

*For
Friends
&
Colleagues*

VOLUME I

Profession: Chess Coach

Mark Dvoretsky

**For
Friends
&
Colleagues**

**by
Mark Dvoretsky**

Volume 1

Profession – Chess Coach



2014
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For Friends & Colleagues

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Volume 1: Profession – Chess Coach
by Mark Dvoretsky

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**From the front flap
of the dust jacket on the
signed, numbered, limited
hard cover edition**

The book you are holding is truly unique. It is the first volume of an autobiographical two-volume set—*For Friends & Colleagues*—by renowned world-class chess trainer Mark Dvoretsky.

This is a limited, hard cover edition of 500 numbered copies. Each volume is signed and dated by the author himself.

Having each copy of the limited edition carry an original signature and date by Mark Dvoretsky posed certain logistical challenges. The book is almost 400 pages, with a library-quality hard-cover binding. Sending the books to Moscow—a round-trip of almost 10,000 miles—was impractical, to say the least.

The solution was to send a set of pre-printed “endsheets” to be signed and dated by the Maestro. In the photo below, taken at his home in August 2014, the author is seen signing the actual endsheets to be bound into the first and second volumes of his *For Friends & Colleagues*.



Photo: Vladimir Barsky

Table of Contents

Foreword by Grandmaster Artur Yusupov	8
From the Author	10
Signs, Symbols and Abbreviations	14
School Years	
The Beginning	15
Math School	16
On the Benefits of Education	16
Nonpartisanship	19
The Pioneer Palace	20
Roshal	20
Simagin	23
My First Training Session	27
The Road to Master	27
My First Trip Abroad	31
University Years	
School Choice	35
The USSR Team Championship	36
The Qualifying Tournament	36
The Spartakiad	37
Transferring to Moscow State University	39
Classes at the University	40
Moscow Master	41
Institute of Physical Education	
Coach and Tutor	43
Employment by Distribution	43
Academic Appointment	45
Participation in Competitions	
Viljandi	48
Moscow Championship	50
Team Match-Tournament	51
Semi-finals of the USSR Championship	54
Polanica-Zdrój	56
Marathon in Tbilisi	57

For Friends & Colleagues

Breaking into High Society	61
The Higher League	63
Wijk aan Zee	68

Meetings with Tal

The First Encounter	73
Competition in Viljandi	77
Tal the Psychologist	81
Symbiosis in the Netherlands	84

Player and Coach – Jack of Two Trades

The First Experiences	93
Visiting Kortchnoi	94
Meeting Chekhov	95
Two-Year Plan	96
Trip to Georgia	97
Kochiev	99
Forecast	100
Battle in Sochi	101
Preparation for the Championship	106
Aftermath	110

Yusupov and Dolmatov – the Way Up

First Contact	113
Muscle Building	115
The World Championship Qualifier	117
Training	122
The Youth Games	125
Finishing Touches	127
Who is the Favorite?	128
Victory	128
<i>Per Diem</i>	129
The Return	131
Training Session in Georgia	132
Fatigue	134
After the Tournament	136
A New Qualifier	137
“Zigzag”	138
“Diversion”	140
A “Hint”	141
“Don’t even think about it!”	143
Kholmov	143

Volume 1: Profession – Chess Coach

In Groningen Again	144
The Training Range	146
Next to Botvinnik	
The Botvinnik School	148
Conviction	151
Kaissa and Pioneer	152
Breakup	153
Forecasts and Recommendations	155
The Most Talented Student	
Grandmaster Schools	157
Meeting Dreev	158
The First Qualifier	160
The Strongest!	161
New Successes	165
School	169
Banned from International Travel	173
Military Draft	175
O tempora! O mores!	
The Song of the Burevestnik	178
Postovsky	180
“We plowed...”	182
Visiting a Millionaire	183
The Chess Tourist	184
One Title for Two Clubs	185
Not everyone returned...	186
As Team Coach	188
Coach in a Large Delegation	189
“Team Play” in Rio de Janeiro	191
Oh Rio, Rio...	193
How I Was Banned from International Travel	195
“Bad” Carrots	197
The Threat is Stronger than the Execution	197
The KGB Never Sleeps	198
Road to the Mausoleum	198
How Psakhis Returned to the National Team	198
Who is Bronstein?	199
How Misha Gurevich Became a Champion	199
Battle for the Chess Players’ Rights	201
A Grandmaster’s “Liberties”	202

For Friends & Colleagues

Major Tournaments and Matches

Women's Candidates Matches	204
Psychology, Time Trouble	226
Battle for the Title	230
Alicante	236
Dubna	237
Twenty-Something Years Later	241
Yusupov's Victory in Yerevan	242
Better Luck Next Time	244
A New Cycle	247
The First Computers	250
Match with Timman	252
Missed Win	258
Two Visits to Canada	265
Match with Karpov	272
Games with Karpov with White	275
Games with Karpov with Black	281
The Third on a Match	284
Attempt	285
A Brilliant Victory in Brussels	286
Failure in Linares	289
How to Get Out of a Crisis	295
The Interzonal Tournament	298
A Battle Between Friends	299

School, Books, Program, and Trips to America

School of Future Champions	305
Books	311
Relations with Publishers	314
Readers	318
Polls	319
MD1	320
Vadim Zvjaginsev	322
Viorel Bologan, Sasha Ryazantsev	327
American Debut	328
Guerel	330
Sunil's Camp	333
"Their Ways"	334
Visits to Boston	337
Patrick Wolff	339

Volume 1: Profession – Chess Coach

Tal Shaked	340
How I Did Not Become an American	342
Lessons in New York	343
Old and New Friends	344
The Fischer that Never Was	345
Dina Tulman	348
 Russia: New School, New Students	
A Prophet Has No Honor in His Own Country!	351
Sergey Yanovsky	353
Sasha Motylev and Volodya Potkin	355
A New School	358
Ernesto Inarkiev, Ivan Popov	360
 Travel	
Germany	364
France	366
The Netherlands	368
Brief Encounters	372
A Long List	377
 Memorable Tournament Crosstables	379
 Index of Games	382

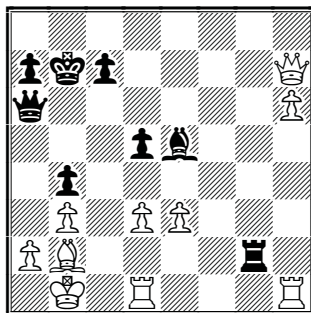
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Foreword

My collaboration with Mark Izrailevich Dvoretsky has lasted for forty years and has resulted in a long friendship. He was not only a coach and second to me, but also the most important chess teacher. I owe to him all of my greatest chess successes, and, to this day, we stay in frequent contact. Of course, I am biased, but, in my opinion, he is the best coach in the world, and, for me, he remains a role model. In my chess training series, *Tiger Leap*, I try to promote and develop Dvoretsky's methods.

I met Mark Izrailevich for the first time in 1972 at the youth team training session held at the Pioneer Palace, and he made a very deep impression. Dvoretsky gave us problems that always had very difficult, often paradoxical solutions. To this day, I remember these lessons and some training positions.

Lucarelli – Carra
Bologna 1932



Black has created unpleasant mating threats. 1.d4 looks like a logical defense, but this move loses to 1...♖e2. White cannot allow this attacking formation on the second rank. **1.♖d2!!** This fantastic resource provides a decisive advantage for White. **1...♖x d2 2.d4 ♖e2.** Now, the black heavy pieces are on the wrong squares, and they can do nothing because White can play **3.♙c1** and win.

In the fall of 1975, I became Dvoretsky's student. Almost every week, I went to his small apartment in Lefortovo, where we worked many hours. Each training session was a valuable experience for me, and hard work quickly led to my increased chess strength. However, Mark Izrailevich did not merely teach me chess. I also learned humanistic and cultural values, expanding my views. Dvoretsky was not formally a dissident, but the totalitarian system was foreign to his free spirit. Mark Izrailevich explained the real world to me and helped me learn and understand the immorality and absurdity of the Communist state. Mark Izrailevich collected songs of the Soviet bards [singers and songwriters who wrote songs outside of the Soviet political establishment – *Tr.*], and it was in his apartment when I, for the first time, heard the critical words of Galich and Vysotsky, as well as the lyrical, but inwardly free, songs of Okudzhava. His music

Volume 1: Profession – Chess Coach

collection grew and was later expanded with recordings of Kim, Nikitin, Sukhanov, Egorov, Kulin, Vizbor, and, later, Starchik. Thanks to Mark Izrailevich, I got acquainted with Bulgakov and Solzhenitsyn, as well as Orwell's books, such as *Animal Farm* and *1984*. At the time, these books were banned in the USSR, but Mark Izrailevich ignored such restrictions, and he had several banned books that were brought from abroad. To survive in a totalitarian society, it was impossible to avoid compromises, but I learned from Dvoretsky to stay true to my own moral values, which should never be discarded, and to never cross lines that should not be crossed, no matter what.

Mark Izrailevich is not only a fantastic coach, but also a successful writer. We (The Yusupov Chess Academy) were very happy to translate Dvoretsky's recent books into German and publish them. For his books *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual* and *Tragicomedy in the Endgame*, in 2010, FIDE awarded Dvoretsky the Boleslavsky Medal.

Dvoretsky's latest work will be published in two volumes. The first part, Profession – Chess Coach, is autobiographical, but, as Dvoretsky explains in his preface, it is not a memoir in the usual form. It describes chess life in the Soviet Union from a coach's perspective. In my opinion, especially interesting are the author's relationships with chess titans such as Botvinnik and Tal.

I am sure that not just chess coaches, but anybody who wants to improve his understanding of chess, will find the advice in this book useful. I also recommend this book to the less ambitious fans of our ancient game for its many interesting stories and amusing anecdotes from the life of the famous coach.

Artur Yusupov

Germany 2014

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From the Author

The book in front of you is not a textbook. However, it is not an autobiography in the usual sense, nor is it a collection of articles, although it includes pedagogical and biographical aspects.

My previous works have received a warm response from a majority of readers, but this book is not for everyone. **I want to forewarn those who may buy and read this book.**

Obviously, people indifferent to chess should not waste their time with it; however, it is unlikely that this book would fall into their hands.

Nor do I recommend this book to those who live only in the present and are not interested in the events of the past.

Finally, my new book is clearly not for the people who tend to idealize the past and create idols. These people are used to the official “Table of Ranks” [a formal list of positions and ranks in the military, government, and court of Imperial Russia – *Tr.*], to the picture of the world formed in their heads by the authorities through the media, and any attempt to offer a different perspective they meet with hostility.

In my book, I do not embellish or gloss over rough edges. I tell everything the way it was and is. I recall both the good deeds and the questionable actions of the people with whom I crossed paths. A significant contribution to the development of chess does not guarantee that these people would not show their dark side and hurt the interests of others under certain circumstances. As Mark Twain wrote, *Everyone is a moon, and has a dark side which he never shows to anybody*. Oftentimes, the dark side should remain hidden, but, as I am sure, it does not always.

For young readers, accustomed to 21st century chess, it must be hard to imagine the reality of the 1960s through the 1980s, and, because of that, some parts of this book might seem confusing. To facilitate further reading, I would like to point out a few significant differences between the time I am writing about and the present.

Competitions. Almost all of the tournaments were round-robins. Even such major events as the European Junior Championships and the World Junior Championships only began to be held as Swisses in the mid-70s. Tournaments with 10-12 participants were unusual, for they were considered too short. National championships were 15-17 games long, and sometimes even longer.

The World Championship. The chess world was divided into zones. Every three years, the best players from each zone competed in interzonal tournaments. The Soviet Union was one such zone. The right to play in the interzonal tournament was granted on an individual basis to some players, while the remaining spots were decided in the zonal tournament (sometimes, national championships were considered zonal tournaments). The winners of the interzonal tournaments played in a tournament of contenders (starting in the mid-1960s, they played candidates matches), which decided who would gain the right to challenge the world

Volume 1: Profession – Chess Coach

champion. In my opinion, this system was not too fair because it provided enormous benefits for the world champion, allowing him to retain his title when objectively he was no longer strongest. Of course, even this system was much better than the chaos that started in the 1990s after Kasparov broke up with FIDE.

Junior Championships. The European Junior Championships and the World Junior Championships were initially held with just one age category, under 20 years old; until the early 1970s, these championships were held only once every two years, and only after that were they annual. World championships for the under 16 age category, the “cadets,” were held from the second half of the 1970s on. Only one representative from each country was allowed, and, as a result, the competition for this single spot was fierce.

Time control. The standard control used in most competitions was 2½ hours for 40 moves. After that, the game was adjourned, and then resumed, sometimes 2-3 hours later, sometimes the very next day, and sometimes even several days later, depending on the tournament regulations. Skill in analyzing adjourned positions was a significant component of chess mastery.

Information. There were no personal computers and no internet. Independent analysis was essential, and information was recorded and stored in notebooks, folders and on index cards. Very few players had access to games from recent competitions. The other sources of information were special bulletins from the major tournaments, and the monthly magazine *Shakhmatny Buleten* [*Chess Bulletin – Tr.*], which published only a few games, *sans* annotations. The Yugoslavian Chess Informant, published twice a year, became increasingly popular, but it was a challenge to obtain it.

Ratings and titles. Inflation gradually devalued both ratings and titles. At a rating of 2490 in 1972, I was in the top 100 chess players worldwide. In a couple of years, my rating increased to 2530-2540, allowing me to move to 35th or so. Where would I be now with such a rating?

Karpov and Kasparov became masters at the age of 15, and Misha Steinberg did so even at 14. (It was, of course, the Soviet master title, since it was not possible to travel abroad to earn an international title.) In the early 1980s, my student Lesha Dreev set a new record. Back then, to become a master at the age of 13 was an incredible achievement, but now there are 13-year-old grandmasters.

Social status of a chess player. The profession of chess player was one of the best in the Soviet Union. Of course, this is only in comparison to the limited opportunities and prospects offered by virtually any other occupation. Technically, we were called “sports instructors” with a salary (which was, in fact, a stipend) that was as low as that of an engineer, a teacher, or a doctor, but we did not have a nine to five job. We had plenty of free time, and could use it any way we wanted. Our line of work was of a creative nature, but its results could be assessed objectively. In the Soviet Union, the authorities decided whether one was a good writer or a good scientist, whereas in our profession the standings in the crosstables said it all. In other sports, an athlete’s career was over by the age of 30-35 (and

For Friends & Colleagues

often earlier than that), but many chess players successfully competed well into old age. Finally, any trip abroad was not only an opportunity to see the world, but a very important source of income. After all, representatives of other sports, musicians, and artists had to turn almost all of their foreign earnings to the government, but we, on the contrary, were allowed to keep most of the prize money.

Travel abroad. The Soviet Union was a totalitarian state that sharply restricted the freedom of its citizens. To participate in a foreign tournament, or make any trip abroad, it was not sufficient to get an invitation. This required the approval of several organizations: the Sports Committee, the Komsomol [a Communist organization for young people aged 14 to 28 – *Tr.*], the Communist Party, and, finally, the KGB. Of course, preference was given to those who were loyal to the government. The reason for denial (which was almost never honestly explained) could be, for example, the “wrong” ethnicity, antipathy from someone in power, bad notes in one’s personal file, etc. At times, some players led a struggle off the chessboard for a spot in an international tournament...

This book consists of two parts. The first part is a memoir, but, as I have already mentioned, it is not a biography *per se*. Vladimir Mayakovsky once said, *I am a poet. That’s what makes me interesting*. In my life, working as a coach has been most important. Thus, I have conceptualized certain life events and later used them in my coaching. In this book, I have likewise tried to assess (though sometimes this took no conscious effort) various events from a coach’s point of view, whether these events were related to chess, university studies, etc. This is the main focus of my new book. Although, it is not just about coaching. Thus, as a rule, the chess examples are discussed from a didactic, rather than purely analytical, point of view. However, as in my previous books, I do not describe an entire coaching system, but only share my experiences. I hope chess professionals and fans will derive something useful for themselves.

You will not find stories of the books I have been voraciously reading since childhood, nor of my favorite plays, movies, etc. I write not of my parents, and very little about my wife and son. At the same time, I write in great detail about my students, especially the first ones. The centerpiece of this book is my work with Artur Yusupov and Sergey Dolmatov when they were young; it was the most memorable time for me and the most successful in my coaching career. In youth, emotions are brighter and feelings are stronger. *What is human life? The first third a good time; the rest remembering about it*, said Mark Twain. From my mature years, I only remember a few episodes, mainly associated with the most important competitions and training sessions in different cities and countries.

My story is illustrated with chess examples. You will find a question mark by many diagrams, next to an indication of which side is to move. This means that the position can be used as an independent exercise, sometimes easy, sometimes quite difficult. Perhaps, you might want to test your skills. These positions are interesting and very useful for improvement.

My annotations for most of the games and excerpts are laconic. I do not want to distract the reader from the narrative with detailed analysis. I think these

Volume 1: Profession – Chess Coach

annotations are interesting in their own right and enliven the text. For the same reason, and perhaps just given the genre, I have included many amusing events from the lives of myself and my friends, as well as some memorable jokes related to the topic under discussion. I hope you will have reason to smile time and again.

Even in this first volume, I liberally use excerpts from old magazine articles. The second volume comprises articles and interviews published at different times (mostly, in recent years) in chess magazines and on Internet websites.

Immediately following the introduction, there is a list of my previous books, with their abbreviations indicated. These books contain many interesting and instructive chess examples connected to the events described in this book. As a rule, I do not present these comprehensively annotated examples again, but it should not be difficult to find them using the references in the text.

Photographs from different periods of my life complement the text. Most of them were taken from my photo archive, but I have also used images by professional photographer Boris Dolmatovski, journalists Anna Burtasova, Elena Klimets, and Maria Fominykh, as well as photos from the archives of the chess magazines *64*, *Chess Review*, *New in Chess*, and some other sources.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Vladimir Barsky, a famous chess journalist and master, for all his help.

I hope that *Profession – Chess Coach* will find its readers and be interesting and useful.

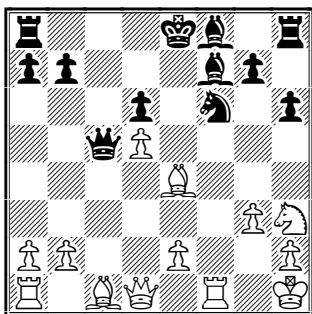
Mark Dvoretsky
Moscow
June 2014

skills. I was even more worried about his rare but serious mistakes in evaluation of the position. Yusupov was an excellent strategist, but his intuition did not serve him reliably. Here is likely the most memorable and upsetting example from the last qualifying tournament.

Yusupov – Yermolinsky

Leningrad 1977

**1.c4 f5 2.d4 ♟f6 3.♟f3 d6
4.g3 c6 5.♟g2 ♟c7 6.♟c3 e5
7.0-0 e4 8.♟g5 h6 9.♟h3 ♟e6
10.d5 ♟f7 11.f3 ♟bd7 12.fxe4
fxe4 13.♟xe4 cxd5 14.cxd5 ♟xe4
15.♟xc4 ♟c5+ 16.♟h1 ♟f6**



Alex Yermolinsky did not play the first part of the game well, and here White has a significant positional advantage. The bishop can simply retreat to f3, but how can one resist the tempting exchange sacrifice?

17.♟xf6!? gxf6 18.♟f4??

But this move is terrible: the f4-square is meant for the knight, which now gets stuck on the edge of the board. White should play either 18.♟f4, or, even stronger, 18.♟d3!, preparing 19.♟e3.

**18...♟b5 19.♟c1 f5 20.♟f3
♟g7 21.♟xd6 ♟d8 22.♟c5?
(22.a4!) 22...b6 23.♟a3?! ♟xd5
24.♟c2 ♟xf3+ 25.exf3 ♟f7
26.♟f4 ♟c8 27.♟b1 ♟xc1+
28.♟xc1 ♟c8, and Black won.**

I had no doubt that, soon, Yusupov would make a significant step forward as a player, but I was afraid that we did not have enough time before the world championship. And indeed, we were able to break through at only the last moment.

I decided to organize a session for Yusupov and Dolmatov separately from the Moscow team. Back then, the training sessions of the Botvinnik School were sometimes held in Dubna. There, on the bank of the Volga River, there was a cozy, comfortable hotel with a good and inexpensive restaurant. Quiet and calm were all the conditions we needed for productive work. Postovsky did not mind, knowing that our preparation would be of high quality and would benefit the team.

Thanks to previous visits to Dubna, I had connections in the administration of the Institute for Nuclear Research, which owned the hotel, and we were promised rooms. I also had good relations with the Burevestnik management, which agreed to finance our session. However, in order to provide funding, they needed a letter from the Sports Committee stating that we were asking for funding to prepare Yusupov for the world championship. Such a trifle, just a piece of paper!

I went to Baturinsky, but he told me, “It does not matter. Let them train at the Moscow team session like everybody else. I will not interfere in this matter.”

I tried to explain that the preparation for the world championship was much more important and that this required good conditions. He did not budge. The conversation continued in a very harsh tone.

With the same request, I visited the deputy chairman of the Sports

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Committee, Ivonin, who was in charge of chess. He also refused; Baturinsky had already called him, so Ivonin was in the know. That made me angry, and I decided to take a desperate step: I notified the management that I would officially refuse to go to the world championship because of a disruption in our training, that I would blame them for the likely failure of the Soviet chess player, and that I would complain to higher authorities. I also told Botvinnik, in whose school Yusupov studied, about the situation. Mikhail Moiseevich expressed his willingness to step in and fight; at the time, he was feuding with Baturinsky and had a strained relationship with the Sports Committee.

A serious scandal began to brew. First Roshal tried to talk me out of submitting an official complaint, and later, to my surprise, Karpov called me. However, I submitted the complaint anyway.

As I was told later, Ivonin called Baturinsky, and they punched the air and discussed my disqualification. But Karpov peeked into Ivonin's office and advised them, "Do not be fools, why are you creating a conflict out of thin air? Do you really want to deal with Botvinnik?" Most likely, they were not too worried about me. In the end, my letter was signed. The session was delayed by three or four days and, of course, this conflict cost me a lot of nervous energy. In Soviet times, such independent behavior was unwelcome, to put it mildly, as well as dangerous.

It turned out that my efforts were justified. The work was productive; we were able to make progress in both chess and physical conditioning. We started each morning with exercises and a substantial jog along the Volga River – a lap that was about 0.6 miles long.

I would like to mention a funny example of the combination of chess and athletic preparation. One day, I had the guys play a training position that I had analyzed very well myself. Seryozha quickly made an incorrect decision and lost without a fight; the training was essentially ruined. I was a little annoyed and told Dolmatov, "Okay, Artur and I will do something else, and you analyze this position, find what you did wrong and what should have happened if you had played it correctly."

Seryozha came back in a couple of minutes and said, "I figured it out!"

"No way, this is a complicated position, it is impossible to figure it out so quickly."

"I am sure, it all works out."

"Look, if you are wrong again, you are going to run our morning lap. I suggest you check it again."

Sergey insisted on showing his solution, which was incorrect, of course. I did not let him leave: "First, figure out this position!"

Three minutes later, he rushed in again: "Okay, now I got it for sure!"

"You better check it carefully or you are going to run a second penalty lap."

Dolmatov was an impatient guy, and once again he did not check his new solution. I rejected it, and Sergey had to go for a run. Artur and I went outside to see how he would cope with the two laps. By the time Sergey had finished, he could hardly breathe. He was not fit then, and running such a distance was difficult for him. Later, Sergey improved his physical fitness significantly and could easily run as far as six miles.

The quality of training before a competition significantly affects the final result, and the performance of the Moscow team at the Youth Games

confirmed that. Dolmatov and Yusupov won the first two board prizes. But among the other members of the team, who had prepared in adverse living conditions, only one guy on the last board had a good showing; the others played unsatisfactorily, and the strong Moscow team did not achieve success.

The Youth Games

The Youth Games took place in Moscow. Dolmatov crushed everyone on the first board; Yusupov played with more effort, which was not surprising; after all, he was taking the entrance exams at MSU during the tournament! However, he scored almost as many points as Sergey.

Suddenly, Botvinnik called me to a meeting. Botvinnik, his school assistant Volodya Kozlov, Bykhovsky, and I gathered by the metro station Kropotkinskaya at the end of Gogolevsky Boulevard.

Botvinnik said, “It is obvious that Dolmatov plays better than Yusupov. He did not win the qualifying tournament because he got sick. I believe that he should be sent to the World Junior Championship.”

I was taken aback. “What about the qualifier and the rules of selection?”

Botvinnik insisted. “I will call them and explain everything. They will understand.”

Bykhovsky, who had reacted warily to Botvinnik’s proposal at first, began to hesitate. “Maybe it really would make sense to make the switch?”

Finally, Botvinnik said flatly, “In the interests of Soviet chess, the strongest player should go, and the strongest player is obviously Dolmatov.”

I could not stand it any longer and snapped. “It would be in the interests of Soviet chess that our work with Artur

and Sergey continue successfully. If such an injustice is allowed to stand even once, not one of us will ever be trusted by the others again! Good relationships will be broken.”

Botvinnik did not expect an objection, having reckoned that I would not care much which of my students I would take to the world championship. He said, “Whatever. When this tournament is over, everything will become clear!”

We went our separate ways without reaching an agreement. I was afraid that Botvinnik might still call the guys. I did not want to bother Artur, but I decided to test the waters with Sergey beforehand, mentioning in passing that such an opinion had been expressed. I was very glad that Dolmatov objected emphatically, “What nonsense! Artur won the qualifier. Of course he should go to the world championship, and I will try to qualify for the European championship.”

Dolmatov’s winning streak continued until the penultimate round, when he lost without resistance to Lyonya Zaid. The end result immediately became problematic, given that he was to play the last game with Black against Kasparov. Here I had to take action.

Sergey was somewhat irresponsible, and it was important for him to organize and streamline his life, learn to work methodically, improve his self-discipline (while Artur never had such problems). With this goal, I demanded that Dolmatov do morning exercises, follow his daily schedule, etc. I suspected that during the Youth Games he neglected these exercises, but decided not to intervene. What if he plays poorly that day and decides to blame the exercises? But, after his loss to Zaid, I gave Sergey a purposefully

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Sergey Dolmatov

exaggerated scolding, both for playing poorly and for neglecting the exercises.

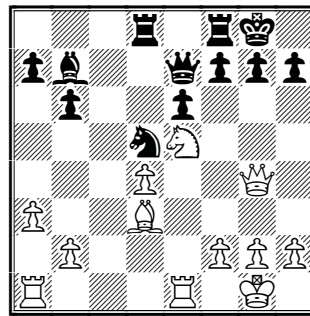
“Getting ready for the European Championship is a serious affair. Any little detail can help or hinder you from achieving the goal, and you do not fulfill even the simplest demands! If I ever hear that you have missed your morning exercises again, I will tell Bykhovsky that he should not consider you as a candidate for the trip!”

This insinuation worked! Sergey was so motivated as he went into the last round against Kasparov that Garry felt it and apparently faltered. Contrary to his usual practice, he resorted to 1.d4, played the opening modestly and soon offered a draw, which Dolmatov rejected without hesitation.

Kasparov – Dolmatov

Moscow 1977

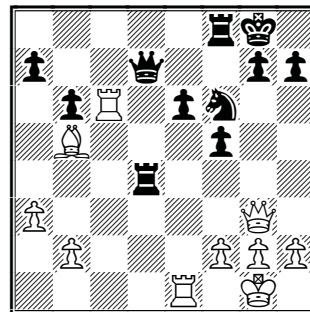
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5
4.e3 ♙e7 5.♙d3 0-0 6.0-0 dxc4
7.♙xc4 c5 8.♙e2 cxd4 9.exd4 ♘c6
10.♙d1 b6 11.♘c3 ♘b4 12.♙g5?!
♙b7 13.♘e5 ♘fd5 14.♙xe7 ♙xe7
15.a3 ♘f4 16.♙g4 ♘bd5 17.♘xd5
♘xd5 18.♙e1 ♙ad8 19.♙d3



19...f5!? 20.♙g3 ♘f6 21.♙ac1?

Up to this point, the position has remained approximately equal, but now White's situation becomes difficult.

21...♙xd4 22.♘c6 ♙xc6
23.♙xc6 ♙d7 24.♙b5



B
?

24...♖e4?

An unfortunate mistake, which his opponent fails to take advantage of. Winning is 24...♖d5! 25.♗e5 ♗×e5 26.♗×e5 ♗d1+ 27.♙f1 ♖e4 28.♗c×e6 ♗c8!-+.

25.♗b3?

It is necessary to find a little combination: 25.♗c7! ♗d1! 26.♗×g7+! ♗×g7 27.♗×d7+ ♗×d7 28.♙×d7, and Black is only slightly better.

25...a6 White resigned.

That was the only time Dolmatov ever won against Kasparov in a tournament. Sergey took first place on board 1, conceding only a point and a half to his opponents. Artur won the second board prize, scoring just a half-point less, and simultaneously passed the entrance exams at the university. There was no reason to demand that Yusupov be replaced.

Botvinnik just shrugged his shoulders. “What, is Artur superhuman or something?!”

Shortly thereafter, Dolmatov won an international youth tournament in Hungary with a score of 12 points out of 13, and, after that, no one doubted his right to represent our country at the upcoming European Championship. It had all ended well.

Finishing Touches

Before leaving for the world championship in the Austrian city of Innsbruck, we held a final, more relaxed training session, the main objective of which was to get into good shape for this most important tournament. At the same time, we fine-tuned various areas where an impact could be made in the remaining time. In particular, I wanted Artur to better understand the variations where White plays b2-b3 early against the King’s Indian Defense; Artur employed them on occasion. Kochiev

was considered to be the expert in this area, and I asked Bykhovsky to summon Sasha for a couple of days.

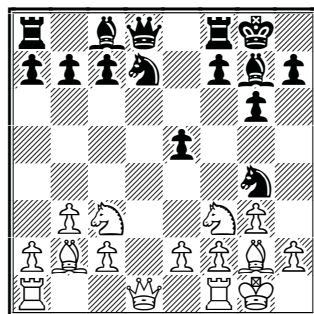
Anatoly Avraamovich opposed it flatly. “No way! Kochiev is a cynical guy, and he would be a bad influence on Artur.”

In this case, he was wrong. It is practically impossible to have a foul influence on such a firm and principled person as Artur. I did not argue and simply contacted Kochiev myself, as I had very good relations with him. He readily agreed to help. So, we met in an informal setting and Sasha shared his ideas with us. At the end of the world championship, Artur used this system to win a crucial game against a rival, who finished second.

Yusupov – Zapata

Innsbruck 1977

1.♖f3 ♖f6 2.g3 g6 3.b3 ♗g7 4.♗b2 d6 5.d4 0-0 (5...c5!) 6.♗g2 ♖bd7 7.0-0 e5?! 8.d×e5 ♖g4 9.♖c3 d×e5?! (better is 9...♖g×e5, with a somewhat worse position)



10.♖d2!

It becomes clear why White did not move the pawn to c4; this square is reserved for the knight. In such situations, it is not easy to avoid playing ...c7-c6, but can one really afford to weaken the d6-square with the knight on c4? Black should probably have played 10...f5,