



C O L U M N I S T S

The Kibitzer Tim Harding

Playing the Budapest in Budapest

Last month the Hungarian Chess Federation organised a special tournament to test the Budapest Defence, 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e5. Appropriately, the event was held in the city of Budapest and I was honoured to be one of the guest players.

This was a most unusual event, because since the early 20th century (when there were several), it has become very rare to stage gambit tournaments or special thematic tournaments devoted to one opening. Such events are quite common in postal and email play, but not in "over-the-board" chess. (Photo: *Chief organiser, Gábor Gyuricza*)



Because FIDE rating points and big money were not at stake, and the primary objective was to discover new things about the Budapest Defence, it was a weekend where "play" (an aspect of chess that is sometimes neglected by serious players) was to the forefront. The opening is still a relative rarity in master chess (though it scores an occasional striking win). It guarantees that an interesting and unbalanced position will arise early on, with many tactical possibilities. Hardly any games were agreed drawn without a real fight.

The games were enjoyable and if you lost, it did not matter too much. You could always blame the opening if you were Black, particularly in my case as I felt that the organisers were paying me to play the Fajarowicz so I was starting my black games with a one pawn handicap!



John Gibson (left) and Tim Harding outside the venue, the Hungarians House in Semmelweis Street, downtown Budapest.

I want to say right away that this was undoubtedly one of the most enjoyable chess tournaments that I ever played in, and I think most if not all of the other

invited guests shared this view. The glorious autumn weather, constantly sunny, and the comfortable Golf Tanya guest-house where we were accommodated, certainly helped a lot, but the friendliness of the organisers was the most important of all. It was my first time in Hungary but I was very interested to see how far (at least in the capital) they have put the Soviet era behind them, after a decade running their own affairs.

I did note that they had a big problem with traffic on the day we arrived (start of a holiday weekend), probably due to the roads being insufficient for the rapid rise in private car ownership and the lack of a rail link to the airport — but these are problems we are very familiar with in Dublin also.

The prime mover and tournament director of the event was Brazilian-born Gábor Gyuricza, whom I had first met last year at the ICCF Congress in Switzerland. Amazingly, I learned later that this was the first chess tournament he ever organised, so well done Gábor! He was ably assisted by a team including Dr Frigyes Görgényi, Ivan Bottlík (the chess historian and ICCF master), György Rabovszky and the chief arbiter was IM Miklós Orsó.

I was invited because a few years ago I wrote a book, *The Fighting Fajarowicz* (published by Chess Digest), which deals with one of the main sub-variations of the Budapest, the gambit line 3 dxe5 Ne4. (Article 19 in *The Kibitzer* series also deals with this variation, as theory stood at the end of 1997.)



The start of the last round top board game between Bogdan Lalic (left) and Levente Vajda.

Other authors of Budapest books and monographs were also invited; of these, grandmasters Bogdan Lalic and Mikhail Tseitlin were able to come, as well as the noted French theoretician FM Francis Meinsohn. The organisers hope to get others next year for the Second Budapest Cup. Danish expert Niels Jørgen Jensen, who has also written on the Fajarowicz, couldn't come but was represented by his friend and colleague Casper Olsen.

Several players who are recognised as strong defenders of the Budapest in practical play were also invited. These included some of the strongest players in the event: Stuart Conquest, Dimitri Reinderman, Tom Wedberg, and Mario Lanzani (who had just finished playing in the Italian championship) as well as experienced French lady international Nicole Tagnon. Travelling with me was John Gibson from Ireland, who is primarily a Go player these days but has been playing the Fajarowicz for decades and contributed a lot of material to my book. Unfortunately the Spanish experts in the opening, such as

Romero Holmes, were not able to come, and also Georg Mohr of Slovenia, one of the most regular Budapest players among the professionals, had to cancel at the last minute because of problems with his car.

Sponsorship for the tournament came principally from a variety of sources, including the hotel, the World Federation of Hungarians (who provided as the venue, the Hungarians House in Semmelweiss Street, downtown Budapest), the city of Budapest and the tourism department of the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

Now on to the chess. The field was top-heavy with titled players. The 42 competitors included 8 FIDE grandmasters, 1 WGM, 18 FIDE IMs, 1 Fide Master and 1 correspondence IM (me). Twelve nations were represented; there was a good turnout of expatriate Hungarians. The top-rated players were Conquest 2563, Reinderman 2551, Lalic 2548, Kallai 2531, Czebe 2520, Horvath 2513, Wedberg 2487 and Tseitlin 2454. Probably some of these took the event more seriously than others; Conquest told me before the second round that he regarded it mostly as a holiday, and he seemed more willing to experiment with the Fajarowicz and unusual-looking moves than most of the high-rated players.

The entry fee was perhaps a little high, or the line-up too daunting, for low-rated or unrated players, but a few braved the heat. (One of the Hungarians was even playing his first tournament and they gave him a special prize.)

I have not been playing much chess (other than correspondence) in recent years, so the thought of playing eight games in a weekend primarily against masters caused some apprehension. As it turned out, it didn't go too badly but I did mess up one game where I couldn't remember what I'd said in my book.

The schedule certainly favoured the younger competitors. The rate of play was 55 minutes per player per game, using FIDE rapid rules. After a round on the Friday evening, October 20, there were three games each on the Saturday and Sunday, starting at 4pm so there was little time to recover between rounds. The final game was played on the morning of Monday October 23, which is a national holiday in commemoration of the Hungarian rising of 1956 against the Soviets. Next year this will fall on a Tuesday, enabling either extra rounds or a more leisurely schedule. (Photo: GM Tom Wedberg)



During this tournament I accumulated more than enough material for two columns. I am going to wait for the bulletin, which the organisers intended to publish fairly soon. before I review the status of the Fajarowicz Variation in detail. So I shall do that in one of the early Kibitzers of 2001. However I shall refer to this gambit line in a few places.

As it happened, in the very first round I had Black against the eventual tournament winner. IM Levente Vajda was one of several ethnic Hungarians in the tournament from the Transylvania region of what is now Romania.

Currently he lives in Budapest and in the October First Saturday GM tournament he only missed the grandmaster title by half a point.

He played a new move very early on against me.

Levente Vajda-Tim Harding 1st Budapest Cup (round 1)

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5 Ne4 4 a3

Nowadays this move is reckoned to be the most critical against the Fajarowicz since it cuts out Black's option of a bishop check or pin from b4. The reply 4...Qh4 is in the sick bay at present.

In my other Faj games with Black I had to meet 4 Nf3. In round 3, I got a fairly comfortable draw against an IM with my usual 4...Bb4+ but I lost in round 5 when I played 4...Nc6 and got into an unusual sideline that I couldn't remember. (My excuse is that it is five years since I wrote my book.)

Of White's other options, it was noteworthy that Nicole Tagnon of France was successful with 5 Qd3!? and others copied her example; this move certainly deserves more examination than was previously thought.

4... b6!?

This move certainly comes into consideration as White has made a non-developing 4th move. The queen's Bishop can be a problem piece for Black in the Fajarowicz, and 4...b6 aims to get it working early.

In round two I played Levente Vajda's father, Albert, and for the first time I had White against the Fajarowicz. He played 4...Nc6 5 Nf3 d6 6 Qc2 Bf5 which is known to be refuted by 7 Nc3! and I scored a relatively comfortable point.

5 Nd2 Bb7

Maybe Black should capture on d2.

6 Nxe4 Bxe4 7 h4!?

This is a high-class waiting move and, still rusty from lack of OTB practice, I reacted very badly with 7...Be7? 8 Qd4 Bb7 9 Qg4 forcing 9...Kf8 with a bad position. White wants to play Qd4 so Black should prevent it, even though it means the bishop cannot go "home". 7...Nc6 8 f3 Bf5 9 e4 Be6 (to follow up...f6) was suggested by GM Reinderman; maybe then the h4 move will not look so clever.

Generally speaking, Levente Vajda played at grandmaster level in this event and obtained a 2784 TPR, so I wouldn't have had a chance anyway. He finished a point clear and was sure of at least a tie for first with a round to go.

Levente Vajda had two big cups to bring home: the Budapest Cup itself and also the Dr Janos Balogh Cup for the best performance by a Hungarian from outside Hungary. (Dr Balogh, who was one of the leading correspondence players for half the 20th century, as well as a strong OTB master, was also a Hungarian who for part of his life "became" Romanian.)

The organisers were very proud of young Vajda's performance, the tournament director saying at the closing ceremony): "He belongs to the Romanian chess federation but he's a Hungarian boy!!"

Here is an example of the winner's methodical approach to the Budapest with Black.

Istvan Almasi - Levente Vajda 1st Budapest Cup (round 6)

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5 Ng4 4 Bf4 Nc6

Another very sharp line is 4...Bb4+ 5 Nd2 d6 6 exd6 Qf6 7 Nh3 Nxf2. Lalic was looking at this before his last round game with Vajda but White is in danger of losing the brilliancy prize if he goes wrong!

For 4...g5!? (good if you want to play for a win), see games later in this article.

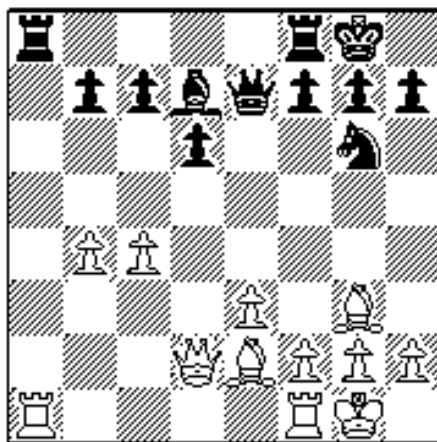
However, 4...Nc6 may be objectively best and during the event Dimitri Reinderman and Tom Wedberg found a line which is good for a draw with correct play.

5 Nf3 Bb4+ 6 Nbd2 Qe7 7 e3 Ngxe5 8 Nxe5 Nxe5 9 Be2 d6 10 0-0 Bxd2 11 Qxd2 0-0 12 b4

12 Qd5 is recommended in Lalic's book.

12...a5 13 a3 Ng6 14 Bg3 axb4 15 axb4 Bd7

Black plays in very simple fashion, confident that he has a sound position. (See Diagram)

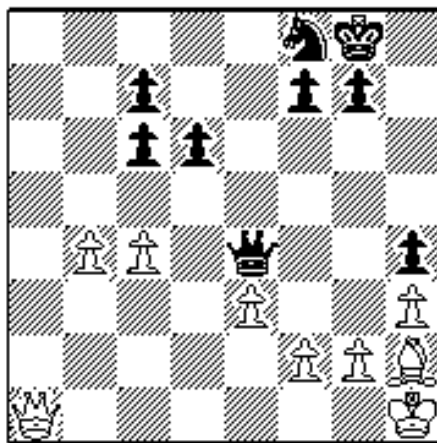


16 Bf3

I found one entertaining precedent, Knaak-Varasdy, Kecskemet open 1987, but doubtless Black can improve at some early stage: 16 h3 Rfe8 17 Rfd1 Qf6 18 Rxa8 Rxa8 19 c5 Ba4 20 Qa2 dxc5 21 bxc5 b6 22 Bb5 Bxd1 23 Qxa8+ Nf8 24 c6 Bb3 25 Bxc7 Bd5 26 Bg3 Qg6 27 Qa4 Ne6 28 Bf1 Qe4 29 Qa8+ Nf8 30 Bd6 1-0.

16...Bc6 17 Bxc6 bxc6 18 Qd4 h5 19 h3 h4 20 Bh2 Rfd8 21 Kh1 Nf8 22

Rxa8 Rxa8 23 Ra1 Rxa1+ 24 Qxa1 Qe4 (See Diagram)

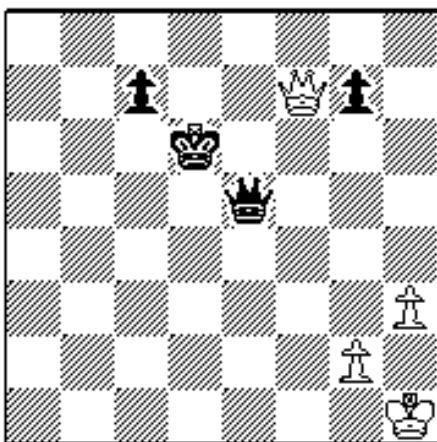


With the well-known advantage of Queen and Knight versus queen and bishop.

**25 Qc1 Ne6 26 c5 dxc5 27 bxc5 Qf5
28 Qd2 Kh7 29 Qd7 Qxf2 30 Bf4
Qe1+ 31 Kh2 Nxf4 32 exf4 Qg3+ 33
Kh1 Qxf4 34 Qxc6 Qe5 35 Qa4 Qxc5
36 Qxh4+ Kg6**

Now it's a queen ending with an extra pawn for Black.

**37 Qg4+ Kf6 38 Qf4+ Ke7 39 Qe4+
Kd8 40 Qa8+ Kd7 41 Qa4+ Kd6 42 Qf4+ Qe5 43 Qxf7** (See Diagram)



White has regained his pawn but the black passed pawn is a winner — if perpetual check can be avoided.

**43...c5 44 Qf8+ Kc7 45 Qf7+ Kb6 46
Qb3+ Kc7 47 Qb5 Qd4 48 Qa5+ Kd7
49 Qb5+ Ke7 50 Qb7+ Kf6 51 Qc6+
Kg5 52 g3 Qd1+ 53 Kg2 Qe2+ 54
Kg1 c4**

One more step forward!

55 Qd5+ Kh6 56 g4

Threatening mate in one but also opening up a route for the black King later.

56...g6 57 Qd4 Kg5 58 Qd8+ Kf4 59 Qd6+ Kf3 60 Qf6+ Kg3 Get out of that! **61 Qc3+ Qd3 62 Qe5+ Kxh3 63 g5 Qg3+ 0-1.**

Probably two thirds, if not three quarters, of the games were played in the main line with 3...Ng4. My first encounter with this line was on the Saturday evening, when I managed to beat an IM from Romania.

Tim Harding - IM Sandor Biró 1st Budapest Cup (round 4)

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5

This was played in virtually every game, except that IM Peter Hardicsay prepared 3 Nf3. I tried a sort of reversed French with 3...e4!? but he says the most critical answer is to go for an English with 3...exd4 4 Nxd4 d5 5 cxd5 Nxd5 6 e4 Bb4+! 7 Bd2 Qe7! as in Hardicsay-Lalic. I also saw one game with 3 Bg5 but surprisingly none with 3 d5 which is often played against me in blitz games on the Internet.

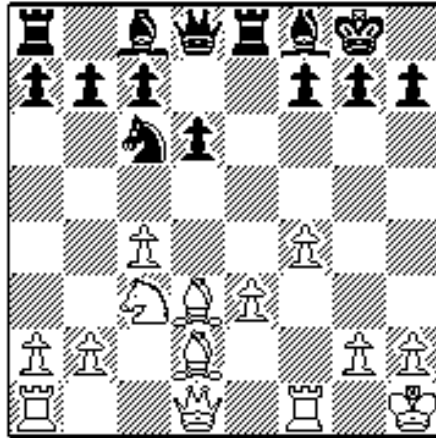
3...Ng4 4 Nf3 Nc6 5 Nc3 Ngxe5 6 e3 Be7?

My round 7 opponent played the superior fianchetto of this Bishop.

7 Be2 0-0 8 0-0 Re8 9 Nxe5 Nxe5 10 f4 Nc6

The books say that if White plays f4, the black Knight should retreat to d7, whence it can go to f6 and fight for control of e4. Due to my opponent's poor move order, he hasn't yet played...d6 so he lacks this option and has a bad position. My next move is over-cautious; I should either have played the precautionary a2-a3 or put the boot in with Nd5.

11 Kh1?! d6 12 Bd2 Bf8 13 Bd3 (See Diagram)



Black now plays a rather panicky move but it's hard to suggest a good plan for him.

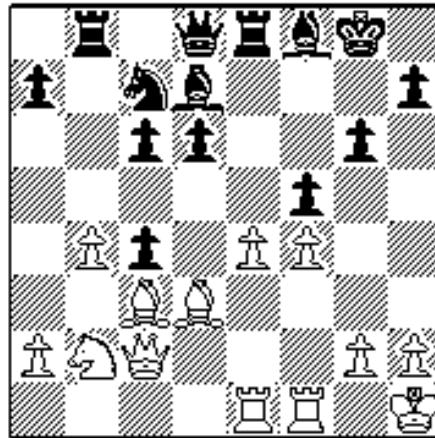
13...f5?! 14 Nd5 Nb8 15 Qc2 c6 16 Nc3 g6 17 Rae1 Na6 18 Na4 Bd7 19 Bc3 Rb8

Not 19...b5? 20 cxb5 cxb5 21 Bxb5 Bxb5 22 Qb3+.

20 b4 b5 21 Nb2 Nc7 22 e4!?

I had been concentrating on containing any possible counterplay and avoiding a tactical clash until my opponent (who was moving much slower than me) got into desperate time trouble, so I am not sure why I lost patience instead of continuing this policy by 22 a3. However, there is nothing wrong with e4 as a move.

22...bxc4 (See Diagram)



23 Bxc4+?!

I should have played 23 Nxc4! when 23...fxe4 24 Bxe4 d5 would be smashed by 25 Bxg6! dxc4 26 Bxh7+ Kf7 27 Qg6 mate.

23...d5 24 exd5 cxd5

I had been dreaming of playing 25 Qd2 bxc4 26 Qd4 here but fortunately I spotted in time that 26...Ne6 stops the mate because after 27 Qh8+ Kf7 28 Qxh7+ he can interpose on g7. So I had

to offer my b-pawn, starting with a rook exchange so that I wouldn't have a Rook hanging on e1.

25 Rxe8 Bxe8 26 Bb3 Bf7?

Down to his last minute, Black didn't dare play 26...Bxb4 after which White has excellent compensation for the pawn but nothing clear. When you are losing on time and position in such events, you have to go for the

complications and hope your opponent blunders.

27 Be5 Bd6 28 Nd3

Now, with the knight ready to go to e5, and everything covered, Black is once more positionally crushed. He only managed to make a couple more moves before his flag fell.

28...Na6 29 a3 Rc8 30 Qb2 1-0.

Having +1 after four rounds doomed me to play three IMs on the Sunday, two with Black, and I managed to score half a point. After surviving a time-scramble in round 6, I lost round 7 — primarily through tiredness after getting a good position. In the last round I drew with White against Ms. Tagnon and so finished on -1. My main regret is that while I played six IMs, I had no GM opponent, although a few times I might have been paired with one.

Now let us look at some of the better games in the tournament. It is not possible to cover everything so I shall concentrate on the variation with 4 Bf4.

The Best Game Prize was awarded to GM Horvath for the following win.

Evgeny Postny (ISR) - Csaba Horvath 1st Budapest Cup (round 3)

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5 Ng4 4 Bf4 g5!?

This is supposed to be too sharp.

5 Bd2 Nxe5 6 Bc3

Bogdan Lalic's book recommends 6 Nf3 here.

6...Bg7

For 6...Nbc6 see the next game.

7 e3 0-0 8 Ne2

In this line White usually plays 8 h4 but I found in my database a game Horvath played with White against David Bronstein in Gausdal 1994: 8...d6 9 hxg5 Qxg5 10 Nd2 Bf5 11 Nh3 Qh6 12 Be2 Re8 13 Kf1 Ng6 14 Rc1 Nd7 15 Kg1 Bxc3 16 Rxc3 Qg7 17 Nf1 Nf6 18 Ng3 Bd7 and a messy game was eventually drawn. Presumably he had some improvement in mind on that game.

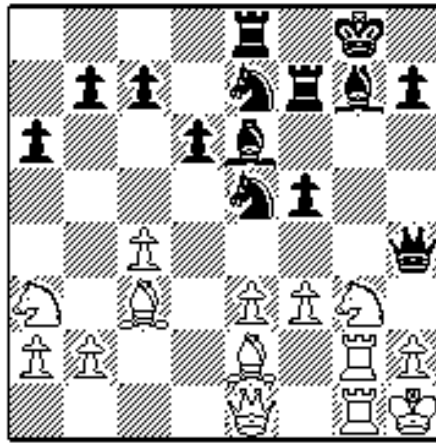
8...d6 9 Ng3 g4 10 Be2 Nbc6 11 Na3

An ugly move that leads to trouble later.

11...Be6 12 Qd2 a6 13 0-0

The king soon comes under heavy attack here.

13...Qg5 14 f4 gxf3 15 gxf3 Qh4 16 Kh1 f5 17 Rg1 Rf7 18 Rg2 Raf8 19 Rag1 Ne7 20 Qe1 (See Diagram)



White would like to exchange queens and bear down on g7.

20...f4 21 exf4

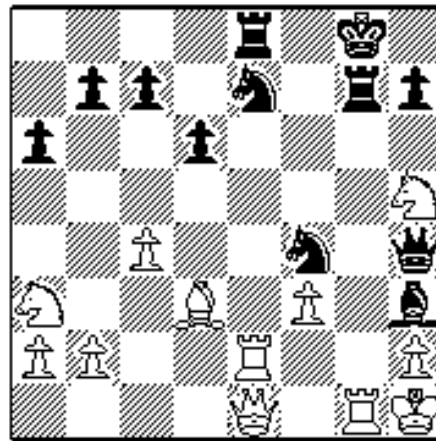
21 Ne4!? is more consistent, but.
21...Qxe1 22 Rxe1 N5g6 (not
22...fxe3? 23 Ng5) 23 Ng5 Bxc3 24
bxc3 Rf6 25 Nxe6 Rxe6 seems
favourable to Black.

21...N5g6 22 Bd3

22 Bxg7 is somewhat better.

22...Bh3 23 Re2 Nxf4 24 Bxg7 Rxf7 25 Nh5

White has evidently been relying on this tactic. (See Diagram)



25...Qxh5 26 Rxf7+ Kxf7 27 Rxe7+ Kf6!

Surprisingly White has no useful check and his a3-Knight is too far from the action. So he is lost.

28 Re3 Rg8 29 Bf1 Qg5

Other moves also win but this is very forcing.

30 Bxh3 Nxh3

Threatening...Qg1+ and mates.

31 Qg3 Qxe3

This mates in every variation.

32 Qxg8 Qe1+ 33 Kg2 Nf4 0-1.

This is what problemists call a "pure" mate: each square in the King's field has just one cover.

Here are two more games in the same variation.

Ewarth Kahn - Gábor Kallai 1st Budapest Cup (round 3) (Notes by Kallai)

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5 Ng4 4 Bf4 g5 5 Bd2 Nxe5 6 Bc3 Nbc6 7 e3 Qe7!? 8 Ne2! Rg8 9 Ng3 d6 10 Be2 Be6 11 Qa4

11 Nd2.

11...f5! 12 0-0

12 Bh5+ Kd8!.

12...0-0-0! 13 b4?

13 Nd2.

13...f4 14 Nh5

14 Ne4 Bxc4 15 Bxc4 Nxc4 16 b5 Qxe4 17 bxc6 Qxc6--.

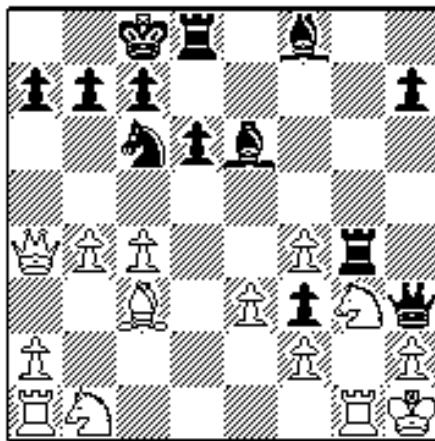
14...f3! 15 gxf3

15 Bxf3 Nxf3+ 16 gxf3 Qf7 17 Ng3 Bh3 18 Nd2 Bxf1 19 Rxf1 Kb8 20 b5 Ne5 21 Bd4 b6 is clearly better for Black.

15...g4 16 f4 Nf3+ 17 Kh1

17 Bxf3 gxf3+ 18 Ng3 h5 (18...Qh4 19 Nd2!) 19 b5 Nb8 20 Kh1 h4 21 Ne4 Bh3.

17...Qh4 18 Bxf3 gxf3 19 Ng3 Qh3 20 Rg1 Rg4! (See Diagram)



With the idea of Qxh2+ and mate.

21 Bf6 Be7! 22 Nd2 Bxf6 23 Nxf3 Kb8 24 b5 Ne7 25 Rad1 Nf5 26 c5 d5 27 b6 axb6 28 cxb6 cxb6 29 Rd3 Bd7 30 Qd1 Bc6 31 Nd4 Bxd4 32 exd4 Nxc3+ 33 Rxc3 Rxc3 34 fxc3 Bd7 35 Qb3 Qf1 mate 0-1

The following was the best game in the simultaneous display which Stuart Conquest gave after the tournament; opponents had the choice of colours. Thanks to Gábor Gyuricza and Stuart

for supplying the scoresheet.

Eva Rendi - Stuart Conquest Budapest simul, 23.10.2000

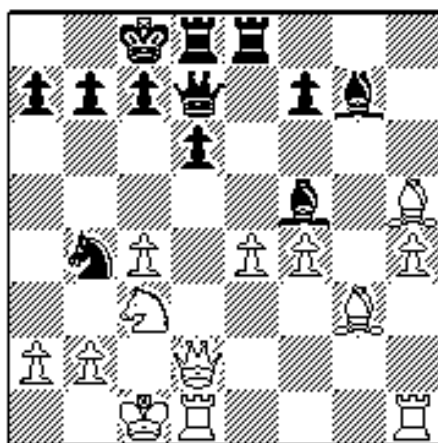
1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5 Ng4 4 Bf4 g5 5 Bg3

The Bishop retreats in the wrong direction.

5...Nc6 6 Nf3 Bg7 7 Nc3 Ngxe5 8 Nxe5 Nxe5 9 e3 d6 10 Be2 Bf5 11 Qd2 h5 12 h4 g4 13 0-0-0 Qd7 14 f4 gxf3 15 gxf3 0-0-0 16 f4 Nc6 17 Bf3 Rhe8

Black gives up a pawn to get his piece play going.

18 Bxh5 Nb4 19 e4 (See Diagram)



Now comes an instructive combination.

19...Rxe4! 20 Nxe4 Nxa2+ 21 Kc2 Bxe4+ 22 Kb3 Qc6!

The real point. The Bishop is much stronger than the h1-Rook.

23 Rhe1

23 Kxa2 wouldn't be very clever on account of 23...Qa4#.

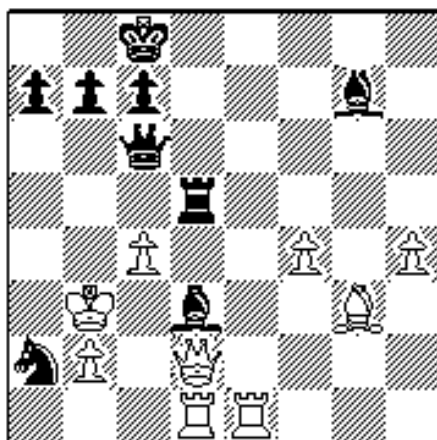
23...Bd3 24 Bxf7

24 Qxd3 Qb6+ would be another way for White to get checkmated.

24...d5

Renews the threat to c4.

25 Bxd5 Rxd5! 0-1 (See Diagram)



White resigned for if 26 cxd5 Qb5+ 27 Ka3 Bc4 checkmate can only be postponed for a few moves by checks and sacrifices on e8.

A very nice attacking game by Stuart which shows how effective the Budapest can be against lower-rated opposition.

Leading scores (more than 50% result) in the tournament were (players Hungarian unless otherwise stated):

1. VAJDA, Levente (ROM) 7, 2/3. HORVATH, Csaba and WEDBERG, Tom (SWE) 6, 4/8. CONQUEST, Stuart & LALIC, Bogdan (both ENG), POSTNY, Evgeny (ISL), DUDAS, Janos and NEMETH, Zoltán 5½. 9/10. ALMASI, István and KHECHUMYAN, Gagik (ARM), 5, 11/16. MEDVEGY, Zoltan, REINDERMAN, Dimitri (NLD), KAHN, Ewarth, GALYAS, Miklos, TSEITLIN, Mikhail (GER) and MESZAROS, Andras.

Prize for Best score by a female player: WGM VAJDA, Szidonia 3½ pts.

Prize for Best score by a player under 18 years old: RENDI, Eva 3½pts.

Prize for Best score by a player over 60 years old: GM FORINTOS, Győzo 3 pts.

Best score by players without FIDE rating: GIBSON, John (IRL) and VAJDA, Albert (ROM) 3½ pts.



Csaba Horvath (left) starts his game with Janos Dudas

Gábor Gyuricza supplied some statistics. From the 168 games (42 players x 8 rounds), only 165 were played, there were three walkovers. White won 68 games, Black won and there were 45 draws. Another way to count it: from the 165 points, White scored $90\frac{1}{2}$ and Black scored $74\frac{1}{2}$, which means 54.8% for white and 45.2% for Black. Unfortunately I don't have separate statistics for the Fajarowicz, but I suspect it scored a good bit less than the 45% although there were certainly a few good wins and solid draws with it.

The overall score was quite respectable for Black and the opinion one heard early in the event (roughly "The Budapest is interesting but of course it's unsound") was somewhat modified by the end, I think. Peter Hardicsay, for example, told me he got a plus score with Black.

It was noteworthy that in the main line with 3...Ng4 most of the top players (including Vajda) employed 4 Bf4 with White but by the end of the event, the quieter lines with e3 looked more promising.

There seemed to be very few takers for sharp lines such as 4 e4, perhaps under the influence of Bacrot-Shirov in Informator 78.

Unfortunately, the language barrier meant that I wasn't able to have meaningful post-mortems with most of my opponents but I suspect the Hungarians will be talking amongst themselves and preparing some improvements for next year. We may well see some interesting Budapest games in the meantime played in regular tournaments by some of the participants. Watch out for them in TWIC!

A selection of twelve games with the Budapest are now available (without notes) on my website at <http://www.chessmail.com/freegames.html> . Most of the games from the tournament should be made available by the organisers later this year in a bulletin.

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