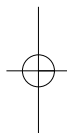


Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Preface	5
Roots	7
First years of competitive chess	10
Correspondence Chess	19
Offbeat Openings	21
Keres and the Estonian chess scene	23
Warsaw Chess Olympiad 1935	36
The end of domestic rivalry	39
Rising Star	88
Keres and the world of the 1930s	92
The shoe fits	95
Paul Keres – the Paganini of Chess	99
First supertournaments	100
FIDE makes its mark in Stockholm Olympiad 1937	104
Semmering-Baden 1937	106
AVRO 1938	117
A Fine streak	119
Drawing to victory	122
“Challenger”	126
Buenos Aires Olympiad 1939	129
Euwe vs Keres match 1939/40	134
The War Years	449
USSR Absolute Championship 1941	451
The Years of German Occupation	455
Tournaments in the Third Reich	457
Munich 1942	458
Prague 1943	459
Salzburg 1943	461
Madrid 1943	463

The Return of the Soviets	465
Rehabilitation?	468
USSR Championship 1947	476
Chigorin Memorial 1947	479
World Championship Candidate	686
The Hague	687
The Contrast: Keres vs Botvinnik	691
Moscow	693
Significance of the insignificant	697
Aftermath of the World Championship	699
Budapest Candidates 1950	700
The Eternal Second	702
Soviet Champion 1950 and 1951	703
Ups and Downs	706
Zürich Candidates 1953	710
Tributes	963
Fischer and Keres	1069
Analytical Comments	1078
Bibliography for Biography	1164
Footnotes for Biography	1166
Acknowledgements	1169
Acknowledgements for Photos	1172
Index of Opponents	1174
Index of Openings	1176



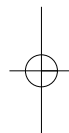
Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Preface	5
Still a Favourite	7
Amsterdam Candidates 1956	11
Inter-Candidates Performance	16
Bled-Zagreb-Belgrade Candidates 1959	22
Romantics take the lead	22
Woes	24
Not a photo-finish	25
Vintage Keres	419
Curaçao Candidates 1962	425
Slowly but Surely	427
Record breaking	429
The rest is history	431
Keres vs. Geller playoff match	436
Gulliver among the Lilliputians	565
Spassky match 1965 and beyond	572
Aftermath	574
Keres and the international scene of the late 60s and early 70s	576
No new tricks for the Old Dog	584
Final Years	794
A Postmortem of an Uncrowned King	867
Conditions	872
Pitfalls	877
Keres and 1948	881
The Coercion Argument	881
The Context	882
Eyewitness accounts and Evidence	885
Natural Causes	887
Shackles	891

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Preface to new expanded edition	5
Preface to original edition	7
<i>Chapter 1:</i> First steps, 1929-1935	15
<i>Chapter 2:</i> First international appearance 1935-1937	40
<i>Chapter 3:</i> On the way to the Grandmaster title 1937-1938	114
<i>Chapter 4:</i> The last pre-war years 1939-1941	170
<i>Chapter 5:</i> Tournaments of the war years 1942-1944	243
<i>Chapter 6:</i> Before the World Championship tournament 1945-1947	253
<i>Chapter 7:</i> World Championship and other tournaments 1948-50	287
<i>Chapter 8:</i> Tournaments and competitions in the years 1950-1952	374
<i>Chapter 9:</i> Tournaments and competitions in the years 1952-1955	445
<i>Chapter 10:</i> A new attempt at the World Championship 1955-1956	521
<i>Chapter 11:</i> Tournaments and competitions in the years 1957-1958	567
Supplementary Games 1932-43	595
Tournament Results	856
Individual Match Results	869
Correspondence Chess Results	870
Miscellaneous articles	872
Acknowledgements	885
Acknowledgements for Photos	886
Index of Opponents	887
Index of Openings	889

<i>Contents</i>	<i>Page</i>
Tributes	894
Bibliography for Biography	981
Footnotes for Biography	983
Acknowledgements	986
Acknowledgements for Photos	989
Suggestions for Further Reading	991
A Modern Look at Five Keres Games	995
Analytical Comments	1006
Special Thanks to...	1031
Index of Opponents	1034
Index of Openings	1036



Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Preface	5
1959: USSR Championship – Zürich – Moscow – Candidates Tournament in Bled-Zagreb-Belgrade	7
1960: Helsinki – USSR vs. West Germany in Hamburg – Leipzig Olympiad	55
1961: Zürich – Oberhausen – Bled – USSR Championship	94
1962: Candidates Tournament in Curaçao – Match vs. Geller – Varna Olympiad – Leningrad	133
1963: Tartu – Piatigorsky Cup in Los Angeles – Moscow	161
1964: Turku-Helsinki – Beverwijk – Buenos Aires – Tel Aviv Olympiad – Hastings	185
1965: Candidates Match vs. Spassky – Helsinki – Mariánské Lázně – USSR Championship	221
1966: Helsinki – Stockholm	238
1967: Moscow – Winnipeg	253
1968: Bamberg – Riga	274
1969: Wijk aan Zee – Tallinn – Tashkent – Luhačovice	293
1970: Budapest – USSR vs. Rest of World in Belgrade – Tallinn – Kapfenburg	312
1971: Tallinn – Pärnu – Amsterdam – USSR vs. Yugoslavia	342
1972: Sarajevo – Budapest – San Antonio	375
1973: Tallinn – Petropolis Interzonal – USSR Championship	403
1974: Togliatti	439
1975: Tallinn – Vancouver	448
Supplementary Games 1943-57	458
Informator Games	816
Tournament Tables	851
Acknowledgements	899
Index of Opponents	902
Index of Openings	904

Preface

For forty years during the 20th century Paul Keres remained one of the world's top grandmasters, admired for the way he played chess, famed for his spectacular surprise attacks, sparkling combinations, opening innovations, middlegame planning and endgame technique.

In fact he is often cited as being the strongest player never to have won the world title. Moreover he was not only respected as a fighting player, with a mastery of all aspects of the game, but also for his gentlemanly sporting conduct.

Volumes three and four of this series will contain Paul Keres' autobiography and own notes to his games, gathered together from his books and contributions to magazines from around the world. But here volumes one and two feature many more of Keres' games, annotated by his contemporaries, including most of the leading players of his era.

Starting with his wild days of correspondence chess, gambits and all-out attacking play, Keres rapidly progressed to a more mature style which placed him among the potential contenders for a world championship title match with Alekhine. However, after winning the immensely strong AVRO tournament in Holland 1938, the Second World War broke out and no title contest took place.

During the War he managed to compete in a few tournaments but then Alekhine died and the World Chess Federation declared the new champion was to be decided by a match-tournament held in The Hague and Moscow. However Paul's homeland of Estonia had in the meantime been annexed by the Soviet Union and political pressure was applied on him not to hinder its favoured player, Botvinnik, from winning the title. Keres eventually finished in third place.

Nevertheless he went on to win the Soviet Championship three times and over the next decade, as the pressure on him eased somewhat, he finished runner-up in four World Championship Candidates tournaments. He also continued to win a great many international tournaments, write about chess, delight spectators with his style of play and give simultaneous exhibitions to the very end of his life.

In his autobiography, published in Estonian, German, Spanish, English, and Russian, he limited his writing to chess-related matters. However, here Joosep Grents has supplied a much broader biography, free from the fetters of any censorship, which will enable the reader to gain a better knowledge

Preface

and understanding of the man, Paul Keres. It is a significantly expanded version of that which appeared originally on the Chess24 website.

The games are given here with their original annotations so as to transport the reader back to the times when they were played, thereby keeping alive the book's historical flavour. However, Philip Jurgens has enhanced many of these notes by providing computer-assisted corrections in footnote form.

All in all, these first two volumes will provide a counterbalance to the following two. Here the biography is far more rounded and the games include not only victories but also defeats and draws, which Keres did not include in his own 'Selected Games' book.

In such a way, by placing all the material in one place and in one language, we hope this series of books will provide readers with the most comprehensive work in English to date on Paul Keres' overall life and career.

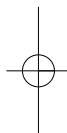
Jimmy Adams

London 2024

Among the sources consulted in writing the biography, I wish to acknowledge the debt owed to the published works of the Keres scholar Paavo Kivine. In particular, Kivine compiled and organized a wealth of correspondence between Keres and Tubin & Tamm upon which I drew liberally. He has also presented many interesting and thought-provoking perspectives on the events in Keres' life.

Joosep Grents

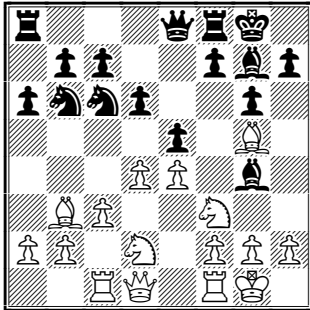
Tallinn 2024



As will be seen in the future, it is advantageous for Black to include the moves 11...h6 12.♙h4. (On 12.♙e3 possible was 12...f5 with great complications.)

12.♙b3 ♙g4

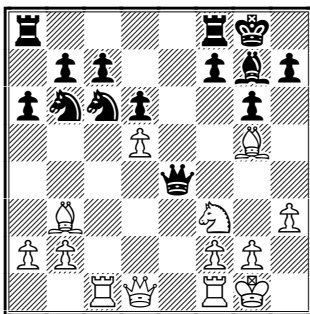
Now on 12...h6 would follow 13.♙e3.



13.h3!

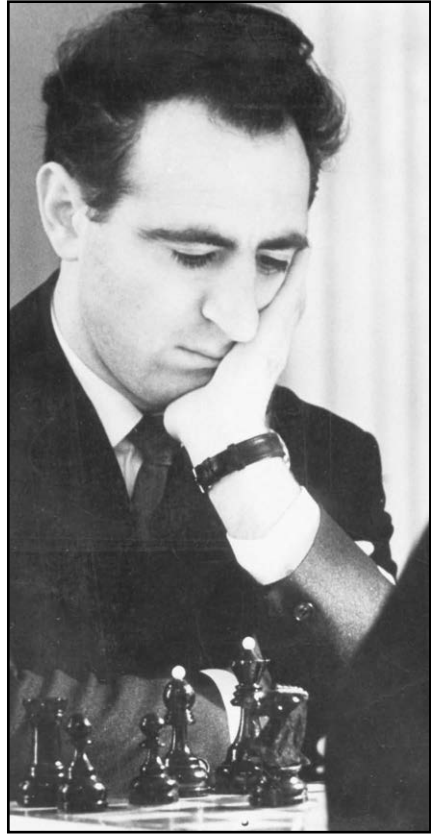
An interesting pawn sacrifice. White obtains compensation in view of his actively placed pieces.

13...♙xf3 14.♘xf3 exd4 15.cxd4 ♖xe4 16.d5



16...♘a5

With the position of the bishop on h4, Black could have continued 16...♘e5. Now, however, on 16...♘e5 follows simply 17.♙xc7 ♘xf3+



Lev Polugaevsky

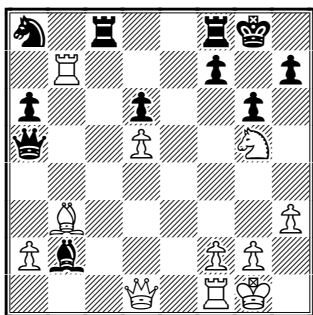
18.♖xf3 ♖xf3 19.gxf3, and White has the significantly better endgame.

17.♙xc7 ♙ac8 18.♙e7! ♖b4 19.♙d2 ♖b5 20.♙xa5 ♖xa5 21.♙xb7 ♙xb2 22.♙g5

With the manoeuvre begun on his 18th move, White has obtained an active position. Now Black has to play very carefully in order to neutralise White's combinational threats along the seventh rank.

22...♘a8!

A good idea. Black threatens to guard the seventh rank with 23...♙c7.



23. ♖e2

White does not continue the attack in the best way and lets go of the advantage. Necessary was 23. ♖g4! creating strong threats. For example, 23... ♜c7 24. ♜xc7 ♞xc7 (if 24... ♖xc7, then 25. ♖e2) 25. ♖h4 h5 26. ♞e4 and Black experiences great difficulties.

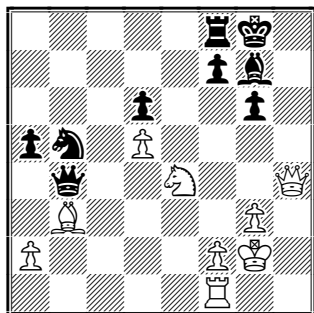
23... ♟e5 24. h4

After 24. f4 ♟d4+ 25. ♚h1 ♜ce8! Black would obtain good counterplay. But also upon the text continuation he manages to defend successfully.

24... ♜c7 25. ♜xc7 ♞xc7 26. h5 ♖b4 27. g3 ♞b5 28. ♚g2 ♟f6 29. ♞e4 ♟g7 30. hxg6 hxg6 31. ♖g4

Better was 31. ♖f3. After the move in the game Black has a quite satisfactory position.

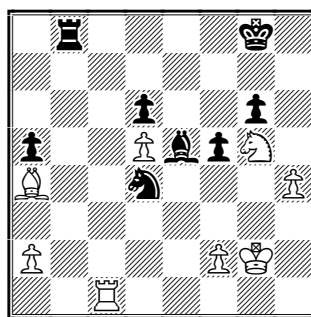
31... a5 32. ♖h4



32... f5?

Short of time, Black tries to simplify the position, but lands in the worse position. Stronger was 32... ♜e8 and if 33. ♞f6+ then 33... ♟xf6 34. ♖xf6 ♖e4+ 35. f3 ♖e5 with a good game. During the game White intended to meet 32... ♜e8 with 33. f3, but also in this case after 33... ♟f8! Black has sufficient defensive resources.

33. ♞g5 ♖xh4 34. gxh4 ♞d4
35. ♟a4 ♜b8 36. ♜c1 ♟e5



37. ♜c7

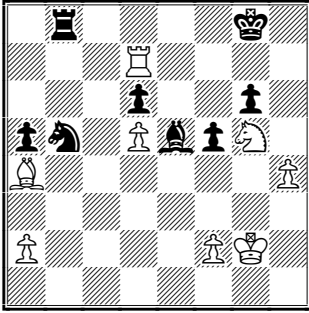
A routine move, facilitating Black's defensive chances. Necessary was a preliminary 37. ♟d7 and only then 38. ♜c7 with an obvious advantage.

37... ♞b5! 38. ♜e7

Upon an immediate 38. ♜d7 would follow 38... ♞c3 and White has taken away the d7-square for his bishop.

38... ♟f6 39. ♜d7 ♟e5

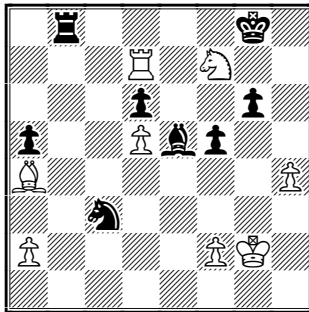
Black does not exploit good chances of defence. Necessary was 39... ♟xg5 40. hxg5 ♞c3 41. ♟c6 ♞e4 with a probable draw.



40. ♖f7

Another favourable continuation was 40. ♗xb5 ♜xb5 41. f4 ♕f6 42. ♝xd6 ♗xg5 43. fxg5 and White has good chances of victory in the rook endgame.

40... ♗c3 41. ♖h6+ ♗h8 42. ♖f7+ ♗g8



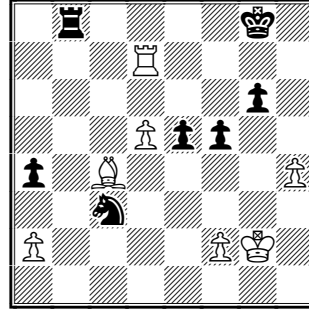
43. ♗xe5 dxe5

After 43... ♗xa4 44. ♝xd6 White wins easily.

44. ♗b3!

The natural 44. ♗c6 is inferior. Black could continue 44... ♗xa2 45. d6 ♗b4 46. ♗b7 a4 47. ♝c7 ♗f8 48. d7 ♝d8, eliminating all the dangers in good time.

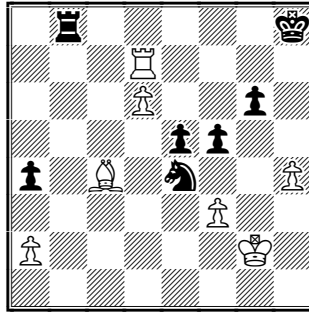
44... a4 45. ♗c4



45... ♗e4

45... ♝b4 is bad because of 46. ♝c7, while on 45... ♝c8 follows 46. ♗a6! ♝a8 (or 46... ♝c5 47. d6 ♗d5 48. ♝d8+ ♗f7 49. d7 ♗e7 50. ♝c8) 47. ♗b7 ♝b8 48. d6 ♗f8 49. ♝h7 ♗g8 50. ♝c7 ♗b5 51. ♗d5+ ♗h8 52. ♝d7 and Black does not have an adequate defence against 53. ♗c4, since on 52... ♝b6 follows 53. ♝d8+ ♗h7 54. d7 ♝d6 55. ♗g8+ followed by 56. ♗c4 and White wins.

46. d6+ ♗h8 47. f3

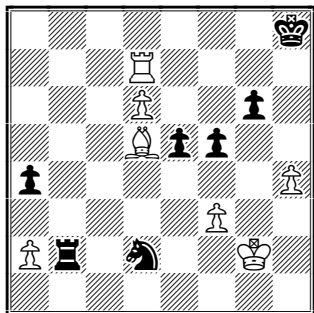


47... ♗d2

Losing at once. He could have put up tougher resistance by 47... ♝b2+ 48. ♗g1 ♝b1+ 49. ♗f1 ♗d2 50. ♝d8+ ♗g7 51. d7 ♝xf1+ 52. ♗g2 ♝xf3. In this case White has two continuations: 53. ♝e8 ♝d3 54. d8 ♗x8 55. ♝xd8 and after the fall of the a4-pawn

White should win, or 53. ♖g8+ ♔xg8
54. d8♖+ with a winning endgame.

48. ♕d5 ♖b2



49. ♖b7!

This move quickly concludes the struggle.

49... ♖c2 50. ♖c7

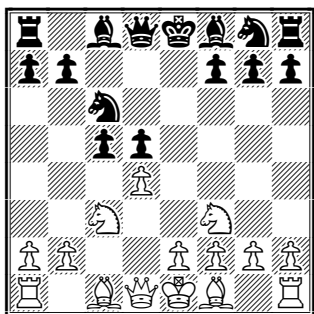
It was also possible to play an immediate 50. d7.

50... ♖b2 51. d7 ♖e4+ 52. ♔f1
♖b1+ 53. ♔e2 ♖b2+ 54. ♔e3 Black
resigned.

Game 196

Queen's Gambit: Tarrasch Defence
Mikhail Tal – Paul Keres
26th USSR Championship,
Tbilisi 1959

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. ♖c3 c5 4. cxd5
exd5 5. ♖f3 ♖c6



6. ♕f4

6.g3 is more often played. The system of development with the move 6. ♕f4 was worked out by the Leningrad master Furman and recently met frequently in tournament practice. Nevertheless it is still difficult for White to count on obtaining an opening advantage, since Black has good piece play for the isolated central pawn.

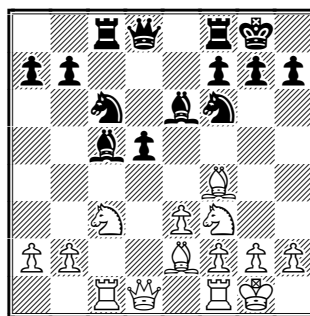
6... ♖f6 7. e3

Inferior is 7. ♖c1 ♕g4! as was played in the game Taimanov – Mikenas, USSR Team Championship, Vilnius 1958.

7... ♕e7 8. ♕e2 0-0 9. dxc5

Upon 9.0-0 Black gets comfortable play after 9...c4.

9... ♕xc5 10.0-0 ♕e6 11. ♖c1 ♖c8



12. ♖e5

White could not play 12. ♖xd5 ♖xd5 13. ♖xd5 ♖xd5 14. ♖xc5 ♖xf4 15. exf4 ♖d4! 16. ♖e5 ♖xe2+ 17. ♖xe2 ♕c4 and Black wins the exchange. With the move 12. ♖e5 he is reckoning on occupying the d4 square, for example, 12... ♖xe5 13. ♕xe5 followed by 14. ♕d4.