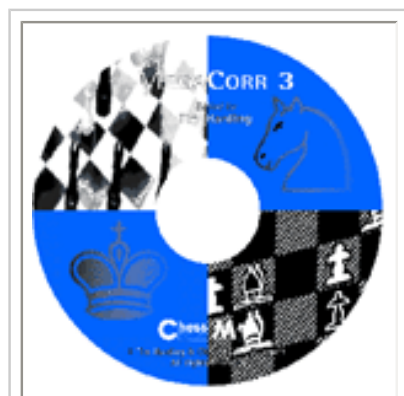




## C O L U M N I S T S

*The Kibitzer*

Tim Harding



Order

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## Correspondence Chess at a Crossroads

A new Correspondence Chess World Champion has just been crowned and this is a good moment to look at the state of this form of the game. Turkish-born Tunc Hamarat, an Austrian citizen, was declared winner of the 16th CC World Championship in mid-January; the championship final tournament began in 1999. He is actually the 15th player to hold this title because Tõnu Õim of Estonia won it twice, a feat that Hamarat thinks he will attempt to emulate after a break from play. At the end of this column you will find one of Hamarat's games.

This is also an important year for correspondence chess because ICCF has a new president, Josef Mrkvicka of the Czech Republic, and several new senior officers were elected towards the end of last year. Their main task for 2004 is to launch its chess server, which is being programmed right now, and to review all the other activities of this organisation in the light of what is required in the 21st century. ICCF's executive board (elected officers) and management committee (appointees with specific jobs) will report to national delegates at the next ICCF Congress that starts October 31 in Mumbai, India. Some far-reaching decisions are likely to be reached there; or at least put forward for discussion and decision the following year.

ICCF is the International Correspondence Chess Federation, recognised by FIDE and national bodies as the world governing body for correspondence chess. It awards titles, administers the rating list, world championship cycle and many important tournaments — either directly or through the national federations which are its constituent members. In its present form, ICCF was established in 1951 but it is the direct heir of the ICCA (1946-51) which ran the first global CC Olympiad and began the first CC World Championship, and before that the Europe-wide Internationaler Fernschachbund (IFSB, which itself had a short-lived precursor, ICSB).

The IFSB was the first body to award CC master titles (no CC-grandmasters then); this was ahead of FIDE, which did not establish the International Master title until 1951. The first holders of the title included several famous OTB masters. IFSB also ran and the first Europe-wide "olympiad" (team tournament) from 1935-39, although it was missing some major countries like Britain and the USSR. Save for the outbreak of war, IFSB would then

have organized the first CC world championship with the blessing of Alekhine, Euwe and FIDE.

Thus, interrupted only by World War II, formal organized international correspondence chess (by the players, for the players) goes back to 1928, but there was more than a century of CC competition prior to that, without any coordinating body. Before 1928, most CC was being played under the auspices of newspapers and periodicals or the national CC clubs that were founded before World War I in Britain, Canada, the USA and some other countries. Going further back, tournaments between individuals became popular in the 1880s; before that most of the CC played was in the form of inter-club or inter-city matches or private matches.

IFSB began as a club for individuals, with some provision for national membership introduced later. When Erik Larsson of Sweden and a few colleagues restarted international CC in 1945-46, and with affordable worldwide airmail about to become a reality, their mission statement was make CC a global game and, with a few hitches, this was accomplished in a remarkably short space of time.

### **Correspondence Chess and “Telechess”**

What exactly is correspondence chess? The definition issue is addressed in ICCF’s Statutes, but in a way that was not satisfactory then and is quite out of date now. Especially in view of the development of the Internet, I think this must be addressed in any redrafting of those Statutes.

The statutes of the ICCF (adopted in 1994) state that:

‘Correspondence chess is defined as a game of chess in which the players do not sit opposite each other at the chess board to make their moves. Correspondence chess normally is any game of chess in which the moves are mutually delivered by post or, in a wider sense, where the moves are made by any other form of transmission.’

Already in my 1996 book *Winning At Correspondence Chess*, I disagreed with the above paragraph. I wrote then:

‘This is certainly not the best possible definition although I can see how they arrived at it; the word "normally" seems to be there just to gloss over some obvious objections. In my opinion, CC involves not only mileage separating the players physically but also a duration of play longer than a day or two. The ICCF definition, taken literally as definitions must be, claims as CC certain types of chess contest that are not in any true sense by correspondence, e.g. the "blindfold" games at the

Melody Amber GM tournament in Monaco, where computers were used to transmit moves between players who sat facing their consoles rather than each other, or even consultation games, where a runner carries moves back and forth between two rooms. I do not think the ICCF has any serious designs on governing such forms of chess; their inclusion in its definition is accidental and due to bad drafting.'

Many years ago FIDE and ICCF made an agreement about "telechess" and organised some Telechess Olympiads but these were essentially regular chess matches with distant opponents, the same as had been played between clubs since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. I don't think ICCF should have become involved in this type of chess at all, but probably did so for fear of losing ground in some way.

However my own suggested replacement definition was no better, because it did not take proper account of the modern era of single-session games played at a distance between opponents on internet servers. These are primarily games with very fast time-limits but also match games at normal time limits with the games finishing the same day, or perhaps with one adjournment, fall into the province of FIDE not ICCF in my opinion.

I think the term "telechess" is outmoded and ambiguous and should be avoided in future. I don't think any acceptable definition of correspondence chess for the 21<sup>st</sup> century should include single-session internet play, any more than it should include single-session games with moves transmitted by telephone, fax or other telegraphic means.

Any satisfactory definition has to include the distance element but not in such a way that it includes the Internet Chess Club etc., so some reference to the duration of a game may be the way. Finding an ideal wording is difficult. Somebody suggested defining CC as chess not played in real time, but apart from the problem of defining that phrase "in real time" itself, I don't like a negative definition. The definition of correspondence chess should state what it is, rather than what it is not.

Traditionally correspondence chess players are allowed to consult printed literature, and that has always been part of its appeal. Players can combine research and study of openings with actual play, and to some extent they can do this in the endgames also. Moreover, players do not have to do all their calculations in their head, but can move the pieces around and make notes.

These factors mean that the best correspondence games are of an extraordinarily high quality, and even games played by strong club players can be very exciting, because with the benefit of detailed analysis over a period of days deep combinations can be attempted which would be

impractical in normal “over-the-board” (OTB) competition.

However, there has always been a grey area concerning the extent to which consultation with computers and other human beings is allowed, with different CC organizations taking a different view of these matters.

Another proposal I have heard is that the definition should include some reference to “time being counted in days not hours, minutes and seconds” but I am opposed to that too. Virtually all correspondence chess servers operate an hour-based time-countdown system, like that used by the “real-time” servers of the Internet Chess Club but of course with much greater time allowances. There are good reasons for doing it this way and players are used to it.

The idea of using a day-based system for a chess server reminds me of how, when railways were introduced in Britain the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, an unfortunate gentleman of some importance did not realise how fast they could travel; he was knocked down by a train and killed. As a result, there were attempts to introduce a law that trains must be preceded by a man walking with a red flag to warn passers-by of the danger. There are not many men employed to do that job nowadays.

### **Correspondence Chess is Booming**

Reports of the imminent demise of correspondence chess have been with us for at least a decade now. Danish GM Curt Hansen said it in ‘New In Chess’ in 1992; Nigel Short made a similar comment last year in the ‘Sunday Telegraph’ of London in an otherwise favourable review of one of my books. Lesser players sometimes follow their lead and make similar statements.

There are probably now more people playing some form of correspondence chess (CC) than ever in the past — by post, by email and on web servers. There may even be some people still playing by fax.

ICCF (to be found at <http://www.iccf.com>) has 19,608 active players in its rating database, i.e. players still alive who have either had a result in the last five years or just started their first new event.

IECG (International E-mail Chess Group) is the largest rival to ICCF. They don’t say how many members they have but their last complete database, games completed up to the end of December 2002, showed 5,921 players and they have probably recruited a few more than died or dropped out in the meantime. This means they had almost 6,000 people who signed up at one time or another, though how many are active?

Their website <http://www.iecg.org/> claims 837 new members during 2003 and they have probably recruited some more this year reasonable estimate is

that they have reached about 7,000 “members”, i.e. players who at some time since the start of 1994 have played an IECG game, of whom maybe half have played an IECG event in the last three years or are actually playing with IECG now. Of course many of these, but not all, are also in ICCF’s 19,000+ membership.

The next largest organisation is IECC International E-mail Chess Club (<http://www.iecc-chess.org/>) website claims over 4,000 members worldwide. Again there is some considerable overlap with ICCF probably, and there are also likely to be several hundred people who play in both IECC and IECG. These organizations don’t have membership fees so it costs nothing to stay on the books even if you played only a handful of games years ago. This makes estimating accurate numbers difficult.

On top of that there are various other smaller clubs, whose membership runs into hundreds and who again may also play some CC with ICCF, IECG etc.

Many ICCF-affiliated national organisations also have on their books players who don’t compete internationally so may not appear in the ICCF ratings database. In the case of a few of the larger countries (Germany, USA and Russia) these numbers of extra correspondence players may be substantial. Until last year, Germany paid ICCF annual dues based on a paid membership of over 5,000, and this got them an extra vote in Congress. Their membership has now declined below 5,000 but is probably still above 4,000 but Germany only has 1,790 active players in ICCF’s Eloquary database.

This means that about half the German players who are keen enough to pay to join their national body are not playing either internationally or in the higher-level internal events that ICCF includes in its rating system, although that system now includes all ICCF international events except the special-openings “thematics”. So in Germany there are at least 2,000 CC players who are happy to be involved at a low level.

Russia has only 502 active players in Eloquary and USA only has 596 but those are large countries with a lot of internal competition not rated by ICCF. There are possibly between 10,000 and 25,000 active CC players in those countries, including some masters and quite a lot of strong players who are potential recruits for ICCF when it gets its server running.

Up to ten years ago, the terms “postal chess” and “correspondence chess” were virtually synonymous. From about 1998-2002 was the heyday of email CC and that form of the game has a vigorous near future, but maybe no distant future. Playing on servers is just so much easier — although also it becomes rather impersonal.

Problems with email chess is partly tied up with the need to use a client

program to help you maintain your games and do all the necessary “bookkeeping” which, in the postal chess era, was done in hard copy notebooks. However there is also the issue of the vast amounts of “spam” (unsolicited commercial emails, much of it pornographic), which can soon start to flood into anyone unwise enough to use his main email address for correspondence chess.

Then there is the computer virus problem, which seems no nearer a solution than ever.

One Irish correspondence chess player wrote me the other day that, for these reasons that essentially have nothing to do with chess at all, he is giving up email chess and going back to postal. The problem with that solution is that there are fewer and fewer opponents available, especially at higher levels, the cost of postage is becoming exorbitant and the efficiency of post offices (at least the Irish one) is decreasing with every price increase and we had three of them in the past 12 months.

The big growth area is the server game, which you can play with your web browser without having to worry about spam and, to a lesser extent, viruses. In this area, it is hardest to estimate accurately the number of players in this category because most casual servers permit “handles” (usernames). Big established sites such as [playchess.de](http://playchess.de), [gameknot.com](http://gameknot.com), [chessfriend.com](http://chessfriend.com) and [www.chessworld.net](http://www.chessworld.net) [kingchess.de](http://kingchess.de), [remoteschach.de](http://remoteschach.de) — as well as smaller ones like Stan’s Net-Chess ([www.stansco.com/netchess/index.html](http://www.stansco.com/netchess/index.html)) — are catering for tens of thousands of players between them. The same person may play under several names on one server, or on several different servers using either the same or different names. So you cannot just aggregate the claimed membership of the various servers to get anything like an accurate count.

It is also very hard to estimate the real playing strength or chess knowledge (not the same thing) of these anonymous players. There are certainly some very strong players, or average players using computers, active on the servers and a lot of ordinary club players who like a game without going out in the rain. Others are undoubtedly children or adult beginners or casual players who are not especially committed to chess but try many games.

Some are extremely weak players, with a hazy idea of the rules, to judge from email enquiries I occasionally receive, such as “Can I answer a check from my opponent by checking his king instead?” The rules about pawn promotions and en passant can cause problems to Net newbies too.

No doubt this is happening because it is now possible to try a new game on the Net without every studying a book about it or having some basic tuition from a parent or experienced player. It has even happened to me; about two years ago I entered a Chinese Chess (xianqi or hsiang ch’i) tournament on the

server [www.itsyourturn.com](http://www.itsyourturn.com) but I didn't realise that the move of the knight is defined slightly differently in that ancient game.

Because the servers handle all the “bookkeeping” and do not allow illegal moves, they are ideal starting points in correspondence chess for keen players who just want to get on with the game with minimal fuss. Many of these are undoubtedly regular or former over-the-board (OTB) club/ tournament players who either did not play correspondence chess before, or gave it up because of the hassle with postcards or emails.

The challenge for the major correspondence chess organizations, and particularly for ICCF, is to try to recruit such players for “serious” CC. By serious CC, I mean events played under your own name, with proper supervision, and with the ultimate goal of international ratings and titles and the honour of representing your country in a correspondence olympiad or similar prestige event.

### **The Issues for ICCF Today**

An organization or company hoping to recruit new members, or “customers”, has to make its advantages as attractive as possible, and ICCF has many advantages. However, it must also think about reducing or eliminating negative factors that could dissuade people who otherwise would be attracted to what it has to offer.

The main “barriers to entry” that they faced in the late 1940s were the notation issue and the payments issue, plus some political problems.

The notation issue arose because of the need to communicate moves unambiguously between countries used to different systems. The English-speaking world mostly used one kind of descriptive notation and the Hispanic world had another. The rest of the world used algebraic notation but with different letters for the pieces: K stands for king in French, English and German but a knight in Russian; C is a knight in French but a bishop in Russian etc. The IFSB had used German algebraic but this didn't suit everybody and just after World War II a German system was unacceptable for worldwide use.

Developed from suggestions that had been made back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century for telegraphic chess codes, Erik Larsson took the opportunity of the fresh start after World War II to introduce what is now known as ICCF numeric notation (see the graphic for the grid). Each square has a two-digit number and every move, except promotions, can be represented in just four digits, the “from” square followed by the “to” square. Promotions require a fifth number to indicate the piece type, usually 1 for queen.

Thus the move 1 N-KB3 (English descriptive), 1 Nf3 (English algebraic), 1

C3AR (Spanish descriptive), 1 Sf3 (German algebraic) etc. were all be replaced by 1 7163, which all international postal players soon learned to understand.

However the internet has now given just about everyone in the chess world some basic understanding of English and most international correspondence chess clubs use English algebraic, in combination with the PGN format (explained last year in Kibitzer 84), but for ICCF the numeric notation is still the “default”. Players can agree at the start of a game to use a different notation, but if they do not then numeric must be used.

There is definitely a case to be made that if ICCF wants to attract the maximum number of players, it should scrap numeric for email. The main “catchment area” of potential recruits are the players in IECC and IECG who do not want to learn numeric notation. Some have tried and lost games through clerical errors as a result; and now won’t play ICCF until this barrier is removed.

So what was once part of the solution; has become part of the problem. I think that numeric notation should be kept for postal chess, which will anyway die out in the next few years, but algebraic notation, with the English piece letters as the default, should be used for email. Moreover, ICCF compounds its problem by specifying a template format for sending all moves with full date and time information right back to move 1. This is not compulsory for all games but many tournament directors insist upon it, so this is a further barrier to entry.

Some email CC software is able to write the outgoing message for you in algebraic or numeric notation, in ICCF template format or PGN format, but not everyone uses such software. Also you still have to interpret the incoming messages.

The payment issue that faced ICCA/ICCF in the early years after World War II was that entry fees and membership fees, all fairly small amounts, had to be collected to pay for the functioning of the organisation. The cost of sending the money could far exceed the value of the transfer in some cases. Therefore a national membership structure was decided upon, which worked well for a long time but now there are problems with it. So once more the old solution has become the new problem.

With national federations collecting entry fees before submitting the entry to ICCF, but only paying the international body annually, a tournament for which the fee is collected can be over before ICCF gets paid, creating cash-flow problems. Also credit cards, the internet payment systems like PayPal and Moneybookers, and cheap inter-bank transfers (just 50 cents now for a transfer in the Eurozone) mean that all the old practical objections to personal



membership of ICCF no longer make sense. If an Irish player wants to enter a French or German OTB open, he pays his fee direct to the organiser not through the Irish Chess Union and many players don't understand why they cannot do this in correspondence chess also.

The ICCF leadership is of course aware of these issues, but it is also aware that its structure as a federation of national organisations has big advantages too, though they may be less obvious to the person who just wants to play chess with the minimum of hassle. They also have to deal with the question that many of the players they would like to attract to ICCF competitions are accustomed to getting their tournaments free of charge, with IECG or IECC etc. Entry fees were not a big issue in the era of postal chess because the cost of the stamps far exceeded the entry fees, but an IECG player may wonder whether paying a fee is worthwhile.

So it will be very interesting to see what proposals come from the new ICCF chiefs later this year.

Of course the free clubs like IECG must have their problems too. They have no direct revenue but they still have expenses, especially the website, and have to rely on sponsorship of which there is a limited amount in correspondence chess. The more the free clubs grow, and with it the workload of the volunteer officials, the harder it will be for them to survive and keep the loyalty of members.

For example, up to about two years ago the IECG games database was very well maintained, with monthly updates by a keen and efficient French organiser, Laurent Tinture. Nowadays, IECG database updates are rare indeed on their website and to get recent IECG games you have to buy ChessBase Magazine. ICCF also sells its games to CBM but releases them free later on.

I am also unsympathetic to IECG because it introduced its own titles system, which it has now reorganised to make them sound more like ICCF's titles. Do not be fooled: if you want to be recognised by FIDE and the great majority of the world's players as a true correspondence chess master, you have to earn the ICCF titles and forget about IECG's spurious copies. Some people are happy to be a big fish in a small pond but effort put into becoming an "IECG Email Master" will not bring you one step nearer challenging Tunc Hamarat for the correspondence chess world championship.

The final set of problems ICCF faced in the old days were political: during the Cold War, all kinds of compromises were necessary to keep everyone happy, especially the powerful Soviet chess federation. ICCF's motto "Amici Sumus" (Latin for "we are friends") papered over many a crack but in recent years has often been used as an excuse for avoiding making unpopular

decisions. Promoting international friendship is still a very important part of the reason for playing correspondence chess, but I think that a little less bending the rules should be needed now.

These are some of the reasons why correspondence chess is at a crossroads. Maybe the answers to the following (inter-related) questions will be clarified in the next few years.

- Can the current level of correspondence chess activity on the internet be maintained or even increased?
- Can a significant number of the casual players on servers be “converted” to serious players participating in ICCF competitions?
- Can correspondence chess support itself financially in the new era?
- Can the organising bodies, not just ICCF, reform themselves to meet the challenges?
- Will the increase in computing power finally kill off the game?

The last is really a whole topic in itself and I am not going to discuss it this month; players are extremely divided about it but the long-predicted death of CC has clearly not yet happened.

### **Two Games**

I conclude with two games by correspondence chess world champions. The first was won recently by the 13<sup>th</sup> CC World Champion, and winner of ICCF’s tournament of the world champions, playing here on a web server. The second game was played by the new world champion.

***Mikhail Umansky (Russia) – Dr. Klaus D. Müller (Germany)***

**Modern Benoni (A63)**

**Chessfriend.com Championship 2003**

**1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 g3 c5 4 d5 exd5 5 cxd5 d6 6 Nc3 g6 7 Bg2 Bg7 8 Nf3 0–0 9 0–0 a6 10 a4 Nbd7 11 Bf4 Qc7 12 e4**

12 h3 is often played but this game appears to show that there is no need to prevent ...Ng4.

**12...Ng4**

John Watson, in his ‘Gambit Guide to the Modern Benoni’ mentions 12...Re8 13 Qc2 Rb8 (13...Ng4) 14 a5 Nh5 15 Be3 b5 16 axb6 Nxb6 17 h3

(Polugaevsky-Vaisser, Sochi 1981) and now suggests 17...f5!?

**13 Nd2 Nge5 14 Qe2 f5?! 15 exf5 Rxf5 16 Bh3 Rf8 17 Be6+ Kh8 18 Nce4**



**18...b6?!**

Black rejects the standard queenside counterplay by ...Rb8 and ...b5; he tries to develop his B instead, but it doesn't work.

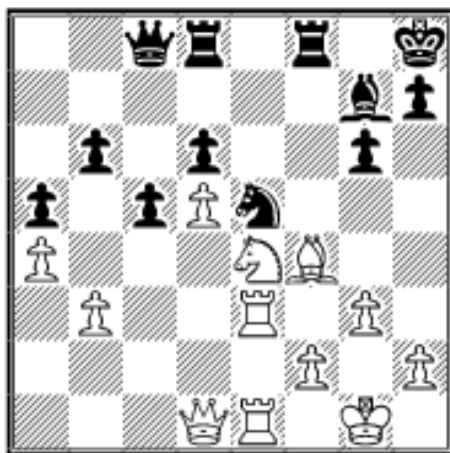
**19 Rfe1 Re8 20 Ra3 a5 21 Re3 Ba6 22 Qd1 Rad8 23 b3 Rf8 24 Nf3 Nxf3+ 25 Rxf3 Ne5 26 Rfe3**

Black's plan has been a total failure; his lynchpin N is now undermined.

**26...Bc8**

26...Nf7 27 Bxf7 Qxf7 28 Ng5 and Ne6 wins material.

**27 Bxc8 Qxc8**



**28 Nxd6!**

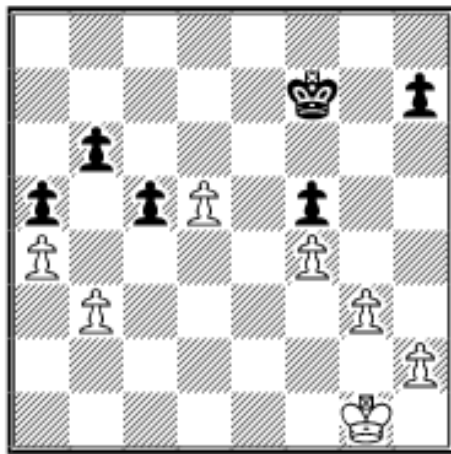
Wins a pawn and simplifies further.

**28...Rxd6 29 Bxe5 Bxe5 30 Rxe5 Kg8 31 Re6**

White heads inexorably towards a won endgame. **31...Rfd8 32 Rxd6 Rxd6 33 Re7 Qf5 34 Qa1 Rf6 35 f4 Rf7 36 Re8+ Rf8 37 Qe5 Rxe8**

37...Qxe5 38 Rxf8+.

**38 Qxe8+ Kg7 39 Qe5+ Kf7 40 Qxf5+ gxf5**



A casual glance might lead you to suppose that White cannot defend his passed pawn but Umansky has it all worked out.

**41 Kf2 Ke7 42 Ke3 Kd6 43 g4!!**

The point of it all, Black had a very long think here.

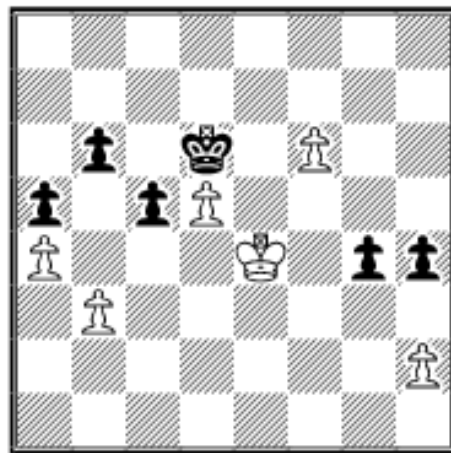
**43...fxg4**

43...Kxd5 44 g5 Ke6 (44...c4 45 bxc4+ Kxc4 46 h4 Kb3 (46...Kd5 47 h5 Ke6 48 Kd4) 47 h5 Kxa4 48 g6) 45 h4 Kf7 (45...b5 46 axb5 c4 47 bxc4 a4 48 Kd4 a3 49 Kc3; 45...h5 46 Kd3 Kd5 47 g6 Ke6 48 Kc4) 46 h5 followed by K-d3-c4 etc.

**44 Ke4 h5 45 f5**

Resignation would be in order here or next move.

**45...h4 46 f6 1-0**



After 46 f6 the white pawns protect each other, but cannot advance unaided, so White threatens Kf4. Black is helpless: 46...b5 (or 46...g3 47 hxg3 h3 48 Kf3) 47 axb5 c4 48 bxc4 a4 49 b6 and White will queen with check: 49...a3 50 b7 Kc7 51 f7 a2 52 b8Q+ Kxb8 53 f8Q+.

This was a performance of typically ruthless efficiency by Umansky.

The next game was Hamarat's first win in the world championship and he originally annotated it for my magazine 'Chess Mail.'

**Spyros Kofidis (Greece) – Tunc Hamarat (Austria)**  
**Sicilian Sveshnikov (B33)**  
**16<sup>th</sup> CC World Championship Final, 1999-2000**

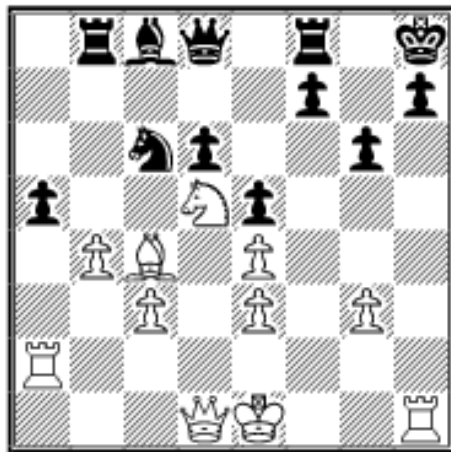
**1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Ndb5 d6 7 Bf4 e5 8 Bg5 a6 9 Na3 b5 10 Nd5 Be7 11 Bxf6 Bxf6 12 c3 Bg5 13 Nc2 0-0 14 a4 bxa4 15 Rxa4 a5 16 Bc4 Rb8 17 Ra2 Kh8 18 Nce3 g6 19 h4 Bxh4 20 g3**

**Bg5 21 b4!?**

21 f4 is more usual. Hamarat commented: “White plans a dangerous attack. For this plan he weakens his pawn position.”

I was only able to find one other of White’s 21<sup>st</sup> move in the ChessBase MegaBase. D.Lekic-D.Drasko, Serbia team ch, Jahorina 2000, went 21...f5 22 f4 exf4 23 Rah2 Rb7 24 gxf4 fxe4 25 fxg5 and a draw was agreed!. However, it looks to me that the team captains made a package deal and the correct result should be 1–0, e.g. 25...Qxg5 (25...Ne5 26 Qd4) 26 Rg2 and it’s hard to see what Black has for the sacrificed piece.

Hamarat finds a much better reply for Black.

**21...Bxe3! 22 fxe3****22...Kg7!**

Black has to play very carefully as the following variation from Hamarat shows: 22...f5? 23 b5! Na7 24 Rah2 Rb7 25 b6 Qg5 26 Qf3 Nc6 27 Nc7+-.

**23 Rah2**

After 23 b5 Ne7 24 Nxe7 Qxe7 25 Rxa5 he intended 25...Bb7 with the better game for Black.

**23...Rh8! 24 b5 Na7!**

He thought that the big complications after 24...Ne7 25 Nf6!! Would favour White.

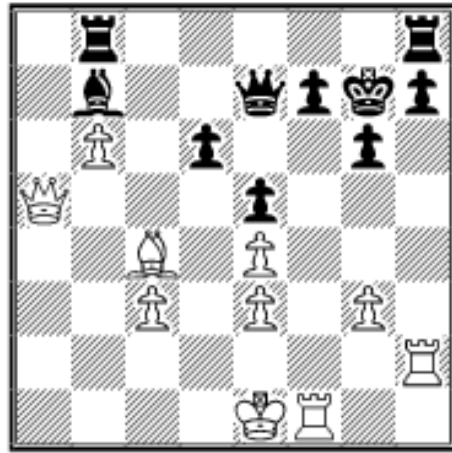
**25 b6 Nc6 26 Qa4 Ne7! 27 Nxe7**

If 27 0–0 Nxd5 28 Bxd5 Be6 29 Bxe6 fxe6 30 Rhf2 Rxb6 31 Rf7+ Kh6 32 Qxa5 Rb2 and Black is winning (Hamarat).

**27...Qxe7 28 Qxa5 Bb7**

He says White is now lost: “This is a typical case when the attack fails, the weaknesses of the attacking side remain. In the present case, it's White's pawn structure.”

## 29 Rf1



## 29...Ra8 0-1

White resigns, perhaps a little early.  
Hamarat indicated the following:

a) 30 Qb4 Ra1+ 31 Ke2 (or 31 Kd2 Rxf1  
32 Bxf1 Qg5) 31...Rxf1 32 Kxf1 Bxe4  
and Black wins.

b) 30 Rhf2!? Rxa5 31 Rxf7+ Qxf7 32  
Rxf7+ Kh6 33 Rxb7 Rc8 and wins.

Finally, I would like to mention that I am currently working on a new anthology of correspondence games, to be entitled '50 Golden Chess Games' and published by my company Chess Mail. It should be available in June.

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