

FURNESS ON CHESS

This is the fourth part of the late Richard Furness's reminiscences of his life in chess. Games annotations are by John Saunders.

MONARCH ASSURANCE

I was the Chief Arbiter at the Monarch Assurance International at the little village of Port Erin in the Isle of Man from 1993 until 2003. During all those years I can only recall one appeal against an arbiter's decision. This occurred after I had made a ruling over a draw claim during the player's last two minutes in a quickplay finish. At that time, an appeal was allowed by FIDE. The Appeal Committee upheld my decision but I would not have been upset if they had over-ruled it. If I could change one FIDE rule it would be to bring back the right of appeal in this situation. Both players are probably far stronger players than the arbiter and yet he has to make an almost instant judgement as to whether progress is being made or whether the other player is holding the position.

Generally when I foresee such a claim might be imminent, I try to seek the advice of a strong grandmaster whom I know and trust – that is virtually all the British grandmasters. In "The British" at Torquay in 2002 there was a draw claim in a game between two titled Indian players. I required them to play on and discreetly consulted an IM and a grandmaster who both believed the other player was making progress and would win. When the flag fell I awarded the game to the loser that I had taken advice from two titled players. The decision was accepted.

The most serious incident I had to deal with in the Isle of Man occurred a few years ago and involved a Russian grandmaster. Well into the event, I learned he had the habit of speaking to his opponents whilst their clock was running. He would offer a draw whilst they had been thinking for some

time or he would ask to borrow their score-sheet. No one had complained.

I monitored his next game more closely and saw him speak to his opponent who immediately looked at me and complained. I stopped the clock and asked both players to come with me to where we could speak without distracting others. The offender wanted to wait till the end of the game. I said I had to speak to him immediately. The Russian only seemed to understand English when it suited him and I do not speak Russian, but fortunately I spotted a grandmaster whom I trusted and who spoke both languages. I explained how the Russian had breached the rule frequently during the tournament and that if he did so again I would award the game to the opponent.

My translator was aware of the offences and did a good job. The message got through. The game was resumed and there were no more transgressions.

Monarch Assurance Isle of Man 1993

□ **D George Ellison**

■ **Varugeese Koshy**

Sicilian Sveshnikov B33

**1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6
5 ♘c3 e5 6 ♘db5 d6 7 ♙g5 a6 8 ♘a3 b5
9 ♙xf6 gxf6 10 ♘d5 f5 11 ♙xb5!?**

The English veteran decides to take his IM opponent down a very tricky line.

11...axb5 12 ♘xb5 ♙a4

If Black doesn't want his king to be chased into the open, then 12...♙a7!? is a playable sacrificial option here.

13 ♘bc7+ ♘d7 14 0-0 ♙xe4

One idea, to stop White's queen getting up close to the black king is to play 14...♙h4 but it is still very dangerous for Black. For example, 15 c4 ♙xc4 16 ♘b5 ♘d8 17 ♘b6 ♙b4 18 ♘xd6!

♖d4 19 ♗xf7+ ♕e7 20 ♗xc8+ ♕xf7 21 ♖b3+ and White had a big attack in Tischbierek-Espig, East German Championship 1979.

15 ♖h5

Now Black cannot prevent the queen reaching f7. However, it has all been played before and Black has known ways of defending.

15...♗e7 16 ♖xf7 ♕c6 17 c4 ♖d7 18 ♖fc1!?

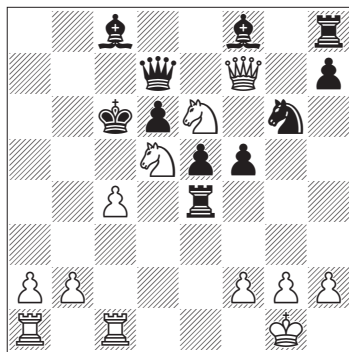
Finally diverging from theory. 18 ♗a8 ♖e6!? 19 ♖e8+ ♖d7 20 ♗xe7+ ♕xe7 21 ♖xh8 ♕b7 was Ganguly-Prasad Hyderabad 2000, which Black won after a complex struggle.

18...♗g6

This attempt to exchange queens under favourable circumstances meets with a surprising reply. 18...♗xd5 19 cxd5+ ♕b7 20 ♖h5 is probably a stronger option for Black, though it is not yet clear if either side has an advantage.

19 ♗e6!

Undoubtedly White's best move. Its shock value provokes Black to blunder.



19...♗h4??

Of course not 19...♖xe6?? 20 ♖c7 mate. Black should keep calm and play 19...♖xf7 20 ♗d8+ ♕d7 21 ♗xf7 when, after 21...♖g8 22 ♗g5 ♕c6 23 ♗xe4 fxe4 or 21...♕g7 22 ♗xh8 ♕xh8 23 ♗b6+ ♕d8 24 ♗xc8 ♕xc8, it is still hard to say which side stands better.

20 ♖f6!

Even better is 20 ♗d8+!! ♖xd8 21 ♖a7 and Black has to give up his queen for nothing to escape the mating net.

20...♖g8?

If now 20...♖xe6 21 ♖d8 and once again Black's king is in a mating net. 20...♖e8 prolongs the game, but after 21 ♗d8+ ♕d7 22 ♖xh8 ♕xd8 23 ♖xh7 White should win.

21 ♗d8+ 1-0

21...♕c5 22 ♖b4+ ♕d4 23 ♖d1+ ♕xc4 24 ♗b6+ wins the queen. A splendid effort by Ellison, who has regularly managed parties of English juniors at the Isle of Man event.

A more light-hearted incident happened at the 1994 Monarch tournament at The Cherry Orchard Hotel. For most Sundays of the year the room where the tournament was played was converted into a Carvery with room for 150 diners. On the last day – a Sunday – play always began at 10.30 to allow time for a lavish buffet and prize-giving in the evening.

A couple of hours into the round I noticed a well-dressed lady and gentleman enter the room and walk its full length, passing many tables at which the players were seated. Clocks ticked and there was the inevitable tension which is associated with a tournament hall.

Reaching the far end they paused for a loud whispered conversation. As I approached them, the lady saw me and my badge. Presumably thinking I was the Head Waiter, the lady told me they had booked a table for lunch. I tried to explain that the Carvery was in a different room that day but she continued to look around for a vacant table, apparently oblivious to the fact that John Nunn, Bogdan Lalic, Matthew Sadler, Miron Sher and about a hundred other players were not actually eating a meal. "But we have booked", she kept insisting.

Eventually I succeeded in ushering them out of the playing room and pointed them in the right direction.

Part Five of the late Richard Furness's chess reminiscences will appear in the September issue.