



ChessCafe.com



A Peek into Chess Informant 87

Viktor Korchnoi Annotates

Ivan Markovic
Chess Informant Editor

COLUMNISTS



Chess Informant
Subscription Service

From the moment when the realm of chess first heard the name Korchnoi, there has always been a constant air of expectation and excitement among the die-hard aficionados – such a compulsive will to win every single game, and the overbearing pressure he places on his opponents even in his seventies is unparalleled in chess history. Fischer is probably the only chessplayer who could stand any comparison with Korchnoi in terms of total dedication to the game, but his painfully premature withdrawal from the chess scene probably cemented the formidable veteran's No. 1 position in the all-time slaughterhouse leaderboard. Moreover, he seems to show no fatigue whatsoever, as he keeps on pushing himself to the limit game after game in his ever-continuing pursuit (does anyone dare call chess a hobby, after all – for Korchnoi it is more of an irresistible drive for quenching the insatiable thirst).

Such an outburst of energy would sear almost anyone, so we have decided to play it safe and choose a game that is not sizzling hot (for the bloodthirsty crowd that might prefer some live action, just a reminder that Enghien-les-Bains tournament is under way, and Viktor the Terrible is among the star-studded field). Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, and also the venue of the greatest World Championship match ever, seemed like a perfect place for Korchnoi: surrounded with dormant volcanoes and frigid weather he erupted in a firework of sacrifices to immediately serve an ice-cold defeat to the home player GM Gretarsson in less than 25 moves. Michael Adams got burned too, but we shall focus our attention to the last round game against the rock-solid Etienne Bacrot.

The young Frenchman tested a new idea in the opening: 10... Bg6 is a prophylactic move that removes the bishop from the square where it could be exposed to attack by the e-pawn. However, it turned out that the central pawn thrust was by far less dangerous than the white bishop ruling the h1-a8 diagonal: combined with the knight on a5 it kept undermining Black's queenside pawns, which resulted in a series of



semi-forced awkward moves (12... Nd5, 13... f5). Bacrot hoped to cover the weaknesses by castling queenside, but fell prey to Korchnoi's sudden switch to a direct attack aimed at the king. The ensuing complications and the pressure exerted were too much for the French grandmaster, who managed to assess the consequences of his best shot (16... Nb6!) only later during the post-game analysis (thanks to his contribution, we can appreciate the beauty of the lines arising after 18. Be5!). The rest was Korchnoi's impressive display of a high level of technique, which just put icing on the cake – for those who think that the entire game was nothing more than a cakewalk for the super-experienced giant, just take a look at the complexity of the seemingly similar lines arising after 16...Nb6! 17. Rfc1 a6: often the most difficult moves and decisions are left behind the scene, and this time the path to victory (or perhaps we should spell it "Viktory"?) was full of pitfalls, which Korchnoi anticipated and avoided with great skill.

Korchnoi 2642-Bacrot 2671
Reykjavik 2003

1.c4 Nf6 2.Nf3 c6 3.d4 d5 4.Qc2 dc4 5.Qc4 Bf5 6.g3 e6 7.Bg2 Nbd7 8.Nc3 Be7 9.Qb3 Qb6 [9...Nb6] 10.Nd2



10...Bg6 N [10...0-0 11.e4!? (11.Nc4) 11...Bg6 (11...Qd4? 12.Ne2 Qd6 13.ef5 Nc5 14.Qc3 Nd3 15.Kf1 and White is superior) 12.Nc4 Qb3 13.ab3 Bb4 **A**) 14.e5? Ne4 and Black is slightly better; **B**) 14.0-0 Bc3 15.bc3 Be4 (15...Ne4 16.Ba3 with compensation) 16.Na5 with compensation; **C**) 14.f3 c5 15.Be3 cd4 16.Bd4 Nc5 17.Bc5 Bc5 18.Ke2 equal] **11.Nc4**

Qxb3 12.axb3 Nd5 13.0-0 and White is slightly better **13...f5!?** [13...N7b6



14.Nd5 Nd5 15.Bd5 cd5 16.Nb6 Rd8 17.Ra7 and White is slightly better; 13...a6 14.e4 Nb4 15.Bf4 with the idea Nd6 and White is slightly better] **14.Na5 0-0-0**

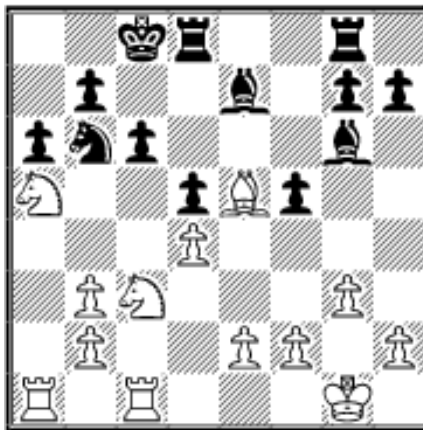


15.Bd5! [15.Bf4!?] **15...ed5**
16.Bf4 Nb8? [16...Nf6??]
17.Nc6 bc6 18.Ra7 and White is winning; 16...Nb6! (the only move) 17.Rfc1 a6

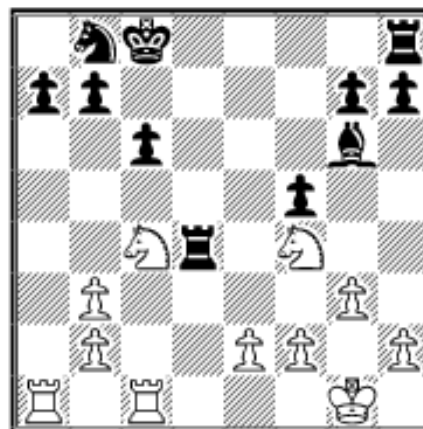


A) 18.b4 Bb4 19.Nc6 bc6
20.Na2 Bf8 (the only move)
21.Rc6 Kb7 22.Rc7 Kb8 **A1)**
23.Rg7?! Ka8 (23...Bd6 24.Bd6 Rd6 25.Nb4 and White is superior) 24.Rc7 a5 25.Nc3 Bb4 26.Nb5 Rd7 27.Rd7 (27.Rac1 Be8 and Black is winning) 27...Nd7 28.Nc7 Kb7 29.Nd5 Bf7 and Black is slightly better; **A2)** 23.Nc3 Bd6 24.Rc6 Nc8 (the only move) 25.Bg5

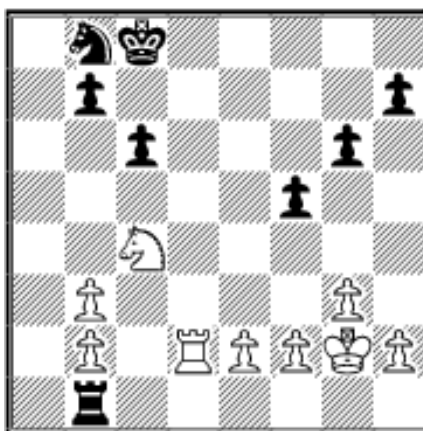
(25.Rd6? Rd6 26.Ra6 Rhd8 27.Nb5 Kb7 28.Rd6 Nd6 29.Nd6 Kc6 and Black is winning) 25...Rd7 26.Rca6 Ra7 and Black is slightly better; **B)** 18.Nb5!? ab5 19.Nc6 bc6 20.Rc6 Kd7 21.Ra7! Ke8 22.Rb6 Rf8! (22...Rd7? 23.Rb8 with the idea Bd8 24.Bg5 h6 25.Rd8 Rd8 26.Bd8; 22...b4 23.Rbb7 with compensation) 23.Rb5 Rf7 24.Raa5 Bf6! and Black is slightly better; **C)** 18.Be5! (Bacrot) **C1)** 18...Rhg8?!



Be5 22.de5 and White is slightly better] **17.Rfc1 Bd6** [the only move] **18.Nd5 Bf4 19.Nf4 Rd4 20.Nc4** and White is superior



winning; **B)** 23...Re8 24.Rbb7 g5 25.Nd3 Ree2 26.Nc5 Rd1 (26...Rf2 27.Rc7 Kd8 28.Ne6 Ke8 29.Re7 mate) 27.Kg2 Rdd2 28.Kh3 and White is winning; **C)** 23...g5 24.Ne6 Re8 25.Ng5 and White is superior] **23.Kg2 Re8 24.Rc2 Kc7** [24...Na6 25.Ra8 and White is superior; 24...Re5!?) **25.Ra5 g6 26.Nd5 Kc8 27.Ne3 Rd4 28.Ra4 Red8 29.Rd4 Rd4 30.Nc4** [with the idea Rd2] **30...Rd1 31.Rd2 Rb1**



32.b4 b5 [32...Kc7 33.b5 cb5 34.Na3] **33.Ne5 Kc7 34.h4 Kb6 35.Kf3 Na6 36.Nd7 Kc7 37.Nf8** and White is winning **Nb4 38.Nh7 Nd5 39.Nf8 Nb6 40.Ng6 Nc4 41.Rc2 Nb2 42.Ne5 b4 43.Rc6 Kb7 44.h5 1 : 0 [Korchnoi]**



[TOP OF PAGE](#)



[HOME](#)



[COLUMNS](#)



[LINKS](#)



[ARCHIVES](#)



[ABOUT THE
CHESS CAFE](#)

[\[ChessCafe.com Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Reviews\]](#) [\[Bulletin Board\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)
[\[Endgame Study\]](#) [\[The Skittles Room\]](#) [\[Archives\]](#)
[\[Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About The Chess Cafe\]](#) [\[Contact Us\]](#)

Copyright 2002 Russell Enterprises, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

"The Chess Cafe®" is a registered trademark of Russell Enterprises, Inc.