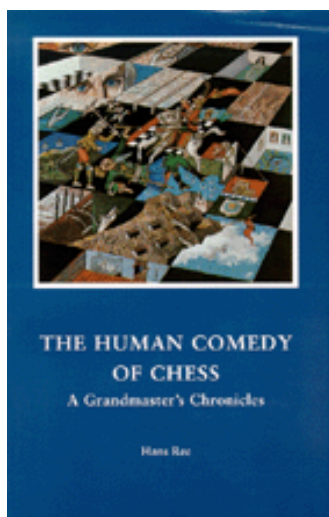




## C O L U M N I S T S

*Dutch Treat*

Hans Ree

*The Human Comedy  
of Chess*

by Hans Ree

## Move, don't freeze!

Officially the tournament that was held in Amsterdam in August was called “Rising Stars versus Experience.” Some jokey variations on this name, playing on the supposed frailty of old age, were easily found and one writer even recommended the youngsters to wear earplugs to silence the sound of creaking bones of the older players. This was all in the spirit of good fun, but what really bothered me was that the Dutch press agency called it “Talent against Routine.” Of course the oldies were thought to represent routine, the youngsters talent.

Can it really be said that the top players of twenty years ago have lost their talent? I'd rather say that they lost their routine, for routine is something that has to be kept up. With the exception of Alexander Beliavsky, the members of the Experience team are not very active anymore as tournament players and so what used to be an easy routine now becomes difficult. The brain has to be summoned to perform tasks that used to be handled efficiently by the spine.

Of course not only routine is lost, but also exact knowledge of modern opening theory and the ability to calculate quickly, deeply and accurately, even in the fifth or sixth hour of play. In the beginning the Experience team did alright, reaching a 7½-7½ score after three rounds, but finally they were convincingly beaten by 28-22.

It had been quite some time since I had last seen some of them, but they hadn't changed much, I thought. Beliavsky was still showing that civilised hint of a smile, just like 34 years ago when he had wiped me off the board in 27 moves in Sukhumi. Ljubomir Ljubojevic still has his clownish energy and John Nunn and Artur Jussupow haven't much changed either since I last saw them.

Only Ulf Andersson had unexpectedly grown a two-months-old beard that made him look like a sea captain in a cartoon. He himself said that he had become worried when he looked in the mirror and saw a dishevelled Saddam Hussein at the moment of his arrest. This seems exaggerated, as he still travels a lot and hasn't been stopped at a border yet.

Andersson tried to play super-solid. As John Nunn once put it in one of his books: “Ulf characteristically went straight for my little toe.” That's how he played as White in this tournament, making five draws of which four were completely uneventful, but one turned into a rook ending which had Ulf nibbling at Daniel Stellwagen's little toe – and getting serious winning chances – until move 88.

As Black he defended all five of his games with the simple and unpretentious system 1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 2. Nc3 dxe4 4. Nxe4 Nd7, losing twice and making three draws.

A few years ago he had shown me some beautiful and razor-sharp correspondence games from an elite tournament he had won. The difference in style compared with his quiet OTB games was striking.

Andersson explained that he had been able to analyse these correspondence games very deeply. He had things under control, so he could play sharply.

About a week ago the International Correspondence Chess Federation published its latest ratings. Number one is Joop van Oosterom, sponsor of this Rising Stars vs. Experience tournament and of many other chess events. Second on the list is Andersson.

Actually it is generally assumed that as a correspondence player 'Van Oosterom' is a collective pseudonym of a group of grandmasters playing under his name, so as an individual player Andersson may actually be the highest rated. He can analyse wild positions as no other, but over the board he tries to avoid them.

He told me that his Swedish compatriots had not wanted him on the Olympic team because of his super-solid style. Rather insolent towards the greatest Swedish chessplayer in history, I would say. "I may be too cautious, but on the other hand I am not losing games like an idiot within 20 moves, like you," Ulf had said to one of the Swedish players.

No, he doesn't lose often and even when he does he tends to fight for every square inch of his territory. But look what happened to him in the fifth round of the Amsterdam tournament against Magnus Carlsen. I got the impression that the fear of losing had paralysed Andersson. In the final position he had two reasonable moves, but – as if frozen behind his board – he let his time almost run out and then resigned. What had come over him? I would have liked to ask, but he had disappeared before I could.

### ***Magnus Carlsen • Ulf Andersson***

**1. e2•e4 e7•e6 2. d2•d4 d7•d5 3. Nb1•c3 d5xe4 4. Nc3xe4 Nb8•d7** This position was defended by Andersson five times in this tournament.

**5. Ng1•f3 Ng8•f6 6. Bc1•g5 Bf8•e7 7. Ne4xf6+ Nd7xf6 8. Bf1•d3 c7•c5 9. d4xc5 Qd8•a5+ 10. c2•c3 Qa5xc5 11. 0•0 Bc8•d7 12. Rf1•e1** As Carlsen admitted during his press conference, his last move was a tactical oversight.

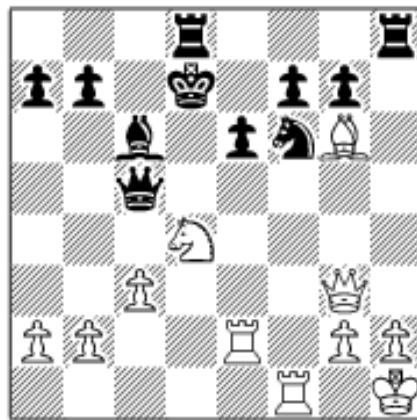
**12...Nf6•g4**



**13. Bg5xe7** White could keep material equality by 13. Qd2 or 13. Be3, but that would have been no way to play for a win. True to his style Carlsen prefers to play a lively position with a pawn less.

**13...Qc5xf2+ 14. Kg1•h1 Ke8xe7 15. Re1•e2 Qf2•c5 16. Qd1•e1 Ra8•d8 17. Qe1•h4+ Ng4•f6 18. Nf3•d4** It may seem as if everything had been planned by White, because black has serious difficulties with his king in the middle.

**18...Bd7•c6 19. Ra1•f1 Rh8•g8 20. Qh4•g3 Ke7•d7 21. Bd3xh7 Rg8•h8 22. Bh7•g6**

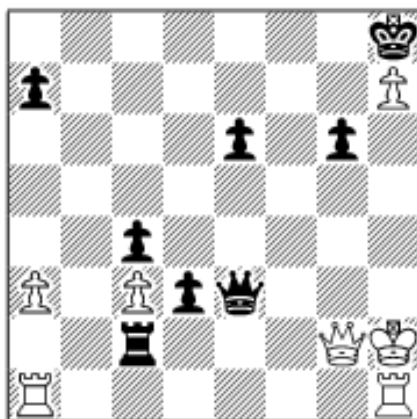


An interesting position. Andersson thought for a long time and then resigned, a decision that nobody understood. Carlsen said that after 22...fxg6 23. Nxe6 Qb6 24. Nxd8 Rxd8 25. Qxg6 Kc8 26. Qxg7 White would have been clearly better, but as all black pieces were active, it would still have been a difficult struggle.

This is certainly true and apart from that, in the diagram position Black has another move, 22...Rdf8. Then if White tries to strike with 23.

Bxf7 Rxf7 24. Nxe6, he has only a draw after 24...Qb6 25. Ng5 Rff8 26. Ne6 Rf7. Of course White is not forced to play 23. Bxf7, but if he plays differently it is not clear if he has an advantage at all.

Resigning in a position which was about equal is bad, but in the first round Stellwagen of the Rising Stars team, had made the 'ultimate mistake,' resigning in a winning position.



*Stellwagen - Jussupow*, after White's 37th move.

Black is winning and should have just taken White's queen with 37...Rxg2+. After that he has to be careful to prevent White playing Ra1-b1-b8+, but this is easily done. However Jussupow played 37...Kh8xh7?? thinking that the win would be even easier after removing White's h-pawn. Stellwagen thought so too and resigned.

It didn't take long before people found that White could have saved his queen, remaining a rook up, by 38. Rae1. Though the win is far from trivial, as Black has

a few pawns for the rook and White's king is not safe, objectively speaking White resigned in a winning position.

"I have done the worst thing a chessplayer can do in the first round, so from here it can only get better," said Stellwagen.

As I wrote earlier, the youngsters finally won convincingly, scoring 28-22. The best individual players were Magnus Carlsen and Alexander Beliavsky, who both scored 6½ out of 10. As Beliavsky had to meet the stronger team, his result was the best of all. I do not think there was a beauty prize, but had there been one, it would probably have been won by John Nunn.



*Nunn - Smeets*, 4th round after Black's 25th move

**26. Ne4-f6+ gxf6 27. Qxh6 f5 28. Nf3-h4 Bd7-b5 29. Nh4xf5 Ra8-d8 30. Rc4-g4 c5-c4 31. Bb3-c2 Rd8-d5 32. Rg4-h4** A nice finish. White is threatening 33. Qh7+ Kf8 34. Qh8+ and mate and after 32...Nxh4 White would give mate starting with 33. Ne7+. So Black resigned.

For more information about this event, visit the official tournament website (<http://nhchess.quinsy.net>).

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