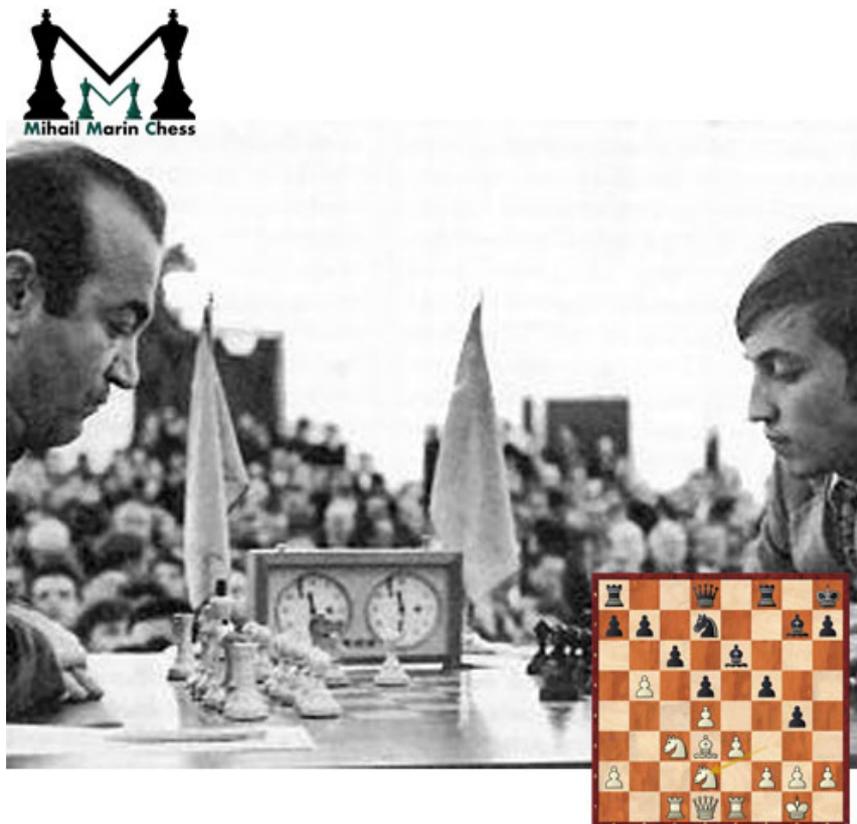


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# KARPOV'S ANTIDOTE TO KORTSCHNOJ'S KINGSIDE PAWN STORMING



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## Introduction

Chess is an individual sport and a chess game is dispute between just two players (with the obvious exception of those cases in which one of them is cheating). Therefore, when I decided embarking on the project of writing about Kortschnoj's pawn storming based on g4–g5 in his games against Karpov, I suspected little or not at all that I would have to introduce into the scene a third silhouette.

Apart from being a strong grandmaster, Semen Abramovich Furman is widely known to have coached Anatoly Karpov while climbing the chess Everest until the very top. Prior to that, he had been a close collaborator of Viktor Kortschnoj, the main hero of my previous and present article. The Goddess of coincidence made it happen that the absolute supremacy in the period between Fischer's and Kasparov's hegemony would be disputed precisely by Furman's young pupil and his ex-partner.

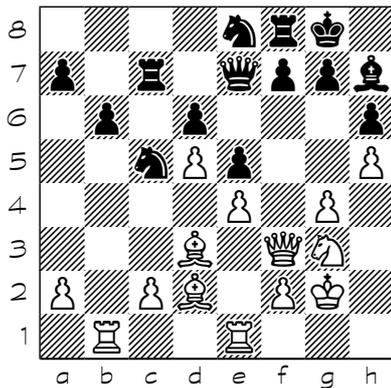
Some time ago, I read an interesting comment of Karpov about a possible cause of his early failures against the more experienced Kortschnoj. Karpov opined that, knowing Furman's style inside out, Kortschnoj knew exactly how he should play against his pupil. After realizing that, Karpov started playing differently than Furman

would advice and the results improved radically.

I did not understand from the beginning what Karpov could mean. I failed to find any hints about it by comparing the opening repertoires of the three grandmasters involved.

Before starting effective work on the present article, I remembered Karpov's comment and decided that it would not hurt approaching the issue from the point of view of the kingside pawn storm. My effort was fully rewarded and this is why we will start by examining two old examples from Furman's practice, in order to understand to which extent Karpov could be vulnerable to this kind of action.

**Petrosian - Furman**  
Soviet championship semi-final  
Gorky, 1950



White has the bishops' pair and considerable space advantage. Black's main trump is his stability on dark squares. The c5-knight certainly stands well, but the other minor pieces are rather misplaced. The e8-knight does not contribute to the blockade in any way, while the bishop has very reduced mobility.

When several things are wrong, one should make a clear plan of solving the problems one by one, in their right order of priorities, hoping that the opponent will not find the appropriate moment of striking. There is little to be done for the bishop at this stage. Besides, keeping f5 under control is a useful job, reducing the force of an eventual white attack. Therefore, Black should start improving the position of his e8-knight.

It is easy to notice, though, that 26...♞f6? is strongly met by 27.g5 hxg5 28.♙xg5 ♞cd7 29.h6±, with a

very unpleasant pin along the h4–d8 diagonal. Furman's next move prepares the knight manoeuvre under more favourable circumstances.

**26...♖h8!**

As we will see, clearing the g8-square will be useful.

**27.♙e3**

Not a bad move, but possibly a sign that White does not have a clear idea of play. Logically, it would make a lot of sense starting active operation in an area out of reach of the h7-bishop, meaning the queenside. Therefore, preparing a2–a4–a5 looks like the most coherent plan, now or in the near future. Later, White could transfer his knight to c4, watching that Black does not find a good moment to start some counterplay based on ...g6.

**27...♞f6!**

Furman brings his knight back into play, setting a small psychological trap at the same time.

