

# Chess champ wows local crowd

By Tom Zuppa  
NEWS STAFF WRITER

FRAMINGHAM —Most American chess players lament Bobby Fischer's 15-year exile from the game, but the Russians are mighty upset as well.

"It's a tremendous loss for chess," former world champion Mikhail Tal told a standing-room-only crowd at the Framingham Chess Club last night.

"With every minute, every hour, every day, the chances of him returning are slighter," Tal said. "We would be very glad to see him return and play again as well."

## FRAMINGHAM

Tal may be among them; he posted one of the best records against the former world champion, who refused to defend the title he won from Boris Spassky in 1972.

Tal, 51, won the world championship in 1961 at age 24, then the

youngest ever. In and out of hospitals due to kidney ailments, he lost a return match to Mikhail Botvinnik 10 months later.

Since then, Tal has remained among the top players in the world, and is currently ranked sixth. A few weeks ago he won the World Blitz Championship in Saint John, New Brunswick, taking home \$37,500. Although he wore the crown more than 25 years ago, he was still besieged last night by autograph seekers who pushed forward pens and tattered copies of his 1975 biography.

Players snapped photographs as Tal strode quickly up and down the aisles of players at the American Legion Hall on Beech Street. He barely paused at most boards, and had won his first three games in less than an hour.

He used a sacrifice strategy in many games last night, keeping the crowd of more than 100 buzzing. At one point, Tal sacrificed

his queen against 11-year-old Bobby Seltzer of West Roxbury, probably Tal's strongest foe.

On Monday night, Tal mopped up the field at the Boylston Chess Club in Boston, scoring 16 wins, two draws in less than 90 minutes.

In a question-and-answer session prior to the exhibition, Tal was equally nimble, stepping around questions on chess politics. Asked if Great Britain would soon surpass the United States as a chess power, Tal replied through an interpreter, "I won't interfere in the internal affairs of your country."

He also refused to become involved in the war of words between world champion Gary Kasparov and World Chess Federation president Florencio Campomanes. "Kasparov makes a lot of noise," he said. "But he also does a lot of good for chess."

Asked about his best game ever, Tal replied, "I hope I haven't played it yet."



NEWS PHOTO BY PETER BAYLIES

Bobby Seltzer, 11, of West Roxbury waits for former world chess champion Mikhail Tal to make his move during a simultaneous exhibition at the Framingham Chess Club last night. Tal played 30 games at once in the exhibition.