
22. Bxd4 Bxd4
23. Nf3 Bc3
24. a6 Qb6
25. Ng5 Rxa6

But not 25. — Bd7? 26. e5!

26. Rxa6 Qxa6
27. Nxe6 fxe6



It was probably this position Stahlberg had in mind playing 21. a5!? Nevertheless, despite the opposite coloured bishops, or rather due to them, white is quite lost.

28. Bh3 Rf6
29. Qe2 Qa5
30. Kg2 Qb4
31. Qd3 c4
32. bxc4 bxc4
33. Qe3 Qb2!

Now white is unable to meet the double threat: The attack against f2, and the parade march of the passed pawn! Notice white's bishop, a mere spectator for the rest of the game!

34. Rd1 e5
35. Rf1 Bd4
36. Qe1 c3
37. Bg4 c2

With the »amusing« threat: 38. — Rxf2†

38. Bf3 Qb3
39. Be2 Qa3!

In this hopeless position white *overstepped* the time limit. 0-1 lesstouring.com

Dallas, 1957 **White: Evans** **Tarrasch Defence**

1. d4 d5
 2. c4 e6
 3. Nc3 c5
 4. e3

This is just a matter of taste, but today, thanks to Petrosjan, 4. cxd5 is preferred. At the time when this game was played the Tarrasch Defence had a bad reputation, but twelve years later it was rehabilitated by Spassky in his match for the World Championship against Petrosjan. So, Larsen is a pioneer, but certainly not for the last time in his amazing career!!

4... Nf6
 5. Nf3 Nc6
 6. cxd5 exd5
 7. Bb5 a6
 8. Bxc6† bxc6
 9. 0-0 Bd6
 10. dxc5 Bxc5
 11. e4 0-0

Of course not: 11. — Nxe4? 12. Nxe4 dxe4
 13. Dxd8† Kxd8 14. Ng5±

12. Bg5 Be7
 13. Nd4 Qd6
 14. e5?!

A dubious decision. »Killing« black's pair of bishops leaves white with a lifeless game. More in the spirit of this variation was: 14. exd5 cxd5 15. Te1±

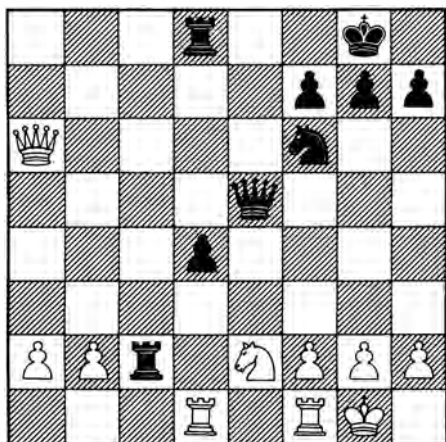
14... Qxe5
 15. Nxc6 Qxg5
 16. Nxe7† Kh8
 17. Nxc8

Indeed not: 17. Nxd5 Rd8†

17... Raxc8
 18. Qd3 Rfd8!?

A typical Larsen reaction. Black sacrifices his queen's wing and presents white with two connected passed pawns, »but before the endgame God placed the middlegame!«

19. Qxa6 d4
 20. Ne2 Rc2
 21. Rad1 Qe5!



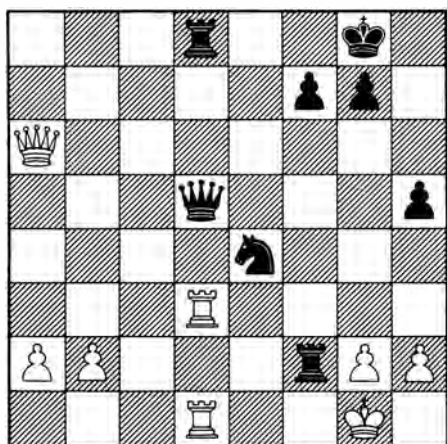
22. Ng3

In the Danish chessmagazine »Skakbladet« you could read that this move was a mistake, and that 22. Nc1 would have been much better. But this is wrong! Black would simply play: 22. — Ng4 23. g3 Qh5 24. h4 Nxf2! 25. Rxd4 (what else?) Nh3† 26. Kh1 Rdc8 with a winning attack.

22... h5!
 23. Rfe1 Qd5
 24. Re2 d3
 25. Re3 Rxf2!
 26. Ne4

Not 26. Kxf2 Ng4† —+

26... Nxe4
 27. Rxd3?



5
Copenhagen, 1960
Black: Geller
Benoni Reversed

1. g3	d5
2. Bg2	e5
3. Nf3	Nc6

In a famous game from 1925, Alekhine in a slightly different position played the ultra-sharp pawn move e4, but according to Larsen that idea is hardly to be recommended! (Réti-Alekhine, Baden-Baden)

4. 0-0	Nf6
5. c4	d4
6. d3	

Overlooking black's pretty reply. 27. Rdx3 was the only move, e.g. 27. — Qg5 28. Rxd8† Kh7 29. Rh8†! Kxh8 30. Qa8† Kh7 31. Qxe4† f5 32. h4! Txg2† 33. Qxg2 Qxe3† =; or 27. — Rxb2 28. Rxd5 Rb1† 29. Qf1 Rxf1† 30. Kxf1 Rxd5 31. Rxe4 =

Interesting was 6. b4!? with some kind of a Benko Gambit Reversed, instead we have a Benoni with a tempo more for white.

6...	Bd6
7. Na3	0-0

27... Rf1†!!

7. — Bxa3 was worth consideration!

A real »blow«. White is going to be mated in »Morpho-style«!

8. Rb1	Re8
9. Nc2	a5
10. b3	

28. Rxf1

If 28. Kxf1 Qf5† 29. Kgl (29. Rf3 Rxd1† 30. Ke2 Nc3† —) Qc5† 30. Kh1 Nf2† 31. Kgl Nh3d.c. 32. Kh1 Qg1† 33. Rxgl Nf2††, but now comes:

Indeed not 10. a3? a4≡

10...	h6?!
-------	------

28... Qc5†

Geller shows that he does not fear 12. b4. A more modest and probably better continuation would have been: 10. — Nb4 11. a3 Nxc2 12. Qxc2 c5 with only a microscopical advantage for white.

Now, however, on 29. Kh1 there follows the simple 29. — Nf2†, and so the American grandmaster *stopped his clock*, on which there remained a minute and a half! - Just take a final look at that white queen, lured away from the battlefield by the pawn snatch back at move 19.

11. a3	Bf5
12. b4	axb4?!

More accurate was 12. — Qd7. It turns out that the open rook file is not to black's advantage.

When the tournament had finished, Larsen got an invitation to sunny California to come and rest for a while. By whom? ... Evans, of course!

13. axb4	Qd7
14. b5	Nd8
15. e3!	hesstouring.com

The strongest continuation, assuring white a certain positional advantage.

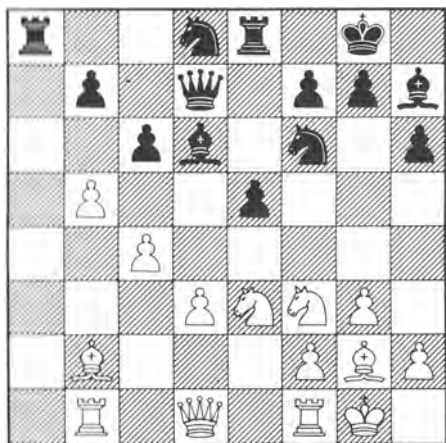
15... dxe3
16. Nxe3 Bh7

Best. After 16. — Bh3 17. d4! white would have a very dangerous initiative.

17. Bb2!

White's position is superior, but urgent measures are required otherwise black will consolidate with ...Ne6 and ...Nc5

17... c6



18. Ra1!

Very strong. In reality this is the winning move! White's pressure, both in the center and on the open rook-file, is impossible to meet in a satisfactory way. Of course Geller was aware of all this. The fact that he now had spend almost an hour on his last two moves indicates that he felt uncomfortable.

18... Rxa1
19. Qxa1 cxb5

The lesser evil. 19. — Bxd3 20. Rd1 and white has a winning attack or 19. — Qc7 20. d4 e4 21. Nh4 cxb5 22. c5+—

20. Nxe5 Qc7
21. Nf3 Be7

Again 21. — Bxd3 fails to 22. Bxf6 Bxf1 23. Nd5+—

22. Rc1!

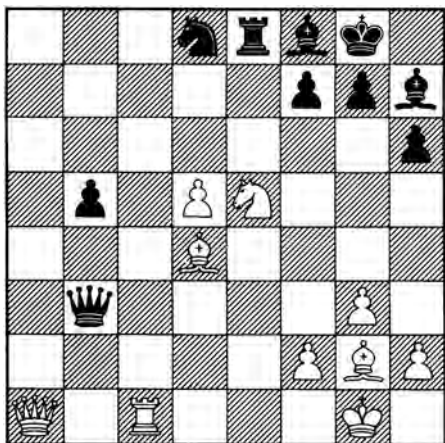
Now the threat is 23. Nd5

22... bxc4
23. dxc4 Qb6
24. Nd5 Nxd5
25. cxd5 Bf8
26. Bd4 Qb3

26. — Qa6 27. Qxa6 bxa6 28. Rc8 was horrible.

27. Ne5 b5

Perhaps 27. — Qb5 was better, but Geller was already short of time. 27. — Bf5 fails to 28. g4!



28. Nd7

Now it is all over.

28... Ba3

Accepting white's kind invitation to the »dance of death«.

29. Bxg7! Bxc1
30. Nf6† Kxg7
31. Nxe8d.c. Kf8
32. Qh8† Ke7
33. d6† Kd7

33. — Ke6 = mate in three moves!

34. Nf6† Kc8

34. — Ke6 loses the queen, and 34. — Kxd6 simply loses a piece to 35. Qxd8†

35. Bh3† Kb7

36. Qxd8 Qd1†

37. Kg2 Bd3

The second wave of white's attack turns out to be irresistible.

38. Bc8† Ka8

39. Qa5†

And here, just before the mate, *Geller's flag fall*. A very fine game, played most logically and still one of Larsen's favourites.

6

Halle, 1963

**White: Robatsch
Sicilian Defence**

1. e4 c5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. d4 cxd4
4. Nxd4 Nf6
5. Nc3 e5!?

Lasker's Hunt-Variante, at that time considered dubious, but at the moment very popular. Two young Russians, Svesnikov and Timoshenko, have brought many new ideas into this system, and in Manila, 1976 (Interzonal) Ljubojevic beat Torre with it.

6. Ndb5 d6
7. Bg5

This is the most active. 7. a4 was recommended by Schlechter after his match against Lasker, but today this is not supposed to give black any troubles.

7... a6
8. Na3

Better than 8. Bxf6 gxf6 9. Na3 when black has 9. — f5!?

8... Be6

Another interesting possibility in this position was 8. — b5!? as in the game: Olafsson-Larsen(!) Zurich, 1959.

9. Nc4 Tc8!?

Here it is...the surprise! Before this game people usually played the weaker 9. — Nd4?! A good example of how white should play against the dubious knight move is: Bronstein-Pelikan Moscow, 1956, which went: 9. — Nd4?! 10. Bxf6 gxf6 11. Ne3 Rc8 12. Bd3 h5 13. 0-0 h4 14. Ncd5 Bg7 15. c3± - In this position Robatsch thought for almost an hour, coming up with what seems to be a faulty plan! The surprise weapon has proved its value.

10. Nd5!?

10. Bxf6 looks better.

10... Bxd5
11. Bxf6 gxf6
12. exd5?!?

A further inaccuracy. 12. Qxd5 Nb4 13. Qd2 d5 14. exd5 Qxd5 with a roughly even position was called for. Now, however, black is better.

12... Ne7
13. Bd3

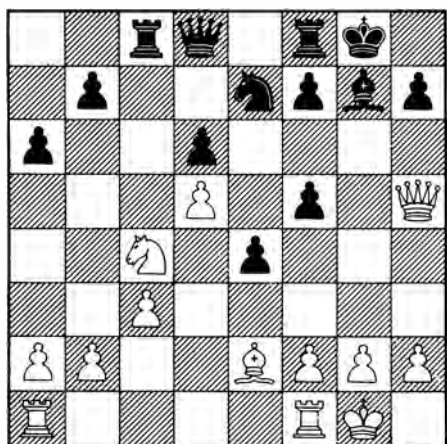
Gligoric's 13. b4!? is best answered with 13. — f5!±

13... f5
14. 0-0 Bg7
15. Qh5

Looks aggressive, but is rather a storm in a teacup!

15... e4
16. Be2 0-0
17. c3

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17... f4!

A strong move, but forced, too. White was threatening to play 18. f4 himself, intending 19. Ne3 with a fine position.

18. Qg5 b5
19. Nd2 f5
20. a4

It is hardly possible to find anything better. Besides, something must be done against the simple threat 20. — Nxd5. Here 20. Qxf4? Nxd5 would only hasten the end!

20... Kh8!

A typical move in this double-edged position. White is already forced to meet con-

crete threats. For the moment such a threat is 21. — f3!

21. Nb3

In this way white saves his knight only to realize that in doing so, he puts himself into the same situation as the Shakesperian Richard III («My kingdom for a horse»). 21. f3 would have been met with: 21. — Bf6, and now white must lose a piece! e.g. 22. Qxf4 (otherwise 22. — Qb6† and 23. — Qe3) 22. — Nxd5 23. Qg3 Bh4 24. Qh3 Nf4—+

21... f3
22. gxf3 Bxc3
23. Kh1 Bxb2
24. Ra2 Be5
25. axb5 Rg8
26. Qh5

He might just as well give up here, but time trouble often blinds a man.

26... Nxd5
27. fxe4 Nf4
28. Qxf5 Qh4
29. Bd1 Ne2!

»Everything« wins, but this is certainly the most rational move in the given position.

30. Qxe5† dx5
31. Rxe2

At the same time he *stopped the clock*, before Larsen could play the deadly 31. — Qh3.

»ON EVERYONE'S LIPS« (1964-67)

This period starts with a bang. At the Interzonal, in Amsterdam 1964, Larsen achieved a marvelous result finishing first, equal with such names as: Spassky, Tal and Smyslov. For a long time he even looked as a sole winner, but a slight sign of tiredness in the last rounds enabled the three Russians to catch up with him. (At this moment Bent Larsen had already qualified for the Candidates').

Even in the West this fine result came as a big surprise, and the words from the earlier Danish champion and IM, Jens Enevoldsen, may well be quoted here: »We knew he was good, but not that good!« It is only natural that during the time that followed, quite a lot was expected of Larsen. Would he prove to be able to take the World's ch. from the Russians, a title which they had held since 1948? (Some would perhaps say 1937!)

The first obstacle on the road to the top was the Yugoslavian grandmaster Ivkov, a player famous for his solid and perfect play. (In Yugoslavia they used to give him nicknames, e.g. »The Yugoslavian Tiger« or »The Yugoslavian Petrosian« - of course referring to his ability and aversion against losing games!) Unimpressed, and playing in his usual vigorous style, Larsen went on to beat this dangerous opponent with the convincing score: $5\frac{1}{2}$ - $2\frac{1}{2}$.

Tal, a name that strikes an ordinary grandmaster with horror, was his next opponent. This former World champion, called »The Magician from Riga«, was of course a favourite, but again Larsen surprised the wondering chess world. It was a tough and fairly even match with slightly better chances for the Danish GM. For a long time it looked as if Larsen would win this match, too, but Tal was able to catch up with Larsen, and in the final game he brought a spectacular knight sacrifice, which caught Larsen by surprise. He found the right course, but later he went astray eventually losing the game and the match as well.

That the Russians had a good reason to fear this young star from the cold North, was shown quite clearly in 1966, when Larsen beat Geller 5-4 in the play-off for the 3rd place in the Candidates', thus gaining the right to play in the Interzonal (Sousse) next year.

Interzonal, Amsterdam, 1964

Black: Lengyel
Vienna

1. e4 e5
2. Bc4!?

Why not? Just like any other grandmaster, Larsen is an expert on opening theory. But unlike the others he prefers little-known or forgotten variations. Here he presents Lengyel with a »novelty« from the days of Philidor.

2... Nf6
3. Nc3 Nc6

A solid move. Probably Lengyel feared some prepared »home-work«. Besides, Gligoric in the third round got a draw with 3. — Nc6, so why not stick to that?

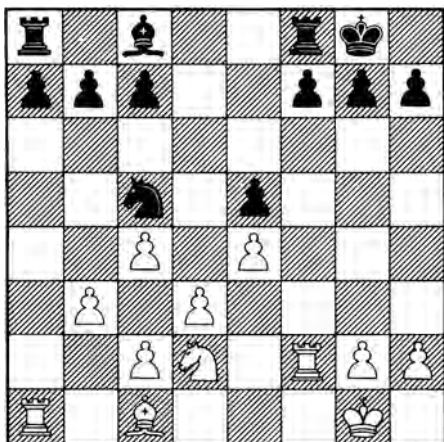
4. d3 Bb4
5. Nf3 d6
6. 0-0 Bxc3
7. bxc3 Na5
8. Bb3 Nxb3
9. axb3 0-0
10. c4 Qe7!?

Lengyel's improvement on Gligoric's 10. — b6

11. Nfd2 Nd7
12. Qh5 Nc5
13. f4!

Just in time. If allowed black would have played 13. — Ne6 with some state of blockade.

13... exf4
14. Rxf4 Qe5
15. Qxe5 dxe5
16. Rf2



This position is not a draw. White's pawns in the center are very dominating, and it is extremely difficult for black to undertake anything active.

16... Ne6
17. Nf3 f6
18. Be3 a6
19. Nh4! Bd7
20. Nf5 Rae8
21. h3 Rf7
22. Kh2

Patience is the order of the day.

22... Nf8
23. g4 Ng6
24. Ng3 Ne7
25. Raf1 Be6
26. Ne2!

With compliments to Nimzovich, who would have loved this »bizarre« move. Actually, the move played is a very fine one. White has prevented black from playing the freeing f5. Now, before the advance of the center pawns, white picks up some small positional advantages.

26... Nc6
27. Kg3 Nb8
28. Nc3 c6
29. c5 chesstouring.com

Mission achieved!

29...	Nd7
30. Na4	Rd8
31. h4	Rdf8
32. Nb2!	

In order to protect the b-pawn before an advance in the center.

32...	Rc8
33. Ra1	Kf8
34. Ra4	Ke8
35. Rb4	Rc7
36. c3	g6?

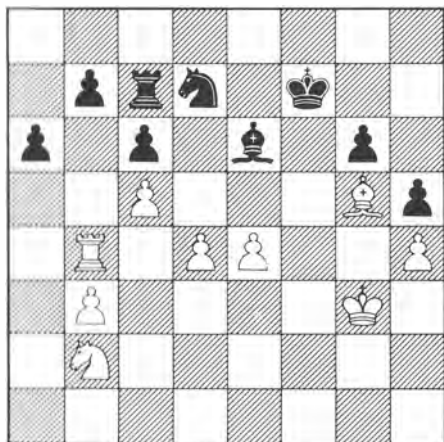
This is a mistake. Black weakens his f-pawn and invites white to play g5. Instead, Lennyel should have played 36. — Kd8! with good chances of a draw.

37. d4	h5?!
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Now he is lost. 37. — Re7 was the only chance.

38. g5	fxg5
39. Bxg5	exd4
40. Rxf7	Kxf7
41. cxd4	

White has a winning position. Black is completely tied down, and his g-pawn is worthless.



41...	Nf6
42. Kf4	a5
43. Ra4	Bxb3
44. Rxa5	Ng4
45. Ra3	Be6
46. Nd3	Kg7
47. Ne5!	

White would very much like to exchange knights because later his king would have a field day in the center.

47...	Rc8
48. Be7	Re8
49. Bd6	Nxe6

Otherwise 50. Ra7 would prove to be just too strong.

50. Bxe5†	Kf7
51. Kg5	Bg4
52. Ra1	Re6
53. Rb1	Re7
54. Rf1†	Ke8
55. Kxg6	

Now it will be difficult to protect the weak rook's pawn.

55...	Kd7
56. Rf4	Be2
57. Bd6	Re6†

Adjourned for the second time.

58. Kg5	Bd3
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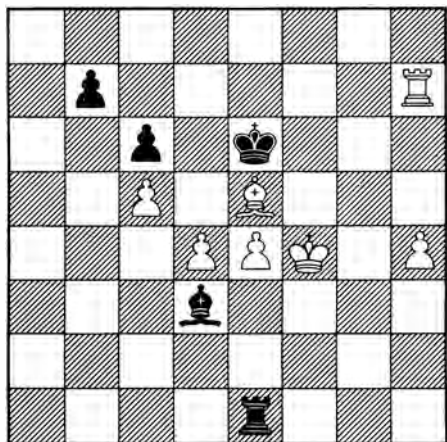
For the tempting 58. — b5 both players came to the same conclusion: not playable! e.g. 59. Rf7† Ke8 60. Rf8† Kd7 61. Kf5 Bg4† 62. Kf4 and here black lacks an answer to the threat 63. d5!+—

59. Be5	Be2
60. Rf2	Bd3
61. Kf4	

I do not want to attach an exclamation mark to this move. It appears completely logical. White frees his rook from the defence of his king's pawn, and in a number of variations the pawn on h5 will be en prise. Black's reaction is forced.

61... Rg6
 62. Ke3 Bc4
 63. Rf5 Rg1
 64. Rxb5 Re1†
 65. Kf4 Bd3
 66. Rh7† Ke6?

Here black could have avoided the threat by continuing 66. — Kd8, although his position, without doubt, remains hopeless.



67. d5†!

The quickest way to conclude the game.

67... cxd5
 68. exd5† Kxd5
 69. Rd7† Resigns

(69. — Kc4 70. Rd4† Kc3 71. Re4† Kd2 72. Bc3†!)

A strategical masterpiece!

8

Interzonal, Amsterdam, 1964

**Black: Portisch
 French Defence**

1. e4 e6
 2. d4 d5
 3. Nc3 Bb4

4. exd5 exd5
 5. Qf3!?

A little surprise. Here Portisch thought for some 20 minutes, not feeling well in variations such as: 5. — Ne7 6. Bd3 Nc6 7. Ne2± or: 5. — Be6 6. Bd3 Qf6 7. Bf4±

5... Nc6

The best move seems to be 5. — Qe7†! when black should have no problems, e.g. 6. Ne2 Nc6 7. Qxd5 Nf6†. If 6. Be3 Nf6 7. Bd3 c5! is very strong.

6. Bb5 Ne7
 7. Bf4 0-0!?

Oh! Portisch is in for a fight today. A more modest try would have been: 7. — Bf5 8. 0-0-0 Qd7 and .. 0-0-0 with a satisfactory position.

8. 0-0-0 Na5?!

Again Portisch tries to create complications which turns out, however, not to be in his favour. Better was 8. — Be6

9. Nge2 c6
 10. Bd3 b5
 11. h4 Nc4
 12. h5 f6

But not: 12. — Qa5 13. h6 g6 14. Bc7! Qxc7 15. Qf6+—

13. g4 Qa5?

Superficially this looks as a dangerous threat, but white's clever reply was probably overlooked by Portisch!

14. Bxc4 dxc4
 15. a3!

This is the resource. Now, if: 15. — Bxa3? 16. bxa3 Qxa3† 17. Kd2 b4 18. Ra1 bxc3† 19. Nxc3 Qb4 20. Rhb1+—

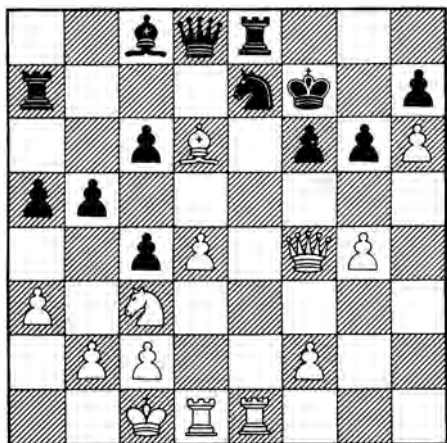
15... Bxc3
 16. Nxc3 Qd8
 17. Rhel a5?! chessstouring.com

He cannot give up the dream. It would have been better to play 17. — Nd5 although the endgame after say: 18. Nxd5 Qxd5 19. Qxd5 cxd5 would prove to be very difficult.

18. Qg3! Ra7

In answer to 18. — b4 Larsen had intended 19. Bd6!

19. h6 g6
20. Bd6 Re8
21. Qf4 Kf7



An extremely unpleasant position for Portisch. 21. — Nd5 would have allowed the »brilliant« 22. Nxd5 cxd5 23. Qxf6!

22. Be5 f5
23. Bb8 Rb7
24. Qe5!

Also »not bad« was 24. Ne4+—

24... Rg8
25. g5 b4
26. Qf6† Ke8
27. Qxc6† Kf7

If 27. — Qd7 then 28. Rxe7† decides at once.

28. Qf6† Ke8
29. d5 Rf8

Another losing line was 29. — bxc3 30. d6+—

30. Qc6† Qd7
31. Bd6 Rf7
32. Bxe7 bxc3

32. — Rxe7 33. Rxe7† Kxe7 34. Qf6† Ke8 35. Re1†+—

33. Bb4† Resigns

9

Interzonal, Amsterdam, 1964

Black: Spassky
Bird's Opening

1. f4

A rare guest in this kind of competitions, but from Larsen you might expect almost everything! Larsen had already qualified for the Candidates', but due to the somewhat funny rule saying that there may not be more than three participants from each country, Spassky could not feel quite safe. The positions in the top were: Spassky and Smyslov 16 Tal, Stein and Larsen 15½ Bronstein 15 etc.

1... d5
2. Nf3 Nf6
3. e3 g6
4. b4!?

Interesting. It is obvious that the queen's bishop aims for b2, and in order to secure its »future« 4. b4 seems to be a natural move. Instead, 4. b3 would have welcomed black to play 4. — c5 followed by a possible...Nc6 and...d4

4... Bg7
5. Bb2 0-0
6. Be2 Bg4!

Spassky wants to play e5. The value of the two bishops is in this position only academic!

7. 0-0 c6
 8. a4 Nbd7
 9. Na3 Bxf3
 10. Bxf3 Re8
 11. d4

Otherwise black would play e5 with a fine game.

11... Ne4?

However strange it may seem, this natural move does not seem to be quite correct. White's problem would have been much more complicated after the simple: 11. — Nb6, intending the knight manoeuvre Nc8-Nd6-Ne4 with complete equality.

12. Bxe4 dxe4
 13. Nc4 Nb6

If 13. — c5 14. bxc5 Nxc5 15. f5!±

14. Na5 Nd5
 15. Qe1 Qd7
 16. c4 Nf6
 17. b5 Qc7

In order to answer 18. bxc6 with b6

18. Rb1!

The first subtlety. Now, if black plays 18. — axb5 19. axb5 b6 20. Nc6 a6 21. d5 axb5, white has the interpolating move 22. Be5! followed by 23. Rxb5±

18... Ng4
 19. bxc6 b6
 20. Qe2 f5!?

A difficult decision. Spassky later regretted this move, but probably he was afraid of: 20. — Nf6 21. d5!? bxa5 22. Be5 Dd8 23. Tb7 with an unclear game! I think a Petrosian would have played 20. — h5 in this position.

21. Nb3 Qxc6
 22. d5!?

This is true Larsen, but to be fair it should be said that white also has another possibility: 22. Ra1±

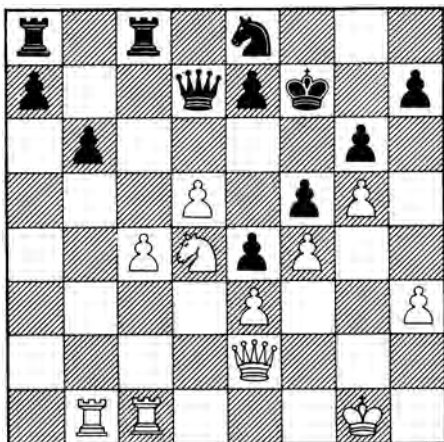
22... Qxa4
 23. Bxg7 Kxg7
 24. Nd4 Rec8
 25. h3 Nf6
 26. Rfc1 Qd7
 27. g4!

This »quiet« move is the point of white's play. Now Spassky's position is difficult, but in the following he displays great ingenuity in how to handle such positions!

27... Kf7

Of course 27. — fxg4 would be met with 28. Ne6†

28. g5 Ne8



29. Qa2!?

Very tempting but perhaps not the best? 29. h4! was a serious »candidate« (Expression borrowed from Kotov's book: »How to think like a grandmaster«) if then 29. — Nd6 30. h5 would be the unpleasant answer, but perhaps Spassky would have played the inventive 29. — h5! after which the outcome remains highly unclear?

29... Nd6
 30. h4 Qe8
 31. Ne6 Qh8
 32. h5 h6!

This fine move which Larsen must have underestimated is the only way out of the mess! e.g. 32. — gxf5 33. Qe2 Kg6 34. Kf2! and all of a sudden Spassky would find himself placed in the middle of a hurricane!

33. Rb2!

One blow after another. Black is invited to play: 33. — Nxc4? 34. Rxc4 Rxc4 35. Qxc4 Qxb2, which would lose after 36. d6!!

33...	gxf5
34. Rh2	hxf5
35. Nxf5†	Ke8
36. c5!?	

In for a Penny, in for a Pound! This is exactly what Larsen says here, but 36. Rg2!? was also very interesting.

36...	Rxc5
37. Rxc5	bxc5
38. Qa4†	Kf8
39. Rg2	Re8?!

In mutual time scramble Spassky commits a slight inaccuracy. The natural move was 39. — Rb8, but even 39. — a5 was worth consideration.

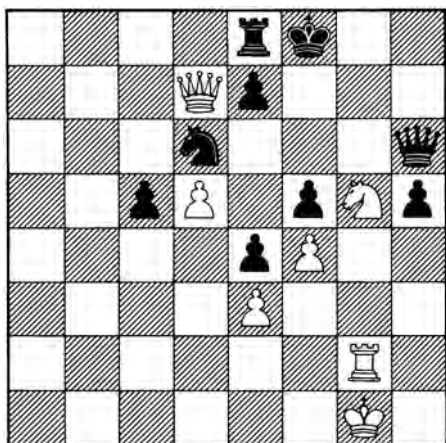
40. Qd7	Qh6
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The threat was a nice smothered mate: 41. Qe6...42. Qf7†!...43. Ne6†† but again, 40. — Rb8, was a possibility.

41. Qxa7	Qh8
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This time 42. Qa1 was threatening.

42. Qd7	Qh6
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This was the sealed move. During the analysis Larsen could not find a sure win, nor could Spassky find a sure draw! Polugajevsky, (Smyslov's second.) claimed that: 42. — Rb8 was an easy draw and probably he was right, but it is always difficult to admit a move being an »error«. (In this case Spassky's 40th move.)

43. Ne6†	Kf7
44. Ng5†	

Of course not: 44. Nd8† Rxd8!±

44...	Kf8
45. Kh2	h4?!

Spassky, (or perhaps his second, Bondarevsky!) is playing with fire now. There was no need for this move; besides, 45. — c4 looks obvious.

46. Ne6†	Kf7
47. Ng5†	Kf8
48. Kh3	c4
49. Ne6†	Kf7
50. Ng5†	Kf8
51. Rg1!	

An excellent move, forcing the black pawn to the 6th rank, but to an unprotected square! chesstouring.com

51... c3

52. Qe6!

What is this?? ... Two pawns down and still Larsen offers the exchange of queens!

52... Qxe6

He must do this. 52. — Qh8?? allows the »brilliant« 53. Qf7†, and 52. — Qg7? would lose a piece to 53. Qe5!

53. dxe6 Kg7

Clearly the only move.

54. Nxe4† Kh6

55. Nxc3

This is the position that white has been aiming for. Material is even, but the initiative is clearly in white's hands, and ... Spassky is short of time!

55... Ne4??

Panic! Even with only seconds left on the clock this is a remarkable misjudgement of the position leading to immediate disaster. Instead, 55. — Rd8!! (Discovered by Larsen only several years later.) seems to keep the draw in hand if only by a hair's breadth!

56. Nxe4 fxe4

57. Kxh4 Ra8

58. f5 Ra2

59. Rg8 Rf2

60. Rf8 Resigns

A gigantic struggle between two of the most uncompromising players in the world.

10

Copenhagen, 1966

White: Flohr

Benoni

1. d4 Nf6

2. c4 c5

3. d5 e5!?

A very solid system, but hardly one to be expected from Larsen. On the other hand, entering a fashionable variation such as 3. - e6, leading to the Modern Benoni (and to some very deeply analysed positions!) is definitely not Larsen either!

4. Nc3

d6

5. e4

g6!?

Now we know him again. The text is a most aggressive move normally leading to very complicated positions. 5. — Be7 is a more modest reply.

6. Bd3?!

It has been known for years that this is not the best place for the bishop! 6. Be2 followed by a later... Bg5 would have been a better way to challenge black's odd King's Indian.

6...

Bg7

7. Nge2

Nbd7

One might also examine the sharp 7. — Nh5!?

8. h3

a6!

Played with a deep understanding of the position. Flohr was ready to answer the »routine move« 8. — 0-0? with 9. g4!± which also would be the answer to 8. — Nh5? Now, however, if white proceeds with 9. g4 he would be met with 9. — h5! when black's problems belongs to the past. Finally, a white plan involving castling long could easily be met with the strong pawn sacrifice... b5!

9. Be3

Nh5!

Black very resourcefully seizes on the slightest chance of complicating the game. Here, by means of a slight material investment, he is guaranteed a lot of active piece-play along the black squares in white's camp.

10. Qd2

0-0

11. g4

Accepting the challenge. Black intends to

play... f5 besides, 11. 0-0-0?! invites black to play the promising 11. — b5!?

11... Nf4
12. Nxf4 exf4
13. Bxf4 Ne5
14. Be2 b5!

Still keeping white busy.

15. cxb5 axb5
16. Nxb5 Ra4!

And now the rook comes rushing in through the back door!

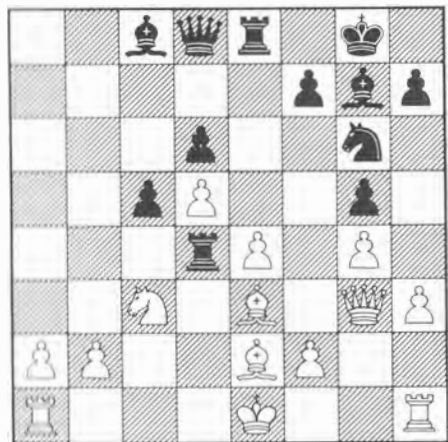
17. Nc3 Rd4
18. Qe3 Re8
19. Qg3?

This natural move is a mistake, but perhaps Flohr simply overlooked black's reply? 19. g5 would have been better, but even then black's position remains very promising.

19... g5!

An excellent idea frequently used both in the Benoni as well as in the Sicilian Defence.

20. Be3 Ng6!



21. Bb5?!

What else? To capture the rook would be fatal, e.g. 21. Bxd4 cxd4 22. Nb5 Rxe4 and

now 23. Nxd6 loses to 23. — Rxe2†! Another possibility was 21. 0-0, but after: 21. — Be5 22. Qf3 Nh4 —+ the Queen would be »off-side« for the rest of the game.

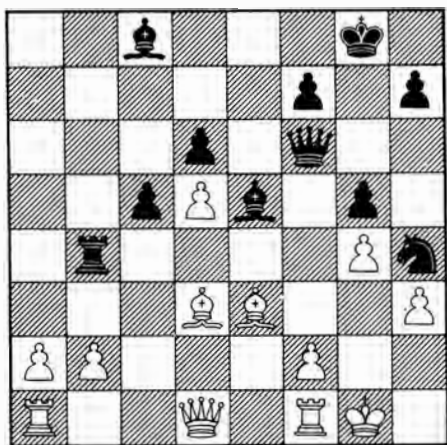
21... Rxe4
22. Nxe4 Rxe4
23. 0-0?

A natural move, but nevertheless a decisive error. He should have played 23. Bd3 with some chances of survival. True, Larsen could continue with: 23. — Qa5† 24. Kf1 Nf4! 25. Bxe4 Ba6† 26. Kgl Ne2† winning white's queen, but the win would still be far away!

23... Rb4
24. Bd3 Be5

Now the assessment is a —+!

25. Qf3 Nh4
26. Qd1 Qf6



27. a3

White only needs to play his bishop to e4 for »all« his difficulties to be behind him, but now there comes the concluding combination.

27... Nf3†
28. Kg2 Bxg4!
29. axb4 Nh4†

30. Kg1 Bxd1
31. Rfxd1 cxb4
32. Be4 Bxb2

Now, I think, white could resign. Black has everything he wants - a dangerous passed pawn, a strong queen against two disconnected rooks and finally threats against the white king.

33. Ra8† Kg7
34. Rb8 Bc3
35. Rxb4!?

This clever move is the only chance of continuing the resistance, but... it turns out that black's position is too strong.

35... Nf3†
36. Bxf3

Clearly the only move.

36... Qxf3
37. Rd3 Be5
38. Rg4 h6
39. Rd2 Qxh3
40. Rg2 f6
Resigns

Black's passed pawn will do the rest.

11

Santa Monica, 1966

White: Fischer

Ruy Lopez

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bb5 a6
4. Ba4

Some months later Fischer went to the Olympiad in Cuba. Probably he had reflected quite a deal upon this game, because fighting the Lopez he came up with a little surprise. Using the »harmless« Exchange Va-

riation he won brilliant games against both Portisch and Gligoric thus turning this forgotten variation to its most popular use against the Lopez.

4... Nf6
5. 0-0 Nxe4

Perhaps a surprise, but Larsen had just finished a booklet on the Open Variation so why not try it out on Fischer?

6. d4 b5
7. Bb3 d5
8. dxe5 Be6
9. c3 Bc5!?

Typical Larsen! The move actually played is very risky, but one has to know all the hidden points in this double-edged position to prove that. A difficult task even for a Fischer!

10. Nbd2

Another very popular move is 10. Qe2

10... 0-0
11. Bc2 Bf5!?

And only now comes the real surprise analysed in great detail in Larsen's booklet. Both 11. — Nxf2! (Once one of the great Botvinnik's favourites) and 11. — Nxd2! are interesting alternatives.

12. Nb3 Bg4!?
13. Nxc5 Nxc5

About this position Larsen has the following to say: »Black has given up the pair of bishops in order to gain other advantages: The attack against the white king's pawn, the bishop manoeuvre, Bh5-g6 and finally the possibility d5-d4. Keres finds the variation interesting. Euwe thinks it is dubious, and Pachman claims 11. — Bf5 to be a mistake!«

14. Re1 Re8
15. Be3 Ne6
16. Qd3 g6!?

Again he shows his fighting spirit. The solid move was of course 16. — Nf8

17. Bh6 Ne7
18. Nd4 Bf5
19. Nxf5

More accurate was 19. Qd2! Now complications arise, which each player considered to be in his own favour!

19... Nxf5
20. Bd2 Qh4!

After this move it can be boldly asserted that Larsen has successfully overcome his opening difficulties.

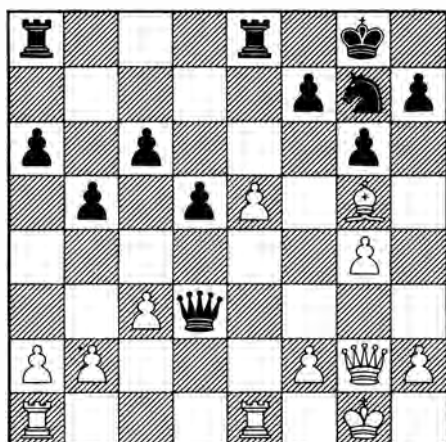
21. Qf1!?

One of Fischer's »deep ones«! He could not of course play 21. Qxd5? Rad8 22. Qc6 Ne7—+, but 21. Qf3!? was a possibility. However, after 21. — Ng5 22. Qf4 Qxf4 23. Bxf4 Ne6 24. Bd2 c5 the position would be fairly even. Therefore, 21. Qf1!? is an ingenious try to continue the »declaration of war« launched by his aggressive: 19. Nxf5

21... Nc5
22. g3 Qc4
23. Qg2

Refusing the drawish: 23. b3

23... Nd3
24. Bxd3 Qxd3
25. Bg5 c6
26. g4 Ng7



27. Re3?!

He cannot give up the dream of victory. The move played is not a »serious mistake« as many annotators seem to think, but the plan behind it is faulty! 27. f3!? safe-guarding the second rank, should have lead to a draw. Notice the little trap: 27. Rad1? Rxe5!

27... Qd2
28. b3

The correct decision. Fischer saw that the intended: 28. Bf6 Qxb2 29. Rd1 Qxa2 30. Qh3 Qc2 31. Rf1, failed to, 31. — g5!! and if: 28. f3 then 28. — Qxg2† would leave him with some difficulties in the ensuing endgame.

28... b4!?

This move turns out to be very effective, but 28. — a5! would probably have been equally good.

29. Qh3??

This loses by force. Still, it was not too late to play 29. f3, with good drawing chances.

29... bxc3
30. Qh6 Ne6
Resigns

chessstouring.com

Fischer must have overlooked that the »brilliant« 31. Bf6 d4 32. Qxh7† would have met a rather prosaic refutation in 32. — Kxh7 33. Rh3† Qh6

12

Santa Monica, 1966

Black: Petrosjan Sicilian Defence

1. e4	c5
2. Nf3	Nc6
3. d4	cx d4
4. Nxd4	g6

Funny! Larsen used to have black in this position. Now, in a way, he is forced to play against himself!

5. Be3	Bg7
6. c4	Nf6
7. Nc3	Ng4
8. Qxg4	Nxd4
9. Qd1	Ne6
10. Qd2!?	

This double-edged move leads to interesting complications. In fact it is a pawn sacrifice because white must answer 10. — Qa5! with 11. Rc1 Bxc3 12. Rxc3! (Qxc3=) when 12. — Qxa2 would have guaranteed black a lot of problems. Still, a pawn is a pawn, and I doubt if Larsen would have played the same against e.g. Korchnoi!

10...	d6
11. Be2	Bd7
12. 0-0	0-0
13. Rad1!?	

Finally departing from one of Petrosjan's elder games, (Keres-Petrosjan Candidates' 1959) in which Keres played the less ambitious 13. Rac1±

13...	Bc6
14. Nd5	Re8?

He does not know Larsen's games!! In the Amsterdam Interzonal, 1964, the game Porath-Larsen continued: 14. — Nc5! 15. f3 a5= ... Of course Petrosjan considered 14. — Nc5, but he rejected it because of the answer 15. Qc2, threatening both: 16. Bxc5 dxc5 17. Nf6†, as well as: 16. b4 - According to Larsen this seems to be a mistake in analysis since the »threat« 16. Bxc5 turns out to be a mere illusion after 16. — dxc5 17. Nf6† Bxf6 18. Rxd8 Raxd8, when black would only be too happy without his queen! Consequently, 14. — Nc5! would have been the right course, and if 15. Qc2 then 15. — a5!

15. f4!

Opening his offensive in earnest, now that his pieces have attained their optimum squares.

15...	Nc7
16. f5	Na6

Heading for the ideal square, e5.

17. Bg4?!

In the heat of the battle, Larsen fails to find 17. b4!±

17...	Nc5
18. fxg6	hxg6
19. Qf2	Rf8
20. e5!!	

No credit for other moves! The variation: 20. Bxc5 dxc5 21. Nf6† Bxf6 22. Rxd8 Raxd8± does not promise white anything, and: 20. Bxc5 dxc5 21. Qxc5 Bxd5 22. Rxd5 Qb6! would only be a draw.

20...	Bxe5
21. Qh4	Bxd5
22. Rxd5	Ne6??

A rare case of blindness. Petrosjan fails to foresee white's 25th move. If he had, he would undoubtedly have considered (and played!) the much better: 22. — e6! with some drawing chances in the occurring endgame. (The »wild«: 23. Bg5?! Qb6 24. Rxe5 dxe5 25. Be3 would of course be worth con-

sideration, but it is hardly possible that Larsen would have played it, since there is a better line!) 23. Qxd8 Rfxd8 24. Rxe5 dxe5 25. Bxc5±

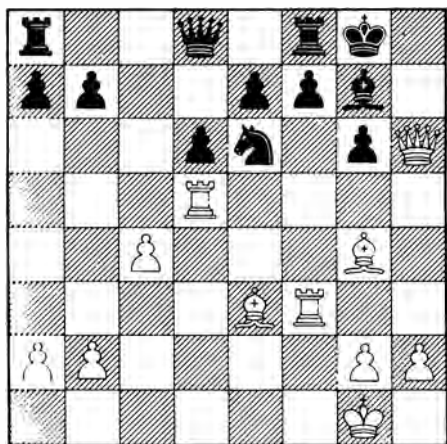
23. Rf3!

An inspired method of increasing the pressure against the black king.

23... Bf6?

This is the final slip. The only chance was to play 23. — f5 24. Rh3 Kf7, but even then I doubt if black would have been able to save his undelicate position.

24. Qh6 Bg7



25. Qxg6!!

Every grandmaster has to sacrifice his queen once in a lifetime, but to sacrifice it against the world champion is indeed something special! Larsen must have enjoyed playing this beautiful move to which there is absolute no defence.

25... Nf4

It turns out that 25. — Nc7 would have lost at once because of the answer: 26. Qxg7†! and mate in two.

26. Rxf4 fxg6
27. Be6† Rf7

Equally hopeless for black was 27. — Kh7 28. Rh4† Bh6 29. Bxh6 Rf5 30. Rxf5 gxf5 31. Bf7! +-

28. Rxf7 Kh8
29. Rg5!

This new wave of the attack is clearly irresistible.

29... b5
30. Rg3 Resigns

13

Santa Monica, 1966

White: Petrosjan

King's Indian

1. c4 Nf6
2. Nc3 g6
3. g3 Bg7
4. Bg2 0-0
5. d4 d6

Just as in the Flohr-game (10), Larsen embarks upon a variation which calls for energy and exact play.

6. e3!?

A solid line, no doubt about that. But on the other hand a rather harmless one, leaving black with a variety of active plans.

6... c6
7. Nge2 a5!?

The beginning of a strong manoeuvre, the point of which lies in his 15th move.

8. b3 Na6
9. 0-0 e5
10. Bb2 Re8
11. a3

Already Petrosjan has problems, e.g. 11. e4! exd4=, and 11. d5 e4!†

11... Rb8
12. h3 h5 chesshouse.com

This is true Larsen. Several years ago Polugaevsky wrote about the fact that Bent Larsen was far from indifferent to advancing his rook's pawns, and he might well be right, since this theme seems to occur again and again in Larsen's games. In his book: »Selected Games«. Larsen gives the following typical explanation: »One charming characteristic of many flank attacks I could mention is that they do not very often lead to simplification«!

13. Qc2 Be6
14. Kh2 Qc7
15. Rac1 b5!

After this fine and logical move black takes over the initiative.

16. cxb5

A difficult decision and perhaps not the right one? 16. d5 cxd5 17. Nxd5 Nxd5 18. cxd5 Qxc2 19. Rxc2 Bd7 with only a minimum advantage to black would probably have been a better white course.

16... cxb5
17. Qd1 Qe7
18. Nb1

Played in order to prevent the annoying 18. — b4

18... Bd7
19. Nd2 e4!

Cramping white's game still further.

20. Nf4

Petrosjan, who is considered to be something of a specialist on the subject: exchange sacrifice, wisely refrains from 20. d5! Nc5 21. Rxc5 dxc5 22. Bxf6 Qxf6 23. Nxe4 Qb6! with a very fine game for black.

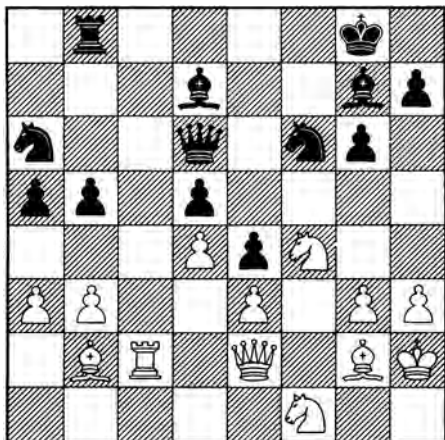
20... d5

Quite unusual in the King's Indian, it is now black who has a spatial advantage.

21. Qe2 Qd6

Taking up a little »flirt« with white's king. From now on, ..h4 is a constant threat.

22. Rc2 Rec8
23. Rfc1 Rxc2
24. Rxc2 h4
25. Nf1 hxg3†
26. fxe3



26... b4!

An excellent move, clearing up an important diagonal (a6-f1). According to Larsen, black is now in a winning position.

27. a4 Rc8
28. Rxc8† Bxc8
29. h4

The lesser evil. Bad would be 29. Qb5? g5 30. Ne2 Qc7, and black dominates the position.

29... Nc7
30. Bh3 Bxh3

Now, however, 30. — Ba6? would leave white with some chances on the king's side, so naturally Larsen welcomes this exchange. Besides, white's remaining bishop is modestly speaking very bad!

31. Nxb3 Bf8
32. Kg2 Qc6
33. Qd1 Bb6

Move by move Larsen increases the activity of his pieces.

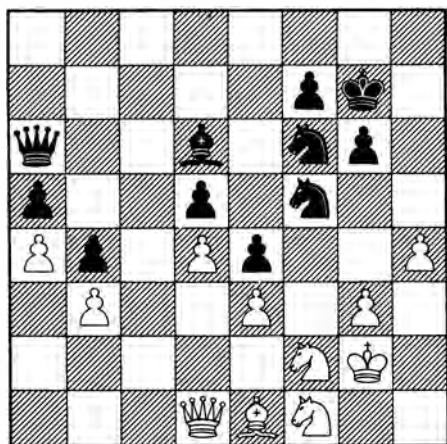
34. Nf2 Ne6
35. Bc1 Ng7
36. Bd2 Nf5
37. Kh3 Qc8
38. Kg2

It would have been too dangerous to play 38. g4 Nh6 39. Be1, because of 39. Nh7 with the murderous threat ...f5+

38... Kg7
39. Nh1 Nh6
40. Be1 Qa6!

Black has achieved his goal: All his pieces are beautifully placed, and the white army is totally paralysed!

41. Nf2



41... Nf5

The sealed move. There could be little doubt that black was in a winning position. Larsen analysed the adjourned game until seven o'clock in the morning (!) being well aware of all the points in the position. By the way, black's last move was not only strong, it also contained a real threat, e.g. 42. Qc2?? Qxf1! and it is all over.

42. Qd2 Bb8

43. Nd1 Ng4
44. Kg1 f6!

A convincing plan. It seems logical to open up more lines, and in some variations it may prove useful to have an entry into the white camp via the rook's file.

45. Kg2 g5
46. Nf2 Ngh6
47. hxxg5

Otherwise his king would be too exposed.

47... fxg5
48. Nd1 Kg6
49. Nh2 g4
50. Qc2 Bd6
51. Nf1 Ng8

Soon he will be ready for the decisive manoeuvre...Qa8-Qh8, but in the meantime patience is the order of the day.

52. Nh2 Nf6
53. Nf1 Kh5
54. Nh2 Kg5
55. Nf1 Nh5
56. Bf2 Nf6

White can do nothing but wait, and Larsen, being very sleepy, only wants to pass the second time control. - Funny, but it is very seldom you see Larsen using this so-called »waiting tactic« in contradistinction to e.g. Petrosjan and Karpov both using it very often.

57. Be1 Nh5
58. Bf2 Qa8!

And suddenly he is not sleepy at all!

59. Be1 Qh8

White's position is lost. There followed:

60. Qc6 Bxxg3
61. Bxxg3 Nhxg3
Resigns

An outstanding performance by Larsen, and certainly one of his most beautiful games ever played! chesstouring.com

THE WORLD'S BEST TOURNAMENT PLAYER (1967-70)

For Larsen the year 1967 took an unusual course. The first 6 months were by no means sensational, but then at the end of the summer something happened. Larsen went to Cuba in order to play in the traditional Havana-tournament, not knowing that this was the start of the most impressive series of victories ever achieved!

»Veni-Vidi-Vici« are the words used about the Roman emperor Caesar, and quite the same could be said about Larsen winning four strong grandmaster-tournaments in a row. Even in 1968, he continued his winning stream, finishing first in Monaco ahead of such notabilities as the two former World champions: Botvinnik and Smyslov. Of course this could not go on for ever, but the fiasco was moderate! In Mallorca, Larsen and Spassky tied for second place, scoring 13/17, a fine result indeed, but Korchnoi (Victor the »terrible«) scored 14!!

The year 1969 is typical of Larsen's play in the following years. Some outstanding performances are followed by some unexplainable set-backs and vice versa. He set off with a convincing first in Busum. Then came a comfortable match win against the IM H. Westerinen, and a very pleasant win against Tal in the play-off for the third place in the Candidates'. This, just like his match with Geller, secured Larsen a free place in the next Interzonal (Mallorca), but a catastrophe lurked around the corner. San Juan, a beautiful town to play in, full of cultural riches from the past, and at the same time equipped with all modern facilities, should be just the place to create good chess, but for Larsen this was certainly not the case! Four lost games, and a shared 6-7 place together with Donner was the meagre result, but perhaps the reason for this failure was that he had just finished his book (»Selected Games«) and therefore lacked training a little! In the annual Mallorca-tournament later the same year, Larsen was on top again and triumphed ahead of Petrosian and Korchnoi. Larsen got a double revenge here, winning both the tournament and the Korchnoi-game as well.



*Grandmaster Bent Larsen, winner of the Interzonal, Sousse 1967.
Left, Victor Korchnoi.*

14 Havana, 1967 White: Tajmanov Nimzo-Indian Defence

1. d4 Nf6
2. c4 e6
3. Nc3

As you probably know, Tajmanov has written a book on the Nimzo-Indian. Naturally, he welcomes every opportunity to play his favourite system even against the Nimzo-specialist, Larsen. On the other hand, Larsen, playing the white pieces, usually avoids the Nimzo-Indian, playing e.g. 3. Nf3

3... Bb4
4. e3 0-0
5. Bd3 c5
6. Nf3 d5
7. 0-0 Nc6
8. a3 dxc4!?

Trying to get away from the headlines in that book!

9. Bxc4

9. axb4?! cxd4 10. Bxc4 dxc3 does not promise white anything real, so the text seems obvious only not the time consumed over it! (Tajmanov played it after some 15 minutes of thought.)

9... Ba5

Of course he could still get safely back to the main line with 9. — Bxc3, but Larsen wanted to test some ideas of his own.

10. Qd3 a6
11. dxc5

Still »theory«. Another possible move was 11. Rd1!?

11... Qxd3
12. Bxd3 Bxc3
13. bxc3 Na5!?

But now we say good-bye to that book of Tajmanov's! It only deals with 13. — Nd7, when 14. a4 gives white the better play. The move actually played is Larsen's attempt to save this crucial line.

14. Rb1 Bd7!?

Probably wrong. In the game Gligoric-Larsen, Sousse, 1967, Larsen played the much better 14. — Rd8! with a fairly even game.

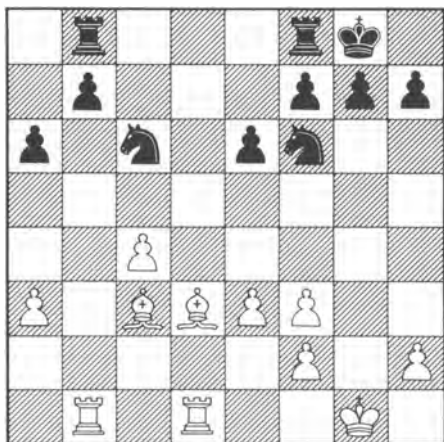
15. c4 Ba4
16. c6!

A very fine idea. Now black is forced to part with his strong bishop, since the variation 16. — bxc5 17. Rb4 Bb3 18. Bd2 looks too dangerous, and 16. — Nxc6 17. Rxb7 Rfd8 does not give black real compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

16... Bxc6
17. Bd2 Bxf3
18. gxf3

Also worth consideration is 18. Bxa5

18... Nc6
19. Bc3 Rab8
20. Rfd1



20... Rfc8!

But not the »unconscious« 20... Rfd8? after

which e.g. 21. f4, intending the manoeuvre: Be2-Bf3 or perhaps: Bc2-a4 leaves black almost without counterplay. Now, however, black is ready to face the fight against white's strong bishops, because white must be careful with that weak c-pawn.

21. f4	Kf8
22. Kg2	Ke7
23. f5	e5

Black is still fighting for equality. To capture on f5 would be bad, because it would only increase the activity of white's dangerous bishops.

24. Bc2	Rc7
25. Kf3	Rd8
26. Rxd8	Kxd8
27. Ba4	Nd7!

Attaching an exclamation mark to this obviously forced move may look strange. Nevertheless, in view of the following line the justification seems to be okay! Now white can win a pawn, but probably not the game with: 28. Bxc6!? Rxc6 29. Rxb7 Kc8! 30. Ra7 g6! (This clever rejoinder is the real point in Larsen's fine defence, and should guarantee the draw without too much difficulty.) Tajmanov thought for about half an hour over his next move. It was difficult to decide which was stronger - The above mentioned line, or the openly aggressive move in the game, but playing for a win he answered...

28. h4!?	g6
29. fxc6	hxc6
30. h5	gxh5
31. Rh1	e4!?

Larsen decides to play for a win. 31. — Nf6 32. Bxc6 Rxc6 33. Bxe5 Ke7 is of course a draw, but with only eight minutes left on Tajmanov's clock Larsen wants more!

32. Kf4

Indeed not 32. Kxe4? Nc5† when black wins a piece, but also 32. Ke2? would be bad because of 32. — Nce5! ‡

32... Nce7
33. Ba5!

With amazing rapidity Tajmanov finds the only way out of the mess. This move was accompanied with the offer of a draw but Larsen, extremely interested in Tajmanov's »fight« against the clock, turned it down.

33...	b6
34. Bxd7	bxa5
35. Ba4	Ng6†
36. Kf5	Tc5†
37. Kf6	Ne5!?
38. Bb3??	

With only seconds left, Tajmanov finally commits a blunder. 38. Bd1 would have guaranteed the draw.

38... Ke8

With this sly move, Larsen spins a mating net around Tajmanov's king.

39. Kg7?

Now he even seeks to the center of the spider's web! White could have put up a more stubborn resistance by 39. Rd1

39... Ng4!

Against this there is absolutely no defence.

40. Rd1	Rg5†
41. Kh8	Nf6
42. Ba4†	Ke7
Resigns	

15

Interzonal, Sousse, 1967

Black: Sarapu Tarrasch Defence

1. Nf3	d5
2. g3	c5
3. Bg2	Nc6
4. 0-0	Nf6

The sharp 4. — e5!? would probably be unwise against Larsen, who loves to play a black system, but with a move extra! (In this case the main variation of the King's-Indian)

5. c4	e6
6. cxd5	exd5

Another possibility was 6. — Nxd5, but it is obvious that black wants to play the Tarasch, and it is difficult to blame him for that!

7. d4	Be7
8. Nc3	0-0
9. Be3!?	

Not better than 9. Bg5, but that move would hardly be a surprise, since it had already occurred once in this tournament. (1. round Geller-Sarapu)

9...	Ng4
10. Bf4	Be6
11. dxc5	Bxc5
12. Qc2	h6

In view of the threat 13. Ng5, this is practically forced.

13. Rad1	Rc8
14. Qb1	Qb6
15. e3	Rfd8

And not 15. — g5?, when 16. Bxg5! hxg5 17. Nxg5 presents white with a decisive attack against the naked black king.

16. h3	Nf6
17. Na4	Qa5
18. Nxc5	Qxc5
19. Ne5	Ne4
20. Nxc6	Qxc6
21. g4!	

White has a clear advantage. He has control over e5-d4 and now f5 also. The black bishop is badly hemmed in, and so the endgame favours white.

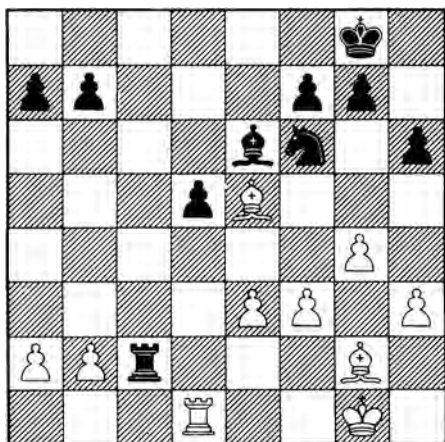
21...	Re8
22. f3	Nf6?!

This move is based on a dubious plan, and should have been replaced with the dynamic 22. — Nd6

23. Be5	Qc2
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»with a possible draw«, Sarapu might have thought! Alas, the exchange of queens does not really change anything. White still has a very promising game.

24. Qxc2	Rxc2
25. Rf2	Rec8
26. Rxc2	Rxc2



27. Bf1!

Simple and strong. The series of exchanges has not reduced white's advantage, and he now threatens to trap black's sole actively placed piece by means of: Bc3 and Bd3.

27...	Nd7
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Now, if 28. Bc3, black has the strong answer 28. — Ne5!

28. Bd3	Rc8
29. Bd4	b6
30. Kf2	f6
31. Bc3	Kf7
32. h4!	

Patiently Larsen moves forward, strengthening his grip by every single move. Black, not

enjoying being pushed back to the edge of the board, therefore decides to do something active rather than being strangled!

32... Ne5!
33. Bb1 Rc4

Threatning...Nxf3

34. Rh1 Rc8

Black was in serious time trouble. For his remaining moves he had less than two minutes.

35. g5 Rh8
36. f4 Ng4†?

A strange move to play when in grave time pressure. 36. — Nc6 was the obvious retreat.

37. Kf3 f5
38. Bd4 h5

Closing off the king's wing, but what about his »stupid« knight?

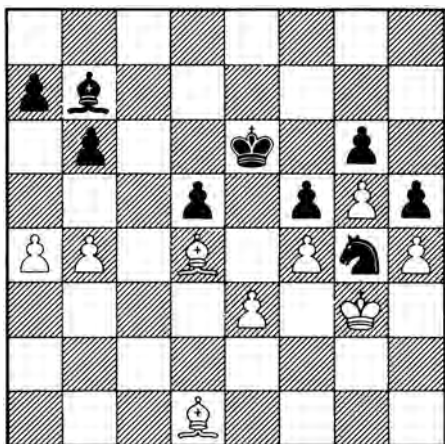
39. Rc1 Rc8
40. Rxc8 Bxc8
41. Bd3 g6
42. Bb5 Bb7

This was the sealed move. When the game was resumed nobody doubted that Larsen would win. Nevertheless, the win is very instructive.

43. a4 Ke7
44. b4 Kf7
45. Kg2?!

A simple waste of time. (See white's 49th move)

45... Ke7
46. Kg3 Kf7
47. Be2 Ke6
48. Bd1!



In this position Larsen calculated some twenty(!) moves ahead which is possible because all black's moves are practically forced.

48... Kf7
49. a5 bxa5
50. bxa5 a6
51. Ba4 Ke7
52. Bc5† Kf7
53. Bd7 Kg7
54. Be8!

The first subtlety. Black is in a state of »Zugzwang« which only leaves him with one single move!

54... Ba8
55. Bd4† Kh7
56. Bf7 Bb7
57. Be6 Bc6
58. Bc8 Bb5
59. Bb7 Bc4
60. Bc6 Kg8
61. Be8 Kh7
62. Bf7!

The second concluding subtlety. The black bishop is forced to give up the protection of the d-pawn, e.g. 62. — Ba2 63. e4! fxe4 64. f5!!+—, is of course out of consideration!

62... **Bd3**
63. **Bxd5** **Be4**

Here the game was adjourned for the second time. The rest is so-called technique!

64. **Bc4** **Bb7**
65. **Be6** **Be4**
66. **Bc8** **Bd3**
67. **Bb7** **Kg8**

Again the only move. Black's bishop is in »Zugzwang«. It cannot give up the protection of the a-pawn, and it cannot allow white to advance the e-pawn, so, it must stay!

68. **Bd5†** **Kf8**
69. **Bc5†** **Kg7**
70. **Kf3** **Nh2†**
71. **Kf2** **Be4**
72. **Bc4** **Bb7**
73. **Bb4** **Kh7**
74. **Bc3** **Ng4†**
75. **Ke2** **Nh2**
76. **e4!**

The decisive break through. Now it was time to resign, but black is obstinate!

76... **Bxe4**

76. — fxe4 77. f5 is equally hopeless.

77. **Bxa6** **Nf3**
78. **Bc8** **Nxh4**
79. **a6** **Ng2**
80. **Be5** **h4**
81. **Bb7** **h3**
82. **Bxe4** **fxe4**
83. **a7** **Resigns**

A beautiful endgame performance by Bent Larsen.

16 Interzonal, Sousse, 1967 White: Gipslis Alekhine's Defence

1. **e4** **Nf6**
2. **e5** **Nd5**
3. **d4** **d6**
4. **c4** **Nb6**
5. **exd6**

It would have been interesting to see what Larsen had prepared against the sharp 5. f4!?

5... **exd6**

Perhaps giving white the impression (false!) that black is a man of peace. 5. — cxd6, is of course playable, but risky. (Permanent white pawn majority on the queen's wing.)

6. **Nc3** **Be7**
7. **Be3** **0-0**
8. **Be2** **Nc6**
9. **Nf3** **Bg4**
10. **b3** **Bf6**

Smyslov's 10. — f5!? is perhaps worth consideration?

11. **0-0** **d5**
12. **c5** **Nc8**
13. **b4?**

Normally this »push« is excellent, starting some queen-side activity which often leads to the creation of a passed pawn. But here, with a 3-3 constellation, the move is a harmless gesture. 13. h3± was the correct answer.

13... **Nce7**
14. **b5** **Na5**
15. **h3** **Bxf3**
16. **Bxf3** **c6**

Now Larsen has a perfectly satisfactory position.

17. **Qd3** **Nc4**
18. **Bf4?** esstouring.com

To change horses in midstream is rarely good, but here it would have been wise, and with 18. Rb1 he could have maintained the balance. Now, however, white goes downhill quickly!

18... Ng6
19. Bh2 Bg5!

Black has now built up his position to give a clear advantage. His control of the dark squares and his more actively placed pieces give him a strong initiative.

20. bxc6 bxc6
21. Bd1?

Better late than never. It is interesting that the Russian grandmaster was not satisfied with this move afterwards. Larsen, however, in »Chess in the Soviet Union«, reveals another opinion saying that the move is excellent and logical, since on f3 the bishop would only be a target for a black knight.

21... Bf4
22. Bc2?

But what is this? Did Gipslis fail to see that it was absolutely essential to get rid of the visitor at c4, or did he simply fear a »ghost«? e.g. 22. Bb3! Nd2 23. Bxf4? (here the ghost becomes real!) Nxf4 24. Qxd2 Qg5!-+ Instead, 23. Rfd1! would practically have forced black to play 23. — Bxh2† 24. Kxh2 Nxb3 25. axb3 Qb8† 26. g3 Qxb3 27. Rdb1 Qc4 with a likely draw after the obvious 28. Qxc4 dxc4 29. Rb4 - however, 22. — Bxh2†! 23. Kh2 Na5 shows that white does not succeed in fully equalizing.

22... Bxh2†
23. Kxh2 Qf6
24. g3

A bitter necessity

24... Rfe8
25. Kg2?

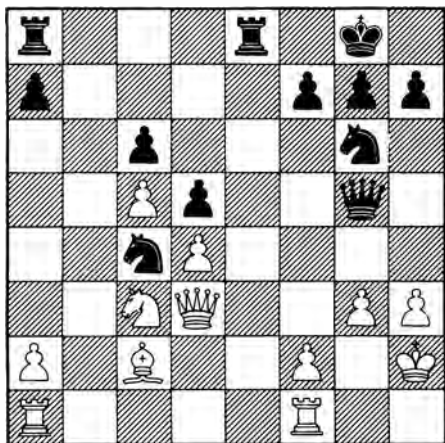
It is easy to understand the reason to this further inaccuracy. White wants to protect

his f-pawn in order to play Re1, but he must have overlooked Larsen's clever 26th move. Correct was 26. Bb3†

25... Qg5!

Forcing white to play f4, which he had tried to avoid so terribly. This is an excellent example of what you might call: Practical psychology at the chessboard.

26. Kh2?!



26... Nb2!

Mission completed. White is forced to give up the protection of the d-pawn.

27. Qf3 Qd2
28. Bxg6 hxg6
29. Nd1 Nc4

Of course! The knight is far too active to part with just in order to win a pawn.

30. Qc3 Rab8
31. Rcl Re4
32. Rc2 Qxd4
33. Qxd4 Rxd4
34. Re1 a5!

Why complicate the issue when you are in a winning position? 34. — Rb5! is such a »complicater«, snatching a second pawn, but giving white some chances of survival,

e.g. 34. — Rb5!? 35. Re8† Kh7 36. Ne3 Rxc5 37. Re7, and white is still alive.

35. Kg2 a4
36. Nc3 a3
37. Na4 g5
38. Re7 Rb4
39. Nb6 Rb2
40. Rc3 Rxa2

»Everything« wins, but the move played is the shortest way to the victory.

41. Nxc4 dxc4
42. Rc7 Rdd2
43. Rf3 c3
Resigns

The attractive finish would be 44. Rxf7 Rxf2† 45. Rxf2 Rxf2† 46. Kxf2 c2-+ or, 44. Rcx7 c2-+

17

Palma de Mallorca, 1967

White: Gligoric

Queen's Indian Defence

1. d4 Nf6
2. c4 b6!?

Normally Larsen plays the Nimzo-Indian, but here as a surprise weapon he presents Gligoric with an almost forgotten variation.

3. Nc3 Bb7
4. Qc2 d5
5. cxd5 Nxd5
6. e4?!

It has been known for years that this is an inaccuracy. White should play 6. Nf3 and only then...e4±

6... Nxc3
7. bxc3 e5!

This is the trick. Only seven moves with the black pieces in a Queen's Indian, and still, the position is equalized!

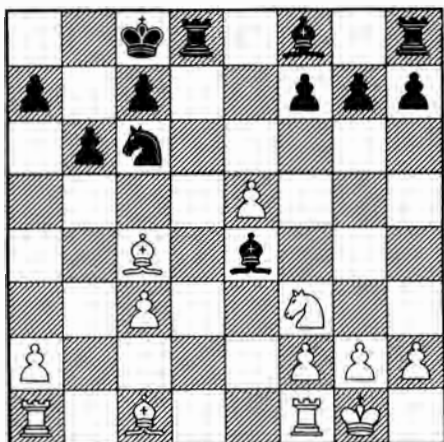
8. dxe5 Qh4
9. Nf3

9. Bb5† was worth consideration.

9... Qxe4†
10. Qxe4 Bxe4
11. Bc4 Nc6!
12. 0-0

It turns out that on 12. Bxf7† Kxf7 13. Ng5† Kg6 14. Nxe4 Nxe5, black would have a nice game.

12... 0-0-0!



In this position Gligoric thought for almost an hour! He had intended the blow 13. Bg5 but now he saw the amusing rejoinder 13. — Bd3!! when white had nothing but weak pawns on the queen's wing.

13. Re1

It is hard to find a better move for white. 13. Bxf7? Bxf3 14. gxf3 Nxe5 is horrible, and 13. Ng5?! allows 13. — Nxe5±

13... Bd5
14. Ba6† Kb8
15. Bg5 Be7
16. Bxe7 Nxe7
17. Nd4 Rhe8
18. f4 g6
19. Bb5?! ssstouring.com

This looks dubious. White should have simply played 19. a4!, whereupon, after the exchange of the weak a-pawn, an almost even position would have been reached.

19...	c6
20. Bf1	h5
21. g3	c5
22. Nb3	

Also not quite sufficient was 22. Nb5 Nf5
23. Bh3 Bc6

22...	h4
23. c4	Be6
24. Rad1	hxc3
25. hxc3	Bg4

A good move emphasizing his control of the important d-file. Black has a very clear - if not winning - advantage.

26. Rxd8	Rxd8
27. Kf2	Nf5
28. Be2?	

True, white has a difficult position, but to add insult to injury, time trouble is knocking on Gligoric's door! In such a situation it is only too easy to blame a master for a feeble move, but in a skittlè game Gligoric would hardly have missed what seems to be his last chance 28. e6!

28...	Bxe2
29. Rxe2	Rd3
30. g4	Nh6
31. g5	Ng4†
32. Ke1	Ne3

Now it is only a question of »time«!

33. Nd2	Nc2†
34. Kf1	Kc7
35. Rf2	Ra3
36. e6!?	

A last gasp for air, but white was lost anyway.

36...	fxe6
37. Rh2	Rxa2
38. Rh6	Ne3†

39. Ke1	Ng2†
40. Kd1	Nxf4

The time scramble has come to an end and Gligoric, realizing that he was three pawns down, *resigned* with a tiny smile.

18 Palma de Mallorca, 1967 Black: Ivkov English

1. c4	c5
2. Nc3	Nc6
3. Nf3	Nf6
4. g3	g6

How long can this go on?

5. Bg2	Bg7
6. 0-0	0-0
7. a3	a6?!

This was the moment when symmetry should be avoided. 7. — d5 looks natural.

8. Rb1	Rb8
9. b4	cx b4
10. axb4	b5
11. cxb5	axb5
12. d4	d5
13. Bf4!?	

Now black is forced to think for »himself«. To continue symmetry with 13. —, Bf5 is of course possible, but then 14. Ra1 Ra8 15. Rxa8 Qxa8 16. Qb3 brings white a clear advantage, on the other hand it is impossible to find a completely satisfactory square for the poor rook, therefore...

13...	Rb6
14. Qb3	e6

Solid, but rather passive. Now both the bishop and the rook look a little »stupid«. Why not the more dynamic 14. ... Bb7±?

15. Rfc1 Bb7
16. e3 h6

All this is part of the plan adopted by Ivkov playing 13. — Rb6. An interesting alternative is 16. — Nh5!? 17. Bg5 f6 18. Bh4 g5 19. g4 gxh4 20. gxh5 Qe8! with an unclear game, but Ivkov does not like such double-edged positions!

17. Be5 Kh7
18. Bf1 Nxe5
19. Nxe5 Ne4
20. Qd1

This is the signal for activity on the king's side. Besides, it also guards against the threat. - Nd2

20... Nd6
21. Nd3 h5?

An old friend! In Larsen's games the flank attack is often the subject of a debate, but here it only weakens the king's position. Moreover, the open rook file is definitely not in black's favour!

22. Nc5 h4
23. Bd3!

An ideal demonstration of the superiority of a centralized bishop against an offside ditto!

23... hxg3
24. hxg3 Rh8
25. Ra1 Bc6
26. Qg4!

A superb attacking move. White threatens not only 27. Nxe6! but also the quiet 27. Ra7!

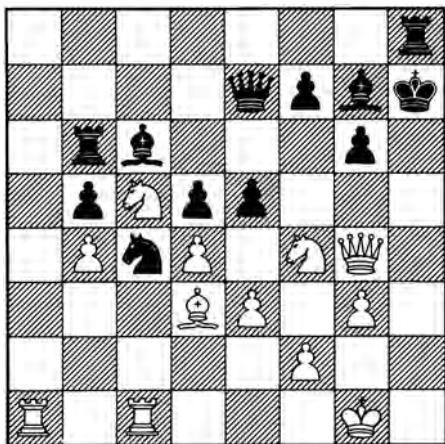
26... Qe7
27. Ne2

The storm clouds are gathering over black's king position.

27... Nc4!?
28. Nf4 e5!?

Probably the best chance. Black could have put up a more passive defence with say 27. —

Nf5, but in that case he would have had a position totally robbed of counter play. Hardly a course to be recommended against the inventive Dane.



29. Bxg6†!

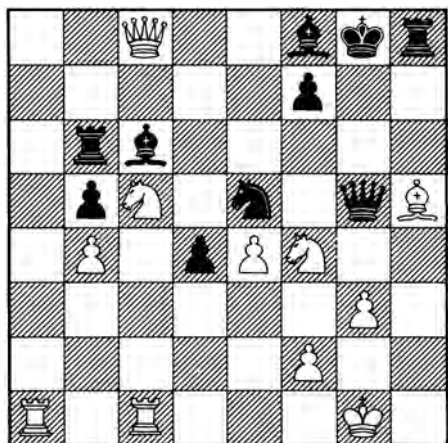
A nice reply winning a pawn. Black can hardly afford to accept this bold sacrifice since after 29. — fxg6 30. Nxc6 Qf7 31. Nxc8 Bxc8 32. Kg2! white's attack would be decisive.

29... Kg8
30. dxe5 Nxe5
31. Qc8† Bf8

A good answer to 31. — Qf8 is 32. Qc7!

32. Bh5 d4
33. e4 Qg5?!

A tactical error missing white's next move. As Larsen pointed out immediately after the game the tempting 33. Rxc5 would have been refuted quite convincingly by the following beautiful line 34. Nxc5 Bxc4 35. Nxe4 Nf3† 36. Kg2 Qxc4 37. Qa8!! (a real Larsen-blow) Black should have played 33. — Qf6, but even then white would have kept excellent winning chances with 34. Ra7! Now comes a little surprise.



34. Nce6!

This fascinating move decides the game, but still it was not too late to throw the win away
 34. Bxf7? Nxf7 35. Nce6 Qh6!-+

34... fxe6
 35. Qxe6† Kh7
 36. Ra7† Bg7
 37. Rc5!

This finishes it, and normally black would resign here. However, being in time trouble Ivkov decides to be shown.

37... Be8
 38. Rxe5 Qxf4
 39. Rxc7 Kxc7
 40. Qe7† Qf7
 41. Rg5† Resigns

19

Monaco, 1968
Black: Gheorghiu
English

1. c4 e5
 2. g3 g6!

Rather a surprising decision as 2. — Nf6 so as to follow-up with a long book line seems natural against one of the most inventive players in the world!

3. d4!?

Accepting the challenge.

3... cxd4

Another interesting possibility is 3. — d6!? (In fact Larsen himself has recommended this »system« for many years. 1. d4 d6 2. c4 e5!? is Larsen in 1977!)

4. Qxd4 Nf6

Also possible is 4. — Qf6!?

5. Nc3 Nc6
 6. Qe3† Be7?

But this is wrong. Gheorghiu seems to be very nervous about his right to castle, (5. Bg5?! Bg7 6. Qe3† Kf8! =) otherwise he certainly would have played 6. — Qe7! After 7. Nb5 Qxe3 8. Bxe3 Kd8 the chances are about equal. Now, however, black must go over completely to defence.

7. Nd5! Nxd5

A sad decision but 7. — 0-0 8. Nxe7† leaves black terribly weak on the black squares around his king.

8. cxd5 Nb8

If 8. — Nb4, white has the strong answer 9. Qc3

9. d6!

A neat move played in order to disrupt his opponent's development.

9... cxd6
 10. Nh3 0-0
 11. Qh6 Nc6

»Sacrificing« his black-squared bishop, but 11. — f6 12. Nf4 Nc6 13. Bg2+ gives white a dangerous attack.

12. Ng5 Bxg5
13. Bxg5 f6
14. Bd2 b6
15. Bg2 Bb7

With 15. — Ba6 he could have forced Larsen to carry on in gambit style, e.g. 16. Bc3 Re8 17. 0-0! Bxe2 18. Bd5† Kh8 19. Rfe1 with the murderous threat 20. Bf3! or even 20. Bc4! Also 17. — Rxe2 18. Rfd1! gives white more than enough compensation for his sacrificed pawns, so Gheorghiu was right, 15. — Ba6?! would have been just too greedy.

16. 0-0 Na5

It is understandable that black wants to get rid of white's strong white-squared bishop, but the price he must pay is high... a totally demolished queen's wing!

17. Bxa5 Bxg2
18. Kxg2 bxa5
19. Rad1

True, some minor pieces have been exchanged, but black's pawn structure is awful, besides, Gheorghiu had spent most of his time (a usual habit!) on the opening, so by now he was already short of time.

19... Qe7
20. Rd2 Rab8
21. Rfd1 Qe4†

Played in order to prevent white from occupying the square f4.

22. Kg1 Rb6
23. h4!

Of course not 23. Rxd6?? Rxd6 24. Rxd6 Qb1† with a draw by perpetual check. The move played is a Larsen special! It combines pressure in the center and on the queen's wing with real threats on the king's wing; quite a deal for one single move!

23... Qe5
24. b3 Rc8?!

Afterwards Gheorghiu claimed this to be a

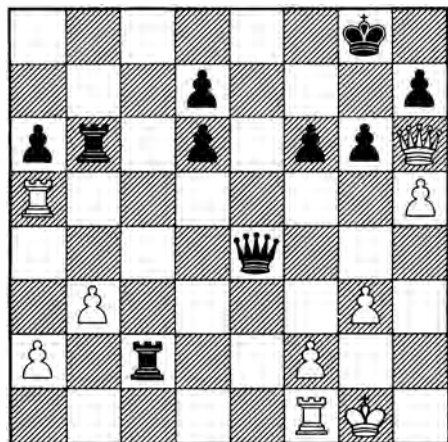
mistake. As an improvement he gave the move 24. — Rc6!

25. Rd5!

White decides to strike whilst the iron is hot.

25... Qxe2
26. h5 Rc2
27. Rf1 Qe4
28. Rxa5 a6

White to move. How does he proceed?



29. Ra4!

This quiet move underlines the fact that black's pieces are too awkwardly placed to help in the defence.

29... Qe8
30. Rg4 Qf8
31. Qe3!

»Accidentally« a rook is en prise! The rest is easy.

31... Rbc6
32. hxg6 hxg6
33. Rxc6† Kf7
34. Rg4

At this moment the Rumanian grandmaster had only seconds left for his remaining moves. chesstouring.com

34... R2c5
 35. Qd3 Re5
 36. f4 Re8
 37. Qd5†

A matter of taste. 37. Qh7† is also quite good!

37... Ke7
 38. Re1† Resigns

After 38. — Kd8 39. Rxe8† 40. Rg8 wins the queen.

20 Monaco, 1968 White: Damjanovic Sicilian Defence

1. e4 c5
 2. Nf3 d6
 3. Bb5†

This is one of Larsen's favourite lines against the Sicilian, but here he plays the black pieces!

3... Nc6
 4. 0-0 Bg4
 5. h3 Bh5!?

He does not trust Bronstein! In the game Larsen-Bronstein Moscow, 1959, the latter played 5. — Bxf3, but without particular success.

6. Re1 e6
 7. Bxc6†

For lovers of the bishop pair 7. a4 or 7. Nc3 are worth consideration.

7... bxc6
 8. d3 Nf6
 9. e5?!

Positionally speaking this looks good since black's pride, the beautiful Sicilian center, is

blown into pieces in one dashing shot! Nevertheless, for pure tactical reasons the move played is a mistake. White should have played 9. b3, intending ..Bb2 and ..Nbd2 with a comfortable game.

9... dxe5
 10. Rxe5 c4!

Damjanovic is invited to win a piece! If now 11. Bg5, the answer would be 11. — cxd3! 12. Bxf6 Qxf6 13. Rxh5 Qxb2 14. Nd2 dxc2, and black has a fine game. Here something funny took place. Damjanovic who was standing a little away enjoying a cup of coffee suddenly discovered that it was his turn to move. He rushed to the table, and before he sat down he simply snatched the bishop with his rook just as if he would say: »There I got you«!

11. Rxh5?!

Why not the »normal« 11. d4?!

11... Nxe5
 12. Ne5 Nf6
 13. Nxc4 Be7
 14. Nbd2 0-0
 15. Nb3 Nd5

A position is reached in which black's advantage is indisputable. Still, the win is far from easy and can only be obtained with great difficulty and utmost care! In this phase of the game Larsen is second to none, and the rest is extremely instructive.

16. Bd2 Bb4
 17. Bxb4 Nxb4
 18. a3 Nd5
 19. Qd2 Nb6
 20. Nba5 Qc7
 21. Re1 Rad8
 22. b4 Rd5!

The rook is well posted here. Instead, 22. — c5?! would have been an inaccuracy because of 23. b5?

23. Ne3 Rd7
 24. Ng4 c5! [esstour.com](http://www.esstour.com)

Well timed. Now white cannot reply 25. Qg5 as 25. — Nd5 26. c4 f6 27. Qd2 Nf4! is in black's favour.

25. b5 c4
26. Nc6 cxd3

Nice to get rid of this weak pawn.

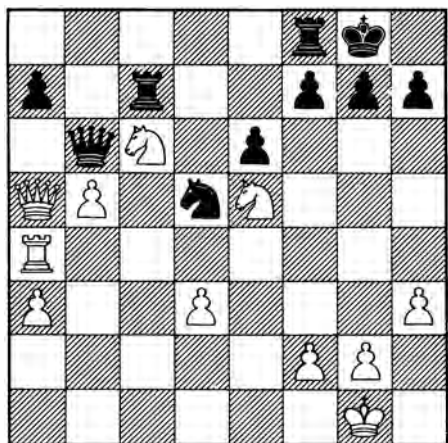
27. cxd3 Qd6

Suddenly it is white who has a weak pawn.

28. Nge5 Rc7
29. Qa5 Nd5
30. Re4 Qc5!

Almost all the white men are busy on the queen's side so a direct attack against the naked king seems natural.

31. Rc4 Qb6
32. Ra4



32... Rb7!!

This is the whole point. It forces Damjanovic, already in time trouble, to make a difficult choice. Should he capture the pawn and thus let all his pieces be lured away from the protection of his king, or should he exchange queens thus satisfying himself with a probably lost endgame?

33. Qxb6

True, a dying man can eat anything, but even he knows his own limitations! Here Damjanovic decides to trust Larsen, and as we shall see not without justification. After 33. Nxa7?? Qc5 34. Nec6 Qc1† 35. Kh2 Qc2 it would hardly be possible to guard against black's numerous threats.

33... axb6
34. Rc4 Ra8
35. a4 f6
36. Nf3 Kf7
37. g3 Rd7
38. Kf1 e5!

Now Larsen is ready for the decisive manoeuvre: Nc7..Ne6..Nc5, with an easy win, but...Damjanovic is in grave time pressure!

39. Ke2?

Hastens the end. Perhaps white thought that he could trap Larsen's bold knight?

39... Rxa4!
40. Rxa4 Nc3†
41. Kd2 Nxa4
42. Nfxe5† fxe5
43. Nxe5† Ke6
44. Nxd7 Kxd7
Resigns

Actually Damjanovic did seal a move, but later analysis showed that it was impossible to trap the brave knight. After 45. d4 it jumps to b2, and out into freedom again.

21

Colorado, 1968 White: Browne Dutch Defence

1. c4 f5
2. g3 Nf6
3. Bg2 e5?!

This move is considered to be of dubious

value, but perhaps it is a good choice against a young »booked-up« player like Browne!

4. d4 exd4
5. Qxd4 Nc6
6. Qd1

He is not tempted to leave the book with 6. Qe3†!?

6... Bb4†
7. Nd2

Objectively this must be regarded as less accurate than 10. Bd2 which continues the fight for the important central square d5. Then, by means of: Nc3 .. Nh3 .. Nf4 and Nd5, he could have kept a firm grip of that vital square.

7... 0-0
8. Nf3

Again, 8. Nh3 looks better.

8... a5
9. a3 Bc5
10. Nb3 Bb6
11. 0-0

But not 11. c5?! Ba7 12. Be3 d6

11... d6
12. Nbd4 Ne5
13. Qc2 Nxf3†
14. Nxf3 a4!

White has an isolated c-pawn and a big hole on b3. Again Bent Larsen's unusual play in the opening has proved to be a success.

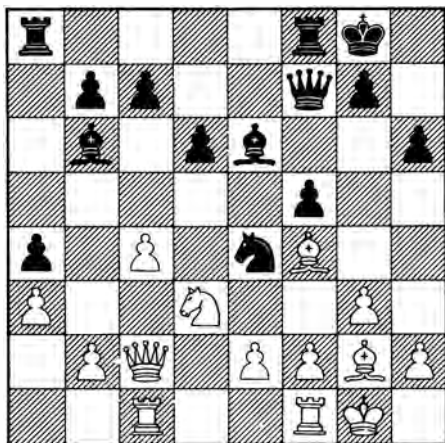
15. Bf4 Ne4
16. Rad1 Qf6

Browne now has a very difficult game. Black cannot only play for attack on the king's side, but can also put pressure on the c-pawn.

17. Ne1

If Nd2? black wins with 17. — Nxf2! 18. Rxf2 g5+

17... Be6
18. Nd3 Qf7
19. Rcl h6!?



It is difficult to decide which of the two good moves: 19. h6!? or 19. — g5!? one should prefer, but Larsen, true to his »style«, of course chose the most difficult to calculate in actual play! In this troublesome position Browne spent ten minutes, leaving him with only thirty minutes for the remaining moves! (Time control at move fifty).

20. c5 Bb3
21. Qb1 Nxc5
22. Nxc5 Bxc5
23. Bxb7 Rb8
24. Bf3 Bd5
25. Bxd5 Qxd5

Now white is hard put to it to find a reasonable move due to the pressure exerted by black's rook.

26. Qc2 Rb3
27. Bd2

If he wants to save his weak b-pawn this has to be done, but now his king looks rather exposed.

27... h5!

The most energetic reply.

28. Bc3 h4
29. Rcd1 Qe6
30. e3?

Weak, as the white squares in his camp now remain terribly weak. He had to try 30. Qd3†

30... h3
31. Rfe1 Qe4!

Forcing white to accept a very unfavourable ending.

32. Qxe4 fxe4
33. Rc1 Rf5
34. Red1 Bb6
35. Rc2 Kf7
36. Rcd2 g6
37. Rd5?

In time trouble Browne commits the decisive error. One can understand that white was eager to exchange a pair of rooks, but this is exactly what Larsen had been waiting for! Browne should have kept cool with 37. Rc1 or Rc2 satisfying himself with an undelicate position, but still alive!

37... Rxd5
38. Rxd5 Bc5!

It turns out that white must lose a pawn.

39. Bh8 Bxa3

Perhaps Browne overlooked the simple back-row mate: 40. bxa3?? Tb1† when he played 37. Rd5?

40. Rd2 Bb4
41. Rc2 c5

Did you think that Larsen missed something here?..Of course not! On 41. — a3 comes 42. Kf1! and white would still be able to put up a fight.

42. Kf1 Ke6

Got it? The answer to 42. — a3 would have been 43. Ke2! but for heaven's sake not 43. bxa3?? Rb1† and mate in two!

43. Ke2 d5
44. Bg7 g5
45. g4 c4

Suddenly white's h-pawn is in danger. No matter how he plays, Browne is lost.

46. Bd4 Bd6
47. f3 exf3†
48. Kxf3 Be5
49. Bxe5 Kxe5
50. Rd2

Browne asks to be shown.

50... Rd3
51. Rc2 Rd1
52. Rf2 Rg1!
Resigns

Nothing can be done against the murderous threat 53. — Rg2

22

Olympiad, Lugano, 1968 White: Reshevsky Nimzo-Indian Defence

1. d4 Nf6
2. c4 e6
3. Nc3 Bb4
4. e3

»On revient toujours à ses premières amours« (Old love dies hard). The Rubinstein Variation has been on Reshevsky's repertoire since he as child prodigy gave simultaneous displays in a number of European countries. The great Rubinstein once visited Lodz (Poland) and here he played a game against the famous boy. Afterwards he stated: »This young man will be World Champion some day«. That was in 1917! and here, some fifty years later, »Sammy« is still on top, playing first board for the Americans.

4... 0-0
 5. Bd3 c5
 6. Nf3 d5
 7. 0-0 dxc4

A matter of taste. 7. — Nc6 is of course equally good.

8. Bxc4 Nc6
 9. a3 Ba5
 10. Qd3 a6
 11. Rd1!?

The crucial line 11. dxc5, is dealt with in game 14. (Tajmanov-Larsen, Havana, 1967)

11... b5
 12. Ba2 c4
 13. Qe2 Qe8!

Until now just a banale repetition of the first match game Portisch-Larsen, 1968. The point is a strong pawn's sacrifice which Larsen discovered in Dundee, 1967, when he analysed his game against Gligoric. Black intends to answer 14. e4! with 14. — e5 15. d5 Nd4! 16. Nxd4 exd4 17. Rxd4 Bb6 18. Rd2 Ng4! and black has a strong initiative. (Larsen).

14. h3!?

Portisch played the modest 14. Bd2!?

14... e5

The first move which Larsen had to play without solid knowledge based upon his analysis before the game!

15. d5 Nd8
 16. e4 Nb7
 17. Bb1 Nd7
 18. Bc2 Nd6

Without too much difficulty black has obtained a solid position, and the game must be considered fairly even; but as usual Reshevsky had spent a lot of time on his first moves.

19. Na2 Nc5
 20. Bd2 Bxd2

21. Nxd2 Bd7
 22. b4 cxb3 e.p.
 23. Nxb3 Nxb3
 24. Bxb3 Qe7!?

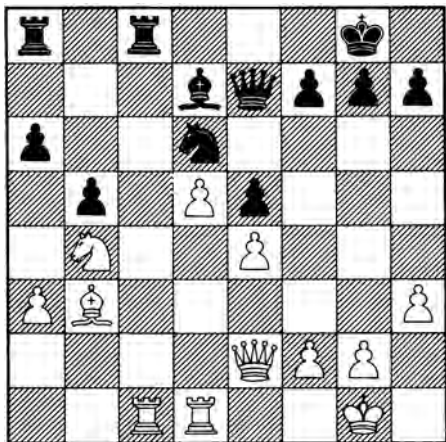
Normally one would expect the »thematic« 24. — f5, but Larsen enjoys to play *unexpected moves*! Another reason is that such quiet moves are much more difficult to deal with than the brutal 24. — f5! especially for a man in growing time trouble!

25. Rac1!?

A standard developing move. From Reshevsky one expects a deeper penetration into the essence of the position and 25. Nb4! was called for, after 25. — Rfc8 26. Nc6 Qf6 27. Rac1 white has a fair position.

25... Rfc8
 26. Nb4??

This is a blunder revealing yet another point of black's last move.



26... Bxh3!

Surely Reshevsky should have seen that this old theme was »on« again? Not 27. gxh3?? Rxc1 28. Rxc1 Qg5† and if 27. Rxc8† black has the simple 27. — Bxc8—+

27. Qe3 Bd7
 28. Nc6 Qf6
 29. f3chesstou h5!?.com

Again and again this theme occurs in Larsen's games. Black must attack on the king's side, otherwise it might be difficult to win the game because of white's firm grip on the square c6. The fact that Reshevsky was in severe time pressure of course also played an important role in Larsen's calculations.

30. Rc3 h4
31. Rdc1 g5
32. Na7 Rxc3
33. Rxc3 Ne8!

The most accurate. Black guards against the threat 34. Rc7, and now plans to improve his piece position generally.

34. Nc6 Rc8
35. Rc2 Kg7
36. Qc3 Rc7
37. Kh1?!

That awful time trouble! However, he did see 37. Qxe5?? Rxc6!-+

37... Kh7
38. Qe3 g4!

This was what Larsen had been waiting for. Now it becomes clear that the white king is badly placed on h1.

39. fxg4 Qf1†
40. Kh2

Of course not 40. Qg1 Qd3-+

40... Nf6

With decisive effect.

41. Nxe5 Rxc2
42. Bxc2 Qa1!!

The elegant final touch. White must lose a piece, e.g. 43. Qf4 Qxe5!

43. Resigns

23

Palma de Mallorca, 1968

Black: Gheorghiu

Queen's Gambit

1. Nf3 Nf6
2. c4 c5
3. Nc3 e6
4. e3 Nc6
5. d4 d5
6. cxd5 exd5
7. Be2 cxd4
8. Nxd4 Bd6!?

Better than 8. — Bc5 9. Nxc6 bxc6 10. 0-0 0-0 11. b3±. The move played stems from Gligoric, who in a previous round, managed to keep a draw with it. His opponent? ... Bent Larsen!

9. 0-0 0-0
10. Nf3 a6

Played in order to prevent the standard manoeuvre Nb5...Nd4

11. b3 Bg4
12. Bb2 Re8
13. h3!?

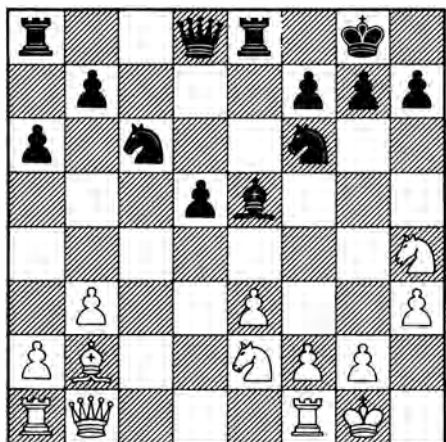
In the above mentioned game Larsen played the less accurate 13. Rc1 which enabled Gligoric to equalize after the fine 13. — Rc8 14. h3 Bh5 15. Nh4 Bg6!

13... Bh5
14. Nh4 Bxg2

Here too 14. — Bg6 is a line worth consideration.

15. Nxe2 Be5
16. Qb1!?

An ambitious idea but the sort of unusual move that Larsen specialises on. 16. Bxe5 Nxe5 17. Nf5± is not »bad« either!



16... Ne4?

After this mistake the picture changes rapidly. Clearly, on 16. — Bxb2 17. Qxb2 Ne5 18. Nf5! is strong, but 16. — d4!? was a very interesting move: 17. Nxd4 (Not 17. Rd1? Nd7!?) 17. — Nxd4 18. exd4 Bxd4 19. Rd1 Bxf2! 20. Kxf2 Ne4! 21. Qxe4 Rxe4 22. Rxd8! Rxd8 23. Nf3 a5! seems to be white's best try, but black's actively placed rooks should guarantee him a draw by careful play. Black could also try 17. Nxd4 Bxd4 18. exd4 Nxd4 19. Rd1 Ne2! 20. Kf1 (20. Kh1?! Qb6!) Qc7 21. Nf3 Ne4!? with interesting complications.

17. Nf3 Bxb2
18. Qxb2 Qf6
19. Qxf6 Nxf6
20. Rfd1

It is time to sum up. Black has an isolated pawn, but what is worse: he lacks the usual active piece-play which normally compensates such a weakness. In a higher sense we may regard Gheorghiu's position as lost.

20... Rac8
21. Rd2 Ne7
22. Nfd4 Ne4
23. Rd3 Rc7
24. f3 Nc5

25. Rc3 Rec8
26. Nf4!

Doubtless the most energetic. The natural reply 26. Rac1 Ne6 27. Rxc7 Rxc7 28. Nxe6 Rxc1! 29. Nxc1 fxe6 30. Nd3 Nc6! gives black some hope of survival.

26... Nd7
27. Rxc7 Rxc7
28. Rd1 g6
29. g4 h6?!

This is wrong, but in a difficult position with only little time to spare such moves come very easily. It was certainly better to play 29. — b5 with excellent chances of ... adjourning the game!

30. Kf2 Ne5
31. h4 Rc8
32. h5 Kg7
33. Ke2 g5?

Short of time, Gheorghiu evidently overlooked white's next move. However, black's position is already beyond the moment of death.

34. Nxd5 Nxd5
35. Nf5! Kh7
36. Rxd5 Rc2!
37. Kd1 Resigns

24

Helsinki, 1969 Black: Westerinen 6th Match Game King's Indian Defence

1. Nf3 Nf6
2. c4 g6
3. Nc3 Bg7
4. e4 d6
5. d4 0-0
6. Bg5! esstouring.com

The book says 6. Be2, but Larsen prefers to go his own way. By the way, the innocent looking bishop move is not quite harmless, and it forces black to fresh thinking from the very start. Other Larsen moves in this position are: 6. h3!? and 6. Be3!?

6... c5

Perhaps a better reaction to 6. Bg5 would have been 6. — h6!? asking the bishop at once. If then 7. Bh4; g5 followed by...Nh5 and, perhaps...c5 is the usual method to obtain dynamic counter-play, but white could also try the inventive 7. Be3!?

7. d5 Na6

The system employed in this game by Westerinen is not particularly popular. If white succeeds in completing his development, then the black pieces will be very cramped. Counter-play must be created quickly, and for that purpose the usual continuations 7. — c6 or 7. — h6, are more active.

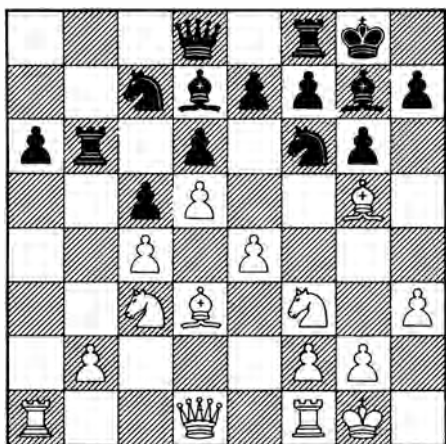
8. h3 Nc7
9. Bd3 a6
10. a4 Bd7?

A serious positional mistake. Westerinen is like a fish in water in complicated and double-edged positions, but sometimes, like here, his positional sense fails him. Obviously he should have played 7. — b6, or even strike in the center at once with 7. — e6!?

11. a5

Of course!

11... Rb8
12. 0-0 b5
13. axb6 e.p. Rxb6



14. Rb1!

A splendid move which shows deep understanding of positions of this type. Black has an isolated a-pawn, but at the moment it is difficult to attack. If it was possible to lure it to a5 things would be quite different. There it would be very easy to attack and almost impossible to defend. On the other hand black cannot allow a white b4, intending ...bxc5, which would leave Larsen too dominating in the center. Also, white is ready to go on (all part in the b4-plan.) with the well-known knight - manoeuvre: Ne1...Nd3±. True to his »style« Westerinen decides to play actively rather than to sit and wait with a passive move such as 14. — e6.

14... e5!?
15. Ne1

Of course not 15. dxe6 e.p. which only would have helped black's stranded knight back into the game.

15... Qe7
16. Bc2 h6
17. Be3 Nh7
18. Nd3?!

Like Fischer and Karpov Larsen knows a lot of middlegame positions and plays them

with lightning speed, but here he simply plays too fast allowing his inventive opponent to be »violent« on the king's wing! The natural move is 18. Qd2!, but perhaps Larsen worried about the razor-sharp 18. — f5!?!-? However, after 19. exf5 gxf5 20. Bxh6 Westerinen would have very little to show for his pawn.

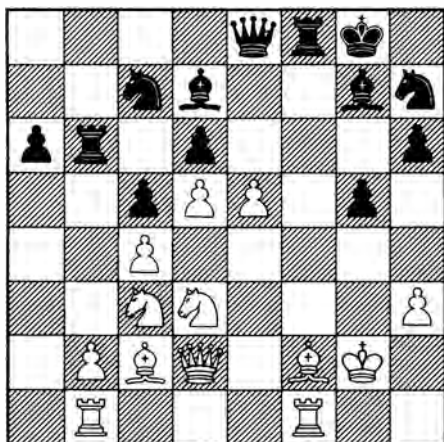
18...	f5
19. f4	exf4
20. Nx f4	Qe8!

Exploiting the fact that white's bishop on e3 is »hanging«. Now the game takes a violent course, and it is not easy to foresee whose attack would prove to be the most dangerous.

21. Qd2	g5
22. Nd3	f4
23. Bf2	f3
24. e5!	

The point of Larsen's previous play. The idea is analogous to Bent Larsen's treatment of his attack in the famous game against Petrosjan, Santa Monica, 1966. In that game (number 12. in this book.) he came up with the incredible 20. e5!! and eventually won with a brilliant queen's sacrifice. According to the master himself, such »unexpected«, brilliant, etc. etc. moves are often found through elimination and we may assume that he also used that method in this game.

24...	fxg2
25. Kxg2	



25...	Qh5?
-------	------

Did he not see 25. — Bxh3†!-? Of course he did! Westerinen thought that the sacrifice would only lead to a draw, and being down 1:5 in the match, he needed a win desperately. After 25. — Bxh3†! 26. Kxh3 Qh5† 27. Kg2 Qf3† 28. Kg1 Qg4† Westerinen thought the game to be a draw by perpetual check since 29. Kh2? would lose to 29. Rf3!, but he seems to have forgotten that there was a third possibility: 29. Bg3!! Qxg3† 30. Qg2, with excellent chances of a win. In this line, even the exchange of queens would hardly save black's disorganized position.

26. Qe3!

Indeed not the tempting 26. e6? Nxe6! 27. dxe6 Bxc3 28. bxc3 Bc6† 29. Kh2 Rxb1 30. Bxb1 g4 31. h4 g3†!!, and black has a decisive attack.

26...	dx e5
27. Nxc5	Bc8
28. Qd3	Bf5
29. N5e4	Rg6
30. Bc5!	

After this move material losses are inevitable, e.g. 30. — Rf7 31. Rxf5! Rxf5 32. Ng3+— chesstouring.com

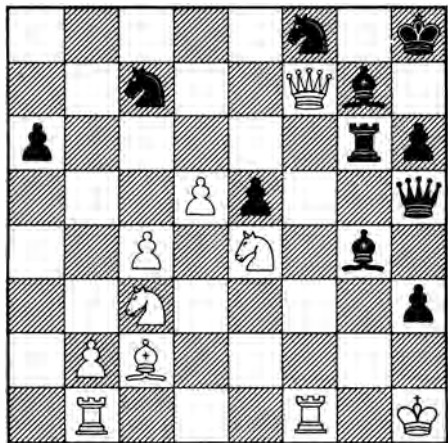
30... g4

A desperate try for a last »swindle«.

31. Bxf8 gxh3d.c.
32. Kh1 Nxf8
33. Qf3

With a beautiful finish in mind, but already there were many winning continuations.

33... Bg4
34. Qf7† Kh8



35. Qxf8†!

The unexpected final touch; Larsen, as usual, sees one move further. However, honestly speaking 35. Rf2 and... Rbf1 seems equally good, but, of course, less amusing.

35.... Bxf8
36. Rxf8† Kg7

It is easy to see that this is the only move.

37. Rbf1

The killer. White threatens mate in one, and if 37. — Rg5, 38. Ng3! traps the queen.

37... Be6
38. dxe6 Rg1†
39. Rxg1† Kxf8
40. Rf1† Ke7

Otherwise black would lose his queen. (40. — Kg7 41. Rf7† Kh8 42. Rh7†! or 42. Rf8† Kg7 43. Rg8†!)

41. Nd5† Nxd5
42. cxd5 Resigns

A fascinating passage of play with Larsen seeing one move too far every time.

25

Eersel, 1969 4th Match Game White: Tal Sicilian Defence

1. e4 c5
2. Nf3 d6
3. d4 cxd4
4. Nxd4 Nf6
5. Nc3 Nc6

As soon as a variation becomes popular Larsen abandons it! 5. — a6, the Najdorf Variation, one of Larsen's earlier favourites, is here rejected for the benefit of the »solid« 5. — Nc6.

6. Bg5 e6
7. Qd2 Be7
8. 0-0-0 0-0
9. Nb3!?

Hardly a surprise, since this move has occurred in several of Tal's games. The book recommends 9. f4!?

9... a6!?

Larsen: »The books recommend 9. — Qb6, but I find the following very interesting«. Tal: »Nowadays 9. — Qb6 is considered to be the strongest move«.

10. Bxf6 gxf6!?

Tal only gives: 10. — Bxf6 11. Qxd6..»with insufficient compensation for his material deficit«. chesstouring.com

11. Be2

Kh8

12. Bh5

Black is not allowed to play...Rg8 for nothing.

12...

Bd7

13. f4

b5

14. Kb1

Qb6

15. f5

Rac8!?

Another interesting possibility was 15. — a5!? with a very unclear position. (Here one could easily consume a lot of time in order to find the »best« move!)

16. Rhf1

a5

17. Ne2

b4

18. Nf4

a4

19. Nc1

Ne5!?

The position is extremely complicated, and both Larsen and Tal had used considerable time calculating endless attacking possibilities, but from now things get worse move by move.

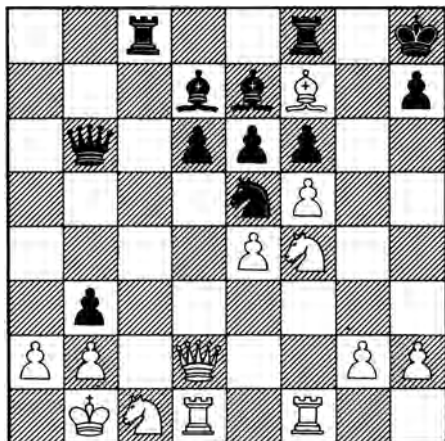
20. Bxf7!

b3!

21. cxb3

axb3!

Much better than 21. — Nxf7 22. fxe6 Bc6 23. exf7 Bxe4† with complicated play not unfavourable to white!



22. Ng6†?

Tal spent some 17 minutes on this move leaving him only 12 minutes for the rest! Nevertheless the move actually played is an error which gives Larsen much the better of it. Tal should have played 22. Bxe6! with about equal chances, e.g. 22. — Rc2 23. Qd4 Rxc1† 24. Kxc1 Qc6† 25. Qc3 bxa2 26. Bxa2 Qa6 27. Qa3 Qc6† is a draw by repetition, since white hardly can afford to play 28. Kb1 Ra8! with a very dangerous attack. But would Larsen have been satisfied with a draw? I think so! After all, he would have been one point up, and... play the white pieces in the next game! However, if not, he could have tried the tricky 22. — Bxe6! (So that white cannot capture with the bishop as above.) e.g. 23. Nxe6 Rc2 24. Qh6?! (24. Qd4!) Rxb2†!! 25. Ka1, (25. Kxb2 bxa2d.c.

26. Kc2 a1 (N)†! wins for black.) and now the quiet 25. — Rg8!! decides the game at once. Tal never misses such »brilliant« lines, so perhaps that was the reason to the mistake 22. Ng6†? Finally, returning to the diagrammed position, white could not play 22. Nxb3? Rxf7 23. fxe6 Bc6 24. exf7 Bxe4† 25. Ka1 Qxb3!! nor could he play 22. fxe6? Rc2 23. Qd4 Rxc1†! 24. Kxc1 bxa2! (Again this terrible motif.) 25. Kd2 (Even »worse« is 25. Kc2 Rc8†) Nc4† 26. Ke2 Qxd1† 27. Rxd1 Nxb6, and black has won a piece.

22...

Nxb6

23. fxe6

Kg7!

Safety first. The variation given above is still tempting, but after 23. — Rc2!? 24. Qh6 Rxb2† 25. Ka1 Rb1† 26. Kxb1 bxa2d.c. 27. Kc2, black would be the first to be mated.

24. Nxb3

hxb6

25. Bxb6

Kxb6

Black's advantage is of course a winning one, but in mutual time pressure a mistake is not far away. chesstouring.com

26. Rf3 Bc6
 27. Qf4 Kf7
 28. Nd4 Rh8
 29. Rb3 Qa6
 30. Ra3 Qb7
 31. Rb3

That terrible clock. Here Tal stopped to write down his moves on the score sheet.

31... Bxe4†
 32. Ka1 Qd5!

With the nasty threat: Bc2, and, of course, e5.

33. Qf1 Ra8

Renewing the threat. Now both players had only seconds left for their remaining moves.

34. a3 Bxg2
 35. Qf2 Rxh2

The rest is silence!

36. Rb5 Qe4
 37. Re1 Rh1
 38. Rxh1 Bxh1
 39. Ne2 Rc8
 40. Nc3 Qd3
 41. Rh5 Be4
 42. Qe1 Bg6
 43. Rh2

However, being informed that they had already passed the 40th move, Tal *resigned* thus allowing the score to be 3:1 in Larsen's favour.

26 Busum, 1969 White: Polugajevsky English

1. c4 Nf6
 2. Nc3 e6
 3. Nf3 Bb4
 4. Qc2 0-0

He could also try 4. — c5 5. a3 Ba5, but Larsen does not fear the »loss« of his black-squared bishop.

5. a3 Bxc3
 6. Qxc3 b6
 7. e3 Bb7
 8. Be2 d6
 9. b4!?

Very ambitious play here from Polugajevsky. Perhaps a built up such as 9. d3...0-0 and only then...b4 is worth consideration.

9... Ne4!
 10. Qc2 Ng5
 11. Bb2 Nd7
 12. Qd1

Here white could create some very interesting problems with 12. 0-0! Nxf3† 13. gxf3±, but obviously Polugajevsky wanted a nice quiet game without double pawns and... without all sorts of sharp Larsen practice!

12... e5
 13. d4 Qf6
 14. dxe5

Naturally white tries to keep the position open for his two bishops. After 14. d5 Nxf3† 15. Bxf3 Qg6 the game is fairly even.

14... Nxe5
 15. Nxe5 dxe5
 16. f3 Rad8

Whatever his opponent has done, Larsen is like a fish in water and already playing for a win!

17. Qc1

But not 17. Qc2? Nxf3†! 18. gxf3 Bxf3 19. Bxf3 Qxf3 with a very dangerous initiative.

17... Rfe8
 18. 0-0 Qg6??

It is impossible to explain why Larsen refrains from his beloved h5 in favour of this blunder which should have cost him a pawn without the slightest compensation.

19. Kh1??

A rare case of mutual blindness. 19. h4! wins a pawn in broad daylight! e.g. 19. — Nh3†? 20. Kh2 Nf4 21. exf4 exf4 22. Rd1+—

19... h5

20. Rd1??

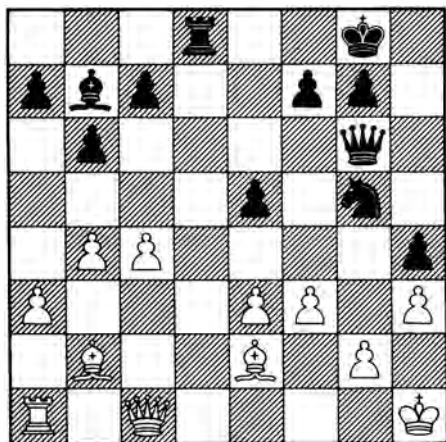
Noticeably upset, and with less than 30 minutes left, Polugajevsky commits a blunder which costs him the game. 20. Qe1 was the given move.

20... h4

21. Rxd8 Rxd8

22. h3

Unfortunately he cannot play 22. Bxe5 h3 23. Bg3 hxg2† 24. Kxg2 Qh5—+



22... Nxh3!

The bold knight is immune because of 23. gxh3 Qg3 24. Qf1 Rd2!—+

23. Qe1!

An ingenious try. Now, if black plays 23. — Ng5 24. Qxh4 Rd2 »with a win«, white has the clever rejoinder 25. Rd1! with a nice back-row mate in reserve.

23... e4!

It now becomes evident that Larsen has seen

and correctly judged further ahead than his opponent. White cannot play 24. f4 as black wins with 24. — Nxf4! 25. exf4 h3 26. Bf1 e3!—+

24. Qxh4 Rd2

With the little trap 25. Rd1? exf3—+

25. Qxh3 Rxb2

26. Rd1 Qf6

27. Re1 exf3

Simple yet strong. The attempt to finish »brilliantly« with 27. — Rxe2? 28. Rxe2 exf3 would have been bad because of 29. Re1! with real chances of a draw.

28. Bxf3 Bxf3

29. gxf3

Indeed not 29. Qxf3?? Qh4†. White's position is horrible. His king cries for constant care and in the meantime black will snatch a pawn or two. Then he will exchange queens thus transposing into an easily won rook endgame.

29... g6

30. e4 Rf2

31. e5

A desperate gasp for counter-play.

31... Qxf3†

32. Qxf3 Rxf3

33. e6 Kf8!

The rest is simple.

34. Rd1 fxe6

35. Rd7 Rf7

36. Rd8† Ke7

37. Ra8 Rf4

38. c5 bxc5

39. Rxa7 cxb4

40. Rxc7† Kd6

41. Ra7 Rf1†

42. Kg2 Ra1

43. Ra6† Kd5

44. a4 b3

Resigns chessstouring.com

Not a faultless game indeed, but one in which you could almost feel the nervous tension of this very important meeting. The game decided who should take first prize, and again we see Larsen winning ahead of two Russians (A Zaitsev being the other!)

27

Busum, 1969 **White: Bobotsov** **English**

1. c4	Nf6
2. Nc3	e6
3. Nf3	Bb4
4. g3	

Just a simple matter of taste. For 4. Qc2, see game 26.

4...	0-0
5. Bg2	d5
6. 0-0?	

However strange it may seem, this mere routine move is probably the decisive blunder! Instead, white should have played 6. cxd5 or 6. a3 Be7 7. d4±

6...	dx c4!
------	--------

Of course Larsen accepts the »challenge«.

7. Qa4

By means of Ne5 and Na3, white normally wins back his pawn with a comfortable position (strong white-squared bishop, mobile pawns in the center, etc.). Here, however, this is not possible. Against 7. Ne5 black has the strong answer 7. — Qd4!, and for the other possibility... it is simply against the rules!

7...	Na6!
------	------

Accurate play. Larsen is ready to play Bd7...Bc6—+ besides, 8. Ne5 could be an-

swered with 8. — Qd4 as above, or perhaps with 8. — c6—+?

8. a3	Bd7
9. Nb5	

Very risky play, but otherwise black would have won a pawn for nothing.

9...	Qe8
10. Nfd4	

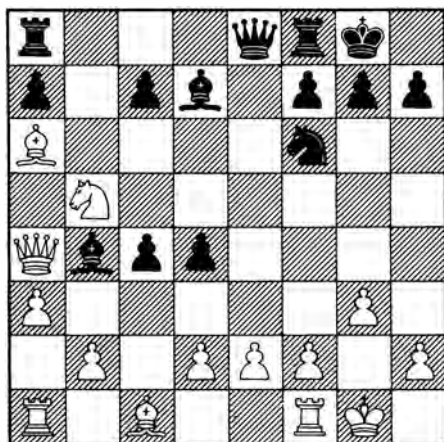
Almost forced. 10. Nxc7 Bxa4 11. Nxe8 Be7! 12. Nxf6† Bxf6 is equal in material, but with a totally dead queen's wing white would hardly be able to continue the struggle for a long time in this variation.

10...	e5!
-------	-----

Also good was: 10. — c6 11. Nc7Nxc7 12. Qxb4 b5†, but this is better.

11. Bxb7	e5xd4
12. Bxa6	

Loses at once, but there was no defence, e.g. 12. axb4 Bxb5 13. Qa5 Nb8! 14. Bxa8 c6 15. Qxa7 Qxe2—+ Presumably both players saw up to here and Bobotsov must have thought he had a fair game, but as usual Larsen has seen further.



12... chesstouBh3!.com

The culmination of black's steadily waxing initiative; now white must lose material.

13. axb4

Bobotsov decides to be shown. The only way out of the mess is to sacrifice the exchange with 13. Nc3, but of course even this would lose in the long run. Amusing is 13. Re1 Qc6 14. f3 Bc5 15. Qxc4 d3† 16. Kh1 Rae8 with threats from which there is no escape.

13... Qe4

14. Bb7

Instant mate arises from 14. f3 Qxe2

14... Qxb7

15. f3 Bd7!

Resigns

Games like this one, in which the champion of Bulgaria is dominated like a novice, show Larsen once more in his dazzling form of the late sixties.

28

Palma de Mallorca, 1969

Black: Korchnoi

Benoni Reversed

1. g3 d5

2. Bg2 c6

3. c4 g6

4. Qa4!?

At this time Korchnoi led the tournament with 4½/7. Larsen had only been able to pick up 2½ (!) so naturally he decides to vary from the normal (drawish) 4. cxd5 cxd5 5. d4, besides, playing for complications right from the start, is indeed Larsen in a nutshell.

4... d4!?

Korchnoi is one of the finest specialists on the white side of a Benoni, so why not try it

out with colours reversed? A good alternative to the sharp text is 4. — e6.

5. Nf3 Bg7

6. 0-0 e5

7. d3 Ne7

8. Nbd2 0-0

9. b4 Nd7

10. Rb1 a5

11. b5

He must do this since 11. a3 Nb6 12. Qb3 axb4 13. axb4 Na4! leaves black with a fine game.

11... c5

12. e3 dxe3!

Clearly the best move. 12. — Ra7?!, to reduce the strength of white's fianchettoed bishop, looks natural, but after 13. exd4 cxd4 15. Ba3± white's advantage would be indisputable, and also 13. — exd4 14. Re1± is unacceptable for black.

13. fxe3 Ra7

14. Qc2 b6

15. Ne4 Nf6

16. Nxf6†

Because 16. Nc3 Nh5 17. e4 f5! would give Korchnoi attacking chances on the king's side which naturally does not suit Larsen at all.

16... Bxf6

17. Bb2 Nf5

18. Rbe1 Re8

Korchnoi has manoeuvred very skillfully and the position can be assessed as roughly even. This should speak for a snap draw, but... Larsen does not like a snap draw, especially not when he is two points down!

19. e4 Ng7!?

This is Korchnoi all over! Most masters would have played 19. — Nd4 20. Nxd4 exd4 with a passive, but defensible position. Korchnoi, however, likes to challenge his opponent with such uncompromising

moves, as if he would say: »Please come and get me! At the same time I must admit that Korchnoi accompanied this »Lasker-move« with the offer of a draw, and... Larsen turned it down!

20. Nd2 h5!

Striking back at once; and much better than the natural but bad 20. — Rd7? 21. Nb1! when black cannot play 21. — Rxd3? because of 22. Rxf6+—, here 21. — Bg5 22. Bh3! also gives white a clear advantage.

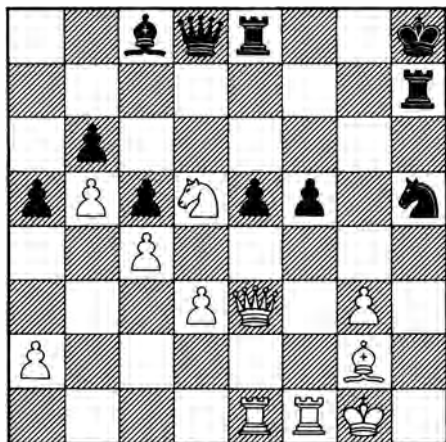
21. Nb1 h4
22. Nc3 hxg3
23. hxg3 Nh5
24. Nd5 Bg5
25. Qf2 f6
26. Bc1 Bxc1
27. Rxc1 f5!

Again Korchnoi prefers to defend in the active way and the move played is undoubtedly the best. If 27. — Rf7 white would be able to increase his pressure undisturbed by means of 28. Bf3...Kg2 and a quick occupation of the important rook's file. Interesting is 27. — Be6!?, but white is not forced to accept the pawn sacrifice. (in fact that would lead to a draw.) Instead, he could continue as above, or perhaps, try 29. Qe3!?, still having the better of it. Moreover, Korchnoi was already in time trouble and had to play the remaining moves without having any clear plan.

28. Qe3 Rh7
29. Rce1 Kh8
30. exf5?

Played in order to take advantage of Korchnoi's increasing time trouble.

30... gxf5



31. g4!? Nf6?

The great defender goes astray! Korchnoi saw that 31. — fxg4? would lose to 32. Be4+—. We may assume that he also saw the trick 31. gxf5?? Ng4!, but such lines, partly based upon tactical tricks, are certainly not sufficient against a player of Larsen's capacity! In server time trouble Korchnoi fails to find the right answer to white's ingenious 31. g4!, and immediately he is placed in a very difficult position. Black should have played 31. Ng7! intending 32. — Rh4! with equality.

32. Nxf6 Qxf6
33. gxf5 Bxf5?!

A better chance was 31. — Rh5!±.

34. Qf3 Rhf7?

Probably the decisive inaccuracy. In his book, »Ich spiele auf Sieg«, Larsen gives the following line, 34. — Rf8 35. Kf2 »with black difficulties in the f-file«. However, an earlier article in the Danish chess magazine, »Skakbladet«, prefers the move 35. Rf2, but with the same text as above! - Korchnoi should have played 34. — Rf8! intending to answer 35. Kf2 with 35. — e4! and 35. Rf2 with 35. — Qh4! in both cases black should

be able to equalize without too much difficulty!

35. Qh5† Kg7
36. Bd5 Rff8
37. Rf2!

Forcing an easily won ending. Not 37. Re2? Bg6!, and black survives.

37... Bg6

What else?

38. Rxf6 Bxh5
39. Rxb6 Bf3
40. Rd6 Rf4
41. Bxf3 Rxf3
42. Rd5 Kf6
43. Kg2 Rf5
44. Re3 Rc8
45. Rf3

Now black could resign with an easy conscience!

45... a4
46. Rxf5 Kxf5
47. Kf3 a3
48. Ke3 Rh8
49. Rxc5

Just in case! Larsen could also win with 49. b6, winning the a- and c-pawns for the b-pawn, but two connected passed pawns are probably the best life assurance one can imagine.

49... Rh2
50. b6 Rxa2
51. d4 Ke6
52. Rxe5† Kd7
53. Ra5 Kc6
54. c5 Rh2
55. Ke4 Resigns

29

Palma de Mallorca, 1969

Black: Panno

King's Indian Reversed

1. g3 g6
2. Bg2 Bg7
3. Nc3!?

Slightly unusual; but as already mentioned, Larsen likes to go his own ways.

3... e5
4. d3 Nc6!?
5. f4 d6
6. Nf3 Ne7
7. 0-0 0-0
8. e4 h6

A hybrid or not; the moves follow a main line of the Closed Sicilian, but without the usual black initiative on the queen's wing. (Instead of 4. — Nc6!? Panno could have played 4. — Ne7 intending 5. — c5 with a real »Closed«.)

9. Be3 Nd4
10. Qd2 Kh7
11. Rae1 Be6
12. Nh4

The most energetic reply. White could try the prophylactic 12. Kh1±, but Larsen wants more.

12... exf4
13. gxf4 Nec6
14. Nf3

Not 14. Qf2? Nxc2! or 14. Bf2?! g5!±

14... Nxf3†
15. Rxf3 f5?!

A mixture of moves. 15. — Nd4! first was more accurate.

16. Kh1 Qf6
17. Nd5!

Avoids the tempting variation 17... d4? fxe4

18. Nxe4 Qf7 19. d5! Bxd5 20. Ng5†!
with a win, because of the prosaic 17. —
Nxd4! 18. e5 dxe5 19. fxe5 Nxf3 20. exf6
Nxd2 21. fxe7 Rfd8

17... Qf7
18. c4 Rae8
19. Qf2 a6?

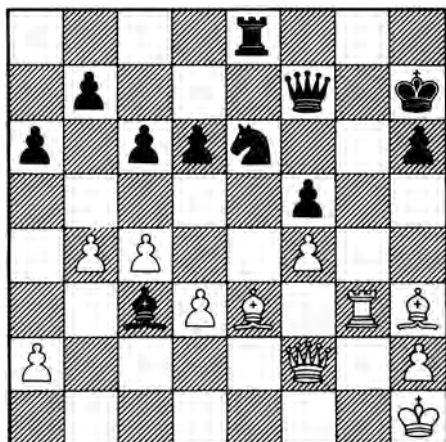
This is an important waste of time. The threat against the a-pawn should have been neglected, but Panno, already in time trouble, decides to eliminate this possibility once and forever. 19. — Nd8 would have been the proper move.

20. b3 Nb8
21. Bc1 c6
22. Ne3 Nd7
23. exf5 Bxf5
24. Nxf5 gxf5
25. Rxe8 Rxe8
26. Bh3!

Now it is clear that Panno is faced with some difficulties. The strong text prevents black from playing Nf6, besides, it prepares an occupation of the open knight-file. Needless to say, Larsen is in his element in such positions!

26... Nc5
27. b4 Ne6
28. Be3 Bc3
29. Rg3!?

With this bold move Larsen must have paid special attention to Panno's increasing time trouble, since nothing was wrong with the natural 29. a3±.



29... Qf6?!

A nervous reaction. He should have taken up the challenge with 29. — Bxb4! e.g. 30. Qb2 Be1! (not 30. — Bc5 31. d4 Ba7 32. d5! Bxe3 33. dxe6 Rxe6 34. Bxf5†, +—) now, after 31. Rg1 Bh4 it is not quite clear, if white has anything real to show for his pawn.

30. a3 Re7
31. Rg1 Ng7
32. Bb6

Otherwise Panno could reduce the material still further with Rxe3! and Bd4.

32... Qe6
33. Qc2 Bf6
34. Qg2 Qf7
35. a4!!

A very fine move. Sometimes such an innocent looking pawn move is much more beautiful than an everyday sacrifice at, e.g. h7. The plan behind the pawn move is to create an open file for the rook, and perhaps, a new diagonal for the king's bishop. So innocent and yet so ambitious!

35... Re8
36. Qf3 Bd8
37. Bf2 Nh5?

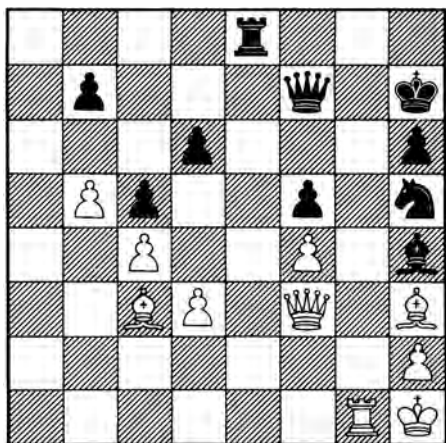
With only seconds left for his remaining moves Panno commits a grave mistake which loses almost at once. However, even without this blunder black would hardly have been able to survive, his position being too exposed.

38. Bd4

What a wonderful diagonal. The threat is 39. Qxh5!

- | | |
|----------|-------------|
| 38... | Rg8 |
| 39. Rb1 | Bh4 |
| 40. b5 | axb5 |
| 41. axb5 | c5 |
| 42. Bc3 | Re8 |
| 43. Rg1 | |

Renewing the threat 44. Qxh5!. Besides, Larsen's sly move contains a little trap.



- | | |
|-------|-------------|
| 43... | Rg8? |
|-------|-------------|

He falls into it.

- | | |
|-----------|----------------|
| 44. Bxf5! | Resigns |
|-----------|----------------|

30 Palma de Mallorca, 1969 White: Medina King's Indian Reversed

- | | |
|--------|------------|
| 1. e4 | g6 |
| 2. Nc3 | Bg7 |
| 3. g3 | |

Trying to reach the Closed Sicilian, one of Medina's pet variations, but in Larsen's famous black notebook the Spanish IM is characterized as a person who normally plays 1. e4 and answers 1. — c5 with 2. Nc3. Naturally Larsen decides not to welcome his opponent with an early c5, but to opt for a lesser known variation of the King's Indian Reversed.

- | | |
|---------|------------|
| 3... | e5 |
| 4. Bg2 | d6 |
| 5. d3 | Be6 |
| 6. h4?! | |

Unusual, ...and bad! 6. Be3 with a set up as in the »Closed«, is much better.

- | | |
|---------|------------|
| 6... | Nf6 |
| 7. Nh3? | |

White consistently carries out his plan which, unfortunately, turns out to be quite wrong.

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| 7... | Nc6 |
| 8. Nd5 | Bxd5 |
| 9. exd5 | Ne7 |
| 10. c3 | h6 |
| 11. Qb3 | Qc8 |
| 12. Be3 | 0-0 |
| 13. 0-0-0 | |

A somewhat risky decision, but because of the awkwardly placed white knight, Larsen would have had the better of it anyway.

- | | |
|----------|------------|
| 13... | a5 |
| 14. a4 | c6 |
| 15. dxc6 | bx6 |

16. Qa3
17. Bd2

Nf5
Rb8

How nice to get such a position in a last round, especially since Petrosjan had already drawn his final game! Stand before the last round: Larsen-Petrosjan 11, Korchnoi-Hort 10.

18. h5 g5
19. Ng1

Who is able to give Larsen 3 tempi in advance??

19... c5
20. Qa2 Qa6
21. Kc2 Rfc8
22. Ne2 e4
23. Bc1

Equally hopeless is 23. dxe4 Qxe2 24. exf5 Qxf2→

23... d5
24. Rhe1

Finally completing his development, but alas...too late!

24...

Nd4†!

Here there are already many ways to win, but the way chosen is indeed the most attractive.

25. cxd4 exd3†!
26. Rxd3 cxd4†
27. Kd2 Ne4†
28. Bxe4 dxe4
29. Ra3

If possible 29. Rb3 Qc4! is even worse.

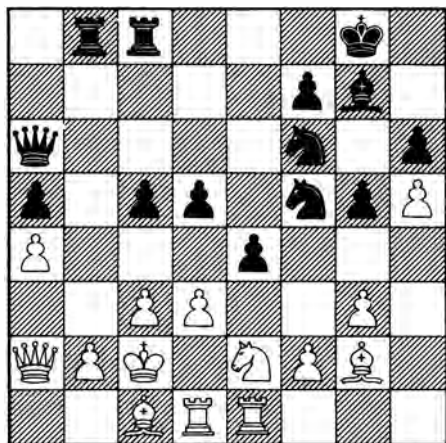
29... Qc6
30. Qb1 d3
31. Ng1

If 31. Nc3 Bxc3† 32. Rxc3 Qxc3†!

31... Qc5!

The quiet point of the combination initiated with 24. — Nd4†!

32. Ra1 Qxf2†
33. Kd1 Bc3
34. bxc3 Rxb1
35. Rxb1 Qc2†



According to Najdorf, we now have two gentlemen in chess! - Once Najdorf was in a winning position against Larsen; the Dane went on allowing himself to be mated. After the game Najdorf stated, »Larsen is a real gentleman who also pays attention to the spectators«.

»A REAL PROFESSIONAL« (1970-77)

1970 was a good year for Larsen. At the grandmaster tournament in Lugano he started with five successive wins and after that, the first place never seemed to be in danger. In the famous match: USSR vs »The Rest of the World«, which took place in Yugoslavia (Belgrad) Larsen played first board and scored $2\frac{1}{2}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$ (Larsen-Spassky $1\frac{1}{2}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$) (Larsen-Stein 1-0) Then, in the four-grandmaster-match in Holland, came the usual set-back!! Spassky won, Donner became second and Botvinnik and Larsen tied for the last 2 places. Some three weeks later he won an unimportant match against Kavalek by 6-2, playing some very fine games!

In 1492 Columbus discovered America! Almost five hundred years later, a new sort of »explorer« - the professional chess master - overflowed the country. Due to Fischer's outstanding results, the interest of chess improved constantly in the Sixties. - (Culminating in 1972, when Fischer won the notorious match against Spassky, and an ordinary person could hardly buy a chess set in the stores of New York!). Gligoric and Larsen are the pioneers, but later a lot of other masters followed in their footsteps visiting this »gentle« country in order to earn some quick money! (At that time a first prize in one of the so-called »Opens« gave the happy winner almost twice as much as a traditional European grandmaster tournament would give and that by only half as much work!

In the summer of 1970, Larsen set off for just another »expedition«, (1968) and again he won both the US Open and the Canadian Open. Later the same year he won a difficult tournament in Yugoslavia and he finished the year with a second place in the Mallorca Interzonal, behind Fischer but winning their mutual game. For the third time B. Larsen was in the Candidates', but in Larsen's case these matches seem to repeat themselves. Larsen won the first match against Uhlmann, but then he was defeated horribly by the coming World champion, R. J. Fischer.

The following years are a true copy of this theme. Some very fine victories in good tournaments but whenever he enters a cyclis for the World ch, destiny ruins everything for him! In 1973, Larsen had a comfortable lead in the Leningrad Interzonal ($5\frac{1}{2}$ /6) still, he only managed to score $4\frac{1}{2}$ out of his remaining 11 games, and for the first time since 1958, Larsen had failed to qualify for the Candidates'. According to Larsen the reason for this was a lack of playing desire due to some misunderstandings in the prearrangement by FIDE. Larsen (and many others) argued before the tournament that the Leningrad group was considerably stronger than that of Petropoliz. It is true that the average of the Elo points were roughly even in the two groups, but the division of the strongest players seemed quite unfair! In the Leningrad group there were 4 players with the highest Elo rating: Tal, Karpov, Korchnoi and Larsen but in Petropoliz there were only two: Portisch and Polugajevsky. Besides, in Petropoliz there were only one single player from the last Candidates' (Geller) but in Leningrad there were five!: Larsen, Hubner, Korchnoi, Uhlmann and Taimanov! Euwe (President of FIDE) has later admitted that there were some mistakes on that occasion, but he blamed Larsen for having sent his protest too late to change matters! - (Larsen played the Interzonal under protest having suggested to be changed or, together with no. five in Leningrad having another chance in Petropoliz.)

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In 1976, Larsen won just another important Interzonal (Biel) and again he was a Candidate. This time the opponent was the Hungarian grandmaster Lajos Portisch, whom B. Larsen had already beaten once before in a candidate match (1968) and even though Portisch had improved considerably in the last years, Larsen was expected to win this encounter even by a small margin. The match took place in Rotterdam and became the overall surprise of the Candidates'. Portisch won with the surprising score 6½-3½ True, Portisch played strongly in this encounter, but due to scandalous conditions as far as the match arrangement was concerned, Larsen lost his usual fighting spirit and played far below his normal standard!

Hardly stopping to breathe Larsen went to Geneva and here he achieved his first(!) 1977 tournament victory, confirming his own statement that if he was only given good playing conditions, he would be able to produce some very fine chess!

This is grandmaster BENT LARSEN, an uncompromising professional, one of the greatest FIGHTERS in chess history, an enormous gifted person (not only at chess!) and last but not least, an interesting and gentle personality whose importance for the chess life in Denmark - and the rest of the world - is paramount!



(The last round of »the match of the century«.) Stein (left) Larsen (right) Back: Geller (left) Gligoric(!) (right) Belgrad 1970.

31

Belgrad, 1970

USSR vs »The rest of the World«

Black: Stein (4th round)

King's Indian Defence

- | | |
|-----------|------|
| 1. Nf3 | Nf6 |
| 2. g3 | g6 |
| 3. Bg2 | Bg7 |
| 4. c4 | O-O |
| 5. O-O | d6 |
| 6. d4 | Nbd7 |
| 7. Nc3 | e5 |
| 8. e4 | exd4 |
| 9. Nxd4 | Re8 |
| 10. Re1?! | |

Hardly to be recommended! The idea behind the ambitious text move is to omit the obvious 10. h3, and ... to avoid endless and

boring Russian analysis! Nevertheless, 10. h3 is correct.

- | | |
|--------|------|
| 10... | Ng4! |
| 11. f3 | Nge5 |
| 12. b3 | Nc5 |

Black's last three moves have ensured him a satisfactory position.

- | | |
|---------|-----|
| 13. Be3 | f5! |
|---------|-----|

How typical of Stein. This energetic answer prevents white from carrying out his plan which was to build up a strong position with ..Qd2 and Rad1. - Stein was a fantastic attacking genius. Unfortunately his outstanding chess career came to a tragic end when he died (age: 38) of a heart attack in 1973. Here some of his most brilliant results: He gained first prize in two of the strongest tournaments of all time (Moscow: 1967 and 1971. He also won three first prizes in the

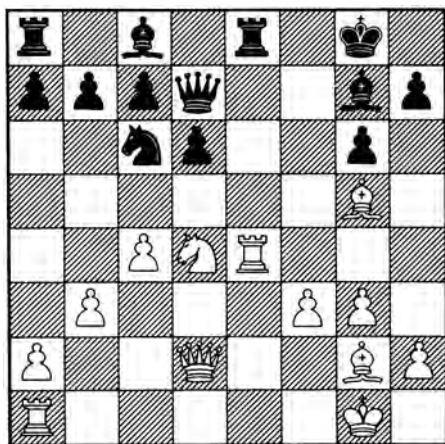
USSR Championships!), and, of course, many, many others.

14. Qd2 **fxe4**
15. Bg5 **Qd7!?**

Another very interesting idea is 15. — Bf6! 16. Bxf6 Qxf6 17. Nxe4 Nxe4 18. Rxe4 Bf5 19. Rf4 Nc6! Not, however, 15. — Nxe4? 16. bxc4 Bxd4 17. Qxd4 Qxg5 18. Nd5! with a murderous attack.

16. Nxe4 Nxe4
17. Rxe4 Nc6??

Unbelievable, horrible etc, etc! A couple of months later the young Russian master, Murej, came up with the incredible 17. — Nf7!! which seems to win by force! e.g. 18. Bh3 Rxe4! 19. Bxd7 Rxd4 with too much »wood« for the queen, or 18. Rael Bxd4†! winning a piece. Finally, both 18. Be3 and 18. Rxe8† would lose, at least, the exchange without the slightest compensation to show for it.



18. Nxc6!?

It is highly possible that this sacrifice should not have given Larsen anything real, but it is definite that without it white would be in trouble, e.g. 18. Rxe8† Qxe8 19. Be3 Qxe3†! also 18. Be3 Rxe4 19. fxe4 Ne5 is

clearly better for black, so the bold exchange sacrifice is white's only chance to get out of the mess!

18... Rxe4

Indeed not 18. — Bxa1? 19. Ne7† Kh8 20. Qe1!! with decisive threats, e.g. 20. — Be5 21. Rxe5+—

19. fxe4 Qxc6?!

He should have accepted the challenge with 19. — Bxa1! An analysis given by the Yugoslavian GM, Janosevic, runs as follows: 20. Ne7† Kf8 21. Qf2† Ke8 22. e5! dxe5 23. Nd5 Bd4 24. Be3 Bxe3 25. Qxe3, »with a very strong attack«. However, 25. — Qg7! (K. Rosell) puts a very serious question to that analysis! Another Yugoslavian commentator, Maric, suggests the following »brilliant« line: 20. Ne7† Kf8 21. Qd1! Be5 22. Qf1† Ke8 23. Nxc8 Qxc8 24. Bh3 Qb8 25. Be6 and wins, but also this is a mere illusion, since black has the much stronger 20. — Kf7! (Even in Larsen's own comments to this game the move 20. — Kf8? is preferred, but in a later dispute he admits that 20. — Kf7! »is possibly better but still with unclear consequences«).

Larsen claims that 21. e5! is very strong, but what if black's king is on f7 instead of f8?? Black must capture this bold pawn, but certainly not with the bishop which would allow a beautiful finish, e.g. 21. — Bxe5??

20. e5!

Not necessary to think twice before playing this which guarantees white a slight but clear positional advantage.

20... **Qc5†**
21. Kh1 **Be6**

Clearly forced. Very bad is 21. — Qxe5 22. Re1, and 21. — Bxe5 22. Bd5† Kh8 23. Re1, with the threat 24. Rxe5, is probably too risky.

22. Bxb7 **Rf8**
23. Be3 **Qxe5**
24. Re1 **Qc3**
25. Kg2!?

If this is better than 25. Qxc3 Bxc3 26. Rcl Ba5 27. Bxa7 c5 is hard to say, but Larsen is an experienced tournament player who knows how difficult it is to meet such quiet moves, especially, when one is short of time, and Stein had only some twenty minutes for his remaining fifteen moves!

25... **Qxd2†**
26. Bxd2 **Bd4**
27. Bf4 **Kf7?!**

Probably an inaccuracy. Why not 27. — Re8, or, perhaps 27. — g5.?

28. Bh6 **Rb8**
29. Bc6 **Bf6**
30. Be3 **a6**
31. Bd2 **Rb6**
32. Bf3 **Rb8**
33. Ba5 **Bd8**

But not the blunder 33. — Rc8?? 34. Rxe6+—

34. Rf1 **Kg8**
35. Bc6 **Bf7**
36. g4

It is extremely instructive to watch Larsen's play in such »simple« positions, and yet, the best is still to come.

36... **Be7**
37. Kg3 **Rd8**
38. Rd1 **Bf6**
39. h4 **Be5†**
40. Kg2 **Rc8**
41. g5 **Kg7**
42. Bd7

How nice to put this move in the envelope. Now white must win material.

42... **Rd8**

Unfortunately black cannot play 42. — Rb8 because of 43. Bxc7 Rb7 44. Bxd6!+—

43. Bg4 **d5**
44. Bf3 **h6!?**

The analysis must have proved that this sharp try was Stein's only hope of survival. Instead, 44. — d4 45. Re1 Bd6 46. Re4 also loses a pawn, but without the important exchange of pawns on the king's side.

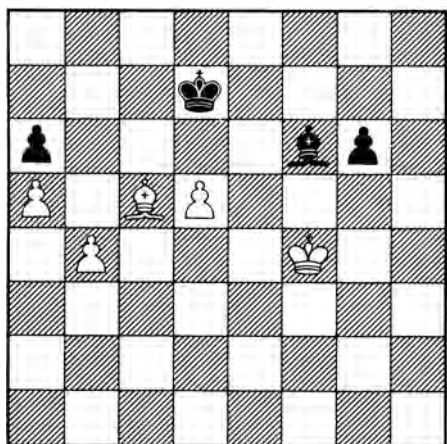
45. gxh6† **Kxh6**
46. Bd2† **Kg7**
47. Bg5 **Rd6**
48. Bxd5!

An important decision, but Larsen was perfectly sure that the coming bishop endgame was a win, and he proved to be right.

48... **Bxd5**
49. Rxd5 **Rxd5**
50. cxd5 **Kf7**
51. Kf3 **Ke8**
52. Bf4 **Bf6**
53. Bxc7 **Bxh4**
54. b4

As a result of his fighting spirit and combinatorial skill, Larsen's mastery of the endgame is often underestimated! And yet, in this field Larsen is second to none, and has produced a wealth of brilliances. This game should help to underline this.

54... **Kd7**
55. Bb6 **Bf6**
56. Bc5 **Bb2**
57. a4 **Ba3**
58. a5 **Bb2**
59. Kf4 **Bf6**



60. Ke4

Larsen's plan is clear. First he will break with b5. After this, Stein's king and bishop would be busy trying to stop both the a- and d-pawn. In the meantime white's task would be pleasant. It would be easy for him to capture the remaining black pawns and then, by means of »Zugzwang«, the win should not be too difficult for a master of Larsen's capacity.

60...	Bc3
61. b5!	axb5
62. a6	Kc8
63. d6	Kb8
64. Kd5	Bf6
65. Kc6	g5
66. Kxb5	g4
67. Kc4	Ka8
68. Kd3	Be5

Why not the amusing try: 68. — g3 e.g. 69. Ke2 Bg5 70. Kf3 Bh4 71. Kg4 Bd8 72. Kxg3?? Bc7!= ? (71. d7+—)

69. d7	Bc7
70. Ke4	g3
71. Kf3	Bd8

If 71. — Kb8, 72. Bd6! decides at once.

72. Kxg3	Ba5
73. Kg4	Bd8
74. Kf5	Ba5
75. Ke6	Bc7
76. Kf7	Ba5
77. Ke8	Bc7
78. Be7	Ba5
79. Bd8	Bd2
80. Bb6	Bg5
81. Bc5	Resigns

A gigantic struggle between two of the greatest masters of all time.

32

Lugano, 1970 Black: Kavalek Larsen's Opening

1. b3	c5
2. Bb2	Nc6
3. c4	e5
4. g3	d6

In this opening almost »everything« is playable. Here, 4. — Ne7, intending to play d5 »in one step«, is an interesting alternative.

5. Bg2	Nge7
6. e3	g6

Still, 6. — d5!? is perfectly playable.

7. Ne2	Bg7
8. Nbc3	0-0!

Not the most accurate. 8. — Be6 is correct because white cannot play 9. Nd5? Bxd5 10. cxd5 Nb4—+

9. d3	Be6
10. Nd5	Qd7
11. h4!	

Only thus! Larsen not only initiates an attack on the black king, but also prevents the freeing move Bh3. lesstouring.com

11... f5?

After this move black has a very difficult position. It is obvious that Kavalek must have underestimated white's chances in the open h-file; if so, he is in for a little unpleasant surprise. Like it or not, Kavalek should have played 11. — h5, with a tense struggle ahead.

12. Qd2 Rae8?!

Probably another false slip. In order to obtain a quick counter play 12. — Rab8 seems natural, but also the more modest 12. — h5 is worth consideration.

13. h5 b5?
14. hxg6 hxg6
15. Nec3 bxc4
16. dxc4 e4?!

Black wants to secure a haven on d3 for his knight, but also white can be happy, since the open diagonal a1-h8 definitely favours the attacking part. (In this case Larsen!)

17. 0-0-0 Ne5
18. Nf4! Rd8

Kavalek declines! With 18. — g5 19. Nxe6 Nd3† 20. Qxd3! exd3 he could win the queen, but after 21. Nxc7! Larsen's attack would be irresistible, e.g. 21. — Kxc7 22. Nd5† Kg6 23. Bf3!!, a beautiful »quiet« point. Against the numerous threats there is no defence.

19. Kb1 Bf7

»Traffic jam« on the king's side, better is 19. — a6 in order to prevent a possible Nb5. At this time Kavalek had only twelve minutes left for his remaining (21!) moves.

20. g4!

A fine sacrifice based on dynamic positional judgement. After this move it becomes clear that Kavalek's king will be exposed to various unpleasant threats.

20... Nxc4

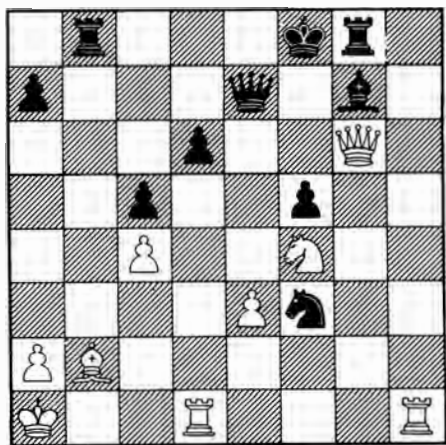
21. f3 exf3
22. Bxf3 Ne5
23. Qh2 Bxc4!?

A desperado to damage white's queen's side pawn formation. Instead, 23. — Rfe8 24. Nb5! loses without a fight, e.g. 24. — Nc8 (Nxf3 25. Qh8†! is mate.) 25. Qh7† Kf8 26. Bd5!+—

24. bxc4 Nxf3
25. Qh7† Kf7
26. Nxd5 Rfg8
27. Nxe7 Rb8

Has Larsen over-reached?

28. Ka1 Qxe7
29. Qxc6† Kf8



No! Now observe Larsen's genius!

30. Ne6†! Qxe6
31. Bxc7†

It is possible that Kavalek, in his awful time trouble, only expected 31. Qxe6?? Bxb2† with a draw by perpetual check, but Larsen had seen a little further than his opponent.

31... Ke7
32. Bf8†!!

Elegant to the last. chessstouring.com

32...

Rbxf8

33. Rh7†

Resigns

After 33. — Rf7 34. Rxf7† Qxf7 35. Qxd6† Ke8 36. Qd8† is mate!

Definitely one of Larsen's most inspired games and ... with his »own« opening!

33

Solingen, 1970 5th Match Game Black: Kavalek King's Indian Defence

1. c4

Nf6

2. Nc3

g6

3. e4

Not the Grunfeld this time!

3...

d6

4. d4

Bg7

5. Nf3

0-0

6. h3!?

One of Larsen's pet variations against the King's Indian, and not so harmless as it looks like. The most popular is of course 6. Be2

6...

e5!?

Kavalek wants a real King's Indian, and it is difficult to blame him for that. Nevertheless, 6. — c5, transposing into the narrow waters of the so-called Maroczy Bind, is a good alternative.

7. d5

Nh5!?

This move and his next introduce complications; but with a firm grip in the center white can only be happy with this sharpening of the game. A more »neutral« move is 7. — Nbd7, when there could follow: 8. Be3 Nc5 9. Nd2 a5 10. g4 c6 with an unclear game (Larsen-Westerinen Helsinki, 1969)

8. Nh2!

According to the established theorist, Pachman, this »ugly« move is the most suitable to demonstrate the drawback in black's aggressive play. White prevents the freeing f5 (8. — f5? 9. exf5!) besides, he is ready to play Be2 with a clear advantage, e.g. 8. — c5 9. Be2 Nf4 10. Bf3 f5 11. h4 Nd7 12. g3± (Kavalek-Yepez, Caracas 1970)

8...

Bf6!?

Black has relied on this novelty, presumably missing White's bold reply.

9. Be2

Ng7

10. h4!

Brilliantly introducing a dangerous new possibility for his rook and queen. Black must accept the sacrifice, otherwise Larsen's spatial advantage would be too dominating.

10...

Bxh4

11. Qd2!

This is the true point of white's combination initiated with 8. Nh2, already Larsen has a strong attack.

11...

h5

Here Kavalek took a »sleep« for forty minutes! Still, the move is forced, since he cannot allow white to block the h-pawn.

12. Qh6

Be7

13. g4

g5!?

Kavalek had relied on this as a saving clause, but Larsen is already so well organized that black's plan just boomerangs.

14. gxf5

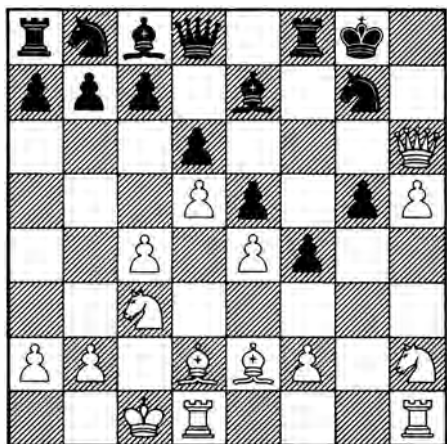
f5

15. Bd2!

Efficient, unpretentious development is the magic formula.

15...

f4



16. 0-0-0

It is obvious that Kavalek has missed the bus! He cannot trap Larsen's bold queen, he is seriously behind in development and last but not least, how does he protect the weak g-pawn?

16... Nbd7
17. Tdgl Rf7
18. Nf3

Forcing the win of a pawn.

18... Nf8
19. Nxcg5 Rf6
20. Qxcg7 Kxcg7
21. Ne6† d.c. Kh7
22. Nxd8 Bxd8
23. Bg4

And now the »bad« bishop disappears. The rest is simple!

23... Bxcg4
24. Rxcg4 Rf7
25. f3 Nd7
26. Be1 a6
27. Nd1

Larsen has no need to hurry, with a sound extra pawn on the king's side and ideal squares for his minor pieces the win is only a question of time.

27... Bf6
28. Nf2 Rg8
29. Rxcg8 Kxcg8
30. Ng4 Rh7
31. Bf2 Kf7
32. b4!

Now white dominates the whole board.

32... b6
33. Kd2 Be7
34. Kd3 Rh8
35. a4 Ra8?!

In desperate time trouble Kavalek's resistance disintegrates and the text allows Larsen a quick finish.

36. Nh6† Kf8
37. Rg1 Ke8
38. Rg8† Bf8
39. Bh4 a5
40. b5 Nc5†
41. Kc2 Nxa4
42. Nf5 Kf7
43. Rg1 Resigns

White's passed pawn must cost black a piece.

34

U. S. »Open«, Boston, 1970 White: Weinstein Sicilian Defence

1. e4 c5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. d4 cxd4
4. Nxd4 Nf6
5. Nc3 d6
6. Bc4 e6
7. Be3

A comparatively new line at the time and much more aggressive than the usual 7. Bb3. The variation stems from the Yugoslavian grandmaster, Velimirovic, who has won

dozens of brilliances with it, and turned it to become more popular than even 6. Bg5 - This game took place in the ultimate round and Larsen led the tournament by half a point (Larsen 9½, Benko 9, R. Byrne-Kavalek etc. 8½. Also in this round: Benko plays Kavalek.)

7... **Be7**
8. Qe2 **a6!?**

Normally Larsen does not feel inclined to conduct theoretical discussions on fashionable affairs, but we may assume that he has something up his sleeve. The continuation 8. — 0-0 is of course playable, but then white would have a fixed target (Larsen's king!) and a promising »self-playing« attack.

9. 0-0-0 **Qc7**
10. Bb3 **b5!?**

Again one of these transpositions which confuses a less experienced opponent, and... gains valuable time on the clock! (Here play is: 2½ hours for 50 moves.)

11. g4

The best. But why use 20 minutes for such an obvious move?

11... **Na5**
12. g5 **Nxb3†**

Certainly not the blunder 12. — Nd7? when white wins with 13. Bxe6!

13. axb3 **Nd7**
14. h4!?

White could also try 14. Nf5!?, but here Larsen would be on home ground. In the Zonal tournament Vrnjacka Banja, 1967, the game Gheorghiu - Hamann continued: 14. — exf5 15. Nd5 Qd8 16. exf5 Bb7 17. f6! (17. Rhel!? is another try.) 17. — gxf6 18. Rhel Bxd5 19. Rxd5 Rg8! and black eventually won. - The subtlety 19. — Rg8! stems from Larsen, who showed it to the Danish team just before the departure for the Havana Olympiad, but partly in vain,

since they did not get the opportunity to try it out. However, after the Gheorghiu game, Larsen could hardly hope for this as a surprise weapon, naturally, he must have prepared something against 14. h4!?, too.

14... **Bb7!?**

This is, I think, what Larsen had in mind when he played 8. — a6!? Instead, two other moves are interesting: 14. — b4!? and 14. — Nc5!? Here one example: 14. — b4!? 15. Na2!? (15. Na4!?) Bb7 16. h5 Qa5 17. Kb1 Bxe4 18. f3 Bf5! = (Ljubojevic - Hamann Amsterdam, 1975)

15. f3

The unclear pawn sacrifice 15. h5!? is indeed worth consideration.

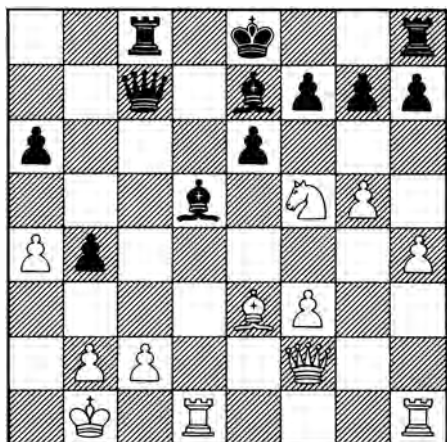
15... **b4**
16. Na4 **Nc5**
17. Qf2?

The most critical moment of the game. After the text white cannot count on obtaining an opening advantage. Instead, Weinstein should have played 17. h5!? after which some highly interesting variations could occur. If black accepts the pawn sacrifice (and why not?) play could develop as follows: 17. — Nxa4 18. bxa4 Qa5 19. g6 Qxa4 20. h6!? (20. Kb1!?) when 20. — Qa1† 21. Kd2 Qxb2 leads to a draw, and 20. — hxg6 21. hxg7 Rg8 22. Rh8 0-0-0! is a serious try for more.

17... **Rc8**
18. Kb1 **Nxa4**
19. bxa4 **d5!**

Larsen has achieved his goal: A promising attack on the queen's wing, and - strong pressure in the center. Black's position is already preferable.

20. exd5 **Bxd5**
21. Nf5



21... 0-0!

Clearly this is the correct way to give up his »material« advantage, because in »winning« the bishop, white leaves himself terribly weak on the white squares surrounding his king. Larsen had already noticed 22. Rxd5?! exd5 23. Bd4 Bc5! holding everything, and against 22. Nh6!? Kh8! is the simple yet strong answer.

22. Nxe7† Qxe7
23. b3

He cannot allow black to play this move.

23... Rc3
24. Rh3??

»Not a move, but a nervous breakdown«! (Larsen) - White's only chance was the pawn sacrifice 24. Bd4! in order to lure black's rook away from the murderous c-file.

24... Rfc8
25. Rd2 Qc7!

A terrible move to meet. The threat is 26. — Bxb3 27. cxb3 Rcl† 28. Ka2 Ral†! 29. Kxa1 Qcl† 30. Ka2 Qa3† 31. Kbl Rcl††, but 26. — Rxb3† is not »bad« either.

26. Rh1 Bxb3
27. Rcl Ba2†!
Resigns

Mate is unavoidable.

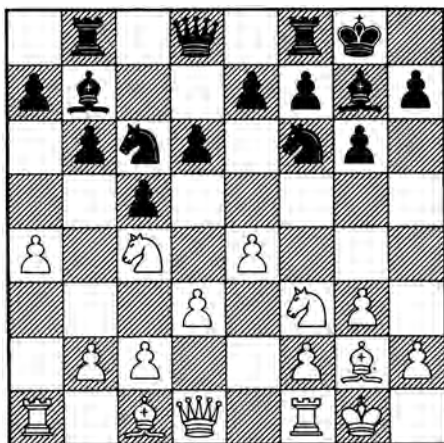
35

Vinkovci, 1970
Black: Gligoric
Sicilian Defence

1. g3 g6
2. Bg2 Bg7
3. e4 c5
4. Nf3 Nc6
5. 0-0 Nf6
6. d3 0-0
7. Re1 d6
8. Nbd2 Rb8
9. a4!?

Another interesting plan in this quiet system is 9. c3!? preparing 10. d4

9... b6
10. Nc4 Bb7



11. h4!? esstouring.com

»The most incredible move of the whole tournament« (Bent Larsen) - Already knowing the uncompromising Dane a little the reader is probably not too astonished at this move, which in fact is a real Larsen reflection. Time and again the Danish grandmaster has stated that such flank attacks do not very often lead to simplification, and here it certainly puts new life into a rather boring position. The main purpose of the move is to prevent Gligoric from playing the freeing 11. — d5 which can be answered with 12. exd5 Nxd5 13. h5!±. A less ambitious player could consider 11. e5 with mutual exchanges and a draw as the most likely result!

11...	Qc7
12. Bd2	Rbd8
13. Qc1	d5
14. Bf4	Qc8
15. exd5	Nxd5
16. Bh6	

Black seems to have overcome his opening difficulties, but Larsen has confidence in the potential energy of his army on the king's side.

16...	Rfe8
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Some annotators have recommended 16. — f6, but that is hardly better, since it leaves black with a big hole on e6, and still white would maintain good attacking possibilities against the enemy king.

17. Bxg7	Kxg7
18. h5	Nf6
19. h6†	Kg8
20. Qf4!	

Powerful centralisation containing a little trap. Now Gligoric cannot play 20. — Qg4? because of 21. Rxe7! winning a pawn.

20...	Nh5
21. Qd2	f6?

Better 21. — Ba8 or 21. — Nf6

22. **a5!**

Quite the strongest move, and in accordance with Larsen's principles of the flank attack. For black this move comes in a very inconvenient moment. He is not quite ready for Nd4, and his other knight is awkwardly placed on the edge of the board. Perhaps it is worth to underline that »play on the whole board« is one of the most marked tendencies in Larsen's arsenal of play!

22...	b5
23. a6	Ba8?!

The lesser evil is to accept the pawn sacrifice with 23. — Bxa6 24. Na5 Nb8, but of course Larsen would have more than enough play for his slight material defect, and by means of 25. Qc3 and ... Kh2 he could build up a very dangerous initiative.

24. Na5	e5
25. Qc3!	

This is the move which Gligoric must have underestimated when analysing his possibilities after 23. — Ba8?!

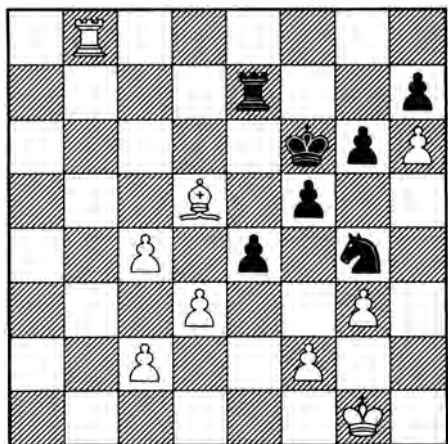
25...	Nd4
26. Nb7!	Bxb7
27. axb7	Qxb7
28. Nxd4	cx d4
29. Bxb7	dx c3
30. bxc3	Re7
31. Rxa7	

This ending must be a win for white. He is a pawn up, his bishop has a great future and for the moment black's knight is out of play. Still, the rest is not without interest.

31...	Kf8
32. Rb1	f5
33. Rxb5	Nf6
34. Ra8	Rxa8
35. Bxa8	Ng4
36. Rb8†	Kf7

Of course not 36. — Re8?? 37. Rxe8† Kxe8 38. Bd5 Nxf6 39. f3+—

37. Bd5†	Kf6
38. c4	e4!?



The old story. Black tries for a last swindle.

39. Rf8†!

A little finesse. Now 39. — Kg5 40. dxe4 fxe4 41. c5 e3 42. fxe3 Rxe3 43. c4! wins outright.

39...	Ke5
40. dxe4	fxe4
41. Bxe4!	Nxh6
42. Bd3	Nf7
43. Rg8	Nd6

The sealed move. Analysing the adjourned position both players came to the same conclusion: A win for white!

44. Ra8	Nb7
45. Ra7	Kd6
46. f3	

The rest is simple. Black's only excuse for prolonging the game is lack of belief in the afterlife!

46...	Nc5
47. Rxe7	Kxe7
48. Kf2	Kf6
49. Ke3	h5
50. Kd4	Ne6†
51. Kd5	g5
52. Kd6	h4

53. gxh4 **gxh4**

54. Bf1 **Ng5**

55. c5

Black has no satisfactory move.

55... **Nf7†**

56. Kd5 **Ke7**

57. f4 **Nh6**

58. Bh3 **Ng8**

Pitifully retrograde!

59. c6 **Nf6†**

60. Ke5 **Ne8**

61. f5 **Resigns**

36

Vinkovci, 1970

White: Tajmanov

Nimzo-Indian Defence

1. d4 **Nf6**

2. c4 **e6**

3. Nc3 **Bb4**

When Larsen wants to play »safe«, he very often chooses the Nimzo-Indian, which in his opinion is one of the most solid systems against 1. d4. However, no rule without an exception; and to call Larsen's play in this game for »safe«, is indeed a cruel joke!

4. Qc2

A little surprise. The Rubinstein-V. 5. e3, is of course the most popular, and by far the most analysed, but sometimes even an author wants to vary a little.

4... **c5**

5. dxc5 **0-0**

6. Bf4 **Bxc5**

An interesting alternative is the double-edged 6. — Na6!?, but Larsen wants a nice quiet game. chesstouring.com

7. Nf3 Nc6
8. e3 d5
9. a3 Qa5
10. Rac1!?

Perhaps this novelty is the real reason behind Tajmanov's avoidance of the main line. Nevertheless, surprised or not, Larsen plays the move considered to be the best against 10. Rd1!?, and it also seems quite natural here.

10... Be7

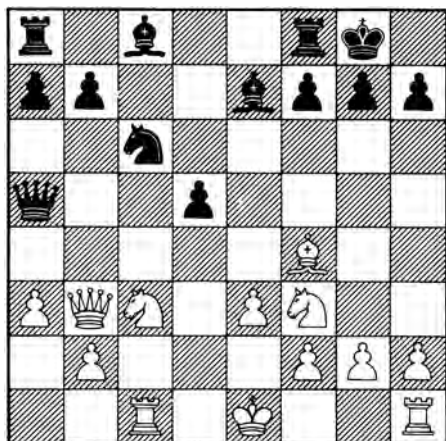
A couple of months later IM Ole Jacobsen found the following interesting variation 10. — d4! 11. exd4 (but not 11. b4? Qxa3 12. bxc5 Qxc3† ♣) Nxd4 12. Nxd4 Bxd4 13. Be2 e5 14. Bg3 Be6 15. 0-0 Bxc3 16. Qxc3 Qxc3 17. Rxc3 Nxe4 with complete equality. This fine line turns Tajmanov's novelty to be rather harmless, and if white wants to try for more than a draw, he must play 10. Rd1!±

11. Be2 dxc4
12. Bxc4 Nd5?

This sharp move is of dubious value; but characteristic of Larsen's style! »...when you gamble against good players they tremble!« — A better continuation would have been 12. — Bd7! with a satisfactory position. It is also worth mentioning that the dubious knight move is a last farewell to the »safety first« approach intended from the very start. From now on he pays more attention to Tajmanov as a person than to the demands of the position!

13. Bxd5 exd5
14. Qb3!

A very powerful move, but also a forced one, since after 14. 0-0?! Be6, play would be even. Now, however, Larsen is placed in an awkward situation. How is he going to protect his weak pawns? The solution to this problem creates perhaps the most fantastic move in his entire career!



14... g5!?

The double-edged, temperamental play of Larsen has gained him widespread popularity in chess (and a lot of fighting victories!) circles. But on this occasion, selecting an ultra-sharp continuation and that for pure tactical reasons, he commits positional »hara-kiri«! His only excuse in doing so is the considerable psychological effect of the move, or, perhaps, a simple lack of alternatives! Better let Larsen speak for himself. Here are his own comments from the Danish chess-magazine »Skakbladet«: »Of course a serious weakening of the king's position, but nevertheless completely justified and that for two reasons. It solves the problems arising from an isolated pawn, and in some variations it could be important that white's king is still left in the center.«

15. Bg3

But not 15. Bxg5?? Bxg5 16. Nxg5 d4!—+

15... g4
16. Nd4??

An incredible error of judgement from a player of Tajmanov's capacity. Instead of the feeble text white should play 16. Ne5! e.g. 16. — Bf6 17. Nxc6 bxc6 18. 0-0 Be6 19. Qd1! (19. Qc2?! Bxc3 20. Qxc3±) c5 20.

e4! with a dangerous attack. (Analysis by Ole Jacobsen. - See also the chapter: The Unexpected Move)

16... Nxd4
17. exd4 Bg5

Is it possible that Tajmanov simply overlooked this natural move when he played 16. Nd4?!

18. 0-0

The only reasonable move, but then, why use half an hour before playing it? After 18. Rc2 Re8† 19. Re2 Rxe2† 20. Kxe2 Bd7†, white would be in trouble.

18... Bxc1
19. Rxc1 Be6
20. h3!?

If black is given the chance he will consolidate with moves such as: ...f6, ...Rf7, and ...Kh8, so white must strike at once.

20... gxh3
21. Be5!?

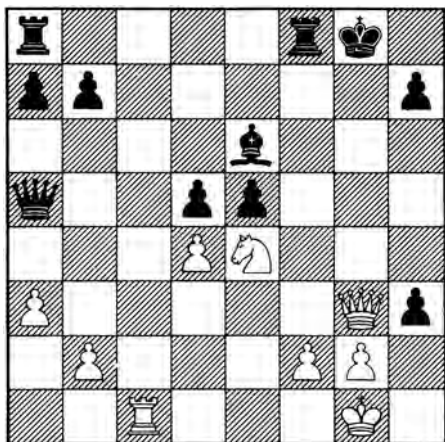
The point of Tajmanov's 20. h3!? But what if black plays the obvious ...

21... f6
22. Ne4

The intended »blow«. Black's answer is forced since 22. -- Qd8? loses to 23. Qg3† Kh8 24. Nxf6 Rxf6 25. Qg5!

22... fxe5
23. Qg3†

What now?



23... Bg4!!

This is the beautiful move on which Larsen had to rely when making his 21st move. The whole point is that white's queen must capture on g4, but that is a white square! With no further checks available the threat against the knight must be respected, and black has won ... a tempo!

24. Qxg4† Kh8
25. Ng5 Qd2

Now white's position is utterly hopeless. Larsen's role as a heroic defender has suddenly changed into the much more pleasant one...the vigorous avenger!

26. Rc7 Qxf2†
27. Kh2 Qxg2†
28. Qxg2 hxg2
29. dxe5 Rac8
30. Rxb7

Desperation. Equally hopeless is 30. Rxh7† Kg8 31. Rh6 Kg7--

30... Rc2
31. Nf7† Kg7
32. e6 Kf6
33. e7 g1 (Q)†
34. Kxg1 Rg8†
Resigns [esstouring.com](http://www.esstouring.com)

Palma de Mallorca, 1970
Interzonal
Black: Uhlmann
French Defence

1. e4 e6

One could hardly expect another move from Uhlmann, for years a devoted »Frenchman,« and together with Botvinnik the finest connoisseur of this difficult system.

2. d4 d5
3. Nd2 c5
4. exd5 exd5
5. Bb5†!?

Normally white plays 5. Nf3 Nc6 and only then 6. Bb5 but if now 5. — Nc6, 6. Bb5 is just a harmless transposition of moves.

5... Bd7!?

Four years later, in the final Candidates' Match between Karpov and Korchnoi, the system with 5. — Nc6 6. Bb5 occurred 7 times, but only in the last (18) of these »discussions«, Karpov succeeded in finding a better system for developing play and got a noticeable edge. According to grandmaster O'Kelly, the Tarrasch variation in the French Defence should be banned because it only leads to a draw!

6. Bxd7†

Avoiding most of Uhlmann's home-prepared variations, but 6. Qe2† is of course equally good.

6... Nxd7
7. Ne2 Bd6
8. 0-0 Ne7
9. Nf3 c4!?

True, in this way black avoids the isolated pawn which normally is the subject of discussion in the Tarrasch variation. Anyway, the d-pawn is still weak.

10. Bf4 Qc7
11. Qd2 0-0
12. Rfe1 Ng6!?

Probably not the most exact. The knight has nothing to do on g6, moreover it soon becomes a welcome target for Larsen's bold h-pawn. Better is 12. — Rfe8 with only a slight advantage to white.

13. Bxd6 Qxd6
14. Ng3 Rfe8
15. h4!

Suddenly black is in trouble. 15. — Qf4? is bad because of 16. Qxf4 Nxf4 17. Nf5± and 15. — Nf4? 16. Nf5! Qc7 17. Ne7† Kh8 (Kf8 18. Qb4!) 18. Ng5! is even worse.

15... h6
16. h5 Ngf8
17. Nf5 Qf6
18. Qf4 Re6
19. Qg4 Rae8
20. Rxe6 Rxe6
21. Ne3 Re4
22. Qg3 Qe6
23. c3!

Larsen's position is already clearly superior, so naturally he rejects the »offered« draw 23. Nd2 Rxd4 24. Nf3 etc. With the simple text Larsen safeguards his d-pawn against the threat from black's rook, and is ready for the unpleasant rejoinder Nd2+ —

23... g5
24. hxg6 e.p. Nxg6
25. Nd2 Rf4
26. Qh3!

Forcing the exchange of queens, after which it should be much easier for white to make the most out of his advantage.

26... Qxh3
27. gxh3 Nf6
28. Ng2 Rf5
29. Re1 Kf8
30. Nf1 Nf4
31. Ng3 Nxe2

31. — Nxh3† 32. Kh2 Rxf2 33. Kxh3
Rxb2 is interesting, but would probably not
give black sufficient compensation for the
sacrificed material.

32. Kxg2	Rg5
33. f4	Rg6
34. Kf3	Nd7
35. Nf5	Rb6
36. Re2	Rf6
37. Ne3	

The pressure on black's »isolated« pawn is
now beginning to mount.

37...	Rd6
38. f5	b5
39. Kf4	a5
40. a3	Nb6
41. h4	

Move by move white improves his position.

41...	Nd7
42. Ng4	Rb6

Black can do nothing but wait.

43. h5	Ra6
44. Rg2	Rb6
45. Rg1	Ra6

The sealed move. With advantages in space
and mobility, Larsen has everything going
for him.

46. Rb1	a4
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A concession indeed, but to allow 47. b3
would probably be too dangerous.

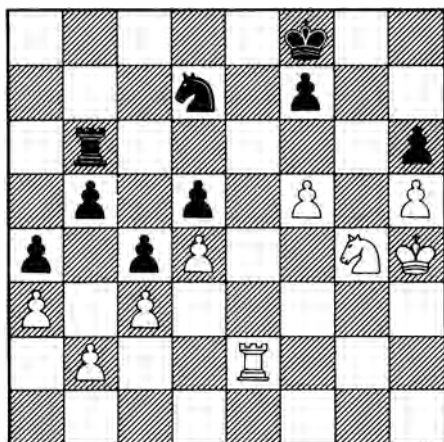
47. Rg1	Rb6
48. Rg2	Ra6

It is certainly not difficult to find black's
moves!

49. Rg3	Rb6
50. Re3	Rd6
51. Kg3	Rb6

The rook ending: 51. — Nf6 52. Nxf6 Rxf6
53. Kf4 is hopeless for black.

52. Kh4	Rd6
53. Re2	Rb6



37

54. f6!

And this is the logical breakthrough, care-
fully prepared long ago. (41. h4!)

54...	Nxf6
55. Nxh6	

Larsen's superiority may be described in
many ways: a strong passed pawn, more ac-
tive pieces, better pawn structure, a more
active king and finally, a permanent weak-
ness to attack, but now with all his pieces.
The rest has few technical problems and re-
quires little explanation.

55...	Ne4
56. Ng4	Re6
57. Ne5	Ke7
58. Ng4	Kf8
59. Rg2	Nd6
60. Ne5	Nf5†
61. Kh3	Ng7
62. Kg4	Kg8
63. Rh2	Rh6?

A final slip in time trouble. His last chance
was to play 63. — Rf6

64. Kg5	Re6
65. Ng4	Ne8

66. Rf2	Nd6
67. Rg2	Ne4†
68. Kf4	Kh7
69. Ne3!	

The time has come for the decisive attack against the weak d-pawn.

69...	Nf6
70. Rg5	Re4†

Passive resistance by 70. — Rd6, does not work because of 71. Nf5!+—

71. Kf3	Rh4
72. Nxd5	Kh6
73. Re5	Resigns

Actually Uhlmann did seal a move (73. — Nxe5), but realizing the natural reply 74. Ne3, which wins a couple of pawns, he later resigned without resuming.

An excellent example of Larsen's superb technique - this was his best game at Palma de Mallorca.

38

Palma de Mallorca, 1970

Interzonal

White: Fischer

Sicilian Defence

1. e4	c5
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This game was, no doubt, the center of attraction at the Mallorca Interzonal. In the late sixties, culminating in 1970, at the »Match of the Century«, there had been a constant battle between Larsen and Fischer for the title of »King of Rest of the World«. In Belgrade both Larsen and Fischer claimed to play top board but for different reasons! According to the current rating list Fischer was ahead of Larsen and the team captain, Dr. Euwe, had decided to put the team in accordance with that list! Larsen, on

the other hand, claimed that Fischer had played very little since his notorious withdrawal from the Interzonal in Sousse, 1967, whereas he had achieved some of the most outstanding tournament results ever seen. Unexpectedly the story had a happy end. When Fischer arrived in Belgrade, he was very eager to play, and he welcomed Larsen to play top board satisfying himself with Petrosjan, whom he beat 3:1! Here, a couple of months later, we see them again, but now the fight is face to face!

2. Nf3	d6
3. d4	cx d4
4. Nxd4	Nf6
5. Nc3	Nc6
6. Bc4	

This is the so-called Sozin variation. Fischer's stubbornness in favouring this system was no surprise to Larsen, but which line would the American Champion choose?

6...	e6
7. Bb3	Be7
8. Be3!?	

Perhaps the Velimirovic-attack?

8...	0-0!?
-------------	--------------

»I am not afraid«, is what Larsen says playing this sharp move. Another set-up is 8. — Qc7 as in the game: Weinstein-Larsen. (34)

9. Qe2

Preparing the »Velimirovic-attack.« Normally Fischer prefers a more quiet set-up which involves the move 0-0, followed by a quick f4-f5. Obviously Fischer is in the mood for a fight, but what about Larsen? Bent Larsen is known as a »long sleeper«, so to start play at 11.30 in the morning did certainly not suit him well. Besides, the previous night Larsen could not sleep so he went up and began to analyse the Velimirovic-attack for hours. Naturally, he was now a little tired and perhaps ready for a quick draw, but facing Fischer's aggressive line he

realized that this would be life and death struggle, and suddenly he became wide awake!

9... a6
10. 0-0-0 Qc7
11. g4 Nd7!?

It was precisely this particular move Larsen had analysed the previous night, so after all lack of sleep also has its advantages! »Old« theory is 11. — Nxd4 12. Rxd4 b5 with a wild game ahead. But not 11. — b5? 12. Nxc6 Qxc6 13. g5 Nxe4 14. Nd5!±

12. h4?!

Out of four possibilities (12. f4!?, 12. g5!?, 12. h4 and 12. Nf5!?) this is definitely the weakest. Strange, because when Fischer visited Yugoslavia (1969) he and Velimirovic analysed the whole system, and reaching this position, Velimirovic recommended the move 12. f4!? Another Velimirovic idea is 12. Nf5!? tested in the game Velimirovic-Bukic. White won, but that line is not to everyone's taste, certainly not Fischer's. When I asked Larsen about this move, he smiled and said, »Sure, it is interesting, but Fischer would never play it.«

12... Nc5
13. g5 b5
14. f3

What else? A typical drawback in variations with Be3 is that e4 is difficult to protect.

14... Bd7
15. Qg2 b4
16. Nce2 Nxb3†
17. axb3 a5
18. g6!?

White must hurry since the initiative already belongs to black.

18... fxg6
19. h5 Nxd4
20. Nxd4 g5
21. Bxg5?!

Another slip. Better is 21. h6

21... Bxg5†
22. Qxg5 h6!

He will not get a second chance.

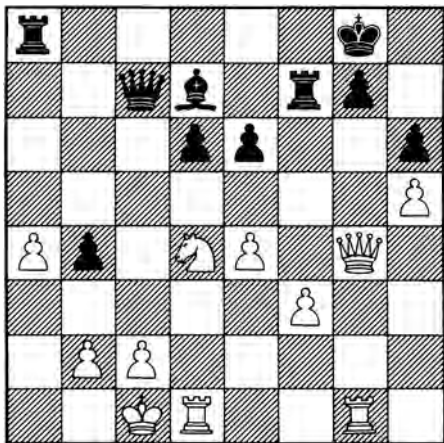
23. Qg4 Rf7!

Preventing the threats before they occur. White's »attack« is over. Now his queen's side crumbles. »A cup of coffee for Larsen, please!«

24. Rhg1

Not 24. Nxe6? Qc8 25. Rxd6 Re7!-+

24... a4
25. bxa4



25... e5!

The fine culmination of Larsen's previous play. The knight is forced away from the protection of the queen's side, and 26. Nf5 Bxf5 27. exf5 Rxa4 is hopeless.

26. Ne6 Qc4
27. b3!?

Desperation. But 27. Rxd6 b3 28. c3 Rxa4 loses at once

27... Qxe6
28. Qxe6 Bxe6
29. Rxd6 Re8

The game is over, but Fischer wants to be shown!

30. Rb6	Rxf3
31. Rxb4	Rc8
32. Kb2	

If white plays 32. c4, the black army penetrates to the second rank with a winning attack.

32...	Rf2
33. Rc1	Bf7
34. a5	Ra8
35. Rb5	Bxh5
36. Rxe5	Be2

Now black's passed pawn must decide the issue; the rest is easy.

37. Rc5	h5
38. e5	Bf3
39. Kc3	h4
40. Kd3	Re2

Back again, please!

41. Rf1	Rd8†
42. Kc3	Be4
43. Kb4	Rb8†
44. Ka3	h3
45. e6	Lxc2
46. b4	Re3†

The sealed move.

47. Kb2	Bd3
48. Ra1	Ba6
49. Rc6	Rxb4†
50. Kc2	Bb7
51. Rc3	Re2†
52. Kd1	Rg2
Resigns	

39 Palma de Mallorca, 1970 Interzonal White: Mecking Nimzo-Indian Defence

1. d4	Nf6
2. c4	e6
3. Nc3	Bb4
4. e3	0-0
5. Bb3	c5
6. Nf3	d5
7. 0-0	Nc6
8. a3	cxtd4!?

One of Larsen's »strange« moves. Like Fischer, Mecking loves the pair of bishops, so actually there could be little doubt about his next move yet, it was played after only some 15 minutes of thought.

9. axb4	dxcc3
10. bxc3	dxcc4
11. Bxc4	Qc7
12. Be2	b6
13. Bb2	Bb7
14. Qb3	a5!?

He could also play 14. — Ne5, with an almost equal game, but the text is more complicated.

15. Qc4!?

Keeping an eye with his king's wing, besides, the threat is 16. b5.

15... Qb8!

The point of Larsen's previous move. Now, both 16. Qb5, and 16. bxa5, is met with 16. — Ba6.

16. Qh4	Ne5
17. Nxe5	Qxe5
18. bxa5	bxaa5
19. Rfb1?	

An incredibly weak move from a player of

Mecking's calibre, walking into the full force of Larsen's queen's side counterplay.

19... Be4
20. Rbd1

A sad decision, but the intended 20. c4, would have been answered with 20. — Qb8!—

20... Rfb8
21. Rd2 Bd5
22. Qd4 Qg5
23. Bf1 Ne4

From an even opening Larsen has reached a clearly superior middlegame position. He has a spatial advantage on the queen's side and the more active piece development.

24. Rc2 Nd6
25. c4 Nf5
26. Qd2

From a person already very short of time one would have expected the modest 26. Qf4. True, due to black's strong passed pawn the endgame would have been difficult, but by no means lost. With the sharp text Mecking plays with the fire!

26... Bc6
27. Be5 Rd8
28. Qc3 a4
29. c5?!

Again a serious waste of time. Mecking should have freed his game a little with 29. Bf4! Qg6 30. Kh1! intending to follow up with f3, and e4. The feeble line chosen by Mecking leaves him with a very cramped position and almost no counterplay

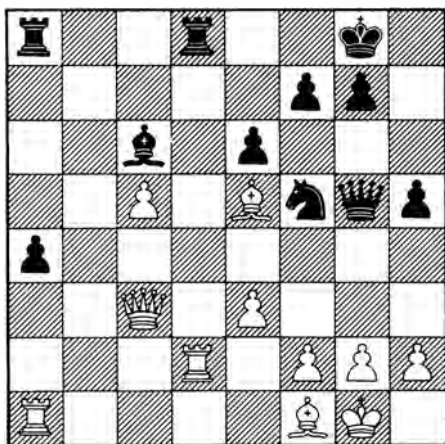
29... h5!

Larsen's »visiting card« is on the board! All of a sudden black's initiative has grown into a strong attack.

30. Rd2?

A blunder which loses at once. Time trouble or not, Mecking should have played 30.

Kh1. Now comes a beautiful forced finish.



30... Rxd2
31. Qxd2 Nh4
32. Bg3 Qf6!

White's attempt to seek release on the queen's side has allowed Larsen a typically Alekhine - like combination. Now, if Mecking plays the obvious 33. Re1, Larsen would have the pleasant choice between two winning continuations, e.g. 33. Re1 Nf3† 34. gxf3 Qxf3 35. e4 Bxe4 36. Rxe4 Qxe4—, or the simple 33. — a3—

33. Qd1 Nf3†!!

The final subtlety. The end is in sight.

34. Kh1

Not 34. gxf3, in view of 34. — Rd8! 35. Bd6 Bxf3 36. Qxa4 Rxd6!—

34... h4
35. Bf4 Rd8
36. Bd6 h3

There is no way for white to stop this attack.

37. Rxa4 Bxa4
38. Qxa4 Nd2
39. Kg1 Qg6
40. Qd1 Nxf1
41. Qxf1 Rd7!

42. f3 Rb7
 43. e4 Rb1
 Resigns

40
Las Palmas, 1971
Candidate Match, 6th game
White: Uhlmann
Queen's Gambit

1. c4 Nf6
 2. Nc3 e6
 3. Nf3 d5
 4. d4 c6
 5. e3 Nbd7
 6. Bd3 dxc4
 7. Bxc4 b5
 8. Bd3 Bb7
 9. e4 b4
 10. Na4 c5
 11. e5 Nd5
 12. Nxc5!?

In Monaco, 1968, Uhlmann lost to Larsen with 12. dxc5, but in the 4th match game he reached a promising position with 12. Nxc5, so why not another try? - Also interesting is 12. 0-0!? cxd4 13. Re1 (Portisch-Larsen, match game, 1968), but faced with one of Larsen's »strange« moves 13. — g6!? Portisch's analysis came to a sudden end, and soon the game was agreed a draw.

12... Nxc5
 13. dxc5 Bxc5!?

Here it is, the surprise! The novelty used here was ready to be let off in the Portisch match, but Portisch was too quick playing a novelty himself on move 12. (0-0!?) One has to be quick with one's novelties now-a-days!

14. Bb5†

Natural, but probably not the best. 14. Qa4† is met with the same answer as in the game,

but 14. Ng5!? is interesting. Also worth serious consideration is 14. 0-0!? e.g. 14. — h6! 15. Nd2!? as in the game (Polugajevsky-Mecking, Manila, 1975)

14... Ke7!

The point. Larsen does not fear 15. Bg5† f6 16. Bd2 Bxf2† and 16. Bh4 Qa5! also gives black the better of it.

15. 0-0 Qb6
 16. Bd3?

In such a sharp position one cannot afford to play »routine« moves. Much better is 16. Qe2 with an equal position.

16... h6
 17. Qe2 Rhd8
 18. Bd2 Kf8
 19. Rac1

White's black-squared bishop cries out for help, but the text ignores this cry and forces the bishop to be a passive spectator for the rest of the game. A better try is 19. a3

19... Rac8
 20. Rc2 a5

Now it bites on »granite«.

21. Rfc1 Kg8
 22. h3 Ne7

White has a sad position. He cannot play actively, but simply has to wait. It is understandable that Uhlmann's clock at this stage of the game showed one hour more than Larsen's.

23. Ne1 Bd4
 24. Rxc8 Rxc8
 25. Rxc8† Nxc8
 26. b3

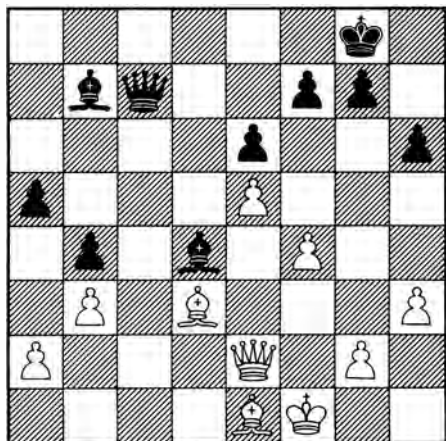
Very passive. Why not 26. Nf3†?

26... Ne7
 27. Nf3 Bc5
 28. Be1 Nf5!

An excellent move. Impossible is 29. Be4??

29. — Ng3-+. Also out of question is 29. Bxf5 exf5 with a very nice, probably winning, position. Evidently Uhlmann is in trouble.

29. Kf1	Qc6
30. Bb5	Qc7
31. Bd3	Nd4
32. Nxd4	Bxd4
33. f4?	



Presumably Uhlmann overlooked Larsen's brilliant 36th move, otherwise he most certainly would have opted for an ending a pawn down, but with a long fight ahead.

33...	Qc1
34. Qd2	Qa1
35. Qc2	Bc3
36. Qb1	Ba6!!

A pretty finish. White *resigned* because he will lose a piece whatever he moves.

41 **Århus, 1971** **Team (ch)** **Black: Uhlmann** **King's Indian Defence**

1. c4	Nf6
2. Nc3	g6
3. e4	

The so-called Grunfeld »killer«. (When Larsen plays the white pieces, he normally avoids both the Grunfeld- and the Nimzo-Indian Defence.)

3...	d6
4. d4	Bg7
5. Be2	

The psychological moment! The text indicates the Averbach Variation, one of Uhlmann's favourites when he plays the white men.

5...	0-0
6. Nf3	

No! To-day the main line is the topic of discussion.

6...	e5
7. 0-0	c6!?

Unusual, but, of course, playable. Normal lines are 7. — Nc6 and 7. — Nbd7

8. Be3	Nbd7
9. Qc2	exd4?!

A dubious decision. Black should try to maintain the tension in the center with 9. — Re8

10. Nxd4	Re8
11. Rad1	Qe7
12. f3	d5?!

Much too sharp. Trying to solve his problems in this violent way, Uhlmann only makes things worse. 12. — a5 is the right course.

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13. cxd5 cxd5

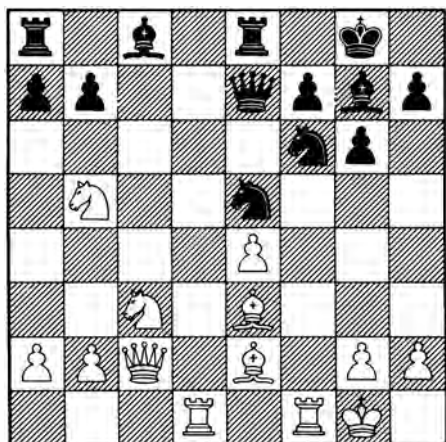
But not 13. — Nxd5 14. Nxd5 cxd5 15. Nb5 dxe4 16. f4! when black will lose the exchange without sufficient compensation to show for it.

14. Ndb5 dxe4
15. fxe4!

Coolly played. Probably Uhlmann hoped for 15. Nc7? exf3 16. Rxf3 Ne5!

15... Ne5

»with a satisfactory position and interesting complications ahead??«



16. Rxf6!

Indeed not! The lonesome defender of the all-important square is removed, and after this black's game will soon collapse.

16... Qxf6
17. Nc7 Bd7

If 17. — Be6 then 18. Bxa7! wins a pawn.

18. Nxe8 Bxe8
19. Nd5 Qe6?

Facing enormous problems, black commits the final error. The only chance was to play the other queen move, viz. 19. — Qh4

20. Nc7 Rc8
21. Rd8!

And now Uhlmann is aware of it, too!

21... Rxc7
22. Qxc7 Bf6
23. Ra8 Nc6
24. Bc4

Already there are many ways to the win. Here, 24. Bh6!? is another possibility.

24... Qxc4
25. Rxe8† Kg7
26. Qd6 Ne7

How to win a won game? The rest is forced.

27. Rxe7! Qe2
28. Bh6† Kxh6
29. Qxh6 Qe3†
30. Kf1

But certainly not 30. Qf2?? Qc1† 31. Qf1 Qc5†

30... Qd3†
31. Kf2 Qd2†
32. Kf3 Qd3†
33. Kg4 Qe2†
34. Qf3 f5†
35. Kh3 Resigns

42

Palma de Mallorca, 1971 Black: Bellon Larsen's Opening

1. b3 b6!?

A very simple yet interesting thought. Black indicates that he wants to copy white's plan of developing play and only intends to part from that if white plays a routine move.

2. Bb2 Bb7
3. e3 chesstourf5?!.com

Much too sharp. As said above, it would have been better to stick to the symmetry with 3. — e6

4. Be2!

Neatly exploiting the awkward position of black's king and rook! This fine idea is perhaps a reminiscence borrowed from a couple of Bronstein's games, e.g. Bronstein-Mikenas and Bronstein-Andersen. Here the interesting idea used in those two games: 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 f5?! 3. Nxe5 Qf6 4. d4 d6 5. Nc4 fxe4 6. Be2!! and since black cannot play 6. — Qg6, his position is already dubious.

4... Nf6

Not 4. — Bxg2?? 5. Bh5† g6 6. Bf3! when black must lose material.

5. Bxf6! exf6

6. Bf3

As a result of black's faulty 3rd move white's position is already clearly better.

6... Nc6

7. Ne2 g6

8. c4 Bd6

9. Nbc3 0-0

10. a3 Re8

11. b4 Qc8

12. d4

Developing for more space. It is obvious that black is in trouble, not only because of the double pawn, but also because of the lack of co-ordination in his poor, disorganized army.

12... Nd8

13. c5 Bf8

14. Nf4!

The signal for a fierce attack.

14... Kg7

15. h4 Ne6

16. Nxe6 Rxe6

17. Nd5 Re8

18. h5 Bxd5

19. Bxd5 c6

20. Ba2!

With the unpleasant threat 21. Qb3+—

20... d5

21. cxd6 e.p. Bxd6

22. Qf3 Qa6!?

A desperate gasp for counterplay.

23. Qxc6 Red8

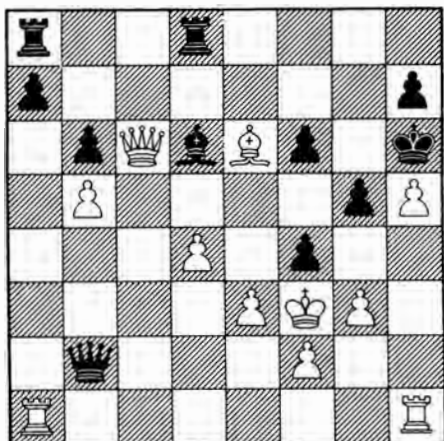
24. b5 Qxa3

25. Ke2 Qb2†

26. Kf3 g5

27. g3 Kh6

28. Be6 f4



29. gxf4 gxf4

30. Rag1

Cashing in on the lack of co-ordination between black's pieces and, of course, the terrible position of his king.

30... fxe3

31. fxe3

Indeed not the »brilliant« 31. Rg6??† hxc6 32. hxc6† Kg5! when white has made a fool out of himself and has to force a draw by perpetual check. chesstouring.com

31... **Rab8**
 32. **Qe4** **f5**
 33. **Qh4** **Resigns**

Funnily enough; In the final position it is the dark squares in the black camp which cannot be defended.

43 Teeside, 1972 Black: Ljubojevic Réti's Opening

1. **Nf3** **Nf6**
 2. **g3**

It is hardly possible to blame Larsen for this solid move, but playing against Ljubojevic it would have been better from a psychological point of view at least, to play 2. c4, avoiding one of his favourite lines, the so-called Polish Variation.

2... **b5!?**
 3. **Bg2** **Bb7**
 4. **Na3!?**

In such positions everything is playable (at least once!)

4... **a6**
 5. **c4** **b4**
 6. **Nc2** **e6**
 7. **0-0** **c5**
 8. **b3** **Be7**
 9. **Bb2** **0-0**
 10. **d4** **d6**

Without too much trouble Ljubojevic has been able to equalize the game. Perhaps white's 4th move was not that good!?

11. **Ne3** **Nbd7**
 12. **d5!?**

True uncompromising play by Larsen, but probably not the most correct. White does

better with 12. Ne1, when the chances still would have been about even.

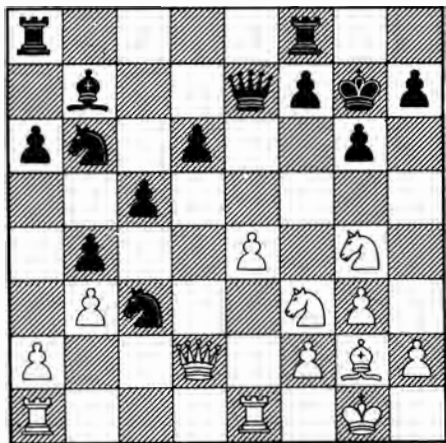
12... **exd5**
 13. **cxd5** **Ndb6**
 14. **Qd3** **Nfxd5**

Not 14. — Nbx d5? 15. Ng5!

15. **Nf5** **Bf6**
 16. **Bxf6** **Qxf6**
 17. **e4** **g6!**

A fine defensive resource probably underestimated by Larsen when he played 12. d5!?

18. **Nh6†** **Kg7**
 19. **Qd2** **Nc3**
 20. **Ng4** **Qe7**
 21. **Rfe1**



21... **f6?**

The move played looks like a solid defence, but in fact it is based upon a miscalculation. Ljubojevic is reported to have seen the coming sacrifice, but being in a rosy mood, he simply refused to calculate it seriously! The only way to test Larsen's risky play was the bold 21. — Nxe4! e.g. 22. Qh6† Kg8 23. Rxe4 Bxe4 24. Ng5 f5—+ or 22. Qb2† f6 23. Ng5 d5 24. f3 Qd7—+ Now, however, Larsen has sufficient compensation for his

slight material defect, and of course he strikes at once!

22. e5! dxe5
23. Nfxe5 fxe5
24. Rxe5 Qf7??

The losing blunder. Ljubojevic is known to play very fast, but here in a very tense position, he only used seconds before he moved his queen to f7. A little »sleep« would probably have convinced him about the hidden dangers of the position and told him to play 24. — Qd7! e.g. 25. Qxd7† Nxd7 26. Re7† Rf7 27. Rxf7 Kxf7 28. Bxb7 Ra7 =

25. Rae1 Nbd5

There is nothing better. If 25. — Bxg2 26. Re7 Bd5 27. Qh6† Kh8 28. Nf6!!+— and 25. — Rae8 26. Qh6† Kh8 27. Rxe8 Rxe8 28. Rxe8 Qxe8 29. Bxb7 also leaves white with excellent winning chances.

26. Bxd5 Nxd5
27. Qb2!

A beautiful quiet point which decides the game at once. Strange as it may seem, black cannot save his queen and the text only prolongs the issue.

27... Nc3
28. Re7 Rad8
29. Rxf7† Kxf7
30. Qc1 Rd1!?

A last try.

31. Qf4† Kg8
32. Qe5!

Now the rest is easy.

32... Rxe1†
33. Qxe1 Be4
34. Qd2 h5
35. Ne5 Re8
36. Qd6 Nxa2
37. g4 c4
38. Qf6 Rf8
39. Qxa6 c3
40. Qc4† Resigns

44

Teeside, 1972 Black: Cafferty Larsen's Opening

1. b3 e5
2. Bb2 Nc6
3. e3 d5
4. Bb5 Bd6
5. c4!?

An interesting alternative to Ljubojevic's 5. f4!? Larsen does not like the variation 5. — Qh4†!? 6. g3 Qe7 (Ljubojevic-Portisch, Teeside 1972. Black won!)

5... dxc4
6. Nf3!?

The sharp point of the previous move. Nevertheless, a pawn is a pawn, and it would have been much better to accept the sacrifice than to opt for the somewhat nervous manoeuvre: 6. — Ne7!? - 7. — Nf5?!

6... Ne7?!
7. Bxc4 Nf5!?

Even less tempting is 7. — 0-0? 8. Ng5 h6 9. h4! with a dangerous attack, but why not the natural 7. — Bf5?

8. Nc3 Nh4
9. g3 Nxf3†
10. Qxf3 0-0
11. h4!

The Larsen patent.

11... Be6??

Positional suicide. True, the position is a little uncomfortable for black, but 11. — Qe7 seems to be all right and should of course have been preferred instead of the panic text which ruins black's game immediately.

12. Bxe6 fxe6
13. Qe2 Qf6

14. Ne4	Qf5
15. d3	Rad8
16. g4	Qf7

If 16. — Bb4† 17. Kf1 Qf7 then 18. a3 followed by b4 and Kg2 is very good for white.

17. a3	Be7
18. 0-0-0	Bd6

Obviously it is impossible for black to do anything active because of white's dominating knight.

19. Kb1	Qe7
20. Ka2	a5
21. h5	Qd7

Probably planning an unclear piece sacrifice on b4, e.g. 22. g5?! a4 23. b4 Bxb4!? with chances not unfavourable to black. Unfortunately (for Cafferty!) white has a much better line...

22. h6!	g6
---------	----

On 22. — a4 23. b4 Bxb4?! 24. hxg7! is the simple answer.

23. d4!

A very fine breakthrough revealing yet another of Larsen's favourite themes: The transposition of one given advantage into another more substantial one.

23...	exd4
24. Bxd4	e5
25. Bb2	b5
26. Ka1	Rb8
27. Rd5	Ne7
28. Rd3	Qe6
29. Rhd1	Rb6
30. Ng5!	

The powerful knight has done its job well, now it decides the game.

30...	Qc8
31. f4	Nc6
32. Qg2	Ne7?

This loses at once. The only move to prolong the battle was 32. — Qe8

33. fxe5	Bc5
34. Rd7	Bxe3
35. Rxe7	Bxg5
36. Rg7†	Kh8
37. e6	Resigns

45

Teeside, 1972 Black: Wade Larsen's Opening

1. b3	d5
2. Bb2	c5
3. e3	Nf6

Black has chosen a quiet and solid set-up, but white should be happy about his well-placed bishop and of possible control over the important central square, e5.

4. Bb5†!?

Another logical move is 4. f4!?, but that would be Bird's Opening and Larsen wants to play his »own« opening!

4...	Bd7
5. Bxd7†	Nbxd7

5. — Qxd7 followed by 6. — Nc6 is more ambitious, but the text is of course quite playable.

6. Nf3	e6
7. c4	Be7
8. 0-0	0-0
9. Qe2!	

A fine flexible move the main purpose of which is to confuse black as to white's intentions in the center!

9...	a6?
------	-----

Mistakenly thinking that Larsen opts for a plan involving d3 and e4. Much better is 9. — Rc8

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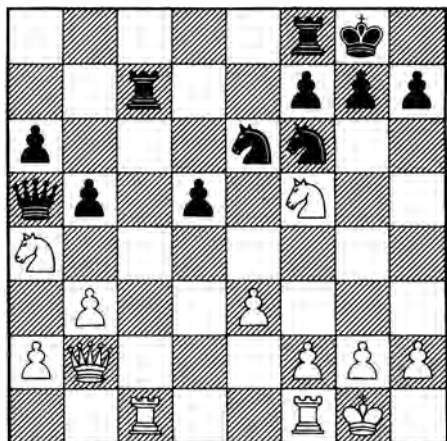
10. Nc3 Qa5
11. cxd5 exd5
12. d4

Of course. Now Larsen has a fixed target. Besides, he has an excellent operation-square (d4) for his minor pieces.

12... Rac8
13. dxc5 Nxc5
14. Nd4 Ne6
15. Nf5!

An unpleasant visitor this knight. White is clearly better.

15... Ba3
16. Rac1 Rc7
17. Na4 Bxb2
18. Qxb2 b5!?



It is hardly possible to find anything better. 18. — Rfc8 fails to 19. Ne7†, besides, white threatens to play Rxc7 followed by Rc1 with an overwhelming game.

19. Nc5!

A little tactical finesse. If 19. — Nxc5 20. Rxc5 Rxc5 21. b4 Qb6 22. bxc5 Qxc5 23. Rc1 Qb6, then 24. Rc6 decides the game at once

19... Qb6
20. b4 Nxc5

If 20. — Rfc8 or 20. — Kh8 white has the strong answer 21. Qe5!±

21. Rxc5!

Even stronger than 21. bxc5 which also would have given white the better of it. Black is forced to exchange rooks, otherwise Larsen's pressure in the c-file would be devastating.

21... Rxc5
22. bxc5 Qe6

As already shown (See note to white's 19th move) Wade cannot accept this pawn sacrifice.

23. Nd4 Qe5
24. Qa3 Ng4
25. Nf3 Qc7
26. Rc1

White's advantage is clearly sufficient for the whole point!

26... a5
27. Qd3 b4
28. c6!

It is a pleasure to study Larsen's play in such positions 28. Qxd5 is not »bad« either, but the text is much quicker and does not give black the slightest chance of survival.

28... Nf6
29. Nd4 h5
30. Qf5 Qc8??

Time trouble, but in a lost position.

31. c7 a4
32. Qxc8 Rxc8
33. Nf5 Resigns

46
Las Palmas, 1972
Black: Smyslov
Vienna

1. e4 e5
 2. Bc4 Nf6
 3. Nc3 Bb4?

It is hardly surprising that Smyslov refrains from 3. — Nxe4!? nor is it surprising that he avoids 3. — Nc6 which undoubtedly would have presented Larsen with some sweet memories from the Amsterdam, Interzonal, 1964 in which Smyslov, together with Larsen, Tal and Spassky tied for first. It was on this occasion that Larsen gained credit for being a World One on the amusing topic: »Almost forgotten variations.«

4. Nf3 d6
 5. 0-0 0-0
 6. d3

Larsen has chosen a very solid line considered to be a little drawish, but watch out! In this kind of position he is like a fish in water and extremely dangerous!

6... Be6

Perhaps he should capture on c3 first.

7. Bxe6 fxe6
 8. Ne2

He will not get another chance.

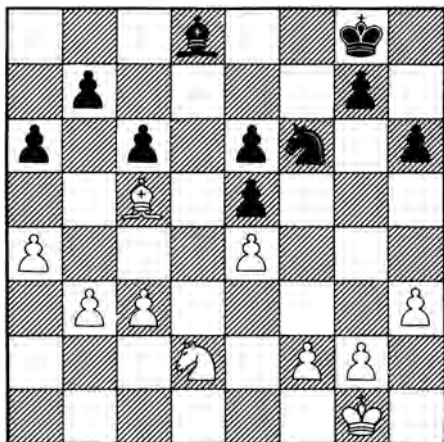
8... Nbd7
 9. c3 Ba5
 10. a4 c6
 11. Ng3 Qe7
 12. Qe2 h6
 13. d4 Bc7?!

This seems to be a typical routine move, but perhaps Smyslov simply overlooked Larsen's strong answer. The proper move is 13. — Qf7, with only a minimal advantage to white.

14. b3! Qf7
 15. Ba3 Rfe8
 16. dxe5 Nxe5
 17. Nxe5 dxe5
 18. Rfd1

White has a little, but clear advantage. On the other hand, black is Smyslov!

18... Red8
 19. Bc5 a6
 20. h3 Rxd1†
 21. Rxd1 Rd8
 22. Rxd8† Bxd8
 23. Nf1 Qd7
 24. Qd2 Qxd2
 25. Nxd2



When Smyslov played 24. — Qxd2, he proposed a draw, but Larsen having just ordered a big cup of nice warm coffee decided to go on a little further, after all he had everything to win since the draw would still be there! The following endgame is, despite the mistake on move 56, one of Larsen's finest efforts ever, and should be studied only with the greatest appreciation.

25... Bc7
 26. Kf1 Nd7
 27. Be3 b5
 28. Ke2! esstouring.com

»It is better that both parts are left with weak a-pawns, than to cut down the front.« (Larsen)

28... Kf7
29. Nf3 Ke7
30. Ne1 bxa4
31. bxa4 Bb6
32. Bc1 Ba5
33. Ba3† c5
34. Kd2 Kd6
35. Nd3 Bc7
36. Kc2

White has improved his position considerably and now plans to sacrifice his a-pawn in order to win the more important c-pawn.

36... Kc6
37. Bc1 Nb6
38. Nb2 Bd8
39. Kd3 Be7
40. g3?

A careless move just before the end of the first session. Instead, 40. Be3! would have prevented any possible black counter-play and placed Smyslov in a very precarious situation.

40... Bd6
41. Ke2 c4!

The sealed move and the best!

42. a5 Nd7
43. Nxc4 Bc5
44. Na3 Bd6
45. Nc4 Bc5
46. f3 Kb5
47. Kd3 Bf2?

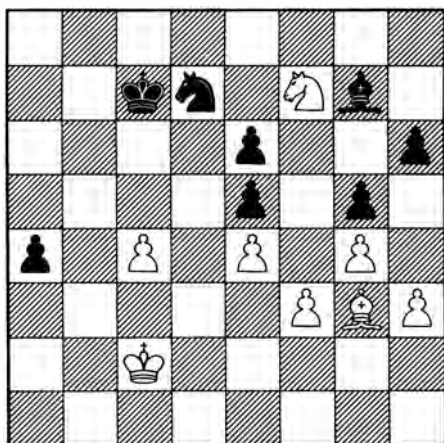
It is difficult to see what white can do if black simply plays 47. — Be7

48. Nd6† Kxa5
49. Ne8 g5
50. g4 Kb6
51. Nd6 Bc5
52. Nf7 Bf8
53. Be3† Kc7

54. Bf2 a5
55. Bg3 Bg7
56. c4??

For the second time in this game Larsen plays a committal pawn move just before the end of a session! The only reasonable explanation to this and the following blunder must be that the players were exhausted! In the first session they had played for 5 hours. Then came a break for 3 hours, and now again 2 hours of play! Even for grandmasters 10 hours of more or less uninterrupted calculation seems to be too high a price to pay, just in order to avoid or at least minimize adjourned games!

56... a4
57. Kc2



57... Kb6??

The sealed move and... the final blunder! Sometimes, as here, it is almost more important to be in good physical form than anything else! The only move leading to a draw is 57. — Nc5! e.g. 58. Bxe5† Bxe5 59. Nxe5 Kd6 60. Nf7† (60. Nd3?? loses for white!) 60. — Ke7 =

58. h4 gxh4

Forced. If 58. — Bf6 59. h5 Bg7 60. Kc3, and black is in »Zugzwang«.

59. Bxh4 Nf8
 60. Bf2† Kc6
 61. Kc3 Ng6
 62. Kb4 Nf4
 63. Kxa4 Nd3
 64. Nd8† Kd7
 65. Bh4 Bf8
 66. Kb5!

5. e3 Bb7
 6. Bd3 c5
 7. 0-0 0-0
 8. dxc5!?

This seems to be a harmless novelty. The book says 8. a3±

9. a3 a5!

Now it is obvious that white must win.

66... Be7
 67. Bxe7 Kxe7
 68. Nc6† Kd6
 69. Kb6 Nc5
 70. Nd8 Nd7†
 71. Kb5 Ke7
 72. Nb7!

Otherwise white would play 10. b4 and 11. Bb2 with a favourable position from the Queen's G. It is true that with 9. — a5! Larsen weakens his queen's wing, especially the square b5, but white's knight is placed on d2 instead of its natural square c3, consequently it should be difficult for him to occupy b5 without serious waste of time.

10. b3 Nc6
 11. Bb2 d5

The »Zugzwang« is deadly but Smyslov decides to be shown.

72... Nf6
 73. c5 h5
 74. gxh5 Nxh5
 75. c6 Nf6
 76. Kc5 Ng8
 77. Nd6 Resigns

The chances are about even.

12. e4?!

A very ambitious move, probably too ambitious, since it proves to be without any real attacking value and only weakens the important central square d4. Instead, 12. Qe2 would have maintained the balance.

12... dxc4
 13. Bxc4 Nd4
 14. e5 Nxf3†
 15. Nxf3 Nd5
 16. Bd4 Rc8
 17. Bxc5 Rxc5
 18. Qd4 Qc7!

Despite some inaccuracies awarded as the best endgame of the tournament.

47

Las Palmas, 1972

White: Gheorghiu

Bogo-Indian Defence

1. d4 Nf6
 2. c4 e6
 3. Nf3 Bb4†
 4. Nbd2 b6

19. Ng5 Ne7
 20. Qd3 g6

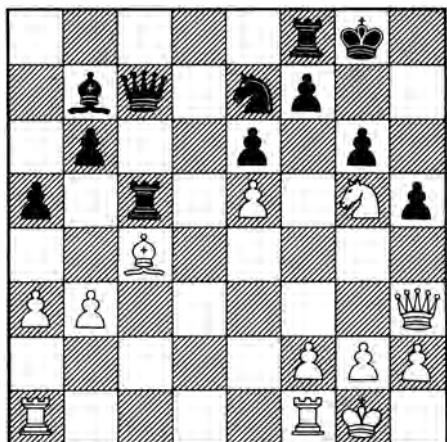
The fight for the central square e4, can also be obtained through 4. — d5

A fine »natural« move, but Larsen had to make very exact calculations for the coming complications because now his king's wing becomes a little exposed.

Of course not 20. — Ng6? 21. Qh3 h6 22. Nxe6!

21. Qh3 h5

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Please take a close look at the diagrammed position. White has forced black to weaken his king's wing, but, as Gheorghiu now realizes, he has no time to capitalize on it before his own position will collapse! Gheorghiu's main problem is his weak pawn on e5. This pawn must be defended, but that gives Larsen all the time he needs.

22. f4 b5
23. g4?!

White is in dire trouble, but this desperate attempt only precipitates the end. To be fair, even 23. Bd3 Rc3-- or 23. Be2 Rc3 24. Bf3 Qc5† 25. Kh1 Nf5-- would not have saved the game, only prolonged it!

23... bxc4
24. gxh5 Rxe5!

This is the prettiest solution to the problem, but the prosaic 24. — Kg7 is equally good.

25. fxe5 Qc5†
26. Rf2 Qxe5

The rest is plain sailing.

27. Nxe6 Qxa1†
28. Rf1 Qe5
29. Nxf8 Kxf8

30. hxg6 Qd4†
31. Rf2 Nxe6
32. Qh6† Kg8
33. bxc4? Qg4†
34. Kf1 Qd1††

48

San Antonio, 1972 White: Evans Queen's Indian Defence

1. c4 e6
2. Nf3 Nf6
3. g3 b6
4. Bg2 Bb7
5. 0-0 d5!?

A typical double-edged Larsen reply over the usual 5. — Be7, e.g. 6. Nc3 0-0 7. d4 Ne4± (Dorfman-Gulko 43. USSR ch 1975)

6. cxd5 exd5
7. d4 Nbd7
8. Nc3 Be7
9. b3 0-0
10. Bb2 Re8
11. Ne5 Bf8!?

Again he heads for complications. According to Larsen the line 11. — Bb4 12. a3 Bxc3 13. Bxc3 Ne4 14. Bb2 f6 should be quite satisfactory for black.

12. f4 c5
13. e3 cxd4
14. exd4 Ne4
15. Nxe4 dxe4
16. Qe2 Nf6
17. g4!?

This leads to very intricate play.

17... Nd5!

Of course not 17. — Qd5? 18. g5 Nd7 19. Bxe4!

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18. Bxe4 f6

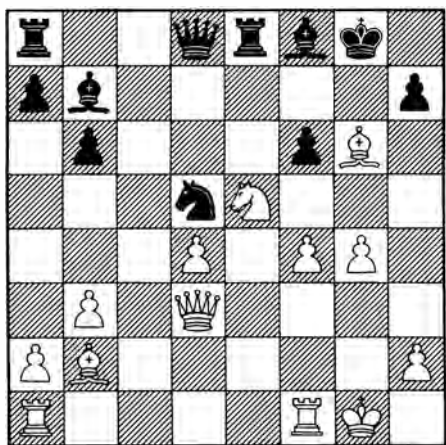
19. Qd3

Logical play, anticipating a dangerous attack on black's king, but by no means necessary. 19. Rad1! seems more accurate. Then black cannot accept the piece with 19. — fxe5? since 20. dxe5 followed by Qd3 gives white a murderous attack, but must play 19. — Rc8! with very unclear consequences.

19... g6

20. Bxg6

What is this? Does Evans, two pawns up, not look like a sure winner? Larsen must have something up his sleeve!?



20... Re7!

This is the point of black's balancing trick! In such positions one must play with the outmost care, one single tiny slip and the result might be a disaster. But this goes for white too, and his next move is definitely not the best, but what is white's best? Certainly not 21. Ba3? hxg6 22. Bxe7 Nxe7+. Larsen gives the following interesting line: 21. Be4! fxe5 22. dxe5 Nb4! 23. Qc4† Bd5 24. Qxb4 Rxe5 25. Bxd5† Qxd5 26. Qc3 Bc5† 27. Rf2 Bxf2† 28. Kxf2 Re2† 29. Kxe2 Qg2† 30. Kd1 Rd8† 31. Kc1 Qh1† 32. Kc2 Qe4† with a draw by perpetual check.

Perhaps he is too modest about his chances in the endgame to mention the interesting possibility 28. — Qc5†!? which, in my opinion, would have given him some chances of a win.

21. Nf7?! Rxf7

22. Bxf7† Kxf7

23. Qxh7† Bg7

24. g5 Qd6

25. g6† Kf8

26. Rae1 Nb4

Refusing Evan's offer of a draw, but only after some time because of problems - not with the position which he judged as favourable - but with his stomach!

27. Qh3 Qd5

The threat is 28. — Nd3—+

28. Re3 Rc8

29. Rfe1 f5

A grandmaster does not ignore a threat like Qxc8†!

30. R1e2 a5

31. Kf2 Ba6

32. Re5?

This seems to be the final mistake. A more stubborn line was 32. Rd2, but after 32. — Rc6! white would probably still lose.

32... Bxe5

33. Rxe5 Nd3†

34. Kg3 Nxe5

35. fxe5 Bb7

The rest is mutual time scramble.

36. Qh8† Ke7

37. Qf6† Kd7

38. Qxf5† Kc7

39. Qf7† Qxf7

40. gxf7 Bd5

41. Kf4 Kd7

42. h4 Ke7

43. h5 Kxf7

44. Resigns

Hastings, 1972-73

Black: Eley

Larsen's Opening

1. b3 e5
2. Bb2 Nc6
3. e3 Nf6

For 3. — d5, see game no. 44

4. Bb5 d6
5. Ne2 Bd7
6. 0-0 Be7
7. f4 e4?

A strange decision. Why not the natural 7. — 0-0. ? White cannot win a pawn with 8. fxe5 dxe5 9. Bxc6 Bxc6 10. Bxe5?? Qd5—+

8. Ng3 0-0
9. Bxc6! bxc6

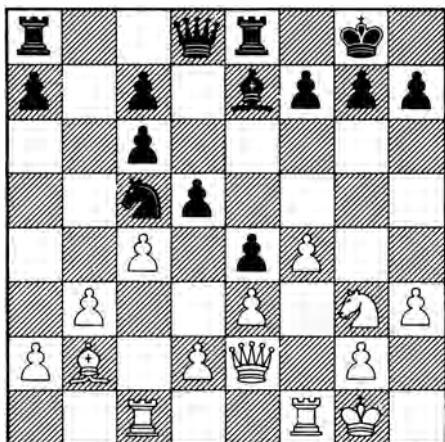
If 9. — Bxc6, 10. Nf5 leaves white with the better posted bishop and possibilities on the king's side.

10. c4 d5
11. Nc3 Re8
12. Rc1 Bg4?!

Not really a mistake, but the start of a faulty plan. 12. — Rb8 looks natural.

13. Nce2 Nd7
14. h3 Bxe2
15. Qxe2 Nc5?

But now he is far too optimistic. It was necessary to play 15. — Bf6.



16. Qg4!

Now matters clear. It is obvious that the task resting on black's bishop is paramount. Keeping an eye both on the weak squares around its king, and at the same time guarding its companion-in-arms, the knight, should of course be impossible. Some variations to illustrate this: 16. — Bf6 17. Bxf6 Qxf6 18. cxd5+- or 16. — Bf8 17. Bxg7 Bxg7 18. cxd5 Qxd5 19. Nh5+-

16... g6
17. f5 Nd3

At long last this knight has reached its destination, but by now black's position is so gummed up that Larsen can win by direct attack.

18. fxg6 hxg6
19. Rxf7!

Not without some satisfaction, we may be sure.

19... Kxf7
20. Rf1† Bf6
21. Bxf6 Resigns

Leningrad, Interzonal, 1973

White: Rukavina
Dutch Defence

- | | |
|----------|-----|
| 1. c4 | g6 |
| 2. d4 | Bg7 |
| 3. g3 | c5 |
| 4. d5 | d6 |
| 5. Bg2 | Na6 |
| 6. Nf3!? | |

Perhaps it would have been better first to play 6. Nc3. If then 6. — f5!? white has the strong manoeuvre 7. Nh3 followed by Nf4±. Black would probably answer 6. Nc3 with 6. Nf6, opting for an ordinary King's Indian or perhaps a variation from the Benoni Defence.

- | | |
|------|------|
| 6... | f5!? |
|------|------|

Finally reaching the Leningrad Dutch. Who knows? Perhaps a friendly gesture towards the organizers?!

- | | |
|--------|-----|
| 7. 0-0 | Nf6 |
| 8. Nc3 | 0-0 |
| 9. Ne1 | |

A strong alternative is 9. Rb1±

- | | |
|---------|-----|
| 9... | Rb8 |
| 10. Qd3 | |

Also worth serious consideration is 10. Nc2!? (Korchnoi-Tal, 1968)

- | | |
|------------|-----|
| 10... | Bd7 |
| 11. b3 | Ne4 |
| 12. Bxe4?? | |

A gross positional misjudgement. Still, it was not too late to get an approximately even position with the natural 12. Bb2. Now, however, Larsen soon gets an overwhelming game.

- | | |
|---------|------|
| 12... | fxe4 |
| 13. Qc2 | Bh3 |

- | | |
|---------|-----|
| 14. Ng2 | Nb4 |
| 15. Qd2 | e3! |

The master touch. Rukavina's position is totally ruined.

- | | |
|----------|-------|
| 16. fxe3 | Rxf1† |
| 17. Kxf1 | e6 |
| 18. Bb2 | exd5 |
| 19. cxd5 | |

If 19. Nxd5 Bxb2 20. Qxb2 Nxd5 21. cxd5 Qe7—+

- | | |
|---------|-----|
| 19... | Qg5 |
| 20. Rd1 | Be5 |

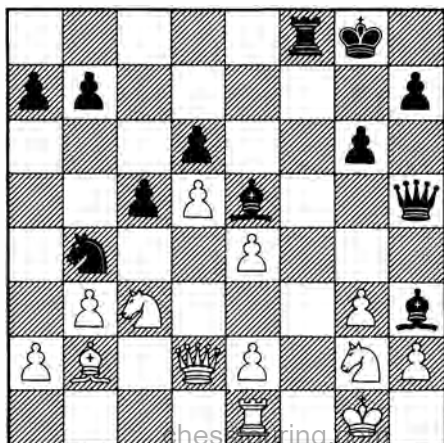
Played in order to prevent 21. Kg1 which would be answered with 21. — Bxg3! (22. Ne4 Bxh2†! —+)

- | | |
|---------|-----|
| 21. e4 | Qg4 |
| 22. Kg1 | Rf8 |

This is certainly a crossroads. The other solution is 22. — Bxg3! 23. hxg3 Qxg3 24. e3 Rf8! 25. Rf1 Rxf1† 26. Kxf1 Nd3!—+

- | | |
|----------|-----|
| 23. Ne3 | Qg5 |
| 24. Ng2 | Qh5 |
| 25. Re1? | |

Overlooking a pretty combination, but even 25. e3 would hardly have saved the game.



25... **Bxg2!**
 26. Kxg2 **Rf2†**

A book motif!

27. Kxf2 **Qxh2†**
 28. Kf1 **Qh3†**
 29. Resigns

51

Leningrad, Interzonal, 1973 Black: Radulov Queen's Indian Defence

1. c4 **Nf6**
 2. Nf3 **e6**
 3. b3

He loves that diagonal!

3... **Be7**
 4. Bb2 **0-0**
 5. Nc3 **d5**
 6. e3 **b6**
 7. d4 **Bb7**
 8. Bd3 **c5**
 9. 0-0 **Nbd7**
 10. Qe2 **Ne4?!**

A dubious novelty. In the game Keres-Hort, San Antonio, 1972, Hort played the better 10. — Rc8, and eventually he drew the game.

11. cxd5 **exd5**
 12. Rfd1 **Nxc3**

A sad decision, but 12. — f5 13. Bb1 would leave black's d-pawn extremely weak.

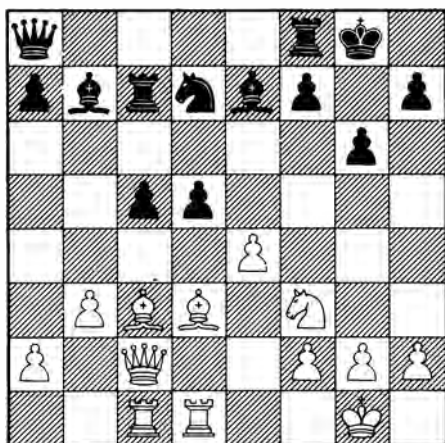
13. Bxc3 **Rc8**
 14. Rac1 **Rc7**

With the interesting idea 15. — Qa8, and 16. — Rfc8. A drawback behind the move 14. — Rc7 is that the rook will be left unprotected for a couple of moves.

15. dxc5 **bxc5**
 16. Qc2 **g6?**

But this is wrong. He should have played 16. — h6 satisfying himself with the worse of it, but with a long and tense struggle ahead.

17. e4 **Qa8**



18. Qd2!

Even better than the positional 18. exd5, which also gives white a strong position.

18... **Bf6**

Not 18. — dxe4? 19. Qh6 Nf6 20. Ng5 Re8 21. Nxh7! +-

19. Qf4

Since black must guard his rook this is the decisive gain of time.

19... **Qd8**
 20. Ba5 **Nb6**
 21. b4?!

This is what you should expect from Larsen. The »natural« line is 21. exd5, winning a pawn, (if 21. — Bxd5? 22. Be4 Rd7 23. Bxb6 axb6 24. Rxd5! winning two pieces for a rook.), but clearly Larsen is out for more.

21... **Be7**
 22. exd5 **Bd6**
 23. Qh6 **exb4?**



Larsen playing an exhibition game a couple of weeks before the Grenå-tournament. His opponent is Denmark's next GM (perhaps even world champion!?) in correspondence chess, Jørgen Sloth.

A banal oversight. Perhaps he preferred a quick death rather than a slow painful one waiting for a chance which surely would never come!

24. Ng5	f5
25. Ne6	Qd7
26. Rxc7!	Resigns

52

Grenå, 1973

Black: Westerinen
King's Indian Defence

1. c4	g6
2. Nc3	Bg7

3. d4	Nf6
4. e4	d6
5. Be2	0-0
6. Nf3	Bg4

An interesting idea often used by Spassky in similar positions, e.g. 6. — c5 7. 0-0 Bg4 8. d5 Nbd7 9. Bg5 a6 10. a4 Qc7 11. Qd2+ (Karpov-Spassky, 3rd match game, 1974)

7. Be3	Nfd7
8. Rc1!	

No routine moves here! If white proceeds with 8. 0-0?! black gets a good game with 8. — Nc6 9. d5 Bxf3 10. Bxf3 Na5 11. Be2 Bxc3! or 8. — e5 9. d5 Bxf3! 10. Bxf3 f5= (Birbrager-Stein, Sverdlovsk, 1963)

8...	c5?!
------	------

Played only after a long thought, but a bad move. 8. — e5 seems indicated.

9. d5	Na6
10. 0-0	Nc7
11. a4	Na6

12. Ng5 Bxe2
13. Qxe2 h6
14. Nh3 Nb4
15. Qd2?!

In order to meet 15. — Kh7? with 16. f4! but of course Westerinen does not even dream of such a passive move! Instead, Larsen should have played 15. f4! followed by Qd2, and perhaps e5! with a nice attack.

15... Ne5!
16. Qe2 Qd7
17. f3

Suddenly black is faced with new difficulties. White threatens to play 18. Nf2 and f4, besides, the knight on b4 looks a little foolish, stranded in the enemy camp without any chances of help from black's other pieces.

17... e6!
18. dxe6 Qxe6
19. Nb5 Ned3??

A surprising blunder instead of the natural 19. — Qe7 with only a slight plus for white, but black's game would be tenable.

20. Rc3! Qe5
21. Rxd3 Nxd3
22. Qxd3 Qxb2
23. Rb1 Qa2
24. Qb3 Qxb3
25. Rxb3 Rfd8
26. a5

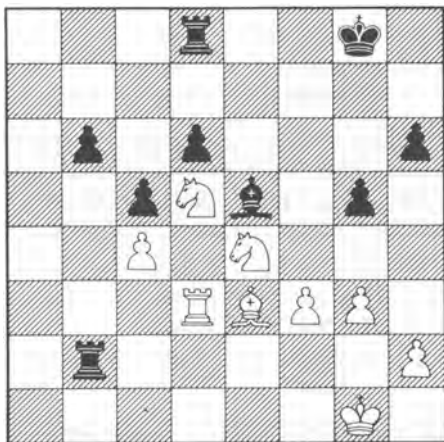
White has, of course, plenty of time, but it seems more relevant to play 26. Nf4, bringing this piece into play again.

26... g5
27. Nf2 Rd7
28. Rd3 Rad8
29. Nd1 f5!

This is Black's best chance. If now 30. exf5?! the answer would be 30. — d5!

30. Nbc3! fxe4
31. Nxe4 b6
32. axb6 axb6

33. Ndc3 Ra7
34. Nd5 Ra1†
35. Kf2 Be5
36. g3 Ra2†
37. Kg1 Rb2?



A typical product of time trouble. Westerinen hopes for 38. — Ra8, but forgets that the open rook-file also can be useful to white!

38. Ra3!

Ups! Now it is black who has to face a furious attack.

38... b5
39. Ra7 Rf8

Or 39. — bxc4 40. Ne7† Kf8 41. Ng6† Kg8 42. Nxe5 dxe5 43. Nf6!+-

40. f4 gxf4
41. gxf4 Bg7
42. f5

Black can hardly move. The rest is simple.

42... bxc4
43. f6 Rf7
44. Rxf7 Kxf7
45. Nxd6† Ke6

Any other move is equally hopeless.

46. fxf7 Rb8
47. Ne8! Resigns

Manila, 1973

White: Quinteros

Ruy Lopez

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bb5 Nge7?

The Cozio Defence, a rare guest in grand-master competitions. Perhaps this old line is a wise choice against Quinteros, known as an expert on the Exchange Variation of the Lopez.

4. c3 a6
5. Ba4 d6
6. d4 Bd7
7. h4!?

An interesting novelty. A crucial line is 7. Bb3 h6 8. Nh4!? exd4 9. cxd4 Nxd4! 10. Qxd4 Nc6 11. Qd5 Qxh4 12. Qxf7† Kd8 with a very unclear position.

7... h6

Of course not 7. — Ng6? or 7. — g6? Both would be answered with 8. h5†

8. h5 exd4
9. Nxd4?!

But here it is difficult to agree with Quinteros. Instead of the artificial text move, which only helps black, the given move is 9. cxd4, when 9. — d5 10. e5 brings about a complicated position probably with a slight plus to white.

9... Nxd4
10. cxd4 d5
11. e5 Bxa4
12. Qxa4† Nc6
13. Be3

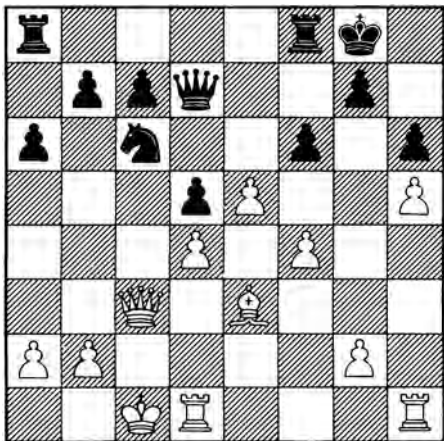
Perhaps a further inaccuracy. 13. a3, in order to prevent Bb4, is a serious alternative.

13... Qd7
14. Nc3 Bb4!

Excellent! It will soon be clear that Larsen's knight is much more active than white's black-squared bishop.

15. Qc2 0-0
16. 0-0-0 Bxc3
17. Qxc3 f6
18. f4?

Quite wrongly Quinteros continue to reduce the capacity of his bishop instead of playing the lesser evil, 18. exf6†



18... a5!!

A bolt from the blue. This beautiful move, which in one dashing flash changes the position totally, must have come as a big surprise to the Argentinian grandmaster who now pondered for almost an hour before he played his next move.

19. a3 a4
20. Kb1 Na5
21. Qd3 Nc4
22. Bd2 fxe5!

Must be carefully calculated because the white pawn majority on the king's side could be dangerous.

23. fxe5 Rad8
24. Bcl b5
25. Rhe1 Rfe8

26. Qf3 c5

27. Rd3?!

A waste of time but honestly speaking, black's pawn avalanche together with the powerful knight would decide the issue anyway.

27... d4

28. Red1 Na5

29. g4 Nb3

30. Rde1

The exchange sacrifice 30. Rxb3 axb3 31. Qxb3† c4 32. Qf3 b4! is hopeless.

30... c4

31. Rde1 b4!

An unfair struggle this one, four black pawns against two white ones: that must lead to a disaster.

32. axb4 d3

33. Bd2 a3!

A move to which there is only one reply.

34. bxa3 Nd4

35. Qf2 Qa4

36. Bc3 Ne2

37. Bb2 Qc2†

In this totally lost position, *white overstepped* the time limit.

54

Manila, 1973 Black: Najdorf King's Indian Defence

1. c4 Nf6

2. Nc3 g6

3. e4 d6

4. d4 Bg7

5. Be2 0-0

6. Nf3 e5

7. 0-0 Nc6

8. d5 Ne7

9. Ne1 Nd7

This is what we could call a key position in the main line of the King's Indian. In his match against Tal (1965) Larsen played 10. f3 f5 11. g5!? and won an interesting game. A year later, Santa Monica 1966, he beat the great Najdorf with: 10. Nd3 f5 11. Bd2 Nf6 12. f3 f4 13. c5 g5 14. Rcl Ng6 15. cxd6 dates' Tie-Match, Larsen reached this identical position against Tal who played 17. — Ne8? and eventually lost. Three years passed, but in the 5th game of the Candidates' Tie-Mach, Larsen reached this identical position against Tal who played 17. — g4!? scoring a spectacular, but not quite deserved win with it! (See also the game: Averkin-Tal, 37th USSR ch 1969) - In this game Larsen plays an old line considered refuted twenty years ago. You ask by whom? ... Najdorf of course!

10. f3 f5

11. Be3?!

Probably too sharp! Now all Najdorf has to do is to repeat (and to remember!) his moves from the game with Tajmanov, Zurich 1953, starting with 11. — f4! =

11... Nf6?

A strange positional error from a grandmaster considered to be an expert on the black side of the King's Indian. Instead of winning a vital tempo with 11. — f4!, Najdorf welcomes Larsen to play 12. c5 without further preparation from say, Nd3.

12. c5 f4

13. Bf2 g5

14. a4!

The natural move is 14. Rcl, but this is even better.

14... Ng6

15. a5 h5

16. cxd6 cxd6

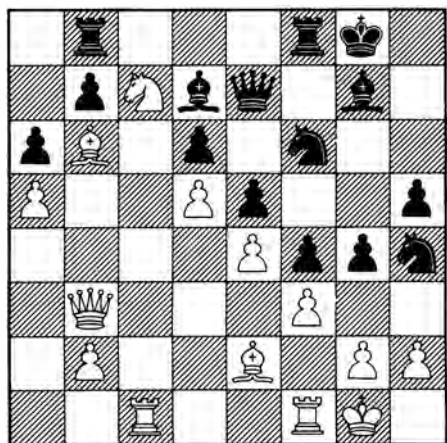
17. Nb5 a6

A sad decision but 17. — g4 18. Nxa7 g3 19. Bb6, is bad for black.

18. Bb6 Qe7
19. Nc7 Rb8
20. Qb3!

Much better than 20. Ba7!? Qxc7 21. Rcl Qxa5 22. Bxb8 Qd8 with some chances of survival.

- 20... g4
21. Rcl Bd7
22. Nd3 Nh4



23. Ne6!

An old trick! Black is forced to part with his strong white-squared bishop after which his attack would be less effective than usual.

- 23... Bxe6
24. dxe6 Rbc8
25. Kh1!

Just in case!

- 25... Kh8
26. Nb4 Bh6
27. Bc4 Rg8
28. Rg1 Rg7
29. Qd3 Rcg8
30. Nd5 Nxd5
31. Bxd5 gxf3

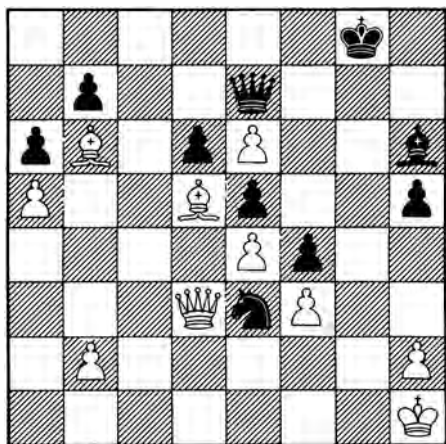
Powerful as it looks black's attack is doomed to fail. Partly because of the inac-

tive black-squared bishop, but also because of white's terribly strong passed pawn and of course the dominating bishop pair which in this case is equally good in attack as well as in defence!

32. gxf3 Rg2
33. Rxc2 Nxc2

If 33. — Rxc2, white can make good use of the c-file with: 34. Rc8† Bf8 35. Bd8!+—

34. Rg1 Ne3
35. Rxc2 Kxc2



36. Bd8!

True, 36. Qc3 would also lead to victory, but the text move is prettier.

- 36... Qe8
37. e7† Kh7
38. Bxb7!

Larsen's bishops mop up on the queen's wing, while the black army, disorganized as it is, remain a spectator to the unavoidable disaster.

- 38... Qa4
39. Qb1 Qb5
40. Bxa6! Qxa6
41. e8 (Q) Qe2
42. Qf7† Resigns

After 42. — Bg7 43. Qxh5† and 44. Qh3 the rest is silence!

55

Manila, 1973

Black: Ivkov

Nimzo-Indian Defence

1. d4 Nf6
2. c4 e6
3. Nc3

This is one of the rare cases in which Larsen allows the Nimzo-Indian to be played against him. Usually he prefers to play 3. Nf3 or 3. g3

3... Bb4
4. e3 c5
5. Bd3 Nc6
6. Nf3

Again he breaks with a principle, (not to allow a double-pawn!) but if white plays 6. Nge2, d5 would give black a good game.

6... Bxc3†
7. bxc3 d6!?

An interesting variation which dates back to Nimzovich. In recent time it has frequently been used by the German grandmaster, Robert Hubner. By the way, in the 5th game of the match for the world championship another Robert won a fine victory with it against Spassky!

8. e4 e5
9. d5 Ne7
10. Nh4!

White must be aggressive on the king's side otherwise black would soon take over the initiative, e.g. 10. 0-0?! h6 11. Ne1 g5!†

10... h6
11. f4 Ng6

But not 11. — exf4? 12. Bxf4 g5, when 13. e5! favours white.

12. Nxc6 fxg6
13. 0-0!

Much stronger than 13. fxe5?! which Spassky tried in the game mentioned above.

13... Qe7!?

The crucial line is 13. — 0-0! e.g. 14. f5 gxf5 15. exf5 e4 16. Be2 Qe7 as in the game Gligoric-Mecking, San Antonio, 1972.

14. Qf3!

White has won the theoretical discussion and is now ready to build up a dangerous initiative on the king's wing.

14... 0-0
15. Qg3 Kh7
16. f5 g5
17. Qh3 Kg8
18. g4

Larsen's position is very promising. Besides the spatial advantage the threat of h4 is hanging over Ivkov's head like the sword of Damocles!

18... Bd7
19. Qg3 Ba4
20. Rb1 Rb8
21. Rb2

The last preparation before the break on the king's side.

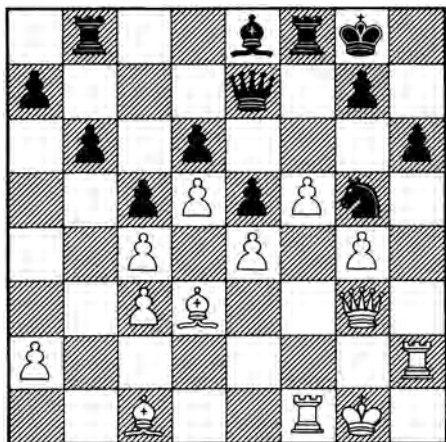
21... b6
22. h4! Nh7

Of course not 22. — gxh4? 23. Qxh4 Nxd5 24. g5 hxg5 25. Bxg5 Nf6 26. Rg2+—

23. hxg5 Nxc6
24. Rh2 Be8

The only move! But what now? The position seems totally blocked so how does white gain further ground under his feet? The answer must be an exchange of white-squared bishops, only then it would be possible to

play Rh5, after which the attack would soon be overwhelming.



25. Qh4 Qf6
26. Kg2 Kf7
27. Kg3 a6!

Otherwise it would be very easy for white to play a rook to a3, and then the bishop to a4.

28. Be3 Kg8

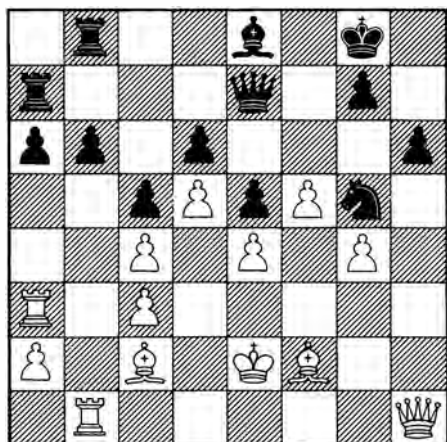
The best. To open the game with 28. — b5?! would only be in white's favour.

29. Rb1 Rf7
30. Rb3

Avoiding the little trap 30. Bxg5 Qxg5 31. Qxg5 hxg5 32. Rh5 Rf6! =

30... Rfb7
31. Ra3 Ra7
32. Rb2 Qd8
33. Rb1 Qe7
34. Bc2 Qd8
35. Qh1 Qe7
36. Kf2 Qd8
37. Ke2 Qe7
38. Bf2!

A sudden swift in plans. Now Larsen presents Ivkov with a delicate problem. What to do against the possible threat 39. Bh4. ?



38... a5?

Panic! Ivkov should have kept calm with his defensive queen moves, but perhaps time trouble spoils his positional judgement of the position?

39. Rab3 Ba4??

And this, still positionally speaking, is even worse! Voluntarily forcing an exchange which white has worked for for hours must be wrong!

40. R3b2 Bxc2
41. Rxc2 Qe8

The sealed move. During the separate adjudicated analysis both players came to the same result: White has a winning advantage.

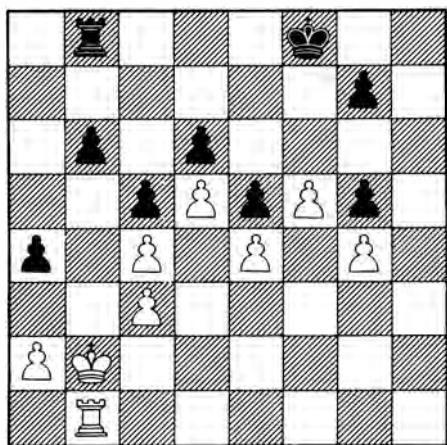
42. Rb5 Qd8
43. Be3 a4
44. Rcb2 Ra5
45. Kd3 Rxb5
46. Rxb5 Nf7
47. Qh5!

And now, without delay, Larsen returns to the first theme of this game: The attack on the black king. The threat, to which there is no defence, is 48. Rb1+—

47... Kf8
48. Rb1 Qf6

Hopeless is 48. — Qe8 49. Qg6 b5 50. cxb5
Rxb5 51. f6!+—

49. Kc2 Ng5
50. Bxg5 Qxg5
51. Qxg5 hxg5
52. Kb2



»Vive la petite difference!« A very instructive position this one. Put the white a-pawn on a3, and the game would be a dead draw. Here, however, Larsen has threats on both wings, and that is more than black can handle. Going over variations such as 52. — Ra8 53. Ka3 Ra6 54. Rh1 Kf7 55. Rh8!+—, Ivkov decides to take a desperate chance with ...

52... g6!
53. fxg6 a3†
54. Kb3

Not 54. Kxa3 Ra8†, when the win would be difficult.

54... Kg7
55. Ka4 Kxg6
56. Kb5 Rf8
57. Kc6 Rf2
58. Rxb6 Rxa2
59. Kxd6 Rb2
60. Ra6 Resigns

56 Las Palmas, 1974 Black: Quinteros Pirch

1. Nf3 d6
2. d4 g6
3. e4 Bg7
4. c3 Nf6
5. Nbd2 0-0
6. Be2

Quinteros prefers sharp and complicated variations such as the Sicilian Najdorf or the Sicilian Dragon. Keeping this in mind Larsen selects a very quiet and solid variation, in order to provoke Quinteros to take a risk!

6... Nc6
7. 0-0 e5
8. dxe5 Nxe5
9. Nxe5 dxe5
10. Qc2 Be6?!

The first risky step. A strategic good idea here is 10. — Bh6!? but also 10. — b6!? is worth serious consideration.

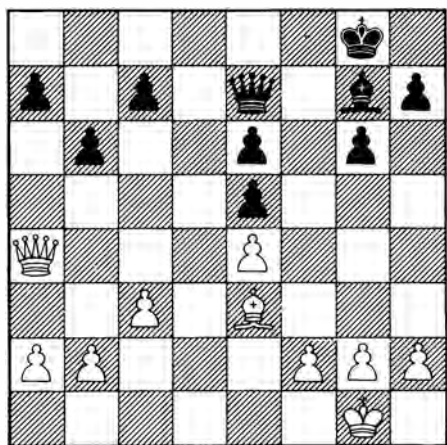
11. Nf3 Nd7
12. Ng5 Qe7
13. Rd1 Rfd8
14. Be3 Nf8
15. Nxe6 Nxe6
16. Qb3!

A good way of assessing the position would be to say that Larsen is already in the endgame, while Quinteros is still in the middlegame! In such a possible ending black's chances would not be too rosy, partly because of the weak queen's wing, but also because of his inactive so-called »bad« bishop.

16... b6
17. Bc4 Rxd1†
18. Rxd1 Rd8
19. Bxe6 Rxd1†
20. Qxd1 fxe6

A sad decision but 20. — Qxe6 21. Qd8† Bf8 22. h3! is by no means better.

21. Qa4



Larsen has excellent winning chances. Black's pieces are inactive, he has an ugly doublepawn and still, the queen's wing is very weak.

21... c5

21. — a5 would be answered with 22. c4, when the break c5! is difficult to meet in a satisfactory way.

22. Qc6 Kf7
23. Kf1 Qe8
24. Qc7† Qe7
25. Qc8 Qe8
26. Qa6 Qd7
27. Ke2 Bf8
28. a4!

White improves his position by every move and now, faced with the threat 29. a5, black must allow the white king entry to the queen's wing. To Larsen this is an important step forward.

28... Qc7
29. Kd3 Be7
30. b3 Qd7†
31. Kc2 Qc7

32. Bd2 Bd8
33. Qd3 Kg8
34. Bh6 Be7
35. g3

As usual Larsen combines the attack on the queen's wing with threats against the enemy king.

35... Qb7
36. h4 a6
37. Bc1 b5
38. axb5 axb5
39. c4 bxc4
40. Qxc4 Kf7
41. Be3 Qa7
42. Qa4 Qxa4??

Quinteros played this, the decisive blunder, with amazing speed. It is difficult to explain this error, because the following bishop ending is an easy win for white. Quinteros must definitely have missed something very simple in his pre-calculations!

43. bxa4 Ke8
44. Kd3 Kd7
45. Kc4 Kc6
46. Bg5 Bd6

The sealed move. Black's task is hopeless. He must keep an eye on white's dangerous passed pawn and he must protect his two weak pawns in the center. Finally, he must not allow white's king to advance further into his camp. All together this seems to be an impossible business, but one must admit that Quinteros puts up a very ingenious defence. The remaining moves are very instructive.

47. Bd8 h5
48. a5 Bb8
49. f3 Bd6
50. g4 Bb8
51. g5?! Bb7

Prolonging the game unnecessarily. A quick win could have been obtained with 51. a6! Ba7 (not 51. — Bd6 52. a7 Kb7 53.

Bb6!+-) 52. Be7! Zugzwang! Bb6 53. Bf6
Bc7 54. a7 Kb7 55. Kxc5+-

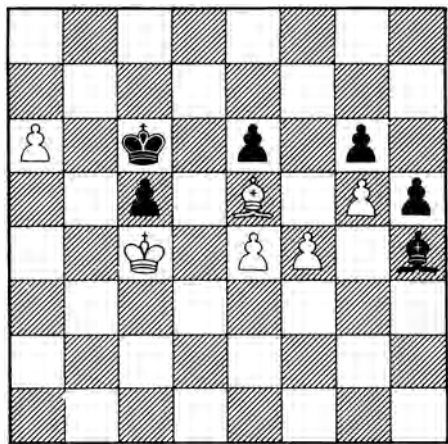
51... Bb6
52. Bb6

Now he cannot use the above mentioned variation, e.g. 52. Bf6 Bc7 53. a6 Kb6 54. a7 Kxa7 55. Kxc5 Kb7!

52... Be7
53. Ba7 Bd8!

A fine resource undoubtedly overseen by Larsen when he played his 51. g5?! Now on the other hand white must play with the utmost care in order to collect the whole point.

54. a6 Ba5
55. Bb8 Be1
56. Bxe5 Bxh4
57. f4



The threat is 58. f5 with a book win, but what if black plays 57. — Bg3. ?

57... Bg3
58. Bb8!!

A beautiful study - like bishop move. The point is 58. — h4 59. a7 Kb7 60. f5! when white wins the race.

58... Bf2
59. f5 exf5

60. exf5 gxf5
61. g6 Bd4
62. Bd6!

That bishop again!

62... h4

Indeed not 62. — Kb6?? 63. Bxc5†!

63. Bxc5!

The third and final point of Larsen's 58th move. The line is: 63. — h3 64. Bxd4 h2 65. a7 Kb7 66. g7 h1 (Q) 67. a8† (Q) Kxa8 68. g8† (Q) Kb7 69. Qf7† Kc6 70. Qe8†! winning. Hardly to believe that this is a possible variation and not a composed study!

63... Bg7
64. Bg1 h3
65. Kd3

The rest of the game is technique!

65... Bh6
66. Ke2 h2
67. Bxh2 Kb6
68. Kd3 Kxa6
69. Kc4 Kb6
70. Kd5 Kb5
71. Bf4 Bg7
72. Be5 Bh6
73. Ke6 Kc6
74. Kf7 Resigns

One of Larsen's »immortal« bishop endings.

57

Menorca, 1974 Black: Duckstein English

1. c4 e5
2. Nc3 Nf6
3. Nf3 Nc6
4. g3 d5
5. cxd5 Nxd5
6. Bg2 Be6

Some years ago 6. — Nxc3!? 7. bxc3 e4! was considered strong, but recent analysis has proved the pawn sacrifice 8. Nd4! to be very promising.

7. 0-0 Be7!?

Theory recommends 7. — Nb6

8. d4! exd4
9. Nb5

Instead of the slightly boring 9. Nxd4 Nxc3 10. bxc3 Nxd4 11. cxd4±, this is certainly an interesting alternative.

9... Qd7!

The most flexible continuation for black. 9. — d3?! cannot be good, and 9. — Bf6 10. Nfxd4 gives white a small but clear advantage.

10. Nfxd4 Nxd4
11. Nxd4 Bh3
12. e4 Bxg2?

But this is bad. Black can achieve equality with 12. — Nf6! e.g. 13. Nf5 Bxf5 14. exf5 Qxd1 15. Rxd1 c6= or 13. Bf4!? Bxg2 14. Kxg2 Nxe4 15. Re1, and it is not quite clear if white gets enough for his pawn.

13. Kxg2 Nb6
14. Nf5 Bf6
15. Qc2 g6
16. Nh6!

An excellent outpost for the knight. Notice the »trap« 16. Rd1!? Qe6 17. Nh6 Qc4! when black has nothing to fear.

16... 0-0-0
17. Bf4 Rhe8
18. Rac1 c6

Unfortunately this is the only move. (18. — Be5?? 19. Rfd1!+-)

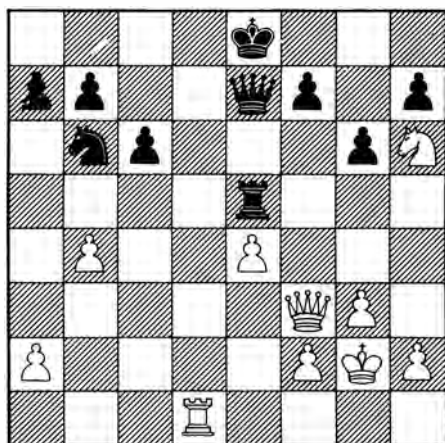
19. b4 Be5
20. Rfd1 Qc7
21. Rxd8† Kxd8
22. Bxe5 Rxe5
23. Qc3!

Almost unnoticed Larsen has built up what seems to be an irresistible attack against the bewildered black king. The threat for the moment is Qxe5!

23... Ke7
24. Qf3 Ke8
25. Rd1!?

Being too sure about the win, Larsen makes a typical »left-handed« move instead of the murderous 25. Qf6! Now black can hang on with 25. — Re6 but perhaps he feared 26. a4!± ?

25... Qe7?



26. Qf4!

A fine quiet move. Now black's position collapses with a bang!

26... Kf8?

Probably a blunder in time trouble, but Duckstein is lost in any case.

27. Rd8† Resigns

Manila, 1974 **White: Torre** **Sicilian Defence**

1. e4 c5
 2. Nf3 e6
 3. d4 cxd4
 4. Nxd4 Nf6
 5. Nc3 d6
 6. Be2

Since the famous game against Fischer, (Mallorca, Interzonal, 1970 no 38) it is very seldom that a Larsen opponent choses the »Velimirovic-attack« against him! Is it refuted? Probably not. But why play a line which Larsen knows better than his own pocket, Torre may have thought!

6... Be7
 7. 0-0 Nc6
 8. Be3 Bd7
 9. Ndb5!?

Torre tries to prove that black's queen is slightly out of play on b8. The book prefers 9. Nb3± or 9. f4±

9... Qb8
 10. a4 0-0
 11. f4 Rc8!?

A novelty! If 11. — Rc8!? should be better than Polugajevsky's 11. — Rd8!? (Podgajec-Polugajevsky USSR 1973) is hard to say, but an unknown idea is always difficult to deal with, especially when it comes from Larsen!

12. Kh1

Perhaps a waste of time. Podgajec played 12. Bf3!?

12... Nb4
 13. Bf3 a6
 14. Nd4 e5!

The point of Larsen's previous play. Now

white cannot play 15. Nf5? because of 15. — Bxf5 16. exf5 e4 17. Be2 d5! and black is already better.

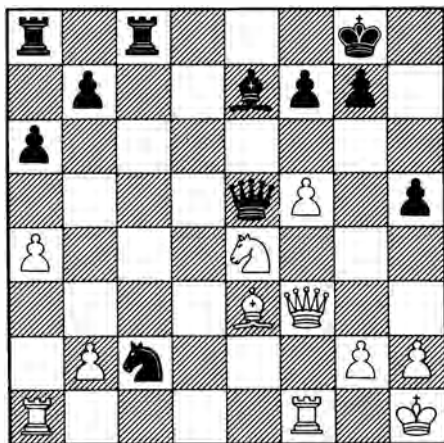
15. fxe5 dxe5
 16. Nf5 Bxf5
 17. exf5 e4
 18. Bxe4

But not 18. Be2 Bd6!±

18... Nxe4
 19. Nxe4 Qe5!

A powerful centralization-move from a queen thought to be stranded on b8!

20. Qg4! h5
 21. Qf3 Nxc2!



Hardly surprising Larsen rejects the draw which could have been obtained with 21. — Rc4 22. f6! Rxe4 23. fxe7, when it is difficult to find a better move than 23. — Rxe3 which allows a draw by repetition of moves.

22. f6?

Torre, the young national hero, goes astray! He should have played 22. Bf4! Qxf5 23. Rad1 with a fairly even game.

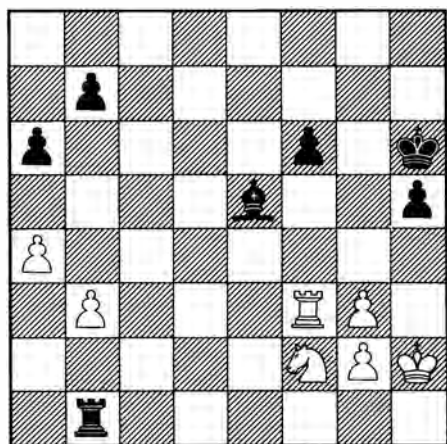
22... Nxe3
 23. Qxe3 Bb6

An unpleasant surprise. Instead of having an even game Torre finds himself placed in difficulties.

24. Qg3	Qxg3
25. hxc3	Be5
26. fxg7	Kxg7
27. Rf5	f6
28. Raf1	Rc6
29. b3	Kg6
30. R5f3	Rd8
31. Nf2	Rc3
32. Rxc3	Bxc3
33. Nh3	Be5
34. Nf4†	Kh6
35. Kh2	Rd2

Larsen has managed to squeeze the most out of the position, but if it is enough to win is another question.

36. Rf3	Rd1
37. Nd3	Kg6
38. Nf4†	Kg5
39. Nh3†	Kh6
40. Nf2	Rb1



The adjourned position. Larsen analysed it for some ten(!) hours, paying special attention to 41. Nd3, but next day when the envelope was opened, it contained the move 41. Ne4, which Larsen had rejected as inferior to

41. Nd3, thus only analysing it for less than an hour!

41. Ne4?!	Kg6
42. Nd2	Rd1
43. Nc4	Bb8
44. Ne3	Rb1
45. Nf1	Be5?!

Too much analysing and almost no sleep turns out to be a bad cocktail producing a sleepy grandmaster! Here Larsen forgets all about the exact order of moves. The right way is 42. — Rb2

46. Nd2	Rc1
47. Nc4	Bc7
48. Ne3	b5?

It is indeed very seldom to see Larsen commit such a grave positional error. After the exchange of pawns on the queen's wing it should be possible for Torre to keep his game alive. Because of the reduced material even a rook ending a pawn down should be a draw. 48. — Rb1! this is the difference. Now even 49. Nd5 Be5 50. Nf4† Bxf4 leaves black with a big, perhaps winning, plus.

49. axb5	axb5
50. Nd5	Be5
51. Ne3?	

How difficult it is to play such relatively »simple« endings! The move actually chosen is bad because the knight will no longer be able to reach f4. Instead, 51. Nf4† should result in a draw by careful playing.

51...	Rb1
52. Nf1	Rb2
53. Kh3	Kg5
54. Nh2	Rb1

No doubt! Torre is doomed and he must just stand by, an idle spectator, as Larsen takes his position apart.

55. Rd3	Kf5
56. Rf3†	Kg5

The most important thing is to pass the sec-

ond time control. 56. — Ke4! is not bad either! The rest is relatively simple and is given without comments.

57. Re3	Kg6
58. Rf3	b4
59. Nf1	Bc3
60. g4	hxc4†
61. Kxg4	Rxb3
62. Rd3	Ra3
63. Kf3	Be5
64. Ke2	Rxd3
65. Kxd3	b3
66. Nd2	b2
67. Kc2	Kf5
68. Kd3	Kf4
69. Ke2	Kg3
70. Kf1	f5
71. Nb1	Bd6
72. Nc3	Bb4
73. Nb1	Ba5
74. Na3	Bc3
75. Nb1	Bb4
76. Kg1	f4
77. Kf1	f3!

Resigns

59 Manila, 1974 Black: Portisch Sicilian Defence

1. e4	c5
2. Nf3	d6
3. d4	

To Portisch this must have been a little surprising since Larsen is known to play almost anything but 3. d4 in this position!

3...	cxnd4
4. Nxd4	Nf6
5. Nc3	a6

The Najdorf Variation. Once, before it was

analysed to »death«, this used to be one of Larsen's pet lines when he was playing the Sicilian. Here he has to face it, playing the white pieces. Perhaps Larsen is not the only one to practise psychology at the chess board?!

6. Bg5

He must have something up his sleeve! To the best of my knowledge this move, which is the most aggressive, has never occurred in Larsen's games before. (For 6. Be2 see game no 1.)

6...	e6
7. f4	Be7

In the play-off for the Candidates', Varese, 1976, the game Tal-Portisch saw Portisch playing the »Poisoned«-Pawn-Variation for the first time ever, but perhaps that was more due to his lack of points than to his ability as a chess-psychologist! Anyway, it would have been interesting to see what Larsen had prepared against 7. — Qb6!?

8. Qf3	Qc7
9. 0-0-0	Nbd7
10. Be2	

This is not considered to give black any troubles, but Larsen has prepared an interesting novelty which he wants to test on this occasion. Other possibilities are: 10. Bd3± - 10. Qg3± and the »old« line 10. g4±(=)

10...	b5
11. Bxf6	Nxf6

Not 11. — Bxf6? 12. Bxb5!+—

12. e5	Bb7
13. Qg3?!	

According to Stean (Sicilian: Najdorf p. 48).« this is objectively worse than 13. exf6!? Bxf3 14. Bxf3 Bxf6 15. Bxa8 d5 16. Bxd5 Bxd4 17. Rxd4 exd5 18. Re1† Kf8 19. Re5!± (=)« (In the famous game Keres-Fischer, Candidates' 1959, Keres played the weaker 19. Nxd5 and eventually lost.)

13... dxe5
14. fxe5 Nd7
15. Bf3!?

This is the novelty Larsen had relied on, but as Portisch demonstrates, it is quite harmless. Of course not the »tricky« 15. Qxg7 Qxe5 16. Nxe6?! fxe6 17. Bh5† Qxh5-+ (Shapiro-Brondum, Biel 1976)

15... Bxf3
16. gxf3 g6!

And not 16. — Qxe5?! 17. f4! with a nice attack to white.

17. f4 Qb7!

Again the best. It is very important to prevent white from occupying the vital square, e4.

18. h4 0-0-0

Portisch has defended himself well, and his position looks promising but, and there is a but, he has spent a lot of time on his last few moves so now the problems come from another front!

19. Nf3 b4
20. Ne2 Nc5
21. Ng5 Rfd8
22. Qe3 h6
23. Nf3 Rd8
24. Ned4

Dangerous! It was better to play 24. Ng3, with only a slight advantage to black.

24... Rd7
25. Nb3 Nxb3?

A strange mistake for a player of Portisch's capacity. 25. — Qe4 was the natural and strong continuation, which would have ensured him the better position.

26. axb3 Rhd8
27. Rxd7 Qxd7
28. h5!

The wind shifts. With this move and the one

that follows, Larsen seizes the initiative, never to give it away for the rest of the game.

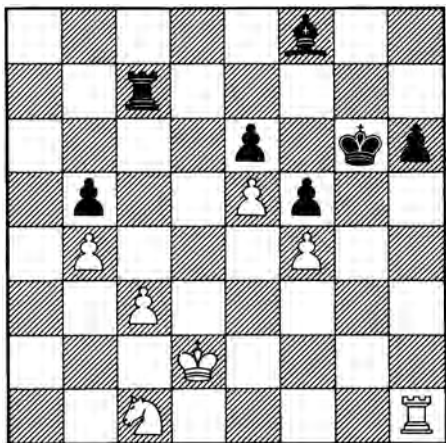
28... gxf5
29. Qe2! Qb5
30. Qxb5 axb5
31. Rxf5 Bf8

The tempting 31. — Bc5 would be strongly met with 32. Rxf6 Be3† 33. Kb1 Rd1† 34. Ka2 Rf1 35. Ng5!±

32. Ne1 Rd5
33. Nd3 Kd8
34. Kd2 f5?

With this move black reduces his chance of easing his cramped position by means of a later f5. Besides, from being almost dead, Portisch's bishop is now completely dead.

35. Ke3 Ke8
36. Rh1 Rd7
37. c3 bxc3
38. bxc3 Rc7
39. Kd2 Kf7
40. Nc1 Kg6
41. b4!



What a pretty move to seal! The diagrammed position is an odd example of a rule and the exception to it. Normally it is wise to put the pawns on white squares if the

opponent has a black-squared bishop, but here Larsen carefully puts all his pawns on black squares! Why he does so should not be difficult to understand. Black's humble bishop cannot defend b5 or e6, so when white's knight arrives at d4, it would be time for Portisch to resign. The most convincing variations are: 41. — h5 42. Ne2 Bh6 43. Ke3+— or 41. — Rc4 42. Ne2 h5 43. Ke3 Bh6 44. Kf3!, and white's rook decides the rest. Finally, 41. — Rc4 42. Ne2 Re4 43. Kd3 h5 44. Nd4 Bh6 45. Rg1† Kh7 (if Kf7 then 46. Nxb5!+—) 46. Nxe6 Bxf4 47. Nf8† Kh8 48. Nd7 Bxe5 49. Rg5! with an easy win.

41... **Rd7†**
42. Kc2

But not 42. Ke3? Be7 43. Ne2 Bd8!

42... **h5**
43. Ne2 **Bh6**
44. Rh4 **Bf8**
45. Rh3!

Putting black in a state of »Zugzwang«. If 45. — Bh6, white wins with 46. Rg3† Kf7 47. Rd3!

45... **Rh7**
46. Nd4 **h4**
47. Nxe6 **Be7**
48. Kd3 **Kh5**
49. Ke3 **Kg4**
50. Rh1 **Kg3**
51. Rg1† **Kh2**
52. Kf2 **Rh6**

An amusing variation is 52. — h3?? 53. Nd4! and the net is closed.

53. Nd4 **Ra6**
54. Rg2† **Kh1**
55. Rg1† **Kh2**
56. Rg2†

Just a harmless repetition of moves before he decides upon anything of importance.

56... **Kh1**
57. Rg7 **Resigns**

60

Orense, 1975

Black: Andersson King's Indian Defence

1. g3	g6
2. Bg2	Bg7
3. c4	Nf6
4. Nc3	0-0
5. d4	c5
6. d5	d6
7. Nf3	Na6

If black wants to play e6, (and he should do so because his position usually gets a little cramped without this freeing move.) this is exactly the time to do it, e.g. 7. — e6 8. 0-0 exd5 9. cxd5, and now both 9. — Re8, as in the game Grigorjan-Polugajevsky, USSR ch 1974, or 9. — Qe7!? (Petrosjan) should guarantee black a satisfactory game.

8. 0-0 **Nc7**
9. Re1!

A good move for several reasons. It prepares the center-break e4-e5, and it makes room for the bishop which from f1 would be able to guard itself against a possible black b5.

9... **a6**
10. a4 **Rb8?!**

This is the main reason to black's arising problems. Of course he should have played 10. — b6, and only then Rb8.

11. a5 **e6?**

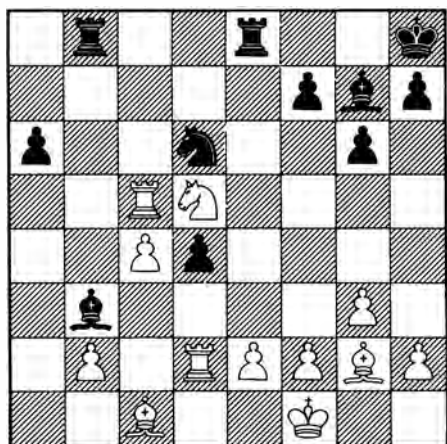
Funnily enough, this move which would have been excellent, if played as black's 7th, is now a mistake! Instead, 11. — b6, as in the game Larsen-Donner, Leyden 1970, should have been preferred. (A similar position is to be seen in the game Larsen-Westerinen, no. 24 in this book)

12. dxe6	Nxe6
13. Qd3	b6
14. Rd1	Bxa5

- | | |
|----------|------|
| 15. Qxd6 | Qxd6 |
| 16. Rxd6 | Ne8 |
| 17. Rd3 | |

It is quite clear that Andersson has a troublesome game. Three weak pawns on the queen's side, and one of them must soon be lost. Besides, Larsen has the ideal operation-square, d5, at his disposal and a much better piece-communication. Naturally Andersson realizes this, and the following is an ingenious attempt to complicate matters.

- | | |
|----------|-------|
| 17... | Nd4 |
| 18. Nxd4 | cx d4 |
| 19. Nd5 | Kh8 |
| 20. Rxa5 | Nd6 |
| 21. Rc5 | Re8 |
| 22. Kf1 | Bf5 |
| 23. Rd1 | Bc2 |
| 24. Rd2 | Bb3 |



25. Nc7!

It looks as if black is coming back into the game, but Larsen's following no doubt carefully prepared knight-manoevre decides the issue.

- | | |
|----------|------|
| 25... | Rec8 |
| 26. Bd5 | Rb4 |
| 27. Nxa6 | Rxc5 |
| 28. Nxc5 | Bxc4 |
| 29. Nd3! | |

The point of the previous knight-route: c7-a6-c5-d3! Now black must part with his strong bishop, (29. — Ra4? 30. b3+-) and with an extra pawn and a pair of bishops the rest is only too elementary for the Danish grandmaster.

- | | |
|----------|------|
| 29... | Bxd3 |
| 30. Rxd3 | Nc4 |
| 31. Bxf7 | Nxb2 |

Black has managed to get rid of the dangerous passed pawn only to find himself up against a terrible pair of white bishops!

- | | |
|----------|------|
| 32. Rb3 | Rxb3 |
| 33. Bxb3 | d3 |
| 34. Ke1 | Bd4 |
| 35. Bh6 | g5 |

Sheer desperation. But as usual Andersson is in grave time trouble and forgets all about resignation!

- | | |
|----------|---------|
| 36. Bxg5 | Kg7 |
| 37. Kd2 | Bxf2 |
| 38. exd3 | Bg1 |
| 39. Be3! | Bxh2 |
| 40. Bd4† | Kg6 |
| 41. Bxb2 | Resigns |

61

Orense, 1975 Black: Quinteros Modern Defence

- | | |
|--------|-------|
| 1. c4 | g6 |
| 2. d4 | Bg7 |
| 3. e4 | d6 |
| 4. Nc3 | Nc6!? |

A very sharp reply. In the books it is considered inferior to moves such as: 4. — e5, 4. — Nd7, 4. — Nf6 or even 4. — c6, but perhaps that judgement is not quite fair!

- | | |
|--------|------|
| 5. Be3 | e5 |
| 6. d5 | Nce7 |

The alternative is the interesting 6. — Nd4!?

7. g4!?

Excellent! You will often meet this idea in variations with a fixed pawn-center, e.g. the Petrosjan-variation of the King's Indian. The plan is to prevent (or at least make it difficult) for black to play f5. Also worth consideration is the line recommended by Boleslavsky and Keene starting with 7. c5!? e.g. 7. — f5 8. Bb5† Kf8 9. f3 Bh6 10. Bf2 Nf6 11. h3 Kg7 12. Nge2 Rf8 13. Bc4± Olafsson-Keene, Reykjavik 1972.

7... Nf6!?

Why not the crucial 7. — f5!?! e.g. 8. gxf5 gxf5 9. Qh5† Kf8 10. Bh3 Nf6 »with an unclear game« (Boleslavsky)

8. f3 h5??

Honestly speaking this is a terribly move! Almost »everything« would have been better than this panic reaction which leaves black with a lifeless game. Interesting is 8. — c5!? In a game between Ree and Uhlmann, IBM 1971, Ree had played 8. h3 instead of Larsen's 8. f3 that game continued with: 8. — c5 9. Bd3 0-0 10. Nge2 Ne8 11. Ng3 Bd7 12. Qd2 a6 13. f3 f5 14. gxf5 gxf5 15. exf5 Nxf5 16. Nxf5 Bxf5 17. 0-0-0 b5!, with a complicated struggle ahead.

9. g5	Nh7
10. Qd2	f5
11. h4	Nf8
12. c5	a6
13. b4	Nd7
14. a4	0-0

Hopeless is 14. — a5 15. Nb5!+-

15. a5!

Instructive pawn play! Did you know that Larsen claims Philidor to be the greatest master of all time?! I think that the old master, if given the opportunity, would have been very pleased playing over this game! 12 pawn moves out of 15!! are indeed out of this

world, but still Larsen has a winning position!

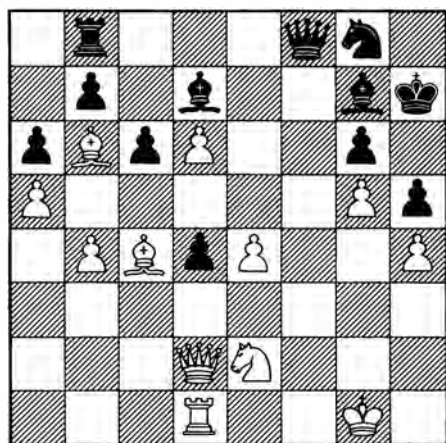
15...	Kh7
16. Nge2	Rf7
17. Nc1	Nf8
18. Be2	c6!?

A violent attempt to get some counter-play. It seems as if Quinteros finds it better to die on the battlefield than in the bed!

19. cxd6	Qxd6
20. Bc5	Qd8
21. d6	Ng8

Fischer, a close friend of Quinteros, used to call such a position: »Traffic jam on the king's side!«

22. Nb3	Qe8
23. Be3	Ne6
24. Rd1	Bd7
25. 0-0	Rd8
26. Bc4	Rf8
27. Bb6	Rb8
28. Ne2	fxe4
29. fxe4	Nd4
30. Rxf8	Qxf8
31. Nbx d4	exd4



32. Rf1!

»Sacrificing« his pride, in the dominating

passed pawn, but to accept the gift would be too dangerous because of 33. Rf7! with a furious attack, e.g. 33. — Be8 34. Bc7+—

32... Qe8
33. Nf4 Qe5
34. Bf7!

Now he even tears in the quarry!

34... Qxd6
35. Bxg6† Kh8
36. Bxh5 d3
37. e5!

The final touch. Black might just as well resign here.

37... Bxe5
38. Ng6† Kg7
39. Nxe5 Qxe5
40. Qxd3 Resigns

A very instructive example of what may happen if black plays passively in a difficult variation.

62

Orense, 1975 Black: Gheorghiu Sicilian Defence

1. e4 c5
2. Nf3 e6
3. Nc3 a6
4. d4

Perhaps this mere routine move was a little surprising to Gheorghiu, but as we shall see Larsen also knows the modern variations of the Sicilian quite well!

4... cxd4
5. Nxd4 Qc7
6. g3 Bb4
7. Ne2 Nf6
8. Bg2 Be7

9. 0-0 Nc6
10. b3 0-0
11. Bb2 Rd8

Larsen has chosen a quiet and modest set-up which leaves black with a satisfactory game and perhaps a feeling of »no danger at all!« The text is ambitious, probably too ambitious, but to prove that one must be aware of all the hidden finesses in this popular variation. Instead of the sharp 11. — Rd8 Larsen gives 11. — Rb8!? with nearly equality.

12. Qd2 b5
13. Nd5!?

One of the most common sacrifices in the Sicilian, but not in this variation! Nevertheless, it is the only way if white wants to prove that black should have played 11. — Rb8!?

13... exd5
14. exd5 Bb7

14. — Qd6?! does not win a piece, on the contrary it gives white a clear advantage after 15. Qf4! Here Gheorghiu offered a draw, but as usual Larsen refused the offer! To Larsen a draw is almost the same as half a defeat! (A malicious rumour has it that Petrosjan looks upon a draw as half a victory!)

15. dxc6 dxc6
16. Qf4!

An ingenious queen-manoeuver. The purpose is to profit from black's - for the moment - awkwardly placed queen's bishop.

16... Bd6
17. Qf5 Bc8
18. Qg5 h6
19. Qc1 Re8
20. Qd2 Bg4?!

Tempting, but a serious inaccuracy! Instead, it was high time for 20. — Ne4! which seems to bring about some sort of dynamic equilibrium. After 21. Qd4 black is forced to weaken his king's side with 21. — f5, but that is of little importance and fully outweighed by his actively placed pieces.

21. Bxf6 Bxe2

Not 21. — Rxe2? 22. Qd4!

22. Rfel Bh5
23. Bc3 Rxe1†
24. Rxe1 a5
25. h4 b4

Unfortunately he cannot play 25. — a4 because of 26. bxa4! bxa4 27. Qd4!

26. Bb2 Rd8
27. Qd4 Bf8
28. Qc4 Qd6
29. Bc1 Bg6
30. Be3 c5

Allowing white a very powerful white-squared bishop, but it is still a question if that would be enough to win the game.

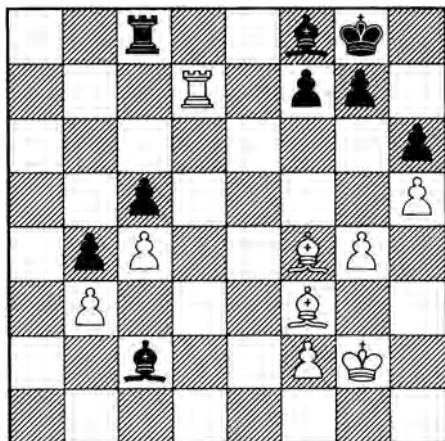
31. Bf3 Qe5
32. Kg2 Qf5
33. h5?!

This attempt to complicate matters (as usual Gheorghiu had »problems« with his clock!) should have lead to a draw, but with only a few minutes left Gheorghiu failed to find the saving line: 33. — Bxh5! 34. g4 Qg6 35. Rh1? Rd4! In this line Larsen would be forced to accept the draw with 35. Be2 Qc6† 36. Bf3 Qg6 etc. Now, however, Larsen is on the right track!

33... Bh7?
34. Rc1 Qe5
35. c3 Bd3
36. Qf4 Qxf4
37. Bxf4 Rc8
38. c4 Bf5
39. Rd1 a4
40. g4!

With only one minute left this must have been a difficult decision to make, but Larsen's »intuition« told him that the penetration to the 7th rank would be decisive! Black cannot play 40. — Be6 because of 41. bxa4! and the passed pawn would be impossible to stop, so he must play...

40... Bc2
41. Rd7 axb3
42. axb3



The adjourned position. Gheorghiu has a difficult choice between two evils. Should he opt for the active 42. — Bxb3. ? or, perhaps, the passive 42. — f6. ? Finally he decides to play the active line, but it still remains a question if the passive one would not have been better. True, Larsen would have an excellent position, but to prove it won, would be impossible!

42... Bxb3
43. Bd5 Ba4
44. Bxf7† Kh8
45. Ra7 Be8
46. Be6!

Quite a shift in scenery! Now Larsen avoids the exchange of white-squared bishops because that would only help black out of his cramped position.

46... Bc6†
47. f3 Re8
48. Bf5 Kg8
49. Ra6 Re2†
50. Kg3 Be8
51. Ra8!

All foreseen, no doubt, from the diagrammed

position. Now black must lose material because 51. — Bf7 fails to 52. Be4!+—

51...	b3!?
52. Be4	b2
53. Rb8	Bf7
54. Bd3	Re8
55. Rxe8	

This wins too, but 55. Rxb2 is much easier.

55...	Bxe8
56. Be5	Be7?!

Missing his last chance in this difficult ending. Good or bad, Gheorghiu should have played for further exchanges with 56. — g6!

57. Bxb2	Bf7
58. Be5	Bf6
59. Kf4	Be6
60. Bd6	Bd4
61. Be5!	

The rest is easy to understand.

61...	Bf2
62. Ke4	Bh4
63. Be2	Be7
64. Bc7	Kf7
65. Ke5	Bc8
66. Bd3	

Adjourned, but later Gheorghiu *resigned* without resumption.

63

Manila, 1975

Black: Kavalek

Sicilian Defence

1. e4	c5
2. Nf3	d6
3. d4	

No comments!

3...	cx d4
4. Nxd4	Nf6
5. Nc3	e6
6. g3	

A good and solid set-up against the popular Scheveningen. Also interesting is the so-called Keres Variation 6. g4!? usually producing a lot of sparkling games.

6...	Nc6
7. Bg2	Nxd4?!

This is »theory«, but as Larsen proves in this game, it is bad too! 7. — Bd7 is a much better try.

8. Qxd4	Be7
9. 0-0	0-0?!

Still it would have been better to play 9. — Bd7

10. e5!	dxe5
11. Qxe5	Qb6
12. a4!	

Larsen never fails to see such moves! Up to now the players have been following a little-known Russian corr-game between Aronin and Konstantinopolsky in which Aronin continued with the weak 12. Na4?! Here, however, Kavalek is faced with the nasty threat a5-a6, and soon finds it very difficult to develop his queen's side in a natural way.

12...	Bd6
-------	-----

Other moves are less satisfactory, e.g. 12. — Bd7 13. a5 Qa6 14. Rd1 Rfc8 (Bc6?? 15. Bf1!+—) 15. Bf1 Qc6 16. a6±

13. Qb5	Qc7
14. a5	a6?

Players of a more methodical temperament might have preferred the calm 14. — Rb8 since now black's position becomes too exposed.

15. Qb6	Qe7
16. Bg5	Bc5

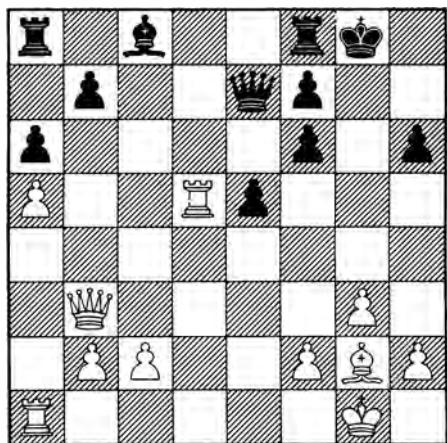
That Kavalek is in a difficult situation can be

seen in the variation 16. — Bc7 17. Bxf6 gxf6 18. Qe3! when white threatens not only Nd5, but also the murderous manoeuvre Qh6-Ra4-h4+ —

17. Qb3 h6
18. Bxf6 gxf6

Unfortunately he cannot play 19. — Qxf6 19. Ne4 Qe7 20. Nxc5 Qxc5 21. Rfd1!+—

19. Na4 Rb8
20. Rfd1 e5
21. Nxc5 Qxc5
22. Rd5 Qe7



23. Qe3!

Based upon a little tactical finesse. If now 23. — Be6, white wins at once with 24. Qxh6! Bxd5 25. Bxd5+—, e.g. 25. — f5 26. Ra4! (that rook again!)

23... Kg7
24. b3 Be6
25. Qc5 Qxc5
26. Rxc5

Nothing has really changed. The advantage on the queen's side is still so big that there should be little doubt about the outcome!

26... Rfd8
27. Kf1 b6
28. axb6 Rxb6

29. Ke1 Rbd6
30. Bf3 Rb8
31. Be2 Rbb6
32. f4! e4?!

Everything is bad, but this loses a pawn for nothing!

33. f5 Bd7
34. Raa5 e3
35. Rc3 Bb5

The simple answer to 35. — Rd2 is 36. Rac5+—

36. Rxe3 Bxe2
37. Kxe2 Rbc6
38. c3 Rd7
39. Rd3 Rb7
40. b4 Rbc7
41. Kd2 Re7
42. Rad5 Re5
43. R3d4 h5
44. Kd3 Re1

The sealed move in a hopeless position. Not only is he a pawn down and the unhappy owner of three weak pawn islands, but the brightest jewel in his collection, the king, is also in great danger!

45. Rc5 Rb6
46. Rc8 a5

A last desperate gesture.

47. Kd2!

No doubt, he plays for mate! 47. bxa5 is also good, but the text is quicker.

47... Rh1
48. h4 Rh2†
49. Kd3 Rh1
50. Kc4

A matter of taste. The »brilliant« 50. Kc2 Rh2† 51. Kf1 Rb5 52. Kg1! is of course equally good.

50... Rxb4†
51. cxb4 Rc1†
52. Kb3 Rxc8

53. bxa5 Kf8
 54. a6 Ke7
 55. Kb4 Rc1
 56. Kb5 Ra1
 57. Ra4 Rb1†
 58. Ka5 Resigns

64

Barcelona, 1976
White: Pomar
Dutch Defence

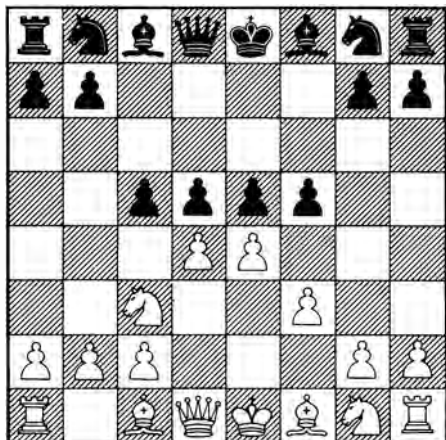
1. d4 f5
 2. Nc3!?

This wild west move is interesting, but perhaps not the right choice against a Larsen. White invites 2. — Nf6 upon which comes 3. Bg5 with inventive lines such as 3. — e6 4. g4!? in the offing, but black has a much better answer.

2... d5!
 3. f3?!

Again he plays with fire. Is it possible that Pomar simply underestimated his opponent and dreamed about a move like 3. — Nf6?! when 4. e4! would transpose into a favourable variation of the Staunton's Gambit?

3... c5!
 4. e4 e5!!



A fantastic position. Only four moves, black's being all pawn moves, and a totally obscure scenery is on the board. Theory had considered only 4. — dxe4?! when 5. d5 is good for white, but Larsen's reply is so strong as to amount to a refutation of 3. f3?!

5. Bb5†

It is difficult to give a better move, e.g. 5. Nxd5 cxd4†, perhaps 5. dxe5 d4 6. Nce2!?, (but certainly not 6. Nd5? fxe4 7. fxe4 Qh4†‡)

5... Bd7
 6. Bxd7† Nxd7
 7. Nxd5 cxd4
 8. Ne2?!

It would have been better to select the route h3-f2 for this knight. In that case chances would be even, but now black is even better!

8... fxe4
 9. fxe4 Nf6
 10. Bg5?

Probably this is the mistake already. It was necessary to exchange on f6, but black would have a fine game anyway.

10... Qa5†
 11. Bd2 Qc5

12. Nxf6† Nxf6
13. Ng3 h5!

Larsen's vigorous playing has earned him a winning position. The text, which is very strong, is almost his trademark and played with a tiny smile this move has a terrible effect!

14. Qf3

A gambling chance. But if 14. h4 black simply plays 14. — g6 with a very nice game.

14... h4
15. Ne2 Qxc2
16. Qf5 Qxe4
17. Qe6† Be7
18. Bb4?

The decisive error. The only chance was 18. 0-0!? when Larsen would have to find(!) 18. — Qc6 19. Qxe5 d3! in order to maintain his winning advantage.

18... Nd5
19. Bxe7 Nf4!
20. Qc4 Kxe7
Resigns

A shocking game.

65

Las Palmas, 1976 White: Fraguera Larsen's Opening

1. Nf3 b6
2. b3 e6
3. Bb2

An odd »Frenchman« would arise from 3. e4, but probably black's 1. — b6 would prove to be more useful than white's 2. b3. Now, however, Larsen is allowed to play his beloved f5.

3... f5!?
4. e3 Nf6
5. Be2 Bb7
6. c4 a5!?
7. 0-0?

A careless routine move. It was not necessary to castle, so why not the natural 7. Nc3±

7... a4
8. d3 axb3
9. axb3 Rxa1
10. Bxa1 Bb4

Black has no problems. The a-pawn has done a perfect job; so one has to be very careful about those flank-attacks from Larsen!

11. Nc3 0-0
12. Na2 Bd6
13. Bc3 Nc6
14. b4 Ne7!

Larsen reveals his evil intentions. A direct attack on the enemy king is the order given by this knight.

15. Nc1

Forced in view of threats like 15. — g5, or 15. — Qa8

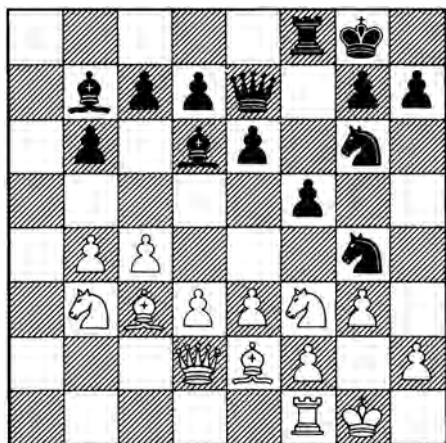
15... Ng6
16. Nb3

Four moves by this humble knight and still it is badly placed. No wonder that black in the meantime has built up a powerful position.

16... Qe7!
17. Qd2 Ng4

Now, with white's queen on d2, instead of d1, this is excellent. The reason is: 18. h3? Bxf3 19. Bxf3 Nh2!—+

18. g3



In this fascinating position Larsen took a »sleep« for nearly fifty minutes. Indeed, there are many tempting lines, e.g. the »brilliant« 18. Nh4?! 19. gxh4?? Qxh4!-+, but what if white simply plays 19. Ne1!? Another interesting possibility is 18. — c5!? which prevents white from playing his intended c5. Finally, Larsen, true to his »style«, embarks on an old friend in such positions, the h-pawn!

18... h5!?

Probably a matter of taste, but the course of the game seems to indicate that 18. — c5!? would have been better!

19. c5 bxc5
20. bxc5 Bxc5
21. h3!

The best. 21. Nxc5 Qxc5 22. Bb4 Qd5 23. Bxf8 Ne5! is a win for black, and 21. Bxg7 Qxg7 22. Nxc5 Ba8 also leaves black with the better of it.

21... Nf6
22. Nxc5 Qxc5
23. Bb4 Qd5
24. Bxf8 Ne5

In the variation given above this should lead to a win for black, but the position is tricky

and the combination difficult to calculate, so, perhaps...?

25. e4??

Obviously this must have been planned several moves ago, but unfortunately it is also Larsen's main variation and as usual he has seen just one move further than his opponent. Here, however, both players seem to have overlooked the astonishing defence 25. Qb4!! which, believe it or not, saves the game for white. The point is that 25. — Nxf3† 26. Bxf3 Qxf3 fails to 27. e4! and black's bishop on b7 is »hanging«. Larsen would be forced to take the draw with 27. — Nd5 28. Qxb7 Ne3 when perpetual check is unavoidable. A pretty line, indeed, but hardly what black had expected from his 18th, h5!?

25... Nxe4
26. Qe3 Nd2!!

That is what he missed. This blow came as a shock to Fraguera, but realizing that it was he who had been cheated, he did the only thing there was to do. With a little pale smile he silently stopped the clock and *resigned*.

66

Las Palmas, 1976 **Black: O. Rodriguez** **Benoni Defence**

1. d4 c5
2. d5 Nf6
3. Nc3 g6
4. e4 d6
5. Bb5† Bd7
6. Bxd7†

The interesting alternative is 6. a4!? (In the game Brinck-Claussen-Brondum, Danish ch 1976, white played 5. Nf3 Bg7 6. Bb5†

Bd7 7. Bxd7†, but here black answered with the double-edged 7. — Qxd7!? and after 8. a4 Qg4!? he took the »poisoned« pawn. That game ended as a draw, but with the better chances for black.)

A similar dangerous line is known from the Moscow-Variation of the Sicilian Defence. (1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. Bb5† Bd7 4. Bxd7† Qxd7 5. c4 Qg4?! etc.)

6... Nbx d7
7. a4 Bg7
8. f4?!

A careless move played with lightning speed. 8. f4?! is based upon the variation 8. — 0-0? 9. Nf3±, but black has a much better move.

8... Qa5!
9. Bd2?!

To play 9. Kf1 would indeed be too much of a confession!

9... 0-0?!

He does not dare to accept the challenge with the crucial 9. — Qb4!?, but then he should not have played 8. — Qa5. Let us examine what might have happened if black had played the sharp 9. — Qb4!, 10. Qe2 Qxb2 11. Rb1 Qxc2, now, for white's next move there are two suggestions. Larsen gives the variation 12. Rc1 Qb2 13. e5 dxe5 14. fxe5 Ng8 15. Rb1 Qc2 16. Nf3±, but perhaps black can improve this line with 14. — Nxe5!? 15. Qxe5 Rd8! True, Larsen could interpolate the move Rb1, both in his 15th as well as in his 16th move, but still there would be a lot of fighting in the position, and black would by no means be without chances! - Gheorghiu on the other hand only gives 12. Nf3±, but here black has the interesting possibility 12. — c4! again with a very complicated game, but probably not unfavourable to Rodriguez.

10. Nf3 e6
11. 0-0 c4?

A serious positional mistake which leaves

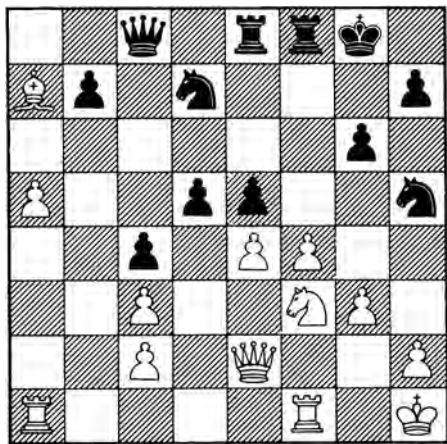
the square d4 free for the white pieces. 11. — Rae8, with only a slight advantage to white, would have been much better.

12. Kh1 Rae8
13. dxe6 fxe6
14. Qe2 Qc5
15. a5 d5
16. Be3 Qc8
17. Bxa7!

Of course he does not fear the coming complications, besides, Larsen may have thought that it is much better to be a pawn up than being forced to sacrifice one!

17... Nh5
18. g3 Bxc3
19. bxc3 e5?!

Again he shows little patience. It is obvious that his knight has no future on h5, so instead of the dubious text he should have played 19. — Nh6, still with a fight left.



20. Nxe5!

With the precision of a Swiss watch, Larsen starts the decisive stream of exchanges.

20... Nxe5

Panic! The only chance was to play 21. — Qc6

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22. Rxf8† Qxf8
 23. Rf1 Qe8
 24. Bc5!

The »forgotten« piece returns to the center with a terrible effect!

24... Rxc4

Also hopeless is 24. — dxe4 25. Bd4! (but not 25. Rf8†? Qxf8 26. Bxf8 Kxf8 when black still would be able to put up a fight.)

25. Qd2 Qc6
 26. Qf2 Resigns

67

Las Palmas, 1976

White: Bellon

Caro-Kann

1. e4 c6

In recent years this has been one of Larsen's favourites against 1. e4. The Caro-Kann Defence has been on the repertoire of such great players as: Capablanca, Botvinnik, Smyslov and, of course, Petrosjan. They all used it because it is solid as a rock, but Larsen is Larsen and, as we shall see, his intention with it is quite different!

2. d4 d5
 3. Nc3 dxe4
 4. Nxe4 Nf6
 5. Nxf6† gxf6!?

This is Larsen's brand new weapon, a sharp and interesting line well suited to his uncompromising style. Solid, but slightly boring, is 5. — exf6.

6. c3 Bf5
 7. Ne2 Nd7
 8. Ng3 Bg6
 9. h4 h5!?

Probably an improvement over 9. — h6 with

which Larsen lost a similar position to Mecking in San Antonio, 1972. The point is that black should not be afraid of losing this pawn, because as compensation he will get a lot of active play, possibly more valuable than an isolated h-pawn!

10. Be2 Qa5!
 11. b4 Qc7
 12. Nxb5 a5!

In Danish chess circles all this is well known, but to Bellon it must have been a little surprising because he now thought for some forty minutes before he made his move, but what a move! Even on Larsen's face, who usually keeps a stiff upperlip when he plays, a tiny smile could be seen, when Bellon played his »deep« rook move.

13. Rh3?!

The natural move is of course 13. Rb1!?

13... axb4
 14. cxb4 e6

Also playable is 14. — e5!?

15. b5 c5?!

Sometimes he really plays too fast! Here, Larsen underestimates white's strong answer 16. Nf4!, with a very double-edged position. Instead, he should have played 15. — Bxb5! 16. Bxb5 Qa5† with a good game.

16. Bf4? Bd6!

Even better than 16. — Qa5† 17. Bd2 Qa4 18. Qxa4 Rxa4 19. Nf4 cxd4 20. Nxb6 fxb6 with a very impressive black center. But with a queen's side majority and two strong bishops Bellon would definitely not be without chances!

17. Bg3

A strange move which seems to emphasize that white's rook would have been far better placed on h1! However, he could have tried 17. b6 Qxb6 18. Rb3 which at least would have solved the problem of an active square

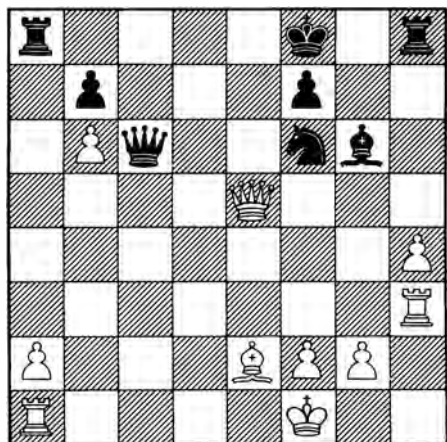
for that important piece, even at the cost of a pawn.

17... cxd4
18. Qxd4 e5!

Now white must lose material.

19. b6 Qc6
20. Nxf6† Nxf6
21. Bxe5 Bxe5
22. Qxe5† Kf8
23. Kf1?

An instructive blunder in a hopeless position.



23... Rxa2!

Now watch your step Mr. Bellon! 24. Rxa2 Qc1† 25. Bd1 Qxd1† 26. Qe1 Bd3† is of course out of question

24. Rd1 Qxb6
25. Qf4 Qb2

White is defenceless.

26. Re3 Ra1
27. Qd6† Kg7
28. g3 Ne4

Bellon's only excuse for not resigning is that he is in an awful time pressure!

29. Qf4 Rxd1†
30. Bxd1 Qd4
31. Be2 Nd2†
32. Ke1 Qxf4
33. gxf4 Ne4
34. h5 Bf5
35. Bd3 Nd6
36. Bxf5 Nxf5
37. Rb3 Re8†
38. Kf1 Re7
39. Rb6 Rd7

And in this totally lost position Bellon *exceeded* the time limit.

68 Lanzerote, 1976 Black: Betancort English

1. c4 c5
2. g3 g6
3. Bg2 Bg7
4. Nc3 Nc6
5. b3 Nf6

In his famous game against Smyslov, Fischer played 5. — e6, that game went on with 6. Bb2 Nge7 7. Na4 Bxb2 8. Nxb2 0-0 9. e3?! d5!= (Smyslov-Fischer, Interzonal, Palma 1970)

6. Bb2 0-0
7. d3 e6
8. Bxc6?!

Unexpected? Yes, but true Larsen! Indeed, it is not to everyone's taste to part with a strong bishop just in order to obtain some »dim« positional advantages, but to Larsen who undoubtedly has adopted some of Nimzovich's ideas, this is quite natural. (Another very good example of this unusual kind of play is the game Jimenez-Larsen, Mallorca, 1967. See the chapter: The Unexpected Move.) chesstouring.com

8...	bxc6
9. Qd2	d6
10. f4	Qe7
11. Nf3	e5?!

Forcing matters. A more modest try would have been the pure waiting-move 11. — Rd8! with a roughly even game. In such positions one should not reveal one's intentions too early!

12. fxe5	dxe5
13. Qg5!	

Now Larsen has a clear positional advantage. Of course not 13. 0-0-0? Ng4-+

13...	Re8
14. 0-0-0	h6
15. Qe3	Ng4
16. Qg1	h5
17. Kb1	e4?!

This sacrifice does not give black real compensation for his pawn, but his position is already troublesome, one of his problems being the weak pawn on c5, which is very difficult to defend.

18. Nxe4	Bxb2
19. Kxb2	f5
20. Nc3	Ne3
21. Rc1	Qf6
22. Qe1	a5
23. Ka3!	

A very fine defence. Larsen threatens to consolidate his position completely by means of Na4 and Qc3.

23...	a4!?
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The only way to obtain at least some kind of counter-play.

24. Nxa4	Ng2
25. Qd2	f4
26. Rhg1	Bh3
27. gxf4	Nxf4
28. e3	Ne6
29. Rg3	Bf5
30. Qc3	

Black's premature attacking attempt has been repelled and Larsen has an easily won position. Normally a grandmaster who obtains such an advantage proceeds with the precision of a computer, but sometimes, as here, he underestimates his opponent, and instead of a boring but perfect game we get a struggle full of sparkling ideas!

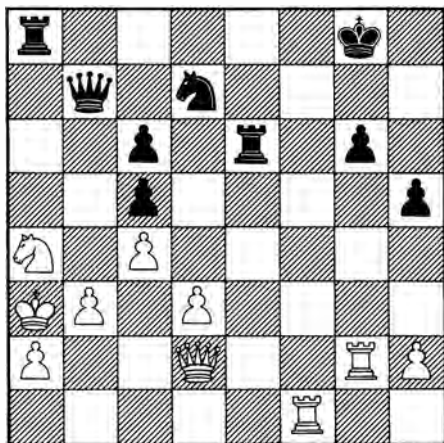
30...	Qe7
31. Ne5?!	

Clearly a gesture of impatience. Much better is 31. Rcg1 followed by the king retreat Kb2-a1!

31...	Nf8
32. e4	Qxe5
33. exf5	Qxf5
34. Rcg1	Re6
35. Rg5	Qf2
36. R5g2	Qf7
37. Qd2	Qb7!

A poisonous move which forces white to play with the outmost care. In many variations an exchange sacrifice would be a dangerous threat.

38. Rf1	Nd7
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39. Kb2!	esstouring.com
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Just in time. Now white's unpinned knight threatens to decide the game at once.

39... **Rxa4**
40. **Qh6** **Rxa2†**

Played with only seconds left on the clock. This is the only possible defence, but, alas, it cannot save the game... only prolong it!

41. **Kxa2** **Qa8†**
42. **Kb2** **Ne5**
43. **Rd2** **Qd8**
44. **Qf4** **Qb8**
45. **Qf2**

Now the rest is easy.

45... **Rd6**
46. **Kc2** **Qa8**
47. **Qxc5** **Qa2†**
48. **Kc3** **Rxd3**

Instead of this »combination« it would have been worth serious consideration to resign the game at once!

49. **Rxd3** **Qb2†**
50. **Kxb2** **Nd3†**
51. **Kc3** **Nxc5**
52. **Rf6** **Kg7**
53. **Rxc6** **Resigns**

69

Interzonal, Biel, 1976

Black: O. Castro

English

In the previous rounds Castro had beaten the two Russian super stars: Geller and Petrosjan. A couple of days later he recieved a telegram from another Russian grandmaster, Korchnoi, at that time just absconded to the West! Victor, »The Terrible«, congratulated him on his big effort against Petrosjan! (Korchnoi and Petrosjan do not even

speak together since an accident during the Candidates' Match a couple of years ago, when Korchnoi accused Petrosjan of unfair methods of play referring to a kick on the knee which Petrosjan should have given him during a game!!) To be absolutely sure not to be misunderstood! Korchnoi added a \$ 100 bill to the telegram as a special prize for Castro's attacking abilities against difficult opponents. So now the spectators were eager to see what the game Larsen-Castro would bring, and they were not disappointed, the game being one of the most exciting during the whole tournament.

1. **c4** **Nf6**
2. **Nc3** **d5**
3. **cxd5** **Nxd5**
4. **g3** **g6**
5. **Bg2** **Nxc3**
6. **bxc3** **c5**
7. **Rb1** **Nc6**
8. **Qa4** **Qc7**
9. **Ba3**

As usual Larsen has adopted a little known variation but to be honest, I don't think that this is the best continuation, and Castro's next couple of moves seems to confirm that statement!

9... **e6**
10. **Qb5?!**

From the previous game against Betancort we already know the interesting alternative, that is to say 10. **Bxc6!?** Is it possible to assume that Larsen rejected this »easy« line because he wanted to beat his young unexperienced opponent in the very same way as Castro had beaten Geller and Petrosjan??

10... **Bd7!**

With this simple yet strong answer black has obtained an equal game. 11. **Qxb7??** loses to 11. **Rb8!**

11. **Qb2** **Qa5?!**

The impulsive Colombian goes astray. Just

like Larsen (Qa4-b5-b2), he sins against one of the basic laws in chess, which says that one should never move a piece twice in the opening, especially not in this case where black's queen was excellently posted at c7. The right move is 11. — Rb8!

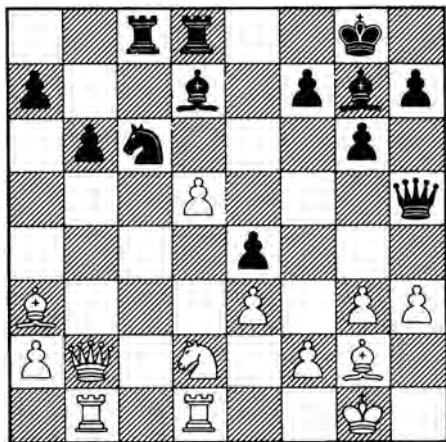
12. Nf3	Bg7
13. 0-0	0-0
14. d4	b6
15. Rfd1	Rfd8
16. e3	Rac8

The chances are about even. Larsen has a firm grip on the center, but Castro's pieces are actively placed and his possibilities on the king's side must not be underestimated.

17. Nd2!?

Larsen, with his razor-sharp judgment of timing in an attack, invites Castro to take the first step. Because of the threat Nc4 black's answer is forced.

17...	cxd4
18. cxd4	Qh5
19. h3	e5
20. d5	e4



21. Nxe4!?

This bold queen sacrifice must have been a very unpleasant surprise to a player who

himself loves to be on the »right« side of a sacrifice. Castro must be considered a typical tactical master, but here he has to face a queen sacrifice from a player who is known as one of the finest tacticians in recent time! - In the playing hall the spectators were very upset, but Mr. Leuzinger, the tournament director, had a very special remedy for such cases! Across the big demonstration-boards (and always on the most exciting one!) you could see a script in two different languages. Just one word appeared: Ruhe! - Silence! Here, Mr. Leuzinger used that resource!

21...

Ne5!?

Castro, who at Biel showed great skill in such double-edged positions, wrongly decides to decline the sacrifice and instead be the one to sacrifice. Not a queen, but still a piece! - Again this is an outstanding example of Larsen's fine judgement of an opponent's psychological behaviour in a position he does not like! Some annotators have blamed Larsen for 21. Nce4!? and called the move a »bluff« etc. etc. but to the best of my knowledge none of them have been able to present a »waterproof« refutation of that unexpected move. Accepting the sacrifice was of course the only reasonable way, here are some variations: 21. — Bxb2 22. Bxb2 Qh6?! 23. dxc6! Bxh3 (Not 23. — Bxc6? 24. Nf6† Kf8 25. Rxd8 Rxd8 26. Bxc6—+) 24. Rxd8† Rxd8 25. c7 Rc8 26. Rd1 f6 27. Rd8† Kg7 28. Bxf6† Kf7 29. Bxh3!+— Or 21. — Bxb2 22. Bxb2 Qh6?! 23. Nf6†!? Kf8 24. Nxd7† Rxd7 25. dxc6 Rxd1† 26. Rxd1 Qg5 27. Ba3†± However, black has just one other possibility, instead of the passive 22. — Qh6?!, and that is 22. — Qe2! (In the official tournament book this move is not even mentioned!) Again white can win a couple of pieces with 23. Nf6† Kf8 24. dxc6 Bxc6 25. Rxd8 Rxd8 26. Ba3† Kg7 27. Bxc6, but here black's queen is excellent placed, and 27. — Rd2! seems to win at once! What would Larsen have played? Probably 23. Rd2, but after 23. — Qa6,

Castro's queen would have been far better placed than in the variations with 22. — Qh6?!

22. g4 Bxg4
23. hxg4 Qxg4
24. Kf1!

The first subtlety.

24... f5

If 24. — Nf3 25. Nf6† Bxf6 26. Qxf6 Nh4 then 27. Bh1! with the murderous threat 28. Bb2+—

25. Nd2 Qh4
26. Qb5 Rc3!

Castro is in his element. Now he hopes for 27. Bb2? Nd3—+, but Larsen is at the top of his form finding one brilliant resource after the other.

27. Rb3!

Again Castro is invited to win the queen, but this time he would have to pay too high a price for it.

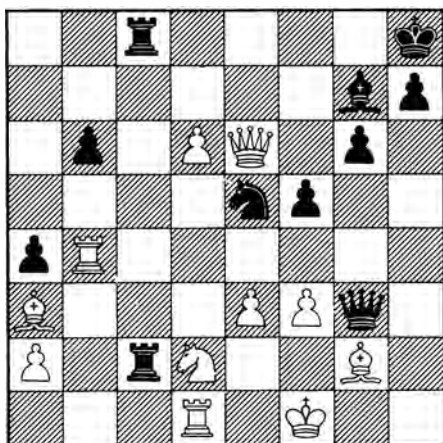
27... Rc2
28. Qe2 Nc4
29. Qd3 Rc8
30. d6!

And suddenly everything has changed. All white's pieces are ideally placed and the passed pawn - the secret triumph - will decide the game.

30... Ne5
31. Qd5† Kh8
32. f3!

The second subtlety. Castro is not even allowed to play Ng4.

32... a5
33. Qe6 a4
34. Rb4 Qg3



35. Rc4!!

The third and final subtlety in this very exciting game (Mr. Leuzinger had a busy day!). Castro was so horrified by this surprising »Nowotny-theme« that he unconsciously clutched his head with both hands, but after a while he returned to reality, and realizing that the game was lost, he played...

35... Nd3
36. Qxc8† Resigns

A fine game showing Larsen's enormous strength in both defensive - as well as tactical play, and a probably useful lesson to the talented Castro! (Later the same year Castro made his first GM norm finishing second after Larsen, but winning their mutual game! (Costa Brava, 1976).



Grandmaster Bent Larsen, winner of the Interzonal, Biel 1976.

70
Interzonal, Biel, 1976
White: Liberzon
Sicilian Defence

1. e4	c5
2. Nf3	e6
3. d4	cx d4
4. Nxd4	Nc6
5. Nc3	Qc7
6. Be2	a6
7. 0-0	Nf6
8. Kh1!?	

In this variation it is much more common to play 8. Be3; nevertheless, the move actually chosen deserves attention.

8...	Bb4!?
-------------	--------------

Trying to complicate as soon as possible seems to be Larsen's clue in this Interzonal-tournament. Here, the solid alternative is 8. — Be7.

9. Nxc6!

In his notes to the game: Parma-Janosevic, Orense 1973, Minic only gives 9. Bg5, but Liberzon's move is much stronger.

9...	bx c6
10. f4	d5

But not 10. — Bxc3?! 11. bxc3 Nxe4 12. Qd4 Nf6 13. Ba3±

11. e5	Nd7
12. Na4!	

Now Liberzon is ready for operations in the c-file.

12...	Nb6
13. c4	Be7
14. Be3	Nxa4
15. Qxa4	Bd7
16. Qc2	

No doubt, Liberzon has a promising position, but what about Larsen? In many variations of the Sicilian, black should not hasten to castle, but wait and try to keep white busy on the queen's wing before he brings his king away from the center. This is exactly what Larsen is working on here.

16... Qb7
17. Bd3 g6
18. Rab1 a5
19. Qf2 0-0
20. Rfc1!

Again a very fine move. With a black rook posted on c8, Larsen's white-squared bishop could be mixed up with a black pawn!

20... Rfc8
21. b3?

But what is this? Here Liberzon goes completely astray. Without too much difficulty he could have obtained an excellent game. The only thing he needed was to play 21. c5!, then, by means of Bd4 followed by Rg1 and g4, he could have build up a very dangerous attack.

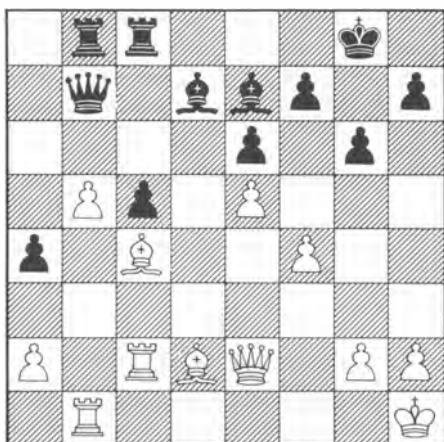
21... Qb4
22. Rc2?

One mistake seldom comes alone! The rook-move is bad for several reasons. White's rooks are placed on the same diagonal, besides, the rook on b1 is unprotected. Finally, black's intended break on the queen's side now seems to gain in strength!

22... a4!

Of course he accepts the invitation.

23. Bd2 Qb7
24. b4 c5
25. b5 Rab8
26. Qe2 dxc4
27. Bxc4



27... Bc6!

White's attack is gone with the wind and here, by means of the strong bishop move, Larsen definitely takes over the initiative.

28. b6?! Rd8
29. Rc3 Be4!

What a pretty bishop this one. (See note to white's 20th move.)

30. Rb2 Qc6!

A difficult move to find, but much stronger than the originally planned 30. — Qa8!? Here Larsen wins a vital tempo.

31. Bb5 Qa8

Of course not 31. — Qxb6?? 32. Qxe4 Rd4 32. Qc2!+—

32. Bd3?

It would have been better to play 32. Bc4, but Liberzon seems to have lost his way in the mess of variations so he proceeds along the wrong track!

32... a3!

Disaster! Liberzon has run into another of Larsen's famous promotion combinations.

33. Rb1	Rxd3
34. Rxd3	c4
35. Rd7	Bxb1
36. Rxe7	Rxb6
37. Qxc4	Bxa2!

The charming point. White *resigned*.

71

Interzonal, Biel, 1976

Black: Matanovic

Vienna Game

In the previous rounds Larsen had lost two successive games. First he lost a difficult game to the »Tiger« (Petrosjan!) and in the next round he was beyond recognition, losing horribly to Robert Byrne. For an ordinary mortal this psychological chock would probably prove to be more than enough, (Bronstein-Cuellar, and Stein-Quinones, are the best known examples.) But Bent Larsen is not an *ordinary mortal*! as you will have to admit if you play over the next two games. Here, the placings after 16. rounds: Hubner 10½, *Larsen*, Smyslov and *Tal* 10, Byrne and *Petrosjan* 9½, and finally, Andersson, *Portisch* and Smejkal 9 etc. By the way, it should be mentioned that Larsen's three last opponents were all tough grandmasters, and that he should score at least 2½/3! in order to be sure of a place in the Candidates'. (In *italics* = the Candidates).

1. e4	e5
2. Bc4!?	

Just as in the »good old days«. (See the games from the Amsterdam Interzonal, 1964)

2...	Nf6
3. Nc3	Nc6

Matanovic is a solid player, not interested in

what Larsen may have prepared against the sharp 3. — Nxe4!?

4. d3	Bc5
5. Bg5	h6!?

In round 14. Smyslov had tried 5. — Na5 6. Bb3 Nxb3 7. axb3 c6 8. Nf3 d6±, but that game gave white a slight advantage so naturally Matanovic avoids that line!

6. Bh4	d6
7. Na4	Bb6
8. Nxb6	axb6
9. f3!?	

A novelty which Larsen has kept as a secret for over 12 years!

9...	Be6
10. Ne2	g5!?

From Matanovic one would have expected the solid 10. — Qe7

11. Bf2	d5
12. exd5	Nxd5
13. Qd2	Qe7
14. 0-0	Nf4!?

Black is eager to force exchanges in order to obtain a draw, but 14. — 0-0-0 is a much better try.

15. Bb5	Ra5
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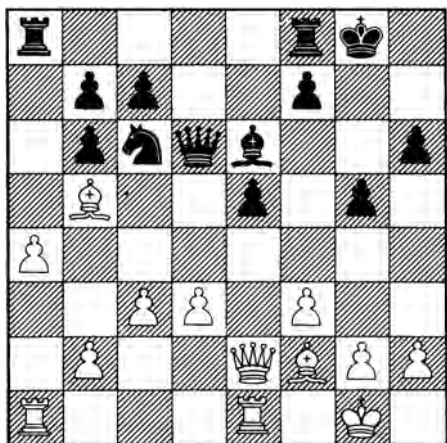
Is Matanovic already in difficulties? The strange looking text seems to confirm this, but 15. — 0-0-0 16. a4! is even worse.

16. a4	Nxe2†
17. Qxe2	0-0

Now there are no excuses for his weaknesses on the king's side.

18. c3	Qd6
19. Rfe1	Raa8?

Almost a blunder, which loses a pawn for nothing. 19. — Bd7 was forced.



20. Bg3!

So simple and yet so strong! Almost unnoticed Larsen has been able to build up a powerful position and now he even wins material!

20...	f6
21. d4	Bf7
22. Rad1	Qe7
23. Qc2!	Be8
24. dxe5	Nxe5
25. Bxe5	fxe5
26. Rd5	Bxb5
27. axb5	Rae8
28. Re4!?	

This is the move from a professional! The reason behind the sly text is that Matanovic had spent considerable time on the opening, so now Larsen wants to test him a little before he takes the e-pawn. A typical Larsen reaction! Objectively speaking, 28. Qg6†! would have been much easier.

28...	Rf6
29. h4	gxh4
30. Rxh4	c6
31. bxc6	bxc6
32. Rd2	Re6
33. Re4	b5
34. Qd1	

With almost every move Larsen tests his opponent, who has the impossible task of keeping his position together, and at the same time being forced to move almost instantly.

34...	Rg6
35. Rd7	Qc5†?

Clearly a product of time pressure. Much better is 35. — Qg5! with a tough struggle ahead.

36. Kf1	Rf8
37. Qd3!	

Again a poisonous move with a multiply of threats, some of them being: Rxe5 and Rg4.

37...	R8f6
38. b4	Qb5
39. Rxe5	Resigns

72

Interzonal, Biel, 1976

White: Smejkal

English

1. c4	c5
2. Nf3	Nc6
3. Nc3	Nf6
4. g3	b6
5. Bg2	Bb7
6. 0-0	e6

The alternative is 6. — g6, but as already mentioned (see game no. 71) Larsen must play for a win and that would be very difficult if Smejkal sticks to symmetry with 7. b3±

7. e4	Qb8!?
--------------	--------------

It is precisely such moves which one can expect from Bent Larsen. The move is of course a novelty, besides, it is quite good and against a player like Smejkal it is excellent!

Smejkal is known to get into time trouble very easily so you can also see the move as an attempt to help him towards this goal!

8. d4	cx d4
9. Nxd4	Nxd4
10. Qxd4	Bd6!

Excellent. Just like in the Sicilian Defence, (in fact it is a Sicilian by transposition!) black starts an immediate fight for the black squares in the center. Now for his next move Smejkal pondered for some fifty minutes!

11. Bg5	Be5
12. Qd2	h6
13. Be3	0-0
14. Bd4	Bxd4
15. Qxd4	e5
16. Qd3	a6
17. Rfd1	Rfc8
18. b3	Qc7

The position is in balance. White has a spatial advantage, but black has the better bishop.

19. Rac1	Rab8
20. Qe3	Qc5
21. Qxc5	bxc5
22. Na4	Rc7?!

An inaccuracy. According to Larsen, it would have been better to play 22. — Rc6 followed by Kf8 still with the assessment: =

23. Rd6	Re8
24. Rb6?!	

Much better is 24. f3±

24...	Bxe4
25. Bxe4	Nxe4
26. Rxa6	Ng5
27. Rd1?!	

From this moment time trouble plays an important role in this very important game. For his last thirteen moves, Smejkal has only ten minutes left. 27. Kg2 looks more precise.

27...	Nf3†
28. Kg2	Nd4
29. Re1	f6
30. f4!?	

A very sharp reaction, especially from a player in serious time trouble, nevertheless, the move seems to be the right decision.

30...	e4
31. Nc3	f5
32. g4	

This break is the point of white's previous moves. The draw seems to be very close?!

32...	Rc6!!
--------------	--------------

A brilliant Larsen conception, and ... the only move to keep the game alive! If instead, 32. — fxg4? black's center, and with that his winning chances, would be broken for ever.

33. Rxc6	dx c6
34. gxf5	e3
35. Na4	Kf7
36. Nxc5	

Strange to imagine, but with two pawns to the good Smejkal is in real danger of losing this game!

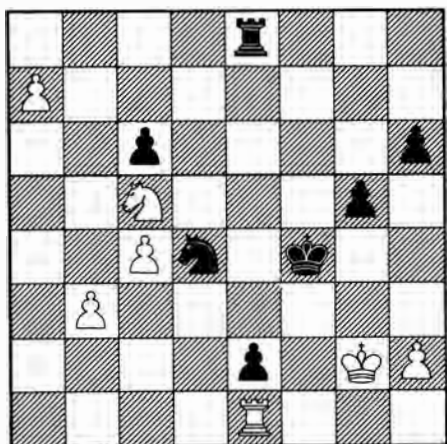
36...	Kf6
37. a4	Kxf5
38. a5	Kxf4
39. a6	g5!

A diabolical trap to put on play just before the end of the first session!

40. a7?

»Never miss a check!«... Here, with only seconds to spare, Smejkal sins against the above mentioned »rule« and commits what seems to be the decisive error. 40. Rf1† should have been preferred.

40...	e2!
--------------	------------



In this position the game was adjourned and Smejkal had to seal his move. But what should he seal? The sharp and complicated knight sacrifice 41. Ne6+!?, or the more modest 41. Kf2. ? There is no doubt that the crucial line would be 41. Ne6†, but would Smejkal dare to seal such a move? Larsen and his »second«, grandmaster Panno, analysed the complicated knight sacrifice until 2 a.m. Then Panno was tired and left Larsen's room in order to get some sleep, but as mentioned before Larsen is not an ordinary mortal, so he went on analysing the game until the next day about 12 noon! Then he took a quick shower and went to the Congress-Hall in order to have lunch (which he badly needed) before the game was to resume at 13 p.m. But even here he could not quite forget his adjourned game and between the meals a portable chess set was to be seen more than once at Larsen's table! - When the envelope was opened by Mr. Leuzinger, Larsen realized that a good night's sleep would have been much better because Smejkal had played the natural 41. Kf2. According to Larsen, even: 41. Ne6† Nxe6 42. Rxe2 Kf5 43. Ra2 Nc7 44. b4 Na8! 45. Ra6 c5! should be a win for black, (»but not without certain difficulties« - Larsen)

41. Kf2?! Ra8!

Indeed not 41. — Kg4? because of 42. Ne6! and now, with the king on f2, white should be able to save the game.

42. b4

Another unsatisfactory line is: 42. Nd3† Ke4 43. Nc1 Rxa7 24. Nxe2 Ra2+—

42... Rxa7

43. b5 cxb5

44. cxb5 Rc7!

Larsen's nightly analysis has come to an end, but with a sufficient result, because now he has an easily won position.

45. Rc1 Rf7

46. b6 Kg4†

47. Kg2

Unfortunately 47. Ke3 fails to 47. — e1(Q)† 48. Rxe1 Nc2†

47... Nc2!

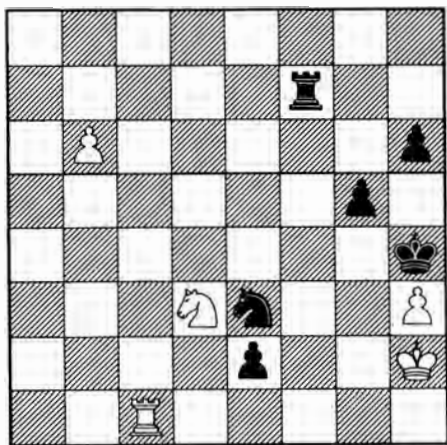
48. h3†

The only move.

48... Kh4

49. Nd3 Ne3†

50. Kh2



50... chesstouh5!! .com

A beautiful move which includes the simple, yet convincing plan of mate! e.g. 51. Re1 g4 52. hxg4 hxg4 53. Rxe2 g3† 54. K- Rf1††

51. b7

The last desperate gasp from a dying man!

51... Rxb7
52. Ne1

Being in his usual time trouble Smejkal just managed to see the variation: 52. Re1 Rb3 54. Nf2 g4!-+

52... g4
53. hxg4 hxg4
54. Rc3 Re7
55. Ra3 g3†
56. Kg1 Kh3
57. Ra8 Ng2!
58. Rh8† Nh4
59. Rf8

Here, before Larsen was able to play 59. — Ra7, or Rc7, or, perhaps...?! Smejkal *re-signed*, thus guaranteeing Bent Larsen at least a play-off for the Candidates'. (In the last round Larsen played a quick draw with Hubner, and rather surprisingly that was sufficient for an untied first place! - *Bent Larsen* 12½, 2. Petrosjan, Tal and Portisch 12, 5. Smyslov, Hubner and Byrne 11½, etc.)

73

Lanzerote, 1976 Black: O. Rodriguez Benoni Defence

1. c4 g6
2. Nc3 Bg7
3. d4 c5
4. d5 Nf6
5. e4 0-0
6. Bd3!?

Preparing a quiet and solid variation and not, what Rodriguez perhaps hoped for, the sharp so-called Keres/Ojanen variation, e.g. 6. — e6 7. Nge2 exd5 8. cxd5 d6 9. 0-0 Na6 10. Ng3 Nc7 11. h3 Rb8 with interesting complications ahead.

6... e6
7. Nge2 exd5
8. exd5 Ng4!?

An interesting novelty over the natural 8. — d6

9. 0-0 Ne5?

What a pity! 9. — d6 is of course the only decent move. Then it would have been interesting to see what Larsen would have done against the knight-manoeuvre Ne5-Nxd3 with equality.

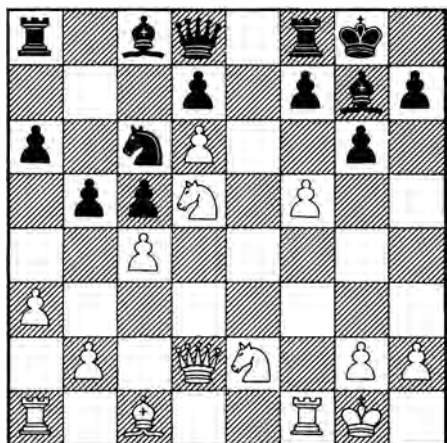
10. d6!

Black must have forgotten all about this possibility which paralyzes his queen's side completely.

10... Nbc6
11. f4 Nxd3
12. Qxd3 Nb4?!

Black's game is not easy, but why this »jump« in an undeveloped position? True, white's f5 is a nasty threat, but since it is impossible to prevent (12. — f5? 13. Qd5†) it would have been far better to play 12. — b6 or even 12. — Nd4

13. Qd2 a6
14. f5 b5
15. a3 Nc6
16. Nd5



The diagrammed position is an excellent example of »obstruction«. The advanced d-pawn has a terrible restrictive effect on Rodriguez' game, and the amusing threat for the moment is f6 followed by Ne7† with immediate disaster.

16... gxf5

A sad decision, but he had no alternative.

17. Ng3 Nd4
18. Ne7† Kh8
19. Nxf5 Nxf5
20. Nxf5!

Of course 20. Rxf5 is not »bad« either, but with the accurate text black is not allowed to play Bb7.

20... Qf6
21. Nxf7 Qxf7
22. b4!

Directly to the point. Now, just like a person sentenced to death and being giving the pleasant choice between the Electric Chair or the gallows, Rodriguez can choose between 22. — Qd4† with a lost ending, or try to keep his position together in a middle-game which would be lost, too!

22... Bb7
23. Bb2 f6
24. Rae1 Bc6
25. cxb5 axb5
26. bxc5

Black is completely tied up, but with his next move he shortens the game considerably.

26... Ra4?
27. Rxf6! Resigns

Awarded as the most brilliant game of the tournament.

74

Copenhagen, 1977

Clare Benedict

White: Ogaard

King's Indian

1. d4 d6
2. e4 g6
3. c4

»Whatever he plays, I play the King's Indian«, Ogaard may have thought playing this move!

3... Bg7
4. Nc3 Nf6
5. Be2 0-0
6. Nf3 Nbd7

In this well-hammered variation black usually provokes white to close the center by means of 6. — e5 and 7. — Nc6, but perhaps Larsen feared the drawish Exchange Variation 7. dxe5 dxe5 8. Qxd8 Rxd8 9. Bg5±?

7. 0-0 e5
8. Re1 a5?!

Trying to confuse his opponent as soon as possible is a theme which always play an important role in Larsen's selection of a possible move, but here 8. — c6 is the proper

move. The reason to this is that in some variations black is able to omit the move a5, but it is hardly possible that he can avoid to play c6. An interesting example with 8. — c6!? is the game: Raskovsky-Dorfman, USSR (ch), 1976, which continued: 9. Bf1 exd4 10. Nxd4 Re8 11. Nc2 Ne5!=

9. Bf1 Re8

Still, it is better to play 9. — c6, but Larsen does not like such »forced« moves!

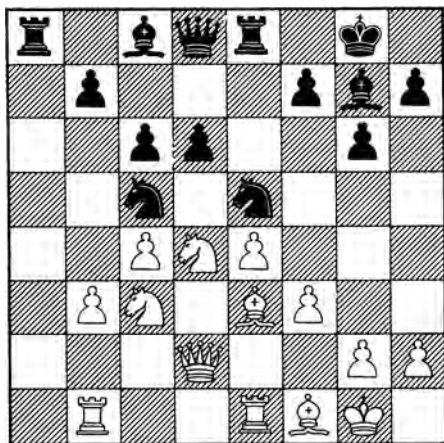
10. Rb1 exd4

(Another try is 10. — c6!?, as in the game Portisch-Liberzon, Biel, 1976)

11. Nxd4 Nc5
12. f3 c6

A difficult decision! but black's position would be extremely cramped without this move.

13. Be3 a4
14. Qd2 Nfd7
15. b4 axb3 e.p.
16. axb3 Nde5



A most interesting position has arisen. It looks as if black has obtained full equality, but that is only a mere dream! White's game is clearly better, and when Larsen's knights

are forced back, he would be in a very difficult situation considering his lack of space and his terribly weak d-pawn.

17. h3!?

Now he is ready to play 18. f4±. Another move which certainly deserves attention is 17. Ra1!? as suggested by the Danish IM Ole Jacobsen. Perhaps Ogaard remembered the famous game: Pachman-Bronstein, Moscow-Prague, 1946 (in which Bronstein exploited his chances beautifully) and feared some identical combinations such as: 17. — Rxa1 18. Rxa1 Nxf3+?! 19. gxf3 Bxd4, but 20. Qxd4! Nxb3 21. Qd1+- seems to be the outright refutation of that idea!

17... Ra3!

A memory from the past?! In his excellent book, »Larsen's Selected Games of Chess«, he introduces his brilliant win against Petrosjan (Santa Monica, 1966) with the following sceptical comment: »In fact I have always had a feeling that the King's Indian is an incorrect opening!... He concludes the comment with a remark that suits that particular game perfectly, but also seems to be useable in this case! »So now I am playing an opening in which I am convinced that flabby routine play leads to disaster.« - Here Larsen's choice is far from being routine work, instead, it is the only possibility for active counter play before white plays his intended f4.

18. Qc1 Ra8
19. Qc2!?

A move which shows that the young Norwegian IM has the right attitude towards the game. With 19. Qd2 a draw by repetition seems to be the likely result inasmuch as Larsen could hardly have found a better move than 19. — Ra3, but why should Ogaard be satisfied with a draw from a superiour position even if the opponent is a famous grandmaster? chesstouring.com

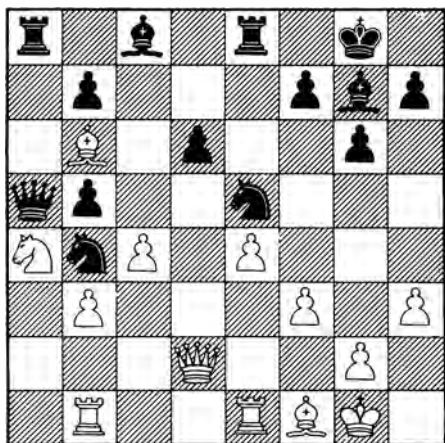
19... Na6
20. Qd2 Nb4
21. Na4 Qa5!?

This bold queen sally obviously planned in connection with the knight-manoeuvre Na6-b4, looks premature, but it is not, and white must play very exactly in order to prove that black's 8th move was a little more than just risky!

22. Nb5?!

Looks as a winning combination, but in fact the quiet 22. Rd1 would have been much stronger.

22... cxb5
23. Bb6



Just before this position arose, Rath, one of the members of the Danish team, asked Larsen if he was not in danger of losing the game, but Larsen replied with a little smile »Just wait and see, I think he has overlooked something!«

23... Nxc4!

Is it possible to assume that Ogaard had overlooked this little »trick«?

24. Bxc4 Qa6
25. Bf1 Nc6
26. Qxd6?!

Why this hasty pawn snatch? The calm bishop retreat, 26. Bf2!, looks much better and would have left Larsen in a difficult position.

26... Be6

Now, according to the annotator in »Chess Informant« (no. 23, game 680), »black has the upper hand«. To me, the position seems to be roughly even!

27. Bf2 Rad8
28. Qc5?

But this is wrong. With only five (5!) minutes left for his remaining twelve moves, Ogaard fails to find the much better 28. Qc7=

28... Nd4!
29. e5 Bf8!

Larsen finds one fine move after another. If instead, 29. — Rd5?! white could possibly have saved the game with 30. Bxd4!

30. Qc3??

Panic! Again Larsen's enormous fighting spirit triumphs. White's only chance was to play 30. Qb6!, e.g. 30. — Qxb6? (30. — Bxb3?) 31. Nxb6 Bc5 32. Bxb5!

30... Qc6!

Freeing the trapped queen, and winning a pawn as well. For his last ten moves Ogaard had only forty-two seconds left! (It was possible to state this because the players used an electronic chess clock worked out in Denmark a couple of years ago.)

31. Bxd4 bxa4
32. Bc4? Rxd4

In this hopeless position Ogaard *exceeded* the time limit. - Not a faultless game indeed, but one showing Larsen's fantastic optimism and ingenuity in a difficult position.

Copenhagen, 1977
Clare Benedict
White: Janetschek
Scandinavian

1. e4 d5

Some months later Larsen wrote an article called, »Good-bye to the Scandinavian?«, but the question mark seems to indicate a certain scepticism about that »last« farewell and indeed, the present game is by no means a refutation of this interesting variation.

2. exd5 Nf6
3. d4 Nxd5
4. c4

Theory recommends a set-up which involves the move 4. Nf3, but Janetschek loves complications, and is not afraid of a weak d-pawn.

4... Nb6
5. Nf3 g6!?

This is sharp, too. Of course Larsen knew that the move considered by the theorists as being the »best«, is 5. — Bg4!?, but playing for a win with the black pieces always involve an element of risk, and Larsen enjoys to play for a win as soon as possible!

6. Be2

A very useful move in such positions is 6. h3!?

6... Bg7
7. 0-0 0-0
8. Nc3 Nc6
9. Be3?!?

Still, it was not too late to play 9. h3, but also 9. d5 came into consideration.

9... Bg4

Now, however, white's center becomes shaky. At this moment the threat is 10. — Bxf3



Bent Larsen, captain of the Danish team at Clare Benedict, Copenhagen, 1977 - Larsen scored 5½/7, and took the 1st board prize (electronic chess clock) as well.

10. g5 Bxf3
11. gxf3

If 11. Bxf3, black plays 11. — Ne5

11... Na5

Of course not 11. — Ne5? 12. c5!

12. c5

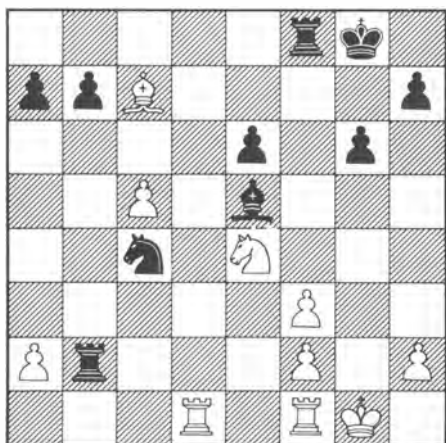
Trying to trap the knight would have been very risky, e.g. 12. Bxb6 cxb6! The c-file would be in black's hands; besides, Janetschek's king would be very exposed after a possible e6 and Qh4

12... Nbc4
13. Bf4 e6!

But not 13. — Nxb2? 14. Qc2 Nbc4 15. Rad1±

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- | | |
|----------|-------|
| 14. dxe6 | fxe6 |
| 15. Qxd8 | Raxd8 |
| 16. Bxc7 | Rd2 |
| 17. Bxc4 | Nxc4 |
| 18. Ne4 | Rxb2 |
| 19. Rad1 | Be5! |



Much better than 19. — Rxa2 20. Rd7! when white's actively placed pieces should guarantee him the draw without too much trouble.

- 20. Nd6!? Nd2**

A very difficult decision because the coming exchange combination almost equalizes the position. Nevertheless, to play 20. — Rxa2 was by no means clear. White would have had at least two interesting continuations: 21. Rdb1!? and 21. Nxc4 Bxc7 22. Rd7!?, both with good chances of a draw.

- | | |
|----------|-------|
| 21. Rxd2 | Rxd2 |
| 22. Nc4 | Bxc7 |
| 23. Nxd2 | Rf5 |
| 24. Rb1 | Rg5†! |

An important »Zwischenschach« as the course of the game shows.

- | | |
|----------|------|
| 25. Kf1 | Rxc5 |
| 26. Rxb7 | Bb6 |

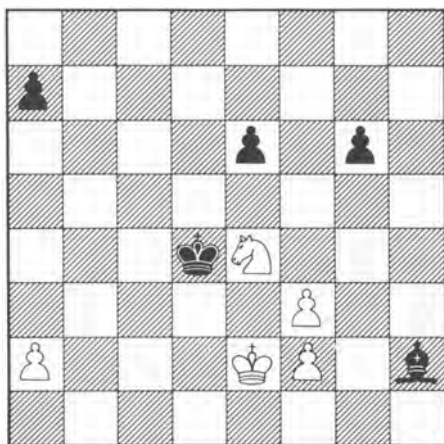
This is the position Larsen opted for when

playing his 20th Nd2. Undoubtly black is better, but to win this position is certainly not an »every-day job«. The following end-game is extremely instructive, and should be played over very carefully!

- | | |
|----------|-----|
| 27. Ne4 | Rc7 |
| 28. Nf6† | |

It would be impossible to keep the a-pawn alive without this exchange of the rooks. On the other hand, to black the exchange is an important step forward, the bishop, of course, being much stronger than the knight.

- | | |
|----------|------|
| 28... | Kf7 |
| 29. Rxc7 | Bxc7 |
| 30. Nxh7 | Bxh2 |
| 31. Ng5† | Kf6 |
| 32. Ne4† | Ke5 |
| 33. Ke2 | Kd4 |



Is this position a win for black? It is difficult to give a clear-cut variation, but analysis proved white's task very troublesome, having to guard against a possible g5-g4, an attack against the weak a-pawn, and finally, the f-pawn could very well be a possible target for black's hungry bishop. Of course the fact that Janetschek was now in serious time trouble eased black's task considerably, but

I doubt if he would have been able to keep the balance anyway!

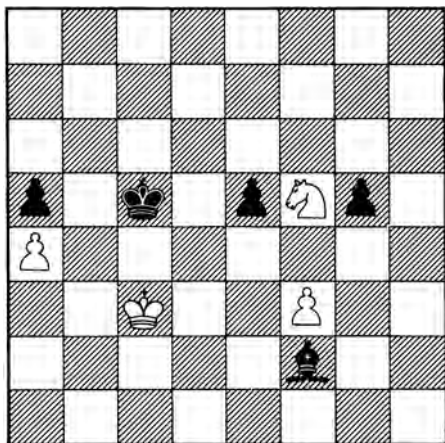
34. Ng5 e5
35. Ne4 Bf4
36. Nd6 Kc5
37. Nc8?

Now he must lose a pawn. The only possible defence is: 37. Ne4† Kb4 38. Kd3 Ka3 39. Nc3+. After 37. Nc8, white is lost though the win is far from easy.

37... a5
38. Kd3 Bg5
39. Kc3 Bh4
40. a4 Bxf2
41. Ne7 g5

A warning to white. In some variations the break e4, would prove to be very unpleasant.

42. Nf5 Bd4†
43. Kb3 Bf2
44. Kc3



The sealed move. Black has a winning position, but the win requires very exact playing. It is a pleasure to watch Larsen's play in this final fase.

44... Be1†
45. Kb3 Bh4
46. Kc3 Bf2!

»Zugzwang!« White decides to give up the a-pawn since 47. Ng7 Be1† 48. Kb3 fails to 48. — Kd4+, and 47. Kb3 Kd5 48. Kc3 e4!-+ is equally bad.

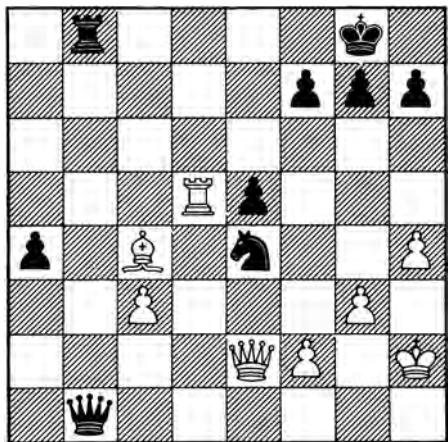
47. Kd3 Kb4
48. Nd6 Bc5
49. Nf7 e4†!!

A brilliant idea. Black sacrifices both pawns on the king's side only to force the a-pawn through! Now 50. fxe4 g4! loses at once, so the white king must give up the protection of the queen's side.

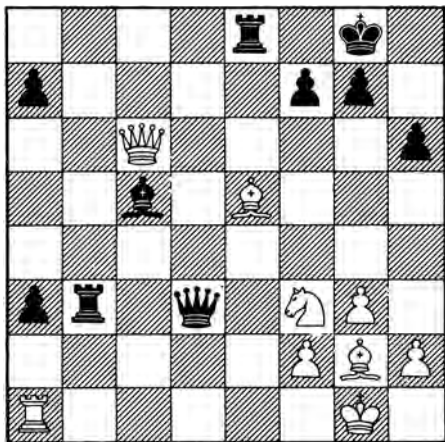
50. Kxe4 Kxa4
51. Nxe5 Kb3
52. Ne6 Bf2!
53. f4 a4
54. f5 a3
55. f6 Bh4
56. f7 Be7
Resigns

FIND THE WINNING COMBINATION!

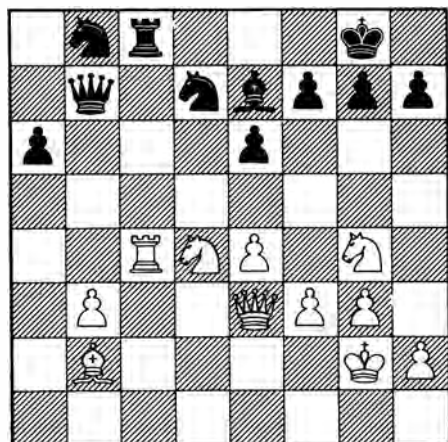
Below you will find a selection of clear-cut combinations, all of which are taken from Larsen's games. Unlike Tal, Larsen is not a strictly combinative player, nevertheless, to find brilliant combinations in a Larsen-game should not be too difficult! Judge for yourself, but here is the evidence!



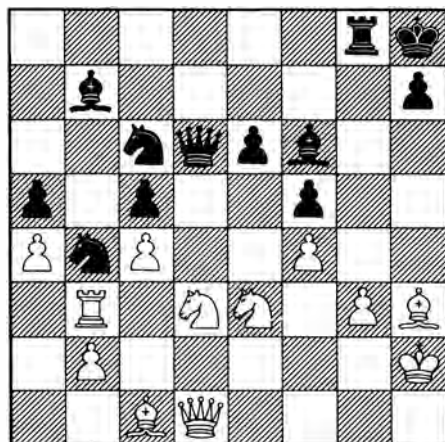
1 Larsen-Szabo
White to move



2 Vranecic-Larsen
Black to move

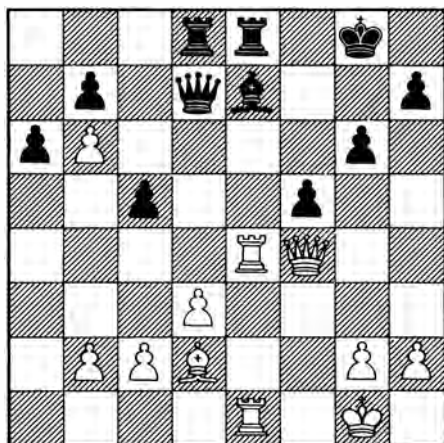


3 Larsen-Matanovic
White to move

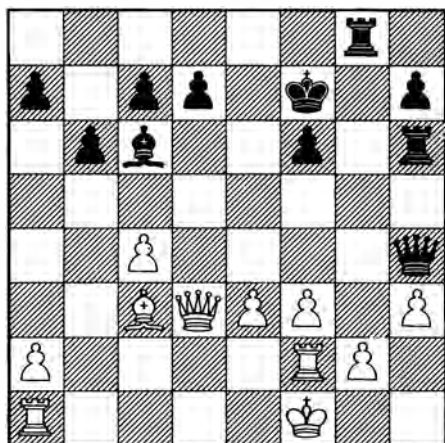


4 Larsen-A. N. Other
Black to move

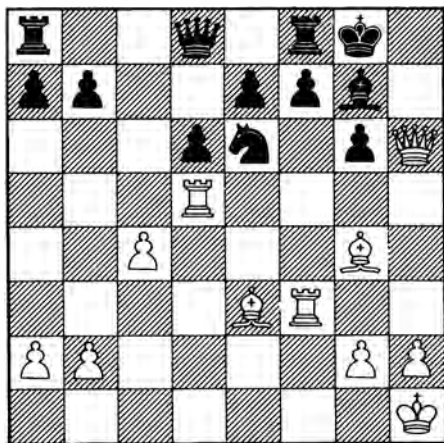
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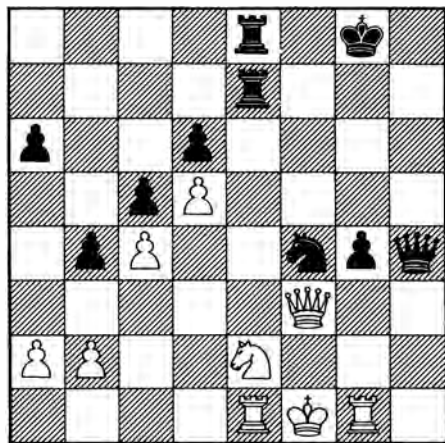
5 Larsen-Bednarski
White to move



6 Gligoric-Larsen
Black to move



7 Larsen-Petrosjan
White to move



8 Hamann-Larsen
Black to move

SOLUTIONS

1 Larsen - Szabo, Wijk aan Zee, 1967

1. Bd3! Nxc3 2. Qxe5! Qb2 3. Rxb5!! Qxf2† 4. Kh3 Rf8 5. Qxc3+- (White also wins after: 2. — Qb4 3. Rb5! Rxb5 4. Qe8† Qf8 5. Bxh7†!)

2 Vranesic - Larsen, Amsterdam, Interzonal, 1964

1. — Rxe5! 2. Nxe5 Bxf2†!! 3. Kxf2 (3. Kh1 Rb1† mates) Qd4† 4. Ke2 Rb7†, mate is unavoidable. White resigned.

3 Larsen - Matanovic, Zagreb, 1965

1. Nxe6! (with the nasty threat: Qc3) 1. — Rxc4? Panic! (The only chance was to play 1. — f6) 2. Nh6†!! resigned (2. — Kh8 3. Bxg7†† and 2. — gxh6 3. Qxh6+-)

4 A.N. Other - Larsen, (from a simultaneous exhibition display)

1. — Nd4 2. Nxb4 Nf3† 3. Kg2 Rxc3†!! 4. Kf2 (if 4. Kxg3 Qxf4†!! 5. Kxf4 Be5††) 4. — Bh4!! 5. Qxd6 Rg1† 6. Ke2 Re1† 7. Kd3 Be4† 8. Kc3 Rxc1† 9. Nbc2 Be1† 10. Qd2 Bxd2††

5 Larsen - Bednarski, Havana, 1967

1. Bc3!! fxe4 (Also bad is: 1. — Bf8 2. Rxe8† Rxe8 3. Qc4† Qf7 4. Rxe8†+-) 2. Qe5 Bf8 (Better: 2. — Bd6) 3. Qh8† Kf7 4. Rf1† Qf5 (A sad decision, but otherwise he would be mated.) 5. Rxf5† gxf5 6. Qf6† Kg8 7. Qg5† Kf7 8. Qxf5† Kg8 9. Qg5† Kf7 10. Qf6† Kg8 11. Qh8† Kf7 12. Qxh7†. The rest is no problem, white won easily.

6 Gligoric - Larsen, Havana, 1967

1. — Rxc2! Now, if 2. Kxc2 Qxh3† 3. Kg1 Qh1††, so Gligoric tried: 2. Rxc2 Qxh3 3. e4 Rg6, only to resign in view of the following variation: 4. Qe2 Qh1† 5. Kf2 Rxc2†

7 Larsen - Petrosjan, Santa Monica, 1966

1. Qxg6!! Nf4 (Indeed not: 1. — Nc7?? 2. Qxg7†!!) 2. Rxf4 fxc6 3. Be6† Rf7 (Equally hopeless is: 3. — Kh7 4. Rh4† Bh6 5. Bxh6 Rf5 6. Rxf5 gxf5 7. Bf7 e5 8. Rh3!+-) 4. Rxf7 Kh8 5. Rg5! The brilliant point. Petrosjan is defenceless. 5. — b5 6. Rg3 Resigns. — I must apologise for the inclusion of this particular combination (Game no. 12 in this book) but I could not resist - the combination being just too pretty!

8 Hamann - Larsen, Danish ch, Holstebro, 1964

1. — Qxe1†! (No credit for other moves, but 1. — Rg7 was, of course, not »bad« either! 2. Kxe1 Rxe2† 3. Kd1 Re1† 4. Kc2 R8e2† 5. Kb3 Re3†, and black won easily.

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LARSEN'S WINNING RECORD

1949 Holstebro, Club ch	1964 Amsterdam, IBM
1951 Odense, Danish ch, 1. class	1966 Krylbo
1951 Ålborg, District ch	1966 Le Havre
1952 Trondheim, (Junior tournament)	1967 Havana
1952 Ålborg ch	1967 Winnipeg
1952 Herning, Danish ch, Master Group	1967 Sousse, Interzonal
1953 Trondheim, (Junior tournament)	1967 Palma de Mallorca
1954 Copenhagen ch	1968 Monaco
1954 Århus, Danish ch	1968 U.S. Open
1954 Copenhagen	1968 Canadian Open
1955 Copenhagen ch	1969 Busum
1955 Ålborg, Danish ch	1969 Palma de Mallorca
1955 International Master	1970 Lugano
1955 Zagreb, (Youth tournament)	1970 U.S. Open
1955 Oslo, Scandinavian ch	1970 Canadian Open
1956 Copenhagen, Danish ch	1970 Vinkovci
1956 Hangö	1972 Teeside
1956 Gijon	1973 Hastings
1956 Copenhagen	1973 London
1956 Moscow, Olympiad, Int. Grandmaster	1973 Grenå, Scandinavian ch
1957 Hastings	1973 Manila
1958 Mar del Plata	1974 New York
1959 Århus, Danish ch	1975 Orense
1960 Wijk aan Zee	1976 Lanzerote
1960 Copenhagen ch	1976 Biel, Interzonal
1961 Wijk aan Zee	1976 Costa Brava
1963 Odense, Danish ch	1977 Geneva
1964 Holstebro, Danish ch	1977 Ljubljana/Portoroz
1964 Amsterdam, Interzonal	1978 Lone Pine

Matches

1956 Olafsson	(3½ - 4½)
1958 Donner	(1 - 3)
1965 Ivkov	(2½ - 5½)
1966 Geller	(4 - 5)
1968 Portisch	(4½ - 5½)
1969 Tal	(2½ - 4½)
1969 Westerinen	(2 - 6)
1970 Kavalek	(2 - 6)
1971 Uhlmann	(3½ - 5½)
1975 Iskov	(½ - 5½)

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INDEX of OPENINGS

(Numbers in bracket indicate that Larsen had white)

Alekhine's Defence 16
Benoni Defence (5), 10, (28), (66), (73)
Bird's Opening (9)
Bogo-Indian 47
Caro-Kann Defence 67
Dutch Defence 21, 50, 64
English Opening (18), (19), 26, 27, (57), (68), (69), 72
French Defence (8), (37)
King's Indian Defence 3, 13, (24), (29), 30, (31), (33), (41), (52), (54), (60), 74
Larsen's Opening (32), (42), (44), (45), (49), 65
Modern Defence (61)
Nimzo Indian Defence 14, 22, 36, 39, (55)
Pirc Defence (56)
Queen's Gambit Declined (23), 40
Queen's Indian Defence 17, 48, (51)
Reti Opening (43)
Ruy Lopez 11, 53
Scandinavian Defence 75
Sicilian Defence (1), (2), 6, (12), 20, 25, 34, (35), 38, 58, (59), (62), (63), 70
Tarrasch Defence 4, (15)
Vienna Game (7), (46), (71)

INDEX OF OPPONENTS

(The numbers refer to games and
the opponents colour is indicated
in brackets)

Andersson 60 (B)	Medina 30 (W)
Bellon 42 (B) 67 (W)	Najdorf 54 (B)
Betancort 68 (B)	Ogaard 74 (W)
Bobotsov 27 (W)	Panno 29 (B)
Botvinnik 2 (B)	Petrosjan 12 (B) 13 (W)
Browne 21 (W)	Polugajevsky 26 (W)
Cafferty 44 (B)	Pomar 64 (W)
Castro 69 (B)	Portisch 8 (B) 59 (B)
Damjanovic 20 (W)	Quinteros 53 (W) 56 (B) 61 (B)
Duckstein 57 (B)	Radulov 51 (B)
Eley 49 (B)	Reshevsky 22 (W)
Evans 4 (W) 48 (W)	Robatsch 6 (W)
Fischer 11 (W) 38 (W)	Rodriguez O. 66 (B) 73 (B)
Flohr 10 (W)	Rukavina 50 (W)
Fraguela 65 (B)	Sarapu 15 (B)
Geller 5 (B)	Smejkal 72 (W)
Gheorghiu 19 (B) 23 (B) 47 (W) 62 (B)	Smyslov 46 (B)
Gipslis 16 (W)	Spassky 9 (B)
Gliloric 1 (B) 17 (W) 35 (B)	Stein 31 (B)
Ivkov 18 (B) 55 (B)	Stahlberg 3 (W)
Janetschek 75 (W)	Tajmanov 14 (W) 36 (W)
Kavalek 32 (B) 33 (B) 63 (B)	Tal 25 (W)
Korchnoi 28 (B)	Torre 58 (W)
Lengyel 7 (B)	Uhlmann 37 (B) 40 (W) 41 (B)
Liberson 70 (W)	Wade 45 (B)
Ljubojevic 43 (B)	Weinstein 34 (W)
Matanovic 71 (B)	Westerinen 24 (B) 52 (B)
Mecking 39 (W)	

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