



## COLUMNISTS

## Inside Chess

Yasser Seirawan



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## Yasser Annotates

## Fedorowicz–Gulko, U.S. Championship 1987

*Fedorowicz, John (2520) – Gulko, Boris (2565)*

USA-ch Estes Park (8), 1987

French [C16]

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 b6 5.a3 Bf8 6.Nf3 Ne7 7.Ne2

Fedorowicz's pet idea. Other recent developments include 7.Bb5+ c6 8. Ba4!?, in order to avoid an exchange of light-squared bishops. John's plan is very simple: Student body right! Everything on the kingside!

7...Ba6 8.Nf4 Bxf1 9.Kxf1 h5 10.Qd3 Nbc6 11.Bd2 Qd7 12.g3 Nf5



Both players appeared happy with their positions. White has a nice edge in space and appears able to play on both sides of the board. Black has his knight on the excellent outpost f5 and is playing the French without his bad light-squared bishop.

What could be sweeter?

13.h3?

The start of a mistaken idea. Clearly Black must castle long; going to the kingside would be suicide. So what's John doing with the kingside? He's opening it up against himself!

My recommendation is the positionally suspect idea of pre-empting Black from going long. How about 13.b4!? Be7 14.h4!?. After connecting his rooks, White can follow up with b5 and c4. Leaving the queenside alone just helps Boris decide where his king is going.

13...Be7 14.Kg2 0-0-0 15.g4?

Fedorowicz stubbornly clings to his rotten idea of booting Black's knight. Though it's an admirable quality to be loyal to your plans, you sometimes you have to change horses. Again, I'll mention 15.h4.

15...hgx4 16.hxg4 Nh6 17.Kg3?

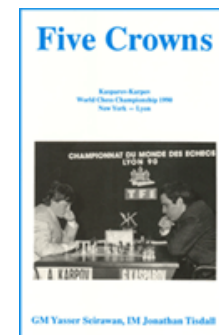
This move walks into a deadly uppercut. White had to play 17.g5, though he's clearly worse after ...Nf5.

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17...g5! 18.Nh5



18...f5!!

Oh yeah! Crunchola.

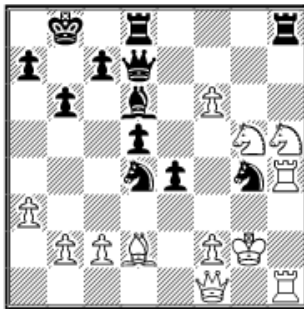
19.exf6 e5!

Boris now achieves another fantasy of all French Defense players: rolling White back with a center rush.

20.Kg2 e4 21.Qa6+ Kb8 22.Nxg5 Bd6 23.Rh4 Nxd4 24.Rah1 Nxg4

Black has two crushing threats, ...Nf5 and ...Qf5. White has no defense.

25.Qf1



In attempting to stop Black's threats, John sets himself up for a simple combination.

25...Nf3??

Played after a long think. The crispiest win is 25...Rxh5 26.Rxh5 Ne3+, after which White can't avoid mate. What's even worse, from Black's point of view anyway, is that he must now play into an ending an exchange up – but with White having excellent drawing chances!

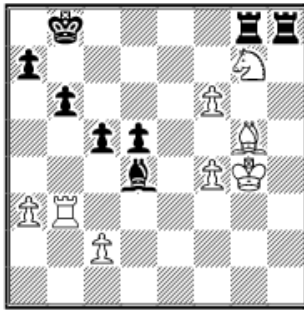
26.Nxf3 exf3+ 27.Kxf3 Nh2+ 28.R1xh2 Bxh2 29.Qh3! Qxh3+ 30.Rxh3 Be5

When visualizing this position at move twenty-five, Boris probably thought the ending a trivial win. White must lose another pawn; Black will be a full exchange up. But not so fast! Suddenly all of White's pieces are optimally placed to support the passed f-pawn. Black must take draconian measures to deal with the little critter. With White's excellent initiative, the result is no longer surprising.

31.Kg4! Bxb2 32.Bg5 Rdg8 33.Rb3

Avoiding Black's threat of 33...Bxf6 34.Nxf6 Rxg5+ and ...Rxh3.

33...Bd4 34.f4 c5 35.Ng7



### 35...Rxc7

Played out of frustration as much as anything else. White has been allowed far too much activity.

Boris didn't want to wait for ...Kf5 and ...Ne6. Still, he could have improved over the game continuation with 35...Rh2 – but even then I don't think the extra tempo would have changed the result.

### 36.fxc7 Bxc7 37.Re3 Bd4 38.Re7 Rh2 1/2-1/2

Speculation was rife at the end of the game. Who stands better? Well, it's tough to say, but the game result is probably a correct one. One likely continuation is 39.f5 Rxc2 40.f6 Bxf6 41.Bxf6, when Black has full compensation for his piece. The only problem for Black is his king: with all the pawns missing it's a book draw; *with* pawns, it's not so clear. In several variations, White's chances appear preferable. Wow! A real turnaround and a lucky escape for Fed.

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