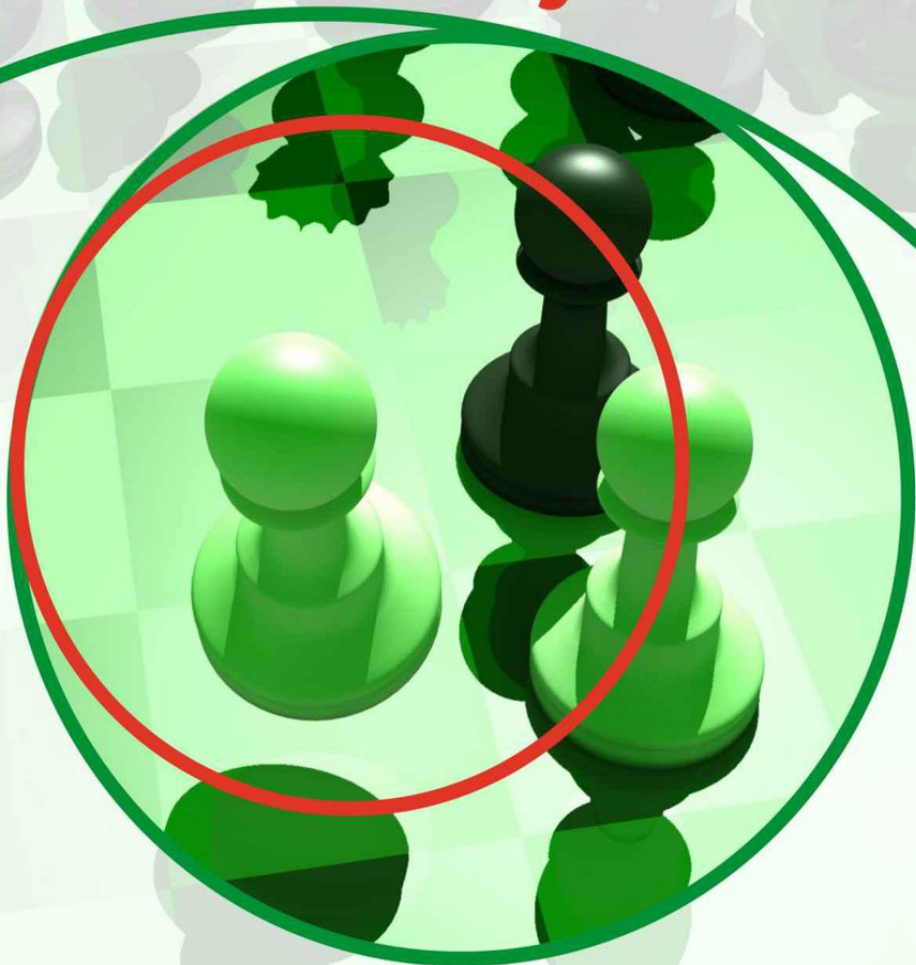


# Lorin D'Costa

## The Panov-Botvinnik attack

move by move



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Lorin D'Costa

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First published in 2013 by Gloucester Publishers Limited, Northburgh House,  
10 Northburgh Street, London EC1V 0AT

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### **British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data**

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN Kindle: 978-1-78194-116-4

ISBN epub: 978-1-78194-117-1

Distributed in North America by The Globe Pequot Press, P.O Box 480,  
246 Goose Lane, Guilford, CT 06437-0480.

All other sales enquiries should be directed to Everyman Chess, Northburgh House,  
10 Northburgh Street, London EC1V 0AT  
tel: 020 7253 7887 fax: 020 7490 3708  
email: [info@everymanchess.com](mailto:info@everymanchess.com); website: [www.everymanchess.com](http://www.everymanchess.com)

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Random House Inc.

Everyman Chess Series

Chief advisor: Byron Jacobs

Commissioning editor: John Emms

Assistant editor: Richard Palliser

Typeset and edited by First Rank Publishing, Brighton.  
Cover design by Horatio Monteverde.

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Lorin D'Costa is an International Master and a full-time chess teacher. He coaches some of the top chess schools in the UK, some of England's very strongest juniors, and also the England team at World and European Youth Championships.

Also by the Author:

Who Dares Wins!

The Sicilian Scheveningen: Move by Move

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# Series Foreword

Move by Move is a series of opening books which uses a question-and-answer format. One of our main aims of the series is to replicate – as much as possible – lessons between chess teachers and students.

All the way through, readers will be challenged to answer searching questions, to test their skills in chess openings and indeed in other key aspects of the game. It's our firm belief that practising your skills like this is an excellent way to study chess openings, and to study chess in general.

Many thanks go to all those who have been kind enough to offer inspiration, advice and assistance in the creation of Move by Move. We're really excited by this series and hope that readers will share our enthusiasm.

John Emms,  
Everyman Chess

# Chapter One

## Strategic Introduction

A pupil of mine recently remarked to me: "It's really hard to get an attacking position against the Caro-Kann. It's so solid and boring." When I say "pupil", I mean my 32 year-old friend Dave, who is rated around 2000, and he did mention this to me over a beer whilst relaxing in the evening during a chess tournament, but you get the idea.

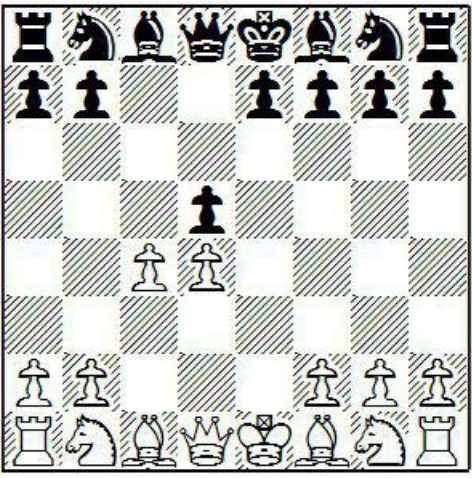
The Caro-Kann is certainly not boring, but it is, indeed, a tough nut to crack. Most players have their fashionable lines against the Sicilian or the French, but struggle for an active line against the Caro-Kann. That is why the Panov is an appealing choice for the attacking or tactical player: straight from the off you get far more open positions than in other lines against the Caro, and without being bogged down with 25 moves of theory that the average Caro player probably knows in the so-called 'main lines'.

In this book we will explore exactly the types of position you may get as a Panov player. White cannot claim any significant advantage in some lines (and let's face it, no line against the rock-solid Caro-Kann can claim to), but it's all about the types of position you are reaching; attacking positions that Caro players simply don't like. Other books on the Caro-Kann describe the Panov as something like: "A risky way to play, as White takes no positional measures." We can let them think this; White is not as all-in as these black players think.

This book is not so much a repertoire book as a demonstration of the various ideas and plans that White has available in the Panov-Botvinnik. Most of the time I have advocated isolated queen's pawn (IQP) positions, but in terms of hard theory, I have offered the reader a chance to pick and choose their favourite variations within each chapter so as to allow for their own 'tailor made' Panov repertoire. I would like to make one thing clear: sharp and attacking positions are generally favoured if possible, as well as plenty of surprise weapons you might want to utilize every now and then.

Game 1  
**V. Panov-S. Mudrov**  
Moscow Championship 1929

**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4**



The starting position of the Panov-Botvinnik Attack. White immediately challenges the central rock that appears to be the d5-pawn, and offers Black the chance to capture on c4 and give White the famous isolated queen's pawn (IQP) on d4. That is why in this book I have generally advocated variations where White reaches

the typical IQP positions.

In this chapter we see a few games, but please view them mainly as snapshots of the various plans and tactics the Panov player needs to be aware of. If you like what you see, then you will like this opening. To begin we will examine this game played by Vasily Panov, said to be one of the first players to essay this opening for White back in the 1920s. It's games like this which attracted many players to copy Panov's aggressive opening.

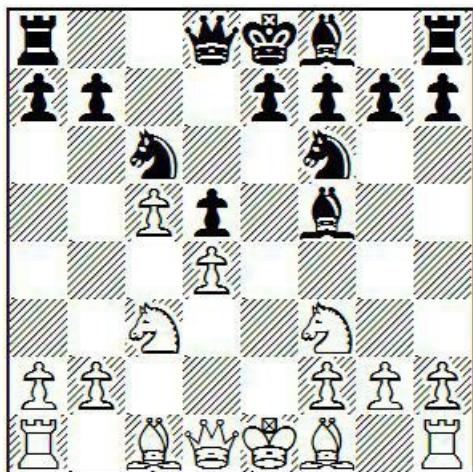
**4 ... Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Nf3**

The most natural, but as we will see in Chapter Four, I will be recommending 6 Bg5 to avoid the endgame line in the next note.

**6 ... Bf5**

This square looks good, but in fact doesn't really cross White's various plans. 6 ... Bg4 creates far more pressure and in fact leads to the main endgame line I mentioned on the previous move: 7 cxd5 Nxd5 8 Qb3 Bxf3 9 gxf3 e6 10 Qxb7 Nxd4 11 Bb5+ Nxb5 12 Qc6+ Ke7 13 Qxb5 Qd7 14 Nxd5+ Qxd5 15 Qxd5 exd5. We want to attack, though, so why play an endgame?

**7 c5**



This was Panov's own take on how to handle the position and one that is still an important plan for White today. The move gains space and allows White to play for b4 to attack Black on the queenside. Of course, the other way to play is to allow an IQP position with 7 cxd5. More on that later.

**7 ... e6 8 Bb5 Nd7 9 Bf4 Be7 10 h3**

A useful preparatory move: ... Bg4 is ruled out and so the knight on f3 remains on the board, controlling the key squares on d4 and e5. These are two of the most important squares throughout the Panov-Botvinnik (and of course in most openings).

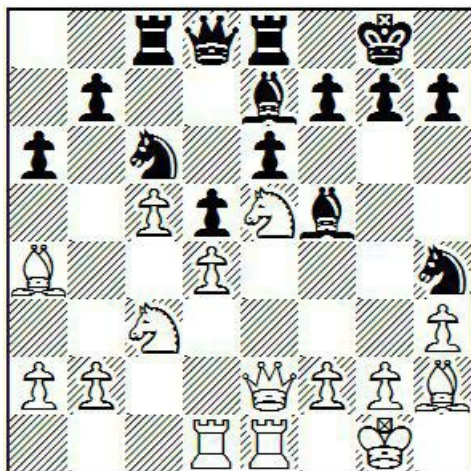
**10 ... 0-0 11 0-0 a6 12 Ba4 Rc8 13 Qe2**

Simply connecting the rooks. Black is also discouraged from playing for the ... e5 break, which is really his only active plan.

**13 ... Re8 14 Rfe1 Nf8**

Trying to force through ... e5 with 14 ... Bf6 allows 15 Bxc6 bxc6 (or 15 ... Rxc6 16 Nxd5!) 16 Qxa6.

**15 Rad1 Ng6 16 Bh2 Nh4 17 Ne5**



This may look obvious, but we will be seeing a lot more of this idea in this book.

**17 ... Bf8**

17 ... Nxe5 18 Bxe5! keeps control of the position, whereas 18 Bxe8 Nef3+ 19 gxf3 Qxe8 is a little problematic for White: for example, 20 Nxd5 exd5 21 Qxe7 Nxf3+ 22 Kh1 Nxe1 23 Qxe1 Qb5 and it is Black who is better.

**18 Nxc6 bxc6 19 Qxa6**

Quite simple play. Black hasn't really achieved anything and now his queenside just falls.

**19 ... Qg5 20 Bg3 e5 21 Bxc6 Qh6**

21 ... Nxc2 22 Kxc2 Qh6 23 Bb7 Re6 is one of those computer lines, but with care White should be okay after 24 Bxc8 Rxa6 25 Bxf5.

**22 Bb7 Re6 23 Qf1**

The queen returns having done her duty. The extra pawns will decide.

**23 ... Bxh3 24 Bxh4! 1-0**

Game 2

**M.Botvinnik-S.Flohr**

9th matchgame, Leningrad 1933

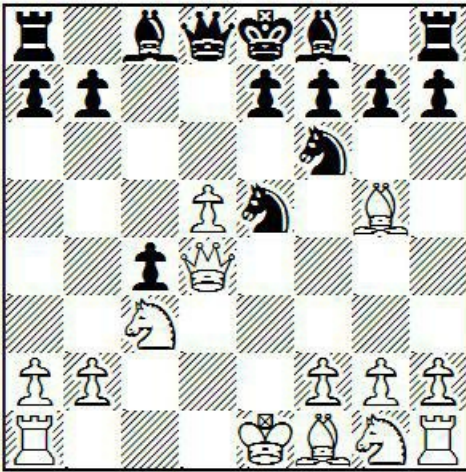
**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Bg5 dxc4**

Black targets the IQP on d4 immediately. We will see more of this line in Chapter Four.

**7 d5**

7 Bxc4 is my recommendation and will be examined later on.

**7 ... Ne5 8 Qd4**



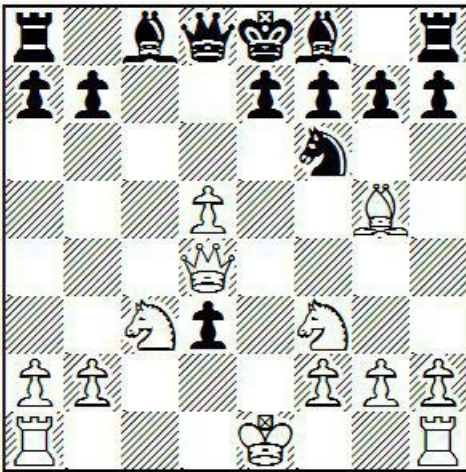
### 8 ... Nd3+

8 ... h6! is one of the key reasons why this line isn't so popular for White nowadays, but, of course, back in the 1930s they did not have the knowledge that has been accrued from thousands of games. Here 9 Bh4 Ng6 10 Bg3 e6 11 Bxc4 exd5 should be roughly equal.

### 9 Bxd3 cxd3 10 Nf3

"This can certainly also be played instead of the natural move Qxd3. The pawn which White spares here will go on to play an important role" – Siegbert Tarrasch.

10 Qxd3 recaptures the pawn, but loses a little bit of time: 10 ... g6 11 Bxf6 exf6 12 Nf3 Bd6 13 0-0 0-0 14 Rfe1 Bg4 and Black is probably okay since the d5-pawn is securely blocked.

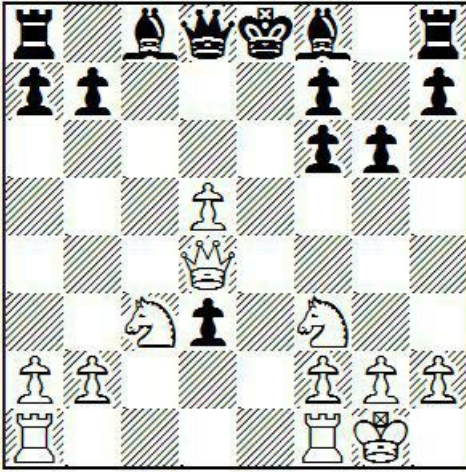


### 10 ... g6

"Dubious because of the attack which will follow down the e-file", according to Tarrasch. However, after 10 ... e6 11 Bxf6! Qxf6 12 Qxd3 Black stands very badly because the f8-bishop does not have a single safe square at its disposal.

Instead, 10 ... Bf5 defends d3, but doesn't solve the issue of the king: 11 0-0 h6 12 Bxf6 gxf6 13 Qf4 Qd7 14 Nd4 Bh7 15 Ncb5! is strong. We will encounter White's lead in development and therefore his intention to attack early quite a lot in this book.

### 11 Bxf6 exf6 12 0-0



### 12 ... Qb6

Alternatively:

a) 12 ... Bg7 13 Qc5! and Black is powerless against the rook check on e1.

b) 12 ... Bd6 13 Ne4! hits f6 which is not so easy to defend against.

c) 12 ... Be7 was probably best: 13 Qxd3 0-0 14 Rfe1 Bg4 15 Nd2 with just an edge because of the space advantage.

### 13 Rfe1+ Kd8

13 ... Be7? 14 d6 wins a piece.

### 14 Qh4

Even 14 Qxd3 Bd6! 15 Nd4 Bd7 16 Ne4 Be5 17 Nf3 Re8 (if 17 ... Bxb2 18 Rab1) 18 d6 still gives White excellent play.

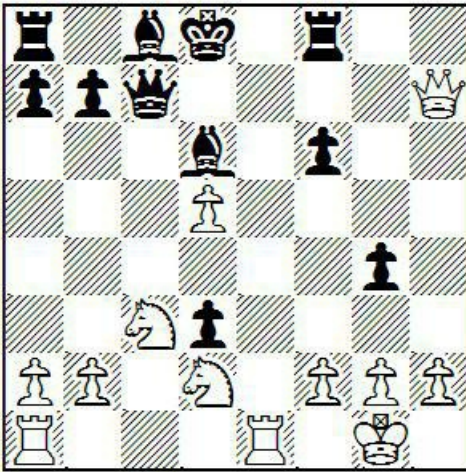
### 14 ... g5

Following 14 ... Be7 15 Rad1 Bf5 there are many ways to play the position, but 16 d6 is a pawn move we will see quite often. After 16 ... Qxd6 17 Nd4 it is clear White has well-coordinated pieces in the centre, compared to Black's sprawled-out army.

### 15 Qh5 Bd6

15 ... Bc5 16 Ne4 protects and attacks at the same time.

### 16 Qxf7 Rf8 17 Qxh7 g4 18 Nd2 Qc7



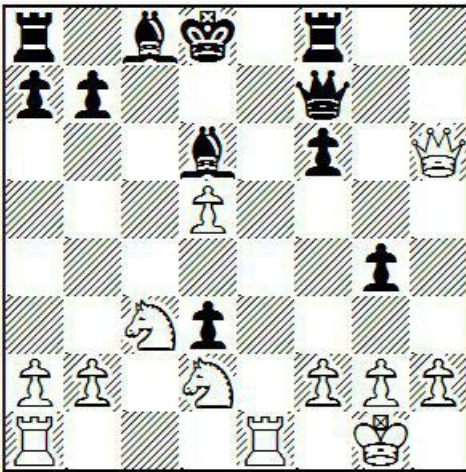
**Question:** Should we exchange queens?

**Answer:** We can do, but if your opponent's king is exposed in the centre then generally you should keep them on so as to increase your attacking chances.

**19 Qh6**

After 19 Qxd3 Bxh2+ 20 Kf1 "the situation of the white king might turn out to be very much endangered", as pointed out by Botvinnik.

**19 ... Qf7**



**Exercise:** We've reached the critical position of the game. What do you think White should play?

**20 Nc4**

**Answer:** Even better was 20 Nb5 as after 20 ... Be5 21 Rxe5 fxe5 22 Qd6+ Bd7 23 Qc7+ Ke7 24 Qxe5+ Kd8 25 Qc7+ Ke7 26 Re1+ Kf6 27 Qd6+ Kg7 28 Re7 White wins the queen and the game.

**20 ... Be5**

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Otherwise, 20 ... Bb4 21 d6 cuts the black position in two, and if 21 ... Qg8 22 Qe3, as does 20 ... Bb8 21 d6 Rg8 22 Re7 Qg6 (or 22 ... Qxc4 23 Qxf6) 23 Qf4.

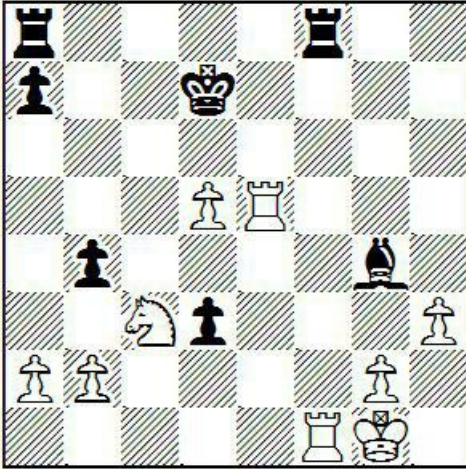
**21 Nxe5**

21 Nb5 is also strong here.

**21 ... fxe5 22 Qg5+ Qe7 23 Qxe5 Qxe5 24 Rxe5**

Somehow Black has managed to reach an endgame.

**24 ... Bf5 25 Rf1 Kd7 26 f3 b5 27 fxg4 Bxg4 28 h3 b4**



**29 Ne4**

"The final accurate move" – Botvinnik. He also points out that after 29 hxg4 bxc3 30 bxc3 Rxf1+ 31 Kxf1 Rc8 "the outcome of the struggle is not clear, because White loses one pawn after the other."

**29 ... Rxf1+ 30 Kxf1 Rf8+ 31 Ke1 Bf5 32 g4 Bg6 33 Re6 1-0**

Game 3

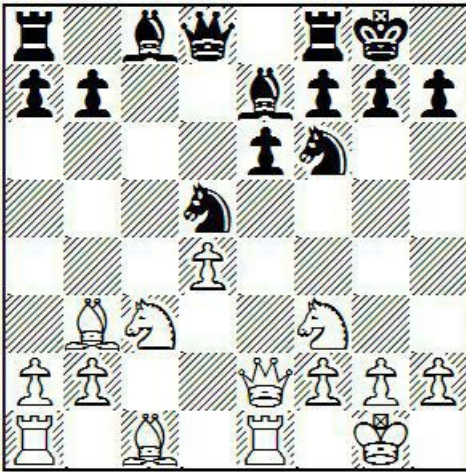
**L.D'Costa-L.Webb**

Bury St Edmunds 2003

**1 d4 e6 2 Nf3 d5 3 c4**

Whilst the opening was not a Panov, but rather a Queen's Gambit Accepted, the idea of demonstrating the IQP attack that arose in the game will help us in the typical IQP positions we are going to come across throughout this book.

**3 ... dxc4 4 e3 c5 5 Bxc4 Nf6 6 0-0 Nbd7 7 Qe2 cxd4 8 exd4 Be7 9 Re1 Nb6 10 Bb3 0-0 11 Nc3 Nbd5**



Here we see a typical white set-up with the IQP. Moves like Ne5 and Bg5 suggest themselves as attacking moves. It's important that White should go Rad1 and not put the rook on c1, because White doesn't want to exchange rooks (or pieces) in IQP-style positions.

**12 Ne5 Qd6**

12 ... b6 is a typical idea for Black to try and develop the bishop on c8, but here it actually loses! Indeed, after 13 Nxd5 Nxd5 14 Nc6 Qd7 15 Bxd5 Black loses a piece.

**13 Bg5 Re8**

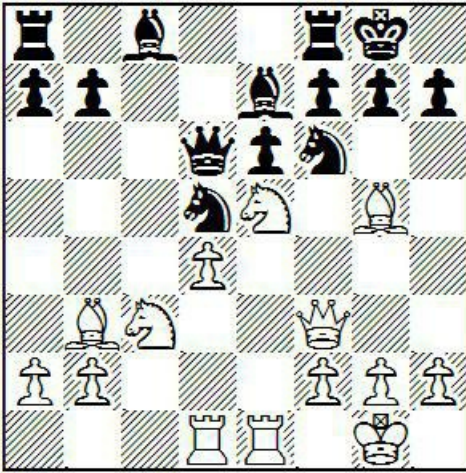
Alternatively, 13 ... h6 14 Bh4 b6 15 Nxd5 Nxd5 16 Bg3 and Black is in all sorts of trouble at this early stage: for example, 16 ... Qb4 17 Nc6 wins the queen.

**14 Qf3 Rf8**

A clear sign that things are already not easy for Black.

**15 Rad1**

As mentioned above, the rook is better on d1 than c1 because White does not want to exchange rooks down the c-file. In some games in this book White will play the rook to c1, but generally if you can go to d1 it is more beneficial, as we will see in this game.



**15 ... Nxc3**

With this move Black changes the pawn structure to a hanging pawn position with White having c- and d-pawns. However, the d4-pawn is now not weak and in this position Black is in no shape to try and attack c3. That said, Black was struggling to develop: for example, 15 ... b6 16 Bxf6 Bxf6 17 Nxd5 exd5 18 Bxd5 Rb8 19 Nxf7! (the blows keep crashing down on Black) 19 ... Rxf7 20 Re8+ or 15 ... Bd7 16 Bxd5 Nxd5 17 Bxe7 Nxe7 18 d5!, which is another typical IQP idea that the Panov player should know.

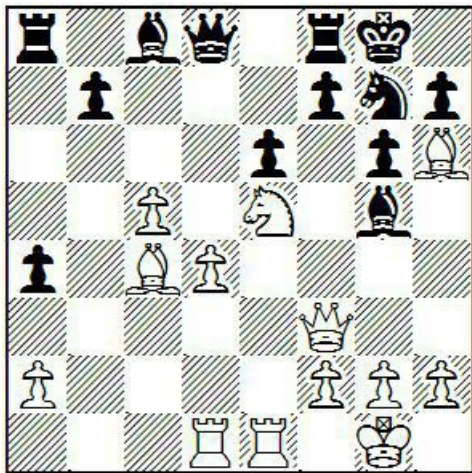
**16 bxc3 a5 17 Qh3 g6**

17 ... a4 18 Bc2 h6 19 Bxh6! gxh6 20 Qxh6 Rd8 21 Rd3! is a rook lift to g3 with devastating effect.

**18 c4 Nh5 19 c5 Qd8 20 Bh6 Ng7**

20 ... Re8 allows 21 Nxf7! Kxf7 22 Bxe6+ with mate to follow.

**21 Qf3 a4 22 Bc4 Bg5**



**23 Ng4**

23 d5! is the computer move to demonstrate White's overwhelming position: 23 ... exd5 (or 23 ... Bxh6 24 dxe6 Qc7 25 e7 Qxe7 26 Bxf7+ Rxf7 27 Nxf7 Qxf7 28 Rd8+) 24 Bxd5 Qf6 25 Bxg5 Qxg5 26 Nxf7.

**23 ... f5 24 Bxg5 Qxg5 25 Ne5**

The knight returns to the brilliant outpost on e5. Compare the bishop on c8 and knight on g7 to White's bishop on c4 and knight on e5. The idea of activity in the Panov is always paramount and we can see that is certainly the case here.

**25 ... Kh8 26 a3 Nh5 27 d5 exd5 28 Bxd5 Qf4 29 Nf7+ Kg7 30 Qc3+ Nf6 31 Re7**

The white pieces swarm in. Black is defenceless.

**31 ... Qh4 32 g3 Qh5 33 Bf3 1-0**

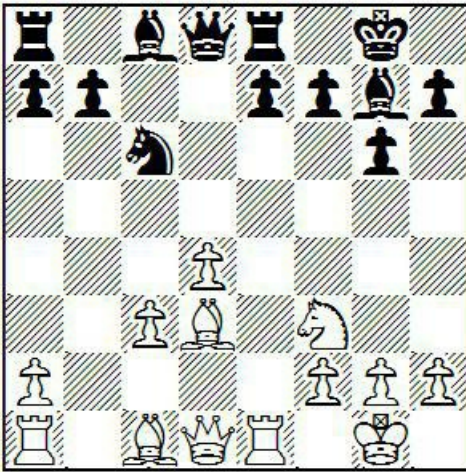
I hope this has convinced you that playing the IQP-style positions can be quite good fun!

Game 4

**M.Tal-A.Karpov**

Brussels (blitz) 1987

**1 e4 c6 2 c4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 cxd5 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nxd5 6 Nf3 Nxc3 7 bxc3 g6 8 d4 Bg7 9 Bd3 0-0 10 0-0 Nc6 11 Re1 Re8**



Here we see another example of the hanging pawns situation on c3 and d4.

**Question:** Are they weak or strong?

**Answer:** On the plus side, the d4-pawn is strengthened, but, on the other hand, c3 is now a potential target for Black. Indeed, White must play actively to distract Black from attacking this pawn.

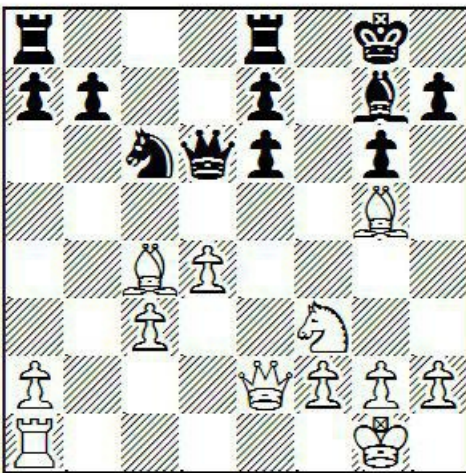
**12 Bg5 Be6**

This appears sensible. Black intends ... Rc8 and ... Na5 to attack c3 and also control the outpost on c4. What can White do?

**13 Rxe6!**

An exchange sacrifice to change the nature of the game and gain long-term play against the weakened Black kingside.

**13 ... fxe6 14 Bc4 Qd6 15 Qe2**



Here Black was forced to go passive with **15 ... Nd8** and after **16 Re1** White won a brilliant game. We will see how he did this in Chapter Five.

## M.Botvinnik-A.Budo

Leningrad 1938

**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6 Nf3 Be7 7 Bg5**

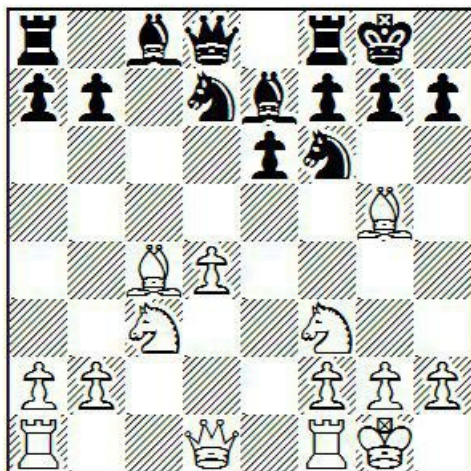
This is a tricky little variation. Botvinnik is hoping not to move the bishop on f1 so he can recapture on c4 immediately in one go.

7 ... cxd5 8 Nxd5 9 Bd3 is the most popular continuation and this will be examined in Chapter Three.

**7 ... dxc4**

Black loses a tempo over normal lines by not waiting for White to play Bd3 before he takes on c4. 7 ... 0-0 is certainly better. Here 8 Bxf6 Bxf6 9 cxd5 exd5 is nothing for White because of the strong bishop on f6 and the d4-pawn is just as weak as the d5-pawn.

**8 Bxc4 0-0 9 0-0 Nbd7**



**Question:** Why did Black play ... Nbd7 rather than ... Nc6 to attack the d4-pawn?

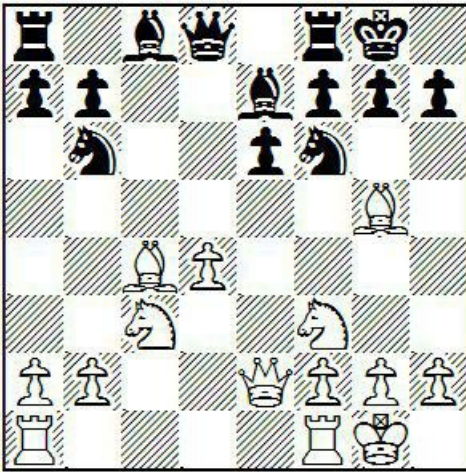
**Answer:** Black's plan is to play ... Nb6 and then take control of the d5-square. This would follow Nimzowitsch's famous mantra of "restrain, blockade, destroy". Black hopes to play ... Nd5 to blockade the d4-pawn and one day to win it. Of course, there is plenty of play in between ...

The other idea of ... Nc6 is to play ... Nb4 and then ... Nbd5, transposing to the ... Nd7-b6-d5 idea, so they are roughly equal.

**10 Qe2**

The queen is very sensibly placed here, controlling e5 and looking towards e6.

**10 ... Nb6**



**11 Bb3**

11 Bd3 is the alternative. Here White does not try and attack the d5-square, but simply points the bishop towards h7.

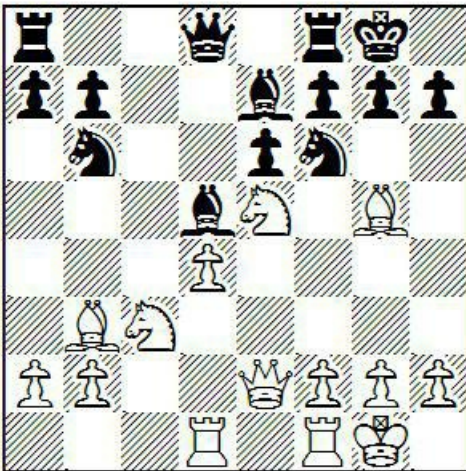
**11 ... Bd7 12 Rad1 Bc6**

Finally Black gets the c8-bishop in the game and it helps control d5. So far we can say that Black is very solid and both players have their pieces in the game. Panov players should, though, be happy with what White has in this position: all the pieces are ready to move forward and attack. Observe how Botvinnik masterfully handles the attack with care and precision.

**13 Ne5!**

A good starting point. This knight eyes up f7 and many other squares.

**13 ... Bd5**



**Question:** Should White capture on d5 or avoid exchanging pieces?

**Answer:** I much prefer Botvinnik's move, keeping pieces on. However, playing 14 Nxd5 means White has a nice light-squared bishop and this is what the computer suggests.

**14 Bc2**

14 Nxd5 Nfxd5 15 Bd2 is the computer's idea, which is of course okay, if not really in the Panov attacking spirit!

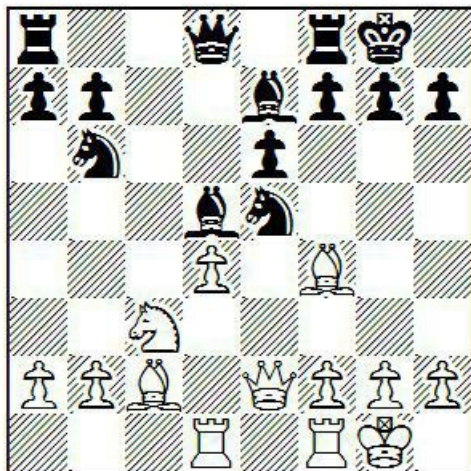
**14 ... Nfd7**

14 ... Rc8 15 Rfe1 and now 15 ... Nfd7 would be very similar.

**15 Bf4!**

Again keeping pieces on. Exchanging with 15 Bxe7 Qxe7 only helps Black's task. Remember the d4-pawn may become a weakness in any potential endgame.

**15 ... Nxe5**



**Exercise:** Which way should White recapture on e5? There are three options.

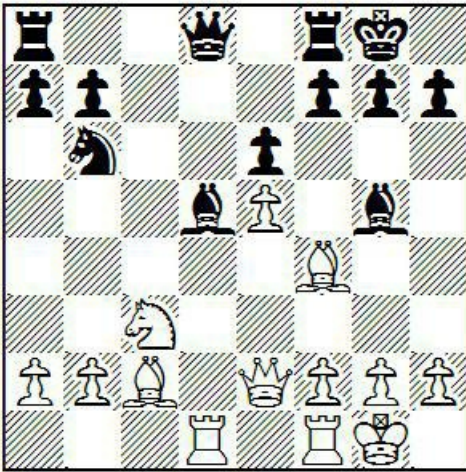
**Answer: 16 dxe5**

Opening the d-file for the rook. This was one of the reasons why Rad1 was played, to try and prevent this idea of exchanging the knight off on e5.

16 Bxe5 looks good and is okay. After a defensive precaution such as 16 ... g6 the position is interesting, but it's not easy to see what White's plan is.

Instead, if 16 Qxe5 Rc8 and despite the queen's threatening position, she isn't really threatening anything. 17 Qh5 g6 18 Qe2 Bc4 19 Bd3 Qxd4 is an example of White's plan going awry.

**16 ... Bg5**



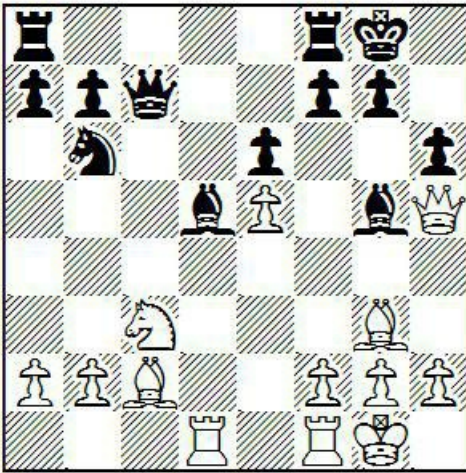
**17 Qh5**

17 Bg3 is also good.

**17 ... h6 18 Bg3**

Keeping those pieces on again. Instead, 18 Bxg5 Qxg5 19 Qxg5 hxg5 20 Nxd5 Nxd5 21 Be4 Rfd8 22 Rd4 Rac8 23 Rfd1 Kf8 is roughly equal.

**18 ... Qc7**



**Question:** Should White play 19 f4 or 19 h4 to further the attack?

**Answer:** Both are good.

**19 h4**

We are going to witness the h-pawn advance, which is often a key part of a potential white attack in the Panov.

19 f4 Be7 20 f5 Bg5 21 h4 Be3+ 22 Kh2 looks very dangerous for Black as well.

**19 ... Bd8 20 Rd4**

Another rook swing. Once it gets to g4, Black's seemingly solid defence will crumble.

**20 ... Qc5 21 Rg4 f5**

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If 21 ... Kh8 22 Bf4! and with Bxh6 to follow, Black can resign.

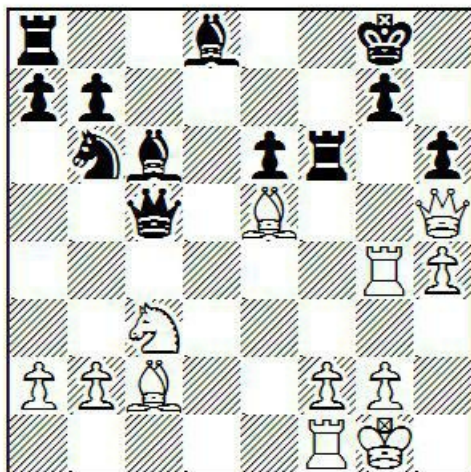
**22 exf6**

The point of having the pawn on e5 becomes clear: it discourages the ... f5 defensive idea.

**22 ... Rxf6**

22 ... Bxf6 23 Qxh6 is also crushing.

**23 Be5 Bc6**



**Exercise:** Can you see how White can win from here? Try to calculate 2-4 moves ahead.

**Answer: 24 Rxc7+! 1-0**

Black resigned as 24 ... Kxg7 25 Bxf6+ wins the queen on c5. Just 10 moves ago Black appeared to have a solid position with good development, but never underestimate our attack! White's attacking strategy in this game should be studied closely because we will be seeing these ideas cropping up time and time again throughout this book.

Game 6

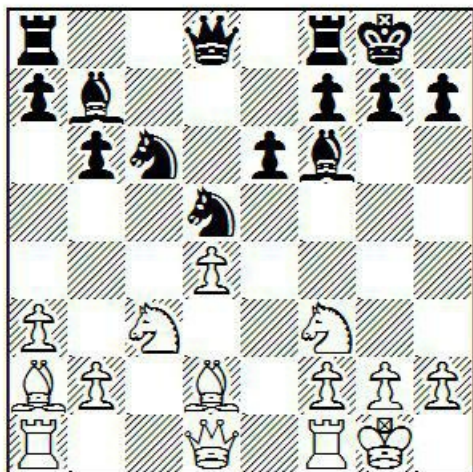
**A. Moiseenko-V. Malakhatko**

Ukrainian Team Championship 2001

**1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 e6 3 Bg5 c5 4 e3 Be7 5 c4 0-0 6 Nc3 cxd4 7 exd4 d5 8 Bd3 dxc4 9 Bxc4 Nc6 10 0-0 b6**

It's also possible to reach this position with White having the extra move a2-a3. This occurs when Black plays ... Bb4 and then after a3 goes back to e7. Transpositions and near transpositions like this are quite normal in the Panov.

**11 a3 Bb7 12 Ba2 Nd5 13 Bd2 Bf6**



Here White decided to capture on d5.

**14 Nxd5 exd5 15 Bf4 Re8 16 Qd2 Rc8**

We have an example of the dual isolani on d4 and d5. A symmetrical pawn structure does not necessarily mean a dull position and a draw. Indeed, White can build up an initiative here thanks to his greater space and better light-squared bishop. We will examine this game further in Chapter Three.

Game 7

**E. Bacrot-V. Iordachescu**

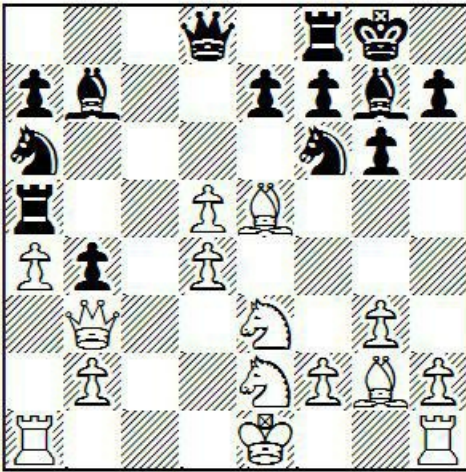
French Team Championship 2010

**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 g6**

There's more in Chapter Six on these ... g6 variations.

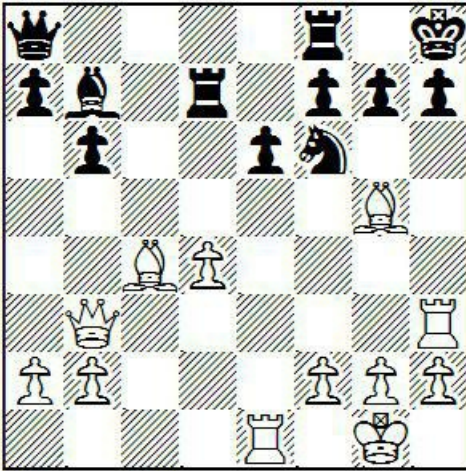
**6 Qb3 Bg7 7 cxd5 0-0 8 Nge2 Na6 9 g3 b5 10 Bg2 b4 11 Nd1 Rb8 12 Bf4 Rb5 13 Ne3 Bb7 14 a4 Ra5 15 Be5** (see following diagram)

In the ... g6 variations White often gets to capture on d5 and hold on to this pawn. Whilst they can become weak in the long term, here the doubled d-pawns are annoying for Black. He may end up winning the d5- (or d4-) pawn at some stage, but White will cause havoc in the meantime. White always has a timely d5-d6 disrupting mechanism to throw Black off his guard even more.



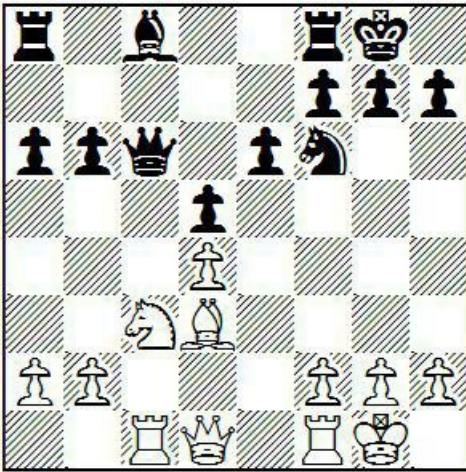
Game 8  
**A. Timofeev-P. Svidler**  
 Russian Championship, Moscow 2008

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6 Nf3 Bb4 7 Bd3 dxc4 8 Bxc4 0-0 9 0-0 b6 10 Bg5 Bb7 11 Re1 Nbd7 12 Rc1 Rc8 13 Qb3 Bxc3 14 Rxc3 Rc7 15 Ne5 Kh8 16 Rh3! Qa8 17 Nxd7 Rxd7



Game 9  
**D. Pavasovic-G. Erdene**  
 Khanty-Mansiysk Olympiad 2010

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Bg5 e6 7 c5 Be7 8 Bb5 0-0 9 Nf3 Ne4 10 Bxe7 Nxe7 11 Rc1 b6 12 c6 Qd6 13 0-0 a6 14 Bd3 Nf6 15 Ne5 Nxc6 16 Nxc6 Qxc6



Black has just captured on c6 with the queen in the 5 ... Nc6 variation (Chapter Four), and has judged that there is no lethal discovered attack down the c-file. However, White's lead in development is key; a common feature of the Panov. Watch how out of nowhere the white position explodes into life:

**17 Ne4!**

A routine discovered attack, you may think?

**17 ... dxe4**

17 ... Qb7 (or anywhere else) runs into the thematic idea of 18 Nxf6+ gxf6 19 Bxh7+!. A Greek Gift sacrifice without the knight coming to g5, but decisive nonetheless: 19 ... Kxh7 (19 ... Kh8 20 Qh5 Rg8 21 Rc3 is also completely crushing) 20 Qh5+ Kg7 21 Qg4+ Kh7 22 Rc3! with mate on h3 to follow. Where did that come from?

**18 Rxc6 exd3 19 Rxb6 Nd5 20 Rd6 Rb8 21 Qd2 h6 22 Rc1 a5 23 b3 Bb7 24 f3 Ra8 25 Qxd3**

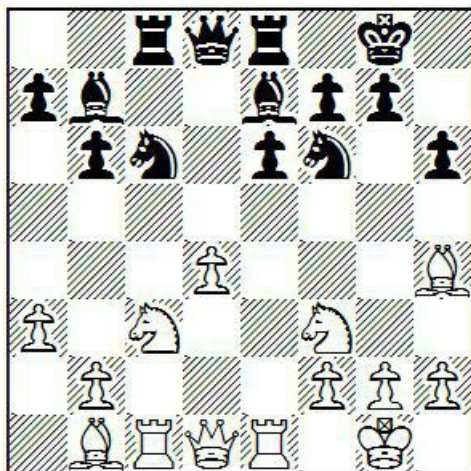
White easily mopped up from here.

Game 10  
**A.Naiditsch-P.Eljanov**  
 Croatian Team Championship 2010

**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Bg5 dxc4 7 Bxc4 h6 8 Bh4 e6 9 Nf3 Be7 10 0-0 0-0 11 Rc1 b6 12 Bd3 Bb7 13 Bb1 Rc8 14 Re1 Re8**

14 ... Nh5, as in the later I.Sokolov-P.Leko, Wijk aan Zee 2013, was better, as it basically avoids the fate Black suffered in this game. The point of this move is to exchange off the dark-squared bishops, which will help Black in his quest to reduce the impact of the IQP on d4.

**15 a3**



Here we have a very typical Panov IQP position. What you are about to see is how weakening the 'routine' ... h6 move can be for Black, which innocently kicks at the bishop on g5 but can become a real problem for the black defence.

**15 ... Nh5**

This is normally a good idea for Black, trying to exchange pieces, but there is a flaw:

**16 Qc2!**

Why 16 Qd3 is not as good will be examined in Chapter Four. It is details like this that can change games.

**16 ... Bxh4 17 Qh7+ Kf8 18 d5!**

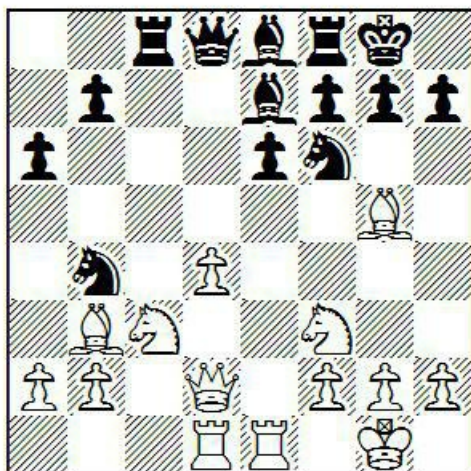
Black was under tremendous pressure which even the super-GM was unable to solve. See Chapter Four for the finish to this game.

Game 11

**J.L.Hammer-J.Kvisla**

Gjovik Open 2009

**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6 Nf3 Be7 7 Bd3 dxc4 8 Bxc4 0-0 9 0-0 a6 10 Bg5 Nc6 11 Re1 Bd7 12 Qd2 Rc8 13 Rad1 Nb4 14 Bb3 Be8**



White has all the major and minor pieces in good, active positions, whereas Black's are far more passive. It appears, though, that Black has everything under control.

**Exercise:** How can White try to attack in this position?

**Answer: 15 d5!**

Another typical idea for the 'Panover' to know. White charges straight through Black's position and gains a big advantage in just a few more moves. Check out Chapter Three for an examination of this position.

Game 12

**M.Botvinnik-H.Kmoch**

Leningrad 1934

**1 c4 c6 2 e4**

This is another way to reach the Panov, via an English move order.

**2 ... d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 d4**

4 cxd5 and delaying the advance of the d2-pawn until later will be examined in Chapter Five.

**4 ... Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Bg5**

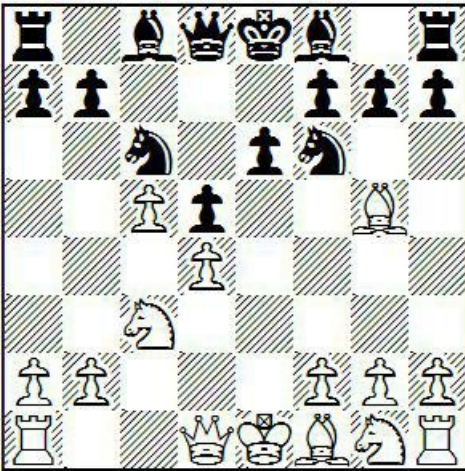
Even back in 1934, Botvinnik was aware of this sharp idea which is in fact the line I am recommending in Chapter Four. As mentioned before, the alternative 6 Nf3 Bg4 7 cxd5 Nxd5 8 Qb3 Bxf3 9 gxf3 is playable, but then there is the endgame line which I feel is not really in the spirit of the Panov.

**6 ... e6**

6 ... dxc4 is the critical line and the hot line nowadays. See Chapter Four for that one.

**7 c5**

7 Nf3 is by far the most popular move, but we have seen this c5 advance already.



**Question:** What is the point of 7 c5?

**Answer:** This move achieves quite a few things. Firstly, it prevents the f8-bishop moving further than e7. Secondly, it gains space and allows a future queenside advance with b4, b5 and so on. Thirdly, the f1-bishop can now go to b5 and put even more pressure on the black queenside.

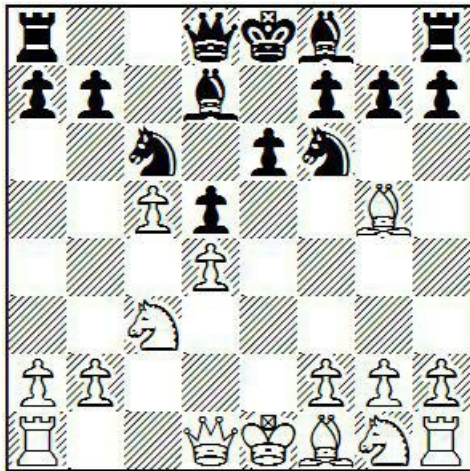
What 7 c5 also does is reduce the pressure on Black's centre. So Black will now be looking to play the pawn breaks ... b6 and, if possible, ... e5 at a timely moment. The game now depends on the result of these pawn breaks. As we will see in this game, if Black achieves neither of these breaks, White will have a free hand in both the centre and the queenside. This game by Botvinnik inspired many to take up the c5 advance due to the ease of White's play.

7 Nf3 Be7 8 Rc1 0-0 9 c5 is another version of the c5 advance, but this time White is ready with the

queenside pieces in play first. One possible line is 9 ... Ne4 10 Bxe7 Qxe7 11 Be2 Nxc3 12 Rxc3 e5 13 Nxe5 Nxe5 14 Re3 which is good for White.

**7 ... Be7**

7 ... Bd7 might be a better idea for Black. The point is to defend c6 so an early ... b6 can come:



a) 8 Bb5 b6! 9 Bxc6 (perhaps better is 9 cxb6 Qxb6 10 Bxf6 gxf6 11 Nge2, as in L.Psakhis-J.Granda Zuniga, Manila Olympiad 1992) 9 ... Bxc6 10 b4 bxc5 11 bxc5 was V.Topalov-B.Gulko, Elenite 1995. Now there is a nice tactic for Black due to the white knight still being on g1: 11 ... Bxc5! 12 dxc5 d4 and g2 hangs. Here 13 Nf3 dxc3 14 Qxd8+ Rxd8 15 Rc1 Ba4! 16 0-0 c2 is just excellent for Black.

b) 8 a3!? is probably best; White needs to go b4 as quickly as possible to defend c5. After 8 ... b6 9 b4 bxc5 10 dxc5 h6 11 Be3 a6 12 Be2 g6 13 Rc1 Bg7 14 Nf3 0-0 15 0-0 Kh7 16 h3 Qc7 the position was rather unclear in B.Damljanovic-M.Stojanovic, Bela Crkva 1996.

Instead, 7 ... h6 8 Bxf6 Qxf6 9 Bb5 g6 10 Nf3 Bg7 11 Qd2 Bd7 12 Rd1 0-0 13 0-0 Qd8 14 Rfe1 (the white pieces are all on central squares and are preventing the ... e5 pawn break, so Black goes for the ... b6 idea) 14 ... b6 15 Bxc6 Bxc6 16 b4 bxc5 17 bxc5 Rb8 18 Ne5 Be8 19 f4 was the sort of position White wants from this variation and, indeed, he went on to win in J.Ehlvest-J.Granda Zuniga, Yerevan Olympiad 1996.

**8 Bb5**

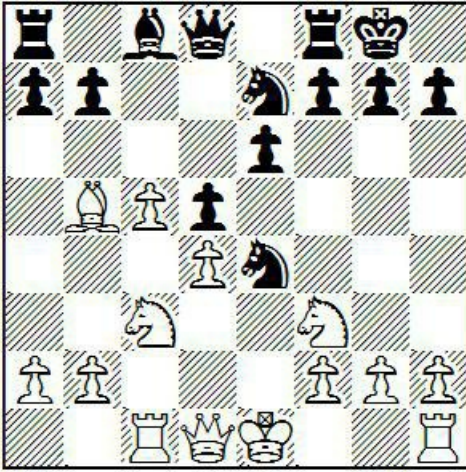
8 Nf3 transposes to G.Kasparov-V.Anand, Amsterdam 1996, from Chapter Four. As you can see, transpositions are rife in the Panov so clearly it's the ideas and plans behind the opening that are the most important to know.

**8 ... 0-0 9 Nf3 Ne4**

Also thematic from Knoch. Black has less space and in such positions the normal antidote is to exchange off pieces to free one's position.

**10 Bxe7 Nxe7 11 Rc1**

11 Qc2 might have been slightly more accurate, as e4 is threatened and 11 ... Nxc3 12 Qxc3 Bd7 13 Bd3! (keep those pieces on when you have more space!) leaves White with the obvious plan of b4-b5 and a4, whereas it is hard to see what constructive plan Black has.



**11 ... Ng6**

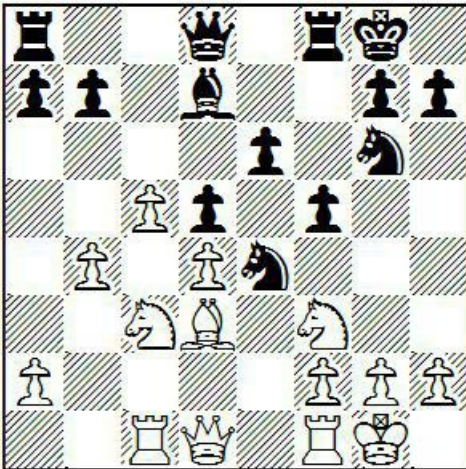
**Question:** After 11 ... Bd7 do we exchange off or retreat?

**Answer:** There is nothing wrong with exchanging, but I prefer to keep this bishop. Of course, the play is quite simple for White in these positions and there isn't a lot he can do to ruin this type of position, which might be one reason it is so popular. Here 12 Bd3 (12 Bxd7 Qxd7 13 Qe2 f5 14 Ne5 Qc7 15 0-0 with f3 to come and pressure on the e6-pawn is also good) 12 ... f5 13 0-0 is quite similar to the main game.

**12 0-0 Bd7 13 Bd3**

Again, there was the dilemma of exchanging or not on d7. 13 Bxd7 Qxd7 14 Re1 f5 15 Qb3 is clearly fine for White too.

**13 ... f5 14 b4**



Here comes the queenside action. The ball is clearly in Black's court to try and do something, which he fails to.

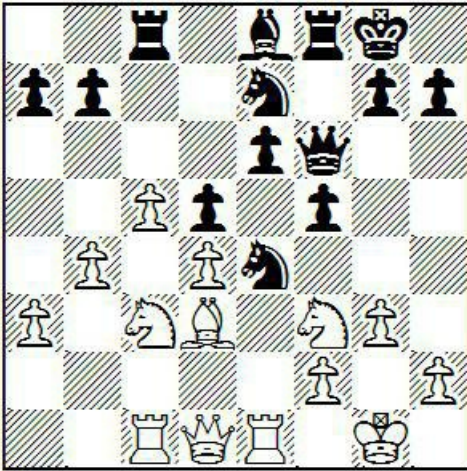
**14 ... Be8**

14 ... a6 was better, attempting to slow down White's queenside play.

**15 g3**

This looks weakening, but ... Nf4 is prevented. Once the knight on e4 is ousted with a future f3, the e6-pawn will look very weak.

**15 ... Rc8 16 Re1 Qf6 17 a3 Ne7**



**18 Ne5**

Clearing the way for the f-pawn to move and throwing the knight into a lovely outpost.

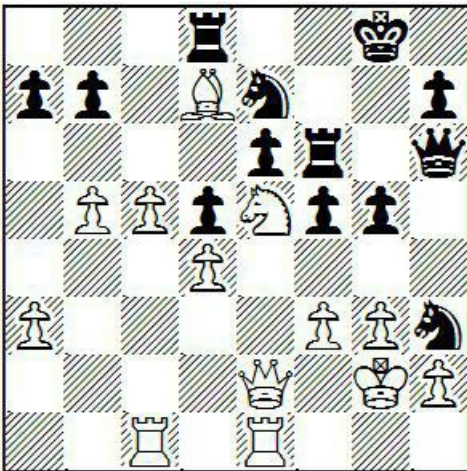
**18 ... Qh6 19 f3 Nf2 20 Qe2**

Sidestepping the last trick: 20 Kxf2 Qxh2+ 21 Ke3 f4+ 22 gxf4 Qxf4+ 23 Ke2 Qh2+ and Black escapes with a draw by repetition.

**20 ... Nh3+**

20 ... Nxd3 21 Nxd3 Bd7 is hardly inspiring for Black with such a passive position.

**21 Kg2 g5 22 Nb5 Bxb5 23 Bxb5 Rf6 24 Bd7 Rd8 25 b5**



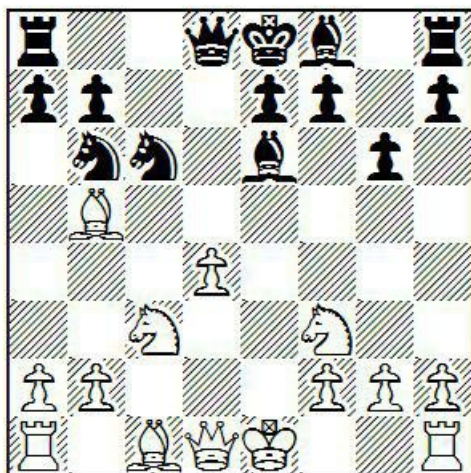
Watch that c-pawn go!

**25 ... Qh5 26 c6 Rh6 27 Kh1 1-0**

A deceptively simple game by Botvinnik, who appeared to win without breaking sweat. This c5 advance is certainly one idea to keep in mind for Panov players.

Here 27 c7 Nf4+ 28 Kh1! Rxd7 29 gxf4 also does the trick, but why allow Black any potential tricks?

**1 e4 c6 2 c4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 d4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 cxd5 Nxd5 7 Bc4 Nb6 8 Bb5 Be6 9 Nf3 g6**



A sensible move, since the black e-pawn is blocked, the f8-bishop will 'go long' on the fianchetto diagonal. Black simply intends to go ... Bg7, ... 0-0 and try to attack the d4-pawn as quickly as possible.

#### **10 h4!?**

Whilst the Panov has many attacking ideas and plans, this one should be considered one of the more risky if also one of the most interesting ones.

**Question:** How can White get away with such a move so early in the game?

**Answer:** Since Black does not have a knight on f6 which would slow down the h4-h5 advance, it is actually quite hard to prevent the pawn push. Once the h-file is open for the rook on h1, further attacking possibilities open up.

#### **10 ... Bg7**

10 ... h5 is playable but a little weakening: for example, 11 Ne5 Rc8 12 Qe2 Bg7 (if 12 ... Qxd4 13 Nxc6 and e6 is loose) 13 0-0 (13 Nxc6 Bg4 14 f3 fxc6 15 fxc4 0-0 is unclear, but probably in Black's favour since White cannot castle) 13 ... Qd6 14 Re1 is objectively unclear if the sort of position White will be aiming for here.

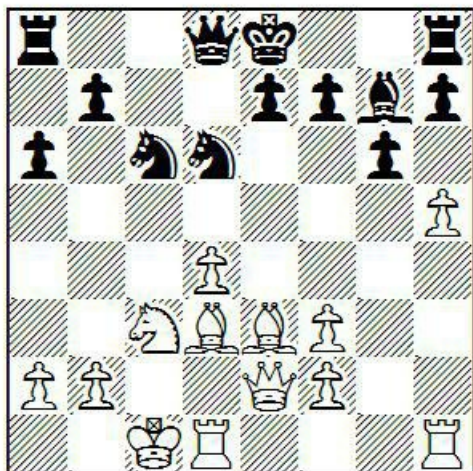
#### **11 h5**

This one needs no explanation.

#### **11 ... Bd5 12 Be3**

I do not normally like this move as the bishop is passive on e3, but d4 needed to be held and there still this idea of castling queenside.

#### **12 ... a6 13 Bd3 Nc4 14 Qe2 Bxf3 15 gxf3 Nd6 16 0-0-0**



There's a new and interesting position on the board. For the whole game, see the notes in Chapter Four to Kramnik-Meier.

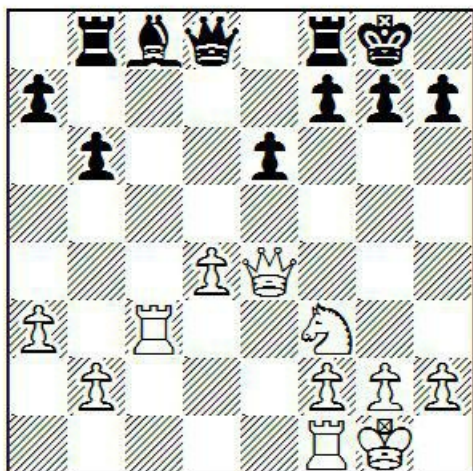
We have already discussed the relative strengths and weaknesses of the isolated d4-pawn. It creates plenty of attacking possibilities, but at the same time the prospective Panov player (i.e. you!) needs to be aware of the pitfalls. One main one is when a late middlegame/endgame is reached and the IQP pawn slowly turns into a weaker and weaker morsel. The Russian Grandmaster Alexey Dreev has for many years been admired as a strong Caro-Kann player and his technique in playing the black position is extremely good. Here we will see one example.

Game 14

**D.Bojkov-A.Dreev**

Greek Team Championship 2006

**1 e4 c6 2 c4 d5 3 cxd5 cxd5 4 exd5 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nxd5 6 Nf3 e6 7 d4 Bb4 8 Bd2 Nc6 9 Bd3 Nf6 10 a3 Be7 11 Bg5 0-0 12 0-0 Nd5 13 Bxe7 Ncxe7 14 Qc2 Nf6 15 Ne4 Ned5 16 Rac1 b6 17 Nxf6+ Nxf6 18 Be4 Nxe4 19 Qxe4 Rb8 20 Rc3**



**Exercise:** It is Black to move. Should Black play ... Bb7 or ... Ba6, to attack the rook on f1? If you opt for 20 ... Bb7, should Black trade the bishop for the knight on f3 afterwards?

**Answer:** Black should definitely go for the queen and rook middlegame and really pile the pressure on the d4-pawn. Watch how Dreev puts this plan into action.

**20 ... Bb7**

After 20 ... Ba6 21 Rfc1 the bishop is shooting into mid-air on the a6-f1 diagonal.

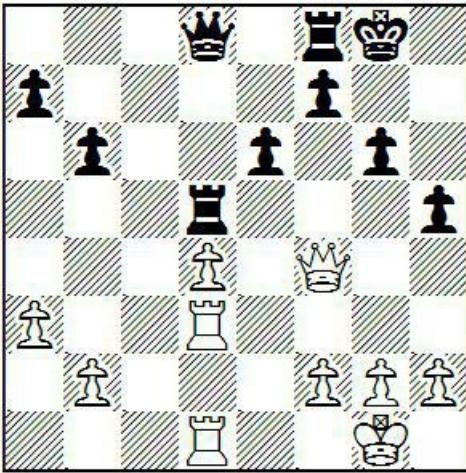
**21 Qe5 Bxf3! 22 Rxf3 Rb7!**

A nice way to prepare ... Rd7 and ... Rd5, blockading the d4-pawn. Once the pawn is restrained, it can be destroyed according to Nimzowitsch's principles.

**23 Rg3 g6 24 Rh3 Rd7 25 Qf4 h5**

25 ... Rxd4 26 Qh6 was a trick that is easily parried.

**26 Rd1 Rd5 27 Rhd3**



Well, this wasn't part of the plan.

**27 ... Re8 28 Qe3 Qf6 29 h3 Red8 30 Qe4 Kg7**

Note the technique of not rushing, the hallmark of a strong player who realizes he has plenty of time in the position to improve all of his pieces.

**31 Qe3 R8d7 32 Qe4 Qd8**

Again, excellent technique: the queen goes behind the rooks to attack d4.

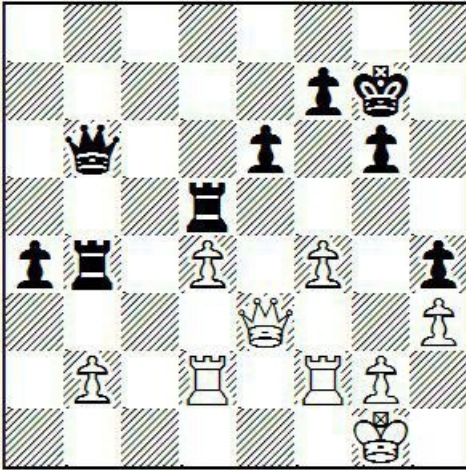
**33 f4**

Forced, otherwise 33 ... e5! would win the d4-pawn. However, this is a further weakening of the position.

**33 ... h4 34 Qe3 Rf5 35 R1d2 Rc7 36 Rf2 Qd6 37 Rd1 a5 38 Rd3 Rc4 39 Rd1 Qc7 40 Kh1 a4**

The pawns on h4 and a4 prevent the white wing pawns from advancing (not that that would do much anyway here), and Black has slowly increased his grip on the position over the past few moves. All that is needed is for the win of material.

**41 Kg1 b5 42 Rff1 b4 43 axb4 Rxb4 44 Rd2 Qb6 45 Rff2 Rd5**



Now the white defences collapse.

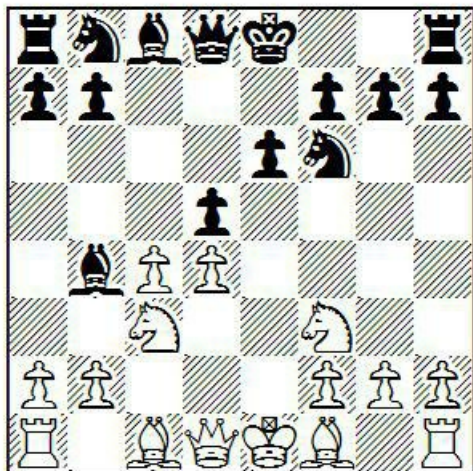
**46 f5 exf5 47 Rf4 g5 48 Rff2 f4 49 Qc3 Rbxd4 50 Kh2 Qf6 0-1**

Two pawns down with no hope, White resigned. Superb technique from Dreev and a game which should highlight the potential problems with the IQP if you exchange off too many pieces. That game was certainly no fun for White I can assure you, so do try and avoid this happening to you!

# Chapter Two

## Black Plays 5 ... e6 6 Nf3 Bb4

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6 Nf3 Bb4



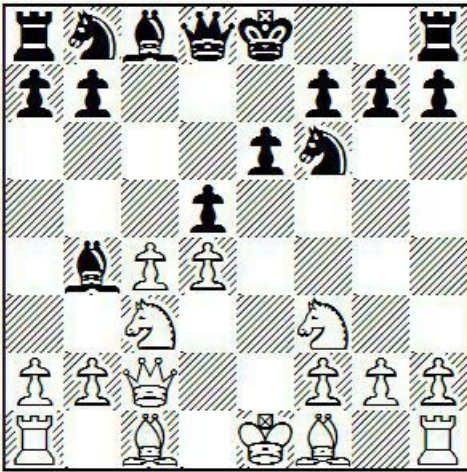
If you were given this position blind, moving the bishop to b4 would be one of the most natural moves you could play. The bishop puts immediate pressure on the knight on c3 and just takes up an active role. Over the coming games in this chapter, I have decided to show the various white ideas rather than recommend just one line. This was mainly because in my research I found many interesting options and felt I could not hide most of them from the reader. The Panov should be about getting interesting, sharp positions and there were just too many options. So my advice is: check all the games here and decide which line(s) suit you best.

Game 15

**D.Zifroni-T.Karolyi**

Tel Aviv 1999

1 c4 c6 2 e4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 d4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6 Nf3 Bb4 7 Qc2



**Question:** What is the usefulness of the queen on c2? Won't it just be attacked down the c-file by a future rook move to c8?

**Answer:** Well, yes, that is true, but Black is a number of moves away from that particular move. White's queen lends support to the knight on c3 and looks towards h7. There are various other ideas too which be seen in the coming games.

#### **7 ... dxc4**

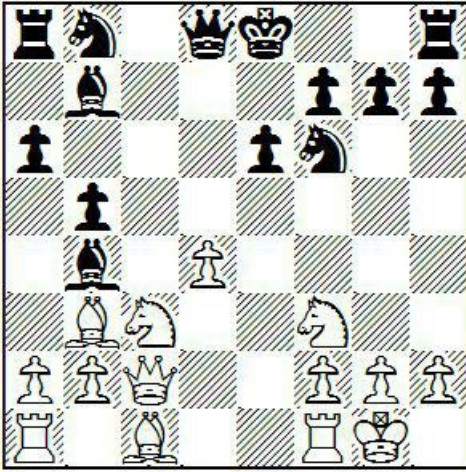
In principle, Black should be avoiding this move. He should wait until White plays Be2 or Bd3, and only then play ... dxc4. That way gains Black an important tempo, because in this game White was able to play Bf1xc4 in one go, rather than Bf1-d3xc4 in two moves. Such tempi can be crucial in such an open position, as the Israeli Grandmaster will show us.

Two alternatives:

a) 7 ... 0-0 8 Bg5 h6 9 Bh4 Nc6 10 Rd1 Be7 11 a3 b6 (note the cat and mouse game both sides are playing; White is waiting for ... dxc4 and Black is trying to avoid it) 12 Bd3 (finally!) 12 ... Bb7 13 Bxf6 Bxf6 14 cxd5 exd5 15 0-0 Re8 16 b4! prevents ... Na5-c4 ideas and this d4 vs. d5 structure is something we will encounter sporadically in the Panov. Moreover, this was all seen in I.Smirin-D.Zifroni, Israeli League 1999, which is interesting because our main game here was played just three months later. Clearly Zifroni was inspired by his game with Smirin.

b) 7 ... Nc6 8 Bg5 h6 9 Bh4 dxc4 10 Bxc4 Be7 11 0-0 0-0 12 Rad1 Nd5 13 Bg3 a6 14 Rfe1 Ncb4 was F.Bistic-R.Fontaine, Novi Sad 2002, and now 15 Qe2 b5 16 Bb3 Bb7 17 Ne5 Rc8 was suddenly somewhat acceptable for Black since he had developed harmoniously. However, 15 Qb3! would have placed Black under some pressure: for example, 15 ... b5 16 Bxd5 Nxd5 17 Nxd5 exd5 18 Rc1 Be6 19 Bc7 is awkward to meet.

#### **8 Bxc4 a6 9 0-0 b5 10 Bb3 Bb7**



**Exercise:** Now ... Bxf3 is in the air. What should White do here?

**Answer: 11 d5!!**

If you managed to work this one out, a true Panov player has just been born!

**Question:** How can White get away with a pawn move when no fewer than four(!) black pieces can capture it, added to the fact that ... Bxc3 will remove another defender of this pawn?

**Answer:** As Black has not castled, ... exd5 isn't really on because Re1+ will cause panic. The king will hardly want to run to f8 and then there is definite compensation.

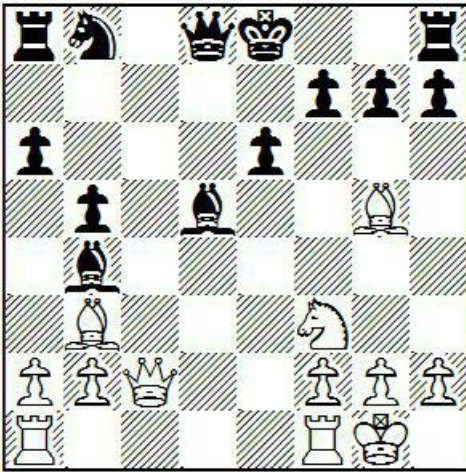
11 Qe2 is the only other decent alternative, defending f3. Play can continue 11 ... 0-0 12 Bg5 h6 13 Bh4 Nbd7 14 Rad1 with a roughly level position, but Black again has a harmonious position and cannot complain.

**11 ... Nxd5**

After 11 ... exd5 12 Re1+ Be7 13 Bg5 0-0 14 Rad1 White is fully developed and d5 is under attack. Indeed, Black is under heavy pressure. Here 14 ... Re8 15 Qf5 Nbd7 16 Nxd5 Nxd5 17 Bxd5 Bxd5 18 Qxd5 Bxg5 19 Nxd5 is one sample line showing the power in the white position.

Instead, 11 ... Bxc3 12 dxe6! reveals another key point. A piece is thrown into the fire for a raging attack on the uncastled king: 12 ... Bb4 13 exf7+ Kf8 14 Ng5 is completely crushing, as 14 ... Bc8 15 Rd1 loses immediately.

**12 Nxd5 Bxd5 13 Bg5**

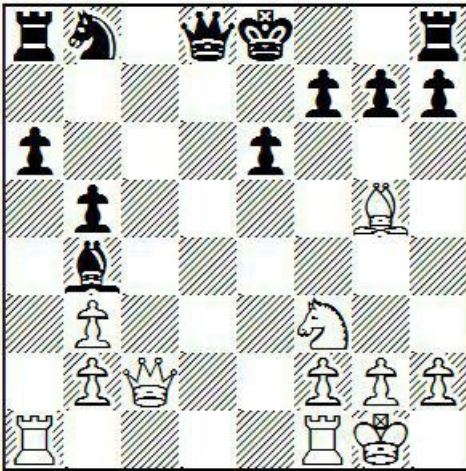


Each move comes with tempo, not allowing Black time for development.

**13 ... Bxb3**

If 13 ... f6 then again 14 Rad1! when another piece gets sacrificed for quick play: 14 ... fxg5 15 Bxd5 exd5 16 Rfe1+ Be7 17 Nxg5 Nd7 18 Rxd5 Qa5 19 Qe4 with tremendous pressure.

**14 axb3**



**14 ... Be7**

14 ... f6 15 Qe4! hits three pieces and that normally spells serious danger.

**15 Rfd1 Nd7 16 Bxe7 Kxe7**

Thus the king has been kept in the centre, and therefore there is good long-term compensation for the pawn. However, if given time, Black may begin to unravel, so in these types of positions, continuing to attack is the best idea (as if you needed any more encouragement!).

Instead if 16 ... Qxe7, White can use his lead in development to his advantage: 17 Qc6! Rd8 18 Ne5 and the knight on d7 is lost.

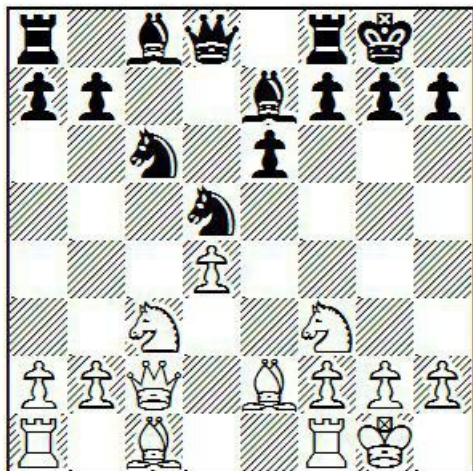


**Question:** Why are we putting this bishop on an apparently passive square when we are supposed to play actively in this opening?

**Answer:** This variation contains some punch, as this game demonstrates. The plan is, of course, to castle and play Bg5, but the other idea is to play Qe4 and Bd3 at some point when suddenly we have some attacking intent.

9 Bd3 is the alternative and will be discussed later in this chapter.

**9 ... 0-0 10 0-0 Be7**



**Question:** Why does Black voluntarily retreat like this? The bishop wasn't even attacked on b4.

**Answer:** The bishop rushes back to the defence of its king by preventing any knight or bishop thrust to g5. This also frees up the b4-square so ... Nb4 hangs in the air at a timely moment. The bishop can also come to f6 to attack the d4-pawn. Finally, Black is staking the claim that although he lost a move with ... Bb4-e7, what he has in fact done is upset White's coordination by making him play Qc2 which he might not normally do in an IQP set-up.

**11 Rd1**

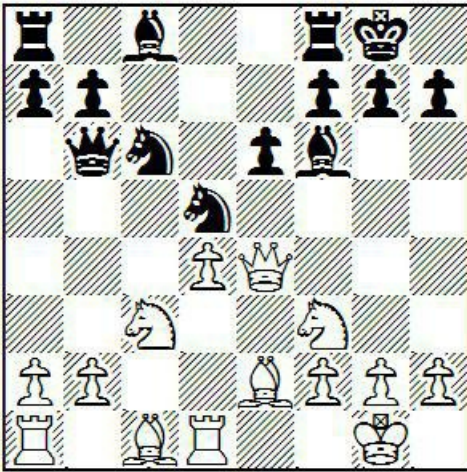
11 a3 Bf6 12 Qe4 Nxc3 13 bxc3 Qd5 has occurred in a few games. With the exchange on c3, the pawn structure has changed so Black is going to try and target the c3-pawn down the c-file, rather than d4.

**11 ... Qb6**

This is the sort of move that looks good, but will get Black in trouble. It rules out the idea of ... b6 and ... Bb7, and d5 is weakened.

11 ... Bf6 12 Qe4 Nce7 to fortify d5 would be similar to the next game.

**12 Qe4 Bf6**



**Question:** Can't White just win a pawn on d5?

**Answer:** Only temporarily I'm afraid.

**13 Bd3**

After 13 Nxd5 exd5 14 Qxd5 Rd8 (14 ... Bg4 is also good) 15 Qe4 Nxd4 Black is fine following the exchanges in the centre.

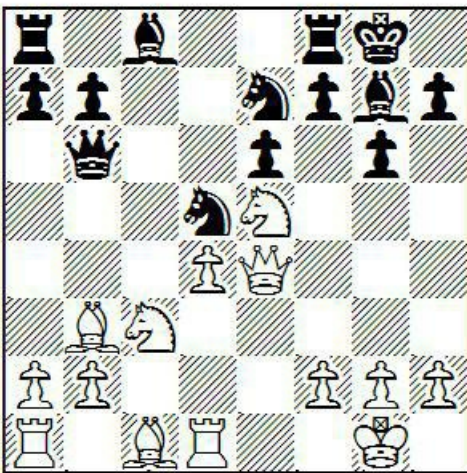
**13 ... g6 14 Bc4 Nce7**

14 ... Nxc3 15 bxc3 Bd7 16 Bh6 Rfd8 17 Qf4 Bg7 18 Ng5! Rf8 19 Bxg7 Kxg7 20 Rab1 shows the speed of White's attacking play and development if left unopposed.

**15 Ne5 Bg7 16 Bb3**

A nice idea. Now b2 is not under attack and with this the question for Black is: what are you going to do about the bishop on c8?

Again, White should not be tempted into trying to capture on d5: 16 Nxd5 exd5 17 Bxd5 Bf5 18 Qf3 Nxd5 19 Qxd5 Rad8 20 Qf3 Rxd4 and all of a sudden it is Black who is clearly better.



**16 ... Qd8**

The queen returns with her tail between her legs, a sign of the failure of going to b6 [www.chessstouring.com](http://www.chessstouring.com)

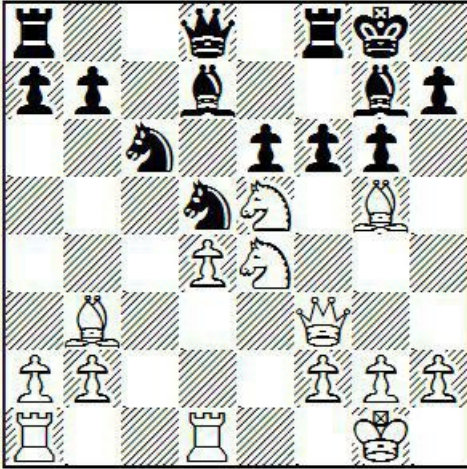
**17 Qf3 Bd7 18 Ne4**

18 Bg5 is the most natural move when play can develop with 18 ... f6 19 Nxd7 Qxd7 20 Bd2 Rad8 21 Rac1 f5 22 Bg5 Bf6 23 h4, which is unclear, but the white pieces are the more active.

**18 ... Nc6**

18 ... Bc6 strengthens the d5-square, but is still a little ropey, as shown by 19 Bg5 f6 20 Nxc6 Nxc6 21 Bh4 Qb6 22 Bxd5 exd5 23 Nc5.

**19 Bg5 f6**



**Exercise:** Find the best continuation for White. A clue is to try and spot how to take advantage of the newly weakened e6-square.

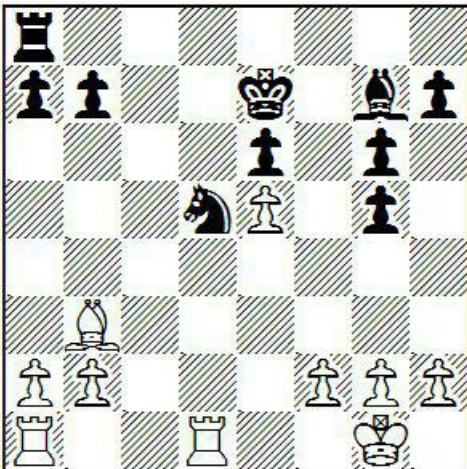
**Answer: 20 Nxd7 Qxd7 21 Nc5 f6**

21 ... Qd6 22 Nxe6! Qxe6 23 Bxd5 was the key idea.

**22 Qxf8+!**

A key zwischenzug. Possibly Black only considered 22 Nxd7 Rxf3 23 gxf3 Nxd4 24 Bxd5 exd5 25 Kg2 Ne6 and, with the knight coming to f4, Black stands satisfactorily.

**22 ... Kxf8 23 Nxd7+ Ke7 24 Ne5 Nxe5 25 dxe5**



### 25 ... Rd8

This position should just be winning for White as he is a clear exchange ahead. Likewise, 25 ... Bxe5 26 Bxd5 exd5 27 Rxd5 Bxb2 28 Re1+ Kf6 29 Rd6+ Kf5 30 Re2 Ba1 31 Re7 is eventually winning for White.

**26 Rd2 g4 27 Rad1 Bxe5 28 Re2 Kf6 29 Rde1 Bd4 30 Rxe6+ Kf5 31 Re8 Rd6 32 Rd1 Nf6 33 Re2 Bc5 34 Bc2+ 1-0**

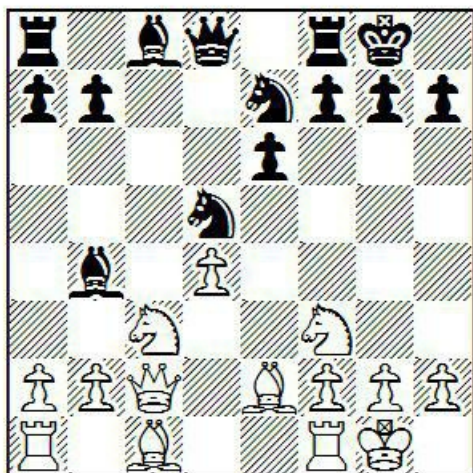
Game 17

**M.Adams-I.Papaioannou**

Istanbul Olympiad 2000

**1 e4 c6 2 c4 d5 3 exd5 Nf6 4 Nc3 cxd5 5 d4 e6 6 Nf3 Bb4 7 cxd5 Nxd5 8 Qc2 Nc6 9 Be2 0-0 10 0-0 Nce7**

We saw the trouble Black has if the d5-square is not secure, so this move makes a lot of sense. Of course, it does reduce the pressure on the d4-pawn for now, so White has a free hand to try and develop some initiative.



### 11 Bd3 h6

This seems natural, but now if the white queen ever makes it to e4, the problem will be how to prevent Qh7: ... g6 will drop the h6-pawn since the bishop on c1 will always be sizing this pawn up.

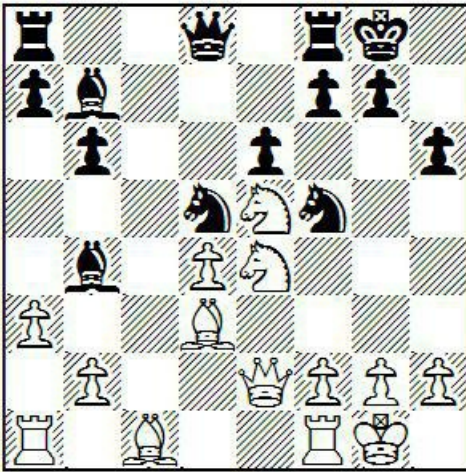
### 12 Ne4 b6 13 Ne5

The knights move menacingly forwards.

### 13 ... Bb7

Alternatively, 13 ... Nf5 14 a3 Be7 (and not 14 ... Nxd4 15 Qc4 Bc5 16 b4) 15 Ng3 Nxd4 16 Qc4 Nf6 17 Be3 Nf5 18 Bxf5 exf5 19 Rad1 looks quite scary for Black even if the computer says Black is okay here: for example, 19 ... Qe8 20 Qf4 and now something like 20 ... g5 is bad because of 21 Qf3! Ba6 22 Nxf5 with a raging attack.

### 14 Qe2 Nf5 15 a3



**Question:** Can't Black just win a pawn here on d4, since 15 ... Nxd4 attacks the queen on e2?

**Answer:** Yes, Black can take on d4, but it is certainly dangerous. I can fully understand why even a strong grandmaster, as Black was in this game, decided not to risk it. After 15 ... Nxd4 the queen has two squares:

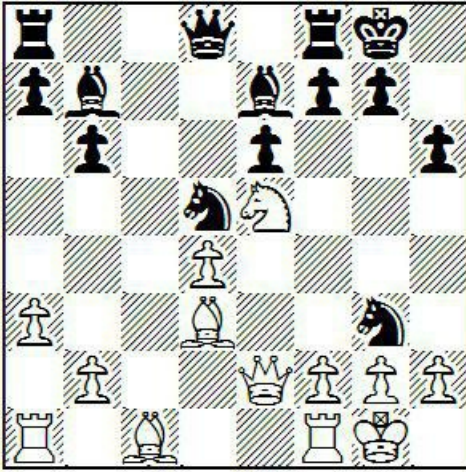
a) 16 Qg4 f5 and now the amusing variation 17 Ng5!? hxg5 (17 ... fxg4 18 Bh7+ Kh8 19 Ng6# is optimistic at best) 18 Qxd4 Bc5 19 Qa4 Qd6 leaves Black in the driving seat since the white pieces are unstable and Black is better developed.

b) 16 Qh5! Be7 17 Ng4 Nf5 18 Nxh6+ gxh6 19 Bxh6 looks very scary, but in these positions the computer is the boss and indicates 19 ... Nf4 20 Bxf4 Qxd3 21 Be5 Ng7 22 Qh6 f6 23 Bxf6 Rf7.

All in all, despite what the computer says, future 'Panovers' should relish these types of complications. It is very difficult for the defending side to always find 'only moves' as Black would need to here. This should give the white player every confidence.

### 15 ... Be7 16 Ng3 Nxc3

Here too after 16 ... Nxd4 17 Qe4 Nf5 18 Nxf5 exf5 19 Qxf5 Nf6 20 Ng4! (trying to remove the defender of h7) 20 ... g6 21 Nxh6+ Kg7 22 Qh3 the computer says Black is roughly okay, but how many of us would accept this position as Black?



**Exercise:** Which way to recapture on g3? Try to decide as if you had this in one of your own games.

**17 hxg3**

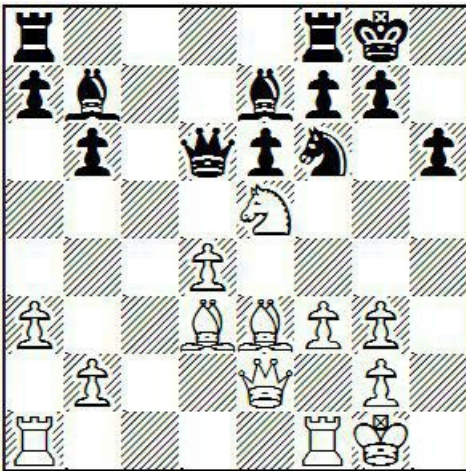
**Answer:** Both are reasonable, although capturing towards the centre is normally the best way. You never know, the semi-open h-file might come in useful one day ...

17 fxg3 opens the f-file at the expense of a slight weakening of the pawn structure. 17 ... Rc8 18 Kh1 Nf6 19 Be3 Nd7 20 Rad1 Nxe5 21 dxe5 Qc7 22 Qh5 is simply unclear, but you either love the white pawn structure or don't!

**17 ... Nf6**

17 ... Rc8 was also sensible, and if 18 Be4 Rc7 19 Bd2 Qa8 20 Bd3 Nf6.

**18 Be3 Qd5 19 f3 Qd6**



**Question:** Where should White put the rook on a1? On c1, d1 or e1?

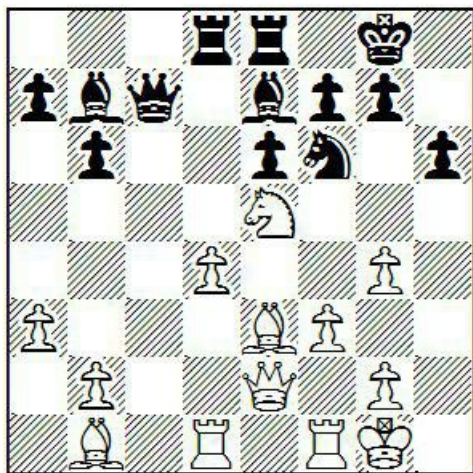
**Answer:** All three moves are okay, but we must remember the ideas and strategies in the Panov and IQP

positions.

### 20 Rad1

The move most in keeping with the IQP: d4 is protected and all the rooks are kept on the board. Instead, 20 Rac1 is perfectly fine, but exchanging rooks in IQP situations tends not to be a good idea. Remember that as the pieces are exchanged, the strength of the d4-pawn diminishes somewhat. Finally, 20 Rae1 is a little odd because d4 may need attention should Black play, ... Nd5 and exchange on e3.

### 20 ... Rad8 21 Bb1 Qc7 22 g4 Rfe8



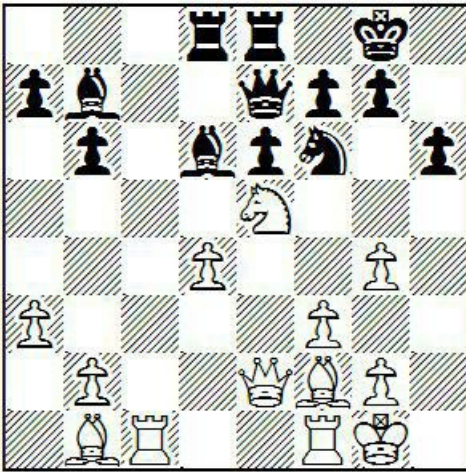
**Question:** Should we now go 23 g5 to try and smash Black off the board, or is it too early for this break?

**Answer:** This is definitely White's plan at some point, but what strong players do is not rush. What we will see is Adams patiently build up to this move, in the meantime preventing any counterplay.

### 23 Bf2

23 g5 hxg5 24 Bxg5 Nd7! (offering exchanges again) 25 Bf4 (25 Qd3 is far too speculative: 25 ... Bxg5 26 Qh7+ Kf8 27 Qh8+ Ke7 28 Qxg7 Be3+ 29 Kh1 Rh8+ and the tables are turned) 25 ... Nxe5 26 Bxe5 Bd6 is unclear, but Black should be happy with this in comparison with the game continuation.

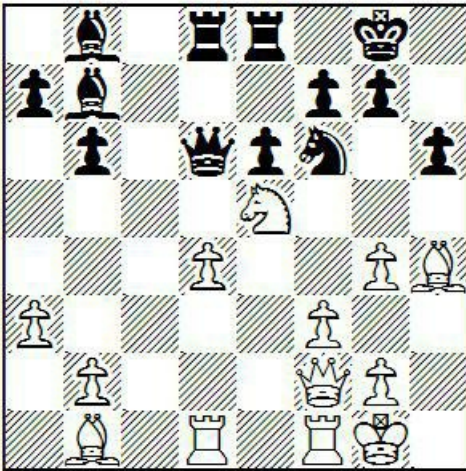
### 23 ... Bd6 24 Rc1 Qe7



**25 Bh4**

Now g5 is always coming and the pressure is annoying for Black.

**25 ... Bb8 26 Qf2 Qd6 27 Rcd1**



**Question:** The rook returns to d1, but what has White achieved?

**Answer:** Black has not done anything constructive himself, and the threat of g5 still hangs over him like the sword of Damocles. Once this break is engineered, the final breakthrough will not be too far off.

**27 ... Rc8**

The computer wants to play 27 ... g5, but after 28 Bg3 Qf8 29 f4 the position is certainly most unpleasant from Black's point of view.

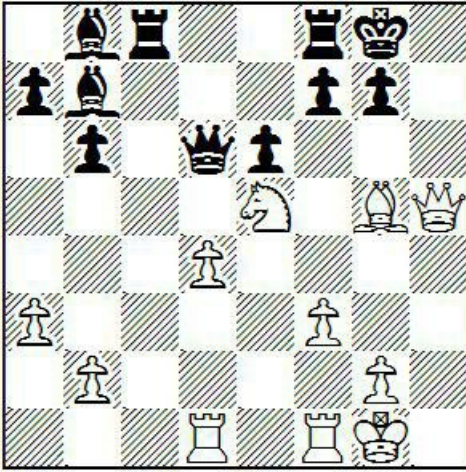
**28 g5 hxg5 29 Bxg5 Nh7**

29 ... Nd7 30 Qh4 f5 31 Ng6 is just horrible. Play can go 31 ... Qg3 32 Ne7+ Kf7 33 d5! Qxh4 34 dxe6+ Kxe6 35 Bxh4 Rxe7 36 Rfe1+ Ne5 37 Ba2+, winning.

**30 Bxh7+ Kxh7 31 Qh4+**

And most certainly not 31 Nxf7? Qh2#.

**31 ... Kg8 32 Qh5 Rf8**



**Exercise:** It's White to play and win! Look for a study-like combination. Warning: this is quite difficult, but does contain a theme you might have seen in a tactics book.

**Answer:**

**33 Bf6!! 1-0**

Black resigned as the threat is 34 Qg5 mating, and after 33 ... gxf6 34 Qg4+ Kh7 35 Kf2! it turns out that the h-file was useful in the end: 35 ... Rc2+ 36 Ke3 and there is no stopping mate on h1.

Game 18

**V.Tkachiev-V.Potkin**

European Championship, Dresden 2007

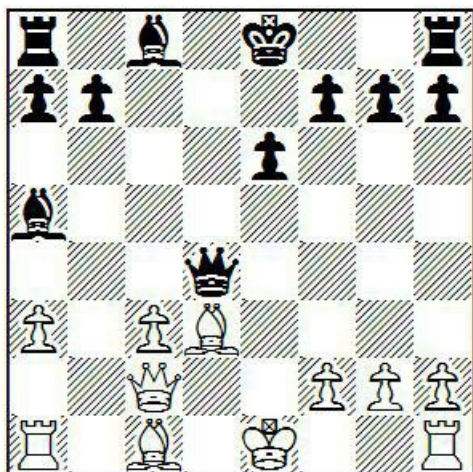
**1 c4 c6 2 e4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 d4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6 Nf3 Bb4 7 cxd5 Nxd5 8 Qc2 Nc6 9 Bd3**

The most common and natural move. Black is dissuaded from castling and the bishop takes up the usual attacking post on d3, as in many opening variations.

**9 ... Ba5**



... and now there occurred a fantastic finish in D.Andreikin-A.Dreev, Baku 2011: 26 Bf6! 1-0.  
**11 bxc3 Nxd4 12 Nxd4 Qxd4**



**Question:** Hang on a minute! Haven't we just lost a pawn and a strong central one at that? We also haven't even castled.

**Answer:** Like in many Panov lines, the initiative is key and we are about to see how this line can be very dangerous for Black. Yes, a pawn has been sacrificed, but the black king will now be stranded in the centre.

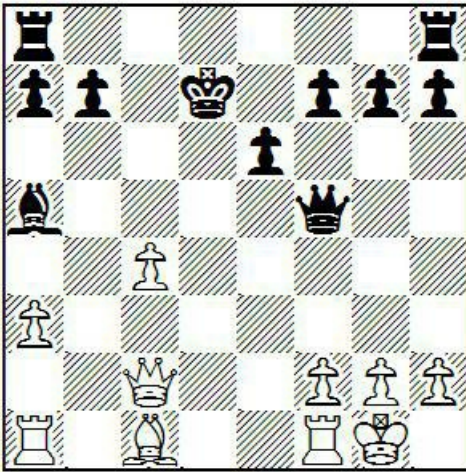
**13 Bb5+ Bd7**

13 ... Kf8 is an alternative: 14 0-0 Qxc3 15 Qa2 (15 Qb1 Qf6 16 a4 e5 17 Qe4 Qf5 18 Qd5 Qe6 19 Ba3+ Kg8 20 Qc5 h6 21 Bc4 Qc6 was completely unclear in Wang Yu-Xu Yuanyuan, Yerevan 2000, but also not unfavourable for White) 15 ... a6 16 Bb2 Qc5 17 Be2 Bd7 18 Rac1 Qg5 19 Bf3 Bc6 20 Bxc6 bxc6 21 Rxc6 h5 22 Qc4 Qd5 23 Qc1 Rd8 24 Rc5 Qd2 25 Qa1 Bb6 26 Bxg7+ Ke8 was D.Howell-E.L'Ami, Liverpool 2008, and now 27 Rc6 Bd4 28 Bxd4 Qxd4 29 Rxa6 would have been good for White. In general White was the one doing the attacking here and Black was the side having to defend (sounds familiar?).

**14 0-0 Qd5**

14 ... Qxc3 15 Bxd7+ Kxd7 16 Qa4+ Ke7 17 Bg5+ f6 18 Rfc1 Qe5 19 Bf4 Qf5 20 Rab1 gives Black no respite for defence, and such a move as 20 ... Bb6 loses straight away to 21 Rxb6! axb6 22 Rc7+ and mate on a8.

**15 c4 Qf5 16 Bxd7+ Kxd7**



**Question:** Should we exchange queens on f5 here?

**Answer:** Never! White is a pawn down and, with the black king in the centre, pieces need to be kept on to increase our attacking chances.

**17 Qb3 b6**

After 17 ... Bb6 there are many tempting options, but let me show a line to demonstrate White's initiative despite the pawn minus: 18 a4 Rhc8 19 Bb2 g6 20 Rae1 Ke8 21 Re5 Qf4 22 c5 Bc7 (if 22 ... Bxc5 23 Qb5+) 23 g3 Qg4 24 Re3 Kf8 25 Qc3 e5 26 f4 with tremendous pressure on the black position.

**18 Rd1+ Ke7 19 a4!**

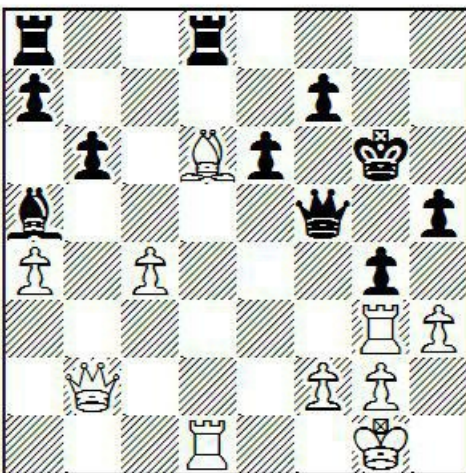
Freeing up a3 for the bishop to direct its fire at the black king.

**19 ... Rhd8 20 Ba3+ Kf6**

20 ... Ke8 21 Qg3 Qf6 22 Qc7 is not so easy to defend against either.

**21 Bd6 g5 22 Qb2+ Kg6 23 Ra3 g4 24 h3 h5 25 Rg3**

Even though the king made it to the kingside, it is still not completely safe. That bishop on a5 is unable to help out the defence which is one of the telling points in this game.



**25 ... f6 26 hxg4 hxg4 27 Rd4 Kf7 28 c5**

28 Rdxg4 Rxd6 29 Rg7+ Ke8 30 Rg8+ Kd7 31 Rxa8 is the clinical computer suggestion.

**28 ... Rg8 29 Rf4 Qg6 30 Rgxg4 Qh6**

If 30 ... Qxg4 31 Qxf6+ Ke8 32 Qe7 mate.

**31 Qb5**

The queen comes in around the other side.

**31 ... Rad8 32 Qc6 1-0**

The black king was hounded to its death. Again we saw the pressure Black had to contend with even though he was a pawn up for most of the game. Crucially, we saw the notion of the bishop on a5 being completely useless compared with being on e7 from where it can help out the defence.

Game 19

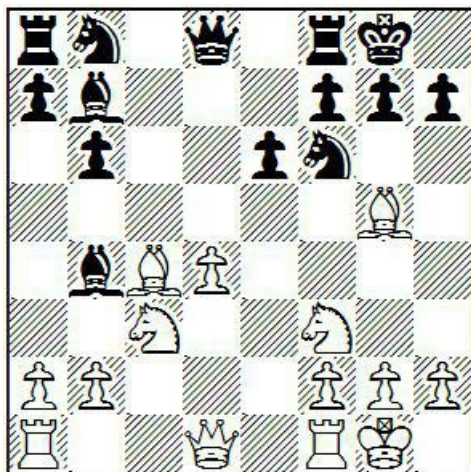
**A. Timofeev-P. Svidler**

Russian Championship, Moscow 2008

**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6 Nf3 Bb4 7 Bd3**

With this move White seeks no early complications, but simply heads for a regular IQP position. This does entail a slight loss of time since Black has waited for the bishop to move from f1 before playing ... dxc4, but an IQP situation is guaranteed, so if you did not like the pawn sacrifice in the previous game, this line might be best for you.

**7 ... dxc4 8 Bxc4 0-0 9 0-0 b6 10 Bg5 Bb7**



One of the most important IQP positions around, since many different openings can transpose to this very position, such as the Nimzo-Indian.

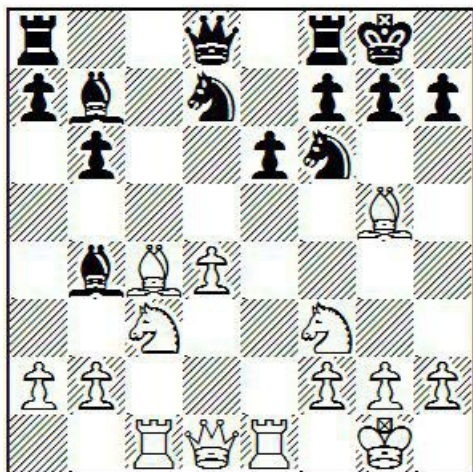
**11 Re1**

There are a number of moves here, such as 11 Ne5, 11 Rc1 and 11 Qe2. All I will say is that all these moves have a common goal, which is to play the pieces towards the centre and play in standard IQP style. If the reader would like to check these moves further and examine the exact variations you are welcome to, but here we will only discuss the ideas and plans to be looking out for.

**11 ... Nbd7**

The knight comes to d7 rather than c6 which would attack the d4-pawn. This has the advantage of protecting its friend on f6, meaning the black queen can move away and escape the pin on the h4-d8 diagonal.

**12 Rc1**



**Question:** Generally in these IQP positions you say to try and place the rooks on d1 and e1, so why play 12 Rc1 here?

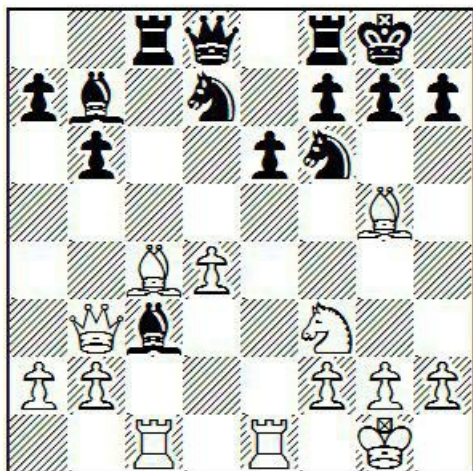
**Answer:** Here with the bishop on b4, there is slightly more pressure on the white queenside. Black would like to go ... Rc8 when c4 and c3 will start to feel the heat. It might look like White is playing defensively, but if Black is not careful then moves like Qb3 and maybe at some key moment d5 will be big attacking moves that may be hard to deal with, as, indeed, this game shows.

**12 ... Rc8 13 Qb3**

13 Bd3 Re8 14 Qe2 Bxc3 15 bxc3 was the line played in V.Anand-V.Topalov, World Championship (Game 9), Sofia 2010. This appears to be the latest twist in this variation. Topalov went 15 ... Qc7 16 Bh4 Nh5!, preventing Bg3 with an unclear game and just the sort of middlegame which has plenty of play in it.

**13 ... Bxc3**

White certainly has a dangerous initiative whether or not Black makes this move: 13 ... Be7 14 Bxf6 Nxf6 (14 ... Bxf6 15 Nb5 Bxf3 16 Qxf3 Bg5 17 Rc2 a6 18 Nd6 Rc7 19 Nxf7 Qe7 20 Nxg5 Rxf3 21 Rxe6 Rxc4 22 Rxe7 Rxc2 23 gxf3 wasn't all that much of an improvement in A.Aleksandrov-M.Perunovic, Vrnjacka Banja 2005) 15 Bxe6 fxe6 16 Qxe6+ Kh8 17 Qxe7 Bxf3 18 gxf3 Qxd4 19 Nb5 Qxb2 20 Rxc8 Rxc8 21 Nd6 Rb8 22 Nf7+ Kg8 23 Qe6 Rf8 24 Nd8+ Kh8 25 Qe7 and 1-0 was that pivotal encounter V.Kramnik-G.Kasparov, World Championship (Game 10), London 2000.



**Question:** Which way to capture back on c3?

**Answer:** Best is with the rook, since who knows what the rook can do along the third rank.

**14 Rxc3**

14 bxc3 allows 14 ... Bxf3 15 gxf3 with a weakened king position for White, but better than 14 Qxc3? b5 which loses a piece straight away.

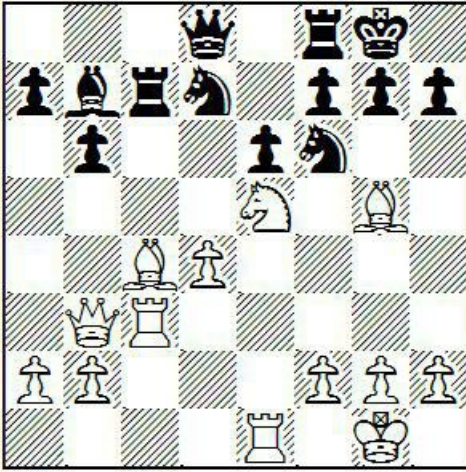
**14 ... Rc7?!**

Black wants to play ... Qa8 and build up pressure down the long diagonal, but this plan is possibly too slow and White gets to build up a head of steam with the attack from here on.

14 ... h6! 15 Bh4 Qe8 is one way to try and defend for Black. The idea of this strange-looking queen move is to get out of the pin from the bishop on h4 so ... Nd5 can be played. However, instead after 15 ... Bd5 16 Nd2 Bxc4 17 Nxc4 Qc7 18 Bg3 Qb7 19 Nd6 Rxc3 20 bxc3 Qc6 21 c4 White stood quite well in S.Atalik-D.Swapnil, Golden Sands 2012.

Instead, 14 ... Qe8?! 15 Nd2 h6 is an attempt to transpose to the above line, but walked into a series of fireworks in A.Onischuk-G.Vescovi, Poikovsky 2002: 16 Bxh6! gxh6 17 Rh3 Rxc4 18 Nxc4 Kg7 19 Qg3+ Kh7 20 Qd3+ Kg7 21 Nd6 Qb8 22 Rxe6!! fxe6 23 Rg3+ Ng4 (or 23 ... Kh8 24 Qg6 Rg8 25 Nf7#) 24 Rxg4+ Kf6 25 Qh7 1-0.

**15 Ne5**



We have seen this idea before. Black can hardly chop this knight off as the pawn recaptures, pinning the f6-knight. On the other hand, f7 and e6 are under pressure and, finally, the rook on c3 is able to swing over to the kingside.

**15 ... Kh8?**

Alternatively:

a) 15 ... Qa8 16 Bxe6 Rxc3 17 Bxf7+ Kh8 18 bxc3 Bxg2 led to a quick win for White in D.Alsina Leal-M.Vilar Lopez, Lisbon 2001.

b) 15 ... Nxe5 looks odd and doesn't work either, but it's worth seeing why: 16 dxe5 Qd4 17 exf6 Qg4 18 g3 (or 18 Rg3 Qxc4 19 Qxc4 Rxc4 20 Bh6) 18 ... Qxg5 19 Bxe6! fxe6 (19 ... Rxc3 20 Bxf7+ Kh8 21 Qxc3 is just winning, while here 20 ... Rxf7 21 Re8# is mate) 20 Rxc7.

c) 15 ... Qe7! is the most sensible, but the queen remains in the pin and therefore it was understandable that Svidler didn't want to play this. Play could continue 16 Bh4!? Rfc8 17 Nxf7 Rxc4 (if 17 ... Qxf7 18 Bxe6) 18 Nh6+ gxh6 19 Rxc4 with an unclear position, but the weakened black kingside probably favours White.

**16 Rh3!**

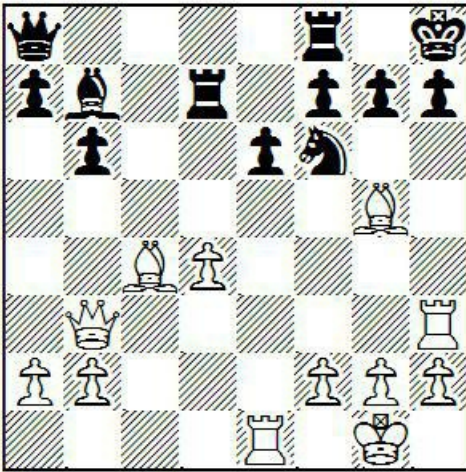
Best, although even after 16 Qa3 Qa8 17 Qe7 Nxe5 18 Qxc7 Nxc4 19 Bxf6 gxf6 20 Rxc4 Rg8 (20 ... Bxg2? 21 Qe7 wins) 21 g3 Bh1 22 f3 Qxf3 23 Rc2 there probably isn't enough for the exchange.

**16 ... Qa8**

Escaping the pin from the bishop on g5, but this loses to a lovely combination. However, even after 16 ... Kg8 17 Qg3 Qe7 18 Bd3 every single white piece is looking ominously towards the black king.

**17 Nxd7 Rxd7**

After 17 ... Nxd7 18 Bd3 g6 19 f3 Bd5 20 Qb4 Kg8 21 Bf4 Black's dark squares are very weak.



**Exercise:** As mentioned in the Introduction, find the win for White.

**Answer: 18 Bxf6 gxf6 19 Rxh7+! 1-0**

Black resigned as mate will follow: 19 ... Kxh7 20 Qh3+ Kg7 21 Qg4+ Kh6 22 Re3 (setting up the mate on h3) 22 ... Bxg2 23 Qh4+ Kg6 24 Rg3+ Kf5 25 Qg4#.

The attacking power of the IQP lives on!

Game 20

**P.H.Nielsen-V.Papin**

European Championship, Aix-les-Bains 2011

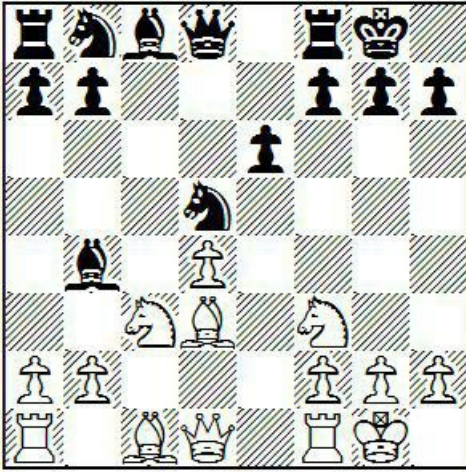
**1 c4 c6 2 e4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 d4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6 Nf3 Bb4 7 Bd3 0-0**

Deviating from the 7 ... dxc4 8 Bxc4 0-0 9 0-0 b6 of our previous game.

**8 cxd5**

Presumably Black assumed White would just castle, and then he could take on c4, transposing to Timofeev-Svidler. I quite like White's novel approach in this game, though, which is admittedly quite rare.

**8 ... Nxd5 9 0-0**



**9 ... Nc6**

The pawn wasn't really en prise, since 9 ... Nxc3 10 bxc3 Bxc3 11 Bxh7+ Kxh7 12 Qc2+ Kg8 13 Qxc3 regains it.

**10 a3**

Alternatively, 10 Bc2 Nce7 11 Qd3 g6 12 Bb3 Nxc3 13 bxc3 Bd6 14 c4 Nf5 15 Bb2 Nh4 16 c5 Be7 17 Rad1 Nxf3+ 18 Qxf3 Bf6 19 Bc1 Bg7 20 d5 with a big initiative in A.Graf-I.Papaioannou, Chania 1999.

**10 ... Ba5**

Quite a committal move since the bishop cannot now return to e7 for the defence, but this has the advantage of putting pressure on c3. Having said that, the last time we saw this idea in Tkachiev-Potkin, it did not work out too well for Black. 10 ... Be7 was more 'normal' when a typical IQP situation has arisen.

**11 Bg5**

We play this anyway in IQP positions, but here since the bishop is not on e7, the queen must answer the question over where it can safely go to.

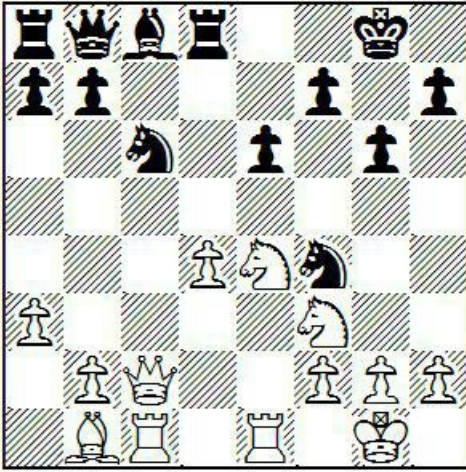
**11 ... Qd6 12 Ne4 Qb8 13 Rc1 Bc7 14 Re1 Bf4**

Wisely trying to exchange some pieces to relieve the pressure, but there are still problems.

**15 Bxf4 Nxf4**

15 ... Qxf4 16 g3 Qh6 17 b4 a6 18 Ne5 puts the pressure on, since 18 ... Nxd4 fails to 19 Ng4 Qh3 20 Bf1.

**16 Bb1 Rd8 17 Qc2 g6**



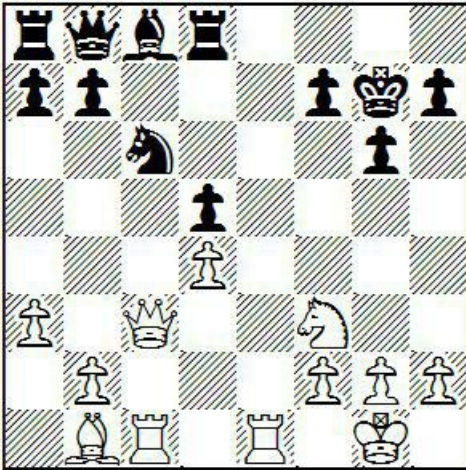
**Question:** What should White do here? Black's last looks rather weakening doesn't it, even if we don't have a dark-squared bishop with which to cause mayhem?

**Answer:** Heine Nielsen's idea certainly takes advantage of the weak dark squares.

**18 Nf6+ Kg7 19 Qc3! Nd5**

19 ... Kxf6 20 d5+ Ke7 21 dxc6 is very unpleasant for Black. The king does not look too healthy on e7 and c7 is in the air. Moreover, 21 ... bxc6 22 Ne5 Bb7 23 Qb4+ wins the errant knight on f4.

**20 Nxd5 exd5**



Now we have the pawn structure with d4 against d5 in the centre (mutual IQP pawns), but here it is clear to see it favours White. Every single major white piece stands better than its black counterpart, and even the bishop on b1 has more scope than the one on c8, since White has not put his pawns on the same coloured squares as the bishop, as per Philidor's suggestion back in the 1700s.

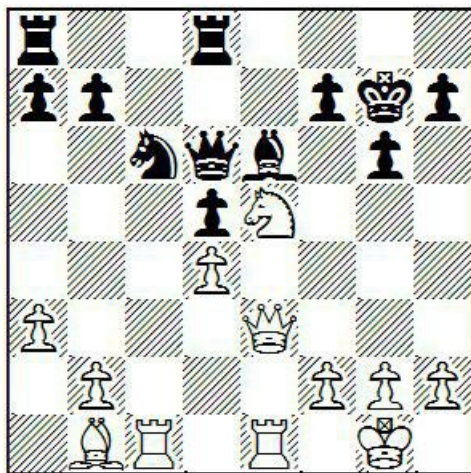
**Question:** That's fair enough, but how to breach Black's position?

**Answer:** When you have a lead in development, you must attack to take advantage of the situation.

Nielsen's play over the coming moves is very thematic for this pawn structure.

Note too in passing that 20 ... Rxd5 is not a good blockade in view of the simple 21 Be4 Rd6 22 d5+.

**21 Ne5 Be6 22 Qe3 Qd6**



**Exercise:** How to undermine the black king position?

**Answer: 23 h4!**

Using the h-pawn as a battering ram is a very useful theme in IQP situations. Black has a choice: to play ... h5 and prevent the pawn advancing further (this would weaken the g6-square, which, as we will see, is a soft spot anyway), or allow h5 which brings up tactics involving both hxg6 and maybe h6+ followed by an invasion on g7 with the queen.

**23 ... Re8**

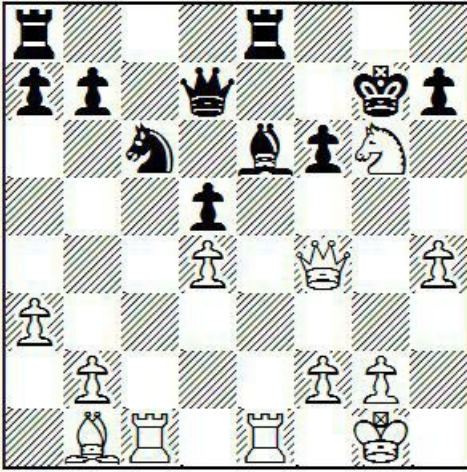
No better is 23 ... h5 24 Nxc6 (much stronger than 24 Qg5 Nxe5 25 dxe5 Qd7) 24 ... fxg6 25 Qxe6 Qxe6 26 Rxe6 Nxd4 27 Rc7+ Kh8 28 Rxc6.

**24 Qf4 f6**

24 ... Nxe5 25 dxe5 Qe7 26 h5 is certainly annoying for Black for the reasons mentioned in the note to White's 23rd.

**25 Nxc6 Qd7**

White had prepared to meet 25 ... Qxf4 26 Nxf4 Nxd4 with 27 Rcd1!.



**Exercise:** Has Black just tricked us? We have won a pawn, but the knight on g6 is trapped. Try to find the best follow-up.

**Answer: 26 Qg3 hxc6 27 Qxc6+ Kf8**

After 27 ... Kh8 28 Qxf6+ Kg8 29 Re3! the rook comes to g3 with great effect.

**28 Qxf6+ Qf7 29 Qh6+ Ke7**

If 29 ... Qg7 30 Rxe6.

**30 Bg6 Qg8**

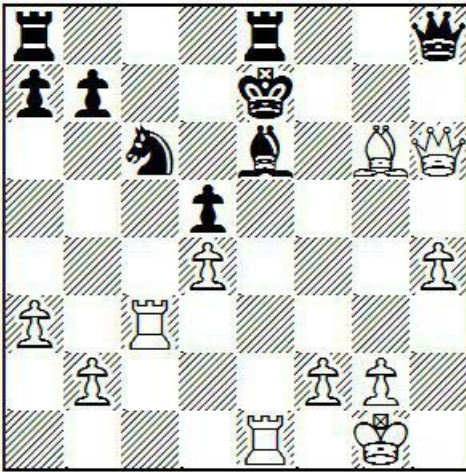
**Question:** White has clearly achieved a lot with this attack, but should we grab material on e8?

**Answer:** This is, of course, okay, but strong players realize that material is best grabbed along the way, rather than deaden the attack. The g6-bishop is covering a lot of squares and is worth more than the rook on e8 in terms of position.

**31 Rc3!**

Bringing the last piece in.

**31 ... Qh8**



**Exercise:** Calculate the winning variation for White. I am being generous in telling you this, since Peter Heine Nielsen would have had to trust his instincts here during the game itself.

**Answer:** A king hunt is in order.

**32 Rxe6+!! Kxe6 33 Re3+ Kd7 34 Bf5+ Kc7 35 Qf4+**

Notice the harmony amongst the white pieces; the bishop and queen on opposite colours take away all the escape squares.

**35 ... Kb6**

Or 35 ... Kd8 36 Qd6#.

**36 Rb3+ Ka5 37 Qd2+ Ka4 38 Bc2! 1-0**

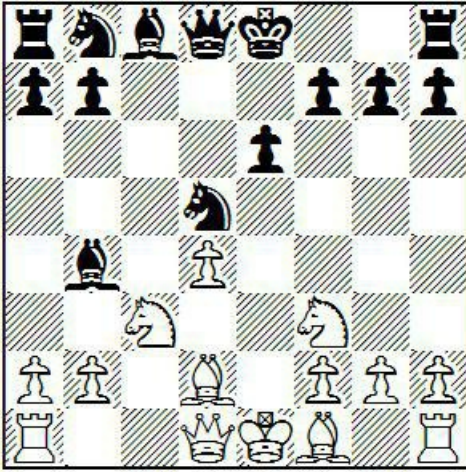
The king will not last much longer on a4.

Game 21

**I. Nepomniachtchi-A. Kharitonov**

Russian Team Championship 2009

**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6 Nf3 Bb4 7 cxd5 Nxd5 8 Bd2**

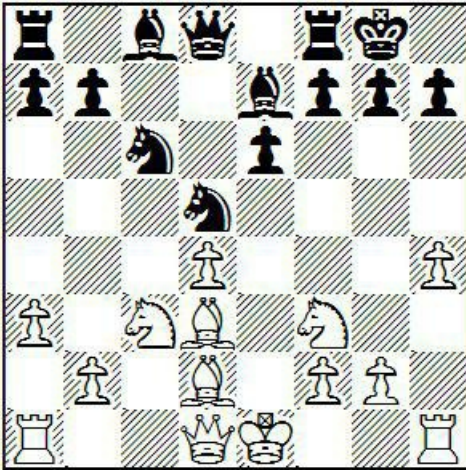


This is by far the most popular move in this position: c3 is defended and now White can get on with Bd3 and quick development.

**8 ... Nc6**

**Question:** Why does Black not just castle here?

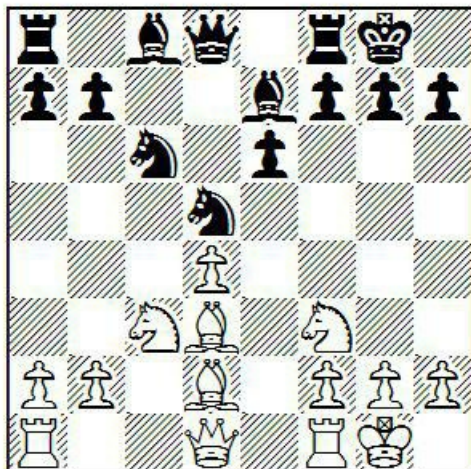
**Answer:** This is playable and has been used by many grandmasters, but 8 ... Nc6 first is probably slightly more accurate because White has an extra option up his sleeve after 8 ... 0-0 in 9 Bd3 Nc6 10 a3 Be7 11 h4 (11 0-0 transposes back to our main game).



This dangerous idea sets up all sorts of attacking themes, one example being seen in the following game: 11 ... Bf6 12 Bxh7+ Kh8 (or 12 ... Kxh7 13 Ng5+ Kg8 14 Qh5 Re8 15 Qxf7+ Kh8 16 Qh5+ Kg8 17 Nce4 with a raging attack; here 14 ... Bxg5 15 hxg5 f5 16 g6! is an idea definitely worth remembering) 13 Bc2 Re8 14 Ng5 Qd7 15 Qh5+ Kg8 16 Nxf7 Nxd4 17 Bg6 Kf8 18 0-0 Ne7 19 Ne5 Bxe5 20 Bxe8 Qxe8 21 Qxe5 Nec6 22 Qg5 e5 23 Rae1 Bf5 24 Ne4 Qd7 25 Bc3 Re8 26 f4 Qd5 27 fxe5 Rxe5 28 Ng3 Rxe1 29 Bxe1 Ne7 30 Bb4 1-0, O.Mihok-L.Eperjesi, Budapest 2007.

**9 Bd3 Be7**

Again waiting for White to commit to castle before he does.



We've reached a topical position, where a number of moves are playable.

### 11 a3

11 Qe2, 11 Re1 and 11 Rc1 are just a few of the alternatives. Of course, with IQP positions there are a series of general moves to involve the pieces, and in this position White is able to play almost all of them. The idea of 11 a3 is to prevent ... Nb4, hitting the bishop on d3 and uncovering an attack on d4.

### 11 ... Bf6

Alternatives are possible here too:

a) 11 ... Nxc3 was Karpov's choice so needs to be taken seriously: 12 bxc3 b6 with a change of pawn structure. Here Black wants to try and prove a3 as a waste of a move rather than a useful one.

b) 11 ... Nf6 12 Bg5 has the trick of Bxh7+ if Black captures on d4 twice. More likely is 12 ... b6 13 Re1 Bb7 14 Bc2. Did I say transpositions are common in these lines? We will come across this position later in this book via a different move order – see Kobalia-Jobava in the next chapter.

### 12 Qc2

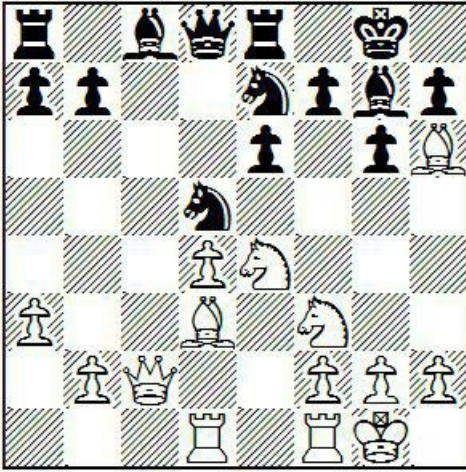
12 Be3 Qb6 13 Qc2 is another way to play, but in general I do not like playing Be3 to defend the d4-pawn, as it is quite passive. You will notice I hardly recommend this approach in this book.

### 12 ... g6 13 Bh6 Re8 14 Rad1 Nce7

Protecting d5, but reducing the pressure on d4.

14 ... Nxc3 15 bxc3 Bd7 is a solid alternative (15 ... Qa5 16 Nd2 Qxa3 17 Ne4 Qe7 18 Nxf6+ Qxf6 19 f4 Bd7 20 Qf2 Ne7 21 Bg5 Qg7 22 Qh4 gave White strong compensation for the pawn in E.Safarli-B.Franciskovic, Budva 2009), and 16 Qd2 e5 17 dxe5 Nxe5 18 Nxe5 Bxe5 19 Bxg6 hxg6 20 Qxd7 Qxd7 21 Rxd7 b5 ended in a draw in A.Riazantsev-V.Bologan, Warsaw 2005.

### 15 Ne4 Bg7



**Question:** Should we exchange the dark-squared bishops?  
 Didn't you say exchanging pieces with an IQP is generally bad?

**Answer:** The general rule is: exchanging one set of minor pieces is fine, two is also okay, but any more and the attacking potential goes downhill. The black bishop on g7 is a good defensive piece, so getting rid of that can only be beneficial as Black's kingside dark squares will now always be relatively weak.

**16 Bxg7 Kxg7 17 Rfe1 Nf5 18 Nc3 Nfe7**

Alternatively, 18 ... Nxc3 19 Qxc3 (19 bxc3 Bd7 20 Qb2 Bc6 21 d5! is another useful idea) 19 ... Qf6 20 Ne5 and since the c8-bishop hasn't yet moved, it will be tricky now to develop this piece. Of course, the longer it remains on c8, the bigger Black's problems may become.

**19 Ne5 b6 20 Qd2 Bb7 21 Ne4 Rf8**

White was no doubt hoping for 21 ... Rc8 22 Ng5 Rf8 23 Nexf7! Rxf7 24 Nxe6+.

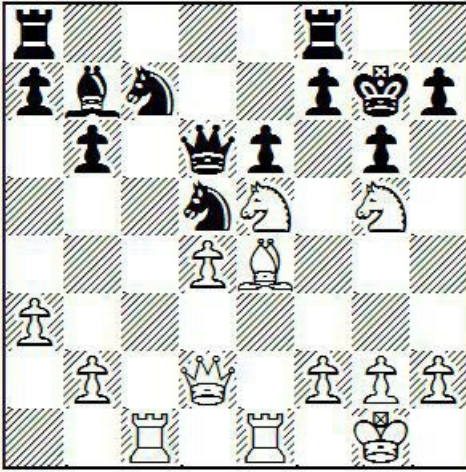
**22 Ng5 Nc7**

Once again note the idea of 22 ... h6 23 Nexf7! Rxf7 24 Nxe6+.

**23 Rc1 Ned5 24 Be4 Qd6**

24 ... f6 also does not work due to tactics: 25 Rxc7+! Nxc7 (or 25 ... Qxc7 26 Nxe6+) 26 Bxb7 Rb8 27

Nc6.



**Exercise:** How can White win material? Think about Black's last move – his queen is now unprotected.

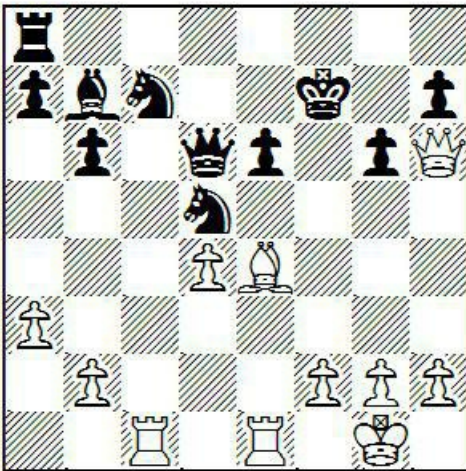
**Answer: 25 Ngxf7 Rxf7 26 Qh6+!**

The key move, otherwise it all doesn't work. Indeed, 26 Nxf7 Kxf7 27 Qh6 Kg8 should hold since the white rooks are too far away from the black king.

**26 ... Kg8**

26 ... Kxh6 27 Nxf7+ Kg7 28 Nxd6 wins an exchange and probably the game.

**27 Nxf7 Kxf7**



**28 Rxc7+!**

28 Qxh7+ is also good, but the grandmaster has spotted a nice zwischenzug to gain even more material.

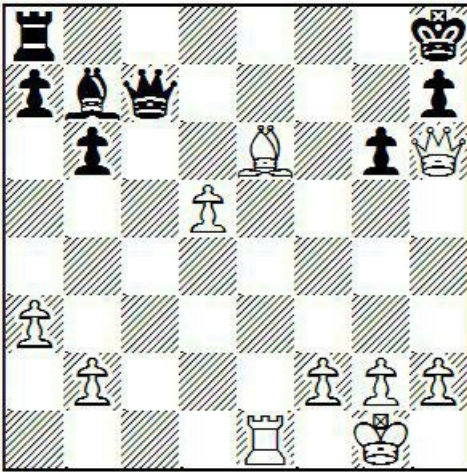
**28 ... Qxc7**

If 28 ... Nxc7 29 Qxh7+ Kf8 30 Bxb7.

**29 Bxd5 Kg8**

Unfortunately for Black, 29 ... Bxd5 fails to 30 Qxh7+ Kf6 31 Qxc7.

**30 Bxe6+ Kh8 31 d5**



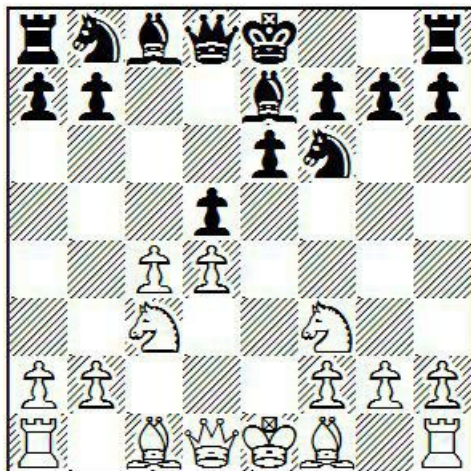
White is two pawns ahead and went on to convert without too much difficulty:

**31 ... Qc2 32 Qc1 Qxc1 33 Rxc1 Rd8 34 f4 Rd6 35 Rd1 Kg7 36 Kf2 Kf6 37 Ke3 Rd8 38 Kd4 Bc8 39 Re1 h5 40 g3 Re8 41 h3 Rh8 42 g4 hxg4 43 hxg4 Bxe6 44 Rxe6+ Kf7 45 Re2 Rh1 46 d6 Rd1+ 47 Ke5 a5 48 Rc2 1-0**

# Chapter Three

## Black Plays 5 ... e6 6 Nf3 Be7

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6 Nf3 Be7



In Chapter Two we looked at the more combative 6 ... Bb4, but Caro-Kann players tend to be creatures of habit and remain solid, especially at club level. The bishop move to e7 tries to take the sting out of any bishop g5 sortie and in the previous chapter we saw Black many times move the bishop back from b4 to e7 anyway, so, why not just save a move? After 6 ... Be7 White has two major options which will be examined here:

1. Play c4-c5 à la Botvinnik, echoing Botvinnik-Kmoch, as we saw in the Introduction.
2. Play for an IQP position with either 7 cxd5 or 7 Bd3 allowing 7 ... dxc4 8 Bxc4.

Different pawn structures arise, but both are active plans and should suit any Panov player.

Game 22

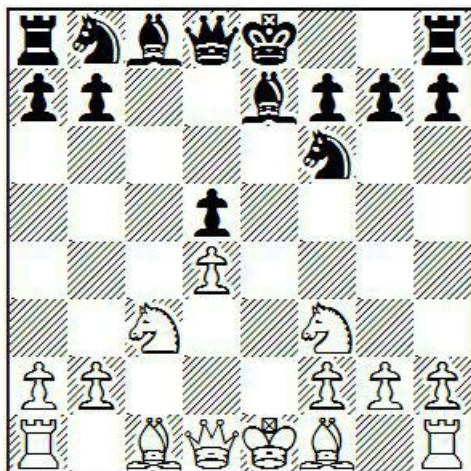
**V. Milov-M. Kobalia**

Ajaccio (rapid) 2004

**1 e4**

The game actually arose via an English move order: 1 c4 Nf6 2 Nc3 e5 3 e3 c6 4 d4 exd4 5 exd4 d5 6 Nf3 Be7 7 cxd5 cxd5. I will say it time and again: IQP positions are commonplace in many openings and therefore important to understand for any improving chess player.

**1 ... c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6 Nf3 Be7 7 cxd5 exd5**



Here we have another isolani vs. isolani position.

**Question:** Why did Black capture back with the pawn here?

**Answer:** The bishop on c8 is freed and Black intends to play very differently to what we have seen in the standard IQP positions. Despite the symmetrical pawn structure, the position is open and ripe for active play, so this recapture does not mean a dull draw.

7 ... Nxd5 is much more popular and will be the discussion of the next few games.

**8 Bd3 0-0 9 h3**

**Question:** Did we have to play this now?

**Answer:** No, of course not, but by preventing ... Bg4 we see there is a slight issue with that bishop on c8 because it is now deprived of the f5- and g4-squares. As the other black bishop stands on e7, there is no annoying check on the e-file so White can take the time out to play this useful move right now. Instead, after 9 0-0 Bg4 10 h3 Bh5 11 Bg5 Nc6 Black is fine.

**9 ... Nc6 10 0-0 h6 11 Bf4 Be6**

Not the greatest square for this bishop.

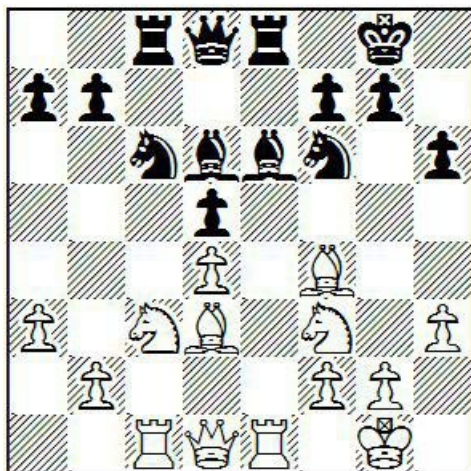
**12 Re1 Re8 13 a3**

Preparing Qd3 ideas with 13 Rc1 Rc8 14 Bb1 also looks good.

**13 ... Rc8 14 Rc1**

Both sides have just been developing and waiting for the middlegame action to commence.

**14 ... Bd6**



**Exercise:** What to do about our bishop on f4:  
capture on d6, play 15 Be5 or do something else?

**Answer:** Best is to play a thematic move in these positions:

**15 Be5!**

15 Ne5 looks tempting, but drops a pawn to 15 ... Nxd4 and there is no 16 Bxh7+ winning the pawn back here. Instead, 15 Qd2 is okay, but not as strong as the game move, as shown by 15 ... Na5 16 Bxd6 Qxd6 17 Nb5 Qb6 18 Qf4. Finally, 15 Bxd6 Qxd6 is just a straight swap and does nothing to help us really.

**15 ... Bf8**

15 ... Bxe5 16 dxe5 Nd7 does not solve Black's problems as after 17 Nb5 the d6-square and the dark squares in general are very weak.

**16 Bb1**

Preparing Qd3 and the classic battery towards h7. Again White's play is very thematic and it's clear that understanding the various ideas in these positions really helps.

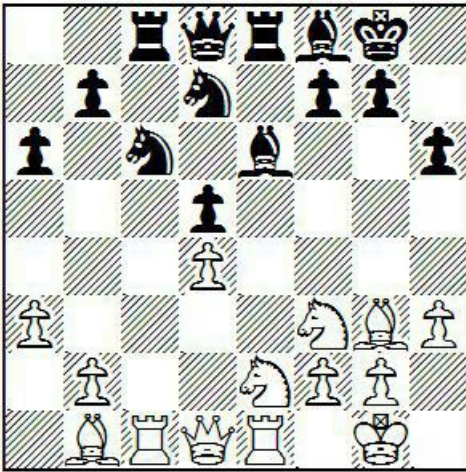
**16 ... Nd7 17 Bg3**

17 Qd3 g6 18 Bf4 is similar to the game.

**17 ... a6**

17 ... Nb6 18 Ne2! Qf6 19 Be5 Qe7 20 Nf4 is a bit better for White since Qd3 is coming and there are a lot of white pieces swarming around the black king.

**18 Ne2!**



**18 ... Be7?!**

Just too passive in my view. 18 ... Qb6 would have been more active, but is still not clear:

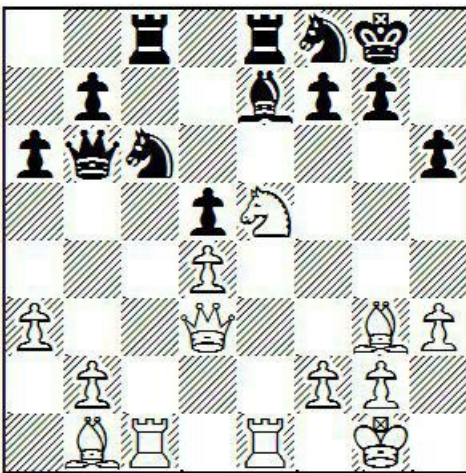
a) 19 Rc3 Nf6 (and not 19 ... Qxb2? 20 Rb3) 20 Rb3 Qa7 21 Re3 Na5 22 Nf4 Nc4 23 R3e2 Qb6 24 Nxe6 Rxe6 25 Rxe6 fxe6 when Black's king is a little draughty, but he has activated his pieces somewhat.

b) 19 Nf4 Qxb2 20 Nxe6 Rxe6 21 Bf5 Rxe1+ 22 Nxe1 Rd8 23 Bc7 Rc8 24 Bg3 gives White some initiative for the pawn.

c) 19 b4 Nf6 (19 ... a5 would be more testing; then 20 Nf4! axb4 21 Nxe6 Rxe6 22 Rxe6 fxe6 23 Qd3 Nf6 24 Qe3 again gives good compensation, but White is not winning immediately) 20 Nc3! Qd8 21 Bh4 with pressure on the black position.

**19 Nf4 Nf8 20 Nxe6 Nxe6 21 Qd3 Nf8 22 Ne5 Qb6?**

Finally, the queen comes to this square to attack b2 and d4, but it is not as strong as it would have been back on move 18. Instead, 22 ... Bf6 23 Rcd1 keeps the tension. Black wants to take the knight on e5, but this will always be met with dxe5 and the d5-pawn will feel somewhat uncomfortable about that.



**Exercise:** How to deal with this double attack? The options: exchange on c6 so d4 does not hang, or do something aggressive.

**Answer:** Now the rook on c8 is protected only once, there is a nice move here:

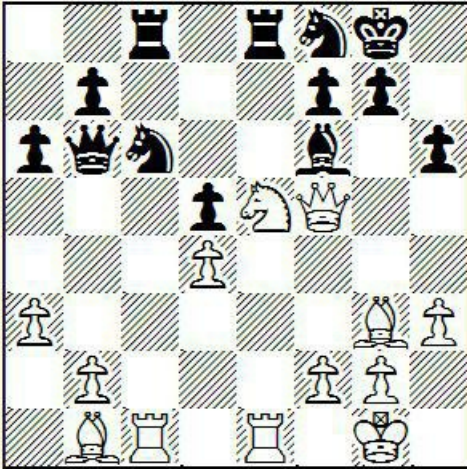
**23 Qf5!**

Much stronger than 23 Nd7 Qxd4 24 Qxd4 Nxd4 25 Rxc8 Rxc8 26 Nb6 Rc6.

**23 ... Bf6**

Protecting f7, but now threats come from other directions.

Unfortunately for Black, 23 ... Nxe5 just loses the exchange to 24 Rxc8 and 23 ... Nxd4 doesn't work either: 24 Qxf7+ Kh8 25 Rxc8 Rxc8 26 Qxe7. Finally, White would be pretty happy too with 23 ... Qxb2 24 Qxf7+ Kh8 25 Nxc6 bxc6 26 Rxc6 Qxa3 27 Rxh6+ gxh6 28 Be5+.



**24 Nd7! Qd8**

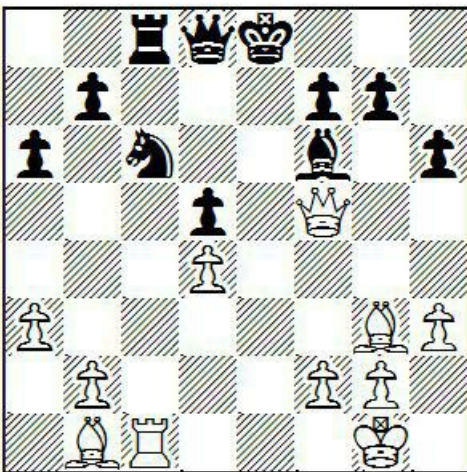
A sad retreat, but there was nothing else, as shown by 24 ... Nxd7 25 Qh7+ Kf8 26 Qh8# and 24 ... Qxd4 25 Nxf8 Kxf8 26 Bd6+ Ne7 27 Rxc8 Rxc8 28 Qxc8#.

**25 Nxf8**

Also rather useful would have been 25 Rxe8 Qxe8 26 Nxf8 Kxf8 27 Qh7.

**25 ... Kxf8 26 Rxe8+ Kxe8**

26 ... Qxe8 27 Qh7 is surely winning. The threat is 28 Qh8+ Ke7 and then 29 Re1+, winning the queen.



**27 Re1+ Ne7**

Alternatively, 27 ... Be7 28 Qh7 or 27 ... Kf8 28 Qh7 g6 29 Bf4! g5 30 Bd6+! Qxd6 31 Qxh6+ with mate in

the usual way: 31 ... Kg8 32 Bh7+ Kh8 33 Bg6+ Kg8 34 Qh7+ Kf8 35 Qxf7#.

**28 Qh7 Qa5 29 b4 Qxa3 30 Bf5! 1-0**

Now that the d7-square has been taken away from the black king, mate on the eighth rank by the queen is unstoppable.

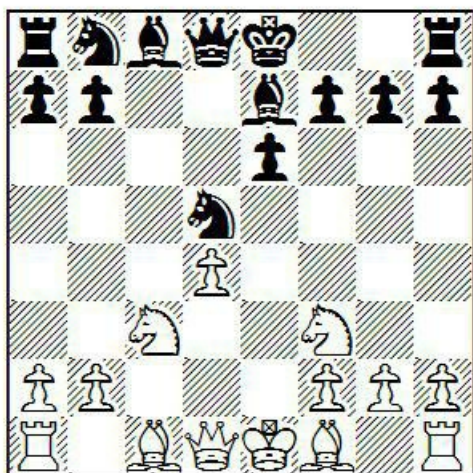
Black did have a solid position, but he didn't get much chance to do anything active himself and White made all the running, which is basically just what Panov players like.

Game 23

**M.Kobalia-B.Baadur**

European Championship, Plovdiv 2012

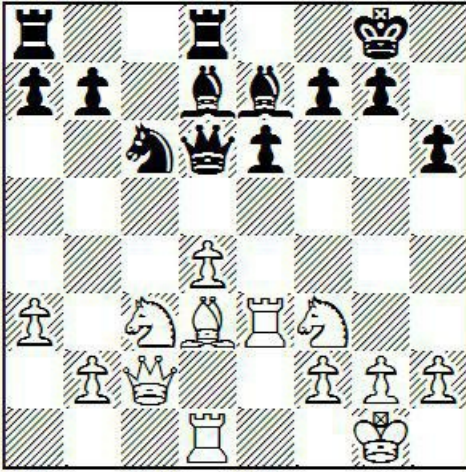
**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6 Nf3 Be7 7 cxd5 Nxd5**



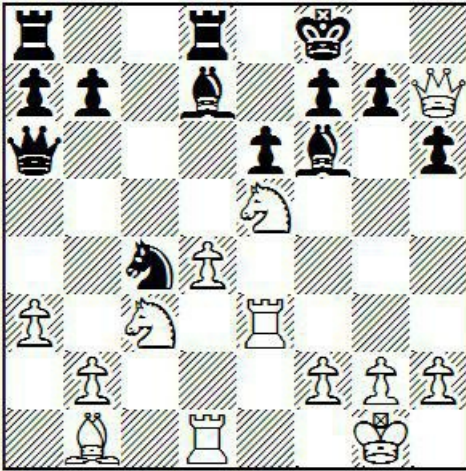
With this standard knight recapture Black plans to carry out the usual blockade of the IQP on d4 and one day hopes to win the pawn. By now, if you have seen the previous games in this book, you should be aware of the plans for both sides and the following moves will adhere to these common themes.

**8 Bd3 0-0 9 0-0 Nc6 10 Re1**

A popular alternative is the prophylactic 10 a3 when one great example runs 10 ... Nf6 11 Re1 Qd6 12 Bg5 Rd8 13 Qc2 h6 (after 13 ... Nxd4 14 Nxd4 Qxd4 White would keep the initiative by 15 Rad1) 14 Be3 Ng4?! (exchanging White's dark-squared bishop is not worth weakening Black's control over the critical d5-square; 14 ... b6 would be a better choice) 15 Rad1 Nxe3 16 Rxe3! (it was also possible to recapture with the pawn, 16 fxe3, thereby supporting the d4-pawn, but leaving the e-file open seems to be even more promising) 16 ... Bd7.



Now White could have opened up the centre immediately by advancing the central pawn, 17 d5 exd5 18 Nxd5, which would have also given him some advantage. However, this is one of the cases when a threat is stronger than its execution. Thus R.Gadjily-R.Kutirov, Pula 1997, continued 17 Bc4!? Na5?! (Black's position is already quite unpleasant and the text move does not bring any relief; Black moves the knight away from the d4-d5 thrust with tempo, but on a5 the knight is misplaced) 18 Ba2 Qa6 19 Ne5! (moving the knight closer to the opponent's king; White simultaneously creates the unpleasant threat of b4 which may win him a piece) 19 ... Bf6 (Black already had no time to fortify the kingside, as 19 ... Be8? would have lost on the spot to 20 b4 Bg5 21 Rd3 Nc6 22 b5) 20 Bb1! Nc4? (it is unlikely that Black would survive after 20 ... Kf8 21 Qh7 Bc8 22 d5!, but at least this way he wouldn't lose on the spot; note too the idea 20 ... g6? 21 Nxf7!) 21 Qh7+ Kf8.



If in this position Black did not have a pawn on e6 the immediate 22 Nxd7+ and 23 Qh8# would have been decisive. That is a prompt for the following sacrifice: 22 Nd5! exd5 23 Nxd7+ 1-0. The idea of the Nd5 thrust was to remove the e6-pawn, thereby opening the e-file. Here it is not a real sacrifice, as after accepting it Black loses, but on the other hand, if he does not take the knight he loses in any case.

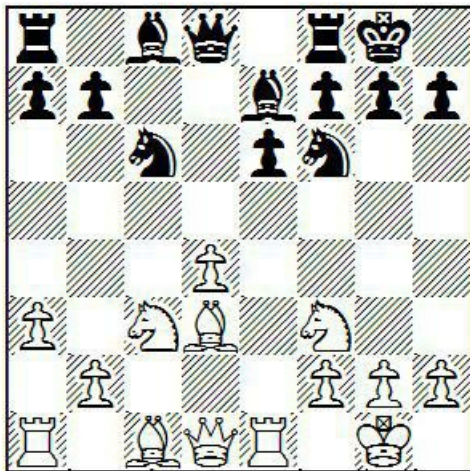
Returning to Kobalia's 10 Re1:

**10 ... Nf6**

10 ... Bf6 makes sense, to attack d4. Following 11 Be4 Nce7 (11 ... Nxc3 12 bxc3 leaves d4 protected, although the pawn structure has again changed; see the Introduction for more on this c3/d4 set-up) 12 Qd3 g6

13 Bh6 Bg7 14 Bxg7 Kxg7 15 Rac1 b6 16 h4 (a typical idea again) 16 ... Bb7 17 h5 unclear play arose in R.Kempinski-T.Wippermann, Thessabniki 2007.

**11 a3**



**Question:** Why is this played?

**Answer:** To prevent ... Nb4 which would attack the bishop on d3 and also allow a future ... Nbd5 to blockade IQP.

**11 ... b6**

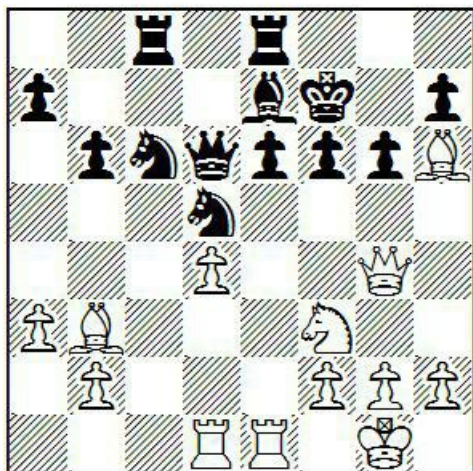
Another logical move, to allow for ... Bb7, thereby increasing the scope of the bishop on c8.

**Question:** Why didn't Black play ... a6 and ... b5 and then fianchetto? Wouldn't this be more active?

**Answer:** Black can play like this, but since the white bishop is on d3 and not c4, it will not be attacked once ... b5 comes. Therefore the fianchetto takes Black an extra move, which is important in an open position like this.

**12 Bg5**

12 Bc2 is worth showing too purely for the following game: 12 ... Ba6?! 13 Bg5 Rc8 14 Qd2 Bc4 15 Qf4 Bd5 16 Qh4 g6 17 Nxd5 Nxd5 18 Rad1 Qd6 19 Bb3 f6 (a weakening move, but there was great pressure on the black position anyway) 20 Qg4 Kf7?! 21 Bh6 Rfe8 ...



... and now comes a real stunner: 22 Rxe6!! Qxe6 23 Re1 Qd6? (Black missed a chance to put up some resistance by playing 23 ... Qf5 24 Qxf5 gxf5 25 Bxd5+ Kg6; instead, 23 ... Qxg4 24 Bxd5+ Qe6 25 Bxe6# was White's idea) 24 Bf4 Qd8 (24 ... f5 25 Qh3 Qxf4 26 Qxh7+ Kf6 27 Bxd5 Nd8 28 Ne5 is crushing) 25 Qe6+ Kg7 26 Bxd5 g5 27 Qf7+ and Black resigned in the game Z.Sturua-R.Kutirov, Yerevan Olympiad 1996.

### 12 ... Bb7 13 Bc2

The reasoning behind this plan, apart from to play Qd3 and set up a battery towards h7, is that the black bishop cannot come to a6 in one go (if White had played Bc2 on the previous move, it could have).

### 13 ... Re8

13 ... Nd5 might have been better, but it is understandable why it was not played, as h7 is unprotected again. 14 Qd3 g6 15 h4 Bxg5 16 Nxg5 Nce7, as in V.Salov-A.Beliavsky, Madrid 1995, might be the sort of thing Black should be aiming for here. <sup>jxh</sup>

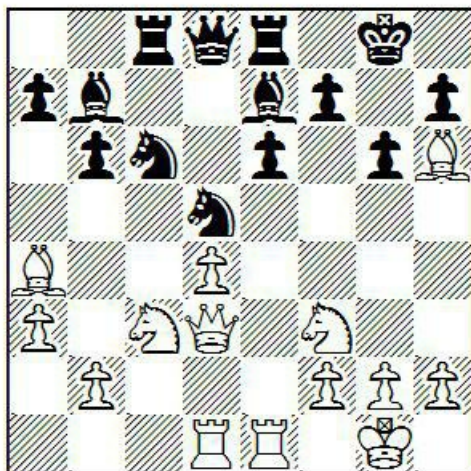
### 14 Qd3 g6

Preventing the threat of 15 Bxf6 and 16 Qxh7+.

### 15 Rad1 Nd5 16 Bh6 Rc8

This may not be the most accurate. Instead, 16 ... Nxc3 17 bxc3 Qd5 (or 17 ... Bxa3 18 Ng5 Be7 19 Nxf7 Kxf7 20 Rxe6 Bf6 21 Rxe8 Kxe8 22 Qc4 Qd6 23 Ba4 Kd8 with rough equality in the earlier V.Potkin-A.Galkin, Sochi 2004) 18 c4 Qh5 19 Bf4 Na5 20 Re5 Qg4 21 Bg3 Bxf3 22 gxf3 Qh3 led to unclear play and was probably okay for Black in V.Potkin-A.Galkin, Sochi 2007.

### 17 Ba4



**Question:** Why did White play this? I thought our bishop was better placed on c2 directed towards the black monarch?

**Answer:** There were many plausible moves in this position, but 17 Ba4 just keeps Black on his toes with potential Ne5 ideas and the pin on the e8-rook. Black is solid, but there is pressure on his position. Put simply, this is just the sort of position a Panov player should be relishing. Let's observe how Black attempted to extricate himself.

**17 ... a6**

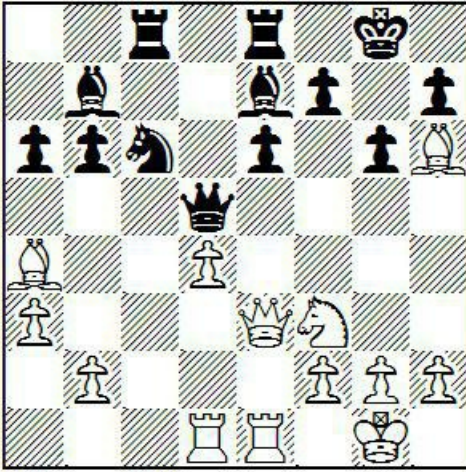
17 ... Nxc3 18 bxc3 Bxa3 wins a pawn with a familiar theme, but the bishop will be missed from the kingside: 19 Ng5 Be7 20 Qg3 Qd5 21 Rb1 Qa5 22 Bb3 Nd8 with clear compensation for the pawn in A.Kornev-S.Virovlansky, Voronezh 2007.

17 ... Bf8 was also playable, but the exchange of bishops does not necessarily ease Black's defensive task.

**18 Nxd5 Qxd5?!**

The logical recapture, but now problems will occur for Black. 18 ... exd5 may have been the safest way to play this position from Black's perspective: 19 Bxc6 (19 b4 Bd6 20 h3 Qd7 21 Bg5 b5 22 Bb3 is also pleasant for White) 19 ... Rxc6 20 Qd2 Bc8 21 Qf4 Rf6 22 Qe5 Be6 with a solid but uninspiring Black set-up in A.Kovacevic-B.Golubovic, Neum 2004.

**19 Qe3**

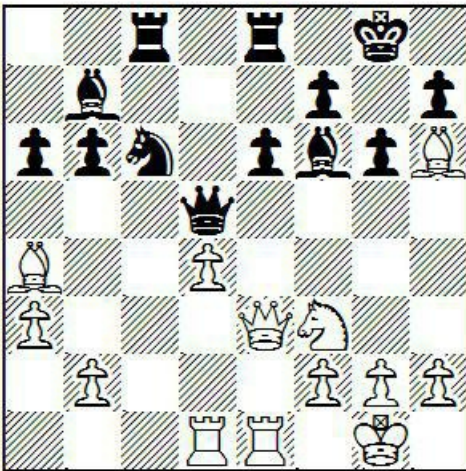


**Question:** Why this queen move?

**Answer:** The queen sidesteps the d-file, so a future Bb3 and d5 break is in the air. Also, if White plays 19 Ne5 immediately, then 19 ... Nxe5 20 dxe5 allows an exchange of queens on d3, which is clearly not in White's interest. Finally, the queen can come around to f4 and harass the f7-square. All in all, a good multipurpose move from Kobalia.

**19 ... Bf6**

Another game saw 19 ... Rcd8 20 Bb3 Qh5 21 d5! exd5 22 Qxb6 Qxh6 23 Qxb7 Na5 24 Qb6 Nxb3 25 Rxe7 Rxe7 26 Qxd8+ Qf8 27 Qxd5 and in V.Utemov-A.Lastin, Moscow 1996, White was a clear pawn ahead.

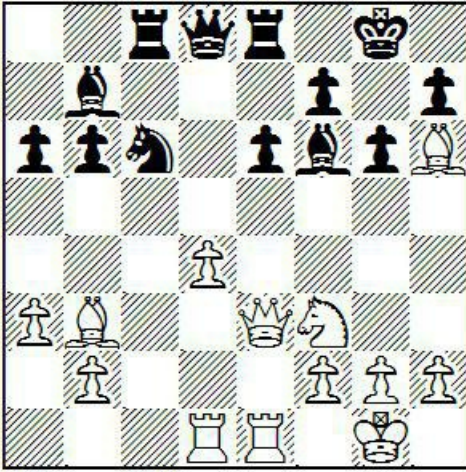


**20 Bb3 Qd8**

Amazingly this position had earlier been reached in some high-level games:

a) 20 ... Qd7 21 d5! exd5 22 Qxb6 Rxe1+ 23 Rxe1 Bxb2 24 Bxd5 Bg7 25 Bxg7 Kxg7 was A.Belavsky-A.Karpov, Moscow 1986, when after 26 Qb2+ Kg8 27 Ba2 the black king will be subjected to pressure with ideas like Ng5 floating around.

b) 20 ... Qh5? 21 d5! Nd8 22 d6 Rc5 23 d7 Re7 24 Qf4 was the famous encounter V.Smyslov-A.Karpov, Leningrad 1971, where White was practically winning already.



**Exercise:** After 20 ... Qd8 can we play 21 d5 or should we prefer another attacking move, such as Ne5?

**Answer: 21 Ne5**

This seems to be best. Instead, 21 d5 exd5 hits the queen on e3 and once the queen moves, the rooks can be exchanged on e1, easing the defence. Likewise, 21 Qf4 Na5 22 Ba2 Bxf3 23 Qxf3 Nc6 24 d5 Nd4 25 Qd3 exd5 is quite equal.

However, 21 Ng5!? is also quite threatening: for example, 21 ... Nxd4 22 Nxf7! Kxf7 23 Rxd4 Bxd4 24 Bxe6+ Ke7 25 Qf4 with a crushing attack.

**21 ... Qe7**

Again there are alternatives, although I must stress that you don't need to memorize anything like this far:

a) 21 ... Bxe5 22 dxe5 Qc7 23 Rc1 Qb8 (23 ... Ba8 24 Qf4 Qe7 25 Rcd1 is also pretty good for White) 24 Qxb6 left White well on his way to victory in M.Adams-F.Doettling, French League 2002.

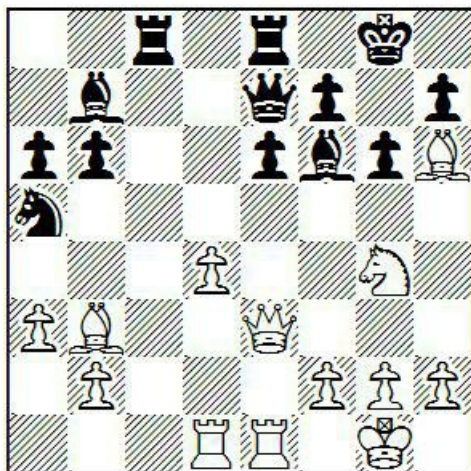
b) 21 ... Na5 allows a lovely tactic: 22 Nxf7 Qe7 (22 ... Kxf7 23 Bxe6+ Ke7 24 Bxc8+ is completely crushing) 23 Ne5 Nxb3 24 Qxb3 Bg5 25 Bxg5 Qxg5 26 f3 Bd5 27 Qd3 with an extra pawn and the better position to boot.

**22 Ng4!**

A strong move. Black can hardly allow 23 Nxf6+, removing a key defensive piece, and the knight moves off the e-file to allow for the d5 thrust.

**22 ... Na5**

Instead, if 22 ... Nd8 23 d5 Bh8 24 Bg5 Qc5 25 Qf4 and just compare the minor pieces for both sides! Likewise, after 22 ... Bg7 23 Bxg7 Kxg7 24 d5! Black's position just falls apart: 24 ... Na5 (or 24 ... exd5 25 Qh6+ Kg8 26 Rxe7) 25 Qh6+ Kh8 26 d6 Qd8 27 d7 and wins.



**Exercise:** What to do here? Just play the move you think is best from this position.

### 23 Ba2

**Answer:** This was the most logical move. White keeps the bishop on the board for a later d5 (i.e. does not exchange pieces), but there was a very difficult-to-spot idea here that wins for White based on the fact his pieces are all very well placed, namely 23 Qf4!. Black has:

a) 23 ... Bg7 24 Bxg7 Kxg7 25 Rxe6!! fxe6 26 Qe5+ and mate follows with a future Nh6+.

b) 23 ... Bh8 and now the stunning breakthrough 24 Bxe6!! fxe6 25 Bg5 clears the way for h6+ and Qe5.

Possibly Kobalia calculated 25 ... Rf8 26 Nh6+ Kg7 27 Qe5+ Rf6 28 Ng4 Kf7 and presumed Black might be just about okay, but, of course, the computer ploughs on: 29 d5! Bxd5 30 Rxd5 Nc6 31 Qd6! with a winning attack. If you saw all this, you must be rated over 2600 and therefore I am wondering why you are reading this book!

23 d5 is also very strong: 23 ... Bxb2 (if 23 ... Nxb3 24 d6) 24 dxe6 f5 25 Bg5 Qc5 26 e7+ Kh8 27 Nf6 Qxe3 28 Rxe3 and even though the queens are off, the attack has not subsided.

### 23 ... Nc4 24 Qf4 Bg7

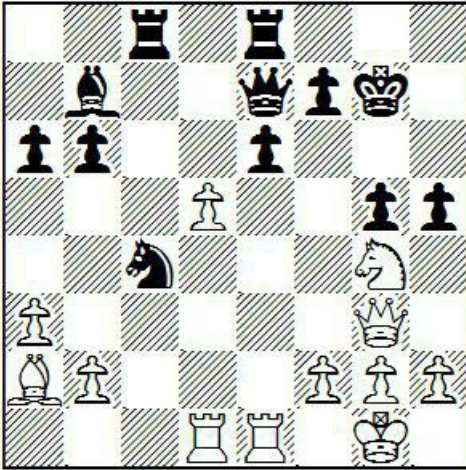
After 24 ... Bh8 25 Bxc4 Rxc4 26 Bg5 Qd7 27 Bf6 the dark squares are too weak for Black to survive.

### 25 Bxg7 Kxg7 26 d5 g5!?

Strong players do not give up and the Georgian Grandmaster realizes he has to create some problems, otherwise he will be overrun.

After 26 ... h5 27 dxe6 hxg4 28 Bxc4 White is a pawn up and with the better position.

### 27 Qg3 h5



**Exercise:** What is the best way for White to continue?  
Clearly we have Black on the ropes, but what exactly to do?

**28 Bxc4**

**Answer:** This is far from bad, but there was a better idea: 28 Qc3+! e5 29 Bxc4 hxg4 30 d6 Qd7 31 Rxe5 was the way to do it, crashing through in the centre and exposing Black's weakened king.

**28 ... Rxc4**

28 ... hxg4 29 d6 Qd7 30 Qxg4 wins, so Jobava puts up tougher resistance.

**29 Ne5?!**

Again this appears winning, but suddenly the game gets interesting again.

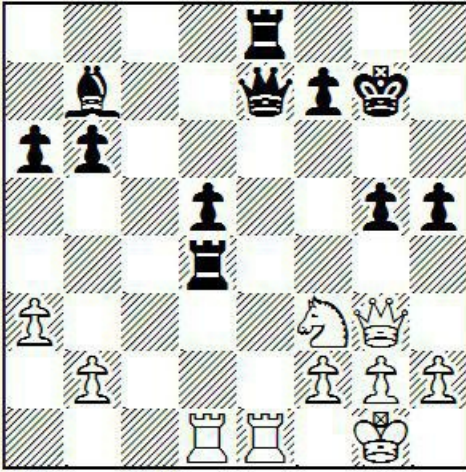
Instead, 29 d6 Rxg4 30 Qxg4 hxg4 31 dxe7 Bd5 would have offered Black some hopes to resist, but 29 Ne3! was a killer blow: 29 ... Re4 30 f3 h4 31 Qf2 Re5 32 d6 followed by Nc4 or Ng4 with a huge attack.

**29 ... exd5 30 Nf3**

30 Nxc4? Qxe1+ 31 Rxe1 Rxe1# was not what the doctor ordered!

**30 ... Rd4!**

Very aesthetically pleasing. Bank-rank mate threats are looming now. Instead, 30 ... Re4 31 Rxe4 Qxe4 32 Qxg5+ Qg6 33 Qd2 still keeps some advantage for White.



**31 Rc1**

One amusing variation is 31 Ra1 Re4 32 Rxe4 dxe4 33 Nxc5 h4 34 Qxc4 Kg6 35 f4 exf3 36 Nxf3 Qxc4 37 Nxc4+ Kg5 38 g3 Re2 and Black is more than out of the woods here.

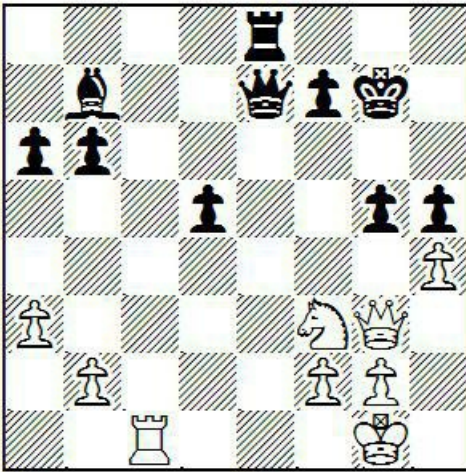
**31 ... Rc4**

White repels 31 ... Re4 with 32 Rxe4 Qxe4 (if 32 ... dxe4 33 Nxc5 h4 34 Qxc4 Kg6 35 Rc3! and the knight cannot be touched because of Rg3) 33 Qxc5+ Qg6 34 Qd2.

**32 h4 Rxc1**

Exchanging was logical, but now White gets the initiative back. 32 ... Qf6 33 Nxc5 Bc6 34 Re1 would have kept Black in it for longer.

**33 Rxc1**



**33 ... Rc8**

If 33 ... Qf6 34 Rc7 Re7 35 Nxc5 Rxc7 36 Qxc7, while 33 ... g4 34 Rc7 Qf6 35 Rxb7 wins.

**34 Re1 Qf6 35 hxc5 Qf5**

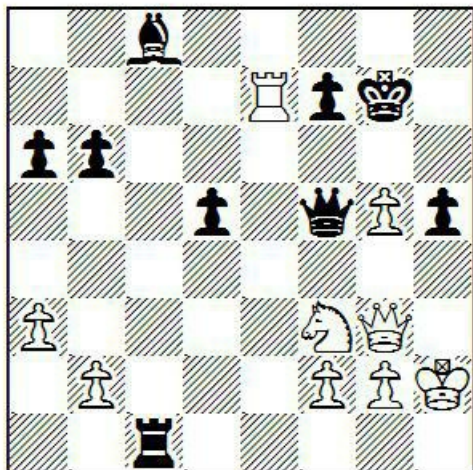
No better is 35 ... Qxb2 36 g6 fxg6 37 Re7+ and wins.

**36 Re7**

White could only have dreamed about finding such a mighty spot for any of his rooks just a few moves ago. Here 36 Nh4 Qd7 37 Qe5+ Kh7 38 Qf6 Rc6 39 g6+ Kg8 40 gxf7+ Qxf7 41 Qg5+ Kf8 42 Qd8+ Kg7 43 Re7

was another way to wrap things up.

**36 ... Rc1+ 37 Kh2 Bc8**



**Question:** Find the breakthrough move!

**Answer: 38 g6! Qg4**

Or 38 ... Qxg6 39 Rxf7+ Kxf7 40 Ne5+ winning the queen.

**39 Rxf7+ Kh6 40 Qe5 1-0**

Mate will follow shortly. This was a very interesting game in which White made most of the running, which is just how we like it.

Game 24

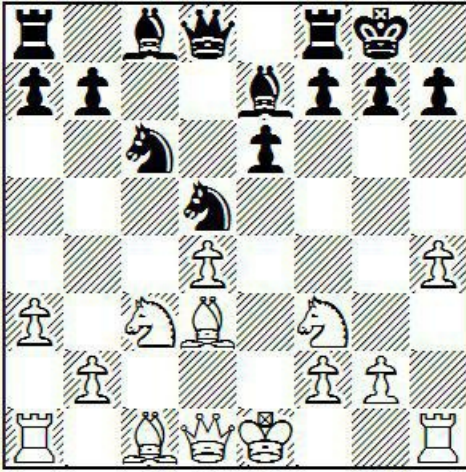
**E.Sveshnikov-A.Tsamriuk**

USSR Team Championship 1975

**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6 Nf3 Be7 7 cxd5 Nxd5 8 Bd3 Nc6**

8 ... 0-0 9 h4!? was a similar way to play h4 to the our main game. 9 ... Nc6 10 Qc2 f5 11 a3 b6 12 0-0 Kh8 13 Re1 with unclear play in E.Sveshnikov-G.Kasparov, Tbilisi 1978.

**9 a3 0-0 10 h4**



**Question:** What is going on here? How can White get away with such a move and not castling?

**Answer:** This game demonstrates yet another option White has and one packed with attacking intent. This is not so much a prelude to a pawn storm with g4, etc, but rather it allows for Ng5 and a quick attack on h7.

**10 ... Nf6**

10 ... f5 prevents Bxh7+ and tries to block this bishop out: 11 Bg5 h6 12 Bxe7 Qxe7 13 Qd2 Qd6 14 0-0 Bd7 15 Rfe1 Rad8 16 Bc4 Rfe8 17 Rad1 with interesting play in E.Sveshnikov-E.Krasilnikov, Cheliabinsk 2006.

**11 Bg5 g6**

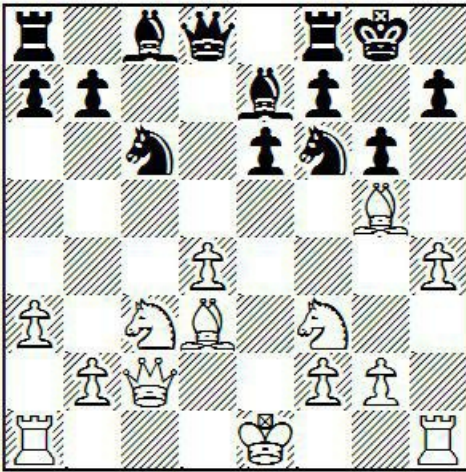
Black is rightly worried about Bxf6 and a Bxh7 Greek Gift sacrifice. He also had:

a) 11 ... h6 (Black should be careful playing this little pawn move, as he can hardly contemplate going ... g6 later to block the b1-h7 diagonal) 12 Qd2 and taking on g5 is very risky to say the least: 12 ... hxg5 13 hxg5 Nd5 14 Nxd5 exd5 15 Bh7+ Kh8 16 Qf4 g6 17 Bg8+ Kxg8 18 Qh4 with mate down the h-file.

b) 11 ... b6 and now White can just go Qc2 and 0-0-0 with an attack, but let's check if the Greek Gift works: 12 Bxf6 Bxf6 13 Bxh7+?! Kxh7 14 Ng5+ Kh6 (14 ... Kg8 15 Qh5 Re8 16 Qxf7+ Kh8 17 Qh5+ Kg8 might just be a draw) 15 Qc1 Qe7 and the dark-squared bishop is sorely missed, so here White should develop rather than sacrifice.

c) 11 ... Nxd4? 12 Nxd4 Qxd4 13 Bxh7+, of course, loses the queen.

**12 Qc2**



12 ... Qa5

**Question:** Could Black not just take on d4 now?

**Answer:** He can, but after 12 ... Nxd4 13 Nxd4 Qxd4 14 0-0-0 White has a huge initiative for the pawn. Already 15 Bxg6 is threatened, and if Black moves the queen away, then h5 follows and the pressure on g6 is very strong: for example, 14 ... Qb6 15 h5 Bd7 16 hxg6 hxg6 17 Bxg6! crashes through.

13 0-0-0

He could have castled kingside, but this is the risky if aggressive option.

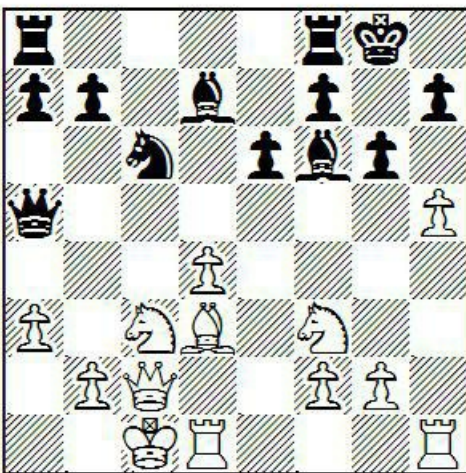
13 ... Bd7

If Black were able to play ... Rc8 and get play against c3, he would be in business, but especially in open positions tempi are key and it is White's turn here.

14 Bxf6

Rightly avoiding 14 h5 Nxd4 15 Nxd4 Qxg5+.

14 ... Bxf6 15 h5



15 ... Bg7

15 ... Nxd4 is just far too risky, even though the computer can calculate this all out to equality, 16 Nxd4

Bxd4 17 hxg6 fxg6 18 Bxg6 Rxf2 19 Bxh7+ Kf8, but this is just too risky for Black to even think about playing.

**16 Kb1 Rfd8 17 hxg6 hxg6 18 Rh4!**

I like this move: d4 is protected, and White prepares to play Rdh1 and bluntly go down the h-file.

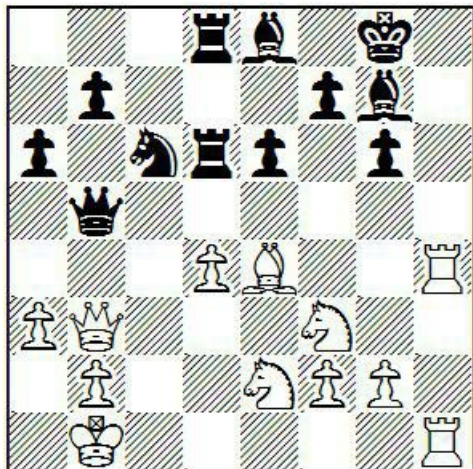
**18 ... Be8 19 Be4 Rd6**

19 ... Rac8 was better as the rook develops down a decent file.

**20 Qb3 a6**

20 ... Nxd4 was the last chance to take on d4: 21 Nxd4 Bxd4 22 Nd5 exd5 23 Rxd4 Rad8 24 Qh3 with a mess.

**21 Rdh1 Rad8 22 Ne2 Qb5**



**Question:** Should we exchange queens here?

**Answer:** No way!

**23 Qe3 Ne7 24 Nc3 Qa5 25 Rh7**

Just edging towards the king.

**25 ... Nf5 26 Bxf5 Qxf5+ 27 Ne4 g5 28 Ka1 Rb6**

28 ... Qxh7 29 Rxh7 Kxh7 30 Nxd6 Rxd6 31 Qxg5 is not enough for the queen.

**29 Ne5**

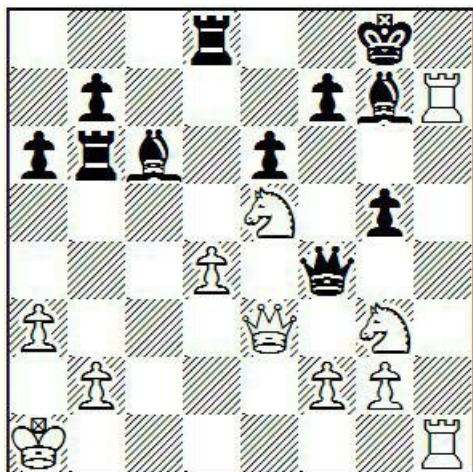
We have seen this one before. The pieces move ominously towards the black monarch. 29 Nexg5 Qc2 30 Rxg7+ Kxg7 31 Nxe6+ Rxe6 32 Qg5+ Qg6 33 Qxd8 was also strong.

**29 ... Bc6**

29 ... Qxh7 30 Rxh7 Kxh7 31 Qxg5 Rxd4 32 Nf6+ Bxf6 33 Qxf6 Rd1+ 34 Ka2 was the last try to hold on.

Now the game ends with a tactical blast.

**30 Ng3 Qf4**

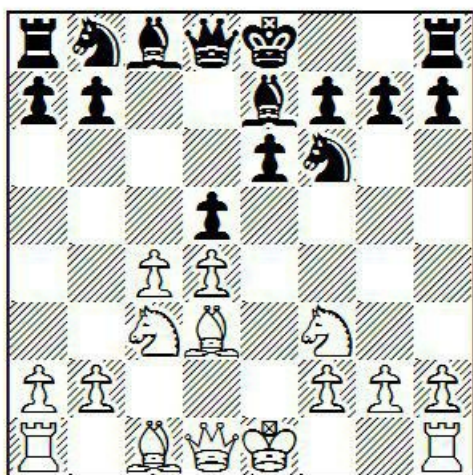


**Exercise:** Find the winning tactic to crown the attack.

**Answer:** 31 Rxc7+ Kxc7 32 Nh5+ Kf8 33 Nxf4 gxf4 34 Qxf4 1-0

Game 25  
**J.L.Hammer-J.Kvisla**  
 Gjovik 2009

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6 Nf3 Be7 7 Bd3



White simply allows Black to capture on c4 and so loses a tempo in return for guaranteeing an IQP.  
**7 ... dxc4 8 Bxc4 0-0 9 0-0 a6**

**Question:** What is the best way to play against 9 ... b6?

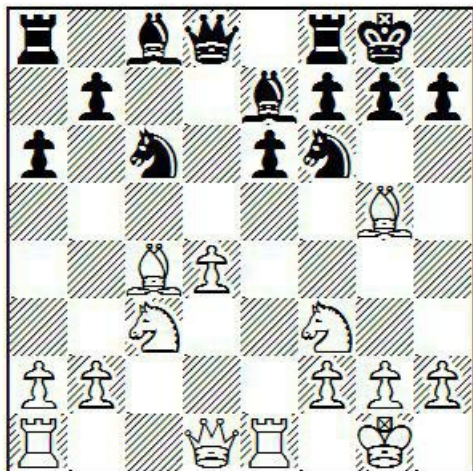
**Answer:** The reason why Black tends to play ... Nc6 before committing the b-pawn is because of 9 ... b6 10 d5! exd5 11 Nxd5 Bb7 12 Nxe7+ Qxe7 13 Bf4 Rd8 14 Qb3 when, with the rooks coming imminently to the

centre, as well as the two bishops in an open position, White must be better.

### 10 Bg5

The most active square for the bishop in an IQP position.

### 10 ... Nc6 11 Re1



### 11 ... Bd7

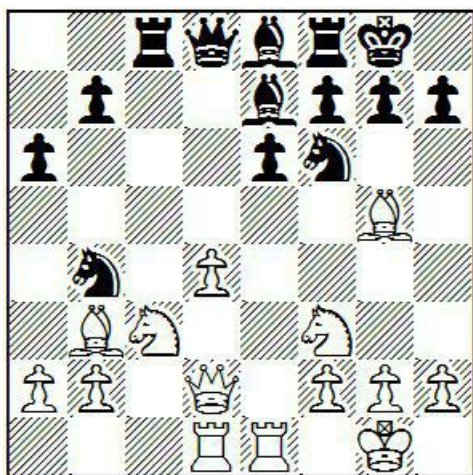
This just looks passive and Black gets punished for this. He should have preferred the fianchetto as he possibly had planned to with the idea of ... a6. After 11 ... b5 both bishop retreats are playable:

a) 12 Bd3 Nb4 13 Bxf6 Bxf6 14 Be4 Rb8 15 Qb3 a5 16 a3 a4 17 Qd1 Nd5 18 Bxd5 exd5 19 Ne5 Qd6 20 Qf3 Be6 21 Na2 Rfc8 22 Nb4 was A.Timofeev-V.Telov, Tomsk 2001, with a position where the knights outscored the bishops due to the somewhat closed nature of the position.

b) 12 Bb3 Bb7 13 a3 Rc8 14 Qd3 Rc7 15 Rad1 Rd7 16 h4 (a typical IQP motif that we have seen before and will see repeatedly throughout this book) 16 ... Re8 17 Bc2 g6 18 Qe3 Ng4 19 Qf4 h5 20 Ne4 Qc7 21 d5 e5 22 Qg3 Bxg5 23 hxg5 Ne7 24 Nxe5 Nf5 25 Nxg4 Rxe4 26 Qxc7 Rxe1+ 27 Rxe1 Rxc7 28 Nf6+ and 1-0 in D.Khismatullin-S.Perun, Serpukhov 2002, was all very thematic.

### 12 Qd2 Rc8 13 Rad1 Nb4 14 Bb3 Be8

Too passive once again. 14 ... Bc6 15 Ne5 Bd5 was far better for Black than the game.



**Question:** What should White do in this position? Think about the various plans we have discussed and pick the correct one.

**Answer: 15 d5!**

Presumably Black either assumed this couldn't be played (he does have four pieces attacking this square), or underestimated the strength of this pawn move. After this, all of White's pieces spring to life. It's not surprising really, since they all occupy central positions in comparison to their Black counterparts.

Instead, 15 Qe2 Rc7 16 a3 Nbd5 looks a bit shaky, but seems to hold. Hence why the game move is far superior. If d5 works – go for it!

**15 ... exd5**

15 ... Nbx d5 16 Bxd5 Nxd5 (16 ... exd5 is met by the cool 17 Rxe7! Qxe7 18 Nxd5 Qe6 19 Bxf6 gxf6 20 Re1! and the queen runs out of squares on e6) 17 Bxe7 Qxe7 18 Nxd5 nets a piece.

**16 Qe2**

16 a3 Nc6 17 Bxf6 Bxf6 18 Nxd5 is also very nice. Every single one of White's pieces is placed fantastically and this is the culmination of the d4-d5 push.

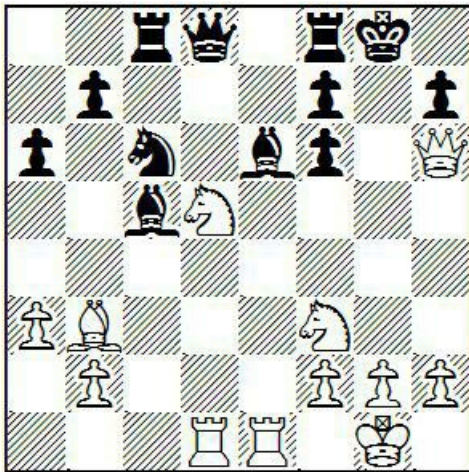
**16 ... Bc5 17 a3**

So simple. Now the knight must retreat and therefore d5 falls, and with it the black position.

**17 ... Nc6 18 Nxd5 Bd7 19 Qd2**

Not the only move. 19 Nxf6+ gxf6 20 Bxf6 Qxf6 21 Rxd7 might allow Black to fight on, but 19 Bc2 Re8 20 Qd3 is the computer's suggestion, bluntly heading for h7 which is just impossible to prevent.

**19 ... Be6 20 Bxf6 gxf6 21 Qh6**



**21 ... Bxd5**

Forced to prevent 22 Nxf6+.

**22 Rxd5**

22 Bc2! wins immediately (if 22 ... Bxf2+ 23 Kh1 f5 24 Bxf5), but you cannot blame White for playing sensibly.

**22 ... Bxf2+**

After 22 ... Qb6 23 Rh5 Bxf2+ 24 Kh1 mate will follow shortly.

**23 Kxf2 Qb6+ 24 Qe3**

24 Kg3 Qc7+ 25 Kh3 Ne7 26 Rh5 Qd7+ 27 Be6! also wins.

**24 ... Qxe3+ 25 Rxe3**

A piece up, the rest of the moves require no comment.

**25 ... Rfd8 26 Red3 Rxd5 27 Rxd5 Rc7 28 Rc5 Re7 29 Ba4 Ne5 30 Nxe5 fxe5 31 Rc8+ Kg7 32**

**Re8 1-0**

Game 26

**A.Moiseenko-V.Malakhatko**

chesstouring.com

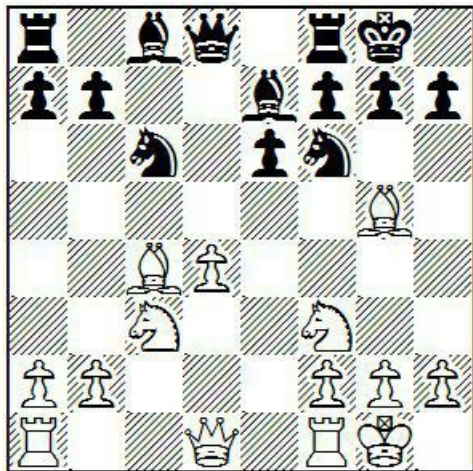
**1 e4**

1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 e6 3 Bg5 c5 4 e3 Be7 5 c4 0-0 6 Nc3 cxd4 7 exd4 d5 8 Bd3 dxc4 9 Bxc4 Nc6 10 0-0 b6 was how the game actually started, via a Torre Attack of all things. This just goes to show how important these IQP positions are because they occur in so many different openings.

**1 ... c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6 Nf3 Be7 7 Bg5 0-0 8 Bd3 dxc4**

Of course, Black waited for White to commit the bishop before taking on c4.

**9 Bxc4 Nc6 10 0-0**



**10 ... b6**

10 ... a6 11 a3 b5 12 Ba2 Bb7 13 Qd3 is another typical line where White prepares to gang up against h7.

**Question:** Why does Black not just play 10 ... Bd7 in this position, rather than spending two moves to develop the bishop to b7?

**Answer:** After 10 ... Bd7 11 Qe2 Rc8 12 Rad1 White continues as normal with Rfe1, Ne5 and so on. The bishop on d7 does protect e6, but it is very passively placed, as we saw in our last game. Black would much rather have it on b7 where it exerts pressure along the centre and towards g2. Basically ... Bd7 is fine in itself, but Black can and should try to be a bit more ambitious.

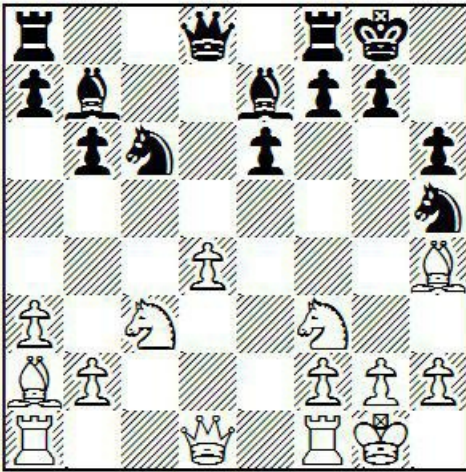
**11 a3**

Played to prevent ... Nb4 and then to d5. This move also allows White to play Ba2 if Black attacks the bishop with something like ... Na5. All in all, it's definitely a useful move.

**11 ... Bb7 12 Ba2 Nd5**

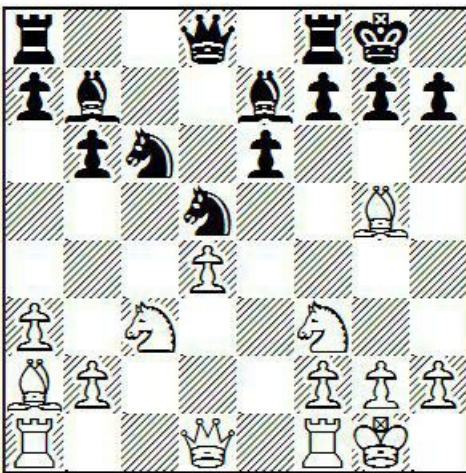
A typical idea, offering an exchange of pieces.

Instead, 12 ... h6 13 Bh4 (13 Bf4 Bd6 14 Be5 Rc8 15 Qe2 with play similar to that which we'll see in Chapter Four is possible too) 13 ... Nh5 is the computer's suggestion, with the assessment that Black is doing fine.



**Question:** Why does it think this?

**Answer:** As we have said before, Black would like to exchange pieces to highlight the weakness on d4. Here Black forces White to part with the dark-squared bishop on h4. Following 14 Bxe7 (if 14 Bg3 Nxc3 15 hxg3 Bf6 16 d5 exd5 and now the problem is we cannot take on d5 with the knight, as after 17 Nxd5 Bxb2 18 Rb1 Bxa3 there isn't enough compensation for two pawns) 14 ... Nxe7! (14 ... Qxe7 15 d5! reveals White's key idea and is played before Black can get in ... Rd8) 15 Re1 Rc8 16 Rc1 Nf4 Black has firm control of the d5-square. This does not mean White's position is bad, but from Black's point of view he should be happy with this type of position. We saw in the introductory chapter with Bojkov-Dreev how Black should try and play from here on.



**Exercise:** What should White do about the bishop on g5 after 12 ... Nd5?

**Answer:** Keep it on the board!

### 13 Bd2

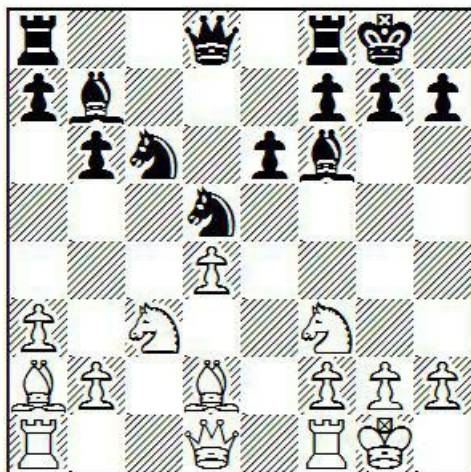
This looks passive, but, as we shall see, this is no problem.

Again 13 Bxe7 Nxc7 would not be White's idea; d5 is firmly in Black's hands. [chesstouring.com](http://chesstouring.com)

13 Be3 is one of those typical 'club player' moves. Whilst not bad, why overprotect d4 when it is not attacked? 13 ... Nxc3 (13 ... Nxe3 14 fxe3 opens the f-file for White and gives him some play towards f7) 14 bxc3 Qc7 followed by ... Na5 and attacking c3 might be Black's plan.

Finally, 13 h4 does not have much punch here since the a2-bishop is not pointing towards h7. Then 13 ... Bxg5 14 Nxg5 Nce7 reinforces the blockade of d5.

**13 ... Bf6**



Here White decided to capture on d5 and after ...

**14 Nxd5 exd5 15 Bf4 Re8 16 Qd2 Rc8**

... we've reached a position we saw in the Introduction, with the dual isolani on d4 and d5. White has the far superior light-squared bishop, but Black appears rock-solid. Moiseenko manages to show how there is plenty of play in this position.

**17 b4**

Preventing ... Na5-c4 and limiting Black's play.

**17 ... Ne7 18 Be5 Ng6**

After 18 ... Bxe5 19 dxe5 Qd7 20 Rfe1 Ng6 21 Rad1 the white pieces are all well placed to attack d5. This time it is Black with the IQP, but he has a bad version of it (too many pieces have been exchanged).

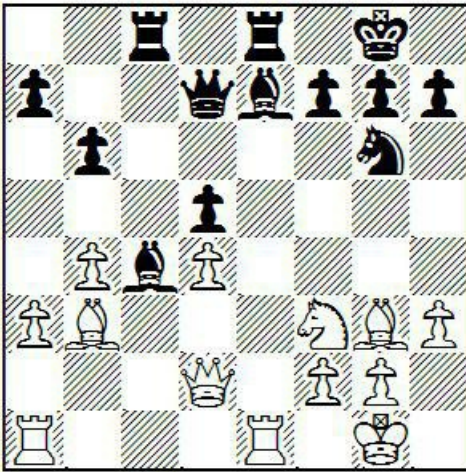
**19 Rfe1 Be7**

It's a sure sign that things are not so easy for Black if he has to retreat like this.

**20 h3 Qd7 21 Bb3 Ba6**

A nice idea of activating this bishop from its passive position on b7.

**22 Bg3 Bc4**



**Question:** Should we trade bishops on c4?

**Answer:** By now, you should really be familiar with the idea of keeping pieces on.

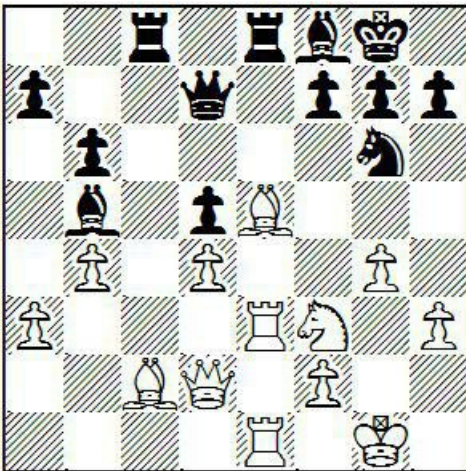
**23 Bc2!**

After 23 Bxc4 dxc4 24 Rac1 b5! the weak d5-pawn turns into a monster of a protected passer. This would require constant attention from White throughout the rest of the game.

**23 ... Bf6 24 Be5 Be7 25 Re3**

Preparing to double rooks on the e-file. It still appears that Black enjoys a completely solid position. However, White's pieces slowly improve their positions and it is not so easy for Black to do the same.

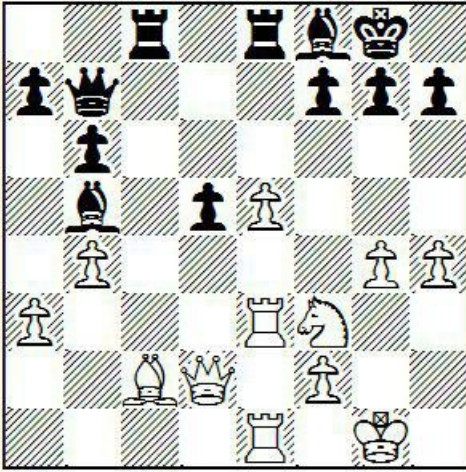
**25 ... Bf8 26 Rae1 Bb5 27 g4!**



**Question:** How can White make such a weakening move?

**Answer:** Since White has such control of the centre he can play like this, but the main idea is tactical: to play 28 Bf5. This forces Black to become even more passive.

**27 ... Qb7 28 h4 Nxe5 29 dx5**



**29 ... d4**

Trying to free his position, but there was no need to do this. 29 ... a5 30 Nd4 Bc4 31 h5 would have been far more solid, with an interesting middlegame struggle ahead.

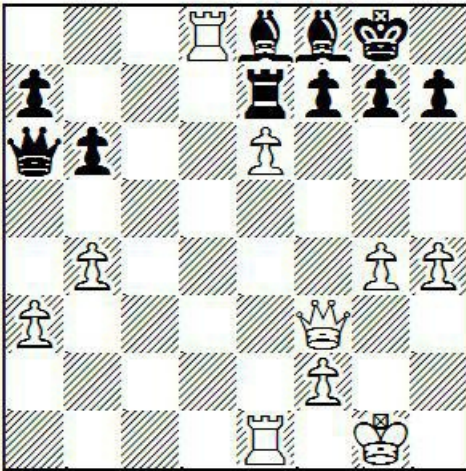
**30 Nxd4 Rd8 31 Re4 Qa6 32 Qe3 Rxd4**

Winning two pieces for the rook, but White has seen further ...

**33 Rxd4 Rxc2 34 e6**

Suddenly the position opens up and Black is quite lost. The threat of 35 e7 decides.

**34 ... Rc7 35 Rd8 Re7 36 Qf3 Be8**



**Exercise:** Spot the winning breakthrough.

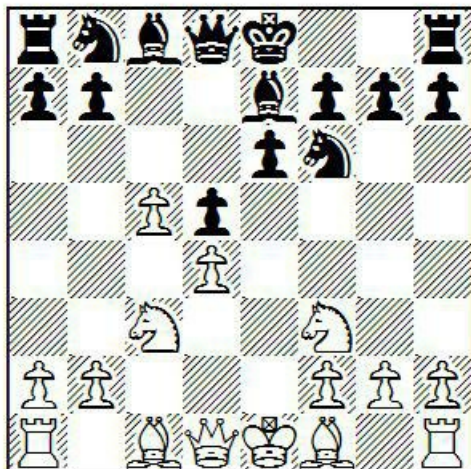
**Answer: 37 Rxe8! 1-0**

Game 27

**F.Tahirov-I.Kalichkin**

Tula 2002

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6 Nf3 Be7 7 c5



**Question:** What is the idea behind this move?

**Answer:** As we saw in the Introduction with the game Botvinnik-Kmoch, White decides not to play the IQP positions and instead goes for a queenside advance. After 7 c5, the general plan is to play b4 and push Black off the board on the queenside. This limits most of Black's minor pieces (the f8-bishop is restricted to the e7-square, ... Nc6 can be met by b5, attacking it, and where is the c8-bishop going?), and Black is hard pressed to play a pawn break because, for now, ... e5 is not on. Of course, if Black does get that move in successfully, he might get a good position.

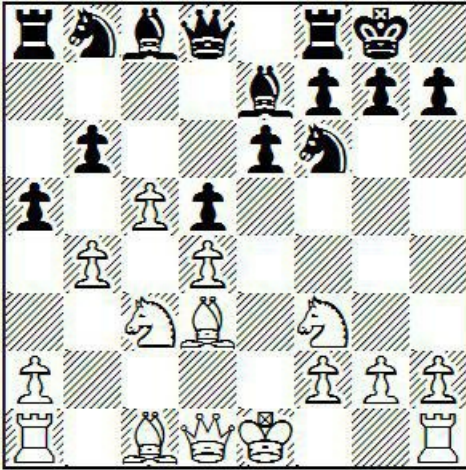
**7 ... 0-0 8 Bd3 b6**

A typical idea to attack the c5-pawn. Since White has not castled, this is a good time for Black to be trying this.

**9 b4 a5**

Another typical idea, Black strikes out early.

Instead, 9 ... Bd7?! 10 Be3 Ng4 (if 10 ... a5 11 b5!) 11 0-0 a5?! (11 ... bxc5 improves, but hardly equalizes after 12 bxc5 Nxe3 13 fxe3 Nc6 14 Rb1) 12 Na4! bxc5 (or 12 ... Bxa4 13 Qxa4 Nd7 14 Qc2) 13 bxc5 Bxa4 14 Qxa4 Nxe3 15 fxe3 Na6 16 Rab1 gave White the better position due to the protected, passed c-pawn in M.Botvinnik-H.Golombek, Moscow 1956.



**Question:** How can White save the queenside pawn structure after 9 ... a5?

**Answer:** Only with one move:

**10 Na4!**

Otherwise, 10 a3 axb4 doesn't work due to the a-file pin and 10 Ba3 axb4 11 Bxb4 bxc5 12 dxc5 Na6 is also horrible for White, since everything is hanging here.

**10 ... Nfd7**

Defending b6, but this looks a little strange. It also weakens the h7-square and Black does that in the Panov at his peril.

10 ... Nbd7 is far more normal:

a) The point of 10 ... Nbd7 is that 11 c6 allows 11 ... Bxb4+.

b) 11 a3 axb4 12 axb4 bxc5 13 bxc5 e5! (as I have said, if Black can get this freeing move in, he will often stand at least okay) 14 Nxe5 Bxc5 15 0-0 Nxe5 16 dxe5 Ne4 17 Bxe4 dxe4 18 Qxd8 Rxd8 19 Bg5 Rd5 20 Nxc5 Rxa1 21 Rxa1 Rxc5 22 Rc1 leads to a draw.

c) 11 Qc2 is an interesting move, although it did not work out so well in the following encounter: 11 ... axb4 12 c6 b3! 13 Qxb3 Nb8 14 Nxb6 Ra5 15 a4 Nxc6 16 Bd2 Bb4! 17 Nxc8 Bxd2+ 18 Kxd2 Ne4+ 19 Ke2 Qxc8 20 Rhc1 Qa8 and Black actually even went on to win in J.Isaev-R.Janssen, Moscow 2002.

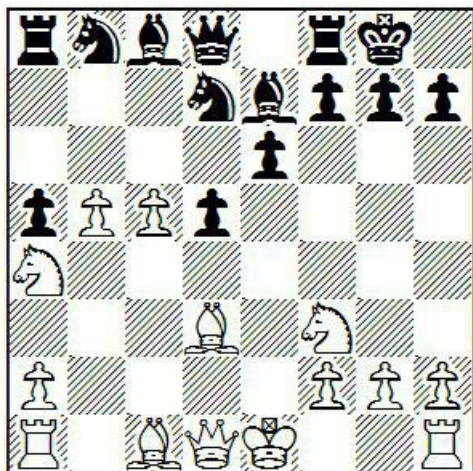
d) 11 Bf4 Bb7 (11 ... axb4 12 c6 Nc5 an interesting piece sacrifice; after 13 dxc5 bxc5 14 c7 Qe8 15 Nb6 Ra5 16 Nxc8 Qxc8 17 Ne5 Qb7 18 0-0 c4 19 Bb1 Rfa8 20 Qe2 b3 21 a4 R5a6 22 g4 g6 for some reason the players agreed a draw in this very sharp position in H.De Greef-H.Danielsen, Leeuwarden 1993) 12 Rc1 bxc5 13 bxc5 Bc6 14 0-0 Nh5 15 Be3 Nhf6 16 Nc3 Ne4 17 Bf4 f5 18 Ne5 Nxe5 19 Bxe5 Bg5 20 f4 Bf6 21 Nb5, as in I.Popov-M.Rodshtein, Puerto Madryn 2009, is probably the way White should be handling this position.

A quick scan of these variations shows that this 7 c5 idea is extremely sharp and there is plenty of play for both sides.

**11 b5!**

There is a tactical reason behind this, of course.

**11 ... bxc5 12 dxc5**



**12 ... Bxc5**

Otherwise, after 12 ... e5 13 c6 e4 14 cxd7 Nxd7 15 0-0 exf3 16 Qxf3 Ne5 17 Qg3 Nxd3 18 Qxd3 Bd6 19 Ba3 maybe Black is equal, but White eventually won the endgame in M.Botvinnik-A.Pomar Salamanca, Munich Olympiad 1958, while 12 ... Nxc5 13 Nxc5 Bxc5 14 Bxh7+ Kxh7 15 Qc2+ Kg8 16 Qxc5 is a similar trick to the game.

**Question:** After the text hasn't White just lost a pawn? What trick does he have?

**Answer: 13 Bxh7+ Kxh7 14 Ng5+**

14 Nxc5 Nxc5 15 Qc2+ Kg8 16 Qxc5 is also playable, but Tahirov goes straight for the jugular. After all, the black monarch is exposed now that the h-pawn is missing.

**14 ... Kg8 15 Nxc5 Nxc5 16 Qh5**

Sacrificing a piece, but White decides to go in for a 'proper' Greek Gift sacrifice.

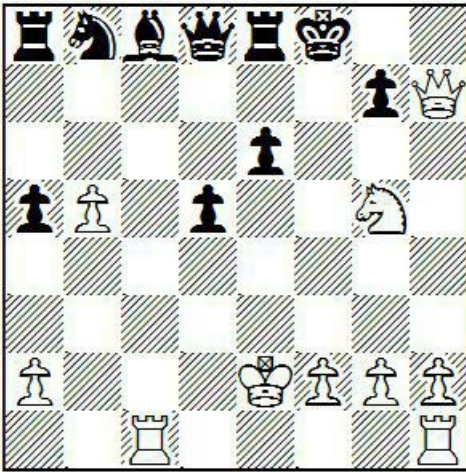
**16 ... Nd3+ 17 Ke2 Nxc1+ 18 Raxc1 Re8**

The only move, to vacate the f8-square for the king.

**19 Qxf7+ Kh8 20 Qh5+**

20 Rc3 probably also wins, but the game continuation is much smoother.

**20 ... Kg8 21 Qh7+ Kf8**



**Exercise:** Calculate all the way to checkmate.

**Answer:** 22 Qh8+ Ke7 23 Qxg7+ Kd6 24 Ne4+! dxe4 25 Rhd1# 1-0

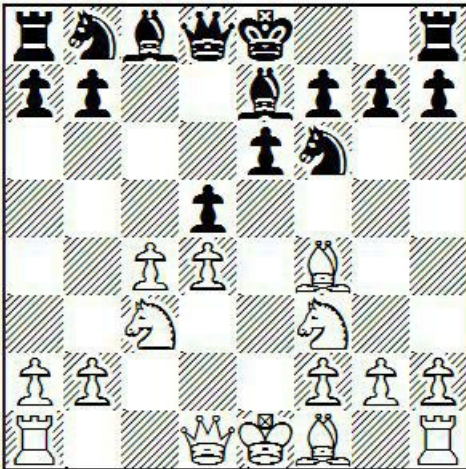
A crushing game where Black did not really make any huge errors and quite a nice advert for the 7 c5 variation.

Game 28

**E. Bacrot-R. Kempinski**

German League 2012

1 c4 c6 2 e4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 d4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e6 6 Nf3 Be7 7 Bf4



**Question:** You have been advocating putting the bishop on g5 in most of these different variations, so why did Bacrot play 7 Bf4?

**Answer:** The idea is to play the c5 variation as we saw in the previous game, but with Bf4 included. What

this does is allow the queen to defend the rook on a1, so once Black attacks White's b4/c5 pawn chain with ... b6 and ... a5, White can simply defend it with a3. The bishop is also quite well placed on f4 for this c5 idea, as it controls the c7-square. Let's see how all this pans out.

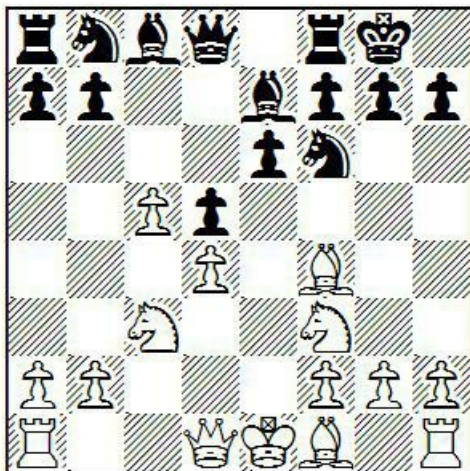
### 7 ... 0-0

Two alternatives:

a) 7 ... Nc6 8 c5 0-0 9 Bd3 b6 10 cxb6 Qxb6 11 Rb1 Bd7 12 0-0 Nh5 13 Be3 f5 14 Ne5 Be8 15 f4 with unclear play in A.Alekhine-McCombie, London (simul) 1932. Even former world champion Alexander Alekhine knew of this variation as far back as the 1930s!

b) 7 ... dxc4 8 Bxc4 0-0 9 0-0 Nc6 10 a3 b6 11 Re1 Bb7 with an IQP position where the bishop is not necessarily badly placed on f4 and Black had to lose a tempo by allowing Bf1xc4 in one go.

### 8 c5



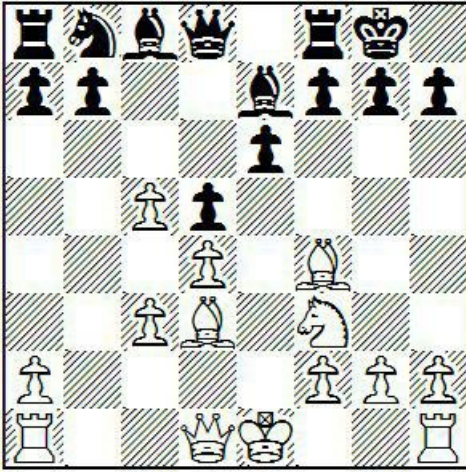
### 8 ... Ne4

Striking out early before White gets time to castle. Instead, 8 ... b6 9 b4 a5 10 a3 reveals the main point of 7 Bf4. Now the queen defends a1, so the rook is not hanging after the exchange on b4. Here 10 ... axb4 11 axb4 Rxa1 12 Qxa1 Nc6 13 Qa4 put Black under some pressure in H.Casagrande-M.Schigan, Austrian League 1996, as 13 ... Bd7 allows 14 b5 Na5 15 c6 with a clear advantage.

### 9 Bd3 Nxc3

9 ... f5 is a major alternative, maintaining the knight on e4. Play could go something like 10 h4 (preventing any ... g5 ideas) 10 ... Nc6 11 Bb5 Bd7 12 Rc1 Be8 13 h5 Rc8 14 a3 Bf6 15 b4, as in D.Khokhriakov-D.Darmin, Sterlitamak 2011.

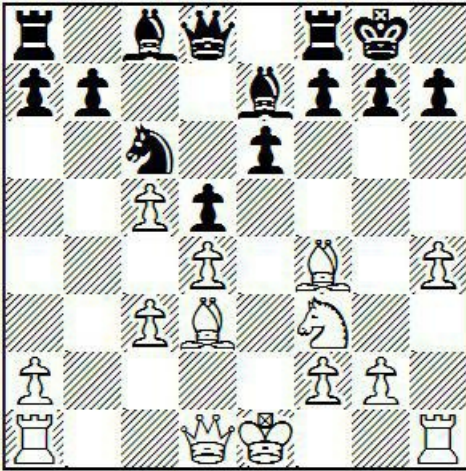
### 10 bxc3



### 10 ... Nc6

Another game saw 10 ... b6 11 cxb6 (after 11 Qc2 h6 12 Rb1 Nc6 White has to take on b6 anyway) 11 ... axb6 12 h4 f5 (12 ... Ba6 prevents the thematic Greek Gift idea, since 13 Bxh7+ Kxh7 14 Ng5+ Kg8 15 Qh5 runs into 15 ... Bd3, but instead 13 Ng5 Bxd3 14 Qxd3 g6 15 Qg3 Nd7 16 h5 retains dangerous attacking chances despite the exchanges) 13 Qe2 Nc6 14 g3 Bd6 15 Bxd6 Qxd6 16 0-0 Bd7 17 Rab1 Rab8 18 Rb2 Rfe8 19 Re1 Re7 20 Kg2 with some pressure in L.Gavrilovic-V.Zivkovic, Vajjevo 2010.

### 11 h4



**Question:** What is the point of this move? Why not just castle?

**Answer:** If you have been reading the annotations so far you will have seen White's cunning idea of h4 threatening a Greek Gift on h7. Black now needs to take steps now to defend against this.

### 11 ... g6

Preventing Bxh7, but creating a target for the white h-pawn. Instead, 11 ... b6? allows the main idea: 12 Bxh7+! Kxh7 13 Ng5+ Kg8 14 Qh5 with a run of the mill a Greek Gift as they come.

### 12 Qc2 f5

The dangers lurking in this position are demonstrated by 12 ... Bf6 13 h5 Bg7 14 Bd6 Re8 15 hxg6 hxg6 16

Bxg6 fxg6 17 Qxg6 Bd7 18 Ng5, with a crushing attack.

**13 Qd2**

13 h5 g5 is what 13 Qd2 tries to prevent.

**13 ... b6 14 Bb5**

White does not mind trading this bishop off, as he will gain the e5-square for his troubles.

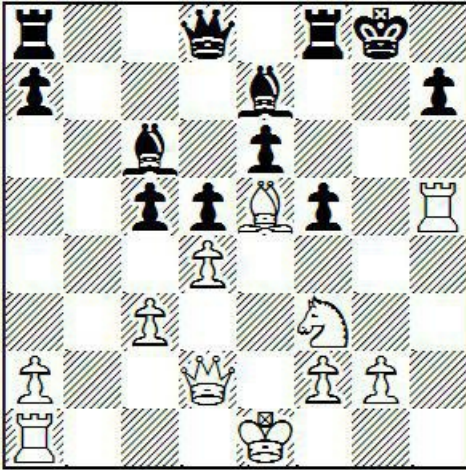
**14 ... Bd7 15 h5**

Now that ... g5 is prevented, this move makes sense.

**15 ... gxh5**

15 ... bxc5 16 hxg6 hxg6 17 Bxc6 Bxc6 18 Ne5 Be8 19 Qe3 cxd4 20 Qh3 wins. This was route one stuff, but very effective nonetheless.

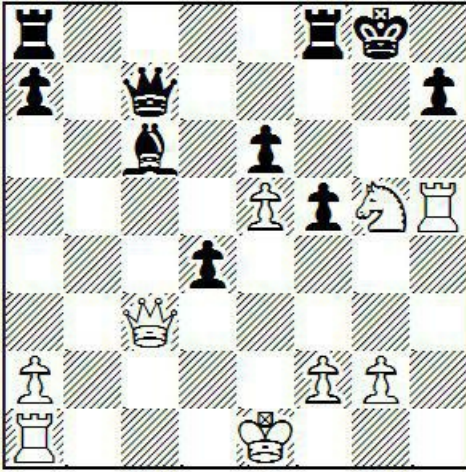
**16 Rxh5 bxc5 17 Bxc6 Bxc6 18 Be5**



**Question:** Does White really have compensation for the pawn here?

**Answer:** Yes. The black king position can hardly be called secure and e5 is a useful square for the white pieces. White's king can shuffle across to f1 and maybe g1, so that he can castle 'by hand'. All in all, this position is much easier for White to play.

**18 ... Bf6 19 Ng5 cxd4 20 cxd4 Bxe5 21 dxex5 Qc7 22 Qc3 d4**



**23 Qc5**

Much better than 23 Qxd4 Rfd8 24 Qc3 Rd5 25 f4 Qb6 when the white king will begin to feel the heat. Dangers lurk in this middlegame for both sides.

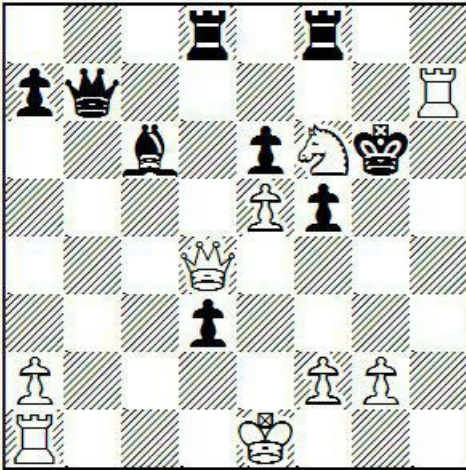
**23 ... d3 24 Nxb7**

A much better way to capture than 24 Rxh7 d2+ 25 Kxd2 Qd8+ 26 Ke1 Qxg5.

**24 ... Qb7 25 Qd4**

Playing for the win. 25 Nxf8 Qb2 threatening a1 and ... Qe2 mate forces White to take the perpetual with 26 Rg5+ Kf7 27 Rg7+ Kxg7 28 Qe7+ Kg8 29 Qxe6+ Kxf8 30 Qf6+ Ke8 31 Qxc6+ Ke7 32 Qd6+.

**25 ... Rad8 26 Nf6+ Kf7 27 Rh7+ Kg6**

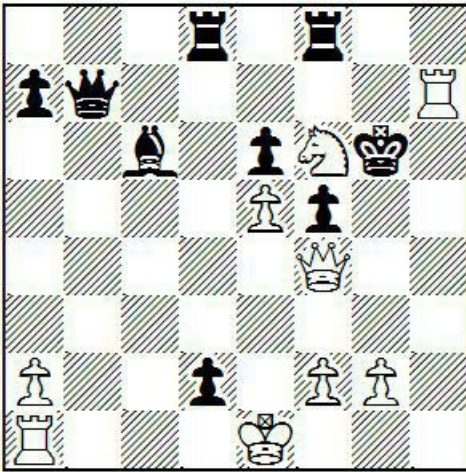


What a position! Both queens are en prise, as well as both kings being under heavy fire. You would expect one side or the other to be able to win immediately, but that is not so.

**28 Rh6+ Kf7**

Rightly avoiding 28 ... Kxh6 29 Qh4+ Kg6 30 Qh5+ Kg7 31 Qh7#.

**29 Rh7+ Kg6 30 Qf4! d2+**

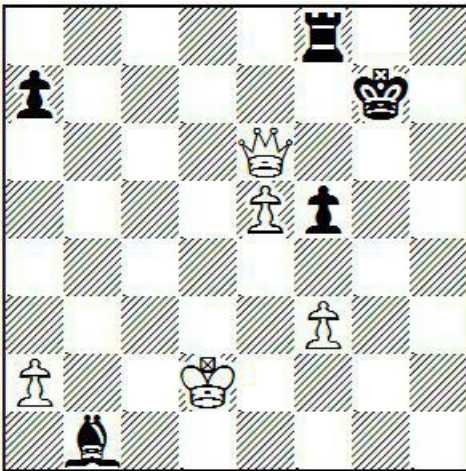


**31 Kd1**

It is, of course, crucial that ... Ba4 is not on the cards.

**31 ... Qxh7 32 Nxh7 Kxh7 33 Rb1 Rd3 34 Qc4 Be4 35 f3 Rxf3 36 gxf3 Bxb1 37 Qxe6 Kg7 38**

**Kxd2**



After all the fireworks White suddenly emerges with a winning position.

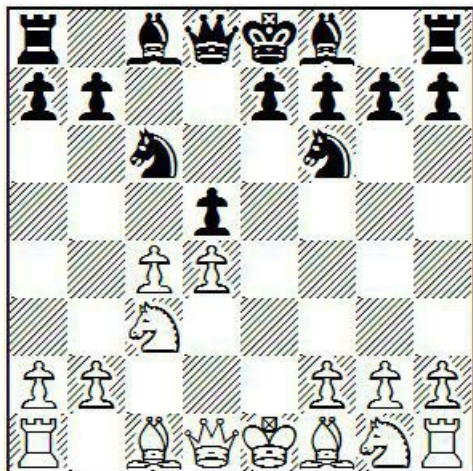
**38 ... f4 39 Qe7+ Rf7 40 Qg5+ Bg6 41 e6 Rf5 42 Qe7+ Kh6 43 Qxa7 Rd5+ 44 Kc1 Rd3 45 e7 Rxf3 46 Qd4 Rf1+ 47 Kd2 Kh7 48 e8Q 1-0**

This 7 Bf4 and c5 idea is certainly an interesting surprise weapon. Be aware of the early h4 and Bxh7+ Greek Gift ideas and you might just catch someone out nice and early.

# Chapter Four

## The 5 ... Nc6 Variation

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6



This variation is advocated by the Danish GM Lars Schandorff in his recent repertoire book *Grandmaster Repertoire 7: The Caro-Kann*, as well as by other Caro-Kann repertoire books, and therefore deserves serious attention. In Chapters Two and Three, we saw how against simple development from Black, White is able to carry out quick developing moves himself with Bg5, Bd3, 0-0 etc. With 5 ... Nc6 Black attempts to prevent White from obtaining a typical IQP position and goes for an early attack on the d4-pawn. Play can become ultra-sharp straight from the opening moves, and so I suggest careful study of this variation.

White's options in this position are:

1) 6 cxd5 Nxd5 7 Bc4!? as a surprise weapon.

2) 6 Bg5 is my sharp, main recommendation.

3) 6 Nf3 Bg4 7 cxd5 Nxd5 8 Qb3 is the line I am avoiding despite being given in many books. The main line leads to an endgame and I feel Panov players should be keeping pieces on the board.

Game 29

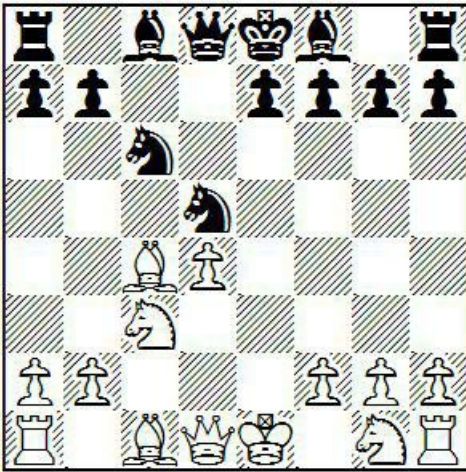
**V.Kramnik-G.Meier**

Dortmund 2012

**1 e4**

1 c4 Nf6 2 Nc3 c5 3 Nf3 Nc6 4 e3 e6 5 d4 d5 6 cxd5 Nxd5 7 Bc4 cxd4 8 exd4 Be7 9 0-0 0-0 was actually how the game began.

**1 ... c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 cxd5 Nxd5 7 Bc4!?**



This continuation makes a lot of sense, in comparison to other lines we have studied so far. White puts immediate pressure on the black centre, in particular the d5-square, and d4 is defended tactically.

**7 ... e6**

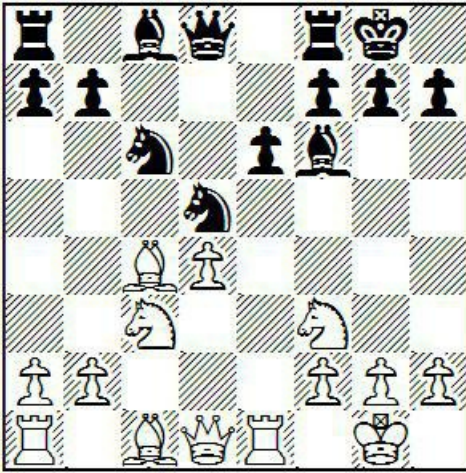
Natural, but Black does not have to echo his play in the previous chapter:

a) 7 ... Nb6 8 Bb5 Be6 9 Nf3 g6 10 h4!? (we first encountered this interesting thrust of the h-pawn against the fianchetto structure in the Introduction; is it reckless or, as I would claim here, the prelude to a lovely attack?) 10 ... Bg7 11 h5 Bd5 12 Be3 a6 13 Bd3 Nc4 14 Qe2 Bxf3 15 gxf3 Nd6 16 0-0-0 Qa5 (16 ... Nxd4 was risky, but might be an improvement, as now the king on e8 comes under heavy fire) 17 Be4 Nf5 18 Kb1 Ncx4 19 Bxd4 Nxd4 20 Qc4 Nb5 21 Bc6+ Kf8 22 Bxb5 Bxc3 23 hxg6 fxg6 24 Ba4 Bg7 25 Rd5 b5 26 Qc6 Rb8 27 Bb3 Qb4 28 Qb6 Re8 29 Rd8 1-0 L.Vajda-P.Michalik, Slovakian League 2011.

b) 7 ... Nxc3 8 bxc3 e6 is also possible, with the usual change of pawn structure in the centre. After 9 Nf3 Bd6 10 0-0 0-0 11 Rb1 Qc7 12 Bd3 Ne7 White went for the Greek Gift sacrifice and 13 Bxh7+ Kxh7 14 Ng5+ Kg8 15 Qh5 Rd8 16 Qxf7+ Kh8 17 Qh5+ Kg8 18 Rb3 was a mess in M.Klichev-I.Losev, Zaraisk 2009.

c) 7 ... Be6 8 Bb3 g6 9 Nf3 Bg7 10 0-0 0-0 is also a playable line from Black's point of view, but needs further tests than it has so far received.

**8 Nf3 Be7 9 0-0 0-0 10 Re1 Bf6**



**Question:** What is Black's threat and what should we be doing?

**Answer:** The threat is 10 ... Nb6 attacking c4 and d4, so White must respond. There are two real options.

**11 Bb3**

The most natural, as the bishop sidesteps Black's plan.

11 Ne4 is the main theoretical continuation, but in general I believe White should try to put pressure on Black's knight on d5 if he wants to fight for advantage in this structure. After 11 ... b6 (11 ... Be7 12 a3 b6 13 Qd3 Bb7 14 Ba2 Re8 15 Bd2 Rc8 16 Rad1 g6 17 h4! Nb8 18 Neg5 Bf6 19 h5 Rc7 20 Bb1 Rd7 21 Nxf7! Kxh7 22 hxg6+ Kg8 23 Bh6 was winning for White in D.Gormally-J.Lopez Martinez, European Team Championship, Gothenburg 2005) 12 a3 Bb7 13 Qd3 Rc8 14 Bd2 (14 Nfg5?! was the high-level encounter M.Tal-T.Petrosian, Moscow 1966) 14 ... Nce7 we've reached a very complicated position that is standard enough for the IQP.

**11 ... Nde7 12 Bf4!?**

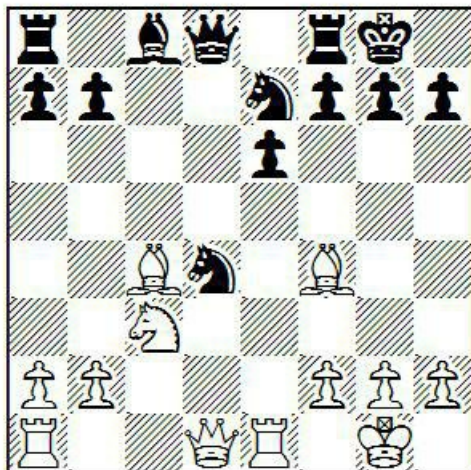
"I was not sure that this continuation is entirely correct, but it seemed to me to be the only way to complicate matters and to play for a win" – Kramnik. That's the spirit!

Instead, 12 Be3 Nf5 13 d5 Nxe3 14 Rxe3 exd5 should be roughly equal and 12 Re4 b6 does not feel like the correct way to play this position.

**12 ... Bxd4**

12 ... Nxd4 13 Ne4 (if 13 Nxd4 Bxd4 14 Qf3 Ng6 15 Bg3 Qf6) 13 ... Nxb3 14 Nxf6+ gxf6 15 Qxb3 is very unclear. These variations show that despite Black's extra pawn, the position is nice and open. Moreover, White's pieces are better developed so there is some compensation. No definitive answer can be given on positions like this; they are just fun to play!

**13 Nxd4 Nxd4 14 Bc4**



**Question:** Why did White play this?

**Answer:** White gets to keep the two bishops as now ... Nxb3 is ruled out. His compensation is based around his lead in development. Still, there are no concrete variations as yet to prove this compensation, so let's just see how it pans out.

**14 ... Nec6 15 Rc1**

A good move, keeping the tension. 15 Qh5 looks tempting, but after 15 ... Qa5! White has to exchange queens: 16 Qxa5 Nxa5 17 Bd3 Nac6 and with the queens off Black can breathe a little easier.

**15 ... Qf6 16 Bc7!**

The sort of move to throw the opponent off guard. The idea is to play Ne4 and not allow a queen retreat to d8.

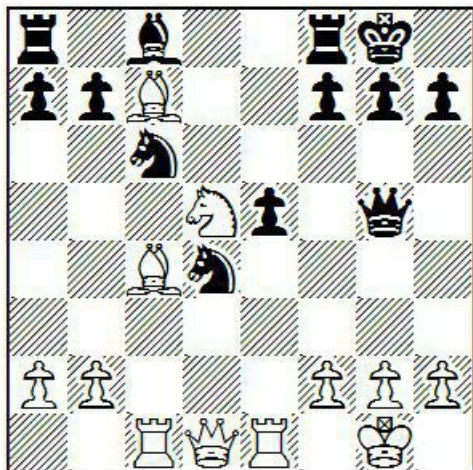
After 16 Bd6 Rd8 17 Ne4 Qg6 suddenly ... f5 is a threat, undermining the bishop on d6.

**16 ... e5**

Probably it was better to play 16 ... Qe7 17 Bg3 Rd8 18 Qh5 Nf5 19 Bf4 Bd7 with an unclear and

complicated position, where Black is rather solid, but White has definite play for the pawn.

**17 Nd5 Qg5**



**Question:** How can White open up the position and continue attacking?

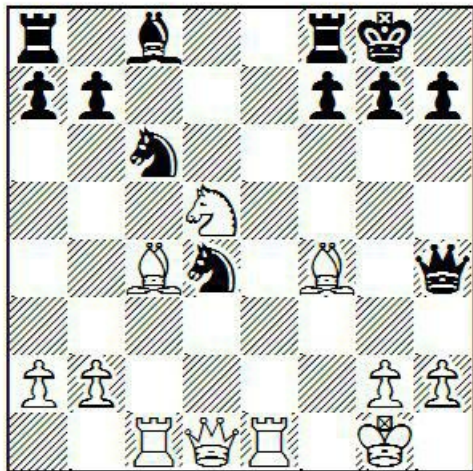
**Answer:** If we allow Black to play ... Bh3, he will be better, so White needs to be quick. Let's open lines!

**18 f4! exf4 19 Bxf4 Qh4**

Alternatively:

a) 19 ... Qg4 20 Be3 (20 Bd6!?) 20 ... Qxd1 21 Rxd1 Ne6 22 Bb5 and White has more than enough play for the pawn.

b) 19 ... Qg6 is not an option: 20 Qxd4! Nxd4 21 Ne7+ Kh8 22 Nxg6+ hxg6 23 Bd6 Rd8 24 Be7 and f7 falls, giving White the clearly better position as all his pieces are far better placed than their counterparts.



**20 Bg3**

Kramnik said he considered 20 Re4! and that it was "a mess". After 20 ... Bg4 21 Qd2 (21 Bd6!?) 21 ... Nf3+! 22 gxh3 Bxf3 23 Bd3 Qg4+ 24 Kf2 Qg2+ 25 Ke3 Qh3 who is supposed to be attacking who?

**20 ... Qd8?**

20 ... Qg5 was best. Following 21 Re4! (White has a draw if he wants, of course, with 21 Bf4 Qh4 22 Bg3)

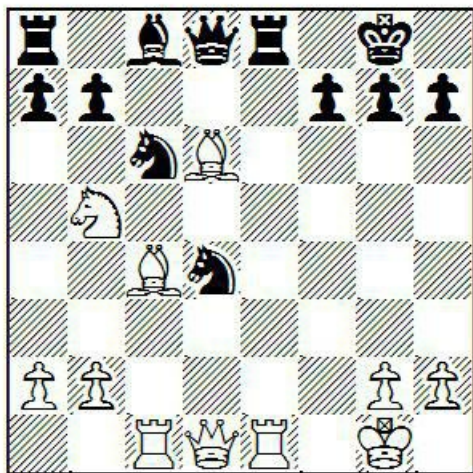
21 ... Nf5! (if 21 ... Bf5 22 Rxd4 Nxd4 23 Bf4!) 22 Rg4! Qh6 23 Bf4 Qe6 24 Nc7 Qe4! 25 Nxa8 Ne3 all hell has broken loose.

**21 Nc7 Rb8 22 Nb5 Ra8 23 Bd6!**

"Now Black is in trouble all of a sudden", as Kramnik pointed out after the game.

**23 ... Re8**

23 ... Nxb5 24 Bxf8 Qb6+ 25 Kh1 Kxf8 26 Bxb5 Be6 (26 ... Qxb5? 27 Qd6+) 27 Bxc6 is just an extra exchange for White.



**Exercise:** What do you think the best continuation is here? Think about White's active pieces and his lead in development, and how to make them count.

**24 Bxf7+! Kxf7 25 Qh5+ g6**

25 ... Kg8 26 Rxe8+ is game over straight away.

**26 Qxh7+ Kf6 27 Nxd4!**

The best and the simplest.

**27 ... Nxd4**

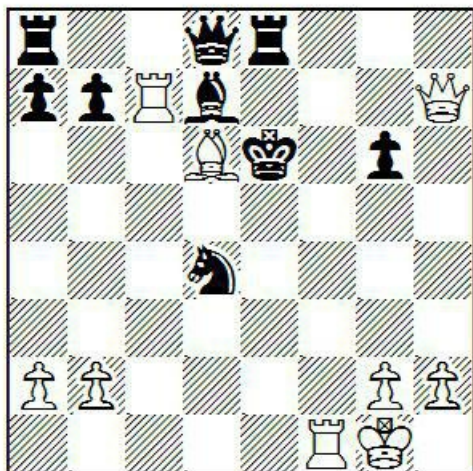
White wins too after 27 ... Rxe1+ 28 Rxe1 Qxd6 29 Rf1+ (29 Qh8+ Kf7 30 Nxc6 also wins) 29 ... Ke5 (or 29 ... Bf5 30 Nxf5 Qc5+ 31 Ne3+) 30 Nf3+ Kd5 31 Rd1+ Kc5 32 Rxd6.

**28 Qh4+ Kf7 29 Rc7+**

29 Qxd4 is also winning, of course, but the text is more precise.

**29 ... Bd7 30 Qh7+ Kf6 31 Rf1+ Ke6**

If 31 ... Nf5 32 Rxd7 Qb6+ 33 Kh1.



**Exercise:** Finish off the king hunt by spotting the checkmate in two moves.

**Answer: 32 Qxg6+ Kd5 33 Rc5# 1-0**

A very complicated game, but one that Panov players should not shy away from. Again, White made all the running, and Black was constantly having to try and find the best defensive moves, which is never an easy task with the clock ticking.

Game 30

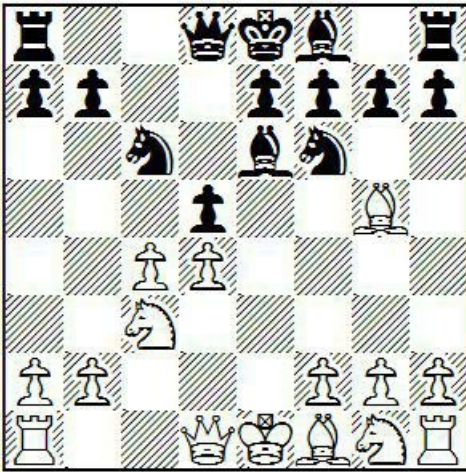
**K.Kulaots-A.Fauland**

European Championship, Aix-les-Bains 2011

**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Bg5**

6 Nf3 is the other main variation, but I have no intention of recommending the endgame in this line after 6 ... Bg4 7 cxd5 Nxd5 8 Qb3 Bxf3 9 gxf3 e6 10 Qxb7 Nxd4 11 Bb5+ Nxb5 12 Qc6+ Ke7 13 Qxb5 Qd7. Whilst many strong players have said that both sides have chances to win here, I feel it is not in the spirit of the Panov. Let's play some sharper stuff with 6 Bg5!

**6 ... Be6**



**Question:** What's this? Another surprise line, but this time from Black?

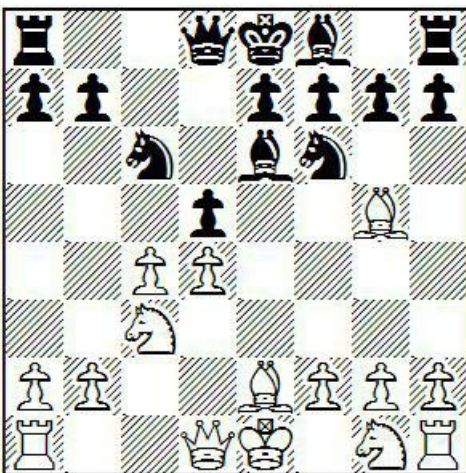
**Answer:** This move looks strange, but has some plus points: d5 is strengthened and Black puts the question to the c4-pawn, since ... dxc4 is supported by the bishop on e6. The f8-bishop can come out via a fianchetto with ... g6 and ... Bg7, so that is not a problem. There are a few lines here, but I quite like the following line which is a nice counter-surprise weapon.

### 7 Be2

7 a3 is another popular weapon against this ... Be6 variation: for example, 7 ... Qd7 8 Be2 0-0-0 9 c5 Ne4 10 Nf3 Nxc5 11 Nxc5 h6 12 Nf3 g5 13 b4 g4 14 b5 gxf3 15 bxc6 Qxc6 16 Bxf3 Bf5 17 0-0 Rg8 18 Re1 e6 19 Rc1 h5 20 Na2 h4 21 Rc3 f6 22 Nb4 Qb5 23 Be2 Qe8 24 c6 Bxb4 25 axb4 Be4 26 f3 Bf5 27 Qa4 Bh3 28 Qxa7 Rxc2+ 29 Kh1 1-0, M.Adams-I.Nikolaidis, French League 2006.

Note too 7 Nf3 h6 8 Bxf6 exf6 9 a3 Be7 10 Be2 0-0 11 0-0 f5 12 Qc2 Bf6 13 Rad1 g6 14 Rfe1 Kg7 15 b4 a6 16 Bf1 f4 17 h3 dxc4 18 d5 Bf5 19 Qc1 Na7 20 Nd4 Bd7 21 Ne6+ Bxe6 22 dxe6 Qc8 23 Rd7 Kh8 24 Qxf4 Bg7 25 Rxf7 Qc6 26 e7 Rxf7 27 Qxf7 Re8 28 Re6 Qd7 29 Nd5 1-0, V.Ivanchuk-V.Topalv, Nice (rapid) 2008.

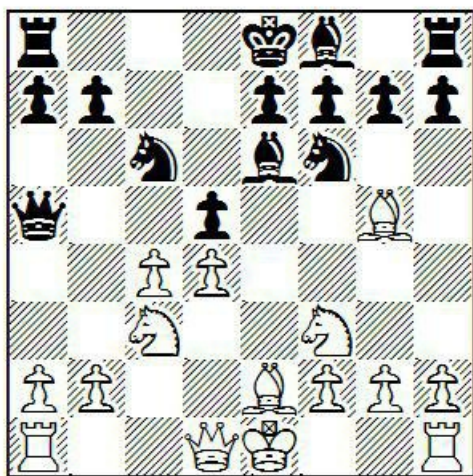
Both these games are well worth playing through to see some of White's strategies.



7 ... Qa5

7 ... g6 8 Bf3! is the trick when Black is in trouble. Similar is 7 ... h6 8 Bxf6 exf6 9 Bf3. Black can escape, but White ends up with a nice position anyway after 9 ... Bb4 (9 ... dxc4 10 d5 is the key point of this Be2-f3 idea) 10 Nge2 0-0 11 0-0 Ne7 12 Qb3 Bxc3 13 Nxc3 dxc4 14 Qxb7 Rb8 15 Qxa7 Rxb2 16 Qc5, as in T.Oral-F.Langheinrich, Pardubice 2002.

### 8 Nf3



### 8 ... dxc4

8 ... Ne4 9 0-0 Nxc3 10 bxc3 dxc4 gives rise to another sharp position. Black has won a pawn, but is again behind in development. Play could go 11 Rb1 0-0-0 12 a4 (or 12 Qd2 h6 13 Be3 g5 14 Qb2 Qc7 15 Nd2 when the black set-up is a little bit artificial; after all, Black hardly ever castles queenside in the Panov) 12 ... a6 13 Bh4 f6 14 Qc2 with the easier play for White in A.Hoffmann-M.Boehnisch, German League 2003.

### 9 0-0 Rd8

Keeping tabs on the d5-square, which is even more important than getting the kingside pieces out.

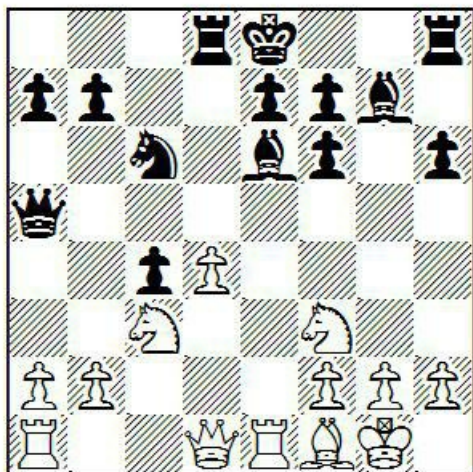
### 10 Re1 h6 11 Bxf6 gxf6

11 ... exf6 12 Bxc4! demonstrates the perils of keeping the king on e8 for too long.

### 12 Bf1

12 Ne4 Bg7 13 Nc5 Bc8 14 Bxc4 0-0 looks pleasant too for White, with chances to play against Black's weakened kingside structure.

### 12 ... Bg7



**Exercise:** What move would you play here as White?

**Answer:** Kulaots came up with a thematic sacrifice.

**13 Rxe6!?**

We saw this idea in the Introduction with the game Tal-Karpov.

**13 ... fxe6 14 Bxc4**

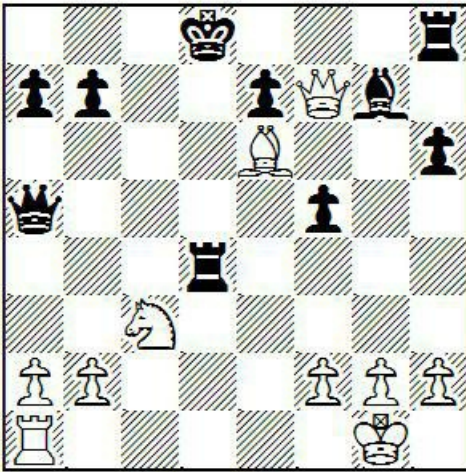
**Question:** What does White have for the exchange?

**Answer:** The light squares are now generally in White's possession, and if moves like Qe2 and Re1 can be played then White can drive straight through the centre. The bishop on e6 was holding Black's position together, so why not just remove it?

**14 ... f5**

Alternatively, 14 ... 0-0 15 Bxe6+ Kh8 16 d5 followed by Nh4 or Nd4-f5, and just look at that bishop on g7, while after 14 ... e5 15 Qd3 exd4 16 Nb5 a6 17 Qg6+ Kd7 18 Qf5+ Ke8 19 Be6! the light squares prove fatal for Black.

**15 Bxe6 Nxd4 16 Nxd4 Rxd4 17 Qh5+ Kd8 18 Qf7**



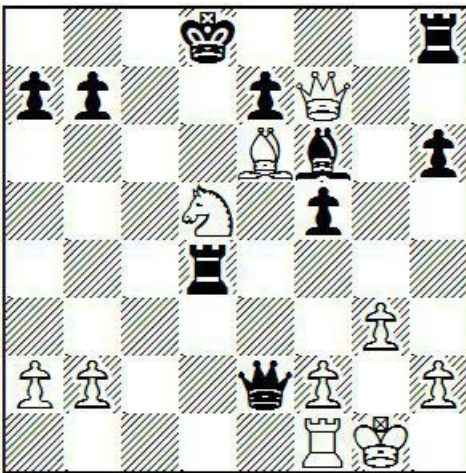
Continuing to attack.

**18 ... Bf6 19 Nd5 Qd2 20 Rf1!**

20 Nxf6? Qd1+ 21 Rxd1 Rxd1# was one to avoid.

**20 ... Qe2 21 g3**

21 Nxf6? Rd1 also wins for Black. It may appear that Black has found counterplay, but this is just a temporary situation.



**21 ... Rxd5**

21 ... Rd1 22 Rxd1 Qxd1+ 23 Kg2 Qd4 24 Bxf5 Qe5 was probably the best hope, but maybe Black was somehow playing for a win?

**22 Bxd5 Qxb2**

Having won the exchange back, Black emerges a pawn up, but with serious problems for his king.

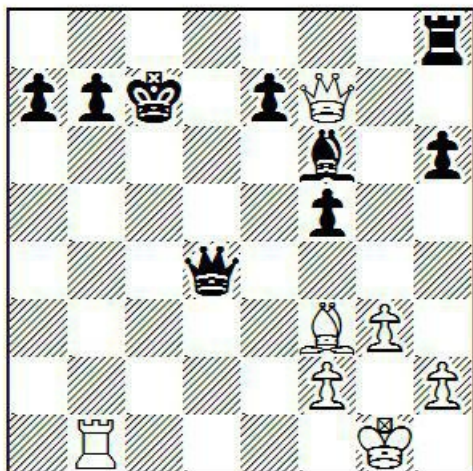
**23 Bf3**

Clearing the d file for a future Rd1+. The immediate 23 Rd1 was obvious and good, and if 23 ... Bd4 24 Qxf5.

**23 ... Kc7 24 Rd1 Qb5**

24 ... Bd4 25 Qc4+ nets the bishop.

**25 a4 Qxa4 26 Rb1 Qd4**



**Exercise:** What is the best way to round off proceedings?

**Answer: 27 Qe6! 1-0**

Black resigned as 27 ... b6 allows 28 Rc1+ Kb8 29 Qc6! with mate on b7 or a8. It's ironic that after the Rxe6 sacrifice, Black was, indeed, cooked on the light squares after all.

Game 31

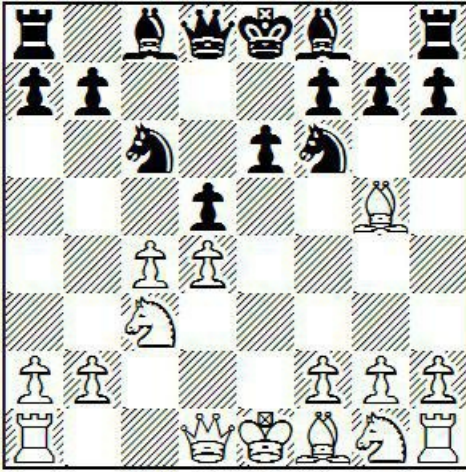
**A.Morozevich-A.Minasian**

Istanbul Olympiad 2000

**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Bg5 e6**

The most natural move. Black decides simple development of the f8-bishop and castling might be the safest.

6 ... Qa5 is an older variation, but just so you are aware, here is one way to play against it: 7 Bxf6 exf6 8 cxd5 Bb4 9 Qd2 Bxc3 10 bxc3 Qxd5 11 Ne2 0-0 12 Nf4 Re8+ 13 Be2 Qd6 14 0-0 Bf5 15 Rfe1 Rac8 16 Bf3 Rxe1+ 17 Rxe1 Na5 18 Qe2 Be6 19 Bd5! Bxd5 20 Nxd5 Nc6 and now a lovely tactic, 21 Nxf6+ and 1-0 in B.Gulko-L.Gonzalez Perez, Las Palmas 1996.



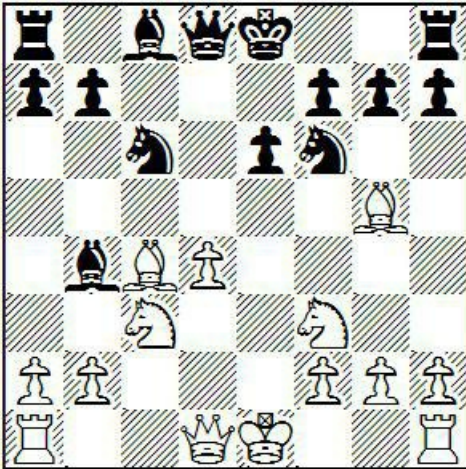
### 7 Nf3 Bb4

7 ... Be7 is the other move and will be discussed in the next game. We have already seen Black having the familiar option of going either ... Bb4 or ... Be7. Indeed, play in these lines here often follows a similar course to that of Chapters Two and Three.

### 8 Bd3

White heads for the IQP position.

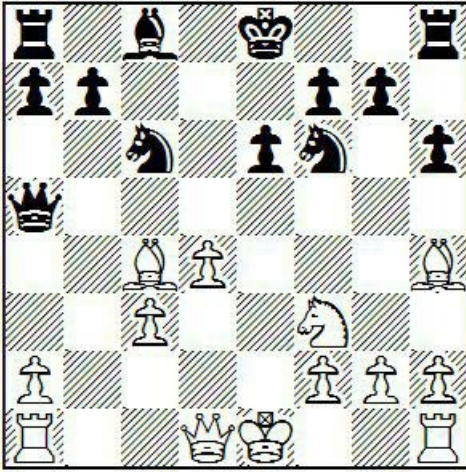
### 8 ... dxc4 9 Bxc4



### 9 ... h6

9 ... 0-0 10 0-0 leads to the usual sort of IQP stuff we have seen already. Play can go 10 ... Be7 (10 ... h6 11 Bh4 Be7 12 Re1 b6 13 a3 Bb7 14 Ba2 Nh5 reveals the point of the early ... h6; now Black can execute his idea, forcing the exchange of the bishop on h4 and after 15 Bg3 Nxc3 16 hxg3 Bf6 17 d5 exd5 18 Bxd5 Bxc3 19 bxc3 Qc7 20 Nh4 Rad8 21 Nf5 totally unclear play arose in N.Sedlak-B.Jobava, Milan 2011) 11 Re1 b6 12 a3 Bb7 13 Qd3 Rc8 14 Ba2, although here Black has lost a tempo because he played ... Bb4 then back to e7. This can only be to White's benefit.

### 10 Bh4 Bxc3+ 11 bxc3 Qa5



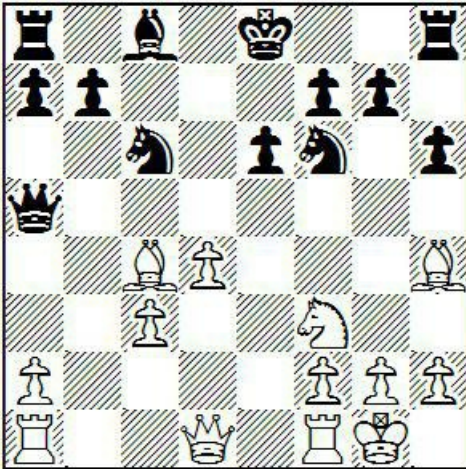
Now we see the point of throwing in ... h6 and Bh4: White cannot play Bd2 to defend the c3-pawn.

**Question:** What should White do about defending this pawn?

**Answer:** Nothing!

**12 0-0**

12 Rc1 Ne4 13 Qc2 is one way to play, not giving c3 away, but the game move is far more exciting.



**12 ... Nd5**

12 ... Qxc3 13 Rc1 Qa5 14 Bxf6 gxf6 15 d5 Ne7 16 Re1 gives White huge pressure for just a pawn. Where will Black castle?

**13 Rc1 Nxc3**

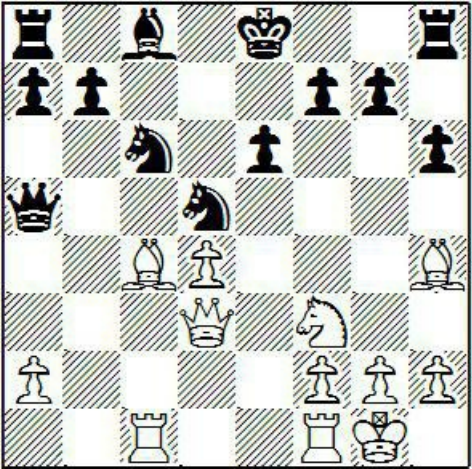
If 13 ... 0-0 14 Qb3 when it's not clear why 12 ... Nd5 was played if Black didn't want to go after the c3-pawn.

**14 Qd3?!**

14 Qb3 was also playable. Then 14 ... Nd5 15 Bxd5 Qxd5 16 Qa3 transposes to the note to Black's 15th move, below.

**14 ... Nd5**

14 ... Nxa2!? looks a risky pawn grab and, indeed, it is, but after 15 Ra1 Nab4 16 Qe4 Qh5 Black does have two pawns for his troubles.

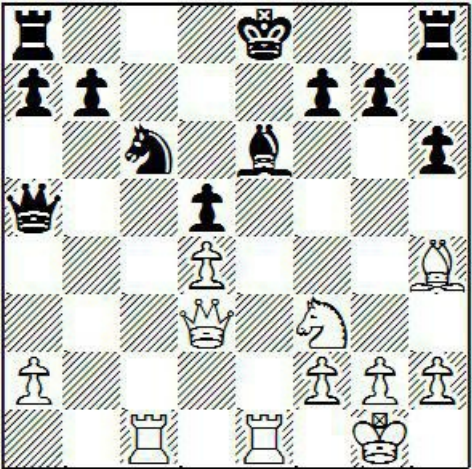


**Exercise:** What to do now? We are a pawn down and need to think of something quick.

**Answer:** Trying to prevent castling is a good idea.  
**15 Bxd5 exd5**

After 15 ... Qxd5 16 Qa3 (preventing castling) 16 ... g5 (and not 16 ... Qa5? 17 Qd6 Qd5 18 Rxc6!) 17 Rc5 Qd8 18 Bg3 there are still problems with Black's king and also with his development. Following 18 ... 0-0 19 h4 an open position arises. Despite the king running way to g8, this last move reminds him that he will not get away so easily.

**16 Rfe1+ Be6**



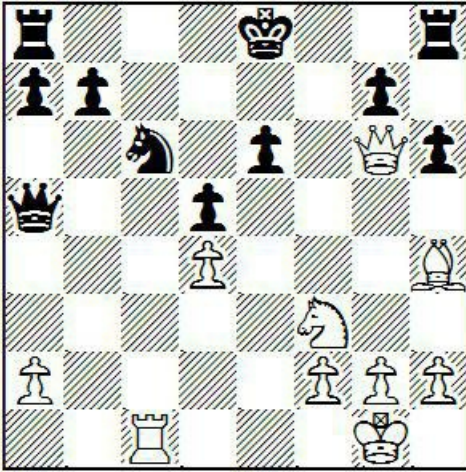
**Exercise:** Decide what you think is the best way to play from here. Black would like to castle kingside and emerge a pawn ahead.

**Answer:** Sacrifice!

**17 Rxe6+!?**

17 Rc5 Qc7 18 Bg3 Qe7 19 Ne5 Nxe5 20 Bxe5 0-0 21 Rc7 Qg5 22 Rxb7 was a 'safer' way to play, if that is possible to say in these Panov lines.

**17 ... fxe6 18 Qg6+**



**18 ... Kf8**

18 ... Kd7? walks straight into the lion's den. 19 Qxg7+ Kd6?! 20 Bg3+ e5 21 dxe5+ Ke6 and now a nice combination to finish: 22 Rxc6+ bxc6 23 Nd4#.

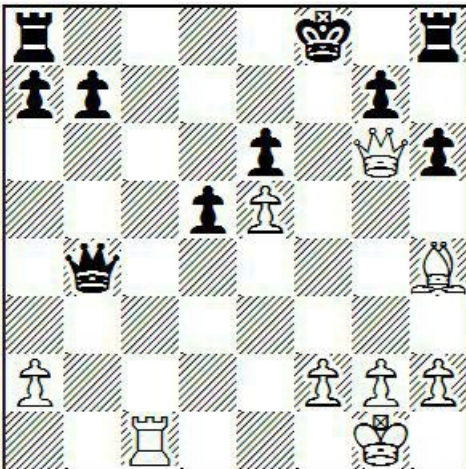
**19 Ne5**

19 Rxc6, sacrificing for control of the e5-square, is very interesting too. After 19 ... bxc6 20 h3 (20 Be7+?! Kxe7 21 Qxg7+ Kd6 22 Qe5+ Kd7 23 Qg7+ Kc8 24 Qxh8+ Kb7 isn't so convincing) 20 ... Qc7 21 Ne5 Re8 22 Qh5 it's hard to evaluate this type of position. White is two (!) exchanges behind, but enjoys a raging attack.

There's also 19 Bg3, attempting to come to d6, when 19 ... Qa3 20 Rc5 Rd8 21 Qxe6 is one continuation.

**19 ... Nxe5 20 dxe5 Qb4**

After 20 ... Qd2 21 Be7+ Kg8 (or 21 ... Kxe7 22 Qxg7+ Kd8 23 Qxh8+ Kd7 24 Qg7+ Ke8 25 Rf1) 22 Qxe6+ Kh7 23 Qf5+ Kg8 24 Rf1 certainly White has compensation for the exchange, as the e-pawn coupled with his active pieces looks menacing.



### 21 g3

Defending the h4-bishop and preventing any future back-rank checkmates. However, 21 h3! was winning, if a very difficult move to see. Here 21 ... Qe4 (21 ... Qxh4? 22 Rc7 Qe7 23 Rxe7 Kxe7 24 Qxg7+ wins the rook on h8) 22 Qxe6 g5 (if 22 ... Qxh4 23 Rc7 again) 23 Rc8+ Rxc8 24 Qxc8+ Kg7 25 Qxb7+ Kg6 26 Qa6+ Kf7 (or 26 ... Kh5? 27 g4+ Kxh4 28 Qa3 Qxe5 29 Kg2 Qe4+ 30 Kh2 and mate cannot be avoided) 27 Qxa7+ Kg6 28 Qb6+ was winning for White according to Peter Svidler.

### 21 ... Re8

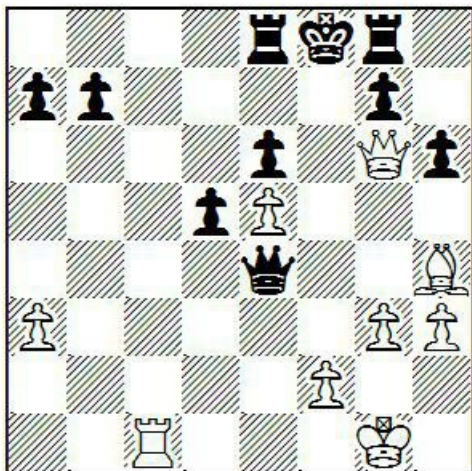
Instead, 21 ... Qe4! 22 Qxe6 g5 was a draw according to Svidler, in view of 23 Rc7 Qe1+ 24 Kg2 Qe4+.

### 22 h3

After 22 Bf6!? Rg8 23 Qh5 gxf6 24 Qxh6+ Ke7 25 exf6+ Kd6 26 f7 Rgf8 27 fxe8Q Rxe8 28 Qf6 anything is still possible.

### 22 ... Rg8 23 a3 Qe4

Rightly avoiding 23 ... Qxa3? 24 Rc7 with mate to follow.



**Exercise:** What is the only way for White to stay alive in this position?

### Answer: 24 Be7+!! Kxe7

And not 24 ... Rxe7? 25 Rc8+ Re8 26 Rxe8#.

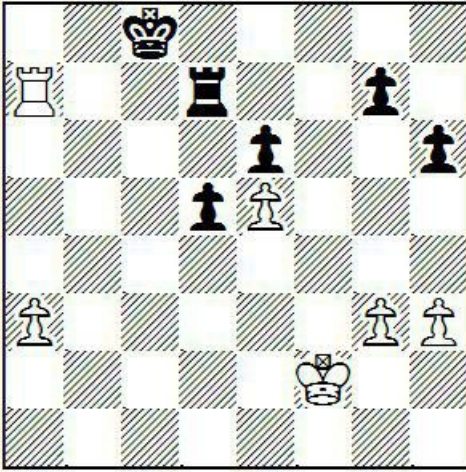
### 25 Rc7+ Kd8 26 Qf7

This looks winning, but Minasian has seen further.

### 26 ... Qe1+ 27 Kg2 Qxf2+ 28 Kxf2

Or 28 Qxf2 Kxc7 and with two rooks for the queen, Black is okay.

### 28 ... Rgf8 29 Rd7+ Kc8 30 Rxb7 Rxf7+ 31 Rxf7 Rd8 32 Rxa7 Rd7



Objectively speaking, this rook ending should be a draw, but that should not detract from the excellent fight up to this point. In fact, Black was probably so relieved to get this far he ended up losing this endgame.

**33 Ra8+**

The pawn ending after 33 Rxd7?? Kxd7 is actually winning for Black due to the strength of the protected passed d5-pawn: 34 Ke3 Kc6 35 Kd4 Kb5 36 Kc3 Ka4 37 Kb2 g5 38 Ka2 d4 39 Kb2 d3 40 Kc3 Kxa3 41 Kxd3 Kb4 42 Kd4 Kb5 and wins.

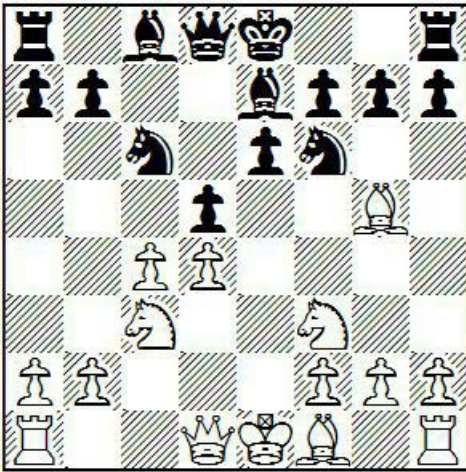
**33 ... Kc7 34 Ke3 Kb6 35 Re8 Ra7 36 Rxe6+ Kc5 37 Rg6 Rxa3+ 38 Kf4 Ra7 39 h4 Rf7+ 40 Ke3 Re7 41 Kf4 Kd4 42 e6 Ra7 43 Rg4 h5? 44 Rg5 Re7 45 Kf5 Kc5 46 Ke5 d4 47 Rxh5 d3 48 Rh8 Kc4 49 Rc8+ Kb3 50 Rd8 Kc2 51 Kd6 Re8 52 e7 d2 53 Ke6 1-0**

Black resigned as 53 ... d1Q 54 Rxd1 Kxd1 55 Kf7 Ra8 56 e8Q Rxe8 57 Kxe8 Ke2 58 Kf7 Kf3 59 Kxg7 Kxg3 60 h5 wins for White.

Quite a dramatic game, but another where White made all the running and Black was on the ropes for most of the time, having to constantly find defensive moves just to stay in the game.

Game 32  
**G.Kasparov-V.Anand**  
 Amsterdam 1996

**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Bg5 e6 7 Nf3 Be7**



**8 c5**

Kasparov follows in his great teacher's footsteps. Also possible are 8 a3 0-0 9 Bd3 b6!? 10 0-0 Bb7 and 8 Bd3, which loses a tempo but leads to an IQP after 8 ... dxc4 9 Bxc4 0-0 10 0-0.

**8 ... h6**

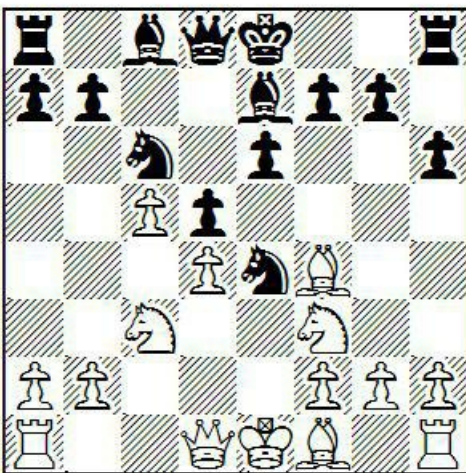
8 ... Ne4 with the idea of exchanging pieces has its merits, but Black must still be careful as the c5-pawn will cramp his position. After 9 Bxe7 Qxe7 10 Qd3 Nxc3 11 Qxc3 0-0 12 Be2 b6 13 b4 we see the normal queenside expansion. If Black sits tight then White will castle and exploit his extra space. Of course, Black can lash out, but 13 ... e5 isn't a panacea: 14 Nxe5 Nxe5 15 dxe5 a5 16 Qd4 axb4 17 cxb6 Re8 18 0-0 Qxe5 19 Qxb4 Bb7 20 Bf3 Qe7 21 Qd4 Qa3 22 h3 Ra4 23 Qd2 Qd6 24 Rfb1 h6 25 Rb5 Bc6 26 Rb2 Qf6 27 Rab1 Rd4 28 Qc1 Bb7 29 Rc2 Rf4 30 Rb3 Rc4 31 Rb1 Rf4 32 Qd1 Rd4 33 Rd2 Rxd2 34 Qxd2 Re6 35 Qb4 Qg6 36 a4 Rf6 37 Rb3 Qg5 38 a5 Rf4 39 Qd2 Qf6 40 Re3 d4 1-0 was M.Adams-J.Speelman, London 2008.

**9 Bf4**

Best, since 9 Bh4 0-0 10 Bb5 Ne4 gives Black the useful extra move ... h6 compared to our last note.

**9 ... Ne4**

We saw this leap above, trying to exchange some pieces to ease the congestion within the black camp.



**10 Bb5**

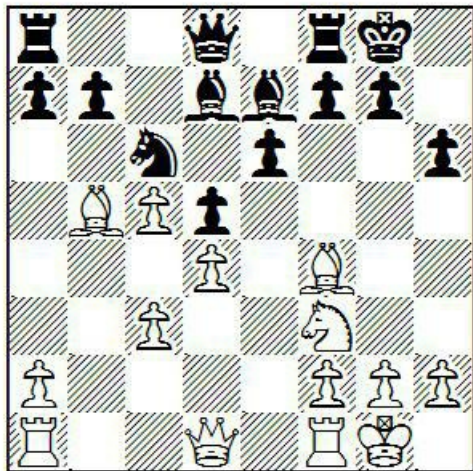
**Question:** Why does Kasparov allow Black to play 10 ... Nxc3 forcing 11 bxc3, meaning we cannot get on with our queenside play with b4, etc?

**Answer:** It is not easy to develop and simultaneously defend the c3-knight: for example, 10 Rc1 Nxc3 (10 ... 0-0 11 Bb5 Nxc3 12 Rxc3 Qa5 is also adequate for Black, while here 11 ... Qa5 12 Qa4 Qxa4 13 Bxa4 Bd7 14 0-0 Ng5 saw Black equalize against his much higher-rated opponent in Y.Solodovnichenko-V.Takrsud, Fagernes 2011) 11 Rxc3 0-0 12 Be2 b6 13 0-0 bxc5 14 dxc5 Bb7 15 Qc2. Here Black would like to push the d- and e-pawns, and White would like to do the same with the b-pawn. Anything might happen.

### 10 ... Nxc3

In another grandmaster game Black decided not to capture on c3, but it didn't turn out too well for him: 10 ... Bd7 11 0-0 0-0 12 Re1 Ng5 13 Ne5! (ignoring the badly placed knight on g5) 13 ... Nxe5 14 Bxe5 Bxb5 15 Nxb5 Ne4 16 f3 Nf6 17 b4 a6 18 Nd6 Ra7 19 Rc1 Qd7 20 a4 Rfa8 21 Qb3 was very nice for White, with the idea of playing on the queenside, V.Filippov-K.Sakaev, Moscow 2005.

### 11 bxc3 Bd7 12 0-0 0-0



**Question:** Which is the best square for the a1-rook?

**Answer:** There are many options, especially if White plays Qe2, allowing the a1-rook access across the first rank, but probably b1 is best. From the rook is applies pressure towards b7.

Kasparov's move was later criticised, especially since he played Rc1 then back to b1 a few moves later. Maybe he was concerned about ... Qa5 attacking c3, or that after a future ... b6 from Black, his c3-pawn would be open to attack down the c-file with ... Rc8 on the cards.

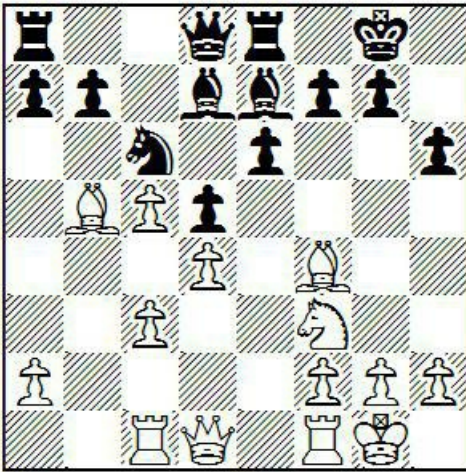
### 13 Rc1

13 Rb1!? may look right, as we noted, but 13 ... b6! 14 cxb6 axb6 15 Qc2 Ra3 16 Bd3 Qa8 17 Rxb6 Rxa2 should be no more than equal since the queenside pawns have been liquidated.

### 13 ... Re8!

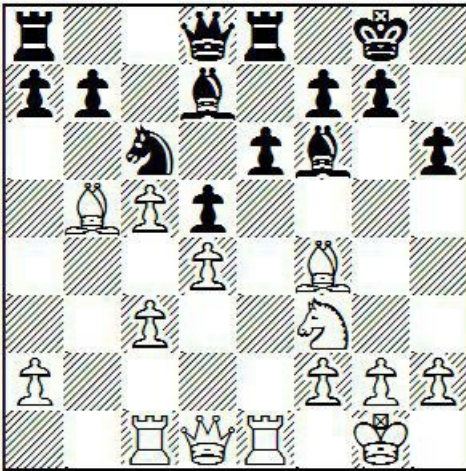
A good waiting move. These are the sorts of moves that strong players play which at first sight look strange. Clearly Black would like to play ... b6, but this is not good (see below), so first Anand plays a useful waiting move. This rook may not be on an open file, but it pre-empts the opening of the centre that may take place after ... b6 and then the rook will be ready.

13 ... b6?! 14 c4 reveals the idea of the rook move to c1. White attempts to blast open the centre with his better central development. After 14 ... bxc5 (14 ... dxc4 15 d5 exd5 16 Qxd5 also applies the pressure) 15 dxc5! (after 15 cxd5 Nxd4 16 Nxd4 cxd4 Black seems to be fine) 15 ... a6 (if 15 ... dxc4 16 Bd6) 16 Ba4 Black is clearly passively placed now that the centre has been prised open.



**14 Re1 Bf6**

Again 14 ... b6 is not good for tactical reasons: 15 c4 bxc5 16 cxd5 Nxd4 17 Nxd4 cxd4 18 Bc7 is just plain awkward.



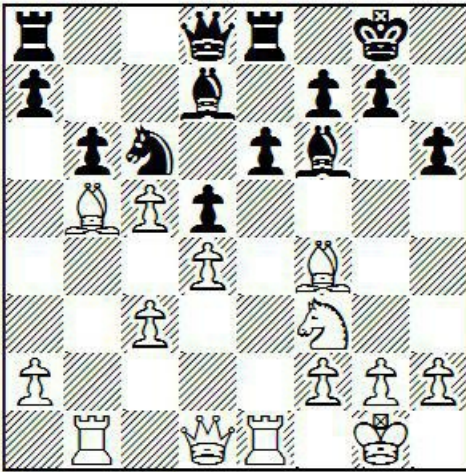
**15 Rb1**

**Question:** Two moves ago, White played Ra1-c1, now he goes Rc1-b1. What is Kasparov doing?

**Answer:** It seems 13 Rc1 was directed against ... b6. However, if Black doesn't play ... b6, the rook is not well placed on c1. Indeed, if White plays c3-c4 he gets a weak pawn on d4. That said, after 15 c4 Na5 16 Qa4 Bxb5 17 cxb5 Nc4 18 Re2 the extra queenside space advantage probably means White is a touch better. As usual, Black is slightly struggling for a good plan.

**15 ... b6**

Now c3-c4 is not so strong, this move is playable.



**Question:** Should White exchange on b6 or not?

**Answer:** Of course White can, but there are more dynamic possibilities in the position.

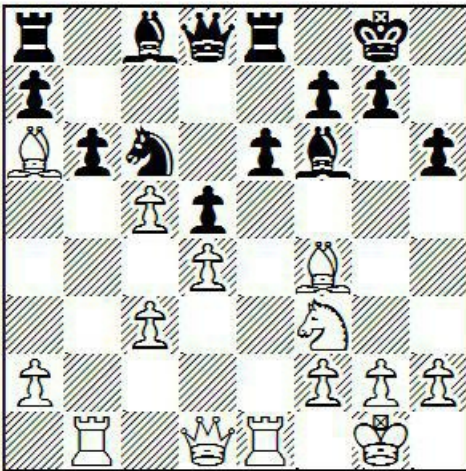
**16 Ba6**

After 16 cxb6 axb6 the a2- and c3-pawns are just as weak as the b6-pawn, while after 16 Bxc6 Bxc6 17 Ne5 Rc8 18 cxb6 axb6 19 Re3 the best White can hope for is to win b6 and grind it out.

**16 ... Bc8**

16 ... bxc5? 17 Bb7 wins the exchange.

**17 Bb5 Bd7 18 Ba6 Bc8**



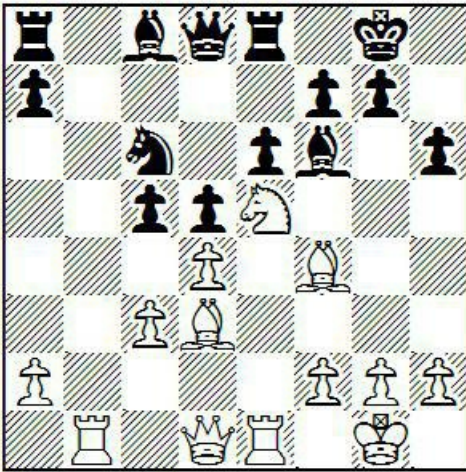
**19 Bd3!?**

No draw!

**19 ... bxc5**

19 ... Bd7 20 Ne5 Nxe5 21 dxe5 Bg5 was another try.

**20 Ne5**



**Question:** Wait a minute! Didn't we just lose a pawn there?

**Answer:** Well, yes, but White now has dynamic compensation. If the knight on e5 gets chopped off, then the d-pawn goes to e5 and acts as a spearhead for a potential kingside attack.

**20 ... Bd7**

Probably Anand should have played 20 ... Nxe5!? 21 dxe5 Bg5, since exchanging is even better for him being a pawn ahead (21 ... Be7 22 Qg4 Kh8 23 Qh5 has ideas towards f7 and h6, and is suddenly very dangerous for Black), when White would likely try 22 Bxg5 Qxg5 23 Bb5 Rd8 24 Bc6.

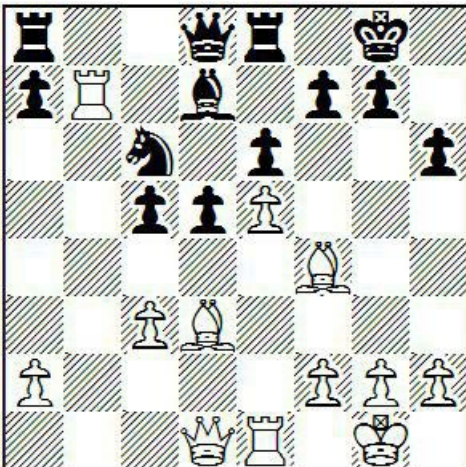
**21 Rb7**

With pressure on d7, thereby forcing Black to take on e5.

**21 ... Bxe5**

Best. Otherwise, we have 21 ... Nxe5? 22 dxe5 Bg5 (22 ... Bc6 can be met by something like 23 Rxf7 Kxf7 24 exf6 Qxf6 25 Be5 Qg5 26 f4 Qh4 27 Re3 with tremendous play after Rg3) 23 Bxg5 hxg5 24 Qh5 (we see White's attacking strategy; now Qh7+ is hard to deal with) 24 ... g6 25 Bxg6 fxg6 26 Qxg6+ Kh8 27 Re3 g4 28 Qh5+ Kg7 29 Qxg4+ Kf8 30 Rf3+ with mate to follow, while 21 ... Re7? is met by 22 Rxd7 Rxd7 23 Nxc6.

**22 dxe5**



Look at all the white pieces, which point towards the black king and are now ready to spring forward.

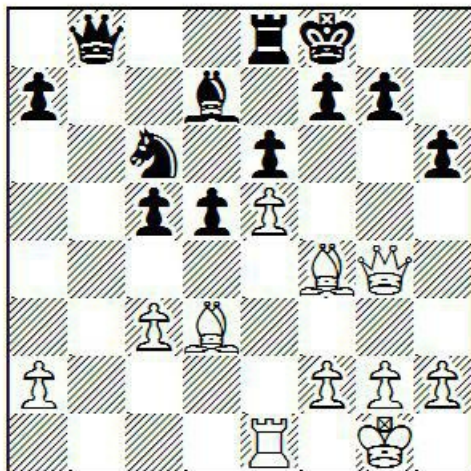
**22 ... Rb8**

22 ... Ne7 allows White to demonstrate his attacking potential: 23 Qh5 Bc6 24 Rxe7 (24 Bxh6 g6! 25 Qg4 Bxb7 26 Bg5 is amazingly still good for White because of the Bf6, Qh4 and Qh8 mating idea) 24 ... Qxe7 25 Bxh6! is dangerous, since 25 ... gxh6 26 Qxh6 just loses.

Likewise, 22 ... c4 23 Bc2 Ne7 24 Qh5 supplies good attacking chances.

**23 Rxb8 Qxb8 24 Qg4 Kf8**

If 24 ... Kh8 25 Qh5 again with threats against f7 and h6. The same ideas certainly keep cropping up.



**Question:** How can we increase the pressure?

**Answer:** Always involve as many pieces as possible and the rook on e1 isn't contributing right now.

**25 Re3!**

This rook lift makes the difference.

**25 ... Qd8**

Otherwise, 25 ... g5 is swiftly met by 26 Qh5 gxf4 27 Qxh6+ Ke7 28 Qf6+ Kf8 29 Rh3 Ne7 30 Qh6+ Kg8 31 Qh8#, while after 25 ... Ne7 26 Rg3 Ng6 27 Bxg6 fxg6 28 Qxg6 Re7 29 Qh7 which side would you prefer to be?

**26 h4!**

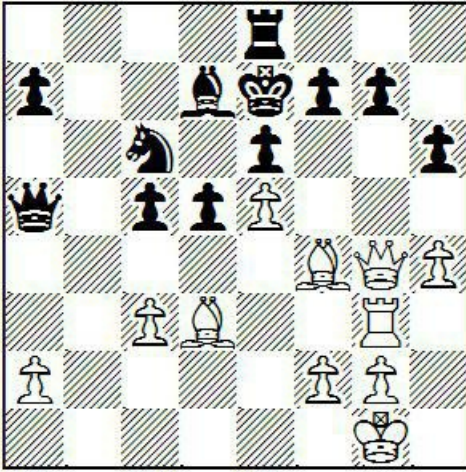
Another thematic move by Kasparov. Before he plays Rg3, he prevents the ... g5 defence.

**26 ... Qa5**

26 ... f5 can hardly work: 27 exf6 Qxf6 28 Rf3 (or 28 Bd6+ Kg8 29 Rf3) 28 ... Kg8 29 Bd6! Ne5 30 Bxe5 Qxe5 31 Qg6 and Qh7 mate looms.

**27 Rg3 Ke7**

27 ... Qxc3 28 Qxg7+ Ke7 29 Qf6+ Kf8 30 Bxh6# is brutal.



**Exercise:** We can capture on g7, but was there anything else? Warning: this one is quite difficult.

**28 Qxg7**

Clearly good, as the infiltration begins, but there was even better:

**Answer:** The long variation after 28 Bg5+! hxg5 29 Qxg5+ f6 30 Qxg7+ Kd8 31 exf6 sees the f-pawn running, with White winning after 31 ... Qxc3 32 f7 Qc1+ 33 Bf1.

**28 ... Kd8**

The king escapes via the back door, but not for long.

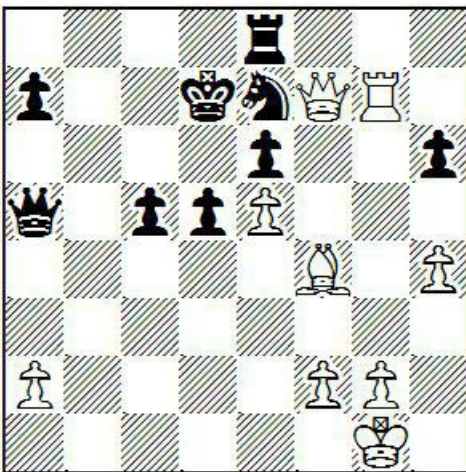
**29 Qxf7 Qxc3 30 Bb5 Qa5 31 Rg7**

Entry is complete. The major pieces on the seventh will spell the end.

**31 ... Ne7**

Or 31 ... Re7 32 Qf8+ Re8 and now there's a nice tactical idea: 33 Rxd7+ Kxd7 34 Bxc6+ Kxc6 35 Qxe8+.

**32 Bxd7 Kxd7**



**Question:** Do we grab on h6 or not? If we do, then

can we plan Bg5 to win the pinned knight on e7?

**Answer:** Not so fast! Black still has some resources.

**33 Qf6**

Defending e5 and then threatening to take on h6. This is clearer than 33 Bxh6 Qe1+ 34 Kh2 Qxe5+ 35 f4 Qf5.

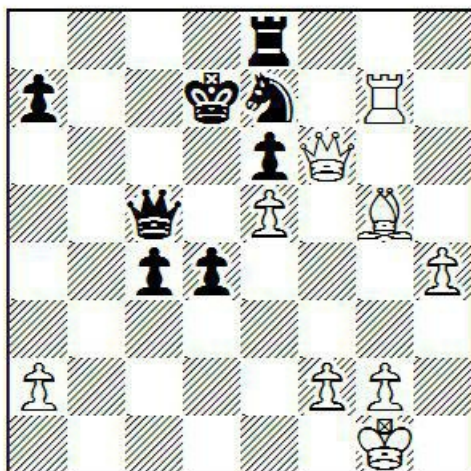
**33 ... d4**

Or 33 ... Qe1+ 34 Kh2 Qxf2 35 Bxh6 and Bg5 will come, winning the knight.

**34 Bxh6 c4**

The black pawns look menacing, but Kasparov has everything under control.

**35 Bg5 Qc5**



**Exercise:** Black appears to have defended. Calculate whether exchanging everything off on e7 will result in a winning king and pawn ending for White.

**Answer:** Well done if you saw that it does.

**36 Rxe7+ 1-0**

After 36 ... Rxe7 37 Qxe7+ Qxe7 38 Bxe7 Kxe7 39 Kf1 the white king can look after the c- and d-pawns, but the black king cannot look after the three passed pawns that will go up the board together.

A nice thematic attacking game from Kasparov with many ideas to remember, including the rook lift with Re3-g3, and the idea of h4 to prevent Black's ... g5 defensive idea while avoiding any back-rank mates.

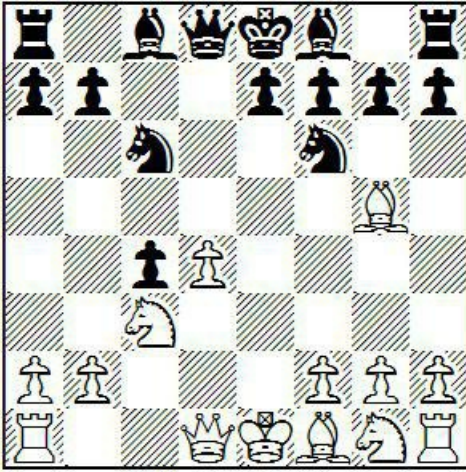
Game 33

**D.Pavasovic-D.Fridman**

European Championship, Plovdiv 2008

**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Bg5 dxc4**

This is a fairly new variation and one recommended by the Danish Grandmaster Lars Schandorff in his Caro-Kann book, as well other sources, so it must be studied carefully. It make sense too: since Black has played an early ... Nc6, why not go after the d4 pawn? In many lines, though, White gives this pawn to Black by way of a sacrifice. Sometimes the queens get exchanged, but there are still attacking opportunities.



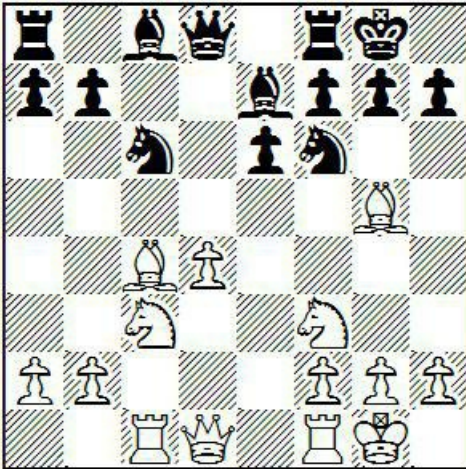
### 7 Bxc4

For the sake of completeness, the other variation White can play is also not without poison: 7 Nf3 Bg4 8 d5 Bxf3 (another king hunt was 8 ... Ne5 9 Bxc4 Nxc4 10 Qa4+ Qd7 11 Qxc4 Bxf3 12 gxf3 Rc8 13 Qb3 e5 14 Bxf6 gxf6 15 Ne4 Be7 16 d6 Bd8 17 Rg1 f5 18 Nc3 Ba5 19 0-0-0 Rc5 20 f4 Qc6 21 Rg7 Rf8 22 d7+ Ke7 23 Kb1 Qh6 24 Nd5+ Kd6 25 Rxf7 Bd8 26 fxe5+ Kc6 27 Qa4+ Rb5 28 Rxf8 Qxf8 29 Rc1+ and 1-0 in T.Burg-B.Van der Zwet, Maastricht 2008) 9 gxf3 Ne5 10 Bxc4 Nxc4 11 Qa4+ Nd7 12 Qxc4 Rc8 13 Qe2 Qc7 14 0-0-0 Qc4 15 Qe3 Qxa2 16 Rhe1 f6 17 Bf4 Kd8 18 Rd3 Nb6 19 d6 e5 20 Bxe5 fxe5 21 Qg5+ Kd7 22 Rxe5 Qf7 23 Re7+ Bxe7 24 dxe7+ Nd5 25 Rxd5+ Kc6 26 Qe5 Qf6 27 Rc5+ Kd7 28 Qd5+ Qd6 29 Qf5+ and 1-0 was a brutal king hunt in E.Safari-J.Bures Pardubice 2010.

### 7 ... e6

Grabbing on d4 will be examined later in this chapter. Let's first see what happens if Black reverts back to normal IQP positions.

### 8 Nf3 Be7 9 0-0 0-0 10 Rc1



**Question:** We are told not to put the rook on c1, but on d1 if possible, so what is so good about this move?

**Answer:** White has the intention of rerouting the c4-bishop to b1 via d3, and doesn't want to trap the rook in on a1 once it gets there. The idea of Bb1 is to play Qd3 and set up the classic battery on the b1-h7 diagonal.

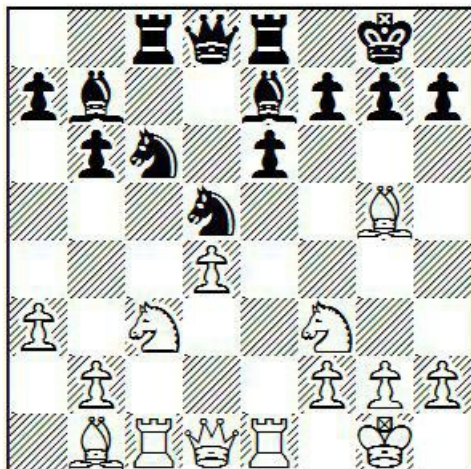
**10 ... b6 11 Bd3 Bb7 12 Bb1 Re8 13 Re1 Rc8 14 a3**

**Question:** What is the idea behind this move?

**Answer:** We have seen this idea before, preventing the c6-knight from coming to b4 and then to d5, which would blockade the d4-pawn. Also this allows for the possibility of a timely Ba2 if necessary.

**14 ... Nd5**

A natural move. Black offers the exchange of pieces and tries to take control of the outpost on d5. Instead, 14 ... h6 15 Bh4 Nh5 is a similar idea when 16 Bg3 Nxg3 17 hxg3 Bf8 is roughly equal.



**Question:** What is the best course of action to deal with the threat of 15 ... Bxg5?

**Answer: 15 h4!**

15 Bxe7 Nxe7 is playable, but I do not think White should be co-operating with such exchanges.

**15 ... Nxc3**

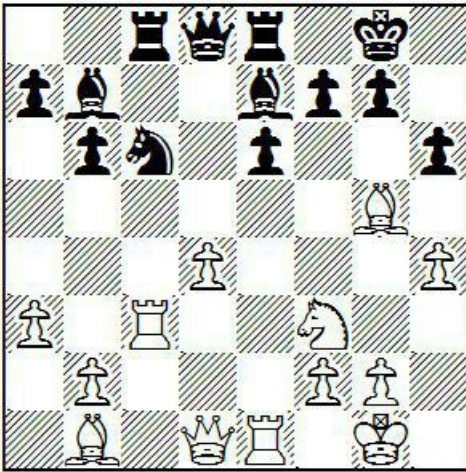
Alternatively:

a) 15 ... Na5 16 Qd3 g6 17 Ba2 Nxc3 18 Rxc3 Rxc3 19 bxc3 Bxf3 20 Qxf3 Bxg5 21 hxg5 Qxg5 22 d5! Qd2 23 Re2 Qc1+ 24 Kh2 Qxa3 25 dxe6 Qd6+ 26 g3 fxe6 27 Qf6 (Black is in trouble as the knight is too far from the defence) 27 ... Qf8 28 Bxe6+ Rxe6 29 Qxe6+ Qf7 30 Qd6 Nb7 31 Qb8+ Kg7 32 Qxa7 g5 33 Kg1 Qd7 34 Re1 Qc7 35 Rb1 1-0 A.Stripunsky-L.Kaufman, Virginia Beach 2007.

b) 15 ... Bxg5 looks logical but runs into a huge tactic which it's very useful to know: 16 Bxh7+! Kxh7 17 Nxg5+ Kg8 18 Qh5 Nf6 19 Qxf7+ Kh8 20 Qxb7, emerging with a big advantage.

**16 Rxc3 g6**

Trying to block out the bishop on b1. 16 ... h6 is another possibility.



**Exercise:** What do you think White should do about this pawn push?

**Answer:** Attack! Without the knight on f6, Black has no defence to the simple queen and bishop battery: 17 Qd3! g6 (if 17 ... hxg5 18 Qh7+ Kf8 19 Qh8#) 18 Rxe6!! (18 Bxh6 is simple and good too) 18 ... hxg5 19 Rxc6+ fxc6 20 Qxc6+ Kf8 21 Qh6+ Kf7 22 Ba2+ with mate to follow.

**17 d5!**

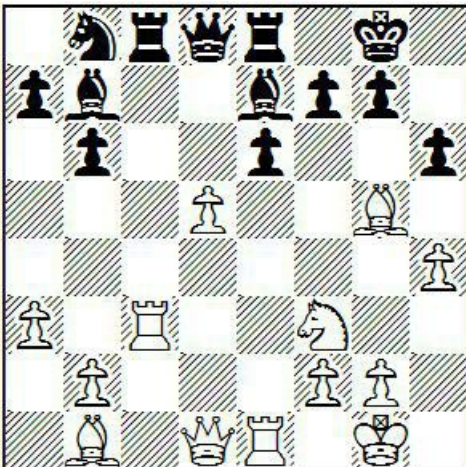
This advance may well have been seen in advance and now the pressure is really being applied to Black's position.

**17 ... Nb8?**

Far too passive and he will be made to pay for this.

17 ... exd5 is both the obvious and the most critical move. After 18 Rce3 d4 19 Re4 Qd7 20 Qe2 Kg7 21 Bd3! (calm as you like; instead, after 21 Bxe7 Rxe7 22 Rxe7 Qxe7 23 Qxe7 Nxe7 24 Rxe7 Bxf3 25 gxf3 Rc1+ 26 Kg2 Rxb1 the tables have been turned) 21 ... h6 22 Bxe7 Nxe7 23 Rxe7 Qxe7 24 Qxe7 Rxe7 25 Rxe7 the bishop does not hang on b1.

Instead, 17 ... Qxd5 18 Qxd5 exd5 19 Rxc6 Rxc6 20 Bxe7 wins two pieces for the rook, but even this is not so clear, although I would happily take White after 20 ... Rc7 21 Bg5 Rxe1+ 22 Nxe1 Kg7 23 Nf3 f6 24 Bd2.



**18 Rxc8 Bxc8**

18 ... Qxc8 19 dxe6 fxe6 20 Ba2 is just horrible to defend.

**19 Ba2 Kg7**

19 ... exd5 20 Bxd5 looks excellent for White, with threats to f7 in the pipeline. Just compare the piece placement for both sides.

**20 Qd4+ Bf6 21 Qa4!**

Now e8, a7 and other squares are being eyed up.

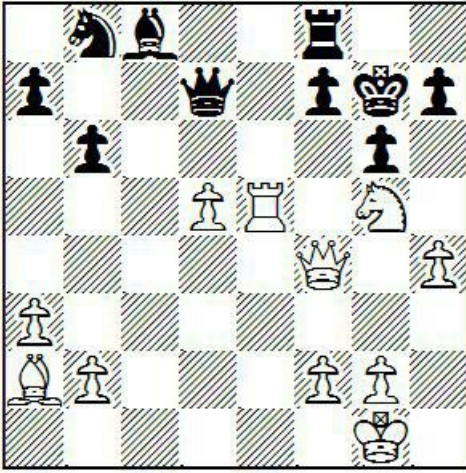
**21 ... Bxg5 22 Nxb5**

22 hxg5 is good as well.

**22 ... Qd7 23 Qf4**

As well as the b8-knight being attacked, there is the threat of 24 dxe6, and so Black must lose a pawn.

**23 ... e5 24 Rxe5 Rf8**

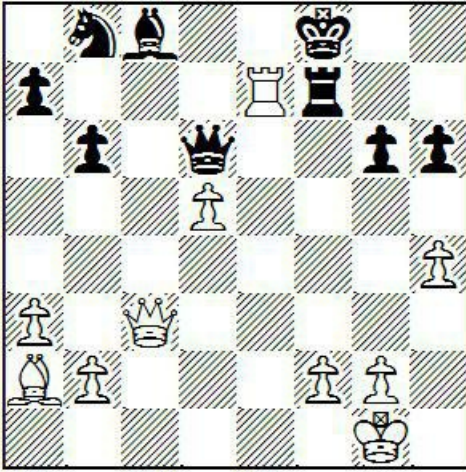


**Exercise:** How could White pretty much finish Black off here?

**25 Qe3**

**Answer:** It was not easy to see, but White should have pressed on with the attack: 25 Re3 Na6 26 h5! h6 27 Qd4+ Kg8 28 d6! hxg5 29 h6! with mate on g7. Obviously a computer line, but one worth showing since the tactics that rained down all made some kind of sense.

**25 ... Qd6 26 Re7 h6 27 Nxf7 Rxf7 28 Qc3+ Kf8**



**29 Rxf7+**

29 Re3!, threatening c8 and mate on h8, was even more clinical.

**29 ... Kxf7 30 Qxc8**

Two pawns ahead White should be winning, despite the technical difficulties that must still be overcome.

**30 ... Nd7 31 Qc6 Ke7 32 Qc1 Qf6 33 Qxh6 Qxb2 34 Qe3+ Kd8 35 d6 Qf6 36 Qe6 Qxe6 37**

**Bxe6 Nf8 38 Bg4 Nh7 39 Be6 Nf8 40 Bg4 Nh7 41 f3 Nf6 42 Be6 Ne8 43 Bf7 Nxd6 44 Bxg6**

The three passed kingside pawns will easily decide.

**44 ... Ke7 45 Bd3**

A nice move, dominating the d6-knight.

**45 ... b5 46 Kf2 a5 47 Ke3 b4 48 axb4 axb4 49 Kd4 Ke6 50 f4 b3 51 g4 b2 52 f5+ Ke7 53 Kc3**

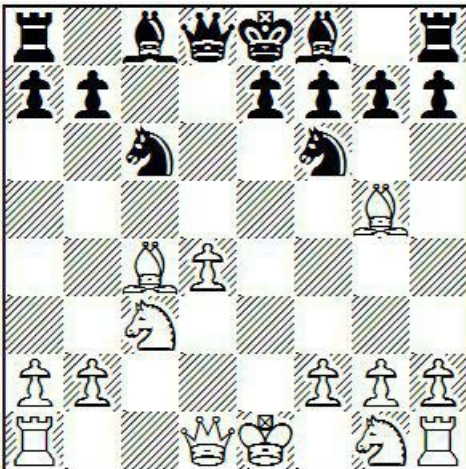
**Nf7 54 g5 Ne5 55 Be4 Nf3 56 Kxb2 1-0**

Game 34

**V.Ivanchuk-A.Beliavsky**

Khanty-Mansiysk Olympiad 2010

**1 c4 c6 2 e4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 d4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Bg5 dxc4 7 Bxc4**



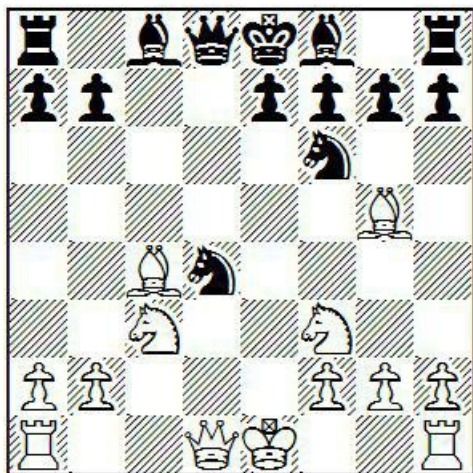
### 7 ... Nxd4?!

A natural move, but, as we will see, this capture entails a huge loss of time which will allow White a big lead in development.

7 ... Qxd4 8 Qxd4 Nxd4 9 0-0-0 will be discussed in the next game and is one of the main lines of the 5 ... Nc6 variation.

### 8 Nf3

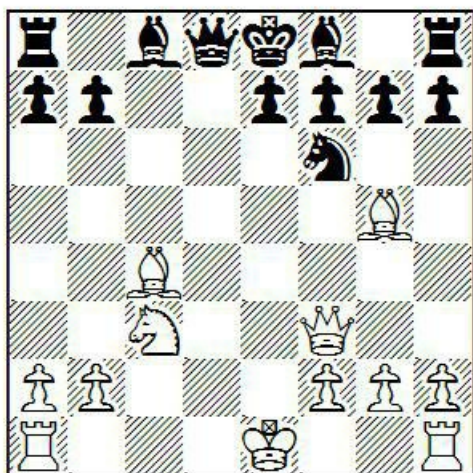
8 Nge2 is the alternative: 8 ... e5 (8 ... Nxe2 allows the tactic 9 Bxf7+! Kxf7 10 Qxd8) 9 Nxd4 exd4 10 0-0! Be7 (10 ... dxc3? 11 Bxf7+ wins the queen again) 11 Bxf6 Bxf6 12 Re1+ Be6 (or 12 ... Be7 13 Nd5 Be6 14 Qa4+ Kf8 15 Rxe6! fxe6 16 Nf4) 13 Qa4+ Kf8 14 Bxe6 fxe6 15 Ne4 Kf7 16 Rad1 with definite compensation for the pawn.



### 8 ... Nxf3+

If 8 ... Nc6 9 Qxd8+ Nxd8 10 Nb5! and Nc7+ is very hard to prevent. This line resembles a very bad version for Black of a line in the Smith-Morra Gambit, except that there the bishop is on c1 and Black has a pawn on e5.

### 9 Qxf3



### 9 ... Qc7

Alternatively:

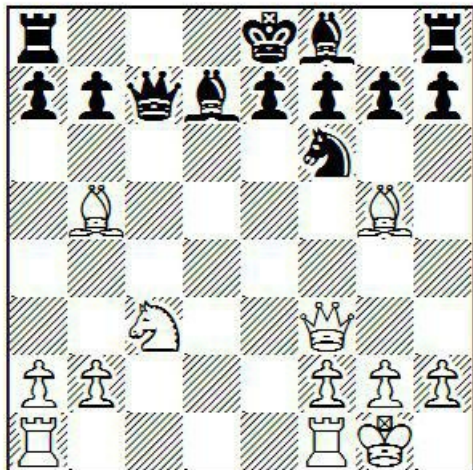
a) 9 ... a6 10 0-0 and then:

a1) 10 ... Qc7 11 Bb3 Bg4 12 Ba4+ Bd7 13 Bxd7+ Qxd7 (or 13 ... Nxd7 14 Nd5 Qd8 15 Rac1 Ne5 16 Qb3 Rc8 17 Qxb7 Nc4 18 Rfd1 Nd6 19 Rxc8 Nxb7 20 Nc7#, P.Jakobsen-F.Pedersen, Danish League 2007) 14 Bxf6 gxf6 15 Rad1 Qc6 16 Nd5 Rd8 17 Rfe1 Rd6 18 Re3 e6 19 Rc3 is another example of Black struggling to defend against his opponent's activity.

a2) 10 ... e6 Rfd1 and now we can see the way for White to go into overdrive: 11 ... Qc7 12 Rac1 Be7 (after 12 ... Qxc4 13 Bxf6 gxf6 14 Ne4! there is no way Black will be able to survive the onslaught: for example, 14 ... Qb4 15 Nxf6+ Ke7 16 Rc7+ Bd7 17 Rcxd7#) 13 Nd5 Nxd5 14 Bxd5 Qb6 15 Bxe7 Kxe7 16 Qa3+ Ke8 17 Bb3 Bd7 18 Rd6 (there were many ways to win; 18 Ba4 Bxa4 19 Qxa4+ Qb5 20 Qf4 being the computer's idea) 18 ... Bc6 19 Rcd1 Qc7 20 Qc5 Rc8 21 Qg5 Kf8 22 Qc5 Qe7 23 h3 h5 24 Ba4 Rh6 25 Rd8+ 1-0 A.Obodchuk-V.Pronin, Policka 1995.

b) 9 ... e6 looks natural, but again the development lead makes the difference: 10 Rd1 Bd7 11 Rxd7! Qxd7 12 Bb5, winning the queen.

**10 Bb5+ Bd7 11 0-0**



**11 ... Bc6**

If the defender has to make this bishop move, the omens are dark indeed for Black. He was well behind in development as it was.

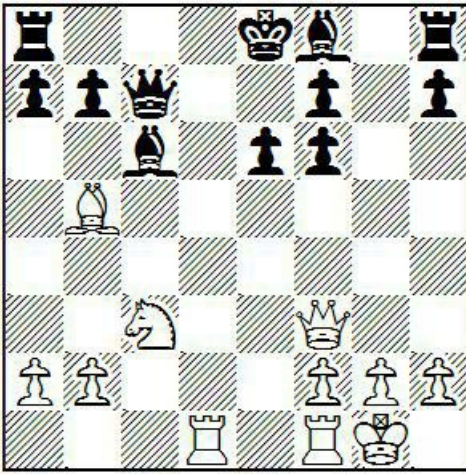
Otherwise, if 11 ... e6 12 Rac1 Bc6 13 Bxf6 gxf6 14 Ne4 Be7 and now a killer tactic to be aware of is 15 Rxc6! bxc6 16 Bxc6+ Kf8 17 Bxa8 f5 18 Qc3 Qxc3 19 Nxc3 Bf6 20 Bc6 and 1-0 in P.Harikrishna-A.Murariu, Nakhchivan 2003.

Instead, 11 ... Bxb5 12 Nxb5 Qb6 13 a4 a6 (or 13 ... e6 14 Be3 Qd8 15 Qxb7 Rb8 16 Qxa7 Nd5 17 Rfd1 Be7 18 Bc5 Rc8 19 Rxd5 exd5 20 Re1 0-0 21 Bxe7 Re8 22 Kf1 1-0 J.Brustkern-Duong The Anh, Budapest 2006) 14 Be3 Qd8 15 Rfd1 Nd7 16 Qxb7 axb5 17 Rxd7 Qc8 (if 17 ... Qxd7 18 Qxa8+) 18 a5 b4 19 a6 Qxb7 20 Rxb7 e5 21 a7 Bd6 22 Ra6 and 1-0 was A.Gipsis-H.Schulze, Biel 1995.

**12 Bxf6 gxf6**

12 ... exf6? 13 Rfe1+ Be7 14 Nd5! wins immediately.

**13 Rad1 e6**



**Exercise:** What do you think White should do here?

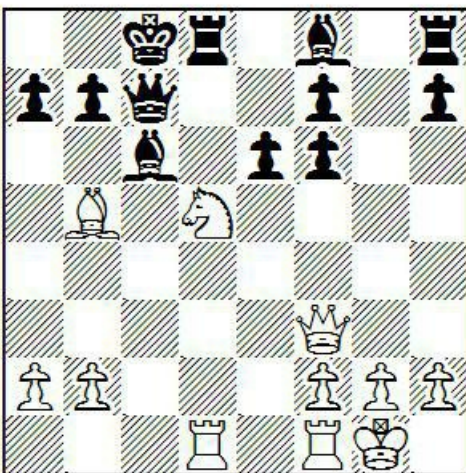
**Answer:** There are a few good moves, but did you end up going for Ivanchuk's one?

**14 Nd5!?**

A thematic move, but possibly not strictly necessary. 14 Qxf6 was the obvious choice and is also good: 14 ... Rg8 15 Nd5 Qd6 (otherwise, if 15 ... exd5 16 Rfe1+ Be7 17 Bxc6+ bxc6 18 Rxe7+ Qxe7 19 Qxc6+ Kf8 20 Qxa8+ Kg7 21 Qxd5, or 15 ... Qd7 16 Nf4 Bd6 17 Rfe1 Bxb5 18 Nxe6, again crashing through in the centre towards the black king) 16 Nf4 Be7 17 Qh6 Qe5 18 Bxc6+ bxc6 19 Qxh7 Rg4 20 Nd3 Qf6 21 f4. In all lines White is clearly better as material parity has at least been restored and Black's position is left in ruins.

**14 ... 0-0-0**

Instead, 14 ... exd5 15 Qxf6 (or 15 Rfe1+ Be7 16 Qxf6 0-0-0 17 Rxe7 Qd6 18 Qxd6 Rxd6 19 Bd3 Rf6 20 f3 and although not material ahead, White can certainly claim an advantage in this late middlegame due to his better pawn structure and piece placement) 15 ... Bg7 (15 ... Rg8 16 Rfe1+ Be7 17 Bxc6+ bxc6 18 Rxe7+ is similar to the note to White's 14th move, above) 16 Qxg7 0-0-0 17 Bxc6 bxc6 18 Rd3 was probably Black's best bet, although it's not exactly a bed of roses to try and defend with moves like Rc1 to come.



**15 Bxc6**

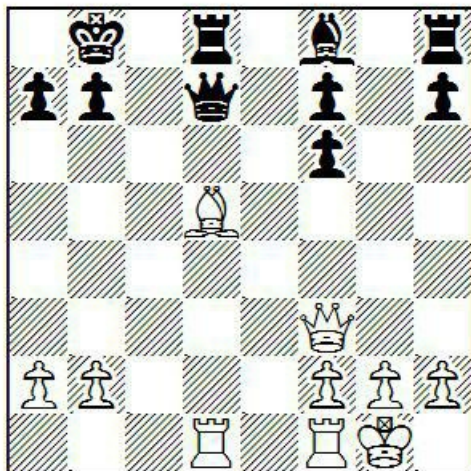
Best, since 15 Qxf6?! Bxd5 16 Qxh8 Qxh2+ 17 Kxh2 Bd6+ 18 g3 Rxh8 gives some compensation for the exchange.

**15 ... exd5**

15 ... Qxc6 16 Rc1 Bc5 17 Ne7+! wins the queen.

**16 Bxd5 Kb8 17 Rc1 Qd7 18 Rcd1**

"The only mysterious move in an otherwise swift game" according to Grandmaster Lubomir Ftacnik, and I have to agree with his assessment. 18 Rfd1 Bd6 19 Qxf6 Rhe8 20 g3 Be5 21 Qf3 would have kept all the advantages plus an extra pawn.



**18 ... Be7**

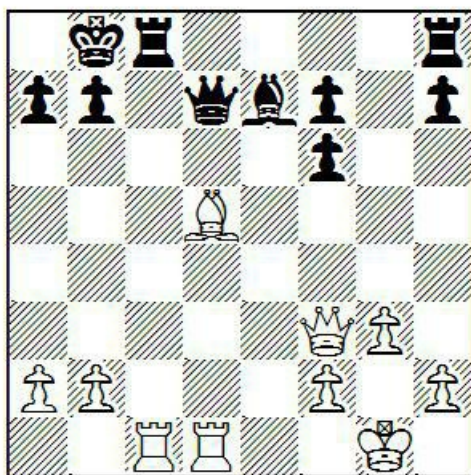
Or 18 ... Qc7 19 g3 Bc5 20 Rc1 with similar problems for the defending side as in the game.

**19 g3 Qc7 20 Rc1 Qd7 21 Rfd1**

21 Bxf7 is greedy, but why not win a pawn?

**21 ... Rc8**

After 21 ... Qb5 White will target the b7-square: 22 Rc3 Rd7 23 Rb3 Qa6 24 Qf4+ Ka8 25 Rc3 Rhd8 26 Rdc1 with a mate threat on c8 that is not so easy to stop. For example, 26 ... Rb8 runs into the attractive 27 Qxb8+ Kxb8 28 Rc8#.



**Exercise:** White to play and cash in on the good position he has.

**Answer: 22 Bxb7!**

It's that b7-square again! 22 Bxf7 is also good, since it wins a clean pawn: 22 ... Rxc1 23 Rxc1 Qd4 24 Rc3.

**22 ... Rxc1**

They may say all rook and pawn endgames are drawn, but after 22 ... Qxb7 23 Qxb7+ Kxb7 24 Rd7+ Kb6 25 Rxc8 Rxc8 26 Rxe7 Black will not be able to draw this one, since he is a pawn down and the kingside pawns are going to fall like skittles.

**23 Rxc1 Qxb7 24 Qf4+ Ka8 25 Rc7 1-0**

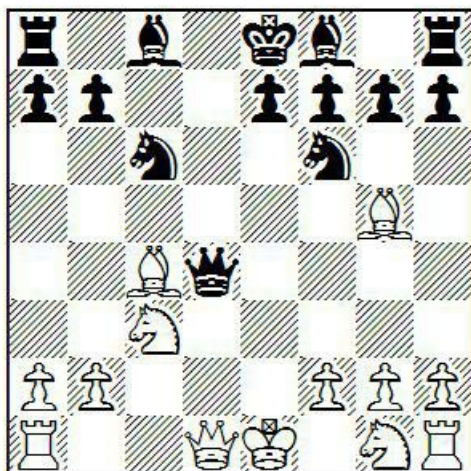
If 25 ... Qb4 26 Qe3 (there is no way to save e7 and a7) 26 ... Bc5 27 Rxc5 Qb7 28 Qc1, and rather than defend this depressing position, Belavsky threw in the towel.

Game 35

**P.H.Nielsen-L.Dominguez Perez**

Esbjerg 2003

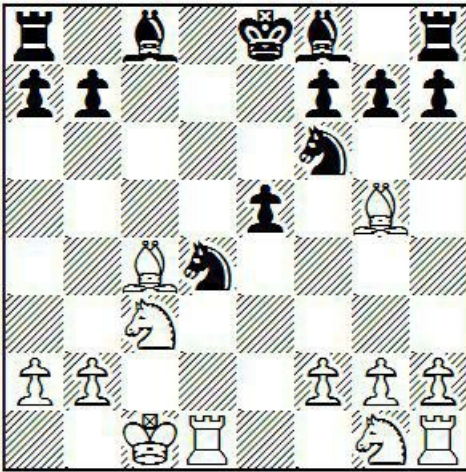
**1 c4 c6 2 e4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 d4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Bg5 dxc4 7 Bxc4 Qxd4**



We saw the problems Black faced with taking on d4 with the knight in the previous game, so let's see what happens if Black wins the pawn and manages to exchange the queens to boot.

**8 Qxd4 Nxd4 9 0-0-0 e5**

9 ... Ne6 hardly looks playable, but as usual the computer gives some fascinating variations: 10 Bxf6 exf6 11 Bb5+ Ke7 12 Nd5+ Kd6 appears lost for Black, but White must find 13 Nf3! (after 13 Nb6+ Kc5 14 Nxa8 Kxb5 the king is not only safe, but the knight on a8 will eventually get trapped) 13 ... g6 (if 13 ... Kc5 14 a4!) 14 Rhe1 Bh6+ 15 Kb1, reaching an amazing position. Well, let me just say that this has not been seen in practice and I do not expect it will either.



**Exercise:** White is a pawn down and without queens on the board, but does have a handy lead in development. What would you play next to increase the pressure?

**Answer: 10 f4!**

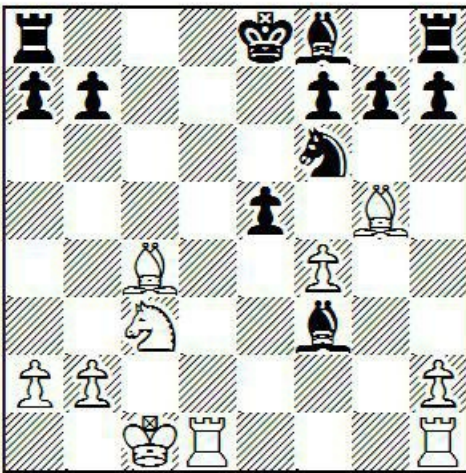
Best and White must play energetically before Black can castle. Indeed, 10 Nf3 Nxf3 11 gxf3 Be7 12 Rhe1 0-0 13 Rxe5 Bd8 seems to equalize for Black since he has got castled.

**10 ... Bg4 11 Nf3**

An odd-looking move, but again we must develop and the knight cannot sit on g1 forever. Black can now capture on f3 both ways, so do study this line carefully.

**11 ... Bxf3**

11 ... Nxf3 is the alternative and at first sight appears to be better because the rooks will be forked. As we know, though, superior development and king safety are important factors in chess too and the play now becomes very sharp. After 12 gxf3 Bxf3 (if 12 ... Be6 13 Bd3 Be7 14 f5 Bd7 15 Rhe1 0-0-0 16 Rxe5) White has:



a) 13 Rhe1 looks tempting and is dangerous, except if your opponent is well prepared: 13 ... Bxd1, 14 Bb5+

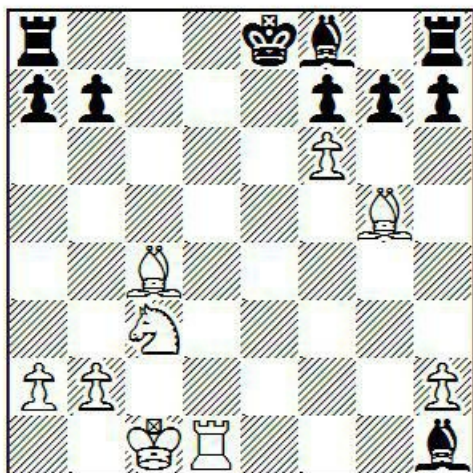
Kd8 15 Rxd1+ Kc7 16 fxe5 h6! is the key defensive move Black will need to find to survive, rather than 16 ... Ng4 17 Nd5+ Kb8 18 Bf4.

b) 13 fxe5 is the most critical move. Now:

b1) 13 ... Bxd1? 14 Rxd1 leaves Black in dire straits as the f6-knight is threatened and so is Bb5. Indeed, 14 ... Nd7 15 Bb5 just loses immediately, as ... Rd8 isn't possible.

b2) 13 ... Nd7 14 Rhf1 Rc8 (not 14 ... Bxd1 15 Bxf7#) 15 e6 (if 15 Bb3 Bh5) 15 ... fxe6 16 Bxe6 Rxc3+ 17 bxc3 Ba3+ 18 Kc2 Bxd1+ 19 Rxd1 Nf6 20 Bxf6 gxf6 21 Rd7 and Black has survived to an endgame, but White should be content to reach this kind of position since his activity is still there (just compare rooks here).

b3) After 13 ... Bxh1 Ftacnik comments: "A truly fascinating position in this opening. In order to prove his superiority, White has to play rather forcefully." Again, I agree with his statement. Black must play very carefully with his king on e8 and here after 14 exf6 he has:



b31) 14 ... Bc6? runs into 15 Nb5! when the knight cannot be captured and Nc7+ is threatened, as well as other moves: for example, 15 ... Rc8 16 Nc7+ Rxc7 17 fxg7, threatening the rook on h8 and mate on d8.

b32) 14 ... h6 is often a useful move, but here White has 15 Nb5 Rc8 16 fxg7 Bxg7 17 Nd6+ Kd7 18 Nxc8+ Kxc8 19 Rxh1.

b33) 14 ... Rc8! 15 Re1+ Kd7 reaches a further divide, so with apologies to the reader we have:

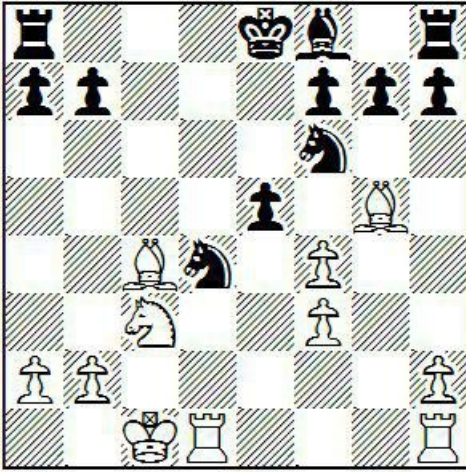
b331) 16 Bxf7 Rxc3+ (this sacrifice is a key way for Black to defend himself) 17 bxc3 Ba3+ 18 Kc2 gxf6 19 Be6+ Kc7 20 Bxf6 Re8 was equal in G.Mainka-P.Buecker, Dortmund 1989.

b332) 16 Rd1+! Bd6 (or 16 ... Ke8 17 Bd3! Rxc3+ – not 17 ... Bd5? 18 Kb1 Rxc3 19 Bb5+!! Rc6 20 Rxd5 g6 21 Bf4 a6 22 Bc7! with mate on d8 – 18 bxc3 Bc6 19 Bb5! Ba3+ 20 Kc2 Rg8 21 fxg7 f6 22 Bxc6+ bxc6 23 Bxf6 is another case of the endgame being lost for Black) 17 Be2 and here there are many threats: Bg4+, Rxh1, Bf4 and so on. It is not possible for Black to deal with all of them: 17 ... gxf6 18 Bxf6 Bg2 19 Be5! Ke6 20 Bxd6 Rhd8 21 Bg3 Rxd1+ 22 Kxd1 a6 23 Kd2 Kf5? (better was 23 ... f5, although after 24 Ke3 b5 25 a3 the two pieces should outweigh the rook) 24 Bd3+ Kg4 25 Nd1! Kg5 26 Bxh7 1-0 was A.Grischuk-E.Bareev, Moscow 2004; an important game for this line from White's perspective.

So there's plenty of food for thought in all these lines, but let's just say White is having all the fun and for the unprepared Black player, life can be tough.

Returning to 11 ... Bxf3:

**12 gxf3**



**12 ... Rc8**

12 ... 0-0-0 may be an alternative because at least the king gets to safety on c8 this way: 13 fxe5 Nxf3 14 Rxd8+ Kxd8 15 Rd1+ Kc8 was B.Stein-R.Speckner, Dortmund 1993, and now the critical line might be 16 Bxf6! gxf6 17 exf6 Bh6+ 18 Kc2 Ne5. Maybe this is the future for Black in this line? Who can tell?

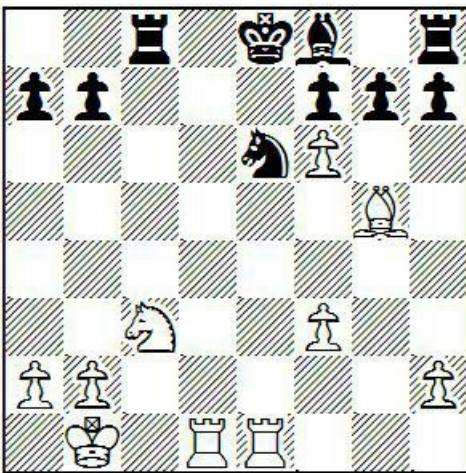
**13 fxe5 Rxc4 14 exf6 Ne6**

14 ... g6 is the normal move, but here White has some chances for an advantage. Here 15 Be3!? is an important novelty that has never been seen in praxis: 15 ... Ne6 16 Kb1! (this fine retreat is vital in the fight for an advantage and better than 16 Bxa7 Bb4, so let's not grab too early before developing) 16 ... Bc5 17 Bxc5 Nxc5 18 Rhe1+ Ne6 19 Re4 and with the greater piece play, White can hope to play Rd7 at some point if Black castles. Also the weak kingside pawns are not easy for Black to get at in the meantime.

**15 Rhe1 Rc8**

Protecting against the threat of 16 fxg7 and 17 Rd8 mate, but it's far too slow. Even with the queens off, playing non-developing moves will land Black in hot water. 15 ... g6 was best, with play similar to the above notes.

**16 Kb1**



**Question:** Again, why play this move? Aren't we just being lazy?

**Answer:** No! In many variations the pin on the c3 knight is frustrating as we want to play Ne4, Nd5 or sometimes even Nb5. Since we have such a huge lead in development, this is more than a useful move in this position.

**16 ... h6**

Here too 16 ... g6 was indicated.

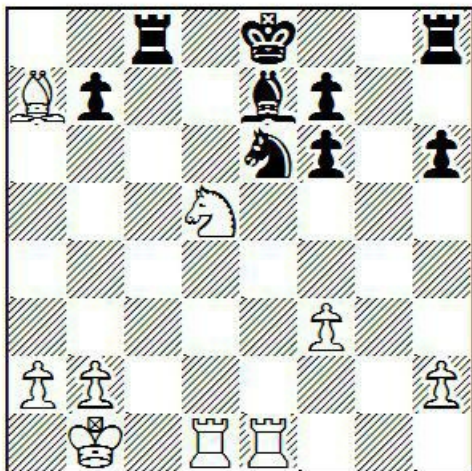
**17 Be3 gxf6**

After 17 ... a6 18 Nd5 g6 19 Bf4! Bc5 20 b4! Bf2 21 Re4 castling allows 22 Ne7+ or 22 Bxh6, and in the meantime Nc7 is threatened. Black can hardly survive here.

**18 Nd5 Be7**

Or 18 ... Bc5 19 Nxf6+ Ke7 20 Nd5+ Kf8 21 Bxc5+ Rxc5 22 f4 and with f5 coming, the lack of coordination amongst the black forces is apparent.

**19 Bxa7**



Now it is okay to grab, as all the other pieces are involved in the action. Technically White is a pawn ahead as he has a more mobile queenside structure compared to the doubled black f-pawns.

**19 ... Rg8 20 Rd3 Rg2 21 Rb3 Rxh2 22 Rxb7**

Indeed, the queenside majority will be the quicker in the long run.

**22 ... Bd6 23 Nxf6+ Kf8 24 a4**

Here they go!

**24 ... Ng5 25 Rd1 Bf4 26 Bc5+ Kg7**

26 ... Rxc5? 27 Nd7+ picks up the rook.

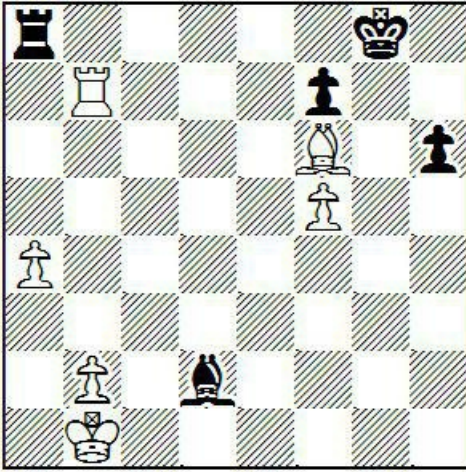
**27 Bd4 Kf8**

If 27 ... Kg6 28 Nd5 with threats to e7 and f4.

**28 Nd5 Rd2 29 Rxd2 Bxd2 30 f4 Ne4 31 Nb6 Rd8**

After 31 ... Rc1+ 32 Ka2 Bxf4 33 a5 the a-pawn marches on.

**32 Nd7+ Kg8 33 Nf6+ Nxf6 34 Bxf6 Ra8 35 f5**



Now Black even has to worry about his king getting caught in a mating net.

**35 ... Bg5**

35 ... Rxa4 36 Rb8+ Kh7 37 Rh8# reveals the point of 35 f5, taking away the g6-square.

**36 Bc3 h5 37 a5 h4 38 Rd7 h3 39 Rd3 h2 40 Rh3 f6 41 Rxh2 1-0**

Game 36

**A.Naiditsch-P.Eljanov**

Croatian Team Championship 2010

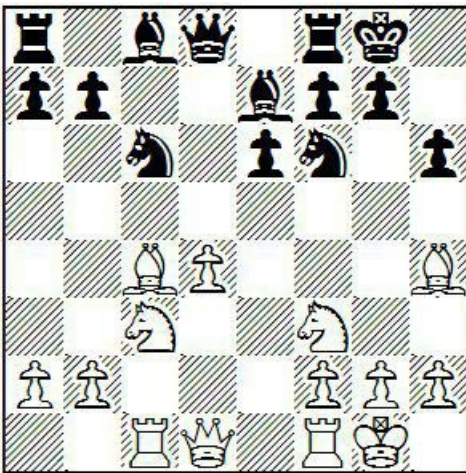
**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Bg5 dxc4 7 Bxc4 h6**

This move is recommended in Lars Schandorff's repertoire book on the Caro-Kann, so it needs to be taken seriously. However, as we are aware from the introductory chapter, this little pawn move does not come without risk.

**8 Bh4 e6**

8 ... Qxd4 can be played here too, with the subtleties being explained in the next game.

**9 Nf3 Be7 10 0-0 0-0 11 Rc1**



**Question:** I thought generally White should not be playing the rook to c1 as Black may be able to exchange it off some day after a future ... Rc8, so why did the strong Grandmaster play this?

**Answer:** As mentioned before, the idea is to play Bd3 and then Bb1, which will point this bishop towards h7 (you will encounter how forceful this idea is in this game). The rook must move, otherwise it would be entombed on a1. Also, it is not so easy for Black to exchange these rooks down the c-file, as a pair of knights are in the way.

11 Re1 is clearly playable as well and places the rook on the potentially useful e file; something too that will prove useful for White. Play might continue 11 ... b6 12 a3 (12 Qe2 Nxd4 13 Nxd4 Qxd4 is an example of why Black has thrown ... h6 and Bh4 in; since the bishop on h4 is now under attack, White has no time for a move like Rad1 which would have given him compensation) 12 ... Bb7 13 Ba2 Rc8 14 Qd3 when, just like in our main game, Black should be aware of the following idea: 14 ... Nh5! 15 Bg3 (or 15 Bxe7 Nxe7 when Black controls the d5-square and has exchanged off a dangerous white piece) 15 ... Nxc3 16 hxc3 Bf6 17 Rad1 Ne7 18 Ne5 with an interesting position that IQP players should not be too afraid of taking on.

**11 ... b6 12 Bd3 Bb7 13 Bb1 Rc8 14 Re1 Re8**

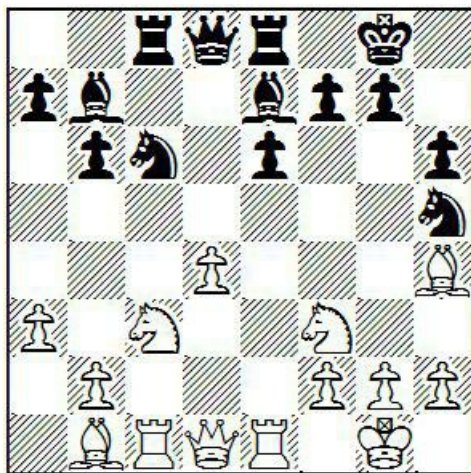
14 ... Nb4 was a sensible alternative, trying to play ... Nbd5 and blockade the d4-pawn. That said, 15 Bg3 (15 Ne5 Nd7 exchanges a few pieces; always be aware of ... Nh5 and ... Nd7 exchanging ideas in these Panov IQP positions) 15 ... Nbd5 16 Qd3 still places Black's position under pressure as Qh7 is always in the air.

**15 a3**

Preventing the ... Nb4-d5 idea.

**15 ... Nh5**

We have seen this idea before, preparing to exchange off a few minor pieces.



**Exercise:** The knight has moved away from the defence of h7. What should White play to try and exploit this: 16 Qc2, 16 Qd3 or 16 Bxe7?

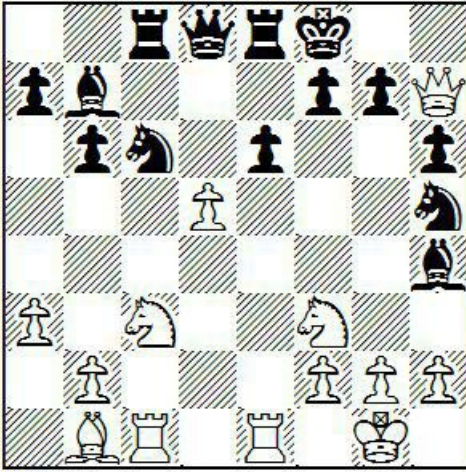
**Answer: 16 Qc2**

Logical but very tactical, as fireworks will now be let off.

Instead, 16 Qd3 g6 17 Rxe6 looks to be crushing, but 17 ... Nf4! is the star move, forking queen and rook while defending against Rxc6+ (but not 17 ... fxe6? 18 Qxc6+ Ng7 19 Qh7+ Kf8 20 Bg6 with a winning attack), while 16 Bxe7 Nxe7 17 Qd3 Nf5 is fairly comfortable for Black.

16 Bg3 is the computer's suggestion: 16 ... Nxc3 17 hxc3 Bf6 18 d5 exd5 19 Rxe8+ Qxe8 20 Nxd5 is interesting, since 20 ... Bxb2 allows 21 Qc2!.

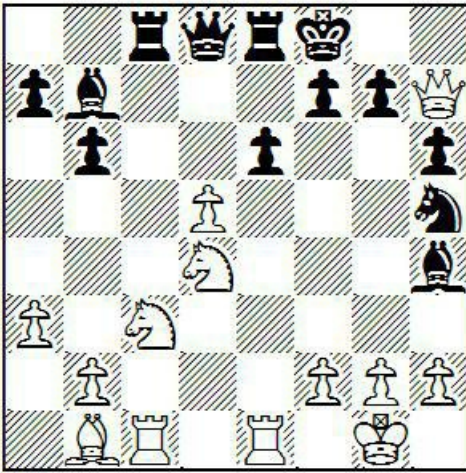
**16 ... Bxh4 17 Qh7+ Kf8 18 d5**



Now our silicon friend comes up with an outrageous suggestion which appears to pour water on our whole attacking plan (how unfair!).

**18 ... Bg5**

After 18 ... Nd4!! 19 Nxd4



19 ... Bxf2+! 20 Kxf2 Qh4+ 21 Kf1 Qxd4 it turns out that White's king is far more unsafe than Black's.

**Question:** How can you show me this game if Black has this riposte?

**Answer:** Whilst the computer may find this, Black was under immense pressure to spot 'only moves' the whole time, and even such a strong player as Eljanov (and his opponent, who clearly missed this idea, otherwise he would not have played 16 Qc2) did not see this, so we mere mortals can rest easy. With a clock ticking and White's pieces surrounding the black king, it's no wonder Black collapsed. Chess is sometimes not a perfect game.

**19 Rcd1**

Now White is winning!

**19 ... Qf6**

19 ... exd5 20 Qh8# is the point.

**20 d6!**

Not the only good move, but since mate on h8 is threatened, Black has only one defence.

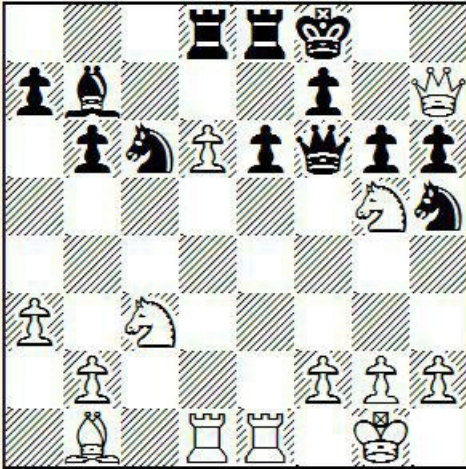
20 dxc6 Bxc6 21 Ne5 g6 22 Rd7! attacking f7 is another nice tactical motif.

**20 ... g6 21 Nxcg5**

21 d7 is also good, but Naiditsch wants more.

**21 ... Rcd8**

After 21 ... hxg5 22 Ne4 Qg7 23 Qxg7+ Kxg7 24 d7 a clear exchange is won, while 21 ... Qxg5 allows 22 Qh8#.



**Exercise:** How should White finish off?

**Answer:****22 Nxe6+! 1-0**

If 22 ... fxe6, the bishop on b7 hangs and Black's position is in ruins.

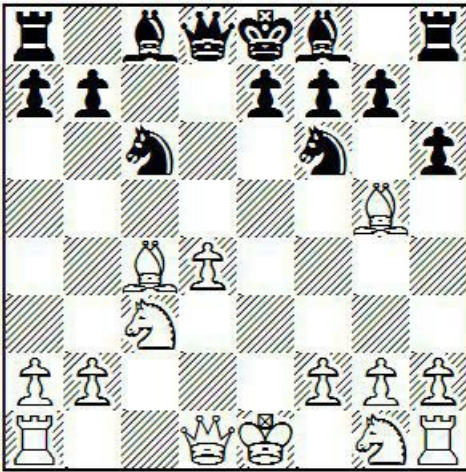
This game demonstrated one of the main reasons why we play IQP positions. They are fun and, above all, sharp and aggressive.

Game 37

**M.Kobalia-D.Jojua**

Turkish Team Championship 2011

**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Bg5 dxc4 7 Bxc4 h6**



Immediately putting the question to the bishop. Now 8 Be3 is too passive for my taste, but as well as 8 Bh4, 8 Bf4 is possible:

a) 8 ... Qxd4 9 Qxd4 Nxd4 10 0-0-0 is far too dangerous to allow as Black cannot play ... e5 to defend the knight on d4, unlike in the main line with 8 Bh4: for example, 10 ... Nc6 11 Nb5 and an invasion on c7 is hard to prevent.

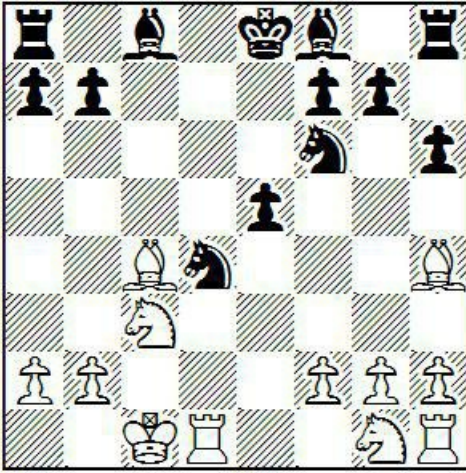
b) 8 ... e6 9 Nf3 Bd6 10 Be5 0-0 11 Qe2 b6 12 a3 Bb7 13 Rd1 Re8 14 0-0 Bf8 15 Rfe1 Nd5 16 Nxd5 exd5 17 Ba2 Na5 with an unclear position in L.Aronian-Wang Yue, Linares 2009.

This might be a reasonable alternative if you do not like the game continuation of sacrificing on d4.

**8 Bh4 Qxd4**

A more critical choice than the 8 ... e6 of Naiditsch-Eljanov.

**9 Qxd4 Nxd4 10 0-0-0 e5**



**Question:** Didn't you show us this exact position in the game Nielsen-Dominguez?

**Answer:** Not quite. Here the moves ... h6 and Bh4 have been inserted. What difference that makes is shown in the following variations.

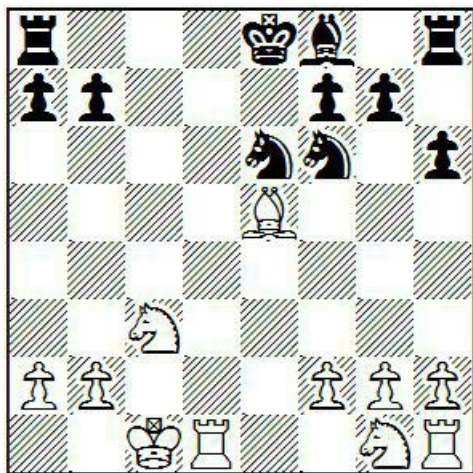
**11 Bg3**

11 f4 would echo Nielsen's play and is possible here too. After 11 ... Bg4 12 Nf3 Black has:

a) 12 ... Nxf3 13 gxf3 Bxf3 14 fxe5 Bxh1 15 exf6 Bc6 (15 ... g5 is an improvement: for example, 16 Nb5 Rc8 17 Re1+ Kd7 18 Rd1+ Ke8 19 Re1+ with a draw) 16 Nb5! is again excellent for White, S.Shyam-R.Griffiths, Hastings 2011/12.

b) 12 ... Bxf3 13 gxf3 and Black must be extremely careful in this razor sharp position. Play can continue 13 ... Rc8 14 fxe5 (or 14 Bf1!? Nd5 15 fxe5 Nxc3 16 bxc3 Ba3+ 17 Kb1 Nxf3 18 Bh3 Ra8 19 Bd7+ Kf8 20 Bg3 with the usual mess, M.Parigras-D.Mastrovasilis, Porto Carras 2011) 14 ... Rxc4 15 exf6 Ne6 (this is the point of ... h6; the rook now attacks the bishop, gaining a crucial tempo for the defence) 16 Bg3 gxf6 17 Kb1 (we saw how useful this little move was in the Nielsen-Dominguez game; the c3-knight is now available for action) 17 ... h5 18 Nd5 Be7 19 Rhe1 h4 20 Bb8 a6 21 f4 f5 22 Nxe7 Kxe7 23 Bd6+ Ke8 24 Rd5 with big pressure on Black in G.Jones-A.Seyb, German League 2012.

**11 ... Be6 12 Bxe6 Nxe6 13 Bxe5**

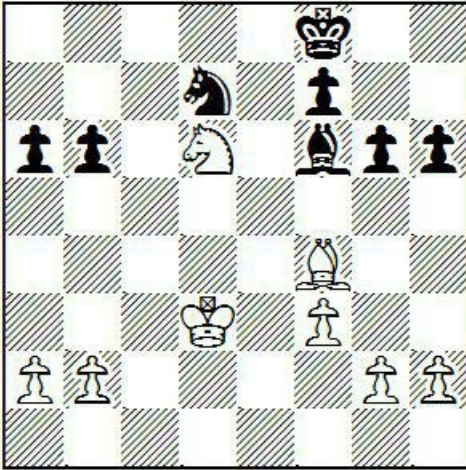


This somewhat 'safer' variation has fewer sharper lines, but of course the risk is Black can draw an endgame. Maybe for once I should put your endgame skills to the test?

**13 ... Be7 14 Nge2 0-0 15 Nd4 Nxd4**

Alternatively, 15 ... Ng4 16 Bg3 Bc5 17 Nxe6 fxe6 18 f3 Ne3 19 Rd2 Rfd8 20 Re2 Rac8 21 Kb1 Nd5 22 Ne4 Be7 23 Rc1 Kf7 24 Rxc8 Rxc8 25 Nd6+ Bxd6 26 Bxd6 Rd8 27 Be5 gave White some chances in the endgame in A.Shimanov-Ni Hua, Moscow 2012.

**16 Rxd4 Rfd8 17 Rhd1 Kf8 18 Kc2 Rac8 19 Rxd8+ Rxd8 20 Rxd8+ Bxd8 21 f3 g6 22 Nb5 a6 23 Nd6 b6 24 Kd3 Nd7 25 Bf4 Bf6**



Kobalia has done his best to press, but objectively this position should be equal. However, White now displays great endgame skill to outplay his opponent.

**26 b4 Ke7 27 b5 axb5 28 Nxb5 g5 29 Be3 Be5 30 h3 Ke6 31 Kc4 f6 32 g4 Bb2 33 Nd4+ Bxd4**

This brings about a bishop versus knight situation in an open position, which is never really a good idea. That said, the alternative was not great either: 33 ... Kf7 34 Nf5 Ne5+ 35 Kb5 Nxf3 36 Kxb6 and the outside passed pawn gives excellent chances for a win.

**34 Kxd4 b5 35 Ke4 Ne5 36 f4 gxf4 37 Bxf4 Nf7 38 h4**

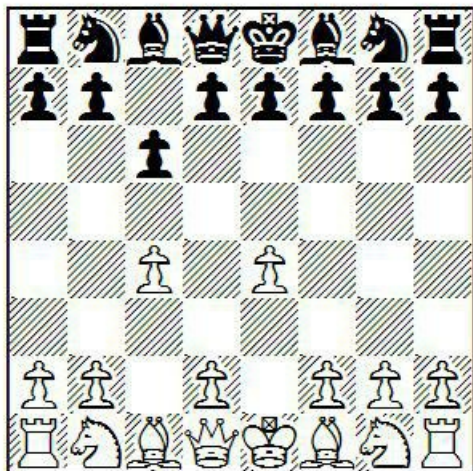
This endgame gives White good chances. If you wish to improve your endgame knowledge do play through the remaining moves. After all, we cannot always checkmate our opponents in the middlegame.

**38 ... b4 39 Bg3 Nh8 40 Kd4 f5 41 gxf5+ Kxf5 42 Kc5 Ng6 43 h5 Ne7 44 Kxb4 Ke6 45 a4 Nf5 46 a5 Kd7 47 Be5 Kc6 48 Kc4 Ne7 49 Kd4 Kb5 50 Ke4 Kxa5 51 Bg7 Kb5 52 Ke5 Kc6 53 Ke6 Nd5 54 Bxh6 Nc7+ 55 Ke7 Kd5 56 Bc1 1-0**

# Chapter Five

## White Plays 2 c4

1 e4 c6 2 c4



Dubbed "Panov's little brother" by many sources, this variation packs more punch than it might at first appear to. Many Panov players have been put off by 5 ... Nc6 in the main line, as we just saw in Chapter Four, and have searched for new ways to reach their beloved IQP positions. One such way is to delay moving the d2-pawn so it is not a target for an early ... Nc6. The plan is to later play d4 and reach a standard IQP position, thereby sidestepping the potential shenanigans that we saw in the previous chapter.

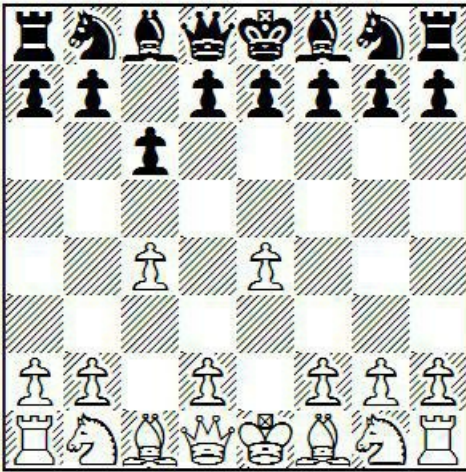
Of course, Black is not obliged to play 2 ... d5 and this is a slight drawback to 2 c4 from White's perspective. However, White really has nothing to fear from these alternatives, which will be looked at in the first game of this chapter, and so for those who dearly want their IQP, 2 c4 might be a nice surprise weapon.

Game 38

**A.Naiditsch-R.Dive**

Istanbul Olympiad 2012

1 e4 c6 2 c4



## 2 ... e5

Not the only move, of course. Apart from the usual 2 ... d5, which is by far the main line, there are some other alternatives:

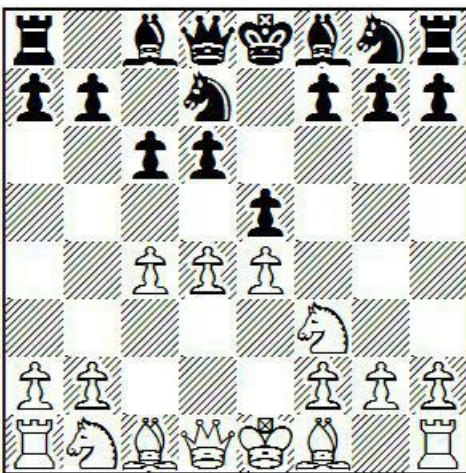
a) 2 ... d6 can easily transpose to 2 ... e5: for example, 3 d4 Nf6 4 Nc3 e5 5 Nf3 Nbd7 6 Bd3 which takes play back into our main game.

b) 2 ... e6 3 d4 d5 and now there are many ways to play the position, but sticking with the IQP theme there is 4 exd5 (4 e5 c5 5 Nf3 Nc6 6 Nc3 cxd4 7 Nxd4 transposes to a line of the Advance Caro-Kann and is one of many transpositions possible after 2 ... e6) 4 ... exd5 5 Nc3 Nf6 6 Nf3 Be7 7 Bd3 0-0 8 h3 dxc4 9 Bxc4 Nbd7 10 0-0 Nb6 11 Bb3 Nbd5 12 Re1 Be6 13 Bg5 Re8, as in I.Chirila-C.Sandipan, Benasque 2012.

c) 2 ... Qa5 is an attempt to throw us off track, but d4 cannot be held off for too long: 3 Nc3 e5 4 Nf3 Nf6 5 Be2 Bb4 6 Qc2 0-0 7 0-0 Re8 8 a3 Bf8 9 d4 d6 was seen in V.Ivanchuk-A.Miles, Biel 1989, amongst other games.

d) 2 ... Na6 3 d4 d6 4 Nc3 g6 will lead to some kind of Pirc with c4 and ... Na6 thrown in. Creativity is probably the name of the game here.

## 3 Nf3 d6 4 d4 Nd7



## 5 Bd3

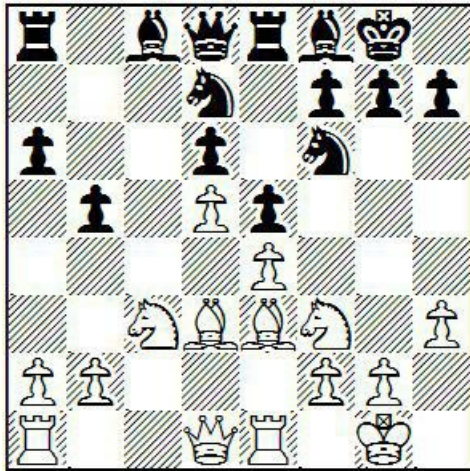
5 Nc3 Ngf6 6 Be2 Be7 7 0-0 0-0 is the main line, but transposes to Old Indian positions which are a little

slower. The game continuation with 5 Bd3 was, of course, played by leading Panov expert Arkadij Naiditsch and gives us slightly more active play, while it should come as more of a surprise to your opponents.

**5 ... Ngf6 6 0-0 Be7 7 Nc3 0-0 8 Re1 Re8**

Alternatively, 8 ... a6 9 d5 Nc5 10 Bf1 cxd5 11 cxd5 Bg4 12 h3 Bh5 13 b4 with a slight space advantage in A.Zubov-M.Vasiliev, Rodatychi 2006.

**9 h3 Bf8 10 d5 a6 11 Be3 cxd5 12 cxd5 b5**



**Question:** With a closed centre what should White do: play on the kingside or the queenside?

**Answer:** Best is to play on the queenside, as Black has a solid set-up around his king and the queenside can be attacked in just a few moves.

**13 b4!**

13 a4 is also a good idea (13 ... b4 14 Ne2 Bb7 15 Nc1 Rc8 16 Nb3 g6 17 a5 with Qe2 and an attack on a6 to follow), but the game move is designed to prevent the black pawn push to b4.

**13 ... Nb6 14 a4 Nxa4 15 Nxa4 bxa4 16 Rxa4 Bd7 17 Ra5**

17 Ra3 Bb5 helps defend the a6-pawn and attempts to alleviate the pressure.

**17 ... Qb8 18 Qa1!**

A clever move, attacking the a6-pawn and simultaneously defending the b4-pawn with tactics.

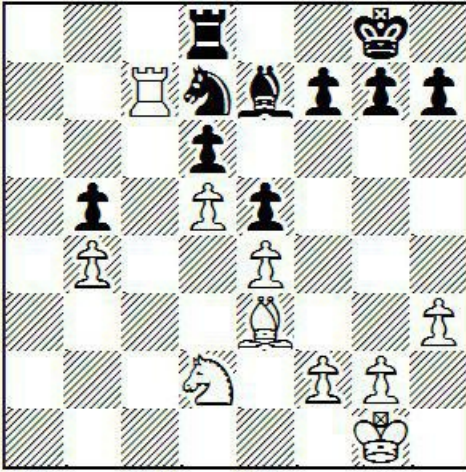
**18 ... Be7**

18 ... Qxb4 19 Rb1 traps the queen.

**19 Nd2 Bb5 20 Bxb5 axb5 21 Rc1 Nd7 22 Rxa8 Qxa8 23 Qxa8 Rxa8 24 Rc7**

A rook invasion on the seventh spells serious trouble for Black. He is forced to go on the defensive and the b5-pawn is there for the taking.

**24 ... Rd8**



**Exercise:** What is the best plan here?

**Answer: 25 Nb3!**

25 Rb7 wins the pawn, but improving the knight's position is even more important.

**25 ... Kf8 26 Na5**

Eyeing up the juicy c6-square.

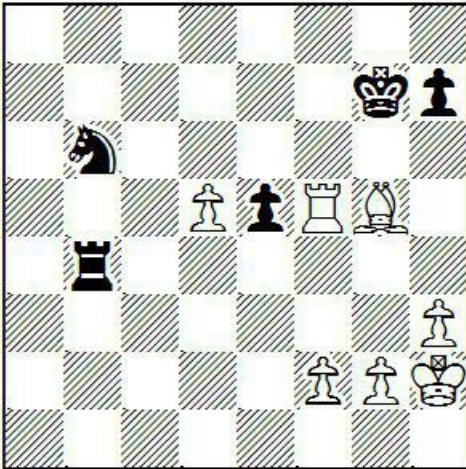
**26 ... Ke8 27 Nc6 Ra8 28 Rb7**

Only now does the rook go after the b5-pawn. A good player never rushes.

**28 ... g6 29 Rxb5 Ra1+ 30 Kh2 f5 31 Ra5 Rb1**

Or 31 ... Rxa5 32 bxa5 fxe4 33 a6 and the a-pawn runs home.

**32 Nxe7 Kxe7 33 Bg5+ Ke8 34 Ra8+ Kf7 35 Rd8 Nb6 36 Rxd6 Rxb4 37 exf5 gxf5 38 Rf6+ Kg7 39 Rxf5**



Finally, a second pawn is won and Black's defences are broken.

**39 ... Nd7 40 Be7 Rd4 41 d6 h6 42 g4 Kg6 43 Kg2 Rd3 44 h4 Rd4 45 h5+ Kg7 46 Kg3 Rd3+ 47 Rf3 Rd4 48 Rc3 Kf7 49 Rc7 Ke6 50 g5!**

The deciding breakthrough.

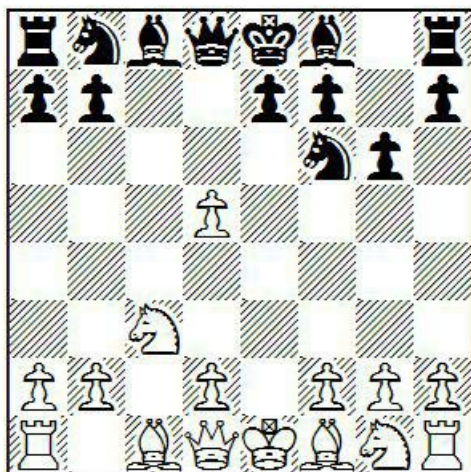
Game 39

**B.Alterman-D.Rogic**

Dresden Zonal 1998

**1 c4 c6 2 e4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 cxd5 Nf6**

4 ... Qxd5 can be played, but it just leads to IQP positions with a loss of time for Black ( ... Qd5-d8 again). One example of this is 5 Nc3 Qd8 6 d4 Nf6 7 Nf3 e6 8 Bd3 Be7 9 0-0 0-0 10 Re1 Nc6 11 a3 b6 12 Bg5 Bb7 13 Bb1 Qd6 14 Qd3 g6 15 Ba2 Rfd8 when a typical IQP has arisen, but one where White has all his forces involved without any hassle. After 16 Rad1 a6 17 Qe2 Re8 18 d5 Nxd5 19 Nxd5 exd5 20 Bxd5 Qc7 21 Bxf7+! Kg7 22 Bxe8 Rxe8 23 Qe6 Bc8 24 Qc4 Black had to resign in A.Mirzoev-Z.Mammadov, Baku 2011.

**5 Nc3 g6**

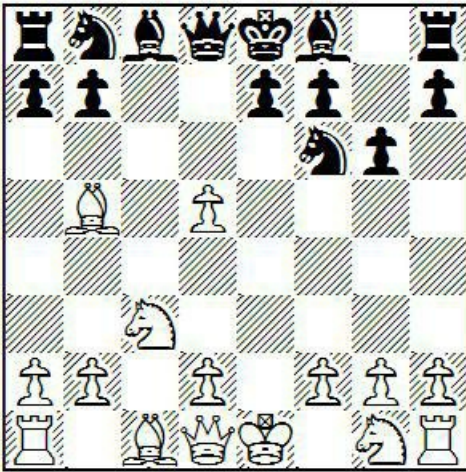
With this slightly unexpected move Black hopes to develop with ... Bg7 and ... 0-0, and only then to try and regain the d5-pawn. As White, we should try and hold on to this pawn for as long as possible. Not just because it leaves us with a pawn advantage, but mainly because it cramps Black's position. This game will demonstrate how problematic it can be for Black if this pawn is not recovered.

Another important idea is that of giving up the front d-pawn on favourable terms. This can often throw a spanner in the works, as Black's plans can be crossed, if done at the right moment. We will come across this idea throughout the next chapter too.

5 ... Nxd5 is the main move and is the subject of the rest of the chapter.

**6 Bb5+**

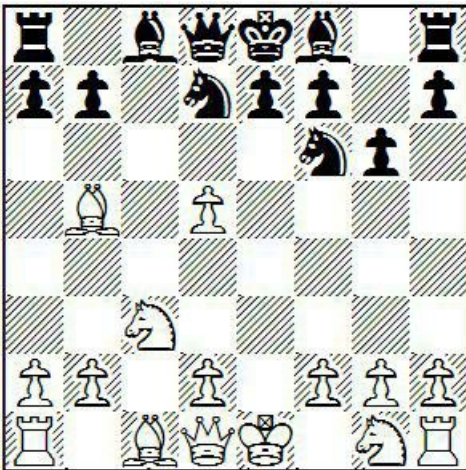
6 Bc4 is the most popular move and, again for the sake of completeness, I will demonstrate how this can be played: 6 ... Nbd7 7 d3 Bg7 8 Nf3 (or 8 Nge2 0-0 9 0-0 Nb6 10 Qb3 Ne8 11 Ng3 Nd6 12 Bf4 Bf5 13 Nb5 Nbc8 14 Rfe1 a6 15 Nxd6 Nxd6 16 Nxf5 gxf5 17 Qc2 Bf6 18 Qe2 Rc8 19 Bb3 when White is a pawn ahead and with the better position, A.Mikhailchishin-D.Paunovic, Minsk 1986) 8 ... 0-0 9 0-0 Nb6 10 Qb3 (holding that d5-pawn) 10 ... Ne8 11 Bf4 Nd6 12 Be5 Bf5 13 Bxg7 Kxg7 14 Qb4 Kg8 15 Rfe1 Rc8 16 Bb3 (giving up the d3-pawn, but under favourable circumstances) 16 ... Bxd3 17 Qh4 Nd7 18 Rad1 Bc4 19 Bc2 Nf6 20 Qh6 gave White the initiative in D.Jakovenko-S.Sjugirov, Russian Championship, Moscow 2009.



**6 ... Nbd7**

**Question:** Why this move rather than the natural-looking 6 ... Bd7?

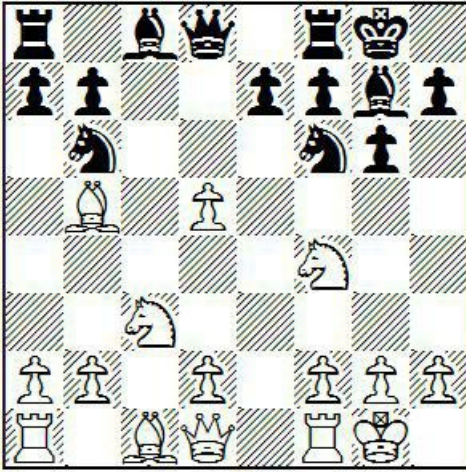
**Answer:** Surprisingly this bishop gets in the way of Black's development and so we should not exchange it off, but rather retreat: 6 ... Bd7 7 Bc4!. Now the idea of ... Nbd7-b6 is cut out and Black will struggle for counterplay. Let Mikhail Tal show us how it's done: 7 ... Bg7 8 Nf3 0-0 9 0-0 Na6 10 d4 Nc7 11 Bf4 Bf5 12 Qb3 (that key move, protecting d5) 12 ... b6 13 Ne5 Nfe8 14 Rfe1 e6 (or 14 ... Nd6 15 Nc6) 15 dxe6 Bxe6 16 d5 Bd7 17 d6 Bxe5 18 Bxe5 Ne6 19 Nd5 N8g7 20 Nf6+ 1-0 M.Tal-V.Landero Luna, Seville 1992.



**7 Nge2**

7 d4 Bg7 8 d6 exd6 9 Qe2+ Qe7 10 Bf4 Qxe2+ 11 Bxe2 Ke7 12 Bf3 is a queen exchange line that I have decided not to recommend (for the reasons of 'we want to attack'), but it is the most popular choice and may suit many of you out there.

**7 ... Bg7 8 Nf4 0-0 9 0-0 Nb6**



Increasing the pressure on the isolated pawn on d5.

**10 Qb3**

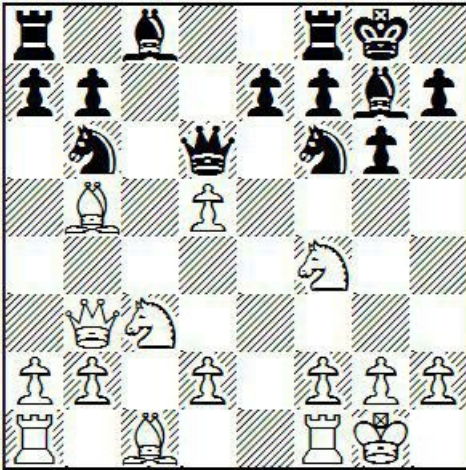
Defending d5 for as long as possible.

**10 ... Qd6**

Alternatively:

a) 10 ... a6 11 Be2 Qd6 12 d4 Rd8 13 Bf3 g5 14 Nd3 h6 15 h4 Nfxd5 16 hxg5 hxg5 17 Bxg5 Bxd4 18 Ne4 Qg6 19 Nf4 Nxf4 20 Bxf4 left Black's king a little exposed in J.Veternaa-C.Roos, Cappelle la Grande 1991.

b) 10 ... g5!? 11 Nfe2 Nfxd5 12 d4 h6 13 f4 Nxf4 14 Nxf4 Qxd4+ 15 Kh1 gxf4 16 Bxf4 with compensation for the pawn in the shape of Black's weakened kingside.

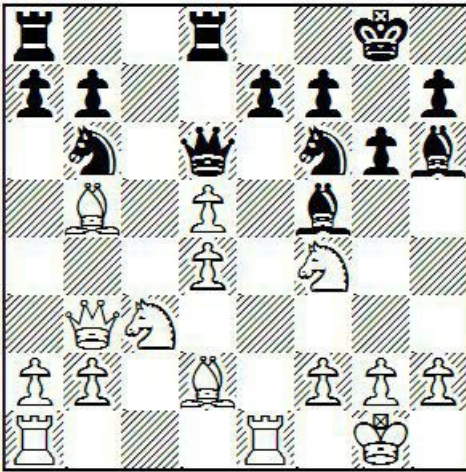


**11 d4 Rd8**

Black increases the pressure yet further against the isolated pawn. Still, in order to win it he will have to take some risks and, as we shall see, in some lines he doesn't win it at all.

**12 Re1 Bf5 13 Bd2 Bh6**

White's point was that after 13 ... Nbx d5?! 14 Ncx d5 Nxd5 15 Nxd5 Qxd5 16 Bc4 the f7-pawn falls.

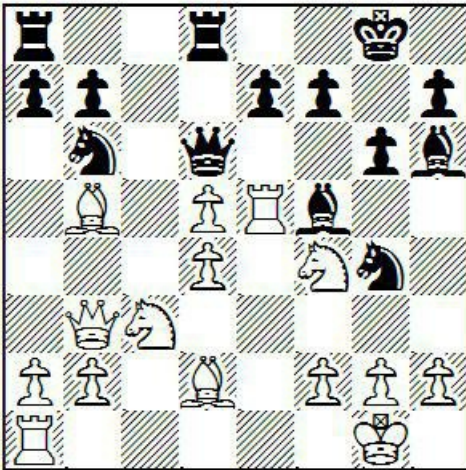


**Question:** How do we deal with the attack on the f4-knight?

**Answer: 14 Re5!**

The rook is vulnerable here, but White has seen he can sacrifice something. Instead, 14 g3 should see Black equalize with precise play: 14 ... a6 (preferable to 14 ... Nh5 15 Nce2 Nxd5 16 Qxd5 Bxf4 17 Nxf4 Qxd5 18 Nxd5 Rxd5 19 a4) 15 Bf1 Rd7 and the pawn will eventually fall.

**14 ... Ng4**



**15 Rae1**

15 Ne4 Qb8 16 Ng3 Nxe5 17 Nxf5 gxf5 18 dxe5 Bxf4 19 Bxf4 Nxd5 is probably not enough for the exchange, although there is some compensation, since only pawns are protecting the black king for now.

**15 ... Rac8**

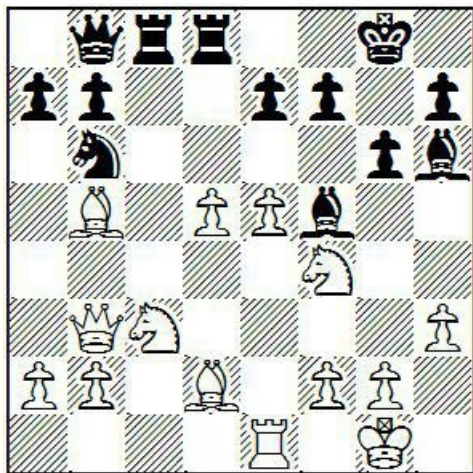
Delaying taking the rook, and with good reason: 15 ... Nxe5 16 dxe5 Qb8 17 d6 exd6 18 e6 with play similar to the game puts the pressure on Black.

**16 h3**

Forcing Black to take the exchange on e5, but now White obtains strong pawns on d5 and e5. Instead, 16 Rxe7?? loses a piece to 16 ... Bxf4.

### 16 ... Nxe5 17 dxe5 Qb8

Otherwise, 17 ... Qc5 18 Be3 Qc7 19 g4 (19 d6 exd6 20 Bxb6 Qxb6 21 Nfd5 Qd4 is a mess) 19 ... Bd7 20 d6 exd6 21 e6 Bxb5 22 Nxb5 Qc4 23 e7 Re8 24 Nxd6 reminds us that we play the Panov for attacking positions, while 17 ... Qc7!? 18 d6 exd6 19 Nfd5 Nxd5 20 Nxd5 forces Black to give up the queen but he is probably okay after 20 ... Bxd2 21 Nxc7 Bxe1 22 Nd5.



**Question:** How to proceed in this crazy position?

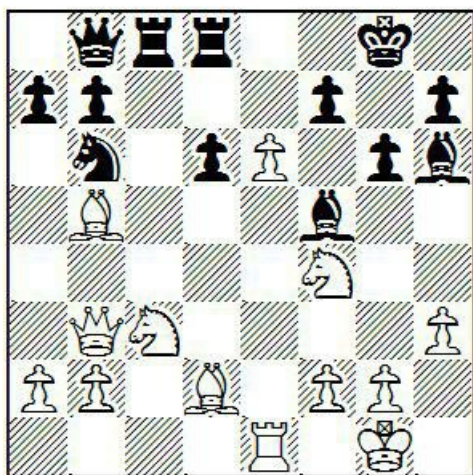
**Answer:** There are two promising ideas. Try to work them out as far as possible in your mind, which is always good tactical training.

### 18 d6

18 Nxg6!? also looks good. Indeed, 18 ... Bxd2 (if 18 ... hxg6 19 Bxh6) 19 Nxe7+ Kh8 20 Re2 seems promising for White. A closer look reveals that Black has 20 ... Bxc3 21 bxc3 Nxd5 22 Nxf5 Rxc3, but after 23 Qb2, with a pawn for the exchange and attacking chances, White can be confident.

### 18 ... exd6 19 e6

Attempting to blast open the kingside.



### 19 ... d5

Other possible defences were:

a) 19 ... fxe6 20 Nxe6 Bxd2 21 Nxd8+ d5 (or 21 ... Kg7 22 Qf7+ Kh6 23 Qf8+) 22 Re8+ Kg7 23 Qb4 g5 24 Qf8+ wins.

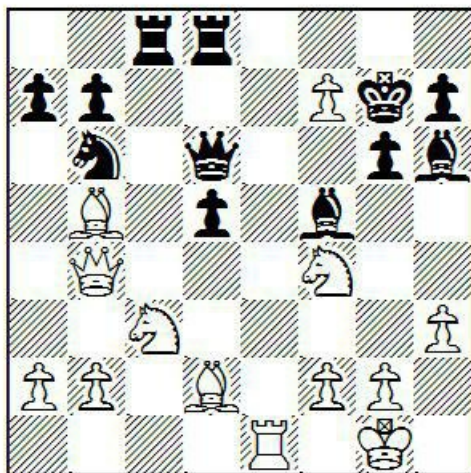
b) 19 ... Bxe6!? 20 Rxe6! fxe6 21 Qxe6+ Kh8 22 Nxc6+! hxc6 23 Bxh6 and there is a raging attack on the board, even though we have given up a fair amount of material.

**20 exf7+ Kg7**

20 ... Kxf7?? 21 Nfxd5 Nxd5 (or 21 ... Bxd2 22 Nxb6+ Kf8 23 Nxc8 Bxe1 24 Qb4+ Kg7 25 Qe7+ Kh6 26 Qxd8) 22 Bxh6 is extremely good and gives us just what we wanted.

**21 Qb4 Qd6**

21 ... Kxf7 22 Nfxd5 Nxd5 23 Nxd5 is similar to the last note.



**Exercise:** Find the tactic that gives White a clear advantage.

**Answer: 22 Ne6+! Bxe6**

22 ... Kxf7 23 Nxd8+! Rxd8 24 Qxd6 Rxd6 25 Bxh6 nets a piece.

**23 Qd4+ Kxf7 24 Bxh6 Rc6**

There was nothing else: for example, 24 ... Rg8 25 Ne4! and the knight comes to g5 with devastating effect.

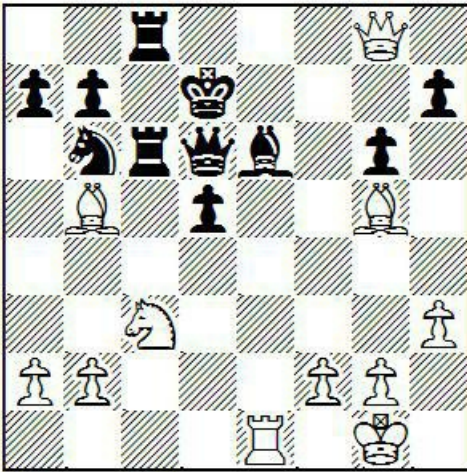
**25 Qg7+ Ke8 26 Bg5**

Also winning was 26 Bxc6+ bxc6 27 Bf4 Qe7 28 Qxe7+ Kxe7 29 Bg5+ Kd7 30 Bxd8 d4 31 Bxb6 axb6 32 Na4 with an extra rook.

**26 ... Rdc8**

26 ... Ra8 can be met by a number of moves, but here is a smart line: 27 Nxd5 Nxd5 28 Qxb7 Nc7 29 Rxe6+ Nxe6 (or 29 ... Qxe6 30 Bxc6+ Kf8 31 Qxc7) 30 Bxc6+ Kf8 31 Bh6+ and the a8-rook goes as well.

**27 Qg8+ Kd7**



**Exercise:** Try to calculate the best finish from here.

**Answer:** 28 Qxh7+ Ke8 29 Bd3! 1-0

Ignoring the rook on c6 for the mate on g6.

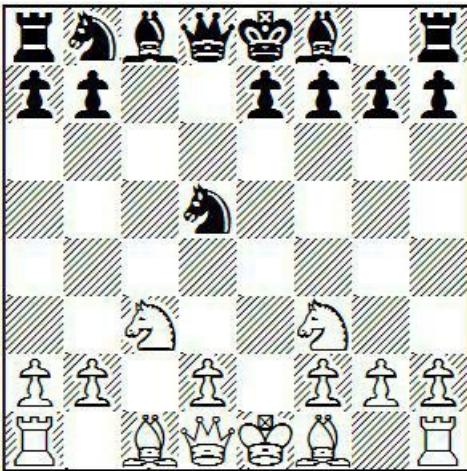
Game 40

**M. Tal-A. Karpov**

Brussels (rapid) 1987

**1 e4 c6 2 c4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 cxd5 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nxd5 6 Nf3**

The independent move and one which characterizes the 2 c4 variation. White continues to hold back his d-pawn.



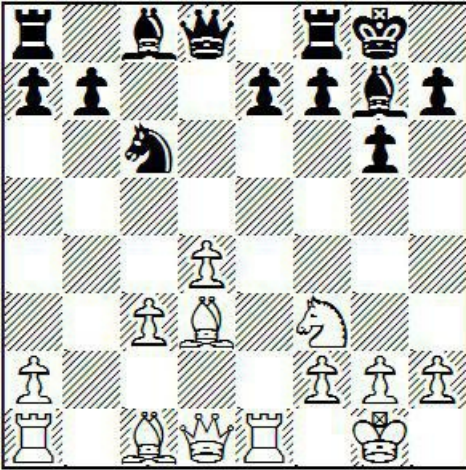
**6 ... Nxc3**

**Question:** Why does Black have to take on c3 before playing ... g6? Why can't he just play 6 ... g6 immediately?

**Answer:** You can, but there are some pitfalls: 6 ... g6 7 Bc4 (7 Qb3 Nb6 8 Bb5+ Bd7 9 a4!? Bg7 10 d4 Bxb5 11 axb5 0-0 12 0-0 N8d7 13 Bf4 Nf6 14 Be5 is the computer's suggestion, which does look quite nice also) 7 ... Nb6 (7 ... Nxc3 8 Qb3! e6 9 bxc3 Bg7 10 Ba3 proves that a quick attack on f7 sometimes can be profitable) 8 Bb3 Bg7 9 d4 0-0 10 d5 (preventing ... Nc6 and gaining space) 10 ... Bg4 11 h3 Bxf3 12 Qxf3 N8d7 13 Bg5 Nc5 14 Rd1 Nxb3 15 axb3 Nc8 16 0-0 Nd6 17 Rfe1 Re8 when Black was solid but passive, P.Van der Sterren-O.Lemmers, Dutch League 2010.

**7 bxc3 g6 8 d4 Bg7 9 Bd3 0-0 10 0-0 Nc6 11 Re1**

Quite a key position for this line. There are many moves here, but White's plan is generally the same: to play actively.



**11 ... Re8**

Alternatively:

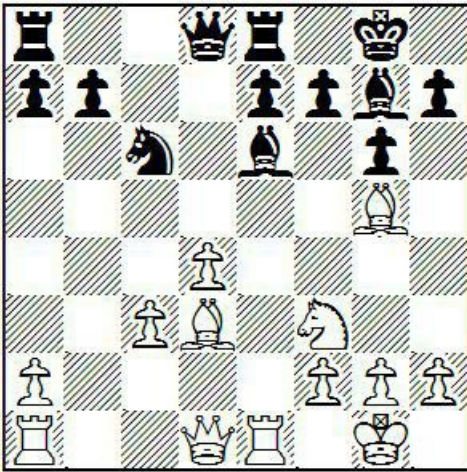
a) 11 ... Bg4 12 Be4 Rc8 13 Bg5 Re8 14 Rb1 Qd7 15 h3 Bxf3 16 Bxf3 b6 17 Bg4 f5 18 Be2 h6 19 Bc1 Kh7 20 d5 1-0 J.Nunn-T.Petrosian, Tilburg 1982, was a brutal high-profile encounter where Black resigned as 20 ... Ne5 is met by 21 Bb5, winning the exchange.

b) 11 ... Qd6 12 a4 Rd8 13 Qe2 Bg4 14 Ba3 (the point of a4 was to play this move, gaining time on the black queen) 14 ... Qc7 15 h3 Bxf3 16 Qxf3 e6 17 Rab1 and White had decent play in N.Ioseliani-E.Danielian, Moscow 1994.

c) 11 ... Qc7 12 h3 b6 13 Bg5 e6 14 Qd2 Bb7 15 Bh6 Rac8 16 Bxg7 Kxg7 17 Rac1 Ne7 18 Ne5 with an interesting game ahead, P.Svidler-B.Gelfand, Moscow (blitz) 2010.

d) 11 ... Qa5 12 Bd2 Bg4 13 Be4 e5 14 d5 Ne7 15 c4 Qd8 16 Qb3 and suddenly the d-pawn was a huge asset in O.Korneev-D.Yevseev, Novgorod 1997.

**12 Bg5 Be6**



A natural move. Black intends to play ... Rc8, ... Na5 and hit the c3-pawn as well as gain an outpost on c4.

**Exercise:** What would you play as White in this position?

**Answer: 13 Rxe6!**

If you went for this exchange sacrifice you certainly have bottle, or you read the Introduction rather well. It's one thing to suggest it now, but not many of us would play this in a real game. Maybe Tal will give us the confidence to play this type of move in the future ...

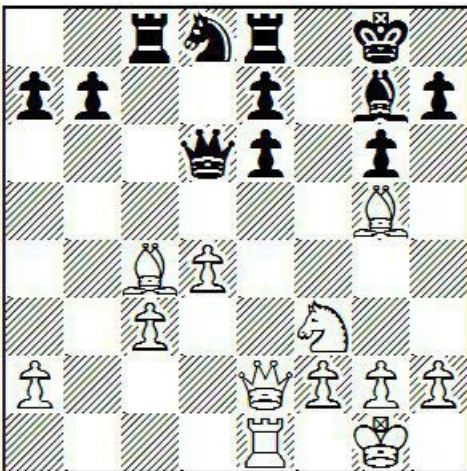
**Question:** So what does White gain out of this exchange sacrifice?

**Answer:** Black has a weakened king position and some bad pawns, and he will be put on the defensive, so ideas of hitting c3 will have to go on to the back burner for a while.

**13 ... fxe6 14 Bc4 Qd6 15 Qe2 Nd8 16 Re1**

Natural attacking moves give White the initiative.

**16 ... Rc8**



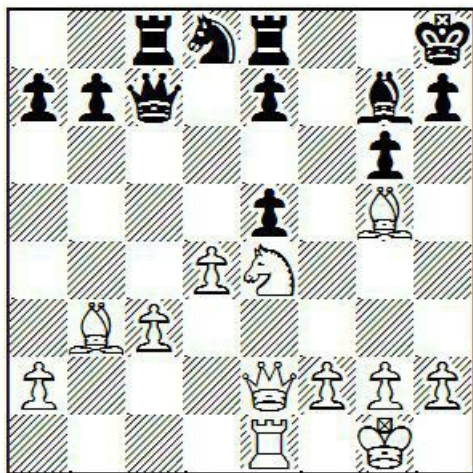
**Question:** Should we capture on e6 to try and regain some material?

**Answer:** Do not exchange your attacking pieces! Also, c3 falls in the end so White doesn't even get the material back.

**17 Nd2**

17 Bxe6+ Nxe6 18 Qxe6+ Qxe6 19 Rxe6 Rxc3 is just plain bad for White.

**17 ... Kh8 18 Ne4 Qc7 19 Bb3 e5**



**Question:** How can we continue the attack?

**Answer:** Forget the d-pawn. Let's attack!

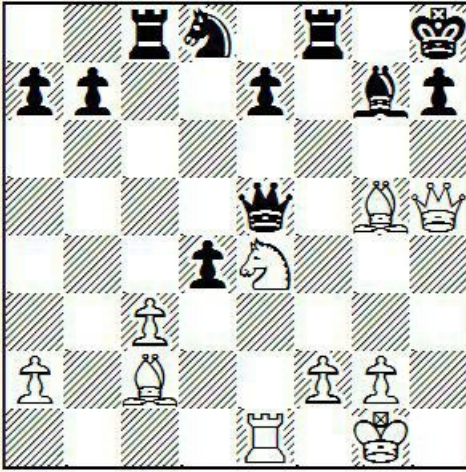
**20 h4! exd4 21 h5 gxh5**

Hard to criticise, but allowing the white queen in spells danger, especially against Tal. Instead, after 21 ... dxc3 22 hxg6 hxg6 23 Qg4 mate is coming with Qh4. Thus 21 ... Qb6 was the last chance to defend, but, of course, this would not be easy to work out even in a slowplay game, which this most certainly was not.

**22 Qxh5 Rf8 23 Bc2**

Changing direction to hit the new target on h7. This is surprisingly hard to defend.

**23 ... Qe5**

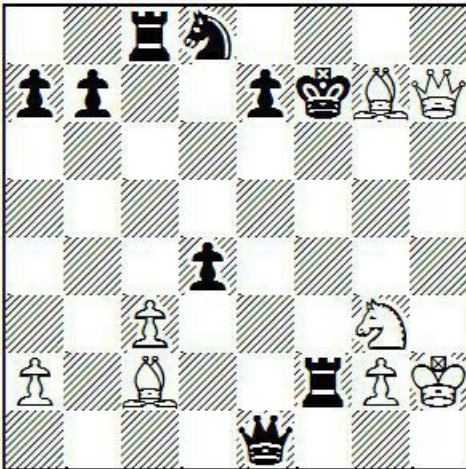


**Question:** Pinning the knight on e4 to the rook on e1.  
If the knight doesn't move, how will White continue the attack?

**Answer:** Ignore the rook!  
**24 Ng3!! Qxe1+ 25 Kh2 h6**

Amazingly there was a saving move for Black, but let's just say that if someone like Karpov can miss it, what's the hope for the rest of us? 25 ... Bh6! 26 Bxh6 Rf7 27 Bxh7 Rc6! and despite the apparent danger, amazingly Black is just about okay here. Indeed, after 28 Bc2 Rxh6 29 Qxh6+ Kg8 30 Qg6+ Kf8 there is nothing better than a draw by repetition: 31 Qh6+ Kg8 32 Qg6+ Kf8 33 Qh6+.

**26 Bxh6 Kg8 27 Bxg7 Rxf2**  
Or 27 ... Kxg7 28 Qg6+ Kh8 29 Qh7#.  
**28 Qh7+ Kf7**



**Exercise:** Find the checkmate.

**Answer:** Do not let the king run away!

**29 Qg6+ Kg8 30 Bh6+ 1-0**

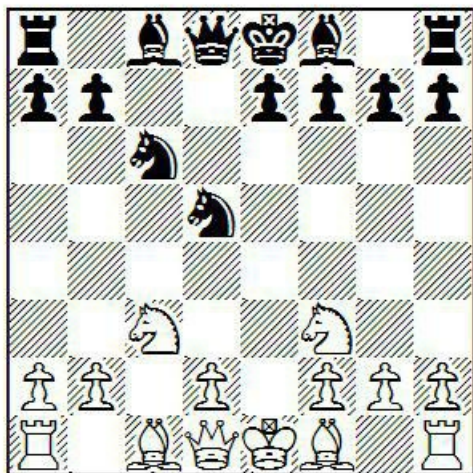
Mate follows on g7. A brilliant game by the magician of attacking chess, Mikhail Tal. Remember this Rxe6 exchange sacrifice theme as a long-term attacking idea.

Game 41

**M.Carlsen-J.Smeets**

Wijk aan Zee 2009

**1 c4 c6 2 e4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 cxd5 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nxd5 6 Nf3 Nc6**



**7 Bb5**

**Question:** Why has the bishop gone to b5? I haven't seen it go there in any other variation in the Panov.

**Answer:** The point is White wishes to delay the advance of the d-pawn until he has castled and developed, so putting the bishop on d3 is ruled out (for now). That only leaves c4 and b5 as active squares.

Note too that 7 d4 Bg4 8 Qb3 Bxf3 9 gxf3 transposes back to the 5 ... Nc6 6 Nf3 long endgame variation, which I have no interest in advocating.

7 Bc4 is playable, but White should be a little careful not to allow Black to equalize in one line: 7 ... Nb6 (7 ... e6 8 0-0 Be7 9 d4 Nf6 10 a3 0-0 11 Bg5 b6 12 Qd3 Bb7 13 Rad1 Qc7 14 Ba2 Rad8 gave White the IQP we tend to like in S.Smagin-J.Silman, Philadelphia 1989), and here:

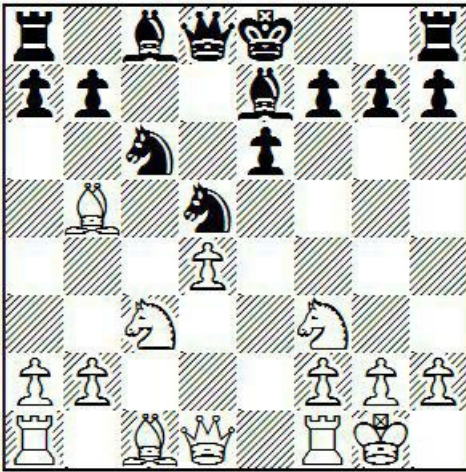
a) 8 Bb3 Bf5! 9 d4 e6 10 0-0 Be7 (here we see the difference – Black's light-squared bishop has found activity on f5 compared to being shut back in on c8) 11 d5 exd5 12 Nxd5 Nxd5 13 Bxd5 0-0 and the position is very equal.

b) 8 Bb5 e6 9 d4 Be7 10 0-0 0-0 11 Re1 Bd7 12 a3 Rc8 13 Bd3 Nd5 was seen in M.Kazhgaleyev-A.Dreev, Moscow 2006, and now the game could have gone 14 Bc2 Qb6 15 Qd3 g6 16 Bh6 Rfe8 17 Qd2 Bf6 18 Be4 Nce7 19 Rad1 Bc6 with unclear play.

Thus 7 Bc4 is playable, but after 7 ... Nb6 best is probably to go to b5 anyway, which helps explain why the main line is to go to b5 in the first place.

**7 ... e6 8 0-0 Be7 9 d4**

Only now does the d-pawn advance, but White has ruled out the lines with an early ... Bb4 and has also gained an IQP without losing a tempo by moving the bishop from f1 to d3 and then recapturing on c4.



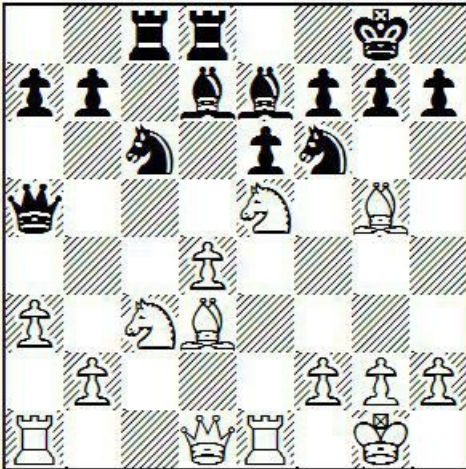
**9 ... 0-0 10 Re1 Bd7**

Black prevents the exchange on c6, which could in some lines lead to a difficult position for him.

10 ... Nf6 is a popular move nowadays, but after something like 11 a3, preventing the ... Nb4-d5 idea, play can run similar to our main game: 11 ... Bd7 12 Bd3 Rc8 13 Bg5 and now in D.Bojkov-R.Adamson, Los Angeles 2011, Black made an error and allowed White a winning position; 13 ... Qa5? 14 Ne5! Qd8 15 Qf3 Nxe5 16 dxe5 Nd5 17 Bxe7 Qxe7 18 Nxd5 exd5 19 Qxd5 Bc6 20 Qb3 Rfd8 21 Bf5 Qg5 22 Qh3 Bxg2 23 Qxh7+ Kf8 24 h4 Qf4 25 Bxc8 1-0.

**Question:** Why did Black retreat his queen here rather than play 14 ... Rfd8?

**Answer:** It's time for an exercise!



**Exercise:** White to play and win.

**Answer:** There is a thematic attacking idea which we have seen before: 15 Bxf6 Bxf6 16 Bxh7+! Kxh7 17 Qh5+ Kg8 18 Qxf7+ Kh8 19 Re3 and wins.

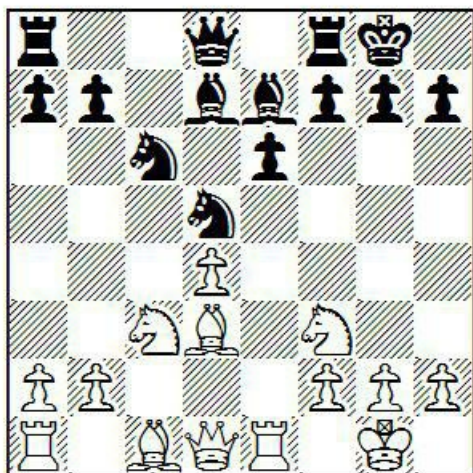
Instead, after 10 ... Bf6 11 Ne5 Qb6 12 Nxd5 exd5 13 Bxc6 bxc6 14 b3 Bf5 15 Ba3 Rfe8 16 Qd2 this time

it's White who is playing against a weak pawn, which lies on c6.

### 11 Bd3

Now the bishop has no function on b5 and is transferred to the most active diagonal. The somewhat clumsy position of the bishop on d7 should justify the apparent loss of tempo.

After 11 Nxd5 exd5 12 Bf4 Bf6 13 Ne5 Nxe5 when all the pieces come off, it's a likely draw.



### 11 ... Rc8

"I had read that this move was supposed to be inaccurate, but it actually seems to be a very decent move" was Magnus Carlsen's assessment. Practice has also seen:

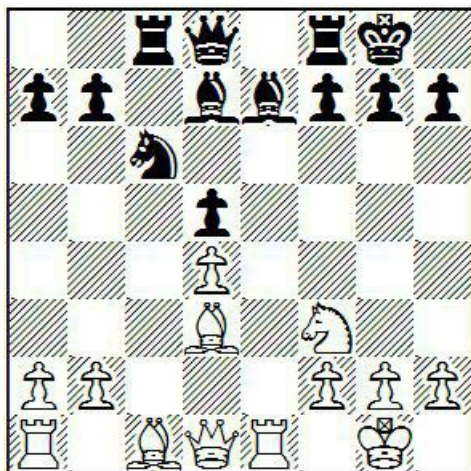
a) 11 ... Ncb4 12 Bb1 gives Black's bishop a post on c6, but leaves the e5-square for White's knight, which should give him the initiative.

b) Not allowing the exchange on d5 with 11 ... Nf6 is double-edged. This move is given in many sources as the way for Black to play, so let's take a closer look: 12 a3 Rc8 13 Bc2 (13 Bg5 also looks like a good idea, one point being that 13 ... Qa5 is met by 14 Ne5, transposing to Bojkov-Adamson above, which was good for White; instead, 13 ... Nd5 14 h4 Nxc3 15 bxc3 h6 16 Bxe7 Nxe7 17 Rc1 Bc6 18 Ne5 might be Black's best, but the position is certainly interesting to play for both colours) 13 ... Qa5 14 Bg5 Rfd8 15 Qd3 g6 (a critical position for this line) 16 h4 (the Danish Grandmaster Lars Schandorff gives 16 Rac1 as a possible way to play for White) 16 ... Be8 17 Rad1 Qb6 18 Bb1 Rd7 19 Qe2 Nxd4 20 Nxd4 Rxd4 21 Be3 Rxd1! 22 Bxb6 Rxe1+ 23 Qxe1 axb6, as in Zhang Zhong-A.Kharitonov, Moscow 2004, is the line given by Jovanka Houska in her book on the Caro-Kann, which is indeed good for Black.

### 12 Nxd5

12 a3, preventing the ... Ncb4 idea, is good too, as we'll see in our next game.

### 12 ... exd5



And so we reach the mutual isolated d-pawn structure which has already been featured elsewhere in this book. Once again, the e5-square will be used as a potential launch-pad to attack.

### 13 Ne5 Bf6

Carlsen considered 13 ... Nxe5 14 Rxe5 Bd6! (but not 14 ... Be6 15 Qh5 g6 16 Qh6 with the threat of moving the rook to h5) 15 Rxd5 Bc6 16 Rg5 (16 Rh5 g6 apparently forces White to give perpetual check with 17 Rxh7) 16 ... g6, which should give Black decent enough play due to the misplaced rook on g5.

However, 13 ... Nxd4 14 Bxh7+ Kxh7 15 Qxd4 is better for White, who will set up a healthy blockade on d4.

### 14 Bf4

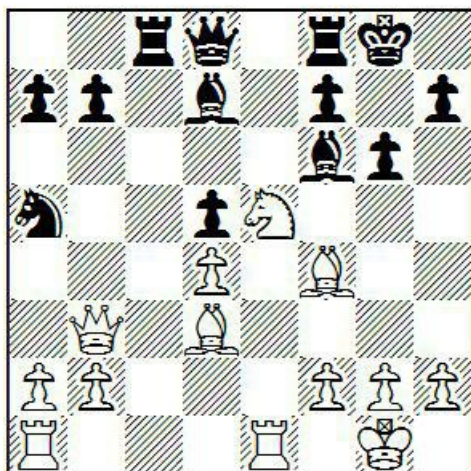
"The most natural move, but probably not the best. The more circumspect 14 Bd2!?, as suggested by the engines, might be a better chance for a small advantage, as 14 ... Nxd4 15 Bc3 practically forces 15 ... Rxc3, when White will enjoy a stable advantage" – Carlsen.

### 14 ... g6?!

14 ... Be6 is solid and maybe the best.

### 15 Qb3 Na5

Instead, 15 ... Nxd4 16 Qxb7 Be6 17 Qxa7 Nc2 18 Bxc2 Rxc2 19 Qd4 should not give Black quite sufficient compensation.

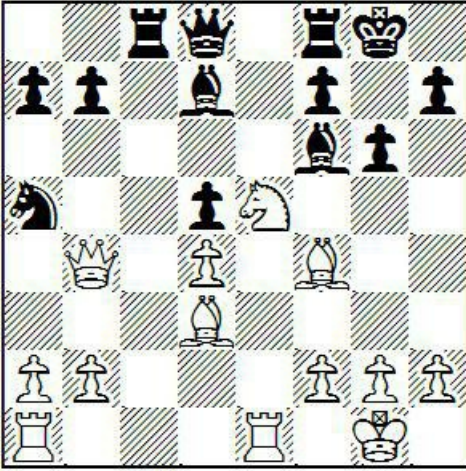


**Exercise:** With our queen attacked should we take the pawn on d5 or not?

**Answer:** It's best not to, as suddenly Black's pieces come alive and d4 will start to feel the heat.

**16 Qb4**

16 Qxd5 Bc6! (16 ... Be6 17 Qe4 is not so good) 17 Qxd8 Rfxd8 18 Bd2 Rxd4 19 Bxa5 Bxe5 20 Rxe5 Rxd3 is completely equal.



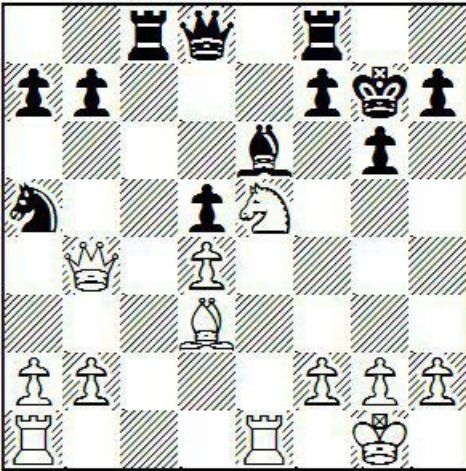
**16 ... Be6**

"This came as a surprise to me. I expected 16 ... Be7 17 Qd2 Nc6 which might appear to lose a tempo, but creates the threat of ... Bb4. 18 Bh6 Re8 (if 18 ... Bb4 19 Qf4 Bxe1 20 Rxe1, winning the exchange back with a slight advantage) 19 Qf4 Nxe5 20 dxe5 is what I intended then, but Black actually has 20 ... Qb6 21 Re2 Qb4! here." Thus Carlsen prefers 18 a3, keeping the tension and preventing ... Bb4.

**17 Bh6 Bg7**

17 ... Re8 would also have been a bit better for White: 18 Bb5 Qb6 19 Bd2!, forcing 19 ... Nc6 20 Bxc6 bxc6 21 Rac1 with a small edge.

**18 Bxg7 Kxg7**

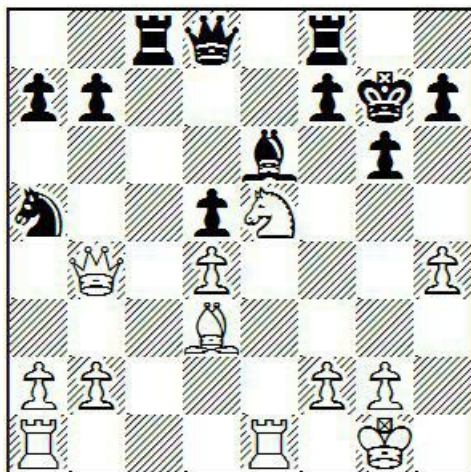


**Question:** How can we put some pressure on Black's kingside position?

**Answer:** With the usual pawn thrust.

**19 h4!?**

Trying to go h5 and soften up the g6-square. 19 f4 with an f-pawn hack may be an alternative attacking idea, but the h-pawn push is more thematic.



**19 ... Re8?!**

Exchanging queens would have prevented what happened in the game: 19 ... Qb6 20 Qxb6 (20 Qd2 f6 21 Nf3 Nc4 22 Bxc4 Rxc4 23 h5 gxh5 is wholly unclear) 20 ... axb6 21 Rad1 Nc6 22 a3 Rc7 23 Bb1, although maybe White has the better endgame here.

**20 h5 f6**

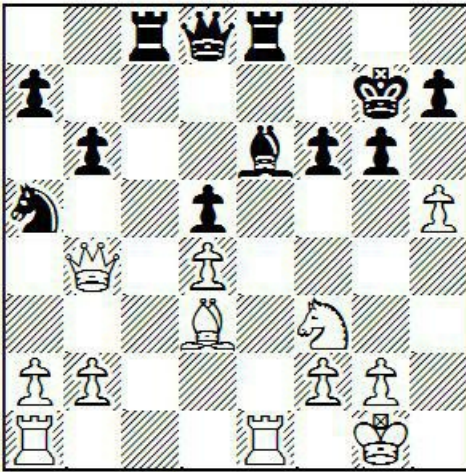
20 ... Qb6 is now too late: 21 Qd2 with h6+ to come is much better for White.

**21 Nf3?!**

Carlsen points out that 21 Bb5 looks very strong. After 21 ... Nc6 (21 ... fxe5 22 Bxe8 23 h6+ Kg8 24 Qa3 gives White an extra exchange, albeit in a messy position) 22 Bxc6 bxc6 23 Nd3 gxh5 24 Nf4 Bf7 25 Rxe8 Qxe8 26 Re1, although White is a pawn down, Black has too many weaknesses.

**21 ... b6**

Instead, 21 ... Qb6 22 Qd2 gxh5 23 Nh4 coming into f5 is strong.



**22 Bb5**

As opposed to on the previous turn, Carlsen was quite critical of this. He preferred 22 Nh4, attacking g6 and after 22 ... f5 23 Nf3 there are many squares, such as e5 and g5, that the knight is eyeing up.

**22 ... Re7 23 Re2 Rcc7?**

This just loses. 23 ... Nc6 with the idea of 24 Qd2 (24 Bxc6 Rxc6 25 Rae1 Qd6 26 Qd2 Rcc7 is okay for Black) 24 ... Bg4! would have given good chances of survival.

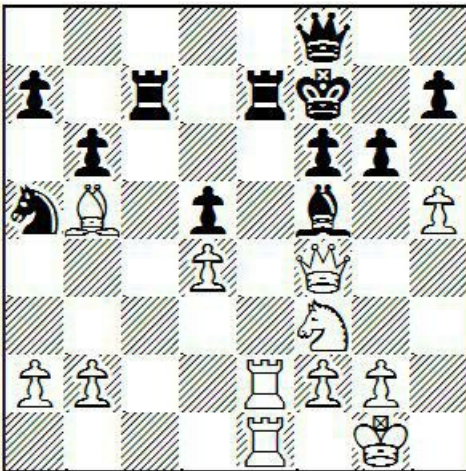
**24 Rae1 Kf7 25 Qd2**

Threatening an invasion on h6, which is hard to deal with.

**25 ... Qf8**

25 ... Bf5 26 Nh4 Rxe2 27 Rxe2 is troublesome for Black since 27 ... Be6 fails to 28 Qh6.

**26 Qf4 Bf5**



**Question:** How to continue the attack?

**Answer:** The h-pawn has already been pushed, so let's go with the g-pawn.

**27 g4 Bc8**

27 ... Be4 28 Ng5+ Kg8 29 Ne6! wins an exchange.

### 28 b4

There were many ways to win here, including too 28 g5 f5 29 hxg6+ hxg6 30 Ne5+ Kg7 31 Nxc6! Kxc6 32 Qd6+ Kh5 33 Rxe7.

### 28 ... Nb7

If 28 ... Rxe2 29 Rxe2 when c7 and a5 are hanging.

### 29 Bc6 1-0

"The d5-pawn is falling, and the same can be said about the black position", as Carlsen observed.

This is quite a critical line to study since this variation has been recommended for Black by a number of sources, but Black's position may not be so easy, as Carlsen showed.

Game 42

### S.Gligoric-A.Pomar Salamanca

Nice Olympiad 1974

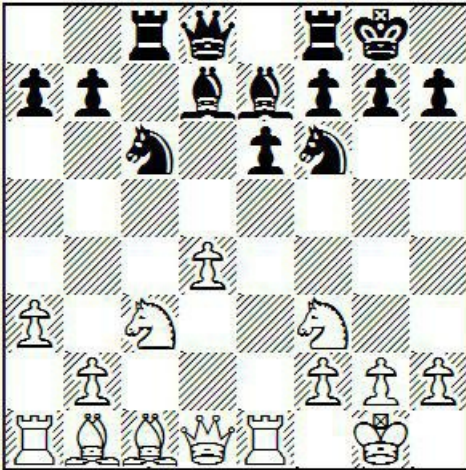
### 1 e4

This game actually started via a Nimzo-Indian: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Nf3 c5 5 e3 0-0 6 Bd3 d5 7 0-0 dxc4 8 Bxc4 Nc6 9 Bd3 Bd7 10 a3 cxd4 11 exd4 Be7 12 Re1 Rc8 13 Bb1.

**1 ... c6 2 c4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 cxd5 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nxd5 6 Nf3 Nc6 7 Bb5 e6 8 0-0 Be7 9 d4 0-0 10 Re1 Bd7 11 Bd3 Rc8 12 a3**

Deviating from Carlsen's decision to exchange on d5.

**12 ... Nf6 13 Bb1**

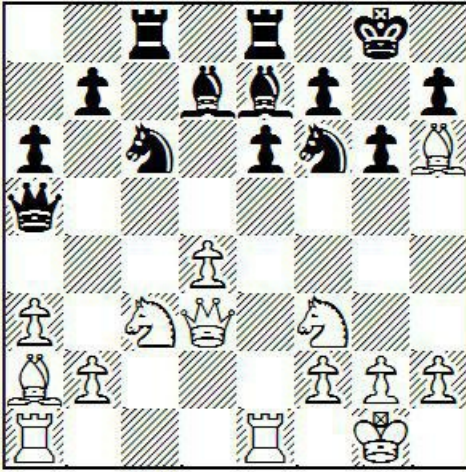


**Question:** Why put the bishop here? What was wrong with the normal idea of 13 Bc2 and Qd3?

**Answer:** From b1 the bishop can safely go to a2 as well, which in some lines can make it a powerful piece along the a2-g8 diagonal. It does block the a1-rook in, but this is only temporary.

**13 ... Re8 14 Qd3 g6 15 Ba2 a6 16 Bh6 Qa5**

Black moves the queen out, allowing a rook to come to d8 with potential pressure on the d4-pawn.



**Exercise:** What would you recommend White to play: 17 Rad1, 17 d5, or 17 Ne5?

**Answer: 17 d5!**

Surprisingly this move catches Black unawares in the centre. That may be hard to believe as Black is fully developed, but in such an open position there are plenty of well-placed white pieces ready to cause havoc.

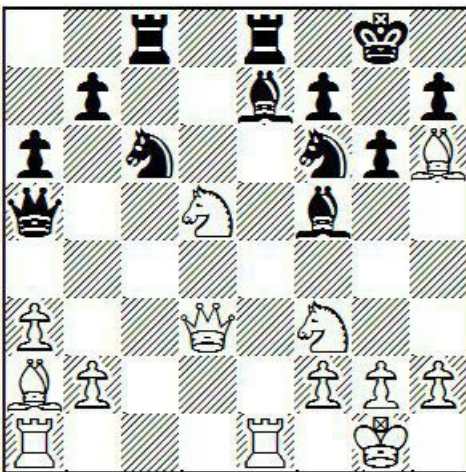
Instead, 17 Rad1 Rcd8 18 h3 Bc8 is passive for Black, but it's not clear how White can improve his position, while after 17 Ne5 Rcd8 18 Rad1 Nxe5 19 Rxe5 (if 19 dxe5 Ba4) 19 ... Qc7 20 Qg3 Bc6, with the exchange of knights on e5, the position has become more comfortable from Black's point of view.

**17 ... exd5 18 Nxd5 Bf5**

Attacking the queen. Others:

a) 18 ... Nxd5 19 Bxd5 Bf5 20 Bxf7+ Kxf7 21 Qb3+ Kf6 22 Ng5 threatens both Qf7 mate and Re6+ which is crushing.

b) 18 ... Be6 looks good, but is met by the typical exchange sacrifice: 19 Rxe6 fxe6 20 Nf4 with threats on e6 and maybe even g6.



**Exercise:** An absolutely critical position has arisen after 18 ... Bf5. Once slip can lose the advantage. Our

queen is attacked, but what would you play in this position?

**Answer: 19 Rxe7!!**

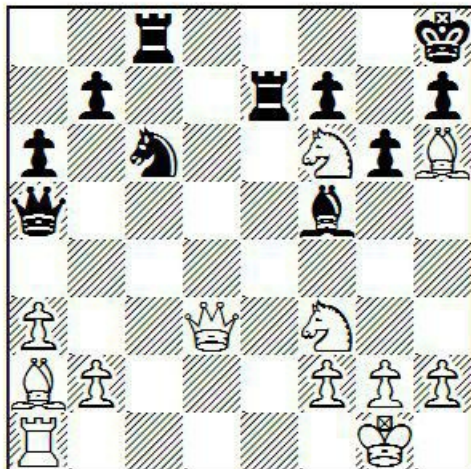
Totally ignoring the attack on the queen.

**19 ... Rxe7**

After 19 ... Bxd3 20 Nxf6+ Kh8 there are many ways to win, but the most aesthetic is 21 Bg7+! (21 Rxf7 spells the end too as Rxh7# and Bg7# cannot both be prevented) 21 ... Kxg7 22 Rxf7+ Kh6 23 Rxh7 mate.

Instead, 19 ... Nxe7 20 Nxf6+ Kh8 21 Qd4 is totally crushing.

**20 Nxf6+ Kh8**



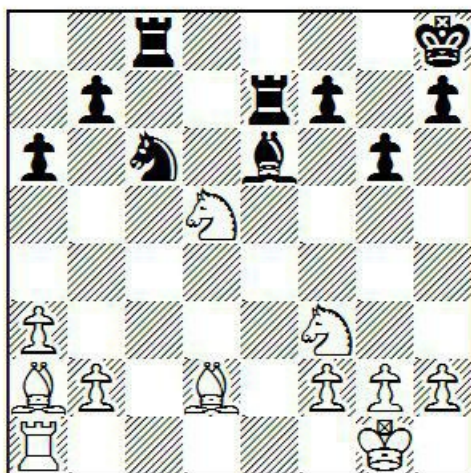
**21 Qd2**

21 Qd6 was also winning.

**21 ... Be6**

Or 21 ... Qxd2 22 Bxd2 and Bc3 is coming, with fantastic piece placement and a lead in material, which is not great news for Black.

**22 Nd5 Qxd2 23 Bxd2**



**23 ... Bxd5 24 Bc3+**

A nice zwischenzug before recapturing on d5.

**24 ... Kg8 25 Bxd5 Rd7 26 Bxc6 bxc6**

26 ... Rxc6 27 Ne5 wins an exchange.

**27 Ne5 Rdd8 28 Kf1 h5 29 Re1 Rd5 30 Nxc6! 1-0**

And with 31 Ne7 winning an exchange, Black threw in the towel. A great game by Gligoric.

Game 43

**N.Miezis-J.Pedersen**

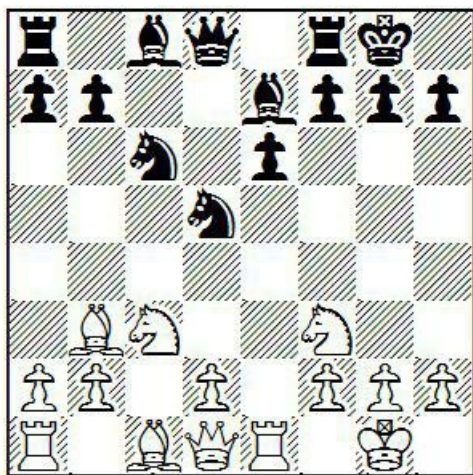
Morso 2002

**1 c4 c6 2 e4 d5 3 cxd5 cxd5 4 exd5 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nxd5 6 Nf3 e6 7 Bc4**

With this White keeps the game in offbeat territory. Instead, 7 d4 allows a transposition back to Chapters Two and Three with 7 ... Bb4 and 7 ... Be7 respectively. That's fine, of course, but if you just wish to play 2 c4 and avoid studying those, then 7 Bc4 is the line to play.

**7 ... Be7 8 0-0 0-0 9 Re1 Nc6 10 Bb3**

And here 10 d4 would transpose to Kramnik-Meier from Chapter Four.



**10 ... Nf6**

Actually 10 ... Bf6 might be a problem for the lazy white player, since I can't see anything better than 11 d4 Nde7, transposing to Kramnik-Meier after all.

**11 d4**

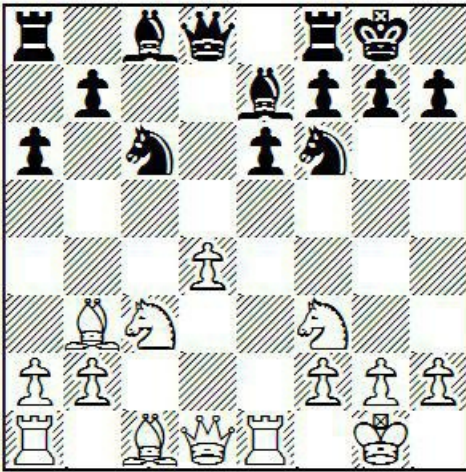
It can be argued that Bb3 was not an overly useful move, but White has at least prevented ... b5 coming with tempo and reached the desired IQP position which is the most important thing.

**11 ... a6**

Others:

a) 11 ... Na5 12 Bc2 b6 13 Bg5 Bb7 14 Qd3 g6 15 Ne5 Nc6 16 Qf3 Rc8 17 Bh6 Re8 18 Ba4 shows a typical method in isolated pawn positions; the attack on c6 is a little uncomfortable.

b) 11 ... b6 12 Bg5 Bb7 13 a3 again leads to fairly standard positions.



### 12 h3

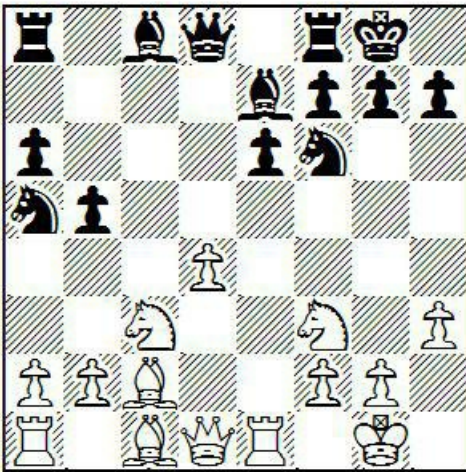
Again quite offbeat and not a move we have really seen, since it doesn't really achieve much, but it is still fairly useful.

More direct would be 12 Bf4 Na5 13 Bc2 b5 14 Qe2 Bb7 15 Rad1 or 12 Bg5 b5 and now the d5 push can be considered: for example, 13 Bxf6 Bxf6 14 d5 exd5 15 Bxd5 Bb7 16 Ne4, since if Black grabs on b2, the white pieces spring into life: 16 ... Bxb2 17 Nfg5! Bxa1 18 Qh5 h6 19 Bxf7+ Rxf7 20 Qxf7+ Kh8 21 Qxb7.

### 12 ... Na5

Alternatively, 12 ... b5 13 d5! exd5 14 Nxd5 Nxd5 15 Qxd5 Bb7 16 Qh5 with an attack.

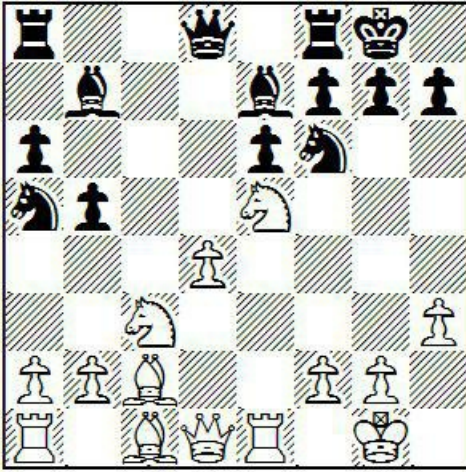
### 13 Bc2 b5



### 14 Ne5

After 14 Qd3 Bb7 15 Bg5 g6 16 Ne5 Nc6 17 Bh6 Re8 we can start to see that h3 wasn't only the loss of a tempo, but also prevents White's queen from coming to h3.

### 14 ... Bb7



**15 Qd3**

White returns to the 'usual' attacking plan of Bc2 and Qd3.

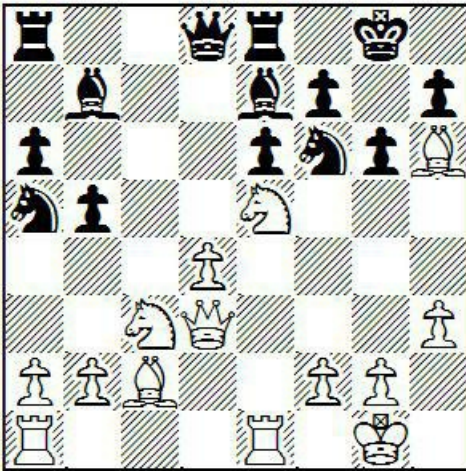
**15 ... g6**

15 ... b4 was possible, but allows Na4 coming to c5. After 16 Bg5 g6 17 Na4 Rc8 Black gains control over d5, but gives up some other squares.

**16 Bh6**

Not losing a tempo by having to play Bg5 first.

**16 ... Re8**



**Exercise:** What would you play here as White?

**Answer:** There are many plausible moves, but most probably you went in for Miezis's move which develops the last remaining piece.

**17 Rad1**

There was an even sharper line in 17 Qg3!?, which deserved definite attention with immediate threats towards g6: for example, 17 ... Qxd4 (and not 17 ... Nc6? 18 Bxg6 hxg6 19 Nxg6) 18 Bxg6! hxg6 19 Nxg6 Kh7! (if 19 ... Ng4 20 Nxe7+ Rxe7 21 hxg4) 20 Nxe7 Kxh6 21 Rad1 Qc4 22 Qe3+ Kg7 23 Rd4 Qc7 24 Qg5+

Kf8 25 Qxf6 with a winning attack.

**17 ... b4 18 Ne2**

Heading for c5 with 18 Na4! was probably better.

**18 ... Be4 19 Qd2 Bxc2 20 Qxc2**

Without the light-squared bishop it is hard to believe that White can attack, but let's still see what happens.

**20 ... b3?!**

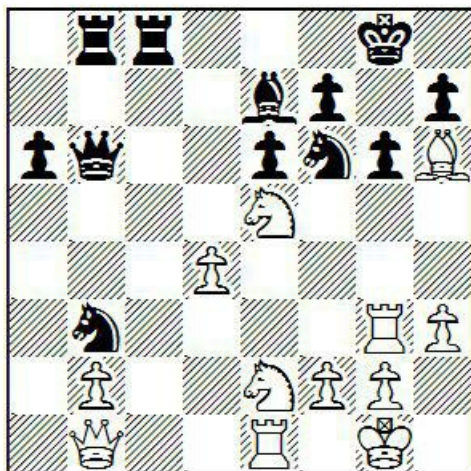
This is completely unnecessary. 20 ... Rc8 21 Qd3 Qb6 was better.

**21 axb3 Qb6 22 Rd3! Rab8 23 Rg3**

White shows his aggressive intentions.

**23 ... Rec8 24 Qb1 Nxb3?**

24 ... Bf8 would have challenged the dangerous bishop on h6. After 25 Bxf8 Rxf8 26 Rf3 Qd8 and Black isn't getting checkmated at least.

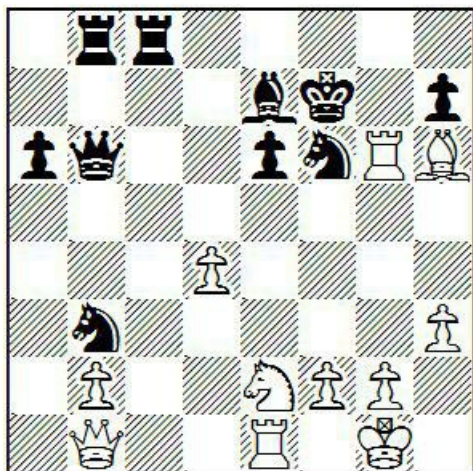


**Exercise:** Black has completely forgotten about his king.

Maybe after the exchange on c2 he assumed he couldn't get checkmated? Calculate White's breakthrough as far as possible.

**Answer: 25 Nxc6! fxc6 26 Rxc6+! Kf7**

Possibly Black saw this and came to the conclusion that everything was okay. Instead, it's mate after 26 ... hxc6 27 Qxc6+ Kh8 28 Qg7#.



**27 Rxf6+!**

An essential follow-up, since after 27 Rg7+ Ke8 28 Nf4 Nxd4 Black might be holding as e6 is defended.

**27 ... Kxf6**

White wins too after 27 ... Bxf6 28 Qxh7+ Ke8 29 Qg6+ Ke7 30 Nf4 Nxd4 31 Nd5+.

**28 Qxh7 Bf8 29 Ng3! e5**

29 ... Bxh6 30 Ne4# is a pretty mate.

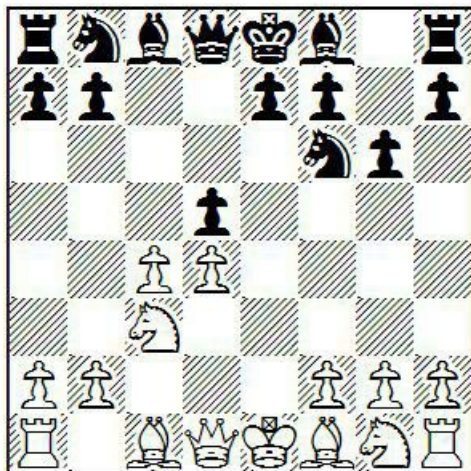
**30 Qf5+ Ke7 31 Rxe5+ 1-0**

The king will be hunted down. Not the most impressive build-up from White, but once Miezis had the chance to sacrifice on g6, he finished off efficiently.

# Chapter Six

## Black Plays ... g6 Lines

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 g6



Best described as one of the riskier ways to meet the Panov, the ... g6 lines are some of the more ambitious plans at Black's disposal. Simply put, Black wants to place the dark-squared bishop on g7 and hit the d4-pawn as soon as possible. Of course, there are drawbacks. As opposed to the ... e6 lines where the d5-pawn is defended and solidified, in this variation Black often has to give up d5 at an early stage. He hopes to be able to win this pawn back at a later date and, if he manages to, the d4-pawn can also become weak.

I have opted to recommend aggressive early plans for White (of 6 Qb3 and 6 cxd5 Nxd5 7 Qb3), trying to target Black's d5-pawn as quickly as possible, and really tackle whether his idea of giving up this pawn was really such a good idea.

Game 44

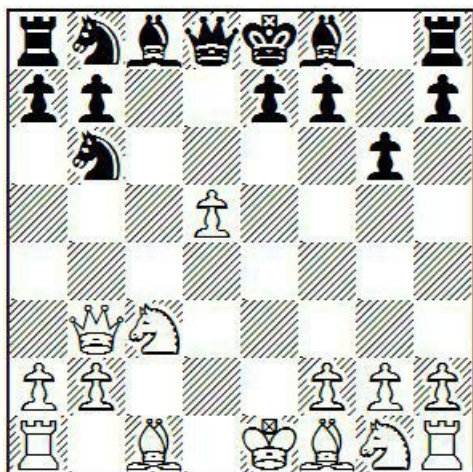
**S.Mamedyarov-S.Vidit**

Kolkata 2009

**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 g6 6 cxd5 Nxd5**

Instead, 6 ... Bg7 7 Qb3 transposes to the 6 Qb3 line, which we'll see later in the chapter, although with this move order there are alternatives to putting the queen on b3: for example, 7 Bc4 0-0 8 Nge2 Nbd7 9 Nf4 Nb6 10 Bb3 Bf5 11 0-0 sees Black, as in many games in this chapter, remain a pawn down, but with hopes of winning the d5 pawn back. One game continued 11 ... Be4 12 Nxe4 Nxe4 13 Qf3 Nf6 14 Bd2 a5 15 a4 Qd6 16 Rfe1 and it was not clear if Black was ever going to get the pawn back in Y.Kryvoruchko-A.Kovchan, Alushta 2007.

**7 Qb3 Nb6 8 d5**



**Question:** We haven't got developed and yet are making a pawn move like this. Why?

**Answer:** We have seen this idea before in similar variations. The pawn pushes forward to gain even more space. Both ... Nc6 and ... Be6 are prevented, and it is hard for Black to attack this pawn again.

8 Bb5+ Bd7 9 Nf3 Bg7 10 a4 is another plan, but again I do not want to advocate too many exchanges as they may relieve Black's position.

**8 ... Bg7 9 Be3 0-0 10 Rd1**

Despite not developing the kingside, d5 is fortified and it is up to Black to get his pieces out to decent enough squares.

**10 ... Na6**

10 ... N8d7 is okay too, but on a6 the knight controls the b4-square, which may be useful for a ... Qd6-b4 manoeuvre. After 10 ... N8d7 11 Be2 Nf6 12 Nf3 Bd7 13 0-0 White has the usual space advantage.

**11 Nf3 Qd6 12 Be2**

12 Bxa6 bxa6 only really helps Black, since the b-file is open, the b7-square is freed for the bishop and the c4-square is weakened.

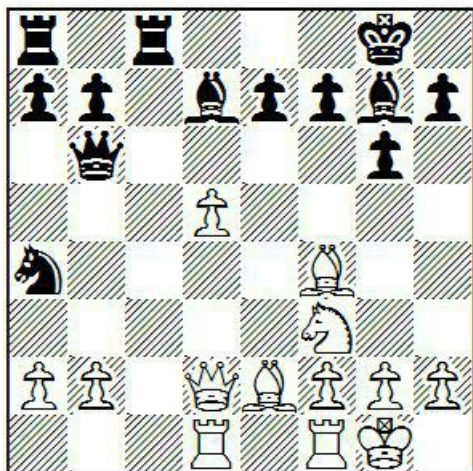
**12 ... Bd7 13 0-0 Nc5 14 Qc2 Rfc8**

Sensible play from Black and it appears that White has overstretched. Now c3 will start to feel the heat and, it might be argued, how useful was that pawn push to d5?

**15 Qd2 Nba4**

15 ... Bxc3 16 Qxc3 Ba4 17 Bh6 f6 is the computer's suggestion, but most human players would not give up the dark-squared bishop so lightly.

**16 Nxa4 Nxa4 17 Bf4 Qb6**



**Question:** How to take the pressure off the b2-pawn?

**Answer:** We should always play actively in the Panov and this position is no different.

**18 Be5**

After 18 b3 Nc3 19 Rc1 Bb5 Black has the upper hand, since the knight on c3 really squeezes White's other pieces.

18 Ne5 is another good and active idea. After 18 ... Bb5 19 Rfe1 Bxe2 20 Rxe2 everything is defended and White's space advantage remains.

**18 ... Bxe5 19 Nxe5 Bf5**

Even here initially Black appears to be doing well, since b2 is attacked and ... Rc2 is threatened. Instead, after 19 ... Bb5 20 Bxb5 Qxb5 21 Rfe1 Qxb2 22 Qf4 there is very little protection around the black king, and one line goes 22 ... f6 23 Nxc6 hxc6 24 Rxe7 Re8 25 Rxe8+ Rxe8 26 Qxa4.

**20 g4**

Full marks for bravery.

**20 ... Rc2**

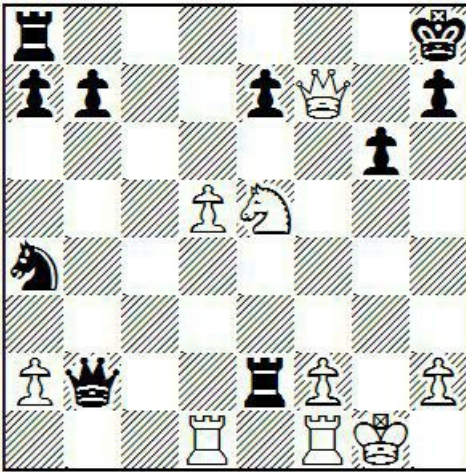
20 ... Qxb2 21 Qxb2 Nxb2 22 gxf5 Nxd1 23 Rxd1 Rc2 24 Bd3 Rxa2 25 Bc4 Ra5 is unclear, but I can quite understand why Black did not want to go in for this.

**21 Qf4 Rxe2 22 gxf5 Qxb2**

Completely overlooking White's reply. If Black had kept a sense of danger, he would have defended his king at this point (the g7-bishop going should have spelt danger!).

Here 22 ... Nxb2 23 Rde1 Rxe5! 24 Qxe5 Nd3 25 Qxe7 Nxe1 26 Rxe1 Qd4 looks scary, but there is a perpetual threatened on g4.

**23 fxc6 fxc6 24 Qf7+ Kh8**



**Exercise:** It's White to play and win. How?

**Answer:** 25 Nxg6+! hxg6 26 Rd3

Now Rh3 cannot be prevented without huge material losses.

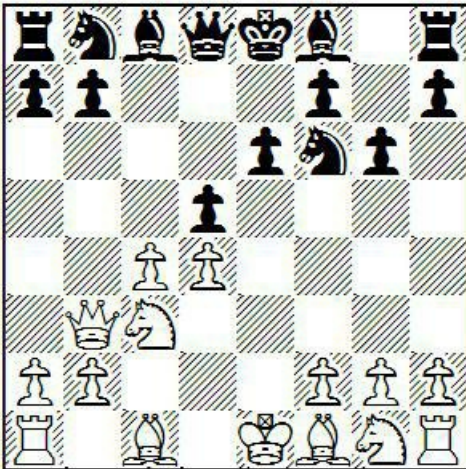
26 ... Qc3 27 Rxc3 Nxc3 28 Qf3 Rc2 29 Re1 1-0

Game 45

**V.Gashimov-V.Topalov**

Nanjing 2010

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 g6!? 6 Qb3 e6?!



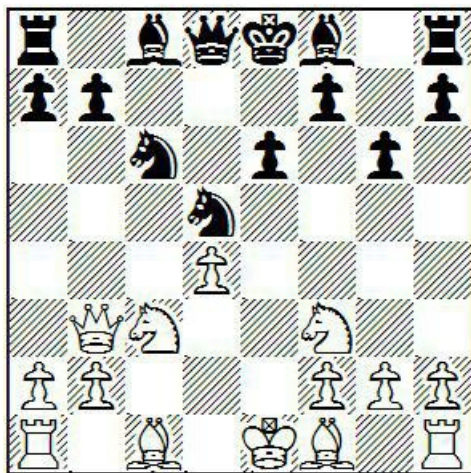
Rather risky, but I think worth showing since it was played in this game by Topalov, who clearly is not a bad player, and it's the sort of move you may face if you opponent doesn't fancy losing a pawn on d5.

**7 cxd5 Nxd5**

7 ... exd5 is just about playable, but there is a lot of pressure to withstand after 8 Bb5+: for instance, 8 ... Nc6 9 Nf3 Bg7 10 Qa3 (10 0-0 0-0 11 Bg5 is also good if you prefer to keep the queens on) 10... Qe7+

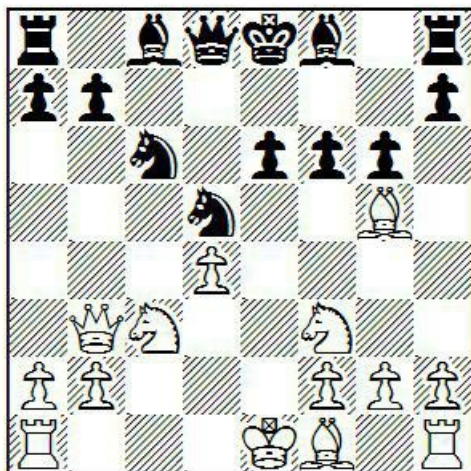
(otherwise the king cannot castle away to safety) 11 Qxe7+ Kxe7 12 Bf4 Be6 13 0-0 Rhe8 14 Ne5 Rac8 15 Rfe1.

**8 Nf3 Nc6**



**9 Bg5 f6**

Hardly the move Black would have wanted to play, but the alternatives don't look great: for example, 9 ... Be7 10 Bh6 Bf8 11 Bxf8 Kxf8 12 Bb5 Kg7 13 0-0 and even though a set of minor pieces has been exchanged, the IQP set-up is still a favourable one.



**Question:** Where to put the bishop once it has been prodded?

**Answer: 10 Bd2**

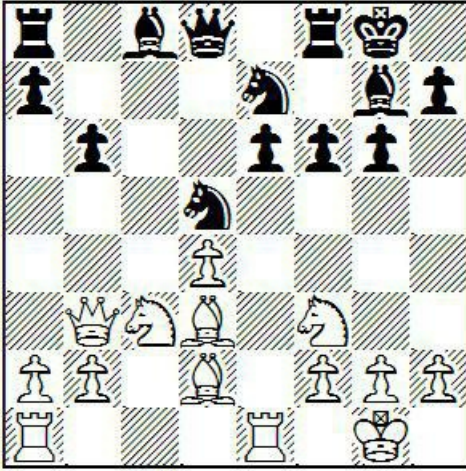
This looks passive, but other squares have some potential problems: for example, 10 Bh4 g5 (or 10 ... Bg7 11 Bd3 0-0 12 0-0 and the bishop may be a target for a future ... g5) 11 Bg3 g4 12 Nd2 Kf7!? is hard to believe, but even after these strange moves how can White defend d4 adequately?

**10 ... Bg7 11 Bd3**

11 Bc4 was the more obvious square, but we must watch out for potential exchanges and here 11 ... Na5 12 Bb5+ Bd7 13 Qa4 Nc6.

**11 ... 0-0 12 0-0 Nce7**

Protecting the d5-square, but also, of course, reducing the pressure on the d4-pawn.

**13 Rfe1 b6**

**Exercise:** What is the best square for the rook on a1?

**Answer:** Placing the rook on the e-file creates the most active role for it, and White has time to do this.

**14 Re2**

Preparing the doubling of rooks. 14 Rac1 is simple, good development as well and then 14 ... Bd7 15 Bc4 Bc8 is the only way to protect d5. Another thematic idea would be 14 Rad1 Qd6 15 h4!?.

**14 ... Kh8 15 Rae1 a6 16 h4!**

Having finished his development, Gashimov starts some activity against Black's weakened kingside with this typical attacking move.

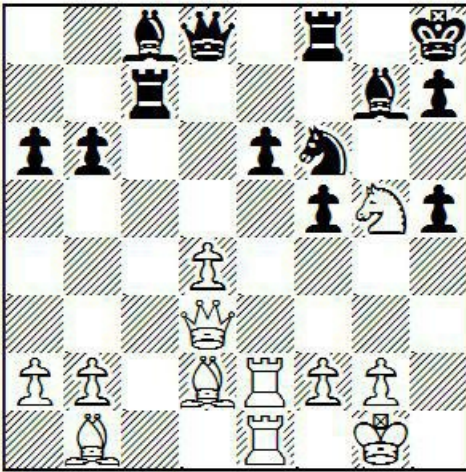
**16 ... Ra7 17 Bb1 Rc7 18 Nxd5**

Also possible was 18 h5 and after 18 ... gxh5 19 Nxd5 Nxd5 20 Qd3 f5 21 Ng5 the e6-pawn falls.

**18 ... Nxd5 19 h5 gxh5**

19 ... g5 20 Rxe6 Bxe6 21 Rxe6 Nf4 22 Bxf4 gxf4 23 Bf5 is an interesting exchange sacrifice for the light squares, although all three results would be possible here.

**20 Qd3 f5 21 Ng5 Nf6**



**22 Qg3?!**

The most direct and principled continuation was 22 Nxe6, and it's not obvious why White didn't take the pawn. After 22 ... Bxe6 23 Rxe6 Ne4 24 Bc3 the position is still a mess, but I am sure we would prefer to be White with the two bishops and safer king.

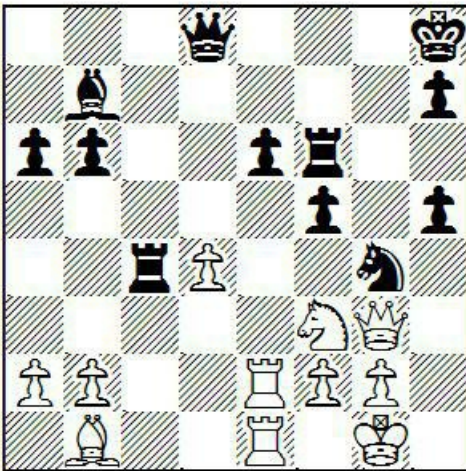
**22 ... Ng4 23 Bf4 Rc4 24 Nf3?**

Again it's not obvious why the pawn on e6 was not taken: 24 Nxe6 Bxe6 25 Rxe6 h4 26 Qf3 and even though d4 can be taken, the long-term damage to the black kingside should tell in the long run.

**24 ... Bb7? 25 Bg5?**

25 Rxe6 Bxd4 26 Bg5 was far better. Maybe both players were in time trouble already.

**25 ... Bf6 26 Bxf6+ Rxf6**



**Exercise:** Can White still capture on e6?

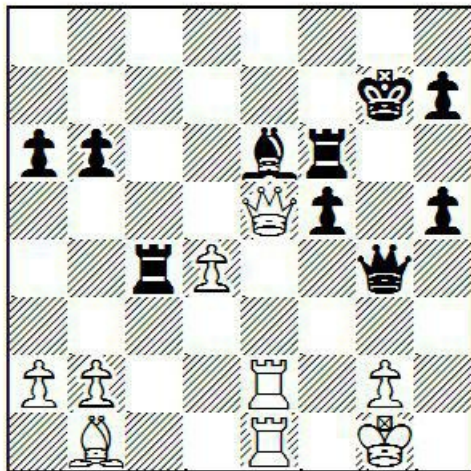
**27 Ng5**

**Answer:** The best move, since the capture was by now bad due to tactical reasons: 27 Rxe6 Rxe6 28 Rxe6 Bxf3 29 gxf3 Rc1+ 30 Kg2 h4 and Black is winning, as shown by, for example, 31 Qf4 h3+ 32 Kxh3 Nxf2+ 33 Kg2 Qg8+ 34 Kxf2 Qg1+ 35 Ke2 Re1+ 36 Kd2 Rxe6.

27 ... Bd5 28 f3

Now the position is dynamically balanced.

28 ... Qg8 29 Nxe6 Bxe6 30 fxe4 Qxg4 31 Qe5 Kg7



It's still quite a messy position, but now the white monarch is feeling a little draughty.

32 Rd2 Bf7 33 Rf1 f4 34 d5 Rc8 35 Rdf2 Re8 36 Qxf6+

A nice tactic to win a pawn, but it only leads to a level endgame.

36 ... Kxf6 37 Rxf4+ Qxf4 38 Rxf4+ Kg7 39 d6 Rd8 40 Rd4 Kf6 41 Rf4+ Kg7 42 Rd4 Kf6 43

Rf4+ Kg7 1/2-1/2

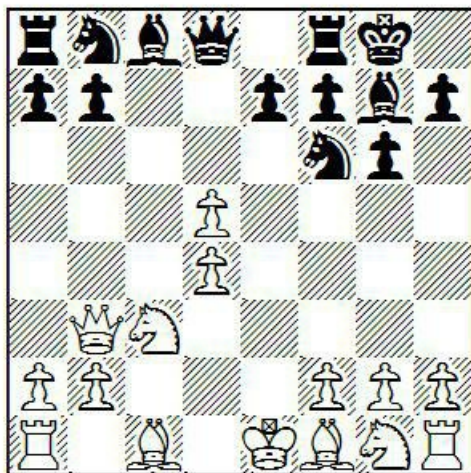
A game where anything could have happened, but I cannot help but feel the opening was a little dodgy for Black.

Game 46

**E.Postny-P.Lagowski**

Olmouc 2004

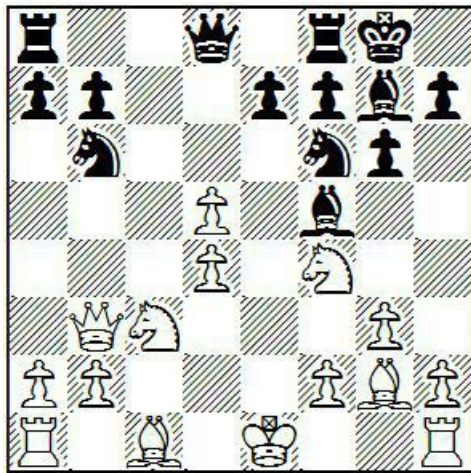
1 c4 c6 2 e4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 d4 Nf6 5 Nc3 g6 6 Qb3 Bg7 7 cxd5 0-0



A key position for this line. The following games will focus on 8 Nge2 and the other way to try and defend

the d5-pawn, with 8 Be2. I have decided to demonstrate both lines, so the reader can pick whichever variation they most prefer.

**8 Nge2 Nbd7 9 g3 Nb6 10 Bg2 Bf5 11 Nf4**

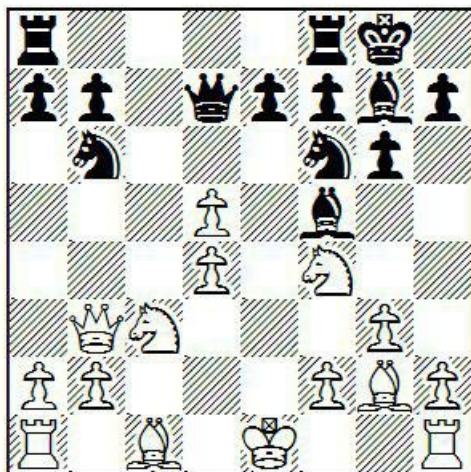


**11 ... g5?**

A mistake as this pawn move is played far too early. Black should keep this move in reserve and develop the other pieces first. Some alternatives:

a) 11 ... h6?! 12 a4 (12 h4, trying to put the brakes on any ... g5 push, is also good: for example, 12 ... Rc8 13 0-0 Qd7 14 a4 Nc4 15 a5 Rfd8 16 Ra4 Nd6 17 Rd1 Nfe4 18 Rb4 Nxc3 19 bxc3 Qc7 20 Bb2 a6 21 Ra1 with a clear extra pawn in A.Sokolov-M.Tsiganova, Helsinki 1992) 12 ... Qd7 13 a5 Nc8 14 Na4 Nd6 15 0-0 g5 16 Nd3 Bh3 17 Ne5 Qf5 18 f3 Bxg2 19 Kxg2 g4 20 Nc3 and Black had managed to get in ... g5, but he still did not recover the d5-pawn in M.Suba-S.Dvoirys, Sochi 1983.

b) 11 ... Qd7



12 a4 (we are seeing this push time and time again, to disrupt Black's coordination, and if the knight is pushed away from b6, then d5 will not be under such intense attack) 12 ... Rac8 13 0-0 Rfd8 14 a5 Nc4 15 Rd1 Nd6 16 Nd3 Bxd3 17 Rxd3 Qf5 18 Qd1 Nde4 19 Qe2 Nxc3 20 bxc3 Nxd5 21 Bd2, as in M.Kobalia-M.Turov, Rimavska Sobota 1996, is possibly Black's best line overall here, but the two bishops and especially the strong one on g2 should mean we prefer White.

c) 11 ... a5 12 a4 Qd6 13 0-0 Rfd8 14 Re1 Kf8 15 Bd2 Qb4 16 Qxb4 axb4 17 Nb5 g5 18 d6! exd6 19 Ne2 Rxa4 20 Rxa4 Nxa4 21 Bxb4 with complications that probably favour White, since d6 is difficult to deal with, P.Tishin-D.Driamin, Samara 2002.

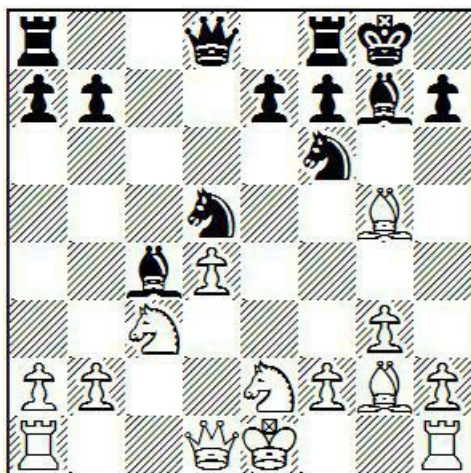
d) 11 ... Rc8 is a natural-looking move too, whereupon play may go 12 0-0 Qd7 13 Rd1 Rfd8 14 a4 Nc4 15 Nd3 Qc7 16 Nc5 Nd6 17 Bf4 and since the d5-pawn is still intact, play is easier for White.

### 12 Nfe2 Bd3?

Continuing with the correct plan, but in the wrong way. Black would like to play ... Bd3-c4 to win the d5-pawn, but ideally without losing the g5-pawn in the process.

Unfortunately, there was already no way back towards equality: for example, 12 ... h6 13 h4 g4 (or 13 ... Nh7 14 hxg5 hxg5 15 a4 and with a5 to come, Black again has a horrible position) 14 Nf4 and the advance of the g-pawn has created nothing but weaknesses, or 12 ... g4 13 Nf4 Qd7 14 0-0 Rfc8 15 a4 Nc4 16 Re1 Rab8 17 Qd1 Bf8 18 Nd3 which also left White better, with d5 secure in J.Franzen-P.Petran, Stary Smokovec 1976.

### 13 Bxg5 Bc4 14 Qd1 Nbx d5



**Question:** Should we take on d5 or not?

**Answer:** It's best to just get castled immediately, since there are pitfalls to be aware of.

### 15 0-0!

15 Nxd5? Bxd5 16 0-0?? Bxg2 17 Kxg2 Qd5+ loses the bishop on g5.

### 15 ... Nxc3 16 bxc3 Qa5

It appears there is some compensation for the pawn, as g5 and c3 are both attacked, but the long-term problem is that of the black king. Without that g-pawn, it will always be open to attack and Postny realizes this to great effect.

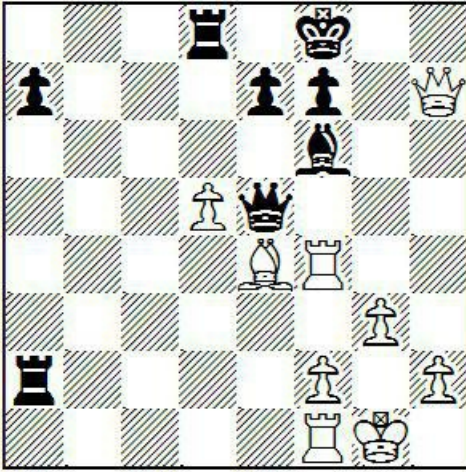
### 17 Bxf6 Bxf6 18 Bxb7 Rab8 19 Be4 Bxe2 20 Qxe2 Qxc3 21 Rad1 Rfd8 22 d5 Qa3?

22 ... Qe5 23 Rfe1 Qg5 was better, but still not brilliant for Black by any means, as he remains a pawn down.

### 23 Rd3 Qd6 24 Qh5

With h7 undefensible, the end is nigh.

### 24 ... Rb2 25 Qxh7+ Kf8 26 Rf3 Rxa2 27 Rf4! Qe5



**Exercise:** How to continue the attack? It appears the king on f8 is safe enough, but White can show that is actually not the case.

**Answer: 28 Bg6! Qxd5**

28 ... fxf6 29 Qh8+ Kf7 30 Qxd8 picks up the rook.

**29 Re1 fxf6 30 Qxe7+!**

The key shot.

**30 ... Kg8 31 Qxf6 1-0**

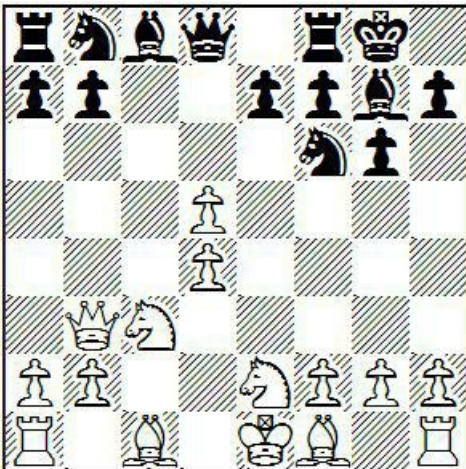
In conclusion, whilst ... g5 undermining the f4-knight makes sense in order to try and win the d5-pawn, timing is everything for Black and this way of playing is pretty risky for him.

Game 47

**J. Borisek-R. Zelic**

European Team Championship, Gothenburg 2005

**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 g6 6 Qb3 Bg7 7 cxd5 0-0 8 Nge2**



**Question:** Again we see this move, but what is the point of it?

**Answer:** The aim is to try and defend the pawn on d5 with Nf4, g3 and Bg2. After this, it will be tough for Black to regain the pawn.

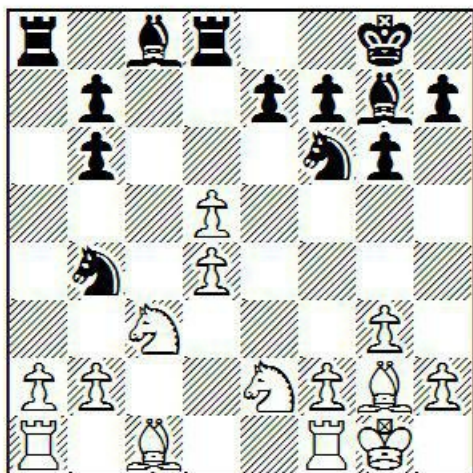
**8 ... Na6 9 g3 Qb6**

**Question:** Why does Black exchange queens?

**Answer:** To try and relieve the pressure on the b7-pawn. Otherwise, how will Black go about carrying out the ... Bf5-d3-c4 plan? The problem is 9 ... Bf5 10 Qxb7 and due to the poor position of the knight on a6, Black doesn't have compensation for two pawns.

**10 Qxb6 axb6 11 Bg2 Nb4 12 0-0 Rd8**

It seems that Black should be winning back the pawn on d5, as he planned.



**Question:** What can we do about this?

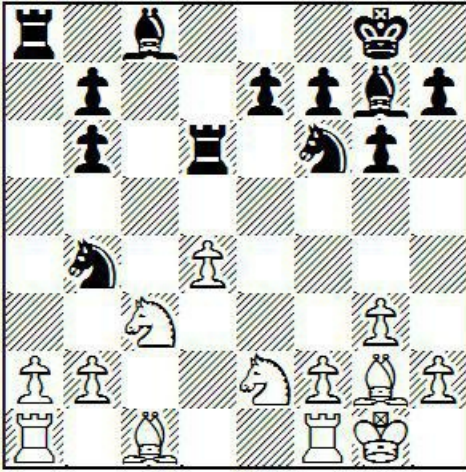
**Answer: 13 d6!**

This move throws a spanner in the works. This thematic advance tries to prevent Black from going about his intended idea of taking on d5 and playing against the IQP on d4.

13 a3 Nbx d5 14 Re1 Bf5 15 Bg5 Rd7 looks fine for Black, since he has developed in a fairly standard way.

**13 ... Rxd6**

13 ... exd6 is playable, although in the following famous game it did not work out too well: 14 Bg5 Re8 15 a3 Nc6 16 Rfe1 Bg4 17 Bxf6 Bxf6 18 Nd5 Bd8 19 Nec3 Rxe1+ 20 Rxe1 Ra5 (20 ... Nxd4 21 Re8+ Kg7 22 Nxb6 Rb8 23 Nc4 is no better) 21 Ne3 Bd7 22 Nc4 Ra8 23 d5 Nd4 24 Nxd6 was just clearly better for White in M.Tal-M.Botvinnik, Moscow 1966.



**14 Bf4 Rd7**

Not the most pleasant square, but the rook had to go here as 14 ... Rd8 15 Bc7 wins the b6-pawn.

**15 Be5 Nfd5?**

This move looks obvious, but it runs into a clever idea. Black does better with:

a) 15 ... Nbd5 16 Rfe1 Rd8 17 Nf4 Nxf4 18 Bxf4 e6 19 Rad1 Ne8 20 d5 was C.Bauer-K.Arkell, Wroxham

2002, with the initiative for White.

b) 15 ... Nc6 is untested, but could be worth a try.

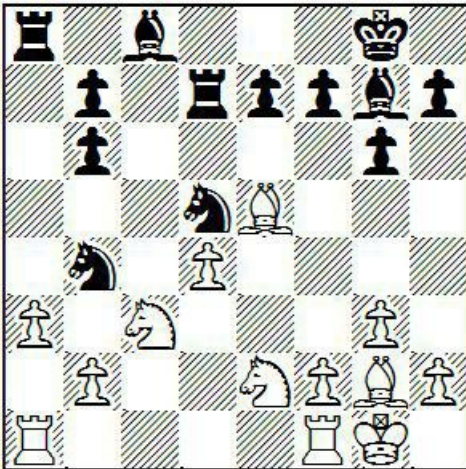
c) 15 ... e6 is the current trend as I write. 16 Rfd1 Nc6 (not 16 ... Ne8 17 Bxg7 Kxg7 18 a3 Nd5 19 Nxd5

exd5 20 Nf4 Nf6 21 Rac1 with the sort of position Black should try to avoid, M.Yilmaz-V.Hamitevici, Chotowa

2010) 17 a3 Nxe5 18 dxe5 Ng4 19 f4 Ne3 20 Rxd7 Bxd7 21 Bxb7 Ra7 22 Bh1 f6 gave Black some

compensation for the pawn but not more than that in D.Navara-G.Kamsky, Istanbul Olympiad 2012.

**16 a3**



**16 ... Nxc3**

Forced.

**17 bxc3**

17 Nxc3 was more natural, but the game move induces a mistake. Here 17 ... Nc2 18 Rad1 Ra5 (18 ...

Nxd4 looks good, but the lack of development may come to haunt Black, although after 19 Bxg7 Kxg7 20 Nd5

Ne2+ 21 Kh1 Rd6 22 Nxe7 Nd4 somehow he is surviving) 19 Bxg7 Kxg7 20 d5 saw Black hold the draw in M.Neubauer-A.David, Port Erin 2005, but again he was the one having to find only moves to save the errant knight on c2.

**17 ... Nc2??**

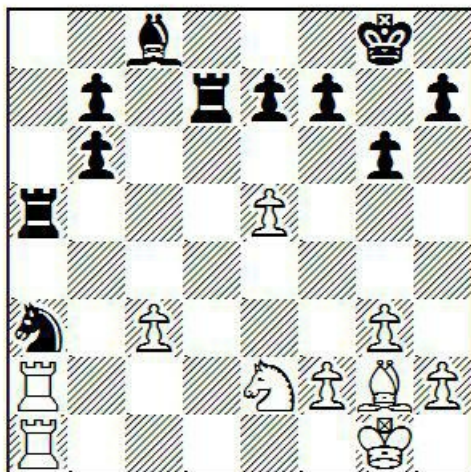
We saw the knight going to c2 in the previous note, but here Black has missed something.

Instead, 17 ... Nc6 18 Bxg7 Kxg7 19 Rfb1 Rd6 20 Nf4 e5 21 Nd5 exd4 (21 ... Bf5 22 Rxb6 exd4 23 cxd4 Rad8 24 Ne3 Rxd4 25 Rxb7 again left Black trying to save his position in D.Lintchevski-K.Maslak, Peterhof 2006) 22 Nc7 Bf5 (22 ... Ra5 23 Ne8+ picks up the d6-rook, the one forced to d6 earlier when White played 13 d6) 23 Nxa8 Bxb1 24 Rxb1 dxc3 25 Rc1 was just winning too for White in Comp Shredder 7-J.Molina, Vicente Lopez 2003, so perhaps Black must try 17 ... Nd5, even though 18 Bxg7 Kxg7 19 a4 leaves him in a tangle and the doubled b-pawns a target.

**18 Ra2 Bxe5 19 dxe5 Nxa3**

19 ... Rd2 20 Nd4 wins the c2-knight due to the pin on d2.

**20 Rfa1 Ra5**



**Exercise:** The position is razor sharp. Can White capture on a3 safely in this position? If not, what can we do?

**Answer:** There is a trap!

**21 e6!**

21 Rxa3?? runs into the trick: 21 ... Rxa3 22 Rxa3 Rd1+ 23 Bf1 Bh3 and mate is unavoidable on f1. However, with the game move, 21 e6!, the c8-bishop is blocked towards h3 and gains White a crucial move to win the knight on a3. In sharp positions, such moves can change the whole game, as here.

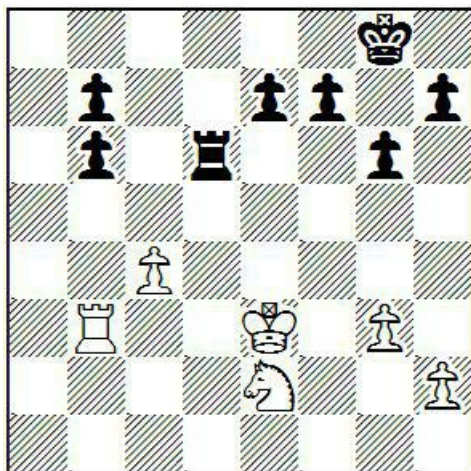
**21 ... Rd6**

Or 21 ... fxe6 22 Rxa3 Rxa3 23 Rxa3 Rd1+ 24 Bf1 and without a bishop on h3 in this position, Black is just a piece down with bad doubled pawns to boot.

**22 Rxa3 Rxa3 23 Rxa3 Rd1+ 24 Bf1 Bxe6**

Now there is a threat of ... Bh3, but it is White's turn.

**25 Kg2 Bd5+ 26 f3 Bxf3+ 27 Kxf3 Rxf1+ 28 Ke3 Rd1 29 Rb3 Rd6 30 c4**



Even though Black has limped to this position with equal material, those doubled b-pawns will cost him and White's careful play leads to the full point.

**30 ... Re6+ 31 Kd3 Rd6+ 32 Kc2 Rc6 33 Kc3 Kg7 34 Nf4 e6 35 Nd3 g5 36 Nb2 f5 37 Na4**

Now b6 is lost.

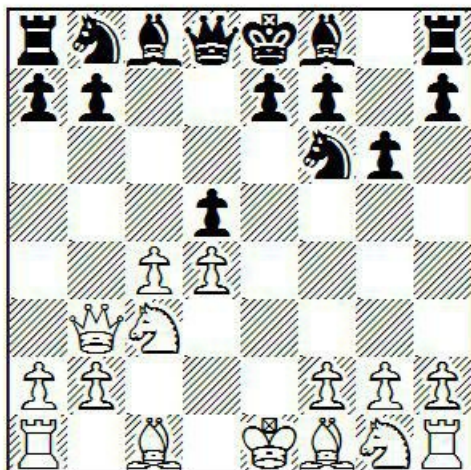
**37 ... Kf6 38 Nxb6 Rd6 39 Na4 f4 40 gxf4 gxf4 41 Nc5 Rd1 42 Rxb7 f3 43 Rb8 Ke7 44 Ne4 e5 45 Rb5 Rc1+ 46 Kd3 Ke6 47 Rb6+ Ke7 48 Rb7+ Kf8 49 Rxh7 Re1 50 Rh3 1-0**

Game 48

**E.Bacrot-V.Iordachescu**

French Team Championship 2010

**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 g6 6 Qb3**



This move is overwhelmingly the most popular move in this position.

**Question:** Why is that?

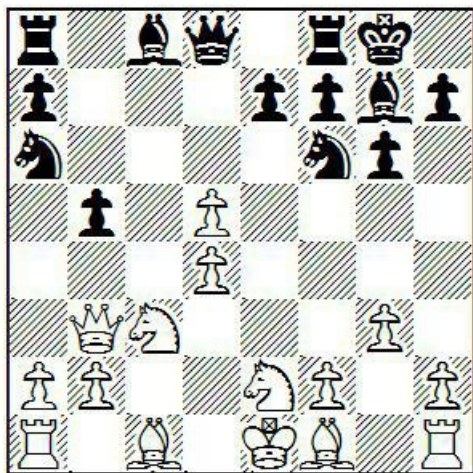
**Answer:** The point is with ... g6 rather than ... e6. Black hasn't defended the d5-pawn, so White can make

a quick attack on it. Black is hard-pressed to try and defend it without getting on the wrong end of things.

### 6 ... Bg7

After 6 ... dxc4 7 Bxc4 e6 White has a number of moves, but maybe 8 d5!?, striking out immediately, is best: 8 ... Nxd5 9 Nxd5 exd5 10 Bxd5 Qe7+ 11 Kf1 Na6 12 Qb5+ Bd7 13 Qxb7 Rb8 14 Qxa6 Bb5+ 15 Qxb5+ Rxb5 16 Bc6+ Kd8 17 Bxb5 left White with too much material for the queen in S.Arslanov-A.Klyuev, St Petersburg 2012.

### 7 cxd5 0-0 8 Nge2 Na6 9 g3 b5!?



Not the only move, but a provocative one that should keep White on his toes in comparison to the 9 ... Qb6 of the previous game.

**Question:** Is there not a free pawn on offer here?

**Answer:** Well, yes, there is, but Black is ahead in development and become even more so if White captures it.

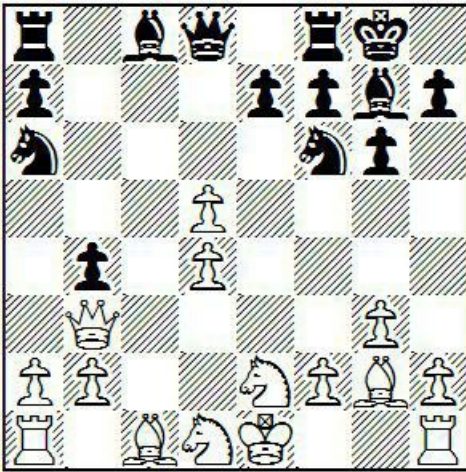
### 10 Bg2

After 10 Qxb5 Rb8 11 Qa4 Nb4!, threatening ... Nd3+ as well as ... Bf5 with ... Nc2+ ideas, White is far too behind in development.

Instead, 10 Nxb5 Nxd5 11 Bg2 Be6 12 Qd1 Qa5+ 13 Nbc3 (not 13 Nec3? Rab8 when the knights are in a bit of a mess) 13 ... Nxc3 14 bxc3 was tried in M.Adams-J.Granda Zuniga, Madrid 1998, and now 14 ... Rab8!?

### 10 ... b4 11 Nd1

It looks like we are going backwards, but from here the knight can go to e3 to defend d5.



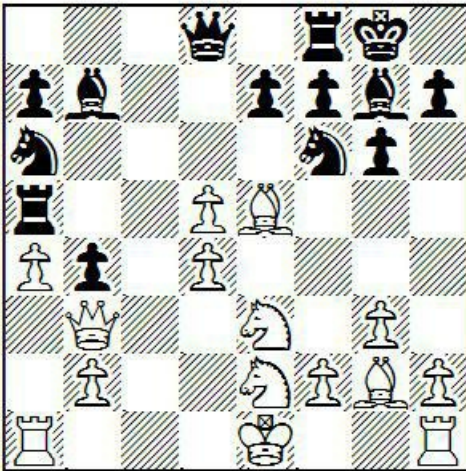
**11 ... Rb8**

11 ... Bg4 12 Ne3 Bxe2 13 Kxe2 is no problem because d5 is secure and Black cannot get anywhere near the king on e2.

**12 Bf4 Rb5 13 Ne3 Bb7 14 a4! Ra5**

After 14 ... Rb6 15 0-0 Qd7 16 Be5 Rd8 17 Nc4 and the rook ends up being trapped anyway.

**15 Be5**

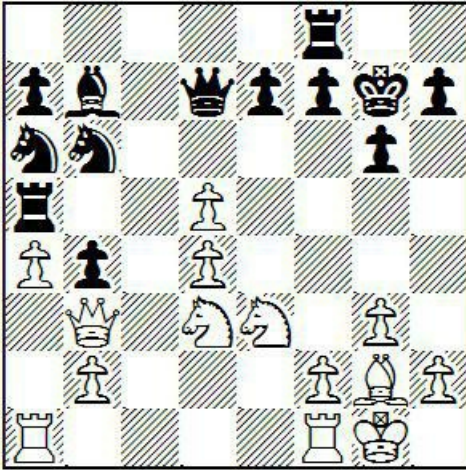


As we discussed in the Introduction, here the doubled d-pawns really hinder Black's position. Whilst he may end up winning the d5- (or d4-) pawn at some stage, White can cause havoc in the meantime. White also again has the timely d5-d6 disrupting mechanism to throw Black off course.

**15 ... Nd7 16 Bxg7 Kxg7 17 Nf4 Nb6 18 0-0 Qd7**

Alternatively, 18 ... Bc8 19 Nd3 Bd7 20 Nc5 Qc8 21 Nxd7 Qxd7 22 Rfc1 Rc8 23 Rxc8 Qxc8 24 Bf1 Qd7 25 Bb5 Qd6 26 Rc1 Nc7 27 Rxc7 Qxc7 28 Qxb4 Nc8 29 Qc5 Qd8 30 b4, M.Turov-D.Dubov, Jermuk 2011, was another example of a top player suffering on the black side in this variation; the rook is simply trapped on a5.

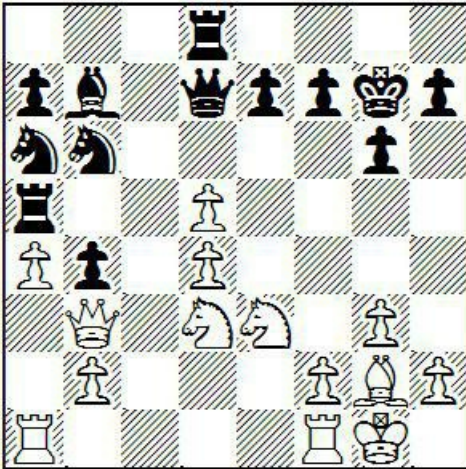
**19 Nd3**



**19 ... Rd8**

**Exercise:** Can you see what happens if Black captures on d5 now with the knight? Put those tactical antennae on.

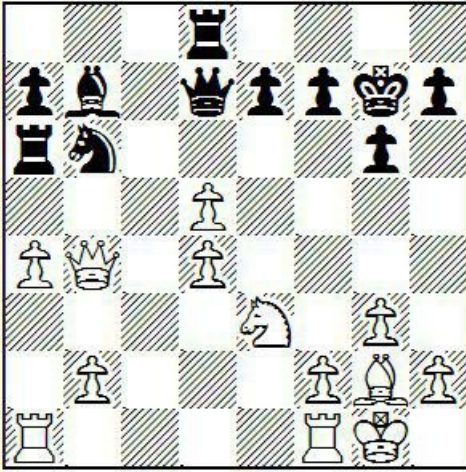
**Answer:** If 19 ... Nxd5 then 20 Nc4 wins the rook on a5 (20 Ne5 Qd8 21 N3c4 is also strong). Note too 19 ... Bxd5 20 Nxd5 Nxd5 21 Ne5 Qb7 22 Nc4! – this trick keeps on coming up.



**20 Nxb4**

This wins two pawns, but there was an even better move in 20 Rfe1!. The idea is to wait until Black takes on d5: for example, 20 ... Nxd5 (or 20 ... Bxd5 21 Nxd5 Nxd5 22 Ne5 Qe8 23 Nc4!) 21 Ne5 Qc7 22 Rac1 Qb8 23 N3c4! is similar to the line given above.

**20 ... Nxb4 21 Qxb4 Ra6**



**22 d6!**

This disruptive move means Black does not even gain the d5-pawn in compensation.

**22 ... Bxg2**

22 ... exd6 23 Bxb7 Qxb7 24 a5 wins the knight on b6.

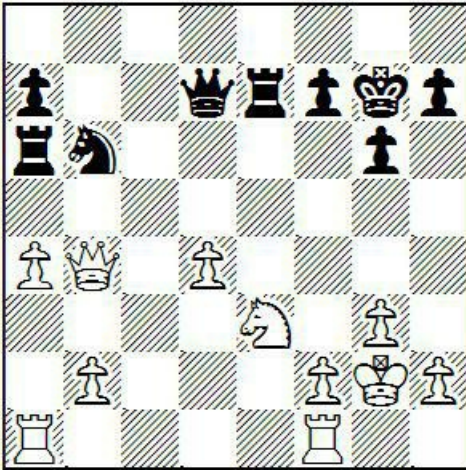
**23 dxe7**

A neat little zwischenzug.

**23 ... Re8**

23 ... Bxf1 24 exd8Q Qxd8 25 Kxf1 Nd5 was probably the best hope, but it's still two pawns.

**24 Kxg2 Rxe7**



Two pawns ahead, White should be winning. Clearly, though, there are some technical difficulties to overcome.

**25 Rfe1 Re4 26 Qb5**

Exchanging off when ahead is usually a good idea.

**26 ... Qxb5 27 axb5 Rxa1 28 Rxa1 Rxd4 29 Rxa7 Rb4 30 Rb7 Nc8**

Otherwise, 30 ... Rxb5 31 Nc4 wins the knight, while after 30 ... Na4 31 h4 Rxb2 32 Nc4 Rb4 33 Nd6 the f7 point falls as in the game.

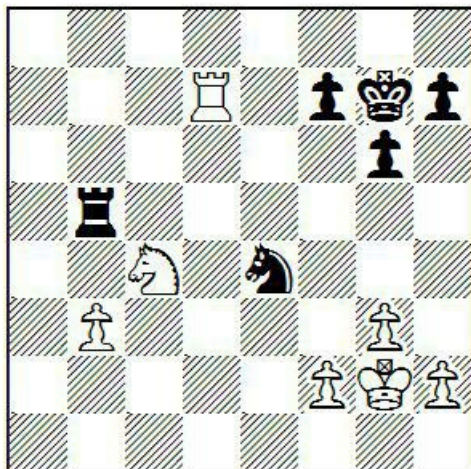
**31 b3 Nd6**

If 31 ... Rxb3 32 Nc4 Rc3 (or 32 ... Rb4 33 Rc7) 33 b6 Rxc4 34 Rxf7+! Kxf7 35 b7 and the pawn queens.

**32 Rd7 Ne4**

32 ... Nxb5 33 Nc4 Kf6 34 Rd3 Ke6 would have made White work much harder for the win.

**33 Nc4 Rxb5**



It appears that Black might be getting close to a draw, but the well-coordinated pieces on c4 and d7 are able to do the job.

**34 Re7 Nc3 35 Nd6 Rxb3 36 Rxf7+ Kh6**

36 ... Kg8 37 Rf3 also works.

**37 Rf3**

This sudden switchback pins the knight and now Black is in serious trouble once again.

**37 ... Ra3 38 Nc4**

38 Ne4? Nb5 escapes.

**38 ... Rb3 39 Rd3 Kg7 40 h4**

Patience is key.

**40 ... Kg8 41 Nd6 Ra3 42 Ne4 1-0**

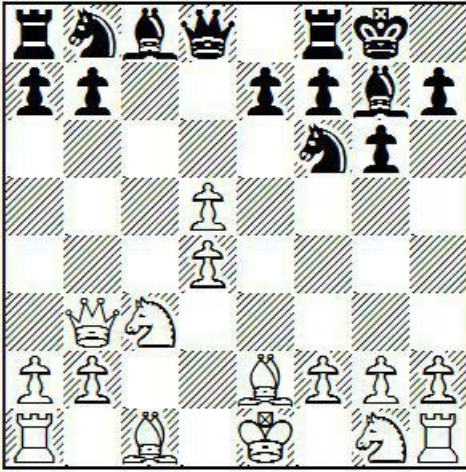
Black resigned as after 42 ... Nb5 there is 43 Rd8+ Kg7 44 Rd7+ and h7 will be lost after 44 ... Kg8 45 Nf6+.

Game 49

**R.Kasimdzhанov-P.Schuurman**

Vlissingen 2007

**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 g6 6 Qb3 Bg7 7 cxd5 0-0 8 Be2**



**Question:** What is the point of this move as compared to 8 Nge2 line which we have looked at so far?

**Answer:** White wishes to continue in similar vein, by playing the bishop to f3 and then bringing the knight to e2 in order to gain control over d5. The arising positions will be fairly similar to those in the 8 Nge2 line except Black cannot play the ... b5 idea which we saw in the previous game.

**Question:** He can't?

**Answer:** Okay, he can, but it's not good.

**8 ... Na6**

Alternatives:

a) 8 ... Nbd7 is the subject of the next game.

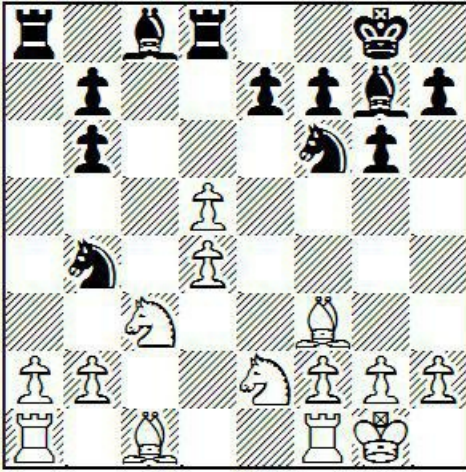
b) 8 ... b6 is an interesting counter-try: 9 Bf3 Bb7 10 Nge2 Qd7 11 0-0 Rd8 12 Nf4 Na6 (at least here Black gets developed and wants to play the knight to c7 to attack d5) 13 Re1 Rab8 14 h3 Nc7 15 Qa3 Bf8 16 Qxa7 Ba6 17 d6 Qxd6 18 Nfd5 Nfxd5 19 Nxd5 Nxd5 20 Qxa6 Nb4 21 Qe2 Rbc8 22 Be4 Qxd4 23 Bg5 Nd3 24 Bxd3 Qxd3 25 Bxe7 Qxe2 was a complicated draw in S.Kindermann-L.B.Hansen, German League 2002.

**9 Bf3 Qb6**

This move was explained earlier in this chapter.

9 ... b5!? is actually playable, although it looks a bit risky with a bishop on f3 pointing towards a8. After 10 a3 Rb8 11 Bf4 Rb6 12 Nge2 Bf5 13 Rd1 Qd7 14 0-0 Rc8 15 Rc1 Rc4 16 Qa2 Bg4 17 Bxg4 Nxg4 18 b3 Rc8 19 Qd2 Rd8 we see that thematic move again: 20 d6 exd6 21 Nd5 Rb7 22 Qa5 with advantage in H.Koneru-A.Stefanova, Kazan 2012.

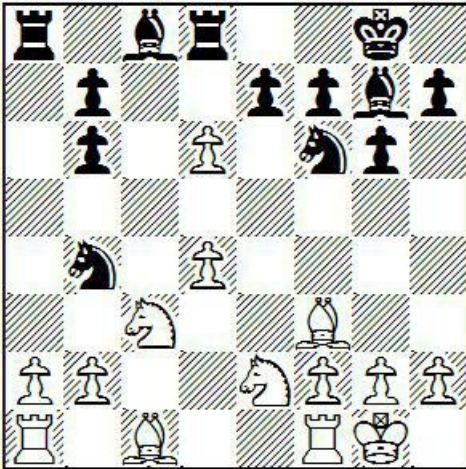
**10 Qxb6 axb6 11 Nge2 Nb4 12 0-0 Rd8**



**Exercise:** What to do about the d5-pawn?

**Answer: 13 d6!**

Excellent. You have been reading! Instead, 13 a3 Nbx d5 14 Re1 Be6 15 Bg5 h6 is the sort of position White wishes to avoid. The c8-bishop is now playing a prominent role, which is more than can be said in our main game.

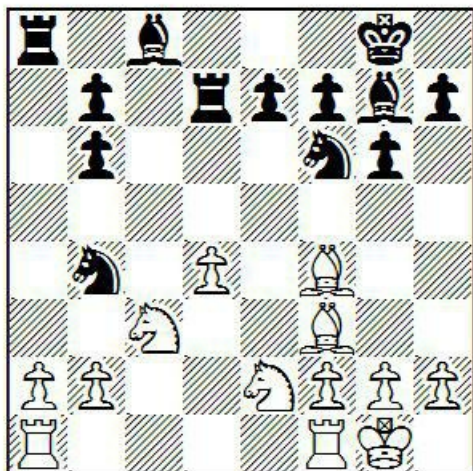


**13 ... Rxd6**

After 13 ... exd6 now 14 Nd5 is not on, since the d-file is closed, but after the 14 Bg5 h6 15 Bxf6 Bxf6 16 Rfd1 Kg7 17 a3 Nc6 18 Nd5 Ra6 of M.Wahls-J.Hickl, German League 1989, 19 Nxf6 Kxf6 20 Nc3 Kg7 21 Rac1 Bf5 22 d5 Ne5 23 Be2 Raa8 24 f4 looks promising.

**14 Bf4 Rd7**

Again, 14 ... Rd8 is met by 15 Bc7, winning the b6-pawn.



### 15 Rad1

Logical, but far from forced:

a) 15 Be5 Nd3 16 Bxf6 Bxf6 17 Nd5 Rd6 18 Nec3 Nxb2 19 Ne4 Rd8 20 Nexf6+ exf6 21 Nxb6 Ra7 22 Rfb1 Nd3 23 Nxc8 Rxc8 24 Bxb7 and Black did not hold this ending in A.Naiditsch-M.Turov, French League 2011.

b) 15 Rfd1 is actually the most popular. Play can continue 15 ... Nfd5 16 Bg3 Nxc3 17 bxc3 Nc6 18 Nf4 Ra5 with the idea of preventing Nd5 and preparing the ... e5 break.

### 15 ... Nfd5

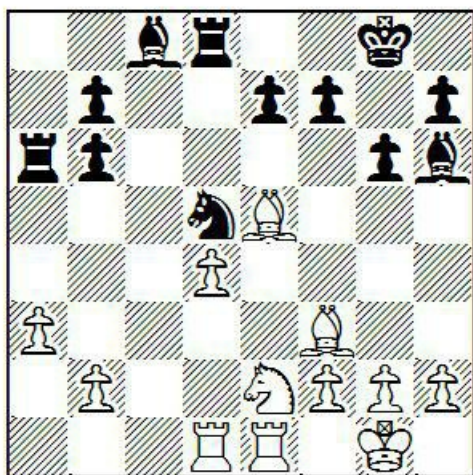
15 ... Nbd5 is logical. After 16 Be5 Rd8 if ... Be6 can be played Black will be okay, but now a series of exchanges gives White the advantage: 17 Nxd5 Nxd5 18 Bxg7 Kxg7 19 Bxd5 Rxd5 20 Nc3 Rd6 21 Rfe1 Re6 22 d5 Rxe1+ 23 Rxe1 Kf8 24 Re4 Bd7 25 Rb4 Ra6 26 f4 with a clearly better endgame for White since b6 will always need attention, J.Degraeve-J.Saada, Saint Affrique 2011.

Instead, 15 ... Nxa2? 16 Ra1! wins the knight.

### 16 Be5 Bh6 17 Nxd5

After 17 a3 Nxc3 18 Nxc3 Nc6 19 Nd5 Ra6 20 Rfe1 Black's pieces lack coordination, even though he is not down on material.

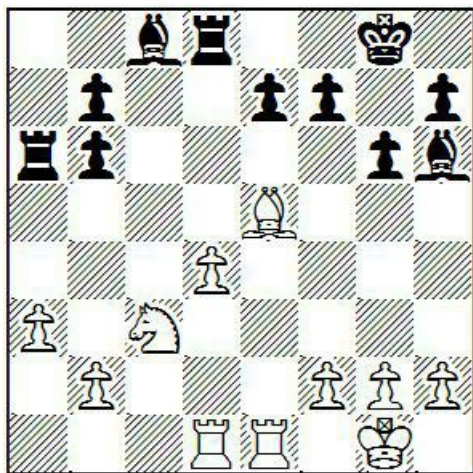
### 17 ... Nxd5 18 a3 Ra6 19 Rfe1 Rd8



**Exercise:** We have seen already that Black plays this move in order to be able to develop the bishop on c8. How can White now prevent Black just going ... Be6 and holding the d5-square?

**Answer:** As in the note to 15 ... Nbd5, above, White can make a useful exchange before pushing the d-pawn.

**20 Bxd5 Rxd5 21 Nc3 Rd8**



**22 d5**

Now the d5-square is under White's control and the light-squared bishop is not so effective.

**22 ... Bf5 23 d6**

Something like 23 h3 is also a useful move, since it's not clear what Black can do here.

**23 ... exd6 24 Bf6! Rc8**

24 ... Rd7 25 Re8+ Bf8 26 Nd5 with Ne7+ to come is winning.

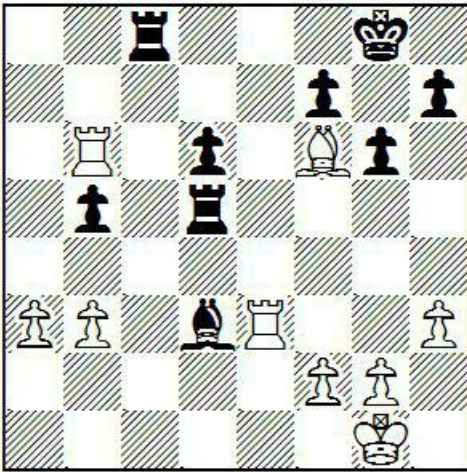
**25 Nd5 Bf8 26 Ne7+ Bxe7 27 Rxe7**

The rook has reached the seventh rank and the f6-bishop is very well placed too. Of course, Black is still quite solid and there is plenty of work left to do.

**27 ... b5 28 Rxb7 Bd3**

The bishop is immune due to mate on c1.

**29 h3 Bc4 30 Re1 Rac6 31 Re3 Rc5 32 Rb6 Rd5 33 b3 Bd3**



**Exercise:** Work out how White can make progress here.

**Answer:** Get the pawns moving!

**34 g4!**

34 h4 h5 is less effective.

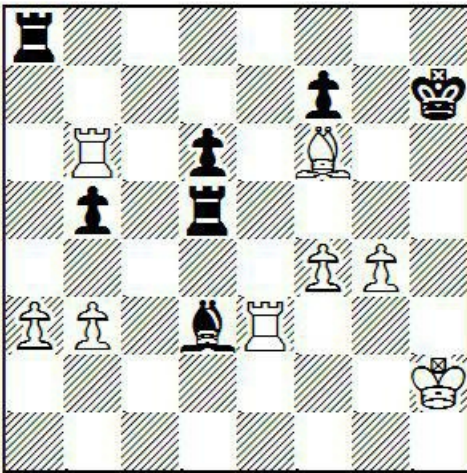
**34 ... g5**

Now if 34 ... h5 35 Kg2 Kh7 36 Kg3 and with the f-pawn ready to go, the initiative will always be with White.

**35 Bxg5 h5**

After 35 ... Rxd3 36 Rxd3 h5 37 f4 Rg7 38 g5 too many black pawns are loose.

**36 Bf6 hxg4 37 hxg4 Kh7 38 Kh2 Ra8 39 f4**



**39 ... Kg6**

**Question:** Why can Black not take on a3?

**Answer:** The back rank is too weak: 39 ... Rxa3 40 Rb8 Kg6 41 Bb2 Ra2 42 Rg8+ Kh7 43 Rg7+ Kh6 44 Rh3+ with mate to follow.

**40 Be7 Rxa3 41 Bxd6 Ra2+**

If 41 ... Rxb3 42 Be5+ Kh7 43 Rh3+ Kg8 44 Rh8# and there's that mate again.

**42 Kg3 Re2 43 Be5+ Kh7 44 Rxe2 Bxe2 45 Kh4**

Black's king is too weak from him to hold this rook and opposite-coloured bishop ending.

**45 ... Bd1 46 b4 Rd2 47 Kg5**

With the idea of Rh6 and mate on h8. The general rule is: opposite-coloured bishops favour the side who is attacking, and that is clearly White in this position.

**47 ... f6+**

Or 47 ... Rg2 48 Rh6+ Kg8 49 Rh8#.

**48 Rxf6 Rg2 49 Rh6+ Kg8 50 Rh4 Be2 51 Kf5 1-0**

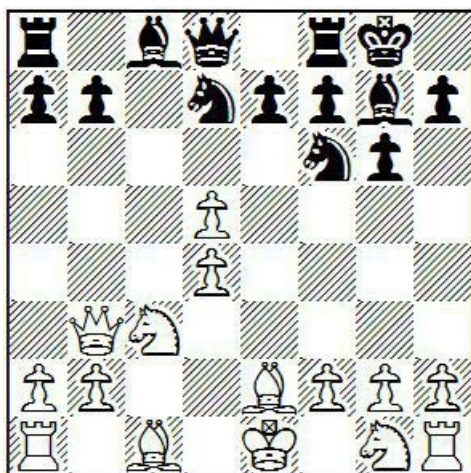
Game 50

**R.Mainka-J.Fries Nielsen**

Germany League 1989

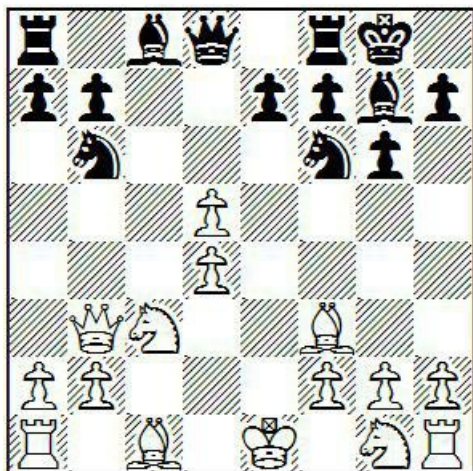
**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 g6 6 Qb3 Bg7 7 cxd5 0-0 8 Be2 Nbd7**

So rather than playing the knight to the edge of the board, as we have just seen, here we see a more normal-looking approach which is to play it to b6 to attack d5.



**9 Bf3 Nb6**

This is quite a key position as there are a number of moves for White. Whilst the main game will demonstrate my choice, the alternatives are certainly playable.



## 10 Bg5

Alternatives:

a) 10 Nge2 Bg4 (10 ... Bf5!? 11 0-0 a5 12 Bf4 Bd3 13 d6 exd6 14 Qd1 Ba6 15 b3 h6 16 h3 Nh7 17 g3 Rc8 18 Bg2 Re8 19 Re1 Nf6 20 Rc1 Qd7 21 Qd2 Kh7 is roughly equal but left plenty to play for in S.Dolmatov-M.Adams, Hastings 1989/90) 11 Bxg4 Nxg4 12 a4 a5 13 0-0 Qd6 14 Bf4 Qb4 15 Qd1 Rfd8 (White was happy too with 15 ... Nf6 16 d6 exd6 17 Ra3 Nfd5 18 Rb3 Qc4 19 Bxd6 Rfe8 20 Nxd5 Nxd5 21 Rd3 in B.Sambuev-B.Cheng, Toronto 2011) 16 d6 exd6 17 Nb5 Nf6 18 b3 Ne4 19 f3 Nc5 20 Rb1 1-0 S.Ter Sahakyan-G.Botta, Chennai 2011.

b) 10 a4 a5 11 Nge2 Bf5 12 0-0 Bd3 13 d6 exd6 14 Bxb7 Rb8 15 Bc6 Nbd5 16 Qd1 Nb4 17 Bb5 Bc2 18 Qd2 (Black has some compensation because the white pieces are in a bit of a jam, but in this game White managed to unravel and convert the extra pawn) 18 ... Ne4 19 Nxe4 Bxe4 20 Ra3 Qb6 21 Qf4 Qb7 22 Rg3 and White was consolidating in B.Rogulj-G.Markotic, Porec 1994.

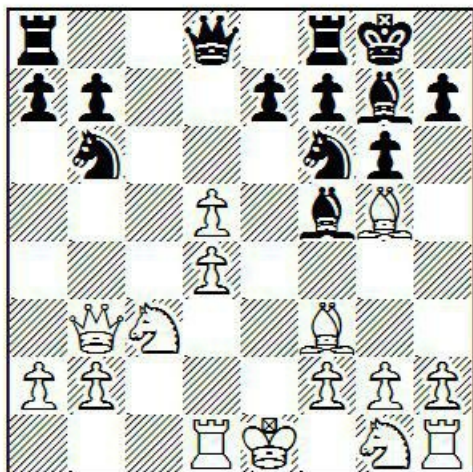
c) 10 Bf4 Bg4 11 Bxg4 Nxg4 12 Nf3 Nf6 13 d6 exd6 14 0-0 Nh5 15 Bg5 Qd7 16 a4 Rae8 17 a5 Nc8 18 Rfe1 Ne7 19 Bxe7 Rxe7 20 Rxe7 Qxe7 21 Re1 Qd7 22 Qb5 was another example of the d6 push giving White control, B.Gulko-R.Delaune, New York 1998.

d) 10 h3 Bf5 11 Nge2 Bd3 12 d6 (again!) 12 ... exd6 13 Bxb7 Rb8 14 Bf3 Nbd5 15 Qd1 Nxc3 16 Qxd3 Nxe2 17 Bxe2 Nd5 18 0-0 Rb4 19 Bf3 Ne7 20 a3 Rxd4 21 Qa6, as in M.Brodsky-W.Sapis, Jaroslawiec 1997, is maybe a tiny bit better for White with the two bishops and better pawn structure.

## 10 ... Bf5

Otherwise, 10 ... h6 11 Bxf6 Bxf6 12 Nge2 Bg7 13 0-0 Rb8 14 Rad1 Na8 15 Nf4 Qd6 16 Nd3 Nc7 17 Ne5 Qb6 18 Qc2 Bf5 19 Qe2 Rbd8 20 Nc4 Qf6 21 Na5 Bc8 22 Rfe1 seemed pleasant for White in E.Safarli-A.Potapov, Voronezh 2009, while 10 ... Bg4 leads to mass exchanges. Maybe Black should be okay here, but the results seem to be in White's favour: for example, 11 Bxf6 Bxf3 12 Nxf3 Bxf6 13 a4 a5 14 0-0 Qd6 15 Ra3 Rfd8 16 Ne4 Qb4 17 d6 Nc4 18 Qxb4 axb4 19 Rb3 Rxa4 20 Nc5 Ra2 21 dxe7 Bxe7 22 Rxb4 Nxb2 23 Rxb7 Bxc5 24 dxc5 Rc8 25 Ne5 Rxc5 26 Nxf7 Nd3 27 Rd1 Rcc2 28 g4 Rab2 29 Nh6+ Kh8 30 Rxb2 Nxb2 31 Rd8+ Kg7 32 g5 1-0 K.Berg-H.Molvig, Copenhagen 1994.

## 11 Rd1



**Question:** Why this move rather than developing the knight on g1?

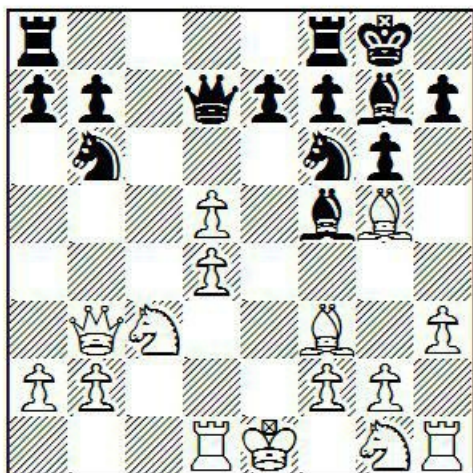
**Answer:** To prevent the ... Bd3 and then ... Bc4 idea, which would round up the d5-pawn. Since the e-file is not open, the knight's development can be delayed by one move.

**11 ... Qd7**

Alternatively, 11 ... Qc8 12 Nge2 Bg4 13 Bxg4 Qxg4 14 Bxf6 Bxf6 15 0-0 Rfd8 16 Rfe1 Qc8 17 Ne4 Nxd5 18 N2c3 Qc6 19 Nxd5 Qxd5? (a blunder which shows off a very nice tactic to know) 20 Nxf6+ exf6 21 Re8+! 1-0 was L.Shytaj-F.Levin, Bratto 2008.

**12 h3**

Again preventing the sortie to g4 which would trade off the f3-bishop which is needed to hold d5.



**12 ... h5**

12 ... h6 13 Bxf6 exf6 14 Nge2 h5 15 0-0 h4 16 Nc1 Rad8 17 Rfe1 leads to a similar position to the game.

**13 Nge2 Nc8**

13 ... Rfd8 gives us two options: 14 d6 exd6 15 0-0 d5 16 Nf4 Re8 17 Bxf6 Bxf6 18 Nfxd5 Nxd5 19 Nxd5 Bg7 20 Ne3 with a pawn advantage, or 14 Bxf6 Bxf6 15 Ng3 Nc8 16 0-0 Nd6 17 Rfe1 Rac8 with a position like in the main game.

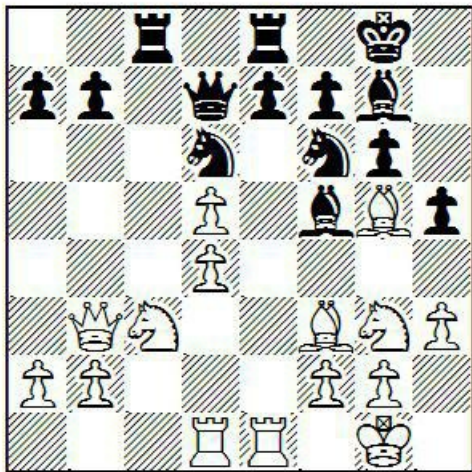
**14 0-0**

Finally!

**14 ... Nd6 15 Ng3 Rac8 16 Rfe1 Rfe8**

This is the sort of position that typifies this ... g6 variation where Black allows White to win the pawn on d5.

Whilst the d-pawns are securely blockaded, what they do is limit the scope of almost all of Black's pieces and prevent any active plans. What we see now is a slow build-up from White, while counterplay is hard to come by from Black's point of view.



**17 Bf4 b6 18 Be2**

Eyeing up the newly weakened squares on the queenside.

**18 ... h4 19 Nxf5 Qxf5 20 Be5 Qd7**

20 ... Nd7, trying to exchange pieces, doesn't work due to 21 Bg4!, while after 20 ... Nfe4 21 Bf3 Black has nothing better than to retreat with 21 ... Nf6.

**21 Ba6 Rcd8 22 Re2 Nh5 23 Qc2 Rf8**

Over the past few moves the black rooks have been reduced to complete passivity.

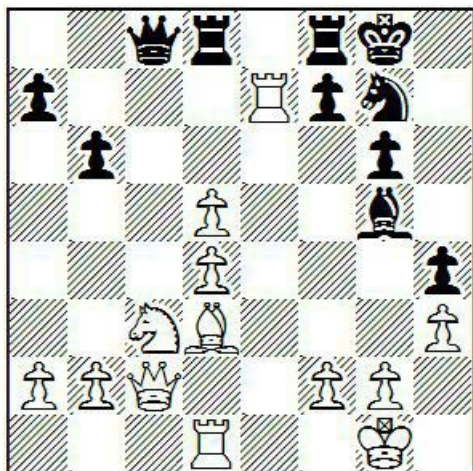
**24 Qd2 Nf5 25 Bb5 Qc8 26 Qc2 Bh6 27 Bd3 Nhg7**

27 ... f6 28 Bxf5 Qxf5 29 Qxf5 gxf5 30 Bh2 Kf7 31 Rde1 is no better.

**28 Bxg7 Nxg7**

28 ... Bxg7 29 Bxf5 Qxf5 30 Qxf5 gxf5 31 Rxe7 is just hopeless.

**29 Rxe7 Bg5**



### 30 Re2

Just keeping control and not taking the bait on a7, although was possible too.

### 30 ... Bf4 31 Re4 Bb8 32 Rxf4

A third pawn goes from absolutely nowhere and so does Black's position.

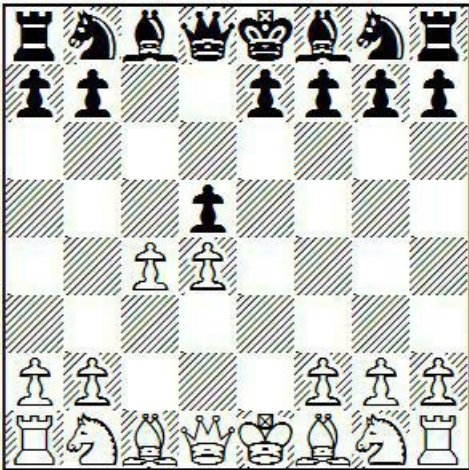
### 32 ... Qd7 33 Qd2 Qd6 34 g3 1-0

Probably out of disgust, Black resigned. He had no counterplay the whole game long.

# Chapter Seven

## Minor Lines

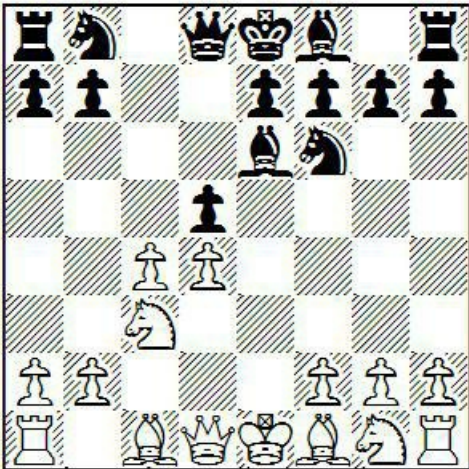
1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4



In this final chapter we will examine the odds and ends that may crop up sporadically if your opponent is looking to surprise you in the Panov.

Game 51  
**A.Zhigalko-E.Agrest**  
 European Club Cup, Eilat 2012

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Be6



This bishop move may look odd, but it has a reasoned idea behind it. In the 5 ... g6 lines, Black jettisoned the d5-pawn and often struggled to win it back. With 5 ... Be6, the idea is to fortify d5 and only then develop the bishop on f8 via ... g6 and ... Bg7. We saw a similar move to this in Chapter Four (5 ... Nc6 6 Bg5 Be6), and here it is played even earlier.

### 6 Nge2

After lengthy deliberation, I decided to go for this move. There is another decent option, but this main game was just too interesting to leave out.

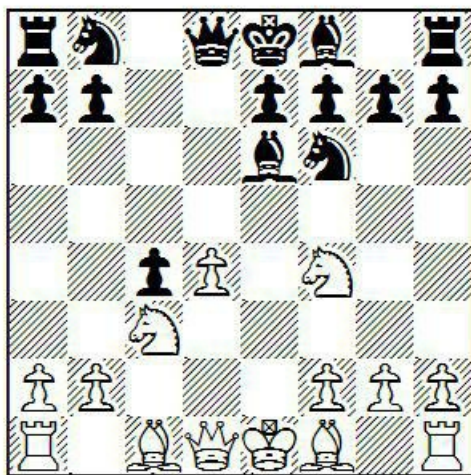
6 c5 playing à la Botvinnik is good too: 6 ... Nc6 7 Bb5 g6 8 Nf3 Bg7 9 0-0 (or 9 Ne5) 9 ... 0-0 10 h3 Ne4 11 Re1 Nxc3 12 bxc3 Bd7 13 Rb1 b6 14 Ba3 Re8 15 c4 bxc5 16 Qa4 dxc4 17 Bxc6 Bxc6 18 Qxc6 Rc8 19 Qa6 cxd4 20 Rxe7 d3 with complications that favour White, R.Mamedov-M.Thejkumar, Kolkata 2009.

### 6 ... dxc4

The only logical follow-up.

### 7 Nf4

Already we can see the point of 6 Nge2. The bishop is attacked and it is forced to move again, since defending it would be a little clumsy.



### 7 ... Bg4

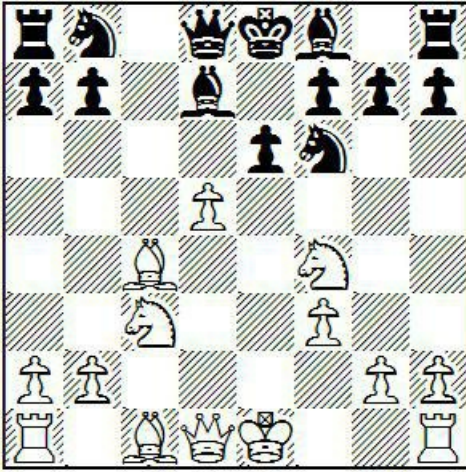
**Question:** Why did Black go here first before retreating to d7, rather than heading to d7 immediately?

**Answer:** If 7 ... Bd7 then after 8 Bxc4 e6 9 0-0 we have a similar position to the game, except with the white pawn on f3 rather than f2. Black argues this is weaker for White in the long term rather than a gain of a move. We shall see ...

### 8 f3

8 Be2 Bxe2 9 Qxe2 e6 10 Qxc4 Bd6 11 0-0 0-0 appears more than adequate for Black, as the light-squared bishop conundrum has been solved.

### 8 ... Bd7 9 Bxc4 e6 10 d5



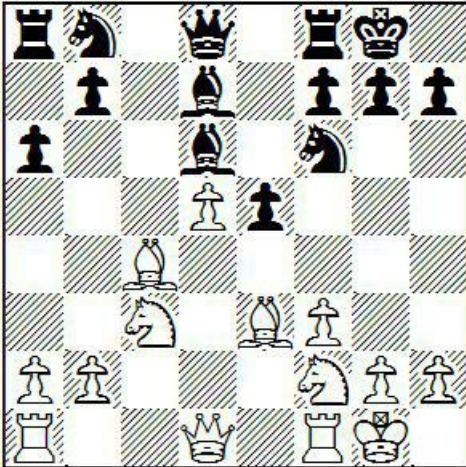
**Question:** Why push this pawn before developing by, say, castling?

**Answer:** We have seen an early d-pawn push to d5 in a few games in this book. Here Black's plan of ... Bc6, ... Nbd7 and ... Nb6 to control the d5-square is immediately prevented, and since White is ahead in development he can afford to play like this.

**10 ... e5**

Alternatively, 10 ... exd5 11 Qe2+ Be7 12 Nfxd5 Nxd5 13 Nxd5 Be6 14 Bf4 Bxd5 15 0-0-0 0-0 16 Bxd5 Qc8+ 17 Kb1 Bf6 18 g4 Nc6 19 Qc4 Qd7 20 Rhe1 Rfe8 21 Be4 Qc8 22 g5 1-0 was L.Yurtaev-M.Fette, Lyngby 1990. A quick win for White which spells out the dangers lurking in the position for Black.

**11 Nd3 Bd6 12 Be3 0-0 13 0-0 a6 14 Nf2**



**Question:** What is the idea behind this move?

**Answer:** The e4-square, as it is in almost every opening, is key and White would like to put a knight there.

**14 ... Bf5 15 Bd3!**

[chesstouring.com](http://chesstouring.com)

Exchanging these bishops reduces Black's influence over e4.

**15 ... Bxd3 16 Qxd3 Ne8 17 Nce4 Nd7**

17 ... f5 18 Ng5! shows that once the light-squared bishops go, new squares open up.

**18 Rac1 h6 19 b4 f5**

After 19 ... Bxb4 20 Qb3 the b7-pawn will be lost.

**20 Nc5**

The knight finds a good square in any case.

**20 ... Qe7 21 Nxb7**

21 Ne6 was tempting, but the knight can be exchanged off at some point, such as by 21 ... Rf7 22 Bc5 Nf8.

**21 ... e4**

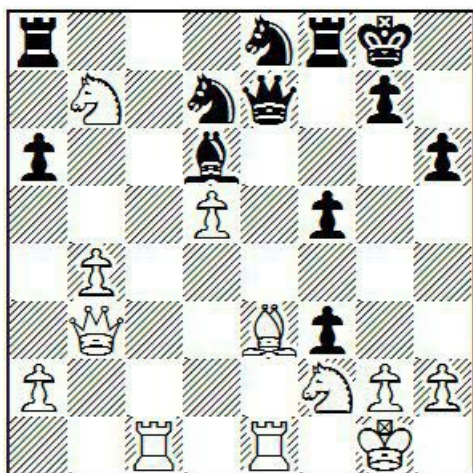
The sort of move Black plays in a Sveshnikov Sicilian, sacrificing a pawn to clear the e5-square and, in this case, opening up the d6-bishop in the direction of the white king.

21 ... Bxb4 is not as good as it looks, as shown by 22 Rfd1 Nd6 23 a3 Nxb7 24 axb4 Nd6 25 Qd2 Rfe8 26 Rc6.

**22 Qb3**

22 fxe4 Ne5 23 Qe2 Qxb7 was Black's trick.

**22 ... exf3 23 Rfe1**



Now it all becomes crazy.

**23 ... Bxh2+**

After 23 ... Qh4 24 Nxd6 Nxd6 25 Bc5 Qf6 26 Qxf3 there is no attack left for Black.

**24 Kxh2 Qh4+ 25 Nh3**

The only move, but an adequate one. 25 Kg1? Qg3 would win immediately.

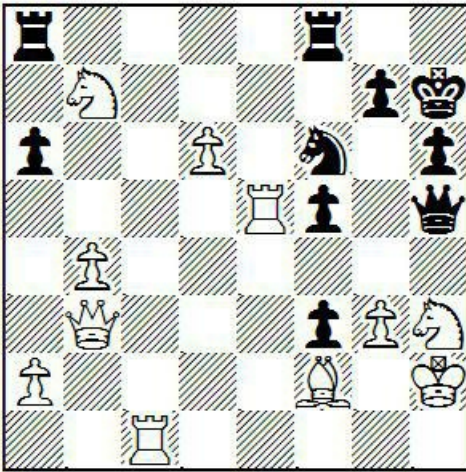
**25 ... Ne5 26 Bf2 Qg4**

26 ... Ng4+ 27 Kg1 Nxf2 28 Nxf2 Qg3 29 Qxf3 snuffs out the attack.

**27 g3 Qh5**

Throwing another piece on to the fire in a bid to continue the attack. The g4-square had to be vacated as after 27 ... Ng6 28 d6+ Kh7 29 Rc3 Nf6 30 Rxf3 the f3-pawn falls and the attack is snuffed out.

**28 Rxe5 Nf6 29 d6+ Kh7**



### 30 Kg1

A remarkably calm move under pressure. 30 Rc4! Ng4+ 31 Rxc4 Qxc4 32 d7 is also winning.

### 30 ... Qxh3 31 Qxf3

The point of the previous move.

### 31 ... Ng4 32 Re7 Rf6

After 32 ... Qh2+ 33 Kf1 Nxf2 34 Rcc7! suddenly it is White who is attacking.

### 33 Qg2 Qh5 34 Rcc7 Rg6 35 Bd4 Rg8 36 d7

A quite amazing position.

### 36 ... Nf6 37 Bxf6

37 d8Q Qd1+ would be disastrous for White.

### 37 ... Qd1+ 38 Kh2

The king returns now that there is no knight check on g4.

### 38 ... f4 39 Bh4 fxg3+ 40 Bxg3 Qh5+ 41 Qh3 1-0

The attack has run out and the d-pawn queens. A very fluctuating game we might say.

## Game 52

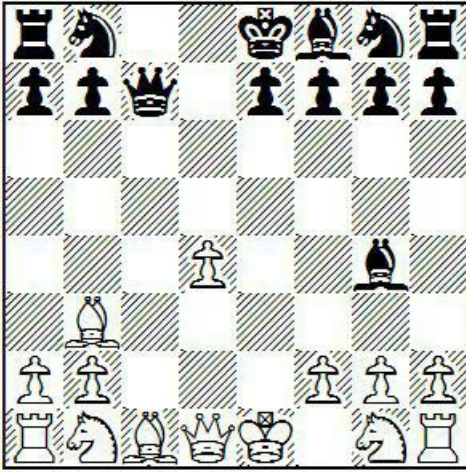
### A.Yusupov-A.Miles

Horgen 1994

### 1 e4

I've changed the move order. The game actually started via a Queen's Gambit Accepted: 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 c5 4 Bxc4 cxd4 5 exd4 Qc7 6 Bb3 Bg4.

### 1 ... c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4 dxc4 5 Bxc4 Qc7 6 Bb3 Bg4

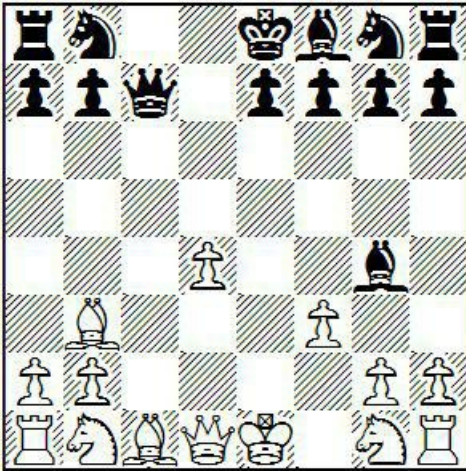


An interesting try based around the loose bishop on c1.

**Question:** How should we deal with this?

**Answer: 7 f3**

This is the only good way. 7 Nf3 Bxf3 8 gxf3 is just no good for White. Here 8 Qxf3 has actually been played: 8 ... Qxc1+ 9 Ke2 Qxb2+ 10 Nd2 Nc6 (if 10 ... Nf6 11 Qxb7) 11 Qxf7+ Kd7 12 Be6+ (12 Qd5+ Kc7 13 Rhc1 e6 14 Qa5+ Kd6 15 Qc5+ Kc7 16 Qa5+ Kd6 17 Qc5+ was correct) 12 ... Kd6 13 Rhd1 Nf6 14 Kf1 reached an amazing position even for a Panov and now came a brilliant tactic in V.Kosyrev-H.Grund, Tallinn 1997: 14 ... Qxd2 15 Bh3 (15 Rxd2 Nd8! traps the queen on f7) 15 ... Qb4 16 Qe6+ Kc7 17 d5 Qe4 18 dxc6 Qxe6 19 Bxe6 bxc6 20 g4 g5 21 f4 h6 22 h4 gxf4 23 Ke2 Bg7 24 g5 hxg5 25 hxg5 Nd5 0-1.



**7 ... Bd7**

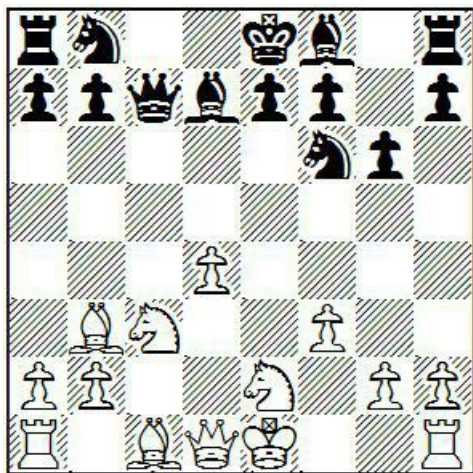
7 ... Bf5 looks like the most active square, although the bishop may become a target here, as shown by the 8 Nc3 e6 9 Nge2 Bd6 10 Nb5 Bb4+ 11 Kf2 Qd8 12 Bf4 Na6 13 g4 of A.Kislinsky-E.Chasovnikova, Moscow 2006, which concluded 13 ... Bg6 14 h4 h5 15 g5 Kf8 16 a3 Ba5 17 Bd6+ Ne7 18 Nf4 Bf5 19 Rc1 Kg8 20 Bxe7 Qxe7 21 d5 Bb6+ 22 Kg2 Be3 23 Rc4 Nc5 24 Re1 Bxf4 25 Rxf4 g6 26 Rd4 Kh7 27 dxe6 Nxb3 28 Rd7 Qc5 29 Rxf7+ Kg8 30 Rg7+! Kxg7 31 Qd7+ 1-0.

### 8 Ne2

In another game from the same tournament, 8 Nc3 e6 9 Nge2 Bd6 10 Ne4 gave White an edge too in B.Gelfand-P.Leko, Horgen 1994.

### 8 ... Nf6 9 Nbc3 g6

Instead, 9 ... e6 10 Bg5 Be7 11 Rc1 Bc6 12 Bxf6 Bxf6 13 d5 exd5 14 Nxd5 Qa5+ 15 Nec3 Bxc3+ 16 Rxc3 0-0 17 0-0 Bxd5 18 Qxd5 Nc6 19 Qxa5 Nxa5 20 Rd1 Rfd8 21 Bd5 was a little better for White as the bishop was better than the knight in A.Goldin-L.Altounian, San Diego 2004.



**Question:** Where to put the bishop on c1?

**Answer:** The two 'usual' squares are both good.

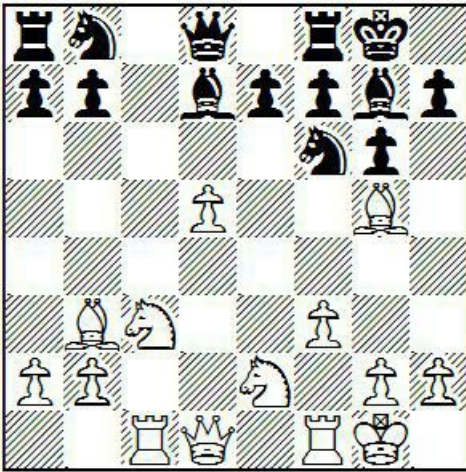
### 10 Bg5

Alternatively, 10 Bf4 Qb6 11 0-0 Bg7 12 Qd2 0-0 13 Rac1 Nc6 14 Na4 Qd8 15 Nc5 with a little pressure.

### 10 ... Bg7 11 Rc1 Qd8

Not exactly what he would have wanted to play, but the open position means the queen is susceptible to attack wherever it goes: for example, 11 ... Qa5 12 Qd2 0-0 13 0-0 Nc6 14 d5 Ne5 15 Kh1 and the d5-pawn guarantees White a useful space advantage.

### 12 0-0 0-0 13 d5



**Question:** We have seen this pawn push many times, but doesn't it here just block the bishop on b3?

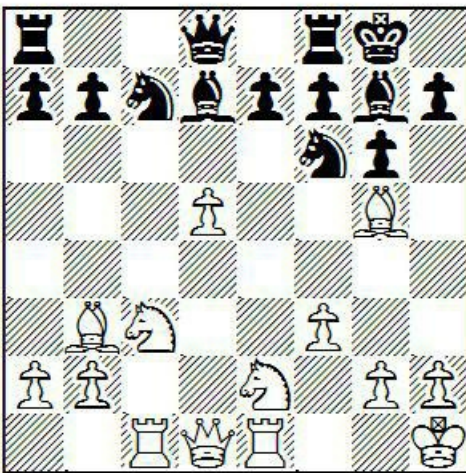
**Answer:** It would appear that the positives (preventing ... Nc6, gaining space and allowing the e2-knight to go to d4) outweigh the negatives (restricting the bishop on b3).

**13 ... Na6 14 Kh1 Nc7!?**

After 14 ... Nc5 15 Bc2 the knight will always have to worry about a b4 push.

**15 Re1**

15 Ne4 Nxe4 16 fxe4 Nb5 would be similar to the position we'll see in the note to White's 20th move, below.

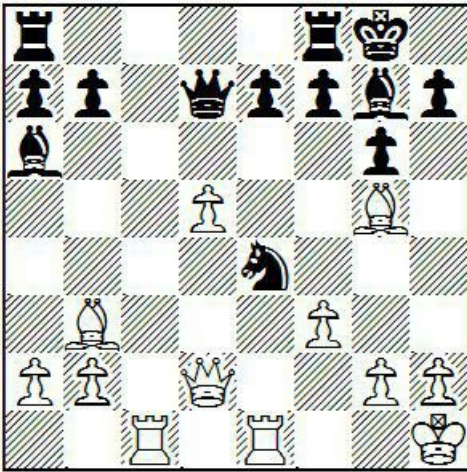


**15 ... Nb5?**

A better try was 15 ... Nce8 16 Ng3 Nd6, blockading the pawn and putting the knight on a better square. After 17 Rc2 Rc8 18 Rce2 Re8 we have seen Black hold the fort like this, but it's all rather passive for him.

**16 Nxb5 Bxb5 17 Nc3 Ba6 18 Qd2 Qd7 19 Ne4 Nxe4?!**

Criticised by Yusupov, but it's not clear what Black should do if the knights are not exchanged, especially as Nc5 hangs in the air.



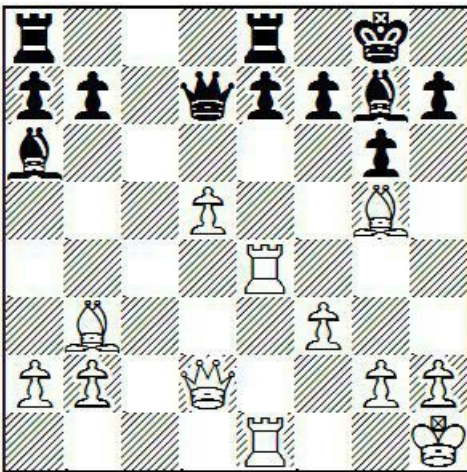
**Exercise:** Which way to recapture?

**Answer: 20 Rxe4!**

White keeps the e-file open so pressure can be applied against e7. Instead, 20 fxe4 Be5 may hold the position.

**20 ... Rfe8 21 Rce1**

Attacking the e7-pawn is more important than the c-file.



**21 ... Bf8**

21 ... Bf6 allows the d-pawn to become a passed pawn: 22 Bxf6 exf6 23 d6 Rxe4 24 Rxe4 Rd8 25 h3 intends 26 Re7, since 25 ... Qxd6 fails to 26 Re8+! Kg7 27 Rxd8.

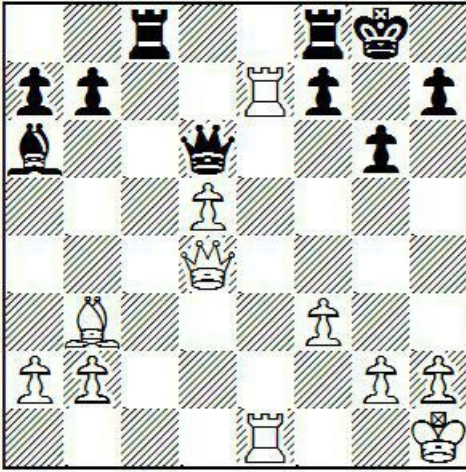
**22 Bh6! Qd6**

Otherwise, 22 ... Bd3 23 Qxd3 Bxh6 24 Ba4 wins the exchange, while after 22 ... Bxh6 23 Qxh6 Qf5 24 Rh4 g5 25 Rg4 f6 26 h4 Black's kingside is destroyed.

**23 Bxf8 Rxf8**

23 ... Kxf8 24 Qh6+ Kg8 25 Rh4 wins h7 and possibly even more.

**24 Rxe7 Rac8 25 Qd4**



If ever you do not know what to do, centralize!

**25 ... Rfd8**

25 ... Qxe7 26 Rxe7 Rc1+ 27 Bd1 is not quite back-rank mate.

**26 h3**

Possible was 26 Qxa7 Qxe7 27 Rxe7 Rc1+ 28 Qg1 Rxc1+ 29 Kxc1, but why risk things?

**26 ... Rc1 27 Rxc1 Qxe7 28 Qxa7**

A second pawn goes and with it Black's resistance.

**28 ... Qe5**

Note too the line 28 ... Qg5 29 Re1 Qd2 30 Qe3 Qxb2 31 Qe7 Rf8 32 d6. We were discussing the d4-d5 pawn push as a possible negative feature, because it blocks the bishop on b3, but if the pawn gets to d6 then the bishop's power is suddenly multiplied.

**29 Qb6 Rd6 30 Qf2 Bb5 31 Re1 Qf6 32 Qg3 Rd8 33 Qc7 Bd7 34 d6 Qh4**

White wins too after 34 ... Bxh3 35 Bxf7+ Kh8 36 Qxd8+.

**35 Re4 Qg5 36 Bxf7+ Kf8**

It's mate in short order after 36 ... Kxf7 37 Re7+ Kf6 38 Qc3+.

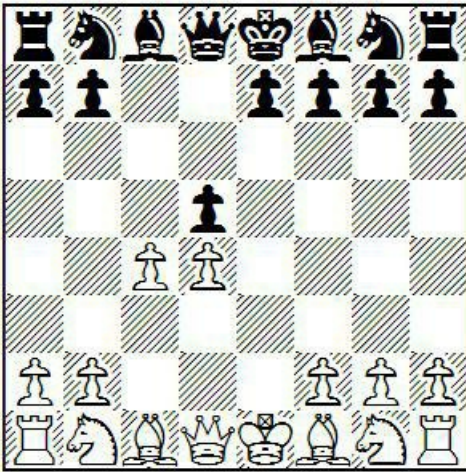
**37 Be6 1-0**

Game 53

**B.Gelfand-Y.Drozdovskij**

Odessa (rapid) 2007

**1 c4 c6 2 e4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 d4**



#### 4 ... Nf6

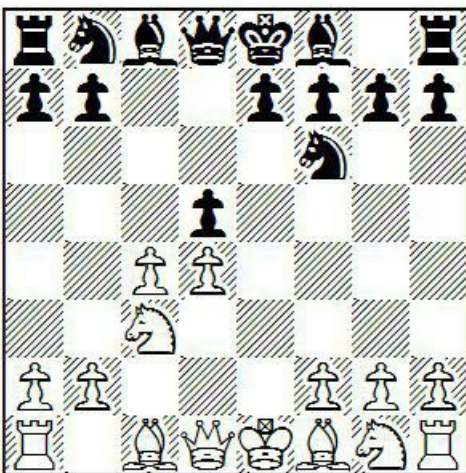
The most natural move and one that is almost universally played, but there are some lesser alternatives we should briefly look at too:

a) 4 ... dxc4 5 Bxc4 Qc7 was seen in the previous game, Yusupov-Miles.

b) After 4 ... Bf5 the bishop is not so well placed and since b7 is now undefended, the queen sortie to b3 will be even stronger: 5 Nc3 Nf6 6 Qb3 Nc6 7 cxd5 Na5 8 Qa4+ Bd7 9 Bb5 b6 (clearly something has gone wrong for Black if he has to play this move) 10 Nf3 g6 11 Bg5 Bg7 12 Ne5 Bxb5 13 Qxb5+ Nd7 14 Nc6 Qc7 15 Qe2 Nxc6 16 dxc6 Nf6 17 d5 0-0 18 0-0 a6 19 Rfe1 Rfe8 20 Rad1 e6 21 Qf3 Nxd5 22 Nxd5 exd5 23 Qxd5 Rec8 24 Re7 1-0 was J.Ruano Azua-R.Mendoza, Quito 1997.

c) 4 ... Nc6 5 Nc3 dxc4 (5 ... Nf6 transposes to Chapter Four, of course) 6 d5 (best; after 6 Nf3 Bg4 7 Bxc4 e6 8 0-0 Bd6 a neat trick to be aware of is 9 d5 Bxf3! 10 Qxf3 Qh4 when both h2 and c4 hang) 6 ... Ne5 7 Qd4 Nd7 8 Bxc4 Ngf6 9 Bf4 a6 10 Nf3 g6 11 0-0 Bg7 12 Qd2 b5 13 Bb3 Bb7 14 Rad1 0-0 15 Rfe1 Nb6 16 a3 Rc8 17 Ne5 is almost a dream position from White's point of view: all the pieces are active and pointing towards the centre, and there is no surprise tactic in the offing. Indeed, 17 ... Nh5 18 Bg5 Nf6 19 d6 exd6 20 Qxd6 h6 21 Nxf7! was easily winning for White in M.Schepetkova-E.Stefanova, Kolontaevo 2005.

#### 5 Nc3



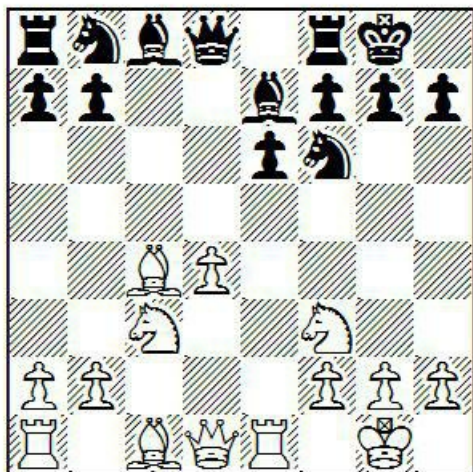
#### 5 ... dxc4

This variation is one of the main reasons I went for IQP positions throughout this book. By playing the Panov, White allows Black to take on c4 very early like this and so force an IQP. In my view, it was well worth looking at IQP positions. I hope you agree with me!

**6 Bxc4**

Of course, this way White gets the bishop to c4 in one go which is a tempo gain.

**6 ... e6 7 Nf3 Be7 8 0-0 0-0 9 Re1**



**9 ... Nc6**

**Question:** Why is 9 ... b6 preparing ... Bb7 not good?

**Answer:** If 9 ... b6 then 10 d5! is very strong. After 10 ... exd5 11 Nxd5 Black is already struggling, as 11 ... Nxd5 12 Bxd5 wins the rook in the corner.

**10 a3 a6**

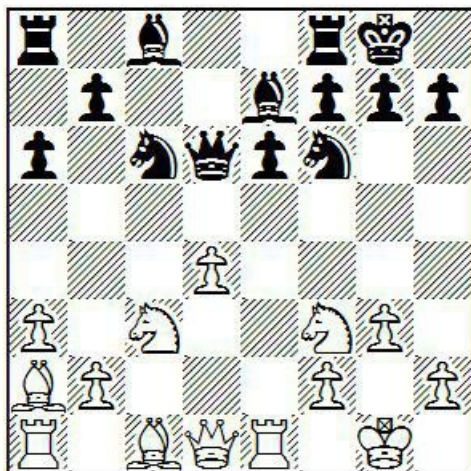
Trying to fianchetto the c8-bishop by playing ... b5 and only then ... Bb7. Instead, if 10 ... b6 11 d5 Na5 12 Ba2 exd5 13 Nxd5 Nxd5 14 Qxd5 and, despite the exchanges, White's better piece placement in the centre gives him an advantage.

**11 Ba2 Qd6**

Again Black delays the b-pawn advance. We are seeing exactly here the differences between this position and similar positions from Chapters Two and Three. That tempo gain with Bf1-c4 is proving very important in these open IQP positions.

After 11 ... b5 12 d5 exd5 13 Nxd5 Be6 14 Nxe7+ Qxe7 15 Bxe6 fxe6 16 Bd2 Rad8 17 Rc1 the e6-pawn is probably a weakness rather than a strength.

**12 g3**



**Question:** What is the point of this odd-looking move?

**Answer:** To play the bishop to f4. Since Black is in no position to take advantage of this slight weakening, White's lead in development will become even more apparent over the coming moves.

**12 ... Rd8**

12 ... Qc7 is better, but still doesn't fully solve Black's problems, as shown by 13 Bf4 Bd6 14 Be5 Ng4 15 Bxd6 Qxd6 16 Ng5 Nf6 17 d5 exd5 18 Nxd5.

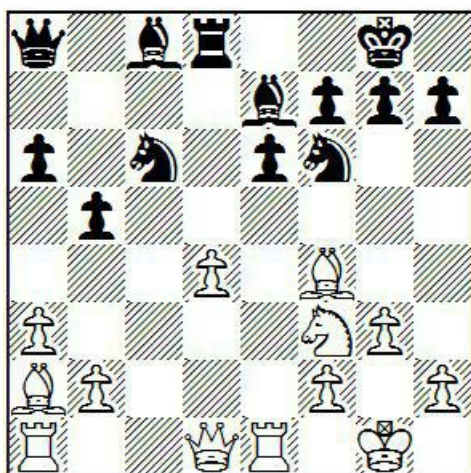
**13 Bf4 Qd7 14 Na4!**

Possibly the move Black overlooked. He is already in trouble as the b6-square invasion by the knight will cost him something.

**14 ... b5**

14 ... Nd5 15 Bxd5 exd5 16 Nb6 Qh3 17 Nxa8 Bg4 18 Nb6 is just not enough for a rook.

**15 Nb6 Qb7 16 Nxa8 Qxa8**



An exchange has been won, but the draughty white king position is a cause for concern.

**17 Re3 Nd5 18 Bxd5 Rxd5 19 Rc1 Bb7 20 Rec3 Bf6 21 Be3 h6 22 Qe2 Rd8 23 h4 Nb4! 24 axb4 Bxf3 25 Qd2 e5**

A pawn has been recovered, but is it enough for Black?

**26 d5 Bxd5 27 Qe1 Bf3 28 Kh2 e4 29 Rc5 Bxb2**

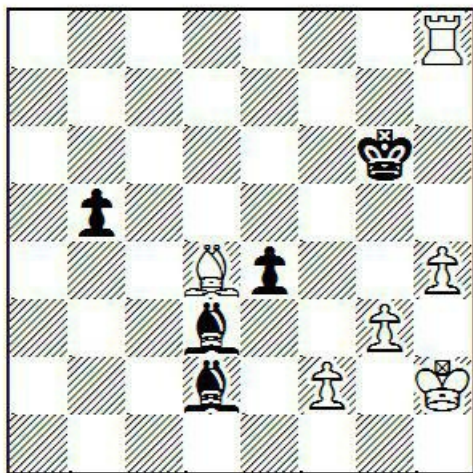
And now a second pawn, but over the next few moves Gelfand takes control with his major pieces.

**30 R1c2 Bf6 31 Rd2 Be7 32 Rc1 Rc8 33 Rd7 Rxc1 34 Qxc1 Qe8 35 Qc7 Bf6 36 Bd4 Bg4**

Naturally, if 36 ... Bxd4 37 Rd8.

**37 Rd6 Be7 38 Rb6 Bd8 39 Rb8 Bxc7 40 Rxe8+ Kh7 41 Re7 Bd6 42 Rxf7 h5 43 Rxc7+ Kh6 44**

**Ra7 Bxb4 45 Rxa6+ Kh7 46 Rb6 Be2 47 Re6 Bd3 48 Re5 Bd2 49 Rxh5+ Kg6 50 Rh8**



The result should no longer be in doubt, but Black plays on since it was a rapid game.

50 ... b4 51 h5+ Kf5 52 h6 Kg6 53 h7 b3 54 Rb8 Kxh7 55 Rxb3 Kg6 56 Be3 Ba5 57 g4 Bc7+ 58 Kh3 Bf1+ 59 Kh4 Bd8+ 60 Kg3 Bc7+ 61 Bf4 Ba5 62 Rb8 Be2 63 Rg8+ Kf7 64 Rg5 Bc3 65 Rf5+ Kg6 66 Be5 Bd2 67 Rf6+ Kh7 68 Bd4 Bf3 69 Rf7+ Kh6 70 Be3+ Kg6 71 Rxf3! 1-0

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