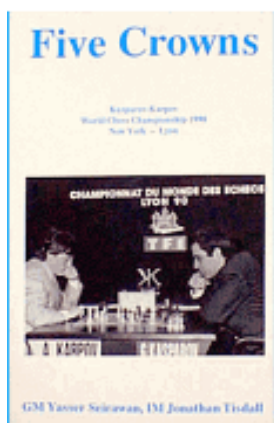


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Yasser Annotates:

Fischer - Spassky, Sveti Stefan 1992

Tuesday, September, 1

I spent the evening before Fischer-Spassky II in Vancouver B.C. as the guest of GM Duncan Suttles and his lovely wife Dobrilla. I was there to take care of business pertaining to our publicly held I.C.E. (International Chess Enterprises) corporation which is traded on the Vancouver Stock Exchange. Though lawyers, trust agents and accountants all jockeyed for my attention during the day, my thoughts were on the upcoming match.

All evening Bobby Fischer's imminent return was the focus of conversation. We were giddy with excitement about the RETURN and at the same time petrified that the event will be canceled. CNN reports about the match were ominous. The U.S. State Department indicated that Fischer faced fines and imprisonment if he went through with the match.

Wednesday, September 2

The next day back in Seattle the fax machine was working overtime. Faxed newspaper clippings told the story: BOBBY DEFIES U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT, SPITS ON WARNING! The phones rang off the hook all day with people trying to get the moves of the first game. We tried to explain that we're not a phone service and we didn't have the moves anyway. "Read All About It" was our retort, but that didn't help much, though we did manage to get some normal business done amidst the chaos.

Finally the call came. Bobby had White and had played 1.e4! High fives all around. At this moment my tickets to Yugoslavia arrived. I would leave in two days. The skeptic in me didn't allow departure until I knew the match was on for sure. I was willing to miss the first three games, but no more! Three more calls ... Ruy Lopez ... Fischer opening novelty ... desperate sacrifice by Spassky. Then the fax with the complete game score arrived.

All work ceased as everyone crowded around to share a very special moment. The first Bobby Fischer game in 20 years! The match was on.

Bobby Fischer - Boris Spassky

Sveti Stefan (1) 1992
Ruy Lopez Breyer C95

1.e4!

Despite, or perhaps because of, his 20-year absence from competitive chess, Bobby goes with what he does best, go for the throat with 1.e4.

1...e5

The classical response, which Bobby could expect from Boris. Now both players will be going into their most complete areas of opening theory.

2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6

Morphy's move. Spassky has experimented with a lot of offbeat defenses: 3...Nf6 and 4...Nxe4-the Berlin Defense or 3...g6-the Pillsbury, while 3...f5-the Schliemann, would be a sharp rejoinder against a rusty opponent.

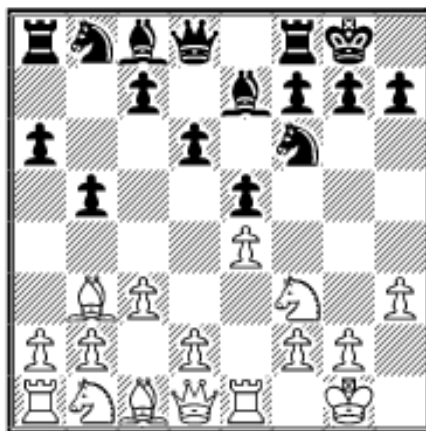
4.Ba4 Nf6 5.O-O Be7

Black continues to follow the most richly documented opening known to theory. The main deviation at this point is the Open Ruy (5...Nxe4) which has long been championed by GM Viktor Kortchnoi.

6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 d6

The most challenging theoretical debate at this point revolves around the Marshall Gambit (7...O-O 8.c3 d5). English GM John Nunn has devoted years to the Black side and his verdict is "Draw!" Few have been able to prove him wrong. Boris relies on his own preparations.

8.c3 O-O 9.h3 Nb8



the adverse e4-pawn.

Initiating the Breyer Defense. This retreat appears to be a unconscionable waste of time at first glance, but generations of GM praxis have proven its soundness. The key to the Ruy Lopez is central control. Black's strategy is to release the c-pawn to grab a few squares by ...c7-c5. Then the b8-knight will redeploy to d7 where it will support both the c5- and e5-pawns. Finally, the c8-bishop is fianchettoed on b7 to put pressure on

9...Na5 10.Bc2 c5 11.d4 Qc7-the Chigorin Defense, has been popular for decades and the solid 9...Be6!? has been tested in more modern times, while 9...Bb7 10.d4 Re8-the Zaitzev, is a favorite of Karpov. And finally, both 9...Qd7 and 9...h6 bear Smyslov's name. Choosing from this varied menu is largely a matter of taste. It should be noted that Boris treads a very well-known theoretical path.

10.d4 Nbd7 11.Nbd2

Bobby prefers the classical, restrained buildup, often called “The Spanish Torture”, and he is a High Inquisitor indeed. The aggressive treatment 11.c4 Bb7 12.Nc3 c6 also causes Black nagging problems.

11...Bb7 12.Bc2 Re8 13.Nf1 Bf8 14.Ng3 g6



Modern GM praxis has given this position a thorough workout. An early game from this position featured 15.Bd2.

Unzicker, W-Portisch, L Santa Monica 1966 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.O-O Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 O-O 9.h3 Nb8 10.d4 Nbd7 11.Nbd2 Bb7 12.Bc2 Re8 13.Nf1 Bf8 14.Ng3 g6 15.Bd2 Bg7 16.Qc1 d5 17.Bg5 Qc8 18.dxe5 Nxe4 19.Nxe4

dxe4 20.Bxe4 Nxe5 21.Bxb7 Qxb7 Draw

It was Boris Spassky who introduced Bobby's next move into practice.

Spassky, B-Unzicker, W Santa Monica 1966 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.O-O Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 O-O 8.c3 d6 9.h3 Nb8 10.d4 Nbd7 11.Nbd2 Bb7 12.Bc2 Re8 13.Nf1 Bf8 14.Ng3 g6 15.Bg5 h6 16.Bd2 Bg7 17.Rc1 c5 18.d5 Nb6 19.Bd3 Qc7 20.Nh2 Na4 21.Rb1 c4 22.Bc2 Nc5 23.Ng4 Kh7 24.Qf3 Nxe4 25.hxe4 Qe7 26.b3 cxb3 27.axb3 Bf6 28.Nf1 Bg5 29.Ne3 Bc8 30.g3 Nd7 31.Qe2 Nf6 32.f3 h5 33.Kg2 Qd8 34.Rh1 Kg8 35.Rbf1 Bh6 36.Nf5 Bxd2 37.Qxd2 gxf5 38.Qh6 fxg4 39.fxg4 Bxg4 40.Rxf6 Qe7 41.Qg5+ Kf8 42.Bd1 Bxd1 43.Rxd1 Rec8 44.Rdf1 Rxc3 45.Qxh5 Rc2+ 46.Kh1 1-0

15.Bg5

A key move in the Spanish Defense. By pinning, White hopes to induce Black's kingside pawns forward, provoking potential weaknesses.

15...h6 16.Bd2

Mission accomplished.

16...Bg7 17.a4!

A classical motif in the Spanish Torture. Black's b5-pawn often is a serious liability. Bobby tries to exploit this at once by undermining/attacking the b5-pawn.

As we saw in Spassky-Unzicker, Boris preferred 17.Rc1, later mixing queenside and kingside attacks. Many subsequent games saw White players leave their a1-rook alone and play 17.Qc1, picking up a tempo against the h6-pawn.

The first guy to find 17.a4! was former World Junior Champion Bojan Kurajica:

Kurajica, B-Ivanovic, B Reggio Emilia 1984 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.O-O Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 O-O 9.h3 Nb8 10.d4 Nbd7 11.Nbd2 Bb7 12.Bc2 Re8 13.Nf1 Bf8 14.Ng3 g6 15.Bg5 h6 16.Bd2 Bg7 17.a4 c5 18.d5 c4 19.Be3 Nc5 20.Ra3 Rb8 21.Qd2 Kh7 Draw

The point of 17.a4 is to inhibit Black's freeing break ...d6-d5: 17...d5? 18.axb5 axb5 19.Rxa8 Qxa8 20.exd5 cxd4 (20...Nxd5 21.dxe5 Nxe5 22.Nxe5 Bxe5 23.Bxh6 wins a pawn) 21.Nxd4 attacks the b5-pawn.

17...c5

Unable to challenge the center with ...d6-d5, Black strikes out with this typical Breyer freeing move.

18.d5 c4



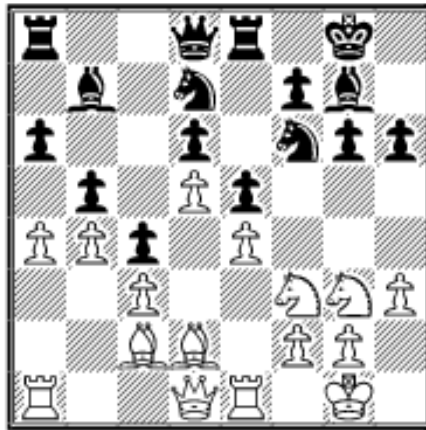
Still theory. The Kurajica game above and the following game continued with 19.Be3:

Hepworth, M-Smigielska, A Oakham 1988 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.O-O Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 O-O 9.h3 Nb8 10.d4 Nbd7 11.Nbd2 Bb7 12.Bc2 Re8 13.Nf1 Bf8 14.Ng3 g6 15.Bg5 h6 16.Bd2 Bg7 17.a4 c5 18.d5 c4 *19.Be3 Qc7 20.Nh2 h5 21.Qd2 Nc5 22.Bg5 Nfd7 23.axb5 axb5 24.Nf3 Nb6 25.Bh6 Nba4 26.Bxg7 Kxg7 27.Qg5 Kh7 28.Qh4 Qe7 29.Qxe7 Rxe7 30.Rab1 Bc8 31.Re3 Rea7 32.b4 cxb3 33.Bxb3 Nb6 34.Ree1 Bd7 35.Nd2 Ra3 36.Ngf1 Rc8 37.Ne3 Nd3 38.Nc2 Ra7 39.Re3 Rxc3 40.Nb4 Rc1+ 41.Rxc1 Nxc1 42.Bc2 Na2 43.Nc6 Bxc6

44.dxc6 Nb4 45.Bd3 Ra1+ 46.Nf1 Nxc6 47.Bxb5 Nd4 48.Bd3 Na4 49.g3 Nb2 50.Kg2 Rd1 51.Be2 Re1 52.Ba6 Rc1 53.Ra3 Nd1 54.Ne3 Nxe3+ 55.Rxe3 Nc2 56.Rb3 Kh6 57.Kh2 Nd4 58.Rb6 Rc6 59.Rxc6 Nxc6 60.Bc4 f5 61.f3 g5 62.exf5 Nd4 63.f6 Nxf3+ 64.Kg2 Nd4 65.h4 gxh4 66.gxh4 Kg6 67.f7 Kg7 68.Kh3 Nf5 69.Be2 Kxf7 70.Bxh5+ Kf6 71.Be2 Nh6 72.Bd3 d5 73.Kg3 Ke6 74.Kf3 Nf5 75.Kg4 e4 76.Ba6 Ke5 77.h5 d4 78.Kg5 d3 79.h6 Nxh6 80.Kxh6 Kd4 81.Kg5 e3 0-1

Since neither of these games were successes for White, this whole line has been judged sound enough for Black. Bobby's next move offers a different twist.

19.b4!



Well played. Black's last few moves were designed to create a c5-outpost for the d7-knight. The text robs the knight of this square.

19...Nh7?

Boris terribly underestimates White's possibilities. Faced with a novelty, Boris had to ask himself, "Do I play 19.cxb3 *en passant* or play to hold the position and cede White a spatial

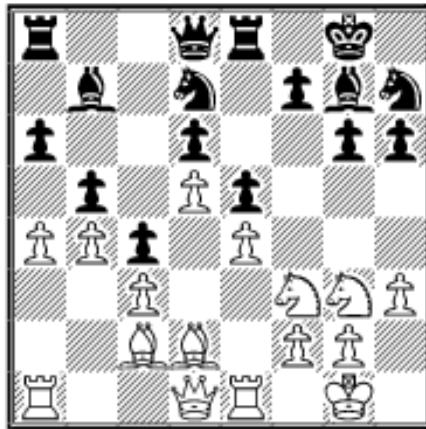
advantage?" Boris correctly felt that 19...cxb3 20.Bxb3 Nc5 21.axb5!? axb5 22.Bc2 Nfd7 23.Qb1 would lead to a type of position where the b5-pawn sticks out like a sore thumb. On the other hand, keeping the position closed seemed safer. This superficial judgment gives White a lot. In the 19...cxb3 variations it isn't clear that White will win the b5-pawn. Further, White's c3- and e4-pawns remain vulnerable and Black would have good piece play.

An additional problem is that the move played by Spassky totally fails within the context of Black's plan of holding the position. If Black is willing to accept a closed game, a reshuffling of pieces is in order. Black must realize that with the center closed, play on the flanks becomes paramount. The kingside is balanced, so White's advantage on the queenside is manifest. It is White's option to open the queenside. Black must prepare to meet this danger. What is the optimum piece arrangement for Black? I like the plan of putting the d7-knight on c7, and the b7-bishop on d7. That way, the b5-pawn is overprotected and White's winning control of the a-file will be impossible. Making this ideal setup isn't easy. In my view Black should continue 19...Qe7 (19...cxb3 is best) 20.Qc1 Qf8 21.Ra3 Reb8 22.Qb2 Ne8! 23.Rea1 Nc7 24.R1a2 Bc8 25.Qa1 Nb6 26.Be3!? Both sides have shifted their armadas, but White has kept an overall grip on the position.

Thus, two observations. 1) White's most dangerous ambitions lie on the queenside. Black has to rush to meet these plans head-on. 2) Once there, Black still hasn't equalized. In short the Spanish Torture lasts a long time.

Viewed like this, Spassky's 19...Nh7 is completely misdirected. He must have entertained the ruinous idea of ...f7-f5, a very doubtful undertaking.

Bobby is quick to pounce on his opportunity.



(after 19...Nh7)

20.Be3!

For years I've been developing a theory about styles that I'd like to expand into a book. The idea is that players can be divided into 1) tacticians only: basically weak, because they lack positional understanding; 2) positional players: tacticians who have achieved some

positional understanding; 3) strategists: strong players who glide from positional strength to positional strength by exploiting tactical opportunities. 4) Finally you come to builders. Builders are the deadliest of opponents. Able to play all positions, they disarm the opposition by making the simplest of moves that build upon one another. Unable to discern a direct threat the opponent drifts. Eventually a storm occurs and the builder wins from his superior position, or along the way the patient builder discovers a flaw in the opponent's camp and it's time to make hay.

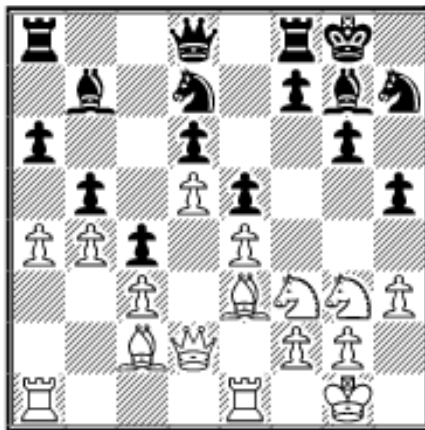
The master builder is, of course, Karpov. Kasparov, too, is a builder in a tactical sense. Fischer had a deserved reputation as a theoretician and tactician. In fact he was so brilliant in these two aspects that many didn't appreciate that he, too, was a master builder.

The text is a perfect illustration. Taken by itself, 20.Be3 is a simple, excellent move. The bishop moves to a diagonal giving it control over more squares/space. More concretely, the move is a brick in White's building plan.

20...h5!?

This move is a further consequence of ...Nf6-h7, since ...Kg8-h7, protecting the h6-pawn, is now prohibited.

21.Qd2 Rf8?!



Boris has been on the wrong track for some time. The text is further confirmation of this unfortunate fact. Black aims for ...f7-f5, making his game a disaster. There were better ways to waste time.

22.Ra3 Ndf6



Boris is beginning to wake up to the smell of frying bacon. His own! The text is an admission that ...f7-f5 isn't happening. It's time to reshuffle and batten down the queenside. If Boris had insisted on suicide, then 22...h4 23.Nf1 f5 24.Bh6 (24.exf5!?) f4 25.Bxg7 Kxg7 26.Rea1 would oblige.

23.Rea1 Qd7 24.R1a2!

Bobby's play is worthy of the highest praise. Somehow he has managed to incorporate just about every classical Spanish device in this game. The text is the prelude to tripling on the a-file to seize its control. Breakthrough time is a'comin'.

24...Rfc8 25.Qc1 Bf8

Attempting to reposition this bishop to a more useful square.

26.Qa1



One of my favorite formations. That is, two rooks barreling down an open file with the queen backing them up as a trigger – also known as Alekhine's Gun.

26...Qe8

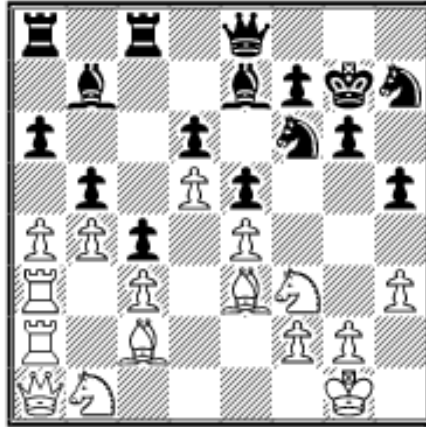
Because of his vast experience in the Spanish, I suspect that Spassky had *anticipated* this position since playing

19...Nh7. He undoubtedly felt that the queenside was fortified, the center closed, and the kingside balanced. He erred. Bobby now unveils his master stroke.

27.Nf1!

The knight has outlived his usefulness on g3 and is going after the b5-pawn!

27...Be7 28.N1d2 Kg7 29.Nb1



A stunned Boris Spassky now had to come to grips with the fact that his position is desperate. White threatens to win by the simplest of means — through captures. Left to himself, White will trade a-pawns, trade rooks and queens on a8 and finish with Nb1-a3, snapping off the b5-problem child. Facing this reality, Boris makes a desperate sacrifice.

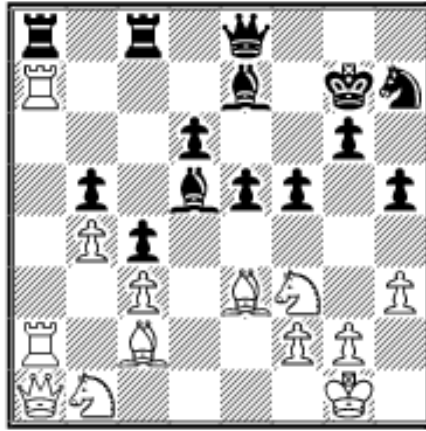
29...Nxe4!

Only moves can be good moves too.

30.Bxe4 f5?

This seductive move is like a siren calling Boris to his death. It exposes Black's king and when a white rook lands on a7, White will have a fine attack to complement his extra piece. While his material disadvantage is clear, Black should have played 30...Nf6! 31.Nbd2 Nxe4 32.Nxe4 Bxd5 33.Ned2 with an improvement over the game. Once again, Bobby is quick to school Boris on his mistake.

31.Bc2 Bxd5 32.axb5 axb5 33.Ra7!



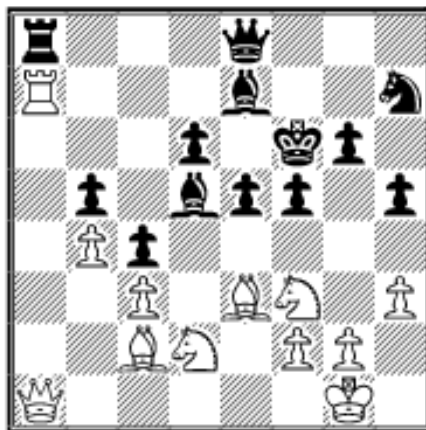
This is the rub. Black's king has attracted the attention of White's pieces.

33...Kf6?

A bold decision that only makes things worse. The h7-knight is thus condemned to a do-nothing existence.

34.Nbd2 Rxa7 35.Rxa7 Ra8 (see next

diagram)



Until now, I had been impressed by Bobby's handling of the pieces. The guy has done good. But right now is his moment to shine. When I saw his next move, I knew that Bobby was *good*. Bobby was *back*!

36.g4!!

Oooh. Crunchy. I like it! With victory in sight, there are few GMs in the

world that would play such a move. The expected wins might follow 36.h4 – boring.

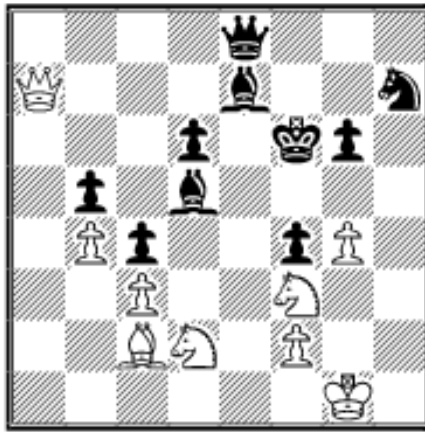
36...hgx4 37.hxg4 Rxa7

Black has nothing better. 37...fxg4? 38.Nh2 is a disaster, while 37...f4 38.Be4! fxe3 39.Bxd5 Rxa7 40.Ne4+ is positional domination.

38.Qxa7 f4

This allows a crispy finish. If 38...Qa8 39.Qxa8 Bxa8 40.gxf5 gxf5 41.Nh4 will eventually win, while 38...Qc6 39.Qb6 Nh4! is a killing shot, since ...Nh4xg6 is tough to meet.

39.Bxf4 exf4



Bobby shines again. I expected the mundane 40.Qd4+ Ke6 41.Bf5+ gxf5 42.gxf5+ Kxf5 43.Qxd5+, when Boris is just busted. Bobby, however, finds a far more accurate move.

40.Nh4!

Now the threats of Qa7-d4+ and Bc2xg6 loom large.

40...Bf7 41.Qd4+ Ke6

Forced, since 41...Kg5 42.Ng2 Kxg4 43.Qxf4+ Kh5 44.Bd1 checkmates.

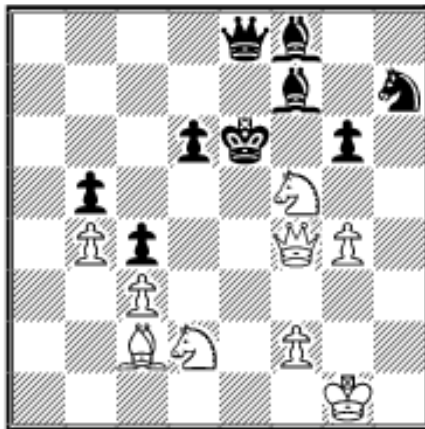
42.Nf5

Now the full strength of 40.Nh4 is revealed. Black's king is in a mating net. Since 42...Bf6 43.Qxd6 checkmate and 42...gxf5 43.Bxf5 checkmate end the agony too suddenly, Boris is forced into a further retreat.

42...Bf8

Not playing the horrible 42...Kd7? 43.Qa7+ Kd8 (43...Ke6 44.Ng7+ forks king and queen) 44.Qb8+ Kd7 45.Qxb5+. The harvest 45...Kd8?! 46.Qb8+ Kd7 47.Ba4+ is blood-curdling.

43.Qxf4



Although Black has fought back to material equality, his pieces are outmatched. White's army is a model of coordination. Black will be picked apart.

43...Kd7 44.Nd4 Qe1+

A jolly good spite check.

45.Kg2 Bd5+ 46.Be4 Bxe4+

Last one.

47.Nxe4

Game over.

47...Be7 48.Nxb5 Nf8 49.Nbxd6 Ne6 50.Qe5 1-0

Yes, indeed Bobby is back! A flawlessly handled game. Precise to the last moment. How good is his chess after 20 years' absence? I should be so lucky! High 2600's? Yes. 2700? Impossible to say after one game.



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