

## Tal Sacked His Queen to Beat Me

By Kirk Petty

On the American chess scene of the late 1970s and 1980s, there was much excitement. Tournament chess was readily available; organizers sought new and old methods to satisfy our hunger for the game. One tried-and-true method was that of GM simuls. It wasn't just GMs, but World Champions that toured, lectured, and played simuls. I have had the privilege to play both my hero GM Petrosian and GM Tal, World Champions! Chess offers the ordinary player a chance to play the greatest players in our sport.

GM Petrosian squeezed me in our game as he was famous for, like a python. (I recommend his book *Python Strategy*.) I wish I had that game to present because I played much better. The game with GM Tal is presented below as it contains the only claim to fame I can take from it.

The game was played in a simul at the Framingham Chess Club in Massachusetts. The Framingham Chess Club was amazing: 100 players every Tuesday night with a great program of regular rated play. GM Tal was very personable.

**Mikhail Tal (2700) - Kirk Petty (2053)**  
Tal Simul (Framingham CC), 3-8-1988

**1.e4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.Nc3 d6 4.f4 Nf6**



Mikhail Tal at the Framingham Chess Club simul in 1988.  
Kirk Petty is seated far right. Photo submitted by Kirk Petty.

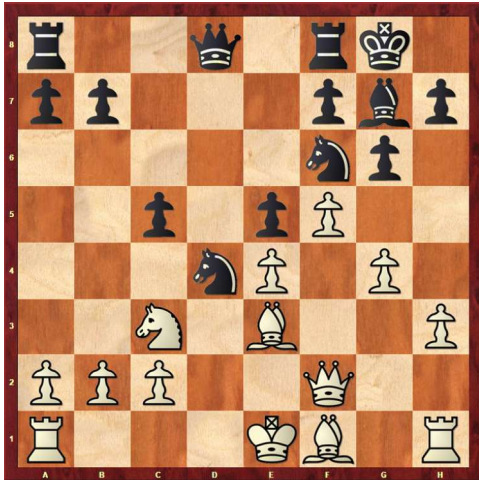
**5.Be3 Nc6 6.Nf3 Bg4 7.h3 Bxf3 8.Qxf3  
e5 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.f5 0-0**

Here 10...Nd4 11.Qf2 Qd6 or  
11...0-0 is better.

**11.g4 Nd4**

Here he comes close to my board again. One compensation the simul giver has is that, with the exception of one pass, once he steps in front of your board you have to move.

12.Qf2 c5



Every Russian schoolboy can see 12...b5 gives black some counterplay. If 13.g5 then 13...b4. I must declare that 12...c5 and my next move is hubris. I decided without evaluation that I could sac a piece for two pawns, activate my bishop, go after the Qf2 & Ke1 piece placement and attack on the queenside. I had seen a game where Tal had faced problems in a similar structure. So I was going to be the one to sacrifice against the magician from Riga. Yeah, right!

**13.g5 Nd7 14.f6 Nxf6 15.gxf6 Bxf6  
16.0-0-0 Bh4 17.Qg2 Qa5 18.Bh6 Rfd8  
19.Qg4 Be7 20.h4 b5 21.h5 b4**

At this moment Tal actually bent over a bit and took a moment. I believe I caught a glimpse of a slight smile.

22.hxg6 fxg6



23.Qxg6+

I said not too much above a whisper: "Tal sacked his Queen" –but I was still loud enough for a bunch of folks at the simul to come running.

**23...hxg6 24.Bc4+** I resigned because it's mate next. **1-0**

Okay, yes, not a well-played game. I was awestruck I suppose. Yes, one would say it's a sham sac, just played for mate; I agree, but he did sacrifice his queen to beat me. I can always say that Tal sacrificed his queen against me, and I have this as a badge of honor. It is something unique in a chess career. ■