

BISGUIER
and
SOLTIS

AMERICAN CHESS MASTERS
FROM MORPHY TO FISCHER

MACMILLAN

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and ANDREW SOLTIS



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the story goes. The post-Fischer generation is equally familiar with the latest wrinkles from the opening innovation factories of Eastern Europe. Their memory and familiarity with important recent games is impressive—especially so, as the number of international tournaments and the corresponding number of important recent games has doubled since the 1930s. During the 1970 World Student Team Championship in Haifa, Israel, Ken Rogoff entered one of the rooms of the U.S. team and glanced at a position which two team members were analyzing. “That’s Uhlmann-Vasiukov, isn’t it?” Rogoff said, referring to a game that had been played more than a year before. “And here Black played his knight up attacking the queen and White responded with queen to rook four. . .,” he continued, giving the next several moves played.

The new generation was also weaned on five-minute chess, which perhaps accounts for a slight superficiality of style. Americans were no longer the “coffeehouse players” they once seemed. But, perhaps because of their youth, the new generation appears at this writing to be less willing to spend five hours of intense concentration at the board than to spend the same amount of time and energy preparing for a game. The result is a sense of hastiness and underdeveloped potential. How this group of talented players grows is, in 1974, a matter of conjecture.

Ken Rogoff

Ken Rogoff, twenty-one years old at this writing, is considered by most close watchers of the chess scene to be the most promising young American since Fischer roamed the Manhattan Chess Club in sneakers. Rogoff, currently a student at Yale, is an excellent example of the Fischer influence. His style is at once solid, dynamic, and simple. His opening knowledge is encyclopedic, the result of having played over thousands of games. His calculating ability is deep, and it is not uncommon

for Ken to mention an unplayed fifteen-move variation during a postmortem analysis of a game. His weaknesses are those of most young players. Inexperience makes it difficult for him to play well in bad positions—yet playing well in bad positions is the hallmark of every great American player.

Ken began playing tournament chess in 1966 and within three years he had won the U.S. junior championship for the first of three times. In 1971 Rogoff placed third in the world junior championship, the highest an American had scored since 1957. Rogoff has played on three U.S. student teams and played first board for the victorious Americans in 1970. The following game was played in the last round, when the United States needed a sweep of Scotland to clinch first place.

STUDENT OLYMPIADE, Haifa, 1970

	ROGOFF	LEVY
1	N-KB3	P-QB4
2	P-QB4	P-KN3
3	P-Q4	PxP

With this, White gets a most favorable Maroczy bind. 3 . . . B-N2 contains more chances for Black.

4	NxP	B-N2
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Attempting to transpose into the more popular Gurgenzidze equalizing line with 4 . . . N-KB3; 5 N-QB3, N-B3 (6 P-K4, NxN!; 7 QxN, P-Q3) can be met now by 6 N-B2 before P-K4.

5	P-K4	N-QB3
6	B-K3	N-B3
7	N-QB3	N-KN5

Otherwise White will play 8 B-K2, leaving Black without any of the freeing exchanges that are considered best for him.

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Notice that 7 . . . P-Q3; 8 B-K2, N-KN5?? loses a piece to 9 BxN, BxB; 10 NxN!

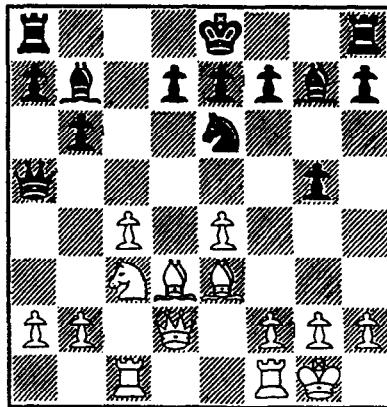
8	QxN	NxN
9	Q-Q1	N-K3

Bronstein's 9 . . . P-K4 is nowhere near sufficient: 10 N-N5, 0-0; 11 Q-Q2, Q-R5; 12 B-Q3, P-Q4?!; 13 BPxP, NxN; 14 BxN, QxKP; 15 P-B3!

10	Q-Q2	Q-R4
11	R-B1	. . .

White would prefer his rook on Q1 but should not allow his pawns to be doubled with . . . BxN.

11	. . .	P-N3
12	B-Q3	B-N2
13	0-0	P-KN4?!



This is an old idea of Larsen's, whose purpose is to exploit black squares via 14 . . . B-K4 and 15 . . . B-B5. If White plays P-KN3, Black continues the attack with . . . P-KR4-5 or . . . P-N5. The move, however, burns Black's positional bridges. He gives up a great many white squares in the hope of exploiting the black ones.

14	P-QR3!	. . .
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A strong preparation for 15 P-QN4, which, if allowed, may lead to 15 . . . QxRP; 16 N-Q5, P-KR3; 17 R-B2!, threatening to win the queen. White's move also protects the rook pawn and allows White to move N-Q5 in some cases.

14	. . .	Q-K4
15	P-QN4	R-QB1
16	N-Q5	. . .

White has a clear edge because of his advantage in space, the discomfiture of the Black queen, and the lag in Black's development. However, Rogoff realizes that his position requires several moves of preparation before anything can be done with his edge. Remarkably solid judgment for a young player.

16	. . .	B-QB3
17	KR-Q1	P-KR4
18	B-N1	R-Q1
19	Q-K2!	. . .

Preparing for B-Q2-B3, which weakens rather than strengthens Black's control of black squares. The maneuver will also remove the Black queen from its key position and stop its holding action in the center.

19	. . .	P-N5
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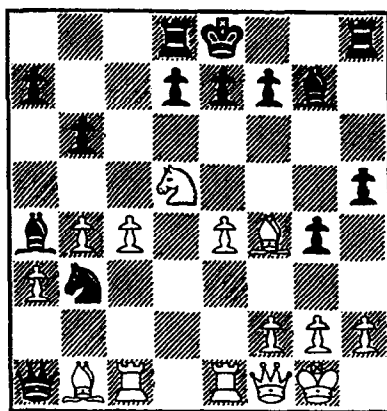
Levy, an enterprising Scot, is an expert in the Sicilian Dragon and is more at home in dynamic, free-flowing tactical positions. Having been denied . . . B-KB5, he has been unable to develop another positional plan and is here reduced to speculation. His only open line—the long black diagonal—is about to be taken from him.

20	B-Q2	B-R5
21	R-K1	N-Q5
22	Q-B1	. . .

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On 22 Q-Q3 Black can continue 22 . . . N-N6; 23 B-B3?, NxR. Having won a small concession in White's queen retreat Black should meet the danger of 23 B-B4 with 22 . . . B-R3!— for example, 23 BxB, RxB; 24 P-B5, P-R5; 25 PxP, PxP; 26 Q-R6, and now not 26 . . . P-R6?; 27 R-B8! but 26 . . . B-B3.

22	. . .	N-N6
23	B-B4	Q-R8



24	R-B2!	. . .
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White has maneuvered quite skillfully in an odd position and here prepares to meet 24 . . . N-Q5 with 25 R-R2. The R8 square is the only safe square for the Black queen.

24	. . .	P-K3
25	B-Q6!	. . .

Threatening mate for starters. And 25 . . . PxN naturally opens the file for a devastating discovery. White's move is the beginning of a fine combination that leads to the capture of the queen.

25	. . .	R-QB1
26	R-R2!	Q-Q5
27	R-Q1!	QxBP
28	B-Q3	Q-B3
29	R-B2	QxR

On 29 . . . Q-N2; 30 B-R6, or 29 . . . Q-R1; 30 N-B7ch, Black can resign.

30	BxQ	RxB
31	Q-R6!	. . .

A neat conclusion. The bishop cannot retreat and with it Black's material equality collapses.

31	. . .	PxN
32	QxB	R-B6
33	QxP	Resigns

Mate follows 33 . . . R-QB1; 34 PxP and 35 R-K1ch. In June 1973 Rogoff took first place in the first USCF-sponsored international tournament held in Norristown, Pa.

Andrew Soltis

When Andrew Soltis won the 1972 Reggio Emilia, Italy, international tournament, it was the first time in more than a dozen years that an American besides Fischer or Reshevsky had taken a foreign first prize. Soltis, twenty-six at this writing, had also taken first prizes in the 1969 U.S. intercollegiate championship and four Marshall Chess Club championships. The author of three books, Soltis writes a chess column for the *New York Post*, where he works as a reporter.

A colorful attacker, Soltis concentrates on unpopular opening lines. He is credited with introducing a tricky variation of the Sicilian (1 P-K4, P-QB4; 2 N-KB3, P-Q3; 3 P-Q4, PxP; 4 NxP, N-KB3; 5 N-QB3, P-KN3; 6 B-K3, B-N2; 7 P-B3, 0-0; 8 Q-Q2, N-B3; 9 B-QB4, B-Q2; 10 P-KR4, R-QB1; 11 B-N3, P-KR4!?). He calculates quickly and scores well in tactical positions. Soltis' weakness is defense in passive positions. Soltis has played on six student teams and had the best score (8-1) of the victorious 1970 team.