

Opening Preparation



Exchange Slav: Strategy and Tactics

Roman Jiganchine

Exchange Slav - Strategy and Tactics

By Roman Jiganchine

The right of Roman Jiganchine to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted in accordance with the Copyrights, Designs and Patents Act 1988. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means (electronic, electrostatic, magnetic tape, photocopying, recording or otherwise), without prior permission from the author.

Jiganchine, Roman. Exchange Slav - Strategy and Tactics. Kindle Edition.

For questions, comments, or more information on this book, contact: Roman Jiganchine at jiganchine@outlook.com.

Copyright © 2013 by Roman Jiganchine.

About the Author

Roman Jiganchine has been a chess coach of several Canadian junior players. His students in the early 2000s won many Canadian championship youth titles in various age groups. Roman has contributed to "Chess Life", Russian "64" magazine, and for several years had an endgame column in Canadian chess magazine "En Passant" (later renamed into "Chess Canada"). He received his early chess education in the Moscow Petrosian Chess school, which brought to the chess world grandmasters such as Morozevich, Riazantsev, and the Women's World Champion Alexandra Kosteniuk. Roman moved to Vancouver, BC in 1998, and represented Canada in the 2000 World Youth Under 18 Championship in Spain.

Opening Preparation

Opening preparation in chess is always difficult and a lot of books have been written about this topic. The goal of this book is to illustrate how a specific structure should be studied for typical themes. To learn the mainline theory one can usually look at the opening encyclopedia or opening tree on a computer and both are great ways of finding out what the most popular sequences of moves are. However it is the experience playing a line that gives a chess player an understanding of the most common ideas and themes behind the opening variation.

This book takes a specific opening variation (Exchange Slav) and through examples from grandmaster play, illustrates those themes. Having gone through this book, you'd want to take a look at the rest of your opening repertoire, and identify the ideas typical for each major pawn structure that arises. Any player who plays the Slav defence as Black, or who plays 1.d4 can benefit from learning the specific middlegame themes presented here. However, other players, who would like to learn the **approach of connecting the middlegame with the opening in chess**, can also learn a lot!

Book Format

The book is meant to be an interactive experience, with a lot of diagrams and questions posed to the reader. To see the solution for each puzzle - just go to the next page in your electronic device. The book has a lot of diagrams, so with some effort - you could try to go through it without using a chessboard.

Slav Defence

Slav Defence - Main lines

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6



This is the Slav defence - it was called so because it was mainly popularized by Russian and Czech players; it was even called Czech defence at some stage. In opening classification there soon appeared a distinction between the Slav and the Semi-Slav defences. Semi-Slav carried the ideas of playing e7-e6 quite early, whereas the Slav defence was making the point of developing the 'c8' bishop outside of the pawn chain. Black supports the 'd5' pawn, while also hoping to use the 'c' pawn to support a quick b7-b5.

3. Nf3

(3. e3 defends c4 in advance, but 3. ... Bf5 4. Nf3 e6



leaves White with a bad bishop on c1.)

3. ... Nf6 4. Nc3 dxc4



Black grabs the pawn, and White has to worry about winning it back.

5. a4

(5. e4 b5



is the Geller gambit and leaves Black with an extra pawn, in return for questionable compensation.)

5. ... Bf5 6. e3 e6 7. Bxc4 Bb4

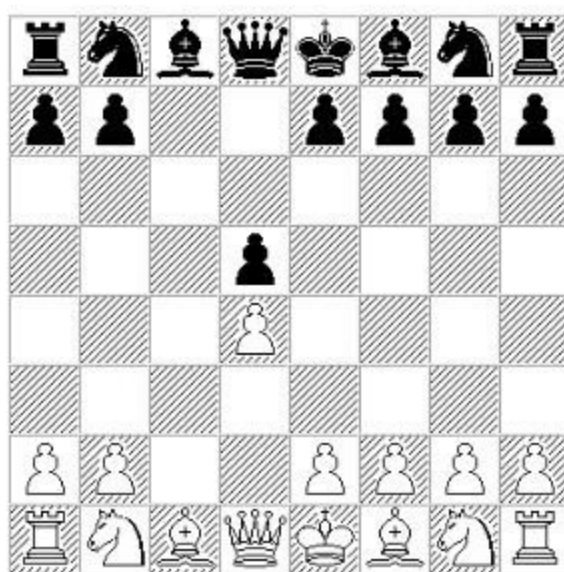


allows Black relatively easy development.

How can White sidestep the issues above and keep some initiative? To some players the Exchange variation is the solution. Vladimir Kramnik is one of the leading exponents today of this approach and he successfully played it against the world's leading players, even defeating Levon Aronian and Vishy Anand in the past few years. By resolving the tension in the center with 3.cd White still remains a tempo up and unless his major goal is to get a draw this evening, this extra tempo can cause a lot of adventures on the board, which, of course, might still lead to a draw.

Exchange Variation - Slav Defence

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. cxd5!? cxd5



This is the exchange variation of the Slav defence. From other symmetric openings, the most obvious comparison would be with the French exchange, but in Slav exchange play more reminds of the Petroff defence, which is one of the most popular openings nowadays, and where White often obtains an advantage.

4. Nf3 Nf6 5. Nc3 Nc6 6. Bf4



6. ... Bf5

The main move, but recently quite a few sidelines have been developed.

(6. ... a6 allows Black to be flexible about development of his 'c8' bishop)

(6. ... e6 is an old solid line.)

(6. ... Ne4 is an attempt to take over the initiative.)

(6. ... Qb6 is attacking the 'b2' pawn, while relying on solidity of Black's own position.)

7. e3 e6



The rest of the book discusses the plans and tactical themes common to this pawn structure in details.

Middlegame Themes

Middlegame themes of Slav Exchange are surprisingly rich for what would appear to be a rather plain structure. I am going to illustrate each with a couple of examples.

- [Play on the 'c' File](#)
- [Pressure on 'c6'](#)
- [Structural Transformations](#)
- [Breakthrough in the Center](#)
- [Kingside Pawn Storm](#)
- [Slav Endgame](#)
- [Good and Bad Bishops](#)

Play on the 'c' File

It is clear that with the only open file being the 'c' file, most attempts to gain an advantage for White would be related to using his extra tempo to double up the rooks on this file and prevent Black from doing so. The next game shows how White can quickly gain initiative in the opening:

Grischuk, Alexander - Kamsky, Gata
Aeroflot Rapid Finals 2013.02.17 , D10

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. cxd5 cxd5 5. Bf4

Recently this became a popular move order; White delays the development of the kingside.

5. ... Qb6 6. e3



6. ... Nc6

(6. ... Qxb2 7. Bb5+ Nc6 8. Nge2 gives White good compensation.)

7. Bd3 Bg4 8. Nge2 e6 9. O-O a6 10. Na4



Now it turns out that the development of the queen to b6 was a waste of time, and White gains initiative.

10. ... Qa7 11. Qb3 b5



Question: Does the knight have to retreat?



Answer: No, White can utilize his lead in development and attack on the 'c' file.

12. Rfc1! Rc8

(12. ... bxa4 13. Qxa4 leaves White with at least one extra pawn.)

13. Rc2!

Grischuk continues to ignore the attacked knight and just builds up pressure along the open file.

13. ... Be7 14. Rac1 Qb7 15. Nc5 Bxc5 16. Rxc5



Black managed to avoid an immediate disaster, but had to surrender an important bishop.

16. ... Nd7 17. R5c3 Bxe2 18. Bxe2 O-O 19. a4!



Grischuk begins attacking Black's weaknesses on the queenside, material losses are already inevitable.

19. ... b4 20. Bd6 Qb6 21. Bxb4

Due to the pin on the 'c' file, the bishop is immune.

21. ... Rfe8 22. Bc5 Qxb3 23. Rxb3 Na5 24. Rbc3 Rb8 25. Bxa6



White now is up two pawns, and Grischuk converted the advantage rather easily.

25. ... Nb3

(25. ... Rxb2 26. Bb5 +-)

26. R1c2 Ndx5 27. dxc5 d4 28. exd4 Nxd4 29. Rd2 Red8 30. Kf1 Kf8 31. Rc4 Nb3 32. Rxd8+ Rxd8 33. Ke1 Rd5 34. c6 Re5+ 35. Kd1 Rd5+ 36. Kc2

Black misplayed the opening when he did not follow up Qb6 with Qxb2, and Grischuk very

convincingly won the game with energetic play.

1-0

Often, even if White succeeded at doubling on the 'c' file, there is still be a serious obstacle on the way of the rooks, the 'c6' knight. If there is no such obstacle on the 'c' file, the side possessing it has a very significant advantage, as the next 2 games illustrate. They also show that learning this structure can help in similar positions, even if they arise from a different opening.

Capablanca, Jose Raul - Vidmar, Milan
It 1922



What does this QGD position have to do with Slav Exchange? This game is a great illustration of how important it is for Black to have his knight on c6, blocking the 'c' file. With the knight on d7 and bishop on c8 the same structure leads to a rather depressing defeat for Black. **11. O-O b6?!**

This allows White to transform the structure in his favour.

12. Nxd5! cxd5

(After 12. ... exd5 13. Bd3 White would win a pawn due to double attack on 'h7' and 'c6'.)

13. Bd3



We now see the typical Slav exchange structure and a version that is very favourable for White, as he controls the open file. The black pieces are poorly developed and his queenside is weakened by the advance of the 'b' pawn.

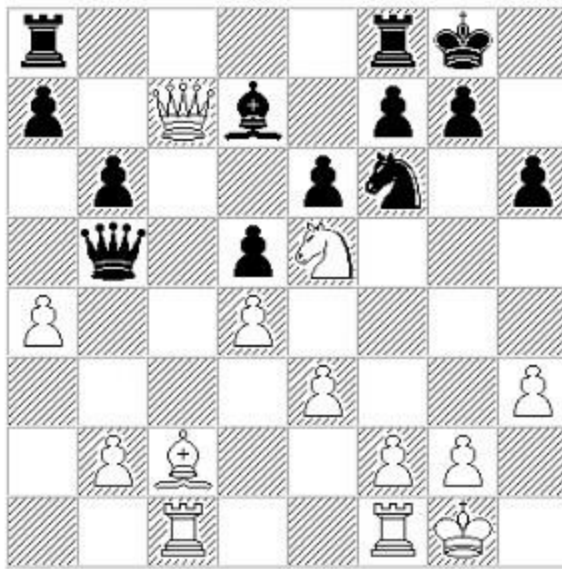
13. ... h6 14. Qc7 Qb4 15. a3



15. ... Qa4

(15. ... Qxb2 does not help very much 16. Rb1 Qxa3 17. Bb5 Qe7 18. Ne5 Rd8 19. Nc6 +-)

16. h3 Nf6 17. Ne5 Bd7 18. Bc2 Qb5 19. a4



19. ... Qxb2 20. Nxd7 Rac8 21. Qb7 Nxd7



White to move



Solution:

22. Bh7+

White opens the 'c' file to his advantage and wins the exchange.

22. ... Kxh7 23. Rxc8 Rxc8 24. Qxc8 Nf6 25. Rc1

and White won.

1-0

Tarnowski, Alfred - Botvinnik, Mikhail
Olympiad 1960



This position arose from the Catalan Opening. Most likely, White was playing for a draw, but despite simplifications Botvinnik manages to outplay his less experienced opponent. **16. ... Qa5 17. Qb3**

Black's advantage consists of a more active position of the queen and the fact that White has a bad bishop.

17. ... b5

Black creates an outpost on 'c4' as he is intending Rc4.

18. Rxc8 Rxc8 19. a3 Rc4 20. Rd1 Qb6 21. Rd2



21. ... Qc6

Black regrouped his pieces ideally - with the queen supporting the rook from behind on the open file.

22. e3 a5 23. Bg3 Rc1



Through natural moves, Botvinnik achieved total domination!

24. f3 f6 25. Bf2 Qc4 26. Qd3 a4



Botvinnik follows all the classical rules of positional play - placing his pawns on colour different from the colour of his bishop.

27. e4 Qxd3 28. Rxd3 b4 29. axb4 Bxb4

Now the 'b2' pawn is doomed.

30. exd5 exd5 31. Re3 Rc2 0-1

Often it is hard for any side to dominate on the 'c' file completely. Then it becomes important who gains initiative after exchanges take place on that file.

Huebner, Robert - Georgiev, Kiril
Bundesliga 1997, D13

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Nf3 a6 5. cxd5 cxd5 6. Bf4 Nc6 7. e3 Bg4



Here the bishop is going to occupy a good position; in some situations Black might willingly exchange on f3.

8. Bd3

Perhaps, this move is too optimistic, as later the bishop has to go back to e2.

8. ... e6 9. h3 Bh5 10. Rc1 Bd6 11. Bxd6 Qxd6



The Black queen is going to occupy a very good position here, eyeing 'b4'.

12. O-O O-O 13. Be2 Rac8

(13. ... Rfc8 can be met with 14. Na4 threatening Nb6)

14. Ne1

(If 14. a3 then 14. ... Na5)

14. ... Bxe2 15. Qxe2 Nd7



The black knights are in fact more active than White's; a7-a6 in this position is a useful advance, as the white knight cannot be safely posted on c5.

16. Nd3 Nb4 17. Nxb4

(17. a3 Nxd3 18. Qxd3 b5 19. Rc2 Rc4 20. Rfc1 Rfc8 is a bit more pleasant for Black.)

17. ... Qxb4 18. Nb1 Qa5



19. b3

(If White plays 19. a3 ,Black might be able to exploit this weakness with Nb6-b6-c4.)

19. ... Rc7 20. Rc2 Rfc8 21. Rfc1



White is able to maintain pressure on the c file, but this allows the Black queen to invade.

21. ... Rxc2 22. Rxc2 Rxc2 23. Qxc2 Qe1+ 24. Kh2 g6 25. Nc3 Nf6 26. g3 Qf1



27. Qe2 Qc1 =+

Of course, Black wants to keep queens on, as his queen is more active - that's his only advantage, but a serious one.

28. Na4?

(The only way to maintain balance was the subtle 28. Qf3! Kg7 29. e4!)

28. ... Ne4 29. Kg2 b5 30. Qb2?

(30. f3 Nxc3 31. Kxc3 bxa4 32. Kg2 axb3 -/+)

(Last chance was 30. Nc5 Nxc5 31. dxc5 Qxc5 -/+)

30. ... Qe1



White realized that after retreating with the knight he won't have any good defence to Nd2 and Qf1, so

he resigned.

0-1

Hauchard, Arnaud - Shirov, Alexei
Oakham 1992



14. Na4

White begins the march of the knight to c5, while Black starts doubling rooks on the 'c' file. Whose plan is going to prove more effective?

14. ... Rc7 15. Nc5 Rfc8 16. Nd3?!

Removing a strong knight from c5 seems to be a shy decision. If White was worried about e6-e5 break, there was a way to prevent it without leaving c5 with the knight.

(Better was 16. Qa4 and Black would not be able to play 16. ... e5? due to 17. Nxb7!)



17. ... Rxb7 18. dxe5 Qxe5 19. Rxc6 Rxc6 20. Qxc6 Rxb2 21. Bxd5! Rd2 22. Bb3 +/-)

16. ... Nb4

The position strongly resembles Huebner-Georgiev.

17. Rxc7 Rxc7 18. a3 Nxd3 19. Qxd3 Qc6 20. Rb1 Qc2

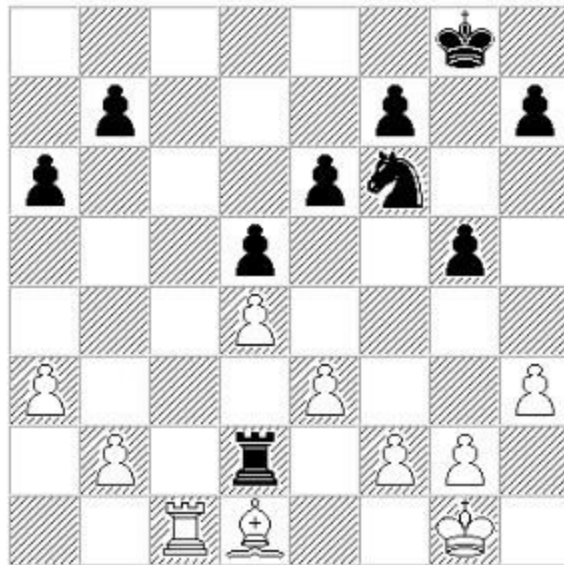


Everything is done according to classical rules: possession of a file leads to an invasion on the second rank.

21. Qxc2 Rxc2 22. Bd1 Rd2 23. Rc1

(There is no time to attack the rook with the king: 23. Kf1 Ne4 24. f3 Ng3+ 25. Kg1 Nf5 -+)

23. ... g5



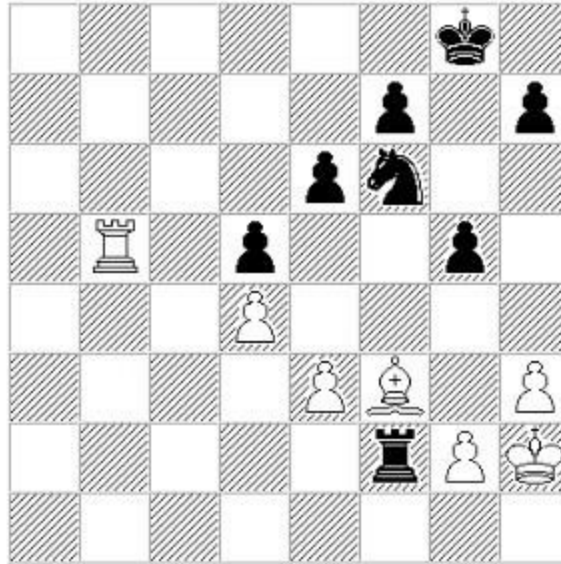
24. b4

(24. Bc2 g4! would have kept the pressure on White: 25. Kf1 g3! 26. fxg3 Nh5 -/+)

24. ... Ra2 25. Bf3 Rxa3 26. b5 axb5 27. Rc7 Ra1+ 28. Kh2 Rf1 29. Rxb7 Rxf2

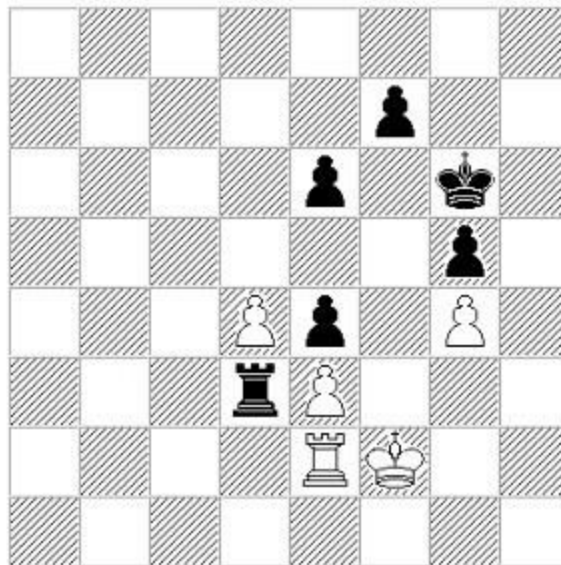
(29. ... Rb1!?)

30. Rxb5



Black won a pawn and his pieces are still more active. Eventually he converted the advantage.

30. ... Rd2 31. Kg1 h5 32. g4 hxg4 33. hxg4 Kg7 34. Rb1 Kg6 35. Re1 Ne4 36. Re2 Rd3 37. Bxe4+ dxe4 38. Kf2



38. ... f5 39. Ra2 f4 40. Re2 fxe3+ 41. Rxe3 Rxd4 42. Ra3 Kf6 0-1

Test Yourself

Not surprisingly, the open file gives ground to a lot of combinations, so the following tactical puzzles will give you an opportunity to develop a keen eye for spotting those chances. The opening of each game is also provided, to give an idea of how early inaccuracies can lead to tactical disasters.

Filguth, Rubens Alberto - Vilela, de Acuna Jose Luis
Havana 1986 , D10

1. c4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. cxd5 cxd5 4. Nc3 Nc6 5. Bf4 Nf6 6. e3 e6 7. Bd3 Be7 8. h3 Bd7 9. Nf3 Rc8 10. Rc1 Qb6 11. Qd2 O-O 12. O-O Na5 13. Ne5

Now it was best to play 13...Nc6.

13. ... Be8?



White to move



Solution:

14. Nxd5

White punishes Black for leaving the 'c8' rook unprotected.

14. ... Nxd5

(14. ... Rxc1 15. Nxe7+ +-)

15. Rxc8 Bb4 16. Qc2 Nxf4 17. Bxh7+ Kh8 18. Rxe8 1-0

1. Nf3 d5 2. c4 c6 3. d4 Nf6 4. e3 Bf5 5. cxd5 cxd5 6. Qb3 Qb6 7. Qxb6 axb6 8. Nc3 e6 9. Bb5+
Nfd7 10. Ne5 Bb4 11. Bd2 Ra5?! 12. a4 Ra8?! 13. Rc1 Bd6



Question: Black has wasted two tempi, how can White punish him for such a loss of time?



Answer:

14. Nxd5!

Black's position collapses since he can't cover 'c8' square.

14. ... O-O

(14. ... exd5 15. Rc8+ Ke7 16. Rxh8 +-)

15. Nxd7 exd5 16. Nxf8 Kxf8 17. Ke2 Nd7 18. f3 Nf6 19. Rhe1 1-0

Pino Munoz Francisca - Cook Patrick
2011 , D12

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. Nf3 Nf6 4. e3 Bf5 5. Nc3 e6 6. Nh4 Bg6 7. Nxg6 hxg6 8. h3 Nbd7 9. Bd2 Bd6 10. Qb3 Qc7 11. Bd3 b6 12. cxd5 cxd5?

(12. ... exd5!)

13. Nb5 Qb8 14. Rc1 a6?



White to move



Solution:

15. Rc8+!

White wins the queen by force.

15. ... Qxc8 16. Nxd6+ Ke7 17. Nxc8+ Rhxc8 18. Qb4+ Ke8 19. Qd6 a5 20. O-O 1-0

Knoflicek, Ctibor - Druckenthaner, Andreas

Vienna open 2003 , D14

1. Nf3 Nf6 2. c4 c6 3. d4 d5 4. cxd5 cxd5 5. Nc3 Nc6 6. Bf4 Bf5 7. e3 e6 8. Bb5 Nd7 9. O-O Be7
10. Qb3 O-O 11. Rfc1 Na5 12. Qa4

Now Black should have gone for 12. ... Nc4! 13. Bxc4 (13. Bxd7 Nb6!) 13. ... Nb6! =

12. ... Nf6?



White to move



Solution:

13. Bc7!

Classic decoy - the queen is forced to c7, where it will be hit by the rook. The loose position of the 'a5' knight is the problem in most variations.

13. ... Qxc7 14. Nxd5 Qd8 15. Nxe7+ Qxe7 16. Qxa5 +/-

White is up a pawn, and eventually converted his advantage.

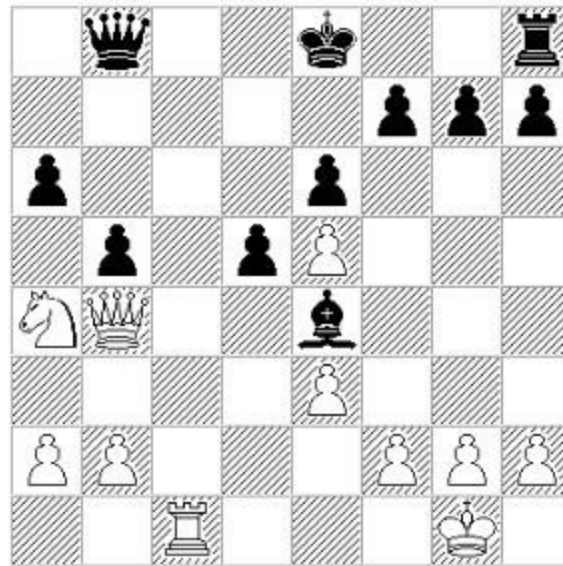
16. ... Nd5 17. Be2 Bg4 18. h3 Bh5 19. a3 f5 20. Qd2 Rad8 21. Ne5 Bxe2 22. Qxe2 Qh4 23. Rc5 g5 24. Rac1 g4 25. hxg4 f4 26. Nf3 Qxg4 27. e4 b6 28. Rc6 Ne7 29. Rc7 Ng6 30. Qb5 e5 31. Rxa7 Rc8 32. Rcc7 Rxc7 33. Rxc7 Qe6 34. Qc4 Qxc4 35. Rxc4 exd4 36. Rxd4 Rc8 37. Kf1 Rc2 38. Rd2 Rc4 39. Rd4 Rc2 40. Rb4 Rc1+ 41. Ke2 Rc2+ 42. Nd2 Ne5 43. Kd1 Rc6 44. Rb5 Nd3 45. Ke2 Nc1+ 46. Kf3 Rc2 47. Rd5 Rxb2 48. Kxf4 Ra2 49. Kf5 Rxa3 50. Rd8+ Kf7 51. e5 Rd3 52. Rxd3 Nxd3 53. f4 b5 54. Ke4 Nc5+ 55. Kd5 Ne6 56. f5 Nf4+ 57. Kd6 b4 58. g3 Nh5 59. Kd7 Nf6+ 60. exf6 Kxf6 61. g4 b3 62. Ne4+ Ke5 63. Nc3 h5 64. Ke7 hxg4 65. f6 g3 66. f7 Kd4 67. f8=Q Kxc3 68. Qg7+ Kc2 69. Qxg3 b2 70. Qf2+ Kb3 71. Qe3+ Ka2 72. Qd2 Ka1 73. Qa5+ Kb1 74. Kd6 Kc2 75. Qa4+ Kc1 76. Qc4+ Kd2 77. Qb3 Kc1 78. Qc3+ Kb1 79. Kc5 Ka2 80. Qa5+ Kb3 81. Qb4+ Kc2 82. Qe4+ Kc1 83. Qc4+ Kb1 84. Kb4 Ka1 85. Qa6+ Kb1 86. Kb3 1-0

Pohl - Tragsdorf, Gisela
DDR-ch (Women) 1969 , D12

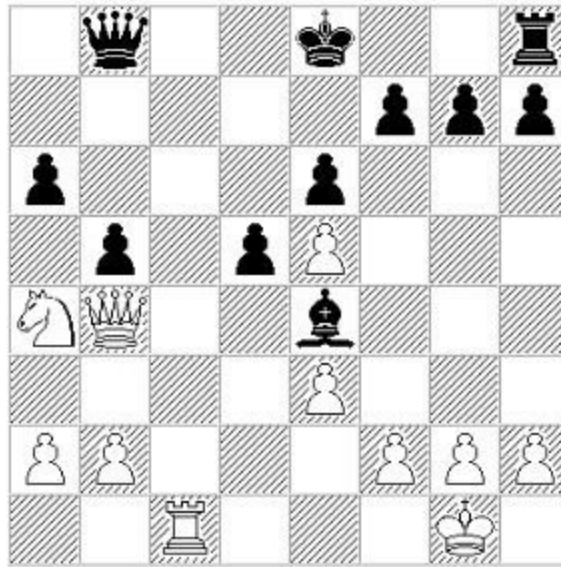
1. c4 c6 2. Nc3 d5 3. cxd5 cxd5 4. e3 Nf6 5. d4 Bf5 6. Nf3 e6 7. Qb3 Qc7 8. Bb5+ Nbd7 9. Bd2 a6
10. Bxd7+ Nxd7 11. Rc1 Rc8 12. O-O Qb8 13. Na4 Bd6?! 14. Rxc8+ Qxc8 15. Rc1 Qb8 16. Bb4
Bxb4 17. Qxb4 Be4?

(17. ... f6!?)

18. Ne5 Nxe5 19. dxe5 b5



White to move



Solution:

20. Nb6

Black is punished for keeping the king in the center for too long.

20. ... Qxb6 21. Rc8+ Kd7 22. Rxb8 +- Qc7 23. Qc3 Qxc3 24. bxc3 Kc6 25. Rf8 Bg6 26. Kf1 Kb6 27. Ke1 Ka5 28. Ra8 Bb1 29. a3 g5 30. Kd2 Bg6 31. g3 g4 32. Ra7 Kb6 33. Rd7 Ka5 34. Rd6 Be4 35. Kc1 Bg6 36. Kb2 Be4 37. Rd7 Bg6 38. Kb3 Kb6 39. Rd8 Ka5 40. Rb8 Be4 41. Rb7 Bg6 42. Ka2 Ka4 43. Kb2 Ka5 44. Kb3 Bh5 45. Rd7 Bg6 46. Rd6 Be4 47. Kb2 Bg6 48. Kb3 Be4 49. a4 bxa4+ 50. Ka3 Kb5 51. Rd7 Bg6 52. Rc7 Kb6 53. Rc8 Kb5 54. Rb8+ Ka5 55. Rb4 h5 56. Rxa4+ Kb5 1-0

Lobbes, Frank - Paschmann, Stefan

Porz Open 1994, D13

1. c4 Nf6 2. Nc3 c6 3. Nf3 d5 4. cxd5 cxd5 5. d4 e6 6. e3 Be7 7. Bd3 O-O 8. O-O b6 9. Ne5 Bb7
10. f4 g6 11. Bd2 Nfd7 12. Rc1 f6 13. Nf3 f5?! 14. a3 h6 15. Ne5 Nxe5 16. fxe5 Kg7 17. Ne2 Qd7
18. Nf4 Ba6



White to move



Solution:

19. Rc7 Qe8

(19. ... Qxc7 20. Nxe6+ wins the queen.)

20. Nxe6+ Kf7 21. Nxf8 Bxd3 22. Bb4 Nc6 23. Bxe7 Nxe7 24. Nxg6 Kxg6 25. Qxd3 1-0

Masich, Vladimir - Stock, Hugo
Wch Seniors 18th 2008 , D11

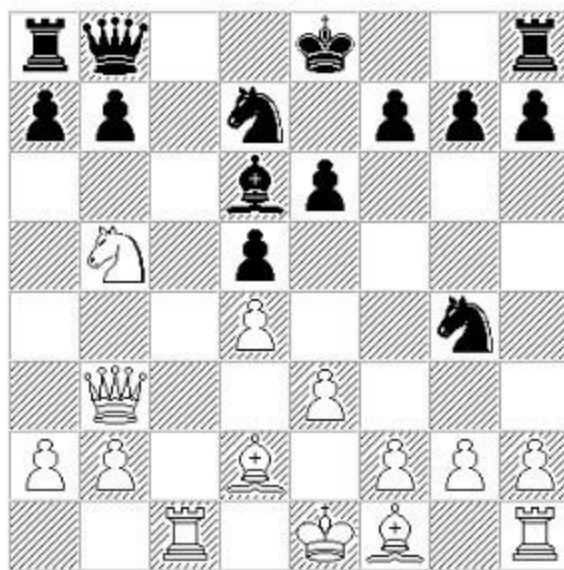
1. d4 d5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. e3 c6 4. c4 Bg4 5. Qb3 Qc8 6. Ne5 Nbd7?!

(6. ... e6! would have allowed to keep the 'c' file closed.)

7. Nxc4 Nxc4 8. cxd5 cxd5 9. Nc3 e6 10. Bd2 Be7 11. Rc1 Qb8?!

(11. ... Qd8!?)

12. Nb5 Bd6?



White to move



Solution:

13. Rc8+!

Black committed several inaccuracies in the opening, and gets punished for them.

13. ... Qxc8 14. Nxd6+ Ke7 15. Nxc8+ Rhxc8 16. Bb5 Ngf6 17. O-O 1-0

Kluger, Hans-Peter - Neubert, Gerhard

EU-chT Seniors 2010 , D10

**1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. cxd5 cxd5 4. Nc3 Nc6 5. Bf4 Bf5 6. e3 e6 7. Nf3 Bd6 8. Bxd6 Qxd6 9. Bb5
Ne7 10. Rc1 O-O 11. a3 h6 12. O-O Rac8 13. Ne2 Rc7 14. Ng3 Bh7 15. Bd3 Bxd3 16. Qxd3 Rfc8
17. Qd2 b6 18. Rc3 Na5 19. Rfc1?**



Black to move



Solution:

19. ... Nb3

Exploiting White's last move.

20. Qd1

(20. Rxb3 Rxc1+ -+)

20. ... Nxc1 21. Qxc1 Rxc3 22. bxc3 Qc7

Up an exchange, Black won shortly.

23. Ne2 Nc6 24. h4 Na5 25. Qc2 Nc4 26. Qb3 Qe7 27. a4 g5 28. hxg5 hxg5 29. g4 Qf6 30. Kg2 Qxf3+ 0-1

Pressure on 'c6'

When putting pressure on the 'c6' knight, White often trades it off and then (if Black recaptured with a pawn) tries to prevent the pawn from advancing to 'c5'. The following two games show how this strategy can be successful, but it is important to keep in mind that in both cases Black's troubles were caused by imprecise opening play.

Botvinnik, Mikhail - Tal, Mikhail
World Championship match 1961 , D14

Capablanca beat Lasker in this opening in 1924 battle of titans, and Alekhine defeated Euwe with it in 1938, but Mikhail Botvinnik was perhaps the only World Champion to use Slav Exchange repeatedly throughout his career. His positional understanding allowed him to win in Slav Exchange against such opponents as Tal and Smyslov. In total between 1945 and 1967 Botvinnik scored 6/8 points in this opening as White, with 4 wins and 4 draws. **1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 c6 3. Nc3 d5 4. cxd5 cxd5 5. Nf3 Nc6 6. Bf4 Bf5 7. e3 e6 8. Bb5**



8. ... Bb4

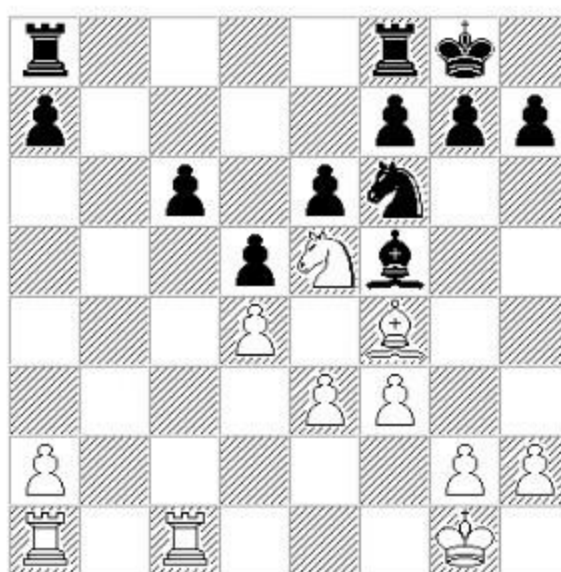
(8. ... Nd7 is considered best here, preventing Ne5.)

9. Ne5 Qa5 10. Bxc6+ bxc6 11. O-O Bxc3 12. bxc3 Qxc3



Black even succeeded in winning the 'c3' pawn, but he still has some difficulties, as he is behind in development. As White regains the c6 pawn, he will also be able to put pressure on the 'a7' pawn.

13. Qc1! Qxc1 14. Rfxc1 O-O 15. f3



No hurry to regain the pawn! It is more important to deprive the Black knight of the 'e4' square.

15. ... h6 16. Nxc6 Rfe8 17. a4 Nd7 18. Bd6

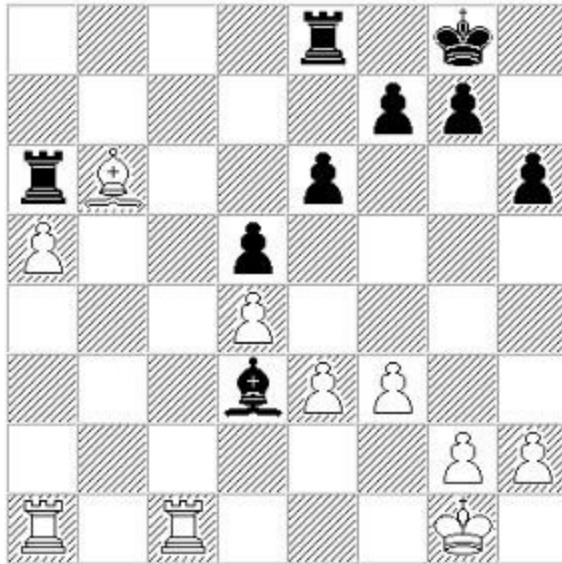


The white minor pieces are effectively restricting the black rooks.

18. ... Nb6

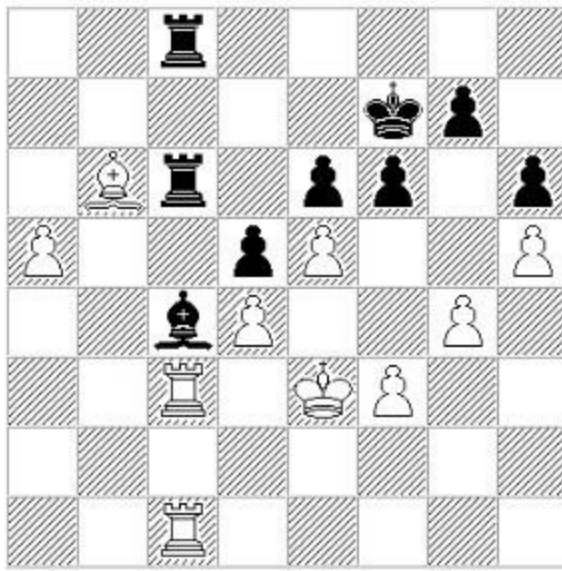
(18. ... a6!?)

19. Bc5 Bd3 20. Nxa7 Rxa7 21. Bxb6 Ra6 22. a5



White has won the pawn and later succeeded in converting his advantage into a full point.

22. ... Bc4 23. Ra3 f6 24. e4 Kf7 25. Kf2 Raa8 26. Ke3 Reb8 27. Rac3 Rc8 28. g4 Rab8 29. h4 Rc6 30. h5 Rbc8 31. e5



31. ... g6 32. hxg6+ Kxg6 33. R3c2 fxe5 34. dxe5 Rh8 35. Rh2 Rcc8 36. Kd2 Bb3 37. a6 Bc4 38. a7 Rh7 39. Ra1 Ra8 40. Be3 Rb7 41. Rxh6+ Kg7 42. Rah1 Rb2+ 1-0

Kasparov, Garry - Dolmatov, Sergei
USSR championship 1979 , D14

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. cxd5 cxd5 4. Nc3 Nf6 5. Nf3 Nc6 6. Bf4 Bf5 7. e3 e6 8. Bb5 Bd6?!

(# The text is not necessarily a mistake but practice has shown that 8. ... Nd7 is best.)

9. Ne5 Rc8 10. Bxc6+

Now a7 and c6 are potential weaknesses.

10. ... bxc6 11. O-O O-O 12. Rc1 Qe7 13. Na4 Bxe5

(13. ... c5? 14. dxc5 Bxc5 15. Nxc5 Rxc5 16. Nc6! +-)

14. Bxe5 Nd7



15. Nc5

White managed to fix the backward pawn on c6, so he has an advantage.

15. ... f6 16. Bg3 e5 17. Qd2 Nb6

(17. ... Nxc5 18. Rxc5 exd4 19. Qxd4 += left White with a solid position, but was more safe for Black.)

18. b3



18. ... e4

Black decides to close the center to get a free hand on the kingside.

19. Na6 h5 20. Qb4 Qb7 21. Nc5 Qe7 22. a4 g5



23. a5 Na8 24. Na6 Qe8 25. Rc2 h4 26. Bd6 Rf7 27. Rfc1 Rg7 28. Nb8



Kasparov's pieces are dominating the queenside. As described by Bronstein, the weakness of dark squares is also ... the weakness of light squares because once White occupied dark squares, Black's pieces on light squares are under heavy attack - especially the knight on a8.

28. ... Bd7 29. Qb7

Both the c6 pawn and a8 knight are doomed even though they are on light squares.

29. ... Kh7 30. Qxa8?!

(Kasparov recommends 30. b4! Qe6 31. Nxd7 Rd8 32. Rxc6 +-)

30. ... Qe6 31. Qxa7 Qxd6 32. Nxd7 Rxd7 33. Qb6



White won a pawn and 'c6' is still a major weakness. Kasparov later won the game after some complications.

In the following game, Vladimir Kramnik achieved victory by setting up strong pressure on the 'c' file, sacrificing his knight for the support of the 'c6' knight (the 'b7' pawn), and winning back the piece and the game by advancing the queenside pawns.

Kramnik, Vladimir - Aronian, Levon
Chess Olympiad 2012.09.03 , D10

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. cxd5 cxd5 5. Bf4 Nc6 6. e3 a6 7. Bd3 g6 8. h3 Bf5



9. Nf3

(9. Bxf5 looked natural, but would have given Black a good grip on the light squares.)

9. ... Bxd3 10. Qxd3 Bg7 11. O-O O-O



12. Rfc1 e6 13. Na4

Here this manoeuvre of the knight is especially dangerous because the black bishop got deployed to the kingside and does not, cover the 'c5' square.

13. ... Ne4 14. Nc5 Nxc5 15. Rxc5 Qd7 16. Rac1 Rfc8 17. a3 Bf8 18. R5c2 f6 19. Nd2 Bd6 20. Bxd6 Qxd6 21. Nb3



After a series of exchanges White still maintains the pressure on the queenside. His knight is more active and the pin on the 'c' file ties up the black pieces. Still Black's position is quite solid and most spectators assumed Aronian would be able to hold.

21. ... Rc7?

Black must have underestimated the sacrifice that Kramnik had in mind.

(21. ... b6 += would have prevented White's next move.)

22. Na5 Rac8



White to move



Solution:

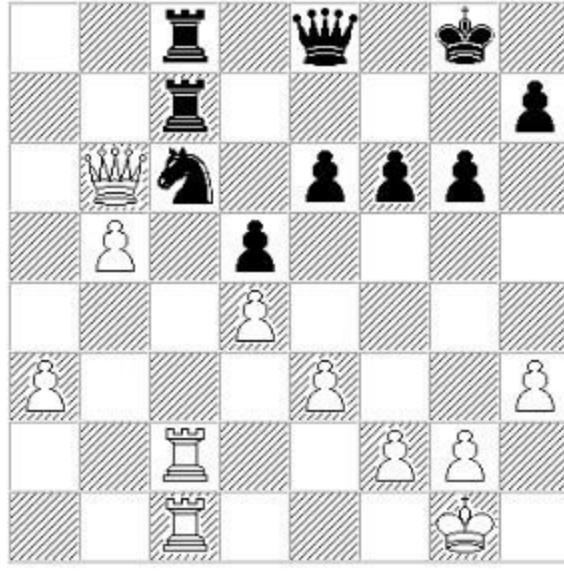
23. Nxb7!!

Completely unexpectedly, Kramnik sacrifices the piece for undermining the support of the 'c6' knight, which given the pressure on the 'c' file - proves decisive!

23. ... Rxb7 24. Qxa6

It turns out that Black has no good defence against the advance of the white 'b' pawn.

24. ... Rbc7 25. b4! Qd7 26. Qb6 Qe8 27. b5



This may look like an oversight due to Black's next move but Kramnik had it well under control.

27. ... Nxd4 28. Rxc7 Ne2+ 29. Kh1 Nxc1 30. Rxc8 Qxc8 31. Qc6!



This is decisive because the white 'b' pawn is now unstoppable.

31. ... Qd8 32. b6 Kf7 33. Qc7+ Ke8 34. Qa7 d4 35. b7

A very impressive game by Kramnik who, just like his teacher, Botvinnik, showed great understanding of simplified 'Slav' exchange positions and outplayed one of the best players in the world.

1-0

Test Yourself

Kramnik, Vladimir - Anand, Viswanathan
Web Blitz 3rd 2007.11.21 , D13

1. Nf3 Nf6 2. c4 c6 3. Nc3 d5 4. cxd5 cxd5 5. d4 Nc6 6. Bf4 a6 7. Rc1 Bf5 8. e3 Rc8 9. Be2 e6 10. O-O Be7?!

(10. ... Bd6!)

11. Qb3



11. ... Na5?

(Correct was 11. ... Qd7! 12. Na4 Na5! 13. Rxc8+ Qxc8 14. Qb6 Nc4 15. Qa7 although White still maintains some pressure.)

12. Qa4+ Nc6



White to move



Solution:

13. Bxa6! Ra8

(After 13. ... bxa6 14. Ne5 Qb6 15. Ne2 Qb5 16. Qxb5 axb5 17. Rxc6 +/- White remains up a pawn.)

14. Bxb7 Rxa4 15. Bxc6+ Kf8 16. Nxa4 Ne4 17. Bb7 Nd6 18. Bxd6 Qxd6 19. Rc6 Qd7 20. Rc8+ Bd8 21. Ne5 1-0

The following examples have colors reversed, as it is Black who is putting pressure on 'c3'.

Babu N Sudhakar - Sriram, Jha
Chhattisgarh Trophy 2002 , D14

**1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. cxd5 cxd5 5. Bf4 Nc6 6. e3 Bf5 7. Nf3 e6 8. Bb5 Nd7 9. O-O Be7
10. Rc1 Rc8 11. Ne5 Ndx5 12. Bxe5 O-O 13. Bg3 Qb6 14. Qe2 a6 15. Ba4 Bg6 16. Bd1 Nb4 17.
Qd2 Qa5 18. Be2 b5 19. a3?**



Black to move



Solution:

19. ... Na2 20. b4

(20. Rcd1 Nxc3 21. bxc3 Bxa3 would have left Black up two pawns, as the 'c3' pawn is also going to fall.)

20. ... Nxb4 21. axb4 Bxb4 22. Ra1 Bxc3 23. Rxa5 Bxd2 24. Rxa6 b4

Black came out of complications with an extra passed pawn and is winning here.

25. Rb6 Rc2 26. Bd6 Rfc8 27. Ba6 R2c6 0-1

Khropova, Larisa - Shumilina, Alexandra
Moscow-ch 2008 , D13

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. cxd5 cxd5 4. Nc3 Nf6 5. Nf3 Nc6 6. Bf4 a6 7. e3 Bg4 8. Be2 e6 9. O-O Be7
10. h3 Bxf3 11. Bxf3 O-O 12. Rc1 Rc8 13. Qd2 b5 14. Qd3 Qb6 15. Rfd1 Rfd8 16. Be2 Na5
17. Qb1 Nc4 18. Bd3 h6 19. b3 Na3 20. Qb2 Qa5 21. g4 Bb4 22. Ne2 Qb6 23. Kg2 Qb7 24. Kg1 a5
25. Bg3 Ne4 26. Bh2 Ng5 27. Kg2 Nc4 28. Qb1 Nd2 29. Qb2 Rxc1 30. Rxc1 Ndf3 31. Nc3 Rc8
32. Bg3?



Black to move



Solution:

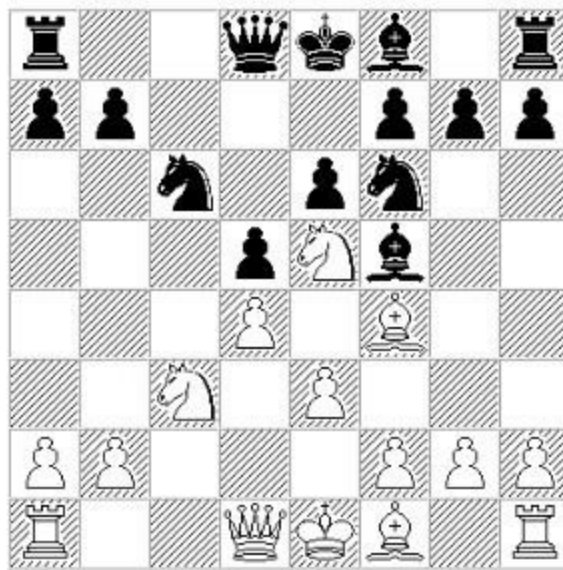
32. ... Ne1+ 33. Rxe1 Bxc3 34. Qe2 Bxe1 35. Qxe1 b4 -+ 36. Bd6 Rc3 37. Qe2 Ne4 38. Bxe4 dxe4 39. Bc5 e5 40. Kh2 exd4 41. Bxd4 Qc7+ 42. Kg2 Rd3 43. Bb2 Qc6 44. Kg1 a4 45. bxa4 Qxa4 46. Bd4 Ra3 47. Qc4 Qd1+ 48. Kh2 Qf3 0-1

Structural Transformations

If Black actually manages to advance his pawn to 'c5', he escapes from the bind, and often has good chances to overtake the initiative.

**Andersson, Ulf - Gligoric, Svetosar
Niksic 1983 , D14**

1. Nf3 d5 2. d4 Nf6 3. c4 c6 4. cxd5 cxd5 5. Nc3 Nc6 6. Bf4 Bf5 7. e3 e6 8. Ne5



This is another way of putting pressure on the 'c6' knight.

8. ... Nd7 9. Nxc6 bxc6 10. Rc1 Be7 11. Be2 O-O 12. O-O c5 !?

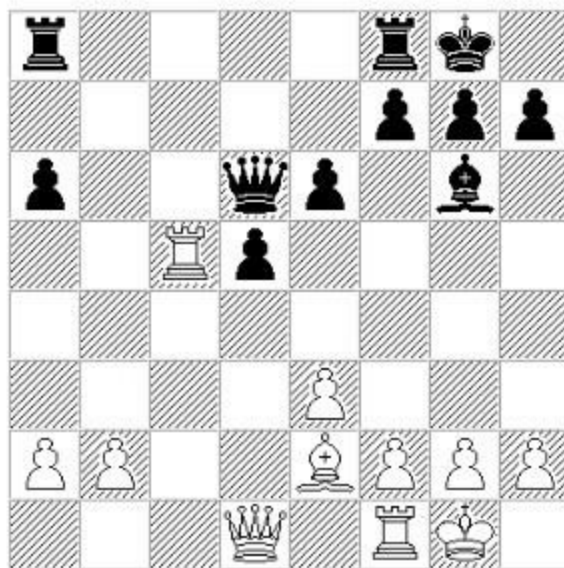


Black achieved his freeing manoeuvre, but the white pieces are very active for the moment, so Black is not entirely out of the woods just yet.

13. Nb5 a6 14. Nd6

(White rejects the repetition after 14. Bc7 Qc8 15. Bd6 Qd8 16. Bc7 =)

14. ... Bg6 15. dxc5 Nxc5 16. Rxc5 Bxd6 17. Bxd6 Qxd6

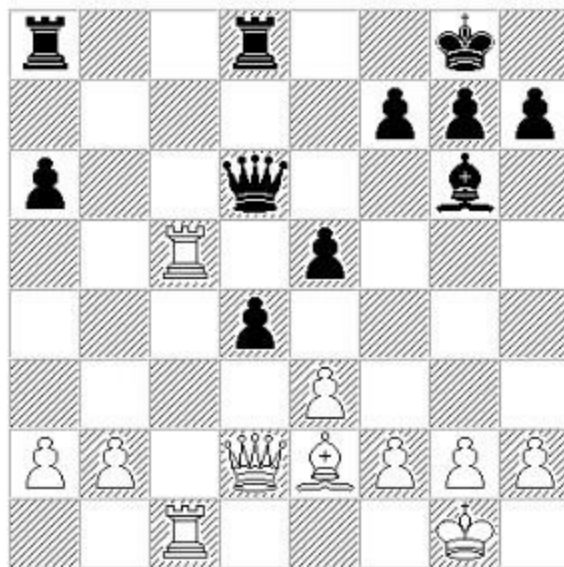


Black emerged with a central pawn majority, but White has hopes for initiative due to his possession of the 'c' file.

18. Qd4 Rfd8 19. Rfc1

(It was better to put pressure on d5 with 19. Rd1!)

19. ... e5 20. Qd2 d4!?



Gligoric correctly believes that his central passed pawn, which is supported by all his pieces should

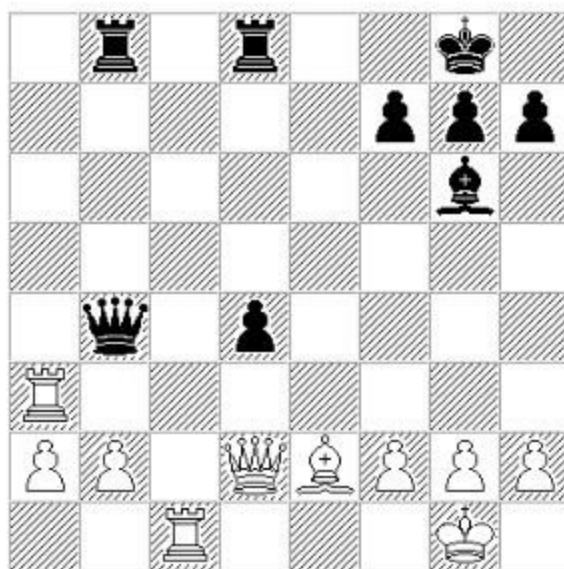
provide sufficient counterplay and sacrifices the 'a6' pawn.

21. Rc6 Qe7 22. Rxa6 Rab8 23. exd4 exd4 24. Ra3

White underestimated the power of the passed pawn and allows Gligoric to advance it to the third rank where it proves too dangerous.

(24. Bf3 Qb4 25. Qxb4 Rxb4 26. Rd6 Re8 27. a3 Rc4 28. Ra1 d3 29. b4 +=)

24. ... Qb4



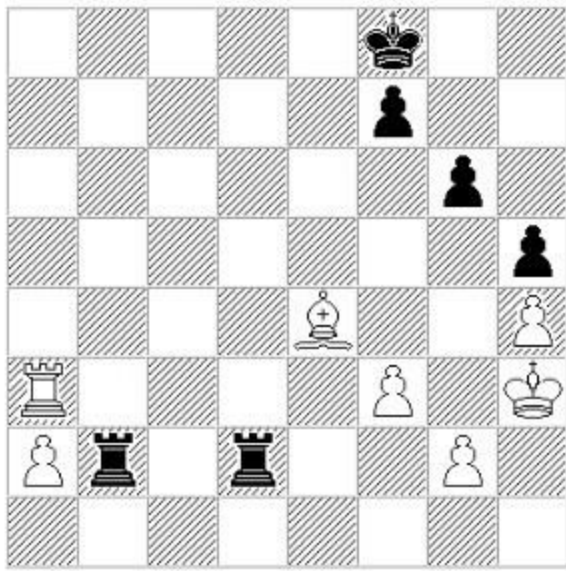
25. Rd1

(25. Qxb4 Rxb4 26. b3 was better.)

25. ... d3 26. Qxb4 Rxb4 27. f3 Kf8 28. Rdx d3

(28. Bxd3 Rbd4 -+)

28. ... Bxd3 29. Bxd3 Rxb2 -+ 30. h4 h5 31. Kh2 g6 32. Kh3 Rd4 33. Be4 Rdd2



and Black eventually won

0-1

Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander - Shirov, Alexei
Manila olympiad 1992 , D13

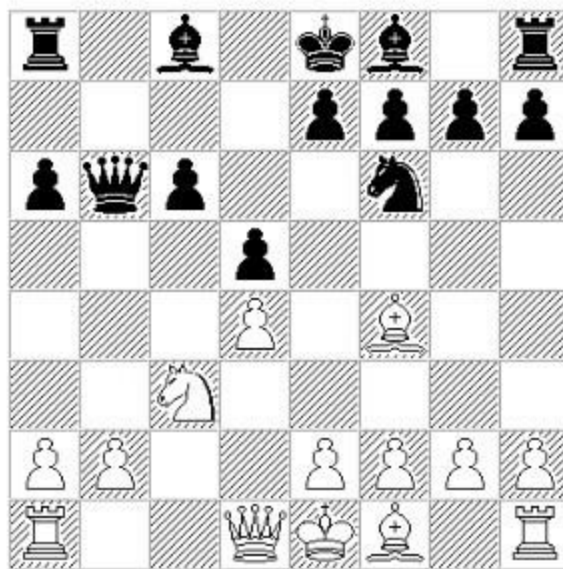
1. Nf3 d5 2. d4 c6 3. c4 Nf6 4. cxd5 cxd5 5. Nc3 Nc6 6. Bf4 a6

This idea became especially popular in the past 20 years.

7. Ne5

(Another popular line goes like this: 7. e3 e6 8. Bd3 Be7 9. Rc1 O-O 10. O-O Bd7 11. h3 Rc8 12. Ne5 b5 13. a4 +=)

7. ... Qb6 8. Nxc6 bxc6



As compensation for the backward 'c' pawn, Black has play on the 'b' file and his center is now stronger.

9. Qd2

The White queen is not placed very well here, threats of Bb4 and Ne4 can be annoying.

(9. a3!? is an interesting alternative with a possible continuation: 9. ... Qxb2 10. Na4 Qb5 11. f3 Qa5+ 12. Kf2 with unclear play.)

9. ... Bf5 10. f3

White has to play this move sooner or later to cover e4.

(For example: 10. e3 e6 11. Be2 Bb4 threatening Ne4. 12. f3)

10. ... e6



11. e3?!

This seems to be too slow.

(Better was 11. Rc1!? threatening Na4-Nc5 11. ... Nd7 12. e4 Bg6)

11. ... Nd7 12. Rc1 Be7 13. Be2 O-O 14. O-O Rfc8 15. a3 Qb7



Black has taken all the possible preparatory measures, and is planning to gain initiative with c6-c5.

16. Na4 c5 17. dxc5 Bxc5!? 18. Nxc5 Nxc5

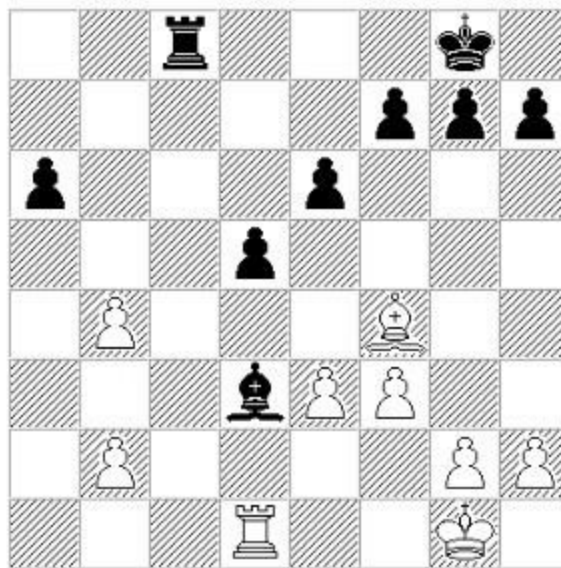


19. Qb4

Nb3 was a threat.

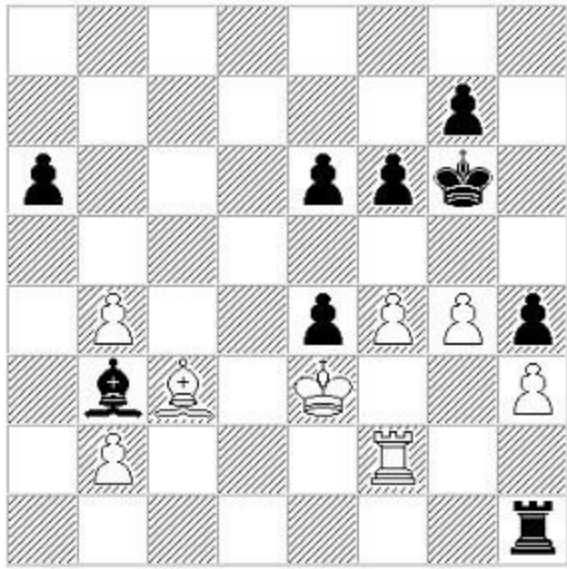
(On the other hand, 19. Bd1 would have allowed 19. ... Nd3)

19. ... Qxb4 20. axb4 Nd3 21. Rxc8+ Rxc8 22. Bxd3 Bxd3 23. Rd1 +/-



Black controls the 'c' file and White's 'b' pawns are weak.

23. ... Bb5 24. Be5 Rc2 25. Bc3 f6 26. Rd2 Rc1+ 27. Kf2 Kf7 28. g4 Bc4 29. f4 Kg6 30. Kg2 h5
31. h3 h4 32. Kf3 Bb3 33. e4 Rf1+ 34. Ke3 dxe4 35. Rf2 Rh1



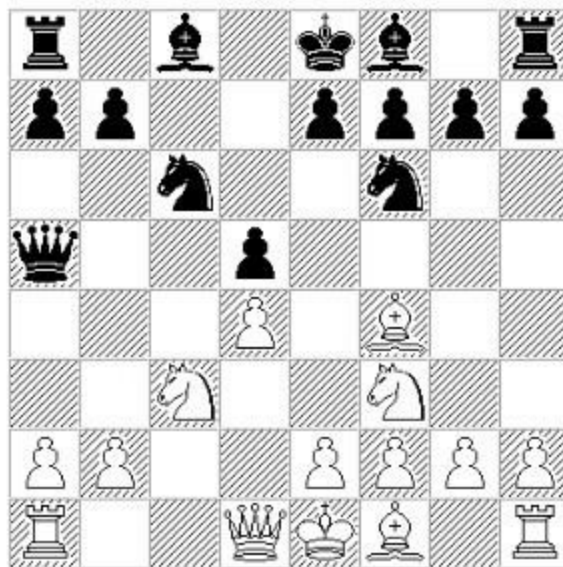
36. Kxe4 Rxh3 37. Bd2 Rg3 38. g5 Bd5+ 39. Kd4 Kf5 40. gxf6 gxf6 0-1

Breakthrough in the Center

While the pawn structure in the center seems to be very stable, this is in many cases an illusion. The side with initiative (usually - White) can open the center, and by doing so, exploit his development advantage, or a more active placement of his pieces. Here we should primarily look at the games of Vadim Milov. He managed to create several masterpieces (against strong grandmasters) that illustrate this idea. But first, a couple of examples from the more distant past.

Botvinnik, Mikhail - Denker, Arnold
USA-URS radio m 1945.09.03 , D13

1. d4 d5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. c4 c6 4. cxd5 cxd5 5. Nc3 Nc6 6. Bf4 Qa5?!



This is an aggressive sideline that Botvinnik refutes convincingly.

7. e3 Ne4 8. Qb3 e6 9. Bd3 Bb4 10. Rc1 Nxc3 11. bxc3 Ba3 12. Rb1 b6



13. e4

Botvinnik spots the lack of harmony in Black's position and opens up the game to his advantage.

13. ... dxe4 14. Bb5

An unexpected manoeuvre as Botvinnik aims to trap the black queen.

14. ... Bd7 15. Nd2 a6

(15. ... O-O 16. Be3! (16. Nc4? Nxd4! -/+) 16. ... Rac8 17. Nc4 Nxd4 18. Bxd4 Qxb5 19. Nxa3 +/- And White remains up a piece.)

16. Bxc6 Bxc6 17. Nc4 Qf5



18. Bd6! e3 19. Nxe3 Qxb1+ 20. Qxb1 Bxd6 21. Qxb6



With an extra queen, the win is quite easy.

21. ... Kd7 22. Qb3 Rab8 23. Qc2 Rb5 24. O-O Rh5 25. h3 Rb8 26. c4 g6 27. Ng4 Rf5 28. Ne5+ Bxe5 29. dxe5 Rxe5 30. Qd2+ 1-0

Ivkov, Borislav - Smyslov, Vassily
Memorial J.Capablanca 1965



16. e4

Ivkov exploits the slightly unstable position of the rook on 'c4'.

16. ... Qf4

(The natural capture does not solve all the problems: 16. ... dxe4 17. Nxe4 Rxc1 18. Nxf6+ gxf6 19. Qg4+ Kh8 20. Rxc1



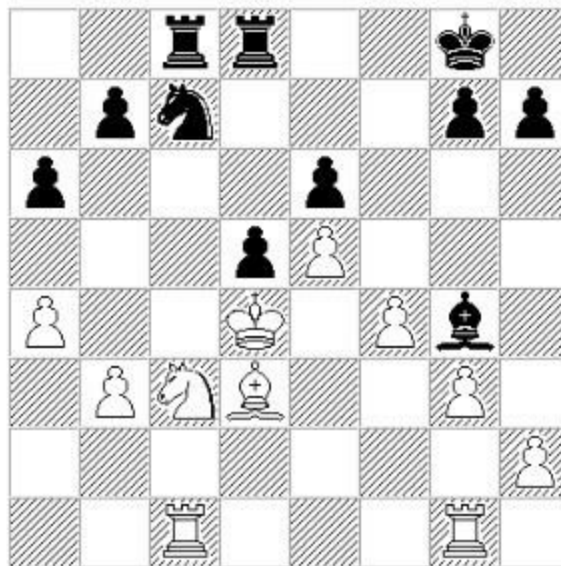
leaves White with a safer king and slightly better chances.)

17. g3 Qg4 18. f3 Qh5 19. e5 Ne8



With the pawn advance - White forced Black to temporarily trap the rook on 'f8', and uses this to develop initiative.

20. Bd3 Rc8 21. f4 Qxd1 22. Rfxd1 Nc7 23. Kf2 f6 24. Ke3 fxe5 25. dxe5 Bb5 26. Bc2 Bc4 27. b3 Bb5 28. a4 Be8 29. Bd3 Bh5 30. Rg1 Rfd8 31. Kd4 Bg4



32. Rc2

White prepares doubling of rooks on the 'c' file.

32. ... Ne8 33. Rgc1 g6 34. a5 Kf7 35. Na4 Rxc2 36. Rxc2 Bf5 37. Nb6 Bxd3 38. Kxd3



Smyslov realized that his cramped position cannot be saved with passive defence, and tried to create counter play at all costs, but that plan ultimately fails:

38. ... g5

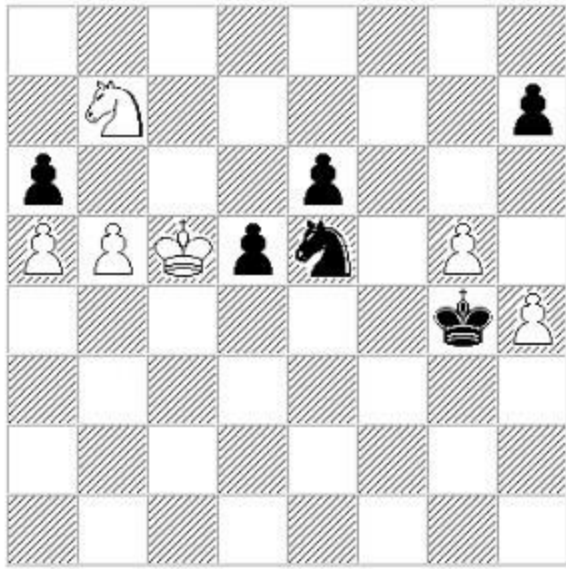
(Preparing the break would have not made much difference: 38. ... h6 39. g4 g5 40. f5 +-)

39. fxg5 Kg6 40. h4 Kf5 41. Kd4 Kg4 42. Rc8 Rxc8 43. Nxc8



The knight endgame is also good for White since the 'b7' pawn remains vulnerable.

43. ... Ng7 44. Nd6 Nf5+ 45. Kc5 Nxc3 46. b4 Ne4+ 47. Kd4 Nd2 48. Nxb7 Nf3+ 49. Kc5 Nxe5 50. b5



50. ... Nd7+ 51. Kc6 d4 52. Nd6 d3 53. Ne4 Kf4 54. Nc3 Ne5+ 55. Kc7 d2 56. bxa6 Ke3 57. a7 Kd3 58. Nd1 Kc2 59. a8=Q 1-0

Milov, Vadim - Porper, Eduard
Ch Israel 1992



White has an advantage, as the Black bishop is passive on e8 keeping the rooks disconnected. **13. Bg5 Kh8 14. Bb1**

Qd3 is coming, so to avoid weakening his kingside pawn formation Black plays

14. ... Ng8 15. Bxe7 Ngxe7 16. Nd3



As soon as the dark squared bishops got exchanged, White switches his attention to the black holes in opponent's queenside. The formation of pawns on a6-b7 makes the invasion of a knight to c5 particularly annoying.

16. ... Ng6 17. a3 Qd8 18. Qe2

(The immediate 18. Nc5 can be countered with 18. ... b6 So Milov first puts extra pressure

on the a6 pawn.)

18. ... Na5 19. Nc5 Qe7 20. Ba2 b5 21. e4



An example of transformation of positional advantage! While in other examples this break serves to attack the Black king which is stuck in the center, here Milov wants to open the game in order to exploit the weakness of Black's queenside and the fact that Black's pieces are passive.

21. ... dxe4 22. b4 Nc6 23. d5! exd5 24. Nxd5 Qe5 25. Qxe4 Qxe4 26. Nxe4 Nd4 27. Kh2 Rd8 28. Rfd1 Ne2 29. Rc2 Nef4 30. Rcd2 Ne6 31. Nb6 Rxd2 32. Rxd2 Bc6 33. Bxe6 Bxe4 34. Bc8



This reveals the positional idea behind the tactical complications - Black pieces are still not coordinated well to defend the weak 'a' pawn.

34. ... Bc6 35. Rd6 Ne7 36. Bxa6 g6 37. Nc8 Nxc8 38. Rxc6 Ne7 39. Rc7 Nd5 40. Rc5



Both pawns fell like leaves in the fall, so Black resigned.

1-0



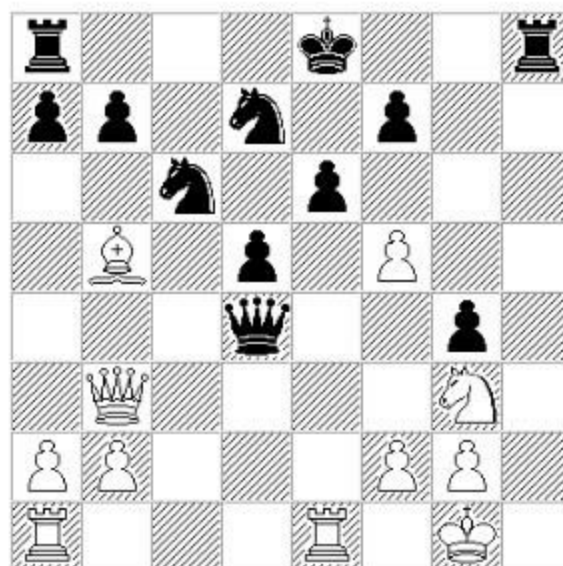
15. Ne2

White tries to transfer some pieces to the defence of the kingside

15. ... Qa5?! 16. e4! Qxd2

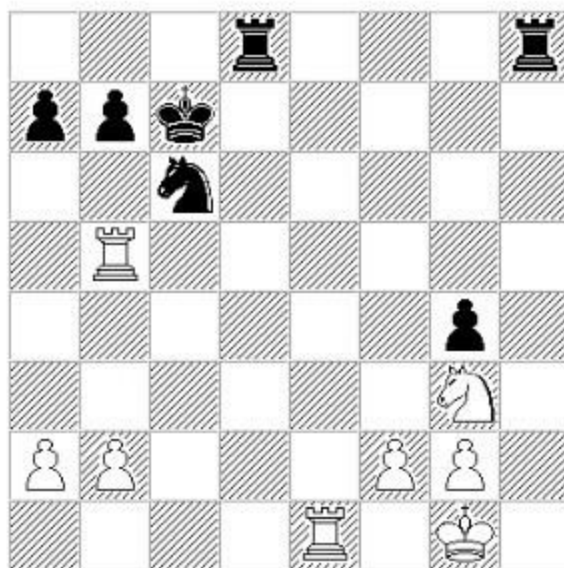
(16. ... dxe4 17. Nc4! would have taken advantage of Black's misplaced queen and weakened dark squares. 17. ... Bxg3 (17. ... Qd8 allows another pawn breakthrough with 18. d5!) 18. Qxg3 with great initiative on the dark squares)

17. exf5 Bxg3 18. Nxg3 Qxd4 19. Rfe1



This is the point of the combination: the black king is still in the center. An extra pawn does not save Black's army which is scattered across the board.

19. ... Kd8 20. fxe6 fxe6 21. Rxe6 Kc7 22. Rd1 Nc5 23. Rxd4 Nxb3 24. Rxd5 Nbd4 25. Re4 Nxb5
26. Rxb5 Rad8 27. Re1



The position simplified and now it is White who is up a pawn.

27. ... Rd2 28. Ne4 Re8 29. Re3 Rc2 30. a4 Re7 31. Nf6 Rxe3 32. Nd5+ Kc8 33. Nxe3

and White won the ending

1-0

Milov, Vadim - Piket, Jeroen
Groningen Festival 1998.12.23 , D13

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. cxd5 cxd5 4. Nc3 Nf6 5. Bf4 Nc6 6. Nf3 a6 7. Rc1 Bf5 8. e3 e6 9. Qb3 Ra7



This idea that has been used in other openings recently became popular in ...a6 variations of Slav.

10. Be2 Nd7 11. O-O Be7 12. Na4 g5

Piket decides to complicate the game with the kingside expansion.

(12. ... O-O 13. Nc5 is a bit more common with White having a slightly better score.)

13. Be5 Rg8 14. Bg3 h5 15. Nc5!



15. ... Nxc5

(There is no time for 15. ... h4 because White breaks through on the queenside and in the center: 16. Nxb7 Qa8 17. Nd6+ Kf8 18. Nxf5 exf5 19. Qxd5 +-)

16. dxc5 h4 17. Bd6 Bg4

(No better is 17. ... Bxd6 18. cxd6 Qxd6 19. Qb6 with a disaster on the dark squares - there is no good way of meeting Rxc6.)

18. h3 Bxf3 19. Bxf3?! f5

This move seems to be the only way to continue the offensive on the kingside, but Black's pieces prove to be too passive for this aggressive thrust to be successful. Milov finds a very elegant refutation.

20. Bh5+ Kf8



Question: How should White continue?

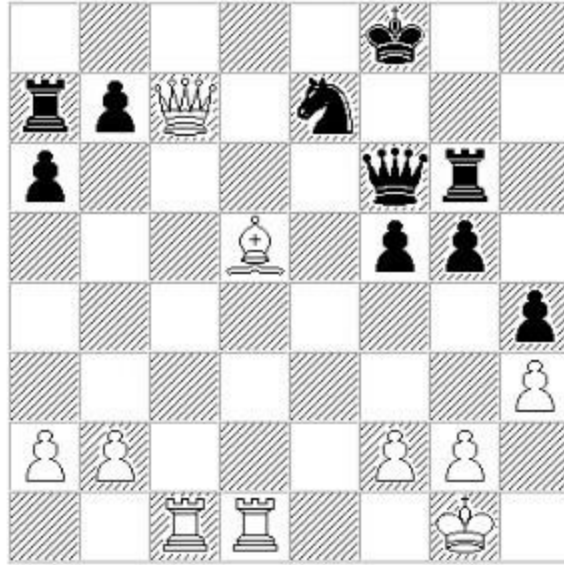


Answer: with a pawn breakthrough!

21. e4! Bxd6

(21. ... fxe4 22. f3 only helps White to open lines against the Black king.)

22. cxd6 Qxd6 23. exf5 exf5 24. Rfd1 Ne7 25. Bf3 Rg6 26. Bxd5 Qb6 27. Qc3 Qf6 28. Qc7



White is again exploiting the unfortunate position of the 'a7' rook.

28. ... Ra8 29. Bxb7 Re8 30. b4 Qb6

(Black's major strategic idea does not work here: 30. ... g4 31. hxg4 fxg4 32. Rc4)

31. a3

and White later converted his material advantage to a full point.

Test Yourself

Socketo, Monika - Stefanova, Antoaneta
WWCC 2012 2012.11.17, D10



Black to move



Solution: **20. ... e5!**

Stefanova nicely exploits the awkward placement of White pieces in the center, especially the queen, and wins a piece.

21. Bxe5

(21. dxe5 d4 22. Qh3 dxc3 23. Bxb5 Qc7 -/+ is similar to the game.)

21. ... Nxe5 22. dxe5 d4! 23. Qe2 dxc3 24. Bxb5 Qf8 25. Bxa6 cxb2



Black is up a piece and soon won:

26. Rb1 Rc7 27. e6 Na4 28. Bc4 f6 29. Qc2 Qc8 30. Rd4 Nb6 31. Qxb2 Nxc4 32. Qe2 Na3 33. Rbd1 Qxe6 0-1

Andrianov, Nikolai - Imanaliev, Taalibek
Tournament (juniors) 1980



White to move



Solution: **12. e4!**

This break is well timed and Black should be careful about dealing with this pawn.

12. ... dxe4

(12. ... Bb4 13. exd5 exd5 14. O-O Bxc3 15. bxc3 O-O 16. Rab1 +/-)

13. d5 Nc5

(13. ... exd5 14. Nxd5)

14. dxc6! bxc6 15. Bxc6+ Ke7 16. O-O-O Nxa4 17. Rd7+ Ke8 18. Bxa4 Be7 19. Rxa7+ 1-0

Kingside Pawn Storm

A classical positional principle says that in order to attack on the flank, one must have a firm control over the center, which has to be closed. Also, it is well known that an attack against king, or a space grabbing operation can be successful if there is enough pieces on the board. Slav Exchange is serves as a good illustration of these ideas: the closed center, which may open, the fact that very often none of the minor pieces are exchanged, allow to consider pawn storm as a possible plan.

Allen, Keith - Volkov, Sergey

Monarch Assurance 9th 2000.10.18 , D13

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. cxd5 cxd5 4. Nc3 Nf6 5. Nf3 Nc6 6. Bf4 Nh5 7. Be5

In his books Mikhail Botvinnik pointed out that this square is the best for the bishop.

7. ... e6 8. e3 Be7 9. Bd3 O-O 10. Rc1 Bd7 11. O-O f6



12. Bg3

(Critical was 12. Ng5 Qe8!? (12. ... g6 13. Nxh7 fxe5 14. Bxg6 Nf6 15. Nxf8) (12. ... fxe5 13. Bxh7+! Kh8 14. Nf7+! Rxf7 15. Qxh5 +-) 13. Nxh7 fxe5 14. Nxf8 Bxf8 15. dxe5 Nxe5 16. Be2 Nf6 with a good position for Black)

(12. Bxh7+? Kxh7 13. Ng5+ fxg5 14. Qxh5+ Kg8 -/+)

12. ... Be8 13. a3 g5 14. Qc2

With this move White is losing control over d4, making it more difficult to play e4.

(14. e4!? seems to be strategically correct. Here however, the Black king is safe, as the bishop on e8 can cover up the light squares. 14. ... dxe4 (14. ... Bf7 is also possible, which only emphasizes that Black's position is rock solid.) 15. Bxe4 Nxc3 16. hxc3 f5 17. Bxc6 Bxc6 18. Re1 Both sides have their trumps here as Black holds on to two bishops and White attacks opponent's slightly weakened pawn structure.)

14. ... Kg7 15. Na4

(15. Bxh7? was not possible because of 15. ... f5 -/+)

15. ... g4 16. Nd2 Nxc3 17. hxc3 Bd6



Black is now better, due to his space advantage on the kingside, and the possibility of attack with h7-h5-h4, and Rh8. If White attempts to open up the center, then Black's two bishops are going to gain power. White's play on the 'c' file is rather slow here.

18. Nc5 Qe7 19. Be2 h5 20. b4 f5 21. Nd3 h4 22. Nf4 Rh8 23. Rfd1 Qf6 24. Nb3



24. ... b6 25. Qd2 Ne7 26. Rc3 Ba4 27. Ba6 Kf7 28. Rdc1



All the invasion squares on the 'c' file are covered. Having missed a chance to open the center, White is just waiting for Black's attack to come.

28. ... Qh6

Black starts the decisive offensive.

29. Qd3

(Exchanging on 'h4' was not any better: 29. gxh4 Qxh4 30. Kf1 Bxf4 31. exf4 Qh1+ 32. Ke2 Qxg2 -/+)

29. ... hxg3 30. fxg3 Qh2+ 31. Kf2



Question: how should Black continue?



Answer: invade with the rook!

31. ... Rh3! 32. Nxh3 Bxg3+ 33. Ke2 gxh3 34. e4 hxg2 0-1

Votava, Jan - Morozevich, Alexander
Bundesliga 1999 , D13

1. Nf3 Nf6 2. c4 c6 3. d4 d5 4. cxd5 cxd5 5. Nc3 Nc6 6. Bf4 Nh5 7. Bd2

(Better was 7. Be5!?)

7. ... e6 8. e3 Bd6 9. Rc1 O-O 10. Be2 Nf6 11. O-O Ne4 12. Be1 f5

Both sides have a bishop behind the pawn chain, but Black firmly controls e4.

13. Nd2



13. ... Qf6!?

Black has the idea of Qh6.

14. Ndx e4 fxe4

Now Black also has pressure along the 'f' file.

15. f4 Bd7 16. g3 Kh8 17. h4?! h6 18. Kg2



18. ... g5!?

Morozevich comes up with an interesting sacrifice, the goal of which is to open up the kingside.

19. fxg5 Qg7 20. Nb5 Be7

(Black avoids disconnecting the rooks with 20. ... Bb8? because of 21. Rxf8+)

21. gxh6 Qxh6



22. Bf2

(22. Rxf8+ Rxf8 23. Qd2 Rg8 24. Bf2 a6 25. Nc3 was better than the plan that White chose in the game.)

22. ... a6 23. Nc3 Bd6 24. Na4?

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. cxd5 cxd5 5. Bf4 a6 6. e3 e6 7. Bd3 Be7 8. Rc1 O-O 9. g4



The fact that the 'c8' bishop is staying behind the pawn chain, and that Black did spend time on 'a7-a6', allows Vaisser to start his favourite plan in Exchange Slav - pawn storm on the kingside.

9. ... Nc6 10. g5 Nd7 11. Nf3 Re8 12. h4 Nf8

(it was necessary to continue with the idea of Black's last move - e6-e5 push. Just as in other examples, the most logical response to flank pawn storm is opening the center. 12. ... Bb4 13. O-O e5 14. dxe5 Bxc3 15. Rxc3 Ndx5 16. Nxe5 Nxe5 17. Bc2 Bh3 18. Bxe5 Rxe5 19. Re1? Rxc3+ -+)

13. Ne5 Nxe5 14. Bxe5 Bd7 15. Rg1 Rc8 16. Qh5



16. ... Ng6 17. Qg4 Bf8 18. f4 b5 19. h5 Nxe5 20. fxg6 21. Rh1 Re7 22. Rc2 Be8 23. a3 a5



24. e4

White is using the passive placement of Black's pieces. Black cannot take on e4 because then Nxe4 seems to be devastating. Meanwhile 25.exd5 exd5 26.Nxd5 is a threat.

24. ... Qb6

(24. ... dxe4 25. Nxe4 Rxc2 26. Nf6+ Kg7 (26. ... Kh8 27. Bxc2 Qa8 28. Rh2 a4 29. hxg6 fxg6 30. Qxe6) 27. hxg6 Rc1+ 28. Qd1!)

25. exd5 exd5 26. Nxd5 Rxc2 27. Bxc2 Qc6 28. Nxe7+ Bxe7 29. Rh2 b4 30. hxg6 b3 31. Qh3 Bxg5 32. Qxh7+ Kf8 33. g7+ Ke7 34. g8=Q 1-0

Test Yourself

Coutts, Tama - Tompkins, Glen
Australian open 1999, D13

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. Nf3 Nf6 4. Nc3 Bf5 5. cxd5 cxd5 6. Qb3 Bc8 7. Bg5 e6 8. e3 Be7 9. Bd3 Nc6
10. O-O O-O 11. Rac1 h6 12. Bh4 a6 13. Bb1 g6 14. Na4 Bd7 15. Nc5 b5 16. Nd3 a5 17. Nde5
Rc8 18. Nxc6 Bxc6 19. Ne5 Qb6 20. Qd3 g5 21. Rxc6 Rxc6



White to move



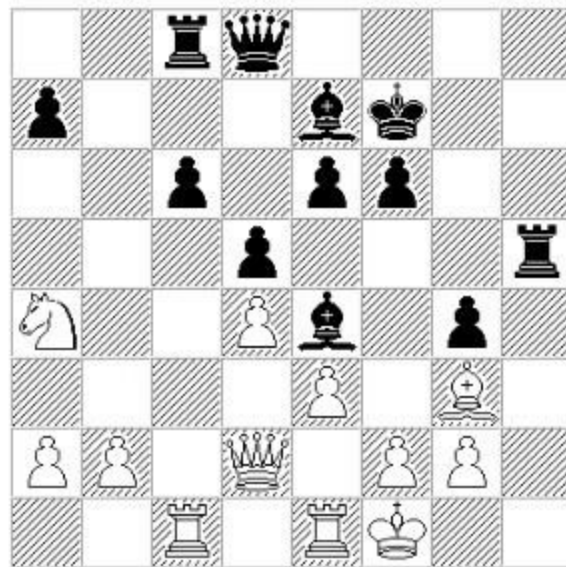
Solution:

22. Nd7 Rfc8

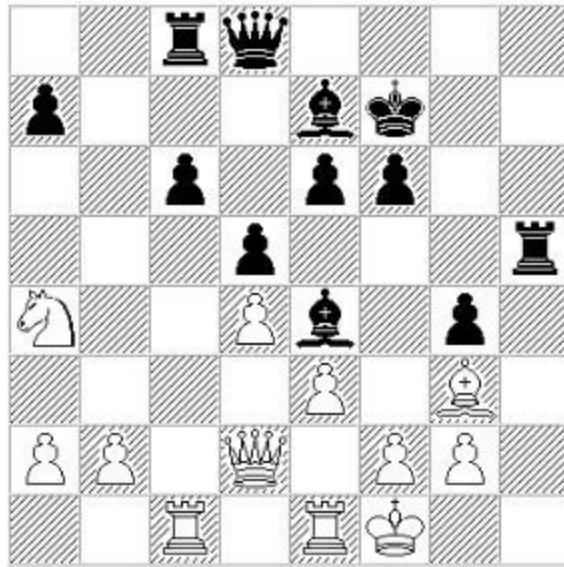
(22. ... Nxd7 23. Qh7# is the point.)

23. Nxb6 Rxb6 24. Bg3 Ne4 25. f3 Nxg3 26. Qh7+ Kf8 27. Qh8# 1-0

Seirawan, Yasser - Beliavsky, Alexander G
Brussels World Cup 1988



Black to move



Solution: **21. ... Bf3!!**

This makes mate inevitable.

0-1

Slav Endgame

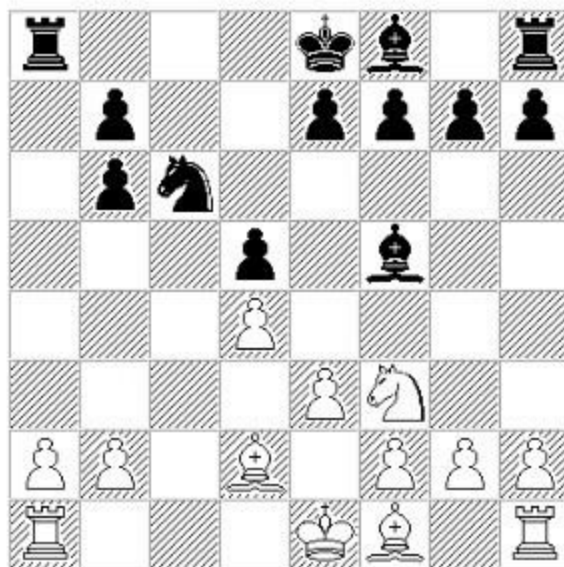
One interesting positional lesson a chess player can learn from the Slav Exchange is that doubled pawns can sometimes be stronger than non-doubled. How can this happen? A very famous game by Capablanca made players look at the issue of doubled pawns from a new perspective: they can cover important squares, provide outposts for our pieces, as well as give open lines to our rooks.

Janowski, David M - Capablanca, Jose Raul
New York International tournament 1916 , D15

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 d5 3. c4 c6 4. Nc3 Bf5 5. Qb3

(Better was 5. cxd5 cxd5 6. Qb3 Qb6 7. Nxd5 Nxd5 8. Qxd5 e6 9. Qb3 and only few players are willing to try and prove that Black has sufficient compensation.)

5. ... Qb6 6. Qxb6 axb6 7. cxd5 Nxd5 8. Nxd5 cxd5 9. e3 Nc6 10. Bd2



10. ... Bd7

This manoeuvre did draw a lot of attention at the time, its goal is to support the pawn advance on the queenside.

11. Be2 e6 12. O-O Bd6 13. Rfc1 Ke7 14. Bc3 Rhc8 15. a3? Na5 16. Nd2 f5 17. g3 b5

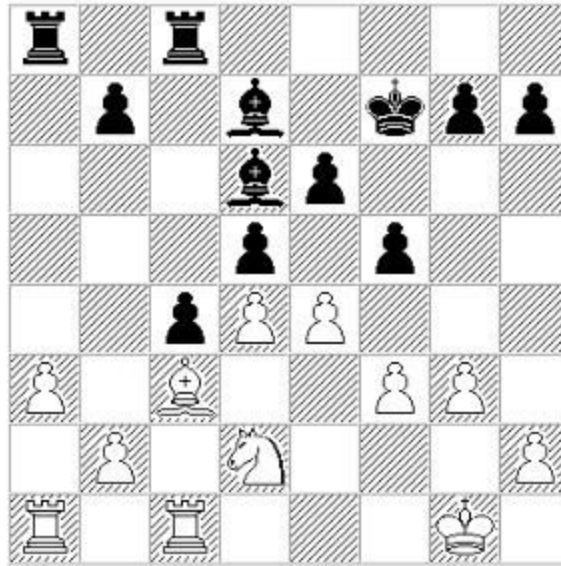


Black's rooks are exerting pressure along the open files, so it is clear that Black has an advantage.

18. f3 Nc4 =+

Black has accomplished his goals, the unfortunate advance a2-a3 makes the knight on 'c4' particularly annoying.

19. Bxc4 bxc4 20. e4 Kf7

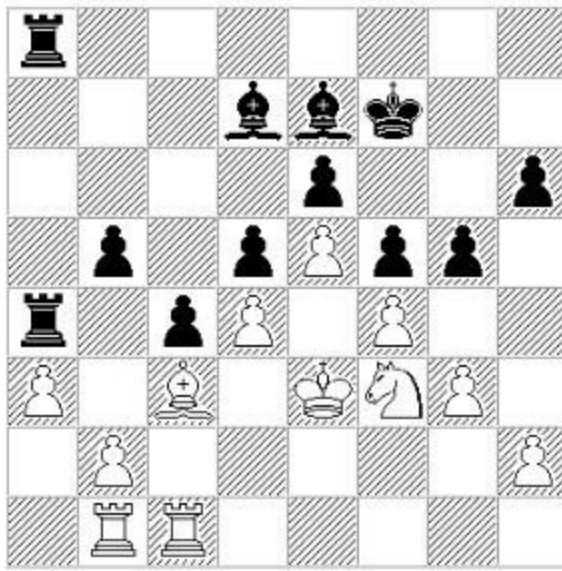


21. e5?

This is a serious positional mistake, now Black can advance pawns on both flanks; for White it is very hard to create any constructive plan.

(Annotators later found that much better was 21. exd5 exd5 22. f4 followed by transferring the knight to 'e5'.)

21. ... Be7 22. f4 b5 23. Kf2 Ra4 24. Ke3 Rca8 25. Rab1 h6 26. Nf3 g5



Capablanca plays very energetically and combines threats on both flanks; the bishops from d7 and e7 are able to exert pressure on both the kingside and the queenside.

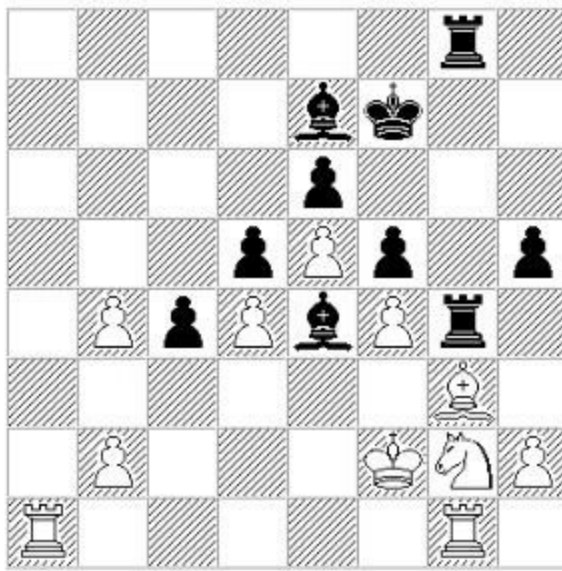
27. Ne1 Rg8 28. Kf3 gxf4 29. gxf4 Raa8 30. Ng2 Rg4 31. Rg1 Rag8

Because of his space advantage it is easier for Black to transfer rooks from one side of the board to the other.

32. Be1 b4!

A decisive break, as Capablanca opens up a diagonal for his light squared bishop.

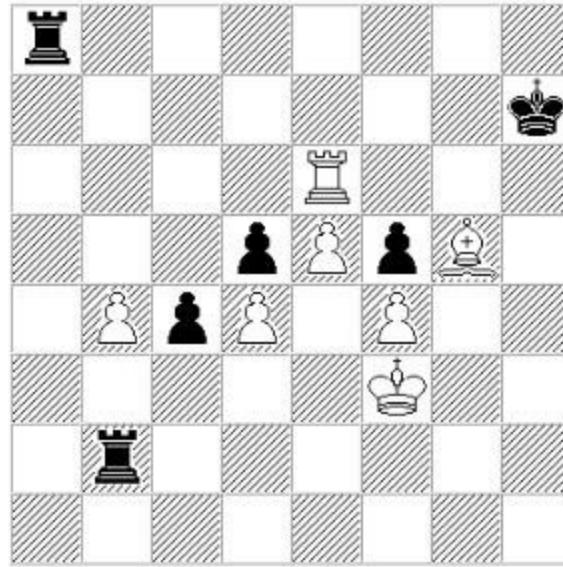
33. axb4 Ba4 34. Ra1 Bc2 35. Bg3 Be4+ 36. Kf2 h5



37. Ra7

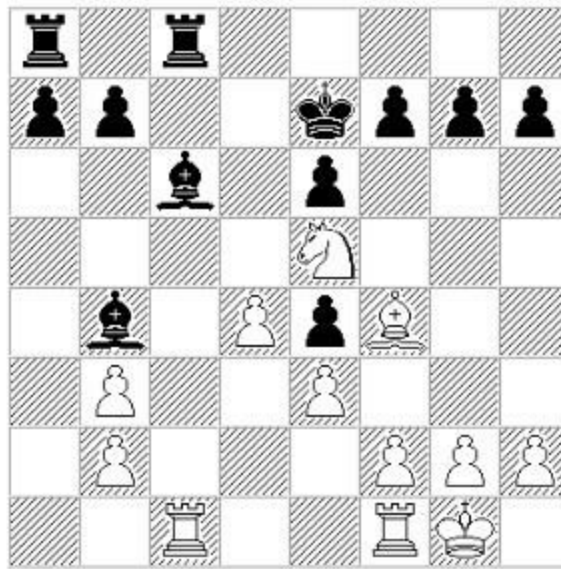
(37. Ne3 h4 38. Nxc4 hxc3+ was also winning for Black.)

37. ... Bxg2 38. Rxc2 h4 39. Bxh4 Rxc2+ 40. Kf3 Rxc2 41. Bxe7 Rh3+ 42. Kf2 Rb3 43. Bg5+ Kg6
44. Re7 Rxb2+ 45. Kf3 Ra8 46. Rxe6+ Kh7



White's king is getting checkmated, so he resigned. All Slav players should be well familiar with this well known game.

0-1



16. Rxc4

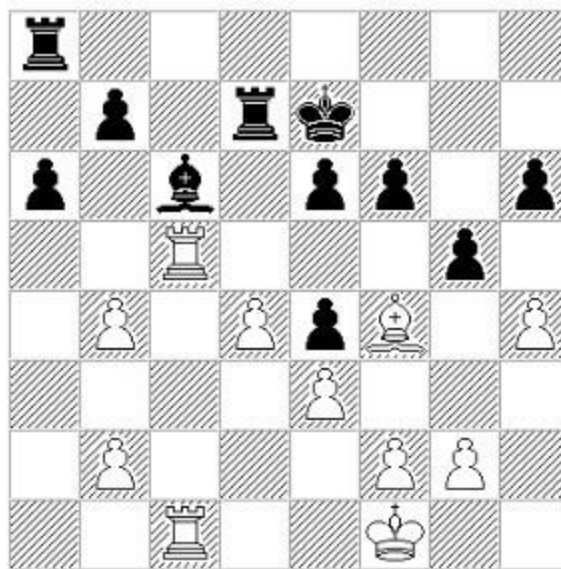
Exchanging on c6 would not really allow White to solve all his problems.

(16. Nxc6+ Rxc6 17. Rxc6 bxc6 18. Rc1 Kd7 19. Kf1 Bd6 20. Bxd6 Kxd6 21. Ke2 Rb8 22. Rc3 Rb5 23. Kd2 c5 24. dxc5+ Rxc5 25. Rxc5 Kxc5 26. Kc3 a5 27. h3 g5 -/+)

16. ... Bd6 17. Rfc1

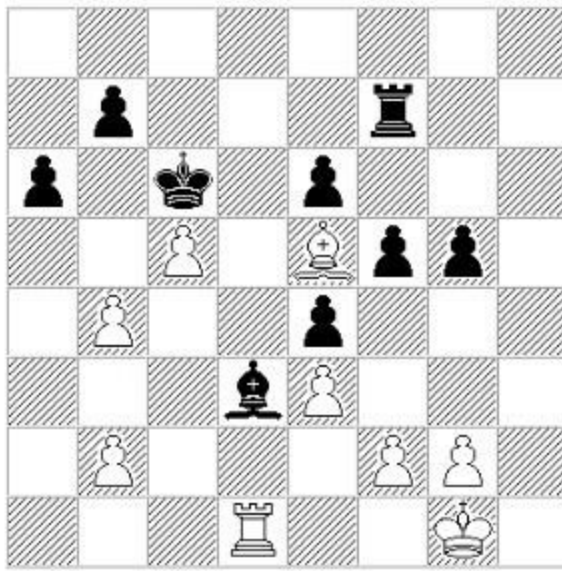
(After 17. Nxc6+ Rxc6 18. Rxc6 bxc6 19. Bxd6+ Kxd6 =+ Black is slightly better due to a better position of his king just like in the previous variation.)

17. ... Bxe5 18. Bxe5 f6 19. Bf4 Rd8 20. Rc5 Rd7 21. b4 a6 22. h4 h6 23. Kf1 g5



Black has a "qualitative" pawn superiority on the kingside: he can advance pawns, and White cannot.

24. Bg3 Rg8 25. Kg1 Rgd8 26. Kf1 Rd5 27. Kg1 Rf8 28. Kf1 Kd7 29. Kg1 Rf7 30. Kf1 f5 31. hxg5 hxg5 32. Be5 Bb5+ 33. Kg1 Rxc5 34. dxc5 Kc6 35. Rd1 Bd3

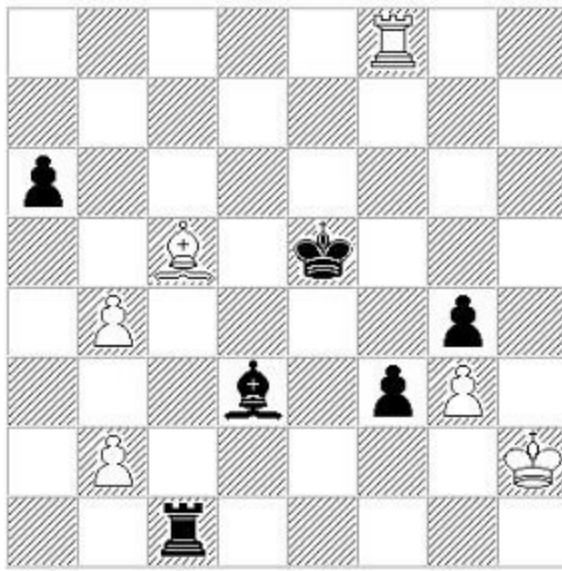


The black king threatens to invade via the weak light squares.

36. f3 Kd5 37. Bc3 e5 38. fxe4+ Kxe4 39. Bxe5 Kxe3 40. Re1+ Be2! 41. Rc1 f4 42. c6 bxc6 43. Rxc6 Ke4 44. Rf6 Re7 45. Bd6 Rd7 46. Kf2 Bb5 47. Kg1 Kd5 48. Bb8 Rd8 49. Bc7 Rd7 50. Bb8 Rb7 51. Bd6 Bd3 52. g3 Rd7 53. Bb8 Rd8 54. Bc7 Rc8 55. Bd6 Rc1+ 56. Kh2 f3 57. Bc5

(57. Rxf3 Be4 58. Rf6 Rh1#)

57. ... Ke5 58. Rf8 g4



After long manoeuvres Black's advantage has taken a clear shape: the doubled pawns on the queenside are useless, whereas the f3-g4 pawns represent great force.

59. Re8+ Kf5 60. Rf8+ Ke6 61. Bf2 Rf1 62. Bd4 Be4 63. Bg1 Rb1 64. Re8+ Kf5 65. Rf8+ Kg6 66. Bf2 Rxb2 67. Kg1 Rb1+ 68. Kh2 Rf1 69. Bg1 Bf5 70. Bd4 f2 71. Kg2 Rd1 72. Rf6+ Kg5 73. Rxf5+ Kxf5 74. Bxf2 Ke4 75. Bc5 Rd2+ 76. Kf1 Kf3 77. Ke1 Rd7 78. Bf2 Rd5 79. Kf1 Rd1+ 0-1

Gligoric, Svetozar - Sajtar, Jaroslav
It 1947



Here White is better developed and is able to develop initiative on the queenside. **12. Ne5 Ndx5 13. Bxe5 f6 14. Bc7**

White immediately points out the weakness of doubled pawns.

14. ... Bd8 15. Bg3 Kd7

(15. ... Kf7 16. Rhc1 Rc8)

16. Rhc1 Bc7 17. Bxc7 Kxc7 18. b4 Bg6 19. Kd2 Ra7?



(19. ... Rac8 20. a3 +=)

20. Bxc6 Kxc6

(20. ... bxc6 21. Nb5+ +-)

21. a4 Raa8 22. Nb5+ Kd7 23. Rc7+ Kd8 24. Rxb7 1-0

Good and Bad Bishops

In Exchange Slav, White's dark squared, and Black's light squares play an important role in evaluation of the position. If that bishop stays behind the pawn chain, that side will probably have long term difficulties, while trying to activate it.

Matlak, Marek - Dreev, Alexey
Czech team championship 1995 , D13

1. d4 d5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. c4 c6 4. cxd5 cxd5 5. Nc3 Nc6 6. e3 a6 7. Ne5 e6 8. f4?!



White secured the 'e5' outpost at the cost of shutting down the poor bishop on 'c1'.

8. ... Bd6 9. Bd3 Ne7 10. O-O b5 11. Bd2 Bb7 12. Rc1 O-O 13. Bb1

(13. Qe2 followed by Be1 and Bh4 was possible, probably with equal chances.)

13. ... Rc8 14. Qe2



(14. Qf3 and transferring the queen to 'h3' was a more aggressive setup.)

14. ... Rc7 15. Nd1 Rxc1 16. Bxc1

The bishop is badly placed here

16. ... Ne4 17. Nf2 Qa5 18. Nf3 f6 19. Nd3 b4!



with a very good idea of making the light squared bishop alive.

20. Bd2 Qb6 21. Rc1 a5 22. Nf2 Ba6 23. Bd3 Bxd3 24. Nxd3

Now White is left with his bad bishop against Black's good one.

24. ... Qa6 25. Kf1 Nf5



41. g3 gxf4 42. gxf4 Kg4 43. Kf2 Kh3 44. Kg1 Bd6 45. Bd2 b3 46. axb3 axb3 47. Ba5 Nf6

(47. ... Ba3? 48. bxa3 b2 49. Nd2 -+)

48. Kf2 Nd5 49. Ke2 h5 50. Kf2 Nf6 51. Nd2 Kxh2 52. Bd8 Ng4+ 53. Ke2 Kg3 54. Nxb3 h4 55. Bxh4+ Kxh4 56. Nc5 Nf6 57. Nxe6 Nd5 58. Nd8 Kh5 59. Nf7 Bc7

Black won due to his superior positional skills; without committing any obvious mistakes
White spent almost the entire game in passive defence.

0-1

Test Yourself - White to move

Just like any other opening system, the Exchange variation of Slav Defence has its own thematic tactical ideas, the rest of the book should help you practice those ideas.

Ubilava, Elizbar - Sarmiento, Alfonso Braulio
International Tournament 1994



White to move



Solution: **12. Rxh7!**

Black pays the price for delaying castling.

12. ... Rxh7 13. Bxg6+ Kf8 14. Bxh7 f5 15. Nh4 Qg5 16. Ng6+ Kf7 17. Nf4 Ne7 18. Nb5 Qh6 19. Nd6+ Kf8 20. Qa4 1-0

Maksimenko Andrei - Schneider Stefan
Copenhagen open 1995



White to move



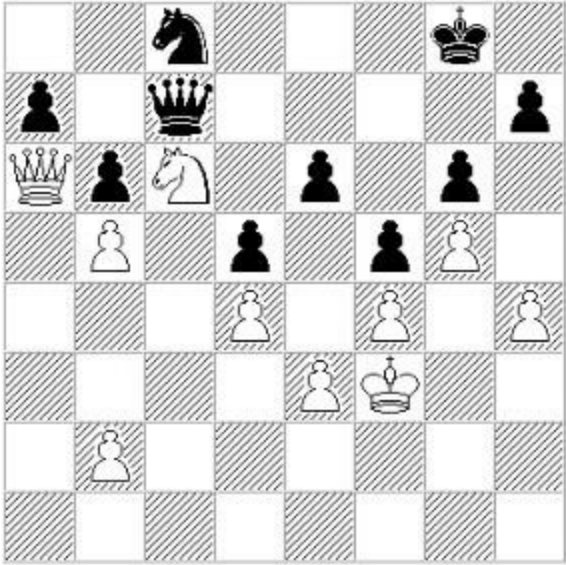
Solution: **14. Nxd5! exd5 15. Nxd7 g6**

(15. ... Qxd7 16. Bxh7+ Kh8 17. Bf5+ +-)

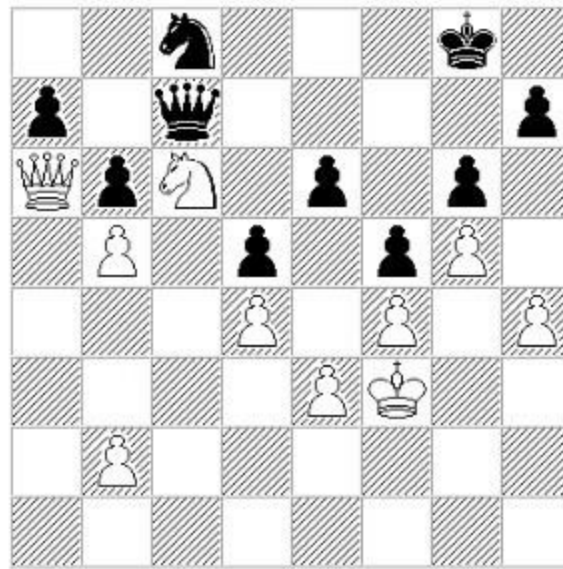
16. Nxf8 Rxc1 17. Rxc1 Bxf8 18. Rc8 1-0

Gibicar, Danijel - Groetzbach, Julian
2012 , D10

- 1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. cxd5 cxd5 4. Nc3 Nf6 5. Bf4 Nc6 6. e3 e6 7. Bd3 Bd6 8. Bxd6 Qxd6 9. f4 Bd7
- 10. Nf3 Ng8 11. Ne5 g6 12. O-O f5 13. a3 Nf6 14. Na4 O-O 15. Rc1 Rac8 16. Nc5 Rc7 17. Rf2
- Rfc8 18. Rfc2 Nd8 19. Qd2 b6 20. Na6 Rxc2 21. Rxc2 Rxc2 22. Qxc2 Ne8 23. a4 Kf8 24. Bb5
- Bxb5 25. axb5 Qe7 26. h3 Nd6 27. Nc6 Qd7 28. Nab8 Qc7 29. Qa4 Nxc6 30. Nxc6 Nc8 31. Kf2
- Ke8 32. g4 Kf7 33. g5 Kg7 34. h4 Kg8 35. Kf3 Kg7 36. Qa6 Kg8



White to move



Solution:

37. Qxc8+ 1-0

Vargas, Serano Pablo - Vives, David
San Jose 2008 , D12

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. Nf3 Nf6 4. e3 Bf5 5. cxd5 cxd5 6. Qb3 Qc7 7. Bb5+ Nc6 8. Bd2 e6 9. O-O
Bd6 10. Bb4 O-O 11. Bxc6 Bxb4 12. Qxb4 Qxc6 13. Ne5 Qa6 14. Nc3 Rac8 15. f3 Rfd8 16. Rac1
Bg6 17. a4 Ne8 18. Nb5 Qb6



White to move



Solution:

19. Nd7! Qa6

(19. ... Rxd7 20. Rxc8 +-)

20. Nc5

Black resigned as he will lose the 'a7' pawn and an exchange.

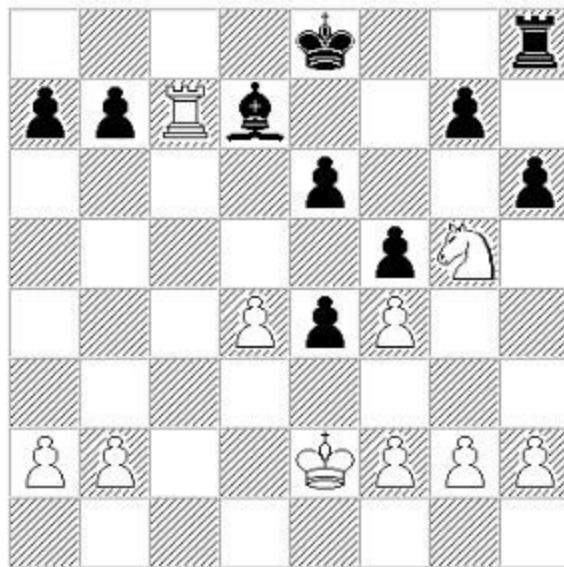
(It is curious that both players overlooked 20. Qf8#)

1-0

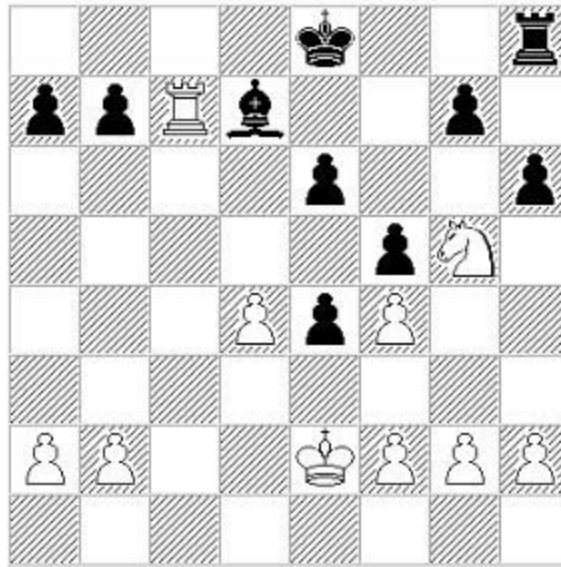
Barosso, Renzo - Simonini, M.

1986 , D13

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. Nf3 Nf6 4. cxd5 cxd5 5. Nc3 Nc6 6. Bf4 e6 7. e3 Bd6 8. Bd3 Bxf4 9. exf4 Qb6
10. Qd2 Bd7 11. Bc2 Nb4 12. Rc1 Nxc2+ 13. Rxc2 Qa6 14. Qe2 Qxe2+ 15. Kxe2 Rc8 16. Rhc1
Ne4 17. Nxe4 Rxc2+ 18. Rxc2 dxe4 19. Ng5 f5 20. Rc7 h6



White to move



Solution:

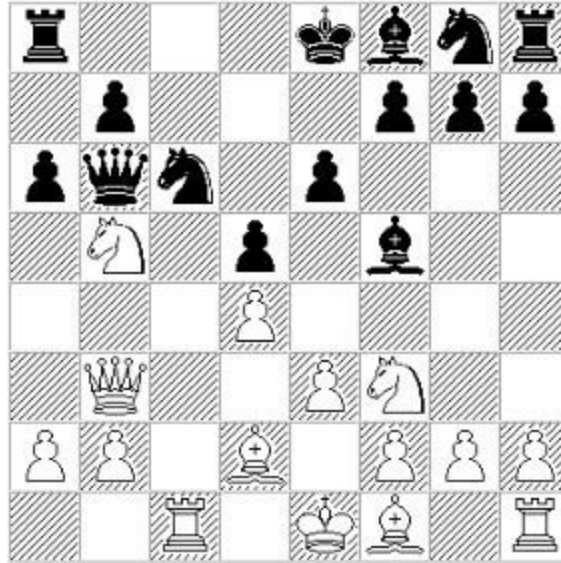
21. Nf7!

White exploits the full power of his active rook on the 7th rank.

21. ... Bb5+ 22. Ke3 O-O 23. Nd6 Ba6 24. b4 Rd8 25. Nxb7 Rb8 26. Nc5 Bc4 27. a3 1-0

Moeani, K. - Arab Adlane
IRI-ch U20 1997 , D11

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. Nf3 Bf5 4. cxd5 cxd5 5. Qb3 Qc7 6. Nc3 e6 7. Nb5 Qa5+ 8. Bd2 Qb6 9. Rc1
Nc6 10. e3 a6??



White to move



Solution:

11. Nd6+ 1-0

Galligan, Brian - Wermelin, Leif
1998 , D10

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. cxd5 cxd5 4. Nc3 e6 5. Bf4 Be7 6. e3 Nd7 7. Rc1 a6 8. Qa4 Nf6 9. Nb5 Kf8
10. Bc7 Qe8 11. Nd6 Bxd6 12. Bxd6+ Kg8 13. Bd3 Ne4 14. Bc7 Qe7 15. Ne2 Nb8 16. Bxe4 dxe4



White to move



Solution:

17. Bd6 Qd8

(17. ... Qd7 18. Rc7! Qd8 19. Be7 ! Qxc7? 20. Qe8#)

18. Be7 Bd7 19. Qb4 Qe8 20. Qxb7 +-

White is up a pawn and has superior development.

20. ... Bc6 21. Qc7 Bb5 22. Nc3 Bd3 23. d5 Nd7 24. Qd6 e5 25. Na4 Bb5 26. Nc5 Nxc5 27. Rxc5 Ra7 28. Rc7 Rxc7 29. Qxc7 f6 30. Bc5 h6 31. h3 Kh7 32. Qb7 f5 33. Rg1 Bd3 34. g4 Qb8 35. Qxb8 Rxb8 36. b4 f4 37. d6 Kg6 38. Kd2 Kf7 39. exf4 exf4 40. g5 1-0

Blank, Goncalves Eduardo - Caporale, Giuseppe Guido

Paulisto-chT 1998 , D13

1. d4 c5 2. c3 cxd4 3. cxd4 d5 4. Nf3 Nc6 5. Nc3 Nf6 6. e3 e6 7. Bd3 Bd6 8. O-O O-O 9. b3 b6 10. Bb2 Bb7 11. Qe2 Qe7 12. Nd2 Rfc8 13. a3 a6 14. Na4 Qd8 15. Rac1 Bc7 16. f4 g6 17. Nf3 Qd6 18. Ne5 Nb8 19. b4 Nbd7 20. Rc2 Bd8 21. Rfc1 Rxc2 22. Rxc2 Ne8 23. Bc1 Nxe5 24. fxe5 Qd7 25. Nc3 f5 26. Bd2 Be7 27. Be1 Nc7



White to move



Solution:

28. Na4

Due to his pieces being very uncoordinated and passive, Black cannot save material.

28. ... b5

(28. ... Qxa4 29. Rxc7 wins a piece for White.)

29. Nb6 Qd8 30. Nxa8 Nxa8 31. Rc1 Nb6 32. Bxb5 axb5 33. Qxb5 Ba8 34. Qa6 Kf7 35. Qa7 Nc4 36. b5 Kg8 37. a4 Bg5 38. Bf2 Qc8 39. a5 Qf8 40. h4 Bh6 41. Qa6 Qe8 42. Rc3 Bf8 43. Rb3 Kg7 44. Bg3 Kh6 45. Qa7 Be7 46. Bf4+ Kh5 47. b6 Bc6 48. b7 1-0

Thomas, Ingo - Broeker, Clemens
Duisburg Grossenbaum op 2004 , D14

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. cxd5 cxd5 4. Nc3 Nf6 5. Bf4 Nc6 6. e3 Bf5 7. Nf3 e6 8. Qb3 Qb6 9. Qxb6
axb6 10. a3 Kd7 11. Bb5 Bd6 12. Na4 Ke7 13. Bxd6+ Kxd6 14. Ke2 Nd7 15. Nc3 f6 16. Bd3
Bxd3+ 17. Kxd3 Na7 18. Rhe1 f5 19. Rec1 h6 20. Rc2 g5 21. Rac1 Rac8



White to move



Solution:

22. Nb5+!

A simple combination, distracting the knight from defending the rook.

22. ... Nxb5 23. Rxc8 Rh7 24. Ke2 +- g4 25. Nh4 Ke7 26. Ng6+ Kf6 27. Nf4 Nd6 28. Rg8 Kf7 29. Ra8 h5 30. Rc7 Ke7 31. Ng6+ Kf6 32. Ne5 1-0

Trubizin, Alexander - Semenov, Nikolai
RUS Central Region-ch 2007 , D10

**1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. cxd5 cxd5 4. Nc3 Nf6 5. Bf4 Qb6 6. Qd2 Bf5 7. e3 e6 8. Rc1 Bb4 9. Bb5+
Nbd7 10. Bxd7+ Kxd7 11. Nf3 Ne4 12. Qd1 Rac8?! 13. Ne5+ Ke7 14. Qa4 Rhd8 15. O-O f6? 16.
Nxe4 Rxc1 17. Rxc1 Bxe4**



White to move



Solution:

18. Rc7+!

Black played with fire for too long, leaving the king exposed, and suddenly gets punished.

18. ... Qxc7

(18. ... Kf8 19. Nd7+ Rxd7 20. Qxd7 is also losing immediately.)

19. Ng6+ Kf7 20. Bxc7 Ra8 21. Qxb4 Kxg6 22. f3 Bb1 23. Qxb7 Rf8 24. Qxa7 h6 25. b4 Rc8 26. b5 1-0

Snorek, Milan - Majer, Jiri
Brno Duras op-A 2011 , D13

**1. d4 d5 2. Nf3 c6 3. c4 Nf6 4. Nc3 e6 5. cxd5 cxd5 6. Bf4 Bd6 7. Bg3 Nc6 8. e3 O-O 9. Bd3 a6
10. Rc1 Qe7 11. Bb1 Bd7 12. a3 b5 13. b4 Na7? 14. Ne5 Nc8 15. Qd3 h6**



White to move



Solution:

16. Ng4! Rd8

(Of course, the knight cannot be taken due to mate: 16. ... Nxc4?? 17. Qh7#)

17. Be5! Ne4 18. Nxe4 dxe4 19. Qxe4 f5 20. Qxa8 +-

As a result of Black's unfortunate Nc6-a7-c8 knight manoeuvre, his rooks are disconnected and White easily wins with an extra exchange.

20. ... fxg4 21. Qe4 Qg5 22. h4 gxh3 23. Rxh3 Bxe5 24. dxe5 Ne7 25. Rg3 Qf5 26. Qh4 1-0

Dzupin, Dmitry - Vostrov, S.
Yuzhny open 2010 , D13

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. cxd5 cxd5 4. Nc3 Nc6 5. Nf3 Nf6 6. Bf4 e6 7. e3 Bd6 8. Bg3 Bxg3 9. hxg3 Qb6 10. Rb1 Bd7 11. b4 Rc8 12. Qd2 h6 13. Be2 Ne4 14. Nxe4 dxe4 15. Ng5 f5 16. Bh5+ Kf8 17. Nf7 Rg8 18. Nd6 Ra8 19. O-O g6 20. Be2 Ne7 21. Nc4 Qd8 22. b5 Nd5 23. Ne5 Qe7 24. Rfc1 Kg7 25. Bc4 Nb6 26. Qa5 Rgc8 27. Bb3 Rxc1+ 28. Rxc1 Qd6 29. Rc5 Kf6 30. a4 a6?



White to move



Solution:

31. Qxb6

Leaving the knight on b6 unprotected was a fatal mistake; White wins back the piece after 31... Qxb6 32.Nxd7+.

1-0

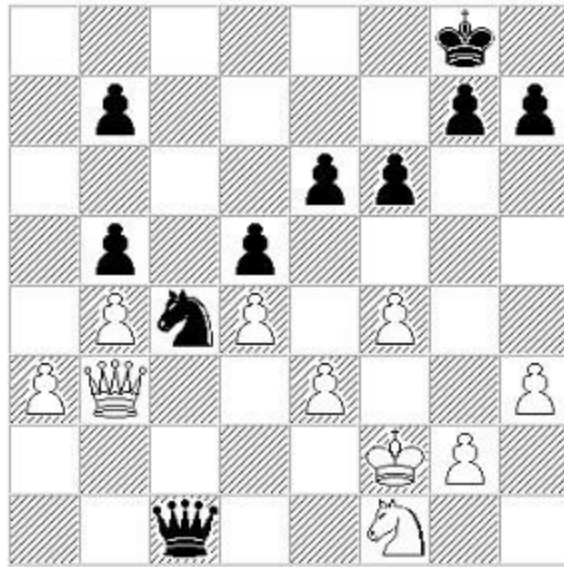
Test Yourself - Black to move

Kaspar, J. - Hlina, Miloslav
Klatovy op-B 1998 , D13

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. cxd5 cxd5 4. Nc3 Nf6 5. Nf3 e6 6. Bf4 Nc6 7. a3 a6 8. Rc1 Bd6 9. Bg5 O-O
10. e3 Bd7 11. Bd3 Rc8 12. O-O Be7 13. Nd2 Ne8 14. Bxe7 Nxe7 15. b4 Nd6 16. f4 Nef5 17. Rf3
Nh6 18. Nb3 Nb5 19. Nxb5 Bxb5 20. Bxb5 axb5 21. Rf2 Nf5 22. Qd3 Nd6 23. Rfc2 Rxc2 24.
Rxc2 Nc4 25. Nd2 Qd7 26. Rc3 Rc8 27. Nf3 f6 28. h3 Nd6 29. Nd2 Rxc3 30. Qxc3 Qc6 31. Qb3
Qc1+ 32. Nf1 Nc4 33. Kf2



Black to move



Solution:

33. ... Qxf1+ 34. Kxf1 Nd2+ 35. Ke2 Nxb3 36. Kd3 b6! 37. Kc3 Na5 38. bxa5 bxa5

Black is up a pawn in the pawn endgame, and won easily.

39. g4 Kf7 40. h4 g6 41. Kd3 Ke7 42. Kc3 Kd6 43. Kd3 h6 44. Kc3 Ke7 45. Kd3 Kf7 46. Kc3 g5 47. h5 f5 48. gxf5 exf5 0-1

Francke, Joerg - Mattick, Lutz
Kreuzberg 2000 , D13

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 c5 3. c3 cxd4 4. cxd4 d5 5. Nc3 Nc6 6. e3 Bf5 7. a3 e6 8. b4 Rc8 9. Bb2 Bd6 10. Rc1 O-O 11. Na4 Ne4 12. Nc5 Qe7 13. Qb3 b6 14. Nd3 Qf6 15. Be2 Qh6 16. O-O



Black to move



Solution:

16. ... Nd2!

White resigned since he either loses the queen or gets mated on h2.

0-1

Berrios, Jimenez Delenis - Hlgatian, Goar
Bled ol (Women) 2002 , D10

1. c4 c6 2. Nc3 d5 3. cxd5 cxd5 4. d4 Nf6 5. g3 Nc6 6. Bg2 Bf5 7. a3 e6 8. e3 Be7 9. Nge2 O-O
10. O-O Na5 11. Nf4 Rc8 12. Nd3 Qb6 13. Ne5? Nb3 14. Ra2



Black to move



Solution:

14. ... Bb1! 15. Nxb1 Nxc1 16. Nc3

(16. Ra1 Qxb2 -+)

16. ... Nxa2 17. Nxa2 Qxb2 18. Nc1 Qxa3 19. Ncd3 Rc3 0-1

Overview of variations

The overview below is a summary of the various options in the opening - taken from the main games that we analyzed.

Slav Exchange - Overview

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. cxd5

(4. Nf3 Bf5 5. Qb3 Qb6 6. Qxb6 axb6 7. cxd5 Nxd5 8. Nxd5 cxd5 9. e3 Nc6 10. Bd2 Bd7 11. Be2 e6 12. O-O Bd6 13. Rfc1 Ke7 14. Bc3 Rhc8 15. a3 Na5 16. Nd2 f5 17. g3 b5 18. f3 Nc4 19. Bxc4 bxc4 =+ and Black went on to produce a great example of the [Slav Endgame](#) - 0-1 [Janowski,D-Capablanca,J/New York 1916](#))

4. ... cxd5



5. Nf3

(5. Bf4 a6 (5. ... Qb6 6. e3 Nc6 7. Bd3 Bg4 8. Nge2 e6 9. O-O a6 10. Na4 Qa7 11. Qb3 b5 12. Rfc1 Rc8 13. Rc2 Be7 14. Rac1 Qb7 15. Nc5 Bxc5 16. Rxc5 Nd7 17. R5c3 Bxe2 18. Bxe2 O-O 19. a4 b4 20. Bd6 Qb6 21. Bxb4 +/- 1-0 [Grischuk,A-Kamsky,G/Moscow 2013](#)) (5. ... Nc6 6. e3 a6 7. Bd3 g6 8. h3 Bf5 9. Nf3 Bxd3 10. Qxd3 Bg7 11. O-O O-O 12. Rfc1 e6 13. Na4 Ne4 14. Nc5 Nxc5 15. Rxc5 Qd7 16. Rac1 Rfc8 17. a3 Bf8 18. R5c2 f6 19. Nd2 Bd6 20. Bxd6 Qxd6 21. Nb3 Rc7 22. Na5 Rac8 23. Nxb7 Rxb7 24. Qxa6 +/- 1-0 [Kramnik,V-Aronian,L/Istanbul TUR 2012](#)) 6. Nf3 (6. e3 e6 7. Bd3 Be7 8. Rc1 O-O 9. g4 Nc6 10. g5 Nd7 11. Nf3 += 1-0 [Vaisser, A - Collins, D, 1994](#)) 6. ... Nc6 7. Ne5 Qb6 8. Nxc6 bxc6 9. Qd2 Bf5 10. f3 e6 11. e3 Nd7 12. Rc1 Be7 13. Be2 O-O 14. O-O Rfc8 15. a3

Qb7 16. Na4 c5 17. dxc5 Bxc5 18. Nxc5 Nxc5 19. Qb4 Qxb4 20. axb4 Nd3 =+ 0-1
[Wojtkiewicz,A-Shirov,A/Manila olm 1992](#))

5. ... Nc6 6. Bf4



(6. e3 a6 7. Ne5 e6 8. f4 Bd6 9. Bd3 Ne7 10. O-O b5 11. Bd2 Bb7 12. Rc1 O-O 13. Bb1 Rc8 = 0-1 [Matlak,M-Dreev,A/ 1995](#))

6. ... Bf5

(6. ... Nh5 7. Be5 (7. Bd2 e6 8. e3 Bd6 9. Rc1 O-O 10. Be2 Nf6 11. O-O Ne4 12. Be1 f5 13. Nd2 Qf6 14. Ndx e4 fxe4 15. f4 Bd7 16. g3 Kh8 17. h4 h6 18. Kg2 g5 =+ 0-1 [Votava,J-Morozevich,A/BL 1999](#)) 7. ... e6 8. e3 Be7 9. Bd3 O-O 10. Rc1 Bd7 11. O-O f6 = 0-1 [Allen,K-Volkov,S/Monarch Assurance 9th 2000](#))

(6. ... a6 7. Rc1 (7. e3 Bg4 8. Bd3 e6 9. h3 Bh5 10. Rc1 Bd6 11. Bxd6 Qxd6 12. O-O O-O 13. Be2 Rac8 14. Ne1 Bxe2 15. Qxe2 Nd7 16. Nd3 Nb4 17. Nxb4 Qxb4 =+ 0-1 [Huebner,R-Georgiev,K 1997](#)) 7. ... Bf5 8. e3 e6 (8. ... Rc8 9. Be2 e6 10. O-O Be7 11. Qb3 Na5 12. Qa4+ Nc6 13. Bxa6 Ra8 14. Bxb7 Rxa4 15. Bxc6+ Kf8 16. Nxa4 Ne4 17. Bb7 Nd6 18. Bxd6 Qxd6 19. Rc6 Qd7 20. Rc8+ Bd8 21. Ne5 1-0 [Kramnik,V-Anand,V/Moscow 2007](#)) 9. Qb3 Ra7 10. Be2 Nd7 11. O-O Be7 12. Na4 g5 13. Be5 Rg8 14. Bg3 h5 15. Nc5 Nxc5 16. dxc5 h4 17. Bd6 Bg4 18. h3 Bxf3 19. Bxf3 f5 20. Bh5+ Kf8 21. e4! +/- 1-0 [Milov,V-Piket,J/Groningen 1998](#))

(6. ... Qa5 7. e3 Ne4 8. Qb3 e6 9. Bd3 Bb4 10. Rc1 Nxc3 11. bxc3 Ba3 12. Rb1 b6 13. e4 dxe4 14. Bb5 Bd7 15. Nd2 a6 16. Bxc6 Bxc6 17. Nc4 Qf5 18. Bd6 e3 19. Nxe3 Qxb1+ 20. Qxb1 Bxd6 21. Qxb6 +/- 1-0 [Botvinnik,M-Denker,A/radio 1945](#))

7. e3 e6



8. Bb5

(8. Ne5 Nd7 9. Nxc6 bxc6 10. Rc1 Be7 11. Be2 O-O 12. O-O c5 13. Nb5 a6 14. Nd6 Bg6 15. dxc5 Nxc5 16. Rxc5 Bxd6 17. Bxd6 Qxd6 18. Qd4 Rfd8 19. Rfc1 e5 20. Qd2 d4 21. Rc6 Qe7 22. Rxa6 Rab8 23. exd4 exd4 24. Ra3 Qb4 25. Rd1 d3 26. Qxb4 Rxb4 27. f3 Kf8 28. Rxd3 Bxd3 29. Bxd3 Rxb2 -/+ 0-1 [Andersson,U-Gligoric,S/Niksic 1983](#))

8. ... Bd6

(8. ... Bb4 9. Ne5 Qa5 10. Bxc6+ bxc6 11. O-O Bxc3 12. bxc3 Qxc3 13. Qc1 Qxc1 14. Rfxc1 O-O 15. f3 h6 16. Nxc6 Rfe8 17. a4 Nd7 18. Bd6 Nb6 19. Bc5 Bd3 20. Nxa7! Rxa7 21. Bxb6 Ra6 22. a5 +- 1-0 [Botvinnik,M-Tal,M/Moscow 1961](#))

9. Ne5 Rc8 10. Bxc6+ bxc6 11. O-O O-O 12. Rc1 Qe7 13. Na4 Bxe5 14. Bxe5 Nd7 15. Nc5 f6 16. Bg3 e5 17. Qd2 Nb6 18. b3 e4 19. Na6 h5 20. Qb4 Qb7 21. Nc5 Qe7 22. a4 g5 23. a5 Na8 24. Na6 Qe8 25. Rc2 h4 26. Bd6 Rf7 27. Rfc1 Rg7 28. Nb8 +-

1-0 [Kasparov,G-Dolmatov,S/USSR \(ch\) 1979](#)

1-0

Conclusion

Having gone through the examples, you might still wonder why one should study Slav Exchange. Because the arising structure is a great field for illustrating basic positional principles that govern chess! At the same time, the transformations that take place in this structure require a lot of subtle judgement. And of course, in most cases this judgment must be based on tactics.

Symbols and Abbreviations Used in the Book

Position Evaluation

- ∞ – Unclear: It is unclear who (if anyone) has an advantage.
- = – Even position: White and Black have more or less equal chances.
- + = – White has slightly better chances.
- + / – – White has much better chances.
- + – – White has a clear advantage.
- = + – Black has slightly better chances.
- / + – Black has much better chances.
- + – Black has a clear advantage.

Move Evaluation

?? - Blunder

? - Mistake

?! - Dubious move

!? - Interesting move

! - Good move

!! - Brilliant move

Table of Contents

[CopyRight Information](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Opening Preparation](#)

[Book Format](#)

[Slav Defence](#)

[Slav Defence - Main lines](#)

[Exchange Variation - Slav Defence](#)

[Middlegame Themes](#)

[Play on the 'c' File](#)

[Grischuk, Alexander - Kamsky, Gata](#)

[Capablanca, Jose Raul - Vidmar, Milan](#)

[Tarnowski, Alfred - Botvinnik, Mikhail](#)

[Huebner, Robert - Georgiev, Kiril](#)

[Hauchard, Arnaud - Shirov, Alexei](#)

[Test Yourself](#)

[Filguth, Rubens Alberto - Vilela, de Acuna Jose Luis](#)

[Ghaem, Maghami Ehsan - Lodhi, Mahmood](#)

[Pino Munoz Francisca - Cook Patrick](#)

[Knoflicek, Ctibor - Druckenthaner, Andreas](#)

[Pohl - Tragsdorf, Gisela](#)

[Lobbes, Frank - Paschmann, Stefan](#)

[Masich, Vladimir - Stock, Hugo](#)

[Kluger, Hans-Peter - Neubert, Gerhard](#)

[Pressure on 'c6'](#)

[Botvinnik, Mikhail - Tal, Mikhail](#)

[Kasparov, Garry - Dolmatov, Sergei](#)

[Kramnik, Vladimir - Aronian, Levon](#)

[Test Yourself](#)

[Kramnik, Vladimir - Anand, Viswanathan](#)

[Babu N Sudhakar - Sriram, Jha](#)

[Khropova, Larisa - Shumilina, Alexandra](#)

[Structural Transformations](#)

[Andersson, Ulf - Gligoric, Svetosar](#)

[Wojtkiewicz, Aleksander - Shirov, Alexei](#)

[Breakthrough in the Center](#)

[Botvinnik, Mikhail - Denker, Arnold](#)

[Ivkov, Borislav - Smyslov, Vassily](#)

[Milov, Vadim - Porper, Eduard](#)

[Milov, Vadim - Sadler, Matthew](#)

[Milov, Vadim - Piket, Jeroen](#)

[Test Yourself](#)

[Socko, Monika - Stefanova, Antoaneta](#)
[Andrianov, Nikolai - Imanaliev, Taalibek](#)

[Kingside Pawn Storm](#)

[Allen, Keith - Volkov, Sergey](#)
[Votava, Jan - Morozevich, Alexander](#)
[Vaisser, Anatoly - Collin Denis](#)

[Test Yourself](#)

[Coutts, Tama - Tompkins, Glen](#)
[Seirawan, Yasser - Beliavsky, Alexander G](#)

[Slav Endgame](#)

[Janowski, David M - Capablanca, Jose Raul](#)
[Ratner, Boris - Romanovsky, Petr](#)
[Gligoric, Svetozar - Sajtar, Jaroslav](#)

[Good and Bad Bishops](#)

[Matlak, Marek - Dreev, Alexey](#)

[Test Yourself - White to move](#)

[Ubilava, Elizbar - Sarmiento, Alfonso Braulio](#)
[Maksimenko Andrei - Schneider Stefan](#)
[Gibicar, Danijel - Groetzbach, Julian](#)
[Vargas, Serano Pablo - Vives, David](#)
[Barosso, Renzo - Simonini, M.](#)
[Moeani, K. - Arab Adlane](#)
[Galligan, Brian - Wermelin, Leif](#)
[Blank, Goncalves Eduardo - Caporale, Giuseppe Guido](#)
[Thomas, Ingo - Broeker, Clemens](#)
[Trubizin, Alexander - Semenov, Nikolai](#)
[Snorek, Milan - Majer, Jiri](#)
[Dzupin, Dmitry - Vostrov, S.](#)

[Test Yourself - Black to move](#)

[Kaspar, J. - Hlina, Miloslav](#)
[Francke, Joerg - Mattick, Lutz](#)
[Berrios, Jimenez Delenis - Hlgatian, Goar](#)

[Overview of variations](#)

[Slav Exchange - Overview](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[Symbols and Abbreviations Used in the Book](#)