

**Michael Adams**



## *Play like a cavalier of the board*

I was very lucky that I got the opportunity to participate in a couple of events with Mikhail Tal at the end of his career. By that time his failing health meant that he was unable to perform with the brilliance of his youth, but his love of chess and life endured.

I remember how at a tournament in Buenos Aires, organised by Miguel Najdorf in 1991, after play Tal would adjourn to the press room for endless blitz games with a crowd of onlookers and a full glass. It didn't seem to be possible to discern how much he had drunk from his play, which remained excellent, but as he became a little more merry he started humming to himself between moves.

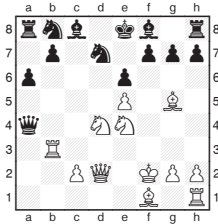
At his peak Tal exerted maximal pressure on his opponents by continually challenging them in complex situations. Such a risky strategy requires great skill at not overstepping the mark, and this was where Tal really excelled, staying with the demands of the position but still dictating play.

He seemed to see the board more as a whole than any other player, enabling him to walk a tightrope through the chaotic play that fascinated him.

Simon Williams also has a spectator-friendly swashbuckling style, making him a good host of the high-quality DVD *Play Like Tal* produced

by Gingergm.com. Simon presents the games in an interactive style. At various points you are asked to stop and predict the move of the great man from a choice of three alternatives. Then there is detailed analysis of all the options. I liked this feature, getting the viewer involved in the action.

The game below (which is covered in great detail in Gary Kasparov's *My Great Predecessors II*) is not from the DVD, so this won't spoil the questions for you. But it gives an idea of the kind of entertainment you can expect.



**M. Tal - A. Tolush**  
USSR Championship  
Leningrad 1956

### 15.Bf1-b5

Tal can't resist creating further confusion, but in fact the simpler 15.Nd4xe6 f7xe6 16.Ne4-d6+ Bf8xd6 17.Qd2xd6 Rh8-f8+ 18.Kf2-g3 was stronger. Instead Tal invites all his pieces to the party.

- 15... a6xb5  
16.Nd4xb5 f7-f6  
17.e5xf6 g7xf6

Black could have survived with 17...Qa4xe4 18.f6xg7 Bf8-c5+ 19.Kf2-g3 Rh8-g8 20.Rh1-e1 Nd7-f6 21.Bg5xf6 Rg8xg7+ 22.Bf6xg7 Qe4-g6+ 23.Kg3-f3 Qg6xg7 24.Qd2-f4 Nb8-a6 25.Nb5-d6+ Bc5xd6 26.Qf4xd6 Qg7-f8+ 27.Qd6xf8+ Ke8xf8, but the maelstrom of complications proves too much.

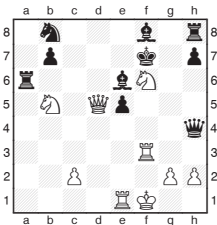
### 18.Rh1-e1

Bringing White's last piece into the assault gives Black a tough defensive task.

- 18... Ra8-a6  
19.Bg5xf6 Nd7xf6  
20.Ne4xf6+ Ke8-f7  
21.Rb3-f3 Qa4-h4+  
22.Kf2-f1 e6-e5  
23.Qd2-d5+

White should have played 23.Nf6-h5+ Kf7-g6 24.Rf3-g3+ Bc8-g4 25.h2-h3 Ra6-f6+ 26.Kf1-g1 Bf8-c5+ 27.Kg1-h2 Qh4xh5 28.Rg3xg4+ Qh5xg4 29.h3xg4.

### 23... Bc8-e6



### 24.Nf6-d7+ Kf7-g6

After 24...Kf7-e7 25.Qd5-c5+ Ke7-e8 26.Rf3xf8+ Rh8xf8+ 27.Qc5xf8+ Ke8xd7 28.Re1-d1+ Kd7-c6 29.Qf8-d6+ Kc6xb5 30.Rd1-b1+ Kb5-a4 31.Rb1-a1+ Ka4-b5 a draw by perpetual is inevitable.

### 25.Nd7xe5+ Kg6-g7

25...Kg6-h5 26.Qd5-d1 Kh5-h6 27.Qd1-d2+ Qh4-g5 28.Rf3-f6+ is decisive.

### 26.Rf3-g3+ Qh4xg3

Black must part with his queen due to 26...Kg7-h6 27.Ne5-f7+ Be6xf7 28.Qd5-d2+ Kh6-h5 29.Re1-e5+ and soon goes under.

- 27.Qd5xb7+ Nb8-d7  
28.h2xg3 Ra6-b6  
29.Qb7-c7 Bf8-c5  
30.Ne5xd7 Be6-c4+  
31.Re1-e2 1-0