

JOHAN HELLSTEN



MASTERING
OPENING
STRATEGY

EVERYMAN CHESS

JOHAN HELLSTEN

MASTERING
OPENING
STRATEGY

EVERYMAN CHESS

www.everymanchess.com

First published in 2012 by Gloucester Publishers Limited, Northburgh House, 10 Northburgh Street, London EC1V 0AT

Copyright © 2012 Johan Hellsten

The right of Johan Hellsten to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted in accordance with the Copyrights, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, electrostatic, magnetic tape, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the publisher.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

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

ISBN: 978 1 85744 692 0

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; website: www.everymanchess.com

Everyman is the registered trade mark of Random House Inc. and is used in this work under licence from Random House Inc.

Thanks to my parents, Lotti and Sverker Hellsten

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.

Contents

Bibliography	5
Introduction	7
1 The Nature of Development	9
Introduction	9
The king and other weak points	10
Pawn advances	16
Causes of a delayed development	22
The development factor after mutual castling	36
A defender's perspective	41
Exercises	47
Solutions	70
2 Crime and Punishment	90
Introduction	90
Early pawn-grabbing	91
Early queen raids	96
Multiple moves with the same piece	100
Exposure of the king	105
Premature attacks	110
Extravagance	113
Ignorance and indifference	119
Exercises	129
Solutions	149

3	The Battle for the Centre	166
	Introduction	166
	Pawn centre	166
	Centre controlled by a piece	180
	Centre controlled at distance	198
	Pawn breaks	210
	Flank advances	217
	The role of the centre	224
	Exercises	235
	Solutions	257
4	Restriction	286
	Introduction	286
	Restriction of castling	286
	Restriction of specific pieces	296
	More restriction methods	303
	Restriction of plans	310
	Exercises	317
	Solutions	331
5	A Few Words on Opening Preparation	347
	Building an opening repertoire	347
	Plans, set-ups, guidelines and move orders	350
	Maintaining your repertoire	352
	Preparing for your opponents	353
	Index of players	355
	Index of openings	364

Bibliography

Books

- Aagaard.J, *Excelling at Chess* (Everyman Chess 2001)
- Aagaard.J, *Excelling at Positional Chess* (Everyman Chess 2003)
- Adams.Mi & Adams.B, *Chess in the Fast Lane* (Cadogan 1996)
- Agrest.E & Hall.J, *90 Schacklektioner* (Sveriges Schackförbund 2002)
- Anand.V, *My Best Games of Chess* (Gambit 1998)
- Bartashnikov.A, *Chess Strategy Course* (ChessBase 1999)
- Bronstein.D, *Mezhdunarodniy Turnir Grossmeisterov* (Fizkultura i Sport 1960)
- Dvoretzky.M, *Shkola Vyshego Masterstva 1-4* (Folio 1998)
- Dvoretzky.M & Yusupov.A, *Opening Preparation* (Batsford 1994)
- Dvoretzky.M & Yusupov.A, *Training for the Tournament Player* (Batsford 1993)
- Dydyshko.V, *Logika Sovremennyh Shahmat* (Polymia 1989)
- Estrin.Y, *Tratado de Ajedrez Superior* (Martinez Roca 1981)
- Euwe.M & Kramer H, *The Middlegame* (Hays 2001)
- Fischer.R.J, *My 60 Memorable Games* (Batsford 1995)
- Geller.E & Damsky.E, *Grossmeister Geller* (Fizkultura i Sport 1976)
- Gligoric.S, *I Play Against Pieces* (Batsford 2002)
- Grahn.L & Westberg J, *Stormästare* (Bonniers 1979)
- Hall.J, *Träna schack med Jesper Hall* (Natur & Kultur 2001)
- Hellsten.J, *Descubriendo los conceptos en ajedrez* (Esfera Editorial 2007)
- Hellsten.J, *Play the Sicilian Kan* (Everyman Chess 2008)
- Hellsten.J, *Mastering Chess Strategy* (Everyman Chess 2010)
- Hillarp Persson.T, *Tiger's Modern* (Quality Chess 2005)
- Karpov.A, *Mis Mejores Partidas* (Paidotribo 2000)
- Larsen.B, *Testa din spelstyrka* (Prisma 1977)
- Johansson.G, *Schackgeniet Anatolij Karpov* (Prisma 1976)
- Marin.M, *Learn from the Legends* (Quality Chess 2004)
- Neishtadt.I, *Winning Quickly with Black* (Cadogan 1996)
- Neishtadt.I, *Winning Quickly with White* (Cadogan 1996)
- Nesis.G, *Tactical Chess Exchanges* (Batsford 1991)
- Pozharsky.V, *Sovremenniy Shahmatniy Samouchitel Tom 2* (1999)

Mastering Opening Strategy

- Romanovsky.P, *Chess Middlegame Planning* (ACP 1990)
Shereshevsky.M, *Endgame Strategy* (Pergamon 1985)
Suba.M, *Dynamic Chess Strategy* (Pergamon 1991)
Suetin.A, *Middlegame Laboratory* (Chess Digest 1974)
Suetin.A, *Schachtraining* (Sportverlag Berlin 1988)
Taimanov.M, *Gewinnen mit Sizilianisch* (Sportverlag Berlin 1989)
Tal.M, *The Life and Games of Mikhail Tal* (Cadogan 1997)
Watson.J, *Los Secretos de la Estrategia Moderna en Ajedrez* (Gambit 2002)
Yermolinsky.A, *El Camino Hacia el Progreso en Ajedrez* (Gambit 2002)
Yusupov.A, *Build Up Your Chess 1: The Fundamentals* (Quality Chess 2008)
Zlotnik.B, *Chess: Knowledge, Training, Mastery* (Danko Bokan 2001)

Periodicals

- Chess Informant 1-110
ChessBase MegaBase 2011
Tidskrift för Schack 2004-08
The Week in Chess 1-860
Chess Today 1-4050

Websites

- www.chessbase.com
www.larsgrahn.blogspot.com

Introduction

Within chess literature there is a huge amount of publications dedicated to different openings. It goes without saying that every opening, system or variation has its specific characteristics, but even so there are a few general concepts which can claim validity in most opening positions. Which are these concepts? Let's see a few quotes from Artur Yusupov's *Build Up Your Chess 1, The Fundamentals*:

- ♠ *"The first principle of opening play is rapid development of all the pieces."*
- ♠ *"The second principle of opening play is to struggle for the centre."*
- ♠ *"The third principle of opening play is to struggle against our opponent's ideas, in order to make his development more difficult and to prevent him from achieving control over the centre".*

Moreover, in his earlier work *Opening Preparation* co-written with Mark Dvoretzky, Yusupov also outlines a few simple rules regarding opening play, such as *"don't move the same piece twice"* and *"don't bring the queen out too early"* etc, unless there is a serious justification.

The present book is structured around these principles and rules, in the following way:

- ♠ Chapter One investigates the role of **development** in the opening.
- ♠ Chapter Two touches upon some of the most typical **dubious actions** in the opening phase, such as early pawn-grabbing, moving the same piece twice etc.
- ♠ Chapter Three takes a look at some different ways of fighting for **the centre** and its role as such.
- ♠ Finally, Chapter Four is dedicated to the concept of **restriction** in its different facets.

What, then, is the need for studying these concepts, if we can already find in books and electronic publications most of the specific opening information that we need? Well, on the one hand it will be easier for us to grasp the contents of existing opening theory if we already have a basic understanding of the general concepts that underlie opening play. On the other hand, in every game we leave the territory of our opening repertoire at some point, we are surprised by a "new" move from our opponent, or we simply forget or mix up

something. In any of these cases, knowledge of opening strategy will help our orientation in the new or unfamiliar position that arises.

In terms of style and format, this book is quite similar to my preceding work *Mastering Chess Strategy*. I have not tried to cover the intricacies of every game by extensive analytical variations in *Chess Informant* style, despite the fact that you can easily achieve that nowadays thanks to the chess database programs and engines. In contrast, my emphasis has been on explanatory text, combined with some key variations and assessments. The space gained by such a priority has permitted me to include quite a large number of games, thus adding to the variety of topics, structures and opening lines featured in this book.

In each game I have dedicated a few words to the specific line involved, while also mentioning other options, main lines etc. You could use it as a first step to further investigation, if there is something that catches your eye. Some openings, such as the Sicilian, occur more frequently in this book than others, let's say the Scotch. This might seem unfair but, after all, the aim of the book is to cover the general concepts already mentioned, independently of the opening in which they occur.

At the end of each chapter there is a section with related exercises, where the reader should try to find the best continuation, usually 1-3 moves, sometimes together with a short plan. The time required oscillates roughly between 3 and 15 minutes, depending on the exercise (they are presented in order of difficulty) and the level of the student. The exercises are also mostly complete games so any lazy reader could just treat them as such.

As for the sources used when writing this book, I have mainly relied on *Chess Informant*, *ChessBase Megabase 2011* and *Chess Today*. Among the written publications that have assisted me, I would like to emphasize *Winning Quickly With White* and *Winning Quickly With Black* by Iakov Neishtadt, which contain a lot of instructive and, at the same time, entertaining games. My technological tools have been *Chess Assistant 11* and *Deep Rybka 4*.

Most games in the book are from the modern period, let's say from 1990 and onwards, but I have also included a number of "classics" when their instructional value justified it. Some of my own games are also featured, for the simple reason that these are the games that I know best.

I should mention that the concepts covered in this book are often intertwined in one single game, so you can easily find games in Chapter One that illustrate, say, the principles of Chapter Four, and vice versa. Nevertheless, the chapters are rather independent, even if I sometimes make references to earlier games. Chapter Two is probably the lightest in content and could even be examined before Chapter One. The book ends with a short discussion about opening preparation, building an opening repertoire and other practical matters.

I hope and think that this book will help you in improving your skills within opening strategy, and at the same time provide you with some entertainment.

Thanks to my students in Riobamba for all the valuable input to this book.

Johan Hellsten,
Riobamba, March 2012.

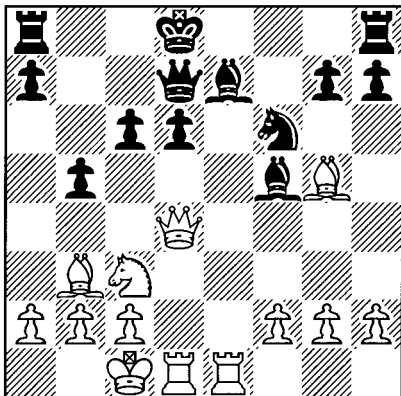
Chapter One

The Nature of Development

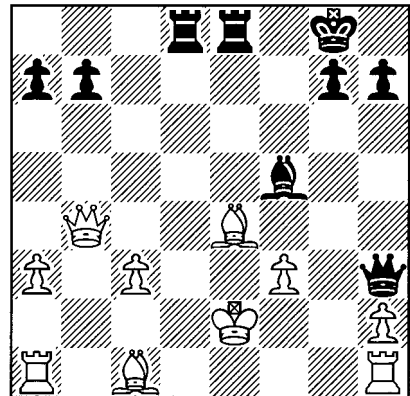
Introduction

Quick development of the pieces is a key condition in the opening, in order to exploit their power to the maximum and secure the king. Leaving aside other positional factors such as material, space and structure, the time factor plays a crucial role in the initial phase of the game. A player left behind in development might face serious problems when some of his pieces, such as the rooks, can't easily take part in the battle. Consider the following positions which we will soon come back to in this chapter:

White has already brought all his pieces into the battle; in contrast Black still hasn't mobilized either rook and he has failed to secure his king. Take it for sure that he will have a hard time defending this position.



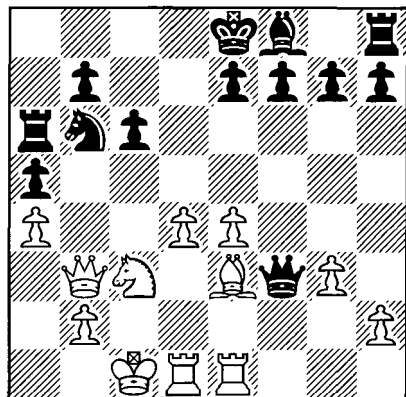
White to Play



White to Play

Nominally White is a piece up, but the difference in activity between both sides' forces is simply overwhelming. When teaching young players, who tend to have big respect for the nominal value of the pieces, in such a position I make them observe that White has ten points out of the game! For

example, the rook on a1 hardly has the same value as the one on e8, and this is, after all, what development is all about.



Black to Play

This position is actually from the next chapter, but it suits our discussion. Black has won a pawn, but his poor kingside development will leave him suffering badly once White achieves d4-d5, and that will come on the next move! In contrast, if Black had an extra tempo, i.e. if ...e7-e6 was already on the board, then after ...♔b4! his chances would increase dramatically. One single tempo makes a huge difference in the opening battle, as we will often see.

So who suffered in these depressing positions? Dolmatov, Topalov and Timman, in games contested in 2004, 1999 and 2002 – which makes it clear that the concept of development is present in battles even at the highest level. By the way, observe the importance of the queens’ presence in the above positions – if these are removed, then Black would probably be okay in the first one, White would be winning in the second one, and his compensation for the pawn in the third one would be much less convincing.

A few principles to bear in mind:

- ♠ The imbalance between attacking and defending pieces is a key factor in any attack, and this certainly applies to positions where one side is better developed than the other, as in the three positions above.
- ♠ The opening or sharpening of the position almost always favours the better developed side, which makes this a key method when exploiting a lead in development.
- ♠ The conversion of a lead in development into a more stable advantage often requires a heavy usage of tactics, sacrifices etc. Throughout the book I often use the term “punishment” when referring to such actions, including such standard methods as opening the position, attacking weak points in the enemy camp, keeping the opponent’s king in the centre, swapping his active pieces, etc.

The king and other weak points

One typical consequence of a delay in development is that the king becomes exposed to an attack. When the enemy pieces start gathering around the monarch, and his fellow forces remain immobilized, the battle usually turns into “play against one goal” (to use soccer language).

Game 1
Ma. Carlsen-S. Dolmatov
 Moscow 2004
Reti's Opening

1 ♖f3 f5 2 d3!?

Instead of entering the Dutch Defence with 2 d4, White prepares e2-e4, striking at the light squares.

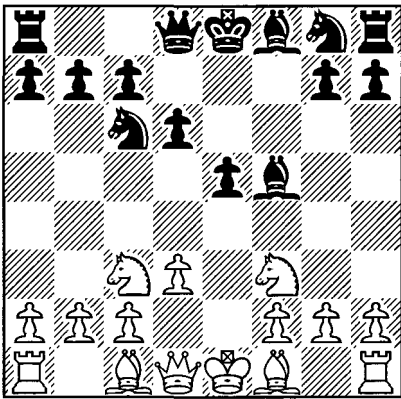
2...d6

The natural 2...f6 can be met by the gambit 3 e4! fxe4 4 dxe4 e4 5 e3 f6 6 g5 with attacking prospects.

3 e4 e5 4 c3 c6

Black appears to be in a safe position; however...

5 exf5 e5xf5



6 d4!

A key move that clears the centre before Black gets castled. Now the king's bishop can be developed actively to c4 or b5.

6...xd4?!

6...e4 seems preferable, trying to keep the position closed when behind in development. Here White can choose between 7 d5!? and 7 g5 d5 8 f3!, hitting the black pawn chain, with interesting prospects in both cases.

7 xd4 exd4 8 xd4 f6

The greedy 8...xc2?! probably wasn't even considered by Dolmatov, since 9 e4 followed by 0-0 and e1 looks extremely dangerous for Black.

9 e4!

The best diagonal for this bishop, where it complicates Black's short casting.

9...c6 10 g5 b5

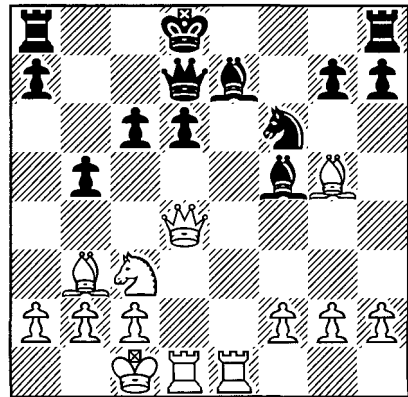
Thanks to White's previous move, he can now meet the logical 10...d5 by 11 0-0! intending 11...dxc4? 12 e5+. Black is also in trouble after 11...e7 12 he1 0-0! 13 e5!.

11 b3 e7 12 0-0-0 d7 13 he1!

Carlsen's play in this game reminds me of Morphy's simple but effective treatment of the opening phase. In just 13 moves he has mobilized all his pieces and now creates the concrete threat of 14 xf6 gxf6 15 xf6. On his part, Dolmatov would be fine if his king and h8-rook changed places, but that will never prove possible.

13...d8

An awkward place for the king, but 13...0-0? was impossible due to 14 g4! xg4 (or 14...g6? 15 e6) 15 xe7 xe7 16 xg4+ with material gains.



Throughout the book we will see many positions where a lead in development has to be exploited by concrete means; i.e. by tactical blows, sacrifices etc. Here is a first case.

14 xe7!

Initiating a decisive combination towards the king on d8. In positions with unbalanced development we should get used to considering the relative value of the pieces. The bishop on e7 is Black's key defender, covering vital squares such as d6 and f6. Conversely, White has so many pieces in action that losing one of them, even one having a greater nominal value than the enemy piece being captured, isn't really a big deal. With such rooks on a8 on h8, how is Black supposed to save his king?

14... ♖xe7

Or 14... ♖xe7 15 ♕xf6+ gxf6 16 ♖e1+ followed by 17 ♖xf6+.

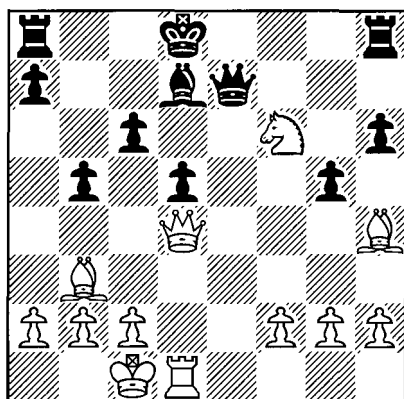
15 ♖f4! ♕d7 16 ♗e4!

Intensifying the attack. In contrast, 16 ♖xd6?! ♖c8 lets Black hang on for a while.

16...d5

Or 16... ♖f8 17 ♗xd6 with ideas like ♖b4-a5+. With such an exposed king Black can hardly resist the attack.

17 ♗xf6 h6 18 ♕h4 g5 19 ♖d4! 1-0



A nice final touch directed at the rook on h8. Now if 19...gxh4, then 20 ♗xd5 cxd5 21 ♖xh8+, while other 20th moves run into 21 ♗f6, in both cases with an easy win for White. Not much better is 19... ♖f8 20 ♗xd7

♖xd7 21 ♕g3 with an overwhelming advantage, so Black resigned.

In closed or semi-open positions, a lead in development tends to make itself somewhat less felt. In such positions, a key idea for the better developed side is to identify a weak point in the enemy camp, on which he can focus his attacking efforts.

Game 2

M.Tal-G.Tringov

Amsterdam Interzonal 1964

Modern Defence

1 e4 g6 2 d4 ♕g7

Launching the Modern Defence, characterized by a flexible development of Black's minor pieces. However, at some moment he will have to bring them out; otherwise he can end up as in this game!

3 ♗c3 d6 4 ♗f3 c6 5 ♕g5!? ♖b6?!

A risky attack on the b2-pawn. A better reply to White's unusual fifth move is 5... ♗f6, transposing to the Pirc, or 5... ♕g4, fighting for the dark squares.

6 ♖d2!

Tal doesn't care about the pawn and just continues development. In fact, modern opening theory is full of similar cases, where the b2-pawn is sacrificed for the sake of rapid development. Now 6... ♕g4 is less effective due to 7 0-0-0, so Tringov accepts the challenge.

6... ♖xb2 7 ♖b1 ♖a3 8 ♕c4

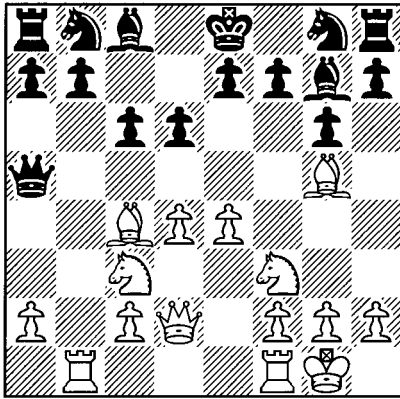
The best diagonal for the bishop, where it eyes the sensitive f7-pawn.

8... ♖a5?!

Too many queen moves. 8... ♗f6, preparing 9...0-0, looks like a better choice, waiting

with the queen retreat until White plays ♖b3. A long time ago Znosko-Borovsky observed that, in positions of this nature, the queen should stay as long as possible in enemy territory. At this moment 9 e5 dxe5 10 dxe5 ♘g4 is quite okay for Black, e.g. 11 ♖b3?! ♙c5, so the flexible 9 0-0 is probably White's best choice, with ample compensation for the pawn.

9 0-0



9...e6

Now 9...♘f6?! 10 e5 dxe5 11 dxe5 ♘g4 fails to 12 ♙xe7! ♙xe7 13 ♘d5+, winning the queen, so Tringov intends developing the knight via e7 instead.

10 ♖fe1 a6

Unfortunately for Black, 10...♘e7? runs into the same trick: 11 ♙xe7 ♙xe7 12 ♘d5+ etc.

11 ♙f4!

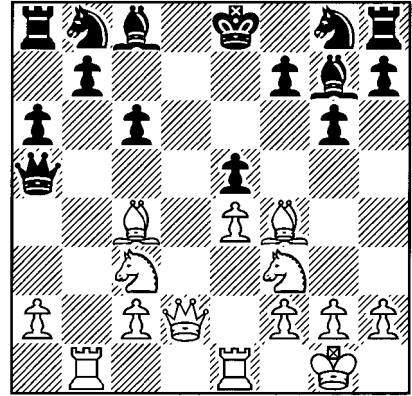
Hitting the vulnerable d6-pawn. As I mentioned before the game, the attack at weak points in the enemy camp is a key method when exploiting a lead in development.

11...e5?

When you are behind in development, the more closed the position the better for

you, so don't even think about opening it! After that, it will be much easier for the opponent to make use of his more active pieces. For better or worse, 11...♙d8 or 11...♙c7 had to be tried, when 12 e5 can be met by 12...d5 and 12 d5 by 12...e5, respectively.

12 dxe5 dxe5



13 ♙d6!!

A terrible blow that again exploits the sensitive d6-square. Now 13...exf4 runs into 14 ♘d5!, when 14...cxd5 15 exd5+ ♙e6 16 dxe6 is disastrous for Black, while other 14th moves let the knight reach c7. On the other hand, 13...♙d8? fails to 14 ♙xf7+, and 13...♙f8 14 ♙xe5+ ♙xe5 15 ♘xe5 is decisive as well, since 15...♙e6 runs into 16 ♖xb7. As for the knight on c3, Tal has a simple reply prepared...

13...♙xc3 14 ♖ed1! ♘d7

Covering the mate on d8 but weakening the light squares, a fact that White immediately exploits. Then again, after 14...♙a5 15 ♘xe5 Black is completely helpless, e.g. 15...♘h6 16 ♙g5.

15 ♙xf7+! ♙xf7 16 ♘g5+ ♙e8 17 ♙e6+ 1-0

In view of the quick mate, Black resigned.

Here is a more complex case of exploiting the weakest point in the enemy camp when ahead in development.

Leaving the f3-square for the other knight.

Game 3
S.Movsesian-R.Tibensky
 Slovakian Championship,
 Kaskady 2002
French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 b6

A rather slow reply to the Advance Variation. Black prepares ...♗a6 in order to exchange his "bad" bishop, but also loses some time and activity compared to the usual 3...c5, hitting the white pawn chain.

4 c3

Strengthening the pawn chain and preventing the immediate 4...♗a6?? on account of 5 ♗xa6 ♖xa6 6 ♖a4+.

4...♖d7 5 h4!?

At first sight a rather surprising move, why not just 5 ♖f3, 6 ♗d3 and 7 0-0, simply bringing out the pieces? Well, closed positions have their particular nature. Since nothing is really going on in the centre White can spend a few tempi on this flank advance, which gains space and enhances future kingside actions, in particular the knight manoeuvre ♖h3-f4.

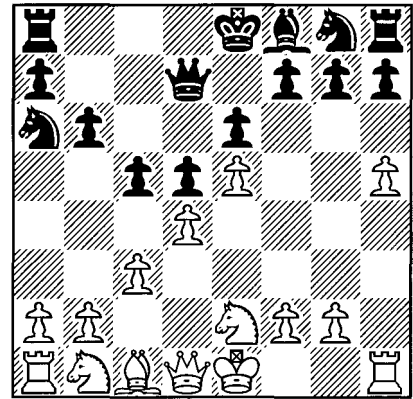
5...♗a6

Perhaps the restrictive 5...h5! was better, when White could consider 6 ♗e2 g6 7 ♗g5 preparing ♖d2-f3 and ♖h3-f4 – Movsesian.

6 ♗xa6 ♖xa6 7 h5 c5

Black finally launches this standard advance, although the absence of a knight on c6 makes it less powerful than in the main line with 3...c5.

8 ♖e2



8...f6!?

A risky attempt at counterplay, since White can complete development much sooner, after which the opening of the e-file will turn to his favour. Besides, the earlier exchange of the light-squared bishops left the e6-pawn more exposed. Safer was the developing 8...♗e7, followed by ...♖c6, before taking further actions.

9 ♗f4 ♖e7 10 ♖d2 ♖c6

Another effect of White's early h2-h4-h5 is that ...♗e7-g6 proves impossible. Moreover, as the typical... ♗e7-f5 plan cannot be supported by ...h7-h5, the knight can be dislodged easily by g2-g4.

11 ♖f3

Just like in the old games of Nimzowitsch, White gives maximum priority to the e5-square.

11...♖c8

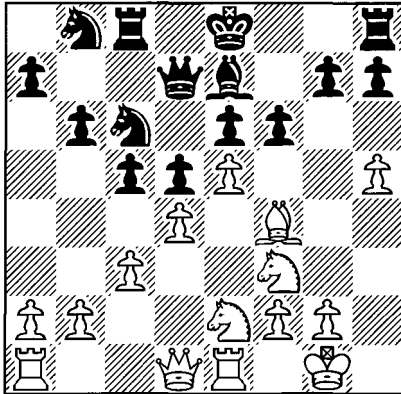
Perhaps 11...0-0-0! followed by ...♗b7 was a safer choice – Psakhis. In this case the knight on a6 would prove useful in the king's defence, whereas in the game it will struggle to find a proper destiny.

12 0-0 ♖ab8 13 ♖e1

13 exf6 gxf6 14 ♖e1 might have been even stronger, forcing the kind of play that occurs in the game.

13...♗e7?

Tibensky doesn't sense the danger. After 13...f5! 14 ♗g5 ♗e7 15 ♖f4 White keeps a pleasant advantage, but at least the position remains closed, which gives Black time to conclude development.



14 exf6!

Initiating an attack on the e6-pawn, just before Black gets castled.

14...gxf6

With hindsight 14...♗xf6 should have been preferred; e.g. 15 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 16 ♖f4 0-0! 17 ♖xe6 ♖fe8 18 ♖f4 ♖e4 with some compensation for the pawn.

15 ♗xb8!

White has no objections to swapping the passive knight on b8 if this helps his attack in the centre.

15...♖xb8

Or 15...♖xb8 16 ♖f4 ♖c6 17 c4!, intending 17...dxc4 18 d5 with strong pressure.

16 ♖f4 ♖d8 17 ♖e2 ♗f7

If 17...cxd4 then 18 ♖xd4!, when 18...e5 19 ♖f3! exf4 20 ♖xf4 leaves Black helpless against the threats at b8, f5 and f6.

After the text, how can White step up the pressure?

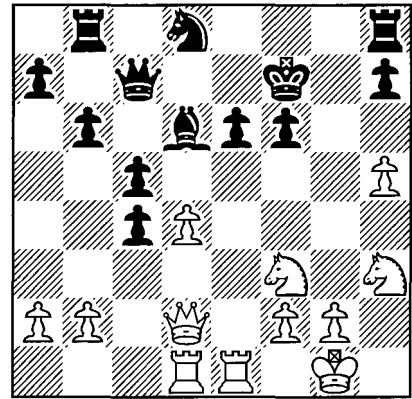
18 c4!

An intuitive advance that further opens the position towards Black's vulnerable king.

18...♗d6 19 ♖d2 ♖c7 20 ♖h3

The idea of ♖h6 is added to White's menu.

20...dxc4 21 ♖ad1



The last piece joins the battle, which makes Black's position very difficult to defend, since virtually any tactical complications will favour White due to his superior development.

21...♖f8 22 ♖e4!

Heading for g4, before Black achieves an artificial castling with ...♗g8-h8.

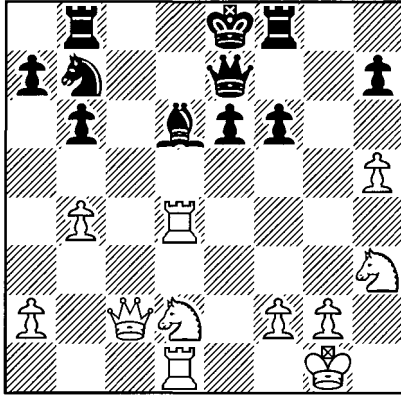
22...♗g8 23 dxc5 ♗xc5 24 ♖g4+ ♗f7

Unfortunately for Black, after 24...♗h8 25 ♖h6 f5 (the threat was ♖f4-g6+) 26 ♖xc4 the tactics work in White's favour; e.g. 26...♗xf2+? 27 ♖xf2 ♖xc4 28 ♖xf8 mate, or 26...♖g7 27 ♖xg7+ ♗xg7 28 b4 ♗e7 29 ♖d7 ♗f6 30 ♖cc7 winning.

25 ♖c2! ♗e8 26 ♖xc4

With the black king back on e8, the rest is easy.

26... ♖e7 27 b4 ♕d6 28 ♖cd4 ♗b7 29 ♗d2!



The knight's reaches e4 or c4 with great effect.

29... ♗d8

This makes no sense but the alternatives were hardly better; e.g. 29...f5 30 ♗c4 ♕c7 31 ♖a4+ or 29...♖d8 30 ♗e4 ♕b8 31 ♖c6+, in both cases followed by a fatal 32 ♖d7.

30 ♖d3 ♗b7 31 ♗e4 1-0

In view of 31... ♕e5 32 ♖b5+ ♗f7 33 ♖d7 Black resigned.

Pawn advances

Another key method for the better developed side is a pawn advance, if necessary in the shape of a sacrifice, that opens the position and clears new lines towards the enemy camp. Actually Movsesian did just that with 18 c4! in the previous game. Here are a few more examples.

Game 4
V.Topalov-V.Ivanchuk
 Linares 1999
 English Opening

1 ♗f3 c5 2 c4 ♗c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 e6

In this variation of the English, White enjoys more space but Black is ready to create counterplay with his queen and king's bishop on the g1-a7 and e1-a5 diagonals.

5 g3

More common is 5 ♗c3. The text keeps the option of meeting 5... ♕b4+ with 6 ♕d2, although Topalov never makes use of this idea in the game.

5... ♕b4+ 6 ♗c3 ♖a5

As beginners we are taught not to bring out the queen too early, but here it helps Black in interfering with White's development.

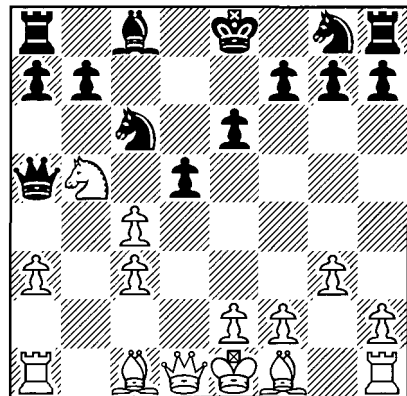
7 ♗db5 d5!

Ruling out the knight check on d6 and fighting for the centre.

8 a3

Consistent with White's previous play, if rather slow. Stohl suggests 8 ♕f4!? e5 (or 8...d4 9 a3) 9 ♕d2, when both 9...d4 10 ♗d5 and 9...dxc4 10 a3 ♕xc3 11 ♗d6+! ♗f8 12 ♕xc3 ♖c5 13 ♕g2 lead to an interesting battle.

8... ♕xc3+ 9 bxc3



In the event of 9 ♗xc3 Black may choose between the simple 9...dxc4, now that the knight check on d6 is no longer possible,

and the riskier 9...d4!? 10 b4 ♖xb4 11 axb4 ♜xa1 12 ♗b5 with unclear play.

9...♗f6!

Ivanchuk quickly brings out the pieces, unworried about 10 ♗d6+ ♖e7 11 ♗xc8 ♜axc8, after which Black already enjoys a significant lead in development.

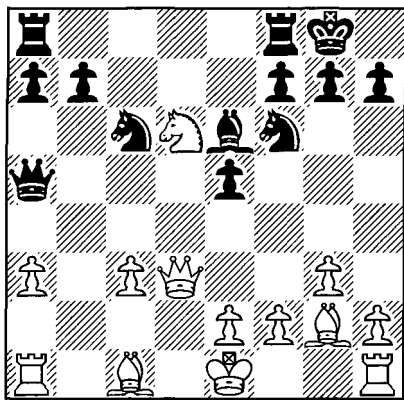
10 ♖g2 0-0

Now White's dilemma is that 11 0-0 dxc4 loses a pawn, while 11 cxd5 ♗xd5 leaves his pieces hanging on b5 and c3. Topalov finds a third option: safeguarding his queenside with the queen, at the cost of delaying development.

11 ♜b3 dxc4 12 ♜xc4 e5!

Simple and strong: now 13...♗e6 is coming up.

13 ♗d6 ♗e6 14 ♜d3



By tactical means White has managed to stay above water. Here 14...♗ad8? and 14...♗fd8? fail to 15 ♗xb7, but Ivanchuk has a much stronger move in reserve...

14...e4!

Another typical punishment method when the opponent has delayed his development: open the position. Now the e-file will be of great use in the attack towards White's king, and the annoying knight on

d6 leaves the board.

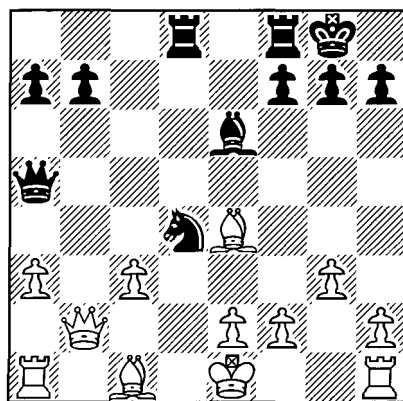
15 ♗xe4

Queen moves all had their drawbacks: 15 ♜c2 ♗d4! or 15 ♜e3 ♗g4! or 15 ♜d2 ♗ad8. As for 15 ♗xe4, Black can reply 15...♗xe4 16 ♗xe4 ♗ad8 with a strong initiative just like in the game – Ivanchuk.

15...♗xe4 16 ♗xe4 ♗ad8 17 ♜c2

After 17 ♜e3 ♗fe8 White is also in big trouble.

17...♗d4! 18 ♜b2



Topalov has defended well and is just one move away from the desired 0-0; however...

18...♗xe2!!

One more sacrifice to force the white king to stay in the centre. Less promising was 18...♗c4 19 ♜b4! or 18...♗fe8 19 0-0! ♗h3 20 cxd4 ♗xf1 21 ♗f3. In both these short lines White applies a common method when behind in development: return the material invested in order to bring out the pieces.

19 ♖xe2

If 19 ♜b4, trying to apply the method described in the previous note, then 19...♗xc3! with heavy material gains thanks to the mating threat on d1.

19...♖fe8!

A flexible move typical of many attacks. If we look at the two pieces on f8 and e6, it is obvious that the rook is heading for e8, whereas the bishop has so many possible destinies that it shouldn't be committed yet. Less promising is 19...♙c4+ 20 ♖f3 f5 21 ♙xb7 ♙d5+ 22 ♖e2 ♙xb7 23 ♗xb7 ♗xc3 24 ♙e3 ♗c4+ 25 ♖e1 ♗c3+ with a draw – Ivanchuk.

20 ♗b4

After 20 f3 f5 White is also in deep trouble, while 20 ♖e1 is met by 20...♗h5+! 21 ♖f1 ♙h3+ 22 ♖g1 ♖xe4! – Ivanchuk.

20...♗h5+ 21 f3 f5!

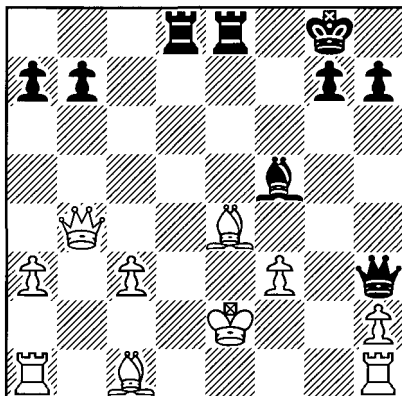
Finally crashing through White's defence, who can only resort to desperate moves.

22 g4 ♗h3

The threat 23...♗g2+ is added to the menu.

23 gxf5 ♙xf5!

Another option was 23...♗g2+ 24 ♖e3 ♗xh1 25 fxe6 ♖d1, but a direct attack on the white king is more tempting.

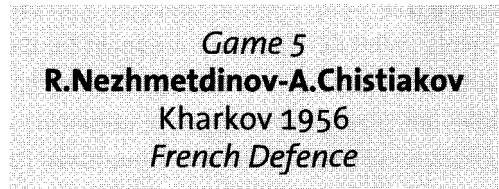


A typical pattern in games with unbalanced development: the attacker has less material but overwhelmingly more activity.

With his king stranded on e2, there is no hope for White.

24 ♗c4+ ♖h8 25 ♖e1 ♖xe4+! 0-1

The most elegant finish. White resigned in view of 26 fxe4 ♙g4+ 27 ♖f2 ♗xh2+ with mate on the next move.



1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♙g5 ♙b4 5 e5 h6 6 ♙d2 ♘fd7?!

Very passive. Nowadays, adherents of the McCutcheon Variation play 6...♙xc3 and 7...♘e4 without much thinking.

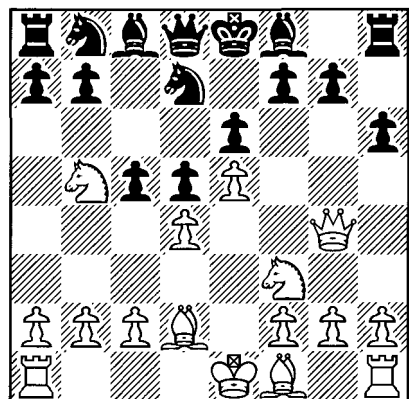
7 ♗g4 ♙f8

In closed positions like this, such retreats are usually justified. In contrast, 7...g6?! 8 ♙d3 would have yielded White a target on g6, just as later occurs in the game.

8 ♘f3 c5

A standard advance in the French, but 8...a6 first was safer in order to prevent White's next move in the game.

9 ♘b5!



Apart from threatening d6+ , this move comes with a more long-term idea – can you spot it?

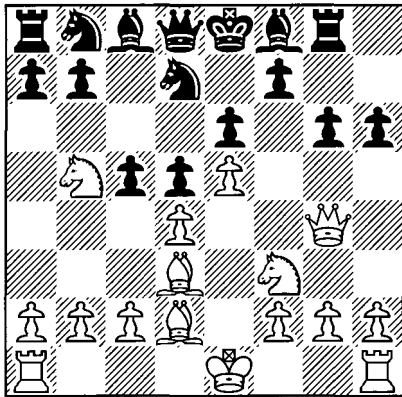
9...g6?

Too slow. $9...c6?$ $10 d6+ \text{exd6}$ 11Wxg7 was very bad for Black, but $9...cxd4$ $10 d6+ \text{exd6}$ 11Wxg7 exe5 ! $12 cxe5 \text{Wf6}$ looks quite okay for him. White should probably try 11exd6 instead, with some initiative.

10 d3!

Development with tempo, as 11exg6 is threatened.

10...g8



Black managed to cover all the enemy threats but now suffers a serious delay in development. Thus White's next move suggests itself.

11 c4!

A key advance in order to open the position before Black closes it by $...c5-c4$, making White's lead in development a less relevant factor.

11...cxd4 12 cxd5 c5

Or $12...a6$ 13dxe6 axb5 14exf7+ exf7 15e6+! with a fierce attack.

13 Wxd4 exd5?

Black omits the intermediate move

$13...c6!$, when 14We3 cxd3+ 15Wxd3 exd5 yields him a slightly superior version of the game.

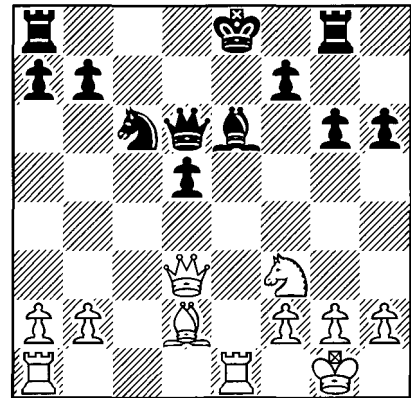
14 d6+!

White had this option for several moves, but only uses it now when the centre has been cleared, which makes Black's dark-squared bishop a key defender. The pawn invested in this operation is irrelevant.

14...exd6 15 exd6 Wxd6 16 0-0

White's position plays itself.

16...cxd3 17 Wxd3 c6 18 fe1+ e6



19 d4!

In chess strategy, exchanges can be carried out for a variety of reasons. One of them is facilitating an attack, as in this case, where White aims at eliminating one of the defenders on e6 and c6. Note that after $19...cxd4$ 20Wxd4 the presence of opposite-coloured bishops favours White, since the opponent will have a difficult task covering the dark squares.

19...g5

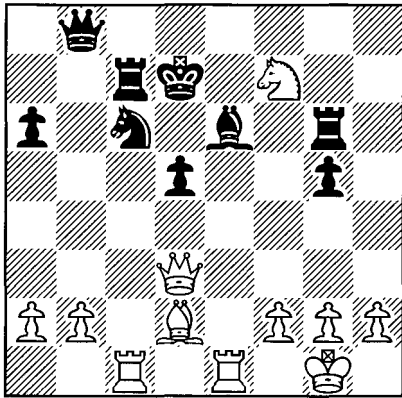
After $19...0-0-0$ 20Bac1 the black king is in big trouble. In the game he tries to hide it on d7, but White has enough material for a successful attack.

20 Bac1 d7 21 cf5!

After mobilizing all his pieces, White initiates concrete actions.

21...♖f8 22 ♜b5! ♜c8 23 ♜xb7+ ♜c7 24 ♜b5 a6

Obviously 24...♙xf5 runs into 25 ♜xd5+.
25 ♜d3 ♜b8 26 ♗xh6 ♜g6 27 ♗xf7!



The final blow which destroys the black king's shelter.

27...♙xf7 28 ♜f5+ ♔d8

Or 28...♔d6 29 ♙xg5 with decisive threats.

29 ♜xc6! ♜cxc6 30 ♙a5+ ♜c7 31 ♜xf7 1-0

Game 6
K.Miton-J.Sammour Hasbun
Stratton Mountain 1999
Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♗c3 ♗f6 4 e3 a6

The Chebanenko Slav became very popular in the nineties, thanks to its flexibility and great room for creativity. One merit of this system is that Black can play 4...a6 against virtually any white move order.

5 ♙d3

Development and at the same time re-

striction of Black's ...♙f5. Other options are 5 ♗f3, 5 ♜c2 and 5 a4.

5...♙g4

Perhaps 5...b5 6 b3 ♙g4 is a more precise move order, avoiding White's queen sortie to b3.

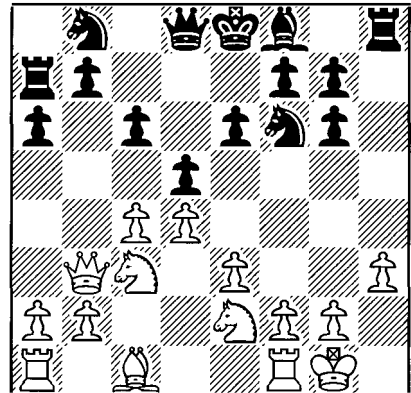
6 ♜b3 ♜a7

The safest way of dealing with the threat at b7. The rook is temporarily out of play but can later return to the eighth rank once the b-pawn has been protected by another piece, e.g. by ...♜c7.

7 h3 ♙h5 8 ♗ge2 ♙g6

Black is anxious to exchange the opponent's "good" bishop, but loses precious time. 8...e6 seems preferable, speeding up development; e.g. 9 ♗f4 ♙g6 10 ♗xg6 hxg6 11 0-0 ♙d6 followed by ...0-0.

9 ♙xg6 hxg6 10 0-0 e6



At this point it is not clear how to exploit the slight lead in development, but Miton finds a surprisingly simple solution.

11 e4! dxc4

The safest reply. White's idea was that both 11...♗xe4?! 12 ♗xe4 dxe4 13 ♙e3! and 11...dxe4 12 ♙e3 would leave Black struggling to find a defence against d4-d5.

12 ♜xc4 b5 13 ♜b3! b4?!

Having seen the rest of the game it is easy to suggest 13...♙e7 14 ♙e3 ♜d7 followed by ...0-0 in order to conclude development. Sammour probably felt that 13...b4 was justified by the enemy queen's retreat to b3 instead of d3, but this is not so.

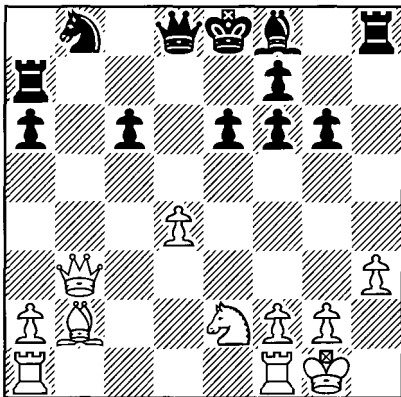
14 e5

By trading the knight on c3 for the one on f6 White manages to clear lines, in particular the b-file, towards Black's underdeveloped camp.

14...bxc3 15 exf6 cxb2?

Black grabs a pawn when it is ill-afforded. The simple 15...gxf6 16 bxc3 ♙d6 followed by ...0-0 was called for. White's superior structure implies some advantage in the middlegame, but at least all Black's pieces get into play.

16 ♙xb2 gxf6



By now there is only one move that can justify White's previous play...

17 d5!

The key move of the game, which clears several new lines towards the enemy king. At this point, the strong threat of 18 ♙xf6 ♜xf6 19 ♜xb8+ leaves Black with practically a single reply.

17...e5 18 dxc6 ♜c8?

This is an early resignation, since the advanced c-pawn will just make White's attack even more powerful. For better or worse, the bold 18...♗xc6 had to be tried. Then 19 ♜a4 is tempting - alas, after 19...♜d7, both 20 ♜ac1 ♗d8! and 20 ♜fd1 ♗d4!, returning the pawn in order to swap queens, keep Black in the game. A more critical try is 19 ♜ac1 ♜c7 20 ♜f3!?, when 20...♜c8! 21 ♜xf6 ♜h5 followed by ...♙e7 seems survivable for Black. As will be seen more evidently in the final games of this chapter, difficult positions call for unusual solutions!

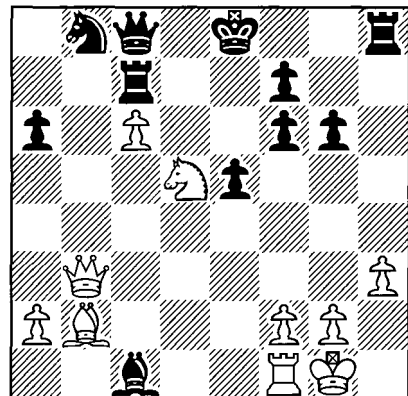
19 ♜ac1 ♜c7 20 ♗f4!

An aesthetic follow-up to the attack, creating the the threat of 21 ♗d5. Perhaps 20 ♗c3!? was even more efficient, with the additional idea of 21 ♗e4.

20...♙h6

20...exf4 21 ♙xf6 followed by ♜fe1+ and ♜b4 is terminal for Black, while after 20...♜xc6 21 ♗d5 he lacks a proper defence of the f6-pawn; e.g. 21...♙g7 22 ♙a3! preventing ...0-0 and threatening a fork on e7, or 21...♗d7 22 ♗xf6+! ♗xf6 23 ♜a4 ♗d7 24 ♜fd1+ ♙d6 25 ♙xe5 with a decisive attack.

21 ♗d5 ♙xc1



How to continue the attack? None of 22 ♖xf6+ ♕f8, or 22 ♜xc1 ♜xc6 23 ♖xf6+ ♕f8, or 22 ♖xc7+ ♜xc7 23 ♜xc1 0-0 is completely convincing. However, Miton has a much stronger move prepared...

22 ♜b4!!

While denying Black from castling, White sets up the devastating threat of 22 ♜d6. In the same spirit 22 ♜a3! was also strong.

22...♜d8

Giving back material in order to save the king. 22...♗g5 23 ♜d6 ♜a7 24 c7! wins easily, while after 22...♗xb2 23 ♜d6! Black can't cope with the double threat at f6 and c7, e.g. 23...♜xc6 24 ♜e7 mate.

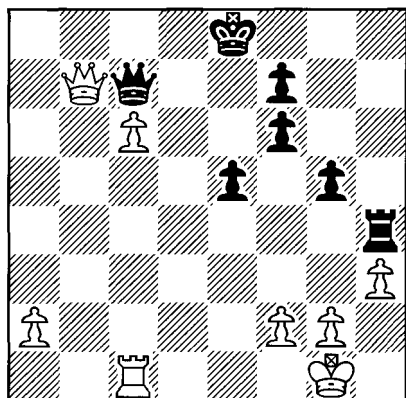
23 ♖xc7+ ♜xc7 24 ♜xc1 a5

In the event of 24...♖xc6 one of several winning lines is 25 ♜c4 ♕d7 26 ♜xf7+ ♕c8 27 ♜xf6 etc.

25 ♜c5

Thanks to the strong passed pawn and Black's badly placed king, the rest is easy.

25...g5 26 ♗a3 ♖a6 27 ♜b5 ♖b4 28 ♗xb4 axb4 29 ♜xb4 ♜h4 30 ♜b7!



The c-pawn finally takes its toll.

30...♕d8 31 ♜d1+ ♜d4 32 ♜xd4+ exd4 33 ♕f1 1-0

There follows ♕e2-d3xd4 with an easy win, so Black resigned.

Causes of delayed development

Nobody likes to get behind in development, so why does this happen? Well, two typical causes can be identified:

- ♣ One player grabs a pawn or two, thus slowing down his development.
- ♣ One player pursues strategical goals (the bishop pair, gain of space etc) at the cost of delaying his development.

These causes have a dual nature, in the sense that the side with a lead in development might also force his opponent to take a pawn (e.g. 14...e4! in Topalov-Ivanchuk) or offer him the bishop pair, a doubling of pawns etc. In other words, the better developed player could consider both material and strategic concessions when exploiting his lead in development.

The following game neatly illustrates the first cause above, and it is one of my favourites on the topic of development.

Game 7
M.Dvoretsky-Wl.Schmidt
 Wijk aan Zee 1975
Sicilian Defence, Alapin Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 e6 3 c3

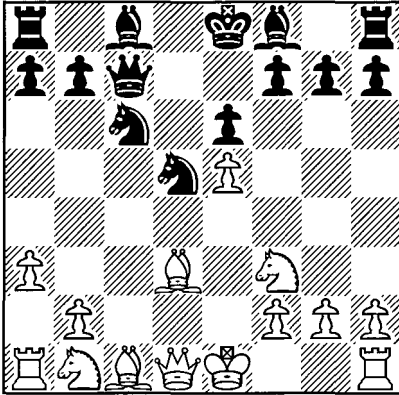
The Alapin Variation in a delayed version. Thanks to Black having already played e7-e6, White avoids some set-ups, such as the ones with ...♗g4.

3...♖f6 4 e5 ♖d5 5 d4 cxd4 6 cxd4 d6 7 a3

Preparing ♗d3 without having to bother about ...♖b4.

7...♖c6 8 ♗d3 dxe5 9 dxe5 ♕c7?!

Black initiates an attack on the e5-pawn at the cost of delaying development. A safer try is 9...g6 followed by ...♗g7 and ...0-0, which I have played myself in a few games.



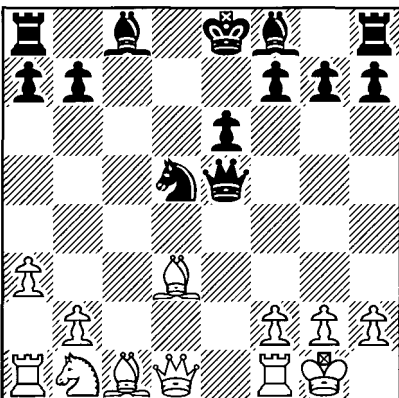
10 0-0!

White doesn't worry about the pawn and just continues development. Of course 10 ♕e2? ♗d4! 11 ♗xd4 ♕xc1+ had to be avoided.

10...♗xe5?!

It wasn't yet too late for 10...g6 or 10...♗e7 with a safe game.

11 ♗xe5 ♕xe5

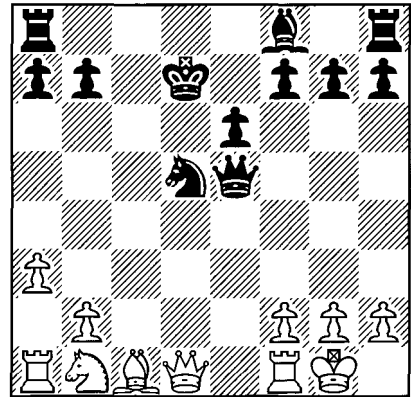


12 ♗b5+!

A typical punishment method in positions with a lead in development: give a check in order to deprive the opponent of castling.

12...♗d7 13 ♗xd7+ ♕xd7

When playing 10...♗xe5, Schmidt perhaps reckoned that his king would be quite safe on d7, thanks to the strong knight on d5 and the two previous piece exchanges. However, Dvoretzky's determined and logical play that follows will show us that this is not so.



14 ♖e1!

This natural rook move should be effected right away, since other moves like 14 ♗c3 and 14 ♕f3 permit 14...♗d6! when Black, thanks to the mating threat on h2, gains an important tempo for his development.

14...♕d6 15 ♕f3

Developing the queen with tempo, and vacating the d-file for the rooks.

15...♗e8

In the event of 15...♗e7 White should avoid 16 ♕xf7? ♖af8 with counterplay, and continue just as in the game.

16 ♗c3!

An excellent move to eliminate the de-

fender on d5. "When your opponent is behind in development, exchange his developed pieces" goes another principle of opening play, which I think belongs to Yusupov.

16...♖d8

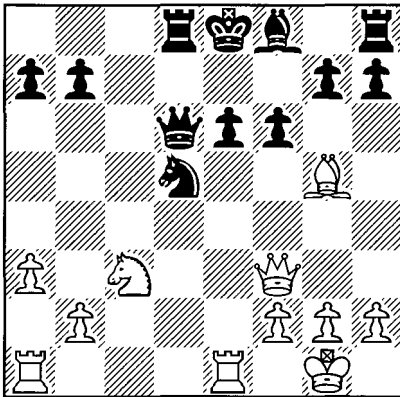
After 16...♙e7 17 ♙d2 ♖d8 18 ♖ad1 Black is definitely sad about having lost his castling rights.

17 ♙g5!

Such moves, developing the pieces with tempo, are rarely wrong.

17...f6

Or 17...♙e7 18 ♙xe7, followed by ♖ad1, with strong pressure.



18 ♖ad1!

Another power move. The last piece enters the game with tempo thanks to the threat of ♖xd5. Note that due to Black's unfortunate tenth move, not only is his king stranded in the centre, he also has one fewer rook in the battle than White.

18...♙f7 19 ♘xd5 exd5 20 ♙f4!

After the timely swap on d5, when Black could no longer recapture with a piece, White identifies the weakest spot in the enemy camp: c7.

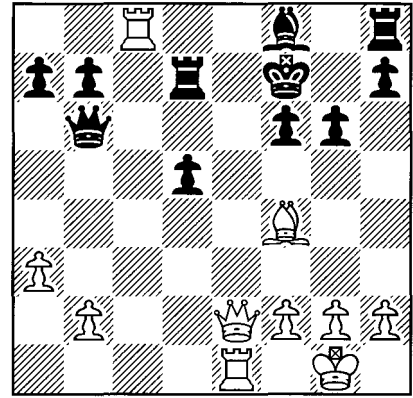
20...♚b6 21 ♖c1

Of course not 21 ♖xd5? ♙c5 and Black has more hope of salvation. Now, on the other hand, 21...♙c5? is useless due to 22 b4. Don't forget that activity is often worth more than material in positions with unbalanced development.

21...♖d7 22 ♖c8!

Such pins are of great use in restricting the opponent's development.

22...g6 23 ♚e2!



The final touch. 23 ♖ee8 might seem tempting, but after 23...♚xb2 the battle continues. Whereas now Black can't in any way prevent the queen's arrival at e8, since 23...♖e7? fails to 24 ♖xf8+ and 25 ♚xe7.

23...♙g7 24 ♚e8 ♖f7 25 ♙h6+! ♙xh6 26 ♚xf7

The rest is easy.

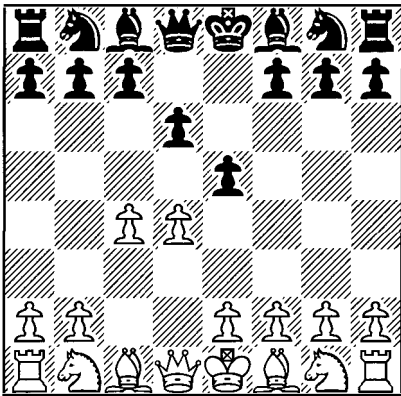
26...♙c5 27 ♖xh8 ♙xf2+ 28 ♙h1 ♙xe1 29 h4 ♙h5 30 ♚xd5+ 1-0

In this utterly hopeless position, Black resigned.

Now let's see an example of the second cause. White gives priority to certain positional aims such as space and a strong centre, at the cost of normal development, and duly pays for it.

Game 8
L.Psakhis-L.Gofshtein
 Israeli Team Championship 1996
English Opening

1 c4 d6 2 d4 e5



3 ♖c3

The queenless middlegame arising after 3 dxe5?! dxe5 4 ♖xd8+ ♗xd8, followed by ...c7-c6 and ...♗c7, is considered excellent for Black, but 3 ♖f3 makes quite some sense, in order to be able to recapture with the knight on d4. The pawn structure that arises after an exchange on d4 implies a space advantage for White, so Black should get something in return for it. In the game, he wins a tempo by attacking the white queen.

3...exd4 4 ♖xd4 ♖c6 5 ♖d2

In this line White intends b2-b3 and ♗b2, after which the queen will turn out to be well placed on d2.

5...♖f6 6 g3

More consistent seems 6 b3 ♗e6 7 e4 followed by 8 ♗b2; but not 7 ♗b2?! d5!, when the move ...♗b4 might soon become unpleasant for White.

6...♗e6!

Development with tempo. We can now spot a slight drawback to 6 g3: the c4-pawn loses its natural defence.

7 e4?!

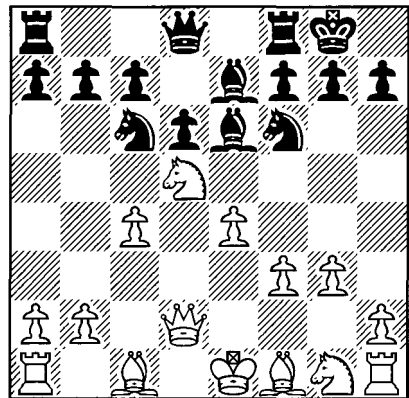
White gains space but will soon have a vulnerable centre to worry about. 7 ♖d5 followed by 8 b3 was preferable – again not 7 b3?! d5! with similar play as in the note to White's sixth move.

7...♗e7 8 f3

This shows that something has already gone wrong for White in the opening. Unfortunately, the natural 8 b3?! was again risky due to 8...♖xe4! 9 ♖xe4 d5 and Black regains the material by a timely ...♗b4.

8...0-0 9 ♖d5

Seizing the centre, but losing more time. 9 b3 was better, when Black could just react as in the game.



So Black has already a distinct lead in development, but how to make use of it?

9...♖d7!

A great move with various purposes. Gofshtein prepares the pawn break ...f7-f5, hitting the white centre and clearing lines towards the enemy camp. Moreover, an annoying ...♖e5 or ...♖c5 is added to the menu.

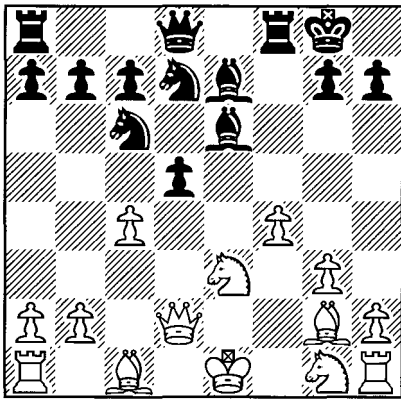
10 ♖g2 f5 11 exf5 ♙xf5 12 ♘e3?!

The problem with moving this knight will soon be revealed. A lesser evil was 12 ♘e2 ♘de5 13 0-0! ♘xc4 14 ♖c3 followed by ♘ef4. White has lost a pawn but at least managed to bring his king into safety.

12...♙e6 13 f4

White has prevented ...♘e5, and 13...♘c5 no longer makes much sense. So how is Black supposed to punish the opponent for his slow development?

13...d5!!



A strong pawn sacrifice that clears lines towards the white monarch. White's next move is forced, since it is the only capture that prevents 14...♙b4.

14 ♘xd5 ♖e8! 15 ♘f3

After 15 ♘xe7+ ♖xe7 or 15 ♘e2 ♙g4 White is suffering heavily along the e-file.

15...♙c5!

Another typical method when enjoying a lead in development: prevent the opponent's castling. It can be effected by a check (see 12 ♙b5+! in Game 7), as well as by a bishop move to the a3-f8 (f1-a6) or a2-g8 (g1-a7) diagonal as in this case, while the deployment of a knight on e6 (e3) is yet another variation on the theme.

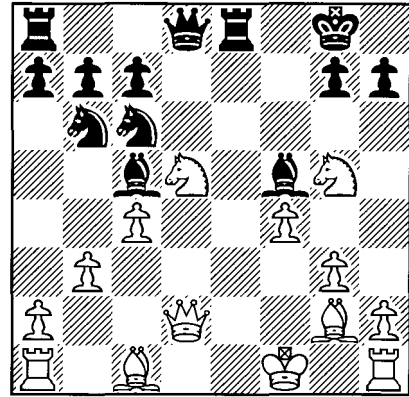
16 ♙f1 ♘b6 17 ♘g5!

Psakhis avoids 17 b3 ♘xd5 18 cxd5 ♙xd5 with a sad position to look at, and sets a little trap.

17...♙f5!

Gofshtein doesn't fall for 17...♘xc4? 18 ♖d3! with double threats at h7 and c4. Now White must cover the c4-pawn, since 18 ♘xb6+? fails to 18...♙d3+ with mate.

18 b3



18...♘b4!

To eliminate the defender on d5, just like Dvoretzky's 16 ♘c3 in the previous game.

19 ♙f3

19 ♘xb4 ♙xb4 20 ♖xd8 (or 20 ♖xb4 ♖d1+ 21 ♙f2 ♖e2+ with mate) 20...♙xd8 is a simple but instructive line. White managed to swap a few pieces, including the queens, but even so his delay in development makes it impossible for him to cope with the multiple threats at c3, d3 and d1.

19...♘6xd5 20 ♙xd5+

After 20 cxd5 ♘c2 the knight doesn't just aim at a1, but also at e3.

20...♘xd5 21 ♖xd5+

Or 21 cxd5 ♖f6! 22 ♙b2 ♖a6+! winning – Gofshtein.

21...♖xd5 22 cxd5 ♕d4 0-1

Obviously, keeping the king in the centre doesn't mean automatic defeat. In some openings, like the Open Sicilian, Black occasionally delays castling for a while, awaiting a safe moment or simply giving priority to other actions. Before continuing our investigation on the causes of a delayed development, let's see an example of a successful king in the centre.

Game 9
S.Conquest-A.Sokolov
 Clichy 1991
Sicilian Defence,
Taimanov Variation

1 e4 c5 2 f4 ♖c6 3 ♗f3 e6 4 ♖c3 a6

Thus Black prevents ♕f1-b5, a move typical of White's Grand Prix Attack, and at the same time enables a future ...b7-b5.

5 d4

White reverts to the Open Sicilian. A different kind of play emerges after 5 g3 d5 6 ♕g2 ♗f6 7 e5 ♗d7 followed by ...♕e7, ...b7-b5, ...♗b7 etc.

5...cxd4 6 ♗xd4 ♗xd4

Usually Black doesn't hurry to carry out this exchange, but here it helps him in achieving ...b7-b5 without having to worry about ♗xc6.

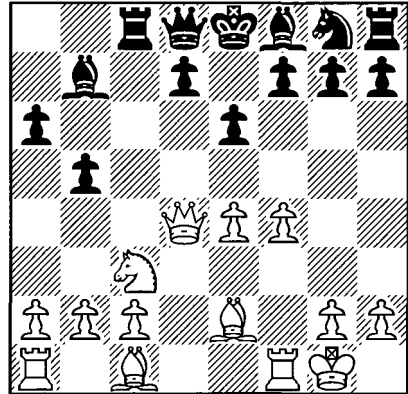
7 ♗xd4 b5 8 ♕e2 ♗b7

A great place for the bishop, where it puts pressure on the e4-pawn and might even assist in a future attack on the white king.

9 0-0 ♖c8

Within the first nine moves, Black has just made one single movement on the

kingside! When Taimanov introduced such a set-up into practice many years ago, the fact that the black queenside is developed before the kingside caused surprise and even suspicion.



However, Black's play is perfectly logical. The queen's rook and bishop have rather obvious destinies on b7 and c8, so they are developed straight away. In contrast, the king's bishop has both c5 and e7 at its disposal, so it could wait a few moves, until White's set-up is more defined. Finally, the knight would like to settle at f6, but only if e4-e5 can be coped with, otherwise it will prefer the route ...♗e7-c6(g6).

10 ♖h1

Parrying the threat 10...♕c5. An earlier game of Sokolov's saw 10 ♗d3 b4 11 ♗d1 ♗f6 12 e5 ♗d5 13 f5 ♗h4!? 14 ♖h1 ♕c5 15 ♕f3 0-0 and Black had a more active position, A.Martin Gonzalez-A.Sokolov, Biel Interzonal 1985.

10...♗f6

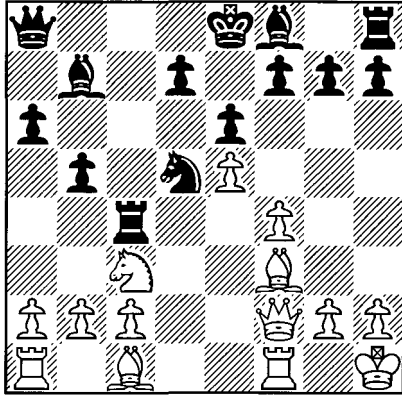
Now, on the other hand, 10...b4?! 11 ♗a4 ♖xc2 12 ♕d3 ♖c8 13 ♕d2 yields White a dangerous lead in development – Sokolov.

11 e5 ♗d5 12 ♕f3

The desirable 12 ♗e4 fails to 12...♖xc2

13 ♔d3 ♚c8 followed by ...♗b6.

12...♚c4! 13 ♗f2 ♗a8!

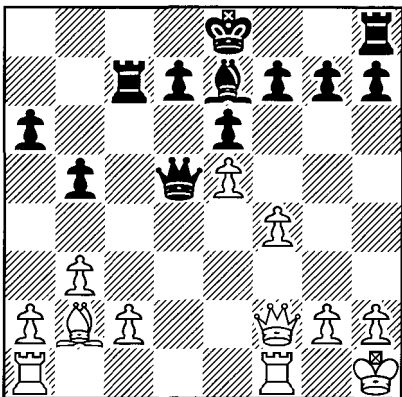


Thanks to this and the previous move, Black stays in charge of the long diagonal.

14 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 15 b3 ♚c7 16 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 17 ♗b2

Considering Black's slow development on the kingside, 17 f5 would seem like a logical choice. However, after 17...exf5 18 ♗xf5 g6!? Black can meet 19 ♗f6 with 19...♚xc2 20 ♗g1 ♚xg2! 21 ♚xg2 ♗d1+ securing a perpetual; the flexible 17...♗b4!? doesn't seem bad either.

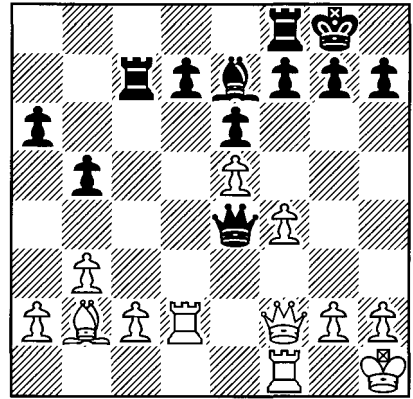
17...♗e7



18 ♚ad1

On this occasion, 18 f5 proves even less dangerous after 18...exf5 19 ♗xf5 0-0 followed by ...♗e6.

18...♗e4 19 ♚d2 0-0



Ten moves later Black finally gets castled and has a minimal edge thanks to his superior pawn structure and more active bishop. The game continued 20 ♚e1 ♗f5 21 ♚ed1 ♗b4! 22 c3 ♗xc3 23 ♗xc3 ♚xc3 24 ♚xd7 h5! 25 h3 ♚c2 26 ♚1d2 ♚fc8 with a slight initiative, although it eventually ended in a draw.

The following game shows the use of positional concessions, such as accepting weaknesses or exchanging "good" pieces, in order to exploit a lead in development.

Game 10
N.Firman-B.Itkis
 Lvov 2003
Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5

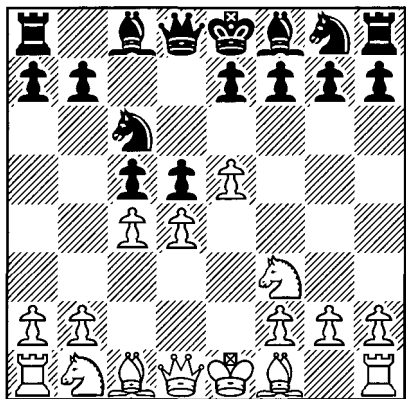
A modern alternative to the traditional 3...♗f5. Compared with the Advance Variation in the French (1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5)

Black is a tempo down, but the h3-c8 diagonal remains open for the bishop.

4 ♖f3

The main line is 4 dxc5, hanging on to the pawn, but the text is viable as well.

4...♗c6 5 c4!



A logical choice: White aims to open the centre, considering the tempo loss involved in ...c7-c6 and ...c6-c5. In contrast, after 5 c3?! ♗g4 followed by ...e7-e6, Black obtains an excellent game.

5...e6 6 cxd5 exd5 7 ♗b5 ♗d7 8 0-0

Speeding up development; whereas the greedy 8 dxc5 ♗xc5 9 ♖xd5?! permits 9...♖b6! with a nasty double attack.

8...cxd4 9 ♗xd4 ♗c5 10 ♗b3 ♗b6 11 ♗c3!

Again White prefers development to material. After 11 ♖xd5 ♗ge7 12 ♖e4 0-0, preparing ...♗f5, Black would enjoy quite a bit of activity for the pawn.

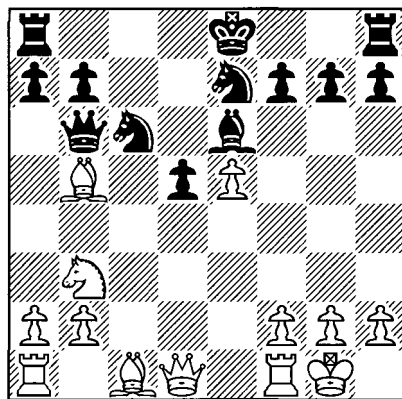
11...♗e6 12 ♗a4 ♗ge7

Black also gives priority to development. The attempt to keep the “good” bishop by 12...♗c7?! permits 13 ♗ac5 ♗ge7 14 ♗d4 ♖c8 15 ♗cxe6 fxe6 16 ♖g4, when White has a clear advantage – Firman.

13 ♗xb6 ♖xb6?

Surprisingly enough, this natural move

proves to be a serious mistake after White’s strong follow-up. Correct was 13...axb6, followed by ...0-0, with just a slight disadvantage.



How to exploit the minimal lead in development?

14 ♗xc6+!

In the opening phase, time is money! Losing the “good” bishop and indirectly the bishop pair is not a big deal if it can help us keep the enemy king in the centre.

14...♗xc6

The following piece of analysis by Firman illustrates Black’s problems if he recaptures with the pawn or the queen: 14...bxc6 15 ♗e3 ♖c7 16 ♗c5! ♖xe5 (otherwise the bishop settles on d6) 17 ♗d4 ♖c7 18 ♖e1 0-0 19 ♗xe6 fxe6 20 ♖xe6 ♖f7 21 ♖a4 with a clear advantage, or 14...♖xc6 15 ♗g5! (preventing ...0-0) 15...♗g6 16 ♖c1 ♖a4 17 f4! h6 18 f5 hxg5 19 fxg6 ♖h4 20 gxf7+ ♗xf7 21 h3 0-0 22 ♗d4 ♖g3 23 ♖e1 and the passed e-pawn spells trouble for Black.

15 ♗e3 ♖c7 16 ♗c5!

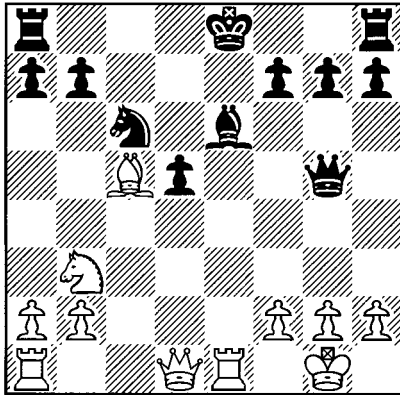
A key move to prevent the opponent’s castling, just like Gofshtein’s 15...♗c5! against Psakhis (Game 8).

16... ♖xe5

Black isn't really happy about accepting this gift, since the absence of the e5-pawn will allow White to use the e-file for the attack, but the bishop would have become unbearable on d6.

17 ♖e1 ♖g5

The greedy 17... ♖xb2 is answered in the same way.



18 ♗d4!

An aggressive exchange directed at the defenders on e6 and c6. We saw Nezhmetdinov carry out a similar idea against Chistiakov (Game 5).

18... ♗xd4?

The last chance was 18... ♗d7, although after 19 ♖b3 ♖ab8 20 ♖ac1 White's pressure is overwhelming.

19 ♖xd4 a6

Defending against the threat of 20 ♖a4+, but now White crashes through on the opposite flank.

20 f4! ♖f5 21 ♖e5 1-0

Renewing the threat of f4-f5. At this moment Black resigned, a possible conclusion of the game being 21... ♖g4 22 ♖xd5 (of course 22 f5 is also fine) 22... ♖d8 23 ♖xb7 ♖d1+ 24 ♖e1! ♖d7 25 ♖a8+ ♖d8 26

♖c6+ ♖d7 27 ♖ad1! and the last piece enters the attack with devastating effect.

Let's see a few more games illustrating the risks of pursuing strategic goals at the expense of development. Mikhail Tal was a true maestro at exploiting a lead in development, as we already saw against Tringov (Game 2). In the next example, his opponent is simply demolished after a few misguided positional considerations.

Game 11
M. Tal-Z. Milev
 Munich Olympiad 1958
Semi-Tarrasch Defence

1 c4 c5 2 ♖c3 ♖c6 3 ♗f3 ♗f6 4 e3 e6 5 d4 d5 6 cxd5 ♗xd5 7 ♗c4

From a rather innocent English Opening, the game has transposed into a more delicate Semi-Tarrasch.

7... ♗b6?!

Such a knight retreat is typical of some openings like the Alekhine, but here it is not really necessary, and rather implies a loss of time. Preferable was 7... cxd4 8 exd4 ♗e7, followed by 9... 0-0, with a normal IQP battle.

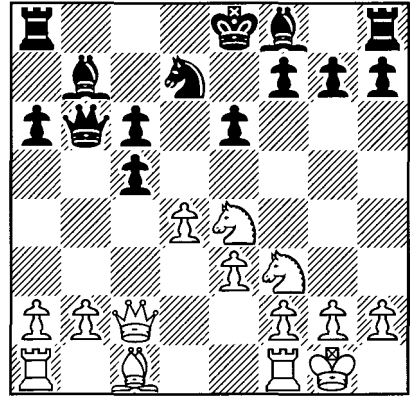
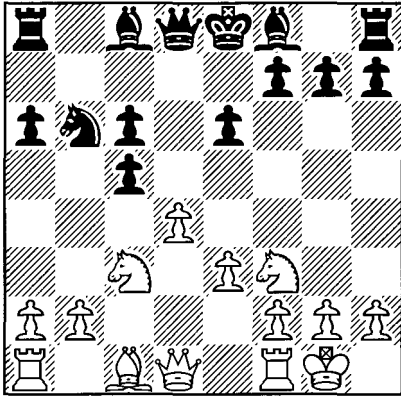
8 ♗b5

Other reasonable options were 8 ♗d3 and 8 ♗b3, but Tal chooses the most active move. The threat of 9 ♗e5 must already be taken into account.

8... a6?!

Anxious about releasing the pin, Milev keeps delaying his development. 8... ♗d7 was better, bringing out the bishop and at the same time preventing 9 ♗e5.

9 ♗xc6+ bxc6 10 0-0



In exchange for the bishop pair, White enjoys a sounder pawn structure and a lead in development.

10...♙b7?

Yet one more unnecessary move. In view of the possible 11 ♘e5 Milev protects the c6-pawn in advance, but he should rather have accelerated the development on the opposite flank by 10...cxd4 11 exd4 ♙e7. Here 12 ♘e5 ♙b7 13 ♣f3 proves inoffensive after 13...0-0 14 ♘xc6 ♙f6! with decent compensation for the pawn; e.g. 15 ♘e4 ♙xc6 16 ♘xf6+ ♣xf6 17 ♣xc6 ♘d5 followed by 18...♞fc8. Probably Tal would have opted for something like 13 ♣h5!? 0-0 14 ♞d1, intending ♞d3-h3, with attacking prospects.

11 ♘e4!

Provoking ...c5xd4 to clear both the c1-h6 diagonal and the e-file.

11...♘d7?

In order to prevent White's intentions, Black moves the knight for the fourth time. Admittedly after 11...cxd4 12 exd4 ♙e7 13 ♙g5!? f6 14 ♙e3 ♘d5 (not 14...0-0?! 15 ♣b3!) 15 ♞c1, followed by 16 ♘c5, White has the upper hand, yet Black's position is entirely fightable.

12 ♣c2 ♣b6

12...cxd4 was the lesser evil, but Black is consistent. Now how to step up the pressure?

13 ♘e5!

A strong blow that either wins the battle for the c5-square or forces the black king to stay in the centre.

13...cxd4

Black opts for the latter, since after 13...♘xe5 14 dxe5, followed by b2-b3, ♙a3 and ♞ac1, he would be strategically doomed.

14 ♘d7 ♖xd7 15 exd4!

White's main priority is to clear the c1-h6 diagonal for the bishop. Less promising is 15 ♞d1?! ♞d8 16 ♞xd4+ ♖c8 and Black stays alive.

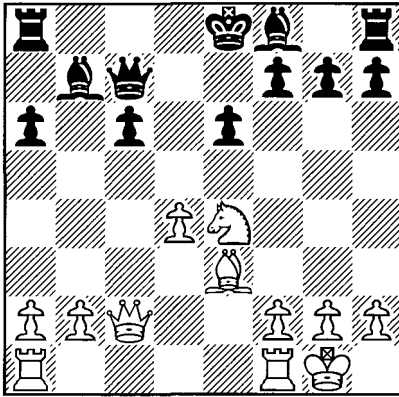
15...♖e8

Intending ...f7-f6 and ♖f7 to safeguard the king. The attempt at artificial castling by 15...♞d8 is well met by 16 ♙e3 ♣c7 17 ♣d2! ♖c8 18 ♙f4 ♣b6 19 ♞fd1, with ideas like ♞c1-c3-b3 and ♙g3 followed by ♣f4.

16 ♙e3!

Development with tempo. Due to the threat of 17 d5, Black must waste a move on retreating his queen.

16...♣c7



17 d5!

Anyway! Now the e-file is cleared with great effect.

17...exd5 18 ♖fe1! ♕d8

After 18...dxe4 19 ♜xe4+ ♙e7 20 ♙c5 Black is definitely missing his right to castling, and 19...♜e7 20 ♜c4 followed by ♙c5(+) is also fatal for him. As for 18...♙e7, White breaks through by 19 ♘d6+! ♙f8 (or 19...♜xd6 20 ♙c5) 20 ♘f5 ♙f6 21 ♙c5+ ♙g8 22 ♜e7! and 23 ♜ae1 next.

19 ♜b3 c5

Losing on the spot, though the bishop's arrival on b6 spelled big trouble in any case; e.g. 19...♙c8 20 ♙b6 ♜d7 21 ♘c5 ♙xc5 22 ♙xc5 ♜e8 23 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 24 ♜c3, followed by 25 ♜e1, when Black's lagging development finally takes its toll.

20 ♘xc5! ♙xc5 21 ♙xc5 ♜xc5 22 ♜xb7 1-0
22...♜c8 23 ♜ad1 is hopeless.

This early queen sortie is hardly a critical test of the Winawer, but the unorthodox positions that often follow may not please every French player. Moreover, at the time of this game I was inspired by some White victories in this line by my countryman GM Jonny Hector.

4...dxe4

One of several logical replies, aiming to gain a tempo by 5...♘f6 on the next move.

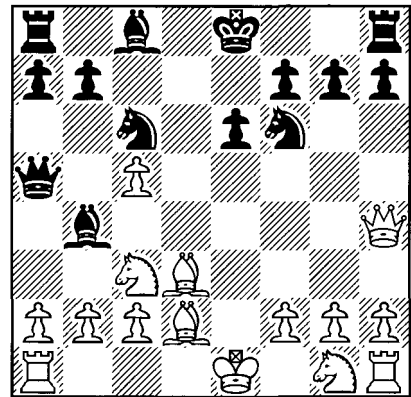
5 ♜xe4 ♘f6 6 ♜h4 c5 7 dxc5 ♜a5?!

The correct move order is 7...♙xc3+ 8 bxc3 ♜a5; e.g. 9 ♜b4 ♜c7 10 ♘f3 ♘c6 11 ♜h4 ♜a5 12 ♙d2 ♜xc5 with mutual chances, J.Hellsten-L.Karlsson, Gothenburg (rapid) 1996.

8 ♙d2

In contrast to 7...♙xc3+ above, here White keeps his pawn structure intact, thus making a future 0-0-0 possible. Besides which, a2-a3 might now prove unpleasant for Black at any moment.

8...♘c6 9 ♙d3



9...♘e5?

Anxious about swapping White's "good" bishop, Black moves the knight twice (soon thrice), which will cost him duly. The simple 9...♜xc5 was called for; e.g. 10 a3 ♙xc3 11

Game 12

J.Hellsten-N.G.Renman
Norrköping 1994
French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♙b4 4 ♜d3!?

♙xc3 e5, followed by ...0-0, with much better prospects than in the game.

10 a3! ♙xc3 11 ♙xc3 ♖xc5

Perhaps 11...♗xd3+ 12 cxd3 ♖xc5 13 ♙xf6 gxf6 14 ♖xf6 ♔g8 was a lesser evil, sacrificing a pawn in order to prevent White's 14th move in the game, although after 15 ♗f3! ♔xg2 16 ♗e5 the latter keeps the initiative.

12 0-0-0

Speeding up development; Black can't do the same with 12...0-0? due to 13 ♙b4.

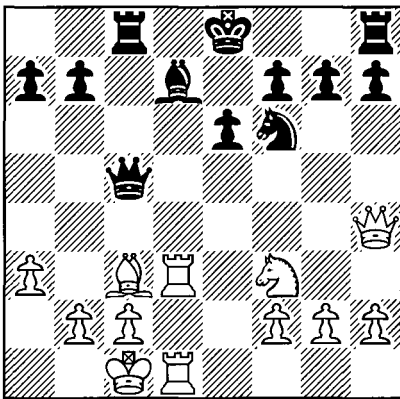
13...♙d7 13 ♗f3!

Development with tempo. Now 13...♗xf3?! 14 gxf3, followed by ♔hg1, leads to unbearable pressure on the dark squares, whereas the doubled pawns are a less serious matter. 13 ♖g3!? was interesting as well.

13...♗xd3+ 14 ♔xd3 ♔c8

Since 14...0-0-0? fails to 15 ♙xf6 gxf6 16 ♔c3, Black opts for a useful move.

15 ♔hd1



A familiar picture in this chapter: one player has mobilized all his pieces, with an advantage in activity that leaves the opponent under a dark cloud. Note that Black's delayed castling doesn't just jeopardize his

king, it also means that he is playing with a rook less.

15...♖f5

This move doesn't achieve much, but what to do? The desirable 15...0-0? fails to the simple 16 ♔xd7 ♗xd7 17 ♔xd7, while 15...♗d5 16 ♗e5 also has a bad aspect for Black; e.g. 16...♗xc3? 17 ♔xc3 ♖xe5 18 ♔xc8+ ♙xc8 19 ♔d8 mate, or 16...♙b5 17 ♔xd5! exd5 18 ♖g3 with the double threat of 19 ♖xg7 and 19 ♔e1. At this point, 18...0-0 fails to 19 ♗d3.

16 ♖g3!

Heading for d6 with tempo. Less clear is 16 ♙xf6?! gxf6 when 17 Rxd7?? fails to mate.

16...♗h5

Or 16...0-0? 17 ♙xf6 ♖xf6 18 ♔xd7.

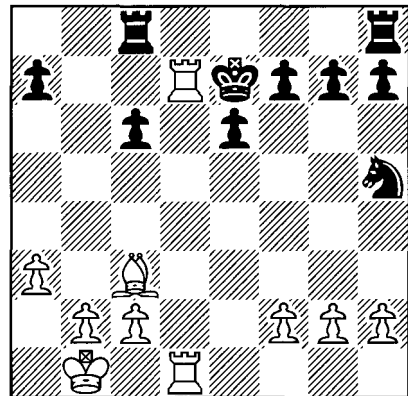
17 ♖d6 ♙c6 18 ♗e5!

Now the threat of 19 ♗xc6 bxc6 20 ♖d7+ forces Black to enter a lost endgame.

18...♖g5+

Or 18...♗f6? 19 ♖d8+! with mate in two.

19 ♙b1 ♖e7 20 ♖xe7+ ♙xe7 21 ♗xc6+ bxc6 22 ♔d7+



The rest is easy:

22...♙e8 23 ♙b4! c5 24 ♙xc5 ♔xc5 25 ♔d8+ ♙e7 26 ♔xh8 h6 27 ♔hd8 ♔c7 28 g3 ♗f6 29 ♔d2 g5 30 h3 h5 31 ♔e1 ♔c5 32 b3 1-0

The following game was played just a few months after my battle with Renman, which confirms the fact that you learn more from your defeats than from your victories!

Game 13
C.Niklasson-J.Hellsten
 Malmö 1994
Bird's Opening

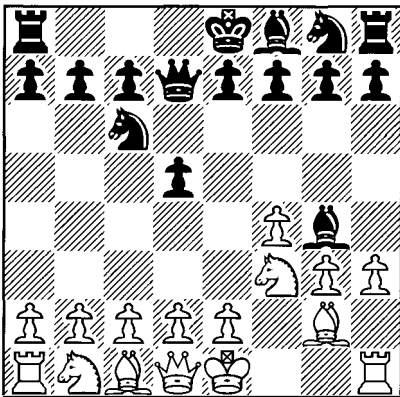
1 g3 d5 2 f4

Adherents of Bird's Opening can use this move order to avoid From's Gambit (1 f4 e5).

2...c6

Launching a rather aggressive set-up. With 2...g6, followed by 3...g7, Black could have entered the Dutch Leningrad with reversed colours, where the minus tempo is no great issue.

3 f3 g4 4 g2 g7 5 h3



While 5 0-0?! g3 plays in Black's hands, 5 c4! might be a more critical test of his set-up.

5...xf3 6 exf3!

After 6 xf3?! e5! followed by ...f6,

...d6 and ...0-0-0, Black obtains a great game. Now, in contrast, 6...e5 can be met by 7 fxe5 ex5 8 d4 with a slight edge due to the bishop pair.

6...e6+?!

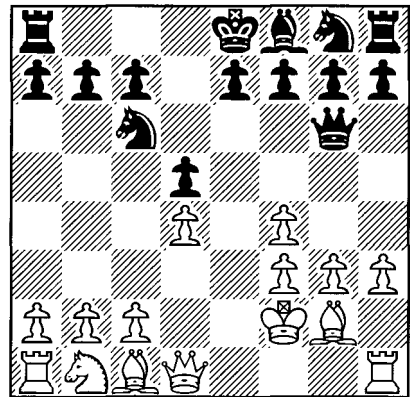
Before playing ...e7-e6 Black aims to deploy the queen at g6 where it will hit the g3-pawn and seize the b1-h7 diagonal. The downside to this creative idea is the time loss involved. A normal continuation was 6...e6 7 d4 d6 8 0-0 ge7, followed by ...0-0, with approximate equality. A later plan might be ...f5, ...ce7 and ...c7-c5, hitting the enemy centre.

7 f2

White of course avoids 7 e2? g6 with a double attack at g3 and c2.

7...g6 8 d4

Fighting for the centre and ruling out any ideas of ...c5.



8...b4?

Black prepares ...c7-c5, striking at the enemy centre. Structurally speaking this is not a bad idea, and it is even utilized by White in a similar structure in the Trompowsky. Once ...c7-c5 is achieved, if White replies d4xc5 then Black obtains two pawns against none in the centre, whereas if he

supports the d4-pawn by c2-c3, then the double pawn capture on d4 produces an isolated white pawn on the same square. The problem with 8...b4 is the same one as two moves ago: Black neglects development. Again 8...e6 was called for.

9 d3

Of course 9 c3? d3+ had to be avoided, while a knight jump to b5 might soon prove useful. Now 9...e6 was, once more, Black's lesser evil, but I am consistent with my previous play.

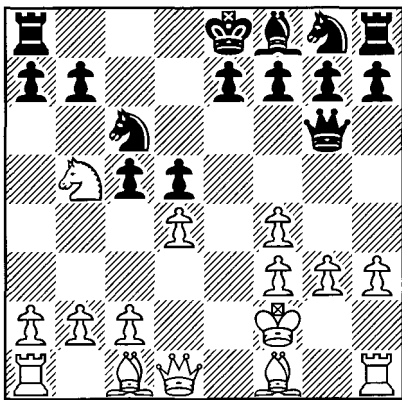
9...c5 10 e3

The bishop was idle on g2 and now helps in pushing back the knight by c2-c3. 10 dxc5?! e5 is less clear.

10...c6

Or 10...cxd4 11 b5! ♖xc2+ 12 e2 ♗xd1 13 ♜xd1 ♖a6 14 ♗xd4, with ideas like e5 and f4-f5, when White's lead in development more than compensates for the pawn.

11 b5



Well, how to defend against the fork on c7?

11...c8?

The decisive mistake, leaving the king stranded in the centre. I discarded 11...0-0-0

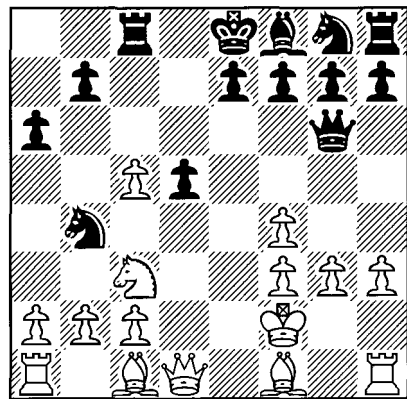
due to 12 dxc5 e6 13 e3. However, after 13...d4! 14 ♗xd4 e5xc5 15 c3 ♗ge7 Black may claim some compensation for the pawn. The development he achieves in this line will remain an illusion for the rest of the game.

12 dxc5 a6

Here 12...e6 fails to 13 e3, so Black has to spend more time to recover the c5-pawn.

13 c3 b4

After 13...e6?! 14 ♖a4 White hangs on to the pawn.



14 e3!

Niklasson has nothing against swapping his "good" bishop for my only developed minor piece. Indeed, after 14...♗xd3+ 15 cxd3 Black's position is hopeless; e.g. 15...♜xc5 16 e3, winning the d-pawn, or 15...d4 16 ♖a4+ with the same effect. Thus Black has to spend one more tempo on moving his queen.

14...c6 15 a3 ♖xc5+ 16 e3!

Development with tempo. Now 16...d4 fails to 17 e5+! axb5 18 e4xd4, recovering the piece with interest; e.g. 18...♖c4 19 axb4 ♜d8 (or 19...♖xb4 20 ♖d3) 20 e6! ♜xd1 21 ♜a8+ ♔d7 22 ♜xd1+, followed by 23 ♜xf8. Remember, tactical complications

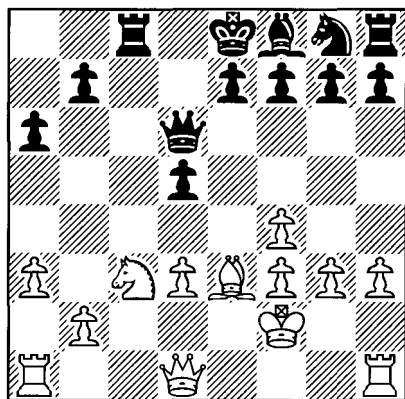
usually favour the side with a lead in development.

16...♗xd3+ 17 cxd3!

Clearing the c-file for future operations. In contrast, after 17 ♖xd3?! ♖c4 18 ♜hd1 e6 Black has much better chances for resistance, since there is no open file where White can exploit his lead in development.

17...♖d6

Obviously 17...d4? fails to 18 ♖a4+.



So, Black finally got what he wanted: a superior pawn structure. Unfortunately, this is irrelevant when most of his pieces are still in their initial positions. Note that White needs just one move to connect his rooks, while Black needs four – thus the latter won't have a chance in resisting on the open file.

18 ♜c1! ♜d8

Surrendering the c-file in order to avoid tactical surprises. After 18...e6 19 ♖a4+ (19 ♗b5 is also interesting) 19...♜c6 (both queen moves fail to the tactical shot 20 ♗xd5!) 20 ♗e2, followed by ♗d4, Black's queenside defence is soon destroyed; 18...♗f6 can be met in the same way.

19 ♗d4 e6 20 ♗a4!

Exploiting the vulnerable squares c5 and

b6, while clearing the c-file for the rook.

20...♗e7?

This tactical oversight loses the queen, but after 20...b5 21 ♗c5 ♜a8 (there was the threat of 22 ♗b7) 22 a4! White breaks through anyway.

21 ♗e5 ♖d7 22 ♜c7 ♖b5 23 ♜c5! f6

Or 23...♖d7 24 ♗b6.

24 ♗c7 ♜c8 25 ♜xb5 axb5 26 ♗c3 ♜xc7 27 ♗xb5

White soon materialized his huge advantage.

The development factor after mutual castling

So far in this chapter, leaving aside the "atypical" game Conquest-Sokolov (Game 9), the side lagging in development never managed to castle! The next two games will show us that the development factor remains relevant even after castling.

Game 14
L. Van Wely-S. Guliev
European Championship,
Ohrid 2001
Dutch Defence

1 d4 f5 2 g3 ♗f6 3 ♗g2 g6 4 ♗f3 ♗g7 5 b4

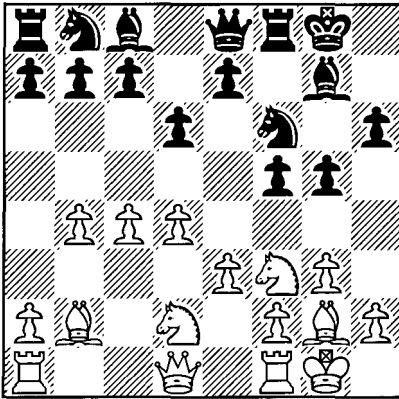
An interesting sideline against the Leningrad Dutch. White prepares ♗b2, in order to neutralize the enemy bishop on g7, and grabs some space on the queenside.

5...d6 6 ♗b2 0-0 7 0-0 ♖e8 8 c4 h6 9 ♗bd2 g5

A typical move in this defence, but the more restrained 9...♖f7 10 ♖c2 c6 followed by ...♗e6 and ...♗bd7 might have been preferable, completing development before taking further actions.

10 e3

A sensible piece of prophylaxis as soon as ...f5-f4 appears on Black's agenda.



10...f4?

Black just can't wait to attack on the kingside, but this lets White open the position to the benefit of his better developed forces. Again 10...♖f7 11 ♖c2 c6, followed by ...♙e6, made sense.

11 exf4!

The virtue of 10 e3 becomes evident: White manages to open the e-file towards the backward pawn on e7, while his king remains completely safe.

11...gxf4 12 ♖e1 fxg3 13 hxg3 ♙g4

Black quickly brings out his remaining forces, but his position is already dubious.

14 ♖c2 ♘c6

Other moves, such as 14...c6 and 14...♖f7, are well met by 15 ♘h4! just like in the game – Tyomkin.

15 b5 ♘d8 16 ♘h4!

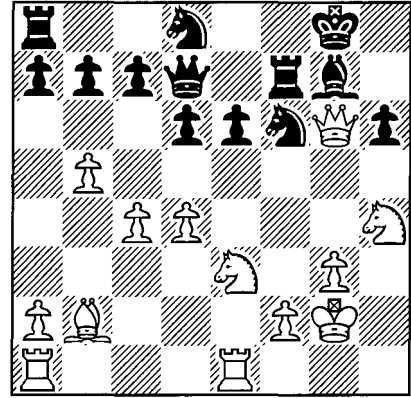
Heading for the weak light squares on g6 and f5. By now Black's aspirations of a kingside attack are definitely outdated, and it is White who is thinking in such terms.

16...♖d7 17 ♘f1

The other knight joins the battle for the

kingside. Less flexible is 17 ♘g6 ♖f7, when White has to look out for ...♙f5.

17...♖f7 18 ♘e3 ♙h3 19 ♖g6! ♙xg2 20 ♙xg2 e6



21 d5!

White's game plays itself. This advance softens up the f5-square and includes the bishop in the attack, since 21...e5? 22 ♘ef5 would be fatal for Black.

21...♘h7

If 21...♙h8 White has the strong sacrifice 22 ♘ef5! exf5 23 ♘xf5 with irresistible threats; e.g. 23...♘h5 24 ♘xg7 ♘xg7 25 ♖xh6+ ♙g8 26 ♖h1 winning – Tyomkin.

22 ♘g4 ♙f8

Black wasn't eager to enter the nice line 22...♙h8 23 ♖xg7+!! ♖xg7 24 ♘g6+ ♙g8 25 ♘xh6 mate – Tyomkin.

23 ♖xh7 ♙xb2 24 ♘g6+ 1-0

In view of 24...♙e8 25 ♖g8+.

Game 15
J.Hellsten-H.Lopez Silva
Pinamar 2004
Benoni Defence

1 d4 c5 2 d5 ♘f6

Mastering Opening Strategy

In this type of accelerated Benoni, another direction is 2...e5 3 ♖c3 d6 4 e4 ♙e7, intending 5 ♜f3 ♙g4 followed by ...♙xf3 and ...♙g5 at the appropriate moment.

3 ♖c3

This is the downside to 1...c5 compared with the standard 1...♜f6 2 c4 c5. White skips c2-c4 in order to speed up development and enable a future ♜f3-d2-c4.

3...e5

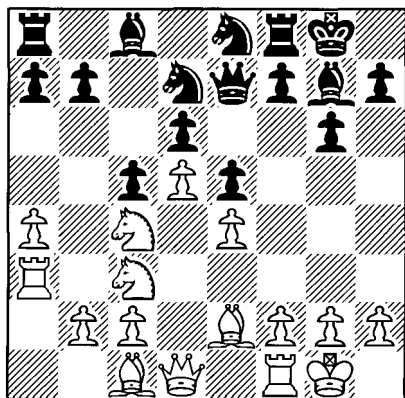
I am no expert on this defence, but 3...d6 4 e4 g6 seems more promising to me, keeping the long diagonal open for the bishop.

4 e4 d6 5 ♜f3 g6 6 ♜d2 ♙g7 7 ♙e2 0-0 8 0-0 ♙e7

Another idea is 8...a6 9 a4 ♜bd7 10 ♜c4 ♜b6, when White could try 11 ♜e3 or 11 ♜a3, preparing 12 a5 and the return of the knight to c4.

9 a4 ♜bd7 10 ♜c4 ♜e8 11 ♙a3!

A useful move, bringing the last piece into play while awaiting Black's next step. In contrast, after 11 f4?! exf4 12 ♙xf4 ♜e5, followed by ...♙d7, the latter has nothing to complain about.



11...f5?!

A natural advance in the present pawn structure; however, on this occasion White

is soon able to open the position for his better developed pieces. Black should have looked for play on the other flank with 11...♙b8, preparing ...b7-b6, ...a7-a6 and ...b6-b5.

12 exf5 gxf5 13 f4!

A key move in order to put pressure on Black's centre before his pieces on a8 and c8 are able to join the battle.

13...exf4?!

13...e4 was preferable, keeping the position closed, although after 14 h3!, followed by g2-g4, White takes the initiative anyway.

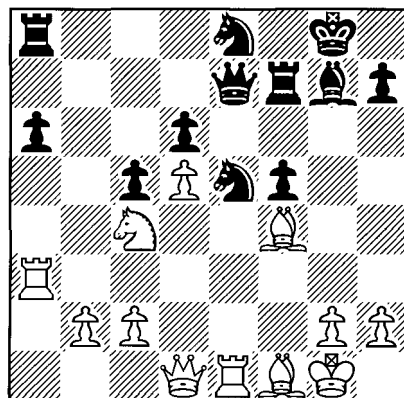
14 ♙xf4 ♜e5 15 ♙e1 ♙d7

Now the pressure at e5 becomes intolerable, but after 15...♜g6 16 ♙h5!, followed by ♙xg6 and ♜b5, or 15...♜xc4 16 ♙xc4 ♙f6 17 ♙b3!, preparing ♜e2-g3, White is also much better.

16 ♙f1 ♙f7 17 ♜b5!

Creating the threat of 18 ♜bxd6 and clearing the third rank for the rook. The difference in activity between White's and Black's pieces is striking.

17...♙xb5 18 axb5 a6 19 bxa6 bxa6



20 ♙xe5

Initiating a winning sequence. The restrained 20 ♙a3 was also strong.

20...♙xe5

Or 20...dxe5 21 d6 ♖e6 22 ♘b6!, followed by ♙c4.

21 ♘xe5 dxe5 22 d6! ♘xd6

Forced, in view of 22...♖xd6 23 ♙c4.

23 ♖d5 ♗d8

Or 23...♗e8 24 ♗xa6 ♘e4 25 ♙c4 etc.

24 ♗xe5 1-0

With his position in ruins, Black resigned. There could have followed 24...♖f6 25 ♗xa6 with fatal pins, or 24...♖c7 25 ♗xa6 ♘e4 26 ♗a8 ♗xa8 27 ♖xa8+ ♔g7 28 ♖d5, when both 28...c4 29 ♖d4! and 28...♖a7 29 c4 should win easily for White.

The next game is a good example on how to work on a lead in a development even after the opening phase has concluded. In clear contrast to the previous two games, when Black finally makes it to castling he is already beyond salvation.

Game 16
E. Berg-P. Velicka
Stockholm 2006
Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 ♘f3 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 ♘e5

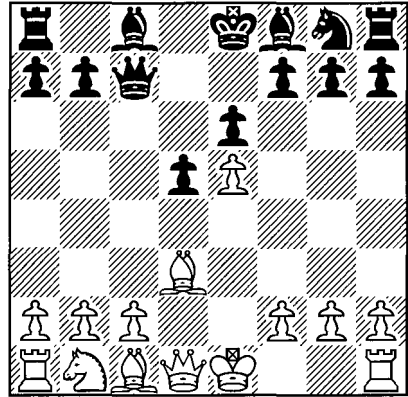
A curious reply to the Caro-Kann, one that can claim a remote relation to the more familiar variation 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 ♙d3 ♘c6 5 c3. In the latter case White has a slight problem with the development of his king's knight, in the sense that ♘f3 might run into ...♙g4. With the early knight jump to e5 he avoids that pin, while he can speculate with the idea of ♙b5(+) at some moment.

4...♘d7 5 d4 ♘xe5 6 dxe5 e6

Considering that 6...♙f5? fails to 7 ♙b5+ ♙d7 8 ♖xd5, Black applies a French-like set-

up with that bishop at home.

7 ♙d3 ♖c7?!



This attack on the e5-pawn loses its sense after White's reply. 7...♘e7! was preferable, followed by ...♘c6 or ...♘g6, speeding up development.

8 0-0!

Just like in Dvoretzky-Schmidt (Game 7), White doesn't lose any time on defending the pawn, aware that 8...♖xe5?! 9 ♙b5+! ♙d7 10 ♙xd7+ ♔xd7 11 ♗e1, followed by 12 c4, would leave the black king in serious danger – Golubev.

8...♘e7 9 ♘c3! ♙d7

Black gets ready to swap off the white knight if it jumps to b5. Again 9...♖xe5?! is too risky; e.g. 10 ♗e1 ♖c7 11 ♘b5 ♖b8 12 ♖f3! (threatening 13 ♙f4) 12...e5 13 ♘c3 d4 14 ♙b5+ with huge compensation for the pawn. On the other hand, 9...a6!? made some sense, in order to prevent ♘b5 once and for all.

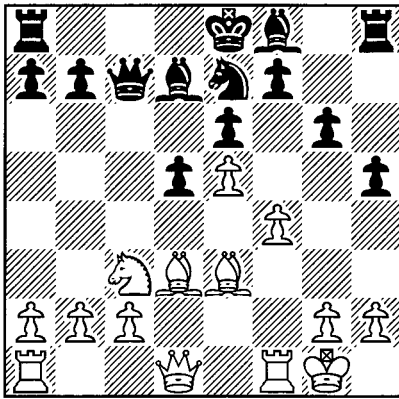
10 f4

Finally White secures the e5-pawn and also adds the advance f4-f5 to his agenda, a fact that explains Black's next move.

10...g6 11 ♙e3 h5?!

Prophylaxis against g2-g4, but swift de-

velopment by 11...♘f5 12 ♖f2 ♙c5 was more to the point. Black could then consider both castling options, depending on White's play.



How can White exploit his clear lead in development?

12 ♘b5!

Berg prepares the crucial c2-c4 break in order to open lines on the queenside. The fact that Black now manages to exchange his “bad” bishop is less relevant.

12...♙xb5 13 ♙xb5+ ♘c6 14 c4!

The d- and c-files are cleared before Black manages to castle.

14...a6

Forcing the trade of the active enemy bishop, but losing more time. Also unsatisfactory was 14...dxc4 15 ♗a4!, followed by ♗ac1 and ♗xc4. Instead, the radical 14...0-0-0!? deserved attention; e.g. 15 cxd5 ♗xd5 16 ♗a4 ♙c5 with more resistance than in the game.

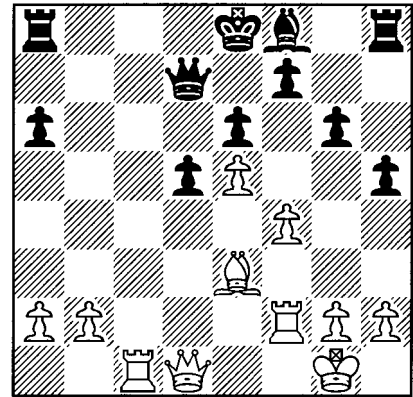
15 ♙xc6+ bxc6 16 cxd5 cxd5

Or 16...exd5?! 17 f5 with a big initiative.

17 ♗c1 ♗d7 18 ♗f2!

Another power move, which prepares ♗fc2 with an invasion down the c-file. As Golubev observes, Black has a great pawn

structure and the “better” bishop, but his delay in development prevents these long-term factors from taking effect.



18...♙e7?!

A vulnerable square for the bishop. 18...♗c8?! failed to 19 ♗xc8+ ♗xc8 20 ♗a4+! (Golubev), but 18...♙h6 was a more tenacious choice, intending 19 ♙c5 ♙f8! 20 ♙xf8?! ♗xf8 and ...♗g7. In turn White should prefer 20 ♙b6, followed by ♗c7 and ♗fc2, with a somewhat inferior version of the game.

19 ♗fc2 0-0

The attempt to prevent the invasion at c7 by 19...♙d8 runs into 20 ♙c5!, denying Black's castling.

20 ♗c7 ♗d8 21 ♗a4!

With the simple idea of ♗d7. Black can't do anything to stop this.

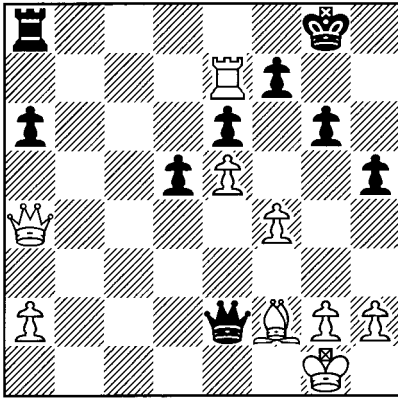
21...♗e8 22 ♗d7 ♗b8 23 ♗cc7 ♗xb2

This desperate shot is easily refuted, but after 23...♗b4 24 ♗xb4 ♙xb4 25 ♗xf7 ♙f8 26 ♗f6 Black is done – Golubev.

24 ♗xe7 ♗xe7 25 ♗xe7 ♗e2 26 ♙f2

Black's attack is already over, since 26...♗b8 fails to 27 ♗e8+. Velicka could have resigned at this point, but keeps on fighting until the bitter end.

The next two games will show these ideas in action.



26... ♖d2 27 h3 ♔g7 28 ♙h4 g5 29 ♙xg5
 ♚e1+ 30 ♘h2 h4 31 ♗xf7+!

The most elegant finish.

31... ♔xf7 32 ♚d7+ ♔g8 33 ♚xe6+ ♔g7 34
 ♙f6+ 1-0

Black lost on time when the mate was around the corner; e.g. 34... ♔h6 35 ♙e7+ ♔g7 36 ♚f6+ ♔h7 37 ♚f7+ ♔h6 38 ♙g5 mate.

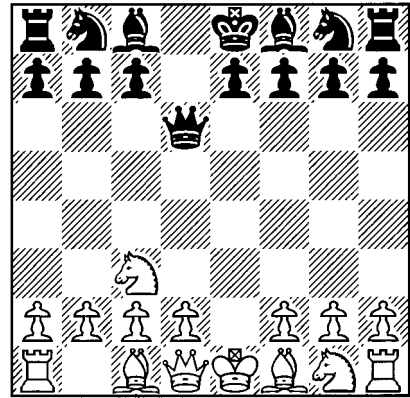
A defender's perspective

Well, what to do when behind in development? Here are some simple recommendations:

- ♣ Consider giving (back) material, usually a pawn, in order to gain time for development.
- ♣ Look for exchanges, in particular of the queens.
- ♣ Consider unusual ways of developing the pieces.
- ♣ Keep the tactical possibilities of both sides constantly supervised – under such circumstances, just one small error might be sufficient to lose the game.

Game 17 V. Anand-S. Tiviakov Wijk aan Zee 2006 Scandinavian Defence

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 ♚xd5 3 ♘c3 ♚d6



Over the last decade, this has become a popular alternative to the traditional 3... ♚a5, with Tiviakov as its main protagonist. On d6 the queen seizes the h2-b8 diagonal, while keeping an eye on the white d-pawn.

4 d4 ♘f6

An alternate move order is 4...c6 5 ♘f3 ♙g4, with the merit that White's sixth move in the game is avoided.

5 ♘f3 c6 6 ♘e5

White immediately seizes the centre and prepares ♙f4 in order to harass the black queen.

6... ♘bd7 7 ♙f4

Another direction is 7 ♘c4 ♚c7 8 ♚f3, preparing ♙f4.

7... ♘d5 8 ♘xd5 ♚xd5 9 ♙e2!?

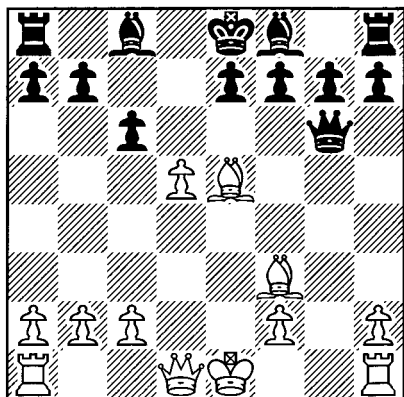
White offers a pawn to speed up development and keep bothering the black queen.

9...♖xe5 10 ♙xe5 ♜xg2!

Accepting the challenge is the best choice on this occasion. After 10...♙f5?! 11 0-0 e6 12 c4 ♜d7 13 ♜b3, preparing ♞ad1 and d4-d5, White obtains a small advantage at no risk.

11 ♙f3 ♜g6 12 d5?!

Logically enough, White tries to open the position for his better developed forces, but Black counts on a strong reply. The preparatory 12 ♜e2 was more flexible; e.g. 12...♙f5 13 0-0-0, intending d4-d5, or 12...♜e6 13 d5! cxd5 14 0-0-0 f6 15 ♙xd5! ♜xe5 16 ♜c4 e6 17 ♞he1 with strong pressure, J.M.Degraeve-I.Smirnov, Cappelle la Grande 2009.



12...♙g4!

By tactical means (13 ♙xg4? ♜e4+) Black manages to exchange the dangerous bishop on f3. Moreover, he enables a quick ...♞d8 or even ...0-0-0, possibilities that Anand hurries to prevent with his next move.

13 dxc6 bxc6 14 ♜e2

Not 14 ♞g1?? ♙xf3 15 ♜xf3 ♜xg1+ 16 ♙e2 ♜g6 and Black wins.

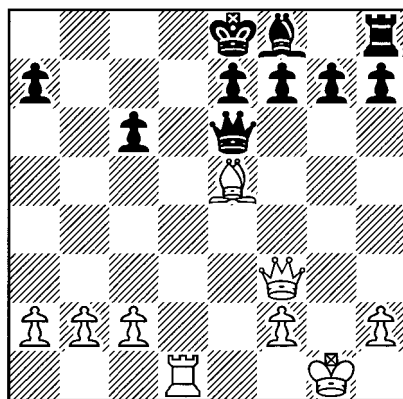
14...♙xf3 15 ♜xf3 ♞d8!

At first sight, 15...♜e6, intending 16 ♜e2 f6 with simplifications, seems tempting. However, White has the much stronger 16 0-0-0!, speeding up development, and the bishop is untouchable because of mate. Thus Tiviakov first rules out the opponent's long castling, which obliges White to hide his king on the more exposed kingside.

16 ♞d1 ♜e6

After 16...♜xc2 17 ♞xd8+ ♙xd8 18 0-0 White has compensation for the two pawns – Anand. Another idea is 16...♞xd1+ 17 ♙xd1 ♜e6 18 ♞e1 ♜d5+, forcing the exchange of queens, although after 19 ♜xd5 cxd5 20 ♞e3, heading for a3 or b3, White keeps the initiative even into the endgame.

17 0-0 ♞xd1 18 ♞xd1



Black is now left with a single defender and his last rank has become vulnerable. Fortunately, White doesn't have too many attacking pieces either – even so, the former should proceed with care.

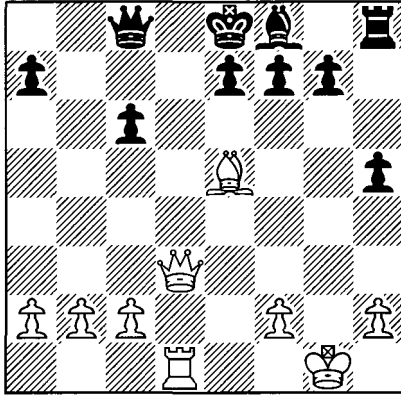
18...h5!

A great idea. Since his remaining pieces can't be developed in a normal way, Tiviakov prepares to bring out the rook via h6. In contrast, after 18...f6?! 19 ♙c3 ♙f7 20 ♞d4!,

followed by ♖a4, White keeps the initiative.

19 ♖d3 ♗c8

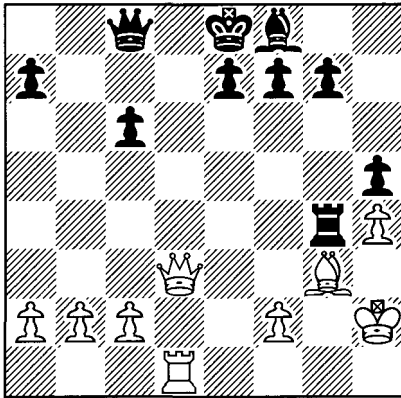
Of course not 19...f6?? 20 ♗g6+ ♗f7 21 ♖d8+!



20 h4!

By blocking the black h-pawn White prepares ♖h2 and ♗g3 with improved safety for his king.

20...♖h6 21 ♖h2 ♖g6 22 ♗g3 ♖g4



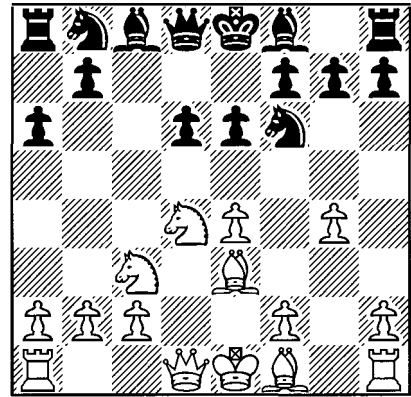
Now that his rook has joined the battle, Black hardly has anything to worry about. The game continued 23 a3 a6 24 ♖e1 c5 (according to Anand, 24...f5 produced a slight advantage) 25 c3 ♖g6 (retreating the rook in order to swap its more active white

counterpart, even at the cost of a pawn) 26 ♖e5 e6 27 ♖xh5 ♖h6! 28 ♖xh6 gxh6 29 ♗f3 c4 and the roughly equal endgame later ended in a draw.

If, by chance, you felt that Tiviakov's play was not that difficult, then in the following game Black faces a much more complex task.

Game 18
A.Naiditsch-V.Belov
Moscow 2007
Sicilian Defence, Najdorf Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 a6 6 ♗e3 e6 7 g4



With 6 ♗e3 White usually signals an English Attack by 7 f3, ♗d2, 0-0-0 etc; in this game he opts for a sharper line.

7...e5

The most principled reply, which virtually forces White to sacrifice a piece in order to keep the balance. A safer choice is 7...h6 with more standard Sicilian play.

8 ♘f5 g6 9 g5 gxf5 10 exf5

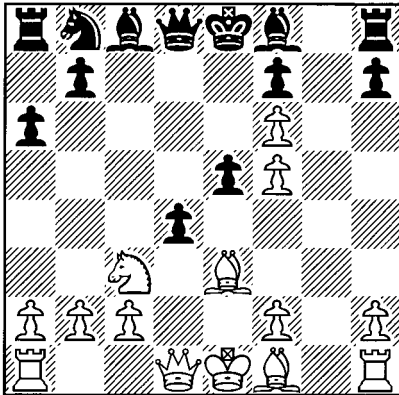
The meek 10 gxf6?! f4 11 ♗d2 ♗e6

would go against the spirit of the variation.

10...d5

This pawn advance is Black's only promising choice. After the materialistic 10...♠fd7?! 11 ♖h5, with ideas like 0-0-0, ♗c4, g5-g6 etc, his king gets under too much pressure, while the seemingly pragmatic 10...♗xf5?! fails to 11 gxf6, followed by ♘d5 or ♖f3, with a clear grip on the light squares.

11 gxf6 d4



Black is ready to charge the piece, though it goes without saying that White's compensation will be enormous.

12 ♗c4 ♖c7

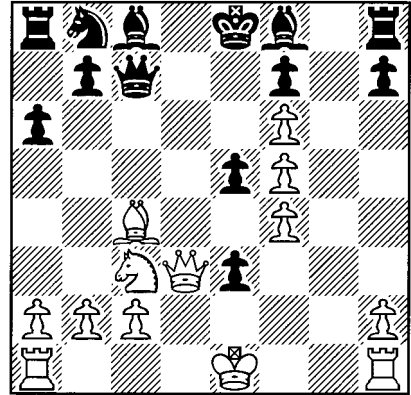
White's previous clever move rendered both captures on e3 and c3 impossible due to the tactical blow 13 ♗xf7+, while 12...♖xf6 13 ♘d5 ♖c6 14 ♗xd4! has yielded him excellent results in practice. After the text he will have to hand over the piece under less favourable circumstances.

13 ♖d3 dxe3

This is currently regarded as the best choice. Several older games saw the continuation 13...dxc3 14 0-0-0 cxb2+ 15 ♗b1 ♘c6 16 f4! with a strong white initiative.

14 f4!?

A rare try in this sharp position, with the obvious intention of clearing the e-file towards Black's king. The main line goes 14 0-0-0 exf2 15 ♗xf7+ ♗xf7 16 ♖d5+ ♗xf6 17 ♘e4+ ♗e7 with great complications.



14...♗b4!

Black hurries to swap the dangerous enemy knight on c3, exploiting the fact that, contrary to the main line with 14 0-0-0, White's king is still on e1.

15 0-0-0 ♗xc3 16 bxc3

A chaotic position has occurred. White is a whole piece down and his pawn structure has been ruined. On the other hand, Black's development is minimal and his king is already being targeted by the active enemy pieces, in complicity with the strong f6-pawn. Needless to say, calculation abilities are essential to handle such a position with either colour.

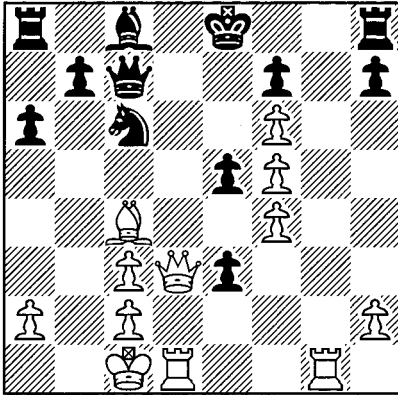
16...♘c6

Development first, and support of the crucial e5-pawn. The greedy 16...exf4? failed to 17 ♖e4+ ♗f8 18 ♖xf4! with decisive threats.

17 ♗hg1!

The last piece joins the battle, with focus on the g7-square. The attempts to clear the

e-file were less convincing: 17 ♖xe3?! ♙xf5, 17 fxe5?! ♜xe5, or 17 ♗he1?! exf4 18 ♜e4+ ♜e5 all help Black.



17...♗f8!

Reinforcing the kingside defence. The earlier game E.Van Den Doel-L.Van Wely, Dieren 1999, saw 17...e2?! 18 ♜xe2 ♙xf5 19 ♜h5 ♙e4 (or 19...♙g6 20 ♜xg6! fxg6 21 f7+ ♙e7 22 ♜g5+ ♙f8 23 ♜f6, winning) 20 fxe5 ♘a5 21 ♙e6! ♗f8 22 ♙d7+ ♜xd7 23 ♙xd7 ♙xd7 24 ♜g4+ and Black resigned.

18 ♜xe3

In the event of 18 fxe5?! ♜xe5 19 ♜g3 ♙xf5 20 ♜e2 Black is saved by the oppor-
tunity 20...♗d8!; e.g. 21 ♜xd8? ♙xd8, leaving the e-file, or 21 ♜xe3 ♜xd1+ 22 ♙b2 (not 22 ♙xd1? ♙g4! 23 ♜xg4 ♜xe3 24 ♜c8+ ♘d8 and Black wins) 22...♜xe3 23 ♜xe3+ ♙e6 24 ♙xe6 fxe6 25 ♜xe6+ ♙d8 with a clear advantage – Naiditsch.

18...♙xf5 19 ♜c5

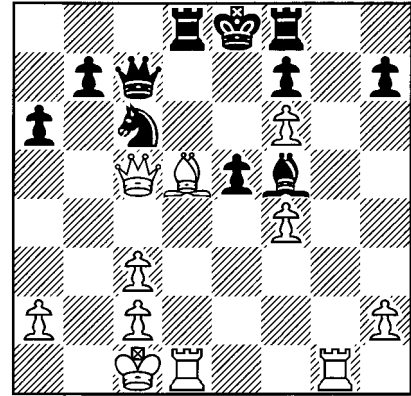
Restricting the knight on c6. Naiditsch also indicates the curious line 19 fxe5 ♘d8! 20 ♙xf7+! ♗xf7! (both 20...♜xf7? 21 ♜g7 and 20...♘xf7? 21 e6 had to be avoided) 21 ♜g8+ ♗f8 22 ♜g7 ♗f7 with a perpetual.

19...♗d8

The last piece is brought into the game.

After 19...b6 20 ♜a3 White keeps the initiative; e.g. 20...♘a5 21 ♙b3 ♘xb3+ 22 axb3 ♙e6 23 ♜g5!, intending 23...exf4?! 24 ♜a4+! b5 25 ♜xb5 axb5 26 ♜xa8+ ♜c8 27 ♜a7 with a decisive attack.

20 ♙d5



20...♗d8!

Black returns some of the material in order to retain his valuable knight, whose departure would leave him very weak on the dark squares; e.g. 20...♙e6?! 21 ♙xc6+ bxc6 22 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 23 ♙xc6+ ♙d7 24 ♜xa6 e4 25 ♗e1 with a decisive attack – Naiditsch.

As for the attempt to castle artificially with 20...♙d7!?, Naiditsch indicates 21 ♙e4+ (of course not 21 ♙xc6+? ♙c8) 21...♙e6 22 ♙xf5+ ♙xf5 23 fxe5 ♜xd1+ 24 ♜xd1 ♗d8 (not 24...♜xe5? 25 ♗d5) 25 ♗f1+ ♙e6 26 ♜c4+ ♙d7 27 ♜g4+! ♙e8 28 e6 with a clear advantage.

21 ♜xd5 ♙e6 22 ♗d6 exf4 23 ♜g7 ♙d7

The only move, in view of the threat 24 ♜xe6+.

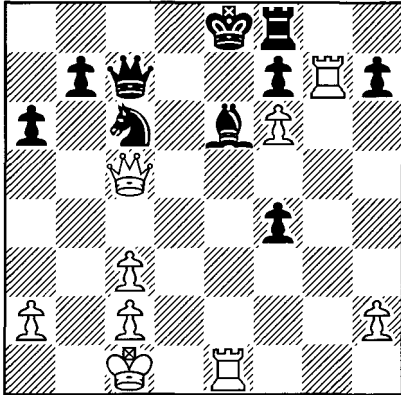
24 ♗d1

Redirecting the rook to a better destiny, such as e1 or g1.

24...♙e6 25 ♗e1?

Mastering Opening Strategy

The materialistic 25 ♖xh7! was called for. Now the threat of 26 ♜xf8+ forces Black to play 25...♗g8, and after 26 ♖g7! (26 ♜g5!? ♜e7! is less promising) 26...♜f8 27 ♜e1 ♜c8 28 ♜d6 ♜d7 29 ♜xf4 White has a clear edge – Naiditsch. The passed h-pawn makes a big difference compared with the position arising after White's 27th move in the game.



25...♜c8

The desirable 25...♜d8? failed to 26 ♜xe6+! fxe6 27 ♜h5+.

26 ♜d6 ♜d7 27 ♜xf4 ♜d8!

Heading for a5, with some counterplay against the enemy king.

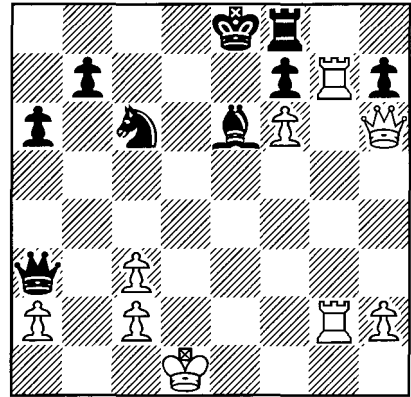
28 ♜eg1?!

White should have settled for 28 ♜xh7 ♜a5 29 ♜xe6+! fxe6 30 ♜d6 ♜g5+ 31 ♜b2 ♜b5+ with a draw by perpetual – Naiditsch.

28...♜b8 29 ♜h6

This time, 29 ♜xb8+ ♜xb8 30 ♜xh7 ♜d7 31 ♜f1 seems preferable, with an unclear endgame.

29...♜d6 30 ♜1g2 ♜a3+ 31 ♜d1



31...♜xc3?

In apparent time-trouble both players missed the strong 31...♜d7!, escaping with the king to c7, after which only Black would have real attacking prospects.

32 ♜7g3!

Now Black has to look out for the threat of ♜xf8+.

32...♜a1+ 33 ♜d2 ♜d4+ 34 ♜c1 ♜a1+ 35 ♜d2 ♜d4+ 36 ♜c1 ♜c5 37 ♜d2!

Preventing ...♜d7-c7.

37...♜e5 38 c3 ♜c5 39 ♜f4 ♜e5 40 ♜f2 ♜a5 41 ♜f4 ♜e5 ½-½

It is difficult for either side to make progress, besides which both players must have been really tired at this point.

Exercises

Game 19

Po. Carlsson-E. Blomqvist
Stockholm 2008
Sicilian Defence,
Richter-Rauzer Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♖c3 ♗c6 3 ♜f3 d6 4 d4 cxd4 5
♗xd4 ♗f6 6 ♕g5 ♗d7

In this Richter-Rauzer sideline, Black gives priority to his queenside development, without fearing the doubled f-pawns. The main line is 6...e6.

7 ♖d2 ♜c8 8 ♗xc6!? bxc6

This recapture leaves both pieces on d7 and c8 somewhat awkwardly placed. 8...♗xc6 was a more natural reaction to White's surprising eighth move.

9 ♕c4 e6 10 0-0-0 ♕e7 11 ♜he1

After just 11 moves, White has brought all his pieces into play. On the other hand, Black enjoys a strong pawn centre, which is a typical feature of this Sicilian system.

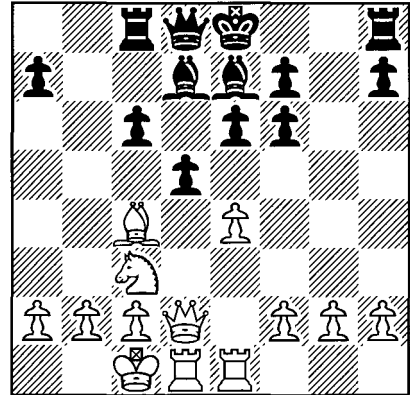
11...d5?!

A dangerous choice, considering Black's slight delay in development. Probably there was nothing wrong with 11...0-0; e.g. 12 e5 ♗d5 or 12 ♕xf6 gxf6 13 ♖h6 ♖h8, followed by ...♗g8-g7.

12 ♕xf6 gxf6?

12...♕xf6 was correct; e.g. 13 exd5 cxd5 14 ♕xd5 (not 14 ♗xd5? ♜xc4) 14...♕xc3 15 bxc3 0-0 16 ♕b3 ♜c7 with just a slight edge for White.

(see following diagram)



Your move...

Game 20

P. Acs-A. Belezky
German League 2011
French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♗c3 dxe4 4 ♗xe4 ♗d7

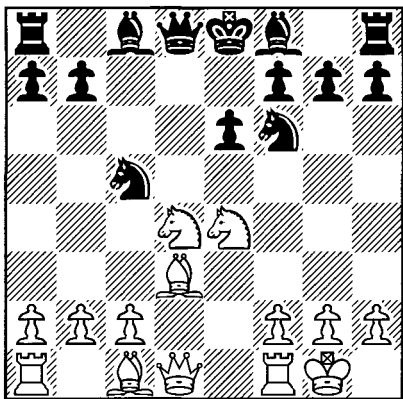
The Rubinstein French is quite popular these days, despite a rather cramped game for Black. 4...♕d7, followed by ...♕c6, is a different approach.

5 ♗f3 ♗gf6 6 ♕d3 c5 7 0-0 cxd4

After the logical 7...♗xe4 8 ♕xe4 ♗f6 Black also remains under some pressure; e.g. 9 ♕g5 cxd4 10 ♖e2!?, preparing ♜ad1xd4.

8 ♗xd4 ♗c5?!

Black somehow wishes to swap the bishop on d3, but wastes time. 8...♕e7, preparing ...0-0, made much more sense – Baburin.

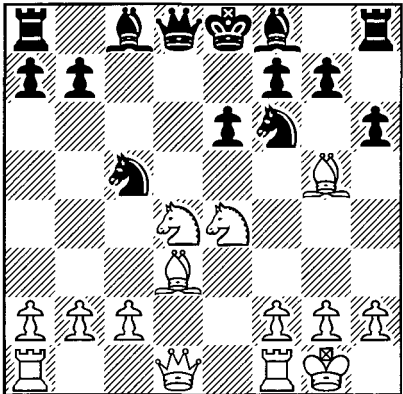


9 ♖g5

Swift development. 9 ♗xf6+ gxf6 (not 9...♗xf6?! 10 ♗b5!) 10 ♖b5+ ♕d7 11 ♗e2 looked promising as well.

9...h6?

This is one tempo loss too much. Correct was 9...♗cxe4 10 ♕xe4 ♕e7 – Baburin.



Your move...

Game 21
A.Saidy-R.J.Fischer
 US Championship, New York 1965
Nimzo-Indian Defence

1 c4 ♗f6 2 ♗c3 e6 3 d4 ♖b4 4 e3 b6 5 ♗ge2 ♕a6 6 ♗g3 ♗xc3+ 7 bxc3 d5 8 ♗f3 0-0 9 e4

The current game cast doubt on this gambit. Nowadays 9 cxd5 is more popular.

9...dxc4 10 ♕g5 h6 11 ♕d2

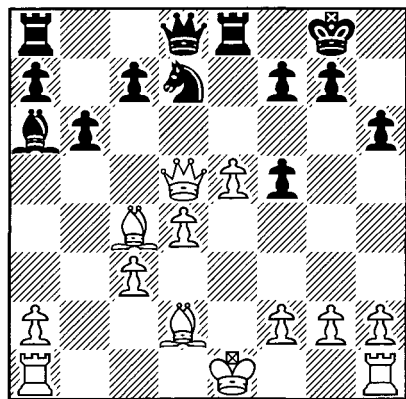
11 e5 seems more consistent; e.g. 11...♗d5 12 ♕xf6 ♗xf3 13 gxf3 gxf6 14 exf6 ♗d7 15 ♗e4 with an unclear endgame.

11...♗bd7 12 e5 ♗d5 13 ♗f5?!

Too optimistic – in the ensuing complications Black’s superior development speaks in his favour. Preferable was 13 ♕e2 and 0-0 in order to conclude development.

13...exf5 14 ♗xd5 ♗e8 15 ♕xc4

White is just one move away from 0-0 with a normal game; however...



Your move...

Game 22
R.Mogranzini-F.Bentivegna
 Porto San Giorgio 2011
English Opening

1 c4 b6 2 ♗c3 ♖b7 3 e4 e6 4 ♗ge2

White avoids the line 4 d4 ♖b4 5 ♕d3 f5 and takes the game into English waters.

4...♗f6 5 d3 c5 6 g3 d5?!

Opening the position when behind in development is always a risky decision. Safer was 6...d6 7 ♖g2 ♙e7 8 0-0 ♘c6, followed by ...0-0, with a standard Hedgehog game.

7 exd5 exd5 8 ♖g2 ♙d7

An awkward move, but 9 ♘f4 was threatening.

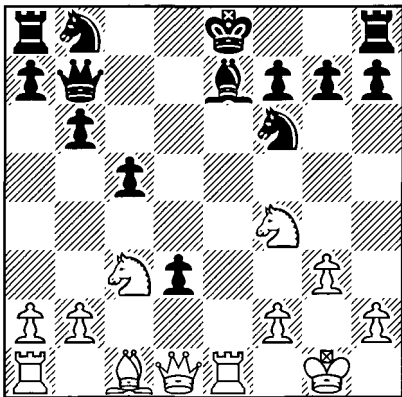
9 ♘f4 dxc4 10 ♙xb7 ♙xb7 11 0-0!

Getting the rook to e1 is White's main priority.

11...cxd3?

The tempo loss involved in this capture will cost Black dearly. 11...♙e7 was called for; e.g. 12 ♘fd5!? ♘xd5 13 ♙f3 ♘c6 14 ♘xd5 0-0-0! and Black defends.

12 ♖e1+ ♙e7



Your move...

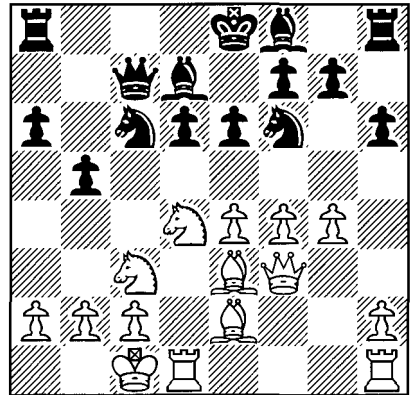
Game 23
A.Suetin-L.Barczay
 Budapest 1976
Sicilian Defence,
Scheveningen Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 e6 6 ♙e3 a6 7 f4 ♙c7 8 ♙f3 ♙d7?!

Very passive. Nowadays 8...b5, followed by ...♙b7, is Black's main choice.

9 0-0-0 ♘c6 10 g4 h6 11 ♙e2 b5?

A careless advance. Black should have preferred 11...♘xd4, followed by 12...e5.



White has a clear lead in development. Your move...

Game 24
M.Boguslavsky-A.Bazhin
 USSR 1990
Benoni Defence

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 c5 4 d5 exd5 5 cxd5 d6 6 e4 g6 7 f4 ♖g7 8 e5

This is a very principled approach against the Modern Benoni. 8 ♙b5+, checking Black's reply before going e4-e5, is the main line.

8...dxe5 9 fxe5 ♘d7 10 e6 fxe6 11 dxe6 ♙e7 12 ♘d5 ♙xe6+ 13 ♙e2!

Interestingly, the queen exchange favours White, whereas 13 ♙e2?! ♘a6 is less promising.

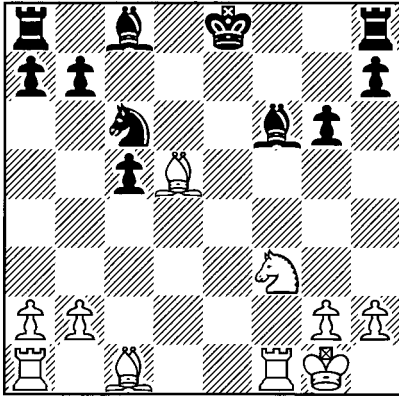
13...♙xe2+ 14 ♙xe2 ♙e5?!

While 14...♘a6? now fails to 15 ♙xa6 bxa6 16 ♘c7+, the active 14...0-0! 15 ♘c7

Mastering Opening Strategy

♖c6 16 ♗xa8 ♗b4 was called for, with counterplay – Yusupov.

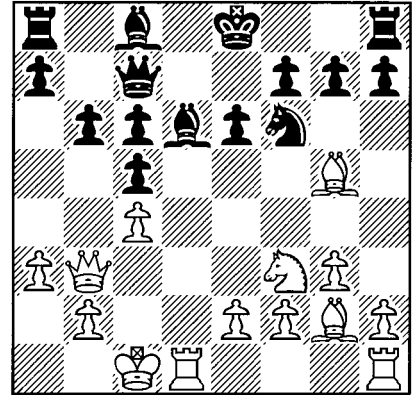
15 ♗f3 ♗f6 16 ♙c4 ♗xd5 17 ♙xd5 ♙f6 18 0-0 ♗c6



Your move...

...♙f4+, prepares ♗xe5 followed by ♙f4, and enables ♙g2, seizing the long diagonal. In contrast, 11 cxd7+?! ♙xd7 would just have helped Black with his development.

11...♙d6 12 ♙g2 dxc6



Your move...

Game 25 Y.Seirawan-P.Zarnicki Buenos Aires 1993 Nimzo-Indian Defence

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♗f3 b6 4 ♗c3 ♙b4 5 ♗b3

Preparing to meet ...♙xc3+ at any moment with ♗xc3, thus keeping the pawn structure intact.

5...c5 6 a3 ♙a5 7 ♙g5 ♗c6

Nowadays, 7...h6 8 ♙h4 g5, followed by 9...g4 or 9...♗e4, enjoys more popularity.

8 0-0-0 ♙xc3 9 d5!

A strong intermediate move.

9...♙e5 10 dxc6 ♗c7?!

Losing time, since the bishop will have to retreat on the next move anyway.

10...♙c7 was preferable.

11 g3!

A move with various virtues: it avoids

Game 26 H.Nakamura-A.Goldin Buenos Aires 2003 Scotch Game

1 e4 e5 2 ♗f3 ♗c6 3 d4 exd4 4 ♗xd4 ♙b4+

A sideline in the Scotch, by which Black provokes c2-c3 in order to avoid White's ♗c3 later on.

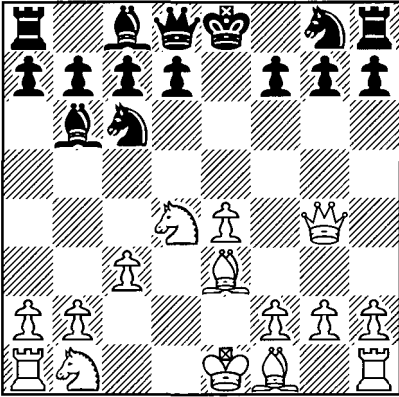
5 c3

After 5 ♗c3 ♗f6 the game transposes to an old variation which is currently considered as harmless, and 5...♗ge7! is possible too.

5...c5 6 ♙e3 ♙b6 7 ♗g4

Exploiting the fact that ...♗f6 is not yet on the board, White launches an attack on the g7-pawn. There are many other options here; for example, 7 ♙c4 and 7 ♗f5 ♙xe3 8 ♗xe3.

Black has slight lead in development.
Your move...



7...♖f6 8 ♖g3 ♖g6

Not 8...♗xd4?! 9 cxd4 ♗xd4 10 ♗xd4 ♖xd4 11 ♗c3 with dangerous compensation for the pawn.

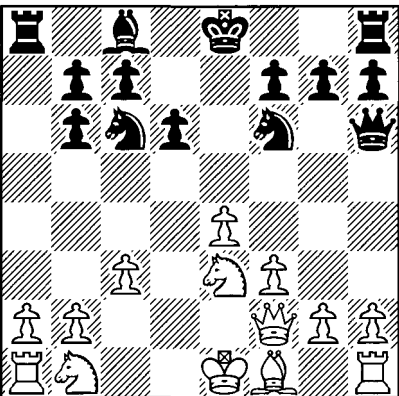
9 ♗f5 d6! 10 ♗xb6

Black's point is that 10 ♗xg7+?! ♗f8 just leads to trouble for White; e.g. 11 ♗f5 ♗xf5 12 exf5 ♖xg3 13 hxg3 ♗xe3 14 fxe3 ♗f6 with excellent play for the pawn – Postny.

10...axb6 11 ♗e3 ♗f6 12 f3?!

Weakening the dark squares, a fact that Black immediately exploits. 12 ♗d2 was a better defence of the e4-pawn, developing a piece in the process.

12...♖h6! 13 ♖f2



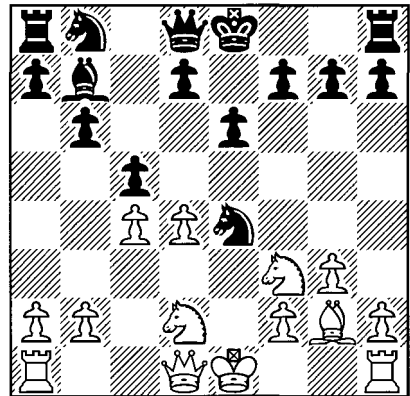
Game 27
A.Onischuk-A.Volokitin
German League 2010
Queen's Indian Defence

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♗f3 b6 4 g3 ♗b7 5 ♗g2 ♗b4+ 6 ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 7 ♗bxd2 c5

In this apparently quiet Queen's Indian line, Black usually continues 7...0-0. The text aims at achieving a Hedgehog position by means of ...c5xd4 and ...d7-d6; however, White has a dangerous reply prepared.

8 e4! ♗xe4?!

A risky decision. 8...cxd4 9 e5 ♗g4 was safer, when the knight can always retreat to h6 if necessary.



9 ♗e5! d5

Unfortunately for Black, 9...♗c3 fails to 10 ♖h5 g6 11 ♖h3!, a trick familiar from the 4...♗a6 5 ♗bd2 variation in the same opening.

10 cxd5 exd5

After 10...♗xd2 11 ♗xf7! ♗xf7 12 dxe6+ ♗xe6 13 ♗xb7 White wins – Golubev. Now

Black is about to castle; however...

11 ♖a4+! ♔e7

Or 11...♗d7 12 ♗xe4 dxe4 13 ♔h3! with a decisive pin.

12 ♗xe4 dxe4 13 ♖d1

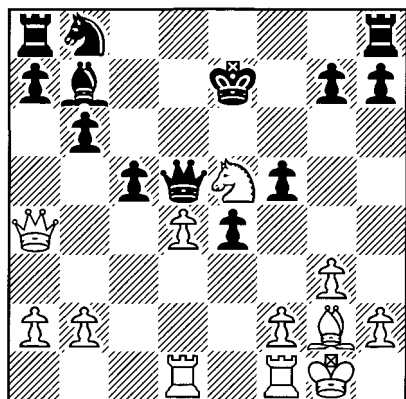
The apparently natural 13 dxc5 runs into 13...♗d5!, so White prepares it.

13...♗d5 14 0-0 f5?

The attempt to castle artificially by 14...♗d8?! fails to 15 ♖fe1 f5 16 f3!, clearing too many lines towards the Black's camp.

His last chance was 14...cxd4 15 ♖xd4 ♗xe5 16 ♔xe4 ♗c6!, returning the piece in order to bring out the pieces. After 17 ♔xc6 ♔xc6 18 ♗xc6 ♖hc8! 19 ♖d7+ ♔f8 20 ♗f3 ♗e6 21 ♖fd1 White has a clear, though not yet decisive advantage – Golubev.

Now, on the other hand, he manages to launch a decisive attack.



Your move...

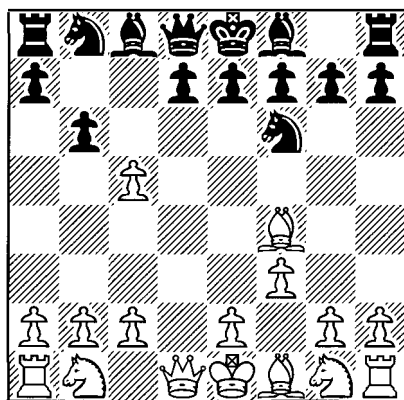
Game 28
S.Mamedyarov-T.Nedev
 Dresden Olympiad 2008
Trompowsky's Opening

1 d4 ♗f6 2 ♔g5 ♗e4 3 ♔f4 c5 4 f3 ♗f6 5

dx5

Another main direction is 5 d5 with Benoni-like play.

5...b6!?



Instead of recovering the pawn by 5...♖a5+ and 6...♗xc5, Black gambits.

6 e4!

White turns down the offer, giving priority to swift development. Less enterprising is 6 cxb6?! ♗xb6 7 ♗c1 d5, when the f2-f3 move does more harm than good.

6...bxc5 7 e5

The flexible 7 ♗c3 is also reasonable.

7...♗g8?!

Black's only developed piece returns home. 7...♗c7 seems more logical, as played in few games. Here 8 ♔g3? ♗h5 proves useless for White, who could try 8 ♔c4 or 8 ♗c3 instead, with a complex battle.

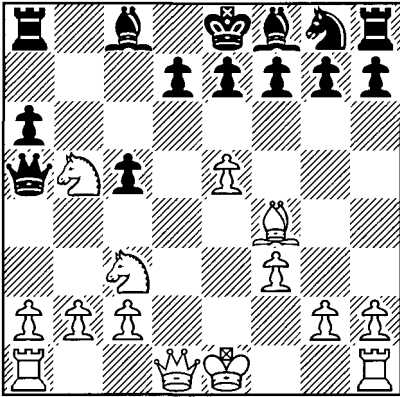
8 ♗c3 ♗c6 9 ♔b5 ♗d4 10 ♗ge2!

White keeps bringing out more pieces and invites the exchange of Black's only developed piece. In this context, the bishop pair is a much less relevant factor.

10...♗xb5 11 ♗xb5 ♖a5+

This won't turn out well, but Black already had a difficult task, considering the abysmal difference in development.

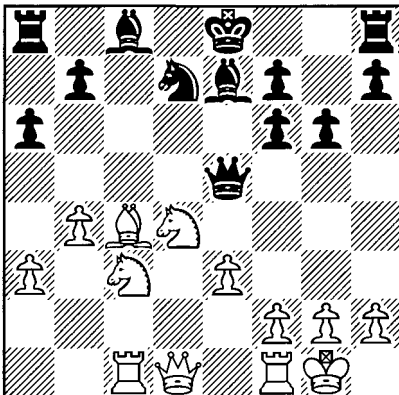
12 ♖ec3 a6



Your move...

Game 29
T.V.Petrosian-V.Korchnoi
 Curacao Candidates 1962
English Opening

1 c4 c5 2 ♖f3 ♖f6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♖xd4 g6 5
 ♗c3 d5 6 ♗g5 dxc4 7 e3 ♖a5
 7...♗g7, followed by ...0-0, is safer.
 8 ♗xf6! exf6 9 ♗xc4 ♗b4 10 ♖c1 a6?!
 And here 10...0-0 is preferable – Suetin.
 11 0-0 ♗d7 12 a3 ♗e7 13 b4! ♖e5



Black has neglected development. Your move...

Game 30
Be.Lindberg-Ax.Smith
 Swedish Championship,
 Stockholm 2007
Sicilian Defence,
Rossolimo Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 ♖c6 3 ♗b5 g6 4 ♗xc6 dxc6 5
 d3

A popular line of the Rossolimo Sicilian.

5...♗g7 6 h3 e5 7 0-0 ♖e7

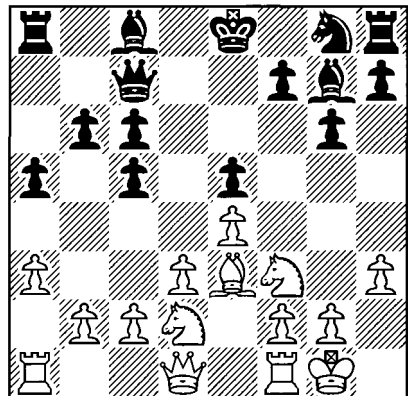
The natural 7...♗e7 permits 8 ♗e3 b6 9
 ♖d2, when Black either has to accept the
 exchange of his fianchettoed bishop after
 9...0-0 10 ♗h6, or postpone castling by
 9...h6.

8 a3 a5

Otherwise the b2-b4 break might be-
 come unpleasant.

9 ♗e3 b6 10 ♗bd2 ♖c7?

An unfortunate loss of time. After the
 correct 10...♗f6 Black could always rely on
 the defensive resource ...♗d7 if needed.



Your move...

Game 31

M.Taimanov-L.Polugaevsky
 USSR Championship,
 Leningrad 1960
Queen's Gambit Accepted

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 f3 f6 4 a4+

An interesting sideline. Black can now transpose to the Slav by 4...c6, or launch a Chigorin-like set-up with 4...c6.

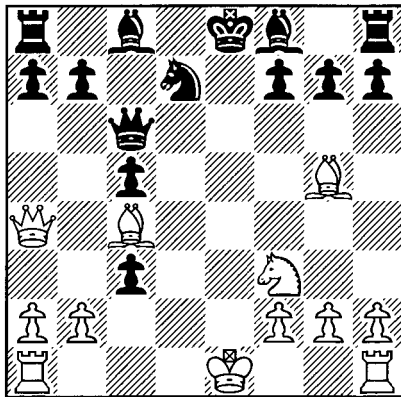
4...bd7 5 c3 e6 6 e4 c5!

Handing over the centre. 6...a6 7 xc4 b8 is preferable, preparing ...b7-b5.

7 d5! exd5 8 e5 d4 9 xc4!

The position is already starting to have a bad aspect for Black. 9 exf6 dxc3 10 xc4, transposing, is also possible.

9...dxc3 10 exf6 xf6 11 g5 c6



Your move...

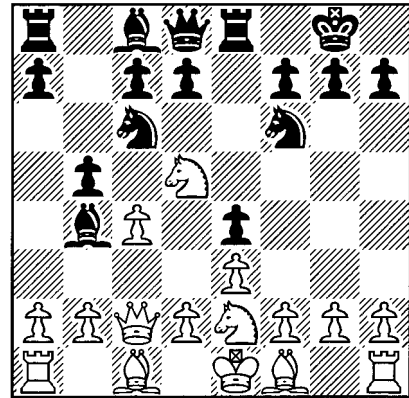
Game 32

Di.Flores-R.Felgaer
 Argentine Championship,
 Mendoza 2008
English Opening

1 c4 e5 2 e3 f6 3 c3 c6 4 f3 b4 5 d5

In this English variation, similar to a Rossolimo Sicilian with reversed colours, 5 c2, preventing ...e5-e4, is White's main choice.

5...e4 6 g1 0-0 7 c2 e8 8 e2 b5!?



This pawn sacrifice become popular when Gelfand launched it one move later (8...d6 9 a3 b5!?) against Salov at Linares 1992.

9 g3

Both 9 cxb5 dxd5 10 bxc6 d6 and 9 f6+ xf6 10 cxb5 e5 11 xe4 b7! yield Black plenty of compensation for the pawn.

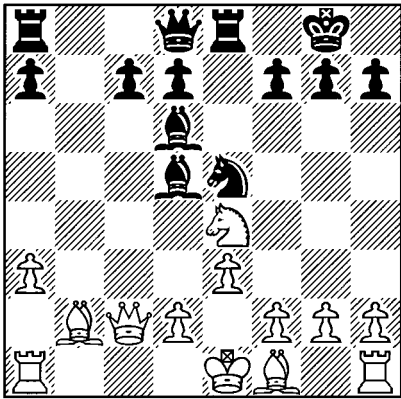
9...b7

Insisting on the gambit. In contrast, the unadventurous line 9...bxc4?! 10 xc4 would just help White with his development.

10 a3 d6 11 b3 e5 12 b2 bxc4 13 bxc4

The attempt to speed up development by the continuation 13 f6+ xf6 14 xc4 runs into 14...d3+!, when both 15 xd3 exd3 and 15 xd3 xb2 favour Black.

13...dxd5 14 cxd5 xd5 15 xe4



Your move...

Game 33
G.Hertneck-H.Grooten
Salzburg 2004
Queen's Indian Defence

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 b6 4 g3 ♗a6

The Queen's Indian is one of the openings where the principle "don't move the same piece twice" is most frequently infringed. Any defence of the c4-pawn now has its drawbacks, after which the bishop settles on its natural square b7, at least in a majority of cases.

5 ♘bd2 ♗b7 6 ♗g2 c5 7 e4 cxd4

Taking the pawn with 7...♗xe4?! proves very risky after 8 ♘e5; e.g. 8...♗c3 9 ♖h5! g6 10 ♗h3, winning material.

8 0-0 d6 9 ♘xd4 ♘bd7

In the Hedgehog position that now emerges, the tempo loss caused by ...♗a6-b7 implies that Black is one move further away from castling, so he should choose the move order with some care. Perhaps 9...♗c8 makes more sense; e.g. 10 ♖e1 ♗e7 11 a4 0-0 12 a5 ♘a6 13 ♘2b3 ♘d7 14 ♗f4 ♘e5

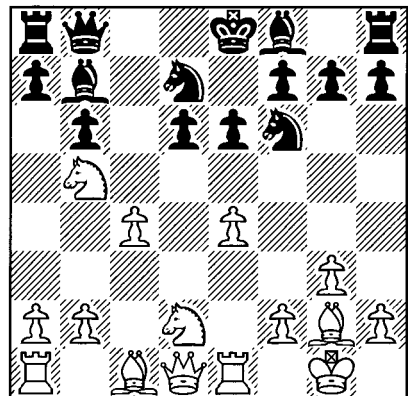
with counterplay, P.Tregubov-V.Baklan, European Championship (rapid playoff), Plovdiv 2008.

10 ♖e1 ♗c7?!

Defending against the tactical shot e4-e5, but the queen gets exposed on this square. Perhaps 10...♗b8 or 10...♗c8 was safer, although in either case 11 a4!, intending 12 a5 bxa5 13 ♘2b3 followed by ♘xa5, yields White a certain initiative.

11 ♘b5 ♗b8

Preparing a consolidation by ...a7-a6, ...♗e7, ...0-0 etc.



Your move...

Game 34
S.Mirkovic-Z.Djukic
Yugoslavia 1997
Benko Gambit

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 g6 3 c4 c5 4 d5 b5 5 cxb5 a6 6 e4!?

Instead of accepting the Benko with 6 bxa6, or handing over the pawn by 6 b6, White launches his own gambit.

6...♗xe4 7 ♗c2 f5?!

A risky move due to the weakening of

Mastering Opening Strategy

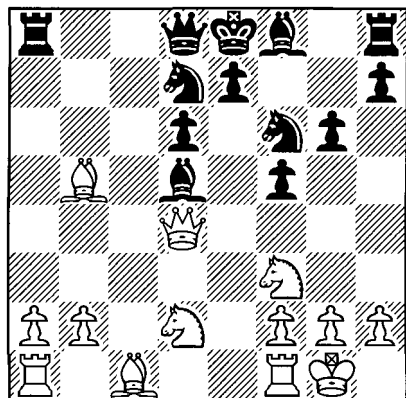
the light squares around Black's king. 7...♘f6 8 ♖xc5 d6 9 ♗d4 ♕g7, followed by ...0-0, seems preferable, in the same spirit of development above material.

8 ♘bd2 ♘f6

Aware that 8...♗xd2?! 9 ♕xd2 d6 10 ♕c3 is horrible for him, Black surrenders the c5-pawn and starts pressurizing the one on d5. 9 ♗xc5 d6 10 ♗d4 ♕b7 11 ♕c4 axb5 12 ♕xb5+ ♗bd7 13 0-0!

It is White's turn to give up a pawn in exchange for quick development.

13...♕xd5



White is ahead in development. Your move...

Game 35 V.Korchnoi-A.Beliavsky Leon 1994 Semi-Slav Defence

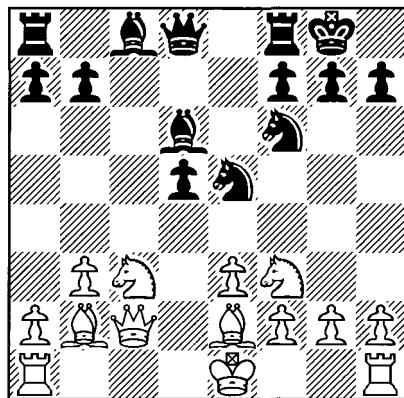
1 c4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 e6 5 ♘f3 ♘bd7 6 ♗c2 ♕d6 7 b3 0-0 8 ♕b2

More flexible is 8 ♕e2, followed by 0-0, not yet defining the destiny of the queen's bishop.

8...e5

Black initiates active operations in the centre.

9 cxd5 cxd5 10 dxex5 ♗xe5 11 ♕e2



Your move...

Game 36 B.Abramovic-M.Bertok Yugoslav Team Championship 1979 Sicilian Defence, Scheveningen Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 ♘f6 5 ♗c3 d6 6 ♕e2 a6 7 0-0 b5?!

This line has a bad reputation due White's strong reply. 7...♗c7 or 7...♗bd7 first is safer.

8 ♕f3! ♗fd7?

This ends badly. 8...♖a7 was mandatory. 9 e5 d5 10 ♗xd5!

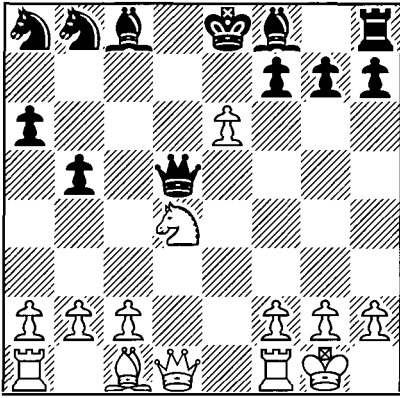
In the spirit of the position, destroying Black's centre before he manages to castle. 10...exd5 11 ♕xd5 ♗b6

After 11...♖a7 12 ♕xf7+!? ♖xf7 13 e6+ Black is also in big trouble; e.g. 13...♔g8 14 ♗xb5! axb5 15 ♗d5, winning.

12 ♕xa8 ♗xa8 13 e6!

Clearing the e-file towards the black king; e.g. 13...♙xe6 14 ♖e1.

13...♗d5



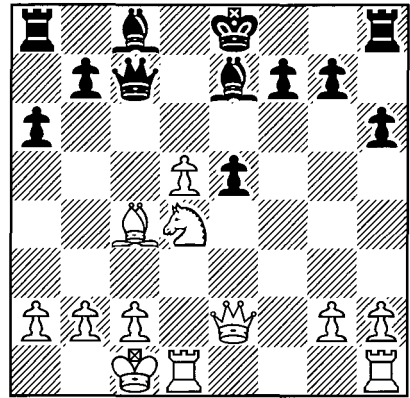
Your move...

♗h5+ ♖d8 16 ♙xe6 with a devastating attack.

12 ♘d5!

Tal doesn't waste time on retreating the knight, preferring to exchange Black's only developed minor piece.

12...♗xd5 13 exd5 ♙e7 14 fxe5 dxe5



Your move...

Game 37
M.Tal-I.Bilek
Amsterdam Interzonal 1964
Sicilian Defence, Najdorf Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 ♘f6 5 ♗c3 a6 6 ♙g5 ♗bd7

A rather unpopular sideline in the 6 ♙g5 Najdorf.

7 ♙c4 h6?!

A dangerous loss of time, which even involves a weakening of the light squares on the kingside. 7...e6 is safer.

8 ♙xf6! ♗xf6 9 ♗e2 e6 10 0-0-0

White develops with lightning speed and 11 e5 is already a threat.

10...♗c7 11 f4 e5

Preventing e4-e5, but also weakening several light squares. Safer was 11...♙e7 12 e5 dxe5 13 fxe5 ♗h7! 14 ♖hf1 0-0, as in the game A.Deviatkin-R.Kempinski, Moscow 2004; but not 13...♗d7? 14 ♗xe6! fxe6 15

Game 38
V.Dydyshko-A.Yermolinsky
Minsk 1980
Budapest Gambit

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5 ♗g4 4 ♙f4 g5 5 ♙g3

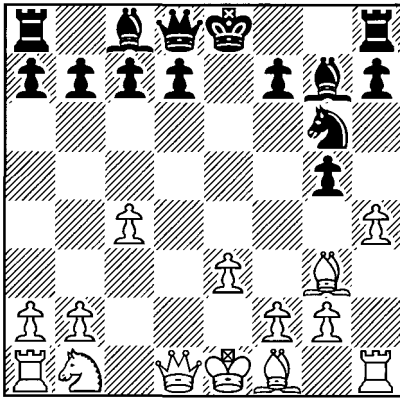
In this sideline of the Budapest Gambit, another option is 5 ♙d2, followed by ♙c3.

5...♙g7 6 ♗f3 ♗c6 7 e3 ♗gxe5 8 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 9 h4!?

Trying to punish Black's fourth move straight away. Today 9 ♗c3 is more popular.

9...♗g6

Installing the double threat of 10...♙xb2 and 10...gxf4.



Your move...

Trading pawns in order to speed up development.

8... ♖xe4 9 ♗gxe4 ♙xe4 10 ♙xc4 ♙c6

Not 10... ♙xg2? 11 ♖g4 and White wins.

11 ♖h5 e6!?

Returning a pawn to facilitate the king-side development.

12 ♙xe6 ♖c7 13 ♙h3 ♗a6?

A serious mistake. Black should have preferred 13... ♖e7+! 14 ♗d1 ♖f6 15 ♖e1+ ♙e7, when the pawn minus is compensated by White's badly placed king – Huzman.

14 0-0 ♙xc5 15 ♖e1+ ♙e7

Black is just one move away from castling; however...

Game 39
D.Gurevich-A.Soltis
 San Francisco 1998
Queen's Gambit Accepted

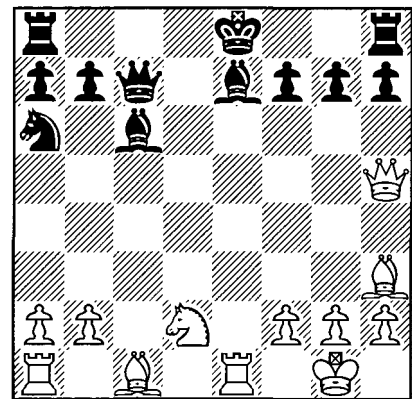
1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♗f3 ♗f6 4 e3 ♙e6

A risky sideline. The main line goes 4...e6 5 ♙xc4 c5 and 6...a6.

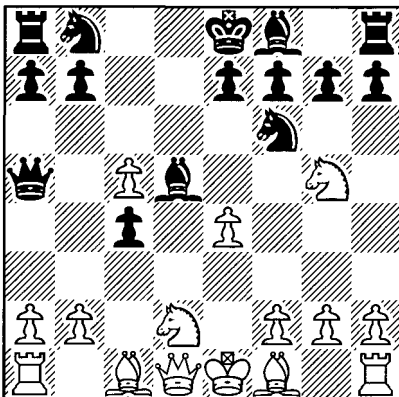
5 ♗bd2 c5 6 dxc5 ♖a5 7 ♗g5

Exploiting the unstable position of the bishop on e6.

7... ♙d5 8 e4!



Your move...



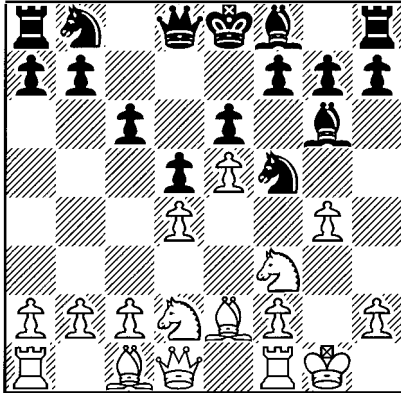
Game 40
V.Bologan-E.Dizdarevic
 Sarajevo 2005
Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♙f5 4 ♗f3

An interesting line against the Caro-Kann, where White can hit the enemy pawn chain on both the queenside (c2-c4) and the

kingside (f2-f4, g2-g4) depending on Black's play. But in the first place White aims at completing his kingside development.

4...e6 5 ♖e2 ♜e7 6 0-0 ♙g6 7 ♜bd2 ♜f5 8 g4



An advance that gains space and time, but slightly weakens the kingside structure. 8 ♜b3 and 8 c3 are more flexible continuations.

8...♜e7

After 8...♜h4 9 ♜xh4 ♜xh4 10 f4 f5 11 ♜f3! ♜xg4+ 12 ♖h1 White has compensation – Bologan.

9 ♜h4 h5!?

A risky choice. Black aims to liberate the f5-square for his knight, but delays development. 9...c5 is safer; e.g. 10 c3 ♜ec6 11 ♜xg6 hxg6 12 ♜f3 ♜d7 13 ♙f4 ♙e7 14 ♜d2 a6 15 ♖g2 ♜c8, preparing ...♜a5-c4, with balanced chances in K.Lahno-B.Jobava, Wijk aan Zee 2006.

10 gxf5 ♙h7 11 ♜df3 ♜f5 12 ♜g2!

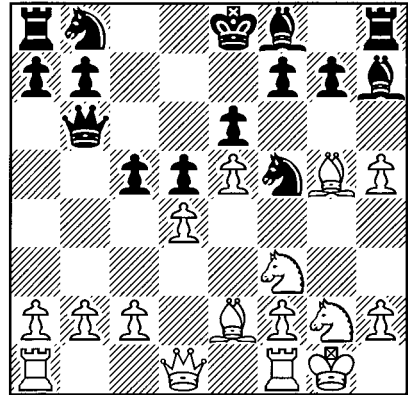
Thus White leaves the black knight blocking the bishop on h7 and prepares a future ♜f4.

12...c5 13 ♙g5

Development with tempo.

13...♜b6?!

Playing with fire: now the delay in development will make itself strongly felt. 13...♙e7 14 ♙xe7 ♜xe7, preparing ...0-0, was safer; e.g. 15 c4!? dxc4 16 d5 exd5 17 ♜f4 ♜d4!, when both 18 ♜xd4 ♜g5+ and 18 ♜xd5 ♜xe2+ 19 ♜xe2 ♙d3 seem okay for Black.



Your move...

Game 41

V.Topalov-E.Rozentalis

European Team Championship,

Batumi 1999

English Opening

1 c4 e6 2 ♜c3 ♜f6 3 e4

This particular English variation often leads to sharp battles.

3...d5 4 e5 ♜e4 5 ♜f3 ♙e7 6 h4!?

A curious advance aimed at the simplifying manoeuvre ...♜e4-g5. Besides, the h-pawn might prove useful in a future attack.

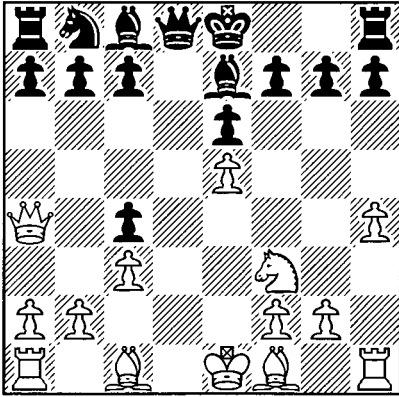
6...♜xc3

Also possible is 6...♜c6 7 d4 f6 8 ♙d3 with just a slight edge for White – Topalov.

7 dxc3 dxc4 8 ♜a4+!

Declining the queen exchange and ena-

bling a future queen transfer to g4.

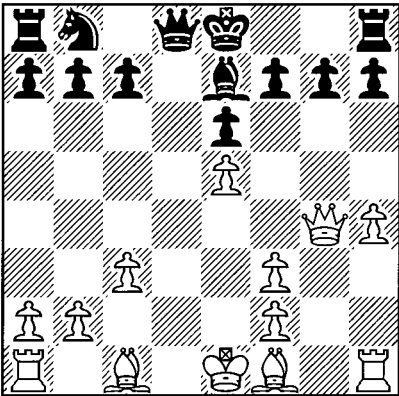


8...d7 9 xc4 c6 10 g4! xf3

Both here and later, 10...0-0? runs into 11 h6.

11 gxf3!

Activity above structure. After 11 xf3?! d5!, followed by ...c6 and ...0-0, Black is fine.



11...f8

Bringing the pieces home is rarely a good idea in the opening, unless the position is closed. However, Rozentalis's suggestion 11...g6 12 h5 d5 doesn't convince either after 13 hxg6 xe5+ 14 e3 fxg6 (or 14...hxg6? 15 e4!) 15 c4, followed by

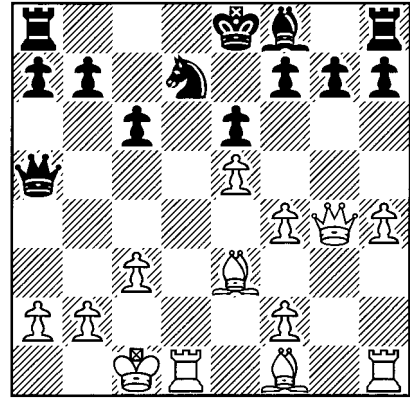
0-0-0, with strong pressure.

12 f4 d7

Now 12...d5 is met by 13 g2, so Black tries a different set-up.

13 e3 c6 14 0-0-0 a5

Black is just one move from ...0-0-0, bringing the king into safety; however...



Your move...

Game 42
P.Svidler-S.Volkov
Russian Championship,
Krasnoyarsk 2003
French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 c3 b6 5 f3 d7

A flexible line in the Advance French. By postponing ...c6 Black keeps the option of a later ...b5, swapping his "bad" bishop.

6 a3 a5

White is denied the space-gaining b2-b4.

7 b3

Preparing to meet ...a5-a4 by b3-b4, keeping the pawn structure intact.

7...a6 8 e3 c8 9 d3 e7

Having overprotected the sensitive c5-

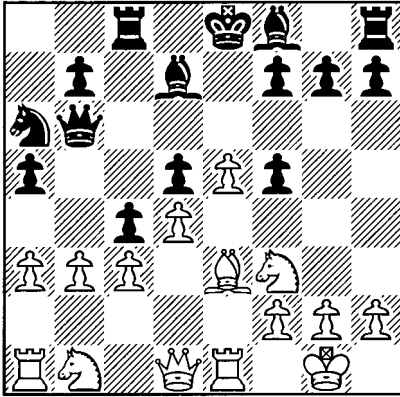
pawn, Black starts bringing out his kingside pieces.

10 0-0

Or 10 dxc5 ♖xc5 11 ♕c2 ♜a6!, preventing White's castling – Svidler.

10...♗f5 11 ♕xf5 exf5 12 ♖e1 c4?

The prophylactic 12...♕e6 was preferable.



Your move...

Game 43
E.Bareev-V.Ivanchuk
Novgorod 1994
Nimzo-Indian Defence

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 ♕b4 4 ♜c2 d5 5 a3 ♕xc3+ 6 ♜xc3 ♗e4

A topical line of the Classical Nimzo-Indian, where White counts on the bishop pair, but Black is ahead in development and will do everything possible to exploit it.

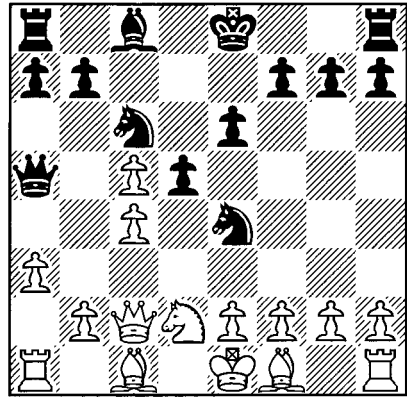
7 ♜c2 c5 8 dxc5 ♗c6 9 ♗f3

A natural choice, but practice has shown both 9 e3 and 9 cxd5 exd5 10 ♗f3 to be more promising.

9...♜a5+ 10 ♗d2

More ambitious than 10 ♕d2 ♜xc5 with

equality. Had 9 cxd5 exd5 been inserted, then White could now swap the active black queen.



10...♗d4!

Activity above material; the pawn can wait.

11 ♜d3 e5!

Gaining space and preparing ...♕f5. Now 12 cxd5? ♗xc5 is bad for White.

12 b4 ♜a4

Setting up the threat of 13...♗c2+.

13 ♖a2 ♗xd2

More promising than 13...♕f5 14 cxd5! ♗xc5 15 ♜c3 with e2-e3 or e2-e4 coming up.

14 ♖xd2?

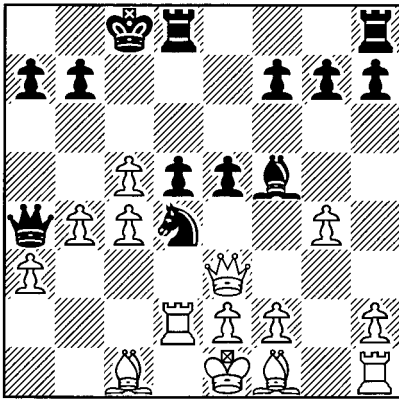
This recapture allows Black to develop his remaining pieces with great speed. 14 ♕xd2? ♕f5 is equally bad, with similar play as in the game. Instead, 14 ♜xd2!, leaving the vulnerable b1-h7 diagonal at the price of a mere pawn, was called for. Now 14...♕f5?! 15 e3! ♗c2+ 16 ♖xc2, followed by 17 cxd5, favours White; so the old game D.Bronstein-I.Boleslavsky, Saltsjöbaden Interzonal 1948, continued 14...dxc4 15 e3 ♗b3 16 ♜c3 ♕e6 17 ♕xc4 ♕xc4 18 ♜xc4 ♗xc1 19 ♜xc1 a5! and a draw was agreed.

14...♙f5! 15 ♖e3 0-0-0!

A move with various virtues: securing the king, mobilizing the rook, and defending the d5-pawn. 15...♘c2+?! 16 ♜xc2 ♜xc2 17 cxd5 is less clear.

16 g4!?

Aware that both 16 cxd5 ♜xd5, followed by ...♘c2+, and 16 ♖xe5 ♘c2+ 17 ♜xc2 ♜xc2 leave his king in big trouble, White employs radical measures to speed up development. Now 16...♙xg4?! lets White escape by 17 cxd5 ♜xd5 18 ♙g2, followed by 0-0, but Black has a much stronger option at his disposal...



Your move...

Game 44
S.Volkov-R.Kempinski
 European Championship,
 Dresden 2007
Semi-Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 c6 4 e4 dxe4

The variation that now arises has a huge body of theory, so 4...♙b4, followed by ...♘ge7, makes sense for Slav players wishing to leave the “book” at an early stage.

5 ♘xe4 ♙b4+ 6 ♙d2 ♜xd4 7 ♙xb4 ♜xe4+

The initial position of Marshall’s Gambit. Black is a pawn up, but White enjoys the bishop pair and a lead in development, so a tense battle can be expected.

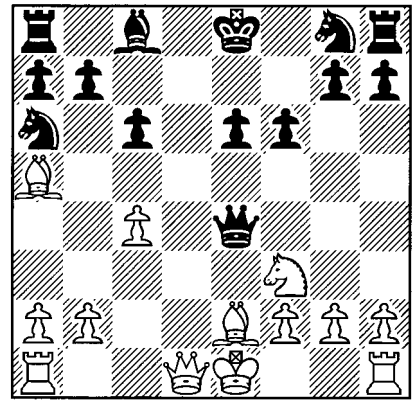
8 ♙e2 ♘a6

After 8...♜xg2 9 ♙f3 ♜g5 10 ♘e2, followed by ♜g1, White’s compensation is duplicated.

9 ♙a5

By means of the threat 10 ♜d8+ White aims to provoke a minor weakness in Black’s camp. Another direction is 9 ♙d6.

9...f6 10 ♘f3



The straightforward 10 ♜d8+ ♙f7 11 0-0-0 is also possible, whereas the text keeps both castling options open.

10...b6 11 ♘d2

Preparing ♙f3 in order to attack the fresh weakness on c6.

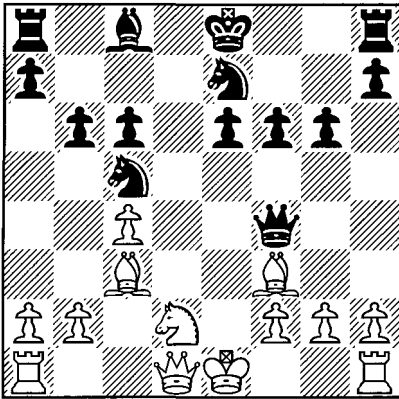
11...♜f4 12 ♙h5+

Curiously, the provocation measure effected on move 9 is repeated on the opposite flank.

12...g6 13 ♙f3 ♘e7 14 ♙c3 ♘c5

So far Black has played well, but now he starts delaying development. This was a good moment for 14...0-0 – Krasenkow.

Your move...



15 g3 ♖f5 16 0-0 e5?!

Again 16...0-0 was more to the point – Krasenkow.

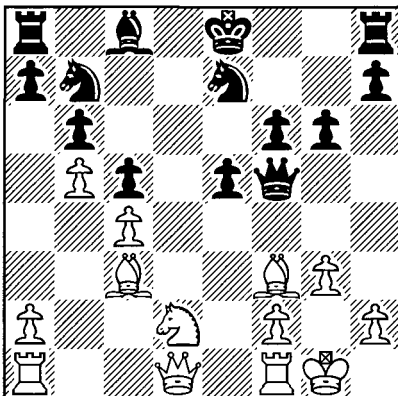
17 b4 ♜b7

Perhaps Kempinski had planned 17...♜e6? and only now discovered the line 18 ♜e4 0-0 19 g4! ♖f4 20 ♙d2 and White wins.

18 b5!

Finally White is able to create concrete threats. Black should now have played 18...♙d7, preparing ...0-0, in order to complete development. Instead, he commits a new inaccuracy...

18...c5?



Game 45

G.Kamsky-V.Anand

Sanghi Nagar

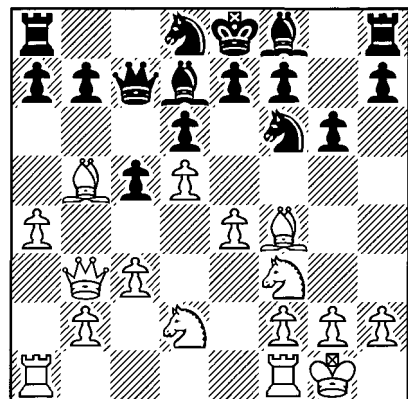
(10th matchgame) 1994

Torre's Opening

1 d4 ♜f6 2 ♜f3 c5 3 c3 g6 4 ♙g5 ♖b6 5 ♖b3
♜e4 6 ♙f4 ♜c6?!

A strange loss of time. 6...♙g7 must be better.

7 d5 ♜d8 8 ♜bd2 ♜f6 9 e4 d6 10 ♙b5+ ♙d7
11 a4 ♖c7 12 0-0



Evaluate the options 12...♙g7 and 12...e5.

Game 46

A.Vovk-M.Kowara

Warsaw (rapid) 2009

Sicilian Defence, Kan Variation

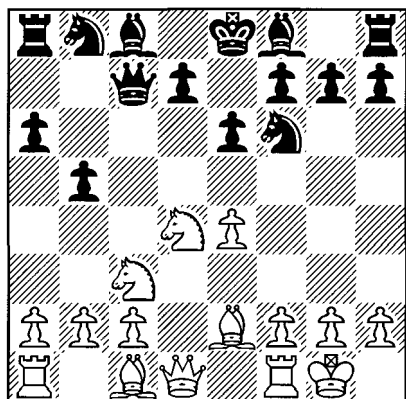
1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♜xd4 a6 5 ♜c3
♖c7 6 ♙e2 ♜f6

In this branch of the Sicilian Kan, 6...b5, followed by ♙b7, is a safe option, delaying

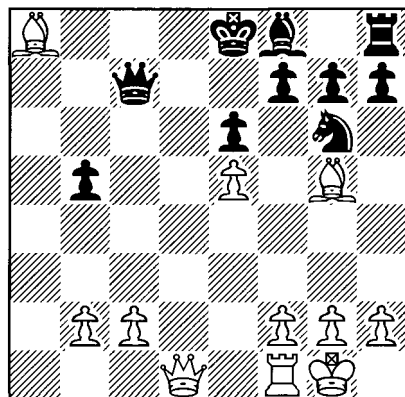
...♘f6 until the right moment. We saw a similar case in Conquest-Sokolov (Game 9).

7 0-0 b5?!

A well-known inaccuracy due to White's next move. If Black wants to keep on delaying ...d7-d6, then 7...♘c6, 7...♙e7 or 7...♙b4 were better options.



pawn, but the fact that this was a rapid game perhaps made White choose a more active move.



In this tense position, how do you continue with Black?

8 ♙f3!

Suddenly 9 e5 is a strong threat.

8...♙b7

If 8...♘c6 then White plays 9 e5 anyway, while 8...e5 9 ♘f5 also favours him.

9 e5 ♘g8 10 ♙f4 ♘c6

The queenside should be developed first. After 10...♘e7? 11 ♘dxb5! axb5 12 ♘xb5 the check on d6 decides.

11 ♘xc6 dxc6 12 a4!?

White tries to open the position in order to exploit his lead in development. The simple 12 ♘e4, heading for d6, looked strong as well.

12...♘e7 13 axb5 cxb5?!

It seems that 13...♗d8!? 14 ♗e2 cxb5 kept the material balance, whereas in the game White wins a pawn.

14 ♘xb5! axb5 15 ♗xa8+ ♙xa8 16 ♙xa8 ♘g6 17 ♙g5?!

Correct was 17 ♙g3, hanging on to the

Game 47

M.Parligras-J.Melero Fidalgo

Seville 2005

Sicilian Defence, Kan Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 a6 5 ♘c3 b5

Just as in Game 9, Black develops his queenside first. A more classical approach in this branch of the Sicilian Kan is 5...♗c7 followed by ...♘f6.

6 ♙d3 ♙b7 7 0-0 ♗b6 8 ♙e3 ♙c5 9 ♗g4!?

Instead of protecting his knight, White launches a counterattack at g7. Perhaps 9 ♘ce2 is objectively stronger, preparing b2-b4, just like later on in the game.

9...♘e7

Preparing ...♘g6, but the simplifying 9...♙xd4! 10 e5 ♘h6 11 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 12 ♙xd4 ♘c6 was a safer choice – Parligras.

10 ♘ce2 ♘g6 11 b4!

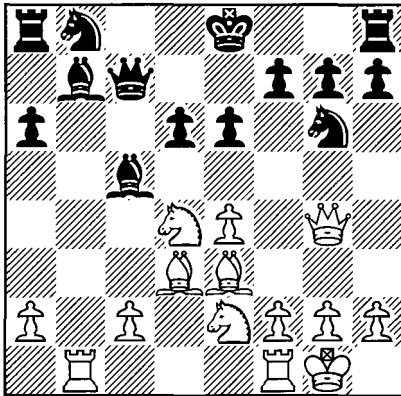
An excellent advance that helps clear the sensitive b-file towards Black's camp.

11...♙xb4 12 ♖xb5 ♙c5 13 ♖bd4!

Having a lead in development White keeps as many pieces as possible on the board. For the same reason, the tension along the g1-a7 diagonal favours him.

13...d6 14 ♖ab1 ♗c7

Black is just about to castle; however...



Your move...

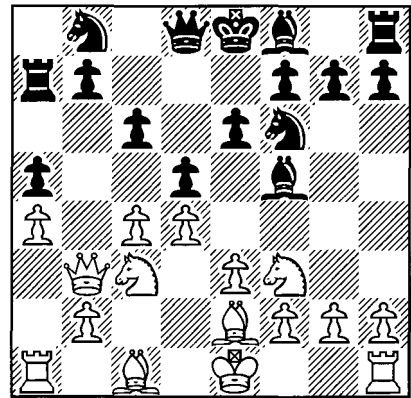
Game 48
N.Kalesis-J.Hellsten
Corinth 1997
Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♖c3 ♖f6 4 e3 a6 5 a4 ♙f5 6 ♗b3 ♖a7

We saw a similar pattern in Game 6 (Miton-Sammour): ♗b3, attacking Black's Achilles' heel in the Slav, the b7-pawn, and the awkward, but safe reply ...♖a7.

7 ♖f3 e6 8 ♙e2 a5

Thus Black creates a stronghold on b4 and prevents a cramping a4-a5, which would have been an interesting option for White on the previous two moves.



9 0-0 ♖bd7 10 ♖h4

After a rather modest opening White starts fighting for the initiative. The exchange of the enemy bishop will facilitate the e3-e4 advance, a key idea in such positions.

10...♙g6 11 ♖xg6 hxg6 12 ♙f3 ♖e4?

Somehow I thought the tactical motif 13 ♖xe4? dxex4 14 ♙xe4 ♗h4 justified this attempt to seize the centre, but it soon proves to be a loss of time. A sounder choice was 12...♙b4, complicating e3-e4, and preparing ...0-0 in order to conclude development.

13 g3 ♖g5?!

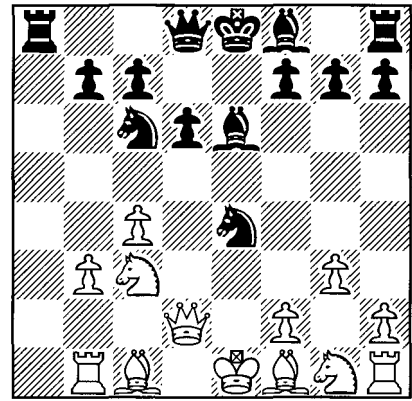
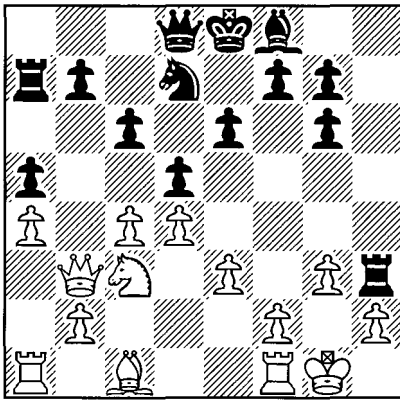
13...♖df6 seems more natural, although after 14 ♙g2, followed by f2-f3, the knight will have to leave its prominent post anyway. In contrast, 13...f5?! is strongly met by 14 ♖xe4! fxe4 15 ♙g2, followed by f2-f3.

14 ♙g2 ♖h3+ 15 ♙xh3

Probably there was nothing wrong with 15 ♖h1, but the text gains time and eliminates the only active enemy piece.

15...♖xh3? (see following diagram)

15...dxc4! 16 ♗xc4 ♖xh3 was preferable, keeping the position somewhat more closed, but I still wasn't aware of the danger awaiting me.



Your move...

Game 49
S.Palatnik-S.Lputian
 Irkutsk 1983
English Opening

1 c4 e5 2 ♖c3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 ♗xd4 ♘c6 5 ♗d2 ♘f6 6 g3 ♙e6 7 e4 a5

We are already familiar with this line from the game Psakhis-Gofshtein (Game 8), where the latter preferred 7...♙e7, speeding up his development. As for the text, Black enables an annoying ...a5-a4 whenever White plays b2-b3. In conclusion, this line seems rather demanding for the first player, who should probably prefer 7 ♘d5 instead.

8 b3 a4

The temporary sacrifice 8...♗xe4! 9 ♗xe4 d5 was even stronger, followed by an opportune ...♙b4.

9 ♗b1 axb3 10 axb3 ♗xe4!

On the second occasion Black takes his chance, although this time the piece can't be recovered immediately.

11 ♗xe4 d5 12 cxd5

In the event of 12 ♗c3 Black can transpose to the game by 12...♙b4 13 cxd5 ♙xd5, though 12...d4!? seems even stronger; e.g. 13 ♗a2 ♙f5 14 ♗b2 ♗xa2! 15 ♗e2+ (not 15 ♗xa2? ♙b4) 15...♗d7! 16 ♗xa2 ♙b4+ with 17...♗e8 next.

12...♙b4 13 ♗c3 ♙xd5

In return for his material deficit Black enjoys excellent piece activity, and the enemy king is stranded in the centre.

14 f3 0-0?!

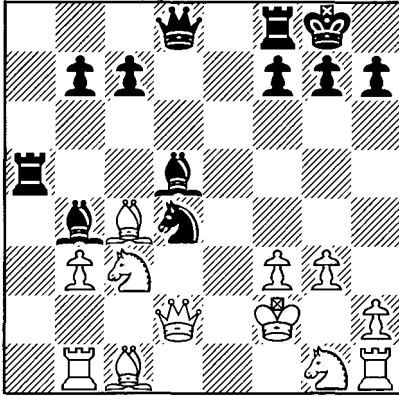
This natural move seems inaccurate due to White's strong reply. Later the improvement 14...♗e7+!, preparing ...♗c5, was discovered; e.g. 15 ♙e2 ♗c5 16 ♙b2 0-0-0 17 ♗f1 ♙xf3 18 ♗xd8+ ♗xd8 19 ♗xf3, as in the game P.Poobalasingam-C.McNab, Uxbridge 2009, where 19...♗d4! would have yielded Black a crushing advantage.

15 ♗f2!

Suddenly the pin on the d-file has become more serious than the one on the e1-a5 diagonal.

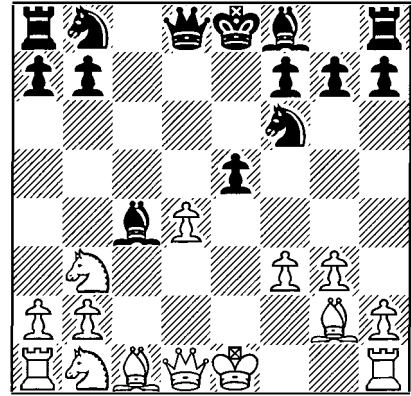
15...♗a5 16 ♙c4 ♗d4

After 16...♙xc4 17 bxc4, both 17...♗e7 18 ♗ge2 and 17...♗f6 18 ♗xb4! ♗xb4 19 ♗d5 ♗xd5 20 ♗xa5 are dubious for Black.



In this tense position, how do you continue with White?

Your move...



11 dx e5 12 d5 12 c3 13 b4 13 d2 13 xc3

Keeping the active knight. After 13...dxc3 14 bxc3 e7 15 f4 White is slightly better – Ftacnik.

14 xc3 15 c6 15 d2 15 b6?

A natural move, in order to prevent 0-0 and enable ...e3, but White possesses a strong reply. Preferable was 15...xb3 16 axb3 dxc3 17 xc3 and only now 17...b6, with sufficient compensation for the pawn.

16 a5! e3

Or 16...xa5 17 xa5 c5 18 f4 0-0 19 c1, with the strong threat of xc4.

17 xc4 17 xc4 18 f2 e3

Game 50
G.Sosonko-J.Timman
Tilburg 1977
Catalan Opening

1 d4 2 f6 2 c4 e6 3 g3 c5 4 f3 cxd4 5 xd4 d5 6 g2 e5 7 b3

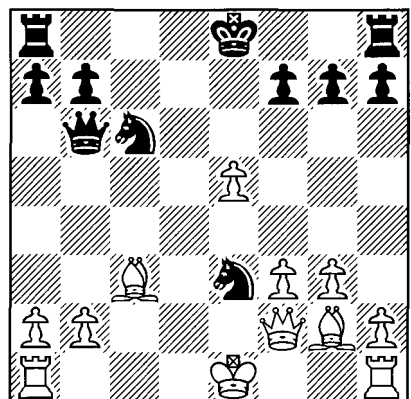
In this Catalan line, White usually prefers 7 f3 these days, with immediate pressure on Black's centre.

7...d4 8 e3 g4!?

Practice has mostly seen the continuation 8...a5 9 exd4 a4, but the text has its logic: Black provokes f2-f3 in order to weaken the opponent's dark squares and limit the bishop on g2.

9 f3 10 e6 10 exd4 10 xc4

At the cost of a pawn, Black manages to keep the enemy king in the centre. 10...exd4 11 dxd4 xc4 was probably fine as well, since 12 a4+?! b5 13 dxb5 fails to 13...e7+!, followed by a deadly check on e2.



Your move...

Game 51
G.Rechlis-B.Avrukh
 Israeli Team Championship 2005
Sicilian Defence,
Rossolimo Variation

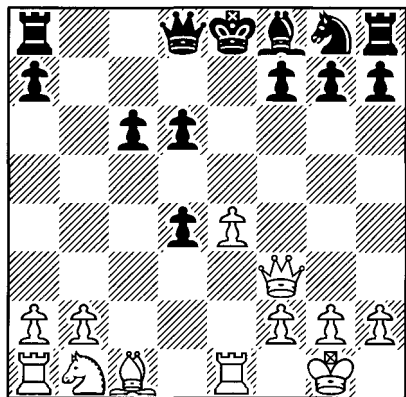
1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 d6 4 ♙xc6+

Nowadays, the early ♙xc6(+) capture is seen rather often in different lines of the Rossolimo Sicilian. The old main line is 4 0-0 followed by 5 ♖e1 or 5 c3.

4...bxc6 5 0-0 e5 6 c3

White immediately prepares the d2-d4 break, even at the cost of a pawn, as we will see next.

6...♙g4 7 d4 cxd4 8 cxd4 ♙xf3 9 ♖xf3 exd4 10 ♖e1



Preparing e4-e5. The immediate 10 e5?! is less promising due to 10...d5! 11 ♖d1 ♗e7, followed by ...♗g6 – Avrukh.

10...♙e7

Another, perhaps safer option was 10...♗f6 11 e5 dxe5 12 ♖xc6+ ♗d7 13 ♖xe5+ ♙e7, followed by ...♖c8 and ...0-0 – Avrukh.

11 e5 dxe5

Black agrees to do without castling,

since 11...d5?! 12 ♖g4 would just make things worse for him with the knight deprived of its natural destiny on f6.

12 ♖xc6+ ♗f8 13 ♗d2

Time to resume development, as 13 ♖xe5?? runs into 13...♖c8.

13...♖c8 14 ♖f3?!

14 ♖a6! was stronger, so that the queen keeps on interfering with Black's play; e.g. 14...♖c7 15 ♖xe5 or 14...f6 15 ♖xa7 ♖d5 16 ♗e4 f5 17 ♗g5! with the initiative – Avrukh.

14...♖c7 15 b3

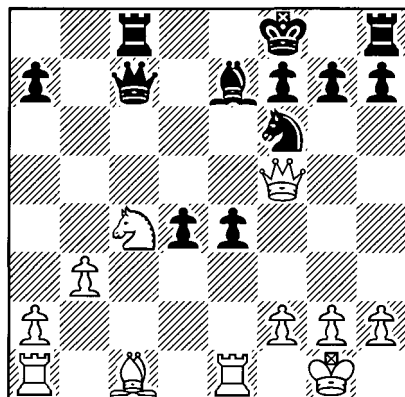
Now that the f3-square is occupied, preparing the move 16 ♗c4 makes good sense for White.

15...♗f6

At first sight, 15...♖c3, swapping the queens, seems logical; however, White is better after 16 ♖xc3 dxc3 17 ♗c4 f6 18 ♙e3 a6 19 ♖ec1 – Avrukh.

16 ♗c4 e4 17 ♖f5

Preparing 18 ♙f4, with increased pressure at the enemy camp.



In this tense position, how do you continue with Black?

Your move...

Game 52
G.Flear-R.Vera Gonzalez
 Elgoibar 1994
Semi-Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 c6 4 e4 dxe4 5 ♘xe4 ♙b4+ 6 ♙d2 ♚xd4 7 ♙xb4 ♚xe4+ 8 ♙e2

We already came across this line in Volkov-Kempinski (Game 44), where Black preferred the modern 8...♘a6.

8...c5

Returning the pawn so as to enable ...♘d7 with tempo in the complications that now follow.

9 ♙xc5 ♚xg2 10 ♚d2?!

A dubious choice, since White will have difficulties in recovering the material sacrificed. Either 10 ♙f3 or 10 ♚d6 ♘d7 11 0-0-0 is preferred nowadays.

10...♚xh1 11 0-0-0 ♘d7 12 ♘f3

White brings more pieces into the battle, but objectively his compensation is insufficient. In contrast, with his queen on d6 (cf. 10 ♚d6 above) at this point 12 ♙f3 would have been decisive, while here it fails simply to 12...♚xh2.

12...♚g2!

Not 12...♚xd1+? 13 ♚xd1 ♘xc5 14 ♚d4! and White recovers the material with some initiative.

13 ♙a3

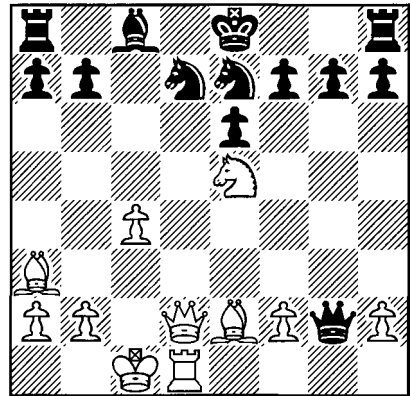
The tempting 13 ♘e5 ♘g6 14 ♚d6 is refuted by 14...♚g5+! 15 f4 ♚xf4+ 16 ♙b1 ♘g8! – Vera.

13...♘e7?

Black speeds up development, but he had more efficient possibilities at hand. as Vera himself indicates: after 13...♚xf2 14 ♘e5 ♚xh2! 15 ♘d7 ♚h6 White is lost; while 13...a5, preparing ...♚a6, would also have refuted the enemy attack.

14 ♘e5

Obviously this knight is untouchable because of mate.

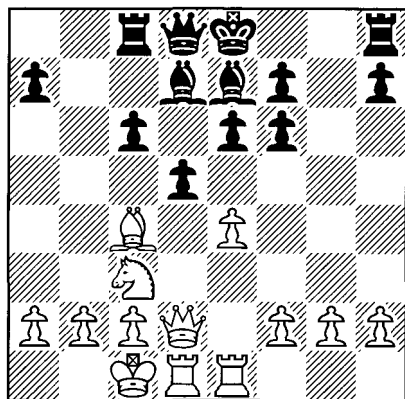


In this tense position, how do you continue with Black?

Your move...

Solutions

Game 19 (continued)



13 exd5 cxd5 14 ♖xd5!

With all the white pieces in ideal locations, and the black king stranded in the centre, the position begs for this kind of sacrifice.

14...exd5 15 ♖xe7+

A second sacrifice in order to eliminate Black's main defender. In contrast, 15 ♖xd5? ♖c7 or 15 ♖xd5?! ♖e6 was less clear.

15...♗xe7

Or in instead 15...♖xe7 then 16 ♖xd5 ♖e6 17 ♖e1 0-0 18 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 19 ♖e7+ and wins.

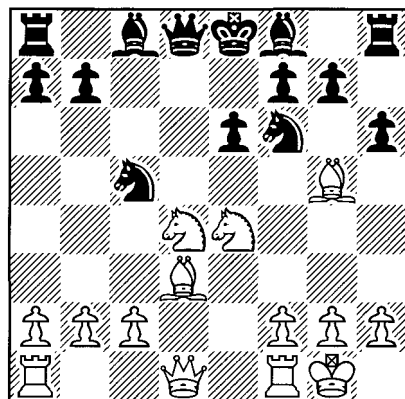
16 ♖xd5+ ♗e6

Both alternatives 16...♗f8 17 ♖h6+ and 16...♗e8 17 ♖xf6+! were equally terminal for Black.

17 ♖e3+ ♗d6 18 ♖e7+! 1-0

In view of 18...♗c7 19 ♖xa7 mate, Black resigned.

Game 20 (continued)



10 ♖b5+

This simple check disrupts Black's development and leaves his king stuck in the centre. 10 ♖xf6 gxf6 11 ♖b5+, with a transposition, is equally strong.

10...♖cd7

Or 10...♖d7 11 ♖xf6 gxf6 12 ♖xe6! fxe6 13 ♖h5+ and wins – Baburin.

11 ♖xf6 gxf6 12 ♖h5!

Creating the lethal threat of 13 ♖xe6 while clearing the first rank for the rooks. In the words of GM Baburin: "The game is over – Black has only one piece developed – and even that piece can't move!"

12...♗e7 13 ♖ad1 ♖c7 14 ♖fe1

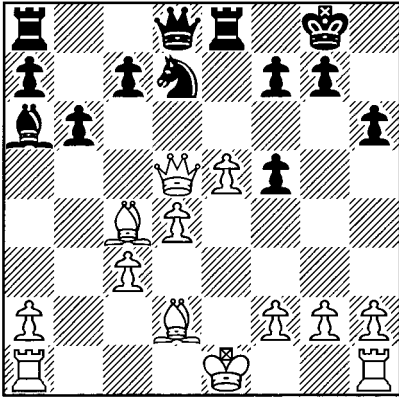
The imbalance between attacking and defending pieces is astonishing.

14...♖e5 15 ♖h4 ♖g7 16 ♖xf6!

A little combination that destroys Black.

16...♖xf6 17 ♖f5+ exf5 18 ♖xe5+! ♖xe5 19 ♖b4+ ♗e6 20 ♖c4+ ♖d5 21 ♖xd5+ ♗e5 22 f4 mate

Game 21 (continued)



15... ♖xe5!

A strong blow that exploits the position of the white king in order to force a superior endgame. Less promising is 15... ♙xc4?! 16 ♚xc4 c5 17 ♙e3, followed by 0-0.

16 ♚xd8

Or 16 dxe5? ♚xd5 17 ♙xd5 ♜xe5+, regaining the piece with interest.

16... ♖xc4+ 17 ♚xe8+ ♜xe8+ 18 ♙d1 ♖xd2! 19 ♙xd2 ♜e2+ 20 ♙c1 ♜xf2

Material is about equal, but the difference in activity is devastating.

21 g3 ♙b7 22 ♜e1 ♙e4!

Restricting the white rook is Black's main priority.

23 ♜e3 ♜xh2 24 a4 h5

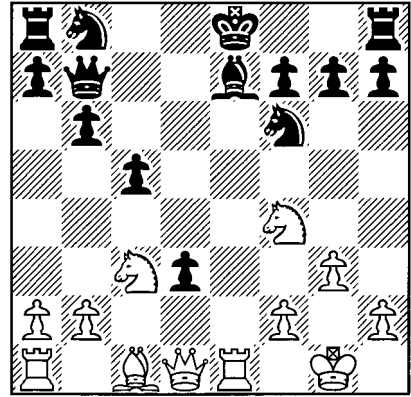
Intending ...g7-g5 and ...h5-h4, in order to create a passed pawn. Black won without any difficulty.

Game 22 (continued)

(see following diagram)

13 ♖fd5!

Exploiting the pin on the h1-a8 diagonal, White manages to keep the enemy king in the centre. 13 ♚xd3?! 0-0 14 ♖cd5 ♖c6 was much less convincing.



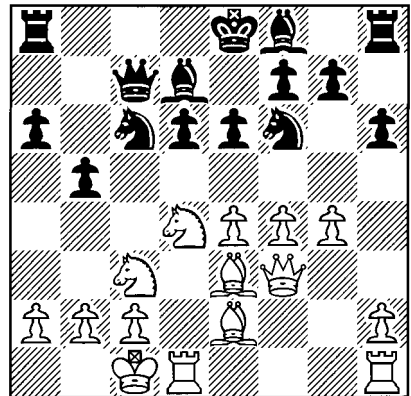
13... ♖xd5 14 ♚f3 ♙f8?

This loses on the spot, but Black had a hard time anyway; e.g. 14... ♖c6 15 ♖xd5 0-0-0 16 ♖xe7+ ♖xe7 17 ♚xb7+ ♙xb7 18 ♜xe7+ ♙c6 19 ♙d2 with a winning endgame for White.

15 ♖xd5 ♙d6 16 ♜e8+! 1-0

In view of 16... ♙xe8 17 ♖f6+ gxf6 18 ♚xb7, Black resigned.

Game 23 (continued)



12 e5!

Opening the position towards the enemy king. Now it becomes clear that the black queen's bishop should have been at

Mastering Opening Strategy

b7 instead.

12...dxe5 13 fxe5 b4

Now 14 exf6 bxc3 or 14 ♖e4 ♘d5 is quite acceptable for Black; however...

14 ♘db5! axb5 15 ♘xb5 ♖c8 16 exf6 b3

This counterattack is bound to fail, though after 16...gxf6 17 ♙b6 Black was in big trouble anyway.

17 fxg7 ♘b4

The pawn was untouchable due to 18 ♘d6+.

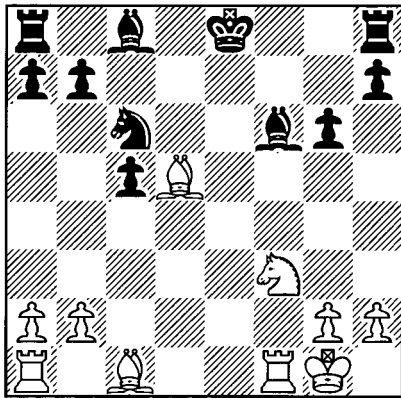
18 ♘c7+!

Simplest.

18...♖xc7 19 ♖xa8+ ♙e7 20 ♖xd7+! ♙xd7 21 ♙b5+ 1-0

In view of 21...♙e7 22 ♖e8+ ♘d6 23 ♖d1+, Black resigned.

Game 24 (continued)



19 ♙g5!

A powerful move, which helps to mobilize the queen's rook and invites the exchange of the active enemy bishop on f6.

19...♙xb2

After 19...♙xb2 20 ♙xg5 20 ♘g5 Black is also in trouble; e.g. 20...♙f5 21 g4! ♙xg4 22 ♘f7 ♖f8 23 ♙xc6+ bxc6 24 ♖ae1+ ♘d7 25 ♘e5+, winning.

20 ♙xc6+!

This and the 22nd move follow the same policy of swapping the opponent's active pieces, thus increasing one's advantage in activity.

20...bxc6 21 ♖ae1+ ♘d7 22 ♘e5+!

22 ♖e7+ ♘d6 23 ♖d1+ ♙d4+ is less precise – Yusupov.

22...♙xe5 23 ♖xe5 ♙c7 24 ♖e7+ ♙d7 25 ♖d1 ♖ad8 26 ♙f4+

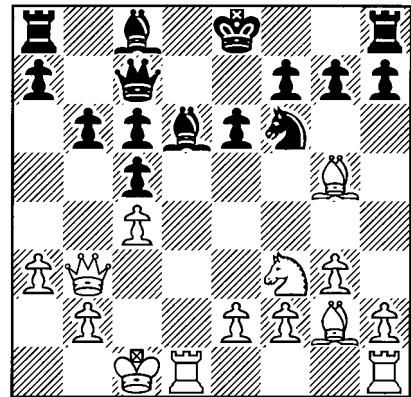
White could have won the exchange with 26 ♖g7 but prefers to keep up the attack.

26...♙b6 27 ♖b1+!

Again activity above material – there is a mate coming up.

27...♙a5 28 ♙d2+ ♙a4 29 ♖e4+ c4 30 ♖xc4+ ♙a3 31 ♙c1+ ♙xa2 32 ♖b2+ ♙a3 33 ♖b7+ 1-0

Game 25 (continued)



13 ♖xd6!

A strong sacrifice that eliminates Black's main defender and facilitates an attack on his Achilles' heel on c6.

13...♖xd6 14 ♖d1 ♖c7?

14...♘d5 was preferable, returning the material in order to secure the king, al-

though after 15 e4 0-0 16 exd5 exd5 17 cxd5 cxd5 18 ♖xd5 White keeps a clear edge – Ftacnik.

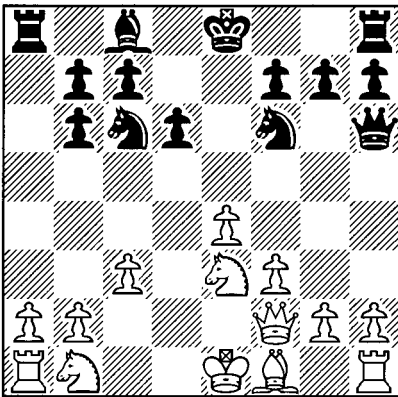
15 ♙f4 ♜b7 16 ♘e5! ♙d7 17 ♖xd7! ♘xd7
18 ♙xc6 ♜a6 19 ♘xd7 ♜c8 20 ♙a4

An even faster win was achieved by 20 ♘b8+! ♙f8 21 ♙xa8.

20...♙e7 21 ♜d3 f6 22 ♜d6+ ♙f7 23 ♘e5+!

Vacating the d7-square for the bishop.
23...fxe5 24 ♙d7 ♜d8 25 ♜xe6+ ♙f8 26 ♙xe5 g6 27 ♙f6 1-0

Game 26 (continued)



13...d5!

An excellent pawn break, exploiting the fact that any move with the knight on e3 runs into ...♜c1+.

14 ♘a3!

Finally White starts bringing out his pieces. After 14 exd5?! ♘xd5! 15 ♘xd5 ♜c1+ 16 ♙e2 0-0 he is indeed in deep trouble; e.g. 17 ♘xc7 ♜xb2+ 18 ♘d2 ♜xa1 19 ♘xa8 ♖e8+ 20 ♘e4 ♜xa2+, regaining the piece with a decisive advantage – Postny.

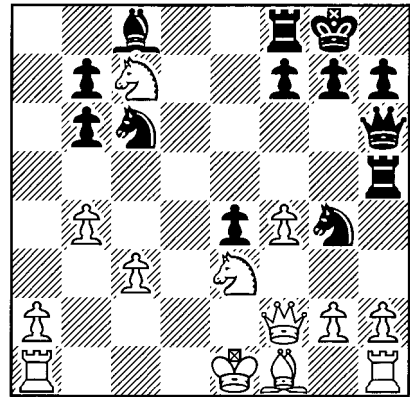
14...dxe4 15 ♘b5 0-0 16 ♘xc7 ♖a5

Possibly 16...exf3!? 17 ♘xa8 ♖e8 was even stronger – Postny.

17 b4?!

Creating new weaknesses. 17 f4 at once was better.

17...♖h5 18 f4 ♘g4



19 ♜g3

After 19 ♘xg4?! ♙xg4 it is far from clear where White's king should hide. In the game he sacrifices a pawn to castle long.

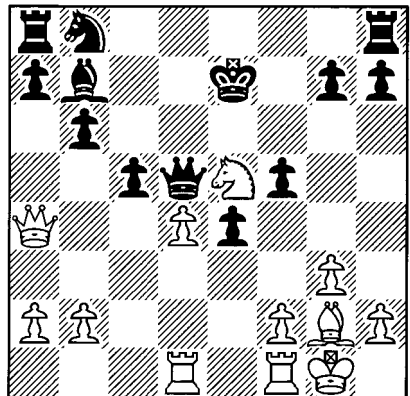
19...♘xh2 20 0-0-0 ♘xf1 21 ♖hxh1 ♘xb4!

By a simple trick Black wins another pawn.

22 cxb4 ♜c6+ 23 ♙b2 ♜xc7

Black later converted his strategic and material superiority into victory.

Game 27 (continued)



Mastering Opening Strategy

15 f3!

Clearing the e-file and the long diagonal towards Black's camp.

15...e3

Now in the event of 15...cxd4 16 fxe4 ♖xe5, White has 17 ♖xf5 ♖e6 18 ♖xd4 with the double threat of ♖xg7+ and ♖e5.

16 ♖fe1 ♖f6

Or 16...cxd4 17 ♖xd4 ♖xe5 18 f4, winning – Golubev.

17 dxc5 ♖xe5 18 ♖d6+ ♖e7 19 ♖h4+! ♖f7

20 ♖c4+ 1-0

In view of 20...♖e7 21 f4 ♖xc5 22 ♖e6+ ♖f8 23 ♖d8 mate, Black resigned.

continuation 19 ♖a4 ♖b5 20 ♖e5! ♖xa4 21 ♖xc5 ♖c6 22 ♖a5+ ♖c8 23 ♖e5 ♖xd6 24 ♖xd6 ♖b5 25 ♖d5! d6! (not 25...♖xd5? 26 ♖e8+) 26 ♖xd6 ♖xe5 27 ♖xe5 with a strong initiative even into the endgame.

19 ♖e4 ♖f4

Obviously 19...♖b6? 20 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 failed to 21 ♖a5+.

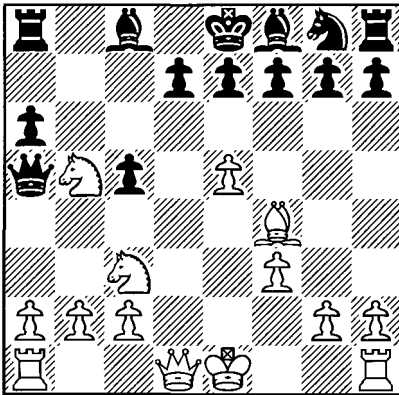
20 ♖xf4 ♖xe4 21 fxe4 ♖e8 22 ♖g4!

This double attack breaks through Black's defences.

22...♖e6 23 ♖xg7 ♖c6 24 ♖f8+ ♖e8 25 ♖xf7 1-0

In this hopeless position, Black resigned.

Game 28 (continued)



13 ♖d6+!

A strong sacrifice that opens the gates to Black's king.

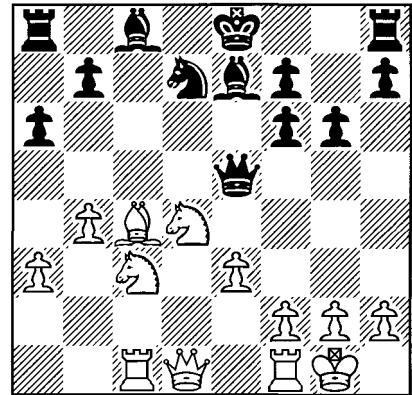
13...exd6 14 exd6 ♖b4 15 ♖e2+ ♖d8 16 ♖d2 ♖b7

Unfortunately for Black, 16...♖xd6 runs into 17 ♖e4 ♖b6 18 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 19 ♖a5+.

17 0-0-0 ♖f6 18 ♖he1 ♖xd6?!

This virtually means returning the piece, making White's practical task considerably easier. For better or worse, 18...♖b6 had to be tried, when *Rybka* suggests the curious

Game 29 (continued)



14 f4!

By diverting the queen from the centre, White prepares a sacrifice on f7. A little less convincing is 14 ♖d5 0-0 15 f4 ♖d6 and Black stays alive.

14...♖b8

Or 14...♖xe3+ 15 ♖h1 with multiple threats, such as 16 ♖f3, 16 ♖d5 and 16 ♖e1 – Suetin.

15 ♖xf7+! ♖xf7 16 ♖b3+ ♖e8

Or 16...♖g7 17 ♖e6+ ♖h6 18 ♖f3 with a mating net – Horowitz.

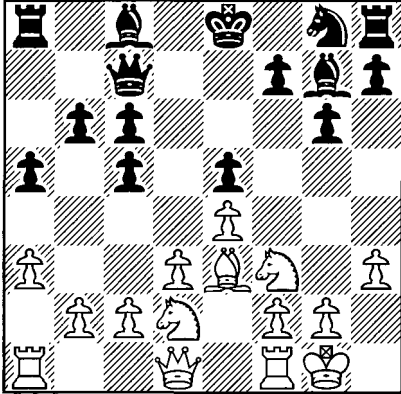
17 ♖d5 ♙d6 18 ♗e6! b5 19 ♗dc7+ ♕e7 20 ♗d4!

With double threats at c6 and e6.

20... ♗f8 21 ♗xa8 1-0

In view of 21... ♗xa8 22 ♗e6 ♗b8 23 ♗c6 ♗c7 24 ♗e7, Black resigned.

Game 30 (continued)



11 b4!

Opening the position to attack Black on the dark squares before he gets castled. 11 ♗c4?! is less promising due to 11... ♙e6, with ... ♙xc4 as a future resource.

11... ♗xb4 12 ♗xb4 ♗xa1 13 ♗xa1 ♗xb4 14 ♗c4 c5 15 ♗a4+!

A strong intermediate check in order to liberate the a6-square for the queen. Less effective is 15 ♗a8?! ♗e7, followed by ...0-0.

15... ♙d7 16 ♗a6 ♙h6

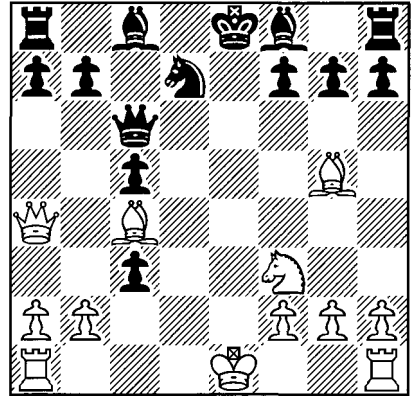
This won't end well, but after 16... ♗e7 17 ♗xb6 0-0 18 ♗xd7 ♗xd7 19 ♙xc5 the game is virtually over anyway.

17 ♗fxe5 ♙xe3 18 ♗xd7! ♙f4 19 ♗cxb6 g5 20 ♗b5 g4 21 ♗a1!

The last piece joins the attack.

21... ♗f5 22 ♗c4 ♗xd7 23 ♗xd7 ♗xd7 24 ♗d5+ 1-0

Game 31 (continued)



12 0-0!

Setting up the threat of 13 ♗he1+ and at the same time seizing the d-file. Less promising is 12 ♙b5?! ♗e6+ 13 ♙e3 ♗xb2 or 12 ♗e5 ♗xe5! 13 ♙b5 ♙d7 14 ♙xc6 ♙xc6 15 ♗c2 ♗xb2 16 ♗b1 ♙xg2 with counterplay – Taimanov.

12... ♗xb2+

After 12... ♗xa4 13 ♗he1+ ♙e7 14 ♗xe7+ ♗f8 15 ♗xf7+ ♗g8 16 ♗fxd7+ ♗xc4 17 ♗d8+ ♗f7 18 ♗e5+ White wins.

13 ♗xb2

13 ♗b1?! ♗e4+ 14 ♗xb2 is another good option.

13... ♙e7 14 ♗he1 f6 15 ♙b5

The pressure at d7 is unbearable; e.g. 15... ♗c7 16 ♙f4!.

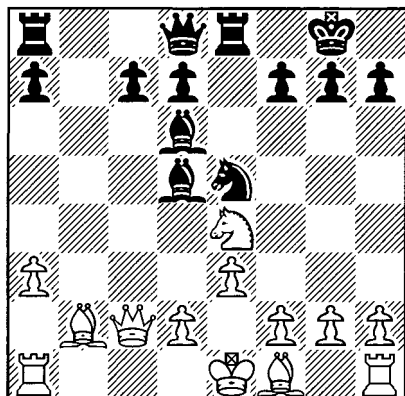
15... ♗b6 16 ♗c1! ffg5 17 ♙xd7+ ♗f8 18 ♗xe7! ♗xe7 19 ♗e4+ ♗d8

19... ♗f7 20 ♗xg5+ or 19... ♗f6 20 ♗e5+ is equally bad.

20 ♙f5+ ♗c7 21 ♗e5+ ♗c6 22 ♗d6+ ♗b5 23 ♗b2+ 1-0

Black resigned in view of the line 23... ♗a5 24 ♗a3+ ♗b5 25 ♗d4+! ♗xd4 26 ♙d3 mate.

Game 32 (continued)



15...♖b8!

Black increases the pressure at the enemy camp, unworried about 16 ♘xd6, depriving him of the bishop pair and damaging his pawn structure. Either 15...♙e4?! 16 ♗xe4 ♜b8 17 ♙c3 or 15...♗g4?! 16 ♘xd6 cxd6 17 ♗f5! was less promising; but 15...♙f8 also made sense, when 16 ♙xe5!? ♜xe5 17 ♙d3, preparing 0-0, might be White's best try.

16 ♘xd6 cxd6 17 ♙c3 ♗h4!

The last piece enters the battle, creating the strong threat of 18...♗g4.

18 h3 ♗g4! 19 ♗f5

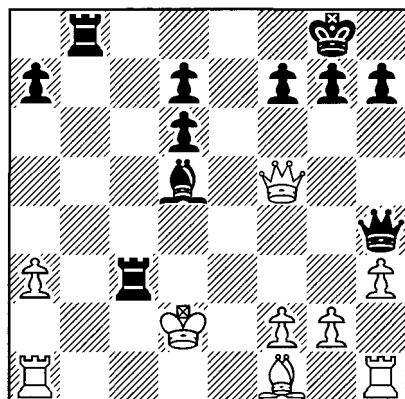
This runs into a strong sacrifice, but after 19 g3 ♗h6 White was also suffering badly.

19...♗xe3! 20 dxe3 ♜xe3+ 21 ♙d2

Or if instead 21 ♙e2 ♜xe2+! 22 ♙xe2 ♗c4+, when both 23 ♗d3 ♜e8+ 24 ♙d2 ♗f4+ 25 ♙c2 ♙e4 and 23 ♙d2 ♙e4 24 ♗a5 ♗d3+ 25 ♙e1 ♜e8! win for Black – De Dovitiis.

21...♜xc3!

A second sacrifice that eliminates the key defender of the dark squares in White's camp.



22 ♗xd5

Or 22 ♙xc3 ♜b3+ 23 ♙c2 ♗d4 with decisive threats.

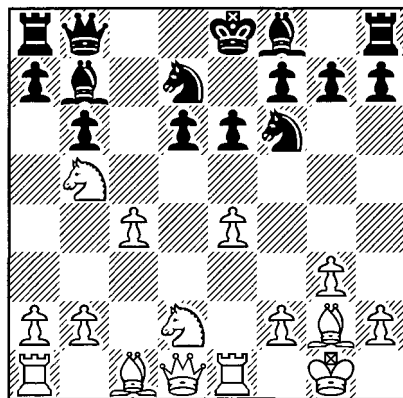
22...♜c5 23 ♗d3 ♜b2+ 24 ♙d1 ♗a4+!

The same "long" queen check that we witnessed in Onischuk-Volokitin (Game 27), with colours and flanks reversed.

25 ♙e1 ♗a5+ 0-1

In view of 26 ♙d1 ♜d5, White resigned.

Game 33 (continued)



12 c5!

A strong sacrifice, which prepares ♗c4 with the focus on Black's weak point d6.

12...dxc5

On 12...bxc5 or 12...dxc5 there follows the same reply.

13 dxc4 e5 14 f4!

Striking while the iron is hot. The check on d6 can wait.

14...e6c6?

This bishop will be fatally diverted from the long diagonal. The last chance was 14...a6! 15 dbd6+ e6xd6 16 dxd6+ e7 and Black is still alive.

15 fxe5! e6xb5 16 exf6 e6xc4 17 e5

White's game plays itself. The threat is 18 Wf3 winning the exchange.

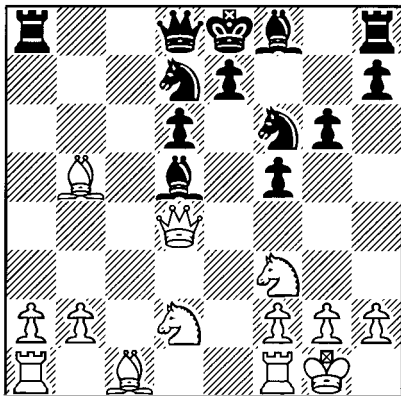
17...a6 18 Wg4! gxf6

Unfortunately for Black, 18...e6 runs into 19 fxg7.

19 Wxc4 fxe5 20 Tf1 f6 21 We6+ e8d8 22 Rd1 1-0

In view of the double threats at d7 and f6, Black resigned.

Game 34 (continued)



14 dxc4!

Unconcerned about the doubling of the f-pawns, White creates the threat of 15 db6 and clears the way for the queen's bishop.

14...e6xf3 15 gxf3 e6b8

If 15...e6g7, then 16 dxd6+! exd6 17 e1+ e7f7 18 e6c4+ d5 19 e6xd5+ dxd5 20 Wxd5+ e7f8 21 e6f4 with a winning advantage – Mirkovic.

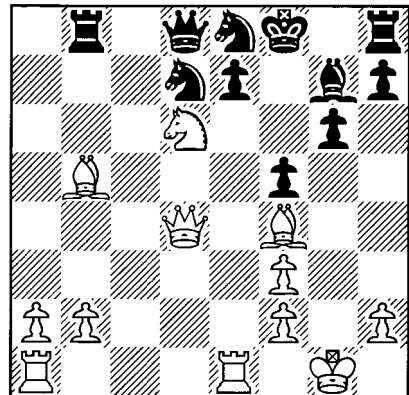
16 e1! e6g7?!

A misguided sacrifice of the d6-pawn. Obviously 16...e6b5?? failed to 17 dxd6 mate, but the prophylactic 16...e7f7 made some sense, when 17 a4 keeps the advantage – Mirkovic.

17 dxd6+ e7f8 18 e6f4!

The last piece joins the battle, securing the knight on d6.

18...dxe8



19 Wb4!

The right square for the queen, where it supports both pieces on d6 and b5 without exposing herself to the black knights. 19 e6h6 d6f6! is less clear, while the game went 19 Wd3?! d6c5! 20 Wd5 dxd6 21 e6e7! e7xe7 22 e1+ d6e4! 23 fxe4 dxb5 24 exf5+ e7f8 25 Wc5+ e7f7 and Black had a defensible position.

19...dxe5

An unsuccessful try for complications, but the alternatives were no better; e.g. 19...exd6? 20 e6xd6+ with mate, or 19...dxd6 20 e6xd6 e6f6 21 e6xb8 dxb8 22

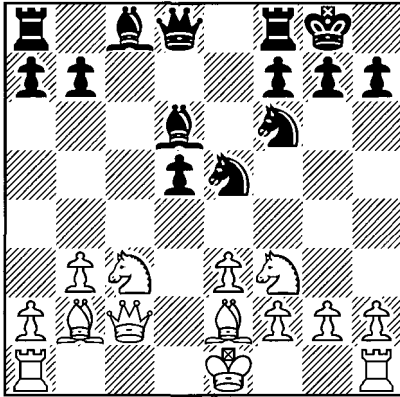
Mastering Opening Strategy

a4 and the passed a-pawn soon decides.

20 ♖xe8 ♜xf3+ **21** ♔h1 ♜xb5 **22** ♜xb5
 ♜xe1 **23** ♜c7!

With decisive threats at e6 and e1. But
 not **23** ♜xg7?? ♜a8+.

Game 35 (continued)



11... ♜xf3+! **12** ♙xf3 d4!

An intuitive pawn sacrifice to clear the
 e-file.

13 exd4?

Much better was **13** ♜e4! ♜xe4 **14** ♙xe4
 dxe3 **15** 0-0 exf2+ **16** ♜xf2 with compensa-
 tion – Beliavsky.

13... ♜e8+ **14** ♙f1

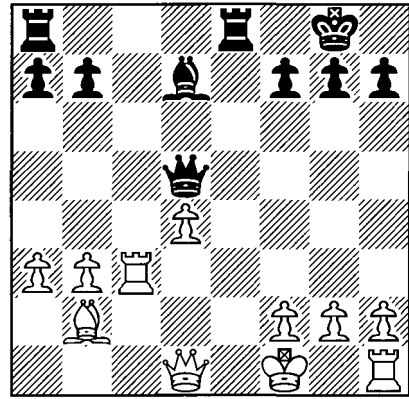
After **14** ♜e2 ♙b4+ **15** ♙c3 ♙f5! Black
 also enjoys a strong initiative. Instead, **14**
 ♙e2 ♙g4 **15** f3 ♙h5 **16** 0-0, securing the
 king, seems preferable, although **16...** ♜c7
17 h3 ♙g6 **18** ♙d3 ♜h5 keeps the initiative
 for Black – Korchnoi.

14... ♜a5 **15** ♜d1 ♙b4 **16** ♜c1 ♙d7 **17** a3
 ♙xc3 **18** ♜xc3 ♜d5 **19** ♙xd5

Not **19** ♜c5? ♙b5+ **20** ♙g1 ♜e1+ and
 wins – Beliavsky.

19... ♜xd5

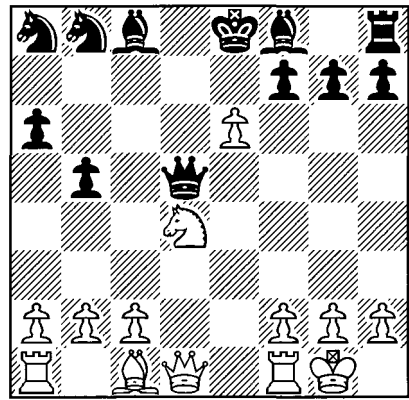
Despite the simplifications Black keeps a
 clear initiative thanks to superior activity.



20 a4 ♜ac8 **21** f3 ♜xc3 **22** ♙xc3 ♜e3!

Now that **23** ♜d2? runs into **23...** ♜xf3+!,
 White loses both his queenside pawns.

Game 36 (continued)



14 c4!

Clearing either the a4-e8 or the h1-a8
 diagonal for the queen. **14** exf7+?! ♙xf7 is
 less promising – Abramovic.

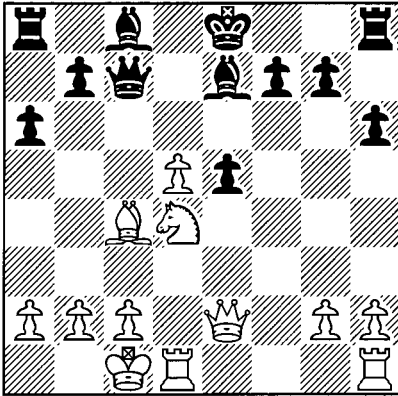
14... bxc4

Or **14...** ♜xc4 **15** ♜f3 with a nasty double
 attack.

15 ♜a4+ ♙e7 **16** ♙g5+! ♜xg5 **17** ♜b4+

That follows **18** ♜xb8 with a devastat-
 ing advantage.

Game 37 (continued)



15 ♖e6! ♜d6

After 15...fxe6 16 ♜h5+ ♖f8 17 dxe6 ♙f6 18 e7+! White gives mate in two, while 16...♗d7 17 ♜g4 also looks grim for Black.

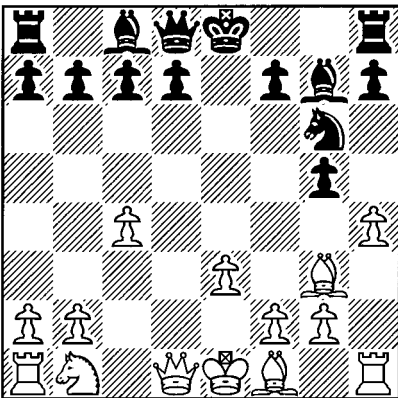
16 ♜xg7+ ♖f8 17 ♖e6+! ♗e8

Or 17...fxe6 18 ♜hf1+ ♖g8 19 ♜h5.

18 ♜hf1 ♙g5+ 19 ♖b1 b5 20 ♜h5! ♙f4 21 ♙b3 a5 22 ♜c7+! ♜xc7 23 d6! 1-0

In view of 23...♜d7 24 ♜xf4! exf4 25 ♜e5+, Black resigned.

Game 38 (continued)



10 hxg5!

A strong exchange sacrifice that helps

speed up White's development and eliminates Black's active fianchettoed bishop. 10 ♜c3?! gxh4 and 10 h5?! ♖e5 11 h6 ♙f6 12 ♜c3 0-0! are less promising.

10...♙xb2?!

10...♜xg5 11 ♖d2 d6! was a lesser evil, not even touching the b2-pawn – Dydyshko.

11 ♖d2 ♙xa1

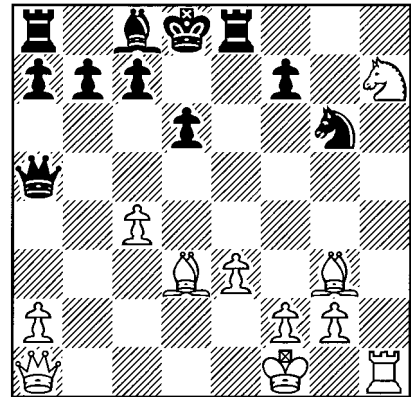
Dydyshko also analyses 11...♜xg5 12 ♙xc7 ♙xa1 13 ♖e4! ♜e7 14 ♖d6+ ♖f8 15 ♜xa1 with magnificent compensation.

12 ♜xa1 ♜xg5 13 ♙d3!

Development with tempo.

13...♜f8 14 ♖e4 ♜a5+ 15 ♖f1 d6 16 ♖f6+ ♖d8 17 ♖xh7 ♜e8?

This loses on the spot. 17...♜g8 was better, although 18 ♙h4+ ♖xh4 19 ♜f6+ ♖e8 20 ♜xh4 puts Black under a strong attack.



18 ♙xg6! fxg6 19 ♜f6+ ♜e7

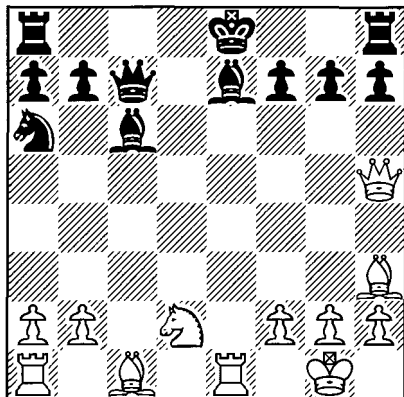
Or 19...♖d7 20 ♜f7+ ♜e7 21 ♖f6+, winning.

20 ♙h4 ♜e5 21 ♜f8+ ♖d7 22 ♙xe7 ♖c6

After 22...♜xe7 23 ♖f6+ ♖e6 24 ♜xe7+ ♖xe7 25 ♖d5+ Black soon loses, while 22...♜a1+ 23 ♖e2 ♜xh1 24 ♖f6+ ♖c6 25 ♜e8+ or 24...♖e6 25 ♜g8+! ♖xe7 26 ♖d5+ ♖d7 27 ♜f7+ leads to mate – Dydyshko.

23 ♜f6 ♜e4 24 ♜f3 1-0

Game 39 (continued)



16 b4!

An ingenious advance with the double idea of 17 b5 and 17 ♖b2. The straightforward 16 ♖g5?! ♜f8 17 ♖h5 ♜d8 is less promising.

16...0-0

After 16...♗xb4 17 ♖b2 0-0 18 ♖f5! White obtains a strong attack; e.g. 18...g6 19 ♖h6 f6 20 ♖xg6! or 18...h6 19 ♖g4 g5 20 ♖h5! ♗d6 21 ♜e6! – Huzman.

17 b5 ♖f6

Or 17...g6 18 ♖e2 ♖f6 19 ♜b1 with similar play.

18 ♜b1 ♖a5 19 ♖f5!

Unpinning the pawn, with decisive material gains.

19...♖c3 20 bxc6 ♖xd2 21 ♖xd2 ♖xd2 22 cxb7 ♜ad8 23 ♖b5

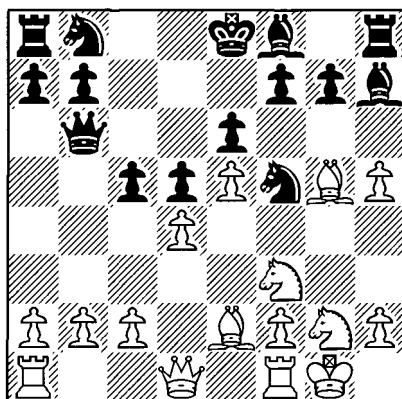
White soon won.

Game 40 (continued)

(see following diagram)

14 c4!

Clearing the centre and preparing actions on the a4-e8 diagonal before Black manages to castle.



14...cxd4

After 14...dxc4 15 d5! or 14...♗xd4 15 ♗xd4 cxd4 16 cxd5 exd5 17 ♗f4 Black is also in trouble.

15 cxd5 ♗d7

Or 15...exd5 16 ♗f4 and the knight enters with great effect.

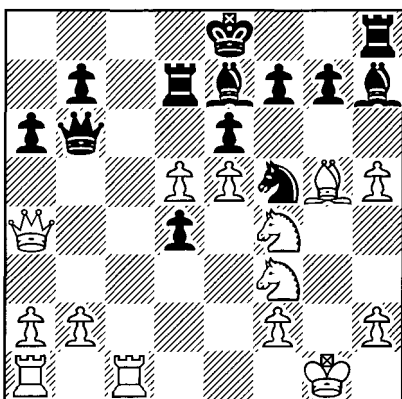
16 ♗f4

Note that White doesn't hurry with the tempting d5-d6, since the attack on Black's king is aided by the tense centre.

16...♖e7 17 ♖a4!

Black is not allowed to castle.

17...♜d8 18 ♖b5! a6 19 ♖xd7+ ♜xd7 20 ♜fc1



Creating new threats with every move. Now Black is unable to cover the c8-square, since 20...♖d8 fails to 21 dx6.

20...♖b5 21 ♖xb5 axb5 22 ♖xe7 ♖xe7

Or 22...♗xe7 23 dx6 fxe6 24 ♗xe6, winning.

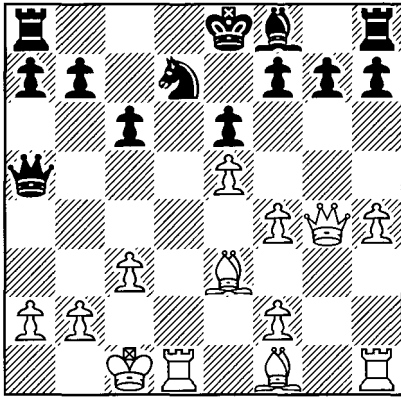
23 d6+ ♗xd6

Desperation, but 23...♖e8 24 ♖c8+ ♖d8 25 ♖ac1 was fatal for Black.

24 exd6+ ♖xd6 25 ♗xd4 e5 26 ♗xb5+ ♖e7 27 ♗g2

White soon materialized his extra piece.

Game 41 (continued)



15 f5!

Opening the position at all cost, considering Black's lack of development. 15 ♖b1?! 0-0-0 is much less promising.

15...♖xa2

After 15...♗xe5 16 ♖e4 exf5 17 ♖xf5 White's lead in development and strong bishop pair speak in his favour.

16 fxe6 ♖xe6

Or 16...♗xe5 17 exf7+ ♖xf7 18 ♖e4, winning – Rozentalis.

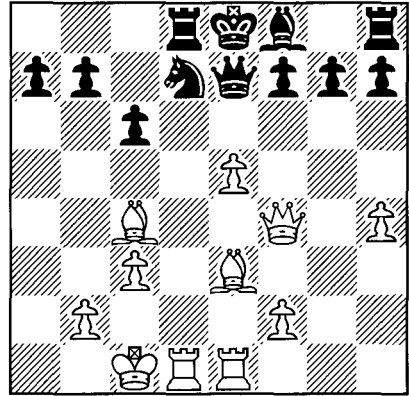
17 ♖f4!

A key move that enables ♖h3 should Black castle long or capture the e5-pawn.

17...♖d8

Both 17...♖xe5? 18 ♖h3! and 17...♗xe5 18 ♖h3 ♖e7 19 ♖he1 f6 20 ♖g3!, preparing f2-f4, are fatal for Black. In the latter line, note that White's attack actually becomes much swifter once the e5-pawn leaves the board.

18 ♖c4 ♖e7 19 ♖he1



By now White's lead in development is decisive; again we have the typical "play against one goal" situation.

19...h5

Or 19...♗xe5 20 ♖d4 ♗xc4 21 ♖xe7+ ♖xe7 22 ♖e1 etc.

20 ♖g3

Preventing 20...♖h6 and preparing to meet 20...g6 by 21 e6!. The immediate 20 e6 fxe6 21 ♖xe6 was also strong.

20...♗xe5

Suicide, but there were no good alternatives anymore.

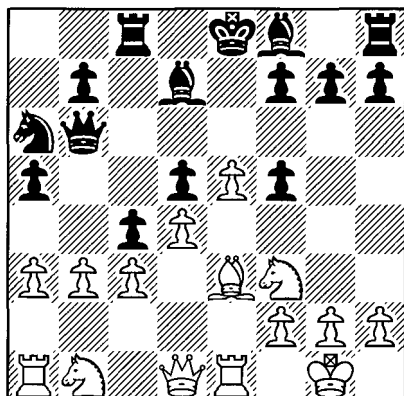
21 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 22 ♖f4

Avoiding the trap 22 ♖g5? f6 23 ♖xe5 ♖d6!.

22...♗xc4 23 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 24 ♖d3! 1-0

The queen enters on d6 with devastating effect and 24...b5 25 b3 doesn't change much, so Black resigned.

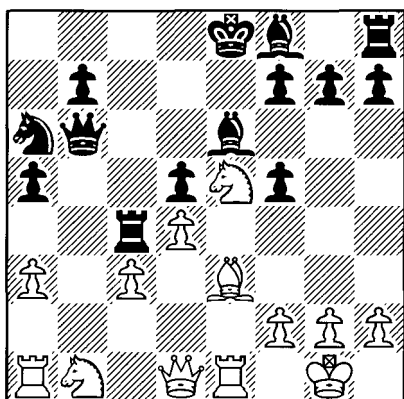
Game 42 (continued)



13 bxc4! ♖xc4

Not 13...dxc4?! 14 d5 ♔c5 15 e6! fxe6 16 ♘e5, intending 17 ♖h5+, with a huge initiative.

14 e6! ♔xe6 15 ♘e5



For the price of a mere pawn, White has obtained a strong knight in the centre and cleared the e-file for a future attack.

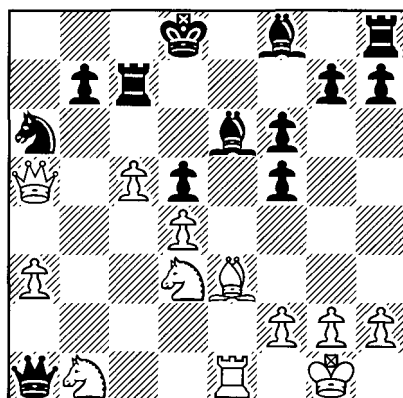
15...♖c7 16 ♖a4+

An annoying check that forces Black to leave his king stranded in the centre. 16 c4 f6! 17 ♖h5+ ♔d8 was less promising – Svidler.

16...♔d8 17 c4

A tempting advance, but the simple 17 ♘d2! was even stronger; e.g. 17...♖xc3 18 ♘df3, followed by ♔d2, or 17...f6 18 ♖ab1 ♗d6 19 ♘d3 ♖xa3 20 ♖b5! with moves like ♔f4 and ♘f4 hanging in the air.

17...f6 18 c5 ♖b2 19 ♘d3 ♖xa1 20 ♖xa5



20...♖a2?

Black returns the favour. By 20...♔c8!, preparing ...b7-b6, he could have kept the balance; e.g. 21 ♘d2 b6! 22 cxb6 ♖xa3 23 bxc7+ ♘xc7 24 ♖b6 ♖a6 25 ♖b3 and White has compensation for the pawn, but nothing more – Svidler.

21 ♔f4 ♖c4 22 ♘b4! ♔e8

Black correctly returns the rook in order to save his king.

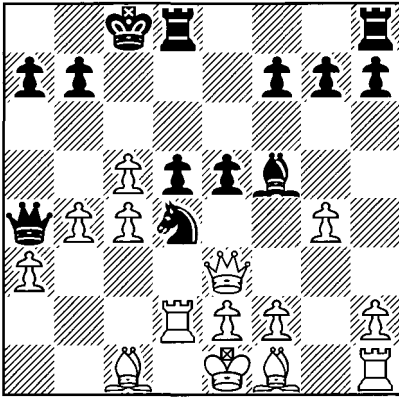
23 ♔xc7 ♔f7 24 ♖b6 ♔c8 25 ♘xa6 ♖xa6?!

The ensuing endgame is lost for Black, so the capture 25...bxa6 was the last chance.

26 ♖xa6 bxa6 27 ♘c3 ♔e6 28 ♖b1!

Preparing ♖b7, c with a decisive advantage thanks to the strong passed pawn and the superior activity. The game continued 28...♔e7 29 ♖b7 ♖e8 30 f3 g5 31 ♖a7 f4 32 ♔d6 ♔f8 33 ♖xa6 ♔xd6 34 ♖xd6 ♔f7 35 ♘xd5 ♖e1+ 36 ♔f2 and White went on to win.

Game 43 (continued)



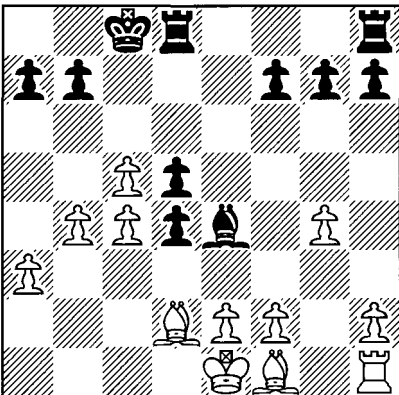
16...♖c2!!

A spectacular move, and the only one that does the job! In contrast, after 16...♗c2+?! 17 ♖xc2 ♗xc2 18 ♗g2 or 17...♗xc2 18 gxf5 dxc4 19 ♗d2 ♗b1+ 20 ♗c1, White is alive.

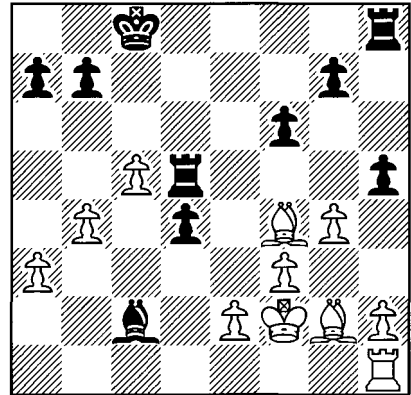
17 ♖xd4

Entering an inferior endgame, but the alternatives were no better; e.g. 17 gxf5?? ♗xc1+ 18 ♖d1 ♗c2 mate, or 17 ♖xc2 ♗xc2+ 18 ♗d2 dxc4+! 19 ♗c3 ♗xe3 20 gxf5 ♗xf1 21 ♖xf1 ♖d4 with a clear advantage for Black.

17...exd4 18 ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 19 ♗xd2 ♗e4!



Obstructing the enemy development; 19...♗xg4?! would invite the white rook into the battle after 20 cxd5 ♖xd5 21 ♖g1. 20 f3 ♗g6 21 cxd5 ♖xd5 22 ♗g2 f6 23 ♗f2 h5 24 ♗f4 ♗c2!



Redirecting the bishop to a more promising diagonal, where it prevents ♖d1.

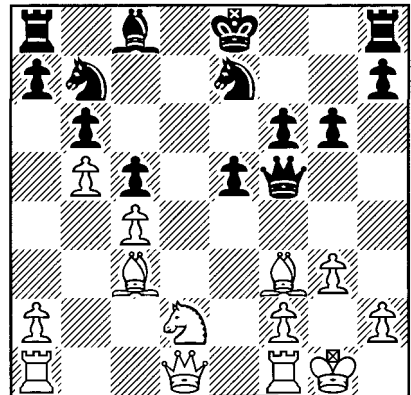
25 h4 ♖e8 26 ♖c1 ♗a4 27 gxh5 ♖xh5 28 ♗g3 ♖e3! 29 ♖c4 ♖d5 30 ♗d6?

An oversight, though after 30 ♖xd4 ♖xe2+ 31 ♗xe2 ♖xd4 Black is much better.

30...♖c3! 31 f4 ♖xd6 0-1

In view of 32 ♖xc3 dxc3 33 cxd6 c2.

Game 44 (continued)



19 ♖e4!

Clearing the way for the f-pawn and enabling a future ♗f3 with increased pressure on the long diagonal.

19...♗e6 20 f4!

A strong advance opening several lines towards Black's underdeveloped camp.

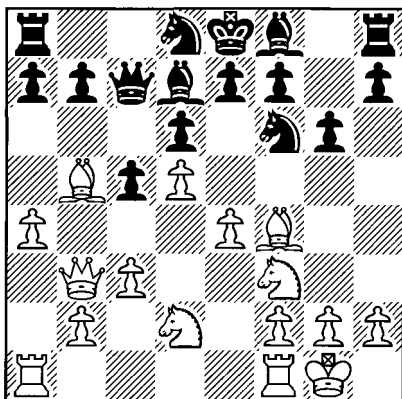
20...♖b8

This leads to unsolvable problems on the queenside, but the alternatives weren't much better. 20...exf4 21 ♗f3 fxg3 22 ♖ae1 wins for White (Krasenkow), while after 20...0-0 21 fxe5 Black is practically lost since 21...fxe5? fails to 22 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 23 ♗f3+. Now let's suppose that, instead of 18...c5?, Black had played the correct 18...♖d7. In that case, after the analogous continuation 19 ♖e4 ♗e6 20 f4 0-0 21 fxe5 fxe5 he would be just fine, with the rooks connected and the long diagonal sufficiently defended. One tempo in development can indeed make an enormous difference.

21 ♗a4! ♔a5 22 ♖xa5 1-0

In view of the horrible position arising after 22...bxa5 23 b6+ ♖d7 24 bxa7! ♖c8 25 ♗xa5 ♖c6 26 fxe5, Black resigned.

Game 45 (continued)



12...♖g7?

12...e5! 13 dxe6 ♗xe6 was a lesser evil, justifying the knight on d8. After 14 e5 ♗xf4 15 exf6 ♗e6 16 ♖fe1 0-0-0 Black still has chances of salvation. In contrast, the text lets White clear the h2-b8 diagonal with decisive effect.

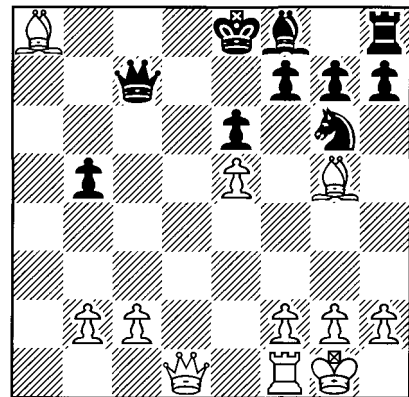
13 e5! ♗h5

Or 13...dxe5 14 ♗xe5 ♗c8 15 ♗e4! with irresistible pressure.

14 exd6 exd6 15 ♖fe1+ ♔f8 16 ♖xd7 ♗xd7 17 ♗b5! 1-0

A strong blow that finishes off Black's resistance. In view of his desperate position after 17...♗xb5 18 ♖xd6+ ♔g8 19 axb5, Black resigned.

Game 46 (continued)



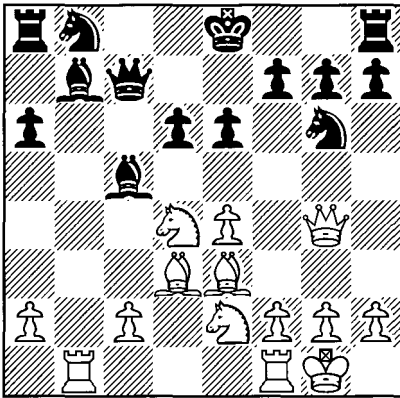
17...♖e7!

Speeding up development while neutralizing White's mating idea. 17...♖c5?, in the same spirit, fails to 18 ♖c6+! and the bishop is untouchable because of mate, whereas the game continued 17...♗xe5? 18 ♗e2 ♗b8? (the last chance was 18...f6 19 ♗xb5+ ♔f7, followed by ...♖d6) 19 ♗xe5! and Black resigned in view of 19...♗xe5 20 ♖c6 mate or 19...♗xa8 20 ♗xb5+.

18 ♖xe7 ♔xe7!

Clearing the back rank for the rook. Black has nothing to worry about; e.g. 19 ♗f3 ♘xe5 20 ♚a3+ ♜d6 21 ♚a7+ ♙f6 followed by ...♞d8.

Game 47 (continued)



15 e5!

A strong blow that opens the position for White's forces and undermines the bishop on c5. Less convincing was 15 ♘xe6 fxe6 16 ♚xe6+ ♘e7 17 ♖c4 ♞f8 with unclear play – Parligras.

15...♘d7

After 15...dxe5? 16 ♘xe6! fxe6 17 ♖xg6+ hxg6 18 ♚xg6+ White soon regains the piece with a huge advantage. 15...♘c6 might be a better try, although after 16 ♘xe6! fxe6 17 ♖xg6+ hxg6 18 ♚xg6+ ♙f8 19 ♘f4 White keeps a strong initiative – Chess Today.

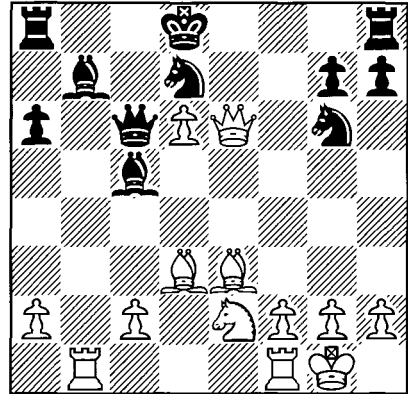
16 ♘xe6!

A typical sacrifice to keep the enemy king in the centre.

16...fxe6 17 ♚xe6+ ♔d8

Or 17...♘e7 18 ♞xb7! ♚xb7 19 exd6 ♘f8 20 ♚e5 ♖xd6 21 ♚xd6 with a clear edge – Parligras.

18 exd6 ♜c6



19 ♞xb7!

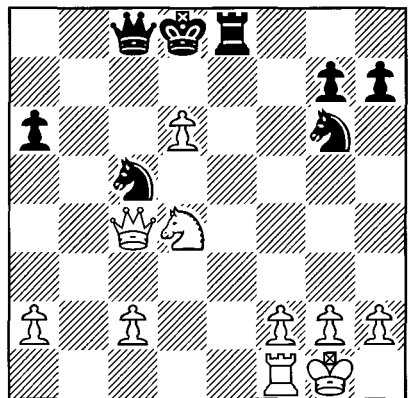
Eliminating one of Black's most active pieces.

19...♚xb7 20 ♖e4 ♚a7 21 ♖xa8 ♚xa8 22 ♖xc5 ♘xc5 23 ♚c4!

New threats with every move. Now 23...♚c6 runs into 24 ♘d4 ♚xd6 25 ♚xc5!, simplifying to a won endgame.

23...♚c8 24 ♘d4 ♞e8

Black parries the threat of 25 ♚xc5 and 26 ♘e6+.



25 d7!

An ingenious move to expose the black king along the d-file.

25...♖xd7

Or 25...♗xd7 26 ♘c6+ ♖c7 27 ♗e7+ and wins – Parligras.

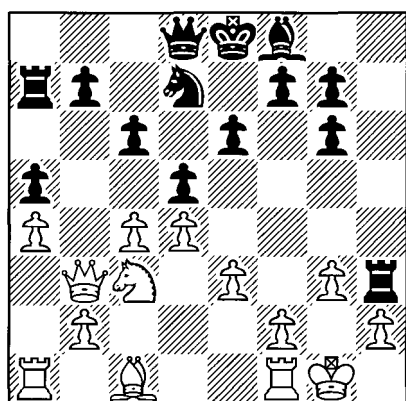
26 ♗d5+ ♖e7 27 ♗f5+! ♖f8 28 ♗d6

Finally White recovers the material, while Black's king remains exposed.

28...♗c7 29 ♗xe8 ♖xe8 30 ♖e1+ 1-0

In view of the continuation 30...♗e7 31 ♗g8+ ♖d7 32 ♗xg7 ♗d6 33 ♗xh7, Black resigned.

Game 48 (continued)



16 cxd5!

Before pushing the e-pawn White rules out ...d5xc4 as in the previous subvariation; e.g. 16 e4?! dxc4! 17 ♗xc4 ♗b6, followed by ...♗b4, with much more resistance than in the game.

16...cxd5 17 e4!

The key move of the game, which clears the position towards the uncastled black king. Note that both black rooks prove awkwardly placed once the game is opened.

17...dxe4 18 ♗b5

After 18 ♗xe4?! ♗f6 19 ♗g5 ♗e7 Black defends, though 18 ♗e3 or even 18 d5!? looked strong as well.

18...♖a6 19 ♗f4 ♖c6 20 d5!

In the same aggressive spirit, clearing more lines towards Black's king.

20...exd5

The tempting 20...♗c5 failed to 21 dxc6! ♗xb3 22 cxb7.

21 ♗xd5 ♗e7 22 ♖ad1 g5

After 22...♗f6 23 ♗e5! Black is also in deep trouble.

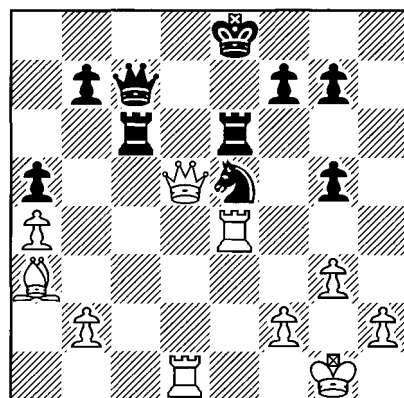
23 ♗d6+ ♗xd6 24 ♗xd6 ♖h6 25 ♗a3

The bishop is kept on its best diagonal. Of course 25 ♗xe4+? ♖e6 had to be avoided.

25...♖he6 26 ♖fe1 ♗c7 27 ♖xe4

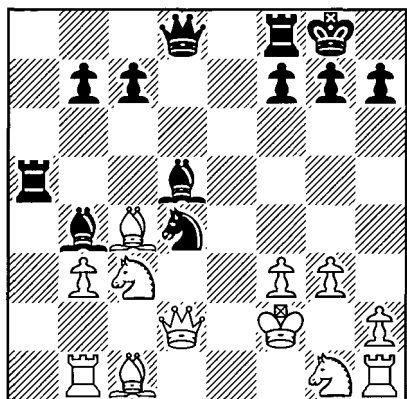
A good alternative was 27 ♗xg5 ♗e5 (or 27...♗e5 28 ♗xg7 ♗f3+ 29 ♖h1 with irresistible threats) 28 ♗h4! ♖h6 29 ♗xe4, transposing to a endgame with a decisive extra pawn.

27...♗e5



At this point the game continued 28 ♖g2 ♗c4 29 ♖xc4?! (29 ♖de1 was correct, keeping up the pressure) 29...♖xc4 30 ♗xg5 ♗c6+ 31 ♖g1 ♖d4! and Black later saved a draw. In contrast, the simple 28 ♖ed4! would have left him defenceless against the mating threat; e.g. 28...f6 29 f4 gxf4 30 gxf4 ♗f7 31 ♖e4! ♗c8 32 ♖de1 ♗d8 33 f5 and White wins.

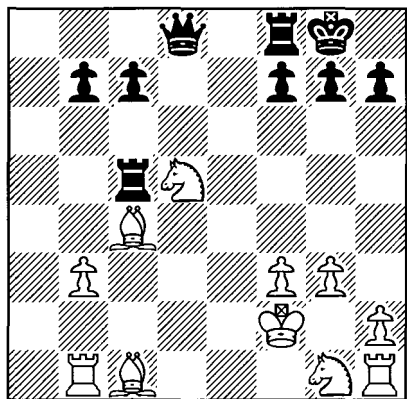
Game 49 (continued)



17 ♖xd4!

Giving back some material in order to repel the enemy attack. Both 17 ♗xd5 ♜xd5, preparing ...♞e8, and 17 ♖d3 ♗c6 18 ♗e3 ♘f5! 19 ♖xd8 ♜xd8, with the threat of 20...b5, would have let Black retain the initiative.

17...♗c5 18 ♖xc5 ♜xc5 19 ♘xd5



19...b5!

Stronger than 19...♞xd5?! 20 ♗xd5 ♖xd5, when White manages to consolidate his slight material plus by 21 ♘e2 followed by 22 ♞e1.

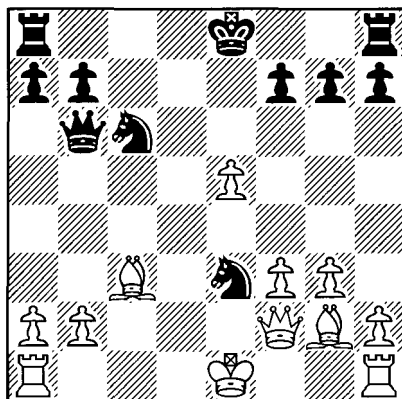
20 ♗a3! bxc4 21 ♗xc5 ♖xd5 22 ♗xf8

The winning attempt 22 b4?! proves risky after 22...♖d2+ 23 ♘e2 ♞e8 24 ♞he1 h6!, preparing 25...c3; but not 24...c3? 25 ♞bd1!, when 25..♞xe2+? fails to 26 ♞xe2 ♖xd1 27 ♞e8 mate.

22...♖d4+ 23 ♘g2 ½-½

Draw agreed, in view of 23...♖d2+ 24 ♘h3 ♖h6+ 25 ♘g2 ♖d2+ etc.

Game 50 (continued)



19 ♘e2!

Forcing favourable simplifications.

19...♘xg2

After 19...♖b5+ 20 ♘e3 0-0-0 21 ♗f1! Black's compensation is insufficient; e.g. 21...♖b6+ 22 ♘e2 ♘d4+ 23 ♘e1 ♞he8 24 ♗d3 ♞xe5+ 25 ♘f1, followed by ♘g2.

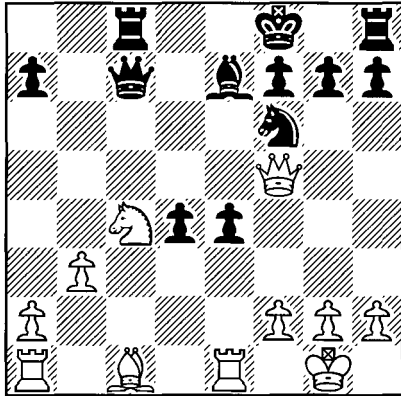
20 ♖xb6! axb6 21 ♘f2

White regains the piece and emerges a sound pawn up in the endgame.

21...♘h4 22 gxh4 ♘e7 23 ♞hg1 ♞hg8

At this point, the game continued 24 ♞g4?! h5 25 ♞e4 ♘e6 26 a3 ♞ad8, followed by ...♘e7-d5, and Black finally saved a draw. By 24 a3, preparing ♞ad1, White could have maintained his advantage; e.g. 24...♞a4 25 ♘g3 ♘e6 26 ♞ad1!, when 26...♘xe5? fails to 27 ♞ge1 f6 28 f4.

Game 51 (continued)



17...h5!

A key move, which prepares ...g7-g6 without having to bother about ♖h6+ and lets Black develop his last piece by ...h5-h4 and ...♖h5 later on. In contrast, 17...g6?! was risky because of 18 ♖h6+ ♔g8 19 ♖g5! ♖d8 20 ♖ac1, intending ♜e5-c6 – Avrukh.

18 ♖f4 g6! 19 ♖g5

After 19 ♖h3 ♖xf4 20 ♖xc8+ ♔g7 21 ♖h3 ♖d8 Black enjoys excellent compensation for the exchange, while 19 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 20 ♖xc7 ♖xc7 21 ♖xe4 ♔g7 leads to an equal endgame – Avrukh.

19...♖d8 20 ♖e5 h4!

Black is just in time to bring the rook into play before his centre crumbles.

21 ♖ad1 ♖h5 22 ♖f4 ♜d5! 23 ♖g4

Of course not 23 ♖xe4? Which is met by 23...♜c3.

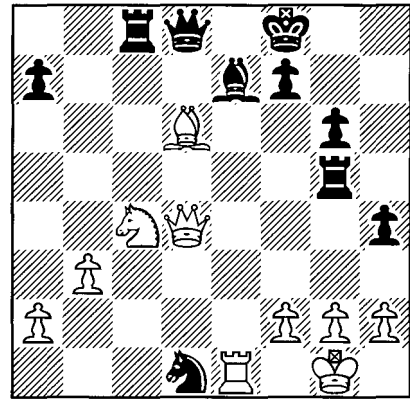
23...♖g5

Avrukh is not satisfied with the equality arising after 23...♖xc4 24 bxc4 ♖xe5 25 cxd5 ♖xd5 26 f3! exf3 27 ♖xf3 ♖xe1+ 28 ♖xe1 ♖d7 and goes for more. But also

24 ♖xe4! ♜c3 25 ♖xd4 ♜xd1 26 ♖d6!

Now that the black king's rook is no

longer preventing the mate on h8, this counterblow becomes possible.



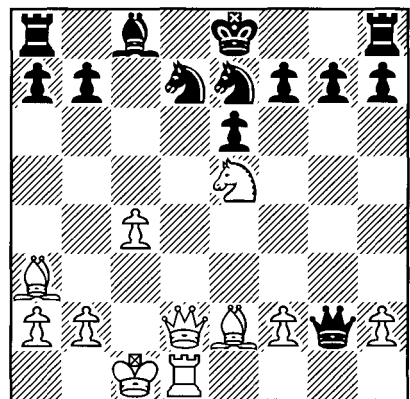
26...♔g8 27 ♖xe7 ♜c3!

An ingenious defence that keeps Black in the game.

28 ♖xc3 ♖xd6 29 ♖e8+! ♖xe8 30 ♜xd6 ♖d5! 31 h3 ♖xd6

An approximately equal endgame has arisen, and the game later ended in a draw.

Game 52 (continued)



14...0-0!

Returning some of the material in order to secure the king. Less practical was 14...♖xh2?! 15 ♜xd7 ♖c7 16 ♖xe7 ♖xd7 17

♙d6! and Black's king stays in the centre, while 14...♗d5?! 15 cxd5 ♗xe5 16 ♖b4! ♗g5+ 17 f4 ♗d8 18 fxe5 seems even less appealing for him.

15 ♙xe7

After 15 ♗xd7?! ♙xd7 16 ♖xd7 ♗f5 17 ♙xf8 ♗xf8 only Black can be better.

15...♗xe5 16 ♙xf8 ♙d7!

Bringing out the pieces. By now Black's safer king and extra pawn compensate for

White's bishop pair and superior activity.

17 ♙b4 ♙e8

Vera suggests 17...♖xf2! 18 ♙c3 f6 19 ♙xe5 fxe5 20 ♖xd7 ♖xe2 21 ♖xe6+ ♔h8 with a slight advantage, so probably 17 ♙c5 was more accurate on the previous move.

18 ♖e3 ♗c6 19 ♙d6 ♗d8 20 h4 e5 ½-½

Draw agreed, in view of 21 ♙xe5 ♗xd1+ 22 ♙xd1 ♗xe5 23 ♖xe5 ♖c6 with an equal endgame.

Chapter Two

Crime and Punishment

Introduction

The title of Dostoyevsky's classic novel gives us a good hint about what this chapter is about. When a game is decided already in the opening phase, the scenario tends to be one and the same: either of the players has committed one of the "crimes" associated with this stage of the game, and is duly punished by the opponent.

Which are the crimes in question? To start with, I would like to replace the term "crime" by the less categorical "dubious action", justified only in the case of a good reason. Here are some typical actions of this nature:

- ♠ Early pawn-grabbing.
- ♠ Early queen raids.
- ♠ Multiple moves with the same piece.
- ♠ Exposure of the king.
- ♠ Premature attacks.
- ♠ Extravagance.
- ♠ Ignorance and indifference.

The defect they all have in common is that development and the battle for the

centre are dangerously delayed. The rest of the chapter is dedicated to these actions, in the above order, although any single game will often contain several of them.

Before moving over to the games, let's observe that there are actually innumerable cases of openings or opening lines where one side deliberately takes such actions. In the Alekhine, for example, Black usually has to move his king's knight several times, allowing White to take temporary command of the centre. The King's Gambit jeopardizes the safety of both monarchs in several of its lines. Early pawn-grabbing and queen raids are combined in lines such as the Poisoned Pawn Variation in the Sicilian Najdorf (1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 ♘f6 5 ♗c3 a6 6 ♕g5 e6 7 f4 ♖b6 8 ♗d2 ♖xb2) and Marshall's Gambit in the Slav (1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♗c3 c6 4 e4 dxe4 5 ♗xe4 ♕b4+ 6 ♕d2 ♗xd4 7 ♕xb4 ♖xe4+). As John Watson mentions several times in *Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy*, practice is the ultimate judge of the correctness of every opening idea, which can't be accepted or discarded automatically due to general principles.

Just to mention one more case, the Chebanenko Slav (1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 a6 and similar lines with 4...a6) was met with scepticism at its invention due to the odd move with the rook pawn – it doesn't develop anything, nor does it fight for the centre or restrict any enemy plan, at least for the moment. However, some twenty years later it is still not clear how to get an advantage against this system, and many world-class players, including Kasparov, have used it in their games. Ironically, contemporary practice sees the equally "suspicious" 5 h3 among its antidotes!

Thus we should keep an open mind when discussing what is "right" and "wrong" in the opening. Nevertheless, the early defeats and difficulties in the opening phase are invariably related to the actions in the above list.

What about the punishment methods? Well, we are already quite familiar with them from the previous chapter; for example: pawn breaks, prevention of castling, attack at weak points, exchange of defenders and, most importantly, a heavy use of tactics.

Early pawn-grabbing

We already saw one related case in Dvoretzky-Schmidt (Game 7). Here are a few more games where one side suffers badly from early pawn-grabbing.

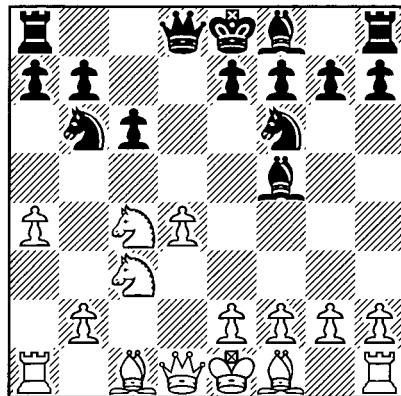
Game 53
P.H.Nielsen-J.Timman
Malmö 2002
Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 dxc4 5 a4

♙f5 6 ♘e5

6 e3 is another direction in this Slav main line. Black, for his part, could opt for the sharp 6...e6 7 f3 ♙b4 8 e4 ♙xe4! 9 fxe4 ♘xe4 on his next move.

6...♘bd7 7 ♘xc4 ♘b6



Black used to play 7...♙c7 exclusively here, preparing ...e7-e5, but nowadays the text is equally popular.

8 ♘e5 a5 9 g3 ♘fd7

Again challenging the active enemy knight. Another option is 9...e6 10 ♙g2 ♙b4, speeding up development and complicating the e2-e4 thrust.

10 ♘xd7

With this capture White gains a tempo for development.

10...♙xd7 11 e4 ♙g4?!

Black somehow wants to provoke f2-f3 but, as the remainder of the game will show us, it is rather White who is helped by that move. 11...♙h3 at once was correct; e.g. 12 ♙xh3 ♙xh3 13 ♙b3 ♙a6 14 ♙e3 e6, when both 15 d5 and 15 0-0-0 can be met by 15...♙b4.

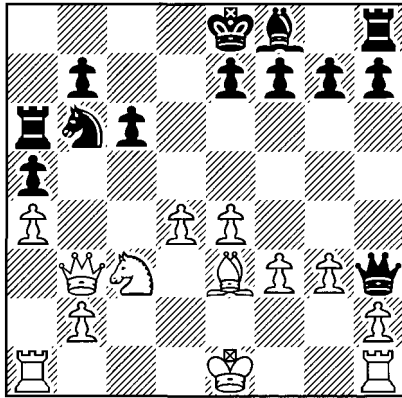
12 f3 ♙h3 13 ♙xh3 ♙xh3 14 ♙b3!

Attacking Black's vulnerable queenside and preparing 0-0-0.

14...♖a6

Or 14...♖g2 15 ♖f1 ♖a6 16 d5 with a clear advantage – I.Sokolov. It is indeed difficult to see how Black can cope with the threat 17 ♕e3, whereas 16...♖xh2 17 ♕f4, followed by 0-0-0, also looks grim for him.

15 ♕e3



15...♖g2?

When behind in development, don't hunt pawns! The fact that a player of Timman's calibre infringes this principle tells us something about its relevance. The last chance was 15...e6, intending 16 d5 ♕b4 – I.Sokolov, who instead advocates 16 ♖f2! ♕b4 17 ♖e2 with a clear initiative now that Black's queen proves dangerously exposed to 18 ♖f4 on the next move. In retrospect, that powerful king move would not have been available after the immediate 11...♕h3.

16 0-0-0! ♖xf3 17 ♖he1

White brings his last piece into the battle, setting up the irresistible threat of 18 d5.

17...g6

This practically loses a piece, though after 17...♖f6 18 d5 cxd5 19 exd5, followed by ♖b5, or 17...e6 18 d5! ♕b4 19 dxe6 Black is

also done; e.g. 19...0-0 20 ♕xb6 ♖xb6 21 e7! ♖e8 22 ♖d8, winning – Hübner.

18 d5! ♕g7 19 ♕xb6 0-0 20 ♕d4

With an extra piece the rest is easy.

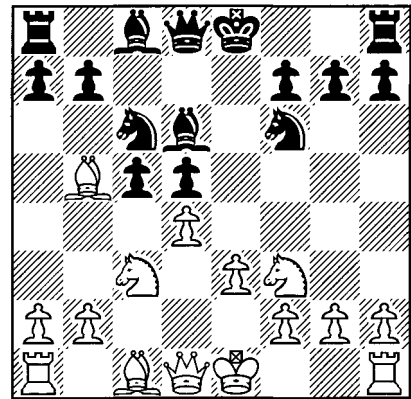
20...♕xd4 21 ♖xd4 ♖f2 22 ♖ed1 ♖xh2 23 ♖xb7 1-0

Game 54
A.Vaisser-M. Illescas Cordoba
 Spanish Team
 Championship 1996
Tarrasch Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 c5 4 e3

4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♖f3 is a more popular reaction to the Tarrasch Defence, followed by g2-g3 and ♕g2, eyeing the potential isolated pawn on d5.

4...♖f6 5 ♖f3 ♖c6 6 cxd5 exd5 7 ♕b5 ♕d6



8 ♖e5?!

We will soon see the drawbacks of this early attack on c6. A normal continuation was 8 0-0 0-0 9 dxc5 ♕xc5 10 b3 and ♕b2 in order to complete development, although I suspect that the king's bishop would be better off at e2.

8...♖c7

Here and on the next move, Black doesn't hand over the bishop pair by 8...♗d7?! 9 ♖xd7, but keeps the tension.

9 ♗a4

With hindsight, 9 ♖xc6 bxc6 10 dxc5 ♗xc5 11 ♖e2, followed by 12 0-0, was preferable.

9...0-0!

A key decision. Black sacrifices a pawn in order to speed up development.

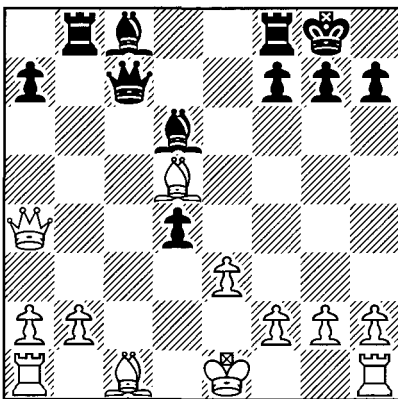
10 ♖xc6 bxc6 11 ♗xc6 cxd4

Illescas immediately clears the centre, aware that 12 ♗xa8? now fails to 12...dxc3 13 ♗c6 ♗e5 14 ♖b1 ♗f5.

12 ♖xd5?!

Here 12 exd4 ♖b8 13 ♗b5 a6 14 ♗e2, preparing 0-0, was preferable – Illescas, even though Black keeps the pressure after 14...♖e8. At this point, White should probably just bite the apple by 15 0-0! ♗xh2+ 16 ♖h1, since the materialistic 15 h3? runs into 15...♗b4! with strong threats. Indeed, when ahead in material but behind in development, giving back a pawn tends to be a sensible idea.

12...♖xd5 13 ♗xd5 ♖b8

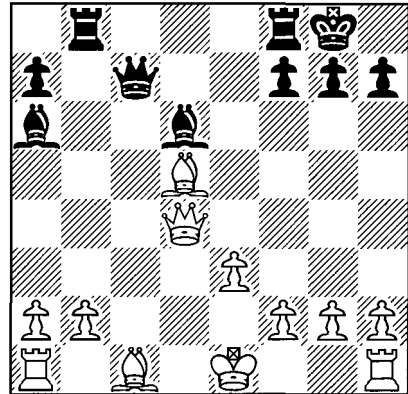


14 ♗xd4?

Taking a second pawn is far too greedy.

After 14 0-0! ♗xh2+ 15 ♖h1 ♗d6, with ...♖b4 coming up, Black has a great position with certain attacking prospects, but at least White has managed to castle.

14...♗a6!



Of course. Now White is denied castling, and his two extra pawns hardly help the defence. On the contrary, the absence of black pawns on the b- and e-files lets Black use his heavy artillery more efficiently in the attack.

15 ♗d2 ♗e5

Parrying the threat of 16 ♗c3.

16 ♗a4 ♗d6!

Stepping up the pressure. In contrast, 16...♗xb2? would be a strategic error in view of 17 ♗xa6! ♗xa1 18 0-0 ♗e5 19 g3, followed by e3-e4. White is the exchange down but Black's attack has disappeared completely and the bishop is a giant on d5.

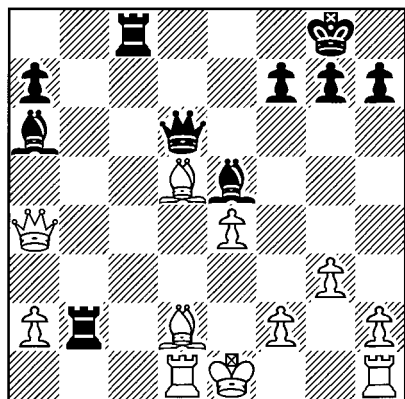
17 e4 ♖xb2 18 ♖d1

After 18 ♗c6 ♖xd2! 19 ♖xd2 (or 19 ♗xd6 ♖e2+) 19...♗f4+ 20 ♖d1 ♗b4 the white king succumbs.

18...♖c8!

The last piece joins the battle, adding new tactical themes to the menu.

19 g3



White's position was already beyond salvation. The text prevents 19...xf4, but Black is now able to land another tactical blow.

19...xf4! 20 xf4

Or 20 xf4 h6+ 21 f4 xf4+ with a quick mate on e3.

20...xc1+

With the idea 21 d1 c3 mate. White is completely lost, though he keeps on fighting until the bitter end.

21 d1 a3 22 c4 xd1+ 23 xd1 f3+ 24 c2 c3+ 25 d1 a1+ 0-1

Game 55
A. Moiseenko-S. Dvoirys
European Cup, Fügen 2006
Grünfeld Defence

1 d4 f6 2 c4 g6 3 c3 d5 4 g5

This line against the Grünfeld became increasingly popular during the new century, with fresh ideas for White being discovered, particularly by Georgian players.

4...e4 5 h4 xc3 6 bxc3 dxc4

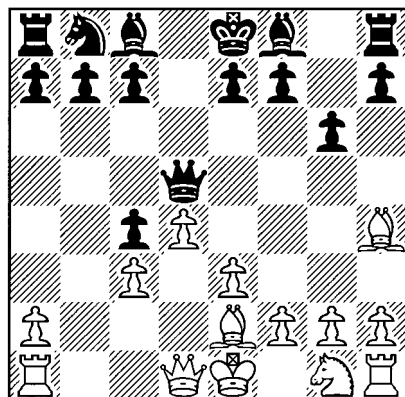
The most principled reply. 6...c5 and 6...g7 are other options.

7 e3 d5

This defence of the c4-pawn has the evident drawback of exposing the queen. 7...e6 is the main line here.

8 e2

By developing the bishop first, White enables e3 on some occasions, e.g. if Black launches a set-up with ...b7-b5 and ...b7. Obviously 8...xg2?? now fails to 9 e3.



8...a5!?

Black goes for a second pawn when his development is almost zero. 8...d7 9 f3 b6 10 0-0 g7 seems much sounder, bringing out the pieces and preparing ...0-0. B. Jobava-P. Svidler, Dortmund 2006, continued 11 a4 a5 12 d2 c6, and here Svidler recommends 13 e3! d7 14 e2, eventually leading to a white advantage. A key factor in the whole 4 g5 variation is the bishop on h4 which exerts annoying pressure at e7.

9 f3!

White ignores the threat at c3 and just continues development.

9...xc3+ 10 d2 c6

Clearing a retreat route for the queen via a5-d8. Hanging on to the pawn with 10...b5? proves disastrous after 11 a4 e7

12 0-0 a6 13 ♕f3! – Moiseenko. The developing 10...♗g7 seems more reasonable, although after 11 0-0 ♖a5 12 ♜xc4 ♗d5 13 ♖b3 ♜c6 14 ♕f3 ♖f5 15 ♜ac1 0-0 16 ♜fd1!, preparing d4-d5, White had a distinct initiative in Z. I. Zoria-V. Mikhalevski, Minneapolis 2005.

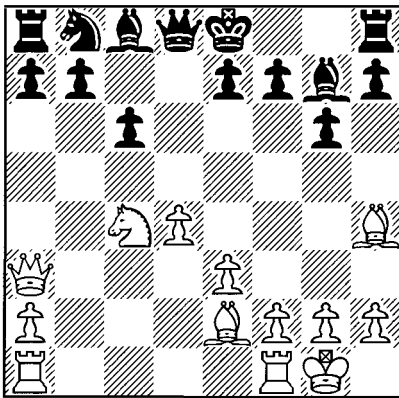
11 0-0 ♖a5 12 ♜xc4 ♗d8

In the event of 12...♗c7 White could choose between the game continuation and 13 ♕g3!? followed by 14 ♕e5.

13 ♖b3!

Moiseenko has observed a great square for his queen on a3.

13...♕g7 14 ♖a3

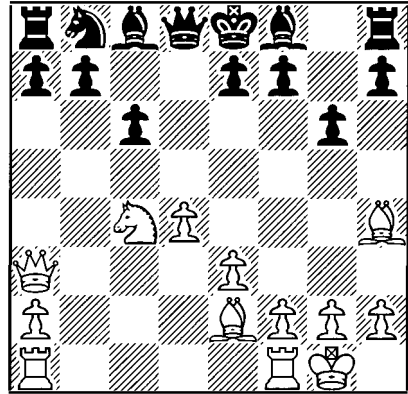


From a3 the queen increases the pressure at the e7-pawn, just before Black is able to castle. Moreover, a tactical shot with ♜b6 is enabled on some occasions.

14...♕f8?

Returning the pieces to their initial positions is rarely correct in the opening, but Dvoirys probably didn't expect White's next move. A better choice was 14...f6 15 ♜ab1 ♜d7 (parrying the threat of 16 ♜b6), although by 16 ♕g4! White keeps the pressure. At this point, after 16...0-0 17 ♕xd7, both 17...♕xd7 18 ♜xb7 and 17...♗xd7 18

♜b6 lose material for Black – Moiseenko, who also analyses 14...b5 15 ♜a5 (not 15 ♜b6?? b4!) 15...♗d6 16 ♗xd6 exd6 17 ♜ac1, followed by ♕f3 and ♕g3, with strong pressure. Nevertheless, either of these lines was preferable to the text, as we will see next.



15 d5!

A well-calculated pawn break that clears several new lines towards Black's camp.

15...cxd5

15...♗xd5? obviously failed to 16 ♜b6, while after 15...b5 16 ♗c3! f6 17 ♜a5 cxd5 18 ♕xb5+ ♖f7 19 ♜fd1 White keeps a strong initiative – Moiseenko.

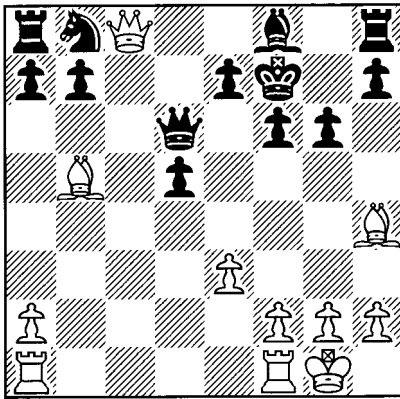
16 ♗c3! f6

The apparently clever 16...d4 17 exd4 ♕g7, giving back a pawn to bring out the pieces, fails to 18 ♜d6+!, and 16...♜g8 has the same flaw. By the text Black prepares ...♕g7 on the next move, but runs into a new tactical problem. Let's remember the fact that tactical complications tend to favour the side with better development.

17 ♜d6+! ♗xd6

Black has to accept the enemy intrusion, since 17...exd6 18 ♕xf6 would make things even worse.

18 ♗xc8+ ♖f7 19 ♕b5!



Enabling a check on e8, while limiting both the black queen and knight. 19 ♖xb7 ♜c6 20 ♙a6! was another good option.

19...♙g7

Now White recovers the material with heavy interest, but 19...♜b6 20 ♙e8+ ♔g7 21 ♖ab1 was also terminal.

20 ♜xb7 ♜d8 21 ♜xa8 ♜b4 22 ♖ab1 ♜xh4 23 ♙e2 f5 24 g3! 1-0

Early queen raids

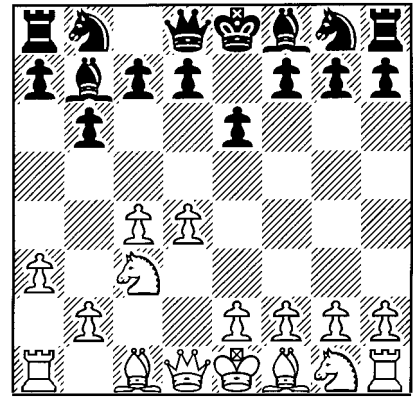
One of the first things taught to beginners is to be careful with the queen, bringing her out only when the rest of the pieces have been developed. Although the validity of this “rule” obviously varies from case to case, we just witnessed an affirmative one in Moiseenko-Dvoiryts. Here are two more games where early queen sorties led to big difficulties for the involved side.

Game 56
T.Hillarp Persson-K.Nygren
Sweden 2004
Owen's Defence

1 d4 e6 2 c4 b6 3 a3

A sensible reply to Owen's Defence, in which Black often tries to get rid of his king's bishop on b4.

3...♙b7 4 ♘c3



4...♜h4?

This early sortie with the queen doesn't fulfil any particular function and rather exposes her to the enemy pieces. Normal continuations are 4...f5 and 4...♘f6, taking control of the key square e4.

5 ♘f3

The most natural reply, though 5 e4!? was possible too, since 5...♙xe4? loses the bishop after 6 g3.

5...♜h5

Or 5...♙xf3 6 exf3, followed by g2-g3 and ♙g2, when the location of the queen on h4 just helps White.

6 e4

Gaining space and preparing the tempting ♙e2.

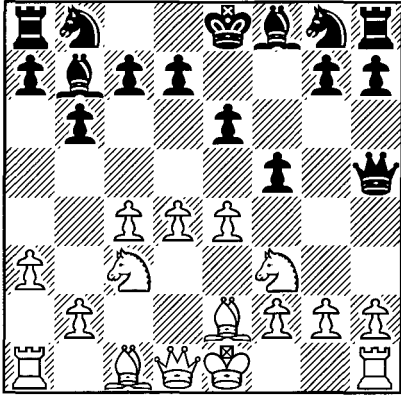
6...f5

Despite the lack of development Black opens the game, as this was probably the only way to justify his previous play.

7 ♙e2!

Relying on some simple tactics White ignores the threat to e4 and just speeds up

development. Other continuations were less promising; e.g. 7 d5?! fxe4 8 ♖xe4 exd5 or 7 e5?! ♙xf3 8 gxf3 ♘c6 and the queen is no longer that badly placed on the h-file.



7...♙f7

A sad necessity, but after 7...fxe4? 8 ♘g5 Black can't defend his queen properly; e.g. 8...♙h4 9 g3 ♙h6 10 ♘ge4 ♙h3 11 ♙g4! ♙g2 12 ♙f3 ♙h3 13 ♘g5 etc.

8 ♘e5

8 ♘g5!? seems even stronger: 8...♙e7 (or 8...♙g6? 9 ♙h5) 9 exf5! exf5 10 0-0, followed by ♖e1+, with a devastating lead in development.

8...♙f6

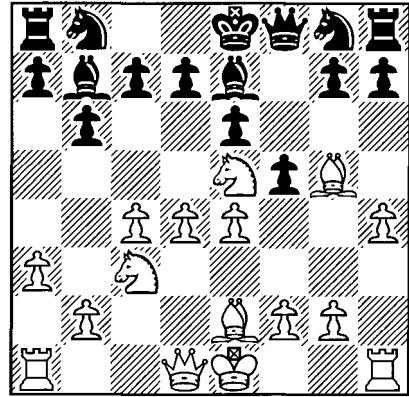
At this point there are several tempting continuations such as 9 ♙f3 and 9 exf5 ♙xf5 10 ♙d3, but Hillarp finds an even more enterprising one.

9 h4!

In order to bring the last minor piece into play via g5. Black can't stop this idea by 9...h6? due to 10 ♙h5+, while 9...fxe4? fails fatally to 10 ♙g5 ♙f5 11 ♙g4.

9...♙e7 10 ♙g5 ♙f8

Hardly the square that the queen was dreaming of when she left the camp on move 4.



11 exf5!

Simple but strong – in order to exploit the great lead in development White should open the position. The fact that the bishop on b7 wakes up becomes irrelevant after the next move.

11...exf5

Unfortunately for Black, 11...♙xf5 fails tactically to 12 ♙d3 ♙f8 13 ♙h5+!, whereas 11...♙xg5 12 hxg5 would just activate the rook on h1.

12 ♙f3!

Another logical move in order to swap the only active enemy piece.

12...♘c6 13 ♘b5!

Stepping up the pressure, now that Black no longer can protect the c7-pawn by ...♘a6.

13...0-0-0

This won't end well, but what else? For example, 13...♙d8 allows the nice blow 14 ♙h5+ g6 15 ♘xg6!.

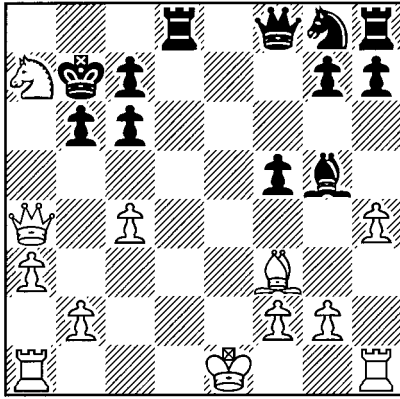
14 ♘xc6 ♙xc6 15 ♘xa7+ ♙b7 16 d5!

The most forceful follow-up.

16...♙xg5

Obviously 16...♙xa7 runs into 17 dxc6 dxc6 18 ♙a4+.

17 dxc6+ dxc6 18 ♙a4!



More precise than 18 ♖xc6+ ♜b8. Now Black has to give a piece in order to repel the attack.

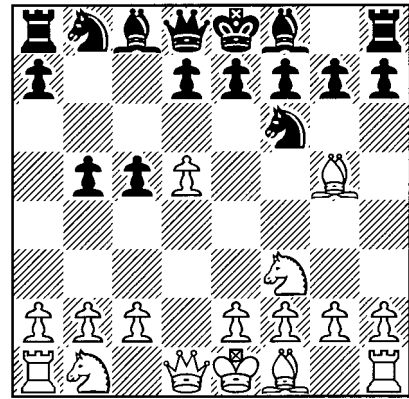
18... ♖e8+ 19 ♜f1 ♞e7 20 hxg5 ♜a8 21 ♖e1! ♜xa7 22 ♜b4

Finally White wins material.

22... ♞g6 23 ♜xe8 ♜xe8 24 ♖xc6+! 1-0

In view of 24... ♜xc6 25 ♜b5+.

but also because in this system Black often needs considerable time to develop his remaining minor pieces, thus the absence of that knight might be strongly felt.



4... ♞e4

Black also frequently plays 4... ♜b6 and 4...d6, not opposing the exchange on f6.

5 ♖f4

Even the odd 5 ♜d3!? has been tried here, insisting on the bishop vs. knight exchange.

5... ♖b7 6 a4

A typical idea: before carrying on with his development White softens up the light squares on the queenside.

Game 57

E.Postny-T.Abergel

European Championship,

Warsaw 2005

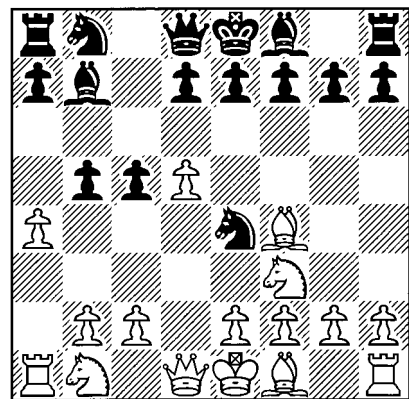
Benko Gambit

1 d4 ♞f6 2 ♞f3 c5 3 d5 b5

By this advance Black stays in the waters of the Benko and Blumenfeld Gambits. 3...e6, heading for the Benoni, is a main alternative.

4 ♖g5

At first sight, a surprising move – is White about to exchange his “good” bishop and surrender the bishop pair? The answer is yes, mainly since the knight on f6 exerts unpleasant pressure on his centre (i.e. 4... ♖b7, hitting the d5-pawn, is coming up),

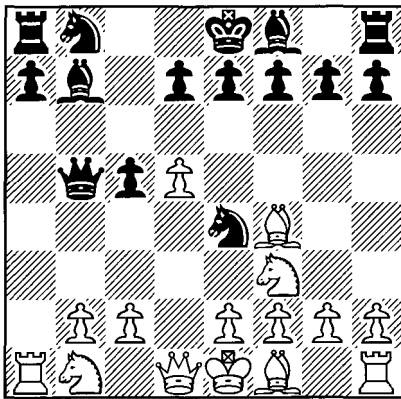


6... ♖b6?

An unfortunate decision. Black assigns the defence of the b5-pawn to the queen, but now she becomes dangerously exposed to the enemy pieces, just like 4... ♖h4 in the previous game.

6... ♖a5+ is a more justified queen sortie to disrupt White's development, although after 7 ♖bd2 ♙xd5 8 axb5 ♖b6 (not 8... ♖xb5? 9 c4!) 9 ♗xe4 ♙xe4 10 ♖d2, followed by e2-e4 and ♖c4, White has had excellent results in practice. Perhaps the modest 6...b4 is Black's best choice here; e.g. 7 c4 e6 8 ♖d3 ♗f6 9 e4 exd5 10 exd5 d6 with just a slight disadvantage in D.Komarov-J.M.Degraeve, French Team Championship 2002.

7 axb5 ♖xb5



8 ♗bd2!

Speeding up development and swapping the opponent's most active piece for an undeveloped one. We saw a similar case with 13 ♗f3! in Hellsten-Renman (Game 12).

8... ♗xd2

8... ♗xd2? loses a piece to 9 c4, while the provocative 8... ♖b4 is well met by 9 c4 ♗xd2 (the threat was 10 ♖a4) 10 ♗xd2, with ideas like ♖a3-b3.

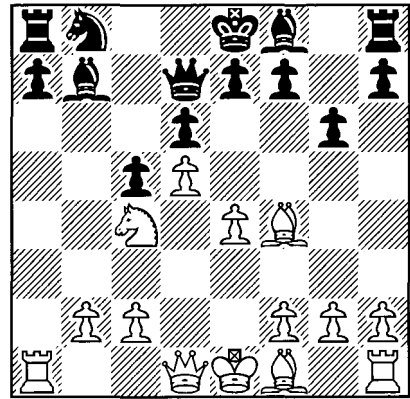
9 ♗xd2 d6

Black resumes development, noticing that both pawns are immune: 9... ♗xd2? this time runs into 10 e4, whereas 9... ♖xb2? fails to 10 ♖b1 ♖f6 11 e3! – Postny.

10 e4 ♖d7

The queen takes the square intended for the knight, since 10... ♖b6 would just give White another extra tempo with 11 ♗c4.

11 ♗c4 g6



Now if Black manages to play ... ♗g7 and ...0-0 the worst would be over for him; however...

12 e5!

Just in time, hitting the opponent's pawn chain before he is fully developed.

12... ♗g7!

Abergel sacrifices a pawn, after seeing that 12... dxe5? 13 ♗xe5 ♖xd5 fails fatally to 14 ♗b5+!

13 exd6 0-0 14 ♗e2 exd6 15 0-0!

The straightforward 15 ♗xd6?! permits 15... ♗xb2 16 ♖b1 ♗c3+ 17 ♖f1 ♗a6 with some counterplay – Postny. The text lets Black save the pawn, but only by making a serious positional concession.

15... ♗a6

Or 15... ♗e5 16 ♗xe5 dxe5 17 ♗h6, fol-

lowed by c2-c4 and f2-f4, with a huge positional plus.

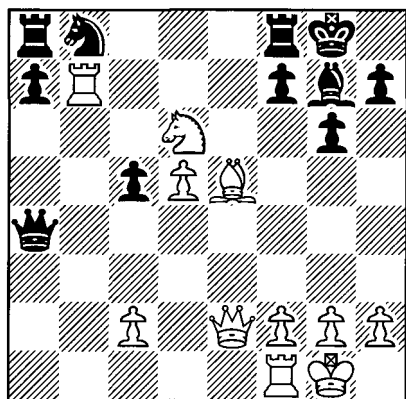
16 ♖xd6

Postny is happy to trade the d6- and b2-pawns, anticipating a great future for his queen's rook.

16... ♗xe2 17 ♖xe2 ♗xb2 18 ♖ab1 ♗g7 19 ♖b7

Material is even, but White's active pieces spell big trouble for Black.

19... ♖a4 20 ♗e5!



White exchanges the main defender of the enemy king, exploiting the fact that ... ♖e8 isn't available.

20... ♖h4

Instead, 20... ♗d7 runs into 21 ♖a1!, while after 20... ♗xe5 21 ♖xe5 both 21... ♗d7 22 ♖e7 ♖ad8 23 ♗xf7 and 21... ♖d4 22 ♗xf7! ♖xe5 23 ♗xe5 win for White.

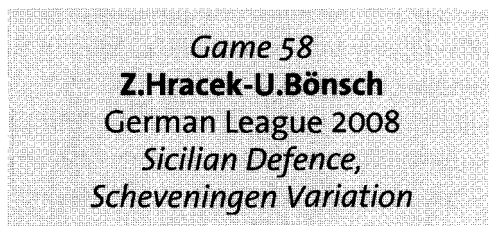
21 ♗xg7 ♗xg7 22 ♖e5+ ♗g8 23 ♗e8! 1-0

In view of the multiple threats at g7, f6 and c7, Black resigned.

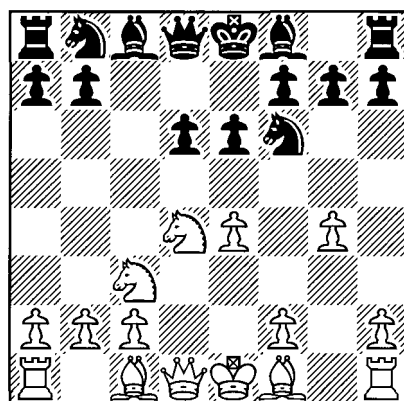
Multiple moves with the same piece

It is simple logic that if we move the same piece several times, the development of its

colleagues is delayed. Here are some games that illustrate this problem.



1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 ♗f6 5 ♗c3 e6 6 g4



The famous Keres Attack, which has made many devotees of the Sicilian Scheveningen adjust their move order. White discourages Black's ...0-0, prepares g4-g5 pushing away the enemy knight from the centre and, for the longer term, gains space on kingside.

6...h6

The most popular reply, neutralizing g4-g5 so that the knight can stay on f6, at least for a while.

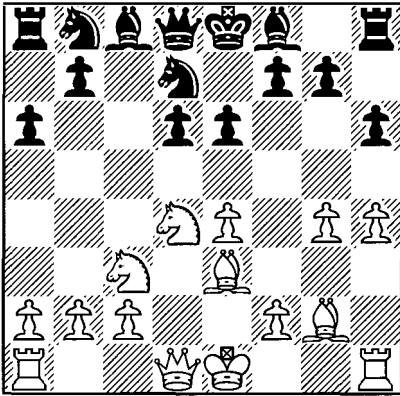
7 h4 a6 8 ♗g2 ♗fd7

The knight moves away before g4-g5 is actually played. Such prophylactic retreats are frequent in the middlegame battle; however, in the opening we should keep a

certain focus on developing moves. Both 8...♖c6 and 8...g6 hold better reputations.

9 ♖e3

A logical reaction to 8...♘fd7. White refrains from g4-g5 and prefers to continue development.



9...♘e5!?

The knight again! The later game D.Rogic-U.Bönsch, Austrian Team Championship 2009, saw the possible improvement 9...b5!?, and after 10 e5 d5 11 f4 ♖c7 12 0-0 ♖c5 13 ♖f3 ♘c6 14 ♘ce2 ♖b7 Black had no real problems. His minor pieces are well developed and he is ready to castle to either side at the appropriate moment. In our main game, all this will remain a dream for him!

10 ♖e2

Before harassing the knight with f2-f4, Hracek enables 0-0-0.

10...♖c7 11 f4 ♘c4 12 0-0-0!

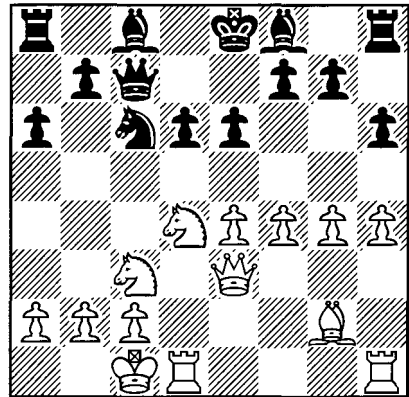
White isn't concerned about losing the bishop pair, and just keeps on bringing out his pieces.

12...♘xe3!?

After such a long journey, it doesn't seem right to swap the knight. Perhaps Black could have tried 12...b5, preparing

...♖b7, and keeping the active knight for a while – although after 13 ♖f2, preparing ♗he1 and ♘d5!?, White enjoys a dangerous initiative.

13 ♖xe3 ♘c6



Finally Black starts bringing out the rest of his pieces, but it is already too late... Can you spot the punishment?

14 e5!

Of course! With such a colossal difference in activity on the board, White should hurry to open the position before Black consolidates with ...♖d7 and ...0-0-0.

14...♘xd4

In the event of 14...d5, hoping to keep the position closed, White could try 15 ♖xd5! exd5 16 ♘xd5 ♖b8 17 ♘f6+! gx f6 18 exf6+ with a fierce attack.

15 ♖xd4 dx e5

Again, 15...d5 runs into 16 ♖xd5!, when 16...exd5? 17 ♘xd5 ♖a5 18 ♘b6 is very bad for Black.

16 fx e5 ♖c5?

A tactical slip, though Black's position was difficult anyway; e.g. 16...♖d7 17 ♘e4 0-0-0 18 ♘d6+ with ♗h3-b3 as a future resource, or 16...♖e7 17 ♘e4 0-0 18 g5 with ideas like 18...h5 19 ♘f6+!.

17 ♖c6+! bxc6

17...♗xc6 failed to 18 ♖d8 mate.

18 ♖xc5 1-0

With the devastating plan ♗c3-e4-d6(+), targeting the enemy king who can't leave the centre, so Black resigned.

Game 59
R.Vera Gonzalez-
A.Romero Holmes
 Leon 1996
Colle's Opening

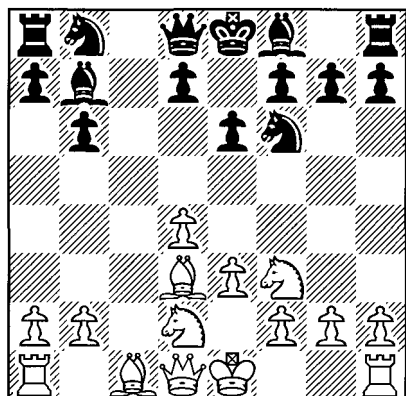
1 d4 e6 2 ♗f3 c5 3 c3 ♗f6 4 e3

White sets up the Colle, an apparently modest opening but with great attacking potential, as in this game!

4...b6 5 ♗bd2 ♖b7 6 ♖d3 cxd4

A logical capture now that White can no longer play ♗c3, but Black had many other options; e.g. 6...d5, gaining space, or 6...♗c6, preparing to meet 7 e4?! at any moment with 7...cxd4 8 cxd4 ♗b4!.

7 cxd4



7 exd4 is more popular, clearing the c1-h6 diagonal for the bishop, whereas the text has the merit of enabling e3-e4 later.

7...♗d5?!

With bishops on g5 and e7 this is a common feature in openings like the Queen's Gambit Declined and Torre's Opening, in order to release the tension by exchanges. Here, on the other hand, Black's intention is rather to meet e3-e4 by ...♗b4 or ...♗f4, but we will soon see that this idea doesn't justify a second move with the knight. Preferable was 7...d5 or 7...♖e7 8 0-0 d6 9 e4 ♗bd7 in Hedgehog style.

8 0-0 f5?!

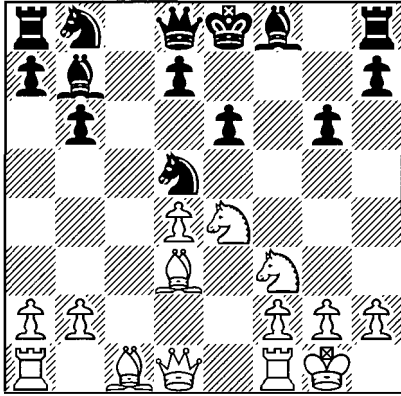
Directed against e3-e4, but now the black king is dangerously exposed. 8...♖e7, bringing out the pieces, was more prudent, although after 9 e4 ♗b4 (9...♗f4 10 ♖c2 ♖a6 11 ♗e1 ♗d3 comes to the same thing) 10 ♖b1 ♖a6 11 ♗e1 ♗d3 12 ♖xd3! ♖xd3 13 d5!, with the threat of 14 ♗b3 and 15 d6, Black still has some difficulties to resolve.

9 e4!

The same old story: the side with a lead in development opens the position. Black could now delay ...f5xe4 for one move by 9...♗b4 or 9...♗f4, yet after 10 ♖b1 or 10 ♖c2 respectively, it is not clear what he has achieved.

9...fxe4 10 ♗xe4 g6?

Romero takes precautions against the emerging threats on the b1-h7 and h5-e8 diagonals, but also delays development for the third time in ten moves. Instead, 10...♖e7 11 ♗eg5!?, with ideas like 11...g6 12 ♗xh7! and 11...♗f6 12 ♗e5 0-0 13 ♖c2!, looks extremely dangerous for him; so the radical 10...♗c6, preparing ...♖c7 and ...0-0-0, seems like his last chance; e.g. 11 ♗eg5 ♖c7! 12 ♗xh7 0-0-0 with some slight compensation for the pawn. Remember, difficult situations call for unusual solutions!

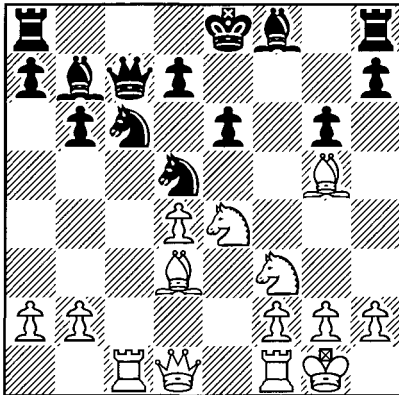


In GM Baburin's words: "Black has been ignoring the principles of development and the punishment is swift!"

11 ♖g5!

Development with tempo. Now 11...♗e7? runs into 12 ♘d6+, so Black has to move his queen, thus giving the opponent another extra tempo.

11...♙c7 12 ♖c1 ♘c6



With the bishop already on g7 Black would be quite fine here, but now White is able to launch a deadly strike. Indeed, one tempo plays a gigantic role in the opening battle. A similar "cheating" experiment in Postny-Abergel (Game 57), placing the

bishop on g7 just before White's 12th move, would have a similar effect.

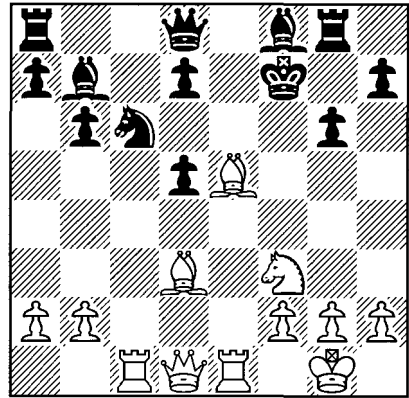
13 ♗f6+! ♘xf6 14 ♗xf6 ♖g8 15 d5!

Exploiting the pin along the c-file, Vera manages to clear the e-file towards the black monarch.

15...exd5 16 ♖e1+

The white pieces are cooperating beautifully.

16...♙f7 17 ♗e5 ♙d8



18 ♗g5+! 1-0

An elegant way of including the last piece in the attack. In view of 18...♙xg5 19 ♙f3+ ♗e6 20 ♗f4+ ♙e5 21 ♖xc6+! dxc6 22 ♖xe5+, Black resigned.

Game 60
Mi.Adams-M.Gurevich
 FIDE World Cup,
 Khanty-Mansiysk 2007
 French Defence

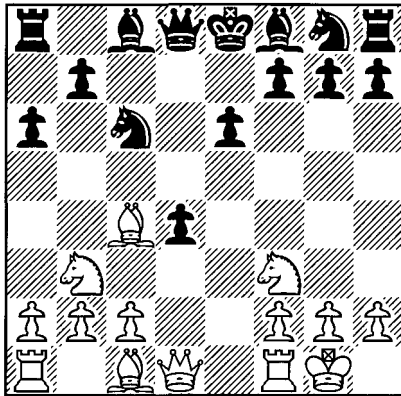
1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘d2 c5 4 ♗gf3

A flexible move, by which White postpones e4xd5 until the moment seems right. 4 exd5 is the main option in this French Tarrasch.

4...cxd4 5 exd5 ♖xd5 6 ♙c4 ♗d8

Black deviates from the main line 6...♗d6 7 0-0 ♘f6 8 ♘b3 ♘c6 9 ♘bxd4 with a heavy theoretical battle. The text permits a more flexible development, since ...♘f6, preventing White's ♗e4 harassing the queen, is no longer mandatory.

7 0-0 ♘c6 8 ♘b3 a6



9 ♗e2!?

Before taking the pawn White wants to play ♗d1 in order to control the d-file. After 9 ♘bxd4 ♘xd4 10 ♘xd4 ♗c7 11 ♗e2 ♙d6, followed by ...♘e7, Black has less to worry about.

9...b5

Thus Black delays White's recapture on d4 and provides the bishop with the great b7-square. On the downside, his queenside pawns become vulnerable to a future a2-a4. A safer choice was 9...♙d6 10 ♗d1 ♘ge7 11 ♘bxd4 ♘xd4 12 ♗xd4 with just a slight edge for White – Grivas.

10 ♙d3 ♘f6

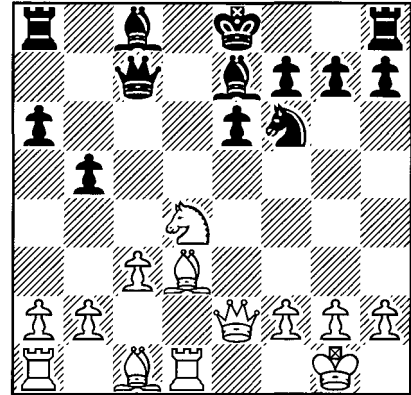
By now, the set-up with ...♘f6 makes sense, in order to prevent ♙e4 or ♗e4.

11 ♗d1 ♙e7 12 ♘bxd4 ♘xd4 13 ♘xd4 ♗c7

14 c3

The immediate 14 a4 permits the

cramping 14...b4, so White prepares it.



14...♙c5?

Black gets ready to meet 15 a4 by 15...b4. Unfortunately, moving the bishop again also implies the loss of a vital tempo for development. Gurevich obviously rejected 14...0-0 due to 15 a4, when both 15...bxa4 16 ♗xa4, hitting the a6-pawn, and 15...b4 16 cxb4 ♙xb4 17 ♙g5!, followed by ♗ac1, yield White the upper hand.

However, a simple solution was 14...♙d7!, complicating a2-a4 while getting on with development. Admittedly this bishop was heading for b7, but in demanding situations you need to be flexible. After 15 ♘f3 0-0 16 ♘e5 ♗fd8, followed by ...♙e8, Black is okay, and he could even consider 15...♙c6 16 ♘e5 ♙d5 17 ♙f4 ♗b7 with unclear play – Adams.

15 ♙g5!

White immediately changes his focus to the kingside, exploiting the absence of the bishop on e7.

15...♙b7?!

Underestimating the danger. 15...♙xd4 16 cxd4 ♘d5 was essential, with some kind of blockade, although after 17 ♗ac1 ♗d6 (or 17...♗d7 18 ♗h5!) 18 ♗g4!, intending

18...0-0? 19 ♔h6, Black has definite problems in completing his development.

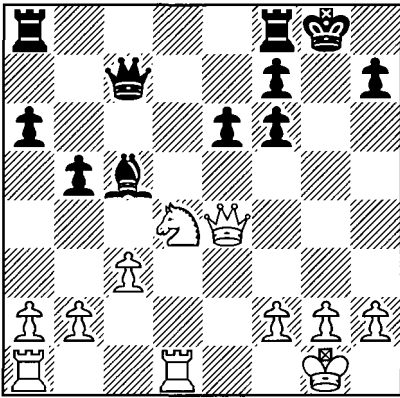
16 ♟xf6 gxf6 17 ♟e4!

After destroying the black king's shelter, White proceeds with the exchange of the active bishop on b7.

17...♟xe4

17...♗d8? fails to 18 ♟xb7 ♖xb7 19 ♘xe6! fxe6 20 ♖h5+, while after 17...0-0-0 18 b4 ♟xd4 19 cxd4 ♗d7 20 a4 White has a clear initiative – Adams.

18 ♖xe4 0-0



19 ♖h4!

Hitting the vulnerable f6-pawn.

19...♗f8

Black just hands over the pawn, seeing that both 19...♟e7 and 19...♖e5 run into 20 ♗d3!, heading for h3 or g3, while 19...f5 20 ♖g5+ ♟h8 21 ♖f6+ ♟g8 22 ♗d3! is also dangerous for him.

20 ♖xf6 ♟f8 21 ♗d3!

The rook gets ready for action along the third rank, while its colleague reaches the d1- and e1-squares. For a player of Adams' calibre, the rest is a matter of technique.

21...♟g7 22 ♖g5

Of course not 22 ♗g3? ♖xg3!. Conversely, Black should now avoid 22...♗d5?

23 ♘xe6!.

22...♖e5 23 ♖g4 ♗d6 24 ♗g3 ♗c8 25 ♖h4 ♟h8 26 ♖e7! ♖c5

Or 26...♗d5 27 ♖xf7 ♟xd4 28 cxd4 ♖xd4 29 h3! ♖xb2 30 ♗e1 ♗dc6 31 ♟h2 etc – Adams.

27 ♗e1 ♗f8 28 ♘xe6

28 ♗xg7! ♟xg7 29 ♗e3 was even stronger – Adams.

28...♖e5 29 ♗ge3! 1-0

Exposure of the king

Another recommendation to beginners is to castle quickly in order to secure the king and activate one of the rooks. However, in practice things are far from being that simple, and sometimes one side delays castling for one or another reason – to avoid an enemy attack, develop other pieces, fight for the centre, etc.

Next, let's see two games where Black's decision to delay castling was less justified, and cost him dearly.

Game 61

U.Andersson-L.Portisch

Skopje Olympiad 1972

Sicilian Defence,

Rossolimo Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 ♟b5+

You might think of the Rossolimo Sicilian as a quiet, solid, opening line, yet it often produces miniatures, perhaps due to White's typically rapid development.

3...♘c6 4 0-0 ♟d7 5 ♗e1 ♘f6 6 c3

A main idea of the Rossolimo is to build a pawn centre by c2-c3 and d2-d4.

6...a6 7 ♟f1 e5

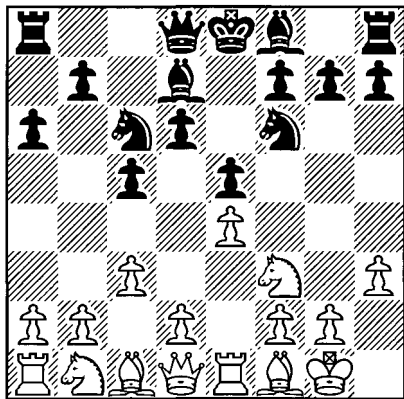
Nowadays, the disruptive 7...♟g4! is

Mastering Opening Strategy

much more popular; e.g. 8 d3 e6 9 ♖bd2 ♗e7 10 h3 ♗h5 11 g4 ♗g6 12 ♖h4 ♖d7 with a complex game.

8 h3

A useful piece of restriction: before launching d2-d4, White prevents ...♗g4.



8...h6?!

In contrast, Black's corresponding pawn move makes little, if no sense at all. He should have preferred 8...♗e7 9 d4 0-0 in order to speed up development.

9 d4 ♖c7 10 a4!

Typical preparation for the ♖a3(d2)-c4 manoeuvre.

10...g6?

Portisch must have decided that this bishop belongs on g7; unfortunately, he now loses one more tempo for his development. After 10...♗e7 11 ♖a3 0-0 12 dxc5 dxc5 13 ♖c4, with ideas like a4-a5 and ♖e3-d5, White is a bit better, but at least Black has managed to castle.

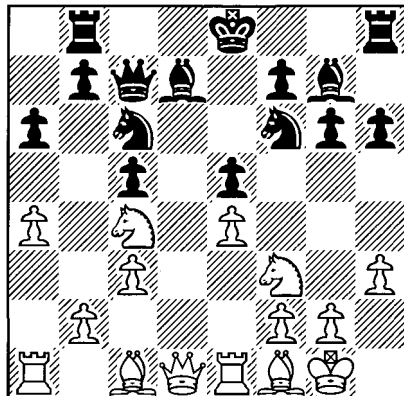
11 ♖a3 ♗g7 12 dxc5 dxc5 13 ♖c4!

Simple and strong, spotting the fresh weakness at d6.

13...♖b8?

A fatal misevaluation. Portisch probably didn't like the look of 13...0-0 14 ♖d6! ♖xd6

15 ♖xd6 ♖fb8 (both 15...b6 16 ♖c4 and 15...♖ab8 16 ♗e3! shed a pawn) 16 ♗c4 ♗e8 with a passive position for Black. However, worse things will happen to him in the game.



At this point there is of course 14 ♖d6+?!, depriving Black of castling – yet after 14...♗e7, followed by ...♖hd8, things aren't that clear. Andersson finds a much stronger solution. Remember, when ahead in development, open the position!

14 b4!

An ingenious sacrifice that aims to exploit the a3-f8 diagonal with the bishop.

14...cxb4 15 cxb4 ♗e6

Unfortunately for Black, the desired 15...0-0 now loses material after 16 b5, followed by ♗a3(-d6). Even worse is 15...♖xb4? 16 ♗b2! with overwhelming pressure; e.g. 16...♖c6 17 ♗a3 followed by ♖d6+. With the text Portisch prepares ...♗xc4 as well as ...♖d8, but Andersson is just in time to complete the punishment.

16 ♖d6+ ♗e7 17 ♗a3!

The move order matters – after 17 b5?! ♖b4 18 ♗a3 a5 Black can put up a better defence.

17...♖e8

After 17...♖xd6 18 b5 ♘b4 19 ♖xd6+ ♗xd6 20 ♙xb4+ ♗c7 21 ♖ac1+ the location of the black king decides.

18 ♘xb7!

The most effective follow-up, which helps to clear the c-file for the attack.

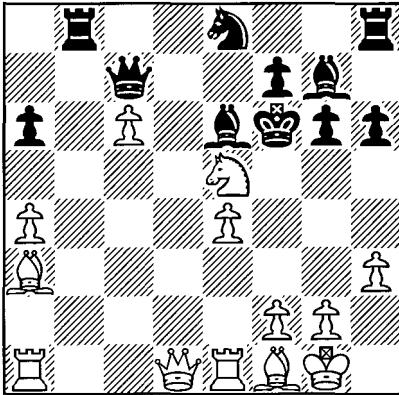
18...♖xb7

After 18...♖xb7 19 b5+ ♘d6 20 bxc6 ♖xc6 21 ♖c1 ♖d7 22 ♙xa6 Black is also helpless.

19 b5+ ♗f6 20 bxc6 ♖c7

Or 20...♖xc6 21 ♘xe5!, inviting the king to a fatal walk.

21 ♘xe5! 1-0



In view of 21...♖xe5 22 ♖f3+ or 21...♗xe5 22 f4+! ♗xf4 23 e5, followed by mate, Black resigned.

Game 62
R.Ovetchkin-N.Efanov
Nizhnij Tagil 2007
Semi-Slav Defence

1 ♘f3 d5 2 c4 c6 3 d4 ♘f6 4 ♖b3

A flexible sideline against the Slav. By defending the c4-pawn with his queen, White keeps any other development issues open.

4...e6

4...dxc4 5 ♖xc4 ♙f5, followed by ...e7-e6, is one of many alternatives.

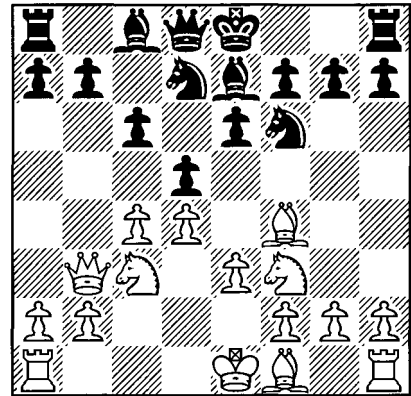
5 ♘c3

White opts for a classical set-up. 5 g3 with Catalan-like play is also possible.

5...♘bd7

Black finally reverts to some kind of Queen's Gambit Declined. A more active choice was a Meran set-up with 5...dxc4 6 ♖xc4 b5, followed by ...♘bd7, ...a7-a6 and ...c6-c5.

6 ♙f4 ♙e7 7 e3



This was a natural moment to castle, but Black prefers to challenge the bishop on f4.

7...♘h5 8 ♙e5! ♘xe5

White's previous move forced Black to make some minor concession in order to swap the bishop. After the text his knight becomes temporarily misplaced on h5, whereas 8...f6 9 ♙g3 ♘xg3 10 hxg3 f5 11 ♙d3 leaves him with a somewhat passive position.

9 dxе5 g6

Parrying the threat of 10 g4.

10 ♙e2 ♖b6 11 ♖c2!

White correctly estimates that his space

advantage and slight lead in development will be more efficiently exploited with the queens still on the board.

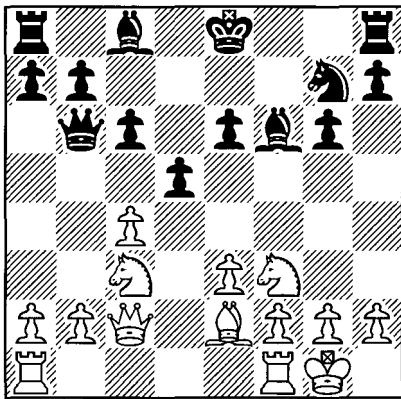
11...♘g7 12 0-0 f5?!

This was another good moment for 12...0-0. Black somehow wants to prevent e3-e4 but, as we will see next, the effect of his move is quite the opposite.

13 exf6!

Opening the position is usually correct when ahead in development.

13...♙xf6



14 e4!

A key move that creates new threats before Black manages to castle.

14...♚a5?

Moving the queen again does very little to resist White's initiative; and neither does 14...d4?! 15 e5! ♙e7 16 ♘e4, nor 14...dxe4?! 15 ♘xe4 ♚xb2 16 ♚d3!. So Black should have tried 14...0-0! 15 cxd5 exd5 16 exd5 ♙f5 with some compensation for the pawn thanks to the bishop pair. As we will see next, it was definitely worth a pawn to get castled.

15 exd5 exd5 16 cxd5 ♙xc3

Practically forced in view of 16...cxd5 17 ♙b5+!, displacing Black's king.

17 bxc3

The intermediate 17 ♚e4+!? was interesting as well.

17...cxd5 18 c4!

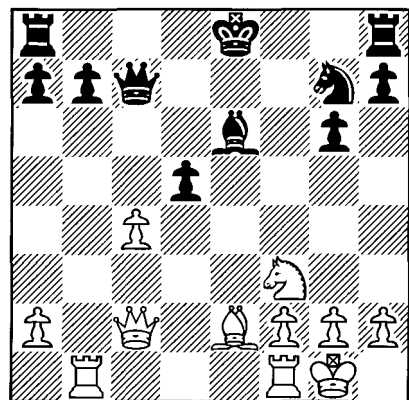
Just like four moves ago, White hurries to install new threats before Black castles away. Now 18...0-0 19 cxd5 ♚xd5?? obviously fails to 20 ♙c4, while after 19...♙f5 20 ♚b3 Black's compensation for the pawn is much less convincing than in the 14...0-0 subvariation above. On the other hand, 18...dxc4? 19 ♙xc4 would leave his king fatally exposed in the centre, so he decides to reinforce that diagonal with the bishop.

18...♙e6 19 ♚ab1!

An accurate move, bringing a new piece to the battle with tempo. In contrast, 19 ♘g5?! lets Black escape by 19...0-0 20 ♘xe6 ♘xe6 21 cxd5 ♘d4, while 19 cxd5 ♙xd5 also moves him a bit closer to castling.

19...♚c7

The only defence of the b7-pawn, since 19...♚b8? loses after 20 cxd5 ♙xd5 21 ♚b5 or 21 ♙b5+.



Again Black is just one move from getting castled, but the following ingenious manoeuvre puts an end to any illusions.

20 ♚a4+! ♚c6

20...♙d7 is met with the same reply.

21 ♖a3

Now Black can definitely forget about castling, and the rest is play against one goal.

21...dxc4 22 ♗d4 ♜d7 23 ♗xe6 ♗xe6 24 ♙xc4 ♚f7 1-0

At the same time, Black resigned. 25 ♜f3+, followed by ♜xb7, is one of several winning options.

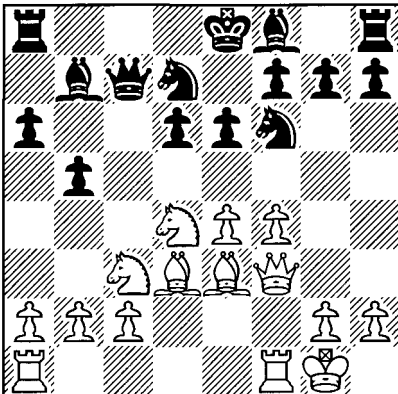
The next game shows another unfortunate decision regarding the king: castling to the “wrong” side.

Game 63
A.Sokolov-L.Sandler
USSR 1991
Sicilian Defence, Najdorf Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 ♗f6 5 ♗c3 a6 6 ♙e3 e6 7 f4

Twenty years ago set-ups with f2-f4 were quite popular in the Sicilian, whereas nowadays, the English Attack starting with 7 f3 is far more common in practice.

7...♗bd7 8 ♜f3 ♜c7 9 ♙d3 b5 10 0-0 ♙b7



11 ♗d1!

A curious idea. White spends two tempi on transferring the knight to f2, where it can't be bothered by ...b5-b4.

11...♗c5

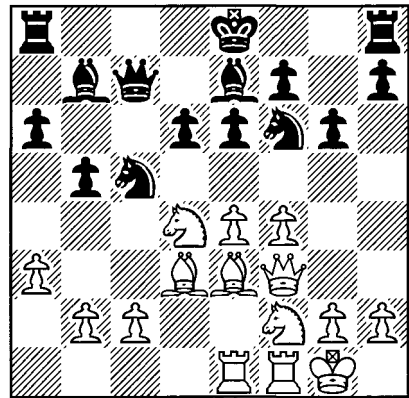
Another sensible option is 11...g6 12 ♗f2 ♙g7; e.g. 13 ♜ac1 e5 14 ♗b3 d5! with counterplay in Wang Zili-Xu Jun, Shenzhen 1992.

12 ♗f2 ♙e7 13 ♜ae1 g6

Black prepares ...e6-e5 without having to worry about ♗f5, but also weakens his kingside. The simple 13...0-0, followed by ...♜e8 and ...♙f8, was perfectly possible; e.g. 14 a3 ♜fe8 15 b4 ♗xd3 16 cxd3 ♙f8 with ...g7-g6 and ...♙g7 next.

14 a3

Preparing b2-b4, or just a clever waiting move...



14...0-0-0?

A fatal decision. Sandler must have thought that with most enemy pieces located on the kingside, his king would be safe on the opposite flank, but this is far from being the case.

Again there was nothing wrong with 14...0-0; e.g. 15 g4 e5! 16 fxe5 (or 16 ♗e2 d5!) 16...dxe5 with a solid game. At this point 17 ♗e2 ♗e6 18 g5? backfires after

Mastering Opening Strategy

18...♘h5 19 h4 f5! with a strong initiative. Black could also delay castling for a while, a typical feature of some open Sicilians in order to frustrate White's attack. One idea in this sense is 14...d5 15 e5 ♘fe4; e.g. 16 b4 ♘xf2 17 ♗xf2 ♘e4 with balanced play.

15 b4!

It makes sense to start the attack right away, before Black consolidates with ...♗b8 and ...♞c8.

15...♘xd3

After 15...♘a4 16 c4! White also manages to clear the c-file.

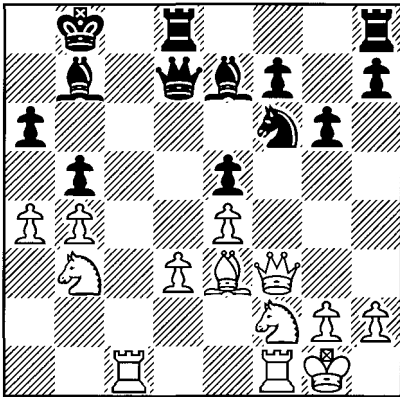
16 cxd3 ♗b8 17 a4!

Opening more lines towards the black monarch.

17...e5

Black tries a counterstrike, aware that 17...bxa4? would just play in White's hands after 18 b5! e5 19 ♞c1 ♗a5 20 ♘c6+ etc – Sokolov.

18 ♞c1 ♗d7 19 fxe5 dxe5 20 ♘b3



The knight has found a great destiny on c5. Apart from the clouds gathering around his king, Black has a serious problem with the unstable knight on f6.

20...bxa4 21 ♘c5 ♙xc5

Or 21...♗b5 22 ♙g5 ♞d6 23 d4 with a

clear edge – Sokolov.

22 bxc5!

The right recapture, to clear the b-file and create a dangerous passed pawn.

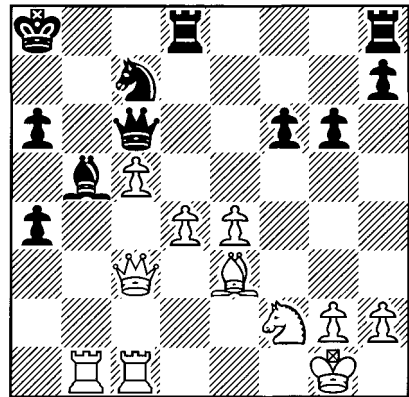
22...♘e8 23 ♗g3 ♗a8

Black just hands over the pawn since 23...f6 24 d4! followed by 25 d5 is terminal.

24 ♗xe5 f6 25 ♗c3

By now White's game plays itself.

25...♙c6 26 ♞b1 ♙b5 27 ♞fc1 ♗c6 28 d4!
♘c7



29 ♗a5

After 29 d5 ♘xd5 30 exd5 ♞xd5 things might get a little more complicated. In fact there is no hurry with d4-d5, since Black is short of active plans. Thus Sokolov just improves his pieces until the position becomes ripe for a tactical shot.

29...♞he8 30 ♙f4 ♗b7 31 ♙xc7 ♗xc7 32 c6+ ♗c8 33 ♞xb5! axb5 34 ♗a6+ ♗b8 35 ♗xb5+ ♗a8 36 ♞c4! 1-0

Premature attacks

"Don't be rushed into a premature, unprepared attack" says one of Yusupov's rules in *Opening Preparation*. The following two games illustrate rather well the risks involved in such action.

Game 64
I.Csom-V.Korchnoi
 Gyula 1965
King's Indian Defence

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 d5?!

This move is usually effected only after Black's ...c7-c5 or ...e7-e5. By playing it at this early stage White sidesteps the Grünfeld (3 ♘c3 d5) but also loses a tempo and weakens the dark squares, in particular c5.

3...♗g7 4 ♘c3 0-0 5 e4 d6 6 ♗e2 c6

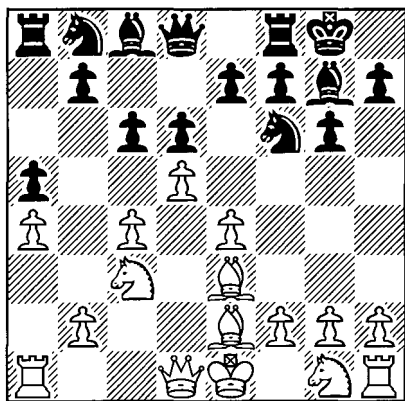
The opponent's third move made Black's planning a bit easier, and he now starts actions on the queenside.

7 ♗e3 a6 8 a4

8 ♘f3 b5 9 ♘d2, preparing 0-0, was quite reasonable.

8...a5!

The conclusion of a typical trick in openings like the King's Indian. First, Black sets up the "threat" ...b7-b5 in order to provoke White's a2-a4, then he plays ...a6-a5, fixing the dark squares on c5 and b4 as future outposts.



9 g4?

The beginning of an absurd plan. Ignor-

ing factors such as the tense centre and a certain delay in development, White initiates an attack on the black king. The modest 9 ♘f3, followed by 0-0, was called for.

9...♘a6 10 f4

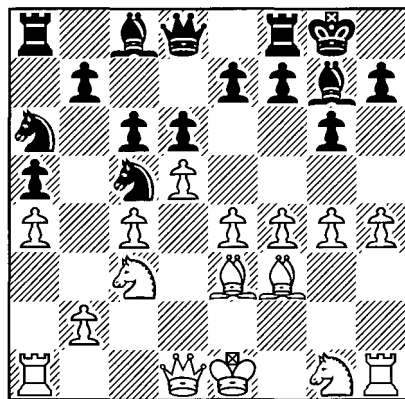
On 10 h4 Black could just react as in the game.

10...♘d7!

Simple but strong. Black redirects the knight to c5 and clears the long diagonal for the bishop.

11 h4 ♘dc5 12 ♗f3?

Fatally diverting the bishop from the defence of d3 and c4. White had to be consistent and continue 12 h5, when 12...♗xc3+?! 13 bxc3 ♘xe4 14 ♗f3 yields him some compensation for the pawn. In turn Black should avoid this line and continue as in the game.



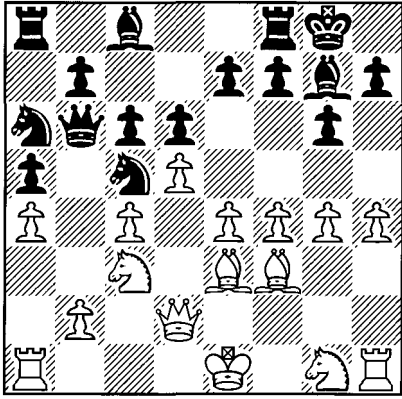
12...♗b6!

A severe punishment that practically decides the game. The method of attacking the weakest spot in the enemy camp, in this case b2 and its neighbouring squares, is familiar to us from Tal-Tringov (Game 2) and Movsesian-Tibensky (Game 3).

13 ♗d2

This fails to a simple trick, but after 13

♖b1 ♜b4! 14 ♘ge2 ♜xc4 White is suffering anyway.



13...♜xb2! 14 ♜xb2 ♘d3+ 15 ♖d2 ♘xb2 16 ♙e2

Trying to trap the knight; however...

16...♙xg4! 0-1

A second blow directed at the overloaded bishop on e2. White resigned, since both 17 ♙xg4 ♘xc4+ 18 ♖d3 ♘xe3 and 17 ♙f1 cxd5 18 cxd5 ♜ac8 are hopeless for him – Neishtadt.

Game 65
R.Milu-I.Zaitsev
Bucharest 1994
Modern Defence

1 e4 g6 2 d4 ♙g7 3 ♘c3 d6

One of the main protagonists in the Modern Defence with 4...a6 is my countryman GM Tiger Hillarp Persson. The present game is referenced in *Tiger's Modern*, his entertaining work on this opening system.

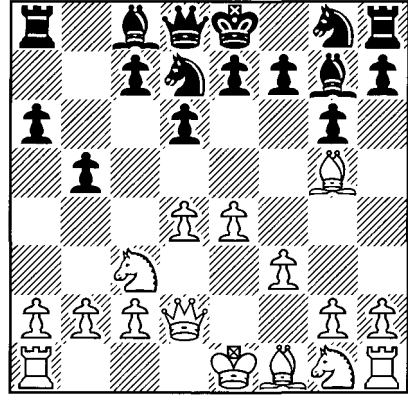
4 ♙g5

4 ♙e3 is far more popular, followed by ♜d2 and 0-0-0. With the text White tries to provoke ...h7-h6, but if Black refrains from

that move, then the bishop might prove somewhat misplaced on g5.

4...a6 5 ♜d2 b5 6 f3 ♘d7

One merit of the Modern is its flexible development. By delaying 6...♘f6 Black avoids an annoying 7 ♙h6; neither has he to worry about e4-e5.



7 h4?!

Such an early kingside expansion is not uncommon in this system, but here White doesn't have sufficient central control for it to work properly. A more sustained approach was 7 a4!? b4 8 ♘d1 a5 9 c3 with a queenside focus.

7...c5!

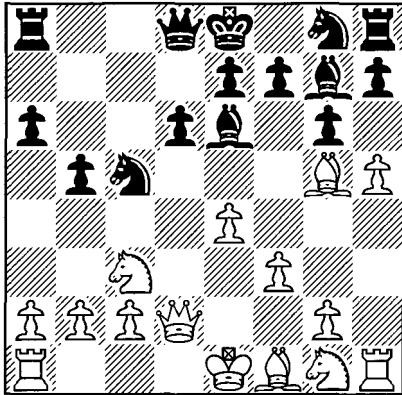
In accordance with classical principles, Black responds to the flank attack with actions in the centre. Note that in a similar position arising after 4 ♙e3 a6 5 ♜d2 b5 6 0-0-0 ♘d7 7 h4, the analogous 7...c5? would fail to 8 dxc5 dxc5 9 ♙xc5!.

8 dxc5

If 8 d5, trying to keep the centre closed, then Black could react by 8...h6 9 ♙e3 ♘gf6; e.g. 10 g4 b4 11 ♘d1 ♘e5 12 ♘f2 e6! in Benoni-style, with excellent counterplay in the centre.

8...♘xc5 9 h5 ♙e6!

Black simply gets on with his development, avoiding double-edged lines like 9...b4 10 ♖d5 ♙xb2 11 ♜b1. From now on, with the bishop on e6, it is sometimes possible to swap a knight on d5.



10 h6?

This advance only makes sense when the reply ...♙f8 is forced. Preferable was 10 ♖ge2 b4 11 ♖d1, keeping the tension on the h-file.

10...♙e5

The bishop is of course happy to stay on the long diagonal. By now it is hard to find a justification for the time spent on the h4-h5-h6 advance.

11 ♖ge2

Or 11 f4 ♙xc3 12 ♜xc3 ♖f6!, followed by ...0-0, with a clear lead in development.

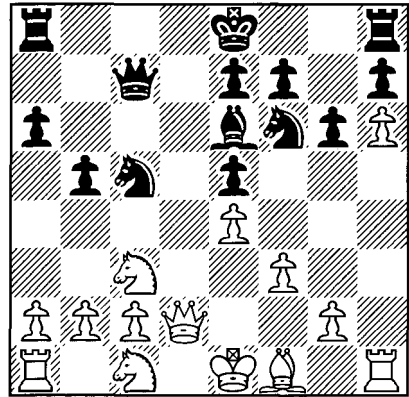
11...♖f6

Black brings his last minor piece into the battle and prepares to meet 12 f4? by 12...♖fxe4.

12 ♙f4?!

The following bishop exchange will just open the d-file for Black's better developed forces. 12 ♖f4, followed by ♙e2 and 0-0, was probably a lesser evil.

12...♜c7 13 ♙xe5?! dxe5 14 ♖c1



14...0-0!

Of course. With the h-file closed forever, Black's king is completely safe on g8.

15 ♖d3 ♜fd8 16 ♜g5 ♜d4

Simple and strong, in order to double rooks on the open file.

17 ♙e2

Or 17 ♖xe5 ♖fxe4! 18 fxe4 f6, recovering the pawn with a huge positional plus.

17...♙c4 18 ♖xe5?

White makes a tactical slip in a difficult position.

18...♖e6 19 ♜g3 b4!

Finally Black breaks through on the queenside.

20 ♙xc4 ♜xc4 21 ♖e2 ♜xc2

Unable to castle, White is rendered helpless.

22 ♖f1 ♜d8! 0-1

Short of a proper defence against the threatened 23...♜dd2, White resigned.

Extravagance

Some opening lines challenge the logic of opening play, usually by neglecting development or the fight for the centre. Often they are associated with play on the flanks, as in the next three examples.

Game 66

G.Kaidanov-D.Gurevich

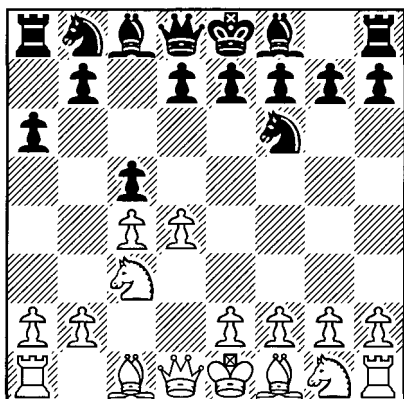
US Championship, Chandler 1997

Irregular defence

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 a6?!

With this offbeat move Black tries to obtain an improved version of the Benko. This game will give us a hint about why his idea is not seen more often in practice.

3 ♘c3 c5



We should compare this position with the one arising after 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 c5. In the latter case, White usually continues 3 d5, aware that 3 dxc5?! ♘a6 or 3...e6 yields Black an easy road to equality. As we will see next, the inclusion of ♘b1-c3 and ...a7-a6 changes things a great deal.

4 dxc5!

Here the natural 4 d5 permits 4...b5! 5 cxb5 axb5 6 ♘xb5 ♖a5+!? (6...♙a6 7 ♘c3 transposes to the Benko) 7 ♘c3 ♙b7 8 ♙d2 ♗b6 9 e4 e6 with interesting compensation for the pawn. The text is much stronger – White gains an important tempo that will help him seize the centre by e2-e4 on the next move.

4...e6

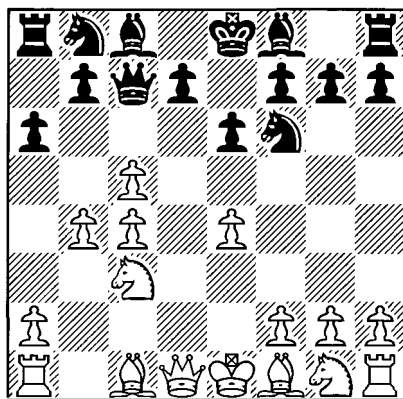
After 4...♖a5 5 e4! ♗xc5 (or 5...♘xe4?! 6 ♗a4! ♗xa4 7 ♘xa4 ♘c6 8 ♙d3 with a firm grip on the queenside) 6 ♙e3 ♗a5 7 ♙d3 Black's opening hardly impresses, but in the game he will actually face more serious problems.

5 e4 ♗c7

The immediate 5...♙xc5 runs into 6 e5, so Black prepares it.

6 b4!

There was nothing wrong with 6 f4 ♙xc5 7 e5 and 8 ♘e4 next, but the text is more ambitious.



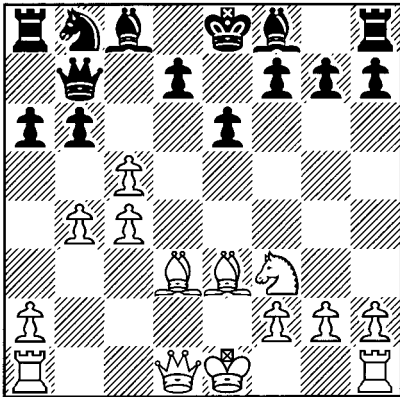
6...♘xe4

Kaidanov also indicates that 6...a5 7 ♘b5 ♗e5 8 ♙e3 or 6...b6 7 cxb6 ♗e5 8 ♙d2 ♙xb4 9 ♘f3 ♗c5 10 ♖b1 leads Black into big difficulties. The text lets him regain the pawn, at the cost of a serious delay in development.

7 ♘xe4 ♗e5 8 ♙e3 ♗xe4 9 ♘f3 b6

Trying somehow to release White's queenside bind, and providing the queen with a retreat square on b7. 9...♘c6? failed fatally to 10 ♙d3 ♗g4 11 h3!, trapping the queen after 11...♗xg2 12 ♖h2 or 11...♗h5 12 g4.

10 ♖d3 ♗b7



The opening experiment has turned into a nightmare for Black – the open centre suggests a tactical battle, in which his bad development will be severely felt.

11 ♖g5!

Exploiting the absence of a knight on f6, Kaidanov takes the first step to an attack on the black king, and creates the threat of 12 ♖e4 ♖c6 13 b5.

11...bxc5 12 bxc5 f5

Or 12...♗b4+ 13 ♖f1 ♖c6 14 ♗f3 f5 15 ♖xe6 etc – Kaidanov. The text parries most of White's threats but creates new weaknesses on the kingside.

13 0-0 ♗c6

After 13...♖c6 14 ♖e1 ♖e7 15 ♖b1 ♗c7 16 ♖xf5! exf5 17 ♗d5 ♖f8 18 ♖xh7, followed by ♖g5, Black is also in big trouble.

14 ♖d4!

This move doesn't just prepare to meet 14...♖xc5 by 15 ♖xg7, it also installs the irresistible threat of ♗h5+. Black is already beyond salvation.

14...♖b7 15 ♗h5+ g6 16 ♗h3 ♖g8 17 ♖e4!

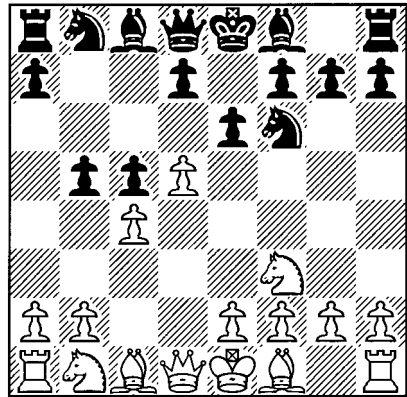
A nice piece of obstruction.

17...fxe4 18 ♗xh7 ♖g7 19 ♖xg7 ♗xc5 20 ♖f6! 1-0

In view of the imminent mate, Black resigned.

Game 67
I.Cheparinov-L.Salgado Lopez
Moscow 2011
Blumenfeld Gambit

1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♖f3 c5 4 d5 b5



In contrast to Black's nameless defence in the previous game, the Blumenfeld Gambit is a fully respectable opening, which has been used by many strong players over the years. On the other hand, its treatment in the present game could be regarded as truly extravagant. How often do you make four of your first eleven moves with a rook?

5 ♖g5

As we already discussed in Game 57 (Postny-Abergel), in such lines White is generally happy to swap his "good" bishop for the active knight on f6.

5...♗a5+

The sharpest reply, unpinning the knight in order to increase the pressure on White's centre. The Benoni-style 5...exd5 6

cx d5 d6 is also playable.

6 ♖bd2!?

Curiously, this natural move is nowhere near as popular as 6 ♖d2 or 6 ♘c3. White temporarily gives up a pawn to speed up development.

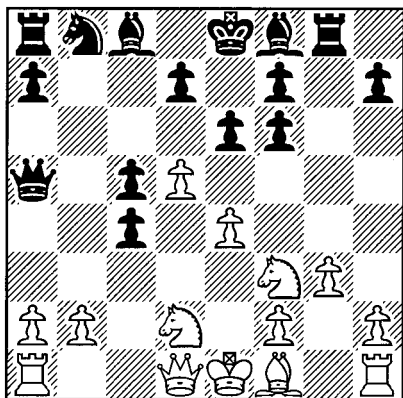
6...bxc4

The tempting 6...♗e4 runs into 7 b4! ♖xb4 8 ♖b1, a trick familiar from a similar Benko line (i.e. 1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 4 ♘d2 ♖a5 5 e4 ♘xe4?! 6 b4!). There can follow 8...♖c3 9 ♖b3 ♖a5 10 ♖xb5 ♖c3 11 ♖b3 ♖a5 12 ♖f4, and 13 ♖b1 next, with a clear initiative.

7 ♖xf6 gxf6 8 e4 ♖g8

Exploiting the semi-open file to complicate the recapture ♖xc4. Capitalizing on the pawn with 8...c3?! yields White a dangerous initiative after 9 bxc3 ♖xc3 10 ♖c1 ♖a5 11 ♖c4, followed by 0-0.

9 g3



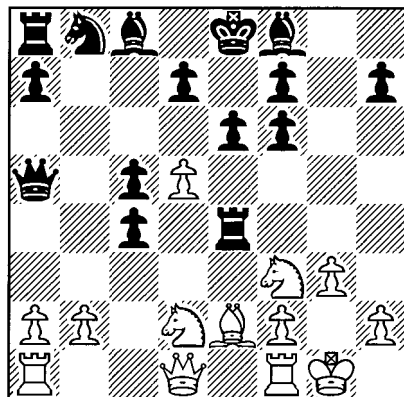
9...♖g4?!

A fancy rook raid, though move 9 is a bit too early for it! Much sounder was 9...♖a6, starting to bring out the minor pieces; e.g. 10 ♖c2 ♖h6 11 ♖xc4 ♖xc4 12 ♖xc4 ♘a6 as tried in a few earlier games, with rather unclear play.

10 ♖e2!

Simple and strong. White just hands over the e4-pawn in order to castle, after which his lead in development will be overwhelming. In contrast, after 10 ♖c2 f5! 11 ♖xc4 ♖xe4+ 12 ♖f1 ♖g4, followed by ...♖b7, Black gets the kind of play he was looking for.

10...♖xe4 11 0-0



11...♖xe2?!

This exchange sacrifice doesn't really ease Black's defence – rather, it helps White to seize the central files with his major pieces. After 11...♖g4 12 ♘xc4 ♖c7 13 ♖e1, or even 13 ♖a4!? intending ♘d6+, White has a huge initiative for the pawn, but the battle goes on.

12 ♘xc4! ♖a6 13 ♖xe2

An amusing picture – of Black's pieces, everyone except the queen is still in its initial position! With several open files at White's disposal, the black king is practically doomed.

13...♖b7 14 ♖ad1 ♖xa2 15 ♖fe1! ♖a4

Unfortunately for Black, 15...♘a6 loses a piece after 16 ♖a1 ♖b3 17 ♘a5.

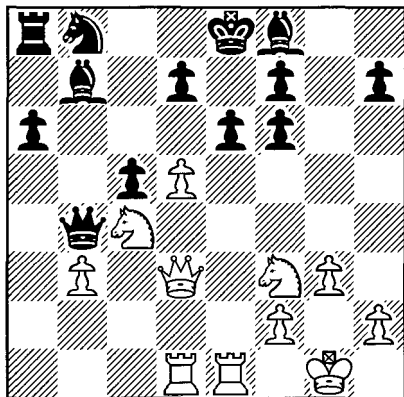
16 b3

Exploiting the trick 16...♖xb3? 17 ♖b1,

White gives his knight some extra protection, thus liberating the queen.

16...♖b4 17 ♖d3 a6

17...♘a6? fails to 18 dxe6, threatening mate. The text prepares ...♗a7 reinforcing the defence, though it is already too late.



Having placed his pieces in ideal positions, Cheparinov is ready for a decisive combination.

18 dxe6 fxe6 19 ♖xe6+!

Opening the gates to Black's king. On the previous move, 18 ♖xh7, intending 19 ♘fe5! fxe5 20 ♘xe5, was another strong option.

19...dxe6 20 ♖d8+ ♔f7 21 ♘g5+! ♔g6

Or 21...fxg5 22 ♘e5+! ♔g8 23 ♖xg5+ with mate – Golubev.

22 ♘xe6 ♖xb3

If 22...♘c6, White wins by 23 ♘xf8+ ♔f7 24 ♘d6+ ♔g8 25 ♖d7! ♖xf8 26 ♘f5 ♖f7 27 ♘h6+ – Golubev.

23 ♘xf8+ ♔h5 24 ♘e5!

Avoiding any tricks with ...♖f3 and creating the threat 25 g4+. Obviously the knight is immune because of mate.

24...♙f3 25 ♘xf3 ♖xf3 26 ♖d5+ ♔h6 27 ♖e7! 1-0

In view of 27...♖xd5 28 ♖xh7+ ♔g5 29

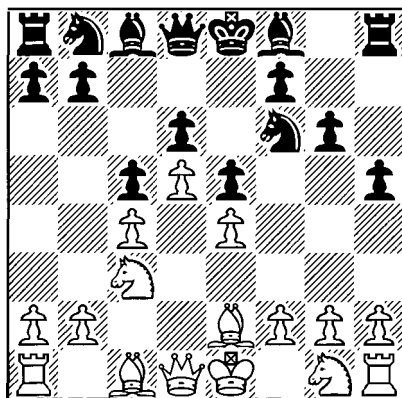
♖g6 mate, Black resigned.

Game 68
K.Hulak-I.Saric
Croatian Team
Championship 2007
Benoni Defence

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 e5 4 ♘c3 d6 5 e4

In this initial position of the Czech Benoni, Black usually continues 5...♙e7, followed by ...0-0, with ...♘e8, ...g7-g6 and ...♘g7 as a future idea. Saric's next move looks like a transposition to the King's Indian, but we will soon see that he has other intentions.

5...g6 6 ♙e2 h5?!



Thus Black prepares ...♙h6 in order to swap the "bad" bishop. This might seem like a clever strategic idea; unfortunately, it implies a certain time loss and also rules out short castling. Moreover, as Watson pointed out several times in *Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy*, such "bad" bishops can actually be missed once the position is opened. The simple 6...♙g7 was preferable here.

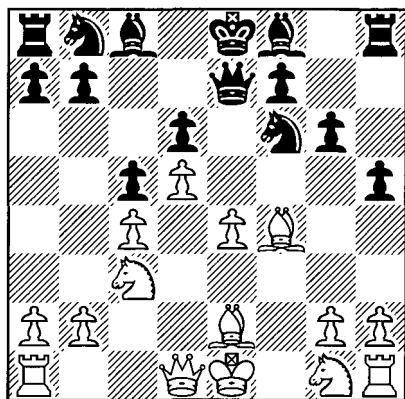
7 f4!

Anticipating the absence of dark-

squared bishops, Hulak clears lines towards the vulnerable points at d6 and f6.

7...exf4 8 ♖xf4 ♜e7

Preventing e4-e5 and preparing ...♗bd7-e5. After 8...♗h6?! 9 ♖xh6 ♜xh6 10 ♜d2 ♜h8 11 ♜f4! a6 (the threat was 12 ♗b5) 12 ♗f3, followed by 13 e5, White develops a strong initiative.



9 ♜a4+

A clever restrictive move. Now the desired 9...♗bd7 runs into 10 ♗b5; e.g. 10...♜xe4 11 ♗h3! ♜xg2 12 0-0-0 with a dangerous initiative. Thus Saric prefers to parry the check with the bishop.

9...♗d7 10 ♜c2 ♗h6

The pragmatic 10...♗g7 11 ♗f3 ♗g4 might have been worth a shot, but Black gets on with his plan.

11 ♗xh6 ♜xh6 12 ♗f3 ♗g4

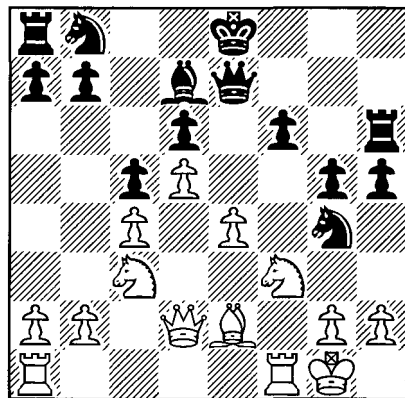
With the queen's knight deprived of the intended route d7-e5, Saric uses the other knight to control the crucial e5-square.

13 0-0 f6?!

Strategically well-founded but too slow in this position. 13...♗e3? obviously failed to 14 ♜d2, so the developing 13...♗a6 was called for. There can follow 14 ♜d2 ♜h8 15 h3 ♗e5 16 ♜f4! ♗xf3+ 17 ♜xf3 g5 18 ♜f6!

and Black is under pressure, but the text leads to worse sufferings for him.

14 ♜d2 g5



Black's dark square blockade looks impressive, but Hulak's next move puts an end to any illusions.

15 e5!

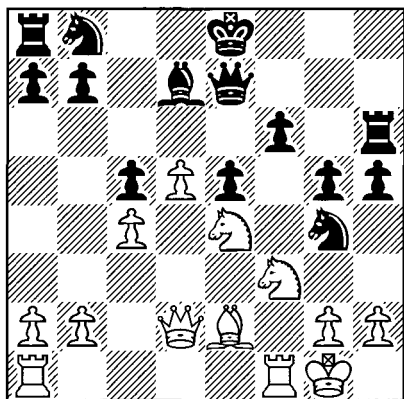
A timely blow, clearing the centre before Black gets castled. Now it is White who will enjoy a great blockading square on e4.

15...dxe5

This implies a knight sacrifice on g4, but alternatives were even worse: 15...fxe5?! 16 ♗xg5 leaves Black's king exposed to ideas like ♜f7 and ♗ce4, while after 15...♗xe5 16 ♗xe5, both 16...dxe5 17 d6 and 16...♜xe5 17 ♗d3 preparing 18 ♜ae1+ is terminal for him, while 16...fxe5 is no improvement in view of 17 ♗e4 with the irresistible threats 18 ♗xg5 and 18 ♗xh5+ ♜xh5 19 ♗f6+. In these lines the "missing" tempo in Black's queenside development is strongly felt, preventing him from a relieving ...0-0-0.

16 ♗e4!

The tempting 16 d6 permits 16...♜e6 17 h3 ♗c6! with similar play to the game, but with Black's queen's knight more actively placed on c6.



After 21...♖xg5 22 ♜xg5 the endgame favours White, but the text lets him launch a decisive counterattack.

22 ♜f6! ♜h1+ 23 ♜f2 ♜xf1+ 24 ♜xf1 ♖c2 25 ♖xe5 g3+ 26 ♜g1 ♜f8 27 ♖e7! 1-0

Ignorance and indifference

A common reason for opening failures is insufficient attention to details in the position; for example, when a player doesn't pay attention to a tactical or positional threat that was just created by his opponent. Another, related situation is when a player goes against the logic of the particular opening or opening position; for example, by a pawn advance that doesn't form part of his set-up, or by developing the "wrong" piece. Finally, a third cause of early defeats or difficulties is simply when a player doesn't know or remember a vital move, move order or idea in the particular opening. Let's see some examples.

16...♜a6 17 h3 0-0-0 18 hxg4

White correctly estimates that he can cope with the enemy attack on the h-file. Otherwise 18 b4! was a different idea, when both 18...cxb4 19 c5 and 18...♜xb4 19 d6 ♖g7 20 ♜xc5 lead to interesting attacking prospects.

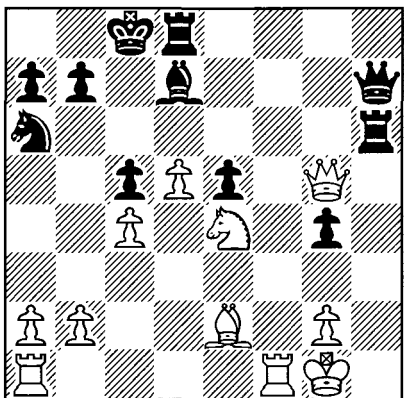
18...hxg4 19 ♜h2 f5

Or 19...♜xh2 20 ♜xh2 ♖h7+ 21 ♜g1 ♖xe4 22 ♜xf6 g3 23 ♜h6!, repelling the attack with a clear advantage.

20 ♜xg4

A practical choice, giving back the piece in exchange for positional superiority.

20...fxg4 21 ♖xg5 ♖h7?!



1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 g6 3 c3

White steers the game into the Alapin, now that Black's second move has ruled out some of his more popular set-ups against that system, such as 2...♜f6.

3...b6

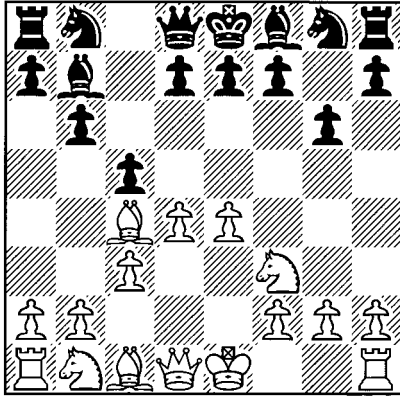
Generally speaking, in the opening phase it makes sense to conclude a fianchetto right away; i.e. 3...♜g7 in this case, when 4 d4 cxd4 5 cxd4 d5 leads to a well-known theoretical position. In the game Black initiates a second fianchetto,

Game 69
L.Aronin-Kantorovich
 USSR Team Championship 1960
Sicilian Defence, Alapin Variation

which is not that bad an idea in itself – the problem is that he never finishes the first one with ...♙g7.

4 d4 ♗b7 5 ♗c4!

After 5 ♗d3 ♗g7 6 0-0 White also has an easier game, but the text is more ambitious.



In fact, after just five moves, Black's extravagant opening already exposes him to some danger; e.g. 5...♗xe4? 6 ♖g5! d5 7 ♗b5+ ♜d7 8 dxc5 bxc5 9 f3 ♗xb1 10 ♚xd5! with decisive threats; or 5...♗g7?! 6 dxc5, when 6...bxc5? fails to 7 ♚b3. Learning from the last line, 5...cxd4 6 cxd4 ♗g7 could be suggested; while 5...e6, preparing ...♗g7, is another option, tried in the game J.Timman-L.Ljubojevic, Wijk aan Zee 1972. Instead, Kantorovich found a "simpler" solution to White's threats.

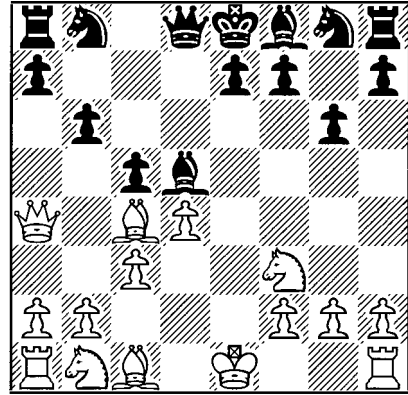
5...d5?

This counter-logical move, opening the position when behind in development, proves to have fatal consequences.

6 exd5 ♗xd5?

The automatic recapture implies that Black hasn't yet sensed the danger. The last chance was 6...♜f6 7 ♗b5+ ♜bd7 8 c4 ♗g7 with a rather suspicious gambit.

7 ♚a4+!



Punishing the opponent on his most vulnerable spot: the a4-e8 diagonal.

7...♗c6?!

This loses outright, though after 7...♜c6 8 ♜e5 (or 8 ♗b5 followed by 9 c4) 8...♜c8 9 ♗b5 ♚c7 10 0-0, preparing 11 c4, Black is also in enormous trouble.

8 ♜e5! 1-0

Black resigned, in view of 8...♗xa4 9 ♗xf7 mate or 8...♚d6 9 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 10 d5 – Neishtadt.

Game 70
J.Hellsten-J.Calderon
Riobamba 2008
Tarrasch Defence

1 ♜f3 e6 2 d4 d5 3 c4 c5 4 ♜c3 ♜c6 5 cxd5 exd5 6 g3

Reaching an initial position of the Tarrasch.

6...♗e6

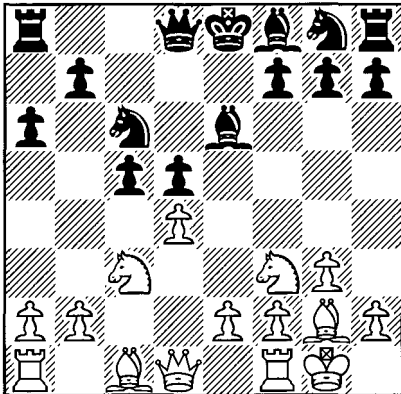
Somewhat premature – in this defence the queen's bishop tends to be the last minor piece to leave the house, simply because its colleagues have more or less pre-

defined squares. The main line goes 6...♟f6 7 ♟g2 ♟e7 8 0-0 0-0, when White is at a major junction between 9 ♟g5 and 9 dxc5.

7 ♟g2 a6?!

This move, preventing ♟b5, is a common feature in the Tarrasch – but not this early! Black could still get a normal game with 7...♟f6.

8 0-0



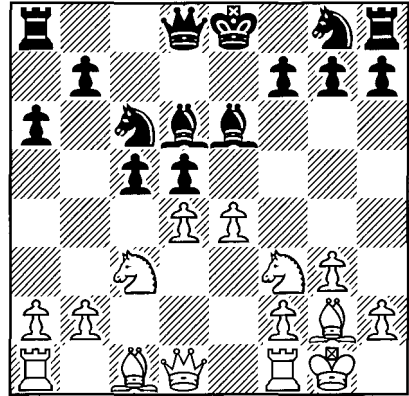
8...♟d6?

This third inaccuracy leads to fatal consequences. 8...♟f6 was again vital, although after 9 ♟g5 ♟e7 10 dxc5 ♟xc5 11 ♟xf6! Black can't play 11...♟xf6 12 ♟xd5 ♟xb2 due to 13 ♟c7+, so he is forced into the horrible 11...gxf6. (Interestingly, if we replace ...a7-a6 by ...0-0 in this line, then 11...♟xf6 12 ♟xd5 ♟xb2 is indeed possible, and has actually been tried hundreds of times in practice!) As for the alternative 9...cxd4 10 ♟xd4 ♟e7, White could try something like 11 ♟xc6 bxc6 12 ♟c1 0-0 13 ♟a4 with a stable advantage, now that ...a7-a6 doesn't contribute to Black's game at all. However, much worse things will happen to him after the careless move played in the game.

9 e4!

Of course – hitting Black in the centre be-

fore he is fully developed. Evidently this blow would not have worked after 8...♟f6 instead of 8...♟d6. In conclusion, not every development move comes to the same thing.



9...♟ge7

After 9...cxd4 10 ♟xd4 or 9...dxe4 10 ♟xe4 Black is also in deep trouble.

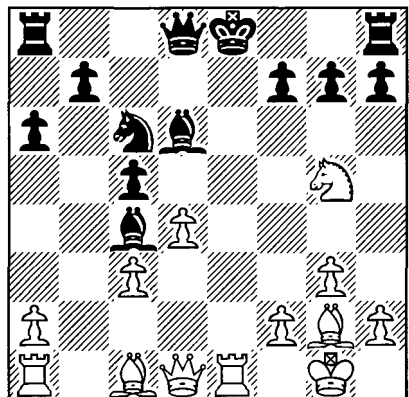
10 exd5

As usual, opening the position makes sense when ahead in development. 10 e5?! ♟c7 would be a relief for Black.

10...♟xd5 11 ♟g5!

With irresistible pressure on the light squares.

11...♟xc3 12 bxc3 ♟c4 13 ♟e1+

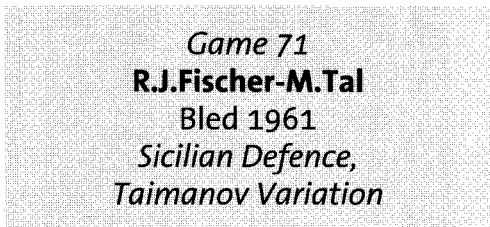


13...♙e7

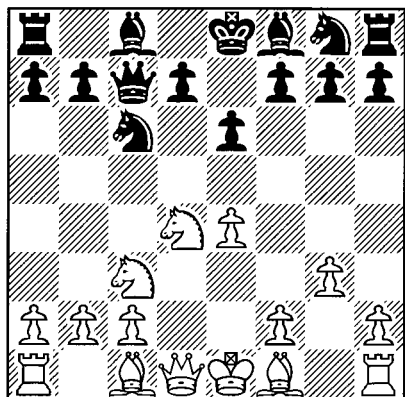
This loses material, though after 13...♙f8 14 ♖b1 Black can't defend properly either; e.g. 14...♖b8 15 dxc5 ♙xc5 16 ♙f4.

14 d5 0-0 15 dxc6 ♙xg5 16 ♖xd8 1-0

In view of 16...♙xd8 17 cxb7 ♖b8 18 ♙f4, Black resigned.



1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 e6 5 ♘c3 ♖c7 6 g3



This fianchetto line is one of the main replies to the Sicilian Taimanov. Play usually continues 6...a6 7 ♙g2 ♘f6 8 0-0, when Black has several choices such as 8...d6, 8...♙c5 and 8...♘xd4 9 ♖xd4 ♙c5. Instead, with his next move Tal “modifies” the move order and is severely punished for the rest of the game.

6...♘f6?

“Probably the losing move!” – Fischer. Interestingly, against 6 ♙e3 or 6 ♙e2 there

is nothing wrong with playing 6...♘f6 before ...a7-a6, but here it proves to be a serious inaccuracy, as we will see next.

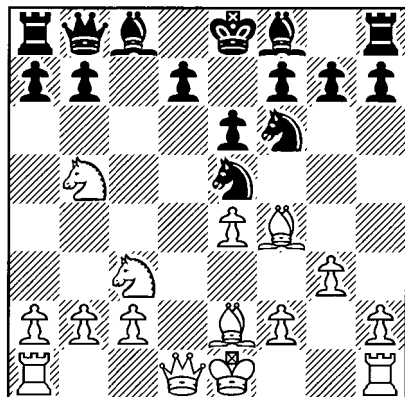
7 ♘db5! ♖b8 8 ♙f4!

From now on Fischer will never let his opponent rest, creating new threats on every move, with a particular focus on the d6-square.

8...♘e5

Later it was discovered that the ugly 8...e5 offers more resistance. There can follow 9 ♙g5 a6 10 ♙xf6 gxf6 11 ♘a3 ♙xa3 12 bxa3 ♘e7 13 ♖f3!? ♖c7 14 ♙g2 d6 15 0-0, intending ♘d1-e3, with a more comfortable game for White in Alex. Ivanov-I.V.Ivanov, US Championship, Long Beach 1989. But if Black is aiming at such kind of play, I guess he should rather go for the Sveshnikov (1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♘c3 e5) straight away!

9 ♙e2!



From here the bishop covers the f3-square, thus creating the threat of 10 ♖d4.

9...♙c5

On most other moves 10 ♖d4 is troublesome for Black; e.g. 9...a6? 10 ♖d4! d6 11 ♗d1! axb5 12 ♙xe5 with a huge edge, now that the bishop is untouchable due to mate.

10 ♖xe5!

This exchange isn't favourable by itself but, together with the following two pawn moves, it lets White take a firm grip on the centre.

10...♗xe5 11 f4 ♖b8 12 e5

Right on time, before Black consolidates with ...d7-d6.

12...a6

Aware that 12...♘g8 13 ♘e4, followed by ♘bd6+, would be terrible for him, Tal opts to complicate the game.

13 exf6 axb5 14 fxg7

14 ♘e4 ♖f8 15 ♗d4 was another good option – Keres.

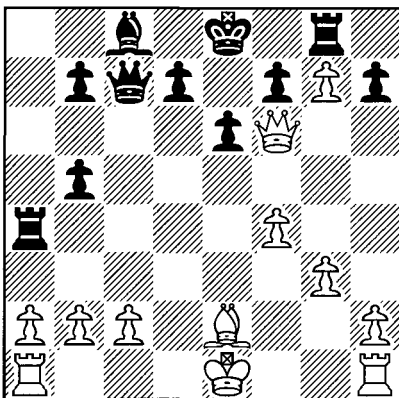
14...♗g8 15 ♘e4 ♖e7 16 ♗d4!

A move with several virtues: it protects the important g7-pawn, speeds up development and enables a future check on f6. The b5-pawn can of course wait.

16...♖a4

This inventive move won't solve Black's problems, but he was already short of a good defence. On 16...♗c7 White could consider 17 0-0-0!? ♖xa2 18 ♖b1, with similar play to later on in the game.

17 ♘f6+ ♖xf6 18 ♗xf6 ♗c7



19 0-0-0!

Fischer has observed that his king will be safe on b1, irrespective of the capture on a2. In contrast, 19 ♖xb5? failed to 19...♗a5+, while both 19 ♖h5 d5 and 19 ♖d3 ♗c5 give Black more hope of survival.

19...♖xa2 20 ♖b1 ♖a6

Or 20...♗a5 21 b3! with the strong threat of 22 ♖h5.

21 ♖xb5

Another good option was 21 ♖h5 d6 (or 21...d5 22 ♖xd5!) 22 ♖he1 ♗e7 23 ♗h6 ♖d7 24 ♗xh7 with a quick win – Fischer.

21...♖b6 22 ♖d3 e5

Tal tries to reach an inferior endgame after 23 ♗xe5+ ♗xe5 24 fxe5 ♖xg7, but in vain...

23 fxe5! ♖xf6 24 exf6

Now the threat of 25 ♖xh7 proves irresistible.

24...♗c5

If 24...♗b6, then 25 ♖hf1! – Fischer.

25 ♖xh7 ♗g5 26 ♖xg8 ♗xf6 27 ♖hf1 ♗xg7

28 ♖xf7+

With such a material advantage, the rest is easy.

28...♖d8 29 ♖e6 ♗h6 30 ♖xd7! ♖xd7 31

♖f7 ♗xh2 32 ♖dx7+

White soon won.

*Game 72
G.Ravinsky-E.Bebchuk
Moscow 1964
Scandinavian Defence*

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 ♗xd5 3 ♘c3 ♗d8 4 d4 g6

An interesting way of treating the Scandinavian. From g7 the bishop will exert pressure on the d4-pawn, possibly joined by the knight via h6-f5.

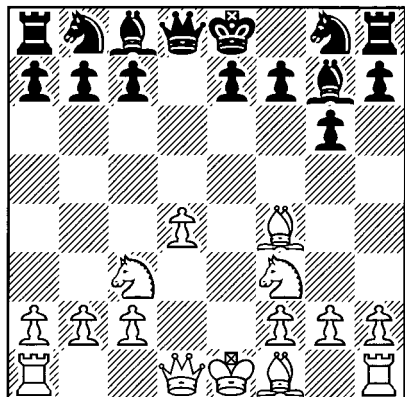
5 ♖f4!

Mastering Opening Strategy

A move popularized by Fischer after his instructive win against Robatsch at the 1962 Varna Olympiad.

5...♙g7 6 ♖f3

Fischer played 6 ♖d2, speeding up the plan of 0-0-0 and ♙h6, though the text is equally reasonable.



How should Black continue his development?

6...♙g4?

Difficult to believe, but after this natural move White is close to winning! Either 6...♘h6!?, heading for f5, or the simple 6...♘f6, followed by ...0-0, should have been tried – Neishtadt. Having browsed through many short games lately, I have observed that one cause of opening disasters is the development of low-priority pieces; e.g. bringing out the queenside pieces when you are going to castle kingside, as in this case.

7 ♙c4! e6

Parrying the threat of 8 ♙xf7+. Instead, 7...♘f6? obviously failed to 8 ♙xf7+ ♙xf7 9 ♘e5+, while the prophylactic 7...♖c8 is strongly met by 8 ♘d5.

8 h3 ♙xf3 9 ♖xf3 ♘c6

This is like sending an invitation card to

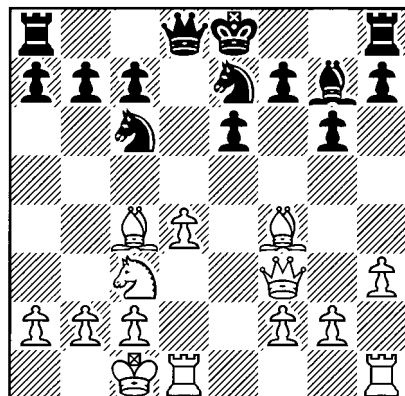
White's d4-d5. Unfortunately, the desirable 9...c6 failed to 10 ♘e4!, heading for d6, when Black is definitely regretting the fact that his king's knight is still on g8. As for the brave 9...♖xd4, after 10 ♖xb7 ♖xc4 11 ♖xa8 Black's slow kingside development again speaks against him; e.g. 11...♙xc3+ 12 bxc3 ♖xc3+ 13 ♙e2 ♖xc2+ 14 ♙f3 ♖d3+ 15 ♙e3 and the checks are soon over.

10 0-0-0!

The quickest way to conclude development and enhance the punishing d4-d5 advance. In contrast, after 10 d5 ♘d4 things might get more complicated.

10...♘ge7

Both 10...♘d4 11 ♖xb7 and 10...♙xd4 11 ♘b5 were fatal for Black – Neishtadt.



11 d5!

Right on time, clearing both central files before Black castles away.

11...exd5 12 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 13 ♖he1+!

More efficient than 13 ♙xd5 0-0 14 ♙xf7+ (not 14 ♙xc6? ♖f6!) 14...♖xf7 15 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8, when Black could play on for a while in the lost endgame.

13...♙f8

Or 13...♘ce7 14 ♙xd5 0-0 15 ♙xb7 with heavy material gains.

14 ♖xd5 ♗f6 15 ♗a3+!

A final accuracy, defending the b2-pawn with tempo and liberating the bishop on f4.

15... ♖g8 16 ♖g5 ♗xf2 17 ♖f1 1-0

In view of 17... ♗b6 18 ♖b5 or 17... ♗xg2 18 ♖d2 ♗xg5 19 ♖xf7 mate, Black resigned.

7 ♖xd4 c6 8 ♖c3

After 8 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 9 ♗d2 h6 10 ♖e3 d5! or 10 ♖h4 d5! Black has had few problems in practice.

8...h6 9 ♖e3

9 ♖h4, maintaining the pin, seems more logical.

9...♖f6 10 ♖c4 0-0

The immediate 10...d5 looks strong as well.

Game 73
E.Gufeld-T.V.Petrosian
USSR Championship,
Moscow 1969
Three Knights Game

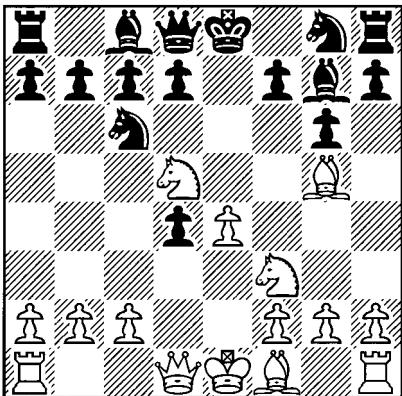
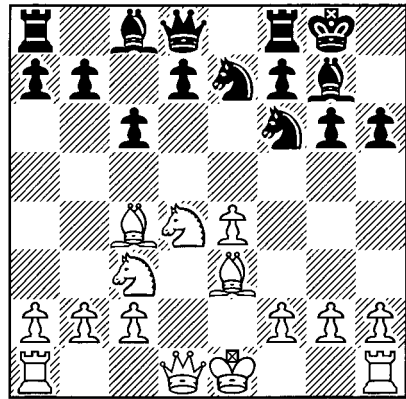
1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♖c6 3 ♖c3 g6

This variation has quite an old record, with several World Champions taking on Black's position.

4 d4 exd4 5 ♖d5

The sharpest choice, though 5 ♖xd4 ♖g7 6 ♖e3, followed by ♗d2 and 0-0-0, is probably a more critical test of Black's opening.

5...♖g7 6 ♖g5



6...♖ce7!

With that knight, since 6...♖ge7? runs into the trap 7 ♖xd4! ♖xd4 8 ♗xd4 ♖xd4 9 ♖f6+ ♖f8 10 ♖h6 mate.

By now Black already enjoys a slight lead in development and ...d7-d5 is in the air, so White should proceed with care. Here 11 0-0?! d5 12 exd5 ♖fxd5 is hardly in his favour, but by 11 e5! ♖e8 12 0-0 he could obtain a decent game; e.g. 12...♖xe5?! 13 ♖xh6 or 12...d5 13 ♖e2 c5 14 ♖b3 d4 15 ♖f4, followed by ♖e4. Instead, the game took a completely different turn...

11 ♗f3?

A seemingly active move, which, however, leads to huge difficulties due to the exposed position of the queen. I suspect that Gufeld simply didn't foresee Black's 12th move, or else miscalculated something.

11...d5! 12 exd5 c5!

Cramping the enemy pieces and gaining

Mastering Opening Strategy

the f5-square for the knight. In contrast, after 12...♙g4 13 ♖g3 ♜exd5 14 ♙xd5! cxd5 15 0-0 White is okay.

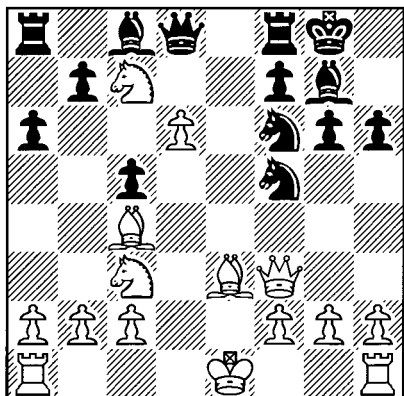
13 ♜db5

After 13 ♜b3 ♙g4 14 ♖f4 g5 15 ♖e5 ♜f5, preparing ...♞e8, Black obtains a strong attack; e.g. 16 h3 ♞e8 17 ♖h2 ♜xe3 18 fxe3 ♞xe3+ 19 ♜d2 ♞xc3! 20 bxc3 ♙d7 with ideas like 21...♜e4+ and 21...b5. Even worse is 13 ♜de2? ♙g4 14 ♖f4 g5 15 ♖e5 ♜h5! 16 ♖e4 ♙f5 17 ♖f3 g4 and the queen is trapped at last.

13...a6!

13...♙g4?! 14 ♖g3 ♜f5 permits 15 ♖c7, so Petrosian eliminates that possibility, leaving White with a single reply.

14 d6 ♜f5 15 ♜c7



15...♜xd6!

A final finesse. Now after 16 ♜xa8 ♜xc4, followed by ...♙d7, Black recovers the material with a huge positional plus, so White starts fishing in muddy waters.

16 0-0-0 ♖xc7 17 ♙f4 ♙g4!

The most practical choice, in order to simplify the game.

18 ♖d3?!

18 ♙xd6 ♙xf3 19 ♙xc7 ♙xd1 20 ♞xd1 was marginally better, when White is an

exchange down. After the text, Black's pressure soon becomes unbearable.

18...b5! 19 ♙d5 ♞ad8 20 f3 b4! 21 ♖xg6

Desperation in a lost position.

21...♜h8 22 ♖d3 bxc3 23 fxg4 ♖b6 24 b3 ♖b4! 0-1

Game 74

T.Nabaty-I.Khairullin

European Championship,

Rijeka 2010

Caro-Kann Defence

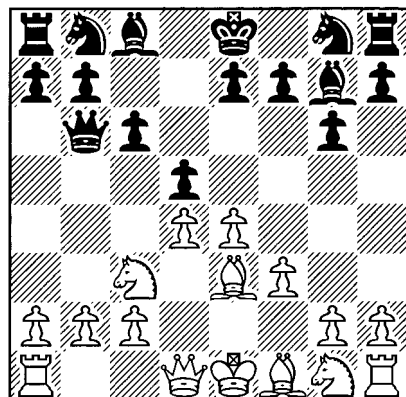
1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 f3

One of the most aggressive replies to the Caro-Kann, which has become quite popular in recent years.

3...g6

Other main options are 3...e6 with French-like play, and 3...dxe4 4 fxe4 e5 5 ♜f3 ♙e6!, preventing the dangerous 6 ♙c4.

4 ♜c3 ♙g7 5 ♙e3 ♖b6



Thus Black interferes with the opponent's plan of ♖d2 and 0-0-0, but also exposes his queen and delays development. Perhaps 5...dxe4 6 fxe4 e5 or 6...♜f6 offers better chances for equality.

6 a3!?

A tricky defence of the b2-pawn – both here and later, 6...♖xb2?? fails to 7 ♖a4.

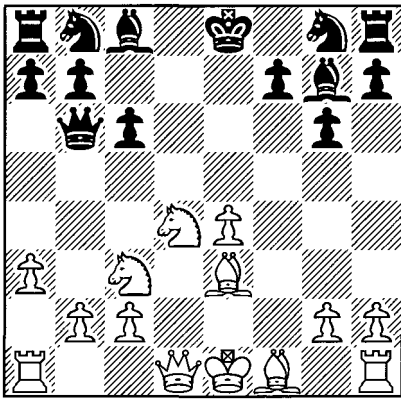
6...dxe4

The immediate 6...e5 is well met by 7 ♖ge2! ♖xb2 8 dxe5 ♙xe5 9 ♜f2!, intending 9...♙xc3 10 ♖xc3 ♖xc3 11 ♙d4 – Postny.

7 fxe4 e5

This counterblow leads to a favourable pawn structure, but slows down Black's development even further; the simple 7...♖f6 might have been preferable.

8 ♖f3 exd4 9 ♖xd4



A tense position has emerged. If Black manages to castle he will have a great game thanks to the weak points on e4 and e5, but White do make everything possible to prevent that, even by means of sacrifices. To start with, Black has to cope with the threat of 10 ♖f5.

9...♙h6?

In my opinion, this move is completely opposed to the nature of the position. Black moves his only developed minor piece away from its natural place on g7, where it was controlling the crucial e5-square, among other things. I guess Khairullin simply wanted to prevent 0-0-0 but, as we will see

next, he pays too high a price for that.

A sounder option was 9...♖c7, on which Postny analyses 10 ♖db5!? cxb5 11 ♖xb5 ♖e5 12 ♖d6+ ♜f8 13 ♖xc8 ♖c6 14 ♖d6+ ♖xd6 15 ♖xd6 ♙xb2 16 ♖d1 with just a slight advantage for White. Even the paradoxical 9...♖d8!?, intending ...♖f6 and ...0-0, seems much better than the text.

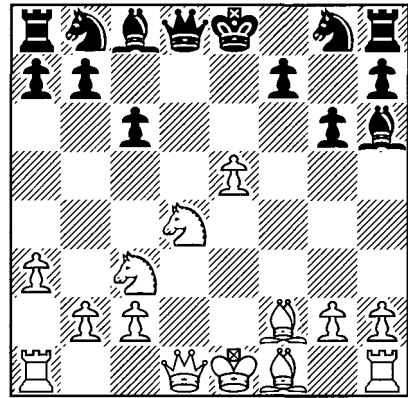
10 ♙f2!

Nabaty surrenders the plan of long castling to maintain dark square pressure.

10...♖d8

If 10...♖c7, White has 11 ♖db5!? cxb5 12 ♖xb5, followed by 13 ♖d6+, with a strong attack – Da Costa Junior; and 12 ♖d4!? f6 13 ♖xb5, followed by ♖d1, is another idea in the same spirit. With the text Black avoids any such sacrifices but soon runs into new problems.

11 e5!



A key move that exploits the absence of the bishop on g7 in order to seize the centre. Now 12 ♖e4 is coming up.

11...♖e7!?

This direct attack on the e5-pawn won't work out well. 11...♖e7, preparing ...0-0, seems more reasonable, although after 12 ♙c4 0-0 13 0-0, intending e5-e6, White

keeps a strong initiative.

12 ♖e4 ♜d7

Or 12...♗xe5 13 ♖e2! with devastating threats; e.g. 13...♜e7 14 ♜f3 ♖e6 15 ♜d1 0-0 16 ♜d6!, followed by 17 ♜f6+ and 18 ♗xe7 – Postny.

13 ♜f3!

Seeing that 13 ♜d6+?! ♜f8 leads nowhere, White prepares the knight check.

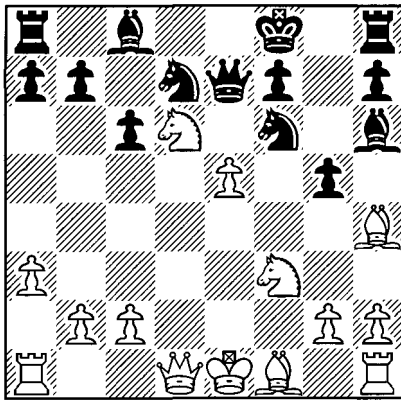
13...♜g6

Both 13...♜xe5? 14 ♙c5! and 13...♙g7 14 ♙c4! ♙xe5 15 0-0 are fatal for Black – Da Costa Junior. With the text he again prepares to meet 14 ♜d6+ by 14...♜f8, but Nabaty has a strong intermediate move prepared.

14 ♙h4!

By provoking ...g6-g5 White creates a weakness on f5 and limits the bishop on h6.

14...g5 15 ♜d6+ ♜f8



16 ♙g3!

Reinforcing the e5-pawn while creating the threat 17 ♜f5. Black's game is by now very difficult due to his exposed king. 16 ♜f5?! ♖e6 was less clear.

16...♜b6 17 ♙e2 ♜f5 18 0-0!

A nice decision in these computer days. White doesn't mind losing the exchange,

his main priority being the swift exploitation of the f-file towards Black's king.

18...♜e3 19 ♖d3 ♜xf1 20 ♜xf1 ♜d5

The only move, in order to keep White's rook from f4.

21 ♜d4 ♜f4 22 ♙xf4 gxf4 23 ♜xc8 ♖xe5

Black finally has to give up material, since 23...♜xc8? fails to 24 ♖h3!.

24 ♜f5 ♜xc8 25 ♜xh6 ♜e8 26 ♖c4!

A new sacrifice to intensify the attack.

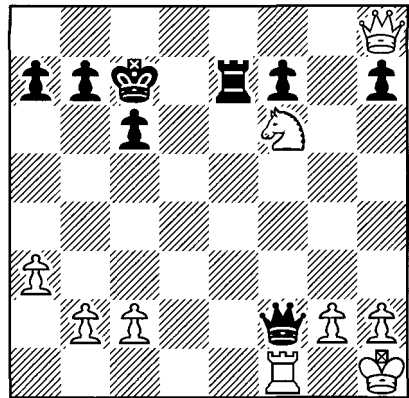
26...♜e6 27 ♜g4 ♖xe2 28 ♖xf4 ♜e7

This lets White recover the material at once, though after 28...f5 29 ♖xf5+ ♜e7 30 ♖g5+ ♜d6 31 ♖f4+ ♜d7 32 ♖d4+ ♜c7 33 ♖xh8 ♖xg4 34 ♖xh7+ Black is also lost – Postny.

29 ♖h6+ ♜e8 30 ♖g7! ♜d7

Seeing that 30...♜f8 fails to 31 ♜f6+, Black prepares a final counterattack, but Nabaty has everything under control.

31 ♜f6+ ♜c7 32 ♖xh8 ♖e3+ 33 ♜h1 ♖f2



34 ♜d5+!

With the idea 34...cxd5 35 ♖c3+ and the queen covers e1. By his next move Black avoids this, but runs into a new intermediate check.

34...♜d7 35 ♖c8+! 1-0

If 35...♜xc8 36 ♜xe7+ ♜d7 37 ♜xf2.

Exercises

The first dozen or so of the following exercises (Games 75-90) are games by my students. In my opinion, such games, despite being of a lower technical level than the customary encounters between titled players, can often have a great instructive value.

Game 75

K.Noboa-D.Jaramillo

Macas 2010

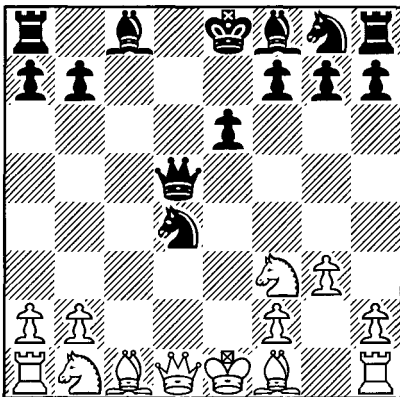
Sicilian Defence, Alapin Variation

1 e4 c5 2 c3 d5 3 exd5 ♖xd5 4 ♘f3 ♘c6 5 d4 e6 6 g3

A rare move, but perhaps not that illogical now that Black can no longer play ...♗g4.

6...cxd4 7 cxd4 ♘xd4??

Extreme materialism.



How to punish Black?

Game 76

D.Brito-M.Morales

Riobamba 2009

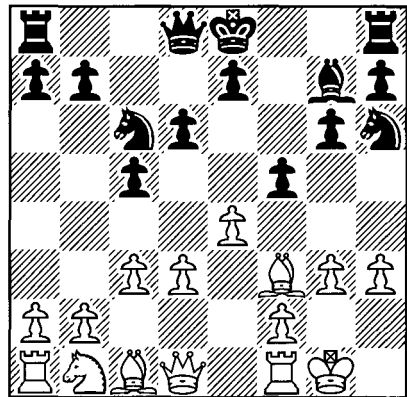
Reti's Opening

1 ♘f3 c5 2 g3 ♘c6 3 ♗g2 g6 4 0-0 ♗g7 5 d3 d6 6 e4 ♗g4 7 h3 ♗xf3 8 ♗xf3 ♘h6

Simpler and better was 8...♗f6, or 8...e6 followed by ...♗ge7.

9 c3 f5?

A really counter-logical move, weakening the light squares just after swapping the bishop of that colour.



How to punish Black?

Game 77

D.Usca-J.Pasto

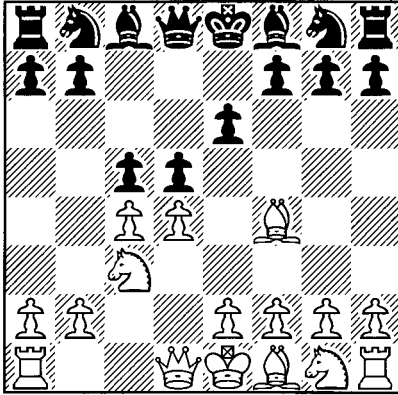
Riobamba 2010

Tarrasch Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 c5 4 ♗f4?

Mastering Opening Strategy

This is a rare move against the Tarrasch – and with good reason!



How to punish White?

Game 78

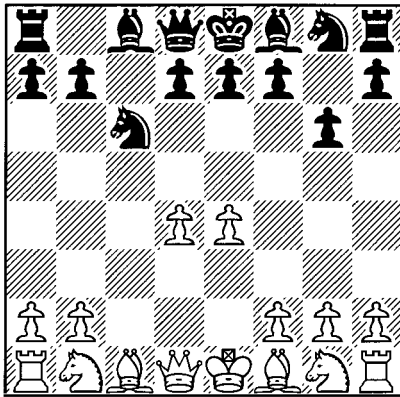
A. Cardenas-P. Parra

Trieste 2009

Sicilian Defence, Alapin Variation

1 e4 c5 2 c3 c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 cxd4 g6?

Not every developing move is of equal value. 4...d5 was better.



How to punish Black?

Game 79

H. Llamuca-D. Usca

Trieste 2011

Sicilian Defence, Closed Variation

1 e4 c5 2 c3 c6 3 f4 a6

A sensible move, ruling out b5, which is a typical feature in White's set-up.

4 f3 b5 5 g3

The game has now transposed from a Grand Prix Attack to the Closed Sicilian variation.

5... b7 6 d3 c7

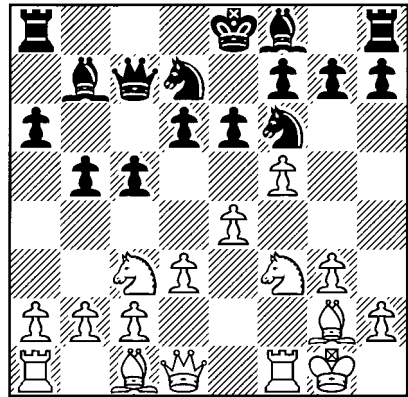
Another approach is 6...b4 7 e2 d5, hitting the light squares.

7 g2 d6 8 0-0 d7 9 f5

The most straightforward choice, though the flexible 9 e2 might be more promising; e.g. 9...g6 10 e5!

9... g6?

Complete indifference. 9...e5 was correct, keeping the position closed; e.g. 10 g4 h6 11 h4 g6 12 h2 b4 13 e2 c4 with counterplay, P. Dankert-B. Kurajica, Hamburg 1977.



How to punish Black?

Game 80
J.Sanaguano-C.Castillo
 Zaruma 2010
Irregular defence

1 e4 d6 2 d4 f5?

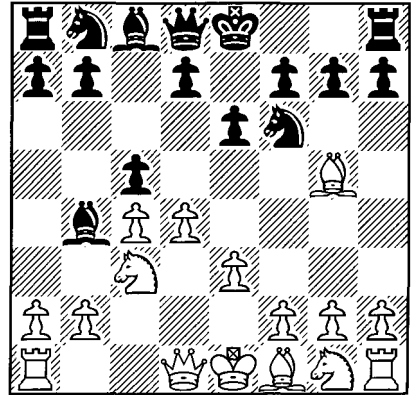
A highly suspect idea. Black weakens the position of his king without any worthwhile purpose.

3 ♖c3

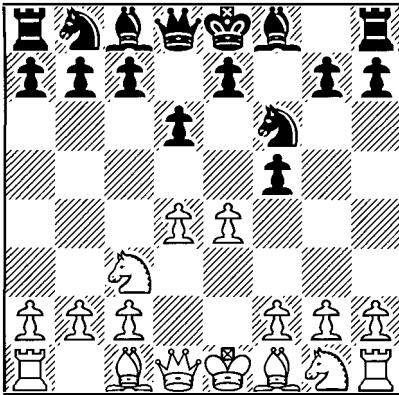
White responds with simple development.

3... ♗f6

is better than the text.



How to punish White?



How to punish Black?

Game 81
D.Usca-J.Hellsten
 Riobamba 2010
Nimzo-Indian Defence

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 ♗b4 4 ♗g5 c5 5 e3?

(see following diagram)

A natural move, but a bad one on this occasion. 5 d5 was correct, and even 5 ♗f3

Game 82
A.Aguilar-J.Bejar
 Riobamba 2010
Queen's Gambit Declined

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 ♗f6 4 cxd5 ♗xd5 5 e4 ♗f6?

This loses an important tempo. Better is 5... ♗xc3 6 bxc3 c5 with an initial position of the Semi-Tarrasch.

6 ♗g5

Another good set-up is 6 ♗f3, followed by ♗d3, 0-0, ♖e2, ♗d1 etc, as we will see in the next chapter.

6... ♗e7 7 ♗f3 c5?!

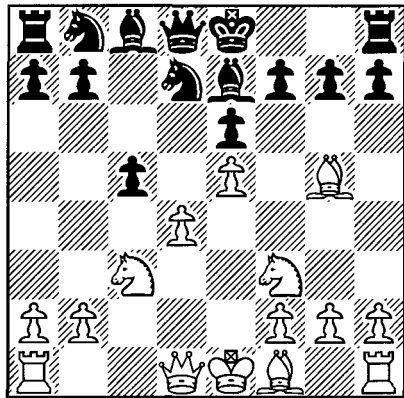
A risky counterstrike, in view of White's superior development. First 7...0-0 was preferable.

8 e5

8 dxc5! ♖xd1+ 9 ♗xd1 ♗xc5 10 e5 was even stronger; e.g. 10... ♗fd7 11 ♗b5! ♗a6 12 ♗d6+ ♗xd6 13 ♗xd6 with a clear edge in the endgame.

8... ♗fd7?

Here 8...cxd4 was preferable; e.g. 9 exf6 gxf6 or 9 ♖b5 a6 10 ♖bxd4 ♜d5 11 ♙xe7 ♚xe7 with just a slight disadvantage.



How to punish Black?

Game 83
L.Paredes-M.Morales
 Riobamba 2010
Sicilian Defence, Alapin Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 ♗c6 3 c3 g6?! 4 d4 cxd4 5 cxd4 d5 6 ♗c3?! 7 ♙xe4 ♜xe4 8 ♙g4?! 9 ♙xf6 ♚xf6 10 ♙b5 a6 11 ♙bxd4 ♜d5 12 ♙xe7 ♚xe7 13 ♙d5 ♚d7 14 ♙c3 ♚c6 15 ♙b4 ♚b6 16 ♙a4 ♚a5 17 ♙b5 ♚b6 18 ♙c3 ♚c6 19 ♙d5 ♚d7 20 ♙e7 ♚e7 21 ♙f6 ♚f6 22 ♙g4 ♚g6 23 ♙h4 ♚h6 24 ♙g4 ♚g6 25 ♙f6 ♚f6 26 ♙g4 ♚g6 27 ♙h4 ♚h6 28 ♙g4 ♚g6 29 ♙f6 ♚f6 30 ♙g4 ♚g6 31 ♙h4 ♚h6 32 ♙g4 ♚g6 33 ♙f6 ♚f6 34 ♙g4 ♚g6 35 ♙h4 ♚h6 36 ♙g4 ♚g6 37 ♙f6 ♚f6 38 ♙g4 ♚g6 39 ♙h4 ♚h6 40 ♙g4 ♚g6 41 ♙f6 ♚f6 42 ♙g4 ♚g6 43 ♙h4 ♚h6 44 ♙g4 ♚g6 45 ♙f6 ♚f6 46 ♙g4 ♚g6 47 ♙h4 ♚h6 48 ♙g4 ♚g6 49 ♙f6 ♚f6 50 ♙g4 ♚g6 51 ♙h4 ♚h6 52 ♙g4 ♚g6 53 ♙f6 ♚f6 54 ♙g4 ♚g6 55 ♙h4 ♚h6 56 ♙g4 ♚g6 57 ♙f6 ♚f6 58 ♙g4 ♚g6 59 ♙h4 ♚h6 60 ♙g4 ♚g6 61 ♙f6 ♚f6 62 ♙g4 ♚g6 63 ♙h4 ♚h6 64 ♙g4 ♚g6 65 ♙f6 ♚f6 66 ♙g4 ♚g6 67 ♙h4 ♚h6 68 ♙g4 ♚g6 69 ♙f6 ♚f6 70 ♙g4 ♚g6 71 ♙h4 ♚h6 72 ♙g4 ♚g6 73 ♙f6 ♚f6 74 ♙g4 ♚g6 75 ♙h4 ♚h6 76 ♙g4 ♚g6 77 ♙f6 ♚f6 78 ♙g4 ♚g6 79 ♙h4 ♚h6 80 ♙g4 ♚g6 81 ♙f6 ♚f6 82 ♙g4 ♚g6 83 ♙h4 ♚h6 84 ♙g4 ♚g6 85 ♙f6 ♚f6 86 ♙g4 ♚g6 87 ♙h4 ♚h6 88 ♙g4 ♚g6 89 ♙f6 ♚f6 90 ♙g4 ♚g6 91 ♙h4 ♚h6 92 ♙g4 ♚g6 93 ♙f6 ♚f6 94 ♙g4 ♚g6 95 ♙h4 ♚h6 96 ♙g4 ♚g6 97 ♙f6 ♚f6 98 ♙g4 ♚g6 99 ♙h4 ♚h6 100 ♙g4 ♚g6

This is not the same thing as 2 c3 g6, and we will soon see why.

4 d4 cxd4 5 cxd4 d5 6 ♗c3?! 7 ♙xe4 ♜xe4 8 ♙g4?! 9 ♙xf6 ♚xf6 10 ♙b5 a6 11 ♙bxd4 ♜d5 12 ♙xe7 ♚xe7 13 ♙d5 ♚d7 14 ♙c3 ♚c6 15 ♙b4 ♚b6 16 ♙a4 ♚a5 17 ♙b5 ♚b6 18 ♙c3 ♚c6 19 ♙d5 ♚d7 20 ♙e7 ♚e7 21 ♙f6 ♚f6 22 ♙g4 ♚g6 23 ♙h4 ♚h6 24 ♙g4 ♚g6 25 ♙f6 ♚f6 26 ♙g4 ♚g6 27 ♙h4 ♚h6 28 ♙g4 ♚g6 29 ♙f6 ♚f6 30 ♙g4 ♚g6 31 ♙h4 ♚h6 32 ♙g4 ♚g6 33 ♙f6 ♚f6 34 ♙g4 ♚g6 35 ♙h4 ♚h6 36 ♙g4 ♚g6 37 ♙f6 ♚f6 38 ♙g4 ♚g6 39 ♙h4 ♚h6 40 ♙g4 ♚g6 41 ♙f6 ♚f6 42 ♙g4 ♚g6 43 ♙h4 ♚h6 44 ♙g4 ♚g6 45 ♙f6 ♚f6 46 ♙g4 ♚g6 47 ♙h4 ♚h6 48 ♙g4 ♚g6 49 ♙f6 ♚f6 50 ♙g4 ♚g6 51 ♙h4 ♚h6 52 ♙g4 ♚g6 53 ♙f6 ♚f6 54 ♙g4 ♚g6 55 ♙h4 ♚h6 56 ♙g4 ♚g6 57 ♙f6 ♚f6 58 ♙g4 ♚g6 59 ♙h4 ♚h6 60 ♙g4 ♚g6 61 ♙f6 ♚f6 62 ♙g4 ♚g6 63 ♙h4 ♚h6 64 ♙g4 ♚g6 65 ♙f6 ♚f6 66 ♙g4 ♚g6 67 ♙h4 ♚h6 68 ♙g4 ♚g6 69 ♙f6 ♚f6 70 ♙g4 ♚g6 71 ♙h4 ♚h6 72 ♙g4 ♚g6 73 ♙f6 ♚f6 74 ♙g4 ♚g6 75 ♙h4 ♚h6 76 ♙g4 ♚g6 77 ♙f6 ♚f6 78 ♙g4 ♚g6 79 ♙h4 ♚h6 80 ♙g4 ♚g6 81 ♙f6 ♚f6 82 ♙g4 ♚g6 83 ♙h4 ♚h6 84 ♙g4 ♚g6 85 ♙f6 ♚f6 86 ♙g4 ♚g6 87 ♙h4 ♚h6 88 ♙g4 ♚g6 89 ♙f6 ♚f6 90 ♙g4 ♚g6 91 ♙h4 ♚h6 92 ♙g4 ♚g6 93 ♙f6 ♚f6 94 ♙g4 ♚g6 95 ♙h4 ♚h6 96 ♙g4 ♚g6 97 ♙f6 ♚f6 98 ♙g4 ♚g6 99 ♙h4 ♚h6 100 ♙g4 ♚g6

The obvious punishment for Black's suspicious opening was 6 exd5! ♚xd5 7 ♗c3, followed by d4-d5; e.g. 7...♚d8 8 d5 ♖b8 9 ♙b5+ ♙d7 10 0-0 and ♙e1 next with a clear plus.

6...dxe4 7 ♗xe4 ♙g4?! 8 ♙xf6 ♚xf6 9 ♙b5 a6 10 ♙bxd4 ♜d5 11 ♙xe7 ♚xe7 12 ♙d5 ♚d7 13 ♙c3 ♚c6 14 ♙b4 ♚b6 15 ♙a4 ♚a5 16 ♙b5 ♚b6 17 ♙c3 ♚c6 18 ♙d5 ♚d7 19 ♙e7 ♚e7 20 ♙f6 ♚f6 21 ♙g4 ♚g6 22 ♙h4 ♚h6 23 ♙g4 ♚g6 24 ♙f6 ♚f6 25 ♙g4 ♚g6 26 ♙h4 ♚h6 27 ♙g4 ♚g6 28 ♙f6 ♚f6 29 ♙g4 ♚g6 30 ♙h4 ♚h6 31 ♙g4 ♚g6 32 ♙f6 ♚f6 33 ♙g4 ♚g6 34 ♙h4 ♚h6 35 ♙g4 ♚g6 36 ♙f6 ♚f6 37 ♙g4 ♚g6 38 ♙h4 ♚h6 39 ♙g4 ♚g6 40 ♙f6 ♚f6 41 ♙g4 ♚g6 42 ♙h4 ♚h6 43 ♙g4 ♚g6 44 ♙f6 ♚f6 45 ♙g4 ♚g6 46 ♙h4 ♚h6 47 ♙g4 ♚g6 48 ♙f6 ♚f6 49 ♙g4 ♚g6 50 ♙h4 ♚h6 51 ♙g4 ♚g6 52 ♙f6 ♚f6 53 ♙g4 ♚g6 54 ♙h4 ♚h6 55 ♙g4 ♚g6 56 ♙f6 ♚f6 57 ♙g4 ♚g6 58 ♙h4 ♚h6 59 ♙g4 ♚g6 60 ♙f6 ♚f6 61 ♙g4 ♚g6 62 ♙h4 ♚h6 63 ♙g4 ♚g6 64 ♙f6 ♚f6 65 ♙g4 ♚g6 66 ♙h4 ♚h6 67 ♙g4 ♚g6 68 ♙f6 ♚f6 69 ♙g4 ♚g6 70 ♙h4 ♚h6 71 ♙g4 ♚g6 72 ♙f6 ♚f6 73 ♙g4 ♚g6 74 ♙h4 ♚h6 75 ♙g4 ♚g6 76 ♙f6 ♚f6 77 ♙g4 ♚g6 78 ♙h4 ♚h6 79 ♙g4 ♚g6 80 ♙f6 ♚f6 81 ♙g4 ♚g6 82 ♙h4 ♚h6 83 ♙g4 ♚g6 84 ♙f6 ♚f6 85 ♙g4 ♚g6 86 ♙h4 ♚h6 87 ♙g4 ♚g6 88 ♙f6 ♚f6 89 ♙g4 ♚g6 90 ♙h4 ♚h6 91 ♙g4 ♚g6 92 ♙f6 ♚f6 93 ♙g4 ♚g6 94 ♙h4 ♚h6 95 ♙g4 ♚g6 96 ♙f6 ♚f6 97 ♙g4 ♚g6 98 ♙h4 ♚h6 99 ♙g4 ♚g6 100 ♙f6 ♚f6

It made more sense to develop the king-side first; i.e. 7...♖f6! 8 ♖xf6+ exf6, followed by ...♙b4+ and ...0-0.

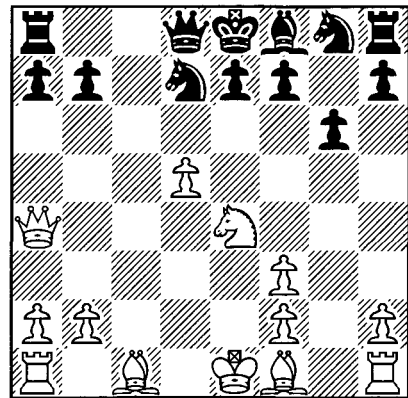
8 d5!

On the second occasion, White finds the correct plan.

8...♙xf3?! 9 ♙xf3 ♚xf3 10 ♙b5 a6 11 ♙bxd4 ♜d5 12 ♙xe7 ♚xe7 13 ♙d5 ♚d7 14 ♙c3 ♚c6 15 ♙b4 ♚b6 16 ♙a4 ♚a5 17 ♙b5 ♚b6 18 ♙c3 ♚c6 19 ♙d5 ♚d7 20 ♙e7 ♚e7 21 ♙f6 ♚f6 22 ♙g4 ♚g6 23 ♙h4 ♚h6 24 ♙g4 ♚g6 25 ♙f6 ♚f6 26 ♙g4 ♚g6 27 ♙h4 ♚h6 28 ♙g4 ♚g6 29 ♙f6 ♚f6 30 ♙g4 ♚g6 31 ♙h4 ♚h6 32 ♙g4 ♚g6 33 ♙f6 ♚f6 34 ♙g4 ♚g6 35 ♙h4 ♚h6 36 ♙g4 ♚g6 37 ♙f6 ♚f6 38 ♙g4 ♚g6 39 ♙h4 ♚h6 40 ♙g4 ♚g6 41 ♙f6 ♚f6 42 ♙g4 ♚g6 43 ♙h4 ♚h6 44 ♙g4 ♚g6 45 ♙f6 ♚f6 46 ♙g4 ♚g6 47 ♙h4 ♚h6 48 ♙g4 ♚g6 49 ♙f6 ♚f6 50 ♙g4 ♚g6 51 ♙h4 ♚h6 52 ♙g4 ♚g6 53 ♙f6 ♚f6 54 ♙g4 ♚g6 55 ♙h4 ♚h6 56 ♙g4 ♚g6 57 ♙f6 ♚f6 58 ♙g4 ♚g6 59 ♙h4 ♚h6 60 ♙g4 ♚g6 61 ♙f6 ♚f6 62 ♙g4 ♚g6 63 ♙h4 ♚h6 64 ♙g4 ♚g6 65 ♙f6 ♚f6 66 ♙g4 ♚g6 67 ♙h4 ♚h6 68 ♙g4 ♚g6 69 ♙f6 ♚f6 70 ♙g4 ♚g6 71 ♙h4 ♚h6 72 ♙g4 ♚g6 73 ♙f6 ♚f6 74 ♙g4 ♚g6 75 ♙h4 ♚h6 76 ♙g4 ♚g6 77 ♙f6 ♚f6 78 ♙g4 ♚g6 79 ♙h4 ♚h6 80 ♙g4 ♚g6 81 ♙f6 ♚f6 82 ♙g4 ♚g6 83 ♙h4 ♚h6 84 ♙g4 ♚g6 85 ♙f6 ♚f6 86 ♙g4 ♚g6 87 ♙h4 ♚h6 88 ♙g4 ♚g6 89 ♙f6 ♚f6 90 ♙g4 ♚g6 91 ♙h4 ♚h6 92 ♙g4 ♚g6 93 ♙f6 ♚f6 94 ♙g4 ♚g6 95 ♙h4 ♚h6 96 ♙g4 ♚g6 97 ♙f6 ♚f6 98 ♙g4 ♚g6 99 ♙h4 ♚h6 100 ♙g4 ♚g6

This ruins White's pawn structure but, more importantly, decreases Black's light square control. Obviously 8...♖e5? failed to 9 ♖xe5 ♙xd1 10 ♙b5+, so 8...♚a5+ 9 ♖c3 0-0-0!? was more in the spirit of the position.

9 gxf3 ♖e5 10 ♚a4+! ♖d7



How to punish Black?

Game 84
J.Sanaguano-O.Vaca
 Riobamba 2010
French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 4 ♙xd5 ♙d3 5 h3 ♙e7 6 ♖f3 0-0 7 0-0 ♖bd7 8 ♙e1 c5 9 dxc5?! 9...♖xc5 10 ♙f1?! 10...♙xc5 11 ♙f1 ♚xc5 12 ♙f1 ♚xc5 13 ♙f1 ♚xc5 14 ♙f1 ♚xc5 15 ♙f1 ♚xc5 16 ♙f1 ♚xc5 17 ♙f1 ♚xc5 18 ♙f1 ♚xc5 19 ♙f1 ♚xc5 20 ♙f1 ♚xc5 21 ♙f1 ♚xc5 22 ♙f1 ♚xc5 23 ♙f1 ♚xc5 24 ♙f1 ♚xc5 25 ♙f1 ♚xc5 26 ♙f1 ♚xc5 27 ♙f1 ♚xc5 28 ♙f1 ♚xc5 29 ♙f1 ♚xc5 30 ♙f1 ♚xc5 31 ♙f1 ♚xc5 32 ♙f1 ♚xc5 33 ♙f1 ♚xc5 34 ♙f1 ♚xc5 35 ♙f1 ♚xc5 36 ♙f1 ♚xc5 37 ♙f1 ♚xc5 38 ♙f1 ♚xc5 39 ♙f1 ♚xc5 40 ♙f1 ♚xc5 41 ♙f1 ♚xc5 42 ♙f1 ♚xc5 43 ♙f1 ♚xc5 44 ♙f1 ♚xc5 45 ♙f1 ♚xc5 46 ♙f1 ♚xc5 47 ♙f1 ♚xc5 48 ♙f1 ♚xc5 49 ♙f1 ♚xc5 50 ♙f1 ♚xc5 51 ♙f1 ♚xc5 52 ♙f1 ♚xc5 53 ♙f1 ♚xc5 54 ♙f1 ♚xc5 55 ♙f1 ♚xc5 56 ♙f1 ♚xc5 57 ♙f1 ♚xc5 58 ♙f1 ♚xc5 59 ♙f1 ♚xc5 60 ♙f1 ♚xc5 61 ♙f1 ♚xc5 62 ♙f1 ♚xc5 63 ♙f1 ♚xc5 64 ♙f1 ♚xc5 65 ♙f1 ♚xc5 66 ♙f1 ♚xc5 67 ♙f1 ♚xc5 68 ♙f1 ♚xc5 69 ♙f1 ♚xc5 70 ♙f1 ♚xc5 71 ♙f1 ♚xc5 72 ♙f1 ♚xc5 73 ♙f1 ♚xc5 74 ♙f1 ♚xc5 75 ♙f1 ♚xc5 76 ♙f1 ♚xc5 77 ♙f1 ♚xc5 78 ♙f1 ♚xc5 79 ♙f1 ♚xc5 80 ♙f1 ♚xc5 81 ♙f1 ♚xc5 82 ♙f1 ♚xc5 83 ♙f1 ♚xc5 84 ♙f1 ♚xc5 85 ♙f1 ♚xc5 86 ♙f1 ♚xc5 87 ♙f1 ♚xc5 88 ♙f1 ♚xc5 89 ♙f1 ♚xc5 90 ♙f1 ♚xc5 91 ♙f1 ♚xc5 92 ♙f1 ♚xc5 93 ♙f1 ♚xc5 94 ♙f1 ♚xc5 95 ♙f1 ♚xc5 96 ♙f1 ♚xc5 97 ♙f1 ♚xc5 98 ♙f1 ♚xc5 99 ♙f1 ♚xc5 100 ♙f1 ♚xc5

The Exchange Variation is hardly a critical test of the French, and the way in which White treats it in this game is probably more suited against the Caro-Kann.

3...exd5 4 ♙xd5 ♙d3 5 h3 ♙e7 6 ♖f3 0-0 7 0-0 ♖bd7

Another good option was 7...c5, followed by ...♖c6.

8 ♙e1 c5 9 dxc5?! 9...♖xc5 10 ♙f1?! 10...♙xc5 11 ♙f1 ♚xc5 12 ♙f1 ♚xc5 13 ♙f1 ♚xc5 14 ♙f1 ♚xc5 15 ♙f1 ♚xc5 16 ♙f1 ♚xc5 17 ♙f1 ♚xc5 18 ♙f1 ♚xc5 19 ♙f1 ♚xc5 20 ♙f1 ♚xc5 21 ♙f1 ♚xc5 22 ♙f1 ♚xc5 23 ♙f1 ♚xc5 24 ♙f1 ♚xc5 25 ♙f1 ♚xc5 26 ♙f1 ♚xc5 27 ♙f1 ♚xc5 28 ♙f1 ♚xc5 29 ♙f1 ♚xc5 30 ♙f1 ♚xc5 31 ♙f1 ♚xc5 32 ♙f1 ♚xc5 33 ♙f1 ♚xc5 34 ♙f1 ♚xc5 35 ♙f1 ♚xc5 36 ♙f1 ♚xc5 37 ♙f1 ♚xc5 38 ♙f1 ♚xc5 39 ♙f1 ♚xc5 40 ♙f1 ♚xc5 41 ♙f1 ♚xc5 42 ♙f1 ♚xc5 43 ♙f1 ♚xc5 44 ♙f1 ♚xc5 45 ♙f1 ♚xc5 46 ♙f1 ♚xc5 47 ♙f1 ♚xc5 48 ♙f1 ♚xc5 49 ♙f1 ♚xc5 50 ♙f1 ♚xc5 51 ♙f1 ♚xc5 52 ♙f1 ♚xc5 53 ♙f1 ♚xc5 54 ♙f1 ♚xc5 55 ♙f1 ♚xc5 56 ♙f1 ♚xc5 57 ♙f1 ♚xc5 58 ♙f1 ♚xc5 59 ♙f1 ♚xc5 60 ♙f1 ♚xc5 61 ♙f1 ♚xc5 62 ♙f1 ♚xc5 63 ♙f1 ♚xc5 64 ♙f1 ♚xc5 65 ♙f1 ♚xc5 66 ♙f1 ♚xc5 67 ♙f1 ♚xc5 68 ♙f1 ♚xc5 69 ♙f1 ♚xc5 70 ♙f1 ♚xc5 71 ♙f1 ♚xc5 72 ♙f1 ♚xc5 73 ♙f1 ♚xc5 74 ♙f1 ♚xc5 75 ♙f1 ♚xc5 76 ♙f1 ♚xc5 77 ♙f1 ♚xc5 78 ♙f1 ♚xc5 79 ♙f1 ♚xc5 80 ♙f1 ♚xc5 81 ♙f1 ♚xc5 82 ♙f1 ♚xc5 83 ♙f1 ♚xc5 84 ♙f1 ♚xc5 85 ♙f1 ♚xc5 86 ♙f1 ♚xc5 87 ♙f1 ♚xc5 88 ♙f1 ♚xc5 89 ♙f1 ♚xc5 90 ♙f1 ♚xc5 91 ♙f1 ♚xc5 92 ♙f1 ♚xc5 93 ♙f1 ♚xc5 94 ♙f1 ♚xc5 95 ♙f1 ♚xc5 96 ♙f1 ♚xc5 97 ♙f1 ♚xc5 98 ♙f1 ♚xc5 99 ♙f1 ♚xc5 100 ♙f1 ♚xc5

Liberating the black pieces. 9 c3, stabilizing the centre, was preferable.

9...♖xc5 10 ♙f1?! 10...♙xc5 11 ♙f1 ♚xc5 12 ♙f1 ♚xc5 13 ♙f1 ♚xc5 14 ♙f1 ♚xc5 15 ♙f1 ♚xc5 16 ♙f1 ♚xc5 17 ♙f1 ♚xc5 18 ♙f1 ♚xc5 19 ♙f1 ♚xc5 20 ♙f1 ♚xc5 21 ♙f1 ♚xc5 22 ♙f1 ♚xc5 23 ♙f1 ♚xc5 24 ♙f1 ♚xc5 25 ♙f1 ♚xc5 26 ♙f1 ♚xc5 27 ♙f1 ♚xc5 28 ♙f1 ♚xc5 29 ♙f1 ♚xc5 30 ♙f1 ♚xc5 31 ♙f1 ♚xc5 32 ♙f1 ♚xc5 33 ♙f1 ♚xc5 34 ♙f1 ♚xc5 35 ♙f1 ♚xc5 36 ♙f1 ♚xc5 37 ♙f1 ♚xc5 38 ♙f1 ♚xc5 39 ♙f1 ♚xc5 40 ♙f1 ♚xc5 41 ♙f1 ♚xc5 42 ♙f1 ♚xc5 43 ♙f1 ♚xc5 44 ♙f1 ♚xc5 45 ♙f1 ♚xc5 46 ♙f1 ♚xc5 47 ♙f1 ♚xc5 48 ♙f1 ♚xc5 49 ♙f1 ♚xc5 50 ♙f1 ♚xc5 51 ♙f1 ♚xc5 52 ♙f1 ♚xc5 53 ♙f1 ♚xc5 54 ♙f1 ♚xc5 55 ♙f1 ♚xc5 56 ♙f1 ♚xc5 57 ♙f1 ♚xc5 58 ♙f1 ♚xc5 59 ♙f1 ♚xc5 60 ♙f1 ♚xc5 61 ♙f1 ♚xc5 62 ♙f1 ♚xc5 63 ♙f1 ♚xc5 64 ♙f1 ♚xc5 65 ♙f1 ♚xc5 66 ♙f1 ♚xc5 67 ♙f1 ♚xc5 68 ♙f1 ♚xc5 69 ♙f1 ♚xc5 70 ♙f1 ♚xc5 71 ♙f1 ♚xc5 72 ♙f1 ♚xc5 73 ♙f1 ♚xc5 74 ♙f1 ♚xc5 75 ♙f1 ♚xc5 76 ♙f1 ♚xc5 77 ♙f1 ♚xc5 78 ♙f1 ♚xc5 79 ♙f1 ♚xc5 80 ♙f1 ♚xc5 81 ♙f1 ♚xc5 82 ♙f1 ♚xc5 83 ♙f1 ♚xc5 84 ♙f1 ♚xc5 85 ♙f1 ♚xc5 86 ♙f1 ♚xc5 87 ♙f1 ♚xc5 88 ♙f1 ♚xc5 89 ♙f1 ♚xc5 90 ♙f1 ♚xc5 91 ♙f1 ♚xc5 92 ♙f1 ♚xc5 93 ♙f1 ♚xc5 94 ♙f1 ♚xc5 95 ♙f1 ♚xc5 96 ♙f1 ♚xc5 97 ♙f1 ♚xc5 98 ♙f1 ♚xc5 99 ♙f1 ♚xc5 100 ♙f1 ♚xc5

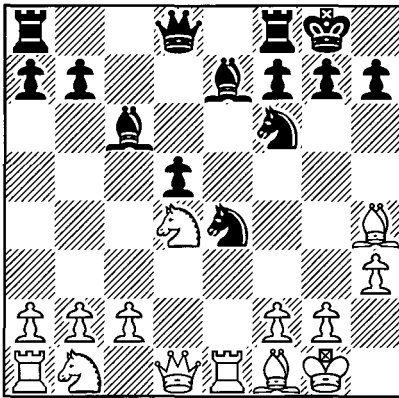
In the IQP structure almost any exchange favours the side playing against it, so 10 ♖g5 or 10 ♜c3 was better, not fearing 10...♜xd3.

10...♞d7 11 ♞g5 ♞c6 12 ♜d4?

Of course the idea of blocking the IQP isn't bad, but in this particular position 12 ♜c3 or 12 ♜bd2 made more sense, in order to play with all the pieces.

12...♜ce4 13 ♞h4?

A rather indifferent move. The correct retreat was 13 ♞e3, and we will soon see the difference.



How to punish White?

Game 85
A.Llamuca-K.Tigrero
 Riobamba 2010
Sicilian Defence, Alapin Variation

1 e4 c5 2 c3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 cxd4 g6

A rather relaxed approach against the Alapin.

5 h3!

A good restrictive move, leaving the bishop on c8 short of a good destiny.

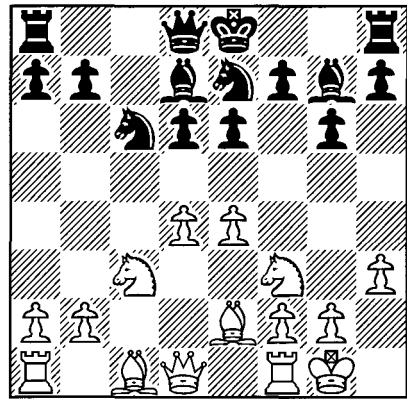
5...♞g7 6 ♜f3 ♞d7?

Here the bishop does not contribute to Black's position in any way, and rather obstructs the other pieces. Not without reason, we are taught to bring out the knights before the bishops, for example with 6...♜f6 in this case.

7 ♜c3 ♜c6 8 ♞e2 e6?

Seeing that 8...♜f6 permits the annoying 9 e5!, Black prepares ...♜ge7. We will soon see the flaw to this idea.

9 0-0 ♜ge7



How to punish Black?

Game 86
J.Sanaguano-B.Rivera
 Macas 2009
Sicilian Defence,
Rossolimo Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 ♜c6 3 ♞b5 g6 4 0-0 ♞g7 5 ♜e1 ♜e5?

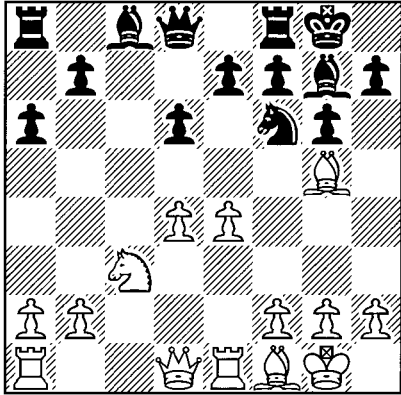
Moving the knight again serves no particular purpose here, and rather slows down Black's development.

6 ♜xe5 ♞xe5 7 c3!

The inherent plan of the Rossolimo: create a pawn centre with d2-d4.

7...a6 8 ♖f1 d6 9 d4 cxd4 10 cxd4 ♙g7 11 ♗c3 ♜f6 12 ♙g5 0-0?!

By the admittedly unsound 12...h6 13 ♙h4 g5 14 ♙g3 0-0 Black could have reached a safer version of the game.



How to punish Black?

Game 87
H.Llamuca-A.Briceno
 Santo Domingo 2010
Bishop's Opening

1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 ♜f6 3 d3 d5?!

A rather risky reply to the Bishop's Opening. Either 3...♗c6 or 3...c6, preparing ...d7-d5, is more common.

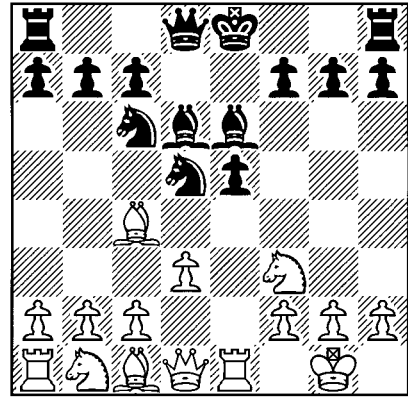
4 exd5 ♜xd5 5 ♜f3 ♗c6 6 0-0 ♙e6?!

Black should prefer the gambit line 6...♙e7 7 ♜e1 ♜b6 8 ♙b3 ♙g4 9 h3 ♙h5 10 g4 ♙g6 11 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 12 ♜xe5 0-0, when White's weakened kingside structure at least implies some compensation for the pawn.

7 ♜e1

Preparing a direct attack on e5. 7 ♜g5 was another good option.

7...♙d6



How to punish Black?

Game 88
E.Perez-L.Paredes
 Riobamba 2010
English Opening

1 ♜f3 ♗c6

Offering a transposition into the Chigorin variation.

2 g3 d6 3 c4 ♜f6 4 ♙g2 ♙e6

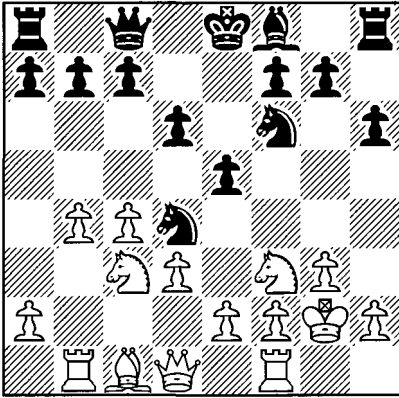
A peculiar idea, aiming to swap the light-squared bishops as soon as possible. Instead, by 4...e5 followed by ...g7-g6 and ...♙g7, he could have steered the game into a standard English.

5 d3 ♜c8 6 0-0

Both here and on the next move, the interfering 6 ♙g5 was interesting as well, while 6 h3 would also cast some doubts on Black's idea.

6...♙h3 7 ♗c3 ♙xg2 8 ♜xg2 h6 9 ♜b1 e5 10 b4 ♜d4?

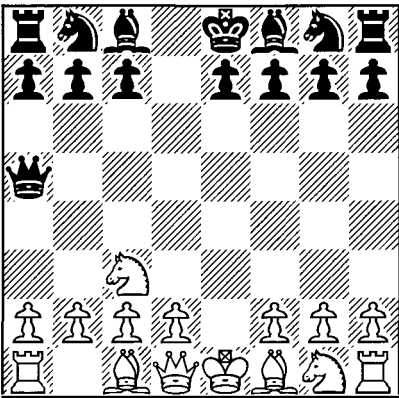
Without any obvious need, Black moves the knight again. 10...♙e7, followed by ...0-0, was much better, waiting with the knight move until White goes b4-b5.



Well, how to punish Black?

Game 89
J. Calderon-A. Chang
 Tena 2008
Scandinavian Defence

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 ♖xd5 3 ♘c3 ♗a5



4 g3

An interesting sideline against the Scandinavian, which leaves the bishop rather well placed on g2.

4...♘f6 5 ♖g2 ♖g4 6 ♘f3 ♘c6
 6...c6 is a more solid choice.

7 h3

The immediate 7 0-0 would permit the annoying 7...♗h5.

7...♖h5 8 0-0 e6 9 d3 ♖xf3?

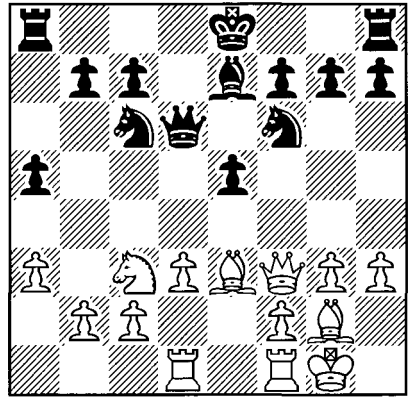
An incomprehensible exchange; the simple 9...♖e7, followed by ...0-0, was much better.

10 ♗xf3 ♖e7 11 ♖d2 ♗c5

Of course there was nothing wrong with 11...0-0. Chang somehow forgets about castling in this game.

12 ♖e3 ♗d6 13 a3 a5 14 ♖ad1 e5?

Black doesn't sense the danger. 14...0-0 was called for.



How to punish Black?

Game 90
J. Sanaguano-A. Vallejo
 Riobamba 2010
Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 ♖d3 ♘c6 5 c3
 ♘f6 6 h3

In this, Fischer's old pet line against the Caro, 6 ♖f4 is considered the most accurate move, in order to avoid Black's next.

6...e5 7 dxe5 ♘xe5

Mastering Opening Strategy

In exchange for the IQP, Black has quite an easy development for his minor pieces.

8 ♖c2

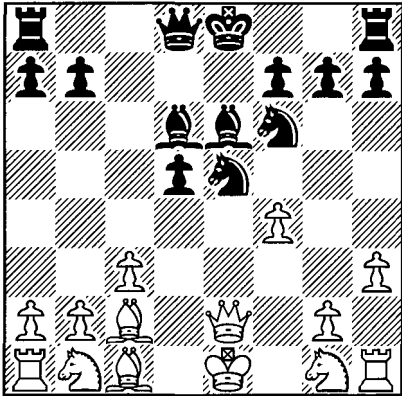
A more critical try is 8 ♗e2 ♗e7 9 ♖b5+ in order to swap pieces. In the game White applies this idea one move later, which will make a big difference.

8...♖e6 9 ♗e2?!

Better was 9 ♖f3, speeding up development, but White is on a material hunt.

9...♖d6! 10 f4?!

Consistent with his plan. Again 10 ♖f3 was called for.



How to punish White?

Game 91
J.Szekely-G.Breyer
 Budapest 1913
Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♖c3 e5 4 dxe5 d4 5 ♖b1?!

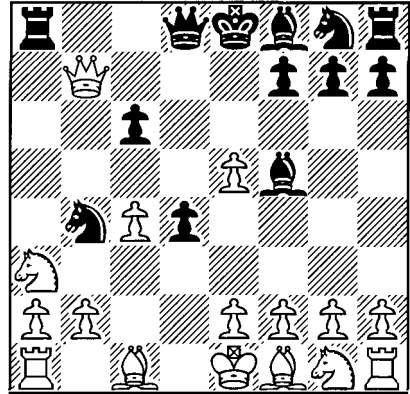
Returning home doesn't seem right in this fluid position. Nowadays, 5 ♖e4 is a much more popular way of meeting Black's gambit.

5...♖f5 6 ♗b3?

Hunting pawns at a very early stage of

the game. 6 ♖f3 was better of course.

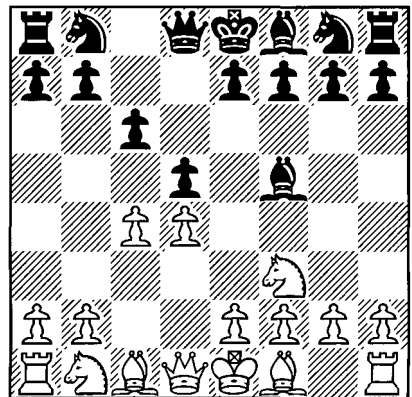
6...♖a6! 7 ♗xb7? ♖b4 8 ♖a3 ♗b8 9 ♗xa7 ♗a8 10 ♗b7



How to punish White?

Game 92
H.Caro-Em.Lasker
 Berlin 1890
Baltic Defence

1 ♖f3 d5 2 d4 ♖f5 3 c4 c6?!



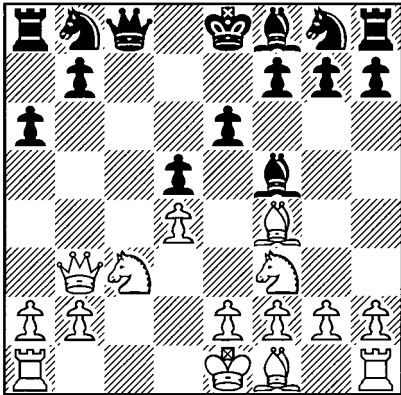
Later, 3...e6 was discovered to be the right move; e.g. 4 ♗b3 ♖c6! 5 ♖d2 (or 5 ♗xb7 ♖b4) 5...♗b8 with complex play.

4 ♖b3?! ♜c8?!

Correct was 4...♖b6! 5 cxd5 ♙xb1! 6 ♙xb1 ♖xb3 7 axb3 cxd5 with equality – Neishtadt. For this reason, 4 cxd5! cxd5 5 ♖b3 was a more precise move order for White, when 5...♖b6 simply drops a pawn to 6 ♖xd5.

5 cxd5 cxd5 6 ♖c3 e6 7 ♙f4 a6?!

Both 7...♖f6 8 ♖b5 and 7...♖a6 8 e4!, followed by 9 ♙b5+, were disastrous for Black – Neishtadt. Instead, 7...♖c6 8 ♖b5 ♙b4+ 9 ♖d1! ♙f8! would perhaps offer more resistance, although 10 ♙c1 keeps a clear initiative for White.



How to punish Black?

Game 93
Atanasov-Rodriguez
correspondence 1982
French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 c3 ♖c6 5 ♖f3 ♗ge7
6 ♗a3 ♙d7

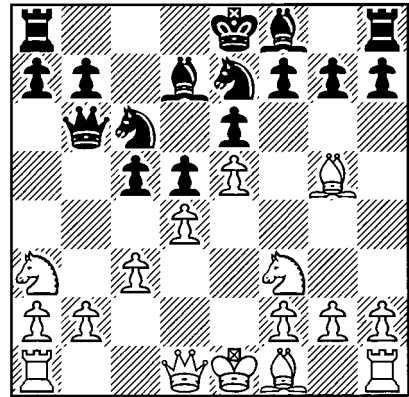
This bishop move often makes sense in the Advance Variation, although on the present occasion, 6...cxd4 7 cxd4 ♖f5 is more usual.

7 ♙g5!?

Setting up the dangerous threat of 7 ♖b5. A more methodical choice is 7 ♖c2, followed by ♙d3.

7...♖b6?

Aware that both 7...h6? and 7...cxd4? run into 8 ♖b5, Black unpins his knight, but this soon leads him into new difficulties. 7...a6, preventing ♖b5, was correct; e.g. 8 dxc5 ♖c7 9 ♙f4 ♗g6 – Neishtadt.



How to punish Black?

Game 94
B.Lalic-B.Laurent
Metz 2007
Benoni Defence

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♖c3 c5 4 d5 d6 5 e4 exd5
6 cxd5

At this point, most Benoni players play 6...g6 without any thinking, but Laurent has an independent idea in mind.

6...a6?!

By means of the “threat” of ...b7-b5 Black aims to provoke 7 a4, when after 7...g6 he has managed to sidestep the sharp line 7 f4 ♙g7 8 ♙b5+. However, Lalic has

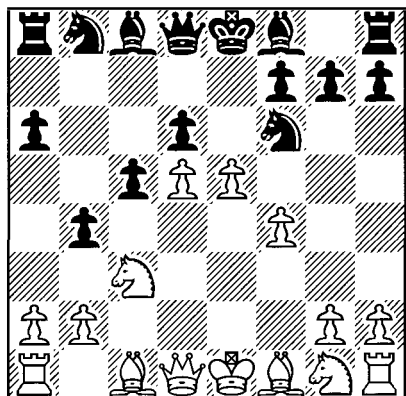
other intentions.

7 f4! b5?!

7...♖e7 was preferable, trying to stop e4-e5 – Baburin.

8 e5 b4?

A fatal miscalculation. For better or worse, Black had to try 8...♖e7 9 ♖e2 ♜fd7.



How to punish Black?

Game 95
W.Lombardy-V.Smyslov
Teesside 1975
Vienna Game

1 e4 e5 2 ♜c3 ♜f6 3 f4 d5 4 d3?!

An insipid version of the Vienna Game. 4 fxe5 ♜xe4 5 ♜f3 or 5 ♖f3 is more to the point.

4...exf4 5 e5?

A lesser evil was 5 ♙xf4, speeding up development.

5...d4!

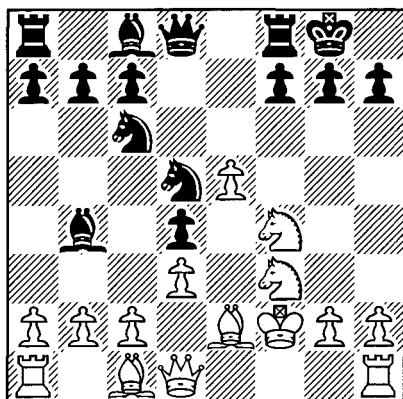
By this counterblow Black grabs the initiative. 5...♜g4 6 ♙xf4 was less ambitious.

6 ♜ce2 ♜d5 7 ♜xf4 ♙b4+!

An annoying check, now that the natural 8 ♙d2 runs into 8...♜e3.

8 ♙f2 ♜c6 9 ♜f3 0-0 10 ♙e2

With his last two moves White is finally taking care of his development, but it is a bit too late.



How to punish White?

Game 96
W.Lange-E.J.Diemer
Weidenau 1937
Dutch Defence

1 d4 f5 2 c4 e6 3 e3

A rather passive set-up against the Dutch. More popular is 3 g3 and 4 ♙g2, taking command of the long diagonal, while the c1-h6 diagonal remains open for the other bishop.

3...d5

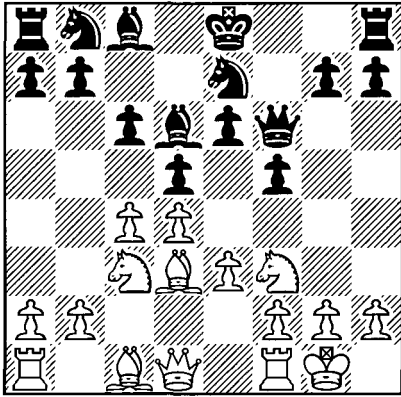
Setting up the Stonewall. Another good option was 3...♜f6, followed by ...b7-b6 and ...♙b7, exploiting the fact that with his third move White practically discarded a kingside fianchetto.

4 ♙d3 c6 5 ♜f3 ♙d6 6 0-0 ♖f6

6...♜f6 seems more natural, enabling a future...♜e4, which is a key idea in the present structure.

7 ♖c3 ♗e7?

Not every developing move is of equal value. 7...♗h6 was preferable.



How to punish Black?

Game 97
G.Bastrikov-I.Kogan
 Minsk 1971
Sicilian Defence, Najdorf Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 ♗f6 5 ♖c3 a6 6 ♗g5 e6 7 ♖f3

Preparing a quick 0-0-0. The main option in this heavily debated Najdorf line is 7 f4.

7...♗bd7

There is an argument in favour of including 7...h6 8 ♗h4 – then White's ninth move in the game becomes impossible due to ...g7-g5.

8 0-0-0 ♖c7 9 ♖g3 b5 10 ♗d3 ♗b7 11 ♖he1

After just 11 moves, White has concluded development and is now ready for an attack on Black's king.

11...h6?

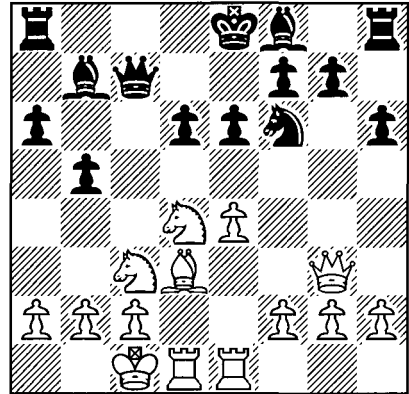
This move is badly timed. 11...♗e7, getting on with development, was preferable.

12 ♗xf6

Exchanging a main defender and gaining time for the attack.

12...♗xf6?

A big mistake. After 12...gxf6 13 ♖h3, intending 14 ♗xe6, Black is under some pressure, but the game will present him with worse problems.



How to punish Black?

Game 98
Bugay-Malkin
 Baranovichi 1971
Sicilian Defence, Taimanov Variation

1 c4 e6 2 ♗c3 c5 3 e4 ♗c6 4 ♗f3 ♗f6 5 d4 cxd4 6 ♗xd4 ♗b4

The most active choice, immediately challenging White's Maroczy Bind.

7 f3?!

Bugay proceeds as if nothing had happened. 7 ♗xc6 bxc6 8 ♗d3, followed by 0-0, is preferable in order to speed up development.

7...d5!

Refuting White's opening play.

8 cxd5 exd5 9 ♖b5

After 9 ♖g5 h6 10 ♖h4 dxe4 11 ♗xc6 ♜xd1+ and 12...bxc6 Black also has an excellent game.

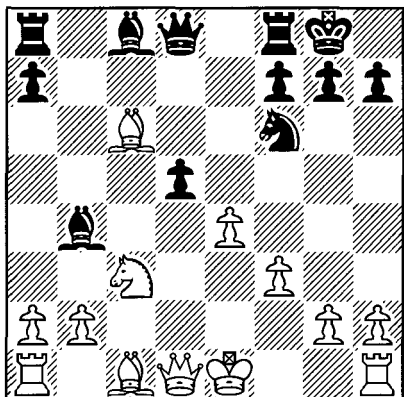
9...0-0!

Sacrificing a pawn to speed up development. 9...♗d7?! 10 ♖xc6 bxc6 11 e5 is less promising.

10 ♗xc6?!

Too materialistic. 10 0-0 was called for; e.g. 10...♗c5 11 ♖xc6 dxe4 12 ♖e3 bxc6 13 ♗xe4 and White is still alive.

10...bxc6 11 ♖xc6



How to punish White?

Game 99
G.Sax-L.Hazai
 Hungarian Championship,
 Budapest 1974
Alekhine's Defence

1 e4 ♗f6 2 e5 ♗d5 3 d4 d6 4 ♗f3 ♖g4 5 ♖e2 e6

Quite a solid branch of the Alekhine.

6 0-0 ♖e7 7 h3 ♖h5 8 c4 ♗b6 9 ♗c3 dxe5?!

At this point Black must already have been thinking about snatching a pawn on

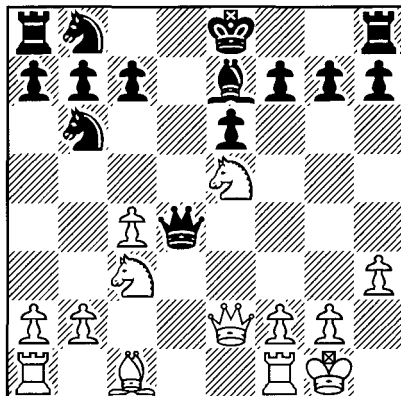
move 11 – otherwise he would have no reason to refrain from the natural 9...0-0.

10 ♗xe5 ♖xe2 11 ♜xe2!

White has seen that the d4-pawn is poisoned. 11 ♗xe2?! was less inspiring.

11...♜xd4?

Consistent, but... losing. Black should have settled for 11...0-0, followed by ...♗d7, with a cramped but solid position.



How to punish Black?

Game 100
I.Boleslavsky-G.Stoltz
 Saltsjöbaden Interzonal 1948
Spanish Opening

1 e4 e5 2 ♗f3 ♗c6 3 ♖b5 a6 4 ♖a4 ♗f6 5 0-0 ♗xe4 6 d4 b5 7 ♖b3 d5 8 dxe5 ♖e6

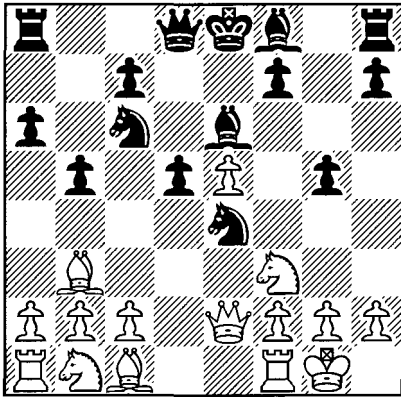
We have reached an initial position of the Open Spanish.

9 ♜e2

A somewhat outdated line. Nowadays White usually continues either 9 ♗bd2 or 9 c3. After the text, 9...♖e7 or 9...♖c5, with 10...0-0 next, yields Black a solid game, but Stoltz finds a more “active” idea...

9...g5?

Gaining space and preparing ...g5-g4 with a fight for the centre, but the king is irreparably weakened by this flank advance.



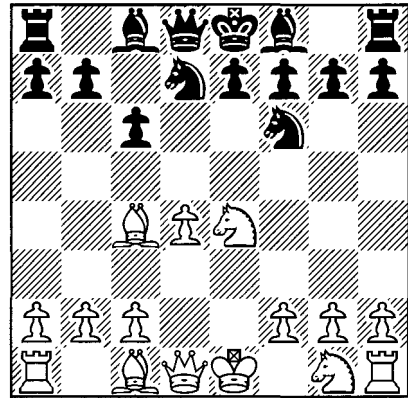
How to punish Black?

Black takes the first step to a Hedgehog formation with ...♟b7, ...d7-d6, ...♞bd7 etc, but in this case 5...d6 or 5...a6 was more advisable.

How to punish Black?

Game 102
E.Sutovsky-A.Bykhovsky
 Tel Aviv 1995
Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♞d2 dxex4 4 ♞xe4 ♞d7 5 ♟c4 ♞gf6



6 ♞xf6+

A somewhat less aggressive continuation than the usual 6 ♞g5 e6 7 ♞e2, when both knights are kept on the board for a future attack.

6...♞xf6 7 c3 e6

With this move, the game takes upon a French-like character. While 7...♟f5? or 7...♟g4? failed to 8 ♞b3, the elastic 7...♞c7 is a more popular choice, delaying ...e7-e6 or ...♟f5(g4) in accordance with White's next move.

8 ♞f3 c5 9 0-0 a6

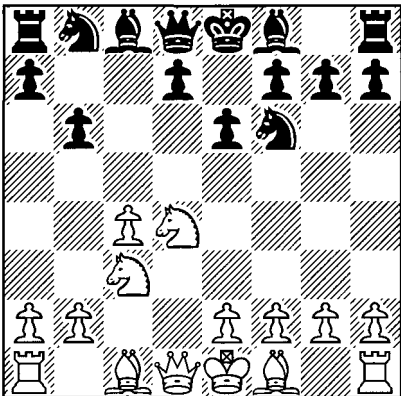
A useful move on many occasions. For

Game 101
P.Ricardi-H.Lopez Silva
 Pinamar 2004
English Opening

1 d4 ♞f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♞c3 c5 4 ♞f3

White turns down the invitation to a Benoni with 4 d5, and heads for the English.

4...cxd4 5 ♞xd4 b6?

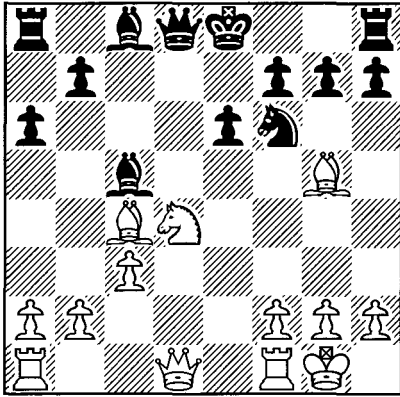


Mastering Opening Strategy

example, after a later ...c5xd4, ♖xd4, Black can play ...♖c7 without worrying about ♖b5.

10 ♖g5 cxd4 11 ♖xd4 ♖c5?

This apparently active move turns out to have a serious flaw. 11...♖e7 12 ♖e2 0-0 13 ♖ad1 ♖c7 was preferable, although White seems to be a tempo up compared with analogous positions in the French Tarrasch with 3...c5 4 exd5 ♖xd5.



How to punish Black?

Game 103 V.Ivanchuk-A.Shirov Wijk aan Zee 2001 Sicilian Defence, Najdorf Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♖xd4 ♖f6 5 ♖c3 a6 6 ♖e3 ♖g4

A very popular way of interfering with White's English Attack.

7 ♖g5 h6 8 ♖h4 g5 9 ♖g3 ♖g7

In exchange for his exposed kingside structure Black enjoys decent dark-square control.

10 h3 ♖f6

10...♖e5 is a popular alternative, pre-

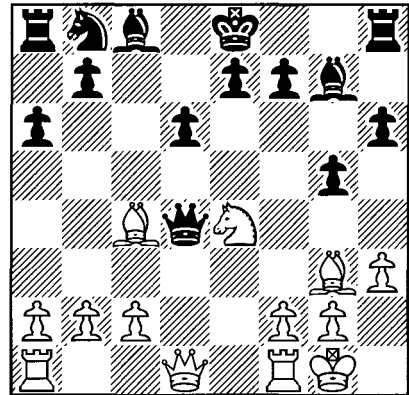
venting White's next move in the game.

11 ♖c4 ♖b6 12 0-0 ♖xe4?

This pawn soon turns out to be poisoned. Ivanchuk analyses 12...0-0 13 ♖f5!? ♖xf5 14 exf5 ♖xb2 15 ♖d5 ♖xd5 16 ♖xd5 with compensation for the pawn, but this certainly looks like a better deal for Black than the game continuation. As for snatching the other pawn by 12...♖xb2, after 13 ♖d3 ♖a3 14 ♖ad1 ♖d7 15 e5! dxe5 16 ♖xe5 ♖c6 17 ♖xc6!? ♖xc6 18 ♖fe1 White counts on a clear initiative – Pikula.

13 ♖xe4 ♖xd4

Or 13...♖xd4 14 ♖h5! winning – Ivanchuk.



How to punish Black?

Game 104 M.Oratovsky-N.Sulava Biel 1996 Sicilian Defence, Kan Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 e6 3 c4 b6 4 ♖c3 ♖b7 5 d4

White finally agrees to an Open Sicilian.

5...cxd4 6 ♖xd4 a6 7 ♖e2 ♖c7 8 f4!?

Quite an aggressive choice. With 8 ♖e3 ♖f6 9 f3 White could have set up a stan-

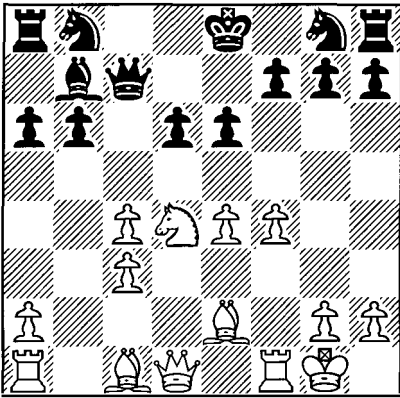
dard Maroczy Bind.

8...♗b4

8...♗f6 9 e5 ♘e4 10 ♖xe4 ♗xe4, followed by ...♗c6, was safer, not yet defining the destiny of the other bishop.

9 0-0 ♗xc3 10 bxc3 d6?

This indifferent move will be violently refuted in the game. 10...♗xe4 11 ♗a3 also looks promising for White, whereas by 10...♗f6!? 11 e5 ♘e4, followed by ...♗c6, Black could have obtained some counter-play on the light squares.



How to punish Black?

Game 105
St.Schneider-C.Olsson
Swedish Team
Championship 2006
Benoni Defence

1 d4 ♗f6 2 ♗f3 c5 3 d5 e6 4 ♗c3

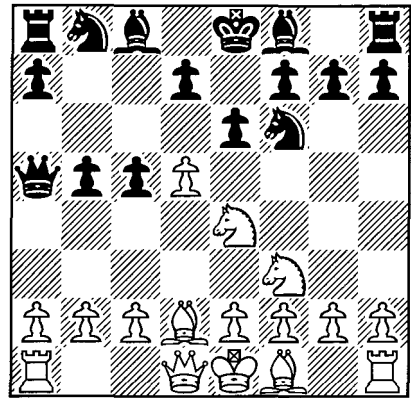
After 4 c4 the game would have transposed to the Benoni, but White prefers a set-up based on swift development.

4...♔a5?!

This and Black's following move make a strange impression. 4...exd5 5 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 6

♗xd5 ♗e7, followed by ...0-0 and d7-d6, would have been a normal continuation.

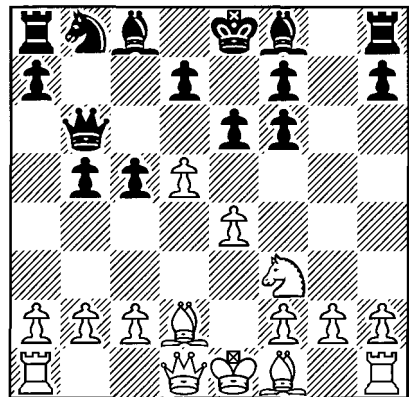
5 ♗d2 b5? 6 ♗e4!



White parries the threat of 6...b4 in advance and prepares the exchange of Black's only active minor piece.

6...♗b6 7 ♗xf6+ gxf6 8 e4!

Reinforcing the centre and enabling further kingside development.



8...♗g8 9 c4 bxc4

Or 9...b4 10 g3, followed by ♗g2 and 0-0, with a comfortable game for White.

10 ♗c3!

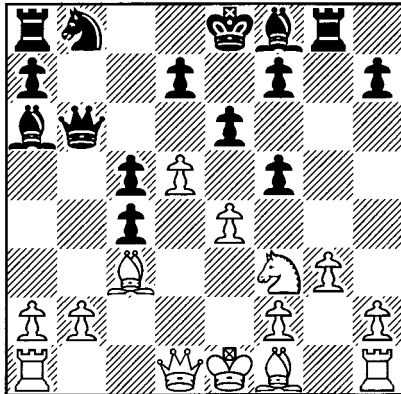
An excellent post for the bishop now that ...b5-b4 is no longer possible.

10...♙a6

This deprives the knight of its supposed destiny, but after 10...♙b7 11 g3 ♘a6 12 ♙xc4 ♘c7 13 0-0 White also has the upper hand.

11 g3 f5?

Suicide – despite a lagging development and the king in the centre, Black opens the position.



How to punish Black?

Game 106
B.Spassky-Avtonomov
 Leningrad 1949
Queen's Gambit Accepted

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘f3 ♗f6 4 e3 a6 5 ♙xc4 e6 6 0-0 c5

An standard position of the Queen's Gambit Accepted has been reached.

7 ♖e2 ♘c6

Nowadays, 7...b5 8 ♙b3 ♙b7 is more popular, with the queen's knight heading for d7.

8 ♘c3 b5 9 ♙b3 cxd4?!

This capture facilitates White's plans, now that both the e-file and the c1-h6 di-

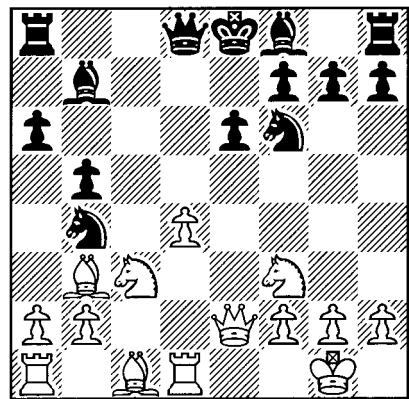
agonal are opened for his pieces. More flexible continuations are 9...♙e7 10 ♖d1 ♗c7 and 9...♘a5 10 ♙c2 ♙b7.

10 ♖d1 ♙b7?

A natural move, but one that soon leads Black into huge difficulties. 10...d3 11 ♖xd3 ♗c7 12 e4 ♙e7 13 ♘d5! is known to favour White, so 10...♘a5 was a safer choice, harassing the dangerous bishop on b3.

11 exd4 ♘b4

An attempt to overprotect the vital d5-square. 11...♙e7 runs into 12 d5!, while after 11...♘a5 12 d5! ♘xb3 13 dxe6 ♗xd1+ 14 ♘xd1 ♘xa1 15 exf7+ ♗xf7 16 ♘g5+ White's attack was decisive in P.H.Nielsen-E.Bentzen, Danish Team Championship 2001.



How to punish Black?

Game 107
B.Lalic-K.Hulak
 Pula 1996
English Opening

1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 g3 d5 4 ♙g2 dxc4

Another option is 4...♙e7 5 0-0 0-0, when White can play a Reti with 6 b3 or enter the Catalan after 6 d4.

5 ♖a4+ ♜bd7

The alternative was a Meran set-up with 5...c6 6 ♖xc4 b5 7 ♖c2 ♙b7, followed by ...♜bd7 and ...c6-c5.

6 ♖xc4 c5 7 ♖b3 ♜b8 8 d3 ♙d6 9 a4 b6

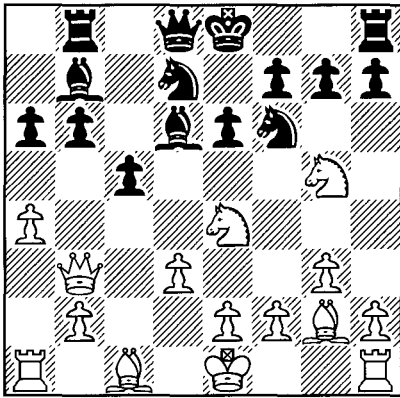
After preparing twice for this move (both 7...b6? 8 ♜e5 and 8...b6? 9 ♙f4 were premature) Black is finally ready to deploy the queen's bishop on the long diagonal.

10 ♜c3 a6 11 ♜g5!? ♙b7

Black avoids the trap 11...0-0? 12 ♜xe6.

12 ♜ce4

Starting active operations with both knights.



How do you defend with Black?

Game 108
E.Mnatsakanian-V.Simagin
 Kiev 1965
Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 ♜c3 d5 3 d4 dxe4 4 ♜xe4 ♜f6 5 ♜xf6+ exf6 6 ♙c4 ♙e7

6...♙d6 is more active.

7 ♖h5

Quite a straightforward approach. 7 ♜e2 is more flexible.

7...0-0 8 ♜e2 g6 9 ♖h6 ♙f5!

Development with tempo.

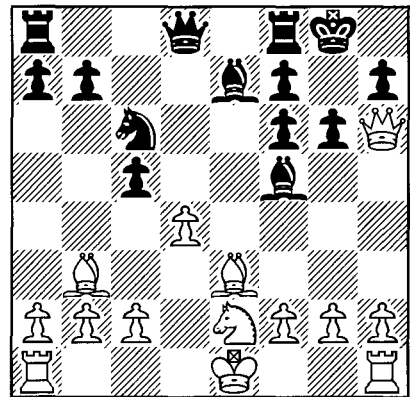
10 ♙b3

After 10 c3 ♜e8 11 ♙e3 ♙f8 12 ♖h4 b5 13 ♙b3 ♜d7, followed by ...♜b6-d5, Black is also fine.

10...c5!

Being slightly ahead in development, Black is happy to open up the game. Now 11 dxc5 ♜a6, followed by ...♜xc5, just helps his case, so White prefers to bring one more piece into the battle.

11 ♙e3 ♜c6



Evaluate 12 0-0-0.

Game 109
E.Postny-J.Shahade
 Budapest 2003
King's Indian Defence

1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 g6 3 f3

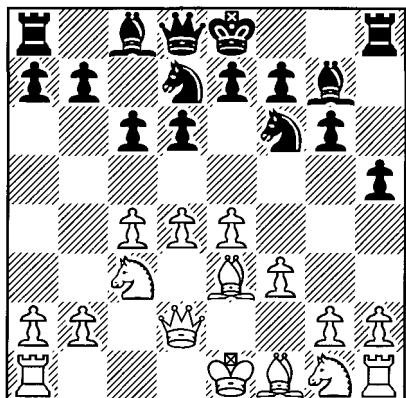
White avoids the mainline Grünfeld arising after 3 ♜c3 d5 and invites a Sämisch King's Indian.

3...♙g7

Black accepts the proposal. By 3...d5 he could have stayed in Grünfeld waters, while

the gambit 3...e5!? 4 dx e5 ♖h5 has its supporters too.

4 e4 d6 5 ♘c3 ♙bd7 6 ♙e3 c6 7 ♚d2 h5



A double-edged advance – Black rules out ♙e3-h6 but also weakens his kingside structure. 7...e5 is more common, or 7...a6, preparing ...b7-b5.

8 0-0-0 ♜a5 9 ♚b1 a6 10 ♘h3 b5 11 ♙f2 ♙b7?!

11...♙b6!? was more active – Postny.

12 f4!

The time is right for central expansion, now that Black's reply 12...♘g4 has been neutralized.

12...b4 13 ♘e2 c5 14 d5

14 e5?! ♙e4 and Black is fine – Postny.

14...♜c7 15 ♘g1!

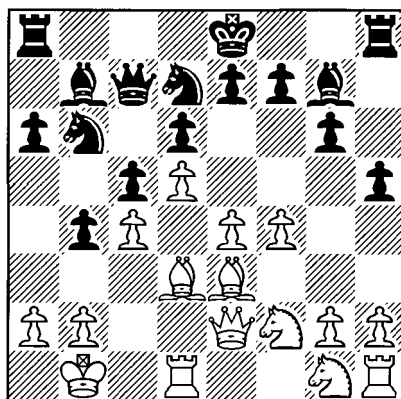
A nice regrouping. The knight is heading for f3 in order to support the e4-e5 advance, while the bishop reaches d3.

15...♙b6 16 ♙d3 ♘fd7

Now the immediate 17 ♘f3? permits 17...♘a4, so White first enables the prophylactic retreat ♙c1.

17 ♜e2 (see following diagram)

Which do you prefer, 17...0-0-0 or 17...0-0, and for what reason?



Game 110

N.Mikkelsen-A.Mohammadi

Lund 2005

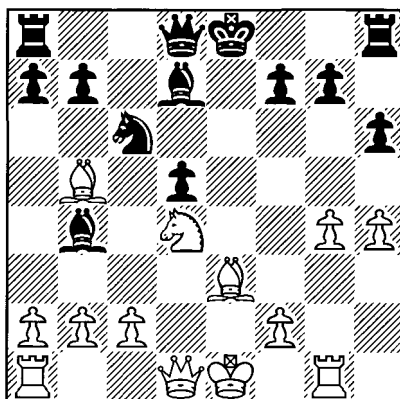
Sicilian Defence,

Scheveningen Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♘f6 5 ♙c3 d6 6 g4 h6 7 h4 ♙c6 8 ♚g1 d5

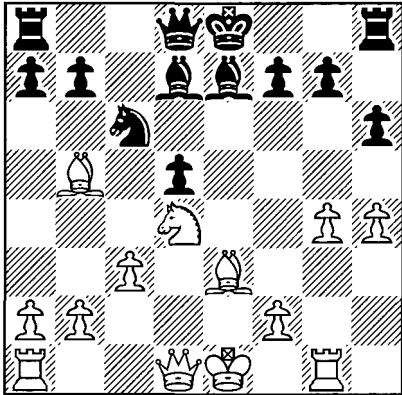
A logical reply to the Keres Attack – Black responds to the flank aggression with action in the centre.

9 ♙b5 ♙d7 10 exd5 ♘xd5 11 ♘xd5 exd5 12 ♙e3 ♙b4+!?



It is not really clear what Black gains by provoking c2-c3, but it worked well for him in the game! 12...♙e7 is the main option in this rather well-researched position.

13 c3 ♙e7

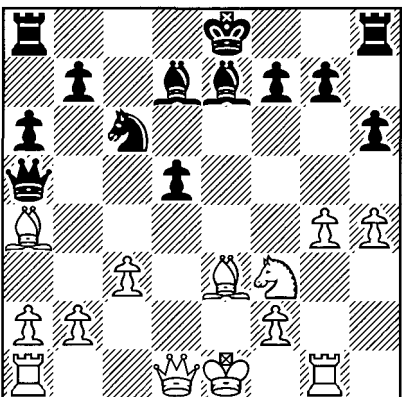


14 ♘f3?!

Retreating the knight from its great post in the centre. More logical was 14 g5, getting on with the kingside expansion, or 14 ♖d2 preparing 0-0-0, without bothering about the h4-pawn.

14...a6 15 ♙a4 ♗a5

Protecting the d5-pawn and enabling a future ...0-0-0.

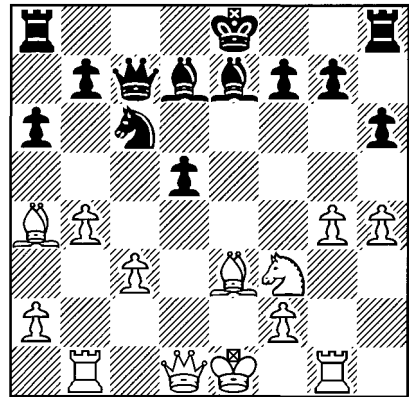


16 b4?!

When White starts pushing his pawns on both flanks in the Sicilian, he often ends up being punished in the centre. Preferable was 16 ♙b3 ♙e6 17 ♗c2, followed by 0-0-0, in order to conclude development – Eriksson.

16...♗c7 17 ♖b1

After 17 ♗xd5?! 0-0-0, followed by ...♗he8, Black has great compensation for the pawn.



How do you continue with Black?

Game 111
S.Ernst-R.Miedema
 Dutch Championship,
 Haaksbergen 2009
Ragozin Defence

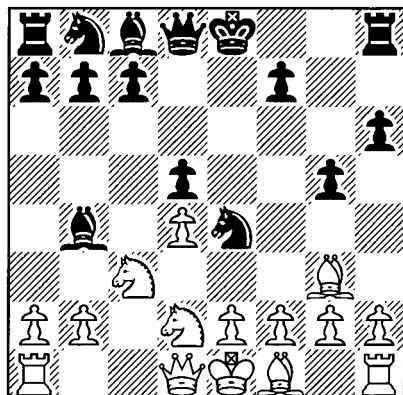
1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 d4 ♙b4

Reaching an initial position of the Ragozin Defence.

5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♙g5 h6

Immediately challenging the enemy bishop. Another way to play the Ragozin is 6...♗bd7 7 e3 c5 8 ♙d3 ♗a5 9 ♗c2 c4 10 ♙f5 0-0 11 0-0 ♗e8, intending ...♙xc3 and ...♘e4.

7 ♖h4 g5 8 ♙g3 ♗e4 9 ♗d2!



Sacrificing a pawn in order to challenge the knight on e4. In contrast, after 9 ♖c1?! h5! Black is even playing for an advantage.

9...♗xg3

Black turns down the offer. After 9...♗xc3 10 bxc3 ♙xc3 11 ♖c1 a sharp position arises, which has been heavily debated in recent games.

10 hxg3 ♙e6 11 ♖c2 c6 12 a3 ♙f8

The idea of regrouping the bishop to g7 is rather slow. 12...♙e7 might have been better.

13 e4! dxe4?!

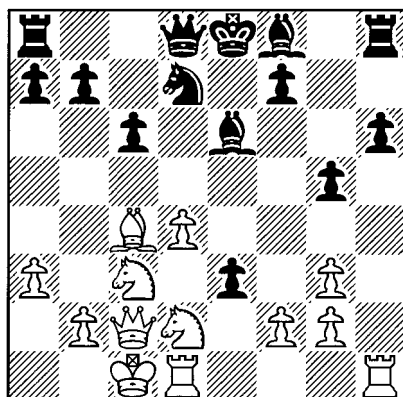
Being behind in development Black shouldn't open the position. Either 13...♗d7 or 13...♙g7 was preferable – Baburin.

14 0-0-0 ♗d7 15 ♙c4!?

Instead of recovering the pawn at once, White looks for a bishop exchange that will strengthen his control of the light squares.

15...e3?

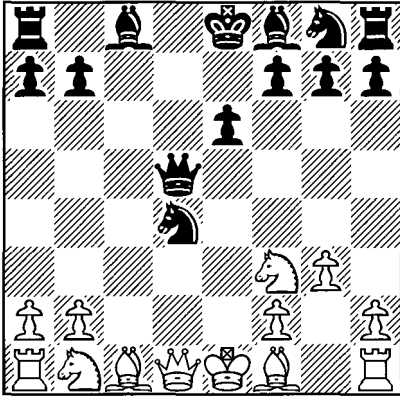
An unfortunate intermediate move. 15...♙e7, preparing ...0-0-0, was Black's last chance – Baburin.



How to punish Black?

Solutions

Game 75 (continued)



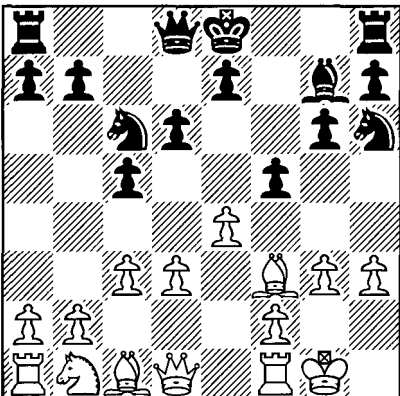
8 ♖xd4 ♗xf3 9 ♜b5+!

The black king is invited to a fatal walk.

9...♙e7 10 ♗c5+ ♙f6

Or 10...♙d8 11 ♗xf8+. At this point White played 11 ♜g5+? and went on to lose the game. But he could have mated his opponent with 11 ♗g5.

Game 76 (continued)



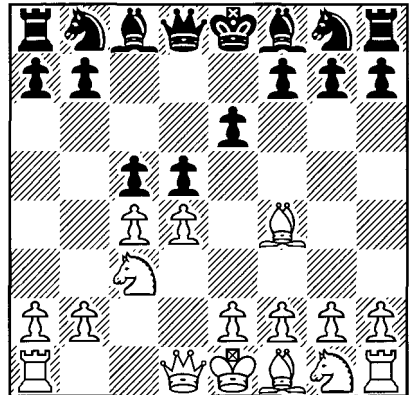
10 ♜xh6!

The game continued 10 exf5?! ♜xf5 and Black had fewer problems.

10...♜xh6 11 exf5

With a huge advantage, now that 11...gxf5? loses a piece after 12 ♜xc6+! bxc6 13 ♗h5+.

Game 77 (continued)



4...cxd4!

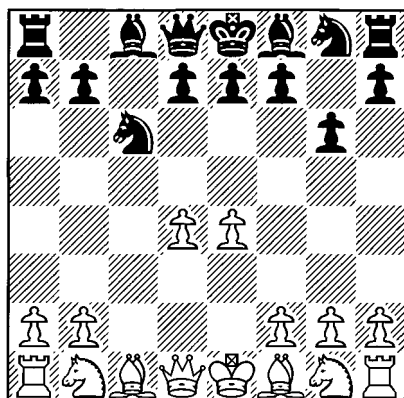
Fighting for the centre. In contrast, the game saw 4...dxc4?! 5 e3, followed by ♜xc4, with equal chances.

5 ♗xd4 ♜c6 6 ♗d1 d4!

Black is clearly better; e.g. 7 ♜e4 e5 8 ♜d2 f5 9 ♜g3 ♜f6 with the strong threat 10...f4.

Game 78 (continued)

(see following diagram)



5 d5! ♖b8 6 ♜d4!

The game went 6 ♘c3?! ♕g7 and Black had fewer troubles.

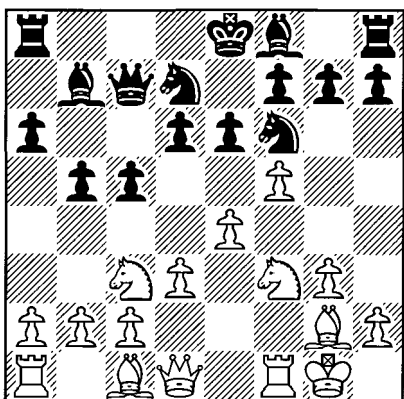
6...♗f6

Or 6...f6 7 ♘c3, followed by ♗f3, ♕c4, 0-0 etc.

7 e5 ♗h5 8 ♗f3

With a pleasant advantage; e.g. 8...f6 9 exf6 ♗xf6 10 ♕c4 ♕g7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♘c3 a6 13 a4 ♖h8 14 ♜h4 d6 15 ♜e1 ♕g4 16 ♗g5 ♕f5 17 ♗ce4, intensifying the attack, as in the game D.Rosandic-Z.Matanovic, Bosnjaci 2003.

Game 79 (continued)



10 fxe6 fxe6 11 ♗g5!

The knight reaches e6 with devastating effect.

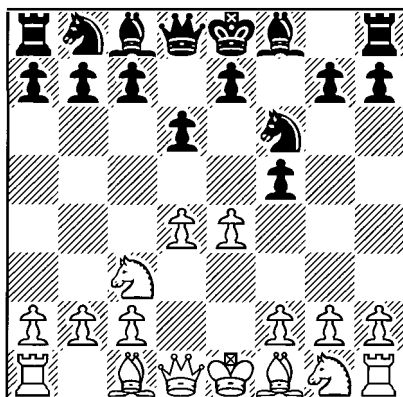
11...e5

11...♖e7?! 12 ♕h3 is even worse for Black.

12 ♗e6 ♜c8 13 ♗d5

With a huge advantage thanks to the powerful knight on e6, which paralyzes the enemy camp. White later won.

Game 80 (continued)



4 exf5!

This, admittedly, helps Black's development but, more importantly, it facilitates an attack on the weakened light squares in his camp. In the same spirit, 4 ♕d3 is also strong. In contrast the game saw 4 e5? dxe5 5 dxe5 ♜xd1+ 6 ♗xd1 ♗fd7 7 ♗f3 ♗c6 with rough equality.

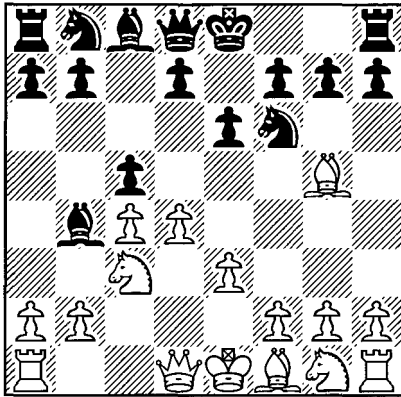
4...♕xf5 5 ♕d3!

Simple and strong: the exchange of these bishops will make the weakness on e6 more strongly felt.

5...♜d7 6 ♗f3

Preparing 0-0 and ♜e1. Black's position already looks difficult; e.g. 6...♗c6 7 0-0 0-0 8 d5! ♗b4 9 ♕xf5 ♜xf5 10 ♗d4, heading for e6.

Game 81 (continued)



5...♖a5!

Creating threats of 6...♙xc3+ and 6...♘e4.

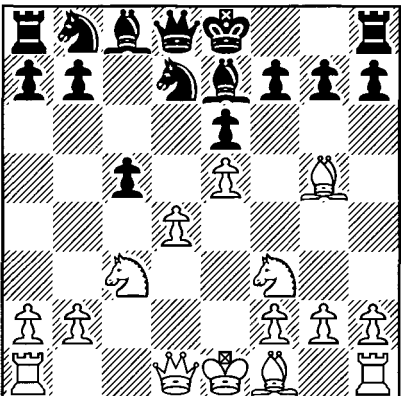
6 ♙xf6

After 6 ♗c2 cxd4 7 ♙xf6 dxc3 8 ♙xc3 ♙xc3+ 9 ♗xc3 ♗xc3+ 10 bxc3 d6 the end-game is clearly favourable for Black.

6...♙xc3+ 7 bxc3 ♗xc3+ 8 ♚e2 gxf6 9 ♖c1 ♗a5

Thanks to the extra pawn and the exposed white king, Black is clearly better. The game continued 10 ♗c2 cxd4 11 exd4 ♘c6 12 ♘f3 d5 13 g3 e5! with a strong initiative.

Game 82 (continued)



9 ♙xe7 ♗xe7

Or 9...♙xe7 10 d5! with a clear initiative.

10 ♘b5!

With a nasty double threat at c7 and d6. This idea is also seen in some lines of the French; e.g. 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♙g5 ♙e7 5 e5 ♘fd7 6 ♙xe7 ♗xe7 7 f4 c5?! 8 ♘b5!

In contrast, the game continued 10 ♘b5?! a6 11 ♙xd7+ ♙xd7 12 ♘e4 cxd4 13 ♘d6+ ♙f8 14 0-0 ♘c6 with rather unclear play.

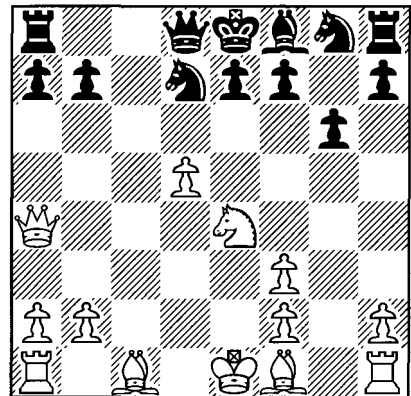
10...♘a6

Or 10...0-0 11 ♘c7 ♘xe5 12 ♘xa8 ♘xf3+ 13 ♗xf3 cxd4 14 ♗a3!, neutralizing Black's counterplay.

11 ♘d6+ ♙f8 12 ♙xa6 bxa6 13 dxc5

With a huge advantage, now that 13...♘xc5? fails to 14 ♖c1.

Game 83 (continued)



11 ♙h3!

One of several good choices, increasing the pressure at d7.

Also interesting was 11 ♙g5!? setting up the threat 12 ♘d6; e.g. 11...♙g7 12 ♘d6+ ♙f8 13 ♘xb7 ♗c7 14 ♗c6 with some advantage; as well as 11 d6!? exd6 12 ♙c4

Mastering Opening Strategy

♙e7 13 0-0, when 13...♘g6? fails to 14 ♘xf6+ ♙xf6 15 ♙h6, followed by ♚fe1+.

In contrast, the game went 11 ♙b5 a6! 12 ♙g5?? (12 ♙xd7+ ♚xd7 13 ♚d4! was correct, keeping the initiative) 12...axb5 13 ♘d6+ exd6 14 ♙xd8 bxa4 and Black won.

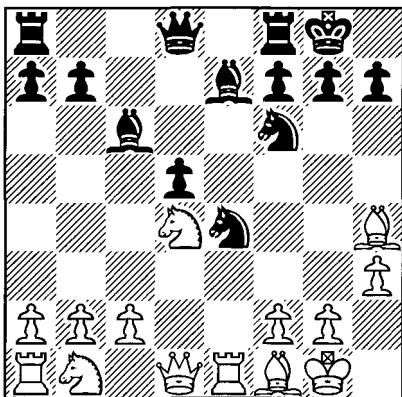
11...f5

It is difficult to find a defence; e.g. 11...♙g7 12 ♘c5 ♘g6 13 ♙g5 winning material, while both 11...a6 12 0-0 b5 13 ♚d4 ♘df6 14 d6! and 11...♘g6 12 ♘xf6+ exf6 13 0-0, preparing ♚e1(+), are equally bad for Black.

12 ♘g5

Intending ♘e6 with a huge advantage.

Game 84 (continued)



13...♚b6!

Hitting the vulnerable b2-pawn, while preparing ...♙c5 with strong pressure on the g1-a7 diagonal. Now the absence of White's queen's knight in the battle is strongly felt.

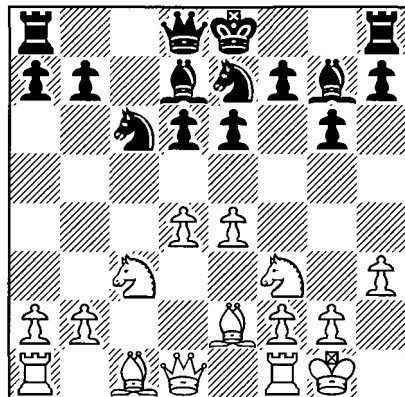
14 ♘f5?

A fatal error. 14 ♘xc6 was essential, although after 14...bxc6 15 ♘c3 ♙c5 Black keeps a clear advantage.

14...♙c5!

With decisive threats at f2 and b2. Black soon won the game.

Game 85 (continued)

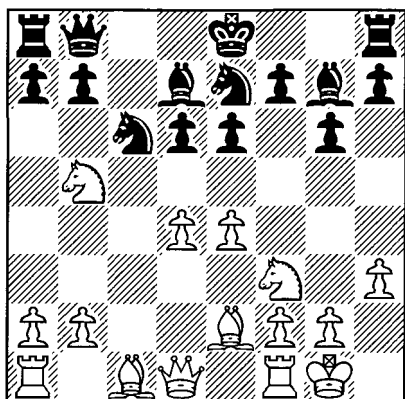


10 ♘b5!

Attacking Black's weak point, the d6-pawn. By the way, this was already a good option on the ninth move. In contrast, the game went 10 ♙e3?! 0-0 11 a3 d5 12 e5 ♘f5 with balanced chances.

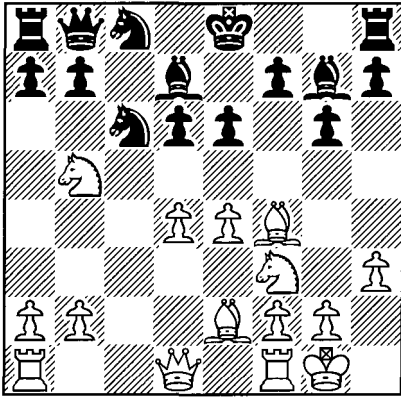
10...♚b8

Or 10...♘c8 11 ♙f4 e5 12 dxe5! dxe5 13 ♙g5! f6 14 ♙e3 with a strong initiative, now that 14...0-0? fails to 15 ♚d5+! ♙h8 16 ♚ad1.



11 ♖f4! ♜c8

Obviously 11...e5 runs into 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 ♜d6+.



12 d5!

White hurries to clear the centre before Black castles.

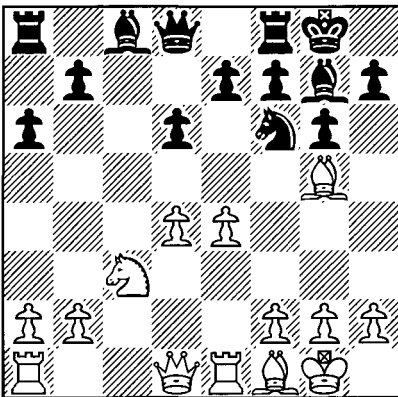
12...exd5 13 ♜xd5 0-0

There is nothing better.

14 ♜xd6

Winning a pawn, with a huge advantage.

Game 86 (continued)



13 e5!

A strong advance that hits Black on the

dark squares.

13...dxe5 14 dxe5 ♜d7 15 e6!

15 ♜d5! was another good option, when both 15...f6 16 ♜xe7+! ♜xe7 17 exf6 and 15...♜e8 16 e6 fxe6 17 ♜xe7+! ♜xe7 18 ♜xe6 ♖f8 19 ♜d6! win for White.

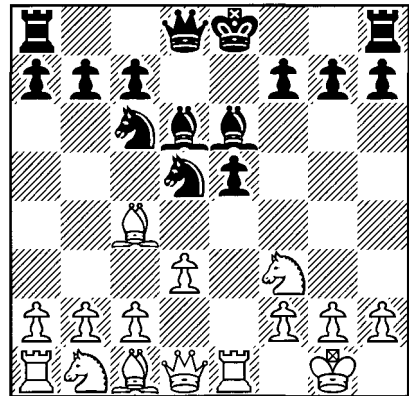
15...fxe6 16 ♜xe6 ♖f6?!

After 16...♜f6 17 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 18 ♜xe7 Black is a pawn down, but the text leaves his king severely exposed.

17 ♖c4 ♖h8

At this point White played 18 ♖h6?!, permitting the salvaging 18...♜e5!. In contrast, after 18 ♜e4! his attack would have been irresistible; e.g. 18...♖xg5 19 ♜xg5 ♜c7 20 ♜xe7! ♜xc4 21 ♜xh7+ ♖g8 22 ♜c1, followed by a decisive check on the a2-g8 diagonal.

Game 87 (continued)



8 d4!

Hitting Black on the e-file just before he castles away. 8 ♜g5 also made sense, whereas the game went 8 c3?! 0-0 9 ♜bd2, when 9...♜f4 10 ♖xe6 ♜xe6 11 ♜c4 ♜f6 would have led to rather equal play.

8...0-0

There is nothing better; e.g. 8...exd4?? 9

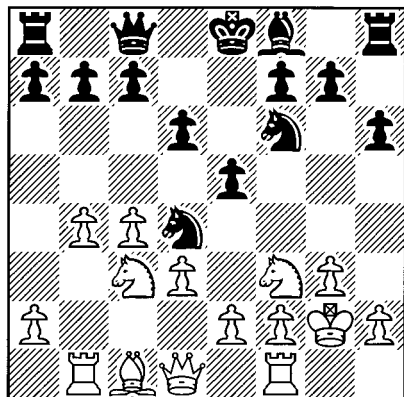
Mastering Opening Strategy

♙xd5 or 8...f6 9 ♘b3! with the strong threat of c2-c4.

9 dxe5

White is a healthy pawn up; e.g. 9...♙c5 10 ♘g5 ♚d7 11 ♖bd2 ♗a5 12 ♙f1 ♙e7 13 ♗c4 with a clear edge, J.Breukelman-J.De Groote, Hengelo 2004.

Game 88 (continued)



11 ♗xd4 exd4 12 ♗b5!

Gaining a vital tempo by attacking the weak d4-pawn. In contrast, the game went 12 ♗e4?! ♗xe4? (Black is not attentive either; keeping the position closed by 12...♙e7 was essential for him) 13 dxe4 c5 14 bxc5 dxc5 15 ♚a4+! (at last, a punishment) 15...♚c6 16 ♚xc6+ bxc6 17 ♜d1 ♜d8 18 ♜b7! ♜d7 and at this point the simple 19 ♜xd7 ♙xd7 20 e3 would have produced an endgame with an extra pawn.

12...c5 13 bxc5 dxc5 14 ♙f4!

Just in time, creating the threat ♗c7+ before Black consolidates with ...♙e7 and ...0-0.

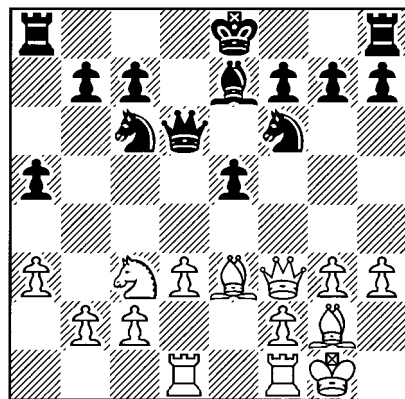
14...♚c6+ 15 ♙g1 ♙d7

The only way of avoiding material losses.

16 e3!

Clearing new lines with a strong initiative.

Game 89 (continued)

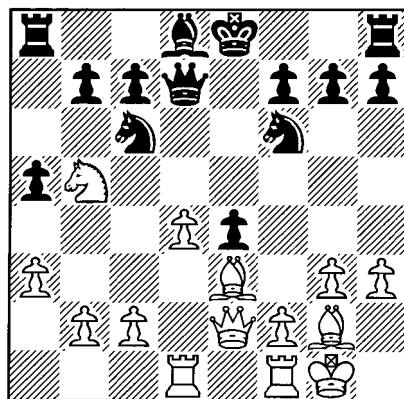


15 ♗b5!

Preparing a central break with d3-d4 before the opponent castles away. Another good option was 15 d4!? exd4 16 ♗b5 ♚d7 17 ♗xd4 with irresistible threats.

15...♚d7 16 d4! e4 17 ♚e2 ♙d8?!

This over-careful move lets White's d-pawn reach the sixth rank. Again 17...0-0 was preferable.

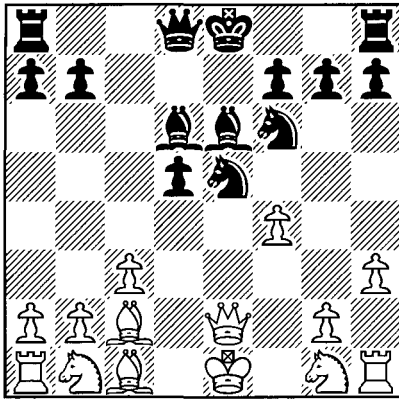


18 d5! ♗b8 19 d6 c6 20 ♗c3

With a decisive advantage thanks to the

powerful passed pawn. The game concluded 20...0-0 21 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 22 ♗xe4 ♜xh3 23 ♛d3 g6 24 d7! ♗c7 25 ♗g5 f6 26 ♗xf6! ♜xf6 27 d8♚+ ♗xd8 28 ♜xd8+ ♜f8 29 ♜e7 ♜c8 30 ♜fe1 ♜a6 31 ♜d6! and Black resigned in view of the inevitable and overwhelming ♗xg6.

Game 90 (continued)



10...♖c6!

Preparing a counterstrike on the weakened e1-h4 diagonal. 10...♖g6 11 f5 ♖e4! in the same spirit is also strong. In contrast, the game went 10...♜c7? 11 fxe5 ♗xe5 12 ♗a4+ and White went on to win.

11 f5 ♖e4!

Setting up the mortal threat of 12...♜h4+. Also interesting is 11...♗g3+ 12 ♖f1 0-0 13 fxe6 fxe6 14 ♖f3 e5 with ample compensation.

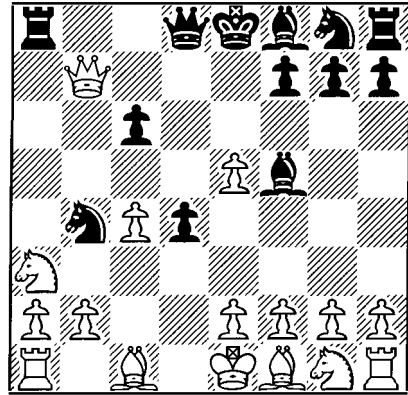
12 ♗xe4

Or 12 fxe6 ♜h4+ 13 ♖d1 ♖f2+ 14 ♖d2 ♗f4+ and wins.

12...♗g3+ 13 ♖f1 dxe4 14 fxe6 fxe6

By 15...0-0+ next, Black recovers the piece while keeping the attack. Obviously 15 ♜xe4?? at this point fails to the reply 15...♜d1+.

Game 91 (continued)



10...♜a5!

Installing the double threat of 11...♖d3+ and 11...♗c8. Less promising is 10...♜xa3 11 bxa3 ♖c2+ 12 ♖d1 ♖xa1 13 ♜xc6+ ♗d7 14 ♜a6 with unclear play.

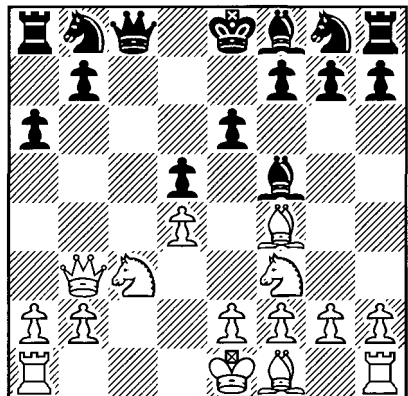
11 ♗d2 ♗c8

The rest is easy.

12 ♜xc6+ ♖xc6 13 ♗xa5 ♜xa5 14 ♖b5 ♗b4+ 15 ♖d1 ♖xe5

Black went on to win.

Game 92 (continued)



8 ♖a4!

Exploiting the fresh weakness on b6. In-

Mastering Opening Strategy

stead, 8 ♖c1 ♜c6 9 ♜a4 is less accurate due to 9...♙b4+ with ...♙a5 as an extra resource.

8...♖a7

This won't end well, but after 8...♜d7 9 ♖c1 ♜d8 10 ♜xb7 Black's game is also terrible.

9 ♜b6 ♜d8 10 ♙xb8!

The immediate 10 ♜a4+ failed to 10...♜c6, so White prepares it.

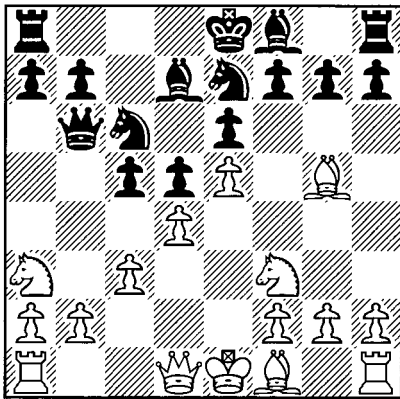
10...♜xb8 11 ♜a4+ ♙e7 12 ♖c1 g5

Desperation in a lost position.

13 ♜e5! ♜h6 14 ♜c8+ 1-0

In view of 14...♙f6 15 ♜d7+, Black resigned.

Game 93 (continued)



8 dxc5!

Initiating favourable complications. In contrast, after 8 ♜b5?! ♜g6 Black is perfectly ok.

8...♜xc5

Or 8...♜xb2? 9 ♜b5 with decisive threats.

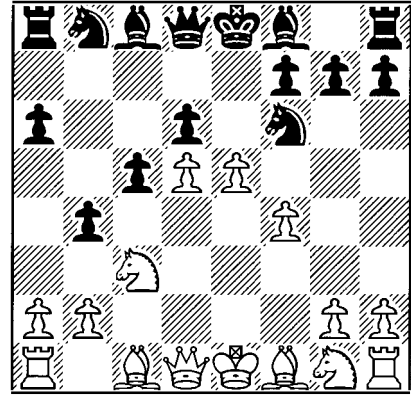
9 ♜b5! ♜xe5

This won't end well, but Black had no other defence against the double threat at c7 and d6.

10 ♜xe5 ♙xb5 11 ♙e3 d4 12 ♜xd4! 1-0

Of course not 12 ♙xd4? ♜d5 13 c4 ♜e4+ and Black is alive. After the text, he had instead to resign, in view of 12...♜xd4 13 ♙xb5+.

Game 94 (continued)



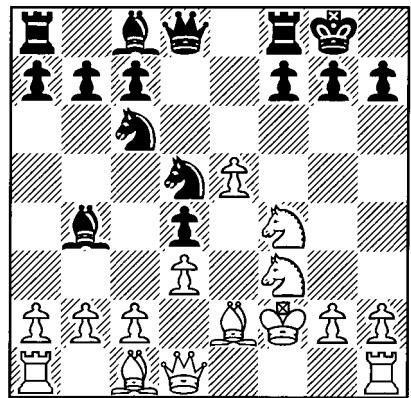
9 exf6 bxc3 10 ♜e2+!

This nasty check wins material.

10...♙d7 11 fxg7 1-0

In view of 11...♙xg7 12 ♜g4+, Black resigned.

Game 95 (continued)



10...♜e3!

At the cost of a mere pawn Black breaks

through on the dark squares. 10...♖e8 11 ♘xd5 ♜xd5 12 ♙f4 was somewhat less promising.

11 ♙xe3 dxe3+ 12 ♙xe3

Or 12 ♙g1 ♘xe5! 13 ♘xe5 ♜d4 – Smyslov.

12...♙c5+ 13 d4

On 13 ♙d2 the sacrifice 13...♘xe5! 14 ♘xe5 ♜d4 again works fine.

13...♘xd4!

An elegant sacrifice directed at White's unsafe king.

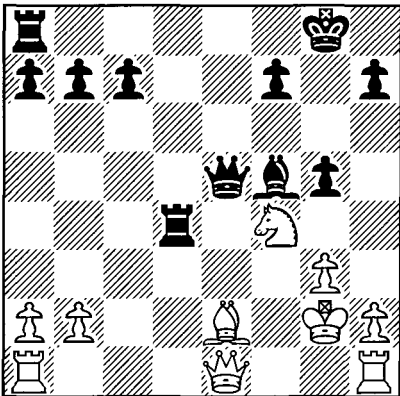
14 ♘xd4 ♜g5! 15 c3 ♜xe5+ 16 ♙f3 ♖d8 17 g3

17 ♜d2 is met by 17 ... g5 18 ♖ad1 ♜f6! 19 g3 ♙d6, getting on with the attack – Smyslov.

17...♙xd4 18 ♙g2

After 18 cxd4 ♖xd4 19 ♜b3 g5 Black also regains the material.

18...♙f5 19 cxd4 ♖xd4 20 ♜e1 g5!



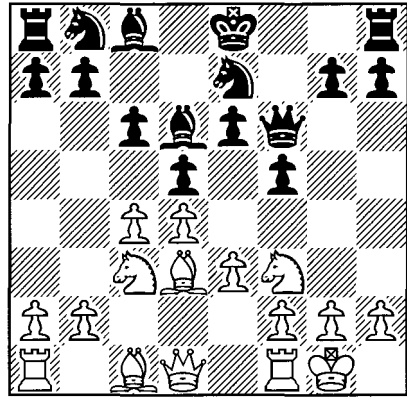
21 ♙f3

Holding on to the piece by 21 ♘h5 fails to the crushing pin 21...♖e4 22 ♙f2 ♖e8 – Smyslov.

21...♜xe1 22 ♖hx1 gxf4 23 gxf4 ♖xf4

Black later converted his extra pawns into victory.

Game 96 (continued)

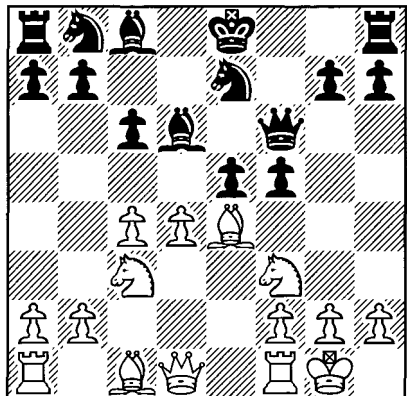


8 e4!

Exploiting the tactical motif 8...dxe4 9 ♙xe4 fxe4?, White achieves a favourable opening of the centre.

8...dxe4 9 ♙xe4 e5?

This further opening of the position is definitely not to Black's benefit, considering his delay in development. Instead, after 9...♘g6 10 ♙c2 0-0 11 ♖e1 White enjoys a clear plus thanks to his superior pawn structure, but the battle goes on.



10 dxe5 ♙xe5 11 ♙g5!

Development with tempo.

11...♜d6 12 ♘xe5 ♜xd1

Mastering Opening Strategy

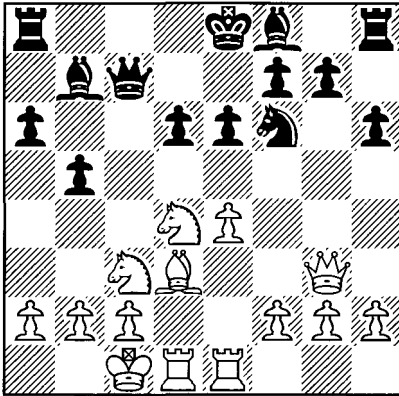
Or 12...♖xe5 13 ♔f3, followed by 14 ♖e1 – Neishtadt.

13 ♖axd1 fxe4 14 ♘xe4

The rest is just agony for Black.

14...♗d7 15 ♗d6+ ♕f8 16 ♙xe7+ ♕xe7 17 ♗xc8+ 1-0

Game 97 (continued)

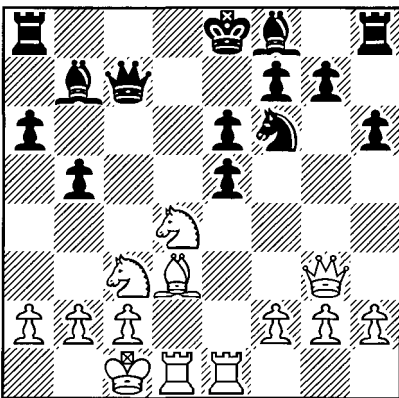


13 e5!

A key move, opening the gates to Black's king before he manages to castle.

13...dxe5

After 13...♗d5 14 ♗xe6! fxe6 15 exd6 ♖xd6 16 ♖g6+ ♕d7 17 ♖xe6! White's attack is decisive.

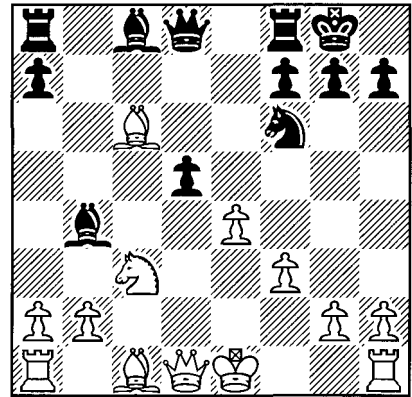


14 ♗cxb5! ♖b6

Or 14...axb5 15 ♙xb5+, when both attempts to defend: 15...♕e7 16 ♗f5+! exf5 17 ♖xe5+ and 15...♗d7 16 ♗xe6 fxe6 17 ♖g6+ ♕e7 18 ♖xd7+ win for White – Neishtadt.

15 ♗xe6! fxe6 16 ♙g6+ ♕e7 17 ♖a3+! ♖c5 18 ♖xc5 mate

Game 98 (continued)



11...♗xe4!

A strong sacrifice, exploiting the vulnerable e1-h4 diagonal as well as White's lack of development.

12 fxe4

Or 12 ♙xa8 ♖h4+ 13 g3 ♗xg3 with overwhelming threats.

12...♖h4+ 13 ♕d2

Both 13 g3 ♖xe4+ and 13 ♕f1 ♖f6+, followed by ...♖xc6, were equally bad for White.

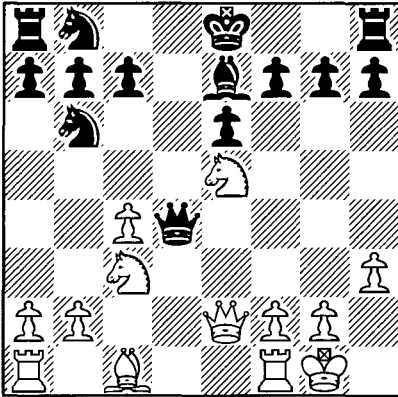
13...♙g4!

Another piece joins the party, with decisive effect.

14 ♖a4 ♖f2+ 15 ♕d3 dxe4+ 16 ♕c4 ♖ab8! 0-1

In view of the multiple threats, White resigned.

Game 99 (continued)

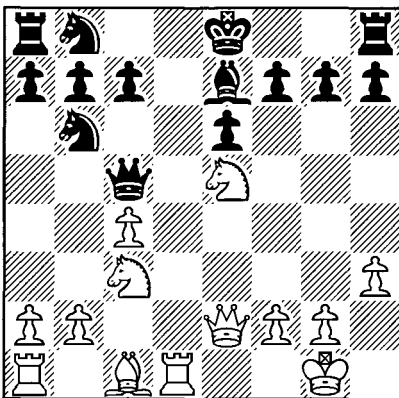


12 ♖d1!

More precise than 12 ♘b5?! ♖d8 13 ♗f3 ♙f6 14 ♖d1 ♗c8 and Black is alive.

12...♗c5?!

Now White wins on the spot, though after 12...♗h4 13 ♘b5 ♙d8 (or 13...♘a6 14 ♖d4! ♗f6 15 ♖f4 – the bishop move vacates e7 for the queen) 14 ♗f3 0-0 15 ♗xb7 Black's game is also difficult.



13 b4!

A key move that wins a tempo by diverting the queen from the defence of the c7-pawn, and clears the a3-f8 diagonal for the bishop.

13...♗xb4 14 ♘b5 ♘a6

Obviously 14...♗c5? failed to 15 ♙a3.

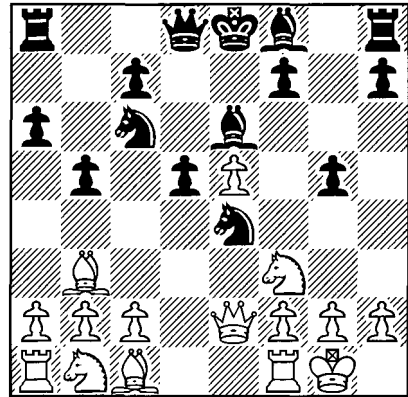
15 ♗f3! ♖f8

Unfortunately for Black, 15...0-0 drops the bishop after 16 ♙a3.

16 ♗xb7 1-0

In view of 16...♗c5 17 ♙e3! ♗xe5 18 ♗c6+, Black resigned.

Game 100 (continued)



10 c4!

Meeting the flank aggression with a strong counterstrike in the centre. In contrast, after 10 ♘bd2?! g4 or 10 ♖d1?! g4 11 ♘e1 ♖g8, Black's ninth move would prove more justified.

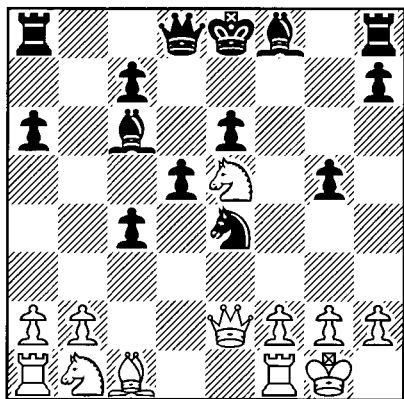
10...bxc4

Or 10...g4 11 cxd5!, when both 11...gxf3? 12 ♗xe4 and 11...♙xd5 12 ♖d1! gxf3 13 ♗xf3 ♘xe5 14 ♗e2 c6 15 ♘c3 leave White on top.

11 ♙a4 ♙d7 12 e6!

Another ingenious advance that clears the e5-square and h5-e8 diagonal for an attack on Black's king. Otherwise, 12 ♘c3, challenging the active knight on e4, also made sense.

12...fxe6 13 ♙xc6 ♙xc6 14 ♘e5



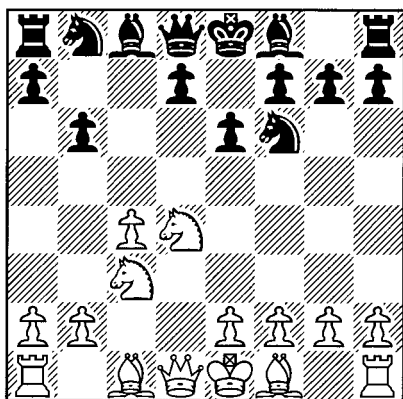
14...♖d6?

Saving the bishop but fatally exposing the king. By the sacrifice 14...♗f6! 15 ♜xc6 ♜d7, followed by ...♙c5, Black could have complicated the opponent's task in practice.

15 ♜h5+ ♙e7 16 ♙xg5+ ♜xg5 17 ♜xg5+ ♙e8 18 ♜h5+ ♙e7 19 ♜f7+ ♙d8 20 ♜f6+ ♙c8 21 ♜xh8

White later won.

Game 101 (continued)



6...♙c5!

Immediately fighting for the d6-square, in similar fashion to Fischer-Tal (Game 71).

6...♙c5

The lesser of evils, since 6...d6? 7 ♙f4! just makes things worse for Black; e.g. 7...e5 8 ♙g5 a6 9 ♙xf6 gxf6 10 ♜d5! and White wins material.

7 ♙f4

7 ♜d6+ ♙e7 8 ♙f4, followed by 9 e3, was more precise.

7...♜a6?!

This lets White take a firm grip on the d6-square. Preferable was 7...0-0! 8 ♙c7 (not 8 ♜c7?! e5! 9 ♙xe5 ♜g4) 8...♜e7 9 ♙d6 ♙xd6 10 ♜xd6 ♜c6 with just a slight disadvantage in the endgame.

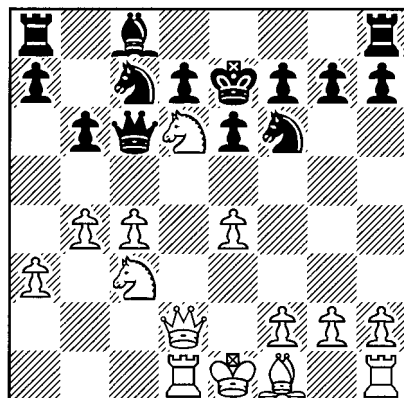
8 ♙d6! ♙xd6 9 ♜xd6+ ♙e7 10 ♜d2!

To reinforce the strong knight on d6.

10...♜c7 11 ♜d1 ♜c5

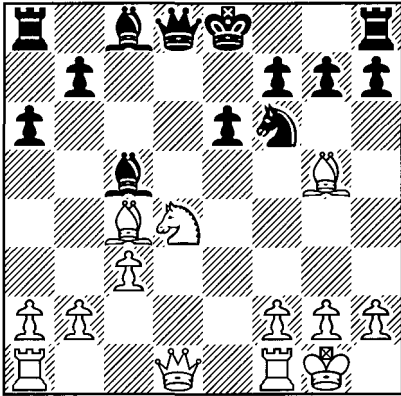
After 11...♜c5 12 e4 ♙b7 13 f3 Black also has a difficult time. One of his problems is that 13...a6, denying either ♜b5, runs into 14 b4.

12 a3 ♜c7 13 b4 ♜c6 14 e4



Seizing the centre with a big edge. There followed 14...♜ce8 15 ♜xe8 ♜xe8 16 ♙d3 d6 17 f4! e5 18 0-0 ♙e6 19 ♜d5+ ♙xd5 20 exd5 ♜c7 21 fxe5 dxe5 22 ♜g5! and White soon converted his advantage into a full point, now that 22...♙f8 fails to 23 ♜xf6! gxf6 24 ♜xf6.

Game 102 (continued)

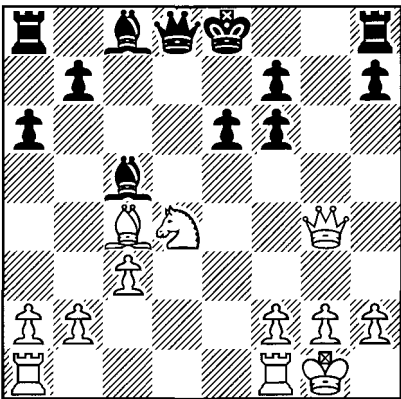


12 ♖xf6! gxf6

Unfortunately for Black, the desirable 12...♗xf6? drops a pawn after 13 ♘xe6! ♙xe6 14 ♖xe6 fxe6 (or 14...♗xe6? 15 ♜e1) 15 ♗h5+.

13 ♗g4!

A move with several virtues: it prevents 13...0-0, prepares 14 ♜ad1, and installs the threat of 14 ♗g7.



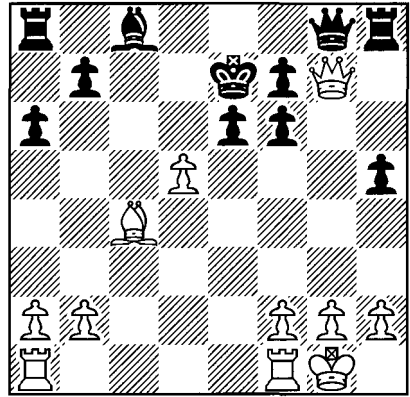
13...♙xd4 14 cxd4 h5

After 14...b5 15 ♙b3 ♙b7 16 d5! ♙xd5 17 ♜ad1 Black also has a difficult game.

15 ♗g7 ♙e7 16 d5! ♗g8

Both 16...e5 17 d6+! and 16...exd5 17

♙xd5! ♗xd5 18 ♗xh8 ♙h3 19 ♗g7 win for White – Blatny.



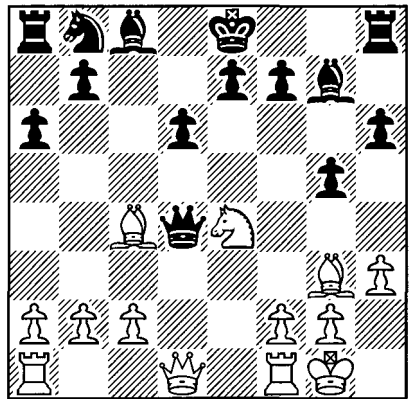
17 d6+! ♙xd6 18 ♗xf6

Black's king has become fatally exposed.

18...♙d7 19 ♜fd1+ ♙c7 20 ♙e2! 1-0

A quiet but powerful move. In view of 20...♙c6 21 ♙f3 ♙xf3 22 ♗xf3, with threats like ♜ac1+ and ♗f4+, Black resigned.

Game 103 (continued)



14 ♘xd6+!

A strong sacrifice with the aim of keeping Black's king in the centre.

14...exd6 15 ♗e2+ ♙e6

Both 15...♙e5 16 ♜ad1, followed by

Mastering Opening Strategy

♖xd6, and 15...♗d7 16 ♖ad1 ♜f6 17 ♖xd6+ ♜xd6 18 ♖d1! win for White – Ivanchuk.

16 ♗xe6 fxe6

The game went 16...0-0 17 ♖ad1 ♜f6 18 ♗d5 ♗c6 19 c3 with a huge positional plus for White.

17 ♜xe6+ ♗d8 18 ♖ad1 ♖e8 19 ♜g6!

Black is doomed; e.g. 19...♜xb2 20 ♜xd6+ with mate on the next move.

piece. Rather curiously for a Sicilian, on move 15 Black has not yet developed either of his knights!

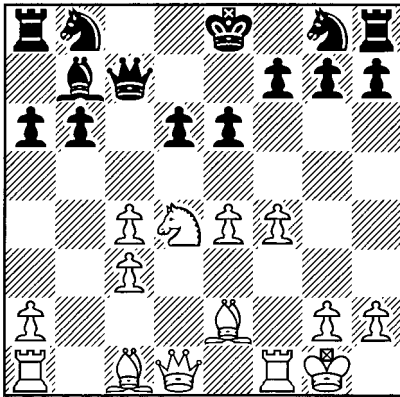
15...f6 16 ♖xf6!

Transposing to a superior endgame.

16...♗xf6 17 ♜xf6+ ♜e7 18 ♗g5 ♜xf6 19 ♗xf6+ ♗c7 20 ♗xh8 ♗d7 21 ♗d4 ♗xe4 22 ♖e1 ♗c6 23 ♖e7

White soon won.

Game 104 (continued)



11 ♗h5!

A surprising attack on the black king, exploiting the absence of a knight on f6. Both 11 f5?! e5 and 11 e5 dxe5 12 fxe5 ♗d7! were less promising.

11...g6

11...♗f6? obviously failed to 12 ♗xe6, while after 11...♜e7 12 f5 e5 13 f6! ♗xf6 14 ♗f5 White develops a deadly attack.

12 f5!

Intensifying the attack before Black gets his pieces into the game.

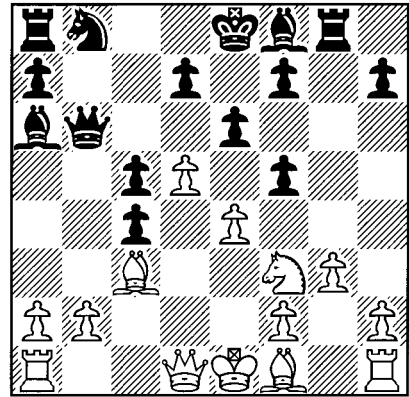
12...exf5

12...gxf5? 13 fxe6 is even worse, with the queen heading for h5.

13 ♗xf5! gxf5 14 ♖xf5 ♗d8 15 ♜d4

With a tremendous initiative for the

Game 105 (continued)



12 ♗g2!

Simple but strong. White brings his last minor piece into play and seizes the long diagonal, which became a more relevant factor after Black's previous move. Less convincing was 12 dxe6?! ♜xe6 or 12 exf5 exd5 13 ♜xd5 ♗b7.

12...fxe4 13 ♗e5 d6?!

This runs into a strong sacrifice, though after 13...♗g7 14 ♗xe4 Black's position also makes a sad impression.

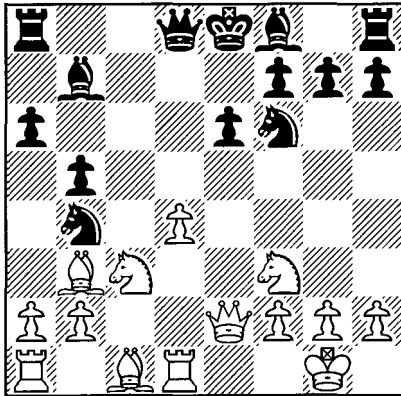
14 dxe6! dxe5

Or 14...fxe6 15 ♜h5+ winning.

15 exf7+ ♗xf7 16 ♗xe4 1-0

In view of 16...♗b7 17 ♜f3+ or 16...♗c6 17 ♜d5+ ♗g7 18 ♜d7+! ♗e7 19 ♗xc6, Black resigned.

Game 106 (continued)

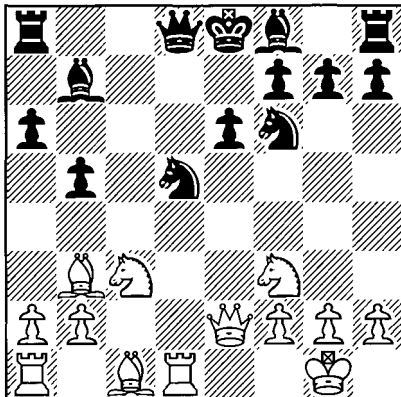


12 d5!

Anyway! In the same spirit, 12 ♖g5 ♗e7 13 ♗xf6 gxf6 14 d5! is also strong. In fact, the d4-d5 break tends to work well in a wide range of IQP positions.

12...♗bxd5

12...♗fxd5? 13 a3 or 12...♗xd5 13 ♖g5 is even worse.



13 ♖g5! ♗e7

Black manages to keep the d5-square under control, but now his pawn structure is ruined.

14 ♗xf6 gxf6 15 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 16 ♗xd5 exd5 17 ♗d4! ♖f8

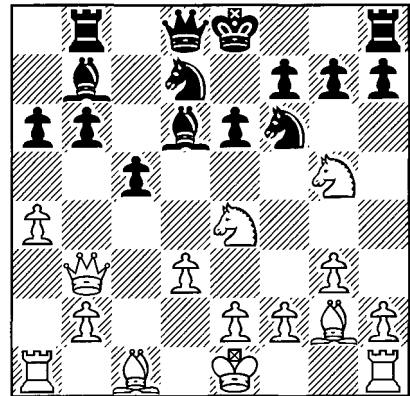
17...0-0? obviously failed to 18 ♗c6, while after 17...♗d7 18 ♖e1 ♖a7 19 ♖ac1 the threat of 20 ♗c6 decides.

18 ♗f5 h5?!

This loses at once, though Black was already short of a good defence.

19 ♖xd5! ♗xd5 20 ♗xe7+ ♖g8 21 ♗xf6 1-0

Game 107 (continued)



12...♗xe4!

Exchanging a pair of knights in order to avoid any tactical shots at e6 or f7. Instead, 12...0-0? again failed to 13 ♗xe6, while the game continued 12...♗c7? 13 ♗xf7! ♖xf7 14 ♗g5+ ♖g6? (a lesser evil was 14...♖e8 15 ♗xe6 ♗xg2 16 ♗xd8 ♖xd8 17 ♖g1 ♗d5 18 ♗c2 with just a clear advantage for White – Lalic) 15 ♗xb7 ♖xb7 16 d4! e5 (17 ♗d3+ was threatened) 17 ♗f7+ ♖f5 18 e4+ and Black resigned in view of mate on the next move.

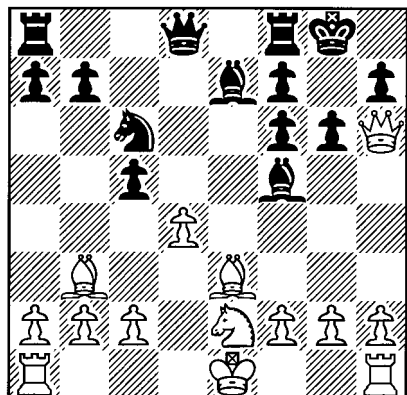
13 ♗xe4 0-0

Exploiting the pin on the h1-a8 diagonal, Black finally manages to castle. The alternative 13...♗e5 at once should be fine as well.

14 0-0 ♗e5

Black has no problems.

Game 108 (continued)

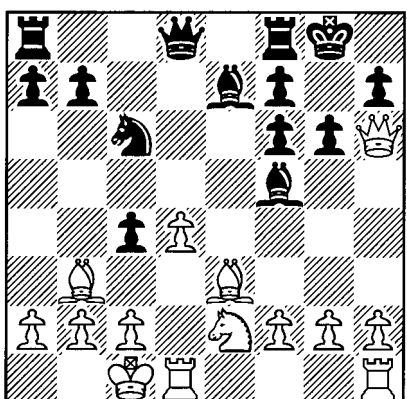


12 0-0-0?

On this flank the king becomes severely exposed to Black's forces. 12 d5? ♖b4 is just as bad, while 12 ♖d1?! runs into the same reply as in the game. In contrast, the simple 12 dxc5 held the balance; e.g. 12...♙xc5 13 ♙xc5 ♜a5+ 14 c3 ♜xc5 15 0-0!.

12...c4!

This strong sacrifice was perhaps overlooked by White.



13 ♙xc4 ♖b4 14 ♙b3 ♜c8

Neishtadt also suggests 14...a5!?, when 15 a4 is strongly met by 15...b5!.

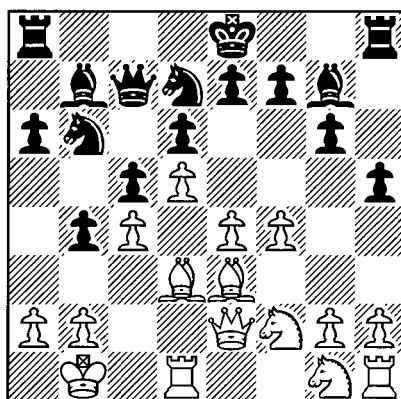
15 ♖c3 ♜a5 16 ♙b1?

This loses at once. 16 ♙d2 was essential, when Black could try 16...♜xc3 anyway; e.g. 17 ♙xc3 ♖xa2+ 18 ♙xa2 ♜xa2 with interesting compensation for the exchange.

16...♜xc3! 17 ♖xc3 ♙xc2+ 0-1

In view of 18 ♙xc2 ♜xa2+ 19 ♙c1 ♜xc2 mate or 18 ♙c1 ♙xb3 19 axb3 ♜a2!, White resigned.

Game 109 (continued)



17...0-0?

This leaves the king fatally exposed to an attack. 17...0-0-0 was a much better choice – Postny.

18 ♙c1 ♜ae8 19 ♖f3 e6

A logical try to create counterplay in the centre. Unfortunately White won't capture on e6, nor will he recapture on d5 with the c-pawn in Benoni-style, but with the e-pawn, after which most of the black pieces will remain in the margins of the battle.

20 ♜c2 ♜e7 21 h3 exd5 22 exd5! ♜fe8

The control of the open file is irrelevant in this case, and White can just keep on attacking.

23 f5! gxf5

Or 23...♖f8 24 fxg6 fxg6 25 ♖h4, winning – Postny.

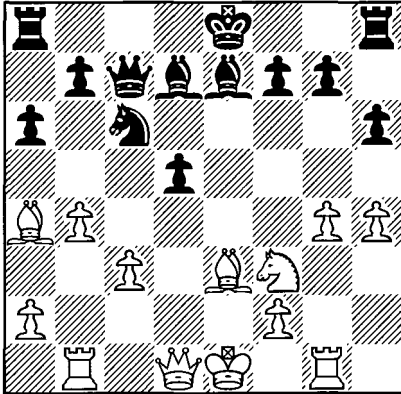
24 ♖h4 ♗e5 25 ♗xf5 ♖d7 26 ♗xg7!

Swapping a main defender of Black's kingside.

26...♗xg7 27 ♖d2 ♖h8 28 ♖g5+ ♗g6 29 b3! 1-0

In view of 30 ♖b2+ coming up.

Game 110 (continued)



17...0-0!

Black has noticed that his king will be quite safe on this flank. In contrast, 17...0-0-0?! permits 18 b5 with some attacking prospects, though the flexible 17...♖e6! was reasonable too.

18 g5

After 18 h5 ♖f6 19 ♖c1 ♖fe8 White's king is in more danger than Black's; e.g. 20 g5? hxg5 21 ♗xg5 ♖xe3+! 22 fxe3 ♖e5, recovering the material with interest.

18...h5 19 ♖c2

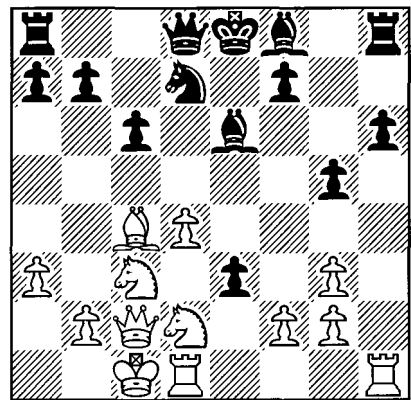
Or 19 ♖xd5 ♖ad8 20 ♖e4 g6 21 ♖f4 ♖d6, preparing ...♖fe8 with a strong initia-

tive.

19...g6

By now Black is strategically winning thanks to White's unsafe king. There followed 20 ♖f1(?) ♖h3+ 21 ♖e1 ♖fe8 22 ♖g3 ♖d7 23 ♖b3 ♖d6 24 ♖g1 ♗e5! 25 ♖xd5 ♖xc3+ 26 ♗d2 ♗d3+ 27 ♖f1 ♖b5 28 ♖g2 ♖e5!, heading for h2, and Black's attack soon took its toll.

Game 111 (continued)



16 ♖xe6!

This sacrifice decides the game. Obviously 16 fxe3?! ♖e7 would be less powerful.

16...exd2+ 17 ♖xd2 fxe6 18 ♖g6+ ♖e7 19 ♖e1 ♖d6

Heading for c7, but in vain...

20 d5! 1-0

A timely advance that includes the second rook in the attack. In view of 20...cxd5 21 ♖xe6+ ♖c7 22 ♗xd5+ ♖c8 23 ♖e8, Black resigned.

Chapter Three

The Battle for the Centre

Introduction

The centre is the most important part of the board, and the side that dominates it will have more possibilities on the whole battlefield. In *Opening Preparation*, Yusupov makes the following observation: “*The centre may be called the commanding summit of chess strategy; whoever gains control of it will afterwards have the better prospects.*”

As a consequence, both players fight for this area – traditionally defined as the set of the e4, d4, e5 and d5 squares – from the very first move. Here are some typical methods of fighting for the centre:

- ♠ Create a pawn centre.
- ♠ Occupy a central square with a piece.
- ♠ Control the centre at distance.

Moreover, the enemy centre can be undermined by:

- ♠ Pawn breaks.
- ♠ Pawn advances on the flanks.

In the following sections, we will investigate these methods together with some related games. In the final part of the chapter we will also discuss the role of the centre in more general terms. It goes without saying that this chapter has more of a middlegame flavour than the previous ones, due to the long-term importance of the centre.

Pawn centre

A pawn centre is usually a big asset in the opening and middlegame battle. Apart from controlling a set of important squares, the central pawns also work as a shield for their fellow pieces. When the pawn centre remains unchallenged, the side that possesses it can consider either an attack on the flanks or an advance by the pawn centre itself.

In the following five games we will see both of these ideas being applied with great success, partly helped by rather indifferent play from the opponents in these encounters.

Game 112

Z.Andriasian-M.Litwiniec

European Rapid Championship,

Warsaw 2010

Italian Game

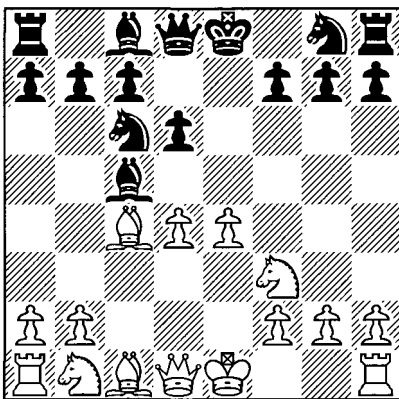
1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙c4 ♙c5 4 c3

An inherent plan of the Italian – create a pawn centre by d2-d4.

4...d6?!

This move doesn't challenge White's intentions in any way. The standard 4...♘f6 is preferable, when 5 d4 exd4 6 cxd4 ♙b4+ forces White either to sacrifice a pawn by 7 ♘c3 ♘xe4, or permit the destruction of his pawn centre after 7 ♙d2 ♙xd2+ 8 ♘bxd2 d5!. Thus practice often sees the more flexible 5 d3, delaying d3-d4 until the moment is right.

5 d4 exd4 6 cxd4



6...♙b4+?!

Now this check proves rather useless since White was going to play ♘c3 anyway, besides which the bishop becomes misplaced on this square. 6...♙b6, keeping the pressure on d4, was called for.

7 ♘c3 h6?

One more inaccuracy. Black wants to play ...♘f6 without bothering about ♙g5, but now she loses an important tempo. 7...♙g4 seemed more active; e.g. 8 0-0 ♙xc3 9 bxc3 ♘f6, when 10 ♙g5 can be met by 10...h6 11 ♙h4 g5 12 ♙g3 ♘xe4.

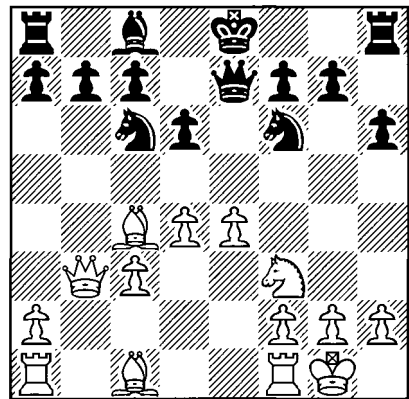
8 ♗b3!

It transpires that the f7-pawn has no comfortable defence.

8...♙xc3+ 9 bxc3 ♗e7?

The last chance was 9...♗f6, preparing ...♘ge7. In the game Black deploys these two pieces in the opposite way, with fatal consequences.

10 0-0 ♘f6



11 e5!

A key method for the side possessing a pawn centre: its advance. The possible benefits are several: gain of space, creation of a passed pawn, or clearance of lines for the fellow pieces, as in this case. 11 ♙e1, preparing e4-e5, was also strong.

11...dxe5 12 ♙a3! ♗d7 13 ♘xe5

By now Black's exposed king makes her game hopeless. 13 dxe5 and 13 ♙fe1 were good as well.

13...♘xe5 14 dxe5 ♘e4 15 ♙ad1 ♗f5 16 ♙xf7+!

A little combination that concludes the battle at once.

16... ♖xf7 17 ♜d8+ 1-0

Game 113

J.Hellsten-M.Howe

Gothenburg 1989

Sicilian Defence, Alapin Variation

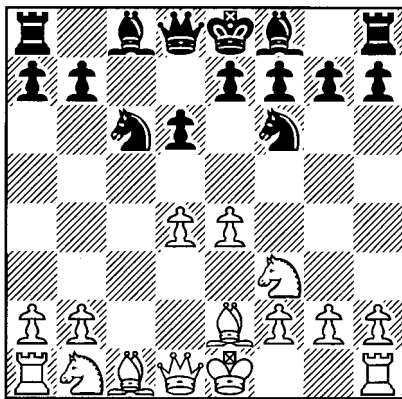
1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 c3

At that time I was 13 years old and my team-mate, GM (back then, IM) Stellan Brynell, had just taught me this sideline against the Sicilian. Similarly to the previous game, White aims to set up a pawn centre with d2-d4.

3... ♗f6 4 ♙e2 ♘c6

The most straightforward reaction, eliminating the queen check on a4 (4... ♗xe4?? 5 ♖a4+). Another common option is 4...g6 5 0-0 ♙g7, when White can choose between 6 ♜e1, followed by ♙f1, and 6 ♙b5+, followed by ♜e1 or ♖e2, with the desired d2-d4 next.

5 d4 cxd4 6 cxd4



6... ♙g4?!

Just like 4...d6 in the previous game,

Black does little to challenge the enemy pawn centre. The main line goes 6... ♗xe4 7 d5 ♖a5+! 8 ♗c3 ♗xc3 9 bxc3 ♗e5 10 ♗xe5 ♖xc3+ 11 ♙d2 ♖xe5 12 0-0 with a sharp battle.

7 0-0 g6 8 ♙e3

Interestingly, rather few opening systems for Black tend to tolerate such a pawn structure. In contrast, with the c-pawns still on the board it is a main feature of the King's Indian and the Pirc, among others.

8... ♙g7 9 h3

Possibly 9 ♗c3 0-0 10 ♗d2 ♙xe2 11 ♖xe2 was more promising, speeding up development.

9... ♖xf3 10 ♙xf3 0-0 11 ♗c3 ♖a5?!

Hitting thin air. Black could have fought for the centre by 11...e5!, when 12 d5 ♗d4! 13 ♙xd4 exd4 14 ♖xd4 ♗d7 yields him good compensation for the pawn. White should rather react by 12 dxe5 dxe5 13 ♙e2 ♗d4 14 ♙c4 ♜c8 15 b3 with a slight advantage.

12 a3 ♜ac8 13 b4 ♖d8 14 ♖b3

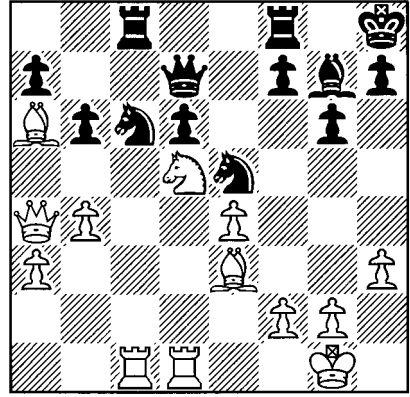
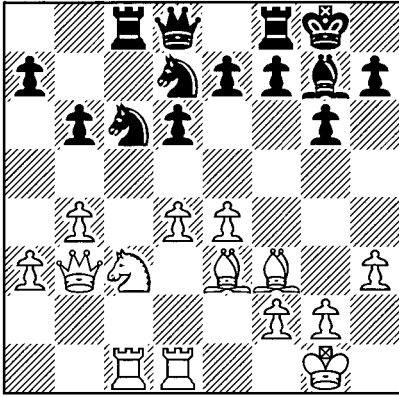
Overprotecting the knight and ceding d1 to the rooks.

14...b6?!

An unnecessary weakening of the light squares. 14...a6 15 ♜fd1 e6 was preferable, followed by 16... ♖e7 and 17... ♜fd8, with a passive but safe position. In contrast, 14...e5?! was no longer feasible due to 15 dxe5 dxe5 16 ♗b5! with ideas like ♜fd1 and ♙c5.

15 ♜ac1 ♗d7 16 ♜fd1

White's development is complete. With the centre firmly in his control, he can now start looking for possibilities on the whole board, in particular on the queenside where Black's unfortunate 14th move left targets on c6 and a6.



16...♙h8?

My opponent perhaps dreamed about a kingside attack, or simply didn't know what to do. The lesser evil was 16...a6 17 ♗a4 ♖cb8, resisting on the queenside.

17 ♗a4

With ideas like 18 ♖b5 and ♙e2-a6. Moreover, Black has to look out for the e4-e5 advance.

17...e5 18 dxe5!

Of course not 18 d5? ♖d4 with counterplay. In contrast, the text clears the d-file for the rooks and establishes a new weakness on d6.

18...♖dxe5

Both 18...dxe5 19 ♖d6! and 18...♖xe5 19 ♙e2 ♖c4 20 ♙xc4 ♖xc4 21 ♖xd6 were equally bad for Black.

19 ♙e2

Setting up the strong threat of 20 f4. Black's next move leads to instant defeat, but his problems were unsolvable anyway.

19...♗e7? 20 ♖d5 ♗d7 21 ♙a6! 1-0

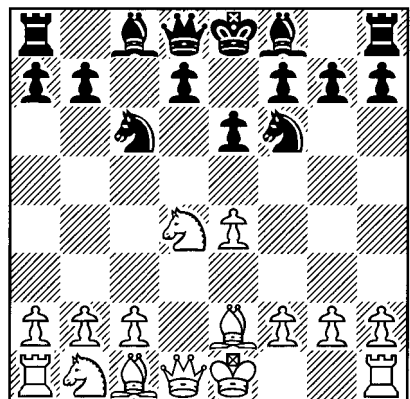
Avoiding the trap 21 f4? ♖d4! 22 ♗xd7 ♖xe2+ 23 ♙f2 ♖xd7 24 ♙xe2 ♙b2 and the battle goes on – whereas now, Black can't avoid heavy material losses; e.g. 21...♖cd8 22 f4, so he resigned.

Game 114
R.Ortega-V.Korchnoi
 Havana 1963
Sicilian Defence,
Taimanov Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 ♖c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♖xd4 e6 5 ♙e2

5 ♖c3 is more flexible; and 5 ♖b5, preparing a Maroczy Bind with c2-c4, is also possible.

5...♖f6



6 ♖xc6!?

Mastering Opening Strategy

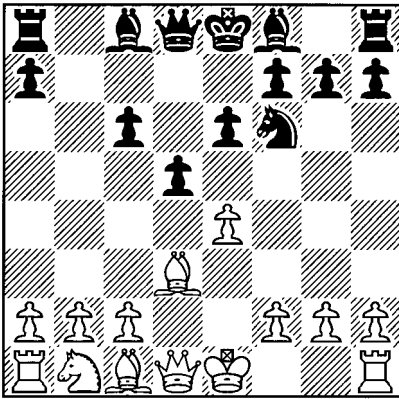
Strengthening the enemy centre without any obvious reason. Again 6 ♞c3 is preferable, when Black can stay in Taimanov waters with 6... ♝c7 , switch to the Scheveningen by 6... d6 , or enter the gambit line 6... ♙b4 7 0-0! ♙xc3 8 bxc3 ♞xe4 9 ♝d3 , followed by ♙a3 .

6...bxc6 7 ♙d3

Of course 7 ♞d2 or 7 ♞c3 was more logical, avoiding a second bishop move.

7...d5

Black starts fighting for the centre. Now either 8 e5 or 8 ♞d2 was a reasonable reply; instead, White commits a new inaccuracy, one that will leave the centre in the opponent's hands.



8 exd5?! cxd5!

The correct recapture, which leaves Black with two pawns against none in the centre.

9 0-0 ♙d6

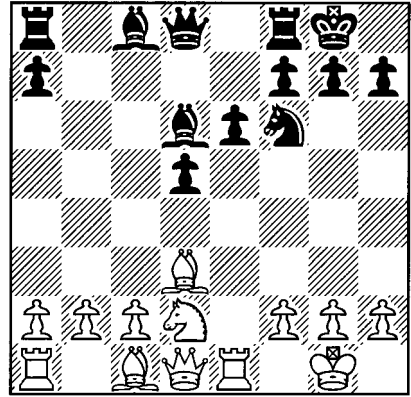
Development first. The tempting 9...e5?! would be premature in view of 10 ♙g5 ♙e7 11 ♙b5+ !, intending 11... ♙d7 12 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 13 ♝xd5 .

10 ♞d2

With hindsight, 10 c4, fighting against the enemy centre seems like a lesser evil;

e.g. 10... dxc4 11 ♝a4+ (not 11 ♙xc4? ♙xh2+) 11... ♙d7 12 ♝xc4 ♝c8 13 ♝h4 , followed by ♞c3 and ♙g5 .

10...0-0 11 ♝e1



11...e5!

Of course. The central pawns start rolling, with great effect.

12 ♞f1 e4 13 ♙e2 d4!

Thanks to the tactical trick 14 ♝xd4?? ♙xh2+ , both pawns reach the fourth rank. Before advancing ...e5-e4 Black had to assure this follow-up, as otherwise White could now have blocked the central pawns by 14 ♙e3 and ♙d4 .

14 ♞g3 ♝a5!

This time minor tactics help Black bring his queen to a great post on d5, where she will support the central pawns and, at the same time, use them as a shield.

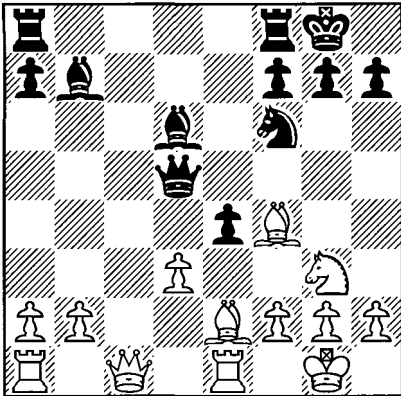
15 ♙d2 ♝d5 16 ♝c1 ♙b7 17 ♙f4?

A tactical oversight. After 17 ♙f1 ♝ac8 Black keeps a clear advantage, but at least the g2-pawn becomes safe.

17...d3!

A carefully calculated blow. The preparatory 17... ♙c5 looked strong as well, whereas the obvious 17...e3?! proves less powerful after 18 ♙f3 .

18 cxd3



18...e3! 19 ♙f3 exf2+

Thanks to the intermediate 17...d3, Black managed to clear the g1-a7 diagonal towards the enemy king.

20 ♖xf2 ♜g4+!

One more accuracy. In contrast, after 20...♙c5+? 21 ♙e3! ♜g4+ 22 ♖g1 White defends.

21 ♖g1

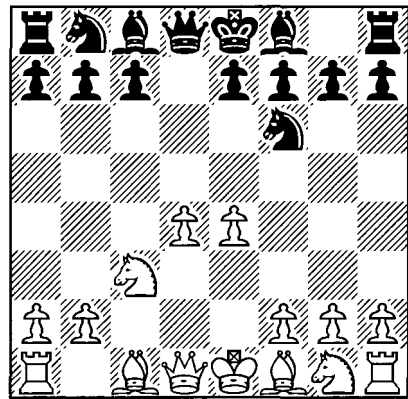
Or 21 ♙xg4? ♜xg2+ 22 ♖e3 ♙xf4+ 23 ♖xf4 ♜f2+ with mate to come.

21...♜d4+ 22 ♙e3 ♜xe3 23 ♜xe3 ♜xe3+ 24 ♜xe3 ♙c5

Finally Black wins the exchange and transposes to a clearly superior endgame. There followed 25 ♙xb7 ♙xe3+ 26 ♖h1 ♙ab8 27 ♙f3 ♜xb2 and Korchnoi went on to win.

for the Queen's Gambit Declined, he should play 2...e6 first.

3 cxd5! ♜xd5 4 e4 ♜f6 5 ♖c3



5...e6?!

This leads to a rather cramped game. After 5...e5 6 ♜f3 exd4 7 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 8 ♜xd4 ♙b4 9 f3 White has also had good results in practice, but Black enjoys more activity than with the text. Anyway, by playing 4 ♜f3 first White could have sidestepped that line.

6 ♜f3 ♙e7 7 ♙d3 0-0 8 0-0 a6

Unfortunately for Black, 8...c5? runs into 9 dxc5 ♙xc5 10 e5 ♜d5 11 ♙xh7+! ♖xh7 12 ♜g5+ with the Greek gift working perfectly. The text prepares ...b7-b5, but the modest 8...b6, followed by ...♙b7, was probably more to the point, speeding up development and exerting some pressure on the h1-a8 diagonal.

9 ♜e2! ♜bd7 10 ♜d1

Such a set-up is often used in similar positions in the Queen's Gambit Accepted. On e2 the queen avoids exposure to the black pieces and enables the attacking idea e4-e5, followed by ♜e4, while the rook on d1 discourages Black's ...c7-c5.

10...c6

Game 115

M. Grabarczyk-P. Podlesny

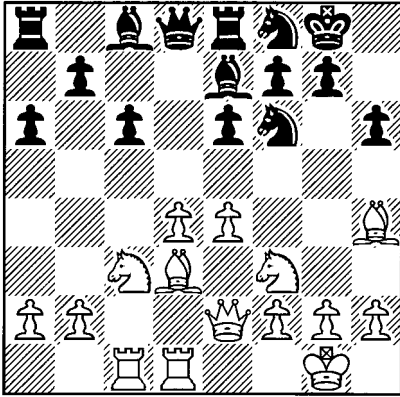
Karvina 1994

Queen's Gambit Declined

1 d4 d5 2 c4 ♜f6?!

A well-known inaccuracy that leaves the centre in White's hands. If Black is aiming

Again very passive, but the desired 10...b5 ran into 11 e5 ♘d5 12 ♖e4! f5 13 exf6 ♘7xf6 14 ♖h4 with a huge edge. 11 ♙g5 ♜e8 12 ♜ac1 h6 13 ♙h4 ♘f8



Time for White to convert his central control into something more tangible.

14 e5!

A typical idea. In exchange for weakening the d5-square, Grabarczyk manages to swap Black's "good" bishop, something that will yield him a grip on the dark squares and, indirectly, attacking prospects on the kingside.

14...♘d5 15 ♙xe7 ♖xe7

Or 15...♘xc3 16 ♜xc3 ♖xe7 17 ♘d2! with similar play.

16 ♘e4! ♘f4

This exchange doesn't help Black's case in any way, but it was already difficult to give him good advice.

17 ♖e3 ♘xd3 18 ♜xd3 ♘d8 19 ♘fd2!

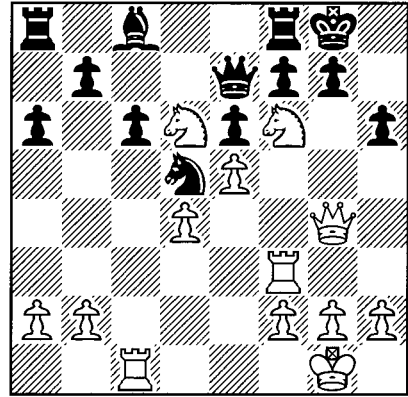
White doesn't even want to allow 19 ♘d6 ♜xd6! 20 exd6 ♖xd6, so directs the other knight to d6 as well.

19...♘g6 20 ♘c4 ♖c7 21 ♘cd6

In strategic terms, the game is already over – Black will never be able to get rid of that knight, which deprives him of any

counterplay and makes White's kingside attack child's play.

21...♘e7 22 ♖f4 ♘d5 23 ♖g4 ♖e7 24 ♜f3 ♜f8 25 ♘f6+!



Enhancing the attack and eliminating any attempts at ...f7-f5.

25...♙h8 26 ♖h5 ♜b8 27 ♜e1!

The last piece joins the party with devastating effect.

27...♙d7 28 ♜e4 ♘xf6 29 ♜xf6 ♙h7 30 ♜h4! ♖xf6 31 exf6 ♜h8 32 ♖xf7 1-0

Game 116

L. Polugaevsky-J. Dorfman

USSR Championship, Tbilisi 1978

Grünfeld Defence

1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 c4 g6?! 4 cxd5 ♘xd5 5 e4

This leads to an inferior version of the Grünfeld. 3...c6, 3...e6 and 3...dxc4 are normal continuations.

4 cxd5 ♘xd5 5 e4

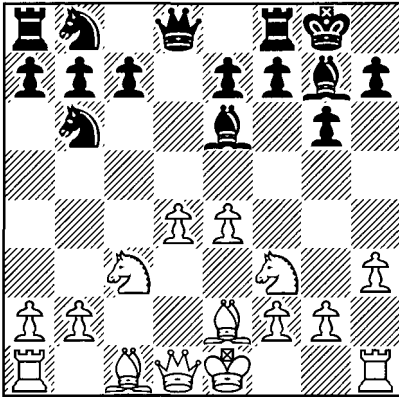
White sets up the pawn centre, and forces Black to spend a tempo on withdrawing his knight, in similar fashion to the previous game. Note that this doesn't happen in the mainstream Grünfeld arising after 1

d4 ♖f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 d5 4 cxd5 ♘xd5 5 e4, where Black has 5...♘xc3 at his disposal.

5...♘b6 6 h3!

A simple measure of restriction directed at 6...♙g4, which would leave the d4-pawn somewhat exposed.

6...♙g7 7 ♘c3 0-0 8 ♙e2 ♙e6?!



After White's annoying sixth move, Dorfman decides to get rid of his problem bishop via c4. The drawback to this idea is that it doesn't put any pressure on the enemy centre, something that he could have achieved by 8...♘c6 9 ♙e3 f5!. Probably White is a bit better after 10 exf5 ♙xf5 11 ♖b3+ ♗h8 12 ♖d1, but Black has much more counterplay than in the game.

9 0-0 ♙c4 10 ♙xc4 ♘xc4 11 ♖e2

Development with tempo. From e2 the queen supports the e4-pawn and cedes d1 to the rooks.

11...♘b6 12 ♖d1 ♘d7 13 ♙g5

The most active square for the bishop. Now 13...h6 14 ♙h4 doesn't help Black too much.

13...c6 14 a4!

There was nothing wrong with 14 ♖ac1, but Polugaevsky's move is stronger. By the threat a4-a5 he tries to provoke the weak-

ening 14...a5.

14...♖e8?

This lets White effect a strong advance in the centre. 14...a5 was a lesser evil; e.g. 15 d5 cxd5 16 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 17 ♖xd5 ♖e8 18 ♖b5 b6 with better defensive chances than in the game.

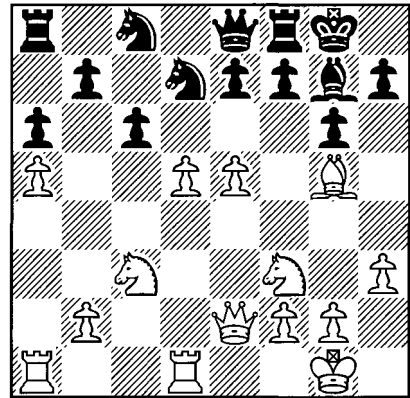
15 a5 ♘c8 16 d5!

Just at the right moment, when 16...cxd5 17 ♘d5 creates the annoying threat of 18 ♘c7.

16...a6

Practically the only move, in order to prevent 17 a6 demolishing the black queenside.

17 e5!



In strategic terms, White is already winning – the centre is totally in his control, while Black's pieces are getting short of space.

17...h6 18 ♙h4 e6

This leads to a powerful passed pawn on d6, but it was difficult to see any other liberating attempt.

19 d6 g5 20 ♙g3 f5 21 exf6 ♖xf6 22 ♖a4!

A nice way of integrating the rook into the coming kingside attack.

22...♘a7 23 h4 gxh4 24 ♖xh4 ♘b5 25 ♙e5!

12...♖f8 13 ♙h4

Black's last move enabled another simplifier with ...♗h5, which can now be met by ♙f2.

13...a6

Seeing that 13...c5?! runs into the annoying 14 ♙b5!, Black prepares it. On the previous move 12...c5?! was also dubious due to 13 dxc5 ♗xc5 14 ♙b5, followed by ♖ad1, with pressure on the weak d5-pawn.

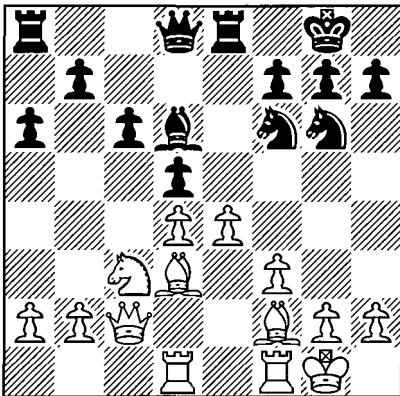
14 ♖ad1!

A "mysterious" rook move that gives extra support to the d4-pawn and discourages Black from ...c6-c5; e.g. 14...c5?! 15 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 16 dxc5 ♖xe3 17 ♗xd5, winning a pawn.

14...♗g6 15 ♙f2 ♙d6

Again the counterstrike 15...c5? is tactically flawed, this time due to 16 ♙xg6 hxg6 17 dxc5 ♙xc5 18 ♗xd5! – Polgar.

16 e4!



White finally pursues her plan of creating a pawn centre. In contrast to the previous two games, here she also achieves a semi-open f-file, which will come handy in a future attack on the black king.

16...dxe4 17 fxe4 ♗g4 18 e5! ♙c7

Unfortunately for Black, after 18...♗xf2?

19 ♖xf2 the f7-pawn falls.

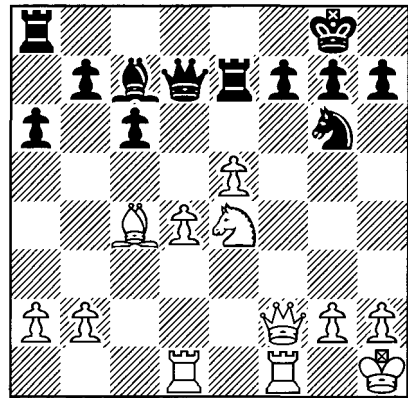
19 ♙c4!

Increasing the pressure on f7. At this point Black is probably missing his "bad" bishop, which would have been doing a good defensive job at e6.

19...♖e7 20 ♗h1 ♗xf2+

Reacting to White's intention of ♙g1 and h2-h3.

21 ♖xf2 ♖d7 22 ♗e4!



The knight is heading for g5 or c5, increasing the pressure on Black's camp. By now White's central control is remarkable – practically all the four central squares are dominated by her, a fact that facilitates her kingside attack to great extent.

22...♖f8 23 ♖f3!

Seeing that the f7-pawn is rather well-protected, Polgar switches her focus to the one on h7.

23...♖e8 24 ♖h5 ♗h8

In view of the line 24...h6?? 25 ♖xg6, Bönsch unpins the f-pawn.

25 ♖d3!

Keeping up the attack. After 25 ♗g5 h6 26 ♗xf7+ ♖xf7 27 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 28 ♖xg6 ♖f8! Black could pin some hopes on the opposite-coloured bishops.

25...h6

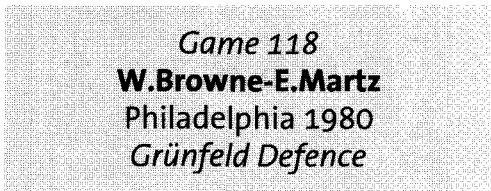
Or 25...f5 26 ♖h3 h6 27 ♜f6! with the mortal threat of 28 ♜xh6+ – Polgar.

26 ♜df3 ♜xe5

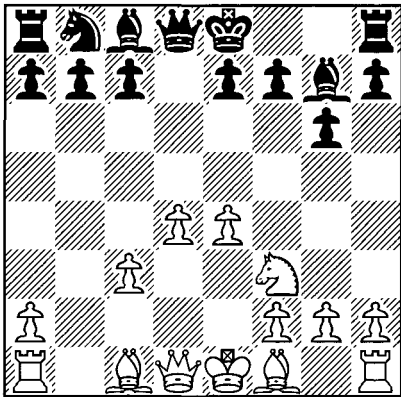
Desperation, but the threat 27 ♜xg6 was irresistible.

27 dxe5 ♜xe5 28 ♜xf7! ♜xf7 29 ♜xf7 1-0

In view of 29...♜xf7 30 ♜xf7 ♜xe4 31 ♜f8+ ♖h7 32 ♙d3 or 29...♜xe4 30 ♜f8+! with similar consequences, Black resigned.



1 d4 ♜f6 2 ♜f3 g6 3 c4 ♙g7 4 ♜c3 d5 5 cxd5 ♜xd5 6 e4 ♜xc3 7 bxc3



One of the starting positions of the Exchange Grünfeld has been reached. White enjoys a pawn centre, whereas Black is ready to undermine it by ...c7-c5, ...♜c6 etc, exploiting the strong bishop on g7. Interestingly, at the time of its invention in the 1920s, the Grünfeld was regarded with suspicion due to the temporary surrender of the central squares. Nowadays, in con-

trast, it is definitely one of the hardest nuts for the 1 d4 players to crack.

7...0-0

These days Black usually plays 7...c5 straight away, one explanation being that after 8 ♙e2 ♜c6 9 ♙e3 ♙g4 White can't safeguard his centre properly. As a result, the approaches with 8 ♖b1 and 8 ♙e3 are more popular in practice.

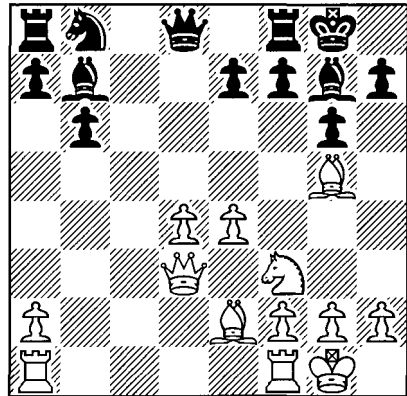
8 ♙e2 c5 9 0-0 b6

In contrast to the previous note, after 9...♜c6 10 ♙e3 ♙g4 11 d5! or 10...cxd4 11 cxd4 ♙g4 12 d5! White can still hope for an advantage; e.g. 12...♙xa1 13 ♜xa1 ♜a5 14 ♙h6, recovering the exchange with a promising central grip.

10 ♙g5

The most active post for the bishop, where it puts some pressure on the e7-pawn and complicates ...e7-e6.

10...cxd4 11 cxd4 ♙b7 12 ♜d3



12...♜d7

Black enables ...e7-e6 again, but the queen will soon have to move again in order to vacate d7 for the knight. 12...♜d7 13 ♖ad1 ♜f6 14 d5 should also be a bit better for White, so Black should prefer 12...♜c6 13 ♖ad1 h6!? 14 ♙e3 (after 14 ♙h4 g5 15

♙g3 g4 the d4-pawn falls) 14...e6 with just a slight disadvantage. Instead of 13...h6 in this line, O.Gladyszev-Z.J.Szabo, Gyongyos 1995, took an instructive course: 13...♙d7?! 14 d5! ♘e5 15 ♘xe5 ♙xe5 16 f4 ♙g7 17 ♙h4! (the immediate 17 e5 allows 17...f6) 17...♙fc8 18 e5! ♙c5 19 ♙f3 ♙e8 20 ♙fe1 f6?! 21 exf6 ♙xf6 22 ♙xf6 exf6 23 ♙xe8+ ♙xe8 24 d6! ♙xf3 25 d7! ♙d8 26 ♙xf3 a5 27 ♙b3+ ♙f8 28 ♙e6! and Black resigned in view of 29 ♙e1 next. Quite an impressive march by the white central pawns!

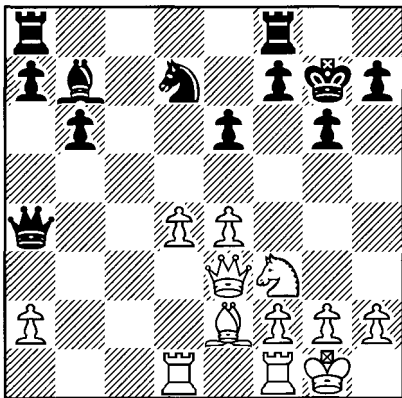
13 ♙ad1 e6 14 ♙e3!

Using the central pawns as a shield for his queen, White prepares ♙h6, swapping the Grünfeld bishop. In contrast, the apparently natural 14 d5?! runs into 14...♙a6!, followed by ...♘c5 with counterplay.

14...♙a4 15 ♙h6 ♘d7

In the event of 15...♙xa2 one tempting option is 16 h4!?, followed by ♙xg7 and h5-h6, a plan that Black is now ready to counter by ...♘f6.

16 ♙xg7 ♙xg7



17 d5!

The key move of the game. White isn't really trying to create a passed pawn, he is rather launching a positional pawn sacri-

fice, whose benefits will become evident two moves later.

17...exd5 18 ♙d4!

An important intermediate move. After 18 e5?! ♙e4! Black manages to interfere with the enemy attack, while 18 exd5?! ♙fe8 or 18 ♙c3+?! ♘f6 isn't convincing.

18...♙xa2 19 e5!

Now we can clearly appreciate Browne's idea. At the cost of one pawn the bishop on b7 has been severely restricted, a great blockading square has emerged on d4 for White's pieces, and the black kingside has become exposed. By the way, a similar pawn sacrifice also appears in the Benoni (e4-e5, ...d6xe5, f4-f5), and by Black in the King's Indian (...e5-e4, f3xe4, ...f5-f4).

19...♙ae8

After 19...h6 20 ♙h4 ♙h8 21 e6 ♙ae8 22 ♘d4 White also enjoys a strong initiative.

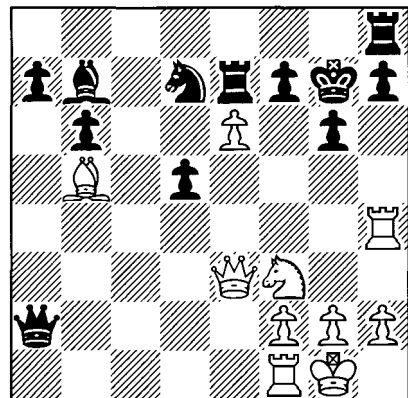
20 ♙h4 ♙h8

On 20...h5 there follows 21 ♙xh5! gxh5 22 ♙g5+ ♙h8 23 ♙xh5+ ♙g7 24 ♙g5+ ♙h8 25 ♙d3 f5 26 ♙xf5 with a decisive attack.

21 ♙b5!

The check on h6 can wait until the optimum moment.

21...♙e7 22 e6!



22...♟f6

Or 22...fxe6? 23 ♔xd7 ♚xd7 24 ♚e5+ ♟g8 25 ♚xe6+, winning – Browne.

23 ♚h6+ ♟g8 24 exf7+ ♚xf7 25 ♟e5 ♚b2

Desperation, but 25...♚e7 26 ♚g5 or 25...♚g7 26 ♚g5 was equally fatal.

26 ♟xf7 ♟xf7 27 ♔d3! ♚e8

There was the threat of 28 ♔xg6+, and 27...♟e4 failed to 28 ♚xe4! dxe4 29 ♔c4+ ♟e8 30 ♚f4! – Browne.

28 ♚f4! ♚f8

Ignoring the enemy threat, though 28...♟e6 29 ♚e1+ and 28...♟g8 29 ♔xg6 were losing as well.

29 ♚xh7+ 1-0

that after the lazy 6...♔g6 7 ♟xg6 hxg6, he could go 8 e4 in one single move. Other main options are 6 e3 and 6 ♟e5.

6...e6

Black doesn't care about the doubled pawns and simply continues development. The pawn structure that now arises might seem dubious at first sight, but practice has shown Black's position to be perfectly playable, with the f5-pawn being useful in obstructing White's e2-e4 advance.

7 ♟xf5 exf5 8 e3 ♔d6

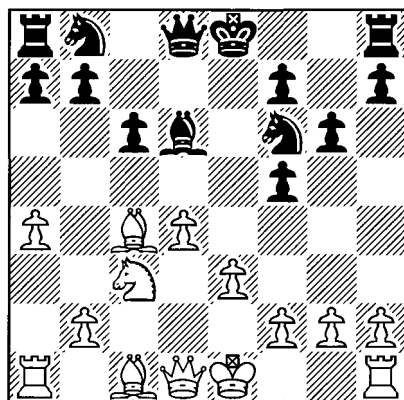
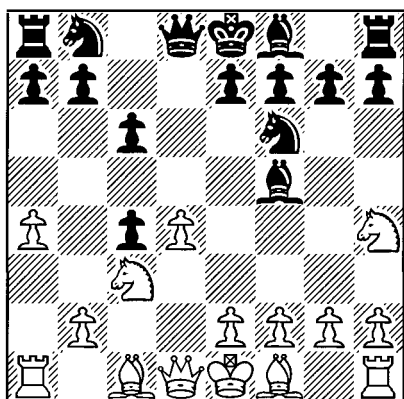
8...♔b4 is more popular, further complicating the e3-e4 plan; e.g. 9 ♔xc4 0-0 10 ♚c2 g6 11 0-0 ♟bd7, preparing ...♚c8 and ...c6-c5.

9 ♔xc4 g6

A useful move, though not really a priority at this early stage. Van der Sterren perhaps refrained from the natural 9...0-0 in view of 10 h3 followed by g2-g4, a dangerous plan that has been launched several times in practice. Even so, Black's position is not without resources; e.g. 10...♟bd7 11 g4 ♟e4! 12 gxf5 ♚a5 13 ♚c2 ♟df6 14 ♔d3 ♚fe8 with counterplay in V.Filippov-I.Ibragimov, New York Open 1998.

Game 119
P.Tregubov-P.Van der Sterren
Amsterdam 2000
Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 ♟f3 ♟f6 3 c4 c6 4 ♟c3 dxc4 5 a4 ♔f5 6 ♟h4



10 ♟f3!

We shouldn't move our pieces twice in the opening – unless there is a good reason, of course. Here White immediately challenges the Slav bishop, one benefit being

Tregubov immediately starts building a pawn centre, before Black gets in ...0-0 and ...♖e8.

10...♖c7?!

A flawed attempt at restricting White's plan. Again 10...0-0 was called for; e.g. 11 e4 fxe4 12 fxe4 c5!, immediately striking at the enemy centre. Tregubov indicates the sharp line 13 e5! cxd4 14 exd6 (not 14 ♖xd4? ♙xe5) 14...dxc3 15 0-0! ♖b6+ 16 ♙h1 cxb2 17 ♙h6 ♗bd7! 18 ♖b1 ♖fe8 19 ♖d2 with a clear advantage. However, by 19...♗e4! 20 ♖xb2 ♖d4 Black seems to hold his own.

11 e4!

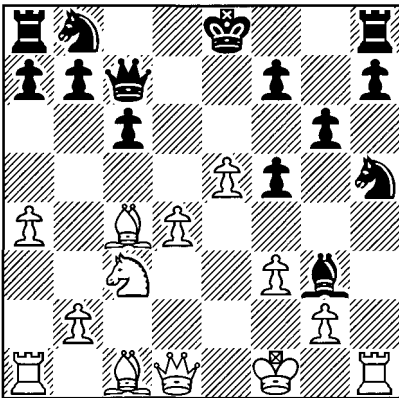
Anyway! White doesn't bother about the h2-pawn and just continues the battle for the centre.

11...♙xh2

After 11...fxe4? 12 fxe4 ♙xh2 13 e5 ♙g3+ 14 ♙f1 ♗h5 15 ♖f3 Black has no defence against ♖xh5 and ♖xg3.

12 e5 ♙g3+ 13 ♙f1 ♗h5

Or 13...♗fd7? 14 f4! with the strong threat of 15 ♗e2.



14 ♖xh5!

A second sacrifice, one that will leave Black's kingside structure in ruins and let White establish a strong grip on the centre.

14 ♗e2?! f4 was less convincing.

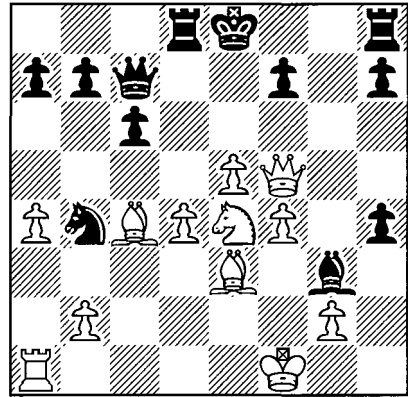
14...gxh5 15 f4 h4

In the event of 15...♗d7, Tregubov indicates 16 ♖xh5 0-0-0 17 ♗e2 ♖hg8 18 ♖a3! and White wins.

16 ♖h5 ♗a6

Since 16...♖d7 runs into 17 e6 or even 17 d5!?, Black surrenders the f5-pawn and gives priority to development.

17 ♖xf5 ♖d8 18 ♙e3 ♗b4 19 ♗e4!



By now White's central control is really impressive, with the double threat of 20 ♗d6+ and 20 ♗f6+ spelling the end for Black.

19...♗d5 20 ♙xd5 cxd5 21 ♖c1! ♖xc1+

There is nothing better; e.g. 21...♖e7 22 ♗f6+ ♙f8 23 ♖h5 h6 24 f5 ♙g7 25 ♖g4+ ♙f8 26 ♙xh6+! or 21...♖b6 22 ♗d6+!? ♖xd6 23 exd6 0-0 24 d7, followed by ♖c8 – Tregubov.

22 ♙xc1 dxe4 23 e6!

The quickest way to victory, opening the gates to the black monarch. Now 23...fxe6 drops a rook after the reply 24 ♖xe6+ ♙f8 25 ♖f6+.

23...♖f8 24 ♙d2! 1-0

In view of the devastating 25 ♙b4, Black resigned.

Centre controlled by a piece

Another key method when fighting for the centre is the occupation of a central square with a piece, usually a knight. Such a piece can become a real headache for the opponent, as we will see in the following games.

Game 120
J.Fries Nielsen-J.Hellsten
 Copenhagen 1996
Colle's Opening

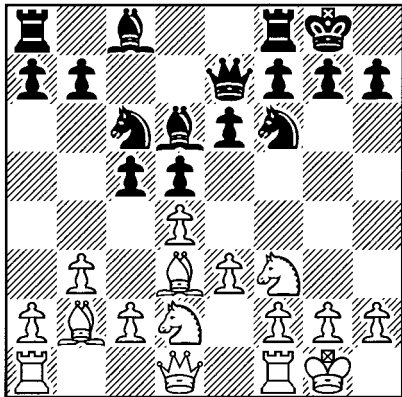
1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♗f3 e6 3 e3 c5 4 ♙d3

The Colle, a venomous opening despite its modest appearance, as we already saw in Game 59 (Vera-Romero).

4...d5 5 0-0 ♗c6 6 b3 ♙d6 7 ♙b2 0-0 8 ♗bd2

Quite a sensible set-up – both bishops enjoy good perspectives and a future knight jump to e5 is enabled.

8...♖e7?!



Black wants to push ...e6-e5, but 8...♖e8 was a better way of preparing this idea; e.g. 9 ♗e5 ♖c7! 10 f4 (or 10 ♗df3 cxd4 11 exd4 ♗b4! with similar play) 10...cxd4 11 exd4 ♗b4! 12 ♙b5 ♙d7 with a favourable minor

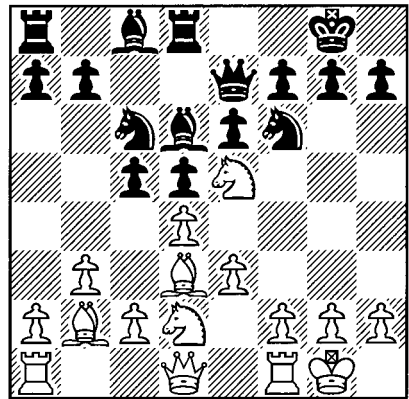
piece exchange and approximately even chances.

9 ♗e5!

White installs the knight on a great post in the centre, exploiting the fact that 9...♗xe5? isn't tactically possible. This method, once popularized by Pillsbury, is frequent in many opening systems, particularly in the queen's pawn openings. On e5 the knight will have a huge impact on the battle, cramping Black's ...e6-e5 advance and supporting a future kingside attack.

9...♗d8?

Indifference. I could have given some justice to my previous move by 9...cxd4 10 exd4 ♙a3!, swapping the attacker on b2. There can follow 11 ♖c1 ♙xb2 12 ♖xb2 ♙d7 13 a3 ♖ac8 14 f4 ♖d8 15 c4! with a distinct initiative for White, J.Nogueiras Santiago-J.Gonzalez Zamora, Cuban Championship, Holguin 1991, but even so Black is better off than in the game.



10 a3!

Preventing both ...♙a3 and ...♗b4.

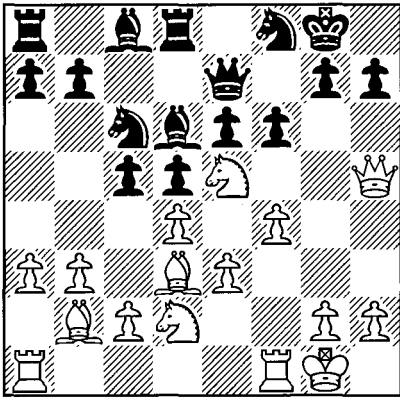
10...♗d7 11 f4!

Backing up the knight, in good old Pillsbury style. 11 ♗df3?! f6 was less promising.

11...♗f8

During the game I thought that things were going well – by ...♘d7-f8 I reinforced the sensitive h7-pawn, and now I would be ready for ...f7-f6, pushing the knight away from e5. Then, by ...e6-e5 I would take control of the centre, with my queen and rook ideally located. But my opponent played with worrying speed and I soon woke up from my illusions. As for the immediate 11...f6, after 12 ♖h5! g6 (12...♘f8 13 ♜f3 leads to the game) 13 ♘xg6 hxg6 14 ♙xg6 ♖g7 15 ♜f3 White obtains a strong attack.

12 ♖h5 f6



13 ♜f3!

A key decision of the game. Nielsen doesn't move the knight away but just gets on with the attack.

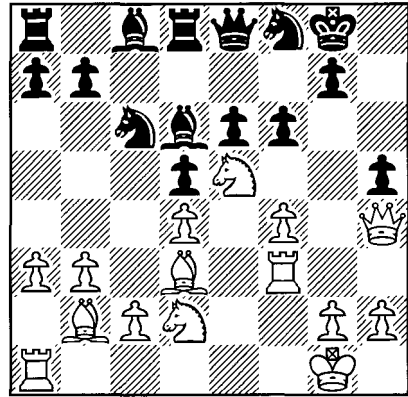
13...♖e8

Vacating the e7-square for the knight or the bishop. At this moment 13...fxe5? 14 fxe5 ♙c7 is refuted immediately by 15 ♜xf8+! ♙xf8 16 ♜f1+ with mate.

14 ♖h4 cxd4 15 exd4 h5?

Eliminating the tactical idea of ♜xf8+ and ♖xh7, so that the piece on e5 can finally be captured. However, after White's reply Black will just have weakened his

kingside. Had I been a bit more pragmatic, I would have played 15...f5!, surrendering the e5-square but, more importantly, hampering White's attack. There can follow 16 ♘xc6 bxc6 17 ♙e1 with a clear positional advantage, but at least Black has saved his king.



16 ♜af1!

White ignores the threat at his knight again and brings the last piece to the attack.

16...fxe5?!

Rather foolhardily, Black accepts the challenge. Instead, 16...♘e7 was correct, sending the knight to the defence; e.g. 17 g4!? hxg4 18 ♘xg4 ♘fg6! 19 ♖h5 ♘f5 20 ♜h3 ♖f7 and despite a promising white attack, Black is alive.

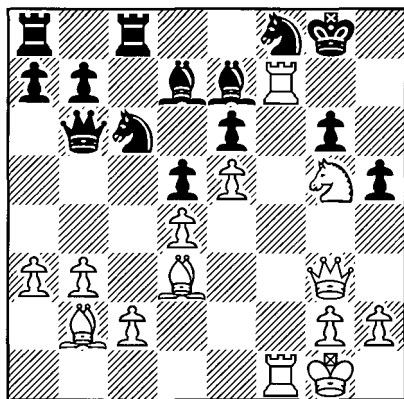
17 fxe5 ♙e7 18 ♖g3 ♙d7 19 ♜f4!

Nielsen takes his time, aware that Black can't coordinate his forces properly. The text prepares ♘f3-g5 (or ♘h4), enhancing the attack.

19...♙d8 20 ♘f3 ♖d8 21 ♘g5! ♖b6?

Losing at once, though after 21...♙xg5 22 ♜xf8+ ♖xf8 23 ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 24 ♖xg5 White is also winning.

22 ♜f7 g6



23 ♖xe6!

Finally Black's kingside crumbles.

23...♗xe5

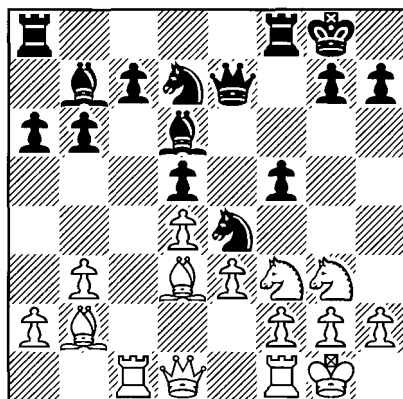
Or 23...♗xe6 24 ♖xf8+ with mate.

24 ♖xe5 ♗xe6 25 ♗xg6 ♖f4 26 ♖g7 mate

after 12 bxc4 ♗xf3 13 gxf3 ♗xh2+) 12...♗h8
13 ♗e4 cxb3 14 axb3 with a slight edge,
J.Fries Nielsen-J.Stanke, German League 2003.
10...a6!

An essential move in Black's set-up, so
as to rule out the same ♖b5 that we saw in
the previous note.

11 cxd5 exd5 12 ♖e2 ♖e7 13 ♖g3 f5!



Game 121

J.Hellsten-R.Akesson

Sweden 1996

Queen's Indian Defence

1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♖f3 b6 4 e3

A perfectly playable line, even if 4 g3
and 4 a3 are considered as more critical
tests of the Queen's Indian.

4...♗b7 5 ♗d3 d5 6 b3 ♗d6

Launching a similar set-up to White's in
the previous game.

7 0-0-0 8 ♖c3 ♖bd7 9 ♗b2 ♖e4

This time it is Black who applies Pills-
bury's method.

10 ♖c1?!

A rather mechanical move. 10 ♖c2 was
more ambitious, fighting for the e4-square;
e.g. 10...f5 11 cxd5 exd5 12 ♖b5!, swapping
the dangerous bishop on d6, or 10...♗xc3 11
♗xc3 dxc4 12 ♗xh7+! (avoiding the perpetual

Black reinforces his central knight and
at the same time prevents 14 ♖f5. With the
centre more or less secured, he is now ready
for a kingside attack.

14 ♖c2 c6!

Akesson is well aware of the enemy in-
tentions and takes prophylactic measures.
Both 14...♖f6 and 14...g5 would have run
into 15 ♖a1!, followed by ♖e5; e.g. 14...♖f6
15 ♖a1 ♖e8 16 ♖e5!, and after multiple
captures on e5, White snatches the c7-
pawn in the end. As for the impulsive
14...f4, after 15 exf4 ♗xf4 16 ♖e1 the e-file
is opened to White's benefit.

15 ♖e2 a5

A useful move that secures the a-pawn
and enables the ...a5-a4 pinprick, a fact that
explains my next move.

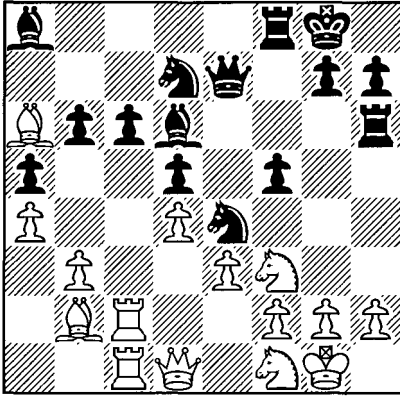
16 a4 ♖f6!

Time to get on with the kingside attack.

17 ♖f1 ♜af8 18 ♙a6 ♙a8 19 ♚d1?

A useless retreat, which leaves White in a very passive position. Much better was 19 ♘f1, followed by ♘e1 and f2-f3, with chances for a successful defence.

19...♞h6 20 ♘f1



20...g5!

With such a firm grip on the centre, nothing speaks against a full-scale advance on the kingside. Less precise was 20...♗df6 21 ♘e5! with some interference.

21 g3 f4 22 exf4 gxf4 23 ♙e2 ♘df6!

Finally Black permits ♘e5, when he has created sufficient threats on the kingside. Otherwise, 23...fxg3 24 fxg3 ♚g7 25 ♙d3 ♞hf6 also looked strong.

24 ♘e5 ♘xf2!

The position was begging for this sacrifice, which opens the gates to the white king.

25 ♙xf2 fxg3+ 26 hxg3

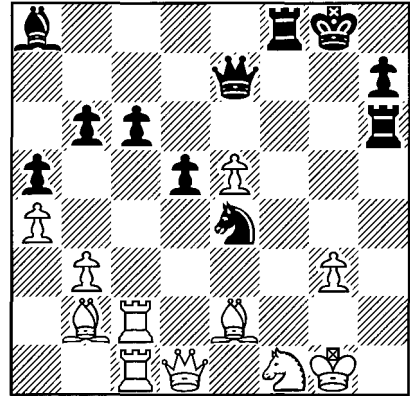
After 26 ♙g1 gxh2+ 27 ♘xh2 ♙xe5 28 dx5 ♞g6+ 29 ♙h1 ♘e4 Black's attack is also irresistible.

26...♘e4+ 27 ♙g1

In heavy time-trouble I just chose the most obvious retreat, but 27 ♙g2!? was worth considering, since 27...♞f2+?! 28 ♙g1 actually helps White more than Black. The

latter should rather continue 27...♙xe5 28 dx5 c5! 29 ♙f3 ♚d7 with strong pressure; e.g. 30 ♙g4 d4! 31 ♙xd7 ♘d2+, regaining the queen with heavy interest.

27...♙xe5 28 dx5



28...♘f2!

With the simple plan of ...c6-c5 and ...d5-d4, including the last piece in the assault.

29 ♚d2 ♚e6!

Defending the rook and creating the threat of 30...♞h1+ 31 ♙g2 ♚h3 mate (or simply 30...♞h3) at the same time.

30 ♚g5+ ♙h8 0-1

Since 31 ♙f3 saves the king but not the queen, White resigned.

It is no wonder that after such painful defeats, I became interested in applying the same idea myself. Here is one example.

Game 122
J.Hellsten-C.Vizama
Linares, Chile 2003
Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 e3

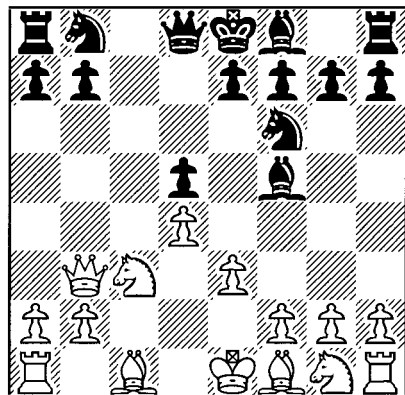
In comparison with the more common 4

♘f3, White rules out 4...dxc4 at this early stage, at the cost of restricting his bishop on c1.

4...♙f5?!

A natural move in the Slav, but slightly inappropriate on this occasion, which White will show with his next two moves. More usual are 4...e6, 4...a6 and 4...g6.

5 cxd5 cxd5 6 ♖b3!



A typical idea in this opening – after the bishop’s departure from c8, White hurries to attack the vulnerable b7-pawn. In contrast, 5 ♖b3?! at once was less accurate due to 5...♖b6.

6...♙c8

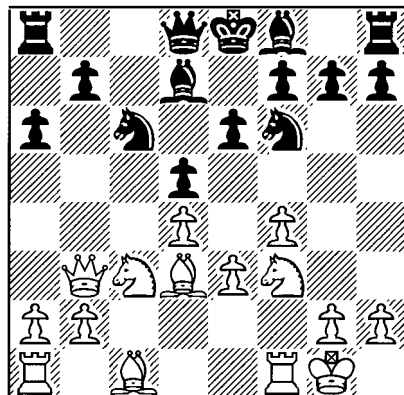
The least of evils, now that 6...♖b6?! runs into 7 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 8 ♖xd5 ♖b4+ 9 ♙d2 ♖xb2 10 ♖c1 with a clear advantage, while 6...b6? drops a pawn after 7 ♙b5+ and 8 ♘xd5.

7 f4!?

An interesting way of seizing the centre – the ensuing weakness on e4 hardly makes itself felt here. Otherwise, White could consider the simple 7 ♘f3 ♘c6 8 ♙d3 e6 9 0-0, followed by ♙d2, ♖fc1 and ♖d1, or even e3-e4!?, transposing to an IQP structure.

7...e6 8 ♘f3 ♘c6 9 ♙d3 a6 10 0-0 ♙d7

After 10...♙e7 11 ♘e5 0-0 12 ♙d2 ♘xe5 13 fxe5 ♘d7 14 e4! White also keeps the initiative.



11 ♘e5!

By now this idea is well familiar to us. Incidentally, 11 ♖xb7?? ♘a5 obviously had to be avoided.

11...b5 12 ♖d1 ♙d6?!

12...♙e7 was better, enabling a future ...♘xe5. Admittedly the other knight could no longer retreat to d7 as in the note with 10...♙e7 above, but in the game Black will suffer worse problems.

13 ♙d2 ♖b6 14 ♙e1

Such a bishop transfer is well known from the Stonewall Dutch.

14...h5?

A pseudo-active move, which just makes it more difficult for Black to castle. It was not yet too late for 14...♙e7 admitting the mistake on move 12.

15 ♙h4 ♙e7 16 ♖c1!

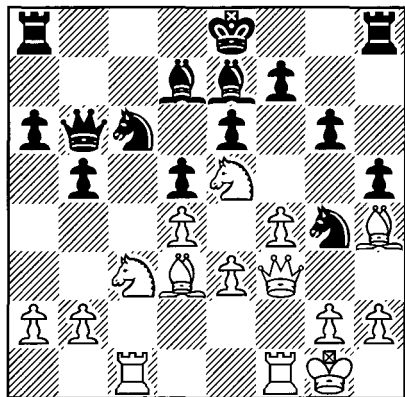
The fact that Black can’t connect his rooks will play heavily against him in the dispute for the open c-file.

16...g6

Or 16...♖c8 17 ♖f3 ♖b8 18 ♖g3!, intending 18...g6? 19 ♘xf7.

17 ♖f3 ♘g4?

This counterstrike won't work out well, though after 17...♖c8 18 ♖g3 ♖g8 19 a3!, with the simple plan of ♖c2 and ♗fc1, Black is also in trouble.



18 ♗xd7

The proud knight finally leaves the board in order to keep Black's king in the centre, thus enhancing the following sacrifice.

18...♔xd7 19 ♗xd5! exd5 20 ♖xd5+

Black's position falls apart completely and the rest is relatively easy.

20...♙d6 21 ♖xf7+ ♗e7 22 f5! ♗hf8

Or 22...♙xh2+ 23 ♔h1 ♗ae8 24 fxg6 with irresistible threats.

23 ♖e6+ ♔e8 24 ♔h1!

Prophylaxis in the attack. Now both 25 ♙xe7 and 25 f6 are threatened, neither of which worked at this moment due to 24...♙xh2+.

24...♖d8 25 f6 ♗xf6 26 ♙xg6+ 1-0

From the previous three games, one could get the impression that once a knight is installed on e5 or e4, the other player is doomed to defeat. Of course this is not the case, and here is an example on how to fight against a "Pillsbury" knight.

Game 123
L.Van Wely-S.Karjakin
Spanish Team
Championship 2005
Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♗c3 ♗f6 4 ♗f3 a6

The Chebanenko system, which we already saw in Miton-Sammour (Game 6).

5 a4

One of the most critical replies, ruling out any attempt at ...b7-b5, at the cost of slightly weakening the b4-square.

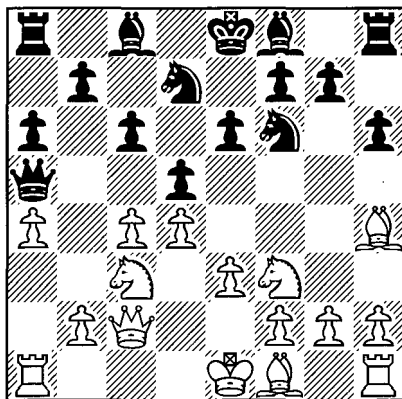
5...e6 6 ♙g5 ♗bd7 7 ♖c2

White could also play 7 e3 at once, though the text tends to be a useful move in such positions.

7...h6 8 ♙h4 ♖a5

An ambitious choice in the spirit of the Cambridge Springs variation (4...e6 5 ♙g5 ♗bd7 6 e3 ♖a5 etc). The simple 8...♙e7 was possible as well; e.g. 9 e3 0-0 10 a5 c5! 11 dxc5 ♗xc5 12 cxd5 ♗xd5 13 ♗xd5 exd5 14 ♙xe7 ♖xe7 15 ♙e2 ♙g4 16 0-0 ♖ac8 with counterplay in L.Van Wely-V.Ivanchuk, Monte Carlo (rapid) 2006.

9 e3



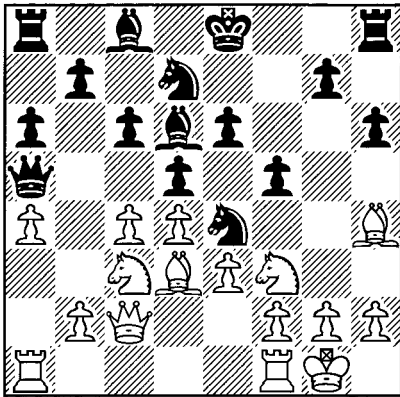
9...♞e4?!

Karjakin hurries to install a knight on e4 at the cost of delaying development. 9...♞b4, followed by ...0-0, was a safer choice.

10 ♙d3 f5

Reinforcing the knight in Pillsbury style. Less appealing is 10...♞b4 11 ♙xe4 dxe4 12 ♘d2 f5 13 c5!, followed by ♘c4, when Black faces severe problems on the dark squares.

11 0-0 ♙d6



At first sight Black's position seems rather promising. He just needs a few tempi to get castled and activate his queenside pieces, after which his central grip would motivate a kingside attack, just as in the previous games. However, Van Wely has a strong antidote prepared.

12 c5!

Before taking charge of the knight on e4, Van Wely fixes the queenside pawn structure, in order to rule out a possible ...c6-c5 break, and enables a future ♘d2-c4 manoeuvre. In effect, after 12 ♙xe4?! dxe4! 13 ♘d2 c5 Black wouldn't have anything to complain about.

12...♙b8 13 ♙xe4!

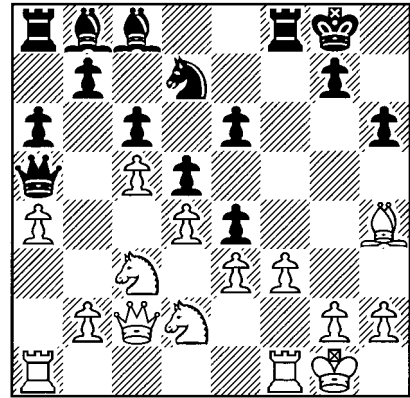
Swapping the least active minor piece

for the strong enemy knight.

13...fxe4

By now, 13...dxe4? 14 ♘d2, followed by ♘c4 and ♙g3, would yield White a clear grip on the dark squares.

14 ♘d2 0-0 15 f3!



A key move to break the enemy pawn chain and clear the f-file before Black's queenside pieces join the battle.

15...exf3 16 ♘xf3 ♖f7

Preparing ...♘f8 to reinforce the kingside defence. In contrast, the active 16...e5 permits 17 ♖g6! exd4 (or 17...e4 18 ♘d2 with the strong threat 19 ♙e7) 18 exd4 ♘f6 19 ♖ae1 with a colossal lead in development.

17 ♖f2!

The most logical choice, in order to include the queen's rook in the battle.

17...♘f8

This time 17...e5 is strongly met by 18 ♖af1 e4 19 ♘xe4! dxe4 20 ♖b3; e.g. 20...♘f6 21 ♙xf6 gxf6 22 ♘g5! hxg5 23 ♖xf6 and White wins.

18 b4!

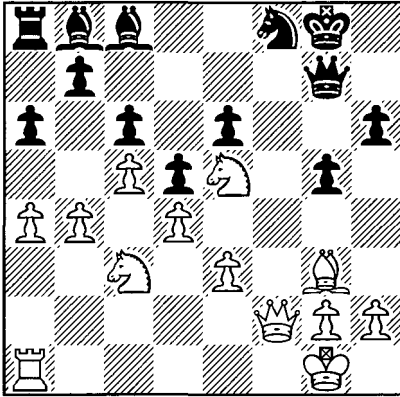
Exploiting the tactical twist 18...♖xb4? 19 a5, followed by ♖a4, Van Wely lures the black queen to c7, thus enabling ♘e5 on

the next move. The simple 18 ♖af1!? ♗d7 19 ♗g3!, preparing ♗e5 after the exchange of bishops, looked strong too.

18... ♖c7 19 ♗e5 ♖xf2 20 ♖xf2 g5

Practically the only move, so as to get some breathing space.

21 ♗g3 ♖g7



22 ♖f1!

The triumph of White's strategy. The knight on e5 is a giant, and Black can hardly save his king with the rook and queen's bishop still out of play.

22... ♗c7

Seeing that 22... ♗d7? runs into 23 ♖xf8+!, Karjakin prepares the bishop move.

23 ♗g4!

Hitting the vulnerable dark squares on f6 and h6.

23... e5

This loses outright, though Black was short of a defence anyway; e.g. 23... ♗xg3 24 ♖xg3 ♗d7 25 ♗f6+ ♗h8 26 ♗h5, followed by 27 ♖e5+.

24 ♗f6+! 1-0

In view of the material losses after 24... ♗h8 25 ♗e8, Black resigned.

Now let's see some examples of other

central squares being subject to the same idea.

Game 124
K. Haznedaroglu-M. Gurevich
 Izmir 2002
Pirc Defence

1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♗f6 3 ♗c3 g6 4 ♗f3 ♗g7 5 ♗e2

A quiet approach against the Pirc. These days, the Austrian Attack (4 f4) and the flexible 4 ♗e3 are probably more demanding lines for Black.

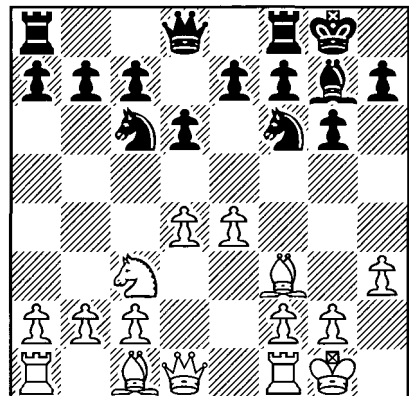
5... 0-0 6 0-0 ♗g4

Black surrenders the bishop pair in order to start working on the dark squares, in particular d4. He has many other options here, such as 6... c6, preparing ... ♗bd7 and ... e7-e5.

7 h3

Another direction is 7 ♗e3 ♗c6 8 d5 ♗xf3 9 ♗xf3 ♗e5 10 ♗e2 c6! 11 f4 ♗ed7 with a complex strategical battle.

7... ♗xf3 8 ♗xf3 ♗c6



9 ♗e3

Considering the dark square problems faced by White later on, 9 ♗e2 e5 10 c3

might be a more promising approach, safeguarding the d4-pawn. He could also contemplate 9 ♖g5 in order to provoke ...h7-h6, so that a later ♜d2 gains a tempo by attacking h6.

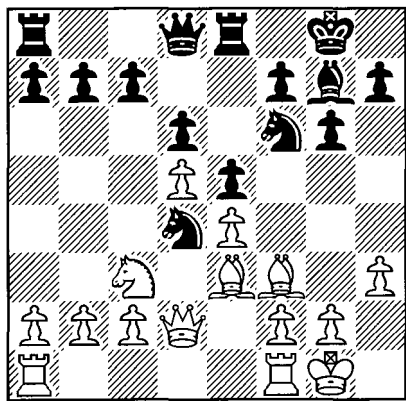
9...♞e8

An odd move at first sight – why doesn't Black just play 9...e5 straight away; e.g. 10 d5 ♗e7, followed by ...♗d7 and ...f7-f5 - ? Well, Gurevich has quite a different idea in mind, one that will become evident on the next move.

10 ♜d2

On moves like 10 ♞e1 or 10 ♗e2 Black could react in similar fashion; e.g. 10 ♗e2 e5 11 d5 ♗d4! 12 ♗xd4 exd4 13 ♜xd4 (or 13 ♖xd4 ♗xe4 14 ♞e1 ♗g5) 13...♗g4!? 14 ♜d2 ♗xe3 15 ♜xe3 ♖xb2 16 ♞ab1 ♜f6 17 ♜b3 ♖e5 18 ♜xb7 ♜f4 with clear compensation for the pawn, N.Guliev-M.Gurevich, French Team Championship 2004.

10...e5 11 d5 ♗d4!



By now Black's strategy is easily appreciated. The knight on d4 is very annoying for the opponent, and removing it by 12 ♖xd4 exd4 13 ♜xd4 fails to 13...♗xe4, crediting the prophylactic 9...♞e8.

12 ♖d1 c6!

Such a knight supports action on the whole board, and here Gurevich has estimated that the queenside is his best battlefield.

13 dxc6

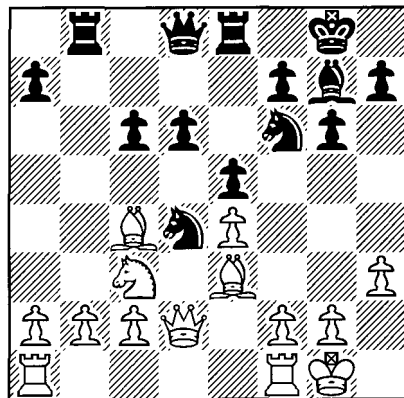
The active 13 f4 runs into 13...cxd5 14 exd5 ♗f5!, followed by ...e5-e4 or ...♖h6, with strong pressure on the dark squares.

13...bxc6 14 ♖e2?!

But here, 14 f4, followed by ♜f2, seems like a better shot, creating some counterplay on the f-file. The text prepares the bishop transfer ♖c4-b3 but, as we will see next, it won't work tactically.

14...♞b8 15 ♖c4?

15 ♞ab1 was a lesser evil, keeping the material balance.



15...d5!

Black sets up a pawn centre, exploiting the fact that 16 ♖b3? now fails to 16...♗xb3 17 axb3 d4. In contrast, 15...♞xb2?! 16 ♖b3 would make things unnecessarily complicated.

16 ♖d3 ♗e6

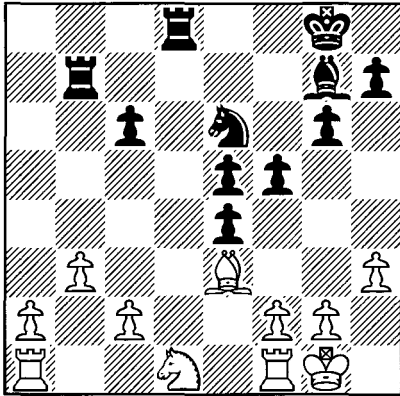
Probably there was nothing wrong with 16...♞xb2, but the text has the merit of installing the additional threat 17...d4.

17 ♗d1 ♗xe4 18 ♖xe4 dxe4 19 ♜xd8

♖xd8 20 ♕xa7

Despite the material balance, White is seriously worse in this endgame due to Black's active pieces and central control.

20...♖b7 21 ♕e3 f5! 22 b3



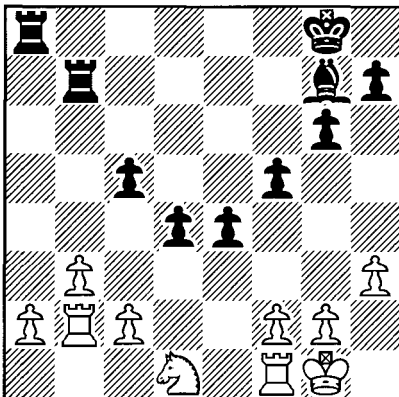
22...♞d4!

The knight returns to its preferred position, increasing the pressure on White's camp. In the same spirit, 22...f4!? 23 ♕c1 ♞d4 was interesting too.

23 ♕xd4?

This just helps Black in creating a passed pawn, though after 23 c3 ♞e2+ 24 ♖h1 ♞a8! White is suffering anyway.

23...exd4 24 ♖b1 ♞a8 25 ♖b2 c5!



One more pawn starts rolling, while White remains badly coordinated.

26 c3 ♖ba7 27 cxd4 ♕xd4

There was nothing wrong with 27...cxd4, but Gurevich prefers to take a pawn.

28 ♖b1 ♞xa2 29 ♞e3 ♖e2 0-1

In view of the double threat of 30...♕xe3 and 30...♖aa2, White resigned.

Game 125
Y.Nikolaevski-V.Mikhalevski
Kiev 1995
English Opening

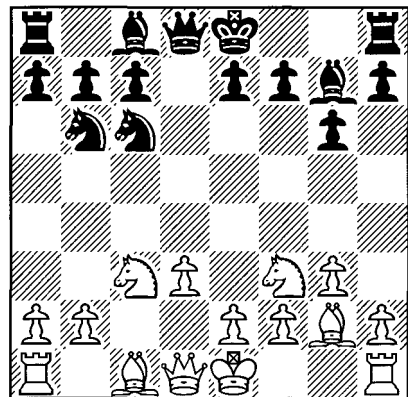
1 c4 ♞f6 2 ♞c3 d5

Black responds to the English in Grünfeld style.

3 cxd5 ♞xd5 4 g3 g6 5 ♕g2 ♞b6 6 d3

Another option was 6 d4 ♕g7 7 ♞f3, transposing to the Fianchetto variation of the Grünfeld.

6...♕g7 7 ♞f3 ♞c6



A typical English structure has emerged, similar to the Sicilian Dragon with reversed colours. White has an extra pawn in the centre and also possesses a semi-open c-file. On the other hand, Black enjoys more

space and easy development.

8 ♖d2

White prepares ♖c1 and ♗h6 in order to exchange the bishop on g7, aware that the absence of pawns on the central squares makes both fianchettoed bishops rather valuable. If Black tries to prevent this by 8...h6, then after 9 ♖c1 he can't easily castle, which is why Mikhalevski prefers just to continue development.

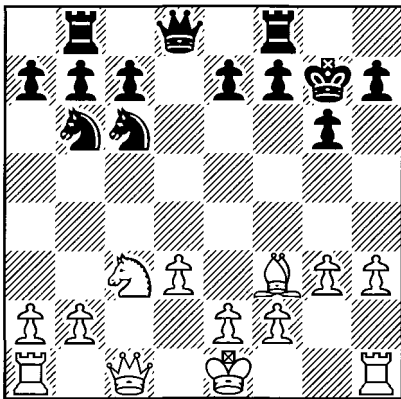
8...0-0 9 ♖c1 ♜b8!?

An interesting piece of prophylaxis. Black overprotects the b7-pawn, so that his knight can move away from c6 later on. In contrast, after 9...♜e8 10 ♗h6 ♗h8 11 h4!?, followed by 12 h5, White develops an initiative on the kingside.

10 ♗h6 ♗g4 11 ♗xg7 ♖xg7 12 h3?!

Perhaps Nikolaevsky wanted to avoid 12 0-0 ♖d7, followed by ...♗h3, but the text just accelerates Black's plan.

12...♗xf3 13 ♗xf3



13...♞d4!

Thanks to the 9...♜b8 move, Black can centralize his knight straight away. From now on, whenever White plays e2-e3, he will be left with a slight weakness on d3.

14 ♗g2 e5

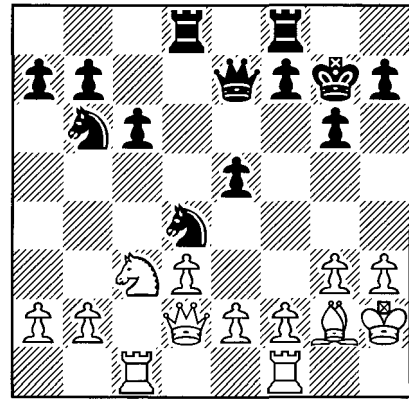
Just in time, before White achieves an ideal pawn structure by 15 e3 and 16 d4.

15 0-0 ♖e7 16 ♞h2?!

This and White's following moves are rather passive. 16 e3 ♞e6 17 ♖c2 seems preferable, intending ♜b1 and b2-b4 with some queenside play. The slight weakness on d3 can be lived with.

16...c6 17 ♖d2 ♜bd8 18 ♜ac1?!

Again White refrains from e2-e3 and ♖c2, preferring a rather cryptic rook move. By now he even has to watch out for ...♞c4.



18...f5!

With the centre more or less controlled, Mikhalevski starts active operations on the kingside. Less useful was 18...♞c4 19 ♖e1, when 19...♞xb2? 20 ♜b1 ♖a3 21 ♖c1 leaves the knight trapped.

19 f4?

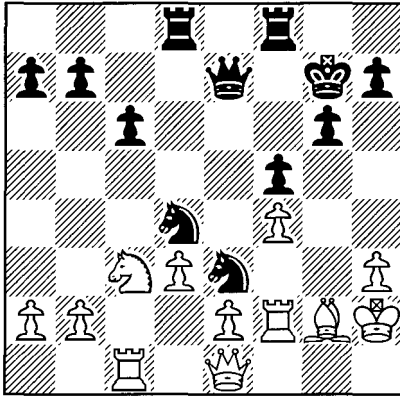
A serious oversight that lets Black establish a firm grip on the dark squares by tactical means. 19 e3? no longer worked due to 19...♞c4! 20 ♖e1 ♞xb2 21 exd4 ♞xd3 22 ♖e3 ♞xc1 23 ♜xc1 ♜xd4 (Ribli), so 19 b3 was more cautious and only then 20 e3. Perhaps Black could react by 19...h5!?, intending ...h5-h4; e.g. 20 h4 e4! 21 ♖e3 f4 22 ♖xe4 ♖d6 with attacking prospects.

19...♖c4!

Exploiting the tactical twist 20 dxc4? ♜f3+, Black sends his knight to a great destiny on e3.

20 ♖e1 ♜e3 21 ♜f2 exf4 22 gxf4

Or if 22 ♜xf4 Black replies 22...g5 23 ♜f2 ♖e5!, intending ...h5-h4 with a strong attack – Ribli.



22...♖h4!

With the centre completely in his hands, Black intensifies his attack and now threatens 23...♜g4+.

23 ♖h1 ♜fe8

The last piece joins the battle, creating the unpleasant threat of 24...♜xg2 25 ♖xg2 ♜e3.

24 ♜f1 ♖h6 25 ♖g3

White offers the exchange in order to relieve his defence, but Mikhalevski just ignores it and keeps on attacking.

25...♜xg2! 26 ♖xg2 ♜e3 27 ♖h2 ♜e6!

The concrete idea behind 25...♜xg2 – the f4-pawn now falls.

28 ♜f3 ♜xf4 29 ♖g3 0-1

At the same time White resigned, without waiting for the reply 29...♜xf3 30 ♖xf3 ♜xh3!, discovering an attack on the rook on c1.

Game 126

D.Bocharov-A.Tjurin
Khanty-Mansiysk 2008
Budapest Gambit

1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5 ♜g4 4 e3

An interesting sideline against the Budapest Gambit, in which White skips ♜f3 in order to develop this knight via h3 instead. The main moves are 4 ♜f4 and 4 ♜f3.

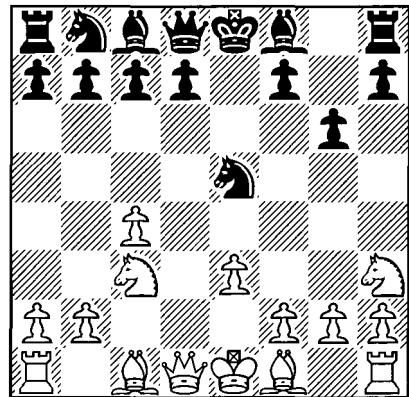
4...♜xe5 5 ♜c3

The immediate 5 ♜h3 permits the gambit 5...d5!?

5...g6

Black opts for a King's Indian-like set-up. In the event of the more Budapest-spirited 5...♜bc6 White can proceed in similar fashion to the game; i.e. 6 ♜h3! ♜b4 7 ♜d2 d6 8 ♜f4 ♜g4 9 ♜e2 ♜xe2 10 ♖xe2 0-0 11 0-0 with a slight edge.

6 ♜h3!



The knight heads for a pleasant destiny on f4, from where it can later reach the key square on d5.

6...♜g7 7 ♜f4 0-0 8 ♜e2 a5

Preparing ...♜a6-c5 without having to bother about b2-b4.

9 0-0 d6 10 e4!

Gaining space and preparing ♖e3. In similar King's Indian positions the e4-pawn often becomes exposed to Black's pieces; here, in contrast, it is somehow helped by the location of the black knight on e5. Moreover, the fact that both white knights can quickly reach the d5-square also speaks in his favour.

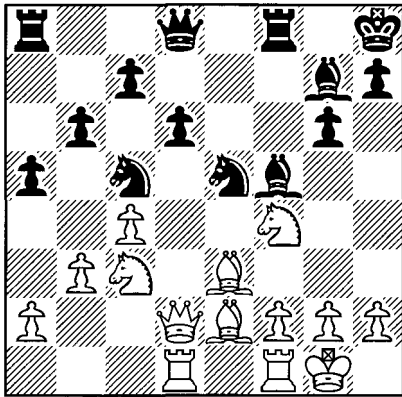
10...♗a6 11 ♖e3 ♘c5 12 ♖d2

Before installing a knight on d5, it makes sense to put a few major pieces on the d-file in order to discourage Black from ...c7-c6.

12...b6 13 b3 ♖h8 14 ♖ad1 f5

Otherwise Black is left too passive.

15 exf5 ♖xf5



16 ♗fd5!

Finally. Now if Black expels the knight by ...c7-c6, then the d6-pawn becomes weak, a subject that we just came across with reversed colours in the previous game.

16...♖f7

Or 16...♗g4 17 ♖xg4! ♖xg4 18 f3 ♖f5 19 ♖d4! with favourable exchanges. Basically, White is happy to exchange about every piece on the board, except for the proud knight on d5.

17 f3

Taking the g4- and e4-squares from Black's pieces. Another good option was 17 h3, followed by f2-f4, a plan that is soon carried out in the game.

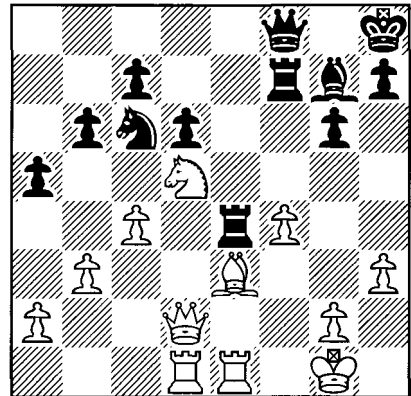
17...♖f8

Black just gets on with the mobilization of his pieces to the kingside; unfortunately, he has no real targets there to work on. In retrospect one gets the impression that he should have tried ...c7-c6 at some point, accepting a weak pawn on d6 just to get rid of the annoying knight on d5. However, both here and on the previous move, 17...c6 runs into 18 ♖g5!, with the knight eyeing b6 and e7 at the same time.

18 h3 ♖e8 19 f4! ♗c6 20 ♖f3

Little by little White improves his position.

20...♗e4 21 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 22 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 23 ♖fe1



Despite the exchanges Black is still in difficulties due the strong knight on d5, which ties at least one of his pieces to defence of the c7-pawn.

23...♖e8 24 g3!

When you are aware that you have a long-term advantage, don't hurry things.

The text provides the king with a safer square on g2 and gives the f4-pawn some extra support.

24...♖g8 25 ♖g2 ♜e6 26 ♙f2!

Bocharov disputes the open file, aware that Black can't easily resist there due to his problem with the c7-pawn.

26...♞c8 27 a3

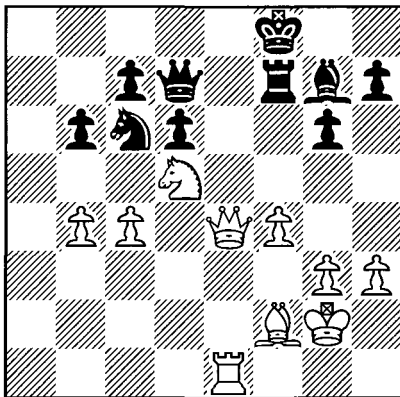
Preparing b3-b4 with a new front on the queenside. The obvious 27 ♜xe6 ♞xe6 28 ♜e1 can wait, since Black can't bring his second rook to the e-file anyway; e.g. 27...♜f8? 28 ♜xe6 ♞xe6 29 ♘xc7.

27...♙f8 28 b4 axb4 29 axb4 ♜xe1 30 ♜xe1 ♞a8 31 ♙g1!

Protecting the knight from exchange by ...♘e7. By now Black is doomed to passive defence.

31...♞c8 32 ♞e2 ♙d4 33 ♖g2 ♙g7 34 ♞e4 ♞d7?

A tactical oversight, but after 34...♞d8 35 g4!, followed by b4-b5, Black is also in big trouble, with 35...♘e7 failing to 36 ♙h4! at any moment.



35 ♘xc7! ♜e7

Obviously the knight was untouchable because of mate.

36 ♙e6+ ♙g8 37 b5 ♘d8 38 ♘c5! 1-0

In view of the lost endgame arising after 38...♜xe4 39 ♘xd7, Black resigned. In effect, a great technical game by White.

Game 127
R.Slobodjan-V.Epishin
 German Team Cup 2002
Sicilian Defence, Closed Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♘c3 e6 3 g3 d5

A solid reply to the Closed Sicilian. Obviously Black also had to be ready for 3 ♘f3 and 4 d4, transposing to the Open Sicilian.

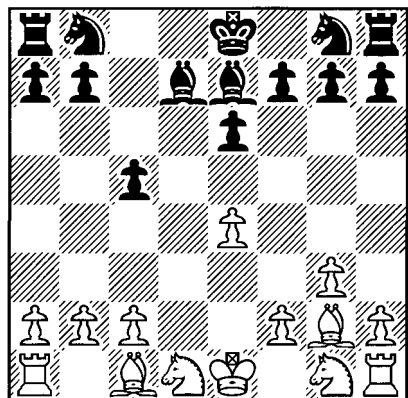
4 d3 ♙e7

By bringing out the bishop first, Black avoids 4...♘f6 5 e5.

5 ♙g2 dxe4

The simplest. Now 6 ♘xe4 ♘f6 leaves White without any trace of an advantage, but neither does the queenless middle-game that arises after the text, so he should probably have preferred e4xd5, followed by ♙g2, either on the fourth or fifth move.

6 dxe4 ♞xd1+ 7 ♘xd1 ♙d7!



Heading for c6 to neutralize the bishop on g2 and put some initial pressure on the e4-pawn.

8 ♖e3 ♘c6 9 ♗e2 ♗d7 10 ♙d2 ♗gf6 11 f3
0-0 12 ♗c4

With the dual intention of 13 ♗a5 and 13 e5. Slower moves like 12 ♗f2 permit 12...b5!, gaining space and taking the c4-square from White's pieces. Actually Black could already have considered 11...b5 on the previous move.

12...♙b5

Immediately preventing both enemy ideas. 12...b5?! 13 ♗a5 or 12...b6 13 e5 ♗d5 14 f4 was less promising – Bangiev.

13 ♗a3 ♘c6 14 ♗c4 ♙b5 15 ♗e3 ♘c6

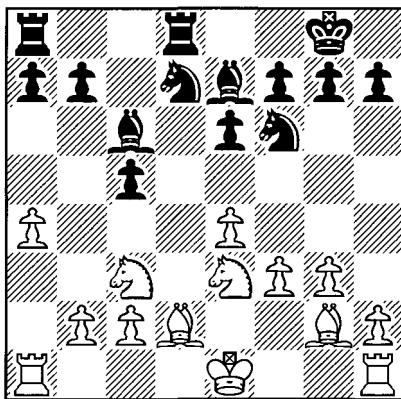
At this point White could have taken a three-fold repetition by 16 ♗c4, but he decides to play for a win. Black, on his part, could have avoided the repetition by 15...♞fd8 at this moment, or by 13...♙a6 earlier on.

16 a4 ♞fd8

Black is finally ready to start fighting for the open file.

17 ♗c3

The immediate 17 ♗c4 would have run into 17...♙xa4! 18 ♞xa4 b5 – Bangiev, so White prepares it.



17...♗e5!

The key move of this game, by which

Black seizes the centre and, at the same time, prevents 18 ♗c4.

18 ♗e2?!

As the remainder of the game will show us, White shouldn't have let the knight stay on e5. Preferable was 18 f4 ♗eg4 19 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 20 h3 ♗f6 21 ♞h2!, preparing e4-e5; e.g. 21...c4 22 e5 ♗d5 23 ♗xd5 ♙xd5 24 ♙e3 with just a slight disadvantage. When you are defending, a key task is to choose between different inferiorities, find the least of evils, so to speak. In the position after 24 ♙e3 White has slightly exposed his pawn structure and his dark-squared bishop might not be such a great piece, whereas in the game he will face more serious problems.

18...g5!

A strong move that reinforces the central knight and enables a future pinprick by ...g5-g4. Now if 19 f4, then 19...gxf4 20 gxf4 ♗g6, with the knight eyeing both f4 and h4.

19 ♞hd1 ♞d4!

One more central field is occupied by the black forces.

20 b3

Unfortunately for White, the desirable 20 ♗b5? fails to 20...♞xa4!, so he prepares it, though his idea is easily prevented by Black's next move.

20...a6 21 ♙e1 h5 22 ♗f1 g4!

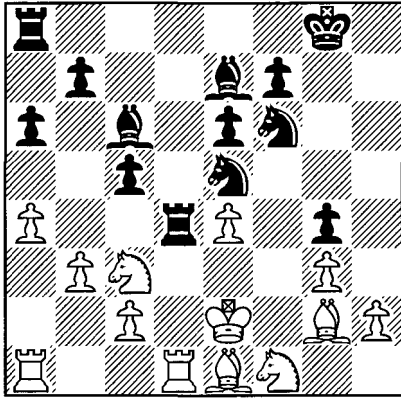
A timely undermining of the e4-pawn, before White pushes away the rook by 22 ♙f2.

23 fxg4

Or 23 f4 ♗f3! 24 ♙xf3 gxf3+ 25 ♗xf3 ♗xe4 with a clear advantage – Bangiev.

23...hxg4

A triumph of Black's strategy – the powerful knight on e5 can no longer be expelled, and the e4-pawn has become a long-term weakness.



24 ♖d2

After 24 ♖f2 ♜xd1 25 ♜xd1 b5!, with the threat 26...b4, Black keeps his grip.

24...♗g7!

Epishin now directs his attention to the h2-pawn and will even be ready to give up the exchange for it.

25 ♖f2 ♜h8! 26 ♖g1

After 26 ♖xd4?! cxd4 27 ♘a2 ♜xh2 28 ♗f1 ♜h6!, followed by ...♘h5 (but not 28...♘h5? 29 ♗g1), White is in deep trouble.

26...♜h5!

The tempting 26...b5 allows 27 axb5 axb5 28 ♜a7 with some counterplay, so Epishin first makes a useful move safeguarding the fifth rank.

27 ♘f1

If 27 a5, preventing ...b7-b5, then 27...♜d8, preparing ...c5-c4 and ...♖b4, looks interesting for Black.

27...♜xd1 28 ♜xd1 b5!

Right on time. Now White again has to take care of the e4-pawn, considering the threat of ...b5-b4.

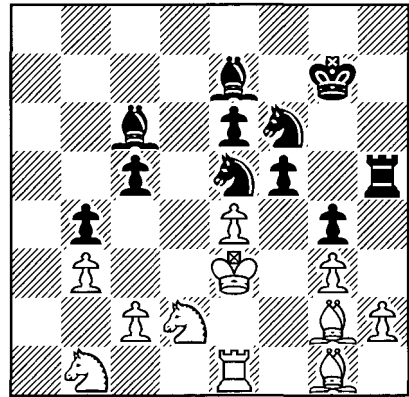
29 axb5 axb5 30 ♘d2 b4 31 ♘cb1 ♘fd7!

Preparing ...f7-f5, with a final stroke against the e4-pawn.

32 ♗f2 f5 33 ♜e1

Since 33 exf5? drops a piece after 33...♜xf5+, White is doomed to passivity.

33...♘f6 34 ♗e3



34...♗f7!

This is not the only winning option, but the most elegant, preparing ...♖f8-h6+.

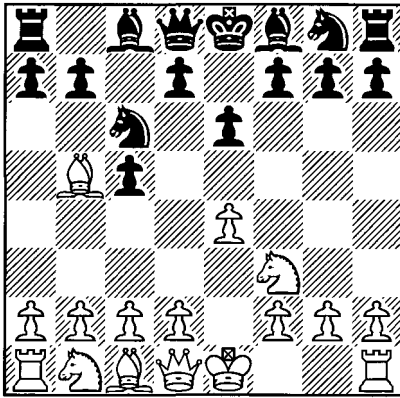
35 ♜f1 ♖f8 36 ♜d1 fxe4 37 ♘c4 0-1

37...♖h6+ 38 ♗e2 ♘xc4 39 bxc4 ♖a4 is just one possible winning path. As for the knight on e5, it never actually moved again after getting there. Still, its presence in the battle was quite strongly felt.

When we talk about seizing the centre with a piece, we usually refer to knights. The following game will show us that, occasionally, the job can be carried out by bishops too.

Game 128
Joe Benjamin-A. Wagener
 US Championship, Seattle 2002
Sicilian Defence,
Rossolimo Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♖b5 e6

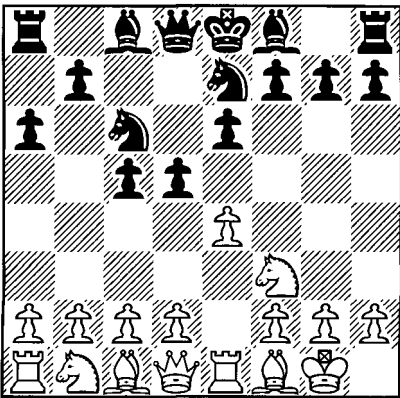


A popular reply to the Rossolimo, by which Black prepares ... $\text{g}e7$ and ... $a7-a6$ in similar fashion to White's play in some lines of the Rubinstein Nimzo-Indian (1 $d4$ $\text{c}f6$ 2 $c4$ $e6$ 3 $\text{c}c3$ $\text{b}b4$ 4 $e3$).

4 0-0 5 $\text{e}e1$

Reinforcing the e4-pawn and providing a shelter for the bishop on f1. Another direction is 5 $c3$ $a6$ 6 $\text{a}a4$ $b5$ 7 $\text{c}c2$, followed by an opportune $d2-d4$.

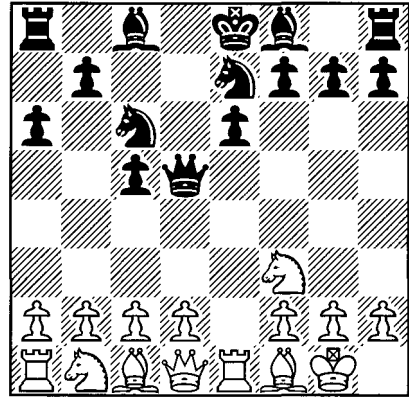
5... $a6$ 6 $\text{a}a4$ $d5$



Black immediately strikes at the centre, before White achieves the standard plan of $c2-c3$ and $d2-d4$, building a pawn centre.

7 $\text{e}e5$ $\text{c}c5$

After 7... $\text{e}e5$?! 8 $d4$ Black has a problem with her development, but 7... $\text{c}c5$ was fully possible; e.g. 8 $d4$ $\text{c}c6$ (replying to $c2-c4$ in advance) 9 $\text{e}e3$ $\text{e}e7$ 10 $c4$ 0-0 11 $\text{c}c3$ $\text{c}c4$ 12 $\text{c}c4$ $\text{e}e7$ with roughly equal play, L.Totsky-V.Golod, Cappelle la Grande 2007.



8 $\text{d}d3$!

Quite an unnatural move, but rather strong. White aims to install the bishop on e4, where it can't be easily chased away by the black knights. Less promising was 8 $\text{c}c3$ $\text{c}c8$, followed by ... $\text{f}f5$, ... $\text{e}e7$ and ...0-0.

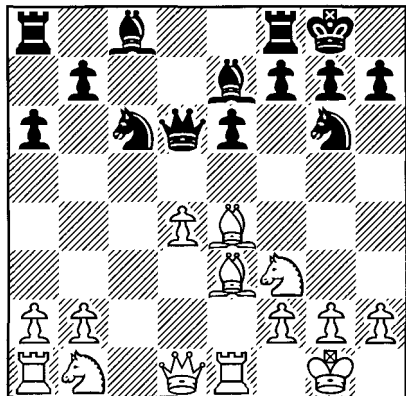
8... $\text{g}g6$

8... $\text{f}f5$?? drops a piece after 9 $\text{e}e4$, but 8... $\text{g}g6$ was another way of resolving the kingside development. M.Ulibin-A.Galliamova, Russian Team Championship 1996, continued in curious fashion: 9 $b4$! $\text{c}c4$ (or 9... $\text{g}g7$ 10 $\text{c}c3$) 10 $\text{e}e4$ $\text{g}g8$ 11 $a3$! $\text{g}g7$ (or 11... $\text{b}b3$ 12 $\text{c}c3$ $\text{a}a3$, heading for $c4$) 12 $\text{e}e4$ $\text{g}g7$ 13 $\text{a}a4$ $\text{c}c4$ 14 $\text{e}e4$ $\text{c}c6$ 15 $d4$ with interesting compensation for the pawn.

9 $\text{e}e4$ $\text{c}c6$ 10 $c3$

Benjamin aims at an IQP structure with $d2-d4$, where the black king's knight would have been much better off on f6.

10... $\text{e}e7$ 11 $d4$ 0-0 12 $\text{e}e3$ $\text{c}c4$ 13 $\text{c}c4$



From now on White's plan is rather simple: bring out the remaining pieces and launch the d4-d5 break.

13...♙d7?!

13...♘b4 seems more active, fighting for the crucial d5-square; e.g. 14 ♘c3 ♘d5 15 ♖b3 ♙d8 or 15...♘f6.

14 ♘c3 ♙ad8 15 ♙c1 f5

Black pushes away the powerful bishop and complicates the d4-d5 plan, at the cost of long-term weaknesses on e5 and e6. Perhaps the modest 15...♙c8, intending 16 d5 ♘b4!?, was a lesser evil.

16 ♙c2!

Heading for b3 to attack the fresh weakness on e6.

16...f4?!

The ensuing complications hardly favour Black, so the restrained 16...♘b4 17 ♙b3 ♙c6 would have been a better choice, even if by 18 ♙g5! White keeps the advantage.

17 ♘e4 ♖d5

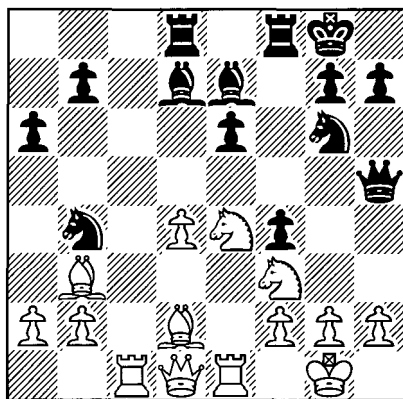
After 17...♖b4 18 ♙d2 ♖xb2 19 ♙b1 Black is also in big trouble; e.g. 19...♖xa2? 20 ♙b3 ♖a3 21 ♙a1 ♖b2 22 ♙c3, trapping the queen, or 19...♖a3 20 ♙xb7 ♙c8 21 ♙c7 ♘xd4 22 ♘xd4 ♙xd4 23 ♖a1! with the

strong threat of 24 ♙c3 ♖a5 25 ♙xc8 – Gershon.

18 ♙d2 ♘b4

Or 18...♘xd4 19 ♘xd4 ♖xd4 20 ♙a5!, recovering the pawn with interest.

19 ♙b3 ♖h5



20 ♘eg5!

White intensifies the attack at the e6-pawn, exploiting the fact that the bishop on e7 is overloaded. 20 ♙c7 was also strong.

20...♙xg5 21 ♙xb4 ♙e7 22 ♙xe7 ♘xe7 23 ♙c7!

Benjamin refrains from the obvious 23 ♙xe6+ ♙xe6 24 ♙xe6, aware that the e6-pawn won't disappear from the board, and instead seizes the seventh rank.

23...♘d5 24 ♙xb7 ♙c8 25 ♙a7

On top of all his positional advantages White now has an extra pawn, and the rest is easy.

25...♙h8 26 ♙e5 ♖e8 27 h3 ♘f6 28 ♖e2 ♙d6 29 ♙c5!

Heading for c7, while vacating e5 for the fellow pieces.

29...♖g6 30 ♙c2 ♖e8 31 ♖e5 ♙b6?

A blunder in a completely hopeless position.

32 ♖c7! 1-0

Centre controlled at distance

Returning to the subject of the pawn centre, most openings actually don't permit its creation. For example, the two main reactions to 1 d4 (1...d6 and 1...d5) both prevent 2 e4, while the Sicilian Alapin (1 e4 c5 2 c3) is usually met by either 2...d5 or 2...d6, ruling out 3 d4 in both cases.

Nevertheless, there are a number of openings, such as the Pirc, the Modern, the King's Indian and the Grünfeld, where White is indeed allowed to create a pawn centre. However, in these defences Black will sooner or later try to undermine the enemy centre by means of pawn breaks (e.g. ...c7-c5 or ...e7-e5 in the first three), or by piece pressure on the central pawns (e.g. ...g4, ...c6, ...a5 etc in the Grünfeld). From White's perspective, openings such as the Reti and the English permit similar ideas with reversed colours.

Such an approach, with the centre being controlled "at distance", was championed by Reti and Nimzowitsch, among others, and maintains a fundamental role within opening strategy. Let's see some examples.

Game 129
J. Van der Wiel-R. Vaganian
 Ter Apel 1993
Alekhine's Defence

1 e4 d6 2 e5 d5 3 c4 b6 4 d4 d6 5 f4

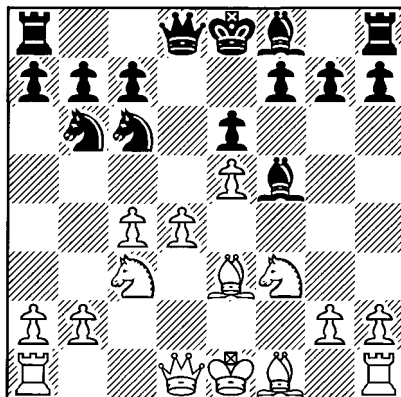
The fearsome Four Pawns Attack, one of White's main weapons against the Alekhine.

5...dxe5 6 fxe5 c6 7 e3

The seemingly natural 7 d3?! is impressive due to 7...g4 8 e3 e6 and Black has

won a tempo on the game continuation.

7...g4 8 c3 e6 9 f3



9...g4

An established exception from the rule that the same piece shouldn't move twice in the opening. Here it serves the purpose of putting pressure on White's pawn centre. Another direction is 9...e7 10 d5 exd5 11 cxd5 b4 12 d4 with sharp play.

10 e2 xf3

By swapping on f3 at this very moment, Black exploits the fact that 11 e3? fails to 11...xc4.

11 gxf3 d7

Preparing ...d8 or ...0-0-0 with increased pressure on d4. The alternative is 11...h4+ 12 e2 f4 13 c5 d7 with double-edged play.

12 f4?!

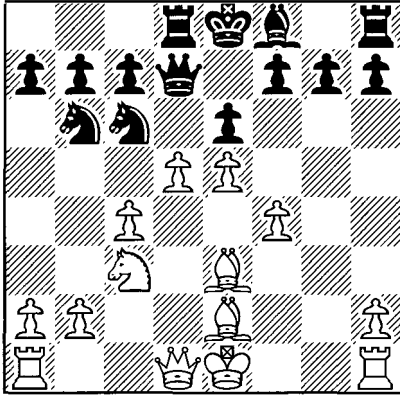
A logical move at first sight, but now the d4-pawn becomes rather exposed. The restrained 12 d2, followed by 0-0-0, is considered a better option.

12...d8 13 d5

After 13 c5 d5 14 d5 xd5 15 e3 d7 the problem with the d4-pawn still persists.

At this point White was probably hoping

for 13... exd5 14 og4! with some initiative, but Black has a much stronger move at his disposal, which will leave the enemy pawn centre in a rather shaky state.



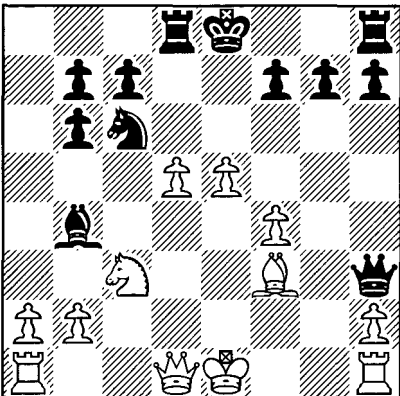
13... ob4!

Exploiting the tactical twist 14 dxc6? xc6 with a double attack at d1 and h1, Black speeds up development and increases the pressure on the d-file.

14 ob6 axb6 15 of3

By surrendering the bishop pair White managed to keep his pawn centre intact; unfortunately, his king will now be subject to a strong counterattack.

15... exd5 16 cxd5 wh3!



17 oe2

An awkward move, but the desirable 17 we2? failed to 17... od4 .

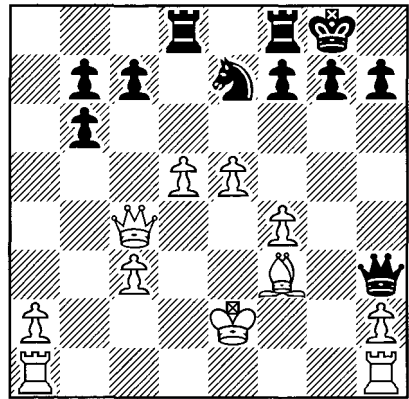
17...0-0

By now White's unsafe king makes his game very difficult.

18 wd3

Both 18 de4 oc5! , intending ... od4+ , and 18 db5 we8! , preparing ... dxe5 , keep up the attack – Ftacnik.

18... de7 19 wc4 oc3 20 bxc3



20...b5!

An ingenious way of clearing new lines towards the white monarch. Now 21 wc5 or 21 wb3 is strongly met by 21... dg6 , so Van der Wiel accepts the offer.

21 wb5 c6! 22 dxc6

Or 22 wb7 xd5 with multiple threats.

22... bxc6 23 wc4

After 23 oc6? xc3 White collapses.

23... dg6 24 ag1 wf5!

A final detail, by which Black installs the double threat of ... xf4+ and ... wc2+ .

25 fg4 wc2+ 26 oe3

Or 26 of1 d1+! , winning a piece.

26... wd2+ 27 oe4 d5! 0-1

Unable to parry the threat of 28... f5+ 29 exf6 we8 mate, White resigned.

In the previous game, Black's pressure on the enemy centre was basically conducted via the semi-open d-file. However, the most typical way of "long distance" central control is by means of a fianchetto, or even two of them, as in the following games.

Game 130
D.Rosandic-A.Delchev
Zadar 2001
Modern Defence

1 e4 g6 2 d4 ♖g7 3 ♘c3 d6 4 ♙e3

One of the most dangerous set-ups against the Modern, by which White prepares either ♗d2 and 0-0-0, followed by a kingside attack, or f2-f4, supporting future expansion in the centre.

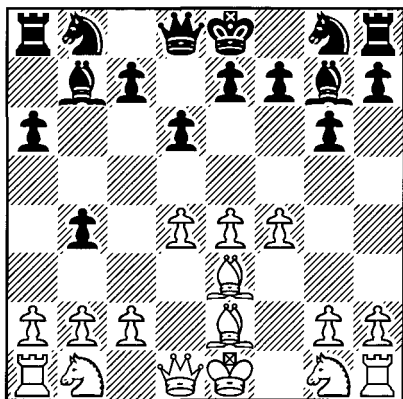
4...a6 5 f4 b5 6 ♙e2

Preparing ♙f3 to reinforce the light squares. 6 ♙d3 is also frequently seen in practice.

6...b4 7 ♘b1

7 ♘a4 is more critical – Hillarp Persson, who also suggests the flexible 6...♘d7 on the previous move.

7...♙b7



As beginners we are taught to bring the knights out before the bishops, since the destiny of the former tends to be a bit more evident. However, in this defence it is the other way around – the bishops are rather predestined for g7 and b7, while the knights, in particular the one on g8, have more squares to consider.

8 ♙f3 ♘f6 9 ♗d3

Neither 9 e5 ♘d5, nor 9 ♘d2 ♘bd7 10 c3 a5 11 ♘e2 0-0 12 0-0 c5 promises White any advantage – Hillarp.

9...♘bd7 10 ♘e2

Black is also fine after 10 ♘d2 0-0 11 c4 bxc3 12 bxc3 c5!; e.g. 13 ♘e2 cxd4 14 cxd4 e5! 15 ♖b1 ♙c6, followed by ...♙b5, with counterplay in A.Galkin-R.Ponomariov, Lausanne 2000. Note that the tempting 15 fxе5 dxе5 16 d5 would have backfired after 16...♙xd5! 17 exd5 e4, when the bishop on g7 makes itself remembered.

10...0-0 11 0-0 e5

Supported by his powerful fianchettoed bishops, Delchev begins striking at the white pawn centre. 11...c5, in the same spirit, was also possible.

12 ♘g3

Reinforcing the e4-pawn. In the event of 12 fxе5 dxе5 13 d5 Black could consider 13...a5, just as in the game; e.g. 14 ♘d2 ♙a6 15 ♘c4 ♗e7, followed by ...♘c5 with counterplay.

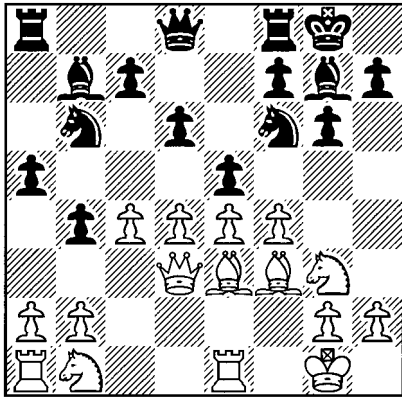
12...a5!

Preparing a pinprick by ...♙a6.

13 ♖e1 ♘b6 14 c4

By advancing one more pawn to the fourth rank White takes precautions against ...♙a6, but also further weakens the dark squares, in particular d4. Instead, 14 ♘d2 was preferable – Hillarp, when Black could try 14...♙a6 15 c4 exf4 16 ♙xf4 d5!?

with some initiative; e.g. 17 b3 dxc4 18 bxc4 ♖h5! 19 ♙e3 ♜xg3 20 hxg3 c5!, exploiting the double pin.



14...♞fd7!

A key move of the game, by which the knight takes prophylactic control of the dark squares on c5 and e5, while clearing the long diagonal for the bishop on g7.

15 fxe5

After 15 dxe5 dxe5 16 f5 ♖e7, preparing ...♞c5, or 15 ♞d2 exf4 16 ♙xf4 c5! Black also enjoys a clear positional plus; e.g. 17 ♙xd6?! ♙xd4+ 18 ♖h1 ♞e5 with a terrible game for White.

15...c5!

An impressive pawn break which demolishes the enemy centre. The modest 15...dxe5 16 d5 ♖e7 and ...♞c5 was also possible, but the text promises more.

16 e6

Rather pointless, but after 16 dxc5? ♞xe5, followed by 17...♞bxc4, or 16 exd6 cxd4 17 ♙xd4 ♞e5 18 ♙xe5 ♙xe5 19 c5 ♞d7 Black also has a huge advantage – Hillarp. At this point, hanging on to the c5-pawn with 20 ♖e3 is refuted by 20...♞c8 21 ♞c1 ♖f6! with multiple threats.

16...cxd4 17 ♙xd4 ♞e5 18 exf7+ ♞xf7 19

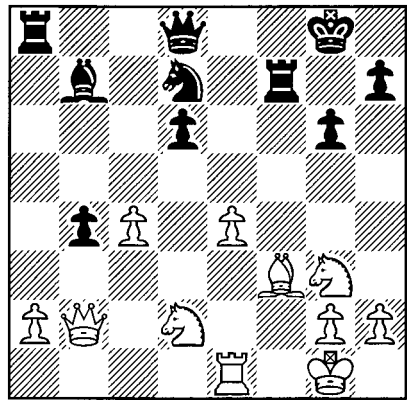
♙xe5

A strategic capitulation, though 19 ♖d1 ♞bxc4, preparing ...d6-d5, was equally troublesome for White, who by now is regretting his slow queenside development.

19...♙xe5 20 ♖c2 a4!

Just in time, enabling ...a4-a3 before the rook leaves a1.

21 ♞d2 a3 22 ♞ab1 axb2 23 ♞xb2 ♙xb2 24 ♖xb2 ♞d7!



Even after winning the exchange, Delchev keeps his grip on the dark squares.

25 ♙g4 ♞c5 26 ♖d4 ♖g5 27 ♙h3 ♞xa2 28 ♞f3 ♖f4 0-1

In this desperate position, White resigned.

Game 131

J.G.Gallagher-R.Ponomariov

Biel 2000

Modern Defence

1 e4 g6 2 d4 ♙g7 3 ♞c3 d6 4 ♙e3 a6 5 ♖d2

White opts for the first of the set-ups outlined in the previous game.

5...♞d7 6 a4

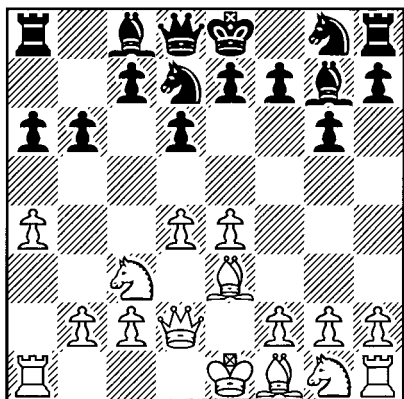
Preventing ...b7-b5, but the advance

Mastering Opening Strategy

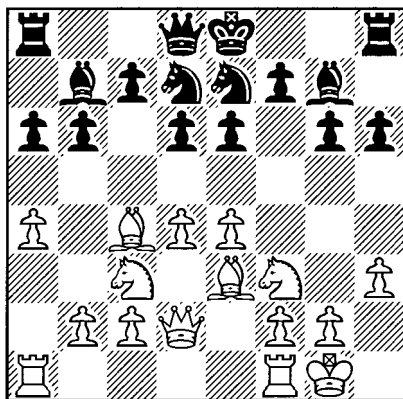
with the a-pawn also means that long castling becomes unadvisable. 6 O-O-O b5 7 h4 is a more critical option.

6...b6

On his part, Black prevents the cramping a4-a5 and enables ...♙b7, thus giving rise to an opening system that is known as the Hippopotamus.



where after 11...e5!, when Black can even grab the initiative by a later ...f7-f5. In similar fashion, e4-e5 often runs into ...d6-d5, followed by ...c7-c5. Black, on his part, is mainly awaiting the right moment for a pawn break, in which virtually any of his pawns from the c- to the g-file can participate.



7 ♖f3 e6

The immediate 7...♙b7 would yield White the additional option of 8 d5, preparing ♖d4. Now, on the other hand, 8 d5 can be confidently met by 8...e5.

8 ♙c4

On other moves Black can react in similar fashion as in the game; e.g. 8 ♙e2 ♙b7 9 h3 h6! 10 O-O ♖e7 11 ♖ad1 g5! 12 ♖h2 ♖g6 13 ♙h5 ♖f6 14 ♙xg6 f×g6, followed by ...O-O with balanced chances in M.Rogovoi-N.Nikolaev, St Petersburg 2000.

8...h6!

Seeing that the immediate 8...♖e7?! permits 9 ♙h6!, swapping the valuable king's bishop, Black prepares it.

9 h3 ♖e7 10 O-O ♙b7

The Hippopotamus is complete. White has more space but it is not easy for him to improve his position; e.g. 11 d5?! leads no-

11 ♙fe1

Now Black can't castle due to 12 ♙xh6, so what to do?

11...g5!

A typical "Hippo" move that enables ...♖g6 with a grip on the dark squares.

12 ♖h2 ♖g6

Just in time, before White strikes with f2-f4.

13 ♖f1

At this point 13 d5!? e5 14 ♖f1, preparing ♖g3-f5, favours White, so the flexible 13...♖de5 14 ♙b3 ♗f6, followed by ...O-O, is probably a better choice.

13...♖f6 14 ♖g3 O-O

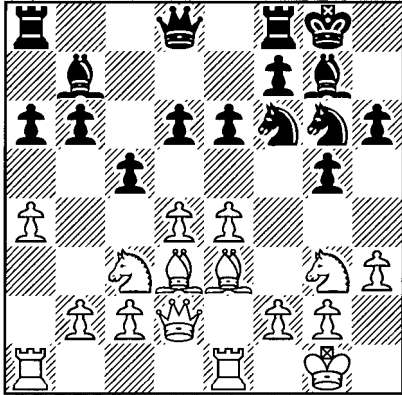
Despite the slightly weakening ...g6-g5, the king is quite safe here.

15 ♙d3

On 15 f3 Black is ready for 15...d5! 16 exd5 ♖xd5 17 ♖xd5 ♙xd5 with rough

equality. The text makes 15...d5?! unfeasible due to 16 e5, but invites another pawn break.

15...c5!



An excellent advance, which softens up the a1-h8 diagonal for the bishop on g7, and also disputes the e5-square for the knight on g6.

16 dxc5?!

A passive reaction that hands over the initiative to Black. 16 d5 ♖e5 17 ♙f1, followed by ♗ad1 and f2-f4, was preferable – Finkel.

16...bxc5

Now White's pawn centre is gone and Black enjoys an extra central pawn, a fact that he soon exploits. 16...dxc5?! 17 a5 was less advisable.

17 ♗ad1 ♖c7 18 ♖e2 d5! 19 exd5 exd5 20 ♙c1

A necessary retreat in view of the threatened 20...d4.

20...♗ae8 21 ♖d2 ♘h4!

Before advancing the c- or d-pawns Black eliminates the possibilities of ♙xg6 and ♘f5, while eyeing the g2-pawn. 21...♘f4 22 ♙f1 d4 looked strong as well.

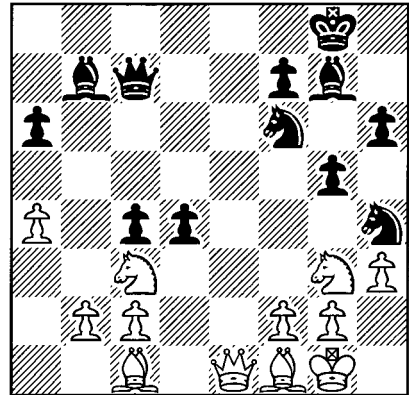
22 ♗xe8 ♗xe8 23 ♗e1

Exchanges often favour the defender, but here Black keeps all his trumps even after the rooks' departure.

23...♗xe1+ 24 ♖xe1 c4!

Move order matters: 24...d4 25 ♘ce4! was less clear.

25 ♙f1 d4



A dream position for Black. All his pieces, in particular the bishops, upstage their white counterparts, and a passed pawn can quickly emerge on the d-file.

26 ♘ce2

Or 26 ♘ce4 ♘xe4 27 ♘xe4 ♖e5!, preparing ...f7-f5 – Finkel.

26...♖c5

Again there is no hurry with advancing the pawns – after 26...d3 27 cxd3 cxd3 28 ♘c3 the d3-pawn becomes a bit exposed.

27 ♖d1 ♘e4 28 ♘xe4 ♙xe4 29 ♘g3 ♙g6

A timely diagonal shift, which makes 30...d3 inevitable. White's next move accelerates the end, though it was not easy to give him good advice.

30 ♖e2?! d3! 31 cxd3 cxd3 32 ♖e8+ ♗h7 33 ♙e3 ♖d5

Installing the queen in the centre tends to be an excellent idea in the endgame, and here it forces White to shed a pawn in order

to stop ...d3-d2.

34 ♖d2 ♗xb2 35 f3 ♕e5!

Ponomarev avoids the “strategical trap” 35...♖e5?! 36 ♖xe5 ♕xe5 37 ♘e4! and White unexpectedly stays in the game.

36 ♘e4 ♕xe4 37 fxe4 ♖d4+ 38 ♙h1 ♖f2! 0-1

Attack and defence at the same time. Faced with multiple threats, White resigned.

Game 132
A. Beliavsky-V. Anand
Munich 1991
Pirc Defence

1 d4 d6 2 e4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 g6 4 f4 ♕g7 5 ♘f3 0-0

The traditional way of meeting White’s Austrian Attack. The sharp 5...c5 is also popular.

6 ♕e3

The main direction here is 6 ♕d3, followed by 0-0, after which White often starts a kingside attack with moves like ♖e1-h4, f4-f5 etc. The text prepares quite a different set-up with ♖d2 and 0-0-0; moreover, it enhances the central e4-e5 advance now that after ...d6xe5, d4xe5, White is ready to recapture on d1 with the rook.

6...b6

A move with two functions: enabling ...♗b7 and facilitating the c7-c5 thrust.

7 e5

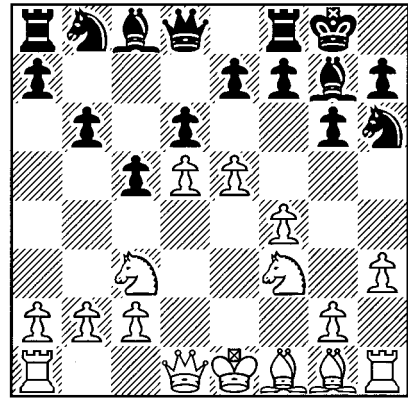
White gains space in the centre, but also exposes his central pawns at quite an early stage of the game. Nowadays, 7 ♖d2, followed by 0-0-0, is more frequently played.

7...♘g4 8 ♕g1 c5! 9 h3

The greedy 9 dxc5 bxc5 10 ♖d5?! backfires after 10...♖b6!, intending 11 ♖xa8?

♕b7 12 ♘d5 ♖xb2 with decisive threats – Anand.

9...♘h6 10 d5



Thus White maintains his pawn centre, and now enjoys a considerable space advantage. On the other hand, he is rather behind in development, a fact that Anand will exploit vigorously during the rest of the game.

10...♕b7 11 ♖d2

Preparing 0-0-0. If 11 ♖e2, in the same spirit, Black could react by 11...♕a6 12 ♖f2 ♕xf1 13 ♖xf1 ♘f5 with counterplay; e.g. 14 ♕f2 dxe5 15 fxe5 ♘d7 16 g4 ♘d4!, destroying the enemy centre. As for 11 g4, preventing ...♘f5, after 11...dxe5 12 fxe5 e6!, followed by 13...♘d7, White’s centre again comes under strong pressure.

11...♘f5 12 ♕h2

Anand also indicates 12 ♕f2 dxe5 13 fxe5 e6!, when 14 0-0-0? fails to 14...♕h6. With the text White enables ♕f4 at the end of this line.

12...dxe5 13 fxe5 e6!

A key move in order to challenge White’s pawn centre before he is comfortably developed. At this point both 14 g4? ♘h4 and 14 d6?! ♘d7 leave the e5-pawn doomed,

while 14 ♖c4 b5! also favours Black. As a consequence, Beliavsky just gets on with development.

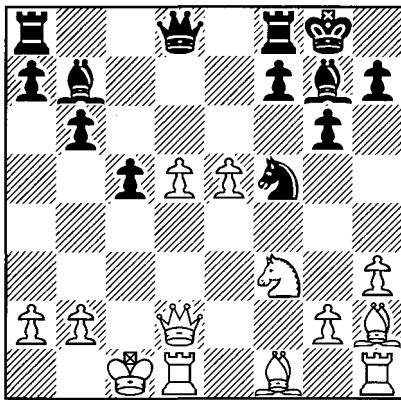
14 0-0-0 exd5 15 ♗xd5 ♗c6 16 c3

Now if White just manages to play ♖c4 and ♖he1 he would be considerably better – Anand. But he has no time for that; e.g. 16 ♖c4?! ♗cd4! 17 ♗xd4 cxd4, with ...♗e3 coming up. The text aims at preventing an annoying ...♗cd4, but in vain.

16...♗cd4! 17 ♗f6+

The best try, since 17 cxd4?! ♗xd5 18 ♖b1 ♖ad8 would leave White under unbearable pressure.

17...♖xf6 18 cxd4 ♖g7 19 d5



By a precise sequence of moves Beliavsky has managed to rebuild his pawn centre, and now intends to reinforce it by 20 ♖c4. Anand finds a great reply.

19...c4!

Exploiting some simple tactics (20 ♖xc4? ♖c8 and 21...b5) Black prevents the enemy plan and enables a future ...c4-c3 as well. 19...♖h6?! 20 ♖f4 ♖xf4 21 ♗xf4 ♖xd5 22 ♖c4 was less convincing.

20 ♖e2?

Practically dropping a pawn. The prophylactic 20 ♖b1! was called for, when

20...♖c8 21 d6 ♖h6 can be met by 22 ♖f4 without losing the d-pawn as in the game. Black should rather try 21...b5, followed by ...a7-a5 and ...b5-b4 with some initiative.

20...♖c8 21 ♖b1

Or 21 g4?! ♗e7! 22 d6 ♗d5, when 23...c3 next proves inevitable.

21...♖h6 22 ♖f4 ♖xf4 23 ♗xf4 ♖xd5!

After some calculating Anand accepts the gift, convinced that White can't exploit the ensuing pin.

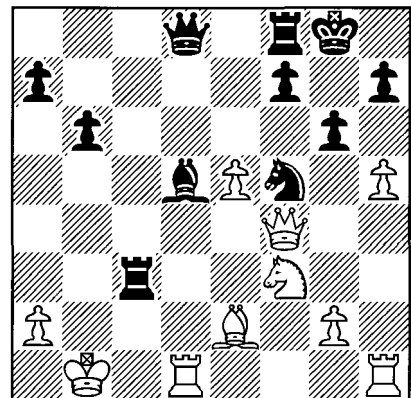
24 h4

In a difficult position, Beliavsky goes for a desperate attack. A key variation was 24 g4 ♗g7 25 ♗h6 ♗e6 26 h4 c3!, when 27 ♗g5 fails to 27...c2+ 28 ♖a1 ♗xg5 29 hxg5 ♖xh1 30 ♖xh1 c1♗+, while after 27 bxc3 ♖e4+ 28 ♖b2 ♗c7, Black's attack is the more convincing one – Anand. As for 24 ♗d4, trying to exploit the pin, then 24...♗h4!

24...c3

As the remainder of the game will show us, Black's attack is faster.

25 bxc3 ♖xc3 26 h5



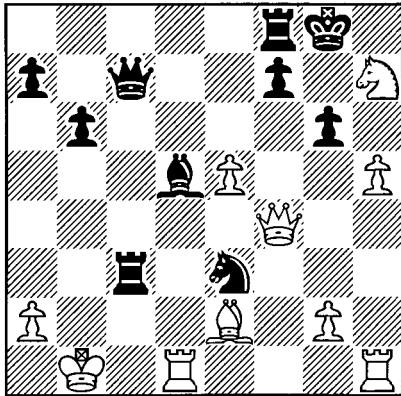
26...♗e3!

The knight joins the attack and at the same time liberates the queen from the defence of the bishop.

27 ♖g5

27 hxg6 fxg6 28 ♖h6 ♖c7 leaves only Black's attack intact, while 27 ♖h6 is refuted by 27...♗xd1 28 hxg6 ♙e4+ 29 ♖a1 ♙xg6 30 ♖xd1 ♖e7 – Anand.

27...♖c7 28 ♗xh7



28...♖b3+! 0-1

An elegant finish. In view of 29 axb3 ♖c2+ 30 ♖a1 ♖c3+ 31 ♖b1 ♖xb3+ 32 ♖a1 ♗c2 mate, White resigned.

As I mentioned in the introduction to this section, controlling the centre at long distance is also possible with the white pieces. Here are two examples.

Game 133
M. Taimanov-V. Hort
Tallinn 1975
English Opening

1 c4 e5 2 ♗c3 ♗c6 3 g3 ♗f6 4 ♙g2 ♙c5

Another option is 4...♙b4, although in that case the reply 5 ♗d5 gains in strength.

5 e3

White chooses a set-up with e2-e3 and ♗ge2 in order to restrict the bishop on c5.

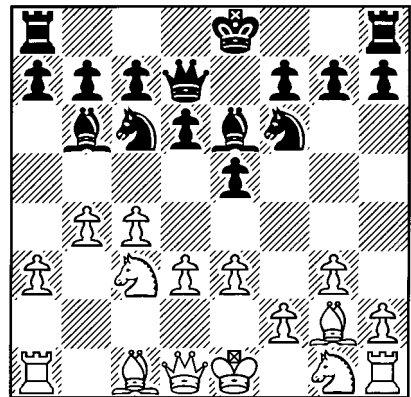
5...d6 6 a3 ♙e6

6...a5 or 6...a6 was more precise, providing the bishop with a shelter on a7.

7 b4 ♙b6 8 d3

Aware that the desirable 8...d5? fails to 9 c5, White just continues development. In contrast, with the black bishop on a7 he would probably have preferred 8 ♗d5 at this point.

8...♖d7



9 h3!

Before playing ♗ge2 Taimanov prevents ...♙h3, in identical fashion to Ponomariov's 8...h6 against Gallagher (Game 131). In fact, White's treatment of the English in this game has great similarities to the Hippopotamus.

9...0-0 10 ♗ge2 ♗d8?!

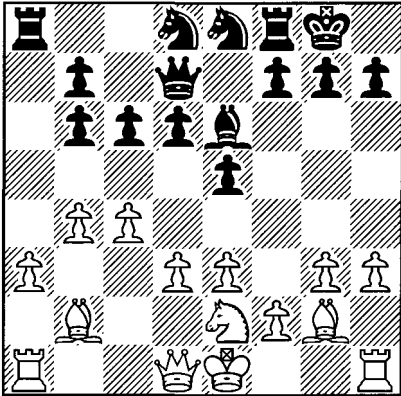
Hort prepares ...c7-c6 and ...♙c7, but this plan is easily refuted by White's next move. Perhaps 10...a5 was more to the point; e.g. 11 b5 ♗e7!? 12 ♙xb7 ♖ab8 13 ♙g2 d5, followed by ...♖fd8, with quite some counterplay for the pawn. Even the simple 10...♖ab8, preparing ...♗e7-g6 to improve the knight, seems like a better choice – in the game, that piece becomes a problem child on d8.

11 ♖a4! c6 12 ♗xb6 axb6 13 ♙b2

An excellent deployment of the bishop, and renewed restriction of Black's ...d6-d5.

13... ♗e8

Preparing ...f7-f6 and ...♗f7, after which the ...d6-d5 thrust would at last become possible, but White has a strong reply prepared.



14 f4!

A key move, striking at the enemy centre and softening up the long diagonal for the bishop on b2.

14...f6 15 g4!

With the centre under control, nothing speaks against this flank advance, which enables castling and also prevents 15...♗f7? on account of 16 f5.

15... ♖h8?!

Preparing ...♙g8, but Black has overlooked the pin that soon emerges on the f-file. 15...♗c7 was better, intending ...b6-b5 – Taimanov.

16 0-0 ♗e7

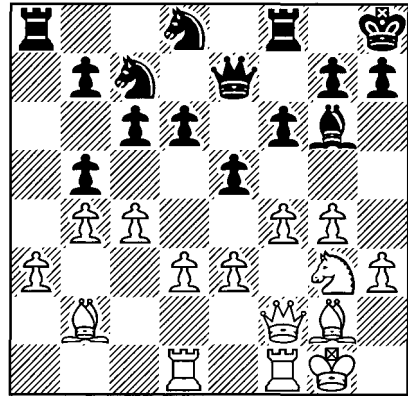
Since 16...♙g8? runs into 17 fxe5 dxe5 18 ♙xe5!, Black has to adjust his plans.

17 ♗e1 ♙f7 18 ♗g3

Step by step White brings more pieces to the kingside.

18... ♙g6 19 ♖d1 ♗c7 20 ♗f2 b5

This facilitates White's further task, though it was already difficult to suggest a constructive plan for Black.



21 c5!

A new pawn thrust in order to soften up the enemy centre. Now neither 21...♗f7? 22 f5, nor 21...d5? 22 fxe5 works for Black, so he has finally to swap the proud e5-pawn.

21...exf4 22 exf4 h6

On 22...dxc5 Taimanov had prepared 23 ♗fe1 ♗d7 24 f5 ♙f7 25 g5! with a strong attack; e.g. 25...fxg5 26 f6 g6 27 ♖e7.

23 ♙e4!

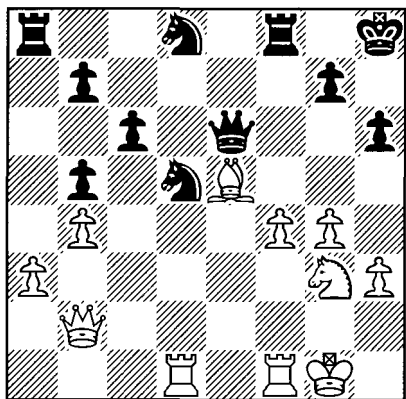
Exchanging the defender of the light squares in the enemy camp.

23...♙xe4 24 cxd6 ♗xd6 25 dxe4 ♗e6 26 e5!

For the third time in the game White softens up the long diagonal for his bishop, on this occasion with decisive effect.

26...fxe5 27 ♙xe5 ♗d5 28 ♗b2

Taimanov once mentioned that the fianchettoed queen's bishop was his favourite piece, both with White and Black. It definitely didn't let him down in this game, and you can find many other games of his where this piece plays the main role.



28...♖f7 29 ♘h5!

More exact than 29 ♘f5?! ♔e6 30 ♘xh6 ♖g6 with complications. Now, on the other hand, 29...♔e6? fails to 30 f5.

29...♖g8 30 f5 b6

Obviously 30...♔e3? runs into 31 ♖c1, x-raying the h6-pawn.

31 ♖fe1 ♘b7

This loses material, though Black was beyond salvation anyway.

32 ♖c1! ♔h7 33 ♖xc6 1-0

In this terrible position, Black resigned.

Game 134

A.Kundin-Kostanovich

Israeli Team Championship 1998

French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘d2 c5 4 ♘gf3

We are already familiar with this line from Game 60 (Adams-Gurevich).

4...cxd4 5 ♘xd4

That game went 5 exd5 ♖xd5 6 ♔c4, transposing to one of the main lines of the French Tarrasch. With the text White keeps the central tension, and takes the game into less explored terrain.

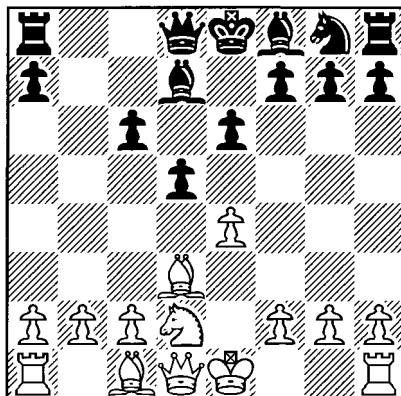
5...♘c6

After 5...e5?! 6 ♘4f3 dxe4 7 ♘xe5 or 6...♘c6 7 exd5 ♖xd5 8 ♔c4 White obtains a clear lead in development, but 5...♘f6 was a valid alternative.

6 ♔b5 ♔d7 7 ♘xc6 bxc6

Another direction is 7...♔xc6 8 ♔xc6+ bxc6 9 c4!, preparing ♖a4.

8 ♔d3



8...e5?!

A very ambitious move. Black achieves a pawn centre, but the delay in development will make it difficult for him to support it adequately. 8...♔d6 was safer, followed by ...♘e7.

9 0-0 ♘f6

After 9...♔d6 10 ♖e1 ♘e7 11 exd5 cxd5 12 c4! Black's centre is successfully undermined; e.g. 12...d4?! 13 c5!, preparing 14 ♘c4, or 12...0-0 13 cxd5 ♘xd5 14 ♘c4 ♔e6 15 ♔d2 with a slight edge – Kundin.

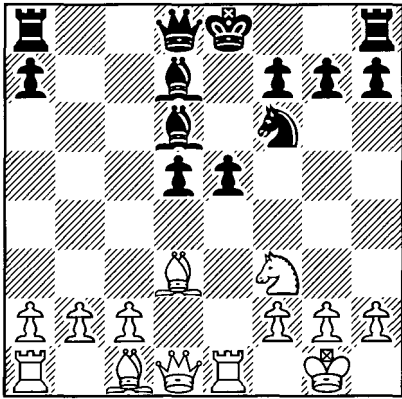
10 ♖e1 ♔d6

Aware that 10...d4 invites 11 ♘c4, Black accepts the clearance of the e-file.

11 exd5 cxd5 12 ♘f3!

Supported by his lead in development, White starts concrete actions against Black's pawn centre. 12 c4 was also possi-

ble; e.g. 12...0-0 13 cxd5 ♖xd5 14 ♖c4 transposing to the 9...♗d6 subvariation given above.



12...♗e7

After other moves White prevails tactically; e.g. 12...e4 13 ♗xe4! ♖xe4 14 ♗xd5, recovering the piece with interest, or 12...♗g4 13 ♖xe5! ♗xd1 14 ♖c6+ ♖d7 15 ♖xd8 ♗xc2 16 ♗xc2 ♖hx d8 17 ♗d2! with ♗a4+ next – Kundin; finally, 12...♗c7 runs into 13 ♖xe5! ♗xe5 14 ♗f4 ♖e4 15 ♗xe4 dx e4 16 ♖xe4 f6 17 ♗xe5 fx e5 18 ♗d5! with twin threats at a8 and e5.

13 ♗f4

The correct follow-up, now that 13 ♖xe5? no longer works due to 13...♗xe5 14 ♗f4 ♗xf4 15 ♖xe7+ ♖xe7.

13...♗g4

The only viable defence; unfortunately, Black will be left without castling after the opponent's next move.

14 ♗b5+! ♖f8 15 ♗g5

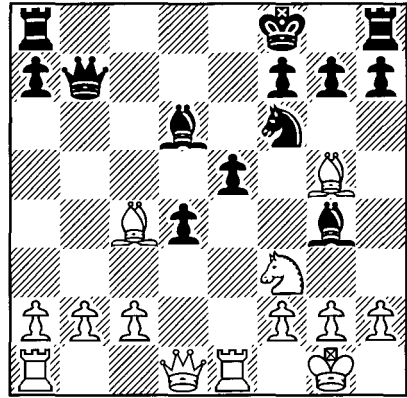
White now directs his attention to the d5-pawn. 15 ♗c6?! ♖d8 or 15 c4 ♗c7 16 ♗g5 a6 was less convincing – Kundin.

15...♗b7 16 ♗c4!

Increasing the pressure. 16 h3?! ♗xf3 17 ♗xf3 ♖e4! would be much less clear.

16...d4

After the alternative 16...♗xf3 17 ♗xf3 e4 18 ♗f5 or 18 ♗b3 White also remains on top – Kundin.



17 ♗e2!

An ingenious retreat which creates new threats, such as the captures 18 ♖xe5 and 18 ♖xd4.

17...♖e4 18 ♗h4 ♗e6?

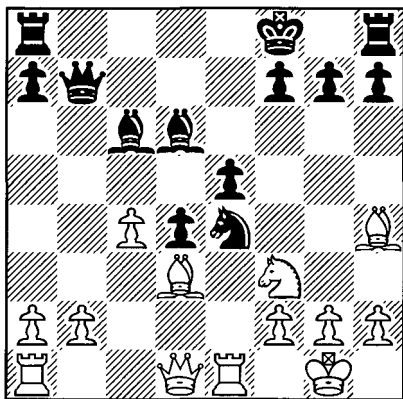
A logical defensive try, but it will lead to the collapse of Black's centre. 18...♗f5?! 19 ♗d3, preparing ♗e2, is equally bad for him, so the active 18...h5!, reinforcing the bishop, was probably the last chance to stay alive – Kundin, whose sample line 19 h3 ♖e8 20 hxg4 hxg4 21 ♖g5?! ♖xh4 22 ♖xe4 ♗xe4 23 ♗b5 ♗h7! illustrates Black's idea. White should rather prefer ♗d3 either on the 20th or 21st move, keeping the pressure.

19 ♗d3 ♗d5

Or 19...f5 20 c3!, exploiting the loose bishop on d6, just like White's next move in the game.

20 c4! ♗c6

Black can't reply 20...dxc3 21 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 due to 22 ♗xd6+, while 21...cxb2 22 ♖b1 doesn't change much.



21 ♖xd4!

By tactical means White finally liquidates the enemy centre. In fact this sacrifice was already available on the previous move.

21...♗c5

An early resignation, though 21...exd4 22 ♕xe4 ♕xe4 23 ♖xd4 was equally bad for Black; e.g. 23...♕xh2+ 24 ♖xh2 ♕xg2 25 ♖g1 winning – Kundin.

22 ♗f5 ♖c7

Now the e5-pawn falls as well, but 22...♗c7? was impossible due to 23 ♕e7+.

23 ♕f1 ♗b7 24 ♗xd6 ♖xd6 25 ♖xd6+ ♗xd6 26 ♖xe5

White is completely winning and the rest is easy.

26...♖e8 27 ♖ae1 f6 28 ♖xe8+ ♗xe8 29 ♕g3 ♗f7 30 c5 ♕d5 31 ♖d1 1-0

In view of 31...♕xa2 32 c6.

Pawn breaks

By the term “pawn break” I refer to the advance of a pawn that puts it in contact with an enemy pawn. This is an important strategic idea in the middlegame as well, for example in the context of pawn chains.

In the opening battle, a pawn break of-

ten proves useful in order to put pressure on the enemy centre, apart from its inherent function of opening a file. We already saw several pawn breaks in the previous section (Games 130-133); e.g. 11...e5 and 15...c5 in Rosandic-Delchev, 15...c5 in Gallagher-Ponomarev, 13...e6 in Beliavsky-Anand, as well as 14 f4 and 21 c5 in Taimanov-Hort. Here are some more examples.

Game 135

J.Hellsten-M.Morales

Riobamba 2010

Queen's Gambit Declined

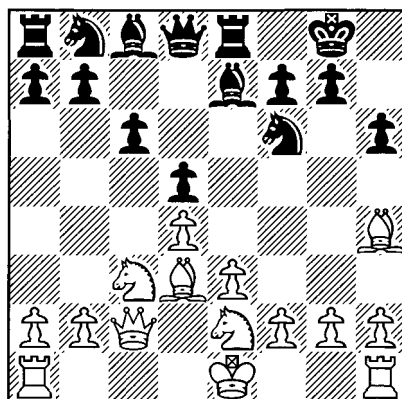
1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♗c3 ♗f6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♕g5

A topical line against the Queen's Gambit Declined, which we already came across in Polgar-Bönsch (Game 117).

5...♕e7 6 e3 0-0 7 ♕d3 c6 8 ♖c2 h6

In the present structure, this move often makes Black's kingside a bit more vulnerable. 8...♗bd7, followed by ...♖e8 and ...♗f8, is the main continuation here.

9 ♕h4 ♖e8 10 ♗ge2



Just like in Polgar-Bönsch, the knight goes to e2 in order to enable the future plan of f2-f3 and e3-e4.

10...♞e4?!

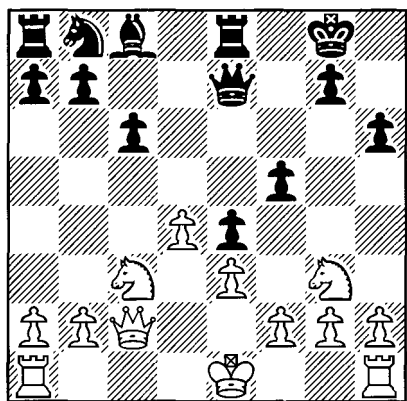
A typical idea to seize the centre, but here it is somewhat premature as Black will lack the support of a knight on f6 later on. For this reason, 10...♞bd7 11 0-0 ♞e4 was a better move order, although White could consider inserting 11 f3!? before castling.

11 ♟xe7 ♜xe7 12 ♟xe4

Creating a target on e4. An alternative approach is 12 0-0 ♞d7 13 ♞ae1, preparing f2-f3 and e3-e4.

12...dxe4 13 ♞g3 f5

With the rook on e8 this move looks a bit odd, but there was no other defence of the e4-pawn available.



14 0-0 ♞a6

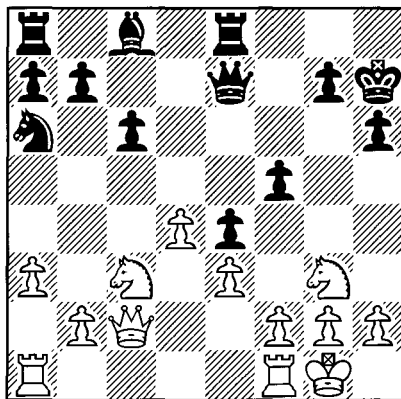
In the event of 14...♟e6, preparing ...♞d7, then 15 f3! looks just as strong as in the game.

15 a3

Quite a lazy move. The immediate 15 f3! was called for; e.g. 15...♞b4 16 ♜d2 ♞d5 17 fxe4 ♞xc3 18 ♜xc3 fxe4 19 ♞f4!, winning a pawn, as occurred in M.Kantorik-J.Veselsky, Czech League 2007.

15...♞h7?

Black perhaps regarded this as a piece of prophylaxis, but he is in fact putting his king right into the line of fire. 15...♞c7 16 f3 ♞d5! was correct, with just a slight initiative for White after 17 ♞ae1.



16 f3!

A key strike, in order to soften up Black's grip on the centre and enable a future kingside attack. We saw a similar idea in Van Wely-Karjakin (Game 123).

16...exf3

Or 16...♜g5 17 fxe4 ♜xe3+ 18 ♞h1 and the black king remains exposed along the b1-h7 diagonal, just as in the game.

17 ♞xf3 g6 18 e4!

One more pawn break to clear more lines towards the enemy king. 18 ♞af1!?, followed by e3-e4, looked strong as well.

18...fxe4 19 ♞cxe4 ♟f5 20 ♞xf5 ♜xe4

Black seems to be defending quite well; however, when deciding upon 18 e4 I had already calculated the following sacrifice that exploits the weak seventh rank in the enemy camp.

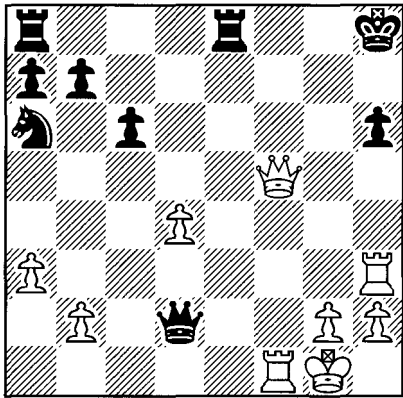
21 ♜b3! gxf5 22 ♜f7+

Of course 22 ♜xb7+? ♞h8 23 ♜xa6 ♞ab8 was not White's idea.

22... ♖h8 23 ♜f6+ ♕h7 24 ♖h3!

The point. Black's queen is now forced to f4, which lets White's second rook join the battle with tempo. In contrast, 24 ♖g3? ♖g8 leads nowhere.

24... ♜f4 25 ♖f1 ♜d2 26 ♜xf5+ ♕h8



At this point, for White's attack to prosper he must activate the other rook, and this is achieved by the following sequence.

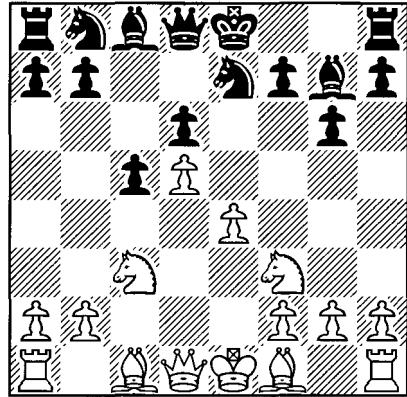
27 ♜f6+ ♕h7 28 ♖g3!

Diverting Black's rook from the e-file so that the queen can give check on e7.

28... ♖g8 29 ♜e7+ ♕h8 30 ♜e5+ 1-0

In view of 30... ♕h7 31 ♖f7+, Black resigned.

6 e4 ♗g7 7 ♘f3 ♘e7



The point of Black's unusual move order. On e7 the knight doesn't block the fianchettoed bishop, while the ...f7-f5 advance can be achieved much earlier than in a usual Benoni. On the other hand, White does not have to worry about the customary pressure on his e4-pawn from a knight on f6 and a subsequent ...♖e8.

8 ♗b5+!

This check, in conjunction with White's next move, aims at disorganizing Black's minor pieces. Another idea was 8 ♗f4; e.g. 8...0-0 9 ♗e2 a6 (by now, 9...f5 at any moment runs into 10 e5) 10 a4, followed by 0-0. In fact, Black could have considered ...a7-a6 even earlier; e.g. 7...a6 8 a4 ♘e7, thus avoiding the check on b5.

8... ♘d7?!

This natural reply soon proves to have its flaws. 8...♗d7 was preferable; e.g. 9 a4 a6 10 ♗e2 ♗g4!, with ...♘d7 next, and all Black's minor pieces are satisfactorily developed.

9 ♗f4! a6

No simple defence of the d6-pawn was available; e.g. 9...♜c7?! 10 e5!, when 10...dxe5? 11 d6 is fatal for Black, or 9...♜b6

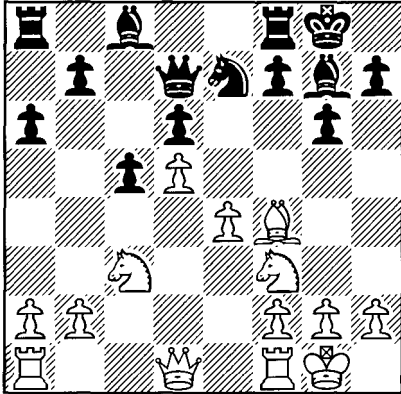
Game 136
M. Illescas Cordoba-
J. Moreno Carnero
 Spanish Championship,
 Seville 2004
Benoni Defence

1 d4 e6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 exd5 4 cxd5 d6 5 ♘c3 g6

Here, and on the following two moves, with 5...♘f6 Black could have entered standard Benoni waters.

10 ♖b3, renewing the threat. With the text Moreno secures the pawn once and for all, at the cost of temporarily misplacing his queen.

10 ♙xd7+ ♗xd7 11 0-0 0-0



12 e5!

This pawn break is a main idea for White in the Benoni, and he rarely has the luck of achieving it at such an early point. Its benefits are several: increased central control, the creation of a passed pawn on the d-file, and a possible exchange of the strong bishop on g7.

12...dxe5 13 ♙xe5

Of course not 13 ♖xe5? ♗f5. In any case, the text is also preferable from a strategic perspective, since it facilitates the exchange of the dark-squared bishops.

13...b5

A useful move that enables both ...♙b7 and ...b5-b4. After other moves White also keeps the initiative; e.g. 13...♗d8 14 ♙xg7 ♗xg7 15 ♖b3, followed by ♗ad1, or 13...f6 14 ♙g3 ♖f5 15 d6, preparing ♖d5 or ♗d5 – Postny.

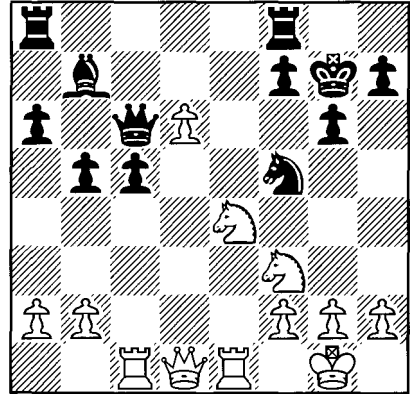
14 d6 ♖f5 15 ♖e4!

White reinforces the d6-pawn and increases his central grip at the same time.

15...♗c6 16 ♙xg7 ♗xg7 17 ♗e1 ♙b7

Or 17...♗e8?! 18 ♖c2, with the unpleasant threat 19 ♖c3+.

18 ♗c1



The last piece joins the battle, making Black's position critical.

18...♗ad8?

Either by desperation or miscalculation, Black gives up material. The cold-blooded 18...c4! was called for, when White seems unable to exploit the opponent's dark square weaknesses in any decisive way; e.g. 19 ♖d4 (or 19 g4?! ♗ae8!) 19...♗d5 20 ♖xf5+ gxf5! 21 ♖xd5 ♙xd5 22 ♖c5 ♗fd8 (but not 22...♗ac8? 23 d7! ♗xc5 24 ♗e8 etc) 23 d7 ♙c6 24 ♗cd1 ♗a7 25 ♗d6 ♗c7 26 ♗ed1 ♖f8 with an inferior but holdable endgame for Black – Postny. Obviously, for humans it is not easy to decide upon such lines over the board, and we often prefer “active” defence like Moreno's choice in the game.

19 ♖xc5

But not 19 ♗xc5?! ♖b6, soon recovering the material with counterplay.

19...♗xd6

There is nothing better; e.g. 19...♖xd6? 20 ♖xb7 or 19...♖b6?! 20 d7.

20 ♖e6+ fxe6

Or 20... ♖xe6 21 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 22 ♖d4 with a technical win – Postny.

21 ♖xc6 ♖xd1 22 ♖c7+

Perhaps Black had overlooked this intermediate check, which secures an extra exchange for White.

22... ♖h6 23 ♖xd1 ♖xf3

After 23... ♖d5 24 ♖e5 White's task is also very trivial.

24 gxf3 ♖h4 25 ♖dd7! ♖xf3+ 26 ♖g2 ♖g5 27 ♖f7 1-0

Game 137

L. Ljubojevic-S. Gligoric

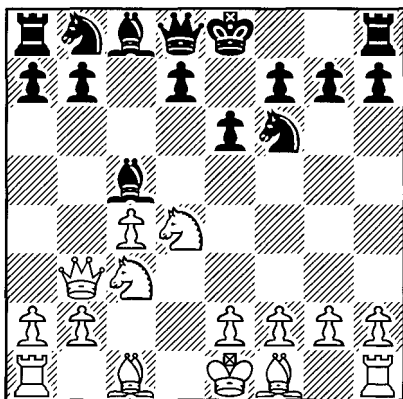
Belgrade (3rd matchgame) 1979

English Opening

1 c4 c5 2 ♖f3 ♖f6 3 ♖c3 e6 4 d4 cxd4 5 ♖xd4 ♖b4 6 ♖b3

Thus White avoids doubled c-pawns, but also misplaces his queen. More promising is 6 ♖db5, preparing a2-a3, or 6 g3, transposing to the Nimzo-Indian with g2-g3.

6... ♖c5!



Exploiting the fact that the knight on d4 is now undefended, Black forces a minor

concession from the opponent.

7 ♖e3

Setting up the threat of 8 ♖xe6, but Gligoric finds a clever antidote. Perhaps the modest 7 e3 was a better choice.

7...b6! 8 ♖c2?!

This retreat leaves the queen in a really awkward position, and complicates further development. By 8 f3 0-0 9 ♖f2 White could still hope for a normal game.

8... ♖a6

Just as on the previous move, Black combines development with tactical considerations. Now White is discouraged from taking on c5.

9 ♖d1 0-0 10 ♖d4 ♖b7 11 e3 ♖e7!

With the threat of ... ♖c5, punishing White for his dubious eighth move.

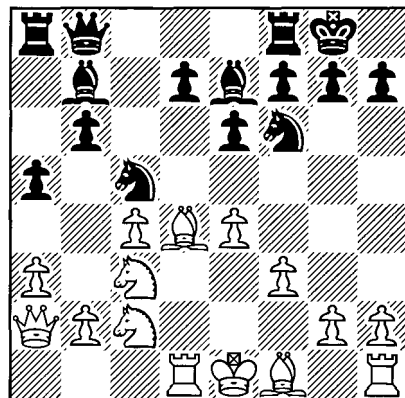
12 a3 ♖c5 13 ♖a2 a5 14 f3

A slightly weakening move, but essential for White's further development.

14... ♖b8!

The standard break 14...d5 would have yielded Black at least equality, but by now Gligoric is looking for more. With the text he seizes the h2-b8 diagonal and enhances future kingside aggression.

15 e4



Ljubojevic finally achieves some kind of Maroczy structure and also parries the threat of 15...e5; however, Gligoric has a strong reply prepared.

15...♘h5!

With the dual idea of ...♗f4 and ...f7-f5, punishing White for his slow development.

16 ♖e2

Correctly speeding up development. 16 g3? f5 would be horrible for White.

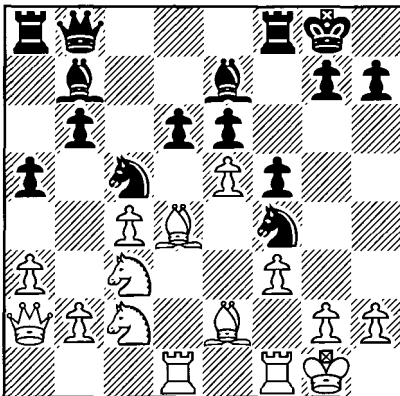
16...♗f4 17 0-0 f5!

This pawn break puts some pressure on the enemy centre, and helps clearing the h1-a8 diagonal and the f-file for Black's forces. The exchange on e2 can wait until a more optimal moment.

18 e5

After 18 exf5 ♗xf5 Black also has a strong initiative.

18...d6!



the bishop on b7.

21 ♖g1 e4! 22 fxe4 ♗xe2

Just at the right moment, in order to exploit the long diagonal to the maximum. Both 22...fxe4 23 ♗e3 and 22...♗xe4 23 ♖f3! were somewhat less promising.

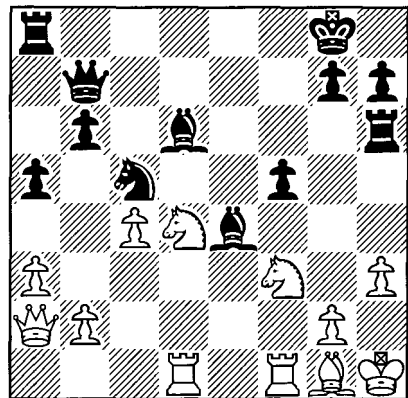
23 ♗xe2 ♖xe4 24 ♗cd4 ♗f6!

More pieces to the attack. Meanwhile, White has considerable difficulties in organizing counterplay, partly due to his badly placed queen.

25 ♗f3

Or 25 ♗c3 ♗h6 26 ♗xe4 ♖xh2! 27 ♗xf5 ♗h5 with a strong attack.

25...♗h6 26 h3 ♖b7 27 ♗ed4



27...g5!

From now on, the threat of ...g5-g4 hangs like the sword of Damocles over White.

28 ♖e3 f4 29 ♗b5 ♖f8

29...fxe3 30 ♗xd6 ♗xd6! 31 ♗xd6 e2 32 ♗e1 ♖xf3 33 gxf3 ♖xf3+ etc was another winning line.

30 ♖xc5 ♖xc5 31 b4!? g4!

Consequent and strong. In contrast, after 31...axb4?! 32 ♗xg5 White stays alive.

32 bxc5 gxf3 33 ♖h2 ♖g7!

Instead of 33...fxg2?! 34 ♗xf4 with

Another pawn break, which clears the h2-b8 diagonal towards White's king, and creates a pawn majority in the centre.

19 exd6 ♖xd6 20 ♖h1 e5!

Of course not 20...♗xe2 21 ♗xe2 ♖xh2? 22 f4 etc – Gligoric. With the text, he instead prepares one more pawn break with ...e5-e4 to soften up the long diagonal for

Mastering Opening Strategy

rather unclear play, Gligoric, by means of the threat of ...♖g3+, forces White to obstruct his rook with his queen.

34 ♖f2 fxg2 35 ♜fe1 ♖g4! 0-1

An elegant finishing move. White resigned.

Game 138 G.Mateuta-J.Hellsten Kavala 2003 Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 c4 c6 4 e3 a6 5 ♘bd2

A rather passive choice. 5 ♘c3 and 5 ♘d3 are the main continuations in this Slav line.

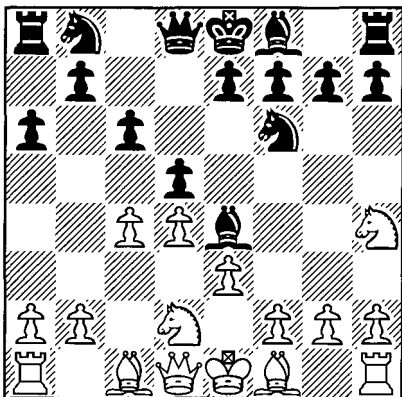
5...♙f5

Black refrains from the standard 5...b5, as after 6 cxd5 cxd5, White could try to exploit the early weakening of c5 by ♘b3-c5 at some moment.

6 ♘h4

The most ambitious choice. In the event of 6 ♖b3 Black could simply reply 6...♖c7, exploiting the fact that White has no knight on c3 attacking the d5-pawn.

6...♙e4!



Before accepting the exchange of his bishop, Black provokes f2-f3 so that White's remaining knight can't move to f3.

7 f3

Black is also fine after 7 ♘xe4?! dxe4 8 g3 e6 or 7 ♖b3 ♜a7 8 a4 e6 9 a5 c5! 10 f3 ♘g6 11 cxd5 exd5 12 ♘xg6 hxg6, preparing ...♘c6, as in Bu Xiangzhi-A.Morozevich, Bled Olympiad 2002.

7...♙g6 8 ♘xg6 hxg6 9 f4

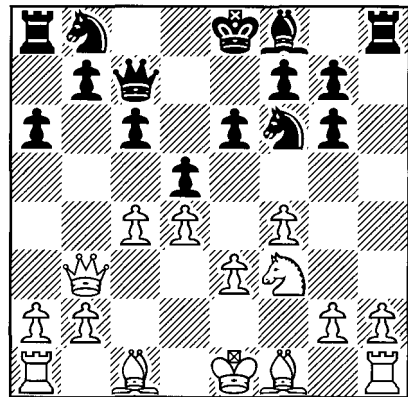
Vacating f3 for the knight, at the cost of a weakened e4-square.

9...e6 10 ♖b3

The attempt to restrict Black by 10 c5?! backfires after 10...b6! 11 b4 a5; e.g. 12 ♖a4 b5 13 ♖b3 ♘h5! with ideas like ...♖h4+ and ...♘g3.

10...♖c7 11 ♘f3

Or 11 c5 ♘bd7 12 ♖c3 a5!? 13 a3 a4!, followed by ...b7-b6, breaking the enemy pawn chain and enabling a future counter-strike with ...c6-c5.



11...c5!

Instead of standard Slav development with 11...♘bd7, Black immediately strikes at the enemy centre, and provides the knight with a more active destiny on c6. The fact that mutual pawn captures on d5

and c5 would leave him with an isolated pawn on d5 is less relevant now that White has weakened his own structure by f2-f4.

12 cxd5 exd5 13 ♔d2?!

13 ♔e2 seems more natural, though after 13...♗c6 Black has an excellent game anyway.

13...♗c6 14 ♔e2

Or 14 ♖c1?! c4 15 ♗d1 ♗e4 with a clear initiative. After the text 14...c4 is entirely possible too; however, I don't want to take off the tension on White's pawn centre yet, preferring a tempting pawn sacrifice.

14...♗e4!? 15 ♗xd5

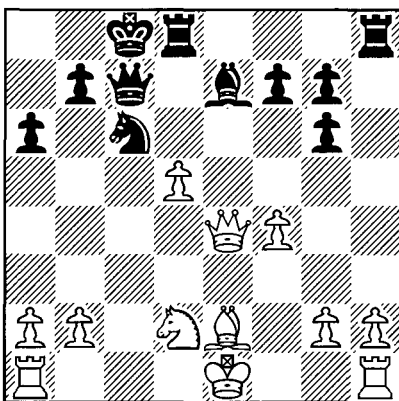
Seeing that 15 0-0?! drops a pawn after 15...cxd4, Mateuta accepts the challenge.

15...♗xd2 16 ♗xd2 cxd4 17 ♗e4+ ♔e7 18 exd4?!

Too greedy. After 18 0-0 0-0 Black has a pleasant edge thanks to the dark square weaknesses in White's camp, who probably would have liked to have his f-pawn back on f2. But the text has the clear drawback of leaving the king stranded in the centre.

18...0-0-0 19 d5

After 19 0-0 ♗xd4 20 ♖ac1 ♔c5 Black enjoys a strong initiative.



19...♖he8!

The last piece joins the party, creating the threat of ...♔h4+, and preventing 20 0-0? on account of 20...♔c5+.

20 ♗c4 ♗b4

Even after the exchange of queens Black's attack will be quite strong. 20...♔b4 was interesting as well.

21 ♖c1

21 ♗xc7+ ♗xc7 22 ♖c1+ ♗b8 is similar.

21...♗xc4 22 ♖xc4+?

A fatal mistake, which leaves both the rook and the knight tactically exposed. 22 ♗xc4 was essential, when both 22...♗xa2 23 ♖d1 and 22...♗b8 23 ♖d1 ♗xd5 24 g3 offer White some hope of salvation.

22...♗b8 23 ♖e4 ♗xd5 24 ♗d1

An early surrender, but 24 0-0? was impossible due to 24...♗f6.

24...f5 25 ♖e5 ♗xf4 26 ♔c4? ♖xd2+! 0-1

In view of 27 ♗xd2 ♔b4+ 28 ♗e3 ♖xe5+ 29 ♗xf4 ♖e4+, White resigned.

Flank advances

The flank advance is a modern addition to the methods in the fight for the centre. By moving a pawn forward on the flank, we can indirectly undermine the opponent's centre, as shown in the following examples.

Game 139
V.Salov-R.Hübner
Barcelona 1989
English Opening

1 ♗f3 d5 2 c4 d4

A principled reply. Black enters some kind of Benoni with reversed colours, albeit with one tempo less, something that can be strongly felt in this opening. 2...e6 and 2...c6 are other frequent options.

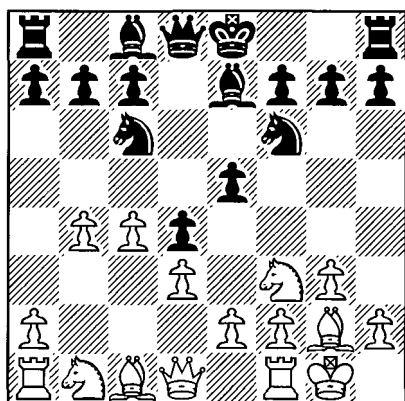
3 g3 ♘c6

Aware of his minus tempo, Black saves on 3...c5 for the sake of development.

4 ♖g2 e5 5 d3 ♙e7 6 0-0 ♜f6?!

A well-known inaccuracy. 6...a5 first was correct, for reasons that soon become evident. Interestingly, with reversed colours White would just have castled at this point; i.e. 1 d4 c5 2 d5 ♜f6 3 ♜c3 d6 4 e4 g6 5 ♜f3 ♙g7 6 ♙e2 0-0 7 0-0, thus avoiding the trick that now follows.

7 b4!



A strong flank advance, by which White puts unpleasant pressure on the enemy centre. You can find this idea in several other opening lines, such as the Four Pawns Attack in the King's Indian (1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♜c3 ♙g7 4 e4 d6 5 f4 0-0 6 ♜f3 c5 7 d5 e6 8 ♙d3?! exd5 9 cxd5 b5!) and the Sicilian Dragon (1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♜xd4 ♜f6 5 ♜c3 g6 6 ♙e2 ♙g7 7 0-0 ♜c6 8 ♜b3 0-0 9 f4 b5!). It displays a kind of relation between the b4 and e5 (or b5 and e4 from Black's perspective) squares, regarding which the knight on c6 proves overloaded.

7...e4?!

Hübner replies with a pawn break similar to 12 e5 in Illescas-Moreno (Game 136), but

on this occasion it lacks support from fellow pieces. Instead, 7...♜xb4 8 ♜xe5 favours White thanks to the extra central pawn and semi-open b-file, while 7...♙xb4?! 8 ♜xe5! ♜xe5 9 ♖a4+ ♜c6 10 ♙xc6+ bxc6 11 ♖xb4, preparing ♙a3, would be even worse. Black's best option is rather 7...♜d7, trying to keep the pawn centre intact, even though after 8 a3 0-0 9 e3 White enjoys some initiative. Having achieved b2-b4 so early on is quite a success – in similar Benoni positions with reversed colours, White usually does anything he can to prevent Black's ...b7-b5.

8 dxe4 ♙xb4

Obviously 8...♜xe4?! 9 b5, followed by 10 ♜xd4, was not in Black's favour.

9 ♙b2!

Simple and strong – White focuses on the fresh weakness at d4.

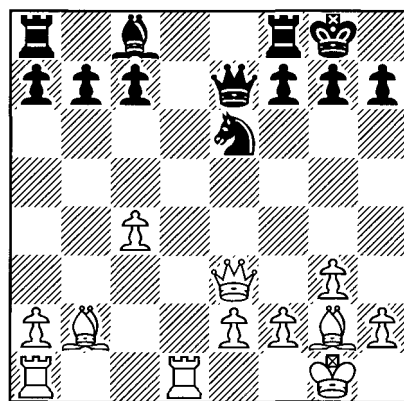
9...♙c5 10 ♜bd2 ♖e7

This leads to unfavourable simplifications, though it is hard to suggest anything better.

11 ♜b3 ♜xe4 12 ♜fxd4 ♜xd4 13 ♜xc5!

Securing the bishop pair, which will play a huge role now that there are no pawns left in the centre.

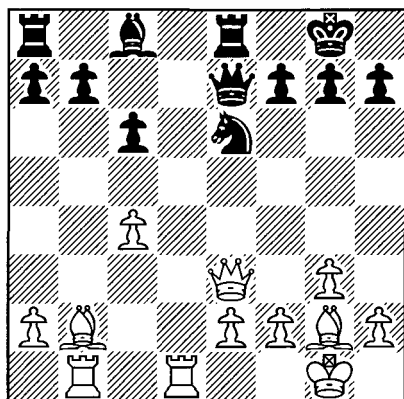
13...♜xc5 14 ♖xd4 ♜e6 15 ♖e3 0-0 16 ♜fd1



White has emerged with a dream position – his bishops control the whole board, and Black can't easily conclude his queen-side development.

16...♖e8 17 ♖ab1 c6

The simplifying 17...♖c5 drops a pawn after 18 ♖xc5 ♜xc5 19 ♖a3 – Salov.



18 ♖a3!

The bishop leaves the long diagonal in order to exploit the fresh weakness at d6.

18...♖c7 19 ♖d6 ♖a5 20 ♖b2

More energetic was 20 f4! – Salov, with f4-f5 coming up.

20...♖a4 21 ♖b3

It is not easy to suggest a plan for Black after 21 ♖c1, but Salov, being a renowned endgame expert, prefers a more technical approach.

21...♖xb3 22 ♖xb3 f6!

Hübner prepares a clever regrouping of his pieces by ...♜d8, ...♞e6 and ...♜f7.

23 f4 ♜d8 24 ♞c7 ♜e6 25 ♞d6 ♜d8 26 ♞f2 ♞e6 27 ♞d4 ♞c8

After 27...♜f7 28 ♖xb7 ♜xd6 29 ♖xd6 ♞xc4 30 ♞f3 Black is also suffering – Salov.

28 ♖a3 c5?

This leads to tactical problems on the light squares. 28...a6 was called for.

29 ♞e4! f5

White also breaks through after 29...♞c6 30 ♞b8! or 29...♜f7 30 ♞ae3 ♜xd6 31 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 32 ♖xe6 ♞d8 33 ♖e7.

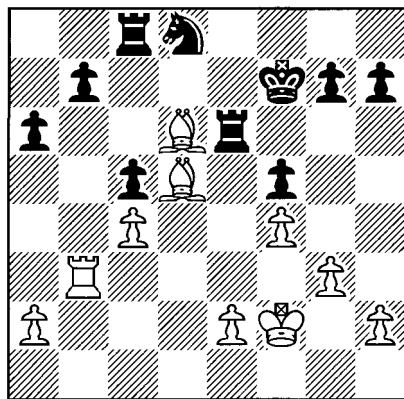
30 ♖xe6! ♖xe6

Or 30...♜xe6 31 ♞xb7 ♞cd8 32 ♞c6, regaining the material with interest.

31 ♞d5 a6

If 31...♞c6 then 32 ♞e7! – Salov.

32 ♖b3 ♞f7



33 e4!

Just when it seemed that Black has managed to consolidate, White brings more pieces into the battle.

33...♞g6

Seeing that 33...g6 34 e5 would leave him terribly restricted, Hübner goes for active defence.

34 ♞xe6 ♜xe6 35 g4!

Very nice. Now 35...♜d8 36 gxf5+ is just depressing for Black, so Hübner gives up his knight.

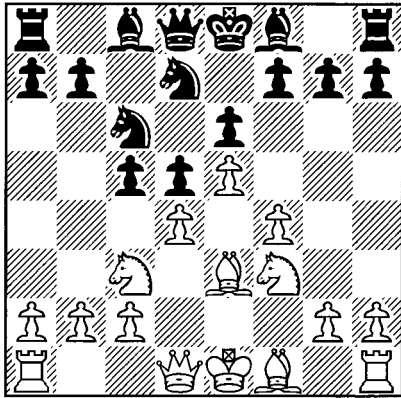
35...fxe4 36 f5+ ♞f6 37 fxe6 b5

Or 37...♞xe6 38 ♖b6! with an easy win, just as in the game.

38 cxb5 ♞xe6 39 ♞f4 c4 40 ♖b1 axb5 41 ♖xb5 ♖a8 42 ♞e5+ ♞f6 43 ♞c5 ♖xa2+ 44 ♞e3 ♖g2 45 ♞g3 1-0

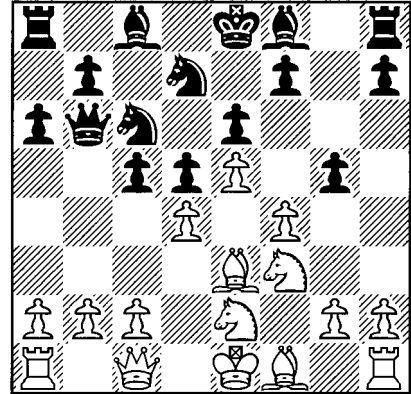
Game 140
B.Predojevic-A.Morozevich
 Sarajevo 2008
 French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 ♜f6 4 e5 ♜fd7 5 f4 c5
 6 ♜f3 ♜c6 7 ♙e3



At this point 9...cxd4 10 ♜exd4 ♙c5 11 c3 might yield White a slight advantage; however, Morozevich has a much more challenging idea in mind.

9...g5!?



An initial position of the Classical French has been reached. White enjoys more space but Black has many dynamic resources at his disposal, some of which we will see in this game.

7...a6

Preparing queenside expansion with ...b7-b5. Other common options are 7...cxd4 8 ♜xd4 ♙c5, 7...♙e7 and 7...♜b6.

8 ♜e2

White enables c2-c3 to strengthen his centre. On the other hand, his queenside is now left somewhat unattended, a fact that Black immediately exploits. The flexible 8 ♜d2 is much more popular in practice.

8...♜b6

A key move in many variations of the French, and rather natural here as White can no longer reply 9 ♜a4.

9 ♜c1

An energetic pawn advance, which exists in several French lines and related structures. Black tries to soften up the enemy centre, exploiting the fact that any capture on g5 would weaken the d4-pawn and, indirectly, its colleague on e5.

10 c3

The most solid reply. Both 10 ♜xg5?! cxd4 11 ♙f2 ♙c5 and 10 fxg5 cxd4 11 ♜exd4 ♜cxe5! look promising for Black, while the greedy 10 dxc5 ♙xc5 11 ♙xc5 ♜xc5 12 ♜xg5 is well met by 12...h6, preparing 13...♜e4, with great compensation for the pawn.

10...cxd4 11 cxd4

After 11 ♜exd4 gxf4! 12 ♙xf4 ♙g7 Black has some pressure on the e5-pawn. Even so, this might be White's lesser evil, in view of what follows in the game.

11...♙b4+!

Now that both 12 ♜c3 and 12 ♙d2 drop the d4-pawn after 12...g4, White's king is forced to a more dangerous location.

12 ♖f2 f6!

Another typical French pawn advance, which further destabilizes White's centre and lets Black open the f-file towards the enemy king.

13 g3

Predojevic tries to keep his pawn chain intact, aware that 13 exf6?! ♗xf6 would just help Black in activating his knight.

13...g4

An improvement on the earlier game V.Topalov-A.Morozevich, Morelia/Linares 2007, which continued 13...♖f8 14 ♖g2 g4 15 ♗h4 and White managed to consolidate.

14 ♗h4 fxe5 15 fxe5

Forced, since 15 dxe5? fails to 15...♗c5! (but not 15...d4? 16 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 17 ♖c4) 16 ♗xc5 (otherwise 16...d4 follows) 16...♗xc5, with ...♗d3+ next – Erenburg.

White has considerable difficulties in doing the same thing due to the poor coordination of his forces. Of course 17...d3+? 18 ♗e3 was less to the point.

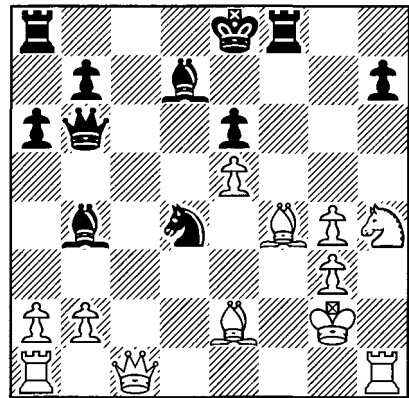
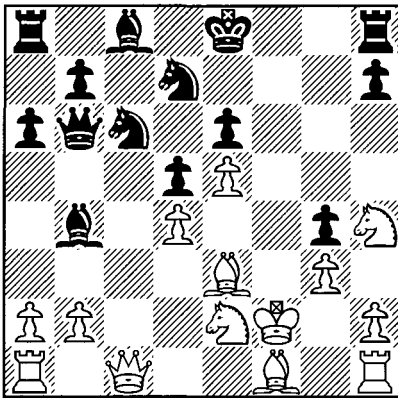
18 ♖g2 ♗d7 19 h3

Clearing some space for the king. 19 ♖c2? was impossible due to 19...♗xe5! 20 ♗xe5 ♗c6+ 21 ♖g1 d3+ 22 ♗d4 ♖xd4+ 23 ♗xd4 dxc2, with ...♗c5 next – Erenburg.

19...d3 20 hxg4

White gives the piece back in order to relieve his defence to some extent. Instead, 20 ♗c3 was strongly met by 20...♗xe5!, preparing ...♗c6+, while after 20 ♗e3 ♖a5 21 ♗f4 ♗xe5 22 ♖h2 ♖c8 Black's initiative is overwhelming; e.g. 23 ♖d1 ♖c2+ 24 ♗g2 ♖xf4! 25 ♗xf4 ♗f3+ 26 ♗xf3 gxf3 27 ♖g1 ♖d5 with a clear advantage – Erenburg.

20...dxe2 21 ♗xe2 ♗d4



15...♗dx5!

A strong positional sacrifice that blows up the enemy centre and clears new lines towards the white monarch. In contrast, both 15...♖f8+?! and 15...0-0+?! would just help White to secure his king by 16 ♖g2.

16 dxe5 d4 17 ♗f4 ♖f8

With this and his next move, Black brings more pieces to the battle, whereas

Black has emerged with a pleasant advantage – his pieces are more active and the white king remains exposed.

22 ♖e3?

A bad place for the queen, as Black's next move will show. More resilient was 22 ♗f3!, not shying away from the exchange of the "good" bishop; e.g. 22...♗xf3 23 ♗xf3 ♗c6 24 ♖h6! with counterplay – Erenburg,

who suggests 22...♖c8, followed by ...♖c2+, as a better choice.

22...♙c5! 23 b4

The only defence against the multiple threats: 23...♗xb2, 23...♙c6+ and 23...♘c2.

23...♗xb4 24 ♖hb1?

This leaves the other rook badly placed on a1. After 24 ♖ab1 ♙c6+ 25 ♖h3 ♘e2 26 ♗xe2 ♗e4 Black will end up with a clearly better endgame – Erenburg, but the text lets him go for more.

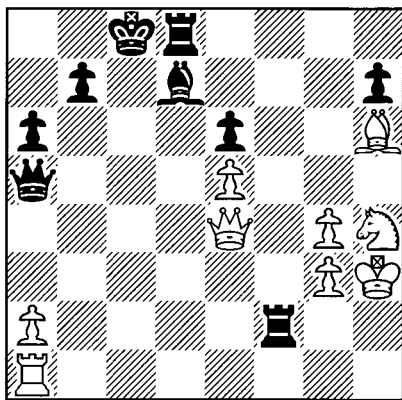
24...♗a5 25 ♖h3

Or 25 ♖d1 0-0-0 26 ♖ac1 ♙a4!, when 27 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 28 ♗xd4 fails to 28...♙c6+. The text avoids any such checks but, unfortunately, also lets Black win material.

25...♘xe2 26 ♗xe2 ♙d4

The drawback of White's 24th move becomes evident.

27 ♙h6 ♖f2 28 ♗e4 ♙xa1 29 ♖xa1 0-0-0



With the black king secured and ...♙c6 coming up, the game is practically over.

30 ♙g5 ♙c6 31 ♖c1 ♗d5!

Obstructing any attempts with ♖xc6+.

32 ♗xh7 ♗xa2

Installing a decisive mating threat.

33 ♖xc6+ bxc6 34 ♘f3 ♖xf3 35 ♙xd8 ♖xd8 0-1

Seeing that the black king easily escapes from the checks via c7-b6, White resigned.

Game 141
Ru.Sadykov-E.Sveshnikov
 Cheliabinsk 2004
Semi-Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♗f6

The idea carried out by White on the seventh move in this game can be found in various openings, such as the Queen's Gambit: 3...♙e7 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♙f4 ♗f6 6 e3 ♙f5 7 ♗b3 ♘c6 8 g4!? as played in L.Aronian-V.Kramnik, Monte Carlo (blind-fold rapid) 2011, or 3...♙e7 4 ♗f3 ♗f6 5 g4!? as in S.Mamedyarov-R.Ponomarev, Dortmund 2010. In the Open Sicilian there are many lines with an early g2-g4, as we already witnessed in Naiditsch-Belov (Game 18) and Hracek-Bönsch (Game 58). Even in the Open Games there are cases of this advance; e.g. 1 e4 e5 2 ♗f3 d6 3 d4 ♗f6 4 ♘c3 ♗bd7 5 g4!? as introduced by Shirov. You can also find it in the English – 1 ♗f3 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♙b4 4 g4!? – and in several Indian Defences.

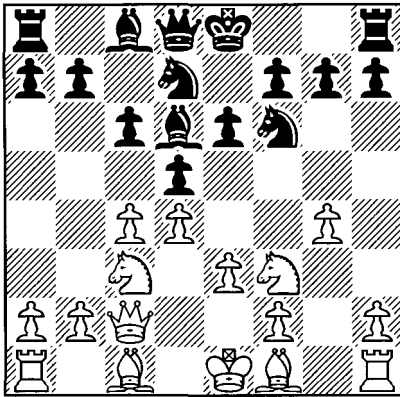
4 ♗f3 c6 5 e3 ♗bd7 6 ♗c2

In this standard position of the Semi-Slav, 6 ♙d3 is another direction, when Black usually replies 6...dxc4 7 ♙xc4 b5, followed by ...a7-a6 and ...c6-c5, giving rise to the Meran System. In contrast, 6 ♗c2 can be regarded as a useful move while awaiting Black's next step.

6...♙d6 7 g4

Just as in the previous games, White launches a flank advance at quite an early stage of the battle. This move caused astonishment at the time of its invention by Shi-

rov and Shabalov in the early nineties, but twenty years later it has an established place in opening theory.



Although White seems, at first sight, to be intending a quick kingside attack, the main idea behind 7 g4 is quite another: to dislodge the knight on f6 by ...g4-g5, and then exploit its absence with a timely e3-e4 break.

By the way, the immediate 7 e4 has proved less promising after 7...dxe4 8 ♖xe4 ♗xe4 9 ♗xe4 ♙b4+ or 9...c5. We will soon see that things are a bit different when e3-e4 is effected without a black knight on f6.

7...♗xg4

A principled reaction. Other common replies are: 7...h6, preventing g4-g5; 7...♙b4, preparing to meet g4-g5 by ...♗e4; and 7...dxc4 8 ♙xc4 e5 striking back in the centre. In the last case, play often continues 9 g5 ♗d5 10 ♙d2, followed by 11 ♗e4, or even the immediate 10 ♗e4, with a fierce battle for the central squares.

8 ♙g1

One key circumstance which makes the 7 g4 line work is that 6...♙d6 has left the g7-pawn undefended. Here, 8...♗xh2 and 8...f5 are Black's main choices, but Sveshnikov's next move is fully playable as well.

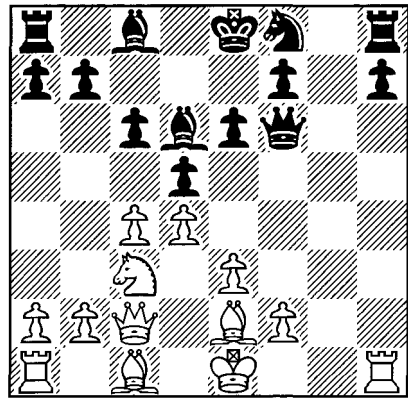
8...♗f6 9 ♙xg4 ♗xf3 10 ♙xg7 ♗f8

The natural 10...♗f6 permits 11 ♙g5, with the threat 12 ♙g2, while the simple 11 h3 has also had good results in practice. Now, on the other hand, the threat of 11...♗g6 makes White withdraw his rook on less voluntary terms.

11 ♙g1 ♙xh2?!

Black grabs a pawn, at the cost of delaying development. Safer was 11...♗g6 12 ♙e2 ♗f6 13 ♙d2 ♙d7 with complex play.

12 ♙e2 ♗f6 13 ♙h1 ♙d6



14 e4!

An energetic pawn advance that hands the initiative to White. As seen in the following subvariations, his choice is tactically well-founded.

14...♙b4

After 14...♗xd4?! 15 ♙e3 ♗f6 16 0-0-0 Black is already under strong pressure; e.g. 16...d4 17 e5! ♙xe5 18 ♗e4 ♗d8 19 f4! ♙g7 20 c5, preparing ♗d6+ (Sadykov). And 14...dxe4 15 ♗xe4 ♗d8 (or 15...♗xd4? 16 ♙d2! – Sadykov) 16 ♗xd6+ ♗xd6 17 ♙e3, followed by 0-0-0, also gives White plenty of compensation for the pawn.

15 ♙e3!

The most appealing solution. White just

keeps on bringing his pieces out, aware that Black's king has no safe destiny anywhere on the board.

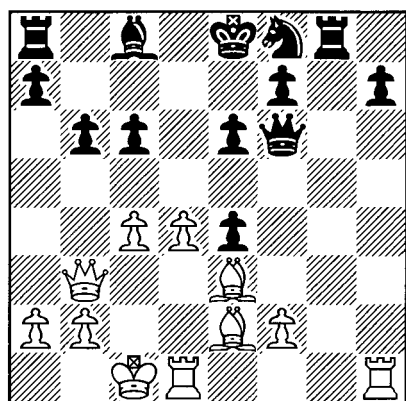
15...dxe4 16 0-0-0 ♠xc3 17 ♚xc3 ♖g8

Activating the rook and avoiding any skewers on the a1-h8 diagonal. In the event of 17...♠d7 White could consider 18 ♖dg1, enabling a future ♠g5.

18 ♚b3!

White prevents ...♠d7 and prepares d4-d5 at the same time.

18...b6



19 d5!

The position was begging for this move, which clears new lines for White's pieces towards the enemy king.

19...♠d7

After 19...c5 20 ♚c2 White also keeps up the pressure; e.g. 20...exd5 21 cxd5 ♚e5 22 ♖h4 f5 23 d6 with compensation – Sadykov.

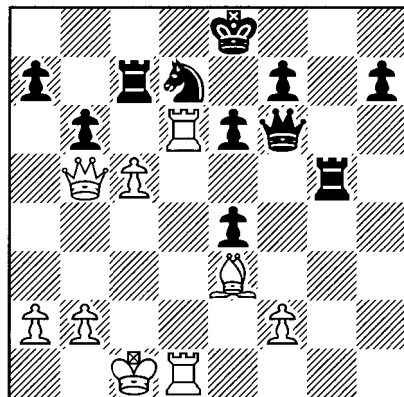
20 dxc6 ♠xc6 21 c5!

White just keeps on attacking, not caring about the possible exposure of his king on the c-file.

21...♗d7 22 ♖d6 ♖c8 23 ♠b5! ♠xb5 24 ♚xb5 ♖c7 25 ♖hd1 ♗g5?

After this pseudo-active move, Black's position falls apart immediately. 25...♚e7

was critical, on which Sadykov's main line goes 26 b4! ♖g6! 27 ♖c6 ♚d8 28 cxb6 ♖xc6+ 29 ♚xc6 axb6 30 ♚xe4 ♚c7+ 31 ♠b1 h5 32 b5!? ♖g4 33 f4 with compensation for the pawn, but nothing more.



26 ♠b1!

Now the double threat at d7 and g5 proves irresistible and Black is just left with desperate moves.

26...a6 27 ♚xa6 ♖gxc5 28 ♠xc5 bxc5 29 ♚b5 ♚d8 30 a4!

A new player enters the field, exhausting the enemy defences.

30...♚c8 31 a5 ♠e7 32 a6 ♗f6 33 ♖d8! 1-0

The role of the centre

By now we are well aware of the fact that the centre is not an element of the opening phase exclusively, but keeps its relevance in the middlegame battle as well. Here I would like to repeat a few strategic principles with relation to the centre:

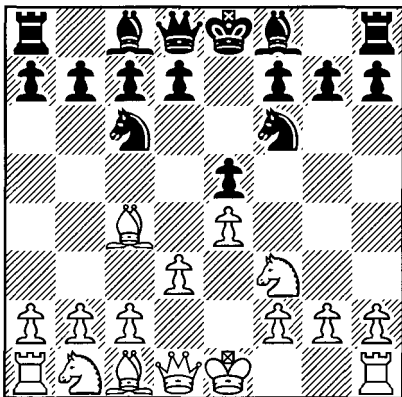
- ♠ The side that controls the centre has a greater freedom of actions on the whole board.
- ♠ An attack on the flank is often well met by a counterstrike in the centre.

↑ Without sufficient control of the centre, an attack on the flank is less likely to succeed.

Note that these are not absolute truths, but just principles, which nevertheless have kept their validity over the years. In the next five games we will see them in action again.

Game 142
V. Bologan-H. Westerinen
 Gausdal 1991
Italian Game

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♘c6 3 ♙c4 ♗f6 4 d3



Nowadays, this is the most popular way of treating the Italian. Adherents of open positions can consider 4 ♗g5 and 4 d4 instead.

4... ♙c5 5 c3 a6 6 ♙b3

A typical prophylactic measure in this line, and Black actually makes a similar one three moves later.

6... d6 7 ♗bd2 0-0 8 h3 ♙a7 9 ♗f1

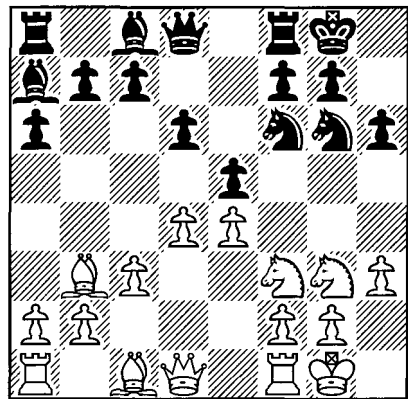
One key feature in this opening system, designed by Moldavian trainer Chebanenko

and frequently used by his students such as Bologan, is that the knight manoeuvre ♗bd2-f1-g3 is executed before castling. Thus White saves on the ♙e1 move, compared with similar positions in the Spanish.

9... ♗e7

Black “copies” the opponent’s idea. Another option is 9... d5, when White usually replies 10 ♗e2, keeping the light square control while avoiding the exchange of queens.

10 ♗g3 ♗g6 11 0-0 h6 12 d4



With the knight on g6 hindering the standard attacking plan of ♗h4, ♗g5, ♗f3 etc, White prefers to set up a pawn centre.

12... exd4?!

This capture leaves White with an extra pawn in the centre, a common situation in defences characterized by a strong fianchetto bishop such as the Grünfeld and Benoni, but less advisable in the current structure. 12... ♙e8 and 12... ♙d7 were reasonable options, keeping the tension while getting on with development.

13 cxd4 d5 14 e5 ♗e4

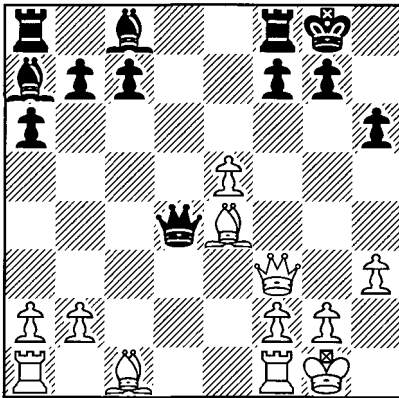
This was probably Black’s point when deciding upon 12... exd4. Unfortunately, the centralized knight will have to depart at

once after White's next move.

15 ♖c2! ♜h4?!

15...f5? obviously drops a pawn after 16 exf6, but 15...♜xg3 16 fxg3 c5! was a lesser evil, putting some pressure on White's centre, even if the latter keeps the advantage after 17 ♖e3. The text has the drawback of leaving the centre completely in White's hands.

16 ♜xe4 dxe4 17 ♖xe4 ♜xf3+ 18 ♜xf3 ♜xd4



19 ♖f4!

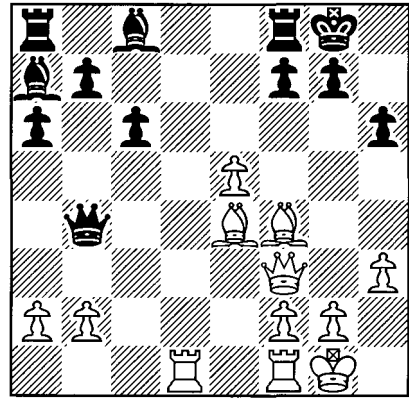
Bologan gets on with development and, at the same time, reinforces his central grip. After ♜ad1 on the next move he will in fact be controlling all four central squares, which leaves him ready to take action on the whole board. Of course 19 ♖xb7? ♖xb7 20 ♜xb7 ♜xe5 was less to the point.

19...c6

In the event of 19...♜xb2 White has 20 ♜fb1 ♜d4 21 ♜d1 ♜a4 22 ♖xh6! gxh6 23 ♜g3+ ♜h8 24 ♜f4 ♜g7 25 ♜d3 with a decisive attack, just like later on in the game.

20 ♜ad1 ♜b4

This time 20...♜xb2 is strongly met by 21 ♜g3 ♜h8 22 e6!, intending ♖e5.



21 ♖xh6!

With the centre completely under his control, White launches a strong attack on Black's king, in which the pawn on e5 plays a crucial role by shielding its fellow pieces and controlling the key square on f6.

21...gxh6 22 ♜g3+ ♜h8 23 ♜f4 ♜g7 24 ♜d3! ♜e8

Or 24...f5 25 exf6+ ♜xf6 26 ♜g3+ ♜f7 27 ♖g6+, winning the queen.

25 ♜g3+ ♜f8 26 ♜xh6+ ♜e7 27 ♜h4+!

A clever check that obliges the retreat of Black's king, now that 27...♜d7? fails to 28 ♖f5+.

27...♜f8 28 a3!

One more intermediate move to force Black's queen to a rather less favourable square.

28...♜d4

The only move, since 28...♜xb2 runs into 29 ♜h6+ ♜e7 30 ♜d6 mate, while 28...♜c5 is met by 29 ♖h7! – Cu.Hansen.

29 ♜h6+ ♜e7 30 ♜f6+ ♜d7

This loses the queen, but 30...♜f8 31 ♖h7 was terminal anyway.

31 ♜d3 ♜xd3 32 ♖xd3 1-0

In this hopeless position, Black resigned.

Game 143
P.Eljanov-V.Akopian
 European Cup, Ohrid 2009
Catalan Opening

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♖f3 ♗f6 4 ♗c3 e6 5 g3

Instead of entering a Semi-Slav battle with 5 ♗g5 or 5 e3, White takes the game into Catalan waters.

5...dxc4

A principled reaction, exploiting the fact that with ♗c3 already on the board White can't easily recover the pawn. The flexible 5...♗bd7 is popular as well.

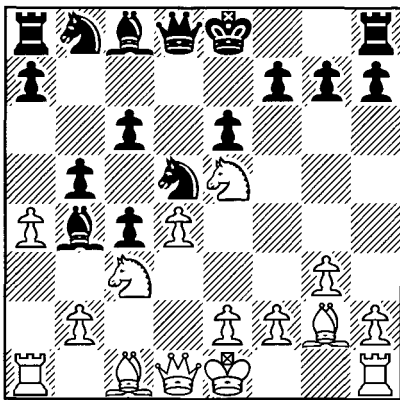
6 ♗g2 b5 7 ♗e5 ♗d5

Black can also consider 7...a6, when 8 ♗xc6 ♜b6! is quite inoffensive for him.

8 a4

Immediately attacking the enemy pawn phalanx, before Black consolidates by ...♗b7 and ...a7-a6.

8...♗b4



9 0-0!

More energetic than the obvious 9 ♗d2. In Eljanov's own words, "a real Catalan player should be ready to prefer to sac a second pawn to win a few tempi!".

9...0-0

Eljanov analyses 9...♗xc3 10 bxc3 ♗xc3 11 ♖a3!, when both 11...♗b4 12 axb5 ♗xa3 13 ♗xa3 and 11...b4 12 ♖xc3! bxc3 13 ♗a3 lead to an overwhelming initiative for White, as does 9...♗xc3 10 e4! ♗xb2 11 ♗xb2 ♗e7 12 d5!?.

On the other hand, 9...f6! 10 e4 ♗e7 was quite a reasonable choice; e.g. 11 ♗f3 0-0 12 axb5 ♗xc3 13 bxc3 cxb5 14 ♗a3 ♖f7 with unclear play in M.Ulibin-I.Salgado Lopez, Cappelle la Grande 2009. In effect, positions of a double-edged nature often require non-standard moves, such as 9...f6 in this case. In contrast, the text lets White retain his powerful central knight on e5 for the rest of the game.

10 axb5 ♗xc3 11 bxc3 cxb5

After 11...♗xc3?! 12 ♜c2 ♗xb5 13 e3 White soon recovers the pawns with a clear positional plus.

12 ♗a3 ♖e8 13 e4! ♗f6

This time 13...♗xc3?! is strongly met by 14 ♜f3.

14 ♜b1!?

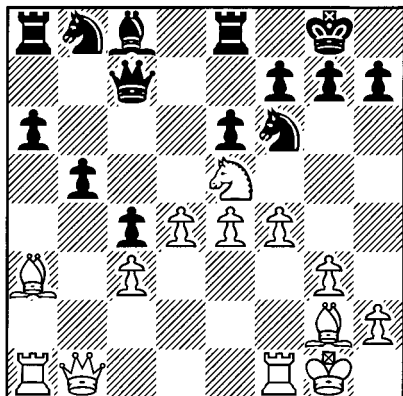
A rare, but good place for the queen, where she overprotects the e4-pawn and exerts some pressure along the b-file. 14 f4 at once was also possible, whereas the tempting 14 ♗xf7 doesn't yield more than a draw after 14...♗xf7 15 e5 ♗d5 16 ♜h5+ ♗g8 17 ♗e4 g6 18 ♗xg6 hxg6 19 ♜xg6+ ♗h8 20 ♖fe1 ♗xc3 21 ♖e3 ♗b7, since both 22 ♖xc3 ♗c6 23 g4 ♜h4! and 22 g4 ♗e2+! 23 ♖xe2 ♗c6 24 ♖e3 ♜h4 let Black parry the mate on the h-file – Eljanov.

14...a6 15 f4 ♜c7

The immediate 15...♗b7? fails to 16 ♗xc4.

White has achieved an unusually strong grip on the centre, combining a centralized

knight with a heavy pawn centre.



In consequence, nothing speaks against a full-scale attack on the kingside, where Black is rather short of defenders.

16 g4! ♟b7 17 g5 ♞f7 18 ♖a2!

A neat way of including the second rook in the attack by preparing to swing along the second rank.

18...♞c6 19 ♖af2 ♖ab8

For his part, Black prepares the only possible attempt for counterplay, the ...b5-b4 advance.

20 ♖d1 a5 21 ♖h5 ♞dx5?

Thus Black assures ...b5-b4 on the next move, but the clearance of the f-file will play heavily against him in the further course of the game. Instead, 21...g6 22 ♖h6 b4 23 f5! leads to a crushing attack after 23...exf5 24 exf5 ♞f8 25 ♞g4 – Eljanov, so the awkward-looking 21...♞d8! was the only way to keep up the fight, when White could consider 22 ♞g4, preparing the advance f4-f5.

22 fx5e b4 23 ♟b2 ♖bd8 24 ♜f3!

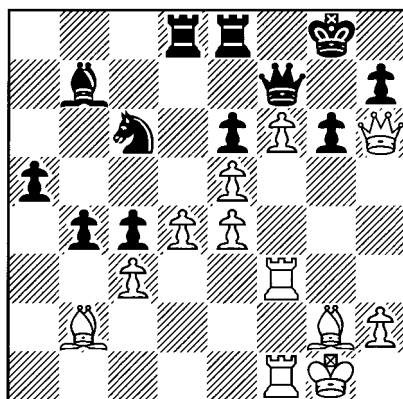
White refrains from the materialistic 24 ♜xf7?! ♜e7 25 ♜7f4 ♖b6 with unclear play, and simply sends the rook to h3. By the way, had Black opted for 21...♞d8!, then the

analogous 22 ♜f3? would have failed to 22...♟xe4.

24...g6

Or 24...bxc3 25 ♜h3 (25 ♟xc3 is also possible), when both 25...cxb2 26 ♖xh7+ ♟f8 27 ♖h8+ ♟e7 28 ♜xf7+ ♟xf7 29 g6+! and 25...h6 26 gxh6 g6 27 ♖g5 ♖e7 28 h7+ ♟h8 29 ♟c1! are fatal for Black – Eljanov. With the text Akopian prepares a light square blockade at the cost of a pawn, but it soon proves insufficient.

25 ♖h6 f5 26 gxf6 ♖f7



27 ♖e3!

Supporting the d4-pawn and preparing a final assault with h4-h5.

27...♞d7 28 h4! ♜ed8 29 h5 bxc3 30 ♟xc3 ♞xd4 31 ♜g3

Now the g6-pawn falls, and the rest is rather easy for White.

31...♞b5 32 hxg6 hxg6 33 ♖h6 ♖h7 34 ♜xg6+ ♟h8 35 ♟xa5 ♖a8 36 ♖g5 ♜g8 37 f7!

A nice intermediate move to divert the black queen from the h-file.

37...♜xf7 38 ♜xf7 ♜xg6

Obviously 38...♖xf7 runs into the reply 39 ♜h6+.

39 ♖d8+ ♜g8 40 ♜xh7+ ♟xh7 41 ♖h4+ ♟g6 42 ♟d2 1-0

Game 144
A.Kotov-I.Boleslavsky
 USSR Championship,
 Moscow 1945
Trompowsky's Opening

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♙g5 ♚e4 3 ♜f4 d6

A modest, but fully playable reply to the Trompowsky. Nowadays, 3...c5 and 3...d5 are more frequent options.

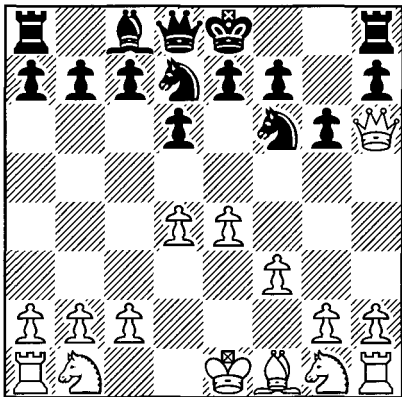
4 f3 ♘f6 5 e4 g6 6 ♚d2 ♚bd7

Aware that ♙h6 might be in the air, Boleslavsky delays 6...♙g7 and develops the queenside first. The same idea is often applied by Black in the Pirc; e.g. 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♘f6 3 ♚c3 g6 4 ♙e3 c6 5 ♚d2 b5 6 ♙d3 ♚bd7, delaying ...♙g7 until the moment is right, such as when White castles short.

7 ♙h6?!

White is eager to start a kingside attack, but it made sense to bring out a few more pieces first; e.g. starting with 7 ♚c3.

7...♙xh6 8 ♚xh6



8...c5!

Black responds to the flank attack with a counterstrike at White's centre. We saw a similar case in Milu-Zaitsev (Game 65).

9 c3?!

This attempt to maintain the pawn centre is strongly punished by the opponent's next move. After 9 d5?! ♚b6 and an opportune ...e7-e6 Black grabs the initiative too, but the developing 9 dxc5 ♚xc5 (or 9...♚a5+) 10 ♚c3 was reasonable.

9...♚b6! 10 ♚d2

A sad retreat for White, but due to his lagging development it was the only way to avoid material losses. In contrast, with his queen's knight already on d2 or a3, he could have played 10 ♚c4 at this point.

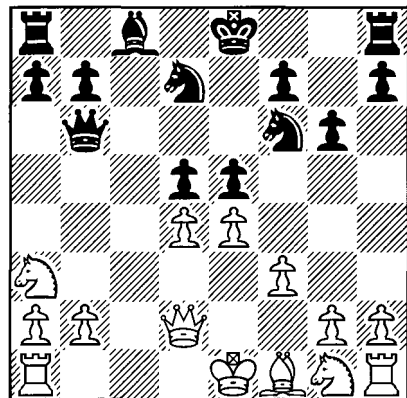
10...cxd4 11 cxd4 e5!

Kotov gets no time to rest. Now the absence of his dark-squared bishop is strongly felt.

12 ♚a3

12 d5?! 0-0, preparing ...♚h5 and ...f7-f5, yields Black a definite initiative, while in the event of 12 ♚c3 he could try 12...d5!? as in the game; e.g. 13 dxe5 ♚xe5 14 exd5 0-0 with interesting compensation for the pawn. With the text White was probably hoping for 12...exd4?! 13 ♚c4 ♚c5 14 b4, followed by 15 ♚xd4, but Black has a much stronger move at his disposal.

12...d5!



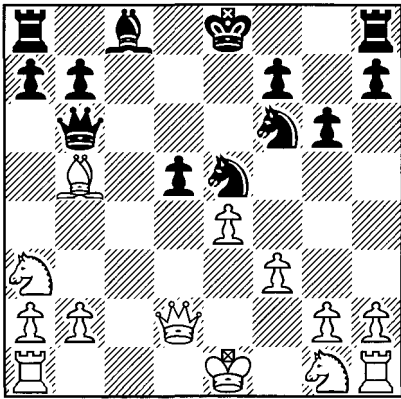
One more central strike, preventing ♖c4 and clearing the e-file for future actions towards the enemy king.

13 dxe5

After 13 exd5 ♗xd5 14 dxe5 ♗e3 15 ♖c4 ♗xc4 16 ♙xc4 ♗xe5 17 ♚e2 ♚b4+, followed by ...0-0, White is also in trouble – Ftacnik.

13...♗xe5 14 ♙b5+

Seeing that 14 exd5 0-0, followed by ...♙e8(+), yields Black a strong attack, Kotov tries to bring out his pieces quickly.



14...♙f8!?

There was nothing wrong with 14...♙d7 15 ♙xd7+ ♗exd7, followed by ...0-0 and ...♙fe8(+), but Boleslavsky wants the bishop on b5 as a future target.

15 exd5 ♙g7 16 ♗e2

Or 16 0-0-0 ♙f5, followed by ...♙ac8+ with a great attack.

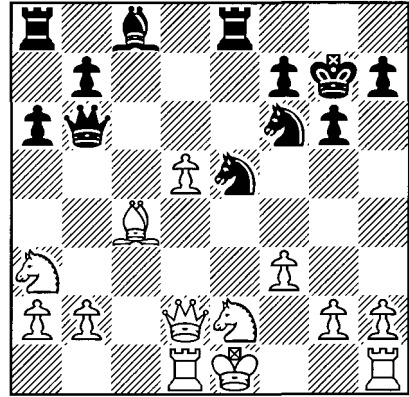
16...a6 17 ♙c4

Both 17 ♙a4?! ♙f5, preparing ...♗d3+, and 17 ♙d3? ♚xb2! cause White even bigger problems.

17...♙e8 18 ♗d1?

This lets Black land a strong tactical blow. 18 ♙f1 ♙f5 19 ♗d1 was essential – Ftacnik, although after 19...♙ac8 it is in fact

not easy to save White; e.g. 20 b3? ♚d6! 21 ♚b2 fails to 21...b5.



18...♙h3!

White's dubious opening strategy receives its final punishment.

19 ♙f1

Ftacnik also analyses 19 f4 ♙xg2 20 fxe5 ♙xe5 21 ♙f1 ♙xf1 22 ♙xf1 ♙f5+ with a decisive attack.

19...♗xf3 20 ♚f4

The attempt to prevent Black's next move in the game by 20 ♚c3 fails to 20...♙e3!.

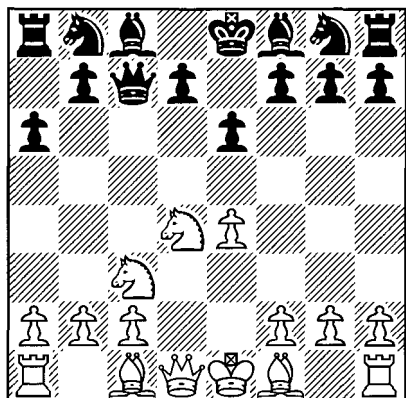
20...♗g4! 21 ♚xf3 ♗e3+ 22 ♙e1 ♙xg2 23 ♚f2 ♙xh1

With an extra exchange and the attack still intact, the rest is easy for Black.

24 ♗d3 ♚b4+ 25 ♗d2 ♙ac8 26 ♙b3 ♙xd5 27 ♙xd5 ♗xd5 28 ♚d4+ ♚xd4 29 ♙xd4 ♗f6 0-1

Game 145
I.Glek-Ch.Lutz
German League 1992
Sicilian Defence, Kan Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 a6 5 ♖c3 ♚c7



This encounter is taken from my book *Play the Sicilian Kan* and can be regarded as a model game for that opening variation. Just like most other Open Sicilians, White has to play aggressively to aspire at any advantage, a fact that often leads to his centre being exposed to a counterblow, as on move 18 in this game.

6 ♗d3

A typical deployment in the Kan, which was possible on the previous move as well.

6...♞f6 7 f4 d6

Black opts for a Hedgehog set-up. The sharper 7...b5 8 e5 b4 is also popular in practice.

8 0-0 b5 9 ♖e2 ♟b7 10 ♞h1 ♞bd7 11 ♟d2 ♟e7 12 ♞ae1

A natural choice, by which White brings his last piece into play, thus getting ready for actions in the centre and on the kingside. Even so, 12 b4!?, preparing a2-a4 to establish a queenside grip, is probably a more critical try.

12...♞c5

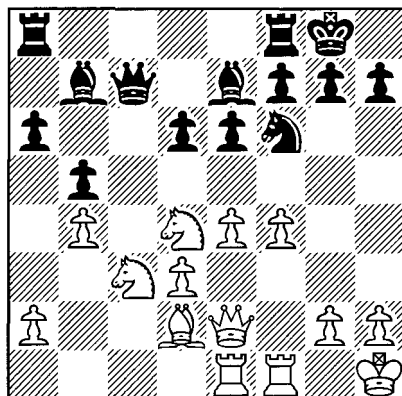
A clever move with several functions: an exchange on d3 is enabled; the threat of 13...b4 winning a pawn is created; and the d7-square is vacated for the other knight in

the event of e4-e5. In contrast, the immediate 12...0-0?! would invite 13 e5.

13 b4

White forces the swap on d3 in order to stabilize his centre. Instead, 13 e5 is well met by the discrete 13...♞fd7!, while after 13 a3 0-0 14 ♞f3 ♞fe8 15 ♞h3 g6, preparing ...♟f8-g7, Black has no major problems.

13...♞xd3 14 cxd3 0-0



An approximately equal position has emerged. Admittedly the exchange on d3 reinforced White's centre, but on the other hand he will miss that bishop in a future kingside attack.

15 ♞c1

The further course of the game suggests that 15 g4! at once might be more precise. Here Black should avoid both 15...d5?! 16 e5 and 15...e5?! 16 ♞f5, followed by 17 g5, in favour of the prophylactic 15...♞fe8 16 g5 ♞d7; e.g. 17 f5 ♟f8 18 fxe6 fxe6 19 ♞c1 ♖d8, intending ...♞e5 and ...♞c8 with a compact position.

15...♖d7 16 g4?!

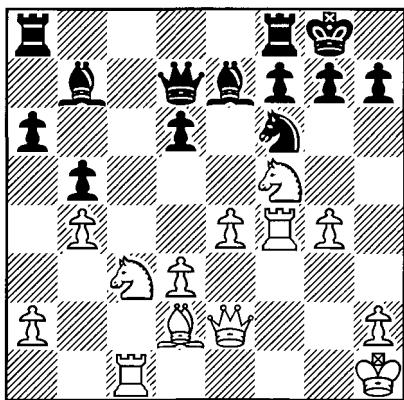
A tempting flank advance, but Black turns out to be well prepared. 16 ♞b3 ♞ac8 17 ♟e3, followed by ♟d4, was a safer choice.

16...e5! 17 ♖f5

Or 17 fxe5 dxe5 18 ♖f5 ♜fd8! 19 g5 ♗e8 with counterplay against d3 and b4.

17...exf4 18 ♜xf4

18 g5? obviously failed to 18...♜xf5, while after 18 ♖g1 ♗d8!, both 19 g5 ♗b6+ 20 d4 ♖xe4! and 19 ♗xf4 d5 20 e5 d4! 21 exf6 dxc3, followed by 22...♜e8, favour Black. Finally, 18 ♗xf4 can be met in the same way as the text.



18...d5!

A key move of the game, by which Black secures a lot of counterplay along the central files and the h1-a8 diagonal, with a distracting effect upon White's attack. In fact, the idea of responding to g2-g4 with ...d7-d5 at some moment has quite an old record in the Sicilian, and Dvoretsky covered the subject rather extensively in *Opening Preparation*.

19 g5 dxe4 20 dxe4

The consistent 20 gxf6 failed to 20...exd3+ 21 ♖e4 ♜xf5! 22 ♜xf5 dxe2 23 fxe7 ♗xe4+ 24 ♖g1 ♗xf5 25 exf8♜+ ♖xf8, while 20 ♖xe7+ ♜xe7 21 gxf6 exd3+ 22 ♖e4 ♜xf6! yields Black a strong initiative; e.g. 23 ♜xd3? ♜d8! with ...f7-f5 coming up.

20...♖xe4!

An intuitive sacrifice that proves to be tactically well-founded.

21 ♖xe7+

After 21 ♖xe4 ♗xg5 White will soon have to return more material; e.g. 22 ♜g1 f6 23 h4 ♜ae8! 24 hxg5 ♜xe4 25 ♜xe4 ♜xf5 26 ♜gg4 ♜e8 etc.

21...♜xe7 22 ♖xe4 ♜ae8 23 ♖g1

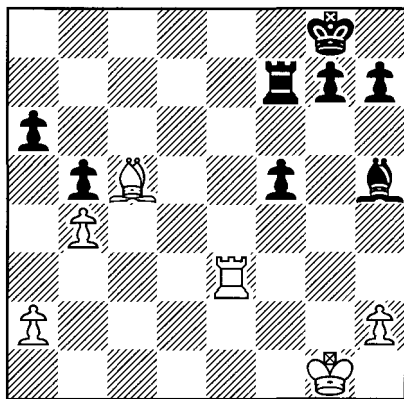
Or 23 ♜e1 f5! 24 gxf6 ♜xf6 and the knight is doomed.

23...♗xe4 24 ♜e1

Glek had put his hopes in this new pin, but it is not nearly as effective as the previous one.

24...♜xg5+ 25 ♜g4 ♗d3!

Black maintains his material advantage. 26 ♗xg5 ♗xe2 27 ♜g3 ♗h5 28 ♗e7 f5! 29 ♜ge3 ♜f7 30 ♗c5 ♜xe3 31 ♜xe3



Opposite-coloured bishops are famous for their drawing effect, but with one pair of rooks still on the board, White should be helpless against the connected passed pawns.

31...♗d7 32 ♜a3 ♗d2

By 32...♗d1+! 33 ♖f2 ♗d2+ or 33...f4 Black would have made significant progress. At this point both players probably suffered from time trouble.

33 ♖xa6 ♟f3 34 h4 h6 35 a4!

Exchanging more pawns.

35...bxa4 36 ♖xa4 ♜g2+ 37 ♚f1 ♜g4 38 ♟e7 ♜e4 39 ♖a7 f4 40 ♟d6 0-1

Despite reasonable chances for a draw, the official scoresheet indicates that White lost at this moment. In any case, the turbulent conclusion of the game doesn't take away its instructive merits.

Game 146
L.D.Nisipeanu-R.Dautov
 German League 2003
Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d3

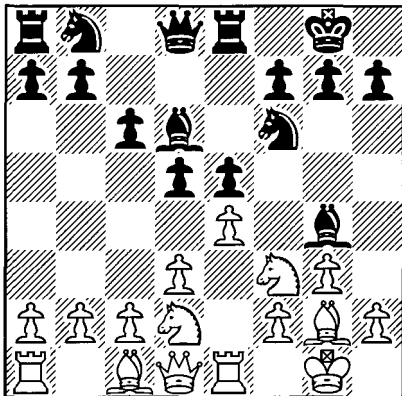
The King's Indian Attack, a practical choice when you are not up to a heavy theoretical discussion.

2...d5 3 ♘d2 e5 4 ♘gf3 ♟d6

A logical set-up, which exploits the support that ...c7-c6 gives to the pawn centre.

5 g3 ♘f6 6 ♟g2 0-0 7 0-0 ♜e8 8 ♜e1 ♟g4

Other main options are 8...♘bd7 and 8...a5, preparing ...♘a6-c5, in both cases waiting with the queen's bishop until the moment is right.



9 c3

Here and on the following two moves, 9 h3 was more precise, in order to force the bishop to h5 – Dautov.

9...♘bd7 10 ♚c2 ♚c7 11 ♘f1!

This was White's last chance for 11 h3, when 11...♟e6 12 ♘g5 gains the bishop pair, while 11...♟h5 12 ♘h4, heading for f5, also yields him a minimal initiative.

11...h6!

Black prevents ♘g5, so that the bishop can retreat to e6 without any risk of being exchanged.

12 ♘e3 ♟e6 13 ♘h4 a5

A useful move which gains some space while awaiting the opponent's next step.

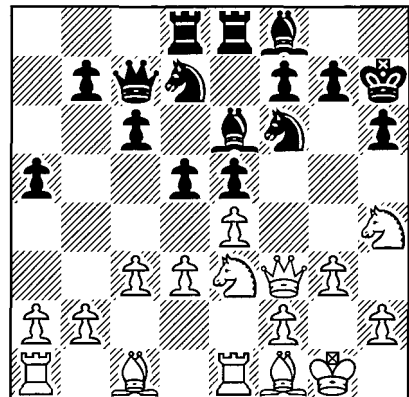
14 ♚e2

Aware that 14 ♘hf5 yields little after 14...♟f8, followed by ...g7-g6, White prefers to reinforce his future kingside attack with a queen transfer to f3.

14...♜ad8 15 ♚f3 ♟f8 16 ♟f1

Both sides are using considerable prophylaxis. The immediate 16 ♘hf5?! backfires after 16...g6 17 g4 ♘c5!, hitting d3 – Dautov.

16...♔h7



Black has defended his kingside rather

carefully, his two last moves fulfilling the purpose of overprotecting the h6-pawn, so that ♖e(h)-f5 can be met by ...g7-g6.

17 g4?!

White gets on with the attack, but we will soon see that his position doesn't support such aggression. The modest 17 h3, preparing ♖e3-g4, was a better choice – Dautov.

17...g6

Covering the vital f5-square. In contrast, the impulsive 17...dxe4 18 dxe4 ♘c5?!, heading for d3, runs into 19 ♖ef5 g6 20 ♘xh6! ♘fxe4 21 ♖h3 with an attack – Dautov.

18 ♖ef5

The only way to justify the previous move. Now there appear ideas like 19 ♖h3 and 19 ♘xh6 ♙xh6 20 g5, so Black must react with care.

18...dxe4 19 dxe4 gxf5 20 gxf5 ♙d5!

A key decision, which was probably already foreseen by Dautov when making his 17th move. By returning the piece in this way, Black obtains a firm grip on the centre, and both his rooks will prove ideally placed.

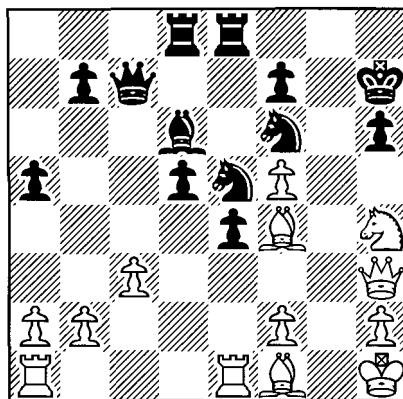
21 exd5 cxd5 22 ♖h3 e4!

Parrying the threat of ♘f3-g5 and vacating the e5-square for the knight, from where it can reach several interesting destinies such as g4, f3 and d3.

23 ♙h1?

A natural move; however, the undefended f2-pawn will soon play against White tactically. 23 ♙e2 ♖e5 24 ♘g2 was correct, improving the passive knight, when 24...♙g7 25 ♙f4 ♖b6 26 ♖g3 ♘fd7!, heading for c5, keeps Black's advantage – Dautov.

23...♖e5 24 ♙f4 ♙d6!



By now the merits of Black's 20th move are clearly appreciated. His strong pawn centre, well supported by the rest of his pieces, gives him a very dominant position, whereas White's kingside attack has reached a dead end.

25 ♙e2

The aggressive alternative 25 ♘f3? failed fatally to 25...♖eg4!, so Nisipeanu opts to prevent ...♖eg4. Unfortunately for him, the knight has another great destiny at its disposal.

25...♘d3! 26 ♙xd6?

A tactical oversight in time trouble. After 26 ♙xd3 ♙xf4 27 ♙b5 ♖g8 White's game is strategically very difficult, but the text loses material.

26...♘xf2+ 27 ♙g2 ♖b6!

A clever intermediate move which lets Black simplify to an endgame with a sound extra pawn.

28 ♖g3

Or 28 ♙c7 ♖g8+! 29 ♘g6 ♖xc7 30 ♙xf2 fxc6, winning – Dautov.

28...♖g8 29 ♘g6 ♖xd6 30 ♖xf2 fxc6 0-1

A pawn down and worse on the whole board, White resigned.

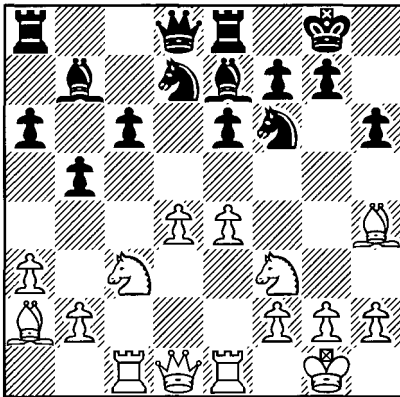
Exercises

Game 147
H.Dobosz-F.Landleiter
 Nuremberg 1999
Queen's Gambit Declined

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 d5?! 3 cxd5 ♜xd5?!

Black's second move surrendered the centre without getting anything in return, and here 3...♘d5 was more to the point, avoiding the early exposure of the queen.

4 ♘c3 ♜d8 5 ♘f3 e6 6 e4 ♙e7 7 ♙c4 c6 8 0-0 ♘bd7 9 ♚e1 0-0 10 a3 b5 11 ♙a2 a6 12 ♙g5 ♙b7 13 ♞c1 h6 14 ♙h4 ♞e8



Your move... (+ short plan)

Game 148
A.Strikovic-R.Mascarinas
 Geneva 1991
Sicilian Defence,
King's Indian Attack

1 e4 c5 2 d3

The King's Indian Attack can be used against a variety of defences, including the Sicilian. Another popular way of launching it is with 2 ♘f3 and only then 3 d3.

2...♘c6 3 g3 d5 4 ♘d2 dxe4 5 dxe4 g6 6 ♙g2 ♙g7 7 ♘g3 ♘f6 8 0-0 0-0 9 ♚e1

Probably the most exact choice, since 9 c3 permits 9...♜d3, while 9 ♜e2 ♙g4, followed by 10...♘d4 or 10...♘e5, also makes life a bit easier for Black. Now, on the other hand, 9...♙g4 can be met by 10 h3.

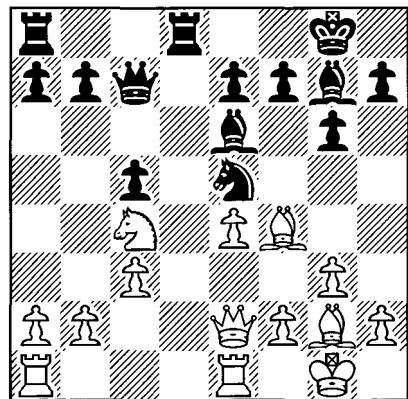
9...♜c7 10 c3 ♞d8 11 ♜e2 ♘g4

Just in time, before White goes e4-e5. A different approach is 11...e5.

12 ♘c4 ♘ge5

12...b6 13 ♙f4 ♘ge5 14 ♘fxe5 ♘xe5 is more precise, as in L.Vogt-M.Petursson, Brocco 1990, although by 15 ♘e3! e6 16 ♙xe5 ♙xe5 17 f4 ♙g7 18 e5 ♙b7 19 ♞ad1 White could have achieved a slight plus.

13 ♘fxe5 ♘xe5 14 ♙f4 ♙e6



Your move... (+ short plan)

Game 149
A.Zapata-M.Tal
 Subotica Interzonal 1987
Alekhine's Defence

1 e4 ♖f6 **2 e5** ♗d5 **3 d4** d6 **4 f4**

Quite a rare, but far from insipid line against the Alekhine.

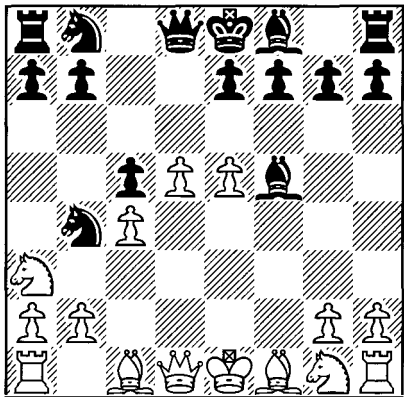
4...dxe5 5 fxe5 c5 6 c4?!

But this pawn advance is badly timed, in contrast to the Four Pawns Attack which we saw in Van der Wiel-Vaganian (Game 129). Instead, with **6 ♖f3 cxd4 7 ♗xd4 ♗c6 8 ♗e4!**, White could still fight for an edge.

6...♗b4! 7 d5?!

One more inaccuracy. **7 a3 ♗4c6 8 e6!?** was more in the spirit of the variation.

7...♗f5 8 ♗a3



Your move...

Game 150
J.Hellsten-M.L.Jevtic
 Belgrade 2002
Queen's Gambit Declined

1 d4 d5 2 c4 ♖f6?! 3 cxd5 ♗xd5?! 4 ♗c3

♗d8 5 ♗f3 e6 6 e4 ♗e7 7 ♗d3 h6?

A loss of time as well as a weakening of Black's kingside structure. **7...b6** at once was a lesser evil.

8 0-0 b6 9 ♗e2 ♗b7 10 ♖d1

Such a set-up is quite logical in this structure, in order to support the pawn centre with two major pieces and complicate Black's ...c7-c5.

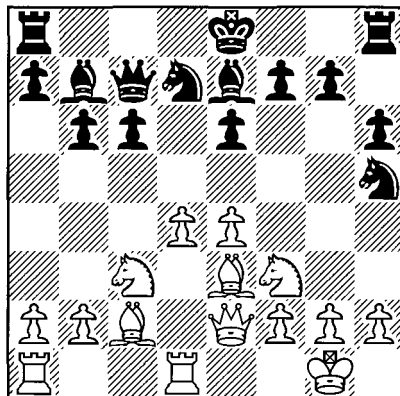
10...♗bd7

The immediate **10...0-0?** would have run into **11 e5 ♗d5 12 ♗e4**, when Black's inaccuracy on move seven makes itself felt.

11 ♗c2 c6 12 ♗f4 ♗h5?!

This won't end well, but it was already hard to give Black good advice.

13 ♗e3 ♗c7



Your move...

Game 151
Mat.Bartel-B.Macieja
 Polish Championship,
 Warsaw 2011
Ragozin Defence

1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♗f3 d5 4 ♗g5

By this move order White avoids the

sharp Botvinnik Variation arising after 4 ♖c3 c6 5 ♙g5 dxc4, since 4...c6 can now be met by 5 ♗bd2 or 5 e3, securing the c4-pawn.

4...h6 5 ♙xf6 ♗xf6 6 ♗c3 ♙b4

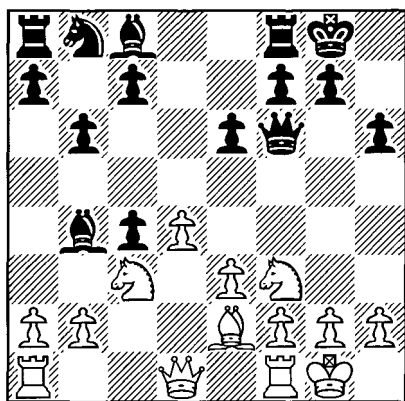
On his part, Black refrains from transposing to the Moscow Variation with 6...c6 and takes the game to the Ragozin Defence. Who benefited from these move order tricks is only known by the players themselves.

7 e3 0-0 8 ♙e2

More flexible than 8 ♙d3, when 8...dxc4 forces White to reply 9 ♙xc4. Incidentally, 8 ♗c1 and 8 ♗b3 are also possible.

8...dxc4 9 0-0 b6?!

9...c5 was preferable – Bartel, immediately putting some pressure on White’s centre.



Your move... (+ short plan)

Quite a popular deviation from the thematic 8...c5. Black aims at light square play with ...♗a5, ...b7-b6, ...♙b7 etc, while the central break ...e7-e5 can also be considered.

9 0-0 ♗d7

An awkward move at first sight, but since the queen’s bishop is heading for b7, the queen will prove well placed on d7.

10 ♙a3?!

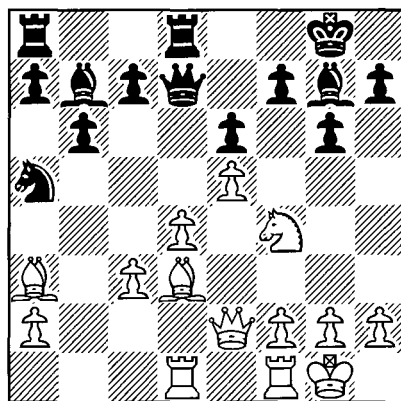
The bishop isn’t doing much there. 10 ♙e3, followed by ♗d2, is a more popular choice.

10...♗a5 11 ♙d3 b6 12 ♗f4?!

12 ♗b1 ♙b7 13 d5 c6 14 c4 was preferable – Moiseev.

12...♙b7 13 ♗e2 ♗f8 14 ♗ad1 e6 15 e5?!

Exposing the central pawns. The modest 15 ♙b4 ♗c6 16 ♙a3 was better – Moiseev.



Your move...

Game 152

A.Lilienthal-V.Korchnoi

USSR Championship, Kiev 1954

Grünfeld Defence

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♗c3 d5 4 cxd5 ♗xd5 5 e4 ♗xc3 6 bxc3 ♙g7 7 ♙c4 0-0 8 ♗e2 ♗c6

Game 153

V.Antoshin-B.Ivkov

Polanica Zdroj 1970

Benoni Defence

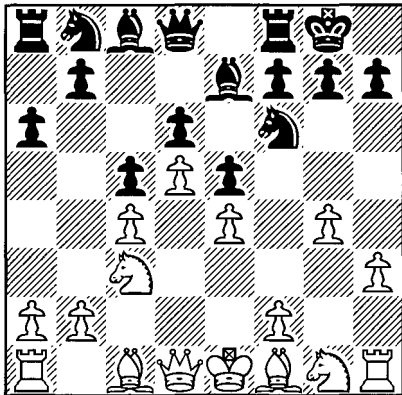
1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 e5 4 ♗c3 d6 5 e4 ♙e7

The Czech Benoni, an ideal opening for players who like closed positions and aren't bothered by a space disadvantage.

6 h3

With this and his next move, White aims at frustrating the typical plan ...0-0, ...♖e8, ...g7-g6, ...♗g7 and ...f7-f5. Another popular approach is 6 g3, followed by ♕g2, ♗ge2, 0-0 and f2-f4, with completely different play.

6...0-0 7 g4 a6



Black signals that he might be considering ...b7-b5 at some moment.

8 ♗f3 ♗bd7 9 ♕d3 ♗e8 10 a3

Copying the opponent's idea from three moves ago.

10...g6

Another idea was 10...♗c7, preparing ...b7-b5, but the text is more efficient, since it soon lets Black complete the development of all his minor pieces.

11 ♕h6 ♗g7 12 ♖d2 ♗f6 13 b4

A parallel attack on both flanks can be a risky business (cf. the game Gurevich-Piket in *Mastering Chess Strategy*), but Black is also fine after 13 ♗e2 ♗h8! 14 ♗g3 ♗g8 15 ♕e3 b5! as in L.Pachman-V.Ciocaltea, Har-rachov 1966; e.g. 16 cxb5 axb5 17 ♕xb5 f5!

with a strong initiative.

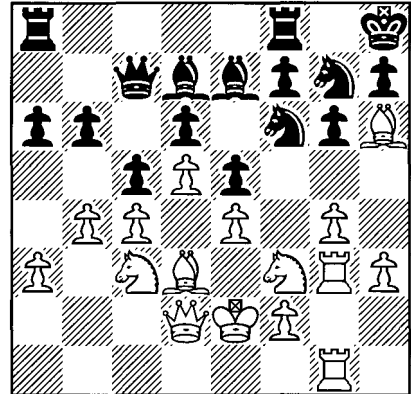
13...b6 14 ♖e2

14 ♖f1!? seems safer, followed by ♖g2, and this is in fact how Gurevich dealt with the royal problem.

14...♗h8

Stepping off the g-file and enabling ...♗g8 if needed.

15 ♖ag1 ♕d7 16 ♖g3 ♖c7 17 ♖hg1



Your move...

Game 154
M.Mrndzic-M.Pejic
 Zupanja 2007
Queen's Gambit Declined

1 d4 d5 2 c4 ♗f6!

I am sorry about bringing up this lousy line in yet another game, but it does have a tendency to produce instructive battles.

3 cxd5 ♗xd5 4 e4 ♗f6 5 ♗c3 e6

As we already discussed in Grabarczyk-Podlesny (Game 115), 5...e5 is a more active choice here, which White could have avoided by playing 4 ♗f3 first.

6 ♗f3 ♕e7 7 ♕d3 0-0 8 0-0 b6 9 ♖e2 ♕b7 10 ♖d1

Applying the same set-up as in the abovementioned game.

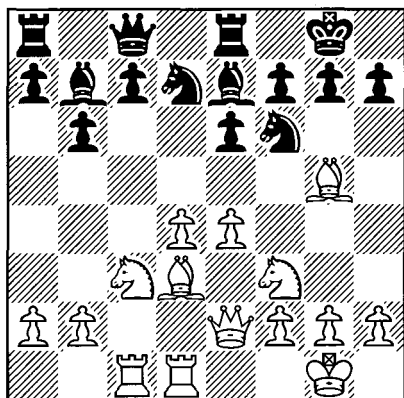
10...♖c8?!

An odd move. 10...♗bd7, followed by ...♜e8 and possibly ...♗f8-g6, was probably a better choice.

11 ♖g5 ♜e8 12 ♜ac1!

The last piece joins the party, discouraging Black from the liberating ...c7-c5 advance.

12...♗bd7



Your move...

Game 155
K.Kachiani Gersinska-P.Cramling
 German League 2003
Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♗f3 ♗f6 4 e3 ♖g4

Black takes the opportunity to bring out the queen's bishop. Other popular options are: 4...♖f5 in the same spirit, 4...a6 as in Mateuta-Hellsten (Game 138), and 4...e6 with a Semi-Slav.

5 ♗c3 e6 6 h3 ♖xf3 7 ♜xf3 ♗bd7 8 ♖d2 ♖b4

A rare move in the Slav, but here it is

useful for preventing e3-e4 – besides, in the event of g2-g4 in similar fashion to Sadykov-Sveshnikov (Game 141), Black can always rely on ...♖xc3 and ...♗e4 if it is needed.

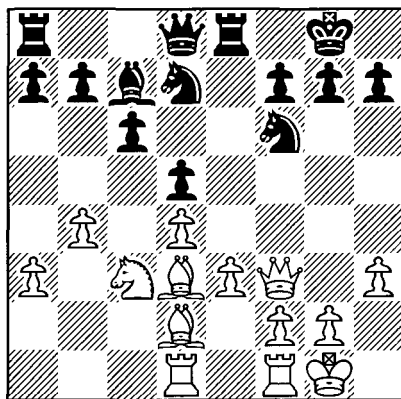
9 a3 ♖a5 10 ♖d3 0-0 11 ♜d1

The natural 11 e4? backfires after 11...e5! – Cramling.

11...♜e8 12 cxd5

This leaves Black with an easy game, though after 12 0-0 e5!, intending 13 cxd5? ♖xc3 and ...e5-e4, her opening problems are over too. As for 12 b4 ♖c7 13 0-0, again 13...e5! works rather well; e.g. 14 cxd5 cxd5 15 ♗xd5? e4.

12...exd5 13 b4 ♖c7 14 0-0



Your move... (+ short plan)

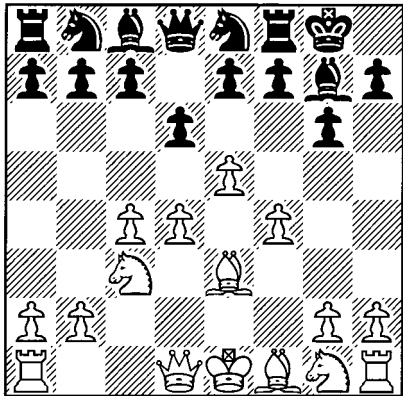
Game 156
R.Letelier Martner-R.J.Fischer
 Leipzig Olympiad 1960
King's Indian Defence

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♗c3 ♖g7 4 e4 0-0 5 e5

Quite a risky advance, which exposes the central pawns to a black counterstrike. Standard moves like 5 ♗f3 and 5 f3 are

preferable, depending on White's repertoire.

5...♘e8 6 f4 d6 7 ♖e3



Your move...

Game 157
S.Gligoric-B.Rabar
 Zagreb 1939
Nimzo-Indian Defence

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♖b4 4 e3 0-0 5 ♙d3 d6

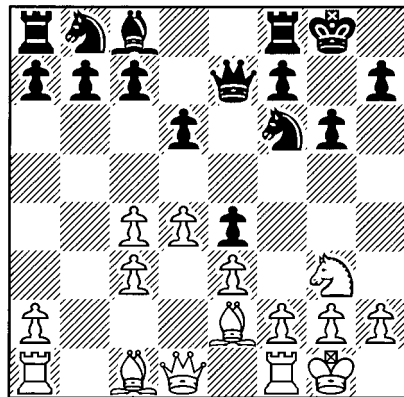
Quite a modest choice, at least in conjunction with Black's next move. Nowadays he usually prefers 5...d5 or 5...c5, immediately challenging the enemy centre.

6 ♗ge2 e5 7 0-0 ♚e7 8 ♗g3

After 8 a3 ♙xc3 9 ♗xc3 e4 10 ♙e2 ♙f5 and ...♗bd7 next, Black obtains a better version of the game. With the text White deprives the opponent of ...♙f5 and prepares ♗f5 on some occasions.

8...♙xc3 9 bxc3 e4 10 ♙e2 g6?!

Preparing ...h5-h4, at the cost of delaying development. The more solid 10...b6, followed by ...♙b7, was preferable – Gligoric.



Your move...

Game 158
L.Javakhishvili-J.Avalos Parra
 Gibraltar 2010
Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♗f3 ♗f6 4 e3 ♙f5 5 ♘c3 e6 6 ♗h4

A popular variation over the last decade. White aims to gain the bishop pair and also enjoys more space, though Black's position remains solid.

6...♙e4

Provoking f2-f3 before accepting the swap on g6, just as in Mateuta-Hellsten (Game 138).

7 f3 ♙g6 8 ♚b3 ♚c7 9 ♙d2 ♙d6?!

A seemingly active place for the bishop, but this move is probably inaccurate here. 9...♙e7 and 9...♗bd7 are more usual options.

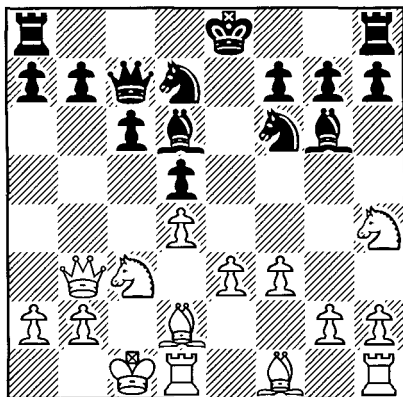
10 cxd5 exd5

Unfortunately, 10...cxd5?, preparing ...♗c6, now runs into 11 ♗b5, which is why the bishop would have been better off at e7. White also has a slight edge after

10...xd5 11 e4, but this might have been the least of Black's evils.

11 0-0-0 ♖bd7?!

A natural developing move, but in fact it does nothing to interfere with the enemy plans. In the event of 11...0-0 White can just reply as in the game, so 11...♗b6!?, looking for a queen exchange, might be worth a try.



Your move...

13...♗a5 14 ♖c2 ♗c4

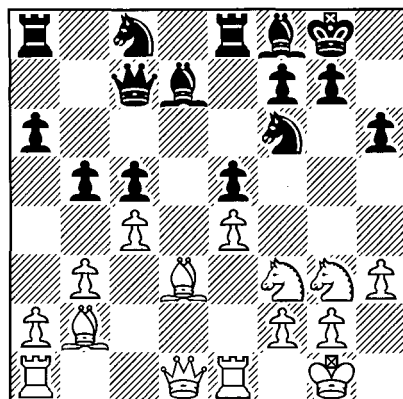
The immediate 14...c5 is also popular in practice, with the point that the knight can sometimes retreat to c6.

15 b3 ♗b6 16 ♖b2 c5 17 dxc5 dxc5 18 c4!

With both black knights having a long journey to d4, this advance makes a lot of sense. Now both the e5-pawn and the d5-square become targets for White.

18...♗c7 19 ♖d3 ♗c8

Preparing ...♗a7-c6-d4.



Your move... (+ short plan)

Game 159
A.Kosteniuk-D.Vocaturu
Moscow 2011
Spanish Opening

1 e4 e5 2 ♗f3 ♗c6 3 ♖b5 a6 4 ♖a4 ♗f6 5 0-0 ♖e7 6 ♗e1 b5 7 ♖b3 d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3

An initial position of the Closed Spanish has been reached. The apparently natural 9 d4 is seen much less frequently in practice due to 9...♖g4.

9...h6 10 d4 ♗e8 11 ♗bd2 ♖f8

Smyslov's Variation, in which Black hurries to apply some pressure down the e-file.

12 ♗f1 ♖d7 13 ♗g3

A standard knight manoeuvre in this opening.

Game 160
S.Estremera Panos-E.Relange
Andorra 1998
Queen's Pawn Opening

1 d4 ♗f6 2 ♗f3 g6 3 g3 ♖g7 4 ♖g2 0-0 5 0-0 d6 6 a4

A curious line, at least the first time that you see it. White gains some space on the queenside, while awaiting the opponent's set-up.

6...a5

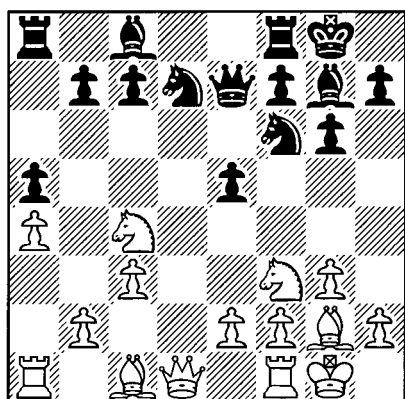
Parrying any ideas of a4-a5(-a6). 6...♗a6, preparing ...c7-c5, is another idea.

7 c3 ♖bd7 8 ♗bd2

After the inclusion of a2-a4 and ...a7-a5, the c4-square has become a good destiny for this knight. In this sense 8...d5 could now have been considered, but Black prefers a typical King's Indian set-up.

8...e5 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 ♖c4 ♗e7

The pressure at e5 is making itself felt. 10...♗e8? failed to 11 ♖fxe5, while 10...e4 11 ♖d4 also yields White a slight initiative, with 11...c5?! running into 12 ♖b5 at any moment.



Your move... (+ short plan)

Game 161
A.Serras Uria-F.Peralta
 San Sebastian 2005
Pirc Defence

1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♖f6 3 ♖c3 g6 4 f4 ♗g7 5 ♖f3 0-0 6 ♗e3

Quite an aggressive line, familiar to us from Game 132 (Believsky-Anand).

6...b6 7 ♗d2

A more flexible choice than Believsky's 7 e5.

7...♗b7 8 ♗d3

Probably 8 e5 ♖g4 9 0-0-0 is more critical, when the gambit 9...c5! 10 dxc5 bxc5 11 ♗xc5 ♗a5 leads to a sharp battle.

8...♖a6 9 a3 c5!

A typical counterstrike in the Austrian Attack, after which the game takes on a Benoni character.

10 d5 ♖c7 11 h3

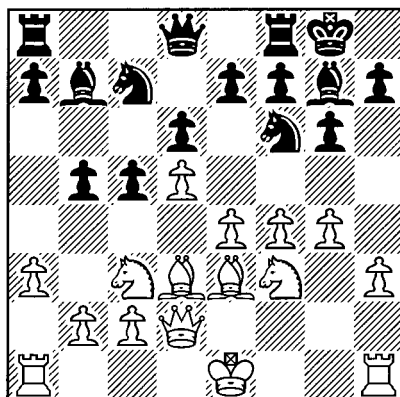
A useful move that rules out ...♖g4 before castling short. In contrast, 11 0-0-0?! b5! yields Black a promising attack.

11...b5!

Highlighting the relationship between the b5- and e4-squares, a subject that we touched upon in Salov-Hübner (Game 139) with reversed colours.

12 g4?!

A careless advance. 12 0-0 was called for.



Your move...

Game 162
R.Fine-H.Steiner
 Hollywood 1945
Queen's Gambit Accepted

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♖f3 ♖f6 4 e3 e6 5 ♗xc4 c5 6 0-0 a6 7 ♗e2

7 a4, preventing ...b7-b5, is another direction in this main branch of the Queen's Gambit Accepted.

7...b5 8 ♖b3 ♖b7 9 a4 c4?!

A dubious choice, since releasing the tension at d4 implies that White will have free hands in the centre. 9...b4, followed by ...♗bd7, was better.

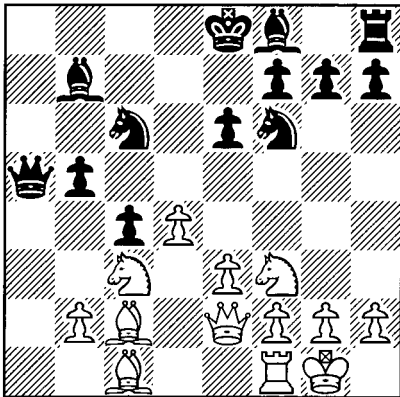
10 ♖c2 ♗c6 11 axb5

As usual, clearing lines is a good strategy for the better developed side.

11...axb5 12 ♖xa8 ♗xa8 13 ♗c3

Not 13 e4?! ♗b4! with counterplay. With the text White wins a tempo for his development, exploiting the fact that 13...b4?! 14 ♗b5 produces a double threat at c4 and c7.

13...♗a5



Your move...

A modern alternative to 6...♗d7, by which Black keeps the option of ...c6-c5 and ...♗c6 on some occasions.

7 h4 h6 8 h5

White proceeds like in the main line with 6...♗d7. Probably 8 ♗e5 is more critical.

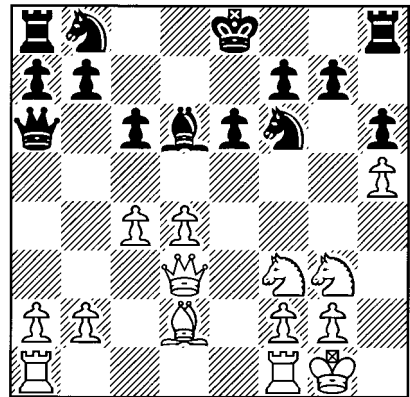
8...♖h7 9 ♖d3 ♖xd3 10 ♗xd3 ♗a5+?!

A dubious queen excursion. Both 10...♗bd7 and 10...e6 were more to the point, speeding up development.

11 ♖d2 ♗a6 12 c4!

Simple and strong. Both ♖d2 and c2-c4 are often useful moves for White in the Classical Caro-Kann anyway, so by now he has a slight lead in development.

12...e6 13 0-0 ♖d6



Your move...

Game 163

I.Herrera-J.Becerra Rivero
Cuban Championship,
Las Tunas 1996
Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♗d2 dx e4 4 ♗xe4 ♖f5 5 ♗g3 ♖g6 6 ♗f3 ♗f6

Game 164

Di.Flores-C.Lujan
Buenos Aires 2006
English Opening

1 ♗f3 ♗f6 2 c4 g6 3 b4!?

A kind of improved fianchetto, which gains some extra space on the queenside. We came across a similar idea in Van Wely-

Guliev (Game 14), and it can also be used by Black; e.g. 1 d4 ♖f6 2 ♗f3 e6 3 g3 b5!?, instead of the more established 3...b6.

3...♗g7 4 ♗b2 0-0 5 g3 c6 6 ♗g2 a5 7 b5 d5

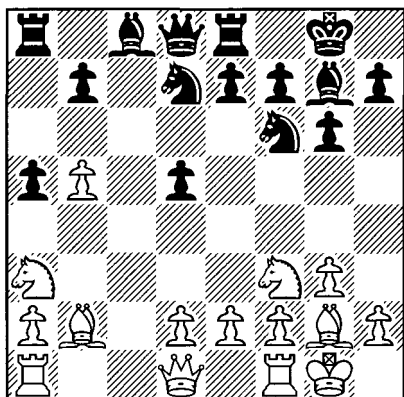
7...cxb5 8 cxb5 a4! seems more consequent, followed by ...d7-d5, leaving the b5-pawn somewhat loose.

8 ♖a3!

8 bxc6 ♗xc6 just helps Black.

8...cxb5 9 cxb5 ♗bd7 10 0-0 ♖e8

Preparing ...e7-e5.



Your move... (+ short plan)

Game 165
H.Lopez Silva-J.Hellsten
 Santiago 2005
Sicilian Defence, Kan Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♗xd4 a6 5 ♗c3 b5 6 g3 ♗b7 7 ♗g2 ♗e7

An interesting deviation from the usual 7...♗f6. On e7 the knight exerts less pressure on White's centre; on the other hand, any tactical motifs with e4-e5 are avoided.

8 0-0 ♗ec6

At first sight, 8...♗bc6 appears more natural; however, after 9 ♗b3! the knight

on e7 lacks a good destiny. Such a restrictive retreat is rather common in the Open Sicilian – also when Black has played ...♗d7, preparing ...♗xd4 and ...♗c6. In contrast, after the text he is ready for ...d7-d6 and ...♗d7 if White goes 9 ♗b3.

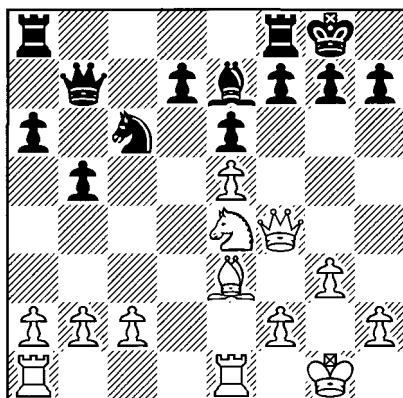
9 e5

White gains space but exposes his e-pawn. Perhaps 9 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 10 ♖e1, intending 10...♗e7?! 11 ♗d5!, was more critical.

9...♗c7 10 ♖e1 ♗xd4 11 ♗xb7 ♗xb7 12 ♗xd4 ♗c6 13 ♗f4 ♗e7 14 ♗e3?!

Passive. Black is fine after 14 ♗e4 0-0 15 ♗f6+ ♖h8! 16 ♗h5 f6 17 ♗g4 ♖f7, but 14 ♗g4!, intending 14...0-0? 15 ♗h6, was more to the point, when Black could choose between the cautious 14...g6 and the more enterprising 14...h5!? 15 ♗xg7 0-0-0.

14...0-0 15 ♗e4



Your move...

Game 166
R.Knaak-J.Plachetka
 Bratislava 1983
Nimzo-Indian Defence

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♗c3 ♗b4 4 e3 b6 5 ♗ge2

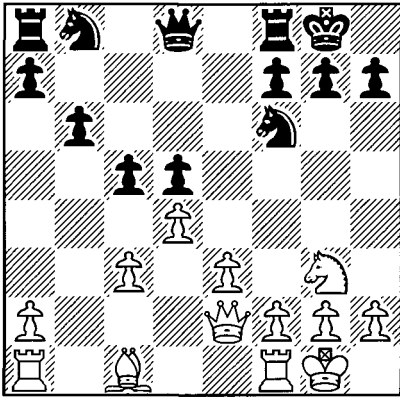
♙a6 6 ♘g3 ♙xc3+ 7 bxc3 d5 8 ♖f3

In this double-edged line of the Rubinstein Nimzo-Indian, 8 ♙a3, sacrificing a pawn in order to stop Black castling, is more popular nowadays.

8...0-0 9 cxd5 exd5

9...♙xf1? 10 dxe6 wins a pawn for White, but 9...♖xd5 might be a more promising choice; e.g. 10 e4 ♖a5 11 ♙xa6 ♖xa6, preparing ...♗bd7 and ...c7-c5, with roughly equal play.

10 ♙xa6 ♗xa6 11 ♖e2 ♗b8 12 0-0 c5



Your move... (+ short plan)

Game 167
A.Alekhine-F.Marshall
New York 1927
Irregular defence

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♗f3 ♗e4?!

Quite an optimistic move, which is convincingly dealt with by Alekhine in this game.

4 ♗fd2!

4 g3 also made sense, whereas 4 ♗bd2 f5 5 ♗xe4 fxe4, with 6...d5 next, is less ambitious.

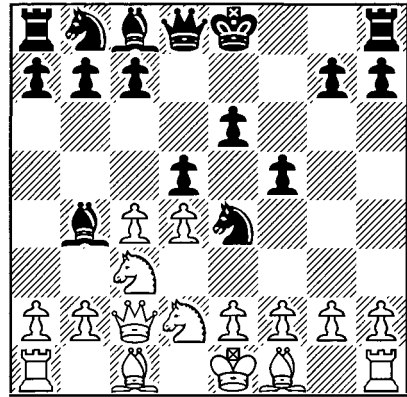
4...♙b4

In contrast, 4...f5 5 ♗xe4 fxe4 6 ♗c3 d5 7 ♙f4 now yields White a pleasant advantage. With the text Marshall accelerates his development and also sets the little trap 5 a3?? ♖f6.

5 ♖c2!

Increasing the pressure on e4 and enabling 6 ♗c3.

5...d5 6 ♗c3 f5



Your move...(+ short plan)

Game 168
V.Golod-E.Rozentalis
European Cup, Neum 2000
Nimzo-Indian Defence

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♗c3 ♙b4 4 f3 d5 5 a3 ♙xc3+ 6 bxc3 c6!?

An interesting reply to the sharp 4 f3 variation. Black prepares to meet c4xd5 by ...c6xd5 at any moment, thus maintaining an excellent pawn structure. As for the "bad" bishop on c8, it can be activated by ...b7-b6 and ...♙a6.

7 ♖c2

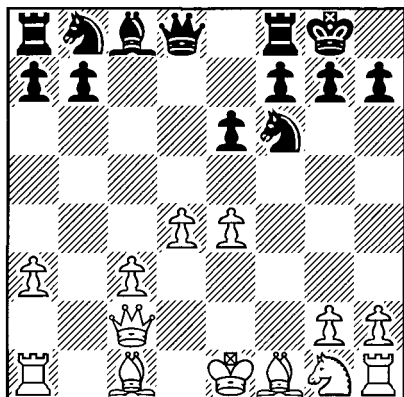
An ambitious try, preparing e2-e4. An-

other direction is 7 e3 0-0 8 ♖d3 b6 9 ♜e2 ♙a6 with a complex battle.

7...0-0 8 cxd5

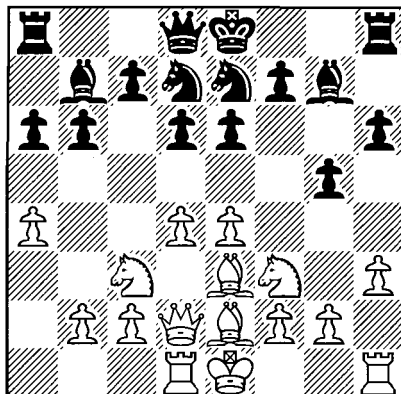
The immediate 8 e4 can be dealt with in the same way as in the game, starting with 8...dxe4.

8...cxd5 9 e4 dxe4 10 fxe4



Your move...

been more prudent.



Your move...

Game 169
S.Yuferov-G.Chepkaitis
St Petersburg 1996
Modern Defence

1 d4 g6 2 e4 ♗g7 3 ♜f3 d6 4 ♝c3 a6 5 a4 b6 6 h3 e6 7 ♗g5?!

Probably not an ideal move against the Hippopotamus, since a later ...h7-h6 will be effected with tempo.

7...♜e7 8 ♜d2 h6!

Of course, before White plays 9 ♗h6. Now 9 ♗e3 was probably called for, since the text just encourages Black's ...g6-g5 – Hillarp.

9 ♗f4 ♗b7 10 ♗e2 ♜d7 11 ♜d1 g5! 12 ♗e3?!

As we will see next, 12 ♗h2 would have

Game 170
M.Gurevich-S.Vega Gutierrez
Spanish Team
Championship 2006
Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♜f3 c6 4 ♜c2

A solid reply to Black's accelerated Meran System.

4...dxc4 5 ♜xc4 ♜f6 6 ♗g5 ♗e7

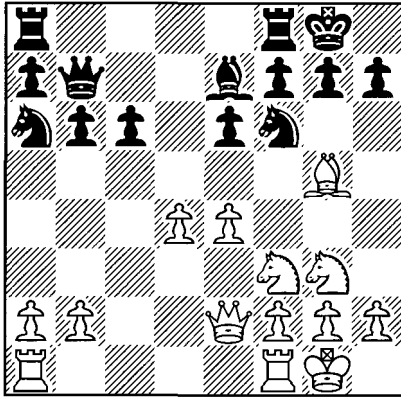
This is quite a passive approach. The alternative 6...b5 7 ♜c2 ♗b7, with the plan ...♜bd7, ...a7-a6 and ...c6-c5, is more popular in practice.

7 ♜bd2 b6 8 e4 ♗a6 9 ♜c2 ♗xf1 10 ♜xf1 0-0 11 ♜g3 ♜a6?!

Again overly passive. 11...c5, challenging the white centre, was essential; e.g. 12 dxc5 bxc5 13 0-0 ♜fd7 14 ♗xe7 ♜xe7 with just a slight disadvantage in A.Delchev-D.Pavasovic, European Team Championship, Batumi 1999.

12 0-0 ♜c7 13 ♜e2 ♜b7?

The sad 13...♜b8 was mandatory.



Your move...

Game 171
V.Kramnik-S.Lputian
 European Team Championship,
 Debrecen 1992
Queen's Gambit Declined

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♗f3 d5 4 ♗c3 ♖e7 5 ♖f4

In the nineties, this move became a popular alternative to the more explored 5 ♖g5.

5...0-0 6 e3 c6

Another main reply is 6...c5, exploiting the fact that with the bishop on f4 White exerts less pressure on the d5-pawn.

7 ♖c2

White delays ♖d3 so that ...d5xc4 can be met by ♖xc4 in one go.

7...♗bd7 8 h3 a6 9 ♖d1 h6 10 a3 dxc4

Kramnik's suggestion 10...♗e8!? seems more flexible.

11 ♖xc4 ♗d5?!

A common simplification method in this opening, but here it leads to a rather passive game for Black. Perhaps 11...b5 12 ♖a2 ♖b7 was more logical; e.g. 13 e4 ♗e8 14

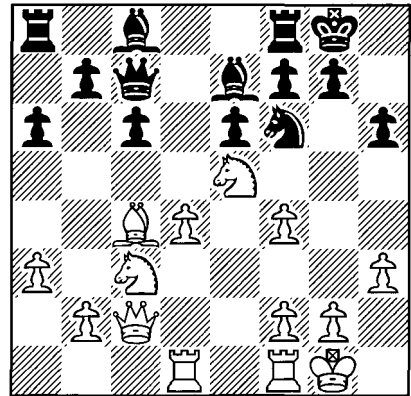
♖b1 ♗f8 15 b4?! a5! with counterplay in L.Psakhis-E.Pigusov, Novosibirsk 1993.

12 0-0!

More ambitious than 12 ♖g3 ♗xc3 13 ♖xc3 with a slight edge – Kramnik. The doubled pawns that now emerge will yield White dynamic assets such as a semi-open e-file and increased control of the crucial e5-square.

12...♗xf4 13 exf4 ♖c7 14 ♗e5! ♗f6

Or 14...c5 15 d5! ♗xe5 16 fxe5 ♖xe5 17 ♗fe1 with a strong initiative – Kramnik.



Your move... (+ short plan)

Game 172
H.Al Hadarani-Ma.Carlsen
 Dubai 2004
Sicilian Defence,
Rossolimo Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 ♗c6 3 ♖b5 g6 4 0-0 ♖g7 5 ♗e1 ♗f6 6 c3

Another main direction is 6 e5 ♗d5 7 ♗c3, a line that makes some Black players prefer 5...e5 instead.

6...0-0 7 d4 d5 8 exd5

8 e5 ♗e4 9 ♖xc6 bxc6 10 ♗bd2 is more

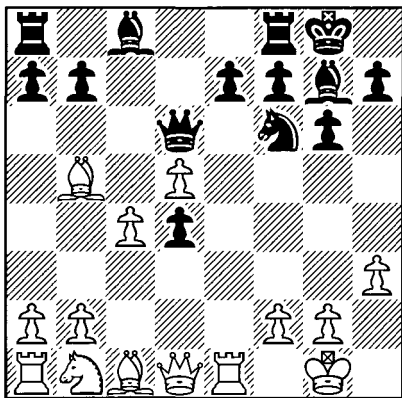
ambitious, trying to get a grip on the dark squares.

8...♖xd5 9 c4 ♗d6 10 d5 ♘d4!

The most active choice, exploiting the fact that 11 ♘xd4 cxd4 12 ♗xd4? runs into 12...♗g4!

11 ♘xd4 cxd4 12 h3?!

White will soon have to pay for his slow development. 12 ♘d2, followed by ♗f3, was essential, when Black could react just like in the game.



Your move...

Game 173

S.Dolmatov-N.Rashkovsky

USSR Championship, Minsk 1979

Sicilian Defence, Najdorf Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♗f6 5 ♗c3 a6 6 f4

In the previous century this line was quite popular against the Najdorf, whereas nowadays White tends to prefer 6 ♗e3 or 6 ♗g5.

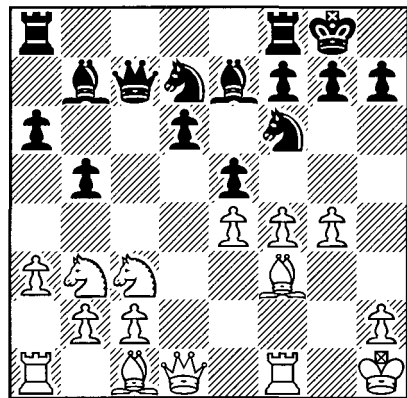
6...♖c7 7 ♗e2

After this move the battle becomes similar to the 6 ♗e2 variation. 7 ♗d3 was more

in the spirit of the set-up with f2-f4, while the restrictive 7 a4 can also be considered.

7...e5 8 ♗b3 b5 9 a3 ♗b7 10 ♗f3 ♗bd7 11 0-0 ♗e7 12 ♗h1 0-0 13 g4

After standard moves from both sides, White finally commences actions on the kingside. 13 ♗e1, heading for g3, was also possible.



Your move...

Game 174

G.Kasparov-L.Yurtaev

Moscow 1981

Nimzo-Indian Defence

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♗c3 ♗b4 4 e3 0-0 5 ♗d3 d5 6 cxd5 exd5 7 ♗ge2 ♗bd7

The more flexible 7...♗e8 is preferred nowadays.

8 0-0 c6 9 f3

Just as in the Queen's Gambit Exchange Variation with ♗ge2, White takes the first step towards the creation of a pawn centre with e3-e4. Black's next two moves put this idea on the shelf, but even so White ends up in a more comfortable position.

9...c5 10 a3 cxd4

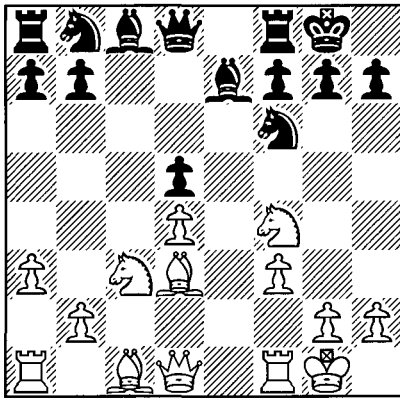
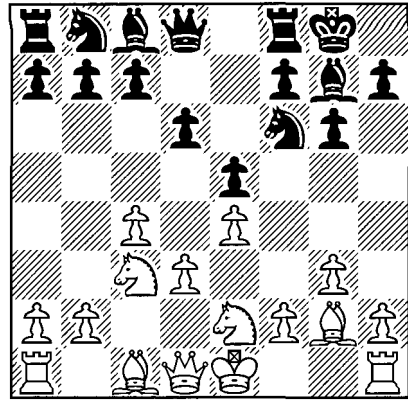
Or if instead 10...♙a5 11 b4! cxb4 12 axb4 ♙xb4 13 e4 with the initiative – Kasparov.

11 exd4 ♙e7 12 ♘f4

In positions with a fixed pawn centre the placement of the minor pieces is a key factor, and here most of the white pieces are already more active than their black counterparts.

12...♘b8

A time-consuming rearrangement, but 12...♘b6?! would leave Black deprived of any counterplay.



Your move...

Game 175
S.Nyysti-O.Sepp
Tallinn 2001
English Opening

1 c4 g6 2 g3 ♙g7 3 ♙g2 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 0-0 5 d3 e5 6 e4 d6 7 ♘ge2

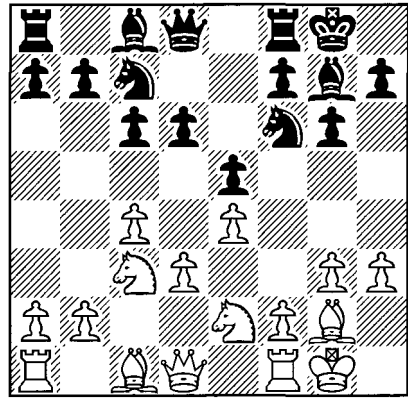
In the English Opening White usually aims at queenside play, but here we have an exception. After castling he will try to build a kingside attack with h2-h3 and f2-f4.

7...c6

Although practice favours 7...♘c6, the text is quite logical, in order to support a central break with ...d6-d5 later on.

8 h3 ♘a6 9 0-0 ♘c7

With this knight manoeuvre Black gets a bit closer to achieving ...d6-d5.



10 f4

In the event of 10 d4 one simple reply is 10...exd4 11 ♘xd4 ♙e8, preparing ...d6-d5; while 10...♙e6!?, intending 11 d5 cxd5 12 cxd5 ♙d7 and ...b6-b5 next, can also be considered.

10...exf4 11 ♘xf4

On 11 ♙xf4 Black could just react as in

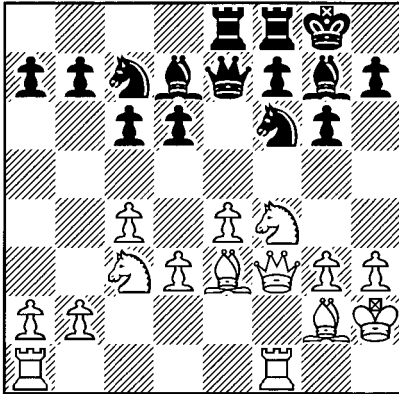
Mastering Opening Strategy

the game, whereas 11 gxf4 is well met by 11...h5, followed by ...f7-f5. At this point, 12 f5 proves quite harmless after 12...gxf5 13 exf5 h8!, followed by ...g8.

11...e7

With the simple idea of concluding development by ...d7 and ...ae8.

12 h2 d7 13 f3 ae8 14 e3



Your move...

Game 176
J.Hjartarson-M.Ballmann
 Winterthur 1996
Benko Gambit

1 c4 g6 2 d4 c5 3 d5 b5?!

This version of the Benko Gambit doesn't work too well, as we will see next.

4 cxb5 a6 5 e4!

A natural move that yields White swift development. In a normal Benko after 1 d4 f6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 4 cxb5 a6, it would obviously have failed to 5...xe4.

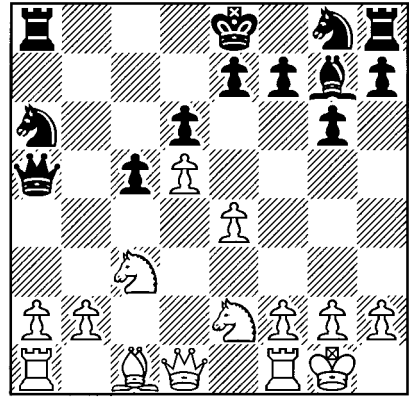
5...axb5

5...g7 was more flexible, waiting with ...a6xb5 until White moves his king's bishop – Hjartarson.

6 xb5 g7 7 e2!

The best destiny for this knight, now that 7 f3? fails to 7...a5+.

7...a5+ 8 bc3 a6 9 xa6 xa6 10 0-0 d6



Your move... (+ short plan)

Game 177
Peng Xiaomin-N.McDonald
 England-China match,
 London 1997
French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 c5 4 c3 c6 5 f3 d7 6 e2 ge7

Now that the white bishop has settled on e2, it makes sense to bring the knight to f5. In contrast, against 6 d3 Black usually prefers 6...cxd4 7 cxd4 b6, exploiting White's lessened defence of the d4-pawn. As for 6 a3, one popular reply is 6...f6 with a kingside focus.

7 0-0 cxd4 8 cxd4 f5 9 c3 c8

Just like 5...d7, a useful move while awaiting White's next step.

10 h1

Some prophylaxis before launching g2-g4. The immediate 10 g4 is well met by

10...♖h4 11 ♖xh4 ♗xh4 12 ♕e3 f6!, undermining the enemy centre.

10...♗b6!?

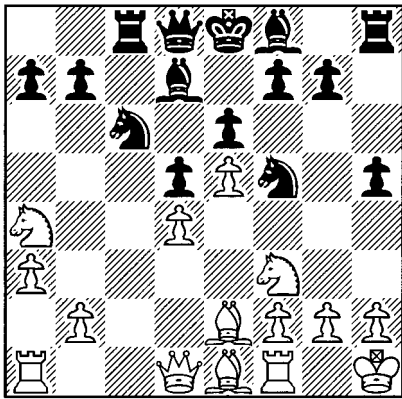
Distracting White from his intended kingside advance. 10...♕e7 11 g4 ♖h4 12 ♖xh4 ♕xh4 13 ♕e3 0-0, followed by ...f7-f6, has also done well in practice.

11 ♖a4 ♗a5 12 ♕d2 ♗d8 13 ♕e1!?

A rather passive solution to the problem with the d4-pawn, which became undefended after Black's queen sortie. Instead, Psakhis suggests 13 ♕e3, although in that case, Black will always be able to meet by g2-g4 by ...♖xe3.

13...h5! 14 a3

Now that Black's previous rendered the g2-g4 plan impossible, White prepares queenside play with b2-b4 and ♖c5.



Your move...

Game 178
M.Dvoretzky-J.Klovans
 USSR Championship,
 Yerevan 1975
Vienna Game

1 e4 e5 2 ♖c3 ♖f6 3 g3

Compared with the main line with 3 f4, this branch of the Vienna leads to a strategically more complex battle, not remote from some English variations.

3...d5

The most principled reaction, by which Black exploits White's temporary surrender of the centre.

4 exd5 ♖xd5 5 ♕g2 ♖xc3 6 bxc3 ♕d6 7 ♖b1 c6 8 ♖f3 0-0

Here and later, 8...e4 9 ♖d4 causes Black a slight problem with the e-pawn.

9 0-0 ♖d7 10 ♖e1 f5

A risky approach, considering that Black hasn't yet finished development. 10...♗c7 or 10...♖e8 was safer.

11 ♗e2!

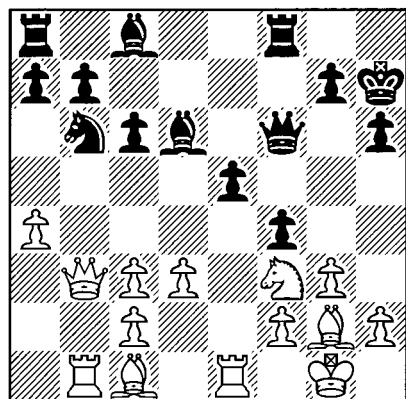
Before getting on with his development, White prepares ♗c4+ in order to exploit the weakened a2-g8 diagonal.

11...h6 12 ♗c4+ ♖h7 13 d3 ♗f6 14 a4

With the black knight evidently heading for b6, it makes sense to push this pawn forward.

14...♖b6 15 ♗b3 f4

After 15...♕e6 16 c4, followed by ♕b2, White also has a more active game.



Your move...

Game 179

A. Believsky-A. Yusupov

USSR Championship, Minsk 1987

Dutch Defence

1 d4 f5 2 c4 ♘f6 3 g3 e6 4 ♙g2 d5 5 ♗f3

Another popular approach is 5 ♗h3 c6 6 0-0 ♙d6 7 ♙f4, followed by ♗d2-f3.

5...c6 6 0-0 ♙d6 7 b3 ♖e7

Black prevents 8 ♙a3, swapping off his "good" bishop. Now White plays 8 a4, insisting with this idea, then 8...a5 fixes a stronghold on b4. Thus White prefers to leave the bishop on b2 for the moment.

8 ♙b2 0-0 9 ♗c3

Apparently this natural move doesn't fit in too well with ♙b2. Both 9 ♖c1, followed by ♙a3, and 9 ♗bd2, preparing ♗e5 and ♗df3, are more popular options in practice.

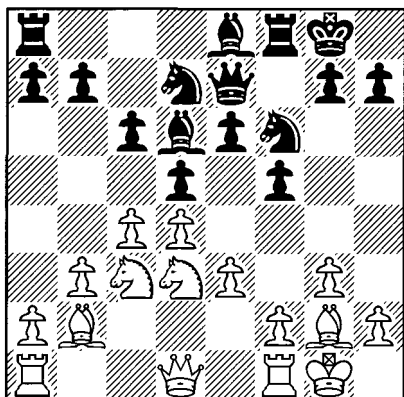
9...♙d7

The bishop manoeuvre ...♙d7-e8-h5 is thematic for the Stonewall, and it sometimes occurs in the French as well.

10 ♗e5 ♙e8 11 ♗d3

11 e3, preparing ♗e2-f4-d3, seems better.

11...♗bd7 12 e3



Your move...

Game 180

W. Browne-F. Gheorghiu

Wijk aan Zee 1981

Queen's Indian Defence

1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♗f3 b6 4 ♗c3 ♙b7 5 a3

By transposition we have reached the Petrosian Variation of the Queen's Indian.

5...d5 6 cxd5 ♗xd5

This leads to a more dynamic battle than 6...exd5 and could be regarded as Black's main reply to the Petrosian.

7 e3

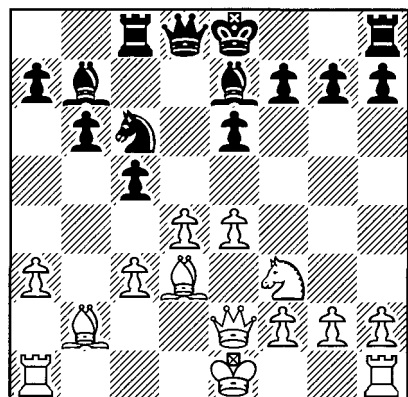
Another option is 7 ♖c2, in order to play e2-e4 in a single move.

7...♙e7 8 ♙b5+ c6 9 ♙d3 ♗xc3 10 bxc3 c5 11 e4

Finally, White is able to set up a pawn centre.

11...♗c6 12 ♙b2 ♖c8 13 ♖e2

From now on, whenever needed, the d4-pawn can be reinforced by a rook move to d1.



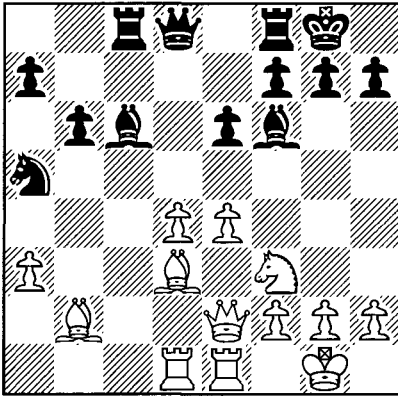
13...cxd4 14 cxd4 0-0 15 0-0 ♙f6 16 ♖ad1 ♗a5

Some prophylaxis in view of the possible d4-d5. In contrast, 16...♗xd4?! 17 ♙xd4

♙xd4 18 ♖b5 e5 19 ♗xe5 yields White a clear initiative.

17 ♜fe1 ♙c6?

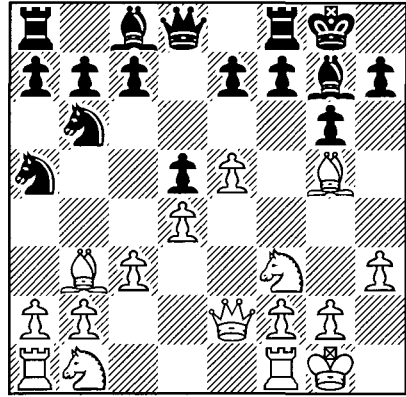
Black intends ...♙a4, but now runs into an unpleasant surprise. Again, prophylactic action was called for, either by 17...♞e8 or 17...g6.



Your move...

timely swap on b3.

10 ♙g5 d5 11 c3



Your move...

Game 181
M.Khachiyan-H.Nakamura
 Las Vegas 2006
Alekhine's Defence

1 e4 ♗f6 2 e5 ♗d5 3 d4 d6 4 ♗f3 g6 5 ♙c4 ♗b6 6 ♙b3 ♙g7 7 0-0

7 ♗g5, followed by ♜f3 or f2-f4, is a more aggressive approach.

7...0-0 8 h3

Preventing 8...♙g4, a move that didn't work last turn due to 8 ♙xf7+. In contrast, 8 ♜e2 ♙g4 9 e6?! is strongly met by 9...d5! 10 exf7+ ♜xf7 11 ♗bd2 ♗c6 12 c3 e5 and Black seizes the initiative.

8...♗c6 9 ♜e2 ♗a5

A typical idea in the Alekhine, in order to reduce White's attacking potential by a

Game 182
S.Brynell-J.Hellsten
 Malmö 1997
Sicilian Defence, Alapin Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 e6 3 c3 ♗f6 4 e5 ♗d5 5 d4 cxd4 6 cxd4 d6 7 a3

We already came across this line in Game 7 (Dvoretzky-Schmidt).

7...♗c6 8 ♙d3 dxe5 9 dxe5 g6!?

Quite a logical set-up against the 7 a3 line, in order to restrict the bishop on d3 and put some pressure on the e5-pawn.

10 0-0 ♙g7 11 ♞e1 0-0 12 ♜e2

In later games I had to face 12 b4 and 12 ♙e4, both of which might be more critical.

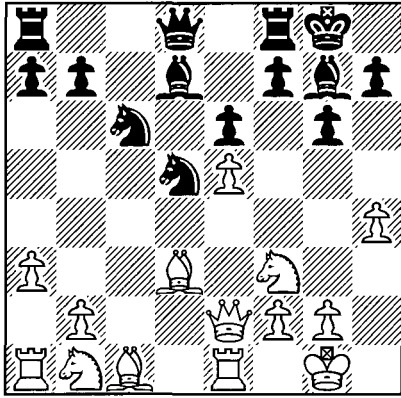
12...♙d7

Practice has seen 12...♜c7 and 12...b6 more often, but I like my move, which keeps maximum flexibility.

13 h4?!

Preparing a kingside attack with h4-h5, but Black has a strong reply at his disposal.

13 ♖e4 ♗c7, preparing ...♗f5 and ...♙c6, also looks fine for him, so 13 ♙d2, followed by ♗c3, might have been White's best choice.



Your move...

Game 183
S.Sulskis-A.Galkin
 European Championship,
 Batumi 2002
Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 c4 d5 3 cxd5 cxd5 4 exd5 ♗f6

Since 4...♖xd5 5 ♗c3, followed by d2-d4, yields White a favourable version of mainstream IQP positions, Black prepares to recapture on d5 with the knight.

5 ♖a4+

This check obstructs Black so that he can't easily recover the d5-pawn. In the same spirit, 5 ♙b5+ is also possible.

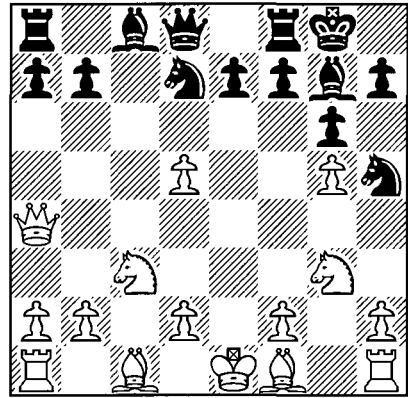
5...♗bd7 6 ♗c3 g6 7 g4!?

A highly aggressive way of treating this system. More common is 7 ♗f3 ♙g7 8 ♙c4 0-0 9 d3, hanging on to the pawn.

7...♙g7 8 g5 ♗h5 9 ♗ge2 0-0 10 ♗g3

White doesn't hide his intentions: clear

the h-file for a future attack on the enemy king, supported by a timely ♖h4.



Your move...

Game 184
A.Dreev-S.Volkov
 Samara 1998
Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♗c3 ♗f6 4 ♗f3 a6 5 c5

A logical reply to the Chebanenko Slav, now that 5...b6 6 cxb6 axb6 isn't available for Black. As a consequence, he prepares the central break ...e7-e5 instead.

5...♗bd7 6 ♙f4 ♗h5!

Just in time: before White plays h2-h3, providing the bishop with a shelter on h2.

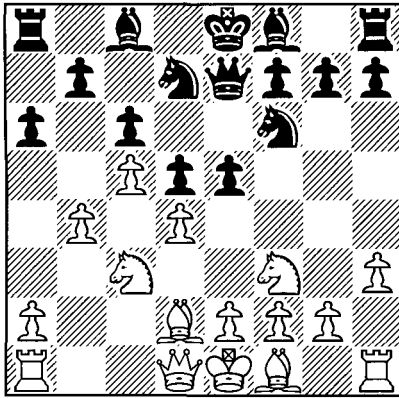
7 ♙d2 ♗hf6 8 h3 e5! 9 b4

Black's point is that after 9 dxe5 ♗e4, the attempt to hang on to the pawn by 10 b4? fails to 10...♗xd2 11 ♖xd2 a5!, while 10 ♗xe4 dxe4 11 ♗g5 ♗xc5 12 b4 ♗e6 13 ♗xe4 ♖d4 14 ♗d6+ ♙xd6 15 exd6 0-0! is about equal – Volkov.

9...♖e7

After 9...e4 10 ♗g1, followed by ♙f4 and e2-e3, White might be slightly better, so

Black prefers to maintain the central tension. Next he could consider ...g7-g6, followed by ...♙g7, with pressure along the a1-h8 diagonal.

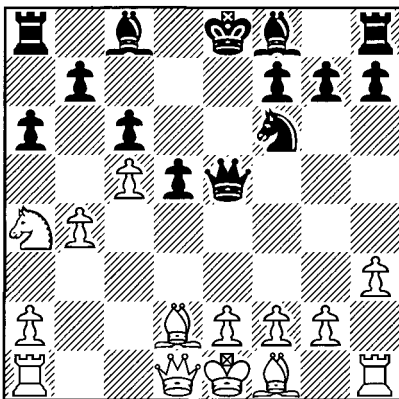


10 dxe5?!

10 ♙e3 seems safer, followed by g2-g3 and ♙g2.

10...♗xe5 11 ♗xe5 ♖xe5 12 ♗a4

With the dual idea of ♗b6 and ♙c3, but Black has a strong reply prepared.



12...♗e4!

When one knight leaves, another arrives. This phenomenon appears in many different openings; for example, in the IQP structures when Black plays ...♗a5 or ...♗b4

and White replies ♗e5.

13 ♙e3

Not 13 ♗b6? ♖f6! 14 ♙e3 ♖c3+ etc.

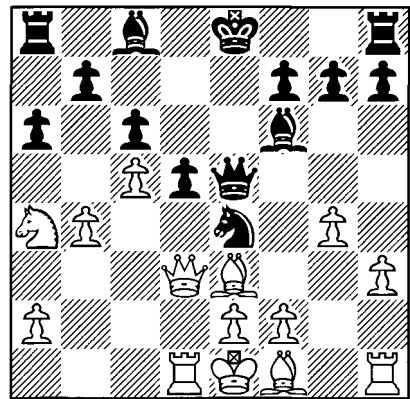
13...♙e7!

Very nice. Now the intended 14 ♙d4? runs into 14...♙h4! with the deadly threat of ...♖(x)g3.

14 ♖d4 ♖f5! 15 ♖d3 ♙f6 16 g4?!

This helps Black's queen to a better square. 16 ♖c1 was preferable – Volkov.

16...♖e5 17 ♖d1

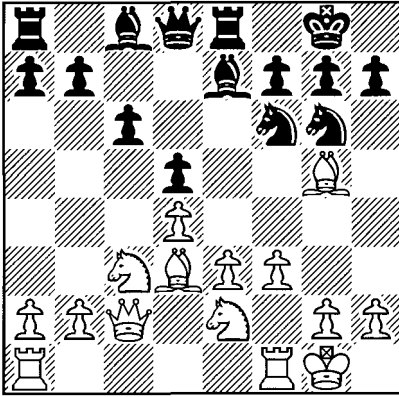


Your move...

Game 185
R.Palliser-R.Pert
Edinburgh 1997
Queen's Gambit Declined

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♗c3 ♗f6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 ♙g5 ♙e7 6 e3 c6 7 ♙d3 ♗bd7 8 ♖c2 0-0 9 ♗ge2 ♖e8 10 0-0 ♗f8 11 f3 ♗g6

We have reached a main position in the Exchange Variation with ♗ge2 against the Queen's Gambit. At this point White usually continues 12 ♖ad1, supporting an opportune e3-e4, but In this game he prefers to set up the pawn centre at once.

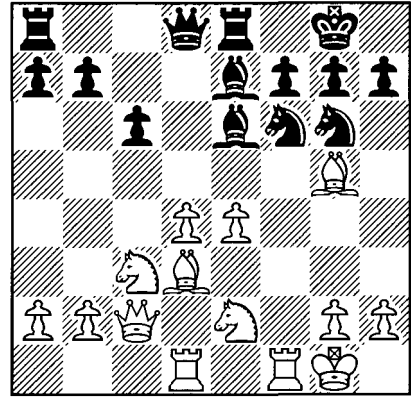


12 e4 dxe4 13 fxe4 ♖e6

13...c5 is less appropriate due to 14 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 15 ♘d5!, when 15...cxd4 runs into the

reply 16 ♘c7.

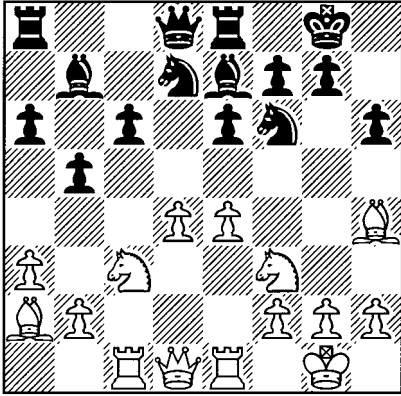
14 ♖ad1



Your move...

Solutions

Game 147 (continued)



15 e5!

This is a powerful advance that clears the b1-h7 diagonal for an attack, and creates a stronghold on the d6-square, just like in the game Grabarczyk-Podlesny (Game 115). The preparatory 15 ♖b1!? looks strong as well.

15...♗d5 16 ♕xe7 ♜xe7 17 ♘e4! ♙7b6 18 ♘c5

18 ♘d6! ♝ed8 19 ♜c2, was even stronger, hitting the c6-pawn while preparing ♕b1.

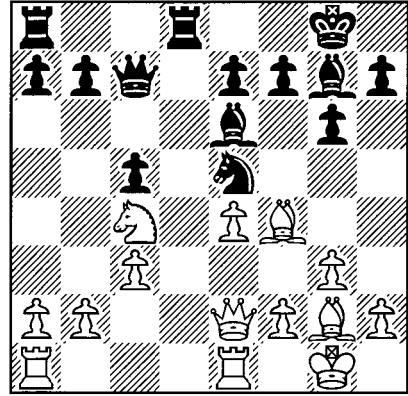
18...♞ac8 19 ♞e4!

With the centre secured, White proceeds with a kingside attack.

19...♞c7 20 ♜c2 ♞ec8 21 ♕b1 g6 22 ♞g4

White is preparing the advance h4-h5. This was the last move on the official score-sheet; independently of the conclusion of the game, White now enjoys a strong attack.

Game 148 (continued)



15 ♘e3!

Redirecting the knight to the central post on d5.

15...♜a5 16 ♘d5 ♞d7

Unable to accomplish ...e7-e6, Black opts for a few useful moves.

17 h3 ♞c8 18 ♕g5!

An annoying move for Black since any defence of the e7-pawn implies some kind of concession, besides which f2-f4 might be in the air.

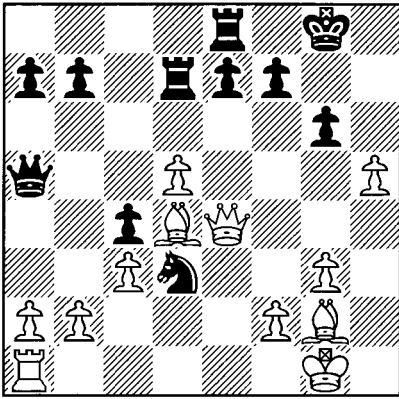
18...♕xd5 19 exd5 c4 20 h4!

Preparing ♕h3. Thanks to the bishop pair and the semi-open e-file, White already possesses a slight advantage.

20...♞e8 21 ♜e4 h6?!

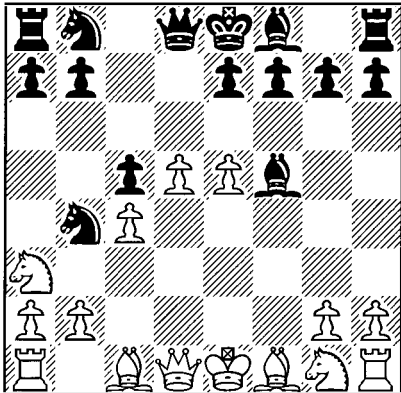
This leads to unfavourable complications. 21...b5, preparing ...♘d3, was probably a lesser evil.

22 ♕xh6! ♘d3 23 ♕xg7 ♘xe1 24 ♕d4 ♘d3 25 h5!



Initiating a strong attack. The game continued 25...♙a6 26 ♜h4 f5 27 hxg6 ♜xg6 28 ♙f3!, preparing ♙h5, and White went on to win.

Game 149 (continued)



8...e6!

By means of the double threat of ...e4xd5 and ...♜h4+, Black destroys the enemy centre.

9 ♜a4+

There is nothing better; e.g. 9 d6? ♜h4+, followed by one more queen check.

9...♜d7 10 ♜xd7+ ♘xd7 11 ♘f3

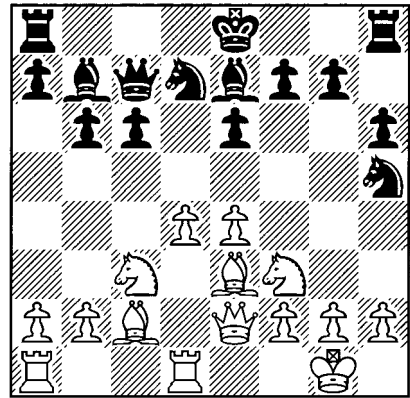
Or 11 dxe6 ♘xe5 12 exf7+ ♙xf7, fol-

lowed by ...♘ed3+, with a huge lead in development.

11...exd5 12 cxd5 ♘xd5 13 ♙c4 ♘7b6 14 ♙b5+ ♙d7

Having a sound extra pawn, Black went on to win.

Game 150 (continued)



14 d5!

A strong advance that opens the position to the benefit of White's better developed forces. 14 e5?! g6 15 g4 ♘g7 was rather less promising.

14...♘hf6

After 14...e5 15 ♜ac1 or 14...exd5 15 exd5 cxd5 16 ♘d4! Black is also in trouble.

15 dxe6 fxe6 16 e5!

The most forcing choice, although the methodical 16 ♘d4 ♘f8 17 ♙b3 ♜c8 18 ♜ac1 was strong as well. The text has the point that 16...♘d5 runs into 17 ♙g6+, so Black accepts the offer.

16...♘xe5 17 ♘d4

With the dual threat of 18 ♘xe6 and 18 ♙f4.

17...♜c8 18 ♙f4 c5 19 ♘db5 ♘f7

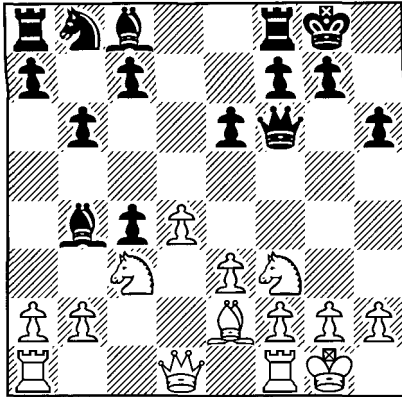
Or 19...♜c6? 20 ♘d6+! ♙xd6 21 ♙a4 etc.

20 ♘c7+

The rest is easy.

20...♖f8 21 ♜xe6+ ♔g8 22 ♜c7 ♕f8 23 ♖e1!
 ♜d7 24 ♘a4 ♜g4 25 ♜xe7+ ♕g8 26 ♘g3
 ♜g5 27 ♜e6 ♜f3+ 28 gx3 ♘xf3 29 h3 1-0

Game 151 (continued)



10 ♜e5!

This and the following move give White a firm grip on the centre.

10...♘b7 11 f4! ♜e7

Black opts for a careful approach. In the event of 11...c5 White could try 12 ♘f3 ♜e7 13 d5! with some initiative.

12 ♘f3 c6 13 ♜c2

A developing move with the additional merit of enabling f4-f5.

13...♘xc3 14 bxc3 c5 15 f5!?

White doesn't care about recovering the pawn, and tries to create opportunities on the kingside before Black is fully developed.

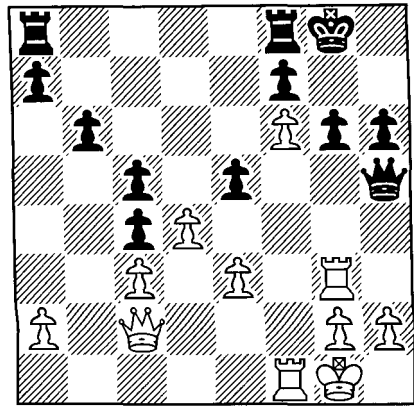
15...♘xf3 16 ♖xf3 ♜d7?!

This accelerates White's attack. 16...exf5 17 ♜xf5 ♜e6! was preferable – Bartel.

17 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 18 f6!

Of course. Now 18...g6 runs into 19 e4!, preparing ♜d2 while preventing 19...♜d5, so Black opts for active defence.

18...e5 19 ♖af1 g6 20 ♖h3 ♜g4 21 ♖g3 ♜h5



22 d5?!

After 22 ♖f5! g5 23 ♖xe5 White has a big advantage – Bartel, and 22...♜h4 23 ♖h3 ♜g4 24 ♖xe5 is similar.

22...♖fe8?

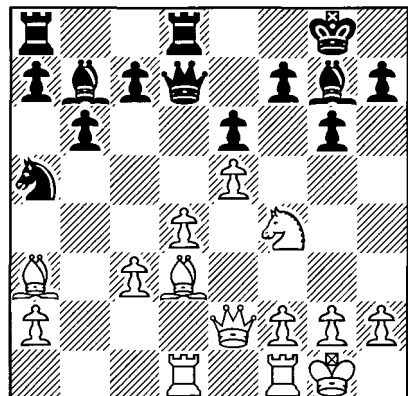
For his part, Black misses 22...e4! 23 ♜xe4 ♖ad8 with counterplay.

23 e4 ♕h7 24 ♜d2 g5 25 ♖f5 ♖g8?

25...♘g6 was the last chance – Bartel.

26 ♖xe5 ♜g6 27 ♖exg5! ♜xg5 28 ♖xg5 ♖xg5 29 d6 ♖d8 30 d7 b5 31 ♜d6 b4 32 ♜e7 bxc3 33 ♜xd8 c2 34 ♜h8+ ♕xh8 35 d8♜+ ♕h7 36 ♜d2 1-0

Game 152 (continued)



15...c5!

A strong counterstrike to soften up the enemy centre.

16 dxc5?!

White gets rid of the backward pawn on d4, but now the one on e5 turns into a target for Black's pieces. 16 ♖b5 ♜c7 17 h4 was a lesser evil, when 17...a6 18 ♖a4 cxd4 19 cxd4 ♜c4! keeps Black's advantage – Moiseev.

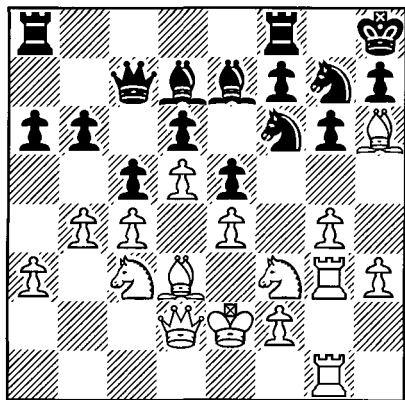
16...♜c7! 17 cxb6

Or 17 ♖fe1 ♘c6 and the pawn falls anyway.

17...♜xe5 18 ♜xe5 ♖xe5 19 ♘e2 axb6

Thanks to his sounder pawn structure and more active pieces, Black is clearly better in the endgame. There followed 20 ♖c1 ♖d5 21 ♖g5 f6 22 f4 fxe5 23 fxe5 ♘c4 24 ♖xc4 ♖xc4 25 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 26 ♖e1 ♖d2 and Korchnoi went on to win.

Game 153 (continued)



17...b5!

An excellent counterstrike, exploiting the fact that the knight on c3 is tied to the e4-pawn. 17...cxb4 18 axb4 b5 is less dynamic, when 19 cxb5 axb5 20 ♖c1 keeps the balance.

18 h4

Since 18 cxb5 axb5 19 ♖xb5? ♖xb5+ 20 ♘xb5 ♘xe4 is completely impossible, White just ignores Black's queenside expansion and carries on with his attack, even at the cost of a pawn.

18...bxc4 19 ♖c2 cxb4 20 axb4 ♖ab8

Now it is evident that Black's attack is faster.

21 h5 ♖xb4 22 hxg6 fxg6 23 ♖h1 ♖b2!

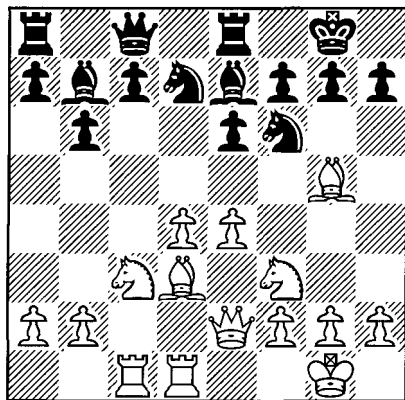
Wisely enough, both here and on the next move Black avoids 23...♘g4? 24 ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 25 ♖xg4, followed by 26 ♜h6+.

24 ♖d1 ♜a5 25 ♘g5 ♘xg4!

Ivkov has seen that receiving a check on h7 isn't a serious matter when his own attack is close to success.

26 ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 27 ♖xh7+ ♖g8 28 ♜c1 ♖xg5 29 ♜xg5 ♜a1+! 0-1

Game 154 (continued)



13 ♘b5!

The start of an excellent strategical operation, with the objective of installing a knight on d6. 13 e5 ♘d5 was rather less convincing.

13...c6

In the event of 13...c5 White can just react as in the game.

14 e5! ♖d5 15 ♜e4

15 ♙xe7 ♜xe7 16 ♘d6 first was even simpler.

15...♗f8

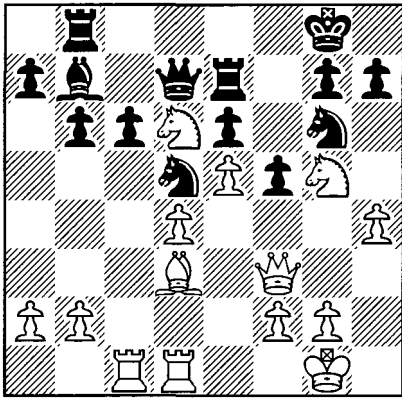
Or 15...f5 16 ♜h4! ♙f8 17 ♘d6 ♙xd6 18 exd6, followed by ♗e5, with a huge initiative.

16 ♙xe7 ♜xe7 17 ♘d6 ♜d7 18 ♗g5!

White gets on with the attack, exploiting the fact that 18...h6 now runs into 19 ♗h7 ♗g6 20 ♗xf7! ♜xf7 21 ♜xg6 with an overwhelming position.

18...♗g6 19 h4! f5 20 ♜f3 ♜b8?

Overlooking the enemy threat. 20...♗xh4 21 ♜h5 h6 22 ♜xh4 hxg5 23 ♜xg5 doesn't help Black's defence much either, so in this case 20...♗f8 was the least of the evils.



21 ♗xh7! ♗xe5

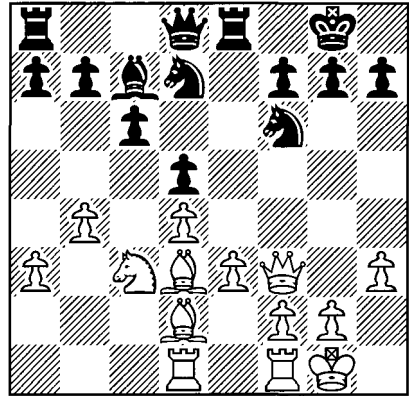
21...♗xh7 is met by 22 ♜h5+ and White wins easily.

22 dxe5 ♗xh7 23 ♗xf5!

This simple shot decides the game at once.

23...♜f7 24 ♘d6+ ♗g8 25 ♗xf7 ♜xf7 26 ♙h7+ ♗f8 27 ♜xf7+ ♗xf7 28 ♙e4 1-0

Game 155 (continued)



14...♜e7!

Preparing ...♗e4 to seize the centre.

15 ♜fe1 ♗e4! 16 g3 ♗df6 17 ♗g2 a5!

A pinprick on the queenside, just when White had reinforced her defences on the opposite flank.

18 ♙xe4

The pawn that now emerges on e4 will enhance Black's attack, but after 18 ♜e2 axb4 19 axb4 ♜e6!, with ideas like ...♗g5, White is also under pressure.

18...dxe4 19 ♜e2 h5!

Preparing ...h5-h4 to soften up the h2-b8 diagonal.

20 h4 ♙d6 21 ♜b1 axb4 22 axb4 ♜e6!

Aiming at the light square weaknesses in White's camp.

23 b5 c5 24 b6

Or 24 dxc5 ♙xc5, with the plan ...♜f5 and ...♗g4.

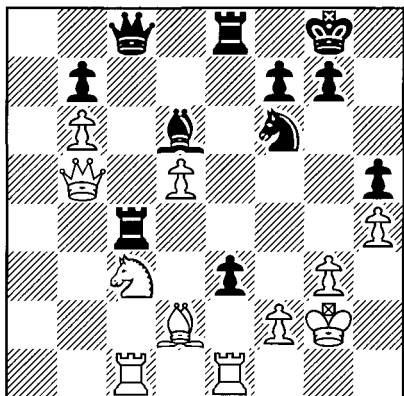
24...cxd4 25 exd4 ♜ac8 26 ♜b5 ♜g4 27 ♜e2 ♜e6 28 ♜b5?!

28 ♜b5, followed by ♜g5, seems preferable, interfering with the enemy attack.

28...♜c4!

Intercepting the white queen from the kingside defence.

29 d5 ♖c8 30 ♜bc1 e3!



A key move that destroys the white king's shelter and brings the rook on c4 into the attack.

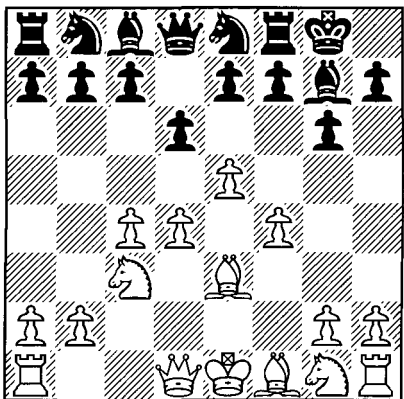
31 ♜xe3

31 ♙xe3? failed to 31...♜xc3, while on 31 fxe3 there follows 31...♜xh4! 32 gxh4 ♖g4+ in similar fashion to the game, with White soon receiving mate.

31...♜xe3 32 fxe3 ♜xh4! 33 gxh4 ♖g4+ 0-1

In view of 34 ♙f2 ♙g3+ 35 ♙g2 ♙xh4+ 36 ♙h2 ♖g3+ 37 ♙h1 ♖f3+ with mate to come, White resigned.

Game 156 (continued)



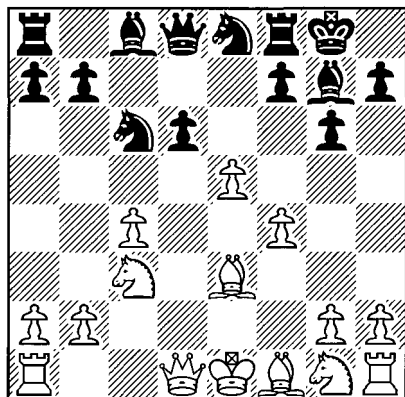
7...c5!

Softening up White's centre before it gets support from its fellow pieces. Black might lose a pawn in the process, but once the position is opened his superior development will be a telling factor. In contrast, 7...dxe5?! 8 dxe5 plays into White's hands.

8 dxc5

After 8 ♘f3 cxd4 9 ♖xd4 ♘c6 10 ♖d2 ♙g4 Black grabs the initiative.

8...♘c6 9 cxd6 exd6



10 ♘e4?!

Moving that knight again seems rather dubious in this tense position. 10 ♘f3 was more natural, when 10...♙e6 or 10...♙g4, followed by ...♖a5, keeps Black's initiative.

10...♙f5!

Development with tempo. 10...dxe5?! 11 ♖xd8 ♘xd8 12 ♙c5 was less clear.

11 ♘g3

Or 11 ♘d6 ♘xd6 12 ♖xd6 ♖e8!, preparing ...f7-f6 with a strong initiative.

11...♙e6 12 ♘f3 ♖c7 13 ♖b1

Awkward, but after 13 exd6 ♘xd6 Black's compensation is also excellent.

13...dxe5 14 f5 e4! 15 fxe6

15 ♘xe4 ♙xf5 or 15 ♖xe4 ♙xb2 is not much better.

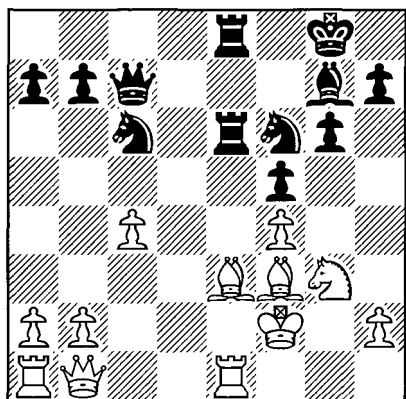
15...exf3 16 gxf3 f5!

The e6-pawn should be recaptured by... the rook!

17 f4 ♖f6 18 ♙e2 ♜fe8 19 ♙f2

After 19 0-0 ♜xe6 20 ♙c5 ♜d8 White's game is also very difficult.

19...♜xe6 20 ♜e1 ♜ae8 21 ♙f3



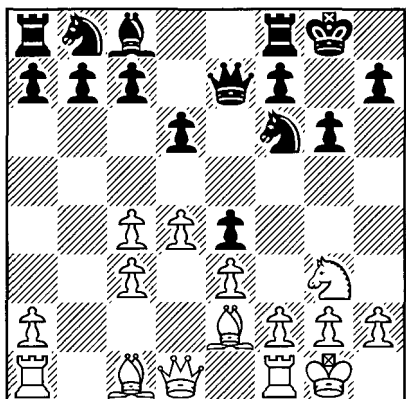
21...♜xe3!

The start of an elegant combination.

22 ♜xe3 ♜xe3 23 ♙xe3 ♜xf4+! 0-1

In view of 24 ♙xf4 ♙h6 mate, or 24 ♙f2 ♙g4+ 25 ♙g2 ♙e3+ 26 ♙f2 ♙d4.

Game 157 (continued)



11 f3!

A strong pawn break that undermines Black's central control and clears the f-file for the major pieces.

11...h5?

A useless move since the knight on g3 is about to leave the board anyway. With 11...exf3 12 ♙xf3 h5 Black could still get a decent game; e.g. 13 e4 h4 14 ♙h1 ♙h7!, heading for g5.

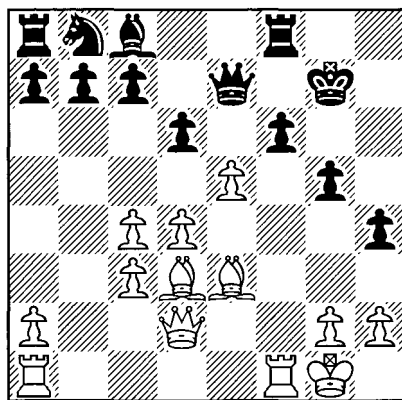
12 ♙xe4 ♙xe4 13 fxe4 ♜xe4 14 ♙d3! ♜e7 15 e4

Thanks to his lead in development and Black's weak kingside, White is already much better.

15...♙g7 16 ♙f4 f6 17 ♜d2 g5?!

The passive 17...♜h8 was called for, although Black's position remains difficult.

18 ♙e3 h4 19 e5!



Of course. Relying on his huge lead in development, White opens the position towards the enemy king.

19...dxe5 20 dxe5 ♜xe5 21 ♙d4 ♜a5 22 c5!

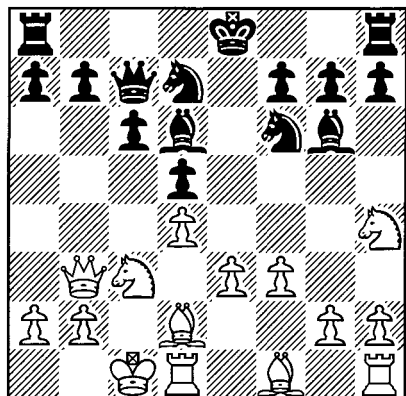
With the threat 23 ♜xg5+.

22...♙h6 23 ♙xf6 ♜xc5+ 24 ♙d4 ♜d6 25 ♜xf8 ♜xf8 26 ♜f1

"Never again would I be able to win games so easily" – Gligoric.

26...♜e7 27 ♜f6+ ♙h5 28 ♙e2+ 1-0

Game 158 (continued)



12 e4!

Of course, creating a strong pawn centre.

12...dxe4 13 ♖xg6 hxg6 14 fxe4

Unable to prevent e4-e5, Black is already in serious trouble.

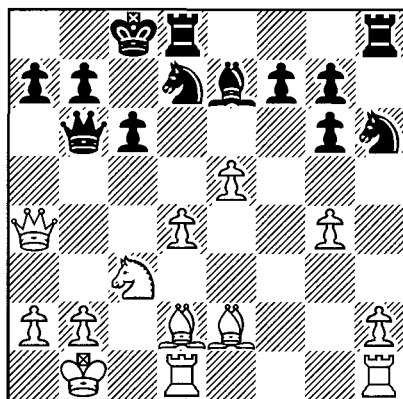
14...♗g4

Or 14...♙f4 15 e5 ♘h5 16 ♙c4 with strong pressure.

15 e5 ♙e7 16 ♙e2! ♗h6

After 16...♗f2 17 ♜hf1 ♗xd1 18 ♜xf7+ ♗d8 19 ♜xg7 ♜f8 20 ♜xd1 White has a crushing advantage.

17 g4 0-0-0 18 ♘b1 ♜b6 19 ♜a4!



With certain prospects for an attack, White avoids the queen's exchange. Now Black should probably have copied his opponent's previous move by 19...♘b8, making life a bit safer for his king. Instead, he tries to free himself by a knight manoeuvre, thereby forgetting about the potential of the white pawn centre.

19...♗f8? 20 d5! ♙b4

Or 20...cxd5?! 21 ♙xh6, followed by 22 ♗xd5 etc.

21 dxc6 bxc6 22 ♗d5!

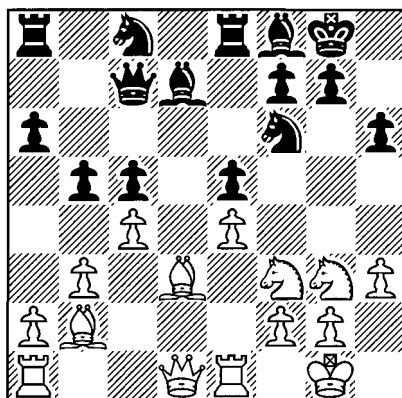
A temporary sacrifice that opens the gates to Black's king. 22 ♙e3!? was also strong, intending 22...♜xe3 23 ♜xc6+.

22...♜xd5 23 ♙xb4 ♜xd1+ 24 ♜xd1 ♗e6 25 ♙a5 ♜b7 26 ♗d6 ♘b8 27 ♜d1!

White doesn't content herself with the c6-pawn, but goes for a final attack.

27...c5 28 ♜d7 ♜c6 29 ♙f3 ♜a6 30 ♜b3+ 1-0

Game 159 (continued)



20 ♗f1!

Heading for d5 in order to seize the centre. Interestingly, the same idea had already been used by Tal: 19...♜ad8 20 ♜c2 b4 21 ♗f1! ♗h5 22 ♗e3 ♗f4 23 ♙f1 ♜d6 24 h4

♟f6?! 25 g3! ♞d3 26 ♙xd3 ♜xf3 27 a3 bxa3 28 ♞xa3 ♙c8 29 ♙e2 ♟f6 30 ♞d5 ♞xd5 31 cxd5! c4 32 bxc4 ♙xa3 33 ♙xa3, followed by c4-c5 with a huge advantage, M.Tal-I.Zaitsev, USSR Championship, Alma Ata 1968.

20...♞a7 21 ♞e3 b4

Since 21...♞c6? fails to 22 cxb5 – Golubev, Black must waste a tempo on securing the b-pawn.

22 ♞d5 ♟d6

Not 22...♞xd5? 23 exd5 ♙d6 24 ♞h4 with a strong initiative for White.

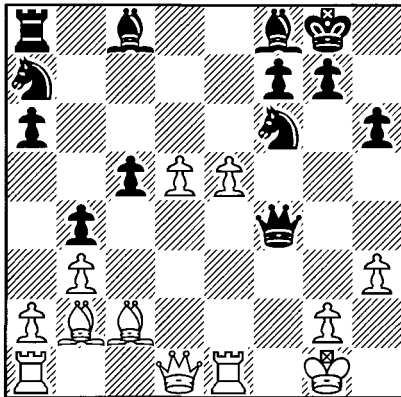
23 ♙c2 ♙c8?!

23...♞c6 was more logical, reintegrating the knight into the battle, although the sacrifice 24 ♞xe5!? ♞xe5 25 f4 seems rather promising for White, just like in the game.

24 ♞xe5! ♞xe5 25 f4! ♞xd5

The only move, since 25...♞e8? 26 e5 is disastrous for Black.

26 cxd5 ♟xf4 27 e5



Despite his material advantage Black is in trouble due to White's great activity. At this point the counter-sacrifice 27...c4!? 28 exf6 c3 was perhaps worth a try, since Black's next move exposes him to a strong attack.

27...♞h7?! 28 ♟d3 ♞g5 29 ♞f1! ♟h4 30 e6! ♞b5

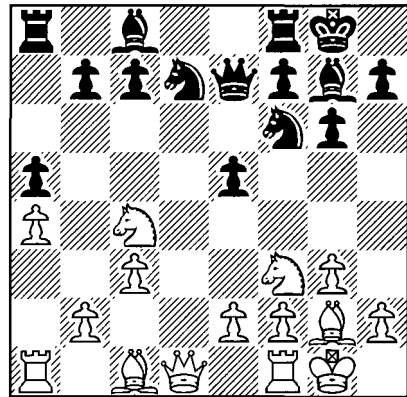
Or 30...f6 31 ♞ae1, winning – Golubev.

31 ♞xf7! ♞d6 32 ♟g6! ♞xh3+

On 32...♞xf7 there follows 33 exf7+ ♟h8 34 ♟xg7+! ♙xg7 35 f8♟ mate – Golubev.

33 ♟f1 ♞f5 34 ♞xf8+! 1-0

Game 160 (continued)



11 b3!

Preparing ♙a3 with increased pressure on the enemy camp.

11...e4

After 11...♞d8 12 ♙a3 ♟e8 13 ♟c2, preparing ♞ad1, White keeps the initiative; e.g. 13...♞d5 14 ♞ad1 ♞7b6 15 ♞cxe5! ♙xe5 16 ♞xe5 ♟xe5 17 c4 ♙f5 18 e4 ♙g4 19 cxd5! ♙xd1 20 ♞xd1 with a big edge in D.Garcia Illundain-D.Del Rey, Saragossa 1998.

12 ♙a3 ♞c5

Or 12...c5 13 ♞d4!, heading for the great square on b5.

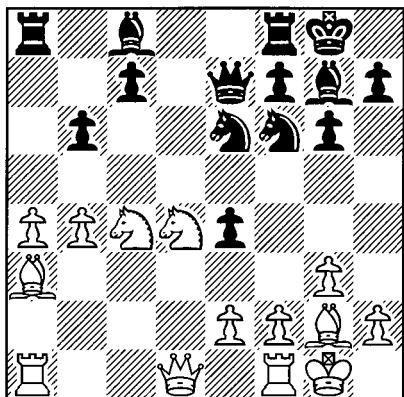
13 ♞d4 b6 14 b4!

Clearing the a3-f8 diagonal for the bishop.

14...axb4 15 cxb4 ♞e6

Since 15...♞xa4? loses material after 16

b5 ♖c5 17 ♙xc5, Black has to accept the entrance of the other knight at c6.



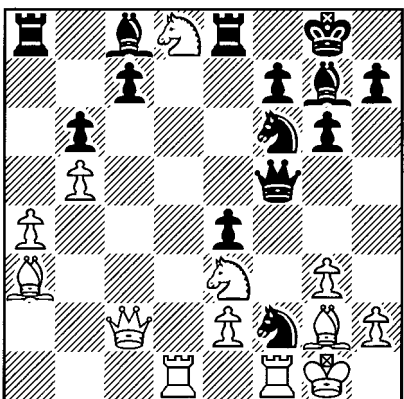
16 ♗c6 ♜d7 17 b5 ♞e8 18 ♜c2!

Simple and strong, preparing ♞ad1.

18...♗g5 19 ♞ad1 ♗h3+ 20 ♖h1 ♜e6 21 ♗d8

Tempting, though the prophylactic 21 ♗e3 might have been even stronger.

21...♜f5 22 ♗e3! ♗xf2+ 23 ♖g1



23...♗h3+?

Black defended very well up to this point, but here he goes astray. After 23...♗xd1! 24 ♗xf5 ♙xf5 25 ♞xd1 ♞axd8 the game is far from over.

24 ♙xh3 ♜g5

Or 24...♜xh3 25 ♜c6! with double threats at a8 and f6.

25 ♜b3!

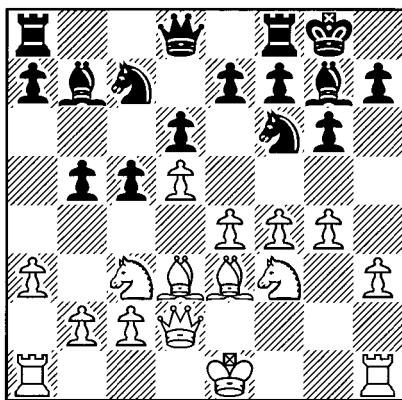
Defence and attack at the same time. The rest is easy.

25...♙xh3 26 ♜xf7+ ♖h8 27 ♜xe8+! ♗xe8

28 ♗f7+ ♖g8 29 ♗xg5 ♙xf1 30 ♖xf1 1-0

Having a piece less, Black resigned.

Game 161 (continued)



12...e6!

This central counterstrike practically refutes White's flank advance. 12...b4 is somewhat less precise due to 13 axb4 cxb4 14 ♗e2, when 14...e6?! fails to 15 ♜xb4.

13 dxe6 fxe6 14 0-0-0

This won't end well, but after 14 g5 ♗h5 White's position is also starting to crack.

14...a5!

There was nothing wrong with 14...c4 or 14...b4 either, but the text is more powerful.

15 g5 ♗h5 16 ♜h2 c4 17 ♙e2 b4!

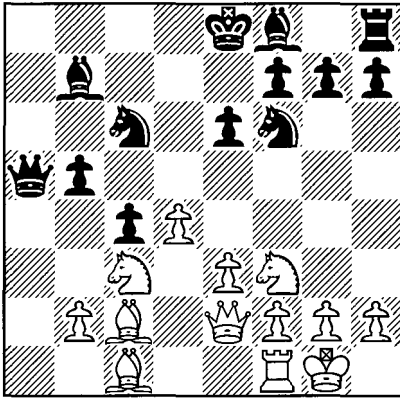
Black's attack is almost automatic, and the rest is easy.

18 ♗a4 bxa3 19 bxa3 ♙xe4 20 ♗b6 ♗d5!

Simplest, clearing the b-file.

21 ♗xd5 exd5 22 ♖d2 ♜d7 23 ♖e1 ♞ae8 0-1

Game 162 (continued)



14 e4!

The central pawns start rolling before Black makes it to castling. 14 ♖d2?! ♙b4 was less promising.

14...♗d7

Perhaps 14...b4!? was more to the point, although after 15 d5! bxc3 16 dxc6 ♙xc6 17 ♗d4!?, followed by ♜xc4, White keeps the initiative.

15 d5! ♗d8

On 15...♗b4 White can react in the same way as in the game.

16 ♗d4 b4 17 ♗cb5 e5 18 ♜xc4!

Of course. Now Black's king is under a big cloud. 18 d6! in the same spirit was possible as well.

18...exd4 19 ♗c7+ ♙e7 20 e5!

A clever pawn sacrifice to clear more space for the attack.

20...♗xe5 21 ♜e1 f6 22 d6+! ♗xd6

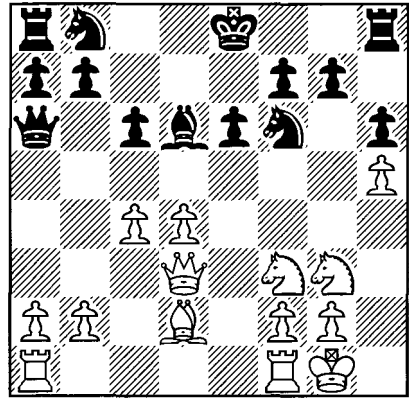
Again Black has to accept the gift, since 22...♗d7 runs into 23 ♙f5+ ♗xd6 24 ♗b5+ ♗e7 25 ♜xe5+! fxe5 26 ♙g5+ etc.

23 ♗b5+ ♜xb5

Or 23...♗d7 24 ♙f5+ with similar play as in the previous note.

24 ♜xb5 ♗c7 25 ♜a5+ 1-0

Game 163 (continued)



14 ♗e5!

A typical idea in such structures. On e5 the knight dominates the centre and facilitates an attack on the kingside.

14...c5?!

A risky counterstrike given Black's lagging development. 14...♙xe5 15 dxe5 ♗fd7 16 ♗e4! is also dangerous for him, whereas both 14...♗bd7 and 14...0-0 looks like safer choices, with just a slight edge for White after 15 ♙c3.

15 ♜fe1!

Supporting the central knight and getting ready for future actions on the kingside.

15...0-0 16 ♗e4!

A standard attacking method – the exchange of defending pieces.

16...♙xe5?

This will just help the white rook join the attack with decisive effect. While 16...♗bd7? failed to 17 ♗xd7 ♗xd7 18 dxc5, correct was 16...♗xe4 17 ♜xe4 cxd4 18 ♜xd4 ♙xe5 19 ♜xe5 ♗c6! 20 ♜g3 ♗e7, heading for f5, with chances for a successful defence.

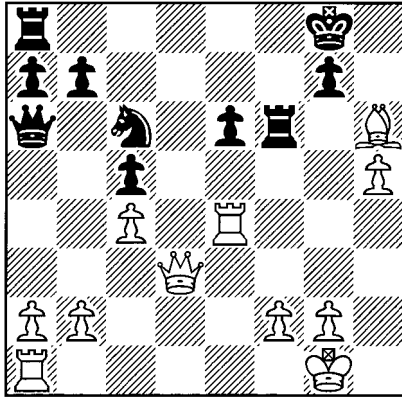
17 dxe5 ♗xe4 18 ♜xe4 ♗c6

Too late, but White's following blow was difficult to parry anyway.

19 ♖xh6! f5

Or 19...gxh6 20 ♖g4+ ♖h8 21 ♖e3! ♖h7 22 ♖e4+ ♖h8 23 ♖f4 ♖h7 24 ♖f6 ♖g8 25 ♖xf7+ ♖h8 26 ♖g6! etc.

20 exf6 ♖xf6



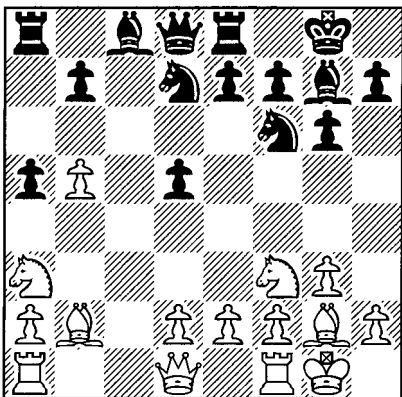
21 ♖g4!

An elegant and well-calculated follow-up.

21...♖xh6 22 ♖d7 ♖h7 23 h6! g5 24 ♖xe6+ ♖f8 25 ♖f6+ ♖e8 26 ♖g6+ 1-0

In view of 26...♖f7 27 h7, Black resigned.

Game 164 (continued)



11 ♖c1!

Seizing the open file and preparing ♖c2-c7. As for Black's intended pawn centre, it might actually become a burden for her later on. In contrast, 11 ♖e5?! ♖e4! 12 d4 ♖xe5 13 dx5 ♖e6 leads to rather unclear play.

11...e5 12 d3 b6?!

Probably 12...♖f8 at once was better, avoiding the weak square on c6.

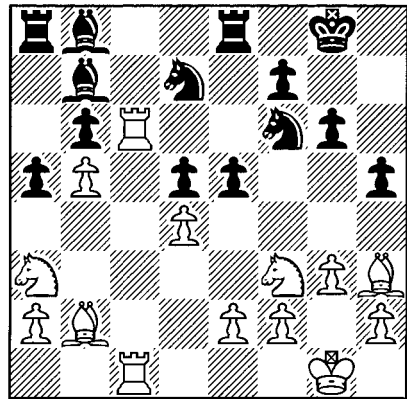
13 ♖c2! ♖f8 14 ♖c7

Without queens on the board, White's guerrilla strategy will be easier to conduct.

14...♖xc7 15 ♖xc7 ♖d6 16 ♖c6 ♖b8 17 ♖fc1 ♖b7 18 ♖h3!

An elegant way of increasing the pressure at Black's camp. Now after 18...♖xc6 19 bxc6 ♖c5 20 ♖b5 ♖e7 21 ♖a3 White's activity and strong passed pawn more than compensate for the exchange, so Lujan instead prepares ...♖g4 to limit the annoying bishop.

18...h5 19 d4!



A typical counterstrike softening up the dark squares, familiar from the ancient game R.Retzi-F.Yates, New York 1924.

19...♖g4?!

Curiously, from now on it is very difficult to defend Black's position. 19...e4?! 20

♞e5 doesn't favour her either, so the pragmatic 19...exd4 20 ♟xd4 ♞g4 seems like a better choice, accepting an inferior pawn structure in order to liberate the pieces.

20 dxe5 ♟xc6 21 bxc6 ♞c5 22 ♞b5! ♜c8

There was the threat of 23 c7, and 22...♟xe5 failed to 23 ♞xe5 ♞xe5 24 ♟xe5 ♜xe5 25 c7 ♜ee8 26 ♞d6 etc.

23 ♟g2!

White shifts his focus to the long diagonal.

23...♜xc6 24 h3 ♞h6 25 ♞g5!

More precise than 25 ♞fd4?! ♟xe5 26 ♞xc6 ♟xb2.

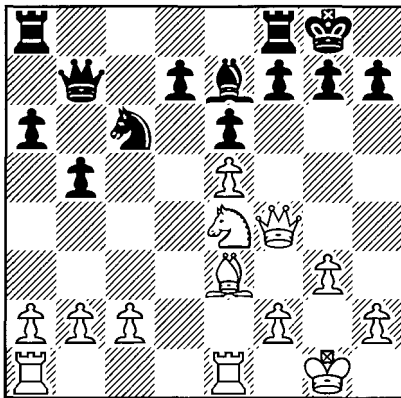
25...♜c8 26 ♟xd5 ♜a7

If 26...♜a6, then both 27 e6 and 27 ♟b7 win for White.

27 ♞xa7 ♟xa7 28 e6! 1-0

In view of more material losses, Black resigned.

Game 165 (continued)



15...f6!

By this pawn break Black fights against the enemy centre and clears the f-file for a future attack. 15...♞c7?! was less promising due to 16 ♟c5 ♟xc5 17 ♞xc5 ♞e7 18 b4!.

16 exf6 ♟xf6 17 ♞xf6+ ♜xf6 18 ♞d6?!

White prepares ♜ad1, but Black's reply finishes off this idea at once. 18 ♞e4 was correct, when 18...d5 19 ♞g2 ♞e5 20 ♟f4 ♞g6 21 ♟g5 ♜f5, preparing ...e5-e4 and ...♞e5, keeps the initiative.

18...♜f5!

With the dual intention of 19...♞e5 and 19...♜d5.

19 ♟f4?

Now the knight enters on d4 instead with strong effect. 19 f4 ♜d5 20 ♞a3 was more solid.

19...♜d5 20 ♞a3

Or 20 ♞c7? ♞xc7 21 ♟xc7 ♜c8 with ...♞e5 or ...♞d4 next.

20...♞d4 21 ♞d3 ♜f8 22 ♜e4?

Overlooking Black's next move. The last chance was 22 ♞e4, when 22...g5 23 c3 ♞c6 24 ♟e3 ♞e5 keeps the initiative.

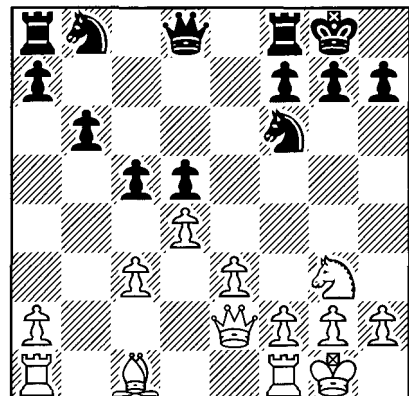
22...e5! 23 c4

Both 23 ♟xe5 and 23 ♜d1 lose straight away to 23...♞f3+, while 23 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 24 ♞xd4 ♜e2 is also hopeless for White – Atlas.

23...bxc4 24 ♞xc4 ♜c8 25 ♞a4 ♞d6! 0-1

In view of the imminent material losses, White resigned.

Game 166 (continued)



13 f3!

The plan of creating a pawn centre remains viable in positions with less material on the board.

13...♖c6 14 ♔b2 ♜d7

Or 14...♗e8 15 e4!, when 15...dxe4 16 fxe4 cxd4 17 cxd4 ♘xd4?! fails to 18 ♜c4! ♘e6 19 ♙xf6 gxf6 20 ♘h5 with a strong initiative.

15 e4! cxd4 16 cxd4 ♜e6

Just as in the previous note, the central expansion is tactically justified; i.e. 16...dxe4 17 fxe4 ♘xd4 18 ♜f2! ♘e6 (or 18...♗ad8 19 ♗ad1) 19 ♙xf6 gxf6 20 ♘f5! ♘h8 21 ♜b2 with a decisive attack – Watson. By the text Black instead prepares a light square blockade.

17 e5! ♘d7 18 ♘h5

After 18 f4?! f5 Black nears his goal.

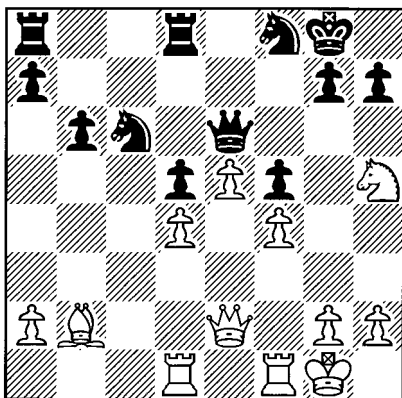
18...♗fd8 19 ♗ad1

The last piece joins the battle. 19 ♘f4?! ♜h6 20 ♘xd5 ♘dxe5! etc was less convincing.

19...♘f8 20 f4

Seeing that he can challenge Black's blockade on the next move, White finally advances his pawn majority.

20...f5



21 g4! ♘g6?!

21...fxg4? 22 f5 was terrible for Black, so perhaps he should have tried 21...♘e7 22 ♙a3 ♘fg6 23 ♘g3 ♗f8!? 24 gxf5 ♗xf5 25 ♘xf5 ♘xf5 in Petrosian style, as after the text White breaks through on the kingside.

22 gxf5 ♜xf5 23 ♙c1 ♗f8 24 ♘g3 ♜h3 25 f5

Apart from its strategic benefits, this advance leaves Black's queen trapped on h3.

25...♘h4 26 ♗d3! ♗ae8 27 ♔b2

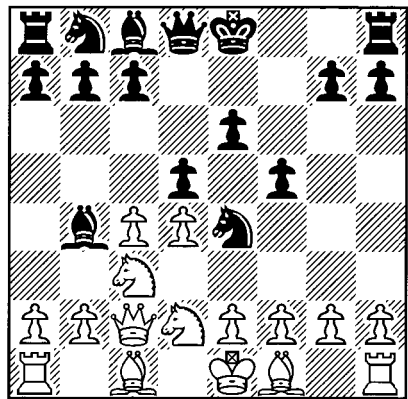
The immediate 27 ♘h5 was also strong, but White is in no hurry.

27...♘b4 28 ♗b3 ♘xa2 29 ♗a3 ♗c8

Or 29...♘b4 30 ♘h5 etc.

30 ♗xa2 ♘xf5 31 ♗a3 ♘h4? 32 ♘f5! 1-0

Game 167 (continued)



7 ♘dxe4!

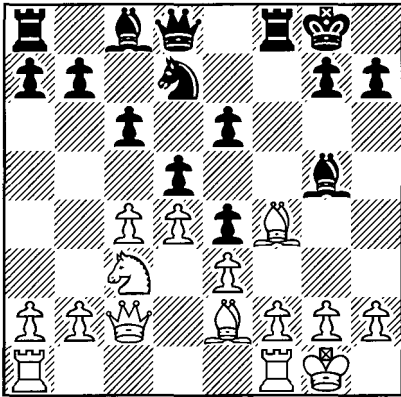
White eliminates the active enemy knight, and prepares a swift development with ♙f4, e2-e3, ♙e2 and 0-0, after which he will be able to strike at the enemy centre with f2-f3. Obviously 7 f3?? ♜h4+ was less suitable.

7...fxe4 8 ♙f4! 0-0 9 e3 c6

The active 9...c5 can be met by 10 a3! ♙xc3+ 11 bxc3, keeping the central control.

10 ♖e2 ♜d7 11 a3 ♖e7 12 0-0 ♖g5

A logical attempt to swap the active enemy bishop, but White has a strong reply prepared.



13 f3!

A powerful pawn break in the same spirit as in Van Wely-Karjakin (Game 123), gaining central control and clearing the f-file towards Black's underdeveloped camp.

13... ♖xf4 14 exf4 ♜xf4

Or 14...e3 15 g3! dxc4 16 ♖xc4 ♜b6 17 ♖d3 and the e3-pawn is doomed.

15 fxe4 ♜xf1+ 16 ♜xf1 e5?

When you are behind in development, don't open the position! The restrained 16...dxc4 17 ♖xc4 ♜b6 18 ♖f2! ♖e7!, followed by ...♖d7, was called for.

17 ♖d2!

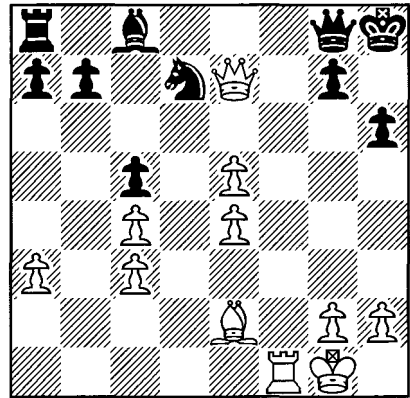
The queen joins the battle for the kingside. By now Black's defensive task is very difficult.

17...c5 18 dxe5 d4 19 ♖f4! dxc3 20 ♖f7+ ♜h8 21 bxc3!

Simple and strong, keeping all the threats. In contrast, after 21 e6 ♜f6 22 e7 ♖g8 things get more complicated; e.g. 23 ♜xf6 ♖e6! 24 ♖xg8+ ♜xg8 25 ♜xe6? c2!.

21... ♖g8 22 ♖e7 h6

Intending 23 e6 ♜f6 24 e5 ♜h7, but Alekhine has a stronger move prepared.



23 ♖h5!

Mobilization is another basic attacking method. Now Black can hardly move.

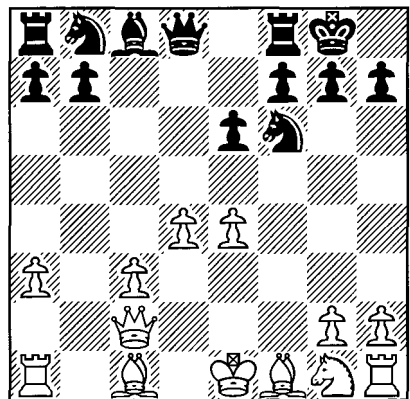
23...a5 24 e6 g6

Or 24...♜f6 25 ♖f7 ♖h7 26 ♜xf6! gxf6 27 ♖f8+.

25 exd7 ♖xd7 26 ♜f7! 1-0

In view of the coming queen check.

Game 168 (continued)



10...e5!

A strong advance that destabilizes White before he is properly developed.

11 d5

Leaving Black with a stronghold on c5, but it was hard to find anything better; e.g. 11 ♖f3 exd4 12 cxd4 ♜e8 13 ♙d3 ♗c6 14 ♙e3 ♙f5! and White loses a central pawn.

11...♗bd7 12 ♙d3

12 ♗h3 ♗c5 13 ♖f2 seems more solid, when Black can choose between the simple 13...♗g4 14 ♗xg4 ♙xg4 15 ♙e3 ♜c8, keeping some advantage, and the more complex 13...♗fxe4 14 ♗xe4 ♙f5 15 ♜f2! ♗xe4 16 ♜xf5 ♜h4+ etc – Golod.

12...♗c5 13 ♙g5

There is nothing better; e.g. 13 ♙e3 ♗fxe4! 14 ♙xe4 ♜h4+ or 13 ♖f3 ♗fxe4! 14 ♙xe4 f5 regaining the piece with a clear advantage – Rozentalis.

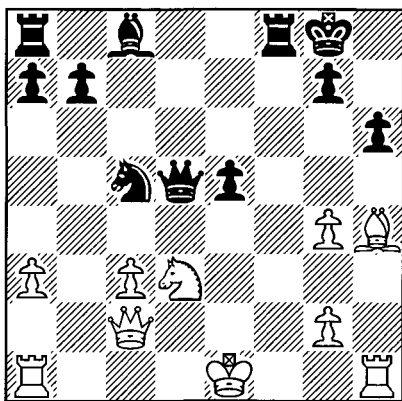
13...h6 14 ♙h4 ♜d6 15 ♗e2?!

This runs into a strong reply. 15 ♖f3 ♗xe4! again works well for Black, so the uninspiring 15 ♙xf6 ♜xf6 16 ♖f3 had to be played either here or on the previous move.

15...♗g4!

With the double idea of ...♗e3 and ...f7-f5. All of a sudden, White's position is very difficult to defend.

16 ♗c1 f5! 17 h3 fxe4 18 hxg4 exd3 19 ♗xd3 ♜xd5



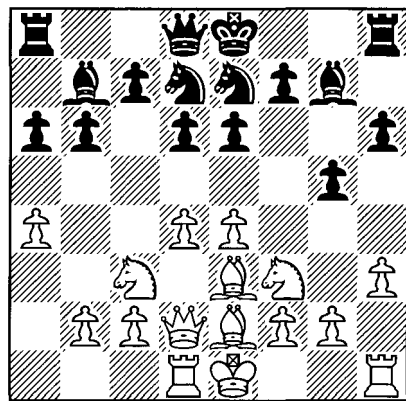
With an extra pawn, safer king and superior pawn structure, Black is winning.

20 ♗f2 ♙xg4! 21 0-0

Or 21 ♗xg4 ♗d3+ and the next check is decisive. The text leaves Black with a second extra pawn, making the win a matter of technique.

21...♙f5 22 ♜e2 ♜ae8 23 ♜fe1 b6 24 a4 ♙c8 25 ♜ed1 ♜c6 26 ♜c4+ ♗h8 27 ♗d3 ♙b7 28 ♜d2 ♙a6 29 ♗b4 ♙xc4 30 ♗xc6 ♗b3 0-1

Game 169 (continued)



12...f5!

An excellent pawn break that undermines the enemy centre while clearing the f-file and the long diagonal for Black's pieces.

13 exf5

If 13 d5, then 13...♙xc3! 14 ♜xc3 e5 is rather strong, but 13 ♜d3 might have been a lesser evil – Hillarp.

13...♗xf5

Stronger than 13...exf5 14 d5! f4 15 ♙d4 etc.

14 ♜d3 0-0 15 ♙c1?

Wasting a vital tempo. 15 0-0 was better, not fearing the exchange on e3.

15...c5!

The story is repeated on the opposite flank. I guess that anyone who sees this game will be tempted to try out the Hippopotamus.

16 dxc5

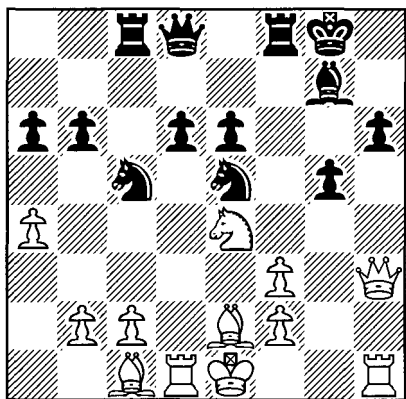
There is nothing better, since 16 d5 $\text{xc3}+$ 17 xc3 xd5 leaves White without any compensation at all for the pawn – Hillarp.

16...c5 17 c4 c8 18 h4?!

Admittedly Black is having a dream position, but this desperate attack will just make his task easier. 18 O-O must have been better, when 18... d7 , with the idea of ... e4 , keeps the initiative.

18...xf3 19 gxf3 h4 20 g4 g6 21 e4 e5 22 h3?

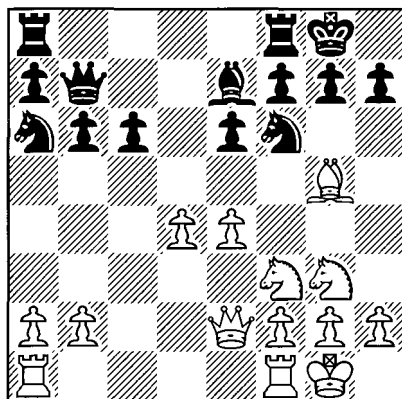
A tactical error, though after 22 g3 xe4 23 xe4 xc2 Black is also much better – Hillarp.



22...g4! 23 h5 h4 24 fxe4 f6!

With double threats at f2 and c2, Black is winning. The game concluded 25 h2 xc2 26 hx6 $\text{xe2}+$! 27 xe2 $\text{f3}+$ 28 e1 g3 29 gx7 $\text{gxh2}!$? 30 $\text{h8}+$ f7 31 $\text{xf8}+$ g6 32 d2 xf8 33 xf8 $\text{f3}+$ 34 e3 g1 35 xd6 h1 and here White resigned.

Game 170 (continued)



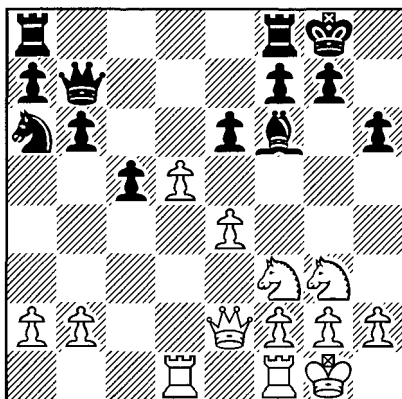
14 d5!

An unexpected blow, based on the fact that both 14... $\text{cxd5}?$ and 14... $\text{exd5}?$ drop a piece after 15 e5. In contrast, 14 e5?! d5 leads nowhere for White.

14...c5 15 ad1

Another good option was 15 d6!? d8 16 xf6 xf6 17 e5 with a huge strategic plus.

15...h6 16 xf6 xf6



17 h5!

An unpleasant move for Black, who now has to hand over the e5-square in order to keep her kingside pawn structure intact.

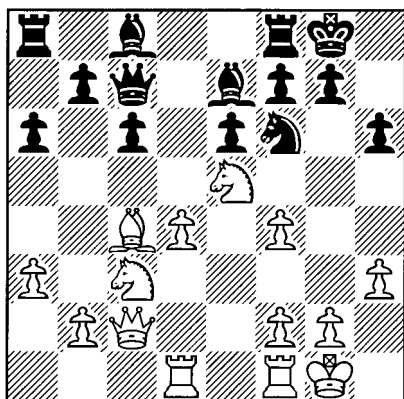
17...♙d8 18 dxe6 fxe6 19 ♖e5!

With the irresistible threat of 20 ♖d7.

19...♙f6 20 ♖d7 ♜b8 21 ♘g4 ♙d4 22 e5! 1-0

22 ♜xa6 ♜e8 was less convincing. After the text Black resigned, seeing that after 22...♖f7 23 ♘xh6+ gxh6 24 ♖f6+ ♙f8 25 ♜g4 she is soon mated.

Game 171 (continued)



15 ♙a2!

With the centre completely dominated by the strong knight on e5, Kramnik initiates a kingside attack.

15...♙d7 16 ♙b1 ♙e8?

16...♖fd8 was correct, preparing the evacuation of the king; e.g. 17 ♘e4 ♙f8 18 ♘xf6 ♙xf6 19 ♜h7 ♙e7 and Black is still alive.

17 d5!

An aesthetic blow, which exploits several tactical motifs at the same time. Now both 17...cxd5? and 17...exd5? run into 18 ♘xd5! with material gains, besides which there appears the threat of 18 d6 ♙xd6 19 ♘g4, a fact that explains Black's next move in the game.

17...♖d8 18 ♖fe1

Simple and strong, bringing the last piece into the battle.

18...♙h8 19 dxe6

Black was ready for 19...cxd5, so White finally fixes a favourable pawn structure.

19...♖xd1 20 ♖xd1 fxe6 21 ♘e4 g6 22 ♘c5! ♙xc5

A positional capitulation, but 22...♜c8 loses material after 23 ♘xg6+! ♙xg6 24 ♜xg6 ♙xc5 25 ♜xh6+ ♙g8 26 ♜g5+ ♙h8 27 ♜xc5 – Kramnik.

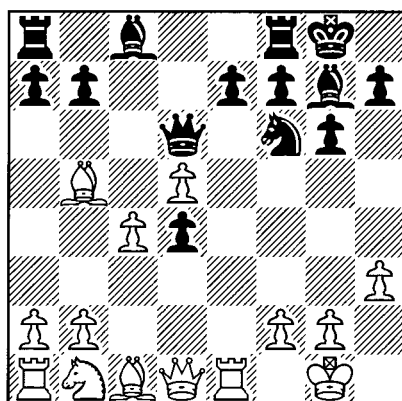
23 ♜xc5 ♖g8 24 ♙a2! ♙g7

There is nothing better; e.g. 24...♙f7? 25 ♜d6! or 24...♘d5 25 ♙xd5 exd5 26 ♖xd5.

25 ♙xe6 ♖f8 26 ♘d7! 1-0

Interestingly, this is the first move with the knight since it settled on e5. 26...♘xd7 27 ♖xd7+! ♙xd7 28 ♜e7+ is hopeless.

Game 172 (continued)



12...a6!

Preparing ...b7-b5 in order to destroy the enemy centre.

13 ♙a4 b5! 14 cxb5 axb5 15 ♙xb5 ♜xd5

Already at this point Black is much better – he has two mobile pawns against none in the centre, and White is far from completing his development.

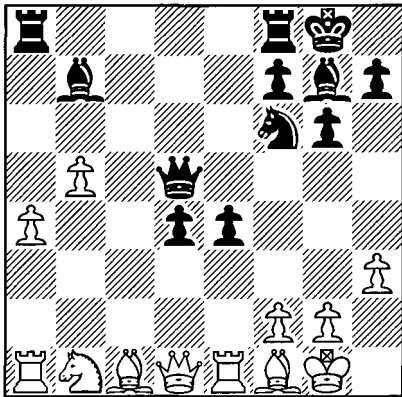
16 a4

Obviously 16 ♖e2 e5 17 ♖f3? failed to 17...e4.

16...♙b7 17 ♖f1 e5!

The central pawns start rolling, supported by both fianchettoed bishops. White now opts for a similar idea on the queenside; unfortunately, his pawn majority will play a less important role until the end-game phase is reached, and Black probably won't let that happen.

18 b4 e4 19 b5



19...♗d7!

A move with several virtues: the a1-h8 diagonal is cleared for the bishop, the knight is improved, and a future ...f5-f4 is enabled.

20 ♖a3?

A weird move, refusing to develop the minor pieces. With 20 ♙b2 ♗c5 21 ♗d2 White could still put up some resistance.

20...d3

On top of all his other advantages, Black now controls the a1-h8 diagonal, and his position plays itself.

21 ♗d2 f5 22 ♖b3 ♖fc8!

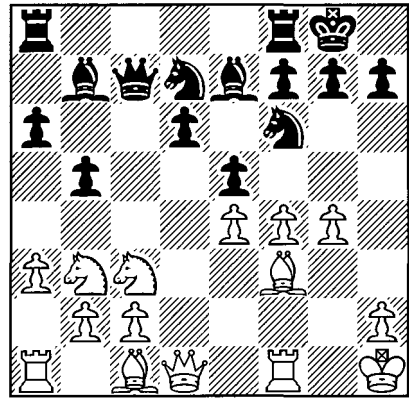
The last piece joins the battle with devastating effect.

23 ♖xd5+ ♙xd5 24 a5 ♙f8 25 ♖a4 ♗b6!

Finishing off any of White's illusions with the passed pawns.

26 ♖a1 ♙b4 27 a6 ♖c2 28 ♖d1 ♙c3 29 ♖a3 ♖xc1 30 ♖xc1 ♙xd2 0-1

Game 173 (continued)



13...d5!

A thematic counterstrike in the Open Sicilian, which makes White's kingside attack less likely to succeed. The pawn possibly lost in this operation is usually well invested.

14 exd5

Black is also fine after 14 g5 dxe4!? 15 ♙g2 ♗e8, followed by ...♗d6.

14...e4! 15 ♙g2

After 15 ♗xe4?! ♗xe4 16 ♙xe4 ♗f6 17 ♙f3 ♖ad8 and ...♗xd5 next, Black obtains a better version of the game.

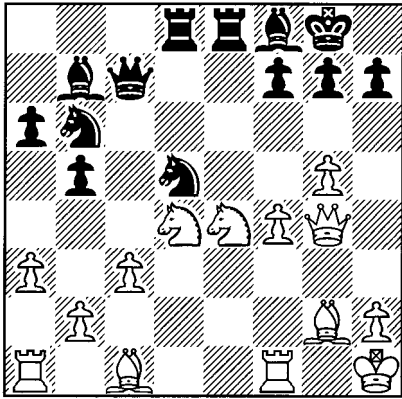
15...♗b6 16 g5 ♗fxd5 17 ♗xe4 ♖ad8

In exchange for the pawn, Black enjoys excellent piece activity.

18 ♗d4 ♖fe8 19 c3

After 19 ♖g4 ♙f8 20 f5 ♖e5! 21 ♗b3 ♗c4 22 g6 ♗de3 Black again had counterplay in L.Psakhis-Z.Azmaiparashvili, Riga 1980.

19...♙f8 20 ♖g4



20...♗xc3!

Rybka's suggestion. In contrast, the game went 20...♖h8?! 21 f5! ♘c4 22 g6 with attacking prospects for White.

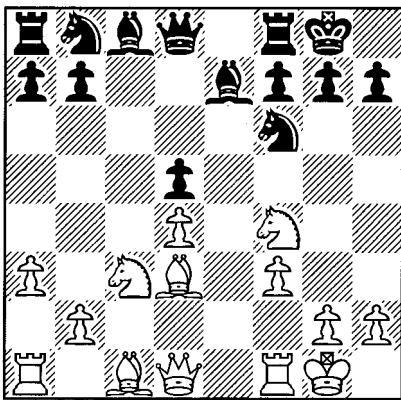
21 ♘f6+

Both 21 bxc3?! ♗xe4 and 21 ♘xc3 ♗xd4 let Black restore the material balance with a pleasant advantage.

21...gxf6 22 gxf6+ ♖h8 23 bxc3 ♘d5

With threats at f6 and c3, Black is better – Rybka.

Game 174 (continued)



13 g4!

A timely flank advance which prepares

g4-g5 undermining d5, while creating attacking opportunities on the kingside.

13...♗d6?!

13...h6?! leaves the king exposed after 14 ♗c2 and 15 ♖d3, so 13...♘c6 14 ♗c2 ♗e6 15 ♖d3 g6 16 ♗e3 was preferable, with just a slight edge – Kasparov.

14 ♖h1 ♗e8

Or 14...♘c6 15 g5 ♗xf4 16 gxf6! ♗xc1 17 fxg7 ♗e8, when 18 ♗xc1, followed by ♗g1, looks like the simplest way of keeping the initiative. The text avoids such play by removing the rook from f8 in advance.

15 g5 ♗xf4 16 ♗xf4 ♘h5 17 ♗xb8!

Time is money – by giving up the bishop pair White accelerates his kingside attack.

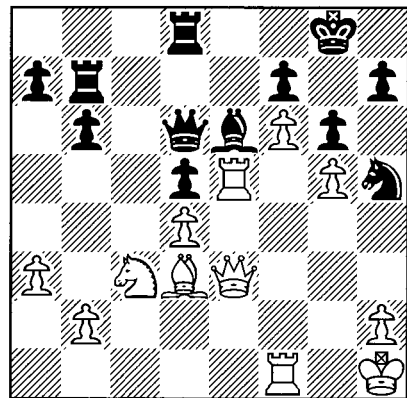
17...♗xb8 18 f4 g6 19 ♖f3 b6?

19...♘g7 was essential, preventing f4-f5. At this point, 20 ♘d5? runs into 20...♗g4! 21 ♖g2 ♗h3, so White should prefer 20 ♗b5! ♗d7 21 ♗xd7 ♖xd7 22 ♘d5 ♘h5 23 ♗ad1 with a clear advantage – Kasparov.

20 f5! ♗b7

Parrying the threat of 21 fxg6, though after White's next move the black king becomes severely exposed anyway.

21 f6! ♗e6 22 ♗ae1 ♖d6 23 ♗e5! ♗d8 24 ♖e3



With the simple but inevitable plan of ♙e2xh5 .

24...b5 25 ♙e2 b4

Removing the rook from the seventh rank will soon play against Black, though he was short of good advice.

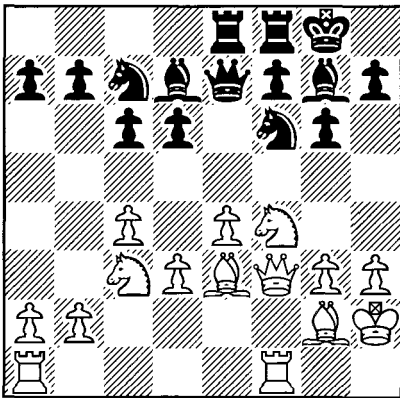
26 axb4 ♜xb4 27 ♙xh5 gxh5 28 g6! hxg6 29 ♜xe6! fxe6

Obviously 29...♜xe6 fails to 30 ♜h6.

30 ♜h6 ♜b7 1-0

At the same time Black resigned, without waiting for 31 ♜xg6+ ♖h8 32 f7 ♜f8 33 ♜xh5+ ♖g7 34 ♜g1+ ♖f6 35 ♜h4+ etc – Kasparov.

Game 175 (continued)



14...d5!

Exploiting the pin on the e-file, Black manages to break in the centre despite six enemy pieces controlling the d5-square.

15 cxd5?!

This runs into a strong reply. 15 ♙xa7 g5!? 16 ♖h5 ♖xh5 17 ♜xh5 d4! 18 ♖e2 ♖e6, followed by ...♙e5, yields Black interesting compensation for the pawn, so 15 ♜f2!, with the threat of ♙c5, was a safer choice; e.g. 15...b6 16 cxd5 cxd5 (contrary to the game, 16...♖fxd5? fails to 17 exd5 ♜xe3

18 dxc6 etc) 17 ♙d4 with roughly equal play.

15...♖fxd5!

Of course, clearing the long diagonal for the bishop.

16 ♙xa7

Or 16 ♖cxd5 ♖xd5 17 ♖xd5 cxd5 and it is White who is fighting for equality.

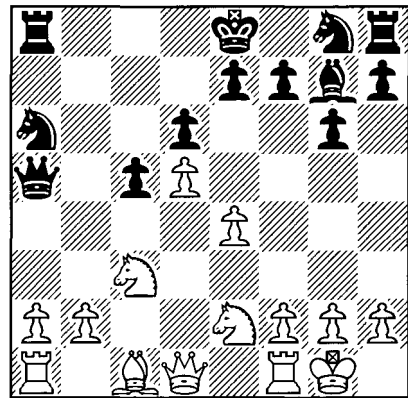
16...♖xc3 17 bxc3 ♖b5! 18 ♜f2 ♖xa7 19 ♜xa7 ♜a8 20 ♜b6

Obviously 20 ♜xb7? fails to 20...♜fb8 21 ♜c7 ♙e5.

20...♙xc3 21 ♜ac1 ♙e5

By now Black has a more active game. There followed 22 d4 ♙xf4 23 ♜xf4 ♜xa2 24 ♜b3 ♜e6! and the threat of ...♜xh3+ forced White to enter the endgame a pawn down, which Sepp went on to win.

Game 176 (continued)



11 f4!

Preparing a pawn break with e4-e5, in order to open the position before Black is properly developed.

11...♖f6 12 e5 dxe5

Or 12...♖d7 13 e6! fxe6 14 dxe6 ♖f6 15 f5 with a strong attack – Hjartarson.

13 fxe5 ♖d7

In the event of 13...♘g4, Hjartarson had planned 14 e6 fxe6 15 ♖f4! ♙d4+ 16 ♖h1 ♗f2+ 17 ♜xf2 ♙xf2 18 ♗xe6 ♗c7 19 ♜f3 with strong threats.

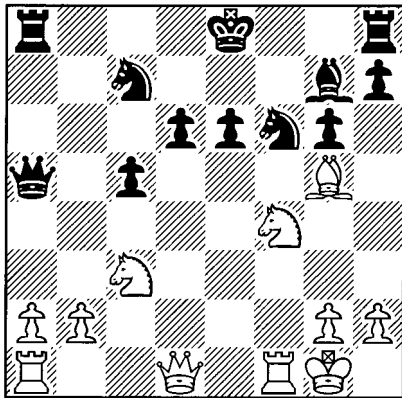
14 e6! fxe6 15 ♙g5!

Some mobilization before capturing on e6. Less convincing was 15 dxe6?! ♗f6, followed by ...0-0, or 15 ♗f4?! ♙d4+ 16 ♖h1 0-0.

15...♗f6 16 ♗f4!

Again White is attentive to the opponent's castling. Now 16...0-0? runs into 17 ♗xe6 ♜f7 18 d6! with decisive threats.

16...♗c7 17 d6! exd6



18 ♗xe6!

A strong temporary sacrifice that further exposes Black's king. 18 ♜xd6?! ♜a6 was less clear.

18...♗xe6 19 ♜e2

Of course not 19 ♙xf6? 0-0. Now, on the other hand, 19...0-0? drops a piece after 20 ♜xe6+, so Black's king is forced to stay in the centre.

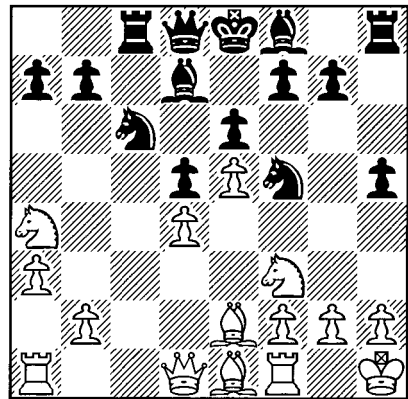
19...♖d7 20 ♙xf6 ♜hf8 21 ♗e4! ♖c7 22 ♙xg7 ♗xg7 23 ♜xf8 ♜xf8 24 ♗xd6!

Luring the king to a decisive double attack.

24...♖xd6 25 ♜d1+ ♖c6 26 ♜e4+ ♖b5 27 ♜d3+ c4 28 ♜d5+ 1-0

In view of 28...♖b6 29 ♜d6+ or 28...♖a6 29 ♜xc4+ ♖b6 30 ♜d6+ ♖b7 31 ♜d7+ ♖b8 32 ♜b3+ with mate, Black resigned – Hjartarson.

Game 177 (continued)



14...g5!

An excellent flank advance to gain space and undermine the d4-pawn by ...g5-g4.

15 ♙c3 g4 16 ♗e1 f6!

A timely pawn break, by which Black exploits the fact that 17 exf6 ♜xf6 leads to strong pressure at d4.

17 ♙d3 fxe5 18 ♙xf5

18 dxe5 d4 19 ♙xf5 exf5 comes to the same thing.

18...exf5 19 dxe5 d4

Thanks to his superior activity Black is already a bit better, since 20 ♙xd4? fails fatally to 20...♗xd4 21 ♜xd4 ♙b5!.

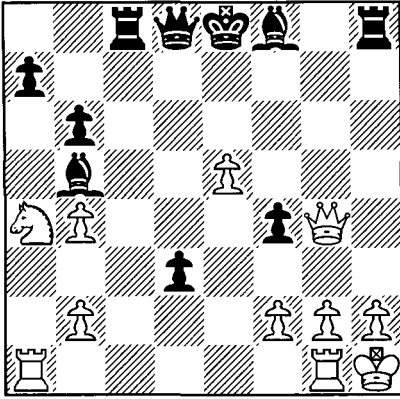
20 ♙b4 ♗xb4 21 axb4 ♙b5! 22 ♜g1 b6

Restricting the knight on a4. 22...♙xb4?! 23 ♗c2 was less clear.

23 ♗c2 d3 24 ♗e3 f4 25 ♗xg4?

Desperation. After 25 ♗f5 ♜d7 26 ♗d6+ ♙xd6 27 exd6 ♜xd6 28 ♗c3 ♙c6 Black keeps the initiative, but the battle goes on.

25...hxg4 26 ♜xg4



26...♖c7!

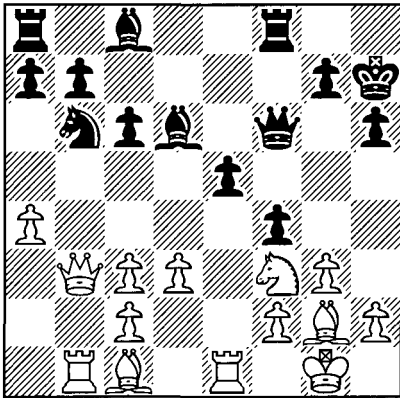
With the idea 27 ♖g6+ ♜f7 28 e6? ♜xh2+! and mate.

27 h3 ♜h6 28 ♘c3 ♙c6

The rest is easy.

29 f3 ♜h4 30 ♜f5 ♙d7 31 e6 ♙xe6 32 ♜b5+ ♙f7 33 ♜ae1 ♜g3! 0-1

Game 178 (continued)



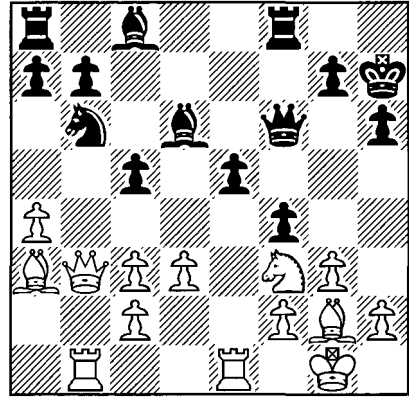
16 ♙a3!

By an indirect attack on the e5-pawn, White makes the enemy attack less likely to succeed.

16...c5?!

Black prevents the bishop exchange but

also weakens the light squares in his camp. 16...♙a3 17 ♜xa3 fxg3 18 fxg3 ♙h3! was preferable – Dvoretsky, although after the simple 19 ♜f1 ♙xg2 20 ♙xg2, followed by ♜be1, White keeps some advantage thanks to his superior pawn structure.



17 a5 c4

Just as on the previous move, 17...♙e6?! 18 c4 only yields Black an additional problem with the b7-pawn, while 17...♘d7 18 ♘h4!, preparing ♙e4(+), is also awkward for him.

18 ♜a2 ♙xa3 19 ♜xa3 ♘d7 20 ♜b4

20 d4! exd4 21 ♘xd4 was even stronger – Zlotnik.

20...cxd3 21 cxd3

By now White's superiority in piece activity is striking.

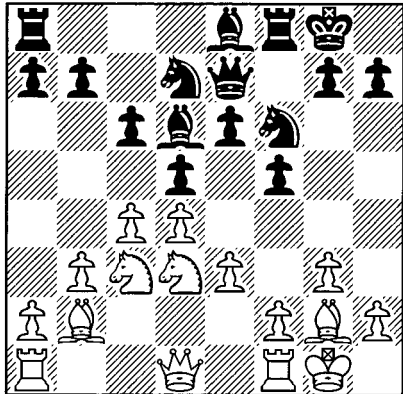
21...♙h8 22 ♜b5!

More technical than 22 ♘xe5?! ♘xe5 23 ♜xe5 fxg3 24 fxg3 ♙h3! – Zlotnik.

22...♜b8 23 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 24 ♜xe5 fxg3 25 fxg3

With a sound extra pawn and more active pieces, White is winning. There followed 25...♜f2+ 26 ♙h1 ♙d7 27 ♜f1 ♜c2 28 ♜d6! ♜fd8 29 ♜xb7 ♜xb7 30 ♙xb7 and Black resigned.

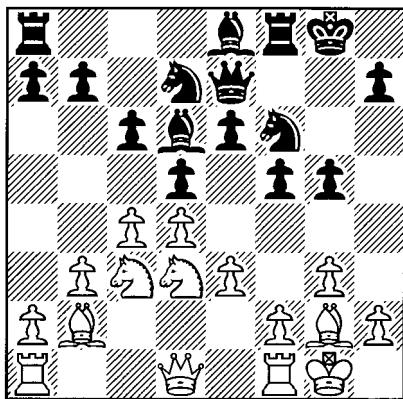
Game 179 (continued)



12...g5!

“If you don’t have the central position under control, it is better to avoid this kind of undertaking; otherwise you risk suffering a counterblow in the centre and coming away empty-handed. But there is no danger of this in the present case, since Black firmly controls the entire complex of central squares.” – Yusupov.

12...d4?! 13 f3 was less convincing, when 13...dxc3? 14 hxg3 dxc3 fails to 15 d2.



13 a4

Resuming the plan of ♖c1 and ♙a3. As

for 13 f3, preparing e3-e4, 13...g6, intending ...h5-h4, looks promising for Black.

13...g6 14 f4

Weakening the e4-square, but 14 ♖c1 at once permitted 14...f4.

14...h5 15 ♖c1 d4!

A Stonewall expert knows to wait with this move until the optimal moment. Here it helps him prevent 18 ♙a3 once again.

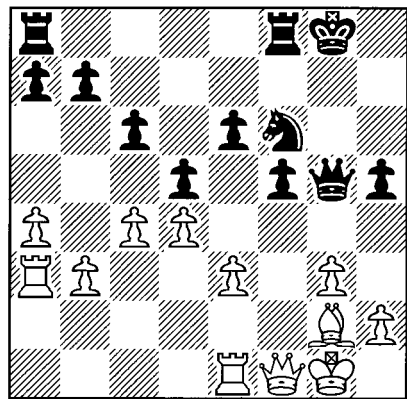
16 fxg5 dxc3!

Preparing a favourable exchange on e2. In contrast, 16...fxg5?! 17 dxe4 fxe4 18 d4 helps White – Yusupov.

17 ♖xc3 d2! 18 ♖fe1 dxd3 19 ♖xd3 ♖xg5

By now Black has a comfortable game, with his minor pieces superior to their white counterparts.

20 ♙a3 dxa3 21 ♖xa3 d6 22 ♖f1 h5!



The pinprick ...h5-h4 is enabled, a fact that motivates White to exchange queens.

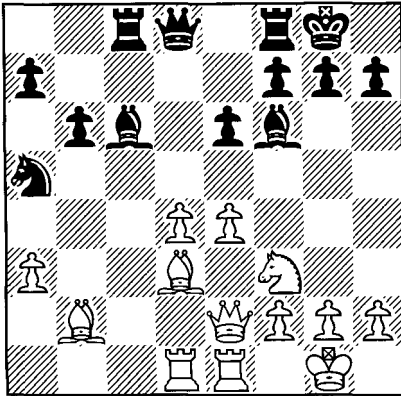
23 ♖f4 ♖xf4 24 gxf4

Or 24 exf4 d7, followed by ...h5-h4, ...h8, ...ag8 etc.

24...d7 25 ♖a2 ag8

Preparing ...g7 and ...ag8, with ...d4 as a later option. Thanks to his superior minor piece Black has a stable edge in this endgame, and Yusupov went on to win.

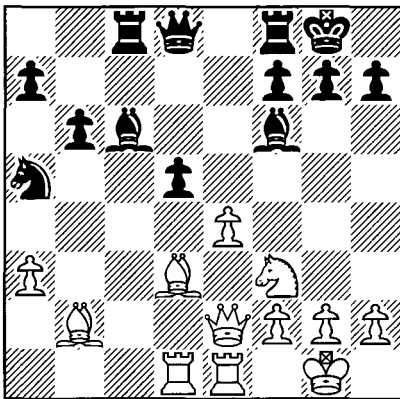
Game 180 (continued)



18 d5!

A thematic pawn sacrifice, which we already saw in Browne-Martz (Game 118). 18 e5?! ♗e7 is less convincing.

18...exd5



19 e5! ♗e7 20 e6

Tempting and strong, in order to clear lines against the black king.

20...♗a4?!

20...♗e8 was more logical, bringing a defender to the kingside, although after 21 exf7+ ♖xf7 22 ♘e5 White keeps a clear initiative.

21 exf7+ ♖xf7 22 ♖e6! ♗xd1

Black accepts the sacrifice, since 22...♖c6?! 23 ♗xh7+ ♗f8 24 ♘d4! makes things even worse for him.

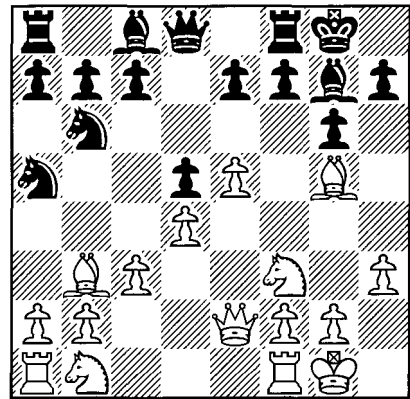
23 ♗xh7+! ♗xh7

Or 23...♗f8 24 ♗g6 ♖f4 25 ♘g5! ♗xg5 26 ♗e5 with deadly threats.

24 ♖xf7 ♖f8 25 ♖h5+ ♗g8 26 ♖xd5+ ♖f7 27 ♖xd1

With an extra pawn and safer king, White won without major difficulty.

Game 181 (continued)



11...f6!

A strong pawn break that increases Black's central control and complicates White's intended attack. Also possible is 11...♘xb3 12 axb3 f6 with similar play, whereas 12...♗f5?! permits 13 ♖e3!, followed by ♗h6, keeping some attacking prospects.

12 ♗f4

Obviously 12 exf6?! exf6, followed by ...♖e8, would play into Black's hands.

12...g5!

Gaining some space on the kingside. The slight weakening of the light squares is not too serious, now that the bishop on b3 will soon leave the board.

Mastering Opening Strategy

13 ♖g3 ♜xb3 14 axb3 ♙f5 15 ♜h2

15 ♜bd2, followed by ♜ae1, seems more natural.

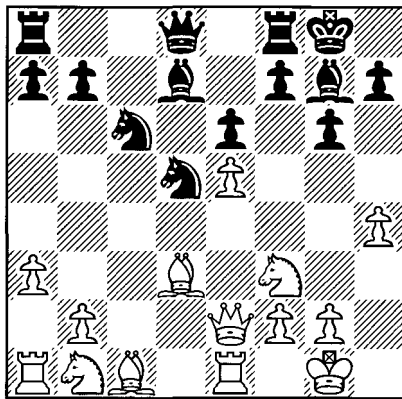
15...c6 16 ♜d2 ♜e8 17 exf6

The clearance of the centre will make Black's bishop pair even stronger, but White must have feared the plan of ...♜g6 and ...♙d3.

17...exf6 18 ♜xe8 ♜fxe8 19 f4 ♙d3 20 ♜f2 h6!

Black gets ready to meet f4xg5 by ...h6xg5, thus preventing the arrival of any white piece at e5. Nakamura later converted his slight advantage into victory.

Game 182 (continued)



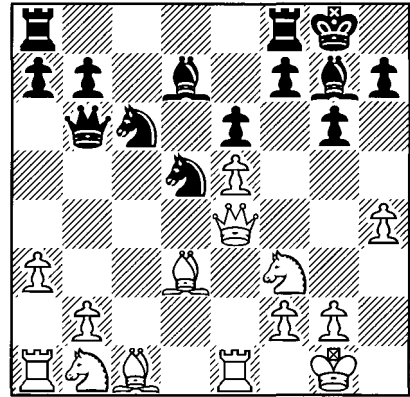
13...♜b6!

Responding to the flank attack with action in the centre. Now 14...♜d4 is enabled, while the queen's rook can quickly join the battle. Evidently, after 12...b6 this queen sortie would not have been available, whereas in the event of 12...♜c7 Black would be one tempo down by now. By the way, 13...♜a5 causes White fewer worries after 14 ♙g5 ♜b6 15 ♜c3.

14 ♜e4

Black is also better after 14 h5 ♜d4 15

♜xd4 ♜xd4, followed by ...♜ac8, or 14 ♜c3 ♜d4 15 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 16 ♜xd5 exd5! with ...♜fe8 next.



14...f5!

Another key move, which enables a counterattack along the f-file, exploiting the lead in development. The damage to the pawn structure is less relevant.

15 exf6 ♜xf6 16 ♜e3 ♜c7 17 ♜bd2?

A slow move that exposes White to a deadly attack. 17 ♜f4!, insisting on the queen exchange, was essential; e.g. 17...♜d8 18 ♜d6!, followed by ♜c3, or 17...♜xf4 18 ♙xf4 ♜d5 19 ♙d6 ♜fd8 20 ♜bd2! ♙xb2 21 ♜ab1 ♙g7 22 ♜e4 with some counterplay for the pawn.

17...♜g4 18 ♜e2

Other squares were no better; e.g. 18 ♜c5 ♙d4, or 18 ♜e4 ♜f4, followed by ...♜af8, or 18 ♜g5 e5! and the queen is trapped by ...♙h6 or ...♙f6 on the next move.

18...♜d4 19 ♜d1 ♙c6

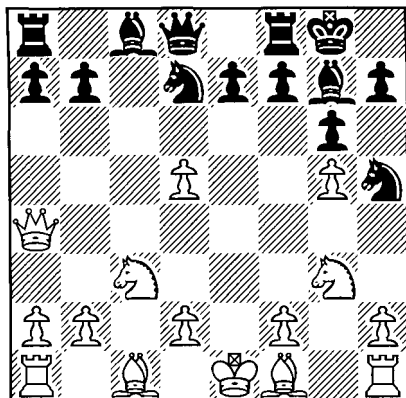
Black's pieces coordinate perfectly.

20 ♙e4 ♜ad8 21 ♙xc6 bxc6 22 ♙f1

Or 22 ♜a4 ♜xf3! and the queen finally enters on h2.

22...♜xf3 23 gxf3 ♜h2 0-1

Game 183 (continued)



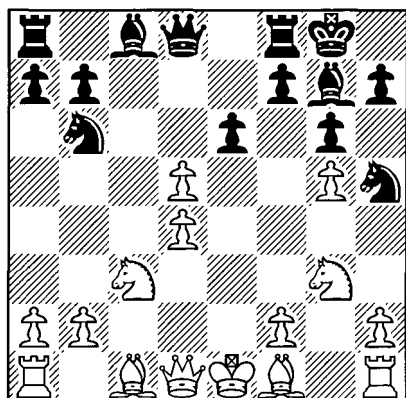
10...e6!

Responding to White's flank attack with action in the centre. 10...e5?! 11 e2 or 10...d3?! 11 hxg3, followed by Wh4, was less accurate, while 10...b6?! 11 Wh4 dxd5 12 dxh5 gxh5 13 g2! also favours White – Lukacs. But 10...c5!? 11 Wh4 dxc3 12 bxc3 Wxd5 was possible; e.g. 13 d4 d8! 14 e2 a4 15 d2 dg7 16 0-0 f5 – Galkin.

11 d4

If 11 dxh5?! gxh5 12 Wh4 de5, both 13 Wxh5 exd5, preparing ...g4(f5), and 13 g2 dg6, intending 14 Wxh5 df4, favour Black.

11...b6 12 Wd1



12...d3!

Now that White can't easily mount an attack down the h-file, Black decides to keep his pawn structure intact.

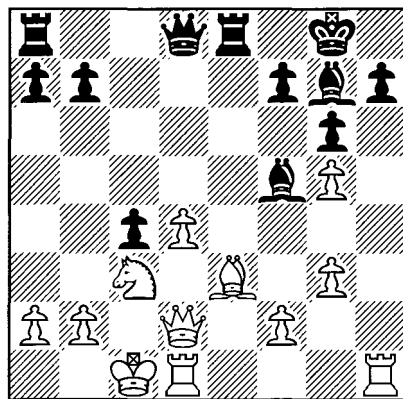
13 hxg3 exd5 14 e3?!

14 g2 e8+ 15 f1 was preferable, although after 15...e6!?, intending ...c8-c4 as well as ...f7-f6, Black has counterplay – Galkin.

14...e8 15 Wd2 e5?!

The greedy 15...Wxg5 was also possible; e.g. 16 0-0-0 We7 17 e6 h6 h8 18 b5 ed7 with a clear edge – Lukacs.

16 b5 d4 17 dxc4 dxc4 18 0-0-0



18...b5!

Black hurries to start his own attack, even at the cost of a pawn.

19 dxb5 b8 20 d3 e7 21 e4

Disrupting the plan of ...e7.

21...b6 22 dde1

White's only chance is to use the e-file for counterplay.

22...e7 23 We3 d4 24 We8+ Wxe8 25 Wxe8+ g7 26 a4 xb2!

Of course not 26...b4? 27 e6! – Galkin.

27 dx2 c3?

A tempting idea, but White can defend

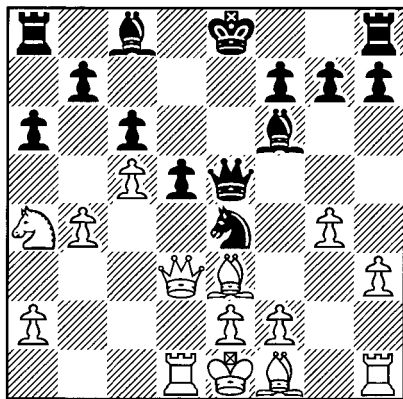
after this. 27...♖xb2 was correct; e.g. 28 ♖he1 ♖b1+!? 29 ♖d2 c3+ 30 ♖e2 ♖b2+ 31 ♖d1 ♖xa2!? 32 ♖d6 h5 33 gxh6+ ♖h7 and Black keeps the advantage – Galkin.

28 ♖d3! ♖xd3 29 ♖b8 ♖b2 30 ♖d1 ♖c2+ 31 ♖b1 ♖d2+

Black has to settle for a draw, since 31...♖f5? fails to 32 ♖xd4 ♖xf2+ 33 ♖c1 ♖f1+ 34 ♖d1 etc.

32 ♖c1 ♖c2+ 33 ♖b1 ♖d2+ 34 ♖c1 ½-½

Game 184 (continued)



17...a5!

With the centre under complete command, Black launches an attack on the fragile enemy queenside.

18 ♖g2

This leads to a soon collapse of White's position, but 18 ♖b6 ♖c3+ 19 ♖d2 ♖xd2 20 ♖xd2 ♖b8 – Volkov, or 18 b5 cxb5 19 ♖xb5+ ♖d7 was also bad for him.

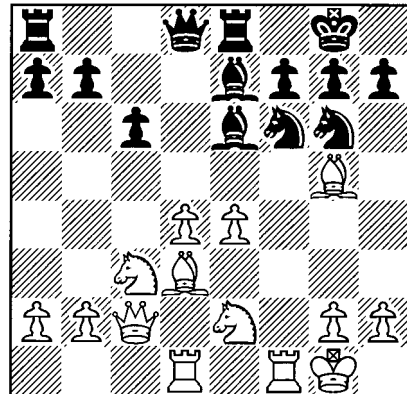
18...axb4 19 ♖b6 ♖a3! 20 ♖c2 ♖xe3!

A final detail, which leaves White without protection on the dark squares.

21 ♖xc8 ♖c3 22 ♖b1 0-0 23 ♖b6 ♖xf2! 24 ♖xf2 ♖h4+ 0-1

In view of 25 ♖f1 ♖f4+ 26 ♖f3 ♖xf3+ or 26...♖g3, White resigned.

Game 185 (continued)



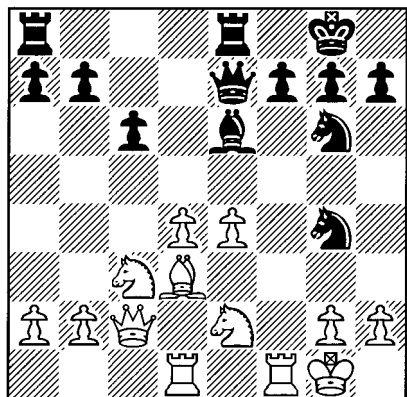
14...♖g4!

Black wishes to soften up White's centre by ...c6-c5, but seeing that the immediate 14...c5?! permits 15 ♖xf6! ♖xf6 16 e5 ♖g5 17 ♖b5 ♖e7 18 d5 and 19 e6 with an initiative, he first removes the knight from f6. In retrospect, White should have preferred 14 h3 and then mobilized the queen's rook.

15 ♖xe7

Or 15 ♖c1 c5! 16 ♖b5 ♖c7 17 g3 ♖ed8 18 d5 ♖c8 with a slight edge for Black thanks to his control of the dark squares, V.Neverov-B.Gelfand, Uzhgorod 1987.

15...♖xe7



16 ♖d2

In view of the threat ...♗e3 White has no time for the desirable 16 e5.

16...c5!

A key move which fixes a favourable pawn structure, since neither 17 h3?! cxd4, nor 17 ♖b5 cxd4 18 ♗xd4 ♜ed8 works at all well for White.

17 d5 ♗d7 18 h3 ♗4e5

Thanks to his stronghold on e5 and the bad bishop on d3, Black is already a bit better.

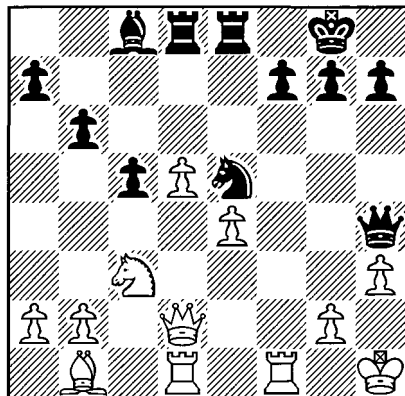
19 ♗f4 ♖g5 20 ♗xg6 ♖xg6!

Pert has observed that he can soon mobilize for an attack on the enemy kingside, whereas White has no obvious plan to follow.

21 ♖h1 ♜ad8 22 ♖f2 b6 23 ♗b1?!

A sad place for the bishop. Perhaps White should have tried 23 ♗b5!? instead; e.g. 23...♗xb5 24 ♗xb5 ♖xe4 25 ♗c7!, with ideas like 25...♜e7 26 d6 and 25...♜f8 26 ♜de1.

23...♗c8 24 ♜fe1 ♖h6 25 ♖d2 ♖h4 26 ♜f1



26...♜d6!

A nice rook lift that enhances the coming attack.

27 ♖f2 ♖h5 28 ♗b5 ♜h6 29 ♖g3 ♜g6 30 ♖h2 ♗a6 31 a4 ♗xb5! 32 axb5 ♖e2

Black wins a pawn, while maintaining his huge positional plus.

33 d6?! ♜xd6 34 ♜xd6 ♖xf1+ 35 ♖g1 ♖xb5 36 ♖d1 h6 37 ♖d5? ♖f1+ 0-1

Chapter Four

Restriction

Introduction

Just like the battle for the centre, the concept of restriction isn't exclusive to the opening phase, and I covered its role in the middlegame quite extensively in *Mastering Chess Strategy*.

Basically, restriction means that you don't let your opponent carry out the moves or plans that he is aiming for. In the context of opening play, we can divide the restrictive measures into three distinct types:

- ♣ Restriction of the opponent's development (including castling).
- ♣ Restriction of a specific enemy piece.
- ♣ Restriction of the opponent's general plans.

Evidently, the two latter types are relevant during middlegame and endgame play as well, whereas the first type is exclusive to the opening. In this chapter we will come across restrictive measures of all three types, sometimes even intertwined within the same game.

Restriction of castling

Throughout this book we have seen many games where the prevention of the opponent's castling had a huge effect on the battle; e.g. Dvoretsky-Schmidt (Game 7; 12 ♖b5+!), Psakhis-Gofshtein (Game 8; 15...♗c5!), Firman-Itkis (Game 10; 16 ♗c5!), Vaisser-Illescas (Game 54; 14...♗a6!), Ovetchkin-Efanov (Game 62; 20 ♖a4+, 21 ♖a3), and Kundin-Kostanovich (Game 134; 14 ♗b5+!). Here are some more examples on the subject.

Game 186

A.Yusupov-T.Wedberg

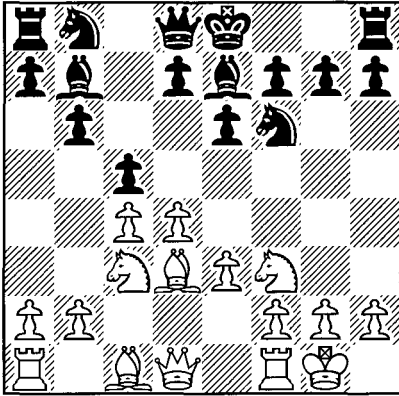
Stockholm 2003

Colle's Opening

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 e3 c5 4 ♗d3 b6 5 0-0 ♗b7 6 c4 ♗e7 7 ♘c3

As mentioned in Game 59 (Vera-Romero), the Colle is by no means an insipid opening, despite its peaceful looks. By playing 7 ♘c3 at this moment, White prepares to meet 7...0-0 with 8 d5!, when

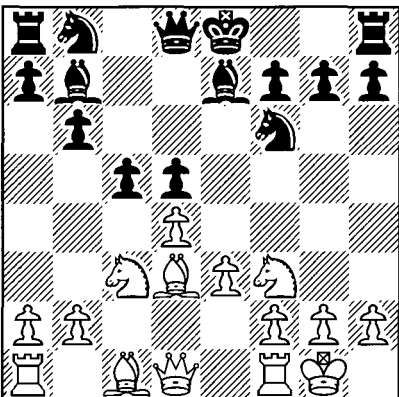
8...exd5 9 cxd5 ♖xd5 10 ♖xd5 ♙xd5 11 ♙xh7+ ♗xh7 12 ♗xd5 yields him a pleasant advantage, whereas other Black 9th moves produces some kind of inferior Benoni due to the placement of the black bishops.



7...d5

7...cxd4 8 exd4 d5 is more popular, when play usually continues 9 cxd5 ♖xd5 10 ♖e5! (10 ♙b5+ ♙c6 is less promising) 10...0-0 11 ♗h5 or 11 ♗g4 with a sharp battle. The drawback to the immediate 7...d5 will be well displayed by this game.

8 cxd5 exd5



While 8...cxd4?! 9 ♙b5+! is annoying for

Black, 8...♖xd5 9 e4 ♖xc3 10 bxc3 0-0 was probably a lesser evil. Similar positions often arise in the Petrosian Variation of the Queen's Indian (1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♖f3 b6 4 a3), but there White has wasted a move on a2-a3, so he should be slightly better here.

9 ♙b5+!

White violates the principle of not moving the same piece twice in the opening, but with good reason. This check either leaves Black without castling or undermines the d5-pawn.

9...♗f8

Wedberg opts for the former. 9...♖c6? 10 ♖e5 ♖c8 11 ♗a4 ♗c7 12 ♗xa7 is just disastrous for Black, while the natural 9...♖bd7 runs into 10 dxc5 bxc5 11 ♖e5! with the idea 11...0-0 12 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 13 ♖xd5. Finally, 9...♙c6 is strongly met by 10 ♗a4! ♙xb5 11 ♗xb5+, when 11...♖bd7 12 dxc5 bxc5 13 ♖d1 again leads to a problem with the d5-pawn, and 11...♗d7 12 ♖e5 ♗xb5 13 ♖xb5 ♖a6 14 ♖d1 also favours White; e.g. 14...0-0 15 ♖c6 ♖fe8 16 b3! ♗f8 17 ♙b2 with strong pressure in N.Sulava-C.Debray, French Team Championship 2009.

10 ♙e2

Prophylaxis against an annoying ...c5-c4, i.e. 10 b3 c4!? 11 bxc4 a6 12 ♙a4 dxc4, and 13...b5 next, with some queenside activity for Black.

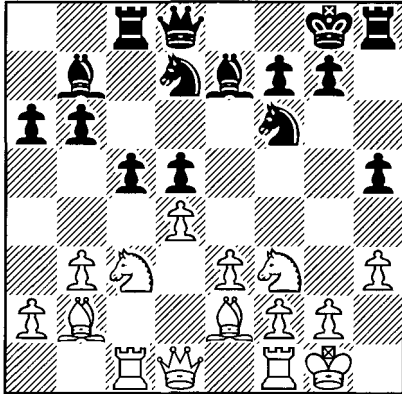
10...♖bd7 11 b3!

Of course. On b2 the other bishop will control the long diagonal and discourage Black's natural plan of ...g7-g6 and ...♗g7.

11...a6 12 ♙b2 ♖c8 13 ♖c1 h5!? 14 h3!

With his last move Black probably hoped for 14 ♖e5 ♖xe5 15 dxe5 ♖g4!, when 16 ♙xg4 hxg4 17 ♗xg4 d4, intending ...♗h4, yields him some counterplay, but Yusupov prevents that idea.

14...♔g8



15 ♖e5!

Activating the knight and preparing ♕f3, with increased pressure on the hanging pawns. Due to his badly placed king, it is already difficult to find a good plan for Black.

15...cxd4 16 ♖xd4

The right recapture, so as to keep the long diagonal open.

16...♕c5 17 ♖f4 ♖f8

Both 17...♕d6 18 ♖xf7! and 17...♖xe5 18 ♖xe5 d4 19 exd4 ♖xd4 20 ♖g5! favour White.

18 ♕f3 ♖e6 19 ♖f5! g6

Doing a favour to the bishop on b2, but the queen was annoying on f5.

20 ♖d3 ♖g5 21 ♖fd1!

Yusupov isn't bothered about the exchange on f3, and brings the last piece into the battle.

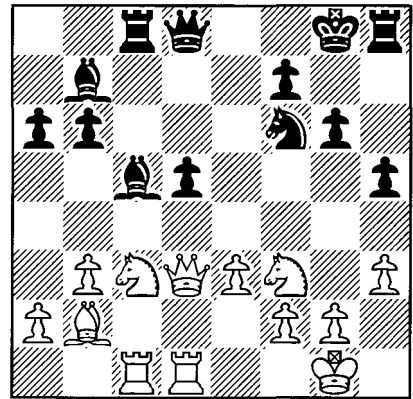
21...♖xf3+

Or 21...♕d6 22 ♕xd5! ♖xd5 23 ♖xd5 ♖xc1 24 ♖xc1 ♕xe5 25 ♕xe5 ♕xd5 26 ♖xd5! etc.

22 ♖xf3

With the rook on e8 instead of h8, this would be a normal fighting position. Here, in contrast, Black's disconnected rooks and

the tactical motifs along the a1-h8 diagonal spell big problems for him.



22...♖e7?

Black's first tactical mistake in the game, and a decisive one. The prophylactic 22...♕e7 was called for, when 23 ♖a4, followed by ♕d4, is one possible way for White to work on his advantage.

23 b4!

A nice strike, which exploits the fact that 22...♖e7 left the bishop on b7 overloaded to the defence of c8 and d5.

23...♕xb4 24 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 25 ♖xc8+ ♕xc8 26 ♖xd5!

Even simpler than 26 ♕xh8.

26...♖h7 27 ♖d8+ ♖f8 28 ♖xf8+ ♕xf8 29 ♖d8 1-0

In view of 29...♕f5 30 ♕a3, Black resigned.

Game 187
P.Ricardi-J.Hellsten
 Santiago 2006
Catalan Opening

1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 e6 3 g3 d5 4 ♕g2 dxc4 5 ♖f3 a6

With this and the following move, Black

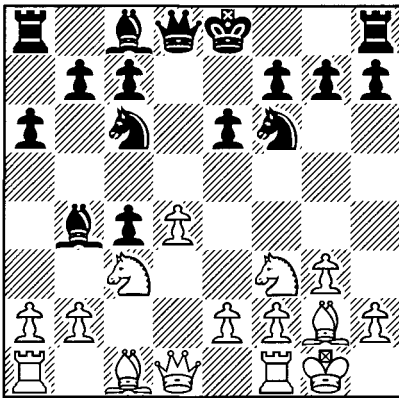
declares his intention to hang on to the c4-pawn. A calmer approach is 5...♙e7 6 0-0 0-0 7 ♖c2 a6, when Black resolves the development of his queen's bishop after both 8 ♗xc4 b5 9 ♖c2 ♙b7 and 8 a4 ♙d7! 9 ♗xc4 ♙c6.

6 0-0 ♘c6 7 ♘c3

Also possible is 7 e3, followed by ♗e2, ♗d1 and e3-e4.

7...♙b4

In my search for a reply to the Catalan, this rare move had attracted my attention. 7...♗b8, preparing ...b7-b5, is much more popular; e.g. 8 e4 ♙e7 9 ♗e2 b5 10 ♗d1 0-0 11 d5 exd5 12 e5 ♘b4! 13 exf6 ♙xf6 with a double-edged battle, as occurred in several games.



8 e4!?

Ricardi plays just the move that I was trying to prevent! An earlier game of mine went 8 ♖c2 0-0 9 ♗d1 ♙e7 (vacating the b4-square for the knight) 10 e4 b5 11 ♗e2 ♗e8 12 ♙f4 ♘b4! 13 ♘e1 and a draw was agreed in J.Gustafsson-J.Hellsten, European Team Championship, Gothenburg 2005.

8...♙xc3

Accepting the challenge. The simple 8...0-0 was also reasonable; e.g. 9 e5 ♘d5 or

9 d5 exd5 10 exd5 ♘e7, with unclear play in both cases.

9 bxc3 ♘xe4 10 ♘e5!

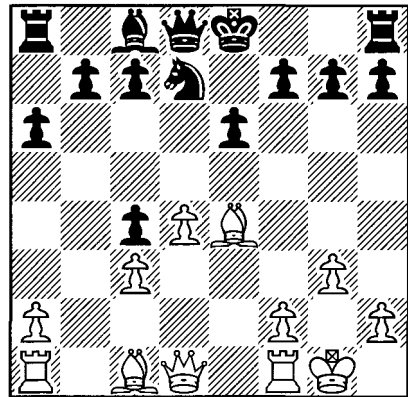
Being two pawns down, White should of course act energetically. After 10 ♖c2?! ♘d6, followed by ...0-0, Black has no problems.

10...♘xe5

Not 10...♘xc3? 11 ♙xc6+ bxc6 12 ♗f3 etc.

11 ♙xe4 ♘d7?!

Here I definitely underestimated my opponent's next move. By 11...♘d3 12 ♙a3 c5! Black could have tried to return the pawns to facilitate his development, a common strategy when facing gambits. At this point, 13 ♙xd3 cxd3 14 ♙xc5 b6! 15 ♙a3 ♙b7 16 ♗xd3 ♗d5 17 f3 ♖c8, preparing ...f7-f6 and ...♙f7, seems about equal; while 13 ♗h5!? h6!, insisting on the idea of ...0-0, or 13 dxc5 ♗a5 14 ♙b4 ♗c7! 15 c6 ♘xb4 16 cxb4 0-0 also looks okay for Black.



12 ♙a3!

A typical restriction method, that we already came across in Vaissier-Illescas (Game 54) with reversed colours, among others.

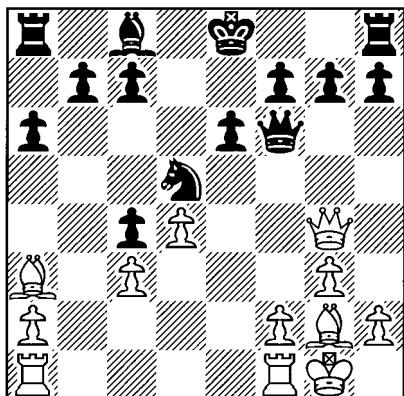
12...♘f6

Despite the two extra pawns and the

absence of direct enemy threats, it is not easy to find a plan for Black here. With the text I transfer the knight to the good d5-square, though that doesn't solve the problem of the uncastled king, of course.

An alternative was 12...c5!? 13 dxc5 ♘f6 in the spirit of the note to Black's 11th move, although after 14 ♙f3 ♜xd1 15 ♜axd1 ♘d5 16 ♜fe1! White keeps the pressure; e.g. 16...♘xc3 17 c6! ♘xd1 18 cxb7 ♜b8 19 bxc8♜+ ♜xc8 20 ♙xd1 with a favourable endgame.

13 ♙g2 ♘d5 14 ♜g4 ♜f6



15 ♜e2!

Having lured the black queen to f6, White now creates the double threat of ♙xd5 and ♜xc4. Less to the point was 15 ♙xd5?! exd5 16 ♜ae1+ ♙e6 17 f4 g6 18 f5 gxf5 19 ♜xf5 0-0-0! and Black defends.

15...♘xc3

The ensuing complications favour White thanks to his better development, but 15...c6 16 ♜xc4 was depressing for Black.

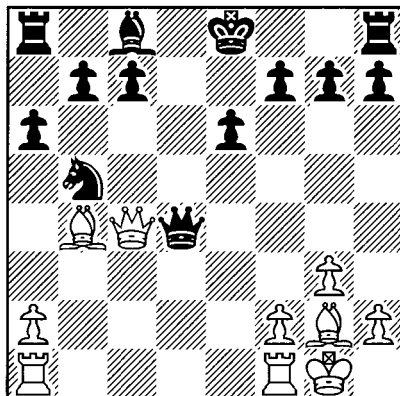
16 ♜xc4 ♘b5 17 ♙b4!

Of course, keeping ...0-0 out of the question.

17...♜xd4?

An oversight in a difficult position.

17...♘xd4? was equally bad due to 18 ♜ad1 e5 19 ♜xd4! exd4 20 ♜xc7 with decisive threats, while after 17...♙d7!? 18 a4! ♜xd4 19 ♜fc1! ♜xc4 20 ♜xc4 ♘d6 21 ♜xc7 White keeps a huge advantage.



18 ♙c6+!

A nice blow which converts White's initiative into something more tangible.

18...♙d7

Or 18...bxc6 19 ♜xc6+ ♜d7 20 ♜xa8 ♘d6 21 ♜ac1 0-0 22 ♜b8 with an easy win.

19 ♙xb5 ♜xc4 20 ♙xc4

Material is about even, but Black's pawns are rather unfortunately distributed to put up much resistance to White's mighty bishop pair.

20...0-0-0?

I was already a bit disillusioned with the course of events and overlooked 20...c5!, preparing ...b7-b5 and ...c5-c4, with some minimal counterplay.

21 ♜fc1 ♙a4 22 ♙c3 ♜hg8 23 ♜ab1 h5 24 h4 ♜d7?

A useless move which lets White break through on the queenside. 24...c6 and ...♙b5 was the last chance.

25 ♙e2! g6 26 ♙f3 c6 27 ♜b4 ♙b5 28 a4 a5

Or 28...♙d3 29 ♙e5 ♜e7 30 ♙xc6 etc.

29 ♖xb5! 1-0

In view of 29...cxb5 30 ♗e5+ ♖d8 31 ♗f6+, Black resigned.

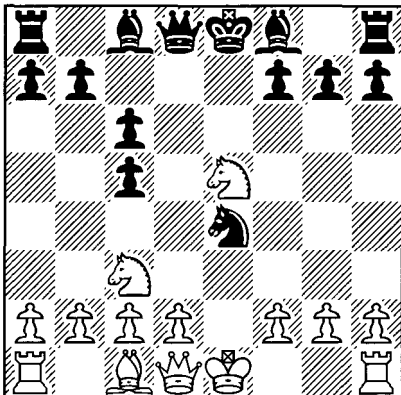
Game 188
Ma.Carlsen-
C.Deepan Chakkravarthy
 Dubai 2004
Sicilian Defence,
Rossolimo Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 ♗c6 3 ♗c3 ♗f6

By his last move White sidestepped the Sveshnikov, whose adherents can also play 3...e5 here.

4 ♗b5

Finally White settles for a Rossolimo, and now intends 5 e5. In this sense, 4...♖c7 is the most frequent choice in practice, while the game move invites the opponent to surrender the bishop pair to gain a lead in development.

4...e5 5 ♗xc6 dxc6 6 ♗xe5 ♗xe4

The only way of recovering the pawn.

7 ♗xe4 ♖d4 8 0-0

Another direction is 8 ♖e2 ♖xe5 9 f4, or even 9 d4, with complex play.

8...♖xe5

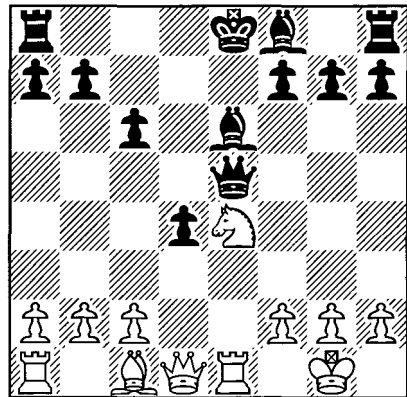
Give Black two extra tempi and he will be just fine after ...♗e7 and ...0-0. Thus Carlsen invests a pawn to increase his lead in development.

9 d4! cxd4?!

It seems that 9...♖xd4 was preferable; e.g. 10 ♖f3 ♗e7 11 ♗g5 f6 12 ♖ad1 ♖xb2 13 ♗d6+ ♗xd6 14 ♖fe1+ ♖f7 15 ♖xd6 ♖f8!, preparing ...♗g8, and Black was okay in R.Ovetchkin-D.Kokarev, Voronezh 2003. Perhaps 10 ♖e2!? ♗e6 11 ♗g5 could be tried instead, in similar fashion to the game.

10 ♖e1 ♗e6

After 10...♗e7 11 ♗g5! 0-0! 12 ♗f6+ ♗xf6 13 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 14 ♖e2 White keeps an initiative in the endgame, but this was probably a lesser evil for Black, as we will see next.

**11 ♗g5!**

Simple and strong – White prevents the opponent's ...0-0-0 and also creates the threat of 12 ♗f6+. Other moves fail to pose any problems for Black; e.g. 11 f4?! ♖d5 12 ♗g5 0-0-0, or 11 ♗g5 ♖d5 12 ♖g4 ♗d7!? as in N.Ristic-P.Kovacevic, Yugoslav Team Championship 1994.

11...♙e7

The natural 11...♚d5 is strongly met by 12 ♙f6!, paralysing Black's game; e.g. 12...c5 13 c3 d3 14 c4!, intending 14...♚xc4 15 ♙xg7! – Postny, or 12...d3 13 c4! ♚a5 14 ♙c3 ♚d8 15 ♚e3 ♚h4 16 ♚xd3 ♚d8 17 ♚e2 with a dangerous initiative in O.Kurmann-J.Markos, Zürich 2010.

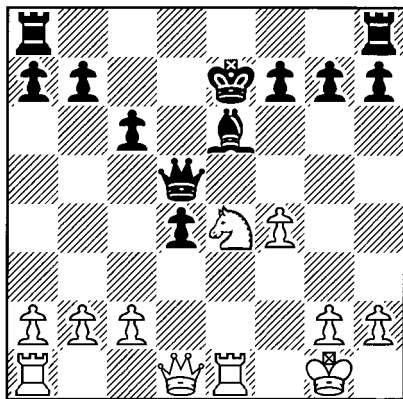
12 f4!

By 12 ♘f6+ ♙xf6 13 ♚xe5 ♙xe5 14 f4 ♙c7 15 f5!, intending 15...♙xf5 16 ♚e1+! ♙e6 17 ♚b4, White could have secured an advantage in the endgame, but Carlsen goes for more.

12...♚d5

Unfortunately for Black, after 12...♚c7 13 ♙xe7 ♙xe7 14 ♚xd4 ♚b6 White has 15 ♘c5!.

13 ♙xe7 ♙xe7



14 f5!

Now that 14...♙xf5? runs into 15 ♘c3+, Black has to accept the trade of the f- and d-pawns, which lets White's queen onto the stage with devastating effect.

14...♚xf5 15 ♚xd4 ♚d5

Or 15...♚hd8 16 ♚b4+ ♙e8 17 ♚ad1 with ♘d6+ next – Postny. The text aims at a queen's exchange, but White easily avoids

that and keeps his attack going.

16 ♚b4+ c5 17 ♘xc5 a5 18 ♚a3 ♚d4+ 19 ♙h1 ♚b4 20 ♚e3! 1-0

In this hopeless position Black resigned. There could have followed 20...♚g4 21 h3 ♚g6 22 ♚a3 ♙e8 23 ♚b3! with decisive threats.

Game 189
S.Brynell-J.Barkhagen
Swedish Team
Championship 2008
Queen's Indian Defence

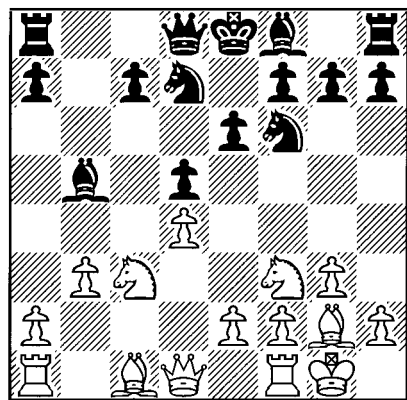
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 b6 4 g3 ♙a6 5 b3 b5

A interesting alternative to the more common 5...♙b4+ or 5...♙e7. At the cost of a few tempi, Black achieves the exchange of the influential c4-pawn.

6 cxb5 ♙xb5 7 ♙g2 d5 8 0-0 ♘bd7

The most accurate choice, since both 8...♙d6 and 8...♙e7 give White the additional option of 9 ♘c3 ♙a6 10 b4!?, cramping Black on the queenside – Avrukh.

9 ♘c3



9...♙c6?!

But this is misguided, as the bishop had

no reason to leave the active f1-a6 diagonal yet. Several games saw 9...♙a6 10 ♖e1 ♙b4 (or ♙e7/♙d6), followed by ...0-0.

10 ♙b2 ♙b7

Black prepares ...c7-c5, a structurally sound idea but risky on this occasion due to White's lead in development. 10...♙e7 was safer, both here and on the next move.

11 ♖c1 c5 12 ♘a4!

Forcing the the exchange of pawns on White's terms, which will yield him considerable activity. 12 dxc5?! ♙xc5 was less ambitious.

12...cxd4

Or 12...♖c8 13 dxc5 ♘xc5 14 ♗d4!, keeping the pressure.

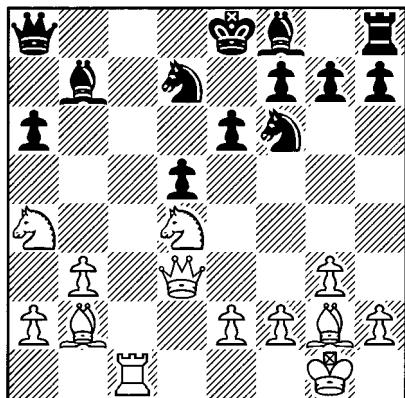
13 ♘xd4 ♖c8 14 ♗d3!

Natural and strong – White connects his rooks for the battle of the c-file, and also enables an annoying ♗b5 or ♗e3 later on.

14...a6?!

Preventing 15 ♗b5, but this additional tempo loss will be strongly felt in the further course of the game. After 14...♙e7 15 ♗b5! ♖b8 16 ♘c6 ♙xc6 17 ♗xc6 0-0 18 ♗a6 ♘b6! Black is still worse, but at least his king has reached safety.

15 ♖xc8 ♗xc8 16 ♖c1 ♗a8



Just as in the previous game, if Black is given two tempi he will have no problems after ...♙e7 and ...0-0. How can White prevent that?

17 ♗e3!

A key move that prepares a sacrifice on e6. The alternative 17 ♖c7?! ♙d6 was less constructive.

17...♙e7

Or 17...♙d6? 18 ♘xe6! fxe6 19 ♗xe6+ ♙e7 20 ♖c7 with the devastating threat 21 ♙xf6.

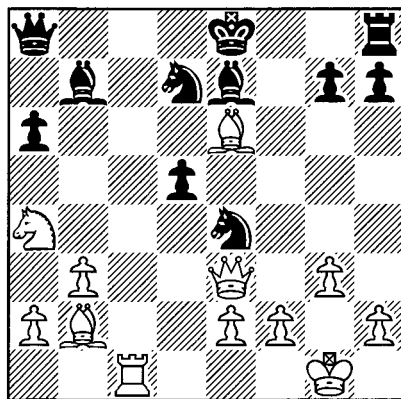
18 ♙h3!

The threat is stronger than its execution – after 18 ♘xe6 fxe6 19 ♗xe6 ♘f8 Black can still defend.

18...♘e4

Seeing that 18...0-0 runs into 19 ♘xe6! fxe6 20 ♙xe6+ ♖f7 21 ♖c7 with huge material losses, Black intercepts the enemy queen.

19 ♘xe6! fxe6 20 ♙xe6



By means of a minimal sacrifice White has managed to open the gates to Black's king, and prevent ...0-0. Actually, the occupation of the e6-square (or e3 with reversed colours) with a minor piece tends to have a strong restrictive effect on the opponent's

development, a fact that motivates similar sacrifices in the Open Sicilian, among others.

20...♖f8

Inviting the white knight to the party, but the threat of 21 ♔xd7+ ♗xd7 22 ♖b6+ had to be parried, and 20...♗df6 21 ♜c7, preparing ♜b6, was also grim for Black.

21 ♖b6 ♜a7

Both 21...♜b8 and 21...♜d8 were strongly met by 22 ♔xd5!. Now, in contrast, the capture on d5 would let Black swap the queens, so Brynell adjusts his plans.

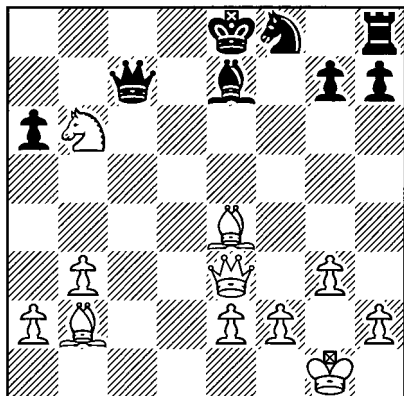
22 ♜c7! ♜b8

Or 22...♗xe6 23 ♜xe7+! ♗xe7 24 ♖xd5+ ♔xd5 25 ♜xa7+ ♗d6 26 ♔a3+ ♗e5 27 f3 with an easy win.

23 ♜xb7! ♜xb7 24 ♔xd5

Black's camp is being completely demolished.

24...♜c7 25 ♔xe4



25...♗e6

25...♔c5 26 ♔g6+ leads to mate, while after 25...♜c5 26 ♔d4 ♜g5 27 ♔c6+ ♗d8 28 ♜c3 the black king is doomed.

26 ♔d5 1-0

In view of 26...♗c5 27 ♔xg7, Black resigned.

Game 190

N.Short-L.Oll

Parnu 1996

Scandinavian Defence

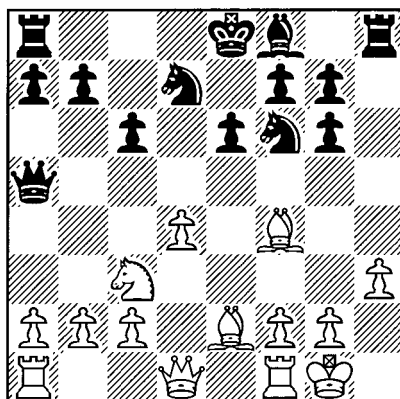
1 e4 d5 2 exd5 ♜xd5 3 ♖c3 ♜a5 4 ♔e2

Short opts for a modest set-up, delaying the fight for the initiative until a later stage of the game. 4 d4, followed by ♗f3 and ♔c4, is the main line here.

4...♗f6 5 ♗f3 c6 6 h3 ♔f5 7 0-0 ♖bd7

A simple alternative was 7...e6 8 d4 ♔d6 and ...0-0 next.

8 d4 e6 9 ♗h4 ♔g6 10 ♖xg6 hxg6 11 ♔f4!



Depriving the black queen and bishop of their standard posts on c7 and d6.

11...♜d8?!

A natural move in this structure, but here it has the drawback of taking a vital retreat square from the queen, a fact that White immediately exploits. 11...♔e7 was preferable, or even 11...♔b4!? 12 ♜d3 ♜f5 – Short.

12 a3! ♗b6?!

This runs into a strong reply. After 12...♔e7 13 b4 ♜f5 14 ♜d2! Black is also in trouble, since 14...♗d5? 15 ♗xd5 cxd5 16 g4

♖f6 17 g5 ♖f5 18 ♙g4 leaves his queen trapped, and 14...e5 15 dxe5 ♘xe5 16 ♖e3 is equally unpleasant for him. In contrast, the pragmatic 12...♖c8!? 13 b4 ♖d8 looked quite acceptable, with ...♙e7 and ...0-0 just around the corner.

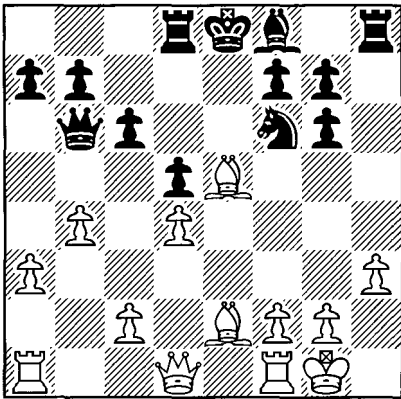
13 ♙e5!

Intercepting the black queen from the f5-square, which means that 14 b4 has become a mortal threat.

13...♘bd5 14 ♘xd5 exd5?!

A third inaccuracy, which yields White an open e-file to operate on. The usual recapture 14...cxd5?! was also dubious due to 15 b4 ♖b6 16 c4! dxc4 17 ♖a4+! – Khalifman; thus 14...♖xd5! 15 c4 ♖d7 should have been preferred – Short.

15 b4 ♖b6



Without any intention to bore the reader, here we have one more case where Black is about to reach safety by ...♙e7 and ...0-0. How can White prevent that from happening?

16 c4!

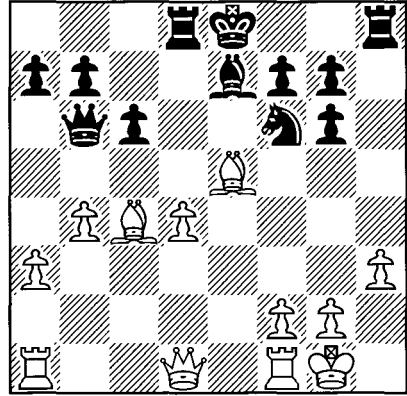
By means of the threat of c4-c5, Short manages to clear new lines towards the enemy king. The isolated pawn that now arises on d4 is a less relevant factor.

16...dxc4

Forced, since 16...♖d7 17 c5 ♖d8 18 b5, followed by ♖a4, ♖ab1 etc, leads to a crushing white initiative on the queenside.

17 ♙xc4 ♙e7

After 17...♙d6 18 ♖c2! ♙xe5 19 dxe5 ♘d5 White is just in time for 20 e6! – Khalifman.



18 ♖c2!

A key move, which stops 18...0-0? on account of 19 ♖xg6. Thus Black is forced onto the defensive.

18...♙f8 19 ♖ae1 ♘d5 20 ♖e2?!

The idea of doubling rooks on the open file is very logical, but 20 ♖e4 was a more active way of doing it – Short. On the other hand, the concrete 20 ♙xd5 ♖xd5 21 ♙xg7+! ♙xg7 22 ♖xe7 ♖xd4 23 ♖c3 ♖hd8 24 ♖fe1 might have been even more promising – in this major piece endgame White is far more active, and he has the safer king.

20...♙f6 21 ♖fe1 ♙g8!

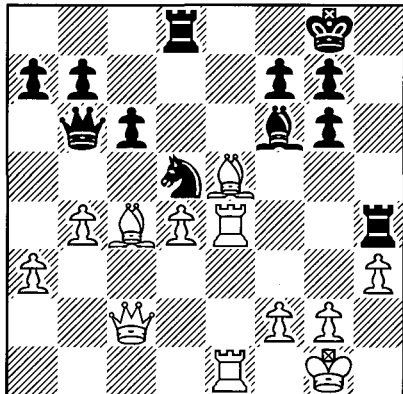
Providing the king with a flight square on h7, so that 22 ♙xd5 can be met by 22...♖xd5 from now on. In contrast, 21...♙xe5? 22 dxe5 ♘f4 (otherwise 23 e6) 23 ♖d2 ♖c7 24 ♖d1!? ♙e7 25 ♖d6! yields White a huge advantage.

22 ♖e4

Admitting the inaccuracy two moves ago.

22...♖h4?

After a tenacious defence, Oll finally goes astray. Khalifman suggests 22...a5 as an improvement, while 22...♖h7, preparing ...♖he8, seems possible as well, keeping up the fight.



23 ♗xd5! cxd5

Perhaps Black had planned 23...♖xd5 24 ♗xf6 ♖xe4 25 ♖xe4 gxf6, only to discover that 26 ♖e8+ ♗g7 27 ♖e7 wins for White; e.g. 27...♖xd4 28 h4! – Khalifman.

24 ♖xh4 ♗xh4 25 ♗c7 ♖c8

Or 25...♗xf2+ 26 ♗xf2 ♖xd4+ 27 ♗f1 ♖c8 28 ♗e5!, keeping the extra material.

26 ♖e8+! ♖xe8 27 ♗xb6 axb6 28 ♗f1

In this endgame Black's weak queenside pawns make it impossible for him to set up a fortress, so White is winning.

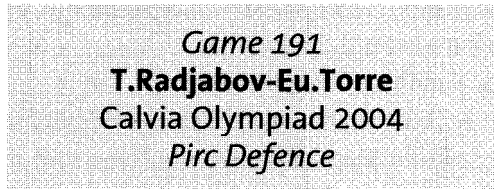
28...♖a8 29 ♖b3 ♖d8 30 ♗e2 ♗f6 31 ♗d3 ♗f8 32 ♖a4 1-0

In view of 33 ♖a7 next, Black resigned.

Restriction of specific pieces

As we saw in the previous games, the restriction of an opponent's castling had

quite a radical impact on the battle. In contrast, the restriction of a specific enemy piece tends to have a more long-term effect on the game, one that can leave the affected side suffering even into the endgame. Let's start with a basic method of this type.



1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♖f6 3 ♗c3 g6 4 f4 ♗g7 5 ♗f3 0-0 6 ♗d3 ♖a6

A common reply to the Austrian Attack, by which Black prepares ...c7-c5 without obstructing the bishop on c8.

7 e5!?

An aggressive choice. The main line goes 7 0-0 c5 8 d5 ♗g4, preparing ...♗c7, ...♖b8 and, if possible, ...b7-b5.

7...dxe5

This and the next move provide an easy solution to the problem with the threatened knight, but also leaves White with an extra pawn in the centre. The restrained 7...♗d7, insisting on the ...c7-c5 idea, is more common in practice.

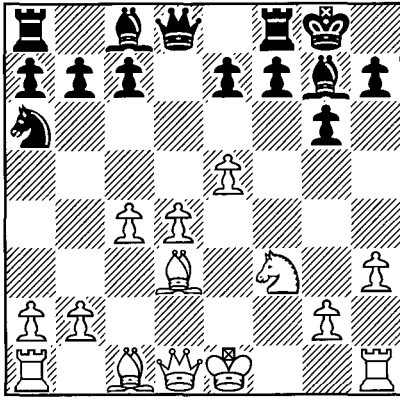
8 fxe5 ♗d5 9 ♗xd5

The most ambitious try, to gain some space before Black gets ...c7-c5 in.

9...♖xd5 10 c4 ♖d8 11 h3!

A typical restriction method, which leaves the bishop on c8 short of a good destiny. It is used in many different openings and in fact we already came across it in Andersson-Portisch (Game 61) and Polugaevsky-Dorfman (Game 116). In contrast, after 11 0-0 ♗g4 Black has an easier

task; e.g. 12 ♖e4 c6 13 h3 ♙xf3 14 ♙xf3 ♜b6 or 14...♜c7, followed by ...♞ad8 and possibly ...c7-c5.



11...f6

A sensible pawn break, reducing some of White's space advantage. 11...c5 12 d5 ♜c7 13 ♜e2 ♘b4 14 ♙b1 was less convincing.

12 exf6 exf6 13 0-0 c6

Preparing ...♘c7 in order to get the off-side knight into play. After 13...c5 14 d5 or 13..f5 14 ♙c2 White should also be slightly better, while the flexible 13...♞e8 can be met by 14 ♙h1!?, intending 14...f5 15 ♙g5.

14 ♙f4 ♘c7 15 ♜b3!

Another sensible developing move, with the additional merit of again restricting the bishop on c8.

15...♙h8 16 ♞ad1 ♘e6 17 ♙e3 ♜c7 18 ♞fe1

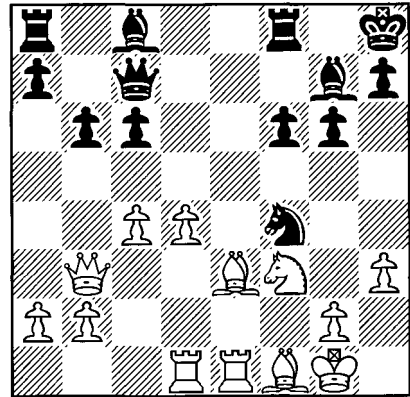
White brings the last piece into the battle, and prepares to meet ...♘f4 by ♙f1.

18...♘f4?!

On this square the knight will just become exposed. Preferable was 18...♘g5! 19 ♘h2! ♜g3 20 ♙h1 with only a slight white advantage – Erenburg, who also suggests 18 d5! on the previous move.

19 ♙f1 b6?

With d4-d5 hanging in the air, Black should have taken prophylactic measures. After 19...♞d8 20 d5 cxd5 21 cxd5 ♜d6 22 ♞d4 White remains on top – Erenburg, but in the game he will obtain an even bigger advantage.



20 d5!

Finally, the time is ripe for the inherent plan in the position: converting the pawn majority into a passed pawn.

20...cxd5 21 cxd5 ♜d6 22 ♜c4!

An accurate follow-up, which attacks the knight and threatens ♜c6 at the same time.

22...♘h5?

This loses material, but after 22...g5 23 ♜c6 ♜xc6 24 dxc6 Black's game is also difficult due to the dangerous passed pawn and White's clearly more active pieces.

23 g4! b5

Since 23...♘g3 fails to 24 ♙f4, Black's fate is practically decided.

24 ♜c6 ♜g3+

Or 24...♜xc6 25 dxc6 ♘g3 26 ♙c5 ♞g8 27 ♙xb5 etc – Erenburg.

25 ♙g2 ♙xg4 26 ♙f2 ♜f4 27 hxg4 ♜xg4 28 ♜e6!

The rest is easy.

28...f5 29 ♖e5 ♜g5 30 ♜f7+ ♜xf7 31 ♜xf7 h6 32 ♜e7 ♜g4 33 ♜h4! 1-0

In the previous game we saw Radjabov successfully restricting the opponent's light-squared bishop, while in the following encounter, Geller directs his attention to the queen's knight. Moreover, the second half of the game will show us a great deal about restriction in general.

Game 192
E.Geller-H.Mecking
 Palma de Mallorca
 Interzonal 1970
Spanish Opening

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙a4 ♘f6 5 0-0 ♙e7 6 ♜e1 b5 7 ♙b3 d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3 ♘a5

The Chigorin Variation, just as popular today as 100 years ago!

10 ♙c2 c5 11 d4 ♜c7 12 ♘bd2 ♘c6

Nowadays, 12...cxd4 13 cxd4 ♘c6 is a more frequent continuation, with Black securing some counterplay along the c-file. This has even made 12 d5 a popular choice, in order to close the centre at once.

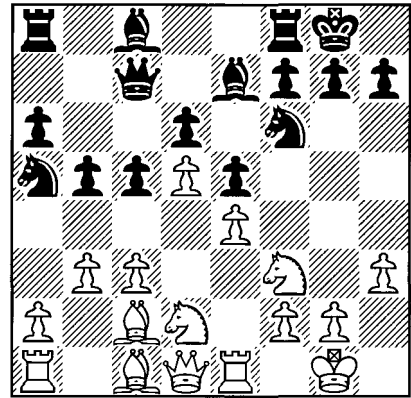
13 d5 ♘a5

The knight returns, but the remainder of the game will show us the drawbacks to this decision. 13...♘d8 is much more common, with the future plan of ...♘e8, ...g7-g6, ...♘g7, f7-f6 and ...♘f7, discovered by Rubinstein at the beginning of the previous century.

14 b3!

A clever piece of restriction directed at the knight on a5. From now on, the typical idea of ...c5-c4 and ...♘b7-c5 will be met by

b3-b4!, exploiting the fact that ...c4xb3 en passant is no longer available. Moreover, a regrouping with ...♘c4-b6 is now also impossible. The immediate 14 ♘f1 gives Black fewer worries after 14...♘c4, or 14...c4 with ...♘b7-c5 next.



14...♙d7

14...g6!?, preparing ...♘h5, is a different idea analysed by A.Filippov.

15 ♘f1

White gets on with his intended kingside attack.

15...♘b7 16 ♘g3 c4 17 b4! ♜fc8?!

A rather cooperative move. By 17...g6 Black could have complicated the opponent's attack to a considerable extent; e.g. 18 ♘h2 a5 19 ♙h6 ♜fc8 20 ♜f3 ♜a6 21 a3 ♜ca8 22 ♘f5 ♙d8! with a tense battle in M.Zufic-B.Lengyel, Budapest 2002.

18 ♘f5 ♙f8 19 ♘h2 a5 20 ♜e3!

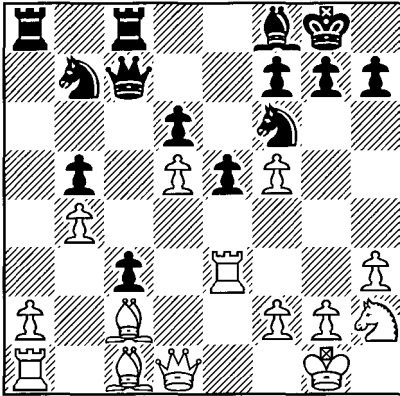
The rook joins the kingside attack and also eyes the sensitive c3-square.

20...axb4 21 cxb4 ♙xf5?!

Geller writes that Black could have waited with this exchange, but also mentions that the doubling of rooks on the a-file would not have made much sense due to a2-a3. In any case, 21...g6 22 ♜g3 ♙h8 23

♠h6 ♖e8, or perhaps 21...♗h8!?, followed by ...♘g8 and g7-g6, seems more tenacious than the text, with a slight hope of reintegrating the knight in Rubinstein style by ...f7-f6 and ...♘d8-f7 later on.

22 exf5 c3



23 ♘g4!

The exchange of knights will liberate the e4-square for the rook, where it will prevent Black's intended ...♗c4.

23...♖e7 24 ♘xf6+ ♖xf6 25 ♗e4!

Before resuming his kingside attack, White prevents 25...♖g5 as well as a positional sacrifice with ...e5-e4. As a consequence, Black is limited to passive defence.

25...♗d7 26 ♗f3 ♗c7 27 h4 ♗e7

Parrying the threat of g4-g5.

28 g3 ♘d8?!

As Geller says, on d8 the knight has a single destiny: back to b7! 28...♗ac8, followed by 29...♗c4, seems preferable, although strategically speaking Black's task remains very difficult due to his passive knight.

29 a3

This and the following moves aim at creating a "second front" on the queenside.

29...♗cc8 30 ♗b1 ♗c7 31 ♗e2!

By a simultaneous attack at the b5- and c3-pawns, White aims at diverting the black queen from the h4-d8 diagonal, so that g3-g4 can be launched later on.

31...♗b8 32 ♗b3 ♗d7 33 ♗f3 ♖e7 34 ♗e3

After 34 ♗xc3 ♗xc3 35 ♗xc3 ♗c8 Black obtains some minimal counterplay.

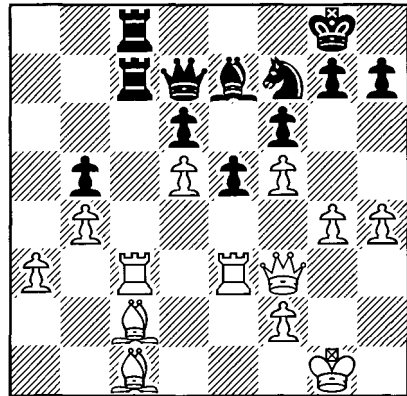
34...♖f6 35 ♗e4!

Of course not 35 ♗bxc3? ♗xc3 36 ♗xc3 e4.

35...♖e7 36 g4! f6

Practically forced, in view of the threat 37 g5, but this means the end for the c3-pawn now that the bishop can no longer settle at f6. Of course 36...♖xh4? failed to 37 g5.

37 ♗e3 ♘f7 38 ♗bxc3 ♗bc8



39 ♖e4!

Finishing off Black's last hope of counterplay: ...e5-e4 followed by ...♖e5. By now White's extra pawn and attacking potential make the win a matter of time.

39...♖d8 40 ♖d2 ♗c4 41 ♗xc4 ♗xc4

In the event of 41...bxc4 Geller had prepared 42 ♗c3, followed by ♖b1-a2 and ♗e4, besieging the c4-pawn.

42 ♗c3 ♖b6 43 ♗xc4 bxc4 44 g5 fxg5 45 hxg5 ♖d8 46 ♗h5 c3 47 ♖e3! h6

With 47...♘h8 48 g6 h6 Black could have

avoided an direct assault at his king, but that would be a cruelty to the poor knight, which has already suffered enough in this game.

48 f6! 1-0

In view of 48...♘xg5 49 ♕xg5 hxg5 50 ♖h7+ with a quick mate, Black resigned.

Here is one more game from older times, where Black's queen's knight again falls victim to restrictive measures.

Game 193

A.Suetin-L.Shamkovich

USSR Championship, Kiev 1964

Scandinavian Defence

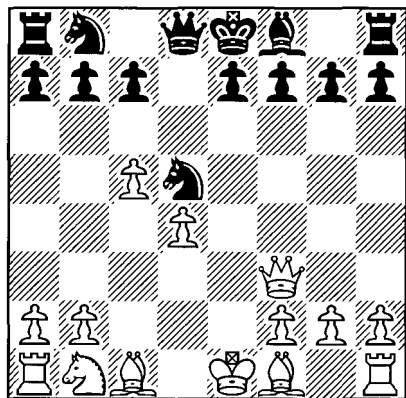
1 e4 d5 2 exd5 ♘f6 3 d4 ♘xd5 4 ♘f3 ♕g4

4...g6 is another direction in this Scandinavian line (with an Alekhine flavour).

5 c4 ♘b6 6 c5 ♕xf3?!

This early exchange yields White a clear initiative. Today, the more elastic 6...♘d7 is preferred; e.g. 7 ♖b3 ♕xf3 8 ♖xf3 ♘c6 with a sharp battle.

7 ♖xf3 ♘d5



8 ♖b3!

Provoking light square weaknesses on the enemy queenside. Such a "punishment" with ♖b3 is rather common in openings with an early development of the black queen's bishop, such as the Slav. In contrast, 8 ♕c4 c6 9 ♘c3 e6 is less dangerous for Black.

8...b6

The active 8...♘c6? fails to 9 ♖xb7 ♘xd4 10 ♕b5+ ♘xb5 11 ♖c6+! – Suetin.

9 ♕g5!

Restricting the opponent's development with ...e7-e6.

9...♖d7

Perhaps Black should have tried 9...h6 10 ♕c4 c6 11 ♕h4 g5 12 ♕g3 e6 instead, accepting a slight weakening of his kingside structure in order to speed up development.

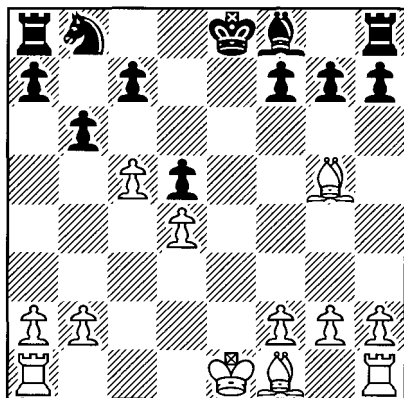
10 ♘c3 e6 11 ♘xd5!

At this moment, Suetin must have already had his strong 13th move in mind. Again, 11 ♕c4 c6 was less promising.

11...♖xd5

Or 11...exd5?! 12 0-0-0, followed by ♖e1(+) with a strong initiative.

12 ♖xd5 exd5



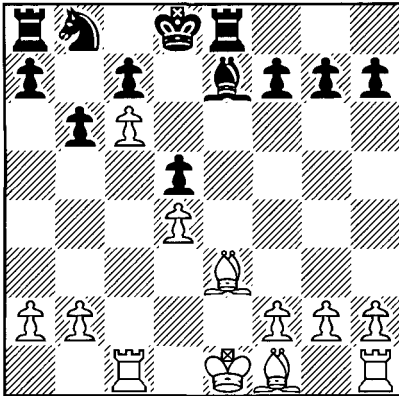
13 c6!

A key move that paralyses the enemy queenside. Now 13...♖xc6? obviously fails to 14 ♖b5 ♖d7 15 ♖c1, so Black will have to develop the opposite flank first.

13...♗e7 14 ♗e3!

14 ♗xe7? ♖xe7 15 ♖c1 ♖d6 or 14 ♗f4?! ♗f6 were inferior – Suetin.

14...♖d8 15 ♖c1 ♖e8



16 g3!

By 16 ♗e2 ♗b4+ 17 ♖d1 ♖e6 18 ♗f3 ♖xc6 19 ♗xd5 ♖xc1+ 20 ♖xc1 c6 21 ♗xf7 White could reach an endgame with a sound extra pawn, but Suetin wants more. Now the analogous 16...♗b4+?! is met by 17 ♖e2!, intending 17...♖e6 18 ♗g2 ♖xc6 19 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 20 ♗xd5 ♖d7 21 ♖c1 etc.

16...♗g5 17 ♗g2!

White's main priority is to keep the c6-pawn on the board. After 17 ♖d2?! ♗xe3+ 18 fxe3 ♖e7 19 ♗g2 ♖d6 20 ♖hf1 ♖xc6 21 ♖xf7 ♖f8! Black defends.

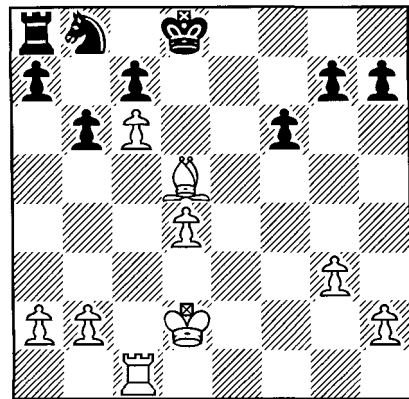
17...♗xe3 18 fxe3 ♖xe3+ 19 ♖d2 ♖e6 20 ♖hf1!

Exploiting the fact that both captures on c6 lose material, White brings the last piece into the battle. Less accurate was 20 ♗xd5?! ♖d6, followed by ...♖xd4+, when the knight could be developed via a6-c5 later on.

20...f6 21 ♖f5! ♖d6

Or 21...♖xc6 22 ♖xd5+ ♖e7 23 ♖h5 etc.

22 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 23 ♗xd5



By skilful play Suetin has managed to swap off the opponent's active pieces, while keeping his c6-pawn alive. Over the following moves Black manages to activate his rook, but not the knight, whose absence in the battle proves fatal for him.

23...♖e7

The immediate 23...♖a6? fails to 24 ♖e1! and 25 ♗f7.

24 ♗g2 ♖a6 25 a3!

A last piece of restriction aimed at the poor knight.

25...♖d8 26 ♖e1+ ♖d6?

Moving the king into a mating net, but after 26...♖f8 27 ♖c3 ♖e8 28 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 29 ♖c4 and 30 ♖d5 Black is also lost due to his absent knight.

27 b4!

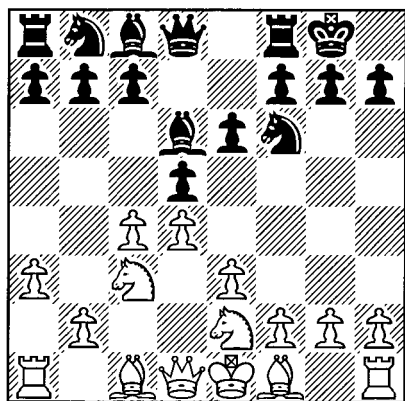
With the inevitable threat of 38 d5 and 39 ♖e6 mate.

27...b5 28 d5 ♖c5 29 bxc5+ ♖xc5 30 ♖e7 1-0

In the next game, White, by some clever pawn play, manages to isolate both a rook and a bishop from the battle.

Game 194
V.Milov-V.Kotronias
 Gibraltar 2009
Nimzo-Indian Defence

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♙b4 4 e3 0-0 5 ♗ge2
 d5 6 a3 ♙d6



A provocative reply, by which Black declares that he is not bothered about c4-c5. This move has lately become a popular alternative to the main line with 6...♙e7.

7 c5 ♙e7 8 b4

Reinforcing the pawn chain is not in vain, as Black might be about to play ...b7-b6 or ...a7-a5.

8...♗bd7

Black prepares ...e6-e5, hitting the base of the opponent's pawn chain. However, practice has shown that, in this particular line, an attack at its edge tends to be more efficient; e.g. 8...b6! 9 ♗g3 c6 10 ♙e2 a5! 11 ♖b1 ♗bd7 12 0-0 axb4 13 axb4 ♙a6 with approximate equality, E.Bareev-V.Kramnik, Monte Carlo (rapid) 2003.

9 ♗g3

9 ♗f4 is also possible, heading for d3 if needed, but with Black apparently aiming

for ...e6-e5, it makes sense to enable ♗f5, depriving him of his "good" bishop.

9...a5!?

Again 9...c6, preparing ...b7-b6, ...a7-a5, ...♙a6 etc, was more to the point, but Black follows his outlined plan.

10 b5!

The space gained by this advance will be of great value later on in the game.

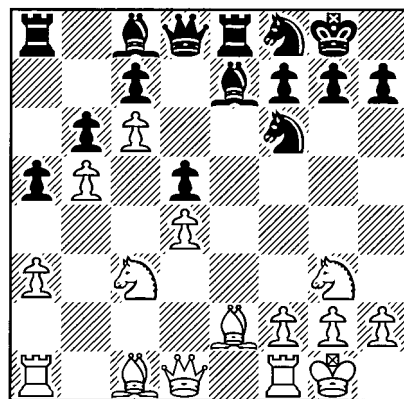
10...e5 11 ♙e2

Now it turns out that 11 ♗f5? drops a pawn after 11...exd4 12 exd4 ♗xc5!, so White just gets on with his development.

11...exd4 12 exd4 ♖e8 13 0-0 b6

Liberating the d6-square. In the event of 13...♗f8 at once, White could proceed as in the game, starting with 14 f4.

14 c6 ♗f8



Black prepares ...♗g6, ...♙d6 etc, with some kingside activity; however...

15 f4!

A cold shower for the opponent. White intends f4-f5 which will leave the bishop on c8, and indirectly the rook on a8, terribly restricted.

15...♗e6

If Black tries to avoid such a scenario by 15...g6, then after 16 f5 ♙xf5 17 ♗xf5 gxf5

18 ♖xf5 ♜g6 19 ♙d3 he is clearly worse anyway – Scherbakov.

16 ♖h1

The immediate 16 f5? obviously failed to 16...♜xd4.

16...♜e4

Otherwise Black will be asphyxiated by f4-f5.

17 ♜cxe4 dxe4 18 ♙e3

Not 18 d5 ♜d4!? with unnecessary complications.

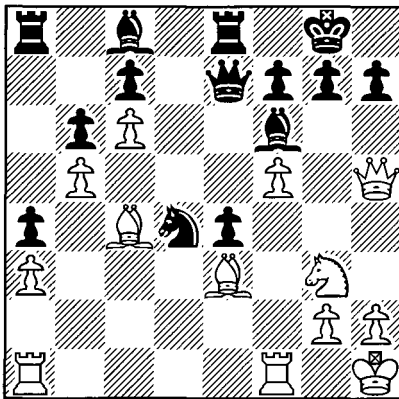
18...♙f6 19 f5!

White sticks to his plan, without bothering about the d4-pawn.

19...♜xd4 20 ♙c4 a4

The prophylactic 20...♖f8 is well met by 21 ♖c1 ♖h8 22 ♗e1 ♗e7 23 ♗f2 ♗e5 24 ♖cd1 ♖d8 25 ♖d2, preparing ♖fd1, when “Black is helpless as he is playing without two pieces” – Scherbakov.

21 ♗h5 ♗e7



22 ♙xd4!

Milov's play in this game is very logical, and teaches us something about priorities in chess. Three moves ago it was worth a pawn to keep restricting the opponent's forces, whereas on this occasion, he has no concern about surrendering the bishop pair

in order to eliminate the opponent's most active piece. 22 ♖ad1 ♜c2 was less convincing.

22...♙xd4 23 ♖ae1 e3 24 ♖f4! ♖d8

Or 24...♙c3 25 ♖e4 ♙xe1 26 ♗xf7+! etc.

25 h3

25 ♖d1 was another good option – Scherbakov, but White is not in a hurry, and first rules out any back rank surprises.

25...♙c3

After 25...♖h8 26 ♜e4 g6 27 ♗h6 White's attack is also decisive; e.g. 27...♙xf5 28 ♜g5 or 27...♙g7 28 ♗xg7+! ♙xg7 29 f6+ – Scherbakov.

26 ♖e4! ♗f6 27 ♖1xe3

With the inevitable threat of 28 ♖e8+. The rest is just agony for Black.

27...g6 28 fxg6 ♖f8

28...hxg6 29 ♖e8+ mates, while 28...♗xg6 fails to 29 ♖xc3.

29 gxf7 1-0

More restriction methods

The number of possible restriction methods in chess is practically unlimited, just like the number of possible plans. The next two games feature methods of a more defensive nature.

Game 195
A.Ardeleanu-R.Zelcic
Schwarzach 2005
Caro-Kann Defence

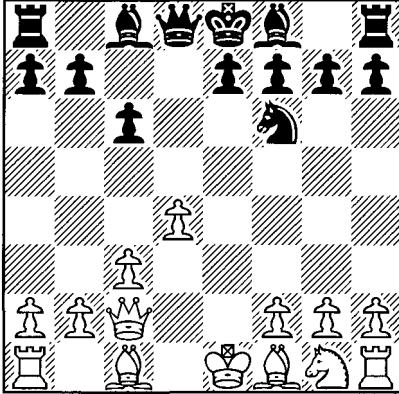
1 e4 c6 2 ♜c3 d5 3 ♗f3!? dxe4

Faced with a curious sideline, Zelcic opts for a typical pawn structure of the Caro-Kann. Both 3...♜f6 and 3...e6 are possible too, whereas 3...d4 4 ♙c4! probably favours White.

4 ♖xe4 ♜d7 5 d4 ♜gf6 6 c3

After 6 ♙c4 ♜b6! 7 ♜xf6+ gxf6 8 ♙b3 ♚xd4 White might not have enough compensation for the pawn.

6...♜xe4 7 ♚xe4 ♜f6 8 ♚c2



8...♙g4!

Black secures an active post for his bishop and, more importantly, interferes with the opponent's ♜g1-f3. Interestingly, Petrosian had already played like this in 1960.

9 ♜e2

The knight has to content himself with a different route. After 9 h3 ♙h5 10 ♙d3?! ♚d5! 11 f3 e6, followed by ...♙d6, Black was even a bit better in M.Szymanski-A.Deviatkin, Warsaw (rapid) 2005.

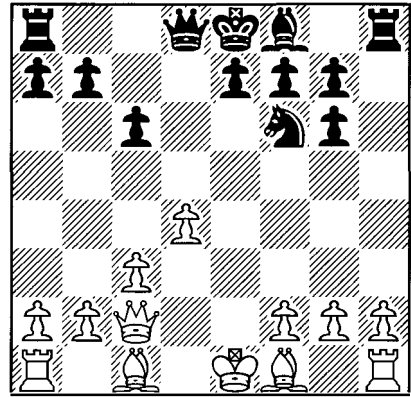
9...♙h5

Securing the bishop in advance from a possible ♜g3, although 9...e6 10 ♜g3 ♚d5! should be fine as well; e.g. 11 h3 ♙h5 12 ♜xh5 ♚xh5 13 ♙e2 ♚g6 with a solid game for Black.

10 ♜f4 ♙g6 11 ♜xg6

After 11 ♚b3 ♚c7 12 ♜xg6 hxg6 13 g3 e6 14 ♙f4 ♚b6 Black has also been doing fine in practice.

11...hxg6

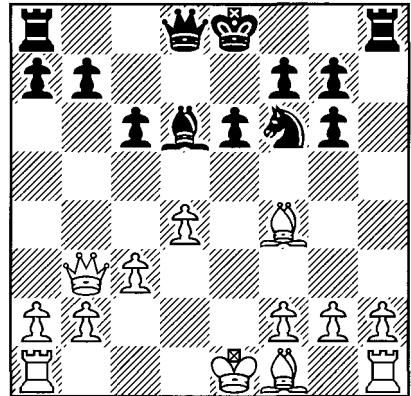


12 ♙f4

Just like Game 190 (Short-Oll), White hurries to complicate Black's typical set-up with ...♚c7 and ...♙d6.

12...e6 13 ♚b3 ♙d6!

Admittedly there was nothing wrong about 13...♚b6, but the text is more ambitious.



14 ♙xd6 ♚xd6 15 g3

It transpires that after 15 ♚xb7 ♜b8 16 ♚xa7 ♜xb2, Black's active pieces and the exposed enemy king more than compensate for the pawn.

15...0-0-0 16 ♙g2 ♜h5!

16...e5 17 0-0-0! was less promising.

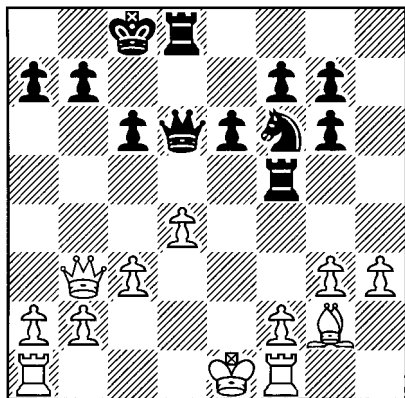
With the text Zelcic seizes the fifth rank, and prepares to meet 17 0-0-0 by 17...♘g4, a fact that explains White's next move.

17 h3 ♖f5!

The opponent's 0-0-0 is again frustrated.

18 ♖f1?

An unfortunate defence of the f2-pawn. 18 ♖c2 was called for.



18...♖e5+!

Exploiting the tactical motif 19 dxе5? ♖d2 mate, Zelcic revokes White's right to castling, in similar fashion to 9 ♖b5+ in Yusupov-Wedberg (Game 186).

19 ♖d2 ♖b5 20 ♖c2 e5

Of course. Now White seems to be completely lost, but Ardeleanu finds the only sensible defence.

21 ♖ad1! exd4 22 ♖c1 d3 23 ♖d2

The loss of a pawn could not be avoided, but at least the king feels a bit safer after the artificial castling.

23...♖e6

23...c5, preparing ...c5-c4, was an interesting alternative.

24 b3 ♖e5 25 ♖fe1 ♘e4 26 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 27 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 28 ♖e3 ♖xe3+?

This exchange yields White reasonable

drawing chances in the rook endgame. By 28...♖f5! Black would have kept a clear advantage, since 29 ♖xa7? ♖e5! wins on the spot.

29 fxе3 ♖d5 30 ♖d2 ♖f5 31 ♖xd3 ♖f3 32 ♖g1

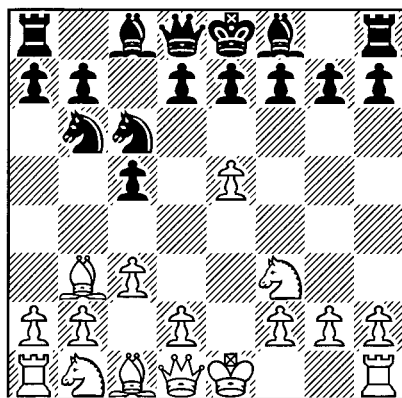
White is still worse, but he eventually saved a draw.

Game 196

E.Sveshnikov-M.Rytshagov

Tallinn (rapid) 2002
Sicilian Defence, Alapin Variation

1 e4 c5 2 c3 ♘f6 3 e5 ♘d5 4 ♘f3 ♘c6 5 ♖c4
♘b6 6 ♖b3



6...d6

The dynamic 6...c4 7 ♖c2 ♖c7 8 ♖e2 g5! is another option in this topical branch of the Alapin Sicilian.

7 exd6 ♖xd6 8 0-0

Currently 8 ♘a3 ♖e6 9 d4 is a more popular choice, when 9...cxd4 is met by 10 ♘b5 ♖d7 11 ♖xe6 ♖xe6+ 12 ♖e3! and ♘bxd4 next, with a lead in development.

8...♖e6

A typical idea in this line, in order to

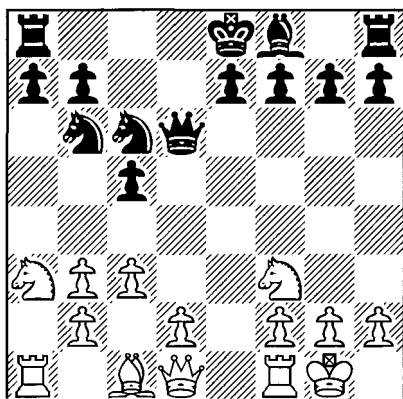
swap the active enemy bishop.

9 ♖a3

The Alapin has its own logics, and this odd move is important in several of its variations. The stereotyped 9 ♕xe6?! ♜xe6 10 ♖e1 offers less after 10...♜d7, followed by ...e7-e6.

9...♕xb3 10 axb3

On 10 ♜xb3 Black can just proceed as in the game.



10...♜d3!

A well-known restriction method, that dates back to the ancient game L.Paulsen-P.Morphy, New York (6th matchgame) 1857. Black obstructs the white d-pawn, at least for the moment, and also avoids an annoying knight jump to b5 or c4.

In contrast, on 10...e6 there can follow 11 d4! cxd4 12 ♖b5 ♜d7 13 ♕f4! ♖d5 14 ♕g3 ♖c8 (or 14...a6? 15 c4, winning a piece) 15 ♖bxd4 ♖xd4 16 ♜xd4 f6 17 ♖fd1! ♕c5 18 ♜e4 with a clear advantage for White – Rogozenco.

11 ♖e1

Or 11 ♖e1 ♜d7! 12 ♖c4 ♖xc4 13 bxc4 e6 with similar play to the game.

11...e6 12 ♖e3 ♜d7

Over the last few moves, Black moved

his queen to a safer square on d7 and, with ...e7-e6, got one step closer to completing his development. On the other hand, White's position wasn't substantially improved by the rook manoeuvre to e3.

13 ♖c4 ♖xc4 14 bxc4 ♖d8

Rogozenco also suggests the simple 14...♕e7!?, when 15 d4 ♖d8 16 ♖d3 cxd4 17 cxd4 0-0 looks fine for Black, while 15 ♜a4 0-0 16 ♖b1, copying Sveshnikov's play in the game, can be met by 16...♜d6, frustrating the b2-b4 advance.

15 ♜a4

Instead of 15 d4 ♕e7, with similar play to the previous note, Sveshnikov prepares b2-b4.

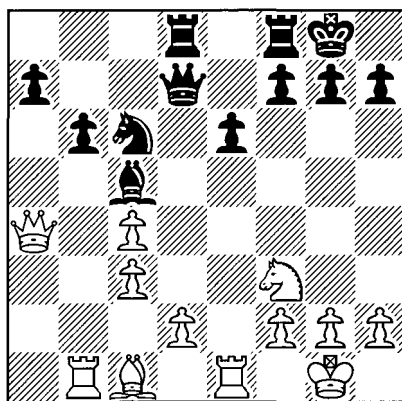
15...♕e7 16 ♖b1 0-0 17 b4 b6

Even simpler was 17...cxb4 18 cxb4 ♖e5! 19 b5 ♖xf3+ 20 ♖xf3 ♕c5 with equality – Rogozenco. After the text White should probably have tried 18 b5, gaining some space, since his next move is tactically flawed.

18 bxc5? ♕xc5!

Black takes the initiative, exploiting the fact that 19 d4? is impossible due to 19...♖xd4.

19 ♖e1



19...e5?!

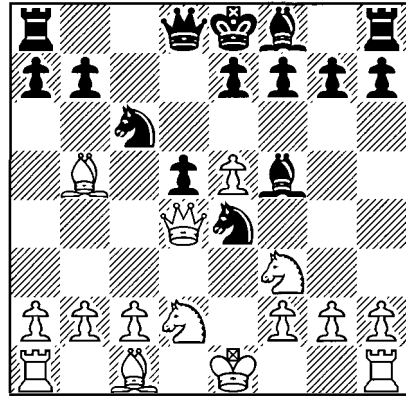
Black misses 19...♘e5! 20 ♖xd7 ♘xf3+ 21 gxf3 ♚xd7 with a favourable endgame; even 19...♗d3!?, repeating our main theme, was interesting for him.

20 ♙a3

White is just in time to simplify the position.

20...♙xa3 21 ♖xa3 ♚fe8 22 d4! ½-½

In view of 22...exd4 23 cxd4 ♚xe1+ 24 ♚xe1 ♘xd4 25 ♘xd4 ♖xd4 26 ♖xa7 ♖xc4 27 ♖xb6, the players agreed to a draw.



Another common restriction method is a pawn sacrifice on a central file. This is the subject of the next two games.

Game 197**P.Keres-L.Schmid****Bamberg 1968***Sicilian Defence, Morra Gambit***1 d4 c5 2 e4 cxd4 3 ♘f3**

After an irregular opening sequence, a kind of delayed Morra Gambit has been reached. At this point, 3...d6, 3...e6 and 3...♘c6 should all lead to a standard Sicilian battle; instead, Schmid tries a more ambitious move.

3...♘f6 4 e5 ♘e4

Black's point – the knight is installed on a good central post, and he is ready to meet 5 ♘xd4? by 5...♖a5+.

5 ♖xd4 d5 6 ♘bd2

Practice has also seen 6 exd6 ♘xd6 7 ♙f4 ♘c6 8 ♖d2 with a slight initiative.

6...♘c6 7 ♙b5 ♙f5

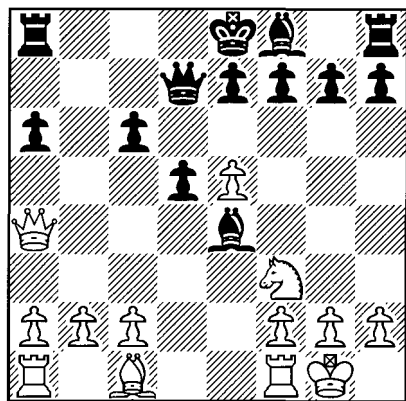
In Caro-Kann style, Schmid activates the bishop before closing the pawn chain with ...e7-e6.

8 0-0 a6?

Too ambitious – Black should have prioritized development over the bishop pair. 8...e6 was called for; e.g. 9 ♖a4 ♖b6 10 ♘xe4 (otherwise 10...♘c5 is possible) 10...♙xe4 11 ♘d4 ♚c8 12 ♙e3 ♙c5 13 c3 a6! 14 ♙xc6+ bxc6 15 b4 ♙xd4 16 ♙xd4 ♖b5! with approximate equality.

9 ♙xc6+ bxc6 10 ♖a4!

Keres hurries to exploit his lead in development.

10...♖d7 11 ♘xe4 ♙xe4

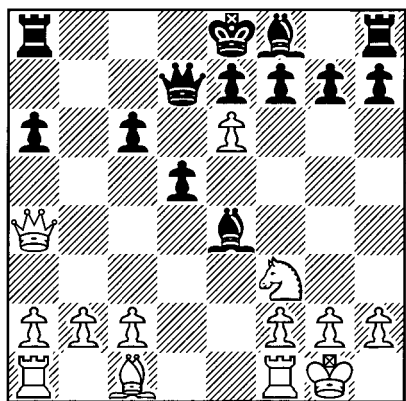
Or 11...dxe4 12 ♘g5!, winning a pawn, since 12...♖d5? runs into 13 c4. After the text Black was perhaps hoping for 12 ♘d4?!

c5 or 12 ♖g5?! ♕f5, followed by ...e7-e6, but Keres has a much stronger move prepared.

12 e6!

A key move. At the price of a mere pawn, White obstructs the opponent's development. Moreover, he forces a minor piece exchange on e4, which will clear the d-file to the benefit of his better developed forces.

This sort of e5-e6 sacrifice occurs in a variety of opening lines: the Alekhine (1 e4 ♖f6 2 e5 ♗d5 3 d4 d6 4 ♗f3 ♗c6 5 c4 ♗b6 6 e6); the Rossolimo Sicilian (1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 ♗c6 3 ♕b5 d6 4 0-0 ♗d7 5 ♕e1 ♗f6 6 c3 a6 7 ♕f1 ♕g4 8 d4 cxd4 9 cxd4 d5 10 e5 ♗g8 (or 10...♗d7) 11 e6); the Slav (1 d4 d5 2 ♗f3 ♗f6 3 c4 dxc4 4 ♗c3 a6 5 e4 b5 6 e5 ♗d5 7 a4 ♕b7 8 e6); and the Grünfeld (1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♗c3 d5 4 ♗f3 ♕g7 5 ♖b3 dxc4 6 ♖xc4 0-0 7 e4 a6 8 e5 b5 9 ♖b3 ♗fd7 10 e6). Occasionally it is Black who effects it; e.g. 1 d4 ♗f6 2 c4 g6 3 g3 ♕g7 4 ♕g2 0-0 5 ♗f3 d6 6 0-0 ♗bd7 7 ♗c3 e5 8 ♖c2 ♕e8 9 ♗d1 e4 10 ♗d2 (or 10 ♗g5) 10...e3.



12...♖xe6

Or 12...fxe6 13 ♗e5 ♖b7 14 ♕e1 ♖b5 15 ♕xe4!? dxe4 16 ♖xe4 with huge compensation for the exchange.

13 ♗g5 ♖g6?!

Moving the queen away from the vulnerable queenside. After 13...♖d7 14 ♗xe4 dxe4 15 ♕f4! e6 16 ♗ad1 ♖b7 17 ♖xe4 ♕e7 18 ♗d3 White's advantage is indisputable, but in the game Black will suffer worse problems.

14 ♗xe4 dxe4 15 ♕f4!

Development and prevention of ...e7-e5.

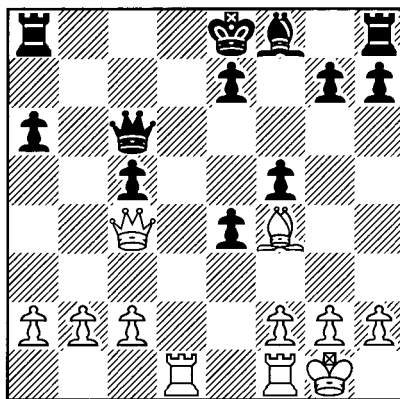
15...f5

Hanging on to the e4-pawn while preparing ...♗f7, an idea that White restricts with his next move.

16 ♖c4! c5!? 17 ♗ad1!

More mobilization. In contrast, 17 ♖xc5?! ♖e6, followed by 18...g6 or 18...♗g8, yields Black some slight hope of concluding development.

17...♖c6



18 f3!

A decisive blow. As soon as the second white rook enters the battle, Black will be doomed.

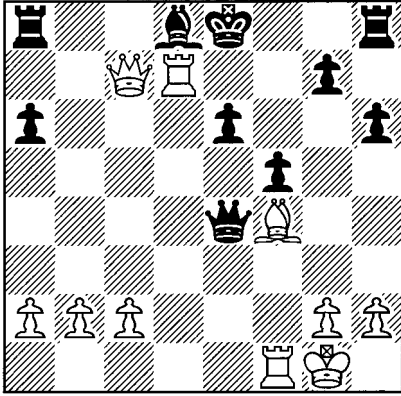
18...h6

18...exf3 19 ♗xf3 just helps White, while on 18...e6 Keres had prepared 19 ♗d6! ♕xd6 20 ♖xe6+ ♗d8 21 ♗d1 with a deadly attack.

19 fxe4 ♖xe4 20 ♖xc5 e6

Or 20...e5 21 ♜c7!, eyeing d7, just like in the game.

21 ♜c7 ♙e7 22 ♖d7 ♙d8



23 ♖xd8+!

This temporary sacrifice finally converts White's strong initiative into something more tangible.

23...♖xd8 24 ♖xg7 ♖f8

Obviously 24...♖d4+? failed to 25 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 26 ♙e5.

25 ♙xh6 ♖d4+

The only move, since 25...♖f7 runs into 26 ♖g8+ ♙e7 27 ♙g5+.

26 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 27 c3 ♖d6 28 ♙xf8 ♙xf8 29 ♖e1!

Restricting the black rook. With two extra pawns, Keres easily won the rook end-game after 29...♙f7 30 ♙f2 ♙f6 31 ♙e2 e5 32 ♖d1 ♖b6 33 b3 ♙g5 34 c4 etc.

Game 198
F.Nijboer-J.Hector
Wijk aan Zee 2003
Spanish Opening

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 ♙c5

One of the oldest Spanish variations, which was sometimes used by Steinitz in his time.

4 c3 ♙b6

4...♗f6 and the sharp 4...f5 are more popular options.

5 d4 exd4 6 cxd4 ♗ce7

Preparing ...c7-c6 and ...d7-d5, an idea which White prevents with his next move.

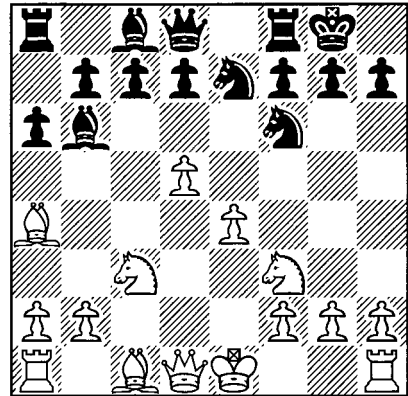
7 d5! ♗f6

After 7...c6 8 ♙a4 d6 9 ♗c3 ♗f6 10 ♙g5 White also has a more active game.

8 ♗c3 a6 9 ♙a4!

The correct retreat square, so as to keep preventing ...d7-d6.

9...0-0



At this point, both 10 0-0 d6 and 10 ♙g5 ♗g6, followed by ...h7-h6, should be fine for Black, but Nijboer has a stronger move prepared.

10 d6!

A key advance that severely obstructs Black's queenside development.

10...cxd6 11 ♙g5

Of course, 11 ♖xd6? ♙c7 and 12...d5 next wasn't White's intention.

11...♗g4?

Preparing ...f7-f6 in order to release the

annoying pin, but this will leave the king-side more vulnerable; besides which, it does nothing to solve the problem with the queenside pieces.

Nijboer indicates 11...d5 12 ♖xf6 gxf6 13 exd5 d6 14 0-0 with a clear advantage for White; even so Black would have much more activity than in the game after, let's say, 14...♖h8 and 15...♗g8 next.

12 0-0 f6 13 ♖f4 ♘e5 14 ♗c1

White keeps ignoring the d6-pawn, and just brings more pieces to the battle.

14...♗c7 15 ♘d5 ♘7c6

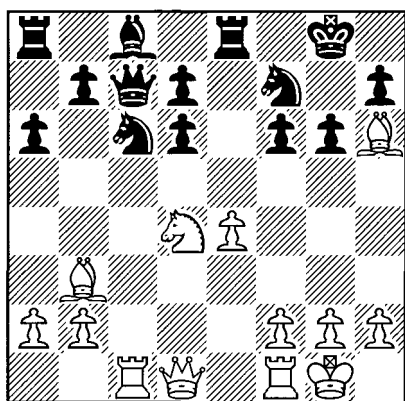
Or 15...♘xd5 16 ♖b3!, followed by ♖xd5 – Wedberg.

16 ♘xc7 ♗xc7 17 ♘d4!

By means of the threat of 18 ♘f5 White provokes a further weakening in Black's kingside.

17...g6 18 ♖h6 ♗e8 19 ♖b3+ ♘f7

This looks awkward, but 19...♖h8 failed to 20 f4! ♗b6 21 fxe5, when both 21...dxe5 22 ♗xf6 and 21...♘xd4 22 exf6! are fatal for Black – Nijboer.



20 ♘f5!

A strong sacrifice, motivated by the fact that Black is still one rook and one bishop down in the battle.

20...♗e6

Practically forced, since 20...gxf5 21 exf5, followed by 22 ♗h5, is terminal.

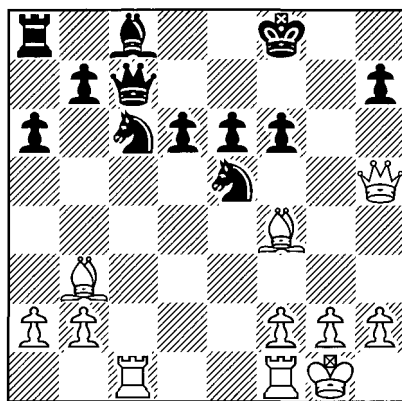
21 ♖f4

Now Black has no other choice than to accept the "gift".

21...gxf5 22 exf5 ♖f8

An early resignation, but 22...♗e7 23 ♗g4+ led to a decisive attack; e.g. 23...♖f8 24 ♖xf7 ♗xf7 25 ♖h6+ ♖e7 26 ♗fe1+, or 23...♖h8 24 ♗h4 ♘g5 (24...♖g7 runs into 25 ♗c3!) 25 ♖xg5 fvg5 26 ♗h6! ♗d8 27 f6 – Nijboer.

23 fxe6 dxe6 24 ♗h5 ♘fe5



25 ♗fd1!

The last piece joins the party, and prevents the consolidating 25...♗f7.

25...d5 26 ♖xe5 fxe5 27 ♗c3 ♖e7 28 ♖xd5! 1-0

In view of 28...exd5 29 ♗xh7+ and 30 ♗xd5+ next, Black resigned.

Restriction of plans

Finally, let us see two positional masterpieces by Karpov and Petrosian, which feature all three types of restriction mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, with emphasis on preventing the opponent's plans.

Game 199

A.Karpov-V.Smyslov

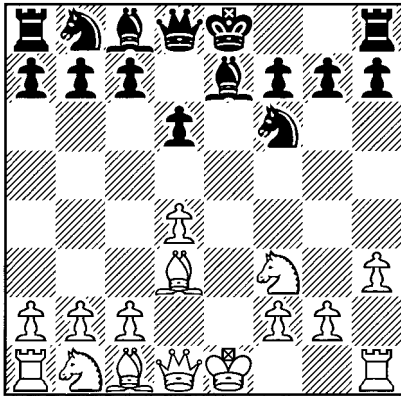
USSR Team Championship 1972

Petroff's Defence

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♗xe5 d6 4 ♘f3 ♗xe4 5
d4 ♙e7 6 ♙d3 ♗f6

Quite a passive way of treating the Petroff. 6...d5 is the main line, either here or on the previous move.

7 h3!



A simple piece of restriction directed at the bishop on c8, and one which we already saw in Radjabov-Torre (Game 191).

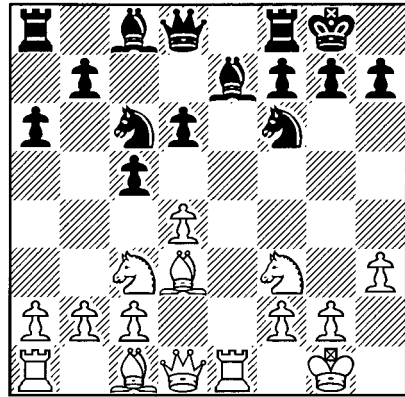
7...0-0 8 0-0 c5?!

This advance doesn't contribute a lot to Black's position and might even harm his pawn structure. 8...♖e8, followed by ...♗bd7-f8, was a more solid choice.

9 ♗c3 ♗c6 10 ♖e1

White maintains the central tension, aware that after 10...cxd4?! 11 ♗b5, followed by 12 ♗bxd4, Black doesn't have sufficient activity to compensate for the IQP on d6. Less promising was 10 d5?! ♗b4 11 ♙c4 ♙f5 etc.

10...a6



Black prepares ...b7-b5, an idea that Karpov will prevent with great fervour over the following moves.

11 d5!

First the knight should be dislodged from c6, since the immediate 11 a4?! permits the annoying 11...♗b4.

11...♗a7?!

Here this piece will be a problem child for the rest of the game. 11...♗b4 was more active, although after 12 ♙f1 ♙f5 13 ♖e2 a5 (a sad necessity in view of the threat of 14 a3) 14 ♙f4 ♖e8 15 a3 ♗a6 16 ♗d2, preparing ♗c4, White has a pleasant edge anyway.

12 a4! ♙d7 13 a5! ♖e8

Or 13...♗b5 14 ♗a4!, seizing the b6-square and leaving the enemy knight useless on b5. At this point, neither 14...♞xa5? 15 ♖xe7, nor 14...♗xd5? 15 c4 works for Black.

14 ♙f1

This and the subsequent moves with the other bishop are rather typical in the present structure. On f1 and h2, the bishops are active and, at the same time, protected from any enemy threats.

14...h6

Mastering Opening Strategy

Smyslov intends 15...♙f8 in order to swap rooks, and first rules out an annoying pin with ♙g5. Unfortunately, the problem with the queen's knight will become more evident the fewer pieces remain on the board. In this sense, 14...♘b5!? seems preferable, redirecting it to c7, now that 15 ♖a4 no longer works due to 15...♗xa5.

15 ♙f4 ♙f8 16 ♖xe8

Obviously 16 ♗d2 ♖xe1 17 ♖xe1? failed to 17...♗xa5.

16...♗xe8 17 ♙h2 ♗d8 18 ♘d2 ♗c7

Some prophylaxis against the imminent 19 ♘c4, but Karpov has other plans.

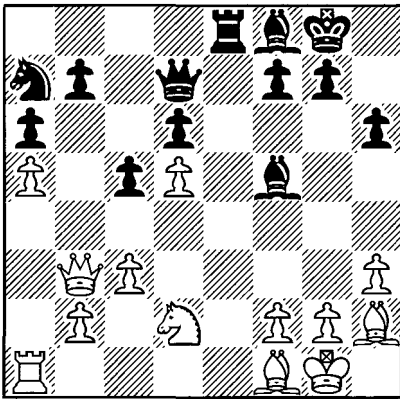
19 ♘de4!

Swapping the opponent's most active piece, consistent with the note to Black's 14th move.

19...♘xe4 20 ♘xe4 ♙f5 21 ♘d2 ♖e8 22 c3

Seeing that Black can't undertake much, White takes his time.

22...♗d8 23 ♗b3 ♗d7



24 c4!

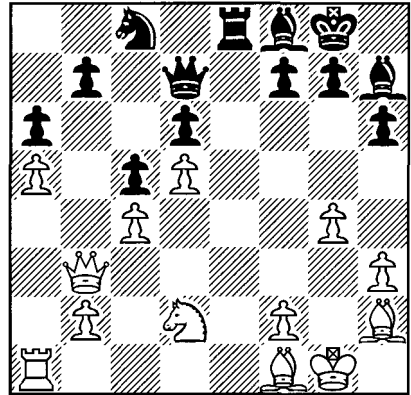
After 24 ♘c4 ♘c8 White doesn't really make progress on the queenside, and Black's bad knight would actually be doing a good defensive job on c8, protecting the weak points at d6 and b6. With the text

Karpov instead prepares a breakthrough on the queenside, an idea which will become evident five moves later.

24...♘c8 25 g4!

A useful prelude to the next move, increasing White's light square control and providing the king with a flight square on g2.

25...♙h7



26 ♙d3!

Black has to accept the exchange of another active piece, since 26...f5?! 27 ♗c2 doesn't favour him.

26...♙xd3 27 ♗xd3 g6 28 ♖b1!

Finally, the rook gained access to b1, and now b2-b4, clearing its way towards the b7-pawn, can't be prevented.

28...♙g7 29 b4 cxb4 30 ♖xb4 ♗c7 31 ♘b3

Protecting the a5-pawn and preventing ...♗c5 at the same time. By the way, the fact that Black can't get his knight to c5 had to be considered when playing b2-b4.

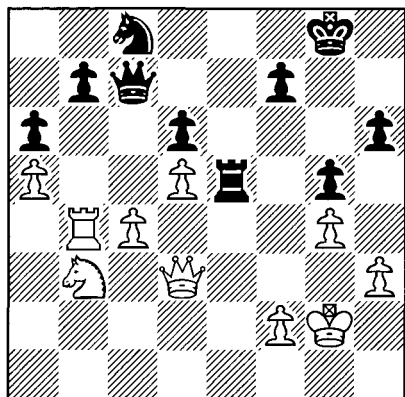
31...♙e5

A liberating attempt with 31...b6? fails to 32 axb6 ♘xb6 33 c5!, so Smyslov opts to swap the powerful bishop on h2.

32 ♙xe5 ♖xe5 33 ♙g2 g5?

Preparing ...♘e7-g6-f4, but this idea is

powerfully prevented by Karpov's next move. Black should have preferred either 33...♖e7 34 ♖d4 ♗c7, with a waiting game, or 33...b6, trying to improve the knight, when 34 ♖a4! keeps the advantage.



34 ♗d4!

With this small move White gets ready to meet 34...♗e7? by 35 ♗b6!, winning a pawn and forcing the exchange of queens at the same time. Thus Smyslov is limited to passive defence, which would have been easier to conduct with the g-pawn still on g6.

34...♗e7 35 ♗b6 ♖e1 36 ♖b3 ♗e2 37 ♖f3! ♖e5

In view of the threat 38 ♗e4, the rook has to retreat.

38 ♖e3 f6

After 38...♖xe3+?! 39 fxe3!, followed by 40 ♗e4, the black knight is badly missed on d7.

39 ♗e4 ♖g7 40 ♖g2!

Creating the threat of 41 ♗g3 ♖xe3 42 ♗f5+. Another good option was 40 ♗g3 ♖xe3+ 41 fxe3 and 42 ♗f5(+) next.

40...♗c7?

This loses on the spot, though after 40...♖g8 41 ♗g3, heading for f5, or even 41

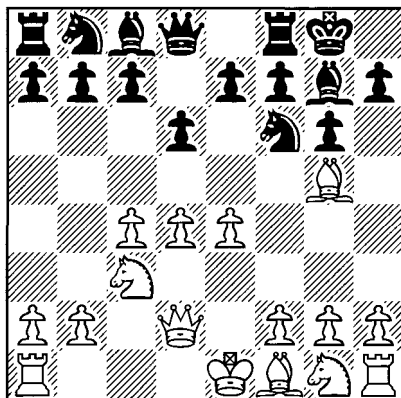
♖f1!?, intending ♖e2-d3 and ♖f3, Black's task also remains very difficult.

41 ♖f3! b5 42 axb6 1-0

In view of 42...♗xb6 43 ♗xb6 ♗xb6 44 ♗xd6 with a hopeless endgame, or 42...♗xb6 43 ♗xf6, heading for e8.

Game 200
T.V.Petrosian-E.Gufeld
 USSR Championship,
 Moscow 1961
King's Indian Defence

1 c4 g6 2 d4 ♖g7 3 ♗c3 ♗f6 4 e4 0-0 5 ♖g5 d6 6 ♗d2



At first sight, White appears to be preparing a kingside attack with ♖h6 and h4-h5, but the idea behind his set-up is quite different: to restrict Black's typical counterplay with ...e7-e5, ...♗h5, ...f7-f5 etc, now that the bishop on g5 can't be easily chased away.

Incidentally, had Black played 5...h6 on the previous move, then after 6 ♖e3, followed by f2-f3 and ♗d2, White gains a tempo for his development thanks to the attack on h6.

6...c5

A natural reaction, which takes the game into Benoni or Benko waters, depending on Black's preferences.

7 d5 ♖a5

7...e6 and 7...b5 are more popular options, in accordance with the previous note.

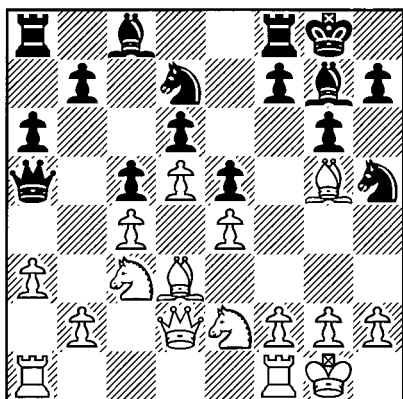
8 ♗d3 a6 9 ♗ge2 e5?!

Such a closure of the centre will leave Black rather short of counterplay. A more modern approach is 9...b5 in Benko style, or the flexible 9...♗bd7 first.

10 0-0 ♗bd7 11 a3

The first step to a future queenside expansion with b2-b4.

11...♗h5



With his last move Black signalled the plan of ...f7-f5, to which Petrosian finds a subtle antidote.

12 f3!

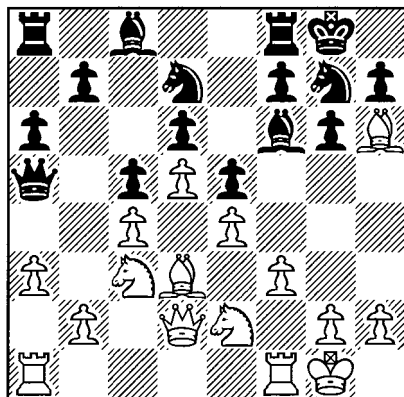
Thus White enables the idea of a kingside grip by g2-g4 and ♗g3 while, more importantly, preparing to meet 12...f5 by 13 exf5 gxf5 14 ♖c2! with an annoying attack on f5, now that the f2-f3 move has ruled out the reply 14...e4. In contrast, 12 ♗e7 ♗e8 13 ♗xd6? failed to 13...♖b6 - *Chess-Base*.

12...♗f6

Gufeld vacates g7 for the knight in advance of g2-g4, but now his kingside pieces become a bit awkwardly placed.

Perhaps 12...♖c7!? was more promising, when 13 g4 ♗hf6 14 ♗g3 can be met by 14...b5! 15 cxb5 c4, recovering the pawn on the next move with some counterplay. Probably Petrosian wouldn't have proceeded so straightforwardly, perhaps preferring another useful move like 13 ♖h1!? while awaiting Black's next step.

13 ♗h6 ♗g7



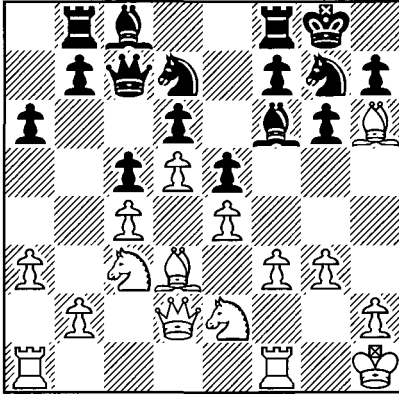
14 g3!

No hurry. White keeps the option of g3-g4, and also enables the f3-f4 breakthrough, depending on Black's coming play.

14...♖b8 15 ♖h1!

Another piece of restriction, or prophylaxis if you prefer. With his king safe from any checks on the g1-a7 diagonal, White gets ready to meet the intended 15...b5 by 16 cxb5 axb5 17 b4!, when 17...cxb4 18 axb4 ♖xb4? 19 ♗e3!, followed by 20 ♗fb1, traps the black queen, while 17...♖a6 18 ♗xb5! wins a pawn since 18...♖xb5? runs into 19 a4. In contrast, 15 a4?! would be less flexible.

15...♙c7



16 b3!

Preventing the idea of 16...b5 17 cxb5 c4. As a result, Black has to forget about queenside counterplay, and now turns his attention to the opposite flank.

16...♙e7 17 ♖ab1 ♙h8

Just like five moves ago, 17...f5?! is strongly met by 18 exf5 gxf5 19 ♙c2!, so Gufeld takes preparatory actions.

18 ♖b2!

The immediate 18 b4 permits 18...b5!? 19 cxb5 c4.

18...♞f6 19 b4!

With the black knight having just left the queenside, the time is right to strike there.

19...♞g8 20 ♙e3 f5

At last. After the more cautious 20...b6 21 bxc5 bxc5 22 ♖xb8 ♙xb8 23 ♖b1, and ♙b2 next, White is clearly better – *ChessBase*.

21 bxc5 dxc5 22 ♖fb1 ♞f6

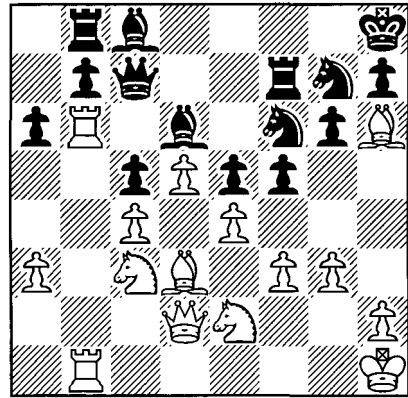
At this point, 22...b6?! is strongly met by 23 ♞a4, while 22...fxe4 23 ♞xe4!? ♖xf3 24 ♖b6 ♞f5 25 ♙g5 leads to a clear initiative for White.

23 ♖b6! ♙d6

In view of lines like 23...♞d7? 24 d6! ♙xd6 25 ♞d5, Black decides to blockade the d-pawn.

24 ♙h6 ♖f7

Unpinning the knight in order to enable a later ...♞f5. If 24...fxe4 25 ♞xe4 ♞xe4 26 ♙xe4 ♖f7 in the same spirit, then White has the restrictive 27 g4! – *ChessBase*, whereas it is not clear what Black gains from 24...♞d7 25 ♖6b2.



25 ♞g1

Thus White prepares ♞h3-g5 on some occasions. The prophylactic 25 ♙g2 was interesting too; e.g. 25...fxe4 26 ♙xg7+! (ruling out ...♞f5) 26...♙xg7 27 ♞xe4 ♞xe4 28 ♙xe4, intending ♞c3, ♙d3 and ♞e4, with a pleasant advantage.

25...f4?

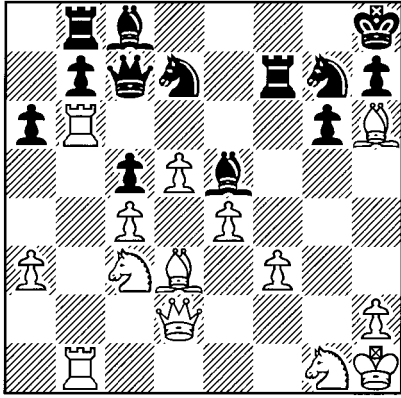
A suicidal attack. 25...fxe4 was called for, when 26 ♞xe4 ♞xe4 27 ♙xe4 ♞f5 28 ♞h3! keeps a clear initiative.

26 gxf4 ♞d7

Perhaps Gufeld had overlooked something in the line 26...exf4 27 ♖xd6! ♙xd6 28 ♙xf4 ♞xe4 29 ♙xd6 ♞xd2 30 ♙xb8 ♞xb1 31 ♙xb1 with a huge edge for White in the endgame.

27 fxe5! ♙xe5

Or 27...♘xb6? 28 exd6 ♖xd6 29 e5! ♗d8
30 ♕g5 ♗c7 31 d6 ♗c6 32 ♕e4 etc.



At this point Black perhaps expected 28 ♖b6 ♘h5! with some dark square play in exchange for the pawn; however...

28 ♖e6!

Surprising, and very strong. On e6 the rook severely obstructs Black's play and is ready to sacrifice itself on e5 whenever the knight leaves d7; e.g. 28...♘f6? 29 ♖xe5! ♗xe5 30 ♕f4, or 28...♘f8 29 ♖xe5! ♗xe5 30 f4 ♗h5 31 f5! gxf5 32 ♕e2 ♗g6 33 ♘f3! with a crushing advantage.

28...b5?!

This counterattack is bound to fail, but it was difficult to give Black good advice.

29 cxb5 c4 30 ♖c6! ♗d8 31 ♕xc4

With three extra pawns and superior activity, the rest is easy for White.

31...♗h4 32 ♖c1 ♘h5 33 ♕g5!

Forcing Black into a useless sacrifice.

33...♘g3+ 34 ♕g2 ♘xe4 35 ♘xe4 ♗xh2+ 36 ♕f1 ♖xf3+ 37 ♘xf3 ♗h1+ 38 ♕f2 1-0

Exercises

Game 201

P.Morphy-C.H.Stanley

New York (blindfold match) 1857

Evans Gambit

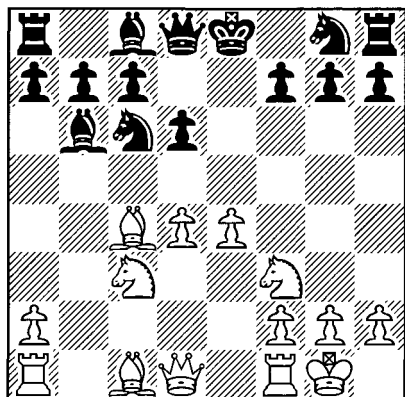
1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♗c6 3 ♕c4 ♕c5 4 b4 ♕xb4 5 c3 ♕a5

5...♕e7 6 d4 ♗a5 is another popular reply to the Evans Gambit.

6 d4 exd4 7 0-0 d6

7...♗ge7, followed by 8...d5, is supposed to be Black's best try, whereas 7...dxc3?! 8 ♖b3 ♗e7 9 ♗xc3 ♗f6 10 e5! yields White a crushing attack.

8 cxd4 ♕b6 9 ♗c3



9...♗f6?!

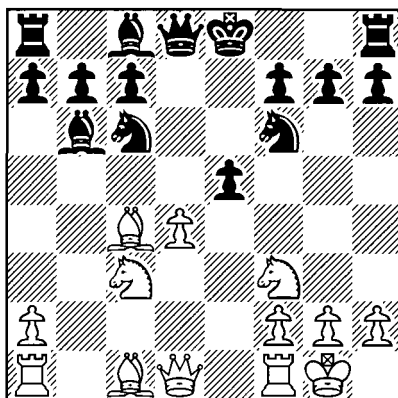
Quite an indifferent move, as if this was a quiet Italian. After 9...♗ge7?! 10 ♗g5!, with the idea 10...0-0? 11 ♗h5, Black is also in great danger; so 9...♗a5 was called for, when 10 ♕d3 ♗e7, followed by ...0-0, should be playable for him.

10 e5!

Clearing lines towards the enemy king.

10 ♕g5 h6 was less convincing.

10...dxe5



Your move...

Game 202

R.J.Fischer-M.Matulovic

Palma de Mallorca

Interzonal 1970

Sicilian Defence,

Rossolimo Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 ♗c6 3 ♕b5 g6 4 c3

4 0-0 is more flexible, when the plan of c2-c3 and d2-d4 is sometimes discarded in favour of other set-ups; e.g. after 4...♕g7 5 ♗e1 e5 6 ♕xc6 dxc6 7 d3, followed by ♗bd2-c4.

4...♗f6 5 ♗e2 ♕g7 6 e5 ♗d5 7 ♗c4?!

This early pawn-grabbing runs into a strong antidote. 7 0-0 0-0 8 d4 seems more

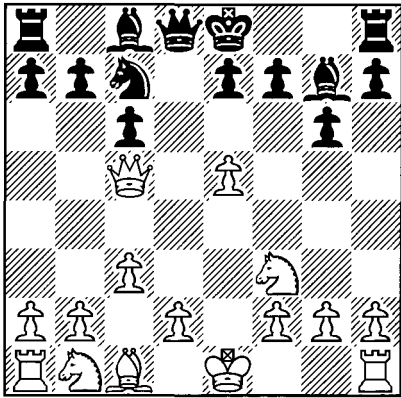
Mastering Opening Strategy

natural, although Black has few problems after 8...cxd4 9 cxd4 d6, so White should rather prefer 6 0-0 0-0 7 d4, or even the flexible 7 ♖d1!? first.

7...♗c7 8 ♖xc6

After 8 ♖xc6?! b6 9 ♖c4 ♗xe5 the pawn trade clearly favours Black – Matulovic.

8...dxc6 9 ♖xc5



Your move...

Game 203 M.T.Arnold-A.Stamnov Chicago 2008 Caro-Kann Defence

1 c4 c6 2 e4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 d4 ♗f6 5 ♗c3

From the English we have transposed to the Panov Attack in the Caro-Kann.

5...♗c6 6 ♖g5 dxc4

A risky, but quite popular choice. 6...e6 and 6...♗e6 are safer options.

7 d5

A gambit with 7 ♖xc4 is possible as well.

7...♗e5 8 ♖d4 ♗d3+?!

“Don’t swap a developed piece for an undeveloped one” is a possible addition to the existing opening principles. Practice

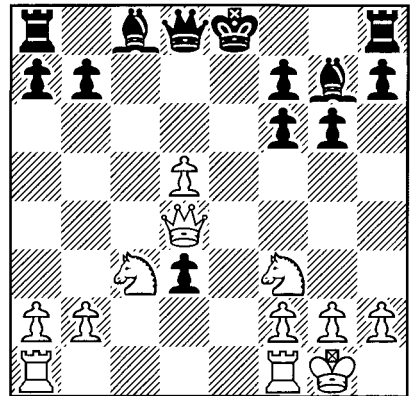
favours 8...h6! 9 ♖h4 ♗g6, when both 10 ♖xf6 exf6 11 ♖xc4 ♖d6, followed by ...0-0, and 10 ♖g3 e5! should be okay for Black.

9 ♖xd3 cxd3 10 ♗f3!

Speeding up development, the pawn can wait. After 10 ♖xd3?! g6 11 ♖xf6 exf6 12 ♗f3 ♖d6 13 0-0 0-0 Black has less to worry about.

10...g6 11 ♖xf6 exf6 12 0-0 ♖g7

With the white queen still on d4, 12...♖d6? clearly fails to 13 ♗e4.



Your move...

Game 204 F.Nijboer-S.Ernst Groningen 2004 Petroff's Defence

1 e4 e5 2 ♗f3 ♗f6 3 ♗xe5 d6 4 ♗f3 ♗xe4 5 d4 d5 6 ♖d3 ♖d6 7 0-0 0-0 8 c4 ♗f6

A surprising retreat of Black’s most active piece. Practice sees 8...c6 almost invariably here, keeping the presence in the centre.

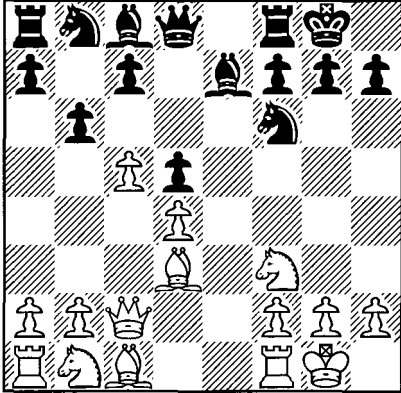
9 c5 ♖e7 10 ♖c2

Preparing to meet 10...♖g4 by 11 ♗e5. Other logical reactions are 10 ♗e5, seizing

the centre, and the restrictive 10 h3.

10...b6?!

A badly timed attack on White's pawn chain. 10...♖c6, speeding up development, was preferable.



Your move...

Game 205
K.Kulaots-E.Alekseev
Moscow 2004
Queen's Indian Defence

1 d4 ♜f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♜f3 b6 4 g3 ♙a6 5 ♚b3

A viable alternative to the main line with 5 b3. The gambit 5 ♚c2 ♙b7 6 ♙g2 c5 7 d5!? has recently also become very popular in practice.

5...c6

An interesting reaction – Black plans to recapture on d5 with the c-pawn after ...d7-d5, thus reaching a Slav structure where his light-squared bishop would outstrip its white counterpart.

6 ♙g5

6 ♙f4 is more popular, when Black often delays ...d7-d5 for a few moves, starting with 6...♙e7.

6...d5 7 cxd5 cxd5 8 ♙xf6

White hurries to swap on f6 before ...♙e7xf6 is possible.

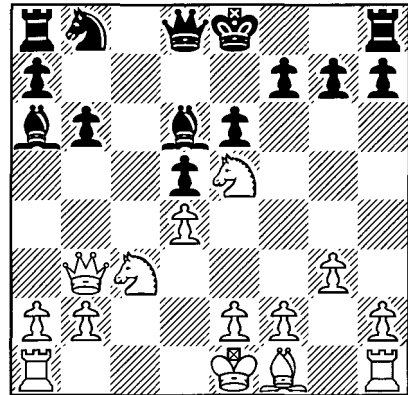
8...♚xf6 9 ♖c3 ♚d8

Rather passive. S.Halkias-E.Postny, Mureck 1998, saw the inventive 9...♚e7!?, heading for b4 or b7, and after 10 a3 ♚b7 11 ♙g2 ♖d7 12 0-0 ♙e7 13 ♚fe1 0-0 Black had little to worry about.

10 ♖e5!

Seizing the centre and eyeing the opponent's Achilles' heel on c6.

10...♙d6?!



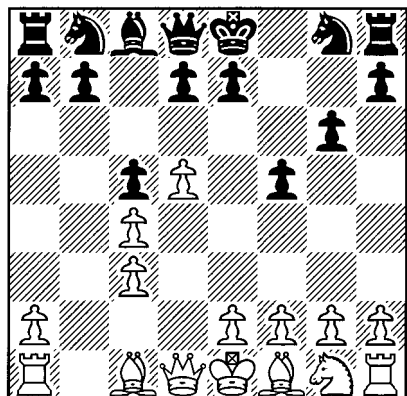
Your move...

Game 206
J.Hellsten-O.Panno
Mendoza 2004
Modern Defence

1 d4 g6 2 c4 ♙g7 3 ♖c3 c5 4 d5 ♙xc3+ 5 bxc3 f5

A double-edged variation that has gained popularity in recent years. White's pawn structure has been damaged and, while the position remains closed, his bishop pair won't be much of an asset, a

fact that explains my next move.



6 e4! fxe4 7 f3 e5

7...exf3?! 8 ♖xf3, followed by 9 ♗d3 and 10 0-0, would fully justify White's gambit, but 7...d6 8 fxe4 ♖f6 was a safer choice, with complex play.

8 dxe6

Sticking to the idea of opening the position for the bishops. Obviously 8 fxe4? failed to 8...♗h4+, while 8 d6 ♖c6 9 ♖h3 ♗a5 didn't please me either.

8...♗e7

A sharp choice. After 8...dxe6 9 ♗xd8+ ♖xd8 10 ♗g5+ ♖e8 11 0-0-0 White should be slightly better, whereas 8...♖c6!? is well met by 9 ♖h3 ♖f6 10 fxe4, when both 10...♖xe4 11 ♗d3 and 10...0-0 11 ♗h6 ♗e8 12 ♗d3, followed by 13 0-0, yield him a slight initiative.

9 ♖h3!

Development first. After 9 exd7+?! ♗xd7, followed by 10...♖c6 and 11...0-0-0, it is Black who is ahead in development.

9...♖f6 10 ♗e2 exf3?!

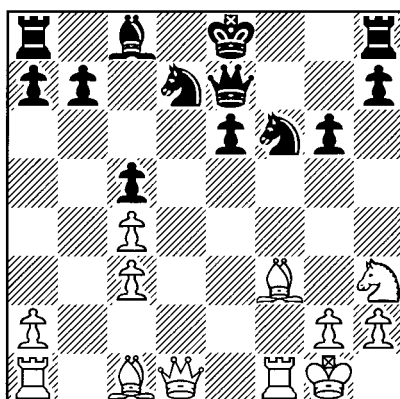
Much safer was 10...dxe6 11 0-0 e5 12 ♖f2 0-0! 13 ♖xe4 ♖xe4 14 ♗d5+ ♖g7 15 ♗xe4 ♗f5 16 ♗e3 with just a minimal edge for White.

11 ♗xf3 dxe6

Or 11...♗xe6+ 12 ♖f2! 0-0 13 ♗e1 ♗xc4 14 ♖g1 d5 15 ♗g5! ♖bd7 16 ♖f4 with a strong initiative.

12 0-0 ♖bd7

After 12...0-0?! 13 ♗h6 ♗d8 14 ♗e2 e5 15 ♗g5 Black is again under strong pressure.



Your move...

Game 207
J.Hellsten-N.De Firmian
 Bermuda 1997
Sicilian Defence, Alapin Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 d6 3 c3 ♖f6 4 ♗e2 g6 5 0-0 ♗g7 6 ♗b5+

In order to set up a pawn centre quickly, White moves the bishop again. 6 ♗e1, followed by ♗f1, is another option.

6...♖c6

6...♗d7 is much more common, when, after the swap on d7, White can prepare d2-d4 by either ♗e1 or ♗e2.

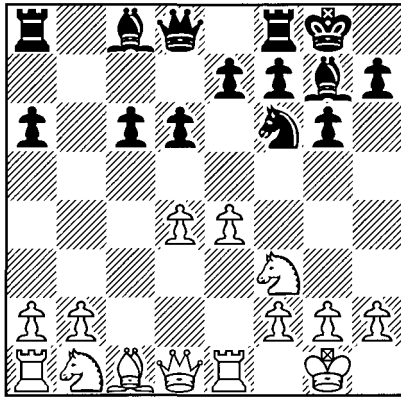
7 d4 a6

7...♖xe4? obviously fails to 8 d5 a6 9 ♗d3, but 7...0-0 8 d5 ♖b8 is interesting,

followed by ...e7-e6, with some kind of Benoni battle where Black might have more counterplay than in the game.

8 ♖xc6+ bxc6 9 ♜e1 cxd4 10 cxd4 0-0

Or 10...♗g4 11 ♜bd2! 0-0 12 h3 ♖xf3 13 ♜xf3 with a slight advantage.



Your move...

Game 208
G.Maroczy-H.Pillsbury
Nuremberg 1896
Four Knights Game

1 e4 e5 2 ♜f3 ♜f6 3 ♜c3 ♜c6 4 ♖b5 ♖c5
4...♖b4 and 4...♜d4 are more frequent reactions to the Four Knights Game.

5 0-0 0-0 6 ♜xe5 ♜e8

After 6...♜xe5 7 d4 ♖d6 8 f4! White soon regains the piece, with some initiative.

7 ♜f3

7 ♜xc6?! dxc6 is quite risky; e.g. 8 ♖c4 ♜xe4!? 9 ♜xe4 ♜xe4 10 ♖xf7+ ♖h8! with some initiative for the pawn.

7...♜xe4 8 d4 ♜xc3 9 bxc3 ♖e7

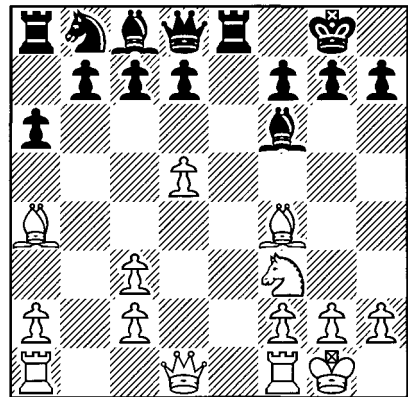
9...♖f8 is more natural, keeping the e-file clear for the rook.

10 d5!

The only way to fight for an advantage – White gains some space and expels the black knight from the centre.

10...♜b8 11 ♖f4 a6 12 ♖a4! ♖f6?!

12...b5 13 ♖b3 d6 seems preferable, followed by ...♜d7 to reactivate the knight, although after 14 ♜d4 ♖b7 15 c4 bxc4 16 ♖a4!? ♜f8 17 ♜f5 ♖f6 18 ♜b1 White had some initiative in S.Conquest-J.Garriga Nu-alart, Olot 1994.



Your move...

Game 209
V.Anand-G.Kamsky
Las Palmas
(11th matchgame) 1995
Sicilian Defence, Najdorf Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♜xd4 ♜f6 5 ♜c3 a6 6 ♖e3 e6 7 ♖e2

The point of such a move order might be to sidestep the 6 ♖e2 e5 variation.

7...♖e7 8 f4 ♜c6 9 ♜d2!?

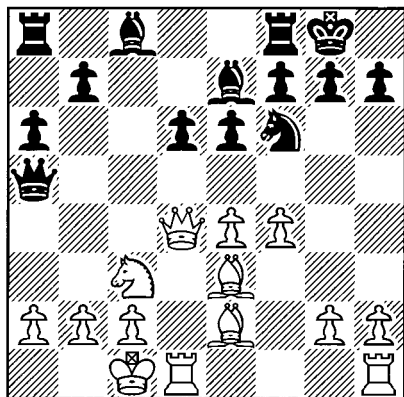
Preparing 0-0-0, quite an unusual idea in connection with f2-f4. In contrast, 9 0-0 0-0 leads to a basic position of the Classical Scheveningen.

9...♗xd4

By this capture Black enables a quick ...b7-b5 later on.

10 ♖xd4 0-0 11 0-0-0 ♜a5?

In the event of 11...b5 at once, 12 e5 is a bit annoying, so Kamsky prepares this advance. However, the prophylactic 11...♗d7 was a better idea in this sense, with rather encouraging results for Black in practice.



Your move...

Game 210
D.Rojas-A.Lema
Tena 2008
Tarrasch Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♗c3 c5 4 ♗f3 ♗c6

A sharper battle arises after 4...cxd4 5 ♗xd4 e5 6 ♗db5 a6 7 ♖a4 or 6...d4 7 ♗d5.

5 ♗f4 ♗f6 6 e3

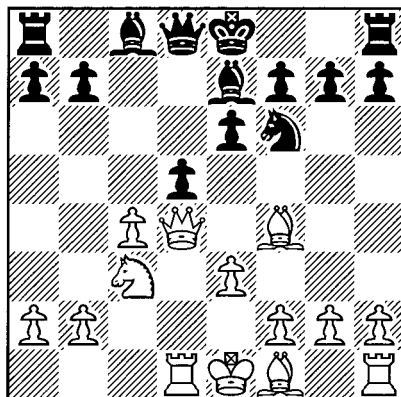
White is applying a modest, but fully playable line against the Tarrasch.

6...cxd4 7 ♗xd4 ♗xd4

7...♗e7 or 7...♗b4 was preferable, speeding up development, since 8 ♗xc6 bxc6 at any moment just helps Black in reinforcing her centre.

8 ♖xd4 ♗e7 9 ♗d1

Stepping up the pressure at d5. A good alternative was 9 cxd5 exd5 10 ♗b5+! ♗d7 11 ♗xd7+ ♖xd7 12 0-0, with a slight but enduring advantage in this simplified IQP position.



Your move...

Game 211
E.Bareev-A.Mikhailchishin
European Team Championship,
Plovdiv 2003
Queen's Gambit Accepted

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4

The most straightforward reaction to the Queen's Gambit Accepted.

3...♗f6

A popular reply, which leads to play reminiscent of the Alekhine's Defence, but with a stronghold on d5 for Black. 3...e5 is the other main direction.

4 e5 ♗d5 5 ♗xc4 ♗b6 6 ♗d3

In the event of 6 ♗b3 Black usually continues 6...♗c6 7 ♗e3 ♗f5, exploiting the opponent's absence on the b1-h7 diagonal.

6...♗c6 7 ♗e2

Since 7 ♖f3?! is well met by 7...♗g4, White brings the knight to e2. 7 ♗e3 ♖b4 8 ♗e4 f5 9 exf6 exf6, followed by ...f6-f5, is another frequently played line.

7...♗g4

Before settling with the bishop on e6, Black provokes f2-f3.

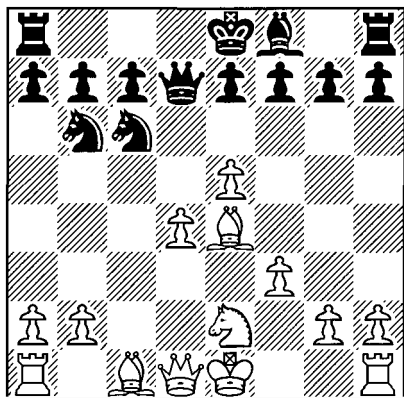
8 f3 ♗e6 9 ♖bc3 ♗d5

Preparing ...e7-e6. Practice also sees 9...♗c4 with the same purpose, while 9...♗d7 10 ♖e4 ♗d5 11 ♖c5 ♗c8, followed by ...e7-e6, is yet another option.

10 ♖xd5 ♗xd5

Or 10...♖xd5 11 a3 e6 12 0-0 with a slight white advantage – Bareev, though this may be Black's safest choice.

11 ♗e4 ♗d7



Your move...

Game 212
W.Steinitz-C.Von Bardeleben
 Hastings 1895
Italian Game

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♖c6 3 ♗c4 ♗c5 4 c3 ♖f6 5 d4
 exd4 6 cxd4 ♗b4+ 7 ♖c3

A sharp version of the Italian, which has

kept its popularity to modern times, in particular at club level. 7 ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 8 ♖bxd2 d5 leads to quieter play.

7...d5?!

This counterstrike will just accelerate White's attack. The main line goes 7...♗xe4 8 0-0 ♗xc3 9 d5 ♗f6 10 ♖e1 ♖e7 11 ♖xe4 d6 with a heavy theoretical battle.

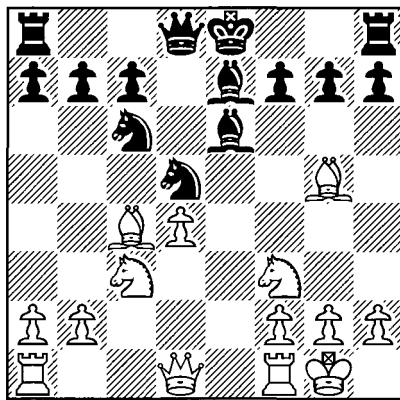
8 exd5 ♖xd5 9 0-0 ♗e6

Or 9...♖xc3?! 10 bxc3 ♗xc3? 11 ♗b3! ♗xa1 12 ♗xf7+ ♖f8 13 ♗a3+ ♖e7 14 ♖xa1, followed by ♖e1, and White wins.

10 ♗g5!

Development with tempo. At this point 10...♗d7 11 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 12 ♖e1+ ♖f8! was Black's safest choice, but he prefers a more obvious reply.

10...♗e7?!



Your move...

Game 213
H.Westerinen-K.Rasmussen
 Malaga 2003
Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♖c3 dxe4 4 ♖xe4 ♗f5 5
 ♖g3 ♗g6 6 ♗c4

An aggressive line against the Classical Caro-Kann. White intends d1e2(h3)-f4 next, after which he could either harass the bishop on g6 by h2-h4, or prepare a sacrifice on e6, while this game features a third plan with f2-f4. The main line goes 6 h4 h6 7 d3 d7 8 h5 h7 9 d3 with a heavy theoretical battle.

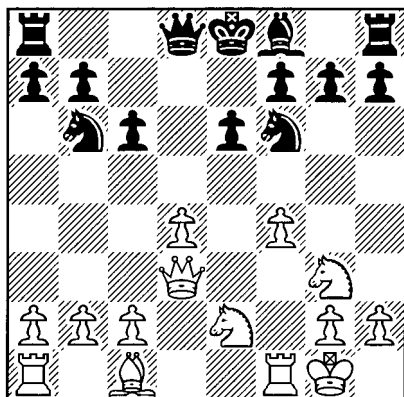
6...e6 7 d1e2 d6 8 0-0

8 d4 is another option, when Black often replies 8... d6 , followed by 9... c7 , in order to challenge the knight on f4.

8... bd7 9 f4

Intending f4-f5 to clear the f-file and the a2-g8 diagonal towards Black's king.

9... b6 10 d3 dxd3 11 cxd3



Your move...

Game 214
E.Lobron-G.Hertneck
 Nuremberg (rapid) 1990
Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 d3 f6 4 b3

An interesting sideline against the Slav, which we already came across in Game 62 (Ovetchkin-Efanov).

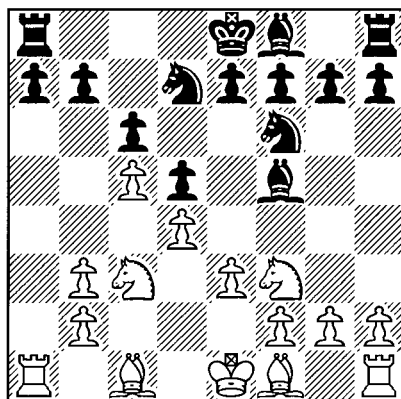
4... b6 5 c5

5 c3 is more flexible. After the text Black had a good alternative in 5... c7 , but he prefers a queenless middlegame.

5... xb3 6 axb3 d5 7 e3?!

7 c3 is more powerful, keeping the option of d4 later on.

7... bd7 8 c3



Your move...

Game 215
J.Lundin-Th.Ernst
 Karlstad 2010
Grünfeld Defence

1 d4 f6 2 c4 g6 3 c3

White's set-up in this game can also be initiated by 3 g3, with the point that after 3...d5 4 cxd5 xd5 5 g2 d7 6 e4 Black lacks the option of 6... xc3 .

3...d5 4 cxd5 xd5 5 g3 g7 6 g2 xc3

Anyway, 6... b6 is perfectly possible as well.

7 bxc3 c5 8 e3 c6

8... a5 9 d2 0-0 10 e2 c6 11 0-0 d8 is another popular set-up.

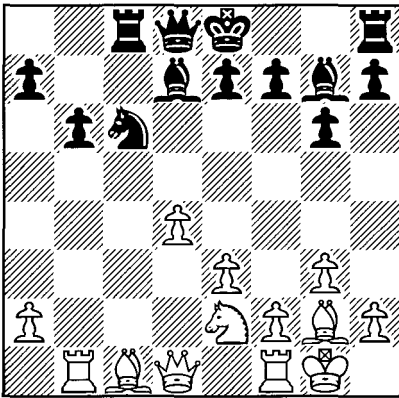
9 e2 d7

Black hurries to start action on the queenside, his traditional battlefield in the Grünfeld. Of course, 9...0-0 is also possible.

10 0-0 ♖c8 11 ♜b1 cxd4?!

11...b6 or 11...♗a5 was preferable – Lundin. We will soon see the difference.

12 cxd4 b6

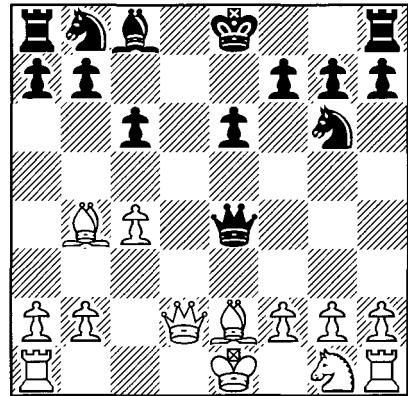


Your move...

Anyway, the text rules out this idea by protecting the bishop on b4.

9...♗g6

Both 9...♖xg2?! 10 0-0-0 ♗d7 11 ♗f3 and 9...c5?! 10 ♙xc5 ♗bc6 11 ♗f3 0-0 12 0-0-0! clearly favour White – Khalifman.



Your move...

Game 216

A.Khalifman-V.Filippov

Russian Team Championship 1995
Semi-Slav Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♗c3 e6 4 e4 dxe4 5 ♗xe4 ♙b4+ 6 ♙d2 ♖xd4 7 ♙xb4 ♖xe4+

A sharp branch of the Slav, that we saw earlier in Volkov-Kempinski (Game 44) and Flear-Vera (Game 52).

8 ♙e2 ♗e7

Quite a rare alternative to the more frequent 8...♗a6.

9 ♖d2

The main idea behind Black's previous move was to meet 9 ♗f3 by 9...♗d5, but even so, after 10 ♗d2 ♖d4 11 ♙a3 ♗f4 12 0-0 White has had good results in practice.

Game 217

A.Shirov-P.Eljanov

Moscow 2010

Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 ♙f5 4 ♗f3 e6 5 ♙e2 c5

We already came across this line in Game 40 (Bologan-Dizdarevic). There Black preferred 5...♗e7, followed by ...♙g6 and ...♗f5, whereas on this occasion he strikes immediately at the white pawn chain.

6 ♙e3 ♗d7 7 0-0 ♗e7

Here and on the previous move, 7...cxd4 8 ♗xd4 ♙g6 9 c4! yields White some initiative.

8 c4

This is indeed a key advance in the current variation, in order to open the position for White's better developed forces. In con-

trast, 8 c3 ♖c6, followed by ...♙e7 and ...0-0, yields Black fewer problems.

8...dxc4 9 ♖a3 c3 10 ♖b5

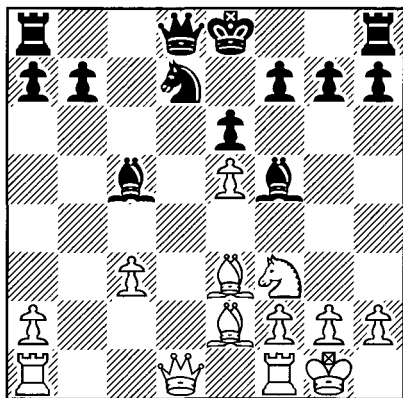
Not 10 bxc3?! ♖d5, when Black wins a tempo by attacking the c3-pawn, but a gambit with 10 ♙g5 was interesting as well.

10...♖d5 11 ♖xc3 ♖xc3

11...♖xe3 12 fxe3 ♙e7 seems safer, as in A.Morozevich-G.Kamsky, Moscow 2008, which continued 13 ♖b3 0-0! 14 ♖xb7 ♖b8 and it was actually Black who decided whether or not to repeat moves.

12 bxc3 ♙e7 13 dxc5 ♙c5?!

“Big mistake” – Shirov. 13...0-0 14 ♖d4 was a lesser evil, with just a slight white advantage – Golubev.



Your move...

Game 218
G.Sosonko-R.Hübner
 Tilburg 1979
Catalan Opening

1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 e6 3 g3 d5 4 ♙g2 dxc4 5 ♖f3 a6 6 0-0 b5

6...♖c6 is more popular, familiar to us

from Ricardi-Hellsten (Game 187).

7 ♖e5 ♖d5

An alternative is 7...c6; e.g. 8 ♖xc6 ♖b6 or 8 b3 cxb3 9 ♖xc6 ♖b6 10 ♖a5 ♖a7 11 ♖xb3 ♖d7! 12 e4 ♙b7 13 ♖e2 ♙e7 as seen a few times in practice.

8 ♖c3

Nowadays, 8 a4 ♙b7 9 b3 is more frequent here.

8...c6?!

A rather slow move that lets White take a clear initiative. 8...♙b7 is much more popular, when 9 ♖d5 exd5 10 e4 dxe4 11 ♖h5 g6! 12 ♖xg6 fxe6 13 ♖e5+ ♖e7 14 ♖xh8 ♖d7 leads to a double-edged battle.

9 ♖d5 exd5

Or 9...cxd5 10 e4 ♙b7 11 ♖h5!, when 11...g6 runs into 12 ♖xg6! fxe6 13 ♖e5, and 11...♖c7 12 exd5 ♙xd5 13 ♙xd5 exd5 14 ♖e1 is equally bad for Black – Sosonko.

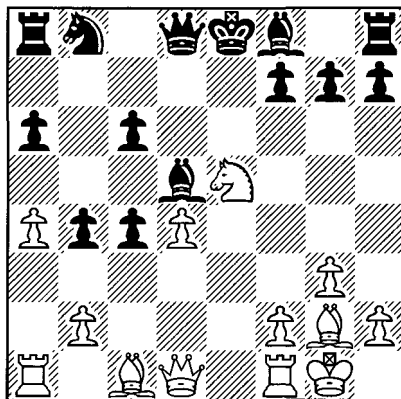
10 e4 ♙e6 11 a4!

A typical Catalan advance, which softens up the black pawn phalanx.

11...b4

The desirable 11...♙e7? fails to 12 axb5 cxb5 13 exd5 ♙xd5 14 ♖xf7! ♖xf7 15 ♖h5+ etc. – Sosonko.

12 exd5 ♙xd5?!



Too materialistic. For better or worse 12...cxd5 13 ♖xc4 ♗e7, followed by ...0-0, had to be tried, although the sharper 13 f4!? can also be considered – Sosonko.

Your move...

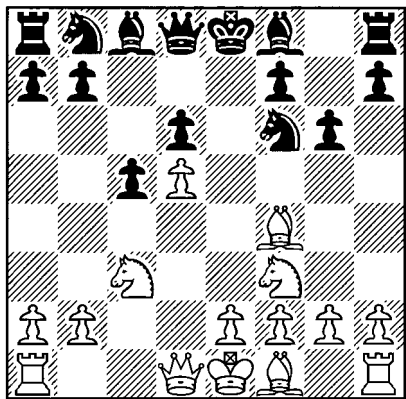
Game 219

A.Yusupov-S.Dolmatov

USSR Championship, Minsk 1987

Benoni Defence

1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♖f3 c5 4 d5 exd5 5 cxd5
6 d6 ♖c3 g6 7 ♗f4



7...a6

In most opening variations a fianchetto is completed immediately, but here 7...♗g7 permits 8 ♖a4+! ♗d7 9 ♖b3 with good results for White in practice.

8 e4

The most ambitious, trying to break in the centre before Black is developed. After 8 a4 ♗g7 normal Benoni play is reached.

8...b5 9 ♖e2 ♖h5

White's previous move made 10 e5 a real threat, so Black takes preventive action.

10 ♗g5 ♗e7 11 ♗h6 ♗f8 12 ♖e3!

In this opening, the exchange of the

dark-squared bishops is usually an achievement for White.

12...♗xh6 13 ♖xh6 b4?!

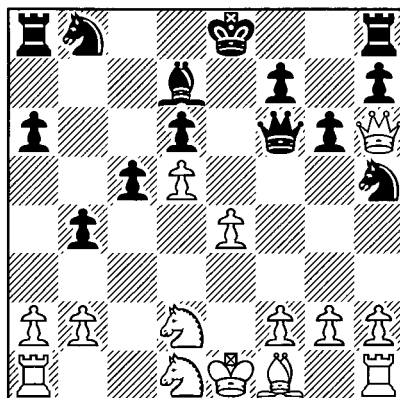
Since the immediate 13...♖f6 is strongly met by 14 e5! dxe5 15 ♖e4 – Franco, Black first expels the enemy knight from c3, but in doing so creates an outpost for White on c4. The flexible 13...♖d7 was preferable – Yusupov.

14 ♖d1 ♖f6 15 ♖d2!

With the dual intention of 16 ♖c4 and 16 g3, restricting the knight on h5.

15...♗d7?!

Again 15...♖d7 seems more natural, although after 16 g3 ♖e5 17 ♗e2! ♖g4 18 ♗xg4 ♗xg4 19 ♖e3 White keeps the advantage – Yusupov.



Your move...

Game 220

A.Vajda-C.Florescu

Rumanian Team
Championship 2004

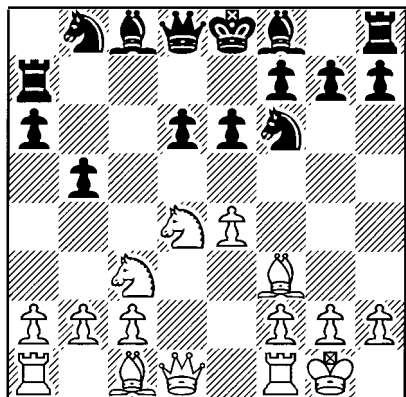
*Sicilian Defence,
Scheveningen Variation*

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♖xd4 ♖f6 5

♖c3 d6 6 ♙e2 a6 7 0-0 b5?!

As mentioned elsewhere in the book, this is a rather risky line for Black, whose ...b7-b5 advance works better if prepared by 7...♗c7 or 7...♘bd7.

8 ♙f3! ♖a7



9 a4

Immediately hitting Black's fragile queenside before he is comfortably developed.

9...b4 10 ♘a2 d5

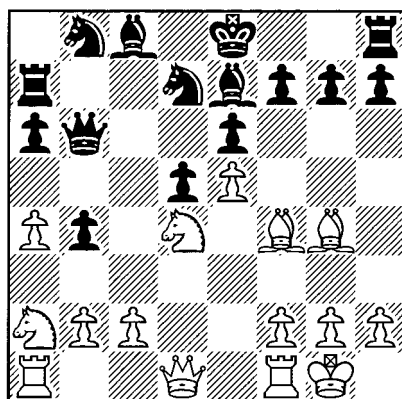
Securing the b4-pawn, at the cost of allowing White a certain dominance in the centre. Perhaps 10...e5 11 ♘b3 ♖b7 was more promising, although after 12 c3 bxc3 13 ♘xc3 ♙e6 14 ♘d5 ♙xd5 15 exd5 ♗b6?! 16 ♘d2, heading for c4(-a5), White had the initiative in S.Vajda-C.Florescu, Bucharest 2000.

11 e5 ♘fd7 12 ♙f4 ♙e7 13 ♙g4!?

Creating the threat of 14 ♙xe6 fxe6 15 ♘xe6.

13...♗b6

13...♘c5? obviously failed to 14 ♘xb4, but 13...0-0 was safer, when both 14 ♙xe6 fxe6 15 ♘xe6 ♗a5 16 ♘xf8 ♘xf8 and 14 ♗d2 ♗b6 15 ♙e3 ♙c5 seem to be okay for Black.



Your move...

Game 221
S.Kindermann-A.Vuckovic
 German League 2004
Sicilian Defence,
Rossolimo Variation

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 g6 4 ♙xc6

Quite a popular choice in contemporary practice, in order to find out straight away how Black is going to recapture on c6.

4...dxc6 5 d3

If White is bothered by a bishop move to g4 then he could play 5 h3 here, although in that case Black obtains the additional option of 5...e5, when 6 ♘xe5?! runs into 6...♗d4. In contrast, after the text Black would have to prepare ...e7-e5 by ...♙g7.

5...♙g4 6 ♘bd2

Another option is 6 h3 ♙xf3 7 ♗xf3, followed by ♘d2-c4.

6...♙h6

A curious deviation from the normal 6...♙g7. Black aims at equalizing by exchanges, but the remainder of the game shows us that things aren't that simple.

7 h3 ♟xf3 8 ♞xf3 ♟xc1 9 ♚xc1 ♜a5+

If 9...♞f6, then 10 ♜h6! is a bit annoying – Finkel.

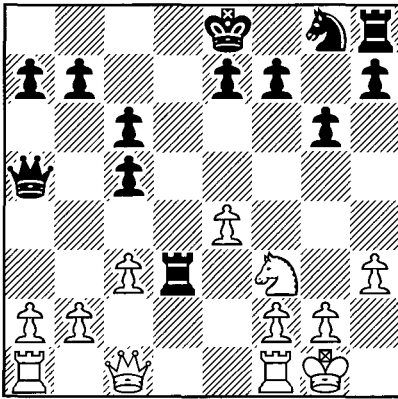
10 c3 ♞d8

The point of Black's previous move – now after 11 ♜e3 ♞f6, thanks to the pressure at d3, he would manage to castle. However...

11 0-0!

An intuitive pawn sacrifice motivated by the lead in development.

11...♞xd3



Your move...

Game 222
G.Kasparov-J.Van Der Wiel
Amsterdam 1988
Queen's Indian Defence

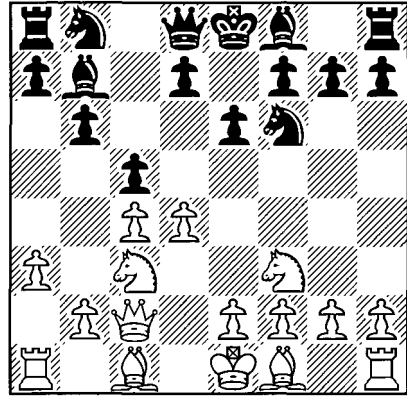
1 d4 ♞f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♞f3 b6 4 a3

The Petrosian Variation, in which White rules out ...♟b4 before further action.

4...♟a6

Just like in the classical line with 4 g3 (cf. Game 189, Brynell-Barkhagen), this attack on the c4-pawn provokes a minor concession from the opponent.

5 ♜c2 ♟b7 6 ♞c3 c5



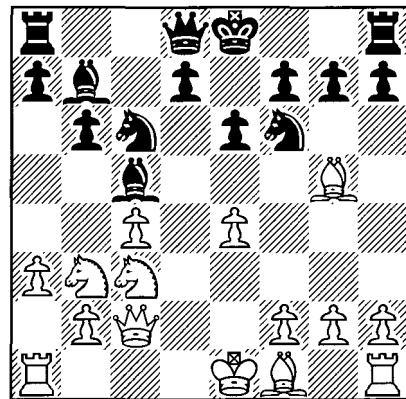
If his queen was still on d1, White could now have reached a favourable Benoni by 7 d5. Here, in contrast, he has to accept the exchange of his d-pawn, which gives rise to a Hedgehog structure.

7 e4 cxd4 8 ♞xd4 ♟c5

Other options are 8...♞c6 and 8...d6.

9 ♞b3 ♞c6 10 ♟g5

White can also play 10 ♟f4, fingering the crucial d6-square, whereas 10 ♞xc5 bxc5 has shown to be less useful for him, both here and later.



10...a6

Preparing a Hedgehog set-up with ...♜c7

Mastering Opening Strategy

and ...d7-d6. The simplifying 10...h6 11 ♖h4 ♜d4 is more popular; e.g. 12 ♜xd4 ♕xd4 13 ♕d3 ♜b8! 14 ♕g3 ♕e5 and Black is okay.

11 0-0-0

The most energetic reaction, giving justice to the early ♜c2.

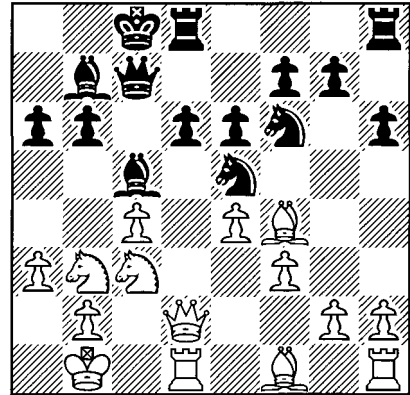
11...♜c7 12 ♝b1 0-0-0?!

An awkward place for the king in this structure. By 12...♕e7 and ...d7-d6 next Black could still get a normal, albeit somewhat delayed Hedgehog.

13 ♜d2 d6

Again 13...♕e7, preparing ...d7-d6, was reasonable, although after 14 ♜c1 Black must look out for a possible ♜d5 or ♜b5.

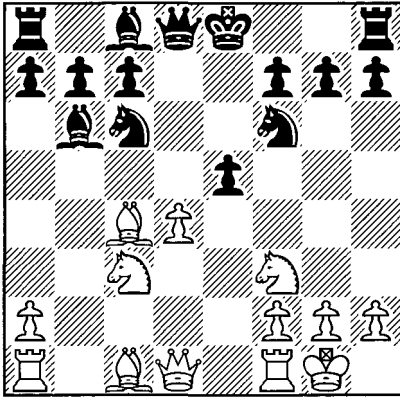
14 f3 h6 15 ♕f4 ♜e5



Your move...

Solutions

Game 201 (continued)



11 ♖a3!

Preventing Black's castling is White's main priority here. 11 ♖e1 0-0 and 11 d5 ♗a5 are less powerful.

11...♗xd4

After 11...♗xd4 12 ♗xe5 ♖e6 13 ♖e1 c5 14 ♗a4+ ♗f8 15 ♖ad1 White had a strong initiative in J.Blackburne-NN, Great Britain (simul) 1872.

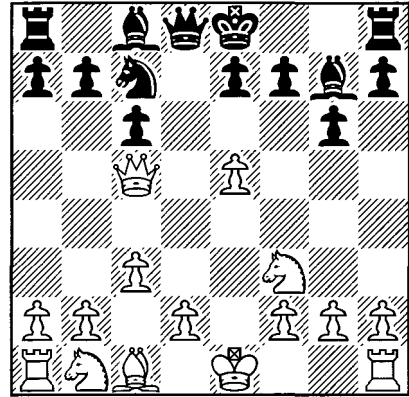
12 ♗b3 ♖e6?!

An early surrender, but 12...♗d7 13 ♗g5 ♗d8 14 ♖ad1 is also depressing for Black.

13 ♖xe6 fxe6 14 ♗xe6+ ♗e7 15 ♗xd4 exd4 16 ♖fe1 ♗fg8 17 ♗d5

Recovering the material with a clear advantage. The game continued 17...♗d7 18 ♖xe7 (18 ♗e5! won outright) 18...♗xe6 19 ♖xe6 ♗d7 20 ♖ae1 (20 ♖c5! won a pawn) 20...♖e8 21 ♖6e4 c6 22 ♖xd4 cxd5 23 ♖xd5+ ♗c6 24 ♖d6+ ♗c7 25 ♖c1+ ♗b8 26 ♖h4 ♗h6 27 ♖g3 ♗a8 28 h3 ♗f5 29 ♖d7 and White went on to win.

Game 202 (continued)



9...♗d3!

Of course, immobilizing White's queen-side forces and preventing 10 0-0.

10 ♗e3 ♖f5! 11 ♗xd3 ♖xd3

Despite the exchange of queens White is still under pressure due to his cramped development. In the following moves, Fischer finds the only way of challenging the annoying bishop on d3.

12 ♖d1! ♗e6 13 ♗e1 ♗f4 14 ♗xd3

Avoiding 14 g3? ♖e2+ 15 ♗c2 ♗h3!, when White must even be careful of a mate on d1.

14...♗xd3 15 f4!?

Seeing that both 15 ♗c2 and 15 ♗e2 are well met by 15...0-0-0, Fischer tries a radical solution.

15...♖h6

Matulovic turns down the offer. After 15...♗f2+ 16 ♗e2 ♗xh1 17 d4, preparing ♖e3, ♗d2 etc, the position is far from clear.

16 ♖c2 ♗xc1 17 ♖e1!

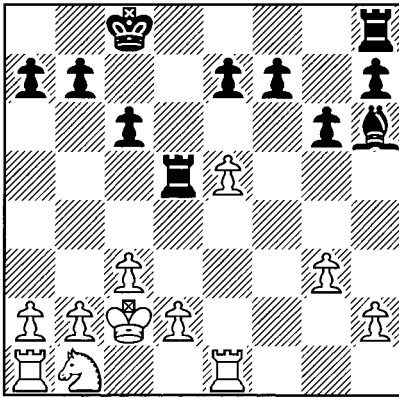
Mastering Opening Strategy

A clever intermediate move. In contrast, 17 ♖xc1? ♙xf4 wins a pawn for Black.

17...0-0-0

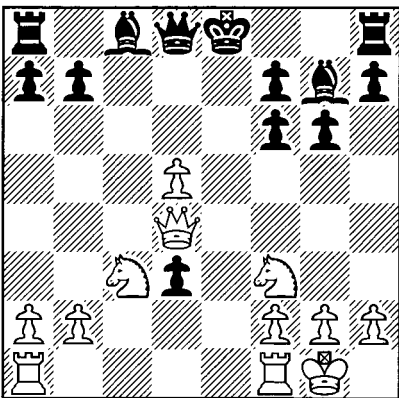
17...♙xf4 18 g3 probably leads to the game, while 17...♘xa2 18 g3! ♘xc3 19 bxc3 yields White compensation for the pawn – Matulovic,

18 ♖xc1 ♙xf4 19 g3 ♙h6 20 ♖c2 ♜d5



Intending 21 d4 c5!. After inventive play from both sides Black has ended up with a slight initiative in the endgame, which later finished in a draw.

Game 203 (continued)



13 ♗b4!

Keeping the enemy king in the centre. 13 ♗fe1+?! ♙f8, followed by ...♙g8, is less convincing, though 13 ♗c5! is a good alternative; e.g. 13...♗d7 14 ♗fe1+ ♙d8 15 d6 ♗c6 16 ♗d4 with a huge advantage – Botvinnik.

13...♗d7

A clumsy move, but the d8-square was badly needed by the king.

14 ♘b5 ♙d8 15 ♜ac1!

With the devastating threat of 16 ♜c7.

15...a5

Neither 15...♗xd5? 16 ♘c7 nor 15...♙f8 16 ♗d4 was any better for Black.

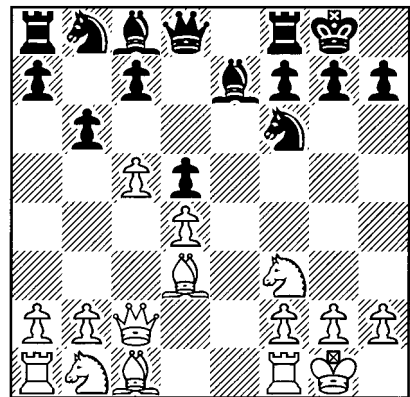
16 ♗c5 ♜a6 17 ♘a7!

A technical choice, by which White secures a decisive material advantage.

17...♜xa7 18 ♗b6+ ♙e8 19 ♗fe1+ ♙f8 20 ♗xa7 ♙h6 21 ♗c5+ ♙g7 22 ♜cd1

There followed 22...♗a4 23 ♜xd3 ♗xa2 24 ♗d4 ♜d8 25 d6 b5 26 ♗b6 ♜d7 27 ♗xb5 and Black resigned, in view of 27...♜b7 28 ♗xb7! ♙xb7 29 d7.

Game 204 (continued)



11 c6!

Severely restricting the enemy queen-side. Contrary to Suetin-Shamkovich (Game

193) here Black is able to liquidate the c6-pawn, but only at the cost of permitting White a strong initiative on the kingside.

11...♖d6 12 ♘e5 ♘g4 13 ♙f4!

13 ♘xg4 ♙xg4 14 ♙xh7+ ♖h8 15 ♙f5 ♙xf5 16 ♗xf5 ♘xc6 is less effective – Huzman.

13...♘e5 14 ♙xe5 ♗xc6 15 ♘c3!

Stronger than the obvious 15 ♙xh7+, since now Black can't avoid the capture on h7 anyway due to the additional threat of 16 ♘xd5 ♗xd5 17 ♙e4.

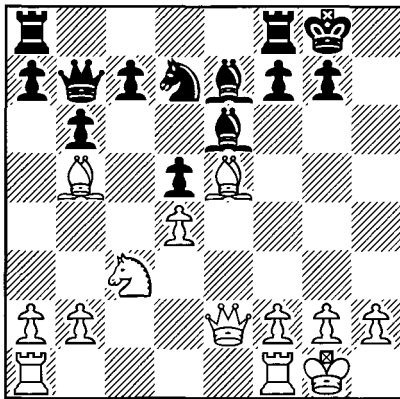
15...♙e6 16 ♙xh7+ ♖h8 17 ♙d3

With the strong threat of ♗e2(d1)-h5.

17...♘d7?!

17...♗d7 was more tenacious, although after 18 ♗e2 ♖g8 19 ♗h5 f5 20 ♗fe1 White keeps a strong initiative.

18 ♗e2 ♖g8 19 ♙b5! ♗b7



20 ♙xg7!

This temporary sacrifice leads to an extra pawn for White, and further exposure of the enemy king.

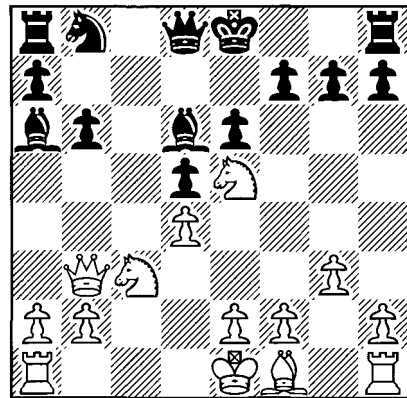
20...♖xg7 21 ♙xd7 ♙xd7 22 ♗xe7 c6 23 ♗ae1

23 f4 ♗fe8 24 ♗g5+ ♖f8 25 f5 was a good alternative – Huzman.

23...♗ae8 24 ♗g5+ ♖h7 25 ♗e3!

With a crushing advantage. There followed 25...♗g8 26 ♗h5+ ♖g7 27 ♗g3+ ♖f8 28 ♗h6+ ♖e7 29 ♗e1+ ♖d8 30 ♗xg8 ♗xg8 31 ♗f6+ ♖c8 32 ♗xf7 ♗xg2+ 33 ♖h1! ♗g4 34 f3 ♗xd4 35 ♗e8+ ♖c7 36 ♗e7 c5 37 ♗e5+ and Black resigned, in view of the imminent mate.

Game 205 (continued)



11 ♗a4+

A timely check that deprives Black of castling. For this reason, 10...♘d7 was preferable last turn, when 11 ♗a4 ♙b7, preparing ...a7-a6 and ...b6-b5, is quite acceptable for him – Gershon.

11...♖f8 12 e4!

With the enemy king stuck in the centre, it makes sense to open the position.

12...♗e8?

Quite a desperate choice – Black sacrifices the d5-pawn in order to swap queens. 12...♙xf1 13 ♖xf1 ♙xe5 14 dx5 ♘d7 was preferable, although White keeps the pressure after 15 exd5 ♘xe5 16 ♗d1 – Gershon.

13 ♗xe8+ ♖xe8 14 exd5 exd5 15 ♙g2! ♙xe5

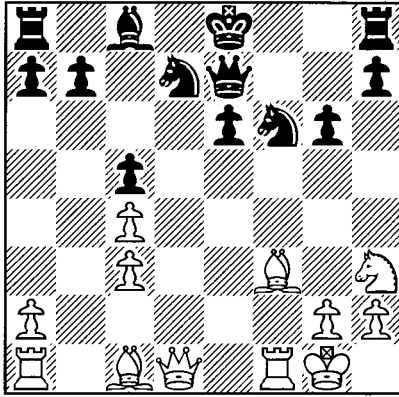
Or 15...♙b7 16 ♘xd5, followed by ♘c4.

16 ♙xd5 ♙xd4 17 0-0-0! ♙xf2 18 ♙xa8

Mastering Opening Strategy

With both a material and positional superiority White is winning. There followed 18...f6 19 ♖b1 (19 ♗e4, heading for d6, was stronger – Gershon) 19...♙c5 20 ♙d5 g6 21 ♙b3 ♖f8 22 ♗e4 ♙e7 23 ♖he1 and Black's position remained very difficult, although incredibly enough, he eventually won the game!

Game 206 (continued)



13 ♙h6!

A key move that prevents Black from castling while connecting the major pieces.

13...e5?

Black aims at liberating himself by ...e5-e4 and ...♗e5, but after White's reply he will hardly be able to move. The last chance was 13...♗g8! 14 ♙g5 ♗g6, insisting on the castling – Giardelli, when 15 ♗f4 0-0 16 ♖e2 keeps a strong initiative.

14 ♖a4! ♙d8

There is nothing better; e.g. 14...e4?! 15 ♖ae1, followed by 16 ♗f2, or 14...♗g8? 15 ♙g5 ♗g6 16 ♙xb7!.

15 ♖a5+!

Provoking new weaknesses.

15...b6 16 ♖a4 e4 17 ♖c6 ♖b8 18 ♙f4 ♗e5?

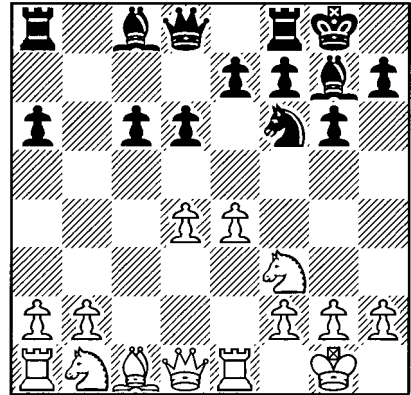
This loses outright. 18...exf3? drops the

queen after 19 ♙c7+ ♖e8 20 ♖ae1, but 18...♙b7 was more tenacious, when one good reply is 19 ♖c7+ ♖e8 20 ♖ae1 h6 21 ♗f2 ♖e6 22 ♙d6!, with the devastating threat of 23 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 24 ♙xe4 ♙xe4 25 ♖f4.

19 ♖ad1+ ♙d7 20 ♙xe5 ♖xe5 21 ♙g4! 1-0

In view of heavy material losses, Black resigned.

Game 207 (continued)



11 h3!

Restricting the bishop on c8. In contrast, after 11 ♗c3 ♙g4! 12 ♙e3 ♗d7, preparing ...♖b6 and ...c6-c5, Black obtains counterplay.

11...♗d7

After 11...♙d7 12 ♗c3 ♖b8 13 b3 ♖a5 14 ♙d2 ♖h5?! 15 e5! White took the initiative in R.Kaula-B.Wilk, Polish Team Championship 1999.

12 ♗c3 c5 13 ♙e3

13 d5?! is less appropriate due to 13...♖b8 with some black pressure along the a1-h8 diagonal.

13...♖b8 14 ♖d2 cxd4 15 ♙xd4 ♙xd4

Such an exchange rarely favours Black, but after 15...♗e5 16 ♙xe5 dxe5 17 ♖e2,

preparing b2-b3 and ♖d2-c4, White has a pleasant advantage.

16 ♖xd4 ♙b7 **17** ♖ad1 ♜f6 **18** ♖g5

With the dual intention of 19 e5 and 19 ♜f5.

18...e6

Thus Black responds to both enemy ideas, since 19 e5 can now be met by 19...♜d5. On the other hand, the d6-pawn becomes rather weak. Anyway, after 18...♖c7 19 ♜f5 White also has the initiative.

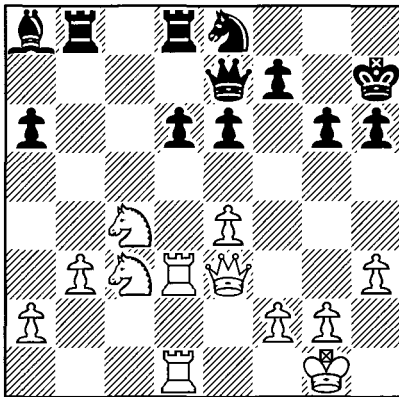
19 ♜b3!

Clearing the d-file towards the d6-pawn, while preparing ♜a5-c4 later on.

19...♖e7 20 ♖d2 ♜fd8 **21** ♜a5 ♙g7 **22** ♖ed1 h6?!

Helping the white queen to a better square. After 22...♙a8 23 ♜c4 d5! 24 exd5 ♙xd5 Black would just be minimally worse.

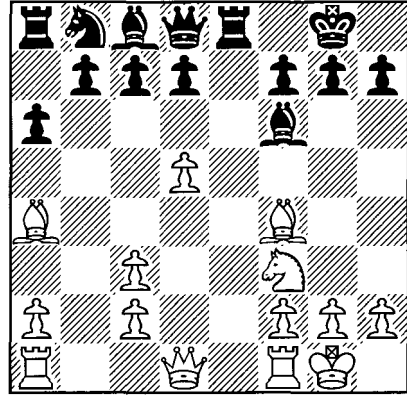
23 ♖e3 ♙a8 **24** ♜c4 ♜e8 **25** b3 ♙h7 **26** ♖d3!



Preparing ♖d2 with increased pressure on d6. There followed 26...♖c7 27 h4 ♙c6?! (losing a pawn, but 27...♖bc8 28 h5 also favoured White) 28 ♖d2 ♙b5 29 ♜xb5 axb5 30 ♜xd6 ♜xd6 31 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 32 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 33 ♖xd6 with a sound extra pawn in

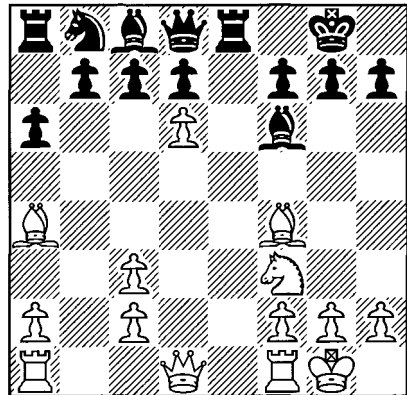
the endgame, although after a series of errors I finally had to concede a draw.

Game 208 (continued)



13 d6!

A powerful advance that severely restricts Black's queenside pieces, in particular the bishop on c8. It is for this reason that 12 ♙a4! was essential on the previous move, in order to keep preventing ...d7-d6, just like in Nijboer-Hector (Game 198).



13...c6?!

Now the knight on b8 becomes restricted too. A lesser evil was 13...cxd6, when White could consider 14 ♖xd6!?

♙xc3 15 ♖ad1 followed by ♙b3, with excellent compensation for the pawn.

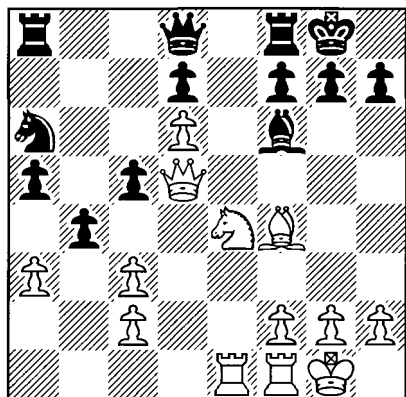
14 ♙b3 b5 15 ♖d2 ♙b7 16 ♘g5!

Maroczy utilizes the threat at f7 to bring his knight to e4, where it will complicate Black's intended ...c6-c5.

16...♜f8 17 ♘e4 a5 18 a3 ♘a6 19 ♜ae1

Since Black can't easily connect his rooks, it makes sense to work on the open file.

19...c5 20 ♙d5 ♙xd5 21 ♖xd5 b4



22 ♜e3!

White just ignores the enemy attack on the queenside, and starts preparing a final assault on the opposite flank.

22...♙xc3?

A serious mistake – without this bishop there will be nobody defending the king. For better or worse, 22...bxa3 had to be tried.

23 ♜xc3

23 ♘xc3 bxc3 24 ♙g5! was another good option, followed by a deadly ♙f6; e.g. 24...♖c8 25 ♙f6! gxf6 26 ♜g3+ ♖h8 27 ♖f5 ♖d8 28 ♜h3 with mate.

23...bxc3 24 ♙g5 ♘c7

Forced, since any queen move, such as 24...♖c8, runs into 25 ♘f6+!, when both 25...gxf6 26 ♙xf6 h6 27 ♖f5 and 25...♖h8

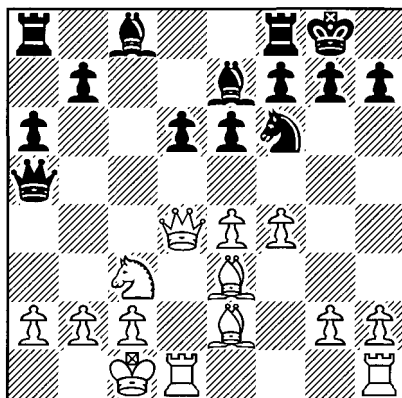
26 ♖f5 g6 27 ♖h3 h5 28 ♘xh5 lead to a quick mate.

25 ♖c4!? ♖e8 26 dxc7

Again 26 ♘f6+! was possible, though the text wins easily as well.

26...♖e5 27 ♜d1 ♜fe8 28 ♜xd7 ♖h8 29 ♖xf7 ♖xg5 30 f4! ♖g4 31 h3 ♖xd7 32 ♖xd7 ♜xe4 33 c8♖+ 1-0

Game 209 (continued)



12 ♖b6!

A key move that prevents ...b7-b5, Black's only active plan, and leaves the enemy pieces rather cramped.

12...♖xb6 13 ♙xb6 ♘e8

Parrying the threat of 14 ♙c7. Neither 13...♘d7? 14 ♙c7, nor 13...e5?! 14 f5 was any good for Black, while 13...♙d7 14 e5! dxe5 15 fxe5 ♘d5 16 ♘xd5 exd5 17 ♙f3 ♜ac8 18 ♙xd5 ♙f5 19 ♙b3 clearly favours White – Anand.

14 e5!

Increasing the pressure on Black's camp and, for the long term, restricting his knight on e8.

14...d5 15 f5! ♙d7 16 ♙g4!

More precise than 16 fxe6 fxe6 17 ♙g4, when 17...♙c8, followed by ...g7-g6 and

...g7, lets Black liberate himself to some extent. Now in contrast, ...g7-g6 will always fail to f5-f6.

16...♗c8

Retreating the bishop doesn't seem right, but the threat of 17 fxe6 fxe6 18 ♖xd5 had to be parried. Instead, 16...exf5 17 ♗f3 and ♖xd5 next clearly favours White, while 16...♗b4 is strongly met by 17 fxe6 ♗xe6 18 ♖xd5 ♗xg4 19 ♖d4!, recovering the piece with a clear advantage due to the miserable knight on e8.

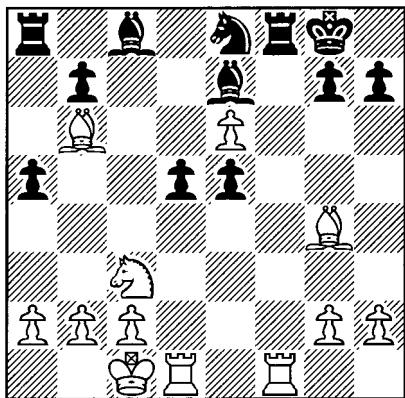
17 ♖hf1 a5

Perhaps preparing ...a5-a4 and ...♖a6 in order to expel the annoying bishop, but White easily prevents this idea with his next move.

18 ♖a4! f6

Complicating the game when behind in development tends to be a bad idea, though Black was short of good alternatives; e.g. 18...♖a6?! 19 ♗e2 or 18...exf5 19 ♗xf5 ♗e6 20 ♖c5 and White wins material.

19 fxe6 fxe5 20 ♖c3!



20...♗g5+

On the natural 20...♖xf1 21 ♖xf1 ♖f6 Anand had prepared the nice blow 22 ♖xf6!, when 22...gxf6 23 ♖xd5 ♖f8 24

♖xe7! ♖xe7 25 ♗c5+ leads to a new white queen, while after 22...♗xf6 23 ♖xd5 a4 24 c4 the black pieces prove decisively restricted.

21 ♖b1 ♖f6 22 ♖xd5!

A well-calculated temporary sacrifice.

22...♖xg4 23 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 24 ♖c7 ♖a6 25 ♗c5+!

A key part of White's combination, which moves the black king away from the e-pawn, now that 25...♗e7? runs into 26 ♖d8 mate.

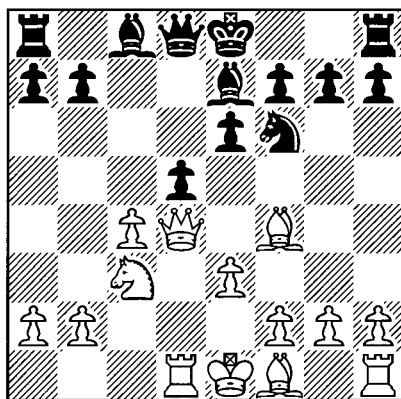
25...♖g8 26 ♖xa6 ♗xe6

Or 26...bxa6 27 e7 ♖f7 28 ♖d8 etc.

27 ♖c7

Anand later converted his extra exchange into a full point.

Game 210 (continued)



9...0-0!

Black simply continues with the development, seeing that if White takes the pawn, then her king will be subject to an annoying check on b4.

Instead, 9...dxc4?! 10 ♖xc4 is less appealing, whereas the game continued 9...♖a5?! 10 cxd5 exd5 (even worse is 10...0-0 11 d6 or 10...♖xd5 11 ♖xg7 ♗f6 12

♙b5+! ♚e7 13 ♙g5 etc) 11 ♙b5+! (exploiting the fact that after 11...♙d7 12 ♙xd7+ Black has no good recapture) 11...♙f8 12 0-0 ♙e6 13 ♙e5 with a clear advantage due to Black's badly placed king.

10 cxd5 exd5 11 ♖xd5?!

11 ♙e2 ♙e6 12 0-0 with a slight advantage is objectively better.

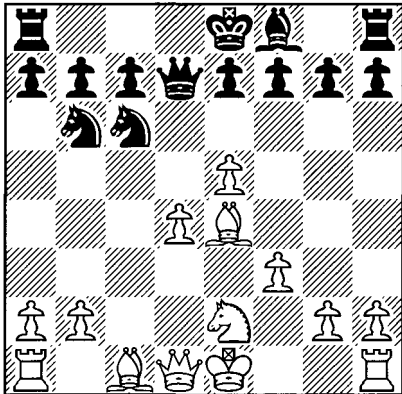
11...♖xd5 12 ♗xd5 ♙b4+!

A key move that severely exposes the white king.

13 ♙e2 ♗b6

In order to meet 14 ♗d4 by 14...♙c5. With 14...♙e6 coming up next, Black has excellent compensation for the pawn.

Game 211 (continued)



12 e6!

A timely pawn sacrifice that complicates Black's kingside development. Obviously 12...♗xe6? now fails to 13 d5.

12...fxe6 13 ♙xc6!

A surprising exchange, but it helps White in quickly installing the other bishop on e5, thus keeping his central grip. Other moves, such as 13 ♗c2, permit 13...g6 and 14...♙g7 with normal development.

13...♗xc6 14 ♙f4 ♖d5 15 ♖c1 ♗b6 16 ♙e5!

16...♙g8

Bareev was ready to sacrifice another pawn in order to keep the initiative, but Mikhalchishin gives priority to his development. Instead, 16...♗b4+ 17 ♙f2 or 16...♖e3 17 ♗a4+ c6 18 ♙f2 leads nowhere for Black, while after 16...♗xb2 17 0-0 ♖e3 18 ♗a4+, both 18...c6 19 ♗fe1, followed by 20 ♗ab1, and 18...b5 19 ♗a6 ♖xf1 20 ♗c6+ ♙f7 21 ♙xf1, preparing ♖f4, offer White excellent compensation for the material.

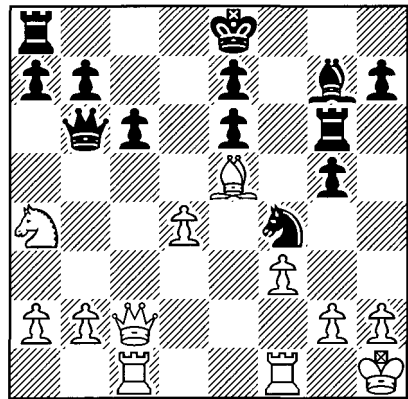
17 ♖c3 c6

Again, 17...♗xb2 yields White clear compensation after 18 ♖xd5 exd5 19 0-0 c6 20 ♗b1 ♗xa2 21 ♗xb7 – Bareev.

18 ♗e2 g5 19 0-0 ♙g6

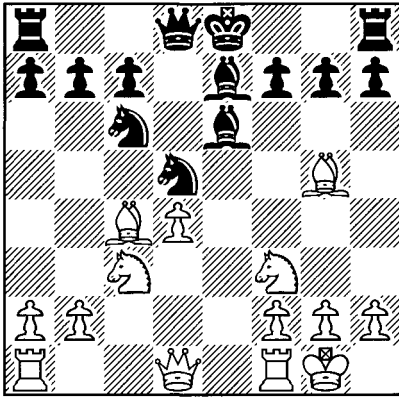
Reinforcing the kingside. White also keeps the initiative after 19...♙g7 20 ♙xg7 ♗xg7 21 ♗e5 ♙f7 22 ♖e4! or 19...♖f4 20 ♗e4 ♙g7 21 ♙xg7 ♗xg7 22 g3 ♖d5 23 ♖a4, with 24 ♖c5 next – Bareev.

20 ♙h1 ♖f4 21 ♗c2 ♙g7 22 ♖a4!



Heading for the excellent square on c5. There followed 22...♗b5 23 ♙xg7 ♗xg7 24 ♖c5 ♗g6 25 ♗fe1 b6 26 a4 ♗b4 27 ♖xe6 ♗d6 28 ♖xf4 gxf4 29 ♗e4 with a slight but enduring advantage, which Bareev later converted into a win.

Game 212 (continued)

**11 ♖xd5!**

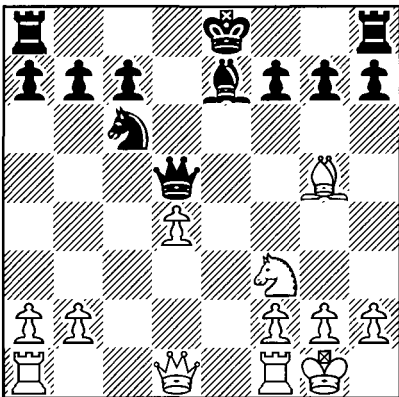
Clearing the e-file is White's main priority. Of course, 11 ♖xe7? ♜cxe7 was less powerful.

11...♙xd5

After 11...♙xg5 12 ♖xe6 fxe6 13 d5! exd5 14 ♜xg5 ♜xg5 15 ♜e1+, intending 15...♜e7, 16 ♜xd5 Black is also in big trouble.

12 ♜xd5 ♜xd5

Or 12...♙xg5 13 ♜e1+ ♙e7 14 ♜xe7 ♜xe7 15 ♜e2! with an improved version of the game.

**13 ♙xe7 ♜xe7 14 ♜e1! f6 15 ♜e2 ♜d7**

White has managed to keep Black's king in the centre, and should now act quickly before the latter consolidates with ...♜f7 and ...♞he8.

16 ♞ad1!

Zaitsev's suggestion, which aims at a quick d4-d5. In contrast, the game continued 16 ♞ac1?! c6? 17 d5! cxd5 18 ♜d4 ♜f7 19 ♜e6! and Steinitz went on to win, with a final combination that has become a classic. However, by 16...♜f7!, Black would have obtained excellent chances of survival.

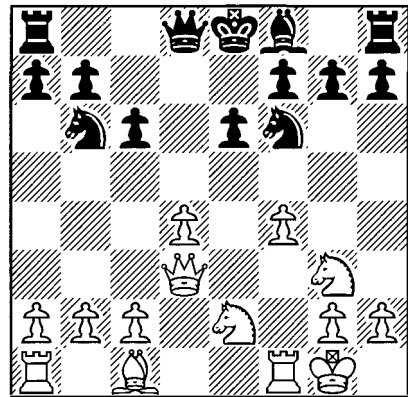
16...♜f7

Or 16...c6 17 d5! cxd5 18 ♞xd5 etc.

17 ♜c4+ ♜d5 18 ♜e5+! fxе5 19 dxe5

With double threats at d5 and e6, and 19...♜e6 failing to 20 ♜g4+, White is winning.

Game 213 (continued)

**11...g6!**

Simple and strong, preventing the enemy plan of f4-f5 while providing the bishop with a good destiny on g7. By the way, had White preferred 10 ♙b3 two moves ago, then 10...♜d7! would have been Black's best choice, in the same spirit of preventing f4-f5.

12 b3 ♖bd5

The immediate 12...♙g7 permits 13 ♙a3!?, complicating ...0-0.

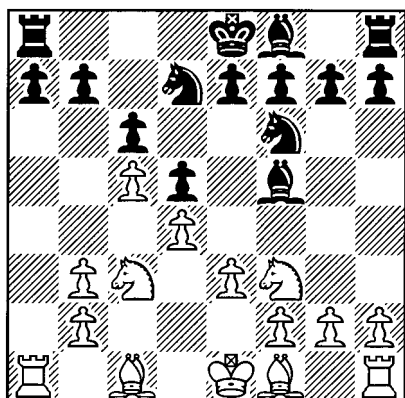
13 c4 ♖e7

A good square for the knight, from where it could move on to f5 one day.

14 ♙b2 ♙g7 15 ♖ad1 0-0

Black has more or less equalized, and now intends ...♗a5, ...♖ad8, ...♗d7, ...♗fd8 etc, with pressure on the d4-pawn. There followed 16 ♖e4 ♖xe4 17 ♗xe4 ♗a5! 18 ♗c2 ♗fd8 19 ♗d3 ♗d7 20 ♙c3 ♗c7 21 ♗fd1 ♖ad8 22 ♖h1 ♖f5, preparing ...c6-c5, with an excellent game for Black, who went on to win.

Game 214 (continued)



8...a6!

An essential move that parries the dangerous plan of b4-b5. In contrast, 8...e6?! 9 b4! ♙e7 10 b5 0-0 11 b4, intending 12 bxc6 and 13 b5, yields White a favourable structure on the queenside, and even 8...e5!? is well met by 9 b4.

By the way, in the event of 8 b4 on the previous move, Black could have resorted to 8...♙xb1! 9 ♗xb1 a6 10 ♖a1 ♖c8 with similar play as in the game.

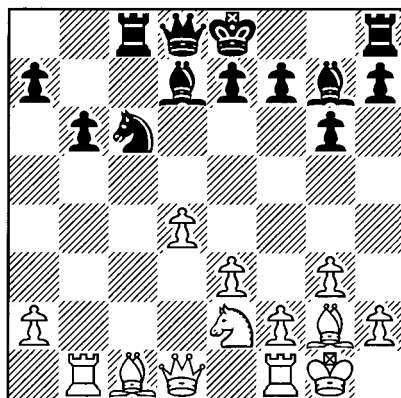
9 ♖h4

Now if 9 b4, then simply 9...♖c8 or 9...♗d8, finishing off the b4-b5 idea.

9...♙c2 10 b4 ♗d8! 11 ♖d2 ♙g6

Black has nothing to worry about. There followed 12 f4 e6 13 ♖xg6 hxg6 14 ♙e2 ♙e7 15 ♖c2 ♖e4!? 16 ♖xe4 dxe4 17 ♙d2 ♖f6 18 h4 ♖d5 19 g3 ♖d7 20 ♖a3?! g5! 21 fxg5 ♙xg5 22 ♗f1 ♙f6, intending ...♖e7 and ...g5, with a slight initiative that Hertneck later converted into a win.

Game 215 (continued)



13 ♙d2!

Restricting ...♖a5-c4 is White's main priority here. Less to the point was 13 e4?! 0-0 14 ♙e3 ♖a5 with ...♖c4 next.

13...0-0 14 ♖c1

The rook had fulfilled its duty on b1 and now helps White in disputing the open file.

14...e6

After 14...e5 15 d5 ♖a5 16 ♙b4!, followed by d5-d6, White has the initiative.

15 ♗b3 b5?!

A typical idea, but here it is badly timed due to White's strong reply. 15...♗f6, connecting the rooks, seems preferable, but not 15...♗e7? 16 ♙xc6 ♙xc6 17 ♙b4 etc.

16 ♖c5! a6 17 ♖c3 ♖b6 18 ♖c1 ♘a7?

A bad location for the knight, where it even becomes a target on the next move. 18...♘e7 was called for, when White could proceed as in the game.

19 ♖c7!

As often happens, the victory in the fight for the open file leads to the seizure of the seventh rank.

19...♙f6

The ...♙d8 plan is one tempo too slow, though Black was short of good options anyway.

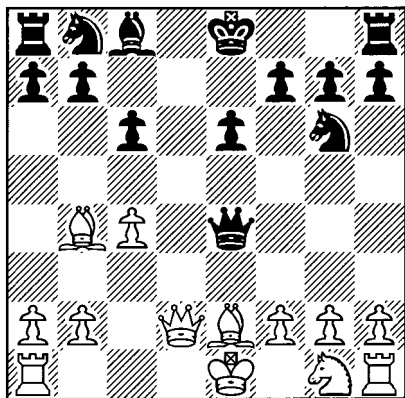
20 ♖c5

This wins material, but 20 ♖a5! ♖xa5 21 ♙xa5 was even stronger, when Black loses a whole piece.

20...♖xc5 21 ♖1xc5 ♙e7 22 ♖xa7 ♙xc5 23 dxc5 ♙c6 24 ♖xa6

At this point, 24...♙xg2 25 ♙xg2 ♖xc5? fails to 26 ♙b4. White later converted his material advantage into victory.

Game 216 (continued)



10 ♘h3!

An excellent move that takes the f4-square from the enemy pieces, while continuing development. In contrast, 10 0-0-0?!

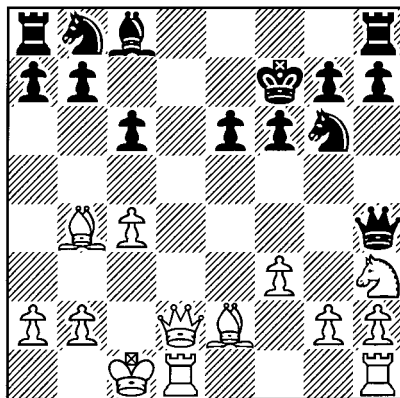
♖f4 lets Black swap queens, and 10 ♘f3 ♘f4 isn't convincing either.

10...f6!?

Creating a haven for the king on f7. Most other moves like 10...♖xg2 are well met by 11 0-0-0, just as in the game.

11 0-0-0 ♙f7 12 f3 ♖h4

Or 12...♖e5?! 13 f4 ♖c7 14 ♙d6 ♖d8 15 c5 with a clear edge – Khalifman.



13 ♙c5!

Enabling the powerful knight manoeuvre ♘f2-e4.

13...e5 14 ♘f2 f5 15 g3 ♖f6

After 15...♖h6 16 ♙e3 f4 17 gxf4, both 17...exf4 18 ♙d4 and 17...♘xf4 18 ♘d3! clearly favour White – Khalifman.

16 ♖hf1!

A “mysterious” rook move that aims at bringing the knight to e4 anyway.

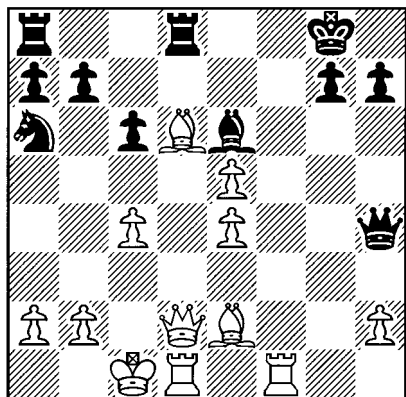
16...♘a6?!

16...♘d7 was safer, enabling a later ...♘f6, although 17 ♙a3 ♖e6 18 ♖c2!, with the double idea of 19 ♖d6 and 19 ♙d3, maintains excellent compensation for White.

17 ♙a3 ♙e6 18 ♘e4! fxe4

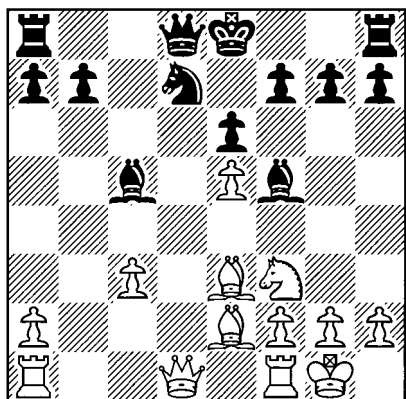
Or 18...♖d8 19 ♘g5+ ♙f6 20 ♖c3 ♖b6 21 f4, winning – Khalifman.

19 fxe4 ♘f4 20 gxf4 ♖hd8 21 ♙d6 ♚g8 22 fxe5 ♜h4



At this point, there followed 23 ♜f4?! ♜xf4 24 ♜xf4 with a superior endgame, which White went on to win. However, the simple 23 ♜e3!, preparing ♜f2 and ♜df1, would have left Black with a hopeless position at once – Khalifman.

Game 217 (continued)



14 ♜a4!

Preventing 14...0-0 on account of 15 ♜a(f)d1. In this sense 14 ♙b5?! ♙xe3 15 fxe3 a6 was less convincing.

14...♙xe3

The attempt to castle queenside by 14...♜c7 15 ♜fd1 0-0-0 runs into 16 ♘d4! ♘xe5 17 ♘b5 ♜b6 18 ♙xc5 ♜xc5 19 ♜a5! – Golubev. After the text Black was perhaps hoping for 15 fxe3 0-0 16 ♜ad1 ♘c5!, but Shirov has a much stronger move prepared.

15 ♜ad1! a6

Black parries the threat of 16 ♜xd7 ♜xd7 17 ♙b5, but the troublesome pin along the d-file remains.

16 fxe3 b5 17 ♜f4 ♜c7

Or 17...0-0 18 g4! ♙g6 19 h4 with a strong kingside attack, just like the game.

18 g4! ♙g6 19 h4 h5

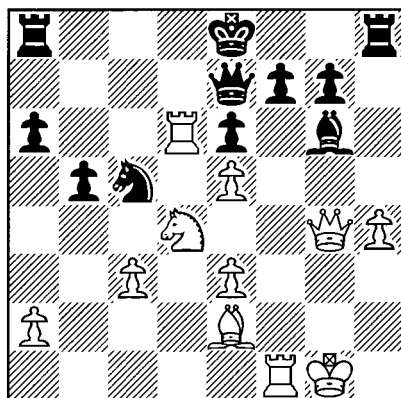
After 19...h6 20 h5 ♙h7 21 g5! ♙f5 22 e4 Black is also under pressure.

20 ♜d6! hxg4 21 ♘d4 ♘c5

By his clever 20th move White secured the vital e5-pawn, and the attempt to attack it by 21...♜c5? now fails to 22 ♘xe6 fxe6 23 ♜xe6+, followed by ♜xg6. Instead, 21...0-0 seems preferable, when 22 ♙xg4 maintains the attack – Golubev.

22 ♜xg4 ♜e7?

Eljanov must have missed White's next. For better or worse, 22...0-0 23 h5 ♙e4 24 h6 ♙g6 had to be tried.

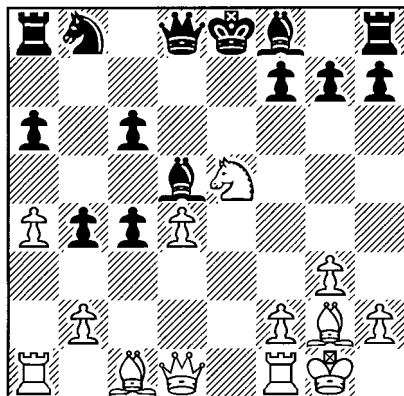


23 ♙f3!

Not just attacking the rook, also creating the threat of 24 ♖c6+ ♜f8 25 ♜xg6. Black's next move fails fatally, though after 23...0-0 24 ♖xa8 ♜xa8 25 h5 ♖e4 26 h6 he would be lost anyway.

23...♜xh4? 24 ♖c6+ ♜f8 25 ♜xg6 1-0

Game 218 (continued)



13 ♜g4!

A power move that restricts the bishop on f8, thus complicating Black's resistance on the e-file. 13 ♜e1?! ♖e7 14 ♖g5 ♜a7! was less convincing.

13...h5

After 13...♖xg2 14 ♜e1! or 13...♖e6 14 ♜h5 ♖e7 15 ♜xc6 Black is also in deep trouble – Sosonko.

14 ♖xd5! cxd5

Or 14...hxg4 15 ♖xf7+ ♜e7 16 ♖g5+ etc.

15 ♜f5

With the black king fatally trapped in the centre, the rest is easy.

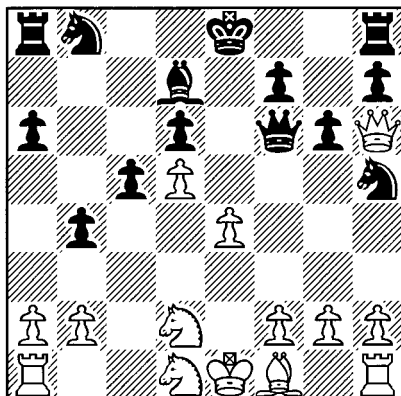
15...♜a7 16 ♜e1 ♜e7 17 ♖g5 g6

Obviously 17...f6? failed to 18 ♜g6+.

18 ♖xe7 1-0

In view of 18...gxf5 19 ♖xd8 ♜xd8 20 ♜xf7+, Black resigned.

Game 219 (continued)



16 a4!

White is aware that the opponent intends 16...♖b5, and so prevents it. Now the knight on b8 becomes a problem for Black, since after 16...bxa3 17 ♜xa3 he can't play 17...♖b5 anyway.

16...♜d8

Preparing to meet 17 ♜c4 with 17...♜e8, but Yusupov sticks to his original plan.

17 g3 ♖g4 18 ♜e3 ♖f3 19 e5!

Clearing the long diagonal for the bishop.

19...dxe5 20 ♜xf3 ♜xf3 21 ♖g2 ♜f6 22 d6 ♜a7 23 0-0

By now Black is in big trouble due to his uncoordinated forces and the exposed king on d8.

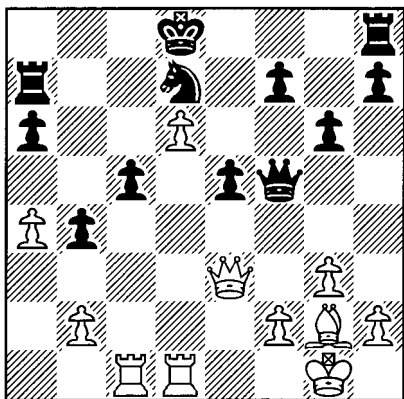
23...♜g7

Or 23...♜d7 24 ♜d5!?, with both 24...♜xd6 25 ♜fd1 and 24...♜g7 25 ♜e3, preparing 26 ♜e7, clearly favour White.

24 ♜ac1! ♜d7 25 ♜fd1 ♜f5

After 25...♜e6 26 ♜d5 ♜g5 27 ♜xg5+ ♜xg5 28 ♜e7, with the threat of ♜c6+, Black is done – Yusupov.

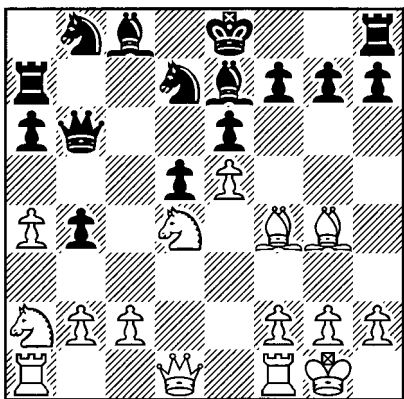
26 ♜xf5 ♜xf5 27 ♜e3!



The threat of 28 ♖xc5 proves decisive.

27...e4 28 ♖xe4 ♗e5 29 ♜d5 ♗e6 30 ♜dxc5 ♜xc5 31 ♗xc5 1-0

Game 220 (continued)



14 a5!

Diverting the black queen from the sixth rank so that a sacrifice with ♖xe6 or ♜xe6 becomes possible.

14...♗xa5

14...♗c7?! is strongly met by 15 ♖xe6!, while after 14...♗b7 15 ♜xe6!? fxe6 16 ♖xe6 d4! 17 ♗xd4 ♜c6 18 ♗d2 ♜dxes 19 ♖d5!, followed by ♜fe1, White also enjoys a strong initiative.

15 ♖xe6! fxe6 16 ♜xe6 g6?!

Now the second white knight joins the battle with great effect. A lesser evil was 16...♗f7 17 ♜d4 ♜c5 18 ♗f3 with compensation for White – Nisipeanu/Stoica.

17 ♜c3! ♗xa1

Or 17...♗b6 18 ♜g7+ ♗f7 19 ♜xd5 ♗d8 20 ♜f5! gxf5 21 ♗h5+, when both 21...♗g8 22 e6 and 21...♗e6 22 ♜xe7 ♗xe7 23 ♜ad1, followed by ♜d6+, lead to a devastating attack.

18 ♗xa1 bxc3 19 ♗a5! ♜c6

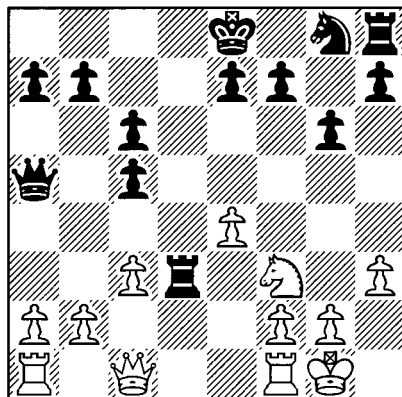
After 19...cxb2 20 ♜c7+ ♜xc7 21 ♗xc7 0-0 22 e6 White is also winning.

20 ♗xd5 ♜b4 21 ♗d4 ♜b7 22 bxc3

With Black's forces in disorder and his king still exposed, the rest is easy for White.

22...♜xc2 23 ♗c4 ♜b6 24 ♜c7+ ♗d8 25 ♜d1+ ♖d7 26 ♗e4 ♜xc7 27 e6! 1-0

Game 221 (continued)



12 e5!

With the simple, but powerful idea of preventing ...♜f6. As a result, Black's development is seriously hampered. In contrast, 12 ♜e5 ♜d8 13 ♗f4 ♜f6 or 12 ♗f4 ♜f6! 13 ♗b8+ ♜d8 14 ♗xb7 ♗b6 is less convincing.

12...♗d8?!

12...e6, preparing a quick ...d7, was preferable, despite the weakening of the d6- and f6-squares. There can follow 13 d5 g5 c7 14 f4 d5! 15 fe1 h6 16 e4 g5 17 g3 xe5! 18 xe5 xe5 19 d6+ e7 20 xe5 xd6 21 e2 with just a slight edge for White in the endgame – Finkel.

13 f4!

Threatening both 14 e6 and 14 d5.

13...d7 14 e6!

The e-file and the h2-b8 diagonal are cleared for the major pieces, and the knight gets access to e5.

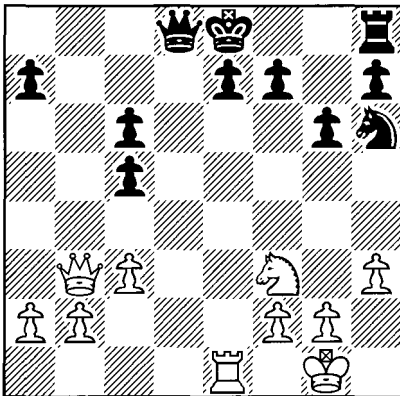
14...xe6 15 fe1 f5

Or 15...d6? 16 e5, winning – Finkel.

16 b8+ d8 17 xb7 d7 18 b3! h6

Overprotecting the f7-pawn. After 18...f6? 19 e5 d5 20 a4, the double threat of 21 xc6 and 21 ad1 is more than Black can take.

19 ad1 c7 20 xd8+ xd8



21 b7!

Finally, White regains the material, with some interest.

21...0-0 22 xa7 d5 23 xe7 xa2 24 g5!

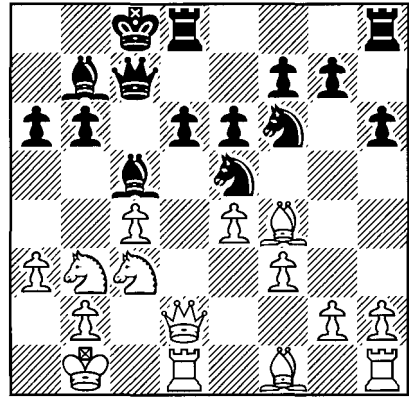
Eyeing both the h7-pawn and the e4-square. The straightforward 24 xc5 xb2

25 xc6 was less ambitious.

24...f5 25 xc5 xb2 26 hx7! a8 27 f6+ g7 28 xc6

White later converted his two extra pawns into victory.

Game 222 (continued)



16 h4!

Before taking aggressive action, Kasparov limits the opponent's intended plan of ...g7-g5. In contrast, after 16 e2?! g5! 17 g3 h5 Black obtains some counterplay on the dark squares.

16...b8 17 h5!

17 e2?! h5 18 h2 f2! was less precise – Kasparov.

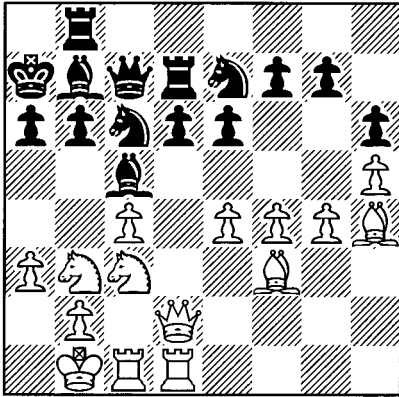
17...d7

A typical Hedgehog pawn break with 17...d5? fails to 18 exd5 exd5 19 xc5 bxc5 20 e1! he8 21 cxd5 – Kasparov, so Black can only wait while the opponent improves his position little by little.

18 c1 c8 19 e2 a7 20 hd1 dd8 21 g4

By now White is better across the whole board.

21...g8 22 g3 e7 23 f4! c6 24 f3 b8 25 h4 d7?



This lets White launch a spectacular

combination. 25...♖bc8 was more solid, after which Kasparov intended the space-gaining 26 g5.

26 ♖b5+! axb5 27 cxb5 ♖a5?

Losing outright, but after 27...♖c8 28 bxc6 ♖xc6 29 e5 Black is also in huge trouble.

28 ♖xa5 bxa5 29 ♖xc5!

The drawback to Black's 25th move becomes evident.

29...dxc5 30 ♗xd7 ♗xf4 31 ♖d6! 1-0

In view of 31...♗a8 32 ♗c7! ♕xe4+ 33 ♕xe4+ ♗xe4+ 34 ♕a1, renewing the threat of 35 ♖a6 mate, Black resigned.

Chapter Five

A Few Words on Opening Preparation

In this short chapter, I would like to share some general thoughts about opening preparation.

Building an opening repertoire

Let's reflect for a while on the nature of knowledge in chess. Middlegame and endgame knowledge is generic, shared by all players – in the middlegame, we must all know how to fight for an open column, create a passed pawn, exploit a weak square etc, while in the endgame, a player who isn't familiar with the concepts of opposition, rear attacks with the rook, the principle of two weaknesses etc, is doomed to failure. As for the knowledge of tactics, we are simply obliged to master forks, pins, discovered checks etc, in order to have success in chess.

In contrast, the opening phase holds much more room for personal style and tastes. You don't have to know anything about the French Defence or Albin's Counter-Gambit in order to become a GM, if these aren't part of your repertoire (although extra knowledge never hurts, of course). If you are a fanatic of the English, then knowledge of the king's pawn openings becomes less necessary, except for your defence(s) against 1 e4, obviously. Thus, opening knowledge is quite a personal matter, originated by the preferences of each player. For this reason, you probably won't find two players with exactly the same repertoire, unless they are under strong influence of the same trainer, and haven't yet started to work independently.

As a consequence, we should exploit the room for personal preferences in the opening by building an opening repertoire that corresponds to our style and tastes. A favourable fact in this sense is the existence of openings and defences with structural and style factors in common. Below I have grouped some openings in two different tables, the first one

according to structural similarities, and the second one according to general “style” similarities. Note that some openings and defences appear more than once, due to their diversity and the variety of fashions in which they can be played.

Openings with structural similarities

Openings and defences	Factor(s) in common
Slav, Caro-Kann, Scandinavian, Torre, London	Pawn structure, queen’s bishop outside the chain
Dutch Stonewall, French, Open Spanish	Pawn structure, opposing pawns in the centre
Benoni, Pirc, Closed Spanish	Pawn structure, dark square play
Nimzo-Indian, Queen’s Indian, Bogo-Indian, Sicilian Scheveningen, Taimanov and Kan	Pawn structure, queenside fianchetto
King’s Indian, Pirc, Modern, Sicilian Dragon	Pawn structure, kingside fianchetto
Queen’s Gambit Accepted, Petroff	Pawn structure, open game
Grünfeld, Catalan (some lines)	Pawn structure, kingside fianchetto
Sicilian Dragon Accelerated, English with g3, Symmetrical English (with Black)	Pawn structure, kingside fianchetto
Sicilian Rossolimo, English with 1...e5 and ...♟b4 (with Black)	Pawn structure
Colle, Semi-Slav	Pawn structure
King’s Indian Attack, King’s Indian, Pirc, Old Indian	Pawn structure
Tarrasch, Petroff, Sicilian Alapin, Queen’s Gambit Accepted, Caro-Kann Panov Attack	Pawn structure (IQP)

Openings with general “style” similarities

Openings and defences	Factor(s) in common
Queen’s Gambit Accepted, Petroff, Spanish Berlin, Sicilian Alapin, Spanish Exchange, French Tarrasch	Solidity, piece exchanges, endgame perspective
King’s Indian, Sicilian Dragon, Dutch Leningrad, French 3 ♘c3, Open Sicilian	Aggressiveness, closed or semi-open positions
Semi-Slav, Spanish Marshall, Arkhangelsk and Schliemann, Caro-Kann with 3 f3, Open Sicilian	Aggressiveness, open or semi-open positions
French, King’s Indian, Czech Benoni	Closed positions, pawn chain battle
Queen’s Gambit Declined, French	Solidity, closed positions
Dutch Stonewall, Sicilian Sveshnikov	Weak points, activity
Sicilian Najdorf, Grünfeld, Sicilian Dragon, Semi-Slav Botvinnik var.	Theoretical battle, sharp play
Nimzo-Indian, French Winawer, Sicilian Rossolimo, English with 1...e5 and ...♗b4	Surrender of the king’s bishop, doubled enemy pawns
Catalan, Benko Gambit, other gambits	Pawn sacrifices, activity
Sicilian Scheveningen, Kan and Taimanov, Alekhine, Pirc, English Hedgehog	Space disadvantage, flexibility, few piece exchanges
Trompowsky, Chigorin	Surrender of the queen’s bishop, imbalanced play
King’s Indian Sämisch, Classical Nimzo-Indian	Space advantage, slow development

Consider these tables as a simple reference, not as an attempt to classify all openings and defences according to their respective characteristics. By now I notice that I have been more generous with Black’s openings for some reason. In any case, you get a brief idea about the directions in which to think when building your repertoire.

Finally, don’t forget that an opening to which you never paid much attention, might actually be well suited for you. In my case, I “discovered” the Sicilian Kan some twelve years after starting with chess, and at the same moment I also switched from 1 e4 to 1 d4. Both

these modifications of the opening repertoire had a rather positive impact on my tournament results, apart from a few initial setbacks.

Plans, set-ups, guidelines and move orders

Every opening has its particular logic, which can be translated into plans, set-ups and minor guidelines. These should be carefully studied alongside with the “theory” moves, in order to obtain a complete picture of the opening involved. In *Strategia*, Mark Dvoretsky advocates the study of typical positions, with a similar pawn structure, piece configuration, etc. Such a task is easily accomplished by examining complete, annotated games with a certain typical position in common.

An additional, interesting approach is to study a certain opening using the games of a specific player; for example, the Grünfeld by Svidler or the Open Sicilian by Anand. You can then gradually “copy” their repertoire, seeing how Svidler responds to 4 ♟f4 , the way Anand handles the Sveshnikov, etc.

When studying openings, we should pay special attention to their inherent, basic plans. Some examples:

- ♠ The ...f7-f5 advance in the King’s Indian.
- ♠ The d4-d5 break in IQP positions.
- ♠ The ...f7-f6 break in the French.
- ♠ The ♞bd2-f1-h2 manoeuvre in the King’s Indian Attack.
- ♠ The minority attack with b4-b5 in the Queen’s Gambit Exchange Variation.

Having acquired some basic knowledge about the opening in question, you will start noticing the “right” and “wrong” moments for the application of these plans. For example, the ...f7-f5 advance in the King’s Indian often works better when White has castled short, and it tends to lose some of its power when the d-file is open, just to name a few cases. The ♞bd2-f1-h2 manoeuvre in the King’s Indian Attack is often powerful when White has achieved the e4-e5 advance, but not so much when it is Black who has a pawn on e5.

Another important issue is the choice of set-ups within a particular opening. For example, in the classical Benoni lines Black is often happy to develop his queen’s bishop to g4, and then follow up with ... ♞bd7 . However, this proves impossible if White chooses a set-up with an early h2-h3 or f2-f3. On such occasions, Black could instead consider a set-up with ... ♞a6-c7 and ... ♟d7 .

In the King’s Indian Sämisch with an early ...c7-c5, d4-d5, White has a slight problem with the king’s knight. Thus he might keep it on g1 for a while, waiting to see whether Black plays ... ♞bd7 , on which he could reply ♞h3 followed by ♞f2 , exploiting the fact that ... ♟xh3 is unavailable for the moment. In contrast, if Black prefers a set-up with ... ♞a6 , as in the previous Benoni example, then the white knight could choose the e2-g3 route instead.

Again, talking about the King's Indian Sämisch with White, an aggressive set-up with ♖d2, 0-0-0, ♟e2, g2-g4 and ♟g3 can be very effective if Black has played ...e7-e5 (and White has responded d4-d5). In contrast, after ...c7-c5, White usually avoids such a set-up due to Black's menacing bishop on g7, and opts for short castling instead.

In some Slav lines with e2-e3 White restricts Black's intended ...♟f5 by an early ♟d3, thus the black bishop often goes to g4 instead. In similar fashion, if White plays h2-h3 early on in the Scandinavian, Black's intention of ...♟g4 can be modified with ...♟f5.

In the Pirc with 4 ♟e3 White has a ready-made, dangerous plan in ♖d2, f2-f3, 0-0-0, ♟h6, h4-h5 etc. Thus Black often delays the natural ...♟g7 and ...0-0 until a later stage of the game, starting with 4...c6. In contrast, against the classical set-ups with 4 ♟f3 he rarely waits with ...♟g7, since a white attack along the h-file becomes less feasible once the knight settles on f3.

When studying new opening lines, try to establish "mini-rules" or simple guidelines that facilitate your understanding of them. For example, in the Classical Variation (4...♟f5) of the Caro-Kann, Black should usually react to h2-h4 with ...h7-h6, and very rarely with ...h7-h5. On the other hand, in the Advance Variation (3 e5) of the same defence, h2-h4 is often more efficiently met by ...h7-h5, than by ...h7-h6.

With Black in the Classical Philidor (1 e4 e5 2 ♟f3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4 ♟xd4 ♟f6), playing ...c7(c6)-c5 is normally a dubious idea from a structural point of view, but once White signals his attacking intentions by advancing f2-f4, then ...c7(c6)-c5 becomes much more reasonable, in order to organize quick counterplay.

As for playing White in IQP positions, if Black hurries to block the d4-pawn by ...♟b4-d5, then the typical plan of d4-d5 has to be discarded, and we could consider a kingside attack instead, with moves like ♟e5, ♟d3-h3 etc. On the other hand, if Black keeps the knight on c6 and continues his queenside development by ...b7-b5, ...♟b7 etc, then his control of the e5-square makes the previous plan less feasible, while the d4-d5 advance becomes relevant again.

When building your repertoire, also be careful with move-orders. For example, if you enjoy playing the Slav against 1 d4, then you could consider 1...c6 as a reply to 1 c4, although in that case you must also be ready for 2 e4. Now, if by chance you like the Old Indian too, then 2...e5 is a possible choice; e.g. 3 ♟f3 d6 4 d4 ♟d7, transposing to that opening. Otherwise you should continue 2...d5, when it is White who has to think about move orders. If he plays 3 exd5 here, then Black could consider 3...♟f6, transposing to a sideline of the Scandinavian, where 4 dxc6 ♟xc6 is regarded as risky for White – who is left with 4 d4, when after 4...exd5 we have finally ended up in an initial position of the Panov Attack of the Caro-Kann. However, if this is not to White's taste, then he should prefer 3 cxd5, after which Black has nothing better than 3...exd5 4 exd5 ♟f6, entering a kind of accelerated Panov Attack, where White often continues 5 ♟b5+ or 5 ♖a4+, trying to hang on to the d5-pawn.

Now let's presume that you didn't like the look of this line and that, by coincidence, with the white pieces you enjoy playing the Rossolimo Sicilian. In that case, you could consider meeting 1 c4 by 1...e5 instead, followed by a quick ...♟b4, getting you into familiar territory, albeit with reversed colours.

However, White could also start his English opening with 1 ♟f3, ruling out 1...e5. The attempt to prepare it by 1...♟c6 unfortunately permits 2 d4, when a Chigorin with 2...d5 seems like the best choice, and that might not be part of your repertoire. White could also play 2 e4, when 2...e5 is probably the best reply, but now you must be prepared for a Spanish or Italian, among others. Fortunately, there is a much simpler solution at hand: 1...d5, followed by 2...c6, by which you easily reach the Slav structure that we talked about in the first place!

Considering the situation from the English player's perspective, if he likes the positions arising after 1 c4 e5, then 1 c4 is clearly the right way for him to start the game. In the opposite case, he could play 1 ♟f3 first and only then c2-c4, thus sidestepping Black's 1...e5. However, this also means that a set-up with g2-g3, ♟g2, e2-e3 and ♟g1-e2 will no longer be available for him, among other things. Time for him to check his priorities.

Summing up, move orders play an important role when building an opening repertoire.

Maintaining your repertoire

When referring to work on our opening repertoire, we could distinguish between three, different preparation processes:

a) **General preparation.** This is the major part of the work and consists of different tasks, such as defining your repertoire, gathering information, updating your lines with new games, analysing critical positions, etc. It is my sincere advice that you do this process at home, and not at the tournament, where time is limited and energy reserves are vital.

How can this work be carried out, in concrete terms? Well, every player has his personal habits and working methods, and I can only tell from my own ones. Here is a possible working plan, to be executed within a chess database program, such as *ChessBase* or *Chess Assistant*:

a1) Create a new game, in which you elaborate a simple tree of moves for the opening in question. For example, in the case of the Pirc Defence with Black, the main branch might be 1 e4 d6 2 d4 ♟f6 3 ♟c3 g6 4 ♟f3 ♟g7 5 ♟e2 0-0 6 0-0 ♟g4, with sub-branches such as 3 f3 ♟bd7, 3 ♟d3 e5, 4 ♟e3 c6, 4 f4 ♟g7 5 ♟f3 0-0 6 ♟d3 ♟a6 etc. When finished you will have an empty tree game, so to speak.

a2) Using books and periodicals, start feeding your tree game with variations and comments. As for electronic sources, cutting game fragments and pasting them into your tree game will facilitate the process. Also add your own pieces of analysis, and analyse critical positions. At the beginning of the tree game, attach a few general guidelines similar to the ones mentioned previously in this section – they will prove useful later during tournament preparation.

a3) Repeat steps a1-a2 for each opening in your repertoire.

a41) Update your repertoire periodically. This can be achieved by creating a filter (in *Chess Assistant*, this is called “classifier”) containing the initial positions within your repertoire; for example, the “stub” positions in the Pirc example above. This filter can then be stored as a template (I am now referring to the process in *Chess Assistant*), and once you have new games to examine (e.g. a new issue of *The Week in Chess*, a new monthly database of *Chess Today*, or a new volume of *Chess Informant*), attach a new filter – based on the template – to the database in question. Finally, execute the filter (i.e. “Search for all nodes” in *Chess Assistant*) and all the games that coincide with the initial positions of your repertoire will be automatically retrieved in separate datasets, ready for your examination.

a42) Practice your opening lines whenever and wherever you can! Even blitz games on the internet suit this purpose, and you can easily feed them afterwards into the corresponding tree game. For example, in the *Blitzin* interface you can mark the “Store my games” option and later access the associated PGN file.

b) **Specific preparation.** Contrary to “a”, this process takes place during the tournament. Here you focus on the opening lines that are likely to occur on the board against your next opponent. Perhaps these lines weren’t sufficiently covered in your corresponding tree games – in that case you will have to follow the procedure outlined in step “a2” above. The good thing about this is that, when you are about to face the same lines in a new game, the work has already been done. Obviously, the more effort you put into the general preparation, the less is needed for the specific preparation.

c) **Quick scans.** Just like “b”, this process is carried out during the tournament. With “quick scan” I refer to a rather superficial examination of one or several tree games, with the simple purpose of refreshing your memory. This kind of preparation is useful when you are not really sure about the opening or opening line to occur on the board. You could compare it to the computer’s transfer of data from the hard disk to its RAM memory.

Preparing for your opponents

From my tournament experience, I recall three main types of opening repertoires among my opponents:

- i) narrow but well-researched.
- ii) wide and flexible.
- iii) a mixture of “i” and “ii”.

The “i” type makes the pre-game preparation quite an easy task, since you usually know in advance which opening or opening line will appear on the board. Thus you can limit yourself to that opening (see “b” above), which makes the preparation a bit more profound and complete. On the other hand, if you manage to surprise your opponent with some new

move or idea, he will often be able to find a good solution anyway due to his experience in that particular type of position.

In contrast, the “ii” type makes preparation much more difficult, and it is quite probable that he will base his opening choice on... *your* repertoire. When facing such “chameleon” players, the quick scans (see “c” above) make a lot of sense, with focus on the variations where you have had problems lately, which tend to be the typical targets for such players. In any case, facing chameleon players can have the advantage that their opening knowledge is a bit superficial (in contrast to the “i” type), a fact that is often revealed once the early middlegame is reached.

Finally, the “iii” type of repertoire implies that the player has some customary openings to rely on, but is also ready to make adjustments in accordance with your repertoire; for example, if you have used a dubious line on several occasions. Basically, you again have to perform a number of quick scans, and then focus on a few lines that are the most likely to occur in the game.

Some final pieces of advice:

- ♣ Aim for a flexible repertoire; e.g. by mastering different subvariations within a single opening. Such flexibility makes the opponent’s preparation a bit more demanding.
- ♣ Be psychologically prepared for surprises. It is possible that your next opponent is about to try out a new opening line, or the games where he played a specific opening didn’t make it to the major databases such as *ChessBase Megabase*.
- ♣ A quick glance at your opponent’s games with the “wrong” colour can establish whether he plays a particular line with both colours – there is at least one such line in the repertoire of any player. The way he treats it with the other colour is definitely relevant for your preparation. Obviously he will be well-acquainted with the line in question, but on the other hand, a player can become a bit confused when his own lines are used against him.
- ♣ When preparing for your next opponent, you could also consider his style and preferences in the later stages of the game. Is he a superb attacker, does he swap pieces as soon as he can, are tactical complexities problematic for him, does he get bored in closed positions, or desperate in defending positions, is he great or not that great in endgames, and so on. Your observations can then be borne in mind during the game and aid your decision-making. If this approach sounds interesting to you, then don’t forget to check his games with the “wrong” colour as well.

Good luck with your preparation.

Index of Players

The index corresponds to page numbers. The white games are in bold.

Abergel T. 98
Abramovic B. **56**
Acs P. **47**
Adams Mi. **103**
Aguiar A. **131**
Akesson R. 182
Akopian V. 227
Alekhine A. **245**
Alekseev E. 319
Al Hadarani H. **247**
Anand V. **41**, 63, 204, **321**
Andersson U. **105**
Andriasian Z. **167**
Antoshin V. **237**
Ardeleanu A. **303**
Arnold M.T. **318**
Aronin L. **119**
Atanasov **137**
Avalos Parra J. 240
Avrukh B. 68
Avtonomov 144
Ballmann M. 250
Barczay L. 49
Bareev E. **61**, **322**
Barkhagen J. 292
Bartel Mat. **236**
Bastrikov G. **139**
Bazhin A. 49

Bebchuk E. 123
Becerra Rivero J. 243
Bejar J. 131
Belezky A. 47
Beliavsky A. 56, **204, 252**
Belov V. 43
Benjamin Joe. **195**
Bentivegna F. 48
Berg E. **39**
Bertok M. 56
Bilek I. 57
Blomqvist E. 47
Bocharov D. **191**
Bönsch U. 100, 174
Boguslavsky M. **49**
Boleslavsky I. **140, 229**
Bologan V. **58, 225**
Breyer G. 136
Briceño A. 134
Brito D. **129**
Browne W. **176, 252**
Brynell S. **253, 292**
Bugay **139**
Bykhovsky A. 141
Calderon J. 120, **135**
Cardenas A. **130**
Carlsen Ma. **10, 247, 291**
Carlsson Po. **47**
Caro H. **136**
Castillo C. 131
Chang A. 135
Cheparinov I. **115**
Chepukaitis G. 246
Chistiakov A. 18
Conquest S. **27**
Cramling P. 239
Csom I. **111**
Dautov R. 233
Deepan Chakkravarthy C. 291
Delchev A. 200
De Firmian N. 320

Diemer E.J. 138
Dizdarevic E. 58
Djukic Z. 55
Dobosz H. **235**
Dolmatov S. 10, **248**, 327
Dorfman J. 172
Dreev A. **254**
Dvoirys S. 94
Dvoretzky M. **22**, **251**
Dydyshko V. **57**
Efanov N. 107
Eljanov P. **227**, 325
Epishin V. 193
Ernst S. **147**, 318
Ernst Th. 324
Estremera Panos S. **241**
Felgaer R. 54
Filippov V. 325
Fine R. **242**
Firman N. **28**
Fischer R.J. 48, **122**, 239, **317**
Flear G. **69**
Flores Di. **54**, **243**
Florescu C. 327
Fries Nielsen J. **180**
Galkin A. 254
Gallagher J.G. **201**
Geller E. **298**
Gheorghiu F. 252
Glek I. **230**
Gligoric S. 214, **240**
Gofshtein L. 25
Goldin A. 50
Golod V. **245**
Grabarczyk M. **171**
Grooten H. 55
Gufeld E. **125**, 313
Guliev S. 36
Gurevich D. **58**, 114
Gurevich M. 103, 187, **246**
Hazai L. 140

Haznedaroglu K. **187**
Hector J. 309
Hellsten J. **32, 34, 37, 65, 120, 131, 168, 180, 182, 183, 210, 216, 236, 244, 253, 288, 319**
Herrera I. **243**
Hertneck G. **55, 324**
Hillarp Persson T. **96**
Hjartarson J. **250**
Hort V. 206
Howe M. 168
Hracek Z. **100**
Hübner R. 217, 326
Hulak K. **117, 144**
Illescas Cordoba M. 92, **212**
Itkis B. 28
Ivanchuk V. 16, 61, **142**
Ivkov B. 237
Jaramillo D. 129
Javakhishvili L. **240**
Jevtic M.L. 236
Kachiani Gersinska K. **239**
Kaidanov G. **114**
Kalesis N. **65**
Kamsky G. **63, 321**
Kantorovich 119
Karjakin S. 185
Karpov A. **311**
Kasparov G. **248, 329**
Kempinski R. 62
Keres P. **307**
Khachiyani M. **253**
Khairullin I. 126
Khalifman A. **325**
Kindermann S. **328**
Klovans J. 251
Knaak R. **244**
Kogan I. 139
Korchnoi V. 53, **56, 111, 169, 237**
Kostanovich 208
Kosteniuk A. **241**
Kotov A. **229**
Kotronias V. 302

Kowara M. 63
Kramnik V. **247**
Kulaots K. **319**
Kundin A. **208**
Lalic B. **137, 144**
Landleiter F. 235
Lange W. **138**
Lasker Em. 136
Laurent B. 137
Lema A. 322
Letelier Martner R. **239**
Lilienthal A. **237**
Lindberg Be. **53**
Litwiniec M. 167
Ljubojevic L. **214**
Llamuca A. **133**
Llamuca H. **130, 134**
Lobron E. **324**
Lombardy W. **138**
Lopez Silva H. 37, 141, **244**
Lputian S. 66, 247
Lujan C. 243
Lundin J. **324**
Lutz Ch. 230
Macieja B. 236
Malkin 139
Mamedyarov S. **52**
Maroczy G. **321**
Marshall F. 245
Martz E. 176
Mascarinas R. 235
Mateuta G. **216**
Matulovic M. 317
McDonald N. 250
Mecking H. 298
Melero Fidalgo J. 64
Miedema R. 147
Mikhalchishin A. 322
Mikhalevski V. 189
Mikkelsen N. **146**
Milev Z. 30

Milov V. **302**
Milu R. **112**
Mirkovic S. **55**
Miton K. **20**
Mnatsakanian E. **145**
Mogranzini R. **48**
Mohammadi A. 146
Moiseenko A. **94**
Morales M. 129, 132, 210
Moreno Carnero J. 212
Morozevich A. 220
Morphy P. **317**
Movsesian S. **14**
Mrndzic M. **238**
Nabaty T. **126**
Naiditsch A. **43**
Nakamura H. **50**, 253
Nedev T. 52
Nezhmetdinov R. **18**
Nielsen P.H. **91**
Nijboer F. **309**, **318**
Niklasson C. **34**
Nikolaevsky Y. **189**
Nisipeanu L.D. **233**
Noboa K. **129**
Nygren K. 96
Nyysti S. **249**
Oll L. 294
Olsson C. 143
Onischuk A. **51**
Oratovsky M. **142**
Ortega R. **169**
Ovetchkin R. **107**
Palatnik S. **66**
Palliser R. **255**
Panno O. 319
Paredes L. **132**, 134
Parligras M. **64**
Parra P. 130
Pasto J. 129
Pejic M. 238

Peng Xiaomin **250**
Peralta F. 242
Perez E. **134**
Pert R. 255
Petrosian T.V. **53, 125, 313**
Pillsbury H. 321
Plachetka J. 244
Podlesny P. 171
Polgar Zsu. **174**
Polugaevsky L. 54, **172**
Ponomariov R. 201
Portisch L. 105
Postny E. **98, 145**
Predojevic B. **220**
Psakhis L. **25**
Rabar B. 240
Radjabov T. **296**
Rashkovsky N. 248
Rasmussen K. 323
Ravinsky G. **123**
Rechlis G. **68**
Relange E. 241
Renman N.G. 32
Ricardi P. **141, 288**
Rivera B. 133
Rodriguez 137
Rojas D. **322**
Romero Holmes A. 102
Rosandic D. **200**
Rozenalis E. 59, 245
Rytshagov M. 305
Sadykov Ru. **222**
Saidy A. **48**
Salgado Lopez L. 115
Salov V. **217**
Sammour Hasbun J. 20
Sanaguano J. **131, 132, 133, 135**
Sandler L. 109
Saric I. 117
Sax G. **140**
Schmidt Wl. 22

Schmid L. 307
Schneider St. **143**
Seirawan Y. **50**
Sepp O. 249
Serras Uria A. **242**
Shahade J. 145
Shamkovich L. 300
Shirov A. 142, **325**
Short N. **294**
Simagin V. 145
Slobodjan R. **193**
Smith Ax. 53
Smyslov V. 138, 311
Sokolov A. 27, **109**
Soltis A. 58
Sosonko G. **67, 326**
Spassky B. **144**
Stamnov A. 318
Stanley C.H. 317
Steiner H. 242
Steinitz W. **323**
Stoltz G. 140
Strikovic A. **235**
Suetin A. **49, 300**
Sulava N. 142
Sulskis S. **254**
Sutovsky E. **141**
Sveshnikov E. 222, **305**
Svidler P. **60**
Szekely J. **136**
Taimanov M. **54, 206**
Tal M. **12, 30, 57**, 122, 236
Tibensky R. 14
Tigrero K. 133
Timman J. 36, 46
Tiviakov S. 41
Tjurin A. 191
Topalov V. **16, 59**
Torre Eu. 296
Tregubov P. **178**
Tringov G. 12

Usca D. **129**, 130, **131**
Vaca O. 132
Vaganian R. 198
Vaisser A. **92**
Vajda A. **327**
Vallejo A. 135
Van der Sterren P. 178
Van der Wiel J. **198**, 329
Van Wely L. **36**, **185**
Vega Gutierrez S. 246
Velicka P. 39
Vera Gonzalez R. 69, **102**
Vizama C. 183
Vocaturro D. 241
Volkov S. 60, **62**, 254
Volokitin A. 51
Von Bardeleben C. 323
Vovk A. **63**
Vuckovic A. 328
Wagener A. 195
Wedberg T. 286
Westerinen H. 225, **323**
Yermolinsky A. 57
Yuferov S. **246**
Yurtaev L. 248
Yusupov A. 252, **286**, **327**
Zaitsev I. 112
Zapata A. **236**
Zarnicki P. 50
Zelcic R. 303

Index of Openings

The index corresponds to page numbers.

Alekhine's Defence 140, 198, 236, 253
Baltic Defence 136
Benko Gambit 55, 98, 250
Benoni Defence 37, 49, 117, 137, 143, 212, 237, 327
Bird's Opening 34
Bishop's Opening 134
Blumenfeld Gambit 115
Budapest Gambit 57, 191
Caro-Kann Defence 28, 39, 58, 126, 135, 141, 145, 233, 243, 254, 303, 318, 323, 325
Catalan Opening 67, 227, 288, 326
Colle's Opening 102, 180, 286
Dutch Defence 36, 138, 252
English Opening 16, 25, 48, 53, 54, 59, 66, 134, 141, 144, 189, 206, 214, 217, 243, 249
Evans Gambit 317
Four Knights Game 321
French Defence 14, 18, 32, 47, 60, 103, 132, 137, 208, 220, 250
Grünfeld Defence 94, 172, 176, 237, 324
Irregular defences 114, 131, 245
Italian Game 167, 225, 323
King's Indian Defence 111, 145, 239, 313
Modern Defence 12, 112, 200, 201, 246, 319
Nimzo-Indian Defence 48, 50, 61, 131, 240, 244, 245, 248, 302
Owen's Defence 96
Pirc Defence 187, 204, 242, 296
Queen's Gambit Accepted 54, 58, 144, 242, 232
Queen's Gambit Declined 131, 171, 174, 210, 235, 236, 238, 247, 255
Queen's Indian Defence 51, 55, 182, 252, 292, 319, 329
Queen's Pawn Opening 241
Ragozin Defence 147, 236

Reti's Opening 10, 129
Petroff's Defence 311, 318
Scandinavian Defence 41, 123, 135, 294, 300
Scotch Game 50
Semi-Slav Defence 56, 62, 69, 107, 222, 325
Semi-Tarrasch Defence 30
Sicilian Defence, Alapin Variation 22, 119, 129, 130, 132, 133, 168, 253, 305, 320
Sicilian Defence, Closed Variation 130, 193
Sicilian Defence, Kan Variation 63, 64, 142, 230, 244
Sicilian Defence, King's Indian Attack 235
Sicilian Defence, Morra Gambit 307
Sicilian Defence, Najdorf Variation 43, 57, 109, 139, 142, 248, 321
Sicilian Defence, Rossolimo Variation 53, 68, 105, 133, 195, 247, 291, 317, 328
Sicilian Defence, Richter-Rauzer Variation 47
Sicilian Defence, Scheveningen Variation 49, 56, 100, 146, 327
Sicilian Defence, Taimanov Variation 27, 122, 139, 169
Slav Defence 20, 65, 91, 136, 178, 183, 185, 216, 239, 240, 246, 254, 324
Spanish Opening 140, 241, 298, 309
Tarrasch Defence 92, 120, 129, 322
Three Knights Game 125
Torre's Opening 63
Trompowsky's Opening 52, 229
Vienna Game 138, 251

MASTERING OPENING STRATEGY

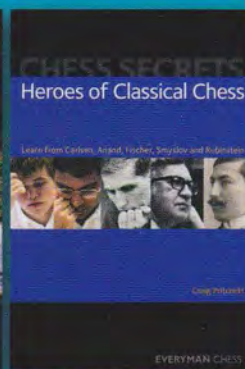
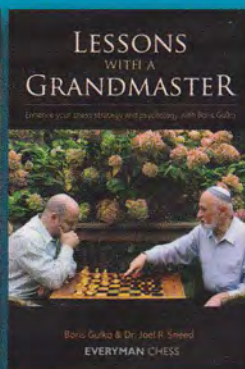
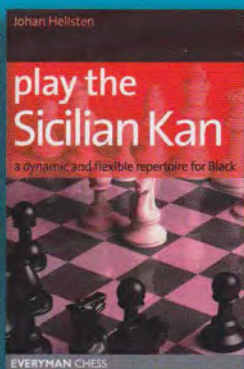
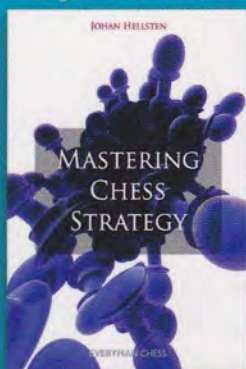
Study brings wisdom. Practice brings perfection.

This is the eagerly awaited follow-up to Johan Hellsten's acclaimed *Mastering Chess Strategy*. In this new book Hellsten focuses exclusively on opening play. He examines a wide variety of key subjects, including development, the centre, attack and defence, pawn breaks, typical mistakes and how to punish them, and opening preparation, providing the reader with a vital foundation in opening strategy. Just like his previous book, *Mastering Opening Strategy* is a product of Hellsten's many years' work as a full-time chess teacher and is specifically designed as part of a structured training programme to improve strategic thinking. In addition to the many examples there's an abundance of carefully selected exercise games which allow readers to monitor their progress and put into practice what they have just learned. Following such a course is an ideal way for players of all standards to improve. Although designed mainly for students, this book is also an excellent resource for chess teachers and trainers.

- An essential course in opening strategy
- Contains over 350 pages of Grandmaster advice
- Includes over 200 examples and exercise games

Johan Hellsten is a Grandmaster, a former Swedish Champion and a European Team Championship individual gold medallist. He's a renowned chess teacher and has firmly established himself as a writer with outstanding credentials.

more great chess titles:



EVERYMAN CHESS

www.everymanchess.com

US \$29.95

UK £19.99

ISBN 978-1-857446920

