

A Strategic Opening Repertoire



**John Donaldson
&
Carsten Hansen**

2nd Edition, Revised & Enlarged



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Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged

by

John Donaldson & Carsten Hansen



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John Donaldson & Carsten Hansen

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Signs and Symbols

!	a strong move
!!	a brilliant or unobvious move
?	a weak move or error
??	a grave error
!?	a move worth consideration
?!	a dubious move
=	an equal position
≅	White stands slightly better
±	White has a clear advantage
+−	White has a winning position
≒	Black stands slightly better
∓	Black has a clear advantage
−+	Black has a winning position
∞	an unclear position
↑	with the initiative
→	with an attack
△	with the threat or idea of
#	mate
↔	counterplay
≡	compensation
ch	championship
ol	Olympiad

Introduction to the Second Edition

It seems hard to believe that almost ten years have passed since the publication of the first edition of *A Strategic Opening Repertoire*. Much has happened in the chess world since then, particularly in the area of openings where humans, aided by computers, have analyzed deeper and deeper. Ten years ago highly specialized opening books were still the exception, but now they are the norm. Such developments make me feel the need for books like the one you are holding in your hands is stronger than ever.

I am not alone in thinking this. When it first appeared, *A Strategic Opening Repertoire* was the only book of its kind on the market. Not long after Angus Dunnington's *Easy Guide to the Reti* and Tony Kosten's *The Dynamic English* were published and in 2004 Nigel Davies' *The Dynamic Reti* reached bookshelves. Clearly there was a need for an opening repertoire book geared to those who wanted to steer play along positional lines.

This new edition of *A Strategic Opening Repertoire* is both revised and expanded. While I have gone through every page of this book, the lion's share of the work was done by my colleague and fellow flank opening enthusiast Danish FM Carsten Hansen. I am particularly indebted to him for fleshing out the annotations to many of the games, particularly in the second half of the book. We both strongly believe in the value of well-annotated model games as a teaching tool and hope that this edition of *A Strategic Opening Repertoire* will increase your understanding of the game and deepen your positional skills.

On a technical note the reader will notice the use of the word I on occasion and may wonder which of the authors is responsible for its use. When it's me the reader will see (JD) and when it's Carsten there is no attribution.

As to who did what, Carsten is responsible for almost all material generated by games played after 1998 and a fair amount before that date. This is a substantially bigger book than the one that appeared roughly a decade ago.

Earlier I alluded to the many changes in the chess world since 1997. One particularly sad one was the passing of grandmaster Alex Wojtkiewicz in the summer of 2006 at much too young an age. Alex was a 1.♘f3, 2.c4, user par excellence and employed many of the lines you see in this book. His knowledge and mastery of flank openings was always an inspiration to me and in particular I greatly enjoyed our conversations on the Catalan. He seemed to have an almost inexhaustible supply of important novelties in this opening. If you are looking for a model player for this repertoire don't forget the games of Alex Wojtkiewicz.

John Donaldson

November 2007 [chesscafe.com](http://www.chesscafe.com)

Introduction to the First Edition

It's been said that ninety percent of the books written about chess are opening books. I'm not sure if this is true, but judging from the United States Chess Federation sales catalog, the figure can't be far off. Until about ten years ago, the bulk of books devoted to the opening were either narrow in focus or encyclopedias like *Modern Chess Openings*.

This choice between super-exhaustive or superficial was a real problem for amateur players looking for a good guide. The past decade has witnessed a proliferation of books dealing with opening repertoires. The basic idea behind this type of book has been to have an authority choose the best lines, explain the ideas, and thus save the non-professional a lot of headaches. Some of these books are quite good, but many are really poor.

The chief abuses center around promising too much and requiring too wide a range of playing styles to fit the repertoire. I remember as a youngster reading GM Lajos Portisch's sage words in the classic *How to Open a Chess Game*. Portisch said that your only goal in the opening is to reach a *playable* middlegame. These were novel and heretical words to my ears at the time. Wasn't the goal of the opening to grab as huge an advantage as possible? Judging from book titles on the order of *How to Win in Ten Moves Against Any Black Defense*, Portisch seemed like a very modest salesman indeed.

I'll grant you that most repertoire books are not quite as blatant as the invented title I've used, but look inside one and see how unobjective they often are. I could deal with the outrageous titles, if the contents were more honest. And remember, if somebody really had such great lines he wouldn't be putting them in a book, he would be winning important tournaments with them.

Aside from faulting many opening repertoire books for unrealistically raising readers' hopes, I must also take them to task for confusing their readers. Typically, these books feature loads of analysis and little explanation, and the lines chosen often fail to have any internal consistency. I'm not talking specifically of razor-sharp lines that fall apart two weeks after the book is published, though that can be a problem, but rather repertoires that require the reader to possess the universal style of a Spassky, equally adept at attack and defense, positional play and endgame strategy. Players with these sorts of skills don't need a guide to the opening! And yet, I see books where the player would have to play g3 in the Vienna one round and the main line of the Dragon the next game as white!

Having pointed out typical failings, it now remains to be seen how well I've succeeded in my aims. First, and foremost, I must warn the reader that this is not the repertoire for a player looking for quick kills. In fact, just the reverse, it's a set of interrelated opening lines intended for the long haul. The lines I present in the

Introduction

following chapters are ones that have served me well for many years. I can't promise you quick wins, but I am quite sure that you will rarely reach an unfamiliar middlegame.

Since reading *Zoom 001: Zero Hour for Operative Opening Models*, I've been fascinated with the idea of playing opening systems that are interrelated. *ZOOM*, by Danish theoretician Steffen Zeuthen, makes a case for playing a sort of Grünfeld-setup with either color, and that is what I've aimed for in this book with white.

Your first move will be 1.♁f3 and, in ninety-nine percent of the cases, you will follow up with 2.c4 and 3.g3. Many amateur players play 1.d4 and 1.c4, but few non-professionals open 1.♁f3. There are good reasons for this move, and surprise is certainly one of them. Using this repertoire, you will almost invariably find yourself on more familiar ground than your opponent. To use but one example, the number of players below 2400 who have a well-considered answer to the Catalan is minimal.

By playing 1.♁f3, we are aiming for queenside openings that restrict Black's counterplay. That means no 1.c4 e5 and no Modern Benoni, Benko Gambit, Budapest Gambit, King's Indian, etc. The flip side is that we don't have quite the initial knockout punch of 1.e4 or 1.d4, but look at the trade-offs.

Less to learn – though let's not kid ourselves that it will be really easy – more strategically connected and understandable ideas, and the likelihood that we will have the home-court advantage, these are the main advantages of this repertoire. This book is aimed at players from 2000 to 2400 USCF who have played 1.e4 or 1.d4 earlier in their careers. I'm a firm believer that everyone should start with 1.e4 and 1.d4 and play classical chess at the beginning of his career and I cringe whenever I see 1600 players wheeling out the King's Indian Attack!

Players below 2000 who are ambitious may also derive benefit in improving their positional understanding. I recommend carefully going over the prose comments and not getting bogged down in variations at the beginning of one's study.

A note on opening move orders: GM Matthew Sadler, in his recent book on the Slav, stated that, in his opinion, opening preparation can be reduced to three simple steps:

1. Knowing the main aim of the opening;
2. Knowing the value of move orders;
3. Understanding typical positions.

Good advice!

Let's deal with number two. The reader who has already looked at the chapter headings will notice that the chapters are hardly of uniform length. This is no

accident. I've made each chapter correspond more or less to the likelihood that you will face that rejoinder to 1.♟f3. This is why the position after 1.♟f3 ♟f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2 0-0 5.♟c3 d6 6.0-0 e5 7.d3 ♟c6 gets the most weight. The King's Indian Defense is by far the most popular answer to 1.d4 these days and this is the position that KID players are aiming for against our system.

Likewise, the second most-popular setup is the Queen's Gambit Declined formation, which is why we offer so much on the Catalan – particularly the Closed System that is most akin to the Orthodox QGD. These two setups and the Hedgehog (1.♟f3 ♟f6 2.c4 c5 3.g3 b6 4.♗g2 ♗b7 5.♟c3 e6 6.0-0) will probably account for fifty percent of your games with 1.Nf3. As much as possible, I've tried to stick with 1.♟f3, 2.c4 and 3.g3, but, in a few rare instances, have been forced to vary. For example, after 1.♟f3 d5 2.c4 dxc4, the old standby 3.♞a3 runs into 3...a6! and 3.♞a4+ doesn't offer realistic chances for an advantage, however consistent it might be. I recommend 3.e3 to play a sneaky QGA line with 4.♗xc4, 5.0-0 and maybe ♞e2 and ♞d1 before d4 *à la* GM Zvjaginsev. Another line, 1...b5, also trips up 2.c4. You could play 2.g3, but White has a hard time getting an edge. Much, much better is 2.e4!, as 2...a6 3.d4 ♗b7 4.♗d3 is already better for White and 2...♗b7 is strongly met by 3.♗xb5!

Many GMs play 1.♟f3 and 2.c4 and their interpretations of it vary. I've given an Anti-King's Indian treatment that Kramnik uses as his backup system. You may prefer to follow his example and put your pawn on d4 – if so, I recommend the Fianchetto KID, which will offer you many good transpositions. I've gone for the main positions against the Hedgehog and Double Fianchetto, but realize that you have other options: 1.♟f3 ♟f6 2.c4 c5 3.♟c3 b6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♟xd4 ♗b7 6.♗g5 or 3...e6 4.e4 (another Zvjaginsev favorite). Players who like playing against the Slav, Dutch and Queen's Gambit Declined (Kramnik always goes in for 1.♟f3 d5 2.d4) will find many ways to steer for their favorite lines. Also worth investigating is 1.♟f3 d5 2.g3 ♟f6 3.♗g2 c6 4.c4!? a line that isn't currently favored, but hasn't been fully researched. Your ultimate goal might be the ability to play 1.♟f3, 1.c4 and 1.d4 (maybe 1.d4 ♟f6 2.♟f3 e6 3.g3) and to choose your opening move based on your opponent.

One good way to get a feel for an opening is to play over the games of a real specialist. Here are some real experts with 1.♟f3: Vladimir Kramnik, Alexander Wojtkiewicz, Rafael Vaganian, Ulf Anderson, Zoltan Ribli, Boris Alterman, and Lev Psakhis.

John Donaldson

March 1998

The Big Attack

This is the game for Closed Sicilian players. Boris Spassky used the Closed Sicilian with incredible results during his run for the World Championship title, including a 3-0 score against GM Efim Geller in their Candidates Match. Though Spassky enjoyed tremendous results, it was only in his third victory over Geller that he finally found the optimum move order and piece placement. What is this game doing in a book devoted to 1.♘f3? Flip the colors and you will see that Geller is playing our line, albeit a critical tempo less. This game is a model of how to attack in the Closed Sicilian and will teach us to respect the potential the position offers with colors reversed.

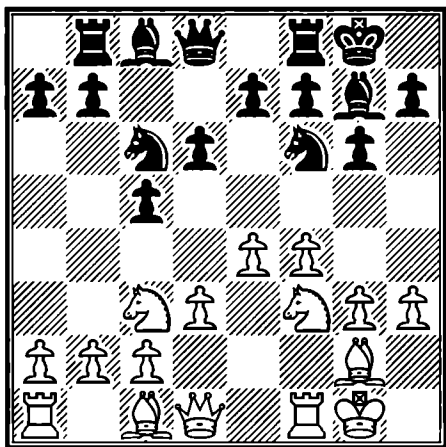
Game 1

*Boris Spassky –
Efim Geller*

Sukhumi (6) 1968

Closed Sicilian [B25]

1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 d6 3.g3 ♘c6 4.♙g2
g6 5.d3 ♙g7 6.f4 ♘f6 7.♘f3 0-0
8.0-0 ♖b8 9.h3



This good multi-purpose move prepares g3-g4, allows ♙e3 and ♖d2 without worrying about ...♘g4, and stops the

...♙c8-g4 followed-by-capturing-on-f3 idea.

9...b5 10.a3

White could have played 9.a4 and after an eventual ...a6 and ...b5 followed by ...b4, we would get a position much like the game. One advantage of 10.a3 is that if Black fools around, White has the idea of ♙d2, ♖b1 and b4. Why move the a-pawn at all? Good question, since the classical laws of chess say don't open lines on the side of the board where your opponent has more space. The advanced position of Black's b- and c-pawns signal this is where his play lies, so why 10.a3? Think of it as a high-class defensive move. Spassky, after much trial and error, had discovered the most efficient defensive setup was to trade the a-pawn, put his rook on c1 and play b3. Granted, this leaves a hole on c3, but it also leaves only the c2-pawn to attack.

Consider that if you don't play a3, Black may win the pawn with ...♖a5×a2 or ...♖b8-b6-a6×a2, as your rook will be forced to move at some point to guard b2 after ...♘d7, unmasking the bishop on g7 (this assumes that the bishop on c1 will have been developed). And ...a7-a5-a4-a3 is another reason to get the rook off of a1. Of course, the rook could go to b1, but after ...♖b8-a8-a2, Black will force b3 and the b1-rook will not be guarding c2. Having the rook on c1 and the pawn on b3 is not perfect. A black knight arriving on c3 will come with great effect. The question is not of preventing it, but how much time it will cost. A maneuver such as ...♘f6-e8-c7-b5-c3 costs many tempi and White figures to

use this time to whip up a terrific attack. If all this seems a little fuzzy, take heart. Spassky had to play quite a few games to discover some of the secrets of this formation; you only have to learn a few classics.

**10...a5 11.♙e3 b4 12.a×b4 a×b4
13.♗e2 ♖b7**

Preparing ...♞b8-a8, but Black had two important alternatives in 13...♙b6, intending 14...♙a6, and 13...♗e8 (or 13...♗d7), trying to stop the White's plan by forcing the rook to b1 early. An example of the latter is 13...♗e8 14.♞b1 ♗c7 15.f5 ♗b5 16.♙d2 ♗bd4 17.♗h4 ♗×e2+ 18.♙×e2 ♗e5 19.♗f3 ♗×f3+ 20.♙×f3 ♖b7 21.h4 ♗h8 22.♙e2 ♙e5 23.g4 e6 =, as in Reshevsky-Korchnoi, Amsterdam (m) 1968.

14.b3!

Following the plan. White will leave only a single target at c2.

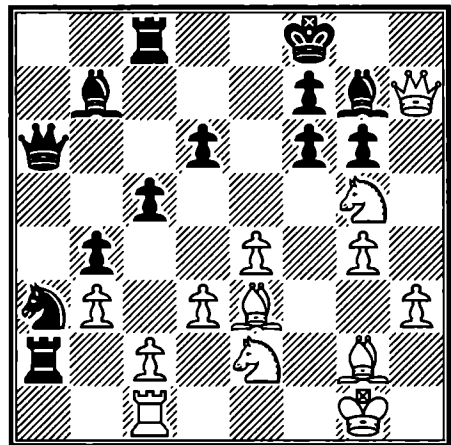
14...♞a8 15.♞c1 ♞a2 16.g4 ♙a8

A critical moment. After this game various improvements for Black were proposed. The two major plans suggested were playing for ...♗d4, which may entail a pawn sacrifice, and the very interesting 16...♙a5, intending to exchange all the rooks off with ...♞a8, ...♙a5-a3-b2 and ...♞a1. Should Black trade off both pairs, his king will be quite safe, as there will be no ♞×f6 to worry about. The only game I could find with this plan was Boog-Van Wely, Bern 1993 (see Game 2) though Dzindzichashvili has used this plan many times when playing the white side of the Closed Sicilian Reversed.

**17.♙e1 ♙a6 18.♙f2 ♗a7 19.f5
♗b5 20.f×g6 h×g6 21.♗g5 ♗a3
22.♙h4**

Having paid his dues on the other wing and in the center, Spassky is free to launch a devastating attack.

**22...♞c8 23.♞×f6! e×f6 24.♙h7+
♗f8**



**25.♗×f7! ♞×c2 26.♙h6 ♞×c1+
27.♗×c1 ♗×f7 28.♙×g7+ ♗e8
29.g5! f5 30.♙×g6+ ♗d7 31.♙f7+
♗c6 32.e×f5+ 1-0**

Trading Rooks to Defend the King

Game 2

Alexandre Boog –

Loek Van Wely

Bern Open (5) 1993

Closed Sicilian [B25]

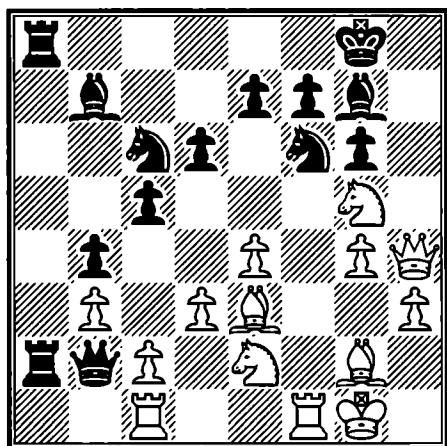
**1.e4 d6 2.♗c3 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2
c5 5.d3 ♗c6 6.f4 ♗f6**

**6...♞b8 7.a4 ♗f6 8.♗f3 0-0 9.0-0 a6
10.♗h4?! ♙g4! 11.♙d2 ♙d7 12.♗e2
b5 13.a×b5 a×b5 14.h3 ♙b6 15.f5 b4
16.g4 c4+ 17.♗h1 b3! 18.g5 ♗e8
19.♗f4 c3! 20.b×c3 b2 21.♙×b2 ♙×b2
and Black has broken through,
F.Blattny-Taimanov, Decim 1975.com**

7.♟f3 0-0 8.0-0 ♖b8 9.h3 b5
10.a3 a5 11.♙e3 b4 12.a×b4 a×b4
13.♟e2 ♙b7 14.b3 ♖a8 15.♞c1
♞a2 16.g4 ♗a5

Compare this position with Spassky-Geller (Game 1). Black could play ...♟f6-e8-c7-b5 or ...♟d7, with a view toward a later ...♟d4. Instead, Van Wely has a most interesting idea: trade both pairs of rooks to safeguard the king and then go after White's weaknesses on the queenside. Swiss FM Alexander Boog faithfully follows Spassky's plan versus Geller, but it doesn't work here.

17.♗e1 ♖a8 18.f5 ♗a3 19.f×g6
h×g6 20.♗h4 ♗b2 21.♟g5



21...♖a1

Just in time!

22.d4

Trading all the rooks leaves no attack and c2 will be ripe to fall.

22...c×d4 23.e5 d×e5 24.♞×f6
e×f6 25.♗h7+ ♗f8 26.♟×f7
d×e3 27.♟h6 ♞×c1+ 28.♗h2
♟e7 29.♙×b7 ♞×c2 30.♙d5
♞×e2+ 0-1

♙×f6 for the Central Light Squares

This game was played towards the end of the Olympiad. A team that wanted to finish at the top had to make its move and this made for plenty of tension. Playing as an individual can be tough enough, but, when you add in not wanting to disappoint one's team and country, it can cause even the strongest players to feel the heat. Playing white in such situations is doubly tricky. Your team needs you to put pressure on the opposing player, but not to risk the house. Losing with white is frowned upon in team competitions, especially in later rounds. That being the case, there is often a tendency to freeze up with white and let Black off easily. Here Israeli GM Lev Psakhis, twice champion of the USSR, shows how to strike a happy balance.

Game 3

*Lev Psakhis –
Wang Zili*

Yerevan (11) 1996
English Opening [A25]

1.c4 e5 2.g3 ♟c6 3.♟c3 g6 4.♞b1
♙g7 5.♙g2 ♟f6 6.d3 a5 7.♟f3 d6
8.♙g5!?

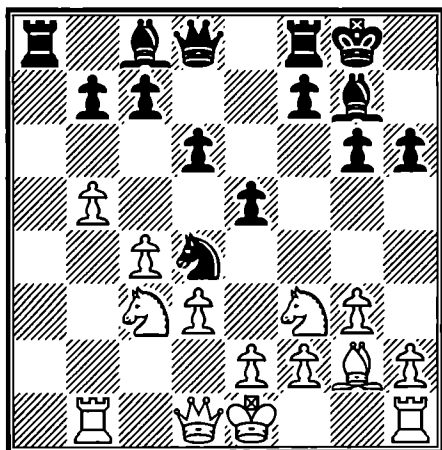
Psakhis points out that on 8.a3, Black could throw in 8...h6!? to stop ♙g5. It's always a tough call how early Black should play ...h6. After all, White could have played ♙g5 on move seven.

8...h6 9.♙×f6 ♙×f6 10.a3 0-0
11.b4 a×b4 12.a×b4 ♙g7 13.b5

Clarifying Black's intentions with his knight. Psakhis could have castled, but

the text is more precise. Note that 13.♖d2? is strongly met by 13...e4!. White always has to be on the lookout for this tactic after ♗g5×f6.

13...♖d4?!



This move, which enjoys such a good reputation in some positions, e.g. 1.♖f3 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2 d6 5.♖c3 0-0 6.0-0 e5 7.d3 ♖c6 8.♞b1 a5 9.a3 ♖d4, is completely wrong here. The trade of White's bishop for Black's knight has a left Black with too few pieces to generate active counterplay as compensation for his poor pawn structure. Psahis suggests 13...♖e7 14.0-0 f5 15.♞c2 with a slight edge for White.

14.♖×d4 e×d4 15.♖d5 ♗e6

15...c6 16.b×c6 b×c6 17.♖b4 is better for White.

16.0-0 ♞d7

16...♗×d5 17.♗×d5 ♞b8 18.♞a1 is pure pleasure for White.

17.♖b4!

Black has to make a tough decision about how to defend b7, perhaps via 17...♞a7.

17...♞ab8

17...♗h3? 18.♗×b7 ♗×f1 19.♗×a8 ♗×e2 20.♞×e2 ♞×a8 21.♞e1 leaves White with all the trumps: in particular, good knight versus bad bishop.

18.♞e1

White had a pleasant choice here between the text, preserving his bishop and giving e2 extra protection, and the more active 18.♞a1. Note that if White does allow ...♗h3, it makes sense to play ♗×h3 and draw Black's queen out of play. Allowing one's opponent to put his queen on h3 can often be dangerous, but here there are no pieces to support it. White played ♞e1, because at this moment he wants to keep his g2-bishop on the board to attack b7. Another possibility was 18.♞a1 ♗h3 19.♗×h3 ♞×h3 20.♖d5 ♞d7 21.♞a7.

18...♞fe8 19.♞a1 ♗h3 20.♗h1 h5!?

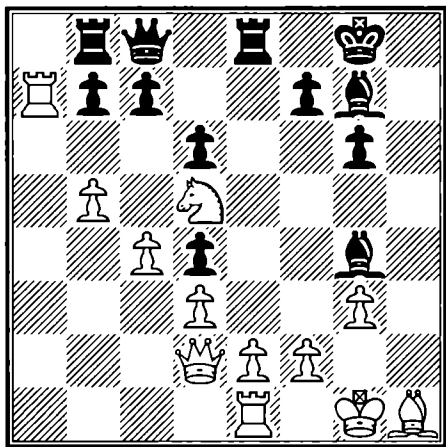
In a position that offers little counterplay, this seems to be the best try. By playing ...h7-h5-h4, Wang nibbles away at White's kingside. It may not be a factor, but at least it slightly improves his position in a situation in which the tendency might be to lash out and lose quickly.

21.♞a7 ♞c8 22.♞d2!

A good move. Usually the queen goes to c2 or b3, but here it does its job of clearing the back rank while making ♞f4 possible. Remember that queen and knight often work well together.

22...h4 23.♖d5 h×g3 24.h×g3 ♗g4

There is just no getting rid of the beast on d5. Black would love to play ...c7-c6, but here the coordination of White's pieces is felt, i.e., 24...c6? 25.bxc6 bxc6 26.♗e7+.



25. ♖f3!?

Confused? Wondering why Psakhis avoided the trade of bishops earlier (18.♞e1 and 20.♗h1), but now offers to, with doubled pawns yet. Chess can be a confusing game, especially when a player has two good options. As we saw, White could have allowed the bishops to be traded earlier and still kept his advantage (18.♞a1). The text is a little bit different. Yes, the pawns are doubled after 25....♗xf3 26.exf3, but after 26...♞xe1+ 27.♗xe1 ♖d7 28.♗a5, Psakhis would be clearly on top. Note that after 26.exf3, White's king is super-safe on g2 and his e1-rook has found its way into the game.

25... ♞e5

Black wants to trade bishops, but only on his terms.

26. ♗f4

Not 26.♗xg4? ♗xg4 27.♗xc7? ♞h5.

26... ♗xf3 27. ♗xf3

Not falling for any tricks like 27.♗xe5?? ♗h3 28.♗e7+ ♗h7 29.♗xg7+ ♗xg7 30.exf3 ♞h8.

27... ♗d8 28. ♗b4 ♗h6?

Running low on time Black finally cracks, but his position was hardly easy. For example: 28...♗e8 29.♞xb7 ♞xb7 30.♗xb7 ♞xe2 31.♞xe2 ♗xe2 32.♗xc7 ♗e1+ 33.♞g2 ♗xb4 34.b6 ♗e5 (34...♗c5 35.♗b8+ ♗h7 36.b7 ♗c6+ 37.♞g1 ♗f3 38.♗c8♗) 35.b7 d5 36.♗xe5 ♗xb7 37.cxd5.

29. ♞xb7 ♞xb7 30. ♗xb7 ♗d2
31. ♗c6 ♗g5

Or 31...♗e8 32.♞a1.

32. ♗xe5 ♗xe1 33. ♗f3 ♗c1
34. ♞g2 ♗d1 35. ♗xc7 ♗xe2
36. ♗xe1 ♗xe1 37.b6 1-0

A very nice positional effort by Psakhis; it must have left his opponent shaking his head, wondering where he went wrong.

The Origins of ...♗g4 (♗g5)

Spassky-Geller made a tremendous impact on the Closed Sicilian/ English, but so did the following game in a quieter way. I'm sure that the idea of ...♗c8-g4 had been played before this game, but never in such a high-class encounter, and with such thematic play. Bobby Fischer, who was always ahead of his time, even came up with the novel maneuver ...♞b8-b6-a6. Brave Bobby, he was never afraid to take some risks as black in order to generate winning chances.

Game 4

Vassily Smyslov –

Robert Fischer

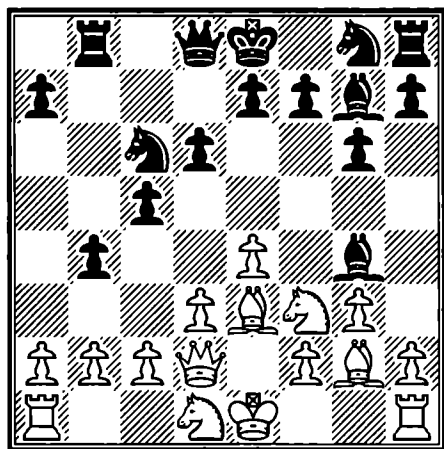
Rovinj/Zagreb (9) 1970

Closed Sicilian [B26]

1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 d6 3.g3 g6 4.♙g2
♙g7 5.d3 ♘c6 6.♙e3 ♖b8 7.♗d2
b5 8.♘f3 b4 9.♘d1

Black's early advance of his b-pawn has left Smyslov no choice but to put his knight on d1.

9...♙g4!?



Fischer played the same maneuver against Hort at the Palma de Mallorca Interzonal later in the year. In that game he followed up with ...e6 and ...♘ge7.

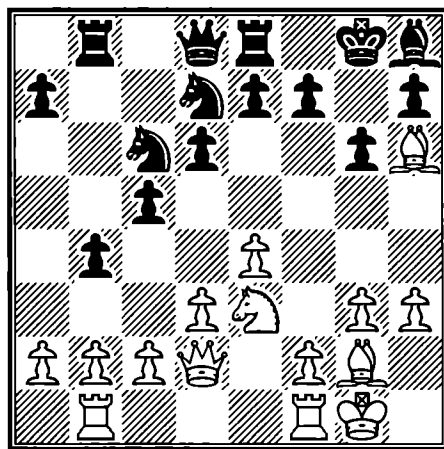
10.h3 ♙×f3 11.♙×f3 ♘f6 12.♙g2
0-0 13.0-0 ♖e8 14.♙h6 ♙h8
15.♘e3 ♘d7!

Putting the question to the b-pawn.

16.♖ab1

This is the normal way to guard the b-pawn, especially as 16...♗a5 17.♘c4 is a waste of time for Black, but Smyslov had better. Can you find a sharp move that gives White the advan-

tage that both players and several commentators have overlooked? A hint: look at Vaganian-Lautier (Game 5) and the cautionary note about being aware of the unprotected knight after the bishop trade (on f3 or f6) and b4 or ...b5? Pat yourself on the back if you found 16.e5!. It's a little different than usual, as the knight is on e3 and not e2. This makes the advance e5-e6 very hard to engineer, as there is no ♘f4 follow up. Still, White improves his position by giving his bishops air with e5 and exd6.



16...♖b6!?

Doubtlessly, this had been played before in some obscure game, but this was quite a move to play against a former World Champion. The a-file isn't open, but that doesn't stop Bobby, who heads straight forward to attack the weakness on a2.

17.♘c4 ♖a6 18.a3 ♘b6 19.a×b4
c×b4 20.♙e3 ♘×c4 21.d×c4 ♖a2
22.f4!

Smyslov, one of the world's foremost experts in the Closed Sicilian from the 1940s through the 1970s, shows his great feel for the position. Sensing that 22.b3 is too passive, he sacrifices a

pawn to open the board for his bishops. He's not called "the Hand" for nothing.

22...♙×b2 23.e5 ♘c3 24.♚d5 ♜a6
25.e6 f×e6 26.♞×e6+ ♔h8 27.f5
♞d4 28.♙×d4+ ♙×d4+ 29.♞h1
g5 30.♞×b4 ♙f6 31.♞fb1 ♞b6
32.♞×b6 a×b6 33.♙d5 ♞f8
34.♞e3 ♞c8 35.g4 ♞c5 ½-½

White owns the white squares and Black the black!

The ...e4 Trick

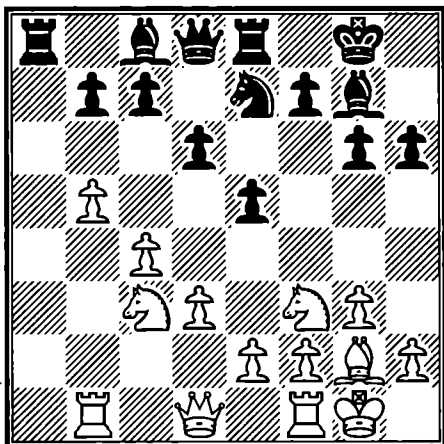
Game 5

Rafael Vaganian –
Joel Lautier

Manila (8) 1990

English Opening [A26]

1.♞f3 ♞f6 2.g3 g6 3.♙g2 ♙g7
4.c4 0-0 5.♞c3 d6 6.0-0 e5 7.d3
♞c6 8.♞b1 a5 9.a3 ♞e8 10.♙g5
h6 11.♙×f6 ♙×f6 12.b4 a×b4
13.a×b4 ♙g7 14.b5 ♞e7



15.♞d2?

Everything looks normal, but it's not. Can you find Black's hidden shot? 15.♞c2 was necessary.

15...e4!

Not the most obvious move in the world, but once you've seen it, you're not likely to forget it. Remember, for this to work, Black has to have control of g5 and can't have a piece on f5, for example, a bishop, because of d×e4.

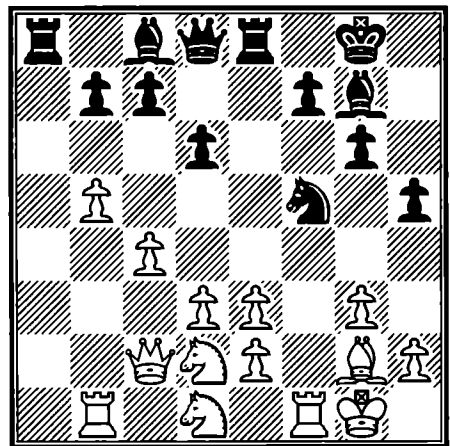
16.♞c2

16.♞c×e4 and 16.♞d×e4 are met by 16...f5 winning a piece.

16...e3!

Sometimes ...e4 only opens up the position for Black's bishops. Here it does much more.

17.f×e3 ♞f5 18.♞d1 h5!



Intending ...h4 with a terrific attack; faced with an imminent wipeout, Vaganian makes a defensive exchange sacrifice.

19.♞×f5!?

This is understandable as 19.♞e4 c6 and 19.e4? ♞d4 are bad for White.

19...g×f5 20.♞f1 h4 21.♞c3 h×g3
22.h×g3 ♞g5 23.♞d5 c6! 24.b×c6
b×c6 25.♞f4 ♞×e3! 26.♙f3

26. ♖xe3 is met by 26... ♗xg3.

26... ♗e5! 27. ♖f2 ♗xf3+ 28. exf3
 ♗xf4 29. gxf4 ♗xf4 30. ♗b2
 ♗h4+ 31. ♖e2 ♗d7 32. ♖d2 ♗e8+
 33. ♖d1 c5 34. ♗a1 ♗f2 35. ♗f6
 ♗e1+ 36. ♖c2 ♗xa1 37. ♗xa1 ♗e3
 38. ♗a7 ♗e6 39. f4 ♗c6 40. ♗a6
 ♗g2 41. ♗b6 ♗f6 42. ♖b3 ♖g7
 43. ♗a5 ♗c6 44. ♗c3

White missed a better try to resist here:
 44. ♗a6! ♗f3 45. ♗a5! and Black still
 has plenty of work to do (Lautier and
 Polugaevsky).

44... ♗a4! 45. d4 ♗xd4 46. ♗xd4+
 cxd4 47. ♖b2 ♗xb3 48. ♖xb3
 ♖g6 49. ♖c2 ♖h5 50. ♖d3 ♖g4
 51. ♖xd4 ♖xf4 52. ♖d5 ♖e3
 53. ♖xd6 f4 54. c5 f3 55. c6 f2
 56. c7 f1=♗ 57. c8=♗ ♗f6+ 0-1

Sacrificing the Exchange for a Pawn and Light Squares

Game 6

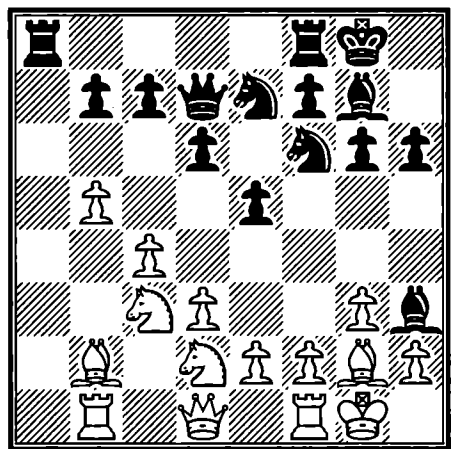
*Edmar Mednis –
 Karl-Heinz Lehmann*
 West Berlin 1983
 English Opening [A26]

1. c4 ♖f6 2. g3 g6 3. ♗g2 ♗g7
 4. ♖f3 0-0 5. 0-0 d6 6. ♖c3 e5 7. d3
 ♖c6 8. ♗b1 a5 9. a3 h6 10. b4 axb4
 11. axb4 ♗e6 12. b5 ♖e7 13. ♗b2
 ♗d7 14. ♖d2

Setting up a nice trick. White usually
 follows up 13. ♗b2 by 14. ♗e1, meet-
 ing 14... ♗h3 with 15. ♗h1 ♖g4 and
 now 16. ♗c2, 16. ♗b3 or 16. ♖d2. So
 14. ♖d2 ought to transpose back into
 known lines.

14... ♗h3?

Natural and wrong. Necessary was
 14... ♗b8 and only then ... ♗h3. Re-
 member that Black's ideal setup is
 ... ♗c8 and ... c6. Barring that, next best
 is ... b6 with the rook on c8 with only
 one target (c7) to hit at. Usually, Black
 can't get this and ends up with his rook
 on b8 and having to later play ... b6 and
 ... ♗bc8. Here 14... c6?! is met by 15. ♖a4
 ♖c8 16. bxc6 bxc6 17. c5! ♗h3 18. ♖c4
 with the advantage – Mednis and
 Byrne).



15. ♗xb7!

Well judged! White gets no immediate
 knockout blow after this exchange sac-
 rifice, but he does get long-term pres-
 sure and a rock-solid position.

15... ♗xf1 16. ♗xf1 ♗a7

16... ♗ab8 17. ♗g2 ♗fd8 18. ♗a3 gives
 White strong pressure.

17. ♗g2

After 17. ♗g2 ♗d8, Black plays for
 ... d5 with a murky position.

17... d5 18. ♗c1 d4 19. ♖ce4 ♖xe4
 20. ♖xe4 ♖f5 21. ♖c5 ♗c8
 22. ♖a6 c6?! chesstouring.com

22...♖xa6 23.bxa6 ♖xa6 24.♙a3 was a better try for Black, but White is still for choice.

23.♙a3 ♖d8 24.♙c5 cxb5?
25.♙xa7 ♖xa6 26.♖a1 ♖e6
27.cxb5 ♘d6 28.b6 e4 29.♖b1
♖c8 30.♗b2 ♗d7 31.♙xe4 ♘xe4
32.b7 ♘d6 33.bxc8=♗+ ♘xc8
34.♙c5 ♖h7 35.♗b7 ♖e6
36.♗e4 ♖a2 37.♖b8 1-0

The Plan ...♙e6, ...♗d7, ...♙h3,
...♘g4, and ...f5

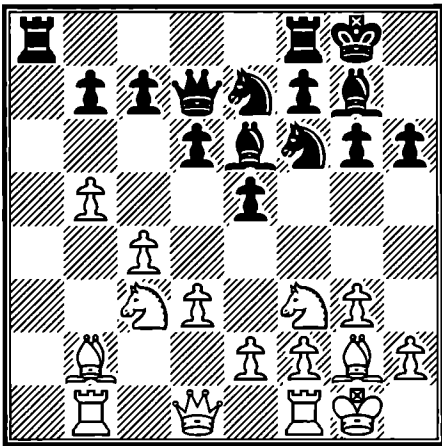
Game 7

Vladimir Raicevic –
Victor Ciocaltea

Bar (10) 1977

English Opening [A26]

1.c4 g6 2.♘c3 ♙g7 3.g3 e5 4.♙g2
♘c6 5.♘f3 d6 6.d3 ♘f6 7.0-0 0-0
8.♖b1 a5 9.a3 h6 10.b4 axb4
11.axb4 ♙e6 12.b5 ♘e7 13.♙b2
♗d7



Black has a difficult choice here in 13...♗d7 and 13...♘d7. Both moves enjoy a good reputation. That the late Romanian GM Victor Ciocaltea chooses 13...♗d7 should count for something. Theory wasn't quite so well developed during his lifetime (he died

in 1983), but Ciocaltea enjoyed a well-deserved reputation for precise and thematic opening play.

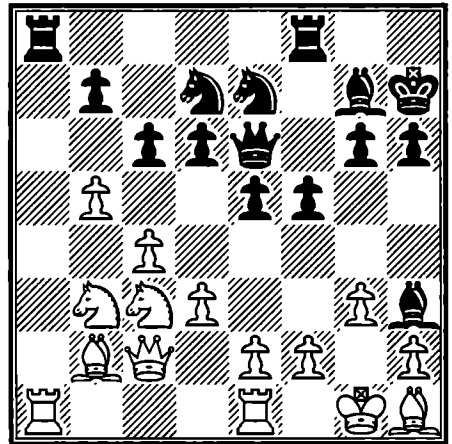
14.♖e1 ♙h3 15.♙h1 ♗e6

An interesting idea. Another good move is 15...♘g4, freeing the way for the f-pawn to advance.

16.♗b3 ♘d7 17.♘d2 c6 18.♖a1
♖h7 19.♗c2 f5

Raicevic and Ciocaltea, in their joint annotations to the game in *Chess Informant* 24/56, assess the position as equal.

20.♘b3



20...e4!

One of the problems Black often has in this line is deciding whether or not to play ...f5-f4. This move is often essential for the attack, but typically gives White a beautiful square on e4 for one of his knights or bishop. The text is a very thematic positional pawn sacrifice. Black gets in ...f4, but only after tossing away his e-pawn. In return, he gets a White pawn on e4 that obstructs the first player's pieces, an active bishop on g7 and the e5-square for his knight.

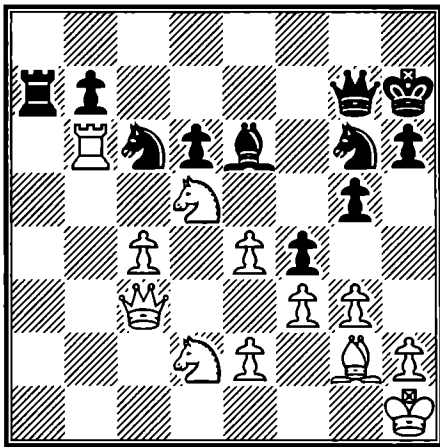
21. d×e4 f4 22. ♖a4 ♗e5 ♘ 23. b×c6
 ♗7×c6!

After 23...b×c6 24.c5!, Black's piece activity is more important than his pawn structure.

24. ♗b6 ♘×a1 25. ♘×a1 ♖f7! 26. f3
 ♗e6 27. ♗d5 g5 28. ♘d1?! ♘a8

Intending ...♘a2, something White must not allow.

29. ♘a1 ♘c8 30. ♗d2 ♗e7 31. ♘a7
 ♗7c6 32. ♘a4 ♗e7 33. ♘b4 ♗7c6
 34. ♘b5 ♘a8 35. ♗g2 ♘a7 36. ♖h1
 ♗g6?! 37. ♗×g7 ♖×g7 38. ♖c3
 ♗d4 39. ♘b6 ♗c6



The critical moment of the game has been reached and Black doesn't have enough time to figure things out. He should have gone forward instead of retreating. 39...♗×e2 40. ♖d3 (40. ♖×g7+ ♖×g7 41. ♘×d6 ♘a1+ 42. ♗f1 ♗×d5 43. c×d5 f×g3) 40...♗c1 41. ♖f1 ♗×d5 42. c×d5 ♖d4.

40. ♖g1 ♗ge5? 41. g×f4 g×f4
 42. ♗×f4?

42. ♖h1 was forced.

42...♘a1+! 43. ♘b1 ♘×b1+
 44. ♗×b1 ♗×c4 45. ♗d2? b5

45...♗×f3+! 46. ♖×f3 ♖d4+, followed by ...♖×b2, with advantage to Black.

46. ♖f1 b4 47. ♖e3 ♖g5 48. ♗h3
 ♗f7 49. ♗f5+ ♖g8 50. ♗d5 ♖×e3
 51. ♗×e3 ♗d4 52. ♗c8 b3
 53. ♗b7?

Missing 53. ♗a6 b2 54. ♗d1 ♗c4
 55. ♗×c4+ ♗×c4 56. ♗b1.

53...b2 54. ♗d5 ♗×d5 55. ♗×d5
 ♗c4 56. ♗b1 ♗b5 57. ♖f2 ♗ca3
 58. ♗d2 ♗c4 59. ♗b1 ♗ca3
 60. ♗d2 ½-½

Despite the errors this game is worthy of close study.

Black Blunts White's Bishop on g2

Game 8

Jaime Sunye Neto –

John Grefe

Lone Pine Open (3) 1977

English Opening [A26]

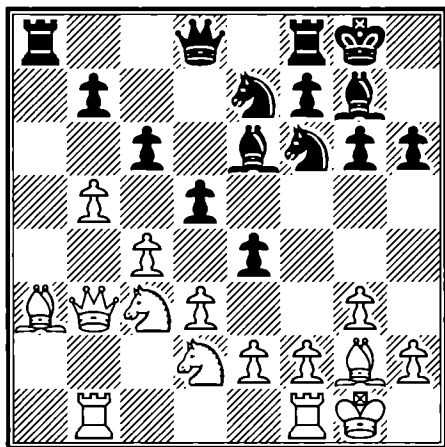
1. ♗f3 ♗f6 2. c4 g6 3. g3 ♗g7
 4. ♗g2 0-0 5. 0-0 d6 6. ♗c3 e5 7. d3
 ♗c6 8. ♘b1 a5 9. a3 h6 10. b4 a×b4
 11. a×b4 ♗e6 12. b5 ♗e7 13. ♗d2

Not the most incisive move. White has better in 13. ♗b2, intending ♘a1, and 13. ♖b3, planning to post the bishop on a3.

13...c6 14. ♖b3 d5 15. ♗a3 e4!

A very nice move bringing the bishop on g7 into the game. Black's minor pieces are well placed to support this advance. Note how useful the insertion of ...a7-a5 has proved to be. The black rook on a8 is very much in the game.

One last observation, look at how White's bishop on g2 is no longer so powerful when the pawn is on e4.



16. ♖c5 exd3 17. exd3 ♜e8
 18. bxc6 bxc6 19. ♝b4?! dxc4
 20. dxc4 ♜xd2 21. ♞fd1 ♜c2
 22. ♞dc1 ♝f5 23. ♕xe7 ♜g4
 24. ♜e4 ♞a2 25. ♖c5 ♝h5 26. h3
 ♜e5 27. g4 ♕xg4 28. hxg4 ♜xg4
 29. ♝b3 ♞e2 30. ♞e1 ♞8xe4
 31. ♝b8+ ♜h7 32. ♕xe4 ♕e5
 33. ♝a7 ♞xe4 34. ♝xf7+ ♕g7
 35. ♕d6 ♜xf2 36. ♝xf2 ♕d4
 37. ♞b7+ ♜g8 38. ♞xe4 ♕xf2+
 39. ♜xf2 ♝f5+ 40. ♞f4 ♝c2+
 41. ♜e3 ♝c3+ ½-½

Infiltration via the a-file

Game 9

*Ulf Andersson –
 Heikki Westerinen*

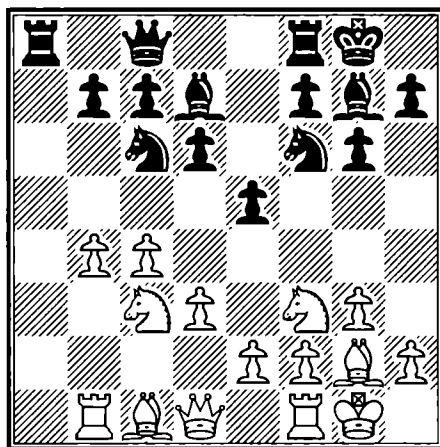
Geneva (11) 1977

English Opening [A26]

1. ♜f3 ♜f6 2. c4 g6 3. g3 ♕g7
 4. ♕g2 0-0 5. 0-0 d6 6. ♜c3 e5 7. d3
 ♜c6 8. ♞b1 a5 9. a3 ♕d7 10. b4
 axb4 11. axb4 ♝c8?!

This way of trying to exchange bishops doesn't enjoy a good reputation. Better ways to achieve the same goal

are ... ♖f5 and ... ♜d7, and ... ♕e6 and ... ♝d7.

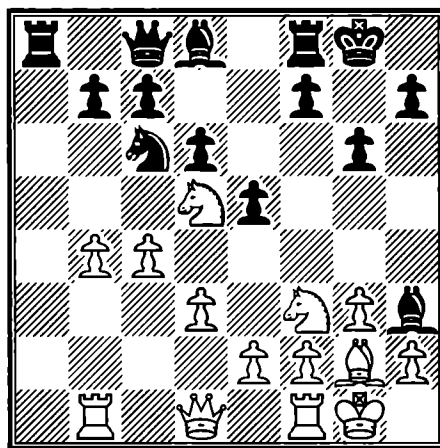


12. ♕g5!

This move is often played in this line of the English, but is particularly effective here.

12... ♕h3?! 13. ♕xf6 ♕xf6
 14. ♜d5 ♕d8

Not 14... ♕g7?? 15. b5.



15. ♕xh3!

This is an idea to remember. The queen can't attack by itself.

15... ♝xh3 16. ♞a1 ♞xa1?!

Giving up the a-file is the final mistake. Black had to play 16... ♞b8.

17. ♖×a1 ♜c8 18. b5 ♘b8?!
 19. ♜a8 ♞e8 20. ♞a1 e4? 21. d×e4
 ♞×e4 22. ♞a7 ♞×c4

Hoping for 23. ♞×b7? ♜h3.

23. ♜g2! 1-0

Tripling on the c-file

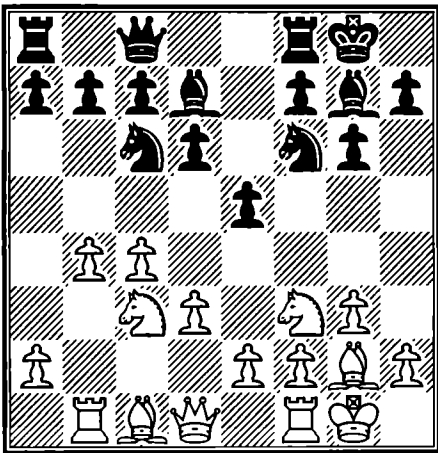
Game 10

*Boris Shatskes –
 Khanan Muchnik*

Moscow 1966

English Opening [A26]

1. c4 ♘f6 2. ♘c3 d6 3. g3 e5 4. ♙g2
 ♘c6 5. d3 g6 6. ♘f3 ♙g7 7. 0-0 0-0
 8. ♞b1 ♙d7 9. b4 ♜c8



If Black is going to employ this plan it makes sense to leave the a-line closed (i.e., no ...a5).

10. b5

10. ♙g5 ♙h3 11. ♙×f6 ♙×f6 12. ♘d5
 ♙d8 13. ♙×h3 ♜×h3 is not as good for
 White, as in Game 9, since the a-file is
 closed.

10... ♘e7 11. ♞e1 ♙h3 12. ♙h1
 ♘g4

Black follows the standard plan (...♙h3, ...♘g4 and ...f5), but White is ready.

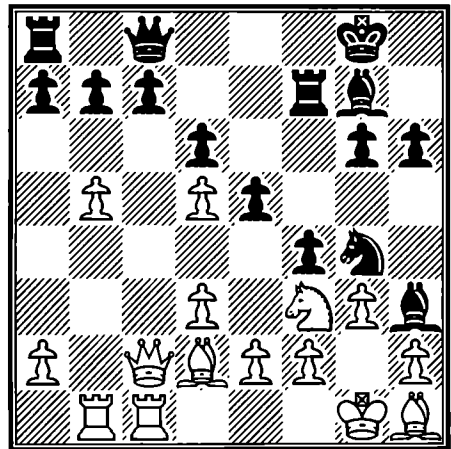
13. ♜c2 h6

To avoid ♘g5 at some point.

14. ♘d5

This is preparation for taking control of the c-file.

14... ♘×d5 15. c×d5 f5 16. ♙d2 f4
 17. ♞ec1 ♞f7



18. ♞b4!

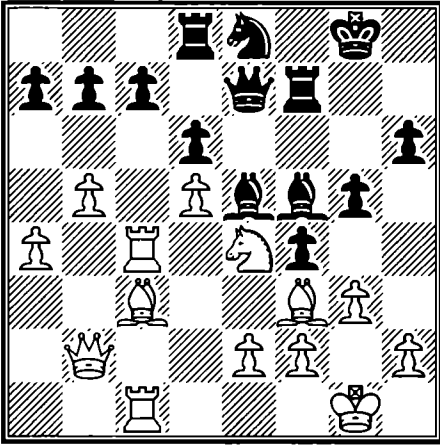
This is a typical rook maneuver in this variation. White prepares to triple on the c-file.

18... ♘f6 19. ♞c4 ♘e8 20. a4 g5
 21. ♙e1

This bolsters f2 and vacates d2 for ♘f3-
 d2-e4.

21... ♙f6 22. ♘d2 ♙d8 23. d4! ♙f5
 24. ♜b3 e×d4 25. ♞×d4 ♙f6
 26. ♞dc4 ♜d8 27. ♘e4 ♙e5
 28. ♙c3 ♜e7 29. ♜b2 ♞d8 30. ♙f3

Introduction



White threatens 31.g4.

30...g4 31.♙g2 h5 32.gxf4!

Taking the bull by the horns. White opens lines for his more active pieces and Black quickly collapses.

32...♙xe4 33.fxe5 ♙xg2 34.e6 ♜f5 35.♚xg2 ♜xd5 36.♜e4 ♜f5 37.♞d2 ♞h4 38.♜f4 ♜c5 39.♞d4 ♜e5 40.♚c4 ♞h3+ 1-0

Chapter One

Closed Sicilian Reversed with 9...h6

The position after 8.♖b1 is one of the richest in chess. White is primarily playing on the queenside and Black on the kingside, but there is a great deal of flexibility for both players. This chapter focuses on lines where Black plays in the center as well as against the king. To that end, he has ideas based on ...h6, ...♗e6 and ...♝d7, as well as the super-center plans with ...♘d4, ...c7-c6 and ...d6-d5 or ...♞e8 and ...d6-d5. Here we look at ...h6 and the queen-plus-bishop battery.

The key position of the Closed Sicilian Reversed occurs after 8...a5 9.a3 h6. Black wishes to complete his development with ...♗e6 and ...♝d7, but needs to avoid an unpleasant ♘g5. If White were able to trade his knight for Black's queen bishop, his kingside would be very safe. Black wants to play ...♗e6-h3 to trade off the bishop that is the heart of White's play.

White can allow this exchange, as it does cost Black some time, but generally he prefers to play ♞e1 or ♞d1 to meet ...♗h3 with ♗h1. This saves the bishop, but can sometimes lead to positions where White's king is very exposed. Note that ♞d1, when possible, is better than ♞e1, because it helps support the advance d3-d4. This break in the center is often an effective counter to Black's play on the wing.

Black can generate some surprisingly sharp attacks after ...h6, ...♗e6, ...♝d7, ...♗h3, ...♘g4, ...f5 and either ...f4 or the sacrificial ...e4 (followed by ...f4).

One response to this has been the idea of ♗c1-g5xf6. White trades a queenside piece for an attacker, gains extra control of d5 and e4, and, in general, achieves a very harmonious arrangement of his pieces (i.e., there is no need for bishop and knight to fight for the d2-square).

Game 11

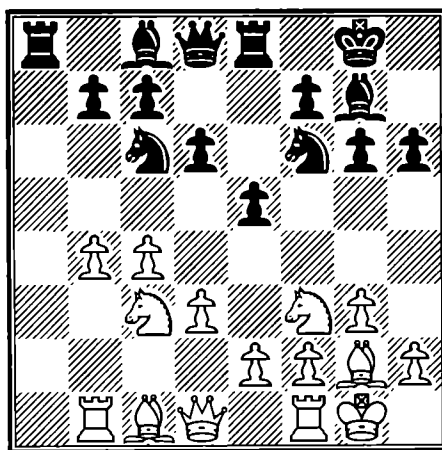
Rafael Vaganian –

John Fedorowicz

Reykjavik 1990

English opening [A26]

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7
4.♗g2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.♘c3 e5 7.d3
h6 8.♖b1 a5 9.a3 ♘c6 10.b4 a×b4
11.a×b4 ♞e8



This interesting mixture of systems is a Fed original. He wants to play ...e4, but without allowing White ♗g5.

12.♘d2

In Peelen-Fedorowicz, Wijk aan Zee 1990, White instead tried 12.e3 ♗e6 13.b5 ♘e7 14.♝c2, which is an interesting alternative. chesstouring.com

Also 12.b5 ♖d4 13.♗xd4 e×d4 14.♗d5 ♗xd5 15.♗xd5 (White is better because of the pressure against the b7-pawn) 15...♗g4 (15...♗h3 16.♞e1 ♞c8 is possibly a better choice for Black) 16.♞e1 ♞a2 17.♞b2 ♞×b2 18.♗×b2 is better for White.

12...♗d4 13.e3 ♗f5 14.b5± ♞b8 15.♗b3

One always hesitates a little when criticizing a move by someone who knows a line really well, but the knight doesn't look ideally placed on b3, and 15.♗b2!? ♗e6 16.♞c2 looks like an attractive alternative.

15...♗e7 16.♗d5 ♗e×d5 17.c×d5 e4?!

This opens up the game, which isn't entirely in Black's favor, because White has more space and better overall coordination. A more prudent choice is 17...♗d7!? 18.♗d2 ♞a8 19.♞b3 ♞a5 20.♞c4 ♞c8, which is fully acceptable.

18.d×e4 ♗×e4 19.♗b2 ♗f6?!

Black cannot tolerate the exchange of dark-squared bishops, as it will leave him weak on the squares around his king and with a backward c-pawn. But the text move seems somewhat passive. Black should consider 19...♗c3!? 20.♗×c3 ♗×c3 21.♞c2 ♗f6 22.♞fc1 ♞e7 with a solid and fully playable position.

20.♞c1 ♗d7 21.♞d3 h5 22.♞c4 h4!? 23.b6

The counterintuitive 23.g×h4 is also playable, because Black doesn't have

any pieces that can exploit the weakening of White's pawn structure on the kingside, e.g. 23...♞e7 24.h3 ♞a8 25.♗d4, and White is better.

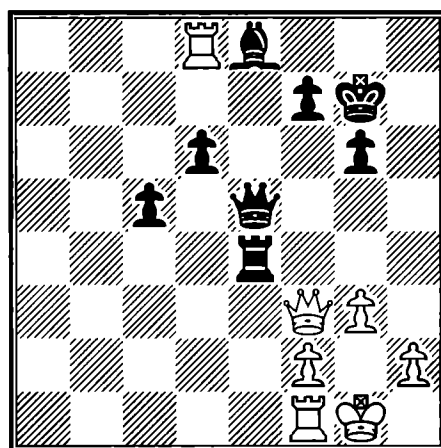
23...c5! 24.♞×h4 ♞a8

24...♞×b6 25.♗×f6 ♞×b3 26.♞b1 leaves White with a plus.

25.♞a1?!

Vaganian suggests 25.♗d2!? as an improvement. For example: 25...♗b5 26.♞fe1 ♞a4 27.e4 ♗d7 28.♞×d8 ♞×d8 29.♗×g7 ♞×g7 30.♗f1 ♗×f1 31.♞×f1 ♗×b6 32.♞b1 ♞a6, and now 33.♞b5!? is good for White, e.g. 33...c4 34.♞c1 ♞c8 35.f4 c3 36.♗b1 c2 37.♗d2, but possibly even better is 33.♞e3! c4 34.♞c3 ♞c8 35.♞b4 f5 36.f3. In both cases White has a clear advantage.

25...♞×b6 26.♗×f6 ♞×b3 27.♞ab1 ♞d3 28.♞×b7 ♞a4 29.e4 ♞a×e4 30.♗×e4 ♞×e4 31.♞b8+ ♗e8 32.♞g5 ♗×f6 33.♞×f6 ♞×d5 34.♞f3 ♞e5 35.♞d8 ♞g7



36.♞b3

White cannot pick-up a pawn with 36.♞×d6?, as 36...♗b5! highlights the

weakness of the back rank and light squares around the king. However, 36.♖d3! may be more accurate, e.g. 36...♗d4 37.♖a6! and White plans to penetrate into Black's position via the back rank.

36...♗b4?!

This looks like it makes sense, because it prevents White's attempts at back-rank penetration, but in fact it allows him to transpose back into the line offered as an alternative on move thirty-six. Instead, Black should have opted for 36...♗e1!, solving his problems.

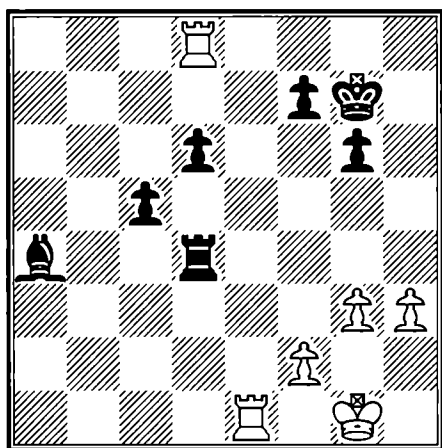
37.♖d1?!

37.♖e3 ♗e4 38.♖d3! ♗d4 39.♖a6 achieves the transposition that White wants.

37...♗d4 38.♖e1 ♖x e1

Here Black may want to consider 38...♗b5!?, e.g. 39.♖xe5+ dxe5 40.♗d1 ♗e2 41.♗d2 ♗f3, and he should not be worse in the endgame.

39.♗x e1 ♗a4 40.h3 =



40.♗e7 ♗f6 41.♗c7 is probably better.

40...♗b3 41.g4 ♗f6 42.♗g2 ♗e6 43.♗g3 c4 44.♗e3 g5 45.♗g8 d5 46.♗f3+ ♖e7 47.♗xg5 ♗d1 48.♗a3 d4 49.♗a7+ ♗d6 50.♗a6+ ♖e7 51.♗a7+ ♗d6 52.♗a6+ ♗d7 53.♗c5 d3 54.♗f4 ♗e1 55.♗cc6 ♖e7 56.♗c7+ ♗d8 57.♗c5 ♖e7 58.♗c7+ ♗d8 59.♗c5 ♗d7 60.♗cc6 ♖e7 ½-½

Game 12

*Ulf Andersson –
Serik Temirbaev*

Yerevan (14) 1996

English Opening [A26]

1.♖f3 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.♖c3 ♖c6 7.d3 h6 8.♗b1 a5 9.a3 e5 10.b4 axb4 11.axb4 ♗e6 12.♖d2 d5?!

This looks good, but the move produces a Dragon Sicilian (with colors reversed) where White has all the play.

13.b5 ♖e7 14.cxd5 ♖exd5 15.♗b2 ♗e8

This allows White to arrange his pieces on good squares on the queenside. Better seems to be 15...♖xc3 16.♗xc3 ♖d5 17.♗a1 ♗a2 18.♖c4 ♗e8, Chernin-Istratescu, FIDE WCh KO, Groningen 1997, and now 19.♗b2!?, followed by 20.♖b3, offers White a slight advantage.

16.♖c2 ♖b4 17.♖c1 ♖fd5 18.♖c4

It is interesting to note that Andersson is not in a hurry to exchange pieces, instead inviting his opponent to do so. In this way he hopes to win a few “half-moves” that will lead to a tangible ad-

vantage. This method is not new; having been first applied with success by the legendary Paul Morphy, whose contemporaries didn't understand why he managed to obtain an advantage in development with such consistency.

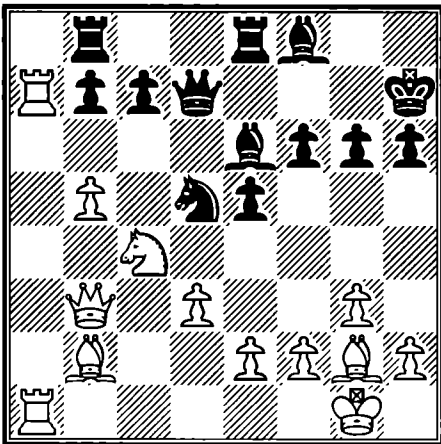
18...♖xc3 19.♗xc3 ♘d5 20.♗c2 ♘b4 21.♗b3 ♘d5 22.♟fc1

Black has tried to defend his e5-pawn by tactical means to avoid the weakening move f7-f6. In the meanwhile, Andersson has finished the mobilization of his pieces and has established strong pressure on the queenside. The irony is that Black will have to play f7-f6 anyway.

22...f6 23.♟a1 ♗d7 24.♟a4!

This is a typical way to gain control of an open line.

24...♗h7 25.♟ca1 ♟ab8 26.♟a7 ♕f8



27.♕a3 ♕xa3 28.♟1xa3 ♗e7 29.♗b2 ♗c5 30.♟3a5 ♘b6 31.♘e3 ♕c8 32.♟a1 ♟e7 33.♟c1 ♗d6 34.♗a3

The exchange of queens will accentuate the weakness of the c7-pawn.

34...♗d8 35.♟c5 ♟g7 36.♗c1 ♗d6 37.♟c2 f5 38.♟a3 ♕e6 39.♟ac3± f4

Black searches for tactical chances. 39...♟c8 is impossible, because of 40.♕xb7, while 39...♘a8 is not a move you make with a light heart: 40.♟c5 ♕g8 41.♗a1 ♟e7 42.♗a7 looks like a total disaster for Black.

40.♘f1 ♘d5

40...♘a8 41.♟c5.

41.♕xd5 ♕xd5 42.♟xc7 ♟bg8 43.♘d2 h5 44.♘e4 ♕xe4 45.dxe4 f×g3 46.h×g3 ♗b4 47.♟2c4 ♗×b5 48.♟7c5 ♗b6 49.♟×e5 ♟f8 50.♟ec5 ♟gf7 51.f3 h4 52.g×h4 ♟f4 53.♗g2 ♗e6 54.♟c7+ ♗g8 55.♗b2 1-0

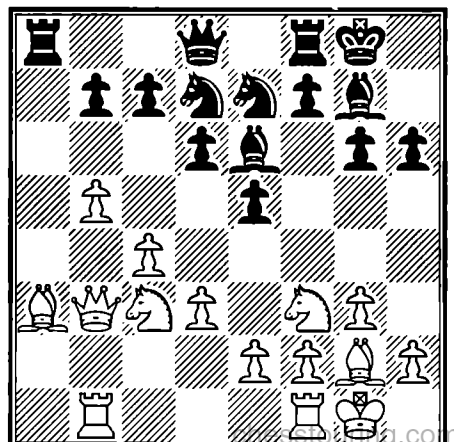
Game 13

Zygmunt Bojczuk –
Vladimir Gurevich

Portoroz 1993

English Opening [A26]

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.g3 g6 3.♕g2 ♕g7 4.c4 d6 5.♘c3 0-0 6.0-0 e5 7.d3 ♘c6 8.♟b1 a5 9.a3 h6 10.b4 a×b4 11.a×b4 ♕e6 12.b5 ♘e7 13.♗b3 ♘d7 14.♕a3



14. ♖b2 ♘c5 15. ♗b4 ♗d7 16. ♞a1 ♙h3 equalizes smoothly for Black.

14...f5

The alternatives seem pleasant for White:

a) 14... ♘c5?! 15. ♙xc5 dxc5 16. ♘d2, and now both 16... ♞a7 and 16... ♞b8 are met by 17. b6 with a solid plus for White.

b) 14... ♘b6 15. ♘d2 ♗c8 16. ♙b4±; this last line is a suggestion of IM Vince McCambridge.

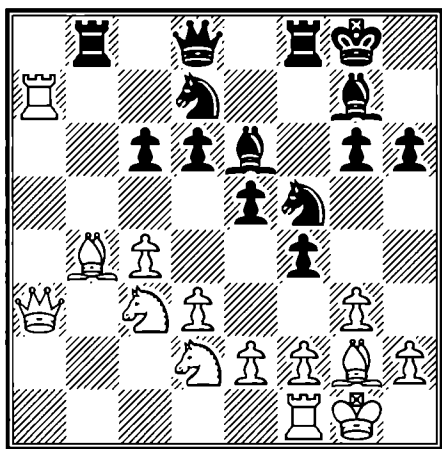
15. ♘d2

Or 15. ♙b4!? (McCambridge).

15...♞b8

Note that 15... ♞a7?! is strongly countered by 16. b6! ♘xb6 17. ♙xd6!, after which 17... ♗xd6? runs into the fork 18. ♘b5, while 17... cxd6 18. ♗xb6 ♗xb6 19. ♞xb6 is also somewhat better for White.

16. ♞a1 f4 17. ♙b4 ♘f5 18. ♞a7 c5 19. bxc6 bxc6 20. ♗a3



20. ♗a4!? is also worthy of consideration, e.g. 20... c5 21. ♙a5 and White completely penetrates the black

queenside. Alternatively, my computer spits out 20... f×g3 21. h×g3 ♘×g3!? 22. ♙xd6! ♘xf1 23. ♘xf1 ♗b6 24. ♙xf8 ♞xf8 25. ♘e3 with a comfortable plus for White.

20... ♗b6 21. ♙xd6 ♘xd6 22. ♗xd6 ♗xa7 23. ♗xe6+ ♗h7 24. ♗xc6 ♘f6 25. ♘de4 ♘xe4 26. ♘xe4 ♞b2 27. ♙f3

White is clearly better at this point. In the game continuation he wants to avoid the exchange of queens, because Black's king and in particular the light squares, including the g6-pawn, are very weak. A queen exchange would only ease Black's defensive burden, as White will have a harder time creating mating threats.

27... ♗b8 28. ♗g2 ♞b6 29. ♗d7 ♗c8 30. ♗a4 ♗a6 31. ♗d7 ♗c8 32. ♗e7 ♗d8 33. ♗a3 ♗c7 34. ♞a1 ♞d8 35. ♗c1 f×g3 36. h×g3 ♞d7?!

With the time control rapidly approaching, Black plays the first of a series of small mistakes that gives White several opportunities to settle the game to his advantage. Because of the weakened kingside, Black has to keep the back rank and g8 safely guarded, and therefore 36... ♞db8 is relatively best. After the text, White can also try 37. c5!?, e.g. 37... ♞b8 38. ♗c4 ♞dd8 39. ♞a6!?, and the pressure is really on Black, as White starts squeezing his way in on the light squares.

37. ♞a4 ♗b8?! 38. ♞a8!

Oops! Black should have tried 37... ♙f8 after which it is still a game. Now it is miracle that he escapes defeat.g.com

38...♖c7 39.♗a3?!

More direct is 39.c5 ♖b8 40.♗xb8 ♗xb8 41.♗g4 ♖d8 42.♗e6 ♖c7 43.c6, and White should win. This is a sign of what is to come the rest of the game. Bojczuk maintains a close to decisive position, but avoids any forcing continuations, and eventually his advantage evaporates. This is a good reminder of Steinitz's dictum that the side with the advantage must attack, if he doesn't the advantage will vanish.

39...♖b8 40.♗a6 ♖b6 41.♗xb6

Or 41.c5!? ♖xa6 42.♗xa6 ♖e7 43.c6 ♗d8 44.♗c5.

41...♗xb6 42.c5 ♖c7 43.c6 ♖f7
44.♗a4 ♗f8 45.♖c4 ♗g7
46.♗c3?!

Here 46.d4! is just nasty for Black; the best is 46...♗b8 47.♗g4 ♗d6 48.♗e6 ♖a7 49.♗d5 ♗e7 50.dxe5, and things look very dark for Black.

46...♗d6 47.♗b5 ♗d8 48.♗d5?!

48.d4! ♗c7 49.d5! is another missed opportunity for White.

48...♖e7 49.♗g4 ♗c7 50.♗e4
♗e8 51.♗d5 ♗b8 52.♖c4 ♗e8
53.♖c3 ♗d8 54.♗e4 ♗b6
55.♖c4?!

We are beginning to recognize a pattern: White wants to win, but doesn't know how, so he keeps moving the pieces around in the hope that Black passes out or blunders. Another possibility is the aggressive 55.c7!?, and now: 55...♗xc7 (or better 55...♖xc7 56.♗xc7

♖xc7 57.♗b3 ♗d6 58.e3, after which White still has winning chances, but it will demand plenty of effort, yet defending Black's position is a boring and unpleasant task) 56.♖c6 ♗h8 57.♗xg6 ♗a5 58.♗f6+ ♖g7 59.♖xe5, and White is winning.

55...♖f7 56.♗f3

56.e3 is better.

56...h5 57.♗e4 ♖e7 58.e3 ♖c5
59.♗d5 ♖xd5 60.♗xd5 ♖e7
61.d4 ♗f6 62.♗f3 exd4 63.exd4
♗c7 64.♗xc7?

White resigns himself to the fact that he cannot win this endgame, but there were still chances, although this time much harder to spot: 64.♗d1! (the bishop looks nice on f3, but it is only in the way of the king and f-pawn) 64...♗b8 65.d5 ♗e5 66.♗b3 g5, and now White wins Black's bishop by 67.d6! ♗xd6 68.f4+ gxf4 69.gxf4+ ♗xf4 70.♗xd6, and White should win the endgame.

64...♖xc7 65.♗e4 g5 66.f4 gxf4
67.gxf4 ♗e7 68.d5 ♗d6 69.♗f3
♖f7 70.♗g3 h4+ 71.♗g4 h3 ½-½

Game 14

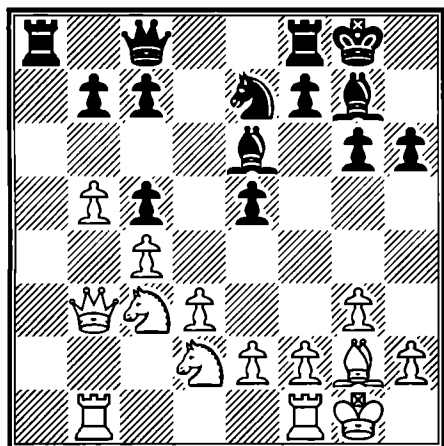
*Alfredo Esposito –
Naselli*

Buenos Aires (11) 1958
English Opening [A26]

1.c4 e5 2.♗c3 ♗f6 3.g3 g6 4.♗g2
♗g7 5.♗f3 ♗c6 6.♖b1 a5 7.0-0
0-0 8.a3 h6 9.d3 d6 10.b4 axb4
11.axb4 ♗e6 12.b5 ♗e7 13.♖b3
♖c8 14.♗a3 ♗d7 15.♗d2 ♗c5?

After the superior 15...♖d8 16.♗b4, White only holds a slight advantage.

16.♗xc5 dxc5



17.b6! c6 18.♗de4 ♗f5 19.e3 h5
20.♗xc5 h4 21.♖a1 ♖xa1
22.♖xa1 ♗h6 23.♗d1?

23.♗3e4! is simpler with a near winning advantage.

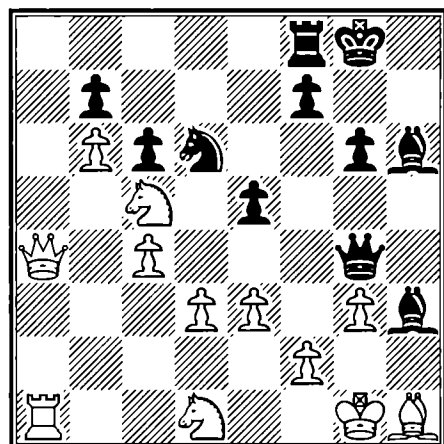
23...♗d6 24.♖a4

Also, 24.♗xe6 ♖xe6 25.♖b4 is good for White.

24...♗h3 25.♗h1

Or 25.♗xh3!? ♖xh3 26.♖a7 ♖c8
27.♗c3 and White is much better.

25...h×g3 26.h×g3 ♖g4?



26...♗g7 would have prevented the nice combination that follows.

27.♗xb7!! ♗xb7 28.♖xc6 ♗d8
29.♖f3 ♖d7 30.♖d5 ♖g4

Or 30...♖e7 31.b7 ♖b4 32.♖a5, and White wins.

31.♗f3 ♖f5 32.♖a8 ♖f6 33.b7
♗xb7 34.♖xb7 ♖xa8 35.♖xa8+
♗f8 36.♖c6 ♖d8 37.♗d5 ♖g7
38.♖b7 ♗d7 39.♗c3 ♗e8 40.♗e4
♖a5 1-0

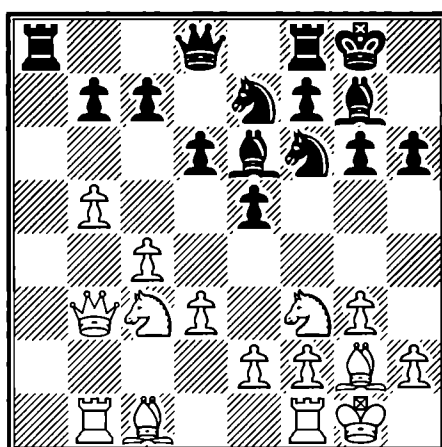
Game 15

*John Donaldson –
Lewis Eisen*

Philadelphia 1997

English Opening [A26]

1.♗f3 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 ♗g7
4.g3 0-0 5.♗g2 d6 6.0-0 e5 7.d3
♗c6 8.♖b1 a5 9.a3 h6 10.b4 a×b4
11.a×b4 ♗e6 12.b5 ♗e7 13.♖b3!?



This is much more dynamic than the usual 13.♗c1-b2. The queen is aggressively placed on b3, prepares ♗c1-a3, and allows the rook to come to d1, where it supports d3-d4. GM Yasser Seirawan used to play 13.♖b3 back in the mid-1970s, when the English, via 1.c4, was his favorite. [esstouring.com](http://www.esstouring.com)

13...♖d7

This is automatic, but Black has other moves available. One possibility is 13...♖d7, e.g. 14.♗d2 ♗c5 15.♖c2 ♖d7 16.♗d5 ♗xd5?! (this is asking for trouble; 16...♗c8!?, intending ...c7-c6, is better; White should probably continue with 17.♗b3!?, e.g. 17...♗xb3 18.♖xb3 c6 19.♗c3 with a small plus) 17.cxd5 ♗f5 18.♗c4 b6 19.e4 ♗h3 20.♗e3 ♗xg2 21.♖xg2 h5 22.♗xc5 bxc5 23.b6, although Black later escaped with a draw, he is clearly in trouble at this point, as in Hodgson-Yusupov, Tilburg 1993. For more Black alternatives at move thirteen, see the notes to the next game.

14.♞d1 ♗f5 15.♗b2 h5 16.♞a1 ♗h6?!

This is the beginning of the wrong plan. Black takes his attention away from the center and that's exactly where White is ready to strike. After 16...♞fd8, Black is only slightly worse.

17.♗e4 ♗h7 18.♞xa8 ♞xa8 19.d4!

White opens the game to get at the weaknesses in Black's position.

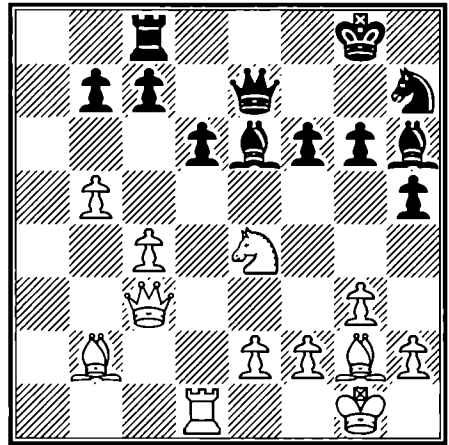
19...exd4 20.♗xd4 ♗xd4 21.♗xd4 ♞c8?

This doesn't make much sense, but even after the better: 21...♗h3 22.♗f3 ♖e6 23.♗c3, White is clearly better.

22.♗b2 ♖e7

There is no good answer to the twin threats of 23.♗c5 and 23.♖c3.

23.♖c3 f6



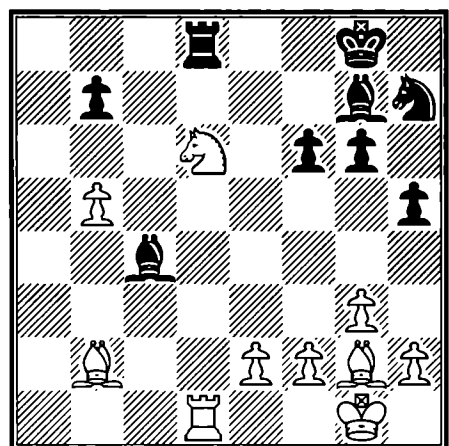
24.c5!

Black's position is crumbling, and with this pawn push, his position is torn apart. Also 24.b6!? further illustrates Black's headaches.

24...♗g7

Obviously, 24...dxc5 25.♗xc5 c6 26.♗xe6 ♖xe6 27.e3 doesn't offer Black any relief.

25.cxd6 cxd6 26.♖d3 ♗c4 27.♖xd6 ♖xd6 28.♗xd6 ♞d8



29.♗xb7

White had an easy win with 29.♞d2 ♗h6 30.e3 ♗xb5 31.♗d5+.

29...♗f8 30.♗xc4? esstouring.com

Much too complicated. Simple and easy is 30.♖c1 ♕e6 31.♗e4.

30...♖xd1+ 31.♜g2 ♕c5

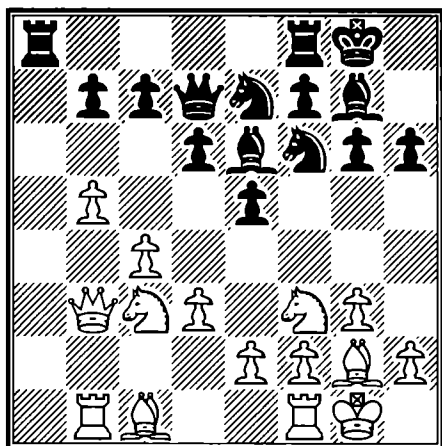
Now g6 falls or the rook is trapped, but the alternative 33...♖d8 doesn't help much, after 34.e4 ♕e7 35.♕d5+ ♜g7 36.b6 ♕c5 37.b7, White is winning easily.

**32.♕e4 ♖d8 33.♕xg6 ♖b8
34.♕xh5 ♖xb5 35.♕g6 ♗f8
36.♕d3 ♕e7 37.♕d4 ♖b8 38.♗e3
♕d8 39.f4 ♕b6 40.♕c4+ ♜h7
41.♕xb6 ♖xb6 42.g4 1-0**

Game 16

*Andrei Maksimenko –
Viktor Moskalenko*
Copenhagen (11) 1995
English Opening [A26]

**1.c4 e5 2.♗c3 d6 3.g3 ♗c6 4.♕g2
g6 5.d3 ♕g7 6.♖b1 a5 7.a3 ♗f6
8.b4 axb4 9.axb4 0-0 10.b5 ♗e7
11.♗f3 h6 12.0-0 ♕e6 13.♜b3
♜d7**



Black has a couple of alternatives that deserve examination:

a) 13...♜c8 14.♕a3 ♖e8 15.b6 c5 16.♗b5 ♖d8 17.♗c7 ♖b8 18.♕b2 ♕h3 19.♖a1 ♕xg2 20.♜xg2 ♗h5 21.♗d2 f5

22.f3±, Suba-Nisipeanu, Romanian Team Ch (Sovata) 1998.

b) 13...c6 14.♕a3 ♖e8 15.♖fc1 g5 16.e3 ♕f5 (16...g4 17.♗h4 d5 18.♕c5± Bareev) 17.♗e1 ♕e6 18.♗c2 d5 19.♕xe7 ♖xe7 20.♗b4! dxc4 21.dxc4 cxb5 22.♗bd5 ♕xd5 23.♗xd5 ♗xd5 24.cxd5, with a small plus for White, Bareev-Bacrot, Sarajevo 2000.

14.♖d1

White has an interesting alternative in 14.d4, as played in Korchnoi-Piket, Tilburg 1989: 14...exd4 15.♗xd4 ♕h3 16.♖d1 ♕xg2 17.♜xg2±.

Marin has suggested 14...e4 as an improvement for Black, but things still look good for White after 15.♗d2 d5 16.cxd5 ♗exd5 17.♗dxh4 (Marin only gives 17.♗cxe4 ♗xe4 18.♗xe4 ♗f4 19.♜f3 ♗xg2 20.♗c5 ♗h4!? 21.gxh4 ♜xd4 22.♗xe6 fxe6 with an initiative for Black, on account of White's battered kingside structure) 17...♗xe4 18.♕xe4! ♗f6 (or 18...♗e3 19.d5 ♗xf1 20.dxe6 ♜xe6 21.♜xe6 fxe6 22.♜xf1 ♕xc3 23.♕xh6 ♕g7 24.♕e3, after which White's bishops and Black's weak pawns give White more than enough compensation for the exchange) 19.d5 with a clear advantage for White.

14...♕h3 15.♕h1 ♗f5?!

15...♗g4! 16.d4 exd4 17.♗xd4 ♗f5 18.♗f3 is unclear (Maksimenko). Donaldson-Agnos, Isle of Man 1997, continued 18...♜e6 19.e3?! c6 20.♗e2?! g5 21.♕d2 ♖fe8 22.♖e1 ♜g6 with an unpleasant position for White. In the first edition 19.♕b2 (intending ♗d5) was suggested, e.g. 19.esc6 20.e4 ♗e7

21.♖d2 with a clear advantage for White, but 19...♗ge3! wins at least a pawn for Black and clearly illustrates what White needed to look out for. However, White can obtain the better chances after 19.e4 ♗e7 20.b6, e.g. 20...c6 (or 20...c5 21.♗f4 ♖ad8 22.♗b5 ♗e5 23.♗xe5 dxe5 24.♗c7, and White is in charge) 21.♗a3 ♖fd8 22.♗e2 with a plus for White.

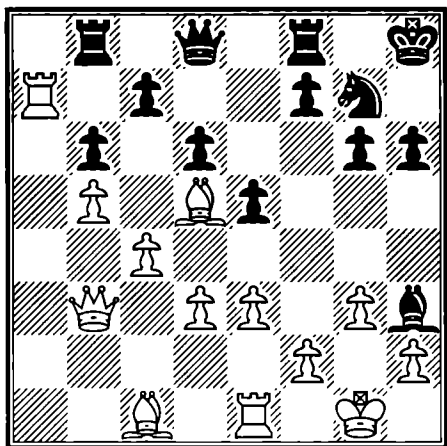
16.e3 ♗h7 17.♖e1

17.♗d2 ♖ab8 18.♖a1 ♗g5, intending ...♗g4, with play on the light squares around White's king.

17...♗h8 18.♗d2 ♖ab8 19.♖a1 ♗g5 20.♖a7± b6 21.♗d5 ♗e6 22.♗e4 ♗e7 23.♗ef6 ♗×f6

Or 23...♖d8 24.♗xe7 ♖xe7 25.♗d5 ♖d8 26.♗b2 with a clear advantage for White.

24.♗×f6 ♖d8 25.♗d5 ♗×d5 26.♗×d5 ♗g7



Black can also adopt a more passive and solid setup with 26...♖e7 27.♗b2 ♗c5 28.♖c3 f6 29.d4 ♗e6, although White is much better after 30.f4.

27.♖c3 ♗e6 28.♗c6 ♗h7 29.d4 d5?

With White's pieces dominating the entire board, opening the position is not normally recommended for the defending side; 29...f6 30.♗b2 ♗d7 31.♗g2± would be more prudent. Now White is just winning.

30.♗a3 ♖g8 31.c×d5 ♗×d5 32.♗×d5 ♖×d5 33.♖×c7 ♖a8 34.d×e5 ♖f3 35.♗b2 ♖a2 36.e4 ♖×c3 37.♗×c3 ♖f8 38.♗b4 ♗e6 39.♖b7 ♖c8 40.♖×f7+ ♗g8 41.♖f6 ♗g5 42.h4 1-0

Game 17

Lev Polugaevsky –
Victor Korchnoi

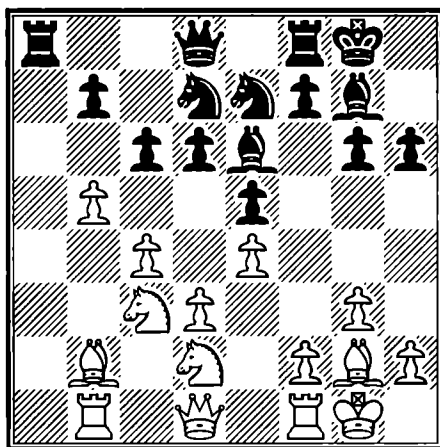
Riga 1975

English Opening [A26]

1.c4 e5 2.♗c3 ♗f6 3.♗f3 ♗c6 4.d3 g6 5.g3 ♗g7 6.♗g2 0-0 7.0-0 d6 8.♖b1 a5 9.a3 h6 10.b4 a×b4 11.a×b4 ♗e6 12.b5 ♗e7 13.♗b2 ♗d7

Interesting. Victor the Great prefers to play in the center first with 13...♗d7 and ...c6, rather than to immediately attack by 13...♖d7 and ...♗h3.

14.♗d2 c6 15.e4?!



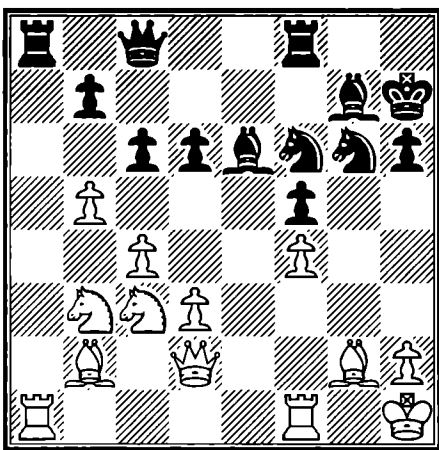
It's rarely good to play e4 in this variation and this position is no exception.

Now Black can weaken White's kingside with energetic play. In the game Andersson-Gulko, Biel 1976, White showed the best way to proceed: 15.♖a1 ♗c7 16.♗c2 ♘f5 17.♖fc1 ♘f6 18.♗d1 ♗d7 19.♖xa8 ♖xa8 20.♖a1 ♗c8 21.♖xa8 ♗xa8 22.♗a4 ♗xa4 23.♘xa4 ♕d7 (not 23...c×b5?! 24.c×b5±, but 23...♘e7 may improve for Black, although 24.b×c6 b×c6 (24...♘xc6 25.♘b6±) 25.c5 ♘e8 26.c×d6 ♘d6 27.♘c5 is somewhat better for White) 24.♘b6 ♕e8 25.b×c6 ♕xc6?! (25...b×c6 26.c5±) 26.♘b3 e4 27.♕xf6 ♕xf6 28.♕xe4 ♘d4 29.♕xc6 b×c6 30.♘xd4 ♕xd4 31.♘c8 ♕c5 and Black resigned in view of 32.♘e7+ ♖g7 33.♘xc6.

15...f5 16.exf5 gxf5 17.f4 ♘g6!

Black is already for choice.

18.♖h1 ♗c8 19.♘b3 exf4 20.gxf4 ♘f6 21.♗d2 ♖h7 22.♖a1?!

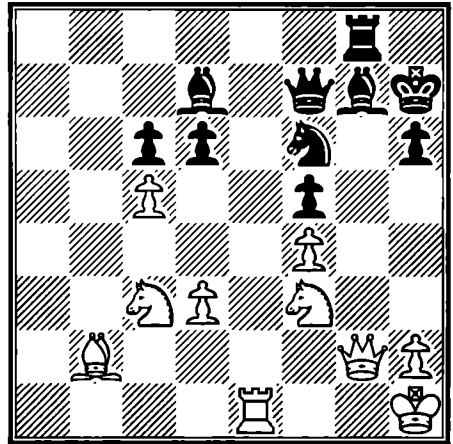


White does not have time for this move, with Black getting ready to strike on the kingside. Better is 22.♘d4 ♕d7 23.♖fe1 ♘h4 24.♘f3 ♘xg2 25.♗xg2 and Polugaevsky would still be in the fight.

22...♖xa1 23.♖xa1 ♘h4 24.♖g1

24.♘d4!? would have kept Black's advantage within controllable limits.

24...♖g8 25.♘d4 ♕d7 26.b×c6 b×c6 27.♘f3 ♘xg2 28.♗xg2 ♗e8 29.♖e1 ♗f7 30.c5



30...♘h5! 31.♗d2 d×c5 32.♘e5 ♕xe5 33.♖xe5

33.fxex5 ♕e6 is of course even worse.

33...♗g7 34.♗f2

Or 34.♖e1 ♕e6! 35.♖f1 ♗xc3.

34...♘xf4 35.♖e3 ♗g2+??

This move looks perfectly logical, but throws away the advantage. With 35...♕e6, Black could have won; now 36.♘e4 ♗g6 (not 36...♘xd3 37.♖xd3 f×e4 38.♕xg7 exd3 39.♗xc5 ♕d5+ 40.♖g1 ♖xg7+ 41.♖f1, which would be nearly impossible for Black to win, because of the lack of shelter for his king) 37.♘f6+ ♗xf6 38.♕xf6 ♕d5+ 39.♗f3 ♖g6 40.♕e5 ♘e2, with a winning material advantage for Black. This is not an easy line to find in time pressure.

36.♗xg2 ♖xg2 37.♖e7+ ♖g6 38.♖xd7??

A terrible time trouble blunder that returns the favor. After 38.♔c1!, White wins a piece, even if it still requires some technique to convert the extra material into a point. Now Black wins.

38...♖×b2 39.♖g1 ♖g2+ 40.♖f1 ♖×h2 41.♖c7 ♖×d3 0-1

Game 18

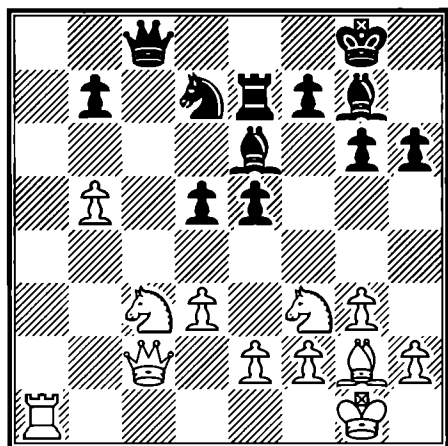
Vassily Smyslov –
Nukhim Rashkovsky

Moscow (13) 1976
English Opening [A26]

1.c4 ♖f6 2.♖c3 e5 3.♖f3 ♖c6
4.d3 g6 5.g3 ♔g7 6.♔g2 0-0 7.0-0
d6 8.♖b1 a5 9.a3 h6 10.b4 a×b4
11.a×b4 ♔e6 12.b5 ♖e7 13.♔b2
♖d7

13...♖e8 14.♖a1 ♖c8 15.♖a7 b6
16.♖d2 f5 17.♖a2 ♖d7 18.♖b4 g5
19.♖b3 f4 20.♖fa1 ♖h8 21.♔b7 ♖b8
22.♖e4 ♔g4 (note that 22...f×g3
23.h×g3 ♖×b5 runs into 24.♔c6!! ♖×c6
25.c×b5 ♔×b3 26.♖×c6, and White
wins) 23.f3 ♔e6 24.♖c6 ♖×c6 25.♔×c6
♖e7 26.g4 with a clear advantage for
White, Fedorowicz-Benjamin, USA
1976.

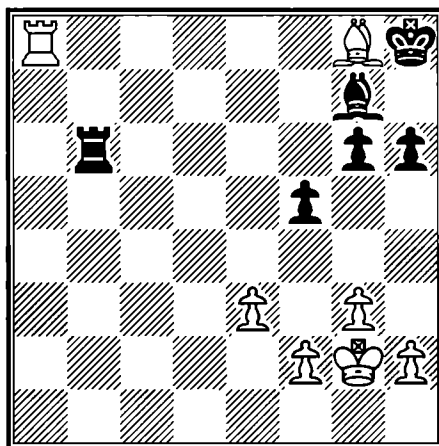
14.♖a1 c6 15.♖×a8 ♖×a8 16.♖c2
d5 17.♖a1 ♖c8 18.♔a3 ♖e8
19.♔×e7 ♖×e7 20.c×d5 c×d5



21.♖e1!

There is no way to defend the d-pawn!

21...♖c5 22.♖×d5 ♔×d5 23.♖×c5
♖×c5 24.♔×d5 e4 25.♖a8+ ♖h7
26.d×e4 ♖×e4 27.e3 ♖c3 28.♔c4
♖c7 29.♔f1 ♖×b5 30.♔×b5 ♖c1
31.♖g2 ♖×e1 32.♔c4 f5 33.♔g8+
♖h8 34.♔d5+ ♖h7 35.♔×b7
♖b1 36.♔d5 ♖b6 37.♔g8+ ♖h8



38.g4!

A very fine move. Black must choose between giving White a passed pawn or a weakness on f5 to play against.

38...f×g4 39.♔e6+ ♖h7 40.♔×g4
h5 41.♔e2 ♖e6 42.♔c4 ♖f6 43.f4
♖h6 44.♖a7 ♔f8 45.h4

Fixing the weakness on g6 forever.

45...♔g7 46.♔f7 ♔f8 47.♔g8
♔g7 48.♔f7 ♔f8 49.♖f3 ♔c5
50.♖c7 ♔d6 51.♖d7 ♖g7??

This is a terrible blunder that allows White to end the game immediately. After 51...♔f8, White would still need to show his legendary endgame skill to take the point.

52.♔e6+ 1-0

Game 19

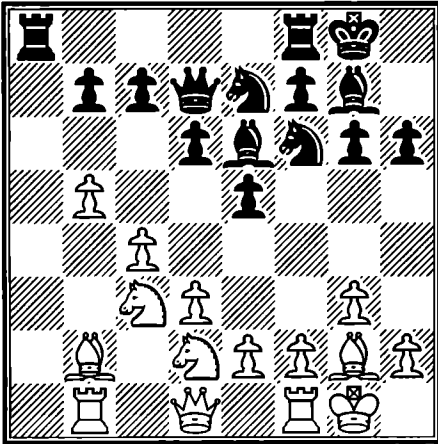
Edmar Mednis –

Alonso Zapata

Amsterdam (7) 1986

English Opening [A26]

1.c4 ♖f6 2.g3 g6 3.♙g2 ♙g7
4.♗f3 d6 5.0-0 0-0 6.♗c3 ♗c6
7.d3 e5 8.♞b1 a5 9.a3 h6 10.b4
a×b4 11.a×b4 ♙e6 12.b5 ♗e7
13.♙b2 ♞d7 14.♗d2



14.c5 was successful for White in Vaganian-Ahn, Eupen 1996: 14...♗fd5 15.♗xd5 ♙xd5 16.b6 ♙a2 17.♞a1 e4 18.♙xg7 exf3 19.♙xf8 fxg2 20.♞e1 ♗xf8 21.♞d2 ♞e6 22.♞ec1 ♞a6 23.cxd6 cxd6 24.♞c7 ♙c4 25.♞c1 ♗g7 26.dxc4 1-0, but Black can improve with 16...cxb6 17.cxb6 ♙a2 (17...f5!?) 18.♞a1 ♞b5, and White has to prove how he intends to either hold the b-pawn or get sufficient compensation for it. Neither appears easy.

14...♞ab8

Avoiding 14...♙h3? 15.♙xb7! of Mednis-Lehmann, Game 6. GM Alonso Zapata, in his notes to the game in *Chess Informant* 42, gives 14...d5= without further comment, but this doesn't seem to hold, as White is better after the standard 15.♗a4!?, target-

ing the c5-square and the e5-pawn simultaneously. After 15...♗h5 16.♗c5 ♞d6 17.♗db3, White's setup leaves a more favorable impression.

15.♞e1 ♙h3 16.♙h1 ♗g4

This is an important idea to remember. The knight is much more actively posted here than on h7 or e8.

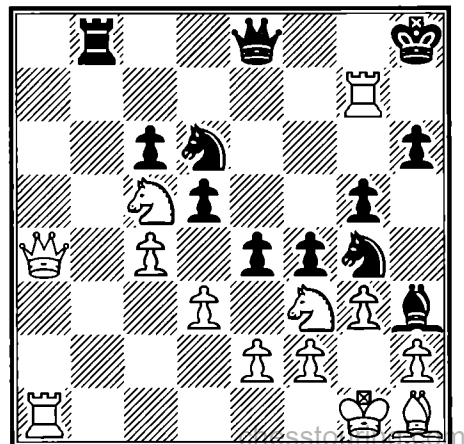
17.♞a1 f5 18.♗d5

After 18.♞a7? e4!, the knight on g4 earns its keep, as the threat is ...♙d4xf2.

18...g5 19.♞a7?!

The right idea, but the wrong execution. Correct was 19.♗xe7+ ♞xe7 20.♞a7 ♗xf2! 21.♗xf2 e4 22.♙xg7 e3+ 23.♗g1 exd2 24.♞xd2 ♞xg7 25.♞xb7 ♞be8, which looks threatening, but White has more than adequate resources: 26.b6 f4 27.♙d5+ ♗h8 28.bxc7 ♞d4+ 29.♗h1 fxg3 30.♞b2!, and White will enter the endgame with an extra pawn and better pawn structure.

19...♗c8 20.♞a2 c6 21.♗c3 ♗e7 22.♞c2 ♗h8 23.♞ea1 f4 24.bxc6 bxc6 25.♗f3 ♗f5 26.♞a7 ♞e8! 27.♗e4 d5 28.♗c5 ♞f7 29.♙c3 ♗d6 30.♞a4 e4! 31.♙xg7+ ♞xg7 32.♞xg7



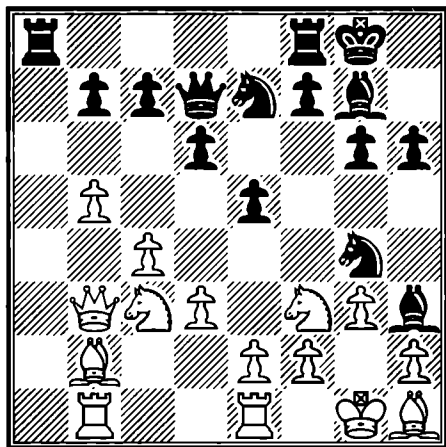
32...e3!! 33.♙g2 exf2+ 34.♚h1
 ♙xg2+ 35.♚xg2 ♚xe2 36.♞h7+
 ♚xh7 0-1

Game 20

*Viswanathan Anand –
 Olivier Touzane*

Moscow FIDE Wch KO (1.3) 2001
 English Opening [A26]

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7
 4.♙g2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.♘c3 e5 7.d3
 ♘c6 8.♞b1 a5 9.a3 h6 10.b4 axb4
 11.axb4 ♙e6 12.b5 ♘e7 13.♙b2
 ♚d7 14.♞e1 ♙h3 15.♙h1 ♘g4
 16.♚b3



This was the first tie-break game from round one of the FIDE Knock-Out World Championship tournament. Against all odds, Anand had lost the first game as white, but then won the second as black. It is rather surprising that in a “must win” game he opts for a line he normally doesn’t play and which allows Black an attack against the white king.

16...♚h7

Occasionally Black’s king is better placed on h7 than on h8, as it avoids the long diagonal, but in this case it isn’t so. In earlier game, Black tried

16...♚h8 with some success: 17.♘d5 ♘xd5 18.cxd5 b6 19.♚c4 f5 20.♞ec1 ♞ac8 21.♞a1 f4 22.♞a7 ♞f7 23.♙g2 ♙xg2 24.♚xg2 g5 25.♚c6 ♚f5 26.♞a8 ½–½, Vaganian-Wahls, Bundesliga 1992. However, White can improve on this with 19.♞ec1! f5 20.♞c6 g5 21.♞bc1 ♞a7 22.♚c4 ♞f7 23.♙g2 ♙xg2 24.♚xg2 ♞e7 25.e4, with a clear advantage for White, Wesseln-Rudolf, Bundesliga 1999.

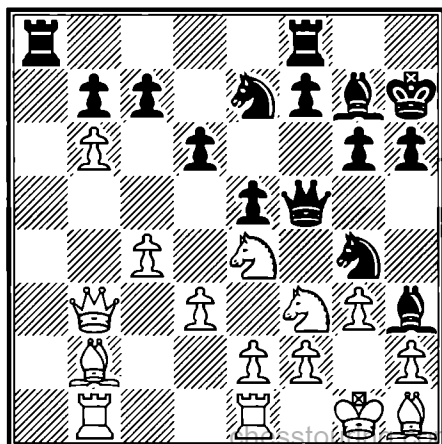
17.♘e4!?

Already pointing to the fact that Black’s king isn’t ideally placed on h7, since 17...f5? is bad on account of 18.♘eg5+ hxg5 19.♘xg5+ ♚h8 20.♘xh3.

17...♚f5

Touzane goes for a direct attack on White’s king, Marin suggests that Black could have considered 17...♚h8, intending to push the knights back with pawns. White has to act decisively as shown by Marin: 18.d4! f5 (18...exd4 19.♘xd4±) 19.♘eg5! hxg5 20.♘xg5 ♘xf2 21.♚xf2 f4 22.♚g1!, and White has gained control over the position: the queen is able to participate in the defense of the kingside, while helping the queenside attack forward.

18.b6!



A Strategic Opening Repertoire

Black's queenside collapses, leaving him no option but to be successful on the kingside.

**18...♖h5 19.bxc7 f5 20.♗xd6 f4
21.♖xb7 f×g3 22.h×g3 ♕f1!**

A nice resource for Black, but White has ample defensive means.

23.♗h4 g5 24.♗e4+ ♖g8 25.♕f3

The game is effectively over.

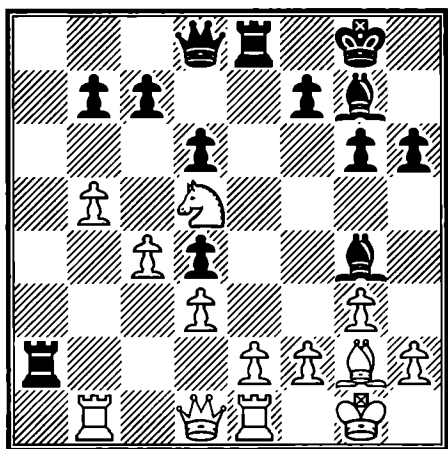
**25...♕h3 26.♕×g4 ♕×g4 27.♗g2
♖a6 28.♕×e5 ♗c8 29.c5 ♖a7
30.♕×g7 ♖×g7 31.♗e3 ♕d7
32.c6 ♕h3 33.♗×c8 ♕×c8
34.♖d4+ ♖g6 35.♖×a7 1-0**

Chapter Two

Closed Sicilian Reversed with 9...♘d4

Black's most centrally minded plan is 9...♘d4. This might look strange at first glance – after all, Black is moving a piece twice in the opening – but it has very good ideas behind it. The second player wants to meet wing action by b2-b4 with breaking in the center via ...c7-c6 and ...d6-d5. The move 9...♘d4 is an invention of Vassily Smyslov and also received an endorsement from another World Champion, Mikhail Tal. White has used plans based on b2-b4-b5 both with and without ♕g5×f6. Note that capturing on d4 rarely offers anything by itself, as White needs to have a foothold for the c3-knight in the center, preferably on d5. The trade often gives Black good play on the e-file.

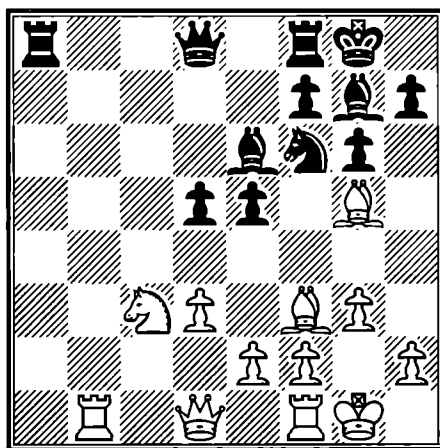
There are two key positions for understanding the variations in this chapter. The first can be found in the game Razuvaev-Ikonnikov (Game 22).



White plays 18.♕f3! with a good game. He accepts a slightly damaged pawn structure to ease the pressure on e2 and emphasize the difference in strength between the knight and bishop. The

queen and knight versus queen and bishop works well for White, as Black can't protect the light squares.

The second is from D.Cramling-Angqvist (Game 27). Black seems to be doing quite well with a big center and apparently active pieces. However, the center is extremely vulnerable and easy to attack, and Black's pieces are not particularly well placed to defend it.



Here, White plays 17 ♖b5! with an unpleasant position for Black.

The variation covered in this chapter is not seen particularly often, as it more difficult to play for Black than White, but the ideas displayed in the games are important for the understanding of the entire opening, not just this line.

Game 21

*Joel Benjamin –
William Watson*

Hastings (13) 1984

English Opening [A26]

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♕g7
4.♕g2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.♘c3 ♘c6

7.♖b1 a5 8.a3 e5 9.d3 ♘d4
10.♙g5

The idea behind this move is to exchange all the minor pieces, except one of White's knights and Black's potentially bad dark-squared bishop.

10...h6 11.♙xf6 ♗xf6

Black has two other moves to consider at this point:

a) 11...♗xf6?! 12 ♘d2!? c6 13 b4 a×b4
14 a×b4 ♖d8 15 e3 ♘e6 16 ♖c2 ♖c7
17 b5± Suba-Farago, Prague Zonal
1985.

b) 11...♘xf3+!? 12 ♙xf3 ♙xf6 13 b4
a×b4 14 a×b4 c6 15 b5 ♖c7 16 ♖b3
♙h3 17 ♖fc1 ♖a5! 18 b×c6 b×c6 19
♖b6 with a little pressure for White,
Dzindzichashvili-Smyslov, New York
1989.

12.b4 a×b4 13.a×b4 ♙g4 14.e3

Ciric, in his notes to the game in *Chess Informant 39* offers the line 14.♘d4
e×d4 15.♘d5 ♙g7 16.b5 ♖a2 17.♖e1
♖e8 and now gives 18.♘b4 as unclear.
In fact, 18.♙f3! is the correct move, a
direct transposition into Razuvaev-
Ikonnikov (see Game 22), which is tremen-
dous for White. After the text, it's
a scrap.

14...♖a3! 15.♘d5!

15.♖c1?? ♘xf3+ 16.♙xf3 ♙xf3 17.♖xf3
♖×c3 18.♖×c3 e4 is a neat trick worth
remembering.

15...♘xf3+ 16.♙xf3 ♙h3
17.♖c1!?

17.♙g2 ♙×g2 18.♖×g2 c6 19.♖a1!?
(19.♘xf6+ ♖xf6 is even more pleasant

for Black) 19...♖×a1 20.♘xf6+ ♖xf6
21.♖×a1 with an even endgame.

17...♖×d3?

This greedy move leads to a strong initiative for White; after the correct
17...♖a2!, White probably has to go for
18.♙g2, leading to play similar to that
after 17.♙g2.

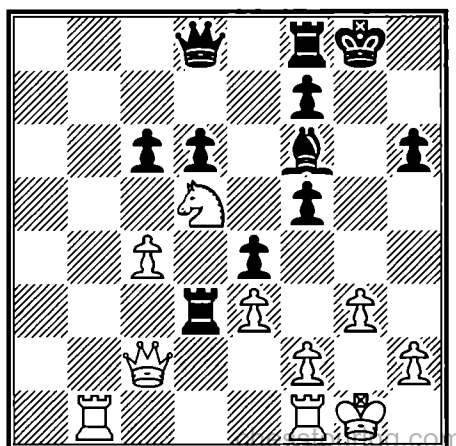
18.♙e4!

It is worth noting that White can win
the exchange with the quiet 18.♖e1,
threatening ♙e4, because the rook on
d3 is trapped. However, it isn't particu-
larly simple to convert the material ad-
vantage after 18.♖e1 c6 19.♘xf6+
♖xf6 20.♙e4 ♙f5 21.♙×d3 ♙×d3
22.♖a1, and the weak light squares
around White's king provides Black
with reasonable compensation for the
exchange.

18...♙f5 19.♙×f5 g×f5 20.b5!?

Threatening ♘b4 and preparing the
sharp continuation in the game. An al-
ternative is 20.♖c2, e.g. 20...e4 21.♖a2
♙e5 22.b5 ♖e8 and White can take a
draw with 23.♘b4 ♖c3 24.♘d5 ♖d3.

20...e4 21.♖c2 c6 22.b×c6 b×c6



23. ♖b8!? ♜×b8 24. ♗×f6+ ♔g7
25. ♗h5+ ♕h7 26. ♖b1 ♜a7!?

After 26...♜d8?! 27. ♜b2 ♜g5 28. ♗f4 ♜g4, White gets the exchange back with interest: 29. ♗×d3 e×d3 30. ♜c3 with clearly better chances for White in the endgame. In pure heavy piece endgames, a safe king is a high priority and Black's king is anything but that. In the game continuation, it appears as if both players are in severe time trouble.

27. ♜b2 f6 28. ♖a1 ♜c7?

I am struggling to make sense of this move, but it is clear that White is now much better. More sensible is 28...♜f7, when one possible line is 29. ♗f4 ♜×c4 30. ♜b7+ ♔g8 31. ♜d7!? ♜f7 32. ♜×f5 ♖d2 33. ♗e6 ♖e8 34. ♖a7! ♖×e6 35. ♖×f7 ♕×f7 36. ♜h7+ ♔e8, and a draw is quite likely, as Black's king has no definite place to hide.

29. ♗f4 d5 30. ♗e6!?

A practical choice, but likely not the best move. The endgame that arises after 30. ♗×d3 e×d3 31. c×d5 ♜e5!? 32. ♖a7+ (or 32. ♜×e5 f×e5 33. d×c6 e4 34. ♖c1 ♔g6 35. f3 is also possible) 32...♔g6 33. ♜b3 ♖b8 34. ♜×d3 ♖d8 35. ♖a5 ♖×d5 36. ♖×d5 c×d5 is very good for White, but it still requires good technique to win it.

30...♜e7 31. ♗×f8+ ♜×f8
32. ♖a7+ ♔g6 33. ♜b7 ♜g8
34. ♖a8?

A logical move, but it is ultimately bad and only works because the players are in time trouble. Correct is 34. c5!, e.g.

34...d4 35. e×d4 ♖×d4 36. ♜×c6, and White has good chances of winning the game.

34...♜f7 35. ♜b8 d×c4?

The final and decisive error; after the correct 35...d4!, Black may even be better: 36. e×d4 ♖×d4 37. c5 ♖d5 38. ♜h8 e3!, and suddenly White's king is under attack.

36. ♜h8 c3 37. ♖g8+ ♕h5 38. h3
1-0

Game 22

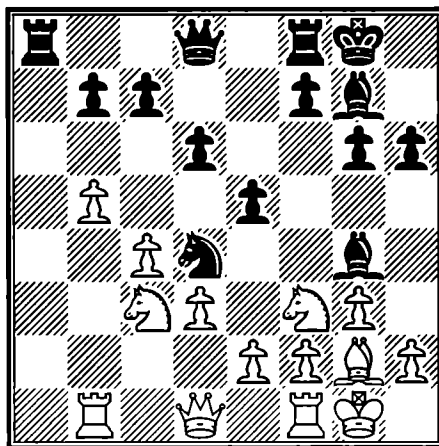
Yuri Razuvaev –

Vyacheslav Ikonnikov

Geneva Open (3) 1994

English Opening [A26]

1. c4 e5 2. g3 ♗c6 3. ♖g2 g6 4. ♗c3
♖g7 5. ♖b1 a5 6. a3 ♗f6 7. b4 a×b4
8. a×b4 0-0 9. d3 d6 10. ♗f3 ♗d4
11. ♖g5 h6 12. ♖×f6 ♖×f6 13. 0-0
♖g7 14. b5 ♖g4



Active and probably wrong. Razuvaev, in his notes in *Chess Informant 59*, suggests 14...♖d7, planning ...c7-c6 to keep White's knight from d5. An interesting response is 15. ♗×d4 e×d4 16. ♗d5, and now on the natural 16...c6, White has the surprising 17. ♗b6!?,

which after 17...♖a2 (17...♜×b6? 18.b×c6 is even better for White) 18.♗×d7 ♜×d7 19.b×c6 b×c6 20.♖b6 leaves White with a small advantage.

15.♗×d4!

15.♗d2 ♖a3! and 15.e3 ♖a3! 16.♖c1 ♗×f3+ 17.♗×f3 ♗×f3 18.♜×f3 ♖×c3 19.♖×c3 e4-+ (Razuvaev) show that the alternatives give Black tremendous play.

15...e×d4 16.♗d5 ♖a2

Compare this position very carefully with Psakhis-Wang Zili (Game 3) from the introduction. They are almost identical and a clear sign that Black should steer far away from this variation.

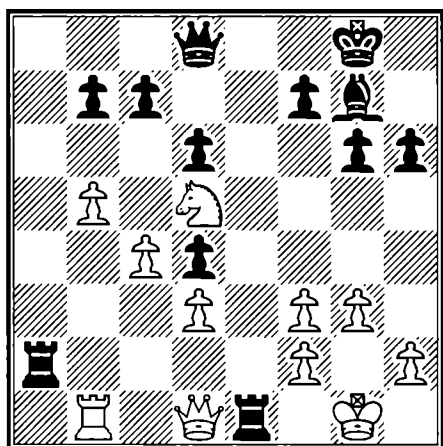
17.♖e1 ♖e8 18.♗f3 ♗×f3

The only simplification White is afraid of is trading his beautiful knight for the poor piece on g7.

19.e×f3

Yes, White has doubled f-pawns, but his king is safe and he now has use of the e-file.

19...♖×e1+



The knight on d5 attacks c7, forcing Black to give up the file.

20.♜×e1 ♖a8 21.♖a1!

Professor Razuvaev is giving a clinic. Now we get a textbook example of the superiority of queen and knight versus queen and bishop, in a situation where the latter's prospects are limited.

21...♖×a1 22.♜×a1

White is now threatening 23.♜a5, so Black is forced to move his c-pawn.

22...c6 23.b×c6 b×c6 24.♗b4 ♜b6 25.♜a4

Thematic, White wants all of Black's pawns on dark squares.

25...♗f8

The alternative 25...c5 creates long-term problems and a huge hole on d5: 26.♜e8+ ♗f8 27.♗d5 ♜b1+ 28.♜g2 ♜g7 (28...♜×d3?? 29.♗f6+ ♜g7 30.♗d7 traps the bishop) 29.g4, and since Black still cannot take on d3 (29...♜×d3 30.♗b6, followed by ♗d7, wins the bishop). White will have time start an attack on the kingside with his pawns. Notice the excellent coordination of White's queen and knight.

26.♜g2

Avoiding 26.♗×c6?? ♜b1+ 27.♜g2 ♜×d3, when Black has a big passed pawn.

26...c5

26...d5 27.♗×c6 wins easily for White.

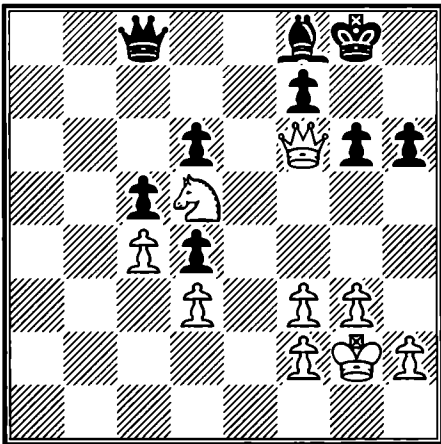
27. d5 b1 28. e8 g7 38. h5! g×h5
 29. e4

White could have begun the kingside advance by 29. g4!?

29... b7 30. f4 c8?!

Black's position obviously isn't much fun to play, but with this move, Black makes it look like the result is predetermined. While 30... d7 isn't any better: 31. f6+ h7 (or 31... g8 32. g6+ f×g6 33. f6+) 32. d4, Black might consider activating the lame bishop on f8 with 30... e7!?

31. f6+ g8



32. g4!

White's queen and knight are on optimal squares, now he prepares to grab more space by advancing his kingside pawns.

32... e6 33. h4 c×f6 34. d×f6+ g7 35. d5 f6 36. g3 f7 37. f4 f5

Allowing f5 would have been positional capitulation. Now, however, White breaks open the kingside in another fashion.

38... g7 39. f3 g×h5 40. g×f5 f7 41. f6 wins easily for White.

39. g5!

The key in such endings is to find a way to enter with the king. Another magnificent example is Saily-Fischer, US ch 1963/64. After the text move, White's win is fairly elementary.

39... h×g5 40. f×g5 g6 41. h4 f4 42. d×f4+ f5 43. d5 g6 44. f4 g7 45. e7+ f7 46. d5 f8 47. g×h5 d5 48. c×d5 c4 49. d×c4 c5 50. g6+ f6 51. g7 f7 52. g6 1-0

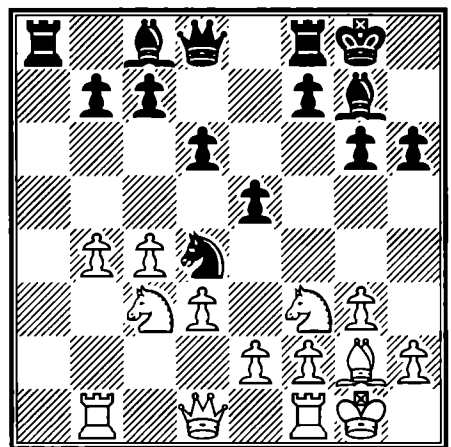
Game 23

Darryl Johansen –
 Spyridon Skembris

Moscow ol (6) 1994

English Opening [A26]

1. c4 e5 2. d3 c6 3. d4 f6 4. g3 g6 5. g2 g7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. d3 d6 8. b1 a5 9. g5 h6 10. d×f6 d×f6 11. a3 g7 12. b4 a×b4 13. a×b4 d4



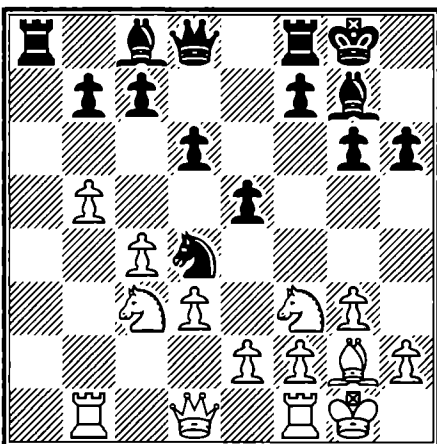
If ...d4 can be played against d5×f6, this is probably the only way to do it.

Normally, ... c6-d4 is bad, because White can play dxd4 and give Black rigid doubled d-pawns, something the possessor of the bishop-pair doesn't want. However, there can be exceptions to this rule if Black has dynamic counterplay.

The natural-looking 13... e6 soon led Black into trouble in Budnikov-Watson, Cologne 1993. There followed 14. e1! ? (it's always worth comparing this move to d2) 14... b8 15. c2 e7 16. b5 d7 17. b4 c6 18. a4 a8 19. bxc6 bxc6 20. axc6! xa4 21. axd7 axd7 22. dxa4 dxa4 23. a1 d7 24. a7 d8 25. e4 f8 26. fa1 g4 27. a8! xa8 28. xa8 e6 29. f4 with a huge advantage for White. A rook and pawn are usually good value for two pieces in the ending, even more so here, where the pieces are so passive.

13... f5! also leads to a good game for White: 14. b5 e7 15. d5 xd5 16. cxd5 h7 17. c2 g5 18. f1 f7 19. d2 f4! 20. b6! cxb6 21. c4 f5 22. xb6 d7 23. b1 a7 24. b4 f8 25. a5 a8 26. e4 xe4 27. xe4+ g7 28. c4= Mishuchkov-Drozдов, St. Petersburg 1992.

14.b5



14...c6!?

The Greek GM understands the position quite well. If White is able to take on d4 and securely post his knight on d5, Black will suffer. So pseudo-active moves such as 14... e8 and 14... g4 fail to meet the demands of the position. The model games Razuvaev-Ikonnikov (Game 22) and Psakhis-Wang Zili (Game 3) show what happens if Black tries.

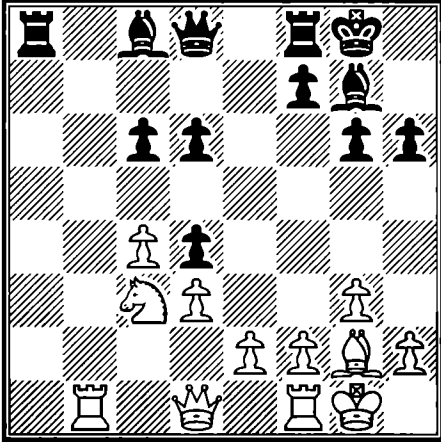
The question then arises, is there a way for White to accelerate his play? Yes and no. Psakhis delayed castling, but he opened with 1. c4 and Black's knight came to c6 early. Wang Zili never got a chance to play ... c6 . But how many players wouldn't castle after 1. f3 f6 2. c4 g6 3. g3 g7 4. g2 0-0 5. c3 d6 6. d3 e5 ? Maybe 7. b1 could be played, but it looks rather early. Black wouldn't be so obliging as to play 7... c6 , inviting 8. g5 a5 9. a3 h6 10. xf6 xf6 11. b4 axb4 12. axb4 g7 13. b5 d4 14. xd4 exd4 15. d5 with the dream position via an unusual move order.

Meanwhile, White might not have anything better than the move order of our current game, note that in the standard position of the Closed Sicilian reverse after 8. b1 a5 9. a3 , moves such as 9... e8 would be found wanting (10. g5!), since Black will have wasted a tempo in trying to setup ... d4 and ... c6 .

15.bxc6 bxc6 16.dxd4 exd4

The difference between this game and those by Razuvaev and Psakhis is that the knight doesn't have the beautiful

outpost on d5. Instead, it has to go to e4, where it is less stable. White needs a good square for his knight in the center if he wishes to try for an advantage. Note that both 17. Qxc6?? and 17. d4 are strongly met by 17... Ra6!



17. d4 d5

White was threatening 18.c5 with the advantage.

18. d2

Black must play actively, as shown in the following variations by Skembris in *Chess Informant 62*: 18. d2 c5 19. cxd5 cxd5 20. dxc5 Bb3! 21. Bb3 and now either 20... Ra2! or 20... Qa5!?. White might wish to consider 18. cxd5 cxd5 19. d2 Bb3 20. Bb5! (or 20. Qd2! Qe8 21. Qf3 Rh3 22. Bfc1 with an interesting game) 20... Re8 21. Qd2 Qg4 22. Bfb1 Qd6 23. d3 Bb7 24. Qf1 Qe6 25. d2 with a small advantage.

18... Qe6 19. cxd5

19. Qc2 h5?! (19... Ra3, followed by 20... Qa5, and active play on the a-file) 20. cxd5 cxd5 21. Bb5 ±.

19... cxd5 20. Bb5?! 20. Ra1!? may be an improvement.

20. Ra1!?

20... Ra2 21. d3?! 21. d3 is better, the knight doesn't have much of a future on b1 and wherever he may be heading from there.

21. d3

21... Qe8! 22. Qb3 Bxe2! 23. d3 Bxd2 24. Qxd5? Qxd5 25. Bxd5 Qe2

Now the d-pawn falls and with that Black is just about winning.

26. d3 Bxd3 27. Qa4 Qe4 28. Bd7 Qc6 29. Bc7 Qf3 30. Bc4 Ba8 31. Qc2 Qe8 32. Bc8 Bxc8 33. Qxc8+ Qh7 34. Qd7 Bd1 35. Bxd1 Qxd1+ 36. Qg2 d3 37. d3 Qe2 38. Qxf7 d2 39. d5 Qe4+ 40. f3 Qe2+ 41. Qh3 Qf1+ 42. Qh4 Qa1 43. d3 Qd4+ 0-1

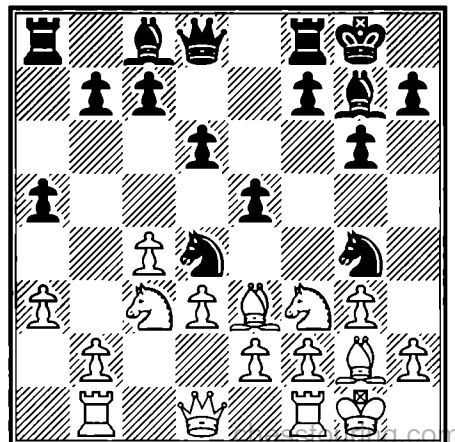
Game 24

Ulf Andersson – Rustem Dautov

Ter Apel (5) 1994

English Opening [A26]

1. c4 e5 2. d3 d6 3. g3 g6 4. Qg2 Qg7 5. d3 d6 6. Bb1 a5 7. d3 d6 8. 0-0 0-0 9. a3 d4 10. Qe3! Qg4!?

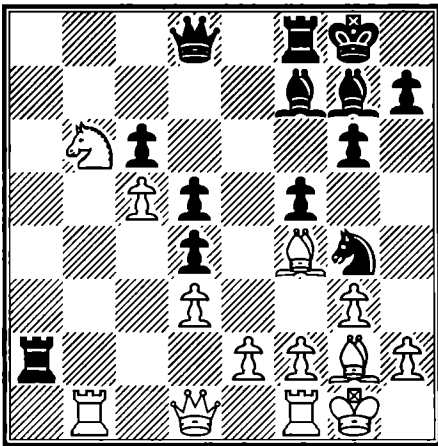


Dautov gives 10...♖xf3+ 11.♗xf3 c6 12.b4 axb4 13.axb4 ♗g4 14.♗g2 ♖d7 as equal. However, the sharp 12.♖b3, as in Shestakov-Smirnov, Moscow 1994 (see Game 25), is a spirited try to wrest the initiative.

11.♗d2 f5 12.b4 axb4 13.axb4 c6

Also, 13...♖xf3+ 14.♗xf3 c6 15.b5 ♗d7 16.bxc6 bxc6 17.♖b7 is slightly better for White. Dautov suggested 13...♖e6!? as a possible improvement, but after 14.♖b3, White should still have the upper hand.

14.b5 ♗d7 15.♖xd4! exd4 16.♖a4 ♗e8 17.bxc6 bxc6 18.c5! d5 19.♖b6± ♖a2 20.♗f4 ♗f7?!



With this move, Black signals that he intends to play on the e-file and put pressure on White's e2-pawn. However, since White can force the exchange of the rook on a2, the plan is a non-starter. Instead, Black should have played the more aggressive 20...♖e5!, with the intention of 21.♖a1 ♖xa1 22.♖xa1 g5!? 23.♗xe5 ♗xe5 (Dautov), and Black is doing quite well. White seems to be able to improve over this with 21.h4 (to prevent ...g6-g5), but his advantage is minimal. Now, on the other hand, Black quickly sinks into trouble.

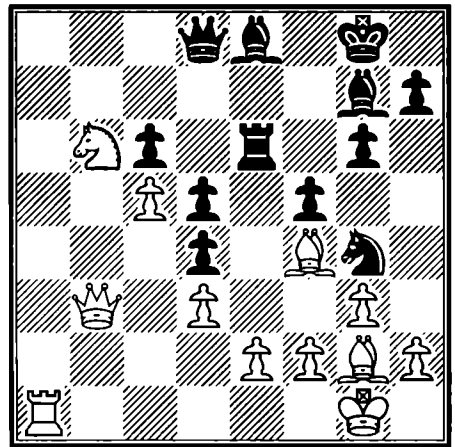
21.♖a1 ♖xa1 22.♖xa1 ♖e8 23.♖a4 ♖e6 24.♖a1±

Black has a multitude of problems: a weak c-pawn, the inability to counter White on the open a-file, and his pieces are poorly coordinated in comparison with White's. The next move doesn't help the situation.

24...♗e8?!

Black should have played something like 24...h6, although the situation after 25.♗d6 ♗e8 26.♖c2 ♖h7 27.♖a7 is still pretty grim.

25.♖b3?



With one move, White throws away his entire advantage. Dautov gives the following lines:

a) 25.♖a8 ♖xa8 26.♖xa8 ♖xe2? (26...♖f6±) 27.♗xd5+!! cxd5 28.c6, and White is winning.

b) 25.♖c2 ♖e7 26.♖xd5! cxd5 27.♗xd5 ♗c6 28.♗xc6! ♖xc6 29.♖b3+ ♖f7 30.♖a8+ ♗f8 31.♖b8 with a clear plus for White (Dautov); ♗d6 is a tough threat to meet.

25...♖xe2 26.♗f3 ♖xf2 27.♗xg4 ♖xf4 28.gxf4 fxf4 29.♖d1 ♗f8 30.♖e2 ♖e7 31.♖xe7 ♗xe7 32.♖a5 ½-½ chesstouring.com

White cannot make any progress, e.g. 32...♖f7 33 ♘c8 ♙f8 34 ♖f2 ♕e6 35 ♖g3 h5 36 ♘b6 (Dautov).

Game 25

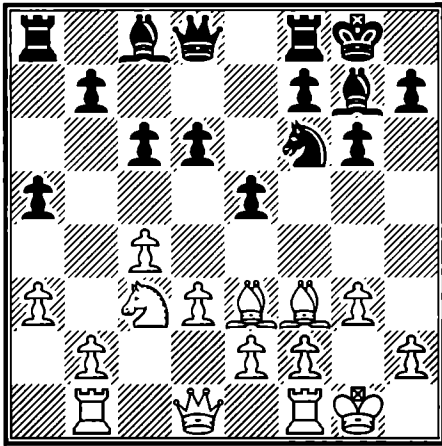
Sergei Shestakov –

Valerij Smirnov

Moscow Open (7) 1994

English Opening [A26]

1.g3 g6 2.♙g2 ♙g7 3.c4 d6 4.♘f3
 5.0-0-0 6.♘c3 e5 7.d3 ♘c6
 8.♞b1 a5 9.a3 ♘d4 10.♙e3!
 ♘xf3+ 11.♙xf3 c6



12.♞b3!?

If White can get an advantage from this position, the text is the way to try. Shestakov stops ...d5 and threatens to play ♞fd1 (Δ d4) or ♞fc1.

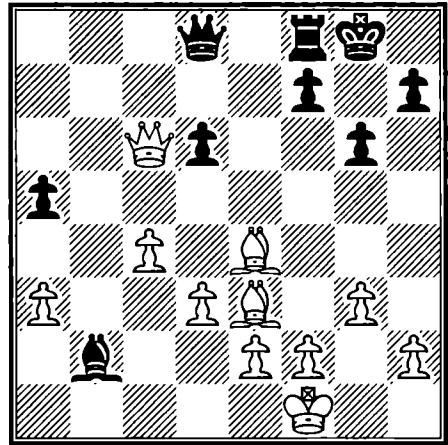
12...♙h3?!

The most direct reply, but also a bit silly, 12...♙h3?! makes 12.♞b3 work. Instead, 12...♖e7, intending ...♙g4 or ...♙h3, is more sensible.

13.♞xb7 ♙xf1 14.♖xf1 e4

Bringing the bishop into the game. Otherwise, White picks up his second pawn on c6 and, with the bishop-pair, stands very well.

15.♘xe4 ♘xe4 16.♙xe4 ♞b8
 17.♞xc6 ♞xb2 18.♞xb2 ♙xb2



19.a4

White is for choice with his great pawn structure. The material balance may be about equal, with two pawns for the exchange, but look at Black's pawns. Black's problem is his lack of counterplay. It is very instructive to see how White slowly improves the position of his pieces and pawns, while Black can only wait for the hammer to fall.

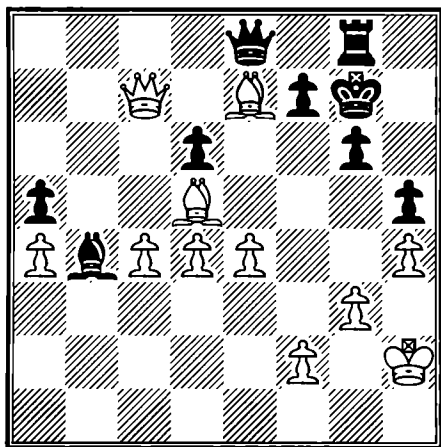
19...♞f6 20.♞b6 ♙c3 21.♖g2
 ♖g7 22.h4 h5 23.♙f4 ♙b4
 24.♙e3 ♙c3 25.♙f3 ♞c8 26.♙d5
 ♞f8 27.♙g5 ♞e5 28.e3 ♙b4
 29.♞b7 ♞e8 30.♙e7 ♞h8 31.d4
 ♞g8 32.♞c7 ♙a3 33.e4

White should also win after 33.♙xd6 ♙xd6 34.♞xd6 ♞xa4 35.♞e5+ ♞e8 37.♞xa5, but it is unnecessary to let Black have any breathing space and the pawn on d6 will remain weak.

33...♙b4

White keeps increasing the pressure. Now e4-e5, exploiting the loose bishop on a3, is threatened. chesstouring.com

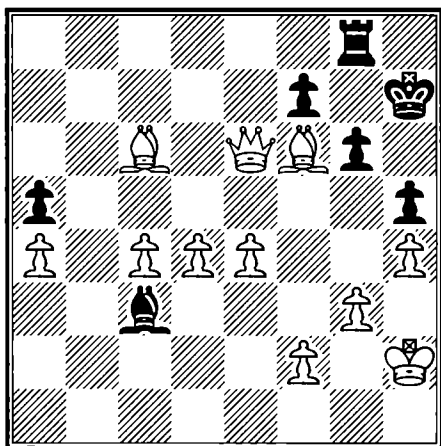
34. ♖h2!



34... ♕c3

Black is in *zugzwang*! Moving the king or queen leaves f7 unguarded, the bishop is protected from the threat of e5 only when it is on b4, and the g8-rook is needed to guard g6: 34... ♜h8 35. ♕xd6 ♕xd6 36. ♖xd6 ♖xa4 37. ♖e5+ ♜g8 38. ♖f6 ♖d7 39. ♖xg6+ ♜f8 40. ♖a6 a4 41. c5, and White is obviously winning.

35. ♖xd6 ♖h7 36. ♕c6 ♖c8
37. ♕f6 ♖e6 38. ♖xe6



Or 38. c5!?, e.g. 38... ♖a2 39. ♖f4 ♜f8 40. ♕e7 ♜g8 41. d5, and things are decidedly unpleasant for Black.

38... fxe6 39. ♖g2 ♜f8 40. ♕e7 ♜c8
41. d5 exd5 42. exd5 ♖g7 43. d6

♕f6 44. d7 ♜h8 45. ♕d6 ♕d4
46. c5 ♖f6 47. ♕c7 ♖e7 48. ♕xa5
♕xc5 49. d8=♖+ ♜xd8 50. ♕xd8+
♖xd8 51. ♕e4 1-0

This might be an important game in the battle against Smyslov's 9... ♗d4.

Game 26

*Roman Dzindzichashvili –
Michael Rohde*

New York Open 1992
English Opening [A26]

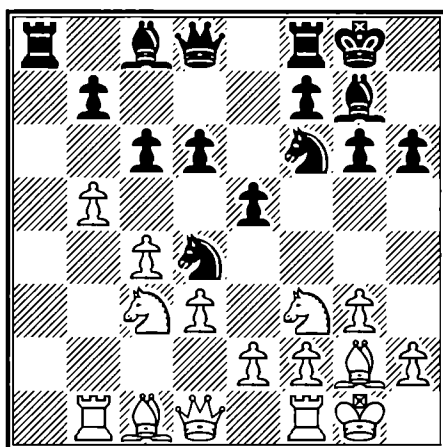
1. c4 g6 2. ♗c3 ♕g7 3. g3 ♗f6
4. ♕g2 d6 5. ♗f3 0-0 6. 0-0 e5 7. d3
♗c6 8. ♜b1 a5 9. a3 ♗d4 10. b4
axb4 11. axb4 h6?!

Black prevents White from playing ♕g5, but loses valuable time; the immediate 11... c6 is better.

12. b5

Another good move for White is 12. ♗xd4!?, after 12... exd4 13. ♗b5 ♗g4 14. ♕b2 c5 15. ♖d2, White has a pleasant position with targets to aim for on the queenside.

12... c6?!



This loses material; correct is 12... ♕g4!?.

13. dxd4 exd4 14. bxc6 bxc6
15. db5!

This double attack on c6 and d4 wins material.

15...cxb5 16. axa8 bxc4 17. dxc4
af5 18. Ba1 d5 19. ab2! de4
20. axd4 dc3 21. axc3 axc3
22. axd5

The simplest. White returns the exchange to go into an ending two pawns up. Rohde understandably declines, but the result is the same.

22...Wf6 23. Ba3 ab4 24. Bf3 We5
25. Wa4 Ac5 26. Wc6 Bc8
27. axf7+ Wg7

Or 27...Wxf7 28. Wxc8, and White wins another exchange.

28. Wd5 We7 29. Bxf5 gxf5
30. Wxf5 Bc6 31. ad5 Bf6
32. Wg4+ Bg6 33. Wc8 1-0

Game 27

Dan Cramling –

Thore Angqvist

Stockholm 1992

English Opening [A26]

IM Dan Cramling is not as well known as his sister Pia, but he is quite a fine player in his own right.

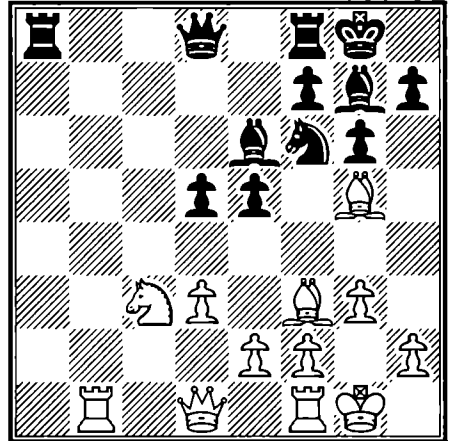
1. c4 e5 2. dc3 dc6 3. df3 df6
4. d3 g6 5. g3 ag7 6. ag2 d6 7. 0-0
0-0 8. Bb1 a5 9. a3 dd4 10. b4
axb4 11. axb4 dx3+?!

Premature. This brings White's bishop to bear on Black's queenside without any downside (lost tempi or having to take on d4, when the knight on c3 can't come to d5).

12. axf3 c6 13. ag5 Ae6

Here, 13...ah3 is more logical, trying to recoup some lost time.

14. b5 d5 15. bxc6 bxc6 16. cxd5
cxd5



17. Bb5!

Black's center is a liability rather than a strength.

17...Ba5 18. Wb1 Wc7 19. Bc1
Bxb5 20. dx5

Despite the exchanges, it is worth noting that White maintains the initiative by creating new threats against Black's pieces and central pawns, which remain weak.

20...Wa5?!

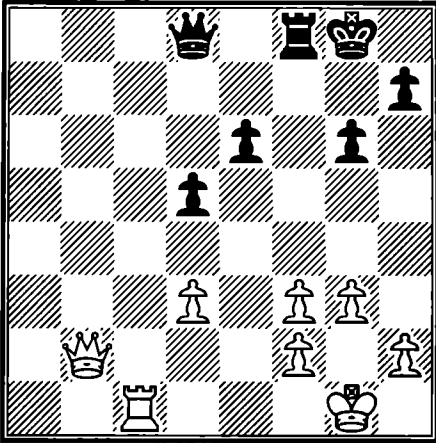
This pseudo-active move only separates the queen from the rest of the pieces; better is 20...Wd8.

21. dc7 e4?!

Starving for counterplay, Black lunges forward with his e-pawn, but ultimately the simplifications and changes in the pawn structure only favors White.

22. ♖×f6 e×f3 23. ♖×g7 ♜×g7
 24. ♜b2+ ♜g8 25. ♘×e6 f×e6
 26. e×f3 ♜d8

Or 26... ♖×f3 27. ♖c8+ ♖f8 28. ♖×f8+
 ♜×f8 29. ♜h8+ and White wins the h-
 and g-pawns, defends d3, and plays h2-
 h4-h5-h6-h7-h8.



27.f4

This position is pure torture for Black. Granted White's extra pawn is doubled, but the exposed position of the black king and weakness on e6 are huge problems that won't go away. Meanwhile, White's king is safe.

27... ♜d7 28.h4!

This pawn will be used like a battering ram to weaken the black king's position.

28... ♜f7 29. ♜d4 ♖a8 30. ♜e5
 ♖c8 31. ♖a1

White needs both heavy pieces on the board to win.

31... ♜b7 32.h5 ♜c7 33. ♜d4 ♜d7
 34.h6

Creating a new weakness on g7. Also 34.h×g6 is possible, but the text is much

stronger. The bone in Black's throat on h6 now means that White can even entertain the idea of simplification.

34... ♜g8 35. ♖a7 e5

Desperation, but 35... ♖c7 36. ♖a8+
 ♖c8 (36... ♜f7 37. ♜g7#) 37. ♖×c8+
 ♜×c8 38. ♜g7# obviously isn't any better.

36. ♖×d7 e×d4 37. ♖×d5 ♜f7
 38. ♖d7+ ♜f6 39. ♖×h7 g5 40. f×g5+
 ♜×g5 41. ♖d7 ♜×h6 42. ♜g2 1-0

Game 28

Ulf Andersson –

Alfonso Romero Holmes

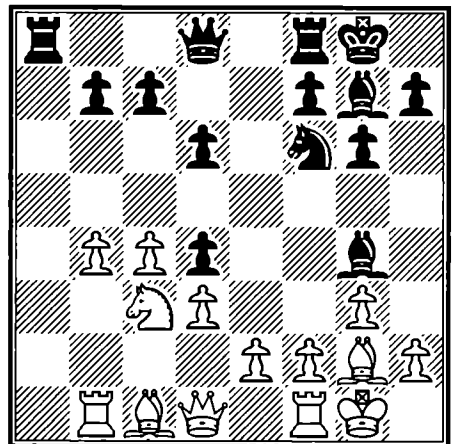
Rome 1986

English Opening [A26]

1. ♘f3 ♘f6 2. c4 g6 3. g3 ♖g7
 4. ♖g2 0-0 5. 0-0 d6 6. ♘c3 ♘c6
 7. d3 e5 8. ♖b1 a5 9. a3 ♘d4 10. b4
 a×b4 11. a×b4 ♖g4?

Correct is 11...c6 12.b5 ♖g4.

12. ♘×d4 e×d4



13. ♘b5

We have already seen this idea in action, hitting the b7- and d4-pawns simultaneously. chesstouring.com

13...Ba2?!

Trying to hang on to the pawns by means of a counterattack.

14.Qb2 c6 15.d3

Oops, now the price is the exchange.

15...Ba8 16.Bb3 Bxa3 17.Qxa3 Qxe2 18.Bfe1 Qg4 19.Ba1

There is nothing remarkable about the last half of the game, except watching how Andersson converts his material and positional advantage without giving Black any chances at all.

19...Bb8 20.b5 c5 21.Qc1 d7 22.f4 Bc7 23.Ba7 Bb8 24.Qd2 Bc8 25.h3 Qe6 26.Bd1 d6 27.g4 d5 28.f5 Qd7 29.g5 d5 30.Qxd5 Qxf5 31.Be7 Qxd3 32.Bf3 Qf5 33.Qxf7+ Bb8 34.Ba7 Bxb7 35.Bxb7 Bxb7 36.Bxb7 Qe5 37.Be7 Qd6 38.Be8+ Bg7 39.Qd5 d4 40.Bg8# 1-0

Game 29
Ulf Andersson –
John Nunn

Johannesburg (1) 1981
English Opening [A26]

1.d3 d6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 Qg7 4.Qg2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.d3 c6 7.d3 e5 8.Bb1 a5 9.a3 d4 10.b4 axb4

Some claim that Black can equalize by 10...e8!? 11.dxd4 exd4 12.d5 c6 13.d4 f6, as in Zimmerer-Khalifman, Bad Mergentheim 1989, but White should still be better after the natural 14.b5.

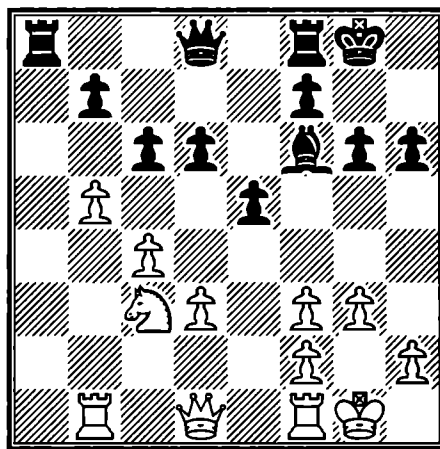
11.axb4 c6 12.b5 Qg4

Andersson has suggested a possible improvement for Black in 12...dxf3+ 13.Qxf3 d5 14.bxc6 bxc6 15.cxd5 cxd5 16.Qg5 Qe6 17.Bb5 Ba5; however, after the quiet 18.Bb1!, Black has difficult problems to solve with his central pawns. One possible continuation is 18...Bc7 19.Bc1 Bxb5 20.dxb5 with a position closely resembling Game 28.

13.Qg5

This is the modern way of treating the position. In the past players tended to take on d4, which gives Black very good pressure down the e-file.

13...Qxf3 14.Qxf3 h6 15.Qxf6 dxf3+ 16.exf3 Qxf6



17.bxc6

This position might seem harmless, but, in fact Black is in great difficulties. White has clear play on the queenside and Black has no corresponding counterplay.

17...bxc6 18.Bb7 Ba3 19.Bc2 d5?

This mistake immediately lands Black in trouble. The correct 19...Ba8 can be seen in Game 30. chesstouring.com

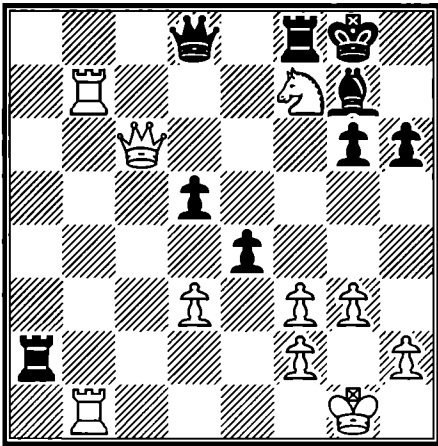
20.cxd5 cxd5 21.♞b5!

White's knight is active on the queenside and in the center, while Black's bishop isn't doing much.

21...♞a5?! 22.♜c6 ♕g7 23.♞b1 ♞a2?!

Black's only chance was to try to go into a pawn-down endgame 23...♜f6 24.♜xd5 ♞d8 25.♞d7 (25.♜e4 ♜f5) 25...♞xd7 26.♜xd7 ♕f8.

24.♞d6 e4?! 25.♞xf7! 1-0



And Black resigned in view of 25...♞xf7 26.♞b8 ♜xb8 27.♞xb8+ ♖h7 28.dxe4 d4 29.e5, when White wins.

Game 30

Ulf Andersson –

Jouni Yrjola

Helsinki (1) 1991

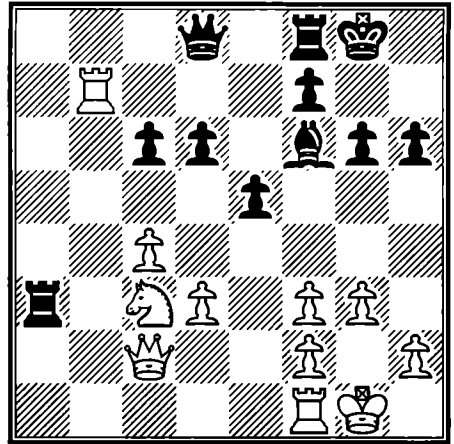
English Opening [A26]

1.♞f3 ♞f6 2.c4g6 3.g3 ♕g7 4.♕g2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.♞c3 ♞c6 7.d3 e5 8.♞b1 a5 9.a3 ♞d4 10.b4 axb4 11.axb4 c6 12.b5 ♕g4 13.♕g5 ♕xf3 14.♕xf3 h6 15.♕xf6 ♞xf3+ 16.exf3 ♕xf6 17.bxc6

White's lack of a stable center square for his knight means that his chances

for an advantage are small. That said, Black still has to play with care.

17...bxc6 18.♞b7 ♞a3 19.♜c2



19...♜a8!

This is a substantial improvement over 19...d5? from Game 29.

20.♞fb1 e4!?

A radical way of getting the bishop into play. The more solid 20...♞a7 has been suggested as better, but 21.♞7b6 ♞c8 22.♜b2, intending ♞b8 and ♞e4, might yield a small advantage. Still, this is preferable to the game continuation.

21.♞xe4 ♕d4

The idea behind the previous move, to put pressure against White's kingside and the f2-pawn in particular.

22.♜c1! d5

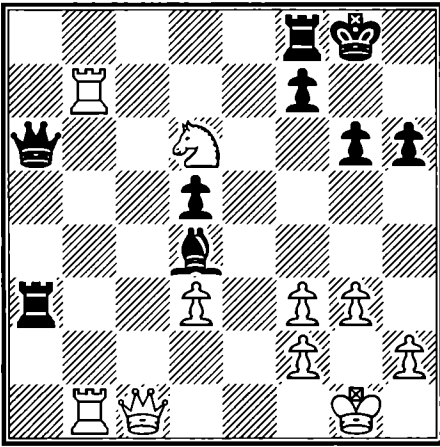
22...♞a2? 23.♜xh6 is more dangerous for Black than it is for White.

23.cxd5

An interesting alternative is 23.♞d6!?, after which 23...♞a2 24.♞xf7 ♞xf2

25.♟f4 ♖xƒ3+ 26.♟xd4 ♖3xf7 27.♖xf7 ♖xf7 28.♟e5 ♔h7 is given as equal by Yrjola, but 25.♟xh6+ ♔h8 26.♔h1 is extremely dangerous for Black and finding a workable continuation may prove difficult. Therefore, Black should probably opt for 23...♙e5, which is also better for White after 24.c5.

23...cxd5 24.♟d6 ♟a6?



Numerous sources give 24...♙e5 25.♟c7 ♟a6 26.♖7b6 ♟a7 as equal, but this is too optimistic, given that the endgame after 27.♟xa7 ♖xa7 28.♟b5 ♖a5 29.f4 ♖b8 30.♖xb8+ ♙xb8 31.♟d4 can be decidedly unpleasant to defend for Black, especially against someone like Andersson.

25.♟f4??

White misses a combination similar to the one from Game 29: 25.♟xf7! ♖xf7 26.♟c8+ ♖f8 27.♟d7, and game over.

25...♖a4!

The move Andersson missed, Black threatens ...♙xf2+, while the knight on d6 still needs protection. The continuation is just desperation since Black is already winning.

26.♟xf7

The alternatives don't work either: 26.♖7b4 ♖xb4 27.♖xb4 ♙c5; 26.♔g2 ♙c5; or 26.♟c4 ♙a7.

26...♙xf2+ 27.♔xf2 ♖xf4 28.♟xh6+ ♔h8 29.gxf4 ♟f6 30.♖1b4 ♟h4+ 31.♔g2 ♟xh6 32.♖d7 ♟h4 33.♖xd5 ♖a8 34.♖b2 ♟xf4 35.♖c5 ♖f8 36.♖f2 ♟d4 37.♖g5 ♔h7 38.♖g4 ♟xd3 39.♖h4+ ♔g7 40.♖g4 ♖f5 41.h4 ♔h6 42.♔g3 ♖e5 43.♔g2 0-1

Chapter Three

Closed Sicilian Reversed – Others

9...♘h5, 9...♙g4, 9...♙f5, 9...♙d7 & 9...♞e8

The lines in this chapter center chiefly on how to trade light-squared bishops without having to spend a tempo on ...h7-h6. Two different ways to do this are ...♙f5, with ...♞d7, and ...♙d7, followed by ...♞c8. The former enjoys a reasonable reputation, but the latter is a bit too grandiose. The artificial nature of the plan was shown in Game 9, where Swedish GM Ulf Andersson, a master of the Closed Sicilian Reversed, shows that one piece by itself is never enough for a successful attack. Black finally gets in ...♙h3 only to have to spend time bringing his queen back into the game.

Note how important a decision it is whether to play ...a7-a5 or not. Many times Black merely opens lines where White is stronger. Certainly, this is the case after 9...♘h5, when Black begins to play on both sides of the board. This is not a good idea (see Game 33), and the second player would be much better off with ...♘h5 and ...f5, without ...a7-a5 thrown in.

Game 31

Jaan Ehvest –

Anatoly Karpov

Reggio Emilia 1991

English Opening [A26]

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.g3 g6 4.♙g2
♙g7 5.d3 d6 6.♞b1 a5 7.a3 ♘f6
8.♘f3 0-0 9.0-0 ♙g4

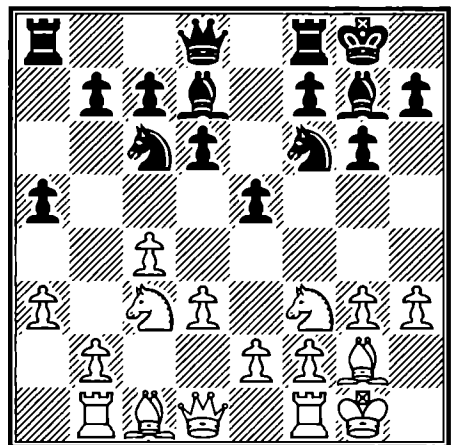
The motivation behind the seldom seen text isn't hard to discern. Like 9...♙f5,

the text attempts to avoid, at least temporarily, the need for ...h6, as in ...h6, ...♙e6 and ...♞d7.

10.h3

An interesting alternative is the immediate 10.b4!?, as in Vaganian-Wolff, see Game 32.

10...♙d7



Black could have, of course, gone to d7 straightaway. Instead, he has given White h3 for free. Is it a strength, as ♞h2 is now possible to thwart the trade of bishops? Or is it a target and tempo for ...♞c8? It's hard to say, except that it should be pointed out that lines with ...♙d7 usually give White too free a hand on the queenside.

The critical continuation may well be 10...♙e6!? 11.b4 axb4 12.axb4 ♞b8 13.b5 ♘e7 14.e4 ♞d7 15.♘g5 c6 16.♞a4 h6 17.♘xe6 ♞xe6 18.bxc6 bxc6 19.♞xb8 ♞xb8 20.♙a3 ♙f8 with equal chances as in Bareev-J.Polgar,

Vienna rapid 1996. However, White should be able to improve on this with the waiting/developing move 14.♘d2!? ♖c8 (14...♗d7 is also possible, but after 15.♗g5, White gets an improved version of the game continuation, where White's g2-bishop isn't blocked by the e4-pawn) 15.♗g5 ♘d7 16.b6!?, with somewhat better chances for White.

11.b4 a×b4 12.a×b4 ♖e8

One novel idea behind ...♘c8-g4-d7 is to try for ...♗d4 and ...♘c6, but it doesn't quite work. 12...♗d4 13.♗×d4 e×d4 14.♗b5 (not 14.♗d5?! ♗×d5 15.c×d5 ♘b5 with a better game for Black) 14...♘×b5 15.c×b5 ♖d7 16.♖c2! (16.♘×b7 ♖ab8 17.♘g2 ♖×b5 with even chances) 16...♖×b5 17.♖×c7 ♗d5 18.♖c4! ♖×c4 19.d×c4 ♗c3 20.♖b2± (Karpov) with ideas such as c5, ♖d2 and e3.

But a noteworthy alternative was tried in Bareev-J.Polgar, Geneva rapid 1996: 12...♖b8 13.b5 ♗e7 14.e4 ♖d7 15.♗g5 c6 16.♖a4 h6 17.♗×e6 ♖×e6 18.b×c6 b×c6 19.♖×b8 ♖×b8 20.♘a3 ♘f8 with approximately even chances.

13.♗d2

Karpov's idea is to meet 13.b5 by 13...♗d4 14.♗×d4 e×d4, when the position is equal. Karpov is Karpov, but after 15.♗a4, intending 16.c5, White is for choice. Another idea is 13.♘g5!?

13...h6

After 13...♖c8 14.♗h2 ♗d4!?, White obtains a somewhat better game by 15.e3, chasing the knight away.

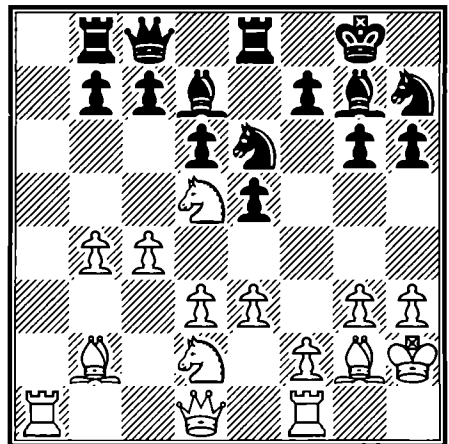
14.♗h2 ♖c8 15.e3

Black was still hoping for 15.b5, when he planned 15...♗d4, followed by ...♗e6. Ehlvest cramps Black with his move, denying the knight d4.

15...♗d8 16.♗d5! ♗h7

Given that the alternatives (16...♗×d5 17.c×d5 c6 18.♗e4 ♖c7 19.♗c3± or 16...♗e6 17.♗×f6+ ♘×f6 18.♗e4±) allow the exchange of a pair of knights, which is in White's favor, Black hides the knight away for the moment, while trying to find a useful way of dislodging White's knight on d5.

17.♘b2 ♗e6 18.♖a1 ♖b8



The number of times where it is good to take on a1 are very few. Black may think he is saving a tempo by not having to make the modest retreat ...♖b8, but the price is usually huge. Here, for example, Karpov gives the line 18...♖×a1 19.♖×a1 ♖a8 20.♗b3 as much better for White, who is threatening b5, ♗b4 and ♗a5, with tremendous pressure on Black's queenside.

19.b5 ♖d8

Trying to grab some space by g...c6.

20. ♖c3!

Preparing ♖a5.

20... ♗f6 21. ♗×f6+ ♕×f6 22. ♖a7
 ♗c5 23. d4!?

Because of his greater piece activity, this central break seems to make sense, but it also allows Black to exchange a few pieces and with that reduce White's overall pressure. The slower 23. ♗e4! maintains the spatial advantage, while not allowing Black any kind of freedom, e.g. 23... ♗×e4 24. ♖×e4, followed by 25. ♖f3, with an unpleasant situation for Black.

23... e×d4 24. e×d4 ♖f5! 25. ♖a1?!

With this move White throws away a huge chunk of his remaining advantage. After the alternative 25. ♖e1!?, White still retains a healthy plus: 25... ♖×e1 26. ♖×e1 ♖a8 27. ♖×a8 (27. b6!? can also be considered) 27... ♖×a8 28. ♗f1 ♗a4 29. ♖a1 c6 30. ♗e3 ♖d7, and although White still has a spatial plus, Black should be able to defend.

25... ♗e4 26. ♗×e4 ½-½

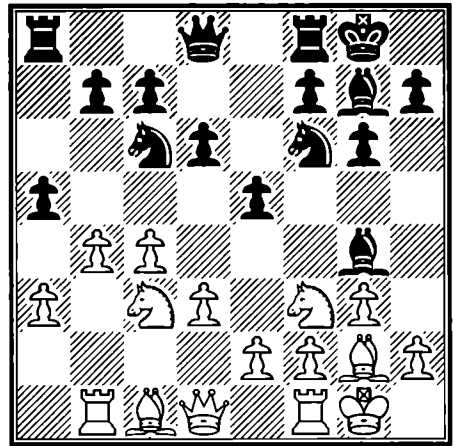
Game 32

*Rafael Vaganian –
 Patrick Wolff*

Saint John 1988
 English Opening [A26]

1. c4 e5 2. ♗c3 ♗c6 3. g3 g6 4. ♖g2
 ♖g7 5. ♖b1 ♗f6 6. ♗f3 d6 7. d3 a5
 8. a3 0-0 9. 0-0 ♖g4 10. b4!?

For some reason this game is not in many databases, so it may be unknown to most players using this line as black.



10... a×b4 11. a×b4 ♖d7 12. ♖g5
 ♖fe8 13. ♖×f6 ♖×f6 14. ♗d5 ♖d8
 15. e3 ♖g7

This looks rather artificial, but it is a link in Black's plan to exchange some pieces. While it is understandable, it is not entirely necessary.

One alternative is 15... ♖a3 16. ♖d2 ♖f5, when Black's pieces have been activated, but White still has a pleasant game after, say, 17. ♗e1 ♖g5 18. f4.

16. ♖a1

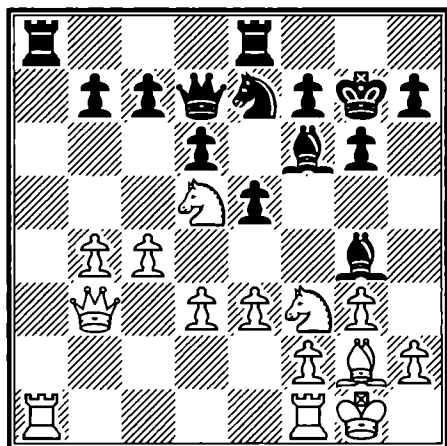
I don't like this move because it seems too accommodating to Black's plan, yet the alternatives are not that attractive either.

16... ♖f6?!

Now Black starts getting himself into trouble. This was part of the overall plan initiated by ... ♖g7, but a better plan has become available. With 16... ♖×a1! 17. ♖×a1 ♖f5, Black could steer the game towards equality: 18. e4 (18. ♖d1 is also possible, although he has to find a good way to counter the unpleasant pin of the knight after 18... ♖h5) 18... ♖d7 19. b5 c×f3

20. bxc6 bxc6 21. Qxf3 cxd5 22. cxd5 and the game is almost entirely balanced, except that White's bishop has slightly better prospects than Black's.

17. ♖b3 ♗e7!?



Black does everything he can to eliminate White's knight on d5: threats, temptation and force. True, Black's king ends up on f6, but it is still relatively safe from harm, because White cannot open lines fast enough to create threats. However, Black then must spend a tempo to return to safety, and White can use this time to gain extra momentum on the queenside.

The following line illustrates what Black wishes to avoid: 17... ♖xa1 18. ♖xa1 ♗d8 19. ♗d2 ♖c8 20. b5 ♗e7 21. ♖a7 ♗xd5 22. ♗xd5 b6 23. f3 ♗h3 24. ♗e4, and White has complete control over the entire board and is just waiting for the proper moment to strike on the queenside, while Black's potential counterplay on the kingside has effectively been shut down.

18. ♗xf6 ♖xf6 19. ♗d2 ♖xa1 20. ♖xa1 ♖b8 21. ♖a7 ♗c6

To the untrained eye, it seems as though White just lost time with 21. ♖a7, but it

makes sense, because he will later regain a tempo with b4-b5. However, I suspect that Black may have been drifting into time trouble at this point. His moves no longer seem to be part of a bigger plan and he quickly folds, while White slowly increases the pressure.

22. ♖a3 ♖g7 23. ♖c3 f6 24. ♗e4 ♖f5?

An unfortunate decision, as the defense of the queenside now collapses. Correct was 24... ♗e7, when White still keeps a comfortable plus by 25. f4 ♗h3.

25. b5 ♗d8 26. b6! ♖d7?

This makes things worse than they need to be. Better is 26... c5, intending 27. ♗xd6 ♖e6, although White maintains a clear advantage after 28. ♗e4 ♖xb6 29. f4 exf4 30. gxf4.

27. bxc7 ♖xc7 28. ♖b4 1-0

Black may have lost on time here, as resignation is somewhat premature. His position is unenviable, but still playable.

Game 33

Ulf Andersson –

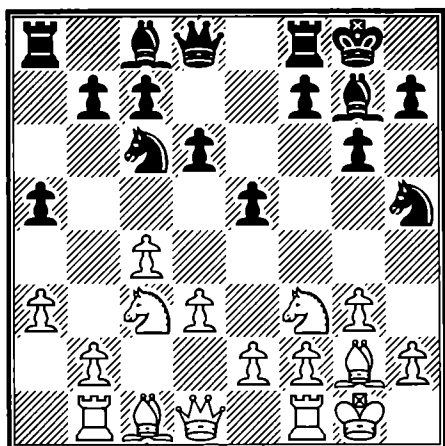
Jan Smejkal

Amsterdam (14) 1973

English Opening [A26]

1. ♗f3 ♗f6 2. g3 g6 3. ♗g2 ♗g7 4. 0-0 0-0 5. c4 d6 6. ♗c3 e5 7. d3 ♗c6 8. ♖b1 a5 9. a3 ♗h5?!

The inclusion of ...a7-a5 makes sense when Black aims to play in the center (...♖e8, ...♗d4, ...h6 and ...♗e6), but matters are less clear if he wishes to play on the kingside. So there is something to be said for ...♗h5 without ...a5.



10.b4 axb4 11.axb4 f5

11...h6 is better in this move order. This position could also arise via 1.c4 e5 2.♟c3 ♟c6 3.g3 g6 4.♞g2 ♞g7 5.d3 d6 6.♟f3 f5 7.0-0 ♟f6 8.♞b1 a5 9.a3 0-0 10.b4 axb4 11.axb4 ♟h5.

12.b5 ♟e7 13.♞b3 ♟h8 14.♞b2!?

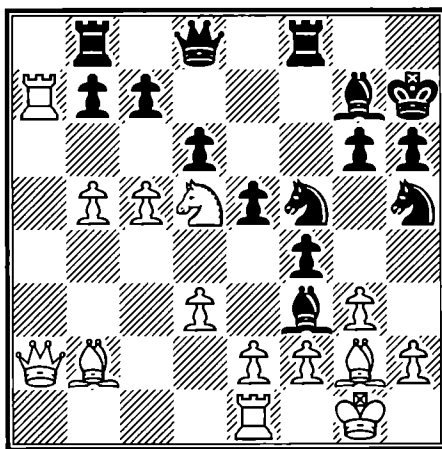
White can also opt for ♞a3 and a quick c4-c5. With the text, he aims to take control of the a-file as quickly as possible. An alternative is 14.♞a3, e.g. 14...♞b8 15.c5 d5 16.c6 bxc6 17.♞b4 ♞f6 18.♞c5! ♟g7 (18...cxb5? 19.♟xd5) 19.bxc6 ♟e6 20.♞a5 ♟xc6, when Valdes claims a clear plus for White after 21.♞a4, but 21.♞xd5! is even stronger. Black's position rapidly falls apart after the forced sequence: 21...♞xb1 22.♞xb1 ♟e7 23.♞xd8 ♞xd8 24.♞xe7 ♞xe7 25.♟xe5. So Black should opt for 20...♞xb1 21.♞xb1 e4 22.♟e1 d4, when things have yet to be decided; or deviate a move or two earlier by ...♞a8.

14...h6?!

This rules out ♟g5, but it costs precious time. The immediate 14...f4 was better.

15.♞a1 ♞b8 16.♟d5 f4 17.♞a7 ♟h7 18.♞a2 ♞g4 19.♞e1 ♟f5 20.c5! ♞xf3

Here Petrosian gave 20...dxc5 21.♟xe5 ♞xe5 22.♞xe5 fxc3 23.hxc3 ♟d6 with a slight advantage for White. However, he must have overlooked 24.b6!, which immediately calls Black's entire setup into question, e.g. 24...cxb6 25.♟e3 ♞c8 26.♞d5 and White is winning.



21.exf3!?

This is very solid, but not necessarily the best. Both Andersson and Petrosian considered 21.♞xf3 ♞g5 as unclear; however, with 22.g4 ♟f6 23.♟xf6+ ♞xf6 24.♞e6, White takes complete control of the game, and Black's counterplay seems more or less irrelevant, e.g. 24...h5 25.♞d7+ ♟h6 26.h3.

After the text move, White's king is completely safe and he has concrete play on the queenside. The bishop will come into play via h3.

21...dxc5 22.♞c4

22.g4 doesn't amount to anything after 22...♟h4.

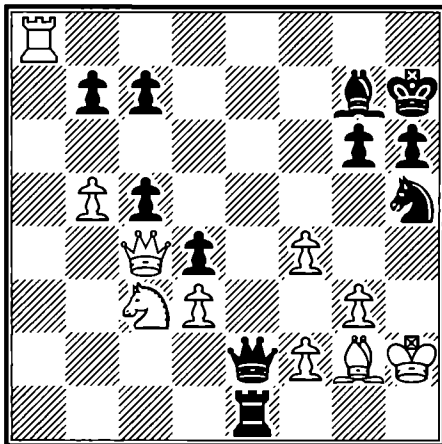
22...♟d4

After 22...♖d6, the queen no longer has access to the g5-square, so 23.g4 works to White's advantage.

23.♙x d4 e x d4 24.♙h3

White tries to activate the bishop as planned, but, with Black's counterplay quickly emerging, its freedom is relatively short-lived. 24.♖xc5? doesn't work because of 24...♞f5. But 24.g4!? is more interesting, e.g. 24...♗f6 25.♗xf6+ (25.♗xf4 ♖d6 26.♗e6 ♞fe8 appears to favor Black) 25...♞xf6 26.♖xc5 ♞f7, with chances for both sides.

24...f x g3 25.h x g3 ♖g5 26.♙g2 ♞fe8 27.♞x e8 ♞x e8 28.f4 ♞e1+ 29.♖h2 ♖g4 30.♞a8 ♖e2 31.♗c3



The first edition of this book considered this to be a mistake, but the suggested improvement 31.♞a2 also leads to a draw in a similarly spectacular fashion to what could have happened in the game: 31.♞a2 ♖g4 32.♖xc5 ♗xg3!!, and now 33.f x g3 ♖h5+ 34.♙h3 ♖f3 35.♙g2 ♖h5+ is a draw by repetition.

31...♖e6??

This "only move" loses on the spot. I can imagine that both players were very

short on time at this stage in the game. The drawing combination is 31...♗f6!! 32.♗x e2 ♗g4+ 33.♖h3 ♗x f2+ and Black draws by perpetual check.

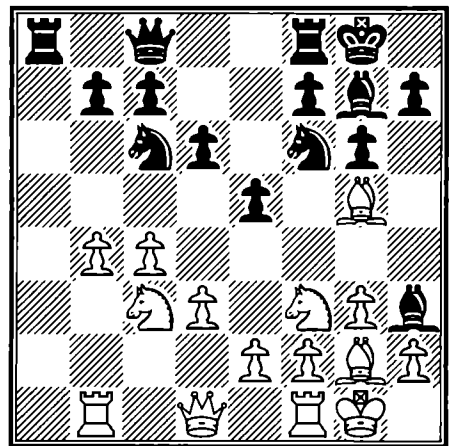
32.♙d5 ♖e7 33.♙g8+ ♖h8 34.♙h7+ 1-0

Game 34

Samuel Reshevsky – Arthur Dake

Lone Pine Open (3) 1977
English Opening [A26]

1.♗f3 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.♗c3 e5 7.d3 ♗c6 8.♞b1 a5 9.a3 ♙d7 10.b4 a x b4 11.a x b4 ♖c8 12.♙g5 ♙h3



13.♙x f6! ♙x f6 14.♗d5

The point of White's strategy. By capturing on f6 and playing ♗d5, when e7 is vulnerable, White takes over the a-file.

14...♙d8

14...♙g7?? 15.b5 wins.

15.♞a1

Even better is 15.♙x h3! displacing the black queen, as *schin*stAndersson-

Westerinen, Geneva 1977 (Game 9). Remember, a queen can't attack by itself, even on h3.

15... ♖×g2 16. ♜×g2 ♜b8

After 16... ♜×a1 17. ♝×a1, White would quickly infiltrate by b5, ♝a7 and ♜a1.

17. b5 ♘e7 18. ♘c3 ±

Trading knights would ease the cramp in Black's position.

18... ♗f5 19. ♜a4 ♘g7 20. ♝d2 ♘e6 21. ♝h6

Playing on both wings; now Black has to consider the advance of White's h-pawn.

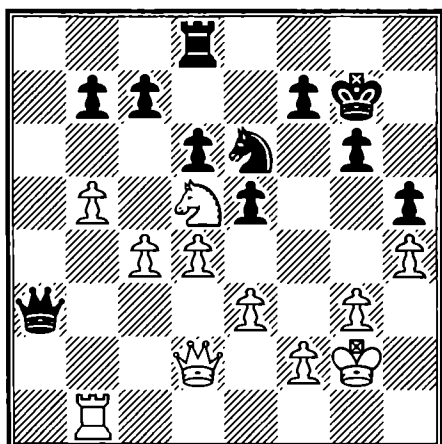
21... ♗f6 22. ♘d5 ♝d8 23. ♘×f6+ ♝×f6 24. ♜a7 ♝e7 25. ♝e3 ♜fe8 26. ♘d2 ♝g5 27. ♘e4!

Black has very little counterplay.

27... ♝d8

27... ♝×e3 28. ♘f6+ ♜h8 29. f×e3 ♜ed8 30. g4, and Black is very tied up.

28. ♘c3 ♜g7 29. h4 h5 30. ♜b1 ♜e7 31. ♘d5 ♜d7 32. ♝d2 ♜a8 33. ♜×a8 ♝×a8 34. e3 ♝a3 35. d4 ♜d8



This is the most active move, but the more solid 35... f6!? can also be considered. The idea is to guard the center with the pawns and protect the queenside with the rook.

36. b6! c×b6

Or 36... c6 37. ♘c7 e×d4 (37... ♘f8 38. d×e5 wins for White) 38. e×d4 with a very clear plus for White, while 36... c5 is met by the simple 37. d×e5 d×e5 38. ♝c2!, intending 39. ♝e4.

37. ♜×b6 e×d4 38. e×d4 ♜d7 39. ♝e3 ♝×e3

The exchange of queens is forced, as 39... ♝a8? drops a crucial pawn after 40. ♜×d6! ♜×d6 41. ♝e5+.

40. f×e3 f5 41. ♜f3 ♜f7 42. ♜e2 ♘d8 43. ♜d3 ♘c6 44. ♘f4 ♜e7 45. ♜b1 ♜d7 46. ♘d5 ♘e7 47. ♘f4 ♘g8 48. e4 f×e4+ 49. ♜×e4 ♘f6+ 50. ♜d3 ♜e7 51. ♜f1 ♜g7 52. d5!

Now White will anchor his knight on e6.

52... ♘d7 53. ♘e6+ ♜g8 54. ♜d4 b6 55. ♜a1?

While this is consistent with White's plan, the more direct 55. ♘g5!, threatening ♘e4, wins quicker, as 55... ♘c5 is met by 56. ♜f6, winning a pawn.

55... ♘c5 56. ♜a8+ ♜h7 57. ♘g5+ ♜g7 58. ♜d8 ♜e1

Neither 58... ♜d7 59. ♜×d7+ ♘×d7 60. ♘e4 nor 58... ♘b7 59. ♜b8 ♜d7 60. ♘e6+ ♜f6 61. ♜f8+ ♜e7 62. ♜f1, and Black has no answer to the twin

threats of 63.♖f8 and 63.♞b1, improve. Black's last try is 58...♗b3+!?, e.g. 59.♖c3 ♞e3+ 60.♖b4 ♗d2 61.♞xd6 ♞b3+ 62.♖a4 ♞b1, when White still has some work to do before he can claim the full point.

59.♞xd6 ♞d1+ 60.♖e3 ♞d3+ 61.♖f4 ♞d4+ 62.♖e5 ♞xc4 63.♞c6 ♗d3+ 64.♖e6 ♞xc6+

64...♗c5+ 65.♖e7 ♞c3 66.♗e6+ ♖h7 67.d6 ♞e3 68.♞xc5 bxc5 69.d7 ♞d3 70.♗xc5 is also lost for Black.

65.dxc6 ♗c5+ 66.♖e7 ♗a6 67.♗e6+ ♖h6 68.c7 ♗xc7 69.♗xc7 g5 70.♖f6 g×h4 71.g×h4 1-0

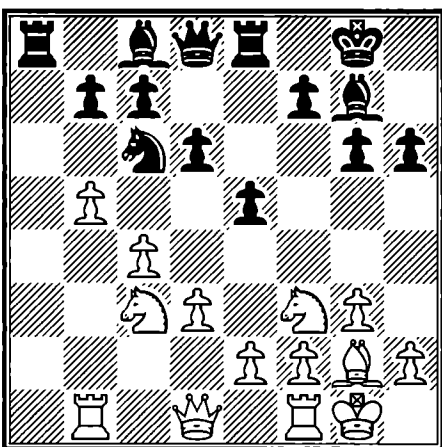
Game 35

*Rafael Vaganian –
Joseph Gallagher*

Biel (2) 1994

English Opening [A26]

1.♗f3 d6 2.g3 e5 3.d3 g6 4.c4 ♖g7 5.♗c3 ♗c6 6.♖g2 ♗f6 7.0-0 0-0 8.♞b1 a5 9.a3 ♞e8 10.♖g5 h6 11.♖xf6 ♖xf6 12.b4 a×b4 13.a×b4 ♖g7 14.b5



Note that 14.♗d2? runs into 14...e4! with an advantage for Black after 15.b5

♗e7 16.♞c1 exd3 17.exd3 ♗f5, Suba-Sznapić, Baile Herculane zonal 1982. This trap is quite common, yet an amazing amount of players have fallen into it, including several grandmasters.

14...♗e7

Note that 14...♗d4 follows the pattern we saw in chapter two: 15.♗xd4 exd4 16.♗d5 ♞a2 17.♞e1 ♖g4 18.♖f3! ♖d7 (or 18...h5 19.♗b4 ♞a7 20.♖xg4 h×g4 21.b6! c×b6 (21...♞a3 22.b×c7 ♞×c7 23.♗d5±) 22.♗d5± Adianto-Sharavdorj, Yangon zonal 1998) 19.♞b3 ♞a5 20.♞b4± Paunovic-Nataf, Yugoslav Team Ch (Budva) 2002.

15.♞c2

Once again, 15.♗d2 is a mistake on account of 15...e4!, and now 16.♞c2 is necessary (16.♗c×e4 f5 wins a piece), although after 16...e3! 17.f×e3 ♗f5 18.♗d1 h5!, Black had a strong initiative in Vaganian-Lautier, Manila interzonal 1990.

15...c6

Or 15...♖e6 16.♗d2 c6 17.b×c6 (17.♞a1!?) 17...b×c6 18.♞b7 d5 19.c×d5 c×d5 20.♗b5 ♞b8 21.♞×b8 ♞×b8 22.♞b1 ♞c8 23.♞a2 ♞a8 24.♞×a8 ♞×a8 25.♗c7 ♞a2 26.♗b3= Z.Djukic-Damljanovic, Nis 1993.

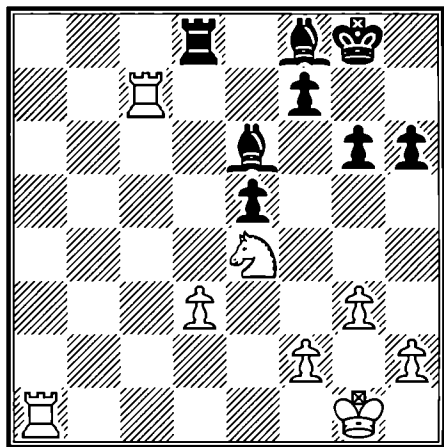
16.♗d2 d5 17.b×c6 b×c6 18.♞fc1 ♖e6 19.♗a4 ♞d6 20.♗b6 ♞a7 21.e4 ♞d8?

This mistake allows White to win material. The alternatives are:

a) 21...d×c4 22.♗d×c4 ♞c7 23.♗e3± (Ribli).

b) 21...dxe4 22.♖xe4 (22.dxe4 ♖c5!?)
22...♖c7 (22...♖d4!? is also interesting,
Ca.Hansen) 23.♗c5 ♗f5= (Ribli).

22.cxd5 cxd5 23.exd5 ♗xd5
24.♗xd5 ♗xd5 25.♗c8 ♖d7
26.♗xa7 ♖xa7 27.♖c7 ♖xc7
28.♖xc7 ♗a2 29.♖a1 ♗e6
30.♗e4 ♗f8



The rook has to stay back for now:
30...♖xd3 31.♗c5 ♖d6 32.♗xe6 ♖xe6
33.♖a8+ wins easily for White.

31.♖a6 ♖h8

Once again, 31...♖xd3 loses for Black,
this time immediately after 32.♖xe6!
fxe6 33.♗f6+ ♖h8 34.♖h7 mate!

32.h4 ♖xd3 33.♖xe6! fxe6
34.♗f6 ♗g7 35.♖c8+ ♗f8
36.♗g4! ♖d4 37.f4! ♖g7 38.♖c7+
♖h8 39.♗xe5?

White has an easier win with 39.♗f6
♗g7 40.♖c8+ ♗f8 41.fxe5, and Black
will lose his bishop, as 41...♖g7 leads
to mate upon 42.♖c7+ ♖h8 43.♖h7.

39...♗d6 40.♗f7+ ♖g8 41.♗xh6+
♖h8 42.♗f7+ ♖g8 43.♗xd6
♖xd6 44.♖f2 ♖f8 45.♖e3 ♖d1
46.♖e4 ♖e1+ 47.♖d4 ♖e2 48.g4

♖e1 49.g5 ♖e2 50.♖h7 ♖g8
51.♖h6 ♖g7 52.h5 gxh5 53.♖xh5
♖g6 54.♖h6+ ♖f7 55.♖h1 ♖d2+

55...♖g6!? (Ribli) would have offered
tougher resistance, although White
should still win.

56.♖e4 ♖e2+ 57.♖f3 ♖a2
58.♖h7+ ♖f8 59.g6 ♖a4 60.♖f7+
♖e8 61.♖g4 e5 62.♖g5 exf4
63.♖f5 ♖e7 64.g7 ♖a1 65.♖xf4
♖g1+ 66.♖h6 1-0

Game 36

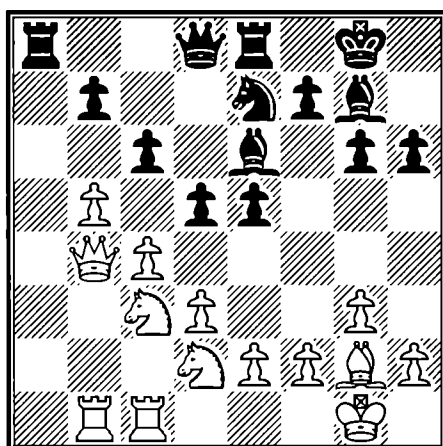
Mikhail Gurevich –

Etienne Bacrot

Sarajevo (6) 2000

English Opening [A26]

1.c4 e5 2.♗c3 ♗f6 3.♗f3 ♗c6
4.g3 g6 5.♗g2 ♗g7 6.0-0 0-0 7.d3
d6 8.♖b1 a5 9.a3 ♖e8 10.♗g5 h6
11.♗xf6 ♗xf6 12.b4 axb4
13.axb4 ♗g7 14.b5 ♗e7 15.♖b3
c6 16.♗d2 ♗e6 17.♖fc1 d5
18.♖b4



18.♖c2!? (Gurevich) is also possible.

18...♗f8!?

After 18...dxc4?! 19.bxc6 bxc6
20.♗xc4 ♗d5 21.♗xd5 cxd5g22.♗b6

♖b8 23.♚c5, White wins a pawn, as in Hickl-Kindermann, German Ch (Alterkirchen) 1999.

But Black has an interesting alternative in 18...♗f5!?. Matamoros Franco-Shirov, Spanish Team Ch (Cala Galdana) 2001 continued: 19.bxc6 bxc6 20.♚b7 ♗d6 21.♚b6 dxc4 22.♗xc6 ♚xb6 23.♞xb6 ♞ab8 24.♞xb8 ♞xb8 25.♗xc4 ♗xc4 26.dxc4 ♗xc4 27.♗d5 ♗a6 (27...♗xd5 28.♗xd5 is slightly unpleasant for Black) 28.♚g2 e4!? (28...♞c8 29.♞a1 ♞xc3 30.♞xa6 is clearly better for White, e.g. 30...♞c7 31.♞xg6! ♞d7 32.e4 ♞xd5? 33.♞xg7+! ♚xg7 34.exd5 and White wins, Marin) 29.♗xe4 ♞d8 30.♗c4 ♗xc4 31.♞xc4 f5! 32.♗c5 ♞c8, and despite the minus pawn, Black can draw the endgame.

19.♚b2 ♗g7

19...d4 20.♗ce4 ♗c8 21.bxc6 bxc6 22.♚b7 (Gurevich) is unpleasant for Black.

20.♚c2 ♚h7?!

20...f5!? 21.e4!? fxe4 22.dxe4 d4 23.♗a4 d3 24.♚b3 is given as unclear by Gurevich.

21.♗b3!

White temporarily sacrifices a pawn to activate his pieces.

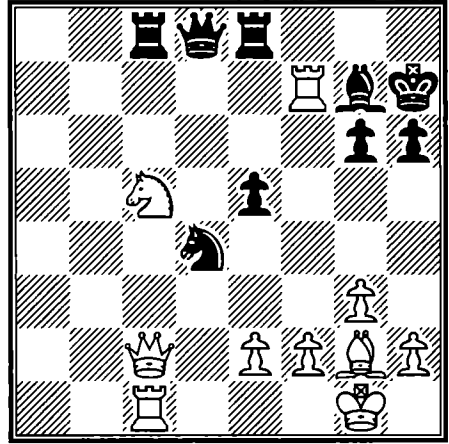
21...dxc4

Or 21...♚d6 22.bxc6 bxc6 23.cxd5 cxd5 24.♗b5 (Gurevich) with a better game for White.

22.dxc4 ♗xc4 23.♗c5 cxb5

23...b6 24.♗5a4 ♗f5 25.♗xc6 ♗d4 26.♚d1± (Gurevich).

24.♗xb5 ♗xb5 25.♞xb5 ♗f5 26.♞xb7± ♞c8 27.♞xf7 ♗d4



On 27...♞e7, Gurevich gives the following line: 28.♞xf5! ♞ec7 (28...gxf5 29.♚xf5+ ♚h8 30.♗e4±) 29.♞f3 ♞xc5 30.♚xc5 ♞xc5 31.♞xc5±.

28.♚a2

Of course not 28.♚d1?? because of 28...♞xc5! 29.♞xc5 ♗f3+.

28...♞e7 29.♞xe7 ♚xe7 30.♗d3± ♞xc1+ 31.♗xc1 e4!? 32.♚b1 e3 33.f4 ♚c7 34.♚f1 ♚h8 35.♗d3

In time trouble, Gurevich doesn't find the best move. He indicates 35.♗e4 g5 36.♗d3 as the best way to win the game.

35...♚c2!?

Black's king gets into trouble if he tries to keep the queens on: 35...♚c3 36.♚b8+ ♚h7 37.♗d5 h5 38.♗g8+ ♚h6 39.♚d8 (Gurevich) with ♚g5+ coming.

36.♚xc2 ♗xc2 37.♗e4 g5 38.♗c5 ♗d4 39.fxg5 hxg5 40.♗b1?! bm

Gurevich gives 40.♔d3, intending 41.♗e4, as the correct continuation. Despite this inaccuracy, he nonetheless converts the pawn advantage rather effortlessly.

40...♕f8 41.♗d7 ♕g7 42.♕e4! ♗b3 43.♕d5 ♗d4 44.♗b6! ♗f5 45.♗c4 ♕d4 46.♖g2 ♖g7 47.♕e6 ♗e7 48.♖f3 ♖f6 49.♖e4+- ♕a1 50.♕d7 ♕c3 51.♗x e3 ♕a1 52.♕a4 ♕b2 53.♗c4 ♕a1 54.♗b6 ♕b2 55.♖f3 ♕d4 56.♗d7+ ♖f5 57.♕c2+ ♖e6 58.♗f8+ 1-0

And since Black now loses his last pawn after 58...♖f7 59.♗h7 ♕f6 60.♖g4, he decided to call it quits.

Game 37

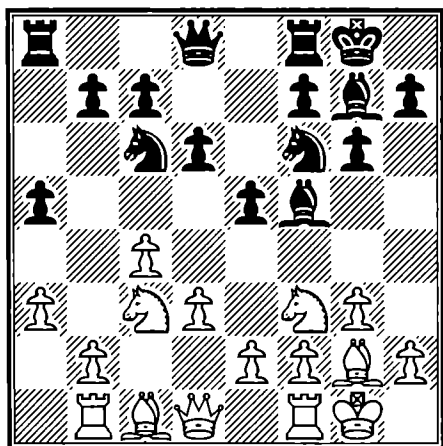
Ulf Andersson –

Joel Lautier

Cannes 1989

English Opening [A26]

1.c4 ♗f6 2.♗f3 g6 3.g3 ♕g7 4.♕g2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.♗c3 e5 7.d3 ♗c6 8.♖b1 a5 9.a3 ♕f5



This move, similar to 9...♕d7, 9...♕e6 and 9...♕g4, intends a setup with queen and bishop on the c8-h3 diagonal, with a possible ...♕h3xg2 in mind. At the

same time it prevents White from countering by 10.h3, on account of 10...e4.

10.♕g5

The alternative 10.b4 is covered in Games 39-41.

10...h6

Here 10...♖d7 leads to a good game for White, who has two attractive options:

a) 11.b4 axb4 12.axb4 e4 (12...♗d4 is best met by 13.♗e1!?) 13.b5 exf3 14.bxc6 bxc6 15.♕xf3 ♕g4 16.♕xf6 ♕xf6 17.♗e4 ♕e7 18.♕xg4 ♖xg4 19.♖b7 ♖c8 20.♖b3 ♖b8 21.♖b1± Beim-Cosma, Berlin 1993.

b) 11.♕xf6 ♕xf6 12.b4 ♖ae8 (12...axb4 13.axb4 ♗d4 transposes to the note after White's twelfth move in Game 41 below) 13.♖a4 axb4 14.axb4 ♖g7 15.♗d2 ♕h3 16.♗d5 ♕d8 (16...♗d4 17.♖xd7 ♗xe2+ 18.♖h1 ♕xd7 19.♗xc7 is of course much better for White) 17.e3 h5 18.♖a8 h4 19.♖xb7± Spiridonov-Legky, Montpellier 1998.

11.♕xf6 ♕xf6 12.♗d2 ♕g7 13.b4 axb4 14.axb4 ♖c8?!

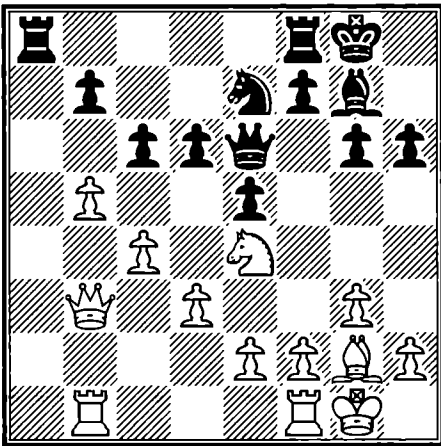
This move looks unattractive, but Lautier wanted to oversee the protection of the b7-pawn. However, giving up on the a-file by 14...♖b8, as in Game 38 below, appears to be a better solution.

Also 14...♖d7 15.♗d5 (15.b5 ♗d8 16.♗d5± Marin) is better for White (Watson); White has b5, followed by ♖c2, and the either ♖a1, or ♗e4 with b6.

15. ♖d5 ♗e6

White is threatening 16.b5 and then a big fork on e7. This leaves Black with the option of capturing the knight (as in the game) or guarding e7 by 15...♞e8, which unfortunately runs into 16.♘e4! with a good game for White.

16. b5 ♗×d5 17. ♗×d5 ♘e7
18. ♗g2 c6 19. ♘e4 ♞e6 20. ♞b3



White has developed unpleasant pressure against Black's queenside pawns, which Black hopes to counter with the following move, but he misses White's follow-up.

20...f5? 21. ♘×d6! c5

21...♞×d6? 22.c5+ is not what Black wants.

22. ♘×b7 ♞b6

The knight is trapped, but White is getting ample return on his investment.

23. ♘×c5! ♞×c5 24. ♗×a8 ♞×a8
25. ♞b4!

Obviously, Black's knight and bishop are no match for White's rook and three pawns. Andersson makes the rest look easy.

25...♞×b4 26. ♞×b4 ♗f7 27. b6 e4
28. d×e4 f×e4 29. c5 ♘c6 30. ♞×e4
♞a5 31. ♞d1 ♞a1 32. ♞×a1 ♗×a1
33. e3 ♗f6 34. ♗f1 ♗e7 35. ♗e2
♘d8 36. ♞c4 ♘c6 37. f4 ♗e6
38. ♗d3 ♗d7 39. ♗e4 ♗e6 40. g4
1-0

Game 38

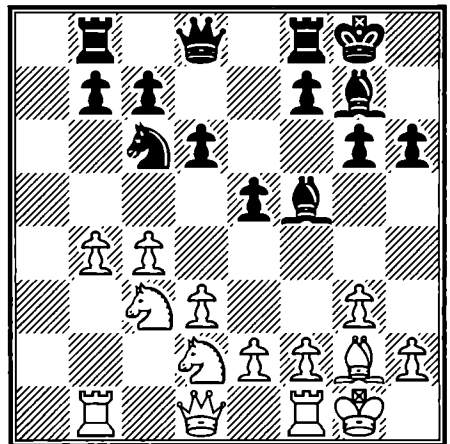
Lembit Oll –

Artur Yusupov

Elista ol (6) 1998

English Opening [A26]

1. c4 e5 2. ♘c3 ♘c6 3. ♘f3 ♘f6
4. d3 g6 5. g3 ♗g7 6. ♗g2 0-0 7. 0-0
d6 8. ♞b1 a5 9. a3 ♗f5 10. ♗g5 h6
11. ♗×f6 ♗×f6 12. ♘d2 ♗g7 13. b4
a×b4 14. a×b4 ♞b8!?



For the weaker alternatives 14...♞c8 and 14...♞d7, see Game 37.

15. b5 ♘e7 16. ♞b3 c6 17. ♞b2

Also, 17. ♞b4!? can be considered.

17... ♗e6 18. ♞fb1 ♞c8

Once again, Black has to step away from a line that is open or about to be opened to protect a pawn.

19. ♘a4 f5 20. ♞a3 ♗h7 21. b×c6
b×c6 22. ♞b7 ♞f7 23. ♘b6

Perhaps 23.♖b4!? is better.

23...♞c7 24.♜a8 ♜×a8 25.♞×a8
♞×b7 26.♞×b7 d5 27.♞b6 e4 ½-½

Black has very comfortable game and should have considered continuing, but since this was a team tournament, other factors probably played a part.

Game 39

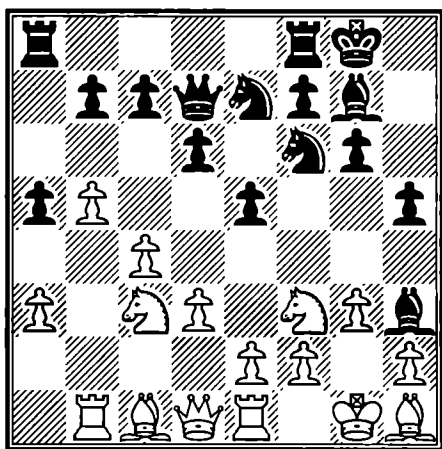
Vladimir Raicevic –

Nikola Padevsky

Vrnjacka Banja 1976

English Opening [A26]

1.c4 ♞f6 2.g3 g6 3.♠g2 ♠g7
4.♞c3 0-0 5.♞f3 d6 6.0-0 e5 7.d3
♞c6 8.♞b1 a5 9.a3 ♠f5 10.b4
♜d7 11.♞e1 ♠h3 12.♠h1 h5
13.b5 ♞e7



13...♞d4?! 14.♞×d4 exd4 15.♞e4± is given by Raicevic, but 14.♞g5!?, attacking the bishop on h3 and the pawn on b7, is also worth some consideration.

14.♞d2 ♞ab8

After 14...d5 15.cxd5 ♞exd5 16.♞×d5 ♞×d5 17.♞e4!, White will put his knight on c5.

15.♞d5! ♞f×d5 16.c×d5 b6
17.♜b3 f5 18.♠b2 ♠f6 19.♞bc1

The schematic and thematic plan, but an interesting feint is 19.f4!?, which threatens 20.fxe5 ♠×e5 21.♠×e5 dxe5 22.d6+, and if Black tries 19...exf4, then 20.♠×f6 ♞×f6 21.g×f4 with a very good game for White. If Black opens on the kingside (21...g5 22.f×g5 ♞g6 23.♜f2 ♞×g5 24.♞g1), his king may be more exposed than White's, and at the moment Black's bishop on h3 is out of the game, while White still has unpleasant pressure along the c-file.

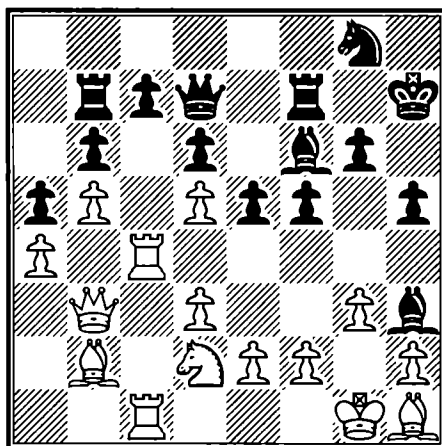
19...♜h7

Also, 19...♠g5!?! can be considered.

20.♞c4 ♞f7 21.♞ec1 ♞b7 22.a4

Again, 22.f4!?! is a possibility, since 22...exf4? runs into 23.♠×f6 ♞×f6 24.♞f3! ♜g7 25.♞g5 ♠g4 26.g×f4, and Black is completely tied up, while 22...♞c8 is met by 23.♞f3 with a clearly better game for White.

22...♞g8



23.♜c2 ♜d8 24.e3 g5 25.♜d1 g4
26.♜c2 ♠g5?

Or 26...♞a7 27.e4 f4 28.d4!.

27.♠×e5! d×e5 28.d6 ♞a7

28...cxd6 29.♙xb7 ♖xb7 30.♖c7+ also wins easily for White.

29.dxc7 ♗c8 30.♖c6 ♘f6 31.♘c4 1-0

Game 40

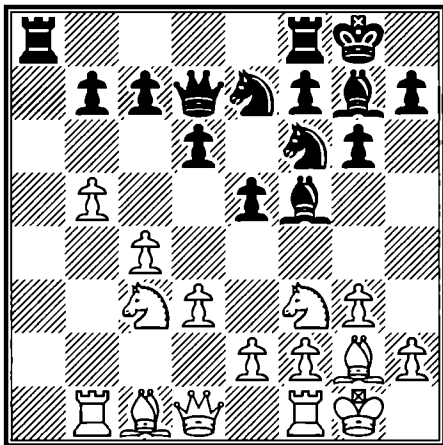
Rafael Vaganian –

Mark Dvoretsky

Vilnius (2) 1975

English Opening [A26]

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♙g7
4.g3 0-0 5.♙g2 d6 6.0-0 ♘c6
7.♖b1 e5 8.d3 a5 9.a3 ♙f5 10.b4
a×b4 11.a×b4 ♗d7 12.b5 ♘e7

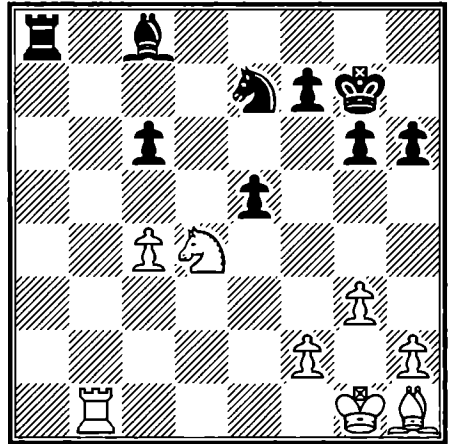


12...♘d4 has also been tried, after 13.♙e3 c5 14.♙g5! ♖a3 15.♖c1 ♙e6 16.♙xf6 ♙xf6 17.e3 ♘f5 18.♘d2 ♙g7 19.♘db1 ♖a5 20.♘d5 ♘e7 21.♘bc3, White has a clear advantage, Andersson-Padevsky, Arboga 1976.

13.♖e1 ♙h3 14.♙h1 h6 15.♙b2 ♘g4 16.d4 ♗e6 17.♗d3 c6 18.e4 e×d4 19.♘×d4 ♘e5 20.♘×e6 ♘×d3 21.♘×g7 ♗×g7

Weaker is 21...♘×e1 22.♖×e1 ♗×g7 23.♘d5+ f6 24.♘×e7 ♗f7 25.bxc6 ♗×e7 26.cxb7 with a better endgame for White.

22.♖ed1 ♘×b2 23.♖×b2 ♖a3
24.♘e2 ♙e6 25.♖c1 ♖fa8
26.bxc6 bxc6 27.♘d4 ♙c8 28.e5
♖a1 29.♖bb1 ♖×b1 30.♖×b1 d×e5



31.♘×c6 ♘×c6 32.♙×c6 ♖a6
33.♙b5 ♖b6 34.♗f1 ♙d7 35.♗e2
♗f6 36.♗d2 ♗e7 37.♗c3 ♖f6
38.♖b2 ♙c8 39.♗b4 ♗d6
40.♖d2+ ♗c7 41.♗c5 g5 42.♖e2
♖e6 43.♖e3 ♙b7 44.♖d3 ♙c8
45.♖f3 f6 46.g4 e4 47.♖h3 f5
48.g×f5 ♖e5+ 49.♗d4 ♖×f5
50.♖×h6 ♖×f2 51.c5 ♖b2
52.♖h7+ ♗b8 53.♙c6 ♙f5 54.♖f7
♙c8 55.♙×e4 ♖d2+ 56.♗e5 ♖×h2
57.c6 ♖e2 58.♖e7 g4 59.♗d6 g3
60.♖e8 g2 61.♖×c8+ ♗×c8
62.♙f5+ ♗b8 63.c7+ ♗a7
64.c8=♗ g1=♗ 65.♗c7+ ♗a8
66.♗d8+ ♗a7 67.♗a5+ ♗b8 ½-½

Game 41

Oleg Romanishin –

Mark Dvoretsky

Odessa 1974

English Opening [A26]

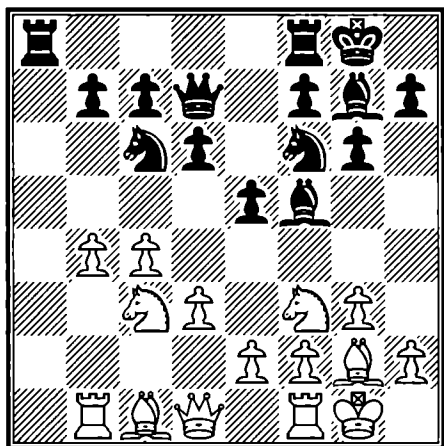
1.c4 g6 2.♘c3 ♙g7 3.g3 ♘f6
4.♙g2 0-0 5.♘f3 d6 6.0-0 ♘c6
7.d3 e5 8.♖b1 a5 9.a3 ♙f5

Dvoretsky's favorite way of handling this position; here he decides to throw in ...a7-a5. chesstouring.com

10.b4

10.e4 ♖g4 11.h3 ♗xf3 12.♗xf3 ♘d4
13.♗g2 c6= (Dvoretsky).

10...a×b4 11.a×b4 ♖d7



12.♗g5

By dispensing with ...h6 on move nine and placing the bishop on f5, Black has made this maneuver possible.

The alternative is 12.♗g5, after which Black has two adequate choices:

a) 12...♗e7 13.♗xf6 ♗xf6 14.b5 c6 15.♗d2 ♗g7 16.♖b3 ♖a7 (16...♖ab8 17.b×c6 b×c6 18.♖×b8 ♖×b8 19.♖×b8+ is clearly better for White, Marin) 17.♖a1 ♖fa8 18.♖×a7 ♖×a7 19.♖b1 ♖a8 20.b×c6 b×c6 21.♖b7 ♖×b7 22.♖×b7, Smirin-Avruch, Tel Aviv rapid 1996, and now 22...♖a1+ 23.♗f1 ♗f6 24.♗e4 ♗×e4 25.♗×e4 d5 is even.

b) 12...♗d4 13.♗xf6 ♗xf6 14.♗d5 ♗d8 15.♗×d4 e×d4 16.b5 ♗h3 17.♖a1 ♖×a1 18.♖×a1 ♗×g2 19.♖×g2 c6! = Andersson-Yusupov, Indonesia 1983.

12...h6 13.♗ge4 ♗e8?

13...♗×e4 14.d×e4 ♗h3 15.♗×h3 ♖×h3 16.♗d5 ♗d4! with equal chances, according to Dvoretsky, but 14.♗×e4!? (Ca.Hansen) improves. Marin now analyses 14...♖h7 (14...♗h3? runs into 15.♗×h6!) 15.b5 ♗e7 (or 15...♗d4 16.e3 ♗e6 17.♗b2 with several plans for White: f4 or ♖a1, followed by f4 or just ♖a1) 16.♖c2!?± and now 16...♗h3? again runs into 17.♗×h6!.

14.♗d5 ♖h7 15.b5 ♗e7 16.♗×e7 ♖×e7 17.♗c3 ♖b8 18.♗a3! ♗f6

18...♖d7 19.c5 ♗h3 20.c6± (Dvoretsky).

19.♖c2 h5 20.c5 ♖fc8 21.e4

Dvoretsky suggested 21.♗d5!? as an interesting possibility at this point.

21...♗e6 22.♗d5 ♗×d5 23.e×d5 b6 24.c×d6 c×d6 25.♖e2! ♖a8 26.♗b4 ♖a4 27.f4 ♗d7 28.f5± ♖c7 29.♖f2 ♖ca7 30.♗e4 ♖a2 31.♖b2 ♖×b2 32.♖×b2 ♗h6 33.♖f2 ♖g7 34.f×g6 f×g6 35.♗×d6 ♖×d6 36.♖f7+ ♖h8 37.♗×g6 ♗g7 38.♗f5 ♖c7 39.♖×h5+?

39.♗e6! wins for White (Dvoretsky).

39...♖h6 40.♖×h6+

40.d6 ♖a7!.

40...♗×h6 41.♖g2 ♗c5 42.♖e1 ♖f7 43.♖×e5 ♗g7 44.♖e8+ ♖f8 45.♖×f8+ ♗×f8 46.♖f3 ♖g7 47.h4 ♖f6 ½-½

Chapter Four

Closed Sicilian Reversed without ...a5

8...a6, 8...h6, 8...♙d7, 8...♙f5, 8...♙g4 & 8...♞e8

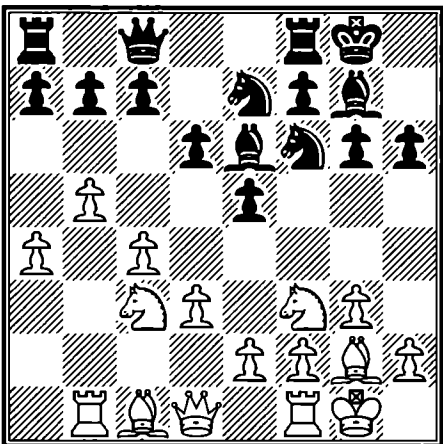
The defining characteristic here is the absence of ...a7-a5. While this may help in some pure pawn storm attacks (...♗h5, ...f5, etc.), it should be noted that these lines have never enjoyed the best reputations. In general, closing the a-line favors White, because his bishop can be placed on a3 with good effect and Black has to worry about the advance a2-a4-a5-a6 or the weakness of his a-pawn after ...♞b8, getting off the dangerous h1-a8 diagonal. Note how White can crash through on the queenside with a2-a4-a5-a6 and b2-b4-b5, followed by b6! (see Games 42 and 43).

Game 42

*Anthony Miles –
Alexander Beliavsky*

Hastings (4) 1974
English Opening [A26]

1.♗f3 ♗f6 2.g3 g6 3.♙g2 ♙g7
4.c4 0-0 5.♗c3 d6 6.0-0 ♗c6 7.d3
e5 8.♞b1 h6 9.b4 ♙e6 10.b5 ♗e7
11.a4 ♞c8?!



This is a bit passive and clumsy. In the game Antunes-J.C.Lopez, Valencia 1989, Black tried the more logical 11...♞d7 12.c5 ♗h3 13.♙a3 ♙xg2 14.♞xg2 ♗e8 15.♞b3 ♞h7 16.cxd6 cxd6 17.♗d5 f5 18.♗xe7 ♞xe7 19.♞d5, and now should have opted for 19...♞d8!? with an interesting battle ahead. Instead, Black went for 19...♞f7 20.a5 ♙f8? (20...♞d8!? 21.♞fc1 is somewhat better for White), when White could have ended the game with 21.♗xe5!.

12.♙a3 ♗d7 13.♗d2 ♞b8

13...e4 isn't particularly good in this situation: 14.♞c2 exd3 15.exd3. White will just continue with his queenside attack, while Black is essentially left without counterplay, e.g. 15...♗f5 16.♗e2 ♞e8 17.a5 ♞b8 18.♞fe1, and White controls the game.

14.♗d5 ♞e8 15.♗e4!

Also, 15.♞c2 offers White excellent chances, e.g. 15...♗f6 (or 15...♗f5 16.e3 ♞d8 17.♗e4 with a clearly better game for White) 16.♗xe7+ ♞xe7 17.c5 d5 18.c6 ♞e8 19.cxb7 ♞xb7 20.♞fc1, and White enjoys the better game.

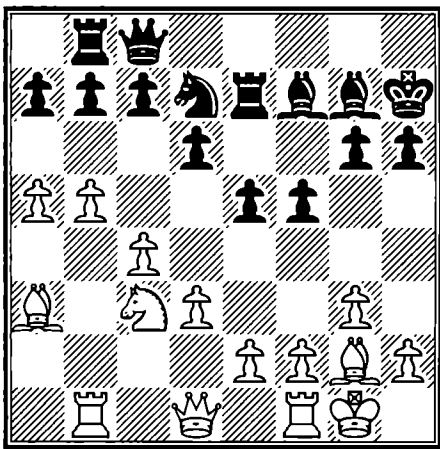
15...f5

Black cannot take on d5: 15...♗xd5 16.cxd5 ♙xd5 17.♗xd6cxd6 18.♞c1 ♞d8 19.♙xd5, when White is much better.

16. ♖ec3 ♗h7 17. a5 ♙f7

Black's patient approach is not altogether safe, but more forcing continuations lead to a White advantage, e.g. 17... ♖xd5 18. cxd5 ♙f7 19. ♗b3 c5 20. bxc6 bxc6 21. ♗a4 ♖xb1 22. ♖xb1 cxd5 23. ♖xd5 ♖c5 24. ♗c4 or 17... ♖f6 18. ♖xf6+ ♙xf6 19. ♖d5 ♖xd5 20. cxd5 ♙f7 21. ♗a4 ♗d7 22. ♖fc1.

18. ♖xe7 ♖xe7



19. b6! axb6

The alternative 19... a6 20. bxc7 ♗xc7 21. ♗d2 b6 22. ♙b4 is also unpleasant for Black.

20. axb6 ♖a8

20... ♖xb6 runs into 21. ♖xb6 cxb6 22. ♙xd6 ♖d7 23. ♙xb8 ♗xb8 24. ♗a4, and Black has a miserable position.

21. ♖b5 ♖xb6

The alternatives do not offer Black any relief: 21... ♖xa3 22. ♖xa3 ♖xb6 23. ♗c2 or 21... c5 22. ♖xd6 ♗b8 23. ♖b5 e4 24. ♗b3 exd3 25. exd3 ♖a6 26. d4!, and Black's position falls apart, e.g. 26... ♖xb6 27. ♖fc1 ♖d7 28. dxc5.

22. ♖xd6 ♗e6 23. ♗c1 cxd6
24. ♖xb6 e4?

Now Black is lost. 24... ♖a6 offers stiffer resistance, although 25. ♖xa6 bxa6 26. ♗e3 e4 27. ♗b6 leaves White with better chances.

25. ♖xd6

White also wins after 25. ♙xd6 ♖a1 26. ♗d2 ♖xf1+ 27. ♙xf1.

25... ♗e5 26. ♖b6 ♗a5 27. ♖b3 ♗a4 28. ♙xe7 ♗xb3 29. ♗b1 ♗a4 30. ♗xb7

With two extra pawns, the realization of the advantage is easy for White.

30... ♖a7 31. ♗b4 ♗d7 32. ♙d6 ♖a2 33. dxe4 ♖b2 34. ♗c5 fxe4 35. ♙xe4 ♖xe2 36. ♙d5 ♖c2 37. ♙f4 ♙xd5 38. ♗xd5 ♗a7 39. ♙e3 ♗a2 40. ♖c1 ♖xc1+ 41. ♙xc1 ♗b1 42. ♗d2 ♙f8 43. ♗b2 ♗e4 44. ♗c3 ♙g7 45. ♗b4 ♙d4 46. ♙a3 ♗d3 47. ♗b7+ ♗h8 48. ♗c8+ ♗h7 49. ♗d7+ ♗h8 50. ♗e8+ ♗h7 51. ♗f7+ ♗h8 52. ♙e7 ♙g7 53. ♗d5 ♗b3 54. h4 ♗h7 55. ♙c5 h5 56. ♙e3 ♗b1+ 57. ♗g2 ♗b3 58. ♗c6 1-0

Game 43

*John Donaldson –
Artur Thompson Motta
San Jose 1984
English Opening [A26]*

1. ♖f3 ♖f6 2. c4 d6 3. g3 g6 4. ♙g2 ♙g7 5. ♖c3 0-0 6. 0-0 e5 7. d3 ♖c6 8. ♖b1 ♙g4

8... ♙f5 9. b4 ♗d7 10. b5 ♖d8 11. ♖g5 h6 12. ♖e4 ♖xe4 13. ♖xe4 ♗h7 14. a4

♙h3?? (14...♙e6!? to clear the path for the f-pawn is the correct move)
 15.♙xh6 ♙xg2 16.♙xg7 ♖xg7
 17.♖xg2 ♘e6 18.f3 ♖h8 19.♘f2 ♖h5
 20.e3 ♖ah8 21.♖h1 f5 22.d4, and
 White is simply a pawn ahead, as in
 Vaganian-Opl, Bad Wörishofen 1991.

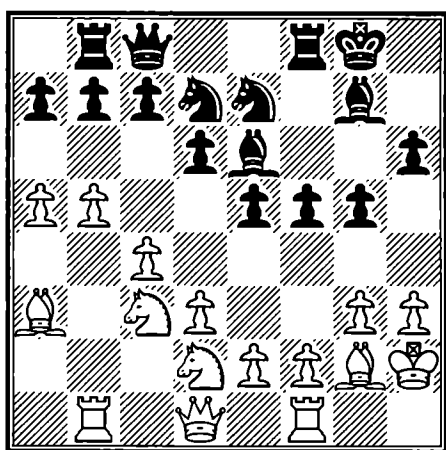
**9.h3 ♙e6 10.b4 h6 11.b5 ♘e7
 12.♘d2 ♖c8**

Here 12...♖d7!? is more active; if White
 takes the b7-pawn, Black will get a de-
 cent game, e.g. 13 ♙xb7 ♖ab8 14 ♙g2
 ♙xh3.

13.♖h2 ♘d7 14.a4 f5 15.♙a3 g5

As we have seen in other examples,
 15...e4 leads to an uncomfortable po-
 sition for Black after the simple 16.♖c2
 exd3 17.exd3.

16.a5 ♖b8



17.b6!?

The idea is the same as in Game 42.
 Also, 17 ♘d5!? can be considered.

**17...axb6 18.axb6 ♘xb6 19.♖xb6
 cxb6 20.♙xd6 ♖d7 21.♙xb8
 ♖xb8 22.♘a4 ♖d8?!**

The best move is 22...e4! to meet 23
 ♘xb6 by 23...♖d4, with chances for
 both sides.

23.♖b3 b5?

White is already in control of the game,
 but now he is winning handily.

**24.♘c5 bxc4 25.♘xc4 ♖c8
 26.♘xe6 ♖xe6 27.♖xb7 ♘d5
 28.♖a1 ♘f6 29.♖a6 ♖e8 30.♘d6
 ♖g6 31.♖e7 ♖d7 32.♖e6+ ♖h7
 33.♘xf5 ♖a7**

This forces a quicker finish. Black wins
 the queen, but gives up too much ma-
 terial for it.

**34.♖xa7 ♘g4+ 35.hxg4 ♖xe6
 36.♖xg7+ ♖h8 37.♙e4 ♖a2
 38.♖g6 ♖f7 39.♖xh6+ ♖g8
 40.♙d5 1-0**

Game 44

Alexander Khasin –

Zigurds Lanka

USSR 1977

English Opening [A26]

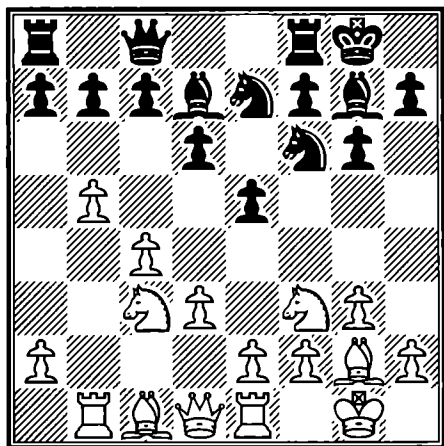
**1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7
 4.♙g2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.♘c3 ♘c6
 7.d3 e5 8.♖b1 ♙d7 9.b4 ♖c8**

Systems with ...♙d7 and ...♖c8 give
 White too free a hand, with or without
 ...a7-a5.

10.b5 ♘e7 11.♖e1

It's a tough decision as to whether to
 preserve the bishop. The moves ♖e1
 and ♙h1 cost time that could be used
 for accelerated queenside play. Both
 11.♖e1 and 11.a4 seems very good for

White; for instance, 11.a4 ♘h3 12.♙a3 ♘xg2 13.♖xg2 ♜e6 14.♞b3 h6?! 15.c5! d5? 16.c6! bxc6 17.bxc6 ♜fd8 18.♙xe7 ♞xe7 19.e4 d4 20.♗e2 ♖h7 21.♗d2, with a clear advantage for White, as in Eising-Hartoch, Holland 1966.



11...♙h3 12.♙h1 h6

Or 12...♗g4 13.♞c2 h6 14.♗d5 ♗xd5 15.cxd5 f5 16.♙d2 f4 17.♞ec1 ♜f7 18.♞b4 ♗f6 19.♞c4± Shatskes-Muchnik, Moscow 1966 (Game 10).

13.a4 ♗h5 14.♙a3 f5 15.c5

White's play on the queenside is much faster than Black's on the kingside.

15...♞d7 16.cxd6?

By releasing the tension prematurely, White gives Black the opportunity to grab the c-file. Better is 16.♗d2!, when Black doesn't appear to have a good answer: 16...d5?! (16...♞ab8 17.cxd6 cxd6 18.♗c4 e4 19.♗xd6 ♙xc3 20.♞b3+ is much better for White, but 18...♗c8 is a bit more sturdy) 17.c6! bxc6 18.bxc6 ♞d8 19.♞b3 and Black loses the d-pawn.

16...cxd6 17.♗d2 ♖h7 18.♗c4

An alternative is 18.♞b3!?, e.g. 18...♞ac8 19.♗c4 e4 (19...d5 20.♗d6 also looks very good for White) 20.♞bc1, and if Black now tries the aggressive 20...d5, White can counter with 21.♗xd5! ♗xd5 22.♙xf8 ♙xf8 23.dxe4 fxe4 24.♙xe4 ♞e8 25.♙f3, when White's chances are clearly better, because of his safer king and superior piece coordination.

18...e4!? 19.♞c1 ♞ac8!?

An interesting pawn sacrifice, but not necessarily forced. 19...d5!? can also be considered, e.g. 20.♙xe7 ♙xc3 21.♙xf8 ♙xe1 22.♗e5 ♞e6 23.♞c7+ ♖g8 24.♗d7 (24.d4 ♙xf2+ 25.♖xf2 ♞xf8 is dangerous for White) 24...♙xf2+ 25.♖xf2 ♞xf8 26.♗xf8 ♞b6+ 27.e3 ♞xc7 28.♗xg6 ♗f6, and despite the limited material, Black has a dangerous initiative, e.g. 29.♗f4 ♗g4+ 30.♖e2 ♙f1+! 31.♞xf1 ♞c2+ 32.♖e1 ♗xh2, when it is unlikely that White can defend.

20.♙xd6

White can bail out with 20.♞b3, transposing to the line discussed after 18.♞b3.

20...♞fd8 21.♙b4 ♞e6 22.♗a5?

This is an odd idea. Decentralizing the minor pieces certainly doesn't fit in with the conventional wisdom of how to combat the initiative.

22...♞d4 23.♙xe7?!

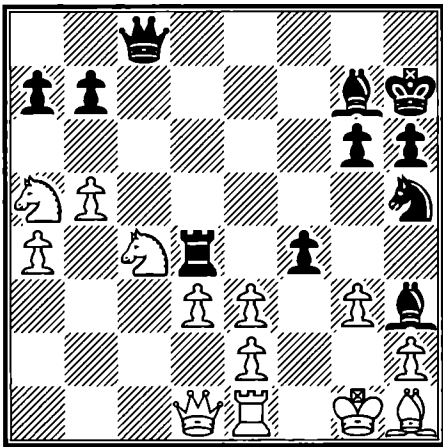
Being a pawn up, White tries to simplify; however, the situation is complex, because in the process he exchanges

some of his better pieces. White will soon have to spend time coordinating his pieces again. Instead, 23.♖a3!? is correct, when White can consider following up with ♖b1 to exchange the rook. Still, Black has full compensation for the pawn.

23...♗×e7 24.♘d5 ♗d7 25.♙×c8 ♗×c8 26.♘e3 f4!

This is stronger than 26...♗c3 27.♘ac4 e×d3 28.e×d3 ♙×d3 29.♗b1 with a complicated struggle ahead, since 29...f4? fails to 30.♖e4.

27.♘ec4 e3! 28.f×e3?



White undoubtedly missed the following forced sequence that Black must have calculated to the end. Yet, the situation is already hazardous for White, e.g. 28.♖f3 e×f2+ 29.♗×f2 f×g3+ 30.h×g3 ♘×g3! 31.♙g1 (31.♘b3 ♗c7! with a winning attack for Black, or 31.♗×g3 ♗c7 32.♗f2 ♗h2+ 33.♗e3 ♗f4+ 34.♗f2 ♖f6! and White will not survive) 31...♘f5, followed by ...♘h4, with much better chances for Black.

28...f×g3!! 29.e×d4

Or 29.♖f3 g×h2+ 30.♗h1 ♗b8!, threatening ...♘g3+, 31 ♖×h5 ♗g3 32 ♖f3 ♙g4! and White cannot avoid mate.

29...g×h2+ 30.♗×h2

Now Black forces mate, but 30.♗f2 ♗g4 31.e3 ♗g3+ 32.♗e2 ♖g4+ doesn't inspire much confidence either.

30...♗c7+ 31.♘e5 ♖×e5+ 32.♗×h3 ♗d7+ 33.♗g2 ♗g4+ 34.♗f1 ♗h3+ 35.♖g2 ♗e3 0-1

Game 45

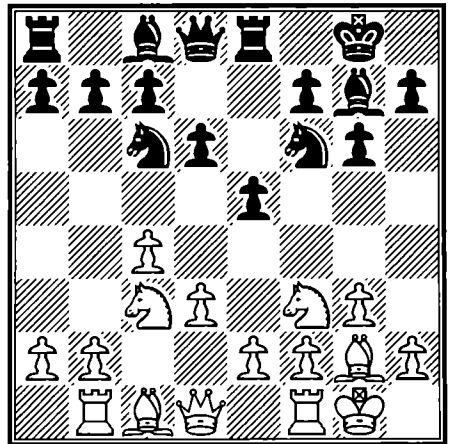
John Donaldson –

Eduard Zelkind

Chicago (5) 1997

English Opening [A26]

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♖g7 4.♖g2 d6 5.♘c3 e5 6.d3 0-0 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.♙b1 ♙e8



Also, 8...♖f5 offers White a pleasant game: 9.♖g5 h6 10.♖×f6 ♖×f6 11.b4 ♗d7 12.♘d2 ♖h3?! (both 12...a6 and 12...♖g7 are better choices) 13.♘d5 ♖d8 14.b5 (14.e3!?) 14...♘d4?! (this looks perfectly logical, but White can obtain a significant advantage after a series of accurate moves. A better choice is 14...♖×g2, when 15.♗×g2 ♘d4 16.e3 ♘e6 leaves Black with a fully playable game. But 15.b×c6 b×c6 16.♗×g2 c×d5 17.c×d5 c5 18.♘c4 leaves White with a comfortable position) 15.♘e4 ♗g7 16.♖×h3! ♗×h3

17.e3 (the idea behind the previous move: Black's queen is shut out)
 17...♖e6 18.f4 f5 19.♗f2 ♜h5 20.♝b3
 (Black's queen is so poorly placed that there is no reason to exchange it, even if it wrecks Black's pawn structure)
 20...e×f4 21.e×f4 g5 22.♝b2+ ♞g8
 23.♞be1, and the opening of the position benefits White, who is better developed and coordinated, as in Vaganian-Martorelli, Reggio Emilia 1995.

9.♗g5 h6 10.♗×f6 ♗×f6 11.b4 ♗g7 12.b5 ♖d4?!

Natural, but wrong. Black should have tried either 12...♖e7 or 12...♖b8, as in Anastasian-Dydyshko, Katowice 1993.

13.♖×d4

13.♖d2!?, followed by e3, is also worth consideration.

13...e×d4 14.♖d5 ♗g4

Compare this position with Psakhis-Wang Zili (Game 3); the only differences are that White has castled, Black has ...♞e8 in, and the a-file is closed. That means White doesn't have ♞b1-a1-a7, but he does have the rook-lift with ♞b1-b3-a3 and the simple and strong plan of a2-a4-a5-a6. Black will probably have to stop the a-pawn's advance by ...b6, allowing the knight to come to c6 via b4.

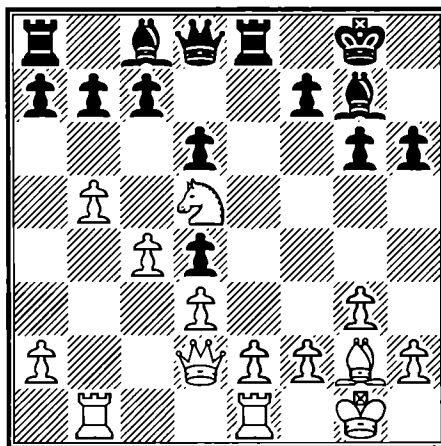
15.♞e1

15.♗f3 was also possible, but the rook move makes sense. Remember, White can still play ♗f3 later, á la Psakhis.

15...♗c8?

To guard c8, but this costs precious time.

16.♝d2



Planning ♝a5 and/or a2-a4-a5-a6.

16...a5??

Stopping ♝a5, but at a very high price. After White's next move, Black can offer little resistance. Much better is 16...♗d7!?, intending to answer 17.♝a5 by 17...c6! 18.♝×d8 ♞a×d8 19.b×c6 b×c6 with chances for both sides. However, after 17.♖b4 ♞b8 18.a4, White has the better chances.

17.b6 c×b6 18.♖×b6 ♞a7 19.♖×c8 ♝×c8 20.♞b6 ♝c7 21.♞eb1 ♝e7 22.♗f3 ♞b8 23.♝f4

Winning material; now the win is trivial.

23...♝e5 24.♞×d6 ♝×f4 25.g×f4 ♜f8 26.♞db6 ♜e8 27.♗×b7 ♜d8 28.♗d5 ♞×b6 29.♞×b6 h5 30.a4 ♜c7 31.♞c6+ ♜d8 32.♜g2 ♗f8 33.♜f3 ♗b4 34.f5 g5 35.♞h6 g4+ 36.♜g2 ♞e7 37.♗e4 1-0

Game 46

Bent Larsen –

Anatoly Karpov

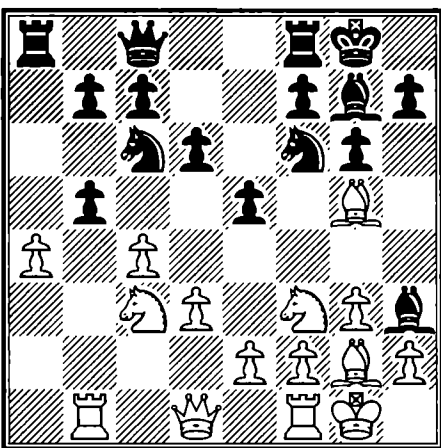
Milan (9) 1975

English Opening [A26]

1.c4 ♖f6 2.♗c3 e5 3.♗f3 ♗c6
4.d3 d6 5.g3 g6 6.♙g2 ♙g7 7.0-0
0-0 8.♞b1 a6

At first glance it seems that ...a6 is better than ...a5. After all, the positions after a4 and b5 and ...a×b5 and a×b5 are exactly the same, tempo for tempo, as those that arise after ...a5, a3, b4, ...a×b4 and a×b4 and b5. Thus, Black has no downside and might sometimes be able to play ...a6 and, only after a4, ...a5. Then b4-b5 could allow ...♗b4. Not exactly! Keep the following idea in mind: should Black play ...a6 and then answer a2-a4 and b2-b4 with ...a×b5, remember to consider the recapture c×b5!. This move isn't available after ...a5 and it can often give White strong pressure on the c-file.

9.b4 ♙d7 10.a4 ♖c8 11.♙g5 ♙h3
12.b5 a×b5



13.c×b5!? ♙×g2 14.♙×g2 ♗e7
15.♖b3

On 15.e4, intending d4, ChessBase's Megabase gives 15...c6! with equal chances, and this seems correct, e.g. 16.d4 (16.b×c6 b×c6 17.d4 e×d4 18.♖×d4 ♖e6 is also close to equal for Black) 16...e×d4 17.♖×d4 ♗fd5 18.♗×d5! ♗×d5 19.♖d3 ♗c3 20.♞bc1 ♗×a4 21.b×c6 ♗c5 and Black can be satisfied.

15...♖d7 16.♗d2 ♗f5 17.♙×f6
♙×f6

Black doesn't achieve anything by 17...♗d4, e.g. 18.♖c4 ♙×f6 19.e3 or 19.♗de4 ♙g7 20.♗d5, in both cases with a clear advantage for White.

18.♗de4 ♙d8

Rather than leaving the bishop useless on the kingside, as in 18...♙g7 19.♗d5 ♖h8 20.♞fc1 with a large advantage for White, Karpov draws the bishop back to defend the queenside and the c7-pawn in particular.

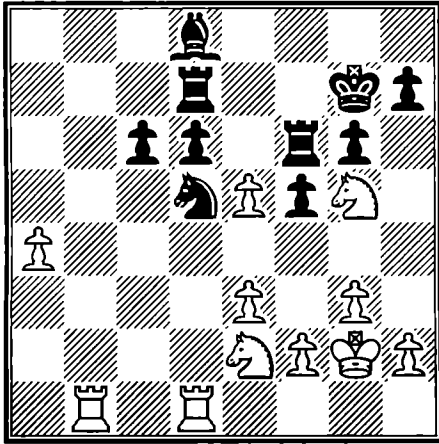
19.♞fc1 ♖g7

Black can also consider the immediate break 19...c6.

20.e3 c6 21.b×c6 b×c6 22.♖b7
♞a7

Black has to allow the exchange of queens, e.g. 22...♙c7 23.♗b5!, and Black is in deep trouble. The only real alternative is 22...♖×b7!? 23.♞×b7 d5 24.♗c4 ♞e8 25.e4, when things can get very complicated after 25...♗d4 26.e×d5 ♞a5!? with chances for both sides.

23. ♖×d7 ♜×d7 24. ♗e2 ♗e7
 25. d4 f5 26. ♗g5 ♜f6 27. ♜d1 ♗d5
 28. d×e5?!



White throws away his advantage by choosing the wrong move order. Correct is 28.e4! f×e4 and only now 29.d×e5 d×e5 (or 29...♜f5 30.♗e6+ ♜f7 31.♗×d8+ ♜×d8, and here not 32.e6+ as given by Minev, because Black can play 32...♜f6 when he is suddenly back in the game; instead 32.♜b7+ ♜g8 33.♗d4 leaves White with a winning position) 30.♗×e4 with a clearly better game for White.

28...d×e5 29.e4 ♜fd6!

Suddenly Black has slightly better chances; however, the reduced material quickly eliminates any advantage that remains.

30.e×d5 ♗×g5 31.d×c6 ♜×d1
 32.♜×d1 ♜×d1 33.c7 ♜d8
 34.c×d8=♜ ♗×d8 35.♗c1 ♜f6
 36.♗b3 ♜e6 37.a5 ♜d5 38.a6
 ♗b6 39.♜f1 e4 40.♜e2 ♜c4
 41.♗d2+ ♜b5 ½-½

While Black wins White's a-pawn, White will be able to exchange off the kingside pawns.

Game 47

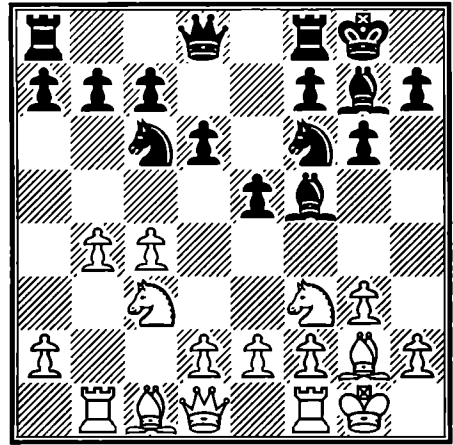
Josif Dorfman –

Mark Dvoretsky

USSR Ch (Yerevan) 1975

English Opening [A26]

1. ♗f3 ♗f6 2. c4 g6 3. g3 ♗g7
 4. ♗g2 0-0 5. 0-0 d6 6. ♗c3 e5
 7. ♜b1 ♗c6 8. b4 ♗f5



An interesting idea that can be played with or without the inclusion of ...a5. Black has three different possible queen and bishop batteries. Standard is ...♗e6 and ...♜d7, which requires a preparatory ...h6 to avoid ♗g5. Also possible, but a bit passive, is ...♗d7 and ...♜c8. The text tries to find a middle way that dispenses with the need for ...h6. On the downside, the bishop is exposed on f5 and maneuvers such as ♗f3-g5-e4 become plausible.

9. d3 ♜d7 10. b5 ♗e7

10...♗d8?! 11. ♗d5 ♗×d5 12. c×d5 is better for White; the knight on d8 will have difficulty getting back into the game.

11. ♜e1 ♗h3

By saving a tempo on ...h6, Black has sidestepped ♜b3 and ♜d1; so White has nothing better than the routine ♜e1.

12. ♖h1 h6

Black decides the threats of ♗g5 and ♖g5 are annoying enough that it is worth taking time to play ...h6. But note that he only does so when White is already committed to ♜e1 and hasn't had time for ♖b3 and ♜d1.

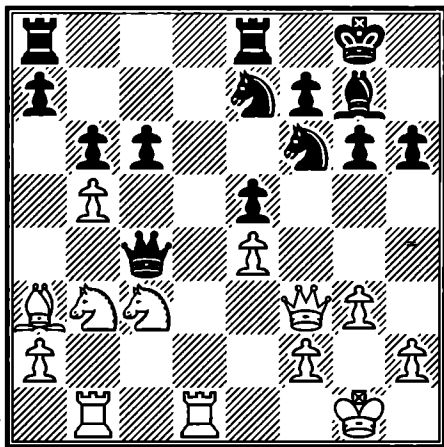
13. d4 ♗e6

The typical way for Black to answer d4 in this line.

14. d×e5 d×e5 15. ♗d2 ♖f5 16. e4 ♖g4 17. ♖f3 ♖×f3 18. ♗×f3 c6 19. ♖a3 ♜fe8 20. ♗b3 b6

20... ♗×c4 21. ♗a5 is also better for White.

21. ♜ed1! ♗×c4!?



According to Dorfman, in his book *The Critical Moment*, this is Black's best practical chance, as it unbalances the game by giving up a piece for a couple of connected queenside pawns. The alternatives are not particular interesting for Black, e.g. 21...c5 22. ♗d5 ♜ac8 23 ♗d2 or 21...♜ad8 22. ♜×d8 ♜×d8 23. ♖×e7 ♗×e7 24. b×c6 ♜e8 25. ♗d5 ♗d6 26. c7 ♗×d5 27. c×d5 ♗×c7 28. ♜c1 both leave Black suffering.

22. ♜bc1

22. ♜d6! c×b5 23. ♜c1! has been given by Dorfman and Sher as better for White, but further analysis is required to determine how much better White is, e.g. 23... ♗h7!? 24. ♗d2! ♗g5 25. ♗e3 ♗c7 26. ♗×b5, followed by ♗c7, and White is clearly better.

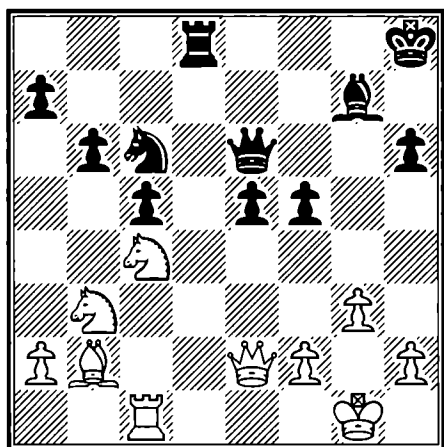
22...c5 23. ♜d6 ♜ad8 24. ♜×d8 ♜×d8 25. ♗d5 ♗×b5 26. ♗×f6+ ♖h8 27. ♗g4 f5 28. ♗e3?!

Dorfman offers the following line as better: 28. e×f5 ♗×f5 29. ♖b2 ♗d4 30. ♖×d4 e×d4 31. ♗×h6 ♜f8 32. ♗f7+ ♖g8 33. ♗d6 ♗d7 34. ♗d5+ ♖h7 35. ♜×c5! (35. ♜e1 ♜f6 is better for Black) 35... b×c5 36. ♗×c5 ♗e7 (36... ♜f5 37. ♗×f5 ♗×d6 38. ♗h3+ leaves White with an advantageous endgame, but it still requires some technique to convert it) 37. ♗e6 ♜f6 38. ♗g5+ ♖h6 39. ♗df7+, and White wins.

28... ♗a4 29. ♗c4 ♗c6 30. ♖b2 ♗e6 31. ♗e2?!

Dorfman writes "There is no longer a clear win," but the analysis is flawed: 31. e×f5 g×f5 (on 31... ♗×f5, White can play 32. ♗×e5!) 32. ♗×e5!! (Dorfman only considers 32. ♗h5 ♗c6 33. ♗e3 ♜f8 34. g4 f×g4 35. ♗×g4 ♗f7, when Black has ample compensation for the piece) 32... ♖×e5 33. ♗e2 ♗c6 34. f4 ♖d4+ 35. ♗×d4 ♗×e2 36. ♗×e2+ (that this is a check may be the important point that Dorfman missed) 36... ♖h7 37. ♖c3, and White wins.

31... ♗c6 32. e×f5 g×f5 chessprogramming.com



33.f4?

This creates unnecessary difficulties for White in converting the material advantage to a win. Instead, he should keep the pressure against Black's center: 33.♖e1 e4 34.♙xg7+ ♗xg7 35.f3 ♘d4 36.♘xd4 ♖xd4 37.♗e3, and with Black's initiative contained, White can begin consolidating the win – analysis by Dorfman and Sher.

33...e4 34.♙xg7+ ♗xg7 35.♖d1 ♖xd1+ 36.♗xd1 e3 37.♗e2 ♗e4 38.♘d6 ♗e6 39.♘b5 a5 40.♘c1 ♗h7 41.a3 ♗g6 42.♗d3 ♘e7 43.♗d6 ♗f7 44.♗xe6+ ♗xe6 45.♘c3 ♘c6 46.♗f1 ♘d4 47.a4 c4 48.♘1e2 ♘f3 49.h3 ♗d6 50.♘d1 ♘d2+ 51.♗g2 ♗c5 52.g4 f×g4 53.h×g4 b5 54.a×b5 ♗×b5 55.♘×e3 a4 56.♘c2 c3 57.♘×c3+ ♗c4 58.f5 ♗×c3 59.f6 ♗×c2 60.f7 a3 61.f8=♗ a2 62.♗a3 ♗b1 63.♗d3+ 1-0

Game 48

Boris Alterman –

Mohamad Al Modiahki

Beijing 1995

English Opening [A26]

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.♘c3 e5 7.d3

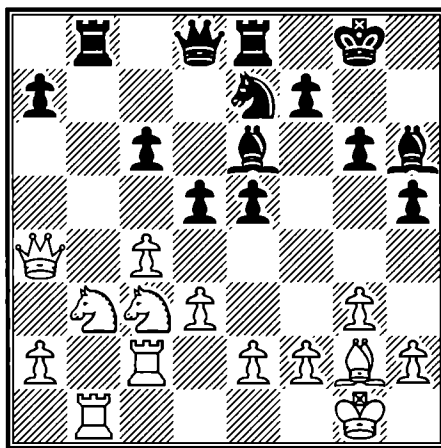
♘c6 8.♖b1 ♖e8 9.♙g5 h6 10.♙×f6 ♙×f6 11.b4 ♘e7 12.♘d2 ♙g7 13.♗c2!?

Note that 13.b5 e4 is fine for Black in this case, after 14.♗c2 exd3 15.exd3 ♘f5, because White cannot contest control of the d4-square.

13...c6 14.b5 d5 15.bxc6 bxc6 16.♖fc1 ♙e6 17.♗a4 h5

Black doesn't want to just sit and wait for White to attack the center pawns and penetrate on the queenside, so he starts to fight for the initiative himself. However, 17...a5 would have provided Black sufficient counterplay, whereas his choice of plan in the game allows White the better chances.

18.♘b3 ♙h6 19.♖c2 ♖b8?!



In this critical position, Black goes awry, but it is difficult to decide on the best move. The idea is that 20.♗xa7! ♖a8 21.♗c5 ♙f8 22.a4 ♖b8 is very good for Black, but White is hardly forced to capture the a7-pawn. The alternatives are a little trickier to handle, but White should ultimately be slightly better:

a) 19...♗d6 20.c×d5 (White achieves nothing by 20.♗a6 ♖eb8 21.c×d5 ♖b6

22. ♖a5 ♗xd5 23. ♗e4 ♖b4 24. ♖c5? ♕f8, and Black is clearly better)
 20...cxd5 21. ♗b5 ♖d8 22. ♗c7 ♕d7
 23. ♖a5 with a pleasant game for White.
 b) 19...♖b6!? looks counterintuitive, but is difficult to take advantage of, e.g. 20.cxd5 cxd5 21. ♗d4 (or 21.d4 ♕f5 22.e4 dxe4 23.dxe5 e3 with a complicated game) 21...♖xd4 22. ♖b4 ♖c5 23. ♗xd5 ♖d6 24. ♗f6+ ♕f8, and both sides have chances. White's best is 20. ♗a5 ♖a6 21. ♖cb2 ♖ac8 22. c5, and White has gained the initiative, e.g. 22...♕h8 23. ♗b7 ♖xa4 24. ♗xa4 ♖b8 25. ♗d6 ♖xb2 26. ♖xb2 ♖a8 27. ♖b7 with better chances for White.

20. ♖cb2

Also, 20. ♖xa7 can be considered.

20...dxc4?!

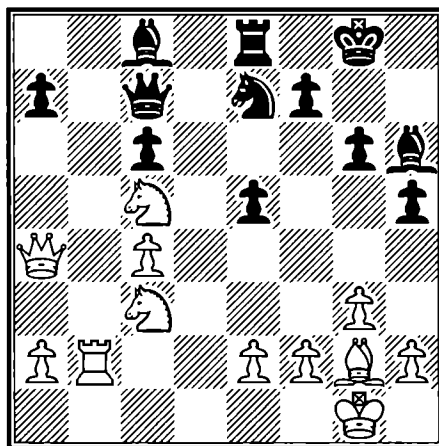
With his center under attack from all angles Black tries to rid himself of his troubles with this exchange, but by opening the diagonal for the g2-bishop, Black only causes himself more problems. That said, the alternative 20...♕g7 21 cxd5 ♗xd5 22. ♗xd5 cxd5 23. ♖xa7 ♖e7 24. ♖a5 ♖xa5 25. ♗xa5 ♖xb2 26. ♖xb2 ♖c7 isn't much fun for Black either.

21.dxc4 ♖c7?!

Black probably overlooked White's twenty-fourth move. The alternative 21...f5!? looks like a better way to proceed. And now 22.e4!? (22. ♗c5 ♖xb2 23. ♖xb2 ♕f7 is fine for Black) 22...♖d6 (or 22...♕h8 23.exf5 ♕xf5 24. ♕e4, and White has the upper hand.) 23.exf5 gxf5 24.c5 ♖d7 25. ♖h4 ♕f7 26. ♕f3, and Black has a serious prob-

lem keeping all of his loose pawns and pieces protected.

22. ♗c5 ♖xb2 23. ♖xb2 ♕c8



24. ♗d5!

Black must have overlooked this, because the exchange sacrifice that follows is forced, yet quite hopeless for him; other moves lead to a collapse of the queenside.

24...cxd5 25. ♖xe8+ ♕f8 26. ♖b5 ♗f5 27. ♗a4?

Not a wise choice, even if the idea behind the move comes to fruition. A better move was 27. ♗b7, e.g. 27...dxc4 28.e3 ♕e6 29. ♖c2 and White is clearly better.

27...dxc4?

Black returns the favor immediately; after 27...♗d4! White would have an unpleasant defensive task at hand 28. ♖xd5 ♕e6 29. ♖b7 (29. ♖b7? loses after 29...♖xc4 30.e3 ♕c8! 31. ♕f1 ♗e2+ 32. ♕xe2 ♖c1+) 29...♖c8 30. ♖a5 (after 30. ♖xe5? ♖xc4, White loses the knight on a4) 30...♗xe2+ 31. ♕h1 ♖xc4 32. ♖d2 ♗xg3+ 33. hxg3 ♖xa4, and with two pawns for the ex-

change in addition to a strong pair of bishops, Black has excellent winning chances.

28. ♖c3

This is why White played his knight to a4; now White may play ♖d5 or ♗d5 when convenient.

28... ♗e6?!

This allows White to exchange some pieces, which is exactly what White wants. Therefore, 28... ♖d4 makes more sense, even if White still has the clearly better chances after 29. ♖a4 ♗d7 30. ♖a6; while 29. ♖d5 ♗a3 30. ♖b1 is simply better for White.

29. ♗d5 ♖d6

This time 29... ♖d4 loses quickly to 30. ♖e8! ♖a5 31. ♖b8 ♖a3 32. ♗xe6 ♖xe6 33. ♖b7, and Black has no defense against the threat on f7, as 33... ♖g5 can be met by 34. ♖e4!.

30. ♖b8 ♖a5 31. ♖b4 ♖xb4

Black obviously isn't interested in exchanging queens, but once again he has no reasonable alternative: 31... ♖c7 32. ♗xe6 ♖xe6 33. ♖b5 ♖c6 34. ♖xd6 ♗xd6 35. ♖b7, and White wins.

32. ♖xb4 ♖e4

Or 32... ♗xd5 33. ♖xd5 ♖f5 34. ♖a4, and the a-pawn falls.

33. ♖xc4 ♖xc3 34. ♗xe6 ♖xe2+ 35. ♖f1 ♖d4

Picking up the extra pawn after 35... ♖xg3+ 36. ♖xg3 ♖xe6 just reduces

the material and the possible counterplay: 37. ♖c6 ♖f7 38. ♖c7+, and White wins. The text move extends the struggle, but doesn't change the result.

36. ♗d5 ♗d6 37. ♖c8+ ♖g7 38. ♖d8 ♖f5 39. ♖d7 ♗e7 40. ♖xa7 ♖f6 41. a4 1-0

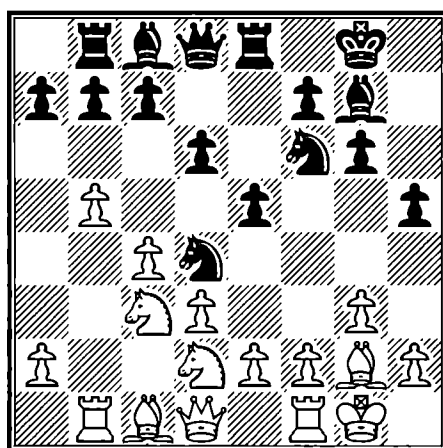
Game 49

*Alexander Chernin –
Jean Marc Degraeve
Bastia (rapid) 1998
English Opening [A26]*

1. c4 ♖f6 2. ♖c3 g6 3. g3 ♗g7 4. ♗g2 0-0 5. d3 d6 6. ♖f3 e5 7. 0-0 ♖c6 8. ♖b1 ♖e8 9. ♖d2 ♖d4

This is the beginning of a very aggressive game plan by Black, who may have thought that his best chance to achieve anything against Chernin was to put White under pressure straight from the opening. This is essentially a good idea, but, as we will see, it is difficult to execute. A normal alternative is 9... ♗e6!.

10. b4 ♖b8 11. b5 h5?!



Another step in Black's game plan. However, without White making any mistakes or major concessions on the kingside, it is difficult to see how this

plan can ever succeed. A more solid approach is 11...♘d7, although White's position is preferable after moves such as 12.♙a3 (Δ c4-c5) or 12.e3.

12.e3 ♘f5

This knight normally returns to e6 to discourage White from playing c4-c5, but Black continues along his aggressive path.

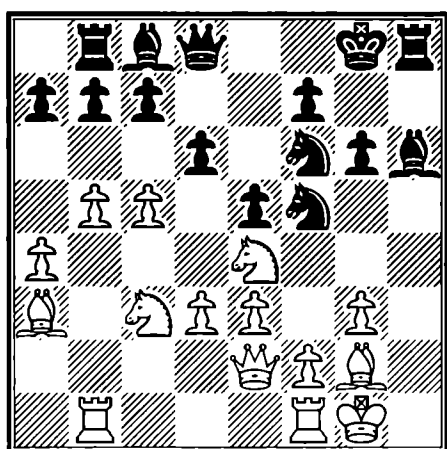
13.a4 h4 14.♙a3 ♙h6

Another attacking move; the idea is to clear the g7-square for the king and then transfer a rook to the h-file. Again, 14...♙e6!? should be considered.

15.♘de4 h×g3 16.h×g3 ♖g7

After 16...♘xe4 17.♘xe4 ♙e6 18.♖d2, White has the upper hand.

17.♖e2 ♜h8 18.c5 ♖g8



This move is an indication that things are not going well for Black. The king retreats so the bishop can help defend the d6-pawn. The alternative 18...dxc5 clearly favors White after 19.♘xf6 ♖xf6 20.♘e4 ♖d8 21.♙xc5.

19.c×d6

White can also consider 19.♘xf6+ ♖xf6 20.♘e4 ♖d8 21.g4, when Black faces severe problems, e.g. 21...d5 22.gxf5 dxe4 23.fxg6 ♖xd3 24.gxf7+ ♖xf7 25.♖h5+ ♖f6 26.♖h4+ ♖f7 27.♙b2 ♙g7 28.♖g3 ♜h5 29.f4, and White should win.

19...c×d6 20.♜bc1?!

Here White could have crushed Black by 20.♘xf6+! ♖xf6 21.♘e4 ♖d8 22.g4 d5 23.gxf5 dxe4 24.fxg6 fxg6 25.dxe4, and the game is essentially over.

20...♙f8?!

This passive move is in keeping with Black's plan, but he can do better. Several of White's minor pieces are competing for access to the central squares, so there is no reason to let him exchange a pair of knights and make White's task easier. Dvoretsky's theory of the superfluous piece tells us that Black should instead opt for 20...♘e8!? 21.♘d5 ♙e6, although White of course is clearly better after 22.♘ec3.

21.♘xf6+ ♖xf6 22.♘d5 ♖g5 23.♜c7 ♙e6 24.♜fc1 ♖h6

The remainder of the game bears evidence of both players being in time trouble, particular Black. The alternative is 24...♙g7!? 25.♖f3±.

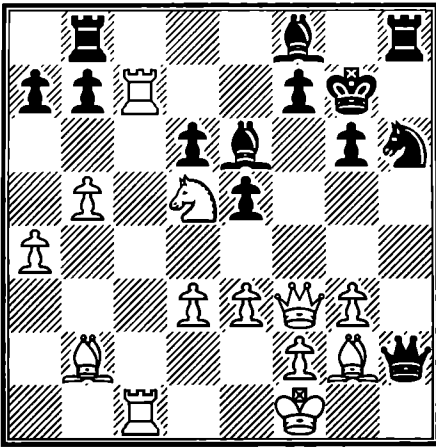
25.♖f1 ♖g7

Or 25...♖g5!? 26.♖f3±.

26.♙b2 ♖h2 27.♖f3 ♘h6?

After this blunder, the game should have ended promptly, but White's over-

sight on the next move allows Black to play on. However, even after the better 27...♖g8, White's extra pawns will decide after 28.♟f6+ ♖g7 29.♞d7 ♜d8 30.♞xf8 ♜hxf8 31.d4 b6 (or 31...exd4 32.e4) 32.dxe5 dxe5 33.♖e2 ♗h5 34.♙xe5+ ♖g8 35.♗xh5 g×h5 36.♞xa7.



28.d4?

This move makes perfect sense given that Black's king is on the same diagonal as the b2-bishop, yet 28.♗f6+ ♖h7

29.♗xe6, winning a piece for nothing is obviously much better.

28...♟g4

The alternatives don't give Black any hope of survival either: 28...♙xd5 29.♗xd5+- or 28...♙g4 29.♗e4 (29.♗f6+ is also good) 29...♙f5 30.dxe5! ♙xe4 31.e6+ ♖g8 32.♟f6+ ♖g7 33.♞xe4+ ♖g8 34.♟f6+ ♖g7 35.♟g4+-.

29.dxe5 dxe5 30.♟f4 ♙b3

After 30...♙f5 31.e4 ♗h7, threatening ...♟h2+, 32.♗b3 settles the game.

31.♗xg4 ♜h6 32.♙xe5+ ♖g8 33.♞c8 ♞xc8 34.♞xc8 ♙xa4 35.♗d7

35.♞xf8+! is a move faster: 35...♖xf8 36.♗c8+ ♖e7 37.♞d5 mate.

35...g5 36.♞xf8+ 1-0

Chapter Five

Closed Sicilian Reversed without ...♘a6 7...♘d7, 7...c6, 7...h6 & 7...♞e8

Black doesn't have to place his knight on c6, though most players do. This chapter deals with alternative placements, e.g. ...♘bd7 or with moves such as ...c7-c6, hoping for a quick ...d5. Play in these lines tends to be more positional than what we have seen in the first four chapters. The play isn't as clear-cut as kingside versus queenside. White can choose between an early ♕g5xf6 (Game 54), e2-e4 (Games 55, 57, and 62) or allowing Black a center and trying to play against it (Games 51 and 53).

Game 50

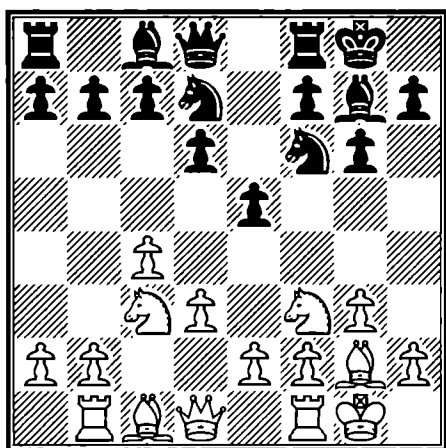
Boris Alterman –

Ronen Har-Zvi

Rishon (3) 1995

English Opening [A24]

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 g6 3.g3 ♕g7
4.♕g2 0-0 5.♘f3 d6 6.0-0 e5 7.d3
♘bd7 8.♞b1



The knight on d7 means that Black is prepared for ♕g5, as he can capture on f6 with his knight. The negative side of

...♘bd7 is that central action with ...d5 is more difficult to achieve.

8...a5

Perhaps it is a question of taste, but I (JD) believe Black is better off without this move if he intends to attack on the kingside by advancing his pawns. Playing ...a5 means sooner or later the a-file is going to be opened, and if it's a race between queenside and kingside, with little play in the center, then opening lines on your opponent's side of the board is probably not a good idea.

9.a3 ♘h5

For 9...c6, see Game 51.

10.b4 a×b4 11.a×b4 f5

Black should have played 11...h6.

12.♕g5!

This bishop move is much more annoying than usual.

12...♘df6

Both 12...♞e8 13.♘d5 and 12...♕f6 13.♕xf6 (13.♞d2!? is also worth consideration) 13...♘dxf6 14.♞b3 leave White with a healthy initiative.

13.♞d2

Normally, White keeps this square free for his knight, but here the pin is so

annoying that Alterman is loath to allow ...h6. In any case, the rooks are connected and White is ready to contest the a-file.

13...f4

On 13...♖e8 14.♞a1 ♘d7 15.♞a2, White will double on the a-file and Black has no real play on the kingside.

14.♞a1 ♞b8

As usual, trading rooks allows ♞a7 or ♞a8 with big effect.

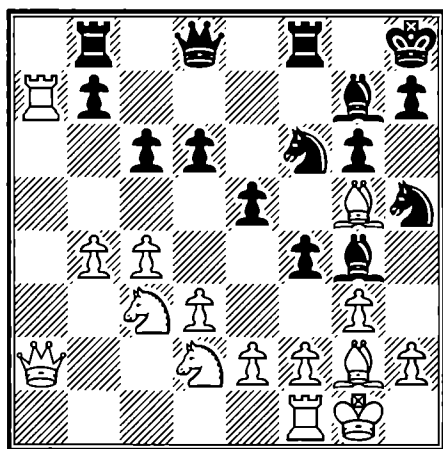
15.♞a7 ♘g4 16.♗a2!

A multipurpose move that cements control of the a-file, sets up threats on the a2-g8 diagonal, and frees d2 for the knight.

16...♗h8

After 16...h6 17.♘xf6 ♗xf6 18.♗d2 c6 19.b5, White's queenside attack is in full swing and Black has no attack.

17.♗d2 c6



18.♗a5! ♗c8

Alterman improves the position of his queen, knowing full well that Black

can't afford to trade. In general, White has better chances in the endgame in this variation. His play on the queenside remains, while Black's play against the king is dampened: 18...♗×a5 19.b×a5 e4 20.♞b1! (of course not 20.♗d×e4?? ♗×e4 21.♗×e4 ♘d4, and White has to resort to 22.c5 to stay in the game, e.g. 22...♘×e2 23.♞e1 d5! with complications favorable for Black) 20...e×d3 21.e×d3 f×g3 22.h×g3 ♗d7 23.♗de4 with a clear advantage for White. Also, 18...b6 19.♗a4 clearly favors White.

19.b5! f×g3 20.h×g3 ♘h3 21.b×c6 ♘×g2 22.♗×g2 ♗g4

The alternatives 22...♗×c6+ 23.♗de4 ♗×e4 24.♗×e4 and 22...b×c6 23.♗c7 ♗×c7 24.♞c7 ♞fc8 25.♞b1! both leave White with much better chances. These variations by Alterman show that Black is busted.

23.♗de4

When Black plays ...f5-f4, White can sometimes get a knight to e4, where it is often worth its weight in gold. Watch as Alterman's knight does great defensive work. In contrast, 23.♘xf6?? allows Black a perpetual after 23...♗f4+ 24.♗g1 ♗h3 25.g×f4 ♗g4+.

23...♗×e4 24.♗×e4 ♗×e2 25.♞×b7 ♞bc8

Upon 25...♗×d3 26.♗d5 ♗f3+ 27.♗g1+-, White's position is rock solid and the c-pawn is going to promote.

26.♗d5!

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26...♖f3+ 27.♗h2

This wins, but more accurate is 27.♗g1 ♜xc6 28.♞xg7! ♜xg7 (or 28...♗xg3 29.♞g8+) 29.♖xc6 ♗xg3 30.♖d7+ ♜f7 31.♗f6+ ♖xf6 32.♗xg6 ♞xd7 33.fxg3 with an easy win for White.

27...♖e2 28.♗g1 ♗f4 29.♗xf4 exf4 30.♗xd6 1-0

Black resigned on account of 30...fxg3 31.♗f7+ ♞xf7 32.♞xf7 gxh2+ 33.♞7xf2 ♖g4+ 34.♖g2 ♖xg2+ 35.♗xg2 ♞xc6 36.♞a2 (Alterman). White will place both of his rooks on the seventh rank with a winning advantage.

Game 51

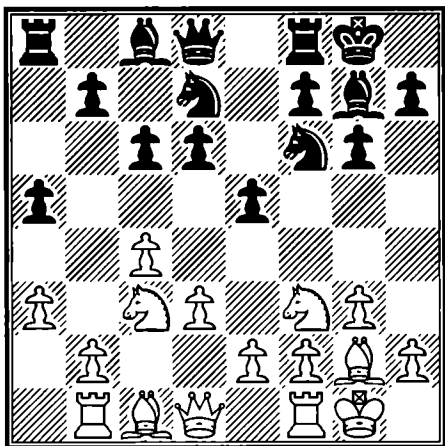
Jörg Hickl –

Colin McNab

Bled ol (3) 2002

English Opening [A24]

1.♗f3 g6 2.g3 ♗g7 3.♗g2 d6 4.c4 e5 5.♗c3 ♗f6 6.0-0 0-0 7.d3 ♗bd7 8.♞b1 a5 9.a3 c6



For 9...d5, see Game 50.

10.♗d2

In his notes to another game, Ribli offers 10.♗g5 h5 11.♗d2 a5 12.cxd5 cxd5 13.♖c1 ♗h7 14.♗b5±.

10...♗c5 11.b4 axb4 12.axb4 ♗e6 13.b5 d5 14.bxc6 bxc6 15.♗b2 ♗c5 16.♞a1

16.cxd5 is another attractive option, e.g. 16...cxd5 17.♗c4!?; however, the evaluation depends on the outcome of the line: 17...dxc4!? 18.♗xa8 cxd3 19.♗g2 ♗f5 20.♞a1 ♖b6 21.♗a3 ♞c8, after which Black has a fair amount of compensation for the exchange.

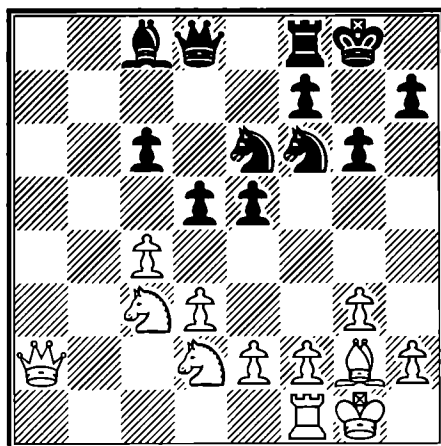
16...♞xa1 17.♖xa1 ♞e8

My computer is quite eager to recommend 17...♗g4, but this also appears very pleasant for White after 18.h3 ♗e6 19.♖a3! ♖b6 20.♞b1 ♗cd7 21.♖a2!.

18.♖a7 ♗f8

Upon 18...♗e6 19.cxd5 cxd5 20.♗b5, White has a substantial queenside initiative thanks to his more active pieces.

19.♗a3 ♗e6 20.♗xf8 ♞xf8 21.♖a2!?



White forces Black to make a decision regarding the center pawns, and whichever way he decides to continue, White's g2-bishop will emerge more powerful than ever. 21.♞b1 is strong as well.

21...d4 22.♟ce4 ♟×e4 23.♟×e4 ♞d7

Black can also consider the immediate 23...f5 to answer 24.♟d2 by 24...♞d6 with some sort of control over the c5-square, foiling a plan such as c4-c5, followed by ♟d2-c4.

24.♞a7 f5

While this looks very active, it is only meant to create some space for Black's pieces, it is not the beginning of a kingside attack.

25.♟d2 ♞f7 26.♞b1 ♞f6 27.♞b6

27.♞b8+ ♟f8 28.c5, intending ♞b7 and ♟c4, deserves serious consideration.

27...♟c5?

This mistake allows White to enter a won endgame by force. A better choice is 27...♞g7, although the situation is still unpleasant upon 28.♞a5 ♟d8 29.♞b8 (29.e3!? can also be considered) 29...♟e6 30.♞b6 ♟f8 31.c5, after which Black is completely tied up, while all of White's pieces are wonderfully coordinated to attack Black's many weaknesses.

28.♞b8+ ♞f8 29.♞×f8+ ♞×f8 30.♞c7 ♞f6 31.♟b3!

This elegant move breaks Black's defensive setup and wins material. It was also good on the previous turn.

31...♟×b3 32.♞×d7 ♟c1

32...♟c5 is the superior choice, although White of course is much better

after 33.♞c8+ (it is best to keep the queens on, because of Black's exposed king in combination with plans to advance the passed c-pawn) 33...♞g7 34.♞×c6.

33.♞c8+ ♞f8 34.♞e6+ ♞f7 35.♞×e5 ♞d7 36.♞b8+ ♞g7 37.♞b2 1-0

Game 52

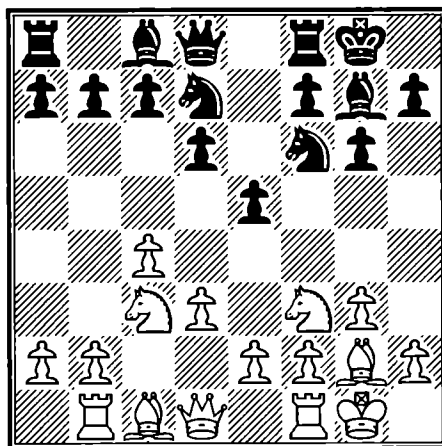
*Jozsef Horvath –
Levente Vajda*

Budapest zonal (2) 2000
English Opening [A24]

1.♟f3 ♟f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♞g7 4.♞g2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.♟c3 ♟bd7

As Ribli indicates in his annotations to this game, Black most likely played this move automatically, awaiting 7.d4, upon which 7...e5 transposes to a main line in the Fianchetto King's Indian. However, White doesn't have to be so cooperative.

7.♞b1 e5 8.d3!



It is noteworthy that White is already better, because the knight on d7 is misplaced.

8...a5 9.a3 h6 10.b4 a×b4 <http://www.chessking.com>

10...e8 11.♖b3 ♕h7 12.e4 c6
 13.♗e3 d7 14.d4 f5 15.exf5 gxf5
 16.dxe5 dxe5 17.♞bd1 axb4 18.axb4
 ♖e8 19.♗h4± was played in J.O.Fries
 Nielsen-Brondum, Esbjerg 1977.

11.axb4 ♕h7

11...♞e8 12.♗d2 ♗f8 13.♗b2 ♗e6
 14.♞a1 ♞xa1 15.♖xa1 ♗g5 16.♖a7 c6
 17.b5 (17.h4!? looks good for White,
 e.g. 17...e6 18.♗de4 ♗xe4 19.dxe4!?)
 and White can build serious pressure
 against Black's backward d-pawn)
 17...d5 18.bxc6 bxc6 19.♖c5 ♗b7
 20.♞a1 ♗f8 21.♖a7 ♗c8 22.♖a5, and
 White still has a slight initiative,
 C.Foisor-Klinova, Pula 1997.

12.♖c2!

A clever move; instead of the normal
 b5, ♗d2 or ♗b2, White takes time to
 improve the position of his queen, well
 knowing that Black doesn't have a good
 answer. Now Black has to bear in mind
 that the queen can support a c4-c5 ad-
 vance and that it places latent pressure
 along the diagonal towards Black's
 king.

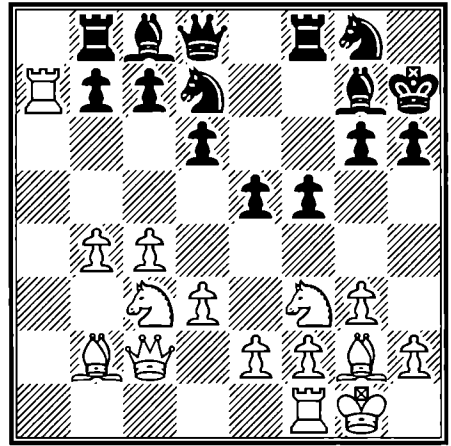
12...♗g8 13.♗b2

White could also consider 13.e4!? ♗e7
 (or 13...f5 14.exf5 gxf5 15.♗b2 with
 clearly better chances for White)
 14.♗e3 f5 15.exf5 (15.♞a1!?) 15...♗xf5
 16.♗e4± (Ribli).

13...f5 14.♞a1 ♞b8

Black cannot exchange on a1, as it
 would only serve to further weaken his
 queenside.

15.♞a7



Ribli mentions 15.c5 dxc5 16.bxc5, and
 offers 16...c6 as unclear and 16...♗xc5
 17.♗b5 ♗e6 18.♗xe5 ♗xe5 19.♗xe5
 c6 20.♗a3 as slightly better for White.
 However, White is clearly better in both
 lines, e.g. after 16...♗xc5, White can
 consider 17.♗d5!? ♗e6 (17...♖xd5??
 18.♗g5+) 18.♖xc5 ♗xd5 19.♗xe5
 ♗xf3 20.♗xf3 ♗xe5 21.♖xe5 with an
 obvious advantage. Or 16...c6 17.♗a4
 ♗e7 18.♗d2 (18.e4!? fxе4 19.dxe4 also
 looks unpleasant for Black) 18...♖c7
 19.♗c4 ♗d5 20.♞fb1, and Black's de-
 fensive task is unenviable. Neverthe-
 less, the game move chosen by White
 is also very good.

15...♗e7 16.b5 ♗c5 17.♗a4

White aims to exchange Black's most
 active piece, the knight on c5. This can
 also be achieved by 17.♗a3, although
 White's advantage seems rather small
 upon 17...b6 18.♗xc5 dxc5 19.♗d2
 ♗e6 20.♞fa1 (Ribli).

17...♗xa4

On 17...e4, both 18.dxe4 fxе4 19.♗d4
 and 18.♗d4 (Ribli) are better for White.

18.♖xa4

18.♞xa4± (Ribli). chesstouring.com

**18...e4 19.♟d4 e×d3 20.e×d3 f4
21.♞e4**

It is understandable that White wants to free his bishop before Black gets an opportunity to force it back to h1 by ...f4-f3; however, given that Black would need a rook to protect the f3-pawn, it would thus tie up a rook and a pawn to pacify one bishop. An interesting alternative is 21.♞a1 ♞×d4 22.♞×d4 f3 23.♞h1 ♞f7 24.♞e1 ♞f8 25.♞c3 ♞h3 26.♞e3 g5 27.d4 ♟g6 28.♞e1 with a clear advantage for White.

21...♞f7 22.♞b1!

White protects the b2-bishop. Here Ribli gives 22...♞h8! 23.♞a1 ♞f8! (or 23...c5 24.b×c6 b×c6 25.♟×c6 ♞×b2 (25...♞×b2 26.♟×e7+-) 26.♞a2±), but now instead of Ribli's 24.f3, which looks good for Black after 24...f×g3 25.h×g3 ♞×d4+ 26.♞×d4 ♞×f3 27.♞×f3 ♞×f3, followed by ...♞h3 and ...♟f5 with a nasty attack, White should opt for 24.♟b3!, e.g. 24...♞×b2 25.♞×b2 ♞f5 26.♞ba2 with a small advantage. After Black's next move, Horvath is completely in charge.

**22...♞×d4? 23.♞×d4 ♟f5 24.♞c3
♞g5 25.♞a2! ♞e6**

An interesting alternative is 25...f×g3 26.h×g3 ♟×g3 27.f×g3 ♞×g3+ (27...♞e3+ doesn't do anything, as the rook on a7 is protected, which is why White had to put his queen on a2 and not c2) 28.♞g2 ♞e3+ 29.♞h1 ♞f5 30.♞e1 (30.♞f1 is met by 30...♞bf8 with a complicated game, whereas 30...♞×a7 31.♞×f5 wins for White) 30...♞×a7 31.♞×f5 g×f5 32.♞g1

♞×g1+ 33.♞×g1, and White should win because of his material advantage and Black's exposed king. In any case, the rest of the game bears clear evidence that both players were in time trouble.

26.♞d2 ♟e7?

26...f×g3 27.h×g3 ♞×d2 28.♞×d2 was the lesser evil, although White is clearly better.

27.♞×b7 ♞×b7 28.♞×b7

Now White is winning.

**28...♞h5 29.♞e1 ♞g4 30.♞b2
f×g3 31.h×g3 ♞f3 32.♞×f3 ♞×f3
33.♞e3**

Ribli mentions 33.♞e3 as an alternative, but it makes perfect sense to keep the queens on the board, especially since Black does not have a dark-squared bishop to defend the king.

**33...♞f5 34.♞e2 ♟g8 35.♞e8 h5
36.♞g2 ♞d7 37.♞e4 ♞f5?!
38.♞d4! ♟f6 39.♞f8 1-0**

Game 53

Yasser Seirawan –

Elliott Winslow

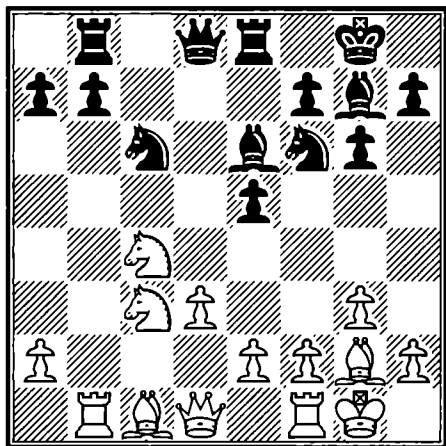
Columbus 1977

English Opening [A24]

**1.c4 g6 2.♟c3 ♞g7 3.g3 d6 4.♞g2
♟f6 5.♟f3 0-0 6.0-0 e5 7.d3 c6
8.♞b1 ♞e8 9.♟d2 ♞e6**

If 9...d5, then 10.b4 d4 11.♟a4 and White has a good reversed Benoni setup.

**10.b4 d5 11.b5 d×c4 12.b×c6
♟×c6 13.♟×c4 ♞b8** ssstouring.com



14. ♖a3 ♗xc4 15. dxc4 ♜a5
16. ♝c1?

16. ♗d6 ♞bd8 17. ♞xb7 is also better for White.

16...e4 17. ♗d6

17. ♞d1!? is better.

17...♞bd8 18. c5?!

18. ♞d1!? ±.

18...♗d4 19. e3?

White is playing with fire during this phase of the game. 19. ♞b2 is safer.

19...♗f3+?

19...♗d5! is terribly problematic for White, who will have to work hard to save himself.

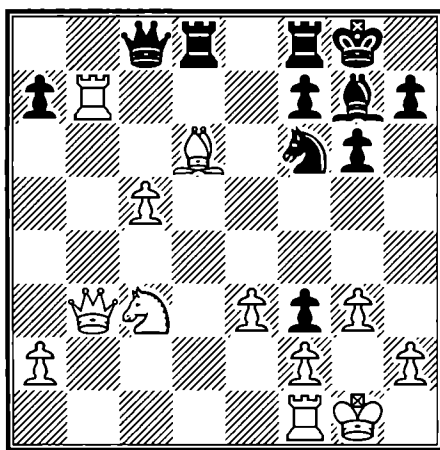
20. ♗xf3 exf3 21. ♞b5?!

Not the best. 21. ♞xb7 ♗d7 22. ♗b5 ♝xa2 23. ♝a3 ♝xa3 24. ♗xa3 leaves White clearly better. Now Black gets a chance to get back into the game on move twenty-two.

21...♝a6 22. ♝b1 ♝c6?

Black gives up on playing good moves in order to play for mate, which Seirawan can prevent with no particular effort. A much better and logical move is 22...b6! with a reasonable game for Black.

23. ♞xb7 ♝c8 24. ♝b3 ♞f8?



My computer indicates that Black can do much better with 24...♝h8!, as 25. ♝xf7? loses to 25...♞g8 26. ♗d5 (in fact 26. ♗e2 is one of White's better moves!) 26...g5!, with the threat of 27...♝h3. Instead, White has to play 25. ♗d5! g5 26. e4! ♗xe4 27. ♗e3 ♗xc5 28. ♗xc5 ♝xc5 29. ♝xf7, when White is clearly better.

25. ♗d5 ♝h3 26. ♗f4 ♝h6 27. h4 g5 28. hxg5 ♝xg5 29. ♗xf8 ♞xf8 30. c6 ♗g4 31. ♝d5 ♝h6 32. ♝h5 ♝xc6 33. ♞xa7 ♗f6 34. ♝f5 ♞b8 35. ♗h5 h6 36. ♗xf6+ ♗xf6 37. ♝f4 ♞d8 38. ♞c7 1-0

Game 54

Ulf Andersson –

Lubomir Kavalek

Manila (15) 1974

English Opening [A24]

1. c4 g6 2. ♗c3 ♗g7 3. g3 ♗f6
4. ♗g2 0-0 5. ♗f3 d6 6. 0-0 e5 7. d3
♞e8 8. ♞b1 chesstouring.com

Ignoring Black's central intentions; two alternatives are Petrosian's 8.♔d2 and the modern 8.♔g5.

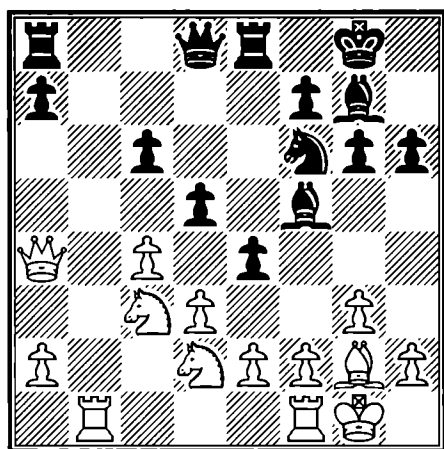
8...c6 9.♔g5 ♖bd7 10.b4

10.♖c1!?

10...h6 11.♔xf6 ♖xf6

Kavalek is able to recapture on f6 with his other knight, avoiding the loss of time usually seen after ...♔xf6 and ...♔g7, but Andersson is very quick on the queenside.

12.b5 d5 13.bxc6 bxc6 14.♖d2 ♔f5 15.♖a4! e4±



Black chooses a very aggressive approach; another idea is to postpone central activity and try to maintain the center pawn. Ljubojevic gives 15...♖d6 16.e4 (16.♖b7!?) 16...dxe4 (16...♔e6!?) 17.♖dxe4 ♖xe4 18.♖xe4 ♖xd3 19.♖bd1 ♖e2 20.♖fe1 ♖h5 21.♖d6 with a better game for White. However, a more solid and sensible move in this line is 18...♖c7, and now 19.♖c5 ♖fc8 20.♖b7 ♖d6.

16.cxd5 exd3 17.e4 ♔d7 18.dxc6?

18.d6! gives White a small edge. Now Black grabs the initiative, and

Andersson has to defend accurately to equalize.

18...♔xc6! 19.♖xc6 ♖c8 20.♖a6 ♖xc3 21.♖bd1 ♖d7 22.♖b3 ♖b6 23.♖xb6 axb6 24.♖d2 ♖c5

Black can consider 24...♖d8 and then possibly maneuver the knight to c4 via e5 to maintain the initiative.

25.♖fd1 ♖d8 26.♔f1

White can finally relax, as a drawn endgame is at hand.

26...♖xe4 27.♖xd3 ♖cxd3 28.♖xd3 ♖xd3 29.♔xd3 ♖c3 30.♖c1 ♔f8 31.♔c4 b5 ½-½

Game 55

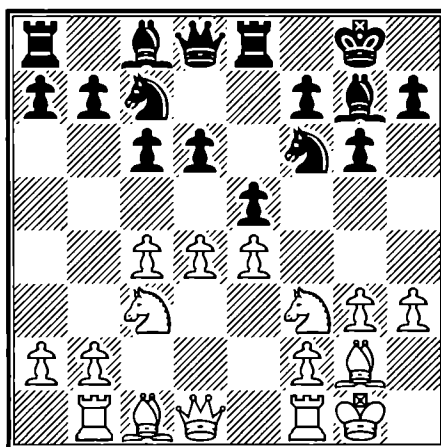
Miguel Najdorf –

Luis Marcos Bronstein

Mar del Plata 1969

English Opening [A24]

1.c4 e5 2.♖c3 ♖f6 3.g3 c6 4.♖f3 d6 5.♔g2 g6 6.0-0 ♔g7 7.d3 0-0 8.♖b1 ♖e8 9.e4 ♖a6?! 10.h3 ♖c7 11.d4



White's lost tempo with d2-d3-d4 is compensated by Black's wanderings with his knight. chesstouring.com

11...exd4 12.♟xd4 ♞e6

We've reached an odd position from the Fianchetto King's Indian that could arise via 1.d4 ♞f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♞g7 4.♞g2 0-0 5.♟f3 d6 6.0-0 ♞bd7 7.♟c3 e5 8.e4 exd4 9.♟xd4 c6 10.♞b1 ♞e8 11.h3 and now Black plays ...♞d7-c5-e6 in one go (White's lost tempo with the d-pawn!). Of course, playing ...♞e6 when White hasn't played b4 is more than strange, but Black's position shouldn't be horrible.

13.♞e3 ♟c5

This knight sure is hopping around! Spending four tempi (...♞b8-a6-c7-e6-c5) when only two were needed (...♞b8-d7-c5) is a sure sign that something is wrong.

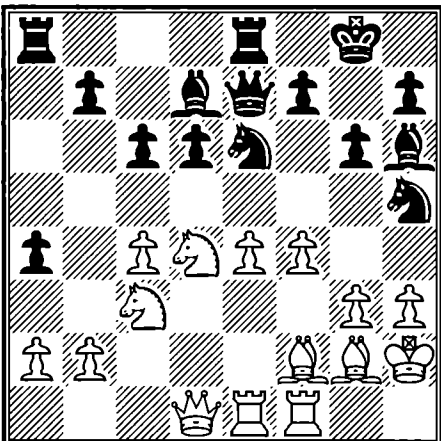
14.♞c2 ♞e7 15.♞be1± a5 16.f4 ♞d7 17.♞f2± ♟h5

Hoping against hope to take on g3.

18.♞d2 ♞h6

18...g5 19.fxg5 ♞e5 20.♟de2 ♟e6 21.h4 ♞h8± (Maric).

19.♞h2 a4 20.♞d1 ♟e6?



This mistake allows White an almost forced win. However, the situation is rather dire, e.g. a move such as 20...♞g7 runs into 21.♟f5! gxf5 22.exf5 ♞d8 23.♞xe8+ ♞xe8 24.♞xh5 and White should win easily.

21.♟f5! ♞f8 22.♟xh6+ ♞xh6 23.♞e3 f5 24.♞xd6 ♟f6 25.♞h1 ♞f8 26.♞d1 ♞xd6 27.♞xd6 fxe4 28.f5 1-0

Game 56

Arkadij Rotstein –

Kevin Spraggett

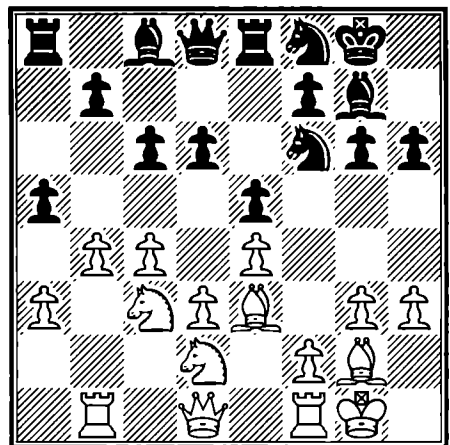
Cannes 1992

English Opening [A24]

1.♟f3 ♟f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♞g7 4.♞g2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.♟c3 c6 7.d3 ♞e8

Or 7...♞a6 8.e4 ♟c5 9.h3 e5 10.♞e3 ♞e7 11.♞e1 ♟e6 12.d4± Donaldson-Encarnacion, Chicago 1997.

8.♞b1 e5 9.e4 ♟bd7 10.b4 a6 11.h3 a5 12.a3 ♟f8 13.♞e3 h6 14.♟d2?!



Rotstein has played this opening many times and has his own ideas on how to handle it, but with this move (and his

next) he hands Black the initiative. With 14.b5 ♖e6 15.♗d2 g5 16.bxc6 bxc6 17.♞b6 ♗c7 18.♞fb1, White has a good queenside initiative and better chances overall.

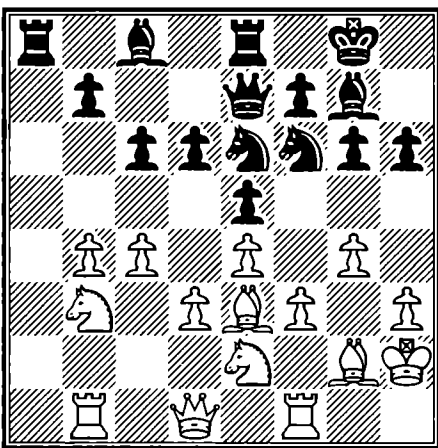
14...♖e6 15.♖b3

Again, White should consider 15.b5 with a pleasant game.

15...axb4 16.axb4 ♖g5 17.♗h2 ♗d7 18.g4 ♗e7 19.f3

This is an ugly move, but White is consistent in setting up a stonewall pawn formation on the light squares, intending a pawn break when it is convenient. However, Black now takes advantage of the fact that White has limited the scope of his light-squared bishop. A much better idea is 19.♗d2.

19...♖e6 20.♖e2



20...d5 21.♗d2 dxc4 22.dxc4 h5 23.♞a1 ♞xa1 24.♞xa1 h×g4 25.h×g4 ♖h7 26.♖c5 ♖xc5 27.♗xc5 ♗h4+ 28.♗g1 ♞d8 29.♗c3 ♖g5 30.♗b6 ♞e8 31.♗f2 ♖h3+ 32.♗xh3 ♗xh3 33.♗g3 f5 34.g×f5 g×f5 35.♞d1 f4 36.♗h2 ♞e6 37.♞d8+ ♗h7 0-1

Game 57

Vladimir Kramnik –

Judit Polgar

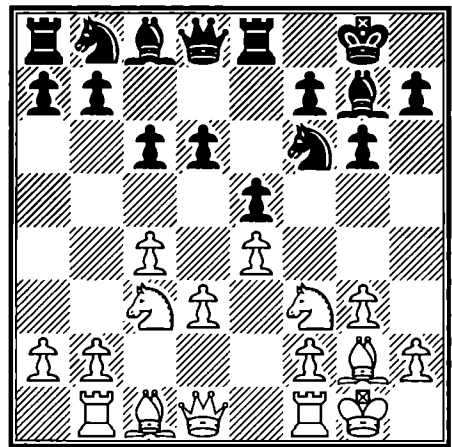
Madrid (7) 1993

English Opening [A24]

1.♖f3 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2 0-0 5.♖c3 d6 6.0-0 e5 7.d3 c6 8.♞b1 ♞e8

8...a5 9.a3 ♖bd7 10.b4 axb4 11.axb4 d5 12.b5 leaves White with the initiative.

9.e4



This is intended to discourage Black from playing ...d5, which the move 8...♞e8 prepared. Waiting for ...♞e8 before playing e4 makes sense, as Black's rook won't be supporting ...f7-f5.

9...d5?!

Both 9...♗g4 10.h3 ♗xf3 11.♗xf3 and 9...a5 10.a3 ♖a6 11.♗e3 offer White better chances. For 9...♖a6?! and 9...♖bd7, see the previous games.

10.cxd5?!

10.exd5! cxd5 11.♗g5 dxc4 (or 11...d4 12.♖d5) 12.dxc4 ♖bd7 13.♞e1 h6

14. ♖xf6 ♗xf6 15. ♖e4 is clearly better for White, according to Kramnik.

10...cxd5 11. ♖g5 dxe4

11...d4!? 12. ♖d5 ♗e6! has also been suggested.

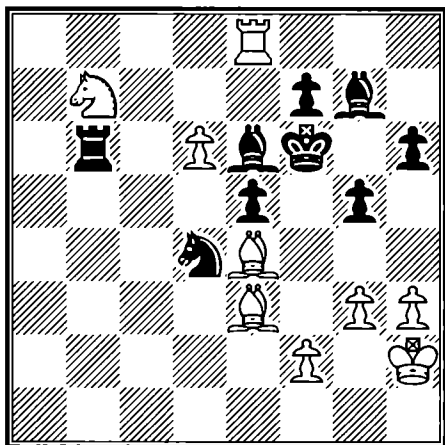
12.dxe4 ♖c6! 13. ♖xd8 ♗xd8 14. ♖d5 ♗d6 15. ♖d2! ♖xd5 16.exd5 ♖d4 17. ♖c4 ♗a6! 18.d6 ♗xa2 19. ♗a1 ♗xa1 20. ♗xa1 ♗e6 21. ♖a5!? ♗c8! 22. ♖xb7 ♗c2 23. ♗xa7 h6 24. ♗e3 ♗xb2 25.h3 ♗b6?

25...♖f5 26. ♗c5 ♗c2 (this is better than Kramnik's 26...♗d2, which is supposed to equalize, but loses to 27. ♖d8 ♖xd6 28. ♖xe6 fxe6 29. ♗e7) 27. ♗a3 ♗d2 28. ♖d8 ♗c4 29. d7 ♗f6 30. ♖c6 ♖g7 31. ♗b4, and White has an advantage that will take time to convert.

26. ♖h2 g5?! 27. ♗a8+ ♖h7 28. ♗e8 ♖g6 29. ♗e4+

Ftacnik offers 29. ♗xe6+ fxe6 (29...♖xe6?? 30. ♗xb6+-) 30.d7 ♗f6 31.d8 ♖ ♗xd8 32. ♖xd8, and White retains excellent winning chances.

29...♖f6



30.g4! ♗a6 31. ♗d3 ♗c6 32. ♗e4

32. ♗xd4 seems to be a simpler win: 32...exd4 33. ♗f5 ♗xf5 34.gxf5 ♖xf5 35. ♗e7 ♗f6 36. ♗xf7.

32...♗c8

Now the win becomes trivial. More stubborn is 32...♗a6, but after 33. ♗xd4 exd4 34. ♗f5! ♗xf5 35.gxf5 ♖xf5 36.d7 ♗f6 37.d8 ♖ ♗xd8 38. ♗xd8, White only requires proper technique.

33. ♗xc8 ♗xc8 34. ♖c5 ♗e6 35. ♗d2! ♖b3 36. ♖xb3 ♗xb3 37.d7 ♖e7 38. ♗c6 ♗f6 39. ♗a5 ♖d6 40. ♗b5 ♗c2 41.d8=♖+ ♗xd8 42. ♗xd8 f5 43.gxf5 ♗xf5 44. ♗f6 ♖e6 45. ♗g7 h5 46. ♗c4+ 1-0

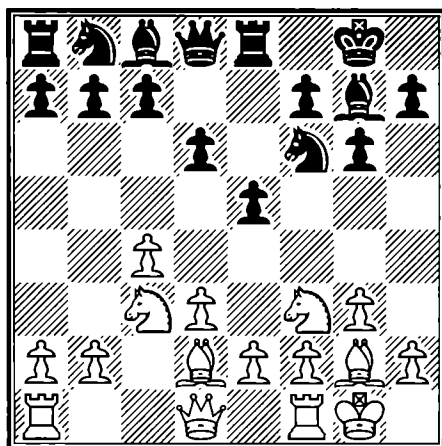
Game 58

Tigran Petrosian – Albin Planinec

Amsterdam (11) 1973

English Opening [A24]

1.c4 ♖f6 2. ♖c3 g6 3. ♖f3 ♗g7 4.g3 0-0 5. ♗g2 d6 6.0-0 e5 7.d3 ♗e8 8. ♗d2!?



Experimental, but it is worth noting that 8. ♗d2 has been tried by two world champions. White doesn't want to surrender the bishop if Black hasn't com-

mitted his knight to c6. Black can still fight for control of d5 by ...c6 and ...d6, which is designed to meet dxf6 with ...dxf6.

8...c6

In Botvinnik-Boleslavsky, Soviet Team Ch 1967, White obtained the better chances after 8...d6 9.c1 e8 10.g5 f8 11.b4.

9.c1

Continuing to experiment; White would normally place his rook on b1 and play for b2-b4-b5, but here Black is well-placed to strike back in the center with ...d6-d5. Petrosian's play is based on taking the sting out of this advance.

9...a5

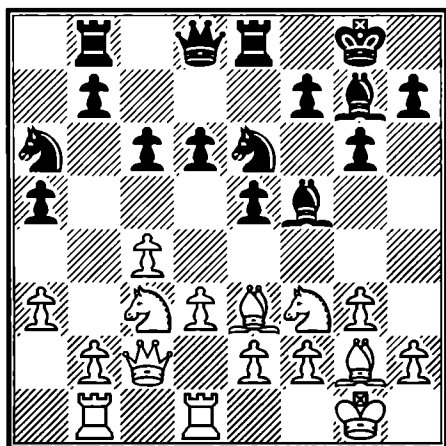
White is better after 9...d5 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.d4 exd4 12.dxd4 or 11...e4 12.d5.

10.a3 d6 11.d3 e8 12.f3 d7

According to Petrosian, Black can also consider 12...b5 13.cxb5 d6 (13...cxb5 14.g5 is given as unclear in *ECO*, but don't trust everything you read. White is clearly better after 14...e7 15.dxb5 d7 16.a4) 14.f3 d1 cxb5, and now Petrosian's 15.g5 is unclear according to *ECO*, but White is slightly better after 15...d5 16.dxe6 fxe6 17.d2, when he will try to provoke Black into playing ...a5-a4 so as to give the knight access to b4. The computer's alternative is 15.d7!, with the idea 15...e7 16.dxe5 exa7 17.d6 b6 18.dxa7 xa7 19.dxb5

xb6 20.dxd6 xd6 21.c6 e5 22.xa6, and White has the better chances.

13.f2 d5 14.f1 f5 15.b1 e6



16.b4 d4 17.a2 axb4 18.axb4 xa8 19.f2 d7 20.h6 dxf3+

20...g4!? deserves attention.

21.dxf3 dh8?

Conventional wisdom suggests that you should avoid exchanging your fianchettoed bishop, but Black ends up on the defensive after the text move. Instead, 21...d5!? offers decent chances for an even game.

22.b5 fd7 23.fdc1 de6

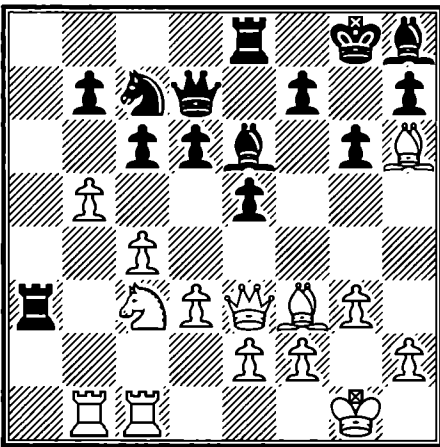
Or 23...g4 24.dxg4 xg4 25.d4 fd7 26.bxc6 bxc6 27.f4 with a clear advantage for White.

24.f3

Steadily putting pressure on the opponent is in keeping with Petrosian's style, but dangerous for Black is 24.bxc6 bxc6 25.f6 d5 and now 26.fxc6!, e.g. 26...xc6 27.cxd5 fd6 28.dxe6 ac8?

29.exf7+ ♖xf7 30.♗e4, when White's attack will prove fatal or 26...e4 27.dxe4 ♖xc6 28.exd5 ♖xc4 29.dxe6 ♖xe6 (29...♞ad8? 30.♗d5 ends the fun even sooner) 30.♙xa8 ♞xa8 31.e4, and White should win. However, Petrosian may have rejected this last position because it is so simplified. Instead, he opts not to force things and let Black suffer through his predicament.

24...♞a3



Another try is 24...♞ec8; however, White is on top after 25.bxc6 bxc6 26.♗e4.

25.♙g2! ♞c8 26.bxc6 bxc6 27.♞b7 ♙g7??

Black wants to eliminate his somewhat bad dark-squared bishop, but it is a good defender of the dark squares and it is needed to protect the loose pawn structure. This mistake is all Petrosian needs to settle the game. A better idea is 27...♙h3, to exchange White's fianchettoed bishop.

28.♙xg7 ♖xg7 29.c5 ♞a5

As Petrosian points out, Black also loses after 29...♗d5 30.♞xd7 (or 30.♙xd5 ♖xb7 31.♙xe6 fx6 32.cxd6,

and White wins) 30...♗xe3 31.♞xd6 ♗xg2 32.♖xg2 with a large advantage for White.

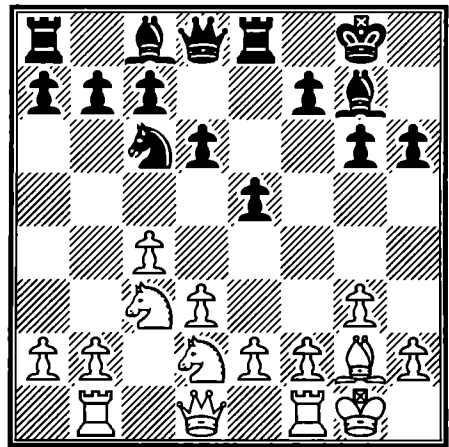
30.cxd6 ♖xd6 31.♗e4 ♖d4 32.♖xd4 exd4 33.♗d6 ♞d8 34.♗xf7 ♙xf7 35.♞xc7 ♞e5 36.♙e4 ♞de8 37.♞1xc6 ♖g8 38.♞d6 ♙e6 39.♞xd4 1-0

Game 59

Ildar Ibragimov –
Evgeny Sapunov

Russian ch (Moscow) 1999
English Opening [A24]

1.♗f3 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.♗c3 e5 7.d3 ♞e8 8.♙g5 h6 9.♙xf6 ♙xf6 10.♗d2 ♙g7 11.♞b1 ♗c6



This move seems harmless, but it contains a little trick. If White now plays 12.b4!?, Black has 12...e4!?, when both 13.♗xe4? and 13.♗dxe4 lose a piece, so White will have to play something such as 13.♗d5. Therefore, White has to first protect his knight on c3 before advancing the b-pawn.

12.♖c1 a5 13.a3 ♙g4

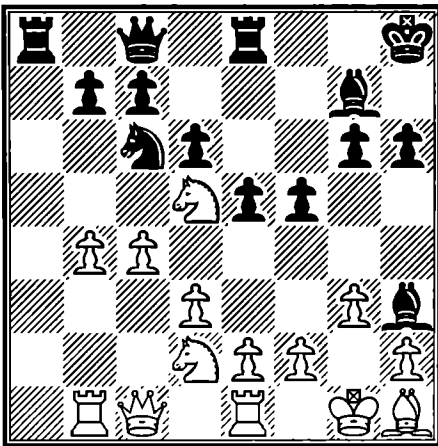
Ribli indicates that Black can't play 13...a4? here, to prevent White's b2-b4,

as he will lose the pawn to 14.♖d1 ♘g4
15.♟e1 ♜d7 16.♗xa4 ♗d4 17.♗c3.

14.b4 a×b4 15.a×b4

White has the more comfortable game because of his queenside play. Black has the bishop-pair, but they are not much of a factor in a closed position.

**15...♞c8 16.♟e1 ♘h3 17.♘h1 f5
18.♗d5 ♞h8?!**



Many players have a tendency to make such a move, especially when the f-pawn has been advanced. It can often make sense to tuck the king into the corner, but this is not one of those times. Let's look at some of the alternatives:

a) 18...♗e7 19.c5! (this is more testing than Ribli's 19.b5 ♗d5 20.♘d5+ ♞h7, which looks okay for Black) 19...dxc5 20.♞xc5 (or 20.♞c4!?) 20...♗d5 21.♞d5+ ♞h7 22.♞xb7, and White has the better chances.

b) 18...♗d8 19.c5! (again Ribli only mentions 19.b5, which leaves Black with an acceptable game after 19...♗e6) 19...♗e6 20.cxd6 cxd6 21.♗b6 ♞xc1 22.♟bxc1, and White is much better.

c) 18...♗d4! is probably Black's best, as it places the knight on an active square with the possibility of retreating to e6. White should still be slightly

better after 19.c5!? (again) 19...♞d8 20.b5!? dxc5 21.♞xc5 ♗e6 22.♞c4, when his overall coordination is superior.

19.b5 ♗e7 20.b6 ♗d5 21.c×d5

21.♘d5, threatening 22.bxc7 or 22.♘f7, loses the initiative, e.g. 21...c5 22.♘f7 ♟f8 23.♘xg6 ♞e6 24.♘h5 e4, and Black has compensation for the pawn, as his pieces are suddenly coordinated and are more active than at any other time in this game.

21...♟a2?

Now Black just loses a pawn. Better is 21...♟e7, although after 22.♗c4, White still has excellent prospects.

22.bxc7 b5?

A substantial blunder in a worse position; it proves the old adage that "mistakes often come in pairs." Now the game is over.

23.♟xb5 1-0

Game 60

Rafael Vaganian –

Garry Kasparov

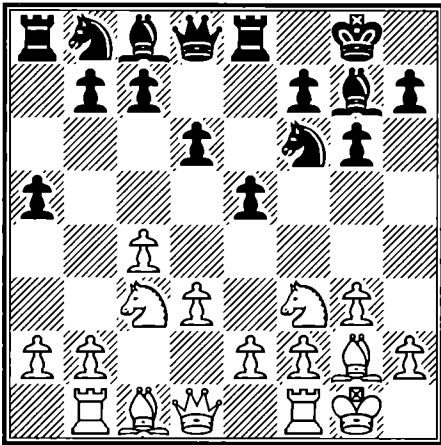
Riga (7) 1995

English Opening [A24]

**1.♗f3 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♘g7
4.♘g2 0-0 5.♗c3 d6 6.0-0 e5 7.d3
♟e8 8.♟b1 a5**

8...e4?! 9.dxe4 ♗xe4 10.♗xe4 ♟xe4 seems like an acceptable continuation; however, upon 11.c5! ♗c6 12.♘g5 ♞e8 13.cxd6 cxd6 14.♟e1, Black is clearly worse after 14...♘e6 15.b3 d5 16.♗d2 ♟d4 17.♘e3 ♟g4 18.♘f3 ♗b4 19.♘xg4 ♘xg4 20.♗f3 ♗xa2 21.♞d2

$\Delta c3$ 22. Bbc1 Bc8 23. Qd4 , and White ought to win, Hickl-Kestler, Germany 1986.



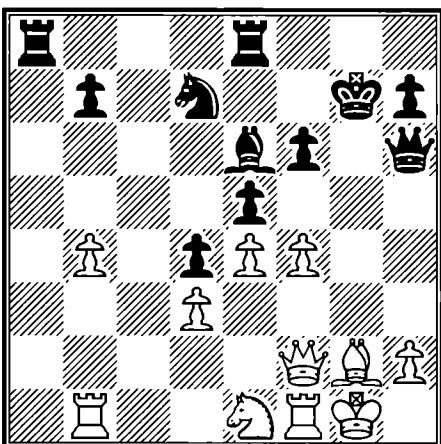
9.a3 c6 10.b4 a**x**b4 11.a**x**b4 d5
12.c**x**d5

Also, 12. $\Delta d2!$? can be considered.

12...c**x**d5 13. Qg5 Qe6 14.e4 d4
15. $\Delta d5$ $\Delta bd7$

In *ChessBase Magazine*, Ftacnik gives 15... Qxd5? 16.e**x**d5 Wxd5 17. $\Delta d2$ Wb5 18. Qxf6 Qxf6 19. Wf3 Ba2 20. $\Delta c4$ Wc6 21.b5 Wxf3 22. Qxf3 Be7 23. Ba1 Bxa1 24. Bxa1 with a small but clear advantage for White. Black's knight on b8 is badly out of play.

16. Δ **x**f6+ Qxf6 17. Qxf6 Wxf6
18. Wd2 Qg7 19. $\Delta e1$ g5 20.f4
g**x**f4 21.g**x**f4 Wh6 22. Wf2 f6



23. Bc1

The chances are about equal, but White loses his way in time pressure.

23... Qh8 24. Bc7 Ba2 25. Bc2 Ba1
26. Bc7 e**x**f4 27. Bxd7

On 27. Wxd7 , Kasparov gives 27... Bxe1 28. Bxe1 $\Delta e5$ with excellent compensation for the exchange. Another possibility is 27. $\Delta c2$, which leads to a position with chances for both sides after 27... Bxf1+ 28. Wxf1 $\Delta e5$, according to Ftacnik.

27...f3?

Black throws away everything he has achieved and should now lose. The idea behind the text move is to open more lines towards White's king. This is the right idea, but it could have been better executed: 27... Qxd7 28. Wxd4 Bea8 29. Wxd7 , and now 29...f3! 30. Wd4 f**x**g2 31. Δ **x**g2 Bxf1+ 32. Qxf1 Wc1+ 33. $\Delta e1$ Wf4+ , and Black should win.

28. Wxd4 f**x**g2 29. Δ **x**g2?

The losing move; possibly caused by looming time trouble. However, with 29. Bxf6! Vaganian could even have claimed an advantage: 29... Bxe1+ 30. Bf1+! Qg8 31. Bxe1 Qxd7 32. Wxd7 Bf8 33. Wg4+ (33. Wd5+ Bf7 34. Wa2 Wf6 35. Qxg2 Wf3+ 36. Qg1 , and now rather than Ribli's 36... Wxd3 37. Qh1 Wf3+ 38. Wg2+ Wxg2+ 39. Qxg2 with winning chances for White, Black has the devilish 36...h6!, intending ... Qh7 , with a winning attack. And since 37. Wg2+ loses to 37... Bg7 , White has to play 37.h3!, allowing 37... Wxh3 38. Be2 Wf1+ with a draw by perpetual)

33...♖h8 34.♗e2!, and White should win in the long run thanks to his central passed pawns.

29...♖xf1+ 30.♗xf1 ♖c1+ 31.♗f2 ♗xd7 32.♖xd7 ♖g8 33.♖h3 ♖d2+ 34.♗f1 ♖xb4 35.♖e3 ♖b2 0-1

Game 61

Vladimir Kramnik –

Veselin Topalov

Vienna (8) 1996

English Opening [A24]

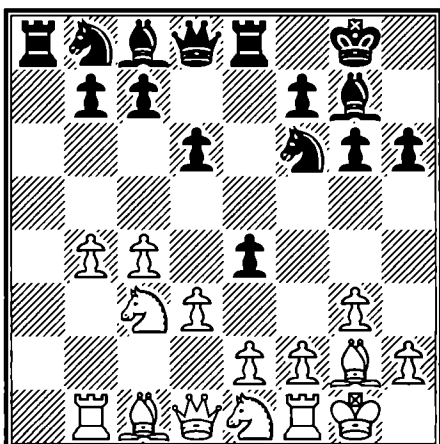
1.♗f3 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗c3 0-0 5.♗g2 d6 6.0-0 e5 7.d3 h6 8.♖b1 a5

Or 8...♗e6 9.♖b3! ♗bd7 10.♖xb7 ♗c5 11.♖b4 a5 12.♖a3, when White is a pawn up for nothing, Vaganian-Pächtz, Bundesliga 1991.

9.a3 ♖e8

9...♗h5?! 10.b4 axb4 11.axb4 c6?! 12.♗b2 f5 13.b5 ♗d7? (13...♗e6+=) 14.bxc6 bxc6 15.♗h4! g5 16.♗xc6 ♖a6 17.♗d5+ ♖h7 18.♗xf5! ♖xf5 19.e4, and White is winning, Vaganian-Plank, Bad Wörishofen 1991.

10.b4 axb4 11.axb4 e4! 12.♗e1



Kramnik suggests that Black is okay after 12.dxe4, but I'm (JD) not sure. For example, after 12...♗xe4 13.♗xe4 ♖xe4 14.♗d2 ♖e8 15.♗b2 ♗xb2 16.♖xb2 ♗c6, White can try 17.e3, building a solid Catalan position. If 17...♖f6, then 18.♖b3, intending ♗e4-c3-d5. Black's best is likely 18...♗f5 to prevent this plan, although White then has the upper hand after 19.b5 ♗a5 20.♖b4, followed by ♖c1 and the c4-c5 advance. Another alternative is the untried 12.♗d4!?, e.g. 12...exd3 13.♖xd3 ♗g4 14.♗d5!? ♗e5 15.♖c2 c6 16.♗f4 with a pleasant game for White.

12...♗f5?!

This lands Black in trouble. As Kramnik indicated, 12...exd3 is a safer alternative: 13.♗xd3 ♗c6 (Kramnik only mentions 12...♗bd7=, but the English Opening expert, John Watson has his own opinion of this line) 14.♗b2 ♗f5 15.♖a1 ♖xa1 16.♗xa1 ♖c8 with chances for both sides in O.Chernin-J.Watson, Hawaii 1998.

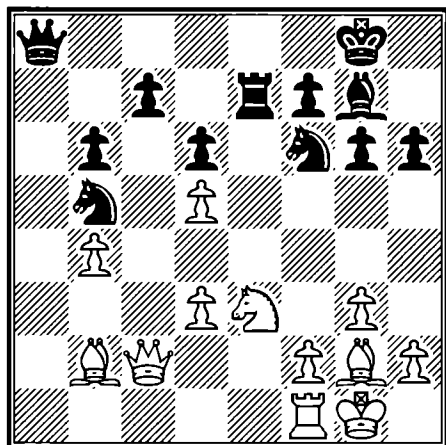
13.♗c2 exd3 14.exd3 ♖c8 15.♗e3 ♗e6

White is also better after 15...♗h3 16.♗b2.

16.♗b2 ♗c6 17.♗cd5 ♗xd5 18.cxd5 ♗a7?!

At first this looks somewhat odd, but the idea is to transfer the knight to b5, from where it will stop the further advance of White's b-pawn and more importantly guard the weak c7-pawn. The c7-pawn would be a target after the normal 18...♗e5 19.♖c2, followed by ♖fc1.

19.♖a1 ♜b5 20.♖a5 b6! 21.♖x a8
♗x a8 22.♗c2 ♝e7



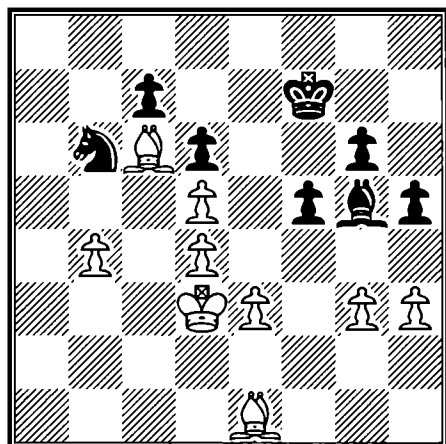
23.d4

White has a clear advantage, but the realization of it is problematic because of Black's solid position and White's awkward pawn structure.

23...♞a7 24.♖a1 b5 25.♗c6 ♗b8
26.♗a6 ♞c8 27.♗a8 ♗x a8
28.♖x a8 ♝e8 29.♞f1 ♞b6
30.♖x e8+ ♞x e8 31.♞x b5 ♞f6
32.♞c6 h5 33.♗f1 ♞g4 34.h3
♞x e3+ 35.fx e3 f5 36.♗e2 ♞h6
37.♗d3 ♗f7 38.♞c3 ♞g5 39.♞e1
♗f6 40.♞f2 ♗f7?

40...♗e7 is correct, not allowing White's improvement on the next move.

41.♞e1?



White throws away his winning chances. He still keeps the initiative, but it isn't enough to win the game. Kramnik indicates that 41.♞b5! would have provided White with excellent chances of taking the point, e.g. 41...♞x d5?? 42.♞c4 ♗e6 43.b5 wins immediately.

41...♗e7 42.e4 fx e4+ 43.♗x e4
♞d7 44.♗d3 ♞b6 45.♞b7 ♞h6
46.♗e4 ♞d7 47.♞c6 ♞g5 48.♗f3
♞b6 49.♞c3 h4 50.gx h4 ♞x h4
51.♗f4 ♗f6 52.♗e4 ♞g5 53.♞b5
♞c1 54.♞e1 ♗e7 55.♞h4+ g5
56.♞e1 ♗f6 57.♞e2 ♗g6 58.♞g4
♗f6 59.♞f3 ♗g6 60.♗d3 ♞f4
61.♗e4 ♞c1 62.♞g4 ♗f6 63.♞e6
♗g6 64.♗d3 ♗f6 65.b5 ♞f4
66.♗c3 ♞e3 67.♗d3 ♞c1 68.♗c2
♞f4 69.♗b3 ♗e7 70.♗b4 ♗e8
71.♗b3 ♞e3 72.♗c3 ♗e7
73.♗d3 ♞c1 74.♞a5 ♗f6 75.♗e4
♗g6 76.♗f3 ♞b2 77.♗g4 ♞c1
78.♞f5+ ♗f6 79.♞e4 ♞e3 ½-½

Game 62

*Timotheos Lirindzakis –
Vasilios Kotronias*
Greece ch (3) 1994
English Opening [A24]

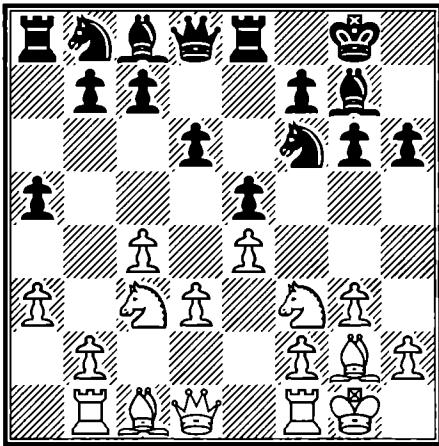
1.c4 ♞f6 2.♞c3 g6 3.♞f3 ♞g7
4.g3 0-0 5.♞g2 d6 6.0-0 e5 7.d3
h6

This move order is designed to sidestep ♞g5 systems by White.

8.♖b1 a5 9.a3 ♝e8 10.e4

It makes sense to play this now that the rook has moved off the f-file and ...f5 would be less likely. An alternative is the *ECO* main line 10.♞d2, which fol-

lows the game Vaganian-Van Wely, New York 1994: 10...c6 11.b4 a×b4 12.a×b4 d5 13.♘b2 ♘e6 14.♞a1 ♚a6 15.b5 ♚c5 16.♚a4 ♚fd7 (Kotronias' suggestion of 16...♚×a4 17.♞×a4 c×b5 certainly deserves more attention: 18.♞×a8 ♖×a8 19.c×b5 ♘d7 20.♖b3 ♖a5 21.♚f3 d4 22.♞a1 ♖b6 (22...♖×b5?! 23.♖×b5 ♘×b5 24.♞a5 is clearly better for White) 23.♚d2 ♖×b5 24.♖×b5 ♘×b5 25.♘×b7 ♞b8 26.♞a8 is very even) 17.♚×c5 ♚×c5 18.♖c2 ♞c8 19.b×c6 b×c6 20.♞fc1 d4?! (this enables White to develop some initiative, so 20...♘g4!?) seems more prudent) 21.♘a3 ♘f8 22.♘×c5 ♘×c5 23.♞cb1 ♘f8 24.♞a6 c5 25.♞bb6 ♖g7 26.♖a2, and White has the upper hand.



10...c6

Black could try to transpose to well-known lines with 10...♚c6, but White has a strong rejoinder in 11.h3!. In such positions, it is very important to prevent Black from playing ...♘g4×f3, followed by ...♚c6-d4, ...c7-c6 and ...♚f6-d7. Typically, Black gets very good play on the dark squares after ...♘×f3. Therefore, Black might want to consider the immediate 10...♘g4.

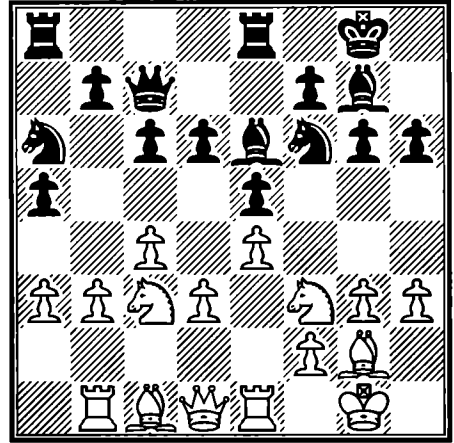
11.♞e1

White is considering d3-d4 if Black tries for a King's Indian setup.

11...♖c7 12.h3 ♘e6 13.b3

Guarding b3 to prepare d4.

13...♚a6



14.d4

White's lost tempo (d2-d3-d4) is more than compensated for by the curious placement of Black's bishop on e6 and knight on a6.

14...♞ad8 15.♘e3 a4?!

Some alternatives are:

- a) 15...e×d4 16.♚×d4±.
- b) 15...b5 16.c×b5 c×b5 17.♚×b5 ♖d7 18.d×e5! ♚×e4 19.♚×d6 ♚×d6 20.♖×d6 ♖×d6 21.e×d6 ♞×d6 22.♚d2, and White is much better.
- c) 15...♖c8 16.♖h2 b5 is unclear according to Kotronias (*ECO* gives it as 16...h5, but after 17.♘g5, White's advantage is beyond dispute); nevertheless, White is better after 17.c×b5 c×b5 18.♚×b5 ♚×e4 19.d5 ♘f5 20.♚h4 ♖d7 21.♖e2.

16.♚×a4 b5 17.c×b5 c×b5 18.♞c1 ♖b7 19.♚c3 b4 20.a×b4 ♚×b4 21.d5 ♘d7 22.♖d2

Also, 22.d2!?, followed by 23.d4, is strong, and 22...d3 is met by 23.c4 dxc1 24.dxd6 Bb4 25.dxe8 Bxe8 26.Bxc1, when White is a passed pawn up for nothing.

22...Bh7 23.Ba1 Ba8 24.Bh2 Bc8 25.Bc1 d5 26.d4! f5

Of course, Black can win the pawn back by 26...Bxc1 27.Bxc1 Qxa4 28.bxa4 Bxa4, but then his piece coordination lacks harmony, as is evident after 29.Bd1!, and now 29...Bb5 is met by 30.Bb3 and Black will have a very hard time untangling, while 29...Qa6 is met by 30.Bb3 d3 31.Bc6, or 29...Qa8 30.Bb3 a2 31.Bc8 Bxc8 32.Bxa4 d3 33.Bc6, and White wins.

27.d1 f4 28.gxf4 Bxc1 29.Bxc1 exf4 30.Qd4 d2 31.Ba1

White has a solid advantage, but 31.Bc2! is possibly even more unpleasant for Black: 31...b4 32.Bc4 a6 33.b6 Qxd4 34.Bxd4 Bb8 35.dxd7 Bxd7 36.Bc6 d5 37.e5! dxb3 38.Bc3, and Black's position falls apart.

31...Qxd4 32.Bxd4 d4 33.Bc1 Bb8 34.d3 Bc8 35.Ba1 Bc7 36.e5 dxe5 37.Bxe5 Bb6 38.d6 Bc8?

This hastens the end, but 38...Bxc3 39.Bxc3 Bxd6 40.d3 is also pretty hopeless for Black.

39.Be7+ d7 40.d4 d5

Everything loses, e.g. 40...Bd8 41.d6+, and White picks up the bishop anyway.

41.Bxd7 Bd8 42.Bf7 1-0

Game 63

Evgenij Miroshnichenko – Zahar Efimenko

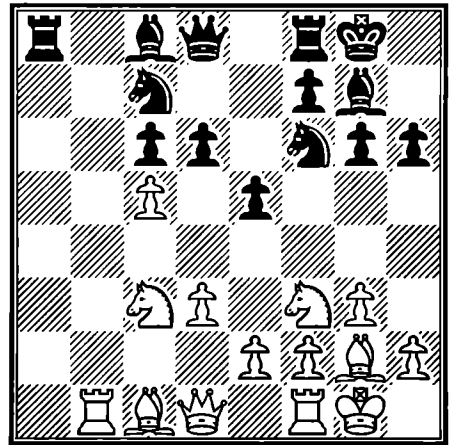
Ukrainian ch (7) Simferopol 2003

English Opening [A24]

1.d3 d6 2.c4 g6 3.d3 Qg7 4.g3 0-0 5.Qg2 d6 6.0-0 e5 7.d3 a5 8.Bb1 d6

Black keeps the c8-h3 diagonal open for his bishop, while he intends to play ...c7-c6 to retreat the knight to c7.

9.a3 h6 10.b4 axb4 11.axb4 c6 12.b5 d7 13.bxc6 bxc6 14.c5!?



White keeps attacking the black pawn chain, but the simple and normal 14.Qe3 appears to offer better chances.

14...d7 15.d4 dxc5 16.Bc2

16.Qd2!?

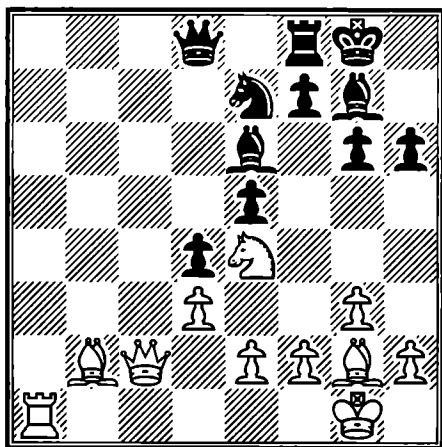
16...d6 17.Qb2

17.Qd2!? appears quite strong, as it keeps the b-file clear for the rook to intervene in the action. The logical 17.dxc5 also deserves analysis, but it appears that Black is okay after 17...dxc5 18.Bxc5 e4! 19.dxe4 d3.

17... ♖d4 18. ♗×d4 c×d4 19. ♝×c6 ♜a5 20. ♞a1 ♘e7

20... ♗g4!? is a more active approach and therefore should be given serious consideration.

21. ♝c2 ♞×a1 22. ♞×a1 ♗e6



This is a very important position for understanding these types of structures. The pawns are distributed symmetrically, the material distribution is identical, and although Black has claimed more space with his pawns, he is actually worse!

The fact that Black's pawns are on d4 and e5, instead of d6 and e7, has left him with a number of unfavorable imbalances, in particular the weak squares along the a3-f8 diagonal. White's dark-squared bishop, in combination with his knight on e4, can attack these weaknesses. In addition, if White exchanges his knight for Black's light-squared bishop, Black will also have problems on the light squares. Finally, White's pieces generally are more active than their black counterparts, as the game illustrates very well.

23. ♗a3 ♝d7 24. ♝c5 ♞e8 25. ♞b1

♘f5 26. ♝a5 ♝c8 27. ♘c5 ♗f8 28. ♘×e6

This is accordance with White's plan, which is to attack the light squares, but 28. ♞b7 ♗×c5 29. ♗×c5 is also good for White.

28... ♞×e6 29. ♗×f8 ♝×f8?!

This starts a series of slightly passive moves, which do nothing but enhance White's advantage. Black should instead opt for 29... ♝×f8!? 30. ♗d5 ♞e7 31. ♝b4 with a better game for White.

30. ♞b5 ♝g7?

The correct move is 30... ♝e8, even if White is better after 31. ♗d5 ♞e7 32. h3!?

31. ♗d5?!

White can improve with 31. ♞b8+! ♝h7 32. ♗d5 ♞d6 33. ♞b7 ♞f6 34. ♞d7, and Black is completely tied up.

31... ♞e8 32. ♞b7 ♘e7?

This just makes everything worse; 32... ♞f8 33. ♝b6 h5 34. h3 isn't pretty for Black, but at least he is still in the game.

33. ♗c4

Even stronger is 33. ♝b5! ♝f8 34. ♗b3, and Black can hardly move, but the game continuation is also good.

33... ♝f6 34. ♝c5 ♝f8 35. ♞b5 e4 36. ♞b6 ♝g5 37. ♝×d4 e×d3 38. ♞f6 ♘d5 39. ♗×d5 1-0

Chapter Six

Closed Sicilian Reversed with ...e5 & ...f5

Here the black knight is back on c6 as in the first four chapters, but Black's f-pawn stands on f5. This greatly affects play, as it makes Black's kingside ambitions much more realistic. Think how, in earlier chapters, Black would have to play the decentralizing ...h5 to get in ...f5. Now there is no such loss of time. Note also that Black's play isn't solely confined to a berserker attack on the king. He also has chances to stand well in the center with a well timed ...d5.

White, for his part, may choose to switch tactics and emphasize c4-c5. Playing ...f5 has some negative as well as positive aspects. One potential drawback is the weakening of the a2-g8 diagonal for Black, and c4-c5 emphasizes this as well as opening lines on the queenside. The game Akopian-Browne (Game 69) is especially useful to study, as GM Browne is a great expert in this system for Black.

Game 64

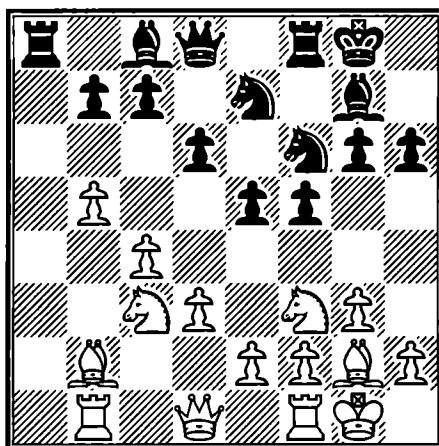
*Rafael Vaganian –
Andrei Kharitonov*

USSR Ch (4) Moscow 1988
English Opening [A26]

**1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.g3 g6 4.♙g2
♙g7 5.♖b1 a5 6.a3 f5 7.d3 ♘f6
8.♘f3 0-0 9.0-0 d6 10.b4 a×b4
11.a×b4 h6 12.b5 ♘e7 13.♙b2**

13.c5!? is an interesting alternative, though Black should be able to meet it

adequately: 13...♙e6 14.♙d2 (14.b6 can also be considered, according to Anand) 14...♘d7?! (Anand gives 14...b6!? 15.c×b6 c×b6= as better) 15.c×d6 c×d6 16.♘a4! b6 17.♙b4 ♘c5 18.♙×c5 d×c5 19.♖c2! ♖a7 (19...♘d5!? 20.♘h4! ♖h7 21.e4! ♘b4 22.♖×b4 c×b4 23.e×f5 ♖c8 24.f×g6+ ♖g8 25.♙c6 b3! is given as unclear by Anand) 20.♘d2 ♘d5 21.♙×d5! ♙×d5 22.♘c4 ♖b7, Akopian-Anand, Belgrade 1988, and now 23.♖fc1!? e4! 24.♘c×b6 ♖×b6 25.♘×b6 ♖×b6 26.♖×c5 ♖e6 27.b6 e×d3 28.e×d3 ♙b7 is slightly better for White, according to Anand.



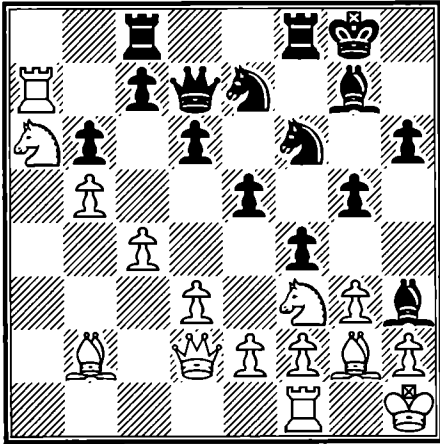
13...♙e6

The move order can be important, e.g. 13...g5 14.♖a1 ♖b8 15.c5!? (White threatens moves such as b6, ♖b3, c×d6 and ♙a3) 15...♙e6 16.♖a7 or 15.♖b3 ♙e6 16.♖a7 ♘d7 17.♖fa1 are both slightly better for White.

**14.♖a1 ♖c8 15.♖a7 b6 16.♘a2 g5
17.♘b4 f4 18.♖d2**

18. ♖c2 is also interesting.

18... ♗d7 19. ♘a6 ♙h3!? 20. ♖h1



20. ♙h3 leads to fascinating complications: 20... ♗xh3 21. ♖xc7 ♖xc7 22. ♘xc7 ♗xg3 23. ♗xg3 e4 24. dxe4 ♘xe4 25. ♖e3 ♘xg3 26. h×g3 ♖xg3+ 27. ♖h1 ♖h3+ 28. ♖g1 ♙xb2 29. ♖xe7 ♙d4+ (Black can obviously draw straight-away, but with a draw in hand you might as well try for more) 30. e3 ♖g4+ 31. ♖h2 ♖xf3 32. ♖e8+ ♖h7 33. ♖e7+ ♙g7 34. ♖xf3 ♖xf3 35. ♘e8 ♖f2+ 36. ♖h1 ♖f8 37. ♖e4+ ♖h8, and a draw is likely.

20... ♙xg2+ 21. ♖xg2 ♘f5 22. ♘b4 ♖f7 23. e4! ♘e7?!

Black believes that with the center closed he has a free hand to attack on the kingside, but life is rarely so simple. Instead, Black should have opened the game with 23... ♗xe3 24. ♗xe3 g4!, and if White now tries 25. ♘xe5, then 25... ♖h5! is difficult to meet, e.g. 26. ♘ec6?! ♘e4!! (thanks Hiarc) 27. dxe4? ♘xe3+! 28. ♖xe3 ♖h3+.

24. h3 ♘g6 25. ♘h2 h5 26. ♘d5 ♘xd5 27. exd5 ♖d7 28. ♖e2 g4 29. ♖g1 ♗xg3 30. ♗xg3 ♖xf1+?

Here Black gets himself into serious trouble. The correct way is 30...h4! 31. ♖xg4 ♖xg4 32. ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 33. ♘xg4 h×g3 34. ♖g2 ♘f4+ 35. ♖xg3 ♘xd3 36. ♙c3 ♖f7 with equal chances.

31. ♘xf1 ♖f8 32. h×g4 h4 33. ♖e4 ♖f7 34. ♖f5 ♖xf5 35. g×f5 ♖xf5 36. ♖xc7 ♖f3 37. g×h4 ♘f4 38. ♙c1?

White can easily obtain a winning position by creating a passed pawn: 38. ♖b7 ♘xd3 39. ♙c3 ♖f4 40. ♘d2 ♖xh4 41. ♖xb6 ♙f8 42. ♖c6+-.

38...e4 39. ♙e3?!

This is the safe move to play before the time control, as both players were probably short on time. Yet it squanders the chance to play for more at almost no risk: 39. dxe4 ♙d4+ 40. ♙e3 ♙xe3+ 41. ♘xe3 ♖xe3 42. ♖f2 ♖h3 43. ♖c6 and White will win both of Black's pawns, which should give him good winning chances. Meanwhile, even if Black could capture all of White's pawns, he cannot win.

39...exd3 40. ♖a7 d2 41. ♙xd2 ½-½

Game 65

Bernd Schneider –

Nigel Short

Solingen 1986

English Opening [A26]

1. c4 e5 2. ♘c3 ♘c6 3. g3 g6 4. ♙g2 ♙g7 5. ♘f3 f5 6. d3 ♘f6 7. 0-0 d6 8. ♖b1 0-0 9. b4 a6 10. a4 h6 11. b5 a×b5 12. a×b5 ♘e7 13. ♙b2 ♙e6 14. ♖a1 ♖c8

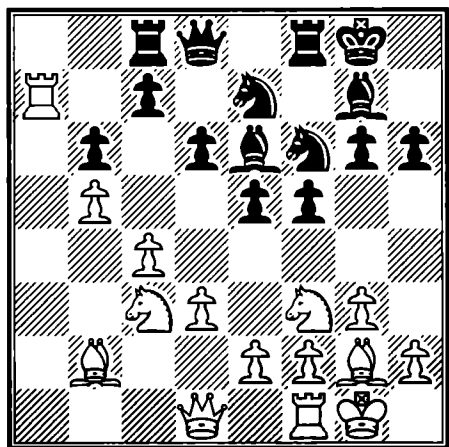
The most economical defense of Black's queenside: Short borrows an

idea from Boris Spassky's treatment of the Closed Sicilian. Black puts the rook on c8 and advances his pawns to c6 or b6, depending on the situation. After ...b6, White's only target is the pawn on c7, which is already defended.

15. ♖a7

In a later game, White obtained the better position by 15. ♖e1! b6 16. ♖c2 d5 17. cxd5 ♖fxd5 18. ♖xd5 ♖xd5 19. ♖a7 ♖d7 20. ♖a1!, Schneider-Neurohr, Bundesliga 1988/89.

15...b6



16. ♖c2

16. ♖e1 d5 (16...g5 17. ♖c2 d5 (17...f4 18. ♖b4 is very pleasant for White) 18. cxd5 ♖fxd5 19. ♖xd5 ♖xd5 20. ♖a1 and White has a clear advantage because he is much better coordinated) 17. cxd5 ♖fxd5 18. ♖a1! (18. ♖xd5 ♖xd5=) with better chances for White. The idea of ♖e1, to bring the knight to c6, is known with colors reversed.

16...g5 17. ♖fa1 f4

This clears the way for ...♖e7-f5-d4.

18. ♖d2! f×g3 19. h×g3 ♖e8

Short is marshalling his pieces for the attack in much the same way Spassky did against Geller (Game 1).

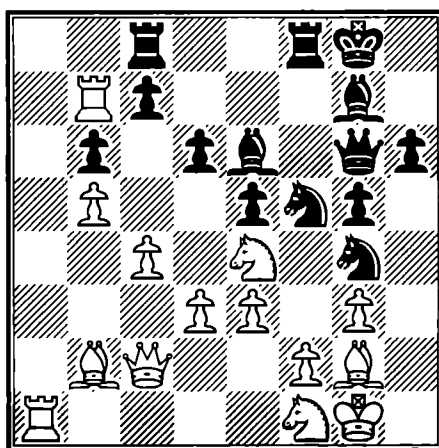
20. ♖ce4

Here White could have played à la Van Wely (Game 2) and traded all the rooks with 20. ♖a8.

20...♖g4 21. ♖f1 ♖f5

Intending to play ...♖d4.

22. e3! ♖g6 23. ♖b7



IM Schneider has played very well against his famous opponent up to this point, but now he loses his way in some incredible complications. As Short demonstrates, in his authoritative notes in *Chess Informant* 42/26, White should bring his queen over for the defense: 23. ♖e2 h5 and now 24. ♖b7, intending ♖aa7.

23...♖h4!? 24. g×h4

Forced, according to Short. White would be helpless if Black managed to make an even trade of his knight for the fianchettoed bishop.

24...g×h4 25. f3 chesstouring.com

The best chance to defend lay in 25.♖e2, which Short analyzes at length without coming to a clear assessment.

25...♖xf3 26.♖e2 ♖f7 27.♗h2 ♖cf8 28.♖aa7??

28.♖f1 was absolutely forced, with the final result still in doubt, e.g. 28.♖f1 ♗xe3 29.♖xf7 ♖xf7 30.♖xe3 h3 31.♖e2 (if 31.♖g3 ♖xg3 32.♗xg3 h×g2 33.♗xg2 d5 34.♖b8+ ♖h7 35.c×d5 ♗xd5+ 36.♗e4 ♖f4, Black is doing well) 31...♗f8 32.♗c1 ♖g7 33.♗f3, and White has the better chances. Now, however, it is all over.

28...h3 29.♖xc7 ♖xc7 30.♖xc7 ♗f2 0-1

Game 66

Rene Libeau –

Pavel Blatny

Münster (3) 1992

English Opening [A26]

1.c4 e5 2.♗c3 ♗c6 3.g3 g6 4.♗g2 ♗g7 5.d3 f5 6.♗f3 ♗f6 7.0-0 0-0 8.♖b1

8.♗g5 h6 9.♗xf6 ♗xf6 10.♗d2 ♖h7 11.♖b1 a5 12.a3 ♗e7 13.b4 a×b4 14.a×b4 e4 15.♖c2 exd3 16.♖xd3 d6 17.b5 c6 18.♖b3 ♗e6 19.b×c6 b×c6 20.♖fb1 ♖c8 21.e4 and White has the game under control, Smirin-A. Ivanov, Philadelphia 1997.

8...a5 9.a3 d6 10.b4 a×b4 11.a×b4 h6 12.b5 ♗e7 13.♗b2

13.♗e1 c6 14.♗c2 d5 15.b×c6 b×c6 16.c×d5 c×d5 17.♗a3 ♗e6 18.♖b7 ♖f7 with equal chances, as in Ljubojevic-Short, Brussels blitz 1987.

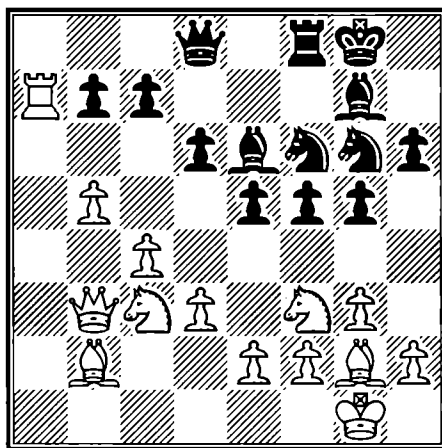
13...g5

For 13...♗e6, see Game 65.

14.♖b3

White has a worthwhile alternative in 14.♖a1, e.g. 14...♖xa1?! 15.♖xa1 (in Grivas-Kr.Georgiev, Athens 1991, the players prematurely agreed to a draw at this point) 15...♗g6 16.♗d2 h5 17.♖a8 b6 18.♖a1 ♗h6 19.♖a7 g4 20.♗f1 f4 21.♖b8, and Black's queenside collapsed before he got a chance to set up a real attack against White's king, as in Hickl-Maus, Bundesliga 1992.

14...♗g6 15.♖a1 ♖xa1 16.♖xa1 ♗e6 17.♖a7?!



Blatny gives 17.♗d2 b6 18.♖a8 as equal, but if anything White is very slightly better.

17...♗d7! 18.♗a3?

Now the trouble truly begins for White. After 18.♗d2, he still has a fighting chance: 18...e4! 19.d×e4 (19.♗d1?! ♗c5 20.♖a3 ♗×b2 21.♗×b2 ♖f6 22.e3 f4 leaves Black with a very dangerous attack) 19...♗d4! (with the idea of ...♗c5 and ...f4) 20.♖a1 ♗c5 21.♖c2

f4 22. ♖d5 ♗×b2 23. ♜×b2 c6 24. ♖b4 ♗e5 and Black has compensation for the pawn, but no more than that.

18...e4 19.d×e4 g4 20.e×f5 ♜×f5
21. ♜×b7 g×f3 22.e×f3 ♜f6
23. ♜×c7 ♜×f3 24. ♗b2 ♜×f2 0-1

Game 67

*Daniel Hausrath –
Mihail Golubev*

Münster (4) 1994

English Opening [A26]

1.c4 e5 2. ♖c3 ♗c6 3.g3 g6 4. ♗g2
♗g7 5.d3 d6 6. ♖f3 f5 7.0-0 ♖f6
8. ♜b1 h6 9.b4 a6 10.a4 0-0 11.b5

White doesn't have to play this immediately; an excellent alternative is 11. ♖e1 g5 12. ♖c2 f4 13.b5 a×b5 14.a×b5 ♗e7 15. ♖b4 with better chances for White.

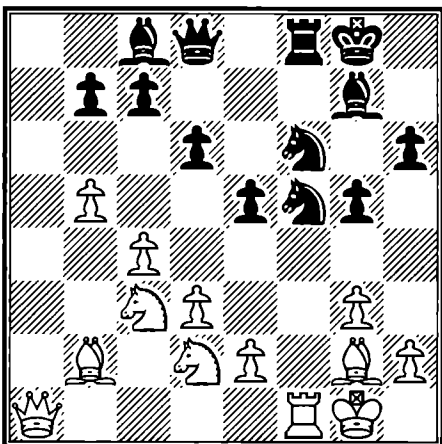
11...a×b5 12.a×b5 ♗e7 13. ♗b2 g5
14. ♖d2 f4!?

Playing for the attack at all cost.

15. ♜a1 ♜×a1

Black again plays the most direct move. A more cautious choice is 15...♜b8.

16. ♜×a1 f×g3 17.f×g3 ♖f5



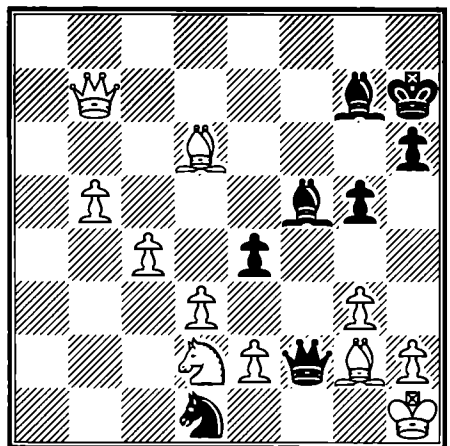
18. ♖d5

18. ♗×b7 ♗e3 (18...♖×g3 19. ♗×c8 ♜×c8 20.h×g3 ♜h3 21. ♜e1 ♖g4 22. ♜×f8+ ♗×f8 23. ♖f1 is given as unclear by Golubev, but it is difficult to see how Black has enough for the piece after, say, 23...♜h5 24. ♖d5) 19. ♗d5+ (19. ♗×c8 ♜×c8 is given by Golubev, but only the text move presents Black problems) 19...♖e×d5 20.c×d5 ♗h3 21. ♜f2 ♜b8 22. ♜a5 ♜b7 23. ♖de4 ♜a8 24. ♖×f6+ ♗×f6 25. ♜b4, and White has slightly better chances.

18...♖g4 19. ♜a5

19. ♜a8! gives Black greater problems; for instance, 19...♖ge3 20. ♖×e3 ♖×e3 21. ♜×f8+ ♜×f8 22. ♗×b7 ♖d1!? 23. ♖e4 ♗×b7 24. ♜×b7 ♖×b2 25. ♜×c7, and White has every chance of winning.

19...♖ge3 20. ♖×e3 ♖×e3
21. ♜×f8+ ♜×f8 22. ♜×c7 ♖d1
23. ♗a3 ♜f2+ 24. ♖h1 ♗f5
25. ♜b8+ ♖h7 26. ♜×b7 e4
27. ♗×d6??



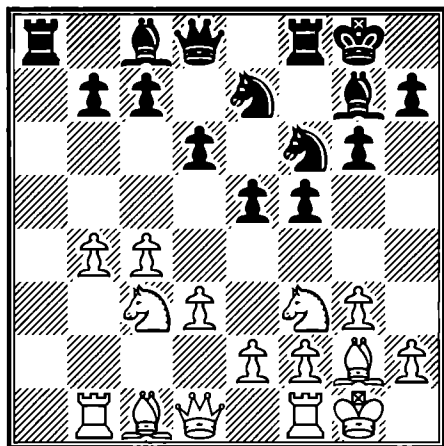
An incredible blunder that loses the game by force; White could still have saved himself by 27. ♖f1, e.g. 27...♜×e2 (or 27...e×d3 28.e×d3 ♜g6 29. ♜d5 ♗d4 30. ♜g8+ ♖f6 31. ♜f8+

♔g6 32.♖g8+ with a draw by perpetual) 28.♗xd6 ♖f2+ 29.♔g1 ♗h3+ 30.♖h1 ♖f2+, and this time it is Black who takes the perpetual.

27...♗e3 28.♗h3 ♖e1+ 29.♖f1 ♗xh3 30.♖xe4+ ♖f5 0-1

Game 68
*Gata Kamsky –
 Predrag Nikolic*
 Groningen (8) 1993
 English Opening [A26]

1.c4 e5 2.♗c3 ♗c6 3.♖f3 f5 4.d3 ♖f6 5.g3 g6 6.♗g2 ♗g7 7.0-0 0-0 8.♞b1 a5 9.a3 d6 10.b4 a×b4 11.a×b4 ♗e7



Here, 11...h6, giving the king the h7-square, is more accurate (see Game 66).

12.♖b3 ♖h8?!

Actually, it wasn't too late to play 12...h6, meeting 13.c5+ by 13...♖h7.

13.c5 h6 14.b5 ♗d7 15.c×d6 c×d6 16.♗a3

16.♖b4 ♖c7 17.♗e3 g5 18.b6 ♖b8 is okay for Black, e.g. 19.♗b5 f4 20.♗d2 ♗c5 or 19.♞a1 ♞a1 20.♞a1 ♗c6 21.♖b2 e4.

16...♗c5 17.♗x c5 d×c5 18.♞fd1

Black should not worry about 18.♗d2 e4 19.♗c4 ♖d4 20.♗a4 ♗e6 21.♗ab6 exd3 22.exd3 ♞ae8.

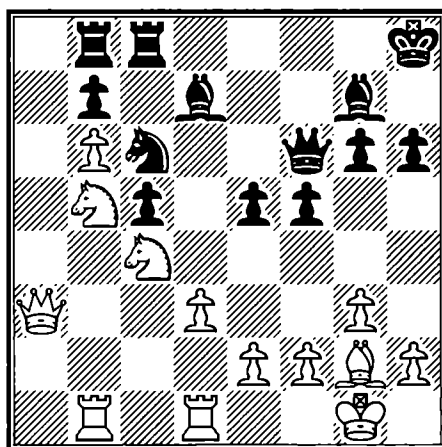
18...♞b8

On 18...♖d6, Ribli gives 19.♗d2 ♖f6 20.♗d5! ♗x d5 21.♖x d5 with a clear plus for White.

19.b6 ♖d6 20.♗d2 ♗d7

Black can also consider 20...♗e6, which leads to interesting complications: 21.♗c4 ♖d7 22.♖a3 ♞fc8 23.♗b5 ♞a8 24.♖b2 e4 25.♖c2 ♗c6 26.d×e4 ♗d4 27.♖d3 ♞a2 and everything is still open for debate.

21.♗c4 ♖f6 22.♖a3 ♞fc8 23.♗b5 ♗c6



23...♞a8 24.♖b2 (24.♖c1!?) 24...♗x b5 25.♖x b5 ♗c6 26.♖x c5 ♗d4 27.♖b4 ♗x e2+ 28.♖f1 ♞a2 29.♞b2 with a clear advantage.

24.♗c7?

This mistake throws away the majority of White's advantage. Also bad is 24.♖x c5? ♗d4 25.♗c7 ♗e2+ 26.♖h1

♖c3 (Ribli), and Black should be more or less winning.

24.♗bd6 is best, e.g. 24...♞d8 25.♝xc5 ♗d4 (or 25...♞f8 26.♞xc6 ♞xc6 27.♝xe5 ♝xe5 28.♗f7+ and White is much better), and here White has 26.♞d2, as suggested by Matanovic, or 26.e3 ♗c6 27.♞dc1 ♞f8 28.♞xc6 ♞xc6 29.♝xe5 with a big plus.

24...♗b4 25.♝a5 ♝e7 26.♞dc1

In light of Black getting to play ...e4, it is probably better to leave the d-rook on d1 and play 26.♞bc1 instead.

26...e4 27.dxe4 fxe4 28.♞d1

In *ChessBase Magazine*, Ribli offers 28.♗e3 as an interesting alternative: 28...♞d4 29.♗ed5 ♗xd5 30.♗xd5 ♝f7 31.e3 ♞a8 32.♝e1 ♝xd5 33.exd4 “with compensation.” This is an understatement, White is comfortably better after 33...cxd4 34.♝xe4 ♞xc1+ 35.♞xc1 ♝xe4 36.♞xe4. However, Black can improve by 31...♝xd5 32.exd4 ♝xd4 33.♞d1 ♝g7 34.♞xe4 ♞c6 and Black should not have any reason to complain.

28...♗c6 29.♝d2 ♞d8

Black can also consider 29...♞f5!?, e.g. 30.♗d5 ♝e6 31.♗ce3 ♞d8 with chances for both sides.

30.♝d6

30.♝e3 leads to even more complications: 30...♞f5 31.♗d2 ♝h7 32.♗xe4 ♗d4 33.♝f3 ♗e5 and Black has compensation for the pawn.

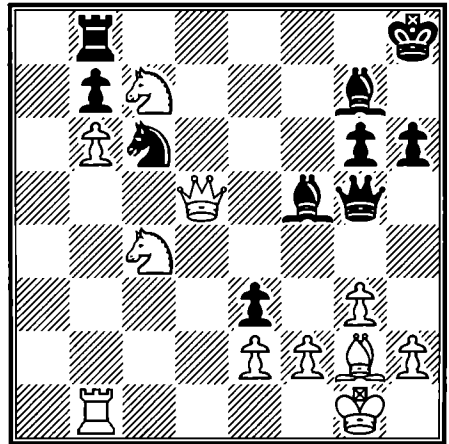
30...♝g5 31.♞d5

The position is hideously complicated. This means both players have to be alert, e.g. 31.♞xe4? runs into 31...♞f5 32.♞xf5 ♞xd6 33.♗xd6 ♝f6 and Black is better (Ribli).

31...♞f5 32.♝xc5 ♞xd5

Here 32...♞d4 33.♝b5 e3 34.f4 is just better for White.

33.♝xd5 e3!?



Being a pawn down with several positional weaknesses, Black needs to complicate as much as possible to stay in the game. The text move certainly fits the bill.

34.♞f1!?

Here 34.f4!? seems like a worthwhile alternative, e.g. 34...♝e7 35.♞d1 ♞d8 36.♗d6 with better chances for White.

34...exf2+ 35.♝h1!?

An interesting decision, but Kamsky continues to press for a win by complicating. With 35.♞xf2, White can retain a slight edge after 35...♞d4 36.e3 ♞xe3 37.♗xe3 ♝xe3 38.♝f7 ♝e1+ 39.♞f1 ♝e3+ 40.♝h1 ♝e7 41.♝xe7 ♗xe7 42.♞e1 with the initiative. www.chessbase.com

35...♖e7 36.♘d6 ♗×e2 37.♘×f5
g×f5 38.♘e6

Although the computer prefers 38.♗e6, nothing much remains after 38...♗×e6 39.♘×e6 ♘c3 40.♖×f2 ♘a5 41.♖×f5 ♘×b6 42.♖f7 ♘e5 43.♖×b7 ♖×b7 44.♘×b7, White has an extra pawn, but he cannot realistically expect to win. Kamsky decides to press for more in time trouble.

38...♖e8 39.♘f4

Also, 39.♗×g7 ♖×g7 40.♗f3 ♗×f3 41.♘×f3 ♖e5 42.♖×f2 ♖b5 creates an equal endgame.

39...♗c2 40.♗f7 ♖e1 41.♗×b7
♗b1 42.♗a6 ♘d8 43.♘d5 ♗b3
44.♘f4 ½-½

A draw was agreed, as after 44...♘d4 45.b7 ♖×f1 46.♘×f1 ♗×b7+ 47.♗×b7 ♘×b7 48.♘h3 ♘d6 49.♖g2 ♖h7 50.♘d3 ♖g6 51.♘×f2, there isn't much left to play for.

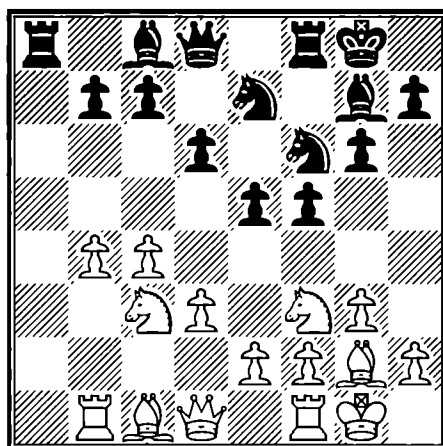
Game 69

Vladimir Akopian –
Walter Browne

World Open 1994
English Opening [A26]

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.g3 g6 4.♘g2
♘g7 5.d3 f5 6.♘f3 d6 7.0-0 ♘f6
8.♖b1 a5 9.a3 0-0 10.b4 a×b4
11.a×b4 ♘e7

Play 1.c4 against six-time U.S. Champion Walter Browne and there is a very good chance that you will reach this position. Walter believes in his systems and has had excellent results with this setup, particularly with ...♘e7, aiming for ...d5.



12.c5

White could play 12.b5 or 12.♘g5, but the text is quite good, if much different from what we've seen up to now. Here White gives Black a potentially big center in hopes of playing against it.

12...h6

Preparing ...♘e6, which if played at once, would be met by 13.♘g5.

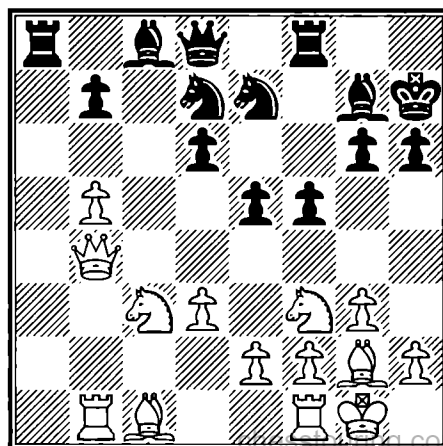
13.♗b3+ ♖h7

For 13...♖h8, see Game 68; the king is better placed on h7.

14.b5 ♘d7

14...d×c5 15.♘×e5 is clearly better for White.

15.c×d6 c×d6 16.♗b4!



16. ♖a3 ♗c5 17. ♖xc5 dxc5 is fully acceptable for Black.

16... ♗b6!

Akopian offers the following analysis: 16...d5 17. ♖h4 ♗b6 (17... ♗f6!? is not mentioned by Akopian. It looks acceptable for Black at first, as 18. ♗xe5 is met by 18... ♖c7, but White comes out on top upon 19. ♖b2! g5 (19... ♖xe5 runs into 20. ♗e4 ♖xe4 21. dxe4 g5 22. ♖xf6 gxh4 23. ♖xe7 ♖f7 24. ♖xh4 with an extra pawn for White) 20. ♖d4 ♗g4 21. f4 gxh4 22. gxh4 ♗xe5 23. ♖h1) 18. ♖g5 ♖e8 (18... ♖f7? 19. ♖xh6 ♖xh6 20. ♗g5+ ♖g7 21. ♖xh6+-) 19. e4! d4 20. ♗d5 ♗bxd5 21. exd5 ♖d6 22. ♖xh6! ♖xh6 23. ♗g5+ ♖g7 24. ♖xh6+ ♖xh6 25. ♗f7+ ♖g7 26. ♗xd6 ♖d8 27. ♗c4+- or 16... ♗c5 17. ♗xe5 ♖xe5 18. d4± the white queen is well-placed on b4 where it can easily go to h4.

17. ♖a3

17. ♖h4 f4.

17... ♗ed5

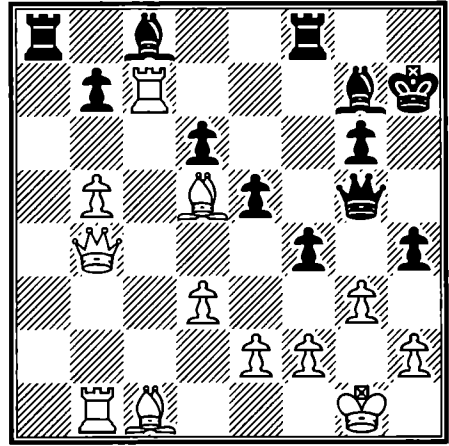
Akopian's play has made it difficult for Browne to move his pawns. Here, the Armenian GM proposes 17... ♖f6!? 18. ♗d2 ♖f8!? as an interesting attempt to mobilize the pawns.

18. ♗xd5 ♗xd5 19. ♗g5+ ♖xg5 20. ♖xd5 f4 21. ♖fc1!

21. ♖xd6?? ♖d8 22. ♖c5 ♖xa3.

21...h5! 22. ♖c7 h4 23. ♖c1

23. ♖xd6?? ♖d8 24. ♖f8 ♖xf8 25. ♖xf8 ♖d7.



23... ♖f6?

Browne was probably in horrible time pressure in a situation where the lines are complicated and treacherous. Akopian gives 23...hxc3! 24. hxc3 ♖g4 25. ♖xb7 ♖a2 26. ♖xd6 ♖xe2 27. ♖xf8 ♖e1+ 28. ♖g2 ♖h3+ 29. ♖h2 fxg3+ 30. ♖xh3 ♖h5+ 31. ♖xg3 ♖g1+ 32. ♖g2 ♖xg2+ 33. ♖xg2 ♖g4+ 34. ♖f1 ♖d1+ 35. ♖g2 ♖g4+ draw, but there are several errors here.

For example, Black can improve with 29... ♖d7!! and suddenly White is facing an irresistible attack: 30. ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 31. ♖xd7+ ♖h8 32. ♖g2 hxg3+ 33. fxg3 ♖h5+ 34. ♖h3 ♖e2+-+.

However, White has an improvement in 27. ♖xf4! (now White's king is a bit safer, because the bank rank is guarded by rook on b1) 27... ♖xf4 28. gxh4 exf4 29. ♖d5 ♖e5 30. ♖g2, and then the next wave of Black's attack begins by 30... ♖h6! 31. ♖f3 (31. ♖xg4? leaves Black with a long-term initiative: 31... ♖g5 32. ♖f3 ♖xg4+ 33. ♖xg4 ♖h4 34. f3 ♖h6 35. ♖c4 ♖g3+ 36. ♖h1 ♖h2, and White's king is in danger because of the weak dark squares) 31... ♖h3 32. ♖h2 ♖g5+ 33. ♖h1 ♖g2+! 34. ♖xg2 ♖h5 35. ♖xh5 ♖xh5+ 36. ♖g1 f3

37.♖xg7+ ♜xg7 38.♗f1 ♚g5+ 39.♜h1 ♜c5!? 40.♜g1 g5 41.b6 g4 42.d4! ♜xd4 43.♞b3, when White is finally okay.

Larsen once quipped “long analysis, wrong analysis,” and while this often true, your understanding of the positions at hand will be enhanced by excursions such as the one above. One thing is clear, Black’s game move is wrong, and the punishment comes swiftly.

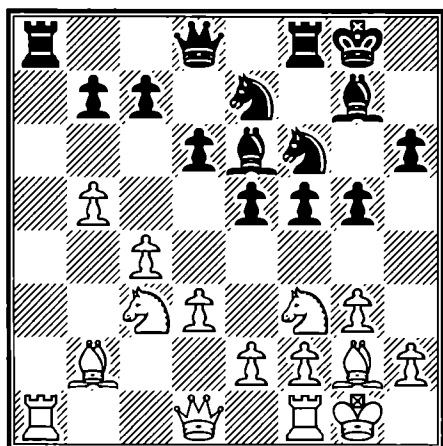
24.gxf4! exf4 25.♜h1! ♚g5 26.♜d4 ♜e5 27.♗b2 1-0

Game 70

*Ljubomir Ljubojevic –
Jeroen Piket*

Monaco rapid (2) 2002
English Opening [A26]

1.c4 e5 2.♗c3 ♗c6 3.♗f3 f5 4.d3 ♗f6 5.g3 g6 6.♗g2 ♗g7 7.0-0 0-0 8.♞b1 d6 9.b4 a6 10.a4 h6 11.b5 axb5 12.axb5 ♗e7 13.♗b2 ♗e6 14.♞a1 g5



14...♜d7 is one alternative, the other is 14...♞b8, as in Sichinava-Golubev, Chemnitz 1998: 15.♜c2 g5 16.♞a7 f4 17.♗d2 fxg3 18.hxg3 ♗g4 19.♗f3

♜e8, and now 20.♗e4 and 20.♞fa1 both offer White better chances.

15.♞xa8 ♜xa8 16.♜b3 ♗d7 17.♞a1 ♜e8 18.♗d2

18.♜b4 ♗c5 19.♗a4 ♗xa4 20.♞xa4 f4 21.♞a7 is somewhat better for White, but 18...f4 or 18...g4 is less clear.

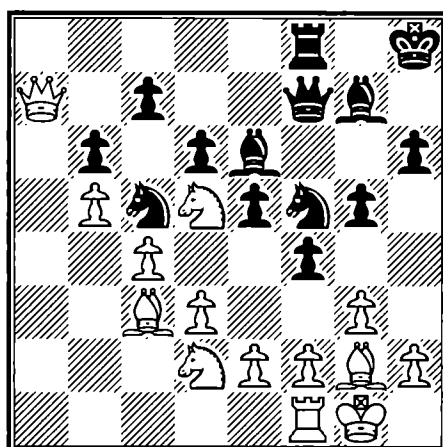
18...♜f7 19.♜b4

19.b6 ♗c5 20.♜b4 c6 offers White less.

19...f4 20.♞f1 b6

The battle lines are clearly defined; White has to win on the queenside before Black on the kingside.

21.♜a3 ♗c5 22.♜a7 ♗f5 23.♗d5 ♜h8 24.♗c3



This appears pointless, but White wants to make sure this bishop is protected by the knight on d5 to avoid any tactical tricks.

24...g4 25.♗b4 h5

25...♗d4!? is worth consideration.

26.♗a6 ♞c8

26...♠a4 27.♙a1 c5 28.♚xf7 ♖xf7
29.♗e4 is excellent for White.

27.♗xc5 dxc5

27...bxc5 28.♗e4, followed by ♖b1 and b6, is worse for Black.

28.♗e4 ♜e7 29.♜b7 ♖f8?!

Black avoids 29...♗d4 on account of 30.♙xd4 exd4 31.♚c6 ♜d7 32.♚xd7 ♙xd7 33.♞a1 ♙f5 34.♞a7, when only White has winning chances, although Black should still draw. However, the complications of the game continuation heavily favor White, because his queenside penetration is far more potent than Black's kingside initiative.

30.♞a1

Now White's rook will join in the queenside attack; Black is in serious trouble.

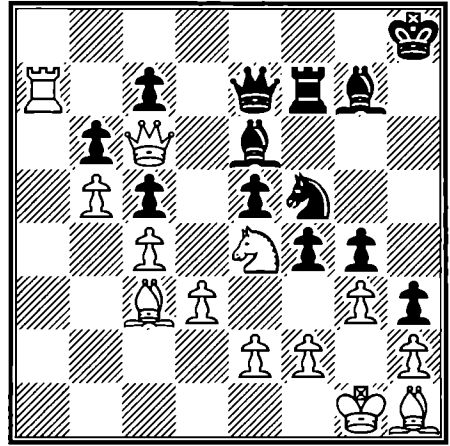
30...h4 31.♞a7 ♖f7?

Black should try 31...fxg3 32.hxg3 h3, when White must choose the complicated 33.♙h1 ♗d4 34.♜f1 or the piece sacrifice 33.♚xc7!? ♚xc7 34.♞xc7 hxg2 35.♞c6 ♞e8 36.e3 and White has excellent winning chances despite being a piece down.

32.♚c6

Stronger is 32.♞a8+ ♜h7 33.♚c6, e.g. 33...fxg3 34.hxg3 hxg3 35.fxg3 ♗d6 36.♗xd6 cxd6 37.♙e4+ ♜h6 38.♙d2+ ♜h5, and now 39.♙h7!, threatening ♚h1+, decides.

32...h3 33.♙h1



White thinks that this will offer Black fewer chances for counterplay than 33.♞a8+ ♖f8 34.♞xf8+ ♙xf8 35.♙xe5+ ♙g7 36.♚a8+ ♙g8 37.♙xg7+ ♜xg7 38.♙h1 ♚e5, which will be difficult to win. But he can improve with the piece sacrifice 36.♙xf4! hxg2 37.♜xg2, after which White will also win the black c- and b-pawns.

33...♗d4

Black may have considered 33...fxg3, intending 34.hxg3 ♗d4 35.♙xd4 exd4, which is an improved version of the game. However, White interjects 34.♞a8+ and suddenly the momentum shifts: 34...♜h7 35.hxg3 ♗d6 (35...♗d4 36.♙xd4 exd4 37.♚xe6 ♚xe6 38.♗g5+, and Black is down a piece) 36.♗xd6 ♚xd6 37.♚xd6 cxd6 38.♞a6 and White wins the b-pawn and then the game.

34.♙xd4 cxd4

34...exd4 is simply refuted by 35.gxf4!, followed by ♗g5, e.g. 35...♙f5 36.♗g5 ♖f8 37.♙e4 ♖f6 38.♙xf5! ♞xc6 39.♞a8+ ♙f8 40.bxc6 and the game is over.

35.c5 fxg3 36.hxg3 ♙f5 chessking.com

36...bxc5 37.b6 obviously isn't what Black wants, but the text move doesn't suffice either.

37.cxb6 ♖b4

Black is fishing for a swindle, but Ljubojevic is having none of it. He plays safely and the game is soon over.

**38.♖c1 h2+ 39.♕xh2 ♖f8
40.♘g5 ♜f6 41.♖xc7 ♜h6+
42.♕g1 1-0**

Game 71

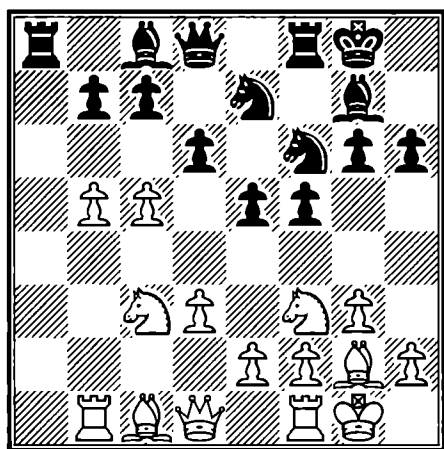
Bojan Kurajica –

Mikhail Ulibin

Bled (9) 2002

English Opening [A26]

**1.c4 e5 2.g3 ♘c6 3.♙g2 g6 4.♘c3
♙g7 5.♞b1 a5 6.a3 f5 7.d3 ♘f6
8.♘f3 0-0 9.0-0 d6 10.b4 axb4
11.axb4 h6 12.b5 ♘e7 13.c5**



The main move 13.♙b2 is covered in the next two games. This game shows a couple of interesting ideas that are worth bearing in mind; here White wants to break up Black's queenside before continuing along more traditional lines.

13...♙e6 14.♙b2 b6 15.cxb6 cxb6

**16.♞a1 ♜xa1 17.♖xa1 ♖b8
18.e4!?**

This is definitely an unusual move in this line. White aims to break the center open by both e4 and d4. Then, after the ensuing exchanges, he will try to show that his pieces are better coordinated.

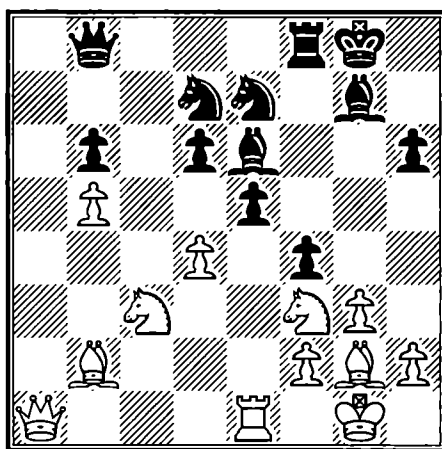
18...♘d7 19.exf5 gxf5

Black can also consider 19...♘xf5 and 19...♙xf5.

20.♞e1 f4?!

This is a normal move for Black, but here his position loses its flexibility and becomes vulnerable to counter-punches such as White's next move. A better try is 20...♘c5 with chances for both sides.

21.d4!



By challenging Black's center, Kurajica questions Black's entire setup and makes it easier for him to strike if Ulibin plays inaccurately.

21...♘g6

21...♙g4 22 ♖a2+ ♖h8 23.♘h4 is better for White, e.g. 23...♙f6 24.dxe5 dxe5 25.♘f3 and White is in control.

22. ♖d2 ♗f6?!

Black is trying to mobilize an attack against the white king, but this is quickly defused because of White's better coordinated pieces. A sounder plan is 22... ♖f7, followed by 23... ♗f8, although White holds the better chances.

23. d×e5 d×e5 24. ♗de4 ♗×e4
25. ♕×e4 ♗e7 26. ♗a2!?

White creates a threat against the e5-pawn and redeploys the knight to b4 where it will be much better placed than on c3. However, 26. ♗a3!, followed by ♗b4, looks very pleasant for White.

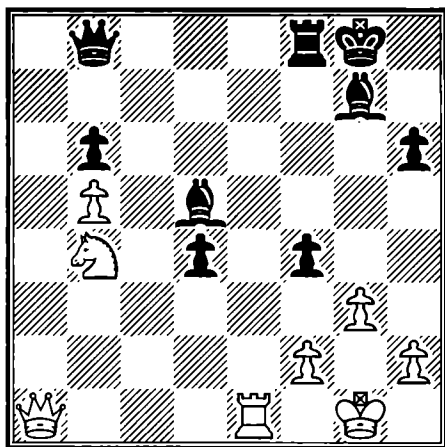
26... ♗f5?!

26... ♗e8 is a better chance, now White takes control of the game.

27. ♗b4 ♗d4 28. ♕×d4

28. ♗c6!? ♗×c6 29. b×c6 also looks good for White.

28... e×d4 29. ♕d5! ♕×d5



After 29... ♕f7 30. ♗c6 ♗d6 31. ♕×f7+ ♖×f7 32. ♗a2!, Black is completely tied up.

30. ♗×d5 d3?!

White will easily pick up the pawn, so 30... ♖e8 is better, although White should still win after 31. ♗×f4.

31. ♗d1 f×g3 32. h×g3 ♗d6
33. ♗×d3

Because of Black's exposed king, as well as White's extra pawn and superior pieces, all White needs to do is coordinate his pieces and the win will be at hand.

33... ♖h8

Note that 33... ♖d8 is met by 34. ♖e7, after which Black cannot play 34... ♗×d5 on account of 35. ♖e8+ ♖f7 36. ♖×d8, while 34... ♖h8 35. ♗e4 only leads White closer to his goal of complete coordination.

34. ♗e4 ♖d8 35. ♗f4 ♕d4 36. ♖g2
♗f6 37. ♗b7 ♖g8 38. ♖e7 ♗f5
39. ♖f7 ♗c2 40. ♗e6 ♕e5 41. ♗f4
♕d4 42. ♗f3 ♗b1 43. ♗c6 ♖×g3+

Ulibin tries one last desperate measure to stop White's threats against his king. Black wins the rook back immediately, but White can force a won endgame.

44. ♖×g3 ♗b3+ 45. f3 ♗×f7
46. ♗×h6+ ♖g8 47. ♗g5+ ♗g7
48. ♖g4 ♗×g5+ 49. ♖×g5 ♖f7
50. ♖f5 ♕g1 51. ♗g6 ♕f2 52. f4
♕g1 53. ♗e5+ ♖e7 54. ♗c4 ♕f2
55. ♖e5 ♕g1 56. ♗d2 ♕h2
57. ♗e4 ♖d7 58. ♗f6+ ♖d8
59. ♗d5 ♕g1 60. ♖e6 ♕d4 61. f5
♖e8 62. f6 ♖f8 63. ♗f4 ♕c5
64. ♗g6+ ♖g8 65. ♖f7+ 1-0

Game 72

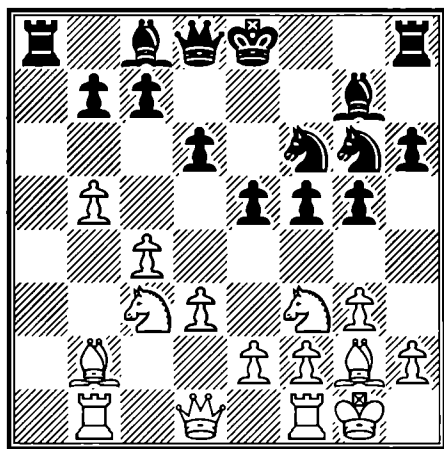
Michael Bezold –

Josef Pribyl

Bundesliga 2 (1.1) 2001

English Opening [A25]

1.c4 e5 2.g3 ♘c6 3.♙g2 g6 4.♘c3
 ♙g7 5.d3 d6 6.♞b1 a5 7.a3 f5
 8.♘f3 ♘f6 9.0-0 h6 10.b4 a×b4
 11.a×b4 g5 12.b5 ♘e7 13.♙b2
 ♘g6



Black follows a very aggressive game plan. Normal is 13...0-0 14.♙c2 ♙e6.

14.♞a1 ♞b8

Another example of Black surrendering the open file, to use the rook to defend the queenside; instead, if Black exchanged on a1, White would have an easier time penetrating on the queenside. However, as we will see, White has many weapons in his arsenal.

15.♞a7 g4 16.♘d2 h5 17.♘b3!

A clever and very strong move; White threatens ♘b3-a5, which forces Black to play 17...b6, further weakening the light squares.

17...b6 18.♘a1!

The idea behind White's previous move, the knight will maneuver via c2 and b4 to c6 or d5 with devastating effect.

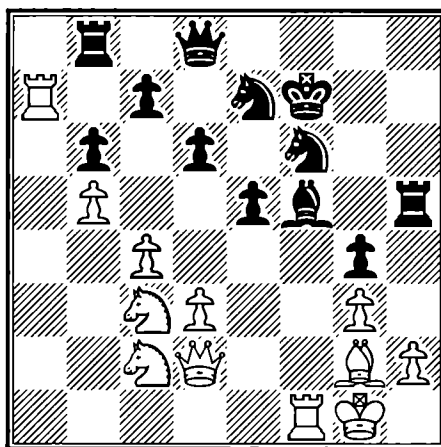
18...h4 19.♘c2 h×g3 20.f×g3 ♙h6
 21.♙c1!

Obviously, White cannot allow Black to control the c1-h6 diagonal, but an exchange of the dark-squared bishops will leave the diagonal to be controlled by White, illustrating Black's difficult task.

21...♘e7 22.♙×h6 ♞×h6 23.♙d2
 ♞h5 24.e4!

In order to take advantage of Black's many weaknesses, White must open the position to gain more targets.

24...♙f7 25.e×f5 ♙×f5?!



This is rather senseless; Black opens the file where his king is situated. With a vulnerable king, Black should aim to reduce some of the pressure by taking on f5 with the rook.

26.♘b4 ♘e8?

This error sends Black spiraling towards defeat. Black can try to do bet-

ter with 26...♖d7, but after 27.♗a6 (27.d4!?) 27...♞c8 28.♗a4, Black is facing serious threats.

27.♗cd5 ♞c8 28.♗×e7 ♞×e7
29.♗d5 ♞d8 30.♗×b6 ♞b8
31.♗d5 ♞g6 32.b6 ♞c8

Now the game is over, with White's b-pawn ending on b7.

33.b7 ♞b8 34.♗b4 ♗d7 35.♗a6
c6 36.♗×b8 ♞×b8 37.♞f2 ♞f5
38.♗e4 ♞g7 39.♗×f5 ♗×f5
40.♞a8 1-0

Game 73

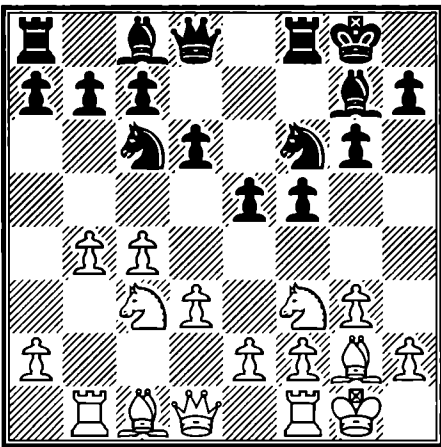
Athanasios Mastrovasilis –

Friso Nijboer

Istanbul (11) 2003

English Opening [A26]

1.♗f3 g6 2.c4 ♗g7 3.♗c3 d6 4.g3
♗c6 5.♗g2 e5 6.d3 f5 7.0-0 ♗f6
8.♞b1 0-0 9.b4



9...♞e8!? was tried in Schnitzspan-Epishin, Bad Wiessee 1998: 10.b5 ♗d8 11.♗d5 ♗×d5 12.c×d5 ♗d7 13.♞c2 ♞c8 14.a4 h6, and here Yusupov recommends 15.♞b4!?, intending ♞c4 with a better game for White.

9...h6 10.b5 ♗e7 11.a4 ♗e6 12.a5

12.♗a3!?, intending c5 at some point, is another idea.

12...♞c8 13.♗d2 g5 14.♗e1

White wants to control the d5-square, so he redeploys the knight to d5 via e1-c2-e3.

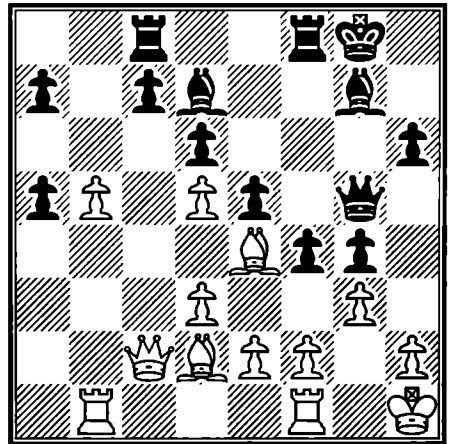
14...b6 15.♗c2 b×a5 16.♗e3

16.f4!? g×f4 17.g×f4 is an alternative.

16...f4 17.♗ed5 ♗e×d5 18.♗×d5
♗×d5 19.c×d5 ♗d7 20.♞c2 g4
21.♗e4 ♞g5

21...♞e8!? can be considered.

22.♞h1?!



After this White must play a series of accurate defensive moves; better is 22.♗×a5, e.g. 22...♞h5 23.♞fc1 f3 24.♞d1 f×e2 25.♞×e2 ♞f6 26.♞×c7 and White is in control.

22...♞h5 23.♗×a5 ♗×b5 24.♞g1
a6 25.f3 ♗d7 26.♞b7 ♞h3
27.♞×c7 h5 28.♞d1 ♞f7

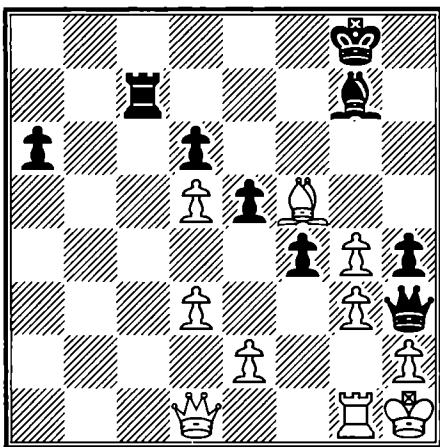
Here 28...♞×c7 29.♗×c7 h4 can be considered.

29.♞×d7! ♞×d7 30.♗f5 ♞dc7?

Black wants to return the exchange in a situation where his pieces are as actively placed as possible, but this just makes things worse. Also, the active 30...♖c5 31 ♗xd7 ♖xa5 32.♖b1 is very problematic for Black; in fact, he probably has to sacrifice the exchange by 32...♖b5 to prevent immediate disaster.

Therefore, Black's best choice is 30...♖dd8, even if this too results in an unpleasant situation: 31. ♗xd8 (White wants to keep his light-squared bishop, as it secures a long-term advantage because of the weak light squares around Black's king) 31...♖xd8 32.fxg4 h×g4 33.gxf4 e×f4 34.♖xg4 ♖e3 35.♖f1 ♖e5 36.♖xf4 ♖xd5+ 37.♗e4 ♖g5 38.♖f5 ♖h6 39.♗d5+ ♖h7 40.♗f7 and Black will struggle to fight off the invasion on the light squares.

31. ♗xc7 ♖xc7 32.f×g4 h4??



A dreadful blunder that ends the game immediately; the alternative is 32...h×g4 33.gxf4 ♖e3 34.f×e5 ♖×e5 35.♗e6+ ♖h7 36.e4, when White is still winning, but it would require several more accurate moves than what is now needed.

33. ♗e6+ 1-0

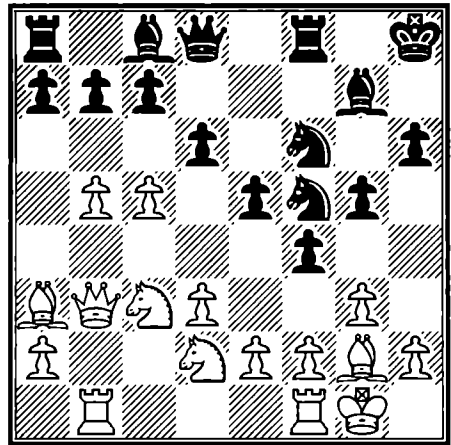
Black resigned because of the embarrassing 33...♖h8 34 g5, when he loses his queen.

Game 74

Alexander Chernin –
Hoang Thanh Trang

Hungarian chT (11) Budapest 2002
English Opening [A26]

1.c4 f5 2.g3 ♗f6 3.♗g2 g6 4.♗c3 ♗g7 5.♗f3 0-0 6.0-0 d6 7.d3 e5 8.♖b1 h6 9.b4 ♗c6 10.b5 ♗e7 11.♗d2 g5 12.♖b3 ♖h8?! 13.♗a3 f4 14.c5 ♗f5?!



Better is 14...d5, although White has an advantage upon 15.c6 b×c6 16.b×c6 ♗e6 17.♗c5 ♖e8 18.♖a4. After the text move, Black has a long-term weakness on the light squares and on the queenside, while his kingside initiative is ill-prepared and easy to parry.

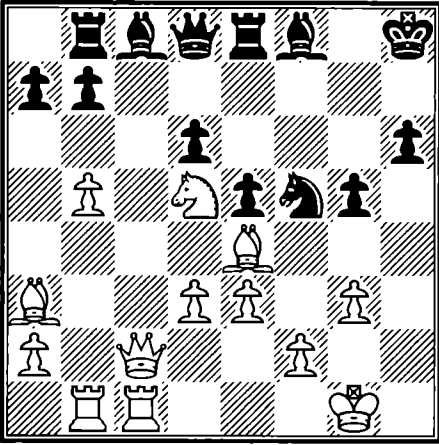
15.c×d6 c×d6 16.♖fc1 ♗g4?!

Very optimistic, but bad; 16...♖e8 is better.

17.♗de4 f×g3

The retreat 17...♗f6 is better, now White's advantage increases.

18.hxg3 ♖e8 19.♗f3 ♘f6 20.♝b4
 ♘xe4 21.♗xe4 ♗f8 22.♘d5 ♘d4
 23.♝d2! ♖b8 24.e3 ♘f5 25.♝c2!



With a steady hand, White has eliminated any active play from Black, and is now ready to penetrate on the queenside via the c7-square.

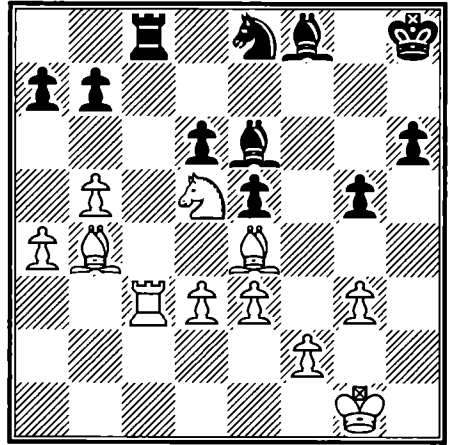
25...♗g7 26.♝c7 ♗e6 27.♝xd8
 ♖exd8 28.♖c7 ♗f8?! 29.♖bc1
 ♘g7 30.♗b4

White continues to improve his position. A more direct approach is 30.♘f6, e.g. 30...♗xa2 31.♗xb7 ♗e6 32.♗c6 d5 33.♖g2! ♗h3+ (after 33...♗xa3 34.♖h1!, Black gets mated) 34.♖xh3 ♗xa3 35.♖c2 ♗d6 36.♖xa7 with excellent winning chances for White.

30...♘e8 31.♖7c3

This slow move may be an indication of time trouble; the alternative 31.♖h7+ ♖g8 32.♘e7+ ♗xe7 33.♖xe7 offers an overwhelming advantage, but it requires some time to calculate.

31...♖dc8 32.a4 ♖xc3 33.♖xc3
 ♖c8?!



Black hopes that by reducing the material he can lessen White's winning chances, but he has most likely overlooked White's next move. Still, the defense is exceedingly difficult, e.g. 33...g4 34.♘c7 ♘xc7 35.♖xc7 d5 36.♗xf8 ♖xf8 37.♗g6 ♗c8 38.♗f7 d4 39.♗d5 and Black's queenside falls.

34.b6!

A crucial move, the Black b-pawn is fixed on b7 and ripe for the picking.

34...♖xc3 35.♗xc3 a6?

After this, Black loses without further resistance. The alternative 35...axb6 36.♘xb6 ♘c7 37.♗xb7 allows Black to struggle on a bit longer, but the result will ultimately be the same.

36.♘c7 ♘xc7 37.bxc7 ♗c8 38.g4!
 d5 39.♗xe5+ ♖g8 40.♗f5 1-0

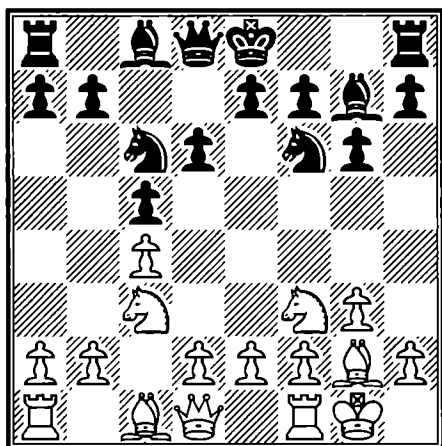
Chapter Seven

Symmetrical English

The Symmetrical English is very different from the Closed Sicilian Reversed. Here the two players jockey for small advantages, and kingside safety is rarely an issue. After 1.c4 c5 2.♟c3 ♟c6 3.g3 g6 4.♞g2 ♞g7, many GMs nowadays prefer the elastic 5.a3, but our move-order doesn't allow such luxuries. The aim is to steer for the position arising after 5.♟f3 ♟f6 6.0-0 0-0 7.d4 cxd4 8.♟xd4 (see Chapter Eight), but there are many ways for Black to break the symmetry early. The systems based on ...e6 and ...e5 occur the most frequently.

Game 75
Victor Frias –
Antonio Frois
 Plasencia (2) 1996
 Symmetrical English [A38]

1.♟f3 c5 2.g3 g6 3.♞g2 ♞g7 4.c4 ♟c6 5.♟c3 ♟f6 6.0-0 d6



Black plays this move here, because he wants to meet 7.d4 by 7...cxd4 8.♟xd4 ♞d7. If he castled immediately, he wouldn't have this option after 7.d4. On the other hand, the text loses some

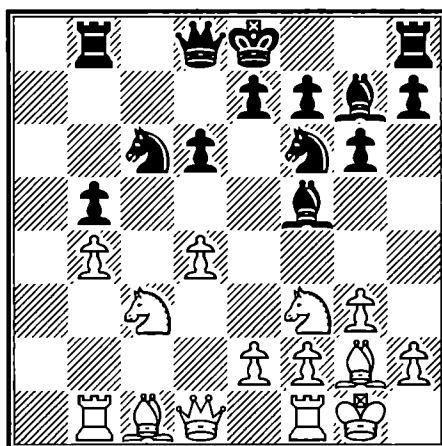
flexibility. Witness Illescas-Anand, Dos Hermanas 1996, which saw 7...0-0 8.♞b1 d5!.

7.a3 a6

7...0-0 8.♞b1 d5?! 9.cxd5 ♟xd5 10.♟xd5 ♜xd5 11.d3 a5 12.♞e3 ♝h5 13.♝a4 (13.♞c1 b6? (13...♞xb2 14.♞xc5=) 14.♟g5 ♞d7 15.♞f3+-) 13...♟d4 14.♟xd4 cxd4 15.♞xd4 ♝g4 16.e3 ♞xd4 17.♝xd4 ♝xd4 18.exd4= and White was a pawn up in the ending, Donaldson-D.Gurevich, Chicago 1997.

8.♞b1 ♞b8 9.b4 cxb4 10.axb4 b5 11.cxb5 axb5 12.d4 ♞f5

Black's early ...d7-d6 comes back to haunt him. He would now much prefer to have castled on move six, so as to be able to play ...d5 with only a slight disadvantage. Now things go from bad to worse.



13.d5!?

This intuitive sacrifice is not completely necessary, but it is certainly very attractive.

13...♙×b1 14.d×c6 ♘e4?

14...♙f5 15.♗d4 0-0 16.♗d×b5 is very good for White, who has two big passed pawns for his slight deficit.

15.♗×e4 ♗×e4 16.♖c2

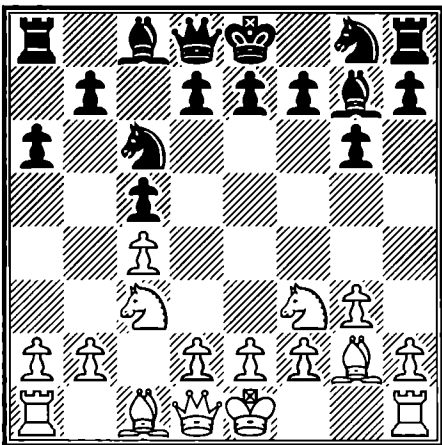
The double threat to capture on e4 or play c7 ends things quickly.

16...♗c3 17.♙b2 ♖c8 18.♙×c3 ♖×c6 19.♗d4 ♖c4 20.♗×b5 0-0 21.♖d3 ♖c8 22.♙×g7 ♖×g7 23.♙b7 1-0

Game 76
Vladimir Bagirov –
Alexey Suetin

Baku 1962
Symmetrical English [A38]

1.c4 c5 2.♗c3 g6 3.♗f3 ♙g7 4.g3 ♗c6 5.♙g2 a6



This is a well-motivated plan. Typically in such positions, whoever first gets in b4 or ...b5 has the advantage. Since White played ♗f3 on move one, he can't play the 5.a3 variation, and so has to follow Black's lead.

6.0-0

Also possible is 6.a3.

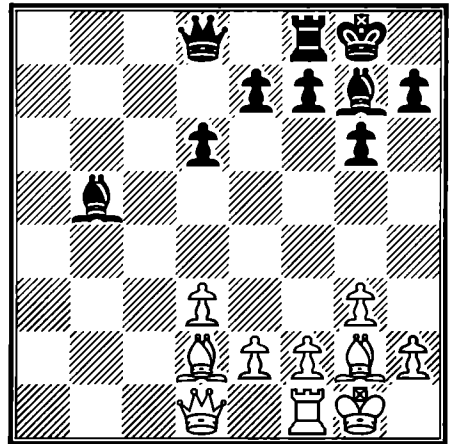
6...♖b8 7.a4 d6 8.d3 ♗f6

There is something to be said for ...e5 and ...♗ge7, especially since much of the sting of b2-b4 has been neutralized.

9.♙d2 0-0 10.♗e1 ♙d7 11.♗c2

The two knights quickly hop to the queenside to support the advances of their respective b-pawns.

11...♗e8 12.♖b1 ♗c7 13.b4 c×b4 14.♗×b4 ♗×b4 15.♖×b4 b5 16.a×b5 a×b5 17.c×b5 ♗×b5 18.♗×b5 ♖×b5 19.♖×b5 ♙×b5



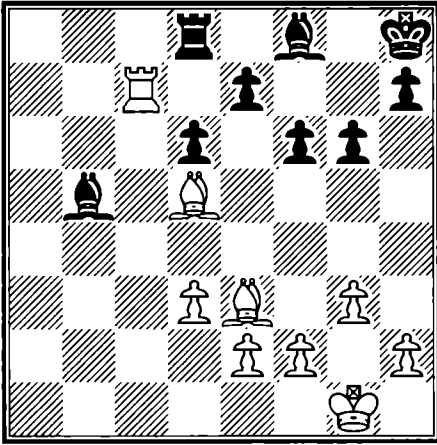
20.♖b3

Being on move in a symmetrical or near symmetrical position is usually a significant advantage. Here White uses his move to develop a useful initiative.

20...♖d7 21.♖c1 ♙a4 22.♖b4 ♖b5 23.♖×b5 ♙×b5 24.♙g5 f6

Black can't avoid this unpleasant weakening move. The rook was going to move to c7 where it not only attacks e7, but prepares to harass the bishop on b5.

25. ♖d5+ ♔h8 26. ♗e3 ♜d8
27. ♝c7 ♘f8



28.g4

Now that Black is totally tied down, White prepares to grab as much space as possible to cramp Black further.

28... ♖g7 29.h4 h6 30.g5

This move grabs more space and hopes to open the position for the rook and the e3-bishop.

30... h×g5 31.h×g5 f×g5

Following the principle that every trade helps the defender.

32. ♗×g5 ♜d7 33. ♝c8 ♘a6 34. ♝c1

Here 34. ♜a8 ♘b7 35. ♜a7 ♘c6 leads nowhere, so White prepares to redeploy his rook and possibly angle for ♗g5-e3-d4+. Inducing ...e5 would create further weaknesses in Black's position.

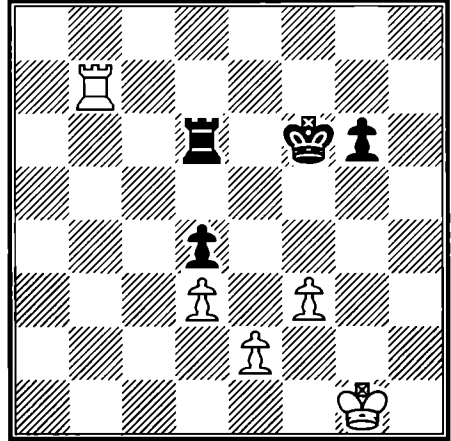
34... ♘b7 35. ♗e6 ♜d8 36.f3 d5?!

This understandable attempt to make some breathing room proves fatal.

37. ♝c7 ♘a8 38. ♜a7!

A necessary finesse, as the immediate capture on e7 fails to 38. ♗×e7 ♘×e7 39. ♝×e7+ ♔f6, winning a piece.

38... ♘c6 39. ♗×e7 ♘×e7 40. ♝×e7+ ♔f6 41. ♝c7 ♜d6 42. ♗c8 d4 43. ♗b7 ♘×b7 44. ♝×b7



44... ♜d5 45. ♝b8 ♔f7 46. ♔f2 g5 47. ♝b1 ♔e6 48. ♝g1 ♔f5 49. ♝g4 ♜d8 50. ♝e4 ♔f6 51. ♔e1 ♜d7 52. ♔d2 ♜d5 53. ♔c2 ♝e5 54. ♔b3 ♝×e4 55. d×e4 ♔e5 56. ♔c4 g4 57. f×g4 ♔×e4 58.g5 1-0

Game 77

Ulf Andersson –

John Van der Wiel

Wijk aan Zee (5) 1983

Symmetrical English [A37]

1. ♖f3 c5 2.c4 ♘c6 3.g3 g6 4. ♗g2 ♗g7 5. ♘c3 d6

5... ♘h6?! 6.h4! d6 7.d3 ♝b8 8.h5 ♗d7?! 9. ♗×h6! ♗×h6 10.h×g6 h×g6 11. ♔c1! ♗g7 12. ♝×h8+ ♗×h8 13. ♔h6 ♗×c3+ 14.b×c3±, as in Game 80.

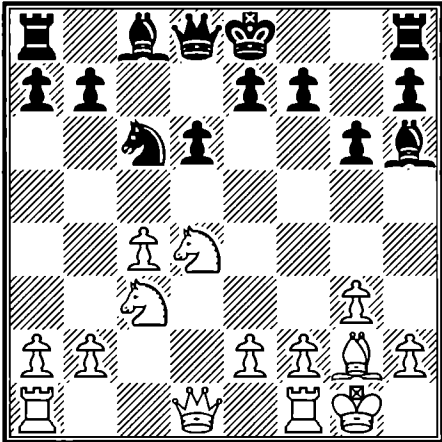
6.0-0 ♘h6

With this move order, Black takes away h2-h4-h5 and threatens to bring his knight to f5 with good effect. ng.com

7.d4!

Played before Black gets in ...e5; White gains space and allows for the harmonious development of the bishop.

7...cxd4 8. Qxh6 Qxh6 9. Qxd4



9...Qd7?!

This natural move is probably a mistake. 9...e5 10. Qxd4 0-0 11. Bfd1 Qg7 12. Qe3 Qxc3 13. Qxc3 Qc7 14. Bxc1 Qe6 15. c5 Qxc5 16. Qxc5 dxc5 17. b3 (17. Bxc5!) 17...Bxd8 18. Qxb7 Bxd1+ 19. Bxd1 c4 20. Qd5 Qxd5 21. Bxd5 cxb3 22. axb3 Bb8, and a draw was agreed in Loginov-Stanec, Aschach 1994.

10.c5 dxc5

10...Qg7 11. Qxc6 Qxc6 12. Qxc6+ bxc6 13. Qa4 Qxc3 14. Qxc6+ Qf8 15. bxc3 Bc8 16. Qa6 Bxc5 17. Qxa7 = Loginov-Csom, Budapest 1993.

11. Qxc6 Qxc6 12. Qxc6+ bxc6 13. Qc2

13. Qa4 0-0 14. Qxc6 Bc8 15. Qa4 Qb6 16. Qh4 Qg7 17. Bxb1 Qe6 18. Bfd1 Bfd8 19. Qa4 a6 20. Bxd8 Bxd8 21. Bd1 Bxd1+ 22. Qxd1 Qg5 23. Qd5

Qxd5 24. Qxd5 Qc1 25. b3 e6 26. Qc7 a5 27. Qe8+ Qf8 28. Qd6 = I. Fancsy-Turzo, Harkany 1994.

13...Qd2 14. Qxd2 Qxd2 15. Qe4 0-0-0 16. Bxd1 Qh6

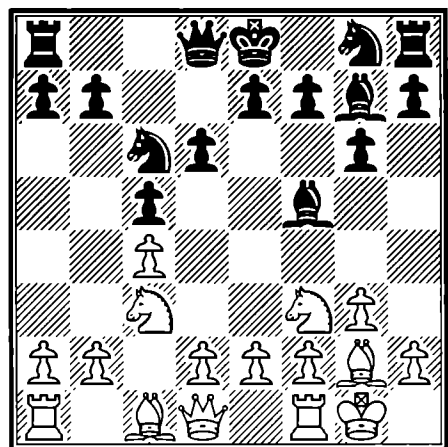
16...Qb4 17. a3 Qa5 18. Qxc5 Qb6 = (Andersson).

17. Qxc5 Bd5 18. Qd3 Qc7 19. f4! Qg7 20. Bc1 Ba5 21. a3 Bb5 22. Bc2 Bb8 23. b4 a5 24. Bfc1 B8b6 25. Qg2 e6 26. bxa5 Bxa5 27. Qb4 c5 28. Bxc5+ Bxc5 29. Bxc5+ Qb7 30. Bc4 Qf8 31. Qf3 Bb5 32. Qc6! Bd5 33. a4 Bd1? 34. Qe5 f6 35. Qd3 h5? 36. Be4 1-0

Game 78

*Aleksander Wojtkiewicz –
Ljubomir Ljubojevic*
Novi Sad ol (5) 1990
Symmetrical English [A37]

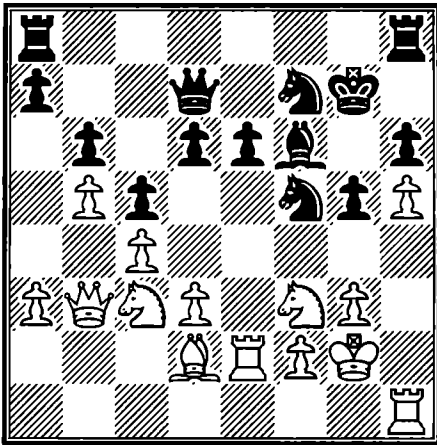
1. Qf3 c5 2. c4 g6 3. g3 Qg7 4. Qg2 Qc6 5. Qc3 d6 6. 0-0 Qf5



This is a sneaky move order by Black. Here 6...e5 7. d4 or 6...e6 7. d4 favor White; the seldom seen text delays developing the kingside to stop d4. The drawback is that White gets in b2-b4

and Black has no tangible threats on the kingside.

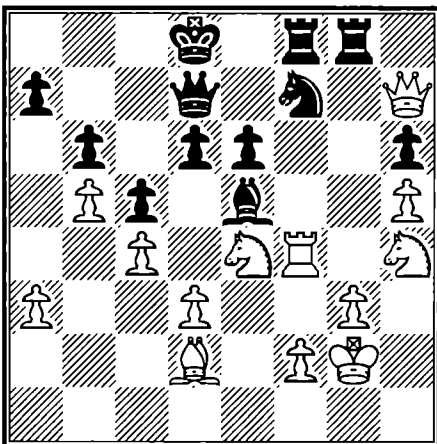
7.d3 ♖d7 8.♔d2 ♕h3 9.a3 ♕xg2
10.♗xg2 e6 11.♞b1 ♘ge7 12.b4
h6 13.h4 f5 14.♗c1 ♗f7 15.♞e1
♗g8 16.♗d1 ♗h7 17.♗b3 b6
18.b5 ♘d8 19.e4 ♘f7 20.♞e2 ♕f6
21.♞h1 ♗g7 22.h5 g5 23.exf5
♘xf5



24.♘e4

The first of two positional exchange sacrifices.

24...g4 25.♘h2 ♘d4 26.♗d1
♘xe2 27.♗xe2 ♕d4 28.♗xg4+
♗f8 29.♘f3 ♕g7 30.♞h4 ♞g8
31.♗g6 ♗e7 32.♞f4 ♞af8
33.♘h4 ♗d8 34.♗h7 ♕e5



35.♘g6 ♕xf4 36.♕xf4 ½-½

The position is very unclear and the game was played in an Olympiad where team considerations make the players more cautious.

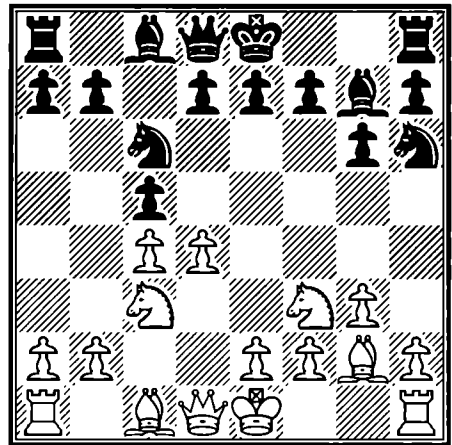
Game 79

*Einar Gausel –
Viswanathan Anand*

Manila ol (6) 1992

Symmetrical English [A37]

1.♘f3 c5 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♕g7 4.♕g2
♘c6 5.♘c3 ♘h6 6.d4



Theory recommends 6.h4!, but Gausel was probably suspicious about Anand's motives. Instead, he opts for a treatment better known after 5...d6 6.0-0 ♘h6 7.d4. In both cases, White is willing to trade his bishop for a knight. This exchange limits Black's counterplay and gives White good central control.

6...cxd4 7.♘xd4 0-0

7...♘xd4 8.♕xh6 ♕xh6 9.♗xd4±.

8.♘c2 d6 9.♕d2

A good square for the bishop: it protects the knight and discourages ...♗a5.

9...♙d7 10.0-0 ♖c8 11.b3

The text protects c4, while getting the pawn off b2, is an integral part of White's plan. This consists of getting a knight to d5 by ♙d2, b3, ♖c1, ♗e3, and finally ♗ed5.

11...♗g4

Anand admits the knight has no future on h6 and spends several tempi bringing it to f6.

12.h3 ♗f6 13.♖c1 a6 14.♗e3 ♙e6 15.♗ed5

White has a pleasant advantage. Perhaps because of team standings or norm considerations, then-IM Gausel decides to play it safe.

15...♙×d5 16.♗×d5 ♗×d5 17.c×d5 ♗d4 18.♖×c8 ♗×c8 19.e3 ♗b5 20.♗b1 ♗c3 21.♙×c3 ♗×c3 22.♖c1 ♗b4 23.♖c4 ♗b6 24.♗c2 ½-½

Possessing complete control of the only open file, Gausel clearly has the better of whatever chances remain.

Game 80

Mikhail Botvinnik – Svetozar Gligoric

Moscow ol (10) 1956
Symmetrical English [A37]

1.c4 g6 2.g3 c5 3.♙g2 ♙g7 4.♗c3 ♗c6 5.♗f3 ♗h6 6.h4 d6

6...♗f5 7.h5 d6 8.d3 ♙d7 9.h6 ♙f8 10.a3 e6 11.b4 ♙e7 12.b5 ♗a5 13.g4 ♗d4 14.♗d2 e5 15.e3 ♗e6 16.♗d5 a6

17.a4 0-0 18.♙b2 ♙g5 19.♗e4 ♙c8 20.♗×g5 ♗×g5 21.f4+- Vaulin-Szalanczy, Kecskemet 1993.

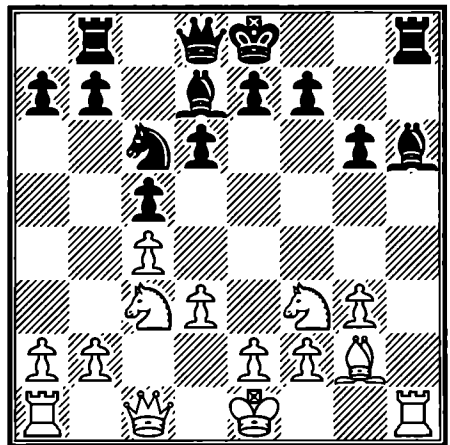
7.d3

7.h5 ♙g4 8.d3 ♗d7 9.♙d2 ♗f5 (9...♙×h5 10.♙×h6 ♙×h6 11.g4 ♗×g4 12.♙h3 ♗f4 13.♗d5 ♙×f3 14.♗×f4 ♙×h1 15.♗d5 ♙×d5 16.c×d5 ♗e5 17.♗a4+ ♗f8 18.f4 b5 19.♗e4 f5) 10.h6 ♙×c3 11.♙×c3 ♗fd4 12.e3 ♗×f3+ 13.♙×f3 ♙×f3 14.♗×f3± Christiansen-Browne, Lone Pine 1972.

7...♖b8 8.h5 ♙d7

8...f6 9.h×g6 h×g6 10.♙×h6? (10.♗h4±) 10...♙×h6 11.♗c1? ♙×c1 12.♖×h8+ ♗f7 13.♖×d8 ♙×b2.

9.♙×h6 ♙×h6 10.h×g6 h×g6 11.♗c1!



11...♙g7 12.♖×h8+ ♙×h8 13.♗h6 ♙×c3+

13...♙f6 14.♗g5!.

14.b×c3 e6 15.♗g5 ♗e7 16.♗d2 ♙e8 17.♗g7 ♗d7 18.f4 ♗e7 19.♖h1 ♗d8 20.♗e4 ♗c7 21.♖h8 ♙c6 22.♗f6 ♗b6 23.♙×c6 ♗×c6

24.♖h7 ♘d8 25.♜xg6 ♕a6 26.a4
 ♕a5 27.♜g5 ♕xa4 28.♖h1 ♖b3
 29.♜h4 ♖b2 30.g4 1-0

Game 81

*Ulf Andersson –
 Florin Gheorghiu*

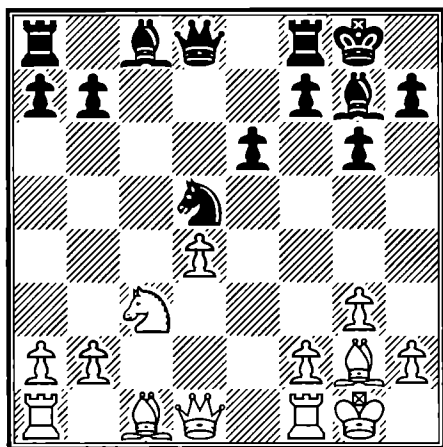
Moscow (11) 1981

Symmetrical English [A36]

1.♘f3 c5 2.g3 g6 3.♙g2 ♙g7 4.c4
 ♘c6 5.♘c3 e6 6.e3 ♘ge7 7.d4
 cxd4 8.♘xd4 d5 9.cxd5 ♘xd4
 10.exd4 ♘xd5

10...exd5?! 11.0-0 0-0 12.♙g5 ♙e6
 13.♜b3 f6 14.♙f4 ♜d7 15.♘b5! ♙f7
 16.♖ac1 ♘c6 17.♖fd1 f5? 18.♘d6
 ♘xd4 19.♖xd4 ♙xd4 20.♘xf7 ♖xf7
 21.♖c7 ♜e6 22.♙xd5 1-0, Pflieger-Van
 den Berg, Hamburg 1965.

11.0-0 0-0



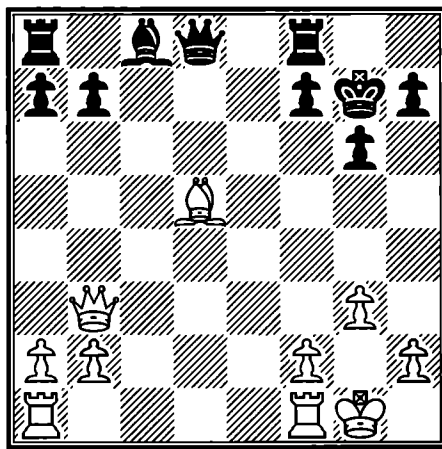
12.♜b3

This is White's best try for an advantage, but 12.♘xd5 contains a trap worth remembering: 12.♘xd5 exd5 13.♜b3 ♙xd4? 14.♙h6 ♖e8? 15.♖ad1 ♜f6? 16.♜a4 1-0, Barcza-O'Kelly, Havana 1967.

12...♙xd4

The main alternative is 12...♘e7, when 13.♖d1 is very interesting (see the notes to Game 82). Also worth consideration is 13.♙g5. White got a slight, persistent pull in Gheorghiu-Jansa, Prague 1985: 12...♘e7 13.♙g5 h6 14.♙xe7 ♜xe7 15.♖ad1 ♖d8 16.d5 ♜f8 17.♖d2 exd5 18.♘xd5 ♖b8 19.♜e3.

13.♘xd5 exd5 14.♙h6 ♙g7!
 15.♙xg7 ♜xg7 16.♙xd5



16...a5!

The best answer to the pressure on b7. Black gains space on the queenside, prepares ...♖a8-a5-b5, and drives the white queen away from a nice square.

17.♖ac1

Here IM John Watson's suggestion of 17.♖fd1, harassing the black queen, makes more sense.

17...a4 18.♜c3+ ♜f6 19.♜xf6+
 ♕xf6 20.♖c7 ♖a5!

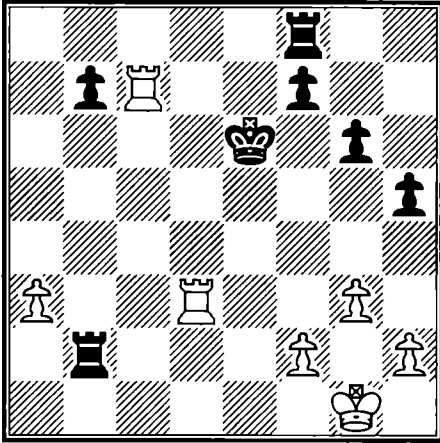
The point of Black's play, as the rook becomes active.

21.♖d1

21.♙xb7 ♙e6 22.a3 ♖b8.uring.com

Symmetrical English

21...♖b5 22.b3 a×b3 23.♗×b3
 ♗e6! 24.♗×e6 ♖×e6 25.♞d3! ♞b2
 26.a3 h5?!



Having equalized, Black loses his sense of danger. Correct is 26...♖f6, intending 27...♖g7, to bring the king back to safety.

27.♞f3!

Tying up Black, as the king is unable to get back safely. White will press to gain space on the kingside by pushing his pawns and then advance his king. Black has to suffer a little, but he can still hold.

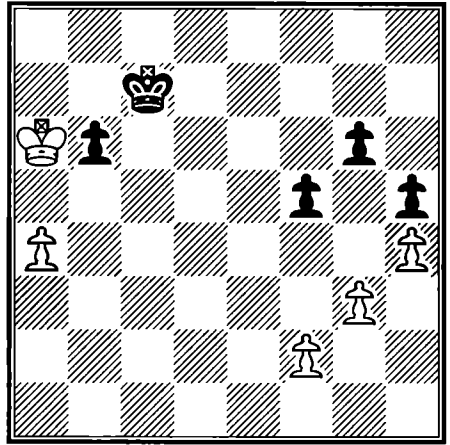
27...♞b6 28.♖g2 ♞b5 29.h3 ♞b6
 30.♞c2 f5 31.♞d3 ♖f6 32.h4 ♞e8
 33.♖f3 ♞e7 34.♞cd2 ♞ee6
 35.♞e2 ♞ed6 36.♞×d6+

White has made some progress, but to go further he needs to trade a pair of rooks to minimize Black's counterplay.

36...♞×d6 37.♞e3 b6! 38.♞b3 ♞e6
 39.♞b4 ♖f7 40.♖f4 ♖f6 41.a4
 ♞c6 42.♖e3 ♞d6 43.♞d4 ♞×d4!

Gheorghiu correctly trades down, because he sees a trick to draw the pawn ending.

44.♖×d4 ♖e6 45.♖c4 ♖d6
 46.♖b5 ♖c7 47.♖a6!



47...f4

47...♖c6? 48.f4 ♖c7 49.♖a7 ♖c6
 50.♖b8! and White wins.

48.g×f4 ♖c6 49.f3 ♖c5 50.♖b7
 b5 51.a×b5 ♖×b5 52.♖c7 ♖c5
 53.♖d7 ♖d4 54.♖e6 ♖e3 55.♖f6
 ♖×f3 56.f5 g×f5 57.♖×f5 ½-½

Game 82

Wlodzimierz Schmidt –

Pawel Stempin

Lublin 1988

Symmetrical English [A36]

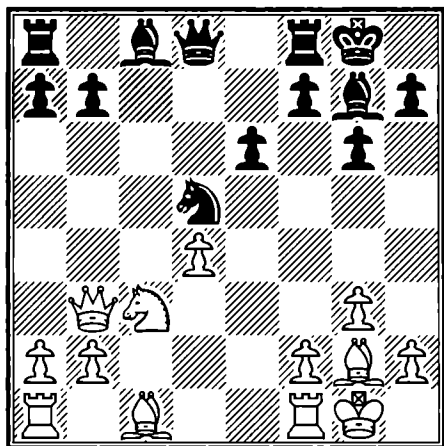
1.c4 c5 2.g3 g6 3.♗g2 ♗g7 4.♟c3
 ♟c6 5.♟f3 e6

This move has enjoyed an excellent reputation since Petrosian-Fischer, Belgrade 1970.

6.e3

This leads to positions that normally arise after 5.e3 e6 6.♟ge2.

6...♟ge7 7.d4 c×d4 8.♟×d4 d5
 9.c×d5 ♟×d4 10.e×d4 ♟×d5
 11.0-0 0-0 12.♖b3! ststouring.com



This position may look drawish; however, Black must be very careful, as a few indifferent moves could land him in trouble. Now Black must choose between 12...e7, 12...b6 and 12...d4.

12...Qxd4

Trying to clear the board. Taimanov, in *ECO, Volume A* (1st edition), prefers 12...e7, quoting Forintos-Sapi, Hungary 1969, which went 13.d5 exd5 14.g5 h6 15.Qxe7 cxe7 16.dxd5 ce5 with equality. More logical is 13.f3, preparing d5 and keeping the bishop on c8 bottled up a bit longer. IM John Watson, in the second edition of his authoritative work *The Symmetrical English* (Macmillan 1988), gives 13.f3 Qxd4?! (13...b6 14.a4 cb3 15.axb3) 14.g5 as crushing. The other alternative, 12...b6, might well be best here. *ECO* gives 13.dxd5 exd5 14.e3 e6 15.f3 (15.f3!?) 15...f3 (15...cb3 16.axb3 f3) 16.dxd5 e6 17.cxd5 f3 18.c5 e6 19.cb6 e6 20.e6 axb6 21.f3 with a slight edge to White from Kestler-Pavlov, Bucharest 1976, but this is not too convincing.

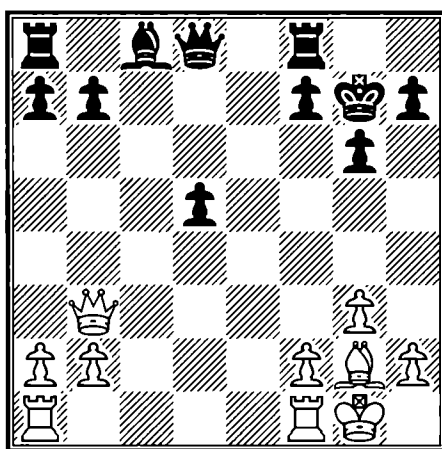
13.dxd5

In *ECO*, Taimanov claims that after 13.Qh6 Qg7 14.Qxg7 c7xg7 15.f3 b6 16.dxd5 cb3 17.axb3 exd5 18.f3xd5 a6 19.b4, White had a slight advantage in the ending, as in Smyslov-Petrosian, USSR (ch) 1974. I (JD) have two points to make. First, Smyslov and Petrosian played in the USSR Cup in Moscow in 1974, not the Soviet Championship. Second, the game was drawn after 19...f3 20.f3d6 e6 21.h4 f3d8 22.f3ad1 f3xd3 23.f3xd6 b6. On 21.f3b6, Black has 21...f3d8. Probably 21.f3ad1 is best, though after 21...f3c8 it doesn't seem to amount to anything.

13...exd5 14.Qh6 Qg7

14...f3 15.f3ad1 Qg7 (a common trap in this line is 15...cb6?? 16.c7a4 winning material) 16.Qxd5 cf6 17.Qg5! cf5 18.f3e1 e6 19.Qxe6 fe6 20.Qf4 (20.Qe3 f7 21.Qd4 b6 22.Qxg7 c7xg7 23.f3d4 f3f8 24.f3f4 c7a5 25.f3xe6 f3xe6 26.c7xe6 f3xf4 27.gxf4) 20...c7f7 21.Qe5 Gheorghiu-Bischoff, Baden-Baden 1987.

15.Qxg7 c7xg7



16.Qxd5

This is the position that GM Schmidt has been aiming for. It might not look

like much at first, as White only has a slight lead in development and the pawn structure is completely symmetrical, but Black's defense is still problematic. First and foremost is how to bring the c8-bishop into the game.

16...♖f6

16...♖b8 17.♖fd1 ♖f6 18.♖ac1 ♗g4 19.f3 ♗h3 20.♖c7 ♖be8 21.♖c3±; for 16...a5! see Game 81.

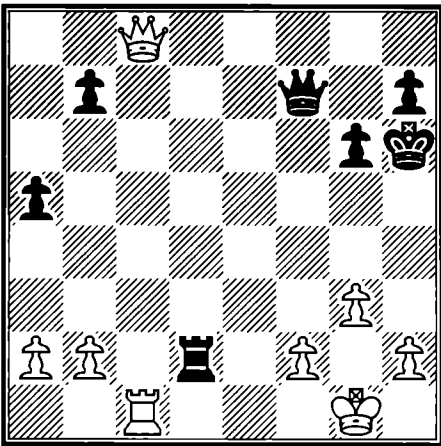
17.♖ac1 a5 18.♖c7 ♖a6 19.♖fc1 ♖b6 20.♖e3 ♖d6

20...♗f5 21.♗xf7 ♖xf7 22.♖xf7+ ♖xf7 23.♖c7+ 24.♖h6 is carnage.

21.♗xf7 ♖xf7 22.♖xf7+ ♖xf7 23.♖c3+

An important finesse to drive Black's king to a bad square.

23...♖h6 24.♖xc8 ♖d2



25.♖c5

A good centralizing move; a pawn up with Black's king exposed, White is winning. The first step is to neutralize Black's active pieces, particularly his rook.

25...♖f3

25...♖xb2 26.♖e3+ ♖g7 (26...g5 27.h4) 27.♖d4+ ♖f6 28.♖c7+.

26.h4 ♖d5 27.♖e7 ♖f5 28.♖e1 ♖d5 29.a4

Played with the intention of fixing Black's a5-pawn as a target; however, to do so White will have to trade a pair of pawns, which is exactly what the defender wants. Correct is 28.♖c3!, continuing the process of driving Black back. Then White could steer for a trade of rooks or queens, as both endings are won for him.

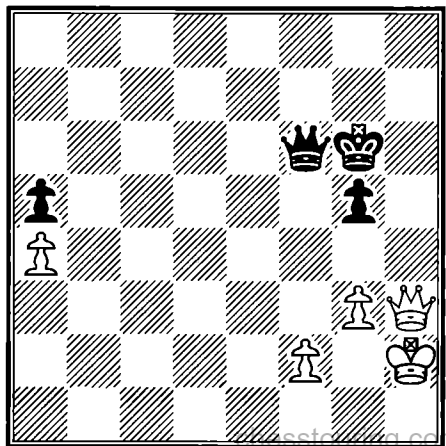
29...b6 30.b4 ♖h5

30...axb4 31.♖xb4 ♖d1+ 32.♖xd1 ♖xd1+ 33.♖g2 ♖d8, White's miscue on move twenty-nine gave Stepin this opportunity, but he missed it.

31.bxa5 bxa5 32.♖b1 ♖g4 33.♖h2 ♖f5 34.♖b2 g5

On passive moves, White had 35.♖e2, with ♖e4+ to follow.

35.♖e7 h6 36.♖d2 ♖f7 37.♖e6+ ♖h5 38.hxg5 hxg5 39.♖h3+ ♖g6 40.♖d6+ ♖f6 41.♖xf6+ ♖xf6



42. ♖f1

It may seem as if White has let Black off the hook, but with weaknesses on a5 and g5, Black has no real defense.

42... ♖d4 43. ♖a6+

Centralizing the queen is the first order of business.

43... ♖h5 44. ♖e2+ ♖h6 45. ♖c2 g4 46. ♖c6+ ♖g7 47. ♖g2 ♖b4

Black would prefer to keep his queen in the center, but in view of 48. ♖c7+, picking up the a-pawn, he has little choice.

48. ♖f1

Now that Black's queen is away from the center, the white king can start to advance.

48... ♖b1+ 49. ♖e2 ♖f5 50. ♖e3 ♖g5+ 51. ♖d3 ♖f5+ 52. ♖e4 ♖g5

52... ♖xf2 53. ♖d4+.

53. ♖c4 ♖c1+ 54. ♖d5 ♖c8 55. ♖e7+ ♖h8 56. ♖d4 1-0

56... ♖g8 57. ♖g5+; 56... ♖f5 57. ♖e5+ and Black is in *zugzwang*.

Game 83

Ulf Andersson –

Yasser Seirawan

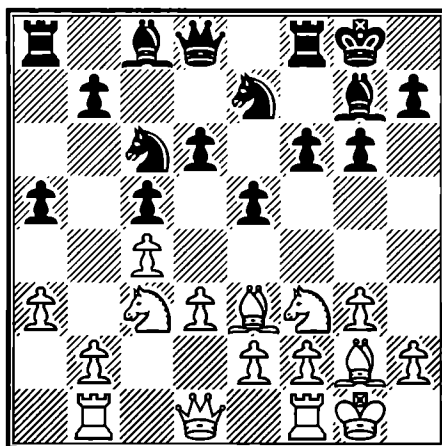
Linares (2) 1983

Symmetrical English [A37]

1. ♖f3 c5 2. c4 ♖c6 3. g3 g6 4. ♖g2 ♖g7 5. ♖c3 e5 6. 0-0 d6 7. a3 ♖ge7 8. ♖b1 a5 9. d3 0-0 10. ♖g3

White would like to trade his bishop for Black's knight to strengthen his control over d5. An exchange would likely be followed by ♖f3-e1-c2-e3-d5.

10... f6 11. ♖e3!



A very fine move by Andersson; most play 11. ♖d2, but Ulf correctly understands the bishop belongs on e3 to restrain the ...d6-d5 break. If Black hits the bishop with 11... ♖f5, White simply retreats to d2, leaving the f5-knight poorly placed. Black needs the knight on e7 to guard the d5-square. He also needs to keep the option of ...f6-f5 available.

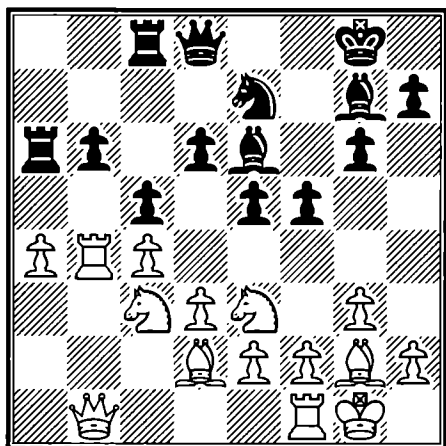
11... ♖e6 12. ♖e1 ♖d7

12... ♖f7 13. ♖c2 b6 14. b4 a×b4 15. a×b4 ♖b8 16. ♖d2 f5 Donaldson-Minev, Portland 1985, White should play 17. ♖g5 with a small edge.

13. ♖c2 a4 14. b3 a×b3 15. ♖×b3 ♖fc8 16. ♖b1 ♖a6 17. ♖b6 ♖c7 18. ♖b2 b6 19. ♖d2 ♖d8 20. a4 f5 21. ♖e3 ♖b4 22. ♖×b4!

A well-timed exchange sacrifice; Andersson gets a pawn and plenty of weaknesses to play against. ring.com

Symmetrical English



22...cxb4 23.♖xb4 ♗d7 24.♞b1
♞d8 25.♗b3 ♖h8 26.♘c2 h6
27.♘b4 ♞a5 28.h4 f4 29.♗h2
♗h7

Black's problem is that he has no real counterplay.

30.♘bd5 ♘xd5 31.cxd5 ♗f5
32.♗xb6 ♞c5 33.a5 ♞dc8 34.♞b3
f×g3+ 35.f×g3 e4 36.♘xe4 ♞c2
37.♗e3 ♗a4 38.♞b7 ♞8c7
39.♞xc7 ♞xc7 40.♘xd6 ♞c2
41.♘xf5 1-0

Game 84

**Gregory Kaidanov –
Vladimir Ilinsky**

Gausdal (1) 1991

Symmetrical English [A37]

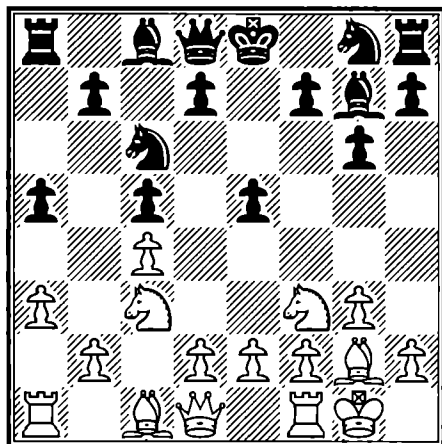
1.c4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.g3 g6 4.♗g2
♗g7 5.♘c3 e5 6.a3 a5

This is a difficult move to make. Black rules out b2-b4 for the time being, but he might have waited for ♞b1 first. Defending against b4 gambits causes some weaknesses on the queenside.

7.0-0

7.♞b1 ♘ge7 8.0-0 d6 9.d3 0-0 10.♘e1
♗e6 11.♘c2 d5 12.cxd5 ♘xd5 13.♘e3

♘xe3 14.♗xe3 ♘d4 15.♗xb7 ♞b8
16.♗g2 ♗b3 17.♗d2 a4 18.♞bc1±
Kaidanov-Brady, Dublin 1991, Black doesn't have enough for the pawn.



7...d6 8.d3

8.♘e1 ♘ge7 9.♘c2 ♞b8 10.♘e3 0-0
11.d3 ♗d7 12.♗d2 ♘d4 13.♞e1 b5
14.cxb5 ♘xb5 15.♘c4 ♗c7 16.♘xb5
♞xb5 17.a4 ♞b4 18.♗xb4 cxb4
19.♞c1± Kaidanov-Egeli, Gausdal
1991.

8...♘ge7 9.♘e1 ♗e6 10.♘c2 d5

It's now or never; White is threatening 11.♘e3.

11.cxd5 ♘xd5 12.♘e3 ♘de7

At this point, Black would rather have castled than to have played ...a5, which has only weakened the b6-square. 12...♘xc3 13.b×c3±.

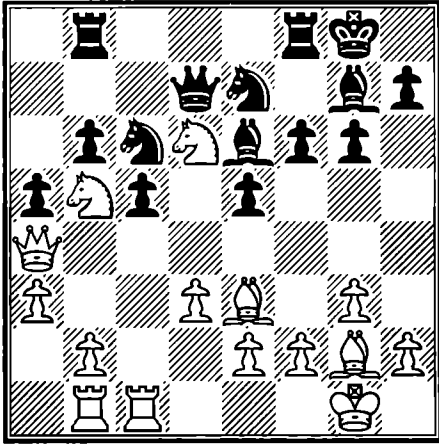
13.♘c4

This is a very inviting square given that ...a5 has been played.

13...0-0 14.♗g5 f6 15.♗e3 b6
16.♗a4 ♗c7 17.♘b5 ♗d8 18.♘c3
♗c7 19.♞fc1 chesstouring.com

The text is part of the final preparations for b2-b4!.

19...♖ab8 20.♖ab1 ♖fc8 21.♘b5 ♗d7 22.♘cd6 ♖f8



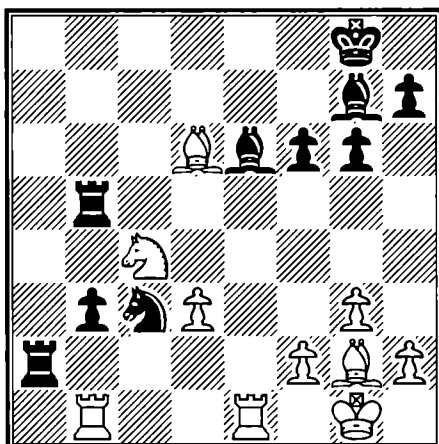
23.b4! a×b4 24.a×b4 ♖a8

24...♘×b4 25.♖×b4! c×b4 26.♖c7 ♗d8 27.♗a7+-, this variation demonstrates the pent-up energy of the white pieces.

25.♗d1 c×b4 26.♙×b6 ♖a6 27.♙c5 ♖b8 28.d4

This break brings all of White's pieces into the game.

28...e×d4 29.♘×d4 ♘×d4 30.♗×d4 b3 31.♗d3 ♖a2 32.♘c4 ♗×d3 33.e×d3 ♘d5 34.♙d6 ♖b5 35.♖e1 ♘c3



36.♖×e6! ♘×b1 37.♙c6 ♘c3 38.♖e8+ ♗f7 39.♙b4!

Kaidanov vacates the d6-square for a huge threat.

39...♘e2+ 40.♗g2 g5 41.♙×b5 ♘d4 42.♖e7+ ♗g6 43.♙e8+ ♗h6 44.♘e3 f5 45.♖e6+ 1-0

Game 85

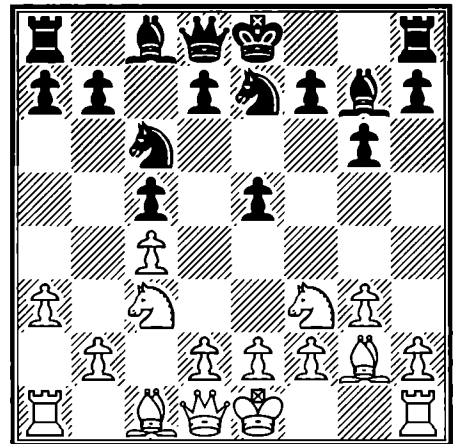
Jan Smejkal –

Orazly Annageldiev

Moscow ol (11) 1994

Symmetrical English [A37]

1.c4 c5 2.g3 ♘c6 3.♙g2 g6 4.♘c3 ♙g7 5.♘f3 e5 6.a3 ♘ge7



This is not a mistake, but it could be deemed imprecise, especially in view of Black's follow-up. Typically, when White plays the maneuver ♘f3-e1-c2, designed to force b2-b4 or to put the knight on d5, Black must have a plan to counter it. One idea is to try to play ...d6-d5. This threat often lures the c3-knight to d5, which makes a break by ...b5 much easier to achieve. Black doesn't want to allow White knights on c3 and e3, where they stifle both breaks. With this in mind, Black should play an early ...d6, meeting ♘e1 by ...♙e6, when d3 is countered by ♘d5. Should

Black hesitate, White will get his knight to c2 and meet ...♙e6 by ♘e3, temporarily dispensing with d3 and saving a vital tempo for the optimal positioning of his knights.

7.♞b1 0-0 8.0-0 a5 9.♘e1 d6 10.♘c2 ♙e6

Now it's too late and White comes to e3 before ...d5 can be played.

11.♘e3 f5

This is natural, since Black can't play ...d5, but it creates weaknesses.

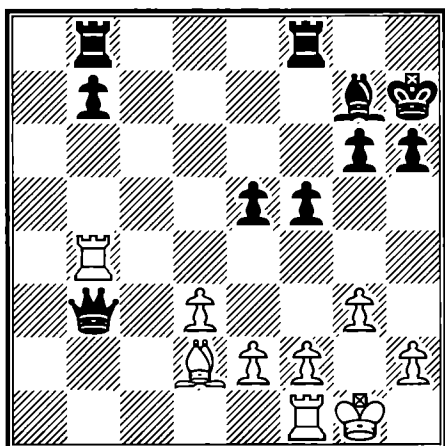
12.d3 h6 13.♘ed5 ♖h7 14.♙d2 ♞b8 15.b4

White is clearly for choice. His play on the queenside is more significant than anything Black can muster on the kingside.

15...a×b4

This is a rather radical solution for Black. He greatly simplifies the position, but still has problems to solve.

16.a×b4 c×b4 17.♘×b4 ♘×b4 18.♞×b4 d5 19.c×d5 ♘×d5 20.♘×d5 ♙×d5 21.♙×d5 ♖×d5 22.♗b3 ♗×b3



23.♞×b3

Just as in Game 76, the simplified nature of the position doesn't guarantee a draw. Here the weakness on b7 and the drafty seventh rank makes the defense difficult for Black.

23...♞fc8 24.♙e3

Threatening 25.♙a7.

24...♞c2 25.♙a7 ♞bc8 26.♞×b7 ♞×e2 27.d4 e4 28.d5

This ensures that f2 will be defended. The d-pawn is bait to be used to double the rooks on the seventh.

28...♞d2 29.♞d7 g5

This tries to break the pin, but creates fresh weaknesses for White to attack.

30.♙e3 ♞d3 31.♞b1 ♖g8 32.♞b6!

Preparing ♞b1-b6-g6.

32...♞f8 33.♙c5 e3

Desperation.

34.♙×f8 e2 35.♞e6 ♖×f8 36.♞×e2 f4 1-0

Game 86

Mihail Marin –

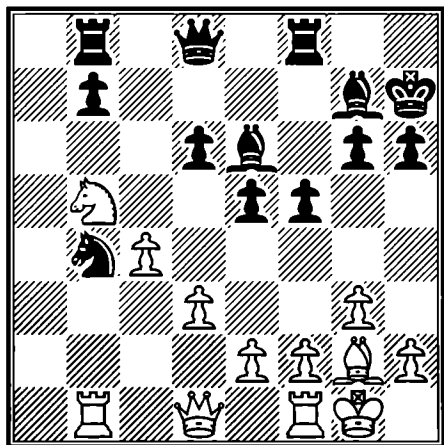
Yuri Gonzalez

Manresa (4) 2004

Symmetrical English [A37]

1.c4 c5 2.g3 ♘c6 3.♙g2 g6 4.♘c3 ♙g7 5.♘f3 e5 6.0-0 ♘ge7 7.a3 a5 8.♘e1 0-0 9.♘c2 d6 10.d3 ♙e6 11.♘e3 ♞b8 12.♘ed5 h6 13.♞b1

**♖h7 14. ♕d2 f5 15. b4 a×b4
16. a×b4 ♗×b4 17. ♗×b4 c×b4
18. ♗b5 ♗c6 19. ♕×b4?!**



19. ♖b3 ♗d4 20. ♗×d4 exd4, and now rather than Marin's 21. ♕×b4, which allows Black to equalize by 21...b5, White can play 21. ♖×b4 with a clear advantage. The text move allows Black to equalize.

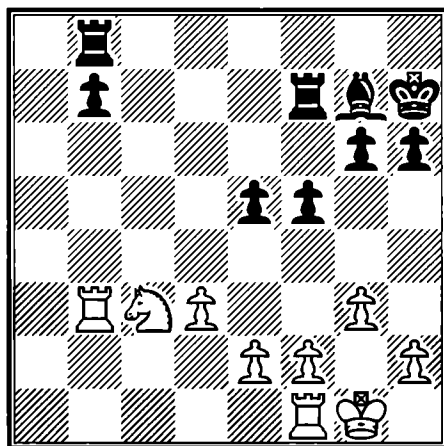
**19... ♗×b4 20. ♖×b4 d5 21. c×d5
♕×d5 22. ♕×d5 ♖×d5 23. ♗c3
♖f7 24. ♖b3 ♖×b3 25. ♖×b3**

This is very similar to the previous game.

25... ♖f7?!

25... ♖fc8 26. e4 (Marin gives 26. ♗d5 b5 27. ♖fb1 ♖c5 28. e4 ♖b7 29. ♗c3 b4 30. ♗a2 ♖a5 without an evaluation, but Black is okay) 26... ♖c6 (26... ♖c5 27. ♖fb1 is slightly better for White) 27. ♗d5 b5 28. ♖fb1 ♖c5 29. ♗c3 f×e4

30. d×e4 ♖c4 31. f3 b4 32. ♗d5 ♕f8 33. ♖f1 ♖g7 34. ♖1b2 and White doesn't really have much of an edge at this point.



**26. ♖fb1 ♕f8 27. ♖b5 ♕d6
28. ♖d5 ♕c7 29. ♗b5 ♖e8 30. ♗a3
♕b8 31. ♖db5 ♖ee7 32. ♗c4 f4
33. ♖g2 h5 34. ♗d2**

Marin indicates 34. ♗a5 ♕a7 35. g×f4 exf4 36. ♖f3 is more accurate, when Black will lose material.

34... ♖h6 35. ♗e4 ♖d7 36. ♖1b3

Marin also mentions 36. g×f4 exf4 37. ♖f3 as the most accurate.

**36... ♖c7 37. ♖b2 ♖cd7 38. g×f4
exf4 39. ♖f3 ♕a7 40. ♖2b4 ♕d4
41. h3! b6 42. ♖c4 ♖f5 43. ♖×f5
g×f5 44. ♖c6+ ♖g7 45. ♗d6 ♖f6
46. h4! ♖e5 47. ♗c4+ ♖d5
48. ♖×b6! ♖g7 49. ♖d6+ ♖c5
50. ♖h6 1-0**

Chapter Eight

Symmetrical English with ...c5 and ...d5 or ...d6

Our coverage of the Symmetrical English continues, but with one important twist – Black puts his knight on f6 and plays ...d5 early, or allows White to play d5. When Black grabs space with ...d5, it typically costs time, which White can then use to generate strong pressure on the queenside. The games by Garry Kasparov (Game 92) and Susan Polgar (Game 96) are illustrative of White's strength in this core position of our repertoire. As in the previous chapter, it is important to note that the suggestions we offer for White are by no means a complete guide to all of Black's responses. To do that we would have filled a whole book!

Game 87

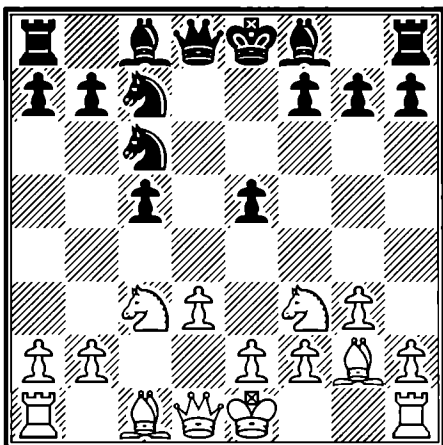
Margeir Petursson –

John Emms

Gausdal (5) 1996

Symmetrical English [A34]

1.c4 c5 2.♟f3 ♞c6 3.♟c3 ♟f6
4.g3 d5 5.cxd5 ♞xd5 6.♞g2 ♟c7
7.d3 e5



Or 7...g6 8.♞e3 ♟e6 9.0-0 ♞g7

10.♟a4 ♟cd4 11.♞c1 ♞a5 12.♟xc5
♟xf3+ 13.♞xf3 ♟xc5 14.♞xc5 ♞xa2
15.b4 0-0 16.♞c7 ♞f6 17.♞b1 ♞a4
18.♞fc1 ♞b8 19.♞c2± Gheorghiu-
Korchnoi, Palma de Mallorca 1972.

8.♟d2 ♞d7 9.0-0 ♞e7 10.♟c4 0-0

10...f6 11.a4 ♞e6 12.f4 exf4 13.♞xf4
♟d5 14.♟xd5 ♞xd5 15.♟d6+ ♞xd6
16.♞xd5 ♞xf4 17.♞xc6+ bxc6
18.♞xf4± Donaldson-Alzate, Philadel-
phia 1986.

11.a4

White abstains from 11.♞xc6 ♞xc6
12.♟xe5 ♞e8, which wins a pawn, but
provides Black decent compensation.
Piket, as white, beat Kasparov in this
line in an online rapid game, but Black
was okay after the opening.

11...b6 12.♞d2 ♞b8

12...♞c8 is met by 13.♟b5!.

13.f4 exf4 14.♞xf4

As Petursson points out in *ChessBase Magazine*, this position was reached with colors reversed in Korchnoi-Matulovic, Sarajevo 1969. White can also consider 14.gxf4!? to eliminate this possibility.

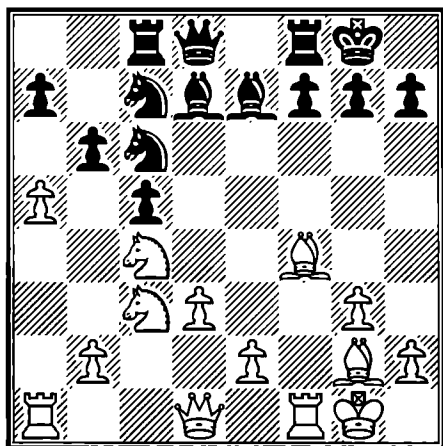
14...♞c8

Another possibility is 15.♞d2!? ♟e6
16.♞xg5 ♞xg5 17.♞xg5 ♟xg5 18.h4

♖e6 19.e3 f6 20.♗d5 with a better game for White.

20.♙xa5 ♖e8 21.♙c3 ♗d4 22.e3 ♗c6 23.♗h5! b4?

15.a5



White doesn't achieve anything by 15.♗b5 after 15...♗e6! 16.♙xc6 ♖xc6 17.♗xa7 ♗xf4 18.♗xc6 (18.♖xf4 ♖h6!?) and Black has sufficient compensation for the pawn) 18...♗h3+ 19.♗g2 ♖a8 with a clear advantage for Black (Petursson).

15...♗e6 16.♙d2?!

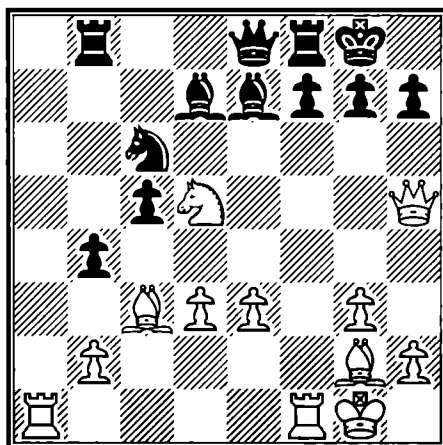
More accurate is 16.a×b6 a×b6 17.♙d2 ♖b8, transposing to the game.

16...♖b8?!

After this move, White can reach the position he wants. A way to confuse matters is 16...♗xa5!? 17.♗xa5 b×a5 18.♗d5 a4!?, which creates new imbalances that are difficult to evaluate.

17.a×b6 a×b6 18.♗d5 b5 19.♗a5 ♗xa5?!

Petursson gives 19...♙g5 as better: 20.♙xg5 (20.e3!?) 20...♖xg5 21.♗xc6 (also 21.♗f6+ gxf6 22.♙xc6 is better for White) 21...♙xc6 22.♗f6+ gxf6 23.♙xc6 ♗g7 24.♖f2±.



After 23...f6! 24.♖xe8 ♖f×e8 (Petursson), White only has a slight edge. Now White is winning.

24.♙f6!! h6 25.♙e4 ♙e6 26.♖f4 ♖d8

Or 26...♙xd5 27.♖xh6!! g×h6 28.♖g4#.

27.♙xe7 ♙xd5 28.♙xd8 1-0

Game 88

John Donaldson –

Greg Samsa

Stillwater 1995

Symmetrical English [A38]

1.♗f3 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♙g7 4.♙g2 0-0 5.♗c3 d5 6.c×d5 ♗×d5 7.0-0 c5 8.♗×d5 ♖×d5 9.d3 ♗c6 10.♙e3 ♖d6

Black's main choices are the text and 10...♙d7, but 10...♙xb2 deserves consideration. The following variations give some idea of the pressure White gets for the pawn. Practically speaking, Black should be looking for a way to return the material: 11.♖b1 ♙f6 (to guard e7) 12.♖a4 ♖h5? and now:m

a) 12...cxb4 13.a3 cxa2 14.dg5 dc3
15.dxd5 dxa4 16.de4 db6 17.dxf6+
exf6 18.d3±.

b) 12...d7 13.dxc5 dd4 14.d1 de6
15.de3 Bb8 16.d4±.

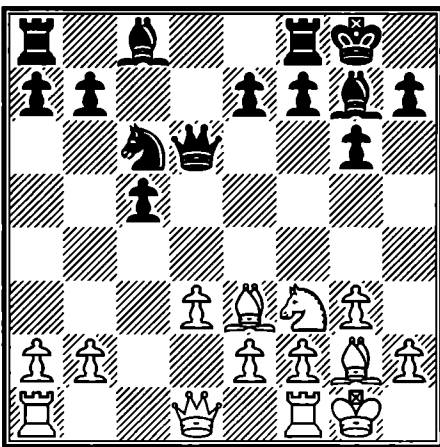
c) 12...d6 13.Bfc1 (13.dd2 dd4
14.dxd4 dxd4 15.dxd4 cxd4
16.dxb7 Bb8 17.dxc8 Bfxc8
18.dc4±) 13...b6 14.d4 dxd4
15.dxd4 cxd4 16.d4 e5 17.dxa8 df5
18.dxa7 dxb1 19.Bxb1 exf4 20.de4
d3 21.exd3 dd4 with compensation)
13.Bb5 e5 14.dxc5 Be8 15.de3 Be7
16.Bfb1±.

The decentralizing 10...h5?! leaves
Black fighting to keep his head above
water after 11.Bc1, and now:

a) 11...dd4?! 12.b4±.

b) 11...dd4 12.dxd4 cxd4 13.d4
Bd8 14.b4 a6 15.Bc5±.

c) 11...b6? 12.dg5! dd7? (12...dg4
13.dxc6 dx2 14.d2 h6 15.Bfe1
Bac8 16.dg2 dg4 17.h3+-)
13.d3+-.



11. Bc1 dd4

11...b6? 12.d4; 11...dx2 12.Bxc5
dg7 13.d3±.

12. dxd4

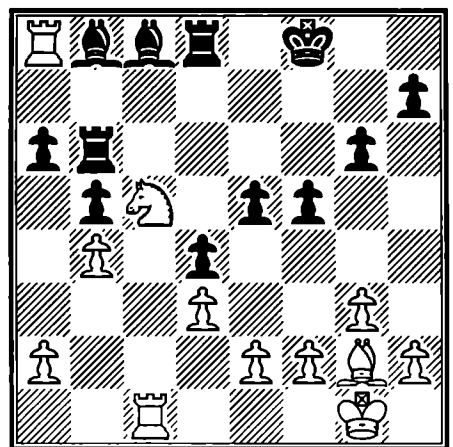
A new move in this position; and it has
its merits. White gains time to mobi-

lize his forces and play on the light
squares. He also hopes to achieve a
good-knight vs. bad-bishop situation.
According to IM John Watson in *Sym-*
metrical English 1...c5, the normal
12.dxd4, should suffice for some ad-
vantage: 12...dxd4 (12...cxd4 13.d2
de6 (13...dg4 14.h3 de6 15.d4 a5
16.d5 de5 17.dxe5 dx2 18.Bc5
dd6 19.Bxa5!) 14.d4 d5 15.d4
Bfe8 16.d5 dxb2 17.Bc2 dd7
18.Bxb2 dx4 19.dxb7±) 13.d4
d6 14.d3 de6 15.dxb7!.

12...cxd4 13. dd2

This unmasks the bishop and prepares
a hop to e4 or c4 depending on circum-
stances.

13...Bb8 14.d4 a6 15.de4 b5?!
16.d5 d8 17.dxd8 Bxd8
18.Bc7 f5 19.dc5 df8 20.Bc1
de5 21.Ba7 Bb6 22.b4 db8
23.Ba8 e5



Can you find the combination? White
has built up his position to maximum
strength and the black pieces are se-
verely restricted. A hint: the bishop on
b8 is pinned and its partner on c8 has
very few squares.

24.dxa6!! dx6 chesstouring.com

24...♖×a6 25.♖×b8+-.

25.♖c6!

This quiet follow-up exploits Black's lack of mobility.

25...♖×c6

25...♙b7 26.♖×b8 ♙×c6 27.♖×b6 ♙×g2 28.♜×g2±; 25...♙c7 26.♖×c7 ♖×a8 27.♙×a8±.

26.♙×c6 e4

A last stab, but resistance is futile.

27.♖×a6 ♙d6 28.a3 f4 29.♙×e4 1-0

Game 89

Aleksander Wojtkiewicz –

Aljosa Grosar

Geneva 1990

Symmetrical English [A38]

1.♟f3 ♟f6 2.c4 c5 3.g3 d5 4.c×d5 ♟×d5 5.♟c3 ♟c6 6.♙g2 g6 7.0-0 ♙g7 8.♟×d5

8.♞a4 0-0 9.♞b5 ♟×c3 10.d×c3 ♞b6 11.♞×b6 a×b6 12.♙f4± (Grosar).

8...♞×d5 9.d3 0-0 10.♙e3 ♙d7 11.d4 c×d4 12.♟×d4 ♞c4 13.♖c1

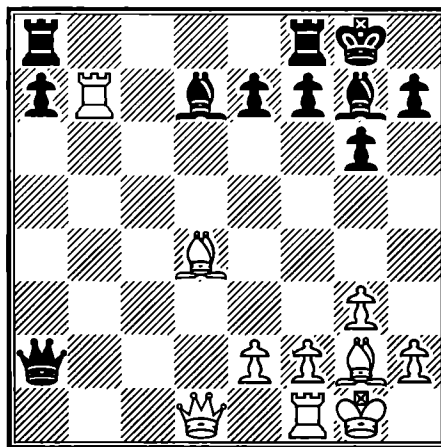
The theoretical main line is 13.♟×c6, but after 13...♙×c6 14.♙×c6 b×c6 15.b3 ♞a6 16.♖c1 ♞×a2 17.♖×c6, Black has successfully solved his opening problems.

13...♞×a2 14.♖a1 ♞×b2

14...♞c4 15.b3 ♞b4 16.♖a4 ♞d6 17.♟×c6 ♙×c6 18.♞×d6 e×d6 19.♙×c6

b×c6 20.♙d1 with equal chances and a draw is likely.

15.♖b1 ♞a2 16.♖×b7 ♟×d4 17.♙×d4



17.♖×d7? ♖ad8 18.♖×d4 ♙×d4 19.♙×d4 ♞c4±.

17...♙a4 18.♞a1 ♞×a1 19.♙×a1 a5 20.♙×g7

In a later game, White tried 20.♖×e7, but after 20...♖ae8 21.♙×g7 ♞×g7 22.♖a7 ♖×e2, a draw was agreed in Vadasz-Nieminen, Budapest 2000.

20...♞×g7

It is rather amazing that Black manages to lose this position, but, as we have seen, just because the position is even, it doesn't mean a draw is the inevitable result.

21.♖a1 ♙c2 22.♖×e7 ♖a6?!

As Grosar indicates, Black has equal chances after 22...♖ae8 23.♖c7 ♙b3 24.e3 a4, but 24...♖ac8!? may even be better.

23.♙d5! a4 24.♖c7! [ssstouring.com](http://www.ssstouring.com)

The rook on a1 and the bishop on d5 are optimally placed. With the text, White improves the placement of his other rook and forces the black bishop out of play.

24...♖f5 25.e4 ♗h3?!

This looks logical, but the bishop gets into trouble here. 25...♗g4 is better, although White retains a slight edge upon 26.f4 ♖g8.

26.f3

This move not only threatens to trap the bishop, but also intends to grab space on the kingside by g4 and h4. Now Black has to play 26...♖g8.

26...a3?! 27.♖f2 h5 28.g4 h×g4 29.♖g3 ♜f6 30.♞×a3?

Grosar offers 30.e5! ♜f5 31.f×g4 ♜f1 32.♞×a3 ♜d1 33.♗f3+-, but Black can improve by 31...♞×e5 32.♗f3 ♜e3 33.♞a7 ♜d8 34.♞1×a3 ♞×a3 35.♞×a3 ♗f1, and Black is okay. Yet, White has a simple path to an advantage: 30.f×g4 ♜f1 (or 30...♗f1 31.e5) 31.♞cc1 ♞×c1 32.♞×c1 ♞h8 33.♞c3 f5 34.g5 f×e4 35.♞×a3 ♗f5 36.♞a7+ ♖f8 37.♞a8+ ♖g7 38.♞×h8 ♖×h8 39.♖f4, even though the win isn't going to be easy; however, 31.♞×a3 ♞g1+ 32.♖f2 ♞g2+ 33.♖f3 ♞×g4 34.♞aa7 also looks very good for White.

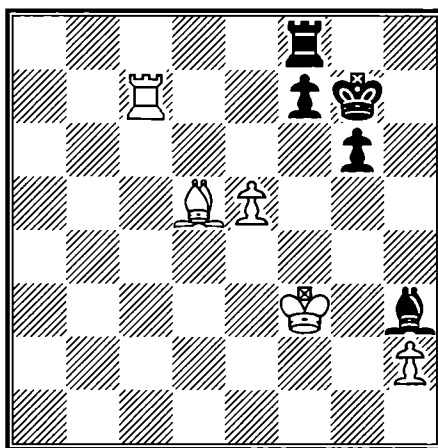
30...g×f3 31.e5 ♜f5 32.♞×f3

32.♖×h3 f2 33.♗c4 f1♙+ 34.♗×f1 ♞×f1 35.e6 ♞g1 36.♞a4 ♞h8+ 37.♞h4 ♞×h4+ (or 37...♞f8) 38.♖×h4 ♖f6 (or 38...♞f1) 39.e×f7 ♖g7, followed by ...♞f1, and Black can draw easily.

32...♞×f3+

After 32...♞×e5 33.♗×f7, it seems that Black has no answer to the threats of ♖×h3 and ♗c4+, but he can elegantly defend himself by 33...♗f5 or 33...♞g5+ 34.♖f2 (34.♖h4 ♞h5+ leads to a repetition of the position) 34...♞g2+ 35.♖e3 ♞c8, when Black is out of trouble.

33.♖×f3



Despite the reduced material, Black is still under pressure. All of White's pieces are more active than Black's, and the threat of e6 seemingly forces the passive reply ...♖g8. On the plus side, the h-pawn is the "wrong color" for a king, bishop and h-pawn versus king ending.

33...♖g8?

33...♖h6! 34.♖g3 (34.♞×f7 ♞×f7+ 35.♗×f7 ♖g5 36.♖g3 ♖f5 37.e6 ♗f1 38.e7 ♗b5=) 34...♗e6 35.♗×e6 f×e6 36.♞e7 ♖g5=.

34.♖f4 ♗e6?! 35.♗×e6 f×e6+ 36.♖g5 ♜f5+ 37.♖×g6 ♖f8 38.♞c5 ♜f4 39.♖g5 ♜f5+ 40.♖g6 ♜f4 41.♞c1 ♞h4 42.♞c8+ ♖e7 43.♞c7+ ♖e8 44.♞h7 ♜f4 45.h4

♖f5 46.♗h5 ♖f8 47.♗g5 ♖f4
48.h5 ♖f8 49.h6 ♖g8 50.♗g1
♖f2 51.♖d1 ♗g2+ 52.♖f6 ♗h2
53.♖d8+ ♖h7 54.♖×e6 ♖×h6+
1-0

Black resigned upon making his move. White puts his king on f7 and pushes the pawn to e6 and e7. If Black checks with the rook, the king goes to e8 and White has a won rook endgame.

Game 90

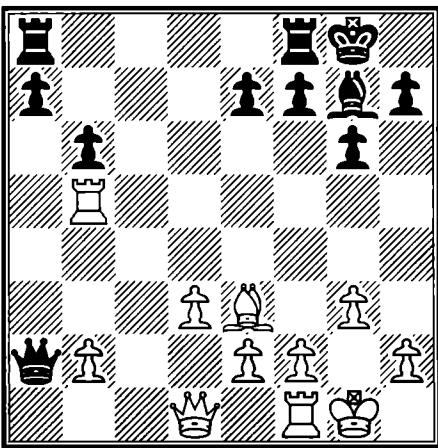
Anatoly Karpov –

Zoltan Ribli

Amsterdam 1980

Symmetrical English [A38]

1.c4 c5 2.♖f3 ♖f6 3.♖c3 ♖c6
4.g3 d5 5.c×d5 ♖×d5 6.♗g2 g6
7.0-0 ♗g7 8.♖×d5 ♖×d5 9.d3 0-0
10.♗e3 ♗d7 11.♖d4 ♖d6
12.♖×c6 ♗×c6 13.♗×c6 ♖×c6
14.♖c1 ♖e6 15.♖×c5 ♖×a2
16.♖b5 b6



16...♖a6 is discussed in the next game. Another option is 16...a6 17.♖×b7 ♖ab8 18.♖×e7 ♖×b2 19.d4 (or 19.♗f4 a5, Damljanovic-Winants, Wijk aan Zee 1990, 20.♖a7 ♖e8 21.e3 ♖d2 22.♖c1 ♖×d3 23.♖c6±) 19...♖×e2 20.♖d3 ♗h6 21.♗×h6 ♖×e7 22.♗×f8

♖×f8 23.d5± Andersson-Winants, Brussels 1988.

17.♖a1 ♖×a1

A major alternative is 17...♖e6 18.♖a6 (or 18.♖a4 ♖fc8 (18...♖d7 19.♖a1 ♖fc8 20.♖a2 h6 21.♖b4 ♖b7 22.b3 ♖d5 23.♖b5 ♖×b5 24.♖×b5 ♗c3 25.♖d5 e6 26.♖d7 a5 27.♖b7 ♖ab8 28.♖×b6 ♖×b6 29.♗×b6 ♖b8 30.♖c2 ♖×b6 31.♖×c3 ♖g7 32.♖c5 ♖×b3 33.♖×a5 with a won endgame for White, as in Ehlvest-Polugaevsky, Haninge 1990) 19.♖a1 h5 20.♖b4 ♗f6 21.♖a2 ♖d7= Bagirov-Mikhalchishin, Tbilisi 1980) 18...♖d7 19.♖a1 h5 20.♖b4 ♖fc8 21.♖a4 (21.♖b5!? Ivanov) 21...♖b7 22.h4 ♗e5 23.♖b3 ♖c6 24.d4± I.Ivanov-Timman, Luzern ol 1982.

18.♖×a1 ♖fb8?!

18...♖fc8 19.♖a6 ♖c2 20.b3 ♖×e2 21.♖b×b6 loses a pawn for Black, but he may be able to defend the endgame. In the game, Black consistently chooses a passive approach and eventually pays the price.

19.♖a6 ♖f8 20.♖b4 ♗e5 21.♖ba4 b5

Black should have played 21...♗×b2 22.♗×b6 ♖b7 23.♗×a7 ♖c8 with decent drawing chances.

22.♖a2 ♖b7 23.b3!

White can win a pawn by 23.♗×a7 ♗×b2 24.♖×b2 ♖a×a7 25.♖×a7 ♖×a7 26.♖×b5, but the game continuation focuses on maintaining the pressure,

counting on the reward being more significant in the end.

23...♖b8 24.♙c5 ♗e8 25.d4 ♘d7
26.e4 e6 27.b4 ♗c8 28.d5 exd5
29.exd5 ♜d7

Or 29...♙e5 30.♞e2 ♙c7 31.♞e8+
♙d8 32.♞c6+ ♞c7 33.♙d6 ♞xc6
34.dxc6 and Black is finished.

30.d6 ♞d8 31.♗g2 ♘d7 32.♞e2
♗c8 33.♞e7 ♞d7 34.♞a2 a5

Neither 34...♙xd6 35.♞xd7 ♗xd7
36.♞d2 nor 34...♗d8 35.♙b6+ ♗c8
36.♞c2+ offer Black salvation.

35.♞c2 1-0

Game 91

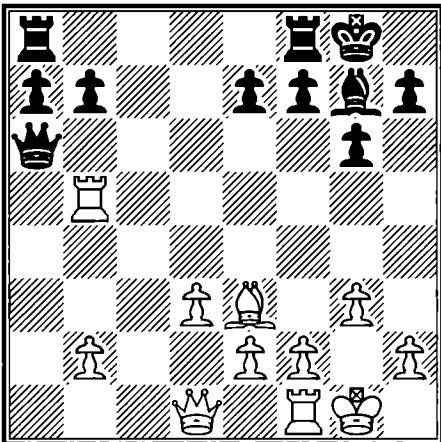
Bong Villamayor

Kenny Solomon

Istanbul ol (1) 2000

Symmetrical English [A38]

1.♟f3 c5 2.c4 ♟f6 3.g3 g6 4.♙g2
♙g7 5.0-0 0-0 6.♟c3 d5 7.cxd5
♟xd5 8.♟xd5 ♗xd5 9.d3 ♟c6
10.♙e3 ♙d7 11.♟d4 ♗d6
12.♟xc6 ♙xc6 13.♙xc6 ♗xc6
14.♞c1 ♗e6 15.♞xc5 ♗xa2
16.♞b5 ♗a6



We saw 16...b6 and 16...a6 in Game 90.

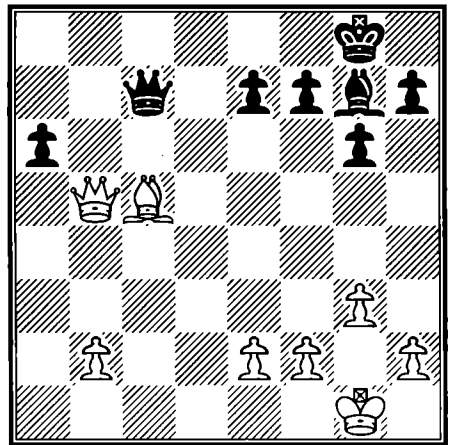
17.♗b3 b6 18.♞b4

Watson's suggestion of 18.♙g5!? re-
mains untested, but worth a try, e.g.
18...e6 (or 18...♗b7 19.♞a1±) 19.♞b4
♗b7 20.♞a1± or 18...♞ac8 (Black
doesn't have to protect the e7-pawn just
now, but he will have to eventually)
19.♞b4 ♗b7 20.♞a1 with pressure.

18...♗a5 19.♞b5 ♗a6 20.♞c1
♞ac8 21.♞c4 ♞xc4 22.dxc4 ♞d8
23.c5 bxc5 24.♞b8 ♗d6
25.♞xd8+ ♗xd8 26.♙xc5 ♗c7?

Here Black can equalize by 26...♙xb2!
27.♙xa7 (27.♗xb2? ♗d1+ 28.♗g2
♗d5+ leaves Black a pawn up)
27...♙f6.

27.♗b5 a6?



A careless decision. White is still bet-
ter after, say, 27...♙f8 28.b4 ♗g7
29.♙d4+ f6, but at least Black is not
heading into a lost endgame, as he is in
the game.

28.♗e8+ ♙f8 29.♙e3 e6 30.♙h6

While Black can temporarily guard everything, White can combine the pin on the bishop along with an attack on the a-pawn. This simple strategy will let White win the a-pawn and eventually the game.

30...♖d6 31.h4 a5 32.b3 ♗c5
33.e3 ♗d6 34.♗a8 ♗d1+ 35.♖h2
♗d6 36.♙xg7 ♖xg7 37.♗xg5

Stage one of the plan is complete and the rest is simple. White only needs to be alert for a perpetual from Black, but this is easily dealt with.

37...♗d6 38.♗a8+ ♖g7 39.♗b7
e5 40.b4 ♗d3 41.♖g2 e4 42.♗e7
h5 43.♗e5+ ♖g8 44.b5 ♗e2
45.b6 ♗f3+ 46.♖g1 ♗d1+
47.♖h2 ♗b1 48.♗b8+ 1-0

Game 92
Garry Kasparov –
Peter Leko
Horgen (1) 1994
Symmetrical English [A38]

1.c4 c5 2.♗f3 ♗f6 3.♗c3 ♗c6
4.g3 g6 5.♙g2 ♙g7 6.d4 cxd4
7.♗xd4 0-0 8.♗c2

It is interesting that Kasparov voluntarily retreats the knight. This variation is typically reached after 8.0-0 d6!? 9.♗c2, when White forgoes the complications of capturing on c6 to play for a positional edge.

8...d6 9.0-0 ♙e6 10.b3 ♗d7

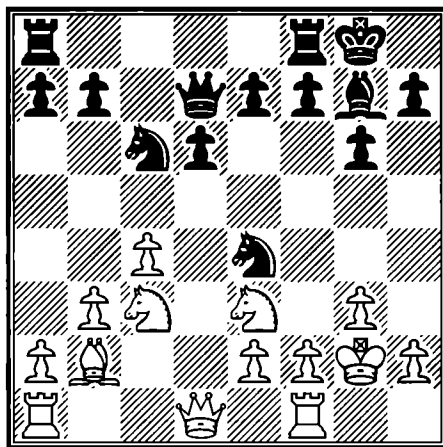
10...♗d7 11.♙d2 ♗c5 12.♞c1 a5
13.♗d5 ♞b8 14.♗ce3 b5 15.♗f4 ♙d7
16.♙c3 ♙xc3 17.♞xc3 b4 18.♞c1 a4
19.♞b1 axb3 20.axb3 ♗a5 21.♗d3

♙c6 22.♗xc5 dxc5= Black has played very well, Andersson-Sermek, Tilburg 1994. A possible improvement for White is 15.cxb5!? ♞xb5 16.♙c3 ♗d7 17.♙xg7 ♖xg7 18.♗f4 and White's pieces are more harmoniously placed.

11.♙b2

White often puts his bishop on d2 in this variation to keep the black queen off a5, but here that isn't a concern.

11...♙h3 12.♗e3 ♙xg2 13.♖xg2
♗e4?!



Trying too hard to simplify, Black loses time. Correct is 13...e6 with a slight disadvantage: 14.♗d2 ♞fd8 15.♞ad1 a6 16.♗c1 b6 17.♗a1 ♗b7 18.♖g1±, as in Mastrokoukos-Kotronias, Komotini 1992.

14.♗c2 ♗xc3 15.♙xc3 ♙xc3

15...♗d4?! 16.♗d3 ♗c6+ 17.f3±.

16.♗xc3 ♗e6 17.♗d5 ♞ac8

17...♗e4+ 18.♖g1 ♗xe2? 19.♞fe1
♗g4 20.♞xe7+-.

18.♞ad1 ♞fe8 chesstouring.com

18...♖xe2? 19.♞de1!

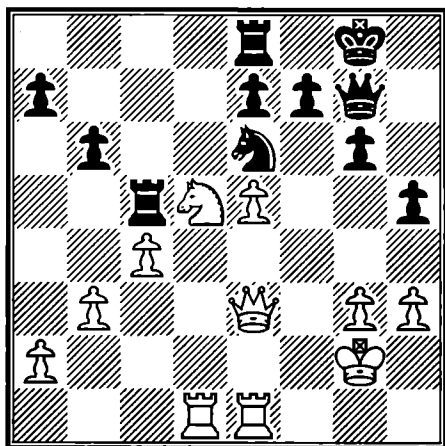
19.♞fe1 ♖e5 20.♖d2!

White's space advantage, coupled with Black's lack of counterplay and the absence of the bishop on g7 make a kingside attack very strong.

20...♗g7 21.e4 ♘e5 22.♖e3! ♞c5

22...b6 23.f4 ♘d7 24.e5 dxe5 25.fxe5 ♘c5 26.♞d2 ♘e6 27.♞ed1± (Kasparov).

23.f4 ♘g4 24.♖f3 h5 25.h3 ♘f6 26.♘c3 b6 27.e5! dxe5 28.fxe5 ♘h7 29.♖e3 ♘f8 30.♘d5 ♘e6



31.a4!

It's rare that one player dominates both sides of the board, but such is the case here. Operating on the theory that to win a complex endgame the stronger side must have two weaknesses to exploit, Kasparov temporarily switches his sights from the black king to the queenside. His idea is that White's pieces are much more mobile than Black's and can switch back and forth across the board at will. Leko, meanwhile, is very cramped and will soon find his defenses stretched too thin.

31...♞h7 32.♞e2 ♞g8 33.h4! ♞cc8 34.♞f1 ♘c7 35.♘f4 ♞ed8

35...♞cd8 36.a5±.

36.e6 f6

36...f5 37.♘xh5! gxh5 38.♞xf5+-.

37.♖e4 f5 38.♖b7 ♘e8 39.♖xa7 ♞d6 40.♖b7 ♞cd8 41.♘d5 ♘f6 42.♖xe7 ♘xd5 43.♖xg7+ ♖xg7 44.cxd5 ♞xd5 45.♞c1 1-0

45...♞f6 46.♞c7+-; 45...♞e8 46.♞c7+ ♞h6 47.e7+-.

Game 93

Rados Bakic –

Jovan Petronic

Budva (2) 1996

Symmetrical English [A39]

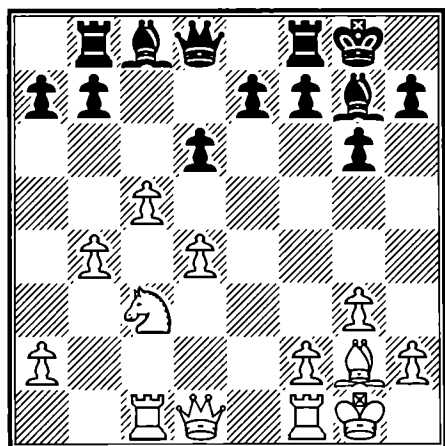
1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 c5 3.g3 g6 4.♙g2 ♙g7 5.♘f3 0-0 6.0-0 ♘c6 7.d4 cxd4 8.♘xd4 ♘g4 9.e3 ♘xd4

9...d6 10.♘de2 ♖a5 11.♘d5 (11.♙d2? ♖h5! is better for Black) 11...e6 12.♙d2! ♖d8 (or 12...♖c5 13.b4 ♖xc4 14.♞c1 ♖xa2 15.♘ec3 ♖c4 16.♘c7 ♞b8 17.♘b1 and Black can't both save his queen and protect the knight on g4) 13.♘dc3 ♞b8 14.♞c1 a6 15.b3± (Skembris).

10.exd4 ♘h6 11.♙xh6

Black's idea is to play ...♘f5, force d5, and then undermine the center by ...b5. White surrenders the bishop-pair to hinder this plan.

11...♙xh6 12.c5 d6 13.b4 ♙g7 14.♞c1 ♞b8



15. ♖a4!?

15. a4 ♕f5 16. ♖e1 ♖e8 17. b5 dxc5 18. dxc5 ♖a5 19. ♖b3 offers White a small plus, as in Raetsky-Higatsberger, Katowice 1993.

15...a6?!

15... ♕xd4 16. ♖b5 dxc5 17. ♖xa7 ♕d7 18. ♖xd4 cxd4 19. ♖xd4 ♕b5 20. ♖fd1 ±.

16. d5! dxc5

Or 16...e6 17. ♖fd1 ♕xc3 18. ♖xc3 exd5 19. ♖xd5 ♖f6 20. ♖f3 ♖a1+ 21. ♖d1 ±.

17. bxc5 e6 18. c6!

Also, 18. d6 ♕d7 19. ♖b4 is better for White.

18...bxc6 19. dxc6 ♖c7 20. ♖fd1 h5 21. h4 ♖b2 22. ♖c2 ♖b6 23. ♖xb2 ♖xb2 24. ♖e4 ♖b6

The material balance is intact, but White has a much easier game because of his passed pawn on c6 and better-coordinated pieces. However, Black has a reasonably solid position and is by no means lost.

25. ♖c4 ♖d8 26. ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 27. c7

Or 27. ♖c5 ♕f8 28. ♖e5 ♕e7 29. ♖h2 with a comfortable edge for White.

27...♖d7?!

Black should keep the c5-square covered by 27...♖e7.

28. ♖c5! f5 29. ♖g5 ♕d4 30. ♖c4 ♖d6?

This blatant error allows White to end the game with an elegant little combination. Black could do better by 30...♕b6, although 31. ♖xe6 ♖d1+ 32. ♕f1 ♖d2 33. ♖g5+ ♖h8 34. ♖h3 leaves White with an advantage.

31. ♖xe6 ♕xe6 32. c8=♖+ 1-0

Game 94

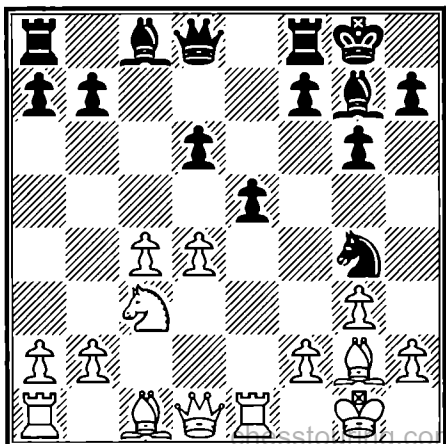
Vladimir Tukmakov –

Frank Holzke

Biel (11) 2000

Symmetrical English [A39]

1. ♖f3 ♖f6 2. c4 c5 3. ♖c3 ♖c6 4. g3 g6 5. ♕g2 ♕g7 6. d4 cxd4 7. ♖xd4 0-0 8. 0-0 ♖g4 9. e3 ♖xd4 10. exd4 d6 11. ♖e1 e5!?



Black seeks active counterplay. One alternative is 11...♖e8, but after 12.h3 ♗h6 13.g4 f5 14.g5 ♗f7 15.f4 ♖b8 16.♙e3 a6 17.♖c1 ♙d7 18.d5, White is slightly better, as in Sorokin-Ricardi, Boca 1997.

12. ♗d5!

This is the only way to play for an advantage as white. The alternatives give Black excellent play; Tukmakov gives 12.h3 e×d4 or 12.d5 f5 or 12.d×e5 ♗×e5 with acceptable play for Black in all cases.

12...e×d4 13. ♗e7+ ♖h8 14. ♙g5 ♖a5!

Necessary, as 14...♙f6? 15.♙×f6+ (Tukmakov's move, but 15.♖×g4! may be even better: 15...♙×e7 16.♖×d4+ f6 17.♙h6 ♖g8 18.♙d5 and White is winning) 15...♗×f6 16.♖×d4+- and 14...f6 15.♙f4± and 14...♗f6 15.♖f3!+- are all much better for White.

15. ♗×c8 ♖×g5 16. ♗×d6 ♖f6! 17. ♗e4 ♖b6! 18.c5 ♖×b2 19. ♖b1 ♖×a2 20. ♖×b7 ♖ae8 21. ♖b1! ♖a5

So far Black has played well, but now he drifts into an inferior position. Better is 21...♖×b1 22.♖×b1, when White only has a slight plus.

22. ♖c1 f5 23. ♗d6 ♙h6

The alternatives are ugly for Black: 23...♖d2 24.♖b2 (Tukmakov) or 23...♖e2 24.♗f7+ ♖g8 25.♗g5! (this is better than 25.♖b3 ♖e1+ 26.♙f1 h5 27.♗e5+ ♖h7 28.♗c4 (+- Tukmakov) 28...♖×f1+! 29.♖×f1 ♖×c5±) 25...h5

26.♙f3 ♖ee8 27.♙d5+ and Black is lost.

24. ♖d1 ♖×c5 25. ♗×e8 ♖×e8 26. ♖b8 ♖e5

Or 26...♖×b8 27.♖×b8+ ♖g7 28.♖b7+ and 26...♖f8 27.h3 (Tukmakov gives 27.♖b2!, but 27...♙g7 is fully playable for Black) 27...♗e5 28.♖b5 ♖c7 29.♖×d4 and White is winning (Tukmakov).

27. ♖×e8+ ♖×e8 28.h3! ♗×f2

Or 28...♗f6 29.♖×d4+- (Tukmakov).

29. ♖×f2 ♖e3+ 30. ♖f1 ♖×g3 31. ♖×d4 ♙e3 32. ♖b2! ♙×d4 33. ♖×d4+ ♖g8 34. ♙d5+ ♖f8 35. ♖f6+ 1-0

Game 95

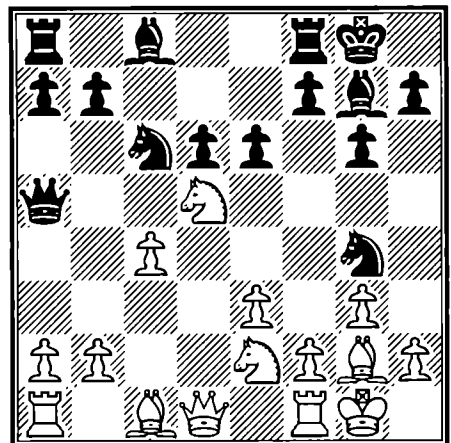
Dorian Rogozenko –

Frank Hegeler

Hamburg (1) 2000

Symmetrical English [A39]

1.c4 c5 2. ♗f3 ♗f6 3. ♗c3 ♗c6 4.g3 g6 5. ♙g2 ♙g7 6.0-0 0-0 7.d4 c×d4 8. ♗×d4 ♗g4 9.e3 d6 10. ♗de2 ♖a5 11. ♗d5 e6



Or 11...♖d8 12.♖b1 ♖b8 13.b3 ♗f6

14. ♖b2 ♗xd5 15. cxd5 ♕xb2 16. ♖xb2 ♗e5 17. h3 ± Lerner-Krivoshey, Oberwart 2000.

12. ♖d2 ♖d8 13. ♗dc3 ♗f6 14. b3

Also, 14. ♖c1 is pleasant for White.

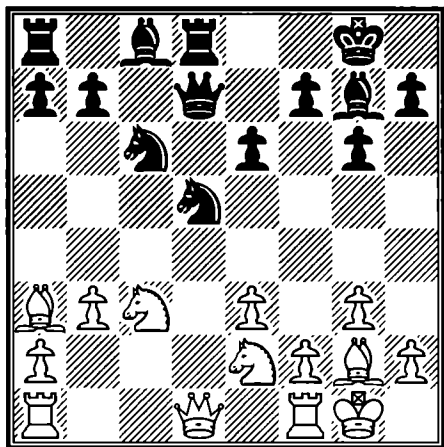
14... ♖d7

Here Rogozenko endorses 14...d5, and offers 15. cxd5 ♗xd5 (15...exd5 16. ♖c1 ±) 16. ♖c1 ♗db4 17. a3 ♗d3 18. ♖c2 with chances to both sides; however, White can get the better game by 16. e4 ♗xc3 17. ♖xc3 ♕xc3 18. ♗xc3 ♖e7 19. ♖d2 ♖d8 20. ♖e3.

15. ♖c1 ♖d8

Or 15...b6?! 16. ♖a3 ♖d8 17. ♖xd6! ♖xd6 18. ♖xd6 ♖xd6 19. ♗b5 and White has a large advantage (Rogozenko).

16. ♖a3 d5 17. cxd5 ♗xd5?



17...exd5 18. ♖c1 ±.

18. ♗xd5!

White sacrifices the exchange in return for play on the dark squares around Black's king.

18... ♖xa1 19. ♖xa1 exd5 20. ♗f4 d4 21. exd4! ♖xd4 22. ♖b2 ♖d2?!

Or 22...♖c5 23. ♖c1 ♖f5 24. ♖h8 f6 25. ♖xf6+- (Rogozenko), but 22...♖d6 23. ♗d5, allows Black to fight on, even if White is still better.

23. ♖c3 ♖d6 24. ♗d5 h5

Rogozenko gives 24...♖e6 25. ♗f6+ ♖f8 26. ♗xh7+ ♖g8 27. ♗f6+ ♖f8 28. ♖xc6 bxc6 29. ♗e4 ♖a3 30. ♖f6 ♖d3 31. ♖g5+-.

25. ♖g7! ♖a3 26. ♖h6 1-0

Game 96

Susan Polgar

Stefan Gross

Stary Smokovec 1987

Symmetrical English [A39]

1. d4 ♗f6 2. ♗f3 g6 3. g3 ♖g7 4. ♖g2 0-0 5. 0-0 c5 6. c4 cxd4 7. ♗xd4 ♗c6 8. ♗c3 ♗xd4

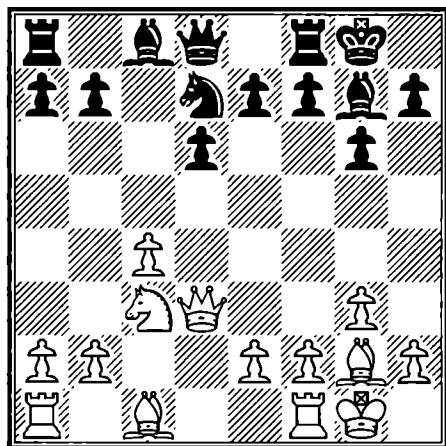
Or 8...♖a5 9. e3 d6 10. ♖d2 ♖g4 11. ♗d5 ♖xd1 12. ♖xa5 ♗xa5? (Black would have done better to play 12...♗xd5 13. ♗xc6 bxc6 14. ♖axd1 ♗b6 15. b3, although White still holds a comfortable edge.) 13. ♗xe7+ ♖h8 14. ♖fxd1 ♖ae8 15. ♗d5 ♗xc4 16. b3 ♗a5 17. ♖ac1 ♖c8 18. ♗b5 ♗xd5 19. ♖xd5 ♖e5 20. ♗xa7 Adorjan-J.Horvath, Debrecen 1990.

9. ♖xd4 d6 10. ♖d3

This position is considered to be slightly better for White, though Black has excellent chances to equalize. Here I will deal with one of the lesser lines and in the next game I will give an over-

view of the theoretical status in other lines.

10...♘d7?!



The text has a poor reputation. Black could have spent his time better by trying to get in ...b5.

11.b3 ♘c5 12.♚d2 ♜b8 13.♙b2 a6 14.♘d5! ♙x b2 15.♚x b2 b5 16.cxb5 axb5

Or 16...♜xb5 17.♜fd1 with a very pleasant position for White.

17.♜fd1 ♙b7 18.h4!

This powerful move highlights the weakness of Black's kingside, now that the dark-squared bishops have been exchanged.

18...♙xd5

18...h5 permanently weakens the kingside, then after 19.♜ac1, Black's position is quite uncomfortable.

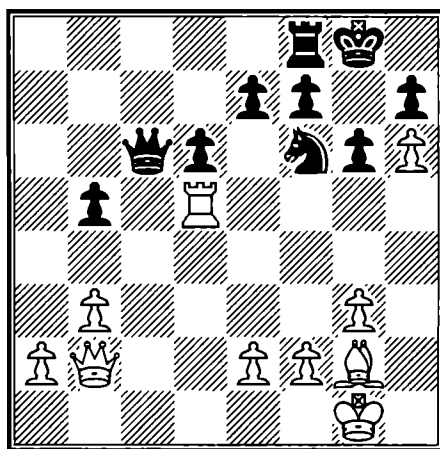
19.♜xd5 ♘d7

19...b4! is worth considering for Black, as it will help tie down White's majority on the queenside.

20.h5 ♘f6 21.h6! ♜b6

21...♚a5?? is punished by 22.♜xd6!; while 21...♚d7 22.♜ad1 ♚e6 23.♜5d3 is more solid for Black, but the long-term problems remain. White has a majority on the queenside and a strong bishop, and Black will have to keep an eye on the kingside as long as the white pawn is on h6.

22.♜ad1 ♚c7 23.♜c1! ♜c6 24.♜xc6 ♚xc6



25.♜f5 ♚e8

On 25...♚d7?!, White has 26.♜xf6!, whereas on 25...♚c8, White cannot go for 26.♜xf6?!, on account of 26...exf6 27.♚xf6 ♚c1+ and Black picks up the h-pawn. However, the simple 26.♜xb5 wins for White.

26.♜f4 ♚d8 27.a4 e5?!

Black pulls the panic lever too soon; advancing the pawns only makes them weaker. A sounder alternative is 27...bxa4 28.bxa4 ♚a5.

28.♜b4 ♚a5

28...bxa4 29.bxa4 ♚a5 30.♚d2 ♘g4 31.♜d4 ♚xd2 32.♜xd2 ♘xh6 33.♜xd6

is identical to the note after Black's thirtieth move.

29. ♖d2 bxa4

29...d5 is effectively met by 30. ♖g5 ♟d7 31. ♖xb5 ♖e1+ 32. ♗f1 f6 33. ♖g4 and White will penetrate Black's kingside.

30. bxa4

30. ♖xd6!? may be stronger, e.g. 30... ♟e8 31. ♖e7 axb3 32. ♖b8 ♖c7 33. ♖xe8 ♖xe7 34. ♖xe7 ♖b8 35. ♖b7 ♖xb7 36. ♗xb7 b2 37. ♗e4 and with an extra piece, White should win easily.

30...d5?!

This looks good on the surface, but it only makes things worse for Black. Still, even 30... ♟g4 31. ♖d4 ♖xd2 32. ♖xd2 ♟xh6 33. ♖xd6 is good for White, because of the strong bishop and passed a-pawn.

31. ♖g5! ♟e8 32. ♖e7

Equivalent is 32. ♖b8!? ♖c7 33. ♖b5, which wins one of Black's central pawns, and maybe even both.

32...e4?!

This loses by force, but even after 32... ♖c7 33. ♖b7 ♖c1+ 34. ♗f1 ♖c6 35. a5, White is winning.

33. ♖b8 ♖xa4 34. ♖e5 f6

If 34... ♖c6, White wins by 35. ♖xe8 ♖c1+ 36. ♗f1 ♖xh6 37. ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 38. ♖xd5 with an extra piece for White.

35. ♖e6+ ♖h8 36. ♖e7 1-0

Game 97

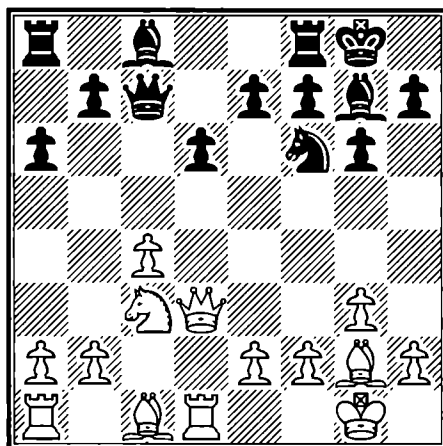
*Lukasz Cyborowski –
Bartlomiej Macieja*

Polish Team ch (1) 2006
Symmetrical English [A39]

**1. ♟f3 c5 2. c4 ♟f6 3. ♟c3 ♟c6
4. g3 g6 5. ♗g2 ♗g7 6. d4 cxd4
7. ♟xd4 0-0 8. 0-0 ♟xd4 9. ♖xd4
d6 10. ♖d3 a6**

This is the main line for Black. White's next move is a recommendation of Watson's that has yet to find a steady following, but the results have been encouraging.

11. ♖d1!? ♖c7



The alternatives are:

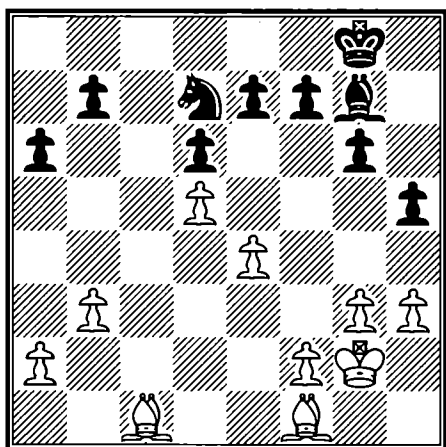
- a) 11... ♗f5 12. ♖f3 ♖b8 13. c5 ♟e8 14. ♗f4, and Black has problems with his d-pawn.
- b) 11... ♖b8 12. c5±.
- c) 11... ♟d7 12. ♖c2 ♖b8 13. ♗e3±.
- d) 11... ♖a5 12. h3±.

12. ♗g5

White can also consider 12. ♗d2, as in Brenninkmeijer-Koch, Linares zonal 1990: 12... ♗f5 13. e4 ♗g4 14. f3 ♗d7

15.♖ac1 ♜fe8 16.b3 b5 17.cxb5 axb5
18.♟d5 ♞d8 19.♟b4! with a clear advantage for White.

12...♗e6 13.b3 ♜ab8 14.♖ac1
♜fc8 15.♟d5 ♗xd5 16.cxd5+
♞d7 17.♗d2 h5 18.h3 ♞d8 19.e4
♟d7 20.♗e3 ♜xc1 21.♖xc1 ♜c8
22.♞d2 ♜c7 23.♗f1 ♞c8 24.♞g2
♜xc1 25.♞xc1 ♞xc1 26.♗xc1



White isn't winning, but Black has problems. White's bishop-pair and space advantage let him push forward without any fear, and the rewards soon emerge.

26...♞f8 27.f4 ♗c3 28.♞f3 ♞e8
29.♗e3 ♞d8 30.h4

White gains more space, while carefully preparing a kingside breakthrough.

30...♞c7 31.♗h3 ♗g7 32.♞e2
♟c5 33.♗g2 ♟d7 34.♞d3 ♗b2
35.♗h3 ♟c5+ 36.♞c2 ♗a1

This keeps the bishop more active than retreating to g7, but it has its problems as well.

37.♗g2 ♟d7 38.b4! ♟f6 39.♞d3
♗b2 40.♗d4!?

This move requires plenty of calculation, as the bishop-pair is one of White's best assets.

40...♗a3

Black trusts that White can break through after 40...♗xd4 41.♞xd4 ♞b6 42.♗f1 a5 43.a3 ♟e8 44.♗h3 (not 44.e5? ♟c7, and White will have difficulty winning) 44...axb4 45.axb4 ♟f6 46.♗f1. Yet it isn't entirely obvious that he can, so it was Black's best choice. Now Black will have problems with his dark-squared bishop, while White has improved the position of his own, making the win relatively simple for White.

41.♗c3 ♗c1 42.♗f3 ♟g4 43.a4
♟h2 44.♗e2 ♟g4 45.♗d4 ♟f6
46.♗f3 ♗a3 47.♞c4 b6

Black has to be careful that his bishop does not get trapped, e.g. 47...♗c1 48.♞c3 b5 49.♞c2 ♗a3 50.axb5 axb5 51.♗c3 ♟d7 52.♗e2.

48.e5 ♟d7 49.e6 fxe6 50.dxe6
♟f6 51.a5 bxa5 52.bxa5 ♗c1
53.♞d3 ♗a3 54.♗b6+ ♞c8
55.♗e4 ♟xe4 56.♞xe4 ♗b4 57.f5
gx f5+ 58.♞xf5 d5 59.♞g6 ♗e1
60.♗c5 ♗xa5 61.♗xe7 d4 62.♗f6
♗b4 63.♗xd4 a5 64.♞f7 1-0

Game 98

David Navara –

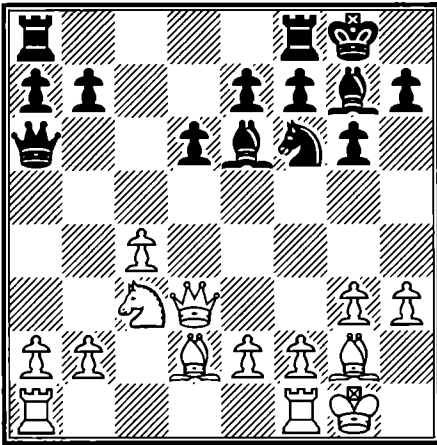
Artur Jakubiec

Czech Team ch (3) 2005

Symmetrical English [A39]

1.d4 ♟f6 2.c4 g6 3.♟c3 ♗g7
4.♟f3 0-0 5.g3 c5 6.♗g2 cxd4
7.♟xd4 ♟c6 8.0-0 ♟xd4 9.♞xd4

d6 10. ♖d3 ♕a5 11. h3 ♗e6
12. ♗d2 ♖a6



This has become Black's main reply to White's setup in the 10...Qa5 line. ECO's main line 12...♖h5, offers White the better chances after 13.g4 ♖e5 14.b3 ♗d7 15.f4! (better than 15.♗d5 ♗×d5 16.♗×d5 e6 17.♗f3 ♗c5 18.♖c2± or 15.♗×b7 ♗c5 16.♖f3 ♗×b7 17.♖×b7 h5 with play for the pawn) 15...♖c5+ 16.♖h1 ♖c8 17.♖ac1 ♗c5 18.♖e3 ♖e8, as in Bistic-Kovalev, Plovdiv 2003, when 19.♗d5 leaves White with a solid advantage.

13. b3 ♖fd8 14. e4

ECO recommends 14.♖ad1! ♖ac8 15.♗e3! b6 16.♗d4 ♖e8 17.♖d2 ♗d7 18.a4! ♖b8 19.♗b5 with a clear advantage, as in Gheorghiu-Sahovic, Mendriso 1987, but one way to improve is 15...d5!?, e.g. 16.♗g5 h6! 17.♗×f6 ♗×f6 17.♗×d5 ♗×d5, and Black may even be better. Don't trust the books blindly.

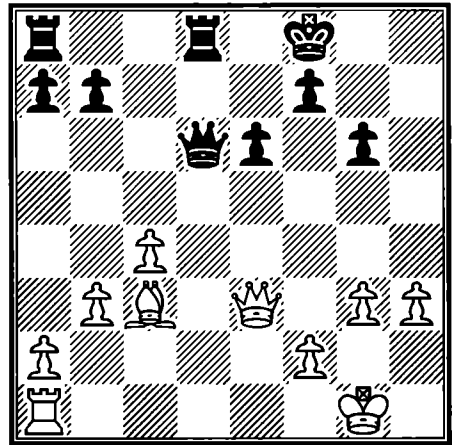
14...d5!?

If White intends to claim an advantage, he has to play as in the game.

15. e×d5 ♗×d5 16. ♗×d5 ♗×d5
17. ♗×d5 e6 18. ♗e7+

White's advantage is insignificant upon 18.♖ad1 ♖×d5 (18...e×d5 19.♗g5 f6 20.♗e3 is pleasant for White) 19.♖f3 ♖f5.

18...♖f8 19. ♗×g6+ h×g6 20. ♖e3
♗×a1 21. ♖×a1 ♖d6 22. ♗c3



White only has a pawn for the exchange, but with the bishop reigning supreme on the dark squares, White has a solid advantage.

22...♖e8 23. ♗f6 ♖d7 24. ♖h6
♖c8 25. ♖e1 ♖c5 26. g4!

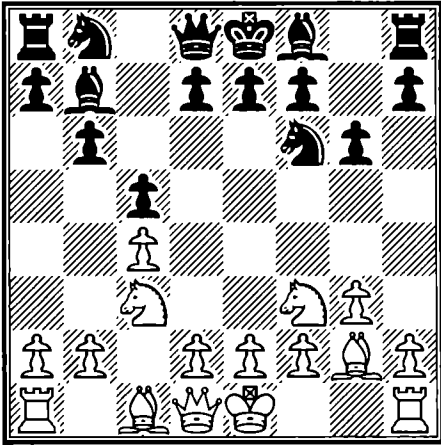
Well played. White is trying to penetrate on the dark squares on the kingside and he doesn't want Black playing ...♖h5. Of course, it weakens White's king, but Black is not in a position to exploit it.

26...♖f8 27. ♖h7 ♖d3 28. ♗g7
♖e7 29. ♖h8+ ♖d7 30. ♖b8 ♖c6
31. ♗f8 ♖d8 32. ♖f4! ♖×f8
33. ♖e4+ ♖dd5 34. c×d5+ e×d5
35. ♖a4+ ♖b6 36. ♖d7 ♖c7
37. ♖×d5 a5 38. ♖g2 ♖b4 39. ♖e4
♖c3 40. ♖f4 f6 41. ♖f3 ♖c6
42. ♖d4+ 1-0

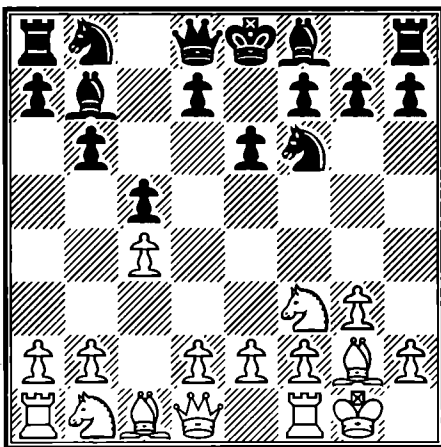
Chapter Nine

Double Fianchetto & Hedgehog

Two of the toughest nuts for our repertoire to crack are the Double Fianchetto, 1. $\text{d}f3$ $\text{d}f6$ 2. $\text{c}4$ $\text{b}6$ 3. $\text{g}3$ $\text{a}b7$ 4. $\text{a}g2$ $\text{c}5$ 5. $\text{d}c3$ $\text{g}6$:



And the Hedgehog, 1. $\text{d}f3$ $\text{c}5$ 2. $\text{c}4$ $\text{d}f6$ 3. $\text{g}3$ $\text{b}6$ 4. $\text{a}g2$ $\text{a}b7$ 5. $0-0$ $\text{e}6$:



Both of these lines are characterized by Black's pieces being confined to the last three ranks. However, the resiliency of Black's setup shouldn't be underestimated, as White can easily overextend if he's not careful. There are a host of options available to counter Black's solid setup, but in most cases the second player has equal chances, despite White's obvious spatial advantage.

Typically, Black will wait for White to loosen his control over d5 or b5 and then counterattack with one of the breaks ...d6-d5 or ...b6-b5 – in some cases even both. Although it is not exactly a rule, the observation of Russian grandmaster Razuvaev is worth keeping in mind: “if White pushes four pawns to the fourth rank against the Hedgehog, he will lose one of them!”

Rather than recommend committal variations where White launches his pawns forward, we have chosen to focus on relatively simple lines that are not theory-laden. White often uses the maneuvers $\text{a}g5 \times \text{f}6$ and $\text{d}f3$ - $\text{g}5$ to undermine Black's d6-pawn, while maintaining a spatial advantage to limit Black's potential counterplay.

Game 99

Ulf Andersson –

Walter Browne

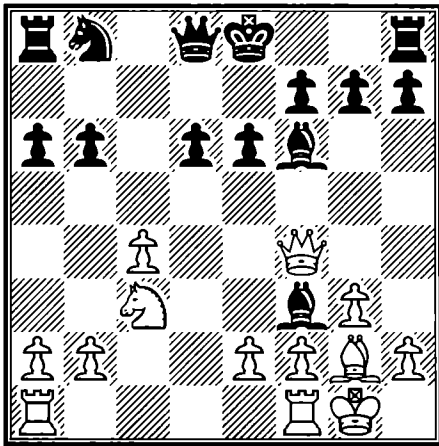
Tilburg 1982

Symmetrical English [A30]

1. $\text{d}f3$ $\text{c}5$ 2. $\text{c}4$ $\text{d}f6$ 3. $\text{g}3$ $\text{b}6$ 4. $\text{a}g2$ $\text{a}b7$ 5. $0-0$ $\text{e}6$ 6. $\text{d}c3$ $\text{a}e7$ 7. $\text{d}4$ $\text{c} \times \text{d}4$ 8. $\text{b} \times \text{d}4$ $\text{d}6$ 9. $\text{a}g5$ $\text{a}6$ 10. $\text{a} \times \text{f}6$ $\text{a} \times \text{f}6$ 11. $\text{b}f4$ $\text{a} \times \text{f}3$

Black's chief decision pertains to which knight to capture. The one on f3 can go to d4 and possibly c6, while the knight on c3 can move to e4, pressuring d6. Note that ... $\text{a} \times \text{c}3$ is rarely an option, as the bishop is needed on e7 to guard d6.

chesstouring.com



12. ♖xf3

Here White has several possibilities. The main alternative to the text is 12. ♗xf3. This keeps the queen on a more active square where it pressures d6, but it makes the natural ♖ac1 difficult to fit in (... ♗g5). The uncommon 12. exf3 is not to be dismissed. White can later gain valuable space with f3-f4, intending f5. After ...g6, the probe h2-h4-h5 can be launched to weaken the black king's position by hxg6 or h6. Fominyh-Csom, Gemersky Pohar 1991 saw 12. exf3!? ♖a7 13. ♖fd1 ♗e7 14. ♖d4 0-0 15. f4 g6 16. h4 ♗d7 17. ♖ac1 ♖b8 18. ♗e4 ♖d8 19. h5 with a slight pull for White.

12... ♖a7 13. ♖fd1 0-0 14. ♖d2

Two alternatives are:

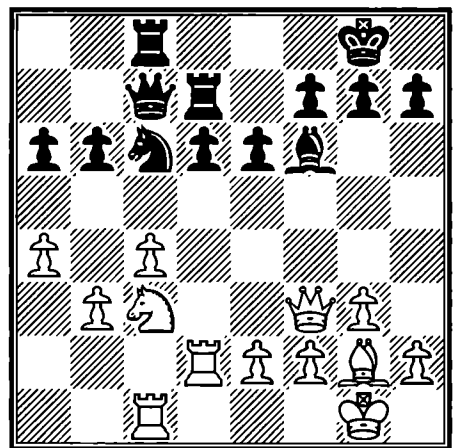
a) 14. ♖ac1 ♗d7 15. ♖e3 ♖b8 16. ♖c2 b5?! (16... ♖c8!? is more solid) 17. cxb5 axb5 18. ♗xb5 ♖xa2 19. ♗xd6 ♖xb2 20. ♖xb2 (20. ♗e4 ♖xc2 21. ♗xc2 ♗e5 22. ♖c5 ♖d8 leaves Black in good shape) 20... ♖xb2? (Black can keep the balance by 20... ♗xb2! 21. ♗c4 ♗e5 22. ♗xb2 ♖xb2 and White has a slight initiative at best) 21. ♗xf7 ♖xf7 22. ♖xe6 ♖e5 23. ♗d5 ♖xe6 24. ♗xe6+- Stangl-Ulibin, Oakham 1990.

b) 14. ♖ac1 ♖d7 15. ♖e3 ♖c7 16. ♗a4 ♖dd8 17. ♖xb6 ♖xb6 18. ♗xb6 ♗xb2 19. ♖b1 ♗e5 20. e3 (20. f4!?) 20...g5 21. ♖d3 g4 22. ♖a3 ♖fe8 (22...f5!?) 23. h3 gxh3 24. ♗xh3± Andersson-Portisch, Reggio Emilia 1989.

14... ♖d7

14... ♖c7 15. ♗e4 ♗e7 16. ♖f4±.

15. ♖c1 ♖c7 16. b3 ♖c8 17. a4 ♗c6



18. ♖xc6!

White's space advantage and nimbler minor piece give him the edge. Note that the black bishop is hitting at air.

18... ♖xc6 19. ♗xc6 ♖xc6 20. ♗a2!

This forces a weakness in Black's pawn structure, because of the threat 21. ♗b4.

20... a5

20... ♖a7?? 21. ♗b4 ♖c8 22. ♖xd6 ♗e7 23. ♖xb6 ♗c5 24. ♖xa6 ♖b7 25. ♗d3 and White is winning.

21. ♖cd1

Andersson regroups with the aim of getting his knight back into the game.

Double Fianchetto & Hedgehog

The direct 21.♘c3 would allow 21...♙xc3, taking the pressure off Black's game.

21...♖f8 22.♘c1 ♗e7 23.e3 g6
24.♗g2 ♙c3 25.♞d3 ♙b2 26.♘e2

Once again, Black would dearly love to trade his bishop.

26...♞c8 27.♞1d2 ♙g7 28.f4

White starts to gain space on the kingside. If given the chance, he will expand by g3-g4-g5, while being alert for the opportunity to get his knight to b5 without allowing ...♙xd4.

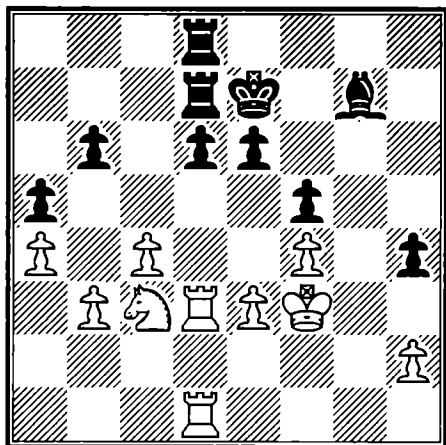
28...f5 29.♖f3 h6 30.g4

The plan is to play gxf5, when the white rooks are ready to grab the g-file.

30...h5 31.gxf5 gxf5 32.♘g3 h4
33.♘f1 ♞f8 34.♞d1 ♙h6 35.♘d2

The knight is looking to go to b5 via b1 and either c3 or a3.

35...♞g8 36.♘b1 ♞gd8 37.♘c3
♙g7



38.♘b5

Mission accomplished! Now Black has to sit perfectly still.

38...♙h8 39.♞3d2 ♙g7 40.♞d3
♙f6 41.e4

Masterful play by White, who realizes that occupying the g-file with his rooks will only invite ...d5. The text seeks to improve the position of his king.

41...fxe4+ 42.♖xe4 ♙g7 43.♞1d2

Andersson is rarely in a hurry. Here he guards his second rank before opting for the decisive phase of the game.

43...♙f6 44.f5!

This weakens d5 and opens the board more fully White's rooks, which will no longer have to worry about ...d5.

44...♙e5

44...exf5+ 45.♖xf5 ♞f8 46.♗e4 ♙e5
47.♞g2 transposes to the game, but avoids White's alternatives on the next move.

45.♞g2

White has two good alternatives:

a) 45.fxe6 ♖xe6 46.♘d4+ ♙xd4
47.♞xd4 ♞h7 48.♗d3 ♖d7 49.♞f2
♗c6 50.♞f6 ♞h5 51.♗c3 ♖c5
52.♞e4±.

b) 45.♘d4 ♙xd4 46.♞xd4 e5 47.♞4d3
♞g8 48.♗d5 ♞f8 49.♞f2±.

45...exf5+ 46.♖xf5 ♞f8+ 47.♗e4
♗e6

Here 47...♞f4+ 48.♗d5 wins for White, but 47...♞dd8!? is interesting, since

48.♖g4 ♔d7 49.♗xh4 ♜de8 gives Black counterplay for the pawn, but 49.♗e3!? leaves White with the initiative and the better chances.

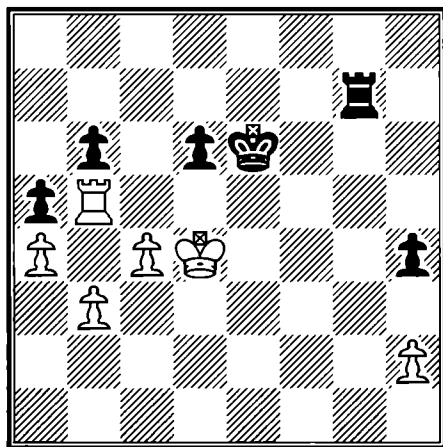
48.♗g6+ ♜f6 49.♗xf6+ ♜xf6 50.♗d5 ♜e5 51.♞d4+

Now the trade is good for White, because of the dominating position of his king, his more active rook and Black's pawn weaknesses.

51...♜xd4 52.♞xd4?!

White may be able to better with 52.♗xd4!?, e.g. 52...♗f7 53.♗d3 ♜f2 (53...♗f6 54.♗h3 ♗h6 55.♞f4 ♗h7 56.♞g4) 54.♗h3 ♗b2 55.♞d4 and White has excellent winning chances.

52...♗g7 53.♗b5



53...♗b7?

The losing error. Black may have been able to hold the endgame after 53...♗g2! 54.h3 ♗g3 (54...♗d2+?! should lose for Black: 55.♞e4 ♗e2+ (or 55...♗h2 56.♞f3 ♗xh3+ 57.♞g4 ♗h1 58.♗xb6 h3 59.♞g3 ♞e5 60.♗b5+ ♞e4 61.♗xa5 ♗c1 62.♗b5 ♗c3+ 63.♞h2 and White has good win-

ning chances) 56.♞f3 ♗h2 57.♞g4 and White is winning) 55.♗xb6 ♞d7! (the saving move, while 55...♗xh3? loses to 56.c5 ♗g3 57.♗xd6+ ♞e7 58.♞c4) 56.♗a6 ♗xh3 57.♗xa5 ♗xb3 58.♗h5 h3 and Black can't lose. After this Andersson, doesn't let the win out of sight.

54.♗h5 ♜f7 55.♗xh4 ♜f3 56.♗e4+ ♞d7 57.♗e3 ♜f4+ 58.♞d5 ♗h4 59.h3 ♗h5+ 60.♞e4 ♞c6 61.♗d3 ♗h4+ 62.♞f5 ♗h8 63.♞g5 ♗g8+ 64.♞f4 ♜f8+ 65.♞g3 ♗g8+ 66.♞h2 ♗e8 67.h4 ♗e5 68.♞g3 ♞d7 69.♞f4 ♗e1 70.h5 ♗h1 71.♗d5 ♗h3 72.♗b5 ♞c6 73.♞g5 1-0

Game 100

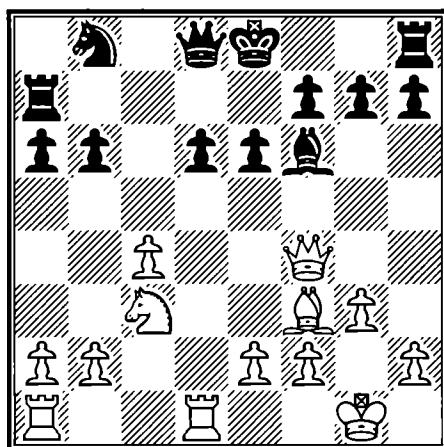
Anatoly Karpov –

Walter Browne

Bath 1983

Symmetrical English [A30]

1.c4 c5 2.♞f3 ♞f6 3.♞c3 e6 4.g3 b6 5.♜g2 ♜b7 6.0-0 ♜e7 7.d4 cxd4 8.♞xd4 d6 9.♜g5 a6 10.♜xf6 ♜xf6 11.♞f4 ♜xf3 12.♜xf3 ♗a7 13.♗fd1



13.♗ad1 ♜e5 14.♞e3 ♗c7 15.b3 b5 16.♞e4 bxc4 17.bxc4 ♗xc4 18.♞xd6+

♙xd6 19.♖d3 ♜a4 20.♗xd6 ♖xd6
21.♞xd6 ♜xa2 22.♞c1 0-0 23.♞c7
♞b2= Velikov-Ftacnik, Trnava 1984.

13...♙e5 14.♗d2

Another possibility is 14.♗e3. The text keeps pressure on d6.

14...0-0 15.♞ac1 b5?

This break is tempting, but wrong. However, the alternatives, while playable, don't look fantastic either:

a) 15...♗e7 16.♙g2 (16.♟e4!?)
16...♞d8 17.f4 ♙xc3 18.♗xc3 ♗c7
19.g4 ♗c5+ 20.e3 and White has more space and a more comfortable position.
b) 15...♗c7 16.♟e4 ♟c6 17.♙g2 ♞d8
18.f4 ♙d4+ 19.e3 ♙c5 20.a3 a5
21.♟c3±.

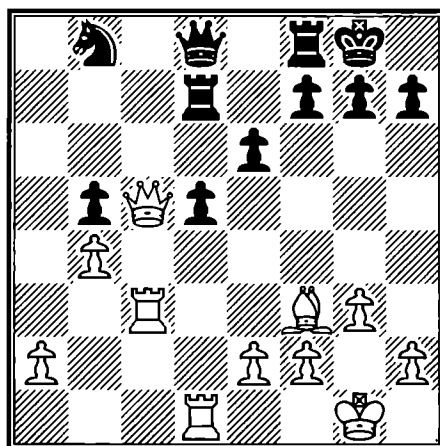
16.♗e3!

16.cxb5 axb5 17.♟xb5 ♞xa2 18.♟xd6
♞xb2 looks comfortable for Black on account of the symmetrical pawn distribution, but White has the initiative, better coordinated pieces, more space, and Black has trouble getting his knight on b8 into the game. The latter will remain a problem despite further exchanges; a possible continuation is 19.♗d3 ♞a2 20.♗b3 ♞b2 21.♗a3 ♗e7 22.♗d3 and White remains in control, although realizing the advantage is difficult.

16...♞d7 17.cxb5 axb5 18.b4!

The weakness on b5 forces Black to cede the c-file.

18...♙xc3 19.♞xc3 d5 20.♗c5!



White's domination of the c-file and Black's weak pawn on b5 spell doom for Black.

20...♗f6 21.♞dc1 d4?

This increases the scope of White's bishop on f3 and prevents Black from protecting the b5-pawn or from developing the knight on b8. However, even after the better 21...♞b7, Black has his hands full upon 22.♗d6! (22.e4?! allows Black back in the game: 22...♟d7 23.♗c6 ♞a7 24.♗xb5 d4 25.♞b3 ♟e5 with ample counterplay) 22...♟d7 23.♞c8 ♞a7 24.♟g2±.

22.♞d3 e5 23.♗xb5 ♗e6

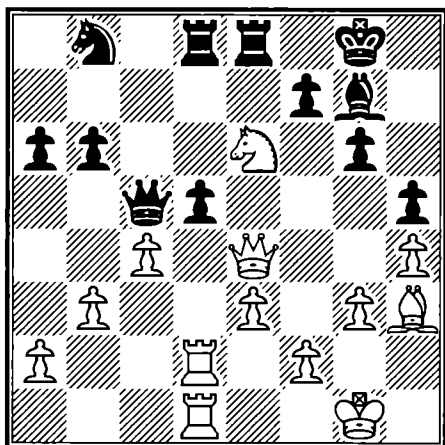
Or 23...♞a7 24.♙d5 ♗a6 25.♗xa6
♟xa6 26.a3+-.

24.♞c5 ♞e7

The alternatives are bad as well:
24...♗xa2 25.♞xe5 ♞d6 26.♙d5 ♗b1+
27.♟g2+- or 24...e4 25.♞e5 ♗xa2
26.♙xe4+-.

**25.♙d5 ♗d6 26.a4 ♟h8 27.♗c4
♗d8 28.a5 ♟d7 29.♞c6 e4
30.♞xd4 ♟e5 31.♗c5 ♞d7 1-0**

ever, Black amazingly manages to hang on, despite his bad knight and worse pawn structure.



26...dxe4 27.♞xd8 ♜e7 28.♞xe8+ ♜xe8 29.♞d8 ♜xd8 30.♟xd8 ♜f6 31.♟b7 ♜e7 32.c5 ♜xc5 33.♟xc5 bxc5 34.♜c8 ♜g7 35.♜b7 f5 36.f3 exf3 37.♞f2 a5 38.♞xf3 ♟d7 39.e4 ♟e5+ 40.♞e3 c4 41.exf5 cxb3 42.axb3 gxf5 43.♜a6 ♟g6 44.♜e2 ♜h6 45.♞d4

Or 45.♜d3 f4+ 46.gxf4 ♟xh4 47.♜e4 ♞g7 and Black draws.

45...f4 46.gxf4 ♟xf4 47.♜f3 ♟g6 48.♞c5 ♟xh4 49.♜xh5 ♞xh5 50.♞b5 ♟f5 51.♞xa5 ♟d4 52.b4 ♟c6+ 53.♞a4 ♟xb4 54.♞xb4 ½-½

Game 102

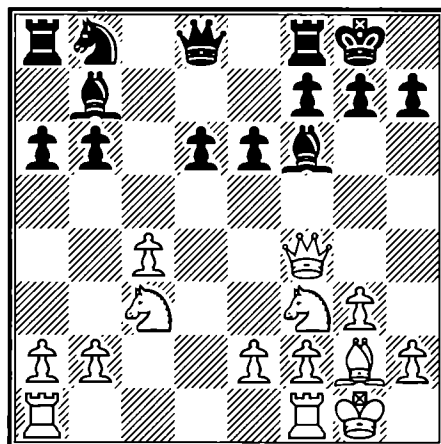
Lubomir Kavalek –

Petar Velikov

Bulgaria tt 1984

Symmetrical English [A30]

1.c4 c5 2.♟f3 ♟f6 3.♟c3 e6 4.g3 b6 5.♜g2 ♜b7 6.0-0 ♜e7 7.d4 cxd4 8.♞xd4 d6 9.♜g5 a6 10.♜xf6 ♜xf6 11.♞f4 0-0

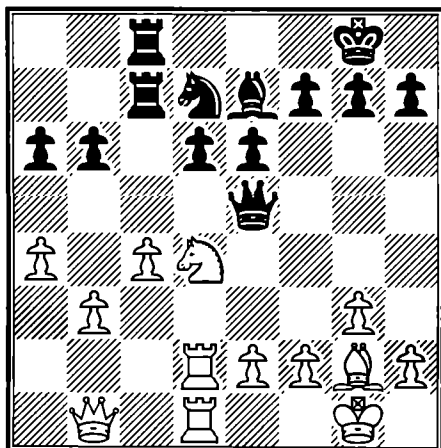


11...♜e7 12.♞fd1 ♜c7?! 13.♟g5 0-0 14.♜xb7 ♜xb7 15.♟ge4 ♜c7 16.♟xd6! g5 17.♞e3± Nogueiras-Galego, Linares 1996.

12.♞ad1 ♜e7 13.♟e4 ♜xe4 14.♞xe4 ♞a7 15.♟d4 ♜c8 16.b3 ♜c5

16...♞e8 17.♞d2 (for 17.♞ac1, see 16...♞e8 in Game 101) 17...♞c7 18.e3 ♜f8 19.♞b1 ♟d7 20.♞fd1 ♟f6 21.a4 ♞c5 22.♞c2 e5?! (Black's impatience will quickly come back to haunt him) 23.♟e2 b5?! 24.axb5 axb5 25.♟c3! bxc4 26.b4 ♞c7 27.♟d5 ♟xd5 28.♜xd5 ♞b8 29.b5+- Andersson-Gruenfeld, Lucerne ol 1982.

17.a4 ♞c7 18.♞d2 ♞e5 19.♞b1 ♞fc8 20.♞fd1 ♟d7



21.b4!

Kavalek is well-acquainted with White's strategy to put a knight on c6, but here he steals several tempi from Velikov with some clever tactics.

21...g6

21...♞xc4 22.♠b7±.

22.b5 a×b5 23.c×b5 d5 24.♗c6 ♞×c6

24...♞f6 25.e4±.

25.b×c6 ♞×c6 26.e4!

Obvious, but strong just the same, Kavalek opens lines for his rooks.

26...♗f6 27.e×d5 e×d5 28.♠×d5 ♞c3 29.♞×b6 ♞c5 30.♞b7 ♗×d5 31.♞×d5 1-0

Game 103

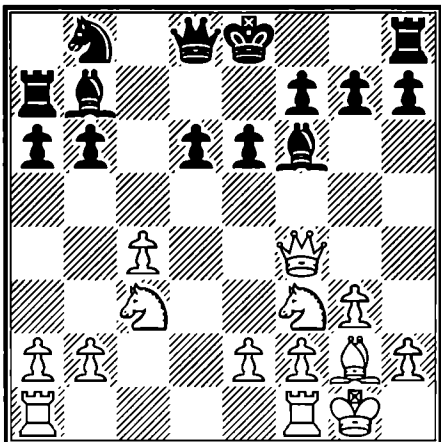
Dov Zifroni –

Evgeny Postny

Tel Aviv (4) 2001

Symmetrical English [A30]

1.c4 e6 2.♗c3 c5 3.♗f3 ♗f6 4.g3 b6 5.♠g2 ♠b7 6.0-0 ♠e7 7.d4 c×d4 8.♞×d4 d6 9.♠g5 a6 10.♠×f6 ♠×f6 11.♞f4 ♞a7



11...♠e7 12.♞fd1 0-0 13.♗e4 ♠×e4 14.♞×e4 ♞a7 15.♗d4 transposes to the game; such occurrences make it easy to confuse positions.

12.♞fd1 ♠e7 13.♗e4 ♠×e4 14.♞×e4 0-0 15.♗d4 ♞d7

Here we depart from the previous games. 15...♞c8 was covered in Games 101 and 102, and 15...♞c7 was discussed in the notes to Game 101.

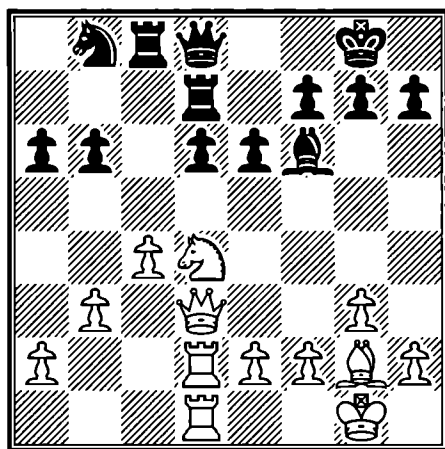
16.♞d3 ♠f6

16...♞c7 17.e3 ♞c8 18.b3 ♠f6 19.♞ab1 ♞c5 20.♞d2 ♞b4 21.♞bd1 ♞c5 22.h4± Drasko-Zivanic, Budva 2004.

17.♞d2 ♞c7 18.♞ad1

Or 18.e3 ♞c8 19.♞c2 ♞d8 20.♞ac1 ♞dc7 21.♞a3 ♞c5 22.b4 ♞5c7 23.♞b3, Spraggett-Nickoloff, Ottawa 1984, and now after 23...♠×d4 24.e×d4 ♗c6 25.♠×c6 ♞×c6, Black is no worse.

18...♞c8 19.b3 ♞d8



19...♞c5 has also been tried: 20.a4 ♞cd8 21.e3 g6 22.♞b1 a5 23.♗b5 ♗c6 24.h4 ♗b4 with fairly even chances, Pflieger-Fahnenschmidt, Bundesliga

1984, but 22.g4! is worth a try, the idea is to continue with f2-f4, g4-g5 and then break open the h-file. If Black seeks prompt counterplay by 22...♖e8 23.f4 e5, then 24.♖e4 looks good for White, i.e. 24...♖de7 25.♗c2 exf4 26.♖xf4 ♖xe3 27.♖f2 ♖3e6 28.♗d5.

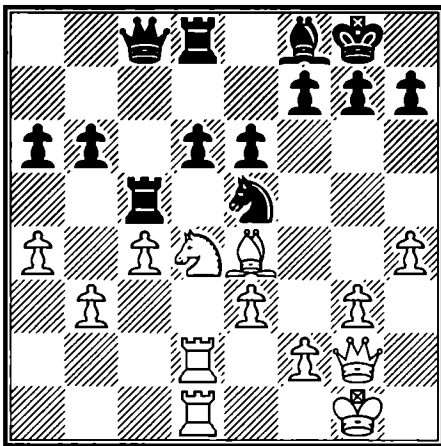
20.h4 ♖c5 21.e3 ♖c8 22.♖e2 ♖d8 23.♗f3 ♖c7 24.♗d4 ♖c8 25.a4

25.♗e4 ♖c7 26.a4 ♖c8 27.♖f3±.

25...♗e7 26.♖c2 ♗f6 27.♗e4

Normally White doesn't want to unnecessarily weaken his queenside structure as it may allow Black counterplay, but here it might actually work: 27.b4!? ♖c7 28.♗e4 ♖d7 29.b5 (as we have seen before, White wants to put a knight on c6) 29...♗xd4 30.exd4 a5 31.♖h5 f5 32.♗g2 with a better game for White.

27...♗d7 28.♖cd2 ♗e7 29.♖f3 ♗e5 30.♖g2 ♗f8?



This loses a pawn. Instead, 30...♖d7! makes more sense.

31.♗b7 ♖b8 32.♗xa6 d5 33.♗f3 ♗xf3+ 34.♖xf3 ♖a8 35.♗b5 dxc4 36.♖xa8 ♖xa8 37.♗xc4 ♖cc8 38.♖d7 ♗c5 39.♖f1 ♖f8

40.♖e2 ♖ab8 41.♗a6 ♖e8 42.♖d3

42.♗b5 ♗e7 43.♖a7 ♖ed8 44.♗d7 ♗c5 45.g4 is also very good for White

42...♖a8 43.♗b7 ♖ad8 44.♖c4 ♖xd7 45.♖xd7 ♖e7 46.♖d8+ ♖e8 47.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 48.a5 ♖d7

Black can try 48...♗d6 49.a6 ♗b8, but it still loses: 50.♖b5 ♗a7 51.♗e4 ♖d7 (51...f5 52.♖c2) 52.♗xh7 e5 53.g4 f6 54.f4 exf4 55.exf4 ♖d6 56.h5 ♖c7 57.g5 fxg5 58.fxg5 and White will win by generating a passed pawn on the kingside.

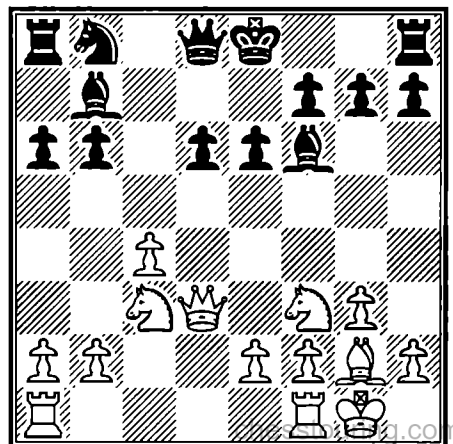
49.a6 ♖d6 50.♖b5 ♖c7 51.♗e4 ♖b8 52.♗xh7 e5 53.b4 ♗e7 54.♖xb6 ♗d8+ 55.♖c6 ♖a7 56.♗d3 ♗e7 57.b5 ♗d8 58.♖d7 ♗a5 59.h5 1-0

Game 104

Grigory Serper –
Albert Chow

Chicago Open (2) 1997
Symmetrical English [A30]

1.c4 c5 2.♗f3 ♗f6 3.♗c3 e6 4.g3 b6 5.♗g2 ♗b7 6.0-0 ♗e7 7.d4 cxd4 8.♖xd4 d6 9.♗g5 a6 10.♗xf6 ♗xf6 11.♖d3



The choice is between this and 11.♖f4. One of the ideas behind the text is a later ♘d4, followed by the advance of the f-pawn. However, we will only briefly examine this plan.

11...0-0?!

In my database White scores 94% against this move, so let's look at the alternatives:

a) 11...♙xf3 12.exf3 ♖a7 13.f4 g6 14.♖fd1 ♙e7 15.♖ac1 0-0 16.b3 ♘d7 17.♗e2 ♘f6 18.♙f3 ♗b8 19.a4 ♖c8 20.♗b2 ½-½, Gustafsson-Bischoff, Pulvermuehle 2004.

b) 11...♗c7 has largely been abandoned by the top players, because it is less flexible than 11...♖a7, and against lower-rated players, it isn't that practical, since White can steer into a drawn endgame. One older example is Ftacnik-Browne, Naestved 1985: 12.♖ad1 ♙e7 13.♘d4 ♙xg2 14.♗xg2 ♘c6 15.f4 ♘xd4 16.♗xd4 0-0 17.f5 ♖ac8 18.fxe6 fxe6 19.♗g4 ♗xc4 20.♖d4 ♗c6+ 21.♖e4 ♙f6 22.♗xe6+ ♗h8 23.♗d5 with equality.

c) 11...♖a7 is played almost exclusively (or 11...♙e7, followed by 12...♖a7) 12.♖fd1 ♙e7 13.♘e4 (or 13.♘d4 ♙xg2 14.♗xg2 0-0 15.b3 ♖c7 16.♖ac1 ♗c8 17.f4 ♘d7 18.♗f3 ♖d8 19.♖c2 ♙f6 20.♘e4 d5 21.♘xf6+ ♘xf6 and Black is fine, H.Olafsson-Shytaj, Turin ol 2006) 13...0-0 14.♖d2 ♘d7 15.♖ad1 ♘c5 16.♘xc5 bxc5 17.♘e5 ♗c7 18.♙xb7 ♖xb7 19.♘f3 ♖fb8 is comfortable for Black, Dizdarevic-Graf, Calvia ol 2004.

12.♖ad1

White can also use the other rook with similar effect: 12.♖fd1 ♙e7 13.♘g5

♙xg5 14.♙xb7 ♖a7 15.♙e4 f5 16.♙g2 ♖d7 17.f4 ♙f6 18.e4 ♙xc3 19.bxc3 a5 20.exf5 ♖xf5 21.♙h3 1-0, Vaganian-Hübner, Thessaloniki ol 1984.

12...♙e7 13.♘g5! ♙xg5 14.♙xb7 ♖a7 15.♙e4!

The point behind White's twelfth move, Black has to play the weakening ...f5 to avoid losing material.

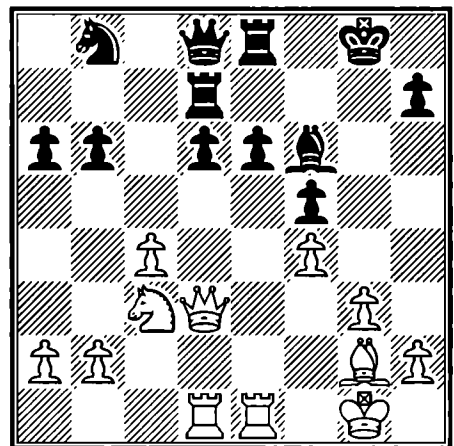
15...f5 16.♙g2 ♖d7

16...♙e7 17.e4 f4 18.gxf4 ♖xf4 19.e5! is a disaster for Black, Krasenkow-Zo.Varga, Lillafured 1989.

17.f4 ♙f6 18.e4 g6

Or 18...♙xc3 19.♗xc3 ♗h8 20.exf5 exf5 21.♖fe1± Freisler-Kalod, Olomouc 1995.

19.exf5 gxf5 20.♖fe1 ♖e8



20...♙xc3 21.bxc3 ♖f6 was the lesser evil, but Black most likely missed White's next.

21.♖xe6! ♖xe6 22.♙d5 ♖e7 23.♗xf5 ♙xc3 24.♙xe6+ ♗h8 25.bxc3 ♖e8 26.♖xd6! 1-0

Double Fianchetto & Hedgehog

Game 105

Konstantin Landa –

Maksim Notkin

Briansk (2) 1995

Symmetrical English [A30]

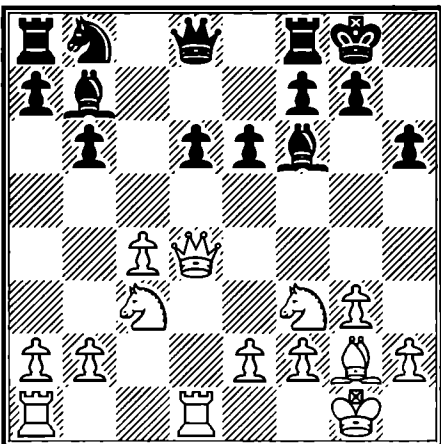
**1. d3 f6 2. g3 b6 3. g2 b7
4. 0-0 c5 5. c4 e6 6. c3 e7 7. d4
cxd4 8. xd4 d6 9. g5 0-0**

This move can easily get Black into trouble. Safer is 9...a6, as discussed above.

10. ffd1 h6

Black's failure to play ...a6 counts against him. 10...a6 11. ffd1 h6 12. xf6 xf6 13. xd6 xd6 14. xd6 c5 15. b4 xc3 16. bxc5 b2 17. fcd1 bxc5 18. fb1 xf3 19. xf3 fad8 20. fa6 c3 21. fb5 ffd8 22. fa7± Stanec-Lobron, Ptuj 1995. The mainlines 10...bd7 and 10...c6 are discussed in the next game.

11. xf6 xf6



12. f4

It's better to keep up the pressure, rather than win the pawn. In Kengis-Shabalov, USSR 1985, White took the pawn, but after 12. xd6 xd6 13. xd6 a6

14. c1 fd8 15. xd8+ xd8 16. d1 xd1+ 17. xd1 e4 18. d2 c2 19. e3 h7, a draw was agreed.

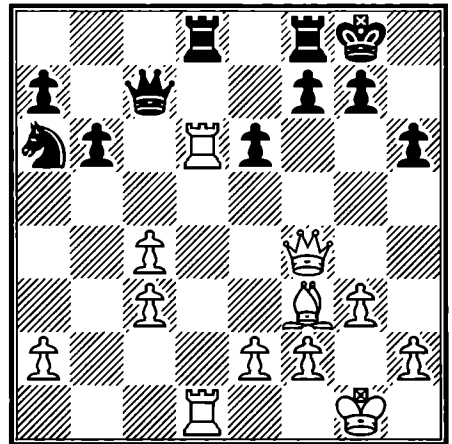
12... xc3 13. bxc3 f7

13...a6 14. xd6 e7 15. ad1 ad8 16. xd8 xd8 17. xd8+ xd8 18. d4 xg2 19. xg2 c5 20. c6± Serper-Nepomnishay, St. Petersburg 1995.

14. xd6

Now, it's fine to take it. White's extra pawn on c4 might not count for much, but the activity of his pieces does.

14... a6 15. ad1 xf3 16. xf3 fad8



17. c5! bxc5

Not 17...xc5?? 18. xd8 and Black's queen lacks protection.

18. xd8 xd8 19. xd8+ xd8 20. a4 c8 21. e3 g6 22. a3 c4 23. e2 c5 24. xa7 e4 25. d4 b7 26. f3 b1+ 27. g2 g5 28. c6 f5 29. h4 h7 30. xc4 f6 31. f3 g5 32. a4 g4 33. c6 e5 34. a5 e4 35. a4 f3+ 36. g1 1-0.com

Game 106

Alexander Huzman –

Michael Adams

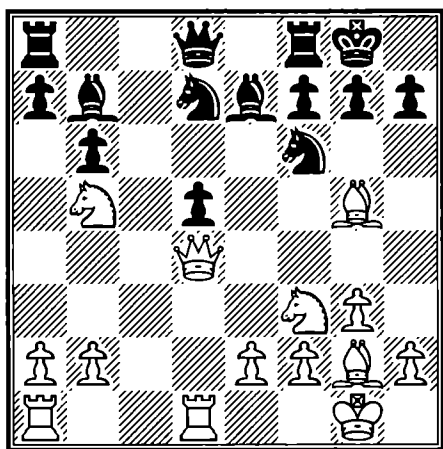
Neum (3.2) 2000

Symmetrical English [A30]

1. c4 c5 2. g3 b6 3. g2 g2
 4. g2 g2 5. 0-0 e6 6. c3 e7 7. d4
 8. cxd4 9. cxd4 d6 10. e2 0-0
 11. g5 bd7

An important alternative is 10... c6 11. f4 (11. d3 offers less, e.g. 11... b8 12. ac1 d8 13. e3 h6 14. xf6 xf6 15. d4 xd4 16. exd4 d5 17. cxd5 b4 18. c4 xd5 19. xd5 xd5 and Black is at least equal, Van der Sterren-Van Wely, Leeuwarden 2001) 11... b8 12. d2 $\text{e5}!$ 13. xe5 dxe5 14. h4 xg2 15. xg2 b7+ 16. f3 ac8 17. ad1 e4 (or 17... h6 18. xf6 xf6 19. g4 g5 20. d7 c7 21. xc7 xc7 22. $\text{b3} \pm$) 18. b3 xf3+ 19. xf3 c5 20. xf6 xf6 21. e4 b8 22. e3 xc3 23. xc3 and White is clearly better, because of the open d-file, Karpov-Smirin, Soviet ch (Moscow) 1988.

11. b5 d5 12. cxd5 $\text{exd5}!$



This is a surprising decision by Adams, who generally follows a positional and

solid approach. In the game, Black accepts an isolated d-pawn, which is usually only done when active pieces offer compensation, but in this case it is White who is better coordinated.

Therefore, let's have a look at the alternatives:

a) 12... xd5 13. xe7 xe7 14. e4 5f6 15. d6 c5 16. e5 d5 17. d2 ad8 18. b4 a6 , Stern-Bezold, Berlin 1990, and here Stohl gives 19. $\text{a3}!$? in *ChessBase Magazine*, when White appears to be solidly in the driver's seat.
 b) 12... xd5 13. c3 c6 (or 13... b7 14. ac1 h6 15. f4 a6 16. e5 xg2 17. xd7 xd7 18. $\text{xd7}!$ h3 19. b7 e8 20. xb6 f6 21. d6 f7 22. xe7 xe7 23. d6 h7 24. d4 c7 25. $\text{xa6}! \pm$ Espig-Schmittziel, Bundesliga 1999) 14. c4 c8 15. e4 (or 15. ac1 h6 (Stohl mentions that 15... $\text{b7}?$ 16. $\text{xd7}!$ xd7 17. e5 d5 18. xd5 exd5 19. xd7 dxc4 20. xf8 is clearly better for White) 16. f4 b7 17. $\text{d6} \pm$ Stohl) 15... h6 15... c5 16. e5 d5 17. b4 d7 18. xd5 exd5 19. h4 xg5 20. xg5 e8 21. e1 and Black has an ugly position, with little hope for counterplay, Kengis-Shabalov, Jurmala 1985) 16. $\text{f4}!$ (this is Stohl's recommendation; instead, Korchnoi-Ftacnik, Biel 1984 went 16. d4 b7 17. xc8 fxc8 18. e5 xg2 19. exf6 b4 20. xg2 xc3 21. bxc3 hxg5 22. xe6 xf6 23. xg5 xc3 with an even endgame) 16... b7 17. d4 $\text{c5}!$? and White is slightly better.

13. $\text{h4}!$

A recent game saw 13. b4 , but after 13... a6 14. c3 c8 15. d2 e8 16. ac1 f8 17. d3 xb4 18. xd5

♖xc1 19.♖xc1 ♗xd5 20.♗xf6 ♜xf6
21.♗xd5 ♘e6 22.♘e4 ♜e5 23.♞d1
b5, Black had equalized and a draw
was agreed in Bunzmann-Wojtaszek,
Paris 2006.

13.♞ac1 can also be considered, e.g.
13...♘c5 (or 13...h6 14.♗xf6 ♘xf6
15.♘e5 a6 16.♘c3 ♗c5 17.♞f4 ♜e7
18.♘xd5 ♘xd5 19.♗xd5 ♗xd5
20.♞xd5± Lipsanen-Joentausta,
Tampere 1990) 14.♗h3 ♘ce4 15.♗e3
♗c5 16.♞d3 ♞e8 17.♗d4 a6 18.♘c3
♘xc3 19.♞xc3± H.Olafsson-
Hjartarson, Reykjavik 1981.

13...h6

Or 13...♞e8 14.♘f5 ♗c5 15.♞d2 ♘e5
16.b4 ♗f8 17.♞f4 a6 18.♘c3 ♘g6
19.♗xf6 ♜xf6 20.♘h6+! and White
picks up the f7-pawn, B.Schneider-
Blasek, Schoeneck 1988.

14.♗e3

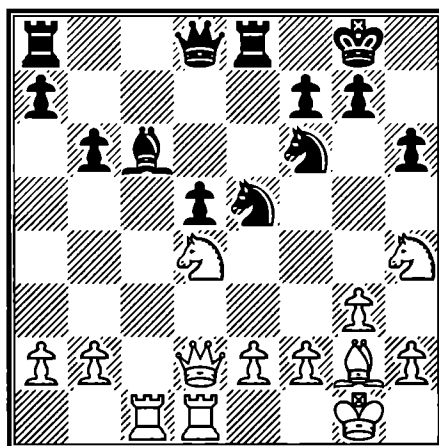
14.♗f4!? ♘c5 (14...♗c5 15.♞d2 is only
slightly better for White) 15.♘f5 ♘e6
16.♞d2 ♗c5 17.b4 (17.♗d6!?)
17...♞d7 18.bxc5 ♜xb5 19.c6! ♗a6
20.♗e5 and White is much better,
Espig-Schunk, Bundesliga 2 1993.

14...♗c5

14...a6 15.♘c3 ♗c5 16.♞d2 looks
natural, but, as Stohl indicates, it leaves
the weak d5-pawn even more vulner-
able.

15.♞d2 ♗xe3 16.♞xe3 ♞e8
17.♞d2 ♘e5 18.♞ac1 ♗c6
19.♘d4

White enjoys a comfortable positional
plus, while Black's hopes of active
piece play have not materialized.



19...♗d7 20.♞b4 ♞c8 21.♘hf5 a5
22.♞xc8!

Exchanging some heavy pieces benefits
White. If 22.♞b3, then 22...♘c4 brings
Black back into the game. Accuracy and
care is needed.

22...♗xc8

Obviously not 22...♞xc8? 23.♘e7+
♞h7 24.♘xc8 axb4 25.♘xb6 and White
is winning.

23.♞d6 ♜xd6 24.♘xd6 ♞d8
25.♘4b5

25.♘xc8 ♞xc8 26.e3 is also worth con-
sideration; Black might control the c-
file, but there aren't any useful entry
squares or weaknesses along it. How-
ever, the game move is more ambitious
– White wants to seize control of the c-
file.

25...♗a6 26.♞c1!?

White continues in accordance with his
plan, but he releases Black from the
bind. The correct move is 26.e3!?, when
26...♗xb5 27.♘xb5 ♞c8 28.♘d4 is
very similar to the 25.♘xc8 line ana-
lyzed above.

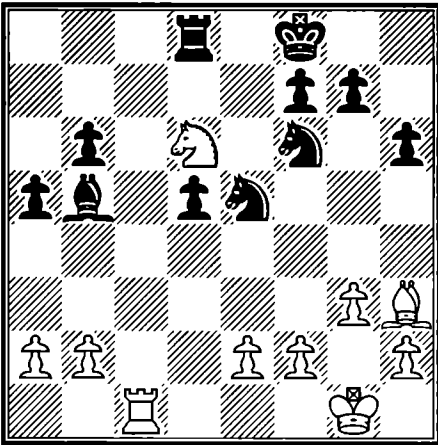
26...♖f8

A slight inaccuracy, but it can be rectified on the next move. However, White's last move offered Black some options that weren't otherwise available: 26...♖e8!? 27.♖xe8 ♖xb5 28.♖c7 ♖xe2 29.♖xd5 ♖d3 30.♖c2 ♖f3! 31.♖xf3 ♖e1 (Stohl) or 26...♖e4!?, in both cases with even chances.

27.♖h3

27.a4!? is possibly better.

27...♖xb5?



This error firmly hands the advantage to White. As Stohl demonstrates, Black is still in the game after 27...♖e4! 28.♖c8 (or 28.♖xe4 dxe4 29.♖c3 ♖d2 and Black is even better) 28...♖xb5 29.♖xb5 ♖c4 30.♖f5 ♖xb2 31.♖c6 g6!? 32.♖xe4 dxe4 with even chances.

28.♖xb5± d4?!

Losing the d-pawn hardly improves the situation, but Black's position was already unenviable.

29.f4 ♖eg4 30.♖d1 ♖d5 31.a4

Of course, taking the d-pawn was also possible.

31...♖e3 32.♖xd4 ♖xd4 33.♖xd4 ♖e4 34.♖g2 ♖c5 35.b3 ♖e7 36.♖f3 f5 37.♖f2 ♖d1+ 38.♖e1 ♖e3 39.h3 ♖f6 40.♖f2 ♖d1+ 41.♖e1 ♖e3 42.♖d2!

Having repeated moves to pass the time control at move forty, White can now work out the winning plan.

42...♖f1+ 43.♖c3 g5

Or 43...♖xg3 44.♖c4 g5 45.♖b5 ♖d7 46.♖c6 (Stohl) and White wins.

44.♖c4 g4 45.hxg4 fxg4 46.♖xg4!

White sacrifices his bishop to decisively break through on the queenside.

46...♖e3+ 47.♖b5 ♖xg4 48.♖xb6 ♖e4 49.b4! axb4 50.a5 ♖xg3

With 50...♖e3 51.a6 ♖d5+ 52.♖b7 ♖c5+ 53.♖c6 ♖xa6 54.♖xd5, Black could stop the a-pawn, but White's e-pawn would then decide the game.

51.a6 ♖f5 52.a7! 1-0

Game 107

Sergey Ionov –

Sergey Dolmatov

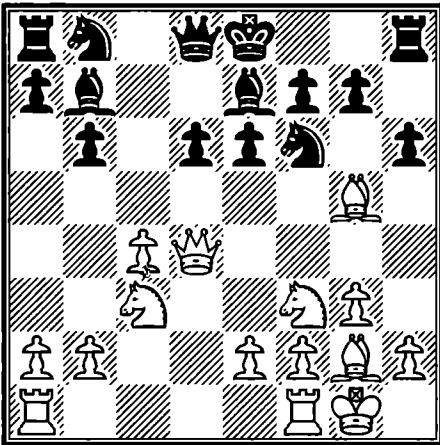
Volgodonsk 1983

Symmetrical English [A30]

1.c4 e6 2.♖c3 c5 3.♖f3 ♖f6 4.g3 b6 5.♖g2 ♖b7 6.0-0 ♖e7 7.d4 cxd4 8.♖xd4 d6 9.♖g5 h6?!

As with 9...0-0 10.♖fd1 h6 and 10...♖a6, the text seeks to win the bishop-pair and/or cripple White's c-

pawns. The problem is that it costs precious time, which White then uses to put strong pressure on d6. 9...c6? 10.c5 d5 11.cxd5 ♖xd5 12.♖ac1 0-0 13.c7 ♖c5 14.♗f4 ♘h5 15.♙xd8 ♘xf4 16.gxf4 ♖axd8 17.cxd5 exd5 18.♖fd1 ♘f6 19.c5± Nickoloff-Stone, Canada 1989.



10. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 11. ♗f4 ♙xc3

Or 11...a6 12.♖fd1 e5 13.♗d2 ♙e7 14.c5 ♙xd5 15.♗xd5 ♖a7 16.c2 0-0 17.c5± A.Martin-G.Lee, Morecambe 1981.

11...0-0 12.♖fd1 ♙xc3 13.bxc3 ♗f6 (13...e5!?) 14.♗xd6 ♖c8 15.c5 ♘a6 (15...bxc5 16.c5 ♙xg2 17.♗xg2 ♗f5 18.f3±) 16.cxb6 axb6 17.♗xb6± M.Voiska-Dzagnidze, Turin ol 2006.

12. bxc3 ♘d7

Several moves have been tried at this juncture, and one in particular is quite interesting:

a) 12...♗c7 13.c4 (13.♖fd1 e5 14.♗g4 g6 15.c4 ♙xg2 16.c5 ♘d7 gives White nothing, Brunner-H.Cordes, Hamburg 1985) 13...♙xg2 14.c5 ♗e7 (or 14...♗c6 15.c5 ♙xd6+ ♗e7 16.♗xf7+ ♗xd6 17.♖fd1+ ♙d5 18.cxd5 exd5 19.c4 and Black is cooked, while 14...♗d7 15.♗xg2 0-0

16.cxd6 ♘a6 17.e4 leaves White with an edge) 15.cxd6+ ♗f8 16.♗xg2 ♘c6 17.♖fd1± Bruk-Maryasin, Israel 2002. b) 12...c6 13.♖fd1 ♘c5 14.♖xd6 ♗f6 15.♗e3 (15.♗xf6 gxf6 16.♖ad1±) 15...♙xf3 (Black probably didn't like the look of 15...0-0 16.c5 ♙xg2 17.♗xg2 ♖ad8 18.♖ad1, but this is worth keeping in mind; White's extra pawn isn't very valuable, while in the game continuation, Black soon gets himself into serious trouble) 16.♙xf3 ♖d8 17.♙c6+ ♗e7 18.♖d4 ♖d6 19.♙g2 ♖hd8 20.♖ad1 ♘a4 21.♖xd6 ♖xd6 22.♖xd6 ♗xd6 23.♗e4 (now the king is in danger) 23..c3 24.♗c6+ ♗e5 25.♗d7 ♘xe2+ 26.♗f1 ♘d4 27.♗c7+ ♗f5 28.♗f4+ ♗g6 29.♙e4+ ♘f5 30.g4 1-0, Atalik-Hellsten, Kallithea Chalkidiki 2003.

c) 12...c6!? (probably Black's best option) 13.♖fd1 (13.♖ad1 ♗e7 is fine for Black) 13...♗e7 14.c4 ♘d4 15.cxd4 ♙xg2 16.♗xg2 ♖c8 17.♖ac1 ♖e8 (Black can consider 17...g5 18.♗f3 ♗c7 or 17...♗d7, in both cases with interesting play) 18.c5! d5, and now rather than 19.cxb6 ♗xb6 20.♖b1 ♗c7 21.♗e3 ♗f8, when Black had equalized in W.Schmidt-Kuligowski, Lubniewice 1981, White should play 19.♗e5 f6 20.♗h5 with the better chances.

13. ♖ad1 ♖c8

Black can also consider 13...e5 14.♗d2 ♘c5 15.♗xd6 ♗xd6 16.♖xd6 f6, although White is somewhat better.

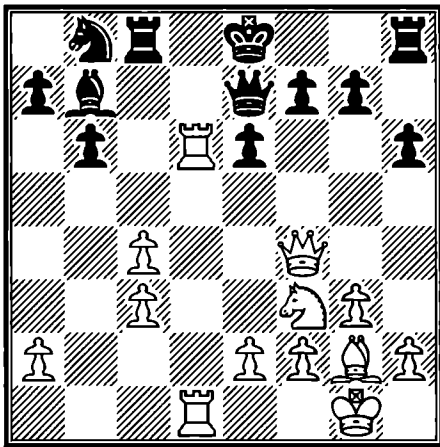
14. ♖xd6 ♗e7 15. ♖fd1 ♘b8?

This error allows White to utilize his better development and piece coordination. The alternatives also leave

White better, but have the benefit of keeping Black in the game:

a) 15...♗c5 16.♗e5 ♖xg2 17.♝xg2 ♗b7+ 18.f3 0-0 19.e4 and White is in control.

b) 15...♗f6 16.♗e5 (16.c5 0-0 17.cxb6 ♗d5 18.♝e5 ♗xc3 19.♞d7 ♗b4 is playable for Black) 16...♖xg2 17.♝xg2 0-0 18.♞6d3 ♗b7+ 19.f3 with the better chances for White.



16.c5!

Bravo! This is an idea to remember in similar positions with doubled c-pawns.

16...b5

Or 16...bxc5? 17.♝a4+ ♖c6? 18.♞xc6 ♗xc6 19.♗e5±.

17.♗e5 ♖xg2 18.♝xg2 0-0 19.c6 a5 20.♗d7 ♗xc6

Desperate situations call for desperate measures, but sacrificing the exchange hardly provides Black any relief. The alternatives are: 20...♗xd7 21.cxd7 ♞b8 22.♝d4 ♞fd8 23.f4 and Black is completely tied up or 20...♞fe8 21.♗xb8 ♞xb8 22.♞d7 ♝f8 23.c7 ♞a8 24.♝d6 and it is essentially game over.

21.♗xf8 ♝xf8 22.a4 b4 23.cxb4 ♗xb4 24.♝e5 ♗d5 25.e4 ♞e8?

A blunder based on an oversight, but Black is obviously lost anyway.

26.exd5 f6 27.♝h5! 1-0

Game 108

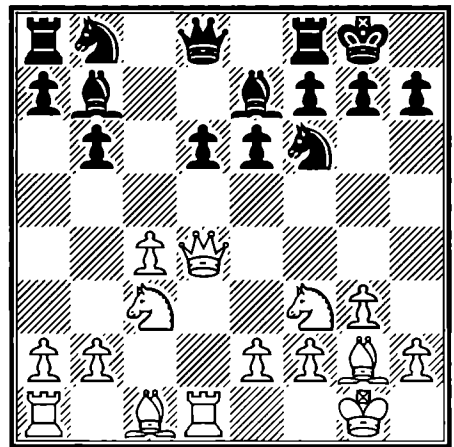
John Donaldson –

James Maki

San Diego 1984

Symmetrical English [A30]

1.♗f3 c5 2.c4 ♗f6 3.♗c3 e6 4.g3 b6 5.♖g2 ♖b7 6.0-0 ♖e7 7.d4 cxd4 8.♝xd4 d6 9.♞d1 0-0



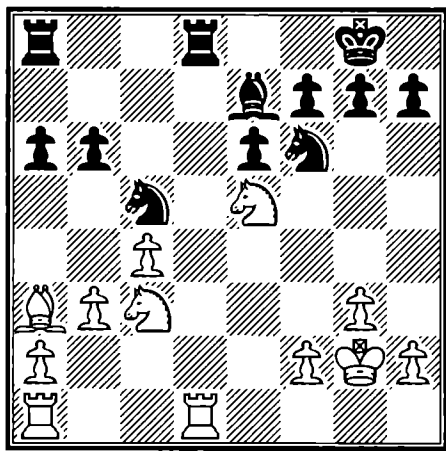
Black should delay castling and play ...a6 and ...♗bd7. For example, after 9...a6 10.b3 ♗bd7 11.e4, Black has two good possibilities in 11...♝b8 and 11...♝c8. The idea is to avoid an early e5 and the trade of queens, whereas 11...♝c7 is more problematic, e.g. 12.♖a3 ♗c5 13.e5 dxe5 14.♝xe5 ♝c8 (or 14...♞c8 15.♝xc7 ♞xc7 16.♖c1! ♗fe4 17.♖f4±) 15.♗a4 ♗fd7 16.♝xg7 ♖f6 17.♝h6 ♖xa1 18.♗xc5 ♗xc5 19.♞xa1 ♝c7 20.♖b2 ♞g8 21.♝xh7± Stean-Ligterink, Marbella 1982.

10.b3

If all the different maneuvers used to combat the Hedgehog (♖g5xf6, ♗g5 and ♞d1 with b3, ♖a3 and e4) are con-

fusing to you, don't despair. This plan is appropriate only when Black has castled too early. g5xf6 works best against an early $\dots\text{e7}$ and if Black delays the development of his kingside ($\dots\text{a6}$ and $\dots\text{d6}$), then g5 and d2 and g5-e4 are effective.

**10...d7 11.e4 a6 12.a3 c5
13.e5 dxe5 14.cxd8 Bfxd8
15.dxe5 Axg2 16.Cf3xg2**



My database has sixty-six games featuring this position, of which Black only won one. White generally has a tiny plus, while Black has decent chances of holding the balance, but very few chances of winning.

16...Af8

This is by far Black's most popular move; second is $16\dots\text{Bdc8}$, which is covered in Game 109.

17.Axc5 Axc5

$17\dots\text{bxc5}$ also deserves a look: $18.\text{d4}$ Bd6 , and now:

a) $19.\text{Bxd6 Axd6}$ $20.\text{d7 Bc8}$ $21.\text{Bd1 e8}$ $22.\text{dab6}$ ($22.\text{dc3 f5}$ $23.\text{f4 Cf7}$ $24.\text{db6 Bc6}$ $25.\text{dba4 df6=}$) $22\dots\text{Bc7}$ $23.\text{Be1 Ae7}$ $24.\text{Cf3 Bb7}$ $25.\text{Bd1 Ad6=}$ Ruffian-Hydra, Leiden 2004, but

White can improve by $20.\text{f4!}$?, e.g. $20\dots\text{Bc8}$ $21.\text{Cf3}$, with a good grip on the position: $21\dots\text{Axex5}$ $22.\text{fxe5 d7}$ $23.\text{Ce4 Bd8}$ $24.\text{g4 f6}$ $25.\text{Bd1 Cf7}$ $26.\text{d6 f5+}$ $27.\text{Ce3 Ce7}$ $28.\text{gxf5 exf5}$ $29.\text{dxd7 Bxd7}$ $30.\text{Bd5}$ and White is much better.

b) $19.\text{Cf3 h5}$ $20.\text{h3 Ba7}$ $21.\text{g4 Bc7}$ (on $21\dots\text{hxg4+}$, Grivas gives the elegant line: $22.\text{hxg4 d7}$ $23.\text{dxd7 Bxd7}$ $24.\text{db6 Bdb7}$ $25.\text{dc8 Ba8}$ $26.\text{Bd8 Bab8}$ $27.\text{de7+ Ch7}$ $28.\text{Bh1#}$, but suggests $21\dots\text{d7!}$? as a possible improvement: $22.\text{dxd7 Bxd7}$ $23.\text{Ce4 g5}$ $24.\text{f3 hxg4}$ $25.\text{hxg4 Bb7}$ $26.\text{Bac1}$) $22.\text{Ce3 Ae7}$ $23.\text{f4 hxg4}$ $24.\text{hxg4 de8}$ $25.\text{dc3 g5}$ $26.\text{de4}$ with a clear plus for White in the endgame, Ftacnik-Ambroz, Hradec Kralove 1981.

18.d4 Cf8!?

Black has tried a number of moves here:

a) $18\dots\text{Bac8}$ $19.\text{dc6 Bxd1}$ $20.\text{Bxd1 Cf8}$ ($20\dots\text{Af8}$ $21.\text{de5 Bb8}$ $22.\text{d7 dxd7}$ $23.\text{Bxd7}$) $21.\text{dxc5 bxc5}$ $22.\text{de5 Ce7}$ $23.\text{f4}\pm$ Antunes-Galego, Portugal 1994.

b) $18\dots\text{Bdc8?}$ $19.\text{b4 Ax4}$ $20.\text{dxb6 Ac3}$ $21.\text{dxc8 Bxc8}$ $22.\text{dc6}$ 1-0, Easton-D.James, England (4NCL) 1998.

c) $18\dots\text{Ad4?}$ $19.\text{dc6 Ax1}$ (or $19\dots\text{e5}$ $20.\text{dxd8 Bxd8}$ $21.\text{Bac1 de4}$ $22.\text{f3 dd6}$ $23.\text{dxb6}$ 1-0, Donaldson-Chao, Seattle 1984) $20.\text{dxd8 g6}$ $21.\text{dc6}$ 1-0, Leski-J.Torres, San Mateo 1994.

c) $18\dots\text{Bdb8?!}$ $19.\text{dc6 Bb7}$ $20.\text{dxc5 bxc5}$ $21.\text{Bd3}\pm$ I.Ivanov-M.Gurevich, Philadelphia 1989.

19.b4! Bxd1

The alternatives are no better: $19\dots\text{Ad4}$ $20.\text{dc6 Ax1}$ $21.\text{dxd8 b5}$ $22.\text{d6 Bb8}$

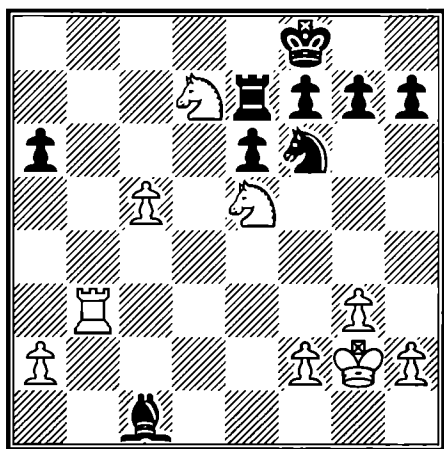
23.c5 ♖c3 24.c6 ♗e5 25.♟d7+ ♟x♟d7
26.♞x♟d7 ♞c8 27.♟xf7 ♗f6 28.c7 ♖e8
29.♞d8 and White is winning,
DeFirmian-Zivanovic, Smederevska
Palanka 1981 or 19...♗x♟b4 20.♟x♟b6
♗c3 21.♟xa8 ♞xa8 22.♟d7+ ♟x♟d7
23.♞ac1 ♗b2 24.♞c2 ♟b6 25.♞x♟b2
♟xc4 26.♞b7 is miserable for Black,
as in Headlong-G.Lee, England (4NCL)
2003.

20.♞x♟d1 ♗x♟b4 21.♟x♟b6 ♞e8
22.c5 ♗a5

White is winning after 22...♟d5
23.♟c6 a5 24.♞d3, Schirm-Marschner,
Bundesliga 2 1994 or 22...♗c3
23.♟ec4 ♞e7 24.♞d8+ ♞e8 25.♞d3,
Villemayor-Sadvakasov, Elista ol 1998.

23.♟c6 ♗c3 24.♞d3 ♗b2 25.♞b3
♗c1 26.♟e5 ♟d5

26...♞e7 is brilliantly refuted by
27.♟bd7+!!.



27...♟x♟d7 28.c6! (the point; Black can't
stop the pawn) 28...♟b6 (28...♟xe5?
loses to 29.♞b8+ ♞e8 30.c7) 29.♞x♟b6
♞c7 30.♞b7 ♞c8 31.♞xf7+ ♖g8
32.♞d7 ♗b2 33.c7 and it is curtains for
Black.

27.c6 ♟c7

On 27...♖e7 28.♟bc4 ♞c8 29.♞b7+
♞c7 30.f4, Black is completely tied up,
and 30...f6 loses to 31.♞xc7+ ♟xc7
32.♟d3.

28.♟bc4 ♗g5 29.♞b7 ♗d8
30.♟d6 ♖e7 31.♟xe8 ♖xe8
32.♟c4 g5 33.♖f3 ♖e7 34.♖e4 f6
35.♖d4 e5+ 36.♖e4 ♖e6 37.g4
♖f7 38.♖f5 ♖e7 39.♞a7 ♖f8
40.a4 ♖e8 41.♟d6+ ♖f8 42.h3
♖g8 43.♟e4 1-0

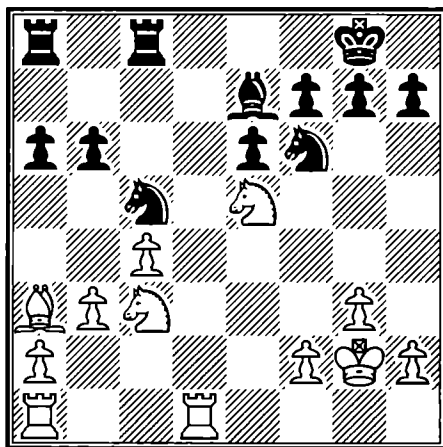
Game 109

*Rafael Vaganian –
Jesus Nogueiras*

Rotterdam (12) 1989

Symmetrical English [A30]

1.c4 ♟f6 2.♟c3 c5 3.g3 e6 4.♟f3
b6 5.♗g2 ♗b7 6.0-0 ♗e7 7.d4
cxd4 8.♖xd4 d6 9.b3 0-0 10.♞d1
♟bd7 11.e4 a6 12.♗a3 ♟c5 13.e5
dxe5 14.♖xd8 ♞fxd8 15.♟xe5
♗xg2 16.♖xg2 ♞dc8



16...♗f8 is covered in Game 108.

17.♟a4

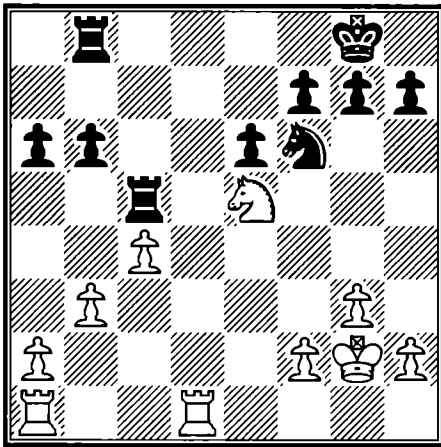
17.♗xc5 ♞xc5 18.♟d7 is best met by
18...♞c6, which keeps the game bal-
anced.

17...♖ab8 18.♙xc5

An important alternative is 18.♙xc5, and now:

a) 18...bxc5 19.♘b2 ♖b7 20.♙c3 ♕f8 21.♖d3 ♖d8 22.♖ad1 ♖xd3 23.♖xd3 ♕e8 24.♙c6 ♖b6 25.♙xe7 ♕xe7, W.Schmidt-Pieniazek, Augustow 1996, and now 26.f4±.

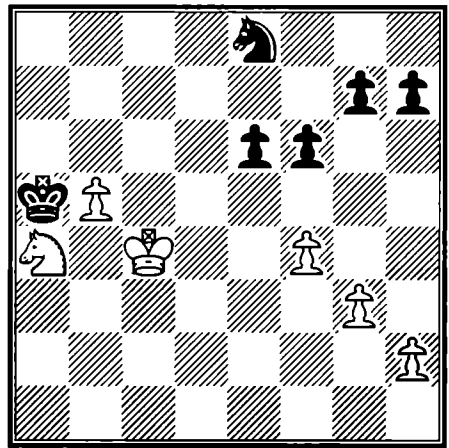
b) 18...♙xc5 19.♙xc5 ♖xc5, and now:



b1) 20.♙d7 ♙xd7 21.♖xd7 b5 22.♖ad1 (or 22.cxb5 axb5 23.a4 bxa4 24.bxa4 ♖a5 25.♖b1 ♖f8 26.♖b4 g5 27.h4 h6 28.hxg5 hxg5 and Black is quite safe, but still has to work for the draw, as in V.Soskov-S.Kasparov, Gothenburg 2006) 22...g5 23.cxb5 axb5 24.g4 ♖bc8 25.♖1d4 (25.♕f3 ♕g7 26.♖1d6 ♖e5 27.♖d3 ♖c2 28.♖d2 ♖c3+, and the chances are about even, although Black managed to lose the endgame in Duong Thanh Nha-Roussel Roozmon, Montreal 2002) 25...♖8c7 26.♖xc7 ♖xc7 27.♖b4 ♖c5 28.a4 bxa4 29.bxa4 h6 30.♖b8+ ♕g7 31.♖a8 ♖c3 32.a5 ♖a3 33.a6 ♕f6 34.h3 ♕g7 35.♖a7 ½-½, Sanikidze-Belozarov, ECC Izmir 2004.

b2) 20.f4! is probably strongest and offers White very decent winning chances: 20...♖c7 (or 20...b5 21.♖d6 bxc4 22.♙xc4 ♖a8 23.♖ad1 is better for White, Barbero-Fominyh, Hartberg

1991) 21.♕f3 ♙e8 22.♖d7 (also, 22.♖d2 is quite good for White, e.g. 22...f6 23.♙g4 ♕f7 24.♖ad1 ♕e7 25.♙e3 f5 26.g4 g6 27.g5 ♖bb7 28.♙c2 ♖d7 29.♙d4 and Black had serious problems, as in M.Arner-R.Lobo, Palo Alto 1991) 22...♖bc8 23.♖ad1 f6 24.♙g4 ♖xd7 25.♖xd7 ♖c7 26.♖xc7 ♙xc7 and White has a significant advantage because of his queenside pawn majority: 27.♕e3 ♕f7 28.♕d4 a5 29.♙f2 ♕e7 30.a3 ♕d6 31.♙e4+ ♕c6 32.b4 axb4 33.axb4 b5 34.♙c3 bxc4 35.♕xc4 ♙e8 36.b5+ ♕b6 37.♙a4+ ♕a5



38.b6!! ♕xa4 39.♕c5 ♕a5 40.b7 ♙c7 41.♕d6 ♙a6 42.♕xe6 ♕b6 43.♕f7 ♕xb7 44.♕xg7 ♕c6 45.♕xh7 ♕d6 46.h4 ♙c5 47.h5 ♕e7 48.♕g8 1-0, Dyachkov-Chytilek, Siofok 1996.

18...bxc5 19.♖d3

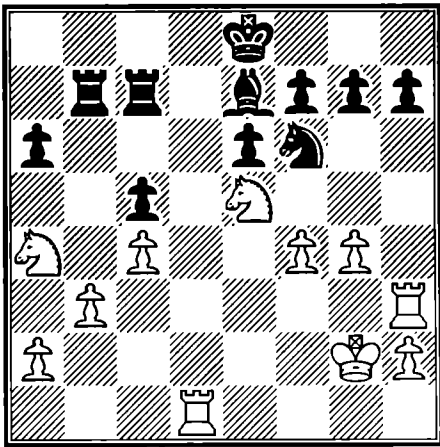
Or 19.♙d7 ♖b7 (19...♙xd7 20.♖xd7 ♙f6 21.♖ad1 ♙d4 may be better) 20.♙dxc5 ♖xc5 21.♙xc5 ♙xc5 22.♖d8+ ♙f8 23.♖ad1 (23.♖a8!?) 23...♖a7 24.♖c8 ♙d7, and now in Szekely-De Boer, Groningen 1994, White took the draw by repetition 25.♖d8 ♙f6 26.♖c8 ♙d7 27.♖d8 ♙f6, but White is better after 25.b4!?, because of his queenside pawn majority

and Black's lack of activity and poor piece coordination.

19...♖b7 20.f4 ♘f8

In Stohl-M.Hoffmann, Bundesliga 1996, Black tried 20...g6, but he was quickly pushed off the board after 21.g4 ♖cc7 22.♖ad1 ♘f8 23.g5 ♗h5 24.♘f3 ♘e8 25.♗c3 f6 26.gxf6 ♗xf6 27.♗e4 ♗xe4 28.♘xe4 a5 29.♖h3 ♗f8 (29...♗f6!?) 30.♗g4 ♖f7 31.♖xh7! ♖xh7 32.♗f6+ ♘e7 33.♗xh7 ♗g7 34.♖g1 a4 35.♖xg6 ♗b2 36.♖g3 1-0.

21.g4 ♖cc7 22.♖ad1 ♘e8 23.♖h3



Upon 23.♗c3 ♗g8 24.♗e4 f6 25.♗f3 ♗h6 26.h3 ♗f7 27.♗g3 ♖c6 28.h4 a5 29.f5 e5 30.♗e4, White has a clear edge, but capitalizing on it is difficult, and after 30...a4 31.♗fd2 ♖a6 32.♖d5 axb3 33.axb3 ♖a5 34.♖b1 ♖a2, Black had some counterplay in Kharitonov-Iljin, St. Petersburg 2005.

23...g6 24.f5+ exf5 25.gxf5 ♗h5 26.♖e3 ♗g5 27.♖ee1 ♘f8 28.♘f3 ♗e7 29.♗c3 ♗f6 30.♗d5 ♗xe5 31.♖xe5 ♖c6 32.♗e7 ♖cc7 33.♖d8+ ♘g7 34.♗d5 ♖c6 35.♖e7 ♖xe7 36.♗xe7 ♖c7 37.♗d5 ♖c6 38.♗e7 ♖c7 39.♗d5 ♖c6 40.♘e4

Now that White has made the time control, he can concentrate on finding the most effective plan.

40...gxf5+?!

As so often happens, the last move of the time control proves to be an error. Better is 40...♗f6+.

41.♘xf5 ♖e6 42.♖a8 ♖e2 43.♖xa6 ♖xh2 44.♘g4 f6 45.a4 ♘g6 46.♗e7+ ♘h6 47.♗f5+ ♘g6 48.♗h4+ ♘h6 49.♗f5+ ♘g6 50.♗h4+ ♘h6 51.♖c6 ♖e2 52.♗f5+ ♘g6 53.♖xc5 ♖e4+ 54.♘h3 ♗f4+ 55.♘g3 ♗h5+ 56.♘g2 ♖g4+ 57.♘h2 ♖f4 58.a5 ♖f2+ 59.♘g1 ♖a2 60.♗h4+ ♘h6 61.♗f5+ ♘g6 62.♗e7+ ♘h6 63.b4 ♗f4 64.♖f5 ♖a1+ 65.♘h2 ♗d3 66.♗d5 ♘g6 67.♖xf6+ ♘g5 68.♖f3 ♗e5 69.♖c3 ♘g4 70.♘g2 h5 71.♗e3+ ♘f4 72.♗c2 ♖d1 73.a6 ♗g4 74.a7 ♖d2+ 75.♘f1 ♗h2+ 76.♘e1 ♖d8 77.b5 ♗f3+ 78.♖xf3+ ♘xf3 79.b6 1-0

Game 110

*Theodor Ghitescu –
Ovidiu Foisor*

Eforie Nord 1989

Symmetrical English [A30]

1.c4 ♗f6 2.♗c3 c5 3.♗f3 e6 4.g3 b6 5.♗g2 ♗b7 6.0-0 a6 7.d4 cxd4 8.♘xd4 d6 9.♖d1

In Adorjan-Suba, Hungary 1993, White tried 9.♗g5, but the maneuver ♗f3-g5-e4 works best only after Black has committed his knight to d7. Now ...♗c6 often proves to be effective, and it even allows for ...♗c6-a7-c8, providing extra protection to d6. Suba soon equal-

ized in style after 9...♘xg2 10.♙xg2 ♖c6 11.♗f4 ♘e7 12.♗ce4 0-0 13.♗xf6+ ♘xf6 14.♗xh7 ♙xh7 15.♗e4+ ♙g8 16.♗xc6 ♖c8 17.♗e4 ♗c7 18.♖d1 ♗xc4 19.♗xc4 ♖xc4 20.♖xd6 b5 21.♖xa6 ♖c2 22.♙f3 ♖d8 23.♘e3 ♘xb2 and Black has enough compensation.

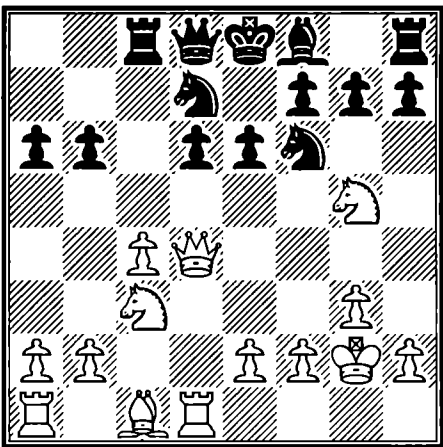
9...♗bd7

9...♘e7 10.♗g5 ♘xg2 11.♙xg2 ♖a7?! (11...♗c6! is more accurate, e.g. 12.♗d3 ♖c8!? 13.b3 0-0 with a decent game for Black) 12.♘e3 ♗bd7 13.♗ge4 0-0 14.♗xd6 ♗a8+ 15.f3 ♖d8 16.♗de4± Wojtkiewicz-Jurek, Bern 1993.

10.♗g5

10.♘g5 ♗c7 11.♗d2 ♘xg2 12.♙xg2 ♘e7 13.♗de4 0-0 14.♖ac1 ♖fd8 15.♙g1 h6 16.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 (16...♘xf6 17.♘xf6 ♗xf6 is equal) 17.♘e3 ♖ab8 18.♗e4 ♗xe4 19.♗xe4, despite White's spatial plus, Black has equalized, as in Serper-Ashley, New York 1996.

10...♘xg2 11.♙xg2 ♖c8



Move orders in the Hedgehog are crucial and this position is a good example. White's play has clearly been based on

attacking d6. If Black hadn't played an early ...♗bd7, he wouldn't have ...♖c8-c6 available now. Conversely, if White had played b3 and Black had played ...♗c7, Black would have the option of ...♘e7 here, meeting ♗ge4 with ...0-0 and ♗xd6 with a rook to the d-file. The d6-pawn is difficult to win and gambit ideas with ♗xd6 met by ...♖d8 are quite common.

12.♗ge4 ♖c6 13.♘f4

White plays sharply based on his superior development. Note that Black is at least two moves away from castling.

13...♗a8?!

Suba's 13...♗xe4 14.♗xe4 ♗c8, intending 15.♖ac1 ♘e7 16.b3 0-0, is the proper way to play, and even 16...b5!? can be considered.

14.♙g1

14.♗d3!? is more aggressive and looks good for White.

14...♗xe4

14...e5 15.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 16.♗e3 ♖xc4 (or 16...♗c8 17.♘g5 ♗d7 18.♙f3! ♖xc4 19.♗d5 h6 20.♘e3 b5 21.b3 ♖c6 22.♖ac1 and Black is in serious trouble) 17.♘g5 ♗d7 18.♗d5 f6 19.♙f3 (19.b3!? ♖c6 20.♙f3 is also worth consideration) 19...e4 20.♗b3 ♗c6 21.♘e3 b5 22.♖ac1 a5? (relatively best is 22...♘e7 23.♖xc4 bxc4 24.♗c3 ♗e5 25.♗d4 ♙f7 26.♗xe4, when White is better, but Black is actually still in the game) 23.♖xc4 (23.a4! is even stronger; Black may then be lost, e.g. 23...♖xc1 24.♖xc1 ♗c5 25.axb5!)

23...bxc4 24.♖c3 ♕f7 25.♞d4 and Black's position is terrible, L.Lengyel-D.Gurevich, Eksjö 1982

15.♖xe4 ♘f6

White was threatening to take on d6.

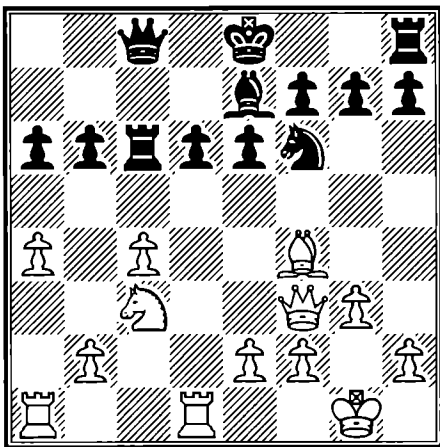
16.♖f3 ♖c8

This move is necessary to counter the threat of ♙xd6, but the queen has lost valuable time in taking two moves to go to c8. Ghitescu now decisively exploits his lead in development.

17.a4!

This seems like a deterrent to ...b5, but Ghitescu has another idea in mind. Also, 17.♞ac1! can be considered.

17...♙e7



18.♘b5!?

This amazing move exploits White's time advantage in wonderful fashion.

18...axb5?

The threats of ♘a7 and capturing on d6 don't allow many options, but the text places Black in a lost position with-

out much hope for counterplay. Alternatively, 18...♖d7 looks like it may hold: 19.♘xd6+ ♙xd6 20.a5 (20.b4 is less accurate: 20...♖c7 21.b5 ♙xf4 22.♖xc6+ ♖xc6 23.bxc6 ♙c7 and Black has the better of it) 20...♖c7 (20...0-0? 21.axb6 ♘e8 22.♞xa6 ♞xc4 23.b7 ♞xf4 24.gxf4 ♖e7 25.♞a8+-) 21.♞xd6 (21.axb6 ♖xb6 22.c5) 21...♞xd6 22.♙xd6 ♖xd6 23.♖a8+ ♖d8 24.♖xd8+ ♕xd8 25.axb6 ♕c8 26.♞xa6 ♕b7 27.♞a7+ ♕xb6 28.♞xf7 ♕c5 29.♞c7+ ♕b4 30.♞xg7 ♕xc4 31.f3 and White has slightly better chances in the endgame thanks to his active rook, pawn chain and the lack of coordination of the black pieces.

19.axb5 ♞xc4 20.♞a8

Black must surrender his queen for a rook, minor piece and an active position, but he is already lost because of his weak b6-pawn, as well as White's easy access to the a-file.

20...d5 21.♞da1 0-0 22.♞xc8 ♞fxc8 23.♞a7 ♕f8 24.♙e5 ♞e4 25.♙c7 ♞b4 26.♖a3 d4 27.♖a6 ♞e8 28.♖xb6 ♘d5 29.♖c6 ♞xb2 30.b6 1-0

Game 111

Petar Velikov –

Silvio Danailov

Bulgaria (11) 1987

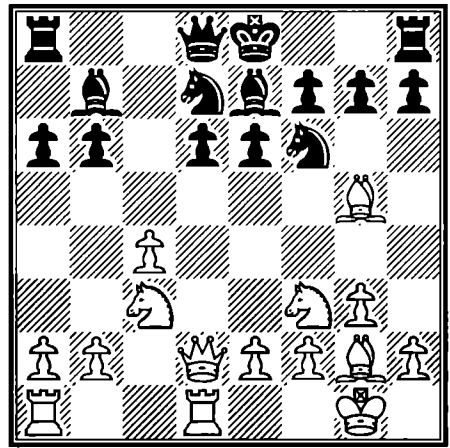
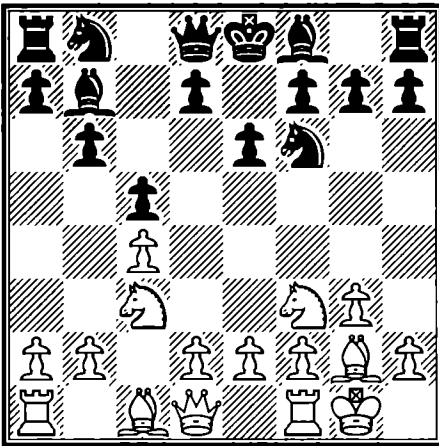
Symmetrical English [A30]

1.♘f3 c5 2.c4 ♘f6 3.g3 b6 4.♙g2 ♙b7 5.0-0 e6 6.♘c3

Black has four serious tries in this position. The least common, 6...♘c6, aims to take some pressure off by trading pieces. The other three moves: 6...♙e7,

6...a6 and 6...d6 are more dynamic. All three aim for the same long-term Hedgehog setup, but the different move orders allow for diverse treatments by White and various options to counter them. To give the most obvious distinction 6...♗e7 allows the fashionable 7.♞e1 (intending e4, d4 and ♖xd4) to be countered by 7...d5, an advance Black would hardly entertain after 6...a6 or 6...d6 7.♞e1.

16.♙xg7 ♘f6 17.♚h6 ♙e7! and White doesn't have enough compensation.



6...d6 7.d4 cxd4 8.♙xd4 a6 9.♞d1

One of the advantages of playing ...d6 and ...a6 before ...♗e7 is that Black is much better placed to meet the ♗g5xf6 plan. Here it would accomplish little after 9.♗g5 ♖bd7 10.♗xf6, because Black can recapture with his knight.

11...♞c8

Black can also play 11...♙c8 or 11...0-0. The latter is safest, but after 12.♗f4, Black either has to play passively by 12...♖e8 or accept a weakness with 12...d5 13.cxd5 ♖xd5 14.♖xd5 exd5 15.♖e5, as in Wojtkiewicz-Yermolinsky, New York 1991.

9...♗e7 10.♗g5

Plans based on ♗g5xf6 and b3, e4, ♗a3, followed by e5, accomplish little against Black's flexible move-order. The other try for White is ♖f3-g5.

11...♙c8 12.♗f4 ♖c5 13.♙e3 ♙c7 14.b4 ♖cd7 15.♙d2 ♙xc4 16.♗xd6 ♗xd6 17.♙xd6 ♙xc3 18.♞ac1 ♙b2 19.♞c7 ♗d5 20.e4 ♙xf2+ 21.♚h1 ♙e2 22.♞e1 ♙xa2 23.♞xd7 ♖xd7 24.exd5 and Black is toast; he is way behind in development and the king is stuck in the center, Wojtkiewicz-Hjartarson, Aalborg 1989.

10...♖bd7 11.♙d2

This modest retreat, preparing to put pressure on d6 via ♗f4, is best. 11.♗xf6?! ♖xf6 12.♖a4 ♞b8 13.c5 dxc5 14.♙e5 ♗d5 15.e4 ♖xe4

12.♗f4 ♞xc4

Or 12...♗xf3 13.exf3 ♖e5 14.b3 (14.♗xe5 dxe5 15.♙g5 can also be considered) 14...0-0 15.♞ac1 ♙c7 16.♙e2 ♙b8 17.♗e3 ♞fe8 18.f4 and White was in complete control, as in Donaldson-Browne, Reno 1990.

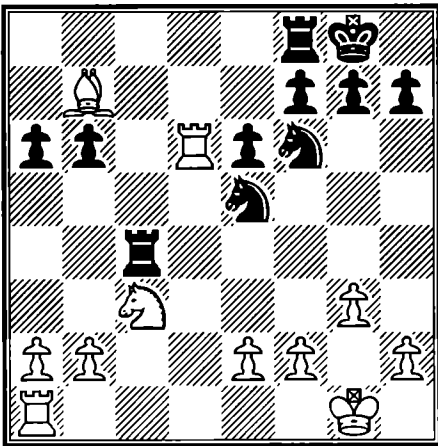
13.♗xd6

The opening of lines naturally favors the better developed player.

13...0-0?!

Now Black gets into trouble; he likely overlooked White's strong reply. Instead, he had to play 13...♖c8! and after 14.♕f4 0-0, Black has equalized, and upon 14.♗g5 ♕xg2 15.♜xg2 0-0 16.♗ge4, Black keeps the balance by 16...b5.

14.♗e5! ♗xе5 15.♕xб7 ♕xд6
16.♜xд6 ♜xд6 17.♖xд6±



White has a clear advantage in the ending because of his more active rooks and superior minor piece.

17...♖b4

This is the only way to stave off losing a pawn, but the rook soon gets into trouble.

18.b3 a5 19.♖b1

Velikov prepares a3 to embarrass the rook.

19...♖b8 20.a3 ♗e8 21.♖dd1 ♖g4
22.♕g2 ♖g6

The poor placement of the rook is more than enough of an advantage for White to win the game.

23.♗b5 f5 24.♖bc1 ♖f6 25.♗d4
♖d8 26.f4 ♗f7 27.♗c6

Trading a pair of rooks is the easiest way to emphasize the misplaced rook.

27...♖xд1+ 28.♖xд1 ♗fd6
29.♗e5 b5 30.♖c1 1-0

Danailov resigned, as White's pieces will clean up on the queenside, while Black's ill-coordinated pieces are only spectators. This was an excellent performance by White.

Game 112

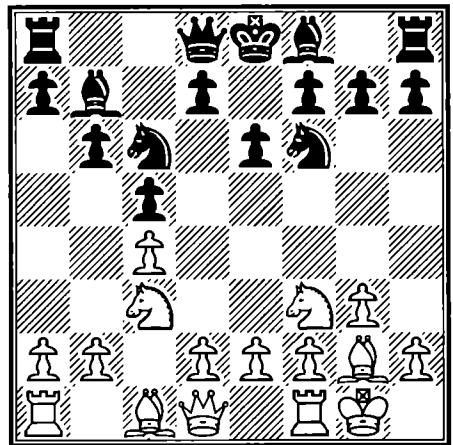
Kiril Georgiev –

Florin Gheorghiu

Palma de Majorca (5) 1989

Symmetrical English [A30]

1.c4 c5 2.♗f3 ♗f6 3.♗c3 e6 4.g3
b6 5.♕g2 ♕b7 6.0-0 ♗c6



This favorite of GM Nick DeFirmian is a tough nut to crack. Black's idea is to trade two pairs of minor pieces after 7.d4 ♗xд4 8.♗xд4 ♕xg2 9.♜xg2 cxd4 10.♜xd4, when White has few chances of fighting for an advantage.

7.♗e5

The text might seem like a beginner's move, but it has some good ideas be-

hind it. White wants to follow up with e4 and d4, but rather than have Black play ...dxd4, he wants to take on c6, as ...Ac6 sometimes allows d5. 7.d5 might look like a loss of time, but Black also spends a few moves finding the right square for his queen. The other try is 7.e4 preserving the bishop on g2 after d4. Upon 7...d6 8.d4 cxd4 9.dxd4 dxd4 10.0-0 Ae7 11.b3 0-0 12.Bd1 a6 13.Aa3 Bb8 14.Ab4±, White continues with a4 and restrains ...b5 and ...d5.

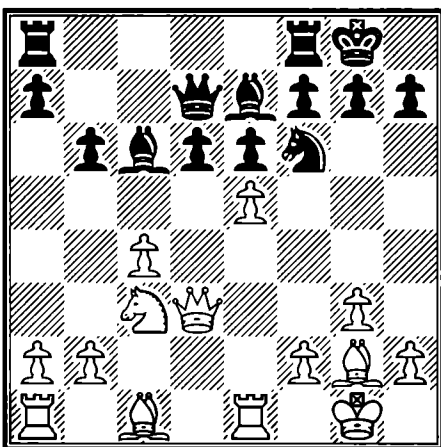
7...Bc8 8.dxc6 Ac6 9.e4 d6 10.d4 cxd4 11.0xd4 Ae7 12.Be1 Bd7

12...0-0 can be met by 13.d5!?, but things are not so clear: 13...dxd5 (13...exd5?! is worse: 14.exd5 dxd5 15.cxd5 Af6 16.Bb4 Ab7 17.Af4 Bd8 18.Bac1 and White's pieces dominate the board) 14.exd5 e5 15.Bc3 Ad7 16.Ae3 f5 with chances for both sides.

13.Bd3

Threatening 14.e5 Acxg2 15.exf6.

13...0-0 14.e5±



14.Af4! keeps the tension a bit longer: 14...d5g4 (or 14...d5h5 15.Ae3 Bfc8

16.Bad1 with a plus for White) 15.Bad1 e5 16.Ac1 and White has the better chances.

14...d5e8

14...d5g4 can also be considered, e.g. 15.exd6 Acxg2 16.Bxg2 Bxd6 17.Be2 Bc6+ 18.f3 Bfd8.

15.Af4 Acxg2 16.Bxg2 Bc6+ 17.Bf3 Bxf3+ 18.Bxf3 dxe5 19.Axe5 Af6 20.Bad1 Axex5 21.Bxe5 d5f6 22.d5 Bfc8 23.b3 a6 24.d6 Bc7 25.Be2 Bf8 26.h4 h5 ½-½

White has nothing more than a symbolic spatial edge.

Game 113

Laszlo Vadasz – Harry Schussler

Kiel (1) 1979

Symmetrical English [A30]

1.d5f3 d5f6 2.c4 b6 3.g3 c5 4.Ag2 Ab7 5.0-0 g6

Black's other option is 5...e6. The text leads to what is called the Double Fianchetto variation.

6.d5c3 Ag7 7.d4 d5e4

The main line, 7...cxd4, is covered in the next few games. The text tries to simplify the position.

8.d5

This move sidesteps simplification, while bringing the knight to a good square. Yes, Black can remove it with ...e6, but not without incurring some

serious weaknesses. Note that in this line the moves $\text{d}g5$ and $\text{d}e1$, trying to exploit the knight on e4, are quite common.

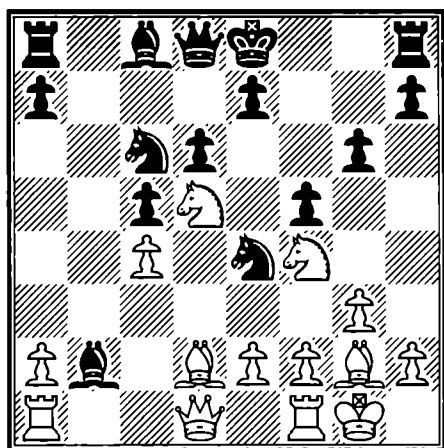
8...dxc6

The alternatives are worse: $8...0-0?$ $9.\text{d}g5!$ $\text{d}d6$ $10.\text{d}f4$ and White is firmly in control, while $8...e6$ $9.\text{d}f4$ $\text{d}d5?$ ($9...cxd4$ $10.\text{d}xd4$ is also pleasant for White) $10.\text{d}xc5$ $\text{b}xc5$ $11.\text{d}d2$ $\text{d}f6$ $12.\text{c}xd5$ $\text{d}xd5$ $13.\text{d}e4$ and Black is already in trouble.

9.dxc5 bxc5 10.dxe1 f5 11.d3 d6 12.d3f4 dxc8

$12...cxd7$ $13.\text{d}e6!$ is worse.

13.d2 dxb2?!

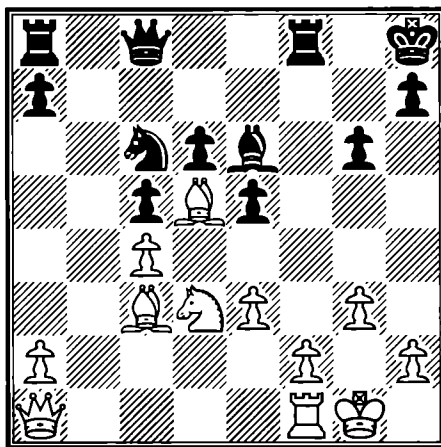


$13...d7$ $14.\text{f}b1$ $0-0$ $15.\text{d}c3$ $\text{d}xd2$ $16.\text{c}xd2$ $\text{c}c8$ $17.\text{a}3$ $\text{f}b8$ $18.\text{b}4!$ with the initiative for White, Vadasz-Ftacnik, Zalaegerszeg 1979.

14.d3! dxa1 15.dxe4 fxe4 16.cxa1 e5 17.dxe4 dd7 18.d3c3 0-0 19.d5+ h8 20.e3 c8?!

A safer choice is $20...f6$ $21.\text{d}d3$ $\text{f}ae8$ $22.\text{f}4$ $\text{c}f5$ and Black is still fighting.

21.d3 dxe6?



Now it is over. Instead, $21...c8e8$ leaves White only clearly better: $22.\text{f}4$ $\text{d}h3$ $23.\text{f}f2$.

22.dxe5+! dxe5

Also, $22...g8$ $23.\text{d}xd6$ $\text{f}d8$ $24.\text{d}xc5$ $\text{d}xd5$ $25.\text{c}xd5$ $\text{f}xd6$ $26.\text{d}e4$ wins for White.

23.dxe5 g8 24.dg4 h6 25.dxf6+ cf7 26.de4 ce7 27.cg7+ ff7 28.cxg6 1-0

Game 114

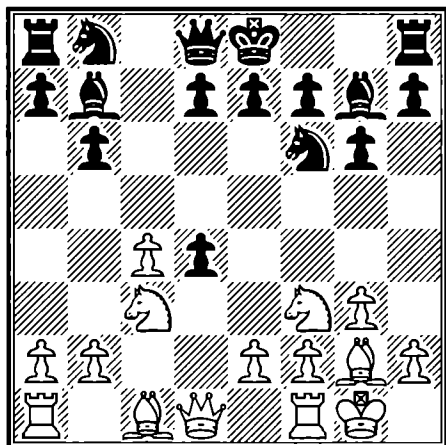
Vladimir Kramnik – Anatoly Karpov

Monaco blindfold (8) 1994
Symmetrical English [A30]

1.d3 dxf6 2.c4 b6 3.g3 db7 4.dg2 c5 5.0-0 g6 6.d3 dg7 7.d4 cxd4

Not so long ago White regularly played $8.\text{d}xd4$ and after $8...dxc2$ $9.\text{c}xc2$, Black was so fearful of a Maroczy Bind (e4 and c4) that he would play $9...c8$ $10.\text{b}3$ $\text{c}b7+$ $11.\text{f}3$ $\text{d}d5$ $12.\text{d}xd5$ $\text{d}xd5$ $13.\text{c}xd5$ $\text{c}xd5$ $14.\text{d}e3$, which yielded White many won endings. Nowadays we know better and no one plays

11...d5. Instead, attention has shifted to the queen recapture, which avoids trading pieces.



8. ♖xd4 d6

This is probably the most precise treatment. Black can gain a tempo by 8...♗c6, but the knight blocks the c-file and the a8-h1 diagonal, and is often misplaced.

9. ♗e3

The bishop goes here, because White is planning to trade off the black powerhouse on g7 by a later ♗h6.

9...♗bd7 10. ♖ac1 ♖c8 11. ♖fd1 0-0 12. ♗h4

Now that Black has castled, White prepares ♗h6.

12...♖e8 13. b3 a6

After 13...♗c6?! 14. ♗h3, Black suffers a passive position: 14...♗xf3 15. exf3 a6 16. ♗g2 ♖c7 17. ♗d4 ♖b8 18. ♗d3 ♖c7 19. f4 ♖ec8 20. a4 ♗c5 21. ♗b1 ♖d8 22. h3 ♗cd7 23. g4 ♖cc8 24. g5 ♗h5 25. ♗d5 ♖e8 26. ♗f3 ♗c5 27. ♗c2 e6 28. ♗b4 ♗f8 29. ♗c6 ♖c7

30. b4 ♗d7 31. b5± Wojtkiewicz-Landenbergue, Bern 1993.

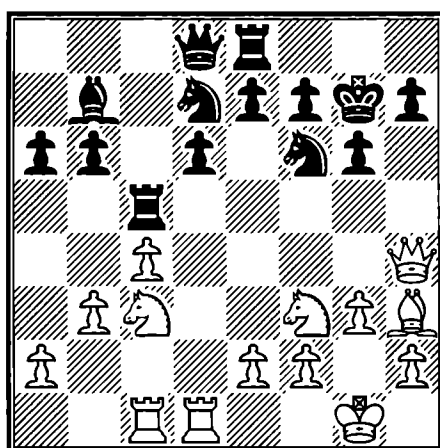
14. ♗h3

On 14. ♗h6, Black would play 14...♖c5, which is a useful move in such positions. The rook threatens ...♖h5 and allows ...♗a8 and ...♖ec8.

14...♖c7 15. ♗h6 ♖c5

The other option here, in view of ♗g5, is capturing on f3. This has to be followed by very concrete play or White will have time for ♗xg7, ♗d4 (centralizing), ♗g2 and f3-f4-f5 with an advantage in the center. Or 15...♗xf3 16. exf3 ♖c5 17. ♗xg7 ♖xg7 18. ♗d4 h5 19. ♗a4 ♗e5 20. ♗g2 ♖a5 21. f4± Wojtkiewicz-Palkövi, Stara Zagora 1990.

16. ♗xg7 ♖xg7



17. ♗d4

Having swapped bishops, the queen returns to a dominating position in the center.

17...♗g8 18. b4 ♖c7 19. ♗d5

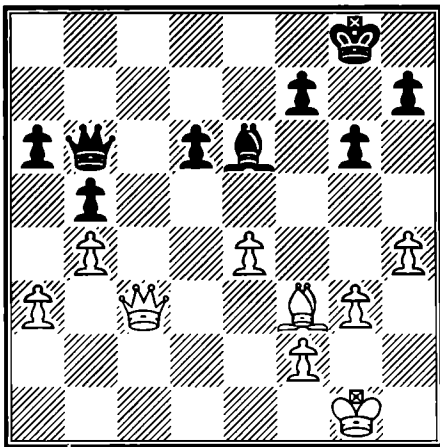
White has a small, clear advantage. However, converting it against Karpov

is never easy, especially when the time control is G/30.

19...♟×d5 20.c×d5 ♞f6 21.e4 b5
22.♞e3 ♞c8 23.♞×c7 ♞×c7
24.♞c1 ♞b8 25.♞g2 ♞d7 26.h3
♞c8 27.♞d4 ♞×c1+ 28.♞×c1 ♞b6
29.♞c3 ♞e8 30.a3 ♞c7 31.h4 e5!?
32.d×e6 ♞×e6 33.♞×e6

33.♞e2!? is also worth exploring, e.g.
33...♞c7 34.♞d2 ♞c6 35.♞c3 with a
better game for White.

33...♞×e6 34.♞f3?!



At this juncture, White throws a good chunk of his advantage away by allowing Black to play ...h7-h5. Instead, White should have played 34.h5!, e.g. 34...g×h5 35.♞f6 with an obvious advantage.

34...h5 35.♞g2 ♞f8 36.e5 d5

36...d×e5 37.♞×e5 is similar to the game, but with a somewhat more active position of White's queen.

37.♞d2 ♞c7

With all his experience, Karpov has probably determined that the ensuing endgame is relatively safe for Black.

Otherwise he might have tried 37...d4!?. In the game White's advantage consists of Black's queenside pawns being fixed on light squares, the color of the bishops. The problem for White is that he cannot allow Black to take over the h1-a8 diagonal with his light-squared bishop, as White's king will then be very vulnerable.

38.♞×d5 ♞×e5 39.♞b7 ♞c7
40.♞e4 ♞e5 41.♞d3 ♞c4 42.♞f3
♞g7 43.♞b7 ♞d6 44.♞g1 ♞d2
45.♞e3 ♞d6 46.♞h2 ♞h7
47.♞a7 ♞f6 48.♞e3 ♞d6 49.♞c5
♞e6 50.♞g2 ♞d7 51.♞e4 ♞g7
52.♞e5+ ♞g8 53.♞f6 ♞e6
54.♞h2 ♞h7 55.♞f3 ♞g8 56.♞c3
♞d1 57.♞e3 ♞c4 58.♞b7 ½-½

Game 115

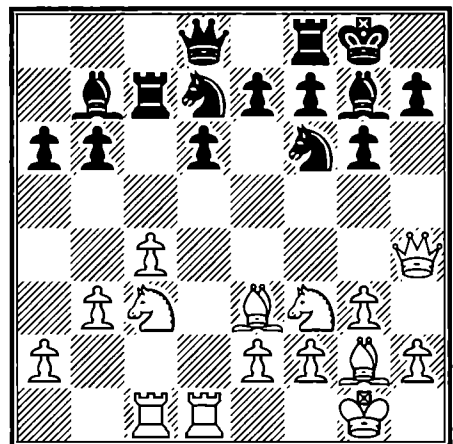
Veselin Topalov –

Lev Psakhis

FIDE-KO Wch (3.1), 1999

Symmetrical English [A30]

1.♞f3 ♞f6 2.c4 c5 3.g3 b6 4.♞g2
♞b7 5.0-0 g6 6.d4 c×d4 7.♞×d4
♞g7 8.♞c3 d6 9.♞d1 ♞bd7
10.♞e3 ♞c8 11.♞ac1 0-0 12.♞h4
a6 13.b3 ♞c7



Or 13...♞e8 14.♞h3 ♞c7 (14...♞c7
transposes to 13...♞c7 14.♞h3 ♞e8,

which is covered in the note to Black's next move, whereas 14...♞b8 gets Black into trouble: 15.♟d5 h5 16.♟g5 ♖a8 17.♙d4 b5 18.e4 bxc4 19.bxc4 e5 20.♙e3 ♟xd5 21.cxd5 ♙f6 22.g4! with a nasty attack in Delchev-Kutuzovic, Nova Gorica 1997) 15.♙h6 ♙xh6 16.♞xh6 ♙xf3 17.exf3 ♞b7 and, in the game Fancsy-Dudas, Budapest 1994, White played 18.♞d4 and Black answered 18...♞c5, but Black could have tried 18...♟e5!?, e.g. 19.♙g2 b5, when 20.f4?! ♟f3+ 21.♞f1?, leads to immediate disaster upon 21...♟g4!. Therefore, White needs an improvement, and while 18.f4 b5 19.cxb5 axb5 20.♙g2 looks promising, Black is fine after 21...♞b6 21.♞g5 b4 22.♟d5 ♟xd5 23.♞xd5. Instead, White should opt for 18.♟e4!?, intending 18...♟xe4 19.fxex4 ♞c5 20.♞e3 ♟f6 21.♙g2 ♞c7 22.f4 and White has a small, comfortable edge.

14.♙h3!

Similar to the idea used by White in the previous game in a closely related position. Prior to this game, this line was considered to offer equal chances. The idea behind the move is that White will try to avoid an exchange of the light-squared bishops and nag Black along the h3-c8 diagonal.

The alternatives have proven less effective:

- a) 14.♙h6 ♞a8 15.♙xg7 ♞xg7 16.♞d4 b5! 17.cxb5 axb5 18.♟xb5 ♞xc1 19.♞xc1 ♞xa2 20.♟c3 ♞a3 21.♞b1 ♞c8 and Black has a comfortable game, Topalov-Kramnik, Wijk aan Zee 1999.
 b) 14.g4 h6! 15.h3 g5 16.♞g3 b5! 17.h4 bxc4 18.hxg5 hxg5 19.b4 ♞a8 20.♙xg5 ♞e8! 21.♙e3 ♟f8 22.a4 ♟e4

23.♟xe4 ♙xe4 24.♙d4 and Black has at least equal chances, Kramnik-Karpov, Dos Hermanas 1999.

14...♞b8?!

This move looks so natural that it is difficult to understand how it can cause trouble for Black, who now gets his typical break on the queenside. As we will see, things are somewhat more complicated. Another possibility is 14...♞e8 15.g4 b5 16.g5 ♙xf3 17.exf3 b4 18.♟e2 ♟e5 19.♙g2 ♟fd7, as in Giardelli-Yudasin, Chicago 1997, and now 20.f4 ♟c6 21.c5 dxc5 22.♙xc5 is clearly better for White (Stohl).

15.♙h6! ♙xf3

Alternatives are:

- a) 15...♙xh6 16.♞xh6 ♙xf3 17.exf3 ♞c5 (17...b5 18.♙xd7 ♞xd7 19.♞d4 b4 (19...e6 20.♞f4 ♟h5 21.♞h4 d5 22.cxd5 exd5, Topalov-Van Wely, Monte Carlo 2005, 23.♞d4 ♞fd8 24.♞cd1 ±) 20.♟d5 ♟xd5 21.cxd5 e5 22.dxe6 fxe6 23.♞d2 a5 24.♞c6 with a clear advantage, Werle-Sasikiran, La Roche-sur-Yon 2006.
 b) 15...b5, M.Jirovsky-Hracek, Luhacovice 2003, and now 16.♙xg7 ♞xg7 17.♙xd7!? ♞xd7 18.cxb5 axb5 19.♞b4 ♙xf3 20.exf3 looks good for White.
 c) 15...♞d8 16.♟g5 ♟f8 17.a4 ♞c5 18.♙xg7 ♞xg7 19.b4 ± Topalov-Grischuk, Monte Carlo 2006.

16.♙xg7 ♞xg7 17.exf3 ♟e5

Stohl gives 17...b5 18.cxb5 axb5 19.♞b4 ±.

18.♙g2 b5

On 18...♖b7, Stohl offers 19.♗d5!? ♗xd5 20.f4!±.

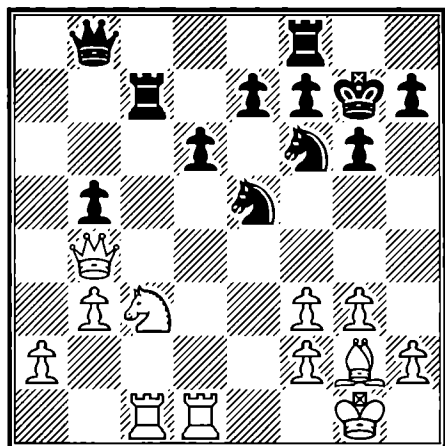
19.cxb5

19.♗e4 is interesting, e.g. 19...♗xe4 20.♖xe4 bxc4 21.f4 ♗g4 22.♞xc4 with a better game for White.

19...axb5

Or 19...♞fc8, and now rather than 20.♖b4 ♖b6 21.♗e2 ♞xc1 22.♗xc1 ♞c2 with a comfortable game for Black, as in Arun Prasad-Venkatesh, Visakhapatnam 2006, White can try 20.♖d4 axb5 21.f4 ♗eg4 22.h3 ♗h6 23.♖b4 with somewhat better chances.

20.♖b4!



20...♞fc8

According to Stohl, Black's best chance was 20...♖a8 21.♖xb5!? ♗xf3+ 22.♞h1 ♞fc8 (22...♗g4? 23.♖e2±) 23.♖e2 ♞xc3 24.♗xf3 ♖a7±.

21.f4 ♗ed7 22.♗e2 ♞c2 23.♞xc2 ♞xc2 24.♞d2 ♞c5

Or 24...♞xd2 25.♖xd2 (intending ♖b4, ♗c3) 25...b4?! 26.♗d4 ♖b6 27.♗c6± (Stohl).

25.♗f3 ♖b6 26.a3 ♗b8 27.♖d4 ♖c7

Also, 27...♗c6!? 28.♖e3 b4 29.a4 is better for White (Stohl).

28.♖b2! b4?

After Black's alternatives, White will play b3-b4 himself, e.g. 28...♞g8 29.b4 ♞c4 30.♗d4± (Stohl) or 28...♗bd7? 29.b4 ♞c4 30.♗d5+- (Stohl); this undoubtedly spurred Psakhis to push his pawn, yet it turns out to be the losing move.

29.axb4 ♞b5 30.♗c3+- ♞xb4 31.♗d5 ♖a5 32.♞e2!?

Or 32.♗xb4 ♖xb4 33.♞d4+-.

32...♞b5 33.b4 ♖d8 34.♗xe7 d5 35.♞e5 ♗bd7 36.♞xd5 ♞b6 37.♞xd7!+- ♖xd7 38.♗d5 ♖d8

Or 38...♞d6 39.♗xf6 ♞xf6 40.g4 and the pin costs Black the rook.

39.♗xb6 ♖xb6 40.b5 ♞g8 41.♗c6 1-0

Game 116

*Vladimir Kramnik –
Levon Aronian*

Turin ol (5) 2006

Symmetrical English [A30]

1.♗f3 ♗f6 2.c4 b6 3.g3 c5 4.♗g2 ♗b7 5.0-0 g6 6.d4 cxd4 7.♖xd4 ♗g7 8.♗c3 d6 9.♞d1 ♗bd7 10.♗e3 ♞c8 11.♞ac1 a6 12.b3 0-0 13.♖h4 ♞c7 14.♗h3 ♖b8

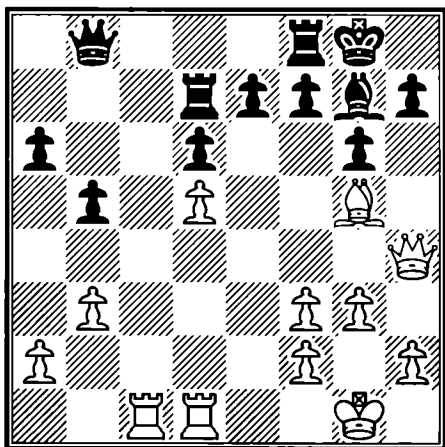
On 14...♖a8, Kramnik gives 15.♗xd7 ♞xd7 16.♗a4 ♖b8 (16...♗xf3 17.♗xb6

♖b7 18.exf3 ♜c7 19.♗d5 ♗x♗d5
20.♞x♗d5 ♞d8 21.♞g2+-) 17.♗x♗b6
♞c7 18.♗a4 ♞fc8 19.♞b6 ♞c6 20.♗d4
♞x♗b6 21.♗x♗b6 ♞c5 22.♗d5 ♗x♗d5
23.cxd5+-.

15.♞g5 ♞x♗f3?!

Kramnik recommends 15...♞e8, e.g.
16.♗d5 ♗x♗d5 (16...♞x♗d5 leaves White
better: 17.cxd5 ♞xc1 18.♞xc1±)
17.cxd5 ♗f6 18.♞xc7 ♞xc7 19.♞c1
♞d8 20.e4 b5=.

16.exf3 b5 17.♞x♗d7! ♞x♗d7
18.♗d5 ♗x♗d5 19.cxd5±



White has a simple, clear structural
advantage and has gained control over
the c6-square.

19...♞c7 20.♞c6 ♞xc6 21.dxc6

The passed pawn now sets the agenda,
as White uses it to restrain Black.

21...♞c8 22.♞c1 e6 23.♞d2 ♞c7
24.a4 d5 25.axb5 axb5 26.♞b4
♞b8 27.♞a3 ♞d4 28.♞a6 ♞e5

The alternatives are 28...♞b6 29.♞a5
e5 30.♞e3 ♞xe3 31.fxe3+- or 28...b4
29.♞a4± or 28...♞b6 29.♞g2±.

29.f4 ♞d6 30.♞a5 ♞c8 31.♞a7
♞a8 32.♞b6 ♞b8 33.♞d4 b4

Also, 33...♞e7 34.c7 ♞b7 35.♞c6 b4
36.♞b6 wins for White.

34.c7 ♞a8 35.♞b6 ♞f8 36.♞x♗b4
♞x♗b4 37.♞x♗b4 ♞e8 1-0

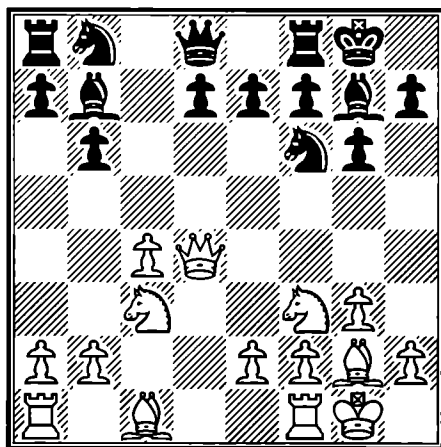
Game 117

*Ljubomir Ljubojevic –
Gad Rechlis*

Manila (8) 1990

Symmetrical English [A30]

1.♗f3 ♗f6 2.c4 b6 3.g3 c5 4.♞g2
♞b7 5.0-0 g6 6.♗c3 ♞g7 7.d4
cxd4 8.♞xd4 0-0



With 8...♗a6, Black can try to spare the
move ...d7-d6. In Tisdall-Christiansen,
San Francisco 1995, White tried 9.♗d5
(9.♞e3 can also be considered) 9...♗c5
10.♞d1 ♞c8 11.♞h4 ♗ce4 12.♞h6
(12.♗g5!?) 12...♞xh6 13.♗xf6+ ♗xf6
14.♞xh6 ♞xf3 15.♞xf3 ♞xc4 16.♞ac1
♞xc1 17.♞xc1 d5 18.h4 e6 19.♞f4 0-0
20.♞c7 when White's active pieces
more than compensate for the pawn,
and White went on to win.

9.♞h4

Unlike Kramnik-Karpov (Game 114),
where Black delayed castling, here

White trades the dark-squared bishops immediately.

9...d6 10. ♖h6 ♗bd7 11. b3

11. ♖ac1 ♖c8 12. b3 ♖c5 13. ♗xg7 ♜xg7 14. ♗d4 ♗a8 15. ♖fe1 ♖fc8 16. e4 ♜g8 17. ♖cd1 b5 18. ♗xb5 ♗xe4 19. ♖e3 ♗e5 20. ♖xe4 ♗xe4 21. ♗xe4 ♗xe4 22. ♗fd4 d5 23. ♗xa7 ♖a8 24. ♗db5 ♖xb5? 25. ♗xb5 and White won the ending in Andersson-Sjoberg, Malmo 1994.

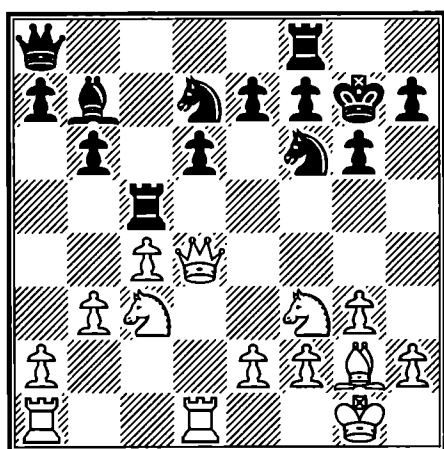
11... ♖c8 12. ♖fd1 ♖c5

Once again, this thematic rook move crops up.

13. ♗xg7 ♜xg7 14. ♗d4

Yet again, after the bishops are traded, the queen finds a fantastic home on d4.

14... ♗a8



15. ♗e1

Ljubo can't follow Kramnik, as ♗d5 isn't possible, but this plan is also good. He intends some central action and decides to reposition his knight.

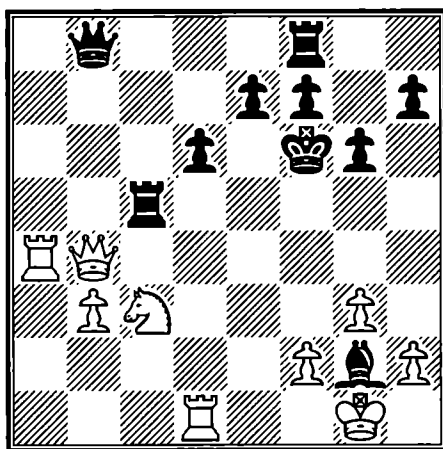
15... a6

Rechlis might have traded bishops, but then Ljubo would have played ♗xg2, e4 and ♗e3 with a substantial spatial plus. Instead, Black lets White decide whether he wants to exchange bishops. Another possibility is 15... ♖e8!?, which guards the e7-pawn in case White plays the likely 16. ♗d5, and makes room for the ... ♗f8-e6 maneuver. One continuation is 16. f4 ♗xg2 17. ♗xg2 ♗f8 18. ♗d5 b5 19. e4 ♗e6 20. ♗d3 bxc4 21. bxc4 ♖cc8 22. e5 dxe5 23. fxe5 ♗d7 with a pleasant position for Black. White should probably just play 16. e4 as in the game.

16. e4 b5

Just being able to play ...b5 isn't enough, as the pawn can easily become weak.

17. ♗d3 ♖cc8 18. cxb5 axb5 19. ♗b4 ♗c5 20. ♗xc5 ♖xc5 21. a4! bxa4 22. ♖xa4 ♗b8 23. e5! ♗xg2 24. exf6+ ♜xf6?



This mistake costs Black a piece for a couple of pawns. After the correct 24... exf6, Black should be able to hold the ensuing double rook ending: 25. ♜xg2 ♗xb4 26. ♖xb4 ♖xc3 27. ♖xd6.

25. ♖h4+! ♔g7 26. ♕xg2 ♖xg3
27. ♜d3 ♝fc8

Black is trying to generate counterplay, but he is only hastening his demise. Rechlis could have tried 27... ♖b7+, but after 28. ♖e4 ♖xe4+ 29. ♘xe4, White should win, although it will take time and a bit of technique.

28. ♖d4+ e5 29. ♘e4 ♖c2
30. ♖xd6 ♜8c6 31. ♖e7 ♖xd3
32. ♘xc5 ♖d5+ 33. ♘e4 ♜a6!?
34. ♖c5!

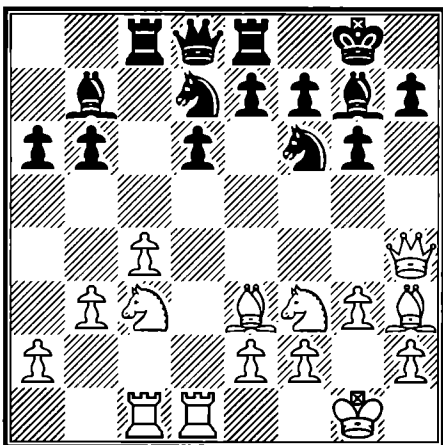
Elegantly avoiding Black's last trick; if 34. ♜xa6, Black has a perpetual after 34... ♖xe4+. Now, it is game over.

34... ♖b7 35. ♜b4 ♖a8 36. ♖xe5+
f6 37. ♖e7+ 1-0

Game 118
Evgeny Pigusov –
Eric Lobron

Merida (3) 2002
Symmetrical English [A30]

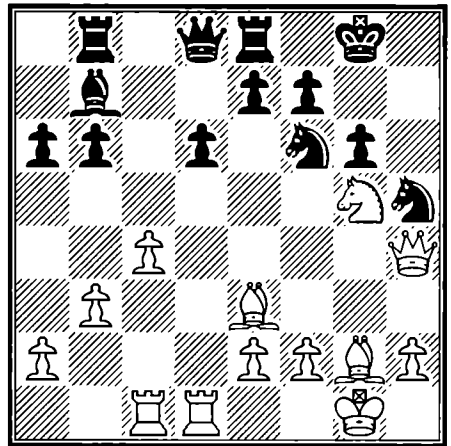
1. ♘f3 ♘f6 2. c4 b6 3. g3 c5 4. ♙g2
♙b7 5. 0-0 g6 6. d4 cxd4 7. ♖xd4
♙g7 8. ♘c3 d6 9. ♜d1 ♘bd7
10. ♙e3 ♜c8 11. ♜ac1 0-0 12. ♖h4
a6 13. b3 ♜e8 14. ♙h3



This useful multi-purpose move controls the h3-c8 diagonal and

supports g4 (sometimes g4 by itself can be met by ...h6, as the trade of g- for h-pawn leaves Black with a sounder structure). In some situations ♙xd7 can be a threat if Black leaves e7 undefended. With the bishop off g2, the plan of ♘d4, followed by f3 and e4, can be an option.

14... ♜b8 15. g4 h5 16. g×h5 ♘×h5
17. ♘d5 ♙f6 18. ♘xf6+ ♘dxf6
19. ♘g5 ♙c8 20. ♙g2 ♙b7
21. ♙h3 ♙c8 22. ♙g2 ♙b7



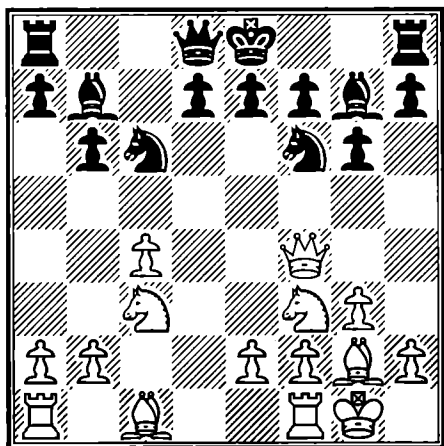
23. f3 e5 24. ♘h3 ♖c7 25. ♘f2
♕g7 26. ♘d3 a5 27. b4 a×b4
28. ♘xb4 ♜h8 29. ♖f2 ♘d7
30. ♜c2 ♘c5 31. ♜cd2 ♜bd8 32. f4
♙×g2 33. ♖×g2 ♘e6 34. f×e5
♖×c4 35. ♘d3 d×e5 36. ♘×e5 ♖c3
37. ♘d3 ♘hf4 38. ♙×f4 ♘×f4
39. ♖f3 ♘×d3 40. ♜×d3 ♖c5+
41. ♖h1 ♖e5 42. ♖f2 ♜de8
43. ♜d7 ♖e6 44. ♜1d6 ♖e4+
45. ♖g1 ♖b1+ 46. ♖g2 ½-½

Game 119
Zoltan Ribli –
Bachar Kouatly
Lucerne (1) 1985
Symmetrical English [A30]

1. ♘f3 ♘f6 2. c4 c5 3. g3 b6 4. ♙g2
♙b7 5. 0-0 g6 6. ♘c3 ♙g7 7. d4
c×d4 8. ♖xd4 ♘c6

This is the old-fashioned method and it is almost certainly not the best.

9. ♖f4



9. ♖h4 h6 is another possibility.

9... ♖c8

Or 9...0-0 10. ♖h4 ♖c8 11. ♗h6 ♘b8 12. b3 d6 13. ♖ad1 ♖c5 14. ♗xg7 ♘xg7 15. ♖d4 ♘d7 16. e4 a6 17. ♖fe1 ♖a8 18. ♘a4 (18. ♘d2?!, followed by 19. f4, looks very pleasant for White) 18... ♖a5 19. ♘xb6 ♘xb6 20. ♖xb6 ♖xa2 21. ♖d2 ♖xd2 22. ♘xd2 ♖b8 23. ♖c7 ♘f8 24. e5 ♗xg2?! (24... dxe5 25. ♗xb7 ♖xb7 26. ♖xe5 is better for White, but more solid for Black than the continuation) 25. exf6 exf6 26. f3 ♗h3 27. ♖e7 ♗e6 28. ♘e4 and Black is busted, Spelman-Greenfeld, Beer Sheva 1987.

10. ♖d1

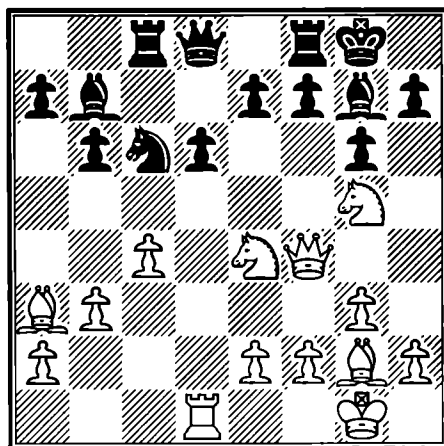
10. b3 ♘e4 11. ♖xe4 ♗xc3 12. ♖b1 ♗g7 13. ♖h4 h6 14. ♗b2 0-0 15. ♗xg7 ♘xg7 16. ♖fd1 d6 17. ♘d4 ♗a8 18. ♘b5 a6 19. ♘c3 ♖b8 20. ♖bc1 (White's position doesn't look like anything special, but Smyslov masterfully increases the pressure by claiming more space, while Black remains idle without counterplay) 20... ♖d7 21. ♖f4 ♖a7

22. ♖e3 ♖fc8 23. ♘d5 ♘e5 24. ♗h3 ♖e8 25. ♖d4 ♘g8 26. ♖c3 ♖b7 27. ♗g2 ♖a7 28. f4 ♘d7 29. e4 a5 30. e5 with a big advantage for White, Smyslov-Kohlweyer, Dortmund 1986.

10...d6 11. b3 ♘e4?!

11...0-0 is more solid and just slightly better for White after 12. ♗b2 ♖d7 13. ♖ab1.

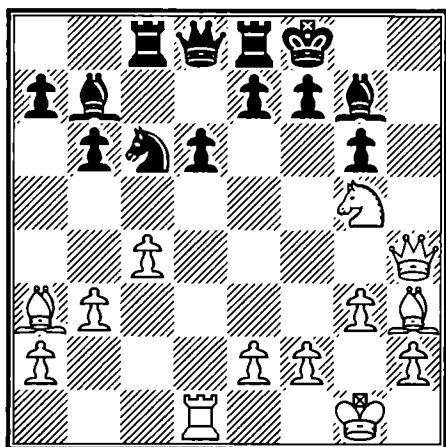
12. ♘xe4! ♗xa1 13. ♗a3 ♗g7 14. ♘fg5 0-0



15. ♘xh7! ♖xh7?

This losing error allows White to conduct a direct attack. Instead, Black should go for 15... ♘d4!, which will force White to play accurately to obtain an advantage: 16. ♘hf6+ (16. ♖xd4 is also possible: 16... ♗xd4 17. ♖h4 (17. ♘xf8 e5 18. ♘f6+ ♘g7 19. ♖h4 ♖xf6 20. ♖xf6+ ♘xf6 21. ♘h7+ ♘g7 22. ♗xb7 ♖c7 is less clear) 17... ♘g7 18. ♘eg5 ♗xg2 19. ♘xf8 ♖xf8 20. ♖xd4+ e5 21. ♖xd6 ♖xd6 22. ♗xd6 ♗c6 23. ♗xe5+ f6 24. ♗d4 and White should win) 16... exf6 17. ♖xd4 ♗xe4 18. ♖xd6 ♖c7 19. ♖xe4±.

16. ♘g5+ ♖g8 17. ♖h4 ♖e8 18. ♗h3 ♘f8



19. ♖e6+!?

This is very good for White, but 19. ♜h7! may well be better: 19... e6 (White threatened 20. ♖e6+) 20. ♗xd6+ ♜xd6 21. ♖xd6 ♜cd8 22. ♖xd8 ♜xd8 23. f3 and White's advantage is even bigger than in the game.

19... ♜g8

19... fxe6 20. ♗xe6 and Black has no defense to 21. ♜h7.

20. ♖g5

20. ♖xd8 ♜cd8 21. ♗g2 transposes to the game continuation, but White can also consider 20. ♗b2!? ♗xb2? (20... ♖e5 is better: 21. ♖xd8 ♜cd8 22. ♗d4±) 21. ♖g5! ♗g7 22. ♜h7+ ♜f8 23. ♖e6+ fxe6 24. ♗xe6 and Black cannot prevent mate.

20... ♜f8 21. ♖e6+ ♜g8 22. ♖xd8 ♜cd8 23. ♗g2 ♗f6 24. ♜h6 e6 25. h4

This can-opener move is the simplest and best way to tear Black's position in pieces.

25... d5 26. h5 ♗g7 27. ♜g5 dxc4 28. ♖xd8 ♜xd8 29. bxc4

White can possibly do better with 29. hxg6!? ♜d1+ 30. ♜h2 ♜d7 31. ♜h5 fxg6 32. ♜xg6 and Black's position is hopeless.

29... g×h5 30. ♗b2 e5 31. ♗d5 ♜d6 32. ♜×h5 ♜d7 33. ♜f5 1-0

Chapter Ten

The Tarrasch and Semi-Tarrasch

Our repertoire has been designed to keep play along specific lines, but sometimes Black gets to call the shots. For instance, at the cost of an isolated queen pawn (IQP), Black can get pretty much transpose to the Tarrasch from any queenside opening. Our treatment against it is to capture on c6 and transform the IQP position into one with hanging pawns. We want to pressure c6 and d5 and look for chances to trade dark-squared bishops to emphasize the weaknesses on c5 and d4. A well-timed e2-e4 can also work wonders.

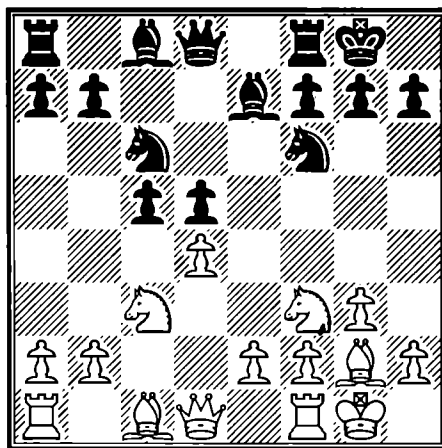
The Semi-Tarrasch is a purely English/Réti opening, which rarely, if ever, arises from 1.d4. The trade of a pair of knights makes the play a little less rich than a regular Tarrasch, but White can keep a slight pull by playing against the isolani.

Game 120
*John Donaldson –
Eleuterio Alsasua*
Reno 1987
Tarrasch Defense [D34]

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 c5 4.cxd5
exd5 5.♗f3 ♗c6 6.g3 ♗f6 7.♕g2
♕e7 8.0-0 0-0

If you find that 9.♕g5 is not to your liking, I (JD) can also recommend 9.♕e3, as in the following game from the old East Germany: 9.♕e3 c4 (or 9...♗g4 10.♕f4 ♕e6 11.dxc5 ♕xc5 12.♖c1 ♕b6 13.♗a4±) 10.♗e5 ♕e6 11.♗xc4! dxc4 12.d5± ♗xd5 13.♗xd5 ♖c8 14.♗d2! ♕f6 15.♗xf6+ ♗xf6

16.♕g5 ♗g6 17.♖fd1 h6 18.♕f4 b5?
(18...♕g4!±) 19.♗e3! ♗f6 20.♗c5
♕g4 21.♖ac1 ♖fd8 22.♖xd8+ ♗xd8
23.♗xb5 ♕xe2?? 24.♗e8+1-0, Espig-
H.U.Grünberg, DDR ch (Ellenburg)
1984 or 13...♕f6 14.♗d2 ♕d4 15.♗f4
♕xe3 16.♗xe3 ♖e8 17.♖fd1 ♗f6
18.♕xc6 bxc6 19.♗d4 ♗xd4 20.♖xd4
♕d5 21.♖ad1 c3 22.♗xd5 cxd5
23.bxc3 ♖xe2 24.♖xd5 g6 25.♖5d2
♖xd2 26.♖xd2 with a better endgame
for White, as in Korchnoi-Carlsen,
Drammen 2004.



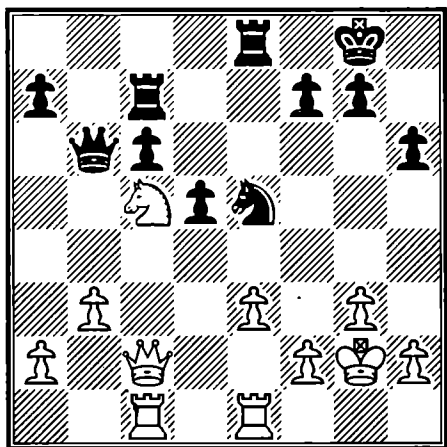
9.♕g5 cxd4 10.♗xd4 h6 11.♕e3
♖e8 12.♖c1 ♕f8 13.♗xc6 bxc6
14.♗a4 ♕d7 15.♕c5 ♕xc5
16.♗xc5 ♕g4

The alternative 16...♕f5 has also proved better for White: 17.e3 ♖b8 18.♗d2 (or 18.b3 h5 19.♗a4 ♗d7 20.♗d4 ♕h3 21.♗c5 ♗c8 22.f3 ♕xg2 23.♗xg2 ♗d7 24.♗d3±, Sherbakov-Orsag, Polanica Zdroj 1996) 18...♗b6 19.b3 ♗e4 20.♗d4 ♗a5 21.♗a4 ♖b5 22.♗xa5 ♖xa5 23.♕xe4 ♕xe4 24.a4 ♖b8 25.f3 1-0, Browne-Leski, San Francisco 1987. chesstouring.com

17.♞e1 ♖b6 18.♗c2 ♞ac8

Black doesn't get much relief from 18...♞ab8 either, e.g. 19.b3 ♗a5 20.e3 ♞bc8 21.h3 ♕h5 22.♗c3 ♗c7 23.♞c2 ♕g6 24.♞d2 ♕e4 25.♞d4 ♗e5 26.♜xe4 ♜xe4 27.♕xe4 c5?! (27...dxe4 is slightly better, but still leaves White with a clear plus) 28.♕h7+ ♖h8 29.♞d3 c4 30.♗xe5 ♞xe5 31.♞d4! ♖xh7 32.♞c1 with a won endgame, Donaldson-Sowray, Bermuda 1995.

19.b3 ♕h5 20.♕h3 ♞c7 21.♕f5 ♕g4 22.♕xg4 ♜xg4 23.e3 ♜e5 24.♗g2



This position is already critical for Black. It doesn't look that bad, but he will have a hard time improving his position, while White has a number of options readily available. Now Black should play 24...♞ce7 and go for a more active approach. In the game Black's rather passive setup predictably backfires.

24...♞cc8?! 25.♞ed1 ♞ed8 26.♞d4 ♗c7 27.♞a4 ♗e7 28.♗c3 ♞c7 29.♗d4 ♞e8 30.♞a6 ♗f6 31.♗f4 ♗g6 32.b4 ♞ce7 33.b5 ♞c8 34.bxc6 ♞xc6 35.♞xc6 ♜xc6 36.♞d1 ♞e5 37.♞d2 ♗b1 38.♜d3 ♞e6 39.♗c7 d4?!

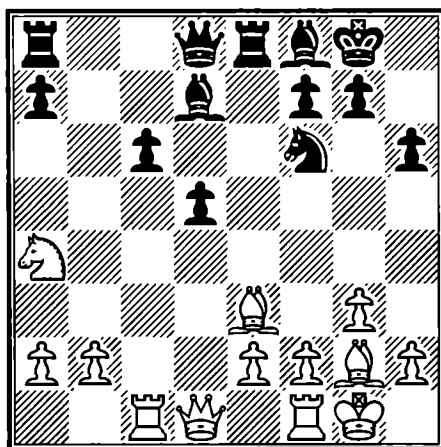
In time trouble, Black sees an opportunity to rid himself of the weak d-pawn, but it only hastens his demise.

40.exd4 ♜xd4? 41.♗d8+ 1-0

Game 121

*Ljubomir Ljubojevic –
Svetozar Gligoric*
Bugojno (13) 1978
Tarrasch Defense [D34]

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♜c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♜f3 ♜c6 6.g3 ♜f6 7.♕g2 ♕e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♕g5 cxd4 10.♜xd4 h6 11.♕e3 ♞e8 12.♞c1 ♕f8 13.♜xc6 bxc6 14.♜a4 ♕d7



14...♗a5?! 15.♞xc6 ♕d7 16.♕d2 ♗b5 (16...♕b4 17.♞c5 ♗xa4 18.♗xa4 ♕xa4 19.♕xb4 ♞xe2 20.b3±) 17.♞xf6 gxf6 18.♜c3 ♗xb2 19.♜xd5±, Strauss-King, British ch (Brighton) 1984.

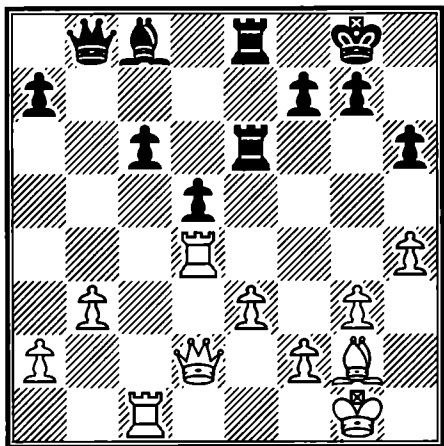
15.♕c5 ♕xc5 16.♜xc5 ♕g4 17.♞e1 ♖b6 18.♗c2 ♞ad8

For 18...♞ac8 and 18...♞ab8, see Game 120. A fourth idea is 18...♕h5, but White still has an edge.

19.h3 ♕c8 20.b3± ♗b8 21.e3 ♞e7 22.♞ed1 ♞de8 23.♞d4 ♜h7 24.♗d2 ♜g5 25.h4 ♜e6

Black is trying to break the block of the c5-square by exchanging White's dominating knight, but in reality he achieves little through this trade, as it reduces chances for active counterplay.

26. ♖×e6 ♜×e6



27. ♜b4± ♜b6 28. ♜c5 ♜f6
29. ♜a4

29. ♜b4?! lets Black back into the game after 29... ♜a6! 30. ♜a4 ♜e2.

29... ♜×c5 30. ♜×c5 a6 31. ♙f1

Also, 31. ♜b4!? can be considered.

31... ♜f8 32. ♙×a6 d4 33. e×d4 ♜e1+ 34. ♜g2 ♙e6

34... ♙g4 35. f4 ♜d1 36. ♜c2 or 34... ♙×a6 35. ♜×a6 ♜e2 36. ♜a8+ ♜e7 37. ♜e5+ and White wins easily in both cases (Ljubojevic).

35. ♙c4!

White eliminates all possible counterplay and the exchange of bishops makes the win straightforward.

35... ♙×c4 36. ♜a8+ ♜e7 37. b×c4 ♜d1 38. ♜e5+ ♜e6

Or 38... ♙d7 39. ♜a7+ ♜d8 40. ♜e4 ♜d2 41. ♜f4 ♜×f4 42. g×f4 ♜e8 43. ♜c7 ♜×d4 44. ♜×c6 ♜×f4 45. ♜g3 and White wins.

39. ♜a7+ ♜f6 40. ♜e3 ♜×d4 41. ♜f3+ ♜e5 42. ♜a×f7! g6 43. ♜e3+ ♜e4 44. ♜f3 ♜×e3+ 45. ♜×e3 ♜e8 46. a4 h5 47. a5 ♜a8 48. ♜e7+ ♜f5 49. ♜c7 ♜×a5 50. ♜×c6 ♜a3+ 51. ♜d4 ♜f3 52. ♜c8 ♜e6 53. ♜e8+ ♜d6 54. c5+ ♜d7 55. ♜g8 1-0

Game 122

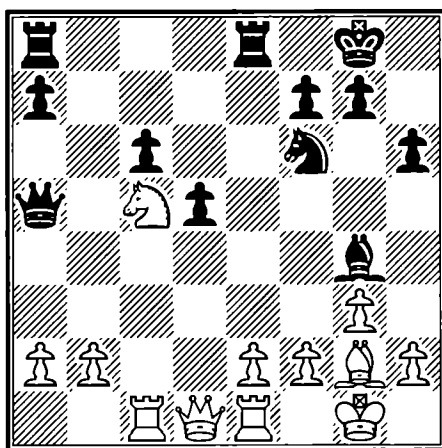
Garry Kasparov –

Miguel Illescas

Linares (2) 1994

Tarrasch Defense [D34]

1. c4 ♗f6 2. ♗c3 c5 3. g3 e6 4. ♗f3 ♗c6 5. ♙g2 d5 6. c×d5 e×d5 7. d4 ♙e7 8. 0-0 0-0 9. ♙g5 c×d4 10. ♗×d4 h6 11. ♙e3 ♜e8 12. ♜c1 ♙f8 13. ♗×c6 b×c6 14. ♗a4 ♙d7 15. ♙c5 ♙×c5 16. ♗×c5 ♙g4 17. ♜e1 ♜a5



For 17... ♜b6, see Games 120 and 121.

18. h3

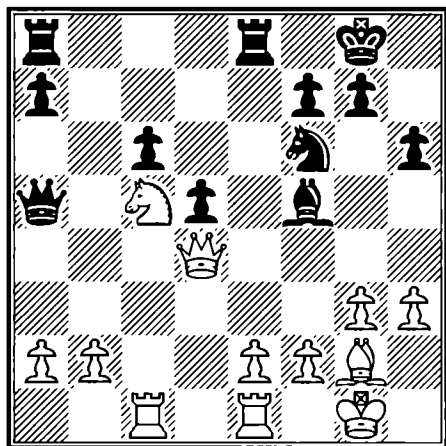
By far the most popular move; however, White can also consider 18. a3 ♜ab8

19.♠d3 ♖b5 20.♗d2 ♕f5 21.b4 ♖a4
22.♞c3 ♕xd3 23.♗xd3 a5 24.bxa5
♗xa5 25.♞ec1±, C.Horvath-Weinzettl,
Mitropa-Cup 1990.

18...♕f5

18...♕h5 19.a3 ♞ab8 20.♠d3 ♖b6
21.b4±.

19.♗d4!?



Nowadays 19.♖a4 is more popular; this is covered in Game 123.

19...♞ab8

While 19...♗xa2? 20.♞a1 ♖c4
21.♗xc4 dxc4 22.♕xc6 (Ftacnik) is
clearly better for White, Black may
want to test the untried 19...♠e4!?,
as suggested by Ftacnik. However, after
20.g4 ♕h7 21.♗a4 ♗xa4 22.♠xa4 ♞e6
23.b4 ♞ae8 24.e3, White has a slight
pull.

20.a3 ♖b5

Black has also tried two other continuations:

a) 20...♖b6 21.♗f4! (the alternatives
offer less 21.b4 a5 22.bxa5 ♗xa5
23.♗c3 ♗xc3 24.♞xc3 ♞b2 25.g4 ♕g6
26.♗f1 ♞a2 ½–½, even though Black

was doing very well in Borovikov-
Bezgodov, Alushta 1999 or 21.b3 ♠d7
22.b4 a5 23.e4 axb4 24.axb4 ♕g6
25.♗c3 ♠f8 26.exd5 ♞xe1+ 27.♞xe1
cxd5 28.♕xd5 ♗xb4 29.♗xb4 ♞xb4
with fairly even chances, as in S.
Romanov-Soltau, e-mail 2001) 21...♕e4
22.b3 ♞bd8 23.b4 ♞e7 24.♗d2 ♕xg2
½–½, in Bratchenko-Bezgodov, St.
Petersburg 2000, even though White
has the better chances after 25.♗xg2
♠e4 26.♠xe4 ♞xe4 27.e3.

b) 20...♠e4! is probably Black's best,
e.g. 21.♞ed1 ♖b6 22.e3 ♗xb2
23.♠xe4 ♗xd4 24.♞xd4 ♕xe4
25.♞xc6 ♞b1+ 26.♗h2 ♞b2 27.♕xe4
♞xe4 28.♗g1 ♞xd4 29.exd4 ♞d2 and
Black obviously has no problems,
Sanchez Rodenas-Diaz Rubi, corr.
2000. White can try to improve by
22.♕xe4! ♕xe4 23.b4 ♕g6 24.♗f4,
and now, say, 24...♞a8 25.♠d7 ♖b5
26.e3 a5 27.♠e5 axb4 28.♠xg6 fxg6
29.♗xb4 ♗xb4 30.axb4 ♞a6 31.b5
cxb5 32.♞xd5 with much better
chances for White in the double rook
endgame, because of his better pawn
structure and the threat of placing two
rooks on the seventh rank. This line
needs further practical tests.

21.b3

The immediate 21.b4 is met by 21...a5!
with excellent chances for Black.

21...♠e4!?

Once again, the alternatives require
examination:

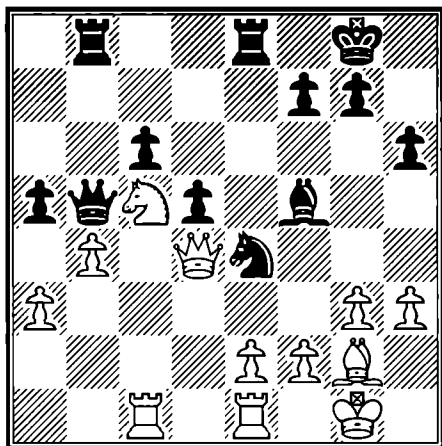
a) 21...♞xe2? loses to 22.♞xe2 ♗xe2
23.♗f4+-.

b) 21...♗a5!? 22.♞a1 (22.♗b2!? de-
serves consideration, e.g. 22...♖b6
23.♗d2 ♠e4 24.♠xe4 ♕xe4 25.b4

♙xg2 26.♖xg2 ♜e6 27.e3 or 23...a5 24.♗f4 ♙g6 25.e3 ♜bc8 26.♗d4 ♜b8 27.♜c3 in both cases with a slight pull for White) 22...♜b6 23.e3 a5 24.♜ac1 ♞d7 25.♜ed1 ♞xc5 26.♜xc5 ♙e4 27.♜c3 ♙xg2 28.♖xg2 ♜e6 29.♜xb6 ♜xb6 with equal chances, Dolgitsers-Kukk, ICCF e-mail 2001.

c) 21...a5!? was suggested in the first edition and the game Mascaro March-Frois, Havana 2005 went 22.♗f4 ♙g6 23.e3 ♙e4 ½-½, but White has the better chances after 24.♙xe4! dxe4 (24...♞xe4?! is worse, as 25.a4! leaves White with a clear advantage) 25.♜ed1 ♞d5 26.♜g4 with a better game for White. Instead, Black might consider 23...♜bc8!?

22.b4 a5!



22...♞xc5 23.♜xc5 ♜b6 24.e3± (Ftacnik).

23.♞xe4 ♙xe4 24.♜c5 ♜b6 25.bxa5 ♜b2 26.♜xb2 ♜xb2 27.♜xc6 ♜a2

27...♙xg2 28.♖xg2 ♜exe2 (28...♜a2 29.♜c3 ♜a8 (29...d4 30.♜d3 ♜a8 31.♜xd4 ♜xa3 32.♜b1 ♜3xa5 33.♜b7 ♜5a7±) 30.♜b1 ♜xe2 31.♜b5 d4 32.♜f3±) 29.♜xe2 ♜xe2 30.a6 ♜e8 31.a7 ♜a8 32.♜c7+- (Kasparov).

28.♜ec1 ♜xa3 29.♜c8 ♜xc8 30.♜xc8+ ♖h7 31.f3 ♙f5 32.♜c5 ♙e6 33.♖f2 g5 34.f4 gxf4 35.gxf4 d4 36.♙e4+ ♖g7 37.f5 ♙a2 38.♙d3 ♖f6 39.a6 ♖e7 40.♜c6 f6 41.♜c7+ ♖d6 42.♜h7 ♜a4 43.♜xh6 1-0

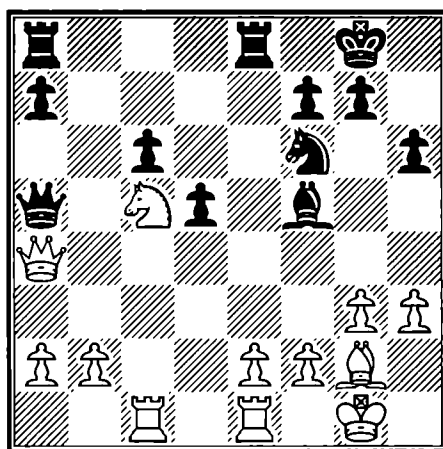
Game 123

*Valerij Filippov –
Varuzhan Akobian*

Las Vegas (3) 2002

Tarrasch Defense [D34]

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♞f3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♞c3 ♞c6 6.g3 ♞f6 7.♙g2 ♙e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♙g5 cxd4 10.♞xd4 h6 11.♙e3 ♜e8 12.♜c1 ♙f8 13.♞xc6 bxc6 14.♞a4 ♙d7 15.♙c5 ♙xc5 16.♞xc5 ♙g4 17.♜e1 ♜a5 18.h3 ♙f5 19.♜a4



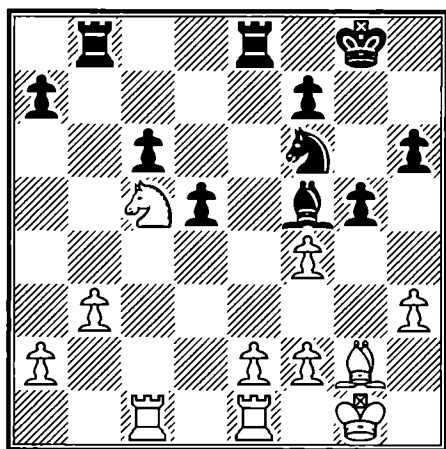
19.♗d4 is covered in Game 122. A third alternative is 19.a3 ♜ab8 20.♞b3 ♜a6 21.e3 ♙e4 22.♞c5 ♜c8 23.b4 with better chances for White, as in Sturua-Zulfugarli, Linares Anibal 2001.

19...♜d2

Also, 19...♜b6 has been tested: 20.b3 ♜e7 21.♗f4 ♙g6 22.e3 ♜ae8 23.♗d4 ♜a5 24.♜e2 (24.♜a4!? ♜xa4 25.♞xa4 appears better for White) 24...♙f5

25.b4 ♖b5 26.♞b2 ♖b8 27.a4 ♖d6 28.♞d2 h5 and now instead of 29.♖f4 ♖xf4 30.gxf4 ♞b8 with approximately even chances in the endgame, as in Scarella-R.Hernandez, San Martin 1994, White should try 29.♞dd1 with a better game.

20.♖f4 ♖xf4 21.gxf4 ♞ab8 22.b3 g5



Akobian's latest try is 22...♞b4 23.e3 g5 24.a3 ♞b6 (24...♞bb8 was played in Kiese-Asendorf, Germany 2001, when 25.fxg5 hxg5 26.b4 ♖g7 27.♖b3 ♞h8 28.♞xc6 ♖xh3 29.♖d4 gave White a clear advantage) 25.fxg5 hxg5 26.b4 ♖f8 (26...♖g7 27.♖f1 ♖d7 28.f3 (or 28.♞ed1!?) 28...♞h8 29.♖h2 ♞h4 30.♞ed1 ♖e8 31.♖b3 ♖g8 32.♞d4 ♞h8 33.♞g4 ♖f6 (33...f6±) 34.f4 gxf4 35.♞xf4+ and White clearly has the better chances, Xu Yuanyuan-Chen Jing, Jinan 2005) 27.♖f1 ♞c8 28.♞c3 (both 28.f3 and 28.f4!? look better for White) 28...♖e7 29.♞ec1 ♖d6 30.f3 ♖d7 31.♖b3 (31.♖g2!?) 31...♖g8 32.♞c5 ♖e7 33.♞a5 ♞c7 34.♖d4 ♖f5 35.♖xf5+ ♖xf5 and Black has equalized, although in Enkhbat-Akobian, Foxwoods 2004, White tried to force the situation with 36.♞ac5 f6 37.b5 ♖d7 and Black subsequently won the endgame.

23.fxg5 hxg5 24.♞c3 ♖g7

After 24...♖h5!? 25.♖f1 ♖f4 26.♖a4, the players agreed to a draw in M.Jukic-Flueckiger, Bern 1989. Black is certainly equal; both 26...♞e6 and 26...d4!? look good. One try at an improvement is 26.♞f3, e.g. 26...♖g7 27.e3 ♖g6 28.♞c1 ♖h5 29.♖e2 ♖g7 30.♞g3 f6 31.h4 ♖h5 32.♖xh5+ ♖xh5 33.hxg5 fxg5 34.♖f1 and White has a tiny pull.

25.♖f1 ♖h5 26.e4 ♖g6

26...♖f4!? should be considered.

27.exd5 ♞xe1+ 28.♖xe1 ♖f4 29.♖f1 cxd5 30.♖d2 ♖f5 31.h4 gxh4 32.♞f3 ♖e6 33.♞xf5 ♖xc5 34.♞xd5 ♖e6 35.♖e3 ♞c8 36.♖c4 ♞h8 37.♞d1 ♖f6 38.♖f3 ♞h5 39.♞d7 a5 40.♖g4 ♞f5 41.♞xf7+ 1-0

Game 124

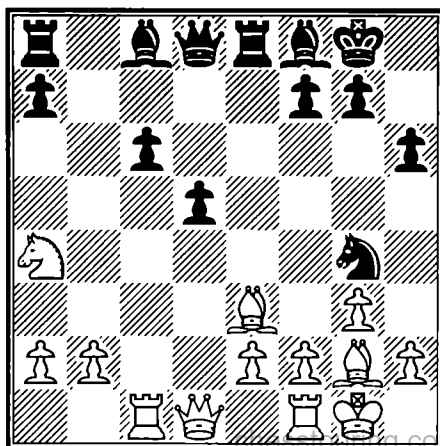
Felix Levin –

Gennadij Ginsburg

German Bundesliga (6) 2004

Tarrasch Defense [D34]

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♖c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♖f3 ♖c6 6.g3 ♖f6 7.♖g2 ♖e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♖g5 cxd4 10.♖xd4 h6 11.♖e3 ♞e8 12.♞c1 ♖f8 13.♖xc6 bxc6 14.♖a4 ♖g4



15. ♖c5

Also, 15. ♖d4 has been tried: 15... ♗a5 16. a3 ♗b5 17. b4 a5?! (17... ♖f5?! 18. ♘c3 ♗a6 19. b5! cxb5 20. ♘xd5 is very bad for Black, while 17... ♗a6 18. ♗c2 ♖d7 (or 18... ♗xe2 19. ♗xc6 ♗xc6 20. ♗xc6 ♖d7 21. ♘c3 ♗d2 22. ♗c7 ♗xd4 23. ♗xd7±) 19. ♗fe1 ♖d6 20. ♘c5 ♖xc5 21. ♖xc5 with a clearly better game for White) 18. ♘b6 ♗b8 19. a4 (19. ♘xc8!? can also be considered, e.g. 18... ♗bxc8 20. e4 ♘e5 21. exd5 axb4 22. a4 ♗a5 23. dxc6 and White is obviously much better) 19... ♗xb4 20. ♗xc6 ♖e6 (or 20... ♖a6 21. ♖f3 ♖xe2 22. ♖xe2 ♗xe2 23. ♗xe2 ♗xd4 24. ♗d1±) 21. ♘xd5 ♗a3 22. e3 ♗ed8 23. ♗xe6 fxe6 24. ♗xg4 exd5 25. ♖xd5+ ♗h8 26. ♗e6 ♗xd5 27. ♗xh6+ 1-0, I. Rogers-Chapman, Geelong 1998.

15... ♖a6 16. ♗c2

Goldin-Bennett, Foxwoods 2002 saw 16. ♗e1 ♗f6 17. ♖d4 ♗g6 18. h3 ♘e5 19. ♖c5 (19. ♘c5!?) 19... ♖b5 20. ♖xf8 ♖xa4 21. ♗xa4 ♗xf8? (21... ♗xf8!? is relatively better, although 22. e4 ♗f6 23. ♗a6 still leaves White in control) 22. e4! d4 23. f4 and White is winning.

16... ♘e5 17. ♖xf8 ♗xf8 18. ♘c5 ♖c8

Or 18... ♗b6!? 19. ♗d4 ♗ad8 20. ♗d1±.

19. ♗d4 ♖f5 20. ♗c3 ♗g8

20... a5!? is an alternative.

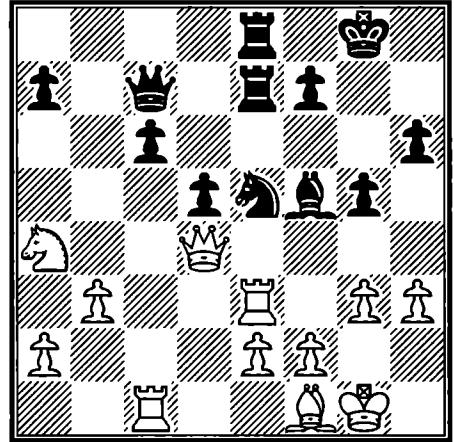
21. b3

21. ♗d1!? is possibly slightly better.

21... ♗a5 22. ♘a4 ♗a6 23. ♗e1 ♗e7 24. ♖f1 ♗a5 25. ♗ec1 ♗ae8 26. ♗e3 ♗c7

26... f6!? makes more sense.

27. h3 g5?!



Black is aggressively pursuing counterplay, but this may be too weakening; 27... ♗d6!? is more prudent.

28. ♖g2

28. ♗ec3!? can also be considered.

28... ♗d7 29. ♗h2

29. g4 ♖g6 30. ♘c5 looks very pleasant for White.

29... h5 30. ♘c5 ♗d6 31. ♗h1 ♘g6 32. ♗xe7 ♗xe7?

This loses on the spot. Instead, Black should try 32... ♗xe7!?, as 33. e4 now leads to a fully acceptable position after 33... ♖xe4 34. ♘xe4 dxe4 35. ♗xc6 e3 36. fxe3 ♗xe3 37. ♗xe3 ♗xe3 38. ♗h2 h4 with even chances, but 33. e3!? leaves White with slightly better chances.

33. e4! ♖c8?! 34. exd5. cxd5

35. ♖e4! ♜d8 36. ♖f6+ ♜f8
37. ♜xd5 ♜xd5 38. ♖xc8+ 1-0

The variation of the Semi-Tarrasch that we are about to discuss is relatively rare. It is reasonably sound for Black, but White has several options for obtaining a safe advantage.

Game 125

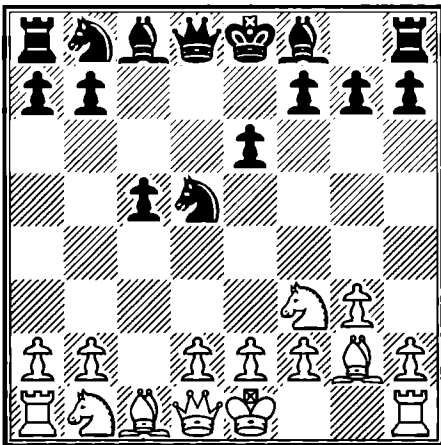
Zoltan Ribli –

Wolfgang Unzicker

German Bundesliga (1) 1986

Closed Catalan [E06]

1. ♖f3 ♖f6 2. c4 c5 3. g3 e6 4. ♖g2
d5 5. cxd5 ♖xd5



This variation, sort of an improved Tarrasch Defense, seeks to make playing with the IQP easier by trading a pair of knights. Normally, the exchange favors the player facing the IQP, but here it's harder to evaluate, because the trade is of a defender (... ♖f6) for an attacker (♖c3).

6. 0-0 ♖c6 7. d4!?

Ribli's treatment works only if he delays the knight's development to c3. He would like to play a3 and b4, and perhaps e4, without allowing ... ♖xc3. Some examples of the main line are:

7. ♖c3 ♖e7 8. d4 0-0 9. ♖xd5 exd5
10. dxc5 ♖xc5 11. ♜c2 (or 11. ♖g5 ♜b6
12. ♜xd5 ♖e6 13. ♜e4 ♜xb2 14. ♖fb1
♜c3 15. ♖c1 ♜b4 16. ♜c2 ♖b6 17. ♖d2
♜b5 18. ♖c3 ♖ac8 19. a4 ♜h5 20. ♜b2
f6 21. ♜b5 ♜xb5 22. axb5 ♖e7
23. ♖d4± Badea-Rapatinski, Wurzburg
1995) 11... ♖e7?! 12. ♖e3 ♖e6 13. ♖d4
♖xd4 14. ♖xd4 ♜d7 15. b3! ♖fc8
16. ♜b2±.

7... ♖e7 8. dxc5

This steers play into Catalan lines with White hoping to weave a few small advantages into something substantial. The main line 8. ♖c3 0-0 9. ♖xd5 exd5 10. dxc5 and the complicated 9. e4 are considered to be a little better for White.

8... ♖xc5 9. ♜c2 ♜e7 10. a3 0-0
11. b4 ♖b6 12. ♖b2

Now we can see that some small plusses are emerging: White clearly has the better bishops. Also, pay attention to the power of the queens and the space-grabbing b4.

12... ♖d7 13. ♖c3

Opposing Black's best-placed piece.

13... ♖xc3 14. ♖xc3 ♖fc8 15. ♖fd1
♖c7 16. ♜d2

16. ♜b2 might seem natural, but the text eyes d6, while covering a5.

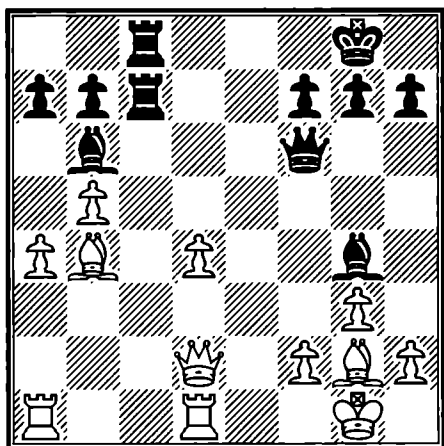
16... e5

Trying to liberate the bishop.

17. b5! ♖d4 18. ♖xd4 exd4
19. ♖b4 ♜f6 20. a4 d3?! chess4u.com

This is based on a miscalculation and White refutes it with his strong twenty-third move. Instead, 20...a5!? is possibly safer, although 21.bxa6 Bxa6 22.a5 Qa7 23.Bac1 is quite unpleasant for Black, whereas 20...Be8 21.a5 Qc5 22.Qxc5 Bxc5 23.b6! axb6 24.Qxd4! Qxd4 25.Bxd4 Qc6 26.axb6 and White controls the game.

21.exd3 Bxc8 22.d4 Qg4



23.a5!

White sacrifices the exchange to keep the passed d-pawn and put Black under immediate pressure. Unzicker either underestimated or overlooked it. If White instead moves his rook from d1, White will lose the d-pawn and the position will soon turn stale.

23...Bc2 24.Qe3 Qxd1 25.Bxd1 Qc7 26.Qxb7 Bb8 27.d5

Passed pawns must be pushed.

27...Bc4?!

This allows White to enter a forced winning sequence; an alternative is 27...Qb2, but White can still present Black with impenetrable problems: 28 b6! axb6 29.Qa3 Qb5 30.a6 Be8

31.Qd3 Qxd3 32.Bxd3 Be1+ 33.Qg2 and the a-pawn decides.

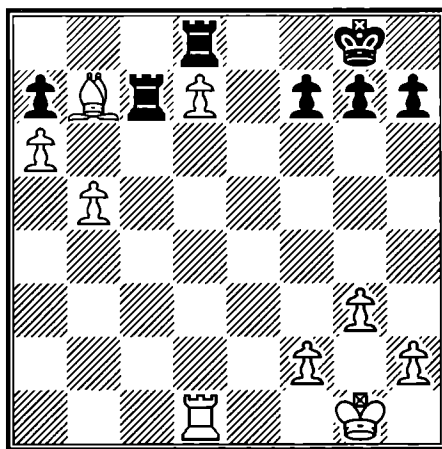
28.Qe7 Qe5

Also, 28...Qc3 29.Qxc3 Bxc3 30.a6 f6 31.d6 Qd8 32.Qxd8 Bxd8 33.b6 axb6 34.Ba1 wins for White.

29.Qxe5 Qxe5 30.a6 Qc7?

Against 30...Qd4!?, White has 31.d6! (31.Bxd4? Bxd4 32.b6! axb6 33.a7 Be8 34.d6 f6 35.Qc6 may also win, but may prove more troublesome) 31...Qc5 32.b6 Qxb6 33.d7 Bc2 34.d8Q+ Qxd8 35.Qxd8 f5 36.Bd7 and White will place his dark-squared bishop on e3 to pick up the a7-pawn and then the passed a-pawn will decide.

31.d6 Qd8 32.Qxd8 Bxd8 33.d7 Bc7?!



This invites White to force his way through on the queenside. Only 33...Bb4 would have stopped White's queenside breakthrough, but then 34.Be1! Qf8 35.Qc6! decides.

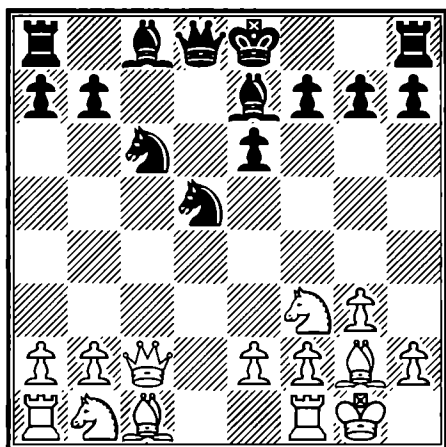
34.b6! axb6 35.a7 1-0

An elegant finish, if 35...Bxb7, then 36.a8Q Bxa8 37.d8Q+ Bxd8 38.Bxd8#.

Game 126

*Alfonso Romero Holmes –
Juan Manuel Carrasco Martinez*
Sanxenxo (7) 2004
Closed Catalan [E06]

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 c5 3.♗f3 e6 4.g3 d5
5.c×d5 ♗×d5 6.♕g2 ♗c6 7.0-0
♕e7 8.d×c5 ♕×c5 9.♖c2 ♕e7



GM Mihail Marin is a specialist in these lines, and he believes that this is the best square for the bishop. However, other moves are seen quite often.

10.a3 0-0 11.e4

An important alternative is 11.♞d1, and now:

a) 11...♕d7 12.e4 ♗b6 (12...♗f6? 13.e5 leaves White with an attack) 13.♗c3 ♖c7 14.♕f4 e5 15.♕e3 with a plus for White, Chekhov-Sibarevic, Banja Luka 1983, but Black can improve by 14...♖e8, e.g. 15.♖e2 ♗a5 16.♗e5 ♕a4 17.♗×a4 ♗×a4 18.♞ac1 ♖b3 (18...♗b3 19.♞xc8 ♞xc8, Brestian-Hmadi, Novi Sad ol 1990, and now 20.♖g4 ♖b5 21.♕h3 leaves White with an initiative) 19.♕f1 ♕f6 20.♞d3 with the better game for White, Kavalek-Gruenfeld, Thessaloniki ol 1984.

b) 11...♖c7 12.e4 ♗f6 13.♕f4 ♖b6 14.♗c3 ♕d7 15.♕g5 (15.e5!? also

looks good) 15...♞fd8 16.e5 ♗e8 17.♕e3 ♖c7, Tkachiev-Vachier Lagrave, Cergy Pontoise 2003, and now both 18.♞ac1 and 18.♗g5 g6 19.♗f3 leave White with a clear advantage.

11...♗f6 12.♗c3 ♖a5 13.b4!?

13.♞d1!? can also be considered.

13...♖h5

Black trusts White's word for the validity of 13.b4, and it seems like he made the proper decision: 13...♕×b4 14.a×b4 ♖×a1 15.b5! ♗b4 16.♖b3 ♖a5 17.♕a3 ♗d3 18.♕×f8 ♖×f8 19.♖c4 and Black is struggling.

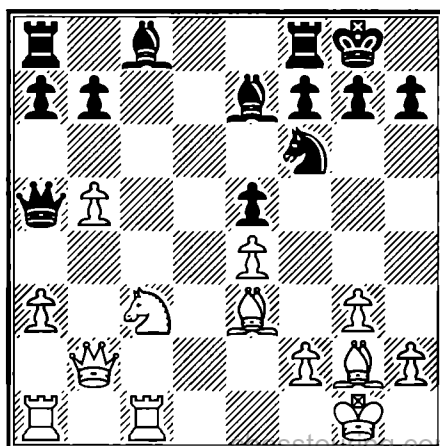
14.b5 ♗e5 15.♗×e5 ♖×e5 16.♕f4 ♖c5 17.♖b2

17.♞fc1!?

17...e5 18.♕e3

An interesting alternative is 18.♞fc1!?, e.g. 18...e×f4 19.♗d5 ♖d6 20.e5, which looks devastating at first, but Black has 20...♖×d5! 21.♕×d5 ♗×d5 22.♖d4 ♞d8 23.♖e4 f×g3 24.h×g3 ♕e6 and Black should be OK.

18...♖c7 19.♞fc1 ♖a5?!



This is hardly the ideal square for the queen, as it lacks purpose and risks it being trapped. A more solid and sensible choice is 19...♖b8!?, when 20.a4 ♕d7 21.♖d1, followed by 22.♞ac1, gives White a safe edge.

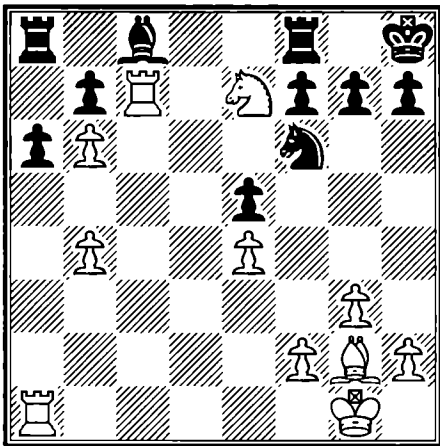
20.b6! ♕c5?

Now Black is on the verge of being lost. Better is 20...♕d8 21.♗d5 ♗x♗5 22.e×d5 a×b6 23.d6, although White has a solid advantage because of his superior piece coordination.

21.♕×c5 ♖×c5 22.♗d5 ♖a5 23.♗e7+

23.♖×e5! is also very good.

23...♖h8 24.♖b4! ♖×b4 25.a×b4 a6 26.♞c7!



A rook entering on the seventh rank usually implies that something has gone wrong for the defender, as is the case here. Black is in serious trouble.

26...♞b8 27.♗×c8 ♞f×c8 28.♖d1

28.♞ac1! is possibly better.

28...h6?

28...♖g8 is better.

29.f3 ♖h7?

Now Black is lost. 29...♞e8 or 29...♖g8 are better.

30.♕h3 ♞f8 31.♞e7 ♞fe8 32.♞×f7 ♖g8 33.♞c7 1-0

Game 127

Ioan Cosma –

Jean Christophe Olivier

Chambery 1998

Closed Catalan [E06]

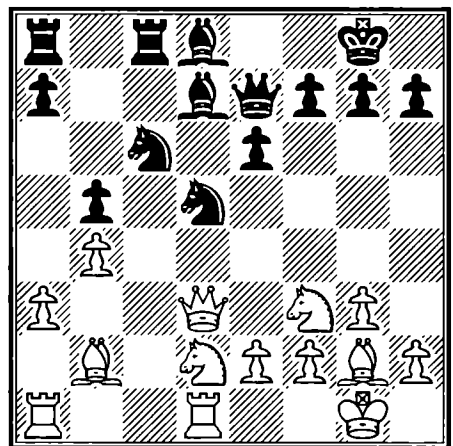
1.d4 ♗f6 2.♗f3 d5 3.c4 e6 4.g3 c5 5.c×d5 ♗×d5 6.♕g2 ♗c6 7.0-0 ♕e7 8.d×c5 ♕×c5 9.a3 0-0 10.♖c2 ♖e7

10...♕e7 is better.

11.b4 ♕b6 12.♕b2 ♕d7 13.♗bd2 ♞fc8?!

This is the wrong square for this rook; Black should play 13...♞ac8, followed by ...♞fd8.

14.♖d3 ♕d8 15.♞fd1 b5



This is an ugly move that attempts to claim the c4-square, but it weakens the c5-square just as much.

16.♗e4 h6 17.♗c5 ♕e8

This is a perfectly normal move, but Black shouldn't play it until the position is further under control. A better try is 17...a5 to undermine White's queenside before a knight settles on c5.

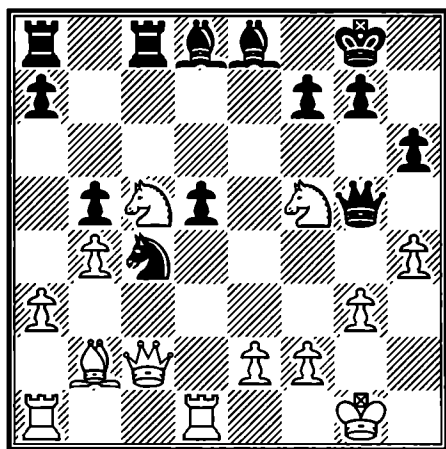
18. ♖d4 ♗e5?!

18... ♗xd4 19. ♖xd4 ♖f8 20. ♖g4 looks grim for Black, but it is better than what follows.

19. ♖c2 ♗c4?

Now Black is effectively lost; however, the alternatives 19... ♗c6 20. ♗f5 exf5 21. ♖xd5 or 19... ♗b6 20. ♗xd5 exd5 21. ♗f5 ♖e6 22. ♖xd5! are bad for Black as well.

20. ♗xd5 exd5 21. ♗f5 ♖g5
22. h4!?



White can do even better with 22. ♗xg7 ♗c6 23. ♗xh6 ♖g6 24. e4! and Black's position is a complete mess.

22... ♖g6 23. ♖xd5 ♗xb2?

Now Black loses by force. Yet, 23... ♗xh4 24. ♗xg7 ♗c6 25. ♖d4 ♗g5 26. e4 is also very good for White.

24. ♖xd8 ♖h8 25. ♖d6! f6 26. e4

Black may have overlooked this move. Now he loses at least an exchange and the game is soon over.

26... ♗c4 27. ♗e7 ♖g4 28. ♗xc8 ♖xc8 29. ♖d1 ♖h3 30. ♖d8 ♖xd8 31. ♖xd8 ♗e5

This last attack is easily parried. Nor does 31... ♗e3 help: 32. ♖xe8+ ♖h7 33. fxex3 ♖xg3+ 34. ♖f1 ♖f3+ 35. ♖e1 ♖xe3+ 36. ♖d1 ♖d4+ 37. ♖e2, even though Black picks up the rook on a1, he is still a piece down and running out of checks.

32. ♖xe8+ ♖h7 33. ♖h5 ♗g4
34. ♖f5+ ♖h8 35. ♖f3 1-0

Game 128

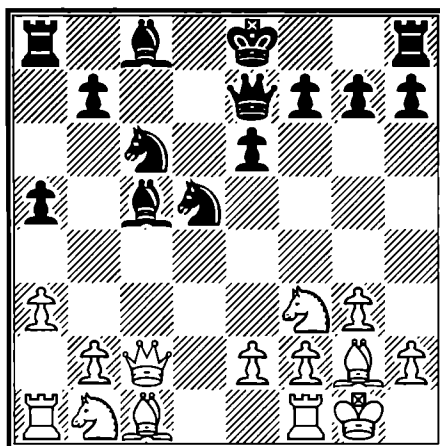
Jozsef Horvath –

Csaba Csiszar

Zalakaros (7) 1996

Closed Catalan [E06]

1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 e6 3. g3 d5 4. ♗g2 c5 5. cxd5 ♗xd5 6. ♗f3 ♗c6 7. 0-0 ♗e7 8. dxc5 ♗xc5 9. ♖c2 ♖e7 10. a3 a5?!



This move is seen quite often, but it substantially weakens the b5-square.

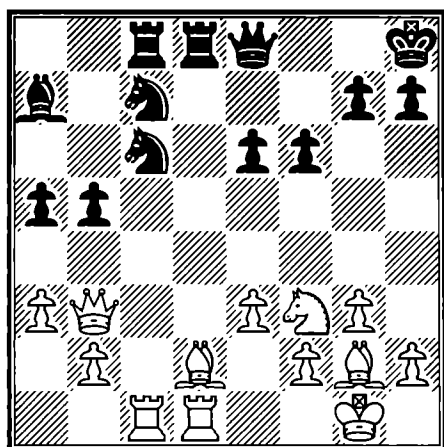
11. ♗bd2 ♗c7?! chesstouring.com

It is difficult to determine the idea behind this move, perhaps Black wanted to cover the newly created weakness on b5. Black should only move his knight when it is chased away by e2-e4 or similar threats. Therefore, relatively best is 11...0-0.

12. ♖e4!? ♙a7 13. ♖d1 0-0
14. ♖d6 f6 15. ♖xc8 ♖axc8
16. ♙d2 ♖h8?!

This loses valuable time; 16...♖fd8 is better.

17. e3 ♖fd8 18. ♖ac1 ♗e8 19. ♗b3!
b5?!



This is too weakening, leaving both the a- and b-pawns vulnerable to attack. Over the next few moves Black is forced to enter a position that is almost strategically lost. The lesser evil is 19...b6, even though it traps the dark-squared bishop on a7.

20. ♖e1 a4 21. ♙xc6 axb3
22. ♙xe8 ♖xe8 23. ♖c3 ♖d5?!

23...♖ed8 24. ♖xb3 e5 is relatively best. After the text move, White almost has a winning advantage.

24. ♖xb3

White's next target is the other b-pawn. Sadly for Csiszar, it will be difficult to fend off White for long.

24...♖b8 25. ♖c1 f5 26. ♖f1 ♖f6
27. ♖e2 ♖e4 28. ♙b4 ♖g8 29. ♖c7
♙b6 30. ♖c6 ♙d8 31. ♖d3 ♖f6
32. ♙d6 ♖a8 33. ♖xb5 ♖a7 34. ♖c8
♖d7 35. ♙e5 ♖e4 36. f3 ♖g5
37. ♙d4 ♖c7 38. ♖bb8 1-0

Game 129

*Hugo Spangenberg –
Carlos Paglilla*

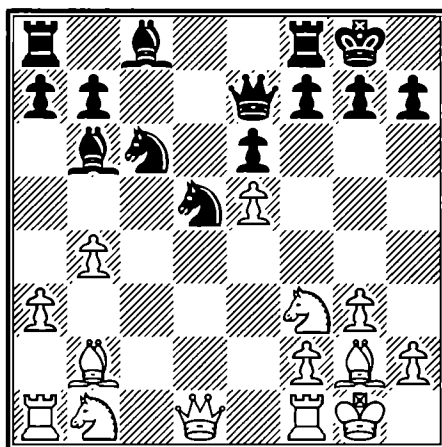
Buenos Aires (6) 1998

Closed Catalan [E06]

1. ♖f3 ♖f6 2. g3 d5 3. ♙g2 c5 4. c4
♖c6 5. cxd5 ♖xd5 6. d4 e6 7. 0-0
♙e7 8. dxc5 ♙xc5 9. a3 0-0 10. b4
♙b6

As discussed above, this is not the ideal square for the bishop.

11. ♙b2 ♗e7 12. e4 ♖f6 13. e5
♖d5



14. ♖bd2

White can also consider 14. ♖c3. The exchange of Black's most active minor piece cannot be bad, because his position will appear even more cramped after the d5-knight's departure:

14...♖d8 15.♗c2 a6 16.♖ad1 ♘xc3
(otherwise Black will have to take on
an isolated pawn, 16...♗d7 17.♘xd5)
17.♗xc3 with a better game for White.
In the game Spangenberg prefers to
leave Black cramped, so he avoids the
trade and goes for an attack on Black's
weak dark squares and kingside.

14...♖d8 15.♗e2 ♗d7 16.♘e4
♖ac8

16...a6!? is a worthy alternative.

17.h4 ♗e8 18.♖ad1 a6?!

18...♗c7 to prevent White's knight
from jumping to d6 makes more sense.
Therefore, White should consider play-
ing 18.♘d6 and only then follow up by
19.♖ad1. Both moves could also be
considered on move seventeen.

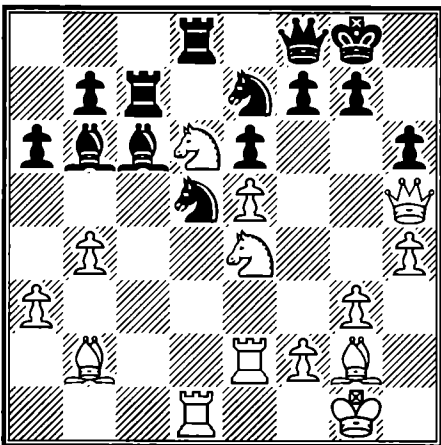
19.♘d6 ♖c7 20.♘g5! h6 21.♘ge4
♗d7 22.♗h5

22.♗g4!?, with ideas like ♘e4-f6+, look
very attractive for White.

22...♗f8 23.♖fe1

23.♖c1!? may be even better.

23...♘ce7 24.♖e2 ♗c6



Here 24...♗a4 is worth considering.

25.♖d3 g6?

There is absolutely no reason to weaken
the kingside like this. Both 25...♘c8
and 25...♘f5 are far more suitable.

26.♗g4 ♗g7 27.♘f6+ ♔h8
28.♗e4

Black is bound hand and foot, so he
tries to complicate matters. As we will
see, this plan nearly works.

28...♗b5 29.♘xb5 axb5 30.♗xd5
exd5 31.e6 d4 32.♘d7 f5 33.♗f4
♖cxd7 34.exd7 ♖xd7 35.♖e6 ♘c6
36.♖d1?!

Here 36.h5 looks very good. Now
Black hurries to prevent it.

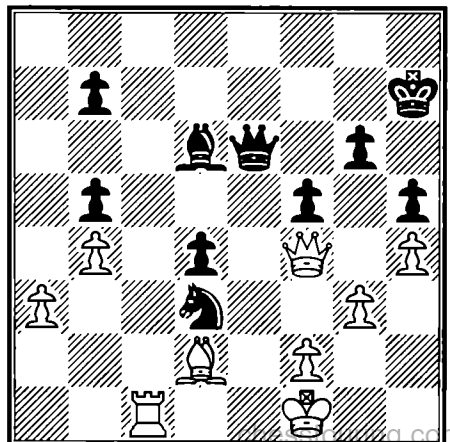
36...h5 37.♖d6

37.♖de1! ♗c7 38.♗f3 is uninspiring
for Black.

37...♔h7 38.♖xd7 ♗xd7 39.♗c1
♗e6 40.♗d2?!

40.♗h6+ ♔g8 41.♗f4 d3 42.♗e3 is
simpler and better.

40...♘e5 41.♖e1 ♗c7 42.♖c1
♗d6 43.♗f1 ♘d3?



This allows a winning combination; with 43...d3, followed by ...c4, Black is only marginally worse.

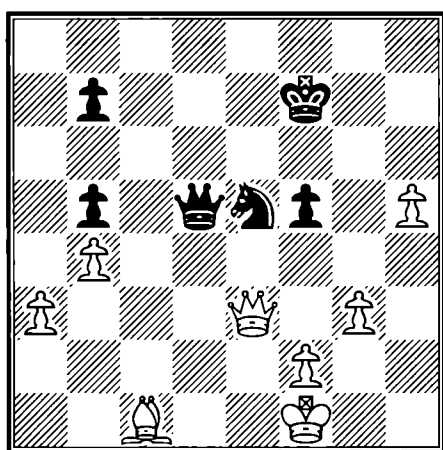
44.♖h6+ ♜g8 45.♞c8+!

This elegant combination simplifies the position, thereby making the win less complicated.

45...♖×c8 46.♖×g6+ ♜h8
47.♖×h5+ ♜g7 48.♖h6+ ♜f7
49.♖×d6 ♖c6 50.♖×d4 ♖f3
51.♖e3?

White's vigilance wanes. Faster is 51.♖d7+ ♜g8 (51...♜f6? 52.♞c3+ wins even faster) 52.♖e8+ ♜g7 53.♞c3+ ♜h6 54.♖e6+ ♜h5 55.♖e2 and the coming queen exchange makes the win trivial.

51...♖d5 52.h5 ♞e5 53.♞c1?



White errs again; both 53.♞e1 and 53.♖e2 win, although some technique is required.

53...♖h1+ 54.♖e2 ♖×h5+ 55.f3 ♞c6?

No sooner is Black back in the game than he throws it all away; with

55...♖h2+ 56.♖d1 ♖×g3, White will find it difficult to win.

56.♖b3+ ♖e7 57.♖e3+ 1-0

This game may have its flaws, but the opening illustrated White's ideas very well.

Game 130

*Jose Garcia Padron –
Orestes Rodriguez Vargas*
Ponferrada (5) 1997
Closed Catalan [E06]

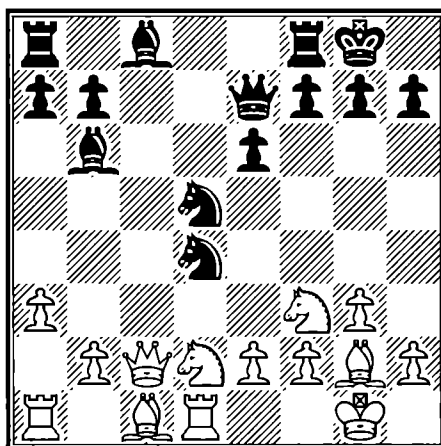
1.d4 d5 2.♞f3 ♞f6 3.c4 e6 4.g3
c5 5.cxd5 ♞xd5 6.♞g2 ♞c6 7.0-0
♞e7 8.dxc5 ♞xc5 9.a3 0-0
10.♖c2

Strictly speaking, this is not best; White should play 10.b4 immediately.

10...♞b6?!

This is a bad square for the bishop, and now Black is struggling to get his queenside developed. For the superior 10...♞e7, see Game 126 and its accompanying analysis.

11.♞d1 ♖e7 12.♞bd2 ♞d4?!



Black hopes to equalize through simplification; however, this just makes things worse. It is better to develop and coordinate the rest of the pieces and only then think about equalizing. A good start is 12...♖c7.

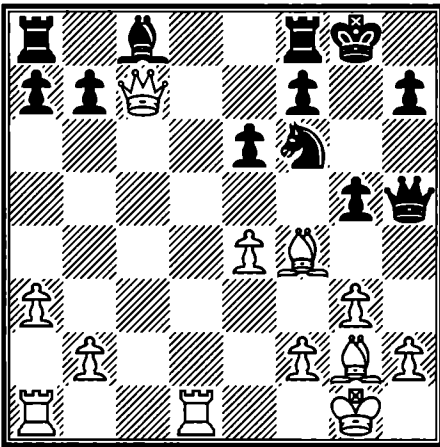
13. ♖xd4 ♙xd4 14. ♖c4 ♗f6
15. e3 ♙e5?

Black is already worse, but this move creates a very bad position. After 15...♙c5 16. e4 ♖b6 17. ♖e3 ♖d7, White has a fair advantage, but at least Black isn't lost.

16. ♖xe5 ♗xe5 17. e4 ♖f6 18. ♙f4

Black fails to put up much resistance during the next few moves.

18...♗h5 19. ♗c7 g5?



A senseless move. A better choice is 19...♗b5, although White has a solid advantage after 20.♙ac1. I don't know how Black is going to get his queenside into play in the foreseeable future.

20. ♙d6

This is reasonably good, but White can do much better by 20.♙d2! and Black

has an awful position with both ♙c3 and ♙b4 looming.

20...♖e8 21. ♗e7 ♖xd6 22. ♙xd6 e5?

23...f6 is better.

23. ♙d8 ♙e6??

A blunder in an otherwise lost position. Of course, 23...♗h6 is better.

24. ♗xf8# 1-0

Game 131

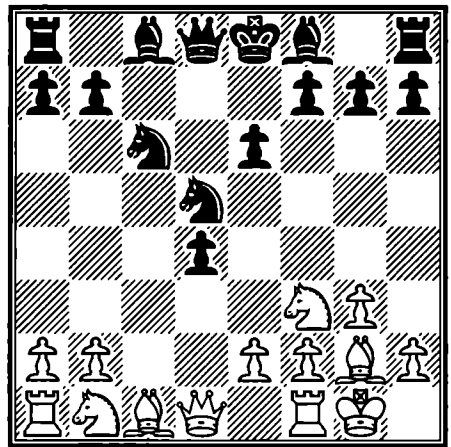
Vinh Bui –

Son Nguyen Ngoc Truong

Budapest (7) 2003

Catalan [E01]

1. d4 ♖f6 2. c4 e6 3. g3 d5 4. ♖f3
c5 5. cxd5 ♖xd5 6. ♙g2 ♖c6 7. 0-0
cxd4



Black tries to circumvent the loss of tempo that occurs upon 7...♙e7 8.dxc5 ♙xc5. However, the text move has its own problems. Another alternative is 7...♗b6, then White should not play 8.dxc5, but rather be aggressive by 8.e4 ♖f6 9.d5 ♖d4, when Black will have problems because of his lack of devel-

opment: 10.♖c3 ♗×f3+ (White was threatening 11.♗×d4 c×d4 12.♗a4 ♖b4 13.a3, winning a pawn – Marin) 11.♖×f3 with a better game for White (Marin).

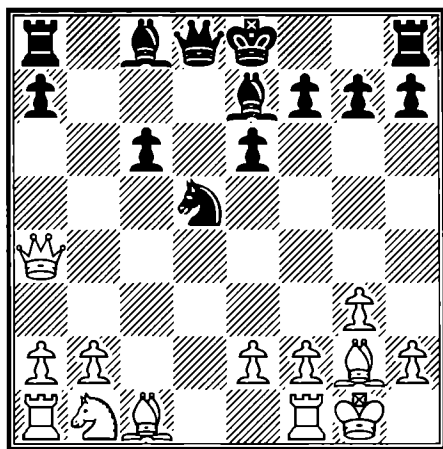
8.♗×d4 ♕e7 9.♗×c6

9.♗c3 is also good for White.

9...b×c6

This is the problem that Black faces in this line. If Black plays 8...♗×d4 to avoid the isolated c-pawn, he will fall behind in development after 9.♖×d4 and have trouble developing his kingside.

10.♖a4



This is not as popular as 10.♖c2 or 10.e4, but it scores very well. The first game with the position after 9...b×c6 was Trompowsky-Keres, Buenos Aires ol (12) 1939. Trompowsky played 10.♖c2, but eventually lost. Three rounds later Trompowsky reached the same position, but this time as black against Capablanca, and White opted for 10.♖a4 and won convincingly.

10...♕d7

In Capablanca-Trompowsky, Black tried 10...♕b7, but after 11.♖d1 0-0 12.♗a3 ♖b6 13.e4 ♗f6 14.♗c4 ♖b5 15.♖c2 ♖fd8 16.♕f4 ♖ac8 17.♕d6, he was in serious trouble.

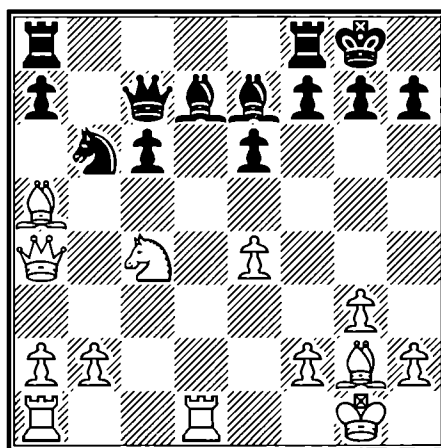
11.♖d1 0-0 12.♗a3

The precise move order isn't all that important at this juncture; equally good is 12.e4 ♗b6 13.♖c2 ♖c7 14.♕e3 c5 15.♗a3 ♖ac8 16.♖ac1 ♖fd8 17.♕f1 ♖b7 18.♗c4 ♗×c4 19.♕×c4 ♕f6 20.b3 and White had the better chances in Kohlweyer-T.Ernst, Gausdal 1993.

12...♖c7 13.♕d2 ♖e5?!

This tempting move soon lands Black in trouble. He most likely overlooked White's fifteenth move. Both 13...♖ab8 and 13...♖ac8 are better, although White still has the upper hand.

14.e4! ♗b6 15.♗c4! ♖c7 16.♕a5!



Suddenly Black is in a bit of a bind and his position is gradually becoming more uncomfortable, although White's advantage is still within limits.

16...e5 17.♖c2 ♕e6 18.♗e3 ♖fc8?!

The wrong rook, the f-rook belongs on the d-file.

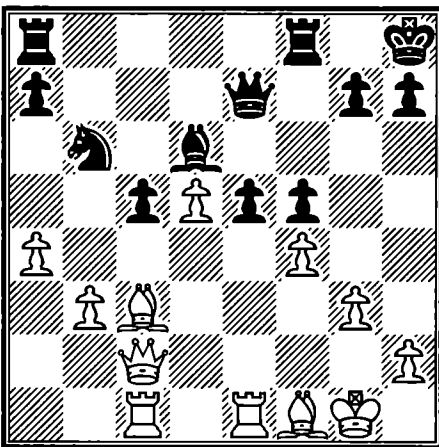
19.b3 c5?

This ugly move allows White to plunk a knight onto the d5-square, but Black reckons he may be able to defend by exchanging it and then blocking the passed d-pawn with the dark-squared bishop. Unfortunately for Black, White has the bishop-pair, more space, and the better pawn structure.

**20.♘d5 ♗×d5 21.e×d5 ♗d6
22.♞ac1 ♖d7 23.♙f1 f5**

Black is trying to obtain more space, so that White doesn't gain control over the entire board.

**24.a4 ♜f8 25.♙c3 ♖e7 26.♞e1
♜h8 27.f4!**



By blocking the center and forcing Black to play ...e4, White improves his dark-squared bishop, while making Black's worse.

27...e4 28.♙c4?!

White shouldn't allow Black to exchange his bad knight for a bishop, as

it lessens White's advantage; therefore, 28.♞cd1 looks better.

**28...♞ab8 29.♜h1 ♘×c4 30.b×c4
♞b7 31.♞b1 ♞fb8 32.♞×b7 ♞×b7
33.♞b1**

White still holds the initiative. Yet, Black manages to put himself in another hole as the time control approaches at move forty.

**33...♜g8 34.♜g2 ♜f7 35.a5 ♖c7
36.a6 ♞b8 37.♞×b8 ♖×b8 38.♜a4
♜e7?**

Now White just marches in; 38...♖c7 was the lesser evil.

**39.♖c6 ♖c7 40.♖×c7+ ♗×c7
41.♙×g7**

White has won a pawn and is now winning easily.

**41...♜d7 42.♜f2 h5 43.♙e5 ♗d8
44.h3 h4 45.♙b8 ♙f6 46.g×h4
1-0**

Game 132
*Aleksandr Poluljahov –
Michael Richter*
Swidnica (3) 1999
Catalan [E01]

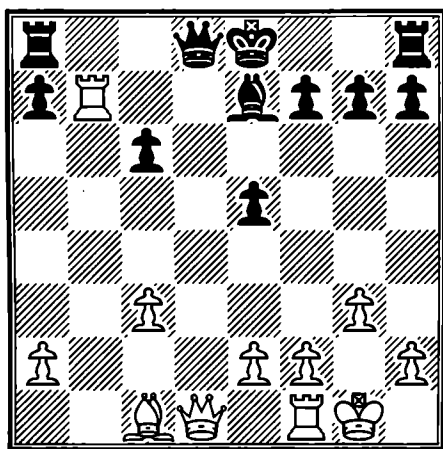
**1.c4 e6 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.g3 d5 4.♙g2
c5 5.0-0 ♘c6 6.c×d5 ♘×d5 7.d4
c×d4 8.♘×d4 ♙d7?!**

This leads to a slightly passive position in which Black suffers.

9.♘c3!

White weakens his pawn structure in order to pressure Black's queenside – the rook on b1 and bishop on g2 work very well together.

9...♘×c3 10.b×c3 ♙e7 11.♖b1 e5
12.♘×c6 ♙×c6 13.♙×c6+ b×c6
14.♖b7



The rook on the seventh rank secures White a substantial advantage.

14...0-0?

This is an instructive mistake that even grandmasters commit. Instead of sacrificing a pawn to obtain counterplay, Black plays a passive move in the hopes that he can fend off White's initiative. Black should play 14...♙c5!?, when he has good counterplay after 15.♙×d8+ ♖×d8 16.♖c7 ♙b6 17.♖×c6 ♔d7 18.♖c4 ♔e6, because of his active pieces.

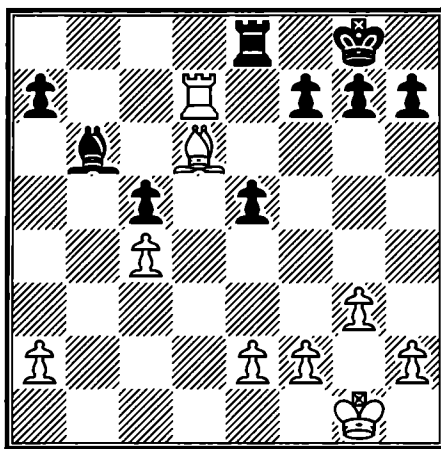
15.♙×d8 ♙×d8 16.♙a3!

White immediately grabs the crucial diagonal, while Black's dark-squared bishop is misplaced on d8.

16...♖e8 17.♖d1 ♙b6 18.♖dd7
♖ab8 19.♖×b8!

This is a very instructive decision. Most players would unhesitatingly play 19.♖×f7 ♖×b7 20.♖×b7; however, Poluljahov doesn't want to give Black counterplay upon 20...♖d8. Instead, White tightens his grip on the position, expecting that it will provide an easier win.

19...♖×b8 20.♙d6 ♖e8 21.c4 c5



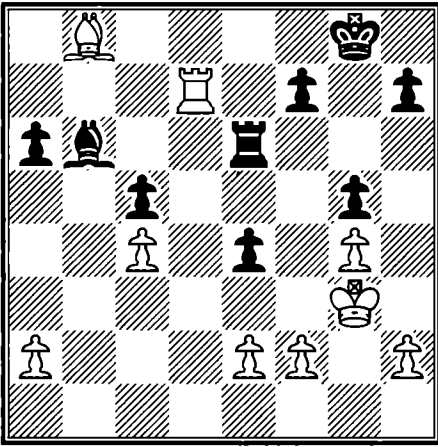
Black has to prevent White from chasing the bishop with c4-c5. At this point let's review and assess the position: the pawn distribution is nearly identical, both players have a rook and a dark-squared bishop, yet White has accumulated a nearly winning strategic advantage. White's rook and bishop are vastly superior to Black's, the result of which is that Black will have a hard time activating his king. Meanwhile, White's king can travel to the center at will. Just because a position is nearly symmetrical, it doesn't make it drawn.

22.♔g2 e4

To prevent White from playing ♔f3, but now the dark squares are further weakened.

23.g4 ♖e6 24.♙b8 a6 25.♔g3 g5

The Tarrasch and Semi-Tarrasch



Black's has to prevent White's king from going to f4, but the text weakens his pawn structure even more. White's next move forces his way into the heart of Black's position and the game is soon over.

**26.h4! g×h4+ 27.♔×h4 ♕a5
 28.♕f4 ♖g7 29.♖g5! ♕c3
 30.♖f5 ♜b6 31.♞d6 ♞b8 32.♞×a6
 ♞e8 33.♞c6 ♖g8 34.♞×c5 ♞a8
 35.♖×e4 ♕g7 36.a4 1-0**

Chapter Eleven

The Catalan

One of the pillars of our repertoire is the Catalan, a sort of Grünfeld in reverse, if you will. This is one of the most important chapters in the book. The number one answer to 1.d4 in both professional and amateur play is the King's Indian Defense and number two is the tried-and-true Queen's Gambit Declined. In our repertoire, the Closed Sicilian Reversed (chapters one through five) is how we meet the King's Indian, and the Catalan is our answer to the Queen's Gambit Declined.

The Catalan is a very sophisticated opening that makes great demands on a player's positional skills. If that makes you feel apprehensive, take heart. Few amateur players have a well-thought-out response to this opening!

The key here is the bishop on g2. White's goal is to bring this piece to life and really make it shine. Don't be afraid of simplification. Endgames in the Catalan usually favor White because of the powerhouse on g2 and the superior pawn structure.

Game 133

Emmanuel Bricard –

Stefan Loeffler

Wijk aan Zee (8) 1996

Open Catalan [E03]

1.♠f3 d5 2.c4 e6

This is a key position for our repertoire. Black has three important alternatives. The first, 2...c6, can transpose into a

Réti à la Ribli-Sherzer (Game 159) or Loginov-Spraggett (Game 162), but White can also consider 3.cxd5, heading for the dependable exchange variation of the Slav. Ulf Andersson, Gregory Kaidanov and Igor Ivanov have all enjoyed great success with this line, which was also a favorite of Botvinnik.

A much underestimated move here is 2...dxc4, as the traditional 3.♠a3 is strongly met by 3...a6 4.♠xc4 b5, when 5.♠ce5 is bad and 5.♠e3 is no more than equal. I recommend a Vadim Zvjaginsev specialty 3.e3 ♠f6 (3...♠e6 and now simply 4.♠a3) 4.♠xc4 c5 5.0-0 e6 6.♠e2, followed by ♠d1 and d4. Yes, there is no white bishop on g2, but you don't have to learn too much theory to master this line of the Queen's Gambit Accepted (no ...♠g4 lines). The problem is that 3.♠a4+, followed by ♠xc4 and g3, yields nothing. Zvjaginsev-Reprintsev, New York 1997 saw 2...dxc4 3.e3 ♠c6 4.♠xc4 e5 5.d4 exd4 6.exd4 ♠f6 7.0-0 ♠e7 8.d5 ♠b8 9.♠e1 0-0 10.♠c3 ♠g4 11.h3 ♠xf3 12.♠xf3 ♠bd7 13.♠g5 h6 14.♠h4 ♠e8 15.♠f5±.

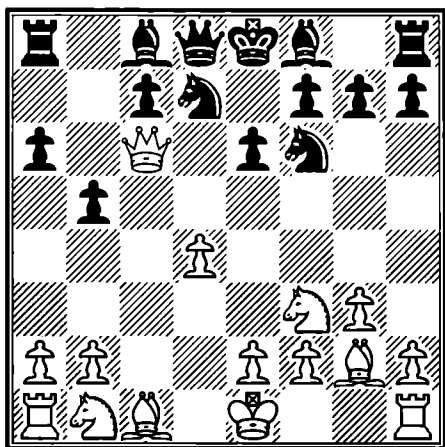
Finally, 2...d4 is possible, although it is seldom seen outside of GM practice. Now 3.e3 ♠c6 offers few chances for an advantage. It is better to play 3.g3, steering for a reversed Benoni. This is a bit beyond the subject of this book, but the idea is to play g3, ♠g2, 0-0, d3, e3 and then either exd4 or ♠e1 à la the Gheorghiu Benoni with a delayed ...exd5.

chesstouring.com

3.d4

This is a very precise move, as we don't want to obtain a position where Black captures on c4 before we have played d4. For example, after 1.♟f3 d5 2.c4 e6 3.g3, a very good move is 3...dxc4, as on 4.♞a4+ ♞d7 5.♞xc4 a6 6.♞g2 b5 7.♞c2 ♞b7 8.0-0 c5 we have few chances of fighting for the advantage, because Black's c5-pawn cramps White. Note that 1.♟f3 ♞f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 should be met by 4.d4 dxc4 5.♞a4+ and not 4.♞g2 dxc4.

3...dxc4 4.♞a4+ ♞d7 5.g3 a6 6.♞xc4 ♞g6 7.♞g2 b5 8.♞c6



8...♞b8

8...♞a7 9.♞e3 ♞d5 10.♞c1 c5 11.♞c3 ♞xc3 12.♞xc3 ♞b6 13.dxc5 ♞d5 14.♞d2 ♞xe3 15.♞xe3 ♞a5+ 16.♞d2 ♞b4 17.♞c1 ♞c7 18.0-0 ♞xb2 19.♞fd1 ♞e7 20.c6 0-0 21.♞b1 ♞a3 22.♞b3 ♞d8 23.♞d3 ♞e7 24.♞bd1 ♞c7 25.♞c5 ♞xa2 26.♞d7 ♞fe8 27.♞g5 h6 28.♞f6+ ♞h8 29.♞h4 gxf6 30.♞xh6+ ♞g8 31.♞d4+- Benjamin-Kaidanov, US ch Chandler 1997.

9.♞f4 ♞b4+

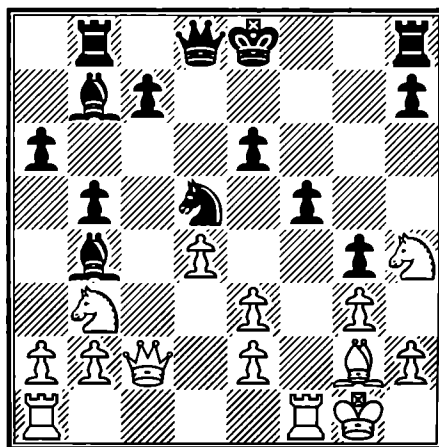
9...♞d5 10.♞g5 ♞b4+?! 11.♞bd2 ♞e7 12.♞xe7 ♞xe7 13.♞c2 ♞b7 14.a3

♞xd2+ 15.♞xd2 f6 16.♞c1 ♞c8 17.♞b4+ ♞e8 18.0-0± and White has a big advantage, Smyslov-So.Polgar, London 1996.

10.♞bd2 ♞b7 11.♞c2 ♞d5 12.♞g5 f6 13.♞f4 g5 14.♞e3 g4 15.♞h4 ♞7b6 16.0-0 f5

The tempting 16...♞xe3 is also better for White after 17.fxe3 ♞d5 18.♞d3 c5 19.e4 c4 20.♞xc4! bxc4 21.♞xc4 ♞e3 22.♞xb4 ♞xf1 23.♞xf1±.

17.♞b3 ♞xe3 18.fxe3 ♞d5



19.♞xf5!?

This speculative sacrifice may not be totally correct, but it stops Black dead in his tracks and immediately forces him to defend. I haven't found a way for Black to completely neutralize White's initiative, even in the lines where the queens are exchanged.

19...exf5 20.♞xf5 ♞d6 21.♞h5+ ♞d8

Or 21...♞d7, e.g. 22.♞xg4+ ♞e6 23.♞g7+ ♞e7 24.♞xb7 ♞hg8 25.♞e5 ♞xb7 26.♞xe6+ ♞xe6 27.a3 ♞d6 28.e4 ♞g6 29.e5 ♞e7 30.♞ac1 ♞a7 31.e4±.

22.e4 ♖e7 23.♞ad1

Logical, but not the best; after 23.a3!? ♗d2 24.♜xd2 ♚xd4+ 25.♞h1 ♗c8 26.♜b3, White is winning.

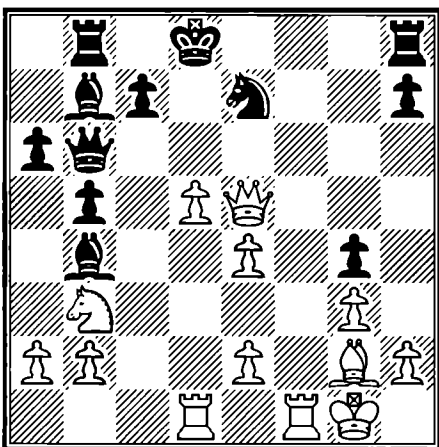
23...♞e6

Or 23...♞g6 24.♞h4 ♞e6 25.♞f6 ♚c4 26.♞xg4 ♞g8 27.♞f3 ♞e8 28.♞c1 ♞g8 29.♞f4 and Black has no prospects.

24.d5?

This is far from best. White can obtain a significant advantage after 24.♞e5!? ♞xe5 (or 24...♞g8 25.♜c5 ♗c8 26.a3 ♗xc5 27.dxc5+ ♗d7 28.♞f6+-) 25.dxe5+ ♞e8 26.a3 and the bishop is trapped.

24...♞g6 25.♞e5 ♞b6+?!



More accurate is 25...♞e8 26.♞f4 ♜c8 27.e5 ♗e7 28.♜d4 ♗c5 29.e3 and White has more than adequate compensation for the piece.

26.♞h1 ♜g6 27.♞g7!

Or 27.♞h5 ♞f8 28.♞xh7 with a clear advantage, but the game move is even better.

27...♗f8?

This is an error, but the alternatives don't offer salvation either: 27...♗e7 28.e5 ♞e3 29.d6 ♗xg2+ 30.♞xg2 cxd6 31.exd6+- or 27...♞e8 28.♜d4 ♞c8 29.♞f7 ♞f8 30.♞xh7 ♞xf1+ 31.♞xf1 ♗a8 32.♞f7 ♗d6 33.♜c6 ♗xc6 34.dxc6 ♞xc6 35.♞xg6+-.

28.♞xh8 ♜xh8 29.♞xf8+ ♞e7 30.♞xb8 ♜f7 31.e5 1-0

There were many mistakes in this game, but it was fun, entertaining and hard fought, adjectives you don't often associate with the Catalan Opening.

Game 134

Miguel Illescas –

Alexander Onischuk

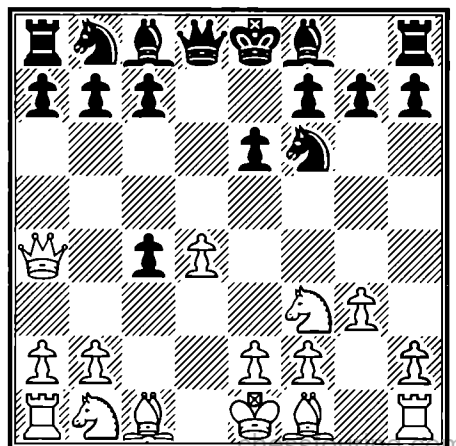
Wijk aan Zee (11) 1997

Open Catalan [E03]

1.♜f3 ♜f6

1...d5 2.c4 e6 3.d4 g6 4.g3 ♗g7 5.♗g2 ♜e7 6.0-0 ♜bc6 7.e3 0-0 8.♜a3 a5 9.♞e2 b6 10.b3 ♗a6 11.♗b2 ♜b4 12.♞fd1 ♞c8 13.♜b5 c6 14.♜c3 c5 15.dxc5 bxc5 16.♜a4 ♗b7 17.♗xg7 ♞xg7 18.♞ac1 ♜a6 19.♞b2+ ♞g8 20.♜e5± Pigusov-Rustemov, Elista 1996.

2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4.d4 dxc4 5.♞a4+



5...♖bd7

5...♖d7 6.♗xc4 ♖c6 7.♗xc6+ ♗xc6
8.♙g2 ♙e7 9.♗c3 ♙d7 10.0-0 ♗d5
11.♙d2 ♗xc3 12.♙xc3 0-0 13.♞fd1
♞fc8?! (13...♞fd8±) 14.♗e5! ♗xe5
15.dxe5 ♙c6 16.♙xc6 bxc6 17.♞ac1±.

6.♙g2 a6 7.♗xc4 b5

7...c5 8.♗c2 cxd4 9.♗xd4 ♙b4+
10.♙d2 ♗e7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♞d1! ♗b6
13.♙xb4 ♗xb4 14.♗c3 ♗c4?! 15.♗b3!
♗xb3 16.axb3 ♗b6 17.b4 ♞b8
18.♗b3± Grivas-Kourkounakis, Athens
1996.

8.♗c6 ♞b8 9.♙f4 ♗d5

The main alternative is 9...♙b4+, see
Game 133.

**10.♙g5 ♙e7 11.♙xe7 ♗xe7
12.♗c3**

This is in more testing than 12.0-0 ♙b7
13.♗c2 c5 when Black had equalized,
as in Sosonko-So.Polgar, Aruba (m)
1991.

12...♗b4?!

This is asking for trouble. A more solid
line is 12...♙b7 13.♗xd5 ♙xc6
14.♗xe7 ♗xe7 15.0-0 ♙xf3 16.♙xf3 c5
17.dxc5 ♗xc5 18.♞fc1; 12...♗b4!?
13.0-0 ♗xc3 14.bxc3 ♗d6± Atalik-Li
Wenliang, Beijing 1996.

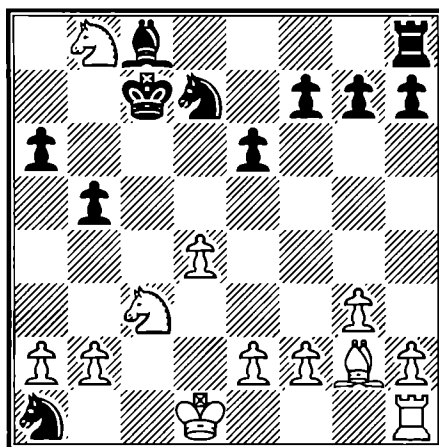
13.♗xc7 ♗c2+ 14.♗d1 ♗xa1

14...♙b7?! 15.♗xc2 b4 16.♗d2 bxc3+
17.bxc3 0-0 18.♞hc1 ♞fc8 19.♗a5
♗b6 20.♗e1 ♗c4 21.♗h5± E.
Pedersen-N.J.Fries-Nielsen, Aarhus
1993.

15.♗e5 ♖d8

15...b4 16.♗e4 0-0 17.♗c6 ♗e8
18.♗d6♗; 15...0-0 16.♗c6 ♗f6
17.♗e4 ♗h6 18.♗xb8♗; 15...♗xe5
16.♗xb8 0-0 17.♗xe5 b4 18.♗d5 ♖d7
19.♗d2+-.

**16.♗xd8+ ♗xd8 17.♗c6+ ♗c7
18.♗xb8**



18...♗xb8?!

18...♗b6 19.♗c6 ♙b7 20.d5 ♙xc6
21.dxc6 b4 22.♗e4 b3 23.♗c5 ♗d6
24.♗b7+ ♗c7 25.♗d2 ♗c2 26.♗c3
♗d5+ 27.♙xd5 exd5 28.♗c5±
Wojtkiewicz-S.Ivanov, Slupsk 1992;
18...♗xb8 19.♗d2 ♗b6 20.♞xa1 b4
21.♗d1 ♞d8 22.e3 e5 23.b3 exd4
24.e4±.

**19.♗d2 ♞d8 20.e3 e5 21.d5 f5
22.♞xa1 e4 23.♞c1 ♗d6 24.f3
exf3 25.♙xf3 ♗d7 26.♙e2 ♗e5
27.a3 ♙d7 28.e4?!**

White is in too much of a hurry. Better
is 28.♞f1 with a solid advantage.

28...♞b8?

Here 28...fxe4 may well be Black's last
chance to save the game: 29.♗e3

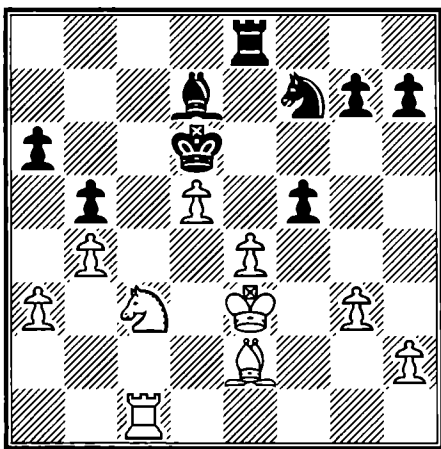
(29.♞d1 ♘f5 30.♞e3 ♘d3 31.♘x4 ♘x4 32.♘d3 ♘d3 33.♞x3 leaves White a pawn up, but Black can win back the d5-pawn with relative ease) 29...♞e8, and now:

a) 30.♞d1 ♘f5 31.♞d4 ♘d3 32.♘x4+ ♘x4 33.♞x4 ♞x4+ 34.♞x4 ♘b2= (Ftacnik).

b) 30.♞x4 ♘c4+ (30...♘c6+ is diffused by Ftacnik's 31.♞f4) 31.♞d4 ♘d2! (Ftacnik and Cifuentes only analyze 31...♘b2, which is better for White after 32.♘e4+ ♞e7 33.♞c2 ♘a4 34.d6+ ♞d8 35.♘g5±) 32.♘d1 ♞e1 33.♘a2 ♞e5 34.♘c3 ♞e1 with a draw by repetition.

c) 30.♘x4+ ♞x4 31.♞d1+ ♞c6 32.♞d6+ ♞c7 33.♞xa6 ♘c6 34.♞xc6+ ♘c6 (34...♞xc6? 31.♘b5+) 35.♘b5 and White has a small advantage that will be tricky to convert to victory.

29.b4 ♞e8 30.♞e3 ♘f7?!



Ftacnik gives 30...fxe4 as better, but Cifuentes indicates White still holds the advantage: 31.♘x4+ ♞x4 32.♞d1+ ♞c6 33.♞d6+ ♞b7 34.♘c5+ ♞c7 35.♞xa6 ♘c6+ 36.♞d2 ♘c8 37.♞a8.

31.♞d4 ♘g5 32.exf5 ♘xf5 33.g4 ♘g6 34.h4 ♘e4 35.♘xb5+ axb5 36.♞c6+ ♞e7 37.♞e6+ ♞d8 38.♞xe8+ ♞xe8 39.h5 1-0

Game 135

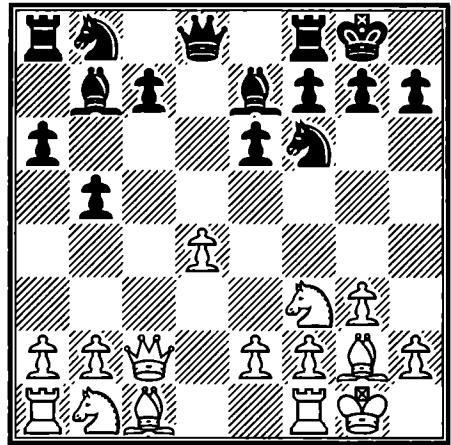
Zoltan Ribli –

Anatoly Karpov

Amsterdam (6) 1980

Open Catalan [E05]

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4.♘g2 ♘e7 5.♘f3 0-0 6.0-0 dxc4 7.♞c2 a6 8.♞xc4 b5 9.♞c2 ♘b7

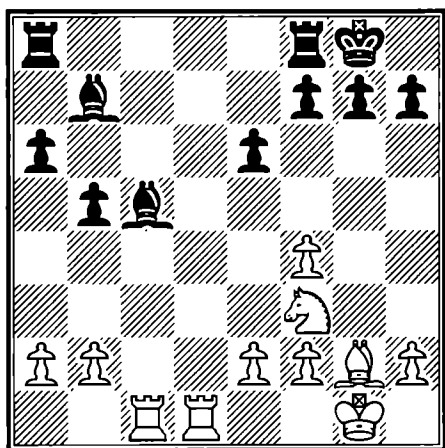


This tabia of the Catalan has been tested in thousands of games. While we offer some examples to give you a feel for these lines, covering everything in detail is beyond the scope of this book, so at some point you may need to supplement your knowledge with more specialized works.

10.♘f4

10.♘d2 is generally considered the main line, but the large amount of theory makes it impractical for our purposes. The text move forces Black to make a decision regarding his c-pawn: defend it with the knights (10...♘d5 or 10...♘c6) or with the bishop (10...♘d6).

10...♘d5 11.♘c3 ♘xf4 12.gxf4 ♘d7 13.♞fd1 ♞c8 14.♘e4 c5 15.dxc5 ♘xc5 16.♘xc5 ♞xc5 17.♞xc5 ♘xc5 18.♞ac1



This position may not look like much, but the fact that Ribli manages to beat Karpov, and that White has only dropped half a point in the games from this position, tells of Black's defensive difficulties.

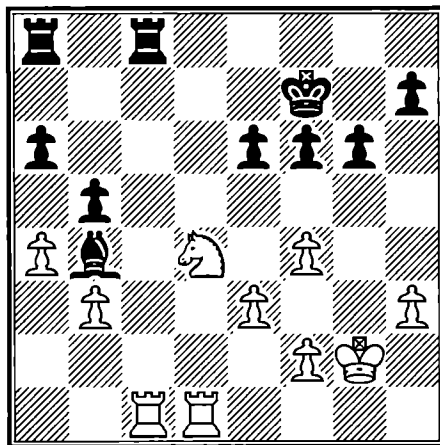
18...♞fc8

18...♞ac8 is an important alternative: 19.♟e5 ♞xg2 20.♞xg2 ♞e7 (or 20...♞fe8 21.♞d7 f6 22.♟f3 ♞f8 23.♞xc8 ♞xc8 24.♟d4 e5 25.fxe5 fxe5 26.♟f3 e4 27.♟d4 ♞c5 28.e3 ♞g5+ 29.♞f1 ± Lukov-Colin, Le Mans 2002) 21.♟c6 ♞c7 22.♟xe7+ ♞xe7 23.♞d6 ♞a7 24.♞cc6 ♞fa8 (the rest of the game is a good example of how to exploit an advantage into the endgame; White never lets his opponent off the hook) 25.♞b6 ♞f8 26.e4 ♞e7 27.e5 g6 28.h4 h5 29.b3 ♞e8 30.♞f3 ♞f8 31.♞e3 ♞e7 32.♞d4 ♞d8 33.♞bc6 ♞xd6+ 34.exd6+ ♞d7 35.♞c5 f6 36.♞b6 e5 37.fxe5 fxe5 38.♞d5 e4 39.♞b8 b4 40.♞g8 ♞b7 41.♞g7+ ♞c8 42.♞xb7 ♞xb7 43.♞e6 ♞c8 44.♞e7 1-0, Gausel-A.Johansen, Gausdal 1999 – an elegant performance by White.

19.♟e5 ♞xg2 20.♞xg2

Black's a6- and b5-pawns are clear targets in this type of ending.

20...f6 21.♟f3 ♞f8 22.e3 g6 23.b3 ♞b4 24.h3 ♞f8 25.♟d4 ♞f7 26.a4!



Ribli slowly but surely improves his position, as Black is without counterplay and has to bide his time.

26...bxa4 27.bxa4 ♞c5 28.♞c4 ♞a3 29.♞xc8 ♞xc8 30.♞b1 ♞c4 31.♞b7+ ♞e7 32.♞a7 e5

Karpov makes a desperate attempt at active counterplay, but irreparably damages his pawn structure.

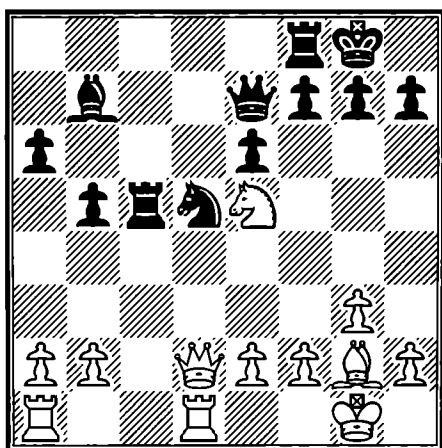
33.fxe5 fxe5 34.♟f3 ♞xa4 35.♟xe5+ ♞f6 36.♟c6 ♞c5 37.♞xh7 ♞a2 38.♞f3 a5 39.h4 a4 40.♞e4

Black's king is poorly placed on f6 and his pieces do not coordinate very well. Ribli now executes the rest of the game flawlessly.

40...♞f8 41.♞a7 ♞d6 42.f4 ♞h2 43.♞a6 ♞f7 44.♟e5+ ♞xe5 45.♞xe5 ♞g7 46.♞a7+ ♞h6 47.♞xa4 ♞xh4 48.♞f6 ♞h5 49.e4 ♞h4 50.e5 ♞h5 51.e6 ♞f5+ 52.♞e7 ♞g7 53.♞d6 ♞f8 54.♞a7+ ♞f6 55.♞d7 1-0

Game 136
Zoltan Ribli –
Svetozar Gligoric
 Novi Sad 1982
 Open Catalan [E05]

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4.♙g2
 ♙e7 5.♗f3 0-0 6.0-0 dxc4 7.♖c2
 a6 8.♗xc4 b5 9.♗c2 ♙b7 10.♙f4
 ♗c6 11.♞d1 ♗b4 12.♗c1 ♞c8
 13.♗c3 ♗bd5 14.♗xd5 ♗xd5
 15.♙g5 c5 16.dxc5 ♗e8 17.♙xe7
 ♗xe7 18.♗e5 ♞xc5 19.♗d2



19...♗c7

19...♗c3!? 20.♗d3 ♗xd1 21.♗xc5
 ♗xc5 22.♞xd1 ♙xg2 23.♗xg2 h6
 24.♞c1 ♗e7 25.♗f4± Ribli-Speelman,
 Moscow ol 1994.

20.♗d3 ♞c2 21.♗e1 ♗f6
 22.♙xb7 ♗xb7 23.♞ac1 ♞xc1
 24.♞xc1 ♞c8 25.♞xc8+ ♗xc8
 26.♗b4 ♗c7

26...h6 27.♗c5 ♗d7 28.f3 is also a bit
 better for White.

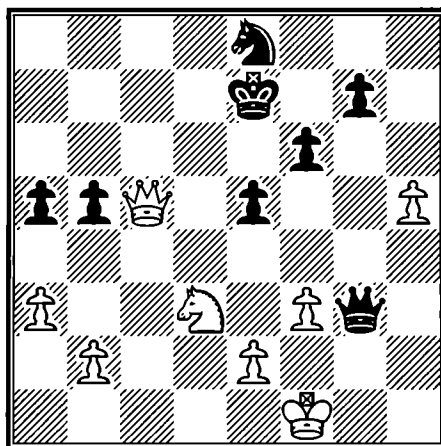
27.♗c5 ♗e8 28.f3 f6 29.♗f2
 ♗f7?

This unnecessarily loses a pawn. After
 29...♗b7 30.e4 ♗d7 31.♗e2, White
 has no more than a slight advantage.

30.♗h5+ ♗e7 31.♗xh7 ♗c4
 32.a3 ♗d4+ 33.♗f1 a5 34.h4 e5
 35.h5 ♗e3 36.♗g8 ♗g5

Black sidetracks his queen by placing
 it on the kingside. 36...♗d4 37.b4 axb4
 38.axb4 ♗c4 39.♗h7 is clearly better
 for White, but certainly more difficult
 than the game continuation.

37.♗d5 ♗xg3 38.♗c5+?!



38.♗b7+ is possibly more accurate:
 38...♗f8 39.♗xb5 ♗h3+ 40.♗e1
 ♗h4+ 41.♗d2 ♗g5+ 42.♗c3 ♗e3
 43.♗xa5 ♗xe2 44.♗b4+ ♗f7 45.♗e4
 and White's queenside pawns will
 eventually decide the game.

38...♗f7 39.♗xb5 ♗h3+ 40.♗e1
 ♗d6 41.♗d5+ ♗e7 42.♗c5 ♗e6
 43.♗c7?!

More accurate is 43.♗d2, when Black
 cannot activate his king as in the next
 note.

43...♗h4+?

Black can put up stiffer resistance by
 43...♗g3+ 44.♗d1 ♗g1+ 45.♗c2 ♗e3
 46.♗c1 e4 47.♗xg7 ♗c5+ 48.♗b1
 ♗xh5 49.♗b3±. chesstouring.com

44.♔d1 ♚a4+ 45.♔d2 ♚d4
46.♚xg7 e4 47.fxe4 ♘xe4+
48.♔d1 ♘g5 49.♚b7 1-0

Game 137

Vassily Smyslov –

Fridrik Olafsson

Belgrade (4.6) 1970

Open Catalan [E05]

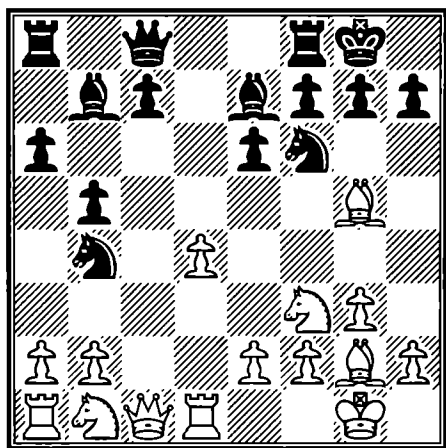
1.c4 e6 2.g3 d5 3.♘g2 ♘f6 4.♗f3
♘e7 5.0-0 0-0 6.d4 dxc4 7.♚c2
a6 8.♚xc4 b5 9.♚c2 ♘b7 10.♘f4
♗c6 11.♖d1 ♗b4

Black would like to play ...c5 as quickly as possible.

12.♚c1

The queen retreats to a square where it still controls c5.

12...♚c8 13.♘g5!



13...♗bd5

Black could have played 13...c5, but after 14.♘xf6 he would be forced to compromise his king position by 14...gxf6 or gambit the c-pawn for a while. 13...c5 14.♘xf6 ♘xf6 15.dxc5 a5 16.♗c3 ♚xc5 17.♗d5 ♚xc1 18.♗xf6+ gxf6 19.♖dxc1 ♖fc8

20.♖xc8+ ♖xc8 21.a3 ♘xf3 22.♘xf3
♗d5 23.♘e4 ♖c5 24.♖d1 ± Ribli-
Rozentalis, Germany 1995.

14.♗bd2!

Thematic play! The knight prepares to go to b3, where it will make ...c5 very difficult to achieve.

14...h6

14...c5? 15.e4 ♗b4 16.e5 ♗fd5
17.♘xe7 ♗xe7 18.♚xc5 ♚xc5 19.dxc5
♗d3 20.♗b3 ♗xb2 21.♖d7 ±.

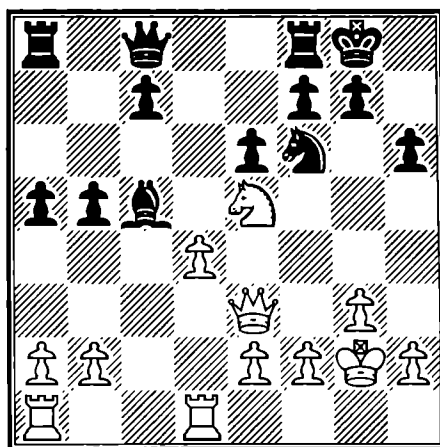
15.♘xf6 ♗xf6 16.♗b3 ♘d6
17.♗c5

The first stage of the game is over and White is in control of Black's freeing breaks with ...c5 or ...e5.

17...♘d5 18.♗e5 ♘xg2

This exchange was forced in view of 19.e4, but now Black has a weakness on c6.

19.♔xg2 a5 20.♚e3 ♘xc5



This was Black's last chance to capture on c5 and still force White to retake with the pawn. If Black had waited a

move longer, Smyslov would have played 21.♖ac1 to answer 21...♗xc5 with 22.♖xc5, achieving a huge positional advantage.

21.dxc5

The exchange on c5 has altered the position so that c6 is no longer vulnerable, but White has a new trump on the d-file.

21...♖a6

Upon 21...♖d8 22.c6 ♖a6 23.♖f3!, White is better and improves his position by advancing the kingside pawns.

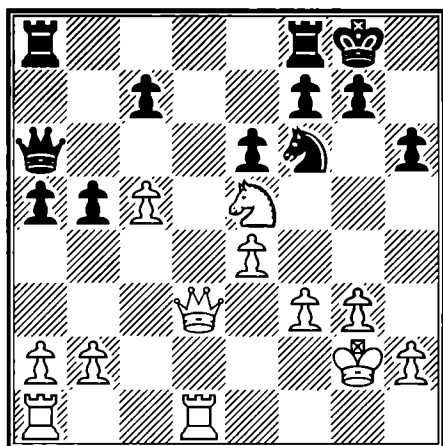
22.♖d3 ♗d5 23.e4

Necessary, as Black was threatening to challenge on the d-file.

23...♗f6

23...♗b4 24.♖d7 f6 25.a3+; 23...f6 24.♗g6 ♗b4 25.♖b3 ♖fe8 26.a3 ♗c6 27.♖d7± (Smyslov).

24.f3



This bolsters the e-pawn and emphasizes Black's lack of counterplay.

24...c6

This opens d6 to White's pieces, but constructive alternatives are lacking.

25.♖e3 ♖ad8 26.♖d6

White now has an ironclad grip on the d-file, as 26...♖c8 27.♖ad1, followed by ♗e5-d7, is devastating.

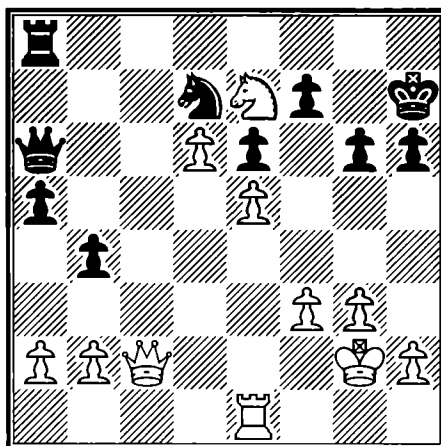
26...♖xd6 27.cxd6 c5 28.♖xc5 b4 29.♖e1 ♖d8

29...♖c8 30.♖d4 ♖c2+ 31.♗g1 ♖e2 32.♖d1 ♖c2 33.d7! the extra queen allows White to answer 33...♖e2 by 34.d8=♖+ ♗h7 35.♖d2.

30.♗c6

This knight is dominating. Notice how White's three pieces are working together in the center, while Black's are divided on the sidelines.

30...♖a8 31.♗e7+ ♗h7 32.e5 ♗d7 33.♖c2+ g6



34.f4

Clearly White is better. He has a dominating passed d-pawn and total control of the c-file, thanks to the knight on e7. But, because his king is slightly exposed, Smyslov first improves the po-

sition of his queen and rook to better safeguard it, before commencing on any decisive operations.

34...♖b6 35.♖e2 ♖b7+

The trade of queens can only help White, as Black then loses any hope of counterplay.

36.♖f3 ♖a6 37.♖c1 ♖c4 38.♖e2

38.♖xc4?? ♖xc4 39.♖xa8 ♖e2+ allows Black to draw by perpetual check.

38...♖b7+ 39.♖g1 ♖xd6

Trying to stay in the game by sacrificing the knight for two pawns. The alternative 39...♖b6 40.♖c7 is hopeless for Black. The text should also lose, but at least it forces White to play accurately.

40.exd6 ♖b6+ 41.♖f2 ♖xd6
42.♖c8

Bringing the knight back to the center.

42...♖d3

42...♖xc8? 43.♖xc8 ♖d1+ 44.♖g2 ♖d5+ 45.♖f3 ♖d2+ 46.♖h3.

43.♖b6 ♖d8 44.b3 ♖f5 45.♖c4
♖d3 46.♖e5

The transfer of the knight from e7 to e5 gives the white king much more protection.

46...♖c3

Abandoning the c-file isn't very attractive.

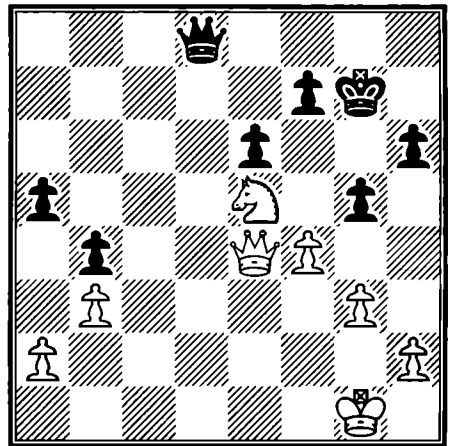
47.♖d2 ♖xc1+ 48.♖xc1 g5
49.♖d2

The first step was to centralize the knight, now the queen moves to the middle of the board.

49...♖g7 50.♖d3 ♖f6 51.♖d4

Threatening to trade queens with 52.♖f3.

51...♖f5 52.♖d3 ♖f6 53.♖e4
♖d8



54.♖f3!

This is a very nice move. Among other things it threatens to trade queens with 55.♖d4+, defends the king from a check on d2 and, in the long term, prepares an advance on the enemy king.

54...♖d1+ 55.♖f2 ♖c1 56.♖e3

56.fxg5 hxg5 57.♖e3 is equivalent.

56...♖b1 57.♖e2 g4 58.♖e5 h5
59.♖g2 f6 60.♖d3 ♖f7 61.♖f2

This is the final preparation for h2-h3, breaking up Black's pawn position.

61...♖e7 62.h3 f5 63.hxg4 fxg4
64.♖d3

The knight returns to the center for the final assault.

64...♖f7 65.♗h2 ♚a1 66.♘e5+ ♖f8 67.♗d2 1-0

Game 138

John Donaldson

Frank Thornally

San Francisco (10) 2002

Open Catalan [E05]

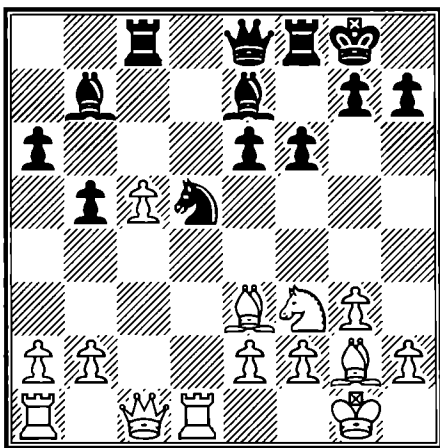
1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 e6 3.g3 d5 4.♙g2 ♙e7 5.d4 0-0 6.0-0 dxc4 7.♖c2 a6 8.♗xc4 b5 9.♗c2 ♙b7 10.♙f4 ♘c6 11.♞d1 ♘b4 12.♗c1 ♞c8 13.♘c3 ♘bd5 14.♘xd5 ♘xd5 15.♙g5 f6?!

Black has to be careful here. The correct sequence is 16...c5 17.dxc5 ♖e8.

16.♙e3 c5?!

16...♖e8 was more prudent.

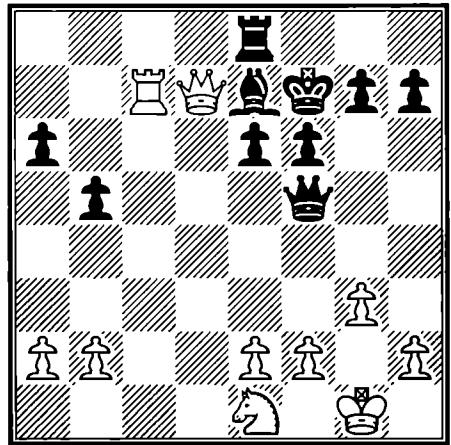
17.dxc5 ♖e8



18.♘e1! ♘xe3 19.♙xb7 ♘xd1 20.♙xc8 ♗xc8 21.♗xd1 ♗xc5 22.♞c1 ♗f5 23.♗d7

White's advantage is indisputable, as the weak points on e6 and a6 stand out.

23...♗f7 24.♞c7 ♞e8



25.♘d3

Black is all tied up, so the knight prepares to head to d8.

25...♖e4 26.e3 g5 27.♘c5 ♖e5 28.♘b7 ♗f8 29.♘d8 ♗xb2 30.♘xe6+ ♗f7 31.♗d5 ♗g6 32.♗d3+ f5 33.♘d4 ♗h5 34.♗xf5 1-0

Game 139

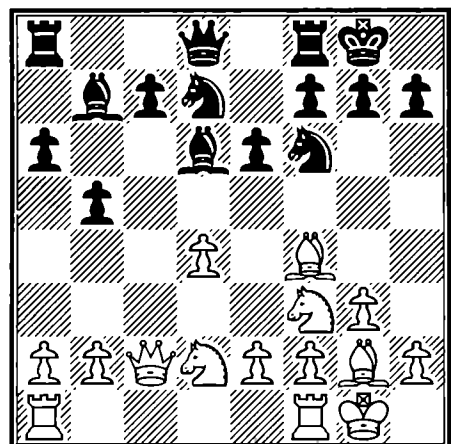
Carsten Hansen –

Soeren Petersen

Danish Team ch corr 1990

Open Catalan [E05]

1.c4 ♘f6 2.d4 e6 3.g3 d5 4.♙g2 dxc4 5.♘f3 ♙e7 6.00 00 7.♗c2 a6 8.♗xc4 b5 9.♗c2 ♙b7 10.♙f4 ♙d6 11.♘bd2 ♘bd7



A main alternative is 11...♙xf4 12.gxf4 ♖bd7 (or 12...♖d6 13.e3 ♖bd7 14.♖b3 ♙e4 15.♖c3 ♗ac8 16.♗fc1 ♖d5 17.♖d2 c5 18.dxc5 ♖xc5 19.♖xc5 ♗xc5 20.♖d4 ♗xc1+ 21.♗xc1 ♖b4 22.a3 ♖xd4 23.♖xd4 ♙xg2 24.♖xg2 ♗a8 25.♗c6 Stangl-Stern, Bundesliga 1991) 13.♗fc1 ♗c8 14.♖b3 ♙e4 15.♖c3 ♖d5 16.♖d2 ♙xf3 17.♙xf3 ♖h4 18.e3 f5 19.♖h1 ♗f6 20.♗g1 ♗h6 21.♗g2 ♖h8 22.♗c1 Stangl-Hedke, Dortmund 1993.

12. ♙g5 ♗c8

The game Hübner-Eng, Bundesliga 1986 saw 12...c5 13.♙xf6 ♖xf6 (or 13...gxf6 14.♖g5 f×g5 15.♙xb7 ♗b8 16.dxc5 ♖xc5 17.♙g2± Dunnington) 14.♖e5 ♙xg2 15.♖xd7 ♖d8 16.♖xf8 ♙xf1 17.♖xh7+ ♖xf8 18.♗xf1 cxd4 19.♖h8+ ♖e7 20.♖xg7 and White is winning.

13. ♖b3 h6

13...c5 14.♙xf6 gxf6 15.♖g5 f×g5 16.♙xb7± or 13...♙e4 14.♖xe4 ♖xe4 15.♙xd8 ♗fxd8 16.♖a5 c5 17.♖b7 ♗f8 18.♖g5! and White is winning.

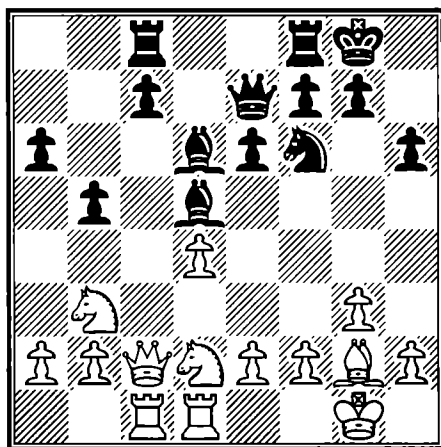
14. ♙xf6 ♖xf6 15. ♗ac1 ♙d5 16. ♗fd1

This forces Black to move his queen, since the pin could have dire consequences.

16... ♖e7 17. ♖fd2!

I didn't want to allow Black the opportunity to play 17...♙xb3, followed by 18...c5. The text move allows Black another pawn break in the center, but the weakness of the queenside remains

intact, which is all I was concerned about.



17... ♙xg2 18. ♖xg2 e5 19. dxe5 ♖xe5 20. ♖f3 ♖e4

Or 20...♖e7 21.♖bd4 with a better game for White.

21. ♖xe4 ♖xe4 22. ♖fd4 c5?

Very tempting, but it loses material by force.

23. ♖f5 c4?!

This is bad, but the alternatives are worse. After the game, my opponent revealed that he thought he had equalized at this point, only to be brutally awakened by my next move. Both 23...♙e5 24.♖e7+ and 23...♗fd8 24.♖xd6 ♖xd6 25.♖xc5 lose material for Black.

24. ♖d2! 1-0

Game 140

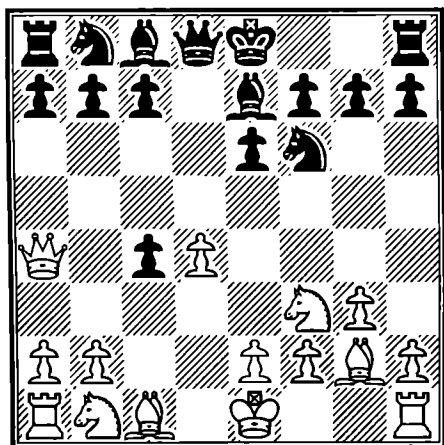
*John Donaldson –
Harry Akopian*

Los Angeles 2000
Open Catalan [E02]

1.c4 ♖f6 2.g3 e6 3.♙g2 d5 4.d4 dxc4 5.♖f3 ♙e7?! chessstouring.com

This is an inaccurate move order.

6. ♖a4+!



6... ♖bd7

6... ♖d7 7. ♖xc4 ♖c6 8. ♖c3 00 9.00 ♖bd7 (9...a6 10. ♖d3 b5 11. ♖g5 ♖bd7 12.a3 ♖b7 13.b4 h6 14. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 15. ♖e5 ♖xg2 16. ♖xg2 ♖d6 17. ♖c6 ♖e8 18. ♖f3 e5 19. dxe5 ♖xe5 20. ♖ac1 ♖e6 21. ♖fd1 ♖fe8 22. ♖d5 ♖xd5 23. ♖xd5± Gleizerov-Akhmadeev, Kstovo 1997.) 10. ♖e1 ♖e4 11. ♖f4 ♖d6 12. ♖xd6 ♖xd6 13. ♖b3 ♖xf3 14. ♖xf3 is better for White, as in Psakhis-Stefansson, NY Open 1997.

7. ♖xc4 a6 8. ♖c2! ♖b8

8...b5? 9. ♖e5; 8...0-0 9.0-0 c5 10. ♖c3 cxd4 11. ♖xd4 ♖b6 12. ♖d1 ♖c7 13. ♖g5 ♖d7 (13...h6? 14. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 15. ♖e4 ♖xc2 16. ♖xf6+ gxf6 17. ♖xc2± Donaldson-Ziatdinov, Reno 1998.) 14. ♖ac1 ♖ac8 15. ♖b3±.

9.0-0 b5 10. ♖f4 ♖d5 11. ♖c3 ♖xf4 12.gxf4

Now we have a mainline Catalan, but with ...♖b8 instead of ...0-0.

12...c5

12...0-0 13. ♖fd1 ♖b7 was more prudent. Playing ...c5 only opens the game for White's pieces.

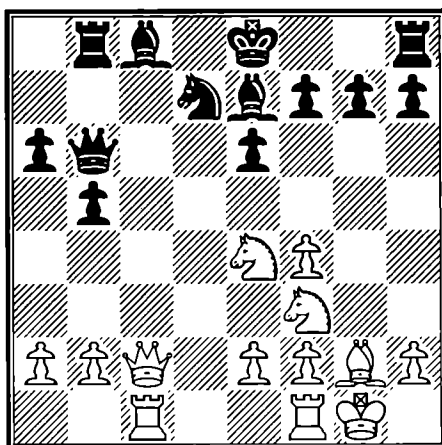
13.dxc5 ♖xc5

13... ♖xc5 14. ♖e5 ♖b7 15. b4 ♖d7 16. ♖fd1+- IM Jack Peters in the *Los Angeles Times*.

14. ♖e4 ♖b6?

14... ♖e7 15. ♖fd1 ♖b6 16. ♖ac1 0-0 17. ♖c7+-.

15. ♖ac1 ♖e7



16. ♖xc8+! ♖xc8 17. ♖xc8+ ♖d8 18. ♖d1 f6

18... ♖e7 19. ♖d4 ♖b8 20. ♖xb8; 18...f5 19. ♖d6+ ♖e7 20. ♖d4! (Peters).

19. ♖d4 f5

19...0-0 20. ♖c6 ♖c7 21. ♖xd7! ♖xc8 22. ♖e7+ ♖f8 23. ♖xc8+-.

20. ♖c6! ♖xc6

20... ♖a7 21. ♖xe6+ ♖f8 22. ♖c6 ♖c7 23. ♖d6 ♖f6 24. ♖e8 ♖xe8 25. ♖xd8 ♖f7 26. ♖d5+- (Peters). stouring.com

21. ♖×c6 f×e4 22. ♖d6 ♖f6
23. ♖×e6+ ♖f7 24. ♖d6 ♖c5

24... ♖b6 25. ♖e5+ ♖×e5 26. f×e5 ♖c4
27. ♖×a6+-.

25. b4 ♖e6 26. ♖d7+ 1-0

Game 141

Boris Gulko –

Anthony Saidy

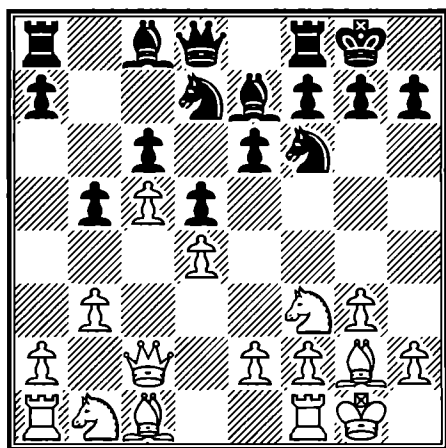
Los Angeles (3) 1987

Closed Catalan [E08]

1. d4 ♖f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♖f3 d5 4. g3
♖e7 5. ♖g2 0-0 6. ♖c2 ♖bd7

6... c6 7. 0-0 b5 8. c5 a5 9. ♖bd2 ♖bd7
10. e4 ♖×e4 11. ♖×e4 d×e4 12. ♖×e4
♖a6 13. ♖e1 ♖e8 14. h4 ♖f6 15. ♖c2
♖d5 16. a4 b4 17. ♖e5 ♖c7 18. ♖e4 g6
19. h5 ♖f6 20. h×g6 h×g6 21. ♖×g6 f×g6
22. ♖×g6+ ♖f8 23. ♖e4 ♖e7
24. ♖g5+- Gulko-Campora, Biel 1987.

7. 0-0 c6 8. b3 b5 9. c5



Allowing Black to capture on c4 or trade on b5 rarely gives any advantage in this sort of position. Grabbing space with c5 is the time-tested way to play.

9... a5 10. ♖c3 ♖a6 11. ♖e1 ♖c8
12. e4 ♖×e4 13. ♖×e4 d×e4

14. ♖×e4 ♖f6 15. ♖e2 ♖d5
16. ♖d2 ♖a8

The following line is far from forced, but it is rather entertaining: 16... ♖f6 17. ♖e5 ♖c7 18. ♖e4 ♖fd8 19. ♖d3 h6 20. ♖h7+ ♖f8 21. ♖g4 ♖×d4 22. ♖×d4 ♖f6 23. ♖b2 ♖×h7 24. ♖×h6 f6 25. ♖×f6 g×h6 26. ♖×e6 ♖g7 27. ♖×h7+ ♖×h7 28. ♖f6+ ♖g8 29. ♖e7 ♖f8 30. ♖×h7 ♖×f6 31. ♖a7 ♖b7 32. ♖×b7 ♖d8 33. ♖e1 and White is winning.

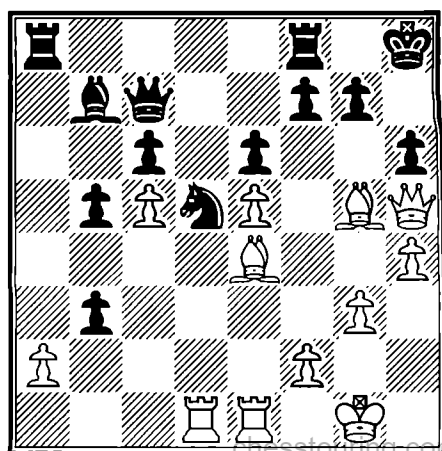
17. ♖e5 ♖b7 18. h4 ♖f6 19. ♖g4
♖×e5

Or 19... ♖c7 20. h5 ♖b4 21. ♖e4 ♖ad8
22. h6 g6 23. ♖f4±.

20. d×e5 ♖h8 21. ♖g5 ♖c7
22. ♖ad1 h6 23. ♖e4 a4

Now the win is relatively simple. An interesting alternative is 23... ♖c3, but Black still has massive problems: 24. ♖f6! g×f6 25. ♖h5! f5 26. ♖×h6+ ♖g8 27. ♖×f5! e×f5 28. ♖g5+ ♖h8 29. ♖f6+ ♖g8 30. ♖d6! ♖e4 31. ♖×e4 ♖×d6 32. c×d6 f×e4 33. h5 ♖h7 34. h6 ♖g8 35. ♖×f7+ ♖×h6 36. ♖×b7 and White's queen and two passed pawns decide.

24. ♖h5 a×b3



25. ♖×d5 c×d5 26. ♙f6 ♖g8
27. ♗g4 g6 28. ♙×g6 1-0

Game 142
*John Donaldson –
Ricardo DeGuzman*
Berkeley 2002
Closed Catalan [E08]

♙×d3 15. exd3 ♖e8 16. a3 ♖c7 17. axb4
axb4 18. ♙d2 ♖b5 19. ♙×b4 ♙f6
20. ♙c3 ♖×c3 21. ♗×c3 ♗c7 22. b4 g6
23. ♖db1 ♖×a1 24. ♖×a1 ♖b8 25. ♖a4
1-0, Razuvaev-Lputian, Vilnius 1980.

13. a3 b×a3 14. ♖c3 ♙b7

This is not a good endorsement for Black's play.

15. ♖×a3 ♖e8 16. b4 ♖c7 17. ♙f4
g5 18. ♙×c7 ♗×c7 19. e4 d×e4
20. ♖×e4 h6 21. h4 g4

21...g×h4 22. ♖×h4 a5? 23. ♗d2 axb4
24. ♖×a8 ♖×a8 25. ♗×h6 b3 26. ♖g6!
f×g6 27. ♗×g6+ ♖h8 28. ♗h6+ ♖g8
29. ♗×e6+- is one example of the
power in White's position.

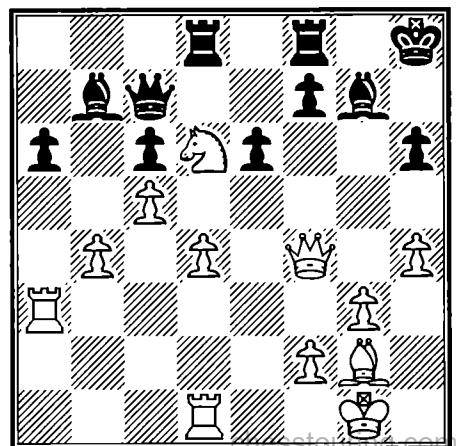
22. ♖e5 ♗g7

22...f5 23. ♖g6 f×e4 24. ♗×e4 ♖f7
25. ♗×g4+-.

23. ♖c4 ♖f6? 24. ♖×f6 ♙×f6
25. ♗e4 a6

25...h5 26. b5 c×b5 27. ♗×b7 ♗×b7
28. ♙×b7 b×c4 29. ♙×a8 ♖×a8 30. ♖c3
a5 31. ♖×c4 a4 32. c6 a3 33. c7 ♖c8
34. ♖b1+-.

26. ♗×g4+ ♖h8 27. ♖d6 ♖ad8
28. ♗f4 ♙g7



1. ♖f3 ♖f6 2. c4 e6 3. g3 d5 4. d4
♙e7 5. ♙g2 00 6. 00 ♖bd7 7. ♗c2
c6 8. b3 b6 9. ♖d1 ♙b7 10. ♖c3
b5!?

Spassky's gambit.

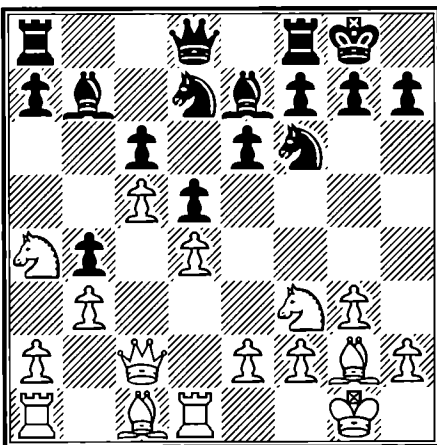
11. c5

Black's idea is that after 11. c×b5 c×b5
12. ♖×b5 ♗a5 13. a4 ♖fc8 14. ♗a2 ♙a6
15. ♙d2 ♗b6, he has plenty of activity
for the pawn.

11...b4

11...a5 12. ♖b1 ♖e8 13. ♖bd2 e5
14. d×e5 ♖g4 15. h3 ♖g×e5 16. ♖×e5
♖×e5 17. ♙b2 ♖d7 18. ♙d4 1-0,
Antunes-Garcia Trobat, Benasque 1996.

12. ♖a4



12...♙a6

On 12...a5, the plan to bring the knight
to d3 is strong: 13. ♖b2 ♙a6 14. ♖d3

29.b5! a×b5

29...e5 30.dxe5 a×b5 31.♖×f7 ♜×f7
32.♘×f7+ ♖×f7 33.♞×d8+ ♙f8 34.♞f3
is decisive.

30.♞a7 ♞b8

30...♞×d6 31.♖×d6 ♖×d6 32.c×d6
♞b8 33.d7 ♙f6 34.♞c1+-.

31.♘×b7 e5

31...♞fc8 32.♖×c7 ♞×c7 33.♙×c6
♞×c6 34.♘a5 ♞cc8 35.♞×f7+-.

32.♖f5 ♞fe8 33.♙e4 ♔g8
34.d×e5 ♞×e5 35.♞d7 ♞×f5
36.♞×c7 ♞e5 37.♙×c6 b4 38.♙a4
♞e1+ 39.♔g2 ♞a1 40.♘d6 b3
41.♙×b3 ♞×b3 42.♞c8+ 1-0

Game 143
Zoltan Ribli –
Adolf Herzog
Lucerne ol (2) 1982
Closed Catalan [E08]

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4.♙g2
♙e7 5.0-0 0-0 6.d4 ♘bd7

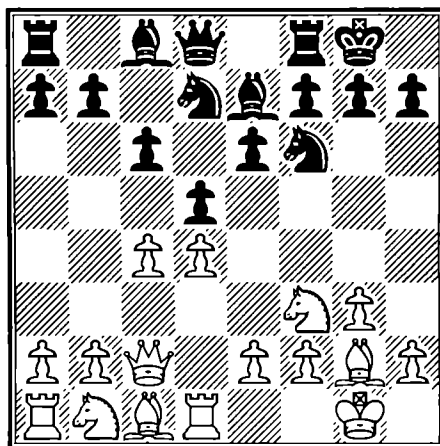
Black can also develop his knight to a6.
One recent try, albeit where White deferred playing b2-b3, was Piket-Morozevich, Netherlands 1996: 6...c6 7.♖c2 b6 8.♞d1 ♙b7 9.♘c3 ♘a6 10.a3 ♖c8 11.e4 ♘×e4 12.♘×e4 d×e4 13.♖×e4 c5 14.d5 ♞e8 15.♖c2 e×d5 16.c×d5 ♖d8 17.d6! ♙×f3 18.♙×f3 ♙f6 19.♙×a8 ♖×a8 20.♖a4 ♙d4 21.d7 ♞e2 22.♖×a6 ♙×f2+ 23.♔f1 1-0.

7.♖c2

White has some choice as to where to put his pieces in the Closed Catalan.

The scheme Ribli uses is the best. First the queen goes to c2, where it protects the c-pawn and eyes e4.

7...c6 8.♞d1



This move might seem odd, but it has its virtues. Later Black will try to play ...c5 and the rook will be very well-placed to discourage this break and to guard the d-pawn.

8...b6 9.b3

This can be the prelude to a fianchetto or simply a way to prepare ♘b1-c3 without having to gambit the c-pawn.

9...♙b7 10.♘c3

The knight is much better placed here than on d2. Sometimes it can be attacked by ...b7-b5-b4, but that is a small price to pay for the increased pressure on d5.

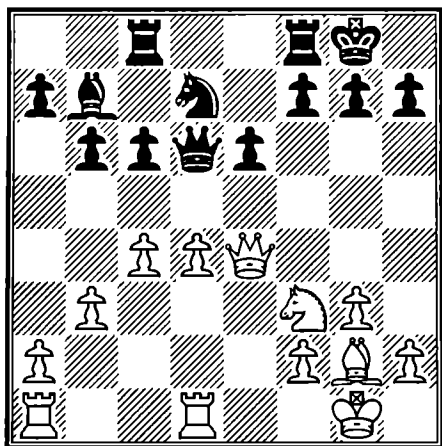
10...♞c8 11.e4

Just so! Now Black has to consider captures on d5 as well as e4-e5.

11...d×e4 12.♘×e4 ♘×e4 13.♖×e4
♖c7

13... ♖f6 14. ♖e1 ♖c7 15. ♗f4 ♗d6
16. ♗×d6 ♖×d6 17. b4 ♖e7 18. ♘e5 c5
19. ♗×b7 ♖×b7 20. d×c5 b×c5 21. b5±.

14. ♗f4 ♗d6 15. ♗×d6 ♖×d6



16. c5!

Remember this maneuver! Once the dark-squared bishops have been exchanged, White would love to play c4-c5. Why? Because the move smother's Black's bishop on b7 (...c5 is now out of the question) and allows White the chance to put a knight on d6. Granted, the move gives the d5-square to Black's knight, but that is often illusory, as that piece is needed on d7 or f8 to guard the king.

16... ♖e7

16... b×c5?! 17. d×c5 ♘×c5? 18. ♖b4 ♖e7
19. ♗ac1+-.

17. b4 ♗fd8 18. ♖e1

This is the characteristic square for the queen in this variation. Here it provides the b-pawn added protection, while restraining breakout attempts with ...e6-e5. 18. ♖c2 ♘f6 19. ♘e5 ♘d5 20. a3 b5 21. ♗e4 g6 22. h4± Portisch-Radulov, Moscow 1977.

18... ♗a6

This move logically attempts to activate the bishop, but, as we will soon see, b5 is not a very stable square.

19. ♗ac1 ♗b5 20. h3 h6 21. ♗d2 ♖f8

21... ♘f6 22. ♘e5 ♘d5 looks like a more solid approach.

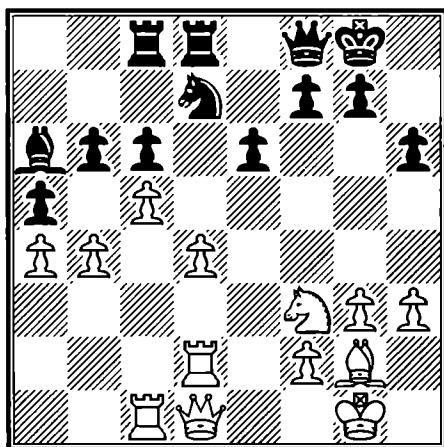
22. ♖d1!

Showing flexibility of thought, Ribli reverses directions and prepares a4, followed by b5.

22... a5?!

22... ♖e7 23. a4 ♗a6 24. ♖c2 ♗b7±.

23. a4 ♗a6



24. b5! ♗b7

24... c×b5? 25. c6 ♘f6 26. ♗f1 gives White a protected passed pawn on c6.

25. ♘e5 ♘×e5 26. d×e5 b×c5
27. ♗d6!?

27. ♗d7!? c4 28. b×c6 ♗a6 29. ♖d2 is likely better and an easier way to win.

27...♙a8 28.b6!

Positional jujitsu. Ribli is directing all his energies into making the black bishop a basket case. The rest is a rout.

28...♗x d6

28...♗b8 29.♗x d8 ♗x d8 30.♖e1 ♗b8 31.♖x a5 should also win for White.

29.♖x d6 ♖x d6 30.e x d6 ♗b8 31.♗x c5 ♗x b6 32.♗x a5

32.d7 ♗b8 33.♙x c6+- is even simpler.

32...♗b8 33.♗a7 g5 34.a5 ♖g7 35.a6 ♖f6 36.d7 ♖e7 37.d8=♖+ ♖x d8 38.♗x f7 ♖e8 39.♗h7 ♗d8 40.a7 ♖f8 41.♗c7 1-0

Game 144
*Csaba Horvath –
 Laszlo Krizsany*
 Paks 1996
 Closed Catalan [E08]

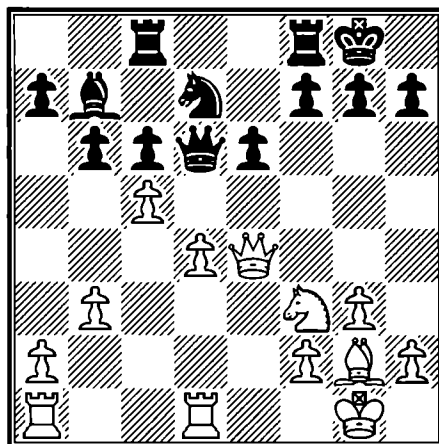
1.♟f3 d5 2.c4 e6 3.g3 ♟f6 4.♙g2 ♙e7 5.d4 0-0 6.0-0 ♟bd7 7.♖c2 c6 8.b3 b6 9.♗d1 ♙b7 10.♟c3 ♗c8 11.e4 d x e4 12.♟x e4 ♟x e4 13.♖x e4 ♖c7

13...♟f6 14.♖c2 ♖c7 15.♙f4 ♙d6 16.♙e5!? ♟d7 17.♟g5 g6 18.♙x d6 ♖x d6 19.c5 ♖e7 20.♟e4 ♙a8 21.b4 ♟f6 22.♟d6± Hulak-Vranesic, Toronto 1989.

14.♙f4 ♙d6 15.♙x d6 ♖x d6 16.c5!

This is a thematic move in the Closed Catalan. White cedes d5, but gets much more in return: the freeing ...c5 is no

longer possible, the d6-square beckons for White's knight (♟f3-g5-e4-d6) and he has more space and chances of expanding on the queenside.



16...♖c7

a) 16...b x c5?! 17.d x c5 ♟x c5? 18.♖b4 ♖e7 19.♗ac1+-.

b) 16...♖e7 17.♗ac1 ♟f6 18.♖h4 ♗fd8 19.c x b6 a x b6 20.♟e5 ♟d5 21.♖x e7 ♟x e7 22.f4 ♟d5 23.♗d2 ♖f8 24.♙e4±.

17.♗ac1

17.b4 ♟f6 18.♖e1 ♟d5 19.♟e5 ♗fd8 20.♟c4 ♙a6 21.♟d6 ♗x d6 22.c x d6 ♖x d6 23.a3 ♙c4 24.♖e5± Stein-Liberzon, Riga 1970.

17...♗fd8 18.♖e1!

As we saw in Game 143, this is a very effective square for the queen. On e1 it stays out of trouble and helps to prepare an advance on the queenside.

18...♙a6

18...♟f6 19.♟g5 ♖d7 20.♖e5 ♖e7 21.♟e4 ♟x e4 22.♙x e4±.

19.a4

19. ♖e5 ♗xe5 20. dxe5 ♝xd1 21. ♜xd1
 ♜xe5 22. cxb6 axb6 23. ♝xc6 ♞b8
 24. ♝xc8+ ♞xc8 25. a4 ♞c7 26. h4±.

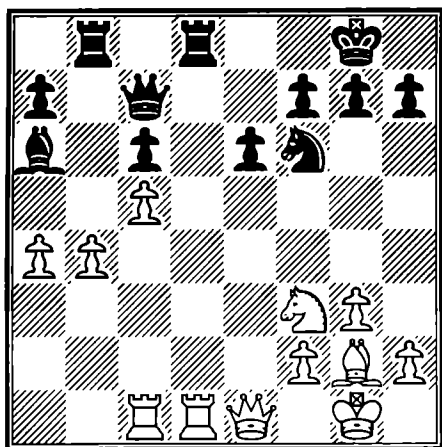
19... ♝b8

19... ♗f6 20. ♖e5 ♗d5 21. cxb6 ♞xb6
 22. ♝c5 h6 23. ♝dc1 ♗b7 24. ♗e4 ♗f6
 25. ♗xc6 ♝b8 26. ♝b5 ♞a6 27. ♞f1
 ♗xc6 28. ♗xc6+-.

20. b4 bxc5

20... b5 21. ♖e5 ♗xe5 22. ♜xe5 ♞d7
 23. a5±.

21. dxc5 ♗f6



Or 21... ♗b7 22. ♝d6 ♗f6 23. ♞e5 with a clearly better game for White.

22. ♞e5! ♝xd1+?!

A safer alternative is 22... ♝dc8
 23. ♞xc7 ♝xc7 24. ♝d6 ♗b7 25. ♗d4
 ♗e8 26. ♗xc6 ♗xc6 27. ♝xc6 ♝xb4
 28. ♝xc7 ♗xc7 29. ♝d1±.

23. ♝xd1 ♞c8 24. ♗d4 ♝xb4

Or 24... ♗b7 25. ♗xc6 and it is soon game over.

**25. ♗xc6 ♝b7 26. ♞d6 ♞f8 27. ♗e5
 ♞xd6 28. cxd6 ♝b8 29. ♗c6 1-0**

Game 145

*Jan Adamski –
 Steen Petersen*

Copenhagen (4) 1995
 Closed Catalan [E08]

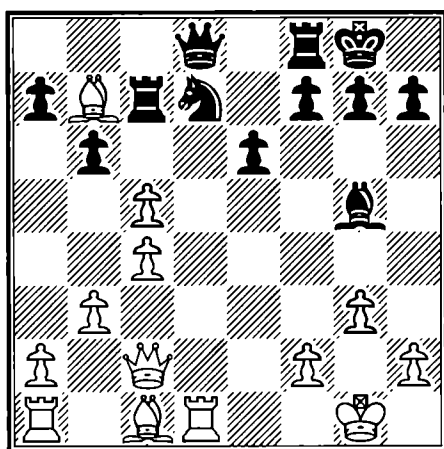
**1. ♗f3 d5 2. c4 e6 3. g3 ♗f6 4. ♗g2
 ♗e7 5. d4 0-0 6. ♞c2 c6 7. 0-0 b6
 8. ♝d1 ♗b7 9. ♗c3 ♗bd7 10. b3
 ♝c8**

10... c5?! 11. cxd5 exd5 12. dxc5 ♗xc5
 13. ♗b2 ♝e8?! (13... ♝c8) 14. ♝ac1
 ♗f8?! (14... ♝c8) 15. ♗g5! g6 16. ♗xd5!
 ♗xd5 17. ♞c3! ♗g7 18. ♗xd5 ♞e7
 19. ♗xf7+ ♞h8 20. ♗xe8 ♝xe8 21. ♞c4
 Donaldson-Bhat, San Francisco 1997.

11. e4 dxe4 12. ♗xe4 c5

Or 12... ♗xe4 13. ♞xe4 ♞c7 14. ♗f4
 ♗f6 15. ♞c2 ♗d6 16. ♗xd6 ♞xd6
 17. ♗e5 with a better game for White.

**13. ♗xf6+ ♗xf6 14. ♗g5 ♗xg5
 15. ♗xb7 ♝c7 16. dxc5**



White has an interesting alternative in
 16. ♗xg5!?, e.g. 16... ♞xg5 17. ♗g2 ♗f6
 and now: 18. a4 or 18. ♞d2 ♞xd2
 19. ♝xd2 ♝d7 20. ♝ad1 cxd4 21. ♝xd4
 ♝xd4 22. ♝xd4, with an edge for White
 in both cases.

16... ♗f6

16...♙xc1 17.♞axc1 ♞xb7 18.c6 ♞c7
19.♞xd7 ♞xd7 20.cxd7 ♞xd7 21.♞d1
♞e7 22.♞d3 g6 23.♞d6 ♞e8 24.♞d7
♞f8 25.♞a4 a5 26.♞d7 ♞c5 27.♞b5±
Yusupov-Beitar, Thessaloniki ol 1988.

**17.♞b1 ♞xb7 18.c6 ♞c7 19.cxd7
♞xd7 20.♙a3**

20.♙e3!? is also worth consideration,
targeting the black queenside pawns,
now fixed on dark squares.

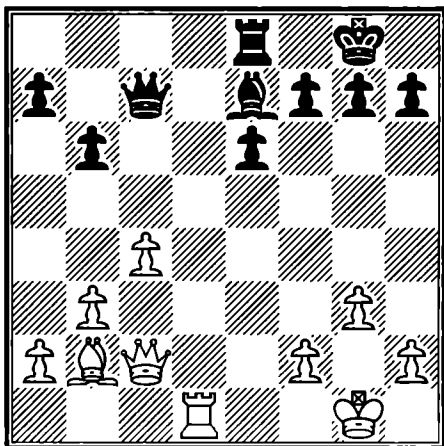
**20...♞e8 21.♞xd7 ♞xd7 22.♞d1
♞c7**

Two interesting alternatives can be
found in 22...♙d4!? 23.♙b2 e5 or
22...♞c6 in both cases with an accept-
able game for Black.

23.♙b2 ♙e7 24.♞c3 ♙f6

Black can also try the defensive setup:
24...f6 25.♞f3 ♞d8 26.♞xd8+ ♞xd8
27.♙c3 e5 28.♞b7 a5 and it is unlikely
that White will be able to break through.

25.♞c2 ♙e7?!



Black may well do better with
25...♙xb2 26.♞xb2 ♞d8 27.♞xd8+
♞xd8 28.♞e5 h6 29.c5 bxc5 30.♞xc5
a5 31.♞g2 and White's advantage is
rather insignificant.

**26.♞e4 ♞d8 27.♞xd8+ ♙xd8
28.b4 ♞d7 29.b5**

Another approach is 29.c5 bxc5
30.bxc5 f6 31.c6 ♞d1+ 32.♞g2 ♞f7
33.♞d4 ♞xd4 34.♙xd4 a6 35.f4 with
a clear advantage for White, but
whether he can win is another issue.

**29...f6 30.♙a3 ♙e7 31.♙xe7
♞xe7 32.a4 f5?!**

This seems like a perfectly reasonable
move, but 32...e5 is better, defending
on the dark squares.

**33.♞c6 ♞f7 34.c5 bxc5 35.a5
♞d8?**

This is the decisive error. Black can stay
in the game by 35...c4! 36.♞xc4 ♞d8!
(not 36...♞d6? 37.♞b3 g5 38.b6 axb6
39.axb6 ♞b8 40.b7 g4 41.h4! and
White wins) 37.b6! (after 37.♞c3
♞d1+ 38.♞g2 ♞d5+ 39.f3 ♞xb5
40.♞c7+ ♞f6 41.♞xa7 ♞d5, White
only has a slight edge) 37...axb6 38.a6
♞d7 39.♞c3±.

**36.b6 axb6 37.a6 e5 38.a7 e4
39.♞a4 ♞a8 40.♞d7+ ♞g8
41.♞e6+ ♞f8 42.♞xf5+ ♞e7
43.♞e5+ ♞d7 44.♞b8 ♞d5
45.♞f8 e3 46.a8=♞ exf2+
47.♞xf2 1-0**

Game 146

Garry Kasparov –

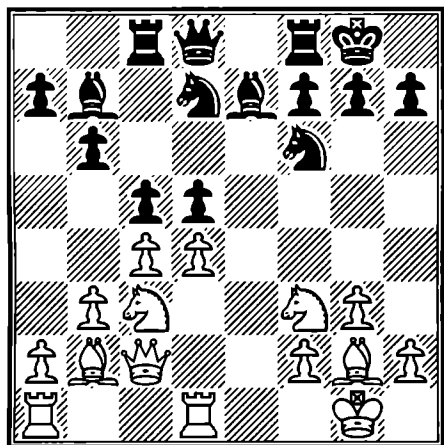
Gata Kamsky

New York (1) 1989

Closed Catalan [E08]

**1.c4 e6 2.g3 d5 3.♙g2 ♘f6 4.d4
♙e7 5.♘f3 c6 6.♞c2 0-0 7.0-0
♘bd7 8.b3 b6 9.♞d1 ♙b7 10.♘c3**

**♞c8 11.e4 c5 12.exd5 exd5
13.♙b2**



13...dxc4

13...♝c7 14.♗x d5 ♗x d5 15.cxd5
♙xd5 16.dxc5 ♙xf3 17.♙xf3+ ♗xc5
18.♞f5! ♞fd8?? 19.♙e5! 1-0, L.Stein-
Lengyel, Moscow 1971.

14.d5 ♗e8

14...cxb3 15.axb3 ♗e8 (15...♞e8
16.♞xa7 ♙a8 17.♗b5 ♙xd5
18.♗g5+-) 16.♞xa7 ♗d6 17.♗e4 ♞c7
18.♗fg5 ♙xg5 19.♗xd6 ♙a8 20.♞xc7
♝xc7 21.♗b5 ♝b8 22.♙e4 g6 23.f4
♙f6 24.♙g2±.

15.♗b5 a6

15...cxb3 16.axb3 a5 17.♗a7 ♙f6
18.♗xc8 ♝xc8 19.♗d2 ♙xb2 20.♝xb2
♗d6 21.♗c4 ♝c7 22.♞e1±.

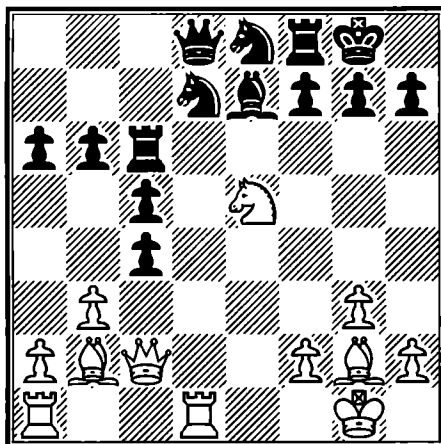
16.♗a7 ♞c7?

Now Black is lost. The alternatives also
favor White, but Black would still be
in the game:

a) 16...♙f6 17.♗xc8 cxb3 18.axb3
♝xc8 19.d6 ♙xb2 20.♝xb2 ♗ef6
21.♗h4±.

b) 16...cxb3 17.axb3 ♗d6 18.♗xc8
♝xc8 19.h4 ♝d8 20.♗e5 ♗xe5
21.♙xe5±.

17.♗c6 ♙xc6 18.dxc6 ♞xc6
19.♗e5



White has a much quicker win with
19.♞xd7! ♝xd7 20.♗e5 cxb3 (or
20...♝c7 21.♗xc6 cxb3 22.axb3 and
White is piece up) 21.axb3 ♝e6
22.♗xc6 a5 23.♙d5 ♝d6 24.♙e5 ♝d7
25.♞f5! and the game is effectively
over.

**19...♞d6 20.♗c6 ♞xc6 21.♙xc6
♗d6 22.bxc4 ♗f6**

Or 22...♝c7 23.♝e2 ♗f6 24.♙f3+-.

23.♙e5 ♝c7 24.♙g2 ♞d8 25.♞d3

25.♞ab1!? ♗g4 26.♙f4 g5 27.♙xd6
♞xd6 28.♞xd6 ♝xd6 29.♞f5 h5
30.♙e4+-.

25...♗g4

25...b5 26.♞ad1 ♝b6 27.cxb5 axb5
28.a4 c4 29.♞3d2+-.

**26.♙f4 ♙f6 27.♞ad1 ♙d4
28.♞xd4 cxd4 29.♞xd4 ♝e7**

The Catalan

Or 29...d6 30.a4 a5 31.c3 d8
32.c5 f6 33.h4 and Black is completely tied up.

30.h3 e5 31.c5 bxc5 32.cxc5 f6
33.c3 h5 34.cxa6 d7
35.cxd8+ dxd8 36.a4 g6

37.e3 h4 38.gxh4 c7 39.d5+
h8 40.c4 d7 41.b5 e7
42.h5 h4 43.a5 f5 44.c5
e8 45.a6 xe3 46.cxe3 a4
47.e4 a1+ 48.g2 xa6
49.e8+ h7 50.g8+ h8
51.f7+ 1-0

Chapter Twelve

The Queen's Indian

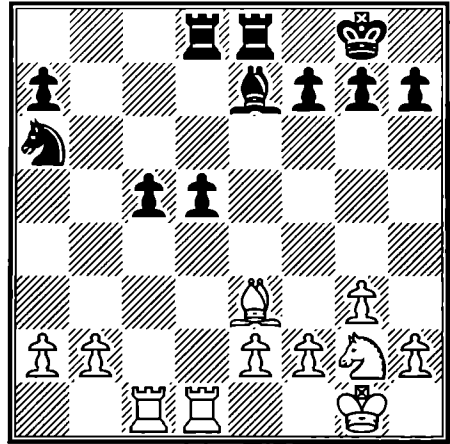
The Queen's Indian setup is similar to the King's Indian and Queen's Gambit Declined in that it is a structure which Black can play against almost everything except 1.e4. This may be an *Indian Defense*, but it definitely belongs to a different tribe, as the QID is solid and a bit tame in comparison with its wilder brethren. Nevertheless, it is a very popular opening at all levels of play.

Our adopted setup against it, with 8.♖xe4 ♗xe4 9.♗h4, is not very fashionable, but it provides Black with problems to solve, as Swedish GM Ulf Andersson has shown on more than one occasion. In several games White plays 9.♗e1, which often leads to the same position after 9...♗xg2 10.♗xg2, but upon 9.♗e1, Black has the added option of 9...d5.

Several of the illustrative games are very technical, but by studying the key ideas you should become familiar with the standard plans. The slight advantage you possess as white, coupled with being on more familiar ground than your opponent, can be an effective point winner.

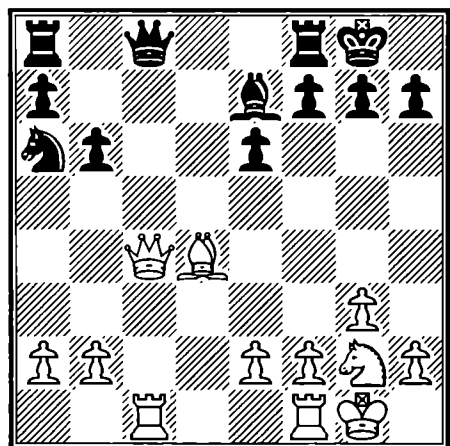
There are two important types of positions to understand in this chapter.

In the first Black has a pair of hanging pawns on c5 and d5 that often require constant protection:



This position is from Andersson-Agdestein, though there are several similar examples in this chapter, including games by Krogius and Petrosian. It may not look dangerous for Black, but as the Russian saying goes: “White is playing for two results (win or draw).”

The other position I will direct your attention to is from Vladimirov-Harikrishna, and this looks even more sterile than the first:



The pawns are symmetrically distributed and nothing seems to be going on, but it is the small nuances that count in this position. White has a slight space

advantage, his pieces are better placed (look at the knight on a6), he can more easily double his rooks and he can start a pawn offensive on the queenside. Black may be able to defend, but this type of position is decidedly unpleasant.

Game 147

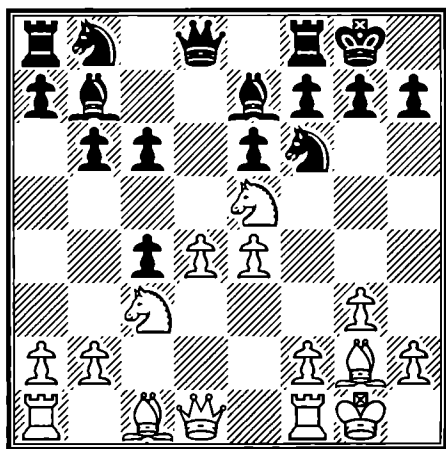
Lev Polugaevsky –

Yaacov Bleiman

Skara (6) 1980

Closed Catalan [E06]

1.c4 e6 2.g3 d5 3.♘g2 ♘f6 4.d4
♙e7 5.♗f3 0-0 6.0-0 b6 7.♗c3
♙b7 8.♗e5 c6 9.e4 dxc4



This is practically forced, but the natural-looking 9...♗bd7? has been played on more than one occasion, when White has 10.♗xc6!, and after 10...♙xc6 11.exd5 exd5 12.cxd5 ♙b7 13.d6 ♙xg2 14.dxe7 ♙xe7 15.♙xg2, White is a pawn up for nothing.

10.♗xc4 ♙a6 11.b3 ♗bd7
12.♙b2 ♙c8?!

This is entirely too passive and indicative of what is to come. An interesting alternative is 12...b5!? 13.♗e3 ♙b6 14.♙c2 ♙ac8, although White is still for choice upon 15.♙fd1.

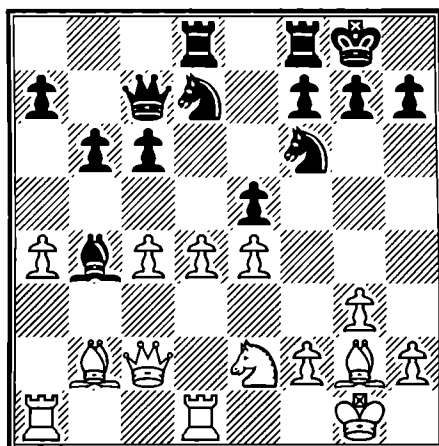
13.a4 ♙b4?!

Another waste of precious time; 13...♙c7!?, followed by 14...♙fd8, makes more sense.

14.♙c2 ♙c7 15.♙fd1 ♙xc4
16.bxc4 e5 17.♗e2!

White is not afraid of ...exd4, because it opens the position for his bishops and the knight can head to f5 to support an assault against Black's king.

17...♙cd8



18.f4 exd4 19.♗xd4 ♙c5
20.♙h1!

White plays carefully, removing the king from the pin. It would be a mistake to rush the situation and play 20.e5, as Black has 20...♗xe5! 21.fxe5 ♙xe5, when 22.♙c3 ♙d6 23.♙d3 ♗e4 24.♙xe4 ♙xe4 25.♙ad1 ♙fd8 leaves White tied up in his effort to guard the pinned knight on d4.

20...♙fe8 21.♙f3 ♗f8 22.♗f5
♗e6?! 23.♙e5 ♙b7 24.♙b2 ♙e7
25.g4!?

The most direct and uncomfortable move for Black. An alternative is

25.a5!?, e.g. 25...c5 26.a×b6 a×b6
27.♟×g7! ♜×g7 28.♞×f6 ♞×f6
29.♝×f6+! ♜×f6 30.e5+ ♜g7 31.♞×b7
and White should win the endgame.

**25...h6 26.h4 c5 27.g5 h×g5
28.h×g5 ♟×e4 29.♝g2 ♞×d1+
30.♞×d1 1-0**

Game 148

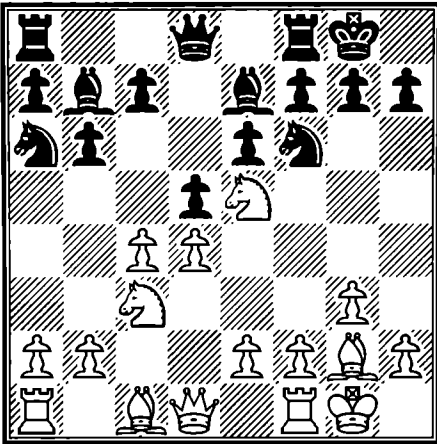
Aleksander Wojtkiewicz –

Oleg Eismont

Katowice (5) 1993

Queen's Indian [E18]

**1.♟f3 ♟f6 2.c4 b6 3.g3 ♞b7
4.♞g2 e6 5.0-0 ♞e7 6.d4 0-0
7.♟c3 d5 8.♟e5 ♟a6**



This move might look odd, but it's well motivated. Black often plays ...c5. If White takes on d5, Black recaptures with the pawn and then transfers his knight to e6 via c7. From there it is ideally placed to support hanging pawns on c5 and d5. Black has to have things just so to accept hanging pawns, but he can also utilize the knight by answering d×c5 with ...♟×c5. Karpov used to like this line before better methods of play were discovered for White.

9.c×d5 e×d5 10.♞f4

An interesting alternative is 10.♟d3. If Black plays 10...c5, White has 11.d×c5 b×c5 12.♞g5, followed by ♟f4, with terrific pressure on d5, as in the game Kavalek-Ljubojevic, Montreal 1979.

10...c5

Black can wait on this move, but then White has time for a3 and b4. For instance, 10...♝c8 11.a3 ♞d8 12.b4 c5 13.♞c1 ♝e6 14.d×c5 b×c5 15.b5 ♟b8 16.♟c4 (the idea ♟e5-c4 is a common motif in this variation) 16...a5 17.♝c2 ♟bd7 18.♞fd1 ♟b6 19.♟×b6 ♝×b6 20.♞g5 gave White a big advantage in Wojtkiewicz-Neckar, Werfen 1990. This is very similar to the Queen's Indian line 1.d4 ♟f6 2.c4 e6 3.♟f3 b6 4.a3 ♞b7 5.♟c3 d5 6.c×d5 e×d5 7.g3.

11.d×c5 ♟×c5

Accepting hanging pawns with 11...b×c5 puts too much strain on Black's position: 11...b×c5?! 12.♟c4! ♝d7 (12...♞c6 13.a3 ♞c8 14.♟e5 ♞b7 15.♝b3 ♞a8 16.♞ad1 c4 17.♝c2 ♝a5 18.e4!) 13.♟a5 ♞ad8 14.♟×b7 ♝×b7 15.♝b3! and Black has problems.

12.♟b5

Heading for d4.

**12...♟e6 13.♞e3 a6 14.♟d4
♟×d4?!**

This is too accommodating. A better try is 14...♞d6!?

15.♞×d4 ♞c5 16.♞c1

White has a clear, pleasant advantage, since Black has no active play.

16...♖e7 17.e3 ♜ac8 18.♗a4

White's play is very methodic; 18.♗h3!? is also worth considering.

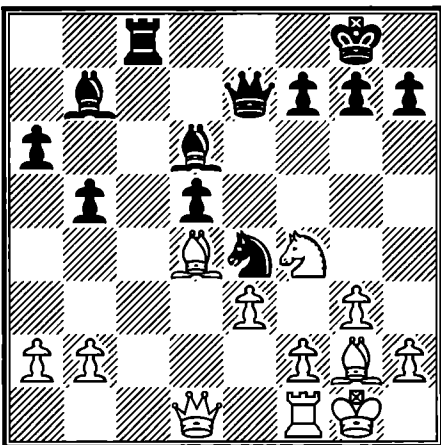
18...♞fe8 19.♗d3 ♗e4 20.♗f4

White could have won a pawn with the petite combination: 20.♗xe4 dxe4 21.♗xc5! bxc5 22.♞xc5!, but after 22...♞xc5 23.♗xc5 ♖d8 24.♞d1 ♗c6! 25.♞xd8 ♗xa4 26.♞d6 ♗b5, it will take considerable effort to convert his winning chances. Instead, Wojtkiewicz keeps the tension, and he is soon rewarded by a mistake from his opponent.

20...b5 21.♖d1 ♗d6?

This allows White to set up too many threats. Stiffer resistance is offered by 21...♞c7, although White has the better chances upon 22.a3.

22.♞xc8 ♞xc8



23.♗g4!

White threatens g7 and d5, which wins a pawn and the game.

23...♗g5 24.♗xg5 ♗xg5 25.♗xd5 ♖f8 26.♗b6 ♗xg2 27.♗xc8 ♗xf1 28.♖xf1 ♗c7 29.♖e2 ♗e6

30.♗a7 ♖e7 31.♗c6+ ♖d6 32.♗b4 a5 33.♗c2 ♖d5 34.♖d3 f5 35.f3 ♗g5 36.e4+ fxe4+ 37.fxe4+ ♖c6 38.♗xg7 ♗b6 39.♗d4 ♗f3 40.♗xb6 ♖xb6 1-0

Game 149

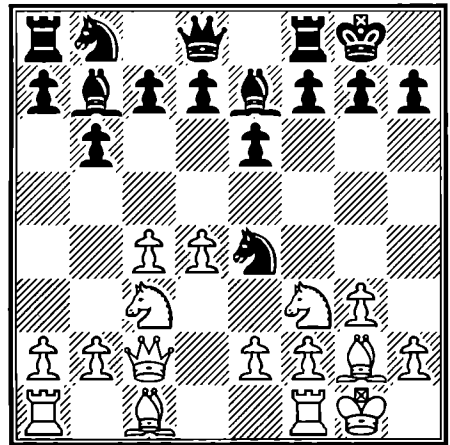
Ulf Andersson –

Christer Bergstrom

Sweden 1996

Queen's Indian [E19]

1.d4 ♗f6 2.♗f3 e6 3.g3 b6 4.♗g2 ♗b7 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.c4 0-0 7.♗c3 ♗e4 8.♖c2



This is a good alternative for those who find trading knights on move eight (8.♗xe4 ♗xe4 9.♗e1/9.♗h4) to be a little too bland; besides this game is very thematic for our repertoire.

8...♗xc3 9.♖xc3 c5

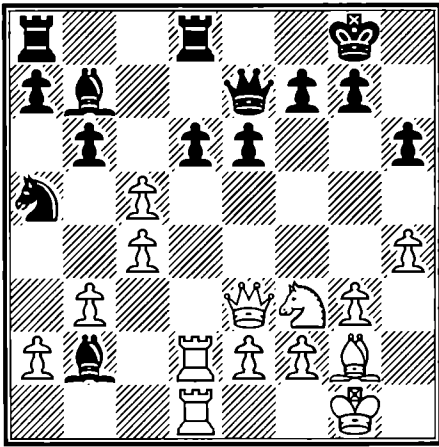
The alternatives are rarely seen compared to the text move:

a) 9...♗e4 10.♗f4!? (10.♞d1 c6 11.♗f4 d6 12.♞ac1 ♗d7 13.b4 ♞c8 (13...a5!? 14.a3 d5 is also possible, although White still has a slight pull) 14.a4 ♞e8 15.♗h3 d5 16.♗d2 ♗g6 17.cxd5 cxd5 18.♖b2±) 10...c6 11.♞ad1 d5 12.♞fe1 ♗a6 13.a3 ♞c8 14.♖b3 b5?! (14...dxc4 15.♖xc4 ♗c7 is better, but more com-

fortable for White) 15.cxb5 ♖b6 16.♗d2 ♕xg2 17.bxa6! with a clear advantage for White, as in Skatchkov-Belukhin, St. Petersburg 2001.

b) 9...f5 10.d5 ♖f6 11.♖c2 ♗a6 12.♞d1 ♗e7 (or 12...♗c5 13.♕e3 d6 14.♞ab1 a5 15.a3 a4 (15...♗e7!?) 16.♕xc5 bxc5 17.♗e1 ♞e8 18.b4 axb3 19.♞xb3 with a better game for White, Simic-Genov, Belgrade 1994) 13.♕e3 ♗c5 14.♕xc5 ♖xc5 15.♗e1 ♞ab8 16.♞ac1 a5 17.dxe6 ♕xg2 18.e7 ♖xe7 19.♗xg2 g6 (19...♕e5!?) 20.♗f4 c6 21.♞d3 ♞fd8 22.♞cd1 ♕e5 23.♖d2 d6 24.b3 ♖f7 (Black is playing very passively and duly ends up worse. He could have considered 24...b5! to create counterplay) 25.♗h3 ♖f6 26.♗g5 ♖e7 27.♗f3 ♖f7 28.♖f4± Ivkov-Tangborn, Manchester 1983.

10.♞d1 d6 11.b3 ♖f6 12.♕b2 ♖e7 13.♞d2 ♗c6 14.♖e3 ♞fd8 15.♞ad1 ♗a5 16.h4 h6 17.dxc5 ♕xb2



18.c6!

White's greater space gives him a pull.

18...♗xc6 19.♞xb2 d5?!

This freeing move leads to massive simplifications, but Andersson always keeps an annoying advantage.

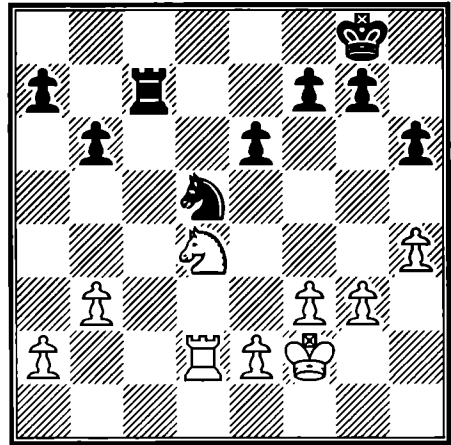
20.cxd5 ♗b4 21.♞bd2 ♗xd5 22.♖e5 ♗f6 23.♗e1 ♕xg2 24.♖xg2 ♞xd2 25.♞xd2 ♖b7+ 26.f3 ♞c8 27.♗c2 ♖c6 28.♖f2

Typical Andersson. The king comes closer for the impending endgame.

28...♗d5 29.♗d4 ♖c7

Black really has no choice, e.g. 29...♖b7? 30.♗xe6 or 29...♖c5? 30.♞c2.

30.♖xc7 ♞xc7



31.e4 ♗b4 32.a3

Systematically taking squares from the knight.

32...♗a6

Of course not 32...♗c6?!, allowing the deadly pin 33.♞c2.

33.b4 ♞d7

One of the cardinal rules of endgame play is to stay active. The more passive alternative 33...♗b8 fails to 34.♗b5 ♞b7 35.♞d8+ ♖h7 36.♗d6 (or 36.♗xa7 ♞xa7 37.♞xb8 ♞xa3 38.♞xb6 with an endgame that White should win

The Queen's Indian

easily) 36...♞d7 37.♞x d7 ♖x d7
38.♖x f7 with a won knight endgame.

34.♖e3 ♖c7 35.♞c2

Focusing on the weak c6-square.

35...♖f8 36.♖c6 ♖b5

This quickly leads to a lost position. Better is 36...♖e8, though 37.b5 f6 38.h5 is still bad for Black.

37.a4 ♖d6 38.♖e5 ♞b7 39.b5!

Cementing the weaknesses on a7, b6 and c6.

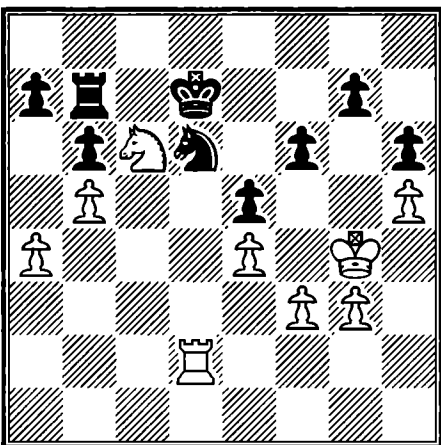
39...♖e7 40.♖c6+ ♖d7 41.♞d2 ♖c7 42.♖f4 f6 43.h5!

Andersson loves to play against weak squares and here he has found another on g6.

43...e5+

Upon 43...♖f7 44.g4 ♖d6 45.e5 ♖f7 46.♞d3, Black has to wreck his position as he has no moves!

44.♖g4 ♖d7



45.f4!

Bringing up the reserves. The end is in sight and Andersson finishes off with precision.

45...♞c7 46.♞d5! a6 47.♖x e5+ ♖e6 48.♖c6 a x b5 49.♖d4+! ♖e7 50.♞x d6! 1-0

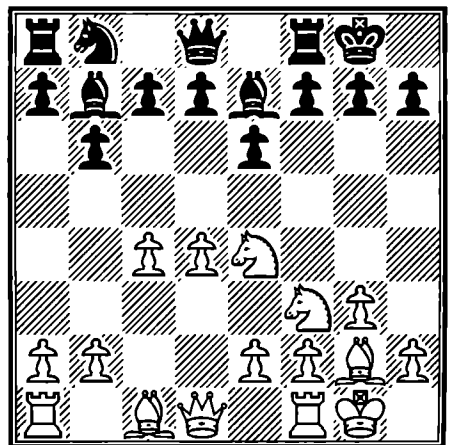
Game 150

*Nikolai Krogius –
Aleksandar Matanovic*

Le Havre 1966

Queen's Indian [E18]

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♖f3 b6 4.g3 ♞b7 5.♞g2 ♞e7 6.0-0 0-0 7.♖c3 ♖e4 8.♖x e4



GM Edmar Mednis recommended this variation in his book, *From the Opening to the Endgame*, since the ensuing positions are often queenless middlegames. Even so, it is very hard for Black to completely equalize in this variation. Of course stronger players will put up tougher opposition, but this nearly forgotten line can be a steady point winner.

8...♞x e4 9.♖h4

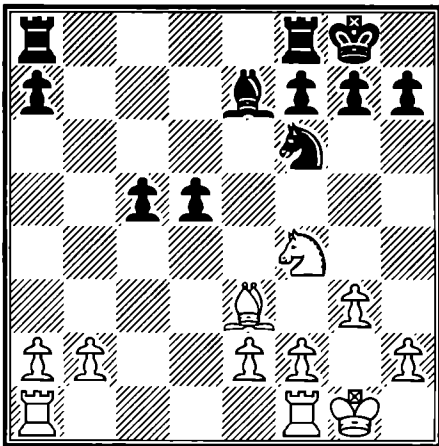
Different sources give 9.♖e1 here. However, if that were so, then 9...d5 is a viable alternative to trading bishops.

While if 9. ♖h4 d5, White obtains the bishop-pair: 10. f3 ♗g6 11. ♗xg6.

9... ♗xg2 10. ♗xg2 d5

If Black doesn't play this move, White will grab the center with e2-e4. Portisch-Timman, Wijk aan Zee 1975, went 10...d6 11. e4 ♗d7 12. ♗e3 c5 13. d5 ♗f6 14. ♖d3 ♗e8 15. ♗b1 ♗f8 16. f3 a6 17. ♗d1 ♗b8 18. ♗d2 b5 19. dxe6 fxe6 20. ♗c3 ♗d7 21. b3 b4 22. ♗b2 ♖c7 23. ♗d2 ♗bd8 24. ♗bd1 ♖b7 25. ♖f1 ♗e7 26. ♖h3, when White has a very pleasant position, and Black is under pressure.

11. ♖a4 c5 12. ♗e3 ♖d7 13. ♖xd7 ♗xd7 14. cxd5 exd5 15. ♗f4 ♗f6 16. dxc5 bxc5



17. ♗ac1

White has a small edge, as the d- and c-pawns cause Matanovic constant worry. Still, Black should draw with precise play.

17...d4

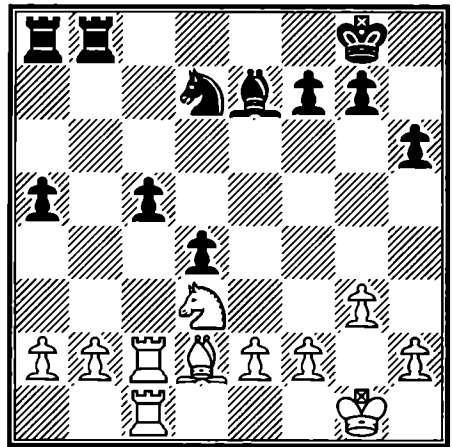
Black advances now, before White has time to redeploy his knight. The alternative 17... ♗ac8 18. ♗d3 d4 19. ♗g5 is clearly better for White.

18. ♗d2 ♗fb8

Here 18...a5 19. ♗d3 ♗d7 20. e3! dxe3 21. ♗xe3 is a key position, see Game 152.

19. ♗d3 h6 20. ♗c2 a5 21. ♗fc1 ♗d7

White must now find a way to increase the pressure on Black's backward c-pawn.



22. e3!

This is a crucial idea in this variation. The pawn on c5 is the real weakness in Black's position. Matanovic's best practical try was 22... ♗f6!? with only a slightly better game for White. The game continuation leaves Black with an unpleasant defensive task.

22...dxe3?! 23. ♗xe3 a4 24. ♗d1

White can also consider 24 ♗e2!?, followed by ♗cc2, to more efficiently achieve the same rook configuration he opts for later.

24... ♗b7 25. ♖g2 ♗a5 26. ♗e1 ♗f6 27. ♗ee2 ♗ab5?

Losing his cool. Black could defend by 27... ♗bb5. While 27... ♗c7 is quite un-

pleasant for Black after 28.♖c4 and 29.f4 with a strong bind.

28.♖c4!?

28.f4!? is another good option.

28...♗e5?

Now Black is lost. Black had to try 28...♗×b2 29.♖×a4! (White should keep the pieces on the board, as he is better coordinated than Black; after 29.♖×b2 ♖×b2 30.♗×b2 ♖×b2 31.♖×a4, he has somewhat better chances in the endgame thanks to the bishop/knight disparity and the remote passed pawn) 29...♗f6 30.♖a8+ ♖h7 31.♖c8 ♗e7 32.a4! (32.♗×h6 ♗b6 33.♖e8 c4 34.♖2×e7 ♖×e7 35.♖×e7 c×d3 36.♗f4 ♗d5 leads to a drawn endgame, despite White's extra pawn) 32...♖a5 33.♗d2 ♗b6 34.♖c7!! (I admit the computer found this move) 34...♖aa7 35.a5! ♗d5 36.♖×b7 ♖×b7 37.♖e4 is clearly better for White.

29.♗×e5 ♗×e5 30.♖×a4 ♗×b2 31.♖a8+! ♖b8

Or 31...♖h7 32.a4 and White wins the c5-pawn.

32.♖×b8+ ♖×b8 33.♗×c5 ♖b5 34.♖c2 ♗e5 35.a4 ♖a5 36.♖c4 ♖a6 37.♖f3 f5 38.♗e3 ♖f7 39.h4 ♖e6 40.h5!

Fixing Black's kingside pawns on the color of the bishops.

40...♗d6 41.♖e2 ♗e5 42.♖b4 ♖a8 43.♖b6+ ♖e7 44.♖b5 ♗c3 45.♖d3 ♗e1 46.♖b1 ♗×f2 47.♗×f2 ♖×a4 48.♗d4 ♖a2

49.♖b2 ♖a3+ 50.♗c3 f4 51.g×f4 ♖e6 52.♖b5 ♖a7 53.f5+ 1-0

Game 151

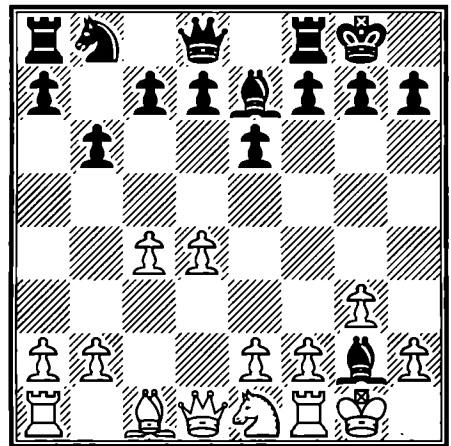
Ulf Andersson –

Simen Agdestein

Wijk aan Zee (2) 1988

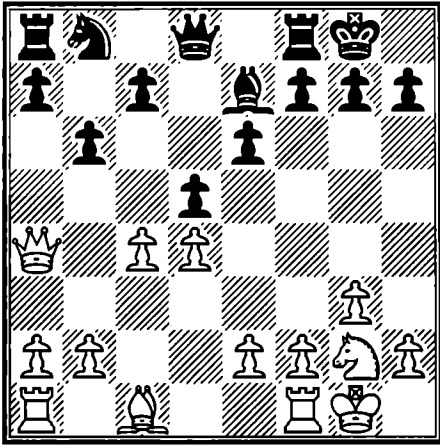
Queen's Indian [E18]

1.♗f3 ♗f6 2.c4 b6 3.g3 ♗b7 4.♗g2 e6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.d4 0-0 7.♗c3 ♗e4 8.♗×e4 ♗×e4 9.♗e1 ♗×g2



As mentioned above, Black has the option of 9...d5, but White still keeps a nagging edge: 10.♖a4 ♖e8 11.♖×e8 ♖×e8 12.c×d5 e×d5 13.♗e3 ♗d7 14.♖c1 c5 15.♗×e4 d×e4 16.♗g2 ♖ac8 17.d×c5 ♗×c5 18.♖fd1 ♗×e3 19.♗×e3 ♗f6 20.♖g2± ♖f8 (Black can consider stopping White's plan with 20...h5, although 21.♖×c8 ♖×c8 22.h3 is still better for White) 21.g4 h6 22.h4 ♖×c1 23.♖×c1 ♖d8 24.♖g3 ♖d2 25.♖c8+ ♗e8 26.♗c4 ♖d7 27.♖f4 b5 28.♗e3 ♖d2 29.♖c2± (stronger is 29.♗f5!, e.g. 29...g6 30.♖e3! ♖d1 31.♗×h6 ♖h1 32.h5 g×h5 33...g×h5 ♖×h5 34.♗g4 and White is winning) 29...♖×c2 30.♗×c2 ♗d6 31.♗e3 f6 32.h5! ♖f7 33.♗f5 ♗b7 34.♖×e4 with an easily won endgame, as in Andersson-Rozentalis, Tilburg rapid 1993.

10. ♖×g2 d5 11. ♖a4



11... ♖e8

Black has a couple of alternatives at this point:

a) 11...c6 12. ♖f4 ♖d7 13. ♖ac1 b5 14. cxb5 cxb5 15. ♖c2 ♖f6 16. ♖fd1 ♖a6 17. ♖c6 ♖xc6 18. ♖xc6 ♖b4 19. ♖c5 ♖xa2 20. ♖xb5 and White's pieces are better coordinated.

b) 11...dxc4 12. ♖xc4 c5 13. ♖e3 cxd4 14. ♖xd4 ♖c8 15. ♖ac1 ♖xc4 16. ♖xc4 ♖a6 17. ♖f4 ♖fd8 18. ♖e3 ♖f8 19. ♖d3 ♖e8 20. ♖fc1 = Andersson-Rozentalis, Tilburg blitz 1993.

12. ♖×e8 ♖×e8 13. c×d5 e×d5 14. ♖d1 ♖a6 15. ♖e3 ♖ad8 16. ♖ac1 c5 17. d×c5 b×c5 18. ♖f4 d4 19. ♖d2 ♖d6 20. ♖f1 ♖×f4?!

Exchanging the bishop for the knight is inaccurate, since the long-term imbalance will haunt Black, who has a knight glued to the a6-square to protect the c5-pawn. Meanwhile, White can improve the position of his pieces and make several pawn breaks as Black just looks on. So, 20... ♖b8 21. ♖d3 ♖c8 22. ♖c2 ♖d7 23 ♖dc1 is a better choice, although White is still better.

21. ♖×f4 ♖d5 22. ♖c4 ♖e6 23. a3

h6 24. b4 c×b4 25. a×b4 ♖b6 26. ♖d2!?

White has reasonable chances of winning with 26. e4 ♖db5 27. ♖d×d4 ♖×b4 28. ♖×b4 ♖×b4 29. ♖d8+ ♖h7 30. ♖d7 ♖g6 31. ♖×a7, but Black's position is easier to play when short of time, as was probably the case here.

26... ♖db5?!

Black should have tried 26...d3!?, when 27. ♖a1 d×e2+ 28. ♖×e2 ♖dd6 29. ♖a4 is better for White, but less so than in the game.

27. ♖b1 ♖b8 28. ♖bc1 ♖a6 29. ♖×d4 ♖×b4 30. ♖c8+ ♖h7 31. ♖c7 ♖b7??

A time trouble meltdown, although even the better 31... ♖c6 leads to doubled rooks on the seventh rank after 32. ♖a4 ♖e5 33. ♖a×a7.

32. ♖×b7 1-0

Game 152

Tigran Petrosian – Mikhail Botvinnik

Moscow wch (3) 1963
Queen's Indian [E18]

1. d4 ♖f6 2. ♖f3 e6 3. g3 b6 4. ♖g2 ♖b7 5. c4 ♖e7 6. 0-0 0-0 7. ♖c3 ♖e4 8. ♖×e4 ♖×e4 9. ♖e1

An interesting alternative is Rubinstein's 9. ♖f4.

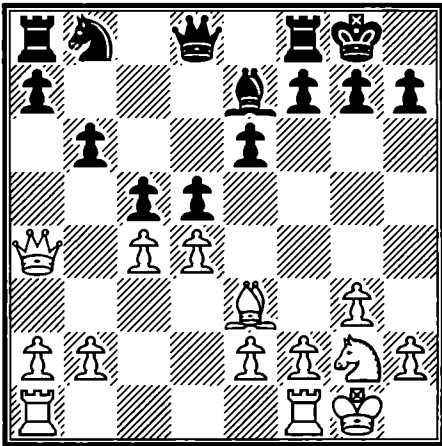
9... ♖×g2 10. ♖×g2 d5 11. ♖a4 c5

11... ♖d7 is supposed to equalize for Black, but it is not as easy as the books

claim: 12.♖xd7 ♘xd7 13.cxd5 exd5 14.♙f4 c5, and now instead of 15.dxc5 ♘xc5 16.♞ad1 ♞fd8 17.♙e5 f6 18.♙c3 ♘e6 19.♘f4 ♘xf4 20.gxf4 ♞ac8 21.♞d3 ♞c4 22.e3 ♞f7 23.♞fd1 with the slightest edge for White, as in Smyslov-Kholmov, Moscow 1969, White should opt for the untried 15.♘e3!, when Black has two options:

a) 15...♙f6 16.dxc5 ♘xc5 17.♘xd5 ♙xb2 18.♞ab1 ♘a4 (18...♙a3? loses to 19.♘c7, followed by 20.♘b5, and the bishop is trapped) 19.e4 and Black's pieces are still trying to coordinate properly.

12.♙e3

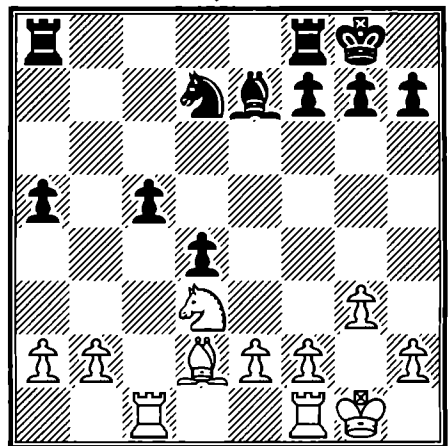


12...♖d7

Kotov recommends 12...cxd4 13.♙xd4 dxc4 14.♖xc4 ♖c8, when after 15.♞ac1, Black has the choice between: a) 15...♖xc4 16.♞xc4 ♞d8 17.♙e3 ♘d7 (or 17...♘a6, as suggested by Karpov, but White is still somewhat better upon 18.♘f4 ♞d7 19.♞fc1 ♞ad8 20.♘d3) 18.♞fc1 and White's pieces are again slightly better coordinated, as in Portisch-Karpov, Tilburg 1986.

b) 15...♘a6 16.♘f4 ♖xc4 (Polugaevsky indicates 16...♞d8!? 17.♙e3 ♖b7 (17...♖xc4 18.♞xc4 transposes to Portisch-Karpov) 18.♞fd1 would give approximately even chances) 17.♞xc4 ♞fd8 18.♙e3 b5 19.♞c3 ♘b4 20.a3 e5 21.axb4 exf4 22.♙xf4 ♙xb4 23.♞c7 h6 24.♞a1 ♙d6 25.♙xd6 ♞xd6 26.♞a3 a5?! (after 26...♞d2!, the game would likely have ended in a draw, but in his irritation over his opponent's unwillingness to agree to a draw, Black makes an inaccurate move and blunders a pawn on the next move) 27.♞b7 b4? (27...♞d5 would have been better, but the endgame after 28.e3 or 28.e4 is more comfortable for White, although Black should still draw) 28.♞xb4 ♞e8 29.♞xa5 ♞xe2 30.♞b8+ ♞h7 31.♞f5 and White eventually converted his extra pawn in Andersson-Polugaevsky, Haninge 1990.

13.♖xd7 ♘xd7 14.cxd5 exd5 15.♘f4 ♘f6 16.dxc5 bxc5 17.♞ac1 d4 18.♙d2 a5 19.♘d3 ♘d7



20.e3! dxe3 21.♙xe3

White has a clear advantage, but converting it against determined defense is difficult.

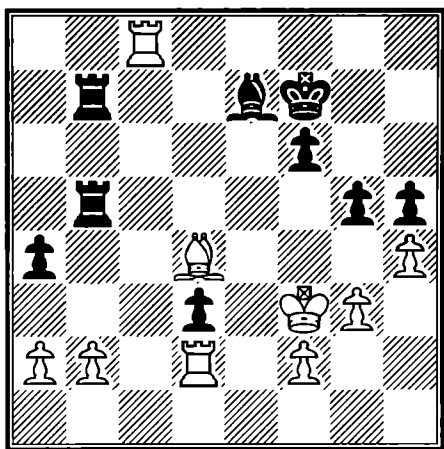
21...♖fb8 22.♖fd1 a4!?

The idea is to fix White's b-pawn on b2 to keep it as a target for counterplay when White focuses on the weak c5-pawn.

23.♖g2 h6 24.♖d2 ♖b5 25.♘f4
♘f6 26.♗f3 ♖ab8 27.♘d3 ♘d7
28.♙f4 ♖8b7 29.♙e3 f6?!

Kotov indicated that 29...♙f6 is more accurate, but after 30.♖c4, White has the better chances.

30.h4 h5 31.♖c4 ♘b6 32.♖cc2 c4
33.♙×b6 c×d3 34.♖c8+ ♗f7
35.♙d4 g5!



Black has to play actively to obtain counterplay.

36.♖c4

The obvious 36.♖×d3 begs to be examined, but after 36...g×h4 37.g×h4 ♖d7 38.♗e3 f5 39.♖h8 ♖b4!, White cannot expect to win.

36...♖b4 37.♖×b4 ♖×b4 38.♙c3
♖c4 39.h×g5 f×g5 40.♖×d3 ♙f6

Thanks to his active rook on c4 and the possibility of creating a distant passed

pawn on the h-file, Black can afford to offer the exchange of this bishop, despite being a pawn down.

41.a3 h4 42.g×h4 ♙×c3 43.♖×c3
♖×h4 44.♖c5 ♗f6 45.♖b5 ♖f4+
46.♗e3 ♖h4 47.♖b4 ♗e5 48.♗d3

48.♖×h4 g×h4 is a draw.

48...♗e6 49.♖b5 ♗f6 50.♗e2
♖e4+ 51.♗f1 ♖h4 52.♗g1 ♖g4+
53.♗h2 ♖h4+ 54.♗g2 ♖g4+
55.♗h3 ♖h4+ 56.♗g3 ♖d4
57.♗f3 ♖f4+ 58.♗e3 ♖h4 59.♖b8
♗e6 60.♖e8+ ♗f6 61.♗d2 ♗f7
62.♖e3 ♖f4 63.f3 ♖h4 64.♗c3
♖h3 65.♗d4 ♖h2 66.b4 a×b3
67.♖×b3 ♗e6 68.♗c5 ♗d7
69.♗d5 ♖e2 70.a4 ♗c7 71.a5
♖a2 72.♖b5 ♖a4 73.♗e5 g4
74.f4 g3 75.♖b3 ♖×a5+ 76.♗e6
♖a6+ 77.♗e7 ♖g6 78.♖c3+ ♗b6
79.♖c1 g2 80.♖g1 ♗c7 81.f5
♖g3 82.f6 ♖e3+ 83.♗f7 ♖g3
84.♗e6 ♖e3+ 85.♗f5 ♖g3 86.f7
♖f3+ ½-½

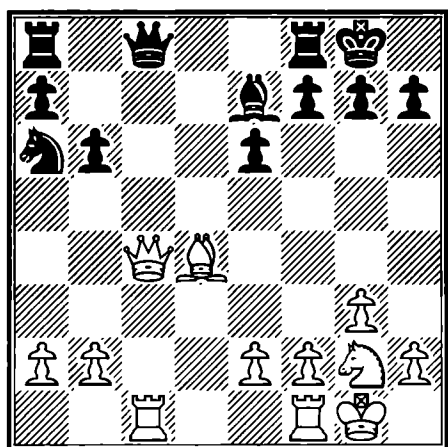
Game 153

*Evgeny Vladimirov –
Penteala Harikrishna*
Kelamabakkam (8) 2000
Queen's Indian [E18]

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 b6 4.♙g2
♙b7 5.d4 ♙e7 6.0-0 0-0 7.♘c3
♘e4 8.♘×e4 ♙×e4 9.♘h4 ♙×g2
10.♘×g2 d5 11.♗a4 d×c4
12.♗×c4 c5 13.♙e3 c×d4
14.♙×d4 ♗c8 15.♖ac1 ♘a6

Interestingly, Harikrishna assayed this line a year later with White, where his opponent deviated with 15...♗×c4 16.♖×c4 ♘d7 (16...♘a6 17.♖fc1 ♖fd8 18.a4 ♖d7 19.♘e1 ♖ad8 20.♘c2 f6

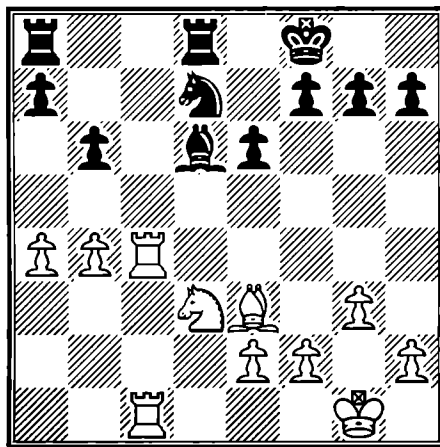
21.♔g2 e5 22.♙e3 ♖c7?! (22...♗f7!?)
 23.♞xc7 ♜xc7 24.♞b4 ♙xb4 25.♞xc7
 is better for White, as in Eperjesi-
 Petran, Budapest 1975) 17.♞fc1 ♞fd8
 18.♞e1 (Black equalizes after 18.♞f4
 ♞c5) 18...b5 19.♞c7 ♙f6 20.♞f3 a6
 21.♙xf6 gxf6 (Black is trying to keep
 the white knight away from the e5-
 square; a possible continuation upon
 21...♞xf6 is 22.♞e5 ♞e8 23.♞7c2 ♗f8
 24.♞c6 (or 24.f3 f6 25.♞c6 ♞d7 26.e4)
 24...♞dc8 25.e4 ♞d6 26.f3 with a dis-
 tinct plus for White) 22.♔g2 ♞e5 23.b3
 ♞xf3 24.♗xf3 (White has an enduring
 advantage in the endgame because of
 his more active pieces and better pawn
 structure; however, he makes the rest
 look easy) 24...♞d2 25.♞1c2 ♞ad8
 26.♗e3 ♞xc2 27.♞xc2 ♞d6 28.g4 ♗g7
 29.h4 ♞d5 30.f3 b4 31.♗f4 h5 32.e4
 ♞a5 33.♗e3 hxg4 34.fxg4 f5 35.exf5
 exf5 36.g5 ♞e5+ 37.♗f4 ♞e4+ 38.♗xf5
 ♞xh4 39.♞c6 ♞h1 40.♞xa6 ♞f1+
 41.♗e4 ♞g1 42.♗f4 ♞f1+ 43.♗e3 ♞g1
 44.♞b6 ♞g2 45.♞xb4 ♞xa2 46.♞b5 f6
 47.♞b7+ ♗g6 48.gxf6 ♗xf6 49.♗d4
 ♗e6 50.♗c5 ♞c2+ 51.♗b5 ♗d6 52.b4
 ♞b2 53.♗a6 ♗c6 54.b5+ ♗d6 55.♞h7
 ♞b1 56.b6 ♗c5 57.♞c7+ 1-0,
 Harikrishna-Anagnostopoulos, London
 2001. This was a great technical
 achievement by White.



16.♞f4

Or 16.♙a4 ♗b7 17.♙c3 ♞c5 18.♗g4
 g6 19.♗d4 f6 20.b4 ♞e4 21.♞f4 e5
 22.♗d5+ ♗xd5 23.♞xd5 with a solid
 plus, e.g. 23...♗f7 24.f3! ♞xc3 25.♞xc3
 ♞fd8 26.e4 and the knight is obviously
 much better than the bishop.

16...♗xc4 17.♞xc4 ♞fd8 18.♙e3
 ♞c5 19.b4 ♞d7 20.♞d3 ♙d6
 21.♞fc1 ♗f8 22.a4



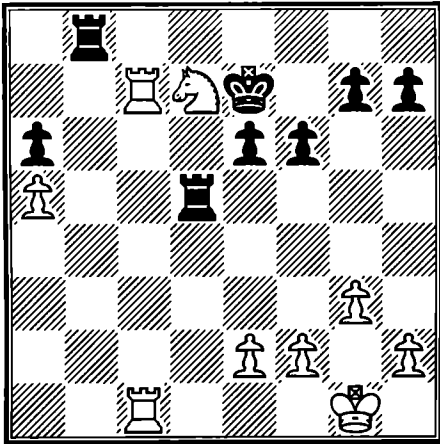
Black finds himself in just the kind of
 endgame he has been striving to avoid:
 somewhat passive and without
 counterplay. Vladimirov has excellent
 endgame technique, and he makes con-
 verting his advantage look effortless.

22...♗e7 23.a5 ♞db8 24.♞c6 bxa5
 25.bxa5 a6 26.♞d1 ♙a3 27.♞c3
 ♙d6 28.♞c6 ♙a3 29.♙g5+ f6
 30.♙c1 ♙xc1 31.♞dxc1 ♞b5
 32.♞c7 ♞d5?

Black is being very cooperative, but
 defending slightly worse endgames is
 a difficult task, especially when your
 opponent is playing as accurately as
 Vladimirov. Somewhat better is
 32...♗d8 to escape the pin on the sev-
 enth rank, when after 33.♞f4 ♞e5
 34.♞1c6 g5 35.♞b7 ♗e7 36.♞d3 ♞b5
 37.♞xb5 axb5 38.a6 ♞a7 39.f4 ♞a8
 (39...♞b8 40.♞b4 ♗d7 41.♞b6+- is

worse) 40. ♖b4 gxf4 41. gxf4 f5 42. ♖f2, White has good chances of winning.

33. ♖c5 ♖b8 34. ♖xd7?



Time trouble may well have something to do with White missing 34. ♖xa6!. It is difficult to accurately calculate 34... ♖b2 35. e4 ♖dd2 36. ♖c5 ♖xf2 (36... ♖e8 doesn't change the result: 37. ♖xe6 ♖xf2 38. ♖xg7+ ♖e7 39. ♖f5+ ♖e8 40. ♖h4 ♖xh2 41. a6 ♖a2 42. a7 ♖b6 43. ♖b7 and White wins) 37. ♖xd7+ ♖e8 38. ♖b1 ♖g2+ 39. ♖f1 ♖gf2+ 40. ♖e1 ♖fe2+ 41. ♖d1 ♖xb1+ 42. ♖xe2 ♖b5 43. ♖c7 and Black is obviously lost.

34... ♖xd7 35. ♖1c6 ♖a8 36. ♖g2 ♖a7 37. ♖xd7+ ♖xd7 38. ♖b6 ♖e7 39. h4 ♖d7 40. h5 ♖e7 41. e4 ♖d7 42. ♖f3 ♖e7 43. ♖e3 h6 44. f4 ♖d7 45. ♖d4 ♖e7 46. ♖c5 ♖d7 47. ♖d6+ ♖e7 48. ♖b6 ♖a8 49. ♖c6

49. ♖c7 e5 50. f5 ♖a7+ 51. ♖b8 ♖a8+ 52. ♖xa8 ♖xd6 53. ♖b7 ♖c5 54. ♖xa6 ♖d4 (54... ♖c6 55. g4) 55. ♖b5 ♖xe4 56. a6 ♖xf5 57. a7 ♖g5 58. a8 ♖ ♖xh5 59. ♖f8 ♖g6 60. g4.

49... e5 50. f5 ♖b8+ 51. ♖xa6 ♖b4 52. ♖b6 ♖xe4 53. ♖b7 ♖d4 54. a6 ♖d7+ 55. ♖c6 e4 56. ♖b7 1-0

Game 154

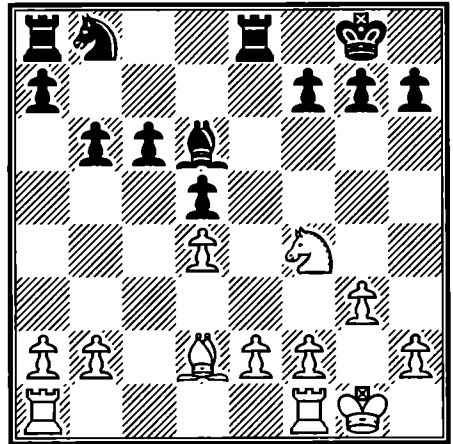
Keith Arkell –

William Paschall

York (8) 1999

Queen's Indian [E18]

1. d4 ♖f6 2. ♖f3 e6 3. c4 b6 4. g3 ♖b7 5. ♖g2 ♖e7 6. 0-0-0 7. ♖c3 ♖e4 8. ♖xe4 ♖xe4 9. ♖h4 ♖xg2 10. ♖xg2 d5 11. ♖a4 ♖e8 12. ♖xe8 ♖xe8 13. cxd5 exd5 14. ♖f4 c6 15. ♖d2 ♖d6



Or 15... ♖d7 16. ♖ac1 ♖ac8 17. ♖c2 ♖d6?! (17... g5!? may be better, e.g. 18. ♖g2! (18. ♖d3?! c5 19. ♖fc1 c4 is better for Black) 18... ♖f6 19. ♖e3!? ♖xd4 20. ♖f5 ♖c5 21. ♖xg5 and I prefer White in this somewhat unclear position) 18. ♖fc1 ♖xf4 19. ♖xf4 ♖e6 20. a4 ♖f8 21. b4 and White is clearly better, but Black soon made things much worse: 21... ♖d7?! 22. b5 c5 23. dxc5 bxc5?! 24. ♖d1 ♖f6 25. ♖e3 c4? 26. ♖xa7 ♖a8 27. b6 ♖d7 28. a5 ♖e5 29. f4 ♖f5 30. e4 1-0, Fridman-Naumann, Internet 2005.

16. ♖fe1 a5?!

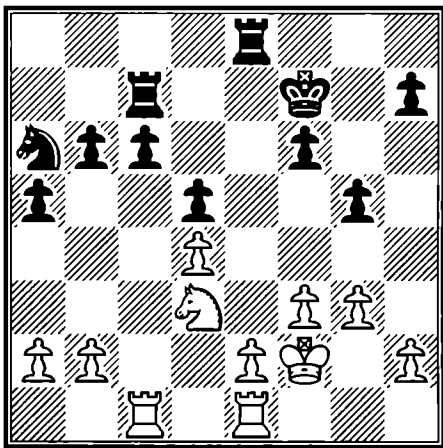
Now Black's knight is tied to the defense of the c-pawn. It is just this sort of inaccuracy that White is counting on to win in this variation. Luckily such moves often come almost by them-

selves when Black wants to demonstrate that he has a good position from the opening. If Black had played 16...d7, followed by 17...ac8, White would have very little.

**17. ac1 a7 18. d3 f6 19. f4
 f4 20. x4 f7 21. f3 g5?!**

Now White gets another weakness to target: Black's kingside. After 21...ae7, White's plus would have been imperceptible.

22. d3 c7 23. f2 a6



24. h4! g4 25. g4!

The point behind White's previous move, the weaknesses in Black's position become increasingly obvious and White's advantage more tangible.

**25... b4 26. x4 b4 a4 27. h1
 e6 28. x4 e8 29. c2 c5?!**

Apparently Black still hasn't learned his lesson. His previous two pawn pushes to the fourth rank were dubious, as is this. It weakens the d5-pawn without getting anything in return.

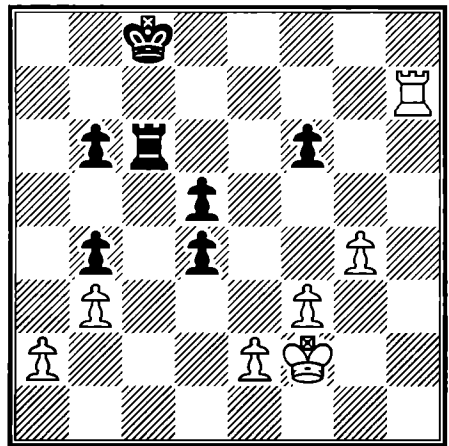
**30. h5! d6 31. b3 d8 32. c1
 c8?!**

With two weak pawns on the kingside, it makes more sense to keep the king in that vicinity.

33. d1 cd7 34. dh1

34.dxc5 bxc5 35.e4 is also worthy of consideration.

**34... c6 35. xh7 xh7 36. xh7
 c4?**



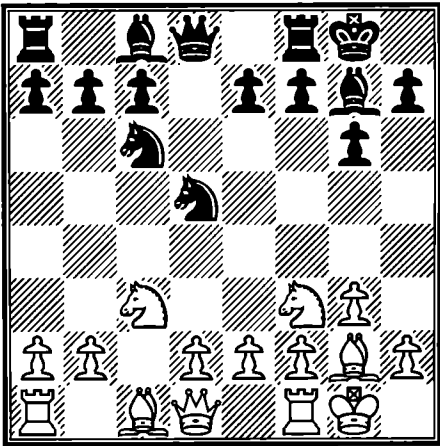
Now Black is lost. Stronger is 36...c4, although White has all the chances after 37.bxc4 dxc4 38.e4, followed by 39 e3.

**37. h5 d6 38. h1 d7 39. d1
 c6 40. x4 c5 41. d1 e6
 42. f4 d4 43. d3 e4 44. f3 d6
 45. g5 e7 46. e3 f7 47. xd4
 x4 48. e3 d1 49. g3 g6
 50. gxf6+ x6 51. h3 e1+
 52. f2 e8 53. h6+ f5
 54. f3 d8 55. h5+ f6
 56. b5 a8 57. xb6+ f5
 58. b5+ f6 59. xb4 xa2
 60. e4 a6 61. d5 a1 62. c4
 a8 63. d6 a3 64. b4 d3+
 65. c6 e7 66. b5 d8 67. b7
 d7+ 68. a6 d1 69. b6 a1+
 70. b7 d1 71. b8 1-0**

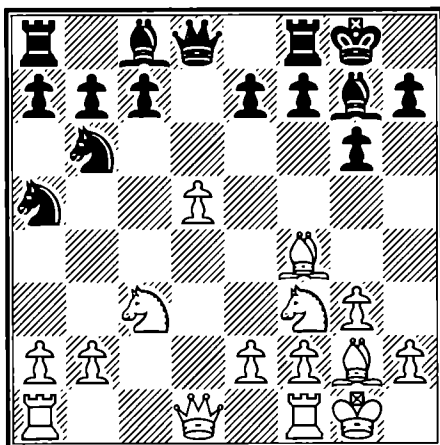
Chapter Thirteen

Odds & Ends

Here we deal with various odds and ends, including the Grünfeld, Dutch, Réti, King's Indian Attack, Chigorin and 1...b5. One of Black's tricky move-order options is 1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2 0-0 5.0-0 d5 6.c×d5 ♘×d5 7.♘c3 ♘c6:



Now White can try to sidestep the main lines of the Grünfeld Fianchetto with 8.♘×d5 ♗×d5 9.d3, but it's not clear this offers much. Another try is to transpose into the Grünfeld Fianchetto, while sidestepping much of the theory with clever move orders such as 8.d4 ♘b6 9.d5 ♘a5 10.♗f4.



Note that we can't force 1.♘f3, 2.c4 and

3.g3. If Black is really determined to prohibit our proposed setup, he can play 1...b5. The question is whether it's worth the price, as after 2.e4 ♗b7 3.♗×b5! (Game 168), White is already better.

Game 155

Maxim Sorokin –

Karl Thorsteins

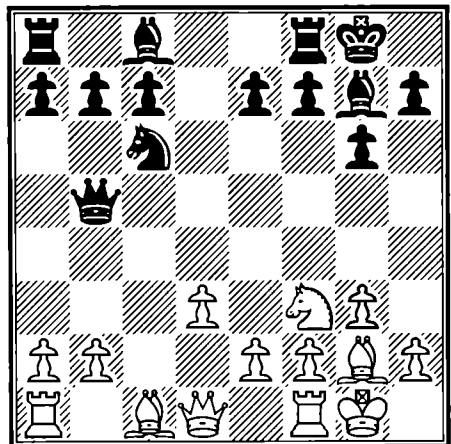
Protvino 1988

English Opening [A16]

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7
4.♗g2 0-0 5.0-0 d5 6.c×d5 ♘×d5
7.♘c3 ♘c6

This is much more solid than putting a pawn on c5.

8.♘×d5 ♗×d5 9.d3 ♗b5



This Portisch favorite gives White difficult problems to solve, which is one reason to consider transposing to a Fianchetto Grünfeld via 8.d4. Notice that many of Black's options in this line, an early ...d×c4 for example, have been avoided by our move-order.

a) 9...♖h5?! is a bad idea: 10.♗b3 ♜b8 11.♙e3 ♙e6 12.♗a3 ♜fd8 13.♞ac1± Ribli-Honfi, Hungary 1974.

b) 9...♗d6 10.♘d2 e5 11.♘e4 ♗e7 12.♙g5 f6 13.♙e3 ♘d4 14.♞c1±.

c) 9...a5! steers for a favorable transposition to the ...♗b5 plan by sidestepping 10.a4! For example, 9...a5 10.♗c2 (what else, as 10.a4 doesn't gain a tempo without a queen on b5) 10...a4 11.♙d2 ♗b5 and the b5-square is now safe for the queen. Trauth-Cvitan, Zurich 1991 went 9...a5 10.a4 ♗h5 11.♗c2 ♙g4 12.♙e3 ♞fc8=. However, White can obviously improve: 10.♙f4!? ♗b5 (10...♙x b2?! is worse: 11.♞b1 ♙c3 12.♞b3 ♙f6 13.♘e5 ♗c5 14.♘c6 bxc6 15.♗d2±) 11.♞b1 ♙e6 (or 11...e5 12.♙e3 ♙e6 13.b3 f6 14.♗d2 ♞ad8 15.♞fc1 e4 16.♘e1 and White has better chances) 12.b3 ♞ac8 13.♗d2 with equal chances.

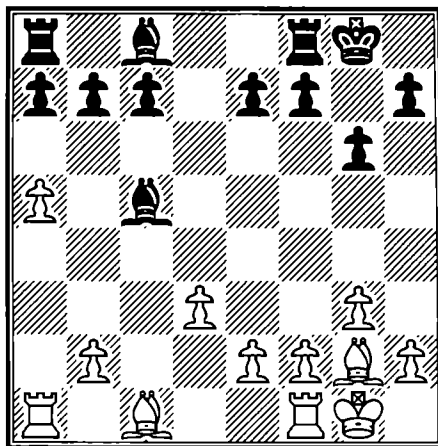
Those who are more ambitious might want to consider the white side of the Grünfeld Fianchetto, as in the next two games.

10.a4 ♗h5 11.♗b3 ♘d4 12.♘xd4 ♙xd4 13.♗c4 ♗c5?

This move seems somewhat desperate, as if Black doesn't have anything better than a clearly worse queenless middlegame. In fact, White's task is significantly easier without the queens. A better choice is 13...c5, although after 14.♙f3 ♗f5 15.♙e3 ♙xe3 16.fxe3, White has somewhat better chances.

14.♗xc5 ♙xc5 15.a5

White is clearly for choice. His bishops and rooks will rake the queenside. Another good move is 15.♙h6, e.g. 15...♞d8 16.♞fc1 ♙d6 17.a5 with a clear plus for White.



15...♙d4 16.♞a4 ♞d8 17.♙f4 c6 18.a6 e5 19.axb7 ♙xb7 20.♙e3 ♙xe3 21.fxe3 ♞d7 22.♞fa1 a6?

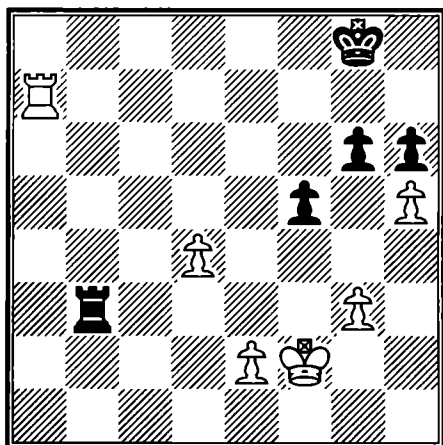
Black's passive defense leads nowhere. Instead, he should try for some activity with 22...c5!?. White immediately wins a pawn by 23.♞xa7 ♞xa7 24.♞xa7, but Black is still in the game: 24...♙c6 25.♞a5 (25.♞xd7 ♙xd7 is also good for White, but winning it is a different story) 25...♙xg2 26.♗xg2 e4 27.dxe4 ♞d2 and with White's extra pawns tripled on the e-file, Black has decent drawing chances, which is more than the game continuation offers.

23.♞b4 ♞a7 24.♞a5 f6 25.♞b6

Black is completely tied up and must now lose a pawn anyway. It is a common mistake, even among stronger players, to maintain material equality for as long as possible, no matter how passive the position becomes. A much more practical approach is to jettison the pawn for piece activity (22...c5!?) to reach a clearly worse but playable endgame.

25...♞c7 26.d4 exd4 27.exd4 ♞a8 28.♞xb7 ♞xb7 29.♙xc6 ♞ab8 30.♙xb7 ♞xb7 31.♞xa6 ♞xb2

32.♖f2 f5 33.♞a7 ♞b3 34.h4 h6
35.h5!



Splitting the black pawns makes the process of winning the endgame easier.

35...g×h5 36.♞a5 ♞b4 37.e3 h4
38.♞×f5 ♞b2+ 39.♖f3 h3 40.♞h5
h2 41.♞×h6 ♖g7 42.♞h5 ♖g6
43.g4 ♞d2 44.♖f4 ♞f2+ 45.♖g3
♞e2 46.♞×h2 ♞×e3+ 47.♖f4 ♞d3
48.♖e5 ♖g5 49.♞g2 ♞e3+
50.♖d6 1-0

Game 156
*Susan Polgar –
Xie Jun*
Jaen Wch (11) 1996
Grünfeld Fianchetto [D76]

1.d4 ♫f6 2.♫f3 g6 3.c4 ♞g7 4.g3
0-0 5.♞g2 d5 6.c×d5 ♫×d5 7.0-0
♫b6 8.♫c3 ♫c6 9.d5 ♫a5
10.♞f4 c6

Black can win a pawn by 10...♞×c3
11.b×c3 ♫×d5, but 12.♞h6 ♞e8
13.♞d4 leaves White with excellent
compensation: 13...♫f6 14.♞a4 c5
15.♞fd1 ♞c7 16.♞f4 ♞b6 17.♞ab1
♞d7 18.♞a3 ♞b5 19.♫e5 and White
is far better coordinated. And
11...♞×d5 12.♞×c7 ♞c5 13.♞f4 is
slightly better for White.

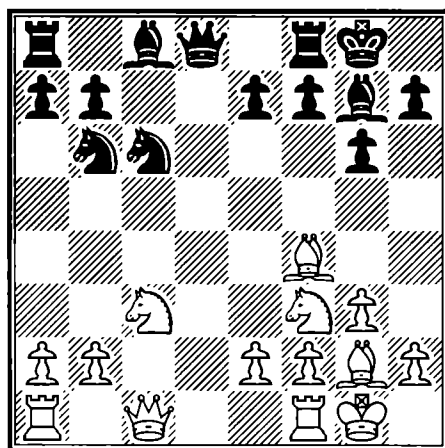
Or 10...♫ac4 11.♞b3 ♞d7 12.♞ac1 c6
13.d×c6 ♞×c6 14.♞fd1 ♞e8 15.♫d2
♞×g2 16.♖×g2 ♞c8 17.♫×c4 ♞×c4
18.♫d5 ♞c6 19.♞e3 ♫×d5 20.♞×d5
with a better game for White, as in
Pr.Nikolic-Valkesalmi, Groningen jr
1978.

Black can also consider Yermolinsky's
10...♞×c3 11.b×c3 ♞×d5, but upon
12.♞×c7 ♞c5 13.♞e5 ♫c6 14.♞d4,
White should have a tiny edge.

11.d×c6 ♫×c6

Trading queens is safer; now White will
develop an initiative.

12.♞c1!



A multipurpose move that avoids ex-
changing queens, prepares to trade off
the powerful bishop on g7, and allows
♞d1.

12...♞g4

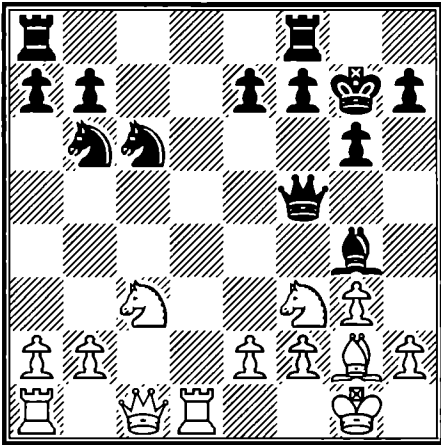
Or 12...a5 13.b3±.

13.♞d1 ♞c8 14.♞h6± ♞f5?!

Here 14...♞h3 or 14...♞d8 are better
tries at keeping White's advantage to a
minimum.

Alternatively, 14...♙xf3 15.♙xf3 ♖e6 16.♙xg7 ♜xg7 17.♜f4 ♞ac8 18.♜b5 ♜c4 19.♜xc4 ♜xc4 20.b3 ♜4e5 21.♙g2 a6 22.♜d4± Donaldson-David, Isle of Man 1997, and the bishop is much stronger than the knight.

15.♙xg7 ♜xg7



16.♜d4!

This emphasizes the power of the bishop on g2.

16...♜xd4 17.♞xd4 e5

17...♞ab8? doesn't work on account of 18.h3 ♙xh3 19.♙xh3 ♜xh3 20.♞h4 ♜e6 21.♜h6+, a trick that we will encounter again in this game.

18.♞d1

While the text move is perfectly fine, Psakhis' 18.♞b4 may be even better, e.g. 18...♜c8 (or 18...♞ab8 19.h3 ♙h5 20.g4), and now rather than 19.♙xb7 ♜xb7 20.♞xg4 (Psakhis), White should win after 19.♜g5! ♙h3 20.♙xh3 ♜xh3 21.♞h4 ♜f5 22.♜h6+ ♜f6 23.♜e4+ ♜e7 24.♜e3 and Black's king is miserable.

18...♜c8 19.b3

Playing against the knight on b6.

19...♙h3 20.♙xh3 ♜xh3 21.♜e3+ ♜d7

21...♞ae8 22.♜b5±.

22.♜e4

Centralizing with a vengeance.

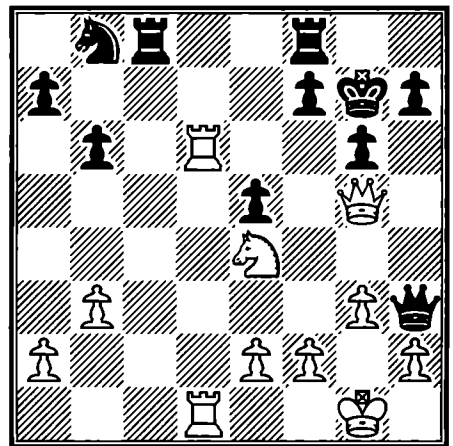
22...b6 23.♞d6!

Stopping the queen from getting back into the game via e6.

23...♞ac8 24.♞ad1 ♜b8

24...♜c5 turns out to be rather awkward for Black: 25.♜xc5 ♞xc5 26.b4 ♞b5 (26...♞cc8 27.♜xe5+ is not what Black had in mind), when 27.a4 ♞xb4 28.♜xe5+ ♜g8 29.♞d8 ♜h6 30.♜e7 is curtains for Black.

25.♜g5!



This leads to a winning ending. Unfortunately, Black doesn't have a choice.

25...♜f5 26.♜xf5 gxf5 27.♜f6 ♜c6

27...♞c2 is better, although 28.♜h5+

♖g8 29.e3 ♜xa2 30.♞1d5 is still very good for White.

28.♜h5+ ♖g8 29.♞1d5!

Tying up Black's pieces as much as possible.

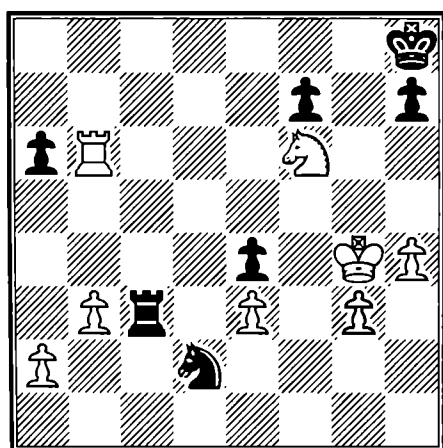
29...♖h8 30.♞f6 ♞c7 31.e3 ♞g8 32.h4 a6?!

32...♞d8 33.♞fd6 ♞xd6 34.♞xd6 ♞c8 35.♞f6 should also win for White. The text move just makes it a little easier.

33.♖g2 ♜e7

33.♖h2 (Su. Polgar) was more accurate, as it would have prevented the possibility of 34.♞xe5 ♜g6 35.♞d5 ♜xh4+ 36.♖h3 ♞c1 37.♖h2 ♜f3+ 38.♖g2 ♜h4+.

34.♞d2 ♜g6 35.♖h2 f4 36.♞xb6 fxe3 37.fxe3 e4 38.♜f6 ♜e5 39.♜xg8 ♜f3+ 40.♖h3 ♜xd2 41.♜f6 ♞c3 42.♖g4!



Now Black's king will end up in a mating net. 42.♞b8+ also wins: 42...♖g7 43.♜h5+ ♖g6 44.♞b6+ ♖f5 (44...♖xh5? 45.g4#).

42...♖g7 43.♖f4 ♞c1 44.♞xa6

♞f1+ 45.♖e5 ♞f3 46.♜h5+ ♖f8 47.♖d6 1-0

Game 157

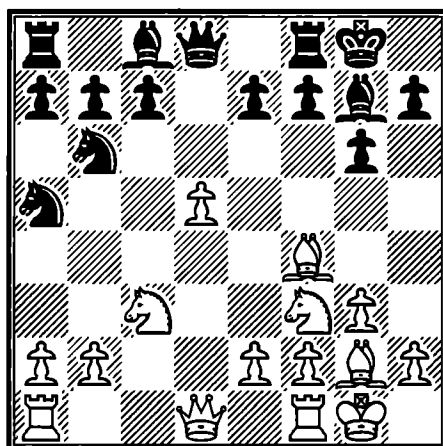
John Donaldson –

Omar Cartagena

Berkeley 1997

Grünfeld Fianchetto [D76]

1.♜f3 ♜f6 2.c4 g6 3.♜c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♜xd5 5.g3 ♜g7 6.♜g2 ♜b6 7.d4 0-0 8.0-0 ♜c6 9.d5 ♜a5 10.♜f4



This move was used successfully in Game 156. White plays for a small edge and restricts Black's counterplay.

10...c6 11.dxc6 ♜xc6

Trading queens worked out well for White in Pr. Nikolic-Xie Jun, Monaco 1996: 11...♖xd1 12.♞fxd1 ♜xc6 13.♞ac1 ♜f5 14.b3 ♞ac8 15.♜e3 ♞fd8 16.♜b5 ♜d5 17.♜xa7 ♜xe3 18.♞xd8+ ♞xd8 19.♜xc6 bxc6 20.fxe3.

12.♖c1 ♜d7

Black should give strong consideration to 12...e5 13.♞d1 ♖e7 and now:

a) 14.♜h6 f6 15.♜xg7 ♖xg7?! 16.b3 ♜e6 17.♖b2 ♞fd8 18.♜e1 f5 (18...♖e7 is better, keeping the weaknesses in the structure to a minimum)

19. ♖xc6 bxc6 20. ♗d3 ♖ab8 21. ♗c5 ♗f7 22. ♖a3 ♖f8 23. ♖ac1 ♗d7 24. ♗3a4 ♖b5 25. ♖b2 ♗xc5 26. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 27. ♗xc5± Donaldson-Goldbar (computer), The Hague 1997.

b) 14. ♗e3 ♗e6 (14...f6 15. ♗b5±) 15. ♗g5 ♖ac8 16. ♗xe6 ♖xe6 17. ♗xb6! axb6 18. e3± Baburin-David, Isle of Man 1997.

After the text, a series of small mistakes lead to an awful position.

13. ♖d1 ♖c8 14. ♗h6 ♖e8?!

14...e5 is better.

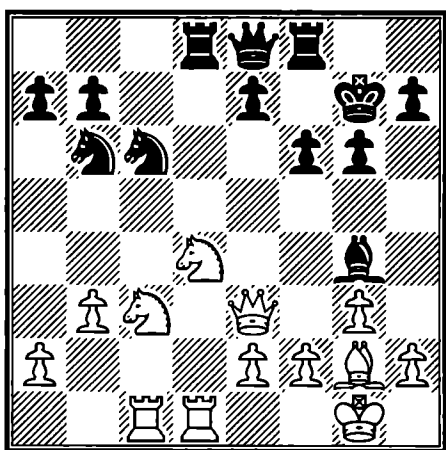
15. ♗xg7 ♖xg7 16. b3

Limiting the activity of the knight on b6 and preparing ♖b2 in certain positions.

16...f6 17. ♖e3 ♖d8?!

17...♗b4 improves.

18. ♖ac1 ♗g4 19. ♗d4!



White has a big edge after this move, which brings the g2-bishop into the game with dramatic effect.

19... ♗xd4 20. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 21. ♖xd4 ♗c8 22. a4

Going after the a-pawn.

22... ♖f7 23. a5 ♗d7 24. ♗d5

White wants to provoke ...e5 to create weaknesses in Black's position.

24...e6 25. ♗g2 e5 26. ♖d5

This is a matter of taste, as 26. ♖xa7 ♖xb3 27. ♗e4, intending 28. ♗d6, was very strong.

26...b6

The only chance. Cartagena is an excellent practical player and realizes that if his pawns get stuck on a6 and b7, it is hopeless.

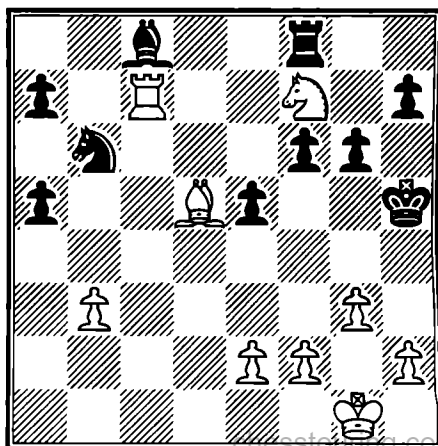
27. ♗b5

Again, staying in the middlegame was an attractive alternative (27. ♖a8).

27... ♖xd5 28. ♗xd5 bxa5 29. ♖c7 ♖h6 30. ♗d6 ♗b6

It looks like Black saves himself with this move, but big positional advantages don't disappear so easily.

31. ♗f7+ ♖h5

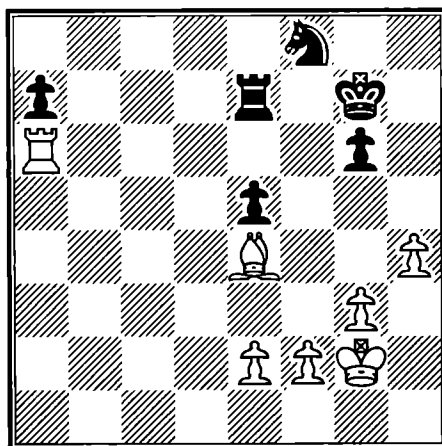


32. ♖f3+

Now 32. ♖xc8?? ♘xc8 33. ♖f3# would be a dream, but 32... ♖xf7 is a nightmare!

32... ♖g4 33. ♘xe5!

This is the logical culmination of White's play. The little combination breaks Black's position.



33... fxe5

33... ♖xf3 34. ♖xh7+ ♖g5 35. ♘xf3+ ♖f5 36. ♖xa7 is an easy win.

34. ♖xh7+ ♖g5 35. h4+ ♖f6

35... ♖f5 36. e4+ ♖f6 37. ♖xg4 is also winning.

36. ♖xg4 ♖f7

Again, Black shows his fighting qualities. After the trade of rooks, he will play ...a5-a4 and create a dangerous passed pawn. Remember rook + bishop generally work better than rook + knight on an open board.

37. ♖h8 a4 38. bxa4 ♘xa4 39. ♖c8 ♖e7

This guards against ♖c6-e6.

40. ♖c6+ ♖g7 41. ♖g2 ♘b6 42. ♖e6 ♘a8 43. ♖d5 ♘c7 44. ♖e4

The rook and bishop completely restrict Black's counterplay, and White is free to advance his king and pawns.

44... ♘e6 45. ♖a6 ♘f8

46. g4

The idea is to play g4-g5, tying Black down to the weakness on g6. Black can only wait.

46... ♘e6 47. e3 ♘f8 48. g5 ♘e6 49. ♖g3 ♘f8 50. ♖g4 ♘e6 51. ♖c6 ♘f8 52. f3 ♘e6 53. f4 exf4 54. exf4 ♘xg5

This is as good a try as any. Rook and two connected passed pawns are a winning combination, but on 54... ♘f8, White had 55. ♖c2, followed by h4-h5, ♖xh5, ♖g4 and f4-f5-f6, etc.

55. ♖xg6+ ♖f7 56. hxg5 ♖xe4 57. ♖a6 ♖b4

Going completely passive with 57... ♖e7 would lose in short order to 58. f5, followed by ♖h5 and the advance of the pawns.

58. ♖xa7+ ♖g6 59. ♖a6+ ♖g7 60. ♖d6 ♖a4 61. ♖f5 ♖a5+ 62. ♖e4 ♖a1 63. ♖e5 ♖e1+ 64. ♖f5 ♖e7 65. g6 ♖h6 66. ♖f6 ♖a7 67. f5 ♖b7 68. ♖e6 ♖a7 69. ♖e7 ♖a6+ 70. ♖f7 ♖a5 71. f6 1-0

Game 158
Garry Kasparov –
Nigel Short
 Paris rapid (3) 1990
 English Opening [A10]

1.c4 f5 2.♟f3 ♟f6 3.g3 e6 4.♞g2

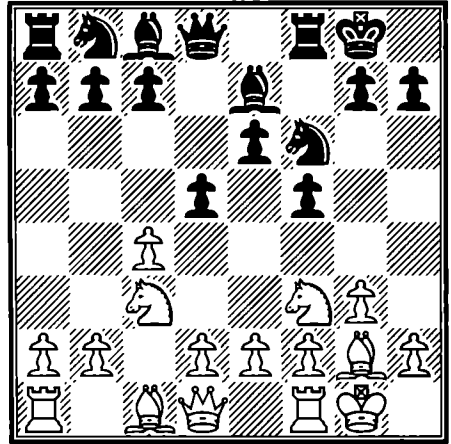
Those who like to face the Dutch only after Black has committed to ...e6 might want to consider variations based on trading dark-squared bishops. Here is one good example of the b2-b3 and ♞c1-a3 plan. Note that with our advocacy of the Catalan, Black might get a Stonewall via 1.♟f3 d5 2.c4 e6 3.g3 ♟f6 4.♞g2 ♞e7 5.d4 0-0 6.0-0 c6 7.♝c2 ♟e4. White could still play ♞a3 or adopt a more traditional treatment with ♟bd2, ♟e5, ♟d3 and ♟f3. The Catalan Stonewall is rather rigid (no early ...♞d6 and a very early ...♟e4): 4.♞g2 d5 5.d4 c6 6.0-0 ♞d6 7.b3 ♝e7 8.♞b2 0-0 9.♝c1 b6 10.♞a3 ♞×a3 11.♟×a3 ♞b7 12.♝b2 ♟bd7 13.♞ac1 ♞fc8 14.♞fd1 ♟e4 15.e3 a6?! (15...c5±) 16.♟c2 c5 17.♟ce1 d×c4 18.b×c4 c×d4 19.e×d4 ♟d6 20.♝e2 ♞c7 21.♟d2 ♞×g2 22.♟×g2 e5 23.♟f4! ♞c6 24.♟d5 ♝e8 25.d×e5 ♟×e5 26.♞e1 ♟g6 27.♝d3 ♝d8 28.♟f3 ♞ac8 29.♞cd1! ♞×c4 (29...♟×c4 30.♟e7+ ♝×e7 31.♞×e7 ♟×e7 32.♝d7 ♞6c7 33.♝e6+ ♟h8 34.♞d7+-) 30.♟e3 ♞4c6 31.♟×f5 ♞c3 32.♝×d6 ♝×d6 33.♟×d6 ♞d8 34.♟g2 ♞c2 35.a4 ♞a2 36.♞d4± Magerramov-Panchenko, Bad Worishofen 1994.

4...♞e7

Or 4...d5 5.c×d5 e×d5 6.0-0 ♞e7 7.b3 0-0 8.♞b2 c6 9.e3 a5 10.♟c3 ♟a6 11.a3 ♟c5 12.♝c2 ♟fe4 13.♟e2 ♟e6 14.d3 ♟d6 15.♞e5 ♞f6 16.♞×f6 ♝×f6

17.♟fd4 h6 18.♞ab1 ♞d7 19.b4 a×b4 20.a×b4 ♟c7 21.♟c3 ♟h8 22.♞a1 ♞×a1 23.♞×a1 ♟cb5 24.♟d×b5 ♟×b5 25.d4± Psakhis-Vaisser, Tel Aviv 1992.

5.0-0 0-0 6.♟c3 d5



Trying to head for the Stonewall.

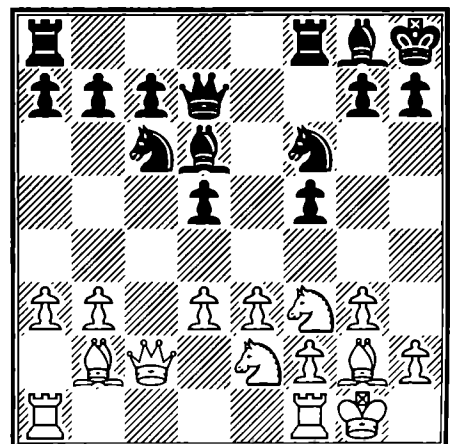
7.c×d5

Unbalancing the pawn structure, Kasparov sets the groundwork for a later minority attack with b2-b4-b5.

7...e×d5 8.e3

This makes it hard for Black to get in ...f5-f4.

8...♟h8 9.b3 ♟c6 10.♞b2 ♞e6 11.♟e2 ♞g8 12.d3 ♝d7 13.a3 ♞d6 14.♝c2



White's solid and flexible setup is more commonly seen with colors reversed in openings like the Hedgehog English and Paulsen Sicilian. In those openings, the pawns would be on e5 and c5, while here they are on d5 and f5, which isn't as good.

14...♖ae8 15.b4

Starting a long-term siege on Black's queenside. It may seem a little slow, but it's always there. Black, on the other hand, has no concrete play, as White's king is too safe to attack.

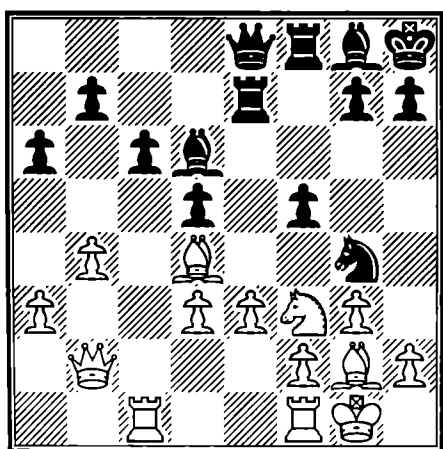
15...♟g4 16.♟ed4 ♟ce5 17.♖ac1 c6 18.♙c3

Kasparov prepares to bring his queen to b2, where it will support the advance b5, while putting pressure on g7.

18...♟xf3+ 19.♟xf3 ♖e7 20.♚b2 ♚e8 21.♙d4!

Forcing Black to defend the a-pawn, but with something bigger in mind.

21...a6



22.♙c5!

Trading the bishops means one less attacker to have to worry about. White

rules the dark squares after the bishop swap.

22...♖f6 23.♙xd6 ♖xd6 24.♚d4!

Centralizing the queen.

24...♙f7 25.a4

The long awaited minority attack rears its head. Kasparov, like Karpov, who has won several beautiful QGD Exchange Variations, knows how to time b4-b5 so that it has maximum effect.

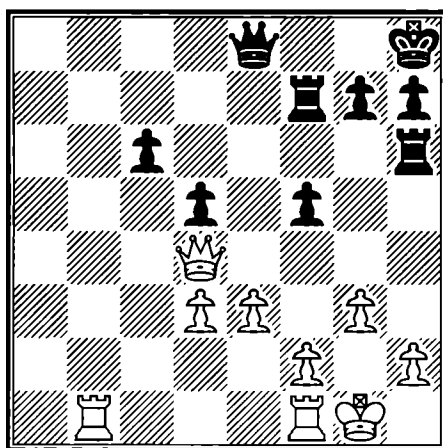
25...♙h5

Short recognizes what is happening and hastens to organize a kingside attack.

26.♖b1 ♟h6 27.b5 a×b5 28.a×b5 ♙×f3 29.♙×f3 ♟f7 30.♙h5!

White's advantage will be easier to realize with only heavy pieces on the board.

30...♖h6 31.♙×f7 ♖×f7 32.b×c6 b×c6



33.♖b6

This position could easily have arisen from a QGD Exchange Variation if not

for White's pawn being on d3 instead of d4. This obviously favors White. Look at that beautiful queen which surveys almost the entire board!

33...♖f8 34.♗c5 g5

Preparing ...f5-f4, which is Black's only chance for counterplay.

35.♖c1 f4 36.e×f4

When you are being attacked on a wing, it's always useful to open up the center as much as possible.

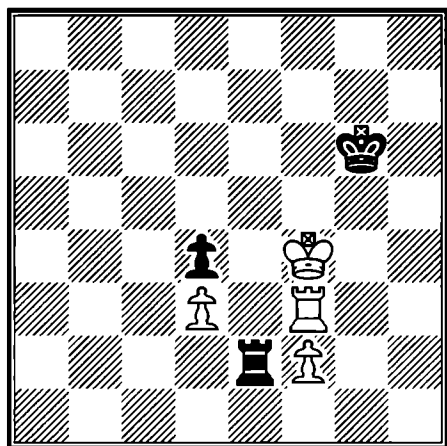
36...g×f4 37.♖×c6 ♖×c6 38.♗×c6 ♗×c6 39.♖×c6 ♖a8 40.♖f6

40.♖d6 f3.

40...f×g3 41.h×g3 ♖a3 42.♖f3 ♗g7

This rook ending, if not already lost, is very difficult for Black, because of his weak pawn on d5 and bad king. White wouldn't mind trading his d-pawn for the enemy h-pawn: connected passers almost always win.

43.♗g2 d4 44.♗h3 h5 45.♗h4 ♗g6 46.g4 h×g4 47.♗×g4 ♖a2 48.♗f4 ♖e2



49.♖g3+ ♗f6 50.♖g2 ♗e6 51.♗f3 ♖e1 52.♖g4 ♗d5 53.♖g5+ ♗d6 54.♖a5 ♗e6 55.♖a2 ♗d5 56.♗f4 ♗d6 57.♗f5 ♗c5 58.f4 ♗b4 59.♖c2 1-0

The Réti Opening is another key part of our repertoire. It is very straightforward to understand and exceedingly effective against players who are not prepared to face it, and even against well-prepared players, White has excellent chances of obtaining a good game.

Game 159

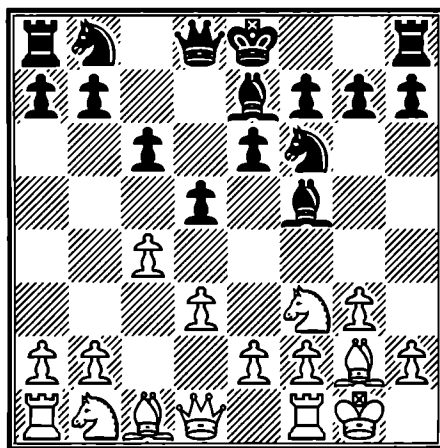
Zoltan Ribli –

Alex Sherzer

Hungary 1995

English Opening [A12]

1.♖f3 ♖f6 2.g3 d5 3.♖g2 ♖f5 4.d3 e6 5.0-0 ♖e7 6.c4 c6



It isn't in Black's interest to exchange on c4 in order to get the queen's off the board, as White will end up with more space and better-coordinated pieces. If you are concerned with the queen exchange against a lower rated player, you can play 6.b3, followed by 7.c4, which will transpose to the same type of position. However, this somewhat restricts White's options, as we will see in the next game.

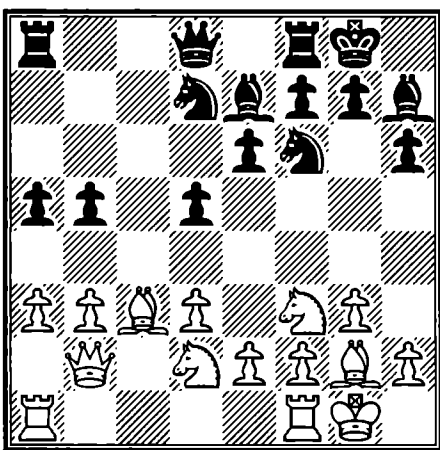
**7.b3 0-0 8.♙b2 ♘bd7 9.♘bd2 a5
10.a3 h6 11.♚c2 ♙h7 12.♙c3**

White prepares ♚b2. From there the queen will control e5 and support the advance b3-b4-b5.

12...b5

An attempt to create active counterplay. In Psakhis-Ubilava, USSR 1983, Black landed in a passive position after: 12...♙d6?! 13.b4 a×b4 14.a×b4 ♚e7 15.c5 ♙c7 16.e4! d×e4 17.d×e4 ♖fb8 18.♘d4! ♘d5 19.♘c4 ♘×c3 20.♚×c3, and White was completely in control. Another try is 12...♖e8, as in Petrosian-Furman, Soviet ch 1975, but upon 13.♚b2 ♙d6 14.♘e5 ♙×e5 15.♙×e5 ♘×e5 16.♚×e5 ♚b6 17.h3 ♖ad8 18.♖fb1 ♘d7 19.♚c3 ♖a8 20.b4 a×b4 21.a×b4 ♖ec8 22.♖b3, White will claim the a-file with better chances.

13.c×b5 c×b5 14.♚b2!



14...♚b6

After 14...♖c8 15.♖fc1 ♖e8 16.♘e5 ♘×e5 17.♙×e5 ♚d7 18.b4 a×b4 19.♖×c8 ♖×c8 20.a×b4, White had the better position in Sunye Neto-Christiansen, Mexico 1980. *ECO*'s recommendation 14...b4, leaves White on

top: 15.a×b4 a×b4 16.♙d4 ♙d6 17.e4! (*ECO* only mentions 17.♖×a8, which allows Black to equalize) 17...♖×a1 18.♖×a1 d×e4 19.d×e4 ♙b8 20.e5 ♘d5 21.♘c4, followed by ♘fd2-e4, with penetration of the dark squares in the center.

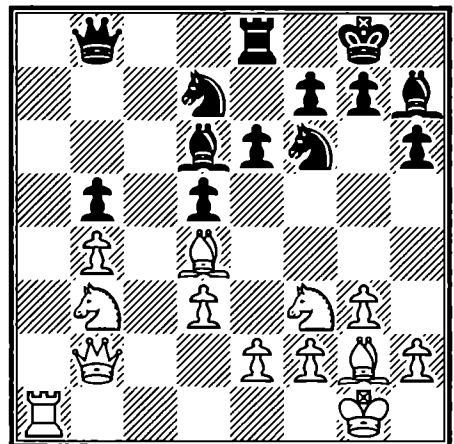
15.b4! a×b4 16.a×b4 ♖fc8

16...♖a4 17.♖fc1 ♖fa8 18.♘b3 ±.

**17.♖×a8 ♖×a8 18.♘b3 ♙d6
19.♖a1! ♖e8**

Upon 19...♖×a1+ 20.♚×a1, White has a small, clear advantage thanks to his control of the dark squares in the center, preventing Black from generating counterplay.

20.♙d4 ♚b8



21.♙c5!

The queenside penetration begins.

21...e5 22.♖a6 ♘×c5

Or 22...♙×c5 23.b×c5 e4 24.d×e4 d×e4 25.♘fd4 ±.

23.b×c5

This passed pawn is a major asset.

23...♙c7 24.d4 e4 25.♗e5! ♕×e5
26.d×e5 ♗d7

Both 26...♙×e5 27.♙×e5 ♖×e5 28.♗d4
and 26...♖×e5 27.♗d4 leave White
clearly better.

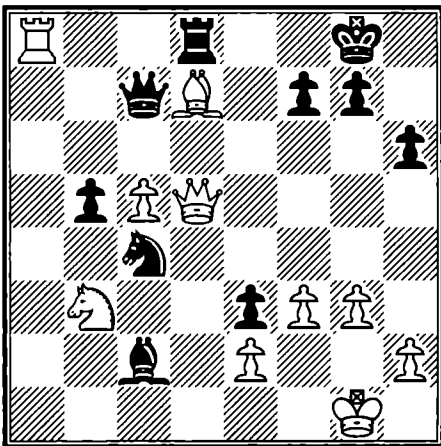
27.♙d4 ♗×e5

If Black takes on e5 with the queen or
the rook, then White will advance his
c-pawn with decisive effect.

28.♙×d5 ♗c4 29.♙h3! e3 30.f3
♖d8 31.♙d7! ♙c7

Or 31...♗e5 32.♖b6 ♙c7 33.♖b7
♖×d7 (33...♙c8 34 c6) 34.♖×c7 ♖×d5
35.♖c8+ (Ribli).

32.♖a8! ♙c2



33.♙f5! 1-0

Game 160

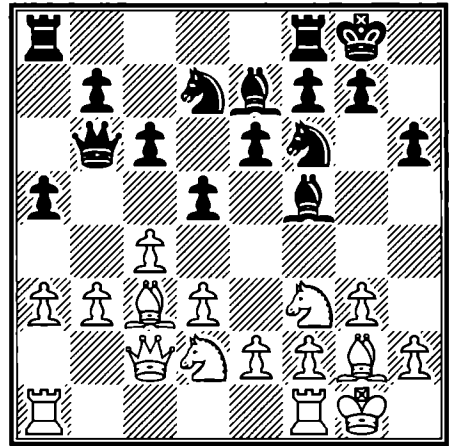
Vladimir Bagirov –

Abram Khasin

Seniors Wch (11) 1999

English Opening [A12]

1.♗f3 d5 2.g3 ♗f6 3.♙g2 ♙f5
4.0-0 e6 5.d3 ♙e7 6.♗bd2 c6 7.b3
0-0 8.♙b2 ♗bd7 9.c4 a5 10.a3
♙b6 11.♙c2 h6 12.♙c3

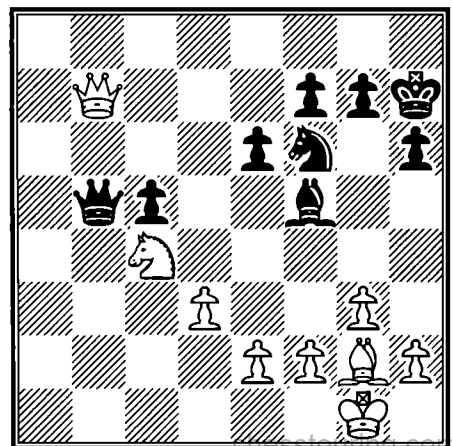


Again, we see White's typical plan in
action.

12...♖fd8 13.♙b2

In Smyslov-Djurasevic, USSR-Yugo-
slavia 1956, Black tried 13...♗c5 to
prevent White from advancing his b-
pawn on account of 14.b4 ♗a4, but
Smyslov found an excellent way
around this by playing 14.♙d4 d×c4
15.d×c4 ♙c7 16.b4, and after 16...a×b4
17.a×b4 ♗cd7 18.♖×a8 ♖×a8 19.c5,
White was in control of the game.

13...♗e8 14.b4 ♙f6!? 15.♖ab1
a×b4 16.a×b4 ♖a4 17.b5 c5
18.♙×f6 ♗exf6 19.♖a1 ♖da8
20.♗e5 ♗×e5 21.♙×e5 ♖×a1
22.♖×a1 ♖×a1+ 23.♙×a1 d×c4
24.♗×c4 ♙×b5 25.♙a8+ ♗h7
26.♙×b7



The massive exchanges have left White with a small, obvious advantage because of Black's weak queenside pawn and his less-coordinated pieces. Black can probably hold the endgame, but he is definitely suffering.

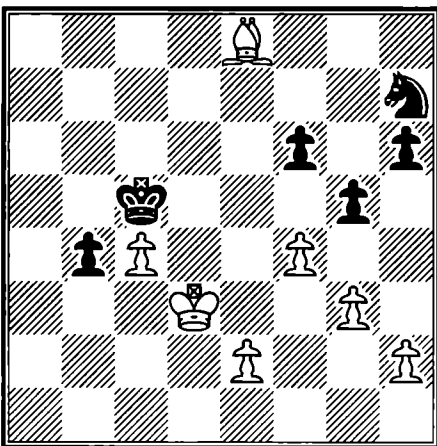
26...♖b4

If Black exchanges on b7, White will play f2-f3 and send his king to the queenside to attack the c-pawn, while Black will have a difficult time mobilizing his minor pieces for an effective defense.

27.♗×b4 c×b4 28.♙c6 e5?!

It looks a bit desperate to give up a pawn before White has actually threatened anything, but Black wants counterplay.

29.♘×e5 ♙e6 30.♘c4 ♙×c4
31.d×c4 ♗g8 32.f3 ♗f8 33.♗f2
♗e7 34.♗e3 ♗d6 35.♙a4 ♗c5
36.♗d3 ♘h7 37.♙e8 f6 38.f4 g5?



Now the bishop traps Black's knight. He should have played 38...♘f8.

39.♙g6 ♘f8 40.♙f5 g×f4 41.g×f4
b3 42.♗c3 b2 43.♗×b2 ♗×c4
44.e3 ♘e6

A last frantic attempt, but White has it covered and wins in short order.

45.♙×e6+ ♗d3 46.f5 h5 47.h4
♗×e3 48.♗c3 ♗f4 49.♗d4 ♗g4
50.♗e4 ♗×h4 51.♗f4 ♗h3
52.♙f7 h4 53.♙d5 1-0

Game 161

Marko Tratar –

Evgeny Sveshnikov

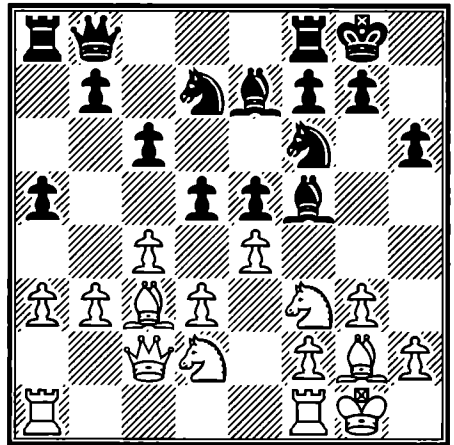
Bled (8) 1999

English Opening [A12]

1.♘f3 d5 2.g3 c6 3.♙g2 ♘f6
4.0-0 ♙f5 5.d3 e6 6.♘bd2 ♙e7
7.b3 a5 8.a3 0-0 9.♙b2 ♘bd7
10.c4 h6 11.♗c2 ♗b8

The main alternatives 11...♙h7 and 11...♗b6 were discussed in the previous games.

12.♙c3 e5 13.e4!

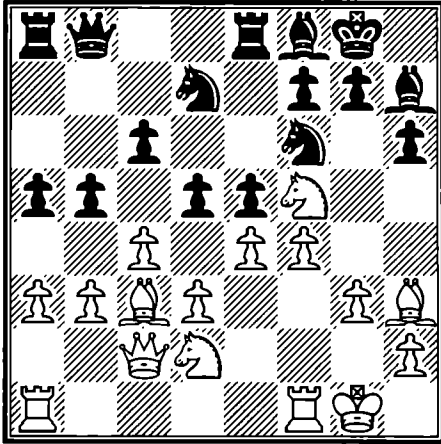


This plan is noteworthy: Black weakened the f5-square with his last aggressive move, and now rather than proceeding with his usual plan of advancing the b-pawn, White seamlessly switches to exploiting Black's indiscretion on the kingside.

13...♙h7 14.♘h4 ♙e8 15.♙h3!

White doesn't achieve anything by 15.exd5 cxd5 16.cxd5 dxc5 17.dxe4 dxcxe4 18.dxe4 dxd5, as the e-pawn is pinned and Black is in command of the game.

15...b5 16.dxf5 Qf8 17.f4!



Just the right recipe, White forces Black to consider his options carefully.

17...b4

Black tries to close the position because White's pieces are better-coordinated and more active, but it limits Black's counterplay, and White ends up with a rather safe plus. Yet, the alternatives are even worse: 17...Qc5+ 18.Qh1, and now:

- a) 18...dxc4 19.bxc4 Qxf5 20.Qxf5±.
- b) 18...Qb6 19.fxe5 dxe5 20.dhx6+ Qf8 21.dfx5±.
- c) 18...Qxf5 19.Qxf5 dxe4 20.dxe4 Qd4 21.b4! Qxc3 22.Qxc3 axb4 23.axb4 Bxa1 24.Bxa1 exf4 and White's superior coordination leaves him much better after 25.Qd4! Be7 26.cxb5 cxb5 27.Ba7! Qe8 28.gxf4.

18.axb4 Qxb4

Or 18...axb4 19.Bxa8 Qxa8 20.Qb2 Qa7+ 21.Qh1 exf4 22.gxf4! dxe4

23.dxe4 Qc5 24.e5 d5 25.Qd1 and White is much better.

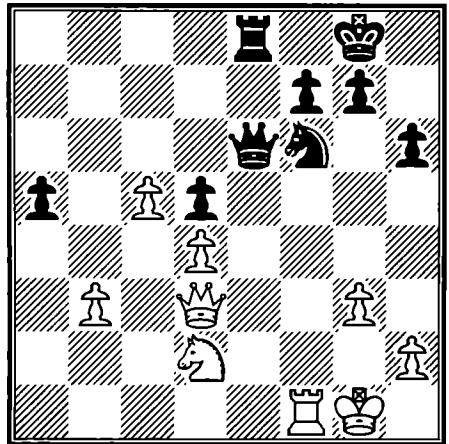
19.fxe5 Qxc3 20.Qxc3 Bxe5 21.exd5 cxd5 22.d4 Be2 23.Bae1

White plays it safe. A worthy alternative is 23.Bxa5 Bxa5 24.Qxa5 Qe8 25.Qc3, and White should be able to convert his advantage to victory.

23...Qxf5 24.Qxf5 Qe8 25.Bxe2 Qxe2 26.c5 d4 27.Qxg4 Qxg4 28.dxf3 dxf6 29.dxe5 Qe6 30.dfx3 dxe4

Or 30...Qg4, inviting to a draw by repetition with 31.dxe5.

31.Qd3 Be8 32.d2 d6



32...d4 may be a better way to keep White's knight away from f3, where it can support the threat of Be1. If White plays 33.h4, then Black's knight will return to e4 and enjoy the additional weaknesses provided by the pawn thrust.

33.dfx3 Qe3+ 34.Qxe3 Bxe3 35.dxe5 Bxb3 36.Ba1 dxe4 37.Bxa5 f6 38.dxc6 Qf7

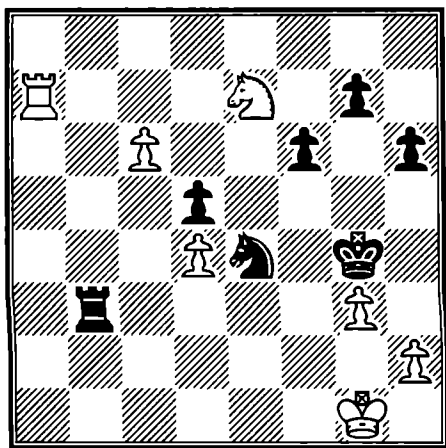
Black makes a spirited attempt at counterplay by marching his king along

the g-file, but 38...♖b1+ 39.♔g2 ♖b2+ 40.♔f3 ♖xh2 is probably better.

39.♖a7+ ♔g6 40.♗e7+ ♔g5 41.c6?!

41.♗xh6 is the simplest win: 41...♔g4 42.♖a1! (not 42.♖xg7+?? ♔f3, when Black wins) 42...♖d3 43.c6 ♖xd4 44.c7.

41...♔g4



42.c7??

Throwing away the win, which was possible with 42.♗xd5 ♖b1+ 43.♔g2 ♖b2+ 44.♔f1 ♖xh2 45.c7 ♗d6 46.♖a6.

42...♗d6??

This is a surprising blunder, immediately after the time control. Black can draw by 42...♖b1+ 43.♔g2 ♖b2+ 44.♔f1 ♖b1+ 45.♔e2 ♖b2+ 46.♔d3 ♗f2+ 47.♔c3 ♗d1+ 48.♔d3 ♗f2+ with a perpetual.

43.c8♖+ ♗xc8 44.♗xc8 g5 45.♗e7 ♖b1+ 46.♔f2 ♖b2+ 47.♔e3 ♖xh2 48.♗xd5 f5 49.♖f7 ♖g2

It looks as if Black has counterplay with his three pawns on the kingside, so it is remarkable how quickly things end.

50.♔d3 ♖xg3+ 51.♗e3+ ♔h5 52.♖xf5 ♖g1 53.d5 ♔g6 54.d6 ♖a1 55.d7 ♖a8 56.♖d5 ♖d8 57.♖d6+ ♔f7 58.♗f5 g4 59.♗xh6+ ♔f8 60.♔e3 ♔g7 61.♗f5+ ♔h7 1-0

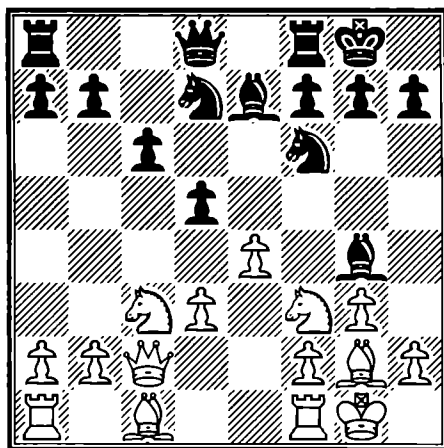
Game 162

Valery Loginov – Kevin Spraggett

Moscow ol (11) 1994

English Opening [A11]

1.♗f3 ♗f6 2.g3 d5 3.♖g2 c6 4.0-0 ♖g4 5.c4 e6 6.d3 ♗bd7 7.cxd5 exd5 8.♖c2 ♖e7 9.e4 0-0 10.♗c3



White achieves less after 10.e5 ♗e8 11.d4 ♗c7 12.♖e3 ♖h5, with chances for both sides according to Loginov.

10...♖c8

10...♖e8? 11.e5 ♗h5 12.h3 is clearly better for White.

10...♗c5 is ECO's main line; however, after 11.♗e5 ♖e6 12.f4 ♖c7, they evaluate the position as equal, yet White seems to have better chances upon

13. ♖e3!? d×e4 14. d×e4 with more space and an easier game.

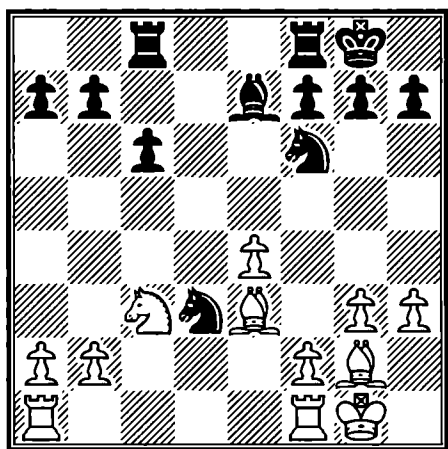
11. h3 ♖×f3

The alternatives 11... ♖h5 12. ♖h4 and 11... ♖e6 12. ♖d4 are both pleasant for White.

12. ♖×f3 ♖e5 13. ♖g2 d×e4

13... d4 14. ♖e2 c5 15. f4 ♖c6 16. ♖d2 leaves White with a wall of pawns to storm Black's king.

14. d×e4 ♖d3 15. ♖×d3 ♖×d3 16. ♖e3



16... b6?

Even the endgames that arise after 16... ♖×b2 are problematic for Black. Upon 17. ♖fb1, we have:

a) 17... ♖a3 18. ♖c1 ♖c4 19. ♖×a3 ♖×a3 20. ♖×b7.

b) 17... ♖b4!? 18. ♖e2 ♖d3? (18... ♖a3 19. ♖d4) 19. ♖b3 ♖fd8 20. ♖d1 and White wins.

c) 17... ♖c4 is probably best: 18. ♖×b7 ♖×e3 19. ♖×e7 ♖×g2 20. ♖×g2 and White has better chances thanks to his more active pieces.

17. ♖ab1 ♖fd8 18. ♖fd1 ♖b4 19. ♖e2 c5? 20. a3 ♖a5 21. e5! 1-0

Black resigned on account of 21... ♖×e5 22. ♖×d8+ ♖×d8 23. b4+ or 21... ♖e8 22. ♖e4 ♖×e5 23. ♖×d8 ♖×d8 24. b4, in both cases winning a piece for White.

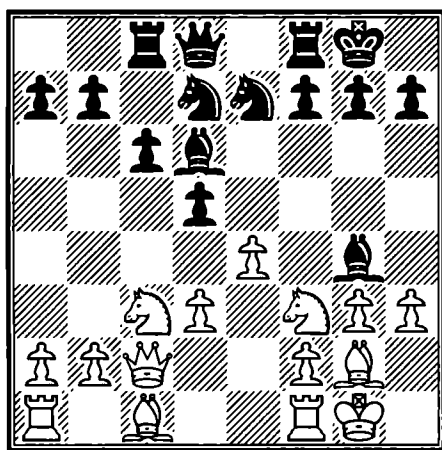
Game 163

*Gerhard Schebler –
Oleg Korneev*

Bundesliga (9) 2007

English Opening [A11]

1. ♖f3 d5 2. g3 ♖g4 3. ♖g2 ♖d7 4. c4 e6 5. c×d5 e×d5 6. 0-0 c6 7. d3 ♖d6 8. ♖c2 ♖e7 9. e4 0-0 10. ♖c3 ♖c8 11. h3



White got nothing after 11. ♖e3 ♖c5 12. ♖×c5 ♖×c5 13. ♖e5 ♖h5 14. f4 f6 15. ♖f3 ♖b6 16. ♖h1 d×e4 17. d×e4 ♖cd8 18. ♖ad1 ½-½, Pigusov-Popov, St. Petersburg 1998.

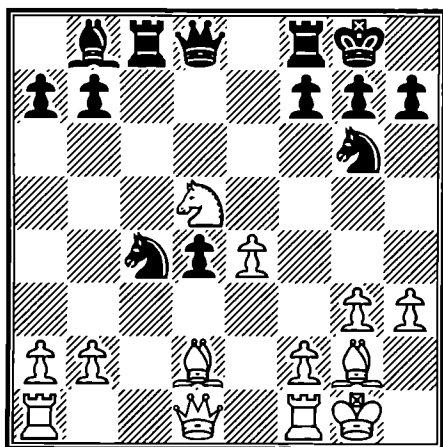
12... ♖h5

Or 11... ♖×f3 12. ♖×f3 ♖e5 13. ♖g2 ♖c5 (13... ♖b6 14. ♖e3 d4 15. ♖a4±) 14. ♖d1! ♖b6 15. d4 ♖5g6 16. e5 ♖d7 17. ♖a4 with a better game for White.

12. ♖e3 ♖b8 13. ♖e2

13.g4!? ♖g6 14.♞ad1 is worth a try.

13...c5 14.♟f4 ♕xf3 15.♕xf3 d4
16.♕d2 ♟e5 17.♞d1!? ♟7g6
18.♖g2 c4 19.dxc4 ♟xc4 20.♟d5!



20...♟xb2 21.♞b3 ♟c4 22.♞ad1
♟e7 23.♖g5 f6 24.♕c1 ♟xd5
25.♞xd4 ♞b6 26.♞xd5 ♞xb3
27.axb3 ♟b6 28.♞b5

White is clearly better: he has the bishop-pair and Black's queenside and knight are completely tied down.

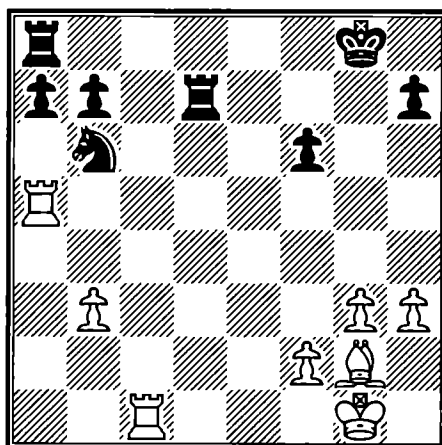
28...♞fd8 29.♕e3 ♕e5 30.♞a5
♞a8 31.♞c1!

White can win a pawn by 31.♞xa7 ♞xa7 32.♕xb6, but the endgame after 32...♞aa8 33.♕xd8 ♞xd8 is nearly impossible to win (especially at this level), because of the opposite-colored bishops.

31...♕d4 32.♕xd4 ♞xd4 33.e5
♞d7 34.exf6 gxf6

There are relatively few pieces left on the board, but Black is close to being lost because of his bad pawn structure and poorly-coordinated pieces. White's best is probably 35.♞e1, intending ♞e1-e6xb6, 35...♞f7 36.♞e4 ♟c8

37.♞h5 ♞g8 38.♞e8+ ♞g7 39.♕e4
and Black is done.



35.♞cc5 a6 36.♞f5 ♞f8 37.♞f4
♟c8 38.♞af5

White can also consider 38.♞d5 ♞e7
39.♞fd4.

38...♞g7 39.♞g4+ ♞h6?

Of course 40...♞h8 is better, even if White is clearly in command.

40.♕e4 1-0

Threatening 41.♞h5+ ♞xh5 42.♞h4+
♞g5 43.f4 mate!

Game 164

Ulf Andersson –

Edvins Kengis

Yerevan ol (13) 1996

English Opening [A13]

1.♟f3 ♟f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3

As I (JD) mentioned in the introduction, this is one of the toughest move-order decisions in the whole repertoire. The question is whether to play the text or ♟c3.

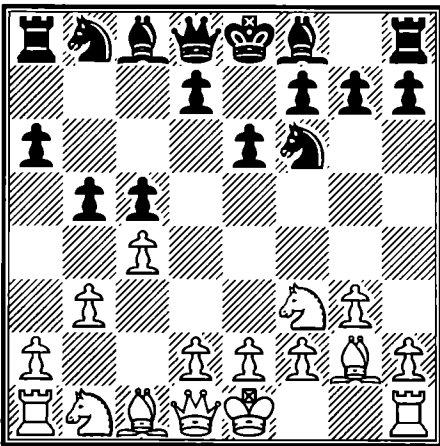
3...a6 4.b3

Black's idea is 4. ♖g2 b5 5. cxb5 axb5 6. ♗d4 c6 7. ♗xb5 cxb5 8. ♖xa8 d5 with sharp complications. After 4. d4 d5 (4...b5!?) 5. ♖g2 dxc4, White can try to transpose to a gambit line of the Catalan.

4...c5

The alternative 4...b5 is discussed in Games 165 and 166.

5. ♖g2 b5



5...b6 6.d4 cxd4 (6...♖b7 7.d5 exd5 8. ♗h4) 7. ♗xd4 ♖a7 8. ♗c3 is possibly better for White, though one should avoid 8...♖b7 9.e4?! because of 9...♖b4 10. ♖d2 ♖xc3 11. ♖xc3 ♗xe4. Another idea is 6. ♗e5!?, e.g. 6...d5 7. cxd5 exd5 8. 0-0 ♖e7 9. ♖b2 0-0 10. d4 ♖b7 11. ♗d2 and we have a position akin to the Queen's Indian Defense Fianchetto Variation, though with Black wasting time on ...a6.

6. ♗c3 ♖b6 7. 0-0 ♖b7 8. ♖b2 ♖e7 9. d4 cxd4 10. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 11. ♗xd4 ♖xg2 12. ♖xg2 bxc4

Or 12...♗c6 13. ♖fd1 ♖b8 14. ♗xc6 dxc6 15. cxb5 cxb5 16. e3 0-0 17. ♗e2 ♖fc8 18. ♖ac1 with a tiny edge for White, as in Marin-Ionov, Benasque 1996.

13. bxc4 d6 14. ♗a4 ♗bd7 15. ♖fd1 ♖c8 16. ♖ac1 0-0 17. ♗b3 ♗e4 18. ♖d4 ♖fd8 19. f3 ♗ec5 20. ♗axc5 ♗xc5 21. ♗xc5 dxc5 22. ♖e3 ♖xd1 23. ♖xd1 ♖b8 24. ♖d7 ♖f8?

Better is 24...♖f8, centralizing the king.

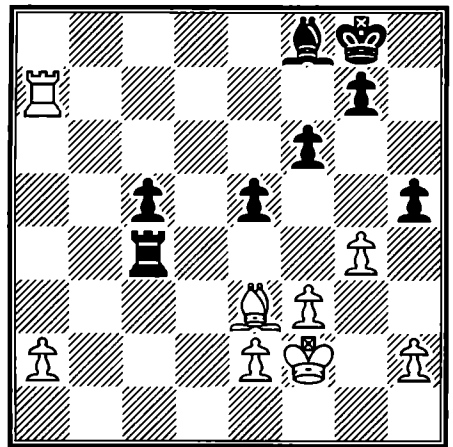
25. ♖a7 ♖b4

25...♖b2?! 26. ♖f2 ♖xa2? 27. ♖a8! ♖a5 28. ♖f4.

26. ♖xa6 ♖xc4 27. ♖f2 e5 28. g4 f6

White is somewhat better, but Black shouldn't lose. However, Anderson is a wizard in the endgame and he now begins to work his magic.

29. ♖a7 h5!?



Trying to get counterplay.

30. g×h5 f5 31. ♖g5 e4 32. ♖f4 exf3 33. ♖xf3 ♖c3+ 34. e3 c4 35. ♖e5 ♖c2 36. a4 ♖a2 37. a5 ♖h7 38. a6 ♖a5 39. ♖c3 ♖a3 40. ♖d4

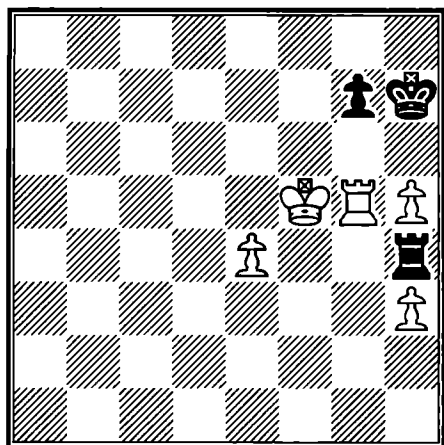
More accurate is 40. ♖b2! with the initiative.

40...c3 41. ♖a8 c2 42. ♖b2 ♖a2

43. ♖xf8 ♜xb2 44. ♖c8 ♜a2
45. ♕f4 ♜xa6 46. ♖xc2 ♖e6

Not 47...g6? in view of 48. ♕g5!

47. ♖e2 ♜h6 48. ♕g5 ♖f6 49. h3
♖f7 50. ♖f2 ♖e7 51. ♖f3 ♖e5
52. ♕f4 ♜a5 53. ♖g3 ♖b5 54. ♖g5
♖b4+ 55. ♕xf5 ♖h4 56. e4



56... ♖xh3 57. e5 ♕g8 58. ♕e6 ♕f8
59. ♖f5+ ♕g8 60. ♖g5 ♕f8
61. ♖f5+ ♕e8 62. ♖f7 ♖xh5
63. ♖e7+ ♕f8 64. ♕d7 g6!

This defends against the immediate threat of 65. ♖e8+ ♕f7 66. g6+. If 64...g5, then 65. e6 is a winner.

65. ♕d8 ♖h1 66. e6 ♖e1 67. ♖f7+
♕g8 68. ♕e7 ♖e2 69. ♕d7 ♜a2
70. ♖f1!?

Or 70. ♖f8+ ♕xf8 71. e7+ ♕g7
72. e8=♖, and after 72...♖f2, the position is a theoretical draw.

70... ♖a7+?!

Black has defended well, but here he loses the thread. 70... ♕g7 was an easy draw.

71. ♕e8 ♖a8+ 72. ♕e7 ♖a2?

Black still has a draw by 72... ♕g7!
73. ♖f7+ ♕g8! 74. ♕f6 ♖f8!.

73. ♖d1 ♕g7 74. ♕e8 ♖a8+

Or 74...g5 75. e7 ♕g6 76. ♕d7 ♖e2
77. e8=♖+ ♖xe8 78. ♕xe8 ♕f5 79. ♕f7
g4 80. ♖g1!.

75. ♖d8 1-0

Game 165

*Marat Makarov –
Aleksei Lugovoi*

Russian ch, Elista (1.6) 1997
English Opening [A13]

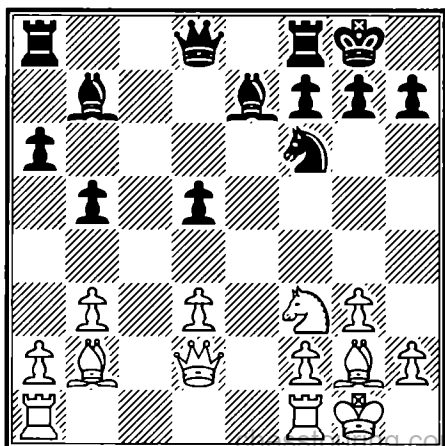
1. ♖f3 ♖f6 2. c4 a6 3. b3 e6 4. g3 b5
5. ♖c3 c6

The normal move, 5...b4, is covered in Game 166.

6. ♖g2 d5 7. 0-0 ♖e7 8. d3 0-0
9. e4! ♖b7 10. exd5 exd5 11. cxd5
♖xd5 12. ♖xd5 cxd5

Or 12... ♖xd5 13. ♖b2 ♖d6 14. ♖e1
♖d7 15. ♖d4 ♖f6 16. ♖f5 ♖c5 17. ♖xf6
♖xf5 18. ♖d4 with a better game for White.

13. ♖b2 ♖d7 14. ♖d2 ♖f6



15. ♖d4! ♜d7 16. ♜f4 ♙d6
17. ♜f5!

White correctly judges that exchanging queens is the best way to exploit his advantage. Now Black should have played 17... ♜fe8.

17... ♜fd8 18. ♜x d7! ♖x d7
19. ♖f5 ♙f8 20. ♜ac1 g6?!

This is unnecessary, which is a good reason to do without it. Better is 20... ♜ac8.

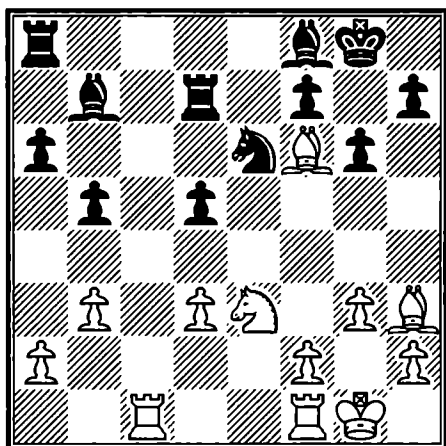
21. ♖e3 ♖c5 22. ♙f6!

This innocent little threat to Black's rook is of major long-term importance. If Black hadn't played ...g6, this wouldn't have been possible.

22... ♜d7 23. ♙h3!?

If 23.d4, then 23... ♖e4 is playable for Black; 23. ♜fd1 d4 is also acceptable.

23... ♖e6?



This natural moves lands Black in trouble. Instead, the counterpunch 23...d4!? appears to work for Black, e.g. 24. ♙x d7 dxe3! 25. ♜xc5 ♙xc5 26. d4 ♙x d4! 27. ♙x d4 ♜d8 (not 27... exf2+??

28. ♙xf2+-) 28. fxe3 ♜x d7 with an even endgame. However, White can still claim a better game by 24. ♖g4!?, when 24...h5 25. ♖h6+ ♜h7 26. ♜xc5 ♙xc5 27. ♙x d7 ♜x h6 28. ♜c1 is somewhat better for White.

24.d4!

This position exemplifies how minute differences have a large impact; had White's dark-squared bishop stayed behind on b2 after this pawn advance, the position would be completely equal. Now on the other hand, Black is clearly worse, and may even be strategically lost. The rest of the game perfectly illustrates how to cultivate and exploit a positional advantage.

24... ♙a3 25. ♜c2 ♜c8 26. ♜xc8+ ♙xc8 27. ♙xe6!

Very nice; now the pawn structure clearly favors White.

27...fxe6 28. ♙e5 h5 29. ♖c2!

White evicts the bishop from a3, which clears the path for the rook to command the c-file from c1.

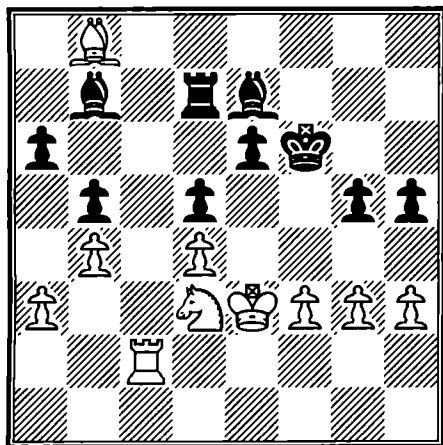
29... ♙e7 30. ♜c1 ♙b7 31. ♖e1! g5
32. ♖d3 ♜f7

The chess engines evaluate this position as very slightly better or clearly better for White, but most strong players would consider Black to be lost. He has absolutely no counterplay and all of White's pieces are much better placed than their counterparts.

33. f3 ♜g6 34. ♜f2 ♜f5 35. h3 ♜g6 36. ♜e3 ♜f5 37. ♜c2 ♜g6

38.b4 ♖f5 39.a3 ♖g6 40.♗b8 ♖f6?

Now Black loses by force. A better chance is 40...♗f6, although White is clearly better: 41.♗e5 ♗e7 42.g4 and White can break with f3-f4 when he is ready.



41.♗c7! ♗f8 42.♘e5 ♞g7 43.♗d8+

Black must now exchange the dark-squared bishop, which was his only hope of removing the strong knight on e5.

43...♗e7 44.♘d7+ ♖g6 45.♗×e7 ♞×e7 46.♞c7 ♗a8 47.♘e5+ ♖f6 48.♞c8

48.♞×e7 ♖×e7 49.f4 ♖f6 saves a couple of moves compared to the game continuation.

48...♗b7 49.♞g8 ♞g7 50.♞×g7 ♖×g7

With a strong knight vs. a “tall pawn” on b7, along with White’s ability to generate a passed pawn on the kingside at will, Black is hopelessly lost.

51.f4 ♖f6 52.♘d7+ ♖f5 53.f×g5 ♖×g5 54.♘e5 ♖f5 55.♖f3 ♖g5

56.g4 h×g4+ 57.h×g4 ♗c8 58.♖g3 ♗b7 59.♘f3+ ♖f6 60.♖f4 ♗c6 61.g5+ ♖e7 62.♖e5 ♗e8 63.♘d2 ♗h5 64.♘b3 ♗e2 65.♘c5 ♗g4 66.♘×a6 ♗e2 67.♘c7 1-0

Game 166

Emir Dizdarevic – Alexander Fauland

Moscow (6) 1989

English Opening [A12]

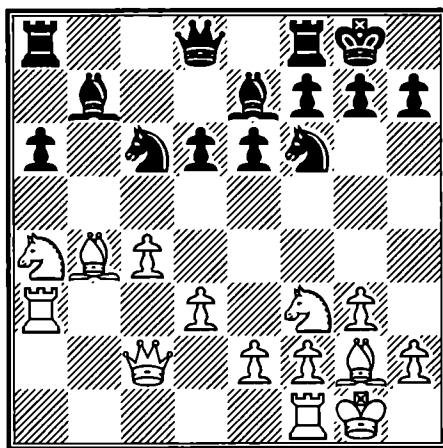
1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 a6 4.b3 b5 5.♘c3 b4 6.♘a4 d6 7.♗g2 ♗b7 8.0-0 ♘bd7 9.a3

White offers the exchange of pawns to allow the knight to retreat to c3, yet surprisingly it remains on a4 the remainder of the game to great effect.

9...b×a3 10.♞×a3 ♗e7 11.♖c2 0-0 12.d3 c5 13.♗d2 ♘b8?!

This is senseless when White can play 14.b4. Black should be preventing White from advancing the b-pawn. A better move is 13...♖c7.

14.b4 c×b4 15.♗×b4 ♘c6?!



15...♘bd7!? 16.♞b1 ♗c6 or even 15...d5!? should be considered, even if White has slightly better chances after

16. ♖xe7 ♜xe7 17. c5 ♜c6 18. ♖b1. The game continuation is terribly passive for Black.

16. ♖c3 ♖b8 17. ♖b3 ♖a8
18. ♖fb1 ♜d7 19. ♖xb8 ♜cxb8
20. ♜b2 ♖c6 21. ♖a1

White doesn't force the situation by 21. ♜b6, as Black pieces are too cramped and can't access comfortable squares. White's advantage is slight, but it is enough to keep Black under control.

21... ♖f6 22. ♖xf6 ♜xf6 23. ♜d4
♖xg2 24. ♜xg2

White maintains his lead in development and better pawn structure, while Black is struggling to coordinate his pieces and get counterplay.

24... ♜c7 25. ♜b6 ♖c8 26. ♖b1
♜fd7 27. ♜b7 g6 28. ♖b3 ♜g7
29. f4 ♜d8 30. ♖b1 ♖c7 1-0

It's unclear as to why Black resigned, but White has a small, unmistakable advantage after 31. ♜b4, e.g. 31... ♜f8 32. ♜a5 ♜c8 33. ♜b6 ♜xb6 34. ♖xb6.

14. ♖xb7 ♖ad8 15. ♖e3 ♖b8 16. ♜c6
♖xc3 17. bxc3 ♖xe2 18. ♖c5 ♜e8
19. ♖d2± Schwartzman-Reprintsev,
US Open 1996.

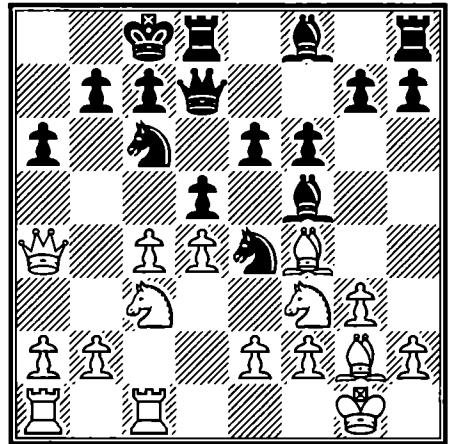
5. 0-0 ♜d7 6. c4 e6 7. ♜c3 0-0-0?!
8. ♜a4 a6

8... ♜b8 9. ♖f4± White has a dangerous attack with ♜b5 and ♖fc1 imminent.

9. ♖f4 ♜e4

Or 9... dxc4 10. ♜xc4 ♜a5 11. ♜a4
♜xa4 12. ♜xa4 ♜d5 13. ♖g5 ♖e7
14. ♖xe7 ♜xe7 15. ♜c5 with a better game for White.

10. ♖fc1 f6



11. ♜b5!?

This move is good, but 11. cxd5 exd5 12. ♜b5! is probably even stronger, e.g. 12... ♖d6 (or 12... axb5 13. ♜a8+ ♜b8 14. ♖xc7 ♜xc7 15. ♖xc7+ ♜xc7 16. ♜a5+ ♜c8 17. ♖c1+ ♜c6 18. ♜xb5 ♖d6 19. a4 ♖e7 20. a5 ♖d7 21. a6 bxa6 22. ♜xa6+ with a continued attack against Black's king) 13. ♖xc6 ♜b8 (13... bxc6 14. ♜xa6+ loses immediately) 14. ♖xa6 bxa6 15. ♜xa6 c6 16. ♜xd6 ♜xd6 17. ♖c1 with a huge plus for White.

Game 167
*Anthony Miles –
Gennadij Sagalchik*

Linares (2) 1994

Queen Pawn Opening [D02]

1. ♜f3 ♜f6 2. g3 d5 3. ♖g2 ♜c6
4. d4 ♖f5

4... ♖g4 5. 0-0 e6 6. c4 dxc4 7. ♜a4 ♖d6
8. ♜c3 0-0 9. ♜xc4 h6 10. ♖d1 ♜e7
11. a3 a6 12. ♜e5 ♜xe5 13. dxe5 ♖xe5

11...♠d6

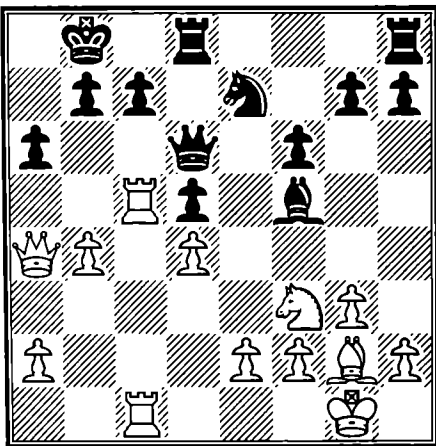
Or 11...a×b5 12.c×b5 ♠b8 13.♠×c7 ♖×c7 14.b6 ♖c6 15.♞×c6+ b×c6 16.♖a8+-.

Alternatively, 11...d×c4 should not be met by 12.♠×c7? on account of 12...e5 13.d×e5 ♖×c7 14.e×f6 ♖b6, but 12.♞×c4! a×b5 13.♖a8+ ♠b8 14.♞×c7+ ♖×c7 15.♠×c7 ♖×c7 16.♖a5+ ♖c8 17.♞c1+ ♠c6 18.♖×b5 ♞d5 19.♖b3 with a clear advantage for White.

12.♠×d6+

White has a sharper alternative in 12.c×d5! a×b5 13.♖a8+! (13.d×c6 b×a4 14.c×d7+ ♞×d7 offers White less) 13...♠b8 14.d×e6 ♠×e6 15.♠d2 ♖f7 16.♠×d6 ♠×d6 17.♖×b7+ ♖d7 18.♠e4 ♖e8 19.♖×b5+ ♠d7 20.♠×d6+ c×d6 21.a4 and White is clearly better.

12...♠×d6 13.c×d5 e×d5 14.♠×d6 ♖×d6 15.♞c5 ♠e7 16.♞ac1 ♖b8 17.b4



White can also play 17.♞×c7 ♞c8 18.♞7c5 ♖b6 19.♖a3, when White is much better.

17...h5

Or 17...♠d7 18.♖c2 ♞c8 19.♠d2 g5 20.♖b3 and White has a clearly better game.

18.♖b3 c6 19.a4 ♠d7 20.e3! ♞c8 21.♠f1 g5 22.b5 c×b5 23.a×b5 ♠×b5 24.♠×b5 a×b5 25.♖×b5 ♞c6 26.♞×c6 ♠×c6 27.♠e1!

The knight heads to c5 to land the *coup de grâce*.

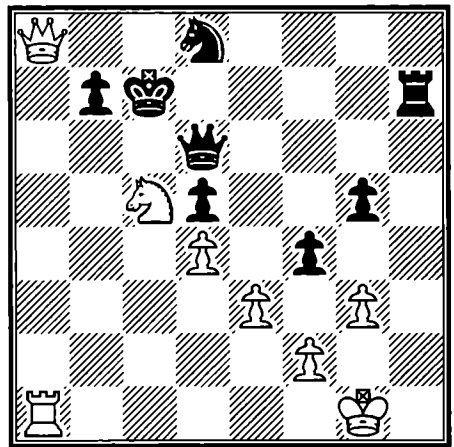
27...h4 28.♠d3 ♞h7

28...h×g3 29.h×g3 ♖d7 30.♠b4+-.

29.♠c5 ♠d8 30.♞a1 h×g3 31.h×g3 f5 32.♖a5 f4

Too little, too late.

33.♖a8+ ♖c7



34.♠×b7! ♖h6

34...♠×b7 35.♞c1+ ♖b6 36.♞b1+ ♖c6 37.♖a6+.

35.♖×d8+ ♖×b7 36.♞b1+ 1-0

36...♖a6 37.♖a8+ ♞a7 38.♖c8+ ♖a5 39.♖c3+ ♖a6 40.♖a1#.

Game 168
Valery Chekhov –
Boris Spassky

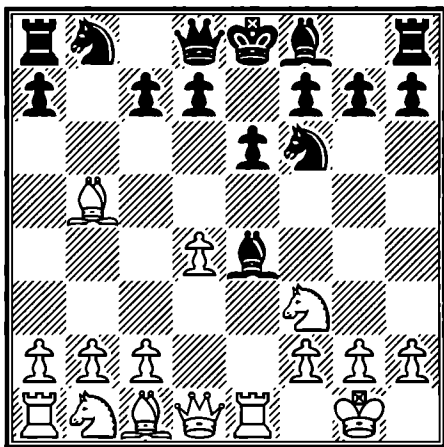
Murcia rapid 1990

Queen Pawn Opening [A40]

1.d4 b5?!

For our purposes, the move order is 1.♟f3 b5 2.e4! ♞b7 3.♞×b5. Upon 1.♟f3 b6, White can play 2.g3 or 2.c4 with a likely transposition into the Hedgehog English or Double Fianchetto English. Those players with 1.e4 experience might want to consider 2.e4, as 2...c5 3.d4 is a good Sicilian and 2...♞b7 3.♟c3 e6 4.d4 favors White, as in the following game: 1.d4 b6 2.e4 ♞b7 3.♟c3 e6 4.♟f3 ♞b4 5.♞d3 ♟f6 6.♞g5 h6 7.♞×f6 ♟×f6 8.0-0 ♞×c3 9.b×c3 d5 10.exd5 ♞×d5 11.♟e5 0-0 12.♟h5 ♟d8 13.c4 ♞b7 14.d5 ♟d6 15.♞ae1 exd5 16.♟f5 g6 17.♟h3 ♟g7 ½-½, Kramnik-Ehlvest, Moscow ol 1994, and now White could have played 18.♟×f7! ♟×f7 19.♟×h6 ♞g8 20.f4!.

2.e4 ♞b7 3.♞×b5 ♞×e4 4.♟f3 ♟f6 5.0-0 e6 6.♞e1



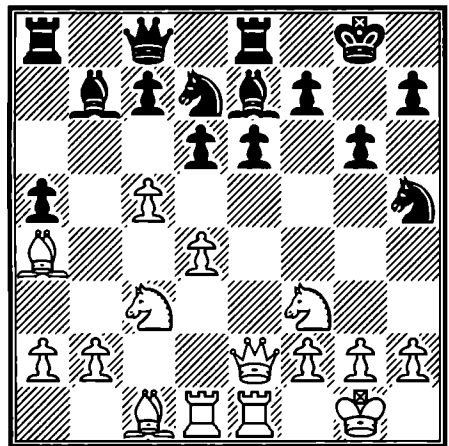
6.c4 ♞b7 7.♟c3 ♞e7 8.d5 0-0 9.♞a4 ♟a6 10.a3 ♟c5 11.♞c2 a5 12.♞e3

exd5 13.c×d5 g6 14.♞e1 ♟h5 15.♟e5 ♟g7 16.♞d4± Wojtkiewicz-Bronstein, Reykjavik 1994.

6...♞e7 7.♞g5

7.c4 ♞b7 8.♟c3 0-0 9.♞a4 d6 10.d5 e5 11.b4 a5 (11...♟bd7 12.♞b2 ♟b6 13.♞b3 ♞a6 14.♟d2 g6 15.a4 ♞c8 16.a5 ♟bd7 17.♞c1 ♟h5 18.♟f3 f5 19.c5 ♟h8 20.♟b5 ♟df6 21.c×d6 c×d6 22.♟×e5+- Donaldson-Papperheusen, Canton 1990) 12.a3 ♞c8 13.h3 ♞d7 14.♞e3 ♞×a4 15.♟×a4 ♟fd7 16.♟b5± Donaldson-T.Costigan, New York 1985.

7...♞b7 8.♞d3 0-0 9.c4 a5 10.♟c3 d6 11.♟e2 ♟bd7 12.♞ad1 ♞e8 13.♞c2 ♟h5 14.♞c1 g6 15.♞a4 ♟c8 16.c5!



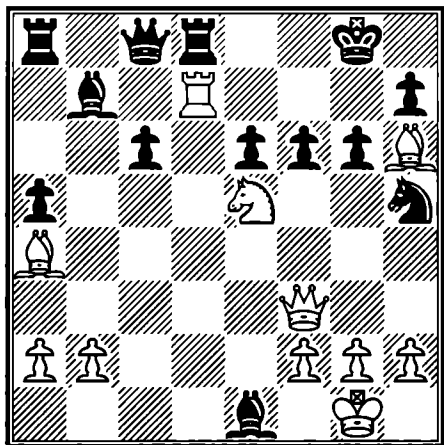
16...d×c5 17.d×c5 c6 18.♟e4 ♟×c5 19.♟×c5 ♞×c5 20.♟e5?!

White sharpens things unnecessarily and soon gets the worse of it. Instead, 20.♟c4 ♞b4 21.♞d2 ♞×d2 22.♞×d2 ♟c7 23.♟e5 and White has a small, clear advantage.

20...♞b4 21.♟f3 f6 22.♞d7?

Fun, but decidedly bad.

22...♙xe1 23.♙h6 ♖d8!



23...♙b4 is not as good: 24.g4 ♙e7
25.g×h5 f×e5 26.h×g6 h×g6 27.♙e4
and White is winning.

24.♙×f6 ♖×d7

24...♙×d7! 25.♘×d7 ♘×f6 26.♘×f6+
♙h8 and Black is winning.

25.♙×e6+ ♙h8 26.♘×d7 ♙e8
27.♙d6 ♙f7?!

27...♙c3! wins more easily.

28.♙e3 ♖e8 29.♙b3 ♙e7
30.♙d4+ ♘g7 31.♘c5 ♙c8 32.a3
♖d8 33.♙a4 ♙d2 1-0

Black must have lost on time, since he
is clearly winning in the final position.

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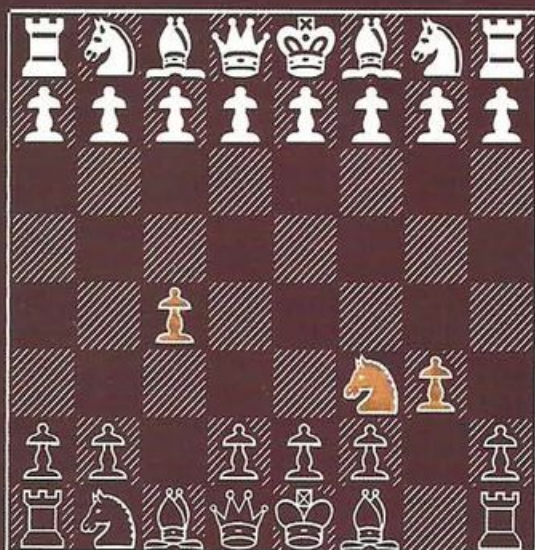
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