



Botvinnik's Secret
Games

Jan Timman

Mikhail Botvinnik was the ultimate boy scout of chess - always prepared! Indeed, his advance preparation for his key matches was feared by the greatest. It even involved the radio blaring while he was playing training games as well as having nicotine-puffing opponents blow smoke in his eyes during practice games, in order to acclimatise himself for the real thing. Of course, this was before the days of modern political correctness when smoking in public is regarded by the powers-that-be as a heinous crime and is, unlike licking the highway clean with your tongue, now generally banned by law on health and safety grounds.

Botvinnik's training games were a well guarded secret only shared by a few trusty colleagues, such as the Grandmasters Ragozin, Averbakh and Furman. The Soviet state was a monument to paranoia at the best of times, but suspicion multiplied when world titles hinged on secrecy, and these games have lain hidden for decades after they were played.

Botvinnik was World Champion three times, from 1948-1957, 1958 -1960 and 1961 -1963. His final championship victory against Tal in the 1961 revenge match counts as one of the highest scoring rating performances in the history of chess. It was of course based on the most meticulous preparation, not least in the psychological sphere of seeking to find and play positions which were not to Tal's taste.

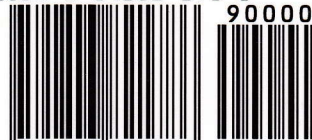
Grandmaster Jan Timman is one of the most popular and colourful players on the modern scene. A finalist in the FIDE-World Chess Federation-World Chess Championship in 1993, Timman has been the second dominating force in Dutch chess after world champion Dr Max Euwe. Here Timman presents every Botvinnik training game which could be found and subjects the most important to typically close analytical and explanatory scrutiny.



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