

Yury Lapshun and Nick Conticello

play 1 b4!

shock your opponents with the Sokolsky



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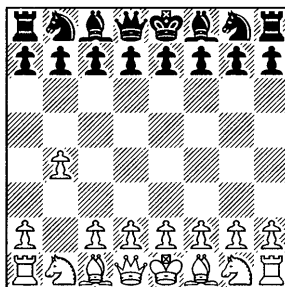
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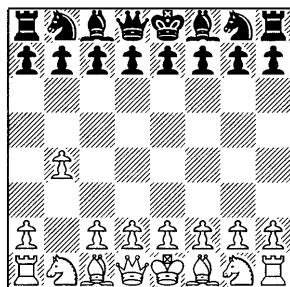
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Winning Unorthodox Openings, Angus Dunnington (Everyman Chess 2000)

The Week in Chess

Introduction

by Nick Conticello



One Saturday evening in September 2004, I was sitting in the Marshall Chess Club, mired in a dreadful slump, when Yury Lapshun came up to me and asked if I would be interested in helping him write a book on the move 1 b4. I gave the matter due deliberation (a whole 20 seconds) and agreed. "It shouldn't take too long," he said. "Maybe three weeks? I'm going to be busy after that." Three weeks? Once he realized we were writing a book and not a pamphlet, he understood it would take a bit longer. In fact it took three years! (We finished the first draft after two years, then found a publisher and rewrote the entire thing.) Anyway, once I had agreed, the benefits were immediate. The next day I played two terrifically creative games and finished second in a strong tournament. There's something about Yury...

My main function on this project has been to assist Yury, whose native tongue is Russian, to communicate his

ideas to an English-speaking public. But I have also contributed research and the occasional piece of analysis, so it can be said that this book is truly a cooperative effort.

History of the Opening

The move 1 b4 had been played sporadically by masters of iconoclastic bent before 1919, but without too much success. Here is the game B.Fleissig-K.Schlechter, Vienna 1893 (or 1895; sources are confused on the date), that is a typically frightful beating for White:

1 b4 e6 2 ♘b2 ♘f6 3 a3 c5 4 b5 d5 5 d4 ♜a5+ 6 ♘c3 ♘e4 7 ♜d3 cxd4 8 ♜xd4 ♙c5 9 ♜xg7 ♙xf2+ 10 ♙d1 d4! 11 ♜xh8+ ♙e7 12 ♜xc8 dxc3 13 ♙c1 ♘d7! 14 ♜xa8 ♜xb5 15 ♙f4 ♜d5+ 16 ♙c1 ♙e3+! 17 ♙xe3 ♘f2! 18 ♙xf2 ♜d2+ 19 ♙b1 ♜d1+ 20 ♙a2 ♜xc2 mate (0-1)

As we say in the USA, don't try this at home!

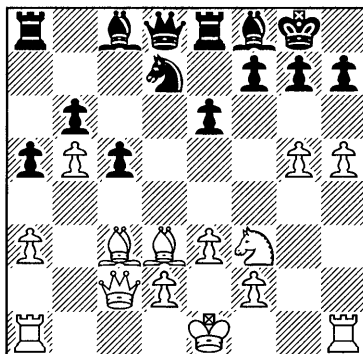
But in 1919 Savielly Tartakower

famously used it to beat Richard Réti in a match in Vienna (this game is covered in Chapter One). I must take this opportunity to correct Richard Palliser's explanation in his excellent book *Beating Unusual Chess Openings*. Tartakower recounts in his book *My Best Games of Chess* that he visited the Central Park Zoo in New York just before he tried 1 b4 against Geza Maróczy in the 1924 New York tournament. He was very impressed by the climbing skills of an orangutan and thought the 'climb' of the white b-pawn was similar. So he dubbed the opening 'the Orangutan' and the name stuck.

The American master Anthony Santasiere played a version prefaced with 1 ♖f3, and Réti himself often advanced the b-pawn two squares in conjunction with the fianchetto of the king's bishop in character with his eponymous system. In more recent times the British International Master Michael Basman has played 1 b4 (or first 1 a3 or even 1 h3!?) as part of his unique complex of offbeat systems. Consider the following:

M.Basman-B.Thipsay
British Championship,
Eastbourne 1991

1 h3 d5 2 b4 ♘f6 3 ♘f3 e6 4 a3 ♘bd7 5 e3 ♘d6 6 c4 c6 7 ♘c3 0-0 8 ♘b2 ♗e8 9 ♗c2 a5 10 b5 c5 11 g4! dxc4 12 ♘xc4 ♘b6 13 ♘e2 ♘f8 14 g5 ♘fd7 15 h4 ♘d5 16 h5 ♘xc3 17 ♘xc3 b6 18 ♘d3!



18...f5 19 gxf6 ♘xf6 20 ♘g5 ♗a7 21 ♘xh7+ ♘h8 22 h6 1-0

However, this book would probably never have been written without the pioneering work of the Soviet master Alexei Sokolsky, whose games and analysis in his book *Debyut 1 b2-b4* demonstrated beyond any doubt that the Sokolsky Opening was a viable weapon at the highest levels of play.

Great players such as Smyslov, Bronstein, Spassky and Larsen have used this opening with success against grandmasters. None of these experts have used the Sokolsky frequently, but at the right moment it can be brutally effective.

General Theory

The advance b2-b4 gains space on the queenside from the outset and announces a general policy of left flank expansion. On the fourth rank the b-pawn is active in the fight for central control; it can drive away an enemy knight from c6 or exchange itself for a c-pawn foolhardy enough to challenge

it too swiftly. Should the pawn advance to the fifth rank, it may attack an enemy pawn chain (b7-c6-d5) or control the c6-square which might become weak after an exchange of Black's fianchettoed light-squared bishop.

White's dark-squared bishop will generally start life on b2 and exert considerable influence on the a1-h8 diagonal. The light-squared bishop has a choice, but a good rule of thumb is to put it on e2 or d3 against a Black set-up based on ...d7-d5, and to fianchetto it if time permits against set-ups with ...e7-e5. This deployment, in conjunction with the thrust c2-c4, resembles an English Opening, and the reader is advised to acquaint himself with that system. Of course, against a King's Indian formation by Black, one may also play e2-e3 and d2-d4, put the bishop on e2, and play a French Defence with an extra tempo. Flexibility is one of the main virtues of the Sokolsky.

Against ...d5 defences White may even opt for a Bird Opening set-up with f2-f4 and ♖f3, strong-pointing e5. But it's usually a good idea to avoid an early d2-d4, as the weakness of the c4-square may make itself felt.

Black's main defensive systems involve advancing the e-pawn or d-pawn two squares at once, or playing an early ...c6 to attack the b-pawn quickly. The move 1...e5 is the most critical option, as the blocking of the long diagonal and the threat to dominate the centre with ...d7-d5 may leave White, if he is not careful, with a passive position

without much space to manoeuvre. It may be necessary to sacrifice material, often the f-pawn or the b-pawn, to meet this strategic threat. The positions after 1 b4 e5 2 ♗b2 f6!? (Chapter One) require the most accuracy from both players.

The line 1 b4 c6 2 ♗b2 a5 aims to weaken the b-pawn before attacking it with pieces. We recommend the gambit 3 b5!? as the best option. White will lure the pawn to b4 and then attack with a2-a3, as in the Benko Gambit (see Chapter Seven).

Why should you play this opening?

There is one outstanding reason to play the Sokolsky: it is virtually certain that your opponent will be unfamiliar with the positions that arise. The best way to reach good positions from the opening is to play reasonably sound systems with which you are familiar and comfortable, and with which your opponents are unfamiliar and uncomfortable! Under these conditions, your opponents will surely make mistakes which you can exploit to win.

Notice I said 'reasonably sound'. If you want to guarantee yourself a small advantage with no risk, the Sokolsky is not for you! After the best practical continuation (in my opinion), 1 b4 e5! 2 ♗b2 ♗xb4!, Black can be assured of an active position, at least for the first ten or so moves. However, we feel that White is not worse here, and the first player has the significant practical advantage of being on familiar turf, given

proper preparation.

So much for familiarity. As for comfort, the Sokolsky is flexible enough to offer players of widely varying styles positions to suit their tastes. For instance, Alexei Sokolsky was a solid, perhaps even a stolid, player; a plodder if you will. His contemporary, Boris Katalymov, an equally ardent devotee of this opening, was a daring tactician who revelled in risky flank attacks. Bukhuti Gurgeniidze is a lover of unusual, closed structures, while the author of this book, Yury Lapshun, detests closed games. There is truly something for everybody in the Sokolsky.

If you want to explore untrodden paths, if you enjoy thinking for yourself, or if you prefer to 'play chess and not variations', you have come to the right place. Memorization is required only for the sharpest lines occurring after 1 b4 e5. Other first moves for Black place a premium on understanding and judgment. A careful study of the material in this book will provide you with a grasp of the basics of numerous structures your opponents will try, and the confidence to confront them effectively.

Opening books may not be too helpful

What of your opponents who may be aware of your predilection for 1 b4? Where can they turn for guidance?

Most of our readers will be club players, as will their opponents. The average non-professional will not be familiar with the best methods of wad-

ing through databases for the most correct information, so one may assume your adversaries will seek guidance from the standard opening reference works and repertoire books like this one. Fortunately for us, very few of them offer really useful information.

For instance, the late Grandmaster Eduard Gufeld, in his book *An Opening Repertoire for the Attacking Player*, recommends 1 b4 e6 2 ♖b2 ♟f6 3 b5 d5 4 e3 c5 5 bxc6 bxc6, and now he gives the move 6 ♟f3 after which Black grabs the initiative on the queenside. But I prefer the continuation 6 c4! ♟d6 7 ♟f3 0-0 8 ♖c2 ♟bd7 9 ♟c3 ♖b7 10 ♟e2!, as played in K.Novikov-D.Pincher, Tula 2000.

Another book, *An Opening Repertoire for Black* by GMs Drazen Marovic and Bruno Parma, considers only 1 ♟f3 ♟f6 2 b4 and offers only one example: 2...g6 3 ♖b2 ♟g7 3 4 c4 0-0 5 e3 c6 6 ♟e2 d5 7 0-0 ♟g4 8 ♟a3?! ♟bd7 9 b5 cxb5 10 ♟xb5 dxc4 11 ♟xc4 a6 12 ♟bd4 e5 13 ♟e2 e4 14 ♟fd4 ♖c8 15 ♖b3 ♟c5 16 ♟a3 ♟fd7 17 ♖c1 ♖a5 18 ♟xc5 ♟xc5 19 h3 ♟xe2 20 ♟xe2 ♖cd8 21 ♟g3 ♟e5? (Marovic and Parma prefer 21...♖fe8) 22 ♖xc5! ♖xc5 23 ♟xe4, and White actually won a long rook and pawn ending, V.Smyslov-W. Uhlmann, Moscow 1967. But what of the move order 1 b4 ♟f6 2 ♖b2 g6 3 ♟xf6!?, one may ask – the authors offer no advice. The King's Indian is no simple panacea against the Sokolsky.

Many repertoire books don't even discuss 1 b4, considering only 1 b3 (the Nimzowitsch-Larsen Attack), which

poses vastly different strategic problems for both sides. A few books, however, do make decent suggestions against our opening. For example, the American Grandmaster Andrew Soltis, in his *Black to Play and Win with 1...g6*, offers a sound King's Indian set-up and considers the Sokolsky separately from the Nimzowitsch-Larsen. Our preferences against this structure will be found in Chapter Three.

Two recent books, *Chess Openings for Black, Explained* by Grandmasters Dzindzichashvili, Alburtt and Perelshteyn, and *Beating Unusual Chess Openings* by IM Richard Palliser, have presented a strong challenge based on the line 1 b4 e5 2 ♗b2 ♗xb4. How to deal with their recommendations is discussed in Chapter Two.

The Sokolsky Connection

Part of our mission in writing this book was to present the best of Sokolsky's work to the English-speaking chess world. All the games played by Sokolsky (except Game 10), and several other pre-1970 games (5, 26, 45, 47, 50, 68, 74, 76 and 77) include notes based heavily upon or directly translated from Sokolsky's book. Occasionally Sokolsky got something wrong, and we have corrected his analysis where necessary. But we have tried for the most part to retain the flavour of Sokolsky's

writing in these games.

However, our primary purpose was to put forth Yury Lapshun's games and ideas, as he is certainly one of the strongest active players who regularly plays the Sokolsky. Yury has annotated more than 60 games here, including 20 of his own best games, and I believe they are a valuable contribution to the literature of chess.

Pronoun Questions

For the remainder of this book, the pronouns 'I', 'me' and 'mine' refer to Yury Lapshun, and 'co-author' refers to Nick Conticello. The authors understand that a significant portion of our readership will be female, and therefore we have used gender-neutral pronouns whenever possible.

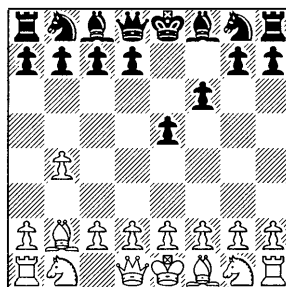
Conclusion

I will now step aside and let Yury Lapshun, with some help from Alexei Sokolsky, guide you the rest of the way. On behalf of Yury, I wish you every success in your games with 1 b4, and I hope you experience as much pleasure in reading this work as the authors enjoyed while writing it.

Nick Conticello,
New York,
March 2008

Chapter One

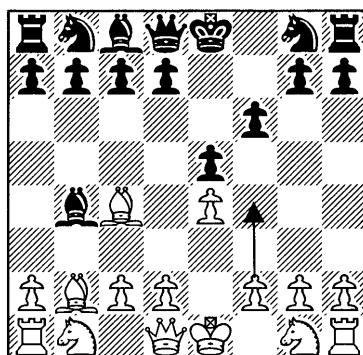
The Sokolsky Gambit



1 b4 e5 2 Bb2 f6! 3 e4! (or 3 b5!?)

We begin our survey of 1 b4 with one of its most complicated and most theoretical variations, the so-called Sokolsky Gambit. With his second move Black embarks on a policy of building a strong, classical pawn centre, using it to blunt White's pieces, in particular the dark-squared bishop, and eventually expanding and breaking through on the kingside. We believe White must combat this plan by drastic means, including the offer of a pawn or two in 19th century style.

We start with two classic Tartakower games that put the Sokolsky Opening 'on the map' so to speak. These games, and two later ones, Fischer-Gloger (Game 3) and Katalymov-Muratov (Game 4), examine the acceptance of the gambit with 3...Bxb4. White replies 4 Bc4 with the idea of continuing with the advance f2-f4, and often f4-f5 following a similar strategy to that used in the Vienna Game.



The Katalymov-Estrin twins (Games 5-6) consider the theoretically approved thrust 3...d5. Instead of the pedestrian 4 exd5 Bxb4, as given by Angus Dunnington in his excellent book *Winning Unorthodox Openings*, we recommend the lively 4 f4!. This thrust of the bishop's pawn suits my style better.

My encounters with Laframboise and Blumenfeld (Games 7-8) illustrate two logical but – perhaps rightly – rare attempts by Black. These games, I

hope, will demonstrate that a thorough understanding of the ideas from the previous examples will enable you to cope with the unexpected, even in such a wild opening as this.

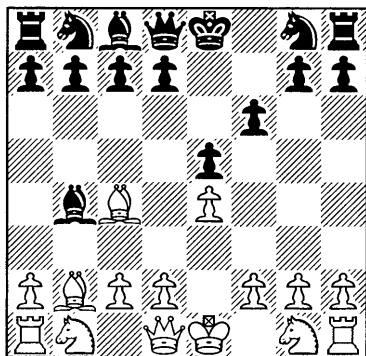
Of course, not everyone will want to play in this gambiteering way, and for people of a more conservative temperament (like my co-author) we include three examples of the positional 3 b5, one of which was played and analysed by Alexei Sokolsky himself.

Game 1
S.Tartakower-R.Réti
Vienna 1919

1 b4 e5 2 ♖b2 f6 3 e4 ♙xb4

Black's attempts at refusing the gambit are discussed in Games 5-8.

4 ♙c4!



According to Sokolsky, this is the best move.

4...♙e7

This knight helps to prepare ...d7-d5, and later on to protect f4 (for example, after f2-f4, met by ...exf4 fol-

lowed by ...♙g6).

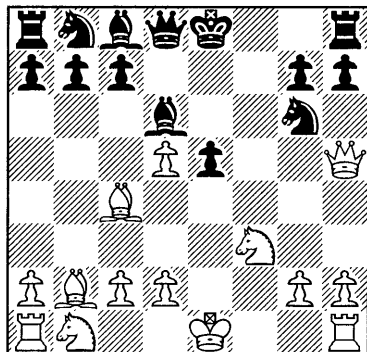
5 f4

The immediate 5 ♖h5+ is White's main alternative (see Game 3).

5...d5 6 exd5 ♙d6

Later Colle tried 6...exf4 against Tartakower (see Game 2).

7 fxe5 fxe5 8 ♖h5+ ♙g6 9 ♙f3



Tartakower is strangely silent about the rest of the opening phase until move fourteen. Perhaps he felt the game was complex enough to dispense with any further comments on complications that didn't occur.

9...♙d7

9...0-0 10 ♙g5 h6 11 ♙e6 ♙f4 12 ♙xd8 ♙xh5 13 ♙e6 ♙f7 14 ♙c3 looks a bit better for White because of his lead in development and that powerful stallion on e6.

10 0-0

After 10 ♙d3 0-0 11 ♙xg6 hxg6 12 ♖xg6 ♙c5 13 0-0 the position is unclear.

10...0-0 11 ♙c3 ♙f4

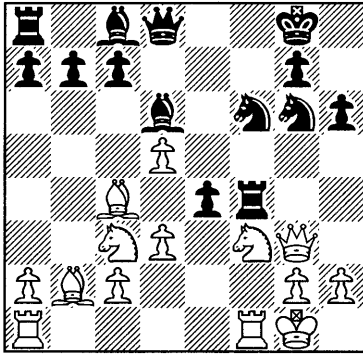
11...♙f6 12 ♖g5 e4 13 ♙d4 ♙xh2+ 14 ♙h1 (but not 14 ♙xh2?? ♙g4+!) 14...♙e5 15 ♙b3 h6 16 ♖h4 should be

good for White.

12 d3 ♖f6 13 ♗g5 h6 14 ♗g3!

14 ♗xg6?? allows Black to trap the queen with 14...♗g4!.

14...e4



Black is not ready to open the centre. 14...♗g4, bringing another piece out, would have been better.

15 ♖xe4 ♖xe4

15...♗xe4 16 ♗xg6 ♗g4 17 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 18 ♗xf6 gxf6 leads to a pawn-up endgame for White.

16 dxe4

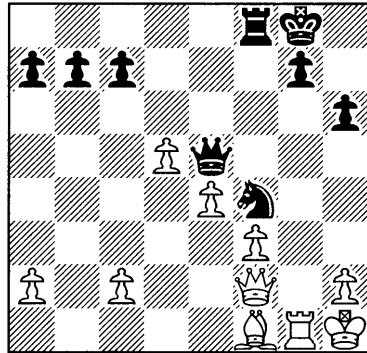
16 ♗xg6! would have been more dangerous for Black. After 16...♗g4 17 ♗h5 ♖f6 18 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 19 d4 White's strong centre outweighs any problems associated with the misplaced queen on h5. Note that 19...♗xd4? 20 ♗e8+ ♖h7 21 ♗d3+ wins material for White.

16...♗g4

16...♗e8! 17 ♗d3 ♗xe4 is unclear.

17 ♗e1 ♗xf3 18 ♗xf3 ♗xf3 19 gxf3 ♗g5+ 20 ♖h1 ♗h5 21 ♗f2 ♗f8 22 ♗e2 ♗e5 23 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 24 ♗g1 ♖f4 25 ♗f1

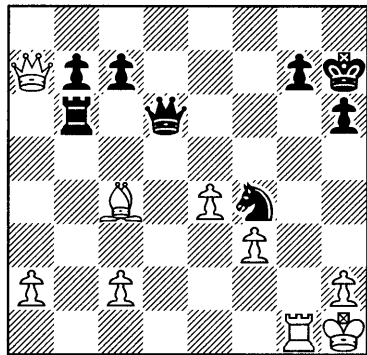
Black is a pawn down, but his active pieces probably offer enough compensation.



25...♗f6?

But there is not enough compensation for two pawns! 25...♗c3!? is an improvement. Tartakower mentions 25...b6 26 c4, but even 26...♗c3 is tough to crack.

26 ♗xa7 ♗b6 27 d6! ♗xd6 28 ♗c4+ ♖h7



29 ♗b8

Now the threat is ♗g8 mate, and White is winning.

29...♖e6 30 ♗xe6 ♗xe6 31 ♗xc7 ♗f6 32 ♗xg7+! ♗xg7 33 ♗xb6 1-0

33...♗a1+ 34 ♖g2! ♗g7+ 35 ♖f2, as given by Tartakower, is an easy win for White.

Game 2
S.Tartakower-E.Colle
 Bardejov 1926

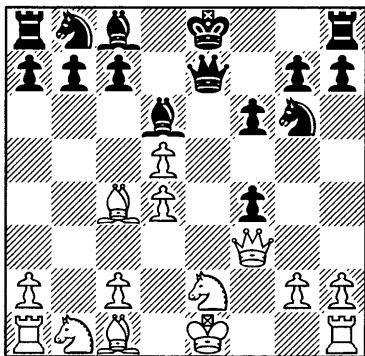
1 b4 e5 2 ♖b2 f6 3 e4 ♙xb4 4 ♙c4 ♘e7
5 f4 d5

After 5...exf4 6 ♘h3 d5 7 exd5 ♙xh3 8 ♗h5+ g6 9 ♗xh3, White has a strong initiative in return for the pawn.

6 exd5 exf4 7 ♗f3

Probably 7 ♗h5+ g6 and only then 8 ♗f3, keeping some pressure on the f6-pawn, was a better choice. Additionally, White also had the possibility of 7 ♘h3 transposing to the previous note.

7...♙d6 8 ♘e2 ♘g6 9 d4 ♗e7 10 ♙c1!



This passive-looking move assures the recapture of the pawn and keeps the position close to equal. 10 0-0 was another possibility.

10...♙f5 11 ♙d3 ♙xd3 12 ♗xd3 0-0 13 0-0 ♙e8 14 ♘xf4 ♘xf4 15 ♙xf4 ♙xf4 16 ♙xf4 ♘a6 17 ♘d2 ♗e3+

17...♘b4!? 18 ♗b3 ♗e3+ 19 ♗xe3 ♗xe3 20 c4 ♙ae8 may give Black a slight advantage.

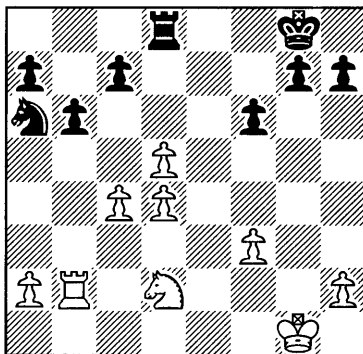
18 ♗xe3 ♗xe3 19 ♗b1!

Tartakower pointed out that it's necessary to stop ...♘b4 here.

19...♙c3 20 ♗b2 b6 21 ♙f3 ♙xf3 22 gxf3

Defending the d4-pawn with 22 ♘xf3 was a better option.

22...♙d8 23 c4



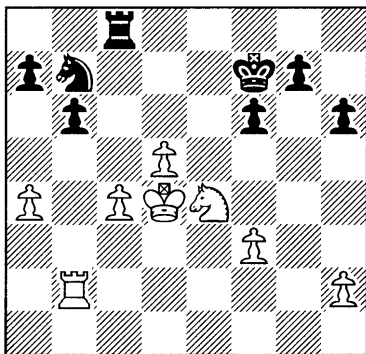
23...♘b8

Neither player noticed that after 23...c6! 24 ♗b3 (or 24 dxc6 ♙xd4 25 c5 b5 26 ♘e4 ♘c7) 24...cxd5 25 ♙a3 ♘b4 26 ♙xa7 dxc4 27 ♘xc4 b5 28 ♘a3 ♘c6 29 ♗b7 ♘xd4 30 ♘xb5 ♘xb5 31 ♙xb5 ♙d1+ 32 ♙f2 ♙d2+ 33 ♙g3 ♙xa2 Black has got an extra pawn, although it's true that there are almost no chances to win this position.

24 ♙f2 ♙f7 25 a4 c6 26 dxc6 ♘xc6 27 d5 ♘a5 28 ♙e3 ♘b7 29 ♙d4 ♙c8 30 ♘e4 h6??

(see following diagram)

30...f5 31 ♘c3 ♘a5 32 ♗b4 would reach an equal position. Tartakower pointed out a nice win similar to the game continuation after 30...♙e7 31 ♙g2 g6 32 ♙e2 ♙f7? (32...♘a5! might hold) 33 a5!.



31 a5! f5

Both captures on a5 lose.

32 axb6! fxe4 33 bxa7 1-0

After 33...d6 34 b8 Bxc4+ 35 e5 Bxa4 36 a8 Rxc4+ 37 e4 Qb6+ 38 Rxa4 Qxa4 39 e4 the stranded knight is trapped and will soon be captured.

Game 3 R.Fischer-J.Gloger Cleveland

(Simultaneous Display) 1964

Who could have imagined that such a classical theoretician as Fischer played the Sokolsky Opening? This is a very important game, with Fischer winning by a direct attack on his opponent's king. Let's take a look at this masterpiece.

1 b4 e5 2 b2 f6 3 e4 e6 4 c4 d7 5 g5+

This move has been played more often than 5 f4.

5...g6

5...g6 can be met by 6 h4 (or even 6 f3).

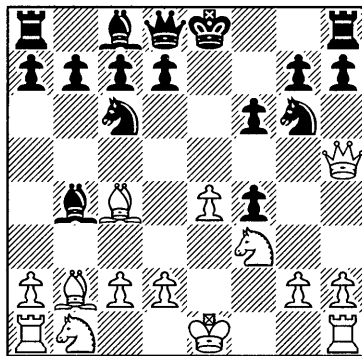
6 f4 exf4

Black has little choice, as the threat was f4-f5 winning a piece.

7 f3

The classic miniature B.Katalymov-G.Ilivitsky, Frunze 1959, shows what can happen if Black is not careful: 7 a3 d5 8 exd5 c6 9 b3 Ba5 10 e5! e7? 11 e7+! and Black resigned.

7...c6



8 f3

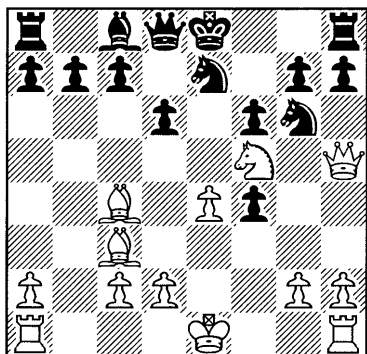
The direct 8 h4 is a reasonable alternative. Our analysis runs 8...ce7 9 a3 and now:

a) 9...d6 10 f5 e5 11 d4 d5 12 dxe5 dxc4 13 f6 g7+ f7 14 exf6 g8 15 e5 d5 16 0-0 e4 17 e3 e3+ (or 17...e6 18 f6 e6 19 g4+ f5 20 e2 b5 21 f3 d8 22 g4 g5 23 c6+ f7 24 e6+, when the centre pawns march to victory) 18 h1 e4 19 e1 d5 20 d2 with a winning position.

b) 9...d5 10 exd5 e6 11 f3 c6 12 b3 d7 13 h3 b5 14 0-0 c7 15 f3 a5 16 a4 b6+ 17 h1 b4 18 e2 a6 19 d3 e3 20 e4, when Black's king is trapped in the centre and White's b3-bishop is very strong.

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8...♙xc3 9 ♙xc3 d6 10 ♘h4 ♖ce7 11
♜f5



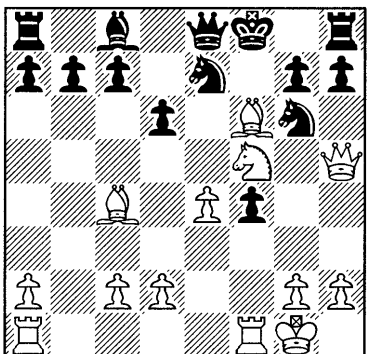
11...♙f8?!

11...d5! would have been a stronger defence. After 12 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 13 ♜xd5 c6 14 ♜d4 b5 15 ♙d3 ♜e5 16 ♙b4 ♜xd3+ 17 cxd3 ♜d8 18 ♙d6 ♙e6 19 ♜c5 ♜b6 20 ♜c3 ♙d8 21 ♙c5 ♜c7, the outcome would still be very much in doubt.

12 0-0 ♜e8?

A fatal mistake, cutting off his king's escape. 12...♜d7!? 13 ♜h4 ♜g4 14 ♜xg6+ ♜xg6 15 ♜f3 ♜g5 is a stronger defence.

13 ♙xf6!



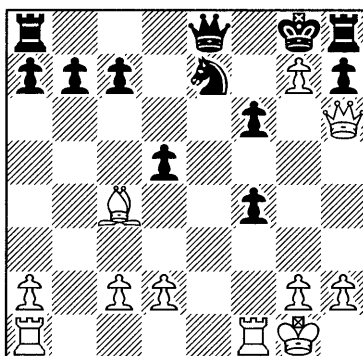
13...♙xf5

Alternatives lead to greater trouble for Black: 13...gxf6 allows mate in one with 14 ♜h6; or 13...♜xf5 14 exf5 ♜c6 15 fxg6 ♜xc4 16 ♜h6!! ♜g8 (16...gxf6 17 g7+) 17 ♜xf4 ♙e8 18 ♙ae1+ ♙e6 19 ♜a4+ c6 20 ♜b4 gxf6 21 ♜xd6 with a crushing attack for White.

14 exf5 d5

Possibly 14...♜g8 is more resilient. Then 15 ♙xg8 ♙xg8 16 fxg6 gxf6 17 gxh7+ ♙g7 18 ♜f3 b6 19 ♙ae1 ♜f7 20 ♜g4+ ♙f8 21 ♜xf4 ♙h7 22 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 23 ♙xf6+ should be a winning rook ending for White.

15 fxg6 gxf6 16 ♜h6+ ♙g8 17 g7 1-0



Black loses material and his position is hopeless.

Game 4
B.Katalymov-V.Muratov
Novgorod 1961

This is a very complex game, in which we discuss some important theory.

1 b4 e5 2 ♙b2 f6 3 e4 ♙xb4 4 ♙c4 ♜e7

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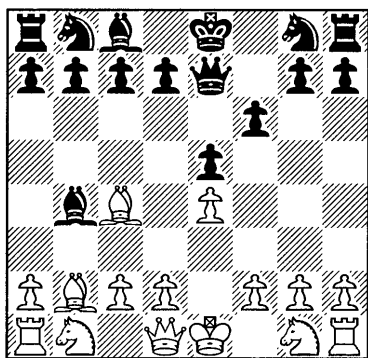
Black has also played 4...♖c6 5 f4 and now:

a) 5...exf4 6 ♖h3 ♗ge7 7 ♖xf4 ♖a5 8 ♗xf6! ♜f8 9 ♖h5! ♖xc4 10 ♖xg7+ ♗f7 11 0-0 ♗g8 12 ♜h5! ♗xf6 13 ♗xf6 ♖g6 14 ♗xg6! hxg6 15 ♜xg6 ♗h8? 16 ♖e8! ♜e7 17 ♖f6 1-0, A.Sokolsky-Strugach, Minsk 1958, is a good demonstration of White's attacking chances in this line.

b) 5...d6 is a passive but solid reaction. We suggest 6 f5, after which Black must decide how to develop his king's knight:

b1) 6...♖h6 7 ♜h5 ♗f8, and now Sokolsky's suggested improvement on a game of his against Veresov is 8 a3 ♗c5 9 ♖c3, with ideas of castling long and dropping the bishop back to a2.

b2) 6...♗ge7 has become more popular recently. After 7 ♜h5+ g6 8 fxg6 ♖xg6 9 ♖f3, as played in the stem game A.Sokolsky-A.Gurvich, correspondence 1963, the position remains unclear.



5 a3

5 c3 didn't lead to any success for White after 5...♗c5 6 ♜e2 d6 7 d4 ♗b6 8 a4 a6 9 a5 ♗a7 10 ♖d2 ♖h6 11 ♖gf3

♖c6 in K.Richter-L.Rellstab, Bad Oeynhausen 1939.

5 ♖e2, as given by Andrew Soltis, seems more to the point. For example:

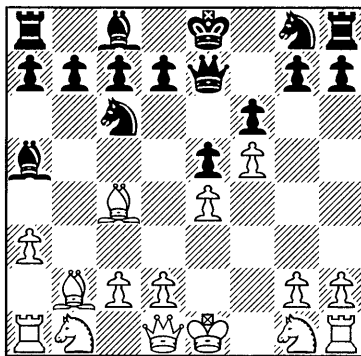
a) 5...d6 6 c3! (Soltis) 6...♗c5 (or 6...♗a5 7 d4 exd4 8 0-0! – presumably this is always the answer to Black's ...exd4) 7 d4 ♗b6 8 0-0, and now 8...♖h6 transposes to note 'b'.

b) 5...♖h6 6 0-0 d6 7 c3 ♗c5 8 d4 ♗b6 9 a4 a6 10 a5 ♗a7 11 ♜b3 ♖c6 12 ♖d2 ♖f7 13 f4 was slightly better for White in the game E.Schiller-E.Richter, correspondence 1971. This is a curious mixture of the Evans and King's Gambits!

5...♗a5 6 f4 ♖c6

Black needs to avoid 6...exf4? 7 ♜h5+ ♗d8 8 ♜xa5 ♜xe4+ 9 ♗e2.

7 f5



Gaining more space for a possible kingside attack. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, f4-f5 is often part of White's plans.

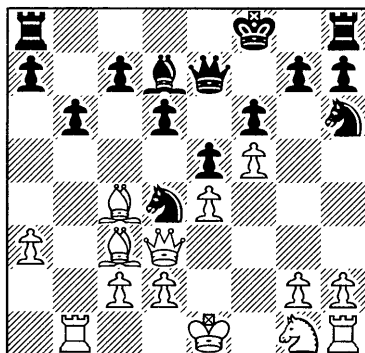
7...d6?!

After this move Black can forget about castling.

7...g6!? 8 ♜f3 ♜c5 9 ♗b3 ♖d4 10

♙xd4 ♖xd4 11 ♖a2 ♘e7 12 ♘e2 ♗d6 13 ♘bc3 is a typically unclear variation, quite common for the Sokolsky Gambit.

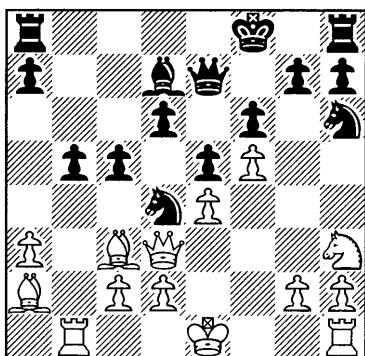
8 ♖h5+ ♙f8 9 ♘c3 ♙xc3 10 ♙xc3 ♙d7 11 ♖b1 b6 12 ♗e2 ♘d4 13 ♗d3 ♘h6



14 ♘h3

Grabbing a pawn is a mistake: 14 ♙xd4? exd4 15 ♗xd4 ♘xf5 16 ♗d3 ♖e8.

14...b5 15 ♙a2 c5



16 ♙xd4?!

16 ♙d5!?, intending 16...♖e8 17 ♙xd4 exd4 18 0-0, is stronger.

16...exd4?!

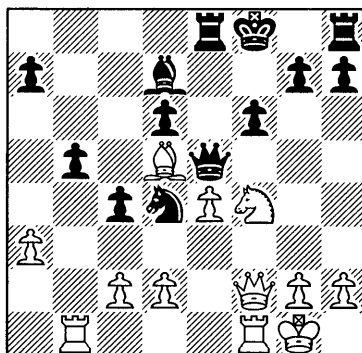
16...c4!? is perhaps a more promising option; for example, 17 ♗f3 exd4 18

0-0 ♗e5 19 ♘f4 ♗c5 20 a4 d3+ 21 ♙h1 dxc2 22 ♖b2 a6.

17 ♙d5 c4?!

Too late! Black should continue 17...♖e8!? 18 0-0 ♘f7 19 ♘f4 a6 20 ♗g3 ♘e5.

18 ♗xd4 ♘xf5 19 ♗f2 ♖e8 20 0-0 ♗e5 21 ♘f4 ♘d4



22 ♗h4?!

22 c3! is much stronger, and here 22...♗xf4 23 ♗xd4 ♗e5 24 ♗xa7 ♖e7 25 ♗b8+ ♖e8 26 ♗b7 ♗e7 27 ♖fe1 ♖d8 28 ♙c6 ♙xc6 29 ♗xc6 ♗d7 30 ♗xb5 ♗xb5 31 ♖xb5 reaches a winning rook end-game.

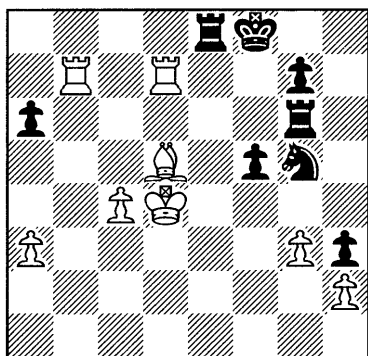
22...♙e6?

22...♙e7! 23 c3 ♘b3 24 d4 ♗g5 is more resilient and gives Black chances to hold on.

23 ♙xe6+ ♘xe6 24 ♖xb5

White's active pieces and Black's poorly placed king add up to a huge advantage for White.

24...♗d4+ 25 ♗f2 ♗xf2+ 26 ♙xf2 ♘c5 27 ♙e3 a6 28 ♖b6 ♘xe4 29 ♙d4! ♘xd2 30 ♖d1 c3 31 ♖b7 h5 32 ♙xc3 ♘e4+ 33 ♙d4 ♘g5 34 ♖db1 h4 35 ♖1b6 h3 36 g3 ♖h6 37 ♖xd6 f5 38 ♖dd7 ♖g6 39 c4



Every white piece is on a perfect square, and now the passed c-pawn will decide the game.

39...f4 40 gxf4 ♖e6+ 41 ♔c3 ♜f6 42 c5 ♜xf4 43 c6 ♜c5 44 ♜f7+ ♜xf7 45 ♜xf7+ ♜g8 46 ♜f3+ ♜h7 47 ♙f7 ♖e4+ 48 ♔c2 ♜g5 49 ♜xh3+ ♜xh3 50 ♙xe8 1-0

In two more moves White will have a new queen.

Game 5 B.Katalymov-Y.Estrin Spartak Championship, Minsk 1962

Sokolsky wrote that this game was played in Minsk, although some sources give Moscow as the location. Notes in quotation marks are by Sokolsky, translated by Yuri Lapshun.

1 b4 e5 2 ♙b2 f6 3 e4 d5 4 f4 exf4

"A sharp variation, not yet well investigated in practice."

5 ♜h5+ g6 6 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 7 exd5 ♙xb4 8 ♙c4

"In the game Sokolsky-Estrin (Baku, 1958) 8 ♖e2 had been played. White

had prepared this bishop move as a novelty. Both continuations give White an initiative which compensates for the sacrificed pawn."

8...♙f5

8...♖d7 is what Estrin chose two years later (see Game 6).

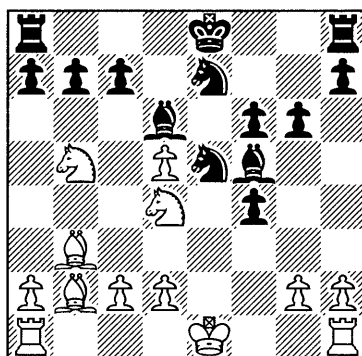
9 ♜e2! ♙d6

"The move 9...♙xc2 doesn't make any sense. After 10 ♜xf4 the knight can jump to e6."

10 ♜bc3 ♜d7

10...♙xc2?! is weak on account of 11 d3.

11 ♜d4! ♜e5 12 ♙b3 ♜e7 13 ♜cb5!



13...a6

13...0-0-0? is met by 14 ♜xa7+, while against 13...0-0? White has 14 ♜xc7! ♙xc7 15 d6+.

14 ♜xd6+ cxd6 15 0-0 ♙e4

Against 15...g5?, 16 ♜xf5 ♜xf5 17 g3 f3 18 d4! regains the pawn with a large initiative. Black's position would be riddled with weaknesses.

16 ♜xf4 f5 17 ♜f3! ♙xf3

17...♜xd5? loses material to 18 ♜xe4! fxe4 19 ♜xe5 dxe5 20 ♙xd5, and 17...♙xd5? 18 ♜xe5 dxe5 19 ♙xe5 gives

White the better position.

18 gxf3 g5 19 ♖b4 0-0-0

"White, with a pair of active bishops, is better."

19...♗xf3+? is a mistake, as 20 ♖f2 ♗e5 21 ♖xb7 improves White's pieces.

20 ♖f2 ♗7g6 21 ♖e1 ♖he8 22 d4

"By kicking the knight from the centre, White gains the possibility of moving the rook to the e6-square."

22...♗f7 23 ♖e6! ♗f4

"Black hoped to eliminate the rook from e6, but he was disappointed."

24 ♖c1! ♗g6

"It's very dangerous to capture the exchange. After 24...♗xe6? 25 dxe6 ♗h8 26 ♖xg5 White should win."

25 ♖c4+ ♖d7 26 ♖c3 f4 27 a4!

"It's necessary to involve the light-squared bishop. By advancing the a-pawn, White achieves his goal."

27...♖e7

27...a5 28 ♖c4! wins.

28 a5 ♖c8 29 ♖d3 ♗f8 30 ♖f6 ♖d8 31 ♖a3 ♗d7 32 ♖e6 ♗f8 33 ♖d2! g4!

For a second time Black declines the exchange. Accepting the sacrifice after 33...♗xe6 34 dxe6 ♗h6 35 ♖xd6 is obviously not a good idea.

34 ♖xe7

"The best move. 34 fxf4 ♗xe6 35 dxe6 ♗g5 36 ♖e2 ♖c3 allows Black counterplay."

34...♖xe7 35 fxf4

"White should decline the pawn offered by his resourceful opponent. After 35 ♖e2+ ♖f6 36 c4!, White could count on victory."

35...♖c3!

"Because of the threat of ...♗g5,

Black gets counterplay."

36 ♖e2+ ♖f6 37 h4 ♖h3 38 ♖e8

"Better is 38 g5+ with subsequent 39 ♖e7. The entry of the black knight into the battle more than outweighs the loss of the d-pawn."

38...♗g6 39 ♖xd6 ♖h2+?

"A time pressure mistake. By playing 39...♗xd6 40 ♖e6+ ♖g7 41 ♖xd6 ♗xh4 Black had a chance to save the game. For example: 42 ♖d7+ ♖g6 43 d6 ♖h2+ 44 ♖f1 ♗f3."

However, in this position we (YL and NC) believe that White can win with 45 ♖d5! ♗d2+ 46 ♖g1 ♖e2 47 ♖e7 f3 48 ♖xe2 fxe2 49 ♖f2.

40 ♖g1 ♖xh4 41 ♖e5+ 1-0

"Here the game was adjourned. Black sealed the move 41...♖g5 and resigned without resuming. The difficult, sharp fight in this game is very typical for the gambit variation after 1 b4."

Game 6

B.Katalymov-Y.Estrin
Spartak Championship,
Moscow 1964

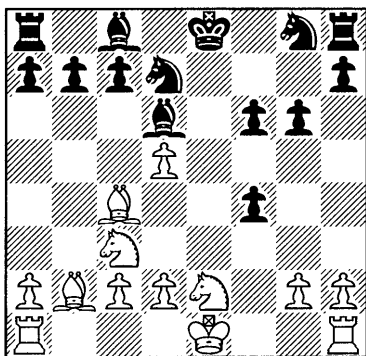
1 b4 e5 2 ♖b2 f6 3 e4 d5 4 f4 exf4 5 ♖h5+ g6 6 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 7 exd5 ♖xb4

This was the second time Katalymov and Estrin played this position against each other in a tournament game.

8 ♖c4

We prefer this natural move to 8 ♗e2!?, which was played in A.Sokolsky-Y.Estrin, Baku 1958.

8...♖d7 9 ♗e2 ♕d6 10 ♖bc3



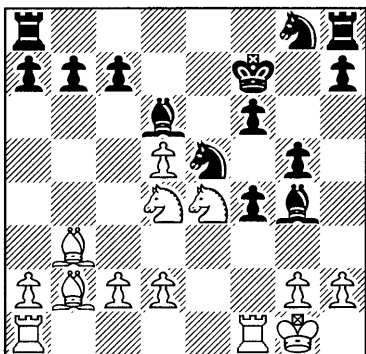
10...♗f7?!

Black has to develop. He should consider 10...♖b6, after which 11 ♖b3 a5 12 a4 g5 13 ♖e4 ♕e5 14 d4 ♕d6 15 ♖xd6+ cxd6 16 c4 ♖e7 17 ♕a3 ♕g4 18 ♕xd6 ♖f5 19 ♕c5 ♖d7 reaches an unclear mess. Positions that are so imbalanced are very difficult to evaluate.

11 0-0 ♖e5 12 ♖b3

12 ♖xf4? loses material after 12...g5! 13 ♖d4 ♕c5.

12...g5 13 ♖e4 ♕g4 14 ♖d4



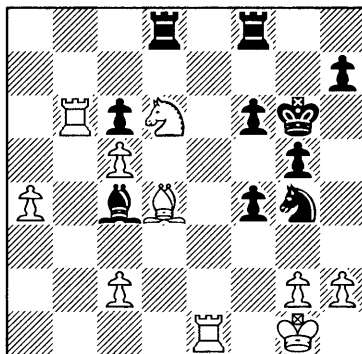
Let's look at this position. We can see a typical King's Gambit, but without the white b-pawn. White's domina-

tion of the centre – especially the e6-square – and the awkward position of the black king compensate him for his missing pawn.

14...♖d8 15 ♖b5 ♗g6

15...♕e2!? 16 ♖bxd6+ cxd6 17 ♖fe1 f3 18 d4 ♖g6 19 ♕a3 ♖f4 20 ♖xd6+ ♗g6 21 ♗f2 g4 22 ♖xb7 ♖b8 23 ♖c5 leaves Black a pawn down with nothing to compensate for White's queen-side pawn mass.

16 ♖xa7 ♕e2 17 ♖fe1 ♕a6 18 a4 ♖h6 19 ♖b5 ♖hf7 20 d4 ♖g4 21 ♖c5 ♕xc5 22 dxc5 c6 23 dxc6 bxc6 24 ♕xf7+ ♗xf7 25 ♖d6+ ♗g6 26 ♕d4 ♖hf8 27 ♖ab1 ♕c4 28 ♖b6



White has improved all his pieces. Now it's time to push the a-pawn, which should decide the game.

28...♕d5 29 a5 ♖h6 30 a6 ♖f5 31 ♕f2 g4 32 c4 g3 33 hxg3 fxg3 34 cxd5 gxf2+ 35 ♗xf2 cxd5 36 ♖xf5 ♗xf5 37 c6

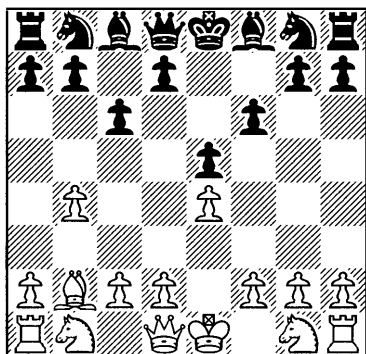
Material is equal, but Black can't stop the two passed pawns.

37...♖a8 38 c7 ♖fc8 39 ♖c1 ♗e5 40 ♗e3 f5 41 ♗d3 ♖g8 42 ♖e1+ ♗f4 43 ♗d4 ♖xg2 44 ♖f1+ ♗g5 45 ♖c1 ♖c8 46 ♖b8 ♖d2+ 47 ♗e5 1-0

Game 7
Y.Lapshun-M.Laframboise
 Montreal 2004

This was my final-round game at the Montreal tournament and I had to win to claim a high place. My opponent was a young, talented Canadian chess master who didn't have many games on my database. I decided that it was time to use my favourite weapon...

1 b4 e5 2 ♖b2 f6 3 e4 c6



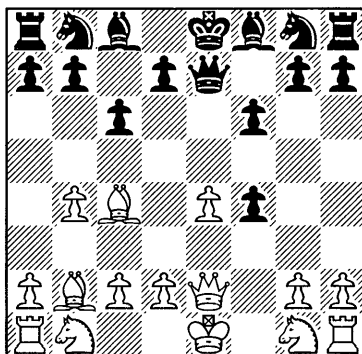
A new move to me, at the time of this game at least. But with the themes of the previous games in mind, it's easy to construct a good plan against 3...c6.

3...♗e7!? is a rare alternative. Soltis gives it an exclamation mark, but it has not been explored whatsoever at high-level chess. One example, the best of a bad bunch, is the following gem: 4 ♗h5+ ♗g6 5 f4 exf4 6 ♗f3 d6 (6...♗c6 is better) 7 ♗h4 ♗g8? 8 ♖c4! and Black resigned, T.Juscamayta Zuegel-G.Semmler, Bad Wörishofen 2000.

4 f4 exf4 5 ♖c4 ♗e7

5...d5 6 exd5 cxd5 7 ♗h5+ g6 8 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 9 ♖xd5 ♖xb4 10 ♗e2 is unclear.

6 ♗e2



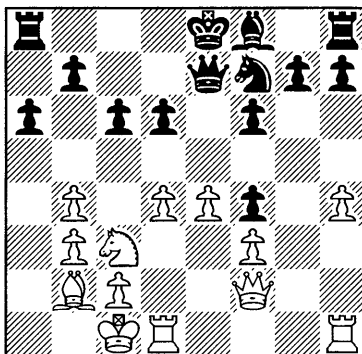
6...d6

Black should speculate with 6...♗xb4 7 ♖b3 ♗e7 8 ♗f3.

7 ♗f3 ♗d7 8 ♗c3 ♗e5 9 ♖b3 ♗h6 10 0-0-0 ♖e6 11 d4 ♗xf3

11...♗eg4 12 d5 ♖d7 13 dxc6 bxc6 14 b5 ♗e3 15 bxc6 ♖xc6 16 ♗d5 ♖xd5 17 ♖xd5 ♗b8 18 ♗d4! promises White a strong attack, something that can be verified by using Fritz.

12 gxf3 ♖xb3 13 axb3 a6 14 h4 ♗f7 15 ♗f2!



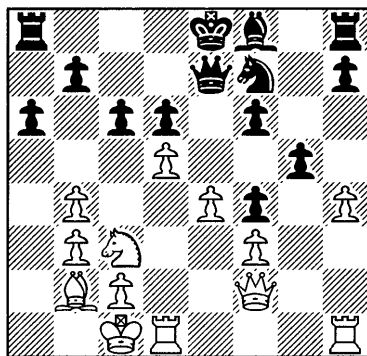
A very difficult move to find, with
chesstouring.com

many ideas. By playing 15 ♖f2, White:

- 1) Keeps an eye on a7-g1 diagonal;
- 2) Defends the h4-pawn;
- 3) Clears the e-file for the rook; and
- 4) Prepares to push the central pawns.

Instead 15 h5 g5 16 hxg6 hxg6 17 ♖xh8 ♜xh8 18 ♖h2 ♜f7 19 ♖xf4?? would not be a good idea in view of 19...♙h6!

15...g5 16 d5!



The aim of this move is to expose the black king and to manoeuvre the knight via e2 and d4 to f5 or e6.

16...♜e5 17 ♜e2 h5 18 ♜d4 cxd5 19 ♜f5 ♖c7 20 ♖xd5

The result of the breakthrough on move sixteen is that White's pieces have much greater scope than their counterparts.

20...♞c8 21 hxg5 fxg5 22 ♞hd1 ♞h7 23 c4

This is thematic, but already White can play simply with 23 ♜xd6+! ♙xd6 24 ♖xd6 ♜xf3 25 ♖e6+ ♜f8 26 ♖d5 g4 27 ♖f5+ ♖f7 28 ♖xh5, which should be winning.

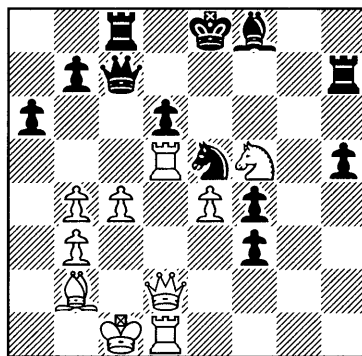
However, White should avoid 23

♖xd6?!, when 23...♜xf3 24 ♖e6+ ♜f7 25 ♖f6+ ♜g8 26 ♖g6+ ♜f7 27 ♖f6+ ♜g8 28 ♖g6+ is only a draw.

23...g4 24 ♖d2

Once again White could play 24 ♜xd6+! ♙xd6 25 ♖xd6 ♜xf3 26 ♖e6+; for example, 26...♜f7 27 ♖dd6 ♖d8 28 e5 ♖g7 29 ♖c2 ♖f8 30 ♖f5+ ♜g8 31 ♖xh5 ♖f7 32 ♖g6 ♜h4 33 ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 34 e6, winning.

24...gxf3



25 ♖xd6?

At the risk of repeating myself, 25 ♜xd6+! ♙xd6 26 ♖xd6 ♜f7 27 ♖e6+ ♜f8 28 ♙d4 ♖d8 29 ♖g1 b6 30 ♖c3 ♖xd4 31 ♖xd4 ♖d8 32 ♖xd8+ ♜xd8 33 ♖xb6 ♖e7 34 ♖f6+ ♜e8 35 ♖xf4 and again White wins.

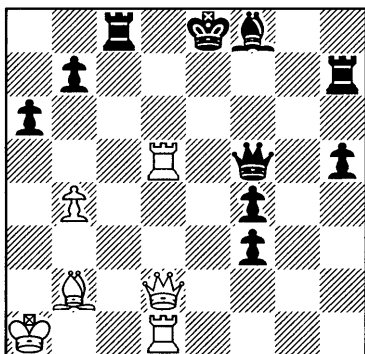
25...♜xc4! 26 bxc4 ♖xc4+ 27 ♜b1 ♖xe4+ 28 ♜a1?

Another mistake – 28 ♖d3! was better. One possible line from here is 28...♖xd3+ 29 ♖6xd3 ♙xb4 30 ♖d4 (Black is struggling despite having five pawns for the piece) 30...♙c5 31 ♖e1+ ♖e7 (31...♜f8 32 ♖xf4 ♖f7 33 ♖xf3 ♖cc7 34 ♖e6 is good for White) 32 ♜xe7 f2 33 ♖f1 ♜xe7 34 ♖xf4 ♜e6 35 ♙d4 ♙xd4 36

♖xd4 ♕e5 37 ♜d2 ♜f8 38 ♜dxf2 ♜xf2 39 ♜xf2 and White wins.

28...♜xf5 29 ♜d5

29 ♜d8+ leads a draw after 29...♜xd8 30 ♜xd8+ ♕f7 31 ♜c7+ ♕e7 32 ♜e1 ♕g6 33 ♜g1+ ♕g5 34 ♜b6+ ♕f7 35 ♜c7+ ♕e7 36 ♜e1 ♕e8 37 ♜b8+ ♕f7 38 ♜c7.



29...♜c2??

A blunder. 29...♜g6?? also loses, to 30 ♜e5+ ♜e7 31 ♜d7+ ♕f7 32 ♜f5+ ♕g8 33 ♜d5+ ♕h7 34 ♜xh5+ ♕h6 35 ♜xh6+! ♜xh6 (35...♕xh6 36 ♜h1+) 36 ♜f5+ ♕g8 37 ♜g1+ ♜g7 38 ♜xc8+. But Black can survive by playing 29...♜g4! 30 ♜d8+ ♜xd8 31 ♜xd8+ ♕f7 32 ♜e1! ♕g8 33 ♜d5+ ♜f7 34 ♜e5 f2! 35 ♜g5+ ♕g7 36 ♜d8+ ♕h7 37 ♜d3+ ♕g8 38 ♜xg4 (38 ♜d8+ ♕h7 is perpetual check) 38...hxg4 39 ♜d8+ ♕f8, when White must be content with perpetual check after 40 ♜g5+ ♕g7 41 ♜d8+ ♜f8 42 ♜d5+ ♜f7 43 ♜d8+.

30 ♜d8+ ♜xd8 31 ♜xc2?

Just one of those days! 31 ♜xd8+! ♕f7 32 ♜f6+ ♕g8 33 ♜d8 was the right way.

31...♜xd1+ 32 ♜xd1 ♕g7 33 ♜xf3

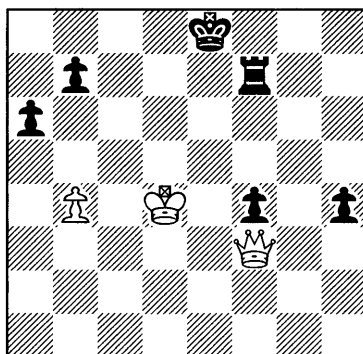
This is natural, but 33 ♜d6 would

have been stronger: 33...♕xb2+ 34 ♕xb2 f2 35 ♜b8+ ♕e7 36 ♜xb7+ ♕f6 37 ♜xa6+ ♕g5 38 ♜e2 h4 39 ♜xf2 h3 40 ♜c5+ ♕g6 41 ♜d6+ ♕g7 42 ♜d7+ ♕g6 43 ♜g4+ ♕f6 44 ♜xf4+ ♕g6 45 ♜h2 and White wins.

33...♕xb2+ 34 ♕xb2 ♜f7 35 ♕c3 h4

35...♕d8! draws as Black is able to set up a fortress: 36 ♜d5+ ♜d7 37 ♜xh5 ♜c7+ 38 ♕d4 ♜c6 39 ♕d5 ♕c8 40 ♜f5+ ♕b8 41 ♜xf4+ ♕a8 42 ♜e5 ♕a7 43 ♜g7 ♕a8 44 ♜d7 ♕a7 45 ♜d8 ♜c1 46 ♕e5 ♜c6 47 ♜d4+ ♕b8, when White can make no further progress.

36 ♕d4



36...♕f8?

Black can draw only if his king can reach the queenside corner protected by two connected pawns, as shown in the previous note.

37 ♕e5 ♜e7+ 38 ♕d6 ♜f7 39 ♜h5 ♕g7 40 ♜g5+ ♕f8 41 ♕e6 h3 42 ♜h6+

Now the white queen will capture Black's pawns one by one. Even so, 42 ♜h5! ♜e7+ 43 ♕f6 is a quicker win as Black is soon mated.

42...♕g8 43 ♜xh3 f3 44 ♜h5 ♜g7 45 ♜xf3 ♕h7 46 ♜h5+ ♕g8 47 ♜e8+ ♕h7

48 ♖f6 b6 49 ♜e4+ ♔g8 50 ♜a8+ ♕h7
51 ♜xa6 1-0

My favourite b4-pawn survived the whole game, even though it could have been captured many times.

Game 8

Y.Lapshun-R.Blumenfeld
Marshall Chess Club 2004

1 b4 e5 2 ♖b2 f6 3 e4 a5

Another unusual try by Black.

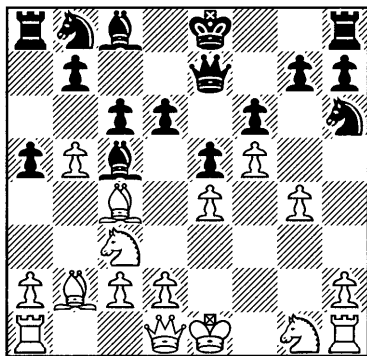
4 b5 ♗c5 5 f4

Again White goes for this f-pawn push. Here 5...exf4?? loses to 6 ♜h5+.

5...d6 6 ♗c4 ♜e7 7 f5 ♘h6

With the idea of ...♘f7 so as to allow Black to castle kingside. 7...g6 8 ♘c3 gxf5 9 ♜h5+ ♕d8 10 exf5 ♜g7 11 ♜f3 reaches an unclear position.

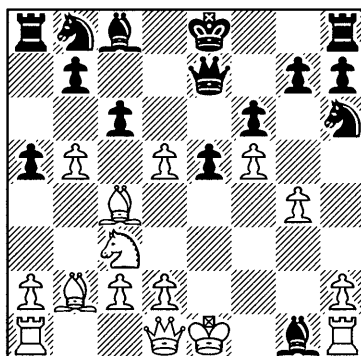
8 ♘c3 c6 9 g4



9...d5?

Opening the position with the king stuck in the middle is a bad idea. The consistent 9...♘f7 would have been much more sensible.

10 exd5 ♗xg1



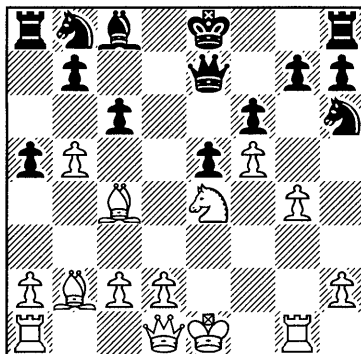
11 d6!

I guess he overlooked this important in-between move. 11 ♜xg1?? would have been met by 11...♜c5, winning material.

11...♜xd6 12 ♘e4 ♜e7

12...♜b4 is met by 13 ♗c3! intending 13...♜xc4?? 14 ♘d6+!. It would probably have been better to play 12...♜c7. Then following 13 ♜xg1 cxb5 14 ♗xb5+ ♗d7 15 ♜e2 ♜b6 16 0-0-0 ♗xb5 17 ♜xb5+ ♜xb5 18 ♘d6+ ♕d7 19 ♘xb5, White has only a small advantage.

13 ♜xg1



13...♗d8?

13...cxb5 14 ♗xb5+ ♗d7 15 ♗xd7+

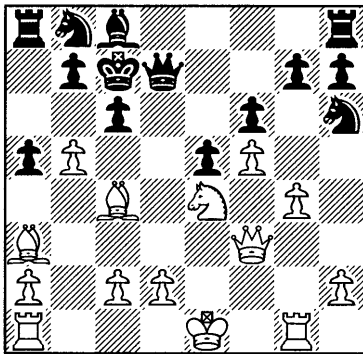
chesstouring.com

♟xd7 16 ♖f3 ♟f7 17 ♙a3 ♜d8 18 ♖b3 leaves Black's king caught in the cross-fire of White's queen and bishop, but the text is even worse for Black.

14 ♖f3 ♟c7??

14...cxb5 15 ♙xb5 ♖b4 16 ♜d3+ ♙d7 17 ♙xd7 ♟xd7 18 ♟e2 ♖b6 19 ♜ab1 ♜c6 20 ♙a3 isn't pretty, but this would still have been better than Black's choice in the game.

15 ♙a3 ♖d7



16 b6+! ♟xb6

16...♟d8 17 d4 blasts open the centre against the black king, e.g. 17...exd4 18 0-0-0 ♜e8 19 ♟c5 ♜e3 20 ♖f4 ♖e7 21 ♟xb7+ ♖xb7 22 ♖xd4+ ♙d7 23 ♖xe3 and White wins.

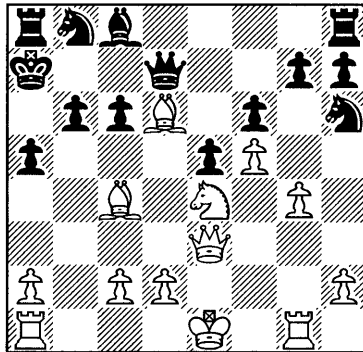
17 ♙d6!

White builds a mating net in the style of Petrosian's famous win against Pachman from Bled, 1961: 1 ♟f3 c5 2 g3 ♟c6 3 ♙g2 g6 4 0-0 ♙g7 5 d3 e6 6 e4 ♟ge7 7 ♜e1 0-0 8 e5 d6 9 exd6 ♖xd6 10 ♟bd2 ♖c7 11 ♟b3 ♟d4 12 ♙f4 ♖b6 13 ♟e5 ♟xb3 14 ♟c4 ♖b5 15 axb3 a5 16 ♙d6 ♙f6 17 ♖f3 ♟g7 18 ♜e4 ♜d8 19 ♖xf6+!! ♟xf6 20 ♙e5+ ♟g5 21 ♙g7! and Black resigned.

17...♟a7

After 17...♟a6, White wins with 18 ♖e3+ c5 19 ♜b1+ ♟a7 20 ♙xa6.

18 ♖e3+ b6



A good exercise for students. It's White to play and win:

19 ♖xb6+!!

A beautiful queen sacrifice, leading to a forced mate.

19...♟xb6 20 ♜b1+ 1-0

20...♟a7 21 ♙c5 is mate.

Game 9 A.Sokolsky-A.Kotov Leningrad 1938

If the previous games seem too hazardous for you, we offer now three examples of the positional approach – the safe 3 b5 – preferred by Sokolsky himself. Notes in quotation marks are by Sokolsky, translated by Yury Lapshun.

1 b4

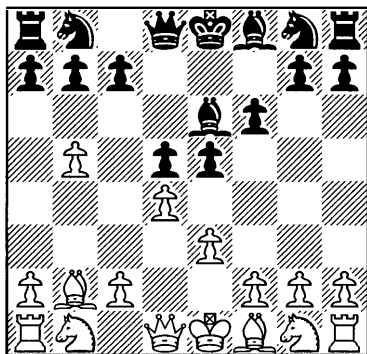
"This game was annotated by Kan in the tournament bulletin under the title 'Irregular Opening'. The move 1 b4 was not taken seriously. Nowadays

1 b4 has earned its 'citizenship' and is a respectable member of the openings family."

1...e5 2 ♖b2 f6

"With this move Black assumes the obligations of a big centre and a potential weakness on the a2-g8 diagonal, which White may attempt to exploit directly by playing 3 e4!? ♙xb4 4 ♙c4, the so-called Gambit Variation. In addition Black's ...f6 does nothing to further his development. White's actual move eschews gambit play, hoping to undermine Black's centre by positional means."

3 b5 d5 4 e3 ♙e6 5 d4



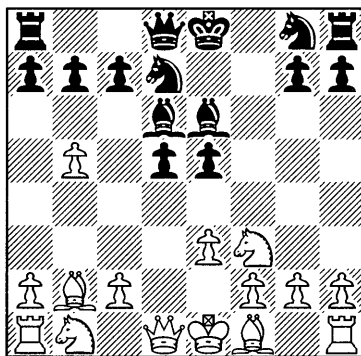
"Better than 5 ♘f3, which Black can answer with 5...c5."

5...♘d7

"One year earlier, in the game Sokolsky-Rovner from the Leningrad Championship, Black played the inconsistent 5...exd4 6 ♗xd4!, abandoning the attempt to build a big centre and rendering the move 2...f6 useless. The most natural answer was 5...e4."

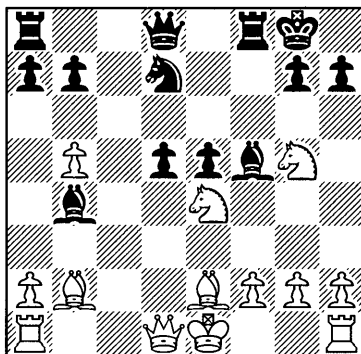
6 dxe5 fxe5 7 ♘f3 ♙d6

"Black's pawn centre is clearly both a source of strength and weakness."



8 ♘bd2 ♘gf6 9 c4 c6 10 ♙e2 0-0 11 ♘g5 ♗e7

Alternatively 11...♙f5 12 cxd5 cxd5 13 e4! ♘xe4 14 ♘dx4 ♙b4+



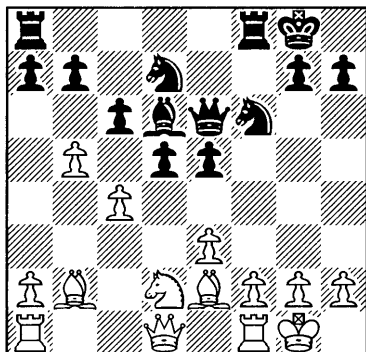
and now:

a) Sokolsky stopped his analysis after 15 ♙f1? dxe4 16 ♗b3+ (16 ♙c4+ ♙h8 17 ♘f7+ ♗xf7 18 ♙xf7 ♗f6 gives Black the advantage), believing that 16...♙h8 17 ♘f7+ ♗xf7 18 ♗xf7 would be good for White. However, looking further on 18...♗b6! 19 ♗xf5 ♗f8 20 ♗xf8+ ♙xf8 21 ♗d1 ♘c5 is actually better for Black since White is undeveloped.

b) We believe 15 ♙c3! is the best move, improving on Sokolsky's line.

Then 15...♙xc3+ 16 ♖xc3 ♗xg5 17 ♗xd5+ ♘h8 18 0-0 ♖ac8 19 ♖e4 reaches an equal position.

12 ♖xe6 ♗xe6 13 0-0

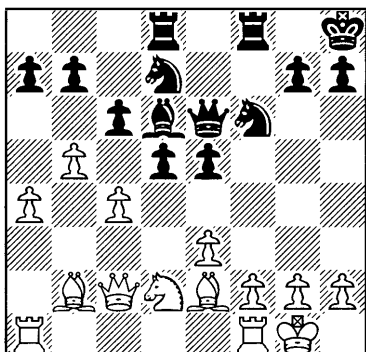


13...♙h8

“Necessary. 13...♖ad8 14 cxd5 cxd5 15 e4! ♖xe4 (15...dxe4 16 ♙c4!) 16 ♖xe4 dxe4 17 ♙g4 ♗g6 18 ♗d5+ ♙h8 19 ♙xd7 ♖xd7 20 ♖ae1! regains the pawn and stabilizes the position.”

We agree with this assessment, and our computer-aided analysis continues 20...♗f5 21 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 22 ♖xe4 ♙c5 23 ♙xe5 ♙xf2+ 24 ♙h1 ♙g8 25 a4 ♖d2 26 h3 g6 27 ♖c1 with a level endgame.

14 a4 ♖ad8 15 ♗c2



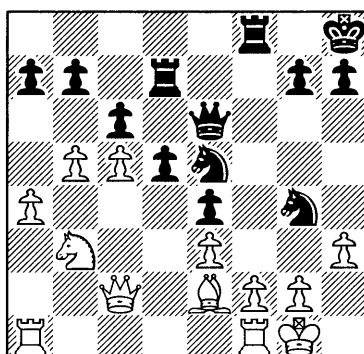
15...e4

“A move in the spirit of the position. Otherwise 16 cxd5 cxd5 17 e4! would be unpleasant. Now Black can count on the creation of an attack on the kingside, and White should be on the alert!”

16 ♙a3 ♖e5 17 ♙xd6 ♖xd6

“The exchange of bishops decreases Black’s attacking chances. After c4-c5 and ♖d2-b3-d4, White, gaining tempi, repulses Black’s pieces. During the struggle there comes a turning point when White captures the initiative.”

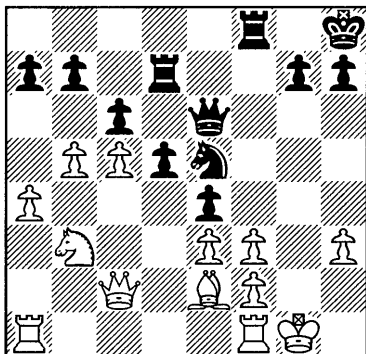
18 c5 ♖d7 19 ♖b3 ♖fg4 20 h3



20...♖h6

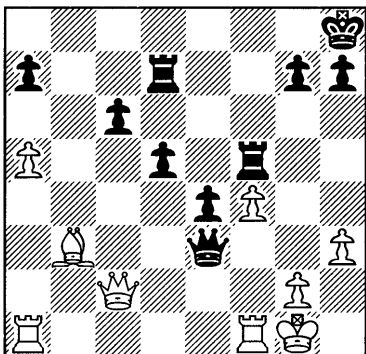
“Attempts to destroy White’s position by sacrificing don’t work: 20...♖f3+ 21 gxf3 (21 ♙xf3 exf3 – 21...♖xf3 22 bxc6 bxc6 23 ♖d4 – 22 ♖d4 ♖xe3 23 ♖xe6 ♖xc2 24 ♖xf8 wins for White) 21...exf3 22 ♙xf3 (22 ♖d4 ♗h6 23 hxg4 fxe2 24 ♗xe2 also wins) 22...♖xf3 23 ♖d4 ♗h6 (23...♖xe3 24 ♖xe6 ♖xc2 25 bxc6 bxc6 26 ♖ab1 h6 is equal) 24 ♖xf3 ♗xh3 (24...♖f7 25 hxg4 ♖xf3 26 ♖fc1 wins for White) 25 ♗f5 ♖d8 26 ♗f4 and Black’s attack is refuted.”

Going back to the position after 21 gxf3, we believe that Black actually can win by playing 21...d5!!.



For example, 22 f4 ♖xh3 23 fxe5 ♜f3!! 24 ♜fd1 ♜f5 25 f4 exf3 26 ♙xf3 ♜xf3 27 ♜xf5 (or 27 ♜d2 ♜df7! 28 ♘d4 ♜xe3+ 29 ♙g2 ♜g5+ 30 ♙h1 ♜h3+ 31 ♜h2 ♜f1+ 32 ♜xf1 ♜xf1 mate) 27...♜xf5 28 ♜f1 ♜g4+ etc.
21 ♘d4 ♜e7 22 a5! ♘f5 23 ♘xf5 ♜xf5 24 bxc6 bxc6 25 ♜ab1

Interesting here is the continuation 25 f4 ♘c4 26 ♙xc4 ♜xc5! 27 ♙b3 ♜xe3+.



Sokolsky stops here and opines that the two connected pawns in this posi-

tion provide enough compensation for the sacrificed knight. We don't believe this to be true and offer the following line as evidence: 28 ♙h2 ♜d6 29 ♙a4 c5 30 ♜f3 ♜d4 31 ♜d1 ♜b4 32 ♜b3 ♜xa5 33 ♜xe4 ♜f8 34 ♜e5 ♜b6 35 ♜g3 ♜bf6 36 ♙c6 ♜b4 37 ♜xd5 ♜xf4 38 ♜xf4 ♜xf4 39 ♜xc5 and White wins.

25...♜f8?

"Better is 25...♜f8, even though this abandons all pretence of aggression."

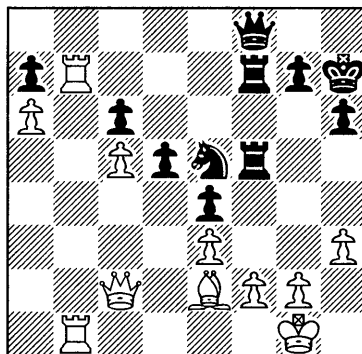
26 a6

"White misses a chance to finish the struggle immediately by 26 f4! ♘c4 (26...exf3 27 ♜xf5! wins) 27 ♙xc4 dxc4 28 ♜xc4, when Black remains a pawn down with a bad position."

26...♜df7 27 ♜b7! h6

"27...♜xf2? 28 ♜xf2 ♜xf2 29 ♜b1! ♜xe2 30 ♜b8 ♜e1+ 31 ♙h2 wins a queen."

28 ♜fb1 ♙h7



"White's advantage is obvious. The task is only to find the most precise method to convert it into victory. First, it's important to exchange one black rook to decrease the pressure on the f-file."

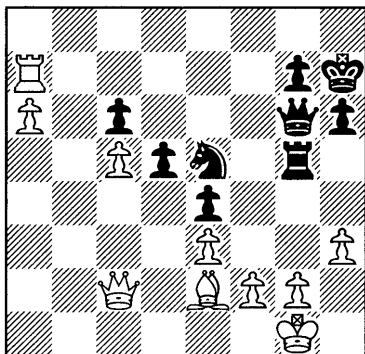
29 ♖xf7

Sokolsky believed 29 ♖b8 ♜e7 30 ♖1b7 ♜g5!? 31 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 32 f4 to be good for White, but we think that after 32...♜g3 33 ♜c1 (33 fxe5 ♖f2 wins) 33...d4 Black has a strong attack; for example, 34 ♖b7 d3 35 ♖g4 ♖f6 36 ♖xa7 ♜f3+ 37 ♖xf3 exf3 38 ♜d2 fxg2 39 ♜xd3+ ♜g6 40 ♖xg7+ ♜xg7 41 ♜d7+ ♜h8 42 ♜d8+ ♜g8 43 ♜d4+ ♜g7 and Black wins.

29...♜xf7 30 ♖b7

"There are not many pieces left on the board, so it's hard for Black to attack the enemy king. At the same time White threatens a rook penetration to the seventh rank capturing the pawn on a7. Here White had to play 30 ♖g4! ♜xg4 (30...♖f6 31 f4; 30...♜g5 31 f4) 31 hxg4 ♜g5 32 f3 ♜g6 33 ♖b7 with real chances for a win. The natural continuation in the game gave Black a chance to force a draw by perpetual check."

30...♜g6 31 ♖xa7 ♜g5



32 g3

"32 g4 h5 33 ♖a8 hxg4 34 h4 ♖h5 35 a7 ♜f3+ 36 ♜f1 ♖xh4 37 ♖h8+ ♜xh8 38

a8♜+ ♜h7 39 ♖xf3 gxf3 40 ♜e1 ♖h2 41 ♜d2 ♖xf2+ 42 ♜c1 ♖xc2+ 43 ♜xc2 f2 wins for Black."

However, *Fritz* suggests 32 ♖f1!! and gives the line 32...♜f3+ 33 ♜h1 ♜e1 34 ♜d1 ♜xg2 35 ♖xg2 ♖xg2 36 ♜f1 ♜g5 37 ♖b7 ♜f5 38 a7 ♜f3+ 39 ♜h2 d4 40 ♖b3 dxe3 41 ♖xe3 ♜f8 42 ♖xe4 ♖d5 43 ♖b4, which is winning for White.

32...♖xg3+ 33 fxg3 ♜xg3+ 34 ♜f1 ♜xh3+ 35 ♜e1 ♜xe3! 36 ♜d1 ½-½

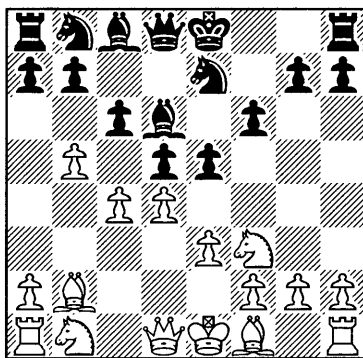
"36 ♜d1 ♜d4+ 37 ♜c1 ♜d3+ 38 ♜b1 ♜b4+ 39 ♜a2 ♜a5+ 40 ♜b1 ♜b4+ 41 ♜a2 ♜a5+ with a perpetual check."

Game 10 A.Sokolsky-S.Zhukhovitsky Kiev 1945

1 b4 e5 2 ♖b2 f6 3 b5 d5 4 e3 ♖d6

4...♖e6 is more often played, to hinder the advance c2-c4 (see Game 9).

5 c4 c6 6 ♜f3 ♜e7 7 d4

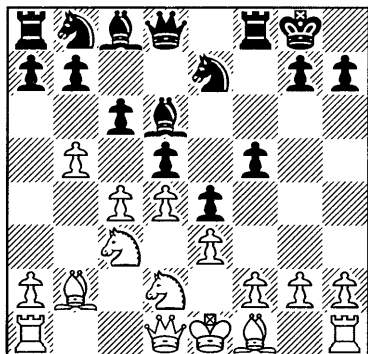


7...e4

7...♜d7 is insufficient, because after 8 dxe5 fxe5 9 cxd5 cxd5 the defence of the central pawns is a heavy burden on

Black, and 10 ♖e2 0-0 11 0-0 e4 sees Black being forced to concede the d4-square.

8 ♖fd2 0-0 9 ♖c3 f5



Black's pawn advances on the king-side provide him with a space advantage. On the other hand, White has created pressure against d5 and has the initiative on the queenside. A lively game with chances for both sides is in prospect.

10 g3

White must prevent Black's intended advance ...f4.

10...♖d7 11 a4 ♖f6 12 ♖a3 ♖c7

A mistake – Black loses valuable time trying to save his good bishop. In addition, its counterpart now creates uncomfortable pressure on the a3-f8 diagonal. The right way was 12...♖xa3 13 ♖xa3 dxc4 14 ♖xc4+ ♖ed5, occupying the important central square d5.

13 a5 a6

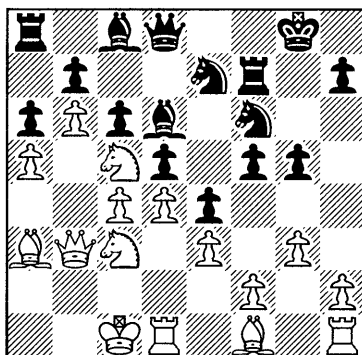
White threatened a5-a6 to detonate the enemy pawn chain, and 13...♖xa3? loses a piece after 14 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 15 ♖xa5.

14 b6 ♖b8 15 ♖b3 ♖f7 16 ♖c5 g5 17

♖b3 ♖d6

On 17...f4, there could follow 18 gxf4 gxf4 19 ♖g1+ ♖h8 20 cxd5 cxd5 21 ♖3xe4!.

18 0-0-0



An original position! The white king is safe despite having no pawns defending it, and Black is being pushed back.

18...h6 19 cxd5 cxd5 20 h4 g4?

With this move Black abandons all hope of counterplay. The immediate 20...f4 is doubtful after 21 hxg5 hxg5 22 gxf4 gxf4 23 ♖h3, but the option of ...f4 must be kept in reserve, not ruled out altogether.

21 ♖d2 ♖b8 22 ♖c2 ♖xc5 23 ♖xc5 ♖c6 24 ♖a3 ♖d7 25 ♖b2 ♖c8 26 ♖e2 ♖e6 27 ♖a2 ♖e8 28 ♖hc1

White concentrates his forces on the only open file and Black cannot oppose this plan.

28...♖b8 29 ♖b4 ♖xc2+ 30 ♖xc2 ♖d7 31 ♖c1

The knight is heading for the c5-square.

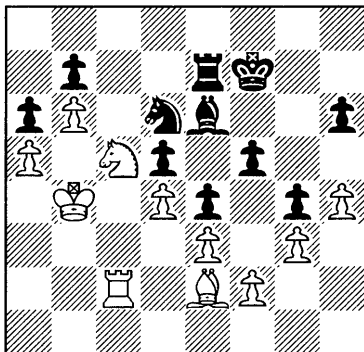
31...♖c6 32 ♖b3 ♖xb4

32...♖f6 is met by 33 ♖c5 ♖c8 34

♖a4, threatening 35 ♘xa6.

33 ♖xb4 ♖d6 34 ♖a3 ♖xa3+ 35 ♔xa3

♘d6 36 ♘c5 ♚e7 37 ♔b4 ♔f7



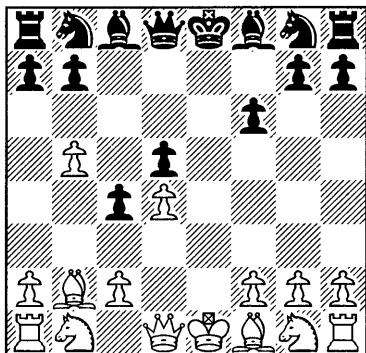
38 ♘xa6!

The logical culmination of White's queenside attack. Now the b-pawn will march to its coronation.

38...bxa6 39 ♔xa6 ♔e8 40 ♚c6 ♘d7 41 ♔c5 1-0

41...♘f7 42 ♔c8+ wins, as does 42 b7.

6 exd4 c4!



After this strong move White has some problems to solve: his bishops look bad, the b5-pawn is weak, and Black has more space.

7 ♘c3 ♔b4 8 ♖h5+

Forcing a weakening in Black's kingside.

8...g6 9 ♖f3 a6 10 g3

10 bxa6 ♚xa6 only helps to improve Black's rook and weaken the a2-pawn.

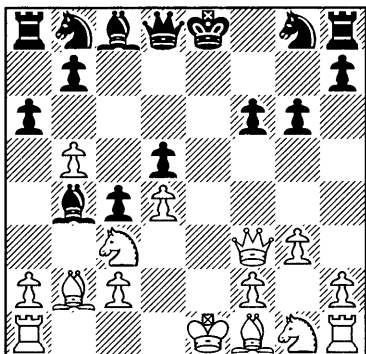
Game 11 K.Volke-V.Kupreichik Minsk 1994

1 b4 e5 2 ♔b2 f6 3 b5 d5 4 e3 c5 5 d4!?

A risky move, fighting for control of the centre. After 5 bxc6 ♘xc6 Black's centre looks very solid.

5...exd4

5...cxd4 6 exd4 e4 7 c4 ♔e6 8 ♘c3 ♔b4 9 ♖b3 ♔a5 10 cxd5 ♔xd5 11 ♔c4, as played in U.Kreuzer-P.Turati, correspondence 1990, sees White maintaining dangerous pressure on the a2-g8 diagonal.



10...♔f5

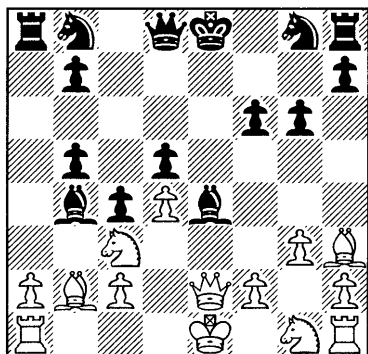
10...axb5 11 ♘ge2 ♘c6 12 ♔g2 gives White a big enough initiative for a pawn.

11 ♔h3

11 bxa6? is bad due to the reasons mentioned previously, and Black can continue with 11...♖xa6 12 ♖g2 ♖e4 13 ♗e3 ♗e6. Instead 11 ♖g2 looks like the best chance for White.

11...♖e4 12 ♗e2 axb5?!

12...♗e7! 13 f3 ♖xc2 wins a pawn.



13 ♖f1

Ducking the pin and clearing e1 for the rook. Possible is 13 f3!? ♗a3 14 fxe4 ♖xc3+ 15 ♖xc3 ♗xc3 reaching a position with chances for both sides.

13...♖xc3 14 ♖xc3 ♗e7 15 f3 ♖f5 16 ♖xf5 gxf5 17 ♗h3 ♗bc6 18 ♗b1 b4

18...♗xa2 19 ♗xb5 ♗d7 looks more logical.

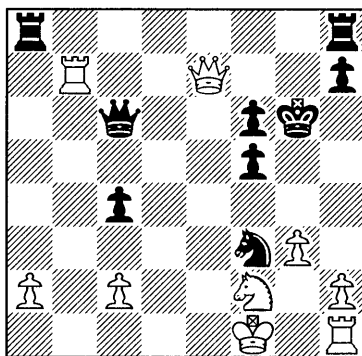
19 ♖xb4 ♗xd4 20 ♖xe7 ♗xe7 21 ♗d2

Here White could have played 21 ♗f2! defending f3. After 21...♗e6 22 ♗e1 ♗a6 23 ♗f4 ♗d7 24 ♖g2 0-0 25 ♗xe6 ♗xe6 26 ♗xe6 ♗xe6 27 ♗e1 White has more than enough play for a pawn.

21...♗xf3 22 ♗xd5 ♗e4 23 ♗b5+ ♖f8 24 ♗b4+ ♖g7

24...♖g8 25 ♗f2 ♗c6 26 ♗xb7 ♗xb7 27 ♗xb7 h5 should be equal.

25 ♗f2 ♗c6 26 ♗e7+ ♖g6 27 ♗xb7



27...♗d2+ 28 ♖g1 ♗f3+ 29 ♖f1 ♗d2+ 30 ♖g1 ½-½

Perpetual check ends an entertaining game in which both players showed their tactical skills.

Summary

This is probably the most difficult chapter in the book from a tactical point of view. Players with sharp styles will relish the complications of the Sokolsky Gambit (3 e4 ♖xb4 4 ♖c4 or 3 e4 d5 4 f4). Opponents who don't know what to do can meet the same fate as mine did in Games 7 and 8, and a study of these two encounters should give you some encouragement.

Players who don't enjoy complications should look more closely at 3 b5, as seen in Games 9-11.

1 b4 e5 2 ♖b2 f6 3 e4

3 b5 d5 4 e3 (D)

4...♖e6 – Game 9

4...♖d6 – Game 10

4...c5 – Game 11

3...♖xb4

3...c6 – Game 7

3...a5 – Game 8

3...d5 4 f4 exf4 5 ♖h5+ g6 6 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 7 exd5 ♖xb4 8 ♖c4 (D)

8...♖f5 – Game 5

8...♖d7 – Game 6

4 ♖c4 ♖e7

4...♖e7 – Game 4

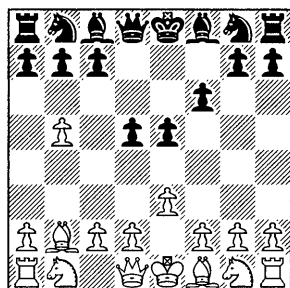
4...♖c6 – Game 4 (notes)

5 f4 (D)

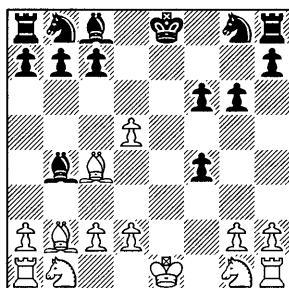
5 ♖h5+ – Game 3

5...d5 6 exd5 ♖d6 – Game 1

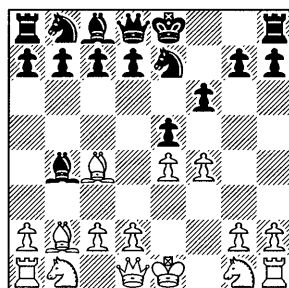
6...exf4 – Game 2



4 e3



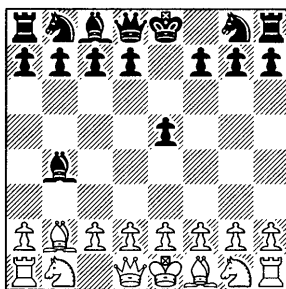
8 ♖c4



5 f4

Chapter Two

1 b4 e5 2 ♖b2 ♗xb4



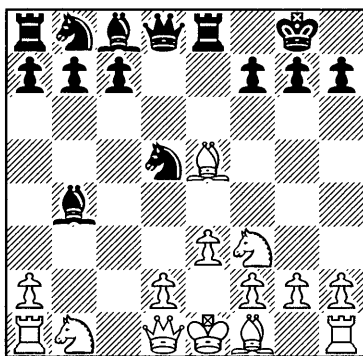
Now we proceed to a popular defence for Black, 1 b4 e5 2 ♖b2 ♗xb4. Black concedes an extra central pawn to his opponent but hopes to develop quickly and start an attack with his better mobilized forces.

The main line runs 3 ♗xe5 ♘f6 4 c4 0-0 5 ♘f3. Games 12-15 examine the common ...♘c6 attacking the e5-bishop (before or after ...d7-d5; there are different move orders but usually it just transposes) with subsequent plans for Black of ...♗e7-f6 and/or ...♗g4 or ...♗f5. In all of these cases the extra centre pawn proves more useful than the lead in development.

In Game 16, prodigy Ray Robson produces the interesting idea 8...♔d6, intending to swing the queen to g6 to spearhead an attack on the white king. Despite Black's reverse in this game, it strikes us as an idea worth testing.

2...♗xb4 has been recommended as Black's best option by some authors, and two recent books pose a strong

challenge to the Sokolsky: *Chess Openings for Black, Explained* by GMs Dzindzichashvili, Alburt and Perelshteyn, and *Beating Unusual Chess Openings* by IM Richard Palliser. Both of these books advocate the line 1 b4 e5 2 ♖b2 ♗xb4 3 ♗xe5 ♘f6 4 e3 0-0 5 ♘f3 ♗e8! 6 c4 d5 7 cxd5 ♘xd5.



Here the books deviate, with Palliser offering the more challenging lines after 8 ♖b2 ♘f4! or 8 ♗e2 ♗xe5! 9 ♘xe5 ♗f6 10 f4 ♘xe3.

All this looks very dangerous, and

to bypass the line I recommend a slightly different version of a line suggested by Palliser himself, namely 4 c4 (Sokolsky's preference) 0-0 5 a3! ♖a5 6 ♘f3, with the intention of 6...♞e8 7 e3 d5 8 cxd5 ♘xd5 9 ♖e2 ♞xe5 10 ♘xe5 ♞f6 11 ♘c4 (the point) ♞xa1 12 ♘xa5 ♖f5 13 0-0 ♞b2 14 ♞b3 ♞xb3 15 ♘xb3 with a playable position. 5 a3 also avoids the main line offered in *Chess Openings for Black, Explained*.

Of course, our analysis is untested and other possibilities may be possible for Black to pose new problems, for example the tricky 5 a3 ♞e8!?. But White can play differently too, even avoiding 2...♖xb4 altogether with 2 a3, in the style of Michael Basman (one example from many you can find in databases is M.Basman-B.Kouatly, London 1979).

Game 17 considers the rare idea (after 3 ♖xe5 ♘f6 4 c4 0-0 5 ♘f3 d5 6 e3) of 6...c5. We don't like this move, as the c5-pawn can easily become a target and Black's development is slowed by a vital tempo.

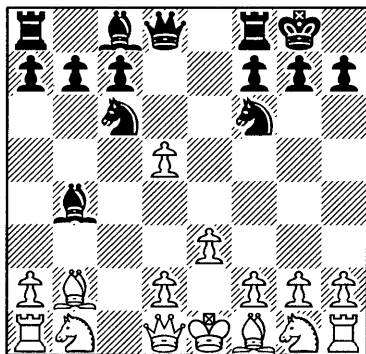
Finally, for true romantics, Game 18 explores the gambit idea of 3 f4, refusing to take back the e-pawn. Tacticians might enjoy the ensuing bizarre positions, which bear more than a passing resemblance to the ideas seen in Chapter One.

Game 12
A.Sokolsky-Anishchenko
Minsk 1959

1 b4 e5 2 ♖b2 ♖xb4 3 ♖xe5 ♘f6

In principle, the exchange of a flank pawn for a central pawn favours the side gaining the central pawn, as eventually that side will construct a strong pawn centre. In truth, Black gets an advantage in development, and for some time White must play precisely to neutralize the opponent's threats.

4 c4 0-0 5 e3 ♘c6 6 ♖b2 d5 7 cxd5



7...♘xd5

Recapturing with the queen, as happened in the game Sokolsky-Litvinov from the same tournament, is unconvincing. White didn't use the chance to capture on f6, and came to regret it later on: 7...♞xd5 8 ♖xf6 gxf6 9 ♘e2! ♖d6 10 ♘bc3 ♞a5 11 ♘g3 with better play for White.

8 ♘f3 ♖g4 9 ♖e2 ♞e8 10 0-0 ♖e7

The plan to transfer the bishop to f6 can't be the strongest continuation.

No better is 10...♖d6 because of 11 ♘c3. Probably Black has to play 10...♞d7 11 d4 ♞ad8, but in this case White's position is better because of the extra central pawn and the potential pressure on the c-file.

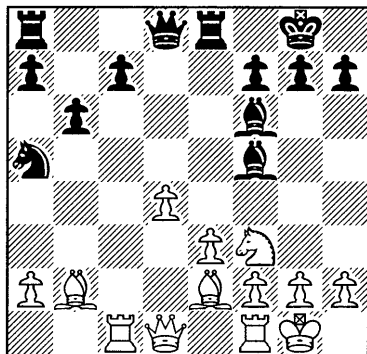
11 d4 ♖f6 12 ♘bd2 ♖f5 13 ♘c4 ♘b6 14

chesstouring.com

♙c1 ♘xc4 15 ♙xc4 ♘a5

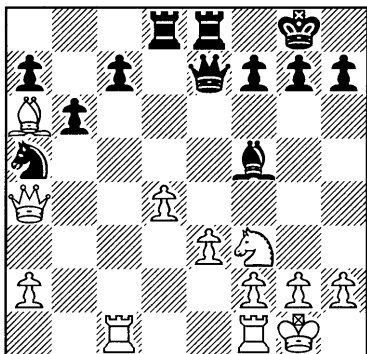
Black wants to play ...c7-c5, but he can't get what he wants. Better is 15...♙d6 16 ♙b3 ♙g6, and if 17 ♙xb7? then 17...♙ab8.

16 ♙e2 b6



This prepares the move ...c7-c5 and prevents the threat of 17 ♙c5. But already White's next move stops the movement of the c-pawn and Black must take care of the backward pawn on the c-file.

17 ♙a3 ♙e7 18 ♙xe7 ♙xe7 19 ♙a4 ♙ac8 20 ♙a6 ♙cd8



Now White has time to double rooks on the c-file.

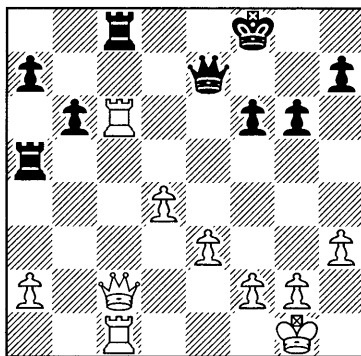
21 ♙c3 ♙e4 22 ♙e2 ♙c8 23 ♙fc1 c6

How to increase the pressure on the c6-pawn? White decides to exchange both of Black's minor pieces which are defending this pawn.

24 ♘d2 ♙d5 25 ♙f3 ♙xf3 26 ♘xf3 f6 27 h3 ♙ed8 28 ♘d2 ♙f8 29 ♘b3 ♙d5

This leads to a forced loss, although even after 29...♘xb3 30 axb3 c5 31 b4 ♙d5 32 bxc5 bxc5 33 ♙c2 Black is losing a pawn.

30 ♘xa5 ♙xa5 31 ♙c2 g6 32 ♙xc6



White not only wins a pawn but invades the opponent's camp, and this quickly decides the game.

32...♙d8

Possibly Black had intended to play 32...♙xc6 33 ♙xc6 ♙xa2, but in this case after 34 ♙c8+ ♙e8 35 ♙b7! the threat ♙c8 would force resignation.

33 ♙b3 ♙ad5 34 ♙1c4!

On the immediate 34 ♙c7 there could follow 34...♙5d7. White occupies the open file in the proper manner, lining up his two rooks in front of his queen. In this case the threat of coming to the seventh and eighth rank is stronger.

34...♖5d6 35 ♖c3 ♜xc6 36 ♜xc6 ♔g7 37 ♖c4 ♜d6 38 d5 ♕f8

The exchange 38...♜xc6 will lead to immediate death after 39 dxc6! ♖c7 40 ♖e6.

39 g3 ♕f7?

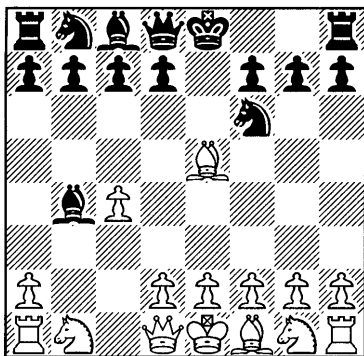
A mistake in a lost position.

40 ♜c7! 1-0

Game 13
Y.Lapshun-L.Milman
New York Masters 2002

Lev Milman is a very young and strong American chess master who has beaten many GMs, and in 2004 he became US Junior Champion. I heard his rating on the Internet Chess Club (ICC) was over 3100. He knew his openings very well, so I decided to play 1 b4.

1 b4 e5 2 ♖b2 ♖xb4 3 ♖xe5 ♜f6 4 c4



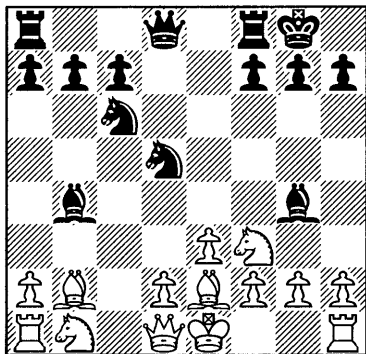
The best, according to Sokolsky. 4 c4 tries to control the centre and Black can only play ...d7-d5 at a cost of exchanging his only central pawn.

4...0-0 5 ♜f3

The suggestion of inserting 5 a3

here, which is a measure against early ...♞e8 lines (instead of ...♜c6), was discussed in the introduction to the chapter.

5...♜c6 6 ♖b2 d5 7 e3 ♖g4 8 cxd5 ♜xd5 9 ♖e2



9...♖e7

More usual is 9...♞e8 10 0-0 ♖e7 and now:

a) 11 ♖c2 ♜ad8 was agreed drawn in G.Kochetkov-A.Kovalev, Minsk 1996. Note here that 12 d4? allows 12...♜xe3! 13 fxe3 ♖xe3+ 14 ♜f2 ♖xf3 15 ♖xf3 ♜xd4 when Black is winning.

b) 11 a3 ♖a5 12 ♖a4!? (12 ♖c2) 12...♖e4 13 ♖xe4 ♜xe4 14 ♜c1 ♜e7 15 d4 ♜d8 16 ♜c3 ♜b6 17 h3 ♖f5 18 ♖b5 gave White an edge in the endgame due to his strong centre in M.Parry-W.Velker, correspondence 1997.

10 0-0 ♜ad8 11 a3 ♖d6 12 ♜c3 ♜xc3 13 ♖xc3 ♜e5

Chances are equal.

14 ♜d4 ♖h4 15 f4 ♖xe2 16 ♖xe2 ♜g4 17 h3 ♜h6

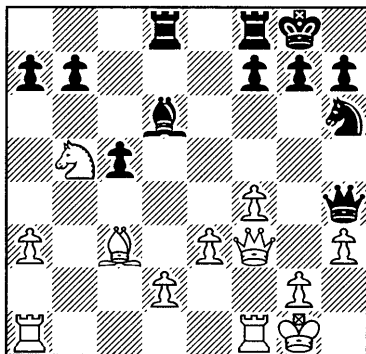
The only way. 17...♜f6 18 ♜f5 ♖h5 19 ♖xh5 ♜xh5 20 g4 ♜f6 21 ♖xf6 gxf6 22 d4 ♜fe8 23 ♖f2 would be clearly bet-

ter for White due to the strong position of his knight.

18 ♖f3 c5?

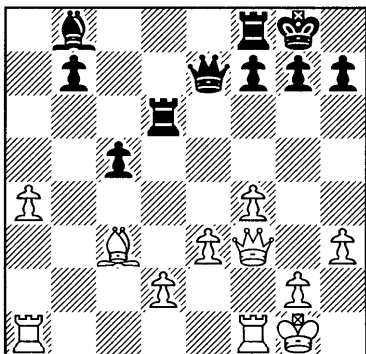
18...c6 would have been a better choice.

19 ♖b5



Black can't defend a7 and b7 at the same time, so White wins a pawn.

19...♗e7 20 ♖xa7 ♙b8 21 ♖b5 ♖f5 22 a4 ♖d6 23 ♖xd6 ♗xd6



24 ♗fb1

In this position I was trying to attack the weak b- and c-pawns.

24...b6 25 ♗b5 ♙c7 26 ♗ab1 ♗dd8 27 ♗b7 ♗b8 28 ♗c6 ♗fc8 29 ♗f3 ♗a8 30 ♙h1

A waiting move – I wasn't sure at this moment whether to advance the e-pawn or the g-pawn.

30...♗d8

30...♗xa4 31 ♙xg7! ♗e4 32 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 33 ♙c3 still leaves White a pawn ahead.

31 ♗b7 ♗db8

And here 31...♗xa4 32 ♗xb6 ♗da8 33 ♗b6b5 is good for White.

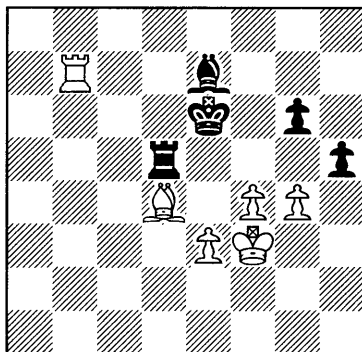
32 ♗c6 ♗c8 33 ♗f3 ♗d8 34 ♗a1 ♗d6 35 d4

Sooner or later I had to get rid of this weakness.

35...♗d5 36 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 37 a5 bxa5 38 ♙xa5 ♙d6 39 ♙c3

Much stronger is 39 ♗c1! ♗c8 40 ♙b6, when White wins a second pawn.

39...♗xa1+ 40 ♙xa1 f5 41 ♙g1 ♙f7 42 ♗b7+ ♙e7 43 ♙f2 cxd4 44 ♙xd4 g6 45 ♙f3 ♙e6 46 g4 fxg4+ 47 hxg4 h5



48 g5?!

Here 48 ♙e4! ♗a5 49 f5+ gxf5+ 50 gxf5+ ♙d6 51 f6 ♙f8 52 ♗b8 ♙h6 53 ♗h8 ♙g5 54 f7 is a simpler win for White.

48...♗a5 49 ♗b6+ ♙f7 50 ♗b7 ♙e6 51 ♗b6+ ♙f7 52 ♙e5 ♗a7

52...♙xg5 loses after 53 ♖b7+ ♗e8 54 ♖g7 ♗e7 55 ♖xg6.

53 f5! ♙xg5

53...gxf5 54 g6+ ♗g8 55 ♖b8+ ♗f8 56 ♗d6 is also hopeless.

54 fxg6+ ♗e7 55 g7 ♖a8 56 ♖g6

56 ♖b7+ ♗e6 57 ♗b8 is a bit more ruthless.

56...♙xe3 57 g8♖ ♖xg8 58 ♖xg8 ♙c5

59 ♖g5 1-0

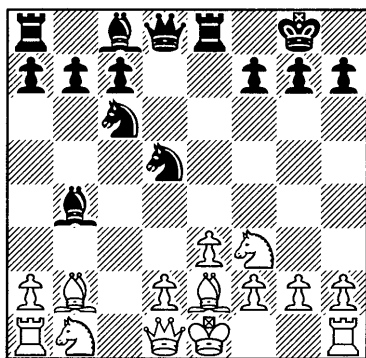
Game 14

Y.Lapshun-M.Sinn

World Open, Philadelphia 2003

This game was published by Joel Benjamin in the magazine *New in Chess*. My opponent sacrificed his rook, and my king survived all the dangerous threats.

1 b4 e5 2 ♗b2 ♙xb4 3 ♙xe5 ♖f6 4 c4 0-0 5 ♖f3 ♖c6 6 ♗b2 ♖e8 7 e3 d5 8 cxd5 ♖xd5 9 ♗e2



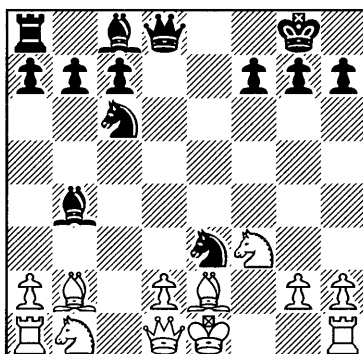
9...♖xe3?

This looks like a very good sacrifice, but in reality it doesn't work.

9...♗g4 transposes back to Game 12,

while 9...♗e7 is discussed in Game 15. A further possibility for Black is 9...♙f5; for example, 10 0-0 ♗f8 11 a3 a6 12 d4 h6 13 ♖bd2 ♖b6 14 ♖c1 ♗d7 15 h3 ♖ad8 16 ♖c4 ♖xc4 17 ♙xc4 ♗e4 18 ♖d2 ♗g6 19 ♖b3 ♗e4 20 ♖d2 ½-½, G.Baranov-L.Yudasin, Chigorin Memorial, St Petersburg 1998.

10 fxe3 ♖xe3



11 ♖b3

At the board it seemed to me that this was the best way to proceed, and I still think this is the case. 11 ♖c1 ♖xg2+ 12 ♗f2 ♖f4, as played in E.Engelhardt-J.Rollwitz, Berlin 1995, is a known route to an advantage for White.

11...♖xg2+ 12 ♗d1!

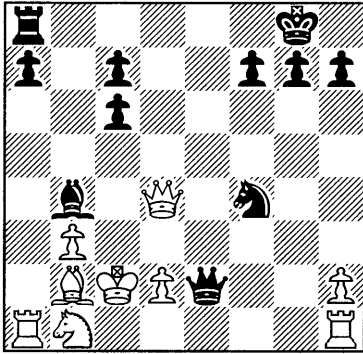
12 ♗f2 ♗h3! is less convincing for White, as Black gets a strong attack.

12...♗e6 13 ♖d3 ♗e7 14 ♖d4 ♖f4

14...♖d8 is met by 15 ♖xc6 bxc6 16 ♗g3. Another game continued 14...♗d5 15 ♖f5 ♗c5 16 ♖f1 ♖d8 17 ♙xg7 ♙xd2 18 ♖xd2 ♖b4 19 ♖h6+ ♙xg7 20 ♗g3+ ♙f8 21 ♗g8+ ♙e7 22 ♖xf7+ ♙xf7 23 ♗xf7+ ♙d6 24 ♗f6+ ♙d7 25 ♗g4+ ♗f5 26 ♙xf5+ ♙e8 27 ♗f7 mate, H.Muri-

J.Bjorn, correspondence 1993.

15 ♖xc6 bxc6 16 ♖d4 ♗b3+ 17 axb3
 ♖xe2+ 18 ♔c2 1-0



After playing 18 ♔c2 I left the room. When I came back my opponent, the set and the clock had all disappeared. Five minutes later Mr. Sinn came back and announced his resignation.

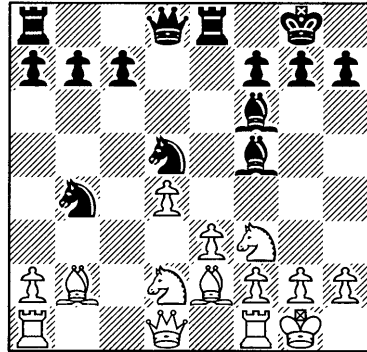
Game 15
Y.Lapshun-D.Wang
 Kapuskasing 2004

Wang is a young talent who had already drawn against a Grandmaster in this tournament. He had prepared for my favourite opening, but only for the first eight moves. We repeated the moves to my game against Sinn, but Wang was not bold enough to sacrifice his rook.

1 b4 e5 2 ♖b2 ♗xb4 3 ♗xe5 ♖f6 4 c4
 0-0 5 ♖f3 ♖c6 6 ♗b2 d5 7 cxd5 ♖xd5 8
 e3 ♗e8 9 ♗e2 ♗e7

This is rare, but it's the same approach that Anishchenko used against Sokolsky (see Game 12).

10 0-0 ♗f6 11 d4 ♗f5 12 ♖bd2 ♖cb4



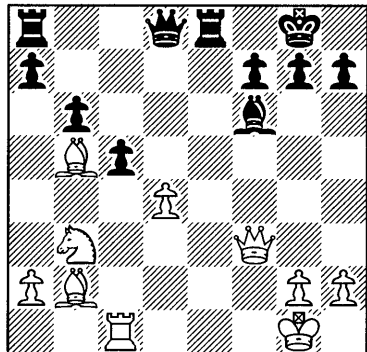
13 ♖b3?!

13 ♖c4, protecting the e3-pawn, is stronger. Now after the tactics the resulting position is unclear.

13...♖c2 14 ♖c1 ♖cxe3 15 fxe3 ♖xe3
 16 ♖d2 ♖xf1 17 ♗xf1 ♗e4 18 ♗c4 b6?!

This is weakening, and in the future Black could have problems with the squares c7 and c6. 18...c6!? looks stronger.

19 ♖f4 ♗xf3 20 ♖xf3 c5 21 ♗b5



21...♗e7?

21...♗e6 22 ♖d1 ♖d6 would have been preferable to the text.

22 ♖d1! c4

22...cxd4 23 ♖xd4 ♙xd4+ 24 ♜xd4 ♛c8 25 ♙c4 ♗h8 26 ♜g4 f5 27 ♜h4 ♛e8 28 ♛h3 ♛g6 29 ♜h6! is a neat win for White.

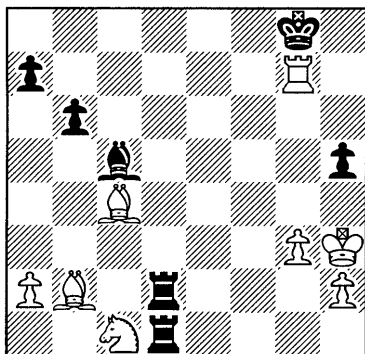
23 ♙xc4 ♜c8 24 ♙d3 ♛e8 25 ♗f1 ♙h4 26 g3 ♜e3 27 ♛f2 ♛e6 28 ♙g1 ♙g5 29 d5 ♛g4 30 ♜f1 ♜f8 31 ♖c1 ♛d7 32 ♙a3 ♜e5 33 ♛f3 ♜d8 34 d6 ♙e3+ 35 ♗h1 ♙c5

The d-pawn goes, but the attack rages on.

36 ♙b2 ♜e3 37 ♛d5 ♜e6 38 ♙c4 ♛xd6 39 ♛xd6 ♜exd6 40 ♜xf7 ♜d1+ 41 ♙g2 ♜8d2+ 42 ♗h3 h5

42...b5 43 ♙e6 ♜d6 44 ♜f6+ ♜xe6 45 ♜xe6 ♜d2 46 ♜e2 is also winning.

43 ♜xg7+



Look how the white rook and two bishops are building a mating net.

43...♗f8 44 ♙f6 ♗e8 45 ♙f7+ ♗f8 46 ♙e6 ♗e8 47 ♜xa7 1-0

Game 16
Y.Lapshun-R.Robson
World Open, Philadelphia 2007

In this game I was playing against

12-year-old Senior Master, Ray Robson, who according to Kasparov is an extremely talented player. I had no time to prepare for him and decided to use my favourite opening weapon.

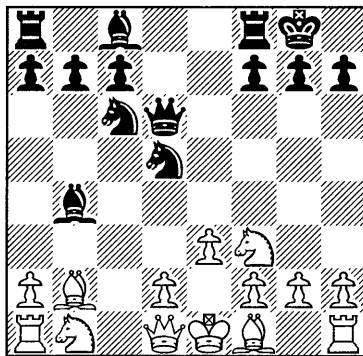
1 b4

This move made him smile, and he thought for about one hour over his opening ten moves.

1...e5 2 ♙b2 ♙xb4 3 ♙xe5 ♖f6 4 c4 0-0 5 ♖f3 ♖c6 6 ♙b2 d5 7 cxd5 ♖xd5 8 e3

In this theoretical position my opponent played a dangerous move which nobody had previously used against me:

8...♛d6!?



I thought I had remembered seeing 8...♛d6 in some book, and that the idea was to play at some point ...♛g6 with pressure on the g2-pawn. I had no idea what to do, so I chose a waiting move which decides where Black's dark-squared bishop goes and protects the b4-square – this could be useful in the future.

9 a3 ♙a5 10 ♙e2

I think 10 ♛c2 is best, preparing ♖c3 and discouraging ...♛g6.

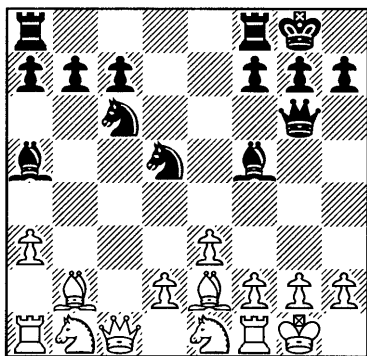
10...♗g6 11 0-0 ♙h3!

Forcing me to undevelop my knight.

12 ♖e1

As Korchnoi said, "I'm preparing my pieces for the next game!" This backward move actually contains a trap: on 12...♞fe8? there follows 13 ♙h5! ♗g5 14 f4 ♗e7 15 ♗f3, winning material.

12...♙f5 13 ♗c1



Preparing to gain some freedom with ♖c3, and also laying another trap.

13...♞fe8

13...♙xb1?! 14 ♞xb1 ♙xd2?? is losing because of 15 ♗xd2! ♗xb1 16 ♖d3 ♗a2 17 ♖c1 ♗b1 18 ♙d3, trapping the queen.

14 ♙c4 ♖b6

14...♞ad8 looks more natural.

15 ♙b5 ♞ad8

Black can try to win a pawn with 15...♙xb1?! 16 ♗xb1 ♗xb1 17 ♞xb1 ♙xd2, but here 18 ♖f3 ♙a5 19 ♙xc6 bxc6 20 ♞bc1 ♖d5 21 ♞xc6 gives White a slight advantage.

16 ♙c3

Trying to release the pressure, but

16 d4 is more natural.

16...♞e7 17 d4 a6 18 ♙e2 ♖d5 19 ♙xa5 ♖xa5

Even though almost all my pieces were on the first rank, my position wasn't worse and I was ready to attack.

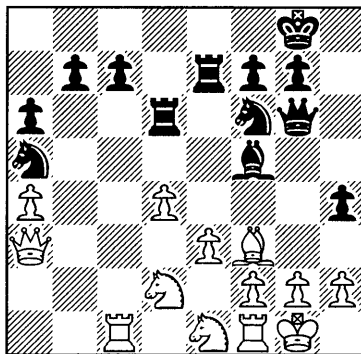
20 ♖d2 ♞d6 21 a4

During the game I felt this was the best defence to the idea of ...♞c6, because my queen needed more freedom.

21...h5

Going for checkmate! Here I was really beginning to worry over the safety of my king.

22 ♙f3 ♖f6 23 ♗a3 h4 24 ♞c1



Creating my first threat: winning a pawn after ♞xc7 and ♗xd6.

24...♖e8

With this and his following move my opponent seemed to be preparing his pieces for the next game too! Right now he was experiencing some time pressure because he had spent too much of it in the opening.

25 e4!

The beginning of my attack in the centre. Black's initiative has disappeared and it was a time for him to

trade pieces with 25...♙g4.

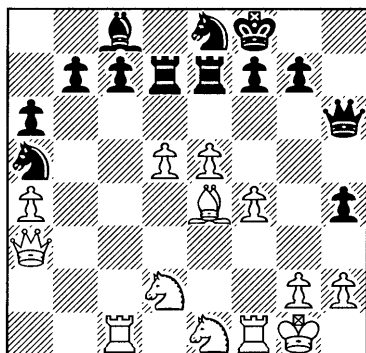
25...♙c8?! 26 e5

Now White has a clear advantage.

26...♖dd7 27 ♙e4 ♖h6 28 f4 ♙f8

Defending the rook on e7 and thus threatening to capture the d4-pawn.

29 d5



An unbelievable position, in which all of Black's pieces have problems moving.

29...f5

This is the only way to complicate the position, but White's next move renders Black's position hopeless.

30 d6! cxd6

Or 30...♗xd6 31 exd6 ♖xd6 32 ♙d3, with a good extra piece.

31 ♙xf5 ♖c7 32 ♖xc7?

White could win easily with 32 ♙xc8!, but in my calculations I missed that after 32...♖xc1 33 ♖xc1 ♖c7 White has 34 ♖b1! ♖xc8 35 ♖f5+ and ♖xc8.

32...♖xc7 33 ♙xc8 ♖xc8 34 ♖b4!

Winning a couple of pawns.

34...♗c6 35 ♖xb7 ♖c7 36 ♖xa6 dxe5 37 fxe5+ ♙e7 38 ♗ef3 h3 39 gxh3 ♖xh3 40 ♖c4 ♗xe5?

Blundering, although the position

was already losing

41 ♖b4+ ♙d8 42 ♖b8+ ♙e7 43 ♖e1 ♖g4+ 44 ♙f2 1-0

Black can't save the knight. This is a good example of a white pawn storm in the centre prepared by careful opening strategy.

Game 17

B.Katalymov-S.Giterman

USSR Championship,
Novgorod 1961

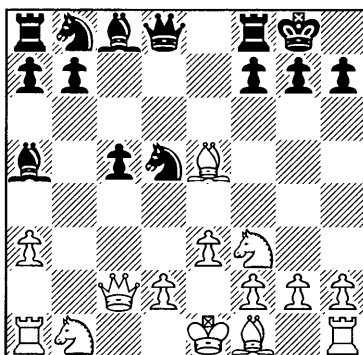
1 b4 e5 2 ♙b2 ♙xb4 3 ♙xe5 ♗f6 4 ♗f3 0-0 5 c4 d5 6 e3

6 cxd5 ♗xd5 7 e3 ♗c6 8 ♙b2 would transpose to previous games in this chapter.

6...c5

6...♗c6 7 ♙b2 ♖e8 8 cxd5 ♗xd5 9 ♙e2 would reach Games 14-15.

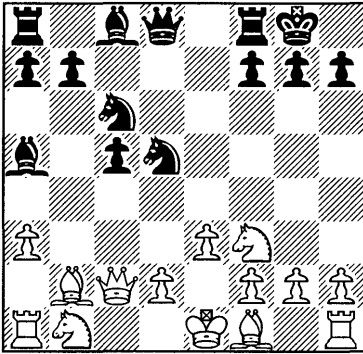
7 a3 ♙a5 8 cxd5 ♗xd5 9 ♖c2



White must try to prove that in the middlegame two pawns in the centre are better than two pawns on the edge of the board.

9...♗c6 10 ♙b2

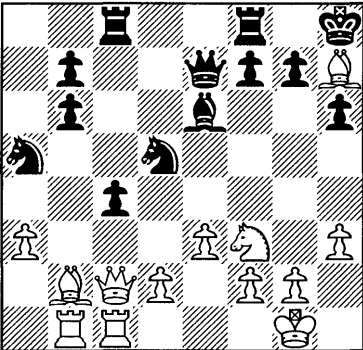
10 ♜xc5? ♜xe5 11 ♜xe5 ♙e6 12 ♜b5 ♜c8 13 ♜c4 ♜f6 14 ♜a2 ♜b6 15 ♜xa5 ♙xa2 wins for Black.



10...♜e7 11 ♙d3 h6 12 0-0 ♙e6 13 ♜c1 ♙b6 14 ♜c3 ♜ad8?

This move allows White to gain the two bishops and saddle Black with weak doubled pawns on the b-file. 14...♜xc3!? 15 ♜xc3 f6 16 ♙e4 ♜a5 17 ♙c2 ♜fd8 looks about equal.

15 ♜a4 ♙g4 16 ♜e1 ♜a5 17 ♜ab1 ♜c8 18 h3 ♙e6 19 ♜xb6 axb6 20 ♜f3 c4 21 ♙h7+ ♙h8



22 ♜d4

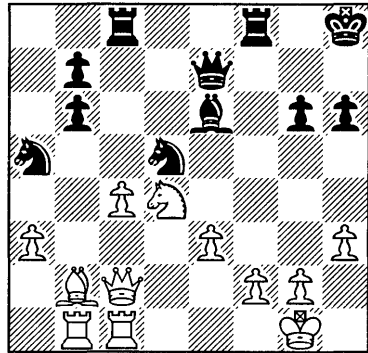
22 ♙e4!? ♜b3 23 ♜d1 ♜fd8 24 ♜d4 ♜xd4 25 ♙xd4 ♜xa3 26 ♙xb6 might be

a slightly better approach.

22...c3?!

Trying to win the h7-bishop, but this allows a tremendous attack on the black king. Instead 22...♜b3! 23 ♜xe6 fxe6 24 ♜d1 ♜h4 25 f3 b5 26 ♙e4 is unclear, as Black enjoys some counterplay on the queenside.

23 dxc3 g6 24 ♙xg6 fxg6 25 c4



White has a crushing attack.

25...♜f6 26 ♜xg6 ♜xc4 27 ♜xh6+ ♙g8 28 ♜g6+ ♙h8 29 ♙a1 ♜f7??

Losing at once. 29...♙d7!? puts up more resistance, although after 30 ♜b4 ♜e5 31 ♜h6+ ♙g8 32 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 33 ♜b3 ♙f7 34 ♜f4 ♜e8 35 ♙c3 ♙c6 36 ♙b4 ♜d8 37 ♜h7+ ♙e6 38 ♜d4+ ♙d5 39 ♜c2 ♙a4 40 e4+ White is winning easily.

30 ♜xe6 ♜xe6 31 ♜b5! 1-0

There is no defence to 32 ♜h5+.

Game 18

Y.Lapshun-R.Kaufman

National Chess Congress,
Philadelphia 1999

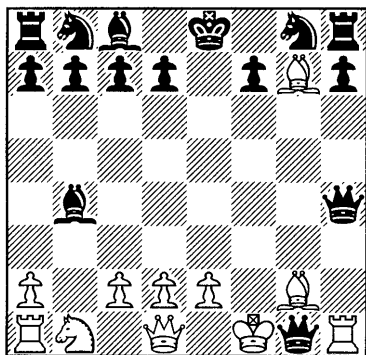
National Master Raymond Kaufman
chesstouring.com

is the son of IM Larry Kaufman. In the first round of this tournament they were somehow paired against each other. Larry Kaufman protested, and they were repaired. As a result, both of them lost: Raymond to me and Larry to the young Canadian player Zhe Quan.

1 b4 e5 2 ♖b2 ♜xb4 3 f4!? exf4

An adventurous move. We prefer 3...d6 4 fxe5 dxe5 5 ~~Q~~xe5 ~~Q~~f6 6 ~~Q~~f3 0-0, as played in a few games, which we feel is slightly better for Black.

4 ♖xg7 ♜h4+ 5 g3 fxg3 6 ♜g2 gxh2+ 7 ♔f1 hxg1 ♜+



Several players chuckled when they saw this position.

8 ♔xg1 ♚g3 9 ♖xh8 d5

I think it's better to save the h-pawn by playing 9...h6.

10 ♖xh7 ♘e7

10...♘c6?? loses to 11 ♖g7!; for example, 11...♙c5+ 12 e3 ♙xe3+ 13 dxe3 ♖xe3+ 14 ♖f1 ♗f4+ 15 ♗f3 ♖c1+ 16 ♖f2 ♖xc2+ 17 ♗e2+ ♖xe2+ 18 ♖xe2 and

White wins.

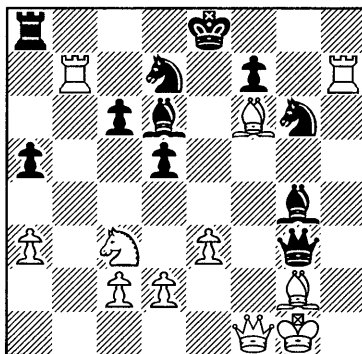
11 ♖f6 ♘g6 12 e3 ♗g4 13 ♔f1 ♘d7??

Black should play 13...♗e6.

14  c3?

14 ♔h4! ♚xh4 15 ♜xf7+ ♜d8 16 ♜g8+ ♚f8 17 ♜g5+ ♜e8 18 ♜xh4 was the right way.

14...c6 15 ♖b1 a5 16 a3 ♙d6 17 ♖xb7



17...♞de5??

Another big blunder. 17...♘g8 18 ♖h6 ♗xf6 19 ♙xf6 ♙e6, although still good for White, was preferable to the text move.

18 **e2?!**

Another slip. 18 ♖xe5 ♜xe5 19 ♖bxf7 ♜f3+ 20 ♜xf3 ♖xf3 21 ♜xf3 ♜xf3 22 ♖xf3 would have finished Black off.

18...♙xe2 19 ♔xe2 ♘g4??

Three strikes and you are out. 19...♟xa3 would have kept things going a while longer.

20 ♖h3

The queen can't escape.

20...♔xh3 1-0

Summary

The reader should devote most of his or her attention to the lines stemming from 5...♗c6 (or 5...d5 followed by ...♗c6), as it's the most popular way for Black to play and several books recommend this as a good line against the Sokolsky. Robson's 8...♖d6 with the idea of ...♗g6 is worth studying, and this move will appeal to opponents with aggressive styles of play.

1 b4 e5 2 ♖b2 ♙xb4 3 ♙xe5

3 f4 (D) – Game 18

3...♗f6 4 c4

4 e3 0-0 5 ♗f3 ♞e8 – chapter introduction

4...0-0 5 ♗f3

5 a3 – chapter introduction

5...♗c6

5...d5 6 e3 c5 (D) – Game 17

5...♞e8 6 e3 d5 – chapter introduction

6 ♙b2 d5 7 cxd5 ♗xd5 8 e3 (D) ♞e8

8...♖d6 – Game 16

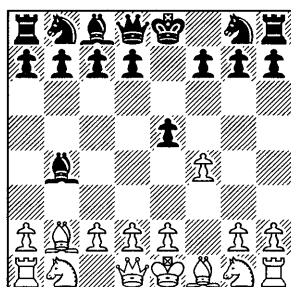
8...♙g4 9 ♙e2

9...♖e7 – Game 13

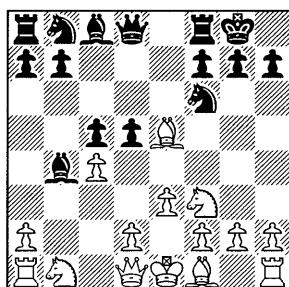
9...♞e8 – Game 12

9 ♙e2 ♙e7 – Game 15

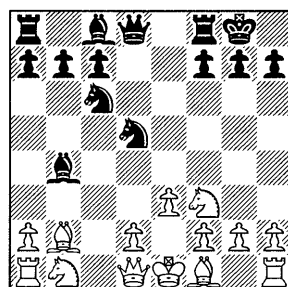
9...♞xe3 – Game 14



3 f4



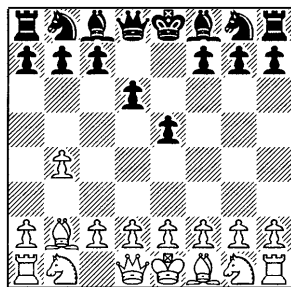
6...c5



8 e3

Chapter Three

Black Plays ...e5 and ...d6



This chapter deals with a very common approach by Black, the King's Indian structure. Black eschews an immediate tactical clash and instead adopts a sound formation with which he or she will no doubt be very familiar.

We also include the Old Indian system under the King's Indian umbrella since many players like to feint with an early ...d6 before either fianchettoing their dark-squared bishop or playing ...♗e7. Games 19-22 pretty much run the gamut of Old Indian structures. There is one with an early ...e5-e4 by Black, one without, one with a massive space grab of ...e5-e4, ...f5, ...c6 and ...d5, and finally one in which White plays d4-d5 himself.

Lapshun-Reeder (Game 23) shows an attempt by Black to imitate Smyslov's ...♗e6 defence to the English Opening, but White's early space gain proves quite useful. The next six games explore the possibilities of standard King's Indian play by Black. Games 25,

27 and 29 feature the idea of queenside castling (or even no castling) by White in an attempt to evade Black's kingside play and to counterattack on that very flank, and this plan is very promising.

It is surprising that Capablanca's double fianchetto approach in his game against Réti is not used more often by modern players. Perhaps they are influenced by the result, the Cuban's first loss in serious play since 1916! At any rate, don't pass up on this fine game. Our final game shows a modern example of the Double Fianchetto defence in a contest between two of Canada's best players in recent history. It's not flashy, but it's worth studying.

Game 19
A.Sokolsky-S.Flohr
USSR Championship,
Moscow 1953

1 b4 e5 2 ♗b2 d6

chesstouring.com

The most solid continuation, in Flohr's style.

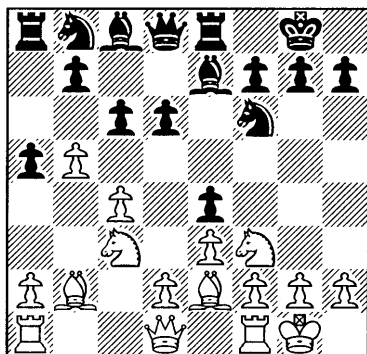
3 c4 a5

It's hardly worth hurrying the b-pawn, as the move b4-b5 is part of White's plans.

4 b5 f6 5 e3 e7

The development of the bishop on e7 is a little passive. Black was luckier in the games Sokolsky-Kholmov and Sokolsky-Lilienthal from the final of the 21st USSR Championship, where the continuation 5...g6 followed by 6...♗g7 was more in the spirit of the King's Indian Defence.

6 f3 0-0 7 e2 c6 8 c3 e8 9 0-0 e4!?



Too active – Black is not yet developed enough. 9...♖bd7 intending 10...♗f8 is stronger.

10 **d4 c5**

Black kicks the knight out of the centre, but loses the use of the c5-square. 10...♖c7 is a better option.

11 c2 bd7 **12** d3

The natural reaction. By eliminating the central e4-pawn, White opens the d-file and creates pressure on the semi-

open file and the weak d6-pawn.

12...exd3 13 ♔xd3 ♘e5

If 13... ♖b6, 14 e4! ♙e6 15 ♗e3 stops the advance of the d-pawn, after which Black remains cramped.

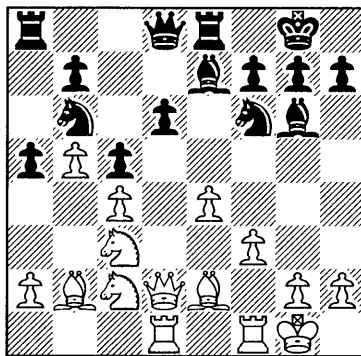
14 ♔d2 ♕e6 15 ♞a3

The knight on a3 is poorly placed, but this disadvantage is only temporary. The defects in Black's position are more serious: a weak d6-pawn and the invasion square d5. The knight on e5 can be easily pushed away.

15... ♖f5 16 f3!

Insisting on the advance e3-e4.

16... ed7 17 e4 g6 18 ad1 b6 19 c2



19...d5!?

This pawn sacrifice is the best practical chance. If 20 cxd5 ♙d6 Black acquires dangerous pressure on the h2-b8 diagonal. Also, after 20 ♖xd5 ♜bxd5 21 exd5 ♙d6 22 f4 ♗e4 Black gains the initiative.

20 exd5 ♘d6 21 f4 ♔c7 22 g3 ♘h5 23 ♖e3

23 ♖xh5? is met by 23...♘xc4.

23...xe2

Not 23...♔e7? 24 ♘f5.

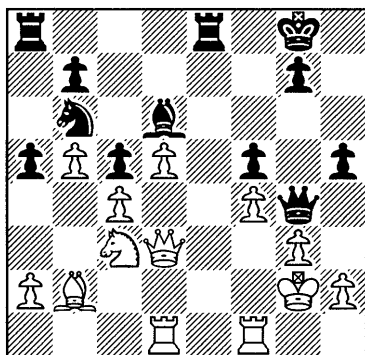
24 ♖xe2 ♗e4

Or 24...♗e7 25 ♗f5 ♗xe2 26 ♗xe2 ♗xe2 27 ♖xf6 ♗xc4 (27...gxf6 28 ♗xd6) 28 ♖xg7 ♖xa2 29 ♖f6 with the threat of 30 ♖c1, and here retreating the bishop is impossible because of d5-d6.

25 ♗d3 ♗d7 26 ♖g2 h5 27 ♗c3 ♗f6 28 ♗b1

White is threatening 29 ♖xf6. After 28...♗e4 29 ♗d2 the exchange of the knight on e4 will be inevitable.

28...♗g4 29 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 30 ♗c3 f5



Preventing ♗e4, but weakening e6. By sacrificing a pawn, White's rook is able to reach this square.

31 ♖de1! ♖xe1 32 ♖xe1 ♖xf4 33 ♖e6!

Not 33 ♖f1 ♖d6 34 ♗xf5 ♗xc4.

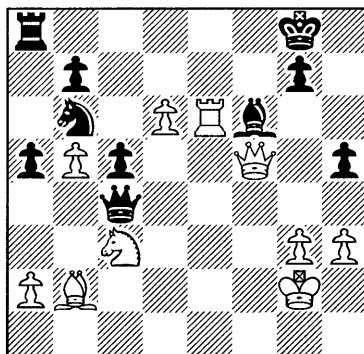
33...♖c7

No better is 33...♗d7 34 h3 ♗g5 35 ♗e2 ♖c7 36 d6 ♖b6 (36...♖d8 37 ♖c1) 37 ♗d5 ♖h7 38 ♖c1 ♗d8 39 ♗xf5+, and White wins.

34 d6 ♖d8 35 h3! ♗xc4

35...♗g5 36 ♖e5 g6 (36...♖f6 37 ♖xf5 ♗g6 38 ♗d5!) 37 ♖e8+ ♖f7 38 ♗e2 ♗f6 39 ♗e4! is crushing.

36 ♗xf5 ♖f6



37 ♖xf6! gxf6 38 ♗g6+ ♖f8 39 ♗xf6+ ♗f7

Alternatively 39...♖g8 40 ♗g6+ ♖f8 41 ♖c1! ♗f7 42 ♖h6+ ♖e8 43 ♗e4+ ♖d8 44 ♗e5 ♖c8 45 ♗e4 ♗d5 46 ♖d2, with a winning attack for White.

40 ♗h6+ ♖e8 41 ♗e4 ♗d5 42 ♗h8+ 1-0

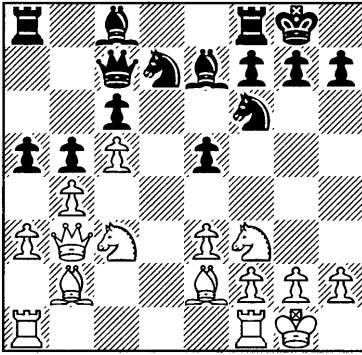
The game is up. 42...♖d7 43 ♗g7+ ♖e6 44 ♗e7+ ♖f5 45 ♗f6+ ♖xe4 46 ♗f3 is mate.

Game 20

B.Katalymov-A.Suetin
USSR Team Championship,
Moscow 1959

1 b4 e5 2 ♖b2 d6 3 c4 ♖e7 4 ♗c3 c6 5 e3 ♗d7 6 d4 ♗gf6 7 ♗f3 0-0 8 ♖e2 a6 9 ♗b3 b5 10 c5 a5 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 a3 ♗c7 13 0-0

White enjoys a comfortable position. Black's e5-pawn is a target, while White's c5-pawn claims considerable space on the queenside. Also, in the future White may be able to attack the weakling on c6.



13...a4?!

Releasing the tension on the queen-side only helps White to add more pressure to the other wing.

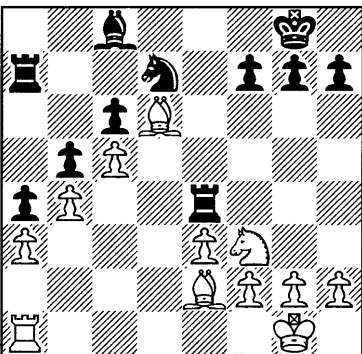
14 ♖c2 ♜e8 15 ♘e4 ♙xe4?

15...♙d5!? 16 ♜fd1 f5 17 ♙c3 ♙xc3 18 ♙xc3 e4 19 ♙d4 ♙e5 would restrict White to a small edge.

16 ♜xe4 ♜a7 17 ♙xe5

17 ♙d3 g6 18 ♙xe5 ♙xe5 19 ♜xe5 ♜d8 20 ♜ad1 ♙f6 21 ♜f4 ♜d7 22 ♙c2 ♙b2 23 ♙d4 ♙xd4 24 exd4 would leave White with an extra pawn, but also a hard task to convert it into a full point.

17...♙f6 18 ♙xc7 ♜xe4 19 ♙d6 ♙xa1 20 ♜xa1



Black can't defend the c6-pawn. White's active pieces are more than enough compensation for an exchange, and White soon reaches a completely winning endgame.

20...♜e8 21 ♙d4 ♙b7 22 ♙f3 ♙b8 23 ♙xb8 ♜xb8 24 ♙xc6 ♙a6 25 f4 ♙f8 26 ♙f2 g6 27 ♜d1 ♜c7 28 ♙f3 ♙c8 29 ♙c6 ♜bb7 30 ♜d8+ ♙g7 31 ♙d4 ♜b8 32 ♙c6 ♙f6 33 ♙xb5

The beginning of the end.

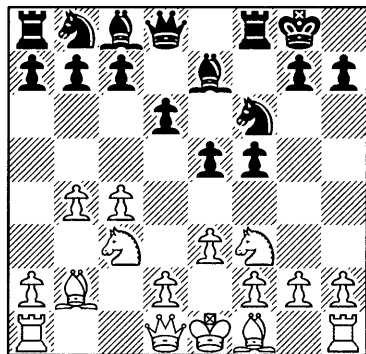
33...♜a8 34 ♙c6 ♜a6 35 b5 ♜axc6 36 ♙xc6 ♙b7 37 e4 ♙g7 38 ♜d6 f5 39 e5 1-0

Game 21

Y.Lapshun-X.Vila Gazquez
Barcelona 2007

It was very important for me to defeat this talented Spanish IM. A win would give me a shot at a GM norm and an opportunity to play a GM on the top board next round. A perusal of my opponent's repertoire convinced me that the Sokolsky was my best bet.

1 b4 e5 2 ♙b2 d6 3 c4 f5 4 e3 ♙f6 5 ♙f3 ♙e7 6 ♙c3 0-0

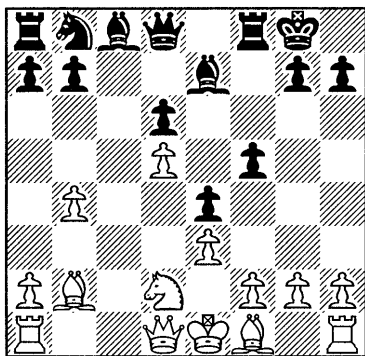


Black has shut out the Sokolsky bishop and prepares to attack in the centre and on the kingside. White must counter in the centre at once.

7 d4 e4 8 ♖d2 c6 9 d5

The routine continuation 9 ♙e2 d5 10 a3 ♙e6 11 0-0 ♜bd7 leaves Black with an easy life. I refused to allow this!

9...cxd5 10 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 11 cxd5



Let's evaluate this position. The d5-pawn, though a weakling, offers White space and attacking chances, and White can also dream of getting a knight to e6. Black wants to nab the d5-pawn, attack the king, and sink a knight into d3. Both sides have chances for success.

11...♙f6 12 ♜b3 a5

Black tries to gain the c5-square for his knight. I was afraid of this move, but Black's undeveloped pieces did make me believe that my position was playable.

13 ♙e2 axb4 14 0-0

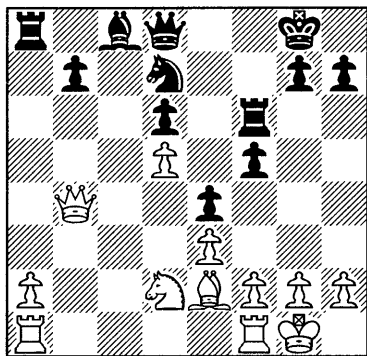
14 ♜xb4 leads to an unclear position after 14...♜a6 15 ♙xa6 ♙xb2 16 ♜xb2 ♜xa6 17 0-0 ♜a5 18 ♜d4. After

the text move, Black can reach that same position with 14...♙xb2 15 ♜xb2 ♜a6 16 ♙xa6 ♜xa6 17 ♜xb4 ♜a5 18 ♜d4.

14...♜d7 15 ♙xf6 ♜xf6

15...♜xf6 16 ♜xb4 ♜xd5 17 ♙c4 ♙e6 18 ♜b3 ♜a5 19 ♜fd1 ♜fc8 20 ♜f1 ♜xc4 21 ♜xc4 ♜f4 22 ♜c2 ♜d3 23 a4 is again unclear, and roughly equal.

16 ♜xb4



16...♜h6

This is probably the start of the bad plan, which will eventually cost Black the game. My opponent was dreaming of mating my well-guarded king, while leaving his queenside valuables in the lurch. Not all dreams can come true...

17 g3

I wasn't sure about this move, but I couldn't find another way to stop 18...♜h4.

17...♜f6

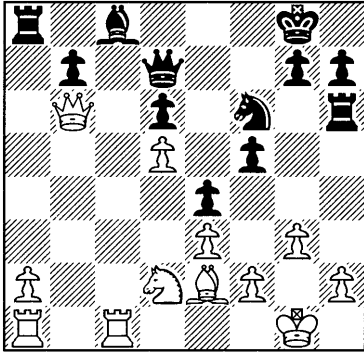
17...b6! improves Black's bishop and defends his queenside. After 18 ♜b3 ♙b7 19 ♜d4 ♜f6 both sides have winning chances.

18 ♜fc1 ♜d7

Accepting the pawn sacrifice is

rather dangerous. After 18...♖xd5 19 ♖c4 ♗e6 20 ♜b3 ♘c7 21 ♜xb7 ♜c8 22 ♖b3 White's passed pawn and active pieces promise him some advantage.

19 ♜b6



During the game I thought that this was a winning move because of my many threats on the queenside.

19...f4??

The best defence is not always a sacrificial counterattack! Black should instead play 19...♗h8! avoiding all the threats, and after 20 ♖c4 ♗e8 21 ♜c2 ♘d7 22 ♜c7 ♘c5 he can probably hold the queenside. Black can also try 20...f4!? (instead of 20...♗e8), although following 21 exf4 ♜h3 22 ♘f1 ♗g4 23 f3 exf3 24 ♜c2 ♘e4 25 ♜xb7 ♜c8 26 ♜e1 ♗f5 27 ♜xc8+ ♗xc8 28 ♜xe4 ♘g8 29 ♜f2 White passed pawn and well-placed pieces should give him a big advantage, albeit in a complicated position.

20 exf4 e3??

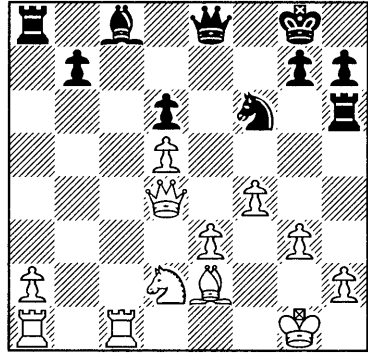
Black could show more resilience, although probably not save the game, with 20...♗h8. Following 21 ♜b5 ♜f5 22 a4 ♜xd5 23 ♜xd5 ♘xd5 24 ♘xe4 White would have an extra pawn and

good winning chances.

21 fxe3 ♗e8

21...♜xh2?? loses a piece to 22 ♜xc8+! ♜xc8 23 ♘xh2.

22 ♗d4



This is the sad end-product of Black's reverie. White covers everything and enjoys two extra pawns.

22...♗f5 23 ♜c7 ♜a4 24 ♜c4 ♜a3 25 e4 ♗d7 26 ♗f3 ♘g4 27 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 28 ♜c3 ♜h5 29 ♘f1 ♜a8 30 ♜c7 ♗g6 31 f5 ♗g5 32 ♜ac1 ♜e8 33 ♜c8 1-0

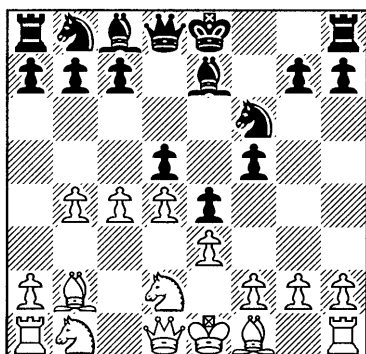
Reality had finally set in, and Black resigned.

Game 22
A.Sokolsky-S.Samarian
Correspondence 1958

1 b4 e5 2 ♖b2 d6 3 c4

White's goal is to capture space on the queenside. Against this Black intends to adopt the Dutch structure, hoping to attack by advancing the pawns on the kingside.

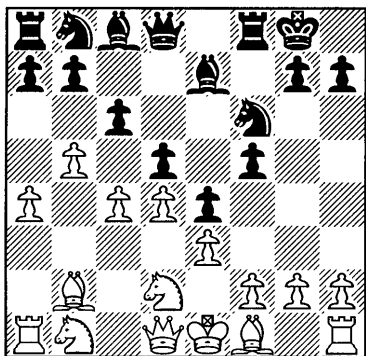
3...f5 4 e3 ♘f6 5 ♘f3 ♗e7 6 d4 e4 7 ♘fd2 d5



8 b5

White will play a further a2-a4 to continue the queenside pawn attack. Possible is 8 ♖b3 c6 9 ♘c3 0-0, as in the game Sokolsky-Suetin (Minsk, 1955), where White also had to play 10 a4 and later b4-b5.

8...c6 9 a4 0-0



10 ♖b3

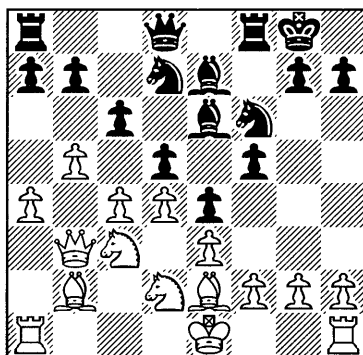
This move is useful in order to pressure the d5-square and defend the e3-square, preventing a possible breakthrough with 10...f4 11 exf4 e3.

10...♙e6 11 ♘c3 ♘bd7

Let's evaluate this complicated position. White pressures the centre and successfully continues the

successfully continues the queenside attack. For Black it's harder to develop kingside activity because he has to defend the centre.

12 ♙e2



12...c5!?

In trying to get rid of the unpleasant pressure on the centre, Black decides to temporarily sacrifice a pawn to stabilize the position. But, as the game shows, opening the c- and d-files is in White's favour. 12...♙e8 is better, to which White would answer 13 ♙a3.

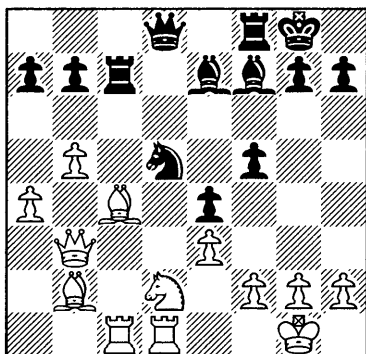
13 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 14 cxd5 ♙f7 15 ♖c1

Nothing comes of 15 ♙c4 because of 15...♘b6. It's dangerous to try holding on to the pawn with 15 dxc5 ♘xc5 16 ♖c3: after 16...♙f6 17 ♖xc5 ♙xb2 18 ♖b1 ♖c8! 19 ♖xa7 ♙c3 White gets into a difficult position.

15...♖c8 16 0-0 ♘b6 17 dxc5 ♘xd5 18 ♙c4

On 18 ♖fd1, Black could answer 18...♘f4! 19 ♙c4 ♘e2+ winning the exchange. After the text move, 18...♘f4 is not good because of 19 ♙xf7+ ♖xf7 20 exf4 ♖xd2 21 ♖fd1 ♖xf4 22 ♖d7 with an advantage for White.

18...♖xc5 19 ♖fd1 ♖c7



Black is trying to play ...♗d7, getting rid of the unpleasant pin on the d-file. The following unexpected strike prevents this idea.

20 ♜xe4! ♖xc4! 21 ♜xc4 fxe4 22 ♜xe4

White gives up two pieces for a rook and two pawns. It's difficult to call this a sacrifice, as the material is approximately level. The benefit of this continuation is obvious: the pin on the d-file is maintained. Black has to search for a way to release his knight.

22...♜d6 23 ♜g4 ♜h6

Probably the best. 23...♜f6 is bad because of 24 ♖xd6 ♜xg4 25 ♗d7, while against 23...♜f6 White answers 24 ♜xf6 ♜xf6 25 ♜d4 ♜xd4 26 ♖xd4 reaching a winning endgame. It's difficult to see how Black can prevent the threat of e3-e4 (after g3) with a subsequent occupation of the seventh rank.

24 ♜d7 ♜e6 25 ♜xb7 ♜h4

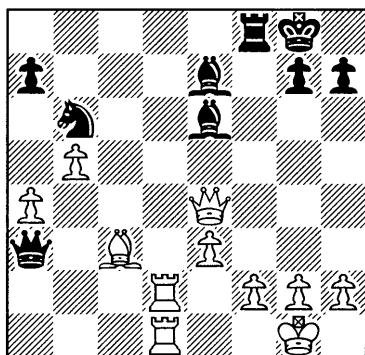
Finally Black has threats on the kingside, but White can defend and keep the material advantage.

26 ♗d2

Of course not 26 g3?, because of

26...♜h5 27 ♖xd5 ♜f3! and Black is winning. On 26 ♖f1 or 26 ♖c2, Black replies 26...♜xa4.

26...♜b4 27 ♖cd1 ♜b6 28 ♜c3 ♜a3 29 ♜e4



This centralization coordinates White's forces and clinches the win.

29...♜f7

Or 29...♜b3 30 ♜b2! ♜c5 31 ♖c1 ♜g5 32 f4! etc.

30 ♜b2 ♜c5 31 ♖c1 ♜b4 32 ♜d4 ♜xd4 33 ♜xd4 ♜b4 34 ♖dc2 1-0

If 34...♜xa4, the easiest way to win is 35 ♖c7.

Game 23

Y.Lapshun-A.Reeder
World Open, Philadelphia 2003

If you want to play 1 b4, you need to know something about the King's Indian Defence. This game shows how White can deal with Black's typical pawn storm.

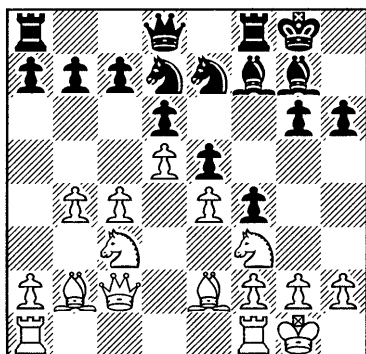
1 b4 e5 2 ♜b2 d6 3 c4 ♜e6 4 e3 ♜d7 5 ♜f3 f5 6 ♜c3 g6 7 d4

White leaves the paths of the Réti

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Opening and enters an unorthodox King's Indian set-up.

7...♙g7 8 d5 ♙f7 9 ♙e2 h6 10 e4 ♘e7 11 ♖c2 0-0 12 0-0 f4



We have reached a typical King's Indian battle scenario. White is trying to break through on the queenside while Black wants to checkmate the white king on the other wing.

13 ♘d2 g5 14 ♖ac1 h5 15 c5

White must not delay this essential line-opening – the pawn sacrificed is not too important. In fact, after 15...dxc5?! 16 ♘a4 cxb4 17 ♖xc7 b6 18 ♙b5 ♘c5 19 ♖xd8 ♖fxd8 20 ♘xc5 bxc5 21 ♖xc5 ♖ac8 22 ♖fc1 ♖xc5 23 ♖xc5 White has regained his pawn and dominates the queenside.

15...g4 16 f3 ♘g6?!

Maybe Black did not like 16...g3 because of the obvious reply 17 h3, but then Black could bring his knight to h4 with the idea of a later sacrifice on g2.

17 fxg4 ♘h4 18 ♘d1 ♖g5 19 ♘f2

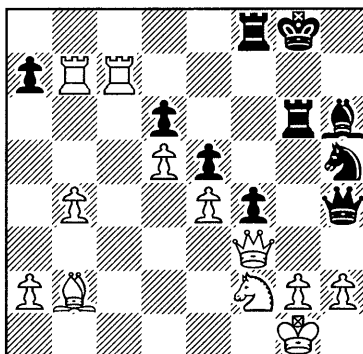
White needs more pieces to defend his king.

19...♘f6 20 ♖d1 hxg4 21 ♙xg4 ♙h5 22 ♘f3 ♘xf3+ 23 ♙xf3 ♙h6 24 ♖c3 ♖f7 25

♙xh5 ♘xh5 26 ♖f3 ♖g7 27 cxd6

There is not enough time to completely secure the king, so White must attack on the queenside.

27...cxd6 28 ♖fc1 ♖h4 29 ♖c7 ♖g6 30 ♖xb7 ♖f8 31 ♖cc7



31...♖g3??

31...♘g3 is a better try, although even here with 32 ♖c2! White puts an end to all of Black's hopes of ...♘e2+.

32 hxg3 fxg3 33 ♖g4+ ♙g5 34 ♖xh4 ♙xh4 35 ♘h3 1-0

Game 24

A.Sokolsky-R.Kholmov

USSR Championship, Kiev 1954

1 b4 e5 2 ♙b2 d6 3 c4 ♘f6 4 e3 g6 5 ♘f3 ♙g7

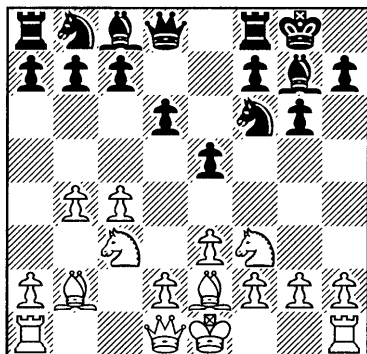
Black has chosen to defend with the King's Indian set-up. Here White's best choice is 6 d4.

6 ♘c3 0-0 7 ♙e2

Again 7 d4 is best. In the game Sokolsky-Flohr from the semi-final of this Championship (see Game 19), White also allowed the move ...e4

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without first playing d2-d4, but Black's bishop had been developed on e7. In that game White was better, but here Black will seize the initiative.



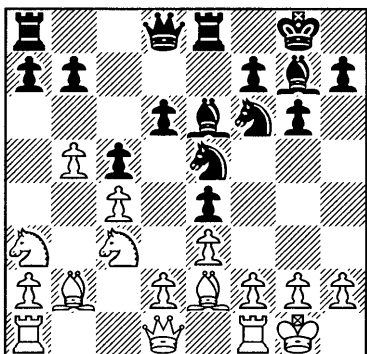
7...e4! 8 d4 c5 9 dxc2

9 bxc5 dxc5 leaves White with a backward pawn on an open file, and surrenders the chance to place a pawn on b5 for counterplay.

9...dxc6 10 b5 dxe5 11 0-0 e6

If 11...dxd3, 12 exd3 exd3 13 de1 creates problems only for Black.

12 da3 e8



A complex position has arisen. Black will use the e-pawn as the spearhead for a kingside attack, but White

can pressure that pawn and use the d5-square and his queenside space for counterplay.

13 c2

White prepares d5 by luring the enemy bishop from its defence of that square. 13 b3 d5! would open the game to Black's benefit.

13...f5 14 b3

Not the immediate 14 d5, because of 14...xf3+ 15 gxf3 exf3 16 d3 dxd5! with the twin threat of 17...g5+ or 17...b4.

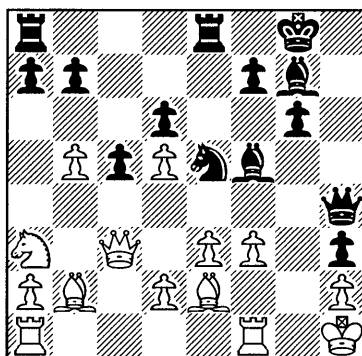
14...h5! 15 d5 dxd5

This trade frees the c4-square for White's knight, but the stronger steed on d5 could not be tolerated.

16 cxd5 h4!

The threat of ...h3, g2-g3, ...g4 etc forces a direct response from White.

17 f4 exf3 18 gxf3 h3 19 h1 h4 20 c3



Preparing c4. The immediate 20 c4? allows 20...dxc4 21 exg7 (21 exxc4? exb2) 21...dxd2.

20...f6 21 c4 g4 22 b3 exb2 23 xb2

Not 23 bxb2? f2+ 24 g1 d3!,

when 25...♖g5+ is a killing threat.

23...♘e5

23...♘f2+ 24 ♔g1 ♖g5+ 25 ♕xf2 ♖g2+? (25...♖h4+ draws by perpetual check) 26 ♕e1 ♖xh2 27 ♘d1 followed by 28 ♘f2 will prevent the h-pawn from advancing.

24 ♘c4 ♜ad8 25 ♜ac1?!

White has beaten off the first wave of the attack and should now advance with 25 a4 at once. To delay gives Black fresh chances.

25...b6 26 a4 ♙c8! 27 f4

27 a5 is not quite fast enough, due to 27...♙b7 28 axb6 ♙xd5 29 bxa7 ♖g4!.

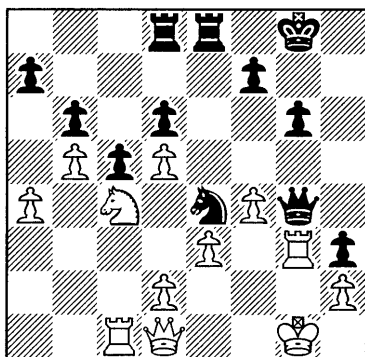
27...♙g4! 28 ♙xg4 ♘xg4

28...♖xg4 29 ♜f2 gives Black nothing.

29 ♜f3 ♘f2+ 30 ♔g1 ♘e4

The last few moves have seen Black's attack growing in menace, so White decides to offer an exchange to slow Black down.

31 ♖d1! ♖g4+ 32 ♜g3



32...♖f5

Kholmov reckons that if he trades queens and takes the exchange he will not be able to win because of White's

blockading knight, so he keeps the queens on for attacking purposes. The offer will not be withdrawn.

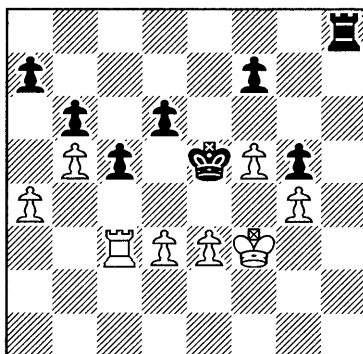
33 ♖f3 ♘xg3 34 hxg3 ♔g7 35 g4 ♖d3 36 ♔h2 ♜e4

This wins the d-pawn but leads to an ending in which the rook is in a box. Was there anything better? I don't think so, since White also has threats, for instance 36...♖b3 37 f5 with f6+ looming.

37 ♜c3 ♖xd5 38 d3 ♜d4 39 ♖xd5 ♜xd5 40 ♔xh3 g5!

The start of a good and necessary manoeuvre to return the exchange.

41 f5 ♜h8+ 42 ♔g3 ♔f6 43 ♔f3 ♜e5! 44 ♘xe5 ♔xe5



So we have an ending with equal material and equal chances. White chooses the simplest drawing line.

45 d4+ ♔f6

Accepting the pawn sacrifice with 45...cxd4 46 exd4+ ♔xd4 47 ♜c7 is dangerous for Black. No better is 45...♔d5 46 dxc5 dxc5 47 ♜d3+ ♔c4 48 ♜d7.

46 dxc5 dxc5 47 ♜d3 ♔e7 48 a5! ♜h1

48...bxa5 49 ♜a3 ♜b8 50 ♜xa5 ♜b7 51 ♔e4 ♔d6 52 ♜a6+ ♔c7 53 ♔d5! even

gives White good winning chances.

49 ♖e4 ♜b1 50 axb6 axb6 51 ♖e5

The idea of this move is to induce Black into blocking the f6-square from his own king. If 51 ♜a3, Black plays 51...♙f6 followed by ...♜xb5

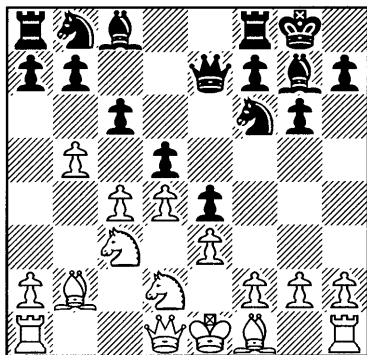
51...f6+ 52 ♖d5 ♜xb5 53 ♜a3 ½-½

Now if 53...♜a5 54 ♜b3 ♜a6, 55 ♙c6 threatening 56 ♜d3 guarantees a draw.

Game 25
B.Katalymov-I.Zaitsev
Odessa 1972

Katalymov played this crazy game in the city and year of my birth. His opponent sacrificed many pieces going for checkmate, but Katalymov won a bishop and triumphed without moving his king's rook or king's bishop!

1 b4 e5 2 ♖b2 ♜e7 3 c4 g6 4 b5 ♖g7 5 e3 ♟f6 6 ♟c3 c6 7 ♟f3 0-0 8 d4 e4 9 ♟d2 d5



Now we can see that Zaitsev, playing a King's Indian system, has saved a tempo by pushing his pawn to d5 in one move.

10 a4

White plans to storm the queenside. The immediate threat is 11 ♖a3.

10...♜d8 11 a5 ♟bd7?!

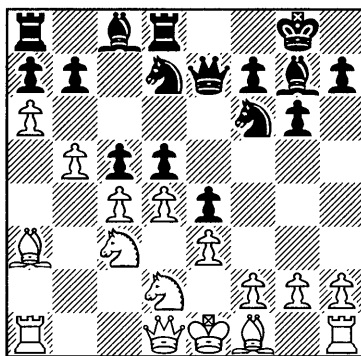
11...cxb5!? 12 cxb5 ♖f5 13 ♖e2 a6 14 ♜b3 axb5 15 ♜xb5 ♟c6 16 0-0 ♜c7 17 ♟b3 ♖f8 18 ♖a3 ♟xa5 19 ♖xf8 ♜xf8 20 ♜xa5 ♜xc3 21 ♜xa8 ♜xa8 22 ♜xb7 reaches an equal position.

11...♖e6, however, allows White to apply pressure with 12 cxd5 ♖xd5 13 ♟xd5 ♜xd5 14 ♜b3 ♜d7 15 a6 b6.

12 a6

From this position it's impossible to calculate the countless variations, but it's clear that Black is under considerable pressure, which will continue unabated.

12...c5 13 ♖a3

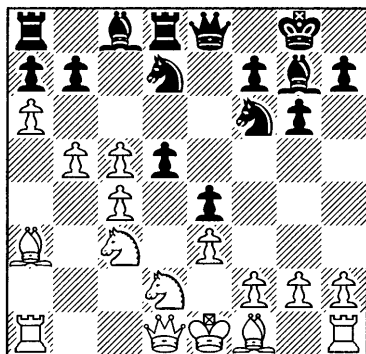


Setting up a deadly pin, from which it's difficult to escape.

13...♜e8?

13...dxc4!? 14 ♖xc4 bxa6 15 bxa6 ♜e8 is far from clear, for example after 16 ♟b5 ♜e7 17 ♜a4 ♟g4 18 ♜a5 ♟b6 19 ♖e2 ♜h4 20 g3 ♜f6 21 ♖xg4 ♖xg4 22 ♖xc5 ♜d7 23 ♟c3 ♖f3.

14 dxc5



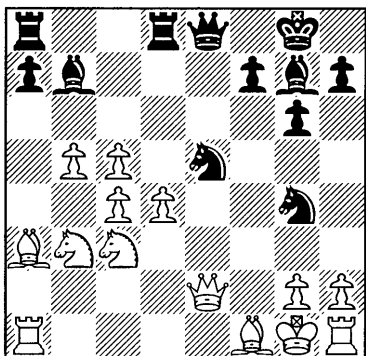
14...d4?

Another mistake. It's true that 14...bxa6!? 15 cxd5 ♖e5 16 ♖c1 ♜xd5 17 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 18 c6 ♜f6 19 bxa6 ♙g4 20 ♜c2 ♜ac8 21 ♙c4 ♜e5 22 ♙b2 is also good for White, but this is not as bad for Black as the text.

15 axb7 ♙xb7 16 exd4 e3 17 ♜b3!

White has to be careful: 17 ♜f3? exf2+ 18 ♙xf2 ♜g4+ 19 ♙g3 ♙xf3 20 gxf3 ♜e3 21 ♜d2 ♙xd4 22 f4 ♜f6 is winning for Black, for example after 23 ♙d3 ♙xc3 24 ♜xc3 ♜e4+ 25 ♙xe4 ♜xe4 26 ♜hg1 ♜d3.

17...exf2+ 18 ♙xf2 ♜e5 19 ♜e2 ♜fg4+ 20 ♙g1



White's two extra pawns outweigh Black's activity – White hasn't developed all his pieces, but his passed pawns can crush everything in their path. In this hopeless position Black's only practical chance is to continue sacrificing pieces.

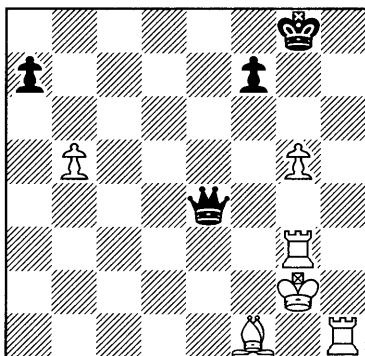
20...♜xd4 21 ♜xd4 ♜d8 22 ♜c2 ♙f3 23 ♜e1

23 gxf3 is another way to win. After 23...♜d2 24 fxg4 ♜xe2 25 ♙xe2 ♜d7 26 c6 ♜b6 27 ♙f3 ♙xc3 28 ♜d1 ♙g7 29 ♙c5 ♙f8 30 ♙xb6 axb6 31 ♙g2, White enjoys a decisive material advantage.

23...♙h6 24 ♜d5 ♙xd5 25 cxd5 ♜xd5 26 h3 ♜e3 27 ♜xe3 ♜f3+ 28 ♙f2!

There was still time to blunder. If 28 gxf3?? ♙xe3+ 29 ♙h2 ♜g5, Black wins as there is no good way to deal with the mate threats; for example, 30 ♜g3 ♜xg3 31 ♙xg3 ♜e5+ 32 ♙g2 ♜g5+ 33 ♙h2 ♙f4 mate.

28...♜xe1 29 ♜xd5 ♜e5 30 ♜xe1 ♜f5+ 31 ♙g1 ♜xd5 32 ♙h2 ♜b3 33 ♙c1 ♙xc1 34 ♜xc1 ♜e3 35 ♜d1 ♙xc5 36 g3 h5 37 h4 g5 38 hxg5 h4 39 ♜d3 ♜c2+ 40 ♙h3 hxg3 41 ♜xg3 ♜h7+ 42 ♙g2 ♜e4+ 1-0



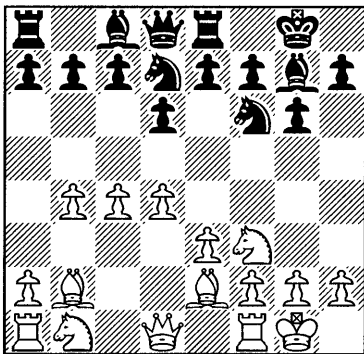
White's king will eventually escape all the checks, the black pawns will disappear, and the white pawns will become queens. One possible line is 43 ♖f3 ♜g4+ 44 ♕f2 ♜d4+ 45 ♖g3 ♜e5+ 46 ♖g2 ♜b2+ 47 ♖f2 ♜d4 48 ♖h3 ♜g4+ 49 ♖g3 ♜e4+ 50 ♖ff3 ♜c2+ 51 ♖h3 ♜h7+ 52 ♖g4 ♜e4+ 53 ♖f4 ♜e6+ 54 ♖h4 ♜e5 55 ♖gf3, and White wins.

Game 26
B.Katalymov-Bakhtiar
Tashkent 1959

1 b4 ♖f6 2 ♖b2 g6 3 e3 ♖g7 4 ♖f3 d6 5 d4 ♖bd7 6 c4 0-0

If White's pawn were on the b3-square, we would have a famous, well-studied King's Indian position. The active move by the b-pawn lends a distinct flavour to White's position.

7 ♖e2 ♜e8 8 0-0



8...♖e4

More often players continue with 8...e5 9 dxe5 ♖g4. Bakhtiar's choice is original, but probably not corresponding to the spirit of the position.

9 ♜c2 f5

After 9...♖df6 10 ♖d3 ♖f5 11 ♖h4! Black's pieces are not well placed, and he will lose at least a pawn.

10 d5 ♖ef6

This humiliating retreat is forced. Black now realizes that it's better not to trade the bishop on g7 which defends his king. On 10...♖df6, White replies 11 ♖d4 and later f2-f3, kicking the knight out of the centre. Black is trying to play ...♖f8 with the further ...e7-e5, which is probably the best he can do in this situation.

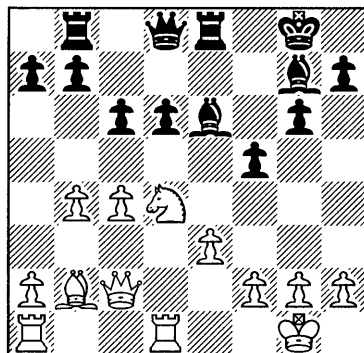
11 ♖d4 ♖f8 12 ♖f3 ♜b8

The pawn on b7 must be protected. The immediate 12...e5 would be weak, after 13 dxe6 ♖xe6 14 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 15 ♖xb7.

13 ♖c3 e5 14 dxe6 ♖xe6 15 ♖d5! ♖xd5 16 ♖xd5

16 ♖xe6 is not good because of the in-between move 16...♖xb4!. The sharp 16 cxd5 ♖xd4 17 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 18 exd4 ♖d7 leaves Black with chances for counterplay.

16...c6 17 ♖xe6+ ♖xe6 18 ♜fd1!



The exchange of the minor pieces

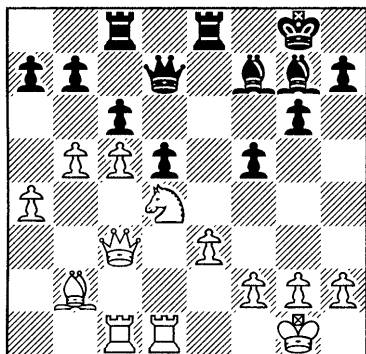
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would lead to an approximately equal game. Despite giving the opponent a pair of bishops, White believes that the great position of the d4-knight in the centre promises him an unquestionable advantage. Black can't exchange this knight (18...♙xd4?), because weakening the squares on the main a1-h8 diagonal could be fatal for him.

18...♙f7 19 c5! d5

Forced, otherwise there would follow 20 cxd6 ♖xd6 21 ♖xf5. Now White begins the pawn storm on the queen-side.

20 a4 ♖e7 21 b5 ♖bc8 22 ♖ac1 ♖d7 23 ♖c3



23...b6?

To prevent the threat of 24 ♖a5, but 23...♖c7 would have been a better way to do this. The pawn move weakens the c6-square and gives White a chance to create a strong passed pawn.

24 ♖a3! cxb5

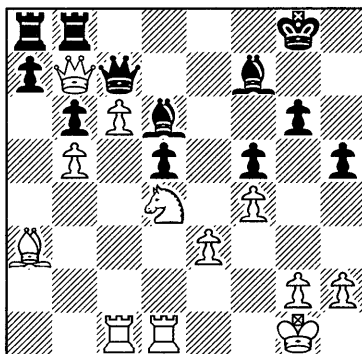
Black would lose a pawn after 24...bxc5 25 bxc6 ♖d6 26 ♖xc5, while 24...♙f8 is really bad because of 25 ♖xc6 bxc5 26 ♖c3.

25 c6! ♖c7 26 axb5 ♖e4 27 ♖a1 ♖a8 28

♖a6 h5 29 ♖ac1 ♖ee8 30 ♖b7 ♙e5

30...♖xb7 is a mistake because of 31 cxb7 ♖ab8 32 ♖c7 ♙e5 (preventing 33 ♖c6) 33 ♖d7 ♙e6 34 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 35 ♙xe5 ♖xe5 36 ♖c1 ♖ee8 37 ♖cc7 etc.

31 f4 ♙d6 32 ♙a3! ♖eb8



Black wants to force the queen exchange and after 33 ♖xc7 ♙xc7 continue the fight by blocking the dangerous passed pawn. But an unexpected queen sacrifice shatters all his hopes.

33 ♙xd6! ♖xb7

If Black doesn't accept the queen sacrifice and plays 33...♖xd6, following 34 ♖d7! ♖d8 35 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 36 ♖a1! ♖dd8 37 ♖a6 ♖dc8 38 ♖da1 White easily forces a win (38...♖c7 39 ♖xb6).

34 cxb7!

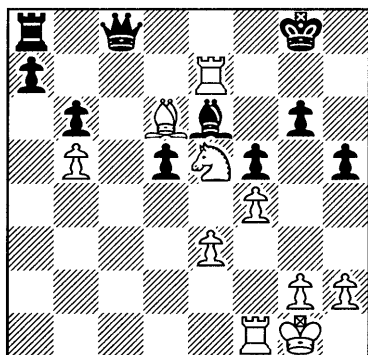
Unexpected and very effective. Recapturing the queen by 34 ♙xc7 ♖xc7 35 ♖a1 ♖e8! would enable Black to resist strongly. Although Black's position would still be inferior, the realization of White's advantage would need a considerable investment of time and energy.

34...♖xb7 35 ♖c7 ♖b8

Black has a small material advantage.

tage, but the activity and proximity of the white forces enables the first player to create insuperable threats.

36 ♖c6 ♜e8 **37** ♘e5 ♙e6 **38** ♚e7 ♜c8
39 ♜f1!



White moves the rook away from the potential thrust ...♜c2. On 39 ♖xg6 there could follow 39...♜c2 40 ♜f1 ♜e4 with counterplay.

39...d4

Black pitches a pawn to clear d5 for his bishop.

40 ♖xg6 d3 **41** ♜c7 ♜e8 **42** ♘e7+ ♙f7

Not 42...♙h8 because of 43 ♙e5+.

43 ♖xf5+ ♙f6

Or 43...♙g8 44 ♖h6+ ♙h8 45 ♙e5 mate.

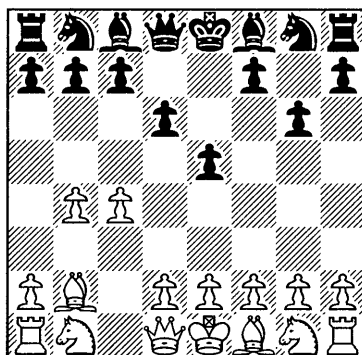
44 ♖g7 ♜g8 **45** ♙e5+ ♙g6 **46** f5+ ♙xf5
47 ♖xf5 1-0

Game 27
V.Alekseev-K.Sakaev
Petrov Memorial,
St Petersburg 1996

White does something quite unusual in this game. He pushes his

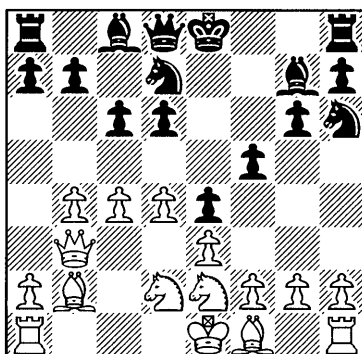
pawns on the queenside and then hides his king there, and somehow it works! But this plan isn't really new; Sokolsky wrote about such an idea 50 years ago.

1 b4 e5 **2** ♙b2 d6 **3** c4 g6



Quite a rare move order. 3...♖d7 4 g3 g6 5 ♙g2 ♙g7 6 ♜b3 ♘e7 7 ♖f3 0-0 8 0-0 ♖c6 was equal in S.Bernstein-J.Sherwin, New York 1959.

4 d4 ♖d7 **5** e3 ♙g7 **6** ♖f3 e4 **7** ♖fd2 f5
8 ♖c3 ♖h6 **9** ♜b3 c6 **10** ♖e2



At first sight this looks like a waste of time, but in order to stop Black's kingside attack Alekseev wanted to gain control of the f4-square.

10...♖f6 **11** h4 ♙e6 **12** ♖f4 ♙f7 **13** a4

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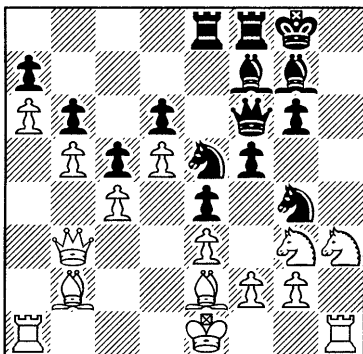
0-0 14 b5

Here we see our favourite queen-side attack. However, I believe that White is actually trying to close the queenside and castle there, and so it's Black's duty to prevent White from doing this by opening up the queen-side. For example, 14...a6!? 15 ♖e2 axb5 16 axb5 ♖xa1+ 17 ♖xa1 with a level position.

14...♖hg4 15 ♖e2 ♖e7 16 a5 c5 17 d5 ♖ae8 18 a6 b6 19 ♖f1 ♖e5 20 ♖g3 ♖fg4?

Sakaev would pay for not preventing White's line-opening on the king-side. 20...h5!? looks like a better option.

21 h5 ♖g5 22 ♖h3 ♖f6 23 hxg6 hxg6

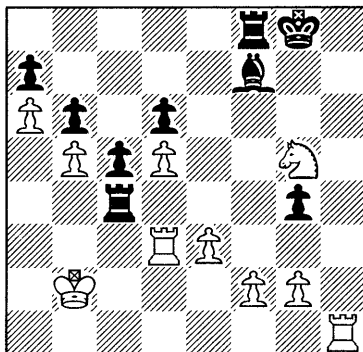


Now, with the queenside locked, the white monarch will be safe there, so White is finally ready to castle! Many years earlier Sokolsky had played in a similar way.

24 0-0! g5

After 24...♖h4!? 25 ♖df1 ♖xf2 26 ♖xf5 gxf5 27 ♖xf2 ♖g3 28 ♖h3 ♖xg2 29 ♖hh1!, with the further ♖hg1 White can easily use the open lines to attack the black king.

25 ♖xg4 fxg4 26 ♖xe4 ♖d3+ 27 ♖xd3 ♖xb2+ 28 ♖xb2 ♖xb2+ 29 ♖xb2 ♖xe4 30 ♖xg5 ♖xc4



White has an extra pawn, but also some weaknesses. In order to maintain the advantage, he must attack Black's weak pawns.

31 e4?!

31 ♖h6! would have been the best way forward. After 31 e4 the position is unclear again.

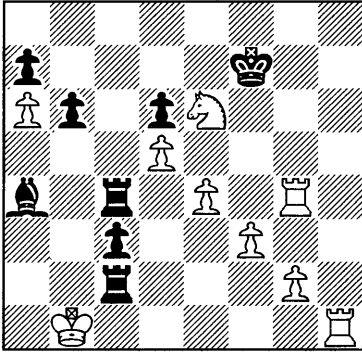
31...♖e8 32 f3 ♖xb5 33 ♖dd1 ♖a4 34 ♖dg1 ♖c2+?!

After 34...♖b4+!? 35 ♖c3 ♖b3+ 36 ♖d2 ♖f6 37 ♖h4 ♖g6 38 f4 ♖b2+ 39 ♖c1 ♖c2+ 40 ♖b1 ♖f2 41 ♖xg4 ♖b5 42 f5 ♖d3+ 43 ♖a1 ♖g7 the outcome is in doubt.

35 ♖b1 c4 36 ♖h4 c3 37 ♖xg4 ♖c8??

Black's king is in a mating net and there was no time to contemplate how to checkmate the white king. Instead Black should be content with a perpetual check, which arises after 37...♖b2+! 38 ♖a1 ♖b3 39 ♖e6+ ♖f7 40 ♖g7+ ♖f6 41 ♖c7 ♖a2+ 42 ♖b1 ♖b2+ 43 ♖c1 ♖c2+ 44 ♖b1 ♖b2+.

38 ♖h1 ♖c4 39 ♖e6+ ♖f7



40 ♖f4+

It's curious how two strong chess players missed checkmate in three moves: 40 ♖g7+ ♖f6 41 ♖h6+ ♖e5 42 ♖g5 mate.

40...♖g6 41 ♖f8+ ♖g7 42 ♖e6+ 1-0

After 42...♖g6 White mates as in the note above with 43 ♖g4+ ♖f7 44 ♖g7+ ♖f6 45 ♖h6+ ♖e5 46 ♖g5.

Game 28

V.Alekseev-V.Komliakov
Petrov Memorial,
St Petersburg 1996

1 b4 e5 2 ♖b2 d6 3 c4 ♖d7 4 e3 g6 5 ♖f3 ♖g7 6 ♖e2 ♖gf6 7 d4

White can also postpone the struggle until a later stage by playing d2-d3, as Benko does in the next game.

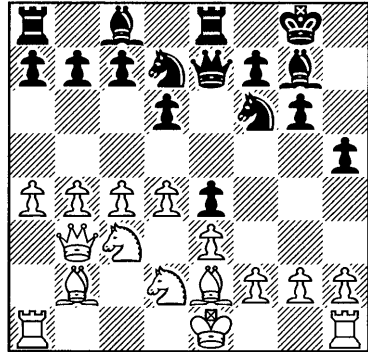
7...♖e7

After 7...0-0 8 0-0 ♖e8 9 dxe5 ♖g4 10 ♖c3 ♖gxe5 11 ♖b3, as played in A.Sokolsky-V.Kirillov, Minsk 1957, White's plan of ♖d5 affords him a standard positional edge.

8 ♖c3 0-0 9 ♖b3 ♖e8 10 a4 e4?!

10...a5!? 11 b5 exd4 12 exd4 c5 13 0-0 cxd4 14 ♖xd4 ♖c5 15 ♖c2 is equal.

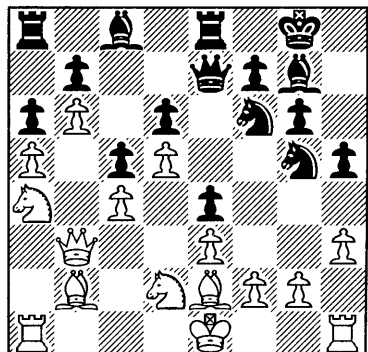
11 ♖d2 h5



We have reached a typical King's Indian Attack position, with colours reversed. White is attacking on the queenside while Black will try to checkmate the king on the other wing, assuming White chooses to castle there...

12 h3 ♖f8 13 a5 c6 14 b5 ♖e6 15 ♖a4 c5 16 d5 ♖g5 17 b6 a6

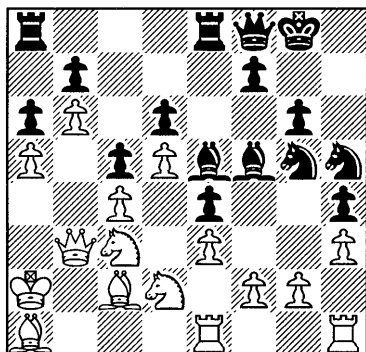
As we saw in Alekseev-Sakaev, and as noted by the Irish GM Alexander Baburin, White has reaped the benefits from his decision to postpone castling.



18 0-0-0!

Now let's enjoy White's kingside attack. First of all, though, White improves the position of his pieces.

18...h4 19 ♖b1 ♙f5 20 ♙a2 ♘d7 21 ♘c3 ♙e5 22 ♚dg1 ♘d7 23 ♙d1 ♙f6 24 ♙c2 ♙h5 25 ♙a1 ♙e5 26 ♚e1 ♚f8



27 f4!

The first step of an attack is often the most difficult one. This move forces Black to open lines against his own king.

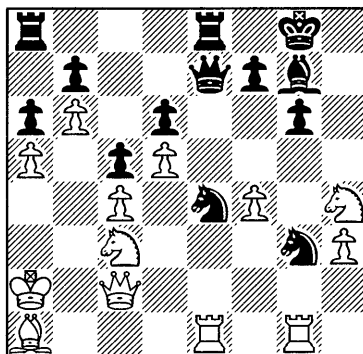
27...exf3 28 gxf3 ♙xc2 29 ♚xc2 ♙g7 30 f4 ♘h7 31 ♘f3 ♚e7 32 ♚hg1 ♘g3 33 e4

White finally is able to advance the pawns in the centre. The oncoming avalanche will sweep away all resistance.

33...♘f6?

Giving away an important pawn. 33...♙d4!? would at least prolong Black's battle, although White does remain on top after the continuation 34 ♚g2 ♚f6 35 f5 g5 36 ♘xd4 cxd4 37 ♘e2 ♚xe4 38 ♚xg3 ♚xe2 39 ♚xg5+ ♘xg5 40 ♚xe2 ♙f8 41 ♚d3 ♚e8 42 ♚xe8+ ♙xe8 43 ♙xd4.

34 ♘xh4 ♘fxe4



35 ♘xe4

35 ♘xg6! wins quickly: 35...fxg6 36 ♘xe4 ♙xa1 37 ♘xg3 ♚xe1 38 ♚xg6+ ♙f8 39 ♚xe1 ♚xe1 40 ♚xd6+ ♙g8 41 ♚g6+ ♙h8 42 ♘e4 ♙d4 43 ♘g5 ♚e7 44 ♘f7+ etc.

35...♚xh4 36 ♙xg7 ♘xe4 37 ♙b2 ♚xf4 38 ♚g4 ♚d2 39 ♚gxe4! ♚xa5+

39...♚xc2 40 ♚xe8+ ♙h7 41 ♚xa8 ♚xc4+ 42 ♙b1 should be winning for White.

40 ♙b1 ♚xe1+ 41 ♚xe1 ♚xe1+ 42 ♙a2 ♚ae8 43 ♚f2 1-0

This looks like a good time to resign. Black is down a bishop, his king is in big trouble and his pawns are weak.

Game 29

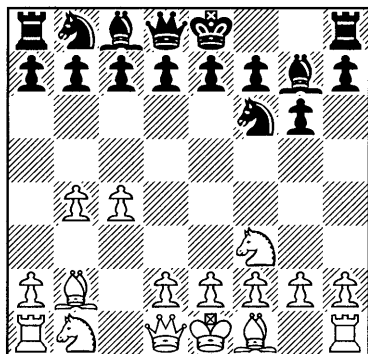
P.Benko-V.Ciocaltea
Lugano Olympiad 1968

GM Pal Benko is a famous Hungarian-American chess legend who has crossed swords many times with World Champions. I had the honour to meet (but not play) him on three occasions.

chesstouring.com

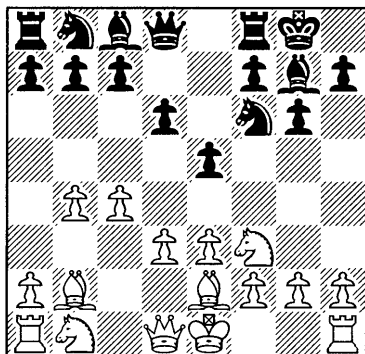
The most memorable was the first, at the World Open in Philadelphia more than a decade ago. Benko was providing free game analysis for amateur entrants. I was so upset after losing one of my typically crazy games against an American IM that I went to him and asked him to show me how could I have won. The Grandmaster played over the game, shook his head sadly, and informed me that I should analyse the game with a computer, because "no human being could possibly make sense of this!" It was good advice; *Fritz* found the win! It's a pleasure to include a couple of his games in this book.

1 ♖f3 ♜f6 2 b4 g6 3 c4 ♙g7 4 ♙b2



A typical way to reach this position via the Sokolsky move order would be 1 b4 ♜f6 2 ♙b2 g6 3 ♖f3 ♙g7 4 c4. With this move order Black needs to be aware of the possibility 3 ♙xf6!?. For example, 4...exf6 4 a3 ♙g7 5 g3 0-0 6 ♙g2 f5 7 d4 d6 8 e3 c6 9 ♜e2 ♜d7 10 0-0 ♜f6 11 c4 a5 12 b5 ♜e4 13 ♜bc3 ♙e8 14 ♙d3 ♙e7 15 ♜a4 ♙c7 16 ♜ec3 ♜xc3 17 ♜xc3 with an edge for White, C.Bulcourn-Llanos, correspondence 1987.

4...0-0 5 e3 d6 6 ♙e2 e5 7 d3

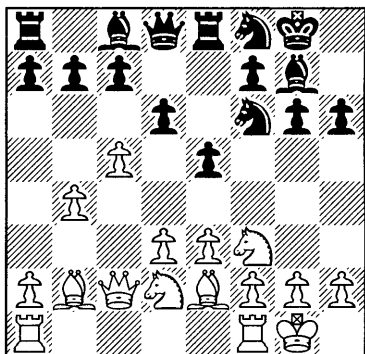


In contrast to 7 d4, White does not allow the advance of Black's e-pawn. 7 d3 also prepares an efficient development of White's b1-knight.

7...♙e8 8 ♜bd2 ♜bd7 9 0-0 h6

After 9...d5!? 10 cxd5 ♜xd5 11 a3 (11 ♙b3!?) 11...e4 12 ♙xg7 exf3 13 ♙xf3 ♜xe3 14 fxex3 ♙xg7 15 ♜c4 the position looks roughly equal.

10 ♙c2 ♜f8 11 c5!?



An unusual move, but the idea to open the c-file in order to attack the queenside is a logical one.

11...♜d5

Attacking the b4-pawn and prepar-

ing a dangerous pawn storm on the kingside.

12 a3 f5 13 ♖fd1

This is a good move which prepares an attack in the centre by pushing the e- and d-pawns. Another idea was 13 a1, pressuring the queenside.

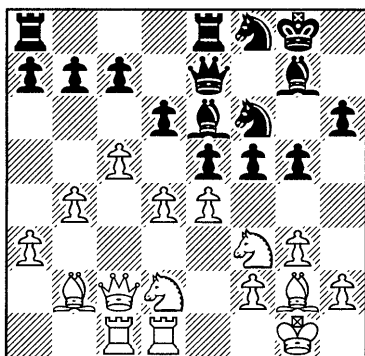
13...♙e6 14 ♘f1 ♚e7 15 ♖ac1 ♙f7 16 e4!

Right on time! White lands a strong blow in the fight for the centre.

16...♘f6 17 g3

17 d4!? looks like the right idea, as all of White's pieces are ready for the complications after this push. After the possible continuation 17...♟xe4 18 ♟xe4 fxe4 19 cxd6 cxd6 20 ♖xe4 d5 21 ♖g4 e4 22 ♟e5 ♙e6 23 ♖g3 ♗d6 24 ♙c5, White's active pieces offer him a chance to fight for the advantage. That said, despite White's logical play it can't be said that he has a real advantage – look at his dark-squared bishop, for instance.

17...♟e6 18 ♟g2 g5 19 d4!



After improving his light-squared bishop, White decides to attack the centre, but Black's advanced pawns on the

kingside have taken considerable space and start to cause problems.

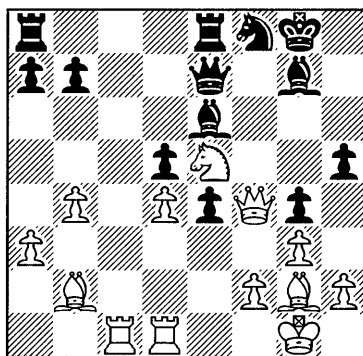
19...♖xe4 20 ♖xe4

Perhaps a better chance is 20 dxe5! d5 21 c6 b6 22 ♖f1 a5 23 ♗e3 ♙f7 24 ♜d4, when White enjoys a slight advantage in this complicated position.

20...fxe4 21 cxd6 cxd6 22 ♔xe4 d5 23 ♔e3 e4 24 ♖e5 g4!

This move contains many ideas, such as preventing White's f2-f3 break and preparing to open up a diagonal for the g7-bishop.

25 ♔f4 h5



26 h3?

Losing a pawn and a tempo. After the obvious 26 ♖c5 the position should be equal; for example, 26...♗ac8 27 ♖dc1 ♗xc5 28 ♗xc5 ♖c8 29 ♗c1 ♗xc5 30 dxc5 ♕c8 31 ♗d2 ♗e6 32 b5 ♘h7 33 ♗c3 ♕xe5 34 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 35 ♕xe5.

26...gxh3

This simple move gives Black a slight advantage.

27 ♖f1 ♔h7

Preparing a dangerous 28...♙h6.

28 ♖c5 1/2-1/2

Probably in this position Benko of-

ferred a draw which his opponent accepted, even though White would have been in some trouble after 28...♙h6 29 ♖h4 ♗xh4 30 gxh4 ♘g6.

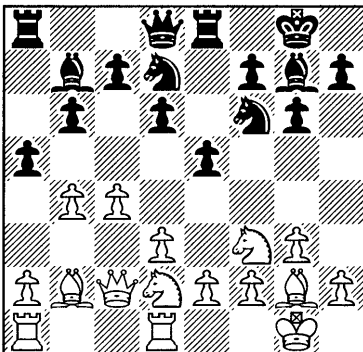
Game 30
R.Réti-J.Capablanca
New York 1924

This game is perhaps the most famous example of b2-b4 in the Réti Opening. It has already been annotated numerous times by many strong players, and we have little to add.

1 ♖f3 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 b4 ♙g7 4 ♙b2 0-0 5 g3 b6

5...d5 6 cxd5 ♘xd5 7 ♙xg7 ♙xg7 8 ♗b3 ♘f6 9 ♙g2 ♘c6 10 0-0 e5 11 d3 ♙g4 12 ♘bd2 ♗e7 13 b5 ♘d8 14 ♗b2 ♘d7 15 ♙ac1, as played in R.Réti-A.Pokorny, Maehrish Ostrau 1923, is a bit better for White. Capablanca prefers a double fianchetto and later adopts a King's Indian formation.

6 ♙g2 ♙b7 7 0-0 d6 8 d3 ♘bd7 9 ♘bd2 e5 10 ♗c2 ♙e8 11 ♙fd1 a5



Black is fighting for control of the

c5-square.

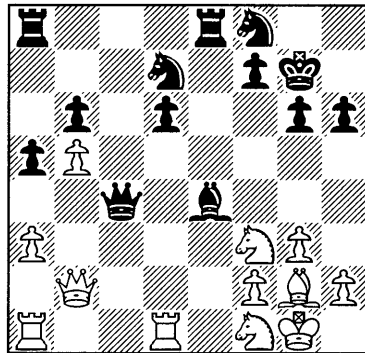
12 a3 h6 13 ♘f1 c5 14 b5 ♘f8

14...d5 15 cxd5 ♘xd5 16 ♘1d2 ♗e7 17 ♙ac1 ♘c7 18 a4 ♙ad8 19 ♘c4 ♘d5 is a good alternative.

15 e3 ♗c7 16 d4 ♙e4 17 ♗c3 exd4 18 exd4 ♘6d7 19 ♗d2 cxd4?!

Before you do something active, make sure your pieces are developed optimally! Black should play 19...♙ad8, and here 20 ♘e3 ♘f6 21 ♙ac1 d5 22 dxc5 dxc4 23 cxb6 ♗xb6 24 ♗e1 ♙xd1 25 ♗xd1 c3 26 ♙xc3 ♗xb5 maintains equality.

20 ♙xd4 ♗xc4 21 ♙xg7 ♙xg7 22 ♗b2+!



Capablanca apparently underestimated the strength of this move.

22...♙g8 23 ♙xd6 ♗c5 24 ♙ad1 ♙a7

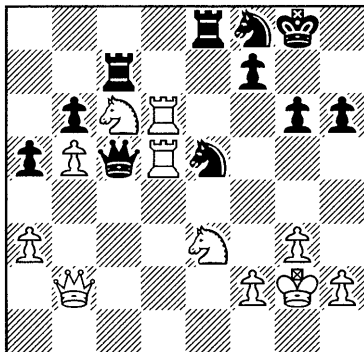
White's pieces are well coordinated and Black is saddled with weak f6- and c6-squares. The pawn on b6 is another useful target for White.

25 ♘e3 ♗h5 26 ♘d4 ♙xg2 27 ♙xg2 ♗e5

Black's position is virtually indefensible. For example, 27...♙c7 28 ♘f3 ♙e6 29 ♙1d5 g5 30 ♘f5 ♘f6 31 ♙xe6 fxe6 32

♖xf6 exf5 33 ♖xb6 g4 34 ♔h4 is hopeless.

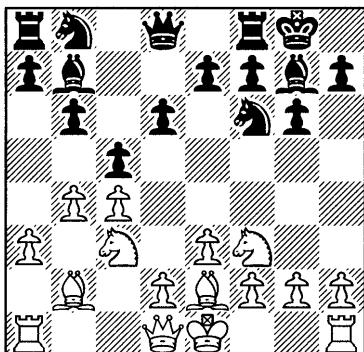
28 ♖c4 ♖c5 29 ♖c6 ♖c7 30 ♖e3 ♖e5
31 ♖1d5 1-0



If 31...♖c4, White replies 32 ♖xc5 ♖xb2 33 ♖c2 ♖a4 34 ♖d5 and wins a piece.

Game 31
K.Spraggett-I.Ivanov
Montreal 1981

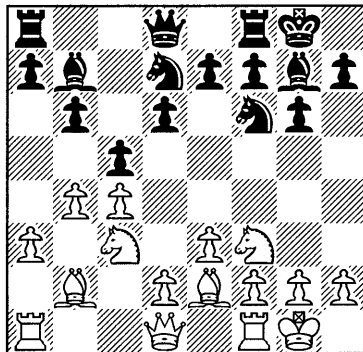
1 ♖f3 ♖f6 2 b4 g6 3 ♖b2 ♖g7 4 c4 0-0
5 e3 b6 6 ♖e2 d6 7 ♖c3 c5 8 a3 ♖b7



The late GM Igor Ivanov, a connois-

seur of the English Opening, knew well that the Double Fianchetto is a tough nut to crack.

9 0-0 ♖bd7



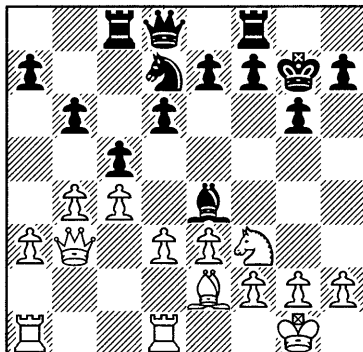
10 ♖b3

The immediate 10 d4 looks more aggressive, but White wants to prepare this advance with ♖fd1.

10...♖c8 11 ♖fd1 ♖e4

I believe that this move favours White because it allows the trade of Black's important King's Indian bishop.

12 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 13 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 14 d3



14...♖xf3

An idea borrowed from the Catalan
chesstouring.com

Opening. White's light-squared bishop has nothing to target in this structure, and in fact the white knight was a more dangerous piece.

15 ♖xf3 ♜c7 **16** g3 ♘f6 **17** ♜ab1 ♜fd8
18 ♜d2 h5 **19** h3 ♜d7 **20** ♖g2 e5 **21**
 ♜b2 ♜e6 **22** ♜bd1 ♜b8 **23** ♜c2?!

It is hard to understand why White didn't prevent Black's next move by playing 23 b5!?

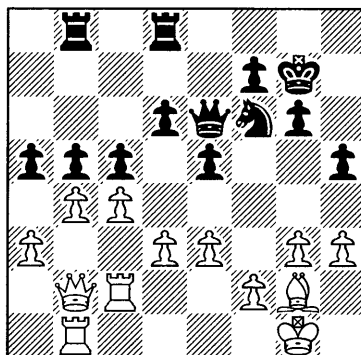
23...b5 24 ♜b1

White could keep a slight advantage with 24 ♜c3!?, with one possible line being 24...♜dc8 25 ♜dc1 a6 26 ♜d2 bxc4 27 ♜xc4 cxb4 28 axb4 d5 29 ♜c5.

24...a5

Now with best play in this complicated position, neither side can gain an

advantage. Almost all the pieces are traded and it's soon time to agree a draw.



25 ♜c1 axb4 26 axb4 bxc4 27 ♜xc4
cx b4 28 ♜cxb4 ♜xb4 29 ♜xb4 d5 30
♜b5 ♜c8 31 ♜c5 ♜xc5 32 ♜xc5 e4 1/2-1/2

Summary

The King's Indian set-up is quite popular but shouldn't be too troublesome for the Sokolsky specialist. White's early capture of queenside space will give him an important lead in the standard pawn races seen in many King's Indian games. In some lines it's worth considering castling long for White, as a way of hiding the king from the opponent's attack or even as a prelude to counterpunching on the kingside (see Games 27-28).

1 b4 ♘f6

1...e5 2 ♙b2

2...♔e7 – Game 25

2...d6 3 c4

3...a5 – Game 19; 3...♙e7 – Game 20; 3...♙e6 – Game 23;

3...♘f6 – Game 24; 3...g6 – Game 27; 3...♘d7 – Game 28

3...f5 4 e3 ♘f6 5 ♘f3 ♙e7 (D)

6 ♘c3 – Game 21

6 d4 – Game 22

2 ♙b2 g6 3 ♘f3

3 ♙xf6 – Game 29 (notes)

3...♙g7 4 c4 0-0 5 e3

5 g3

5...b6 (D) – Game 30

5...d5 – Chapter 7

5...d6

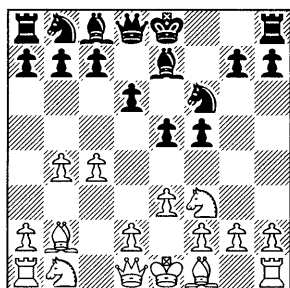
5...b6 – Game 31

5...d5 – Chapter 7

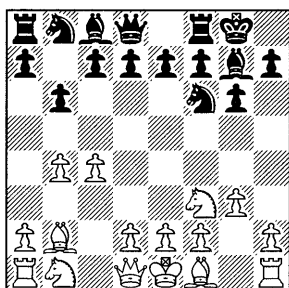
6 d4

6 ♙e2 – Game 29

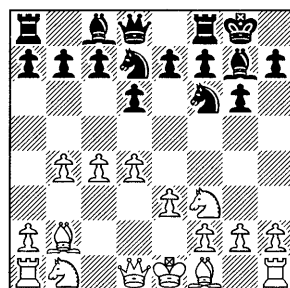
6...♘bd7 (D) – Game 26



5...♙e7



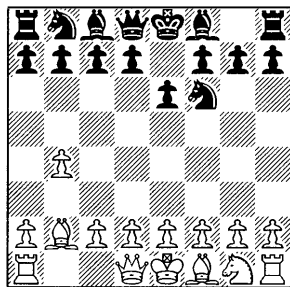
5...b6



6...♘bd7

Chapter Four

Queen's Indian Systems



In this chapter we move away from the direct, cut-and-thrust opening play of ...e5 systems and proceed to the more leisurely, amorphous, strategic life of the reversed queen's pawn opening. Tactics and variations mean little here; plans and ideas count for much more.

It was quite difficult to decide whether some of games given below belonged to this or the next chapter. In the end we decided that games in which the fianchetto of Black's light-squared bishop was the dominant factor, whether the move ...b6 was played early or late, would belong here.

The basic idea of countering the Queen's Indian set-up may be stated quite simply: put a pawn on the b5-square and keep it there as long as you can. A pawn on b5 takes the best square away from the enemy queen's knight and acts as a spearhead for an attack on the left flank. The possibility of a white piece occupying the weakened square c6 must be respected by

Black, and like it or not the question of what to do about the b5-pawn must always be uppermost in his or her thoughts.

White will generally develop the light-squared bishop via e2-e3 and ♖e2, to cover b5 and leave a route for the d-pawn to advance two squares in the delayed fight for the centre (Fischer-Ina, Game 43, is an example of the difficulties facing White should he fianchetto his king's bishop). After developing the king's knight to f3, with or without the Bird-like advance f2-f4, White will castle and decide whether to clarify the central position at once or proceed directly with queenside play. Early direct attacks on the kingside are uncommon in this system.

One of the key games in this chapter is the encounter Sokolsky-Keres (Game 32). Sokolsky's notes discuss in considerable detail the strategic problems in the opening, and the note to move fifteen demonstrates the viability

of his approach. This game and several others in this book show Sokolsky as an excellent defender and endgame expert.

The ideas discussed by Sokolsky in the Keres game are illustrated well by Games 33-34. The notes to the former deal with the theme of the struggle for the centre, while the latter is a good example of solid positional play arising from the early thrust f2-f4.

The remaining Sokolsky games here are all quite instructive. Sokolsky-Chekhov (Game 35) features the queenside attack in all its glory as well as another well-played ending. His encounters with Usov and Byvshev (Games 36-37) demonstrate the important concept that White need not oppose rooks on an opened a-file when the heavy pieces have major tasks elsewhere. White's space advantage weighs heavily upon Black in these games.

We've also included Lapshun-Scekic (Game 38) as an example of a virile counter to aggressive Black play, as well as a superb piece of entertainment. This is easily one of the two most complex games in this book; its only rival for top spot is the first of the Lapshun-Furdzik encounters in Chapter Six. We must note here that these two tactical slugfests were played at a rapidplay time control of 30 minutes per player for the entire game! Thus the notes will point out quite a few errors by both sides, which under the circumstances we hope will be pardoned by the reader.

Game 32
A.Sokolsky-P.Keres
USSR Championship,
Moscow 1950

1 b4 e6 2 ♖b2 ♘f6 3 b5

The most principled continuation. The pawn on b5 restricts Black's play while gaining space for future operations on the queenside.

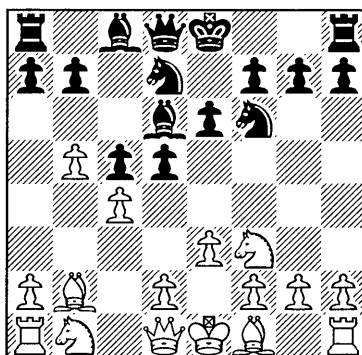
3...c5 4 e3 d5

The simplest and perhaps best scheme of development.

5 ♘f3

Worth a look is 5 f4, taking control of e5. Without the knight on c6, Black will find it difficult to push through ...d5-d4. Can Black do this at once? Probably White can answer this with 6 ♘f3 or 6 ♗d3 with 7 ♘f3 to follow.

5...♗bd7 6 c4 ♗d6

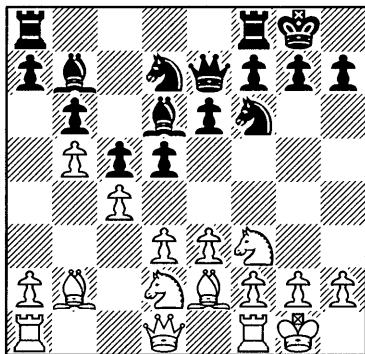


7 d3

Instead of this, White can play 7 ♗e2 b6 8 d4, saving a tempo. Katalymov recommends here 7 ♘c3, and if 7...0-0 then 8 ♖b3; if 7...b6 then 8 a4.

7...0-0 8 ♖bd2 b6 9 ♙e2 ♙b7 10 0-0 ♚e7

The placement of the black pieces is the most natural, in the spirit of the position. 10... ♚c7 is weaker because of 11 ♜c1! and later d3-d4.



11 a4

White's plan is to advance pawns on the queenside by a2-a4-a5, and Black feels impelled to stop this.

11...a5

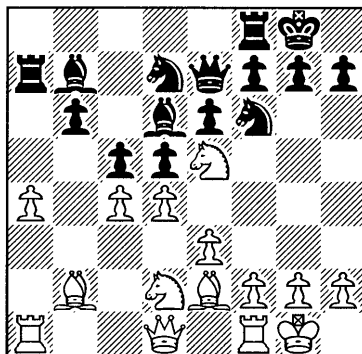
This counter-movement on the queenside, where Black is under pressure, is probably not good. Black played better in the game A.Sokolsky-V.Efremov, USSR Correspondence Championship 1953/54, with 11... ♜ad8 12 a5 ♙b8 13 axb6 axb6. Instead of 14 d4 as in the game (which allowed 14...e5!) White needed to play 14 ♚c2 , moving the queen from the d-file, which would lead to a complex game with mutual chances.

12 bxa6 ♜xa6

The opening of files on the queenside is in principle better for White. In addition, Black will have to spend time repositioning his rooks. Of course, it's

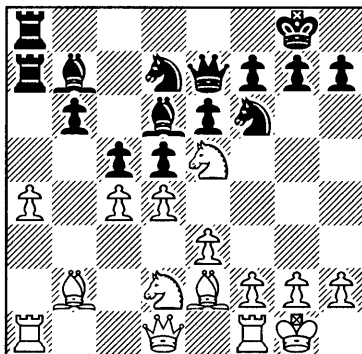
true that White has a weakness – the pawn on a4 – which needs defending.

13 d4 ♜a7 14 ♖e5



14...♜fa8

In this position the chances are equal. A later game, A.Sokolsky-P.Atyashev, USSR Correspondence Championship 1953/54, continued 14... ♜c8 15 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 16 cxd5 exd5 17 ♙b5 c4 18 ♜b1 ♜f6 19 ♙a3 ♙c6 20 ♙xd6 ♚xd6 21 ♜c3 ♜a5? (21... ♜e7) 22 ♙xc6 ♚xc6 23 f3 ♜ca8 24 ♚d2 ♜e8 25 e4 ♜c7 26 ♜ae1 , with White achieving an advantage.



15 f4

White overestimates his chances.

Instead 15 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 (15...♙xd7?! is answered by 16 cxd5 exd5 17 dxc5 bxc5 18 ♙xf6 gxf6 19 ♙d3! with the threat of ♙h5) 16 cxd5 exd5 17 ♙b5 would leave White in a good position.

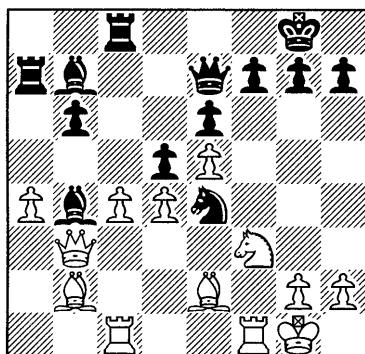
15...cxd4 16 exd4 ♙b4!

The threat is 17...♙xd2 18 ♙xa4, so White must move the knight away from the d2-square, allowing the black knight to enter e4.

17 ♖df3 ♖e4 18 ♙b3 ♖xe5 19 fxe5

White must avoid 19 ♖xe5? ♖d2, or 19 dxe5? ♙c5+.

19...♙c8 20 ♙ac1



20...♖d2

Black is trying to simplify into a favourable endgame.

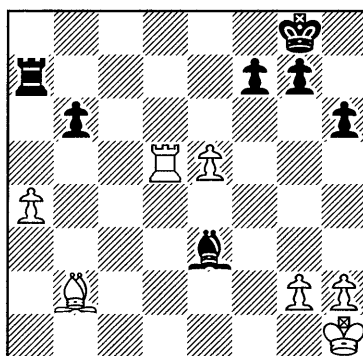
21 ♖xd2 ♙xd2 22 ♙c2 dxc4 23 ♙xc4

Black wins a pawn after 23 ♙xc4 ♙g5 24 d5 ♙e3+ 25 ♖h1 ♙xb3 26 ♙xb3 ♙xc2 27 ♙xc2 ♙xd5.

23...♙xc4 24 ♙xc4 ♙g5! 25 d5

White has little choice: 25 ♙f2? ♙e3!; 25 g3? ♙e3+!; or 25 ♙g3 ♙xg3 26 hxg3 ♙xa4 and White loses a pawn with a bad position.

25...♙e3+ 26 ♖h1 ♙xb3 27 ♙xb3 ♙xd5 28 ♙xd5 exd5 29 ♙d1 ♙e3 30 ♙xd5 h6

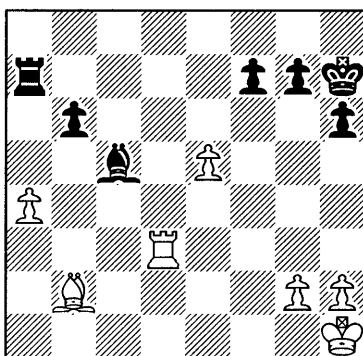


By 'gentle' play Black achieves a position in which he is winning the a-pawn by force.

31 ♙d8+

White had based his hopes on 31 ♙d4 ♙xd4 (31...♙xa4? 32 ♙xe3 ♙a1+ 33 ♙g1) 32 ♙xd4, but Keres had prepared 32...b5! when Black is winning.

31...♖h7 32 ♙d3 ♙c5



33 h3

The transition to the rook endgame by 33 ♙a3 ♙xa4 34 ♙xc5 bxc5 35 ♖g1 wouldn't offer White any hope after 35...♙a7! 36 ♙c3 ♙c7 (not 35...c4? 36 ♙d7 ♖g6 37 ♙c7, with drawing chances).

33...♖xa4 34 ♔h2 ♜b4 35 ♙a3 ♞d4!

If 35...♞e4 36 ♙xc5 bxc5 37 ♞d5 c4 38 ♞c5, White would reach a close-to-drawing position.

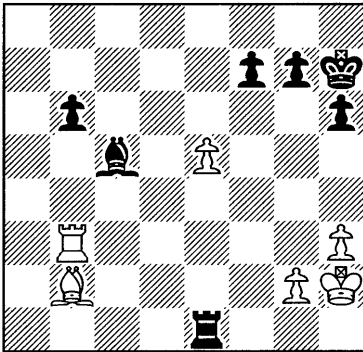
36 ♜b3 ♞e4

After 36...♙xa3 37 ♞xa3 b5 38 ♞a7 ♔g6 39 g4 ♞d5 40 ♞e7, the black king can't approach the e5-pawn, the b-pawn will be stopped by the rook from the b7-square and the game should finish as a draw.

37 ♙b2

White didn't risk 37 ♙xc5 bxc5 38 ♜b7 ♞xe5 39 ♞xf7 ♔g6 because in this endgame Black has real chances to win.

37...♞e1



38 ♞f3

Probably better here was 38 g4 with the idea of cutting off the black king. The bishop endgame which occurs after 38...♞e2+ 39 ♔g3 ♞e3+ 40 ♞xe3 ♙xe3 41 ♔f3 ♙c5 42 ♔e4 ♔g6 43 ♙c1 is drawish.

38...♙g1+ 39 ♔g3 ♔g6

After 39...♞e3 40 ♔f4! ♞xf3+ 41 gxf3 ♔g6 42 ♔e4, pushing the pawn to f5 gives White serious counterchances.

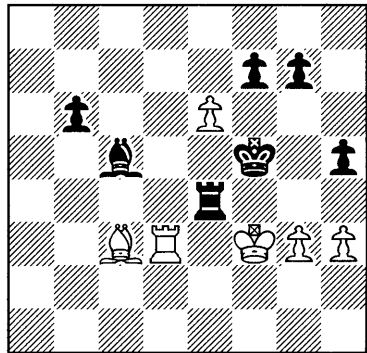
40 ♙c3 ♞e4 41 ♞d3 ♔f5!

Here Black could trade rooks, but he prefers to transfer the king to e6.

42 ♞f3+

42 e6? ♞xe6 43 ♙xg7 fails to 43...♞g6+.

42...♔e6 43 ♞d3 h5 44 ♔f3 ♔f5 45 g3 ♙c5 46 e6!



By decreasing the number of pawns on the board White increases his chances for a draw.

46...fxe6 47 ♙xg7 ♞a4 48 ♙b2

Preventing 48...♞a3.

48...♜b4 49 ♙c3

49 ♙a3 e5 50 ♞c3 was another possibility.

49...♞c4

49...♜b3 might be stronger, pinning the white pieces.

50 ♙b2 h4

This allows White to activate his pieces, but I can't see how Black can improve his position. For example: 50...♞c2 51 g4+ hxg4+ 52 hxg4+ ♔g5 53 ♙e5; 50...e5 51 ♞d5 ♙d4 52 ♙xd4 ♞xd4 53 ♞b5; and finally 50...b5 51 ♞d7. In all cases the endgame should finish as a draw.

51 g4+ ♔g5 52 ♙e5 ♞c2 53 ♙c7 ♔g6 54

♙d8 ♙f2 55 ♚b3 ♙f7 56 ♙xb6

With the capture of the passed b-pawn, a draw becomes inevitable.

56...♙xb6 57 ♚xb6 ♚h2 58 g5 ♚xh3+ 59 ♙g4 ♚h1 60 ♚b7+ ♙f8 61 ♚h7 ♚g1+ 62 ♙f4 ♚f1+ 63 ♙g4 e5 64 ♚xh4 ♙f7 65 ♚h6 e4 66 ♚f6+ ½-½

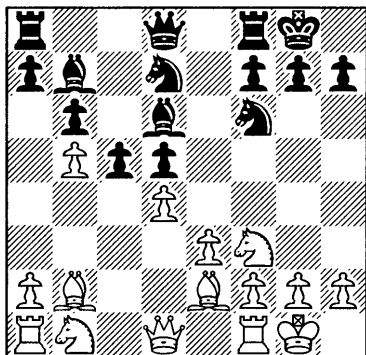
Game 33
L.Kiss-P.Kiss
Eger 1992

In a tournament in Hungary I played an opponent named Kiss, and one of my students played another Kiss. But I've never seen a game between two Kisses, until now!

1 b4 d5 2 ♙b2 ♘f6 3 e3 e6 4 b5 c5 5 ♘f3 ♘bd7 6 c4 b6

6...♙d6 7 d3 0-0 8 ♘bd2 b6 was Sokolsky-Keres (see Game 32).

7 ♙e2 ♙d6 8 0-0 ♙b7 9 cxd5 exd5 10 d4 0-0

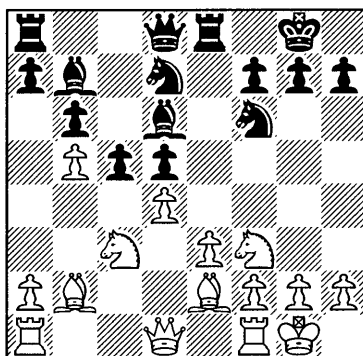


11 ♘c3

11 dxc5!? is another option. After 11...bxc5 12 ♚c2 ♚e8 13 ♘bd2 ♚c8 14 ♚fd1 ♚e7 15 ♙d3 White can build

pressure against the two hanging pawns on c5 and d5.

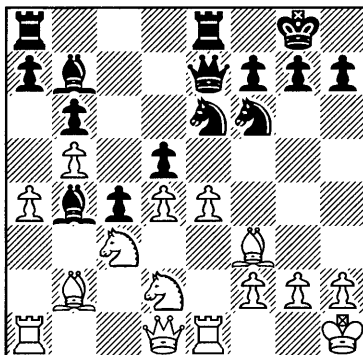
11...♚e8



12 ♙h1?!

A complete waste of time – it's difficult to believe a master would play such a move before developing the rest of his pieces. 12 ♚c2 c4 13 a4 ♚e7 14 ♚fc1 a6 15 bxa6 ♙xa6 would be roughly equal.

12...♚e7 13 a4 c4 14 ♘d2 ♙b4 15 ♙f3 ♘f8 16 ♚e1 ♘e6 17 e4?!

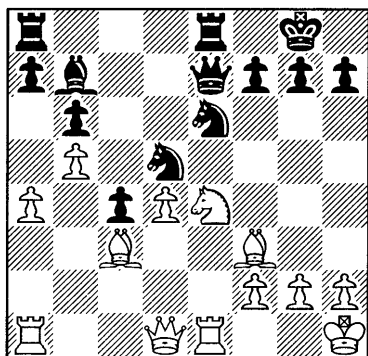


17...♙xc3?

17...♘f4! 18 ♚c2 (18 e5 ♘d3) 18...♙xc3 19 ♙xc3 dxe4 20 ♙d1 e3 21 ♚xe3 ♙xg2+ 22 ♙g1 ♘e4 23 ♘xe4 ♙xe4

24 ♖d2 ♜h4 would give Black a winning attack.

18 ♙xc3 dxe4 19 ♘xe4 ♘d5



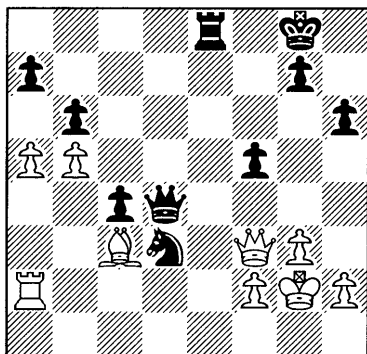
20 ♙b2

20 ♜c2!? ♜d7 21 ♘d2 ♘g5 22 ♙xd5 ♙xd5 23 f3 is about equal.

20...♜c7 21 ♜d2 ♘ef4 22 ♘c3 ♘xc3 23 ♜xc3 ♙xf3 24 ♜xf3 ♘d3 25 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 26 ♙c3 h6 27 g3 ♜e7 28 ♖a2 ♜e4 29 ♙g2 f5

Black has very active pieces, but it's not enough to claim an advantage.

30 a5 ♜xd4



31 ♙xd4?

In chess, captures are not compulsory! 31 ♖e2! ♜d7 32 ♖xe8+ ♜xe8 33

axb6 axb6 34 ♜xf5 would have given White an edge.

31...♘e1+ 32 ♙f1 ♘xf3 33 axb6 axb6 34 ♙c3

34 ♙xb6! ♖e5 35 ♖a5 c3 36 ♙g2 c2 37 ♖a8+ ♙f7 38 ♖c8 ♘e1+ 39 ♙f1 ♖xb5 40 ♙xe1 ♖xb6 41 ♖xc2 is a dead draw.

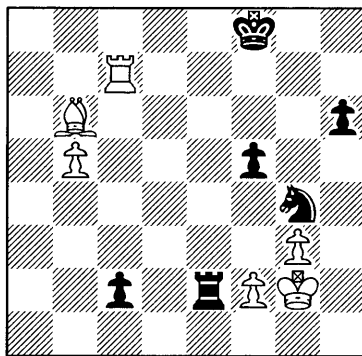
34...♘h2+ 35 ♙g2 ♘g4 36 ♖a7 ♖e2 37 ♙d4

Even though Black now has two extra pawns, White's two very active pieces provide enough compensation.

37...c3

The position after 37...♖d2!? 38 ♙xb6 c3 39 ♖c7 c2 40 ♙a7 ♙f8 41 b6 ♖xf2+ 42 ♙g1 c1♜+ 43 ♖xc1 ♖b2 44 ♖c8+ ♙e7 45 ♖c7+ ♙d6 46 ♖xg7 offers White some winning chances, but we think Black should be able to hold.

38 ♖xg7+ ♙f8 39 ♖c7 c2 40 ♙xb6



40...♘e5?

40...♖d2 41 ♙f3 ♘e5+ 42 ♙e3 ♖d6 43 ♙a5 ♖d5 44 ♖xc2 ♖xb5 45 ♙c3 ♙e7 46 ♙xe5 ♖xe5+ 47 ♙f4 ♙f6 is a draw, while even simpler is 40...♖e5 41 ♖xc2 ♖xb5.

41 ♙e3!

The bishop stops Black's c-pawn, chesstouring.com

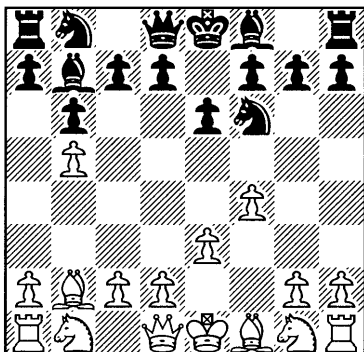
whereas the white b-pawn will run to glory.

41...♖d3 42 ♖f3 c1♚ 43 ♙xc1 ♘xc1 44 ♜xc1 ♞b2 45 ♞c5 f4 46 gxf4 ♙g7 47 ♙g4 ♜xf2 48 ♞c7+ ♖f6 49 ♞c5 ♙e7 50 ♖f5 h5 51 ♙g5 ♞b2 1-0

White grabs the h5-pawn, after which one of his pawns will become a queen.

Game 34
M.Vokac-M.Tratar
Ceske Budejovice 1996

1 b4 ♘f6 2 ♙b2 e6 3 b5 b6 4 e3 ♙b7 5 f4

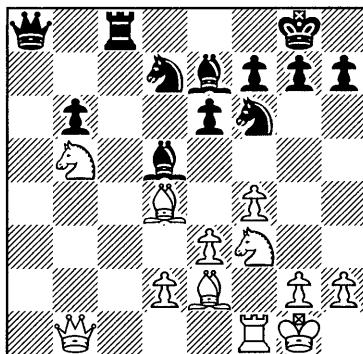


With 5 f4 White is aiming to gain control of the e5-square. 5 ♘f3 is more common: 5...♙e7 6 ♙e2 (6 c4 0-0 7 ♙e2 d5 8 a4 was Sokolsky-Chekhov – see Game 35) 6...0-0 7 0-0 d5 8 d3 c5 9 ♘bd2 ♘bd7 10 c4 ♙d6 11 ♞e1 ♞c7 was equal in A.Miles-Z.Ribli, London 1984. 5...a6 6 a4 axb5 7 axb5 ♞xa1 8 ♙xa1 d6 9 ♘f3 ♘bd7 10 ♙e2 ♞a8 11 ♙b2 ♙e7 12 0-0 0-0 13 c4 ♞d8 14 ♞c2 c5

Black seeks active counterplay

along the c-file, so he pushes his c-pawn and induces White to capture.

15 bxc6 ♙xc6 16 ♘c3 ♞c8 17 ♞b1 ♙b7 18 ♘b5 d5 19 cxd5 ♙xd5 20 ♙d4



White has managed to trade off his weak c4-pawn and now starts to attack Black's vulnerable b-pawn.

20...♞a2 21 ♘c3 ♞xb1 22 ♞xb1 ♙c5 23 ♘d5 ♘d5 24 g3 ♙xd4 25 ♘xd4 g6 26 ♖f2 ♞a8 27 ♙f3 ♞a2 28 ♙xd5 exd5

Despite the two weak pawns, Black should hold this ending. However, the task proves to be too difficult after a blunder by Black and some excellent endgame play by White.

29 ♙e2 h5??

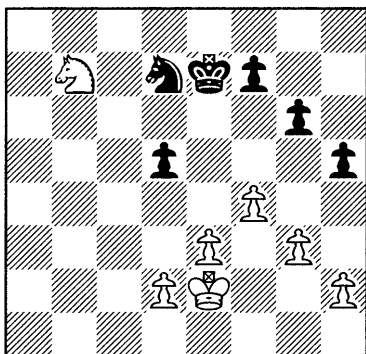
Black should rush his king to the centre with 29...♖f8!. The text move wastes time.

30 ♞b5 ♞a5 31 ♞xa5 bxa5 32 ♘c6 ♖f8

Winning a pawn, as 32...a4 can be met by 33 ♘e7+ ♖f8 34 ♘d5.

33 ♘xa5 ♙e7 34 ♘b7

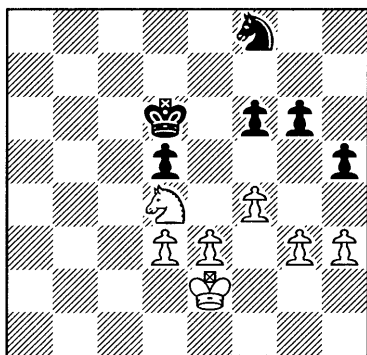
A long time ago somebody told me that knight endgames are very similar to pawn endgames, in which case an extra pawn is almost always a decisive factor.



34...d3 35 d3 c7 36 h3 c7 37 c5 c6 38 b3 d6 39 d4 d7 40 f3 f8 41 g5 f6

This move weakens Black's pawn structure, but the only alternative was an undesirable king retreat.

42 f3 c5 43 d4 d6



44 d2

Now the white king will circle round its counterpart.

44...d7 45 c3 c5 46 f3 a4+ 47 d4 c5 48 h4 e6+ 49 c3 f8

White's strategy is based upon attacking the two weaknesses on g6 and d5.

50 b4 c6 51 d4 d6 52 b5 f5 53

a6 d7

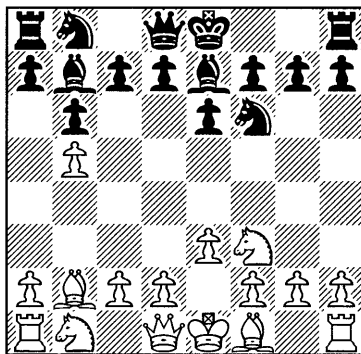
53...e7 54 b6 d6 55 b5 e6 56 c6 is zugzwang, and 53...e6 54 b6 d6 55 b5 d7 56 c5 e6 57 c6 reaches the same position.

54 xg6 f6 55 h4 e6 56 f3 d6 57 g5 c6 58 a5 d7 59 b4 1-0

Two extra pawns, together with Black's three weaknesses, are more than enough to win this position.

Game 35 A.Sokolsky-V.Chekhov Leningrad 1938

1 b4 f6 2 b2 e6 3 b5 b6 4 e3 b7 5 f3 e7



Black plays in the style of the Queen's Indian Defence. White begins an advance on the queenside, where he has a space advantage.

6 c4 0-0 7 e2 d5 8 a4 dxc4

Giving up the centre leads to an advantage for White. Black should play 8...c5.

9 a3 c3 10 xc3 d5

And here too it's better to play

chesstouring.com

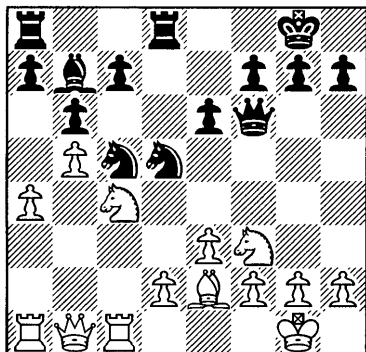
10...c5.

11 ♖b2 ♖f6 12 ♖xf6 ♜xf6 13 0-0 ♖d8

14 ♜b1! ♖d7

A natural move. Now on 14...c5, 15 ♖c4 ♖d7 16 a5! is very strong.

15 ♖c4 ♖c5 16 ♖c1



White has finished the mobilization of his forces and threatens moves like d2-d4, a4-a5 or ♖c4-a5. Black's knights must retreat.

16...♖e7 17 d4 ♖e4

17...♖e4 would have been better, but even in this case White develops strong pressure after 18 a5.

18 ♜b2 ♖d3

18...♖d3 is bad because of 19 ♖xd3 ♖xd3 20 ♖ce5.

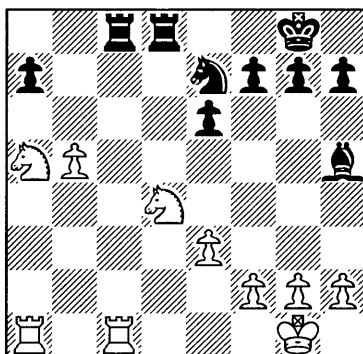
Against 18...♖d3 White could reply 19 ♖d1, but after 19...♖xc4 20 ♖xc4 a6! Black would obtain some counterplay. The continuation in the game leads to an ending which is clearly better for White.

19 dxc5 ♜xb2 20 ♖xb2 ♖xe2 21 ♖d4 ♖h5

21...♖g4 would have offered more chances for Black.

22 cxb6 cxb6 23 ♖c4 ♖ac8 24 a5 bxa5

25 ♖xa5



25...♖xc1+

Otherwise there would follow 26 ♖ac6.

26 ♖xc1 ♖f8 27 f3 ♖c8

In the annotations to this game, published in the tournament bulletin, the chess master Alatorsev suggested for Black the variation 27...e5 28 ♖dc6 ♖c8, believing that Black could put up stiff resistance. But White can win in a study-like way, as follows: 29 ♖c4! ♖xc6 30 ♖d6 ♖c7 31 ♖xc6! ♖d7 32 ♖c8+ ♖e7 33 ♖f5+ ♖f6 34 g4, and there is no good defence to the threat 35 ♖c6+.

28 ♖xc8+ ♖xc8 29 ♖dc6 ♖e8 30 ♖xa7!

Using the strength of the far advanced b-pawn, White carries out a small combination. After 30...♖xa7 31 b6, the b-pawn becomes a queen.

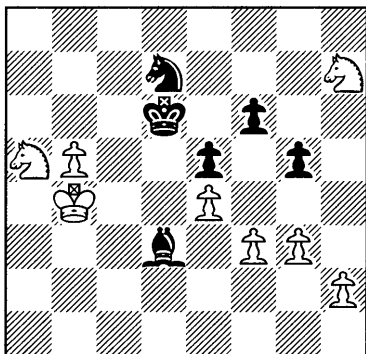
30...♖b6 31 ♖f2 ♖d7 32 e4 f6 33 ♖e3 e5 34 ♖d3 ♖f7

Finally the black bishop can get into the game.

35 ♖c3 ♖c7 36 ♖b4 ♖a2 37 ♖7c6 g6 38 ♖b3 ♖b1 39 ♖c5 ♖c2 40 ♖e6+

40 ♖a5 is easier, but this was the last move of the time control.

40...♔d6 41 ♖f8 ♙d3 42 g3 g5 43 ♖xh7
 ♜d7 44 ♖a5



44...g4

This is the only chance to complicate things a little bit. On 44...♙e2, White answers 45 ♜c4+ ♙e7 46 ♜d2.

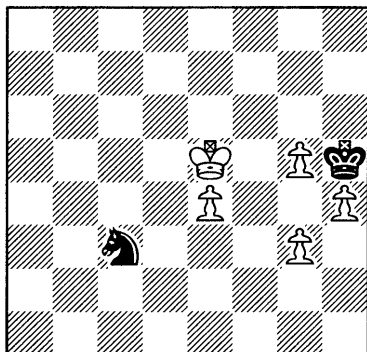
45 ♜c3 ♙b1

White wins easily after 45...♙xb5 46 fxg4 ♙e7 47 g5.

46 ♜c4+ ♙e7 47 ♜d2 ♙a2 48 fxg4 ♙g8
 49 ♜xf6 ♙xf6 50 h4

Passed pawns on both flanks ensure White's victory.

50...♙e6 51 g5+ ♙g6 52 ♜c4 ♙h5 53
 b6! ♙xc4 54 ♙xc4 ♜xb6+ 55 ♙c5 ♜a4+
 56 ♙d5 ♜c3+ 57 ♙xe5



Four pawns against the knight! A very interesting endgame to the finish.

57...♜e2 58 g4+! ♙g6 59 ♔d6 ♜c3 60
 e5 ♜e4+ 61 ♙d7 ♜c5+ 62 ♙c6 ♜d3 63
 ♙d6 ♜f2 64 e6 ♜xg4 65 e7 ♙f7 66 h5

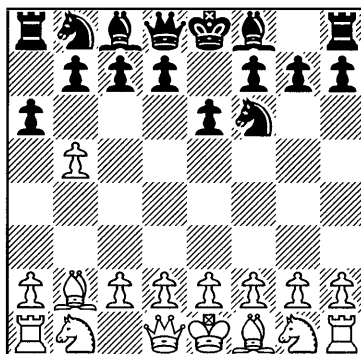
Of course not 66 ♙d7 because of 66...♜e5+ 67 ♙d8 ♜c6+, and against 66 g6+ Black has 66...♙e8 67 g7 ♜h6 68 ♙e6 ♜g8.

66...♙e8 67 h6 ♜f2 68 h7 ♜e4+ 69 ♙e5
 ♜xg5 70 h8 ♚+ 1-0

Game 36

A.Sokolsky-D.Usov
 Odessa 1960

1 b4 e6 2 ♙b2 ♜f6 3 b5 a6



Trying to open the a-file. In principle opening a file on the queenside should be better for White, because he has more space.

4 a4 d5 5 e3 c5

5...axb5 6 axb5 ♙xa1 7 ♙xa1 has been played in other games.

6 ♜f3 ♙d6 7 c4

White consolidates his space on the queenside. He now wishes to play d2-

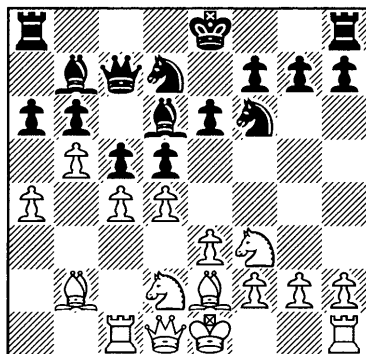
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d4, achieving central parity.

7...♘bd7 8 ♙e2 b6 9 d4 ♚c7

Black's decision to place his queen here is both premature and poorly judged, as White will soon open the c-file. Better is 9...♙b7 10 ♘bd2 0-0 11 0-0 ♚e7, with a later ...♚fd8.

10 ♘bd2 ♙b7 11 ♚c1!



A 'positional' sacrifice, not of material, but of a file! White 'sacrifices' the open a-file, realizing that Black, with his lack of space, can't do anything with it. On the other hand, White will profit from the opening of the central files.

11...axb5 12 axb5 0-0 13 h3 ♚a2

This is the beginning of a wrong plan. 13...♚ac8, and later ...♚b8, is a better option.

14 ♚b3 ♚fa8 15 0-0 cxd4

Releasing pressure in the centre. Black can't continue slowly because White can play ♚fd1 followed by ♘d2-b1-c3, beginning central operations himself as in the similar game Sokolsky-Byvshev (see Game 37).

16 ♙xd4 ♘c5 17 ♚b1 e5

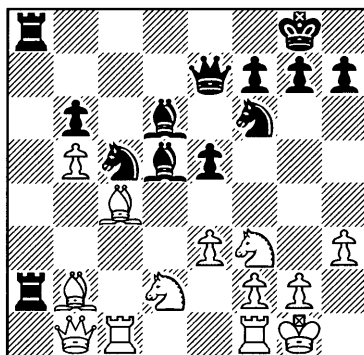
Against other moves, like 17...♚e7, White would start to attack with 18

cxd5 ♙xd5 19 ♙c4.

18 ♙b2 ♚e7

Black's position seems active, but after two further moves White's advantage becomes apparent.

19 cxd5 ♙xd5 20 ♙c4



20...♚xb2

An exchange sacrifice – a result of Black accepting that his position was not good. It's true that 20...♙xc4 21 ♘xc4 e4 22 ♘d4, and 20...♚a7 21 ♙xd5 ♘xd5 22 ♘c4 with the threat of 23 ♚fd1, are not attractive for Black.

21 ♚xb2 e4 22 ♘h2

White must play carefully: 22 ♘d4 is worse because of 22...♚e5.

22...♚d8!

The best move, containing a clever trap. On the natural 23 ♚fd1 there follows 23...♙xc4 24 ♚xc4 (or 24 ♘xc4 ♘d3) 24...♘d3 25 ♚c2 ♙xh2+ 26 ♙xh2 ♘xf2 27 ♚f1 ♚d6+ 28 ♙g1 ♘xh3+!.

23 ♘b3 ♘d3! 24 ♙xd3 ♙a3

Black is regaining the exchange, but he still can't achieve material equality.

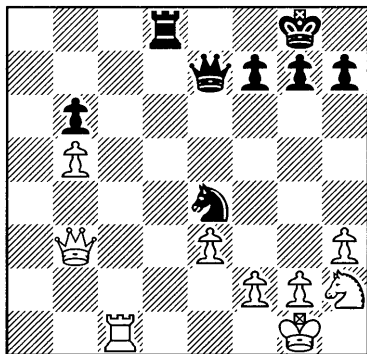
25 ♚c3 ♙xc1 26 ♚xc1

Not 26 ♘xc1 exd3 27 ♘xd3, because of 27...♙xg2! 28 ♙xg2 ♚e4+.

26...♙xb3

Not a lot better is 26...exd3 27 ♘d4, when the d3-pawn should disappear.

27 ♙xe4! ♘xe4 28 ♖xb3



The tactics have ended. White has got an extra pawn and plenty of chances to win. One might expect a quiet transfer to a winning ending, but soon complications arise again.

28...♘c5 29 ♖c4 ♘d2

Black's counterplay is based upon this rook on the seventh rank.

30 ♘f3 ♖b2 31 ♖a1!

White decides matters by capturing the a-file. How ironic!

31...h6 32 ♖d5! ♙h7

If Black accepts the pawn sacrifice with 32...♖xb5, then after 33 ♖a8+ ♙h7 34 ♖f5+ g6 35 ♖c8 he can't escape from checkmate.

33 ♖f5+ g6 34 ♖c8 h5

34...♖f6 35 ♖a8 ♖g7 is a little more resilient, although even here White achieves victory by playing 36 ♖e8 with the threat of ♖a7.

35 ♖a8 ♖f6

Now there follows a little combination.

36 ♘g5+! ♙h6 37 ♘xf7+! ♙h7?

Zeitnot! But 37...♖xf7 38 ♖h8+ ♖h7 39 ♖xb2 is hopeless for Black in any case.

38 ♖g8 mate (1-0)

Game 37
A.Sokolsky-V.Byvshev
Lvov 1951

1 b4 ♘f6 2 ♙b2 e6 3 b5 d5 4 e3 a6 5 a4 ♘bd7

Black could exchange rooks on the a-file, but this exchange probably favours White. With more room to manoeuvre on the queenside, White is more likely to use this file.

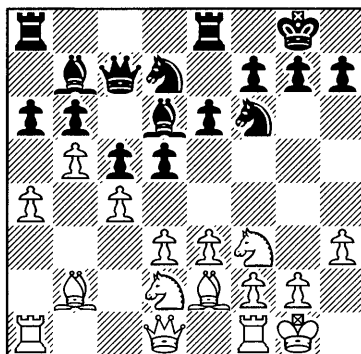
6 ♘f3 ♙d6 7 c4 c5 8 d3

Another plan is to put pressure on d5 after 8 ♘c3 and 9 ♖b3.

8...0-0 9 ♘bd2 b6 10 ♙e2 ♙b7 11 0-0 ♖c7

In time the c-file can be opened, so it was better for Black to place his queen on e7.

12 h3 ♖fe8



13 ♖c1!

Conceding the a-file, White prepares to open the centre with d3-d4.

13...axb5 14 axb5 ♖a2

Black's idea to use the a-file for counterplay doesn't work, as his rooks can't be supported by the rest of the pieces due to a lack of space. It would have been better to play 14...♖ac8 intending ...♗b8.

15 ♗b3 ♖ea8

Black stubbornly continues the wrong plan. It was actually better to return the other rook to a8.

16 ♘b1 ♗d8 17 ♖fd1 ♖a4

After a random move like 17...h6, White would carry out his threat 18 ♘a3, and if 18...♖8xa3, then 19 ♗xa3 ♖xe2 20 ♖f1 trapping the rook.

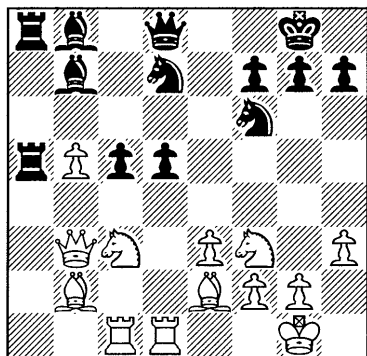
18 ♘c3 ♖4a5 19 d4!

With his pieces well posted, White will benefit from opening the centre.

19...♗b8

19...♗e7 would have been a slightly stronger choice. Now there follows an unexpected sacrifice.

20 cxd5 exd5 21 dxc5 bxc5

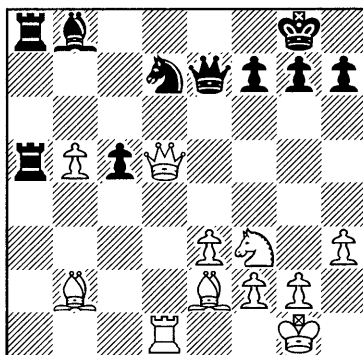


22 ♘xd5!

A positional exchange sacrifice.

White's active pieces, especially his bishops, and his strong b-pawn promise good winning chances.

22...♘xd5 23 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 24 ♗xd5 ♗e7 25 ♖d1



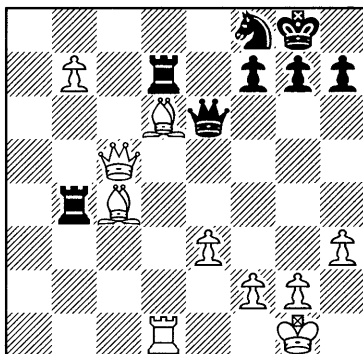
25...♘f8

On 25...♘f6 there could follow 26 ♗d8+ ♗f8 27 ♗xf6 ♗h2+ 28 ♖xh2 ♖xd8 29 ♗xd8!, and having three minor pieces for the queen, White should win.

26 ♗c4 ♖8a7 27 ♘e5! ♗xe5 28 ♗xe5 ♖a4 29 ♗d6 ♗e6 30 b6!

The b-pawn decides. It's interesting to observe the connection between the opening and the finish of the game!

30...♖d7 31 b7 ♖b4 32 ♗xc5



32...♖xd6!

Probably the best chance.

33 ♖xd6!

It would have been a mistake to capture the queen because of 33 ♖xe6 ♖xd1+ 34 ♖h2 ♖xb7.

33...♖b1+ 34 ♖h2 ♖e7 35 ♖d5 g6 36 f4 ♖g7 37 ♖d4+ ♖h6 38 ♖b6 1-0

The b-pawn will become a queen.

Game 38

Y.Lapshun-M.Scekic

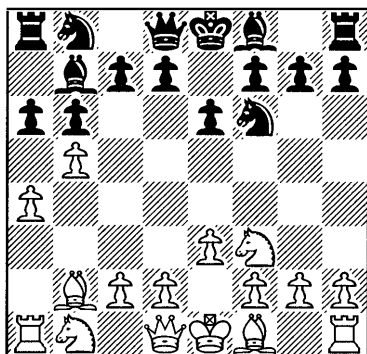
Marshall Chess Club (Rapid) 2004

I had seen that my opponent in this game, the Yugoslav IM Milos Scekic, was a strong tactician, so 1 b4 was a very good positional choice.

1 b4 e6 2 ♖b2 ♖f6 3 b5 a6 4 a4 b6

For 4...d5 5 e3 c5, see Games 36-37. Another viable way for Black to play is with 4...c6 5 bxc6 bxc6 6 ♖f3 c5, as in K.Volke-Y.Shulman, Minsk 1994.

5 ♖f3 ♖b7 6 e3



6...♖b4!?

6...axb5 7 axb5 ♖xa1 8 ♖xa1 d6 9 ♖e2 ♖bd7 10 c4 ♖a8 11 ♖c3 ♖e7 12 0-0

0-0, as played in A.Ornstein-R.Akesson, Stockholm 1998, is a fairly typical continuation.

7 c3

I didn't want to see any of his pieces in my camp, so I felt obliged to play this weird-looking move.

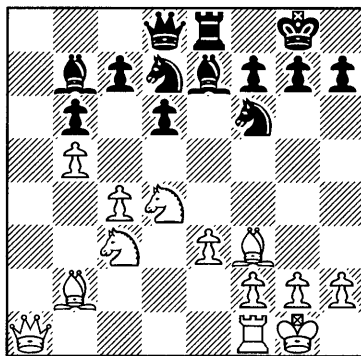
7...♖e7 8 c4 0-0 9 ♖e2 d6

A reasonable alternative is 9...d5 10 0-0 dxc4 11 ♖xc4 axb5 12 axb5 ♖xa1 13 ♖xa1.

10 0-0 e5 11 ♖c3 ♖bd7 12 d4 axb5 13 axb5 exd4

It would not be prudent to advance in the centre. After 13...e4 14 ♖d2 ♖xa1 15 ♖xa1 ♖e8 16 ♖a4 ♖f8 17 ♖c2 g6 18 ♖a1 White can combine play on the open a-file with pressure on the e4-pawn.

14 ♖xd4 ♖xa1 15 ♖xa1 ♖e8 16 ♖f3



In order to occupy the weak d5- and c6-squares, I had to trade my light-squared bishop.

16...♖xf3 17 ♖xf3 ♖c5 18 ♖d4

18 ♖d5 was more promising, for example after 18...♖ce4 19 ♖d4 ♖d7 20 ♖c1 ♖c5 21 ♖c3 ♖xd5 22 cxd5 f5 23 ♖c6 ♖f6 24 ♖a3 ♖xb2 25 ♖xb2.

18...♖d7 19 ♖d1 ♜fe4 20 ♜d5 ♙h4!

A good move, forcing a weakening of White's kingside and thus gaining counterplay.

21 g3 ♙d8 22 ♙g2?!

22 ♖a8! ♙f6 23 ♖c6 ♖xc6 24 bxc6 ♙d8 25 f3 ♜g5 26 ♖a1 would have kept an advantage.

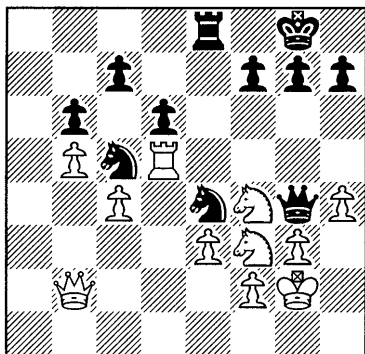
22...♜g5 23 ♜f4 ♙f6 24 h4 ♜ge4 25 ♜f3?

I was afraid to play 25 f3! because of 25...♙e5 26 fxe4 ♖g4, but here 27 ♖g1 ♜xe4 28 ♖e1 ♖a8 29 ♙h2 ♖a4 30 ♖g2 ♖xc4 31 ♖b1 ♜c5 32 ♖f5 beats off the attack.

25...♙xb2 26 ♖xb2 ♖g4

Scekic was coming after me with his whole army! I had to work hard to defend his threatened sacrifices on g3 and f2.

27 ♖d5



27...f6?!

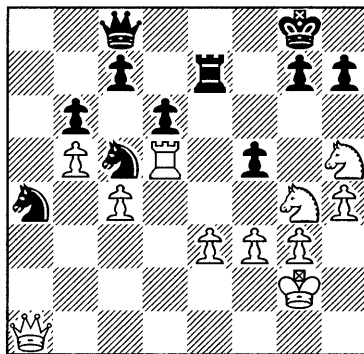
27...♜e6 is stronger: 28 ♜xe6 (28 ♜d4?! ♜xf4+ 29 exf4 h6 30 ♖e2 ♖c8 favours Black; but it was worth considering 28 ♖c2, for example 28...♜xf4+ 29 exf4 ♜f6 30 ♖d2 ♜h5 31 ♖d4 ♖d7 32 ♖e4 ♜f6 33 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 34 ♜d4)

28...fxe6 29 ♜h2 ♖g6 30 ♖d4 ♜f6 with an equal position.

28 ♜h2 ♖c8 29 f3!

The start of my combination.

29...♜a4 30 ♖a1 ♜ec5 31 ♜g4 f5 32 ♜h5 ♖e7



My intuition told me that one of the knight sacrifices should win, but which one? I was thinking about ♜h6+, ♜g6+, ♜hf6+ and ♜xg7. At this moment both of us were in severe time trouble and I had to make my decision quickly.

33 ♜g6+!?

Only 33 ♜xg7!! gives White a sure win. I saw it but was afraid of 33...fxg4. However, White can play 34 ♜f5 gxf3+ 35 ♙f1 ♖e6 36 ♜xe7+ ♖xe7 37 ♖g5+ ♙f7 38 ♖g7+ winning the black queen, a point I managed to miss while calculating the jungle of variations.

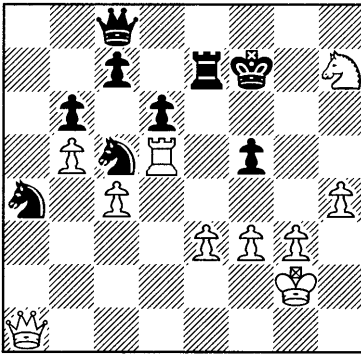
After the game Aleksander Wojtkiewicz told me that 34 ♖g5? (instead of 34 ♜f5) was a winning move, but the position is so complex that even strong grandmasters can be mistaken: 34...gxf3+ 35 ♙h2 ♖e5! 36 ♖xe5 dxe5 37 ♖xe5 ♖f8 38 ♜f5 ♜c3 39 ♖f4 ♖f6 40

♖xf3 ♘3e4 and it's Black who should win.

33...gx f6 34 ♖xf6+ ♔f7!

34...♙h8 is bad on account of 35 ♘g4+ ♖g7 36 ♘h6 ♖e6 37 ♖xf5 ♗d7 38 g4 ♗f7 39 h5 h6 40 ♖xh6 ♗f8 41 ♖f5. Alternatively, 34...♙f8 35 ♘g4! ♖g7 36 ♗f6+ ♔g8 37 ♘h6+ ♔h8 38 ♖xf5 ♗g8 39 ♖xg7 ♗xg7 40 ♗d8+ ♗g8 41 ♗xc7 is also hopeless for Black.

35 ♖xh7!



35...♖e5!

Black keeps finding the best practical chance. Against 35...♔g8, White wins after the sequence 36 ♖f6+ ♔f7 37 ♘h5 ♔g8 38 g4 ♗d8 (38...fxg4 39 ♖g5+) 39 ♖xf5 ♖e5 40 ♖xe5 dxe5 41 ♗xe5 ♔f7 42 ♗g7+ ♔e6 43 ♖f4+ ♔d6 44 e4 ♖d7 45 ♗g6+ ♔e7 46 ♗g5+ ♖f6 47 e5 ♗d2+ 48 ♔h3.

36 f4 ♖b3!

36...♖xd5 allows 37 ♗f6+ ♔g8 (or 37...♔e8 38 ♗f8+ ♔d7 39 ♖f6+ ♔e6 40 cxd5 mate) 38 ♗g6+ ♔h8 39 ♖f6 ♖d2+ 40 ♔h3, when Black cannot prevent mate.

37 ♗xa4 ♖xe3!

The complications reach their peak,

and both players were desperately short of time!

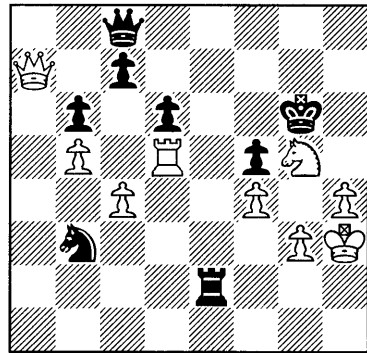
38 ♖g5+ ♔g6 39 ♗a7?

Under time pressure it was not possible for me to calculate that I could win with the sequence 39 ♗a2! ♗h8 40 ♗c2 ♖d4 41 ♗d1 ♖b3 42 ♔f2 ♗c3 43 h5+ ♔h6 44 ♖xf5 ♖c5 45 ♖f7 ♖e4+ 46 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 47 ♗d5 ♗c2+ 48 ♔f1 ♗xc4+ 49 ♗xc4 ♖xc4 50 g4, reaching a winning rook ending.

39...♖e2+?

After defending so well, it was a pity for Black that he missed the opportunity to play 39...♗e8! 40 ♗xc7 ♖e2+ 41 ♔h3, when 41...♖h2+! forces a perpetual check after 42 ♔xh2 ♗e2+ 43 ♔g1 ♗e1+ 44 ♔g2 ♗e2+.

40 ♔h3



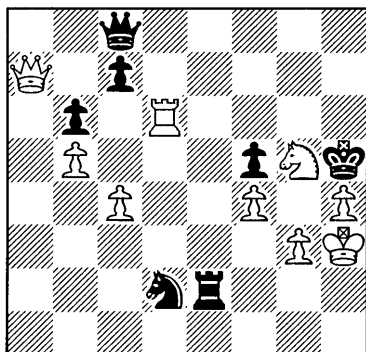
40...♖d2?

Allowing a simple tactic. 40...♗e8 41 ♖f3 ♖e7 puts up more resistance.

41 ♖xd6+!

Good enough, but more precise is 41 ♗a1! ♖e4 42 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 43 h5+ ♔h7 (43...♔xh5 44 ♗g7) 44 ♗f6 ♖xc4 45 ♗e7+ ♔h8 46 h6 ♗g8 47 ♖xf5.

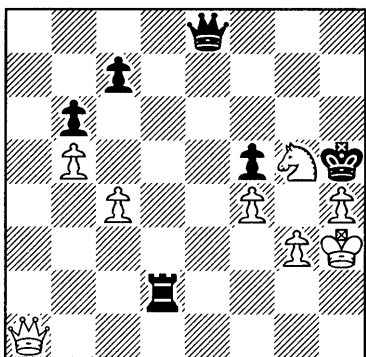
41...♔h5



42 ♖f6??

42 ♖a1? allows Black to save the game with 42...♗e4! (42...cxd6? 43 ♖g7 ♜h2+ 44 ♗xh2 ♖xc4 45 g4+ ♗xg4 46 ♗e4+ ♗xf4 47 ♗xd2 ♖e2+ 48 ♖g2 ♖xg2+ 49 ♗xg2 is winning for White) 43 ♜d5 ♗f2+ 44 ♗g2 ♗g4+ 45 ♗f1 ♖e8 46 ♜e5 ♗xe5 47 ♖d1 ♗xc4 48 ♖xe2+ ♖xe2+ 49 ♗xe2 ♗d6.

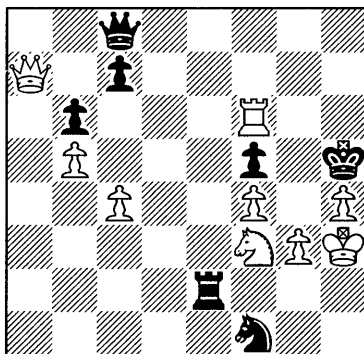
42 ♜xd2!! is the only move that wins here – who could believe such a thing? 42...♜xd2 43 ♖a1 ♖e8



44 ♗f3! (44 ♖g7 ♜h2+! draws by perpetual check) 44...♜f2 45 ♖f6 ♖g6 46 ♖h8+ ♖h6 47 ♖c8 ♖f6 48 ♖d7 ♖g6 49 ♗e5 ♖f6 50 ♖h7+ and White forces

mate. A mere human can't possibly work this out with no time on the clock.

42...♗f1 43 ♗f3

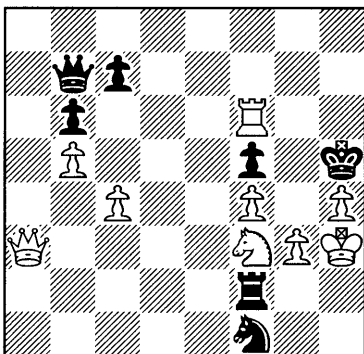


43...♜f2??

My opponent could have turned the tables completely with 43...♗e3!! 44 ♖a1 ♖g8 45 ♗g5 ♗g4 46 ♖g1 ♗xf6 47 ♖d1 ♖xc4, when Black is winning.

44 ♖a3! ♖b7?

This allows mate, but Black's moment had already passed and White was now winning in any case.



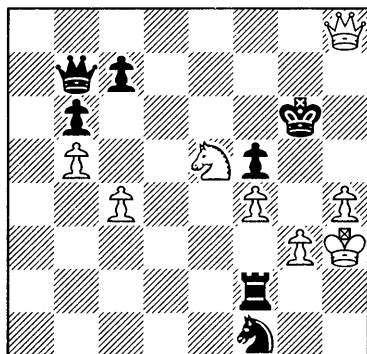
45 ♜h6+!!

At this moment both of us had less than 15 seconds left on our clocks.

45...♔xh6 46 ♖f8+ ♔h5

Or 46...♔g6 47 ♘e5+ ♔h7 48 ♖f7+.

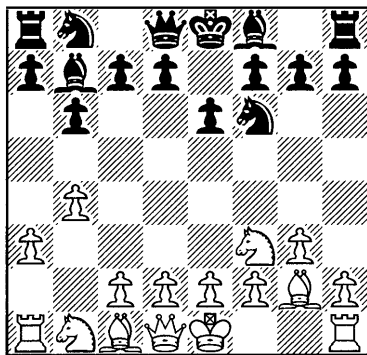
47 ♖h8+ ♔g6 48 ♘e5 mate (1-0)



This beautiful checkmate excited the 20 or so spectators who were watching the finale to this game.

Game 39
D.Bronstein-B.Ivkov
Amsterdam Interzonal 1964

1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 b4 e6 3 a3 b6 4 g3 ♔b7 5
♔g2



The fianchetto of White's light-squared bishop is a rare idea in the

Sokolsky, and is sometimes employed by those more familiar with the Réti.

5...c5

A serious attempt to claim the initiative by attacking the centre.

6 bxc5

After 6 b5?! a6 7 bxa6 ♔xa6 Black enjoys an edge due to the isolated pawn on a3. This is a consequence of playing b4-b5 without the precaution of ♔b2.

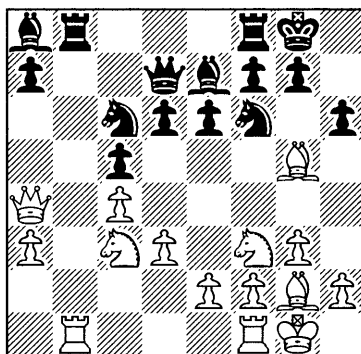
6...bxc5 7 c4 ♘c6 8 0-0 ♔e7 9 ♘c3 0-0
10 d3 ♖b8 11 ♔f4 d6 12 ♖b1 ♔a8

The pawn structure now resembles the English Opening. With the passive 12...♔a7 Black is trying to trade pieces and achieve a draw.

13 ♖a4

Following 13 ♖xb8!? ♖xb8 14 ♖a4 ♖c7 (14...♖b2?? 15 ♖b1 ♖xc3 16 ♔d2 ♘e4 17 ♔xc3 ♘xc3 18 ♖c2 ♘xb1 19 ♖xb1 should be winning for White) 15 ♖b1 ♖b8 16 ♖xb8+ ♖xb8, White's activity shouldn't be sufficient to win.

13...♖d7 14 ♔g5 h6



15 ♔xf6

15 ♔d2 was safer, but Bronstein always tried to force the issue. By captur-

ing Black's knight, White tries to strengthen his control of the squares e4 and d5. But he succeeds only in improving Black's position.

15...♙xf6 16 ♖e4 ♙b2 17 ♜fd1 f5

17...♜b6!? is the natural move, preparing to double rooks and allowing Black to fight for the initiative.

18 ♖ed2 ♖e5 19 ♜a5

19 ♜xd7 ♖xd7 20 ♖e1 ♜b6 21 ♙xa8 ♜xa8 22 ♖c2 ♜ab8 is better for Black.

19...♙c6

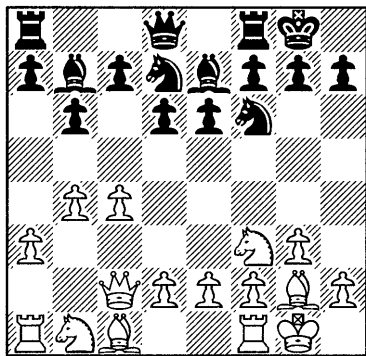
19...♙xf3+! 20 ♙xf3 ♙xf3 21 ♖xf3 ♜b3 would have given Black an advantage.

20 ♜a4 ♖e5 21 ♜a5 ♖c6 22 ♜a4 ♖e5 ½-½

Game 40

B.Gurgenidze-A.Schneider
World Senior Championship,
Biel 1994

1 ♖f3 ♖f6 2 b4 e6 3 a3 b6 4 g3 ♙b7 5 ♙g2 ♙e7 6 0-0 0-0 7 c4 d6 8 ♜c2 ♖bd7



9 ♖c3

9 ♙b2 would be in the style of

Sokolsky's Opening, but in this game White chooses another path for the Sokolsky bishop.

9...c5 10 bxc5 bxc5 11 d3

The position now looks very much as if it arose from the English Opening. 11 ♜b1 would have been another good choice.

11...h6 12 ♙f4 ♖h5 13 ♙d2 f5 14 ♜ab1 ♙c6

Black should consider 14...♖b6!?

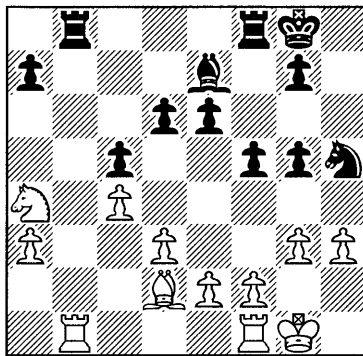
15 ♖g5! hxg5

15...♙xg2 16 ♖xe6 ♜c8 17 ♙xg2 wins a pawn for White.

16 ♙xc6 ♜c8 17 ♙xd7!

White would maintain an advantage if he kept this active bishop by playing 17 ♙g2.

17...♜xd7 18 ♜a4 ♜xa4 19 ♖xa4 ♜b8 20 h3



20...d5?

Black should play 20...♙f7. In the endgame you should activate your king and also try to avoid creating weaknesses in your own camp. After 20...d5 White could have won a pawn with 21 cxd5! exd5 22 ♖c3 d4 23 ♖d5 ♙d6 24 ♙xg5.

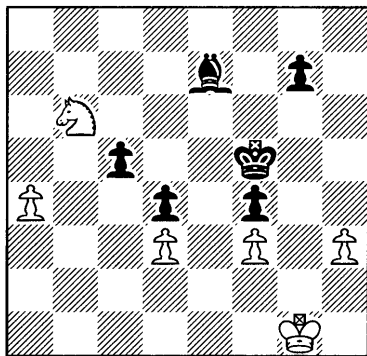
21 ♖e3 d4 22 ♖d2 e5

22...g6 frees the g7-square for the knight and prepare ...e6-e5.

23 g4 ♜f4 24 ♖xf4 gxf4 25 gxf5 ♜f7 26 ♜b5 ♜xb5 27 cxb5 ♜b8 28 ♜b1

White should have an edge because in this closed position a knight ought to be stronger than a bishop.

28...♜f6 29 b6 axb6 30 ♜xb6+ ♜xb6 31 ♜xb6 ♜xf5 32 a4 e4 33 f3 exd3 34 exd3



White's advantage is increasing every move.

34...♜e6 35 ♜f1 ♖d8 36 ♜c4 ♖c7 37 ♜e2 ♜d5 38 ♜d1 ♜c6 39 ♜c2 ♜b7 40 ♜b3 ♜c6 41 ♜c2 ♜d5?!

41...♜b7 would have offered some drawing chances.

42 h4! g6 43 a5 ♜c6 44 a6 ♖b8 45 ♜b3 ♜d5

Or if instead 45...♖c7 46 ♜a3 ♖b8 47 ♜a4 ♖c7 48 a7 ♜b7 49 ♜b5 and White wins.

46 ♜b6+ ♜c6 47 ♜c8 ♖e5 48 ♜e7+ ♜b6 49 a7 ♜b7 50 ♜xg6 ♖f6 51 h5 ♖g5 52 ♜c4 ♜xa7 53 ♜e5 ♜b6 54 ♜f7 1-0

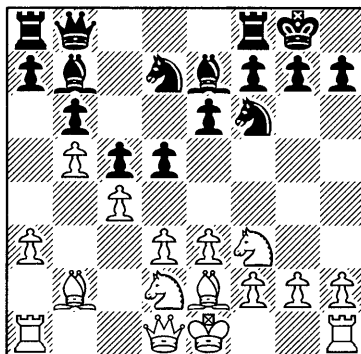
Black cannot stop the h-pawn and so he resigned.

Game 41

B.Gurgenidze-G.Kalatozishvili

Kirovabad 1973

1 ♜f3 ♜f6 2 b4 e6 3 a3 ♖e7 4 c4 b6 5 e3 c5 6 b5 ♖b7 7 d3 0-0 8 ♖b2 d5 9 ♜bd2 ♜bd7 10 ♖e2 ♜b8



Sokolsky-Byvshev (see Game 37) reached a very similar position. In that game Byvshev tried to attack by capturing the a-file, but this plan didn't work and Sokolsky won. Here Kalatozishvili slowly regroupes his pieces to prepare an attack in the centre.

11 0-0 ♜e8 12 a4 a5

Stopping any movement from White's a-pawn.

13 ♜c1 ♜d6

Black is ready to push his f-, e- and d-pawns to gain control of the centre, and White must prevent this plan.

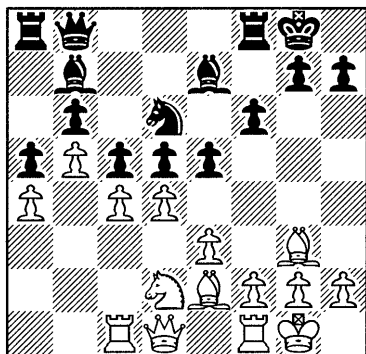
14 ♜e5 ♜xe5 15 ♖xe5 f6 16 ♖g3 e5?!

Now White's light-squared bishop becomes very dangerous, and Black should have dealt with the pin on his knight in a different way. One of the

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possibilities was to play 16...♖d8.

17 d4

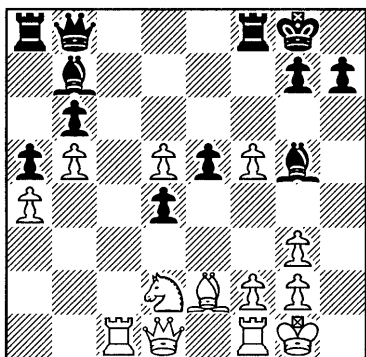


Copying Sokolsky's idea from his game against Byvshev. After 17 cxd5 ♗xd5 18 ♗f3 ♖b7 19 ♖c2 ♗xf3 20 ♗xf3 the position would probably be equal.

17...♗f5 18 cxd5

White could secure a pull by continuing 18 dxc5!? ♗xc5 19 cxd5 ♗xg3 20 hxg3 ♗xd5 21 ♗f3 ♗xf3 22 ♖xf3.

18...cxd4 19 e4 ♗xg3 20 hxg3 f5 21 exf5 ♗g5



22 f4!

White wants to break up Black's strong centre and advance his d-pawn.

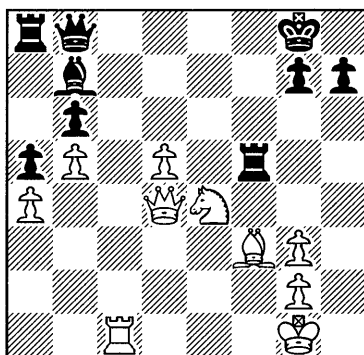
22...exf4 23 ♗e4 ♗h6?

A mistake. The move 23...f3! could lead to a drawish position after 24 ♗xg5 fxe2 25 ♖xe2 ♖xg3 26 ♗e6 ♖ae8 27 ♖e4 ♖f6 28 ♖f3 ♖d6 29 ♖xd4 ♖xd5 30 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 31 ♗c7 ♖e5 32 ♗xd5 ♖xd5.

24 ♖xd4!

The only way to achieve an advantage is by taking the initiative with this exchange sacrifice.

24...f3 25 ♗xf3 ♗xc1 26 ♖xc1 ♖xf5



White's well-placed pieces and a passed d-pawn should give an advantage, despite the small material deficit.

27 ♖xb6

If you have a passed pawn, push it! Black's pieces are poorly placed, and White should use his passer to confuse the enemy forces. After 27 d6! ♖f8 28 ♖xb6 ♖c8 29 ♖d1 ♗xe4 30 d7 ♖d8 31 ♗xe4 ♖f6 32 ♖c7 ♖e7 33 b6 ♖ff8 34 ♖c6, only the slightly exposed white king offers Black any slim hope of survival.

27...♗xd5 28 ♗f6+?

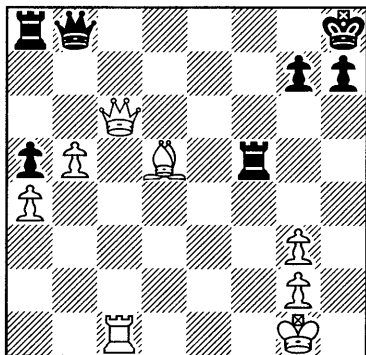
It's not easy to see, but Black has a problem with his bishop. White could have exploited this by playing 28

♖xb8+! ♜xb8 29 ♔d6 ♙g5 30 ♜c5, and following 30...♙xf3 31 ♜xg5 ♙d1 32 ♜c5 ♙xa4 33 b6 ♙f8 34 b7 Black would be in big trouble.

28...♜xf6 29 ♙xd5+ ♙h8

Suddenly Black might even be better.

30 ♜c5 ♜f5 31 ♜c6



31...♜xd5??

Black couldn't find the right defence. 31...♜f8! was possible, because 32 ♖xa8?? loses to 32...♖b6+ 33 ♙h1 ♖h6+ 34 ♙g1 ♖xc1+ and ...♜xa8.

32 ♖xd5

Now White's passed pawn decides the game.

32...♖b6+ 33 ♜c5 ♜e6 34 b6 ♜e8 35 b7 ♜b3 36 ♖h5 g6 37 ♖f3 ♖b6+ 38 ♙h2 g5 39 ♜c6 ♜e3 40 ♖xe8+ 1-0

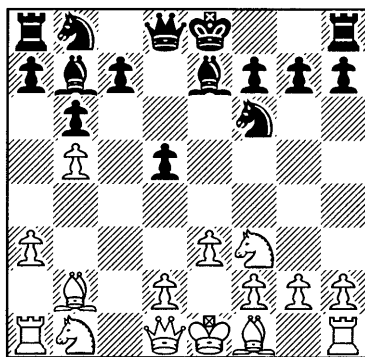
Game 42
B.Spassky-L.Lengyel
Moscow 1975

1 ♔f3 ♔f6 2 b4 e6 3 a3 b6 4 ♙b2 ♙b7 5 e3 ♙e7 6 c4 d5?!

It's perhaps too early for Black to

decide which pawn structure he wants in the centre, and it's certainly safer to castle first, as we saw in the previous two games.

7 cxd5 exd5 8 b5



Spassky demonstrates his positional ability. He fights for control of the c6-square by occupying d4 with his knight, placing the rook on the c-file and – first of all – putting his pawn on b5.

8...a6 9 a4 axb5 10 axb5 ♜xa1 11 ♙xa1 0-0 12 ♙e2 ♔bd7 13 0-0 ♔c5 14 ♔a3

The knight is aiming for the d4-square via c2.

14...♔e6 15 ♔c2 ♔e4 16 ♔cd4 ♔4c5 17 ♜c2

Now it's time to think about both the weak c6-square and the backward c7-pawn.

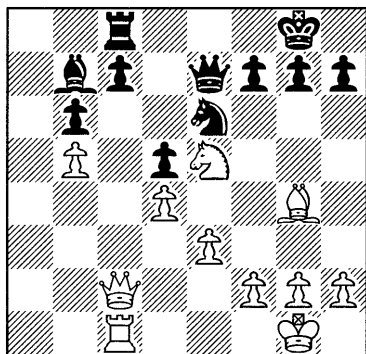
17...♙f6 18 ♔xe6 ♔xe6 19 ♙xf6 ♜xf6 20 d4 ♜a8 21 ♔e5 ♜e7 22 ♙g4 ♜c8 23 ♜c1

Let's take a look at what's going on. Obviously White stands better here because:

1) His pieces occupy great positions; and

2) There are two weaknesses on the c-file that are under attack: c6 and c7.

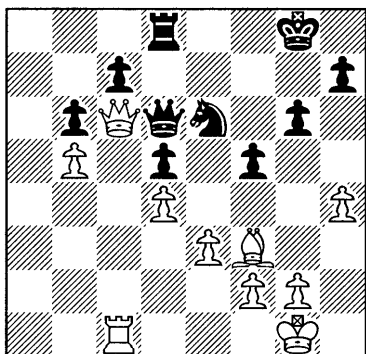
I believe these advantages should be enough for White to win.



23...g6 24 dxc6 25 h4

The continuation 25 dxe6 fxe6 (25...fxe6 is answered by 26 dxa7 winning a pawn – 26...Bxa8? loses to 27 Bxc7 Bxa7 28 Bb8+) 26 de5 gives White many positional advantages.

25...f5 26 ef3 exxc6 27 Bxc6 Bd8



28 g4!

Striving to create another weakness in Black's camp. Instead White could have won a pawn with 28 Bxd6?! Bxd6 29 Bc6, but it's not enough to win the

game after 29...Bxc6 30 bxc6 ef8 31 exd5 d8 32 ef1 ef7 33 ef2 ed6 34 eg8 dxc6 35 exh7 de7.

28...Bxc6 29 Bxc6 ef7 30 ef1 Bd7 31 ef2

After 31 gxf5!? gxf5 32 ef2 ef7 33 h5 Bd6 34 Bc1 there would be further weaknesses for White to attack.

31...d8 32 Bc1 ef6 33 g5 h6 1/2-1/2

It's probably too early to take a draw here. 33...h6 34 Bg1 Bh7 35 h5 gxh5 36 exh5 hxg5 37 Bxg5 Bh6 38 ef3 is still slightly better for White.

Game 43

R.Fischer-D.Ina

Cleveland

(Simultaneous Display) 1964

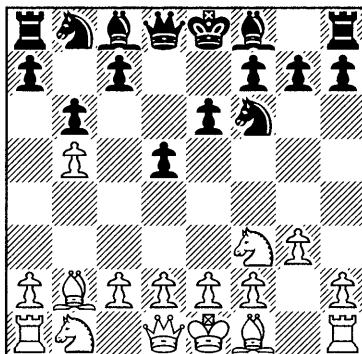
1 b4 e6 2 ef2 d5

In this and the following game, Black commits to an early ...d5.

3 ef3 df6 4 b5

For the alternative, 4 a3, see Campora-Visier Segovia (Game 44).

4...b6 5 g3



Fischer liked to fianchetto the king's
chesstouring.com

bishop, just like in his favourite King's Indian Defence. In this position 5 e3, protecting the b5-pawn, is safer.

5...a6 6 a4 axb5 7 axb5 ♖xa1 8 ♙xa1 ♜d6 9 ♙g2 ♙e7 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♜c1 ♜b4

Black exploits the absence of White's light-squared bishop on the f1-a6 diagonal by attacking b5.

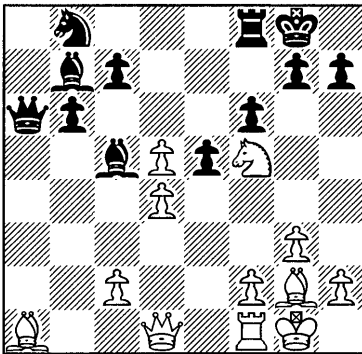
12 ♜c3 d4 13 ♜a2 ♜xb5 14 ♜xd4 ♜a6 15 ♜c3 ♙b7 16 e4 e5?!

16...c5 offers good counterchances; for example, 17 ♜de2 c4 18 ♜b1 ♜d8 19 ♜d1 ♙c5 20 d4 cxd3 21 cxd3 e5.

17 ♜f5 ♙b4 18 ♜d5 ♜xd5 19 exd5 f6 20 ♜d1 ♙c5?

Black should play 20...g6, and following 21 ♜e3 ♜e8 22 c4 ♜d7 23 d4 ♙d6 24 ♜c2 ♜a8 25 ♙b2 ♜a4 26 ♜e2 both sides have chances.

21 d4!



This excellent advance activates White's pieces and shuts out Black's best unit – the bishop on c5.

21...♙d6?

21...exd4 22 ♙xd4 ♙xd4 23 ♜xd4 ♙c8 24 ♜e1 is also good for White, but this would have been a better choice for Black than the text.

22 ♜g4

Now White crashes through with an unstoppable attack.

22...g6 23 ♜xd6 cxd6 24 ♜e6+ ♜g7 25 ♜xd6 exd4 26 ♙xd4 b5 27 ♜c7+ ♜h6 28 ♜a1 ♜c8 29 ♙e3+ g5 30 ♙xg5+! 1-0

White wins after 30...♜xg5 31 ♜g7+, or 30...fxg5 31 ♜xa6+.

Game 44

D.Campora-F.Visier Segovia
Canete 1994

In this game we can see how a Grandmaster beats a FIDE Master from a completely level endgame.

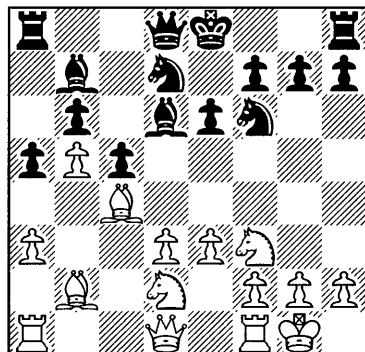
1 b4 d5 2 ♙b2 ♜f6 3 ♜f3 e6 4 a3 a5

4...c5 5 bxc5 ♙xc5 6 e3 is discussed in Chapter Five (see Games 50-51).

5 b5 ♜bd7 6 e3

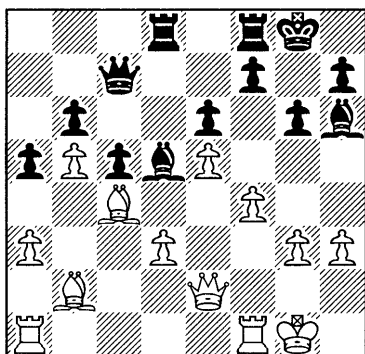
6 d4 ♜b6 7 ♜e5 ♙d7 8 e3 ♙d6 9 c4 dxc4 10 ♜xc4 ♜xc4 11 ♙xc4 c6 was comfortable for Black in the game C.Skalicka-J.Salas Romo, Buenos Aires 1939.

6...c5 7 c4 dxc4 8 ♙xc4 b6 9 0-0 ♙b7 10 d3 ♙d6 11 ♜bd2



White is thinking about the c4-square, and the fact that a knight on that square can add more pressure to e5. All the bishops are pointing menacingly at the kingside, and both sides must also be careful since any pawn movement in the centre could create some weak squares.

11...0-0 12 e4 ♖g4 13 h3 ♖ge5 14 ♖e1 ♖g6 15 ♖ef3 ♖de5 16 ♖c2 ♖xf3+ 17 ♖xf3 ♖h4 18 ♖e2 ♖xf3+ 19 ♖xf3 ♖c7 20 ♖h5 ♖f4 21 e5 g6 22 ♖e2 ♖ad8 23 g3 ♖h6 24 f4 ♖d5



In this closed position both White and Black have ineffective dark-squared bishops. I don't see any winning plan for Black, but White has some options. He can try to attack the black king by pushing his kingside pawns, but he must take care not to expose his own king by doing so as this would lead to big trouble. Also, White can place rooks on c1 and d1, preparing the push of the d-pawn.

25 ♖ad1 ♖xc4?!

This poor move trades off a good piece and eliminates a white weakness at the same time. 25...♖d7!? 26 ♖d2

♖fd8 27 ♖c3 ♖f8 28 a4 ♖b7 29 ♖h2 ♖e7 would be okay for Black.

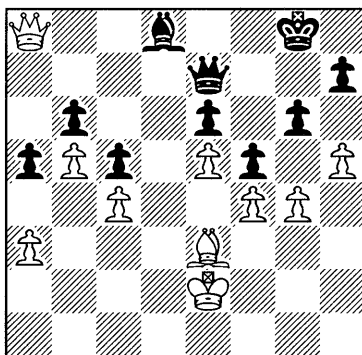
26 dxc4 ♖xd1 27 ♖xd1 ♖d8 28 ♖f2 ♖f8 29 ♖c3 ♖xd1 30 ♖xd1

White has a slight advantage, but it shouldn't be enough to win. The only chance is a pawn storm on the kingside.

30...♖e7 31 ♖f3 ♖d8 32 ♖e2 ♖d7 33 g4 ♖f8 34 ♖e4 ♖e8 35 h4 ♖f8?!

Perhaps Black should grab the pawn on h4. Following 35...♖xh4!? 36 g5 ♖g3 37 ♖f3 ♖h2 38 ♖f2 Black has the resource 38...♖b7!, and after 39 ♖xh2 ♖e4+ 40 ♖d2 ♖xc4 41 ♖c2 ♖xb5 42 ♖h1 a4 43 ♖d2 ♖c4 44 ♖f3 I believe the game should finish in a draw.

36 h5 ♖g8 37 ♖e1 ♖f8 38 ♖f2 ♖g8 39 ♖a8 ♖e7 40 ♖e3 f5



This looks suicidal, but perhaps Black was afraid that White would play h6, ♖xc5 and then b6.

41 exf6 ♖xf6 42 g5 ♖e7 43 ♖d2 ♖f7 44 ♖c3 ♖d7 45 hxg6+ 1-0

After the recapture 45...hxg6, White plays 46 ♖h1!, and here 46...♖d6 47 ♖h7+ ♖e8 48 ♖xg6+ makes matters pretty clear.

Summary

The Queen's Indian system of development is a logical response to the Sokolsky, but you should be able to deal with it comfortably if you remember to put a pawn on b5 and protect it, and look for the right moment to break in the centre. It's hard to be more specific; a certain amount of 'feel' is required to play this type of position well.

1 b4 ♘f6

1...e6 2 ♙b2 d5 3 ♘f3 ♘f6

4 b5 b6 – *Game 43*

4 a3 a5 5 b5 ♘bd7 6 e3 c5 7 c4 dxc4 8 ♙xc4 b6 – *Game 44*

2 ♙b2

2 ♘f3 e6 3 a3

3...♙e7 4 c4 b6 – *Game 41*

3...b6

4 ♙b2 – *Game 42*

4 g3 ♙b7 5 ♙g2 (D)

5...c5 – *Game 39*; 5...♙e7 – *Game 40*

2...e6 3 b5 b6

3...c5 4 e3 d5 5 ♘f3 ♘bd7 6 c4

6...b6 – *Game 33*

6...♙d6 7 d3 0-0 8 ♘bd2 b6 – *Game 32*

3...a6 4 a4 (D)

4...b6 – *Game 38*

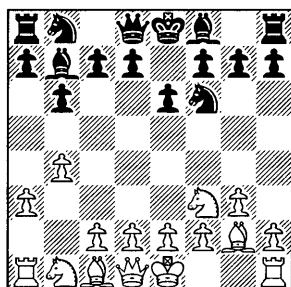
4...d5 5 e3

5...c5 6 ♘f3 ♙d6 7 c4 ♘bd7 8 ♙e2 b6 – *Game 36*

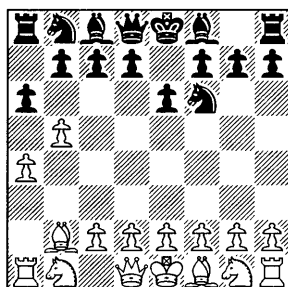
5...♘bd7 6 ♘f3 ♙d6 7 c4 c5 8 d3 0-0 9 ♘bd2 b6 – *Game 37*

4 e3 ♙b7 5 ♘f3 (D) – *Game 35*

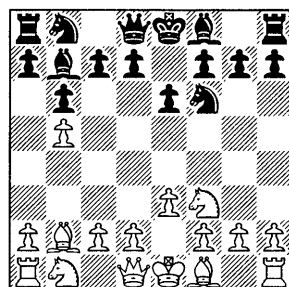
5 f4 – *Game 34*



5 ♙g2



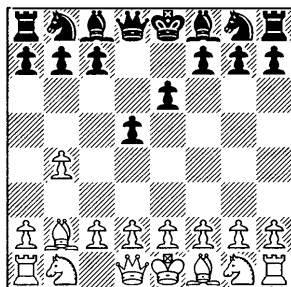
4 a4



5 ♘f3

Chapter Five

Black Plays ...d5 and ...e6



The next two chapters are important because many Black players choose a reversed queen's pawn opening against the Sokolsky (or, for that matter, against any unorthodox opening). For the sake of convenience, in this chapter we deal with an early ...e6, whereas in Chapter Six we move on to games where Black develops his light-squared bishop outside the pawn chain.

This chapter consists of games, many originally from Sokolsky's book, which examine attempts by Black to play a reversed Queen's Gambit with his light-squared bishop locked in behind his e-pawn, and not fianchettoed. This plan seems like a poor one from the evidence accumulated here. In nearly every game Black feels the need to open the a-file with ...a6 and ...axb5. The usual result is that White ends up with control of the a-file and has room to make good use of it, especially as Black's light-squared bishop often just

ends up getting in the way. The exception seems to be Spassky-Smyslov (Game 45), in which Black's queenside play nearly carries the day. Possibly Spassky's plan of attacking on the kingside was inappropriate.

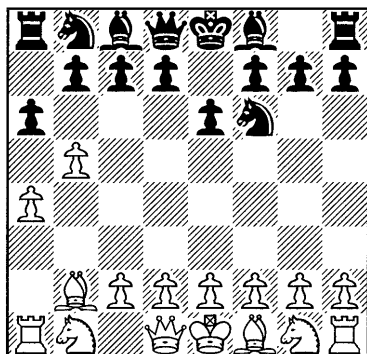
In Simagin-Flohr (Game 50), White avoids b4-b5 and uses the time saved to build an attack on the right flank, but Flohr's careful defence neutralizes White's threats. The classic encounter Alekhine-Drewitt (Game 51) shows what can happen against a less than perfect response.

Game 45 **B.Spassky-V.Smyslov** Moscow- Leningrad Match, Moscow 1960

1 b4 ♘f6 2 ♙b2 e6 3 b5 a6 4 a4

Not your everyday opening! Does it make sense to keep the centre pawns home and throw up the a- and b-

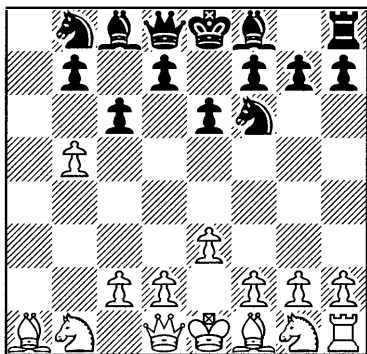
pawns? Black has no great edge in the centre or in development at this moment, so why not?



4...axb5 5 axb5 ♖xa1 6 ♕xa1

This position looks nothing like those seen in so-called standard theory. Nonetheless, the following lively struggle between two top Grandmasters shows there is plenty of scope for interesting play in this system.

6...c6 7 e3



7...d5

Of course Black could take on b5, but the surviving b-pawn would be isolated. The forcing variation 7...cxb5 8 ♕xb5 ♖a5 9 ♖c3 ♖e4 10 ♖b1 ♕b4? 11

♗xe4 ♖xb5 12 ♖d6+ would not be a good idea.

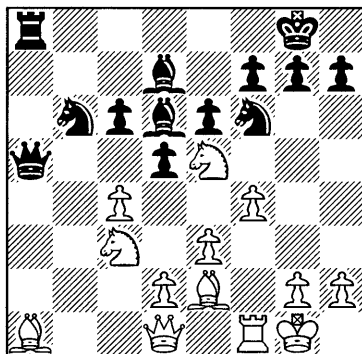
8 ♖f3 ♖bd7 9 c4 ♖a5 10 ♖c3 ♖b6

Black is striving for active counterplay, but it would be more advisable to complete development with 10...♕d6 and ...0-0.

11 bxc6

Spassky wants to grab e5 for his knight, so he takes on c6 first to gain a tempo. Probably trading on d5 followed by ♕e2 is a better option.

11...bxc6 12 ♖e5 ♕d7 13 ♕e2 ♕d6 14 f4 0-0 15 0-0 ♖a8



Often in this variation White uses the a-file for active operations on the left flank. In this game White's outpost on e5 prepares the ground for a king-side attack, and Black will be the one to play on the queenside.

16 g4!

It's not every game you see one player pushing pawns on both wings in the first sixteen moves.

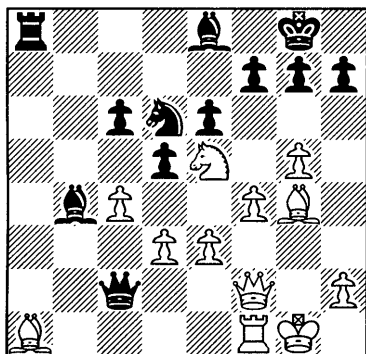
16...♕e8 17 ♖e1 ♖a4 18 ♖xa4

18 g5 is met by 18...♖e4.

18...♖xa4 19 g5 ♖e4 20 d3 ♕b4! 21 ♖h4 ♖d6

21...♖d2 22 ♖g4 ♖xf1 23 ♖xg7 ♖e7 24 ♖xf1 is very dangerous for Black, if not losing outright. However, 21...♞c2! looks to be winning for Black. Instead he prefers to bring his knight to f5 to defend his king.

22 ♞f2 ♞c2 23 ♖g4



The retreat of the knight has lifted all the pressure off White's position, and he can now defend quite easily.

23...♞xf2+

23...♞a2 24 ♞xc2 ♞xc2 25 ♞f2 ♞c1+ 26 ♞f1 ♞c2 27 ♞f2 draws at once.

24 ♖xf2 dxc4

After 24...♞a2+ 25 ♖g3 dxc4 26 ♖xc4 ♖xc4 27 dxc4 ♞c2 28 ♞d1 ♖e7 29 ♞b1 ♖d6 30 ♞d1 ♖c7 31 ♖d4 ♞xc4 32 ♞a1, the penetration on the eighth rank, combined with the pressure of the dark-squared bishop on g7, makes the draw clear. 32...g6 33 ♞a8 ♖f8 34 ♞c8 ♖a5 35 ♖e2 ♞c1 36 ♖b2 ♞b1 37 ♖a3+ ♖b4 38 ♞b8 c5 39 ♖xb4 ♞xb4 40 ♞c8 would even offer White the better prospects.

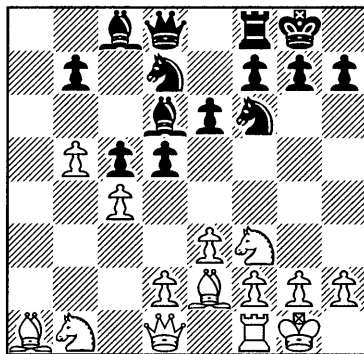
25 ♖xc4 ♖xc4 26 dxc4 c5

The position has stabilized, and peace will soon be at hand.

27 ♖e5 ♞a2+ 28 ♖g3 ♖a4 29 ♞a1 ½-½

Game 46
A.Sokolsky-A.Shagalovich
Minsk 1959

1 b4 e6 2 ♖b2 ♖f6 3 b5 a6 4 a4 axb5 5 axb5 ♞xa1 6 ♖xa1 d5 7 e3 c5 8 ♖f3 ♖d6 9 c4 0-0 10 ♖e2 ♖bd7 11 0-0



11...dxc4

A mistake – it's wrong to give up the important c4-square. 11...b6 followed by ...♖b7, finishing the development of the minor pieces, is a better way forward.

12 ♖a3! ♖b6

Obviously Black shouldn't allow a white knight to stay on the c4-square, so the upcoming exchange is forced.

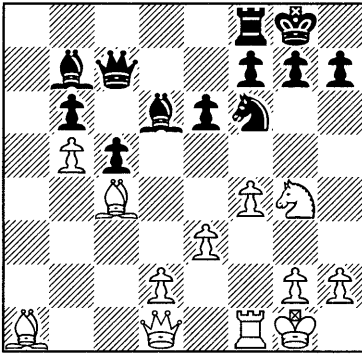
13 ♖xc4 ♖xc4 14 ♖xc4 b6 15 ♖e5

White exploits the absence of a knight from d7 to capture the important central square e5.

15...♖b7 16 f4 ♞c7

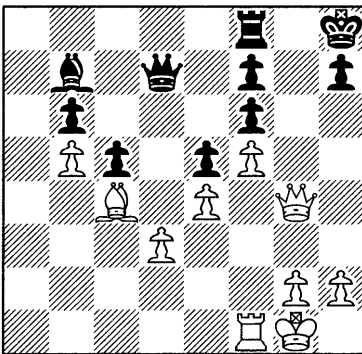
On 16...♞e7, Black is afraid of the reply 17 ♖c6!.

17 ♖g4!



Real threats begin to appear. Now 17...d5 is bad on account of 18 ♖xg4 g6 (or 18...e5 19 ♗g3!) 19 ♗g5 ♕e7 (not 19...♗e7?, because of 20 ♕f6) 20 ♗h6 f6 21 ♕xe6+. Black also can't play 17...d4 because of 18 d3. Finally, on 17...d5 or 17...d6, 18 f5! is very strong; for example, 17...d6 18 f5 exf5 19 ♖xf5 ♕c8 20 ♖h6+! and White is winning. This is why Black allows the doubling of his pawns: it's better than losing material.

17...♕e7 18 ♖xf6+ ♕xf6 19 ♕xf6 gxf6 20 f5! e5 21 ♗g4+ ♖h8 22 e4! ♗d7 23 d3



White violates a well-known pre-

cept by placing his pawns on light squares when there are light-squared bishops present. Nonetheless, in this exceptional case the decision is sound. Black's bishop stays restricted by the pawns, but its counterpart is active, threatening Black's weakened kingside. So Black seeks salvation in an ending, but unfortunately for him this still favours his opponent.

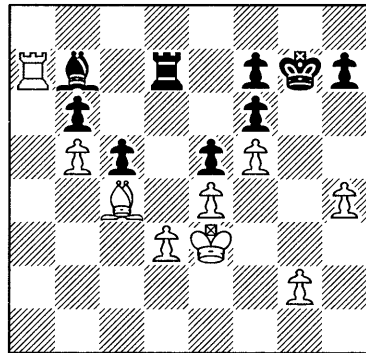
23...♗d4+ 24 ♖h1 ♗e3 25 ♗h5 ♖g7 26 h4 ♗h6 27 ♗xh6+ ♖xh6 28 ♖a1!

The a-file is at last in White's grasp, and the imminent invasion of the seventh rank will terrorize the black forces.

28...♖d8 29 ♖a7 ♖d7 30 ♖g1 ♖g7

Black gets nothing from 30...♖h5 because of 31 g3 ♖g4 32 ♖f2 ♖h5 33 ♕d5 ♕c6 34 ♖xd7 ♕xd7 35 ♕c6 ♕c8 36 ♕e8, when he is quite lost.

31 ♖f2 ♖f8 32 ♖e3 ♖g7



33 ♕d2?

A sad mistake! White could have reached a bishop endgame with excellent chances for a win by continuing 33 ♕d5! ♕c6! 34 ♖xd7 ♕xd7 35 ♕c6 ♕c8 36 ♕d2 ♖f8 37 ♖c3 ♖e7 38 ♖c4 ♖d6 39

g4 h6. In this position it's sufficient for White to lose a tempo to put Black into zugzwang, as follows: 40 ♔d5 ♕e7 41 ♕a8! ♖d6 (or 41...♔d7 42 ♕c6! ♕xc6 43 bxc6 ♖d6 44 ♖b5 ♕c7 45 h5! etc) 42 ♕c6. The pawn endgame after the forced 42...♔d7 43 ♕xd7 ♖xd7 44 ♔d5 ♖c7 45 g5 hxg5 46 hxg5 fxg5 47 ♕xe5 is winning for White; for example, 47...f6+ 48 ♖xf6 g4 49 e5 g3 50 e6 g2 51 e7 g1♗ 52 e8♗ ♗d4+ 53 ♗e5+.

33...♕c6!

Black at once seizes his chance to save the game. This move was impossible before because of ♗a6, but now after 34 ♗a6 there follows 34...♕xe4. After the text move White must swap rooks but this exchange lacks the desired effect.

34 ♗xd7 ♕xd7 35 ♔c3 ♖f8 36 ♖b3 ♕e7 37 ♖a4

Defending the b5-pawn allows White to play ♔d5, but Black of course will not allow it to reach c6.

37...♕e8 38 ♔d5 ♕d6 39 ♖b7 ♖c7 40 ♔d5 ♕d6 ½-½

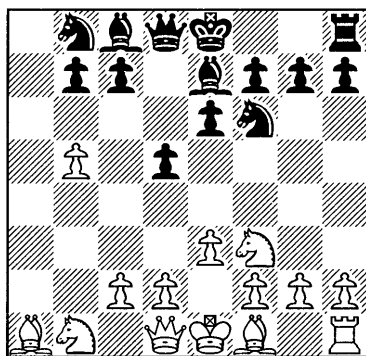
Game 47

S.Bernstein-H.Seidman
US Championship 1959

1 b4 ♖f6 2 ♕b2 e6 3 b5 a6 4 a4 axb5

Look at the diagram at the end of this game, and note how active a role White's rook on the a-file played. Should Black open a file for his opponent to capture? This question probably doesn't need an answer.

5 axb5 ♗xa1 6 ♕xa1 d5 7 ♖f3 ♕e7 8 e3



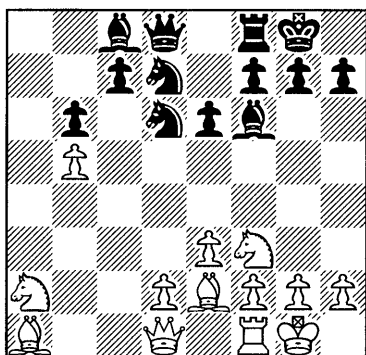
8...♖bd7

Here it's better to play 8...c5. Leaving a pawn on c7 keeps Black a little passive, and it will be difficult in future to come up with a good plan.

9 ♕e2 0-0 10 0-0 ♖e8

Again 10...c5 is stronger. Black's regrouping of his pieces will not prove to be successful.

11 c4 ♕f6 12 ♖c3 dxc4 13 ♕xc4 ♖d6 14 ♕e2 b6 15 ♖a2!



Black's previous move intended to deploy his light-squared bishop actively, but White immediately aims the knight on the route ♖c3-a2-b4-c6, to reach the accordingly weakened point.

It's also worth noting the backward pawn on the half-opened c-file. If the pawn were on c5, Black wouldn't have these problems.

15...♙b7 16 ♙xf6 ♚xf6 17 ♜b4 ♞e5 18 ♞d4!

Now both knights are controlling c6, and Black can't avoid an unpleasant invasion.

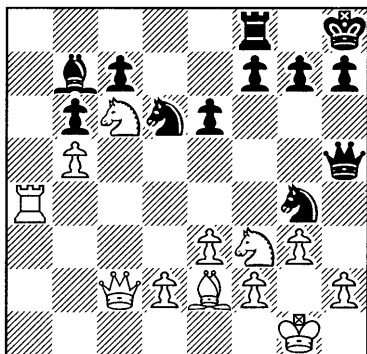
18...♚g5 19 g3 ♚h6 20 ♚c2 ♚h3

Usually the pressure on the open diagonal creates too many problems. Here it's easily eliminated because the white knight is coming to c6.

21 ♞bc6 ♜h8 22 ♚a1

So, the a-file is in White's power! It's worth observing that the reply 22...♚a8 is not good for Black. Continuing 23 ♚xa8+ ♙xa8 24 ♚a4, White's queen invades on the a-file, achieving the advantage. This is a logical turn of events, since on the queenside White has a space advantage, and using the open a-file is easier for him.

22...♞g4 23 ♞f3 ♚h5 24 ♚a4!



A beautiful idea! White offers Black a choice of either of the pawns on b5 or h2. On 24...♞xb5 there follows 25 ♞h4!,

winning a piece. Black prefers to capture the pawn on h2 but is trapped in a clever snare.

24...♞xh2

Maybe Black counted on 25 ♚h4? ♞xf3+ 26 ♙xf3 ♚f5!, meeting all the threats.

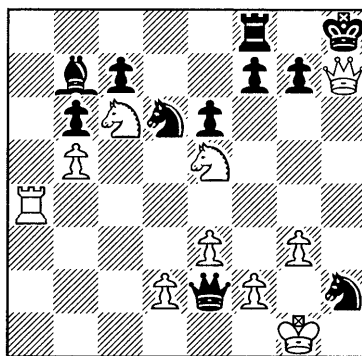
25 ♞fe5!

In this position 25...♚f5 loses a piece after 26 ♚xf5 ♞xf5 27 ♜xh2. Nor is Black saved by 25...♚h6, because of 26 ♚h4.

25...♚xe2

Now, by sacrificing a queen, White forces a checkmate in four moves:

26 ♚xh7+! 1-0



(Co-author's note: My late friend Sidney Bernstein was quite proud of this elegant win against his old rival Herb Seidman, and I am pleased to include it in this collection.)

Game 48
A.Sokolsky-E.Geller
USSR Championship, Kiev 1957

1 b4 ♞f6 2 ♙b2 e6 3 b5 a6 4 a4 ♙e7

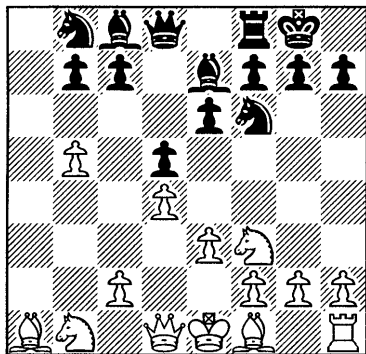
chesstouring.com

Placing the bishop on e7 is a standard opening ploy and is hence unobjectionable, but the continuation 4...d5 5 e3 c5 6 ♖f3 ♙d6 is more active.

5 e3 0-0 6 ♖f3 axb5?!

Opening the a-file is good for White, who now has a base for active operations on the queenside. 6...d5 is a stronger option.

7 axb5 ♙xa1 8 ♙xa1 d5 9 d4



This move is probably not worse than the usual 9 c4. White plans to develop by ♖bd2 and ♙d3. Black must open the game with ...c5 or else he will remain cramped.

9...c5

Geller brings about a lively position with this mandatory thrust. True, White's dark-squared bishop comes alive, but so do the black pieces.

10 dxc5 ♖e4!?

Hoping to get in a useful ...♙a5+, but 10...♙xc5 would have been stronger.

11 ♖bd2 ♙a5 12 ♙e2 ♙d7

After 12...♖c3? 13 ♖b3! ♙b4 14 ♙d2 ♖a2 15 ♙xb4 ♖xb4 16 ♙d2, the black knight is in a precarious position.

13 0-0 ♙xb5

Or 13...♖xc5 14 ♙b1, and a later c2-c4 will give White the better chances.

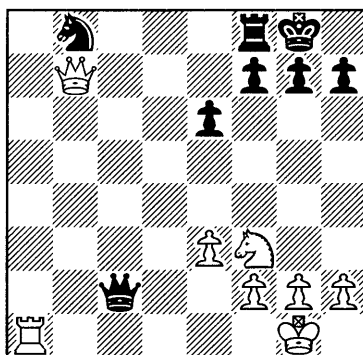
14 ♙xb5 ♙xb5

If 14...♖xd2, White replies 15 ♖xd2! ♙xb5 16 ♙g4 g6 17 ♙d4 f6 18 ♙b1 ♙xc5 19 ♙xb7, arriving onto the seventh rank with many threats.

15 ♖xe4 dxe4 16 ♙d4! ♙f6 17 ♙xe4 ♙xa1 18 ♙xa1

Maybe better here is 18 ♖g5 g6 19 ♙h4 h5 20 ♙xa1.

18...♙xc5 19 ♙xb7 ♙xc2



The battle on the queenside has ended satisfactorily for both sides. White's pieces are placed more actively, but Black has eliminated all the pawns on the left flank and has thus assured himself of not losing.

20 h3

After 20 ♖d4! ♙c8 (20...♙c3 21 ♙b1 ♙c8) 21 ♙b1 ♖d7 22 ♖c6 ♙xb7 23 ♙xb7 ♖f6 24 ♖e5, Black would still have to negotiate a few difficulties before achieving the draw. In the actual event peace was concluded more quickly.

20...♙c6 21 ♙a7 ♙xb7 22 ♙xb7 ♖c6 1/2-1/2

Game 49
A.Sokolsky-N.Abzhirko
 Omsk 1943

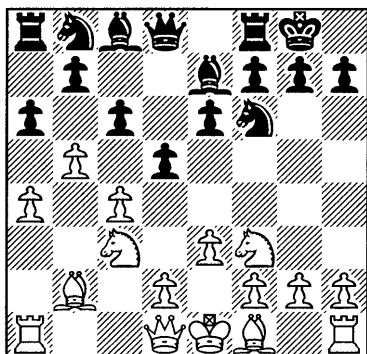
1 b4 ♖f6 **2** ♙b2 e6 **3 b5** ♙e7 **4 e3** 0-0 **5** ♖f3

It's a matter of taste which move to prefer: 5 ♖f3 or 5 f4.

5...c6

In this game Black decides to destroy the nuisance on b5. It's possible to do so by a more exact order of moves: 5...a6 6 a4 axb5 7 axb5 ♖xa1 8 ♙xa1 c6 9 c4 d5.

6 a4 d5 7 c4 a6 8 ♖c3!

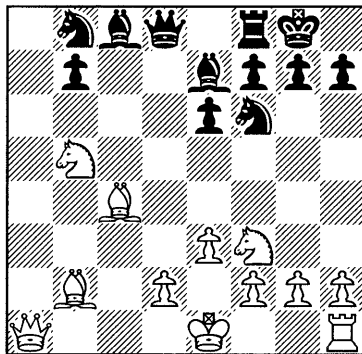


Now after the exchange of rooks on the a1-square White's queen will come to the a-file, and this greatly improves his position.

8...axb5 9 axb5 ♖xa1 10 ♙xa1 dxc4 11 ♙xc4 cxb5 **12** ♖xb5

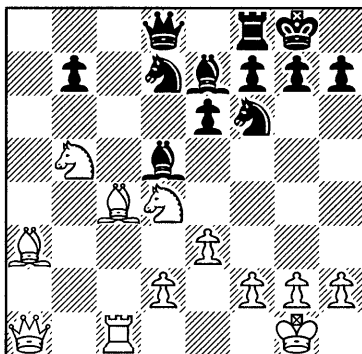
Black has achieved his goal of destroying the b5-pawn, but he has spent too much time in doing so. Furthermore, the b7-pawn is now exposed as a weakness. The results of the opening

are obviously in White's favour. The ensuing transfer of the bishop to c6 is probably the best that Black can do in this position.



12...♙d7 13 0-0 ♙c6 **14** ♖fd4 ♙d5 **15** ♖c1 ♖bd7

The tempting continuation 15...♙xc4 16 ♖xc4 ♙d5 leads after 17 ♖c7! ♙d8 18 ♖c3 to the loss of a pawn. **16 ♙a3!**



The goal of this exchange is to gain the d6-square for the knight, from where it can attack the pawn on b7.

16...♙xa3 17 ♙xa3 ♖b6 18 ♙xd5 ♖bxd5 **19** ♖d6

White has carried out his plan, but

Black defends admirably.

19...♖e7! 20 ♜b5 ♜e8 21 g3

An important preparation. White wants to push the knight away from d5, but 21 e4 allows 21...♜f4.

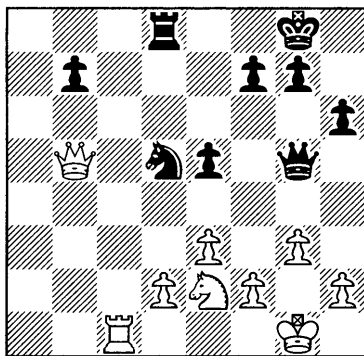
21...♜xd6 22 ♖xd6 ♖g5

22...♖xd6 23 ♜xd6 b6 (23...♜b8 24 ♜xb7!) 24 e4 ♜f6 25 f3 ♜b8 26 ♖f2 etc leads to a difficult ending for Black.

23 ♜d4

Black was threatening the move 23...♜xe3!, and 23 ♜c5 was no good because of 23...b6 24 ♜c6 ♜xe3. In turn, White is now threatening to sacrifice on e6.

23...♜d8 24 ♖c5 h6 25 ♖b5 e5 26 ♜e2



Black has defended very imaginatively until now. Here he has to play 26...b6, but in this case by continuing 27 ♜c3! ♜xc3 28 ♜xc3 ♜b8 (or 28...♜xd2 29 ♖e8+ ♖h7 30 ♖xf7) 29 ♜c7 White could keep an advantage.

26...♖e7 27 ♜c5 ♖d6 28 d4 exd4

On 28...b6 there could follow 29 ♜c6 ♖e7 30 e4 ♜f6 31 dxe5 ♜xe4 32 ♜xb6, winning a pawn.

29 ♜xd4 ♜c7

It's difficult for Black to defend after

29...b6 30 ♜c4, with threats of 31 ♜f5 or 31 e4.

30 ♖c4 ♜a6?

The transfer of the knight to the edge of the board is a serious mistake. Coming back to d5 leads to immediate defeat: 30...♜d5 31 ♜f5 ♖e6 32 ♜xd5 ♜xd5 33 ♖xd5 etc. Only 30...♜e6! offers hopes of saving the game.

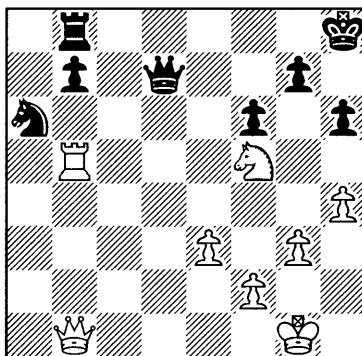
31 ♜b5 ♜b8 32 ♖b3

Here it's possible to win a pawn, playing 32 ♜xb7 ♜xb7 33 ♖c8+ ♖h7 34 ♖xb7 ♜c7. But White is well aware that realizing his extra pawn in such an ending is not an easy task, so he prefers to keep the rooks on and increase the pressure.

32...♖d7

32...g6 is not good because of 33 ♜b6 ♖c7 34 ♜xg6+.

33 ♜f5 ♖h7 34 ♖b2 f6 35 ♖b1 ♖h8 36 h4



It's hard to defend when you can't make a good move. White threatens 37 h5 followed by ♜h4. The move Black chooses permits White to include the rook in the attack.

36...♖g8 37 ♜d5! ♖c7

37...♖e6 38 ♜d6 ♜c4 39 ♜xh6+! is destructive.

38 ♜d1 ♜c8

Equivalent to giving up. But after 38...♜c5 39 ♜g4! Black has no defence to the threats of 40 ♜xc5 or 40 ♜xh6+.

39 ♜d7 1-0

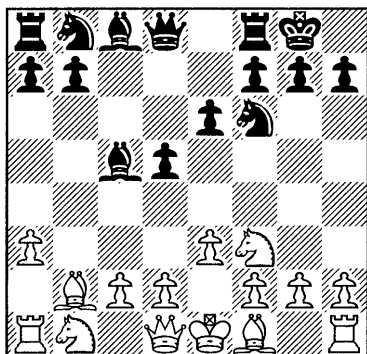
White has successfully converted his early queenside activity into a devastating attack on the other wing.

Game 50 V.Simagin-S.Flohr USSR Championship, Moscow 1955

1 b4 d5 2 ♘b2 ♜f6 3 ♜f3 e6 4 a3

4 b5 is stronger. Simagin writes that after 4 b5 a6 5 a4 Black can simplify the position with 5...axb5 6 axb5 ♜a1 7 ♘xa1. But this exchange cannot be good for Black – it opens a file on the side where White has more space. Practice shows that in such cases White has more chances to play on this file.

4...c5 5 bxc5 ♘xc5 6 e3 0-0



The game has started similarly to

the beginning of Alekhine-Drewitt, Portsmouth 1923. Alekhine continued here 7 c4 ♜c6 8 d4, which is probably better than Simagin's preference.

7 d4 ♘e7

This is stronger than retreating to b6, which was Drewitt's choice.

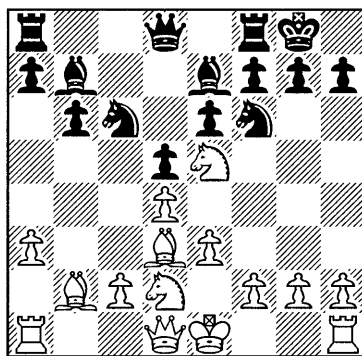
8 ♜bd2

And here 8 c4 was better. Flohr immediately exploits his opponent's mistake.

8...b6! 9 ♘e5

Now after 9 ♘d3 or 9 c4 Black can continue 9...♘a6!. The idea of White's actual move is to make it harder for Black to exchange the light-squared bishops: 9...♘a6 is met by 10 ♜c6! ♜xc6 11 ♘xa6.

9...♘b7 10 ♘d3 ♜c6



11 0-0

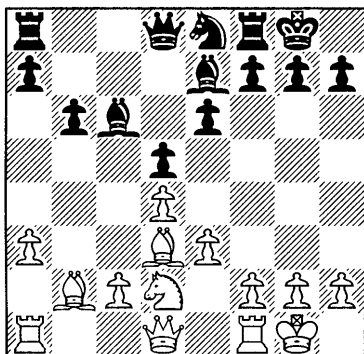
After 11 ♜f3 (with the idea of preparing ♜h3) 11...♜xe5 12 dxe5 ♜e4! 13 ♜xe4 dxe4 14 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 15 ♜xe4 ♜c8, even though Black has lost a pawn his position is not worse.

11...♜e8 12 ♜xc6

In the spirit of the position was 12 f4, to which Black should reply 12...f5.

White instead prepares the advance c2-c4.

12...♙xc6

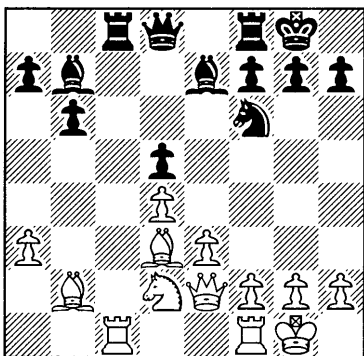


13 c4 ♘f6 14 ♖c1 ♜c8 15 ♗e2 ♙b7

White must resolve the tension in the centre because of the threat of 16...♙a6.

16 cxd5 exd5

Not 16...♗xd5 17 e4! ♗a2? 18 ♖b1, with a threat of 19 ♙c4.



17 f3

A preferable way to prepare the central push was with 17 ♜xc8! ♗xc8 18 f3. Also worthy of attention was 17 ♙f5.

17...♜xc1! 18 ♜xc1 ♙d6 19 ♘f1

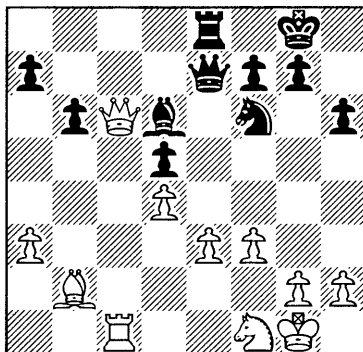
Weaker is 19 e4 dxe4 20 fxe4 ♙f4! 21 d5 ♜e8.

19...♜e8

So Black has succeeded in stopping the advance of the e-pawn. White begins play along the c-file.

20 ♙a6 ♗b8! 21 ♙xb7 ♗xb7 22 ♗c2 h6

23 ♗c6 ♗e7



Flohr declines the exchange, thinking that with queens on the board it will prove easier for Black to get counterplay.

24 a4 ♙a3 25 ♗c3 ♙d6 26 ♗b3 ♗e6

26...♗d7 is weaker because of 27 ♗b5.

27 ♙a3 ♙xa3 28 ♗xa3 ♜c8 29 ♜xc8+ ♗xc8

The situation has simplified. White's small threats are easily dealt with, and the drawish outcome of the struggle is now inevitable.

30 ♗e7 ♗a6 31 ♗b4 ♗d3 32 h3 h5 33 h4 ♗e2 34 ♗a3 ♗e1! 35 ♗d3!

The simplest: after forcing the exchange of the pawns on the edge, the position is more stabilized.

35...♗xh4 36 ♗a6 ♗e1 37 ♗xa7 ♗b4 38 ♗a8+ ♙h7 39 ♗c6 ♙g8 ½-½

Game 51
A.Alekhine-J.Drewitt
Portsmouth 1923

I had heard about this Alekhine game which features a famous two-bishop sacrifice, but I never imagined the opening had been the Sokolsky.

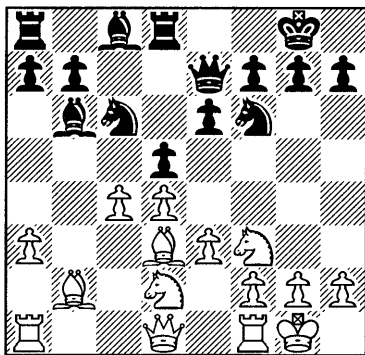
1 ♖f3 d5 2 b4 e6 3 ♙b2 ♜f6 4 a3

This is my favourite move, but some players – including Sokolsky – prefer 4 b5.

4...c5 5 bxc5 ♙xc5 6 e3 0-0 7 c4

7 d4 was covered in Simagin-Flohr (see Game 50).

7...♘c6 8 d4 ♙b6 9 ♘bd2 ♚e7 10 ♙d3 ♜d8 11 0-0



White enjoys a very comfortable position because his pieces are controlling the centre and Black has a bad bishop on c8.

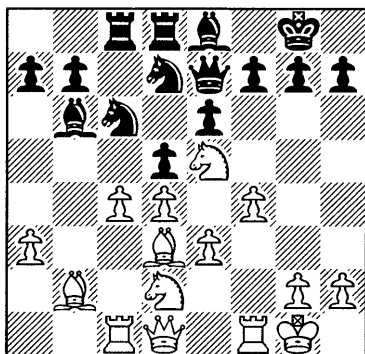
11...♙d7 12 ♘e5 ♙e8

12...♙c7!? 13 ♜c1 ♜ac8 14 f4 dxc4 15 ♘dxc4 ♘d5 16 ♚f3 f6 17 ♘xd7 ♚xd7 18 ♚h3 g6 leaves White with attacking chances because of Black's loose king-

side, but at least this avoids a quick defeat.

13 f4 ♜ac8 14 ♜c1 ♘d7?

Even here, the move 14...♙c7!? could be played. 15 ♚f3 h6 16 c5 b5 17 ♙xb5?! ♘xd4 18 exd4 ♙xb5 poses some awkward problems for White, although taking on b5 is obviously not forced.



15 ♘xc6 ♜xc6?

15...bxc6 avoids an immediate catastrophe, but 16 c5 ♙a5 17 ♙c3 ♙xc3 18 ♜xc3 ♜b8 19 ♘f3 ♘f6 20 ♚c2 ♜d7 21 ♜b1 ♜db7 22 ♜cb3 ♜xb3 23 ♜xb3 ♜xb3 24 ♚xb3 leaves White with the advantage thanks to his stronger minor pieces.

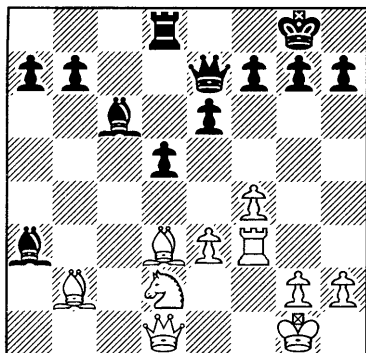
16 c5 ♘xc5

This is clearly desperation, but 16...♙a5 17 ♘b3 ♙c7 (17...b6 18 ♘xa5 bxa5 19 ♙c3 ♜b8 20 ♜b1 ♜xb1 21 ♚xb1 ♘f6 22 ♙xa5 is hopeless for Black) 18 ♙b5 wins the exchange, as does 16...♙c7 17 ♙b5.

17 dxc5 ♙xc5 18 ♜f3 ♙xa3 19 ♜xc6 ♙xc6

Now comes the thematic double-bishop sacrifice:

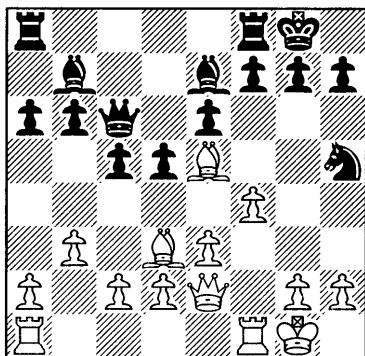
chesstouring.com



20 ♖xh7+!! ♜xh7 21 ♜h3+ ♜g8 22 ♜xg7 1-0

After 22...f6 23 ♜h6 ♜h7 24 ♜h5 ♜f8 25 ♜g4+ ♜f7 26 ♜xf8 White wins a piece; or 22...♜xg7 23 ♜g4+ and White mates with 23...♜f6 24 ♜h6 or 23...♜f8 24 ♜h8.

This type of sacrifice was made famous by Emanuel Lasker, who used it to win a classic game over 100 years ago: 1 f4 d5 2 e3 ♘f6 3 b3 e6 4 ♜b2 ♜e7 5 ♜d3 b6 6 ♘f3 ♜b7 7 ♘c3 ♘bd7 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♘e2 c5 10 ♘g3 ♜c7 11 ♘e5 ♘xe5 12 ♜xe5 ♜c6 13 ♜e2 a6 14 ♘h5 ♘xh5



15 ♖xh7+ ♜xh7 16 ♜xh5+ ♜g8 17 ♜xg7 ♜xg7 18 ♜g4+ ♜h7 19 ♜f3 e5 20

♜h3+ ♜h6 21 ♜xh6+ ♜xh6 22 ♜d7 ♜f6 23 ♜xb7 ♜g7 24 ♜f1 ♜ab8 25 ♜d7 ♜fd8 26 ♜g4+ ♜f8 27 fxe5 ♜g7 28 e6 ♜b7 29 ♜g6 f6 30 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 31 ♜xf6+ ♜e8 32 ♜h8+ ♜e7 33 ♜g7+ ♜xe6 34 ♜xb7 ♜d6 35 ♜xa6 d4 36 exd4 cxd4 37 h4 d3 38 ♜xd3 and Black resigned, Em.Lasker-J.Bauer, Amsterdam 1889.

Game 52 Y.Lapshun-J.Szabolcsi Budapest 2007

I played this game in a 'First Saturday' tournament in Budapest. The opposition consisted mostly of strong IMs, so I knew it wouldn't be easy. Even though I finished tied for last place, I was very happy to have played some wild games. After a short draw against a GM in the first round, my next opponent was the Hungarian chess coach, IM Janos Szabolcsi. During my preparation for the game, I got pretty nervous because the guy had four good defences against 1 e4. After hours of hard work, the best I could find against them was a very small edge. This was not particularly satisfying, so I figured it was time to trot out 1 b4 for its maiden appearance in this event. After reviewing a few Sokolsky games (this book wasn't available yet!) I was ready...

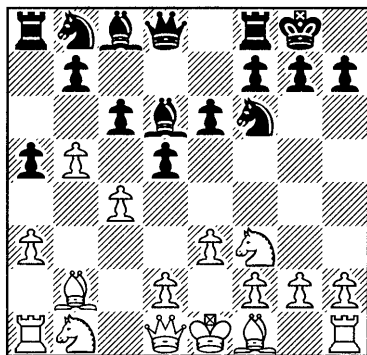
1 b4

The other competitors, all titled players, came over to my board one by one and each of them left with a big smile – I get this reaction all the time!

1...c6 2 ♖b2 d5 3 e3 ♜f6 4 ♜f3 e6

When my opponent shut in his light-squared bishop with this move, I began to feel comfortable.

5 a3 a5 6 b5 ♙d6 7 c4 0-0



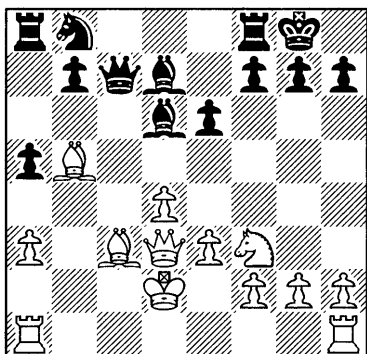
8 d4

Grabbing the bigger share of the centre, at a cost of weakening the important e4-square. But, as Fischer said, you gotta give squares to get squares.

8...dxc4 9 ♜c3

9 ♙xc4!? cxb5 10 ♙xb5 ♙d7 11 ♙d3 ♙c6 12 ♜c3 ♜bd7 13 e4 is also good.

9...♜d5 10 ♙xc4 ♜xc3 11 ♙xc3 ♙c7 12 ♙d3 cxb5 13 ♙xb5 ♙d7 14 ♙d2!?



Steinitz, anyone? I wanted to de-

fend my bishops and couldn't find any other way to do so. It looks very risky, yes, but the black pieces are in a different time zone from the white king.

14 0-0 ♙xb5 15 ♙xb5 ♙c8 (15...♙xc3?? allows the queen to be trapped by 16 ♙fc1) 16 ♙fc1 should be equal.

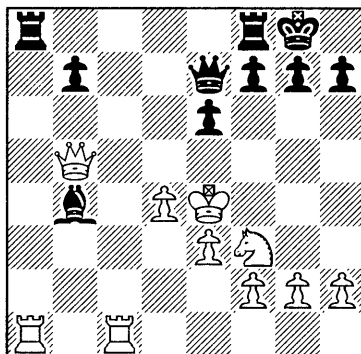
14...♙xb5 15 ♙xb5 ♜d7 16 ♙hc1 ♜f6

My opponent could not resist the temptation to give a check with his knight on e4, but now White can trade his lousy bishop and create problems for Black.

17 ♙b4! ♜e4+ 18 ♙d3 ♙e7

18...♜xf2+?? 19 ♙e2 ♙d8 20 ♙xd6 ♙xd6 21 ♙xf2 and Black loses a piece.

19 ♙xe4 axb4 20 axb4 ♙xb4



What is going on here? The white king is not afraid of anything and demonstrates that he is a valuable member of the team. Black can't do anything to harm him, and later on he will return to his shelter. Meanwhile, Black will have big problems with his weak b-pawn.

Fritz or some other computer engine will tell you that this position is

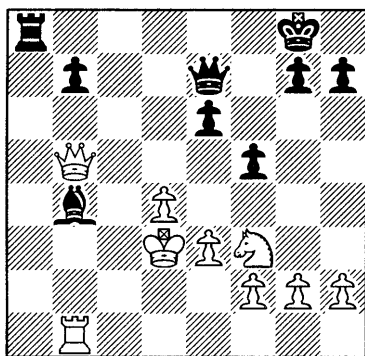
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equal, but don't you believe it! I felt then, as I feel now, that White is winning a pawn and has a big advantage.

21 ♖xa8! ♜xa8 22 ♜b1 f5+

Despite my faith, I must point out that Black has a better defence here with 22...♙d6! 23 ♖xb7 ♖xb7+ 24 ♖xb7 ♜a2 25 ♜d7 ♙f8 26 ♜e5 ♜xf2 27 ♜d8 f5+ 28 ♙d3 ♜xg2 29 h4 ♜h2 30 ♜d7 ♙f7 31 ♜xf8 ♙e7 32 ♜c8 ♜xh4, with very good chances to draw because White's knight doesn't have anywhere to go.

23 ♙d3



23...♜a3+

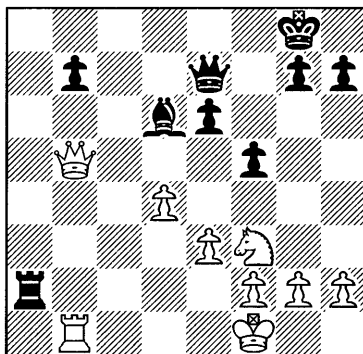
In comparison to the previous note, after 23...♙d6 24 ♖xb7 ♖xb7 25 ♜xb7 ♜a2 26 ♜d7 ♙f8 27 ♜g5 ♜xf2 28 ♜xe6 ♜xg2 29 ♜d8 ♙f7 30 ♜xf8 ♙e7 31 ♜a8 ♜xh2 White is winning as the knight can escape (d4-d5 followed by ♜e6). In this line Black can choose to defend with 27...♜a6, but White has excellent chances to convert his advantage.

24 ♙e2 ♜a2+ 25 ♙f1

It was thoughtful of the rook to escort my king home, but this really hasn't accomplished very much for Black. And now White possesses that

nice inviting cubby-hole on e5.

25...♙d6



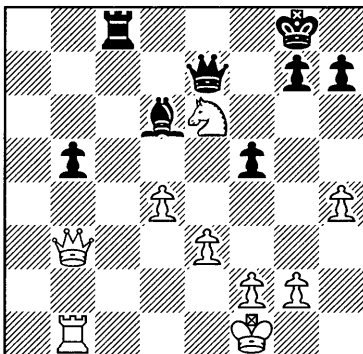
26 h4

I liked the idea of moving this pawn out of the bishop's firing line, but the direct 26 ♜g5 was an excellent alternative. Then 26...♜a8 27 ♖xb7 ♖xb7 28 ♖xb7 ♜a1+ 29 ♙e2 ♜a2+ 30 ♙f3 e5 31 dxe5 ♙xe5 32 ♜e7 ♙d6 33 ♜e8+ ♙f8 34 ♜xh7 ♙xh7 35 ♜xf8 leaves White with a winning rook ending.

26...♜c2 27 ♖b3

Another good way was 27 ♖xb7 ♜c1+ 28 ♙e2 ♜c2+ 29 ♙e1 ♜c1+ 30 ♙d2 ♖xb1 31 ♖xb1, with an extra pawn.

27...♜c8 28 ♜g5 b5 29 ♜xe6



The b-pawn will also drop shortly, and the rest requires no explanation.

29...♖f7 30 ♖d5 ♙e7 31 ♜xb5 ♙xh4 32 g3 ♙f6 33 ♜xf5 ♜a7 34 ♜c5 ♜a8 35 ♜e4 ♜a1+ 36 ♙g2 ♜d8 37 ♜d7 ♜a6 38 ♜b6 1-0

My opponent had seen enough and gave up. So after two rounds I was tied for the lead, but I then lost my next three games. My play was as reckless as my king's wanderings in this game!

Game 53

V.Akopian-S.Ganguly
Goodricke Open, Calcutta

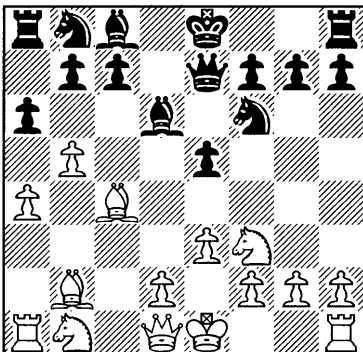
1 b4 e6 2 ♙b2 ♜f6 3 b5 d5 4 e3 ♙d6

4...♙e7 5 f4 0-0 6 ♙d3 a6 7 a4 axb5 8 axb5 ♜xa1 9 ♙xa1 ♜bd7 10 ♜f3 ♜e4 looks level, S.Tartakower-G.Maróczy, New York 1924. The moves 4...a6 and 4...c5, in conjunction with an early ...b6, were discussed in the previous chapter.

5 ♜f3 a6 6 a4 ♜e7

Black is preparing to advance in the centre with ...e5.

7 c4 dxc4 8 ♙xc4 e5



Now the position looks like it arose from a reversed Sicilian Defence.

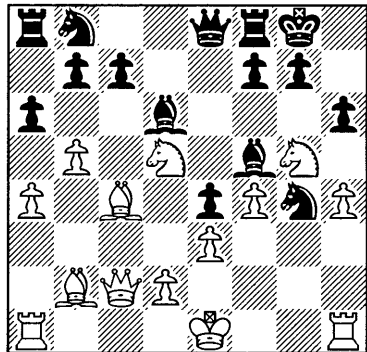
9 ♜g5 0-0 10 ♜c2 h6 11 h4! e4

Accepting the sacrifice is quite risky: after 11...hxg5 12 hxg5 ♜bd7 13 ♜c3 ♜e8 14 gxf6 ♜xf6 15 bxa6 bxa6 16 ♜d5 ♜d8 17 f4 ♜b8 18 ♙c3 ♙e6 19 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 20 ♜h7+ ♙f8 21 ♙xa6 Black has succeeded only in losing a pawn.

12 ♜c3 ♙f5 13 g4 ♜xg4 14 ♜d5

14 ♜gxe4 axb5 15 ♙xb5 ♜d8 16 ♜c1 ♜a6 is unclear.

14...♜e8 15 f4



Even a computer does not understand what is going on in this crazy position. White has a very dangerous attack, but his king is not castled, his rooks are not connected and the knight on g5 is under threat.

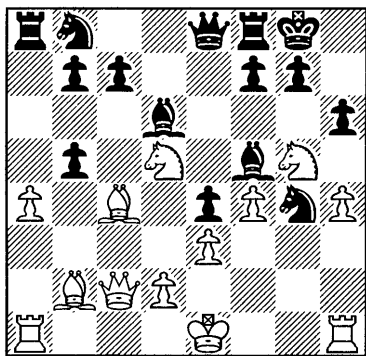
15...axb5?

15...♙h8 looks like the best defence; for example, 16 ♙a3 axb5 17 ♙xb5 ♜d8 18 ♜xc7 ♜a7 19 ♙e2 ♙xa3 20 ♜xa3 ♜e7 21 ♜b5 ♜a5.

15...♜d7, on the other hand, could lead to the following aesthetic variation: 16 bxa6 bxa6 17 ♜c3 ♜df6 18 ♙e2

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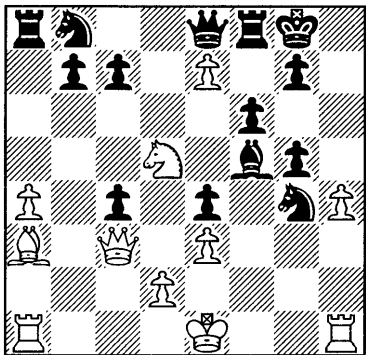
♖h5 19 ♖g1 hxg5 20 ♙xg4 ♙xg4 21 ♙xg4 c6 22 ♜xg7+!! ♜xg7 23 ♜f6+ ♖h8 24 hxg5! ♜f5 25 ♜xe8+ ♙g8 26 ♜f6+ ♙g7 27 ♜xe4+ ♙g6 28 ♜c1, and White is winning.



16 ♜c3! ♙e5 17 fxe5 bxc4 18 e6 f6 19 e7 hxg5

19...♜e5 20 exf8♜+ ♜xf8 21 ♜xc7 is hopeless for Black.

20 ♙a3



20...♜d7 21 exf8♜+ ♜xf8 22 ♜e7+ ♙f7 23 ♜xf5 ♜e5 24 hxg5

White has managed to achieve a decisive material advantage without moving his king or either of his rooks.

24...♜d7 25 ♜f1 ♜fg6 26 gxf6 gxf6 27

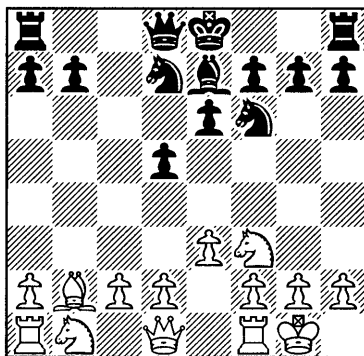
♜d4 ♜e6 28 ♙d1 ♜f3 29 ♜c5 ♜d8 30 ♜d4 ♜xd4 31 exd4 e3 32 dxe3 1-0

Game 54
R.Fischer-K.Walters
San Francisco
(Simultaneous Display) 1964

1 b4 ♜f6 2 ♙b2 e6 3 b5 d5 4 ♜f3 c6

This idea is not seen very often. Usually Black plays instead 4...a6!? 5 a4 axb5 6 axb5 ♜xa1 7 ♙xa1 (transposing to Bernstein-Seidman, see Game 47), 4...c5 5 e3 (Games 32-33) or 4...♙d6 (Game 53).

5 e3 cxb5 6 ♙xb5+ ♙d7 7 ♙xd7+ ♜bxd7 8 0-0 ♙e7



Black has achieved a fairly comfortable position from the opening, with a nice c-file and no weaknesses.

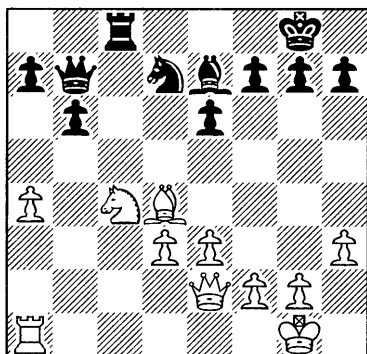
9 d3 0-0 10 ♜bd2 ♜c7 11 c4!

Fischer exchanges his weak c-pawn. 11...dxc4 12 ♜xc4 ♜ac8 13 a4 ♜fd8 14 ♜e2 b6 15 ♜fc1 ♜b7 16 h3 ♜c5

The knight on c5 is a danger, attacking a4, b3, d3 and e4.

17 ♜d4 ♜xd4 18 ♙xd4 ♜b3 19 ♜cb1

♠xa1 20 ♠xa1 ♠d7



21 ♠b2

21 ♠g4!? might be stronger. 21...♠f6 is met by 22 ♠xf6 ♠xf6 23 ♠d6 ♠d7 24 ♠xc8 ♠xa1 25 ♠c4! g6 26 ♠a6 ♠c7 27 ♠xa7, when White wins a pawn and has very good winning chances.

21...f6 22 ♠b1

22 a5!? b5 23 a6 ♠c6 24 ♠a5 ♠xa6 25 ♠b3 ♠d6 26 ♠xa7 leads to very interesting complications after 26...e5!, which in all likelihood will boil down to equality after 27 ♠a2 ♠f8 (27...exd4 28 ♠xd7!) 28 ♠a6 ♠c7 29 ♠a7.

22...e5 23 ♠c3 ♠c5 24 ♠a2?

24 ♠c2 ♠d5 25 ♠b2 ♠e6 26 ♠d1, preventing annoying Black moves such as ...♠a2 and ...♠b4, makes sure that White holds the balance.

24...♠d5 25 ♠d1 ♠xd3 26 ♠xd3 ♠xc4 27 ♠d2 ♠xa4

White is two pawns down and completely lost.

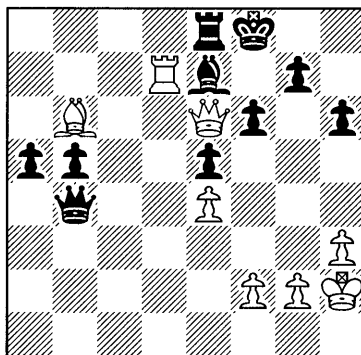
28 ♠d7 ♠a3

28...♠f8!, preventing 29 ♠d5, is stronger.

29 ♠d5+ ♠f8 30 ♠d2 h6 31 ♠e6 ♠e8 32 e4 b5 33 ♠e3 a5 34 ♠h2

34 ♠d5! ♠c8 35 ♠xb5 ♠c3 36 ♠d2 ♠c6 37 ♠xc6 ♠xc6 38 ♠xa5 is dead equal. Fischer was probably still trying to win!

34...♠b4 35 ♠b6



35...♠xe4??

35...a4! would have collected the Fischer scalp. For example, 36 ♠f5 a3 37 ♠a7 ♠c4 38 ♠d7 b4 39 ♠d8 ♠c5 40 ♠xe7+ ♠xe7 41 ♠a8+ ♠f7 42 ♠d8 ♠c6 43 ♠g8+ ♠g6 and White runs out of ideas. After the text move, however, the tables are abruptly turned.

36 ♠c5! ♠f4+

36...♠xc5 allows mate in one with 37 ♠f7.

37 g3 1-0

Poor Walters missed the chance of a lifetime in this game.

Game 55
B.Gurgenidze-A.Dgebuadze
Georgian Championship,
Tbilisi 1996

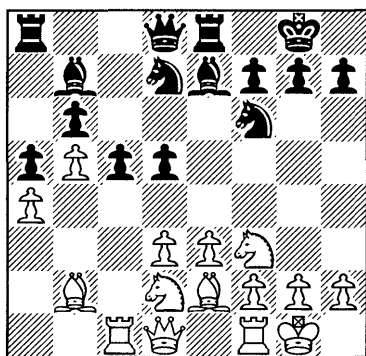
1 ♠f3 ♠f6 2 b4 e6 3 a3 d5 4 e3 c6 5 c4 ♠e7 6 ♠e2 0-0 7 0-0 ♠bd7 8 cxd5 exd5

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9 ♖b2 a5

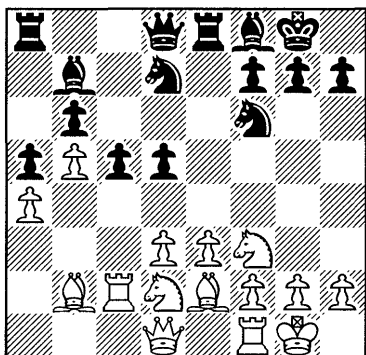
A good move, which helps Black to gain some control in the centre.

10 b5 c5 11 a4 ♖e8 12 d3 b6 13 ♘bd2 ♙b7 14 ♖c1



Such a position can easily occur in the Sokolsky. Ideally White would like to swap off Black's d-pawn by playing e3-e4, but Black's concentration of forces on that square makes this idea impractical. So instead White conceives a plan of direct attack on the enemy's central bastion.

14... ♙f8 15 ♖c2



Defending both bishops and preparing a thematic ♖a1.

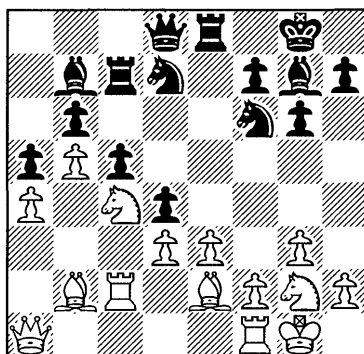
15...g6 16 g3

Planning a possible ♘h4-g2-f4, adding pressure to d5.

16... ♙g7 17 ♘h4 ♖c8 18 ♘g2 ♖c7 19 ♚a1

White wants to attack the d5-pawn with the queen on a2, bishop on f3 and knight on f4. Black decides to strike first, but probably the counterattack is premature and 19... ♗e7 is safer.

19...d4 20 ♘c4



20... ♘e5?!

Black should play 20... ♗a8!?, when 21 ♘e1 dxe3 22 fxe3 ♖e6 23 ♙d1 offers chances for both sides.

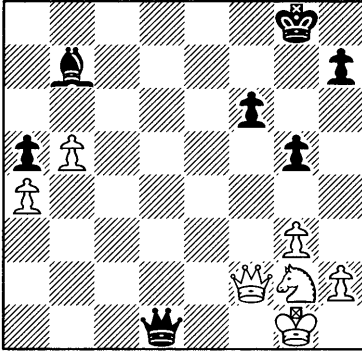
21 ♘xe5 ♖xe5 22 exd4 cxd4 23 ♖xc7 ♗xc7 24 ♙xd4 ♖xe2 25 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 26 ♗xf6

White has won a pawn, but Black's pieces are active and it will be hard to make it count.

26... ♖e6 27 ♗d4

27 ♗a1! ♙xg2 28 ♙xg2 ♗d7 29 ♖d1 keeps the extra pawn and offers some winning chances.

27... ♖d6 28 ♗e5 ♗d7 29 ♘f4 f6 30 ♗e3 g5 31 ♘g2 ♖xd3 32 ♗xb6 ♗d5 33 f3 ♖xf3 34 ♖xf3 ♗xf3 35 ♗f2 ♗d1+



36 ♖e1

After 36 ♖e1 ♜d4+ 37 ♖e3 ♜d5 38 ♜e8+ ♔g7 39 ♜e7+ ♔g6 40 ♜e8+ ♔g7 41 ♜e7+ Black should allow the perpetual check, as 41...♜f7 42 ♜xf7+ ♔xf7 43 ♘e3 is good for White.

36...♜d5 37 ♜xf6 ♜h1+ 38 ♔f2 ♜xh2+ 39 ♔e3

39 ♔f1 ♜d2 40 ♜e6+ is probably also a draw.

39...♜xg3+ 40 ♔d2 1-0

The game should be drawn after 40 ♔d2 ♜f4+ 41 ♜xf4 gxf4 42 ♘d3 h5 43 ♘xf4 h4, but maybe Black lost on time.

Summary

The Queen's Gambit set-up without ...b6 is less logical than the Queen's Indian – players don't employ the Queen's Gambit as White by locking in their queen's bishop anymore, do they? The recipe for White is often the same as the one suggested in Chapter Four: put a pawn on b5, cover it, and then strike at the centre. However, playing with a more restrained a2-a3, as in Games 50-52, is also possible.

It's not covered here, but the Bird set-up with f2-f4 might be worth exploring, and this can be compared with a similar approach in the Nimzowitsch-Larsen Attack with 1 b3 (a good source is Dunnington's *Winning Unorthodox Openings*).

1 b4 ♘f6

1...d5 2 ♙b2 ♘f6 3 ♘f3 e6

4 b5 (D): 4...c6 – Game 54; 4...♙d6 5 e3 – Game 53

4 a3

4...c6 – Game 52; 4...c5 5 bxc5 ♙xc5 6 e3 0-0 (D)

7 c4 – Game 51; 7 d4 – Game 50

2 ♙b2

2 ♘f3 e6 3 a3 d5 4 e3 – Game 55

2...e6 3 b5

3 a3 d5 4 ♘f3 – see 1...d5

3...a6

3...♙e7 4 e3 0-0 5 ♘f3 c6 – Game 49; 3...d5 – see 1...d5

4 a4 axb5

4...♙e7 – Game 48

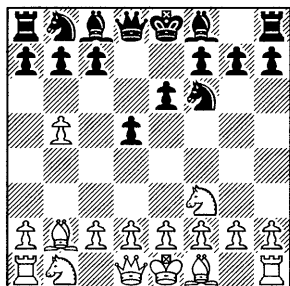
5 axb5 ♖xa1 6 ♙xa1 d5 (D)

6...c6 – Game 45

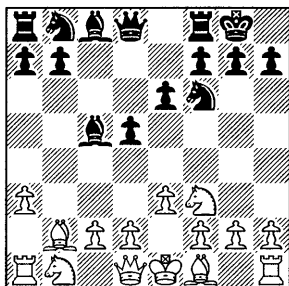
7 e3

7 ♘f3 ♙e7 8 e3 ♘bd7 – Game 47

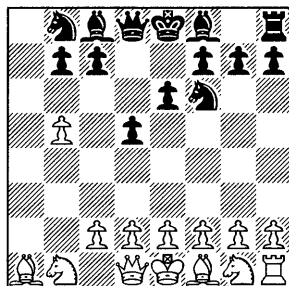
7...c5 8 ♘f3 ♙d6 9 c4 – Game 46



4 b5



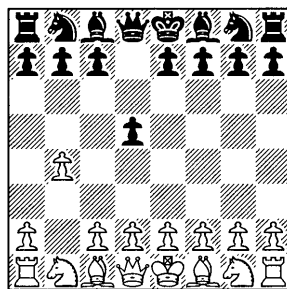
6...0-0



6...d5

Chapter Six

Black Plays ...d5 and ...♗f5/...♗g4



This chapter is devoted to reversed queen's pawn openings in which Black develops his c8-bishop outside the pawn chain so that it will not be hemmed in when he supports the centre with ...e7-e6.

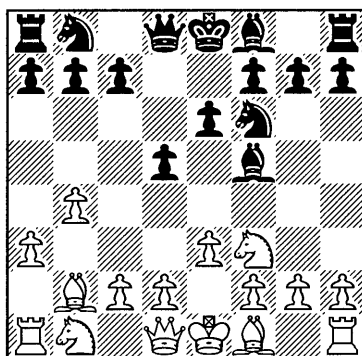
Against an early ...♗f5 White can borrow an idea from the Nimzowitsch-Larsen Attack and play a quick f2-f4 to seize the e5-square. Larsen was quite fond of this plan and dubbed it 'the Dutch Orangutan', an acknowledgement to another common name for 1 b4. My encounter with Gravel (Game 59) explores this approach, while Games 56-58 concentrate on the more usual development with ♘f3 followed by a quick c2-c4.

One of Black's most challenging defences to the Sokolsky consists of playing 1...d5 followed by ...♗g4, either on the second move or a bit later. The final seven games of this chapter will examine various White plans against this set-up.

Game 56 B.Larsen-W.Browne Las Palmas 1974

1 b4 d5 2 ♗b2 ♗f5 3 ♘f3 e6 4 e3 ♘f6 5 a3

White's main alternative, 5 c4, is discussed in Katalymov-Litvinov (Game 57).



5...c5

5...♘bd7 6 c4 dxc4 7 ♗xc4 a5 8 b5

♖b6 9 ♕e2 ♕d6, as played in E.Agur-S.Dudakov, Netanya 1973, is a sound path to a reasonable position for Black.

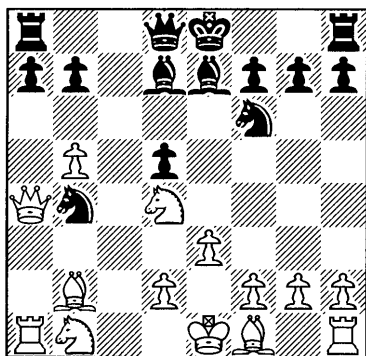
6 c4!? cxb4 7 axb4 ♖c6

After 7...♕xb4 8 ♖a4+ ♖c6 9 ♖d4 ♕e7 10 ♖xc6 bxc6 11 ♖xc6+ ♖f8 12 ♖c3, the awkward position of Black's king assures White of an advantage.

8 ♖a4 ♕e7

8...♕xb4 transposes to the previous note.

9 cxd5 exd5 10 ♖d4 ♕d7 11 b5 ♖b4



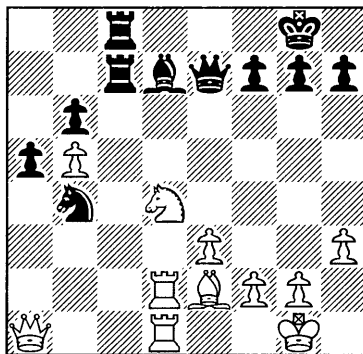
Let's take a look at this position. White is trying to finish his development. He does have an isolated b5-pawn, but the knight on d4 is strong enough to protect all the weaknesses. Black has almost finished his development, but he must protect the isolated d5-pawn. I prefer White's position because his pieces – when they are developed – have the potential to exploit Black's weaknesses later in the game.

12 ♕a3 a5 13 ♖c3 0-0 14 ♕e2 ♖e4 15 0-0 ♖xd2 16 ♖fd1 ♖c4

16...♖e4 would have been stronger, and 17 ♖xe4 dxe4 18 ♖f5 ♕xf5! 19 ♖xd8 ♖fxd8 20 ♕c4 ♕f6 21 ♖d1 ♖d3 22

f3 exf3 23 gxf3 ♖e5 reaches a dynamic position with rough material equality – our assessment is 'unclear'.

17 ♖xd5! ♖xa3 18 ♖xe7+ ♖xe7 19 ♖xa3 b6 20 ♖d2 ♖ac8 21 ♖ad1 ♖c7 22 h3 ♖fc8 23 ♖a1

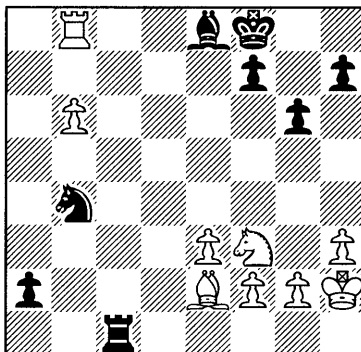


This position should be equal: White possesses a strong knight on d4, but Black has a passed pawn on a5.

23...g6 24 ♖f3 ♕e8 25 ♖d6 ♖xd6 26 ♖xd6 ♖c1+ 27 ♖xc1 ♖xc1+ 28 ♖h2 a4

Now it begins to get really complicated. It's very difficult for most players to calculate all these crazy variations, but for Larsen it's not a big deal.

29 ♖xb6 a3 30 ♖b8 ♖f8 31 b6 a2



32 ♖b5

32 b7 ♖c6 33 ♖a8 a1♚ 34 ♖b5 ♜f6
35 ♖xc6 ♜d6+ 36 g3 ♖b1 37 ♖xe8+ ♔g7
38 ♖d4 h5 39 ♔g2 ♖b6 40 ♖c8 ♖b2 41
♖f3 ♖b4 is fascinating but far from
clear. White may be better, but we
would not be surprised to see a draw
as the final result.

32...♖c6?

Browne could have reached a com-
pletely drawn position after 32...a1♚!
33 ♖xe8+ ♔g7 34 b7 ♖a6 35 ♖xa6 ♖b1
36 b8♚ ♖xb8 37 ♖xb8 ♜xa6 38 ♖b2.
Probably he was very short of time, but
who wouldn't be in such a game?

33 ♖xc6 a1♚ 34 ♖xe8+ ♔g7 35 b7

Now White gains a decisive mate-
rial advantage.

**35...♖b1 36 b8♚ ♖xb8 37 ♖xb8 ♜a5 38
♖b7 ♔f8 39 e4 ♜c5 40 ♖d5 f5 41 ♖e5
1-0**

After 41...♜d6 (what else makes any
sense?), 42 ♖f7+ ♔e8 43 ♖c6+ ♔d8 44
♖d7+ wins what's left of Black's posi-
tion. Just another day at the office for
the Great Dane.

Game 57
B.Katalymov-V.Litvinov
Minsk 1971

**1 b4 d5 2 ♖b2 ♖f5 3 e3 ♖f6 4 ♖f3 e6 5
c4 ♖b7**

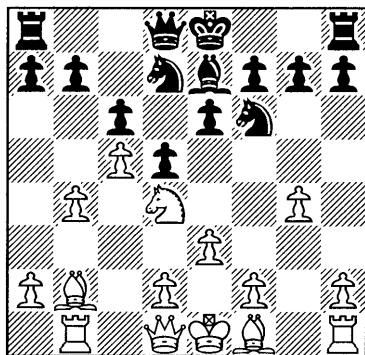
After 5...♖xb4 6 ♜a4+ ♖c6 7 ♖d4,
7...♜d6?? is a blunder which drops a
piece to 8 ♖xc6 bxc6 9 a3 ♖c5 10 d4
♖b6 11 c5. Instead, 7...♖e7 8 ♖xc6 bxc6
9 ♜xc6+ ♔f8 10 ♖d4 dxc4 11 ♜xc4 of-
fers White chances to attack Black's

weaknesses and exploit the poorly
placed king on f8.

6 c5

White starts a queenside attack.

6...♖e7 7 ♖d4 ♖xb1 8 ♖xb1 c6 9 g4!?



This could be the move either of a
total beginner or a very strong player.
After pressing on the queenside, White
begins attacking the kingside! I don't
really believe in this attack, but such
crazy moves did help Katalymov to
win a considerable number of games.

9 ♖e2 a5 10 a3 axb4 11 axb4 0-0 12
0-0 ♖e8 13 f4 ♜c7 14 ♜c2 ♖a2 15 ♖a1
♖ea8 16 ♖xa2 ♖xa2 17 ♖a1 ♖xa1+ 18
♖xa1 leaves White with a minimal ad-
vantage in space. The text is much
more ambitious!

9...e5

Castling into it with 9...0-0 allows
White to build a promising attack after
10 g5 ♖e8 11 f4 e5 12 fxex5 ♖xe5 13 h4
a5 14 ♖b3 ♖d7 15 a3 axb4 16 axb4.

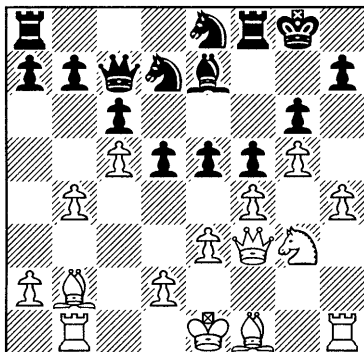
10 ♖f5 g6

After 10...0-0 11 d4 exd4 12 ♖xd4
♖e8 13 ♖e2 ♖f6 White can abandon the
plan of a direct attack by playing 14 0-0,
which still leaves him with an edge.

11 ♖g3 **0-0** **12** h4 ♗e8 **13** g5 f5 **14** f4 ♜c7?!

14...exf4!? 15 exf4 offers chances for both sides, for example after 15...♗g7 16 h5 a5 17 hxg6 hxg6 18 a3 axb4 19 axb4 ♖e8 20 ♗e2 ♗f8 21 ♜b3.

15 ♜f3



15...♗f7?

Black should seek counterplay with 15...a5!?, although White is still better after 16 h5. One possible line runs 16...axb4 17 hxg6 hxg6 18 ♖h6 ♗g7 19 ♖xg6 ♗f7 20 ♖h6 ♗e8 21 ♗h5 ♗xh5 22 ♜xh5+ ♗d8 23 g6 ♗f6 24 ♗xe5 ♜xe5 25 fxe5 ♗xh5 26 ♖xh5 ♗xc5 27 ♖b2 ♗e8, and here 28 ♗d3 gobbles the f-pawn because it's all over after 28...f4? 29 exf4 ♖xf4 30 ♖h8+ ♖f8 31 g7.

16 h5! ♗f8 **17** ♗e2!

Defending the f4-pawn, and preparing to move the queen to the h-file. White is able to attack without moving his bishop or rook.

17...b6 **18** hxg6 hxg6 **19** ♜h3

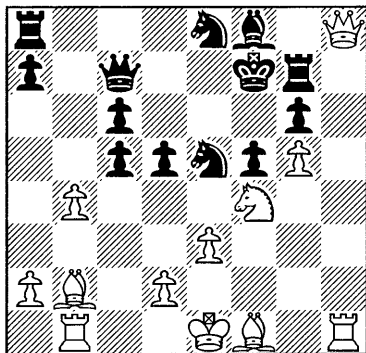
After this move White's attack becomes deadly.

19...♖g7 **20** fxe5 ♗xe5 **21** ♗f4 bxc5

Against 21...♗f7, White can win ma-

terial with 22 ♗xg6! ♗xg6 23 ♜xf5+ ♗e7 24 ♗xg7 ♗xg7 25 ♜xg6.

22 ♜h8+ ♗f7



23 ♜xf8+!

This is decisive, winning a piece

23...♗xf8 **24** ♗e6+ ♗g8 **25** ♗xc7 ♗f3+ **26** ♗e2 ♖xc7 **27** ♖h8+ ♗f7 **28** ♗xf3 cxb4 **29** ♗e5 ♖e7 **30** ♖h7+ 1-0

Game 58

Y.Lapshun-O.Adu

Richard Aronow Memorial,
Philadelphia 2002

I will always be grateful to Mikhail Belorusev for organizing the Aronow Memorial tournament, because in it I achieved my third and final International Master norm. This game marked my first test with 1 b4 against an IM.

1 b4 **d5** **2** ♗b2 **c6** **3** e3 ♗f5 **4** ♗f3 e6

Black has chosen a reversed London System. This is also known as the New York System, since Emanuel Lasker used it to defeat Réti at the 1924 New York tournament.

5 c4 ♗f6 **6** cxd5

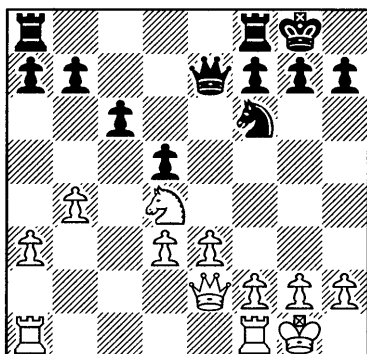
chesstouring.com

6 b5 dxc4 7 ♟xc4 ♟e7 8 a4 0-0 9 0-0, as played in H.Ree-Y.Bernstein, Netanya 1968, is nothing special for White. Against 6 a3, 6...a5 is rather annoying, while 6...dxc4 7 ♟xc4 a5 is also not bad. White can also play in the same style as Katalymov, with 6 c5 (compare Game 57).

6...exd5 7 a3 ♟d6 8 ♟e2 0-0 9 d3 ♟e7 10 ♟bd2 ♟bd7 11 0-0

White has nothing here, and 11...a5! is a strong idea. After Black's actual choice, I could see a favourable structure shaping up.

11...♟e5 12 ♟xe5 ♟xe5 13 ♟xe5 ♟xe5 14 ♟f3 ♟e7 15 ♟d2 ♟g4 16 ♟d4 ♟xe2 17 ♟xe2



The exchanges have left White with a superior minor piece and a clear plan: to play the Minority Attack on the queenside.

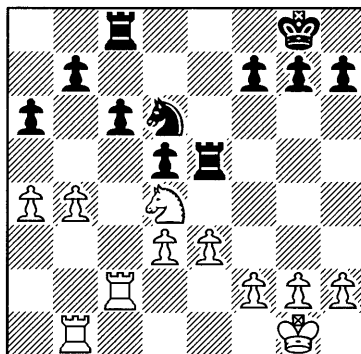
17...♟fe8 18 ♟fc1 a6 19 ♟ab1 ♟e5 20 ♟c2 ♟d7 21 ♟g4 ♟ad8 22 ♟g3 ♟b6 23 ♟xe5 ♟xe5 24 ♟b3 ♟c8 25 a4 ♟d6 26 ♟d4

White is happy to have his pawn on d3 to keep Black's knight out of e4 and c4. In contrast, he has the d4-square for

his own knight.

26...♟c8?!

26...♟f8, centralizing the king, is stronger.



27 ♟bc1 ♟f5?!

And here 27...♟a8!? lessens the force of the thrust b4-b5.

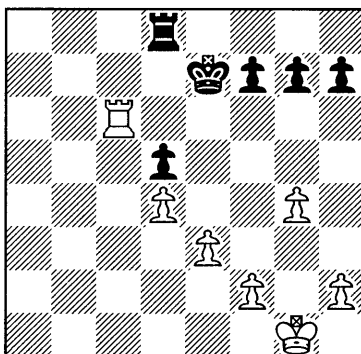
28 ♟xf5 ♟xf5 29 ♟c5 ♟d8 30 b5 axb5?

30...cxb5!? 31 axb5 ♟f8 would have at least avoided the immediate loss of a pawn.

31 axb5 ♟f8 32 bxc6 bxc6 33 d4

White wins a pawn and keeps enough on the board to clinch the win.

33...♟f6 34 ♟xc6 ♟xc6 35 ♟xc6 ♟e7 36 g4!



36...♖a8 37 ♔g2 ♕d7 38 ♜b6 ♖c7 39 ♜b2 ♖c6 40 h4 ♜e8 41 ♜a2 ♖b6?

41...♜e7!? is the right way to meet the threatened 42 ♜a7.

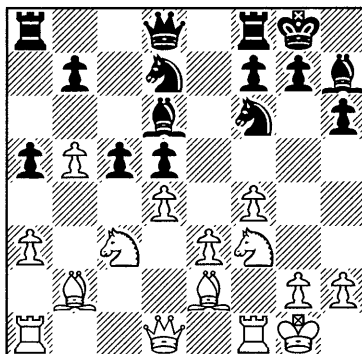
42 ♜c2!

It's useful to cut off the black king from the rest of his army.

42...♜d8 43 ♜c5 f6 44 g5 fxg5 45 hxg5 h5 46 gxh6 gxh6 47 ♔g3 ♜g8+ 48 ♖h3 ♜f8 49 ♖g2 ♜f5 50 f4! 1-0

50...h5 51 ♔g3 ♖b7 52 e4 is decisive. So I won, but it seems that the reversed London System is a viable defence to 1 b4.

weak e-pawn and e4-square, but at least in return I was getting the e5-square for my knight.



Game 59
Y.Lapshun-S.Gravel
Montreal 2004

It took a long journey to reach this game. My Canadian friends drove me from Kapuskasing to Montreal, a trip of more than ten hours. When I finally arrived, I was about 30 minutes late. It was very difficult to find the venue because all the signs were in French. I had absolutely no idea what my opponent liked to play, so I figured this was a good time for the Sokolsky.

1 b4 ♘f6 2 ♙b2 d5 3 e3 ♙f5 4 f4

The idea of this move is to control the e5-square. 4 ♘f3 e6 reaches Games 56-58.

4...e6 5 a3 a5 6 b5 c5 7 ♘f3 ♘bd7 8 c4 ♙d6 9 cxd5 exd5 10 ♙e2 0-0 11 0-0 h6

My opponent didn't want to have to part with his bishop after ♘h4.

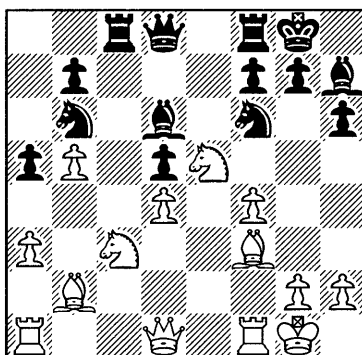
12 ♘c3 ♙h7 13 d4!?

I was worried about giving myself a

13...♘b6 14 ♘e5 ♜c8 15 ♙f3 cxd4?!

15...c4 is stronger; later on Black can work on White's weaknesses.

16 exd4



16...♘c4?!

Black should have prepared this move.

17 ♘xc4 ♜xc4 18 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 19 ♙xd5 ♜c2 20 ♙c1 ♙xa3 21 ♗f3 ♙xc1 22 ♜axc1 ♜e8

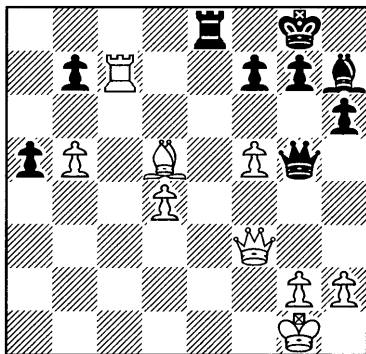
White has emerged well from all the complications, with an active bishop and a passed pawn. The next step is to

shut out the black bishop.

23 f5 ♖xc1 24 ♖xc1 ♜g5?!

This tempting counter will fail, albeit in an amusing fashion. 24...b6 would have been stronger.

25 ♖c7



I had to calculate many variations, and eventually I decided that my king would be safe after a short trip round my g-pawn.

25...♗e1+ 26 ♙f2 ♜d2+ 27 ♙g3 ♙h8! 28 ♖c8+ ♙g8 29 ♜g4 ♗e3+ 30 ♙f3 b6

It's hard to say for sure whether or not it's wise to interpolate 30...♗e1+ 31 ♙h3.

31 f6 g5 32 h3

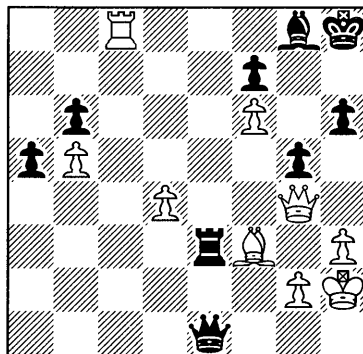
It's time to move my king to h2. 32 h4!? was also possible, but I wanted to hide my king, not expose it!

32...♗e1+

32...♗e6 is possible too. Fritz offers the following variation, which may uncover the truth, but it's too difficult for any human I know to work out over the board. Take it for what it's worth: 33 ♖c6 ♗e1 34 ♙h2 ♗e3 35 h4 ♖b1 36 ♙d1 ♖xb5 37 ♖c8 ♜f4+ 38 ♜xf4 gxf4 39 ♖d8 ♖f5 40 ♖d6 ♖b5 41 d5 ♖b4

42 ♖d8 a4 43 d6 ♖d4 44 ♙g4 f3 45 gxf3 h5 46 ♙e6 ♙h7 47 ♙f5+ ♙h8 48 ♙g3 b5 49 d7 a3 50 ♖a8 b4 51 d8♜ ♖xd8 52 ♖xd8 b3 53 ♙e4 a2 54 ♖a8 b2 55 ♖xa2 and White wins!

33 ♙h2



33...♗e8??

Black had to try 33...♗e6, although White is still winning here after 34 ♖c6 ♗e3 35 h4 a4 36 hxc5 ♜xc5 37 ♜xc5 hxc5 38 d5 ♗e8 39 ♖xb6 ♙h7 40 ♖b7 ♙g6 41 ♖a7 ♖b8 42 d6.

34 ♜h5 ♙h7 35 ♙g4!

Winning, as Black must give up a rook to prevent ♙f5+.

35...♜f2 36 ♖xe8 ♜f4+ 37 ♙g1 ♜xd4+ 38 ♙h1 ♜xf6 39 ♙e2 ♙g7 40 ♜f3 1-0

Game 60

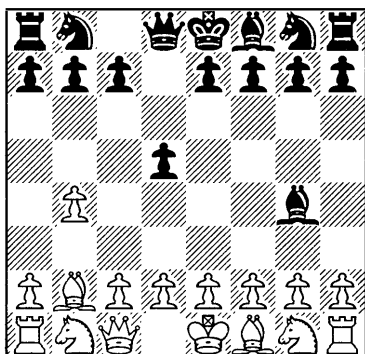
Y.Lapshun-A.Hahn
US Championship,
San Diego 2004

In this game I beat a US Women's Champion with 1 b4. Before I played her, I looked at her games and didn't know which move to open with. I was

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thinking about 1 e4, but she plays various openings after this: the Sicilian or 1...e5, with the Ruy Lopez or Marshall Gambit. Before the game I was talking with my roommate, Salvijus Bercys, and he told me I was preparing too much for my opponents, and that it was taking up too much energy. So I decided to take his advice, forget preparation, and play 1 b4. She played great chess in the opening but I decided to attack when she got into time trouble, and I won. Maybe she could have defended with 39...♚d8, but by then I was doing well.

1 b4 d5 2 ♖b2 ♙g4 3 ♚c1



The idea of this move is to play 4 e3 and later ♙e2, so that the knight will recapture the bishop with a tempo for development.

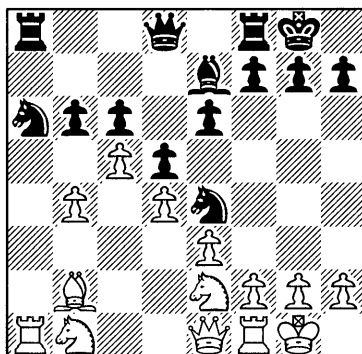
3...♟f6

3...♟d7 reached a very similar position in Lapshun-Paschall (see Game 61).

4 e3 e6

4...♟bd7 5 c4 e5 6 b5 ♙d6 is equal, S.Rocha-V.Akopian, World Junior Ch., Mamaia 1991.

5 a3 ♙e7 6 ♙e2 ♙xe2 7 ♟xe2 c6 8 c4 0-0 9 0-0 a5 10 c5 ♟a6 11 ♚c3 axb4 12 axb4 b6 13 d4 ♟e4 14 ♚e1



The white queen defends the b-pawn and – indirectly – the a1-rook, while preparing to attack the black king after f2-f3 and ♚g3.

14...♚b8

The black queen indirectly attacks the b2-bishop and also points at the white king.

15 f3 ♟f6 16 ♙c3 ♟c7 17 ♟d2 ♟b5 18 ♙b2 ♚xa1 19 ♚xa1 ♚b7 20 ♚a4 ♚a8 21 ♚b3 ♟c7 22 ♟c1 ♚b8 23 ♙c3 ♟d7 24 ♚c2 ♟b5 25 ♙b2 e5

Black is trying to break up White's centre, but it is standing like a rock. This centre is worth maintaining; breaking it up with 26 dxe5 would give Black plenty of play after 26...bxc5 27 bxc5 ♙xc5 28 ♚e1 ♙a3.

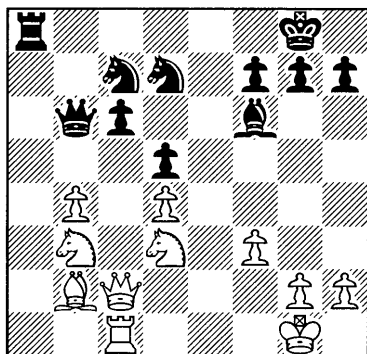
26 ♟d3 exd4 27 exd4 ♙f6 28 ♟b3 ♚a8

28...♚e8 is also reasonable. White has nothing after 29 f4 bxc5 30 bxc5 ♙d8 31 ♚e1 ♚xe1+ 32 ♟xe1.

29 ♚e1 ♟c7 30 cxb6 ♚xb6 31 ♚c1

White has two isolated pawns, but Black's c-pawn is very weak and White

can use the a5- and c5-squares.



31...♖b8 32 ♗h1

I'm not sure if this is the best move, but a little prophylaxis can't hurt.

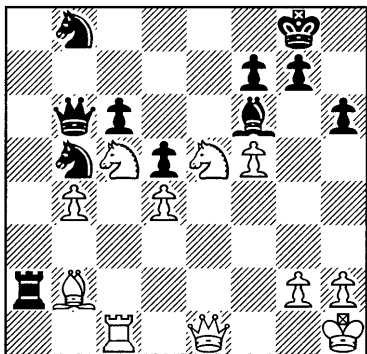
32...♗e6 33 ♖c3 h6 34 f4

My opponent's time pressure and a bad knight on b8 convinced me to make my first attacking move.

34...♖a4 35 f5 ♖c7 36 ♖bc5 ♖a8 37 ♖e5

It was a huge pleasure to have two great knights on c5 and e5, but I also wanted to improve the b2-bishop.

37...♖b5 38 ♖e1 ♖a2



39 ♖g4

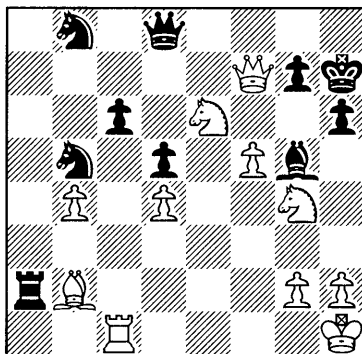
39 ♖xf7!? is an interesting sacrifice:

39...♖xf7 (39...♖c7? 40 ♖xh6+ gxh6 41 ♖g3+ ♙g5 42 h4 ♖xb2 43 hxg5 h5 44 f6 ♖e8 45 ♖e5 gives White a winning attack) 40 ♖e6+ ♖f8 41 ♖c8+ ♖f7 (41...♙d8 is more resilient but White still enjoys a strong attack after 42 ♖e6+) 42 ♖e6! (42 ♖e6+ ♖f8 is a draw) 42...♙e7 43 ♖e1 ♖xb2 44 ♖g5+!, and White mates after 44...hxg5 45 ♖e6+ ♖f8 46 ♖xe7+ ♖g8 47 ♖e8+ ♖h7 48 ♖h5+ ♖g8 49 ♖e8.

39...♙g5??

Instead the move 39...♖d8! defends. After the continuation 40 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 41 ♖e8+ ♖h7 42 ♖xb8 ♖xf5! (42...♖xb2 43 ♖d7! ♖xf5 44 ♖f8+ ♖g8 45 ♖g6+ ♖h7 46 ♖e7 wins for White) 43 ♙a1 ♖xg2! 44 ♖xg2 ♖g5+ 45 ♖g3 ♖xc1 46 ♖d3+ ♖g8 47 ♖f1 ♖d2+ 48 ♖f2 ♖d1 49 ♖g1 ♖d2+ 50 ♖f2 ♖d1, White cannot improve on a draw.

40 ♖e8+ ♖h7 41 ♖xf7 ♖d8 42 ♖e6 1-0

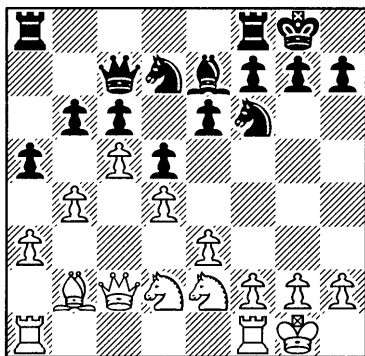


The deadly attack by White's queen and two knights forces Black to resign. After 42...♖g8 (or 42...♖e7 43 ♖f8+ ♖h8 44 ♖g6+), a flight is taken from the black king and White forces mate with 43 ♖xg5+ hxg5 44 ♖h5.

Game 61
Y.Lapshun-W.Paschall
 New York Masters (rapid) 2003

The tournament organizer suggested that my game against IM William Paschall deserved to be on the Internet. When I asked why, he said that people like the way I play 1 b4. He was joking, but in the end I decided that if people want to see it, they will see it!

1 b4 d5 2 ♖b2 ♗g4 3 ♜c1 ♘d7 4 c4 e6 5 e3 ♘gf6 6 a3 a5 7 c5 c6 8 ♙e2 ♙xe2 9 ♘xe2 b6 10 d4 ♙e7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♘d2 ♜c7 13 ♜c2



I felt at the time, as I do now, that this position is evenly balanced and offers chances for both sides.

13...♗g4 14 g3 f5?!

There are two problems with this move. Black is left with:

- 1) A weak e-pawn; and
- 2) A weak e5-square.

15 ♘f4 ♜f6 16 h3 ♘h6 17 ♘d3 a4? 17...axb4 18 axb4 ♜ff8 19 ♘f4 ♙f7

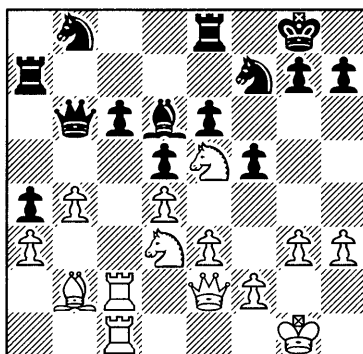
holds the balance. Black's choice in the game deprives him of counterplay.

18 cxb6 ♜xb6

Black has too many problems: the squares c5 and e5 are weak, and in addition Black has to defend his a-, c- and e-pawns.

19 ♜ac1 ♘b8 20 ♘f3 ♜f8 21 ♘f4 ♜e8 22 ♘e5 ♜a6 23 ♜e2 ♙d6 24 ♘fd3?!

24 ♘xc6 ♘xc6 25 b5 ♜a5 26 ♜xc6 ♜b8 27 ♙c3 ♜a7 28 b6 ♜b7 29 ♜b5 24...♜a7 25 ♜c2 ♘f7 26 ♜fc1



26...♘xe5?

This move loses material. Black should play 26...♜c7.

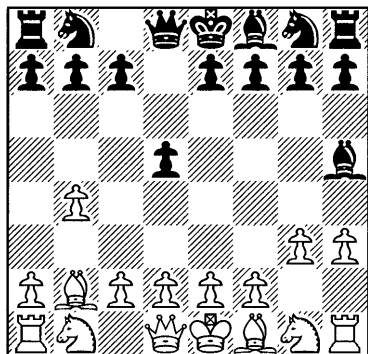
27 dxe5 ♙f8 28 ♙d4 ♜a6 29 ♙xa7 ♜xa7 30 ♘c5 g6 31 ♜c3 ♙g7 32 f4 ♙f8 33 h4 h6 34 ♙f2 ♜e7 35 ♜c2 ♜e8 36 ♜d1 g5 37 hxg5 hxg5 38 ♜h5 1-0

Game 62
P.Benko-J.Bellon Lopez
 Torremolinos 1973

Here's another example of 1 b4 being played by a great American legend.

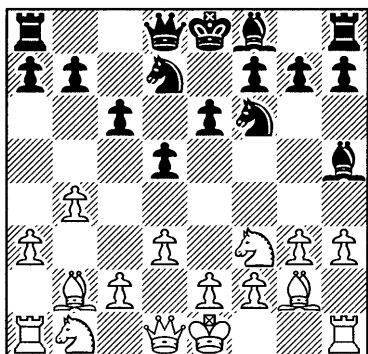
Benko demonstrates an unusual and risky way to play this opening.

1 b4 d5 2 ♟b2 ♟g4 3 h3 ♟h5 4 g3



The double fianchetto is an interesting approach. A certain familiarity with the Réti Opening, particularly the so-called Capablanca System, is a useful thing to have if you want to play this way.

4...e6 5 ♟g2 ♟f6 6 a3 ♟bd7 7 ♟f3 c6 8 d3



I don't trust this passive set-up because the b4-pawn can become an object of Black's attack. White has to solve this problem by weakening himself further.

8...a5!

Giving White another headache.

9 c3

White must close the diagonal of the Sokolsky bishop for the moment. This position now looks more like a Philidor than a Sokolsky.

9...♟d6 10 ♟bd2 ♟b6 11 ♟b1 0-0 12 g4

In order to castle White is forced to weaken his kingside, as 12 0-0?! ♟xg3 13 bxa5 ♟a7 (13...♟xa5? 14 c4 ♟a7 15 ♟d4! wins a piece) 14 a6 bxa6 15 ♟d4 ♟f4 16 ♟xc6 ♟c7 leaves Black with the advantage.

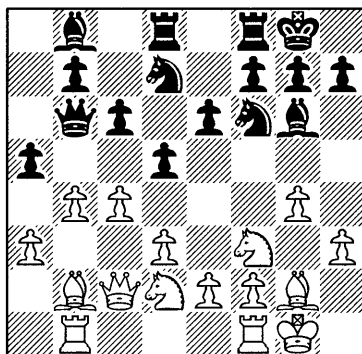
12...♟g6 13 0-0 ♟ad8

Another active alternative is 13...axb4 14 axb4 ♟a2 15 c4 ♟f4, with level chances.

14 c4 ♟b8

After 14...axb4?! 15 axb4 ♟xb4 16 ♟c3 c5 17 ♟xb4 cxb4 18 ♟a4 ♟c7 19 ♟xb4 ♟c5 20 ♟b6, White has a comfortable position and a target on b7 to attack.

15 ♟c2



15...♟c7

15...axb4 16 axb4 dxc4 17 ♟xc4 ♟c7 would have been safer. After the text

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move, 16 bxa5!? ♖xa5 17 ♙xf6 ♜xf6 18 ♖xb7 ♖xa3 19 ♖fb1 ♙f4 20 ♜d4 is dangerous for Black.

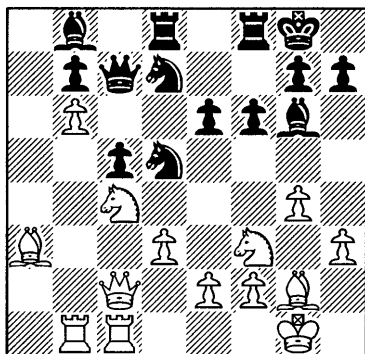
16 ♖fc1 dxc4 17 ♜xc4

It's taken a while, but at last we have a Réti structure that favours White, since Black's pieces are in odd places and White can execute a minority attack with his Sokolsky pawn.

17...axb4 18 axb4 ♜d5 19 b5 f6

19...cxb5?! 20 ♜ce5 ♜xe5 21 ♙xe5 ♖xc2 22 ♖xc2 b4 23 ♙xb8 ♖xb8 24 ♜h4 ♖fc8 25 ♖xc8+ ♖xc8 26 ♙xd5 exd5 27 ♖xb4 is better for White.

20 ♙a3 c5 21 b6!



White's b6-pawn sticks like a bone in Black's throat. Black cannot take the pawn, as 21...♜7xb6 loses material to 22 ♜xb6 ♜xb6 23 ♙xc5.

21...♖f4 22 ♖d2

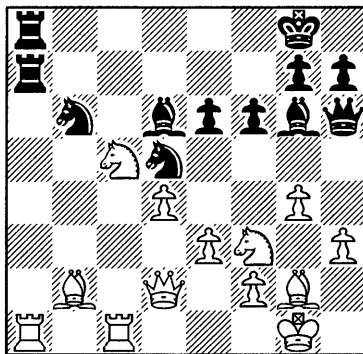
22 ♜a5? allows Black to complicate with 22...♜e5, and after 23 ♜xb7 ♙xd3! 24 ♖xd3 ♜xd3 25 exd3 ♖c8 26 ♜xc5 ♖d6 27 b7 ♖cd8 it's probably Black who has more chances to win.

22...♖c8?

Losing the b7-pawn doesn't help matters. After 22...♖xd2!? 23 ♜fxd2

♙f4 24 ♖c2 ♖a8 25 ♜e4 ♖fc8 26 e3 ♙h6 White has a good position, but Black does at least have some counterplay.

23 e3 ♖h6 24 ♜a5! ♖f7 25 ♜xb7 ♜7xb6 26 ♜xc5 ♖a7 27 ♖a1 ♙d6 28 d4 ♖ca8 29 ♙b2



Benko cleverly trades all the pieces to reach a winning endgame.

29...♙f7 30 ♖xa7 ♖xa7 31 ♖d3 ♖g6 32 ♖xg6 hxg6 33 ♜e1 ♖a2 34 ♜ed3 ♜b4 35 ♙c3 ♜xd3 36 ♜xd3 ♙a3 37 ♖b1 ♖c2 38 ♙b4 ♙xb4 39 ♖xb4 ♜d5 1-0

Probably Black lost on time in this position. After 40 ♙xd5 exd5 Black will face severe problems trying to survive a pawn down and with several weaknesses.

Game 63

Y.Lapshun-J.Bonin
Marshall Chess Club 2002

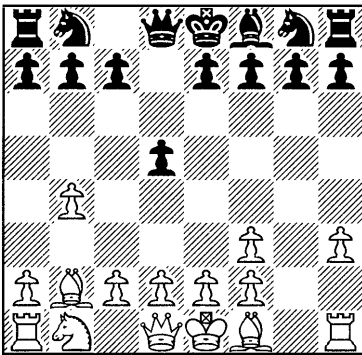
Jay Bonin is a renowned IM from New York. He's won countless tournaments, defeated many GMs and won many club and state championships; he recently received a lifetime achieve-

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ment award from the USCF.

Bonin has always been a tough opponent for me. Fifteen years ago, when I started my career in New York City, he beat me like a drum. Now, of course, I do much better. We've played each other in hundreds of serious games, and God only knows who is ahead because we have stopped counting.

**1 b4 d5 2 ♟b2 ♟g4 3 h3 ♟h5 4 ♞f3
♟xf3 5 gxf3**



I prefer this capture to 5 exf3 because I don't know what to do about the possibility of an isolated d-pawn in that variation. 5...♞f6 6 c4 dxc4 7 ♟xc4 e6 8 0-0 ♞bd7 9 a3 ♟e7, as played in G.Baranov-A.Payen, St Petersburg 1998, illustrates the d-pawn problem quite clearly. White doesn't want to play d2-d4 and close the line of his dark-squared bishop; the move d2-d3, obstructing the light-squared bishop, is also undesirable; and finally leaving the d-pawn at home may lead to a weakness on the d3-square. I think White is struggling to equalize here!

5...c6 6 e3 e6 7 c4 ♞f6 8 ♞b3 ♞bd7 9

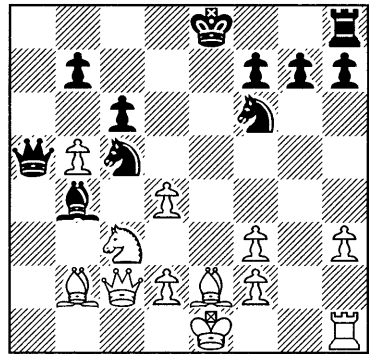
**exd5 exd5 10 ♞c3 a5 11 a3 axb4 12
axb4 ♞xa1+ 13 ♟xa1 ♞b6 14 b5 ♞a5?!**

14...♟d6 15 ♟e2 0-0 16 0-0 ♞a8 looks equal, and in fact is easier for Black to play with all his pieces well posted.

15 ♟b2 ♟b4 16 ♟e2 ♞c5 17 ♞c2 d4!?

Jay decided to sacrifice a pawn to keep my king in the centre. Of course he could have just castled and stood perfectly okay.

18 exd4



I was nervous playing with all of my remaining six pawns being weak, but I did at least have an extra pawn and the two bishops for my suffering.

18...♞e6?

18...♞cd7 19 ♞e4 0-0 20 bxc6 bxc6 21 ♞xc6 ♞xe4 22 fxe4 ♟xd2+ 23 ♟f1 ♞a2 is more consistent and a better choice. If Black does not like this position, he shouldn't offer the pawn in the first place.

**19 ♞e4! ♞d5 20 bxc6 0-0 21 cxb7 ♞b6
22 ♞g1**

Fritz prefers 22 ♞c5 ♞xc5 23 dxc5 ♟xc5 24 ♟d3 ♟xf2+ 25 ♟d1 ♞xb7 26 ♟xh7+ ♟h8 27 ♟e4 ♞d8 28 ♟e2 ♞b6, but this position didn't look so great to

me at the board. The move I played seemed simpler and stronger.

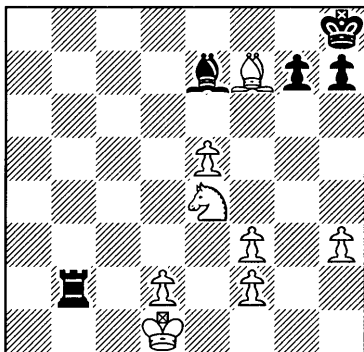
22...♖xb7 23 ♙c4 ♘ef4 24 ♜b3 ♙h8 25 ♙d1

I couldn't find a safer place for my king.

25...♜b8 26 ♜g5! ♙e7 27 ♜xb7 ♜xb7 28 ♙xd5 ♜xb2 29 ♜e5

29 ♜f5 is also strong.

29...♙g6 30 ♙xf7! ♙xe5 31 dxe5



In this winning position I had only five minutes left and wasn't able to keep any further score of the game. Little by little I was able to push my passed pawns forward and eventually I forced my opponent to resign.

Game 64 W.Lombardy-M.Quinteros Torremolinos 1974

GM William Lombardy, who swept to the World Junior Championship with a perfect 11-0 score fifty years ago, is a legend of American chess. I've analysed with him several times at the Marshall Chess Club, and I'm always

astonished by his rapid grasp of the position and his original but accurate approach to strategic problems. I always come away from these sessions feeling like a humble student who has been taught by a true master.

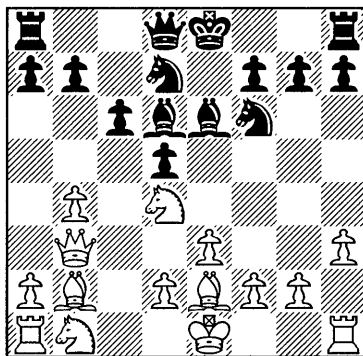
1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 b4 c6 3 c4 d5 4 e3 ♙g4 5 ♙b2 e6 6 ♜b3

In most games White defends the b4-pawn by pushing it or protecting it with a2-a3. Here Lombardy uses an interesting idea – defending it with the queen.

6...♙bd7 7 cxd5 exd5 8 ♙e2 ♙d6 9 h3 ♙e6

I believe the e6-square isn't the best choice for the bishop in this type of structure, and instead Black should maintain the pin with 9...♙h5.

10 ♙d4



This ambitious move blocks the d5-pawn, attacks Black's bishop and helps to attack both flanks.

10...♜e7 11 b5 c5 12 ♙xe6 fxe6 13 d3 0-0 14 0-0 ♙h8 15 ♙c3 ♙b6

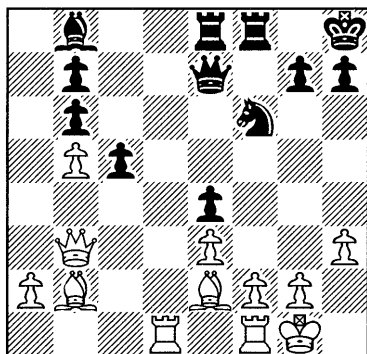
This position offers level chances: White enjoys the advantage of the two bishops, while Black has a strong cen-

tre. Lombardy now provokes Quinteros into an advance which weakens his dynamism in the centre.

16 ♖a4 e5 17 ♖xb6 axb6 18 ♟f3 e4 19 dxe4 dxe4 20 ♟e2 ♜ae8

It would have been better to get rid of White's two-bishop advantage by playing 20...♟e5.

21 ♜ad1 ♟b8



An unsuccessful attempt to check-mate the white king only leads to a loss of time, and White uses this to strike back in the centre. It wasn't too late to trade White's dangerous bishop by playing 21...♟e5.

22 ♜d2 ♜c7 23 g3 ♜c8 24 ♟g2 ♜f5 25 ♜d1 ♟e5 26 ♟xe5 ♜xe5

After wasting so much time Black has finally traded bishops, but he has lost the initiative.

27 ♟c4 h5?!

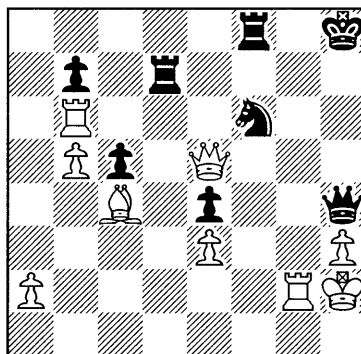
Black continues to attack the king, but it was time to fight for control of the d-file and defend the weak b6-pawn. 27...♜c7 would have helped to solve these problems.

28 ♜d6 h4

A desperate pawn sacrifice can't

free Black from White's grasp.

29 gxf4 g5 30 ♜xb6 ♜d8 31 ♜a1 ♜f5 32 hxf5 ♜xg5+ 33 ♟h2 ♜h4 34 ♜e5 ♜d7 35 ♜g1 ♜xf2+ 36 ♜g2 ♜h4



37 ♜xf6! 1-0

White is winning in all variations:

37...♜xf6 38 ♜g8+ ♟h7 39 ♜h5+ ♜h6 40 ♜xh6+ ♟xh6 41 ♜xf8; or 37...♜xf6 38 ♜e8+ ♟h7 39 ♜xd7+ ♟h6 40 ♜g7+ ♟h5 41 ♜h7+ ♜h6 42 ♟f7 mate.

Game 65

Y.Lapshun-R.Furdzik
New York Masters (Rapid) 2002

Mr. Furdzik is a National Master who has beaten some GMs. He plays openings creatively and well, but despite this I have beaten him with 1 b4 many times. Even though he knows what I will play against him, the result is always the same. Here is one example of his 1 b4 woes.

1 b4 d5 2 ♟b2 ♖f6 3 e3 c6 4 f4

4 ♖f3 ♟g4 5 c4 reaches Lombardy-Quinteros (Game 64).

4...♟g4 5 ♟e2

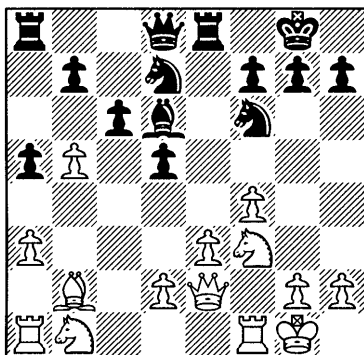
chesstouring.com

For 5 ♖f3, see the next game.

5...♙xe2 6 ♖xe2 e6 7 a3 ♘bd7 8 ♖f3

Continuing to fight for the e5-square.

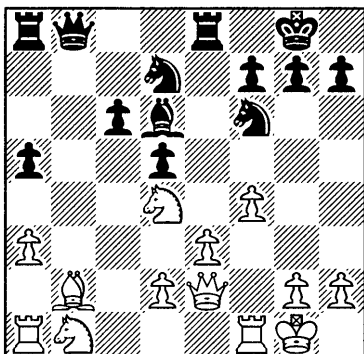
8...♙d6 9 c4 0-0 10 0-0 a5 11 cxd5 exd5 12 b5 ♖e8



13 bxc6?

This premature exchange gives Black too much play, and 13 ♖d4! is much stronger.

13...bxc6 14 ♖d4 ♖b8



15 ♖c3

I overestimated my chances when playing this tricky move. Now 15...♖xb2!? 16 ♖fb1 ♙xa3 17 ♖xb2 ♙xb2 18 ♖a2 ♙xc3 19 dxc3 ♖b6 20

♖xc6 ♖c4 offers Black good compensation for the queen. 15...♙xf4! is even stronger, as 16 ♖xf4 ♖xb2 17 ♖ff1 ♖b6 would leave White with nothing for the missing pawn.

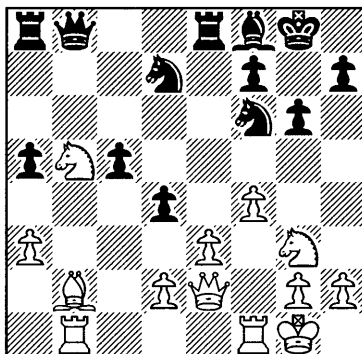
15...c5 16 ♖f5

16 ♖db5 d4 17 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 18 ♖b5 ♖b6 19 a4 is roughly equal.

16...♙f8

Furdzik could have probably forced a draw here with 16...♙xf4 17 ♖xf4 ♖xb2 18 ♖af1 d4 19 ♖e4 dxe3 (19...♖xe4? 20 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 21 ♖g4 g6 22 ♖h6+ ♖h8 23 ♖xe4 ♖f8 24 ♖xf7+ ♖g7 25 ♖e7 ♖b8 26 ♖d8+ ♖h6 27 ♖xf8 ♖xf8 28 ♖xf8+ is winning for White; and 19...♖xe4 20 ♖g4 dxe3 21 ♖h6+ ♖h8 22 ♖xf7+ ♖g8 23 ♖h6+ is another draw) 20 ♖xe3 ♖d5 21 ♖g4! ♖xe3 22 ♖h6+ ♖h8 23 ♖xf7+ ♖g8 24 ♖h6+, when the game ends in perpetual check.

17 ♖ab1 d4 18 ♖b5 g6 19 ♖g3



19...♙g7?!

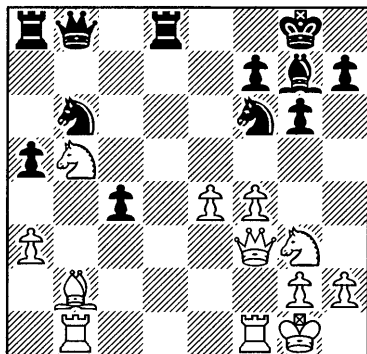
19...♖b7 20 f5 ♖ab8 21 a4 ♖d5 22 e4 ♖5b6 would have been okay for Black.

20 ♖d3 dxe3 21 dxe3 ♖b6?!

Black should have restrained the force of 22 e4 by playing 21...♖d8, in-

tending 22 e4 ♖b6 23 ♖c4 ♜ab8.

22 e4 c4 23 ♖f3 ♜d8



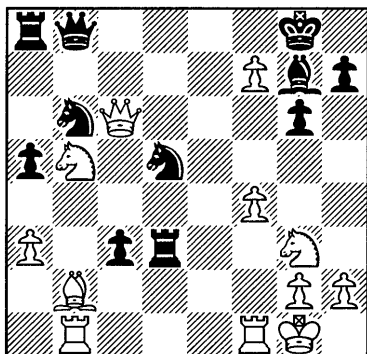
24 e5?!

In such a complex position, it is natural that both sides make mistakes. 24 ♙d4 is stronger, with White obtaining an attack after 24...♖b7 25 f5 ♗e8 26 ♖f2 ♙xd4 27 ♗xd4 ♜d7 28 e5.

24...♜d3 25 ♖c6 ♗fd5 26 e6 c3?!

26...f5 is the best try here. Following 27 ♙xg7 ♙xg7 28 ♗d6 ♗e7 29 ♗dxf5+ gxf5 30 ♖xb6 ♖xb6+ 31 ♜xb6 ♙f6 32 ♜c1 ♜xa3 33 ♙xc4 ♜e3 34 ♜a4 ♙xe6 35 ♜b5 ♜ea6, Black has good chances to hold the draw.

27 exf7+



27...♙h8?

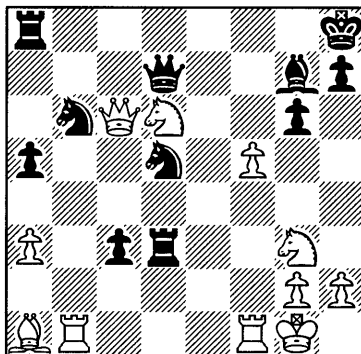
White enjoys a big advantage after 27...♙xf7 28 ♗e4 cxb2 29 ♗g5+ ♙f8 30 ♖e6 ♙d4+ 31 ♗xd4 ♖e8 32 ♜xb2, but the text is even worse for Black.

28 ♙a1?

28 ♗xc3 ♖c8 (or 28...♗xc3 29 ♜fe1! and ♜e8+) 29 ♖xc8+ ♜xc8 30 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 31 ♜fe1 ♜e3 32 ♗f1 ♜xe1 33 ♜xe1 leaves White with two extra pawns and should lead to victory.

28 ♜fe1 is also good enough: 28...♖f8 29 ♗xc3 ♜c8 30 ♖b5 ♗xc3 31 ♙xc3 ♜dxc3 32 ♜e8, winning the queen.

28...♖f8 29 f5 ♖xf7 30 ♗d6 ♖d7



31 ♖xa8+!

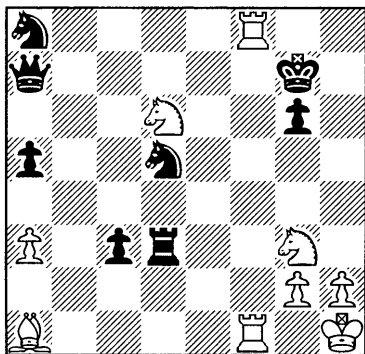
White is trying to build a mating net, even though his bishop on a1 can't move!

31...♗xa8 32 ♜b8+ ♙f8 33 ♜xf8+ ♙g7 34 fxg6 ♖a7+?

Amazingly, Black can play 34...♖xd6! After 35 ♗f5+ ♙xf8 36 ♗xd6+ ♙g7 37 gxf7 ♙xf7 38 ♗e4 ♗ab6 39 ♗f2 ♜d2 40 ♗e4 ♜d3 41 ♗f2 ♜d2 42 ♗e4 it's a draw by repetition – White can hardly try to win with his

bishop locked in the corner.

35 ♖h1 hxg6



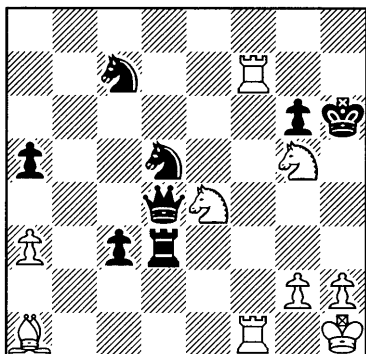
36 ♖ge4?!

36 ♜f7+ ♞xf7 37 ♜xf7 ♜ab6 38 ♜e5 is simpler.

36...♞d4 37 ♖g5? ♜ac7??

37...♞e3! is the best try. White can still win, though, with 38 ♜e8+! (38 ♜xa8? ♞f6! 39 ♜a7+ ♜g8! 40 ♜a8+ ♜g7 41 ♜a7+ ♜g8 is only a draw) 38...♜xe8 39 ♜xe8 ♜ac7 40 ♜d8 a4 41 ♜d7+ ♜h6 42 ♜f7+ ♜g7 43 h3 ♞c5 44 ♜e5+ ♜h6 45 ♜g4+ ♜g5 46 ♜e1, when at long last the black king is caught.

38 ♜f7+ ♜h6 39 ♜de4!!



White has built a mating net with

two rooks, two knights and two pawns.

39...♜h5 40 ♜h7+ ♜g4 41 h3+ 1-0

It's mate next move after 41...♜xh3+ 42 gxh3.

Game 66

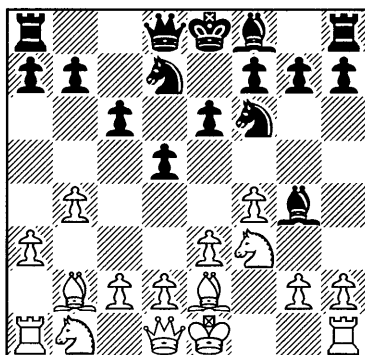
Y.Lapshun-R.Furdzik

Marshall Chess Club 2002

Here's another exciting win over Furdzik. In this game he once more gets mated, and my king doesn't even make a single move.

1 b4 d5 2 ♖b2 c6 3 e3 ♜f6 4 f4 ♖g4 5 ♜f3 e6 6 a3 ♜bd7 7 ♖e2

7 c4 ♖d6 8 cxd5 exd5 9 ♖e2 0-0 10 0-0 ♜e8 11 ♜c3 ♜c8 was fairly comfortable for Black in A.Ornstein-S.Hansen, Gausdal 1999. White can continue with moves such as ♜d4 and ♞c2, trying to control the squares f5 and c5.

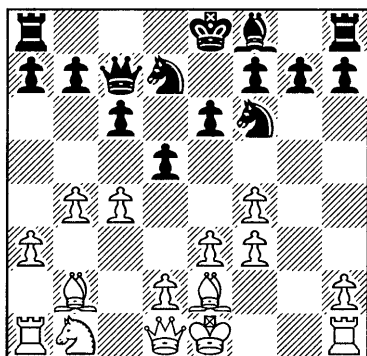


7...♖xf3 8 gxf3?!

I was nervous about recapturing this way because it spoiled my pawn structure, and I had to think about king safety. On the other hand the f3-pawn

is controlling the centre and White does obtain the g-file for the rook.

8...♖c7 9 c4



9...e5?!

This opened the centre for my two bishops and my opponent was going to pay for this. As I usually tell my students, "Before you do something active, develop your pieces!"

10 cxd5 ♘xd5 11 fxex5 ♘xe5 12 ♘c3 ♘xc3

12...♞d8 is stronger.

13 ♙xc3 f6

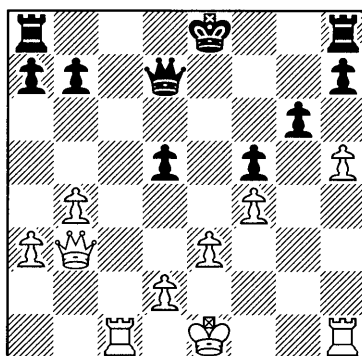
This is an unpleasant move to play, but it's forced because of the pressure exerted by White's c3-bishop. Now White can exploit the new weaknesses on the light squares.

14 f4 ♘d7 15 ♙h5+ g6 16 ♙g4 ♙g7 17 ♖b3 ♘b6 18 ♙e6 f5 19 h4 ♘d5?

Black would still be okay after 19...♙xc3 20 ♖xc3 ♞f8 21 ♙b3 (21 h5 g5! is quite unclear.) 21...0-0-0.

20 ♙xd5 cxd5 21 ♙xg7 ♖xg7 22 ♞c1 ♖d7 23 h5!

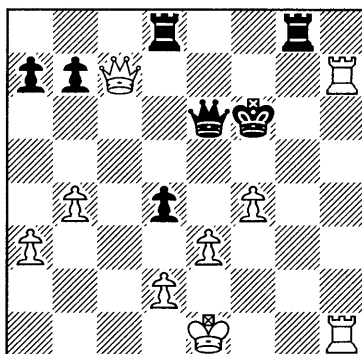
After creating weaknesses on the queenside, it is now time to force concessions on the other wing.



23...gxh5 24 ♞c5

White is down a pawn, but look at all those weak black pawns! It's time to collect them in a harvest.

24...♞d8 25 ♖c3 d4 26 ♞e5+ ♙f8 27 ♖c5+ ♖d6 28 ♞xf5+ ♙e7 29 ♞e5+ ♙f8 30 ♞f5+ ♙e7 31 ♖c4 ♞hf8 32 ♞e5+ ♙f6 33 ♞exh5 ♞g8 34 ♞xh7 ♖d5 35 ♖c7 ♖e6



36 ♞7h6+

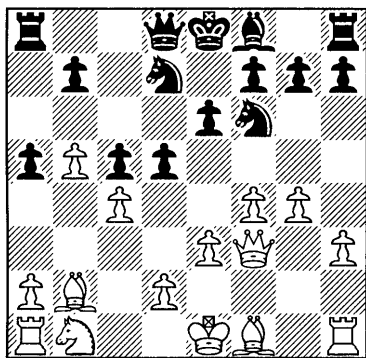
36 ♞f7+ also wins after 36...♖xf7 37 ♖e5+ ♙g6 38 ♖g5 mate, or 36...♙g6 37 ♞g1+ ♙h5 38 ♞h7+ ♖h6 39 ♖e5+ ♙h4 40 ♞xh6 mate.

36...♞g6 37 ♞xg6+ ♙xg6 38 ♖h7+ ♙f6 39 ♞h6 mate (1-0)

Game 67
Y.Lapshun-A.Smith
 Canadian Open,
 Kapuskasing 2004

One day before this game I was analysing some openings together with GM Dmitry Tyomkin and his coach Mark Tseitlin, a very humorous Grandmaster from Israel. During our analysis, whenever the king was uncastled in the middle, he was constantly repeating "The father is in the middle!" Next day, against the Canadian player Andrew Smith, my king didn't make a single move in the entire game. Whenever I was away from the board I would laugh like crazy, and constantly repeat "The father is in the middle!"

1 b4 c6 2 ♖b2 d5 3 e3 ♘f6 4 f4 a5 5 b5 c5 6 ♘f3 ♙g4 7 h3 ♙xf3 8 ♚xf3 e6 9 c4 ♘bd7 10 g4!?

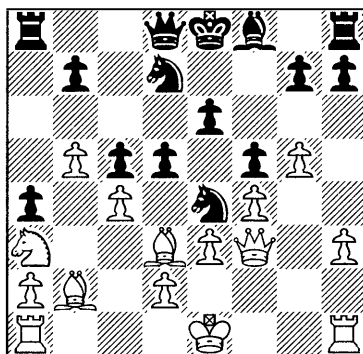


A very risky move, but if need be White can always castle long.

10...♞e4 11 g5 a4 12 ♙d3 f5 13 ♞a3

This looks strange, but soon the

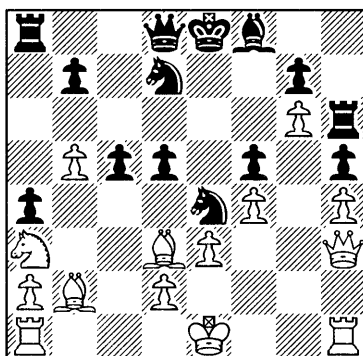
knight will go to the c4-square.



13...h5

With this move my opponent was trying to stop my kingside attack. In order to finish his plan, he would have to push his pawn to g6. I had to prevent this.

14 h4 ♜h7 15 cxd5 exd5 16 g6! ♜h6 17 ♜h3!



At this moment, I thought that I was simply winning a pawn and that my opponent could already give up, but I was wrong – he could have defended with 17...♜b6. Then 18 ♜xf5 ♜xg6 19 ♜xg6+ (19 ♜xd5 ♜g3+ 20 ♙d1 ♞f2+ 21 ♙c2 ♙d6 22 ♜xh5+ g6 23

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♙xg6+ ♖xg6+ 24 ♖xg6+ ♜xg6 is unclear – Black has a piece for three pawns) 19...♜xg6 20 ♙e2 ♜ef6 21 ♙f3 ♙d6 22 ♙e2 is better for White, who has two bishops and many pawn targets.

Black's actual choice is considerably worse.

17...♖a5? 18 ♙xe4 dxe4

18...fxe4 19 ♖e6+ ♙d8 20 ♖xd5 ♜xg6 21 ♖xb7 ♜b8 22 ♖xe4 leaves White two pawns ahead and winning.

19 ♖xf5 ♖b4 20 ♖e6+

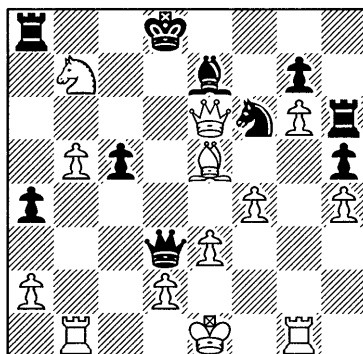
White can also win by playing 20 ♖f7+ ♙d8 21 ♙xg7 ♙xg7 22 ♖xg7 ♖xa3 23 ♖xh6 ♖b2 24 ♜d1.

20...♙d8 21 ♜b1 ♖a5 22 ♖xe4 ♖b6 23

♜g1 ♜f6 24 ♖f5 ♙e7 25 ♙e5 ♙e8 26

♜c4 ♖d8 27 ♖e6 ♖d3 28 ♜d6+ ♙d8 29

♜xb7+ 1-0



My opponent resigned because he thought that after 29...♙e8, 30 ♖f7 was mate, but in fact Black's king can escape to d7. Instead I was considering 29...♙e8 30 ♜d6+ ♙d8 31 ♜f7+ ♙e8 32 ♖c6+ ♙f8 33 ♖xa8+.

Summary

Systems with ...♙f5 are certainly playable for Black, but Games 56-59 show that White has chances to fight for the advantage. It does seem, however, that White cannot get much against ...♙g4 systems, and often it's necessary to take some risks. White's kingside pawns may become compromised, as in Lapshun-Bonin (Game 63), and dynamic play is required to compensate for this. In general, the earlier Black gets his bishop to g4, the better off he is.

1 b4 d5 2 ♙b2 ♙f5

2...♙g4

3 h3 ♙h5

4 g3 – Game 62

4 ♘f3 – Game 63

3 ♖c1 (D)

3...♘f6 – Game 60

3...♘d7 – Game 61

2...♘f6 3 e3 c6

4 ♘f3 ♙g4 5 c4 – Game 64

4 f4

4...a5 – Game 67

4...♙g4 (D)

5 ♘f3 – Game 66

5 ♙e2 – Game 65

3 e3 e6

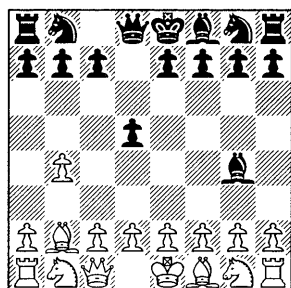
3...♘f6 4 f4 – Game 59

4 ♘f3 ♘f6

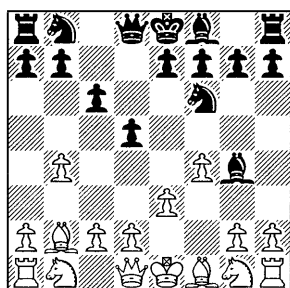
4...c6 – Game 58

5 a3 (D) – Game 56

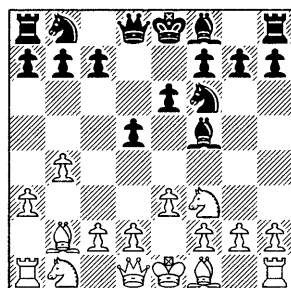
5 c4 – Game 57



3 ♖c1



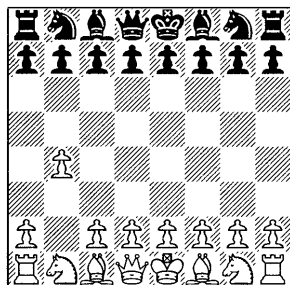
4...♙g4



5 a3

Chapter Seven

1...c6, 1...f5 and Unusual Moves

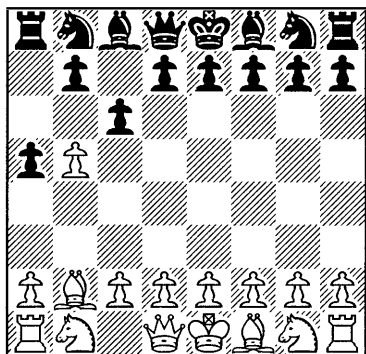


We conclude our study of the Sokolsky Opening with an examination of 1...c6, the Dutch Defence (...f5) and some unusual tries by Black.

First we consider the ambitious 1...c6, and after 2 ♖b2 Black has two main options: 2...♝b6 and 2...a5. This defence is sharp and White must react aggressively, otherwise he ends up with a poor position. Against 2...♝b6 (Games 68-70) White can neutralize Black's early threats with the variation 3 a3 a5 4 c4 axb4 5 c5!, and if 5...♝xc5? then 6 axb4 attacks two pieces and wins material. In this line White gains some space on the queenside but Black obtains targets for counterattack; chances seem roughly balanced. By the way, we should mention here that 1...c6 is Richard Palliser's 'fallback' defence in his book *Beating Unusual Chess Openings*, and we cover his recommendations in the notes to Game 69.

Against 2...a5, we don't like the spineless 3 a3 axb4 4 axb4 ♜xa1 5 ♖xa1

♝b6, when White is forced to incarcerate his bishop with 6 c3. We prefer instead the thrust 3 b5.



This move, offering a pawn to disrupt Black's pawn formation and creating a later target for a Benko Gambit-style line opening on the queenside, is discussed in Games 71-73. Rudenkov-Strugach (Game 74) displays a delayed but no less effective version of the gambit.

The three main approaches for Black in the Dutch are the Fluid System

(sometimes called the Ilyin-Zhenevsky Variation), the Stonewall, and the Leningrad. We offer an example of White's play against each of these possibilities.

In Katalymov-Kondratiev (Games 75-76), White counters Black's 'small centre' approach by first grabbing the centre and then advancing on the queenside as in the English Opening. By the way, '75-76' is not a misprint; we submit two versions of this game, one with our own notes, and one with Sokolsky's. Yury had written notes to this game by himself, overlooking that Sokolsky had included it in his book. After reading both sets of notes, Nick suggested leaving both versions intact, to provide the reader with two significant viewpoints of an interesting game, from two strong players with vastly different styles and outlooks.

In Game 78, Dutch IM Gerard Well-ing counters the Stonewall by holding back his central pawns and blasting open the kingside with h2-h3 and g2-g4, a sort of 'mirror English', and the idea of frustrating the Stonewaller's ambitions by keeping a pawn on d3 is a noteworthy concept. In Shiffler-Schmidt (Game 77), White borrows yet another English Opening idea, used by Larsen and Karpov, of giving up the queen's bishop to double the enemy's f-pawns. This Trompowsky-like approach is especially effective against a Dutch set-up.

Games 79-80 cover 1...a5, while Games 81-82 supply a few examples of play in a Grünfeld (or Schlechter) type set-up for Black, which admittedly

tends to occur more from games starting 1 d4f3.

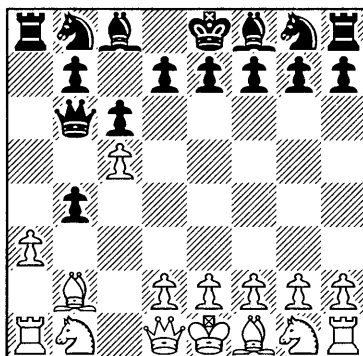
Finally, after 1 b4 d5 2 g2b2 you are not likely to encounter moves like 2...d6 or 2...d7 very often, but the final two games show sensible ways to meet them, and should comfort those who worry about dealing with bizarre variations.

Game 68
B.Katalymov-Y.Sakharov
Kiev 1962

1 b4 c6 2 g2b2 b6

Another try for an opening 'refutation'. This prepared idea is met by a strong counter.

3 a3 a5 4 c4 axb4 5 c5!



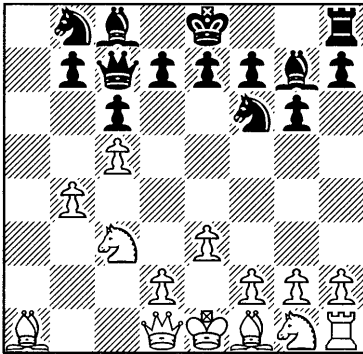
Interesting play! Katalymov's novelty demonstrates the waste of time by an early queen move. The queen can't take the pawn, so she is forced to retreat.

5...d7 6 axb4 xa1 7 g2xa1 f6 8 e3 g6 9 d3 g7

Here Black has to play 9...d5 to pro-

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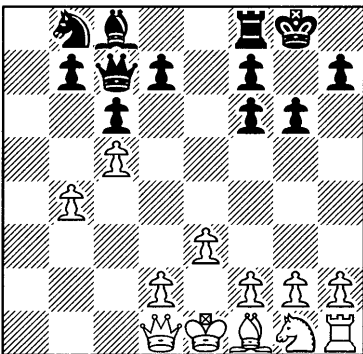
hibit the move $\text{d}e4$. In the case of 10 cxd6 Wxf6 (not 10... exd6 ?, because of 11 $\text{d}d5$!) 11 $\text{d}e4$? $\text{d}xe4$ 12 $\text{d}xh8$ f6, White's bishop on h8 is trapped. Such an approach probably couldn't lead to success, and this is why White should choose either 10 cxd6 Wxf6 11 b5 or immediately 10 b5! cxb5 11 $\text{d}xb5$ Wxc5 12 $\text{d}d4$ Wc6 13 $\text{d}f3$, with strong pressure for a sacrificed pawn.



10 $\text{d}e4$! 0-0 11 $\text{d}xf6$ $\text{d}xf6$

Obviously 11... exf6 is not good because of 12 $\text{d}d6$.

12 $\text{d}xf6+$ exf6



13 $\text{d}f3$

Not immediately 13 $\text{W}a1$, because of

13... $\text{d}d6$! 14 Wxf6 dxc5 15 bxc5 $\text{W}a5$.

13... $\text{d}d6$ 14 $\text{W}a1$ $\text{W}e7$

Or 14... dxc5 15 bxc5 $\text{d}d7$ 16 $\text{d}d4$ b6 17 cxb6 Wxb6 18 $\text{d}d3$, with the better position for White.

15 cxd6 Wxd6 16 Wd4 $\text{W}e7$

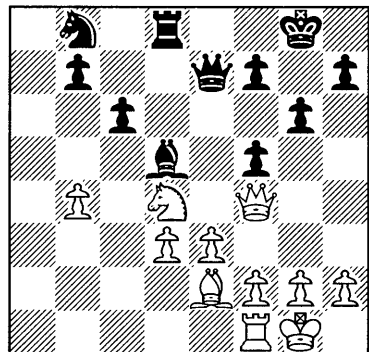
Black has his reasons for not trading queens, because in the ending White will be more active. By the way, soon the white rook will occupy the open a-file, and this will be a substantial advantage in the future.

17 $\text{d}e2$ $\text{d}d8$ 18 Wf4 $\text{d}f5$ 19 0-0 $\text{d}e4$

The best chance for Black. 19... $\text{W}e4$ is a mistake because of 20 Wc7 , winning the pawn on b7.

With 19... $\text{d}e4$ Black prevents White from capturing the open a-file. On 20 $\text{W}a1$ there follows 20... Wxb4 , when 21 $\text{d}d3$ is bad because of 21... Wb2 , and in reply to 21 Wxf6 Black answers 21... Wd6 .

20 $\text{d}d4$ f5 21 $\text{d}d3$ $\text{d}d5$



22 b5

22 Wb1 is also not bad.

22...c5 23 $\text{d}c2$ $\text{d}d7$

This allows White to penetrate via c7, but it's difficult to find a better al-

ternative. On 23...♖d6 there could follow 24 ♖xd6 ♜xd6 25 d4 (or 25 ♜a1), with an advantage for White in the ending.

24 ♖c7! ♜a8 25 ♜a1 ♜xa1+ 26 ♘xa1 b6 27 ♘c2 ♖e6

Black sidesteps the pin and defends his pawns on the queenside. Even so, Black is not able to eliminate all his difficulties, and he has to constantly defend the pawn on b6. White intends now to trade light-squared bishops and bring into the game the knight on c2.

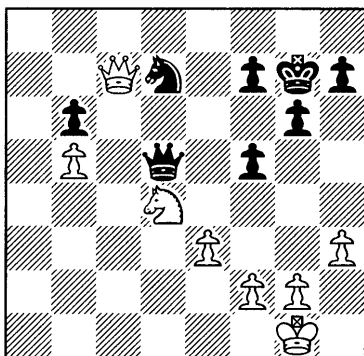
28 ♘e1 ♙g7 29 h3 ♘a8 30 ♙f3

A logical continuation of the intended plan. Less clear are the results of the sharp 30 g4.

30...♙xf3 31 ♘xf3 ♖d5 32 d4 cxd4

32...c4? is mistaken because of 33 ♖c6!. It's worth noting the active role the pawn on b5 plays in this game.

33 ♘xd4



Even after many exchanges, White has preserved his advantage. Now he is threatening to play 34 ♖c6!, and after exchanging queens the b-pawn will advance to become a new queen. In response Black tries to free himself by

sacrificing a pawn.

33...f4!?

Now on 34 ♖c6, Black gains counterplay with 34...♘f6 35 ♖xb6 fxe3 36 fxe3 ♖e4.

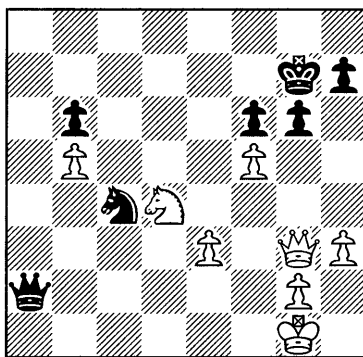
34 ♖xf4 ♘e5

At first sight it seems Black has real chances to save the game, but White's next move will demonstrate that he has not only a material advantage, but also an initiative.

35 ♖g5! f6

A forced weakening – White was threatening to play 36 f4. Now 36 ♘f5+ is no good because Black defends by playing 36...♙f7 37 ♘h6+ ♙g7 with a draw, but White finds an interesting way to continue the attack.

36 ♖g3 ♖a2 37 f4 ♘c4 38 f5



38...♘d2?

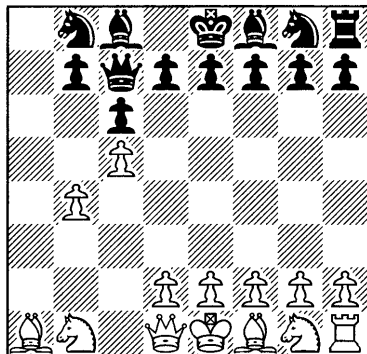
A mistake in a lost position. It was necessary to revert to defence, playing 38...♖a7. Even so, the queen ending after 39 fxg6 hxg6 40 ♘f5+ ♙f7 41 ♘d6+ ♘xd6 42 ♖xd6 should be winning for White.

39 ♘e6+ ♙f7 40 ♖c7+ ♙e8 41 ♖d8+ ♙f7 42 ♖f8 mate (1-0)

Game 69
L.Yudasin-V.Epishin
 New York Open 1990

1 b4 c6 2 ♖b2 ♜b6 3 a3 a5 4 c4 d6

The main continuation here is 4...axb4 5 c5 ♜c7 (5...♜xc5?? 6 axb4!) 6 axb4 ♜xa1 7 ♖xa1,



and now:

a) Palliser's main line runs 7...d6 8 d4 with two branches:

a1) 8...e5 9 e3 (Palliser stops here) 9...♟f6 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 ♟f3 with a comfortable position for White, Y.Lapshun-J.Gonzalez Diaz, Sants 2006.

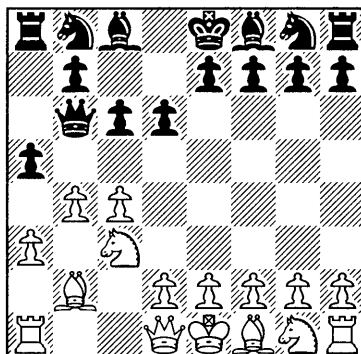
a2) 8...♟f6 ("a solid continuation" – Palliser) 9 ♟c3 b6 10 cxd6 ♜xd6 11 b5 ♜b4 12 e3 ♟d5. Here we vary with 13 ♜c1 (instead of Palliser's 13 ♜c2) 13...e6 14 ♖d3 c5 15 ♟f3 cxd4 16 ♟xd4 ♖c5 17 0-0, when White has no problems and can fight for an advantage. We must remind the reader that this analysis is untested in practice.

b) Another option for Black is 7...b6,

after which 8 e3 d6 9 ♟a3 bxc5 10 bxc5 dxc5 11 ♟f3 offered White compensation for the sacrificed pawn in M.Bosboom-S.Ernst, Dieren 1999.

c) 7...♟f6 reaches Katalymov-Sakharov (see Game 68).

5 ♟c3



5...♟f6

Grabbing the b-pawn with 5...axb4 6 axb4 ♜xa1 7 ♜xa1 ♜xb4? is punished by 8 ♟d1! ♟f6 9 ♖xf6 exf6 10 ♜a8, winning material.

6 b5 g6 7 ♜b1 ♜d8 8 g3

Possibly 8 bxc6 should be preferred. White has an edge after 8...♟xc6 9 e4 ♖g7 10 d4 0-0 11 ♟f3 ♖g4 12 ♖e2 ♜c8 13 ♖c1 ♜d7 14 ♖e3.

8...♖g7 9 ♖g2 0-0 10 ♟f3 d5

This position looks like an English Opening where White has gained some extra tempi.

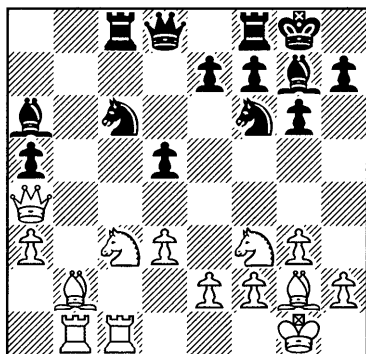
11 bxc6 bxc6 12 0-0 ♖a6

12...dxc4 13 ♜c2 ♜d6 14 ♜fe1 ♖g4 15 ♟a4 ♟bd7 16 ♜xc4 is roughly equal.

13 cxd5 cxd5 14 d3 ♟c6 15 ♜a4 ♜c8 16 ♜fc1

White exerts some pressure on the queenside, so Black has to be careful

here. Epishin solves his problems with a pawn sacrifice.



16...e6 17 d1 d7 18 c3 h6 19 xa5 xa5 20 xa5 xc1 21 xc1 b5 22 xb5 xb5

Black's two bishops should provide enough compensation for the pawn deficit, and this proves to be the case.

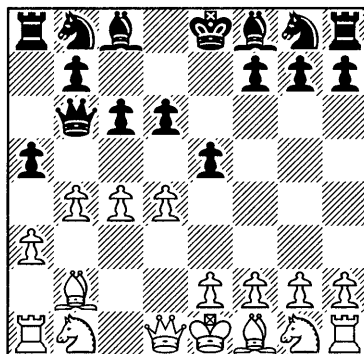
23 b1 d7 24 e3 a8 25 c2 f8 26 d4 a4 27 fe1 c8 28 b4 c3 29 a1 e4 30 ed3 d2 31 e3 c4 32 c5 xc5 33 dxc5 a5 34 a6 1/2-1/2

After 34 a6 b3 35 b1 xc5 36 xc5 xc5 the position is equal.

Game 70
Y.Lapshun-C.Stevens
Guelph 2004

This was my final-round game at the Guelph Open. After five draws in a row against GMs and a loss to an IM, I had to beat Stevens. He was a young player and I didn't have many games of his in my database. In this situation, what to play on my first move became obvious.

1 b4 c6 2 b2 b6 3 a3 a5 4 c4 d6 5 d4 e5



This surprised me. My b4-pawn was under attack and I was afraid to open the centre by playing 6 dxe5. It took me more than 20 minutes of thinking time to understand that I had to bring my pieces out first and only then decide on how to open the centre.

5...axb4 6 c5 c7 7 axb4 xa1 8 xa1 e5 9 e3 reaches the position discussed in the note 'a1' to Black's 4th move in Game 69.

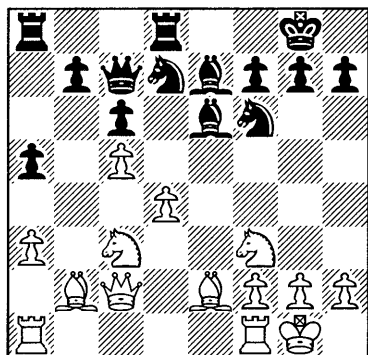
6 d2 e6 7 c5 c7 8 f3 d7 9 e3 gf6 10 c3 e7 11 e2 0-0 12 0-0 fd8 13 c2

Sidestepping the rook on d8. I wanted to bring my rook from f1 to d1, but first of all my queen needed a safer place. It's unbelievable, but both of us had spent about an hour for the first twelve moves. It was time to move more quickly, and I managed to do this more effectively than my opponent.

13...dxc5 14 bxc5 exd4 15 exd4

Finally Black has released the tension in the centre. Let's take a look at this position. Both sides have problems

– White has a weak d5-square, a vulnerable d4-pawn and a bad bishop on b2. Black has a backward pawn on b7, and holes on b6 and d6. Whoever is able to exploit the enemy weaknesses more successfully will win the game.

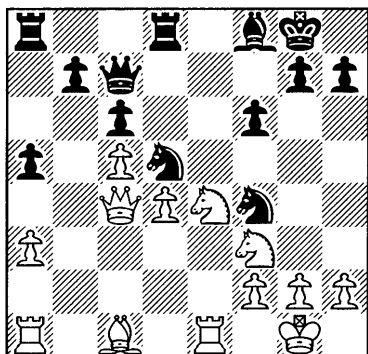


15...d5 16 e4 f4 17 c4 xc4 18 xc4

White pressures the f7-pawn, but Black has total control of the d5-square.

18...f6 19 e5 f6d5 20 fe1 f6 21 f3 f8 22 c1

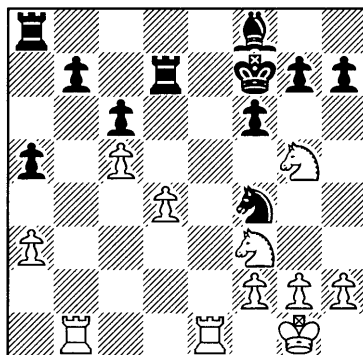
This strange-looking backward step is the best move according to *Fritz*. With my following move I would solve the problem of the bad bishop.



22...xf7 23 xf4 xf4 24 xf7+ xf7 25 ab1

In trying to add pressure to the b7-pawn, my d4-pawn had also become vulnerable.

25...d7 26 eg5+!



26...g8

After 26...fxg5 White wins a piece: 27 e5+ e6 28 xd7+ xd7 29 xb7+ xd8 30 f7 g6 31 f4! gxf4 32 h4 e7 33 h5.

27 e6

Reaching here was easy, but can the knight escape later?

27...d5 28 f1

28 d2!? is another possibility.

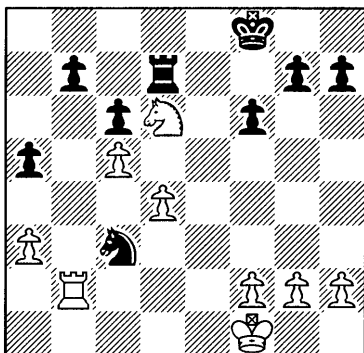
28...e8 29 b2 de7 30 xf8 xf8 31 xe7 xe7 32 d2 c3?

32...a4! 33 c4 e4 34 d2 h4 35 h3 c3 36 e3 b5 37 c2 e4 38 f3 e8 leaves Black marginally better, although White should hold easily.

33 c4 d7?

33...e4! 34 xa5 xd4 35 g3 a4 36 xb7 xa3 37 b6 a7 38 d8 e4 39 xc6 e7 40 e6+ xd8 41 xe4 d7 reaches a tenable rook ending for Black.

34 ♖d6

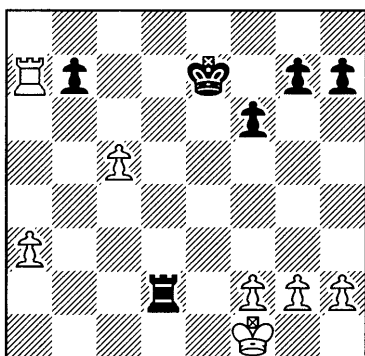


I had been dreaming about landing on d6 with my knight about 20 moves ago, and finally my dream came true.

34...♖b5 35 ♖xb5 cxb5 36 ♖xb5 ♖xd4 37 ♖xa5

37 ♖xb7 ♖c4 38 ♖b5 a4 39 ♖a5 ♖f7 40 ♖a7+ ♖g6 41 ♖e2 ♖xc5 42 ♖xa4 would leave Black with drawing chances.

37...♖d2 38 ♖a8+ ♖e7 39 ♖a7 1-0



In this position my opponent resigned. After 39...♖d7 40 c6 bxc6 41 ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 we have a classic illustration of the power of the outside passed pawn. Black will capture the a-pawn,

but he will lose his c-pawn first and then his kingside pawns too.

Game 71

Y.Lapshun-I.Figler

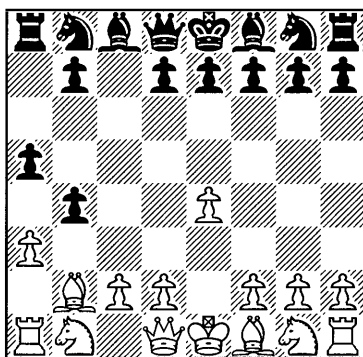
Marshall Chess Club (Rapid) 2004

Ilye Figler, originally from Moldova, is a strong FIDE Master who has scored two IM norms. He is also a good correspondence player with a solid knowledge of openings. I had played normal systems against him without great success, so on this occasion I thought the Sokolsky might come as an unpleasant surprise.

1 b4 c6 2 ♖b2 a5!?

I am always afraid of this move because it practically forces White to sacrifice a pawn, as 3 a3 axb4 4 axb4 ♖xa1 5 ♖xa1 ♖b6 6 c3 e5 is pleasant for Black.

3 b5!? cxb5 4 e4 b4 5 a3



Welcome to the Sicilian Defence, Wing Gambit!

5...♖f6

5...bxa3 is discussed in Campora-

chesstouring.com

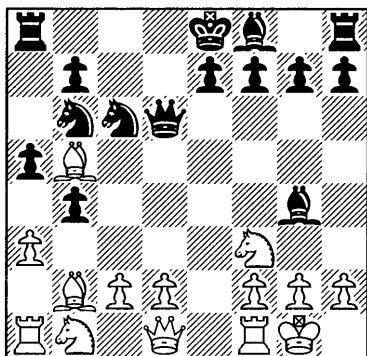
Anguix Garrido (Game 72), and 5...♘a6 is the subject of Volke-Wegner (Game 73).

5...♖b6 6 ♘f3 e6 7 ♙c4 ♘f6 8 ♙xf6 gxf6 9 0-0 ♖c7 10 ♖e2 b6 11 axb4 ♙xb4 12 ♙a3 leaves White with compensation, K.Volke-A.Aleksandrov, Minsk 1994.

6 e5 ♘d5 7 ♙c4 ♘b6 8 ♙b5 ♘c6 9 ♘f3 d5 10 exd6?!

10 axb4!? axb4 11 ♖xa8 ♘xa8 12 0-0 ♙d7 13 ♘g5 ♖a5 14 e6 ♙xe6 15 ♖h5 ♙d8 16 ♙xc6 bxc6 17 ♘xf7+ ♙xf7 18 ♖xf7 ♖c5 19 ♙xg7 ♙xg7 20 ♖xg7 ♖e8 21 ♖xh7 leaves White a pawn ahead. It's hard to assess, but I believe that White is better.

10...♖xd6 11 0-0 ♙g4



12 d4?!

I don't like this move here: it weakens c4 and also makes d4 a target. White should instead consider 12 h3!? ♙h5 13 ♖e2 e6 14 ♖e3.

12...♖d5! 13 c4?

13 ♙e2 ♘c4 14 ♙c1 e6 15 axb4 ♙xb4 16 c3 gives White chances for equality.

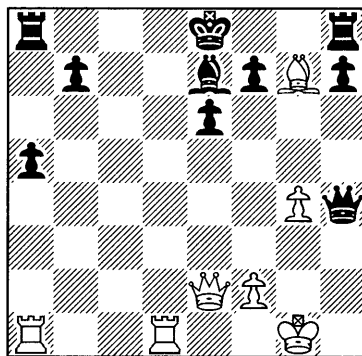
13...♘xc4 14 ♙xc4 ♖xc4 15 axb4 ♘xb4 16 h3 ♙xf3

After 16...♙h5 17 ♘bd2 ♖d5 18 ♙a3 e6 19 ♖e1 f6, White doesn't have nearly enough for his two pawns.

17 ♖xf3 ♖c6 18 ♖e2 e6 19 ♘c3 ♙e7 20 d5 ♘xd5 21 ♘xd5 ♖xd5 22 ♖fd1 ♖f5 23 g4 ♖g5 24 h4 ♖xh4??

Black has to defend the b5-square. After 24...♖c5 25 ♖ac1 ♖b4 26 ♙c3 ♖a4 27 ♖a1 ♖b3 28 ♙xg7 ♖g8 29 ♖ab1 ♖a4, Black keeps a winning advantage.

25 ♙xg7!



25...f6

25...♖g8 is met by 26 ♖b5 mate.

26 ♖xe6 ♖a6 27 ♖c8+ ♙f7 28 ♙xh8 ♖c6 29 ♖d7 ♖e6 30 ♖d4 ♖e5 31 ♖xb7 h5 32 ♖b3+ ♙f8 33 ♖c1 ♖c5 34 ♖xc5 ♙xc5 35 ♖b8+ ♙f7 36 ♖b7+ ♙e7 37 ♖e4 f5 38 ♖d5+ 1-0

Game 72

D.Campora-J.Anguix Garrido
Canete 1994

1 b4 c6 2 ♙b2 a5 3 b5 cxb5 4 e4 b4 5 a3 bxa3 6 ♘xa3 d6 7 d4 e6 8 ♙d3 ♘f6 9 ♘e2 ♙e7 10 0-0

White has developed almost all his

chesstouring.com

pieces, and he's also captured the centre and the b5-square. This adds up to full compensation for the missing pawn.

10...♖c6 11 ♖h1

I believe this prophylactic move is a waste of time, but many players like to prepare the f-pawn push in this manner.

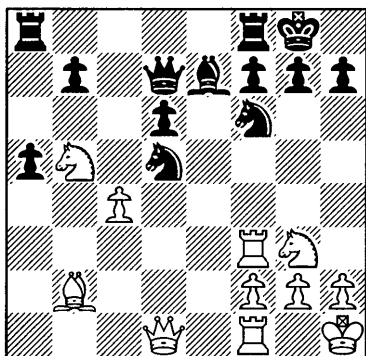
11...♗b4 12 ♗b5+ ♗d7 13 c3 ♗xb5 14 ♖xb5 ♖c6 15 ♖g3 0-0 16 c4 ♖b4 17 d5 exd5

White retains compensation after 17...♗d7 18 ♗e2 exd5 19 cxd5 ♗fe8 20 ♗fb1.

18 exd5

Also possible was 18 cxd5!?, for example, 18...♗d7 19 ♖d4 ♗fc8 20 ♖gf5 ♗d8 21 ♗a3 with a strong attack against the black king.

18...♗d7 19 ♗a3 ♖bxd5 20 ♗f3



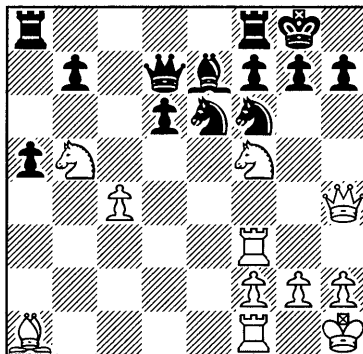
20...♖b6

20...♗fc8 21 cxd5 ♗xb5 22 ♖f5 ♗c7 23 ♗a1 ♗d8 24 ♗e1 ♗xd5 25 ♖xg7 ♖e4 26 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 27 ♗e3 ♗xe3 28 fxe3 reaches an unclear position in which we believe White maintains slightly the better chances.

21 ♗d4 ♖a4 22 ♗a1 ♖c5?!

22...d5!? leads to another messy position after 23 ♖f5 ♖c5 24 ♗e3 ♖fe4 25 ♗g3 ♖xg3+ 26 ♗xg3 ♗g5 27 ♗xg5 f6 28 ♗g4 g6 29 ♗d4 ♗xf5 30 ♗xc5 ♗ad8 31 ♖g1. On this occasion we think the chances are level.

23 ♖f5 ♖e6 24 ♗h4!



Now White enjoys a clear advantage. Black's two extra pawns are meaningless when compared to the aggressiveness of White's pieces.

24...♗fe8 25 ♖xe7+ ♗xe7 26 ♗xf6!

This is winning.

26...gxf6 27 ♗xf6 ♗d7 28 f4!

Kicking out the last defender on e6.

28...♖f8 29 ♗g5+ 1-0

After 29...♖g6 30 ♗h6, Black cannot prevent mate with ♗g7.

Game 73

K.Volke-H.Wegner
German League 1993

1 b4 c6 2 ♗b2 a5 3 b5 cxb5 4 e4 b4 5 a3 ♖a6 6 ♖f3 e6 7 axb4 axb4

After 7...♖xb4 8 ♗b5 ♖f6 9 e5 ♖fd5

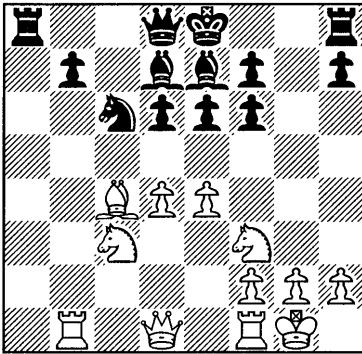
chesstouring.com

10 0-0, White's centre provides sufficient compensation for the pawn investment.

8 ♖c4 d6 9 0-0 ♜f6 10 ♖xf6

10 e5 is also possible. Following 10...dxe5 11 ♜xe5 ♖e7 12 ♖b5+ ♜d7 13 ♖g4 ♖f6 White can play 14 ♖a2, defending his loose bishop and thus freeing his knight on e5 to move.

10...gxf6 11 c3 ♖d7 12 cxb4 ♜xb4 13 ♜c3 ♖e7 14 ♖b1 ♜c6 15 d4



White has enough play. His pieces are well developed and they are ready to attack Black's weakened pawns.

15 ♖xb7 ♜a5 16 ♖xd7 ♜xd7 17 ♖b5+ ♜c8 18 ♜d4 is a promising alternative, as White's pieces can quickly swarm around the black king.

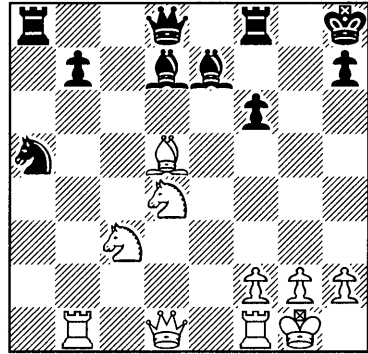
15...0-0 16 d5 ♜a5 17 dxe6 fxe6 18 ♖a2 ♜h8 19 ♜d4

White has found another weak pawn on e6 and hastens to attack it.

19...d5?!

19...♖c8 20 ♖d2 ♜c6 21 ♜db5 ♜e5 22 ♖fc1 ♖a6 23 ♜d4 ♜c6 24 ♖c4 ♖a8 25 ♜db5 ♜e5 26 ♖a2 ♖a6 repeats the position, and this is Black's best option according to Fritz.

20 exd5 exd5 21 ♖xd5



White has a safe king and active pieces; Black possesses the two-bishop advantage but is saddled with three isolated pawns. The overall verdict: White is better.

21...♖c5 22 ♜f3 ♖a6 23 ♖c2 ♖c8 24 ♖fd1 ♖d6 25 ♖a2 ♖f5 26 ♖bc1 b6 27 h3 ♖e8 28 ♜h4 ♖c8 29 ♖b1 ♖a3 30 ♖c2 ♖c5 31 ♖c1 ♖e5?!

This beginner's blunder will cost Black an exchange. After 31...♖e7 32 ♖cd2 ♖ed7 33 ♜f5 ♜b3 34 ♖c2 ♜xd2 35 ♜xd6 ♖xd6 36 ♖c6 ♖c7 37 ♖xd2 ♖xc6 38 ♜b5 ♖g8 39 ♜xd6 ♖xh3 40 g3, White's dominating knight promises him full play for his pawn, but no more.

32 ♜g6+ 1-0

Black loses material, as 32...hxg6 allows mate in one with 33 ♖h6.

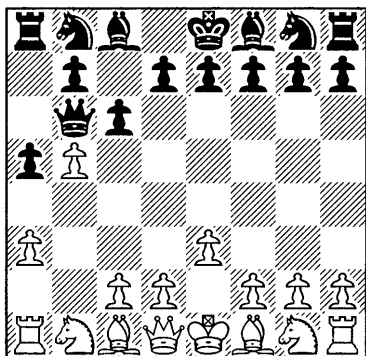
Game 74
Rudenko-Strugach
Correspondence 1961

1 b4 c6 2 e3 ♖b6

chesstouring.com

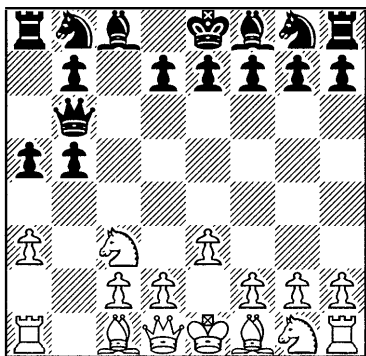
Black is trying to refute White's opening, but this early move by the queen leads to difficulties.

3 a3 a5 4 b5!



An interesting pawn sacrifice, which Black must accept, otherwise his play makes no sense.

4...cxb5 5 ♖c3



5...b4

Playing to save the pawn is fully consistent. Against other replies White plays 6 ♖xb5 and 7 ♖b1, achieving the better development.

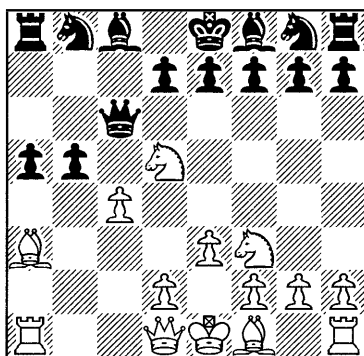
6 axb4 ♖xb4 7 ♖a3 ♖b6 8 ♖d5

8 ♖b1 is also good here.

8...♖c6 9 c4 b5

It would have been better to play the immediate 9...e6.

10 ♖f3



10...e6

On 10...bxc4 there follows 11 ♖xc4!, and here 11...♖xc4 would be bad because of 12 ♖c1!.

11 ♖e5! ♖b7 12 ♖f3! d6

White knights occupy positions in the centre, but both of them are under attack. White's next move reveals the true state of affairs.

13 ♖b6! ♖a7

Obviously not 13...♖xb6, because of 14 ♖xf7+ ♖d8 15 ♖xf8+ ♖c7 16 ♖xg7+. On 13...dxe5 there could follow an interesting variation: 14 ♖xf8 ♖xf8 15 ♖xa8 e4 16 ♖g3 ♖xa8 17 ♖c7 etc.

In the game White snatches back the pawn.

14 ♖xf7+! ♖xf7 15 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 16 ♖xc8 b4

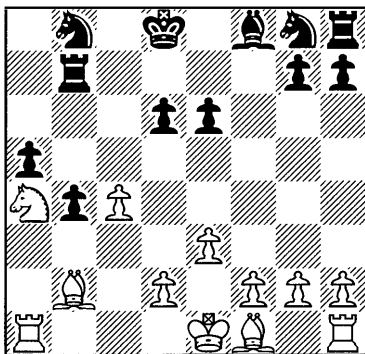
There is no way to exploit White's isolated knight, which is surrounded by black pieces. On 16...♖d7, White answers 17 ♖a7 followed by ♖b5.

17 ♖b2 ♖d8

It was senseless to play 17...♖b7, be-

cause of 18 ♖xa5 ♜c6 19 ♖b5.

18 ♜b6 ♖b7 19 ♜a4



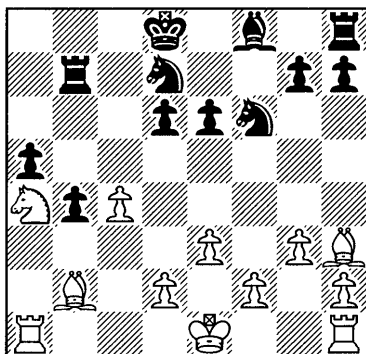
The complications have ended with material equality and a White advantage. He has a pair of active bishops and superiority in the centre. Black's passed pawns are blocked and pose no serious danger.

19...♜d7 20 g3!

Black's e6-pawn is the juiciest target in his camp.

The natural 20 d4 is weaker – White doesn't want to close the diagonal for the bishop on b2.

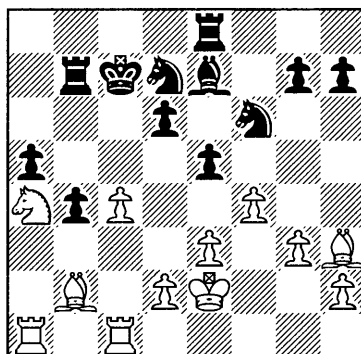
20...♜gf6 21 ♘h3!



21...e5

Maybe it's better to make an ugly move, 21...♞e7, not weakening the light squares. Black has a dark-squared bishop and his pawns are also placed on dark squares, which is not good from a positional point of view.

22 ♞e2 ♞e7 23 f4 ♞c7 24 ♖hc1 ♞e8



25 c5!

White decides matters quickly by blasting open the position.

25...dxc5 26 fxe5 ♜g8

Against 26...♜e4 or 26...♜d5, 27 ♞g2 is very strong.

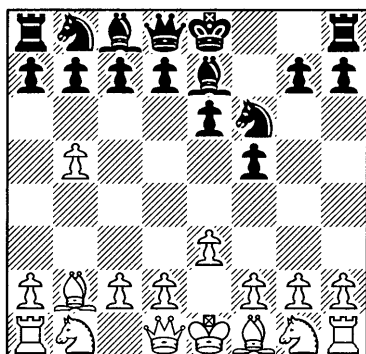
27 e6 ♜df6 28 ♜xc5 ♞xc5 29 ♖xc5+ ♜d6 30 ♖xa5 ♞e7 31 ♞e5 ♜d8 32 ♖cb5 ♖xb5 33 ♖xb5 1-0

Black's risky play to grab a pawn at the start, combined with a loss of time with the queen, was strongly refuted by White.

Game 75
B.Katalymov-P.Kondratiev
Spartak Championship,
Minsk 1962

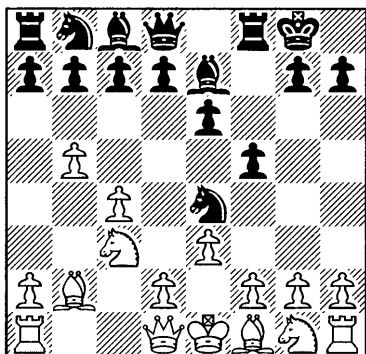
1 b4 f5 2 ♞b2 ♜f6 3 e3 e6 4 b5 ♞e7

chesstouring.com



5 c4

5 ♖f3 0-0 6 c4 d6 7 ♘c3 c5 8 bxc6
 ♘xc6 9 ♙e2 b6 10 0-0 was equal in
 W.Lombardy-L.Evans, New York 1962.
 5...0-0 6 ♘c3 ♙e4?!



It's too early for this activity; Black
 needs to develop some pieces first.

7 f4 ♙f6 8 d4 ♘xc3 9 ♙xc3 a6 10 a4
 axb5 11 axb5 ♙xa1 12 ♙xa1 d6 13 ♘f3
 b6?!

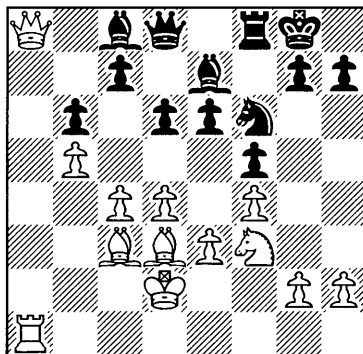
The bishop never gets to b7, and in
 the future the weak c6-square can pre-
 sent Black with a number of problems.
 Fritz likes 13...♘d7!? in order to reply
 to 14 ♙d3 with 14...e5!. Of course
 White could instead play 14 ♙e2, and

the open a-file assures him of a slight
 advantage.

14 ♙a8!? ♘d7 15 ♙d2

White prevents 16...♘c5 followed
 by 17...♘e4. So the black knight tries to
 get to e4 via the f6-square, to attack
 White's dangerously centralized king.

15...♙e7 16 ♙d3 ♘f6 17 ♙a1!



White consistently pursues his at-
 tack along the a-file.

17...♙d7?

17...d5! was the right move. Black
 shouldn't trade queens when the white
 king is in the centre. In general, if
 somebody is attacking you on the
 flank, try to hit back in the centre,
 especially if your opponent's king hap-
 pens to be situated there.

18 ♙xd8 ♙xd8 19 ♙a7 ♙c8 20 ♙b4 ♙f8
 21 h3 h6 22 g4

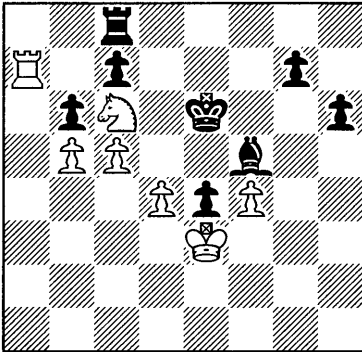
Maybe this is not too bad, but I
 don't think a sacrifice is necessary.
 White should calmly prepare a push of
 his c-, e- and/or g-pawns to win in a
 controlled manner.

22...fxg4 23 hxg4 ♘xg4 24 e4 ♘f2 25
 ♙b1 d5!

When you have extra material and

you are defending, it's a good idea to trade pieces. (Remember what I said before about hitting back in the centre?)

26 ♖xe7+ ♔xe7 27 exd5 exd5 28 ♖e5 ♖e4+ 29 ♖xe4 dxe4 30 ♔e3 ♖f5 31 c5 ♔e6 32 ♖c6



32...g6??

32...bxc5! 33 dxc5 g6 34 ♖a6 ♔f7 35 ♖a7 ♔e6 36 ♖a6 ♔f7 should hold.

33 d5+! ♔xd5

After 33...♔f6, White wins with 34 cxb6 cxb6 35 d6 g5 36 d7 ♖xd7 37 ♖xd7 ♖e8 38 ♖d6+ ♖e6 39 ♖xe6+ ♔xe6 40 fxg5 hxg5 41 ♔xe4.

34 ♖e7+ 1-0

Game 76
B.Katalymov-P.Kondratiev
Spartak Championship,
Minsk 1962

1 b4 f5

This answer has some logic. To White's pawn thrust on the queenside, Black replies in a similar fashion on the other wing.

2 ♖b2 ♖f6 3 e3 e6 4 b5 ♖e7 5 c4 0-0 6 ♖c3

Perhaps 6 ♖f3 or 6 f4 is a better option. Obviously this move, developing a piece, is also possible.

6...♖e4

Black hastens to engage in direct combat. Now 7 ♖xe4 fxe4, with pressure on the f2-square, is no good for White. And it's too early to play 7 d3 because of 7...♖xc3 8 ♖xc3 a6 9 a4 d5, with counterplay. Finally, after 7 ♖f3 Black has possibilities of expansion on the kingside with ...f5-f4 or ...g7-g5. Katalymov decides to prevent such plans.

7 f4! ♖f6 8 d4 ♖xc3

Black shouldn't hurry with this trade. 8...d6 or 8...d5 would be a better choice.

9 ♖xc3 a6 10 a4 axb5

Probably this trade is the primary reason for Black's defeat. In principle it's a mistake to open a file on the flank where your opponent has a space advantage, and this is borne out by the development of events in this game.

11 axb5 ♖xa1 12 ♖xa1 d6 13 ♖f3 b6

Of course it's not unfavourable to develop the bishop on the main diagonal, but an intrusion by the white queen will prevent this possibility.

14 ♖a8 ♖d7

Black intended here to force White's queen to retreat due to the threat of 15...♖c5!.

15 ♔d2!

With this move White solves a few problems: the bishop on c3 is defended and the threat of 15...♖c5 is neutral-

chesstouring.com

ized; a transfer of the rook to the open a-file becomes easier; and Black's plans of counterplay on the kingside (possible with White's kingside castling) are destroyed.

Less successful is a retreat of the bishop with 15 ♖a1, or 15 ♖b4 because of 15...♗e8! followed by ...e6-e5. But the text move is excellent, helping the future mobilization of White's forces.

15...♗e7 16 ♖d3 ♜f6 17 ♖a1 ♖d7

In these conditions, when Black probably can't hope to create counterplay, the plan of trading pieces with a goal of decreasing White's pressure is natural.

18 ♖xd8 ♗xd8 19 ♖a7 ♗c8 20 ♖b4 ♜f8

White was threatening to play ♜e5, exploiting the undefended bishop on e7.

21 h3 h6

White is much better: Black has to defend c7 and his pieces don't have much space. But it's not easy to find a plan to exert pressure on such a stable enemy position. Katalymov decides to make an interesting pawn sacrifice on the kingside to prepare a breakthrough in the centre.

22 g4! fxg4 23 hxg4 ♜xg4 24 e4 ♜f2 25 ♖b1 d5

Rather than wait, Black decides to counterattack. The strength of White's threats is illustrated in the following variation: 25...h5 26 e5 dxe5 (the threat was 27 exd6 winning a piece) 27 ♖xe7+ ♜xe7 28 fxe5 ♖e8 (otherwise 29 ♖g6 is unpleasant) 29 d5 exd5 30 cxd5 ♖xb5 31 ♖f5 ♖d7 32 d6+ ♜d8 33 e6! etc.

26 ♖xe7+ ♜xe7 27 exd5 exd5 28 ♜e5

♜e4+

Probably the only move. White was threatening 29 ♜xd7 followed by ♖f5+. On 28...♖e6, 29 c5 is very strong.

29 ♖xe4 dxe4 30 ♜e3 ♖f5 31 c5 ♖e6

Black's king must leave the seventh rank. On 31...♜f6 there could follow 32 ♖a6 ♗b8 33 d5! (with a threat of d5-d6) 33...♖c8 34 ♖a7 bxc5 (or 34...♗b7? 35 ♖a8 ♖f5 36 c6, winning a rook) 35 ♗xc7, and White should win.

32 ♜c6 g6?

Immediately losing. But after the best defence 32...bxc5 33 dxc5 g6 34 ♖a6! ♜f7 35 ♜d4 ♜g7 36 ♜xf5+ gxf5 37 ♗c6, White is winning because of the threat of b5-b6!. It's instructive to observe the active role of the b-pawn in all these variations.

33 d5+! ♜xd5

After 33...♜f6 34 cxb6 cxb6 35 d6 Black is losing a piece, and it's not difficult for White to win.

34 ♜e7+ 1-0

The pressure on the open a-file and the presence of the far advanced pawn on the queenside enabled White's success in this interesting ending.

Game 77
L.Shiffler-Schmidt
Correspondence 1950

1 b4 f5 2 ♖b2 ♜f6 3 ♖xf6!?

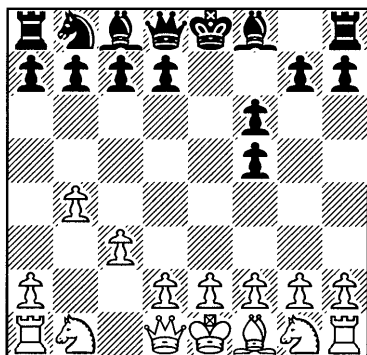
An interesting solution. White gives up a beautifully placed bishop and concedes the bishop pair in exchange for inflicting upon Black doubled pawns on the f-file, decreasing Black's

pawn mobility on the kingside.

3...exf6

Obviously not 3...gxf6? 4 e4!, when Black's king is in danger.

4 c3!

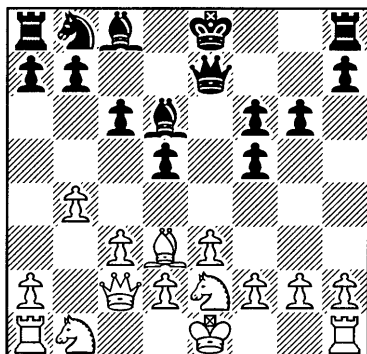


This and White's next few moves meet with the position's demands. After exchanging the dark-squared bishop, White places pawns on the dark squares.

4...d5 5 e3 ♖d6 6 ♖d3!

White takes aim at the f5-pawn, not allowing it move forward.

6...♗e7 7 ♘e2 c6 8 ♗c2 g6



9 h4! h5

Otherwise h4-h5 will be quite po-

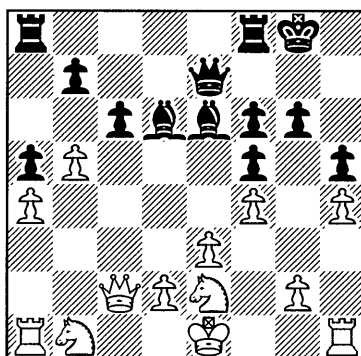
tent. By placing his pawns on dark squares in conjunction with owning a light-squared bishop, White has created an original and harmonious position.

10 a4 ♘d7 11 f4! a5!

It's necessary to prevent a4-a5. Black is trying to keep some life in his position.

12 b5 ♘c5 13 c4 ♘xd3+ 14 ♗xd3 dxc4

15 ♗xc4 ♖e6 16 ♗c2 0-0



17 bxc6

It's easier here to play 17 ♘bc3 with ♖f2 to follow. White's task involves restricting the enemy bishops if possible while creating good squares for his knights. To open the c-file Black sooner or later has to capture on b5, when White will answer ♘xb5.

17...bxc6 18 ♘bc3

A careless capture of the pawn on c6 would lead to big problems after 18 ♗xc6 ♖fc8.

18...♖ab8 19 ♘d4 ♖c4!?

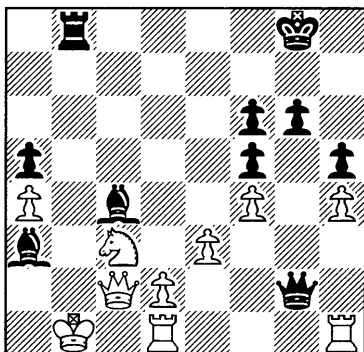
An interesting exchange sacrifice, and working out the resulting complications will prove to be very difficult. More natural was 19...♖d7 20 ♖f2, with

chances for both sides.

20 ♖xc6!

White bravely meets the danger head-on, and a maelstrom of complications arises on the board.

20...♗b7 21 ♖xb8 ♗xg2 22 0-0-0 ♕a3+ 23 ♖b1 ♖xb8+



24 ♖b5!

An unexpected move! If Black now plays 24...♕xb5, then after 25 ♗b3+ ♖g7 26 axb5 White beats off the attack and remains with a material advantage.

24...♗d5 25 ♖a1 ♖b3

Now on 25...♕xb5 there follows 26 ♖b1.

26 ♗c7 ♖b7 27 ♗c8+ ♖h7 28 ♖b1 ♖b2+

At first glance Black has achieved success...

29 ♖xb2!

...but this exchange offer dashes his hopes! In the event of 29 ♖xb2 ♕xa4, Black enjoys a huge attack.

29...♗xh1+ 30 ♖b1 ♗d5 31 ♖xb3!

Very business-like. Black remains a piece down.

31...♗xb3 32 ♗xb7+ ♖h6 33 ♗d7 ♗xa4+ 34 ♖b2 ♗b4+ 35 ♖c2 ♗a4+ 36

♖c3 ♗b4+ 37 ♖d3 g5

There is no perpetual check after 37...♗e4+ 38 ♖e2 ♗g2+ 39 ♖d1 ♗f1+ 40 ♖c2 ♗c4+ 41 ♖c3. But the text move is the equivalent of resignation.

38 hxg5+ fxg5 39 ♗c6+ ♖g7 40 fxg5 h4 41 ♗h6+ ♖g8 42 ♗g6+ ♖h8 43 ♖d6 1-0

An original game with a very sharp fight.

Game 78 G.Welling-R.Achleitner Velden 1994

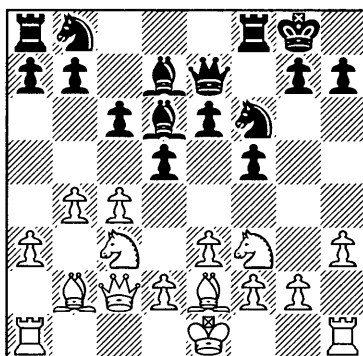
1 b4 d5 2 e3 e6 3 ♖b2 f5

Black plays the Dutch Defence, Stonewall variation.

4 c4 ♖f6 5 ♖f3 c6 6 a3 ♖d6 7 ♖c3 0-0 8 ♗c2 ♗e7 9 ♖e2 ♖d7

In the Stonewall Black often manoeuvres his bad bishop via e8 to h5.

10 h3



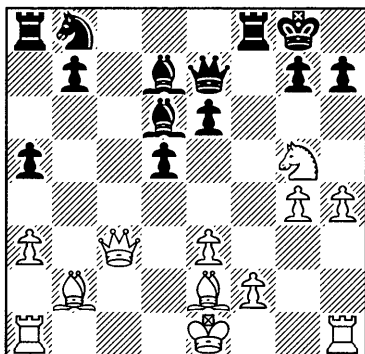
Preparing a kingside attack with a pawn on g4, rook on g1 and bishop on b2.

10...a5 11 b5 ♖e4 12 g4 ♖xc3 13 ♗xc3 f4 14 h4

14 ♖e5!? ♗e8 15 exf4 ♜xf4 16 d4 dxc4 17 b6 ♘d7 18 ♖xc4 is roughly equal. White would be doing well were it not for the weaklings on d4 and b6.

14...fxe3 15 dxe3 cxb5 16 cxb5 ♗xb5 17 ♘g5 ♗d7?

17...♗xe2!? 18 ♗xe2 ♘c6 19 ♖d3 g6 20 f4 ♜ad8 offers level chances.



18 ♖d3! g6 19 ♖d4! e5 20 ♖xd5+ ♗g7 21 ♜d1 ♗c7

After 21...♜f6 22 f4 ♗c6 23 fxe5 ♗b4+ 24 axb4 ♜f1+ 25 ♜xf1 ♗xd5 26 ♜xd5, White has extra material as well as the attack.

22 ♖xb7 ♗c6 23 ♖xc7 ♖xc7 24 ♘e6+ ♗f7 25 ♘xc7 ♗xh1 26 ♗xe5 ♜a7 27 ♗c4+ ♗e7 28 ♗d6+ ♗d7 29 ♘b5 ♗f3 30 ♗xf8+ ♗xd1 31 ♘a7 ♗xg4

After a long tactical middlegame Black is down a bishop. White has a completely winning position and the rest of the game requires no further comments.

32 ♗h6 ♗d6 33 ♗f4+ ♗c5 34 ♗xb8 ♗xc4 35 ♘c6 ♗b3 36 ♘a5+ ♗xa3 37 ♘c4+ ♗b4 38 ♘e5 ♗e6 39 ♗d6+ ♗c3 40 f3 ♗c2 41 ♗f2 ♗d2 42 ♗b4+ ♗c2 43 ♘g4 ♗b3 44 ♗f8 ♗c3 45 ♘f6 h5 46

♘e4+ ♗c4 47 ♗g3 ♗d5 48 ♗f4 ♗f7 49 ♗g5 ♗e5 50 ♗d6+ 1-0

Game 79

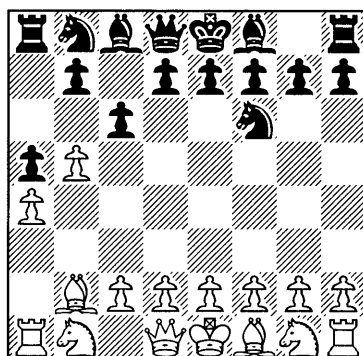
Y.Lapshun-L.Oms Fuentes

Barcelona 2007

1 b4 a5 2 b5 c6

2...♘f6 3 ♗b2 g6 is the subject of Akesson-Ernst (see Game 80).

3 a4 ♘f6 4 ♗b2



I remember how several titled players who inspected our board seemed shocked that two players trying to finish high in the standings could reach a position like this.

4...d5 5 e3 ♗f5 6 ♘f3 e6 7 c4 c5 8 cxd5 exd5 9 d3

9 d4 ♗xb1 10 ♜xb1 c4 gives Black a passed pawn and a small advantage.

9...♗d6 10 ♘bd2 0-0 11 ♗e2 ♜e8 12 0-0 ♘bd7 13 ♜e1 ♘e5?

13...♜c8 is a good move.

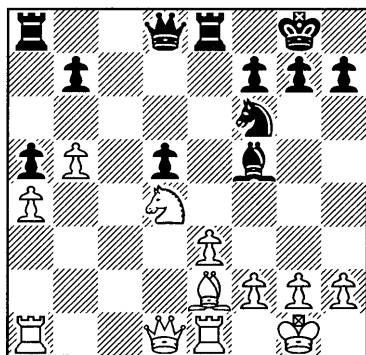
14 ♘xe5 ♗xe5 15 ♗xe5 ♜xe5 16 d4! cxd4 17 ♘f3 ♜e8

17...dxe3?! 18 ♘xe5 exf2+ 19 ♗xf2 ♘e4+ 20 ♗f1 ♖b6 21 ♘d3 ♖e3 22 ♜a2

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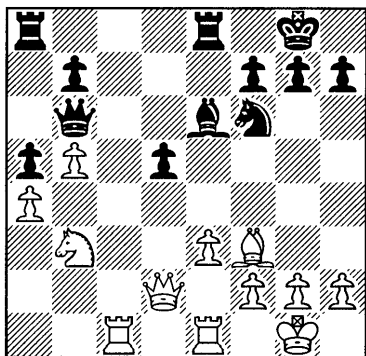
♖h6 23 ♙f3 ♜xh2 24 ♜a3 ♜c8 25 ♙xe4
 ♙xe4 26 ♜g4 ♜h1+ 27 ♙e2 ♜xg2+ 28
 ♜xg2 ♙xg2 29 ♜c1 is winning for
 White.

18 ♘xd4



White, with a strong knight on d4
 and an isolated pawn to attack, has the
 advantage.

18...♙d7 19 ♜c1 ♜b6 20 ♙f3 ♜ac8 21
 ♜d2 ♙e6 22 ♘b3 ♜a8



23 ♜c3

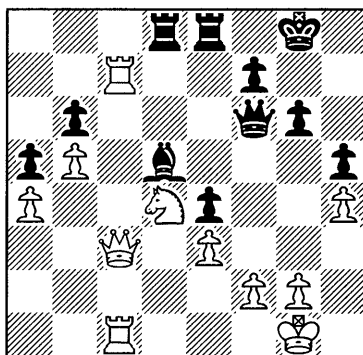
23 ♜d4! ♜xd4 24 ♘xd4 ♜ec8 25 ♘b3
 b6 26 ♜c6 looks very dangerous for
 Black.

23...♘e4 24 ♙xe4 dxe4 25 ♘d4 ♜d6 26
 ♜ec1 g6 27 ♜c2 ♙d5 28 h3 ♜ad8 29

♜c7 b6 30 ♜c3 h5 31 h4

Stopping Black's kingside attack.
 White is still slightly better, but I
 couldn't see how I could win.

31...♜f6??



Finally Black has made a mistake,
 and he pays for it.

32 ♘c6! ♜xc3 33 ♜xc3 ♙xc6 34 ♜7xc6

Black can't defend all his pawns.

34...♙d1+ 35 ♙h2 ♜d2 36 ♙g3 ♜e5 37
 ♜xb6 g5 38 ♜bc6 gxh4+ 39 ♙f4 ♜e8 40
 ♜c2 ♜d1 41 ♜b2 1-0

The strength of my passed b-pawn
 and the task of defending his numer-
 ous islands (only Japan has more) con-
 vinced my opponent to resign.

Game 80

R.Akesson-T.Ernst

Kraft Chess Cup, Skelleftea 1999

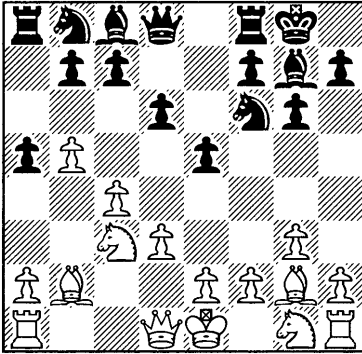
I met GM Ralf Akesson in Barce-
 lona. I spent many rounds in that tour-
 nament placed between his board and
 his countryman GM Lars Karlsson's. I
 kidded them that they were my two
 Swedish bodyguards!

chesstouring.com

1 b4 a5 2 b5 ♖f6 3 ♙b2 g6 4 g3

A typical King's Indian pawn race looms after 4 e3 ♙g7 5 ♖f3 0-0 6 c4 d6 7 d4 ♖bd7 8 ♙e2 e5 9 ♖c3 e4 10 ♖d2 ♙e8 11 ♙c2 ♙e7. This was played in A.Sokolsky-Y.Nikolaevsky, Kiev 1957, with White eventually winning.

4...♙g7 5 ♙g2 0-0 6 c4 d6 7 ♖c3 e5 8 d3

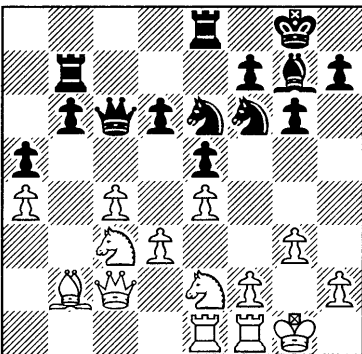


A typical English Opening!

8...♖bd7 9 ♖a4 ♙e8 10 ♙c2 ♙b8 11 e3 b6 12 ♖e2 ♙b7 13 ♙xb7 ♙xb7 14 e4

In this closed position Black is saddled with weak c6- and d5-squares. White tries to prepare f2-f4.

14...♖f8 15 ♖ac3 ♖e6 16 0-0 ♙d7 17 ♙ae1 c5 18 bxc6 ♙xc6 19 a4



Fixing the weak b6-pawn and reinforcing the outpost on b5. In addition, Black has to take care of his d6-pawn and the d5-square. He should play the prophylactic 19...♖d7!?, intending to answer 20 f4 with 20...exf4 21 ♖xf4 ♖xf4 22 ♙xf4 ♖c5.

19...♙d7?! 20 f4 ♖c5 21 ♙f3

21 f5!? was the most logical way to attack the black king.

21...♙h3 22 ♙h1 ♙h5?!

22...♖g4!? 23 ♖g1 ♙h5 24 ♖b5 ♙d7 25 h3 f5 would have been a better try, although we believe White would still have the advantage.

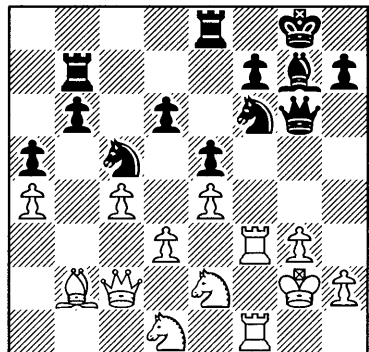
23 ♙g2 g5?!

23...♙c7 24 ♖b5 ♙d7 25 h3 ♙e6 26 ♙c1 is not quite as bad as the text.

24 fxg5 ♙xg5 25 ♙ef1

White piles on more pressure down the f-file, and on all the black weaknesses there.

25...♙g6 26 ♖d1!?



This knight is going to e3 and on to the magical f5-square.

26...♖fxe4

A desperate sacrifice in an awful position. Black refuses to lose slowly

and tries to survive in the tactical wilderness.

27 dxe4 ♖xe4 28 ♖xe4 ♜xe4 29 ♜d3 ♜c5 30 ♜a3 e4 31 ♙xg7 ♙xg7 32 ♜e3 ♙f8 33 ♜f4

This is winning for White, who has an extra knight for just two pawns.

33...♜e5 34 ♜d1 ♜d7 35 ♜b1 ♜b7 36 ♜ed5 ♜d7 37 ♙f2 ♜e8 38 ♜e3 ♜c8 39 ♜fd5 f6 40 ♜bb3 ♙f7 41 ♜b5 ♜cb8?

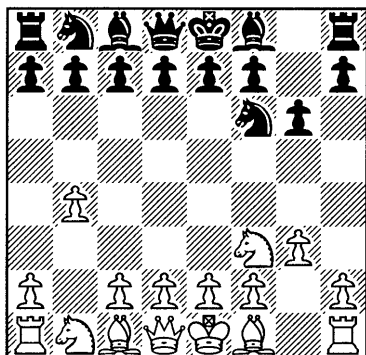
Black needed to defend b6 with 41...♜c6.

42 ♜f5 ♙e6 43 ♜f4+ 1-0

White wins after 43...♙f7 44 ♜xd6+ ♙e7 45 ♜xb7.

Game 81
D.Bronstein-V.Lepeshkin
USSR Championship,
Tallinn 1965

1 ♜f3 ♜f6 2 g3 g6 3 b4



3...d5

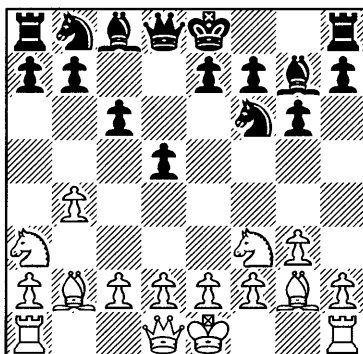
V.Hort-M.Krisko, Trinec 1972, continued 3...♙g7 4 ♙b2 0-0 5 c4 d5 6 ♙g2 dxc4 7 ♜a3 ♜d5 (the attempt to save the c4-pawn doesn't succeed after 7...♖d6 8

b5 ♖b6 9 ♖c1 ♙e6 10 ♜e5) 8 ♙xg7 ♙xg7 9 ♖c1 ♙g8 10 ♖xc4 c6 11 0-0 ♜d7 12 ♖h4 e5 13 ♜g5 ♜d7f6 14 b5 ♜e7 15 bxc6 bxc6, and White enjoyed a slight advantage due to the weak c6-pawn.

4 ♙g2 ♙g7 5 ♙b2

White employs a double fianchetto against the Grünfeld set-up.

5...c6 6 ♜a3

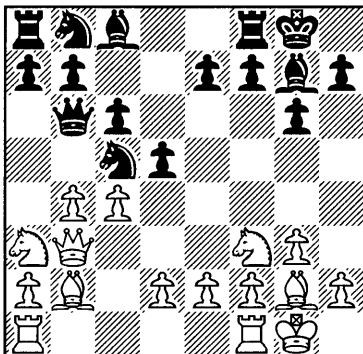


Another extraordinary idea from Bronstein: White prepares to strike at the centre with his c-pawn.

6...0-0 7 c4 ♖b6 8 ♖b3 ♜e4

8...a5!? 9 cxd5 cxd5 10 b5 reaches an equal position.

9 0-0 ♜c5

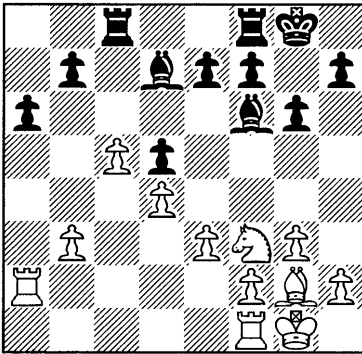


A tactical trick, which only serves to improve White's pawn structure. Soon White is able to take control of the centre.

10 bxc5 ♖xb3 11 axb3 ♙xb2 12 ♖a2 ♙f6 13 cxd5 cxd5 14 ♘b5 ♘a6 15 d4 ♙d7 16 ♘c3 ♘b4 17 ♖d2 ♖ac8 18 ♘a2

Wresting control of the b4-square will give White added possibilities on the queenside.

18...♘xa2 19 ♖xa2 a6 20 e3



20...b6?!

This overambitious thrust merely creates weaknesses. Black should choose 20...♖c7, with a defensible position.

21 b4

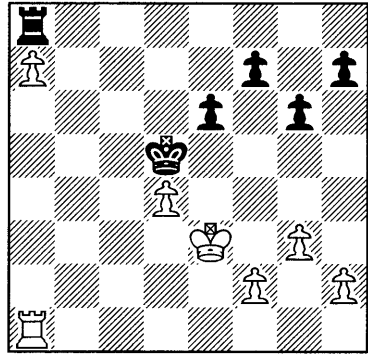
21 cxb6 ♙b5 22 ♖fa1 ♖b8 23 ♘e5 ♖fd8 24 ♖c1 ♖xb6 25 ♖ac2 is close to equal.

21...♙b5 22 ♖c1 ♙c4 23 ♖aa1 e6 24 ♙f1 a5?

Losing a pawn, and the game. After 24...♙xf1 25 ♙xf1 bxc5 26 bxc5 ♖c6 27 ♖a5 White has only a small advantage.

25 ♙xc4 dxc4 26 bxa5 bxc5 27 ♖xc4 cxd4 28 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 29 ♘xd4 ♙f8 30 a6 ♙xd4 31 exd4 ♙e7 32 ♙g2 ♙d6 33 ♙f3

♙d5 34 ♙e3 ♖a8 35 a7



35...f5

35...f6 36 h4 h6 37 g4 h5 38 f3 ♙d6 39 gxh5 gxh5 40 ♖a5 ♙c6 41 ♙e4 ♙d6 42 ♖a6+ ♙e7 43 f4 ♙d7 44 f5 exf5+ 45 ♙xf5 is a typical winning line – White can always gain an entry square for his king. The text move shortens the process.

36 ♖a5+ 1-0

After 36...♙d6 37 ♙f4 h6 38 h4, Black runs out of useful moves and must allow the white king to penetrate and eventually gobble up some more pawns.

Game 82

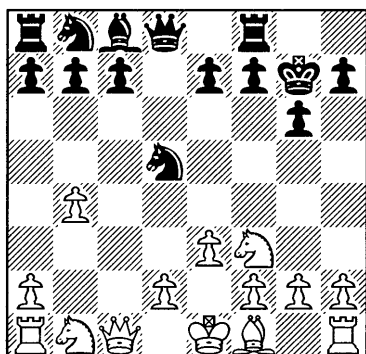
B.Gurgenidze-E.Mnatsakanian
USSR Team Championship,
Moscow 1972

1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 b4 g6 3 c4 ♙g7 4 ♙b2 0-0 5 e3 d5

The drawback of playing a Grünfeld set-up in this pseudo-English Opening is that Black's important dark-squared bishop is likely to be traded.

chesstouring.com

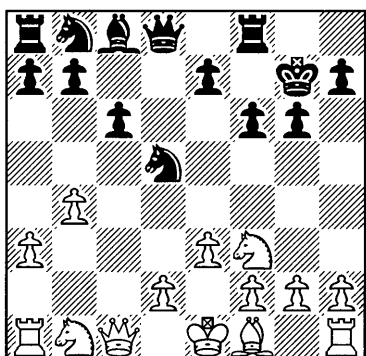
6 cxd5 ♖xd5 7 ♙xg7 ♔xg7 8 ♚c1



White puts his queen on a dark square (now that the dark-squared bishops have gone) and indirectly defends his pawn: 8...♖xb4?? 9 ♚c3+ wins the knight.

8...f6 9 a3 c6!?

Too many pawn moves is risky. Maybe Black should play 9...♙g4!?.



10 d4 a5 11 b5 ♚b6 12 bxc6 ♚xc6 13 ♖bd2 ♙d7 14 ♚xc6 ♖xc6 15 ♙c4 ♖c7 16 ♚b1

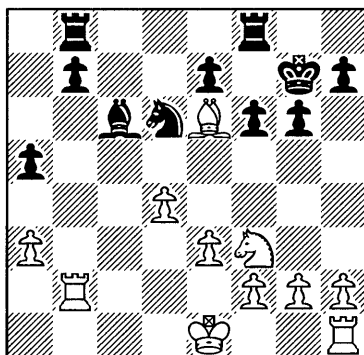
White's strong centre and Black's weak b-pawn add up to give White the advantage.

16...♚ab8 17 ♚b6 ♖a7 18 ♖e4

This knight is racing to c5, but it was more logical to castle first.

18...♙c6 19 ♖c5 ♖c8 20 ♚b2 ♖d6 21 ♖e6+ ♖xe6 22 ♙xe6

The white bishop on e6 inhibits Black's movement, but after his reply the dark side of failing to castle becomes apparent.



22...♙b5 23 ♖d2

To get his king's rook into the fray, White retreats the knight to prepare f2-f3 followed by ♙f2.

23...f5 24 f3 ♙f6 25 d5 ♙e8 26 ♙e2 ♙f7 27 ♙xf7 ♙xf7 28 ♚c1 ♚fc8 29 ♚xc8 ♚xc8 30 ♖d3 b5

White's edge has evaporated, but Black must still be careful to restrain his opponent's ambitions in the centre.

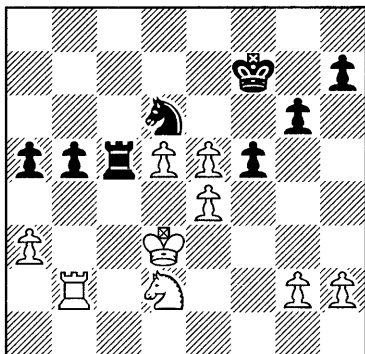
31 e4 e5

A step in the wrong direction. 31...♙f6! 32 f4 fxe4+ 33 ♖xe4+ ♖xe4 34 ♙xe4 ♚c4+ 35 ♙f3 looks drawish.

32 f4! ♚c5?

The rook ending after 32...♙f6 33 fxe4+ ♙xe4 34 ♖f3+ ♙f4 35 e5 ♖c4 36 ♚xb5 ♖xe5+ 37 ♖xe5 (37 ♖d4?? ♚c4 mate) 37...♙xe5 38 ♚xa5 ♚c1 should probably end as a draw.

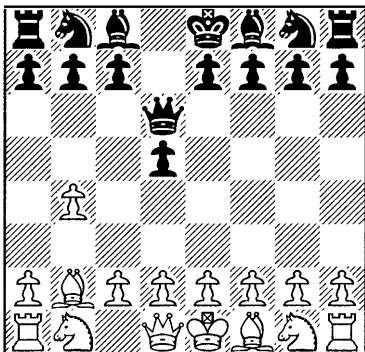
33 fxe5 1-0



It's more than likely that Black lost on time here. A possible conclusion could be 33 fxe5 ♖xe4 34 ♔d4 ♔e7 35 a4! (35 ♖xe4 ♜c4+ 36 ♔d3 ♜xe4 37 ♜xb5 ♜xe5 38 ♜xa5 looks drawish) 35...♜c1 36 axb5 ♖xd2 37 ♜xd2, and White wins.

Game 83
A.Sokolsky-F.Villard
 Kiev 1955

1 b4 d5 2 ♔b2 ♜d6



This early movement of the queen is

probably not good. By attacking the b4-pawn, Black gains time to create a pawn centre, but in future the poor position of his queen will weigh against him.

3 a3

White could offer a pawn sacrifice by continuing 3 b5, intending 3...♜b4? 4 ♔c3 ♜xb5 5 e4 with the initiative. Instead Black should reply consistently with 3...e5, as in the text.

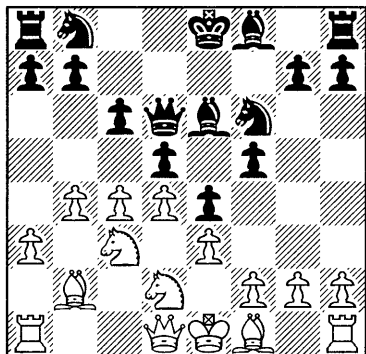
3...e5 4 ♖f3 f6

This is essential, as it's unfavourable to allow White's pieces to invade the centre after 4...e4 5 ♖d4. In addition, the continuation 4...♖d7 5 e3 ♔e7 followed by a later ...♔f6 is simply unrealistic.

5 e3 ♔e6 6 d4 e4

Maintaining the centre by playing 6...♖d7 7 dxe5 fxe5 requires considerable concessions after 8 c4! c6 (or 8...dxc4 9 ♜xd6 ♔xd6 10 ♖g5 ♔d5 11 ♖c3) 9 cxd5 cxd5 10 ♖c3 a6 11 ♖g5 ♖gf6 12 ♖xe6 ♜xe6 13 ♜b3 – there is strong pressure on Black's central pawns.

7 ♖fd2 f5 8 c4 c6 9 ♖c3 ♖f6



Black has advanced pawns into the centre and hopes to develop the initiative. But it's possible to spot two bad omens for Black: the poorly placed queen on d6 and the undeveloped queenside. Under these circumstances, White is first to begin active operations on the queenside.

10 ♖c2! a6

White was threatening to play 11 cxd5 cxd5 12 ♖b5.

11 ♜a4! ♖d8

Admitting the mistake of 2...♖d6. On 11...♜bd7, 12 ♜c5! would be very strong.

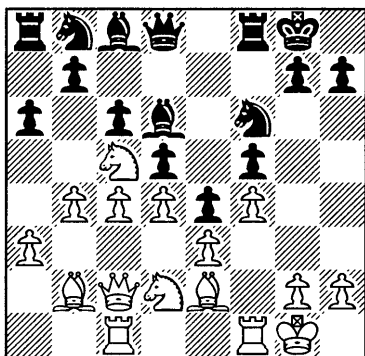
12 ♜c5 ♙c8 13 ♜c1

Being better developed, White now prepares to open the c-file.

13...♙e7 14 ♙e2

Here it's possible to play 14 cxd5 ♜xd5 (not 14...cxd5, because of 15 ♜cxe4!) 15 ♙c4.

14...0-0 15 0-0 ♙d6 16 f4



White is prepared for a sharp fight, in which the advantage in development should be felt. For example, 16...exf3 17 ♙xf3 ♖c7 18 h3 b6 19 cxd5! bxc5 20 dxc6! cxb4 (or 20...♜xc6 21 bxc5

♙h2+ 22 ♙h1 ♙g3 23 d5 etc) 21 ♖b3+ ♙h8 22 axb4, when even though Black has an extra piece, he can't escape defeat because virtually every move he makes will lose something.

16...♜g4

Black should try to attack without opening the position, and 16...♜g4 is a serious mistake. 16...b6 is a much better move.

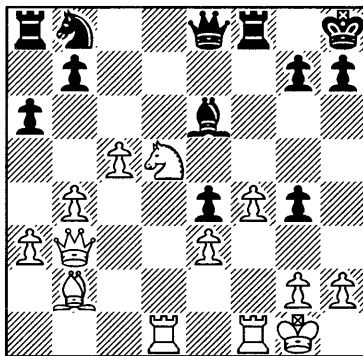
17 ♙xg4 fxg4 18 cxd5 cxd5 19 ♖b3 ♙xc5

Forced, otherwise a pawn goes.

20 dxc5 ♙h8 21 ♜cd1 ♙f5 22 ♜b1 ♙e6 23 ♜c3

Black's resources have run out. He must lose material.

23...♖e8 24 ♜xd5



24...♜d7

After this Black loses an exchange, but who can give advice in this position? On 24...♖f7 or 24...♜f7, very strong is 25 f5!

25 ♖c3 ♜f6

Nor would the result be any different after 25...♖f7 because of 26 ♜c7 ♙b3 27 ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 28 ♙xg7+ ♙xg7 29 ♜xd7+, winning easily.

26 ♖c7 ♜f7 27 ♖xa8 g3!?

A desperate counterattack, which misses the mark.

28 ♖b6 gxh2+ 29 ♔h1 ♖h5 30 ♜e1 ♜g6 31 ♜xh2 ♜f5 32 ♖c8! ♖f6 33 ♖xf6 gxf6 34 ♖d6 and White soon won (1-0).

Game 84

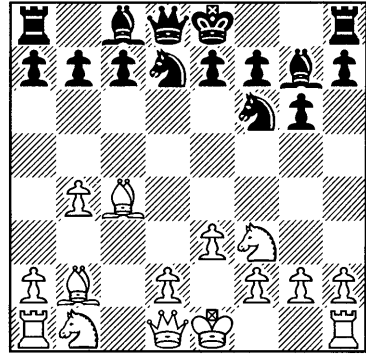
M.Vokac-P.Bazant
Czech Championship,
Turnov 1996

And finally, to end this book we show how a strong player (rated nearly 2300) lost in seven moves against the Sokolsky!

1 b4 d5 2 ♖b2 ♖d7 3 ♖f3 ♖gf6 4 e3 g6 5 c4 dxc4 6 ♖xc4 ♖g7??

Black fails to see a thematic bishop

sacrifice. 6...♖b6 7 ♖b3 and only then 7...♖g7 would have avoided the impending disaster.



7 ♖xf7+!! 1-0

White wins the queen after 7...♖xf7 8 ♖g5+ ♖e8 9 ♖e6, while 8...♖g8 is even worse because of 9 ♜b3+, mating on f7.

Summary

The Dutch is best handled by the 'avoidance' strategies we offer here (English Opening and Réti players will have no problems with this). Of the other Black options studied in this chapter, 1...c6 is the most critical. It's worth investing some time memorizing lines here, as inaccurate play could get punished.

1 b4 c6

- 1...f5 2 ♖b2 ♜f6 (D)
 3 e3 – Games 75-76; 3 ♙xf6 – Game 77
 1...a5 2 b5
 2...c6 – Game 79; 2...♜f6 – Game 80
 1...♜f6 2 ♖b2 g6 3 ♜f3 ♙g7
 4 c4 0-0 5 e3 d5 – Game 82; 4 g3 d5 5 ♙g2 c6 6 ♜a3 – Game 81
 1...d5 2 ♖b2
 2...♚d6 – Game 83
 2...♜d7 – Game 84
 2...e6 3 e3 f5 – Game 78

2 ♖b2

- 2 e3 – Game 74

2...♚b6

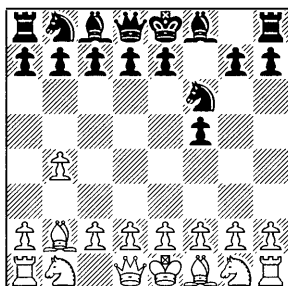
- 2...a5 3 b5 cxb5 4 e4 b4 5 a3 (D)
 5...♜f6 – Game 71
 5...bxa3 – Game 72
 5...♜a6 – Game 73

3 a3 a5 4 c4 (D) d6

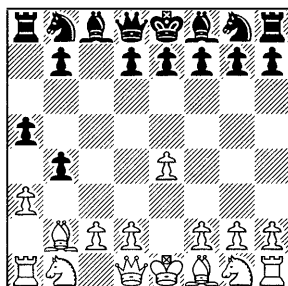
- 4...axb4 – Game 68, Game 69 (notes)

5 ♜c3 – Game 69

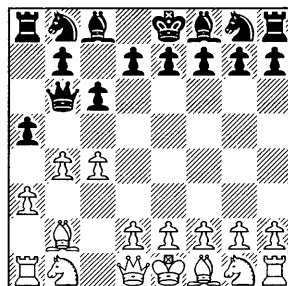
- 5 d4 – Game 70



2...♜f6



5 a3



4 c4

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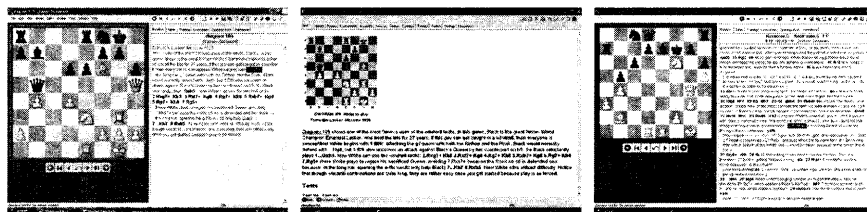
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US Master **Nick Conticello** won two Chess Journalist of America awards in 2003, and was named Organizer of the Year by the United States Chess Federation in 1996.

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