

ly for some, myself included. It was time to look back on what had been achieved. A group of kids journeyed from the Bronx to Moscow, some of whom would otherwise have been lucky to see New Jersey, let alone another country. They saw that through chess they could achieve things that might never have been possible. Seeing new places, increasing their cultural and historical knowledge, meeting new people. They became stars, learned to believe in themselves, in their chess, and in their worth as human beings. We stayed true to the original motto of Chess-in-the-Schools: Helping kids grow one move at a time.

As the plane hurtled back towards the West, I reclined in my seat, a satisfied smile on my face. We had done our job. Our students saw what chess was all about, what it should be about, and we showed the world what an organization of chess lovers with a dream combined with a bunch of talented kids with a lot of spirit could do. And there's more to come.

### SICILIAN DEFENSE

[B42]

W: GM Anatoly Karpov  
B: Matthew Morales

Moscow Simul, 1998

#### Notes by Dennis Monokroussos (2409)

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 exd4 4. Nxd4 a6

The Kan variation of the Sicilian Defense, a choice which is both fortunate and unfortunate, in different respects. It is fortunate because Karpov is a great expert on this variation; in fact, one of the first chess books I ever owned, around 18 years ago, was a book on this variation by Karpov himself! So Matthew's going to have his work even more cut out for him in this game. But on the positive side, it's tough to see what better tutorial he could get on one of his favorite openings than by playing it against a World Champion! I always encourage younger players — indeed, everyone — to play what they know best when facing a much stronger player. If you're going to be an underdog in any case, why should you further handicap yourself by avoiding your own strengths? You shouldn't!

5. Bd3 Qc7 6. 0-0 Nf6 7. e4 Nc6 8. Nf3

More common is 8. Nxc6, with one possible continu-

ation going 8. ... dxc6 9. f4 e5 10. Kh1 Bg4 11. Qc2 0-0-0 12. Nc3 exf4 13. e5 Qxe5 14. Bxf4 Qa5 15. Ne4, and White has compensation for the pawn (Murey-Tal, Sukhumi 1972 [Informant 14/331]).

8. ... d6

Passive but solid. More active are 8. ... b6 9. Nc3 Ng4 10. h3 h5 11. g3 Nge5 12. Be3 h4 13. g4 Bd6, when Black is fine and 8. ... Ng4 9. Nc3 Be7 (unclear is 9. ... Bc5 10. Na4 Ba7 11. c5 d6 according to Ivanchuk) 10. Be2 b6 11. h3 h5 12. g3 Nge5 13. h4 g6 14. Bf4 d6 15. Rc1 Nxf3+ 16. Bxf3 Ne5 17. Bg2 0-0, with an equal game (Ivanchuk-Portisch, Debrecen 1992 [Informant 56/193]).

9. Nc3 Be7 10. b3 Bd7

Against "Maroczy Bind" positions, characterized by the pawns on c4 and e4, which serve to cramp Black, the standard way to fight back is by trying for the ... b7-b5 or, better still, the ... d6-d5 pawn break. That, combined with other factors such as the possibility of the b6-square being exploited (by Bc1-e3 and Nc3-a4), a better way to proceed is probably 10. ... b6, followed by 11. ... Bb7. That leaves the d-file open for a Black rook to help support a later ... d6-d5, which could also be helped by the b7-bishop. It also leaves the d7-square free for Black's knight to protect b6 if need be!

Black is making reasonable-looking moves, but the danger is that he can find himself slowly strangled to death unless he comes up with a plan to combat White's space advantage.

11. Bb2 0-0 12. Be2!

A good move! It takes the bishop away from a square where it wasn't doing anything useful and where it could be attacked, and unblocks the d-file, thereby making Black's ... d6-d5 break harder to achieve.

12. ... Rfd8 13. Rc1 Rac8 14. Re1

Both sides have finished developing, and now it's time for Black to see what's possible. The ... b7-b5 and ... d6-d5 breaks are still the primary hope here, but can they be achieved? Black's pieces are all bundled together, so Matthew rightly seeks to exchange pieces. Unfortunately, the idea he has takes too long and exchanges off one of Black's most useful pieces for one of White's worst — it is an important skill to learn which pieces to exchange and which not to!

14. ... h6 15. Bf1 Nh7 16. Nd5!

This pseudo-sacrifice is a very common idea in

Maroczy Bind positions (it happens very frequently in the English Opening, for example), either pushing Black's pieces back into oblivion or else leaving him with a weak, isolated d-pawn.

16. ... exd5?!

Better is 16. ... Qb8, though White maintains a very nice advantage in any case.

17. exd5 Ng5

Consistent, but the knight really is better on f6! Instead, 17. ... Qa5 is an improvement. It breaks the pin, harasses the a-pawn, and utilizes the open 5th rank for possible defense.

18. Nd4!

Now Black's g5-knight is just misplaced, and the pressure on c6 is getting more severe.

18. ... Nxd4?

Best may be 18. ... Qb6 or 18. ... Qa5, but Matthew tries to keep the position stable at the expense of the queen. It's really just too much material, especially given White's space advantage and Black's weak d-pawn.

19. Rxc7 Rxc7

An improvement is 19. ... Ndf3+, messing up White's pawns slightly (but not enough to be significant) and, more usefully, keeping White's queen off the d4-square — at least momentarily: 20. gxf3 Rxc7 21. Qd4?? Nxf3+.

20. Qxd4 Bf6?

An oversight, missing White's next move. As so often happens, bad positions tend to breed bad moves. Very few players have been masters of holding bad positions (Steinitz, Lasker, and Korchnoi come instantly to mind), and their games deserve careful study.

21. Qb6 Rdc8 22. Bxf6 gxf6 23. h4 Nh7 24. Qxd6, Black resigns.

Mate isn't imminent, but White's material advantage and Black's passive and uncoordinated pieces make Matthew's decision a reasonable one. So that's what world champions play like!

## 1998 ASPIS PRIZE WON BY ASUKA NAKAMURA

The prestigious Laura E. Aspis prize for achievement in chess has been won by twelve-year-old Asuka Nakamura, a rated expert. Awarded every year by Chess-in-the-Schools (formerly the American Chess Foundation), the Aspis prize is considered the most distinguished honor that can be won by a young American chessplayer.

The winner was born on February 4, 1986 in Hirakata City, Osaka Prefecture, Japan. He moved to the United States when he was four, and he began playing chess when he was five, taking lessons from Robert Snyder. Currently, he studies with his dad, FM Sunil Weeramantry.

Asuka won his first national championship in 1992 in the Kindergarten division in Knoxville, Tennessee. Since then, he has won seven more national championships. He holds a unique record in the Grade School Nationals where, in five years of competition, he has compiled a score of 30 wins, no draws, no losses.



He has also represented the United States in international competition: the 1996 World Youth Championship (Boys 10 and under) in Spain and the 1998 Pan American Championship (Boys 12 and under) in Brazil. He is a three-time member of the Pressman All-America Team.

Outside of chess, Asuka loves all sports, basketball in particular. He plays two musical instruments, violin and trombone. He also enjoys working with computers. Asuka is a seventh grader at the White Plains, New York Middle School and he resides with his parents, Sunil and Carolyn Weeramantry, and his chessplayer brother, Hikaru.

1998 marks the nineteenth annual Aspis Prize. It is awarded each year to the highest rated American chessplayer under the age of 13 as of the previous December 31.

The prize is made possible by the generous support of Dr. Samuel L. Aspis of Cleveland, Ohio, and is presented in memory of his wife, Laura. Asuka will receive the Aspis trophy and \$1500.

## Judit Polgar

is one of the top 15 players in the world and the highest rated woman. She will give a Simultaneous Exhibition originally scheduled for her sister, Women's World Champion Zsuzsa Polgar.



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