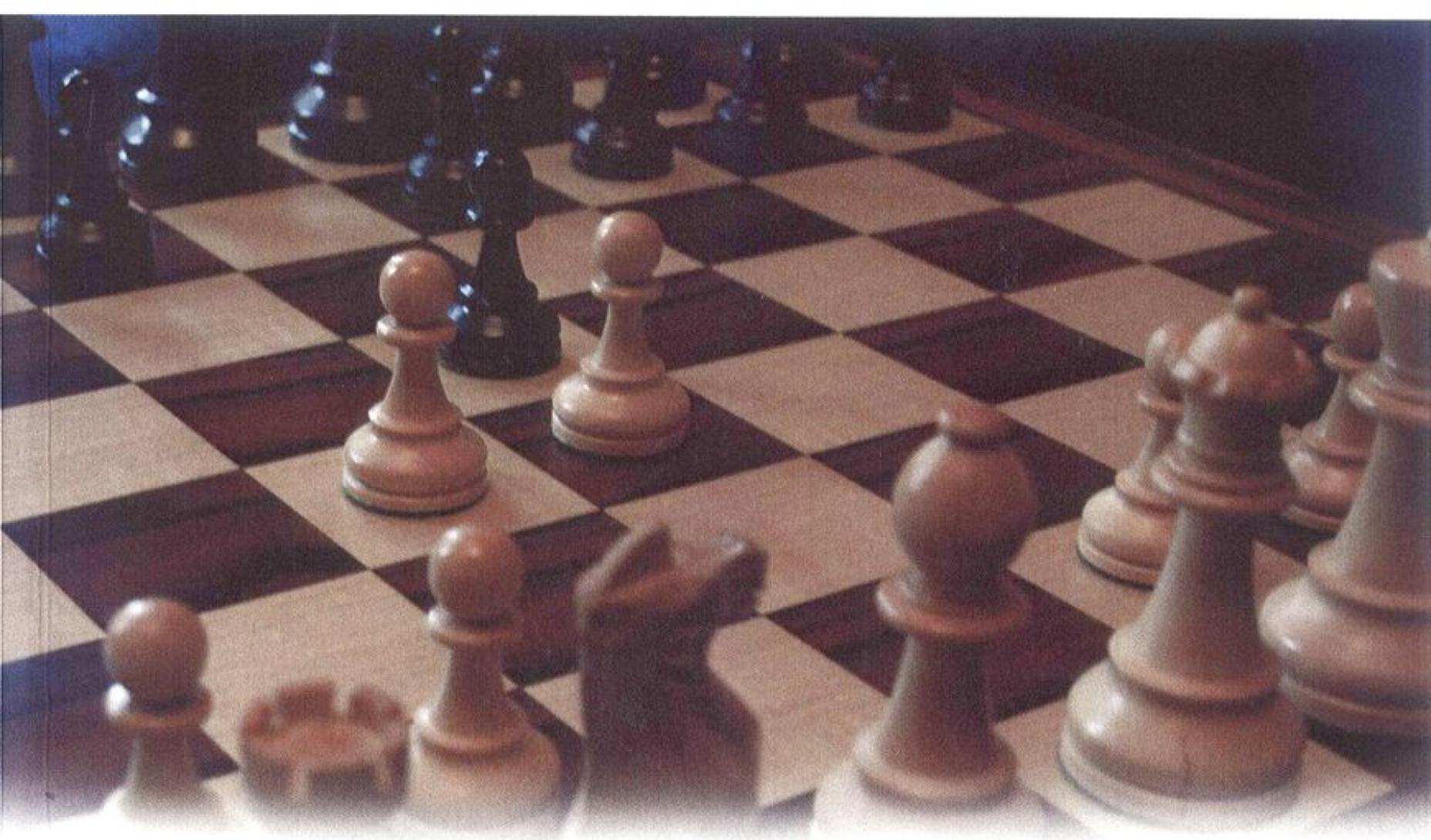


Lars Schandorff

Playing the Queen's Gambit – A Grandmaster Guide



QUALITY CHESS



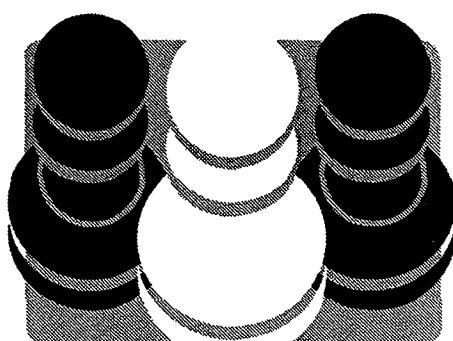


Playing the Queen's Gambit

– a grandmaster guide

By

Lars Schandorff



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Playing the Queen's Gambit - A Grandmaster Guide

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Preface

This book provides White with a hard-hitting repertoire against all Black's answers to 1.d4 d5 2.c4, the Queen's Gambit, including classics like the evergreen Queen's Gambit Declined, the highly fashionable Slav, and the rather obscure Chigorin.

The repertoire is based entirely on big mainlines, which guarantees its reliability and strength. Firstly, you cannot expect to get anything against well-respected openings like the Queen's Gambit Accepted and the Semi-Slav by trying a little sideline or just by playing safe. The main lines, on the other hand, have not become main lines by chance. They have slowly but surely evolved and proved their strength over the years, so by choosing main lines you gain reliable weapons.

Secondly, the main lines are sharp and put the maximum pressure on the opponent, both theoretically and in practice. This corresponds perfectly with the philosophy behind this work, which is that White should strive for the initiative and show that moving first matters. Developing the pieces fluidly to active squares and trying to take the centre with pawns to seize space – these are key elements in the various White set-ups presented here.

Playing White is like serving in tennis. I remember when I started to play a few years ago – tennis that is! – a good friend of mine explained that the serve should be a great offensive weapon. Actually this is quite a cruel thing to tell a beginner, because the serve is by far the most difficult stroke in tennis. But it is true of course, and the right attitude. With a good serve you either win directly or, if the opponent manages to return the ball, at least you get the chance to take the initiative and dictate the rest of the duel.

In this book I offer you an excellent first serve. And it will be an effective offensive weapon, I promise that. But every tennis player knows that it is important to have a decent second serve as well. This may also be true in chess, especially in this computer age, so having a safe alternative is a good idea. Thus, throughout the book I offer hints of where you could devote some of your further investigations.

Enough. Let's hit the engine and start rolling – I hope you enjoy the films, the songs and the moves.

Lars Schandorff
Denmark, January 2009

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Key to symbols used

±	White is slightly better	?	a weak move
≡	Black is slightly better	??	a blunder
+	White is better	!	a good move
+	Black is better	!!	an excellent move
+-	White has a decisive advantage	!?	a move worth considering
-+	Black has a decisive advantage	?!	a move of doubtful value
=	equality	#	mate
≈	with compensation	(n)	n th match game
⇄	with counterplay	→	with an attack
∞	unclear	↑	with an initiative
		N	new move

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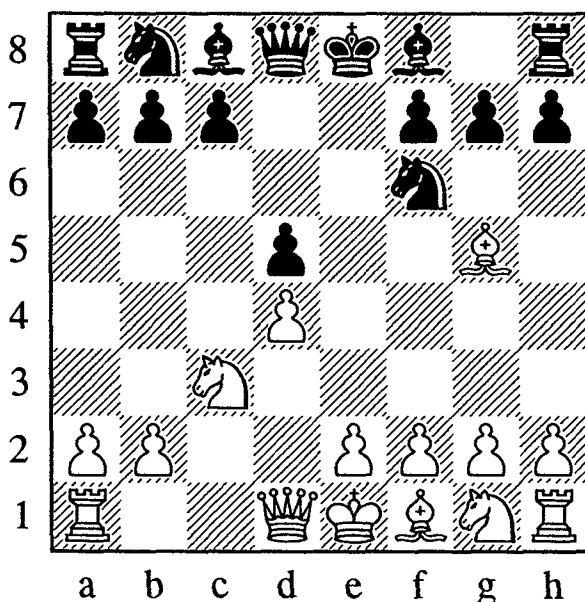
Introduction to the Repertoire

I have explained the principles of the repertoire – aggressive reliable mainlines that seize space – but after 1.d4 d5 2.c4 how does that translate into moves? Against some openings the choice seems obvious, in others there are several possible lines that could fit the bill. Where there was a real choice I have used my judgement to select the most principled continuation – no compromises!

Let's take it one opening at a time in the order I have arranged the chapters:

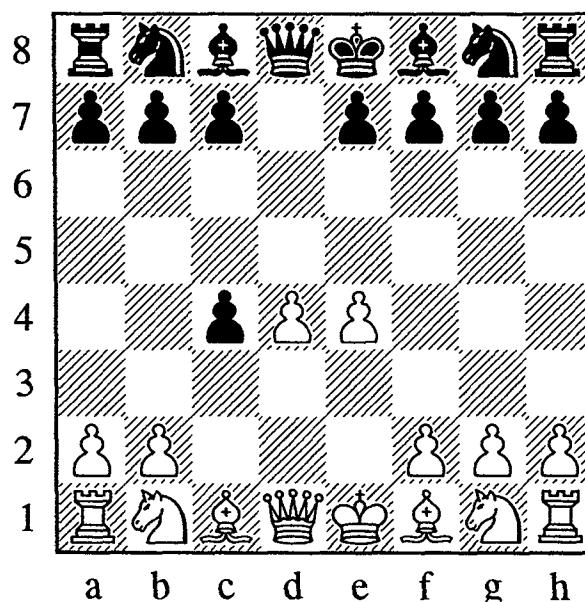
Chapter 1: Queen's Gambit Declined

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 Against the **Queen's Gambit Declined** my choice is: **4.cxd5 exd5** Critical, yes, but how does it take space? The answer is that in many of my lines White will later play f3 and e4. **5.♗g5** The great Botvinnik will be our guide of how to play this line.



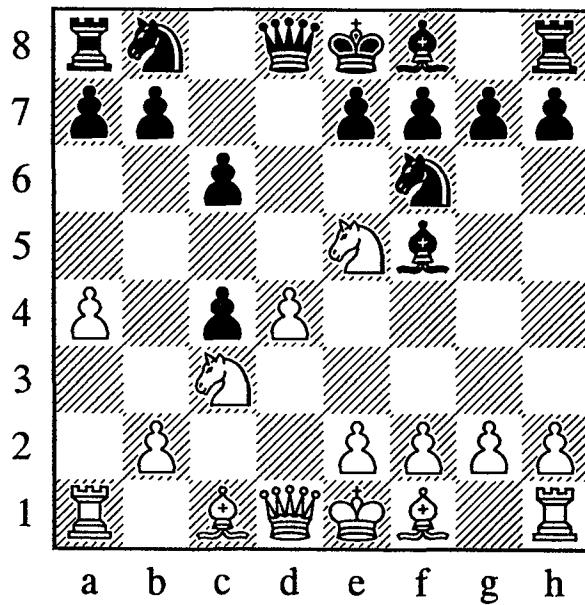
Chapter 2: Queen's Gambit Accepted

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 The **Queen's Gambit Accepted** is a tough opening to meet, but it is obvious my space-gaining choice must be: **3.e4** Black has various ways to challenge White's central dominance, so we will leave the details till later.



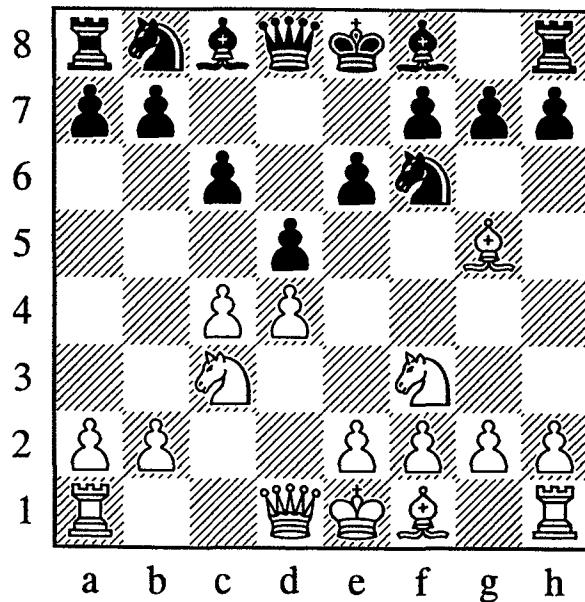
Chapter 3: The Slav

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Qf3 Qf6 4.Qc3 dxс4 5.a4 Qf5 Naturally, Black also has moves such as 5...Qg4, 5...Qa6 and 5...e6, and I cover them all. But 5...Qf5 is the mainline of the **Slav**, and I answer with the mainline: **6.Qe5** As against the Queen's Gambit Declined, I will usually build my centre with f3 and e4.



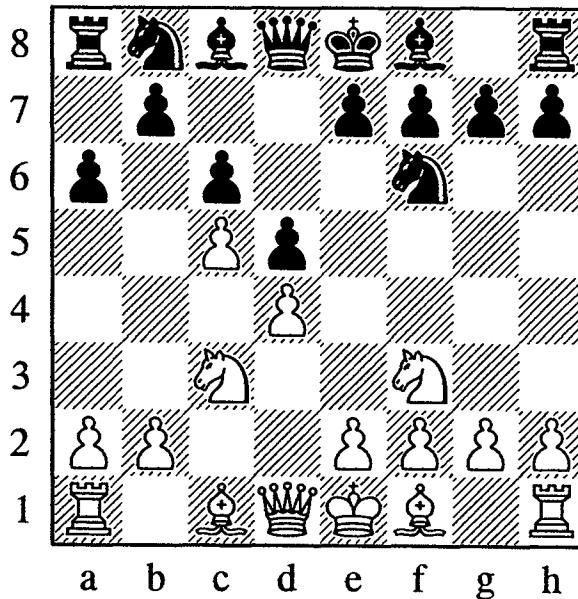
Chapter 4: The Semi-Slav

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Qf3 Qf6 4.Qc3 e6 The **Semi-Slav** will be met by the most aggressive reply: **5.Qg5** Naturally if Black takes on c4 then White seizes the centre with e2-e4.



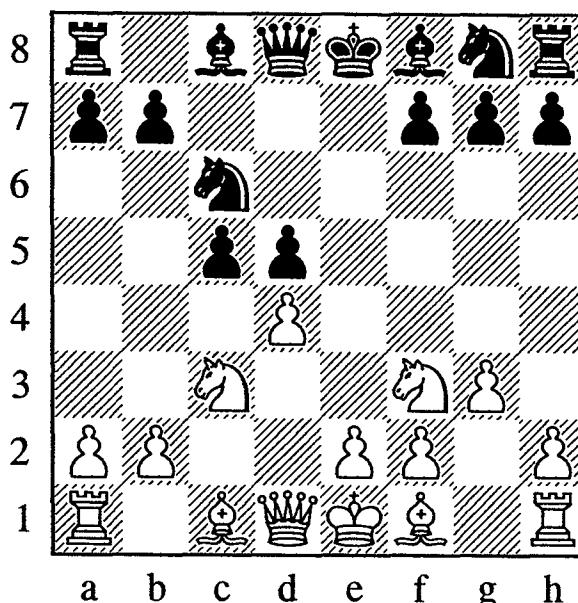
Chapter 5: The a6-Slav

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 a6 Against the **a6-Slav** achieving e2-e4 is more difficult (though it will happen in one of my key lines!). This time I claim a space advantage by playing: **5.c5** At this point Black has a choice, so we will leave further explanation to the chapter itself.



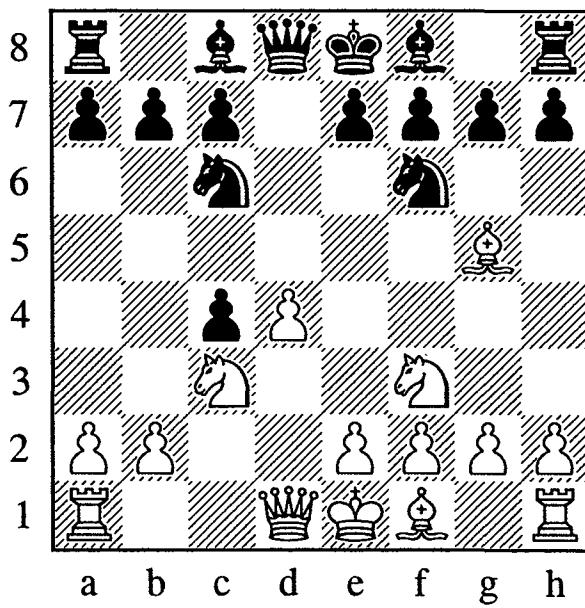
Chapter 6: The Tarrasch

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 The **Tarrasch** is the joker in our pack: White will not have a space advantage but we will have easy development and the sounder pawn structure by following the main line: **4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.g3** White's play will be more about control, whereas the rest of the repertoire is more attacking.



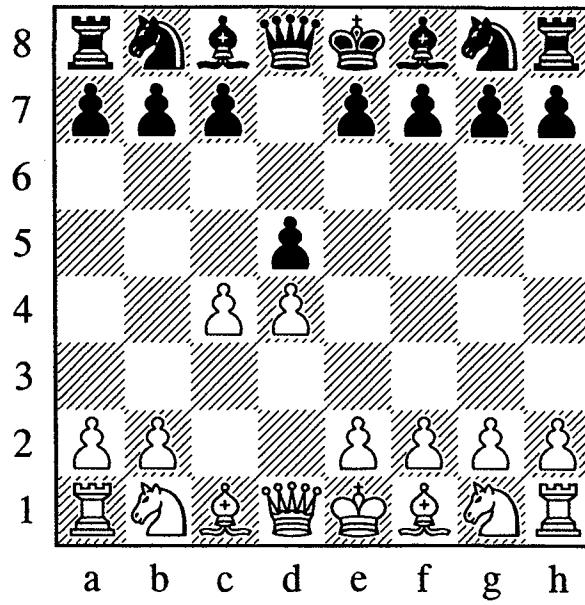
Chapter 7: The Chigorin

1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♜c6 In the **Chigorin** Black chooses piece-play over supporting his centre, so it is relatively easy for us to secure a space advantage – the trick is to find an accurate move order that limits Black's counterplay. My solution is: **3.♘c3 ♜f6 4.♘f3 dxc4** Now 5.e4 looks like our kind of move, but it allows Black to play 5...♝g4, so I opt to develop first with: **5.♗g5** This is an old favourite of mine, and I will show how to use it as an effective weapon.



Chapter 8: Minor Lines

The final chapter is a hotchpotch of minor lines.



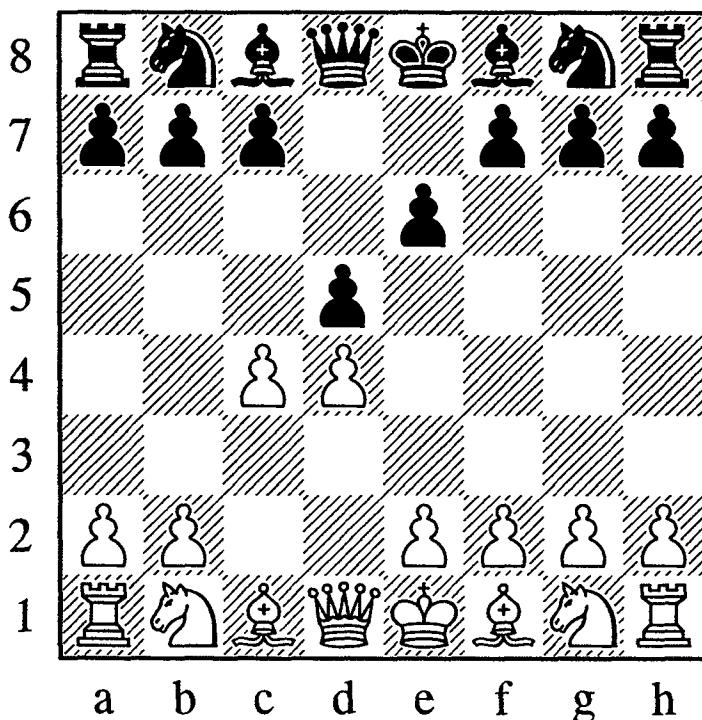
The lines covered include the Triangle Variation (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c6), the Albin Counter-Gambit (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5) and the Von-Hennig-Schara Gambit (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 cxd5). Naturally this chapter also covers many other lines, as this is a complete repertoire.

I have explained the ideas behind the repertoire and shown a few moves, so it's time to dive into the details.

Chapter 1

Queen's Gambit Declined

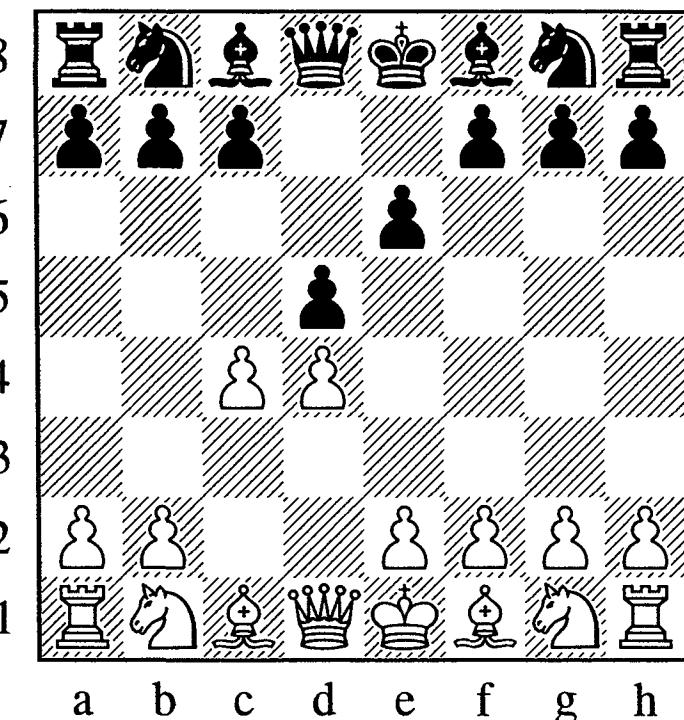
*And did we tell you the name of the game, boy
We call it Riding the Gravy Train*
– Pink Floyd



1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6

- | | |
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| 3...♝e7 | page 28 |

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6



The real Queen's Gambit: Black defends d5 and stays solid. It is one of the most respected openings in all chess theory and has been used by every World Champion. Fortunately, they have also had to face it, so we will have some of the greatest guides possible.

3.♘c3 ♘f6

Black plays according to the old philosophy: first equalize, and then play for a win. Black's choice of opening should not be thought of as unambitious, but rather as realistic. After all it is White who must come up with something. It is only fair: he has the serve, remember.

Translated to moves, Black will continue ...♗e7 and ...0–0 with a safe king. Afterwards the queenside can be attended to. Here the bishop on c8 needs special care. It is the real problem child of the entire Queen's Gambit Declined, because its natural route to freedom was blocked by 2...e6. Often it can come fully alive on b7. The knight on b8 can go to d7 and help Black to increase his influence in the centre with ...c5.

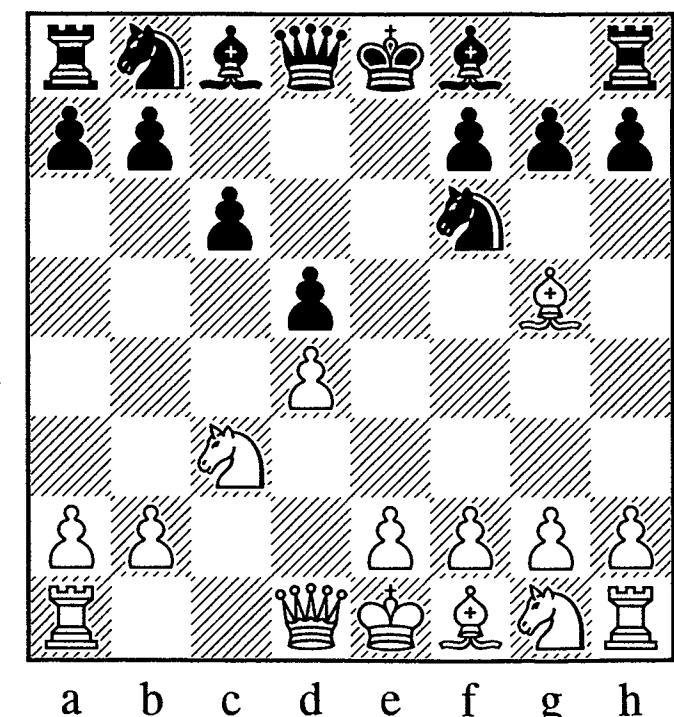
One mainline is 4.♘f3 ♛e7 5.♗g5 0–0 6.e3 and now instead of the ancient masters' solid but rather passive 6...♗bd7, the modern elite throws in the little move 6...h6. Then 7.♗xf6 does not do much for White other than lose

the bishop pair, while after the standard 7.♗h4 Black can either release the tension with the Lasker variation 7...♗e4 or play the flexible Tartakower system with 7...b6. Generally speaking, White's pieces quickly get to good squares and he has a slight positional initiative, but Black has no real weaknesses, so it is difficult to gain anything tangible. In the new century White has had some success with 5.♗f4. Even so, after 5...0–0 6.e3 both the old move 6...c5 and the popular 6...♗bd7 seem viable. Fortunately there is a third option. One that immediately changes the nature of the battle.

4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗g5

The Exchange Variation. White fixes the pawn structure in a way that gives him a slight but long-lasting positional edge. Usually Black safeguards d5 with ...c6 and we have the typical Carlsbad structure.

5...c6



White has tried to play on both flanks. Usually he begins with 6.♔c2 to prevent Black's problem bishop from going to the great square f5, then White continues with e3, ♘d3, ♘f3 and either castles long and launches an offensive on the kingside with h3 and g4, or castles short and begins positional play on the

queenside with $\mathbb{B}b1$ followed by b2-b4-b5, the so-called minority attack.

It is true that Black does not have immediate counterplay. For example, the natural strike in the centre with c6-c5 will most likely lead to severe problems if White just takes it and isolates the black d-pawn. But you don't play the Queen's Gambit with Black to get active piece-play, do you? No, you play it to get a firm position, and that is exactly what you get after the normal moves ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$, ...0-0 and ... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ followed by the clever regrouping ... $\mathbb{E}e8$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}f8$. The king's position is well defended and, although placed on the last few ranks, the black pieces are ready to counter any aggression. In the early days of this variation White often ran headfirst into a wall.

However, the legendary World Champion Mikhail Botvinnik found, almost by accident, an interesting set-up for White based on his flair for dynamic pawn play. After the moves $\mathbb{W}c2$, e3, $\mathbb{Q}d3$ he developed the knight more flexibly with $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ and after 0-0 came the key move f3! preparing the break e3-e4. So White could also play in the centre. This strategy is very promising and was also a favourite of Botvinnik's pupil, the brilliant attacking player Garry Kasparov.

As an appetizer, let's see three famous Botvinnik wins that show White's prospects in full bloom.

Follow the Patriarch

Botvinnik was well known for his deep opening preparation, but you can't work out everything in the lab: chess is a practical game. Even in our computer age you still have to make your own decisions at the board – at least sometimes! In the following masterpiece Botvinnik was provoked by the creative Estonian, Paul Keres, and had to come up with something new. In fact, he came up with the foundation for our whole system.

Game 1

Botvinnik – Keres

Moscow 1952

1.d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5 4.cxd5 exd5
5. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 6.e3 0-0 7. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 8. $\mathbb{W}c2$
 $\mathbb{E}e8$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 10.0-0 c6 11. $\mathbb{Q}ab1$

Preparing the typical minority attack.

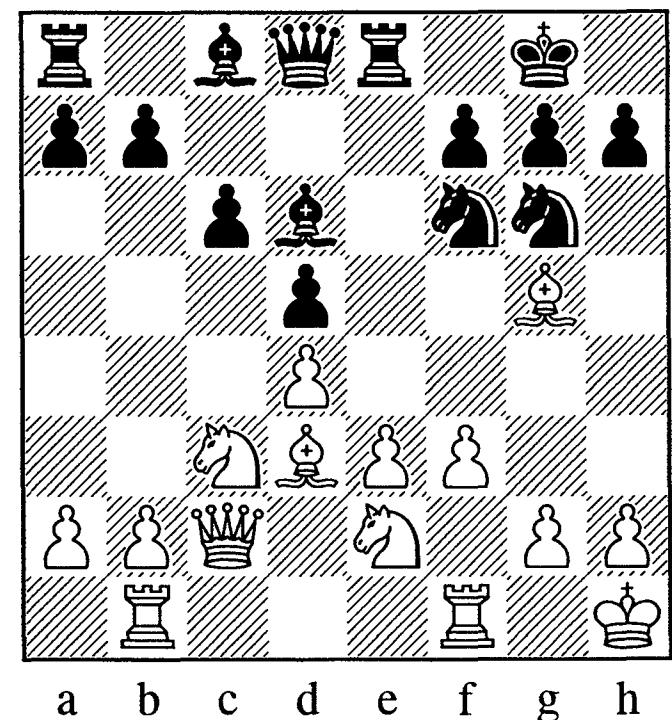
11... $\mathbb{Q}d6?$!

This threatens 12... $\mathbb{Q}xh2\#$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4\#$ and ... $\mathbb{W}xg5$, but the move is inaccurate.

12. $\mathbb{Q}h1$

Now on ... $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ White has the intermediate move $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ winning instantly.

12... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 13.f3!



We are witnessing the birth of a profound strategy. Black was ready to gain the bishop pair with ...h6, so White needed an active continuation. 13.f3 prepares play in the centre with e3-e4.

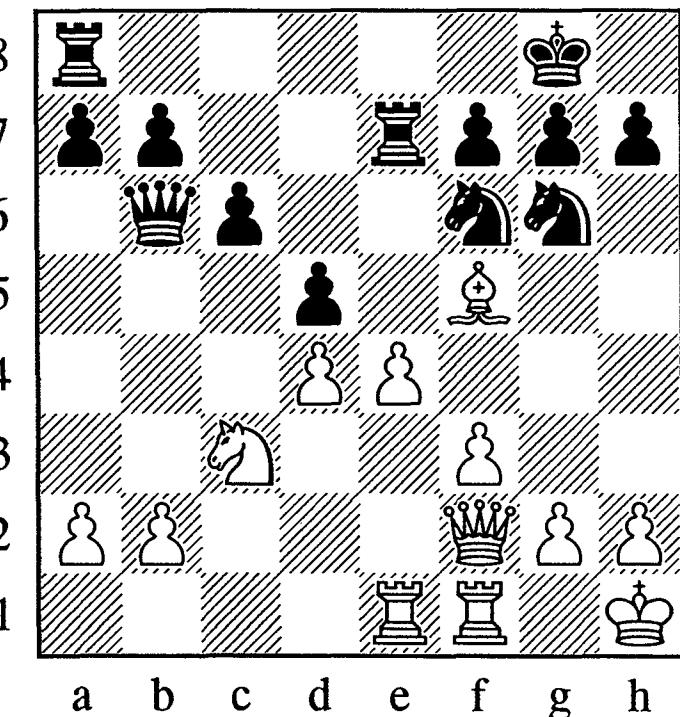
13... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

Black admits his failure. After 13...h6 14. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 15.e4 White already has a serious initiative.

14.♗be1

Botvinnik adapts to the new situation. No minority attack today! The plan is to play e3-e4, but first he improves his pieces and at the same time prevents any counterplay: prophylactic play in its very essence. The break will come eventually and with extra force if it is properly backed up. Too hasty was 14.e4 dxe4 15.fxe4 ♗g4 when Black gets good counterplay.

14...♗d7 15.♕xe7 ♜xe7 16.♗g3 ♗f6 17.♗f2 ♗e6 18.♗f5 ♗xf5 19.♗xf5 ♗b6 20.e4!



Finally.

20...dxe4 21.fxe4±

White has strong pressure. The further advance e4-e5 is in the air, gaining more space and establishing an outpost on d6 for the knight.

21...♝d8 22.e5 ♗d5 23.♗e4

Simple stuff: the knight is going to d6.

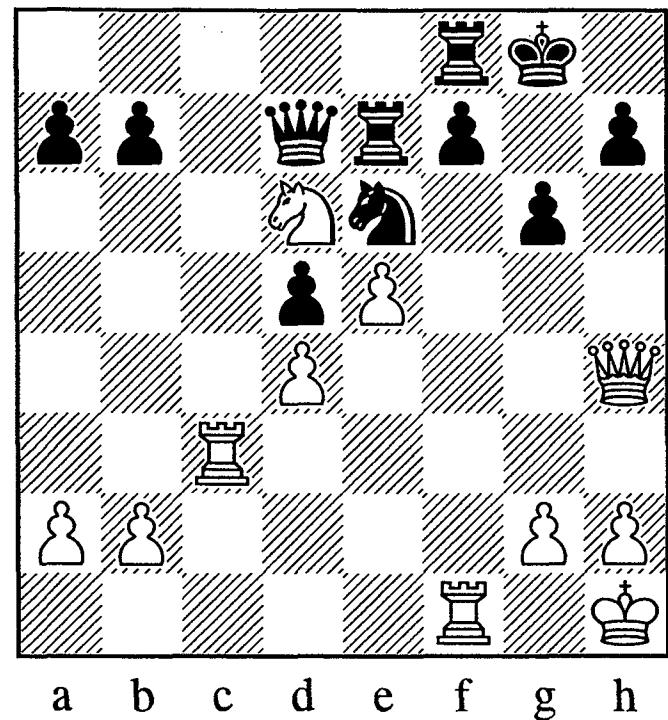
23...♗f8 24.♗d6 ♗c7 25.♗e4

Botvinnik wants to eliminate the strong knight on d5 and at the same he vacates f5 for his own knight.

25...♗e6 26.♗h4 g6 27.♗xd5 cxd5 28.♗c1 ♗d7 29.♗c3+–

The positional dominance transforms into a strong attack. Black is beyond salvation.

29...♝f8



30.♗f5! ♜fe8

Or 30...gxsf5 31.♗g3† ♗g7 32.♗f6 and mate on g7.

31.♗h6†

Even stronger than taking the exchange. Soon Black will lose everything.

31...♝f8 32.♗f6 ♗g7 33.♗cf3 ♗c8 34.♗xf7 ♗e6 35.♗g5 ♗f5 36.♗h6 ♗g7 37.g4

1–0

After this game Botvinnik refined the system, so when the opportunistic Danish fighter Bent Larsen allowed it some years later, the Patriarch was more than ready.

Game 2

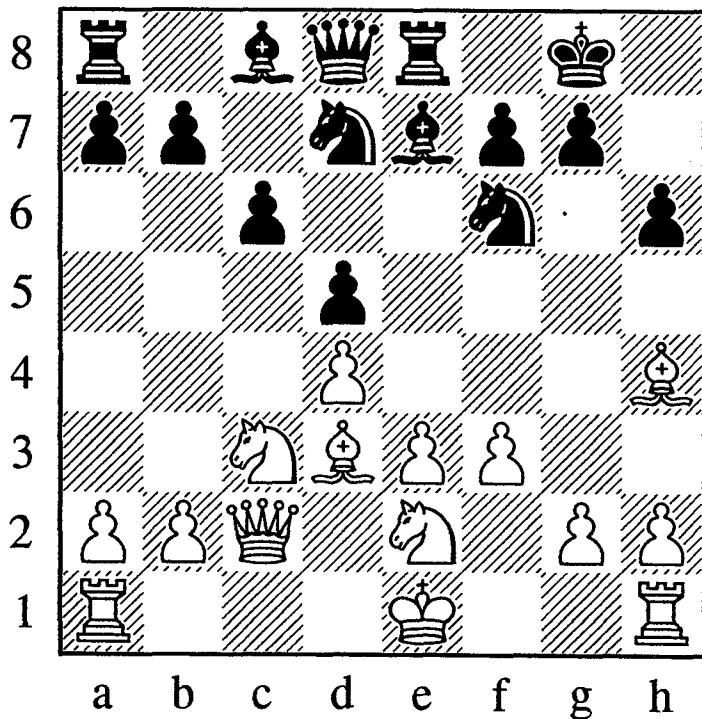
Botvinnik – Larsen

Noordwijk 1965

1.c4 e6 2.♗c3 d5 3.d4 ♗f6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗g5 c6 6.e3 ♗e7 7.♗c2 0–0 8.♗d3 ♗bd7 9.♗ge2 h6

This looks natural but it is a small weakening of the kingside. Better is the standard ... $\mathbb{E}e8$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}f8$.

10. $\mathbb{Q}h4 \mathbb{E}e8$ 11.f3!



This time Botvinnik hurries to take the desired set-up.

11...c5

Now that White has softened the pawns in the centre somewhat, especially the pawn on e3 is loose, this counter-strike gains in strength.

12.0–0 a6 13. $\mathbb{E}ad1$ b5

Black quickly seeks counterplay on the queenside before White can make use of his superiority in the centre and on the kingside. Botvinnik had the chance to play $dxc5$ with a small positional advantage, but he had a fondness for closed positions.

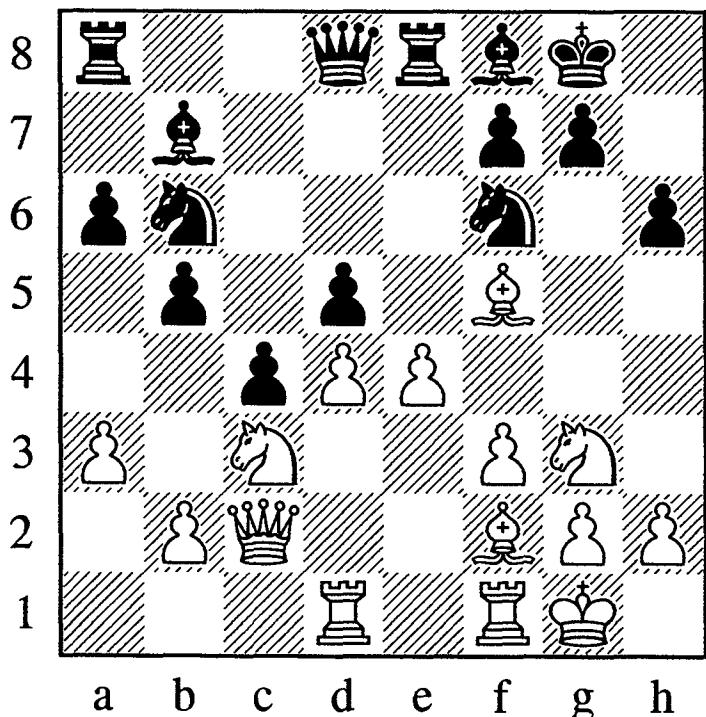
14. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ c4 15. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}b6?!$

Here Black should have taken the opportunity to disturb White a little more with 15...b4! with acceptable play.

16. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 17.a3

Now it will not be so easy for Black to play ...b4.

17... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 18.e4



The typical break. Apparently, as soon as it comes White has promising play.

18...g6 19. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ a5 20.e5

Simply taking more space.

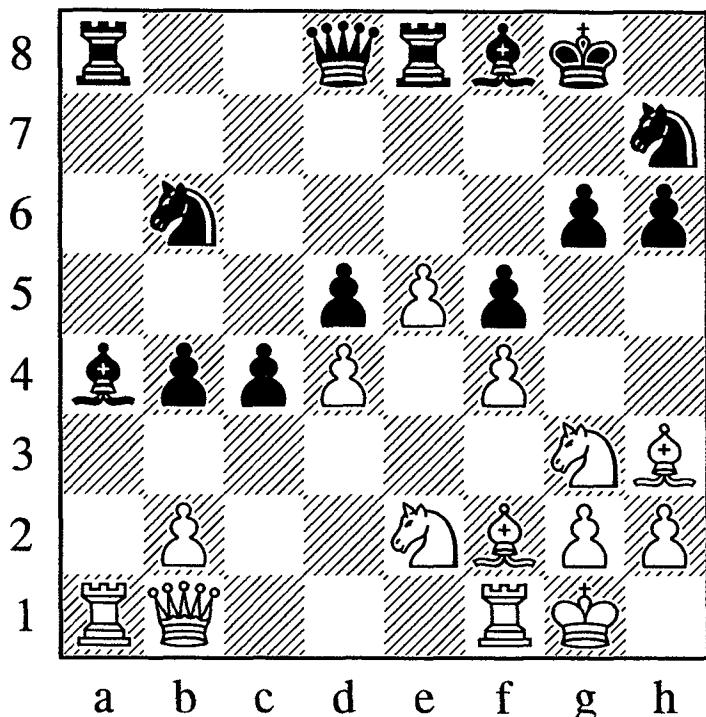
20...b4 21. $\mathbb{Q}ce2$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 22.f4

The offensive on the kingside will dictate the rest of the game. Mate, after all, is valued above all else in chess.

22... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 23. $\mathbb{E}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 24. $\mathbb{W}b1$ f5

White was ready to play f4-f5 himself.

25.axb4 axb4



26. $\mathbb{Q}xf5!$ gxf5 27. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$

An instructive piece sacrifice: White removes any obstacles in front of his pawns. Black is badly coordinated and it is difficult for him to organize a defence.

27... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g3$

Even stronger was the direct 28. $\mathbb{Q}g6!$ $\mathbb{B}ed8$ 29.f5 followed by f6.

28... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 30. $\mathbb{W}g6\#$ $\mathbb{W}g7$

31. $\mathbb{W}c6\pm$ $\mathbb{B}xal$ 32. $\mathbb{B}xal$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 33. $\mathbb{B}a7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5?!$

The text loses, but 33... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 34. $\mathbb{W}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 35. $\mathbb{W}a5$ $\mathbb{B}e7$ 36.f5 was also pretty hopeless.

34.dxe5 $\mathbb{W}e6$ 35. $\mathbb{W}xe6\#$ $\mathbb{B}xe6$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{B}c6$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ c3 38.bxc3 bxc3 39. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{B}xc5$ 41. $\mathbb{B}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 43.g3 h5 44. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ d4 45. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{B}c7$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 47.f5 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}f6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 49. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{B}b7$ 50.e6 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 51. $\mathbb{B}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}e5\#$ 52. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$

1-0

The 3... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ move order

Annoyed by the normal Exchange variation, Black began to play the cunning move order **1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$** . Here the exchange **4.cxd5 exd5** is not so scary because White cannot follow up with $\mathbb{Q}g5$ and after the normal **5. $\mathbb{Q}f4$** Black can play **5...c6 6.e3 $\mathbb{Q}f5$** , solving the problem of his light-squared bishop. Still, it is not so easy as it looks at first sight. White can throw a spanner in the works as demonstrated by – of course – none other than Botvinnik.

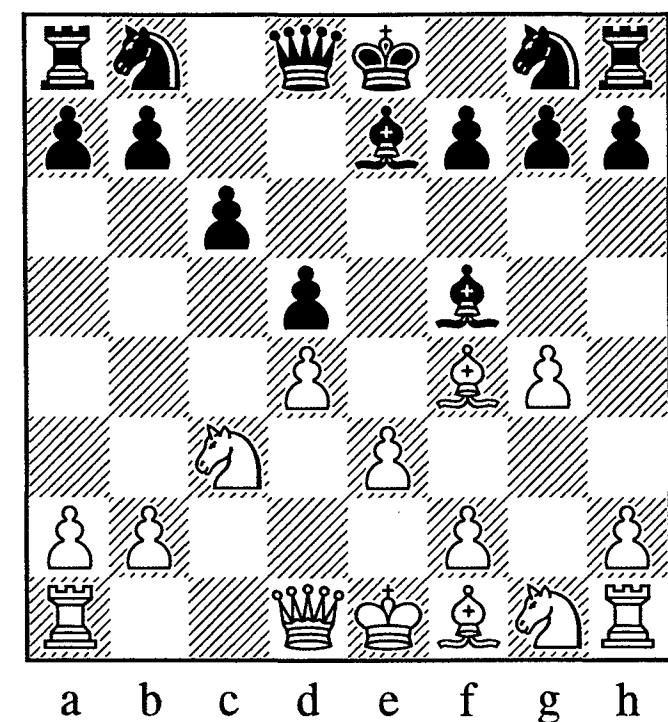
Game 3

Botvinnik – Petrosian

World Ch., Moscow (14) 1963

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 4.cxd5 exd5

5. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ c6 6.e3 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 7.g4!



Immediately irritating the bishop. If 7... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ then 8.h4 is very annoying, because the pawn is taboo: 8... $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ 9. $\mathbb{W}b3$ b6 10. $\mathbb{B}xh4!$ $\mathbb{W}xh4$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ winning. There will be more about this in the Theory section.

7... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 8.h3

A quiet move that simply secures the new space White has gained on the kingside. Botvinnik kept working on the system, and in 1970 he launched the more energetic 8.h4!? against Spassky – this time it is a genuine pawn sacrifice! The complications seem to favour White and it will be our mainline.

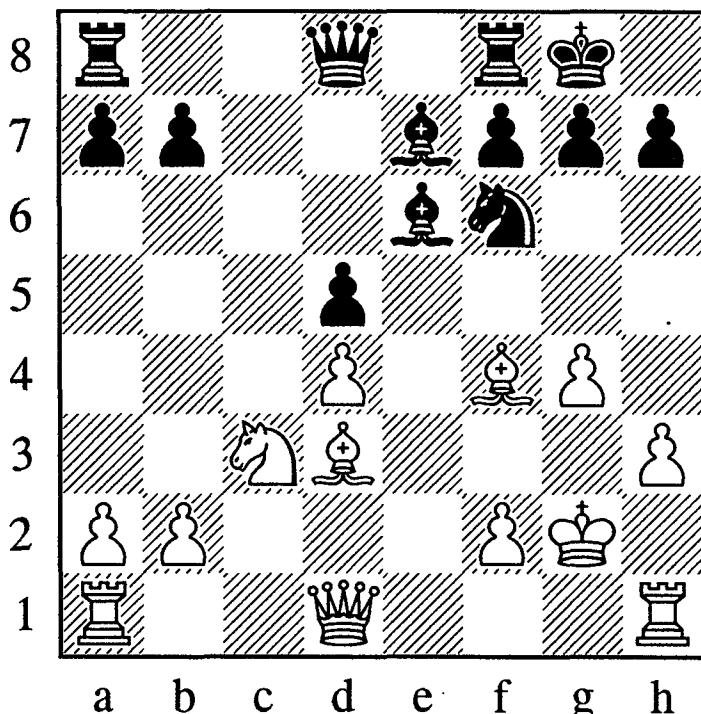
8... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}d3$

A few games later in the match the opening was repeated and Botvinnik now varied with 9. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6?!$ 11. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15.f3 g6 16. $\mathbb{B}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 17.b3, Botvinnik – Petrosian, Moscow (18) 1963. Again White was slightly better, but in a long manoeuvring game Botvinnik misplayed just before the time control and suddenly found himself in a bad ending. Petrosian took the point and later the match as well.

9...c5 10. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ 0-0 12. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ cxd4

In another World Championship match, nearly 20 years later, 12... $\mathbb{B}c8$ was played, but White was still better after 13. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 14. $dxc5$ $\mathbb{B}xc5$ 15. $\mathbb{B}b5$ $\mathbb{B}f8$ 16. $\mathbb{B}fd4\pm$, Kortchnoi – Karpov, Merano (13) 1981. An alternative was 12... $c4$.

13. $\mathbb{B}xd4$ $\mathbb{B}xd4$ 14. $exd4\pm$



White has a pleasant position; Black stands rather passively and can only think about defending. Although the pawn structure is symmetrical, it is not so easy for Black to play, and even the great master of defence did not manage to hold the game.

14... $\mathbb{B}d7?$!

Better was 14... $\mathbb{B}c8$ or 14... $\mathbb{B}d6$.

15. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{B}f6$ 16. $f3$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 17. $\mathbb{B}e5$ $\mathbb{B}d6$ 18. $\mathbb{B}ae1$ $\mathbb{B}xe5$ 19. $\mathbb{B}xe5$ $g6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{B}d7$ 21. $\mathbb{B}e2$ $\mathbb{B}b6$ 22. $\mathbb{B}he1$ $\mathbb{B}c4$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xc4$ $\mathbb{B}xc4$ 24. $\mathbb{B}d2$

It is knight against bad bishop. Black is slowly but surely outplayed.

24... $\mathbb{B}e8$ 25. $\mathbb{B}e3$ $a6$ 26. $b3$ $\mathbb{B}c6$ 27. $\mathbb{B}a4$ $b6$ 28. $\mathbb{B}b2$ $a5$ 29. $\mathbb{B}d3$ $f6$ 30. $h4$ $\mathbb{B}f7$ 31. $\mathbb{B}xe8\#$ $\mathbb{B}xe8$ 32. $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{B}f7$ 33. $g5$!

Softening the dark squares and giving the white pieces more potential entry points.

33... $\mathbb{B}e6$ 34. $\mathbb{B}f4$ $\mathbb{B}f7$ 35. $\mathbb{B}d3$ $\mathbb{B}e6$ 36. $gxf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 37. $\mathbb{W}g5$ $\mathbb{W}xg5\#$ 38. $hxg5$ $a4$ 39. $bxa4$ $\mathbb{B}c4$ 40. $a5$ $bxa5$ 41. $\mathbb{B}c5$ $\mathbb{B}f5$ 42. $\mathbb{B}g3$ $a4$ 43. $\mathbb{B}f4$ $a3$ 44. $\mathbb{B}e5$ $\mathbb{B}b4$ 45. $\mathbb{B}d3$ $\mathbb{B}b5$ 46. $\mathbb{B}d6$ $\mathbb{B}f7$ 47. $\mathbb{B}c6$ $\mathbb{B}xd3$ 48. $\mathbb{B}xd3$ $\mathbb{B}b2$ 49. $\mathbb{B}xa3$ $\mathbb{B}g2$ 50. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ $\mathbb{B}xg5\#$ 51. $\mathbb{B}c6$ $h5$ 52. $d5$ $\mathbb{B}g2$ 53. $d6$ $\mathbb{B}c2\#$ 54. $\mathbb{B}d7$ $h4$ 55. $f4$ $\mathbb{B}f2$ 56. $\mathbb{B}c8$ $\mathbb{B}xf4$ 57. $\mathbb{B}a7\#$

1–0

After this remarkable lesson we are ready to get to work. The Botvinnik games are rather old, but their essence is as true today as it was back then. Ideas with $f3$ and $e4$ are very much alive and kicking in modern chess, which we will witness in three more games.

Black often tries to avoid these lines by varying early, so first the theory leading to the mainline will be examined in detail. And at the end of the chapter the popular 3... $\mathbb{B}e7$ move order will get its own treatment, both with a theory section and three further illustrative games.

Theory

The Exchange Variation is especially rich with move orders and transpositions. Usually you get to the mainline one way or another, but here is an overview of the various sidelines.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{B}c3$ $\mathbb{B}f6$

The move order 3... $\mathbb{B}e7$ is covered at the end of the chapter.

Naturally Black has other possible third moves, but they will be covered in later chapters:

If 3... $c6$ then 4. $\mathbb{B}f3$ when 4... $\mathbb{B}f6$ is a Semi-Slav (Chapter 4) or 4... $dxc4$ leads to the Noteboom (Chapter 8).

3... $c5$ leads to the Tarrasch Defence (Chapter 6).

3...dxc4 naturally allows 4.e4 when 4...c5 5.d5 leads us into the Queen's Gambit Accepted (Chapter 2).

3... \mathbb{Q} b4 is covered in Chapter 8.

4.cxd5 exd5

On 4... $\text{h}x\text{d}5$ White takes the centre by 5.e4 $\text{h}x\text{c}3$ 6.bxc3 with advantage. The position then resembles a Semi-Tarrasch – see Chapter 8 for more details.

5.ঁg5 c6

The question is if Black can do without this move.

5... $\hat{\text{Q}}$ e7 6.e3 0-0

But definitely not 6... $\mathbb{Q}f5$? 7. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$
 8. $\mathbb{W}b3$ attacking b7 and d5, while 6... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$
 7. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ looks a bit too sophisticated.
 After 8. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ g6 10. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$
 11.f3± White is better.

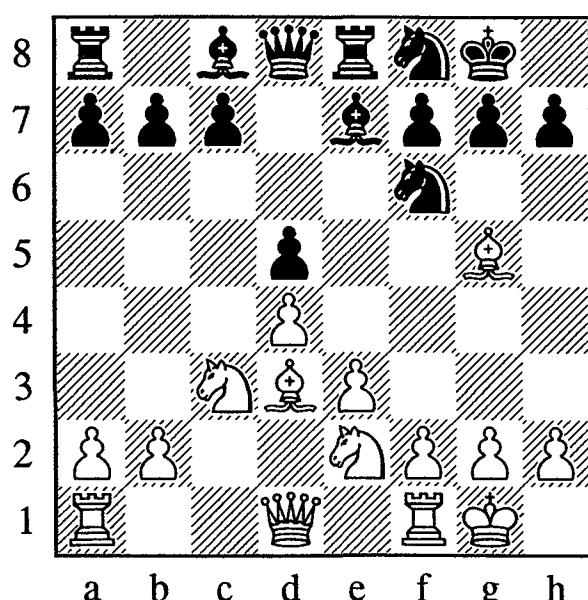
7. ♕d3 ♘bd7

Here 7...h6 8.Qh4 b6, as in the Tartakower, leads to a normal small plus for White after 9.Qge2 Qb7 10.0-0 Qbd7 (or 10...Qe4 11.Qxe7 Wxe7 12.Qc1±) 11.f3 c5 12.Qf2!±.

8.Qge2 ♜e8 9.0-0

9. C2

9... f8



to the mainline after 10...c6 but White has an interesting possibility in:

10.b4! ♕xb4

Or 10... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 11.b5 with extra space on the queenside.

11. ♔xf6 gxf6 12. ♔xd5! ♕xd5 13. ♕a4

Attacking e8 and b4, so White wins the piece back.

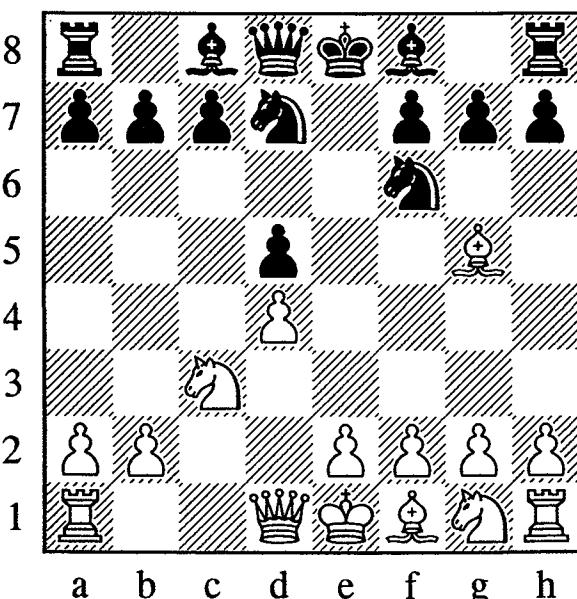
13... ♜h3 14. ♜f4 ♜a5 15. ♜xa5 ♜xa5
 16. ♜xh3±

With an advantage in the endgame because of the much better pawn structure. Black should stay passive with 16... \mathbb{Q} e6. Instead after the active:

16...c5?! 17.dxc5 ♔e6 18.♔a1 ♕ec8 19.♔f5
 ♕xc5 20.♔xe6 ♕xc1 21.♔xf7† ♔xf7 22.♕xc1
 ♕d8 23.♔f1 ♕d2 24.a4 ♕a2 25.♕c4

White was a pawn up in Bareev – Lputian, Montecatini Terme 2000.

An important trick to know arises after 5... Qbd7 :



At first sight it drops a pawn, but in fact after 6. $\mathbb{Q}xd5?$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$ 8. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2\#$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ it is White who drops a piece.

Therefore the right way to react is simply 6.e3 when play will most likely transpose to the mainline. There is a unique set-up though, which is reached after 6...c6 7.♗d3 ♛d6!? but White should be able to gain a plus in many ways. For example, 8.♘c2 h6 9.♕h4 0-0 10.♗e2 (or 10.♗f3) 10...♗e8 and here

Now 10. $\mathbb{W}c2$ will most probably transpose

a simple positional solution is 11. $\mathbb{Q}g3\pm$. If Black continues his experiment and answers 8. $\mathbb{W}c2$ with 8... $\mathbb{Q}f8$, with the idea ... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ and ... $h6$, then we can play 9. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$. (The standard move in our repertoire. In this exact position alternatives such as 9. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ or 9.0–0–0 also look good.) 9... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ (again 10.0–0–0!?) is tempting) 10...0–0 11.0–0 $h6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 13. f4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14. f5± Zaichik – Arkhipov, Moscow 1987.

6. $\mathbb{W}c2$

Preventing ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$. 6.e3 usually transposes, but Black can try 6... $\mathbb{Q}f5!$? 7. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 9. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ gxf6 which, I admit, looks awful at first sight. Actually White is only marginally better and Nigel Short has almost made a living out of defending it.

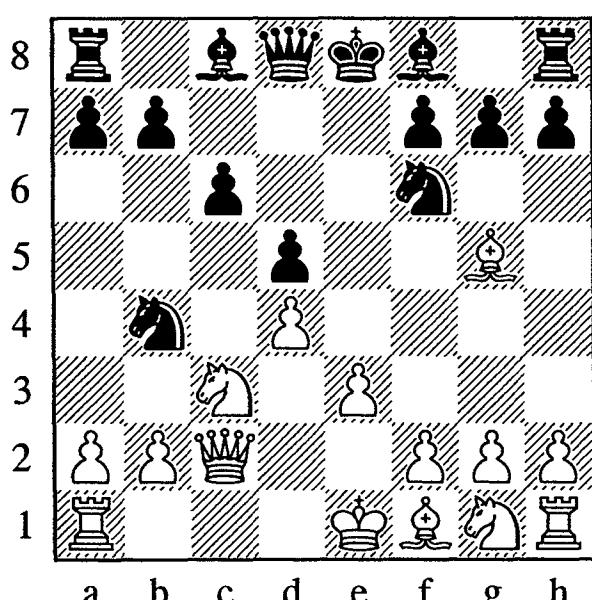
6... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

The only way to try to take advantage of the early $\mathbb{W}c2$ is:

6... $\mathbb{Q}a6$

With the idea to play ... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$. If White stops the manoeuvre with 7.a3 the knight jumps to c7 and e6 instead, with unclear play. It is best just to allow the knight move.

7.e3 $\mathbb{Q}b4$



Where should the queen go?

8. $\mathbb{W}b1$!

After the natural 8. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 9. $\mathbb{E}c1$ a5

10.a3 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ it is not so easy for White to get anything. Even Kasparov did not succeed: 11. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ h6 12. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 14. e4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 15. exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}xg2$ 18. $\mathbb{W}e3$ 0–0–0 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe6\#$ fxe6 20. $\mathbb{W}xe6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 21. $\mathbb{W}e8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 22. $\mathbb{W}e6\#$ ½–½ Kasparov – Ivanchuk, Wijk aan Zee 1999.

On 8. $\mathbb{W}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 9. $\mathbb{E}c1$ the surprising queen sortie 9... $\mathbb{W}a5!$? gave Black lots of counterplay in Ehlvest – Short, Manila (ol) 1992.

8...g6 9. $\mathbb{W}d1$!

Very refined. White has voluntarily lost a tempo, but Black's free move was ...g6 and it ties his queen to the defence of the knight, thus ruling out all ... $\mathbb{W}a5$ possibilities.

9... $\mathbb{Q}f5$

9...a5 10.a3 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}d3\pm$ was pleasant for White in Dokhoian – Vaganian, Tilburg 1994.

10. $\mathbb{E}c1$ a5 11.a3 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 12. $\mathbb{W}b3$!

But this was even worse! Actually Black played 12... $\mathbb{Q}c8$, admitting her failure, in Srebrnic – Repkova, Sibenik 2007.

7.e3 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$

Here Black could try to get the bishop out with 7... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ but after the energetic 8. h3! $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 9. f4 h6 10. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 11. g4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 12. f5 $\mathbb{Q}h4\#$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ it is still trapped, now just on the other side of the board!

8. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 0–0

An important alternative is:

8... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$

Black gets rid of some of the pressure on his position, but the price is high. The exchange of the dark-squared bishops guarantees White a long-lasting positional plus because his remaining bishop is better than Black's.

10. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$

With Kasparov as our guide, we will stick to this set-up, but there is no need to make the move automatically. The knight could also be

strong on f3 in this particular variation, as in 10.0–0–0 ♜b6 11.h3 g6 12.♗f3 ♜g7 13.g4 ♜e6 14.♔b1 0–0–0 15.♗a4 h5 16.♗e5 hxg4 17.hxg4 ♜c7 18.♗c5 ♔b8 19.a4 with a big advantage, Khairullin – Nepomniachtchi, Plovdiv 2008.

10...g6 11.0–0–0

The most aggressive. Simply 11.0–0 is of course also possible.

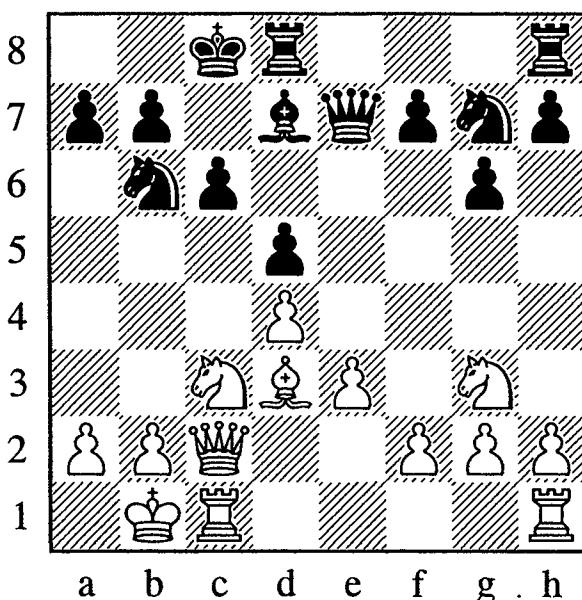
11...♗b6 12.♗g3

12.h3 followed by g4 is interesting, or just 12.♔b1.

12...♗g7 13.♔b1 ♜d7

Or 13...♜e6 14.♝c1 0–0–0 15.♗a4 with similar play, while 13...h5 invites a break in the centre with 14.♝he1 ♜e6 15.e4!?.

14.♝c1 0–0–0



15.♗a4! ♜xa4 16.♝xa4 ♔b8 17.♝c3

White has the initiative. His heavy pieces exert strong pressure on the black king's position.

17...b6 18.♝a6

Also good is 18.♝a3 or 18.♝hc1:

18...♜e6 19.♝hc1 ♜he8 20.♝b3 ♜d6 21.♝f1 ♔a8 22.♝d2!?

A key moment: Kasparov leaves the h-pawn en prise. If Black takes it he can play ♜f3 and ♜e5 with tempo. Andersson focused too much on the defence and did not dare to try his luck, although the complications were okay for him.

22...♝c7 23.♝f1 ♜e6?! 24.g3 ♜c8 25.♝g2 ♜c7

26.h4 ♜d8 27.♝f3

White has creatively regrouped and Kasparov finishes the game in his well-known style: calculating like a monster.

27...♜c8 28.♝a4 c5 29.♝g5! ♜xg5 30.hxg5 ♜b7 31.dxc5 bxc5 32.♝f4! ♜xf4 33.gxf4 d4 34.♝xc5 ♜xc5 35.♝xb7† ♔xb7 36.♝xc5 dxe3 37.fxe3 ♜e8 38.♝e5! ♜xe5 39.fxe5 ♔c6 40.♔c2 ♔d5 41.b4 ♔xe5 42.a4 f6 43.gxf6 ♔xf6 44.b5 1–0

This was Kasparov – Andersson, Reykjavik 1988.

9.♝ge2

This is the most flexible and is our repertoire choice. 9.♗f3 is of course legal, and is also very popular.

9...♜e8 10.0–0

Black gets his share of the chances if White castles long. Instead White keeps control and retains slightly better prospects.

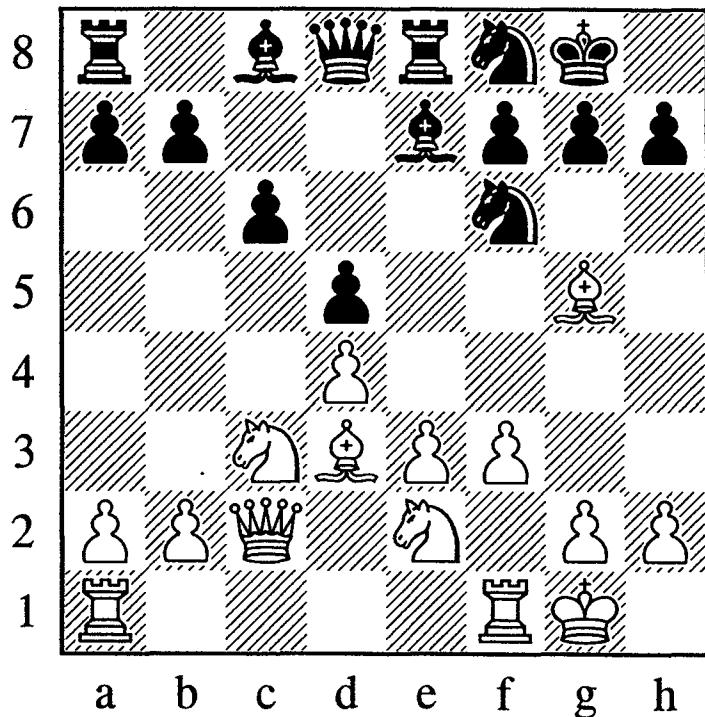
10...♝f8 11.f3

We have reached the mainline.

Conclusion: Black can vary his moves a lot early on, but he cannot disturb the soundness of White's position, and it seems that to every black try there is an antidote. The most important sideline is without a doubt 8...♝h5. It is easy to play for Black and quite solid. Still, the positions in which both players castle long are somewhat in White's favour.

The mainline

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.cxd5 exd5
 5.♗g5 c6 6.♗c2 ♗e7 7.e3 ♘bd7 8.♗d3 0-0
 9.♗ge2 ♗e8 10.0-0 ♘f8 11.f3



White intends to take the centre with e3-e4. If he succeeds, this is an extremely powerful strategy as we have seen Botvinnik demonstrate. Positionally speaking there are some pros and cons of the move 11.f3. Let's take the positive first. On f3 the pawn covers the important square e4 and thereby prevents Blacks liberating move ...♘e4 for good. On the negative side the pawn on e3 is weakened, which often gives Black the chance to strike in the centre with c6-c5, because if White takes with dxc5 then ...♗xc5 attacks e3.

Black has three normal moves in this position – he can develop with 11...♗e6, try to simplify with 11...♗h5, or improve his pieces with 11...♗g6 – and they will be covered in Game 4-6. Seldom seen lines are:

11...h6 12.♗h4 ♘e6 13.♗ad1 White is very comfortable, while the knight on e6 looks clumsy.

11...g6 12.♗ad1 ♘e6 13.♗h4 ♘h5 14.♗xe7 ♗xe7 15.♗d2 ♗d6 16.♗c2 ♗d7 17.e4!± ♗f8 18.♗b3 dxe4 19.fxe4 f6 20.d5 cxd5 21.♗xd5

♗c5† 22.♔h1 ♗ef7 23.♗c1 ♗b5 24.♗d4 ♗a6 25.♗c4 ♗a4 26.b3 ♗a3 27.♗c7! ♗xc7 28.♗xf7† ♗xf7 29.♗xc7 White won material in Peralta – Lettieri, Badalona 2006.

11...c5 12.♗xf6! ♗xf6 13.dxc5 ♗xe3 14.♗ad1± Now d5 is weak. 14...♗e6 15.♗e4 The point. 15...d4 16.♗b5 d3 17.♗xd3 ♗e7 18.♗d6 b6 This was Mozetic – Abramovic, Novi Sad 1995, and here 19.♗e4! ♗d8 20.♗f4 would have been crushing.

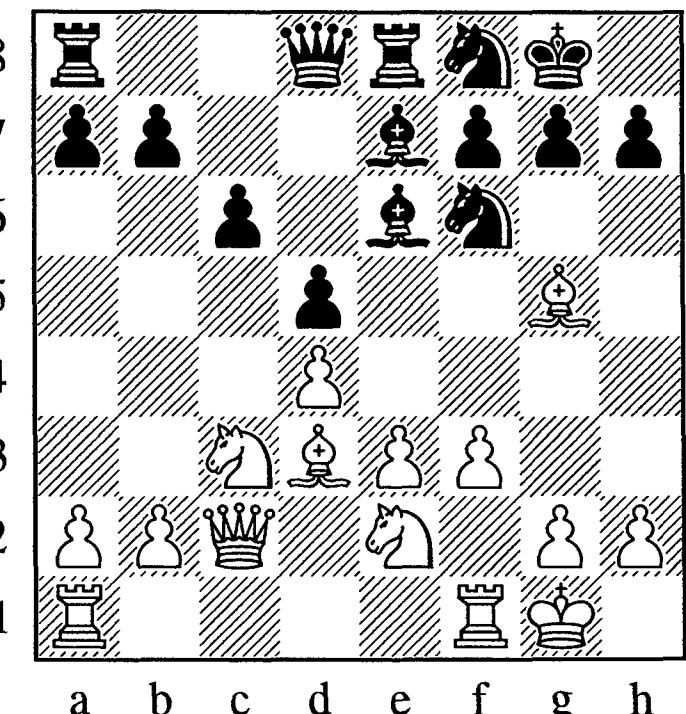
The young World Champion Garry Kasparov crushed many of his opponents in the 80s with his trademark dynamic chess. The Exchange Variation of the Queen's Gambit was very suitable for that purpose.

Game 4

Kasparov – Andersson

Belfort 1988

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5
 5.♗g5 c6 6.♗c2 ♗e7 7.e3 ♘bd7 8.♗d3 0-0
 9.♗ge2 ♗e8 10.0-0 ♘f8 11.f3 ♗e6



Black develops a piece and prepares ...♗c8 and ...c5 with counterplay.

12.♖ae1

It is the classic dilemma: where to put the rooks. White wants to break with e3-e4 and expects Black to take with ...dxe4, when he will take back with fxe4 and open the f-file. Therefore the king's rook should stay on f1, but what about the other one? Well, it would also be good on d1 protecting d4 but, true to his style, Kasparov chose the most aggressive square.

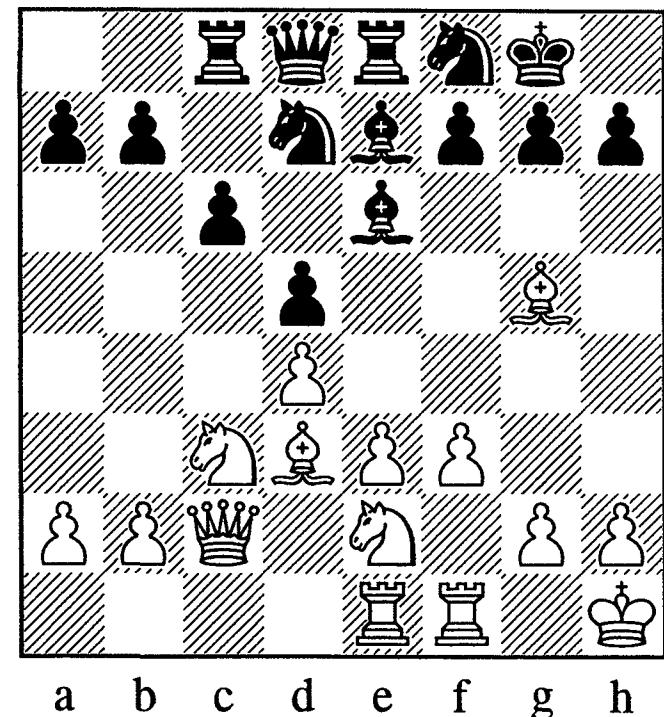
12...♗c8 13.♔h1

Prophylaxis – the king steps away from the a7-g1 diagonal.

13...♘6d7

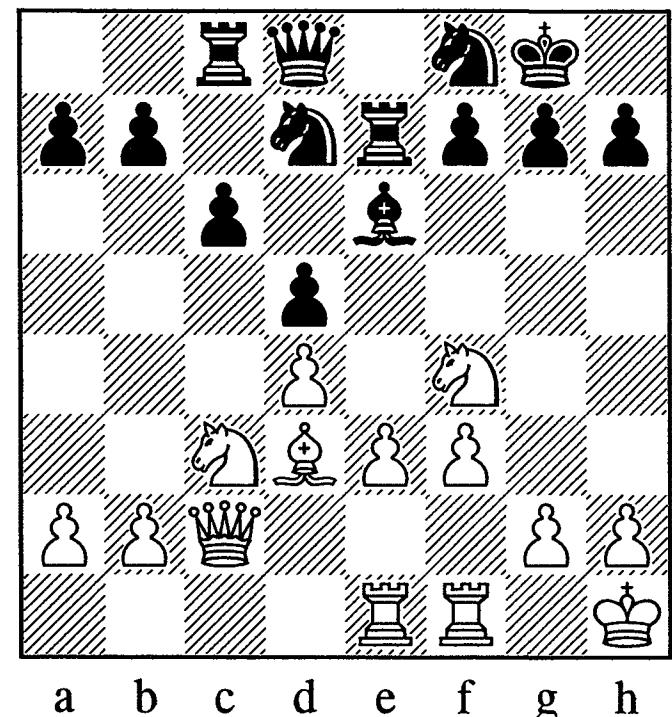
A typical way to release some of the pressure. Black was not quite ready for the counter-strike ...c5 because White just takes and switches to positional mode with play against the isolated queen's pawn. 13...c5 14.dxc5 ♗xc5 15.♘d4± or 15.♗b5 ♘b8d7 16.♗d2.

13...a6!? was a possible waiting move.

**14.♗xe7 ♗xe7**

After 14...♗xe7 15.♘g3 (or 15.♘f4 ♗d6 16.♗d2 ♘cd8 as in Sakaev – Asrian, Dubai 2000, and now White could have tried 17.♘h5 with annoying pressure) 15...♗b6 16.♗f2 c5 17.a3 a6 White found a very imaginative

thrust: 18.f4!? f6 19.e4 dxe4 20.♘cxe4 cxd4 21.♘h5! ♗f7 22.♘h4! Black was in big trouble and after 22...♗c4 23.♘d6 he lost material in Bareev – Yusupov, Frankfurt 2000.

15.♘f4**15...♗c7?!**

Too clumsy. More natural was:

15...♗f6 16.♗d2

White could even consider 16.g4?.

16...♗g6

This looks solid instead of 16...b5?! 17.e4! b4 18.♘a4 dxe4 19.fxe4 ♗xd4 20.e5! winning material. 20...♗f5 21.exf6 ♗xe1 This was Bareev – Asrian, New York 1998, when the simplest was 22.♗xe1 ♘d8 23.♗c1 ♘xd3 24.♗d1 ♗xf6 25.♘xd3 ♘d4 26.b3 ♗d6 27.♘ab2±.

Even after the text White can force matters: 17.♘xe6 fxe6 18.♗xg6 hxg6 19.e4 dxe4 20.fxe4 e5 21.d5

When Black should still be careful, for example:

21...cxsd5 22.exd5 ♗d6 23.♗g5!**16.♗f2**

Prophylaxis, prophylaxis! You can almost feel the proud teacher standing behind his favourite pupil.

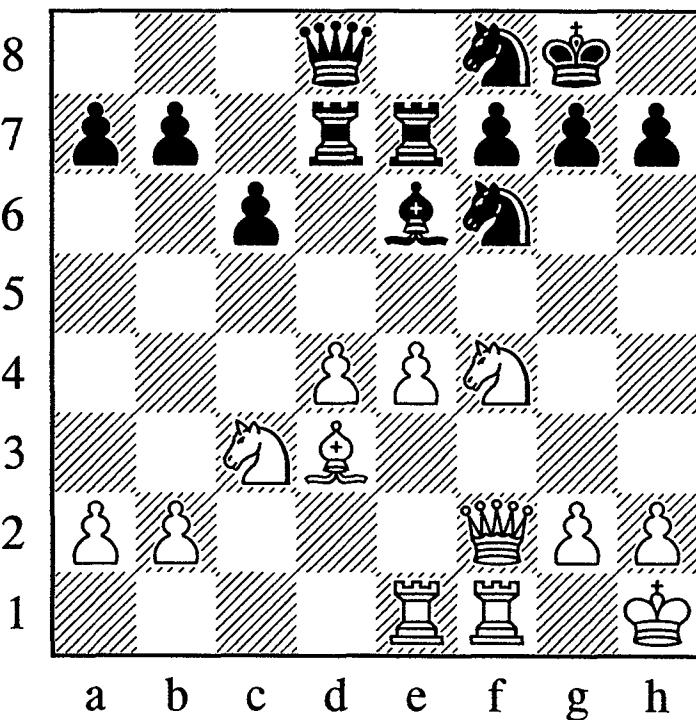
16... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 17.e4!

Finally.

17...dxe4 18.fxe4

Now Black could play 18... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 19. $\mathbb{W}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$, but after 20. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ the bishop is a monster and f7 is weak.

18... $\mathbb{B}cd7$



19.d5!

This highlights the dynamic possibilities of such central pawns.

19...cx d 5 20. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{B}c7$

Black did not have a good way to give up material:

20...dxe4 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe4\pm$

20...d4!? 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xa7$ with a pawn more.

21.ex d 5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e2!$

Threatening d6, but not 22.d6? $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$.

22... $\mathbb{B}c8$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xa7$

White has simply won a pawn.

23...b6 24. $\mathbb{W}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 25.d6!? $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}fd5$

$\mathbb{Q}e5$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xb6$

Kasparov has managed to get two connected passed pawns and he quickly gets the point as well.

27... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 28. $\mathbb{W}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 31.a4 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 32.a5 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}hxg6$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xd8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 37.b4 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 38.b5

1-0

Conclusion: The solid Swede Ulf Andersson was blown away by Kasparov's energetic play in the centre, but from a theoretical point of view 15... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ is more critical. Also worth noting is the possibility to play 12. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ instead of 12. $\mathbb{Q}ae1$. It is nice to be able to vary.

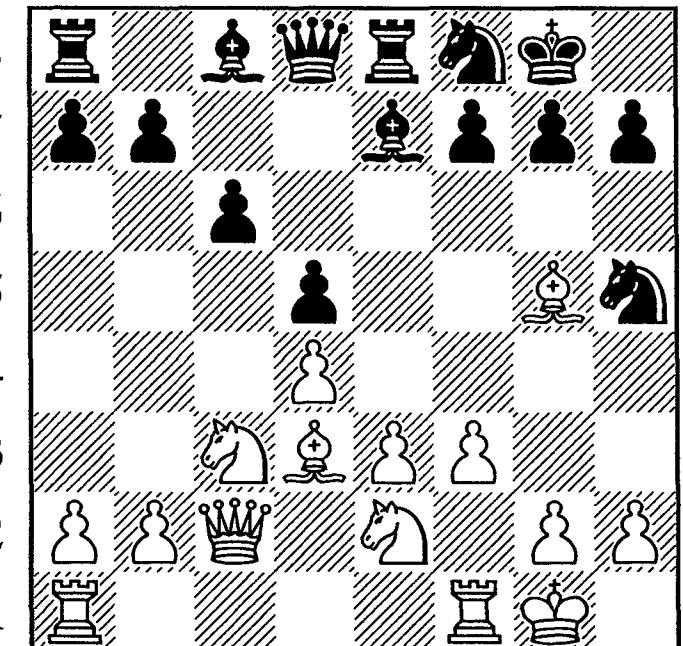
In the next game Black tries to simplify but his knight drifts to the rim and White forces e3-e4 through.

Game 5

Bernasek – Talla

Czech Republic 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4.cxd5 exd5 5. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 6.e3 0-0 7. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 9.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 10. $\mathbb{W}c2$ c6 11.f3 $\mathbb{Q}h5$



Black releases some of the pressure.

12.♕xe7 ♕xe7

After:

12...♝xe7

I once played:

13.♗d2 f5

More solid is 13...♝e6 14.♗ad1 g6.

14.♗ae1 ♕e8

My opponent really wanted to prevent e3-e4...

15.e4!

...but for tactical reasons it is still possible.

15...fxe4 16.fxe4 dxe4 17.♘xe4 ♔e6

Not 17...♝xe4? 18.♘xe4 ♕xe4 19.♗f4 ♕f5
20.♗e5.

18.♗c3 ♘d8 19.♗g5! h6 20.♗h4 ♗h7

21.♗c5

White has overwhelming pressure.

21...g5 22.♗xh7† ♘xh7 23.♗e4 ♘d7 24.♗b1

25.♗xe7 ♕xe7 26.♗g6† ♕g7 27.♗xh5
♘xd4† 28.♔h1 ♔e8 29.♗xh6 ♘xc5 30.♗e6†
♔h7 31.♗e4 ♘d4 32.♗f6† 1-0

Schandorff – Lauridsen, Copenhagen 1997.

Instead of 13.♗d2, more straightforward is:

13.e4 dxe4 14.fxe4 ♘g4

Or 14...♝e6 15.d5 ♘c5 16.♗ad1.

15.♗ad1

White is better with his dynamic pawn centre.

15...♗d7

15...♗d6 16.♗c1 ♘d8 17.♗g5! f5 18.e5
♗d7 19.♗xf5 ♘xf5 20.♗xf5 ♘e8 21.♗g4 g6
22.♗xh5 and White was winning in Lesiege
– Khassanov, St Augustin 1999.

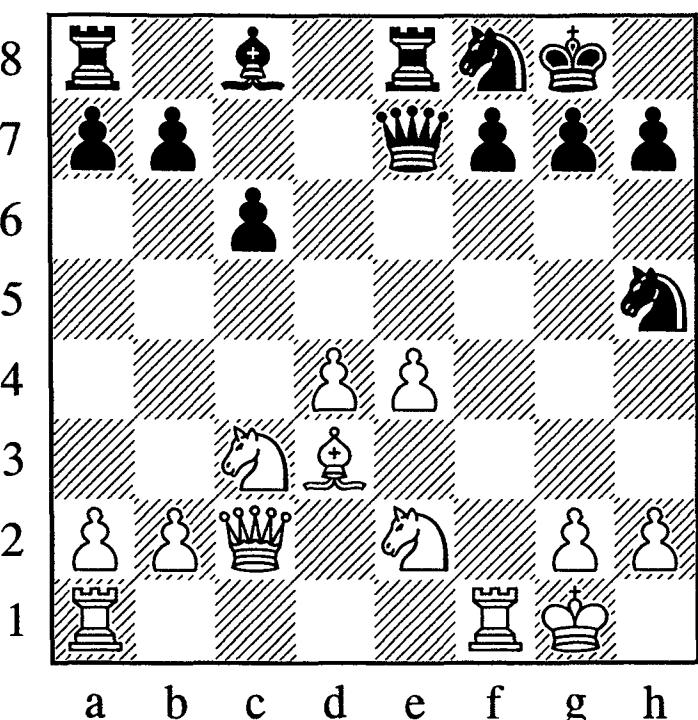
16.e5 g6 17.♗c4 ♘e6 18.♗e4 ♘xe2 19.♗xe2
♗b6 20.♗xf7! ♘xf7 21.♗f1† ♘g7 22.♗xe6
♗e7 23.♗b3±

With an attack, Aleksandrov – Denker,
Reno 1999

13.e4 dxe4

If Black keeps it closed with 13...♝e6 White grabs more space with a huge advantage:
14.e5±

14.fxe4



14...♝e6

The safest move. It is tempting to play more actively, but the position cannot bear it as the knight on the rim is especially in danger. I will offer two examples:

14...♝g4 15.e5!

15.♗f2 followed by ♘af1 is also good, but 15.e5 is more forcing.

15...♗ad8 16.♗e4

On the way to d6: f7 is the weak spot in Black's camp and it can also be attacked by ♘c4.

16...♝g6

16...♝e6 17.♗d6 ♘xd6 18.exd6 ♘xd6
19.♗xh7† ♘f8? (19...♔h8 20.♗f5±) 20.♗g6
1-0 Aleksandrov – Jasnikowski, Warsaw
2005.

17.♗ad1

There was no reason to allow 17.♗d6 ♘xd6
18.exd6 ♘xd6 with compensation for the
exchange, but maybe 17.♗c4 was even
better.

17...♝f8 18.h3 ♘xe2 19.♗xe2 ♘hf4 20.♗c4
♔h8

20... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 21. $\mathbb{E}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}gf4$ was more stubborn, but White is clearly better anyway. If nothing else he can always play $\mathbb{Q}d6$.

21. $\mathbb{E}f3$ f6 22.exf6 gxf6 23. $\mathbb{Q}g3$

The position was very promising for White in Ivanchuk – Yusupov, Brussels 1991.

14... $\mathbb{W}g5$ 15.e5!

And White even threatens $\mathbb{Q}e4$ with tempo.

15... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{W}e3\#$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{E}ad8$
17... $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}4e6$
20. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$

18. $\mathbb{E}ae1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2?$

18... $\mathbb{W}h6$ 19. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{E}e7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ gives White pressure.

19. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{W}h6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d6$

White was winning, Chiong – Delay, Geneva 1993.

15. $\mathbb{E}f2$

Just planning to double rooks, but again the simple advance deserved attention: 15.e5 $\mathbb{E}ad8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 17. $\mathbb{E}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ g6 19. $\mathbb{E}af1\pm$ and f7 was not easy to protect, Bruzon – Soppe, Buenos Aires 2005.

After 15.e5, instead of 15... $\mathbb{E}ad8$, Black could try:

15...f6!?

This gives some counterplay.

16. $\mathbb{E}ae1$ $\mathbb{E}ad8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ fxe5 18.dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$
19. $\mathbb{Q}2c3$

19. $\mathbb{Q}d6!$? looks like a good try. Black does not quite get enough for an exchange:
19... $\mathbb{W}xe5$ (19... $\mathbb{W}g5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{E}xe5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f7!$
 $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f3) 20.\mathbb{Q}xe8$ $\mathbb{W}e3\#$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{E}xe8$
22. $\mathbb{Q}c4$

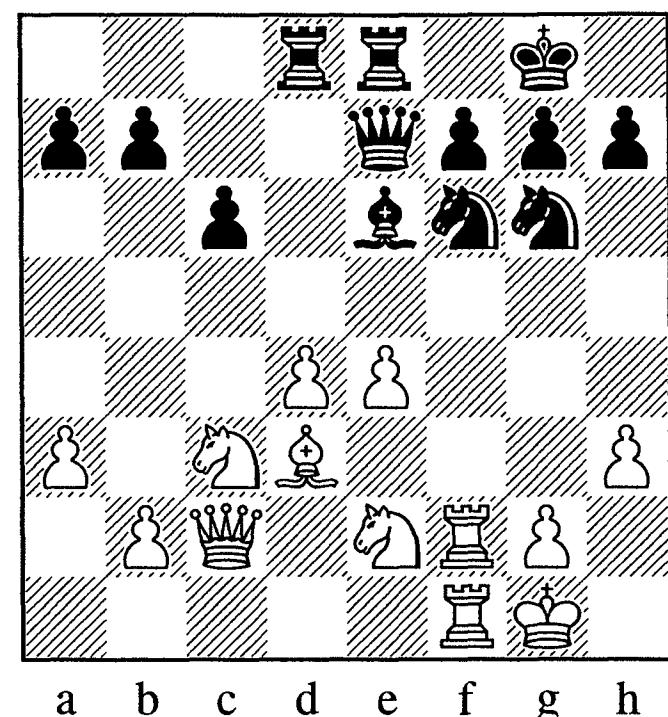
19... $\mathbb{W}xe5!$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f6\#$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 21. $\mathbb{E}xf6$ $\mathbb{E}xe1\#$
22. $\mathbb{E}f1$ $\mathbb{E}xf1\#$ 23. $\mathbb{E}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

Black had good compensation for the queen in Krush – Johannessen, Bermuda 2002.

15... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 16.h3 $\mathbb{Q}g6$

16... $\mathbb{E}ad8$ 17. $\mathbb{E}af1$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ transposes.

17. $\mathbb{E}af1$ $\mathbb{E}ad8$ 18.a3



Preparing to take more space with b4.

18...c5!?

One week later the same two players met again and now Black had an improvement ready:

18... $\mathbb{E}f8$ 19.b4

19. $\mathbb{Q}a4!$? b6!?

19...b6!

19...a6 20. $\mathbb{Q}a4\pm$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 21.e5 $\mathbb{W}h4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f4$
was good for White in Bareev – Ahlander,
Naestved 1988, but 19...a5! was possible.

20. $\mathbb{Q}a4$

20. $\mathbb{E}d1\pm$ is a good way to regroup, keeping some advantage. If Black plays actively with 20...a5 then simply 21.b5.

20... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6!$

This was a little annoying for White in Bernasek – Talla, Czech Republic 2007, because he did not want to take the repetition with 22. $\mathbb{Q}e2$.

19.e5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{E}xd5$

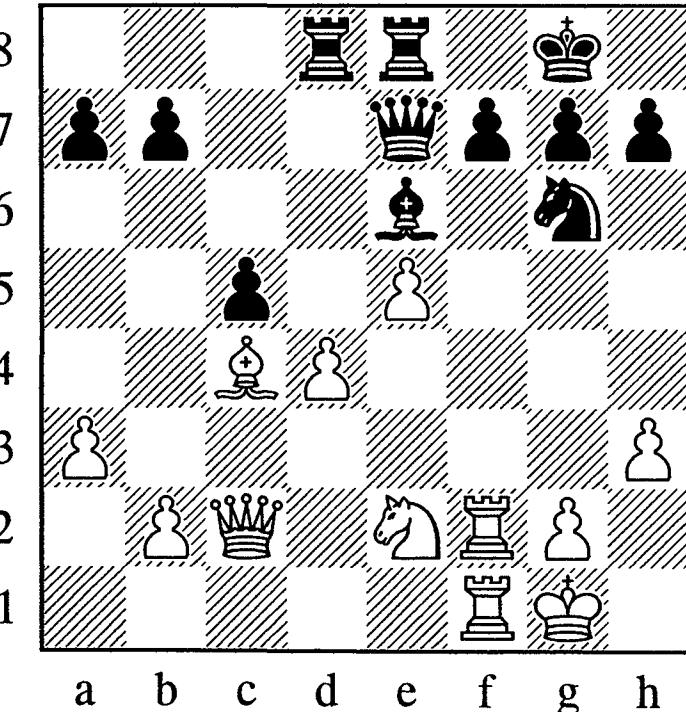
Black would rather play 20... $\mathbb{E}xd5$ when 21. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xh7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $cxd4$ was considered satisfactory for him since the game Vaisser – Bricard, France 1998. However it did not take mankind's new helper more than a second to come up with 21. $\mathbb{Q}c3!$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 22.d5!

$\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ when the threats are overwhelming. If f7 falls, everything falls. Black could give an exchange with 22... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ but it is not good enough. White plays 24. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ with a big advantage.

21. $\mathbb{Q}c4$

Here Black should give up the exchange and play 21... cxd4, but I can only repeat myself: it is not good enough. After 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$, as in Luciano – Brunello, Riga del Garda 2004, 24. $\mathbb{W}a4!$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ would have been strong.

21... $\mathbb{Q}dd8?$



22. $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7\#$

25. $\mathbb{W}xc5$

It is over.

25... b6 26. $\mathbb{W}c4\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 27. e6

1-0

Conclusion: The plan with the early e3-e4 gives a strong initiative. It is interesting to follow up with a quick e4-e5 as well, gaining more space and securing more squares for the white pieces.

In our next game the Danish grandmaster Curt Hansen first improves his f8-knight before

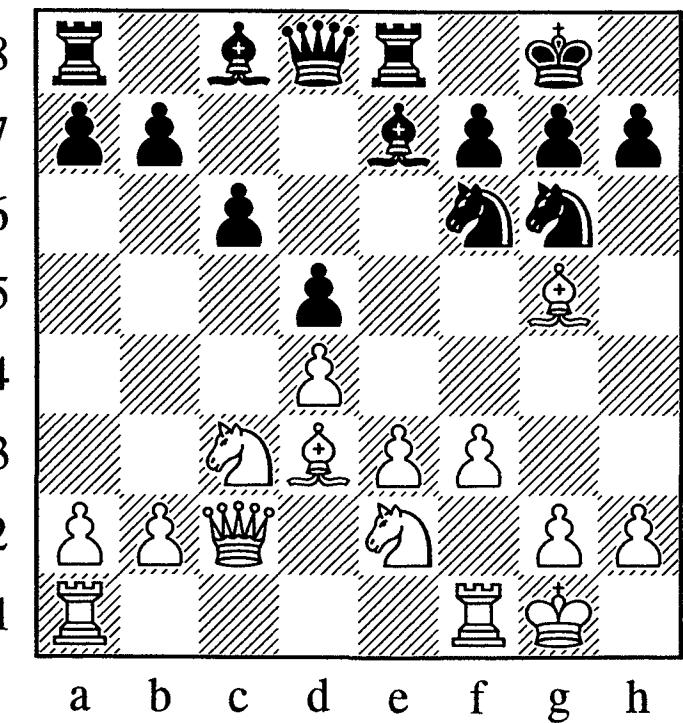
developing the queenside. Still, he quickly runs out of good moves.

Game 6

Sasikiran – Cu. Hansen

Malmo 2005

1. d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2. c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5 4. cxd5 exd5 5. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ c6 6. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 7. e3 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 0-0 9. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 10. 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 11. f3 $\mathbb{Q}g6$



Black improves the position of the knight. It covers the squares f4 and h4, so the bishop on g5 won't get back again, but why should it?

12. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$

You should sit on your hands and keep saying "Prophylaxis" to yourself. 12. e4 is premature as Black answers 12... dxe4 13. fxe4 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4!$ with counterplay.

12... $\mathbb{Q}e6$

Black has the chance to get the bishop pair with the interesting:

12... h6!?? 13. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$

The problem is White gives up his second bishop as well and gets a passed pawn in the centre:

14. $\mathbb{Q}xg6!$ fxg6 15. e4 g5 16. e5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 17. f4

With a firm initiative.

17... gxf4 18. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{E}f8$

18... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 19. $\mathbb{W}g6$

19. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ $\mathbb{E}xf1\#$ 20. $\mathbb{E}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e2$

The knights are indeed very good!

21... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 22. h4 $\mathbb{E}e8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}f7?$! 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe7\#$

$\mathbb{E}xe7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{E}e6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d6\pm$

Kasparov – Barua, Internet 2000.

If instead:

12... $\mathbb{Q}h5$

Black succeeds in exchanging the dark-squared bishops, but White gets the break e3-e4 in a little too easily.

13. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$

13... $\mathbb{E}xe7$ 14. e4 $\mathbb{Q}hf4$ 15. e5 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xd3$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 17. f4 f5 18. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 19. b4± White was better on both flanks and even had knight against bad bishop, Schandorff – Bank Friis, Bellinge 1991.

14. e4 $\mathbb{W}g5$ 15. f4!

15. $\mathbb{W}d2$ with a slightly better endgame is also possible.

15... $\mathbb{Q}hxf4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 17. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}h3\#$

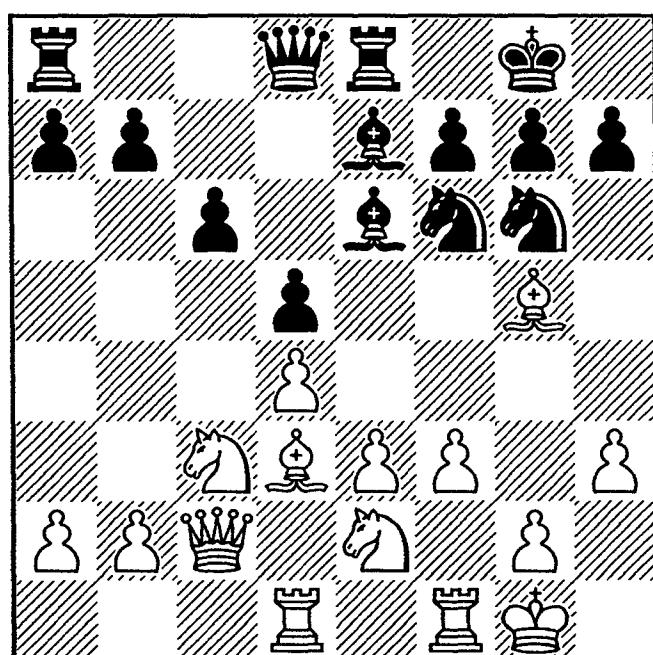
18. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{W}xd2$ 19. $\mathbb{E}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 20. exd5 cxd5

21. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{E}d8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}c7!$ $\mathbb{E}b8$ 23. d5 f6 24. d6

$\mathbb{Q}f7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 26. $\mathbb{E}e1\pm$ $\mathbb{Q}e5?$ 27. $\mathbb{E}xe5$

White won in Solmajer – Ursic, Ljubljana 2006.

13.h3



Taking control of g4 and preparing the break e3-e4. There were sensible alternatives in 13. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ and 13. $\mathbb{Q}g3$.

13... $\mathbb{E}c8$

Black continues to develop his pieces. The c-file in connection with the break c6-c5 could give counterplay. Less ambitious would be the by now standard plan to exchange bishops:

13... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 15. g4?!

White responds in a non-standard way, but on closer inspection the move makes perfect sense. White takes more space on the kingside and he keeps his positional advantage. The weaknesses the move creates can hardly be exploited by Black's passive forces.

15... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 16. $\mathbb{W}d2$ c5 17. $\mathbb{Q}g3$

17. dx5 $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{E}ed8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}d4\pm$

17... $\mathbb{W}d6$ 18. f4 cxd4

18... c4 19. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 20. $\mathbb{E}de1$

19. exd4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 20. g5 $\mathbb{Q}e4?$!

20... $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ 21. gxf6 $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 22. $\mathbb{E}xf1$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$

23. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{E}ed8$

21. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ dxe4 22. $\mathbb{Q}gxe4\pm$

White has won a pawn, Marzolo – Neuillet, Montlucon 1997.

13... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 15. e4 dxe4 16. fxe4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ This was Studnicka – Knechtel, Aschach 2003, and 17. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 18. $\mathbb{E}xf4$ $\mathbb{E}ad8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}f2$ is a little better for White.

14.a3

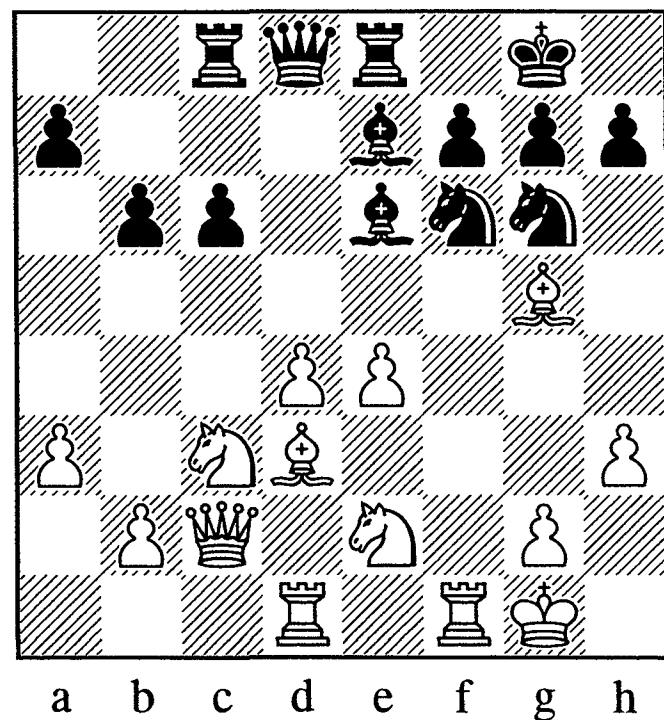
White hesitates, but he could and should strike at once: 14. e4! dxe4 15. fxe4± with a typical advantage. In the only two games to reach this position, Black tried to generate play on the queenside with ...b5 or ... $\mathbb{W}a5$, but in both cases White kept good positional control with the move $\mathbb{Q}e3$.

14... b6?!

This is just weakening.

14... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ was the most solid, although White probably keeps a slight edge with quiet play. The tempting 16.e4 would backfire after 16...dxe4 17.fxe4 c5! with the point 18.d5 $\mathbb{Q}xh3!$ 19.gxh3 c4 winning back the piece with good play.

15.e4! dxe4 16.fxe4



White has achieved the thematic break and Black already has big problems.

16... $\mathbb{W}c7$

Now it was too late for 16... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ because 18. $\mathbb{Q}a6!$ highlights the downside of the move ...b6: 18... $\mathbb{Q}cd8$ 19.d5 or 18... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}b5$.

17.e5

Or 17. $\mathbb{Q}e3\pm$ with good centralization.

17... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ cxd5?!

Better was 19... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c3\pm$.

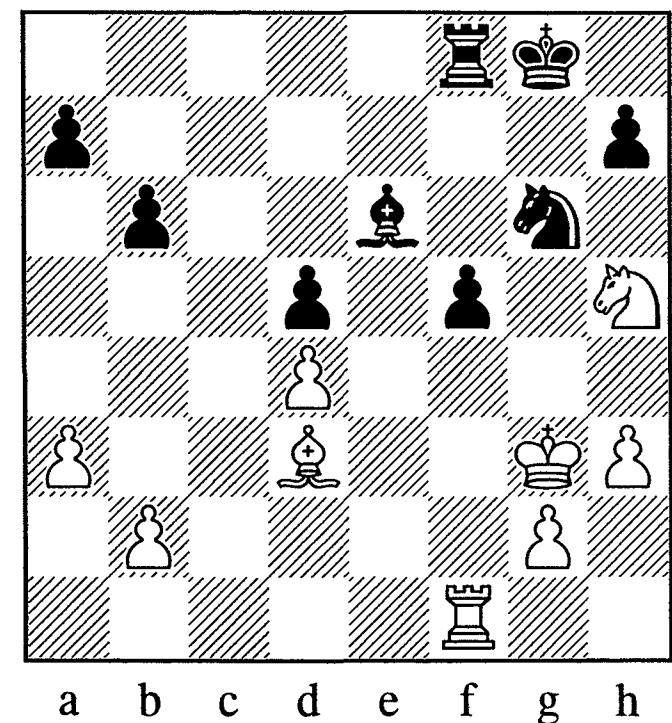
20. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 21. $\mathbb{W}e3\pm$

White can slowly regroup and intensify the pressure on the kingside.

21... $\mathbb{W}h4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}ce8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}df1$ f6

Black is seeking counterplay but he only ends up with a very tangible weakness.

24.exf6 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxf6 26. $\mathbb{W}g3!$ $\mathbb{W}g5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{W}xg3\#$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ f5 30. $\mathbb{Q}g3$



White takes control of the dark squares and in the end the king penetrates to e5 and decides the game.

30... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xc8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$

Or 33... $\mathbb{Q}g6\#$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}g3$.

34. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6\#$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 38.g3 h5 39.d5 $\mathbb{Q}a5\#$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ h4 41. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ hxg3 42. $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}e2\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 45.b4 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ f4 47. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 49. $\mathbb{Q}e6$

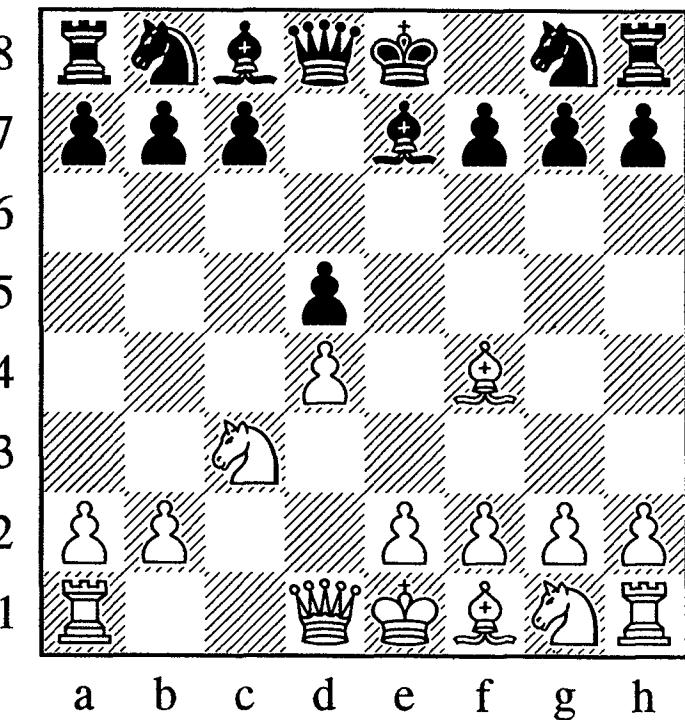
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Conclusion: This game is another excellent example of how good White's position is when he manages to play a well-timed e3-e4.

3... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

We now turn to the interesting 3... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ move order. Many things are similar, yet many things are different.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Qc3 Qe7 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Qf4



5...c6

Since Black has been unable to solve all his problems in the mainline, the experimental 5...Qf6 6.e3 Qf5!? has become very fashionable. See game 9 for details.

6.e3

The standard move 6.Qc2 to prevent ...Qf5 should be an obvious idea by now, and it is playable of course. Usually Black answers 6...g6 followed by the bishop move anyway. Another way of getting the problem bishop into play is 6...Qg4 7.e3 Qh5 8.Qd3 Qg6. The real reason that we play 6.e3 is that in this particular instance we do not want to prevent ...Qf5. On the contrary, we hope for it!

6...Qf5

Sometimes Black plays solidly with...

6...Qd6

...although it loses a tempo and exchanges his better bishop. White should be content with the positional benefits that are handed to him on a silver plate. Having said that, White needs a little sense of reality as well, because he is only slightly better and the battle is yet to come.

7.Qge2

A flexible move that has been popular with world-class players. Instead 7.Qxd6 Qxd6 8.Qd3± is a straightforward way to play and 7.Qg3, keeping the tension and inviting Black to open the h-file for the white rook, is a good choice as well.

7...Qe7

Black also chooses the most flexible method. On 7...Qf6 Grischuk came up with a creative and aggressive set-up 8.h3!? (8.Qxd6 Qxd6 9.Qf4± is safe) 8...0-0 9.g4 with some initiative. 9...Qe8 10.Qxd6 (10.Qg2) 10...Qxd6 11.Qg3 Qe6 12.Qc2 (12.g5 Qfd7 13.Qb3 Qc7 14.0-0-0 c5?) 12...a5 13.Qd3 Qa6 14.a3 g6∞ 15.Qce2 Qac8?! (15...Qec8) 16.Qd2 Qa8 17.Qc1 Qc7 18.f3 Qe7 19.Qf2± Qae8?! 20.Qxa5 Qc8 21.Qf1 Qe6 22.Qb4 Qd8 23.Qg2 Qg7 24.Qd2 Black did not have enough for a pawn in Grischuk – Kasimdzhanov, Tripoli (5.4) 2004.

8.Qxd6 Qxd6 9.Qg3 0-0 10.Qd3± Qd7

11.Qc2

11.0-0

11...Qf6 12.0-0-0!

The most dangerous line for Black.

12.Qd7 13.Qb1

White is positionally better and can slowly build up an offensive on the kingside. Black's problem is that if he advances his pawns on the queenside, he will create new weaknesses in his own camp and give White extra possibilities.

13...c5?! 14.dxc5 Qxc5 15.e4!

This blows the position open.

15...d4

Or 15...dxe4 16.Qgxe4 Qxe4 17.Qxe4 Qf5 18.Qxf5 Qxf5 19.Qxf5 Qxf5 20.Qd7±.

16.Qce2 Qb6 17.Qxd4!

Winning a pawn because of 17...Qxd4 18.Qb5 Qe5 19.Qxd7.

17...Qg4 18.h3 Qac8 19.Qe2 Qe5 20.Qc2 Q7g6 21.Qb3±

This was Morozevich – Topalov, Nice 2008.

Black can also just develop with 6... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ but this move is unambitious and does not even try to gain any of the possible advantages of the 3... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ move order. White continues normally with 7. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 0–0 8. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ (or 9. $\mathbb{Q}f3$) with a pleasant position.

7.g4

Botvinnik's concept, but 7. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ is also possible and less forcing.

7... $\mathbb{Q}e6$

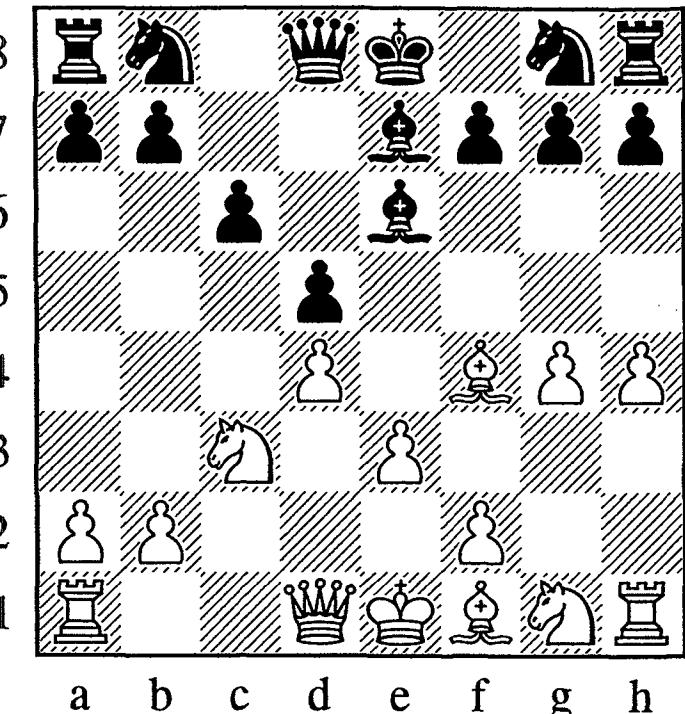
The safe retreat. Instead 7... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 8.h4 is highly unpleasant for Black:

8...h5 9.g5 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 11. $\mathbb{W}b3$ is good for White.

8... $\mathbb{Q}xh4$?! 9. $\mathbb{W}b3$ b6 10. $\mathbb{Q}xh4$! $\mathbb{W}xh4$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ is decisive, as mentioned in the introduction, but let's continue the analysis a little: 11...cx d5 12. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ †! (or 12. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 13. $\mathbb{W}xa8$ 0–0 14. $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ $\mathbb{W}xg4$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xa7$ $\mathbb{W}xb8$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xb8$ $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}cl$ and we have an ending with a pawn more) 12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ † $\mathbb{Q}f8$ (13... $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 14. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ †) 14. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ † $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 16. $\mathbb{W}b7$ Black is completely tied up and will soon lose material.

8...h6 9.h5 (9. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ is also good for White) 9... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 11. $\mathbb{W}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 12.f3± We can already fantasize about a white knight on f5. That actually didn't happen in the game, primarily because Black sought quick counterplay, and ended up with new problems. 12... $\mathbb{W}b6$ (12... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$) 13. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 14.0–0–0 c5?! 15. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ cxd4 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 18. $\mathbb{W}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 0–0 20.g5 White had a strong attack in Dreev – Miralles, France 2008.

8.h4!



The Patriarch's dramatic refinement. White expands further on the kingside and puts maximum pressure on Black. 8.h3 is probably enough for a small plus, but no more than that.

8... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

It is still very risky to take the pawn with 8... $\mathbb{Q}xh4$: see Game 7.

Let's have a quick survey of seldom-played moves:

8... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 9.g5 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 12.bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ (12... $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}b1\bar{\infty}$) 13. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0–0–0 14.a4 and White is much better, Ki. Georgiev – Lputian, Istanbul (ol) 2000.

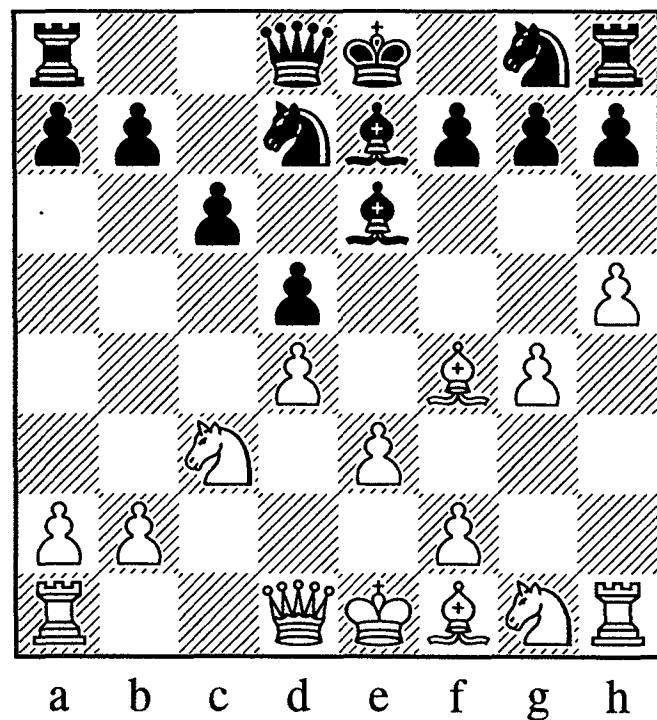
8...c5 9. $\mathbb{Q}e5$?! $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ 11.g5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ (12. $\mathbb{Q}h3$?) 12...h6 13. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ $\mathbb{Q}xh1$ † 15. $\mathbb{Q}xh1$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 16. $\mathbb{W}a4$ † $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 17.dxc5 White is slightly better, Dautov – Lputian, Istanbul (ol) 2000. This game was played four rounds after the Georgiev game, so 8...c5 was Lputian's attempt to improve on 8... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ – White won both games.

8... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}h3$!± $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ h6 11. $\mathbb{W}f3$ † $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}f4$! $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 14.exf4 f6 15.0–0–0 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ † $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 17.f5 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}he1$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}g6$

$\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 22.fxg6 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 23. $\mathbb{W}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 24. $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ 25. $\mathbb{B}e7\#$ $\mathbb{B}d7$ 26. $\mathbb{B}e8$ Black was completely tied up in Yakovich – Arlandi, Saint Vincent 2000.

8... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 9. $\mathbb{B}b1$ and 8...h6 9. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 10.f3 does not change much compared to the mainline.

9.h5



Taking yet more space.

9... $\mathbb{W}b6$

With normal moves Black will soon find himself in a precarious situation. He should seriously consider Karpov's imaginative:

9... $\mathbb{Q}h6$

When after 10. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ gxh6 Black's shattered pawns would effectively stop White's expansion on the kingside. Instead:

10. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 11. $\mathbb{B}c1$

Or 11. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ g5!?

11... $\mathbb{Q}d6$

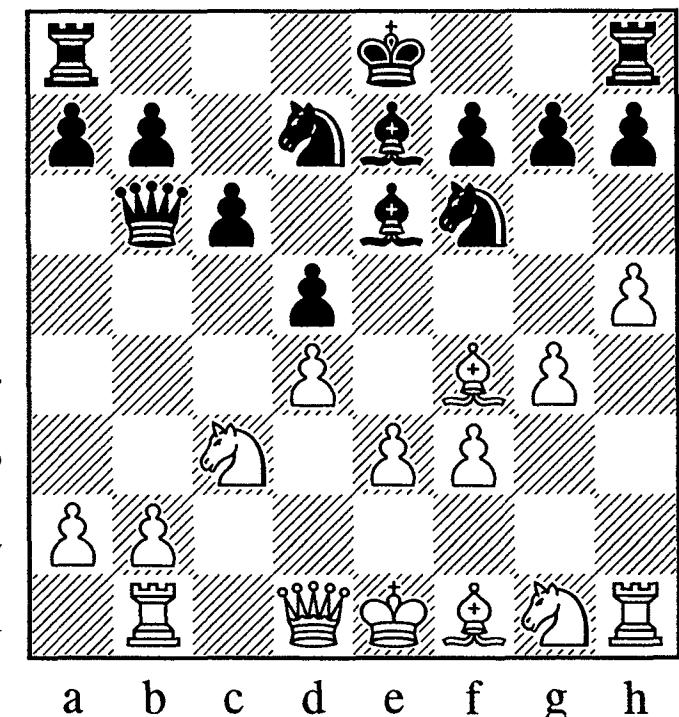
11... $\mathbb{Q}c4!$ was more in the spirit of the position. 12. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ dx $c4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ gxh6 is fine for Black. 14. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 15.f4 f6 16. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 0–0–0 18. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{B}he8$ 20. $\mathbb{B}he1$ c5 with active play, as in Mueller – Daurelle, e-mail 2001, so 12.b3 $\mathbb{Q}d6\infty$

with a complicated and demanding position should occur. Another benefit of the knight on h6 is that Black can throw in the counter-strike f7-f5 at an appropriate moment.

12. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xf4\pm$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14. $\mathbb{B}g1$ g5 15.hxg6
15. $\mathbb{Q}d3?$
15...hxg6 16. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 17.b3 g5 18. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 0–0–0 19. $\mathbb{B}h1$ f6 20. $\mathbb{W}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 21. $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 23.f3

White had a good ending though it was later drawn in Kasparov – Karpov, Moscow 1985.

10. $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}gf6$ 11.f3



White has the better chances. His far advanced pawns will always be a thorn in Black's eye. They can advance further with many direct threats, especially if Black castles kingside, and his dilemma is that he probably has to castle right into the fire because the alternatives are even worse. The king cannot stay much longer in the middle and castling queenside is not really an option with the white bishop covering c7 and b8 and the rook already behind the b-pawn: White would play b2-b4 very fast with a big attack. Statistics back up this evaluation. The position after 11.f3 has been played a dozen times and White has a huge score. See Game 8 for more details.

Conclusion: The theory after 3... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ is rather complicated, but in general Black has had problems coming up with a proper response to White's expansion on the kingside. 9... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ is very interesting though, and leads to highly original positions. In practical play you will probably meet 6... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ more often, but it leads to the well-known Exchange structure play that is comfortable for White.

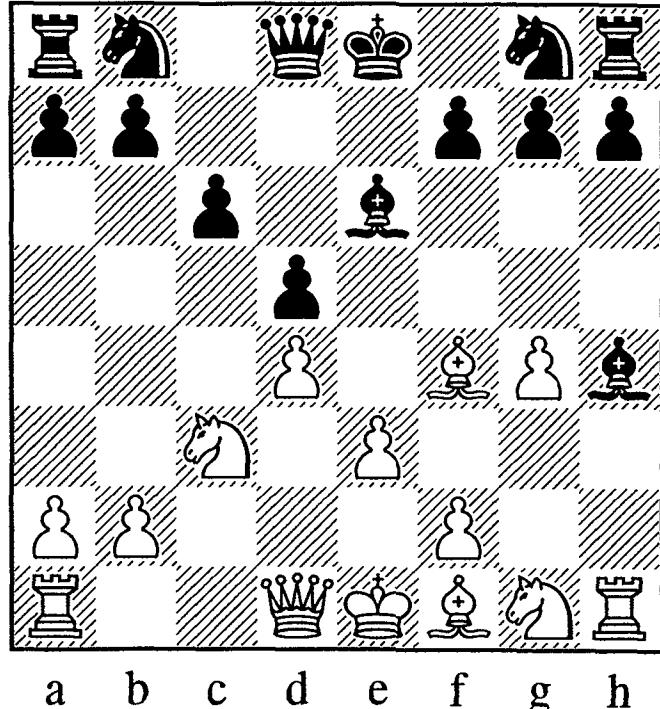
When you sacrifice a pawn, you should always ask yourself: what happens if my opponent takes it?

Game 7

Gulko – Lputian

Glendale 1994

1.c4 e6 2. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5 3.d4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 4.cxd5 exd5
5. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ c6 6.e3 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 7.g4 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 8.h4 $\mathbb{Q}xh4$



9. $\mathbb{W}b3!$

This is very annoying for Black, who cannot answer with 9... $\mathbb{W}b6$ because the pawn-grabbing bishop would be en prise. This means Black has to weaken his position.

9...b6

The smallest concession, but a better practical choice may be the bizarre looking:
9...g5!?

And then there are three options:

10. $\mathbb{W}xb7N$ gxf4 11. $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ fxe3
13.fxe3 $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 14. $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2\infty$

10. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ f6 11. $\mathbb{Q}h2$

11. $\mathbb{W}xb7!N$ fxe5 12. $\mathbb{W}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 13.0–0–0
 $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}d3!\pm$ e4 15. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}h3$
exd3 17. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ d2† 18. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4\pm$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c1$
 $\mathbb{Q}e1\pm$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}g3$ 21. $\mathbb{W}b7$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h3$
 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e2$

11... $\mathbb{Q}xg4!$ 12. $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$

Black saves himself with an unsuspected counterattack:

13. $\mathbb{W}xa8$ $\mathbb{W}xe3\pm$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2\pm$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}f1$
Not 15. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}d3\pm$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}e3\#$.

15... $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xb8\pm$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2\pm$
18. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{W}f3\pm$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}xe2$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}g4$
21. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$

Probably a mistake in the database: 21... $\mathbb{W}e4\pm$ is more forcing and my guess as the actual move in the game.

22. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xh8$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3\pm$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ ½–½

With a perpetual, Vaisser – Geller, Sochi 1982.

10. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$

10...b6 11. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ must be good for White and 10... $\mathbb{Q}xg4?$, trying to copy Geller's play, is a mistake due to a little difference: 11. $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 12. $\mathbb{W}xa8$ $\mathbb{W}xe3\pm$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}xf2\pm$ (Or 13... $\mathbb{Q}xf2\pm$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 15. $\mathbb{W}xb8\pm$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5\pm$! and here is the difference! 16...cxd5 17. $\mathbb{W}d6\pm$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}b5\pm$) 14. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}g3$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ $\mathbb{W}xg3$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ and White was winning in Vaisser – Diaz, Havana 1985.

11. $\mathbb{Q}f3$

11. $\mathbb{W}xb6$ axb6 12. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ gxh4
14. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ f6 15. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ h5
11... $\mathbb{W}xb3$ 12.axb3 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ gxh4
14. $\mathbb{Q}e5$

14. $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ $\mathbb{B}xb8$ 15. $\mathbb{B}xh4$ h5 16. $\mathbb{B}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$
 14... f6 15. $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ $\mathbb{B}xb8$ 16. $\mathbb{B}xh4$ h5 17. $\mathbb{B}xa7$
 $\mathbb{Q}e7$

Black has good chances to hold the ending.

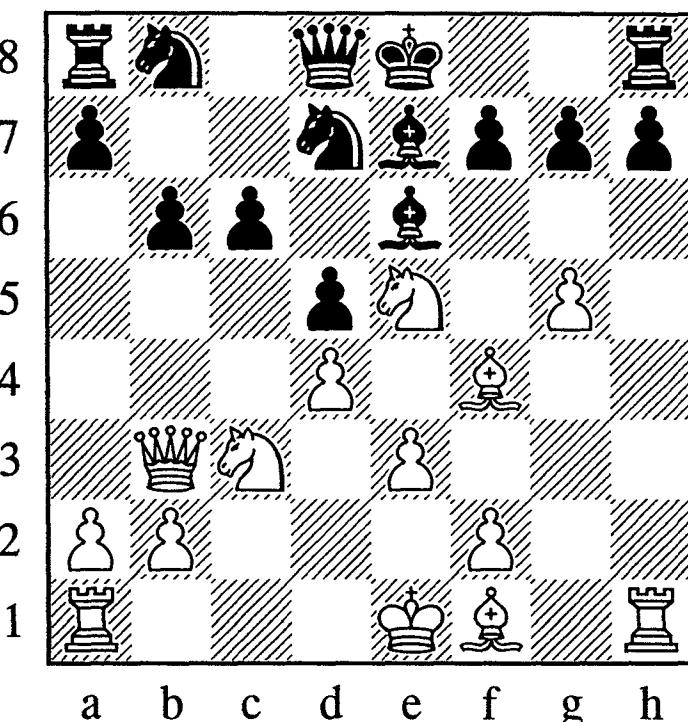
10. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}e5$

White has great compensation for the pawn. We see the effect of the little move b7-b6: now the c6-pawn is a new soft spot and Black cannot develop the knight from b8. On the kingside the open h-file is significant and also gives Black some headaches.

11... $\mathbb{Q}f6$

Two years later Lputian tried to improve with 11...g5 12. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 14. $\mathbb{B}c1$ but was nevertheless caught in White's grip. After 14... $\mathbb{Q}bd7?$! 15. $\mathbb{Q}b5!$ it was already more or less over: 15... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 16. dxc5 cxb5 17. $\mathbb{W}xb5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 21. $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 22. c6 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xd6$ With a strategically winning position, Yusupov – Lputian, Baden-Baden 1996.

12. g5 $\mathbb{Q}fd7$



13. g6!

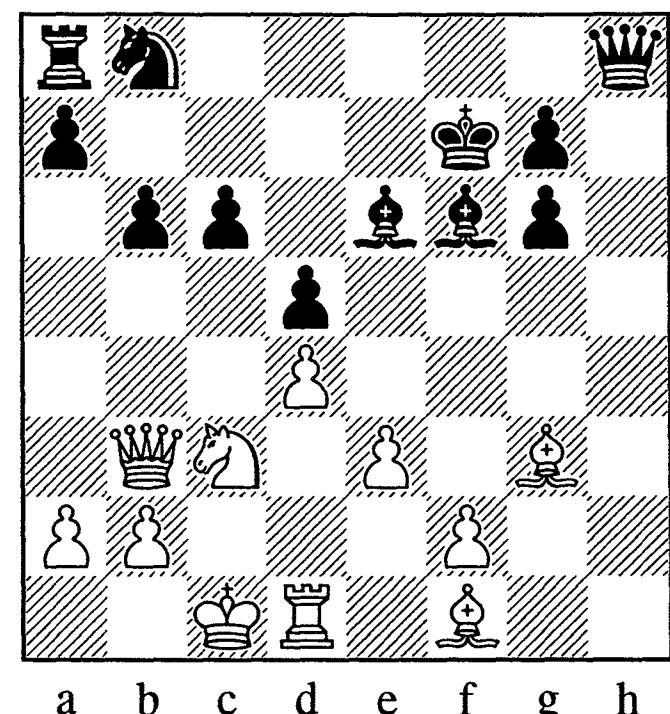
A spectacular breakthrough: on 13...fxg6 White has 14. $\mathbb{Q}xg6!$.

13... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 15. $\mathbb{B}xh7$ 0–0 16. $\mathbb{Q}g3$

fxg6 17. $\mathbb{B}h2$

"Harmony", the ancient choir hummed in the background. Look at the position. White's play is fluid and coherent. He is ready to castle long, play $\mathbb{Q}d3$ and $\mathbb{B}dh1$ with enormous pressure. Black's forces, on the other hand, are badly coordinated.

17... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 18. 0–0–0 $\mathbb{B}h8$ 19. $\mathbb{B}xh8$ $\mathbb{W}xh8$



20. e4!

White keeps his opponent busy.

20... $\mathbb{W}h5$

Or 20... dxe4 21. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ with a decisive attack.

21. $\mathbb{B}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 22. exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ cxd5 24. $\mathbb{Q}g2$

Winning d5 and the game.

24... $\mathbb{B}c8\#$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{E}e8$

Or 25... $\mathbb{B}c4$ 26. $\mathbb{W}b5$.

26. $\mathbb{Q}xd5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 27. $\mathbb{B}h1$ $\mathbb{W}f5\#$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}al$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 29. $\mathbb{W}a3\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 30. $\mathbb{W}d6$ $\mathbb{W}c2$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ 32. $\mathbb{W}c7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}d6\#$

1–0

Conclusion: You should not lose sleep because you have left the h-pawn en prise. Taking it is extremely dangerous for Black, but maybe

9...g5 keeps him alive.

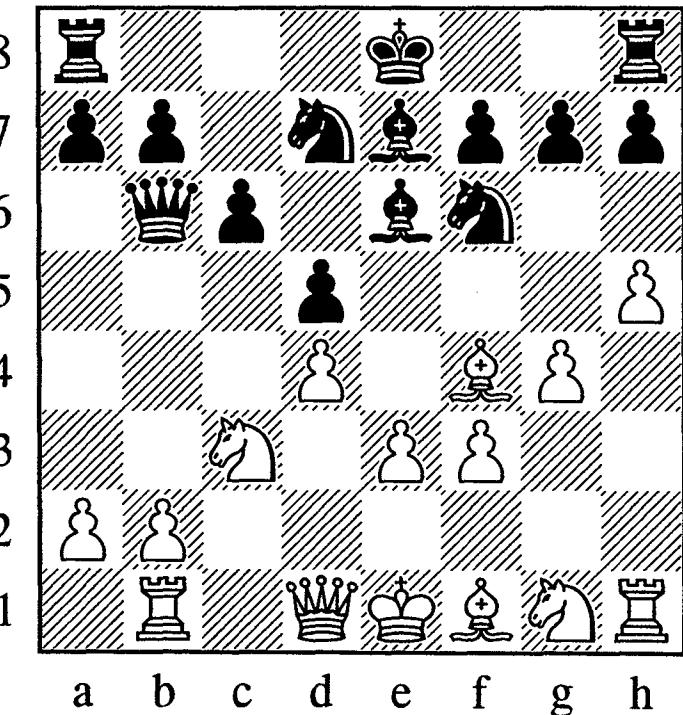
The next game shows that White's offensive on the kingside often leads to a direct attack.

Game 8

Knaak – Geller

Moscow 1982

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘e7 4.cxd5 exd5
 5.♗f4 c6 6.e3 ♘f5 7.g4 ♘e6 8.h4 ♘d7 9.h5
 ♘b6 10.♗b1 ♘gf6 11.f3



11...h6

A difficult decision: the h6-pawn halts the white pawns for now, but at the same time it creates a target in Black's camp. A year after this game Geller tried to do without it:

11...0–0 12.♗d3 c5 13.♗ge2 ♜ac8

Apparently with good counterplay.

14.♔f1

14.g5!?

14...cxd4 15.exd4 ♘d6

ECO suggests the regrouping 15...♗b8!?

16.♗g2 ♘c6 17.a3 ♘a5 with unclear play.

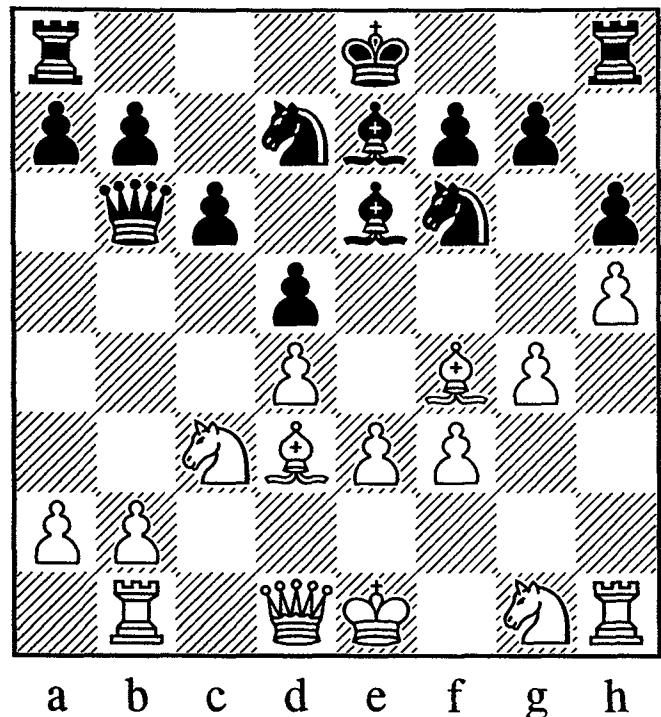
To me White seems much better after 18.g5

♗d7 19.♗c2 f5 20.♗be1.

16.♗d2 ♘e8 17.♗g2

White nevertheless had a pleasant position while Black lacked a plan, Beliavsky – Geller, Moscow 1983.

12.♗d3



12...c5

The most natural. In the game that started it all Black found counterplay on the queenside by advancing all of his pawns, or did he in fact create weaknesses?

12...♗a5 13.♗ge2 b5 14.♗c1 ♗d8 15.♗b3

Maybe ♘c2 and ♘d3 is a better way.

15...0–0 16.♗e2

Too much manoeuvring: sometimes the Patriarch was a little too fond of keeping the position closed. 16.g5 hxg5 17.♗xg5 was more to the point and looks good for White – compare it to the main game.

16...a5 17.♗g3 a4 18.♗c1 c5

Suddenly Black is very active.

19.♗f5

19.♗xb5? ♗a5†

19...♗xf5 20.♗xf5 cxd4 21.exd4 ♗b6 22.♗e2
 ♘d6 23.♗d2 ♘xf4 24.♗xf4 ♗fe8† 25.♔f1
 ♘b8 ½–½

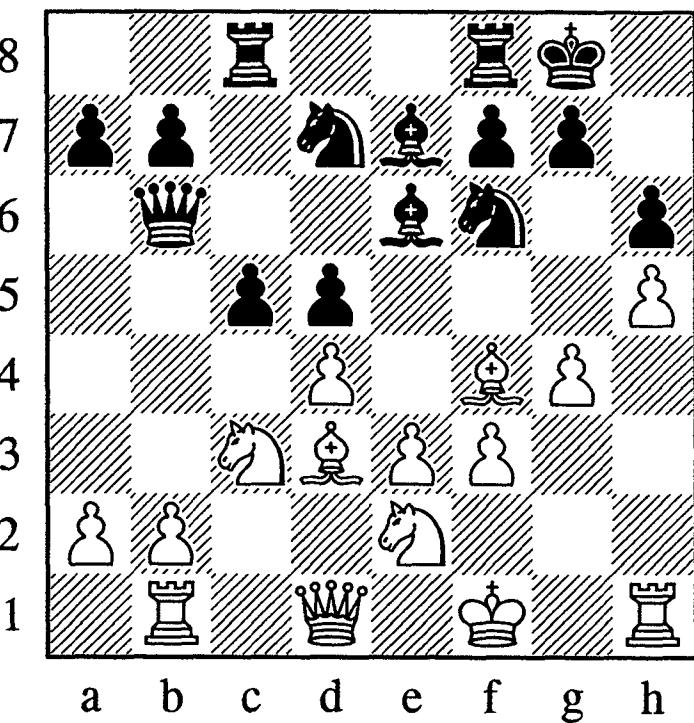
Botvinnik – Spassky, Leiden 1970.

13.♗ge2 ♜c8

13...cxd4 14.exd4 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ was Kruppa – Kolesnik, Minsk 2000, but 14. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ seems simpler.

13...c4 14. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ b5 16.a3 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 17.b3 cxb3 18. $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ a6 was played in Riazantsev – Sanikidze, Dresden 2007, and now 19. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ seems correct, aiming at f5.

14. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ 0–0



15.g5!

Instructive. White uses the pawn on h6 to open lines against Black's king.

15...hxg5 16. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8$

16... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ may look like an interesting tactical blow, however it backfires after 17. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ c4 18. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 19. $\mathbb{W}d2$.

17. $\mathbb{W}e1$

Preparing to transfer the queen to the g-file.

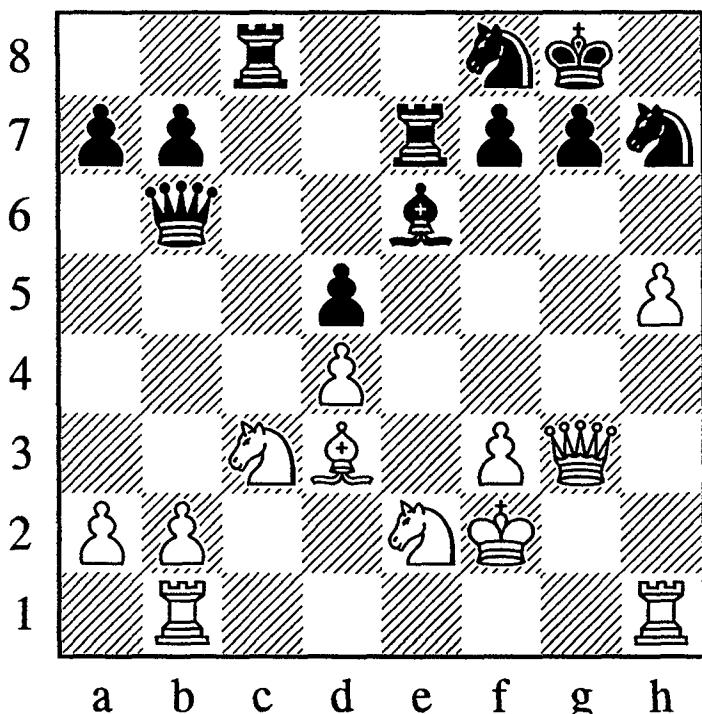
17...cxd4 18.exd4

18. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$! is more positional, but Knaak wants to attack.

18... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 20. $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}df8$

Or 20... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f4$.

21. $\mathbb{Q}f2$



White is ready for an assault along the g-file. Black should foresee a scenario like this when contemplating whether to play 11...h6.

21...f6 22. $\mathbb{Q}c2$

White sees that d5 is a little weak and regroups to exploit this.

22... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}ce8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}bd1$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f4$

Increasing the pressure on d5.

25... $\mathbb{W}d6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ b5 27. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 28.h6!

Black's position is falling apart.

28...g6 29. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ a5 30.h7† $\mathbb{Q}gxh7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$!

1–0

Black lost on time, but 31... $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}e7$! wins quickly for White anyway.

Conclusion: It is very unpleasant for Black to be so cramped on the kingside. With the pawn on h6 White has a clear target and can open the position when he feels like it.

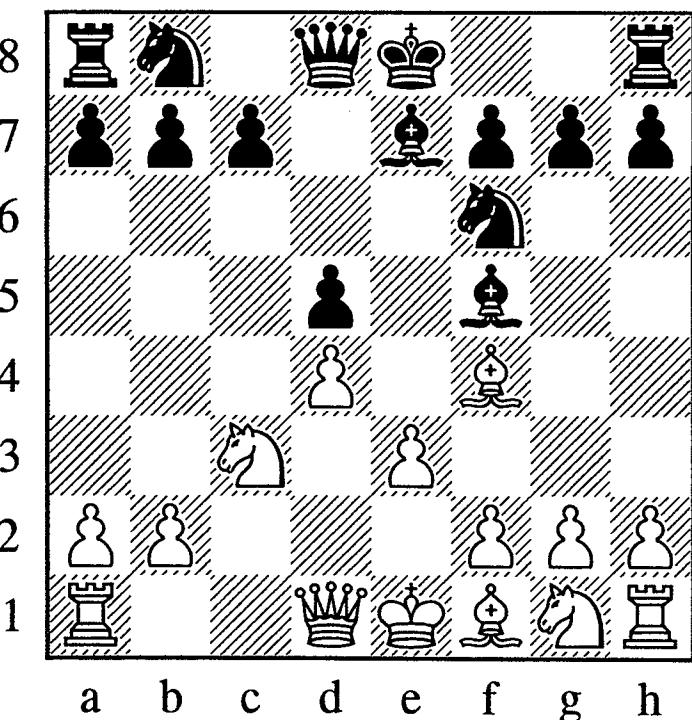
The modern way for Black to play, with ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$, leads to sharp play but, as demonstrated in the following fine correspondence game, White apparently has a way to keep control and secure a slight edge.

Game 9

Chytilek – Frey

Correspondence 2003

**1.c4 e6 2.Qc3 d5 3.d4 Qe7 4.cxd5 exd5
5.Qf4 Qf6 6.e3 Qf5!?**



The modern treatment.

7.Qge2!?

A flexible choice. The move White wants to play to exploit Black's early bishop move is 7.Wb3 but after 7...Qc6! things are not so clear:

8.a3

This is a drastic way to prevent ...Qb4.

8...Qa5 9.Wa2

9.Wa4† c6

9...0–0 10.Qf3 c5! 11.dxc5 Qxc5 12.Qd1

Or 12.Qb5 Qc6 13.Qe2 a6 14.Qc3 d4 and Black has no problems whatsoever: 15.exd4 Qxd4 ½–½ Volkov – Khalifman, Dagomys 2008.

12.b4 Qb6 13.bxa5 Qxa5 14.Qe5 Qc8 15.Qcl Qe4 16.Wb2 f6 17.Qd4 Qxc3 18.Qxc3 Wc7 and Black wins is the tactical justification.

12...Qc2 13.Qd2 Qb3 14.Wb1 Qc8

Black had the upper hand in Sasikiran – Ponomariov, Khanty-Mansiisk 2007.

8.Wxb7 Qb4

This is risky for White.

9.Qc1

9.Qb5† is tempting but after 9...Qf8! White has some problems getting his queen back to safety. A recent example continued: 10.Qcl a6 11.Qe2 Qe8! 12.a3 Accepting the inevitable fate. 12...Qb8 13.Wa7 Qa8 14.Wb7 Qb8 15.Wa7 Qa8 ½–½ Moiseenko – Shomoev, Moscow 2007.

9...0–0 10.a3!?

Or 10.Wxc7 Wxc7 11.Qxc7 Qfc8 12.Qg3 Qe4 and Black is very active. 13.a3 Qxc3 14.Qxc3 Qa2! In Djurhuus – Olafsson, Reykjavik 1996, White had to surrender the c-file or sacrifice an exchange.

Best is probably 10.Qf3 Qc2† 11.Qxc2 Qxc2 12.Qxc7 Wc8 13.Qa6. Now in Lopez Martinez – Gongora Reyes, Varadero 2000, Black rather naively tried to copy Yusupov's play with 13...Wxb7? 14.Qxb7 Qab8 15.Qxb8 Qxb8 16.Qc6 Qxb2 17.0–0 only to find himself a clear pawn down. Correct was the computer solution 13...Qb4! with adequate play.

10...Qc2† 11.Qxc2 Qxc2 12.Qxc7 Wc8 13.Qa6 Wxb7 14.Qxb7 Qab8 15.Qxb8 Qxb8 16.Qa6 Qxb2 17.Qge2 Qb6 18.Qc8 Qxa3

Black was clearly better with the bishop pair and strong passed a-pawn in Ehlvest – Yusupov, Linares 1991.

7...0–0 8.Qc1

Directed against a quick c7-c5 from Black.

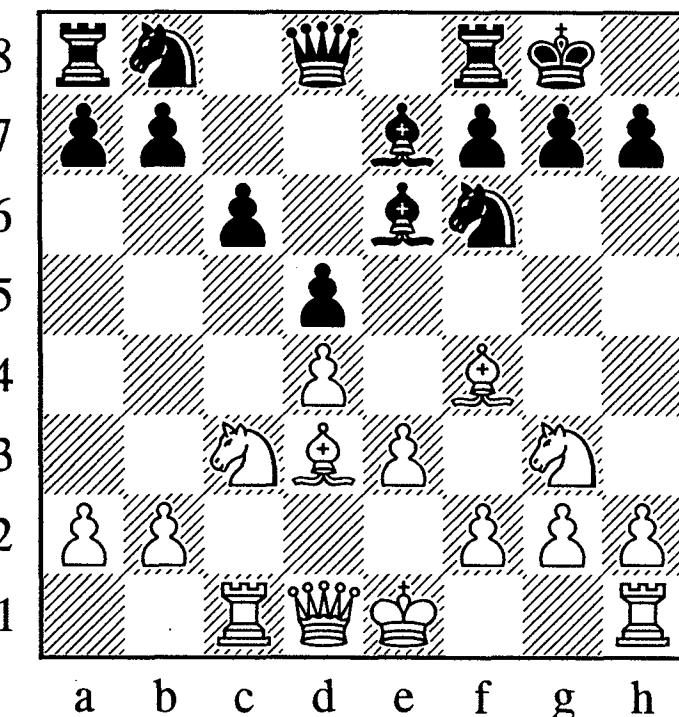
On the natural 8.Qg3 Qe6 9.Qd3 Black immediately counters with 9...c5! 10.dxc5 Qxc5 11.0–0 Qc6 12.Qcl d4! trying to liquidate the whole centre. White has some initiative after both 13.Qb5 Qb6 and 13.Qce4

$\mathbb{Q}e7$ so it is not dead equal yet and maybe some improvement can be found.

8...c6 9. $\mathbb{Q}g3 \mathbb{Q}e6$

After 9... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 10.h4 is strong, e.g. 10...h6 11.h5 $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 13. $\mathbb{W}xd3$ and the white knight has the great attacking square f5.

10. $\mathbb{Q}d3$



White is slightly better. He has long-term possibilities on the kingside and he can perhaps break in the centre or even play positionally on the queenside. As usual in the Queen's Gambit exchange structure, it is not easy for Black to create active counterplay, but he can rely on a solid and sound position.

10... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$

In a clash with his great rival Kasparov, Karpov played:

10... $\mathbb{R}e8$

The game was a quick draw but White seemed better all the way and had several opportunities to play differently.

11. $\mathbb{W}b3?$

11.0–0 seems more natural when 11... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ transposes to the main game.

11... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 12. $\mathbb{W}c2$

White's claim is that the black queen is misplaced on b6.

12... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 13.0–0 g6 14.h3

Very modest. 14.a3 was interesting, and if 14...a5 then 15.h4!? with play all over the board: 15... $\mathbb{R}ac8$ 16.h5 c5 17.hxg6 hxg6 18. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$! This looks crushing but Black can decline the offer: 18... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$! 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ and everything is still possible.

14... $\mathbb{R}f8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ $\mathbb{R}ac8$ 16. $\mathbb{W}d2$

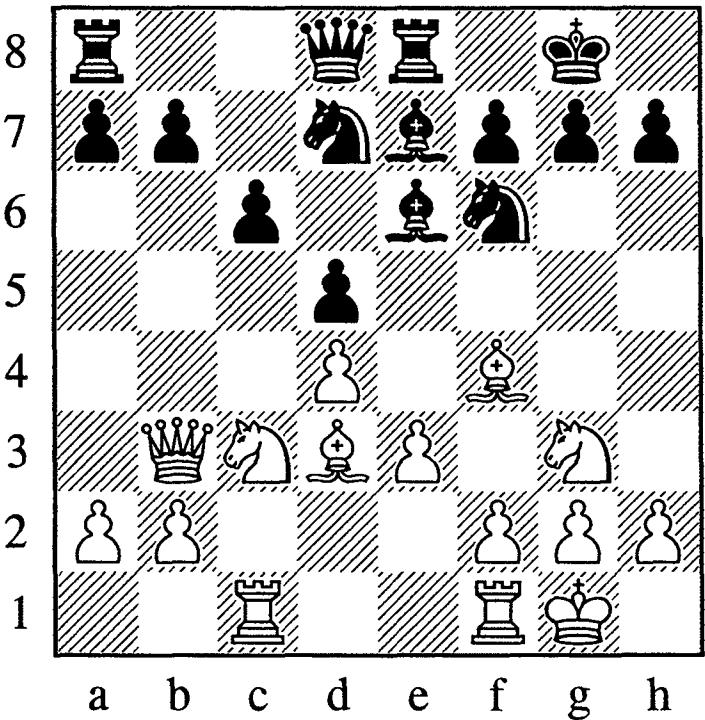
Here 16. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ or 16. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ were good alternatives.

16... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 18.g4

Preventing ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$.

18... $\mathbb{W}d8$ 19.f3 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 20.b3 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 21. $\mathbb{R}c2$ ½–½ Kasparov – Karpov, Seville (12) 1987.

11.0–0 $\mathbb{R}e8$ 12. $\mathbb{W}b3!$



12...b5

This looks strange at first sight, but then you realise that there is a tactical problem with the natural way to protect b7:

12... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}b5!$ That's it: the rook on c1 takes part in the execution of the queen after 13... $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}c7!$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xb5+$.

12... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ runs into the same: 13. $\mathbb{Q}b5!$ $\mathbb{R}f8$ (not 13... $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$) 14. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{R}c8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{R}xe6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ and White is better.

13.♘f5 ♘xf5 14.♘xf5 g6 15.♗h3 a5
16.♗e2

Straightforward positional play: White puts pressure on the weak c6-pawn.

16...a4 17.♗d3 ♗b6 18.♗c2 b4 19.♗xd7
♘xd7 20.♗fc1 ♗ac8 21.b3 axb3 22.axb3
♗f8 23.♗g3 ♗e6 24.♗f4 ♗xf4 25.♗xf4
♗b7

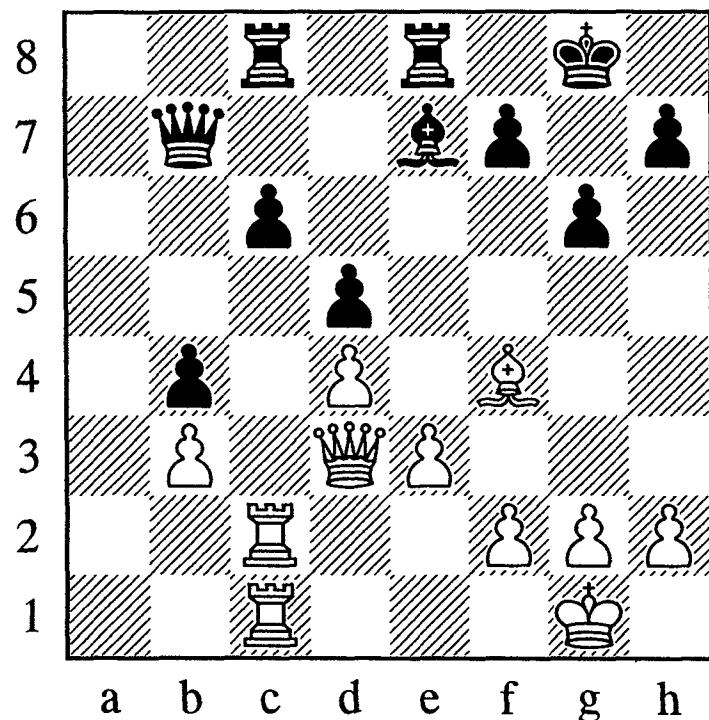
36...♗f8 37.♗b5 ♗e6 38.f4 ♗a8 39.d5 ♗ea6
40.e4

1–0

Conclusion: The flexible 7.♗ge2!? leads to typical Queen's Gambit Exchange play, where White has some positional advantage. There are also some strong tactical possibilities – notice the strength of 12.♗b3!.

Chapter Conclusion: The Exchange Variation is a simple and strong way for White to meet the orthodox Queen's Gambit Declined. The fixed pawn structure is slightly to White's advantage and at the same time contains enough positional and tactical venom to worry Black. The plan with f3 and e4 in particular is surprisingly difficult for Black to meet, as we have seen time and again throughout the chapter. Therefore, many players choose the 3...♗e7 move order, but also here the exchange structure gives White good prospects.

The play is often strategically deep with few forcing lines, so it is important to know the standard plans and typical middlegame scenarios. Remembering the exact moves is secondary.



The position has simplified, but the static elements are the same. Black is tied to the defence of the backward pawn on c6, and White can switch his attention to the kingside and try to open a new battleground there.

26.h3 ♗b6 27.♗d1 ♗b7 28.♗f3 ♗a6 29.♗e5
♗d8 30.h4! ♗xh4 31.♗g4 ♗e7 32.♗d7

White has activated his queen with tempo and now wins the pawn back on c6 when all his pieces are very active.

32...♗a3 33.♗xc6 ♗xc1†

Or 33...♗cd8 34.♗b7 ♗xb3 35.♗c7 and White controls the seventh rank, for example 35...♗f8 36.♗f6! ♗xf6 37.♗xf7† ♗g8 38.♗xh7!
♗f8 39.♗cc7.

34.♗xc1 ♗xc1† 35.♗h2 ♗cc8 36.♗xd5

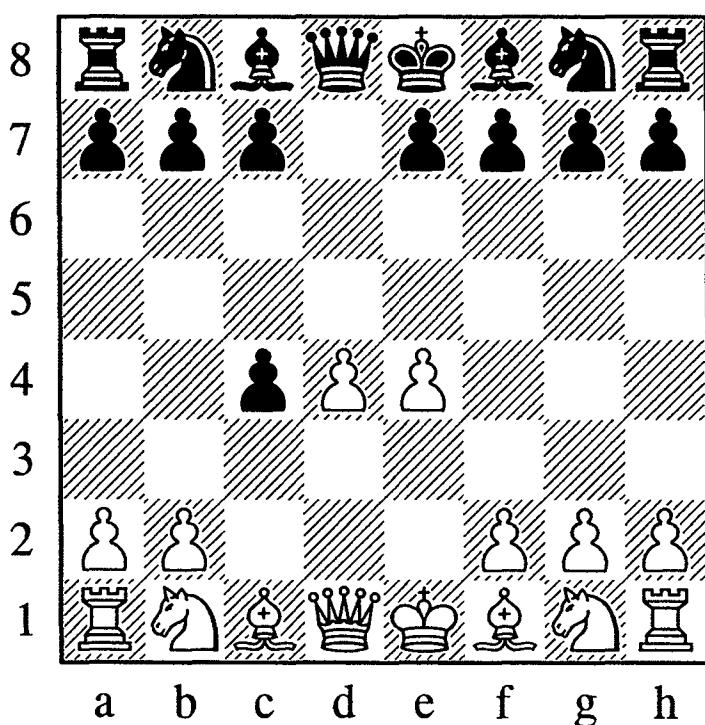
White collects a free d-pawn: the game is decided.

Chapter 2

Queen's Gambit Accepted

You're gonna need a bigger boat

– Chief Brody, *Jaws*



1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4

The 3...b5 Variation

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The 3...c5 Variation

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The 3...e5 Variation

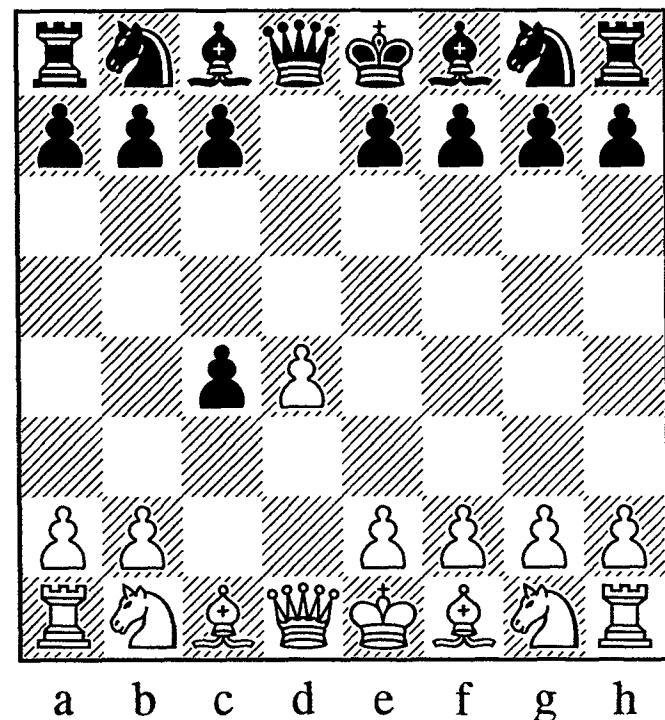
page 48

The 3...♞c6 Variation

page 60

The 3...♞f6 Variation

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1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4

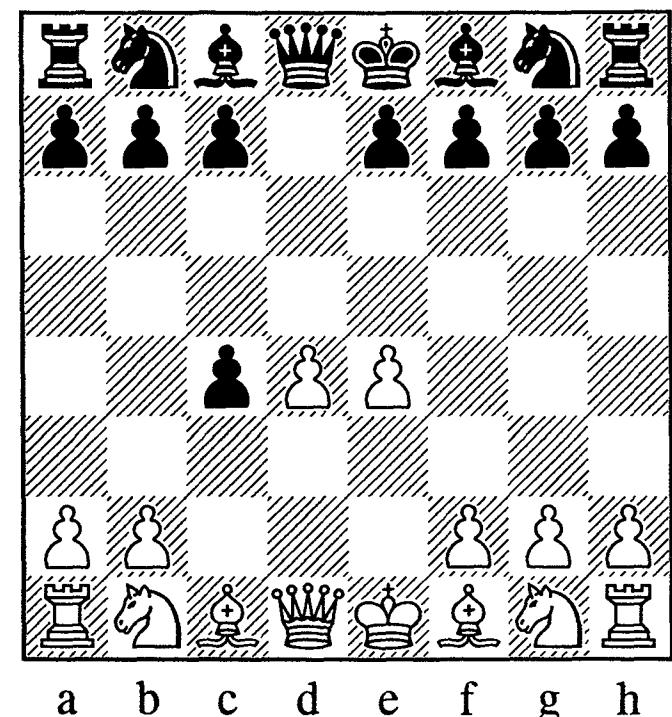
And now to something completely different. Black voluntarily gives up the centre and still pretends to be happy, though it is against all classical chess principles.

The Queen's Gambit Accepted is a very cunning system. Black did not take on c4 to keep the pawn, it is merely an exchange. And that is more or less the philosophy behind the opening. No matter what active measures White takes, Black will try to neutralize them as soon as possible. Black will use his flexibility to attack White's centre with pawns, pieces or both, depending on how White proceeds. And Black will use the same flexibility to create a healthy structure without weaknesses. It is a very concrete way to play and White risks not getting a real game at all, just a sterile draw.

A very natural reaction is to play 3.♘f3 followed by e2-e3 and then take the pawn back. For a long time the mainline was 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e3 e6 5.♗xc4 c5 6.0-0 a6 7.a4, where White claimed a slight positional edge. The interesting positions with an isolated queen's pawn after 7...♗c6 8.♗e2 cxd4 9.♗d1 ♗e7 10.exd4 0-0 11.♗c3 were intensely debated. These days Black is thought to be okay after 11...♗d5. Instead White switched his attention to a sharper set-up with 7.♗b3. Here the IQP positions after 7...♗c6 8.♗c3 cxd4 9.exd4 ♗e7

are more dangerous for Black. White has had some success with the interesting 10.♗g5 0-0 11.♗d2, and 10.♗e1 is also a good try. Still, it is complicated and double-edged to put it mildly, and Black can also refrain from taking on d4 and instead play, for instance, 7...b5.

However there is an obvious solution for White: just take the centre and play:

3.e4

White takes all the space he can and gets two wonderful central pawns. That is something! Instead of the narrow lines with just a tiny edge, White goes for the big fish.

On the downside, the impressive centre has no backup and White has not regained the pawn yet, so more time will have to be wasted. In other words, White is a bit overstretched just now, but only for a few more moves, then everything will be in order. Black should use the momentum and strike at once at the centre, trying to force White to make a concession. Many believe that Black's most logical options are the natural pawn strikes, 3...c5 or 3...e5, but seeking more sophisticated piece-play with 3...♗c6 or 3...♗f6 also has many fans. Trying to keep the pawn with 3...b5 cannot be recommended, because it gives White a free hand to build a strong initiative, but of course it deserves to be examined.

The 3...b5 Variation

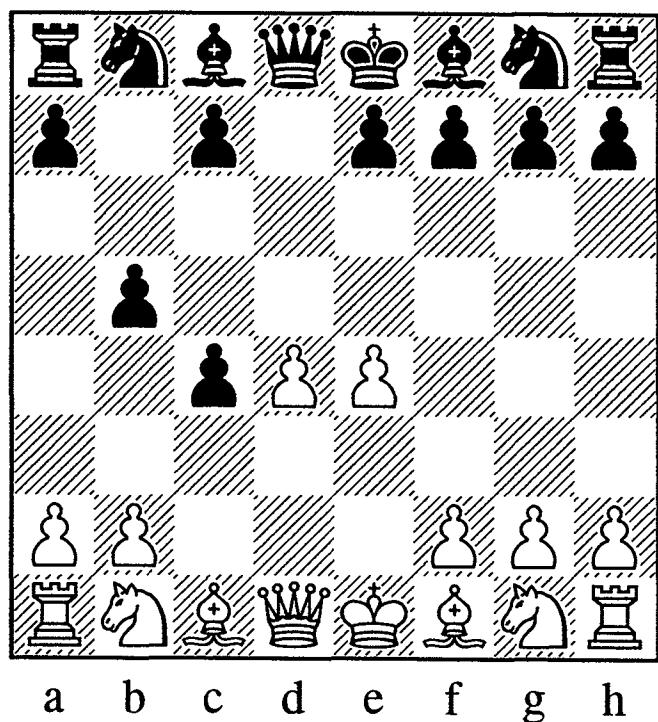
– Isn't that just a pawn?

Game 10

Ponomariov – I. Sokolov

Zafra 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 b5



4.a4

Immediately confronting Black's pawn phalanx.

4...c6

Or 4... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 5.axb5 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ e6 9.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ and White was better in Ribli – Pr. Nikolic, Reykjavik 1988.

5.axb5 cxb5 6. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$

This looks awkward, but he had to protect the pawn. Natural moves like 6...a6 7. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ or 6... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ are clearly insufficient.

7. $\mathbb{Q}f3$

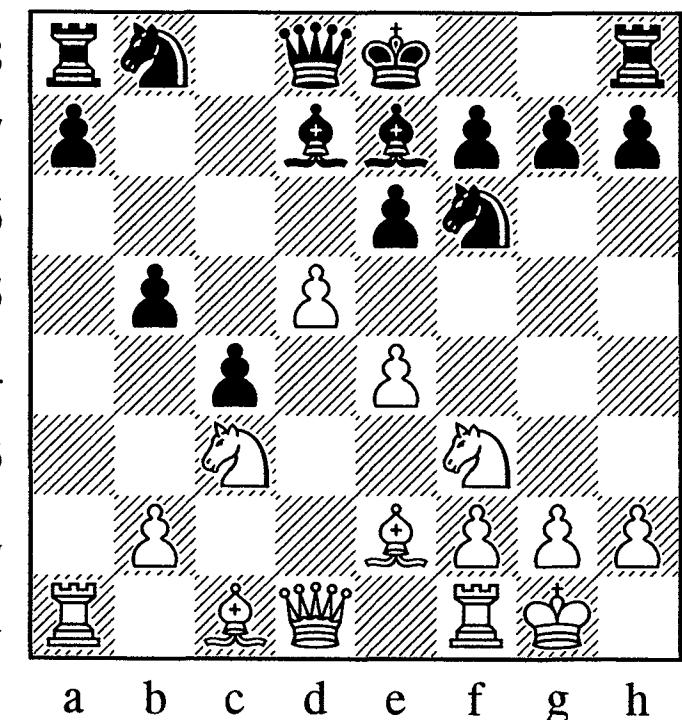
The most natural move, but Hans Berliner in *The System* claims that 7.d5! is probably

even stronger. One point being 7...e6 8.dxe6 $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$! where the queen protects the knight via the check on h5.

7...e6 8. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 9.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$

No better is 9... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 10.d5! $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 11.bxc3 exd5 12.exd5 0–0 13. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ a5 15. $\mathbb{W}d4$ with strong positional compensation for the pawn, Zarnicki – Slipak, Villa Martelli 2007. Black can hardly move as ... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ allows the terrible $\mathbb{Q}c6$.

10.d5!



10...exd5

The stem game went 10...b4 11.d6! and Black either had to give up his important dark-squared bishop or withdraw further. Zaltsman choose the latter: 11... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 12.e5 bxc3 13.exf6 and Black's development was horrible, Yermolinsky – Zaltsman, St Martin 1993.

11.exd5

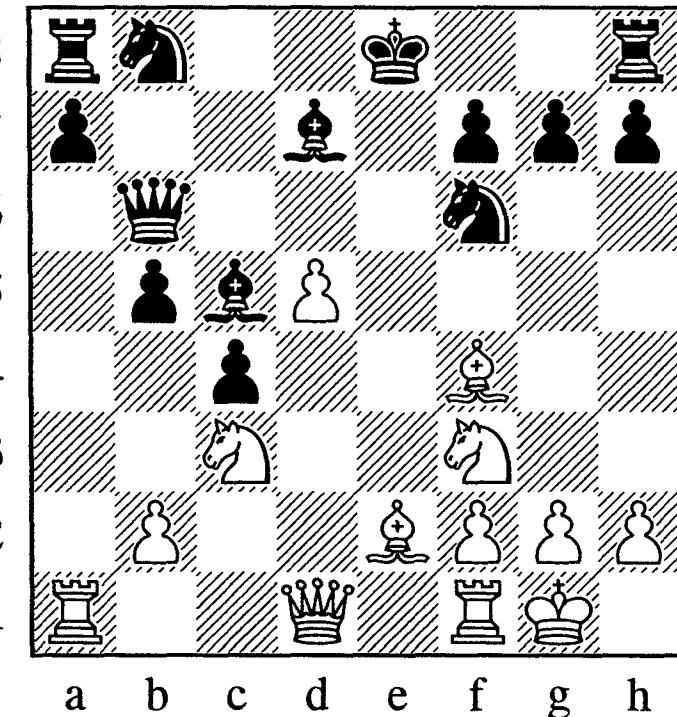
Also possible was 11.e5 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 12. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 13. $\mathbb{W}xd8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 15.bxc3 with an initiative in the endgame.

11... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}f4$

Now 12... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ seems solid after 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ but then 15.b3! destroys the nice pawns and after 15...b4 16. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$

17. $\mathbb{B}xa4$ c3 18. $\mathbb{Q}b5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 19. $\mathbb{B}e1\#$ Black is rather exposed.

12... $\mathbb{Q}c5$



13. $\mathbb{Q}xc4!!$

An amazing sacrifice. Ponomariov calculates that his long-term threats are more important than a piece. Very bravely played indeed.

13... $\mathbb{B}xc4$ 14. $\mathbb{W}e2\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$

14... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ is worse.

15. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}f5?$

Black does not have time for this. 15... $\mathbb{Q}g8$, to get the king out of the way, was more sensible, but 16. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ keeps a lot of play for the piece.

16. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{W}b5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$

Threatening $\mathbb{Q}d6\#$.

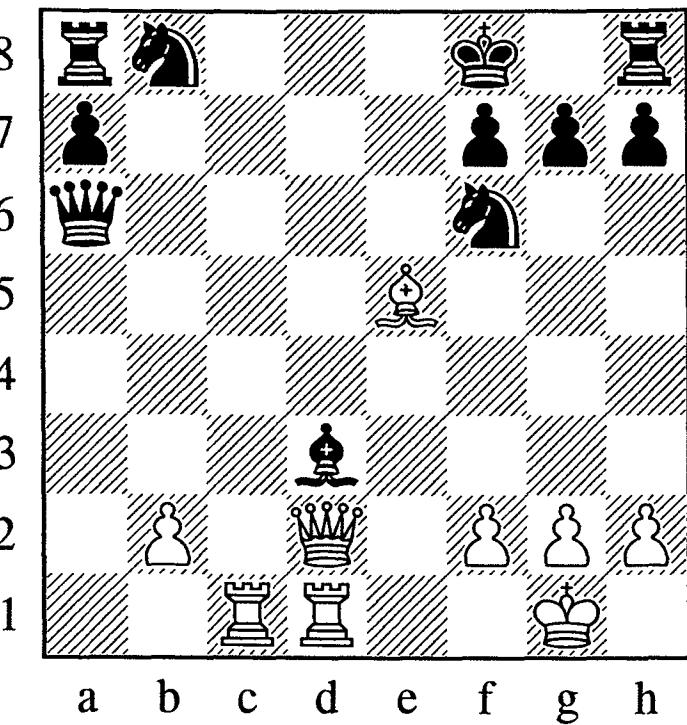
18... $\mathbb{W}d4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 20. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$

Or 20... $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 21. $\mathbb{B}fc1$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 22. $\mathbb{B}c8\#$ and taking on h8.

21. $\mathbb{B}fd1$

21. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ was also good.

21... $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 22. $\mathbb{B}ac1$ $\mathbb{W}a6$



23. $\mathbb{Q}xf6!$

Simple and effective. Black cannot take back: 23... $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 24. $\mathbb{B}c8\#$ or 23... $gxf6$ 24. $\mathbb{W}h6\#$.

23... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}c3$

Calmly played. Black is still a piece up, but it is impossible to keep everything together.

24... $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 25. $\mathbb{W}g5$

Attacking g7.

25... $\mathbb{Q}f6$

25... $f6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}d5$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 28. $\mathbb{B}e1\#$

26. $\mathbb{W}c5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$

Again this move, and again Black does not take back: 27... $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 28. $\mathbb{W}c8\#$ or 27... $gxf6$ 28. $\mathbb{B}c3$.

27... $h6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}c3$

And calmly back, almost like déjà vu.

28... $\mathbb{B}e8$ 29. $\mathbb{B}d6$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 30. $\mathbb{W}f5$

With strong pressure. Black will never solve the problem with his king and the opposite-coloured bishops only make things worse. Facing nothing but difficulties, Black blunders a piece.

30... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 31. $\mathbb{W}xb5$

1-0

Conclusion: Yes, a pawn is a pawn, and an initiative is an initiative! The problem with 3...b5 is that it gives White too much free play in the centre.

The 3...c5 Variation

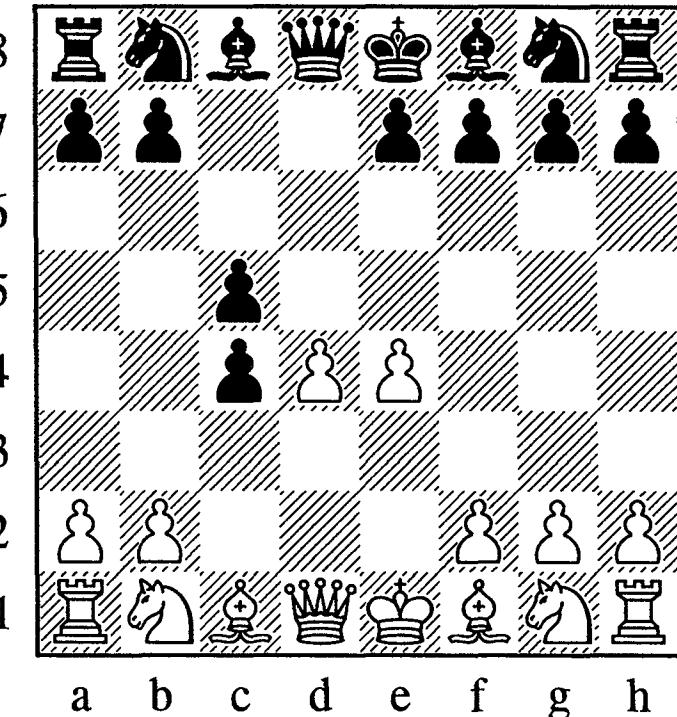
For a long time this was thought to be a good countermeasure. These days it is found to be too lightweight.

Game 11

P.H. Nielsen – Karjakin

Hastings 2002

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 c5



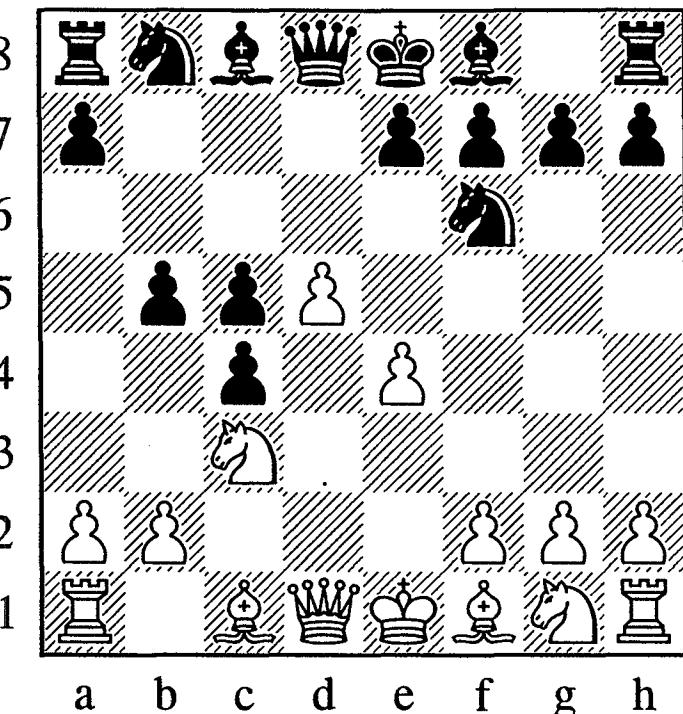
4.d5

Taking space. The ending after 4.♘f3 cxd4 5.♗xd4 ♗xd4 6.♗xd4 ♘d7 7.♘xc4 ♘c6 is nothing.

4...♘f6

4...e6 is the safe option, and it is examined in the next game.

5.♘c3 b5



Very sharp and consistent.

6.♘f4!

The forcing 6.e5 b4 7.exf6 bxc3 8.bxc3 is tempting but not convincing. 8...♗d7 (or even 8...♗a5!?) 9.♗a4 exf6 (9...gxf6) 10.♘f4 ♗b6 11.♘xc4 ♘d6 and Black is okay.

6...♗a6

This looks strange: one gets the feeling that Black is asking too much, so it is no great surprise that the move is practically refuted in this game. Black had some problems because the other ways to protect b5 had drawbacks too:

a) 6...a6 7.e5 b4 8.exf6 bxc3 9.bxc3

White is a tempo up compared to the variations after 6.e5. Still it is not totally clear:

a1) 9...♗a5 10.♗c1 gxf6 11.♘xc4 is pleasant for White. 11...h5?! (11...♗d7) 12.♗f3 ♘d7 13.0–0± ♘b6?! 14.♘c7! ♗a7 15.d6 White was already winning in Legky – Peric, Cannes 2000.

a2) 9...gxf6 10.♘xc4 is of course good for White.

a3) 9...♗d7 10.♗a4 ♗b6
10...gxf6 11.♘xc4

10...exf6? 11.♘c6! ♖a7 12.♗b1 leaves Black tied up, e.g. 12...♕e7 13.d6.

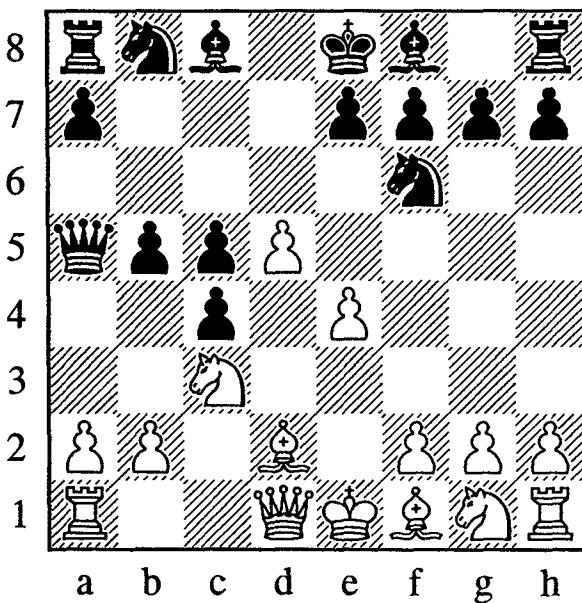
11.fxe7

11.♕xc4 ♘xf6 12.♗e2 seems simple and strong.

11...♕xe7 12.♕xc4 ♘b2 13.♕c1 ♕d6 14.♕e3

This was Markeluk – Juarez, Buenos Aires 1989, and now 14...0–0! offers compensation after 15.♘b3 ♖b8 16.♘xb2 ♖xb2.

b) 6...♘a5 7.♕d2 (avoiding 7.e5 ♘e4)



With the following possibilities:

b1) 7...e5!? 8.dxe6

8.f4 ♘bd7 9.♗f3 ♕d6 is okay for Black.

8...♕xe6

8...fxe6 9.e5 ♘fd7 10.♘g4 is dangerous for Black.

9.e5 ♘fd7 10.f4

10.♘f3 ♘b6 11.a4 b4 12.♗b5 ♘a6 13.♕xc4!? is an interesting improvement, when 13...♕xc4 14.♘c6† ♕e7 15.♗d6 gives White a big attack, e.g. 15...♗d5 16.♗f5† ♘d8 17.♗g5† f6 18.exf6! ♕xc6 19.fxg7† ♘c7 20.gxh8=♘ c4 21.♘xh7† ♕d7 22.♗f4† ♘b7 23.♗e3 and White should be able to convert his extra material into a full point.

10...g6 11.♘f3 ♘b6 12.♗e4 ♘a6 13.♗f6† ♘d8

The position was unclear in Komperda – Hebrard, corr. 2000.

b2) 7...♘bd7!? 8.♗f3

Again 8.f4 is not convincing: 8...b4 9.e5 ♘xc3 10.♕xc3 ♘c7 11.exf6 ♘xf6∞

8...b4 9.e5 ♘g4 10.e6!

This blow tips the balance in White's favour.

10...fxe6 11.dxe6 ♘b6 12.♗g5! ♘f6 13.♘f3 ♘xc3 14.♘c6† ♘fd7 15.♕xc3 ♘a4 16.exd7† ♘xd7 17.♘f3 ♘c6 18.♘f7† ♘d8 19.0–0–0

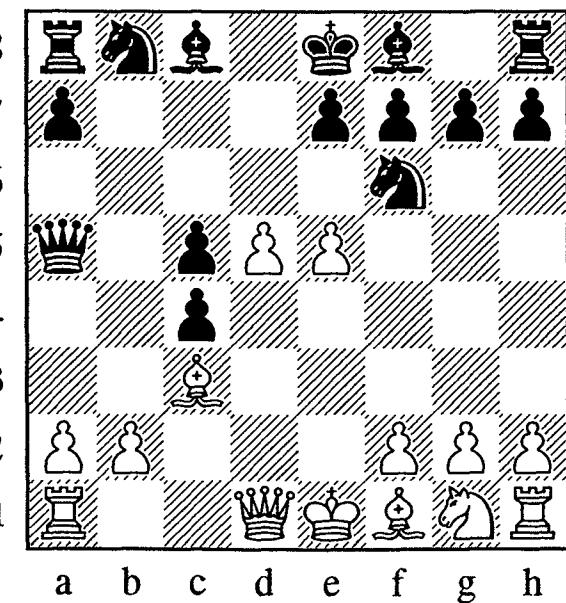
With a winning position, Bergsson – Michiels, Differdange 2007.

b3) 7...b4 8.e5 ♘xc3

8...♘g4 9.e6! Again we see this resource.

9...♘f6 10.♕xc4! fxe6 11.dxe6 ♘b7 (11...bxcc3 12.♕xc3 ♘c7 13.♘a4† ♘c6 14.♗f3 ♘b7 15.0–0–0 and Black will not survive) 12.♗d5! ♘c6 (12...♗xd5 13.♕xd5 ♘xd5 14.♘h5† g6 15.♘xd5+–) 13.♕xb4! ♘d8 (13...cxcc4 14.♗xf6† exf6 15.♘d7#) 14.♕xc5 ♘xd5 15.♘xd5 ♘xd5 16.♘xd5 White was winning in Van Wely – Azmaiparashvili, Istanbul 2000.

9.♕xc3



9...♘a6

After 9...♘c7 10.exf6 exf6 11.♕xc4 ♘d6 (on 11...♘d6 12.♗e2† is annoying) 12.♗e2 ♕e7 13.0–0 0–0 14.♗g3 White had an overwhelming position and quickly won: 14...♘f4 15.d6! ♘xc4 16.dxe7 ♖e8 17.♘f3 ♘a6 18.♗h5 1–0 Sherbakov – Shaginjan, St Petersburg 1999.

10.exf6 exf6 11.b3

Winning back the pawn with a positional advantage.

11... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0–0 14.0–0 f5

15. $\mathbb{W}d3$

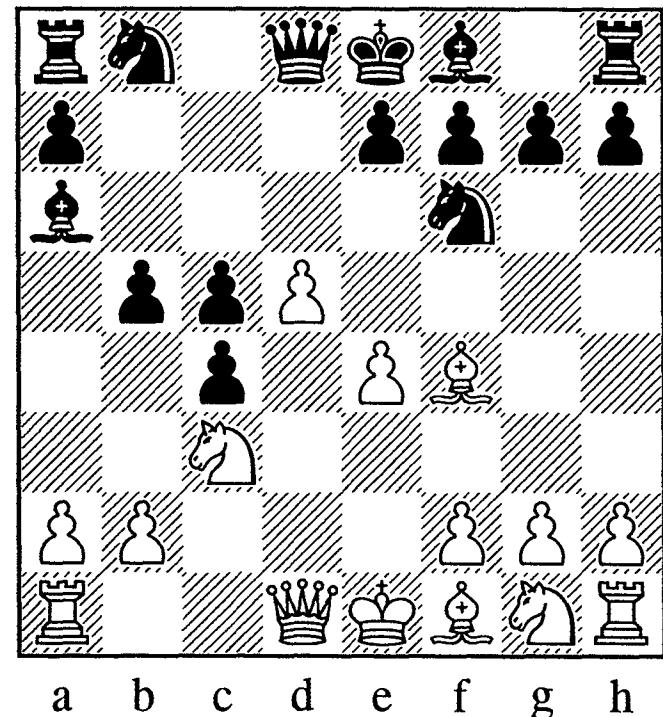
Shirov once played 15. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ g6 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$!? sacrificing an exchange. 17... $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 18.d6 And gaining good compensation. 18... $\mathbb{W}h4$ 19. $\mathbb{W}d5$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$!? And now gave away a piece as well. 20...gxf5 21. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ In Shirov – Kramnik, Linares 1993, White had active play for the rook, but Black should have been able to get out of the grip.

15...g6 16. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

16... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 18. $\mathbb{W}g3$

17. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c3$

White was strategically winning in Lempert – Bukhman, St Petersburg 1993.



7. $\mathbb{Q}f3$!

A strong novelty at the time.

7.e5 b4 8.exf6 bxc3 9.bxc3 gxf6 ∞

This has been played with great success by Ponomariov.

10. $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 11. $\mathbb{W}g4$?! $\mathbb{W}xd5$! 12. $\mathbb{Q}e2$

Not 12. $\mathbb{W}xg7$ $\mathbb{W}e4$ †.

12... $\mathbb{W}e4$ 13. $\mathbb{B}xb8$ † $\mathbb{B}xb8$ 14. $\mathbb{B}xb8$ $\mathbb{W}b1$ †

15. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ 0–0

With good play for the piece.

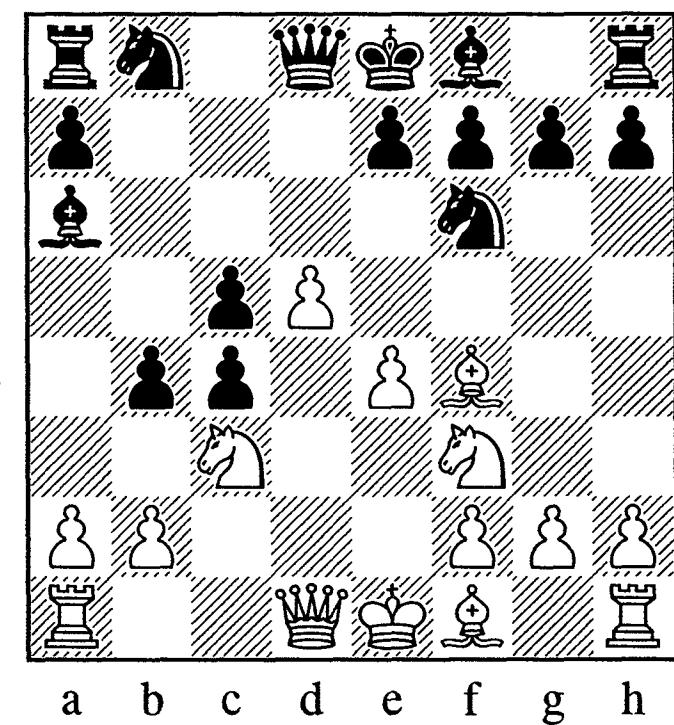
16. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 17. $\mathbb{W}f4$?! $\mathbb{W}b7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{W}b5$

19. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{W}b2$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ e5 21. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ fxe5

Black was winning in Khalifman – Ponomariov, Neum 2000.

Or instead of 10. $\mathbb{B}b1$, 10. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 11. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 12.g3 $\mathbb{W}b5$ 13. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 15. $\mathbb{B}d1$ e6! and White had problems with his d-pawn in Volkov – Ponomariov, Ohrid 2001.

7...b4



8. $\mathbb{Q}xb8$!

The beginning of a long forced variation.

8...bxc3 9. $\mathbb{W}a4$ † $\mathbb{W}d7$ 10. $\mathbb{W}xa6$ cxb2 11. $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{B}xb8$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$!

12. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}b7$? 13. $\mathbb{B}xb2$! 1–0 Shirov – Motylev, Moscow 2001, was a quick knockout.

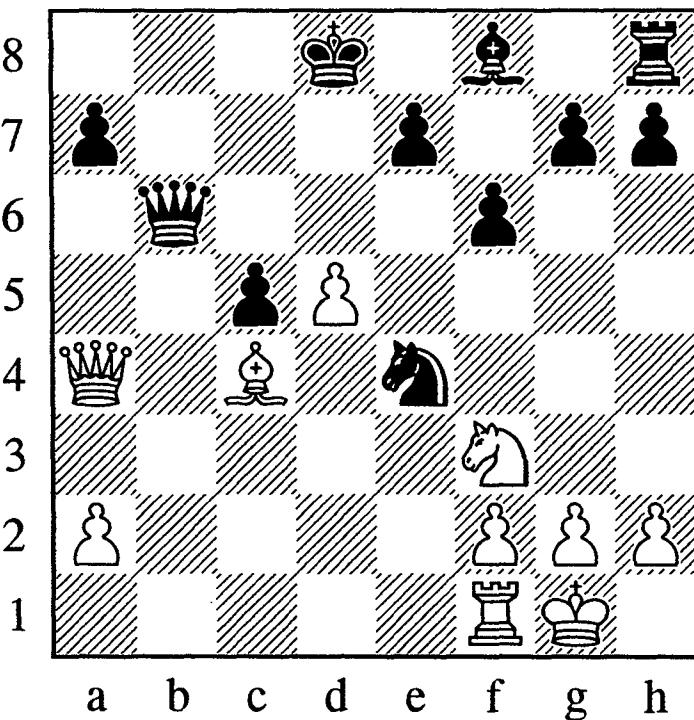
The improvement soon came: 12... $\mathbb{W}c7$! 13. $\mathbb{W}a4$ † $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ g6 15. $\mathbb{W}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xc7$ † $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 17. $\mathbb{B}xb2$ $\mathbb{B}xb2$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ This was good for Black in Ivanisevic – Chatalbashev, Antalya 2002.

12... $\mathbb{B}b6$

12... $\mathbb{W}b7$ lets the b-pawn live: 13. $\mathbb{W}a4$ † $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14.0–0 but White has a strong initiative. 14... $\mathbb{W}b4$ 15. $\mathbb{W}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ (not 15... $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 16. $\mathbb{B}xb2$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e5$) 16. $\mathbb{Q}a6$ with a firm grip: 16...h5 17.e5 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 18.e6 fxe6 19. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ is winning.

13. $\mathbb{W}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 14. $\mathbb{B}xb2$ $\mathbb{W}b7$

If 14... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ to keep the position closed then 15. $\mathbb{B}xb6$ $axb6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ and now White has a brilliant combination: 17. $\mathbb{Q}b5\#!$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 18. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xb5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xb6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 21. 0–0! $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 22. $\mathbb{B}d1$ Winning. 22... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 23. $\mathbb{W}a6\#$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 24. $\mathbb{W}a4$ Threatening $\mathbb{W}e8\#$.

15. $\mathbb{B}xb6$ $\mathbb{W}xb6$ 16. 0–0 f6 17. $\mathbb{W}a4\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ **18. d6!**

A spectacular breakthrough. White gives up another pawn and open more lines into the black position.

18... e5

18... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ Threatening mate on d7. 19... $\mathbb{Q}b5$ (or 19... $\mathbb{W}b7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ followed by $\mathbb{B}b1$) 20. $\mathbb{B}b1$ a6 21. $\mathbb{W}b3$ And White has 22. a4 to come.

19. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 20. $\mathbb{W}a5\#$ **1–0**

A very young Karjakin saw 20... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 21. $\mathbb{B}b1\#$ and resigned.

Conclusion: The ultra-sharp variation with 3...c5 and 5...b5 was effectively put out of business by the Danish theorist Peter Heine Nielsen's powerful play.

Black has a much more positional approach, but it does not seem sufficient either.

Game 12**Greenfeld – Gyimesi**

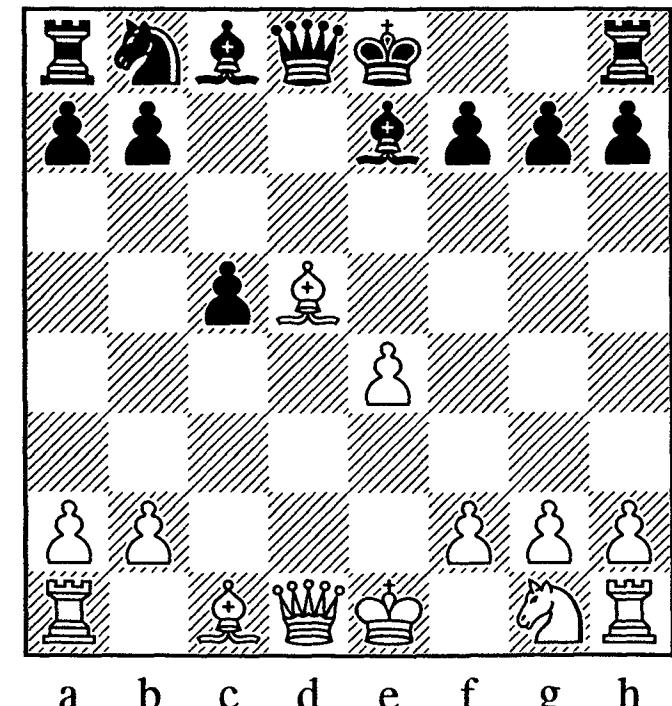
Tel Aviv 2001

1. d4 d5 2. c4 dxc4 3. e4 c5 4. d5 e6 5. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$

Another popular road leading to Rome is 5. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ exd5 6. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$.

5... $\mathbb{Q}f6$

After 5...exd5 6. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ the position is already tricky for Black because 6... $\mathbb{Q}f6?$ allows 7. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\#$.

6. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ exd5 7. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 

This looks like a fantastic position for White with the great bishop on d5. Then you realise that Black can kick it away or exchange it with ... $\mathbb{Q}d7\text{-}b6$ or ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$. In fact White has to play exactly to keep a positional edge.

9. $\mathbb{Q}e2$

Going to c3, so White can take back on d5 with the knight and keep a piece on this fine outpost. However, 9. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ is also playable.

9...0-0 10.0-0 ♜a6

Planning ...♜c7 next.

10...♝d7 11.♝c3 ♜b6 12.♝f4

This will often transpose, but there are exceptions:

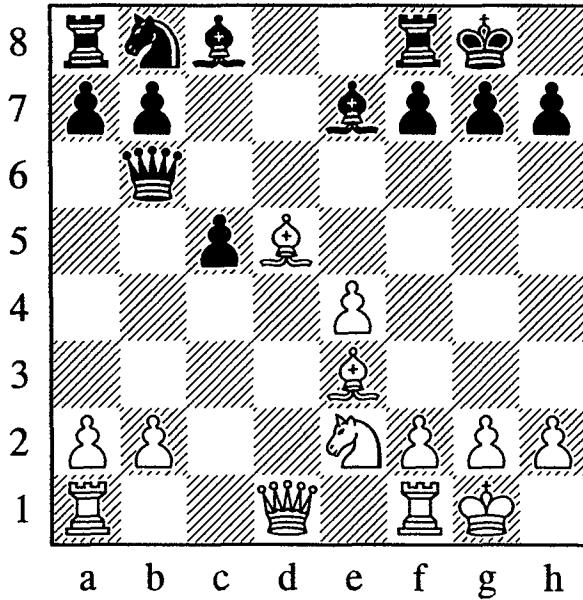
12...♝g5 13.♝f3

13.♝d6!? ♜e7 14.e5 was proposed by Sakaev. After 14...♝xd6 15.exd6 the pawn is taboo and remains a thorn in the middle of Black's position. This line does indeed look good.

13...♝xf4 14.♝xf4 ♜e7 15.a4 ♜e6 16.a5 ♜xd5 17.exd5 ♜c8 18.♝fe1 ♜d7 19.♝c4! ♜d6 20.♝xc5

White won a pawn in Winants – Afek, France 2002.

10...♝b6 11.♝e3



11...♝c6

11...♝g4 12.♝d2 ♜c6 13.f3 ♜e6 14.♝f4 is very pleasant for White. 14...♝b4 15.♝xe6 fxe6 Solozhenkin – Kallai, France 1996, and now 16.♝c3! seems strong. The queen eyes the weak c-pawn and is ready to go to the excellent square c4.

12.♝d2 ♜e6 13.♝f4 ♜e5 14.b4! ♜xb4 15.♜xb4 cxb4 16.♝xe6 fxe6 17.♝xe6† ♜h8 18.f4 ♜d3 19.♝ad1 ♜ad8 20.♝d5

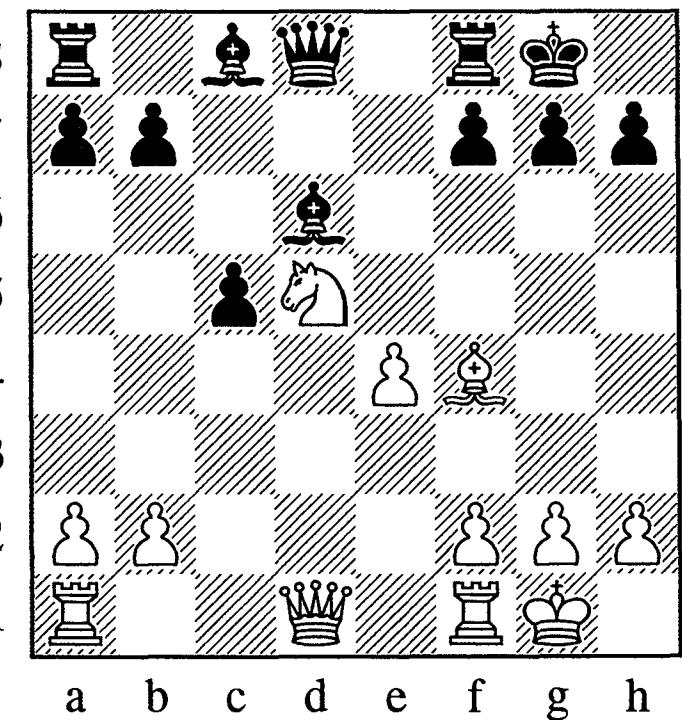
In Granda Zuniga – Gandler, Yerevan 1996, White's bishop pair and better pawn structure secured him a good ending.

11.♝f4 ♜c7

The creative player Yochanan Afek has a special liking for this variation. His results however are poor.

The following is a recent disaster: 11...♝b6 12.♝d2 ♜e6 13.♝c3 ♜b4 14.a3 ♜xd5 15.exd5 ♜ad8? (15...♝d7 was forced but then 16.d6 is great for White) 16.♝e2 1–0 Rogers – Afek, Hoogeveen 2006. White wins a piece on the e-file.

12.♝c3 ♜xd5 13.♝xd5 ♜d6



14.e5!

Pushing Black further back.

14...♝b8

14...♝c7 15.e6! wins an exchange. 15...♝xf4 16.e7 ♜xh2† 17.♝h1 ♜d6 18.♝xf8=♛† ♜xf8 19.♝h5 ♜e5 20.♝fe1 (perhaps stronger is 20.♝ae1 so the rook is not attacked on a1) 20...♝xb2 21.♝xh7 ♜h6† 22.♝xh6 gxh6 23.♝ab1 ♜d4 24.♝c7 ♜b8 25.♝e8† ♜g7 26.♝b5 ♜f5 27.♝xb8 ♜xb1 28.♝xd4 cxd4 29.♝xb7 ♜xa2 30.♝xa7 ♜b1 31.♝d7 d3 32.♝g1 ♜f6 33.f3 ♜c2 34.♝f2 With good winning chances in the endgame, although Black managed to hold in Galyas – Nemeth, Budapest 2001.

15.♝b3

15. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 16. $\mathbb{W}e4$ kept the central control in Gofshtein – Afek, Tel Aviv 1996, but 15... $f6$! could be tried.

15... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 16. $\mathbb{B}ad1$ b6 17. $\mathbb{Q}g3$

Preparing f2-f4.

17. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 18. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 19. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ was Orr – Afek (here he is again), Gausdal 2003, when 20. $\mathbb{W}g3$ looks good for White.

17... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 18. f4 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

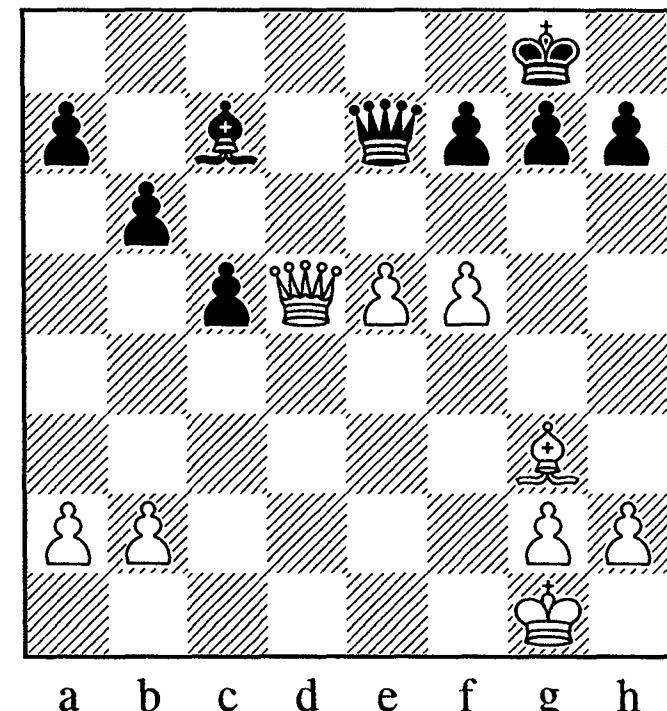
There is no way to avoid this exchange: the knight is too powerful on d5 and must be removed. The price is high though, as surrendering this bishop leaves Black's light squares rather weak.

19. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 20. f5

Keeping all the positional trumps.

20. $\mathbb{W}a4$, eyeing d7 and a7, was tempting but after 20... $\mathbb{B}fd8$ 21. $\mathbb{B}xd8\#$ $\mathbb{B}xd8!$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xa7$ $\mathbb{B}d2$ 23. b3 $\mathbb{W}d8$ Black has compensation for the pawn.

20... $\mathbb{B}ad8$ 21. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ $\mathbb{B}xd5$ 22. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ 23. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{B}xd5$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xd5$



White's centralized queen completely dominates the position. Black lacks counterplay or even a plan, while White can slowly but surely advance his pawns on the kingside and activate his king.

24...h6

24... $\mathbb{W}d8$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xd8\#$ $\mathbb{B}xd8$ leads to a very passive bishop ending, where White keeps good winning chances after 26. $\mathbb{B}f4$ g6 27. g4 $\mathbb{B}f8$ 28. $\mathbb{B}f2$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 29. $\mathbb{B}e3$ $\mathbb{B}d7$ 30. $\mathbb{B}e4$.

25. $\mathbb{B}f4$ $\mathbb{B}h7$ 26. g3 g5!?

This transforms his position, but does not improve it. Psychologically it is difficult to remain passive for very long.

27. $\mathbb{f}xg6\#$ $\mathbb{f}xg6$ 28. g4 $\mathbb{B}g7$ 29. $\mathbb{B}g2$ b5 30. $\mathbb{B}g3$ $\mathbb{B}h7$ 31. h4 a6 32. g5 hxg5 33. hxg5 c4 34. a3

White has all the time in the world and maybe takes it a bit too easy: 34. e6! $\mathbb{B}xg3$ 35. $\mathbb{B}xg3$ $\mathbb{B}g8$ 36. $\mathbb{B}f3$ $\mathbb{B}f8$ 37. $\mathbb{W}e5$ seems winning.

34... $\mathbb{B}g7$ 35. $\mathbb{B}f4$ $\mathbb{B}f8$ 36. $\mathbb{B}f3$ c3?!

The last chance was 36... $\mathbb{W}d8$.

37. bxc3 $\mathbb{W}xa3$ 38. $\mathbb{W}c6$

White finally breaks through.

38... $\mathbb{B}d8$?! 39. e6

The credits can begin. The film is over.

39... $\mathbb{B}g8$ 40. $\mathbb{B}d6$

1–0

Conclusion: White gets a pleasant position if Black just stays solid. The popularity of 3...c5 is over, which is easy to understand. The sharp tactical variations and the more quiet positional ones are all just better for White. As simple as that!

The 3...e5 Variation

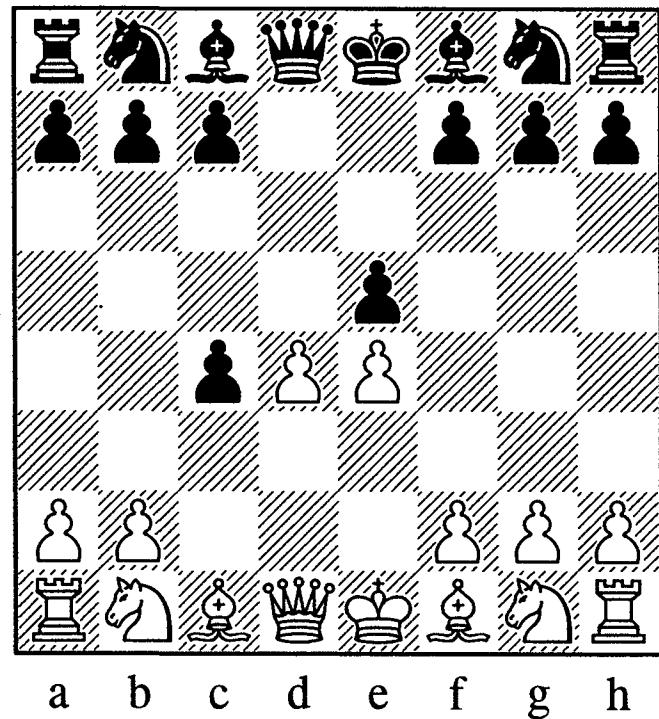
The most popular move by far. It is direct and concrete, yet positionally founded as well.

Game 13

Sauberli – Bilsel

Correspondence 1999

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 e5



4.♘f3

Good simple development, just allowing Black to take on d4, is best.

4.dxe5 ♘xd1† 5.♗xd1 ♘c6 6.f4 ♘g4†, followed by ...0–0–0, gives Black the initiative.

4.d5 ♘f6 5.♗c3 c6 6.♘xc4 b5 7.♗b3 b4 and e4 is hanging.

4...♗b4†

A tempting check. The mainline however is 4...exd4, which will be examined in the next couple of games.

5.♗c3

5.♗bd2 c3 and suddenly the Queen's Gambit is a genuine gambit. Or 5.♗d2 ♘xd2† 6.♘xd2 exd4 and the simplifications make it easier for Black.

5...exd4 6.♘xd4

The ending 6.♘xd4 ♘xd4 7.♗xd4 ♘f6 8.f3 could also be tried.

6...♗e7

There is an alternative:

6...♗e7!? 7.♘xc4 ♘f6

7...♗xe4† 8.♗f1 ♘xc3 9.bxc3 is extremely dangerous, for instance 9...♗e6 10.♗a4† ♘c6 11.♗g5 ♘xc4† 12.♗xc4 ♘ce7 13.♗e1 ♘g6 14.h4 ♔f8 15.♗xc7 f6 16.♗h3 ♘d3†? 1–0. A big mistake in a hopeless position, Shirov – Huebner, Dortmund 1992.

8.0–0 0–0

And now:

9.♘f4

With the idea e4-e5, looks good, especially since Black still hardly can take the bait:

9...♗xc3 10.bxc3 ♘xe4 11.♗e1±

7.♘xc4 ♘bc6 8.♗e3 0–0

It is legal to simplify with:

8...♗xd4

But there is no guarantee that life will be simpler.

An easy solution for White is: 9.♘xd4 ♘xd4 10.♘xd4 0–0 11.a3 ♘xc3† 12.♘xc3 ♘e6 13.♗e2 In Topalov – Kharlov, Tripoli 2004, the pair of bishops gave White the advantage in the ending.

More complicated but probably also stronger is:

9.♘xd4 0–0 10.a3

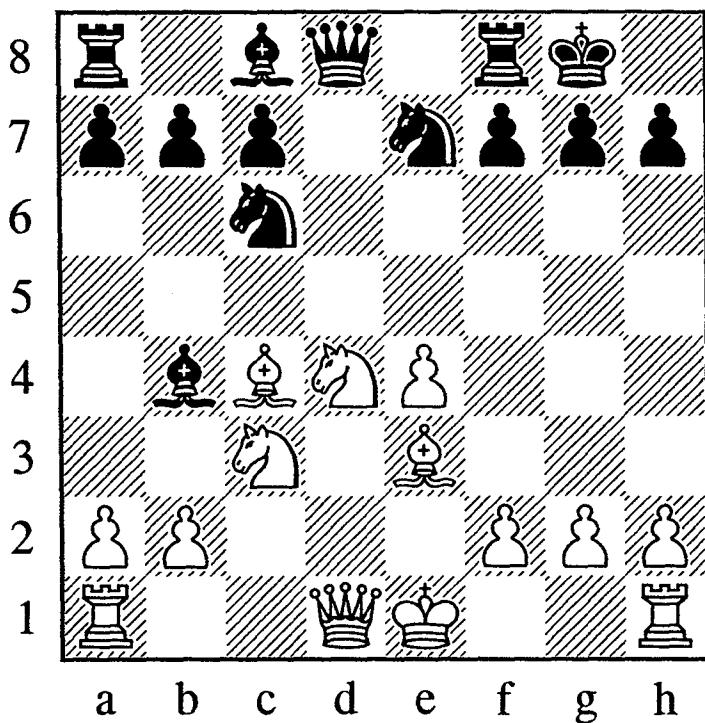
10.0–0 ♘c6 11.♗e3 ♘xd1 12.♗fxd1 ♘xc3 13.bxc3 ♘e6 was played in Van Wely – Azmaiparashvili, Ohrid 2001. Now 14.♗xe6 fxe6 15.♗d7 ♘ac8 16.f4 ♘f7 17.♗ad1 would give White an edge.

10...♔a5 11.0–0 ♘b6

11...♗g6 12.♗c5 ♘e8 13.♗a4± was Grunberg – Penrose, corr. 1987, and on 11...♗c6 12.♗c5 is disruptive.

12.♗xb6 axb6 13.f4

This is pleasant for White, who has a strong majority on the kingside, Van Wely – Romanishin, Moscow 2004.



9. $\mathbb{Q}db5$

This knight move is the modern favourite. It attacks c_7 and thus swapping queens is a threat.

In the early 1990s White had some success with:

9.a3 $\mathbb{Q}xc3\#$ 10.bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$

An interesting improvement for Black could be 11... $f5\?!$ 12.exf5 (12. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}ec6$) 12... $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ (12... $\mathbb{Q}d5$) 13. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 14.0–0 $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ b6.

12.0–0 $\mathbb{W}e7$ 13. $\mathbb{W}c2$

White was slightly better in Bareev – Ivanchuk, Dortmund 1992. His pair of bishops and good central control has more weight than the somewhat shattered pawn structure.

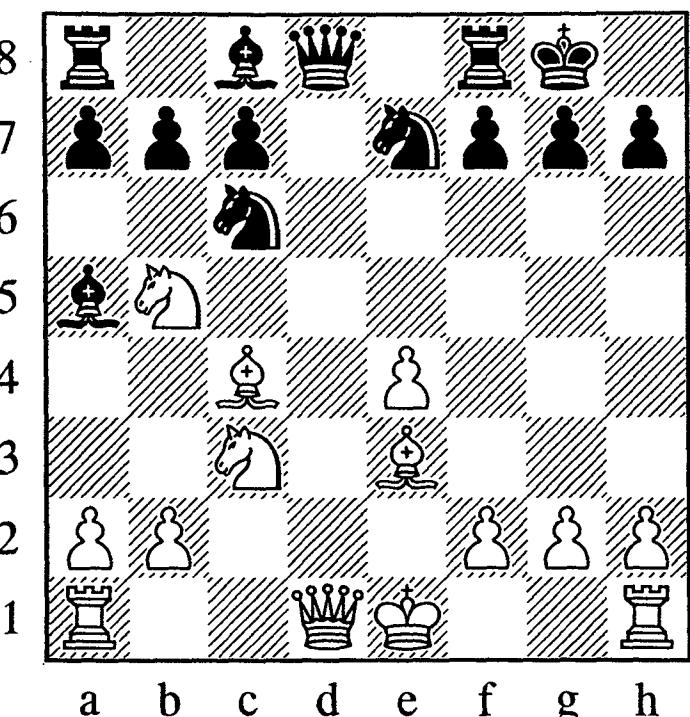
9... $\mathbb{Q}a5$

Protecting c_7 .

9... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ is too passive. 10.a3 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 11.b4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ axb6 13.f4 $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ 15.0–0 This is clearly better for White: 15... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ (or 15... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 16. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ with strong pressure, Vyzmanavin – Bagirov, Podolsk 1992) 16. $\mathbb{W}f3$ With good prospects on

the kingside, Bacrot – Lautier, Val d'Isere 2002.

9... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ is interesting. 10. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ fxe6 11. $\mathbb{W}xd8$ (11. $\mathbb{W}b3\?$ could be tried) 11... $\mathbb{Q}axd8$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ Black has compensation. 13. $\mathbb{Q}7b5$ a6 14. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ b5 15. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3\#$ 16.bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 18.0–0–0 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ Azmaiparashvili – Nogueiras, Yerevan 1996, and now 19. $\mathbb{Q}el$ $\mathbb{Q}dd8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ is a possible improvement.



10. $\mathbb{W}h5\!$

A surprising queen sortie. It is rather active on h_5 and at the same time it vacates d_1 for the rook.

The mainline is:

10.0–0 a6 11. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}d6$

But White has no advantage whatsoever, as Rublevsky in particular has often demonstrated.

13. $\mathbb{Q}e3$

13. $\mathbb{Q}cl$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 16. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}xb3$ 17.axb3 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ ½–½ Volkov – Rublevsky, Saint Vincent 2005.

13... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 14. $\mathbb{W}b3$

14. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 15.bxc3 $\mathbb{W}c6$ 16. $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 17. $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ a5 21. $\mathbb{W}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 23.f3 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 24.cxd4 b5 25. $\mathbb{W}b2$ f5 26.d5 $\mathbb{W}d7$ 27.exf5 $\mathbb{W}xf5$ ½–½ Dao Thien Hai –

Rublevsky, Khanty-Mansyisk 2005.
 14... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 15. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$

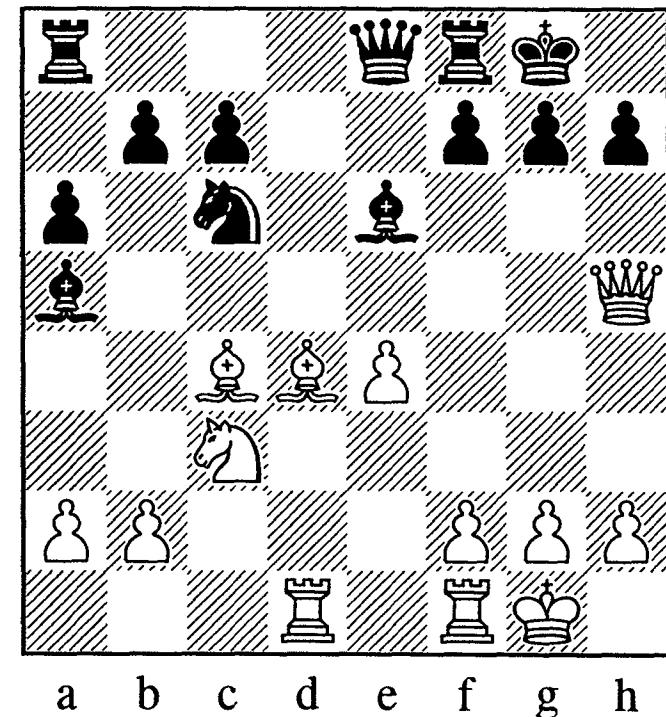
17. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{E}fe8$ 18. $f3$ $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$

Khalifman – Tkachiev, Shenyang 2000.

10...a6

The master of this variation played instead 10... $\mathbb{Q}e6$, so this move is probably preferable. Still, after 11. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $fxe6$ 12. $\mathbb{E}d1$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 13. $\mathbb{W}xe8$ $\mathbb{E}axe8$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ White had a better endgame in Bologan – Rublevsky, Tomsk 2006.

11. $\mathbb{E}d1$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$
 14.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e6$



15. $\mathbb{Q}xg7!$

A deep sacrifice that destroys the opponent's king position.

15... $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 16. $\mathbb{W}g5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 17. $\mathbb{W}f6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$
 18. $\mathbb{Q}d5!$

There will be no perpetual check of course. White has calculated a long way, and judged that Black's pieces are too scattered and uncoordinated to help the defence in time.

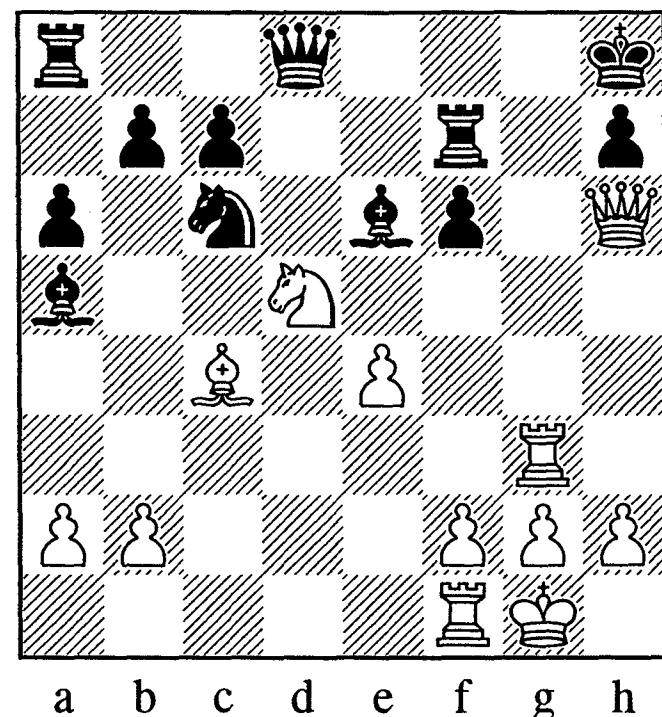
18... $\mathbb{W}d8$

18... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 19. $\mathbb{E}xd5$ loses at once.

19. $\mathbb{W}h6$ $f6$ 20. $\mathbb{E}d3$

A typical rook shift along the third rank.

20... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 21. $\mathbb{E}g3$ $\mathbb{E}f7$



22. $\mathbb{Q}f4!$

The final blow.

22... $\mathbb{Q}e5$

Not 22... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e5\#$ and mates.

23. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$

White has won the piece back and is a pawn up with an attack. The game is over, or at least it would be if this was an old-fashioned correspondence game: nobody wants to spend stamps on a position like this. But it was a modern e-mail game, so Black continued.

23... $\mathbb{W}f8$ 24. $\mathbb{W}h4$ $\mathbb{E}g7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 26. $\mathbb{E}h3$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 27. $\mathbb{E}d1$ $c6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{E}ee7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $\mathbb{E}xg6$ 32. $e5$ $h6$ 33. $f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 34. $g4$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 36. $fxe5$ $\mathbb{E}xe5$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}h5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 38. $\mathbb{E}d8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 39. $\mathbb{E}hd3$ $\mathbb{E}d5$ 40. $\mathbb{E}8xd5$ $cxd5$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{E}b6$ 42. $\mathbb{E}b3$ $\mathbb{E}xb3\#$ 43. $axb3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $d4$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}e4$
 1–0

Conclusion: White played a great attacking game, but it does not bury the whole variation with 4... $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$. Black can and probably should follow the expert Rublevsky's example and take the somewhat worse ending on move 10.

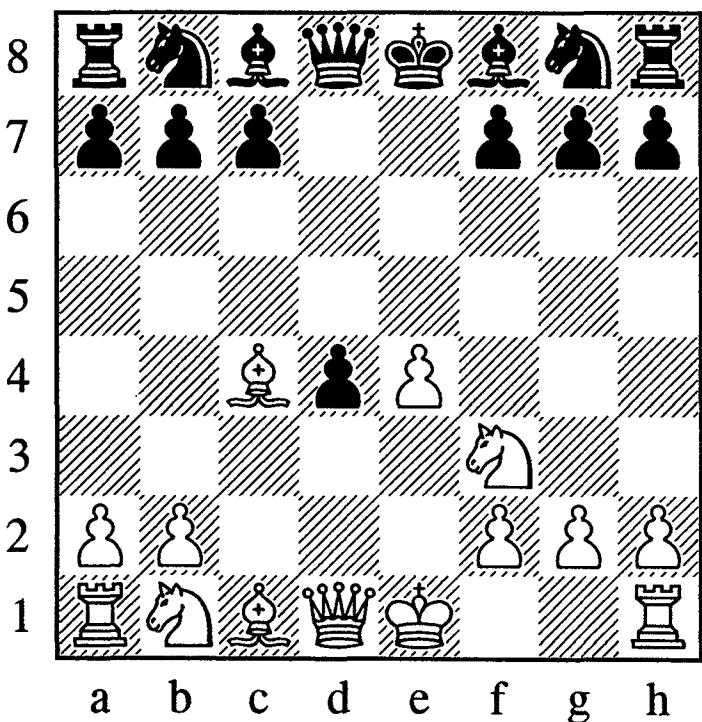
We now turn to the more normal 4...exd4.

Game 14

Grote – Thelen

Correspondence 1998

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 e5 4.Qf3 exd4
5.Qxc4**



Quick development is the essence of White's opening strategy. There is no need to be concerned about the sacrificed d-pawn. Most probably it will be won back with some positional advantage and if not... well at least Black will be forced into some extreme measures which will add strength to White's initiative.

5...Qb4†

The mainline 5...Qc6 will come into focus in the next games, while protecting the pawn with 5...c5 backfires after 6.Qe5 Qe6 7.Qxe6 fxe6 8.Qh5† g6 9.Qxg6 Qf6 10.Qh3.

6.Qbd2

The most complicated. Also playable is of course 6.Qd2.

6...Qc6 7.0–0 Qf6

The most straightforward. The alternatives are not too encouraging.

7...Qf6 8.e5 Qg6 9.Qh4 Qg4 10.Qdf3 looks risky: 10...Qe6 11.Qxe6 fxe6 12.Qb3 Qge7 13.h3 Qe4 14.Qxe6 Yusupov – Mikhalkishin, Frunze 1981, and White is better, e.g. 14...Qd5 15.Qxd5 Qxd5 16.Qf5.

7...Qe6 8.Qxe6 fxe6 9.Qb3 d3 (not 9...e5 10.Qxe5! Qxe5 11.Qh5† Qg6 12.Qb5† c6 13.Qxb4) 10.Qe3 Qf6 11.Qbd4 Qxd4 12.Qxd4 This is good for White: Qa4† is a threat and 12...Qd7 13.Qb3 or 12...Qe7 13.Qxd3 both seem convincing.

7...Qxd2 8.Qxd2 Qge7 looks flexible, but f7 is a weak spot. 9.Qg5 Qe5 10.Qb3 h6 11.f4! hxg5 12.Qxe5 0–0 13.Qxg5 With a strong attack. 13...Qe6 14.Qxe6 fxe6 15.Qxf8† Qxf8 16.Qg4 Qf7 17.Qf1 Qg6 18.h4 Qc6 19.h5 Qxe5 20.Qf4 Qxh5 21.Qxe5 Qe8 22.Qxc7 d3 23.Qd2 1–0 Xu Jun – Ardiansyah, Jakarta 1987.

8.e5

This is a special feature of the 3...e5 variation: the white e-pawn can go ahead and disturb the knight on f6, gaining time for the initiative.

8...Qd5 9.Qb3 Qb6 10.Qg5

The most forcing. The alternative 10.Qb5 is well answered by 10...Qd5 with equal chances.

**10...Qe7 11.Qxe7 Qxe7 12.Qb5 Qd7
13.Qxc6 Qxc6 14.Qfxd4 Qd5 15.Qg4 0–0**

The critical position. White has space on the kingside, a very threatening queen, and a great outpost on f5 for the knight. In practical play, however, Black's defences have been difficult to overrun. It seems that if he protects against the mate on g7 by simply playing ...g6, he is

asking White to come up with a new threat, and it has not been easy to find one.

16.♘fe1

16.f4 g6 has been played more often, but it has not scored as well.

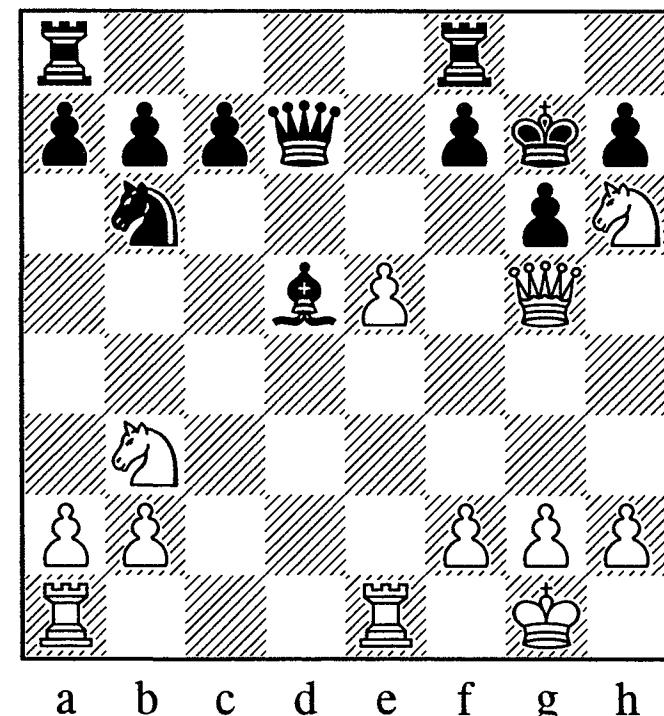
16...♝d7

16...g6 17.♗f5 ♝d7 just transposes, but 16...♝e6 is probably the safest, though 17.♗xe6 fxe6 18.♗d4 ♞ae8 19.♗ad1± gives White an edge based on the space advantage and the weak e6-pawn, Hnatovsky – Vujanovic, corr. 2002.

17.♗f5 g6 18.♗h6† ♔g7

18...♔h8 19.♗f4 ♝e7 20.♗c5! puts Black under heavy pressure.

19.♝g5



Black's position is rather delicate. One wrong move and it will immediately be over!

19...♝xb3?!

A mistake!

Also bad is 19...f6?! 20.exf6† ♞xf6 21.♗e7† ♝xe7 22.♗f5† ♞xf5 23.♗xe7† ♞f7 24.♗e5† ♔g8 25.♗c5 and White should win, although he only drew in Kasparov – Huebner, Skellefteå 1989.

The only chance is:

19...♝e6

There can follow:

20.♗c5 ♝d8 21.h4

White keeps his space.

21...♝d5 22.♗ac1 b6 23.♗xe6† fxe6 24.♗c6!

Right in the middle of it all.

24...♝d7 25.♗ec1 ♞ac8 26.♗g4 ♞f5 27.♗f6

27.♗d2!± keeps the pressure.

27...♝xg5 28.♗xd7 ♞f5 29.♗f6 ♞xe5 30.♗xd5 ♞xd5 31.♗xc7† ♞xc7 32.♗xc7† ♔h6 33.♗xa7 ♗d1† 34.♔h2 ♗d2 35.f3 ♗xb2

Black held the rook ending in Sherbakov – Blauert, Calcutta 2002.

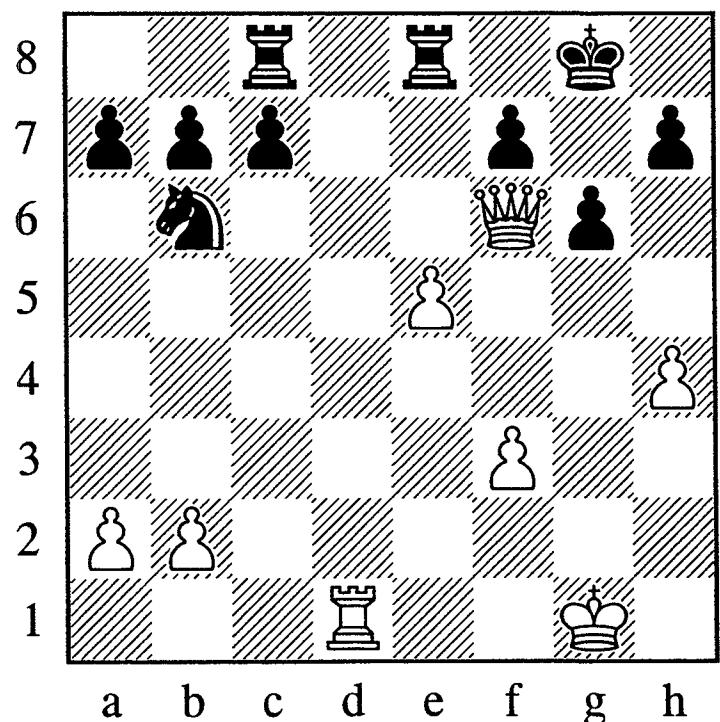
20.♗f6†!

A spectacular refutation of 19...♝xb3.

20...♔xh6 21.♗e4

Preventing the threat of ♘h4 mate will cost Black a lot of material.

21...♝d1 22.f3 ♘xf3 23.gxf3 ♝h3 24.♗d1 ♝h5 25.♗h4 ♝xh4 26.♗xh4† ♔g7 27.♗e7 ♞ac8 28.h4 ♘fe8 29.♗f6† ♔g8



30.h5! gxh5

Black could not allow the pawn to come to h6, but now his structure collapses and the queen gains access to his position.

31.f4

Better was 31.♔f2 ♔e6 32.♕g1† ♔f8 33.♗g7† ♔e7 34.♗g5† ♔f8 35.♗xh5 with an easy win.

31...♝e6 32.♝d8† ♞xd8 33.♛xd8† ♔g7 34.♛xc7 ♜d5 35.♛xb7 ♜xf4 36.♛xa7 ♞xe5

Now Black can continue the fight. In the end the white pawns decide though.

37.♛c7 ♘e4 38.♔f2 ♜e6 39.♛c3† ♔g6 40.b4 ♘f4† 41.♔e2 ♘h4 42.b5 ♜f4† 43.♔f1 ♘h1† 44.♔f2 ♘h2† 45.♔g1 ♘xa2 46.♛c6† ♔g5 47.b6 f5 48.♛c8 ♜e2† 49.♔f1 ♜g3† 50.♔e1 ♘a1† 51.♔d2 ♜e4† 52.♔c2 ♘a2† 53.♔b1 ♘a4 54.b7 ♘b4† 55.♔c2 h4 56.b8=♛ ♘xb8 57.♛xb8 ♔g4 58.♔d3 ♔f3 59.♛e5 ♜g3 60.♛d5† ♔f4 61.♛d8 ♔g4 62.♛g8† ♔f3 63.♛xh7

1-0

Conclusion: This is a sharp variation where White is always slightly on top. Black could chicken out with 16...♝e6, but White would keep some positional advantage anyway.

The check on b4 is always debatable, but the main move is 5...♞c6.

Game 15

Bareev – Estrada Nieto

Canada 2006

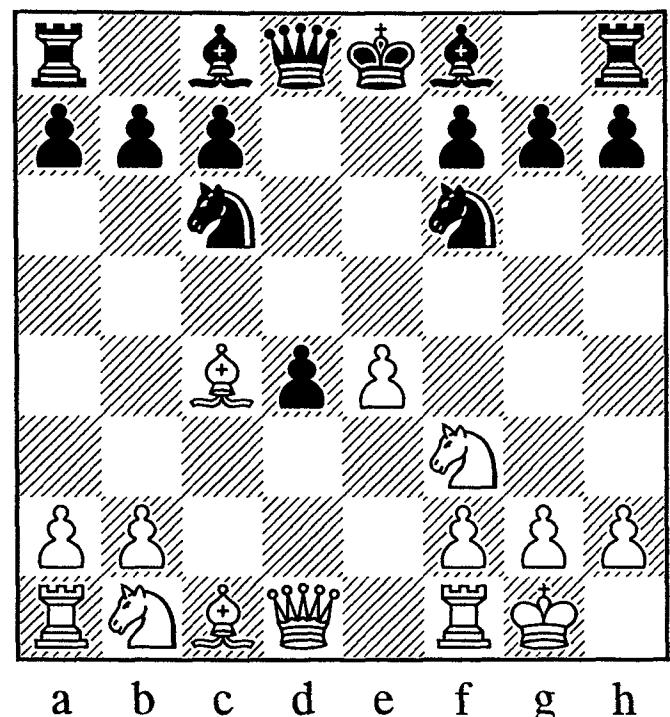
1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 e5 4.♞f3 exd4 5.♝xc4 ♜c6 6.0-0

The normal move. White simply completes his kingside development as quickly as possible. I have to admit I changed the move order to make it fit. In reality Bareev played 6.♛b3 when 6...♝d7 7.♔d2 ♜f6 8.0-0 led to

the game. Against 6.♛b3 critical is 6...♝b4† 7.♝bd2 ♜e7 with unclear play.

6...♝f6

The mainline 6...♝e6 is covered in the next game.

**7.♛b3!**

It is important to play actively. 7.e5 ♜e4 8.♔e1 ♜c5 9.♔g5 ♜e7 10.♔xe7 ♛xe7 11.♝xd4 ♜xd4 12.♛xd4 ♔e6! is just equal. 13.♔xe6 (or 13.♔f1 ♘d8 14.♛e3 0-0 15.♝c3 a5 16.♝ad1 c6 17.♔e2 b6 18.f4 ♘xd1 19.♝xd1 ♘d8 20.♝d4 ♘xd4 21.♛xd4 f6 ½-½ Lofgren – Vayser, corr. 2003) 13...♝xe6 14.♛e4 0-0-0 15.♝c3 ♘d4 16.♛e3 ♘g5 17.♛xg5 ♜xg5 18.♝ac1 a6 19.♝e2 ♘hd8 ½-½ Karpov – Lautier, Monte Carlo 1999.

7...♝d7 8.♔d2!

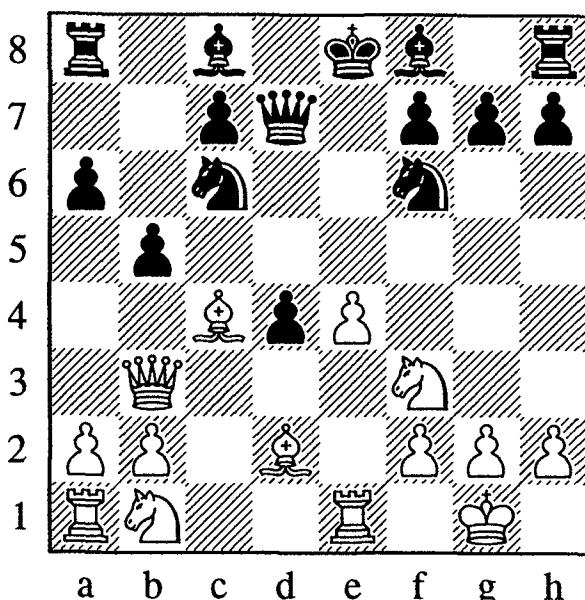
Preventing ...♝a5.

Kasparov once played the more direct 8.♞g5 in an exhibition game against a computer. But it was way back in 1985, so there was no Centrino processor to worry about! 8...♝e5 9.♔b5 c6 10.f4 ♜eg4 11.♔c4 ♘h6 12.♔d2 ♘c5 13.♔df3 With good compensation for the pawn, Kasparov – Comp Constellation 36K, Hamburg 1985.

8... $\mathbb{Q}c5$

Protecting the extra d-pawn. Several other moves have been tried:

8...a6 9. $\mathbb{E}e1!$ b5



10. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 11.exd5† $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 14.dxc6 $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 15.a4 With a strong initiative. 15...0–0–0 16.axb5 axb5 17. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ This was Khalifman – Bauer, Istanbul 2000, and now 18. $\mathbb{W}c3$ would create overwhelming threats.

8...a5 9. $\mathbb{E}e1$ a4 10. $\mathbb{W}b5!$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 11.e5 $\mathbb{Q}g4$

11... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ c6 14. $\mathbb{W}b6$ and Black was completely outplayed in Sakaev – Lautier, Las Vegas 1999.

12. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$

Taking the pawn back.

12... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$

Even better was 13. $\mathbb{Q}xe6!$ fxe6 14.h3. e.g. 14...c5 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe6!$ $\mathbb{W}xb5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c7†$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}1c3$ winning.

13...fxe6 14.h3 $\mathbb{W}xb5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xb5†$ c6 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc6†$ bxc6 17.hxg4

With a pawn more in Morovic – Stevic, Pula 1999.

8... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}d5$

9. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ a6 10. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 11.h3 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ secures active play, and looks promising for White.

9... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 10.e5 0–0 11. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6

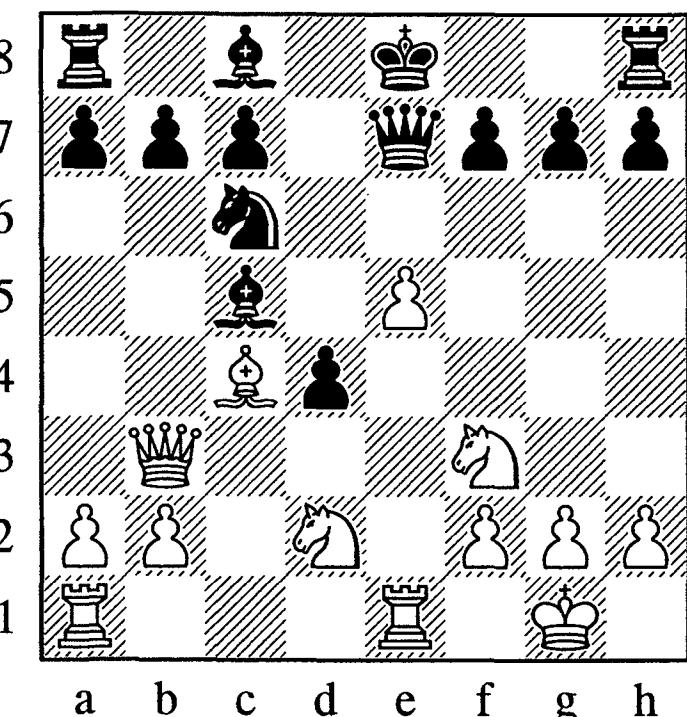
13.h3 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ gxh6 15. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$

This gave White some positional compensation for the pawn, but it was far from convincing, so 9. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ should be tried. Mrkvicka – Thomas, corr. 2001.

9.e5 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 10. $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}bxsd2$

Black is far behind in development. He would love to play 11...0–0 but then 12.e6 is a killer.

11... $\mathbb{W}e7$



12.e6!

Cutting Black's position in two.

12...f5

Forced. 12...fxe6 13. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ ends in a disaster on the e-file.

13. $\mathbb{W}d3$ 0–0 14. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}bxsd4$

Winning the pawn back with all the positional plusses remaining. In particular, the passed pawn on e6 makes Black's position utterly hopeless.

15... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ c5 18. $\mathbb{W}d5$ g6 19. $\mathbb{E}ac1$ a5 20.a4 $\mathbb{E}a7$ 21. $\mathbb{E}cd1$ b6 22. $\mathbb{W}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xb6$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 24. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 25. $\mathbb{E}e5$

1–0

Conclusion: This variation with 6... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ is a sideline and after this game it will remain a sideline!

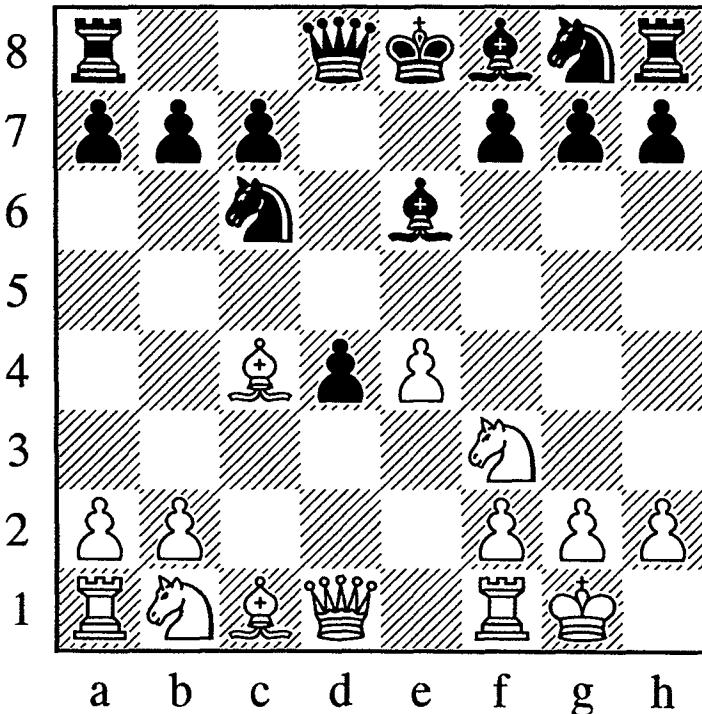
The big mainline is of course 6... $\mathbb{Q}e6$.

Game 16

Schandorff – A. Rasmussen

Denmark (ch) 2008

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 e5 4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ exd4 5. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e6$!?



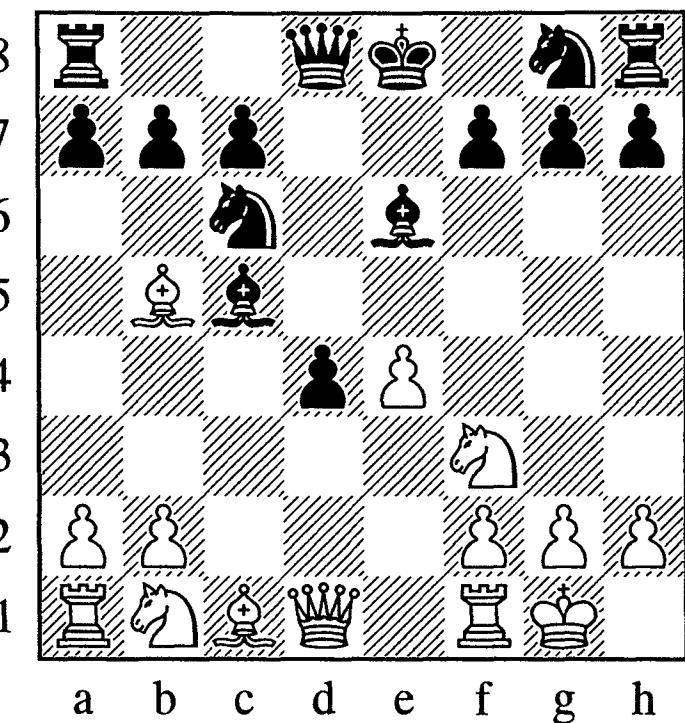
The sharp mainline. Black creates some imbalance instead of playing safe. The arising positions are very double-edged and all three results are plausible.

7. $\mathbb{Q}b5$!?

Also a sharp reaction. White could regain the pawn with 7. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ fxe6 8. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 9. $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 10. $\mathbb{W}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ with a very interesting position. This is the absolute mainline of the whole 3...e5 complex. White has a superior structure, but Black has kept the d-pawn and has active pieces and control of the important e5-square. If Black plays the 6... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ line you can safely assume that he is well

prepared for this position. With 7. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ White takes the game in a totally different direction, even though structure vs. piece activity is still a key element. To begin with, White threatens the d4-pawn, so Black must protect it.

7... $\mathbb{Q}c5$



8.b4!

Very energetic play. White gains a tempo by harassing Black's bishop and prepares to play $\mathbb{Q}b2$ conquering the important d4-pawn. Also very popular is 8. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}ge7$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}g5$! with complications.

8... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 9.a4!

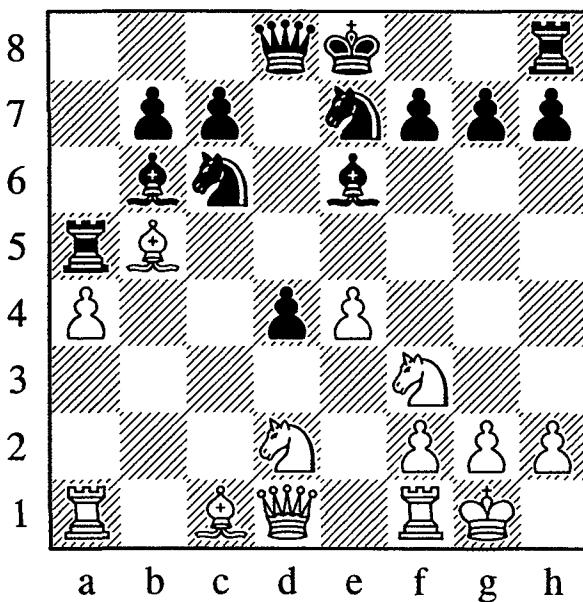
Complications are also what we have on the board now. By threatening to trap the black bishop, White hopes to force his opponent to weaken his queenside. It is important to gain some positional concessions, as 9. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}ge7$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 0–0 leads to exchanges but no advantage.

9...a6

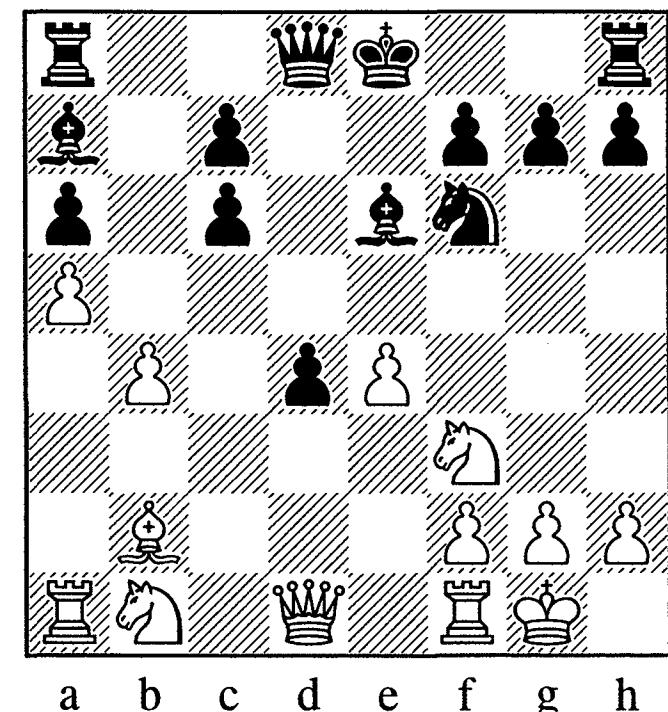
The alternative is:

9...a5 10.bxa5 $\mathbb{Q}xa5$

Which at first sight might seem like a blockade on the queenside. However after: 11. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}ge7$



11...Qa7 12.Qb2 Qf6



The critical position.

13.Qxd4

The other capture is interesting as well:

13.Qxd4 Qxd4 14.Qxd4 Qxe4 15.Qxg7
15.Qe1 Wd5?! 16.Wd3 c5 17.Qxe4 cxd4
18.Qc3 Wb3 19.Qxd4 was positionally great
for White in Onischuk – Nisipeanu, Foros
2007, but the simple 15...Qf6 is solid.
15...Qg8 16.Qe5 Qh3 17.Qg3 Qxg3 18.hxg3
Wxd1 19.Qxd1 Qe6

Black's pawns are scattered, but actually they
are difficult to attack. The opposite is the
case with the b4-pawn as we shall see.

20.Qc3 Qg4! 21.Qab1 Qb8 22.f4! Qf5 23.Qb2
Qxg3 24.Qa4 Qf8 25.Qc5 Qa8

White had to give up a pawn, but he gained
excellent compensation. The black rook is
passive on a8, however his bishop is quite
strong and there are few entry points in the
position, so Black should be able to hold
it.

26.Qf2 Qc3 27.Qbd2 Qc4 28.Qd4 Qxd4
29.Qxd4 Qe7

And it should be a draw. White kept the
initiative and little by little Black made some
inaccuracies that could have cost him the game
in Aronian – Shirov, Elista 2007. It is much
easier to attack than to defend.

12.Qg5!

Black has problems. White will simply
remove the light-squared bishop and thereby
get the excellent c4-square for his knight.

12...0–0

12...Wd7 13.Qxe6 Wxe6 14.Qc4 0–0
(14...Qa8 15.Qxb6 cxb6 16.Wxd4±)

15.Qxa5 Qxa5 16.Qa3 and Black did not
have enough for the exchange in Ushenina
– Korbut, St Petersburg 2004.

13.Wh5 h6 14.Qxe6 fxe6 15.Qc4 Qa8
16.Qxh6!

A spectacular sacrifice. Preparing it a little
more with 16.Qa3 also made sense.

16...gxh6 17.Wxh6 Qa7 18.Qa3 d3 19.Qd2
Qf7 20.Qxd3 Wf8 21.Qg3† Qg7 22.Qc4 Qd4
23.Qxe6† Qxe6 24.Wxe6† Wf7 25.Qxg7†
Qxg7 26.We5† Wf6 27.Wxc7

With too many pawns for the piece.

27...Qb6 28.Wg3† Qg6 29.Wg4 Qf8 30.Qf3
Qc5 31.a5 Qf7 32.h4 Wf4 33.Wg5 Wxg5
34.Qxg5 Qe7 35.g3 Qe5 36.Wg2 1–0

Lafarga Santorroman – Kulvietis, corr.
2002.

10.Qxc6† bxc6 11.a5

11.Qb2 Qf6 is usually just another way to
reach the game position after 12.a5 Qa7, but
Ponomariov has experimented with 11.Qbd2?!
Qf6 12.Wc2 0–0 13.Wxc6, as in Ponomariov
– Sasikiran, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007, when he
regained the pawn although the position is
very double-edged.

Topalov just ignored the d4-pawn and played:

13.♘bd2 0–0 14.♗c2

With pressure on c6. Actually this was my primary focus when preparing for the game. I wanted to play like Topalov, but the more I looked at it, the less I could make it work. In the game Black immediately answered with a mistake losing a tempo.

14...♝g4?

What I didn't like was 14...♝h5! 15.♗xc6 ♘f4 with very tricky counterplay. 16.♗xa6 ♗f6 17.g3 (17.♗fc1 ♘xg2! initiates tactical complications that seem okay for Black: 18.♗xc7 ♘h4 19.♗xh4 ♗g5† 20.♗g2 ♗xd2 21.♗xa7 ♗xb2) 17...♝h3† 18.♗g2 ♘g5 Threatening ...♝h3† winning the queen. 19.♗d3 ♘h3† 20.♗g1 ♘xf1 21.♗xf1 ♘xf3† 22.♗xf3 c5 With fine play for Black because of the finesse 23.b5? c4!.

15.h3 ♘f6

Sad, but 15...♝e3 16.fxe3 dxe3 17.♗b3 e2† 18.♗f2 was not good enough.

16.♗e5 ♘d7 17.♗fe1

Even better was 17.♗fd1! ♗e7 18.♗df3 when the rook is more active.

17...♗e7 18.♗df3 c5 19.bxc5 ♗xc5 20.♗d2

♗e7 21.♗a3 c5 22.♗xd4

White regained the pawn with a positional advantage, Topalov – Nisipeanu, Vitoria Gasteiz 2007.

13...♝xe4 14.♗xa7 ♗xa7

A new move, but it was safer to exchange queens first:

14...♗xd1 15.♗xd1 ♗xa7 16.♗e5 ♗b7 17.♗xc6

In my preparation I thought that White had an edge in the ending. I still believe so.

17...♝d6

White threatened mate on d8 and 17...0–0 18.f3 ♘d6 19.♗c3± just moved the king further away.

18.♗c3

The new Chinese star Wang Yue tried 18.♗a3 ♘d7 19.♗ac1 and protected the c6-knight just

in time. After 19...f6 20.♗c4! ♗xc4 21.♗xc4 ♗b5 22.f3 ♗e8 23.♗c2 he had a small but long-lasting advantage, Wang Yue – Zhang Pengxiang, Beijing 2008.

18...♞d7

The knight on c6 restricts Black so he tries to kick it away.

19.♗e5† ♘c8 20.♗ac1! f6 (20...♗xb4? 21.♗xd6) 21.♗c6 ♗e8 22.f3

Lybin – Mrazik, corr. 2003. The knight is back on c6 and White keeps some pressure in the ending.

15.♗d4 0–0

Immediately returning the pawn. Worse was 15...♗d5 16.f3 ♘g5 17.♗c3 or 15...♗d5 16.f3 ♘f6 17.♗c3 with a strong initiative.

16.♗xc6 ♗f6

Defending tactically by attacking the rook on a1. It was not too late to head for an ending: 16...♗xd1 17.♗xd1±

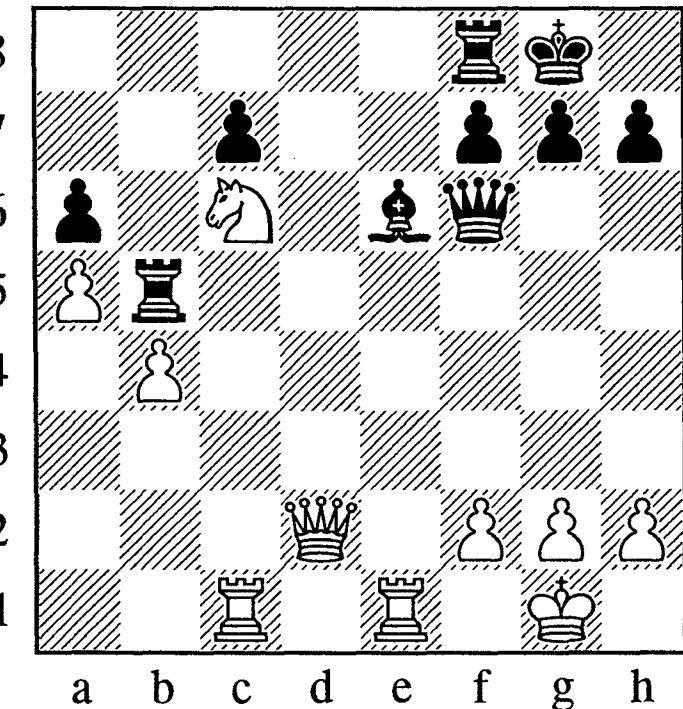
17.♗d2

17.♗a3 ♗b7 was unclear.

17...♝xd2

Interesting was 17...♗c3 but a safe solution for White seems to be 18.♗e1 ♗b7 19.♗e4! ♘xe4 20.♗xe4± which is similar to the game.

18.♗xd2± ♗b7 19.♗ac1 ♗b5 20.♗fe1



White has a small but definite edge. In the following moves I concentrate the play on the dark squares, where Black's bishop can be of no use.

20... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 21. $\mathbb{E}e3$ h6 22. $\mathbb{E}f3$ $\mathbb{W}h4$ 23. $\mathbb{W}d4!$

A perfect centralization of the queen, especially since Black can hardly exchange it.

23... $\mathbb{W}g5$

23... $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd4\pm$

24. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 25. $\mathbb{E}g3!$

The culmination of White's dark-squared strategy: Black is forced to ruin his pawn structure on the kingside as well.

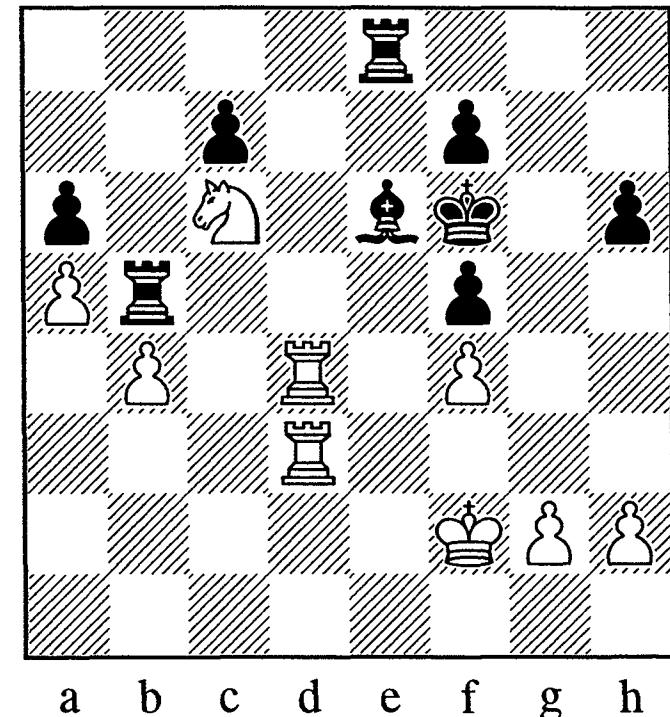
25... $\mathbb{W}f6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ gxf6 27. $\mathbb{E}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 28. $\mathbb{E}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 29.f3 $\mathbb{Q}f5$

29... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 30. $\mathbb{E}xc6$ $\mathbb{E}e2$ 31. $\mathbb{E}xc7$ $\mathbb{E}g5$ 32.g4+–

30. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 31. $\mathbb{E}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 32. $\mathbb{E}e3$ $\mathbb{E}a8$ 33. $\mathbb{E}ed3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 34. $\mathbb{E}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 35. $\mathbb{E}c2$ f5

Desperately seeking some activity.

36. $\mathbb{E}cd2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 37. $\mathbb{E}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 38. $\mathbb{E}hd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 39. $\mathbb{E}2d3$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 40.f4



White has a strategically winning position, as Black has too many weaknesses on both flanks

to withstand the pressure forever. With my last move I created the possibility of quickly transferring my rooks from one flank to the other via the third rank.

40... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 41. $\mathbb{E}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 42. $\mathbb{E}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{E}a8$ 44. $\mathbb{E}e5$ $\mathbb{E}xe5\#$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

Also possible was 45.fxe5? $\mathbb{E}e8$ (45...f6) 46. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ f6 47. $\mathbb{E}d8$ $\mathbb{E}xd8$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}d5\#$ 49. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 50. $\mathbb{Q}e6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 51. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ and White is winning.

45... $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 46. $\mathbb{E}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 47. $\mathbb{E}c3$ c6 48. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{E}b8$ 49. $\mathbb{E}g3\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 50. $\mathbb{Q}c3+-$ c5

Hopeless was 50... $\mathbb{E}b7$ 51. $\mathbb{E}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 52. $\mathbb{E}d7$ $\mathbb{E}xd7$ 53. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$.

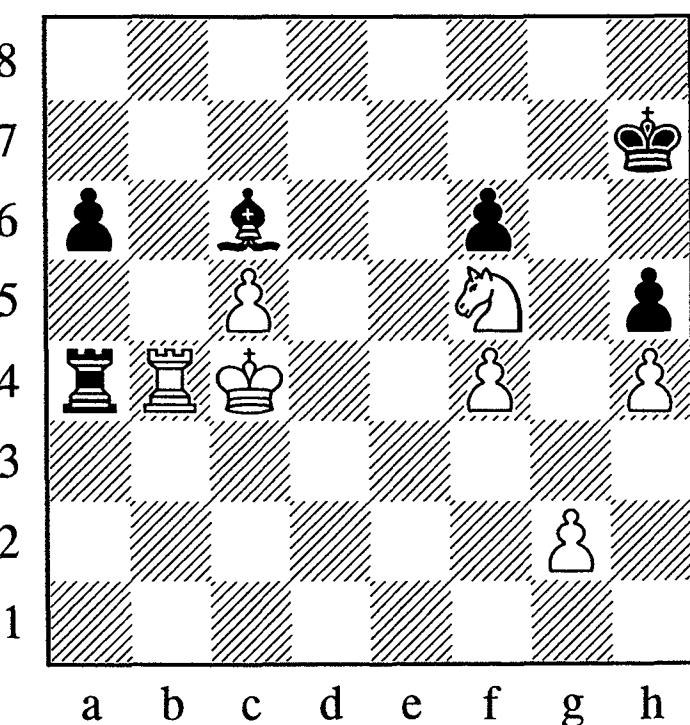
51.bxc5 f6 52. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 53. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ h5 54.h4

Simpler was 54. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$.

54... $\mathbb{E}b1$ 55. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{E}b5$ 56. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{E}xa5$ 57. $\mathbb{E}b3$

And here 57. $\mathbb{Q}e7$.

57... $\mathbb{E}a4\#$ 58. $\mathbb{E}b4$



58... $\mathbb{Q}d5\#$?

We were in time trouble.

58... $\mathbb{E}a1$ was the only move.

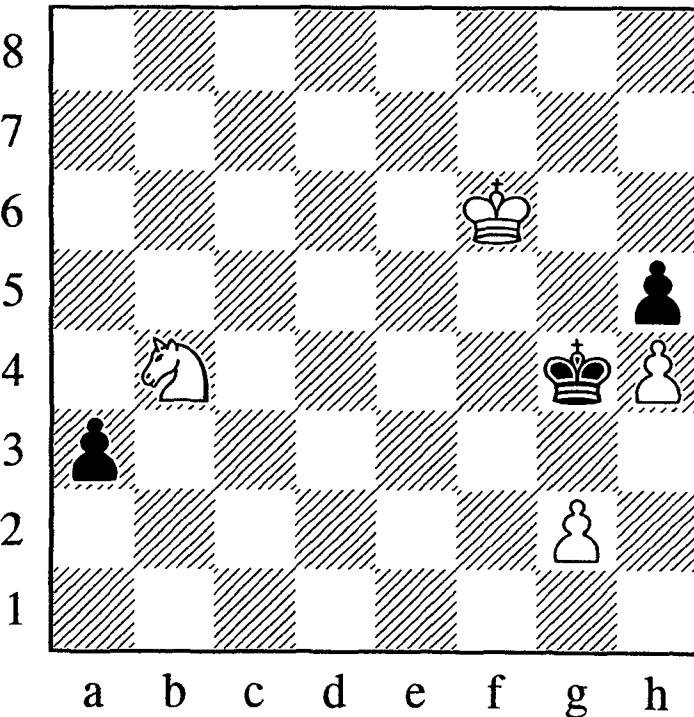
59.♔xd5! ♜xb4 60.c6

The passed pawn decides.

60...♝b5† 61.♔e6

Better was 61.♔d6 ♜xf5 62.c7 ♜xf4 63.c8=♛ ♜xh4 64.♔e7+– ♜g4 65.♛f5† ♔h6 66.♛xf6† ♜g6 67.♛h8† ♔g5 68.♔f7 and it is over. The text is okay though, but in the end wins by just a single tempo.

61...♝c5 62.♕e7 a5 63.♔d6 ♜c1 64.c7 ♜d1† 65.♔c5 ♜c1† 66.♔d6 ♜d1† 67.♗d5 ♜c1 68.♔d7 a4 69.c8=♛ ♜xc8 70.♔xc8 a3 71.♗b4 ♔g6 72.♔d7 ♔f5 73.♔e7 ♔xf4 74.♔xf6 ♔g4



**75.g3! ♔xg3 76.♔g5 ♔f3 77.♔xh5 ♔e2
78.♔g5 ♔d2 79.h5 ♔c3 80.h6
1–0**

Conclusion: What to think of a game like this one? Well the word “fight” comes to mind, and I think this is the key to understanding the popularity of this variation. With 6...♝e6 Black is creating very unbalanced play that will never be dull. White has certain positional plusses as always, but he has to constantly strive for the initiative to maintain an advantage.

From a theoretical point of view the position after 12...♝f6 is extremely important. I think

White has an edge because of his better structure, but it is playable for Black, who often has active pieces to compensate for the positional deficits.

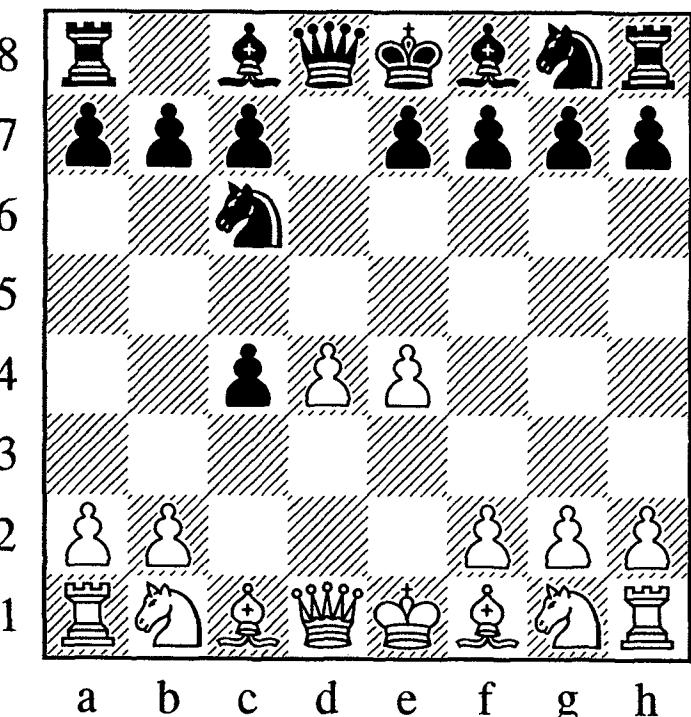
The 3...♞c6 Variation

So far Black has attacked the centre with pawns. He can also use his pieces and force tense play from the very beginning.

Game 17**Sargissian – Hillarp Persson**

Copenhagen 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 ♞c6



A provocative and popular move that creates associations with the Chigorin, 1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♞c6!?. Black attacks the white centre with pieces and apparently does not mind tactical complications, but in reality he is aiming to achieve a sound set-up. However White does not have to be cooperative.

4.♗f3

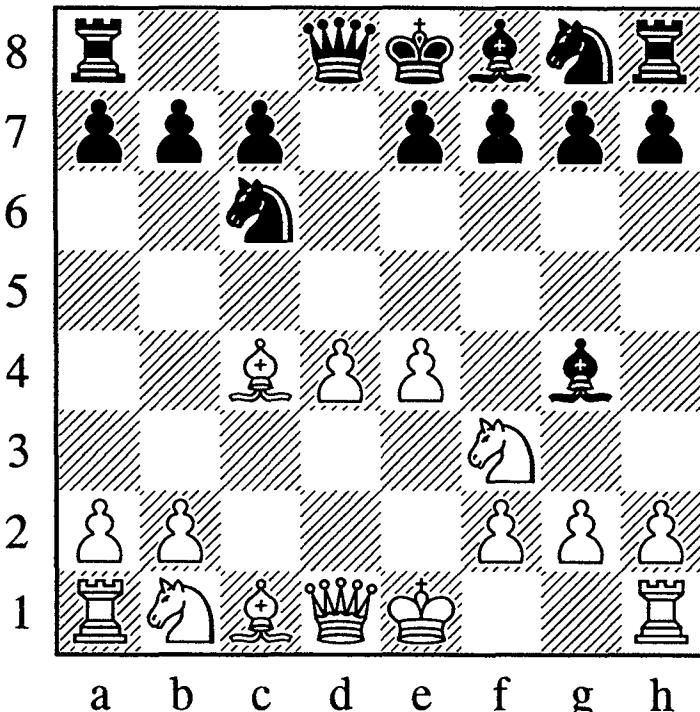
Allowing the pin after 4...♝g4.

4.d5 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ is more messy than good and after 4. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5.f3 e5 6.d5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ a6 9. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ Black has his desired formation.

4... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$?

A sharp try.

5.d5 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ e5 8. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ a6 9.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ is more standard. Experience has shown that 11. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0–0 12. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ is playable for Black, who has good piece coordination and he can often get his share of the play on the queenside with ...b5 or ...c6. Still, objectively speaking, White has chances of a small positional advantage after a natural move like 13. $\mathbb{Q}c1$.



5...e6

Perhaps safer is:

5... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 6. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ e6 7.d5 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}b5\uparrow$ c6 9. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 10. $\mathbb{W}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 11. $\mathbb{W}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$

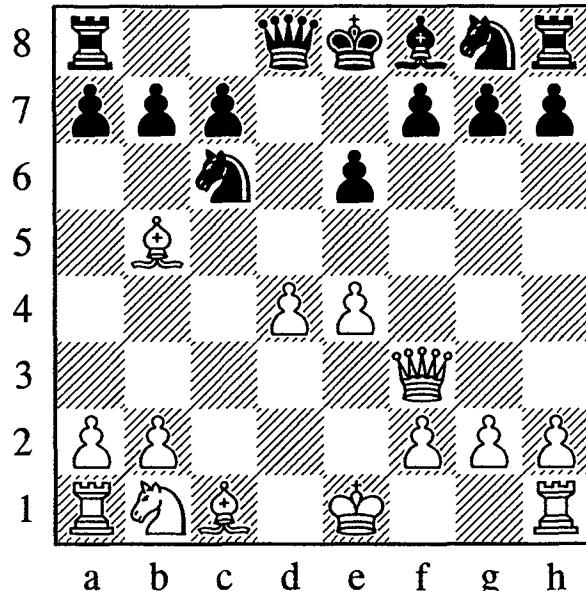
Black is okay in the ending: 12.dxe6 fxe6 13. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ a6 14. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 15.f3 $\mathbb{Q}c8=$

Ovod – Kovalevskaya, Moscow 2007.

After 5... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 6. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ e6, instead of 7.d5, White can try:

7. $\mathbb{Q}b5\uparrow$?

Sacrificing a pawn. Now there is a split:



a) 7... $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 8.0–0 (8. $\mathbb{Q}c3N$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xc6\uparrow$ bxc6 11. $\mathbb{W}e2\infty$) 8... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}ge7$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 11. $\mathbb{W}h3$ g5 With double-edged play, Piesina – Vorotnikov, Soviet Union 1979.

b) 7... $\mathbb{Q}b4\uparrow$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}xc6\uparrow$ bxc6 10.0–0 White is ahead in development and he has good compensation for the pawn. Also the doubled pawns on the c-file are rather vulnerable. With a further split:

b1) 10... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}e3$
11. $\mathbb{Q}f4\uparrow$? $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 13. $\mathbb{W}e3$
11... $\mathbb{W}f6$ 12. $\mathbb{W}g3$ 0–0

Muschik – Krallmann, Germany 2002.

b2) 10... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}c4$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}fc1$ $\mathbb{W}a6$
This was J. Christiansen – L. Hansen, Aalborg 1994, and now:
13. $\mathbb{Q}d4!$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14.e5

This is awkward for Black.

14... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

Or if 14... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ then 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ exd5 16. $\mathbb{W}g3$.

15. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$

What else?

16.b3 0–0 17. $\mathbb{Q}c4$

With a big positional advantage.

6. $\mathbb{Q}e3$

6. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ is also possible.

6... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$

Black takes the opportunity to weaken White's pawns.

6... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$

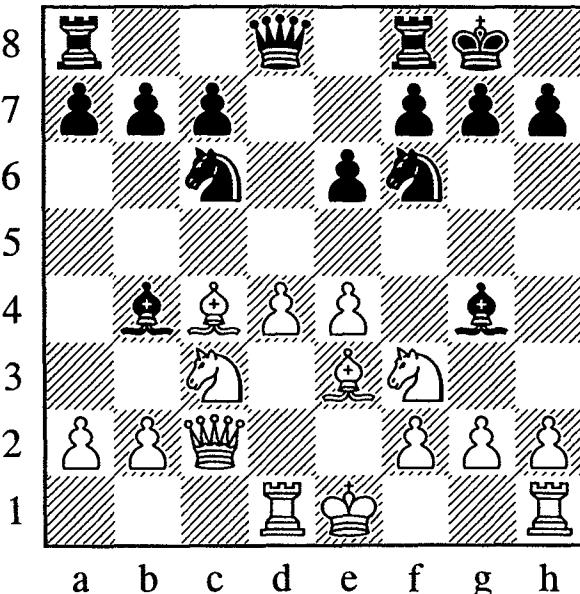
This would transpose to a well known position from the Chigorin that more often arises after the move order 1.d4 d5 2.c4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ dxc4 4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5.e4 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ e6 7. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$. To be known is not the same as to be respected and after:

8. $\mathbb{W}c2$ 0–0 9. $\mathbb{Q}d1$

White is slightly better.

9.0–0–0 also looks strong, but after the surprising 9... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 10.bxc3 $\mathbb{W}e7$ 11.h3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 12.gxf3 $\mathbb{Q}fb8!$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ b5 Black has created counterplay out of nothing. 14.e5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xh7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ b4 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ exd5 18. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ c5 With good play for the pawn in Shirov – Morozевич, Amsterdam 1995.

Returning to 9. $\mathbb{Q}d1$, we will consider three replies:



9... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 10.gxf3 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 11.e5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12.0–0 c6 13. $\mathbb{Q}h1$

Planning $\mathbb{Q}g1$. White is slightly better.

13... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ cxd5 15. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ g6 16. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 17. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}g1$

With play on both flanks.

18... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 19. $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ f6?

Allowing a killing blow:

21. $\mathbb{Q}xg6!$

1–0 Persson – Boucher, corr 2004. Black resigned because:

21... $\mathbb{h}xg6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$

This would be hopeless. For example:

22... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}h6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 25.exf6 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 28. $\mathbb{W}e7$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xe6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 30. $\mathbb{W}f6$

9... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3\#$ 11.bxc3 c5 12.0–0 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 13. $\mathbb{W}b1$ b6 14.h3 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 15.g4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 19.dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 22.cxb6

Black does not have enough for the pawn.

22... $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 23.e5 $\mathbb{Q}fd5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xh7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$

White had control in Elwert – Gather, corr. 1999.

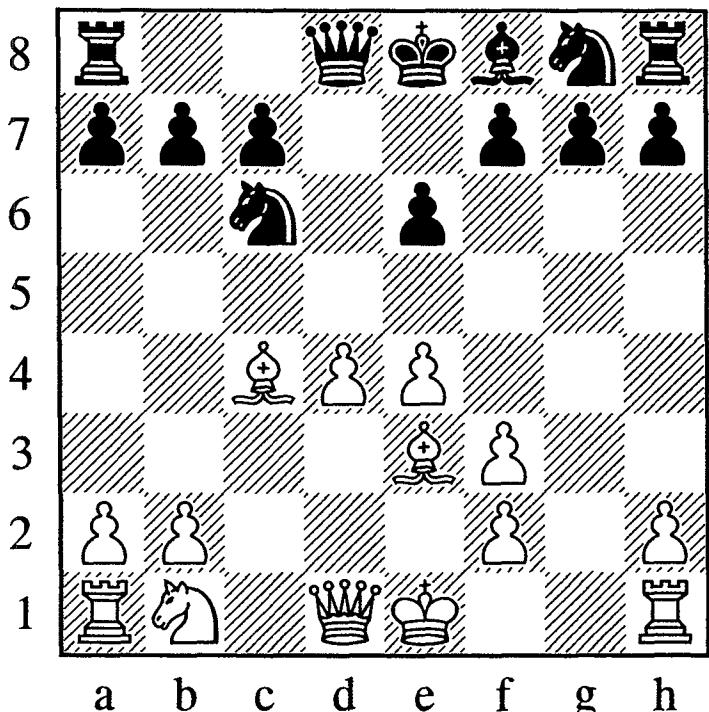
26... $\mathbb{W}xh3?!$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}xg4\#$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}h5$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}g2$

Followed by the decisive $\mathbb{Q}h1$.

9... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ e5 11. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 12.0–0 (12.dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$) 12... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 13.dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 15.gxf3 $\mathbb{W}e6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ and White was clearly better, Belozerov – Bigaliev, Kolontaevo 1997.

6... $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ is the same.

7.gxf3



7...♝b4†

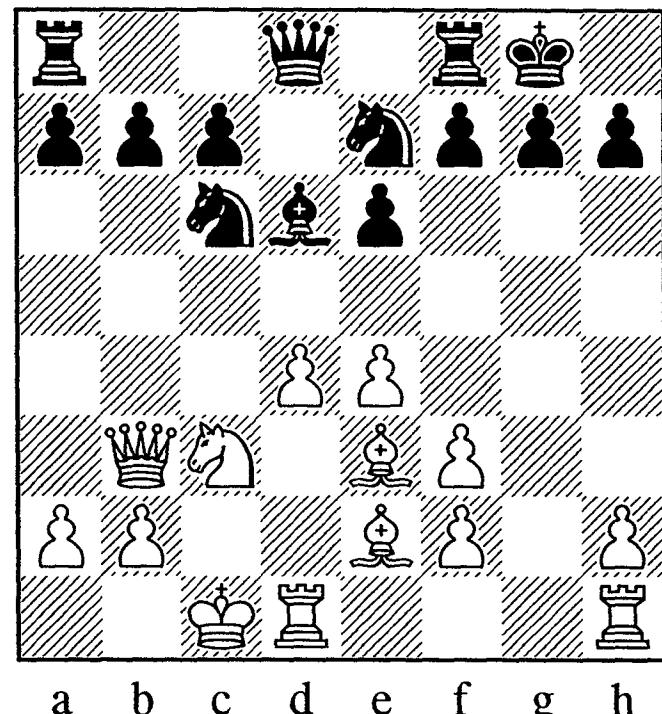
A natural move. Black wants to complete his development and castle kingside as quickly as possible. 7...♝f6 with the idea of castling long has also been popular. The d-pawn is suddenly a target. White has tried many things, but probably he should fight hard for the initiative and be ready to sacrifice a pawn with 8.♞c3 0–0–0 9.♝a4 and now 9...♝xf3 (or 9...♞xd4 10.0–0–0) 10.♝g1 with good compensation.

8.♞c3 ♜ge7

A flexible set-up, but White's centre must count for something.

9.♝b3 ♜d6

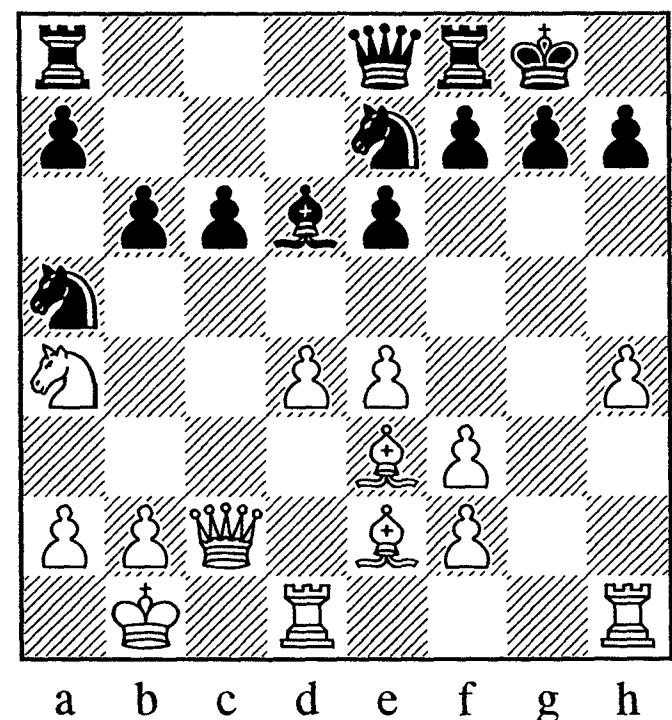
9...♝a5, to put the bishop on b6, falls foul of the typical break in the centre: 10.0–0–0 ♜b6 11.d5! exd5 12.♞xd5 ♜xd5 13.♞xd5 ♜c8 14.♝hg1 The threats were impossible to parry. 14...♝e7 15.♞xe7 ♜xe7 16.♝xg7 ♜xe3† 17.fxe3 ♜e6 18.♝b4† ♜f6 19.♝c3† ♜e7 20.♝c5† ♜e8 21.♝g5 White won in a few moves, Komljenovic – Ehlvest, Linares 1994.

10.♝e2 0–0 11.0–0–0

White has a clear advantage. His strong centre secures a lot of space and the open g-file gives rise to optimistic attacking ideas.

11...♝a5 12.♝c2 c6 13.♞a4 b6 14.♝b1

This is not really necessary, but White spends some time improving his king's position. It is prophylactic thinking, and should by now be quite familiar.

14...♜e8 15.h4!

The h-pawn is a ram to knock holes in the enemy's fortress.

15...♝b7 16.h5 ♜d8 17.e5 ♜b8 18.♞d3 ♜f5

Giving up a pawn, which was more or less forced. 18...g6 19.♞c3 with the plan of ♜e4 exploiting the weak dark squares around the black king. 18...h6 19.♞xh6 gxh6 20.♝dg1† ♜h8 21.♝d2 and mate on h6.

19.♝xf5

19.♝hg1!? seems even stronger. Black can hardly move without making some concession.

19...exf5 20.♝xf5 f6

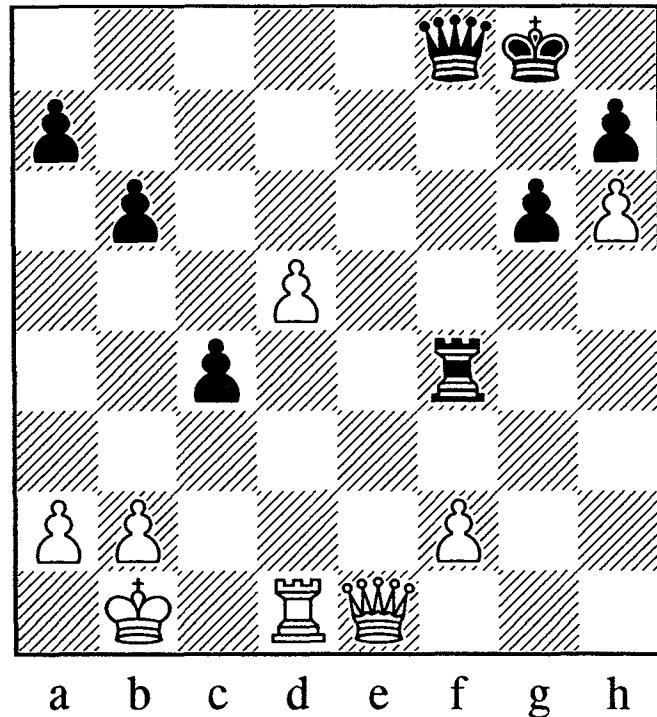
Now Black has some counterplay.

21.exf6 ♜xf6 22.♝g4 ♜f7 23.♞c3

Back into play.

23...♞d6 24.♝g5 ♜c8 25.d5 c5 26.h6 g6

27. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{W}f8$ 28. $\mathbb{B}he1$ $\mathbb{B}f5$ 29. $f4$ $c4$ 30. $\mathbb{W}f3$
 $\mathbb{E}e8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 32. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{E}xe1$ 33. $\mathbb{W}xe1$
 $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{B}xf4$



35.d6!

The strong passed pawn quickly decides the issue.

35... $\mathbb{W}f5\#$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 37. $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{B}f7$ 38. $\mathbb{W}d4$
 $b5$ 39. $\mathbb{B}e1$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 40. $\mathbb{W}e5$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 41. $\mathbb{W}e8\#$
1-0

Conclusion: 3... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ leads to sharp and complex play. White can try to keep control with 5. $d5$, but I like to take up the challenge and answer with a double-edged strategy as well. The complications seem to be advantageous for White but beware of the transposition to the Chigorin, where the play is rather messy. In chess, psychology is an important factor. After all, you are facing a guy who plays the QGA, so he is probably disciplined and not a fan of chaos. If you reached the position via the Chigorin, then I would prefer to play more safely – which you can see in the chapter about this bizarre opening.

The 3... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ Variation

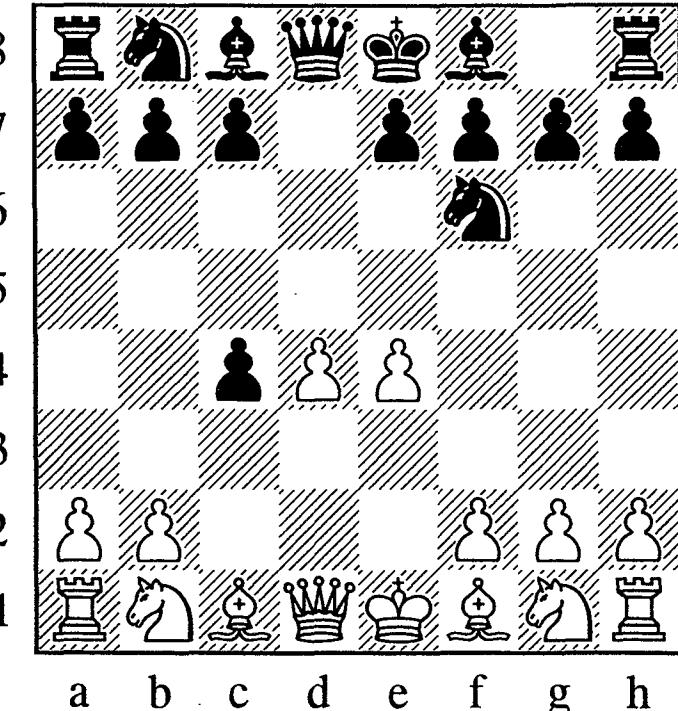
A profound move. Black invites the e4-pawn forward.

Game 18

Sakaev – Mikhalkishin

Budva 2002

1. $d4$ $d5$ 2. $c4$ $dxc4$ 3. $e4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$



This line is as provocative as 3... $\mathbb{Q}c6$, but positionally more sound. Black attacks the centre with a piece and tries to lure White into advancing the pawn with tempo, when the knight will have a fine square on d5. Nevertheless White should take up the challenge. After all, he gains more space and that will determine the play for a long time.

4. $e5$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$

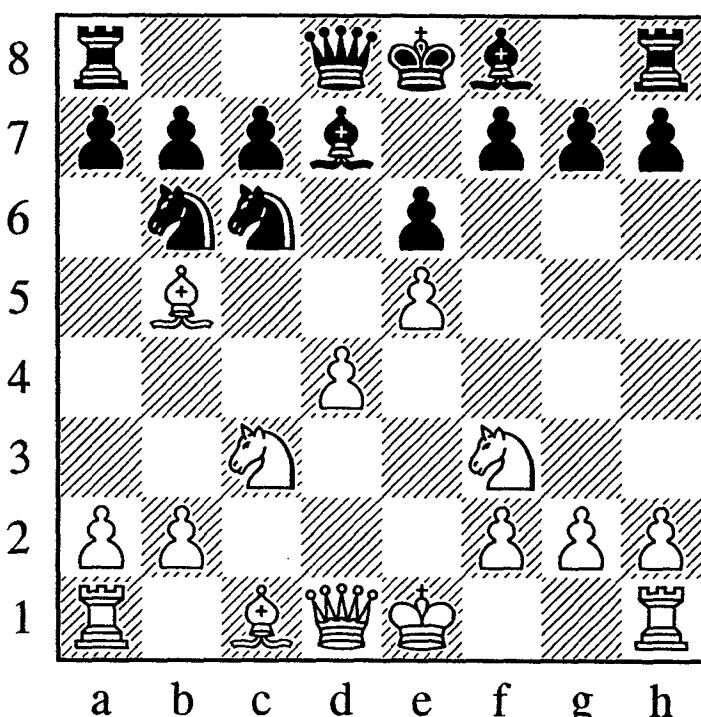
Black keeps developing his pieces. Unfortunately for him, he will be pushed back within a few moves. The slightly more sophisticated 5... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ is the mainline and will be examined in the next game.

6. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$

Best. 6... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 7. $bxc3$ and 6... $e6$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ both give White too much freedom.

6... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ continues the fight for the important $d5$ -square, but after 7. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ it is difficult for Black to untangle.

7.♗b5 ♗d7 8.♘f3 e6



White's extra space has already influenced the play: to keep control over the key square d5, Black played ...e7-e6 before his light-squared bishop had time to develop, so it seems it will remain passively placed on d7. In reality, the bishop is on its way to the excellent square c6. Black will move his knight from c6 to b4 or e7, clearing the bishop's path.

9.0–0

Accepting his fate. 9.a3 ♘e7 10.♗d3 ♘c6 is no big achievement for White: the knight on e7 can go to d5, f5 or g6!

9...♗b4

The natural route to d5: 10.♗d3 is discouraged. And 9...♗b4 also avoids sealing the bishop on f8, as the alternative does:

9...♘e7 10.♗d3 ♘c6

Black is effectively a tempo down compared to the line given above (as White's 0–0 is far more relevant than a2-a3). I will offer two completely different ways of combating it:

a) 11.♗g5 h6 12.♗h5 g6 13.♗ge4! ♗g7 14.♗g4 ♘f5 15.♗e3

Black has still not solved his king's problems, Beliavsky – Portisch, Thessaloniki 1984.

b) 11.♗e1 ♗d7 12.♗e3 0–0–0 13.♗c1 ♘b8 14.a3 ♘bd5 15.♗e4! ♘f5 16.b4 b6? 16...♗fxe3 17.fxe3 f5 is unclear.

17.♗e2 ♘fxe3 18.fxe3 f5

This was Campora – Borges Mateos, Madrid 2007, and now White could win instantly with the little combination:

19.exf6 gxf6 20.♗xf6! ♘xf6 21.♗e5

10.♗e2 ♘c6 11.a3 ♘d5 12.♗c2

Preparing the standard move ♘e4.

After the immediate:

12.♗e4

Black can reply:

12...♗f4! 13.♗xf4 ♘xe4

Removing the knight that White had hoped would be a lasting influence.

14.♗g5 ♘g6 15.♗f3 ♘b8

This seemed solid enough for Black in Korchnoi – Sadler, Arnhem 1999. A possible continuation is:

16.♗e3 ♘e7 17.♗h3 0–0 18.♗f4 c6 19.♗xg6 hxg6

Followed by ...♗d5.

12...♗xc3

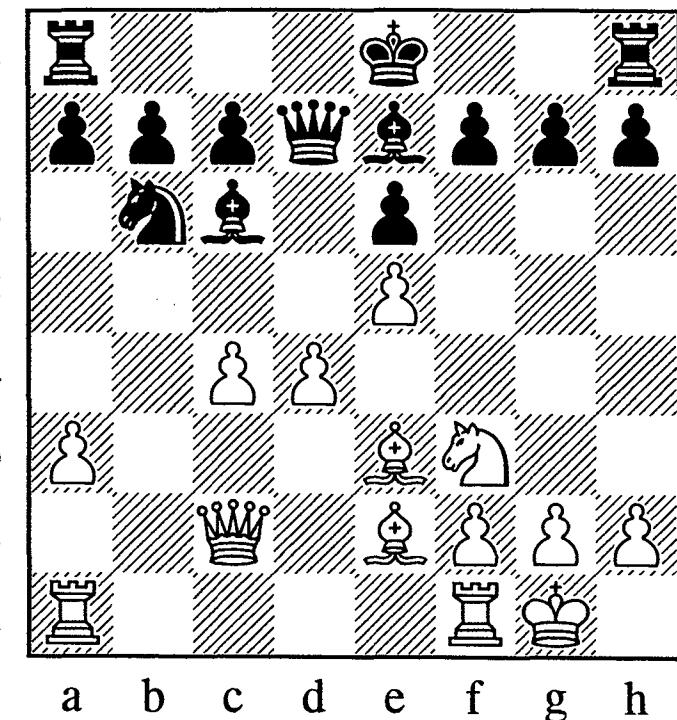
A risky decision. In the long run Black will have difficulties holding back White's central pawns.

As ever, there are alternatives:

12...♘e7 13.♗e4 h6 14.♗d3± a6 15.♗c5! ♘xc5 16.dxc5 ♘d7 17.♗e1 ♘e7 18.♗e4 White's space gave him a clear advantage in Gavrikov – Brunner, Biel 1995.

12...♗d7 13.♗e4 ♘b5 14.♗c5 ♘xc5 15.dxc5 ♘xe2 16.♗xe2 ♘c8 17.♗d2 ♘ce7 18.♗ac1± Again the extra space secures some positional advantage. The knight on d5 is good of course, but you can play around it.

13.bxc3 ♘e7 14.♗e3 ♗d7 15.c4



Taking d5 under control – a great psychological victory!

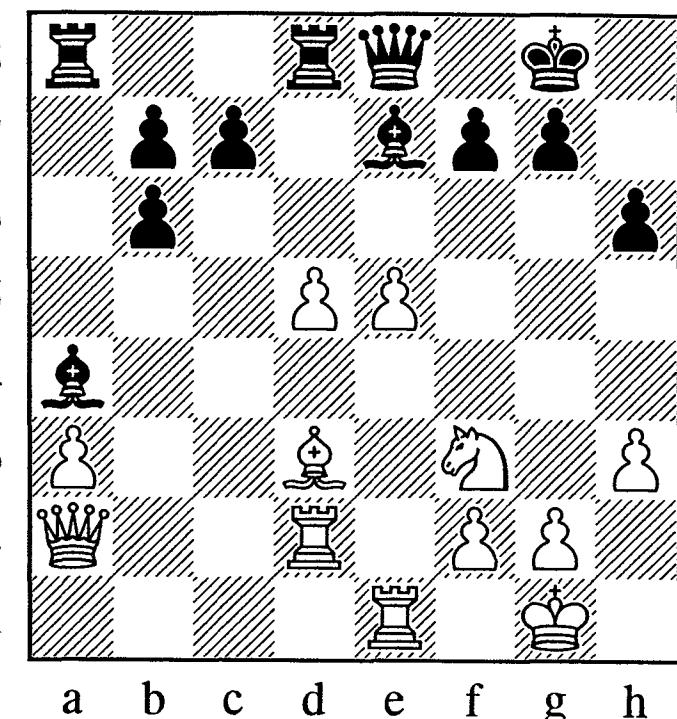
15...♝c8 16.♛a2 0–0 17.♝fd1 ♜fd8 18.h3 ♜e8 19.♝d2

White is in no hurry; he could have played d5 at once.

19...h6 20.♝ad1 ♜a4 21.♝c1 ♜c6 22.♝cd1 ♜a4 23.♝e1 ♜c6 24.d5!

The thematic break. White gives away his bishop pair but in return gets two fantastic central pawns.

24...exd5 25.♝xb6 axb6 26.cxd5 ♜a4 27.♝d3 ♜a8



28.e6!

Very energetic and direct play by Sakaev. He weakens the white squares around the black king. The final assault is not far off.

28...♝d6 29.♞e5 ♜xe5 30.♝xe5 f6 31.♝e3 ♜e7 32.♝c4 ♜e8 33.♝e4 g6 34.♝g3 ♜g7 35.♝c2?!

Probably time trouble. 35.e7 ♜d6 36.♝xg6! ♜xg6 37.♝xg6 ♜xg6 38.♝xg6 won at once.

35...♝d6 36.♝e2 ♜a5 37.♝xg6!

Now he sees it.

37...♜xg6 38.♝xg6 ♜xg6 39.♝xg6

The e-pawn will cost Black a rook.

39...♝xa3 40.e7 ♜a8 41.e8=♛+ ♜xe8 42.♝xe8† ♜g7 43.♝e4
1–0

Conclusion: A good illustration of what extra space can do. Black has the nice square d5, but White's extra room to manoeuvre tells.

Probably 5...♝b6 is Black's best bet.

Game 19

Bu Xiangzhi – Karjakin

Bilbao 2007

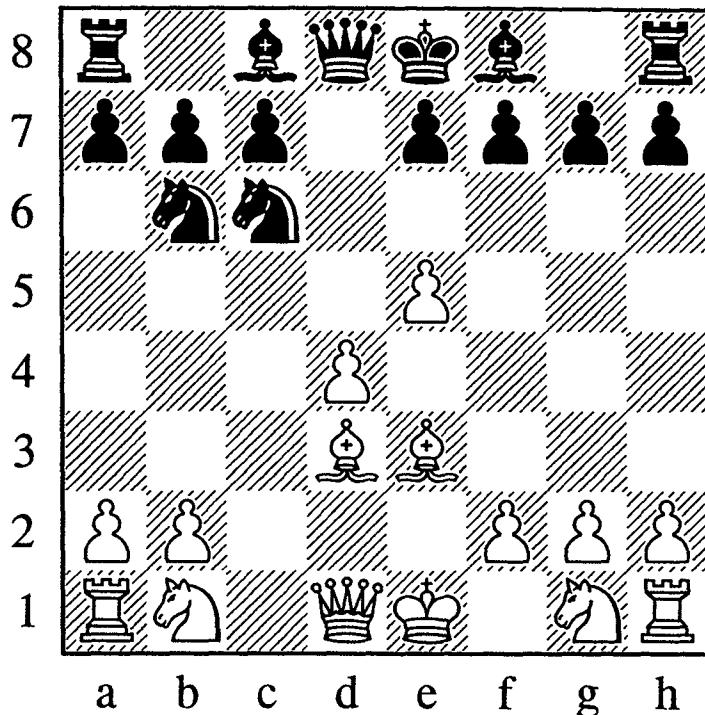
1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 ♜f6 4.e5 ♜d5 5.♝xc4 ♜b6 6.♝d3

6.♝b3 is also popular and leads to complex play, but I think 6.♝d3 is more positional, especially in connection with the following move.

6...♝c6 7.♝e3

Instead 7.♝e2 is seen in most games, when 7...♝g4 8.f3 ♜e6 is the mainline. I like 7.♝e3

because it causes Black some trouble figuring out what to do with the light-squared bishop, which cannot go to f5 or g4.



7...♝b4

An interesting resource found in the mid-80s in the Soviet Union, but made popular when Short launched it in his legendary match with Karpov in 1992.

7...♛e6 8.♝c3 ♛c4

Another way to try to solve the problem with the light-squared bishop.

9.♛xc4 ♜xc4 10.♝b3 ♜a5 11.♝c2 e6 12.♝f3
♝c6 13.a3

Preventing ...♝b4.

13...♝b6 14.0–0 ♜e7 15.♝e4 ♜ed5 16.♝d2
♜e7 17.♝fe1 ♜d7 18.b4±

In Sargissian – Granda Zuniga, Zafra 2007, we see the typical scenario: Black has an excellent outpost on d5 for his knight, but overall White's space counts for more.

7...g6 8.♝c3 ♛g7 This time it is the dark-squared bishop that Black is trying to improve.
9.♝ge2 0–0 10.♝e4 ♜b4 11.♝b3 a5 12.♝f4±
e6 13.a3 ♜d5 14.♝fxd5 exd5 15.♝xd5 a4
16.♝a2 ♜a5 17.♝c4 ♜xc4 18.♝xc4 White is a pawn up, Timman – Korchnoi, Pula 1997.

8.♝e4 f5

The point – White will have to make a concession. If Black plays less boldly, say 8...c6, then White's extra space should, as usual, secure an edge.

9.exe6

Nobody has allowed 9.♝f3 f4! 10.♝xf4 ♜f5 with numerous threats.

9...exf6 10.♝c3

10.a3 allows 10...f5 with good counterplay.

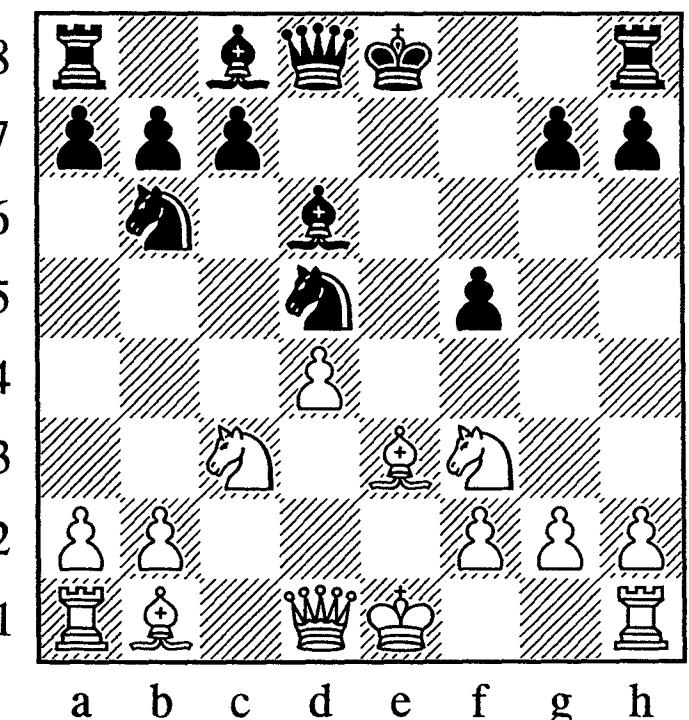
10...f5 11.♝b1

Karpov has ventured 11.♝f3 but did not really get anything: 11...♝d5 12.♝d2 ♜e6 13.♝h3 ♜e7 14.0–0 0–0 15.♝e1 ♜f7 16.♝xd5
♝xd5 17.♝c2 ♜d7 18.♝g5 ♜f6 19.♝xf7 ♜xf7
20.♝b3 c6 Karpov – Shirov, Wijk aan Zee 2003.

11...♝d6

11...♝d5 12.♝f3 ♜d6 transposes.

12.♝f3 ♜d5



13.♝g5

Disrupting Black's development.

13...♝d7

Clumsy, but 13...♜e7 loses a tempo: 14.♝d2 0–0 15.0–0 with a pleasant position for White.

For example, 15... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 16.bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 17. $\mathbb{B}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{B}xf7$ 22. $\mathbb{W}b3\pm$ Shirov – Ponomariov, Linares 2002.

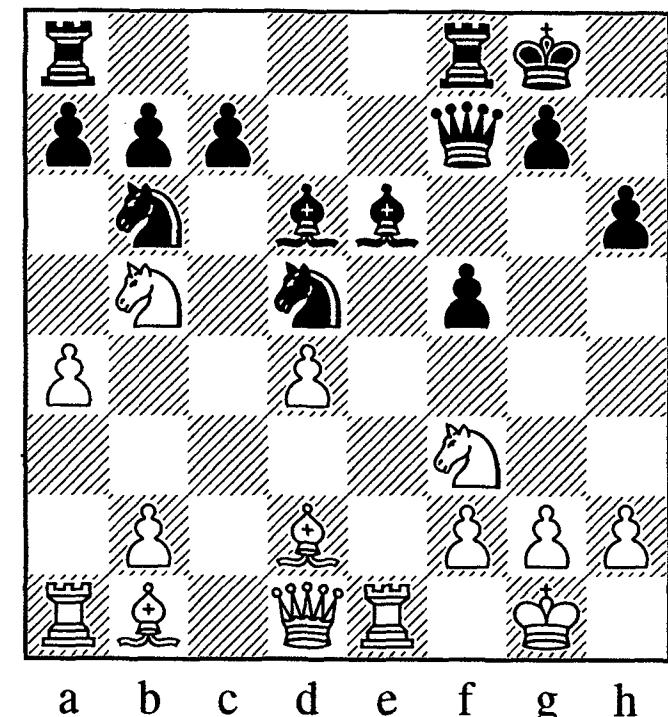
14.0–0 0–0 15. $\mathbb{B}e1$

A natural developing move. Interesting was 15.a4 $\mathbb{W}f7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ when the bishop comes alive. 16... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 17.a5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}b5\pm$ $\mathbb{Q}5f6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 20. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{B}fc8$ 21. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{W}d5?!$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ cxd6 23. $\mathbb{W}xc8\ddagger$ 1–0 Saunders – Milligan, corr. 2001. Black threw in the towel a bit early. 23... $\mathbb{B}xc8$ 24. $\mathbb{B}xc8\ddagger$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 25. $\mathbb{B}c7$ was not much fun, though it is far from over.

15...h6 16. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 17.a4

Preparing to chase the knight with a4-a5. Also playable is 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 20. $\mathbb{B}xe5$ c6 and now 21. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{B}fe8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ cxd5 23. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{B}xe5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ was not enough to win in Anastasian – Van den Doel, Gothenburg 2005, but simply 21. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{B}fe8$ 22. $\mathbb{B}ae1$ and White is better.

17... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}b5!$



Bu relentlessly harasses his opponent. Black's opening play has left a hole on e5 and somewhat weakened his kingside, but now Bu also points at the queenside as a possible new frontier.

18... $\mathbb{Q}f6$

There is no easy solution.

18... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xd2$ $\mathbb{B}fd8$ is not satisfactory, as 21. $\mathbb{W}e2$ offers pressure.

18...a6 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ cxd6 This at least covers the e5-square, but after 20.a5 White is better after both the passive 20... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ and the more complicated 20... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ b6 22. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 23.axb6 $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f4$.

19.a5 $\mathbb{Q}bd5$ 20.a6

Very instructive play: White fixes a permanent weakness on a7. Later it will decide the game.

20...b6 21. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$

Giving up a pawn, as instead 21... $\mathbb{B}fe8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 23.dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 24. $\mathbb{W}f3$ was horrible.

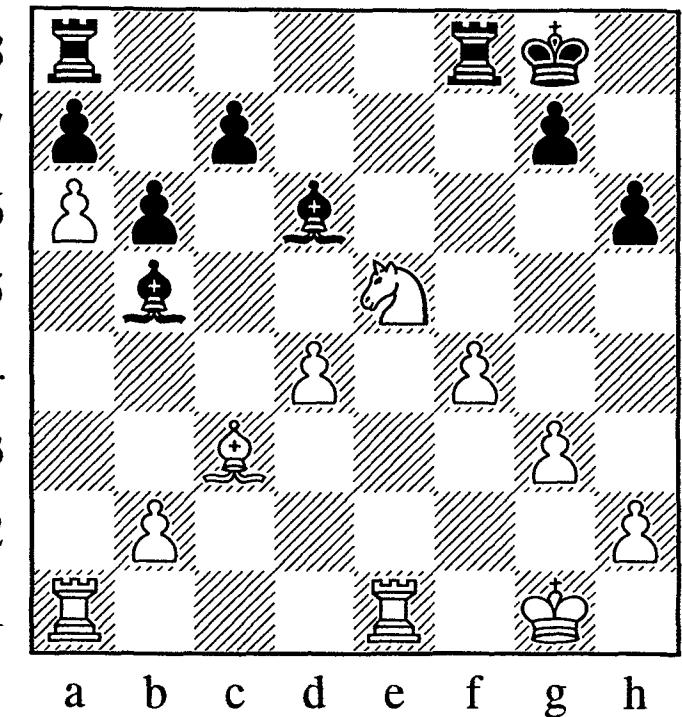
22. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ fxe4 23. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 24. $\mathbb{W}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$

24... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ cxd6 26. $\mathbb{W}g3$, hitting d6, is also good for White.

25. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$

25... $\mathbb{Q}b4?!$, to introduce some complications, was maybe a better try.

26. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{W}f4$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xf4$ $\mathbb{B}xf4$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 29.g3 $\mathbb{B}ff8$ 30.f4



This was a blindfold rapid game, but White exploits his pawn advantage in exemplary style.

**30...♝ad8 31.♗g2 c5 32.dxc5 ♜xc5 33.h4
♝fe8 34.h5 ♜d6 35.♗h3 ♜xe5**

Of course the opposite-coloured bishops give Black some drawing chances, but maybe this is not the wisest thing to do anyway. Now a7 is really weak and difficult to defend, and White can keep pressing for the full point without any risk.

**36.♝xe5 ♜xe5 37.♜xe5 ♔f7 38.g4 ♜d3†
39.♔h4 ♜d7 40.♜b8 ♜e2 41.b4 ♜b5 42.♜e5
♜e6 43.♜a3 ♔f7 44.g5 hxg5† 45.fxg5 ♜e7
46.g6† ♜g8 47.♜b8 ♜e4† 48.♔g3 ♜e8?**

This looks like a mouse slip. 48...♜e7
49.♔f4±

49.♜xa7 ♜a8 50.♜xb6

1-0

White will get passed pawns on both wings.

Conclusion: Positionally, 3...♝f6 is not completely sound. White simply gets too much space for Black to equalize, and the move 5...♝b6 does not alter this view.

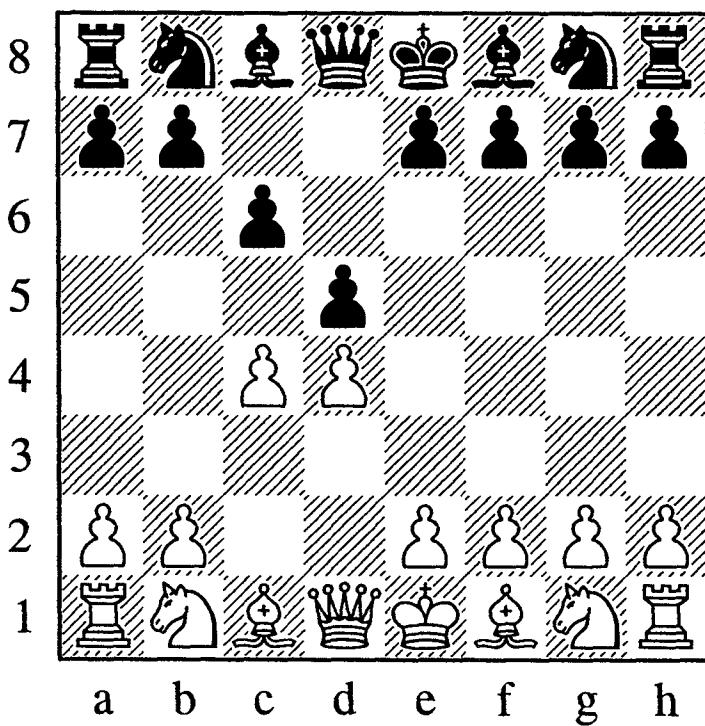
Chapter Conclusion: The Queen's Gambit Accepted is a very concrete opening, so it is fitting to answer sharply and resolutely with 3.e4. The variations are rich and complicated: every line contains difficult positional and tactical motifs, and you have to know a lot to be confident with White. However, I think the games show that at the bottom line White is on top! I admit that 3.e4 is a demanding move to play, but sometimes you need bigger equipment.

The key elements to mastering 3.e4 are to make use of the extra space and to always fight for the initiative.

Chapter 3

The Slav

Good news for the people who love bad news
– Modest Mouse



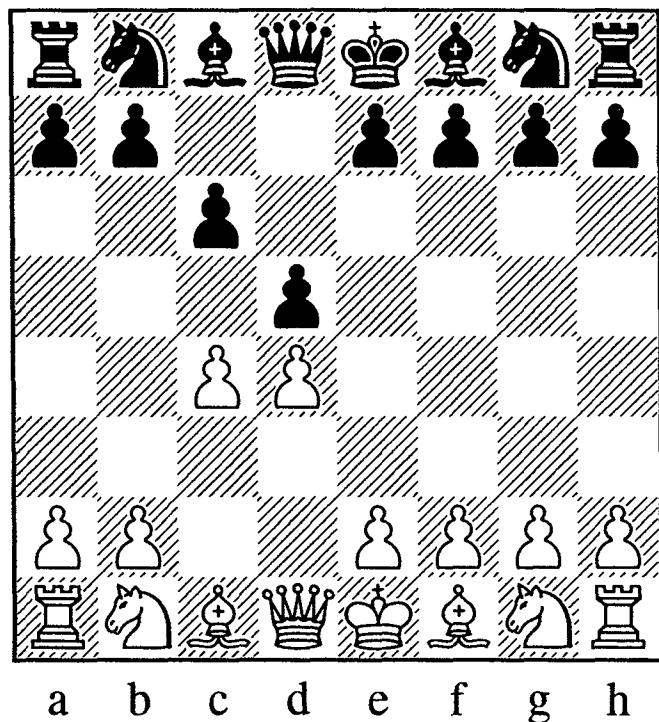
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6

- The Rare 3...dxc4
- The 5...♝a6 Variation
- The 5...♝g4 Variation
- The 5...e6 Variation
- The Mainline: 5...♞f5 6.♝e5
- The 6...♝a6 Variation
- The Mainline – Part One:
- The Bishop Sacrifice – 15...0–0–0

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- The Bishop Sacrifice – 15...0–0
- The Bishop Sacrifice – 15...b5 etc.
- Kramnik's ending
- The Mainline - Part Two:
- The Classical Move – 11...f6
- Morozevich's 11...g5
- Sokolov's Variation – 7...♝b6

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1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6



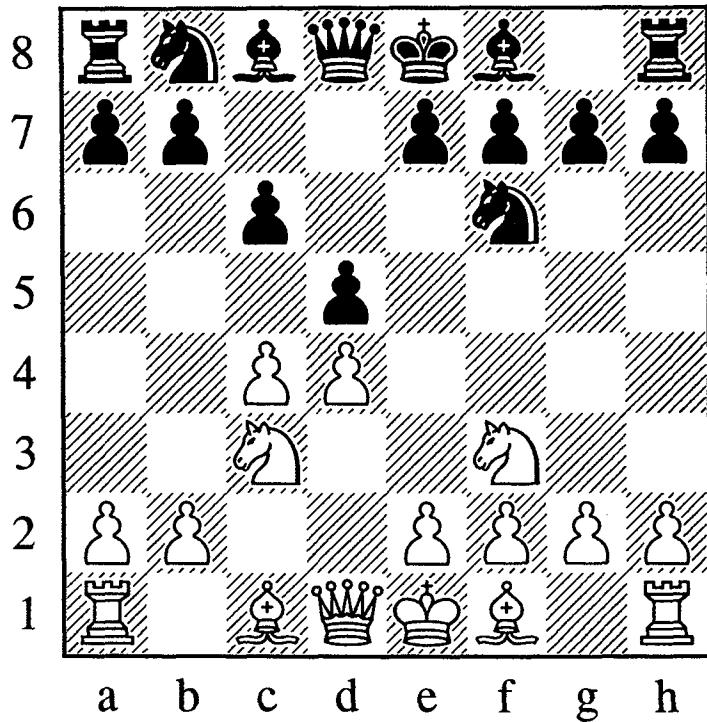
The Slav. One of the most popular openings in modern chess. Black protects d5 and secures his influence in the centre. If White takes on d5 with cxd5 then Black just takes back with his c-pawn and the status quo is maintained. In contrast to the Queen's Gambit Declined with 2...e6, Black does not close the diagonal for his light-squared bishop and hopes to bring it out to f5 or g4. This is all fairly easy to grasp but the real secret of the Slav is much deeper. Actually Black plans to play ...dxc4 voluntarily! It turns out that the innocuous looking move 2...c6 not only protects d5, but can also help to follow up ...dxc4 with ...b5 securing the pawn.

3.♘f3 ♘f6

Black can disrupt matters by venturing 3...dxc4. On 4.e3 he can continue sharply with 4...b5 or try the interesting 4...♗e6!?. Game 20 shows that White gets the upper hand but 3...dxc4 should not be underestimated.

3...e6 4.♗c3 is a frequently employed move order to reach the Semi-Slav or the Triangle variations, which are both covered later in the book.

4.♗c3



4...dxc4

The Slav move. Black breaks the symmetry to get chances of his own. 4...e6 would of course lead to the Semi-Slav – see Chapter 4. 4...a6 is the a6-Slav – see Chapter 5. A few alternatives need to be mentioned:

4...g6 is a mix between the Slav and the Gruenfeld. A simple answer is 5.cxd5 cxd5 6.♗f4± with a good Exchange Slav, as the bishop is misplaced on g7.

4...♗f5 is premature, as 5.cxd5 cxd5 6.♗b3 is annoying.

4...♗b6 is occasionally played. A simple reaction is 5.e3 ♗f5 (safer but not satisfactory is 5...♗g4 6.h3 ♗xf3 7.♗xf3± and White enjoys the pair of bishops) 6.♗e5! with the idea 6...e6 7.g4 ♗g6 8.h4±.

5.a4

Preventing b7-b5. Afterwards White will win the pawn back.

5...♗f5

Again the main Slav move. Black develops the light-squared bishop to an active post and fights for control over the important e4-square. However there are many other possible moves:

5... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ The knight is perhaps on its way to the good square b4. The problem is that it does nothing to fight for the centre. White naturally continues 6.e4 – see Game 21.

5... $\mathbb{B}g4$ is an alternative way to develop the bishop, but there is a drawback: White can activate his knight with 6. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ and gain the better prospects – see Game 22.

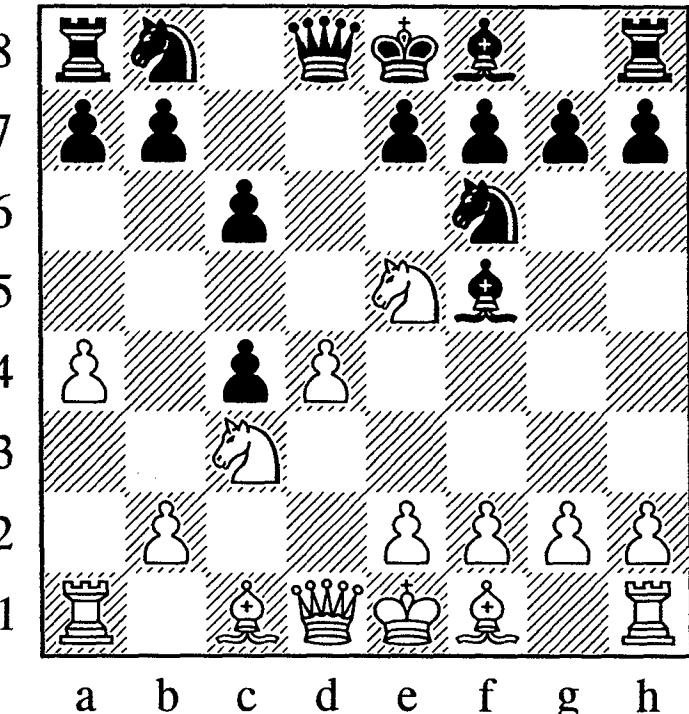
5...e6 almost looks too modest, but it is a very solid line – see Game 23.

Occasionally Black tries to confuse his opponent with 5... $\mathbb{Q}d5$, but a good response is 6.e3 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 7.bxc3 b5 8. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 10.f3±.

Also possible is 5...c5 when 6.e4 cxd4 7. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ e5 9. $\mathbb{Q}db5$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ ± leads to a pleasant endgame for White.

Finally, 5...a5 6.e4 $\mathbb{B}g4$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ e6 8.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 9. $\mathbb{W}d3$!? $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 10.gxf3 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 11.f4 looked promising for White in Avrukh – Welling, Kemer 2007.

6. $\mathbb{Q}e5$



This is our repertoire choice. White plans to play f3 followed by e4, taking the centre. Black

has many counter-ideas and the play generally becomes very sharp.

More balanced is 6.e3 e6 7. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 8.0–0 0–0 with a typical Slav position. White can try to expand in the centre with 9. $\mathbb{W}e2$ but even after 9... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 10.e4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ Black is very solid, as has been confirmed in hundreds of games. 6. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ is a more direct way of playing. It will be covered in great detail in Games 24-31, but first I will deal with the rare Slav lines.

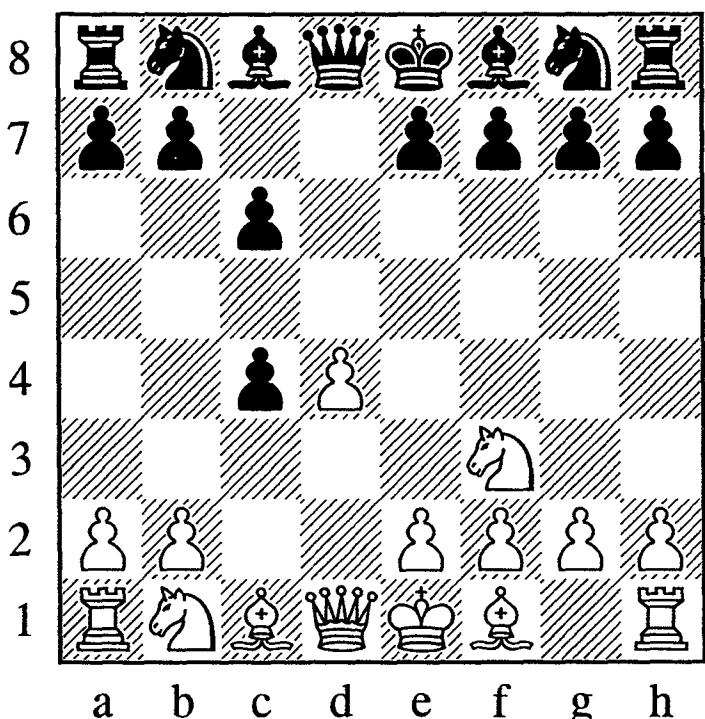
The Rare 3...dxc4

Game 20

Delchev – Sommerbauer

European Team Championship, Leon 2001

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ dxc4

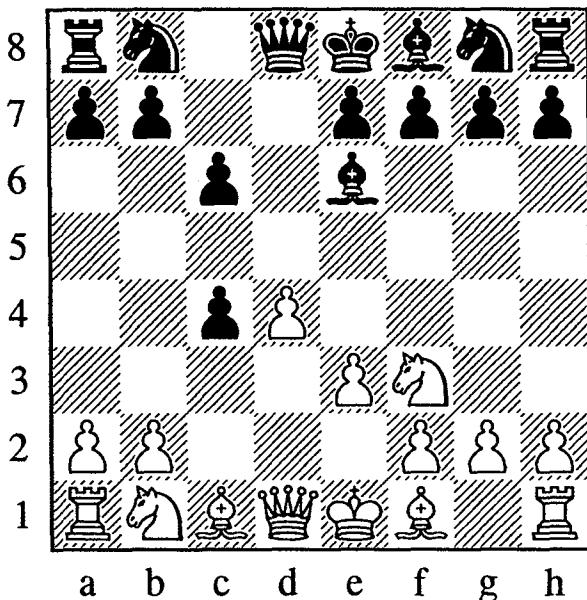


4.e3 b5

The most natural, but there is another move:

4... $\mathbb{Q}e6$!?

By protecting the pawn, Black disturbs the harmony of White's play. Fortunately the bishop also obstructs Black's own development. The most promising reply is:



5.♗c3

Fighting for the initiative.

White can go for the c-pawn: 5.a4 ♗f6 6.♗a3 but then Black gets counterplay with 6...c5 and is close to equality.

5...b5

5...♗f6 6.♗g5 ♕d5 7.e4 h6 8.exd5 hxg5 9.dxc6 ♗xc6 10.d5 ♗e5 11.♕xg5 is good for White.

6.♗e2

Taking advantage of the clumsy bishop on e6. White just develops: he is not afraid of being a pawn down.

6.a4 b4 7.♗e2?! ♗f6 8.♗f4 is an interesting new way of playing that also looks quite good.

6...♗f6 7.0–0 g6

7...♗g4 8.a4 b4 9.♗e5! ♗xe2 10.♗xe2 was good for White who is ready to take his pawn back, Gusan – Taras, corr. 2005.

8.♗g5 ♕c8

Similar is 8...♗d7 9.b3 h6 10.♗ge4 ♗xe4 11.♗xe4 cxb3 12.axb3 ♗g7 13.♗d2 0–0 14.♗a5 ♜c8 15.♗c1± with great positional compensation for the pawn, Nikitin – Chuprikov, Russia 2008.

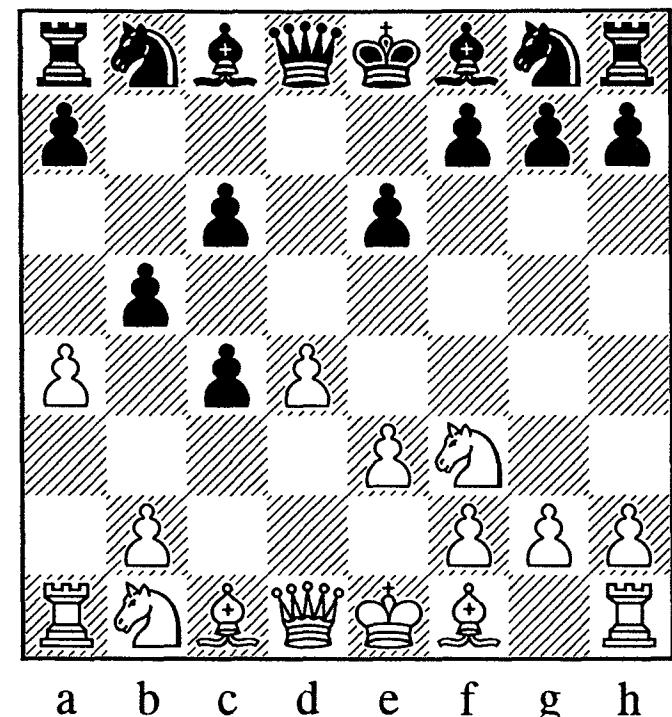
9.b3

9.a4 is another way to get good play for the pawn.

9...h6 10.♗ge4 b4 11.♗xf6† exf6 12.♗e4 f5 13.♗c5 c3 14.a3 ♗xc5 15.dxc5 ♗a6 16.♗c2 0–0 17.axb4 ♗xe2 18.♗xe2 ♜d5 19.♗c2 a5 20.bxa5 ♜xc5 21.♗d2 ♗a6 22.♗xc3±

Wang Yue – Zhang Pengxiang, Shandong 2007.

5.a4 e6



A key position that can also be reached from the Queen's Gambit Accepted. In fact, that is how it came about in this particular game. I changed the move order to make it fit, but in reality it was 1.c4 e6 2.♗f3 d5 3.d4 dxc4 4.e3 b5 5.a4 c6.

6.axb5

The most straightforward.

Interesting alternatives are 6.b3 and 6.♗c3.

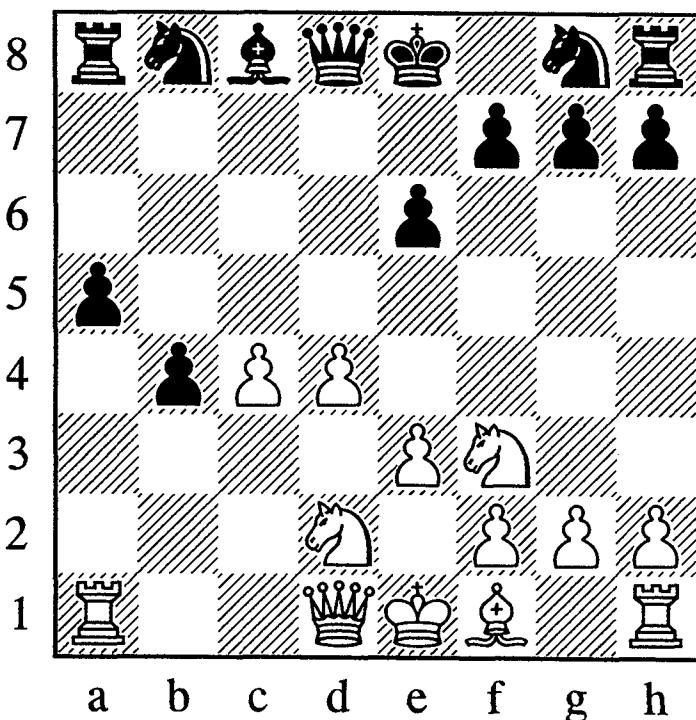
6...cxb5 7.b3

White wins the pawn back. If ...cxb3 then b5 hangs with check.

7...♗b4†

This forces complications, but it probably is an unsound approach. Even so, it was too late for safe alternatives. 7...♗f6 8.bxc4 bxc4 9.♗xc4± has been seen in several games. With good development, an extra pawn in the centre and a potential weakness on a7, White is better.

8.♗d2 ♗xd2† 9.♗bxsd2 a5 10.bxc4 b4



This is Black's cunning idea. He gets two connected passed pawns on the queenside, but they are not so dangerous. White is ahead in development and his big centre should count for more.

11.Qd3

11.Qe5 Qf6 12.Wa4† has been suggested, but after 12...Qfd7 13.c5 0-0 14.Qdc4 Qxe5 15.Qxe5 Qb7 16.c6 Qa6! 17.Qxa6 Wxa6 18.0-0 f6 19.Qd3 Wxc6 Black held in Adams – Rausis, Yerevan 1996. Furthermore Black can try 12...Qd7.

However White can also vary. After 11.Qe5 Qf6 interesting is 12.Qe2 0-0 13.Qf3 Wa6 14.0-0.

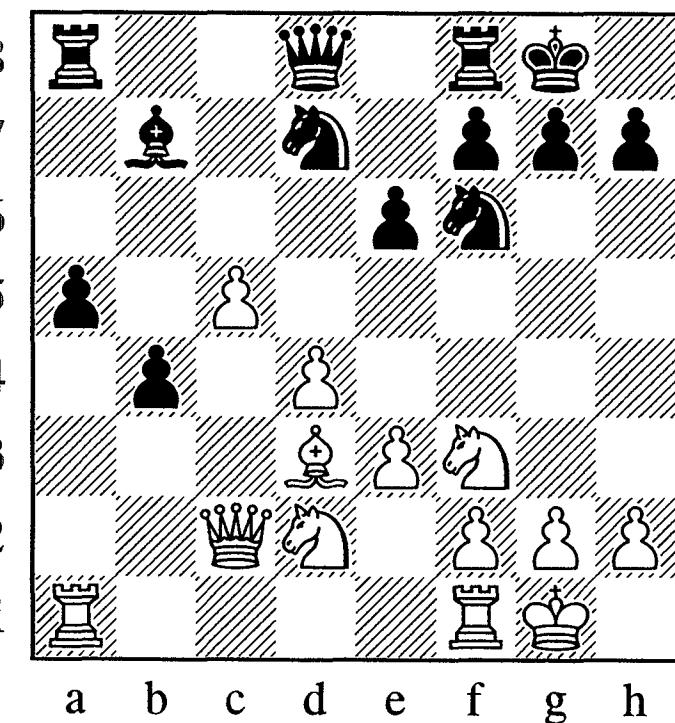
11...Qf6 12.0-0 0-0 13.Wc2

A good alternative is 13.e4 e5 14.Wc2! exd4 15.e5 Qfd7 16.Qxh7† Wh8 17.Qe4 when the d4-pawn is weak. 17...Wa6 18.Qb3 Wc7 19.Qfe1 a4 20.Qbxd4 Qxe5 21.Qxa4† Qxf3† 22.Qxf3 Wxa4 23.Wxa4 Wxc4 This was Kakageldyev – Ivanov, Ashkhabad 1996, and now 24.Wa5! with the threat Wh5† was very strong.

13...Qbd7

If 13...Qb7 then 14.e4 creates a big centre: 14...Qh5 15.e5 h6 16.Qh7† Wh8 17.Qe4† Lannaioli – Raessler, corr. 2002.

14.c5 Qb7



15.Qb5

15.e4 h6 16.Qb5 Wc7 17.Qa2 Qc6?! 18.Qxc6 Wxc6 19.Qfa1 was very good for White in L.B. Hansen – Engqvist, Gausdal 1990, but Black should have tried 17...Qa6.

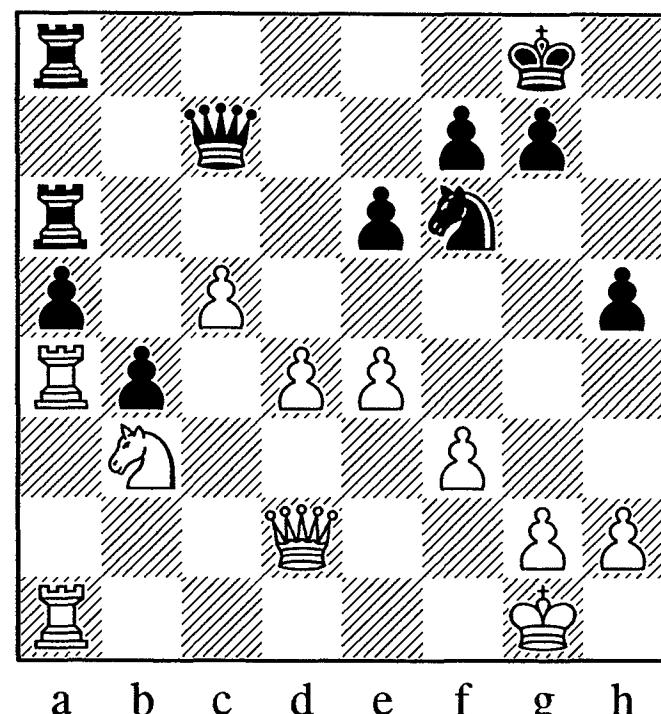
15...Wc7 16.Qfc1 Qc6 17.Qxc6 Wxc6 18.Qa4!

Blockading the pawns.

18...Wa6 19.Qcal Qfa8 20.Qb3 Wc7 21.e4±

The black pawns are effectively blocked; now the big white centre can show its muscles.

21...Qb8 22.Qe5 Qc6 23.Qxc6 Wxc6 24.f3 Wc7 25.Wd2 h5?!



26.d5!

The breakthrough.

26...exd5 27.exd5 h4 28.d6 $\mathbb{W}c6$ 29. $\mathbb{W}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 30. $\mathbb{B}xa5$ h3 31. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{B}xa5$ 32. $\mathbb{B}xa5$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{B}xa5$ 34. $\mathbb{W}xg7\#$

1–0

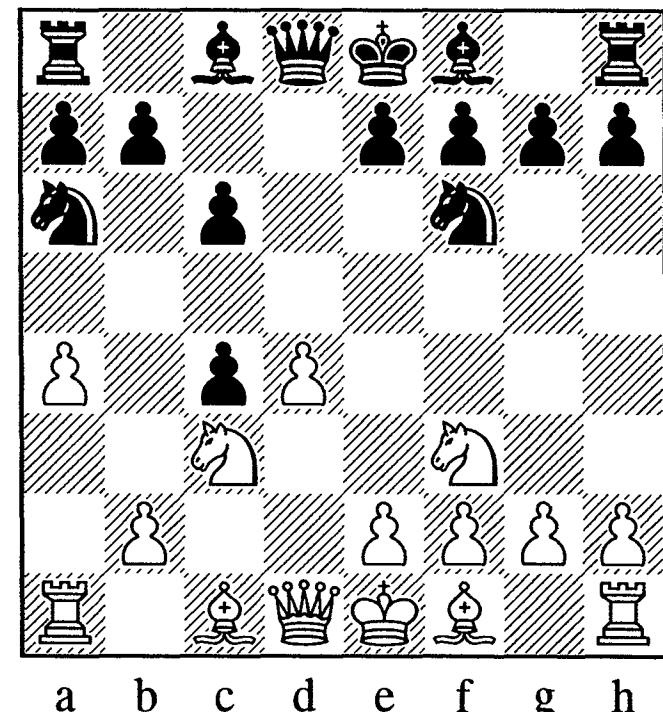
Conclusion: It is risky for Black to give up the centre with 3...dxc4 and 4...b5. The black pawns on the queenside can be blocked while the white centre is much more dynamic.

The 5... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ Variation**Game 21**

Mikhalevski – Rabinovich

Dieren 1999

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ dxc4 5.a4 $\mathbb{Q}a6$



A sideline, but not without its logic. The knight has a fine square on b4 and the bishop can still be developed to an active post at g4. The drawback is that White gets the chance to grab the centre. A chance he should definitely take.

6.e4 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$

Destroying the white pawn chain. Playing more quietly with 7...e6 8.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 0–0 10. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 11. $\mathbb{B}ac1$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 12.h3 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}fd1\pm$ looks like a more typical Slav position, where White has the usual better chances due to his extra space.

8.gxf3 e6

8... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 9.0–0 e6 10. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 11. $\mathbb{B}g1$ h6 12. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 0–0–0 13. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ also seemed promising for White in Avrukh – Kogan, Israel 2008.

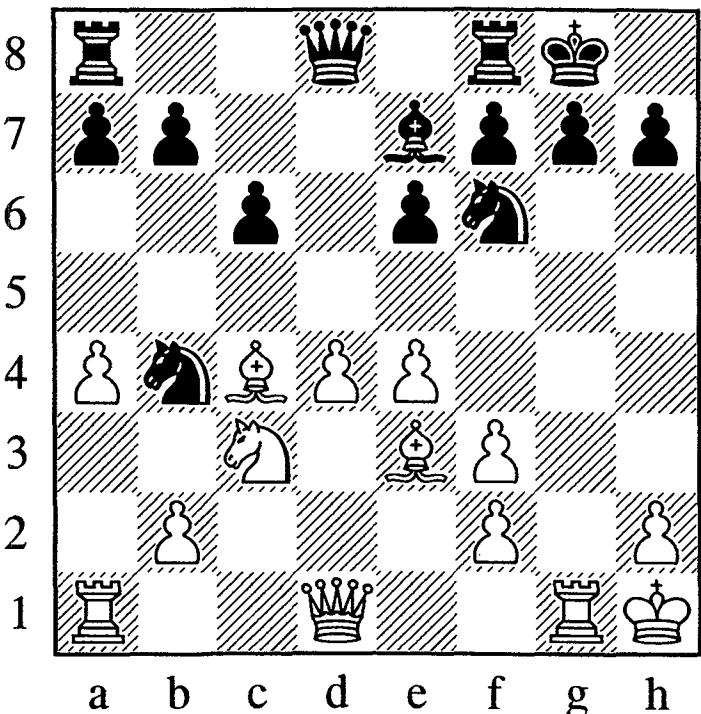
It is easier for White to get something going against the black king than the other way around.

9. $\mathbb{Q}e3$

White could wait a little with this move. 9.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ 0–0 11. $\mathbb{B}g1$ g6 12.f4 is a good alternative, for instance 12... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 13. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{B}ad8$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 15. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 16.a5! seemed very promising for White in Rogozenko – Shirov, Germany 2001.

9... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 10.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}h1$!

Once again we see this instructive manoeuvre.

11...0–0 12. $\mathbb{B}g1$ 

The rook gets to the open file and hits Black's king position.

12... $\hat{h}8$

The king steps out of the way; 12...g6 13.f4 just increases the problems.

13.f4 c5

Black naturally tries to find counterplay.

14.dxc5 $\hat{w}c8$

14... $\hat{w}c7$ is worse: 15.e5 $\hat{d}7$ Stefansson – Gretarsson, Alborg 1998, and now 16. $\hat{b}5$ $\hat{w}c6\#$ 17. $\hat{g}2$ $\hat{d}xc5$ 18. $\hat{d}6$ b6 (or 18... $\hat{x}d6$ 19.exd6 with the idea $\hat{w}d4$) 19.f5 gives White a strong initiative.

15.e5 $\hat{d}7$

The intermediate check with 15... $\hat{w}c6\#$ is nothing: 16. $\hat{g}2$ $\hat{d}ad8$ 17. $\hat{w}b3$ $\hat{d}fd5$ 18. $\hat{b}5$ $\hat{w}c7$ 19. $\hat{e}4$ Black has not regained the pawn.

In his notes for ChessBase the winner suggested 15... $\hat{d}fd5$, but it is refuted by 16. $\hat{x}d5!$ exd5 17. $\hat{b}5$ $\hat{w}xc5$ 18. $\hat{c}1$ b6 19. $\hat{d}6$ $\hat{w}c6$ 20. $\hat{d}4\pm$.

16. $\hat{e}4$ b6?!

On 16... $\hat{d}xc5$ White had 17. $\hat{d}6$, but 16... $\hat{w}c6$ should have been tried. Now White gets a promising attacking position.

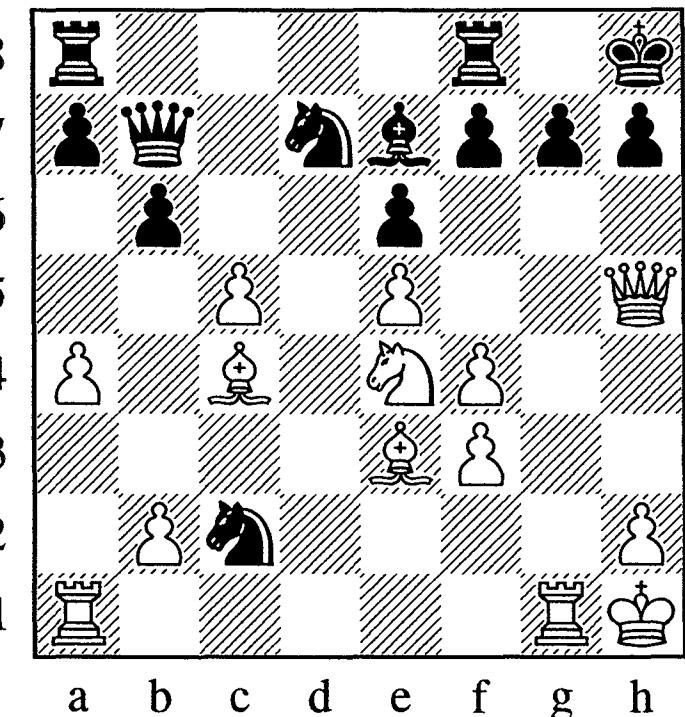
17. $\hat{w}h5!$ $\hat{w}b7$

Or 17... $\hat{d}xc5$ 18. $\hat{w}xc5$ bxc5 19. $\hat{g}3!$ with overwhelming threats. The other rook can come to g1 and the rook on the third rank can switch to h3 as well.

18.f3

Now Black had to try 18...g6, but he totally misses White's biggest threat.

18... $\hat{d}c2?$



19. $\hat{g}xg7!$

A powerful finish.

19... $\hat{d}xg7$ 20. $\hat{d}f6!$

The king cannot get away and will be mated on h7.

20... $\hat{d}xf6$ 21. $exf6\#$ $\hat{d}xf6$ 22. $\hat{g}g1\#$ $\hat{h}h8$ 23. $\hat{d}d3$

1–0

Conclusion: The 5... $\hat{d}a6$ variation is a little passive. White takes the centre with 6.e4 and if Black later disrupts White's pawn structure with ... $\hat{d}xf3$ then after gxf3 the rook quickly comes to the g-file with direct attacking chances. All in all, a very pleasant variation for White.

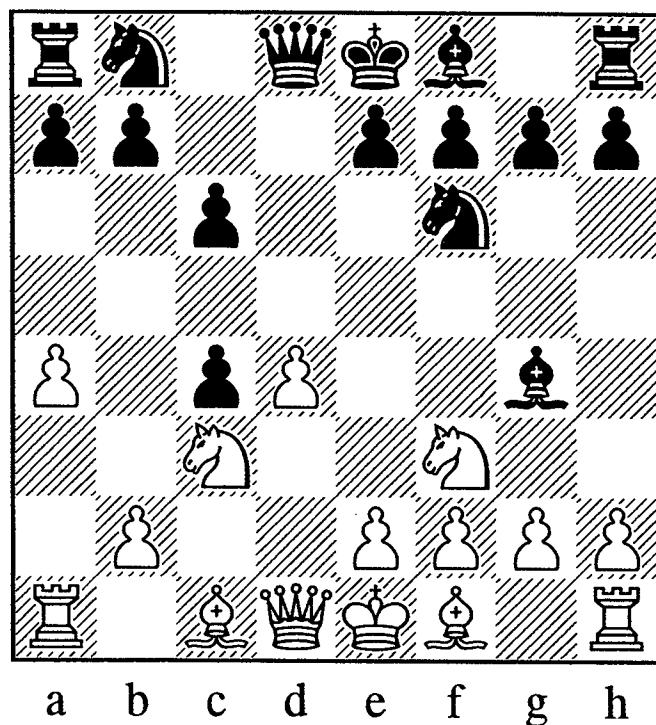
The 5... $\hat{d}g4$ Variation

Game 22

Coleman – Tait

Correspondence 1994

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3. $\hat{d}f3$ $\hat{d}f6$ 4. $\hat{d}c3$ dxc4 5.a4
 $\hat{g}4$



Black gets the bishop out. Of course White can take the centre with 6.e4, but it is even more tempting to win a tempo on the newly developed piece.

6.Qe5 ♖h5

The standard move. However White should be aware of the tricky line:

6...♝bd7?!

With the point 7.♝xg4 ♜xg4 8.e4 e5! 9.♝xg4 exd4 with good compensation for the piece. This line was suggested by Palliser as a surprise weapon for Black in *Dangerous Weapons: The Queen's Gambit*. A safe choice for White is 8.e3 ♜gf6 9.♝xc4 e6 10.0-0 ♖b4 which looks like a normal Slav where Black has given up his light-squared bishop for a knight. His structure is solid, but with the pair of bishops and more space White should be better after something like 11.♝c2 0-0 12.♜d1 ♕a5 13.e4±.

White can just take the pawn back with:

7.♝xc4

After:

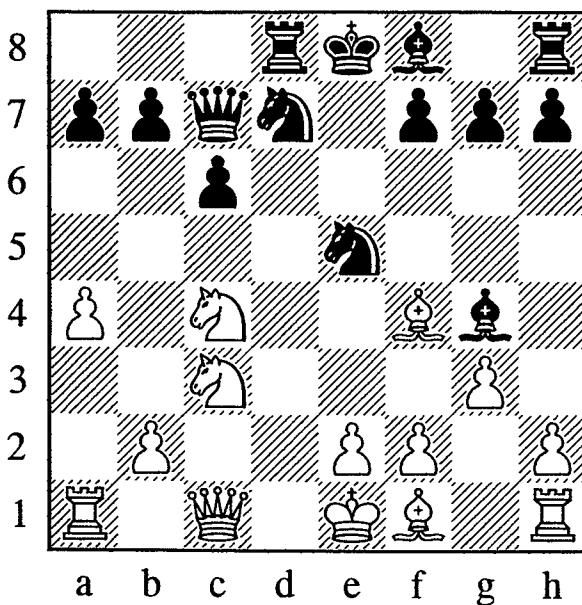
7...♝c7 8.g3 e5 9.dxe5 ♜xe5 10.♝f4

Play is very similar to the ♖f5-Slav which will be covered below.

10...♜d8

10...♝fd7? 11.♝xe5 ♜xe5 12.♝d4 highlights the difference: the bishop on g4 hangs.

11.♝c1 ♜fd7



Now Palliser's analysis goes: 12.♝xe5 ♜xe5 13.♝e3 f6 14.f4 ♜e6! Which seems fine for Black, for instance: 15.b3 b6 16.fxe5 ♜c5 17.♝c1 ♜xc4 18.bxc4 ♕xe5 and Black has compensation.

In light of this, the simple 12.♝g2 springs to mind. It must be better for White, but the position should be carefully compared with the ♖f5-lines.

7.f3

Preparing to seize the centre.

7...♝fd7

The refined move.

On 7...e6 White could continue automatically with 8.e4 but there is a more interesting possibility:

8.g4!

And now there are three options:

8...♝fd7 9.h4 ♜e7 10.♝e3 ♜xe5 11.dxe5 ♜xh4† 12.♝xh4 ♜xh4† 13.♝f2 ♜h2 14.♝e4 ♜xe5 Beliavsky – Cornette, Linares 2003. 15.♝d6† ♜e7 16.♝xc4 ♜d5 17.♝b3± ♜d8 18.♝xb7† ♜d7 19.e4 ♜g5 20.gxh5 White is winning material.

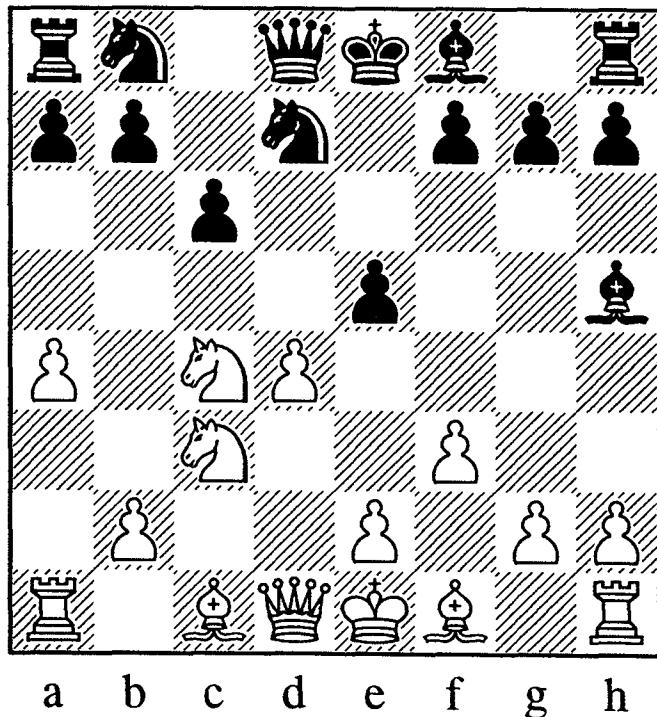
8...♝d5 9.e4 ♜h4† 10.♝e2 ♜xc3† 11.bxc3 ♜g6

After 11...f6 12.♘xc4 ♕f7 13.♘e3 the black queen is feeling uncomfortable.

12.♕f4 ♘d7 13.♗b1 0–0–0 14.♕g3 ♘f6
15.♘xc4 h5 16.♕h3 h4 17.♘d6† ♕xd6
18.♕xd6 ♘g5 19.♗b4± Joppich – Kribben,
corr. 2005.

8...♗g6 9.h4 h6 10.♘xg6 fxg6 11.e4 c5
Sosonko – Timman, Tilburg 1983, and now
12.d5! exd5 13.e5 is very promising.

8.♘xc4 e5



A typical counter-strike.

9.e4

If White takes the pawn with 9.♘xe5 ♘xe5 10.dxe5 then 10...♘d7 11.f4 ♘b4 follows with great compensation.

The big mainline is 9.♘e4 ♘b4† 10.♘d2 ♘e7 when the simplest is 11.♘xe5 ♘xe5 12.dxe5 ♘d7 13.♘d6† ♕xd6 14.exd6 ♘xd6 15.♗c3± with the pair of bishops in an open position.

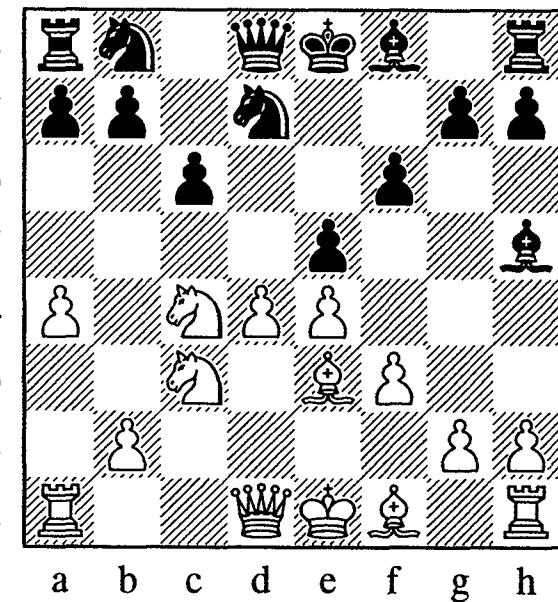
However, after some study, I like 9.e4 more and more. It has been neglected by theory basically because the complications have been misjudged. In fact it is very poisonous, as some correspondence games show.

9...♗h4†

The main move, but after this game Black will probably be forced to search in new directions:

9...exd4 10.♗xd4 is no good: White is positionally dominant.

9...f6 10.♘e3



10...♗f7

10...♗b4 is also possible, but White can secure an edge in various ways. For example:
11.dxe5 ♘xe5 12.♗b3 ♘e7 13.♘xe5 fxe5
14.♗c4± Romanko – Sergienko, Russia
2008.

11.♘e2

11.a5±, taking b6 from the black knight, is a good alternative.

11...♗b6 12.d5 ♘8d7

The wild 12...♘xd5 13.exd5 cxd5 is countered by 14.♗b3! dxс4 15.♗xb7 ♘d7
16.0–0–0 ♘c8, Zpevakova – Dolgov, corr.
2002, and now 17.f4 to open lines looks very strong.

13.0–0

Maybe better is 13.a5 ♘xc4 14.♗xc4 ♘c5
15.♗xc5 ♘xc5 16.b4 when White has taken over the initiative: 16...♘d7 17.0–0 0–0
18.♗d3 and White's extra space gives room for optimism.

13...♘xc4 14.♗xc4 ♘c5 15.♗xc5 ♘xc5 16.a5
0–0 17.b4 cxd5 18.♗xd5 ♘xd5 19.♗xd5 ♘e6

20.♕c1 ♜h8 21.♕c7 ♜xc7 22.♗xd8 ♜fxd8
23.♗xc7

White had the more active rook in Izeta Txabarri – Lima, Leon 1997, but Black held the game.

9...♝b4 10.dxe5 0–0 11.♝e3

Just developing. White has also had success with the sharper moves 11.h4 and 11.♝f4.

11...♛e7 12.♝e2 ♜xe5 13.♗xe5 ♛xe5

14.0–0± ♛e7

Or 14...♜xc3 15.bxc3 ♛xc3 16.♝d4 with excellent compensation.

15.a5 ♜d7 16.♗b3 ♜c5 17.♗xc5 ♜xc5 18.♗c4

♝ad8 19.♗fd1 ♜h8 20.♗b4 ♜de8 21.♗f1 f6

22.♗a4 ♜xa4 23.♗xe7 ♜xe7 24.♗xa4 ♜f7

25.♗d6 ♜c7 26.♗ad4 ♜g8 27.♗d7 ♜xd7

28.♗xd7 ♜b8 29.b4±

With a great ending, Grischuk – Korotylev, Moscow 2006.

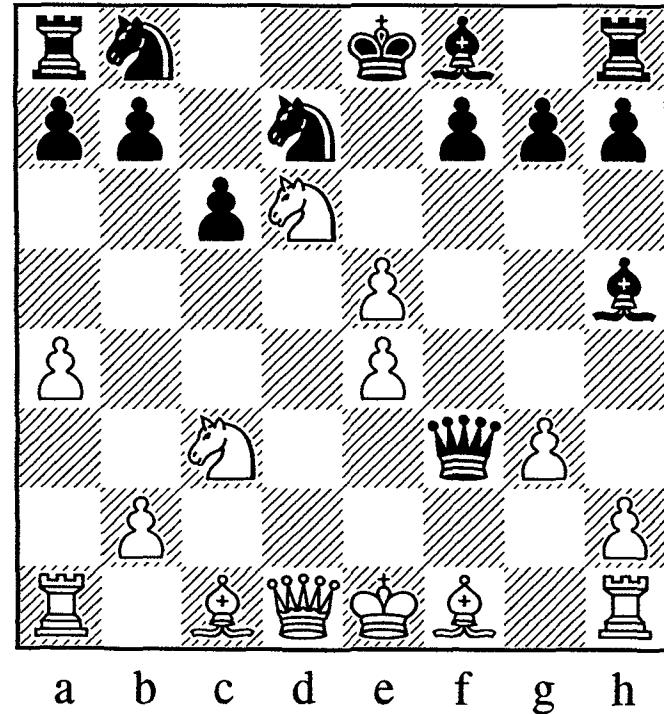
10.g3

10.♝e2 is interesting and probably also fine, but White can already force matters.

10...♛f6 11.dxe5 ♛xf3

11...♝xe5 is very rarely tried. Probably because 12.♗xe5 ♛xe5 13.♝f4 gives White very good play, for instance 13...♛a5 14.h4 h6 15.g4 ♜g6 16.h5 ♜h7 17.♗b3±.

12.♝d6†



12...♚d8

The alternatives are not attractive:

12...♜xd6 13.♗xd6! ♛xh1

Black has a rook more, but after:

14.♗g5

His king is in dire straits. In fact White wins by brutal force:

14...f6 15.exf6 ♜xf6

Or 15...gxsf6 16.♗xf6 ♜xf6 17.♗e6†.

16.♗xf6 gxsf6 17.♗e6† ♜f8

Or 17...♚d8 18.♗xf6† ♜c7 19.♗e5† ♜d7 20.♗xh5 followed by castling long.

18.♗xf6† ♜g8 19.♗g5† ♜g6 20.0–0–0 ♛f3

21.♗e7

The most precise.

21...♝a6 22.♗c4† ♜f7 23.♗d7 ♜g7

23...♝f8 24.♗g5#

24.♗g5† ♜f8 25.♗xb7 1–0

Vayser – Wickens, corr. 1990. Material will soon be pouring in. A possible continuation is:

25...♝b8 26.♗h6† ♜g8 27.♗xf7† ♛xf7

28.♗xf7 ♜xf7 29.e5

The other move also fails to impress:

12...♝e7

Again White should be ready to sacrifice the rook:

13.♗b3 ♜c5 14.♗c4 ♛xh1 15.♗xc5

It does not look nice for the black king.

15...♝d7 16.♗g5† f6 17.exf6† gxsf6 18.♗xf6†!

♝xf6 19.♗e5† ♜d7 20.♗f5† ♜e7 21.e5! ♛f3

22.exf6† ♜xd6 23.♗d1† ♛xd1†

Losing, but 23...♜c7 24.♛a5† b6 25.♛e5† leads to mate.

24.♗xd1 ♜e8† 25.♗f2 ♜e5 26.♗f4 ♜xd1

27.♗c4 c5 28.f7 ♜g7 29.♗d2† ♜c7 30.♗xd1

h5 31.♗d3 ♜d8 32.♗g6 ♜f8 33.♗f6 ♜d6

34.♗f3 ♜f8 35.h3 ♜e1 36.g4 ♜h1 37.g5

♜xh3† 38.♗f2 ♜h2† 39.♗g1 ♜h4 40.♗e6 ♜f4

41.♗f5 c4 42.g6 ♜c5† 43.♗g2 ♜f2† 44.♗g3

h4† 45.♗xh4 ♜h2† 46.♗g3 1–0

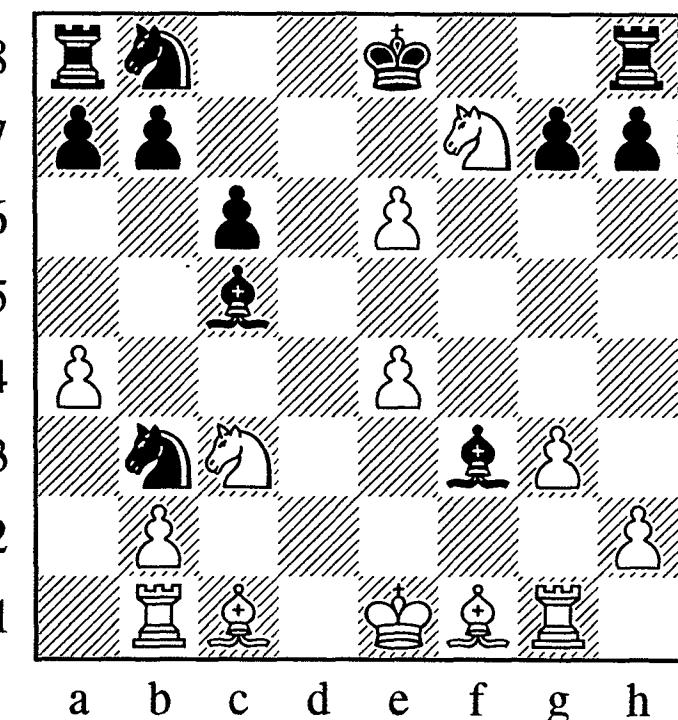
Pastore – Dolgov, corr. 2002.

13. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 15. $e6!$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$
Not 15... $\mathbb{Q}xh1?$ 16. $exd7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xh8.$

16. $\mathbb{E}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$

Attacking the other white rook. If Black saves his own with 16... $\mathbb{E}g8$ then White just plays 17. $\mathbb{Q}c4\pm$.

17. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$



Again attacking a rook! Like before, bad is 17... $\mathbb{E}g8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c4$.

18. $\mathbb{Q}xh8$

White had finally had enough.

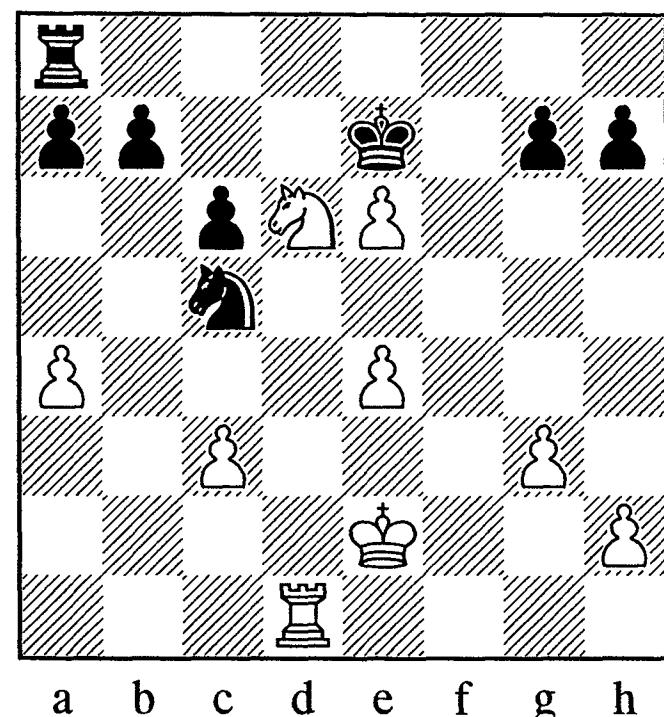
Interesting was 18. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg1$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ $\mathbb{E}f8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ which looks crushing. To begin with, $\mathbb{Q}g5\#$ is a threat. 21... $h6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ and now $\mathbb{Q}d6\#$. It seems winning.

**18... $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 19. $\mathbb{E}xc1$ $\mathbb{Q}xg1$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$
21. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$**

The two players played a theme match in this variation. Also tried was 21... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ but after 22. $\mathbb{E}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 23. $\mathbb{E}f7$ it was even worse.

22. $\mathbb{Q}f7$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 23. $\mathbb{E}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 24. $bxc3$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$
Not 24... $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xb7.$

25. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$



26. $\mathbb{Q}xb7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$

26... $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 27. $\mathbb{E}d7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 28. $\mathbb{E}xb7$ is a lost rook ending, but 26... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ was the best chance to stay in the game.

27. $\mathbb{E}d7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 28. $\mathbb{E}xg7$

Now White is a clear pawn up.

28... $a5$

Or 28... $\mathbb{Q}xc3\#$ 29. $\mathbb{E}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 30. $\mathbb{E}xh7.$

**29. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}c5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 31. $\mathbb{E}xh7$ a4
32. $\mathbb{E}c7$**
1-0

Conclusion: The once popular 5... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ faces a serious crisis after 6. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 7. $f3$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $e5$ 9. $e4$.

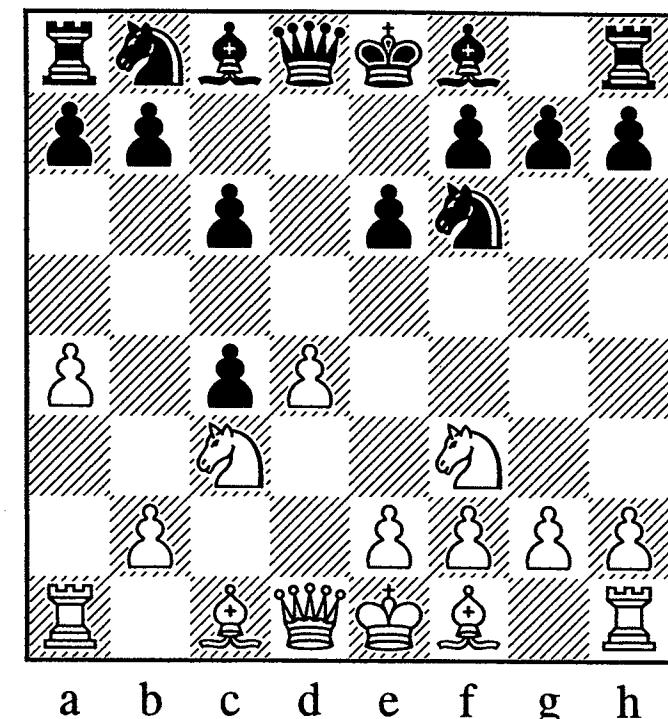
The 5...e6 Variation

Game 23

Eljanov – Drozdovskij

Ukraine (2) 2006

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $dxc4$ 5. a4 e6



A very solid way of playing that has become quite popular recently.

6.e4

The natural move – White grabs the centre at once. But be aware that this move is actually a double-edged pawn sacrifice. The great majority of White players continue with the safer 6.e3, planning to take on c4 with the bishop just like in the Queen's Gambit Accepted. And after 6...c5 7.♗xc4 ♘c6 8.0–0 cxd4 9.exd4 ♘e7 that is exactly what we have: a position from the QGA. The difference is that the white pawn is on a4 instead of a2. Black intends to exploit this fact by the manoeuvre ...♝c6-b4 and eventually to d5. Even the problem bishop can get an active role after ...♝c8-d7-c6. All in all, Black's position has proved to be very solid and he has good chances to keep the balance. However, White has by far the easier play: he has more space and some initiative in a typical isolated queen's pawn middlegame. Moves such as 10.♘e2, 10.♗g5 and 10.♕e1 have all been tried with success. It is worth investigating further and having one of these lines in reserve, as a second serve may pay off, but as our main line I have chosen the much less explored and more confrontational 6.e4.

6...♝b4

Attacking e4. Black must go in for the fight, as 6...c5 7.♗xc4 is simply good for White.

7.e5

The most forcing. Good alternatives are 7.♘c2 and 7.♗g5. In all cases White has decent compensation.

7...♝d5

The great attacking player Alekhine was confronted three times with:

7...♝e4 8.♘c2 ♘d5

He simply continued:

9.♗e2

Planning to castle. Black is badly coordinated and behind in development.

9...c5

9...0–0 10.0–0 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 ♘e7 12.♗d2 c5 13.♗xc4 ♘d8 14.♘e4 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♘d7 16.♗d3 g6 17.♗a3± Alekhine – Helling, Dresden 1936.

10.0–0 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 cxd4 12.cxd4

Later he varied with 12.♗xd4 ♘c5 13.♗f3 ♘d7 14.♗d1 ♘c6 15.♗xc4± Alekhine – Bogoljubow, Nottingham 1936, when 15...♗xf2† 16.♗xf2 ♘xc4 17.♗a3 would have left the black king stranded in the centre.

12...c3 13.♗d2 ♘a5 14.♗xc3 ♘xc3 15.♗a3 ♘c6 16.♗xc3 ♘d7 17.♗b1±

Alekhine – Euwe, Holland (19) 1935.

8.♗d2 b5

The most straightforward. The alternatives are inferior:

8...♗xc3 9.bxc3 b5 10.♗g5

This is a much better version of the main game for White. It can quickly be transformed into an attack. For example:

10...h6

10...f6 11.exf6 ♘xf6 12.♗e2 a6 13.♗f3 with annoying pressure. Black blundered with

13...h6 14.♕h5†! ♜xh5 15.♗xh5† ♔d7 16.♘f7 ♕e8 17.♗g6 ♕g8 18.♗f4 and White was completely winning in yet another Alekhine game, Alekhine – Bogoljubow, Germany 1929.

11.♘e4 0–0 12.♗h5 ♕e7 13.♗g5! ♕c7 14.♘f6†!

Winning by force.

14...♘xf6 15.exf6 ♕d8 16.h4 ♕d5 17.fxg7 ♕e4† 18.♔e2 ♕e8 19.♗xh6 ♕h7 20.♗xh7† ♔xh7 21.axb5 ♔b7 22.♗xc4 ♗xg7 23.h5 cxb5 24.♗xb5 ♕xg2 25.h6† ♔h7 26.♗g1 ♔c6 27.♗f6 ♕xb5 28.♗g7† 1–0

Weber – Rizzi, corr. 1999.

8...♘xc3 9.bxc3 ♔e7 10.♗xc4

This is pleasant for White.

10...c5 11.♗e2 cxd4 12.cxd4 ♘c6 13.♗e4

With good centralization.

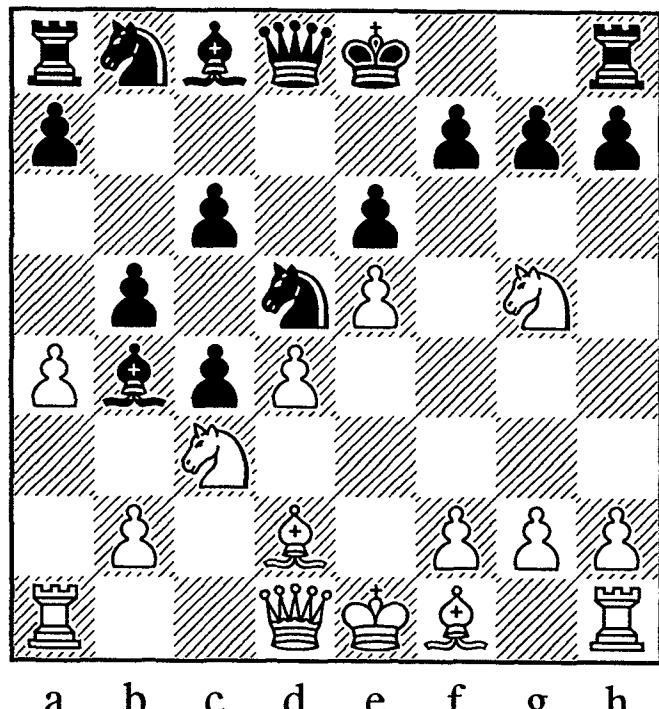
13...♔b4 14.♗a2

Maybe 14.♗d1 is more precise.

14...♗xd2† 15.♗xd2 ♘b4 16.♗b5† ♔f8

Dydyshko – Shvedchikov, Passau 1994, and now simply 17.0–0±. Black's king will be a source of concern.

9.♗g5?!



A very aggressive idea. 9.axb5 ♘xc3 10.bxc3 cxb5 11.♗g5 ♘c6 12.♗h5 ♕e7 13.♔e2 b4 gives Black adequate counterplay.

But the immediate 9.♔e2 with long-term compensation is of course possible.

9...♔e7

A good defensive move. Very dangerous is 9...0–0 10.♗c2 f5 11.exf6 ♘xf6 12.♔e2 with good compensation. 12...♕e7 13.0–0 ♔b7 14.♗g4! h6 15.♗xe6† ♔h8 16.♗ae1 hxg5 17.♗xg5 White had very powerful play for the piece in Jakubowski – Loeffler, Gausdal 2005.

One of the experts of this line, the Israeli grandmaster Postny, has tried 9...♕e7. After 10.h4 ♘d7 11.♔e2 c5! Black liberates himself: 12.♗xb5 cxd4 13.0–0 d3 14.♗f3 0–0 15.♗xb4 ♕xb4 16.♗xd5 exd5 17.♗c7 ♘xe5 18.♗xa8 ♕b8† Rodshtein – Postny, Israel 2008. 10.h4 was too nonchalant. White should instead try 10.♔e2, which looks good. A tempo is very important.

Speaking of a tempo, 9...h6 just helps the knight to get to e4.

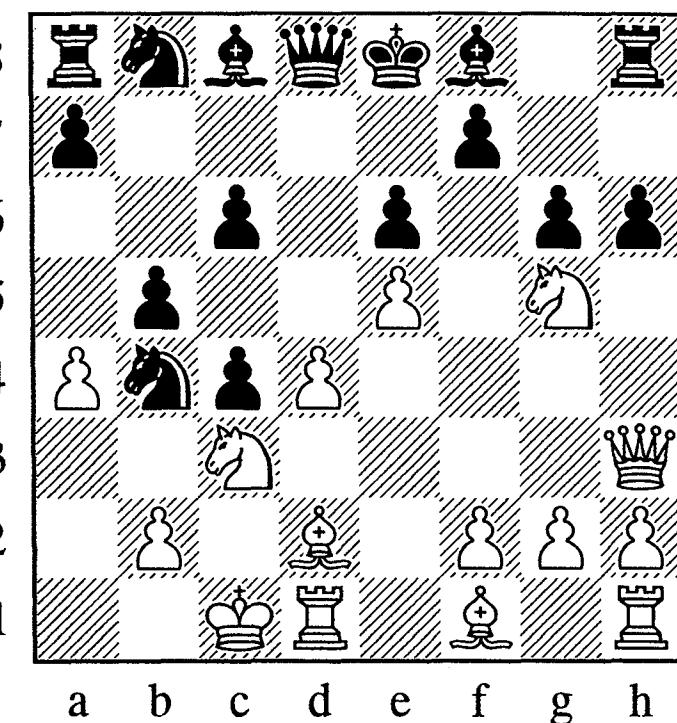
10.♗h5 g6 11.♗h6 ♘b4

Safer was 11...♔f8 12.♗h3 ♔e7 inviting a repetition. White declines of course! 13.♗ce4 f5 14.exf6 ♘xf6 was Vazquez Igarza – Gonzalez Garcia, Casar de Caceres 2007, and now I like 15.♗c5. The question is whether Black can enter the complications after 15...♕xd4 16.♗cxe6 ♕xb2. After 17.♗d1 the tension is high and a small inaccuracy would mean a zero on the scoreboard. A possible continuation is 17...♔b4 18.♗c7† ♔d8 19.♗g3 ♘bd7 20.♗xc4 bxc4 21.♗xb4 ♕xb4† 22.♔f1 with a strong attack for the piece and at least a draw.

12.0–0–0!

Time is crucial in such sharp positions. White develops and simultaneously protects against the fork on c2. The king's position is a bit open though, so you should be careful.

12...♝f8 13.♗h3 h6



A critical position. I believe White has two simple and very promising lines, and a third which just gives fair compensation. Unfortunately Eljanov chose the latter. Well, he did not have all the time he needed and a computer to aid him. He was not writing a book either, he was just playing a game.

14.♘ce4

14.axb5 ♕a5 15.♗xc4± or 14.♗ge4 ♔e7 15.axb5 ♕b6 16.♗xc4 ♕xd4 17.♕g4± both look good.

14...♔e7 15.axb5

15.♗d6† ♕xd6 16.exd6 ♘d5 17.♗e4 f5 seems fine for Black: 18.♗g5 ♕a5 19.♗c5 c3

15...♕a5

Black penetrates with his queen, and the game should end in a perpetual check.

16.♗xb4 ♕a1† 17.♗c2 ♕a4† 18.♔c1 ♕a1† 19.♔c2 ♕a4† 20.♔d2?!

The year this game was played, the Ukrainian Championship was organized as a knock-out tournament. Eljanov had lost the first game and had to play for a win, even if he knew it was suicidal.

20...♗xb4† 21.♔e3?

21.♔c1 was still a draw.

21...♕xd1

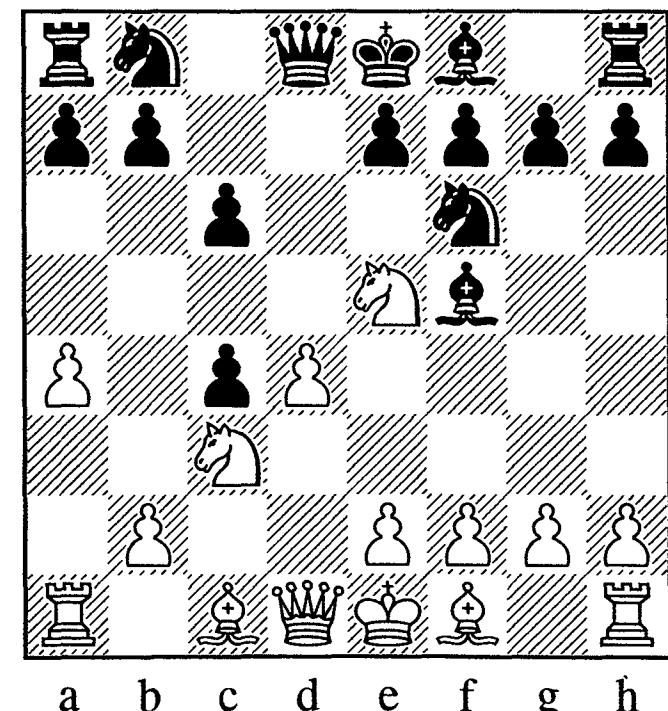
Now Black wins.

22.♗xc4 ♕xh1 23.♗xf7 ♕c1† 24.♔f3 ♕xf7 25.♗h4 g5 26.♗h5† ♔g7 27.g3 ♕xc4 0-1

Conclusion: The sharp gambit 6.e4 is worth a try. White quickly gets a great attacking position in most lines, but he should study Postny's 9...♗e7 which seems to be Black's best bet. However, even here, the new move 10.♗e2 gives White good compensation.

The Mainline: 5...♝f5 6.♘e5

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 ♕f5 6.♘e5



Black has two major lines. The complicated 6...e6 which will be covered in Part One, and the old 6...♗bd7 which will be covered in Part Two. Before that we will look at quite a tricky sideline: 6...♗a6 – see Game 24.

6...e6 7.f3

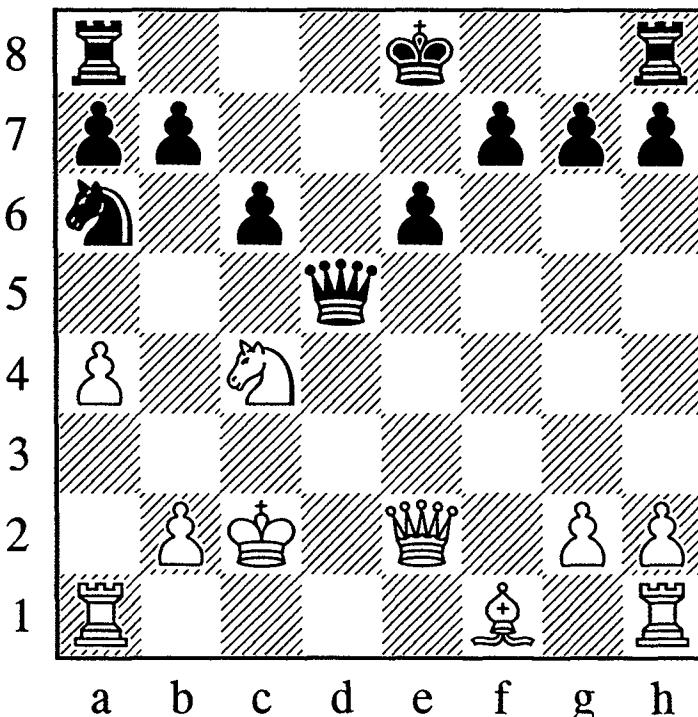
White prepares to take the centre with e4, shutting the black bishop out of the game.

7. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ c5 was nothing.

7... $\mathbb{Q}b4$

Black defends tactically. He allows White to carry out his plan because he has an interesting piece sacrifice ready. Instead of retreating, Black will part with the problem f5-bishop, get three pawns in the process, and at the same time force the white king out into the open. For a long time this sharp approach was considered satisfactory for Black, but in the computer age the advantage has definitely tipped to the white side and the popularity of this line has declined.

8.e4 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 9.fxe4 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xe4\#$ 12. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2\#$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{W}d5\#$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$



After some pretty forced moves (as I have no interest in trying to force a draw with 10. $\mathbb{W}f3$) we have arrived at this interesting position, which can be considered the starting point of the bishop sacrifice line. Apparently Black is very active and White has problems with both his king and his development. That is a superficial judgement though. In reality, White has good chances to untangle and in the long run, especially in endings, the bishop has proved to be stronger than the three pawns. This line was a vital part of Vladimir Kramnik's

White repertoire when the young Russian made his way into the world elite in the 90s. I have collected a trio of his games that show how he handles three different set-ups for Black: long castling, short castling or the direct assault 15...b5. They are Games 25-27. Enjoy.

Speaking of Kramnik, he has also influenced the black side and recently promoted a sideline.

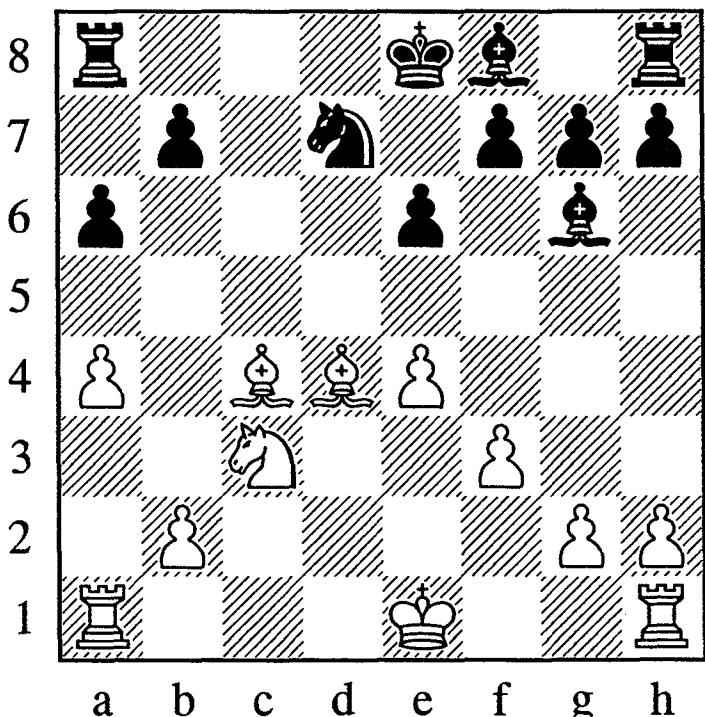
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $dxc4$ 5.a4 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ e6 7. $f3$ c5

This used to be considered dubious.

8.e4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$

But the bad reputation was because Black generally tried 8...cxd4, which is indeed rather loose. The bishop move was thought to be a positional disaster.

9. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ cxd4 10. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ a6



14. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$

The ending looks good for White but in the notorious World Championship match against Topalov, Kramnik drew fairly easily with Black. However White can safely press for the full point. See Game 28 if you want to know how it is best done.

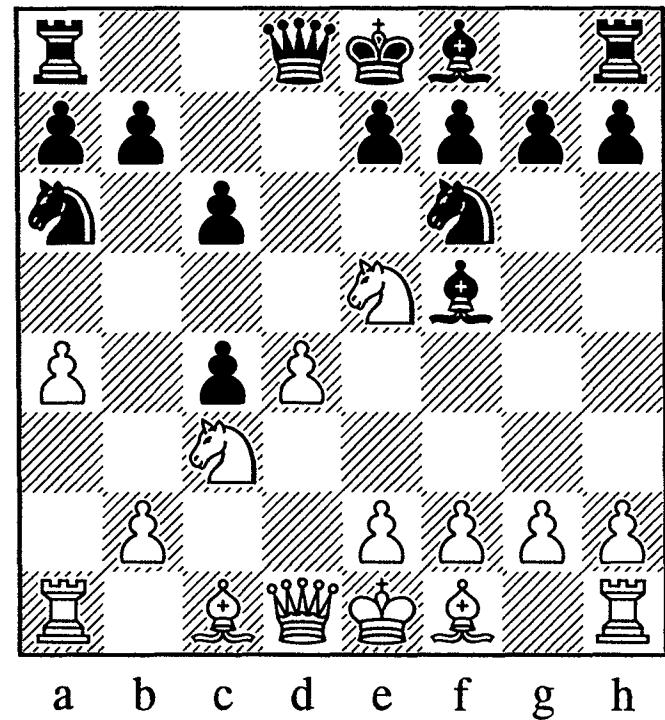
The 6... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ Variation

Game 24

Navrotescu – Itkis

Romania 1998

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ dx c 4 5.a4
 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$



A tricky line that scores quite well, but only because many White players answer automatically with 7.f3, but in this unusual case 7.e3 is the correct path.

7.e3

On 7.f3 Black plays 7... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ and gets good counterplay after 8. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ e5! with one point being 9.dxe5 $\mathbb{W}h4\#$ and ... $\mathbb{W}xc4$.

7... $\mathbb{Q}b4$

The idea: Black activates the knight and threatens ... $\mathbb{Q}c2\#$.

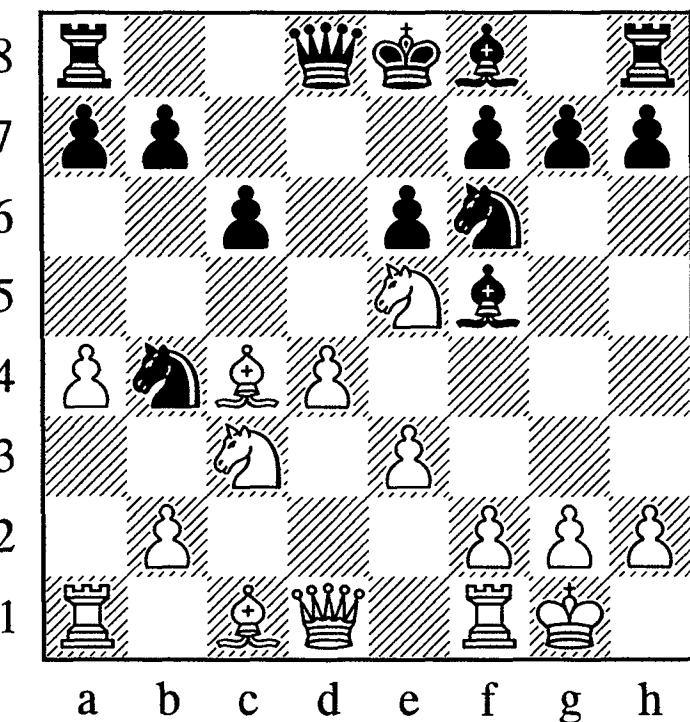
8. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$

White can also use tricks.

8...e6

Not 8... $\mathbb{Q}c2\#$ 9. $\mathbb{W}xc2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\#$.

9.0–0



9... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

The normal solid approach. There are two other possibilities, however they are somewhat speculative.

9... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 10. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 11. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

11... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ and now the new move 13. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ is very promising. For instance:
 13... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 14.dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 15. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xg7$
 $\mathbb{E}f8$ 17. $\mathbb{E}xf1$ $\mathbb{W}xd2$ 18. $\mathbb{E}d1$ $\mathbb{W}xd1\#$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$
 $\mathbb{Q}a1$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xe6!$ fxe6 21. $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{E}d8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}c3\pm$
 The queen and lots of pawns completely dominate the two rooks and knight.

12.dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}g4$

This used to be a pet line of Pia Cramling. She had to search for something else, because in this game her opponent refuted it!

13.e4! $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 14. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 15. $\mathbb{W}g3$

And there is trouble all over.

15...f6 16. $\mathbb{W}xg7$ $\mathbb{E}f8$ 17.exf5 $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xb7$
 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xh7$ $\mathbb{Q}6xf5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e3\pm$

White had a pawn more in Gyimesi – P. Cramling, Gibraltar 2006.

9... $\mathbb{Q}c2\?!$ 10. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$

This was recently played by Kramnik against Carlsen, although just in a blitz game! At least White should be able to get the standard advantage based on space.

11. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 12. a5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$
 14. $\mathbb{B}xa2$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 15. $\mathbb{B}d1$ 0–0 16. e4 $\mathbb{B}ad8$ 17. f3
 $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ f5 19. exf5 $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e5\pm$ c5?!

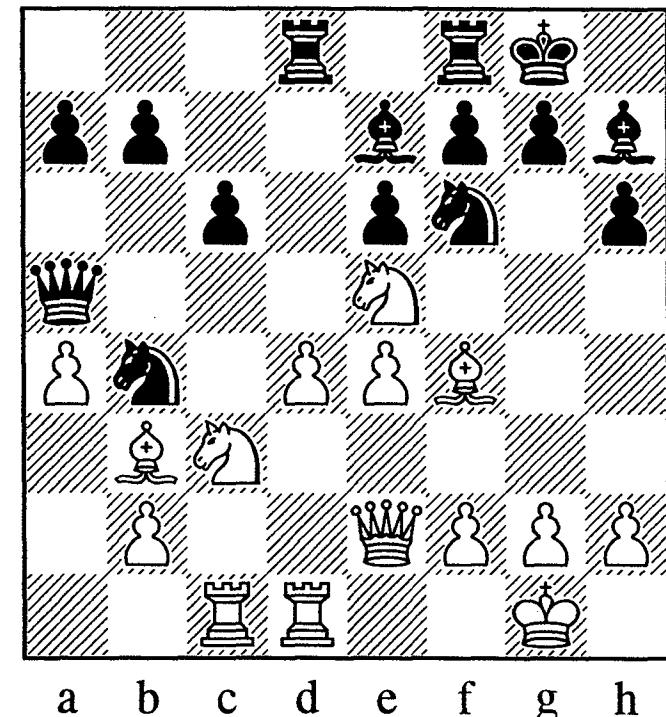
Carlsen – Kramnik, Moscow (blitz) 2008,
 and here the rising star missed the winning:
 21. g4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$!

10. $\mathbb{W}e2$ h6

Giving the bishop a retreat square. 10...0–0
 11. e4 $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 12. $\mathbb{B}d1$ 0–0 13. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ In addition to his space superiority White can take the bishop pair with $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ whenever he likes.

11. e4 $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 12. $\mathbb{B}d1$ 0–0 13. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}a5$
 13... $\mathbb{B}e8$ 14. $\mathbb{B}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ was too passive:
 15. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}g3\pm$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{B}ad8$
 18. h3 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ f6 20. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f4$
 $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 22. $\mathbb{W}b3$ and White was winning in Ruck – Ivanisevic, Kladovo 2001.

14. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{B}ad8$ 15. $\mathbb{B}ac1$



Black has great difficulties improving his position. The lack of space begins to tell, and the bishop on h7 is a headache that just won't go away.

15... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

Trying to exchange White's strong knight, but it can move in a new direction.

16. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}a6$

The queen found the last square available.

17. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$

On 17...c5 White's biggest problem is choosing between 18.d5 or 18.Qb5.

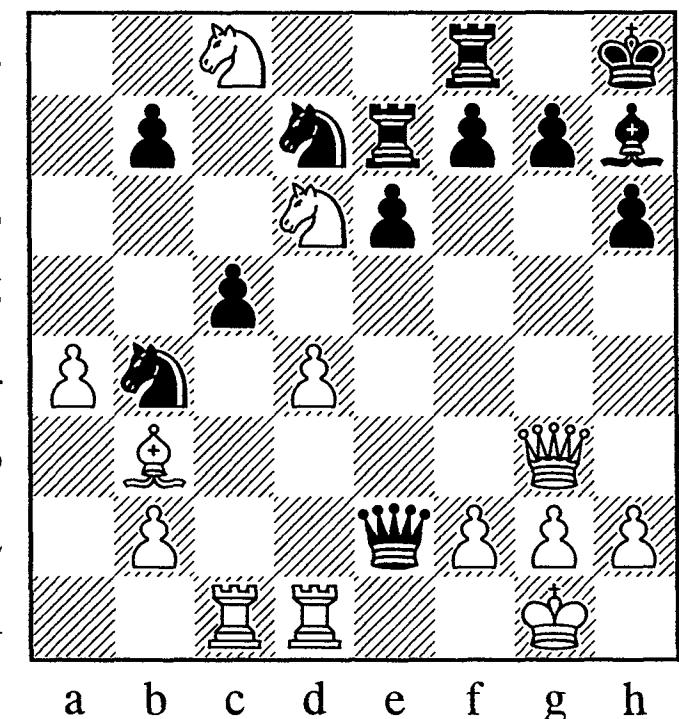
18. $\mathbb{Q}c7!$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{B}ce8$

. Not 19... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ attacking c8 and f7.

20. $\mathbb{W}g3$

The pressure is already decisive. Black tries to get some counterplay, but only hastens his downfall.

20...c5 21. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{B}xe7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{W}e2$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}ac8$



Trapping the rook.

25... $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 27. $\mathbb{B}xc1$ $cxd4$ 28. h4 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 29. f4

Unfortunately he missed the spectacular 29. $\mathbb{W}xe5!$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\#$ $\mathbb{B}xf7$ 31. $\mathbb{B}c8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}g6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$. In the end the extra piece decides, though the technical phase is not as convincing as the opening phase.

29... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $bxc6$ 31. $\mathbb{B}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 32. $\mathbb{B}c7$

32. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\#$! $\mathbb{B}xf7$ 33. $\mathbb{B}c8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ and game over.

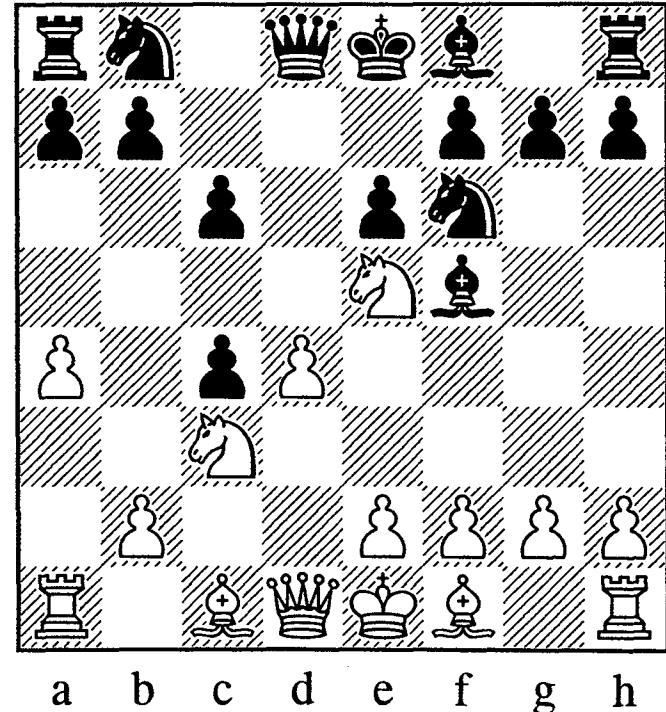
32... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ d3 34. f5 exf5 35. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 36. $\mathbb{B}xf7$ $\mathbb{B}xf7$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{W}xa4$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 40. $\mathbb{W}f3$ d2 41. $\mathbb{W}b3$ g5 42. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}d4$ 43. $\mathbb{W}g3$ g4# 44. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ h5 45. $\mathbb{W}c7$ $\mathbb{W}f2$ 46. $\mathbb{W}d8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 47. $\mathbb{W}g5$ $\mathbb{W}d4$ 48. $\mathbb{W}xh5\#$

1-0

Conclusion: 6... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ should be answered by 7. e3 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ threatening mate. White will castle next and get the usual advantage based on space.

The Mainline – Part One

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ dx c 4 5. a4 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ e6



It is time to study the mainline of 6...e6. As explained in the introduction to this chapter, the key position is on move 15. Black has to make a choice between 15...0–0–0, 15...0–0, or a more rare 15th move. We shall thus consider this line in three sections.

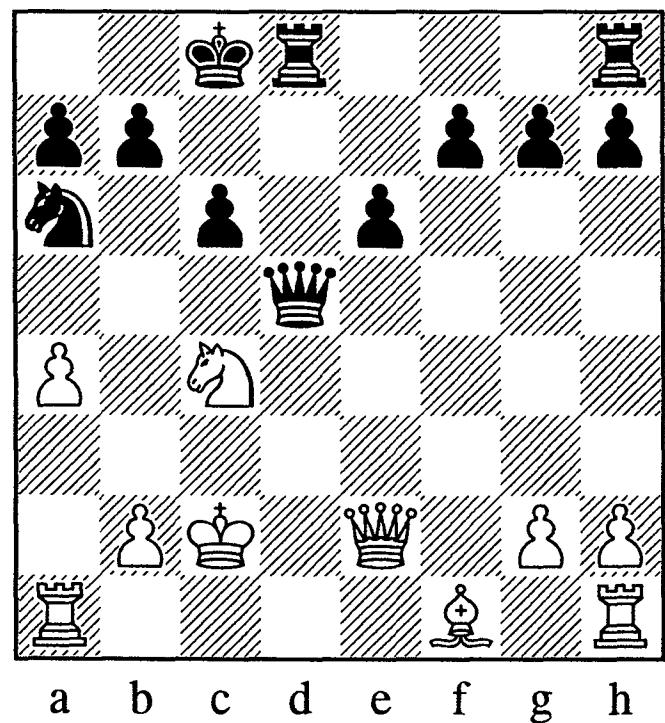
The Bishop Sacrifice – 15...0–0–0

Game 25

Kramnik – Shirov

Dortmund 1996

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ dx c 4 5. a4 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ e6 7. f3 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 8. e4 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 9. fxe4 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xe4\#$ 12. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2\#$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{W}d5\#$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 0–0–0



Black gets the king out of the way and activates a rook at the same time. Sounds good, but the drawback is that it will not be easy to create serious threats against the white monarch without weakening his own king's pawn shelter.

16. $\mathbb{W}e3$

Attacking a7. A refinement from the often tried 16. $\mathbb{W}e5$ f6 17. $\mathbb{W}e3$ when 17... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ e5 is quite solid for Black.

16... $\mathbb{Q}c5$

Black has alternatives:

16... c5

A solid choice, but a bit inflexible.

17. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}a3$

The king heads for some kind of safety.

19... $\mathbb{Q}b8$?! 20. $\mathbb{W}g3\#$ e5 21. $\mathbb{W}xg7$

Grabbing a pawn.

21...f5 22. $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{E}hg8$ 23. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{E}g6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}b3$

Eliminating the knight with a clear advantage.

25...b6 26. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ exd4 27. $\mathbb{W}b3$ d3 28. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{E}xd5$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{E}g4$ 30. $\mathbb{E}d1\#$ c4# 31. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ b5 32.b3 cxb3 33.axb5 $\mathbb{E}xb5$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{E}c5\#$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ $\mathbb{E}xg2$ 36. $\mathbb{E}df1$ $\mathbb{E}g5$ 37. $\mathbb{E}f3$

White wins the f5-pawn and holds onto his own last pawn, Schandorff – Jelling, Denmark 1996.

16... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 18.g4

This gives White a nice grip of the position.

18...f6 19. $\mathbb{E}hd1$ $\mathbb{W}g2$ 20. $\mathbb{E}xd8\#$ $\mathbb{E}xd8$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}xh2$ 22. $\mathbb{E}d1\pm$ $\mathbb{E}b8$ 23.a5 $\mathbb{Q}c7$

Black allows a spectacular finish:

24. $\mathbb{Q}b6\#$! axb6 25.axb6 $\mathbb{Q}a6$

25... $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 26. $\mathbb{E}a1\#$

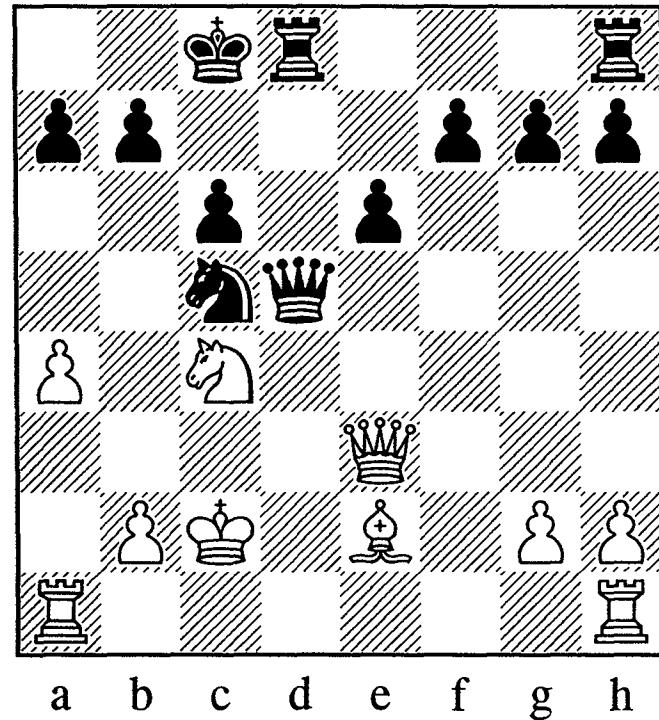
26. $\mathbb{E}a1$ $\mathbb{E}d8$ 27. $\mathbb{W}e7$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 28. $\mathbb{E}xa6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$

29. $\mathbb{W}xd6\#$ $\mathbb{E}xd6$ 30. $\mathbb{E}a3$

White won in Kramnik – Ki. Georgiev, Moscow (ol) 1994.

16... $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ c5 18. $\mathbb{E}c1$ transposes to 16...c5.

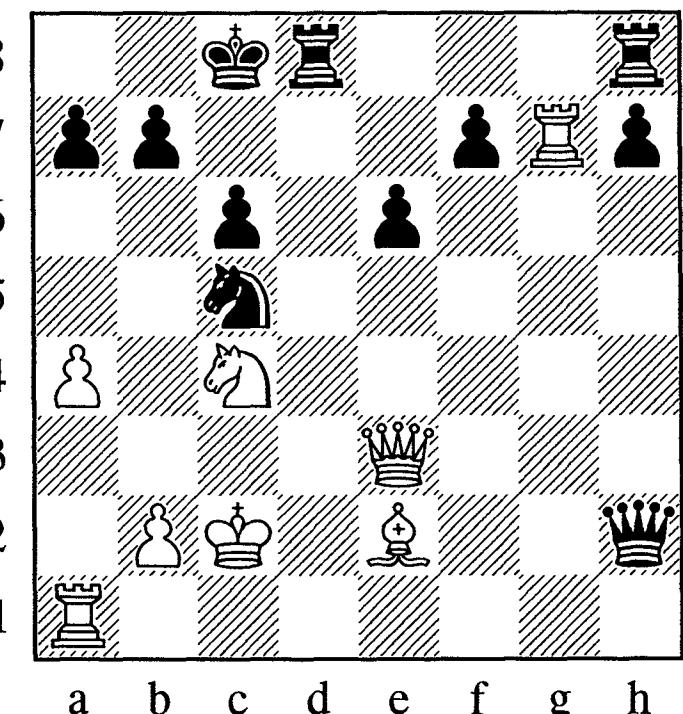
17. $\mathbb{Q}e2$



17... $\mathbb{W}xg2$

After 17... $\mathbb{W}f5\#$ the white king must do a little dance: 18. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}f6\#$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{E}d5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ but ends up in relative safety. 20... $\mathbb{E}hd8$ 21. $\mathbb{E}ad1$ We have a typical bishop vs. three pawns position which should be advantageous for the piece in the long run, for instance 21... $\mathbb{W}g5$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xg5$ $\mathbb{E}xg5$ 23. $\mathbb{E}xd8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f3\pm$ Agdestein – Cu. Hansen, Reykjavik 1995.

18. $\mathbb{E}hg1$ $\mathbb{W}xh2$ 19. $\mathbb{E}xg7\!$



A strong novelty at the time, which more or less finished Black's interest in this variation. Kramnik's move was thought to be impossible because of the obvious strike 19... $\mathbb{E}d3$, but the Russian found a remarkable countermeasure.

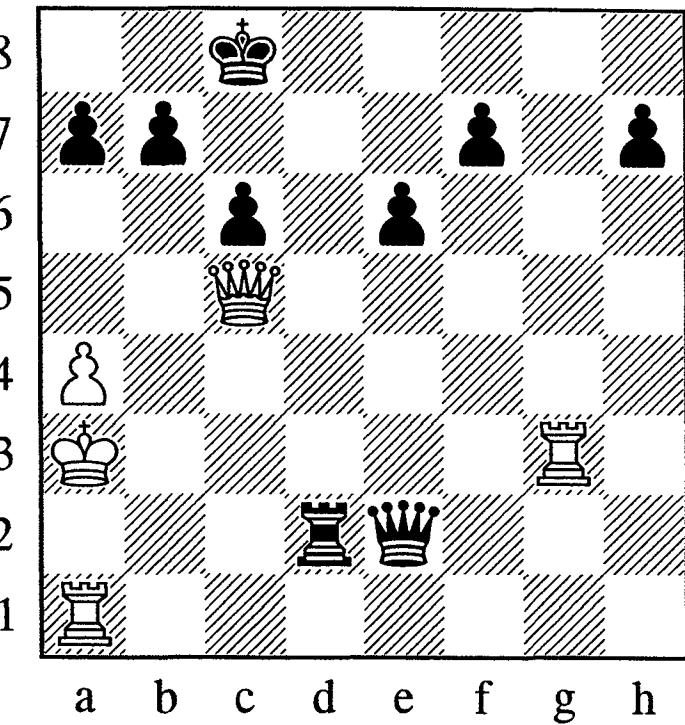
19... $\mathbb{E}d4\?!$

Shirov comes up with a creative try. He sacrifices a rook but gets five(!) pawns and some attack. However when the initiative is over, White's heavy pieces take control.

If 19... $\mathbb{E}d3$ then 20. $\mathbb{E}h1\!#$ is the only move, but such a strong one that it immediately turns the tables: 20... $\mathbb{W}xh1$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 22. $\mathbb{E}xf7\pm$ and Black is left with some weak pawns.

20. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xe2\#$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{E}d8$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xc5$

$\mathbb{E}xd2\#$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{E}xb2\#$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{E}d2$ 25. $\mathbb{E}g3$



Kramnik protects his king. Then he is ready to go for the black pawns.

25... $\mathbb{W}e4$

25... $\mathbb{E}d3\#$ is nowhere near a perpetual check. After 26. $\mathbb{E}xd3$ $\mathbb{W}xd3\#$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{W}d2\#$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}d3\#$ 29. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{W}d5\#$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{W}g2\#$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ the white king easily escapes.

26. $\mathbb{E}b3$ $b6$ 27. $\mathbb{W}f8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 28. $\mathbb{W}xf7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$
29. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{W}xf3?!$

More resistance could have been made with the queens still on the board.

30. $\mathbb{E}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 31. $\mathbb{E}f4$ $\mathbb{E}d3\#$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{E}h3$
33. $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{E}h2\#$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{E}h3\#$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{E}h2\#$
36. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{E}h6$ 37. $\mathbb{E}fe4$ $c5$ 38. $\mathbb{E}xe6$ $\mathbb{E}h3\#$
39. $\mathbb{E}1e3$ $\mathbb{E}h1$ 40. $\mathbb{E}3e4$ $\mathbb{E}h3\#$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{E}g3$

Or 41... $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 42. $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{E}a3$ (42... $\mathbb{E}h4\#$ 43. $\mathbb{E}6e4$ $\mathbb{E}xe4\#$ 44. $\mathbb{E}xe4$ $a5$ 45. $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 46. $\mathbb{E}b1$ is easy) 43. $\mathbb{E}b1$ followed by $\mathbb{E}e7$.

42. $\mathbb{E}h6$ $a6$ 43. $\mathbb{E}xh7$ $\mathbb{E}g5$ 44. $\mathbb{E}b7$ $\mathbb{E}h5$ 45. $\mathbb{E}e6$ $\mathbb{E}h4\#$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{E}b4$ 47. $\mathbb{E}c6$ $\mathbb{E}d4\#$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{E}b4$ 49. $\mathbb{E}b8$

1-0

Black is in zugzwang. On 49... $\mathbb{E}b1$ White has 50. $\mathbb{E}xc5\#$.

Conclusion: After 15...0-0-0 16. $\mathbb{W}e3$, attacking a7, is rather uncomfortable for Black, especially since 16... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 17. $\mathbb{E}e2$ $\mathbb{W}xg2$ 18. $\mathbb{E}hg1$ $\mathbb{W}xh2$ 19. $\mathbb{E}xg7!$ with the point 19... $\mathbb{E}d3$ 20. $\mathbb{E}h1!$ leads to a clear advantage for White.

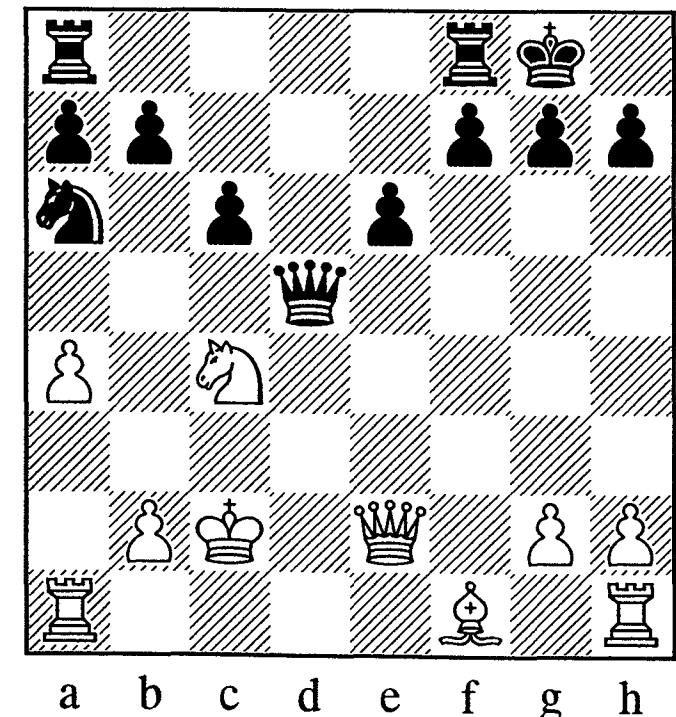
The Bishop Sacrifice – 15...0-0

Game 26

Kramnik – Haba

Germany 1993

1. $d4$ $d5$ 2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3. $c4$ $c6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $dxc4$
5. $a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $e6$ 7. $f3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 8. $e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$
9. $fxe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xe4\#$
12. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2\#$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{W}d5\#$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$
15. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 0-0



Black evacuates his king to the other side compared to the previous game. It makes a lot of sense – the king protects the pawns on the kingside, which were rather vulnerable in the aforementioned game. As a benefit, Black can also play aggressively on the queenside, throwing his pawns in the face of the wandering white king. So White also needs a change of strategy.

16. $\text{We}5$

Also possible is 16. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 17. $\mathbb{K}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{E}ad8$ 19. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{E}d4$ 20. $\mathbb{E}a3$ and White has got his king out of the way and developed both rooks. Still, after 20... $\mathbb{E}fd8$ Black is very active. Kramnik easily defended the position with Black: 21. $g4$ $\mathbb{W}g5$ 22. $\mathbb{E}b3$ $a5$ 23. $h4$ $\mathbb{W}g6\ddagger$ 24. $\mathbb{K}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}c2\ddagger$ 25. $\mathbb{K}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4\ddagger$ 26. $\mathbb{K}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}c2\ddagger$ $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$ Van Wely – Kramnik, Wijk aan Zee 1999.

16. $\mathbb{W}e3$ does not impress much. 16... $\mathbb{E}fd8$
 17. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{A}b4\#$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ b5! Very nice.
 Unfortunately it leads almost by force to a
 draw. 19. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ bxc4 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{E}ab8\#$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}c3$
 $\mathbb{W}a5\#$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{E}d2\#$! 23. $\mathbb{W}xd2$ $\mathbb{E}xb2\#$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xb2$
 $\mathbb{W}xd2\#$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ a5 26. $\mathbb{E}hc1$ $\mathbb{W}b4\#$ $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$
 Blomstrand – Johnsen, corr. 1997

16...♝fd8

The eternal chess question: where to put the rooks?

16... $\mathbb{B}ab8$ 17.a5 (preventing ...b5) 17...f6
 18. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ cxd5 19. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{B}fc8\ddagger$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$
 21. $\mathbb{B}a3$ White again manages to develop smoothly. 21...f5 22. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 23. $\mathbb{B}d1\pm$
 Onischuk – Grischuk, Biel 2007.

16... $\mathbb{H}ac8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $f6$ 18. $\mathbb{W}e3$

White could not exchange queens, but now it turns out that the black queen is not safe in the middle of the board.

18...b5

18... $\mathbb{W}f5\#$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5\#$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$
 21. $\mathbb{E}hf1$ $\mathbb{W}c2$ 22. $\mathbb{E}f2\pm$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{E}cd8$
 24. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}a4\#$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}xa1\#$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xa1$
 $\mathbb{E}xd6$ 27.g4 White gradually won in Price –
 Ratering, corr. 1999.

19. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{W}f5\#$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}g4$

Not 20... $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d6!$

21. ♡d6± ♜cd8 22. ♛f5! ♜xa4†

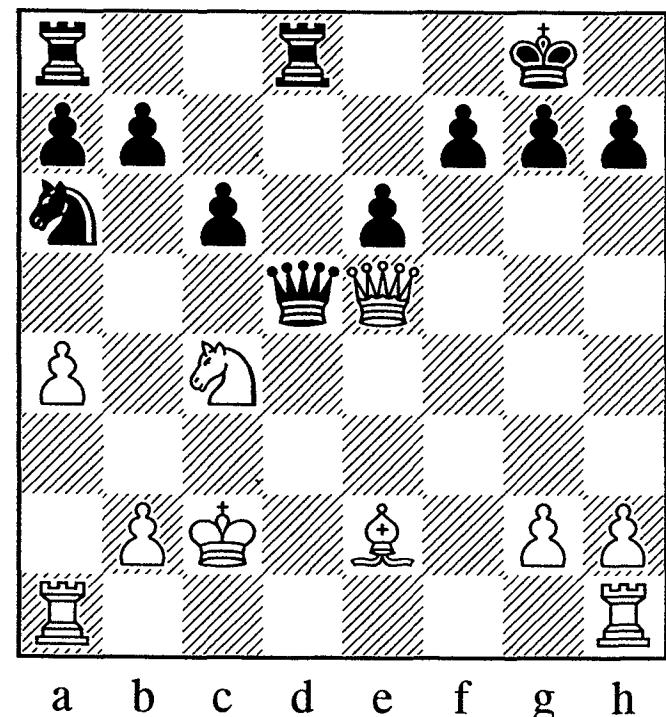
22...exf5? 23.♔e6† ♔h8 24.♕f7† mates.

23. $\text{b}1$ $\text{xd}6$ 24. $\text{xd}6$ $\text{exf}5$ 25. $\text{e}6\text{+}$ $\text{h}8$

26.♘xc6 ♗b8 27.♘c8

White was winning in Gretarsson –
Bjornsson, Iceland 1993.

17. e2



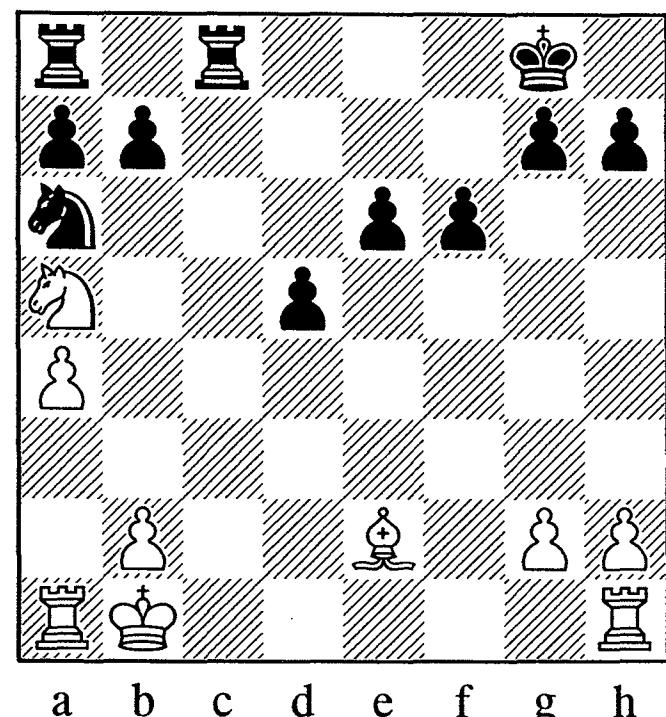
17..f6

This is the move Black wants to play. Seen in the light of what follows, he could consider the relatively unexplored 17... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ when 18.g3± seems like a plausible answer.

18. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $cxd5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{H}dc8\#$

19... $\mathbb{H}ac8\dagger$ is much the same.

20. b1



A typical ending for this variation. It seems that the bishop is always stronger than the three pawns, and here White also has a small initiative on the queenside that is actually quite annoying for Black.

20... $\mathbb{Q}b4!!$

Sacrificing the b-pawn for some activity.

The normal move is:

20... $\mathbb{Q}c5$

But after:

21. $\mathbb{B}c1$

White has pressure.

21... $\mathbb{Q}f8$

21...b6?! 22.b4 bxa5 23.bxc5±

22. $\mathbb{B}a3 \mathbb{Q}e4!!$

22...b6 23. $\mathbb{B}ac3$

23. $\mathbb{B}xc8\#$ $\mathbb{B}xc8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{B}c7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ e5

26. $\mathbb{B}d3$ d4 27. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 28. $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{B}b7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}a2$

$\mathbb{B}c7$ 30. $\mathbb{B}e1$

This was Vujadinovic – Marez, corr. 2000, and Black did not have enough compensation.

21. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{B}ab8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{B}c2$ 23. $\mathbb{B}e1$

Protecting everything. White will untangle with the usual move $\mathbb{B}a3$.

23... $\mathbb{B}d2$

Another try is:

23...e5 24. $\mathbb{B}a3$ $\mathbb{B}xb2\#$

24... $\mathbb{B}c5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{B}c2$ 26.a5 d4 27. $\mathbb{B}a4$

d3 28. $\mathbb{B}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 29. $\mathbb{B}d1$ f5 30. $\mathbb{B}xd3$ $\mathbb{B}xg2$

31. $\mathbb{B}xg2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 32. $\mathbb{B}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 33.a6 was good

for White in Zawadka – Gardarsson, corr.

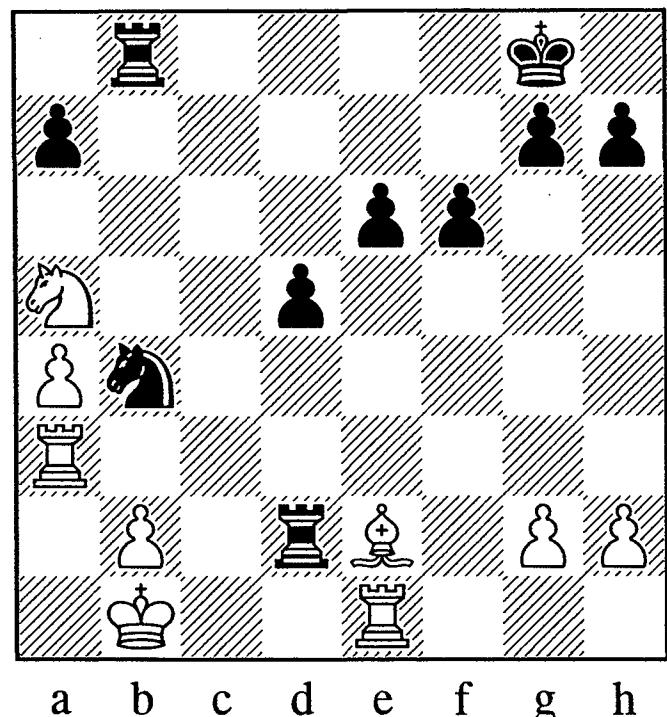
2006.

25. $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ $\mathbb{Q}d3\#$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe1$

Black has again gained a third pawn for the piece, but his knight is stranded on the wrong side of the border.

27.g3 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 28. $\mathbb{B}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}g2$ 29. $\mathbb{B}a2$ d4 30. $\mathbb{Q}c6$
 $\mathbb{B}b1$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 32.a5 1–0

24. $\mathbb{B}a3$



24... $\mathbb{Q}c2$

Again 24... $\mathbb{B}xb2\#$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ $\mathbb{Q}d3\#$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ 27.g3 leaves the knight in trouble.

25. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{B}xe2$

In another game Black tried 25... $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{B}xb2\#$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ but his knight was still in trouble. 28. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ e5 29. $\mathbb{B}a1$ $\mathbb{B}c8\#$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $dxc4\#$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xc4\#$ With a winning position, Winkler – Benassi, corr. 1998.

26. $\mathbb{B}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 27.bxa3 $\mathbb{B}b6$ 28. $\mathbb{B}c2$

White is winning.

28... $\mathbb{B}a6$ 29. $\mathbb{B}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 32. $\mathbb{B}b5$ g5 33. $\mathbb{Q}b4$ h5 34. $\mathbb{B}b7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}f7$

1–0

Conclusion: On 15...0–0 White plays 16. $\mathbb{W}e5$ with the intention of exchanging queens and getting a good ending. That is exactly what happens in the mainline after 16... $\mathbb{B}fd8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ f6 18. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $cxd5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ with pressure on the queenside.

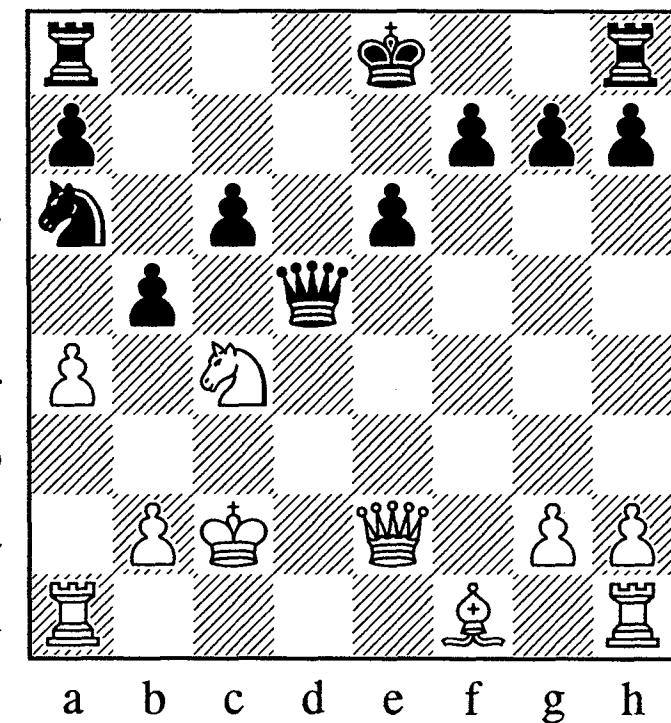
The Bishop Sacrifice – 15...b5 etc.

Game 27

Kramnik – Shirov

Linares 2000

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Qf3 Qf6 4.Qc3 dxc4
 5.a4 Qf5 6.Qe5 e6 7.f3 Qb4 8.e4 Qxe4
 9.fxe4 Qxe4 10.Qd2 Wxd4 11.Qxe4 Wxe4†
 12.We2 Qxd2† 13.Qxd2 Wd5† 14.Qc2 Qa6
 15.Qxc4 b5



Very sharp. Black tries to exploit the white king's risky position.

There are some rare alternatives:

15...Wf5† 16.Qc3 White follows up with We5 next, with good control. One example is 16...0–0–0 17.We5 Wf2 18.We3 Wxe3† 19.Qxe3 with a pleasant ending, Schandorff – Jelling, Silkeborg 1988.

15...Qb4† 16.Qb3 and the check has been given prematurely.

15...Qe7

Black anticipates an ending, and so places

his king actively in the centre.

16.We5 Qhd8 17.Qe2 f6

Better is 17...Wxe5 18.Qxe5 Qb4† 19.Qb3 Qd2 20.Qf3 Qc2 21.Qad1 Qd4† 22.Qc3 Qxf3 23.gxf3 Qd5 24.Qc4± Herbst – Piermattei, corr. 1999.

18.We3!

Now it will not be an ending and the king is ridiculous on e7.

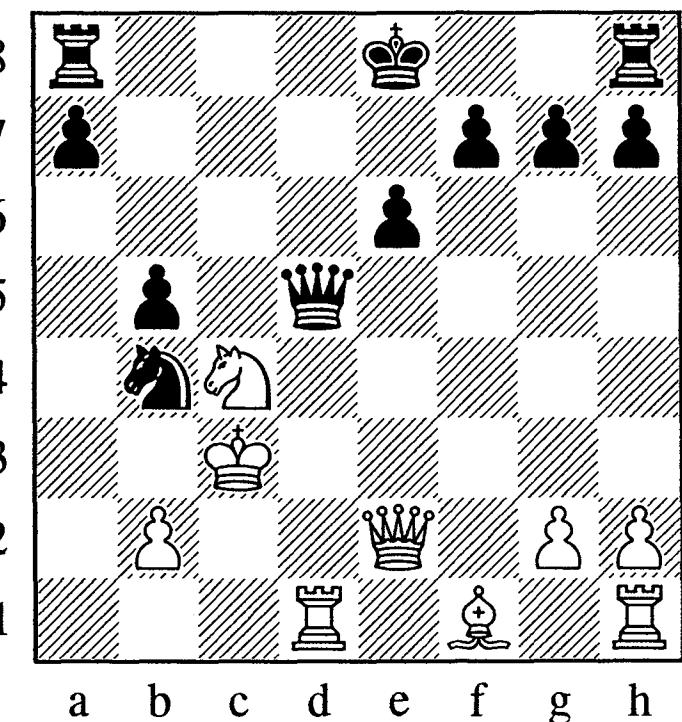
18...Qb4† 19.Qb3 a5 20.Qad1 Wf5 21.Wc3± b5 22.Qxa5! c5 23.Qxb5 Qxa5 24.Qhf1 Wh5 25.g4 We5 26.Wxe5 fxe5 27.Qxd8 Qxd8 28.Qc4 Qe7 29.Qxc5 Qd5 30.b4 Qa8 31.Qc6 Qc8 32.b5 e4 1–0

Kramnik – Hodgson, Groningen 1993.

16.axb5 Qb4†

Not 16...cxb5 17.Qxa6.

17.Qc3 cxb5 18.Qd1!



a b c d e f g h

The most convincing.

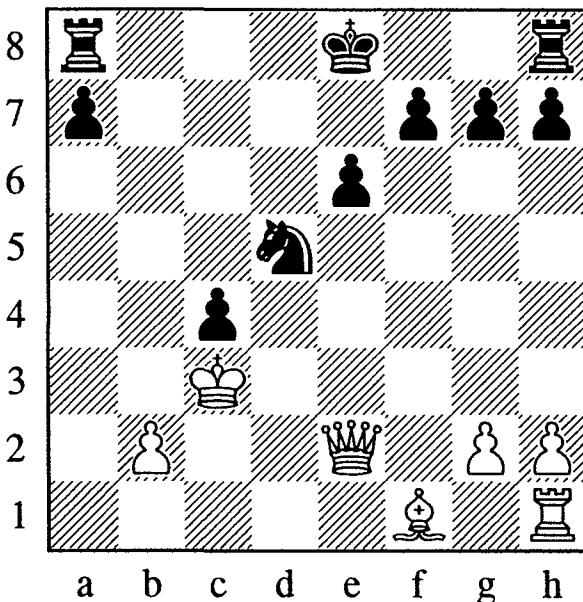
18.Qxb4 bxc4 19.Wxc4 Qb8† 20.Qa3 has been played by Karpov, but 20...Wa5† 21.Qa4† Wa4† 22.Qxa4 Qxb2 looks like a position Black can easily defend.

18.Qb6 is a tactical blow that peters out to a draw. 18...Wc5† 19.Qb3 Qc6! 20.Wxb5 We3† 21.Qc2 Wf2† 22.Qc3 (not 22.Qe2 0–0)

22... $\mathbb{W}d4\#$ ½–½ Shirov – Khalifman, Ter Apel 1997.

18... $\mathbb{W}c5$

Black could also try: 18... $bxc4?$ 19. $\mathbb{E}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5\#$ A surprising but also very speculative queen sacrifice.



White has a decision to make: in the line's famous debut Topalov did not find a way to make progress: 20. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 0–0 21. $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{E}fc8$ 22. $h4$ $\mathbb{E}c5$ 23. $\mathbb{E}h3$ $\mathbb{E}ac8$ 24. $\mathbb{E}a3$ $a5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $h5$ 26. $\mathbb{W}d4$ ½–½ Topalov – Anand, Dos Hermanas 1997.

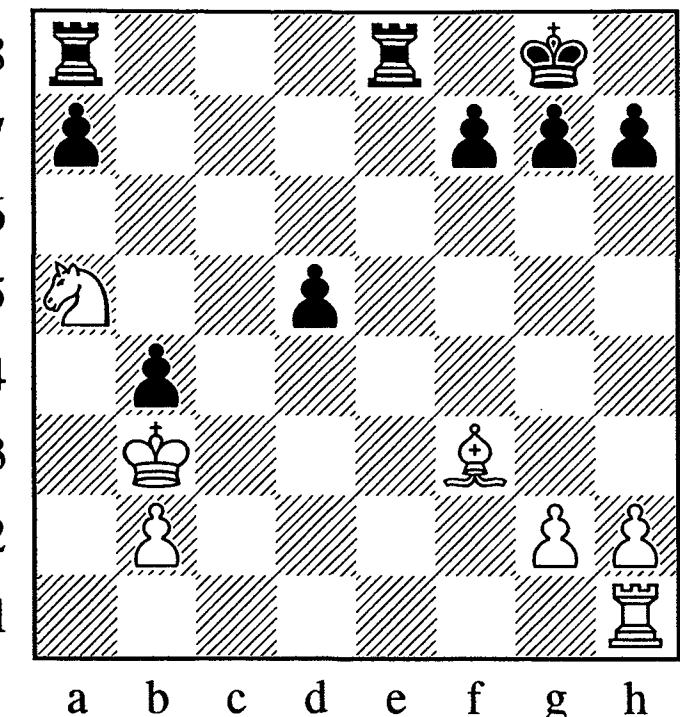
20. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{E}b8$ is unpleasant, but a computer may get away with it. For a human the best move is certainly:

20. $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ Just going to the kingside with the king. 20...0–0 21. $\mathbb{W}e5$ $\mathbb{E}ac8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{E}fd8$ 23. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6\#$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{E}d5$ 25. $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{E}b5$ 26. $\mathbb{E}c2$ $g6$ 27. $g4$ White finally has time to start some active operations. The material advantage should decide, especially if combined with an initiative. 27... $\mathbb{E}cc5$ 28. $\mathbb{E}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 29. $\mathbb{W}e5$ $\mathbb{E}b3$ 30. $h4$ $h6$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $a5$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{E}d3$ 33. $\mathbb{E}e2$ $\mathbb{E}b3$ 34. $\mathbb{W}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}d3\#$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{E}e5$ 37. $\mathbb{W}c7$ $\mathbb{E}c5$ 38. $\mathbb{W}d8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 39. $\mathbb{W}d4\#$ $e5$ 40. $\mathbb{W}d6$ $\mathbb{E}bb5$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 1–0 Salov – Illescas, Dos Hermanas 1997. This game was played only a few days after the Topalov – Anand game.

19. $\mathbb{W}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}d5\#$ 20. $\mathbb{E}xd5$ $b4\#$

20... $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $exd5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xb5\pm$ also gives White good winning chances, but maybe Black also has more chances to hold!

21. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0–0 23. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $exd5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{E}fe8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f3$



White will win at least one of Black's weak pawns to begin with, and the white pieces coordinate very well, so Black will be forced onto the defensive. Rooks are not good defenders, and Shirov always strives for counterplay anyway so he takes some chances and goes down with a bang. However, the position would be tough to hold even by more sturdy play.

25... $\mathbb{E}ac8$ 26. $\mathbb{E}d1!$ $\mathbb{E}e3\#$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $b3$ 28. $\mathbb{E}xd5$ $g6$ 29. $\mathbb{E}d7\pm$

There are weak points at a7, b3 and f7.

29... $\mathbb{E}c2$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$

30... $\mathbb{E}xf3?$ 31. $gxf3$ $\mathbb{E}xh2$ and running with the h-pawn looks desperate and it is, but it was the last chance.

31. $\mathbb{E}xa7$ $h5$ 32. $h3$ $h4$ 33. $\mathbb{E}b7$ $\mathbb{E}c5$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{E}f5$ 35. $\mathbb{E}c7$ $g5$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ $\mathbb{E}f4\#$ 37. $\mathbb{E}c4$ $\mathbb{E}xc4\#$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $f5$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 40. $b4$ $\mathbb{E}e1$ 41. $b5$

$\mathbb{Q}e5$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}c6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 43. $b6$ $\mathbb{E}c1\#$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}b5$
 $g4$ 45. $b7$ $\mathbb{E}b1\#$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 47. $hxg4$ $fxg4$

48. $\mathbb{Q}e4$

1-0

Conclusion: 15... $b5$ looks like great fun, but in the end it is White who is laughing.

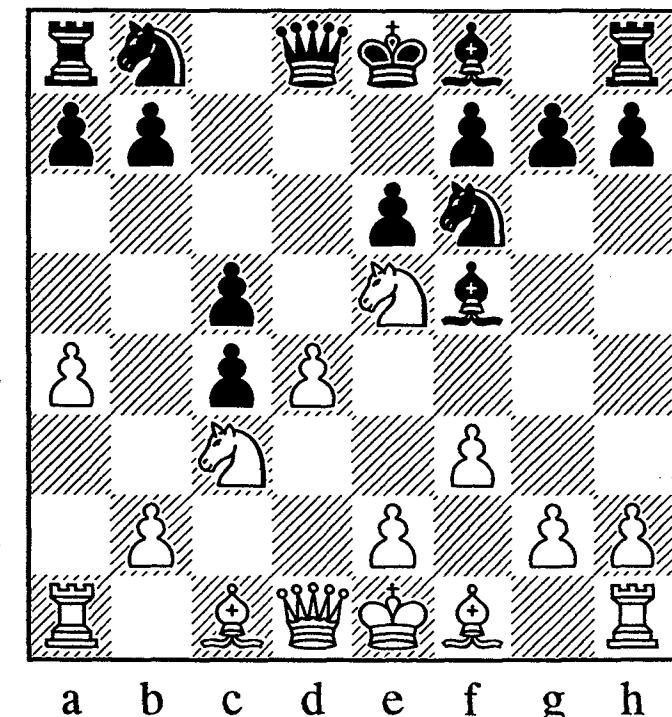
Kramnik's ending

Game 28

Maletin – Amonatov

Russia 2008

1. $d4$ $d5$ 2. $c4$ $c6$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $dxc4$ 5. $a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $e6$ 7. $f3$ $c5$

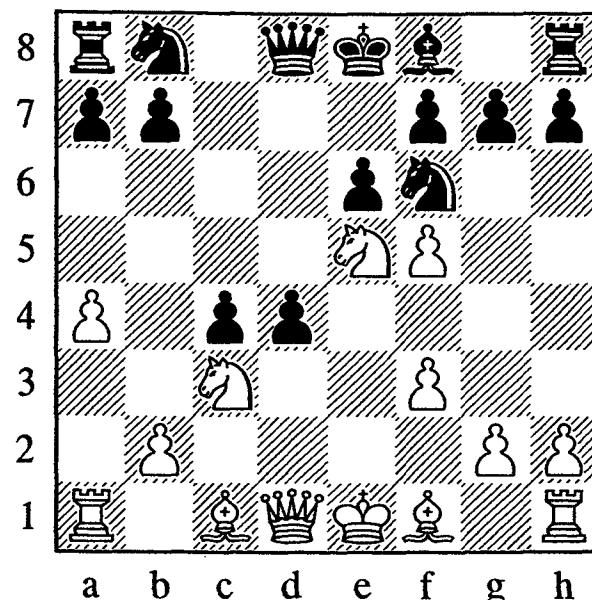


This move had a bad reputation, but Kramnik launched a very deep defensive idea in the World Championship match against Topalov, so now it needs to be taken seriously.

8. $e4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6!$

This was considered a positional mistake because the bishop is buried here.

The sharp alternative is 8... $cxd4$ This leads to complications that favour White after: 9. $exf5$



Now there is a split:

9... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $bxcc6$ 11. $fxe6$ $fxe6$ 12. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $dxc3$ 13. $\mathbb{W}xe6\#$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 14. $\mathbb{W}xe7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 15. $bxcc3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 18. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 0-0-0# 20. $\mathbb{Q}c2\pm$ White had a pleasant ending with a strong pair of bishops in Saul – Parisi, corr. 2001. Furthermore 16. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ is interesting.

9... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $dxc3$ 11. $\mathbb{W}xd8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\#$

12. $\mathbb{W}e2$ is safer and should give a small plus, but why not force the play if it is good?

12... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

No easier is 12... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 13. $bxcc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3\#$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 15. $fxe6$ $\mathbb{E}g8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 17. $\mathbb{E}b1\pm$ $b6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}b5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xc8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ and White had won a pawn in Alekseev – Wang Yue, Nizhnij Novgorod 2007.

13. $bxcc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3\#$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 15. $fxe6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 16. $\mathbb{E}b1$

With good compensation for the piece. Black has major problems coordinating his forces.

16... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 17. $\mathbb{E}xb7$ $a6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}a3$

Black's position looks precarious.

18... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 19. $\mathbb{E}d1$ $h5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d3$

Simply winning.

20... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 21. $\mathbb{E}xg7$ $\mathbb{E}a7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 23. $\mathbb{E}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ 24. $e7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 25. $f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}e5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 28. $\mathbb{E}d8$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{E}xe7\#$

30.♕xe7 ♕xe7 31.♖h8 1–0

Klausen – Alfredsson, corr. 2007.

9.♕e3

9.d5 keeps the game in a middlegame, but the text leads almost by force to a slightly better endgame.

9...cxd4 10.♗xd4

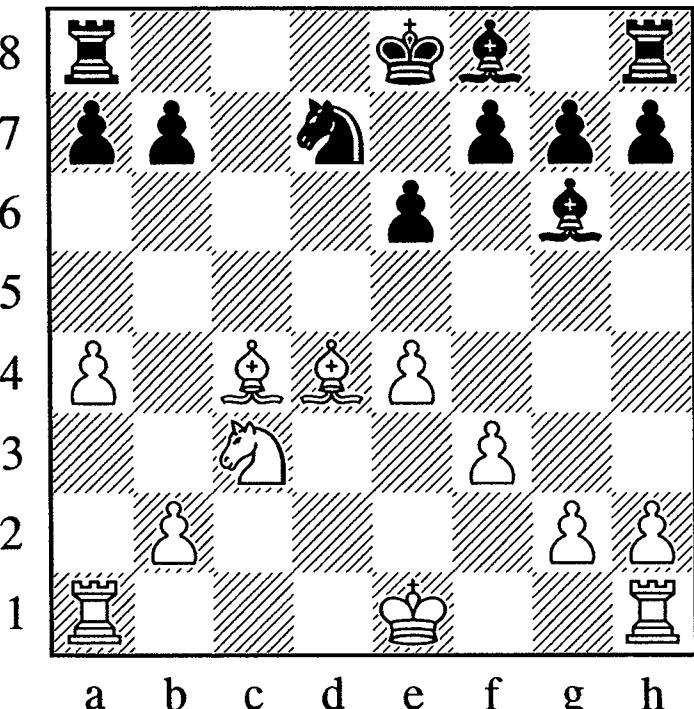
Apparently simple and strong, but Kramnik's deep preparation will soon reveal that it is not so easy. Possible was 10.♕xd4 but after 10...♝fd7 Black seems okay.

10...♗xd4 11.♕xd4 ♜bd7

11...♝fd7 is the more common move order, but it just transposes.

Not to be recommended is 11...♝c6 12.♝xc6 bxc6 13.a5 ♜d7 14.♕xc4 e5 15.♕e3 ♜b4 16.♕e2 ♜e7 17.♖h1 with advantage to White, Huebner – Pelletier, Germany 1998.

12.♝xd7 ♜xd7 13.♕xc4



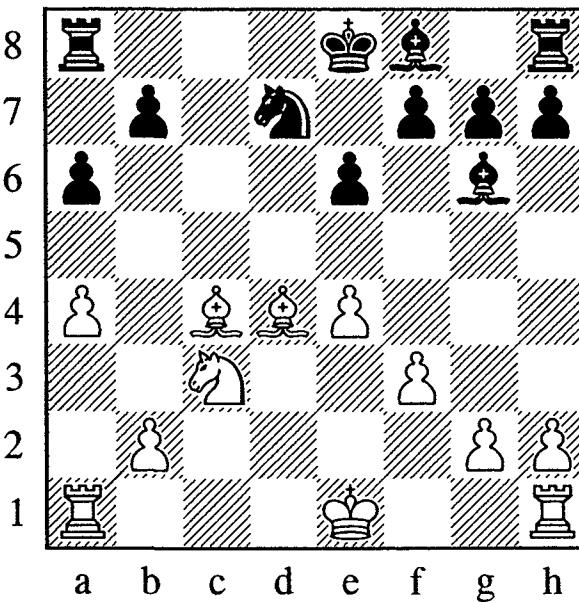
This looks good for White who has more space and some very active bishops. Black is behind in development and the bishop on g6 is out of play, just like the old books said.

13...♜c8

A little inaccurate because White gets an extra option.

In the famous stem game Kramnik played: 13...a6 14.♕e2 ♜g8! The point. Black protects g7 and is ready to move the bishop out and put the king on e7 with normal harmony. Later he can play ...f6 and bring the light-squared bishop back into the game via f7 or e8. It is a slow manoeuvre, but Black has no real weaknesses and White has difficulty finding anything to shoot at. Anyway, Topalov couldn't. 15.♖hd1 ♜c8 16.b3 ♜c5 17.a5 ♜e7 18.♗a4 ♜b4 19.♗b6 ♜xb6 20.♕xb6 f6 21.♖d3 ♜c6 22.h4 ♜gc8 23.g4 ♜c5 24.♖ad1 ♜xb6 25.♖d7† ♜f8 26.axb6 ♜xb6 27.♖1d6 ♜xd6 28.♖xd6 ♜c6 29.♖xc6 bxc6 30.b4 e5 31.♕xa6 ½–½ Topalov – Kramnik, Elista (6) 2006.

Very convincing, but lately White has had success against 13...a6 with an interesting idea:

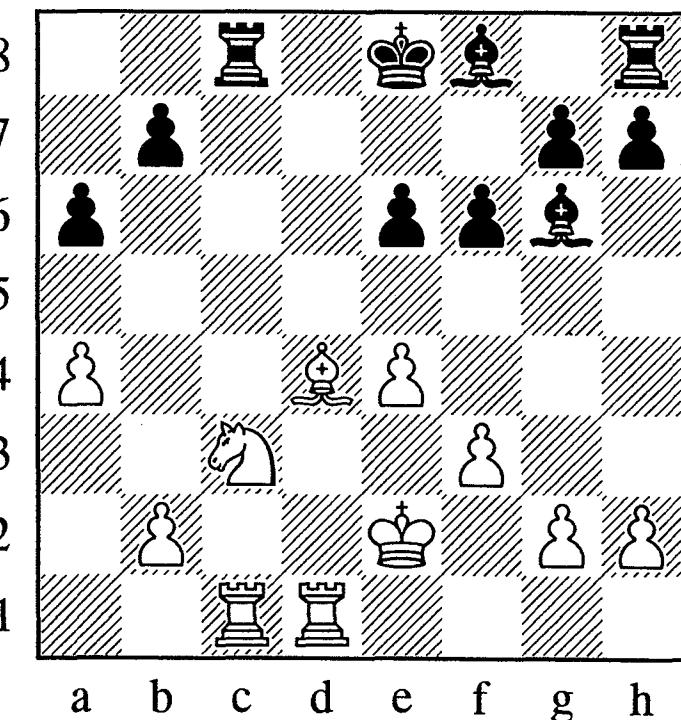


14.♖c1 ♜c8 15.♗e2?! ♜g8 16.h4 h6 17.♔f2 ♜c6 18.b4! ♔d8 (18...♝xb4 19.♕xa6!) 19.h5 ♜h7 20.b5 axb5 21.♕xb5 ♜xc1 22.♖xc1 g5 23.♗xd7 ♜xd7 24.♕e5 ♔d8 25.♖c7 f6 26.♗d4 ♜xe4 27.♗xe6† ♔e8 28.fxe4 fxe5 29.♖xb7 1–0 Gyimesi – Bindrich, Germany 2008.

14.♗b5!

If the bishop retreated Black would gain the option of playing a7-a5 in one move.

14...a6 15.♕xd7† ♕xd7 16.♔e2 f6 17.♗hd1
♔e8 18.♗ac1±



White has some positional pressure. Black's king is floating and a constant problem. The bishop wants to go back to f7, but where should the king be then? And also b7 is weak. Instead 18.♗b6 ♗c5 19.♗xc5 ♘xc5 20.♗d6 ♔e7 21.♗ad1 ♔e8 22.♗d3 a5 23.♔e3 ♗c6= did not achieve much in Bocharov – Amonatov, Voronezh 2007.

18...♗c6 19.♗a2 ♘xc1 20.♗xc1 ♔e7 21.♔b6 e5 22.♗d3 ♔f7?

Correct was 22...♔f7 23.♗c1 ♗d6± and Black blocks the door. White probably continues 24.♗c5 or ♗c7 with a pull.

23.♗c1± ♗d8 24.a5

Black is completely tied up. If 24...♔d7 then 25.♗c5† wins on the spot.

24...♔e7 25.♗c8 ♘e8 26.♗b8

Winning a pawn.

26...♗c4 27.♗xb7† ♗f8 28.♔e3 ♗e7 29.♗c5 ♗b5 30.b4

And now with a winning position.

30...h6 31.♗b6 ♗c4 32.♗b7 ♗xc5† 33.♗xc5 ♘d8 34.♗c7 ♗g8 35.♗c6 ♗b5 36.♗b6 ♗c4

37.h3 h5

37...♗a8 was passive and White could open a second front with g3 followed by f4.

38.♗xa6 ♘d3† 39.♔f2 ♘d2† 40.♔e1 ♘e2† 41.♔d1 ♘xg2 42.♗c5 ♘a2 43.a6 ♗h7 44.♔c1 ♗h6 45.♗b7 h4

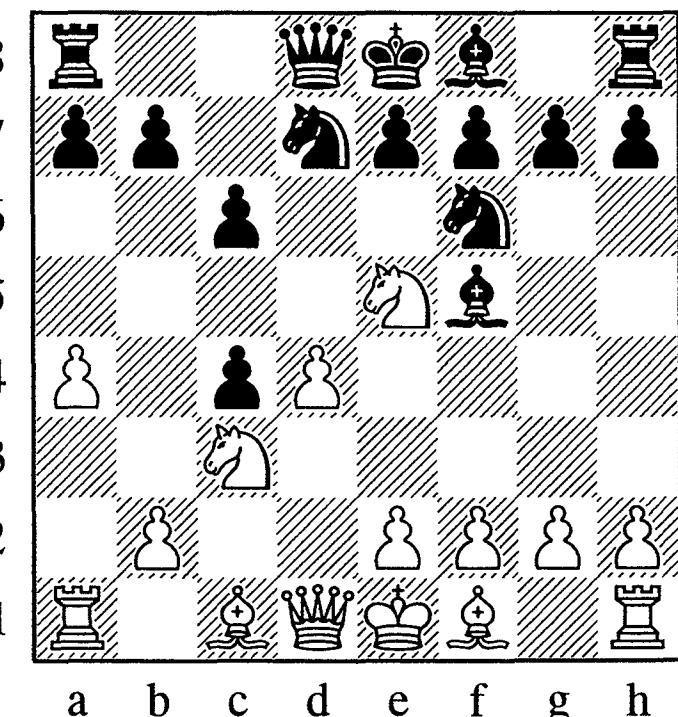
If 45...♗xa6 46.♗a7 ♗c4 47.♗xa2 ♗xa2 48.b5 and the pawn goes all the way.

46.a7 ♗g5 47.♔b1 ♗f4 48.b5 g5 49.♗a6
1–0

Conclusion: Kramnik's endgame variation should not be underestimated, but its value shouldn't be exaggerated either. White is slightly better and, if it isn't Kramnik you are facing, you have good winning chances. If it is Kramnik, then take the draw and get on with your life.

The Mainline - Part Two

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♗f3 ♗f6 4.♗c3 dxc4 5.a4 ♗f5 6.♗e5 ♗bd7

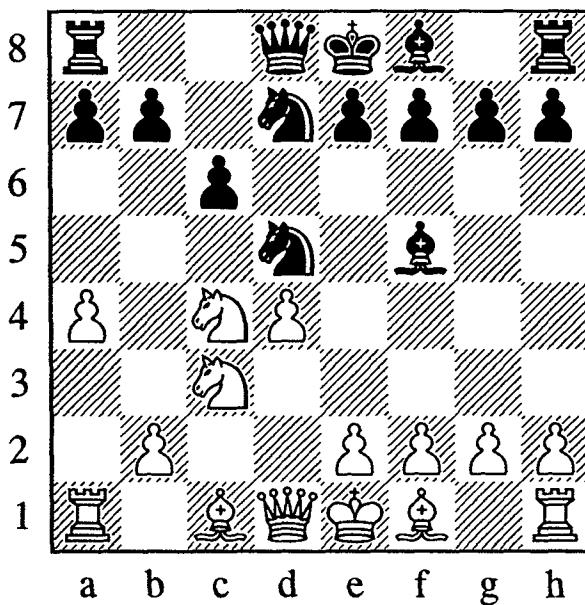


This old move is currently riding a wave of popularity. The foundation for the grand comeback was laid by a series of discoveries from the creative mind of the Russian star Alexander Morozevich.

7. $\mathbb{Q}xc4 \mathbb{W}c7$

The classical move. The modern interpretation is 7... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ a5, often referred to as the Sokolov Variation. On the one hand, a deserved tribute to the great Slav fighter, Ivan Sokolov, but on the other, maybe also an urgent need to name a variation in the modern Slav after someone other than Morozevich.

Speaking of Morozevich, he even came up with 7... $\mathbb{Q}d5!?$:



And it is doubtful if Black has enough for the pawn.

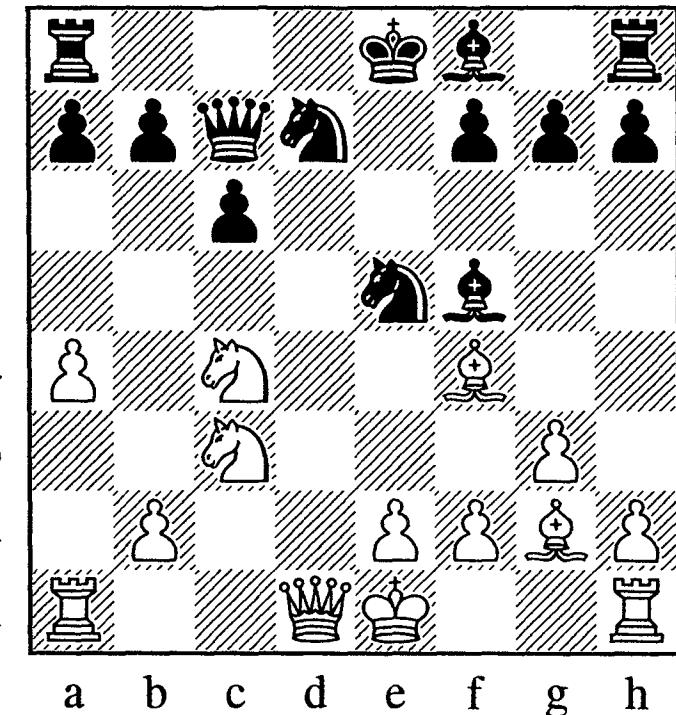
7... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ is ultimately a surprise weapon. If White is not paralysed by shock, he should get a safe edge. With 7... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ it is another story. In Game 31 it will come under close scrutiny.

A much simpler issue is 7...e6, which is too cooperative: after 8.f3 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 9.e4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}e2\pm$ White gets what he wants.

8.g3

White wants to fianchetto his light-squared bishop and at the same time $\mathbb{Q}f4$ is prepared.

8...e5 9.dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}g2$



The starting position for an old variation that had been tested in hundreds of games. Then along came Morozevich and pang! A whole new concept saw the light of day: a stunning idea that mixed deep positional understanding with a flair for the extravaganza.

11...g5

Black's best move. It has almost completely replaced the classical set-up with 11...f6. But of course the old variation should not be forgotten. In Game 29 it will be examined.

With the point of striking next with ...e5.

A good antidote is:

8.g3

Also interesting is 8.f3 e5 9.e4 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 10.bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}b1\pm$.

8...e5 9. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ exd4 10. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 11. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}7xf6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ cxd5 13. $\mathbb{Q}e3$

With a better ending for White.

13... $\mathbb{Q}e6$

13... $\mathbb{Q}b4\ddagger$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2\ddagger$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 16.f3 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}hc1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ a6 20. $\mathbb{Q}h3\pm$ was certainly no improvement in Babula – Lehner, Austria 2006.

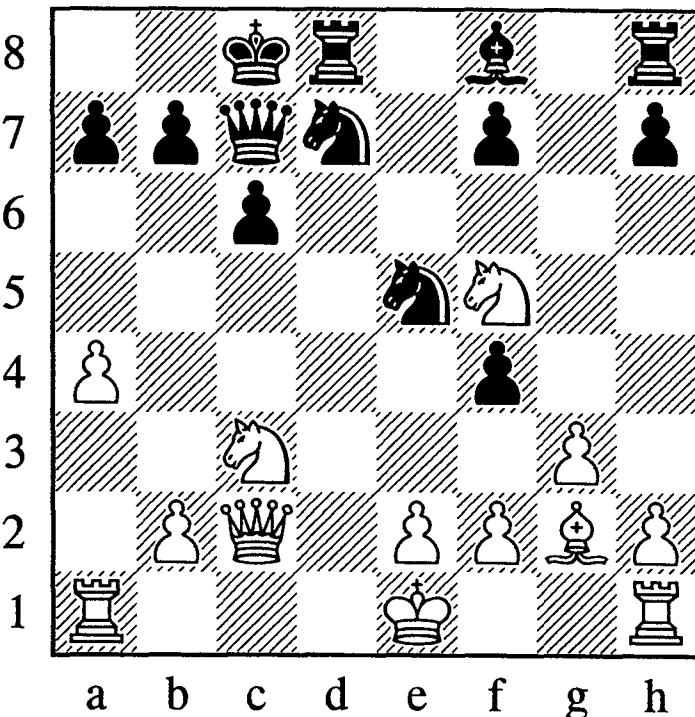
14.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ 0–0 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 18.e4 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 19.exd5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ a5

This was played in the stem game Kasparov – Morozevich, Astana 2001, and now best was:

21. $\mathbb{Q}e3$

12.♘e3

This was Kasparov's reaction when confronted with Morozevich's novelty over the board. Later White has tried many sharper things based on 12.♗xe5 or 12.♘xe5, but Black seems to have adequate countermeasures. Kasparov's knight move seeks a small but stable positional advantage.

12...gxf4 13.♗xf5 0–0–0 14.♗c2

A key position that has been heavily debated over the last few years. White hopes that the knight on f5 will give him the better chances but it is much more complicated than that – see Game 30 for the details.

The Classical Move – 11...f6**Game 29****Aronian – I. Sokolov**

Wijk aan Zee 2006

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 ♘f5 6.♗e5 ♘bd7 7.♗xc4 ♗c7 8.g3 e5 9.dxe5 ♘xe5 10.♗f4 ♘fd7 11.♗g2 f6

The classical move: Black protects the knight on e5.

There are a number of rare options:

a) 11...♗e6 12.♘xe5 ♘xe5 13.♗d4 f6 14.a5 a6 15.♗e4 ♘d5 16.0–0 ♘e7 17.♗fd1 ♘d8 18.♗c3 ♘xe4

A sad necessity because 18...0–0 19.♗xd5! ♘xd5 20.♗xf6† ♘xf6 21.♗xd5† drops a pawn.

19.♘xe4

White had a large advantage with the pair of bishops in Browne – Unzicker, Wijk aan Zee 1981.

b) 11...♗d8 12.♗c1 f6 13.0–0 ♘e6 14.♗e4! is good for White:

14...♗b4 15.a5 0–0 16.a6 bxa6?! 17.♘xe5 ♘xe5 18.♗c5 ♘xc5 19.♗xc5± Euwe – Alekhine, Holland 1937.

14...♘xc4 15.♗xc4 ♘xc4 16.♘xc7 ♘c8 17.♘f4± ♘e7 and now 18.♗fc1 or 18.♘h3 gives White both a strong initiative and a positional advantage.

14...♘e7 15.a5 a6 16.♘xe5 ♘xe5 17.♘c5 ♘c8 18.♗c3 0–0 19.♗fd1± In Sretr – Pletanek, corr. 1984, the structure on the queenside was very favourable for White.

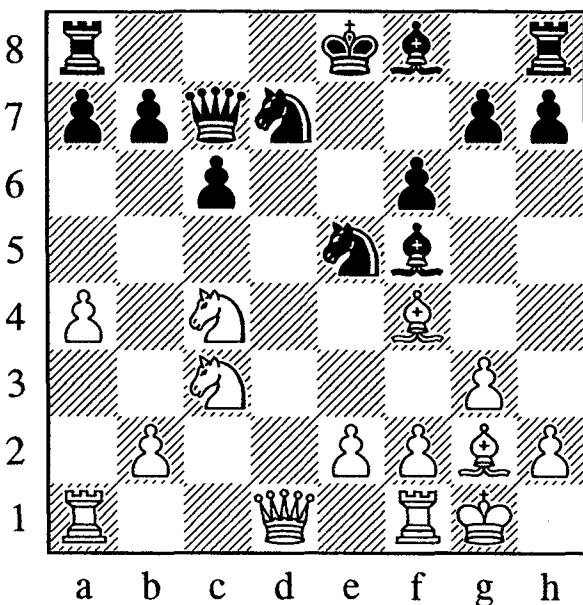
c) 11...♘e7 12.0–0 0–0 13.♗c1 f6 14.♗xe5 fxe5 15.♗d5! ♗d8 16.♗xe7† ♗xe7 17.♘g5 ♗e6 18.a5 h6 19.♘e3± Razuvayev – Bronstein, Yaroslavl 1982. The bishops are nice.

11...g5 is of course the big mainline these days. It will be examined in the next game.

12.0–0 ♘c5

Morozevich's attempt to revive the old mainline. The move was a necessary lifeline because the known moves were clearly in crisis.

Let's have a look:



12... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $f xe5$

13... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 14. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ with good play for White, Timman – Hebert, Rio de Janeiro 1979.

14. $\mathbb{Q}g5$

A finesse designed to make Black weaken himself.

14. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 15. $\mathbb{W}c1$ is also fine and should give White a small but safe advantage.

14... $h6$

Or 14... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}e4$.

15. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$

If 15... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ then 16. $\mathbb{W}c2$ is annoying for Black because 16... $0-0$? loses to 17. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$.

16. $\mathbb{W}c2$

The effect of the move ... $h6$ is seen: $g6$ has been weakened and makes an excellent entry square for the white queen.

16... $0-0$ 17. $\mathbb{W}g6$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$

17... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 18. $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$ Simon – Marez, corr. 2000, didn't say much. A possible continuation is 18... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19. $a5\pm$.

18. $a5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$

Or 18... $a6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}hg8$ 21. $\mathbb{W}h7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 22. $fxe3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xc7\ddagger$ $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f5\pm$ Van Seben – Le Duigou, corr. 2004.

19. $fxe3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}a3$

White has the initiative.

20... $a6?$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 1–0

Khalifman – Gabriel, Bad Wiessee 1998.

On 21... $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ follows 22. $\mathbb{W}e6\ddagger$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xb3$.

12... $0-0-0$

This is risky and it was severely punished in the following game:

13. $\mathbb{W}c1$ $g5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}b5!$

This initiates a long tactical sequence.

17... $cxb5$ 18. $AXB5$ $\mathbb{W}xb5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}a5!$

A brilliant blow.

19... $\mathbb{W}xa5$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xc4\ddagger$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 21. $\mathbb{W}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$

Not 21... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xb7\ddagger$ $\mathbb{W}xb7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c1\ddagger$.

22. $\mathbb{W}xf5\ddagger$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}a1+-$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$

25. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 26. $e4$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 27. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $g4$ 28. $\mathbb{W}b3$

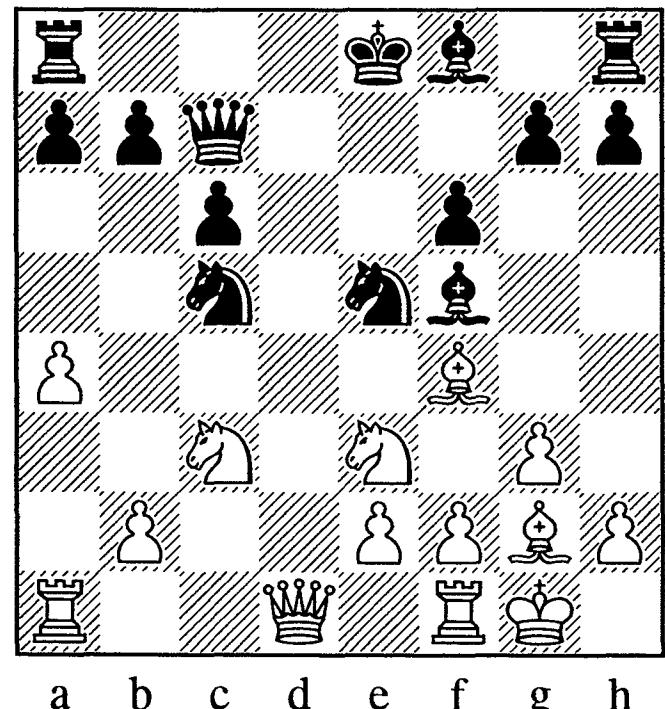
$h5$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}a8\ddagger$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 31. $\mathbb{W}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$

32. $\mathbb{W}b4\ddagger$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}b8$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 34. $\mathbb{W}a4\ddagger$ 1–0

Lafarga Santorroman – Kitson, corr. 2006.

Finally, 12... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 13. $\mathbb{W}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ transposes to the last note.

13. $\mathbb{Q}e3$



White regroups with tempo and is ready to kick the black knight back with $b2-b4$. 13. $e4$ also looks like a decent try.

13... $\mathbb{Q}g6$

The most popular.

The intermediate move 13... $\mathbb{Q}d8\?!$ has a tactical flaw: 14. $\mathbb{Q}cd5\!?$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 15. $b4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{W}xf5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 18. $\mathbb{W}b3$ with a very promising

position, Almeida Quintana – Mestre Bellido, Barbera del Valles 2007.

The other retreat is:

13... $\mathbb{Q}e6$

This is best met by:

14.b4 $\mathbb{E}d8$ 15. $\mathbb{W}b1$

The text is stronger than 15. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 16.b5 $\mathbb{Q}b4\infty$.

15... $\mathbb{Q}b3$

15... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 16.b5 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ is not so attractive now that it does not come with tempo. 17.bxc6 bxc6 18. $\mathbb{E}c1$ a5 19. $\mathbb{Q}b5!$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 20. $\mathbb{E}d1$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{E}xd1\uparrow$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xd1$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 24. $\mathbb{E}c1\pm$ Wells – Hanley, Scarborough 2001.

16. $\mathbb{Q}ed5!$ cxd5 17. $\mathbb{W}xb3$

To relieve some of the pressure Black must enter an inferior ending.

17... $\mathbb{W}c4$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 19. $\mathbb{E}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$

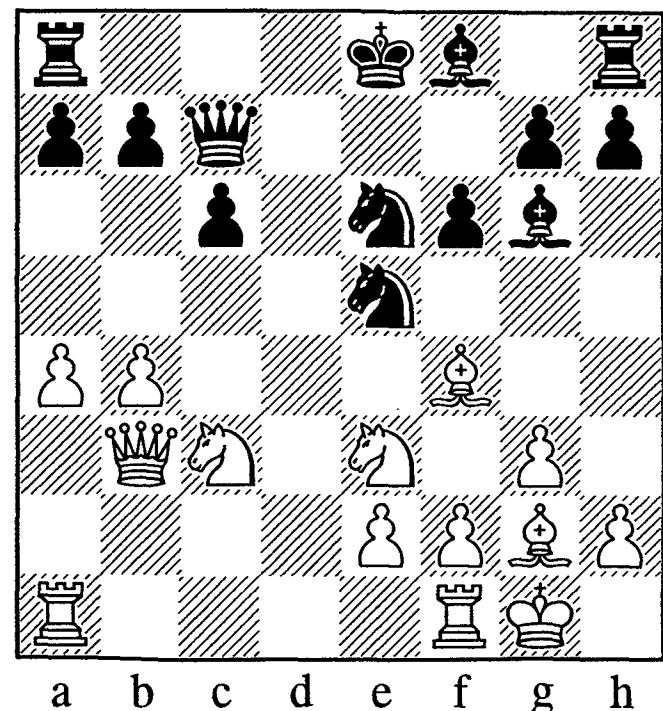
20. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 21. $\mathbb{E}ac1\pm$

C. Williams – Verducci Silvelo, corr. 2006.

14.b4 $\mathbb{Q}e6$

14... $\mathbb{E}d8$ can be answered with the by now familiar 15. $\mathbb{Q}ed5!$ cxd5 16.bxc5 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 17. $\mathbb{W}b3$ and White regains the pawn with an active position. 17...0–0 18. $\mathbb{E}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 20.h3 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 21.e4 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 22.a5 \pm b6 23.axb6 axb6 24. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e3!$ Now b6 is weak, Alekseev – Fressinet, Khanty-Mansyisk 2007.

15. $\mathbb{W}b3$



A new attempt. Previously 15.b5 $\mathbb{E}d8$ 16. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 17. $\mathbb{W}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$, with complicated play, had been seen in a lot of games.

15... $\mathbb{Q}f7$

15... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 16. $\mathbb{W}b2$ $\mathbb{E}d8$ is too loose because of the well known tactic 17. $\mathbb{Q}cd5!$ $\mathbb{Q}df3\uparrow$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ cxd5 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ and White was winning in Conquest – N. Berry, Turin (ol) 2006.

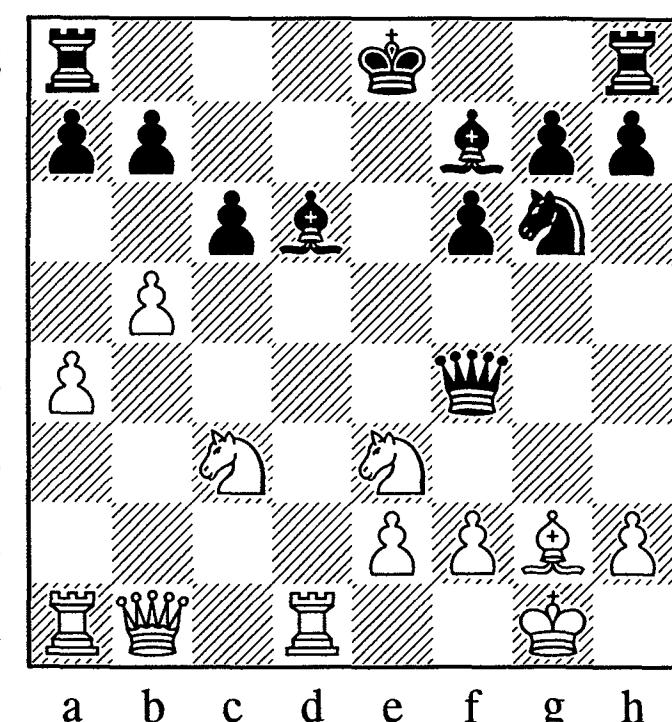
16. $\mathbb{W}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$

Again 16... $\mathbb{E}d8$ could be considered, but then 17. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 18.gxf4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 19.b5 $\mathbb{W}xf4$ 20.bxc6 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 21. $\mathbb{W}e4\uparrow$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ bxc6 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd6\uparrow$ $\mathbb{E}xd6$ was Pogorelov – Peralta, Seville 2006, and now the simple 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc6\uparrow$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 25. $\mathbb{E}ab1$ $\mathbb{E}d8$ 26. $\mathbb{E}b7$ is clearly better for White.

17.gxf4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 18.b5!

Active play with direct threats.

18... $\mathbb{W}xf4$ 19. $\mathbb{E}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$

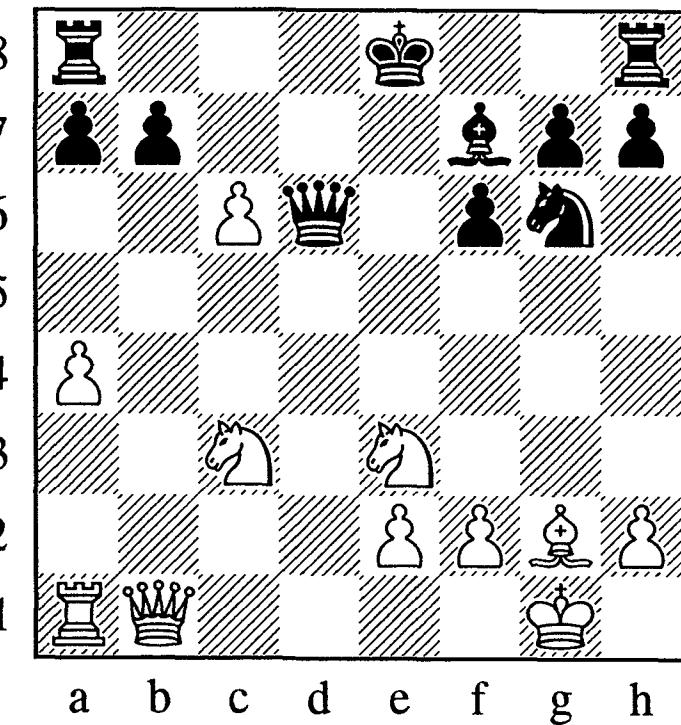


In another game Black tried 19... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ but after 20.bxc6 0–0 21.cxb7 $\mathbb{E}ab8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}cd5$ Zhao Xue – Gerasimovitch, Kemer 2007, it was already over.

20. $\mathbb{E}xd6!$

A spectacular exchange sacrifice.

20... $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 21.bxc6



21...0–0

Now White gets what he wants: a protected passed pawn on the seventh rank.

Better is 21...bxc6 when 22. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 23. $\mathbb{W}b4$ is not quite as deadly as it appears: 23... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 24. $\mathbb{R}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $cxd5$ 26. $\mathbb{R}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 27. $\mathbb{R}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}d6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 29. $\mathbb{W}c4$ $h5$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 31. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{R}h7$ 32. $\mathbb{R}d7$ White has good compensation for the exchange, but Black is not in the coffin yet. 32... $\mathbb{W}e6$ 33. $\mathbb{R}e7$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 34. $h4$ $\mathbb{R}e8$ 35. $\mathbb{R}xa7$ $\mathbb{W}e4$ 36. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}g4\#$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{W}e4\#$ 38. $f3$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 39. $\mathbb{W}b7$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}e7\#$ $\mathbb{R}xe7$ 41. $\mathbb{W}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}h3\#$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ ½–½ Verleur – Turkov, corr. 2006.

22. $\mathbb{Q}b5$

In a later game White took at once on b7: 22.cxb7 $\mathbb{R}ab8$ And only then the knight move: 23. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 24.a5 $\mathbb{W}a6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{W}xe2$ 26. $\mathbb{W}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2\#$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $f5$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 31. $\mathbb{R}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 32.a6 The protected pawn on b7 was a decisive factor in Babula – Ribli, Austria 2008.

22... $\mathbb{W}c5$ 23.cxb7 $\mathbb{R}ab8$ 24. $\mathbb{W}f5$

If White could exchange queens Black would have no counterplay whatsoever and he could fully enjoy the passed pawn.

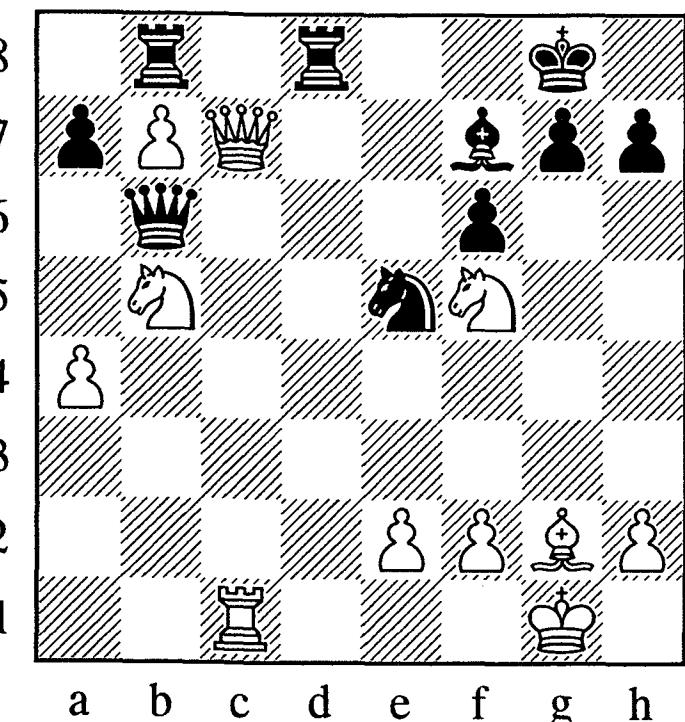
24... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 25. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}c7$

He insists.

26... $\mathbb{R}fd8$ 27. $\mathbb{R}c1$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}f5$

The defence creaks.

28... $\mathbb{W}b6$



29. $\mathbb{W}xb8!$

An elegant finish.

29... $\mathbb{R}xb8$ 30. $\mathbb{R}c8\#$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$
32. $\mathbb{R}xd8$ $\mathbb{R}xd8$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}d5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}e7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$
35. $\mathbb{Q}ec6$

1–0

Conclusion: Aronian's direct approach is a serious blow to the whole variation and it will probably scare away the last believers in the classical set-up.

Morozevich's 11...g5

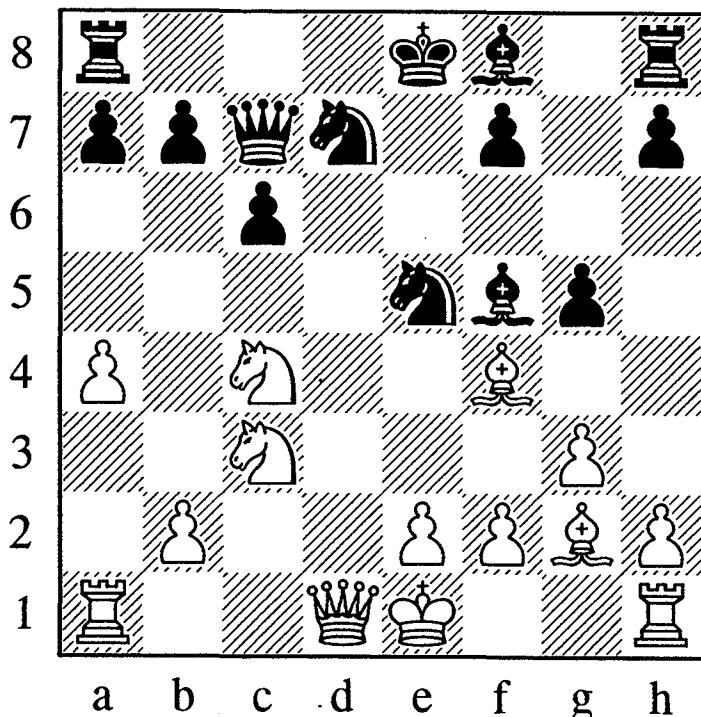
Game 30

Volokitin – Inarkiev

Russia 2008

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $dxc4$
5.a4 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 8.g3 e5

9.dxe5 ♜xe5 10.♗f4 ♜fd7 11.♗g2 g5!?



This crazy but creative move of Morozevich is the current mainline.

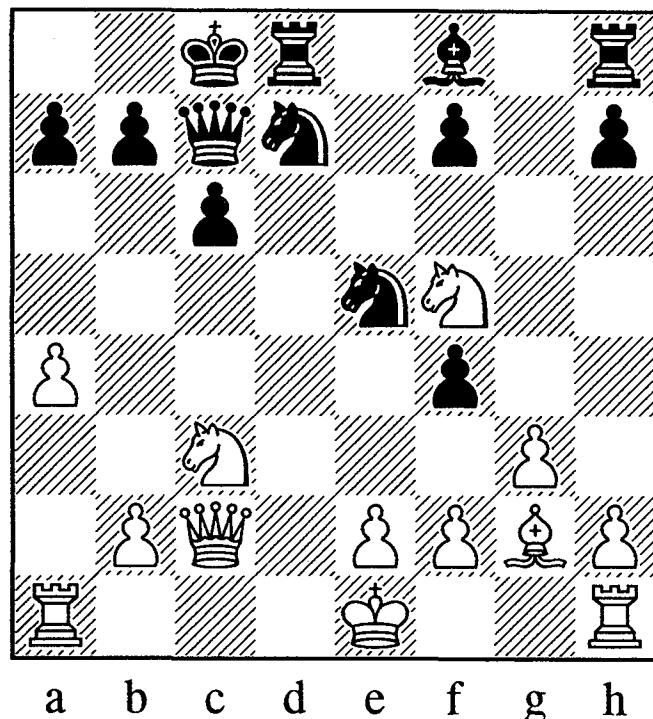
12.♘e3

The positional approach. 12.♗xe5 ♜xe5 13.♗d4 f6 has held up fine for Black and 12.♘xe5 gxf4 13.♘xd7 0–0–0 14.♗d4 ♗xd7 15.♗xf4 ♘d6 gives good play for the pawn. Black's dominance on the dark squares makes it difficult for White to get anything going.

12...gxf4 13.♘xf5

A nice square for the knight.

13...0–0–0 14.♗c2



We have already reached a strategically complicated position. The opposite-coloured bishops give both sides a clear dominance on each colour complex. Furthermore, White will most probably castle kingside so there are attacks and counterattacks in the air as well. Black has tried a variety of moves here.

14...♘c5

The mainline. The knight is on its way to e6 and at the same time White is prevented from castling long, just in case. However there are many interesting alternatives.

14...♗b4 15.0–0 fxg3 16.hxg3 h5 17.♗fc1

Threatening ♘d5.

17...♘f6 18.♘e3

18.a5!? a6 19.♘e4 is another way to play.

18...♗b8 19.♗f5 ♗e7 20.♗f4 a5 21.♗d1

White was slightly better in Grischuk – Tukmakov, Odessa 2007.

14...♗b8 15.0–0 fxg3 16.hxg3 h5

This is similar.

17.♗fc1 ♘f6 18.a5 h4 19.♘xh4 ♗xh4

A typical blow in this line.

20.gxh4 ♗eg4 21.♗d1 ♗e8 22.♗f5 ♘h6

23.♗d3 ♗h2† 24.♔f1 ♗g8 25.e4

Apparently White has control, but Black finds another hidden resource.

25...♘h5 26.♗xh5 ♘xf2 27.♗d8† ♗xd8

28.♔xf2 ♗g8 29.♗f3

This was Babula – Ragger, Germany 2008, and here he had:

29...♗e3†! 30.♔xe3 ♗g3 31.♗xg3† ♗xg3†

32.♔f3 ♗xh4±

Black has chances to draw. Okay, in this position the attack after ...♗xh4 was not convincing, but beware of the idea. An alternative for White is the perhaps more exact 17.♗fd1.

14...♘g6 15.0–0 fxg3 16.hxg3 h5 17.♗fc1

And here we are again.

17... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 18.b4!

18. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ is not so clear.

18...h4

Not 18... $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{W}xb4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ with a winning attack.

19. $\mathbb{Q}b5!$

This strike is a vital part of White's arsenal.

19... $\mathbb{W}c8$

19... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 20.a5 $\mathbb{W}xb5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ 22.b5+– is a nice variation.

20. $\mathbb{W}b3$ h3 21. $\mathbb{W}e3$ c5 22. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 23.bxc5± $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 24.c6!

Spectacular!

24... $\mathbb{Q}d1\#$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ bxc6

27. $\mathbb{Q}ab1!$ cxb5 28. $\mathbb{Q}xb5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}d5\#$ 1–0 Kasimdzhanov – Predojevic, Germany 2007.

Finally, 14...fxg3 15.hxg3 might be a little premature because White can still castle long.

15.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e6$

Interesting is the more positionally founded:

15...fxg3 16.hxg3 a5

It seems White can get a small advantage:

17. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ h5 18. $\mathbb{Q}xd8\#$ $\mathbb{W}xd8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e4$

The obvious 19. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ gives Black good counterplay which enables him to keep the balance: 19... $\mathbb{W}f6$ 20.e4 h4 for instance 21.f4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 22.e5 $\mathbb{W}e6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ hxg3 24. $\mathbb{Q}d6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}g4$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}xe2$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xc6\#$ bxc6 28. $\mathbb{W}xc6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 29. $\mathbb{W}b6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 30. $\mathbb{W}b8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 31. $\mathbb{W}d6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ ½–½ Johannessen – L'Ami, Germany 2006.

19... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 23. $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$

And now the endgame after:

24.f4 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4\#$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ hxg4 27. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$

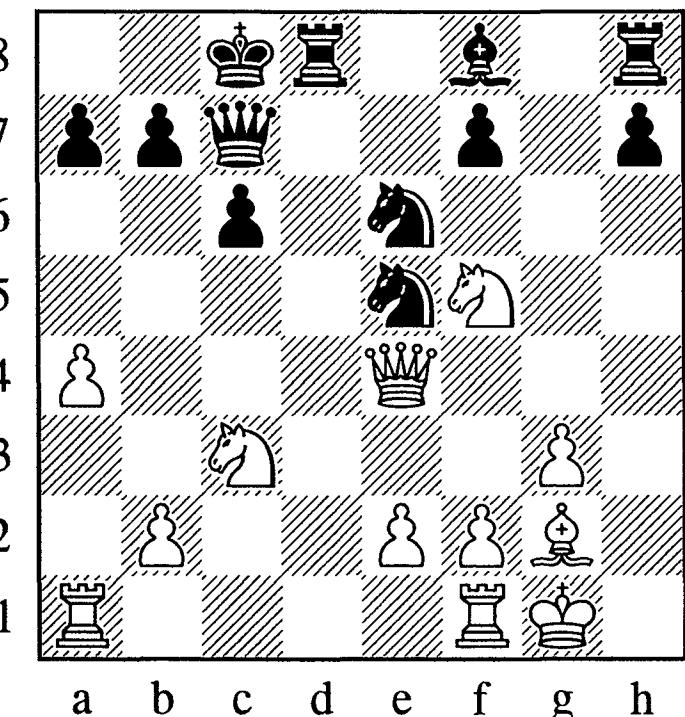
Llorente Zaro – Andriasian, Herceg Novi 2006, was unclear but more or less balanced.

I think White can improve with 24. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ keeping an edge.

16. $\mathbb{W}e4$

16. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ is known to be satisfactory for Black. For example, 18. $\mathbb{W}c1$ fxg3 19.hxg3 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ a5 23.b3 ½–½ Kramnik – Morozevich, Astana 2001.

16...fxg3 17.hxg3



17...h5

Seeking quick counterplay, but White's attack comes first.

The position was not at all easy though, as the following examples show:

17...a5

This tries to close the queenside, but doesn't close a thing!

18. $\mathbb{Q}b5!$ cxb5 19.axb5 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 20. $\mathbb{W}e3 \rightarrow \mathbb{Q}g4$ 20... $\mathbb{Q}cd7$ 21. $\mathbb{W}a7$ is hopeless: 21... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e7\#$! $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}fc1$ $\mathbb{W}b8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xc5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}h3\#$ 1–0 Porat – Gonda, Budapest 2005.

21. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 22. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{W}e4$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe4\pm$

White was a clear pawn up in Johannessen – Shirov, Germany 2004.

17... $\mathbb{Q}c5$

Teasing the queen.

18. $\mathbb{W}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 19. $\mathbb{W}h5$

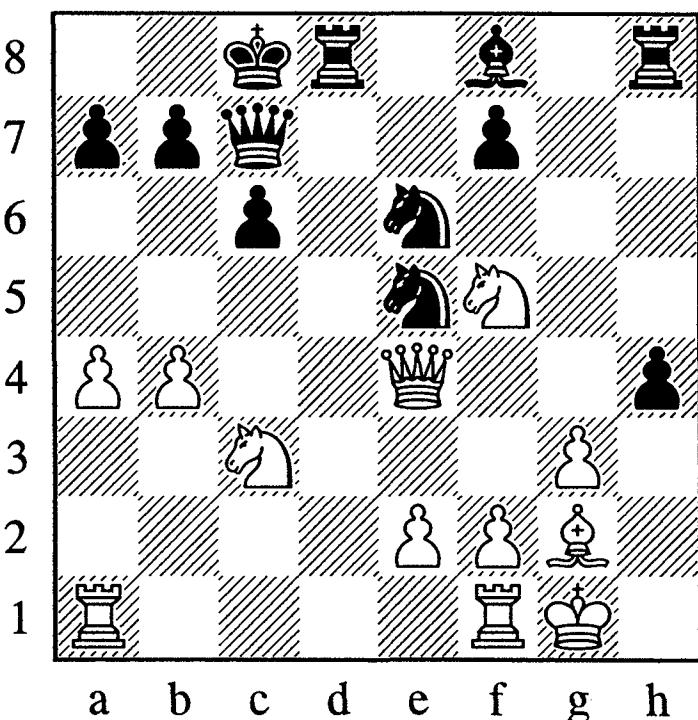
But it finds a new safe square.

19...a5

19... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 20. $\mathbb{B}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 21.e3 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h6$
 $\mathbb{B}hf8$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xd8\#$ $\mathbb{B}xd8$ 24. $\mathbb{W}f5$ $\mathbb{B}f8$ 25. $\mathbb{B}d1\pm$
J. Rodriguez – Lafarga Santorroman, corr.
2003.

20. $\mathbb{B}ad1$ $\mathbb{B}xd1$ 21. $\mathbb{B}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 22.e3 $\mathbb{W}e5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e4$
 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 24. $\mathbb{W}f3$ h5 25. $\mathbb{Q}fd6!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xf7\#$
 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 28.f4 $\mathbb{W}e6$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$
30. $\mathbb{Q}f2\pm$ Grischuk – P.H. Nielsen, Internet
2004.

18.b4 h4



19. $\mathbb{Q}b5!$

Kind of standard, yet always spectacular.

19... $\mathbb{Q}xb5$

Of course Black tests the sacrifice: on 19... $\mathbb{W}b8$ follows 20. $\mathbb{Q}xa7\#$ $\mathbb{W}xa7$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xe5$.

20. $\mathbb{B}fc1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 21.axb5 hxg3 22.bxc6

He even had time for 22. $\mathbb{Q}xg3$.

22... $\mathbb{Q}xf2\#$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ b6 24. $\mathbb{B}a6!$

The culmination of Volokitin's powerful play. He simply threatens $\mathbb{B}ca1$ and Black has no defence.

24... $\mathbb{Q}xb4$

Desperation. 24... $\mathbb{B}h2$ 25. $\mathbb{B}ca1$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$
26. $\mathbb{B}xa7$ $\mathbb{W}xa7$ 27. $\mathbb{B}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ 28. $\mathbb{W}c4$ and the queen quickly gets in and decides.

25. $\mathbb{W}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 27.e3+– $\mathbb{B}h6$
28. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 29. $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{W}xf4\#$ 30.exf4

White has repelled Black's tricks and has a won ending.

30... $\mathbb{B}h2$ 31. $\mathbb{B}a2$ $\mathbb{B}g8$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}e7$
 $\mathbb{B}gh8$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}c6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 35. $\mathbb{B}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}2h6$ 36. $\mathbb{B}ac2$
 $\mathbb{B}xc6$ 37. $\mathbb{B}xc6$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ 38. $\mathbb{B}f6$ $\mathbb{B}d7$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$
40. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ a5 41. $\mathbb{B}xf7$ a4 42. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ a3 43. $\mathbb{B}xd7\#$
 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}f7$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 46.f5 b5
47. $\mathbb{Q}a2$

1–0

Conclusion: Morozevich's 11...g5 leads to extremely demanding positions. With 12. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ White gets a wonderful knight on f5 that can help both to defend and to attack. However the opposite-coloured bishops make many of the variations rather balanced and unfortunately all three results are possible.

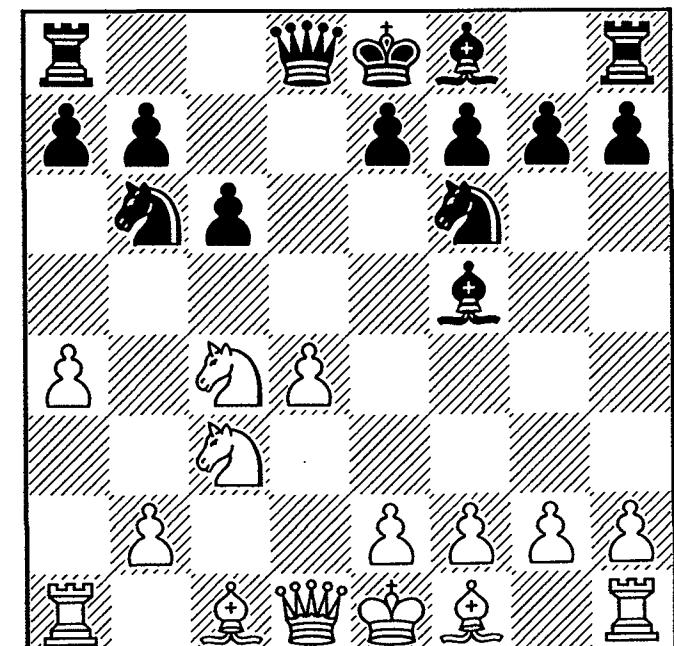
Sokolov's Variation – 7... $\mathbb{Q}b6$

Game 31

Avrukh – Grigoriants

Russia 2008

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ dxc4 5.a4
 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$



An increasingly popular line pioneered by the fighter Ivan Sokolov. The line is suggested by Vigus in his book *Play the Slav*, so it is very important to know.

8.♘e5

White does best to keep some pieces on the board.

8...a5

Black has a rather rare alternative.

8...e6 9.a5!?

Not the only move, but a logical way to exploit Black's omission of the usual 8...a5.

9...♗bd7

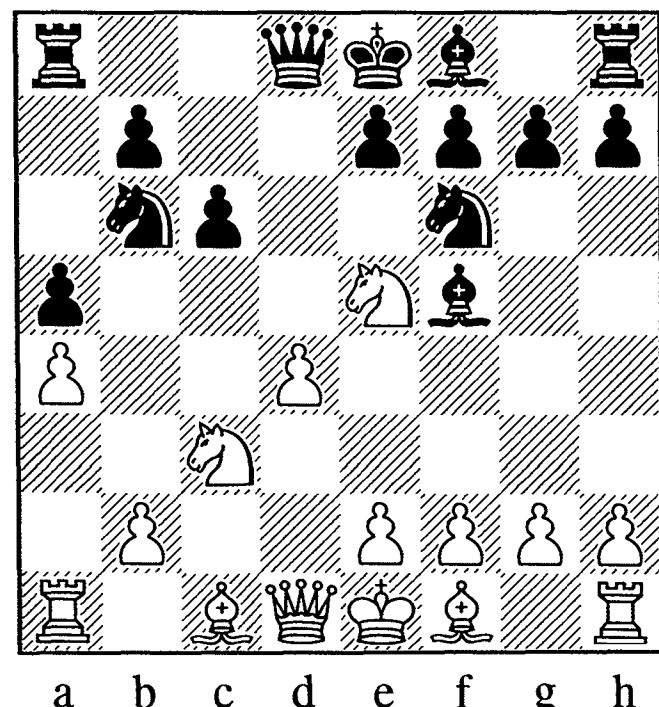
This was played by Huebner, who is a Slav expert, so his choice is significant.

The other way is 9...♗bd5 10.f3!? (10.a6 ♗b4 is a messy line for those who like to analyse).

The position after 10.f3 is almost unexplored, but White seems to have promising play with ideas of e2-e4 or a5-a6. For example: 10...♗b4 11.♕d2 ♗xa5 12.e4 ♗xc3 13.bxc3 ♗g6 14.♔a6! A neat trick to undermine c6. It would be more usual for a5-a6 to perform this role, and that's one reason why Black generally blocks the a4-pawn with 8...a5.

10.a6 ♗xe5 11.axb7 ♘b8 12.dxe5 ♘xd1† 13.♗xd1 ♘e4 14.♗xa7 ♘b4† 15.♗c3 ♘c5 16.♗xe4 ♘xa7 17.♗d6†

White had excellent compensation for the exchange in Veingold – Huebner, Finland 2007, and went on to win.



9.♗g5

The modern try.

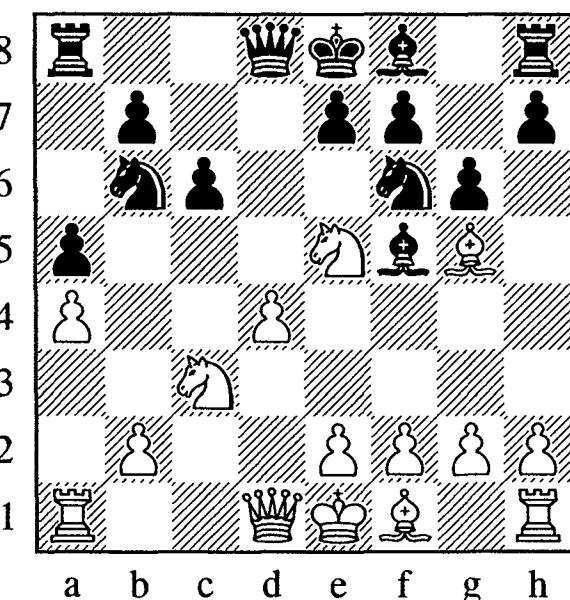
The obvious 9.f3 is not so clear after 9...♗fd7 10.♗xd7 ♗xd7 11.e4 ♗g6. Often Black will strike at the white centre with ...e7-e5 leaving White rather vulnerable on the dark squares.

Instead many players go for a small but safe edge with 9.g3. After 9...e6 10.♗g2 ♘b4 11.0–0 0–0 12.e3 h6 13.♗e2 ♘h7 14.♗d1 ♗fd7 then 15.♗d3 keeps some pieces on the board and e4 will come next with a slightly more pleasant position for White because of the extra space. However, Black has a firm structure and good chances of counterplay. In the practical games with this line Black has held on very well and scored almost fifty percent. With the more direct 9.♗g5 White develops actively and quickly. He is ready to answer 9...e6 with 10.e4 so Black is immediately under some pressure.

9...h6

A necessary prelude to playing ...e6. Another move is currently on the cutting edge of theory and that is the Gruenfeld-like:

9...g6!?



White has a couple of options, 10.f3 and 10.e3:

10.f3

This sharp move is worth a try, but it is also risky.

10... $\mathbb{Q}g7$

Worse is 10...h6?! 11. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 12.e4 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0–0 14. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 15.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 16.g3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 17. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 18.f4± Babula – Kulaots, Dresden 2007, and h6 turned out to be a weakness.

11.e4 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 0–0 13. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 14.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 15.f4 $\mathbb{E}ad8$ 16. $\mathbb{W}c1$

This was unclear in Daus – Bergmann, corr. 2007. Black could consider 16...f5.

10.e3

White should be able to get a positional plus with this modest move.

10... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$

11... $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ is pleasant for White: 12... $\mathbb{Q}bd5$ 13. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 14. $\mathbb{W}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 15. $\mathbb{E}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e2\pm$ 0–0 17. $\mathbb{E}b3$ $\mathbb{E}fe8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{E}a7$ 19. $\mathbb{E}d1$ With a better ending, Sargissian – Felgaer, Lugo 2007.

12. $\mathbb{Q}e2$

Vacating d3 for the knight.

12... $\mathbb{Q}bd5$

12... $\mathbb{Q}fd5$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ was Sargissian – Sokolov, Zafra 2007, when 14. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ must be better for White.

13. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 0–0 14.0–0 c5 15. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

Grischuk – Carlsen, Baku 2008, and now:

18.exd4!

This gives White the initiative after either 18... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 19. $\mathbb{E}c1\pm$ or 18... $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 19. $\mathbb{W}f3$.

Instead of 9...g6, Black could also try the tricky:

9... $\mathbb{Q}fd5?$

White responds sharply:

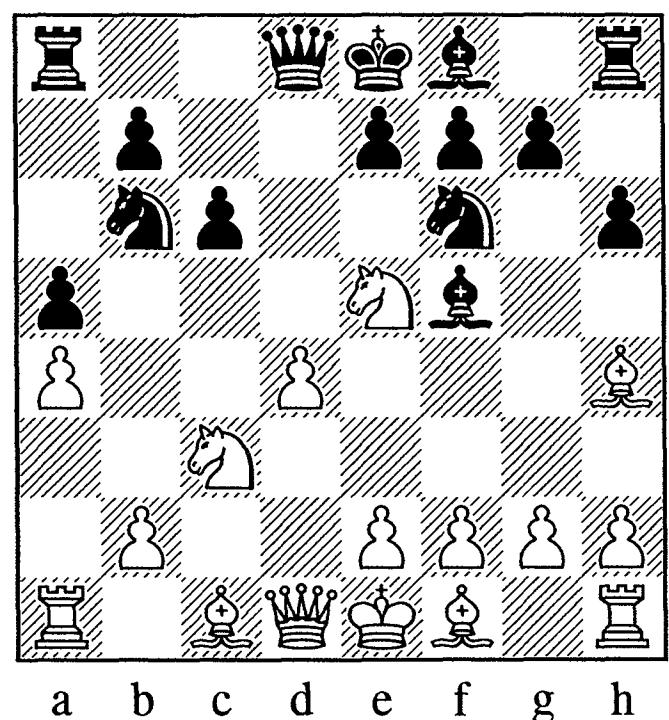
10.e4! $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 11.bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 12. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 13.c4 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 14. $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}e2$

This gives good compensation for the pawn.

15...h6

If 15... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ then 16.g4! $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 17.d5! is strong because 17... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ wins for White. 16. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ g5 17. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 18. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 19. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}g3$

White's position was easier to play in Kuljasevic – Milman, Washington 2006.

10. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ **10...e6**

If instead:

10... $\mathbb{Q}bd5$

White can get a good ending with:

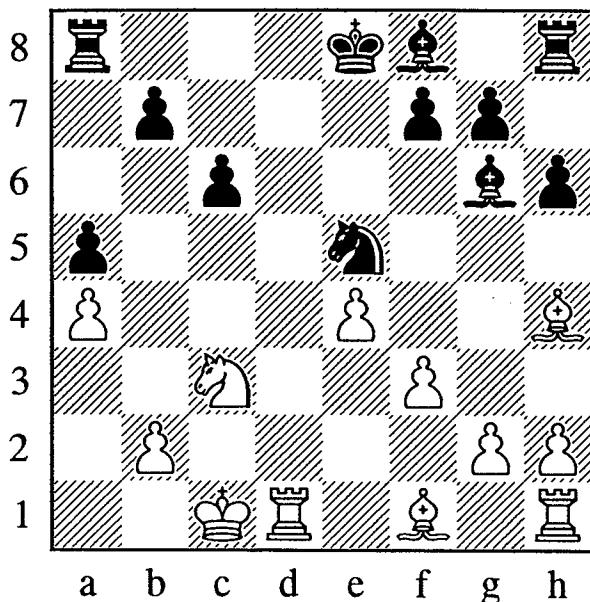
11. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 12. $\mathbb{W}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 13.f3 $\mathbb{Q}fd7$

Interesting is 13... $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 14.e4 e6 when the bishop will be surprisingly safe on b3 in the middle of the white camp. Still 15. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}a2!$ $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ (not 19... $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ or 19... $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 21.d5) 20. $\mathbb{Q}xa2\pm$ P.H. Nielsen – Dziuba, Plovdiv 2008, and White had the bishops and the space.

14. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$

14.e4 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 15.dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17.f4 g6 eventually held for Black in Cmilyte – Ruan, Ekaterinburg (2.1) 2006, but the extra space certainly makes White's position much easier to play.

14... $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 15.e4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 16.0–0–0 e5? 17.dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$



This happened between the same two players, and now Cmilyte effectively decided the outcome with a tactical blow:

18.♘d5! cxd5 19.♗b5† ♘c6 20.exd5 ♗b4
21.dxc6 0–0 22.c7 ♜ac8 23.♗g3

White won in Cmilyte – Ruan, Ekaterinburg (2.6) 2006.

Instead of the unfortunate 16...e5 Black should play the more modest 16...e6 and just accept having less space. White has no reason to complain though. He – or rather she – is the only one who can play for a win.

The alternative 10...g5 weakens the kingside:
11.♗g3 ♗g7 12.e3 ♘fd7 and now 13.♗d3!+
Harikrishna – Becerra Rivero, Lubbock 2008.

11.e4 ♗h7 12.f3 ♗e7 13.♗f2 0–0

The immediate 13...♘fd7 will most probably lead to the same position after 14.♗d3.

14.♗e2 ♘fd7

The standard reaction for Black in this variation: White withdraws his knight rather than exchanging it, to keep maximum pressure on Black and use the extra space.

15.♗d3 ♘d6

The other option is:

15...♜c8 16.0–0 c5

This has been popular, but White can liquidate to a pleasant ending, where Black feels the absence of the h7-bishop:

17.dxc5 ♘xc5 18.♗xc5 ♗xc5 19.♗xc5 ♜xc5
20.♗xd8 ♜xd8 21.♗fd1 ♜cc8 22.♗ab1

Preparing b4.

22...♔f8 23.♗xd8† ♜xd8 24.b4 ♜d4 25.bxa5
♗xa4 26.♗d1 ♜d2 27.♗f1 ♜d7 28.♗c1±

Gelfand – Felgaer, Khanty Mansyisk 2005.
The knight on a4 and bishop on h7 do not coordinate very well.

Later Kozubov showed that Black had better chances to hold with the active: 22...f5 23.♗f2 fxe4 24.fxe4 ♔f8 Grigorian – Kuzubov, Kirishi 2007.

However White can improve on 17.dxc5: the latest word is: 17.♗b5?! cxd4 18.♗xd4 ♘c4 19.b3 ♘d6 20.♗d2 ♘xb5 21.axb5 e5 22.♗f2 ♘c5 23.♗d1 ♘d7 24.b6! ♜a8 25.♗e1 ♘xb6 26.♗xa5 ♘d7 27.♗d5 ♗c7 28.♗c1 ♜fc8 29.♗xc7 ♜xc7 30.♗xe5 ♘xe5 31.♗xe5

Black did not have enough for the pawn in Sargissian – Wang Yue, Pamplona 2007.

16.♗c1

A very exact move. White is ready to meet ...♗c7 with ♘b5.

On the immediate:

16.0–0

Black has prepared a typical liberation plan with:

16...♗c7 17.g3 e5

White maintained a small plus after:

18.♗c1 exd4 19.♗b5 ♗b8 20.♗xd4 ♜d8 21.b3 ♘e5 22.♗c2 ♘xd3 23.♗xd3 ♘d7 24.♗fd1

But Black had the usual firm Slav structure, Kasimdzhanov – Ki. Georgiev, Khanty-Mansyisk (2.3) 2007.

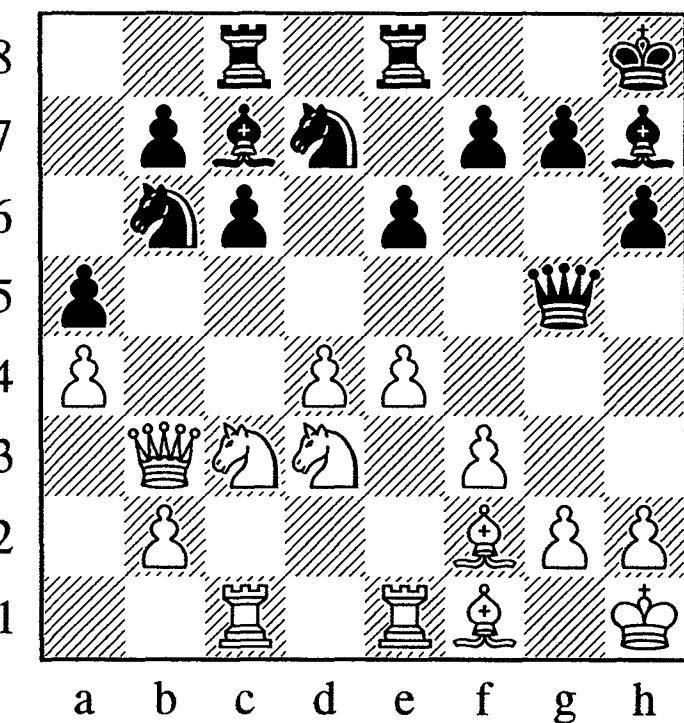
16...♗e7 17.♗b3 ♘c7 18.0–0

Now White is clearly better: Black has no obvious counter-strikes.

18...♜ac8 19.♔h1 ♔h8 20.♗fe1 ♗g5
21.♗f1

He has all the time in the world and slowly regroups. Black, on the other hand, lacks space and has difficulties in improving his pieces.

21...♝fe8?!



22.♞e5! ♞xe5 23.dxe5 ♞d7 24.♝xb7 ♞xe5

25.♝g3!

Threatening f3-f4.

25...♝e7 26.♝b5! ♛b8

Not 26...cx b5 27.♝xe5 ♛xe5 28.♝xe7 ♜xe7

29.♝xc8†.

27.♝xe7 ♜xe7 28.♝ed1 ♜f8 29.♞d6 f6

30.♝xe5 fxe5 31.♝xc6

With very forceful play White has won a pawn and has an overwhelming position.

31...♝d7 32.♝e2 ♛g6 33.h4 ♔h7 34.♝b5

♝b7 35.♝a6 ♜c8 36.b3 ♜f7 37.♝c4 ♜f4

38.♝xa5

1-0

Conclusion: The new line 9.♝g5 could soon be making headlines. The best answer is probably 9...g6 where theory is still in its infancy.

Chapter Conclusion: You will often have to face the Slav. This opening is popular at all levels and, after having seen the illustrative games in this chapter, it is easy to understand why. Although our focus is on the white side of the board, one cannot help noticing that this opening is full of deep positional subtleties, and the tactical motifs are almost unlimited. So strategic understanding and concrete preparation will pay off.

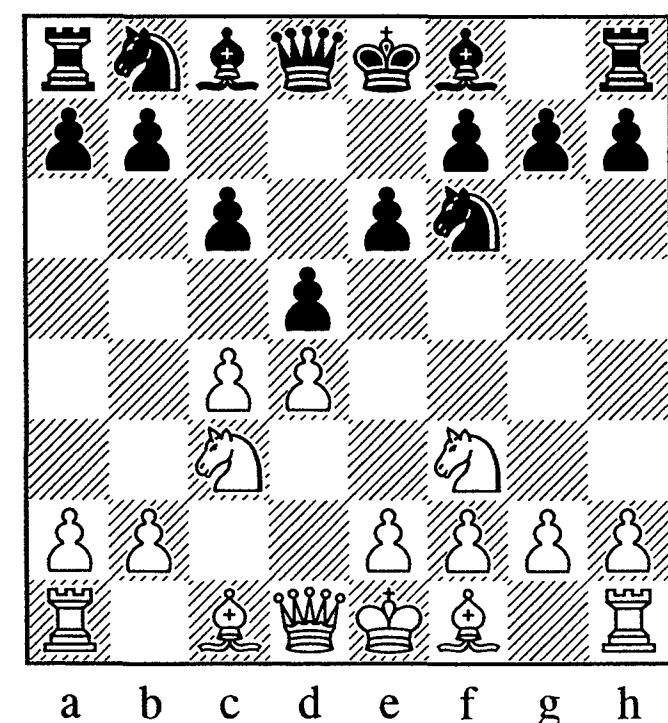
After 5.a4 the minor lines will remain minor. If White knows what he is doing, he can count on a plus. The real test is 5...♝f5. Here our repertoire with 6.♝e5 is a reliable line that gives good chances of gaining an advantage. You especially have to be ready to face Morozevich's 11...g5 and Sokolov's 7...♝b6. They both lead to very demanding positions and nothing is completely clear, so be careful out there!

Chapter 4

The Semi-Slav

*Karma Police arrest this man
he talks in maths
he buzzes like a fridge
he's like a detuned radio*

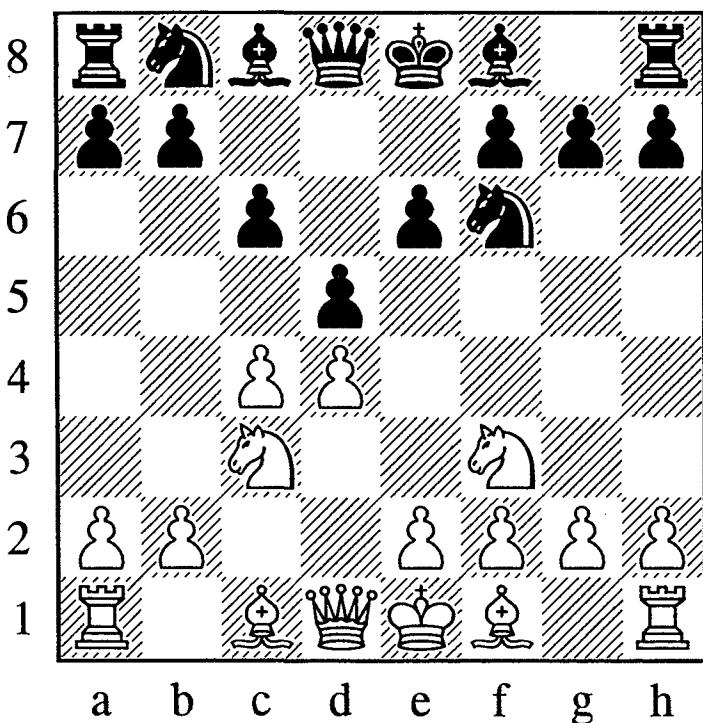
– Radiohead



1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6

The Botvinnik Variation	page 112
The Moscow Variation	page 113
The Cambridge Springs	page 114
Queen's Gambit Declined Theory: Botvinnik Variation	page 114
Theory: Moscow Gambit	page 133
Theory: Cambridge Springs	page 147
Theory: QGD	page 158

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Qf3 Qf6 4.Qc3 e6



The Semi-Slav, one of the most computer analysed and debated openings in the new millennium. Black reinforces his d5-strongpoint, but most importantly he also activates the typical Slav-idea of ...dxc4 followed by ...b5.

5.Qg5

The most active and critical response. It often leads to extreme complications and the resulting positions are very double-edged to put it mildly, so you should be willing to gamble a little to play it. And you shouldn't be allergic to computers either. With good knowledge of the basics, at least some of the current theory, and a lot of self-confidence, then 5.Qg5 is a tremendous weapon. Many of the variations are balancing on the cutting edge and a new move can always overturn the evaluations. Therefore it is absolutely essential to follow closely what is happening in the chess world. Suddenly a stunning idea will turn the common belief upside down. Fortunately it is fun to research. And in these modern times it can be fun to analyse as well. It is important to realise that chess is no longer a deep strategic game where you try to be creative at the board. It has become a much more concrete game, and a lot of clashes are decided right in the

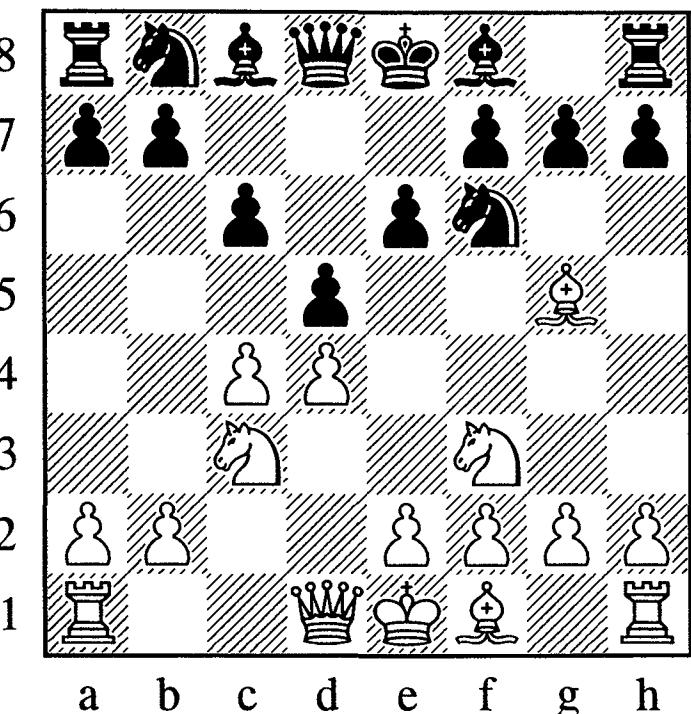
opening. This will also be the case in the Semi-Slav, so if you have a problem with that then 5.Qg5 is not suited for you. If, on the other hand, you don't mind letting Fritz analyse a critical position while you have a beer in the bar, then we are speaking the same language.

The modest 5.e3 is a simple and popular alternative. Here too the play can quickly become rather sharp if both sides insist. After 5...Qbd7 6.Qd3 dxc4 7.Qxc4 b5 8.Qd3 we have the starting position of the Meran. And the fancy 6.Wc2 Qd6 7.g4 is also an interesting approach by White. Both variations deserve further investigations and could serve as an alternative to 5.Qg5. But you shouldn't be deceived: they are also very theoretical and difficult to play for both sides. It seems there are no shortcuts. If White is unable to keep his initiative then all hopes for an opening advantage will vanish. This is very much the characteristic of the whole Semi-Slav complex.

After 5.Qg5 the play divides into several big lines.

The Botvinnik Variation

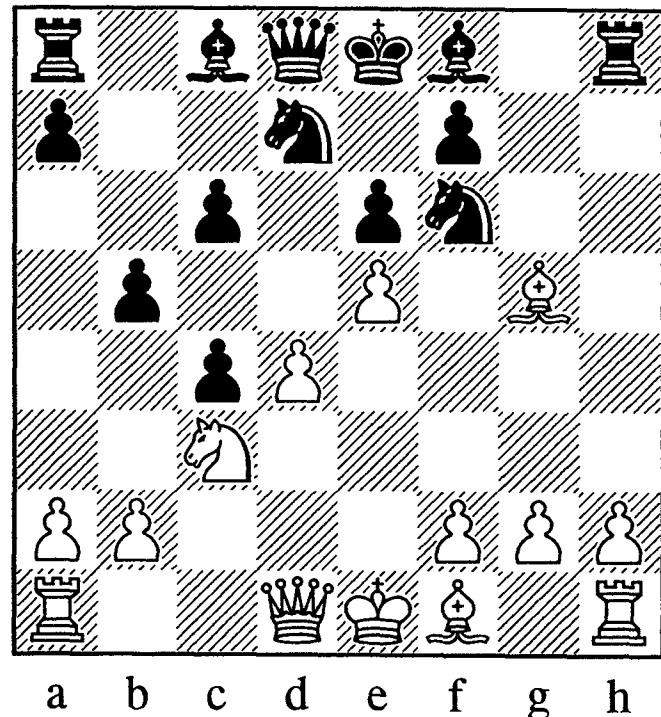
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Qf3 Qf6 4.Qc3 e6 5.Qg5



5...dxc4

The Botvinnik variation: Black goes all-in. White should be better and has to call. That is why there is no need to search for easy sidelines already. I will mention a few of them in the Theory section on the way down mainstreet anyway, because they give the possibility of varying the play, which could be useful if some problems should arise in one of the mainlines – and that is a real possibility. Actually, so real that it is more or less bound to happen.

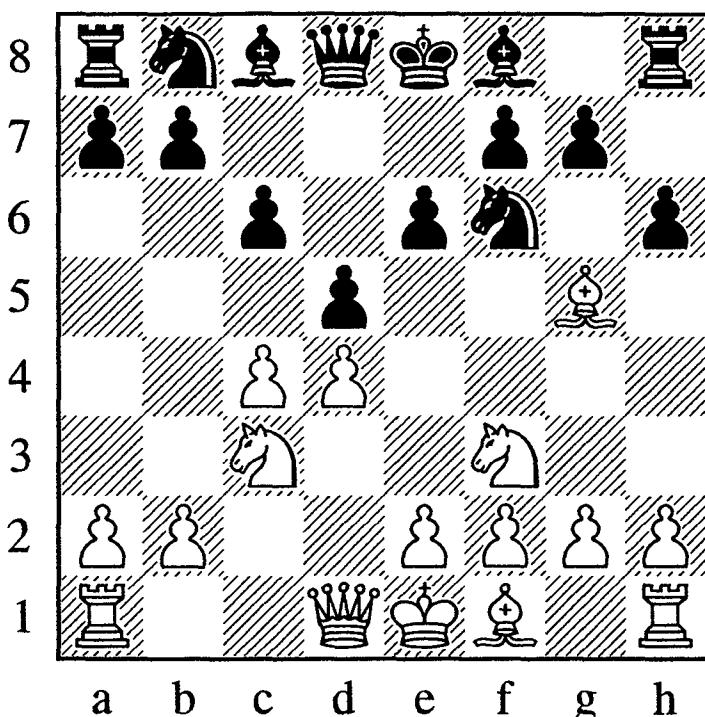
**6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.Qh4 g5 9.Qxg5 hxg5
10.Qxg5 Qbd7**



White wins the piece back and is going to be a pawn up. It is not clear what Black has got in return, but his big pawn majority on the queenside is a factor that should not be underestimated. White's free h-pawn could also tell, but in practice it has been surprisingly difficult to get it going. Generally, normal chess logic ceases to apply in the Botvinnik variation and the tactical skirmish is just about to begin. We will return to it in the Theory section.

The Moscow Variation

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Qf3 Qf6 4.Qc3 e6 5.Qg5 h6

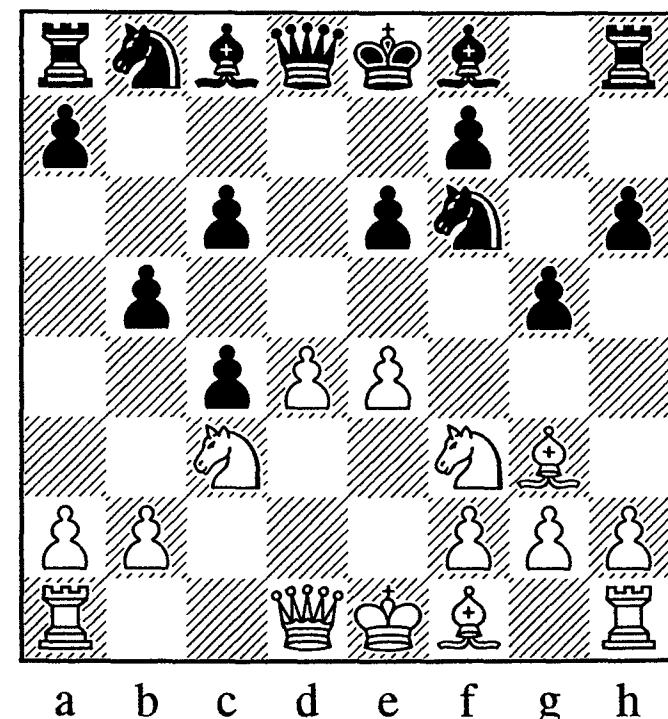


The Moscow variation: a sophisticated improvement of the Botvinnik. Of course White can play solidly and take on f6, but it is more natural to withdraw the threatened bishop.

6.Qh4 dxc4 7.e4 g5

The difference.

8.Qg3 b5



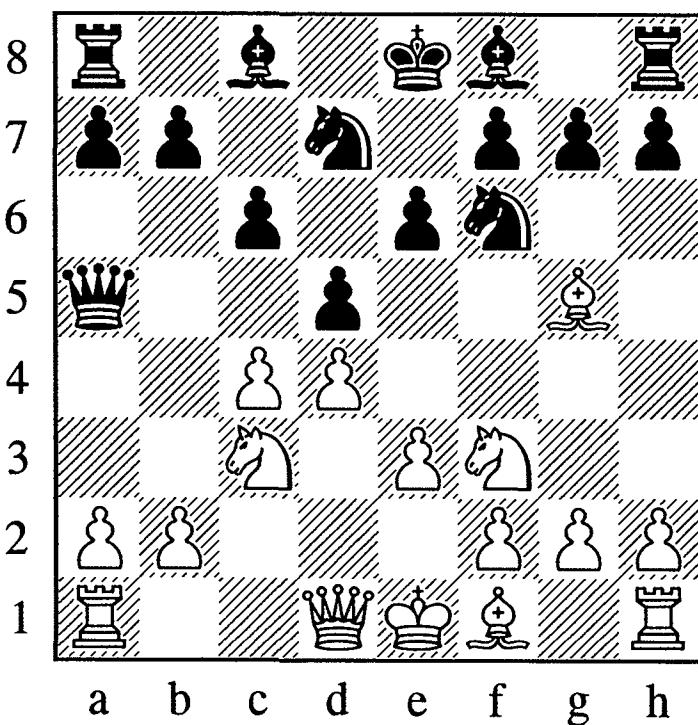
Here it is White who has sacrificed a pawn. This time the compensation is obvious. White is ahead in development and Black's kingside is weakened and can be attacked with h4. Still, is it worth more than a pawn, that's the question.

The Cambridge Springs

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♗g5 ♘bd7

The Botvinnik and Moscow variations both lead to chaotic play, so some Black players instead try to have more control. A popular move is ...♘bd7.

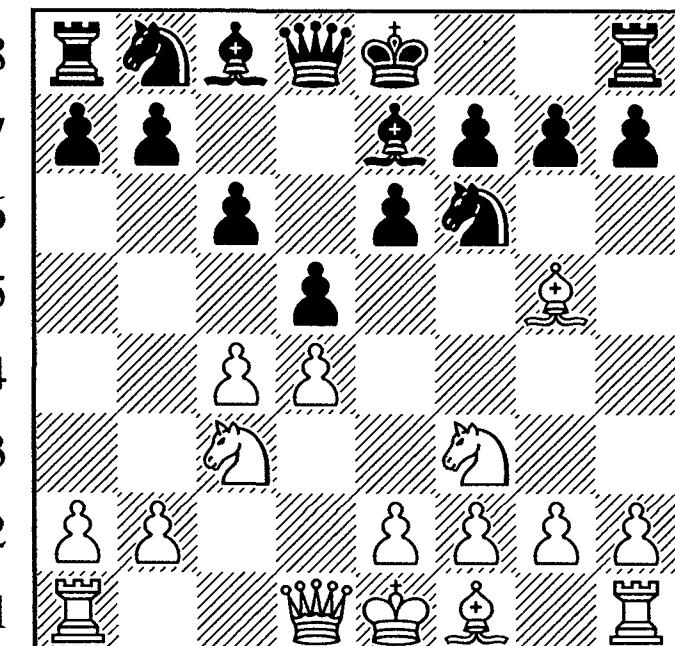
6.e3 ♕a5



The Cambridge Springs. Black pins the white knight and threatens ...♘e4. White has to react energetically to keep the initiative.

Queen's Gambit Declined

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♗g5 ♖e7



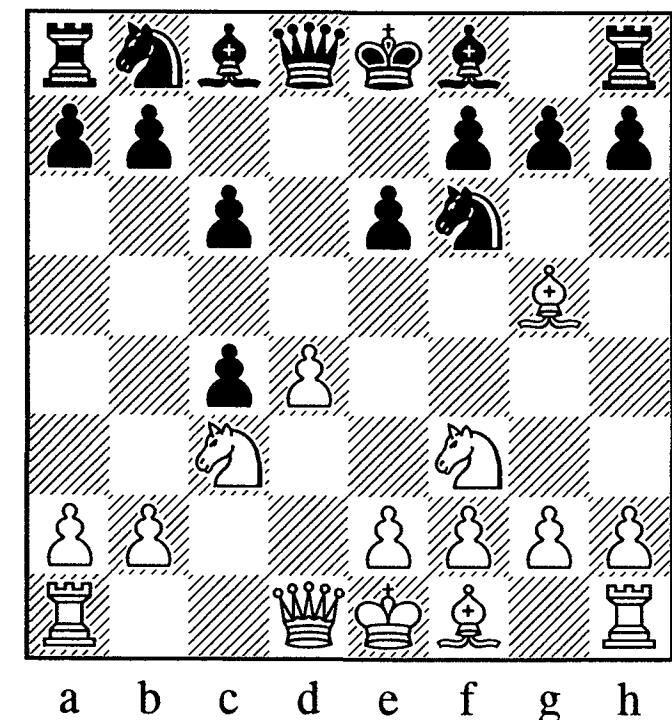
Finally Black can choose just to play a Queen's Gambit Declined position. It looks firm, but ...c6 has been played prematurely and White has no difficulties getting some positional advantage.

It may seem odd at first glance to cover the Cambridge Springs and the QGD in the chapter on the Semi-Slav rather than, say, Chapter 1 – the Queen's Gambit Exchange Variation. However, there is logic to my choice: with my repertoire Black can only reach the Cambridge Springs and the QGD via the Semi-Slav move-order. If Black had played 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 we would of course play 4.cxd5.

With the structure explained, it is time for the wild Botvinnik Variation.

Theory: Botvinnik Variation

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♗g5 dxc4



6.e4

The natural move. White takes the centre and simultaneously threatens to recapture the pawn on c4 and exploit the pin on the dark knight by e5.

An alternative is 6.a4 ♖b4 7.e4 where White can answer 7...b5 with 8.e5 and 7...c5

with 8.♕xc4. Black's most solid approach is 7...♕xc3† 8.bxc3 ♕a5 9.e5 ♔e4 10.♕d2 ♕d5 and now 11.a5 gives White some initiative.

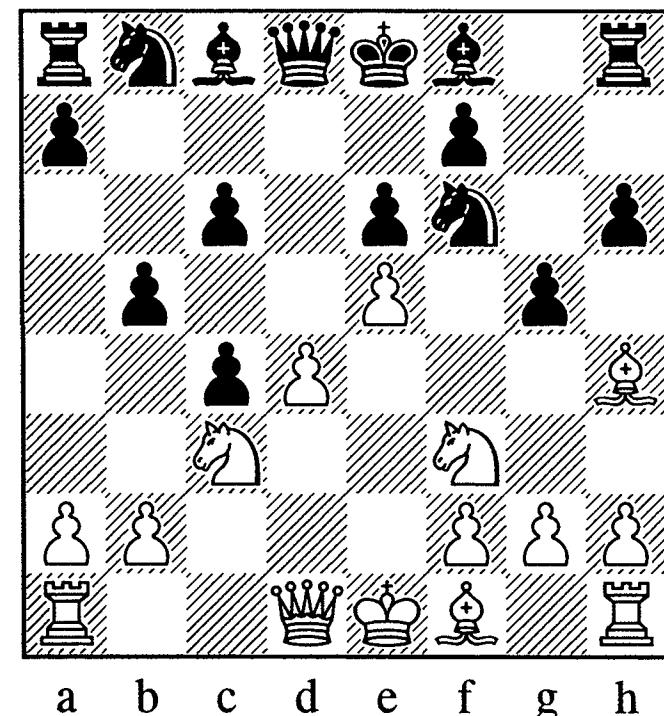
6...b5 7.e5

Again an alternative is 7.a4, but now Black can hold onto the pawn with 7...♗b6 which has scored very well for him.

7...h6

Black has to break the pin.

8.♕h4 g5



9.♘xg5

An alternative was suggested in *Dangerous Weapons*:

9.exf6 gxh4 10.♘e5 ♘xf6 11.g3

The problem with these sidelines is that they often turn out to be dangerous for the wrong player.

Instead 11.♕e2 ♘d7 12.♘xc6 ♕b7 13.♕f3 a6 gives Black good play.

The main move is 11.a4 when 11...♕b7 and the wild 11...c5 both lead to complications that seem okay for Black.

After 11.g3 play can continue:

11...♘d7 12.♘e2 c5 13.♘c6

Planning ♘d5, but if Black is willing to sacrifice material he will get good counter chances.

13...♕b7

Black could also try Grischuk's 13...♕g7 14.♕g2 cxd4 15.♘d5 ♘f5 16.g4 ♘g5 17.f4 d3 18.fxg5 dxе2 19.♘c7† ♕f8 20.♘xa8 ♕b7 21.♘c7 ♘b8 22.♘xb8 ♕xg2 23.♔xe2 ♕e7 24.♘ba6 hxg5 with strong bishops and some pawns for the rook, Rychagov – Grischuk, Moscow 2007.

14.♘d5 ♕xc6 15.♘xf6† ♘xf6 16.d5 ♘xd5 17.♕g2 ♘g7 18.a4 0–0 19.axb5 ♘xb5 20.0–0 a6 21.♘h5 hxg5 22.fxg3 ♘ad8 23.♘f2

Jobava – Cheparinov, Wijk aan Zee 2006, and now Vigorito suggests:

23...c3 24.bxc3 ♕xc3 25.♘b1 ♘g7

Black should be fine.

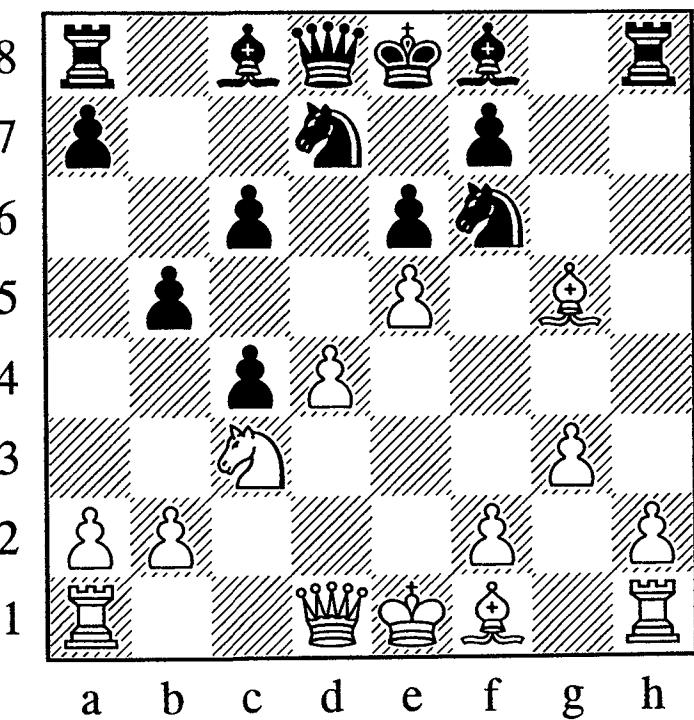
9...hxg5

Sometimes Black tries the tricky 9...♘d5 but it is not correct. White answers 10.♘xf7! and gets the upper hand. Game 32 shows how.

10.♕xg5 ♘bd7

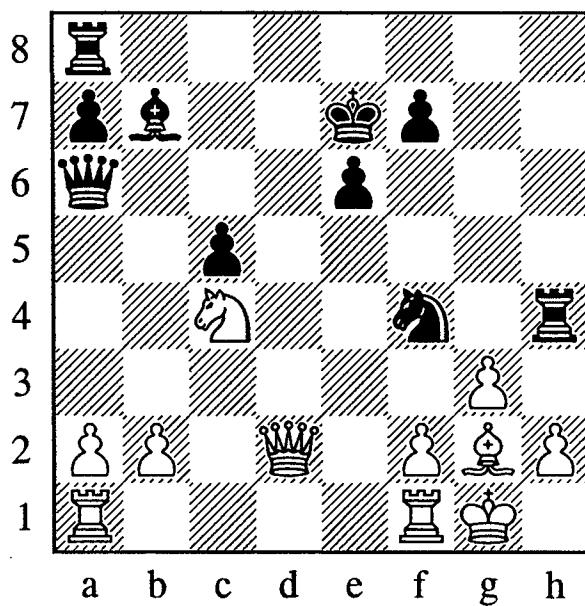
The standard reaction. Possible is 10...♕e7 11.exf6 ♘xf6 12.♘xf6 ♘xf6. The exchange of the dark-squared bishops has left Black with big holes on c5 and d6, which could be useful for the white knight. Game 33 highlights this issue.

11.g3



An important moment. White could take on f6 immediately by 11.exf6 when 11... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 12.g3 c5 13.d5 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ 0–0–0 15.0–0 is just another way to reach the mainline.

Black gets some additional possibilities on move 13 though, of which 13... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ and 13... $\mathbb{W}c7$ deserve to be mentioned, but especially 13... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ has been a problem. The spectacular mainline goes: 14. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 15.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}h4!$ 19. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f4!$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}a6$



And White has been unable to prove anything but a draw:

21. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}h3\#$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}xb7\#$ 23.f3 $\mathbb{Q}d8$
 24. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xb2\#$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}f2\#$
 27. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}h3\#$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}f2\#$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}h3\#$
 30. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}f2\#$ ½–½ Potkin – Yakovich,
 Novokuznetsk 2008.

21. $\mathbb{Q}fc1$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}xb7$ 23. $\mathbb{W}d6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$
 24. $\mathbb{W}e5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xc5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}e5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$
 27. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e2\#$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}f5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$
 30. $\mathbb{W}d6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ exf5 32.gxh4 $\mathbb{W}h1\#$
 33. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}xc1$ 34. $\mathbb{W}b8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 35. $\mathbb{W}xg8$ $\mathbb{W}c4\#$
 36. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}f4\#$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{W}c1\#$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}c4\#$
 39. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}f4\#$ ½–½ Jobava – Rodshtein,
 Pamplona 2007.

11... $\mathbb{Q}b7$

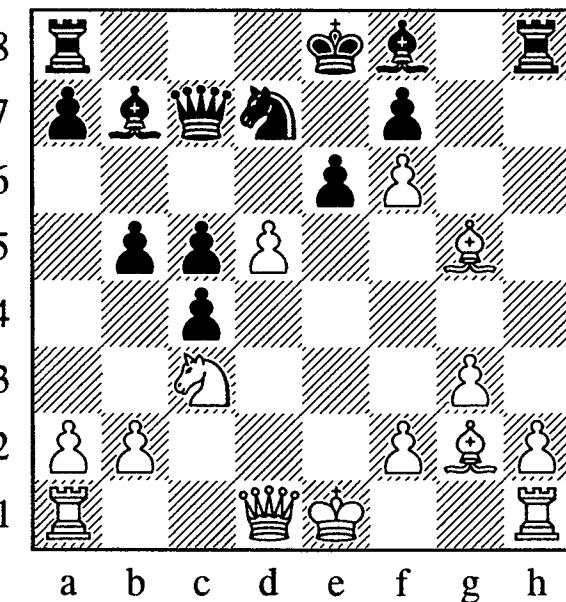
Here Black has a chance to prove the downside of the move-order 11.g3, namely by

playing 11... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 12.h4 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 13.hxg5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$. White must think more about the initiative than material, and respond actively with 14.g6 fxg6 15. $\mathbb{W}g4$. See Game 34 for the current status of this interesting line.

The other try, 11... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 12.exf6 b4 13. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$, may be a little disturbing for White, but if he knows his stuff he will be able to castle comfortably and Black's operations on the queenside might be premature. See Game 35.

12. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$

The normal move, but also seen is:
 12... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 13.exf6 c5 14.d5



Now we have two options:

14... $\mathbb{W}e5\#$

This is a mistake due to:

15. $\mathbb{W}e2$ 0–0–0

15... $\mathbb{W}xg5?$ simply loses to 16.dxe6! $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 17.exd7# $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 18.f4! $\mathbb{W}xg3\#$ 19.hxg3 $\mathbb{Q}xh1\#$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 1–0 Glembeck – Heyn, corr. 2000.

16.dxe6 $\mathbb{W}xe2\#$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 18.e7 $\mathbb{Q}xe7$
 19.fxe7 $\mathbb{Q}dg8$

And now:

20.h4!

This is a promising exchange sacrifice.

20... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6\#$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xh1$
 23. $\mathbb{Q}xh1$ a6 24. $\mathbb{Q}a3\pm$

Lesiege – Khassanov, Montreal 2001.

Instead of 14... $\mathbb{W}e5\#$ Black can try:

14...b4

But then comes:

15.d6! $\mathbb{W}b6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 0–0–0 17.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}d5$

17... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 18. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 19. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ is just good for White who is more than willing to give up an exchange to get rid of Black's light-squared bishop:

19... $\mathbb{W}c6$ 20.a3 b3 21. $\mathbb{B}xd5!$ exd5 22. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd5\pm$ Filippov – Bocharov, Tomsk 2004.

Or 19... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 20. $\mathbb{B}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 21. $\mathbb{B}xc4!$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ with good play, as in P.H. Nielsen – Smeets, Wijk aan Zee 2005.

18.a3 b3 19. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 20.f3

White is better.

20... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

Or 20... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 21. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xf4\pm$ Arakelov – E. Volkov, Dubna 2007.

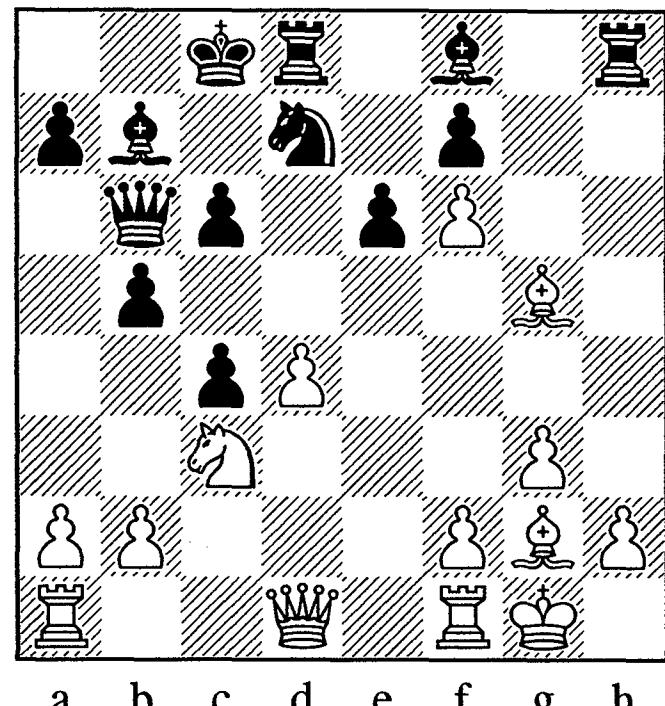
21.fxe4 e5

Kaidanov – Hillarp Persson, Turin 2006, and now I like 22. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c3\pm$.

13.exf6 0–0–0

13...c5 14.d5 leads to the same thing.

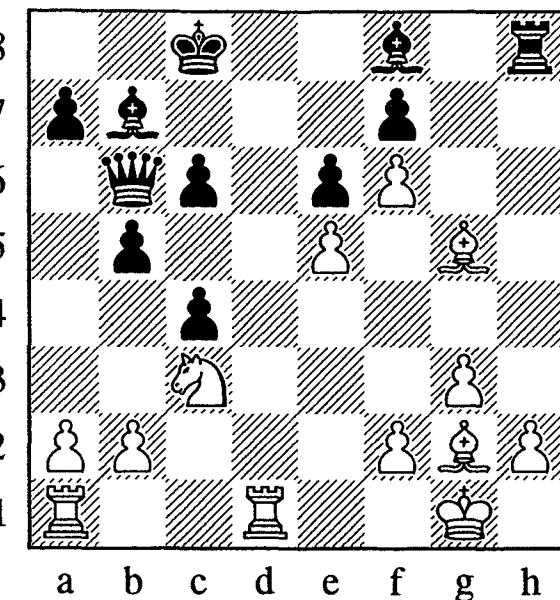
14.0–0



14...c5

The normal way of seeking counterplay. Black should confront White in the centre and on the queenside, where he has a massive pawn superiority. A few other moves have been tried, but they do not solve the demands of the position.

14... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 15.dxe5! $\mathbb{B}xd1$ 16. $\mathbb{B}fxd1$



After the positional queen sacrifice White is clearly in the driver's seat. He has almost total dominance and Black cannot use his queen for much.

One example is 16... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{B}f8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{B}xf6$ Vilela – Frey Beckman, Havana 1985, and now 24. $\mathbb{Q}e7!$ $\mathbb{B}f7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ would have trapped the queen.

14... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{B}xh6$ 16.b3

White opens the position.

16...cxb3 17.axb3 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 18. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{B}h5$ 19. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ e5 20. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ exd4 21. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{B}hh8$ 22.b4

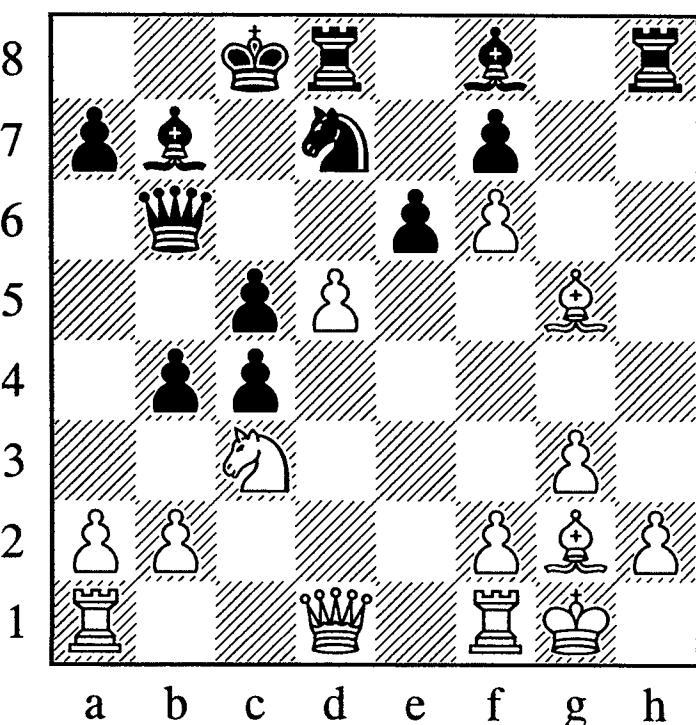
With a positional grip. Black feels the absence of his dark-squared bishop.

22... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{B}d6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{B}hd8$ 25.h4

Run Forrest, run!

25... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 26. $\mathbb{B}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 27. $\mathbb{B}da1$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 28. $\mathbb{B}xa7$ $\mathbb{W}xa7$ 29. $\mathbb{B}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ 30.h5 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 31. $\mathbb{W}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}a2$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{B}d5$ 33.h6 1–0

Withey – Perrin, corr. 2007.

15.d5 b4

Another important crossroads.

16.Qa4

This move gives Black the most problems.

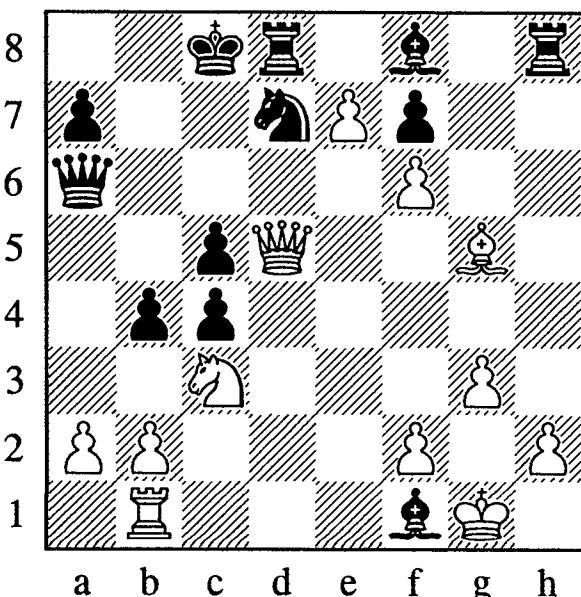
The alternative is the stunning:

16.Qb1

This leads to extremely sharp variations full of sacrifices and counter-sacrifices. Black seems to hold in the critical positions, but let's have a quick look. 16...bxc3 17.bxc3 is too dangerous for Black. Instead he should play:

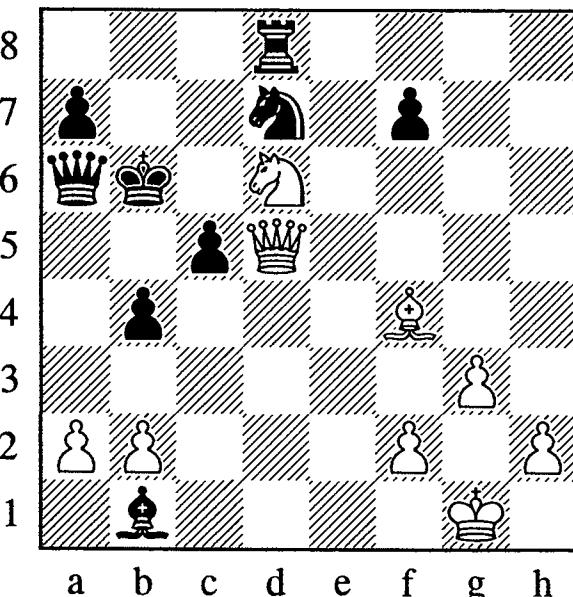
16...Wd6 17.dxe6 Qxg2 18.e7 Qxf1

18...Qb7 and 18...Qa8 are interesting attempts.

19.Wd5

A fantastic position. White is a rook down and everything hangs everywhere.

19...Qxe7 20.fxe7 Qd3 21.Qe4 Qxb1 22.Qd6† Qc7 23.Qf4 Qb6 24.Qxc4† Qb5 25.Qd6† Qb6 26.exd8=Q† Qxd8

**27.Qc4†**

Playing for more than a draw is risky: 27.a4 bxa3 28.Qc4† Wxc4 29.Wxc4 a2

27...Qb5 28.Qd6† Qb6 29.Qc4† Qb5 ½–½
Topalov – Kramnik, Dortmund 1996.

16...Wb5

The queen had to be moved, but where to? 16...Wb5 has been the traditional answer, but also interesting is 16...Wa6 – see Game 36.

16...Wd6, however, cannot be recommended.

17.Qf4 e5 18.Qe3 Qh6 19.Wc1 Qxe3 20.Wxe3 is just good for White. 20...Qa6 21.a3 Qb8 22.h4 Qdg8 23.Qxc5 Qxc5 24.axb4 Qb7 1–0 Kramnik – Ivanchuk, Novgorod 1996. An early resignation by Chucky. The finish could be 25.Qa3 Qc7 26.Qf1 Qb5 27.Qxa7 Qb8 28.Qa5 Qd7 29.Qa6 and wins.

17.a3

Trying to open the queenside for the white pieces. 17.dxe6 Qxg2 is complicated, but Black has done well in the games that have been played with it.

17...exd5

Almost the only move left.

a) 17... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{B}xh6$ is known to be risky:

19.dxe6 $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 20.exd7† $\mathbb{B}xd7$ 21. $\mathbb{W}c1$ This is given by Pedersen as good for White. If we continue a bit with: 21... $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xh6$ $\mathbb{W}xa4$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xf1$ c3 It seems that Black gets good counterplay. Instead White could play:

19.axb4 cxb4 20.b3 c3 21. $\mathbb{W}d4$

This looks promising.

21... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xc3!$ bxc3 23. $\mathbb{W}xc3\#$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$
 24. $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 25. $\mathbb{W}d6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 26. $\mathbb{B}xa7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xa7$
 27. $\mathbb{W}c7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 28. $\mathbb{B}a1\#$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ 29. $\mathbb{B}xa6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$
 30. $\mathbb{W}xd8$

With a winning position: the pawns begin to tell.

30... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 31.b4 $\mathbb{B}h5$ 32. $\mathbb{W}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 33.f4 $\mathbb{Q}f3\#$
 34. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}xh2\#$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b5\#$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f1\#$
 37. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 38. $\mathbb{W}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}e2\#$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$
 40. $\mathbb{W}xh5$ 1–0

Traut – Rudwall, corr. 1997.

b) 17... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ exd5 19. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xa4$
 20.axb4

Vigorito likes 20. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ and after 20... $\mathbb{W}b5$
 21.axb4 $\mathbb{W}b7$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xf7$ you can understand why.

20... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xf7$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 22. $\mathbb{B}xa7$

This is an idea of Korchnoi.

22... $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xf7$ cxb4 24. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{B}d7$ 25. $\mathbb{B}xd7$
 $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 26. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 27. $\mathbb{B}xc4\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}d4$
 $\mathbb{B}h6$

The ending does not win by itself, but the three pawns give White good practical chances as the following game confirms.

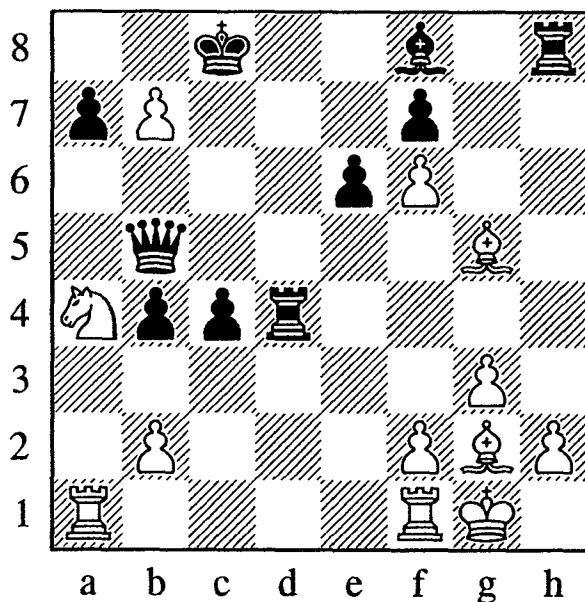
29. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 30. $\mathbb{B}c6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{B}h5$
 32. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{B}d5$ 33.h4 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 34. $\mathbb{B}b6$ b3 35. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$
 $\mathbb{B}xd6$ 36. $\mathbb{B}xb3$ $\mathbb{B}d2$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ 38. $\mathbb{B}e3\#$
 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 39. $\mathbb{B}e2$ $\mathbb{B}xe2$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d2\#$
 42. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 43.b4 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 44.b5 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}f2$
 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$

49. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 50. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 1–0

Mason – Hanison, corr. 2000.

c) 17... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 18.axb4 cxb4 19. $\mathbb{W}d4$

19. $\mathbb{W}g4$ is also possible, but 19. $\mathbb{W}d4$ and the following queen sacrifice is very strong.
 19... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 20.dxc6! $\mathbb{B}xd4$ 21.cxb7†



This protected passed pawn on the seventh rank will be a constant nuisance for Black.

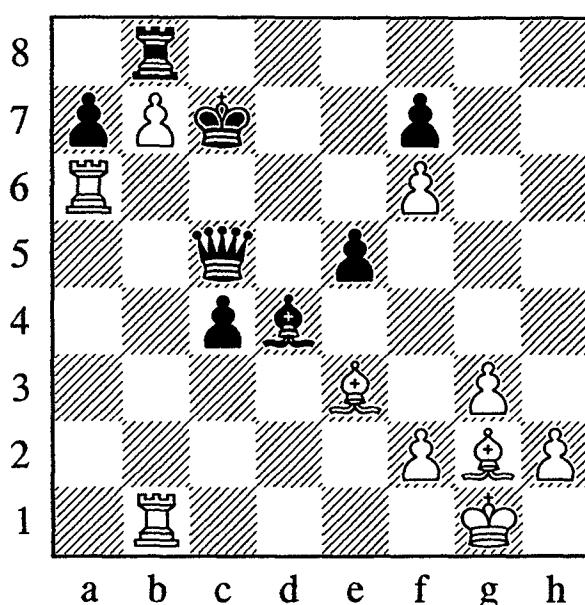
21... $\mathbb{Q}c7$

21... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ makes little difference. After 22. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ e5 23.b3! c3 24. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$
 $\mathbb{B}xd4$ 26. $\mathbb{B}xd4$ c2 27. $\mathbb{B}c4$ the best Black can get is a bad ending: 27... $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 28.bxc4
 $c1=\mathbb{W}\#$ 29. $\mathbb{B}xc1$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ a5 31. $\mathbb{Q}d5\pm$

22. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ e5

22... $\mathbb{B}d5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ or 22... $\mathbb{Q}c5$
 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 24. $\mathbb{B}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 25. $\mathbb{B}c6$ is worse.

23. $\mathbb{Q}c3!$ bxc3 24.bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 25.cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$
 26. $\mathbb{B}fb1$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 27. $\mathbb{B}a6$ $\mathbb{B}b8$



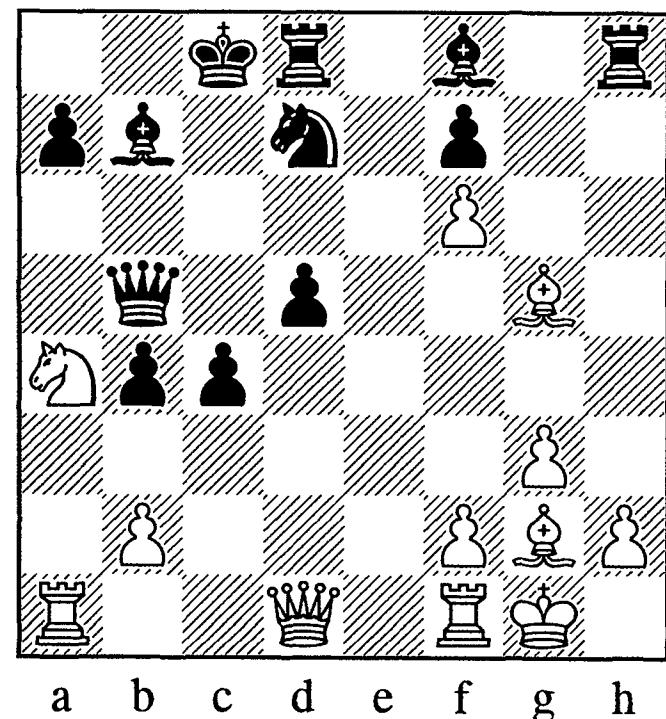
28.♗c1!

The bishop goes the other way around and decides the game.

28...c3 29.♔a3 ♕c4 30.♔d6† ♔d7 31.♔c6† ♔e6 32.♔b5 ♔xf2† 33.♔xf2 ♕d4† 34.♔f1 ♕e4 35.♔e1 ♕h1† 36.♔f2 ♕xh2† 37.♔f3 ♕xb7 38.♔xe5† ♕b6 39.♔c4† ♔d7 40.♕xa7† ♔c8 41.♕c7† 1–0

Kamsky – Kramnik, New York 1994.

18.axb4 cxb4



This is the main position in the Botvinnik variation and it will be analysed in Game 37. Sometimes Black has tried to confuse matters with:

18...d4!?

But after:

19.♔xb7† ♔xb7 20.♕xc5† ♕xc5

Bad is 20...♕xc5 21.♕f3† ♔b6 22.bxc5† ♕xc5 23.♔d2 ♔b4 24.♔xb4 ♕xb4 25.♔a6† 1–0 Michenka – Talla, Frydek Mistek 2003.

21.bxc5 ♕xc5 22.♕e1

the black king's position is too open and White has won some convincing correspondence games.

22...♕e6

Or 22...♕b3 23.♕e7† ♕d7 24.♕f3† ♔b6 25.♔ael1 ♕c6 26.♕f5 ♕c5 27.♔d2 ♕d5 28.♔le5 ♕hd8 29.♔xf7 ♕d3 30.♔xd5 ♕xd5

31.♕e4 ♕c5 32.♕el1 ♕d7 33.♔xd7 ♕xd7 34.♕e7 1–0 Hayakawa – Tanti, corr. 2006.
23.♔d2 ♕h5 24.h4 ♕xd1 25.♔exd1 ♕d5 26.♔dc1 ♕c8 27.♔a4 ♕dc5 28.♔f1 a5 29.g4 ♔a6 30.f3 c3 31.bxc3 dxc3 32.♔e3 1–0
Bredenhof – Ward, corr. 2007.

Game 32

Kund – Jimenez

Correspondence 2005

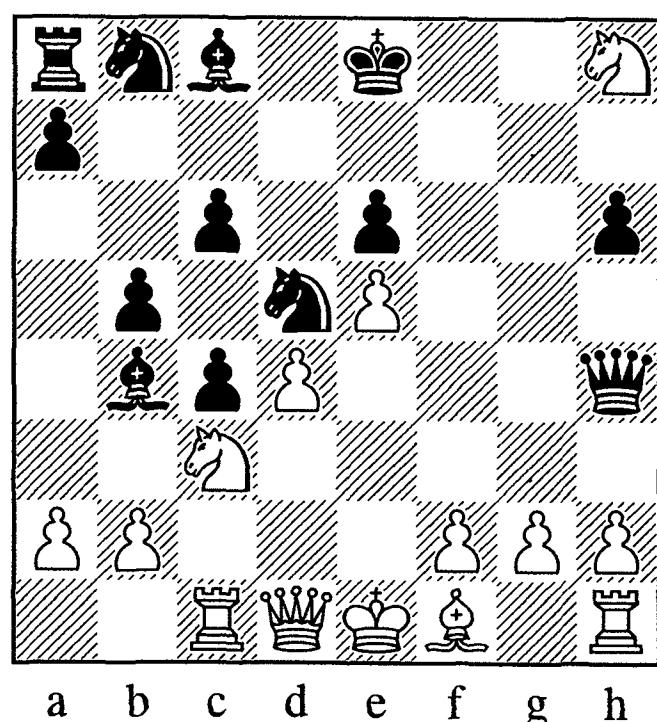
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♗g5 dxc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.♗h4 g5 9.♗xg5 ♘d5?!

A tricky line to face over the board, but the good news is that if White knows his stuff, he wins.

10.♗xf7! ♕xh4 11.♗xh8

The knight is difficult to trap.

11...♗b4 12.♕cl



12...c5

Black strikes at the centre. The text is probably the best move, but if you did not know the variation the move you would fear would of course be:

12... $\mathbb{W}e4\#$

The problem seems to be:

13. $\mathbb{Q}e2 \mathbb{Q}f4$

This looks grim. In fact it is good for White.

14.a3 $\mathbb{Q}xg2\#$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}f1 \mathbb{Q}e3\#$ 16.fxe3 $\mathbb{W}xh1\#$
17. $\mathbb{Q}f2 \mathbb{W}xh2\#$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e1 \mathbb{Q}e7$

Or 18... $\mathbb{W}g1\#$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{W}xd1\#$ 20. $\mathbb{B}xd1$
 $\mathbb{Q}xc3\#$ 21.bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 22. $\mathbb{B}g1$. White penetrates the kingside before Black is fully coordinated. 22... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 23. $\mathbb{B}g8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$
24. $\mathbb{B}g7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 26. $\mathbb{B}g4 c5$
27. $\mathbb{Q}xe6 \mathbb{B}b8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xh6 \mathbb{Q}c8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 1-0
Ionov – Pera Lucas, Balaguer 1997.

19. $\mathbb{Q}d2 c5$

Or 19...a5 20. $\mathbb{W}g1$.

20. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ cxd4 21. $\mathbb{B}xc4 \mathbb{Q}a6$ 22. $\mathbb{B}xd4 \mathbb{Q}c5$
23. $\mathbb{W}f1 \mathbb{Q}xd4$ 24. $\mathbb{W}f7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xd4 \mathbb{W}g2$
26. $\mathbb{W}f8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 1-0

Timman – Ljubojevic, Buenos Aires 1980.

13.dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$

13... $\mathbb{W}g5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ is not good enough: the check on h5 is disturbing for Black.

14. $\mathbb{Q}e2 \mathbb{Q}xe5$ 15.0-0

The simplest. 15. $\mathbb{Q}h5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ is less clear.

15... $\mathbb{Q}b7$

If 15... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ then 16. $\mathbb{B}xc3!$ is strong because
16... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}h5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 18. $\mathbb{W}d6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$
19. $\mathbb{W}xe5$ is winning for White, as in Nemet –
Karaklajic, Yugoslavia 1979.

16. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 0-0-0

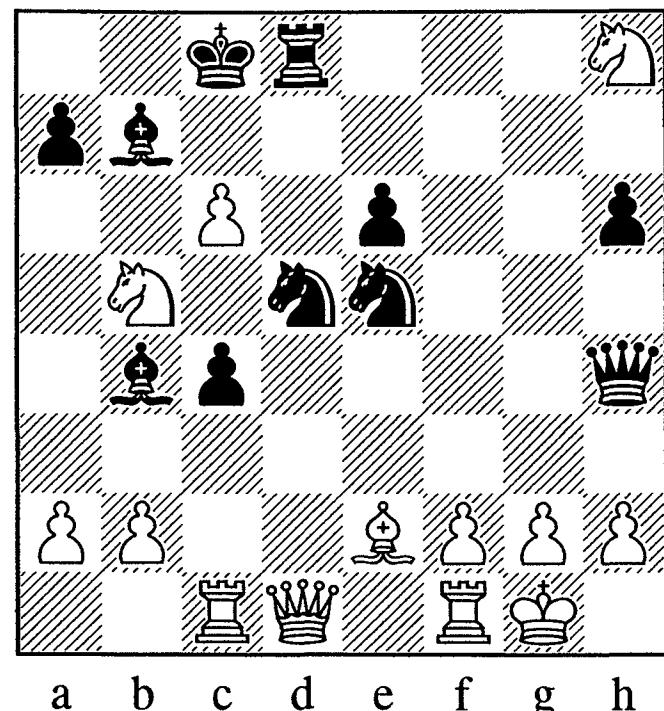
Other moves have had a hard time.

16... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}g6!$ $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 18. $\mathbb{B}xc4 \mathbb{Q}df4$ (or
18... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}h5$) 19. $\mathbb{B}xc5 \mathbb{B}d8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d6\#$
 $\mathbb{B}xd6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}b5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xd6 \mathbb{W}g4$ 23. $\mathbb{W}c7\#$
 $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xb7 \mathbb{Q}h3\#$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}h1 \mathbb{Q}xf2\#$ 26. $\mathbb{B}xf2$
1-0

P.H. Nielsen – Sveshnikov, Kemerovo 1995.

16... $\mathbb{B}d8$ 17. $\mathbb{W}a4$ (17. $\mathbb{Q}h5\#$! $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ just wins) 17... $\mathbb{Q}f4?$ (17... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ should have been tried) 18. $\mathbb{Q}d4\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xb4$
 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 21.f4 $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 22. $\mathbb{W}e1 \mathbb{W}xe1$ 23. $\mathbb{B}cxel$ 1-0
Gulko – Vera, Yucatan 1999.

17.c6!



This smart intermediate move quickly decides the issue.

17... $\mathbb{Q}f4$

Unfortunately he could not take on c6:
17... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xa7\#$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ or
17... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ when 18. $\mathbb{Q}xa7\#$! $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ 19. $\mathbb{B}xc4\#$
wins the black queen.

18. $\mathbb{W}c2!$

The most precise.

18... $\mathbb{B}d2$ 19. $\mathbb{W}h7 \mathbb{Q}e7$

19... $\mathbb{Q}xe2\#$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}h1 \mathbb{W}e7$ 21. $\mathbb{B}xb7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$
22. $\mathbb{W}e4 \mathbb{Q}d3$ 23. $\mathbb{W}c6 \mathbb{W}xb7$ 24. $\mathbb{W}e8\#$ $\mathbb{W}c8$
25. $\mathbb{W}xc8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 26. $\mathbb{B}xc4\#$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 27.g3 and
White wins.

20. $\mathbb{B}ce1 \mathbb{B}xe2$ 21. $\mathbb{W}g8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d6\#$
1-0

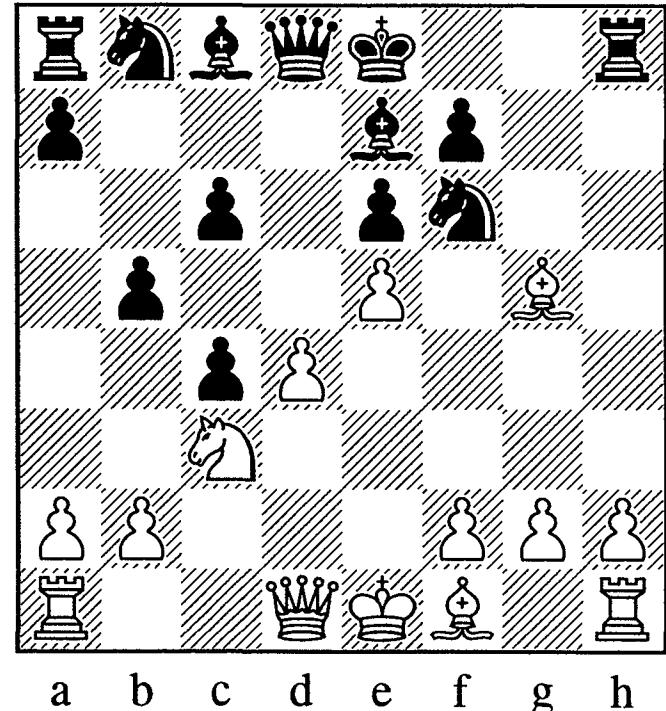
Conclusion: 9... $\mathbb{Q}d5\#$! is refuted by 10. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\#$.

Game 33

Castellano – Parkes

Correspondence 2005

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Qf3 Qf6 4.Qc3 e6 5.Qg5 dxcc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.Qh4 g5 9.Qxg5 hxg5 10.Qxg5 Qe7



11.exf6 Qxf6 12.Qxf6

White could also withdraw the bishop to e3, but it makes sense to exchange them as Black is left with a lot of holes on the dark squares.

12...Wxf6 13.g3 Qa6

13...Qb7 14.Qg2 Qa6 transposes.

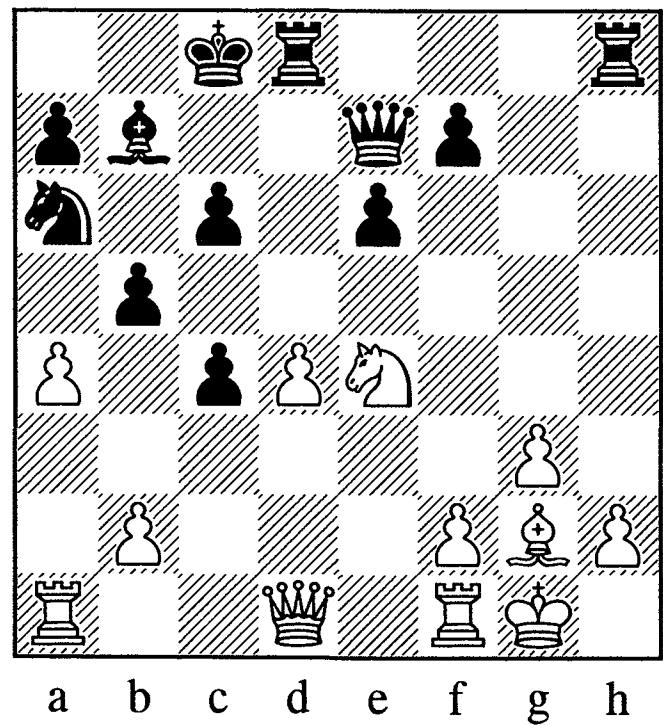
14.Qg2 Qb7 15.Qe4

White centralizes the knight and drives the black queen away from the good square f6. If instead 15.0-0 0-0-0 the d-pawn already hangs. White has also tried to sharpen the play with the more direct 15.a4 or 15.Qxb5, but I think the text move is the most convincing.

15...We7 16.0-0 0-0-0 17.a4

After completing development White starts active operations on the queenside. Black has no real attacking chances on the kingside, so

he should turn to the centre for counterplay. Also, he would like to activate the knight, but it is easier said than done. If it moves from a6 to b4 the white knight gets a great outpost on c5.



17...Qb8

A good way to start: Black improves his king's safety.

Keeping the position closed with 17...b4 is a positional concession. After 18.Qc1 f5 19.Qd2 Qxd4 20.Qxc4 Qhd8 21.Qxd4 Qxd4 22.Wc2± as in Brewer – Cody, corr. 1992, White is well coordinated and the free h-pawn is a real factor.

The other alternative is 17...f5, when it is tempting for White to force the play with 18.axb5 cxb5 19.Qxa6 Qxa6 20.Qc5 This looks very strong, but by giving back material Black can get an unclear ending: 20...Wxc5! 21.dxc5 Qxd1 22.Qxd1 b4 Also interesting is 22...Qb8. 23.Qa1 Qb5 24.Qxa7 c3 25.bxc3 bxc3 The c-pawn enables Black to hold.

The right way to meet 17...f5 is:

18.Qc3 b4

Not 18...e5 19.axb5 cxb5 20.Qxb5 Qxg2 21.Qxa6!.

19.Qe2 c5

19...e5 20.♘c2 exd4 21.♗xc4± is pleasant for White.

Also 19...♝c5!? 20.♘c2 ♜b3 21.♖ad1 ♜a6 as in Bartholomew – Becerra Rivero, Philadelphia 2008, could be tried, but it looks suspicious.

20.♘c2

Careless is 20.♕xb7† ♘xb7 and Black threatens ...♜xh2.

20...♜xg2

20...♝h7 21.h4 ♜d5 Rodrigues – Boino, Lisbon 2000, and now 22.♖ad1 ♛b8 23.♝f4± was strong.

21.♔xg2 ♘b7† 22.f3 ♘d5 23.♖ad1 b3

23...c3 24.bxc3 b3 25.♗b2 is not enough.

24.♘c3 ♜b4 25.♝f4 ♘c6 26.♗xc4±

Walach – Olsar, Karvina 2006.

18.♗d2

The queen plans to enter on the dark squares. Because of the early bishop exchange, Black has difficulties covering them all.

18...♝b4

Smyslov once played 18...b4 in a Candidates match against a very young Kasparov. The veteran drew the game, but after 19.♖ac1 f5 20.♝g5 e5 21.♖xc4 c5 22.♖xb7 ♘xb7 23.♗e3 exd4 24.♗e5† ♛a8 Kasparov – Smyslov, Vilnius (5) 1984, White could have taken the pawn with 25.♗xf5±.

19.♖fd1

The ending after 19.♗f4† ♘c7 20.♗xc7† ♛xc7 is pretty unclear.

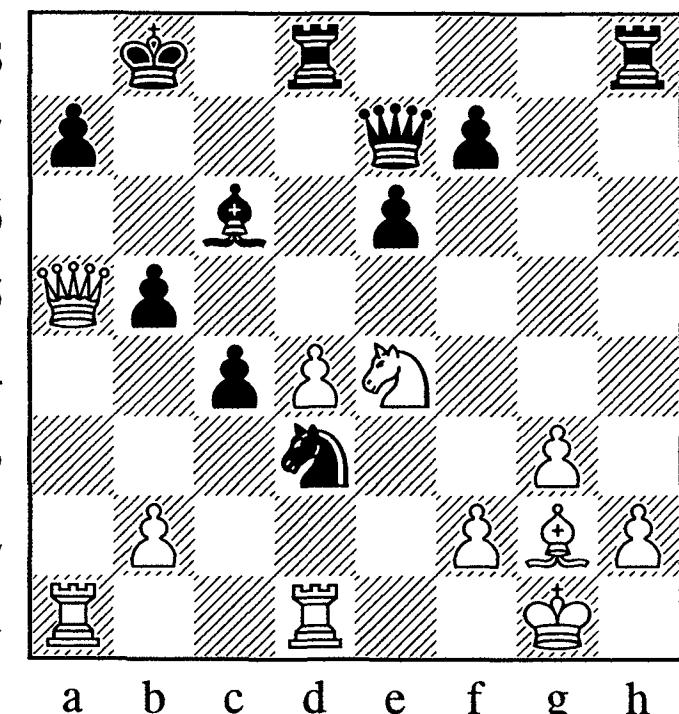
19...♝d3

A tempting square, but this knight move is tactically refuted.

19...e5 20.♝c5 wasn't much better though. A simple variation is 20...♝d3 21.♝xd3 cxd3 22.dxe5 ♘xe5 23.axb5 (23.♖a3 is also good) 23...cx b5 24.♖xb7 ♛xb7 25.♗a5 ♘c5 26.♗a6†

♛b8 27.b4± as pointed out by Khalifman. We can analyse a bit further: 27...♝b6 28.♖xb6† axb6 29.♖a3 ♜d4 30.♖axd3 ♜xb4 31.♖d7 and I think White wins the rook ending.

20.AXB5 CXB5 21.♗a5 ♜c6



22.♖xd3! cxd3 23.♝c5

Finally the knight arrives on this wonderful square. For the exchange White gets a long-term attack.

23...♜xg2 24.♔xg2 ♛a8 25.♗xb5 ♜d6 26.♗xd3

And two pawns.

26...♗c7 27.♗c3 ♜h5 28.b4 ♜hd5 29.♗f3 f5

A mistake in a bad position.

More stubborn was 29...♜b6 but White should be winning. The computer fancies 30.♝g1!?. Black can't take on b4 because of ♜a6 and on 30...♝e7 31.♖e1 with the threat ♗xd5 is very annoying.

30.♝xe6 ♘b7 31.♝c5 ♘xb4 32.♖a6 ♘b8 33.h4

Black is helpless.

33...♗d8 34.♝e6

1–0

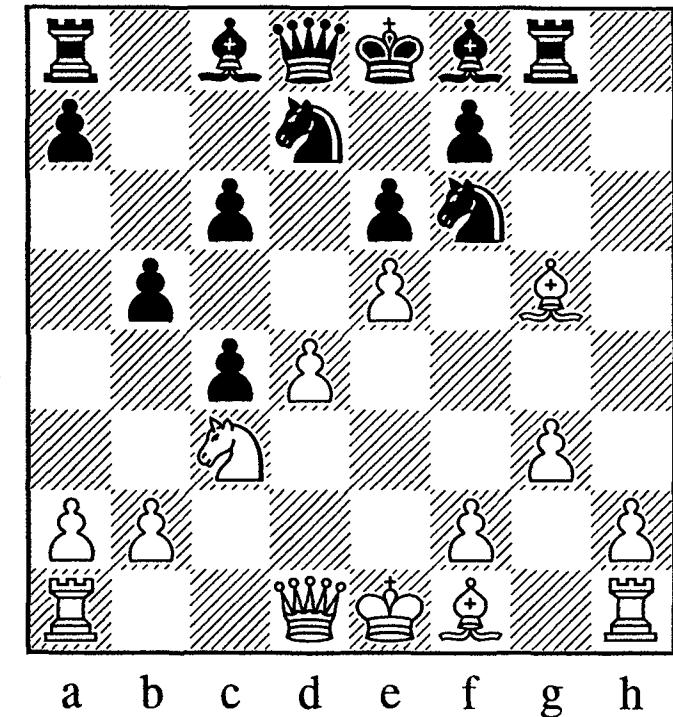
Conclusion: The 10... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ variation is interesting, but the exchange of the dark-squared bishops benefits White.

Game 34

Cheparinov – Pavasovic

Dresden Olympiad 2008

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ c6 5. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ dx $c4$ 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ g5 9. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ hx $g5$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 11.g3 $\mathbb{Q}g8$



12.h4

12. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ misplaces the bishop, but interesting is 12. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 13.ex $f6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 15.a4. However following 15...0–0–0 16.ax $b5$ cx $b5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xb7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$ Black gets adequate counterplay after 19. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ or 19. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ a5.

12... $\mathbb{Q}xg5$

The point.

13.hx $g5$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$

Black has a very compact position. White must grasp the initiative by any means: otherwise Black's two pieces for a rook will begin to tell.

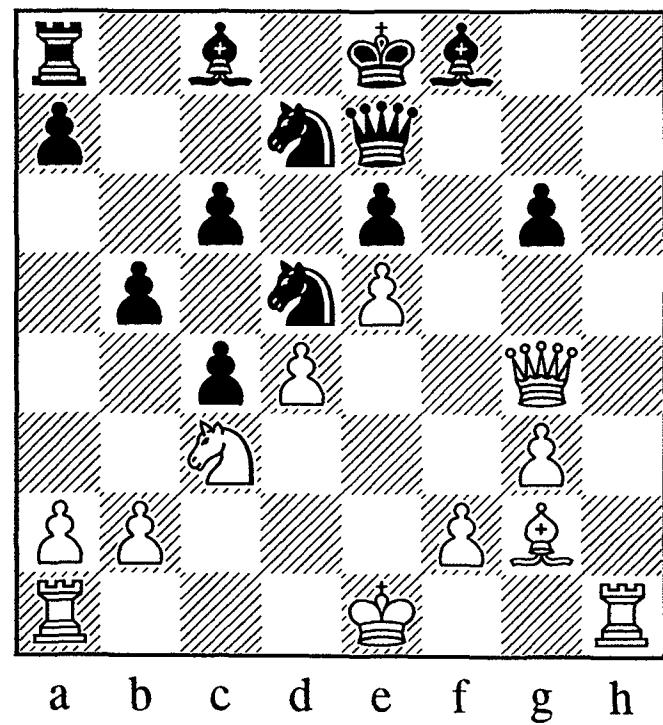
14.g6!

Destroying Black's pawn structure and giving White some concrete targets.

14...fxg6 15. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{W}e7$

15... $\mathbb{W}a5\?!$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xe6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ is refuted by a strong piece sacrifice: 17. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}5b6$ Knaak – Van der Wiel, Lugano 1989, and here 20.e6 is crushing, for instance 20... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 21.e7! $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h7\#$ with a mating attack.

16. $\mathbb{Q}g2$



White simply develops and intensifies the pressure. Instead 16. $\mathbb{W}xg6\#$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ could lead to an unclear ending where Black certainly has no reason to complain.

16... $\mathbb{Q}d8$

The latest trend: Black wants to get his majesty into safety on the queenside.

Several other moves have been tried:

16... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xg6\#$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 18. $\mathbb{W}g4!$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e4\pm$ has been known to be good for White since Dautov – Gabriel, Altensteig 1994. Black could try 17... $\mathbb{Q}d8$, but then again it would make more sense to begin with 16... $\mathbb{Q}d8$, as in the main game.

16... $\mathbb{Q}7b6$ 17.a4 $\mathbb{W}b4$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xg6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$
19. $\mathbb{W}f7!$

This looks very strong, judging from a new correspondence game.

19... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

Or 19... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$.

20. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$

23. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}h8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 25.axb5 c3

25...cxb5 26. $\mathbb{Q}a6\pm$

26.bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

1–0

Wingo – Turoczi, corr. 2007.

29. $\mathbb{Q}xe8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xe6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ and it is all over.

16... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xg6\#$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xf7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$

19. $\mathbb{Q}e4$

19. $\mathbb{Q}h7\#$ also looks pretty good.

19... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

No better is 19... $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 22.f4 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}ah1\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}6h5$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ (24...b4 25. $\mathbb{Q}g5$) 25. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7?$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}h7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}h8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}1h7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ Redpath – Rainfray, Dublin 2000, and here best is 30. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 31.e6 $\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}h6\#$.

Or 19... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xg5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}h6\pm$ Cade – Canizares Cuadra, corr. 2005. The rooks are coming.

20. $\mathbb{Q}d6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}h7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$

21... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 22.exd6 \pm

22. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}d8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$

25. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ cxd5 26. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$

28. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 29.f4 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 30.g4

Black has no counterplay and White's rooks and pawns easily finish him off.

30... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}c8$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 32.f5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xf8\#$

$\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 34.f6 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}h8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}h7\#$ 1–0

Vladimirov – Conquest, Alma-Ata 1989.

16... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xg6\#$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{W}xg6$

On 18... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ the novelty 19.a3 is strong:

19... $\mathbb{Q}xc3\#$ 20.bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xf7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$

22. $\mathbb{Q}d2\pm$ and White's play on the kingside will dictate events.

19. $\mathbb{Q}xg6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ cxd5 21. $\mathbb{Q}f7!$ $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$

22. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 23.a3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 24.f4 $\mathbb{Q}c8$

This was Ploenes – Ax, corr. 1996, and now the correct way is:

25.g4 \pm

16... $\mathbb{W}f7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$

Forcing the play.

18.0–0–0 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ was fine for Black in Beliavsky – Kramnik, Linares 1993, but 18. $\mathbb{Q}h8$ is a serious alternative.

18...cxb5 19. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$

20... $\mathbb{Q}bd5$ 21.f3? (The recommended move was 21. $\mathbb{Q}h8$, but the American expert comes up with an interesting new concept.)

21... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}h8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}h7$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}ah1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 26.a3 a5 This was Yermolinsky – Onyekwere, Las Vegas 2006, and with 27. $\mathbb{Q}1h6!$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{W}xg7$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xe6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}h1\pm$ he could have reaped the harvest.

21. $\mathbb{Q}h8$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 22.f3!

White intends to take back with the pawn if Black exchanges bishops, thereby keeping the key square d5 under control.

22... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

22... $\mathbb{Q}bd5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 24.a3 $\mathbb{Q}d3\#$

25. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ cxd3 26. $\mathbb{Q}d1\pm$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xf5$ gxf5

28. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$

31. $\mathbb{Q}h7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}hc2$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$

34. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ a6 35. $\mathbb{Q}a7$ $\mathbb{Q}c4\#$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ a5 37.b3

$\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}c8$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}g8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}h7$

1–0 Shirov – Morovic, Las Palmas 1994, was another victory for the rooks.

23. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$

23... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}h7$ does not change much.

24. $\mathbb{Q}h7$ $\mathbb{Q}bd5$

White has an open line to work with and the rooks are difficult to keep down.

25.a3

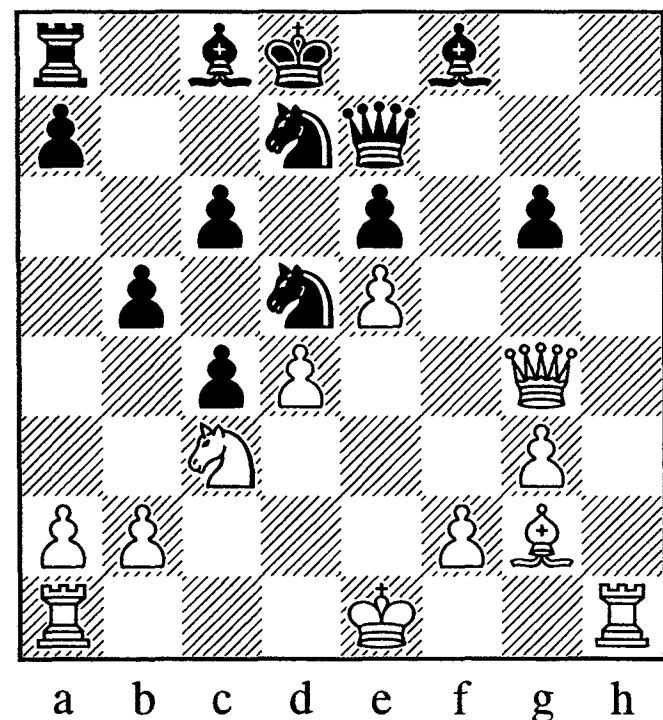
25. $\mathbb{Q}ah1$ is also natural.

25... $\mathbb{Q}f5$

Schmidt – Treiber, corr. 1996. A possible continuation is:

26. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ exf5 27. $\mathbb{W}g5$ f4 28. $\mathbb{W}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$
 29. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}h7$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 31.g4± a5 32. $\mathbb{Q}ah1$
 b4 33.axb4 axb4 34. $\mathbb{Q}g7$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}h8$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$
 36. $\mathbb{Q}b8$ c3 37.bxc3 bxc3 38. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ c2 39. $\mathbb{Q}c3$
 $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 40.d5

White wins – analysis by me, and Fritz!



17. $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$

An important decision. White improves Black's pawn structure, but also takes away many of the dynamic possibilities in the position and renders Black's queenside rather passive.

The immediate 17. $\mathbb{W}xg6$ would allow 17... $\mathbb{W}b4$ with counterplay.

17...cx d5 18. $\mathbb{W}xg6$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$

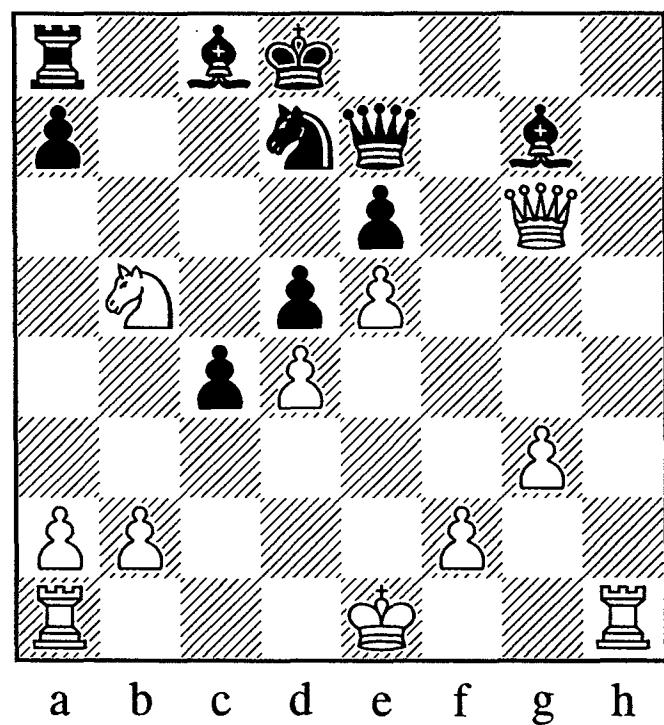
Best.

18... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}h7$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xe8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 21.f4± gives White the usual pull in the ending: 21...b4 22. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 23.g4 c3 24.b3 $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 25.f5! $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ Bacrot – Fressinet, Val d'Isere 2002, and here 27. $\mathbb{Q}h8$ with the idea 27...exf5 28.g5 would have been very strong.

18... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 19.a4 $\mathbb{W}e8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xe8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 21.axb5

$\mathbb{Q}b7$ happened in Antic – Ivanisevic, Budva 2003, and now 22. $\mathbb{Q}h7\pm$ was the right way.

19. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$



19... $\mathbb{Q}f8$

Pavasovic had the diagram position earlier in 2008 and ventured:

19... $\mathbb{W}b4\#$

After:

20. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 21. $\mathbb{W}g5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$
 23.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 24. $\mathbb{W}g6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7\#$

This was Pr. Nikolic – Pavasovic, Plovdiv 2008, and Black was happy, but after analysing the opening some more he probably became afraid of:

20. $\mathbb{Q}f1!$ $\mathbb{W}xb5$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xg7$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{W}b6$
 23. $\mathbb{Q}h6$ a5 24. $\mathbb{W}g8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$
 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}e7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}h7$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$
 29. $\mathbb{Q}b1$

This looked very promising for White in Skeels – Simmelink, corr. 2006, although the game was eventually drawn.

20. $\mathbb{W}g4$

Or 20. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{W}b4\#$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 22.0–0–0±.

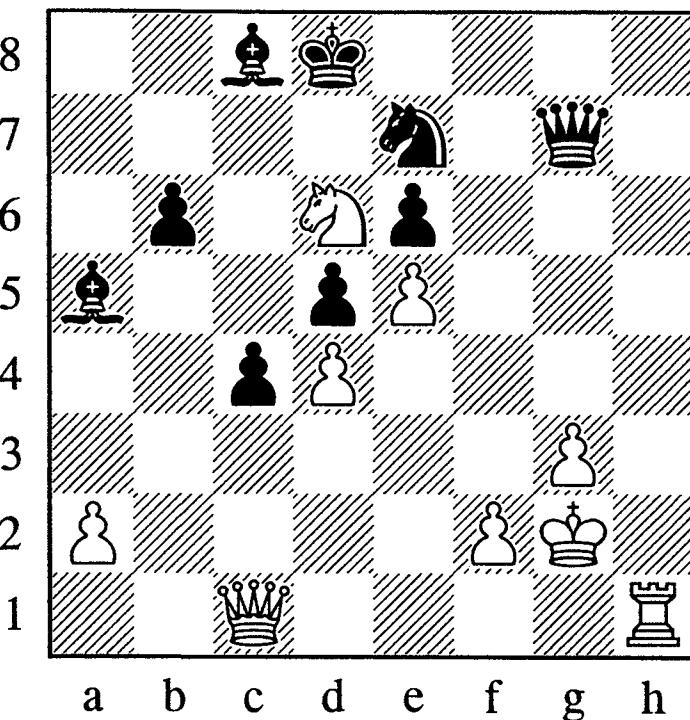
20... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 22.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 23. $\mathbb{W}f3$
 $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ axb6 26. $\mathbb{W}a3$
 $\mathbb{Q}a5$

White was threatening to penetrate on the queenside, but Black managed to close the door just in time. Then Sargissian switches to the other flank.

27.♔g2 ♔g6 28.♕h1 ♕g7 29.♕c1

And now it becomes difficult to cover all the squares.

29...♔e7



30.♕h8†!

The rook is immune due to the fork ♔f7†.

30...♔d7 31.♕h1! ♕g4 32.♕h7

White penetrates and quickly decides the game.

**32...♕g6 33.♕h4 ♔d2 34.♔xc8 ♔xc8
35.♕d8† ♔c6 36.♕xc8†**

Or rather, he could have forced resignation if he had played 36.a4 with a mating attack.

**36...♔b5 37.♕e8† ♕xe8 38.♕xe8 ♔c3
39.♕xe6 ♔xd4 40.♕e8 c3 41.e6 c2 42.♕c8
♔c5 43.e7 c1=♕ 44.e8=♕† ♔b4 45.♕e2**

It is still more than good enough.

**45...d4 46.♕h8 ♔c3 47.♕h1 ♕c2 48.♕xc2†
♔xc2 49.f4 b5 50.♕h5**

1-0

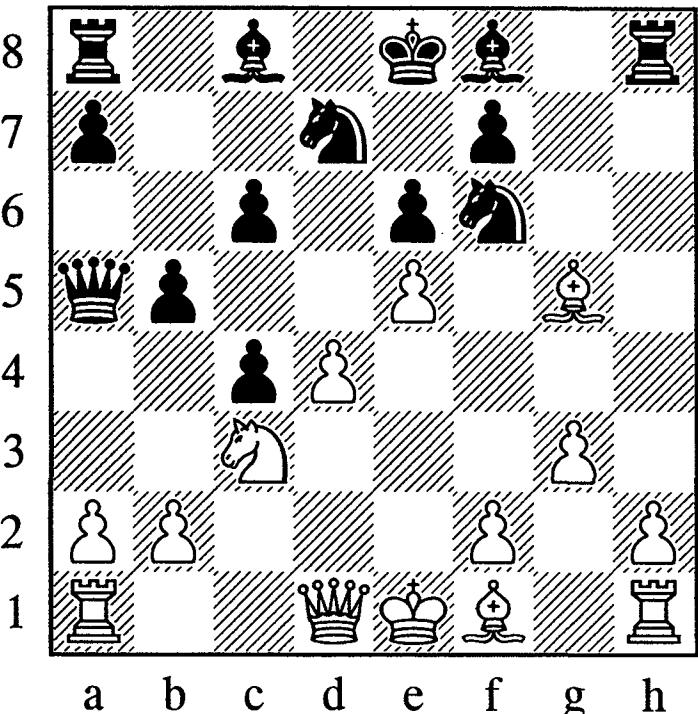
Conclusion: The ...♕g8 and ...♕xg5 idea leads to a permanent material imbalance. White should strive for the initiative by playing 14.g6 followed by 15.♕g4. Later on the rooks can flash their muscle power.

Game 35

Raffel – Roth

Correspondence 1958

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♗g5
dxcc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.♗h4 g5 9.♗xg5 hxg5
10.♗xg5 ♘bd7 11.g3 ♕a5**



With a quick offensive on the queenside, Black hopes to disrupt White's normal development.

12.exf6 b4

Sometimes Black starts with:

12...♔a6

After the normal moves 13.♕f3 b4 14.♘e4 this transposes to the recommended mainline – see the next note. Since I propose a different set-up as our repertoire move, we need to vary here as well. The obvious way to do so is by playing:

13.a3

When Black may regret not playing ...b4 when he had the chance.

Play continues:

13...0–0–0 14.♕g2 ♜c5 15.0–0 ♜b3 16.♗f3 ♜b7

16...♝xd4 17.♗e4 looks good for White who is much better coordinated.

17.♖ad1 b4 18.♗e4 bxa3 19.bxa3 ♜xa3

Cheparinov has tried 19...♝d5 but after 20.♔e3 ♜xa3 21.h4 c3 22.♗e2 ♜b2 23.♗c2 ♜a1 24.♖xa1 ♜xa1 25.♗c5 ♜xc5 26.dxc5 ♜b2 27.♖d1± Nakamura – Cheparinov, Cuernavaca 2006, White was in charge. The h-pawn is much more dangerous than Black's pawns on the queenside.

20.♖a1!?

A new move that seems very intriguing.

20.♔e3 ♜h5 21.♗xh5 ♜xh5 leads to a double-edged ending.

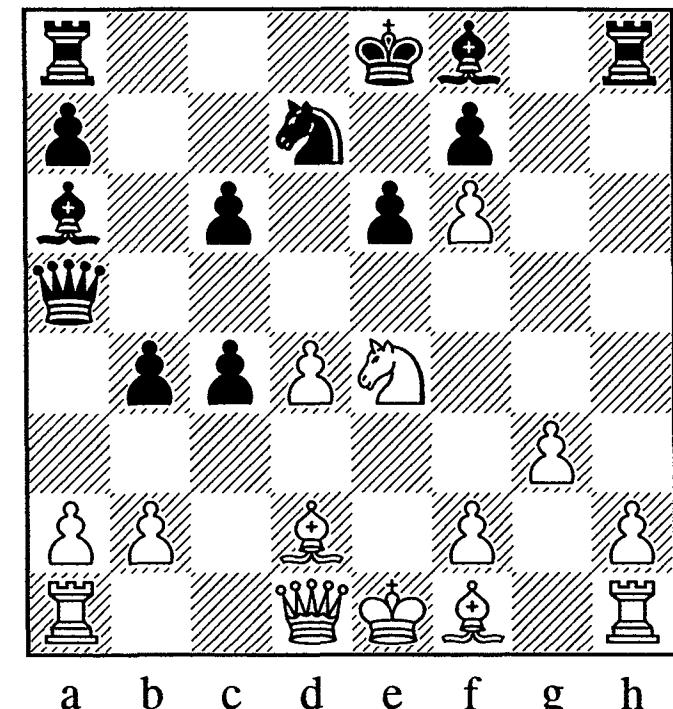
20...♝xa1 21.♖xa1 ♜xd4 22.♗xa3 ♜d1†
23.♗xd1 ♜xa3 24.♗d6† ♜b8 25.♗xf7 ♜f8
26.♗e5

White has great positional compensation for the queen.

13.♗e4 ♜a6

Black intends to meet 14.♕g2 with 14...c3 preventing castling.

14.♗d2!?



A forgotten move. I first noticed it when the young Russian grandmaster Inarkiev used it at the end of 2008. It has only been played in a handful of games, but White has won them all, so I guess we will see more of it.

The recommended line by Pedersen and Khalifman is 14.♗f3 0–0–0 15.♔e2 and White manages to castle. The mainline goes 15...♝b7 16.0–0 ♜d5 17.♔e3 c5 18.♗d2 ♜xf6 19.dxc5 c3 20.bxc3 bxc3 21.c6 ♜xc6 22.♖ac1 ♜d5 23.♔d4 and White is better, Mikhalevski – N. Pedersen, Aarhus 1997.

Black may have an improvement up his sleeve since they keep playing the line. It could be 18...cxsd4 19.♗xd5 exd5 20.♗xd4 ♜c5! and Black is definitely still alive.

14...♜d5

The standard centralization of the queen.

Inarkiev's opponent instead played:

14...0–0–0 15.♕g2 ♜e5 16.0–0

If 16.dxe5 then 16...c3.

16...♜xd4 17.a3

Or 17.♔xb4!? ♜b6 18.♔d2.

17...♜b6 18.axb4 ♜xb4 19.♗e1 ♜xd2

20.♗xd2 ♜hd8 21.♗e4 ♜d3 22.♗e3

Again there is another interesting option:

22.♗a5!?

22...♚b7

Inarkiev – Yu Yangyi, China 2008, and here 23.h4

seems to give White the upper hand in a complicated position.

14...c3 15.bxc3 bxc3 16.♗xc3 is rubbish.

15.♕g2 ♜xd4 16.0–0

16.♗f4 is another move. Black did not survive after 16...♜xb2 17.0–0 in Gros – Burguete, San Jose 1997, but 16...♜xd1† 17.♖xd1 ♜b5 18.h4 ♜c5 19.♗xc5 ♜xc5 20.♗e5 0–0 is maybe not so clear.

16...0–0–0 17.♕e3!

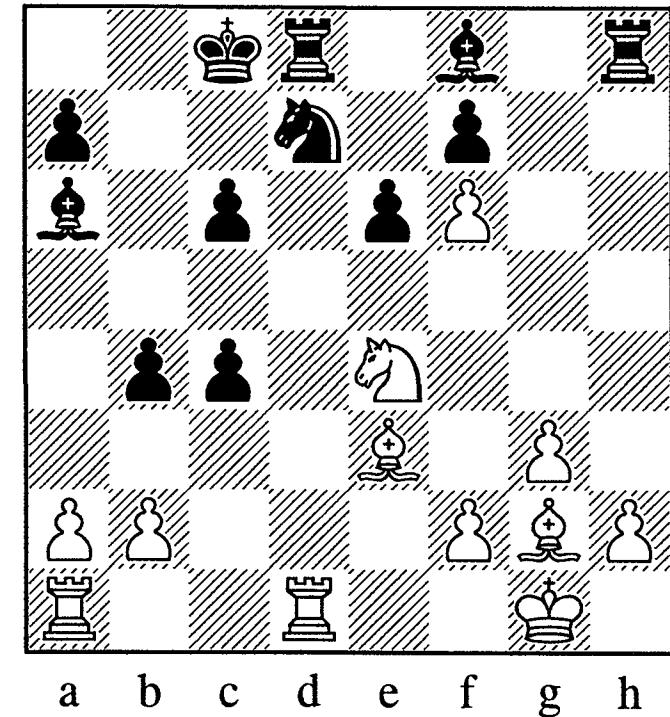
Simple and strong. The queen exchange does not make the positional advantage go away. On the contrary.

That said, 17.♔c2 also looked good.

17...♚xd1

17...♚xb2 is no better: 18.♕d6† ♔xd6 19.♔xd6 ♔b8 20.♔c5±

18.♗fxd1



White has good control and is much better. In the game Black blunders and loses more or less instantly, but it was not easy to find a lasting defence anyway. Maybe a move like 18...♗h5 should be tried.

18...♘b6? 19.♗xd8† ♕xd8 20.♗g5

Just winning.

20...♔c7

On 20...♔e8 there was 21.♔xb6 axb6 22.♔xc6†.

21.♗f4† ♔c8 22.♗xf7 ♗g8 23.♗xc6 ♘d5 24.♗e5 ♗g6 25.♗d1 ♘b7 26.♗xb7† ♔xb7 27.♗d8†

1–0

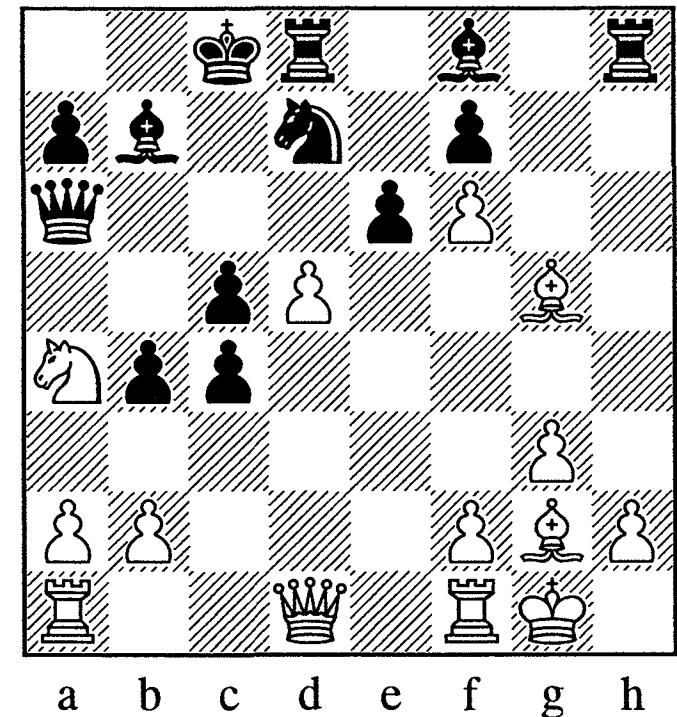
Conclusion: The new old move 14.♗d2!? puts the traditional ♕a5-line out of business, that is with 12...b4, but Black can still try 12...♔a6 when 13.a3 is natural.

Game 36

A. Kovacevic – Simmelink

Correspondence 2006

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♗g5 dxc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.♗h4 g5 9.♗xg5 hxg5 10.♗xg5 ♘bd7 11.exf6 ♘b7 12.g3 c5 13.d5 ♕b6 14.♗g2 0–0–0 15.0–0–0 b4 16.♘a4 ♕a6



Black sidesteps the mainline. Putting the queen on the a-file just urges White even more to open the position, but Black has a specific tactical liquidation of the d5-pawn in mind.

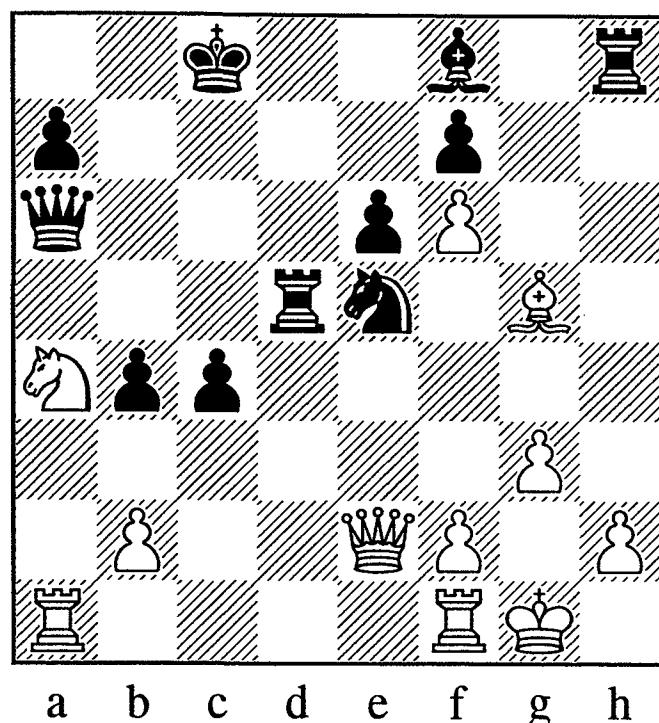
17.a3 ♕xd5

That's it.

18.♗xd5 ♘e5

Winning the piece back.

19.♔e2 ♕xd5 20.axb4 cxb4



Black succeeded with his little operation, but his queen is momentarily vulnerable on a6, which White exploits to activate his knight.

21.♘c3

Actually c4 is also rather weak. A new try is 21.♗fc1!? ♕c6 22.♕f4 ♘d3 23.♗xc4! ♕xc4 24.♗c1 ♕xc1† 25.♗xc1 ♔b7 26.♗e3 and White was better in Braun – Naumann, Nuernberg 2008.

21...♝a5

Black could also offer the exchange with 21...♕c6 but White is not forced to take it. 22.♕f4 bxc3 23.♕xe5 ♜d2 24.♖e1 ♜c5 25.bxc3 With ♜d4 coming. 25...♝d3 (or 25...♝hd8 26.♕d4 ♜b2 27.♕xc5 ♕xc5 28.♕e4† Alexa – Necesany, corr. 2005.) 26.♕d4 ♕f3 27.♝a5 ♜b6 Rahman – Sriram, Calcutta 2001, and now 28.♝a4 ♕d5 29.♜xb6 axb6 30.♕a1 is decisive.

22.♝xa5 ♕xa5 23.♘e4 ♘d3 24.♗e3

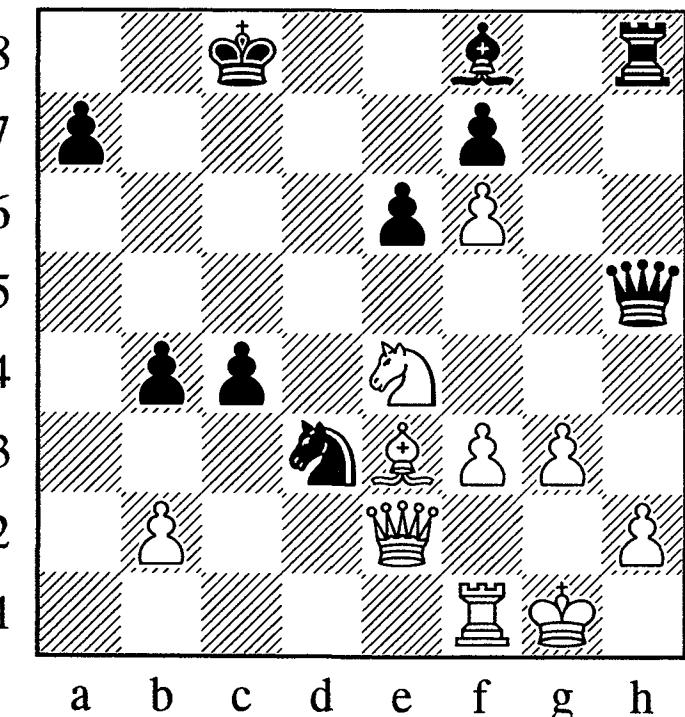
White introduces the threat of ♘g5. Other moves such as 24.b3 and 24.♗d1 have not been very successful.

24...♛h5

This threatens mate and offers an ending where the strong pawn majority on the queenside would be a significant factor.

Fortunately White can parry both.

25.f3



White is ready to undermine the black knight with b2-b3. In the game Black tries to defend tactically. The question is if he has any alternatives.

25...a5

25...b3 26.♕g5! ♔b7 27.h4 paralyses the black queen. In Mueller Alves – Simmelink, corr. 2006, White won quickly: 27...♜b4 28.g4 ♛h7 29.♗c1! ♜a5 (29...♝xc1 30.♕xc4 or 29...♝c8 30.♗xc4 ♜xc4 31.♕xd3) 30.♗xc4 ♜d8 31.h5 1–0

26.b3

Going for the black queen with 26.♕g5 looks tempting just like in the last note: 26...♛h3 27.g4 a4 28.♗c1 ♘e5 29.♗xc4† ♘xc4? (29...♔b7 was forced) 30.♕xc4† 1–0 Luhn – Noble, corr. 2007.

26...a4

Not 26...cxgb3 27.h4.

27.h4! axb3

A mistake. Black should get the queen out while it was still possible, however total satisfaction was far off: 27...♕e5 28.bxc4 ♘c5

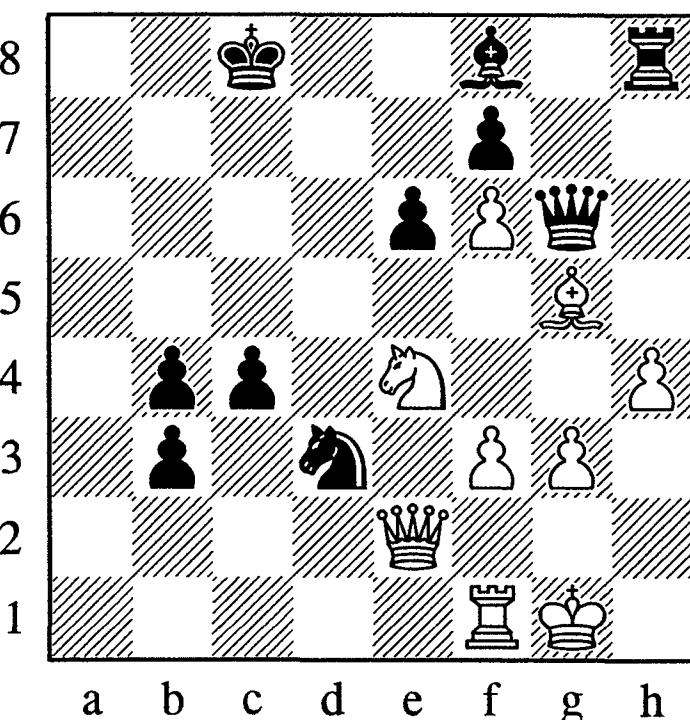
29.♕g2 ♜g8 (29...♝xe4 30.♕f4) 30.♕xc5 ♜xc5
 31.♗d1 b3 32.h5± Daus – Moreno Carretero,
 corr. 2007.

27...♝f5 28.bxc4 is similar.

28.♕g5

The queen is out of play.

28...♝g6



29.♗c1!

The tactics work in White's favour.

29...b2

29...♝xc1 30.♛xc4† ♔b7 31.♛b5† ♔c8
 32.♛c6† ♔d8 33.♔e3 mates.

**30.♗xc4† ♔c5† 31.♗xc5†! ♜xc5 32.♛c2
 b1=♛† 33.♛xb1 ♜xe4 34.fxe4**

Black defended well, but his open king's position and the bad coordination of the heavy pieces makes it a hopeless task.

**34...b3 35.♔f4 ♛h5 36.♛xb3 ♛c5† 37.♔g2
 e5 38.♔g5 ♛d4 39.♔f3 ♛d8 40.h5**

White is no longer afraid of an ending.

**40...♛a1 41.♔g4 ♛e1 42.♛e3 ♛b4
 43.h6 ♛h8 44.♛c1† ♔d7 45.♛d2† ♛xd2
 46.♔xd2**

1–0

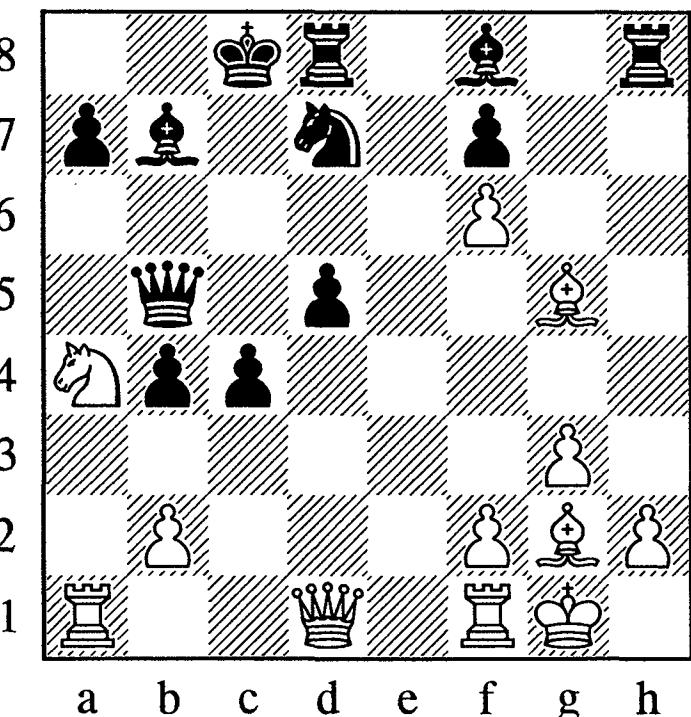
Conclusion: The sideline 16...♝a6 is in deep trouble, and even if White does not want to enter the complications then Braun's 21.♗fc1!? looks like an interesting new path to follow.

Game 37

Strangmueller – Sakai

Correspondence 2004

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♜f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♕g5
 dxc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.♕h4 g5 9.♘xg5 hxg5
 10.♕xg5 ♜bd7 11.g3 ♜b7 12.♕g2 ♛b6
 13.exf6 0–0–0 14.0–0 c5 15.d5 b4 16.♘a4
 ♛b5 17.a3 exd5 18.axb4 cxb4



19.♔f4

A relatively new move. White takes control over the dark squares around the black king and it is not easy to find an adequate answer. There are, as ever, alternatives:

19.♗e1

This is another interesting try. White creates the possibility of putting the rook on e7, which could be a bomb in the middle of Black's position. In his book on the Semi-Slav Vigorito praises the idea, but unfortunately it is a good illustration of what happens

over and over again in such an ultra-sharp opening as the Botvinnik variation: a new move completely changes the verdict. The thematic line goes:

19...d4 20.♗xd4 ♗xg2 21.♗xg2 ♗xg5
22.♗xc4† ♔b8 23.♗ed1

And White wins according to Vigorito. He gives the apparently convincing line:

23...♗h5 24.♗d5 ♗xh2† 25.♗f3 ♗h6
26.♗b5† ♗b6 27.♗xb6 ♗xf6† 28.♗g2 axb6
29.♗e4+–

But then came the following correspondence game:

23...♗f5! 24.♗d5 ♗xh2†! 25.♗xh2 ♗xf2†
26.♔h3 ♗d6! 27.♗b5†

Not 27.♗xd6 ♗h8†.

27...♗b6 28.♗h4 ♗e8 29.♗xb6 axb6

Despite being an exchange up, White's position is very uncomfortable with no shelter for the king.

30.♗d5 ♔b7 31.♗ad1 ♗h8! 32.♗xd6 ♗xh4†
33.♗xh4 ♗h2† 34.♗g4 ♗xb2

Black has good winning chances.

35.♔h3 b3 36.♗d7† ♗c6 37.♗7d6† ♗b5
38.♗f1 ♗e5 39.♗dd1 ♗h5† 40.♗g2 b2
41.♗de1 ♗d5† 42.♔h3 ♗d3 43.♗d1 ♗h7†
44.♗g2 ♗c4 45.♗de1 b5 46.♗f4† ♗c5 47.♗ff1
♗b4 48.♗f4† ♗a5 49.♗ff1 ♗a4 50.♗g1 ♗c2†
51.♗f3 ♗c6† 52.♗g4 ♗xf6 53.♗gf1 ♗g6†
54.♔h3 ♗a3 55.♗f3† ♗a2 56.♗f2 b4 0–1

Repanic – Ljubicic, corr. 2006.

19.♗e3

This has traditionally been the mainline. White is slightly better, but Black's position is rather compact and difficult to overcome. A recent example highlights the way Black usually gets counterplay.

19...♗c5 20.♗g4† ♗d7 21.♗xc5

The stunning 21.♗g7 is nothing for White after 21...♗xg7 22.fxg7 ♗g8 23.♗xc5 ♗xg7.

21...♗xc5 22.♗xc5

22.♗g7 ♗hd8 23.♗xc5 ♗xc5 24.♔h3 ♗c7

25.♗xd7 ♗xd7 26.♗g5 ♗b6 and Black is ready to push d5-d4 with great play for the exchange.

22...♗xc5 23.♗fe1

23.♗g7 was possible.

23...♗hd8 24.♗e7 ♗c7 25.♗ae1 ♗c6 26.♗f4†
Or again 26.♗g7.

26...♔b6 27.♔h3 ♗d6 28.♗xf7 d4 29.♗e5 ♗d5
30.♗e6 d3 31.♗g4 d2 32.♗d1 ♗f5 33.♗c7†
♔b5 34.♗e3 ♗d5 35.f3 ♗d4 36.♗fe7 ♗xf3
37.♗xf3 d1=♗† 38.♗xd1 ♗xd1† 39.♗e1 ♗d4†
40.♔h1 ♗d5† 41.♗g1 ♗d4† 42.♔h1 ♗d5†
43.♗g1 ½–½

Kasimdzhanov – Ragger, Dresden (ol) 2008.

19...♗c5

The standard reaction and the only move that has been played, but let's check some alternatives.

If 19...♔h6 to exchange the bishops, then 20.♗d6! is very annoying, because on 20...♗f8 White has 21.♗e7.

On other moves such as 19...♗xf6, 19...♗e8 or 19...♗c6 the centralization of the white queen with 20.♗d4 seems quite strong.

20.♗xc5 ♗xc5 21.♗e1

White even has a promising alternative in:

21.h4

This threatens ♔h3†.

21...♔c6 22.♗e1 d4

Vigorito suggests 22...♔b7 as an improvement, but then 23.♗e7† looks thematic, for instance 23...♗xe7 24.fxe7 ♗de8 25.♗d4 a5 26.♗e5± with great play for the exchange.

23.♗g4† ♗d7 24.♗a5! ♗b6

24...♗xa5 25.♗xc6

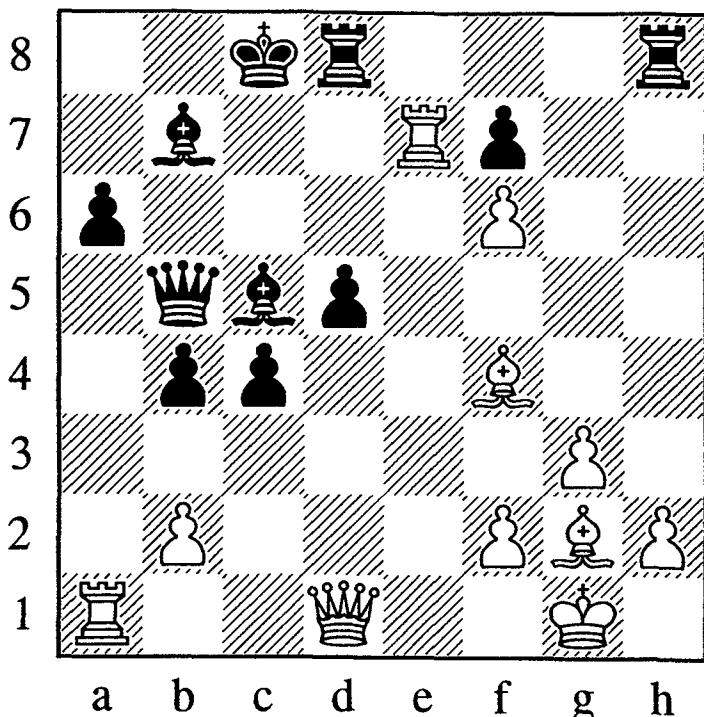
25.♗f5 ♗xg2 26.♗xc5† ♗c6 27.♗e7 ♗hd8
28.♗xf7

White is winning, Porper – Lock, Guernsey 2006.

21...a6

21... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 22. $\mathbb{B}e7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 23. $f xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$
24. $\mathbb{W}d4$ a6 25. $\mathbb{W}b6$ is no better.

22. $\mathbb{B}e7$



Standard by now.

22... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 23. $f xe7$ $\mathbb{B}dg8$ 24. $\mathbb{W}d4$

With complete dominance.

24... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 25. $\mathbb{W}e5$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 27. $\mathbb{B}d1$
1-0

Conclusion: The mainline Botvinnik is also in dire straits after the simple but strong 19. $\mathbb{Q}f4$. Notable is the rook manoeuvre to e7, where White gives up an exchange for complete dominance on the dark squares.

Botvinnik conclusion: The Botvinnik Variation leads to many fascinating lines, but at the moment White seems to be on top in all of them, so it is no wonder that the world's top players have already left the sinking ship and climbed on board the Moscow.

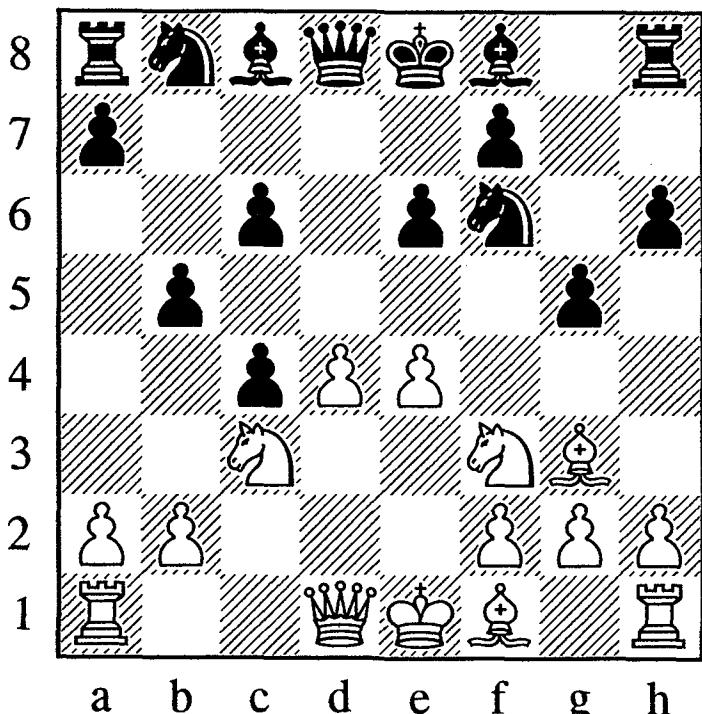
Theory: Moscow Gambit

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ e6 5. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6

6. $\mathbb{Q}h4$

This is the sharpest choice, which is known as the Anti-Moscow Gambit. The normal Moscow 6. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 7.e3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ dxc4 9. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ g6 10.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ has been tested in many games and so far Black's pair of bishops seems to balance White's extra space and freer play.

6...dxc4 7.e4 g5 8. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ b5



The Moscow Variation's similarity to the Botvinnik is striking, but so are the differences. Here Black is a pawn up instead of being one down! White has long-term positional compensation though: a strong centre with the further advances d4-d5 or e4-e5 constantly in the air gives a lot of dynamic quality. Furthermore Black has exposed himself on both flanks and almost invites White to play a4 and h4. Let's stop a moment at that last point: the weakening of the kingside is the most significant and therefore a quick h2-h4 could be strong.

9. $\mathbb{Q}e2$

A good developing move.

Also possible is the immediate 9.h4 or the more sophisticated:

9. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 10.h4

White sidesteps some of the problems in the

mainline. But typically he also creates a new one, namely:

10...g4 11.♘xg4 ♘xg4 12.♗xg4 ♗xd4

Taking the central pawn.

13.♗d1 ♗g7 14.♗f4 ♘a6 15.♔e2

White just wants to castle with good compensation; he has scored very well from this position. A recent example from the Olympiad in Dresden continued:

15...♔e7 16.0–0 ♘c5 17.e5 ♗g6 18.♗d4 ♗d8

19.♗fd1 ♗d5?!

Better is 19...♗xd4.

20.♗e3 h5 21.♗f3 a6 22.b4 cxb3 23.axb3

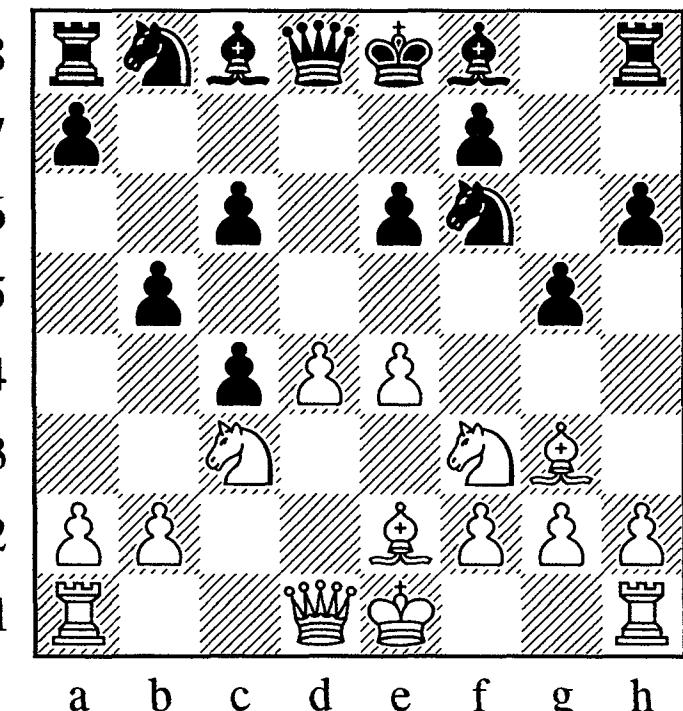
a5 24.♘e4 ♘xe4 25.♘xe4 ♗h6 26.♗f4 ♗g7

27.♘xd5 exd5 28.♗g5 ♗g8 29.f4 ♗g6 30.♗d2

c5 31.♘xe7 d4 32.♗g5 1–0

Aronian – Caruana, Dresden (ol) 2008.

A few rounds later in the same tournament Aronian repeated the line against Kramnik and the Russian came up with 13...♗f6!? 14.e5 ♗f5 15.♗d4 ♔e7 16.b3 c5 17.♗e3 ♘c6! 18.bxc4 ♘b4 19.♗f4 ♘c2† 20.♗e2 ♗xf4 21.♗xf4 bxc4 22.f3 ♘d4† 23.♗f2 ♔d5† and Black had won the opening duel, Aronian – Kramnik, Dresden (ol) 2008.



9...♗b7

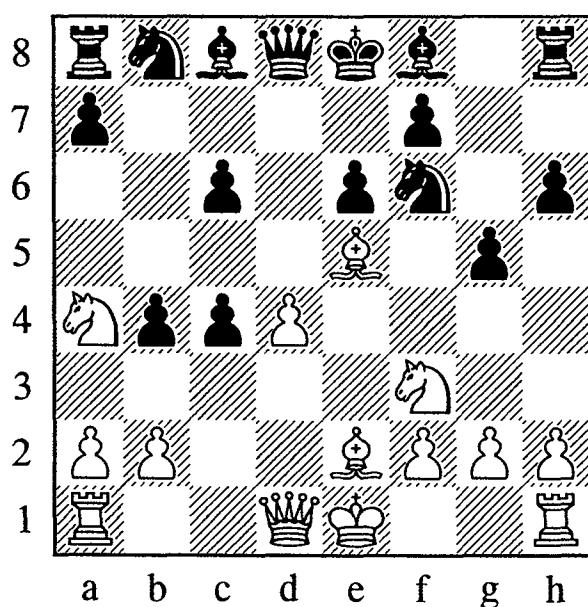
The best move. Other tries can quickly lead to trouble, especially if Black is driven by greed.

9...b4 10.♗a4 ♘xe4

Black wins a central pawn but neglects normal development.

11.♔e5 ♘f6

On 11...♗g8 there follows 12.♗c2. Then 12...f5 13.♘xc4 g4 14.♗d2 ♘xd2 15.♗xd2 ♗g6 16.♗c1 ♗a5 17.♗c5 ♘d7 18.♗d3± and Black's position is full of holes, Rodriguez – Pecha, corr. 2001. That means Black has to withdraw the knight with 12...♘f6 when 13.0–0 or ♘xc4 gives White a pleasant initiative.



12.♗c5! ♗g8

12...♘xc5 13.dxc5 ♘bd7 14.♔d6±

Or 12...♗g7 13.♘xc4 0–0 14.♗c2 ♘bd7 15.h4 gxh4 (15...g4 16.♗g5!→) 16.♗xd7 ♘xd7 17.♗xh4± Sakaev – Kobalia, St Petersburg 1998. White can castle queenside and launch a big attack.

13.♗c2 ♘bd7 14.♗xd7 ♘xd7 15.0–0 ♘d5

16.♗d2?!

16.♘xc4

16...f6 17.♗g3 ♔f7 18.♗h7† ♗g7 19.♔h5† ♔e7 20.♗xh6 ♔e8

P.H. Nielsen – T. Thorhallsson, Reykjavik 2001.

21.♗g4 c3 22.bxc3 bxc3 23.♗c4+

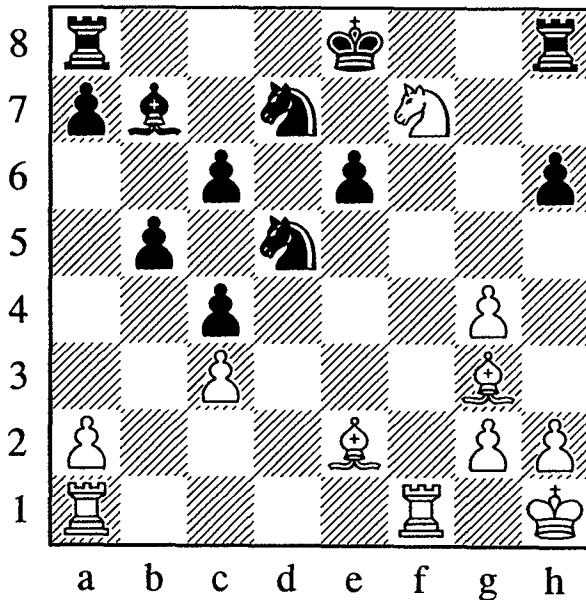
Another way is:

9...♗b4 10.♗c2 g4 11.♗e5 ♗xd4 12.0–0 ♘xc3 13.bxc3 ♘xe4 14.♗d2

Black is three pawns up, but terribly weak on

the dark squares: White just has to open up the position with f2-f3 to get going.

- 14... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 15.f3 $\mathbb{W}d5$ 16. $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{W}c5\ddagger$
 16... $\mathbb{E}g8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 18.fxg4 e5
 19. $\mathbb{W}xh6\pm$ Goldin – Ippolito, Philadelphia 1999.
 17. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 18.fxg4 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xf7\ddagger$ $\mathbb{W}xf7$
 20. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\pm$



This has been tested in some correspondence games. White has a strong initiative after either:

- 20... $\mathbb{E}h7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d6\ddagger$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 22.a4 bxa4 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$
 $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}h4\ddagger$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e8\ddagger$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 26. $\mathbb{E}fb1\ddagger$
 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}f6$ $\mathbb{E}f7$ 29.c4 e5 30.c5

McKenzie – Le Bled, corr. 2006.

- Or 20...0–0 21. $\mathbb{Q}xh6\ddagger$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 22. $\mathbb{E}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$
 23.g5 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g4$
 Geissler – Zolochovsky, corr. 2006.

9... $\mathbb{Q}h5$

This is a tactical mistake:

10. $\mathbb{Q}e5$

This misplaces the rook.

- 10... $\mathbb{E}g8$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ $\mathbb{E}xb8$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$
 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2\ddagger$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc4!$
 a6

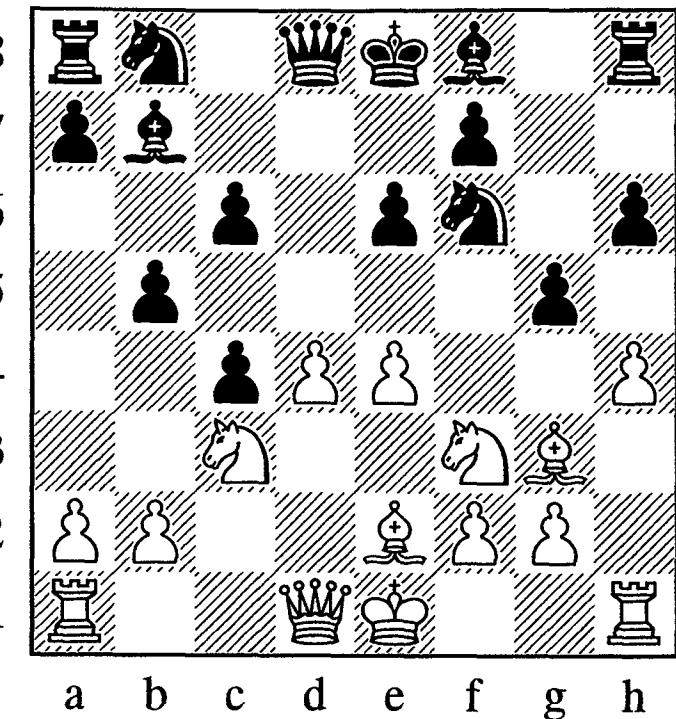
16... $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 17. $\mathbb{W}a4\ddagger$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xa7\ddagger!$ $\mathbb{W}xa7$
 19. $\mathbb{Q}c6\ddagger$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ is nice.

17. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}xb8$ 18.a4 b4 19. $\mathbb{Q}e2\pm$

With an exchange more.

9... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ is also imprecise. With 10.d5 White gets promising play – see Game 38.

10.h4



This thrust is the most direct and disruptive for Black who will have to pay for moving his pawns on the kingside. In practice White has often chosen a different path with 10.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}d6$, but after the cool 13...a6 all attempts to generate a serious advantage have so far failed and White seems stuck.

10...g4

Black tries to keep the position closed.

Again greed backfires:

- 10...b4 11.hxg5 bxc3 12.bxc3!

A spectacular piece sacrifice.

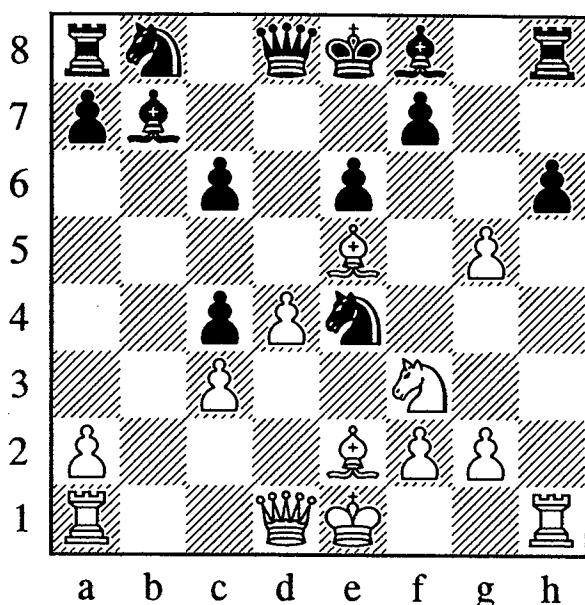
12... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

On 12... $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 13.g6! fxg6 14. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ is good.

- 14... $\mathbb{E}g8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ (15... $\mathbb{E}xg6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}h5$
 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xg6\ddagger$ $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ 18. $\mathbb{W}h5\ddagger$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 19. $\mathbb{W}f7\ddagger$
 $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}g5\ddagger$) 16. $\mathbb{Q}h4$
 $\mathbb{W}xc3\ddagger$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19. $\mathbb{E}h3$
 $\mathbb{W}b2$ 20. $\mathbb{E}f3\ddagger$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 21.e5 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 22. $\mathbb{E}b1$
 $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{W}b2$ 24. $\mathbb{E}fxa3$ c3 25. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$
 26. $\mathbb{Q}f8$ c2 27. $\mathbb{W}f7\ddagger$ $\mathbb{Q}6d7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xe6\ddagger$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$
 29. $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}a6\ddagger$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{W}b1\ddagger$
 32. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ c1= \mathbb{W} 33. $\mathbb{E}xb1\ddagger$ $\mathbb{W}xb1$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}f7$ $\mathbb{E}xg2\ddagger$

35.♕xg2 ♕f1† 36.♕h2 ♕xf7 37.♕d8† 1–0
Raijmaekers – Einarsson, corr. 2004.

13.♕e5



13...♕xc3

Black has passed the point of no return, as simply moving the rook will not work:
13...♖h7 14.♕b1 This highlights the power of the queen: it attacks black pieces all over the board. 14...♕a5 15.♕d2! And after this precise blow it is all over. 15...f5 (15...♗xd2 16.♕xb7 or 15...♕xc3 16.0–0) 16.gxf6 c5 17.♗xe4 ♕xe4 18.♕h5† ♔d8 19.♕xe4 ♕xc3† 20.♔e2 ♕d3† 21.♕xd3 cxd3† 22.♔xd3 With a winning position, Rogozenko – Filipenko, Internet 2001.

Returning to 13...♕xc3:

14.♕c2 ♗xe2 15.♔xe2 ♕g8

Black could also sacrifice the rook: 15...♗d7 16.♕xh8 hxg5 17.♕h7 ♕a5 Only move. (17...g4 18.♗e5 ♗xe5 19.♗xe5 ♕d5 20.♕ah1 c5 21.♕xf7 ♕e4† 22.♕xe4 ♕xe4 23.♕c7 cxd4 24.♕h8 ♕b8 25.♕xd4 ♕d3† 26.♔e3 ♕b1 27.♔c5 ♕e1† 28.♔f4 ♕e4† 29.♔g3 1–0 Stohl – Kuczynski, Germany 2002) 18.♕b1 ♕a6 19.♕f1 g4 20.♗e5 ♗xe5 21.♗xe5 ♕a3 And now first 22.♕h8 ♕d7 23.♕h7 ♕e8 depriving Black of the right to castle, then 24.♕d1 ♕b5 25.♔g1±.

Or 15...c5 16.♕xh8 hxg5 17.♕ad1 ♕c7 18.♗e5 ♕xg2 19.♕h7 cxd4 20.♕xd4 ♗c6 21.♕xf7 1–0 Seipel – Tokmachev, corr. 2003, was a quick KO. The finish could be

21...♗xd4† 22.♕xd4 ♕c6 23.♕d6† ♕xd6 24.♕g6† ♔d8 25.♕f6†.
16.gxh6 ♕xh6 17.♕h7!

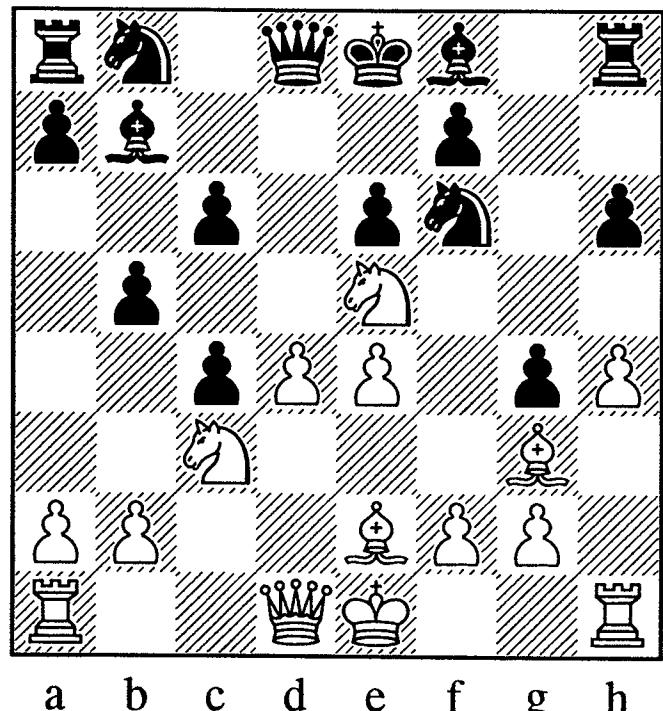
Even stronger than 17.♕xh6.

17...♕g6 18.♕xh6 ♕xh6 19.♕xh6 ♗d7 20.♕d6 ♕f6 21.♕h1 ♕xh6 22.♕xh6 0–0–0 23.♗g5

White wins the pawn back with a better ending, for instance:

23...f6 24.♗xe6 ♕e8 25.♔d2 ♕xe6 26.♕h8† ♕f8 27.♕xf8† ♔d7 28.♕c5±

11.♗e5



The starting position of the h4-variation: Black is in a serious dilemma.

As should be clear by now the aggressive ...b5-b4 cannot be recommended:

11...b4 12.♗a4 ♗xe4 13.♕xc4 ♗xg3

No better was 13...h5 14.♕e2 ♗xg3 15.fxg3 ♕h6 16.0–0 f5 17.d5! ♕a5 18.♕xf5! ♕xa4 19.♕xf8† ♕xf8 20.♕f2† ♕e7 21.♕f7† ♔d6 22.♕f8† ♔c7 23.d6† ♔b6 24.♔b3 ♕b5 25.♕d8† ♔c5 26.♔c1† ♔d4 27.♕g5 1–0 Stohl – Pavasovic, Portoroz 1999.

14.fxg3 ♗d7 15.♗xf7! ♕xf7 16.♕xg4 ♕e7 17.0–0† ♕e8 18.♕xe6 ♕c8

This was Khalifman – Dreev, Elista 1998. Khalifman continued 19.♕ael and won a nice game, but the computer claims that White can win on the spot:

19. $\mathbb{Q}f7!$ $\mathbb{W}xf7$
 19... $\mathbb{W}d6$ 20. $\mathbb{E}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$
 22. $\mathbb{Q}c5!$
 20. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 21. $\mathbb{E}f1\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 22. $\mathbb{W}e4\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$
 23. $d5$ $cxd5$ 24. $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{E}g8$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xd5$
 Attacking both rooks.

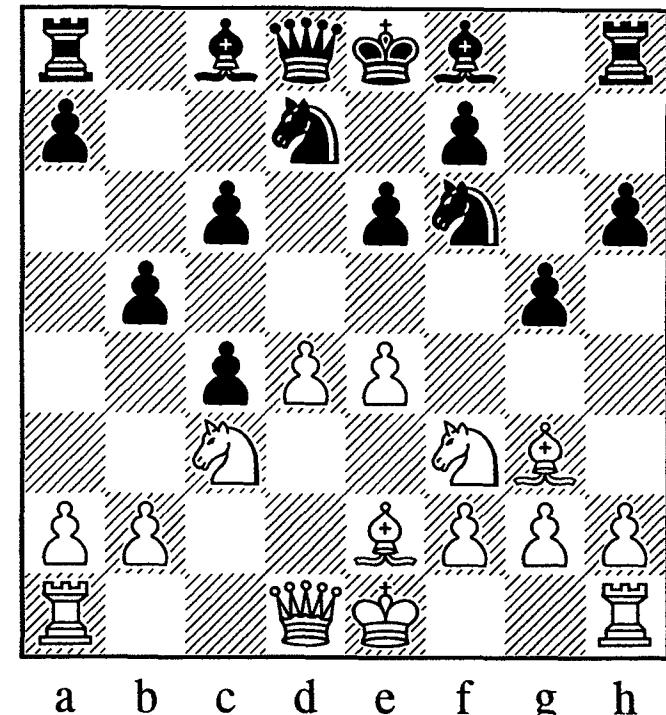
Black has three respected options. First of all it is tempting to speed up development and offer the g4-pawn as bait. That could be done by either 11... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ – see Game 39 – or 11... $\mathbb{E}g8$ – see Game 40. Finally Black can protect g4 with 11... $h5$. That is covered in Game 41.

Game 38

Ferrini – Richardson

Correspondence 2003

1. $d4$ $d5$ 2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 3. $c4$ $e6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $c6$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $h6$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $g5$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $dxc4$ 8. $e4$ $b5$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$



10. $d5!$

Seizing the initiative.

10... $\mathbb{Q}b7$

Taking on d5 is not good:

10... $exd5$ 11. $exd5$ $b4$ 12. $dxc6$ $bxcc3$ 13. $cxd7\#$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 14. $bxc3$ $\mathbb{W}xd1\#$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc4\pm$
 Yermolinsky – Hayward, Las Vegas 2002.

10... $cxd5$ 11. $exd5$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$

11... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 12. $0-0\uparrow$

12. $dxe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$

12... $\mathbb{W}xd1\#$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$

15. $\mathbb{Q}xb5\pm$ gives White a good ending with active pieces and some weak black pawns.

13. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$

13... $a6$ 14. $0-0$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $fxe6$ Solozhenkin – Alavkin,

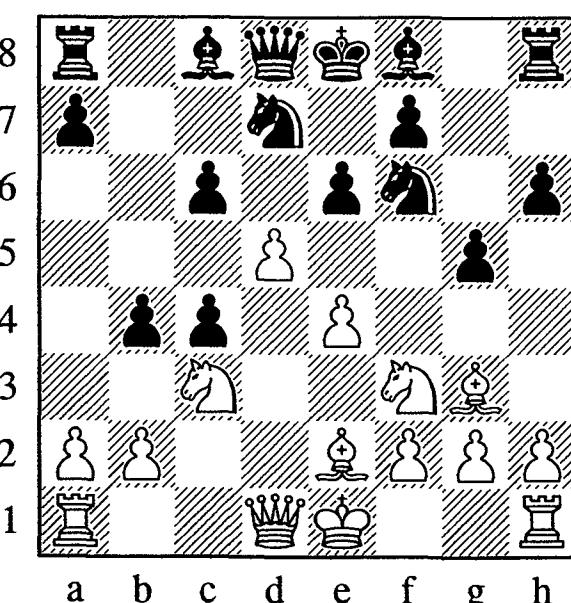
St Petersburg 1999, and now 18. $\mathbb{E}e1$ is decisive: 18... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}h5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 20. $\mathbb{E}xe6$ 14. $0-0$ $0-0$

Beliavsky – Bacrot, Bugojno 1999, when the simplest was:

15. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $fxe6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xb5\pm$

10... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ is also suspicious: 11. $dxc6$ $\mathbb{W}xd1\#$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $a6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14. $h4$ $g4$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $0-0$ 16. $f3$ $gxf3$ 17. $gxf3\pm$ Van Wely – Nakamura, Bastia 2007.

Finally we have 10... $b4$:



This has been played in several games, but the complications tend to lead directly to a positional advantage for White:

11. $dxe6$ $bxc3$ 12. $exd7\#$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$

Worse is 12... $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 13. $bxc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 14. $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 15. $hxg3$ $\mathbb{E}g8$ 16. $\mathbb{E}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xc4$

$\mathbb{W}e7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 19. 0–0± Mercadal
Benejam – Lopepe, corr. 2001.

13. $\mathbb{W}c2$ cxb2

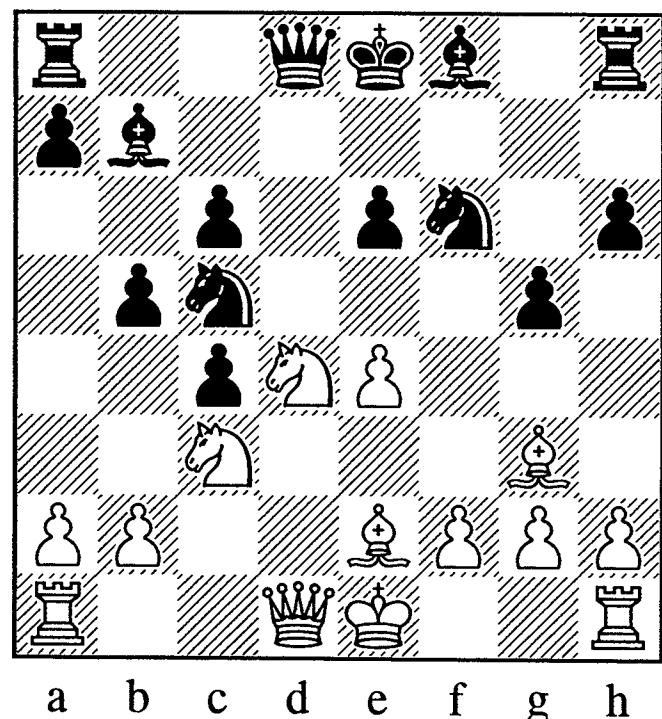
Not 13... g4 14. $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}xb2$
16. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{W}b5$ 17. $\mathbb{B}d8\#$ 1–0 Beliavsky –
Bacrot, Albert 1999.

14. $\mathbb{W}xb2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 16. $\mathbb{W}a3$ a5 17. 0–0
 $\mathbb{W}b4$ 18. $\mathbb{W}c1$ 0–0 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$

Or 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc4?$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 20. $\mathbb{B}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$.
19... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 20. e5 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 22. $\mathbb{W}c2$
 $\mathbb{W}e7$ 23. $\mathbb{B}fe1\pm$

Kuhne – Noack, corr. 2001.

11. dxe6 fxe6 12. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$



13. e5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}h5\#$

The king is forced to take a walk.

14... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

Running towards safety on the queenside.
Staying in the centre with 14... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ leaves
Black without many prospects: 15. 0–0 $\mathbb{Q}g7$
16. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 17. $\mathbb{B}ad1\pm$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$
19. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xg5!$ $\mathbb{W}xf4$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xe6\#$
 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 22. $\mathbb{B}xd3\#$! $\mathbb{Q}c7$ (or 22... cxd3 23. $\mathbb{W}d6\#$
 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f7$) 23. $\mathbb{W}e7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$
25. $\mathbb{B}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xf8$ $\mathbb{B}hxf8$ 27. $\mathbb{B}xe5$ and
White won in Vermeulen – Sherwood, corr.
2004.

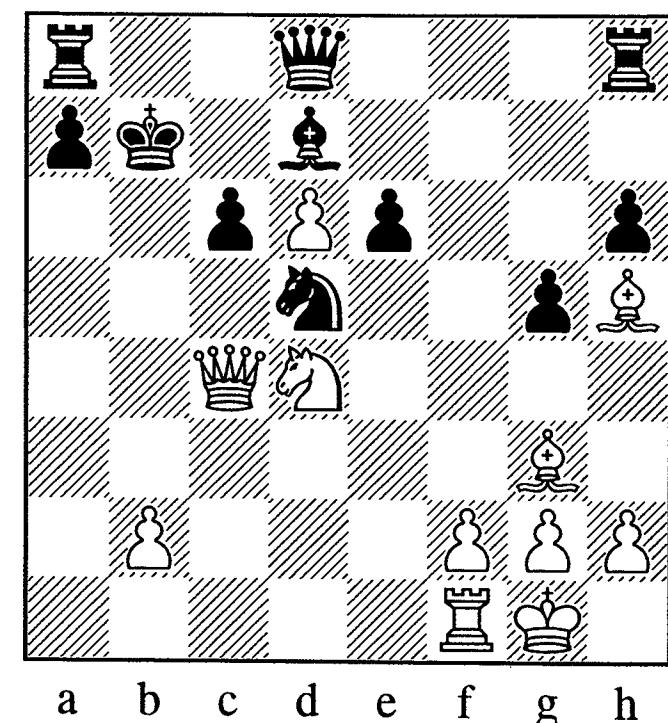
15. 0–0 $\mathbb{Q}c7$

Weakening the structure further with
15... b4 16. $\mathbb{Q}ce2$ has not gone well for Black.

16. $\mathbb{Q}e4!$

Nice. On 16... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ there is 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe6\#$.

**16... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}d6!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 18. $\mathbb{exd6\#}$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$
19. a4! $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 20. $\mathbb{B}xa4$ $\mathbb{bxa4}$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xa4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$
22. $\mathbb{W}xc4$**



Black is busted. The knight goes to b3 next
and then lands on c5 with devastating effect.

22... $\mathbb{B}f8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}c5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 25. $\mathbb{B}a1$

The strongest: it threatens $\mathbb{B}xa7\#$ and mate
next move. In the stem game White also won
after 25. $\mathbb{W}a6$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}a3$ Stohl – Ziegler,
Germany 1999, when 26... $\mathbb{B}bd8$ could have
prolonged the fight a bit, but probably not
changed the result.

25... $\mathbb{B}b5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{B}f7$ 27. $\mathbb{W}a4$

Winning the exchange back, while the
grip on the position remains. The end comes
quickly.

**27... $\mathbb{W}b8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{cxb5}$ 29. $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{W}c8$
30. $\mathbb{W}g6$ $\mathbb{B}f5$ 31. $\mathbb{W}g7$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$
33. $\mathbb{Q}c7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ h5 35. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ g4 36. $\mathbb{B}c1$
 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{axb6}$ 38. b4**

1–0

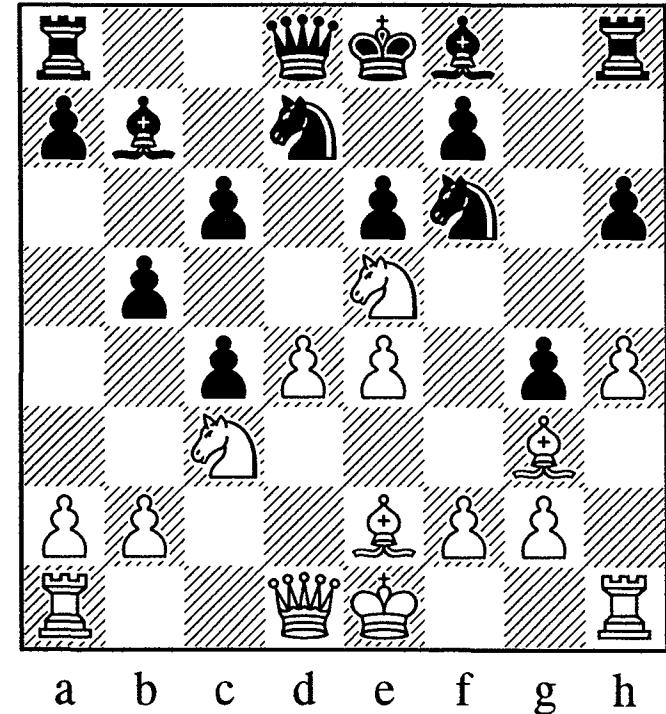
Conclusion: 9... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ is an inaccuracy that White can immediately punish by 10.d5! with a strong initiative.

Game 39

Grischuk – Gelfand

Odessa 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ e6 5. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 6. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ dx c 4 7.e4 g5 8. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ b5 9. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 10.h4 g4 11. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$



Black makes no attempt to hold onto the extra pawn and instead gives priority to finishing his development and getting rid of the strong knight on e5. Of course White is not obliged to take on g4.

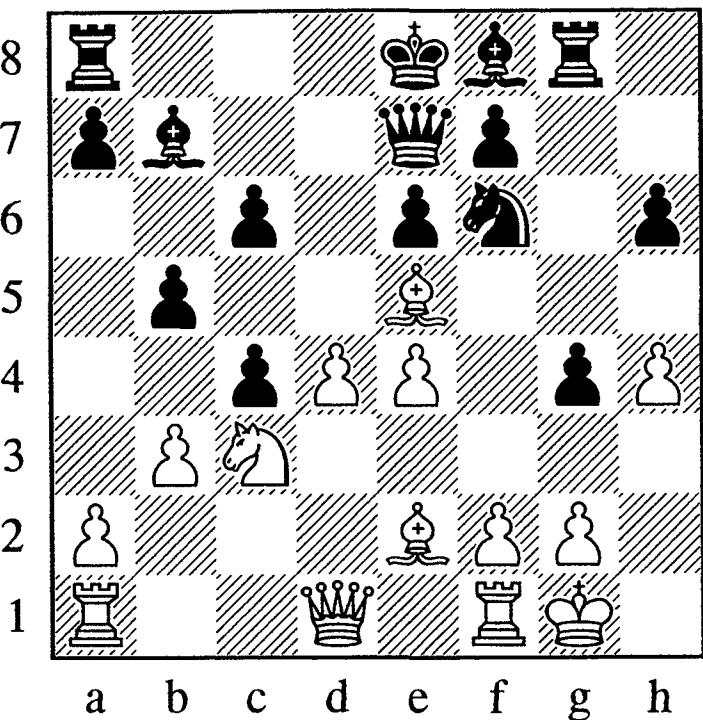
12. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 14.0–0

Grischuk prefers to keep playing a gambit.

14... $\mathbb{E}g8$

Actually Grischuk had previously lost a game, also in rapid, to another Semi-Slav expert, Dreev, but after 14...h5 15. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 16.b3 cxb3 17.axb3 he had fine compensation, Grischuk – Dreev, Mainz 2005. Also, instead of 15. $\mathbb{W}c2$, why not play 15.b3.

15.b3



This move is the right way to challenge Black's typically very compact pawn structure in the Moscow. If Black takes on b3 then lines are opened for White and he can calmly intensify the pressure, while it is not obvious how Black can liberate himself and get counterplay.

15...b4

On 15...cx b 3 16.ax b 3 b4 White activates the knight by 17. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 18.e5 $\mathbb{W}xh4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ with good compensation: 19...g3!? (or 19... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 20.g3 $\mathbb{W}h5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}a6$ and Black's queenside will be exposed) 20. $\mathbb{Q}f6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 21.f x g3 $\mathbb{E}xg3$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{E}e3$ 23. $\mathbb{E}f4$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}c4\pm$ The black rook in the middle of White's position misses its friends.

16. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ c3

It is risky for Black to open the position before he has completed development: 16... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 17. $\mathbb{W}c2$ c5 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{E}xg7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}ael$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 22.bxc4! $\mathbb{Q}c6$ Riazantsev – Vitiugov, Moscow 2008, and now 23. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}xh4$ 24.d5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e5\pm$ would put Black in a precarious position.

17. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ e5 19. $\mathbb{E}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 20.d5

White tries to open the position while Black's king is still stuck in the centre.

20... $\mathbb{W}d6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$

Finally he takes it.

21...cx d5 22.ex d5 .0-0-0

It was of course tempting to get the king away from the centre, but maybe he chose the wrong flank.

Possible was 22... $\mathbb{E}c8$ 23. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ and anything can still happen.

23.a3! $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 24. $\mathbb{W}e3$

Black's queenside is full of holes.

24...h5

Not 24... $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xa7$.

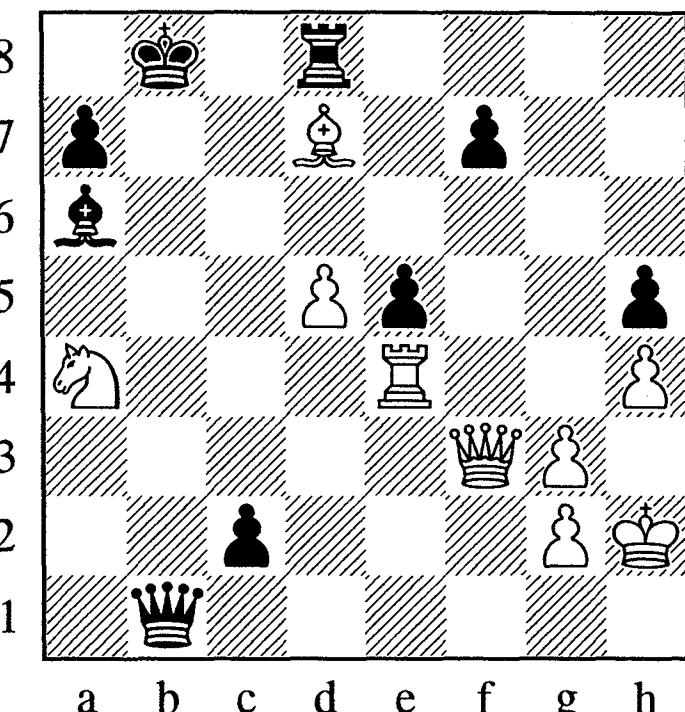
25. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 26. $\mathbb{E}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 27. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$

28.axb4 $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ 29. $\mathbb{E}xe1$

White has excellent compensation for the exchange: e5 is weak and the knight has a key square on c5.

29... $\mathbb{W}xb4$ 30. $\mathbb{E}e4$ $\mathbb{W}xb3$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{E}xg3$

32.fxg3 $\mathbb{W}b1\#$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ c2



$\mathbb{Q}c7$ (35... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 36. $\mathbb{E}c4$) 36. $\mathbb{W}xe5\#$ $\mathbb{E}d6$ 37. $\mathbb{W}c3\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}c5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 39. $\mathbb{W}h8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}xa6\#$ $\mathbb{E}xa6$ 41. $\mathbb{E}c4\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 42. $\mathbb{W}c8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 43. $\mathbb{W}xa6$

34... $\mathbb{Q}b7$

The last chance was 34... $c1=\mathbb{W}$ but then 35. $\mathbb{Q}xa6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 36. $\mathbb{E}b4\#$ $\mathbb{W}xb4$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{E}xd7$ 38. $d6\#$ and White still has a dangerous initiative.

35. $\mathbb{W}f6$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 36. $\mathbb{W}xe5\#$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 37. $\mathbb{W}xc7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 38. $\mathbb{E}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 39. $\mathbb{E}xc2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{E}b8$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}d3$

1-0

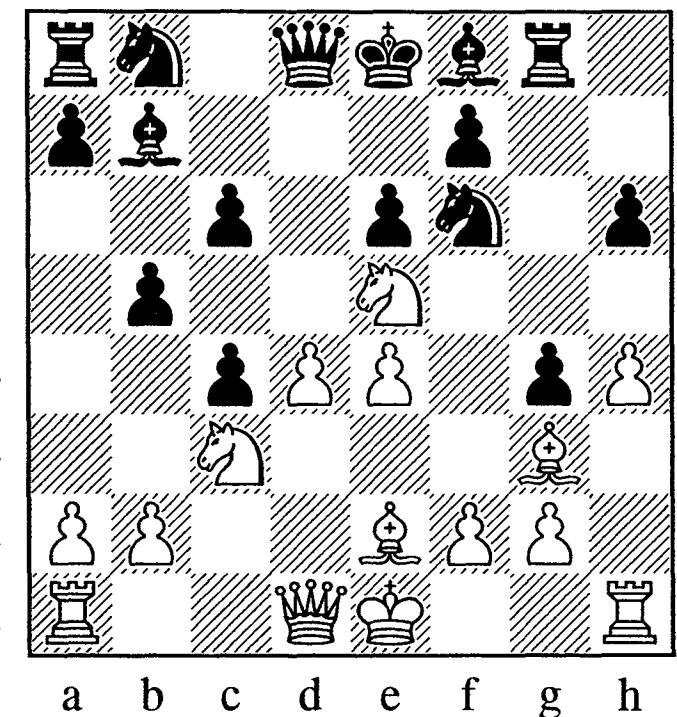
Conclusion: A tense game where White always had the initiative. Pay attention to the typical idea 15.b3: a great way to combat Black's otherwise impressive pawn structure.

Game 40

Ruiz – L. Andersen

Correspondence 2006

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ e6 5. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 6. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ dx c4 7.e4 g5 8. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ b5 9. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 10.h4 g4 11. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{E}g8$



Black puts everything on this passed pawn.

34. $\mathbb{Q}c5$

34. $\mathbb{W}f6$ won instantly: 34... $\mathbb{E}xd7$ 35. $\mathbb{W}h8\#$

12.♕xg4

Actually I like another move-order more:

12.0–0 ♕bd7 13.♕xg4

This is because it takes away Black's extra possibility with ...b4 and ...c5 – see next note. If Black does not transpose to the main game with 13...♕xg4 14.♕xg4 he can instead try:

13...b4!?

Then there could follow:

14.♕a4 ♕xe4 15.♕xc4

Once again Black's strategy of opening up the position with his own king in the centre is at least questionable. The evaluation should be based on concrete analysis though and things are not so clear:

15...♔a5 16.♗c1 0–0–0 17.♔h2 ♔d6 18.♔d3 ♔xh2† 19.♔xh2 ♕df6 20.♔xe4 ♕xe4 21.♔c5 ♕xc5 22.♔xc5 ♔xa2 23.b3 ♔b2 24.♔f3 ♔g4 25.♔c2! ♔gxd4
25...♔a3 26.♔e5 ♔gxd4 27.♔f3
26.♔xd4 ♔xd4 27.♔h5±

Nakamura – Dreev, Stepanakert 2005, seems good for White. So far so good.

And outright bad is: 15...♕xg3 16.fxg3 ♔e7 17.♔c5± Vitiugov – Stripunsky, Internet 2005.

However interesting is:

15...h5 16.♔e3 ♔f6

Avrukh – Akopian, Crete 2007, when the critical line is:

17.♔xh5 ♔h6 18.♔xh6 ♔xh6 19.♔fe1 ♕xg3
20.fxg3 0–0–0 21.♔h2

And Black has some compensation after:

21...♗g7

12...♕xg4 13.♔xg4 ♕d7

Instead Black can try to solve his problems by force:

13...b4 14.♕a4 c5

And after:

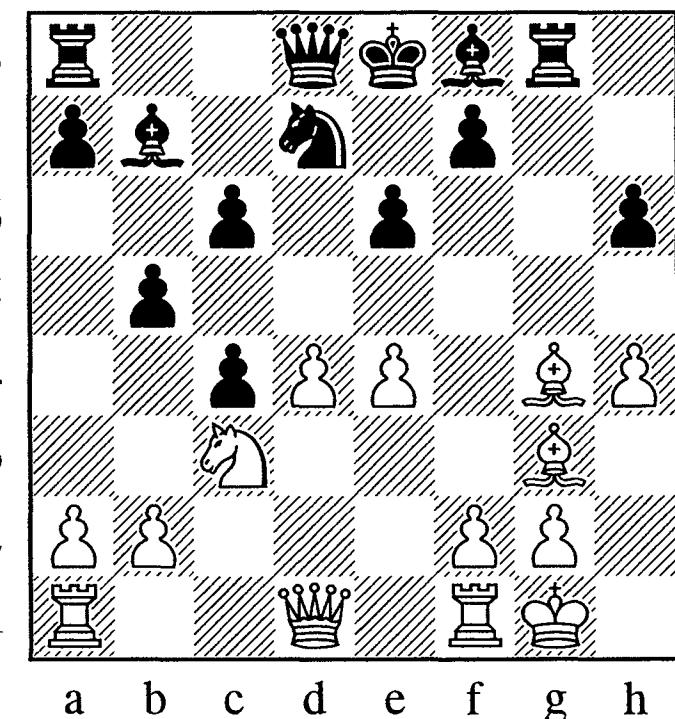
15.d5 exd5 16.exd5 ♔xd5 17.♔xd5 ♕xd5
18.0–0–0 ♕xg4 19.♔xd5 ♕d7 20.♔e1† ♔d8
21.♔ed1 ♕d4 22.♔1xd4 cxd4 23.♔xd4 ♕c8
24.♔d6

An ending is reached that looks slightly better for White, but probably it should be nothing.

24...♔e8 25.♔e4† ♔d8 26.♔xf8 ♕xf8 27.a3 bxa3 28.bxa3 ♕c6 29.♔b2 ♕f6 30.♔e2

White had good winning chances because the black c-pawn is very weak, Grischuk – Anand, Mexico City 2007.

Later Black improved with 24...♔xd6 25.♔xd6 ♔e7 26.♔xh6 ½–½ Riazantsev – Karjakin, Dagomys 2008. After 26...♔g8 27.g3 ♕f6 White's rook is out of play and 27.♔a6 ♕xg2 28.♔xa7 is about equal.

14.0–0**14...♔b6**

14...♗f6 15.♔f3 ♔b6 16.♔d2 ♔d8 17.♔f4!
♔g7 18.♔fd1 was good for White in Vermeulen – Richardson, corr. 2003.

14...b4 15.♔a4 ♔a6 16.♔h5 ♔b5 17.♔c5 ♔xc5
18.♔xc5 ♔e7 19.♔e1 ♕xg3 20.♔xg3 ♔xc5†
21.♔h2 0–0–0 22.♔xf7 and Black did not have enough for the exchange, Ronczkowski – Mercadal Benejam, corr. 2004.

15.♗h5

A key move: the bishop attacks Black's weak spot on f7 and makes it harder for him to castle long. Another standard try is 15.a4 with play on the queenside.

15...♝f6 16.♗e5 ♝xh5 17.♝xh5

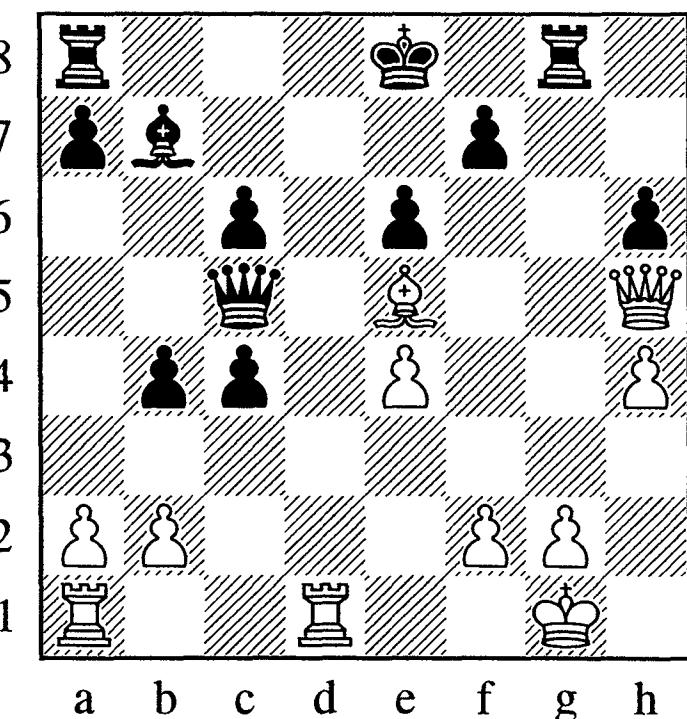
The queen replaces the bishop.

17...b4

Seeking counterplay. Instead 17...♝d8 18.♝ad1 ♘d7 19.♝fe1± was Atalik – Markus, Jahorina 2003.

18.♘a4 ♜b5 19.♘c5!

A great positional pawn sacrifice.

19...♝xc5 20.dxc5 ♜xc5 21.♝fd1

The black king will remain in the centre and White's super-bishop on e5 is from another planet from its rival on b7, so White has more than enough for the pawn. Also, opposite-coloured bishops tend to favour the side with the initiative.

21...♝g6 22.♝d2 ♜b5

Or 22...c3 23.bxc3 bxc3 24.♝c2 ♜a5 25.♝xc3± Zhevaková – Jones, corr. 2007.

23.a4 bxa3 24.♝xa3 a5 25.♝a1

Also strong is 25.♝f3±.

25...c5 26.♝f3 ♜c6 27.♝e1

1–0

Black resigned – still a pawn up but with no prospects whatsoever.

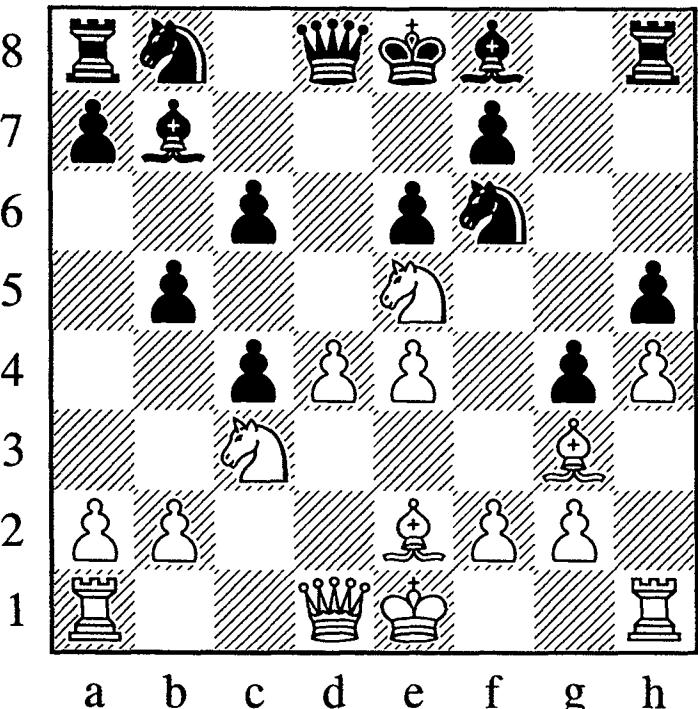
Conclusion: If Black wants to return the pawn then 11...♝g8 is probably not the way to do it. White gets equal material and keeps a strong initiative, which is almost too much to ask for.

Game 41**Grischuk – Karjakin**

Sochi 2008

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♜f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♗g5 h6 6.♗h4 dxc4 7.e4 g5 8.♗g3 b5 9.♘e5

An experimental move-order, which in this game just transposes. For more details about the pros and cons please see the Theory section. 9.♘e2 ♜b7 10.h4 g4 11.♘e5 h5 is the normal way.

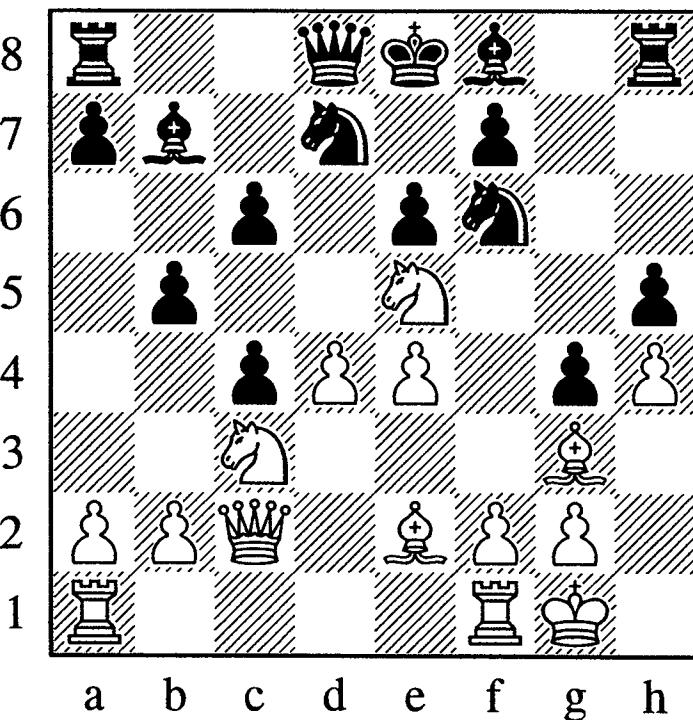
9...h5 10.h4 g4 11.♘e2 ♜b7

Black is guarding his g-pawn, but having moved his pawn-chain from h6-g5 to h5-g4 has certainly not hidden the holes on his kingside, and the pawns can still be attacked.

12.0–0

Here, and again on the next move, it was also possible to confront Black's pawn-chain with f2-f3 to open the position, but I like Grischuk's style. He develops smoothly and makes all his pieces work well together.

12... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 13. $\mathbb{W}c2$



13... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

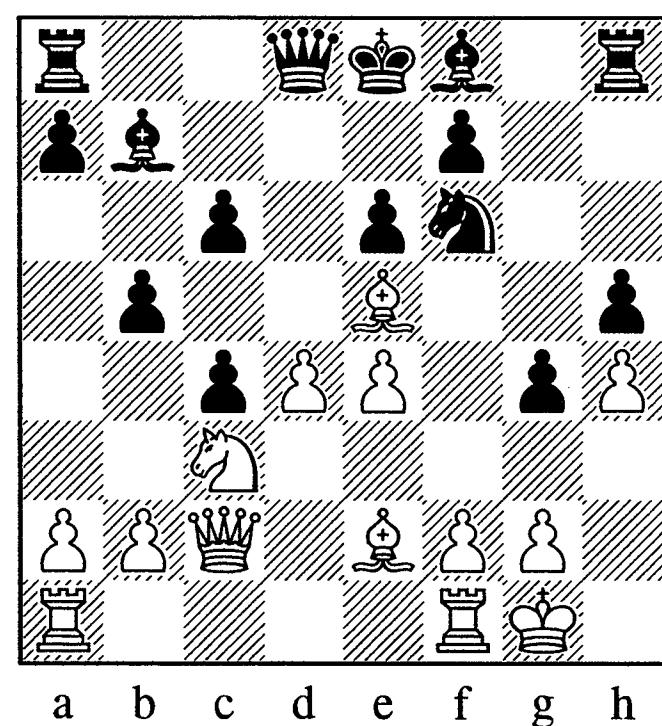
Black must get rid of the annoying knight. And you don't have to write home to your Mom and tell her about the alternatives:

13... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 14.b3 (14. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ is also natural)
14... $cxb3$ 15. $axb3$ a6 16. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ 0–0 17. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ c5
(17... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 18.e5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $cxd5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f4$
and h5 falls) 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 19. $dxc5$ $\mathbb{W}c8$
20.b4± Skrondal – Lovik, Norway 2008.

13... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 15.b3 $cxb3$ 16. $axb3$
 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 18.e5 a6 19. $\mathbb{W}b1!$
(anticipating ...c5) 19...c5 20.d5!± $exd5$
21. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$
24. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ White is winning, Zontakh – Dlugosz,
Krakow 2000.

13... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}g3$
 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 17.d5! $\mathbb{W}e7$ 18.a4! White already has
a powerful initiative. 18...b4 19. $dxc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$
20. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 21. $axb5$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{W}xh4$
23.e5± Babula – Montes, Dresden 2008.

14. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

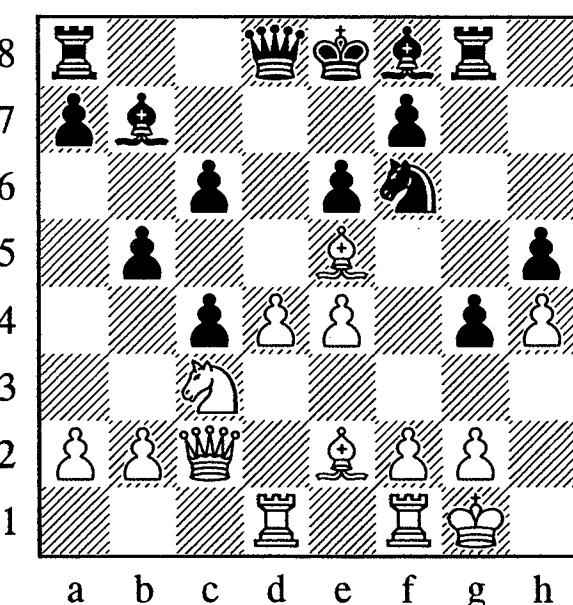


14... $\mathbb{Q}g7$

The most natural, but it has also been popular to put the rook on the g-file.

14... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$

Which rook? 15. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ looks just as good.



15... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 17.b3 $cxb3$ 18. $axb3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$

18...a6 19.e5 c5 20.d5 $exd5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$
22. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 24.e6!?
25. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$

28.♕xg4± Kordts – Makovsky, corr. 2001.

19.e5 ♕xc3 20.♗xc3

White has a significant positional advantage despite the missing pawn, Gilimshin – Petraitis, corr. 2004.

Black has also tried:

15...♝g6

But this is artificial.

16.♕f4 ♕e7 17.b3

On the recommended move 17.g3, as played by Sakaev, Black should try either 17...♝a5 or 17...♝b4.

17...cxb3

17...b4 18.♗a4 c3 gives Black impressive pawns, but White succeeded in breaking them up and building a direct attack in the following game: 19.♗c5! ♕c8 20.♗c4 ♜a5 21.♗d3 ♜b7 22.♗e5 ♜g7 23.a3! bxa3 24.b4 ♜xb4 25.♗b3 ♜b6 26.♗h6 ♜h7 27.♗g5 ♜e7 28.♗xc3 ♜xe4 29.♗e3 ♜d6 30.♗xe7 ♜xe7 31.♗g5† f6 32.♗g6 ♜ah8 33.♗xe6! ♜d8 (33...♜xe6 34.♗fe1) 34.♗d7 1–0 Dhanish – Dothan, corr. 2006.

18.axb3 a6 19.g3 ♜b6 20.e5 ♜d5 21.♗xd5 cxd5 22.f3

Very illustrative: the kingside is easily opened and White both wins material and penetrates the black position.

22...♜c8 23.♗b1 gxf3 24.♗xf3 ♜d7 25.♗xh5 ♜g7 26.♗h6! ♜xg3† 27.♗h2 ♜cg8 28.♗h7 1–0

Vojna – Kramer, corr. 2000.

14...♝h6

This looks a bit extravagant.

15.b3 cxb3 16.axb3 0–0

But is in fact not so clear.

17.♗fd1

17.♗d3 is possible.

17...♜e7

17...♝e8 and 17...♝d7 can be answered with 18.♗g3 with good long-term compensation.

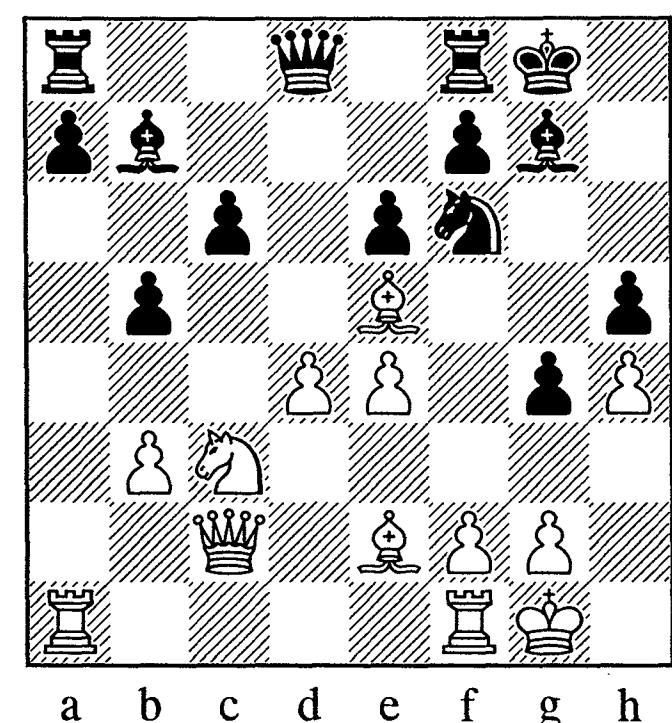
18.♗g3 ♜d7 19.e5 f5 20.exf6 ♜xf6

Krush – Erenburg, Las Vegas 2007, and now 21.♗d3± would emphasize White's good control of the white squares. The pawn-chain h5-g4 is actually quite loose.

15.b3!

Very standard by now.

15...cxb3 16.axb3 0–0



17.♗g3

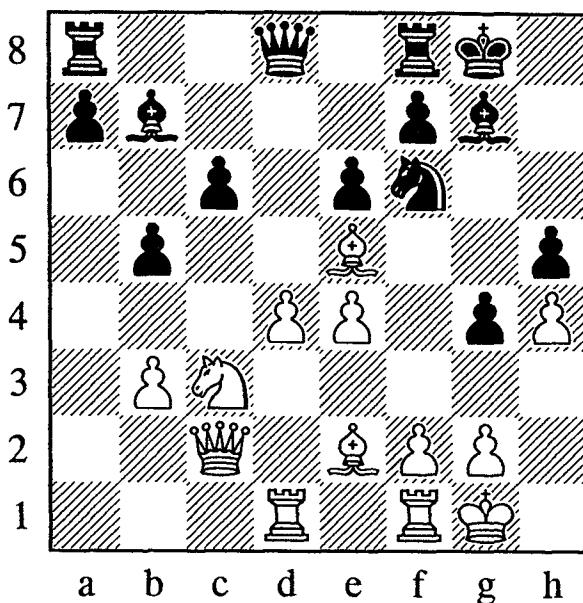
A very important decision. Grischuk has a flair for attacking chess, no doubt about that. He knows it must be very risky for Black to take on d4 with the queen, so he doesn't waste time with the preliminary 17.♗ad1, but moves the bishop immediately creating the threat e4-e5.

Actually 17.♗ad1 is also quite good. It is a move you can make automatically without thinking, and a dozen players have done that – made the move I mean, I don't know about the thinking part – with good results. White always has fine long-term compensation for the pawn in these types of position.

Grischuk's move forces the pace more and looks promising, but let's check the other option:

17.♗ad1

Black has tried different moves:



17... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ (18. $\mathbb{Q}g3!?$) 18... $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 19.e5
f5 20.exf6† $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}fe1\bar{\mathbb{Q}}$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ exd5
23. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}xh4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 25.g3 $\mathbb{W}g5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e5$
 $\mathbb{W}h6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}e7\#$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}de1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 29. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}f6$
30. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\#$ $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 31. $\mathbb{W}e5\#$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 32. $\mathbb{W}c7\#$ 1-0
Daus – Blauhut, corr. 2006.

17... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 19.g3 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 20.e5 $\mathbb{Q}ad8$
21. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ f5 22.exf6† $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ c5 24. $\mathbb{W}xc5$
 $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 25.dxc5 a6 26. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}c2\pm$ White
has good winning chances in the ending, as e6
and h5 are weak, Karason – Mayer, corr. 2002.

17... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ b4 19. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ c5!? 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}fc8$
21.f3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 22.fxg4 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 23.dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}c4$
 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 25. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 26.gxh5 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{W}c5\#$
28. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}e5$
28... $\mathbb{W}xh5$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}d8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 30. $\mathbb{W}xh5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xh5$
31. $\mathbb{Q}d3+-$

29.h6 $\mathbb{Q}f6$
29... $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}d8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}f4$
32. $\mathbb{Q}h8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xe6!$ fxe6 34.h5† $\mathbb{Q}f7$
35. $\mathbb{Q}h7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xb7\pm$

30. $\mathbb{W}g4\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$
Christensen – Selyanchin, corr. 2005.

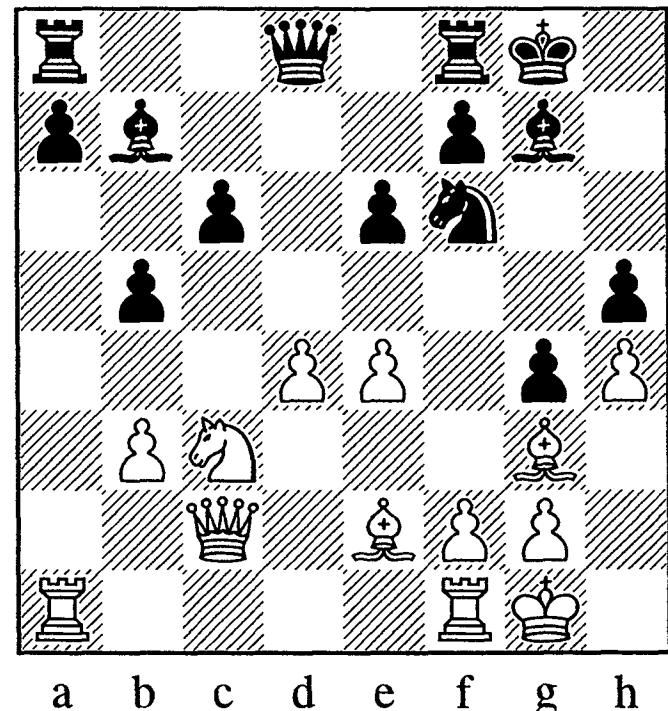
31. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}h5$ 32. $\mathbb{W}xh5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4\#$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xh5$
34. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 36.g3±

With a pawn more.

17... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$
18. $\mathbb{Q}g3!?$ f5 19.exf5 exf5 20. $\mathbb{W}c1$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f4$
with good positional compensation, Neto –
Avotins, corr. 2004.

18... $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 19.e5 f5 20.exf6 $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$
22. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ exf5

Black held in Taucius – Figueiras, corr.
2005.



17...c5

This liberates the passive bishop on b7 and
seeks active counterplay. Black does not mind
that material equality will be restored.

17...b4 18. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c5$
 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 21.dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d6\pm$ $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 23.e5 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$
24.cxd6 $\mathbb{W}f8$ 25. $\mathbb{W}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ Avrukh – Sargissian,
Germany 2007. Now 26. $\mathbb{W}xb4$ takes the
pawn back and leaves Black with a miserable
position.

After 17...b4 18. $\mathbb{Q}a4$, instead of 18... $\mathbb{Q}d7$,
Black's most recent try is: 18...c5!? 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$
 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ This is an intelligent way to try to solve
the opening problems. 20. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 21.dxc5
 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}d1$
 $\mathbb{Q}xd1\#$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ ½–½

This was Leitao – Matsuura, Sao Paulo
2008. In the game Black succeeded, but White
could instead try: 20. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 21.dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$
22. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$

17... $\mathbb{W}xd4$ is indeed extremely risky: 18. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$
 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 19.e5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e4\#$ is a good answer.

17... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 18.e5 f5 19.exf6 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 20. $\mathbb{B}ad1$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 21. $\mathbb{W}g6$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 22. $\mathbb{W}g5$ maintained strong pressure. Black tried to return the pawn with 22...b4 23. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ c5 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 25. $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 26.dxc5± but it was no longer satisfactory, Pashikian – Ter Sahakyan, Yerevan 2008.

17... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 18.e5 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 19. $\mathbb{B}ad1$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 20.b4! $\mathbb{W}xb4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ is a good illustration of how dangerous this set-up is. White has sacrificed his entire queenside, so the attack had better work. 21... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 22. $\mathbb{B}d7$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 23. $\mathbb{B}d8$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 24. $\mathbb{B}xe8!$ $\mathbb{B}fxe8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 26. $\mathbb{W}h7$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xg4!$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (27...hxg4 28.h5 $\mathbb{B}ed8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}h4$) 28. $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ $\mathbb{B}f8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ c5 30. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 1–0 Dhanish – Misiunas, corr. 2006.

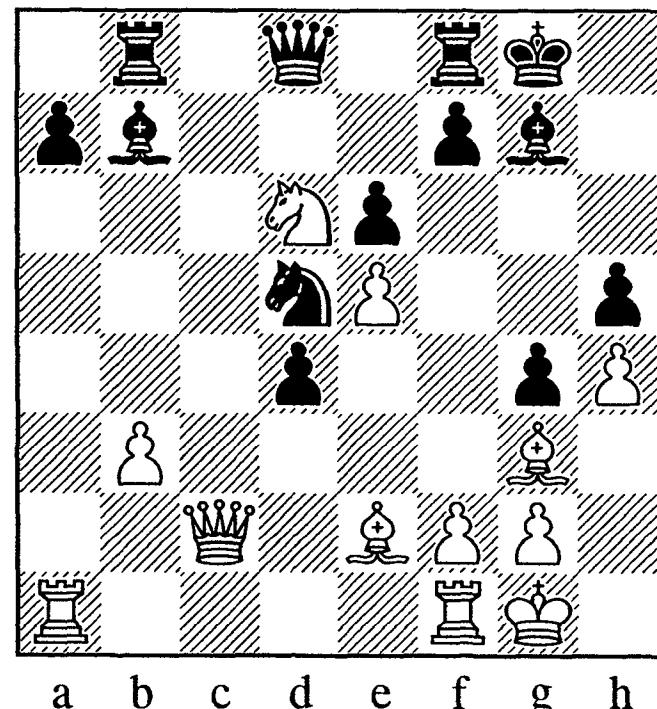
18.e5

18.dxc5 b4 19. $\mathbb{B}ad1$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ is unclear.

18... $\mathbb{Q}d5$

In a recent game Black tried 18... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ but after 19. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ cxd4 21. $\mathbb{Q}d3\pm$ it ended in a massacre on the light squares. 21...f5 22.exf6 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xe6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 24. $\mathbb{W}f5$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{B}ae8$ 26. $\mathbb{B}fe1$ $\mathbb{B}e7$ 27. $\mathbb{B}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 28. $\mathbb{B}e2$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 29.g3 $\mathbb{W}c1\#$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{W}c5$ 31. $\mathbb{B}e6$ $\mathbb{B}ff7$ 32. $\mathbb{B}c2$ 1–0 Shulman – Baramidze, Dresden (ol) 2008.

19. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ cxd4 20. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{B}b8$



21. $\mathbb{W}d2$

In a correspondence game White successfully employed 21. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ and after 21... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 22. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 23. $\mathbb{B}fe1$ a5 24. $\mathbb{B}ac1$ $\mathbb{B}b6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ was strong: 25... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 26. $\mathbb{B}xe4$ d3 27. $\mathbb{B}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 28. $\mathbb{B}g5$ f6 29.exf6 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 31.hxg5 $\mathbb{W}d6$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ g3 33.fxg3 $\mathbb{W}xg3$ 34. $\mathbb{B}e7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 35. $\mathbb{W}b2$ 1–0 Van Unen – Lanc, corr. 2007.

The problem is that 24... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 25. $\mathbb{B}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ seems to hold without any problems.

21... $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ a5

22... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xa7$ $\mathbb{B}xb3$ would simplify but White would keep the pressure with 24. $\mathbb{B}fa1\pm$.

23. $\mathbb{B}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}c2$

A nice regrouping: the bishop move protects b3 but also prepares $\mathbb{W}d3$.

24... $\mathbb{B}b6$

The position is very complicated and it is hard to find the right plan. Here Black had a couple of alternatives.

24...f5 25.exf6 $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{W}h6$ 27. $\mathbb{B}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ $\mathbb{B}xb3$ 29. $\mathbb{B}g5\pm$ and Black will have to pay for the open king's position.

24...a4!? was perhaps best. 25. $\mathbb{W}d3$ (25.bxa4 $\mathbb{B}b2$ is unclear: Black is ready to sacrifice the exchange) 25...f5 26.exf6 $\mathbb{B}xf6$ and now finally 27.bxa4 and White could come out on top in this tense position. After all, he can also flirt with sacrificing the exchange with $\mathbb{B}xc3$.

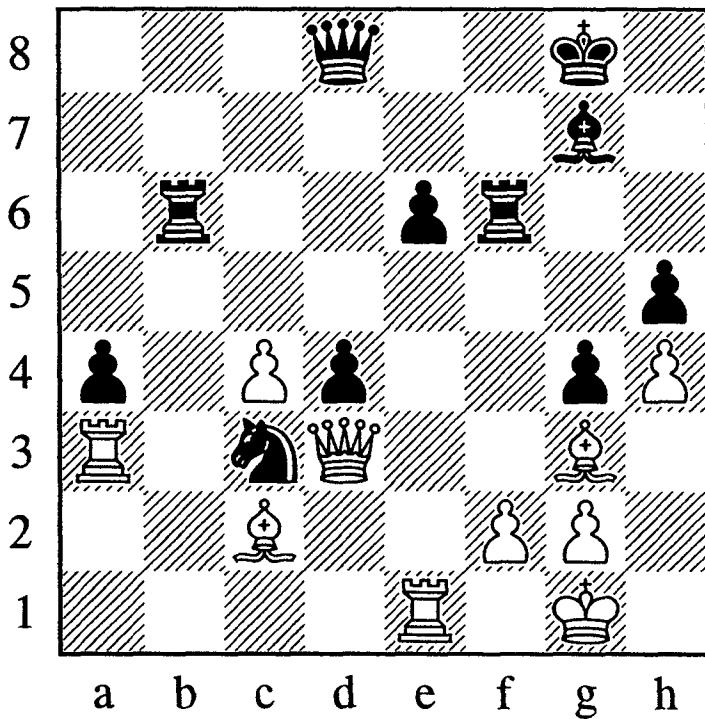
25. $\mathbb{B}e1$ a4

Now it probably comes too late, but the position was difficult anyway. 25...f5 26.exf6 $\mathbb{B}xf6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}c4\pm$ is the normal way while 25... $\mathbb{B}xd6$ is a more drastic solution that hardly is sufficient after 26.exd6 f5 27. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}c4$.

26. $\mathbb{W}d3$ f5 27.exf6 $\mathbb{B}xf6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$

Not good. 28...axb3 29.王h7† ♕f8 30.王a7 lost instantly, for instance 30...王b7 31.王xb7 ♕xb7 32.王d6†, but 28...王f5 to block the dangerous diagonal was the best chance, even though it costs at least an exchange: 29.王xb6 ♕xb6 30.王d2±

29.bxc4



White threatens $\mathbb{R}xc3$. Black has to move the queen away, which loses the important d4-pawn.

**29...王e7 30.王xd4 王xa3 31.王xb6 e5
32.王d8† 王f8 33.王a5 e4**

Karjakin finds the last resource.

34.王xe4

But Grischuk keeps it simple. 34.王xc3 王xf2 35.王e5 王c5 36.王xg7 王xc2† 37.王d4 王xd4† 38.王xd4 王xc4 was unnecessary, especially since 39.王xe4 enters a pin and 39...a3 draws.

**34...王xe4 35.王xe4 a3 36.王e3 王f7 37.王xa3
王xc4 38.王a5**

Attacking h5.

**38...王f7 39.王e5 王h6 40.王d8† 王h7 41.王e7
1-0**

On 41...王f5 42.王c7 王g6 43.王e5 wins at once.

Conclusion: Another great performance by Grischuk. The Russian star is like a fish in the water in these complicated affairs. So could you be. Play over the game a few more times and get a feel for this dynamic initiative. It is notable that Grischuk again uses the 15.b3 break.

Moscow Variation Conclusion: The Moscow Variation is at the very cutting edge of modern opening theory. Many of the lines are strangely balanced: White has a good long-term initiative for the pawn, but perhaps not more than that. In a practical game, however, it will be difficult for the black player to find his way through this tactical maze. And that's why it often pays off to play razor-sharp chess with White – you will dictate events and psychologically it is much more pleasant to attack than to defend. Of course the Moscow and the Botvinnik Variations both lead to hair-raising complications and there is a lot of theory, but you don't have to know everything by heart to play them. And please remember that even though FIDE has made the game faster and faster over the years, you are actually still allowed to think at the board.

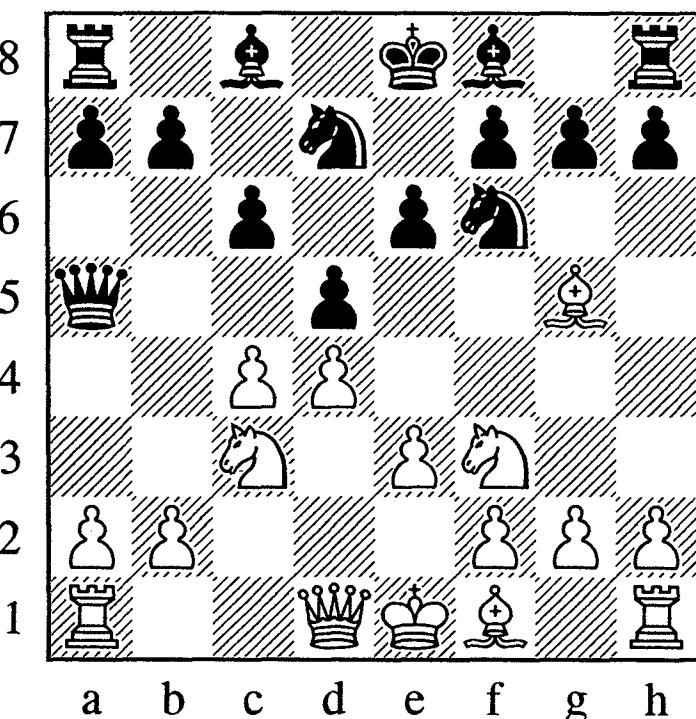
Theory: Cambridge Springs

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.王f3 王f6 4.王c3 e6 5.王g5
王bd7 6.e3**

White could transpose to a Queen's Gambit Exchange variation with 6.cxd5 exd5 7.e3. This structure is rightfully considered easier for White to play, so it could be a good practical choice. However, when I recommended the Exchange variation in Chapter 1 it was with the knight on e2. Here it is on f3, so that would create some discrepancy and also the Cambridge Springs is hardly something to be afraid of.

6...王a5

It was also possible to transpose to a Queen's Gambit Declined with 6... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ while other bishop moves such as 6... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ or 6... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ do not quite meet the positional demands of the situation. On 6... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ a simple answer is 7.cxd5 and no matter how Black takes back he will get an inferior Exchange Variation, and on 6... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ there is nothing wrong with 7. $\mathbb{Q}d3$.



The old Cambridge Springs line has regained some popularity, primarily because many Black players want to play the Semi-Slav and are ready to enter the various Meran lines but are reluctant to try the chaos of the Botvinnik or Moscow Variations. They are therefore in search of something solid. With the queen move Black pins the white knight and creates the possibility of ... $\mathbb{Q}e4$.

7.cxd5

The sharpest. If White wants a more positional game he can opt for 7. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ instead, but the chances to get an opening advantage will be much smaller.

7... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

The real CS move, but of course it is possible to take back with a pawn.

7...cxd5

This is symmetrical, but the knight is passive on d7.

8. $\mathbb{Q}d2$

Directed against ... $\mathbb{Q}e4$.

8. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 9.0-0 was also possible.

8... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 9. $\mathbb{W}b3$ 0-0 10.a3 $\mathbb{Q}d6$

If 10... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 11.bxc3 b6 then 12. $\mathbb{W}b4$.

11. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ a6 12.0-0 b5 13.e4 dxe4 14. $\mathbb{Q}dxe4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 15.d5!

A thematic break.

15... $\mathbb{Q}e5$

15...exd5 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$

18. $\mathbb{W}a2!$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 19.b4 $\mathbb{W}a4$ 20. $\mathbb{W}e2$ and the black queen is in trouble.

16.d6 $\mathbb{Q}d8$

16... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxf6
19. $\mathbb{Q}ce4$ wins.

17. $\mathbb{Q}xf6\#$ gxf6 18. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}c2$
b4 21.axb4 $\mathbb{W}xb4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xh7\#$
 $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ f5 25. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$

Gritsak – Grabarczyk, Glogow 2001, and here 27. $\mathbb{W}c1$ would have won instantly.

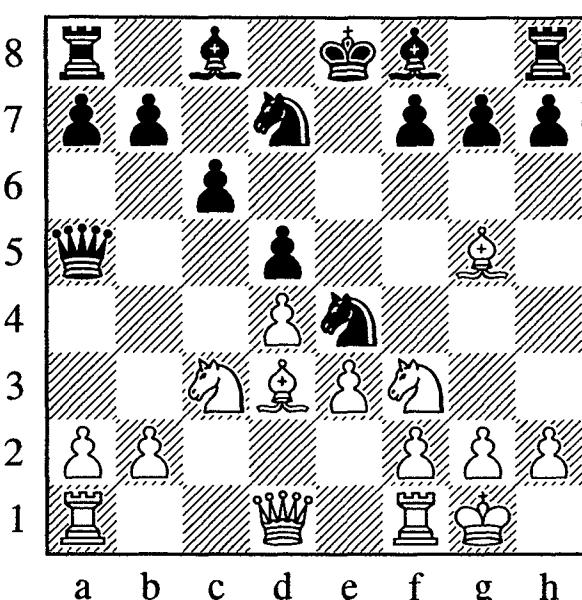
7...exd5

This creates a QGD Exchange structure after all, but with the queen misplaced on a5.

8. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$

Otherwise the queen's position does not make sense:

9.0-0



Black now has various options, but White will come out on top:

9... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$

Taking the pawn is too risky.

10.bxc3 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 11.e4 dxe4 12. $\mathbb{E}el$ f5 13. $\mathbb{E}cl$ $\mathbb{W}a3$

13... $\mathbb{W}b4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxf6 16. $\mathbb{W}h5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xh7$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}g7$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 21. $\mathbb{E}ed1$ e3 22.fxe3 $\mathbb{E}xe3$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 25. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 26. $\mathbb{W}h8$ 1-0 Tummes – Klugstedt, corr. 1993.

14. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

Or 14... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 15. $\mathbb{W}h5\#$ g6 16. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ hxg6 17. $\mathbb{W}xh8$ $\mathbb{W}xd3$ 18. $\mathbb{W}g8$ $\mathbb{W}a3$ 19. $\mathbb{E}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}h6$.

15. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxf6 16. $\mathbb{W}h5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 18. $\mathbb{E}ed1$ $\mathbb{Q}d2$ 19. $\mathbb{E}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 20.d5

Opening the position.

9... $\mathbb{Q}df6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 12.f4±

9... $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

On 10... $\mathbb{W}d8$ or 10... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ White gets 11.f4 in and on 10...h6 11. $\mathbb{W}h5$ is strong.

11.h3

Black was ready to play ...h6 followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$.

11...h6 12. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$

Or 12... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 0-0 14.f4 c5 15. $\mathbb{W}f3$ cxd4 16.exd4 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{E}d8$ 18.a3 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 19. $\mathbb{E}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c3\pm$ Borovikov – Eggert, Nettetal 2004. White quickly launched a pawn offensive on the kingside.

13. $\mathbb{W}c2$ 0-0 14.a3

14. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ is also fine.

14... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 15.bxc3 c5 16. $\mathbb{W}b2$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 17.a4±

Grischuk – Godena, Saint Vincent 2005.

There is yet another approach:

7... $\mathbb{Q}e4$

This is tricky, but not that good.

8.dxe6 fxe6 9. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 11.bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 12. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

Worse is 12...e5 13. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ or 12...0-0 13. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}d3$.

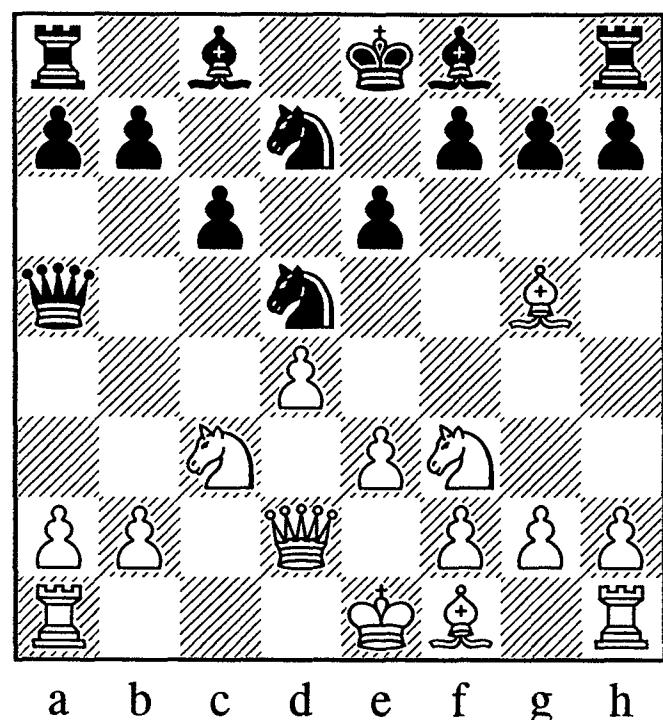
13. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14. $\mathbb{E}c2$ e5

14...e5 loses a pawn after 15. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxf6 16. $\mathbb{W}h5\#$ and $\mathbb{W}xc5$.

15.dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 16.0-0

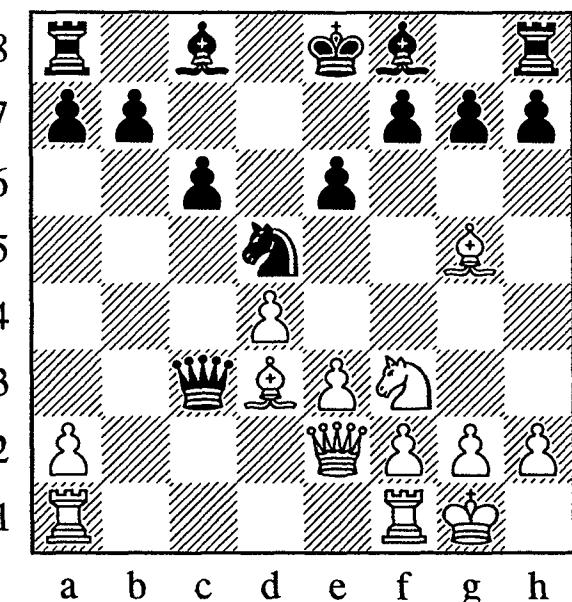
Gorelov – Novopashin, Volgodonsk 1981, and the threat of $\mathbb{Q}c4$ gives White the initiative.

8. $\mathbb{W}d2$



8... $\mathbb{Q}b4$

Black intensifies the pressure on the c3-knight. Another way to do that is: 8... $\mathbb{Q}7b6$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 10.bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ (or 10... $\mathbb{Q}a4$) 11.0-0 $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 12. $\mathbb{W}e2$



A typical scenario in the Cambridge Springs: Black has won a pawn by his consistent exploitation of the pin on the c3-knight, but he has fallen way behind in development. Game 42 shows how it can continue.

9. $\mathbb{B}c1$ h6

Usually Black wins this tempo on the bishop by playing ...h6 but it is possible to do without it. In their famous Candidates match Smyslov tried some other moves against Kasparov, but he was severely punished.

9...e5 10.a3! $\mathbb{B}d6$ (10... $\mathbb{B}xc3$ 11.bxc3 $\mathbb{W}xa3$ 12.e4 $\mathbb{Q}5b6$ 13. $\mathbb{B}d3\infty$) 11.dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 13.b4! $\mathbb{B}xc3$ 14. $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 15.bxa5 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 0–0 17.f3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 18.e4 $\mathbb{B}e8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ a6 20. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 21. $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{B}e7$ 22. $\mathbb{B}hd1$ $\mathbb{B}ae8$ 23. $\mathbb{B}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 24. $\mathbb{B}bd2$ $\mathbb{B}d7$ 25. $\mathbb{B}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 26.g4 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 28.g5± In Kasparov – Smyslov, Vilnius (9) 1984, Black lacked counterplay.

9...f6 10. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ e5 11. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 0–0 12.0–0 exd4
 12... $\mathbb{B}e8$ 13. $\mathbb{W}c2$
 13.exd4 $\mathbb{B}d8$ 14.a3! $\mathbb{B}xc3$ 15.bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}f8$
 15... $\mathbb{W}xa3$ 16.c4 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 18. $\mathbb{B}a1$
 $\mathbb{W}b4$ 19. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e4\infty$
 16. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 17. $\mathbb{B}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 18.c4 $\mathbb{W}xd2$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$
 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{B}d7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$
 23.d5 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 24.dxc6 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6
 26.c5±

Kasparov – Smyslov, Vilnius (3) 1984. The bishop pair is very strong.

The most interesting line is:

9...c5 10.a3 $\mathbb{B}xc3$ 11.bxc3

As usual, it is dangerous to try:

11... $\mathbb{W}xa3$

When Khalifman gives:

12.e4 $\mathbb{Q}5f6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 14.d5! exd5 15.exd5
 0–0

15... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c4\uparrow$

16.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

16...h6 17. $\mathbb{Q}xh6!$ gxh6 18. $\mathbb{W}xh6$ wins.

17. $\mathbb{Q}xh7\uparrow$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e7$ $\mathbb{B}e8$
 20. $\mathbb{B}fe1\infty$

White's impressive bishop dominates the black position and he will have good attacking chances on the kingside.

But Black can play:

11...b6

Then 12. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ h6 will transpose to something in the mainline that we try to avoid. Instead we can take the ending, when a recent example went:

12.c4 $\mathbb{W}xd2\uparrow$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}5f6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$
 15.f3

With ...h6 and $\mathbb{Q}h4$ included, the bishop often returns to f2 where it coordinates well with the other troops, so here it is maybe a slight disadvantage to have the bishop on g5.

15...0–0 16. $\mathbb{Q}f2$

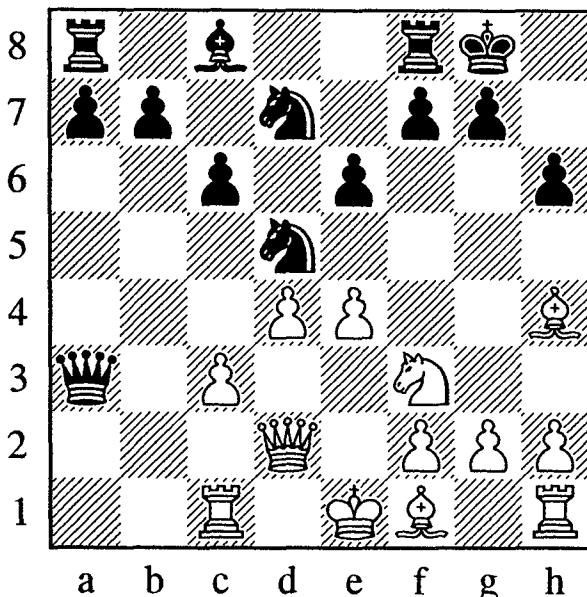
16.0–0 was more natural and looks slightly better for White.

16...h6 17. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{B}fe8$ 18. $\mathbb{B}hd1$ cxd4 19.exd4
 e5 20. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{B}ac8$ 21.a4 e4 22. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$
 23.d5 exf3 24.gxf3 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{B}ed8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d4$
 $\mathbb{B}c5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{B}c7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{B}c5$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{B}c7$
 30. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{B}c5$

With a draw by repetition, Meier – Carlsen, Dresden 2008.

10. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ c5

After: 10...0–0 11.a3 $\mathbb{B}xc3$ 12.bxc3 $\mathbb{W}xa3$
 13.e4



White again gets a good play for a pawn. Game 43 shows how the initiative can unfold.

11.a3

Standard by now.

11...♝xc3 12.bxc3 b6

The positional choice: Black prepares ...♝a6 to exchange his problem bishop. Even worse than before is:

12...♝xa3 13.e4 ♜f6 14.♝d3 ♜a5 15.d5! exd5 16.e5 ♜e4 17.♝xe4 dxe4 18.♝d6

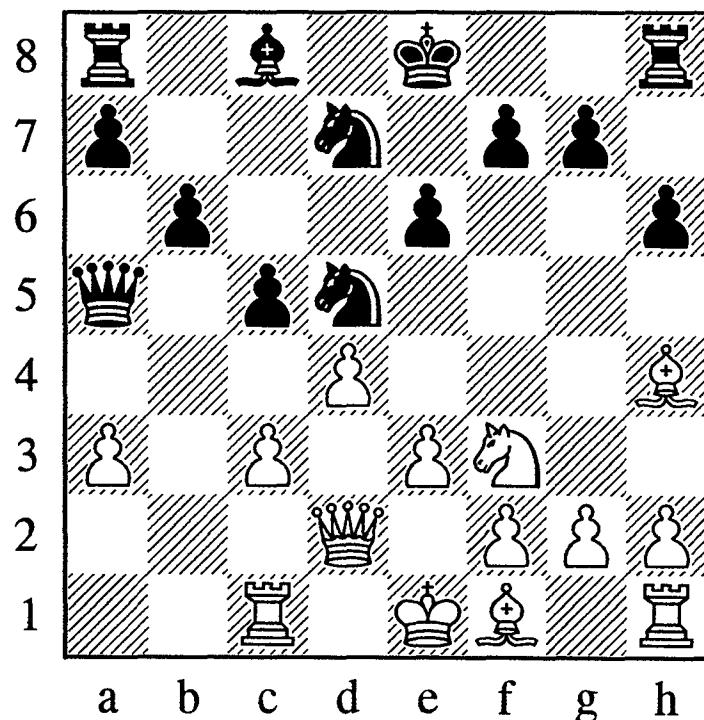
Threatening mate.

18...g5 19.♝xg5! ♜b6

19...hxg5 20.♝xg5 f6 21.exf6 and it is over.

20.♝xe4 ♜xd6 21.♝xd6† ♜f8 22.f4± ♜b6
23.0–0 ♜g8 24.f5

And Black never got out, Petursson – Halasz, Naestved 1988.

**13.c4**

The modern solution. White is content with a slightly better ending, where the pair of bishops hopefully can claim their right. Traditionally White has played:

13.♝d3 ♜a6 14.0–0 cxd4 15.♝xa6 ♜xa6
16.♝xd4

16.cxd4 0–0 17.e4 ♜f6 18.♝e3 ♜ac8 should be okay for Black who is ready to swap rooks on the c-file.

16...0–0 17.e4 ♜f4 18.♝xd7 ♜e2† 19.♔h1 ♜xc1 20.♝xc1 ♜xa3 21.♝d2 ♜ac8 22.♝d4

But this position is considered fine for Black these days.

22...a6

This move prevents ♜d4-b5-d6 and prepares b6-b5 followed by ...♝c4.

23.f4

23.f3 b5 24.♝e1 ♜c4 25.♝e2 ♜fc8 and it is not easy to improve White's position. 26.♝a1 ♜b2 27.♝b1 ♜c2 28.♝d1 ½–½ Simeonov – Lindqvist, corr. 2007.

23...♝c4 24.e5 b5 25.♝e2 ♜c5 26.h3 a5 27.♝f1 b4 28.cxb4 axb4

The passed pawn gave Black the upper hand, Braun – Fridman, Bad Woerishofen 2008.

13.e4

This is nothing.

13...♝f6 14.♝d3 ♜b7 15.d5 c4! 16.dxe6 cxd3 17.exd7† ♜xd7 18.♝xd3

This position has been considered fine for Black since an old game between Kramnik and Ivanchuk. A later correspondence game confirmed this:

18...♝c5!? 19.♝d6 f6

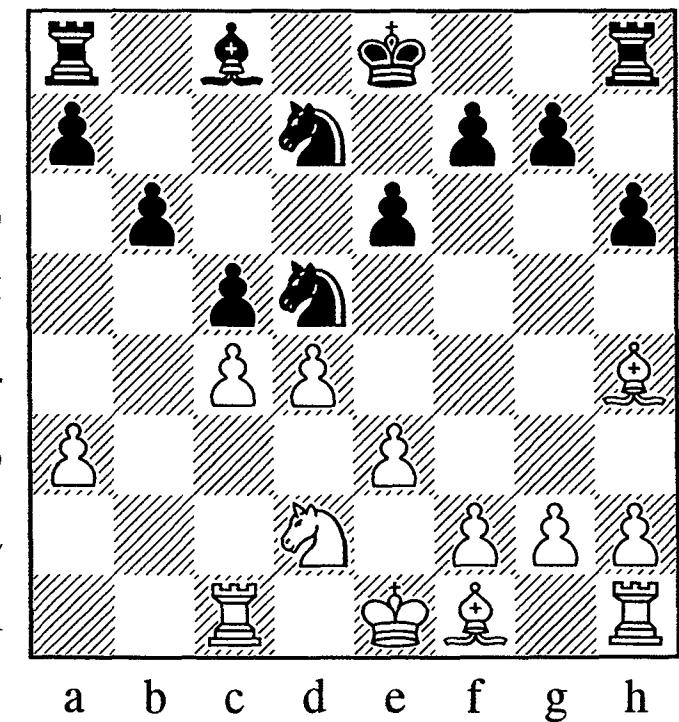
Now White could not find anything better than giving up a piece.

20.♝xf6 gxf6 21.♝xf6 ♜f8

Rost – May, corr. 2001, and the finish could have been:

22.♝e5† ♜f7 23.♝c7† ♜g8 24.♝g3†

With perpetual check.

13...♝xd2† 14.♝xd2

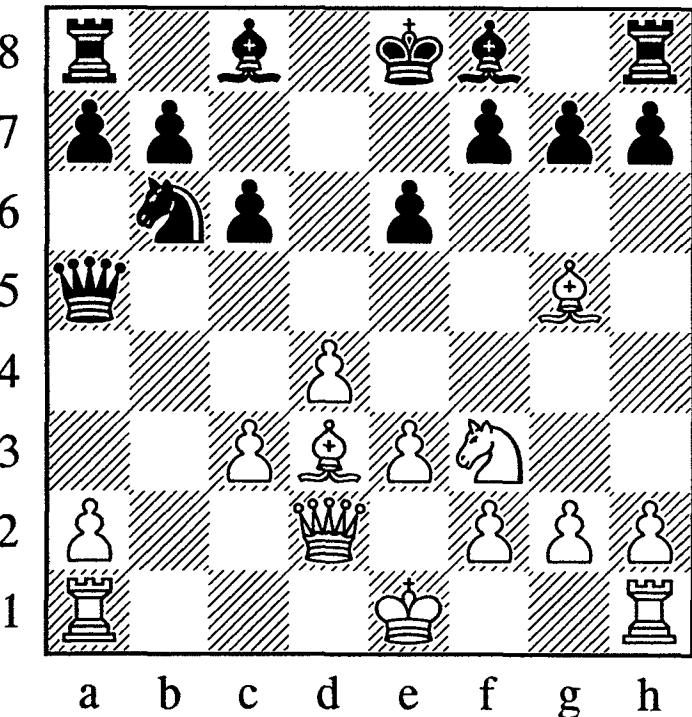
Black must withdraw the knight to e7 or f6. White continues with the flexible f3 and ♘e2. The other bishop can always return to f2 with a harmonious position. Game 44 tells more.

Game 42

Mehlhorn – Drosson

Correspondence 2003

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♗g5
♗bd7 6.e3 ♖a5 7.cxd5 ♘xd5 8.♗d2 ♘7b6
9.♗d3 ♘xc3 10.bxc3



10...♘d5

Black can also win the pawn with:

10...♘a4

Because 11.♗c1 allows 11...♘xc3 and 11.c4 ♗b4 is even worse.

White should of course just give up the pawn and accept the inevitable.

11.0–0 ♖xc3 12.♗e2

The knight looks funny on a4, but Black can harass the white queen by keep threatening to exchange. A pawn down, White prefers to wait a little before going into an ending.

12...♗b2 13.♔c2 ♗b5

Another line is: 13...♘c3 14.♗d3 ♘d5 15.♔b3 h6 16.♔h4 ♖c3 17.♗e2 ♔a3

18.♗e5 with good compensation.

14.♗d1 ♘c3 15.♗d2 ♘e2†

Or 15...♗b4 16.♗d3 when 16...♖a5 is a mistake after Khalifman's 17.a3 ♖xa3 18.♗fb1 b5 19.♗b3 b4 20.♗axa3 bxa3 21.♗xc3 ♖xc3 22.♗xc3 a2 23.♗a3± and 16...♖a4 17.a3 ♖a5 18.♗b2 f6 19.♔h4 ♗d5 20.♗fc1 was Magerramov – Sherbakov, Cheliabinsk 1991. The black queen is not safe and White is ready with moves such as ♖c2, threatening ♗xh7.

16.♔h1 ♗b4 17.a4! ♖xd2 18.axb5 ♖c3
19.♔a2

Black has to go to extremes to avoid losing his knight.

19...♔d7

19...h6 20.bxc6 bxc6 (20...hxg5 21.♗e4±)
21.♔a4 ♖d7 22.♔h4 g5 23.♗xe2 gxh4
24.♗c2 ♖a5 Pankratov – Kariz, corr. 1997.
25.♗e5±

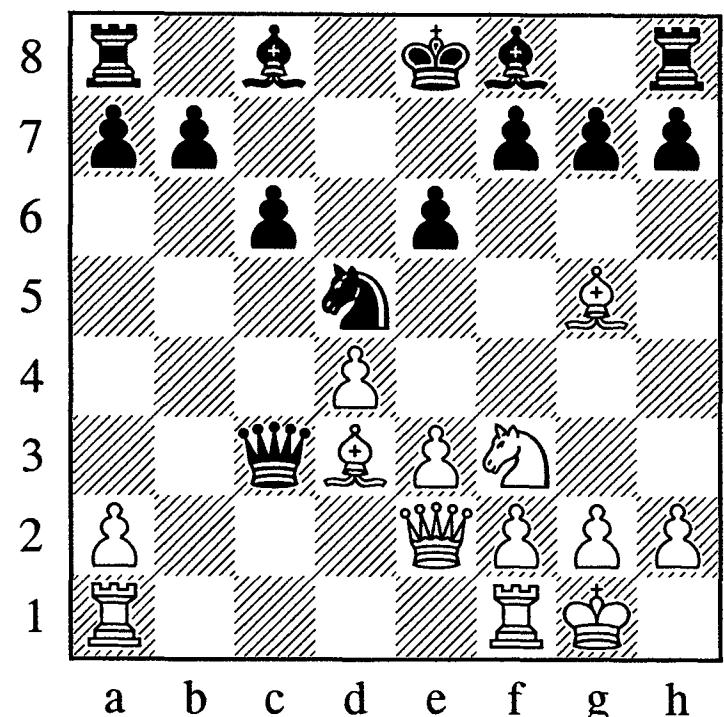
20.♗d3

20.♗e4 also looks good.

20...h6 21.♔h4 g5 22.♗xe2 gxh4 23.♗c1 ♖b4
24.♗e5 ♖d6 25.♗xd7 ♔xd7 26.bxc6† bxc6
27.♗f3 ♖hc8 28.♗a6±

Gerstner – Jirovsky, Germany 1999.

11.0–0 ♖xc3 12.♗e2



Black has no real weaknesses, but he is terrible behind in development, and his

vulnerable queen almost guarantees that he will lose even more time getting her back to safety. White has more than enough for the pawn and should be in no hurry. The compensation is of a long-term positional kind: the extra space, the easy piece-play. Black will without doubt be able to castle, but he will have great trouble developing his queenside.

12... $\mathbb{Q}d6$

12... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$
 15. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ $hxg6$ 16.a4!? (16. $\mathbb{Q}fc1$) 16... $\mathbb{W}a5$
 17. $\mathbb{Q}fc1$ g5 18.h3 f6 19. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 20.e4 ∞
 Eingorn – Meister, Bad Wiessee 2008.

13. $\mathbb{Q}d2$

Activating the knight.

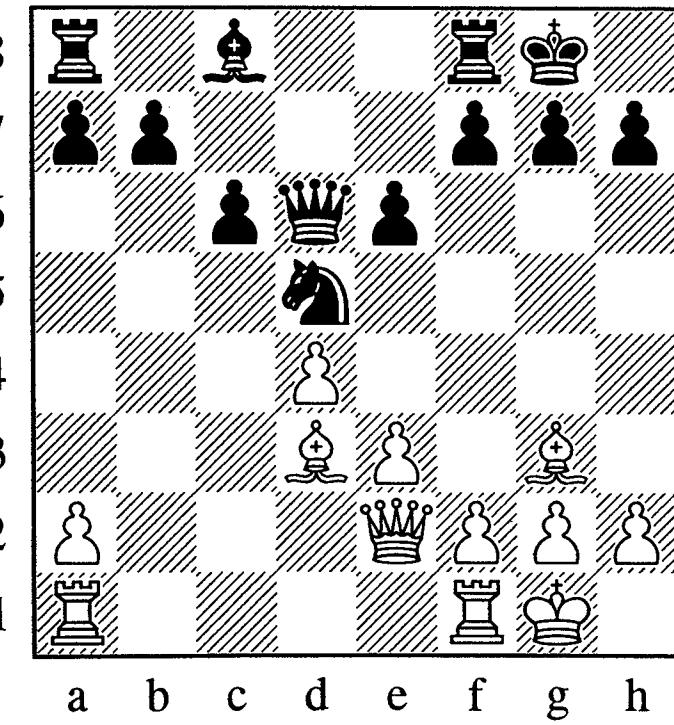
13... $\mathbb{W}a5$

Black should be alert. A careless move like 13...0–0? would after 14. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ cost the queen because there is no satisfactory defence against $\mathbb{Q}b3$ or $\mathbb{Q}fc1$.

14. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd6\#$

A simple decision. White just takes the bishop pair and secures good play, especially on the dark squares. 15. $\mathbb{W}h5$ has also been tried but it is not as clear-cut.

15... $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 0–0 17. $\mathbb{Q}g3$



The bishops exert strong long distance pressure. Poor Black still has to develop the queenside.

17... $\mathbb{W}d7$

Protecting c6 and preparing ...b7-b6 followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}b7$. On 17... $\mathbb{W}e7$ White could try the new move 18.e4 \pm .

18. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$

Also possible is 18. $\mathbb{Q}fc1$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ b6 20.e4 a5 21.a3 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 22. $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ b5 24. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ f6 25. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ f5 27.f3 a4 28. $\mathbb{Q}ac1\pm$ Innocenti – Fleischanderl, corr. 2004. Black's position does not impress.

18... $b6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$

White centralizes the rooks and finishes his development. The compensation will not go away and he is in no hurry. The stem game continued 19. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 20. $\mathbb{W}d3$ g6 21. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 22. $\mathbb{W}e2$ f5 23. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ with compensation, Gligoric – Shengelia, Panormos 1998. But as Panczyk and Ilczuk proclaim, 20...f5 would have been better with unclear play.

19... $f5$

A double-edged decision, but on 19... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ comes 20.e4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 21. $\mathbb{W}b2\pm$ when play can continue 21...f5 22.f3 $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c2$.

20.e4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$

20...fxe4 21. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ g6 creates a weakness. White can put the queen on g4, play the bishop to e5, and then h2-h4-h5.

21. $\mathbb{Q}e5$

Nice bishop.

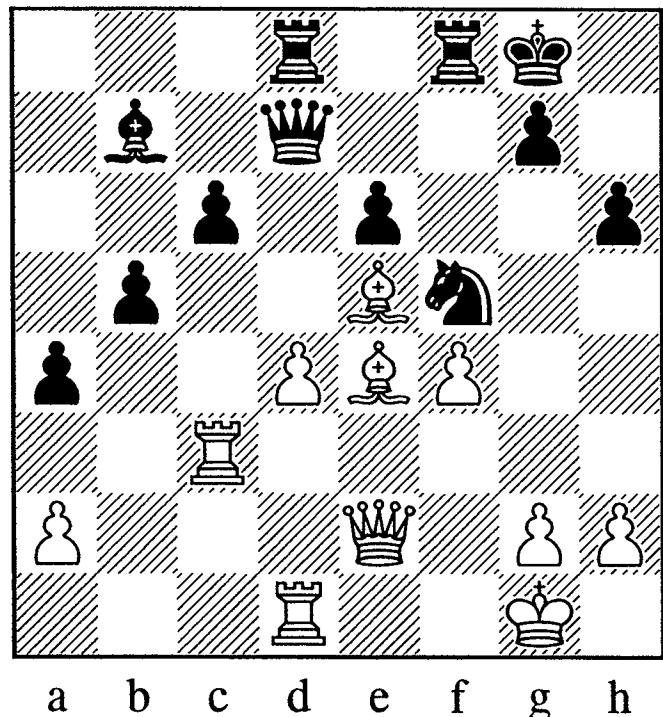
21... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

Otherwise the rook would go to h3 with an attack.

24. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ a5 25. $\mathbb{Q}b3$

First he creates some new weak spots in the black camp.

25...b5 26.Qxe4 Qf5 27.Qc3 h6 28.f4 a4



29.g4 Qe7 30.g5

White launches a direct assault.

30...Qf5 31.gxh6 Qxh6 32.Qg3 Qf7 33.Wh5 Qf5 34.Qdd3!

1-0

Nice. If 34...Qxg3 then simply 35.Qxg3 and g7 falls in connection with the check on h7.

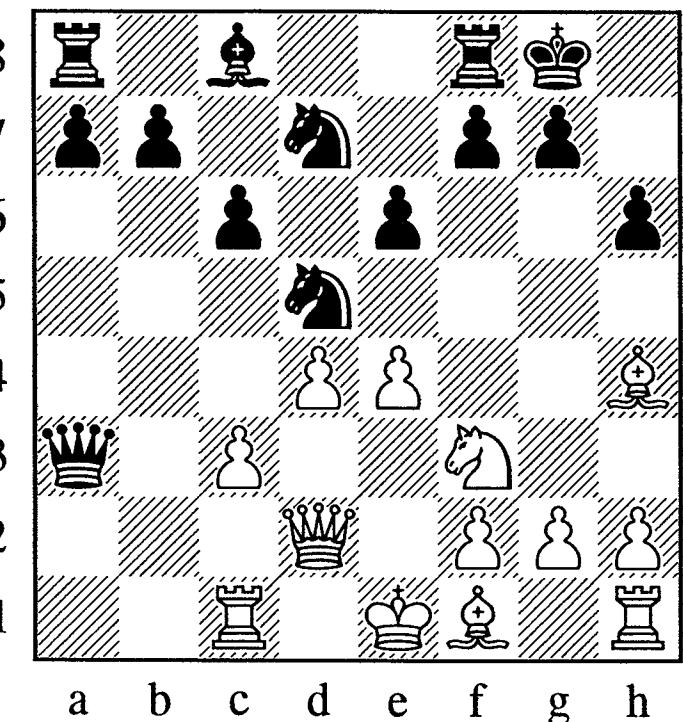
Conclusion: A typical display if Black goes for an early win of a pawn. His bad development and the strong pair of bishops will make the rest of the game an unpleasant uphill struggle.

Game 43

Kramnik – Bruzon

Turin Olympiad 2006

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Qf3 Qf6 4.Qc3 e6 5.Qg5 Qbd7 6.e3 Wa5 7.cxd5 Qxd5 8.Wd2 Qb4 9.Qc1 h6 10.Qh4 0-0 11.a3 Qxc3 12.bxc3 Wxa3 13.e4



Another pawn sacrifice, another initiative.

13...Qe7

13...Q5b6 14.Qd3 Qe8 15.0-0 e5 16.Qg3 exd4 17.cxd4± just opened the position to White's advantage in Kramnik – Lobron, Frankfurt 1995.

14.Qd3 Qg6 15.Qg3 e5

Seeking influence in the centre.

The alternative is:

15...b6 16.0-0

And 16.h4 would very likely have been even stronger.

16...Qb7

But with:

17.e5 We7 18.h4

White took the initiative.

18...c5 19.h5 Qxf3 20.gxf3 Qh4 21.Wf4 Qf5 22.Qxf5 exf5 23.Wxf5 We6 24.We4 f5 25.d5! We8 26.Wf4±

P.H. Nielsen – Cu. Hansen, Esbjerg 2002. White's central pawns are some sight.

16.0-0

16.h4 was also possible, but Kramnik just finishes development. It is clear he believes in the long-term prospects of White's position.

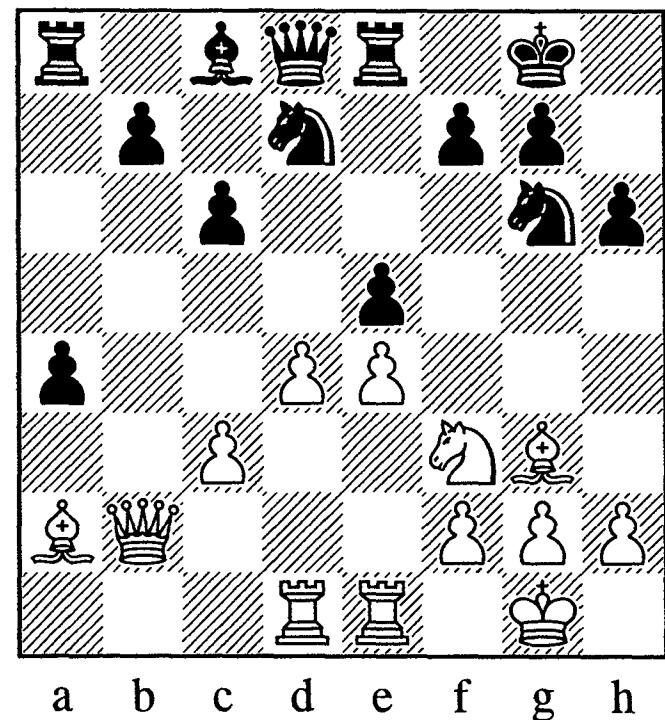
16...Qe8

16... $\mathbb{W}e7$ has been played in a correspondence game, but it does not change much. White can continue 17. $\mathbb{B}f1$ like Kramnik or even 17.h4!?

17. $\mathbb{B}f1$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 18. $\mathbb{W}b2$ $\mathbb{W}d8$

Black got his queen home, but Kramnik still doesn't hurry. Slowly but surely he improves his pieces. He has a nice centre and good prospects on the kingside, while Black's majority on the queenside will not be a real threat for long.

19. $\mathbb{Q}b1!$ a5 20. $\mathbb{B}cd1$ a4 21. $\mathbb{Q}a2$



Kramnik has coordinated his pieces beautifully. He found an active post for the light-squared bishop where it points all the way down to the weak spot f7 and at the same time blocks Black's passed a-pawn.

21... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 22. $\mathbb{W}c1$ $\mathbb{B}a5$

Black tries to get his rook out without developing the c8-bishop at all.

23. $\mathbb{W}d2$ exd4

Releasing the tension mainly benefits White, but Black's position was not easy to play. 23...b6 could be answered by 24.h4 when Black should perhaps try 24... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{B}xe5$ 27.dxe5 $\mathbb{W}xe5$ with some compensation for the exchange.

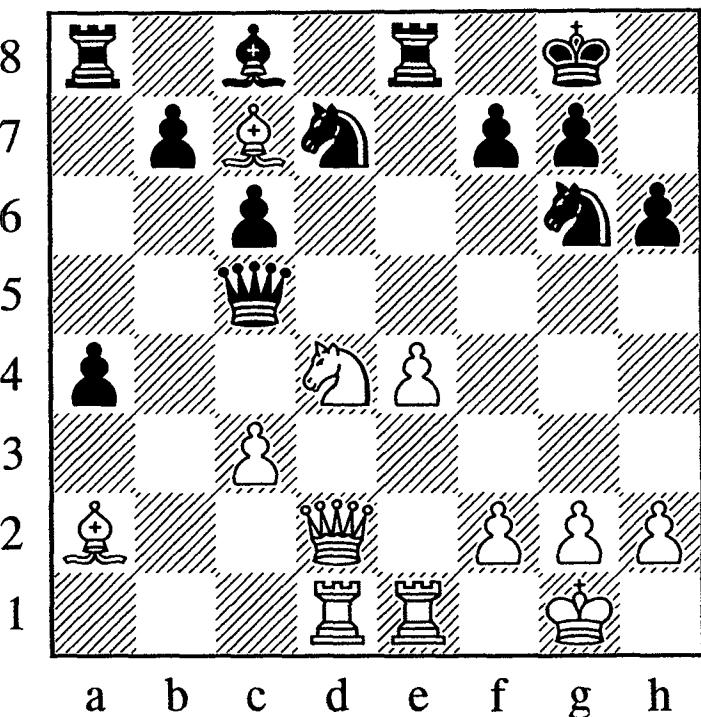
24. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$

The most dynamic option.

24... $\mathbb{W}c5$

24... $\mathbb{Q}de5$ 25.f4±

25. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{B}a8$



26. $\mathbb{Q}xf7†!$

The culmination of Kramnik's remarkable handling of this bishop.

26... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 27. $\mathbb{W}a2†$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$

In his notes in *Informant* the winner mentions the nice detail 27... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}d8†!$ with mate in a few moves.

28. $\mathbb{Q}e6†$ $\mathbb{B}xe6$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xe6$

The black king is caught: White will follow up with $\mathbb{B}e3$ and $\mathbb{B}f3$. Black cannot move the knight from d7 because of the weak back rank.

29... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 30. $\mathbb{B}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 31. $\mathbb{B}f3$ $\mathbb{W}h5$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}d6$

1-0

On 32... $\mathbb{W}g5$ then 33. $\mathbb{B}f7$ decides.

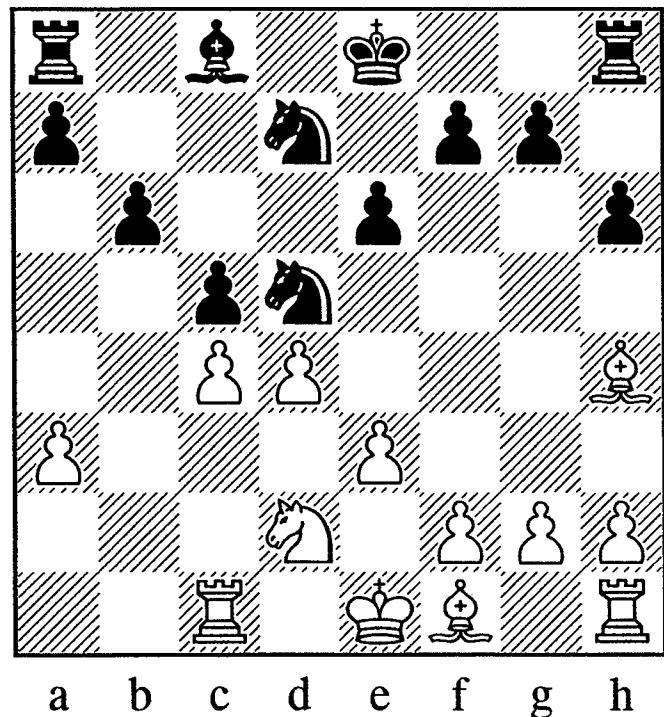
Conclusion: This game is another illustration of the long-term dangers that await Black if he takes the pawn. Such positions are almost impossible to defend over-the-board.

Game 44

Bubir – Nemec

Correspondence 2006

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 e6 5.♗g5 ♘bd7 6.e3 ♖a5 7.cxd5 ♘xd5 8.♗d2 ♘b4 9.♗c1 h6 10.♗h4 c5 11.a3 ♘xc3 12.bxc3 b6 13.c4 ♖xd2† 14.♘xd2



14...♘f6

This is the most solid option.

Black has an alternative that looks tempting:

14...♘e7

The knight can jump to f5 and harass the white bishop. However, the bishop does not really mind returning to f2, and Black's knights may be misplaced. These are the words; let's translate them into some practical examples:

15.f3 ♘f5 16.♗f2 ♘d6

Or 16...♘a6 17.♗d3 ♕c8 18.g4! ♘d6 19.♗g3 ♘e7 20.♗f2± ♕hd8 21.♕hd1 ♘b8 22.h4 ♘b7 23.d5! exd5 24.♗f5 ♘d7 25.cxd5 g6 26.♗b1 c4 27.h5 ♘dc5 28.e4 g5 29.♗f1 ♘b3 30.♕c3 ♘d6 31.a4 f6 32.♗e3± Potkin – Malakhov, Russia 2008.

17.♗b3

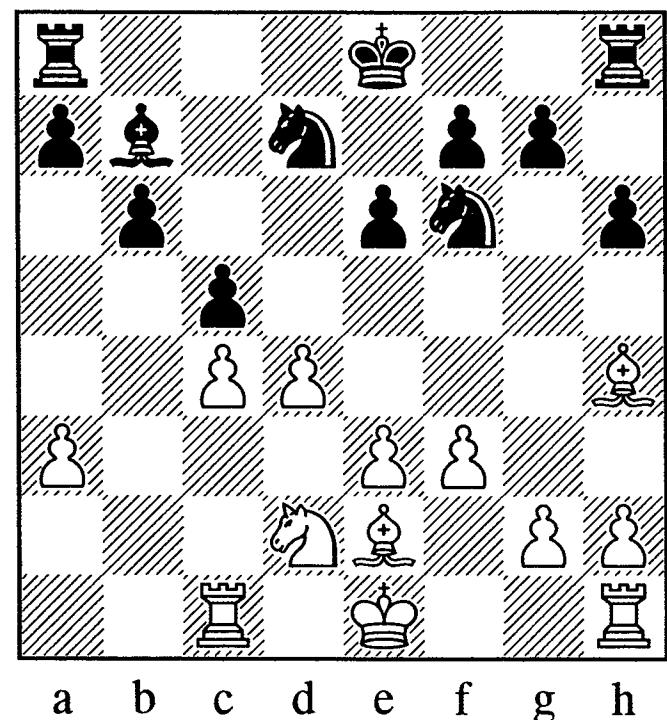
17.♗d3 is of course also fine.
17...♘a6 18.dxc5 bxc5 19.e4 ♕c8 20.♗e2 ♘b7 21.♗d2 ♘b6 22.a4 ♘e7 23.a5 ♘d7 24.♗hd1 f6 25.♔c3±

Tasic – Norman, corr. 2006. Space and bishops!

15.f3

A key move, but White could also develop the light-squared bishop first.

15...♘b7 16.♗e2



16...♕c8

The right square for the rook, but both sides could just as well have started by castling short and then Black could have played ...♖ac8 with a transposition.

The following games took a more original course:

16...0–0 17.0–0 cxd4

17...♗fe8 18.♗fe1 ♕ac8 19.♗f1± Vaganian – Krasenkow, Barcelona 2007.

18.exd4 e5 19.c5! bxc5 20.dxe5

With the idea 20...♗xe5 21.♗xc5.

20...♗fe8

Grischuk – Filippov, Tripoli 2004, and now both 21.♗c4 and 21.f4 would have been very good for White.

16... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

Keeping the king in the centre is not necessarily a good idea.

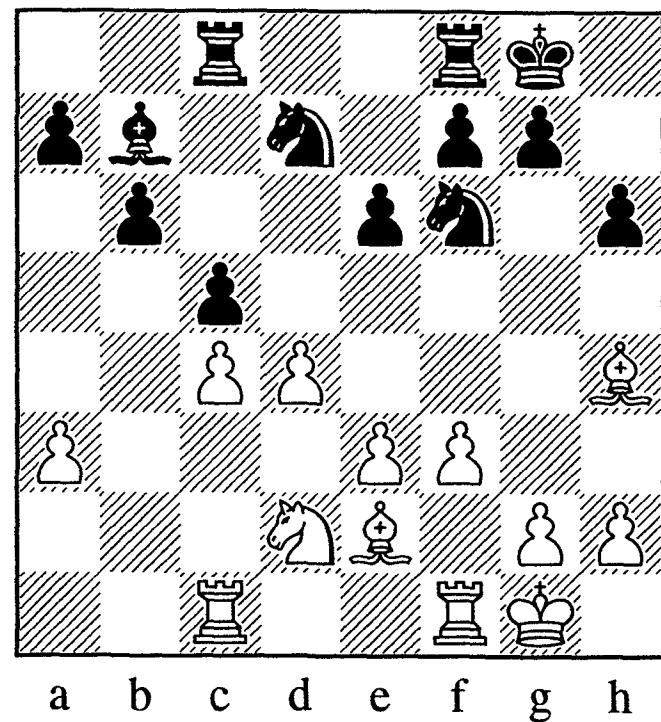
17.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}hd8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c2!$?

18. $\mathbb{Q}b3$

18... $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}fc1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}8d7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ a6 23.a4±

Black did not find a plan and now he suffers, Babula – Ashton, Pardubice 2008.

17.0-0 0-0



18.a4

A good positional idea. The further advance a4-a5 would attack Black's pawn chain. It was also possible just to centralize the other rook and see what Black intends to do. 18. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ cxd4 21.exd4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 22.a4 $\mathbb{Q}ec8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}a1$ e5 Obviously this is the plan, but there was never a good time to execute it. 24.d5 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 25.a5 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}db1$ ± Zontakh – Romanko, Russia 2008.

18... $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ g5 20. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ a5

A drastic decision, but otherwise White would play a5 himself.

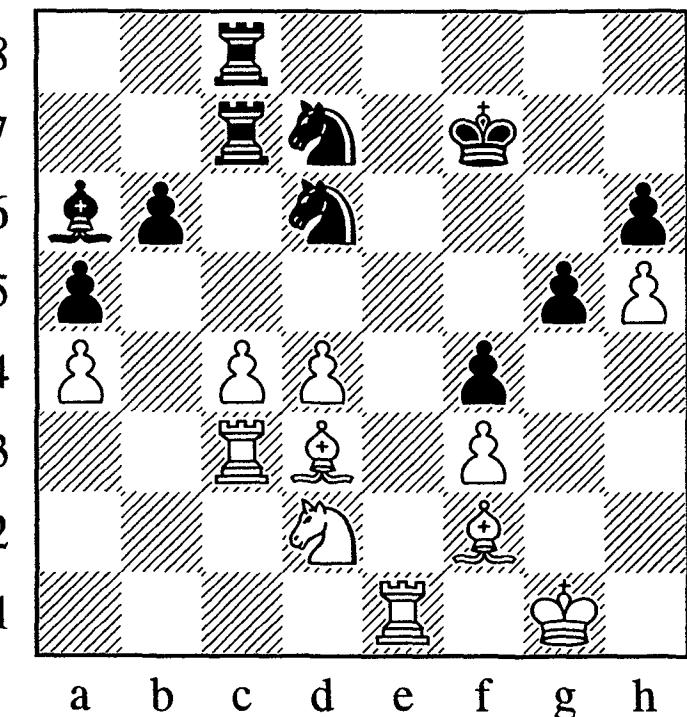
21. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ cxd4 22.exd4 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 27.g3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 28.g4

Taking squares from the knight.

28... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 29.h4 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 30.h5±

White does not mind closing the position. He fixes the black pawn on h6, where it might later be hit by the unopposed dark-squared bishop. Furthermore, the weakness on b6 will always be there and the dynamics are on White's side in the centre and on the kingside, so there will be good winning chances.

30... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}ec1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ f5 35. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}dc8$ 37.gxf5 exf5 38. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ f4 39. $\mathbb{Q}f2$



39... $\mathbb{Q}g8$

It was difficult to find a move. 39... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}ec1$ lost an exchange and on 39... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ White advances 40.d5.

40. $\mathbb{Q}e6!$

Penetrating Black's position.

40... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}g6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$

Not only winning the black h-pawn, but also creating a strong passed pawn.

43... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

Not 43... $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}h8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$.

44. $\mathbb{Q}h7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 46. $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 49.h6 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$

50.d5!

Decisive.

50... $\mathbb{Q}h5$

Or 50... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 51. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 52.h7.

51. $\mathbb{B}xg5$ $\mathbb{B}h8$ 52.h7 $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 53. $\mathbb{B}xh5$ $\mathbb{B}g8\#$
 54. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 55. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{B}g6$ 56. $\mathbb{B}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$
 57. $\mathbb{B}f7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 58. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}e3\#$ 59. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ fxe3
 60. $\mathbb{Q}e2$

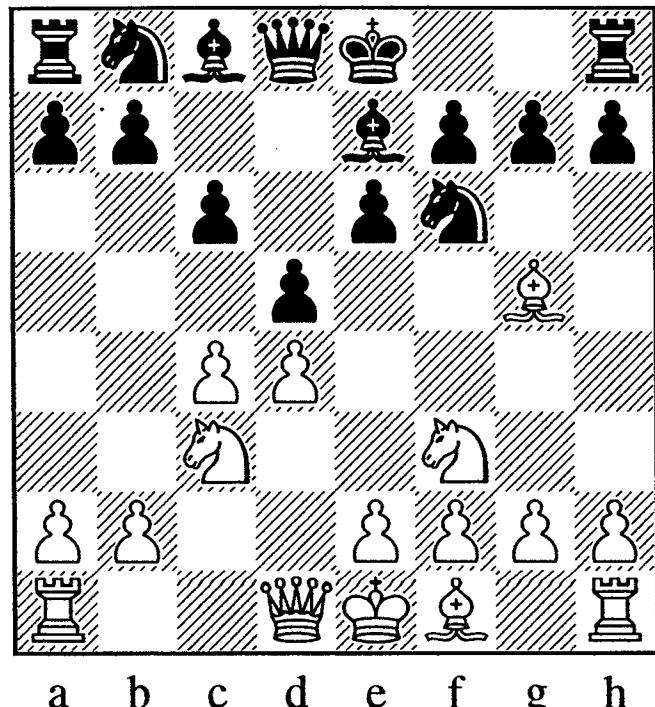
1-0

Conclusion: The ending is probably the best Black can get, but still it is nice for White.

Cambridge Springs Conclusion: The Cambridge Springs is not the easy solution to the question posed by 5. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ that Black might have hoped for. It is solid on the surface, but with active and coherent moves White gains the initiative. He should not be afraid to sacrifice a pawn on the way. If Black takes it, he will suffer. Black does best by keeping his structure intact and trying to develop, but even here he cannot solve all the problems and ends up in an inferior ending.

Theory: QGD

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ e6 5. $\mathbb{Q}g5$
 $\mathbb{Q}e7$



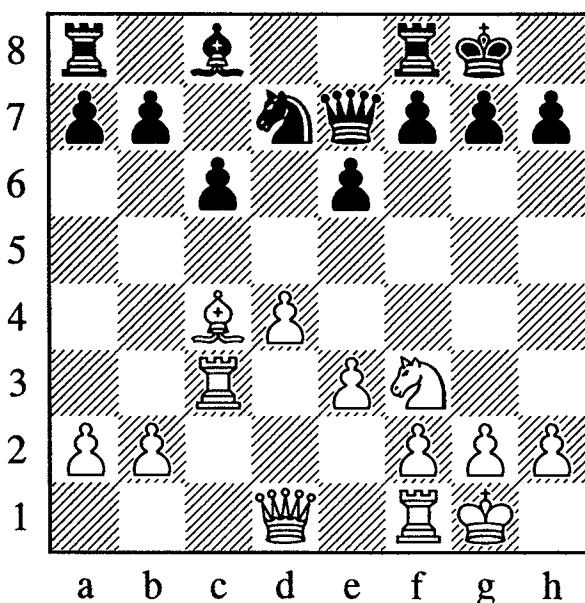
Black just develops and plays a classical Queen's Gambit Declined. The move ...c6 makes it quite passive though, and White gets a rather free game just by making natural moves.

6.e3 0-0

Or 6... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ first will be the same thing.

7. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 8.0-0 h6

Winning a useful tempo, but actually also giving White an important extra possibility. The alternative is the old liberating manoeuvre: 8...dxc4 9. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 11. $\mathbb{B}cl$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 12. $\mathbb{B}xc3$



Here play divides.

12...c5

This try to solve his positional problems leaves Black with a rather passive position after:

13. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ cxd4 14. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 15. $\mathbb{B}d1\pm$

When it is not clear how the problem child on c8 shall be developed.

15...b6

On 15...a6 16. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ b5 17. $\mathbb{W}e5$ is annoying.

16. $\mathbb{W}e5$

Khalifman proposes 16. $\mathbb{B}dc1$ when 16... $\mathbb{B}d8$ 17. $\mathbb{W}e5$ is a possible continuation.

16... $\mathbb{B}d8$

Gotti – Long, Nice 1938. Now:

17. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{B}d5$ 18. $\mathbb{W}c7$ $\mathbb{W}xc7$ 19. $\mathbb{B}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$

20.♕xd7 ♕xd7 21.e4 ♘d6 22.♘c6 ♘xc6
23.♘xc6 ♕c5 24.f3

This gives White a pleasant ending with more space and active pieces.

12...b6

Developing the bishop makes Black regret that the pawn is still on h7.

13.♗d3 c5 14.♗c2

Winning a tempo.

14...h6 15.♗h7† ♕h8 16.♗e4 ♘b8 17.♘c1

It is difficult for Black to free himself.

17...♗b7

Or 17...f5 18.♗c6.

18.♕xb7 ♘xb7 19.dxc5 ♘xc5

19...bxc5 20.♗d1±

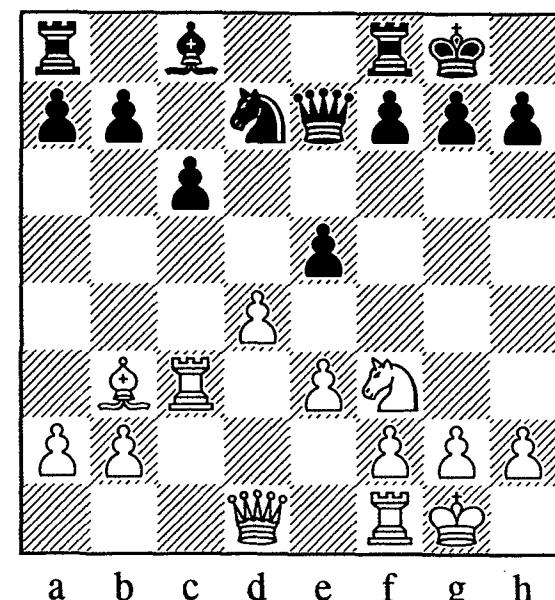
20.b4 ♕a6 21.a3±

Black has no counterplay and White will press for the rest of the game.

12...e5

The standard break.

13.♗b3



This is a good prophylactic answer. Again Black has a choice:

13...exd4 14.exd4

White quickly develops a strong initiative on the kingside.

14...♗f6 15.♗e1 ♘d6 16.♗e5 ♗d5

It is wise to block the dangerous diagonal.

16...♗f5 17.♗xf7! ♘xf7 18.♗xf7† ♔xf7

19.♗b3† ♔f8 20.♗xb7 ♘b8 21.♗xa7 ♘xb2
22.♘xc6 ♘b4 (22...♘xc6 23.♗a3†) 23.♗ec1±
Kolehmainen – Versili, corr. 2005.

And 16...♗e6 17.♗xe6 fxe6 18.♗b3 ♗d5
19.♗g3 ♘e7 20.♗d3 ♘ae8 21.♗g4 ♘f7
22.♗ge4± with strong pressure, Kacheishvili – Petrosian, Batumi 2003.

17.♗g3 ♘e6

On 17...♗f5 18.♗f3 ♘g6 19.h4! is strong:
19...♗f6 and now the novelty 20.♗g5! renews
the threat to play h5.

18.♗h5↑ ♘b4 19.♗e4 ♘d2 20.♗d3

White nicely combines active operations
with a positional grip.

20...♘ae8 21.♗e2 ♘f6 22.♗f3 ♘h6 23.♗xe6
♘xe6 24.♗xe6 fxe6

Skeels – Zielinski, corr. 2005.

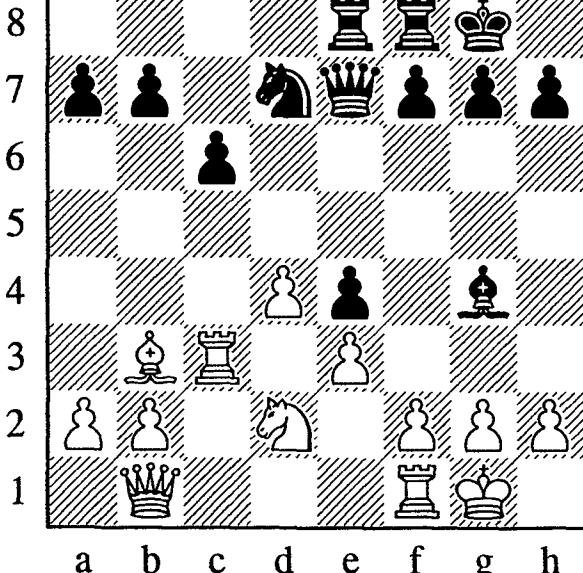
25.♗e2±

13...e4 14.♗d2 ♘f6 15.♗c5 ♘g4 16.♗b1
♗d7

16...♗e2 17.♗e1 ♘d3 18.♗c2 ♘xc2

19.♗xc2±

17.♗c3 ♘ae8



18.♗xe4!

A nice transition into a favourable endgame.

18...♗xe4 19.♗xe4 ♘xe4 20.f3 ♘xf3 21.gxf3
♘ee8 22.d5! cxd5 23.♗xd5 b6 24.♗c7

Keeping the structure with 24.e4 was also
possible.

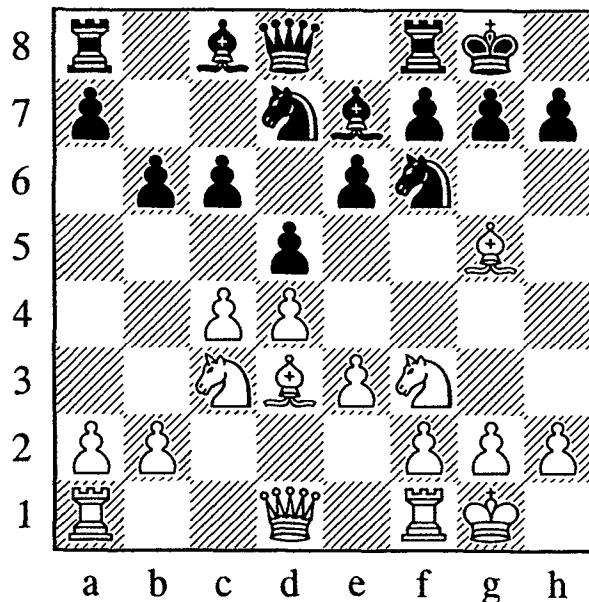
24.♗f6 25.♗b3 ♘xe3 26.♗xa7 g5

Lobron – Fahnenschmidt, Germany 1993,

Now 27.♕c4± would have secured White's advantage.

If Black instead keeps the tension and just tries to finish development with:

8...b6



He will still be pushed on the defensive.

9.cxd5

A good moment to release the tension: White gets much freer piece play.

9...cxd5

The typical QGD move 9...exd5 also fails to equalize: 10.♘c2 ♘b7 11.♗ad1!? h6 12.♗h4 ♘e8 13.♗fe1± ♘e4 14.♗xe4 ♘xh4 15.♗h7† ♘h8 16.♗f5 ♘e7 17.e4! dxe4 18.♗xe4 ♘g8 19.♗e5± ♘f6? 20.♗xf7! ♘xf7 21.♗xf6 gxf6 22.♗b3† ♘f8 23.♗h3 ♘b4 24.♗xh6† 1–0
R. Krueger – Gschwendtner, Bad Wiessee 2002.

10.♗c1 ♘b7 11.♗e2

The position is reminiscent of an Exchange Slav. White's admittedly slight positional pressure is very hard to meet in practice.

11...♗e4 12.♗f4 ♘df6 13.♗e5

Also strong is 13.♗b5 ♘e8 14.♗c2 ♘c8 15.♗fc1 ♘xc2 16.♗xc2 ♘a8 17.♗b3 a6 18.♗c7 ♘xc7 19.♗xc7 ♘d8 20.♗c2± Solari – Arias Duval, corr. 2003.

13...♗xc3 14.♗xc3 ♘c8 15.♗fc1 ♘xc3 16.♗xc3 ♘d6 17.♗g5±

White has the c-file and attacking chances; Black now blundered:

17...♗xe5? 18.dxe5 h6 19.exf6 1–0

Black resigned in Lerner – Auvinen, Helsinki 1992, realising that ...hxg5 is answered by ♘h5.

The waiting move 8...♗e8 does not make much sense, as White has even better waiting moves himself in ♘c1 or ♘c2.

The typical Slav idea 8...dxc4 9.♗xc4 b5 is covered in the next note, because here it makes good sense to include the moves ...h6 and ♘h4.

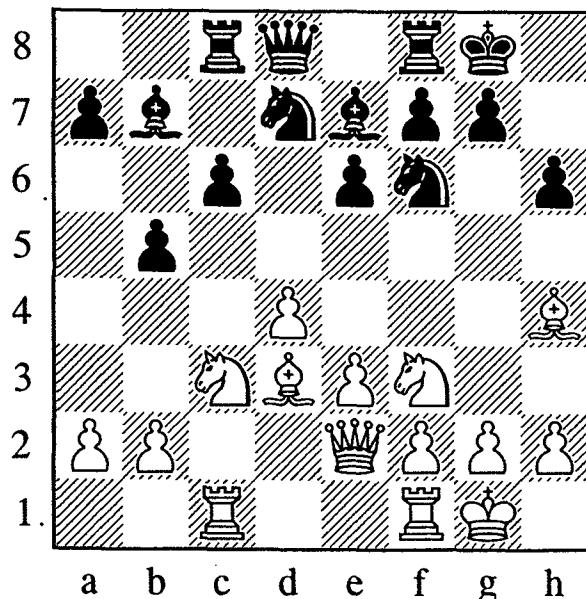
9.♗h4 dxc4 10.♗xc4 ♘d5

Interesting is the modern interpretation:

10...b5?! 11.♗d3 ♘b7

On 11...a6 12.a4 is annoying. Then 12...b4 13.♗xf6 ♘xf6 14.♗e4± or 12...♗b7 13.♗c1 ♘c8 14.♗e2± and it is not easy for Black to get in the freeing move c6-c5.

12.♗c1 ♘c8 13.♗e2



13...b4 14.♗a4 c5

14...♗a5 15.b3 c5 quickly turned out badly for Black: 16.♗b5 ♘c6 17.♗xc6 ♘xc6 18.dxc5 ♘xc5 19.♗e5 ♘c7 20.♗xc5 ♘xc5 21.♗xc5 ♘xc5 22.♗xf6 gxf6 23.♗d7 ♘d8 24.♗xf6† ♘g7 25.♗h5† ♘f8 26.♗c1 And a pawn was lost, Ki. Georgiev – Houska, Gibraltar 2008. Black's play could be improved, no doubt,

but besides this, 16. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ is also promising for White.

15. $\mathbb{Q}a6!$

Black managed to play ...c5, but after this fine positional move the light-squared bishops will be exchanged and White will gain some entry points on the queenside.

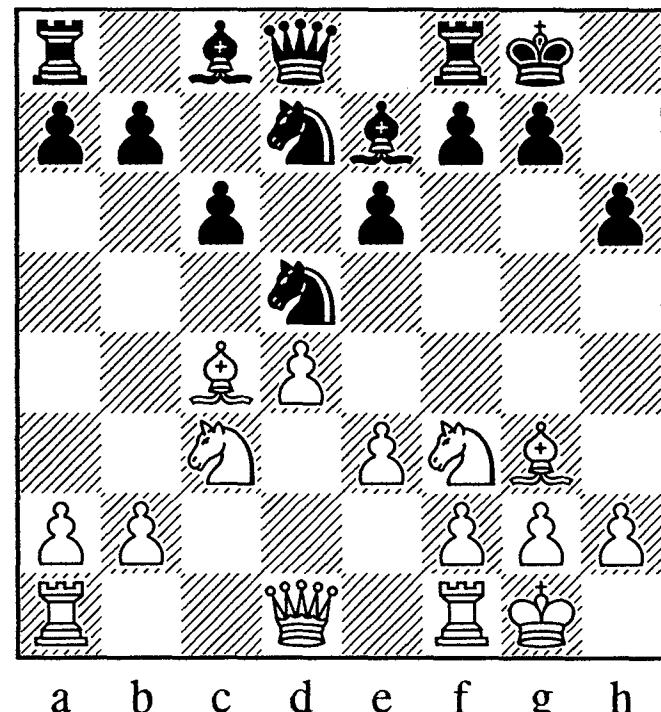
15... $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$
18. $\mathbb{B}c2\pm e5$

Not 18... $\mathbb{B}cd8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}c6 f5$ 20. $dxc5\pm$ Goldin – Barua, Reno 1999. 20... $\mathbb{B}c8$ 21. $\mathbb{W}b5 \mathbb{Q}dxc5$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xb4$

19. $\mathbb{B}fc1 exd4$ 20. $exd4 \mathbb{B}fe8$ 21. $h3 \mathbb{Q}b8$ 22. $\mathbb{W}d3 \mathbb{Q}d7$

Kazhgaleyev – Gurevich, Dresden 2008, and now 23. $\mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{Q}xd2$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xd2$ would win the c-pawn for nothing.

11. $\mathbb{Q}g3?$



The normal move is 11. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 12. $\mathbb{B}c1 \mathbb{Q}xc3$ 13. $\mathbb{B}xc3$ when we have a position from the QGD Lasker variation. Here too White has good chances to achieve a small advantage, but why not go for more? With more space it is common knowledge that it is good to keep many pieces on the board, that's the logic behind 11. $\mathbb{Q}g3$. See Game 45 for the conclusion.

Game 45

Halkias – Mchedlishvili

Yerevan 1999

1. d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2. c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3 \mathbb{Q}b4\ddagger$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{Q}e7$

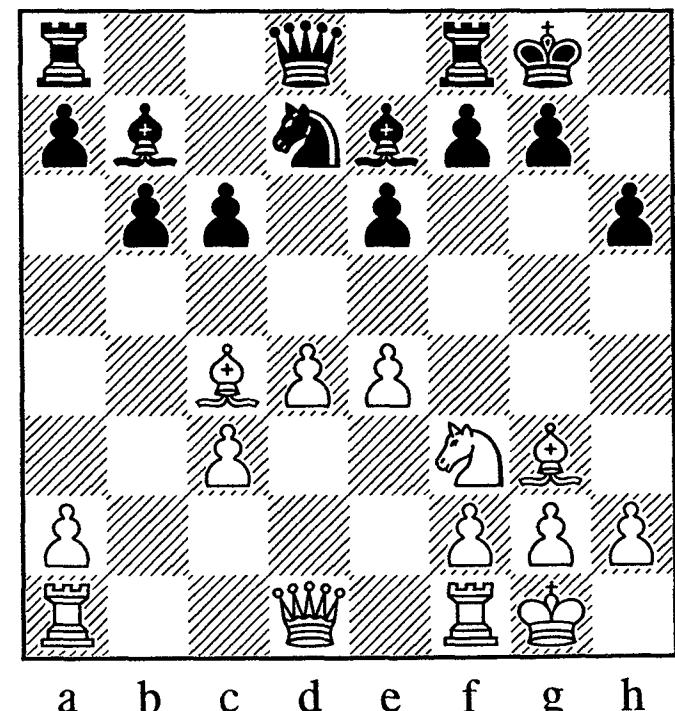
An odd move order for this book, but it will return to normal service shortly: both sides lose a move this way.

5. $\mathbb{Q}c3 d5$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}g5 \mathbb{Q}bd7$ 7. e3 0–0 8. $\mathbb{Q}d3 c6$
9. 0–0 h6 10. $\mathbb{Q}h4 dxc4$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xc4 \mathbb{Q}d5$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}g3 \mathbb{Q}xc3$

Standard. The inclusion of the moves 12... $\mathbb{Q}7f6$ 13. $\mathbb{B}c1$ doesn't solve anything. 13... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 14. $bxc3 \mathbb{Q}e4$ (14... $c5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}e5 \mathbb{Q}e4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}f4 cxd4$ 17. $cxsd4 \mathbb{Q}g5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xg5 \mathbb{W}xg5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d3 \mathbb{Q}d6$ 20. $\mathbb{B}c7\pm$ Gruenberg – Elseth, Novi Sad 1990) 15. $\mathbb{Q}e5 \mathbb{Q}a3$ 16. $\mathbb{B}c2 \mathbb{W}a5$ 17. $\mathbb{W}d3 \mathbb{Q}d6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}b3 b6$ 19. $\mathbb{B}b1 \mathbb{Q}a6$ 20. $c4 \mathbb{B}fd8$ 21. $e4\pm$ Gilles – Lautenbach, corr. 2004, and the space began to be felt.

13. $bxc3 b6$ 14. e4 $\mathbb{Q}b7$

White's strong centre gives him the better chances. Often the space superiority can be transformed into a direct attack.



15. $\mathbb{B}e1$

Natural development. White has also had success with 15. $\mathbb{W}d3$ b5 (15... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 16. $\mathbb{E}ad1$ c5?! 17. d5± Ruether – Soergel, Bavaria 2001) 16. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ c5 17. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ c4 (17... cxd4 18. e5 g6 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ with an attack) 18. $\mathbb{W}e2$ a5 19. $\mathbb{E}ad1$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 20. $\mathbb{E}fe1$ ± Agdestein – Adianto, Novi Sad 1990.

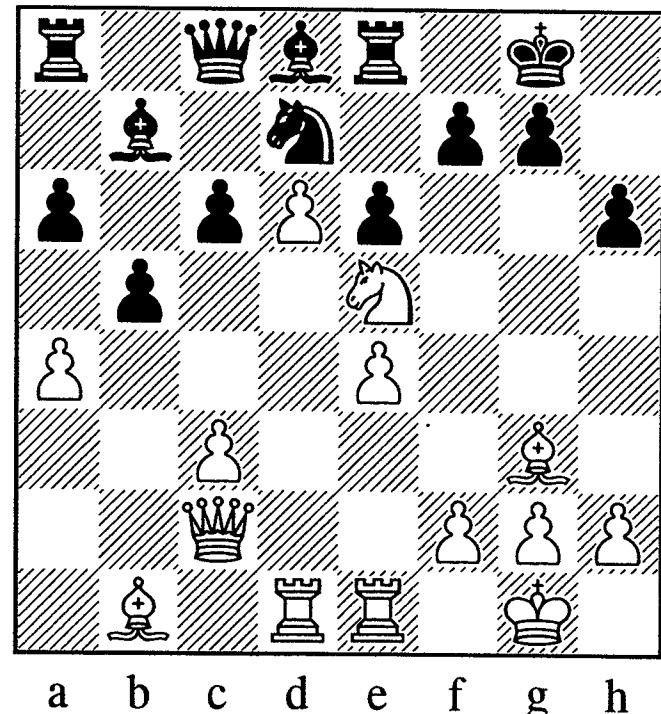
15... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 16. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 17. $\mathbb{E}ad1$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 18. a4

This takes more space and prevents some of Black's active operations on the queenside. Additionally, White prepares the bishop manoeuvre $\mathbb{Q}c4-a2-b1$ when the canon is pointing directly at the black king. It is clear that White has won the opening duel.

18... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ b5 20. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ a6 21. d5!

Opening lines: the queen eyes h7.

21... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 22. d6 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$



24. $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$

A spectacular finish.

24... $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 25. e5 $\mathbb{Q}f8$

Apparently everything is covered.

26. d7!

But now the knight is forced back again and the white queen can enter the position and decide the outcome.

**26... $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 27. $\mathbb{W}g6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 28. $\mathbb{W}h7$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$
29. $\mathbb{Q}g6$**
1–0

Conclusion: With 11. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ (okay, 12. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ with this game's funny move order) White keeps the pieces on the board. It's simple and promising.

QGD Conclusion: Transposing to the old solid QGD is the same as accepting a slightly inferior game from the beginning. Black is close to equality in the various ...dxc4 lines. Close: yes! But still far away.

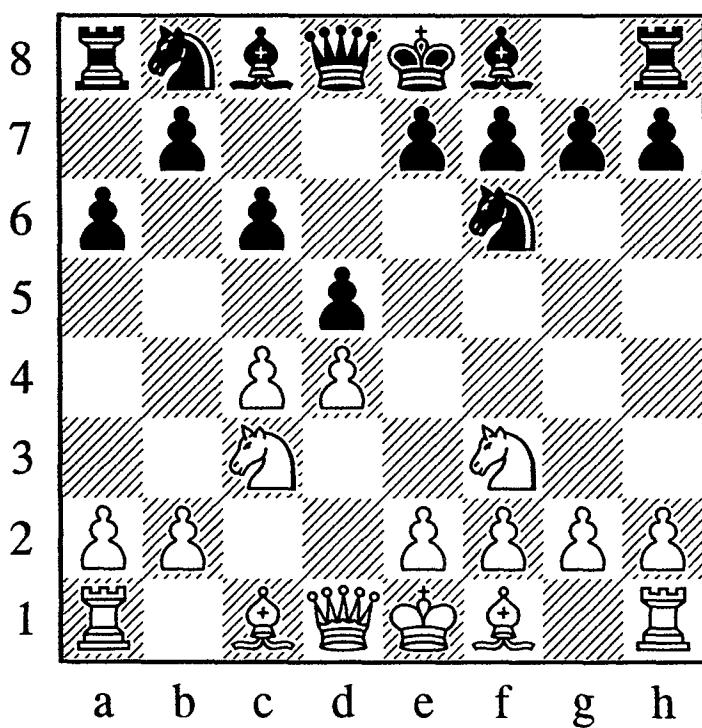
Chapter Conclusion: With 5. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ against the Semi-Slav White follows the strategy outlined for the entire book: swift and active development, and a preference for taking the centre should the opportunity arise. And it sure does. In the Botvinnik and Moscow variations Black puts all his money on early flank operations of a somewhat suspicious nature. White gets the centre and a lot of dynamic possibilities to attack the far-advanced black pawns. Especially the Botvinnik seems in crisis, but White can also expect an initiative against the popular Moscow, although it is never totally clear. If Black tries to chicken out with a Cambridge Springs or classical Queen's Gambit, then White will come out on top anyway, often with a slight but long-lasting positional edge.

So with 5. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ you really send a message to your opponent. Let's continue the brilliant Radiohead song quoted in the beginning of the chapter: "This is what you get, this is what you get, this is what you get, this is what you get, when you mess with us."

Chapter 5

The a6-Slav

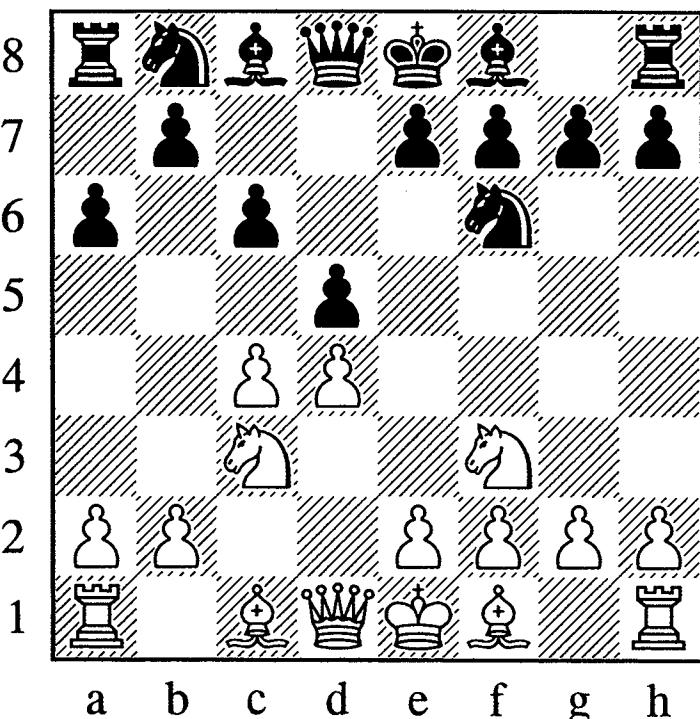
This whole world is wild at heart and weird on top
– Lula, *Wild at Heart*



1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 a6

The 5...b6 Variation	page 165
The 5...♗g4 Variation	page 166
The 5...g6 Variation	page 169
The 5...♗f5 Variation	page 171
The 5...♗bd7 Variation	page 175

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Qf3 Qf6 4.Qc3 a6



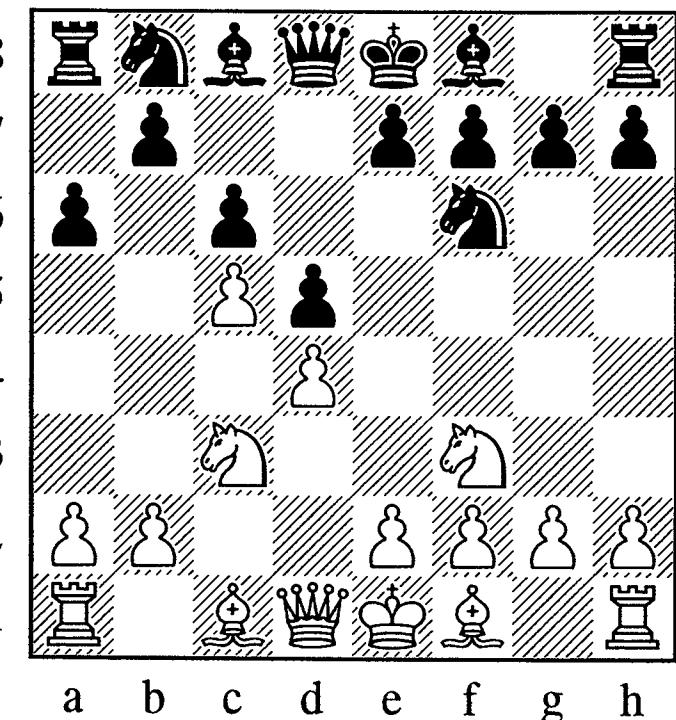
This is post-modern chess. Although the point of the little move ...a6 is obscured by the clouds, no one is surprised any longer when it appears on the board. The a6-Slav was introduced into top level tournaments back in the 90s and, despite several attempts to refute it, this provocative sideline has become a well established and respected opening enjoying enormous popularity at all levels. Its name still varies though. From just the basic facts like "The a6-Slav" to "The Chebanenko Slav", celebrating its Moldavian roots, to the eccentric but meaningful "The Chameleon" because Black adopts very different set-ups depending on what White does.

It is true that the further course of the game is still very much in disguise, but we can make a few statements about the nature of the position after ...a6. The light-squared bishop is always an issue in the Queen's Gambit. Here, after the preliminary move ...a6, Black is ready to develop the bishop to f5 or g4 because he no longer needs to fear $\mathbb{W}b3$ by White as it can now be answered by the cool ... $\mathbb{B}a7$. Also, given the chance Black can consider advancing with ...b7-b5 grabbing space on the queenside. Or he can take on c4 in typical Slav style and protect the pawn with ...b5. On the kingside

there are different scenarios too. Black can play ...e7-e6 and get a kind of Queen's Gambit Declined position or he can play ...g7-g6 and fianchetto the dark-squared bishop with some resemblance to the Gruenfeld.

Korchnoi once gave 4...a6 a question mark and called it a waste of time. Instead you could see it as an intelligent waiting move forcing White to show his hand. Well I won't make you wait any longer. Here is what we play!

5.c5



A principled move. White closes the position and takes away many of Black's dynamic possibilities. With 5.c5 White gains more space and highlights a clear defect of the move ...a7-a6: the weakening of b6. Another principled move is 5.a4, which effectively stops all Black's expansions on the queenside, and lately White has had success with 5.e3 b5 6.c5!? as well. Generally speaking, White can expect a little positional plus in most of the lines, but Black has a very solid structure and his flexible position gives good possibilities for counterplay.

After 5.c5 the position is strategically very demanding. Black can hope to attack the white centre with ...b7-b6 or ...e7-e5 at an appropriate moment, and he is also free to develop the problem child from c8 to f5 or

$g4$, either at once or perhaps a little later. Translated to moves, we will examine in turn $5...b6$, $5...Bg4$, $5...g6$ and end with the two most common tries, $5...Bf5$ and $5...Bbd7$.

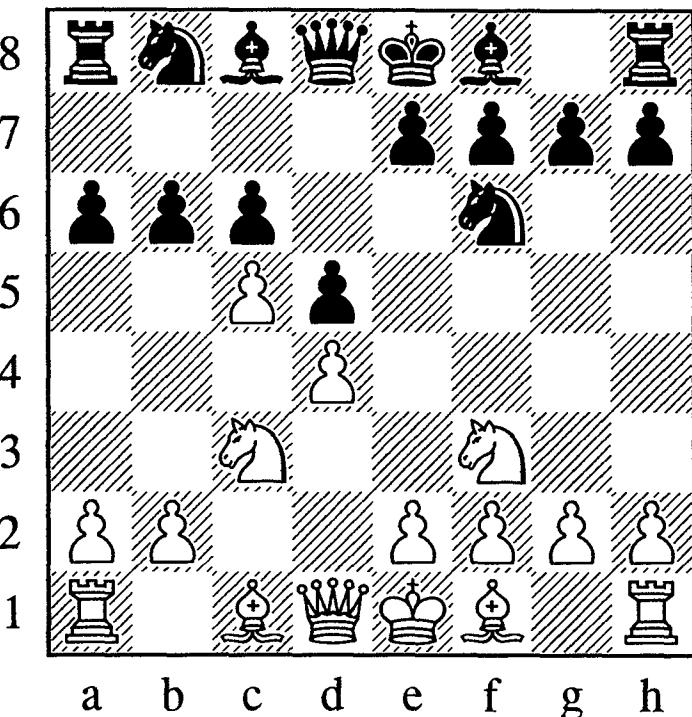
The 5...b6 Variation

Game 46

Soln – Crepan

Slovenia 1999

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Bf3 Bf6 4.Bc3 a6 5.c5 b6



Trying to "exchange" the hole on b6.

6.cxb6 $\mathbb{W}xb6$

Often Black plays the flexible:

6... $Bbd7$

The idea is not to follow up with ... $Bxb6$ because the knight is somewhat misplaced there, but rather to quickly play ...e6 and ...c6-c5, and thereby get rid of the backward c-pawn. Play can continue:

7.e3 e6

7... $\mathbb{W}xb6$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ g6 is not clever, as 9.b3 $Bg7$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}a3!$ emphasizes: 10... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 11. $\mathbb{W}c1$ and Black did not know how to get rid of

the pressure on e7, Inarkiev – Onoprienko, Moscow 2008.

8. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ c5 9.0–0 $\mathbb{W}xb6$ 10.b3 $cxd4$ 11.exd4 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 0–0 13. $\mathbb{W}e2\pm$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$

With 13...a5 14. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{W}a7$ 15. $\mathbb{E}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ Black tries to simplify. Still 16. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{W}xa6$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xa6$ $\mathbb{E}xa6$ 18. $\mathbb{E}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 20. $\mathbb{E}fc1$ f6 21. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 22.f4 gave White a nice ending with good control in Kamsky – Navara, Baku 2008.

14. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{W}a7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{E}fc8$ 16. $\mathbb{E}ac1$

White has a good grip on the position and it is difficult for Black to find counterplay.

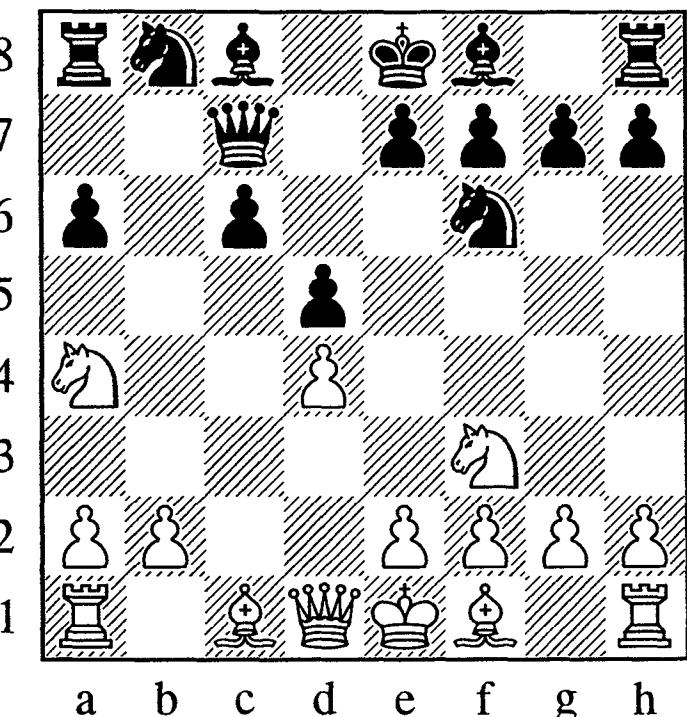
16... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 18. $\mathbb{E}c2$ $\mathbb{E}xc2$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xc2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 21.b4 a5?! 22. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 23. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 24.a3 $\mathbb{E}c7$ 25.f3 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xa5$ $\mathbb{W}xa5$ 27.bxa5±

With a pawn more, Koneru – Cramling, Russia 2008.

7. $\mathbb{Q}a4$

Very logical. White points his finger at the new hole on c5. A quiet move like 7.e3 was of course also playable.

7... $\mathbb{W}c7$



8.g3!

White plans $\mathbb{Q}f4$ to kick the black queen away and take even more control over the dark squares.

8... $\mathbb{Q}e4$

8... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}a7$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ e6 was played in Duriez – Braakhuis, corr. 2001, and now White could have continued with the forceful 11.f3 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 12.g4 $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 14.h4±.

8...e6 has not been played yet, perhaps because 9. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 11.a3 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 12. $\mathbb{W}c2$ looks positionally depressing for Black.

9. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10.0–0 e6 11. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}a7$

It was safer to exchange the dark-squared bishops with 11... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ but it would leave Black positionally inferior.

12. $\mathbb{Q}d2$

Removing the strong knight on e4.

12...f5

12... $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}fxd1$ dxe4 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ was absolutely horrible.

13. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ fxe4 14. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}h3!$

With Black's pieces diverted on the queenside, this attack on the lonely e6-pawn is very unpleasant. In fact Black can only protect the pawn with his king.

15... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 16.f3

Opening lines towards the black king and quickly creating decisive threats.

16... $\mathbb{Q}f6$

Or 16...exf3 17. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 19. $\mathbb{W}d3$ with overwhelming play.

17.fxe4 dxe4 18. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 19.e3 h5 20. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}c3$

Winning material.

21... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ c5 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 25. $\mathbb{W}b8$ $\mathbb{W}xb8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ cxd4 27.exd4 $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}c7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}c8$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}a7$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ h4

34. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xe7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$
37. $\mathbb{Q}d3\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ hgx3 39. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ gxh2#
40. $\mathbb{Q}xh2$

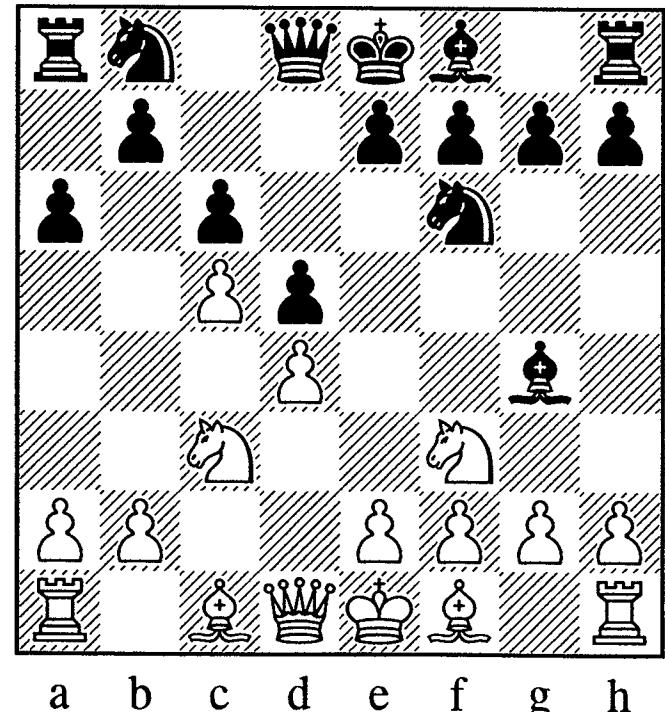
1–0

Conclusion: 5...b6 displays a kind of domino effect: whenever Black gets rid of one hole, a new one appears.

The 5... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ Variation**Game 47****Topalov – I. Sokolov**

Wijk aan Zee 2004

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ a6 5.c5 $\mathbb{Q}g4$



This looks dubious: Black provokes the knight to jump to a great square with tempo.

6. $\mathbb{Q}e5$

We say thanks.

6... $\mathbb{Q}h5$

The most natural, but Black has two other tries.

6... $\mathbb{Q}e6$

This seems rather clumsy and after:

7. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}d3!$

Black lacks space and has a peculiar bishop on e6.

8...g6 9.e3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0–0 11.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e4$

In a more recent game Black tried to improve with 11... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 15.bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 16.g4! $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 18.f4 f5 19.h3± Drozdovskij – Degtarev, Differdange 2008. White will have a small plus forever, with chances on both flanks. A good practical alternative was 12.f3?! to keep the pieces on the board.

12.f3 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 13.bxc3 f5 14. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 15. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}b3\pm$

This was great for White in Halkias – Degtarev, Hamburg 2005. White can double rooks on the b-file to begin with and later switch the attention to the kingside as well.

6... $\mathbb{Q}f5$

This is an active move, but after:

7.f3

The bishop is also exposed.

7... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$

7...g6 allows 8.e4 when 8...dxe4? 9. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ is too dangerous and 8... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ is simply good for White who will develop quickly and probably castle queenside.

8.g4 $\mathbb{Q}e6$

8... $\mathbb{Q}g6$? 9.h4 is awful.

9. $\mathbb{Q}d3$

Again keeping the pieces on the board and making the e6-bishop look funny.

9... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}e3$

In his book on the Chebanenko Slav, Bologan proposes 10. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ (10... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}f4$) 11. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 14. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{W}b8$ and Black is desperately trying to survive on the back ranks. He continues the analysis with 15.g5 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{W}xc8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}h3\pm$ which indeed looks

very convincing.

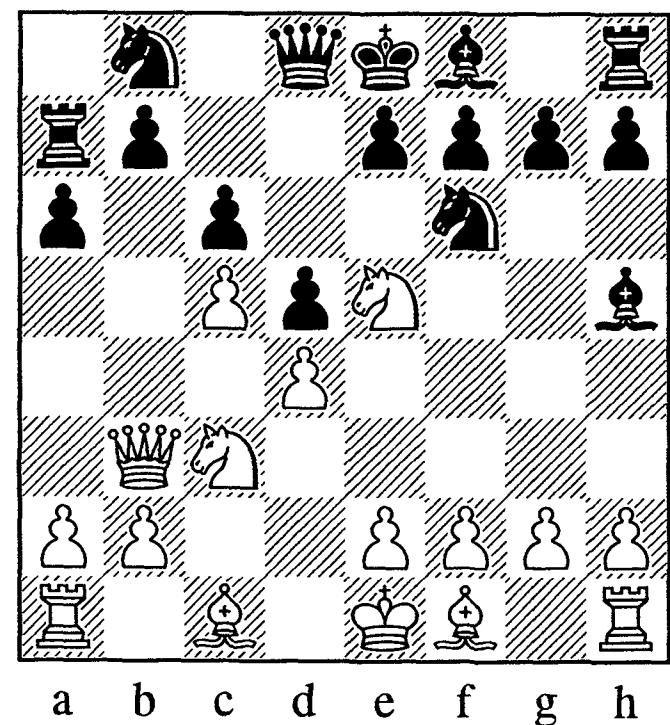
10... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ e6 12. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7$
14.0–0±

P.H. Nielsen – Agrest, Malmo 2004.

7. $\mathbb{W}b3$

This is always disruptive for Black, and most players tend to defend b7 with ... $\mathbb{Q}a7$. The rook looks really silly there, but it is a built-in paradox of the a6-Slav that this is mostly a cosmetic impression. Later the rook goes back and joins the battle. In the meantime it is out of play, sure, but we must remember that it actually is the white queen that is forcing the rook to take this awkward position, and the queen is not that great on b3 in the long run either. Quid pro quo. The alternative way to protect the pawn is ... $\mathbb{W}c8$, but that loses control over b6 and is not very flexible.

7... $\mathbb{Q}a7$



8.e4!

True to his style Topalov hits hard if he is given the chance. Okay, sometimes the Bulgarian star plays a little too wildly, but here the move is justified. A quieter approach like 8. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}d3\pm$ would give the typical small advantage based on space.

8...e6

If Black takes the bait with 8...dxe4 then 9.Qe2! is strong. After 9...e6 10.Qxh5 Qxh5 11.0–0 White's play has a nice flow and Black's pieces are rather badly coordinated – check out the rook on a7 and the knight on h5! 11...Qf6 (11...Wxd4?! 12.Qc4 is too dangerous.) 12.Qg5 Qe7 13.Bad1 0–0 14.Bf1 Qbd7 15.Qc4 Be8 16.h3 Qd5 17.Qxe7 Bxe7 18.Qxe4 Q7f6 19.Qed6± Iotov – Tzekov, Sunny Beach 2005. The control over d6 is more significant than over d5.

9.exd5 exd5 10.Qd3

Quick development. In a semi-open position like this the misplaced rook on a7 will be inconvenient for Black for a long time. It does not contribute to the fight for the open e-file, which White easily conquers.

10...Qbd7 11.Qf4 Qxe5 12.Qxe5 Qe7

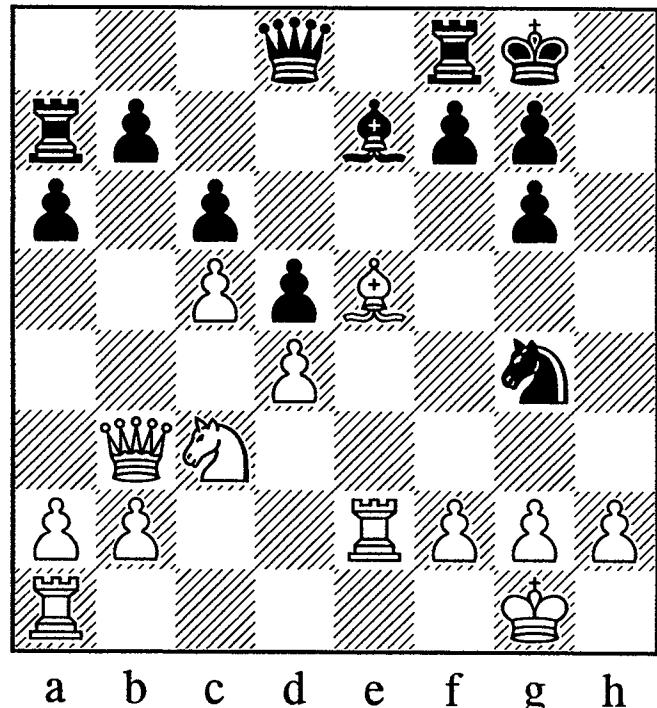
13.0–0 0–0 14.Bfe1 Qg6

Or 14...Qd7 15.Qc7! Wxc7 16.Bxe7 Wd8 17.Bae1 and the e-file gives White the upper hand, Svoboda – Karhanek, Stade Mesto 2004.

15.Qxg6 hxg6 16.Be2

Preparing to double rooks with a clear advantage. However Black's response gives new possibilities.

16...Qg4



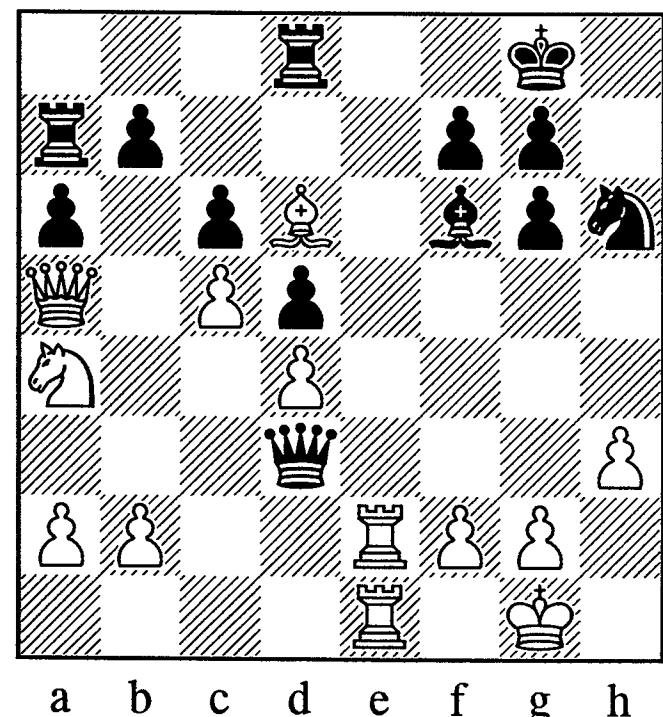
17.Wb6!

Using the vulnerable b6-square to penetrate Black's position.

17...Wa8

Voluntarily going to the corner just shows that something has gone wrong. The problem was that heading for the ending with 17...Wxb6 18.cxb6 Baa8 failed to the tactic 19.Qxg7.

**18.Qc7 Qf6 19.Qd6 Bd8 20.Qa4 Qh6
21.Wa5 Wc8 22.h3 Wf5 23.Bae1 Wd3**



Sokolov is desperately searching for counterplay and, unexpectedly, it is provided by Topalov: after his fine play he fails to reap the harvest.

24.Be8†

Convincing was 24.Qc7 Bf8 25.Qb6 Qf5 26.Qd7 and White is winning, e.g. 26...Baa8 27.Qxf8 Bxf8 28.Bd2 Wb5 29.Wxb5 axb5 30.Qe5 with an exchange more.

24...Bxe8 25.Bxe8† Wh7 26.Qe5

This lets the last chance slip away. 26.Qb6 Qxd4 27.Qb8 Qf5 28.Wel and the rook is trapped, but Black is very active.

26...Qxe5 27.dxe5 Wb1† 28.Wh2 We4

Black holds the draw.

29.g3 $\mathbb{W}c2$ 30. $\mathbb{K}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 31. $\mathbb{W}d8$ $\mathbb{Q}e3\#$
 32. $\mathbb{K}g1$ $\mathbb{W}d1\#$ 33. $\mathbb{K}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}f1\#$ 34. $\mathbb{K}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e3\#$
 35.fxe3 $\mathbb{W}e2\#$
 ½–½

Conclusion: After 5... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ the white knight jumps to e5 with tempo and secures White a firm initiative.

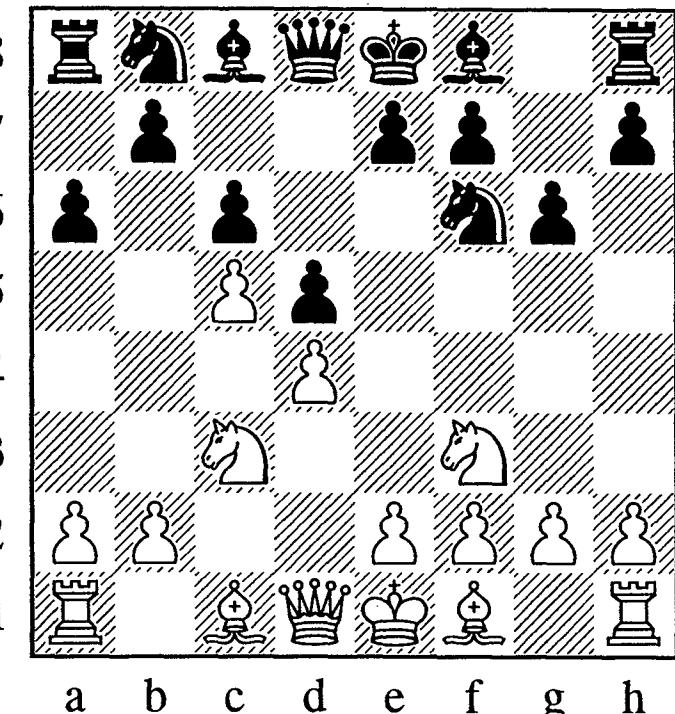
The 5...g6 Variation

Game 48

Eljanov – Kamsky

Russia 2008

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ a6 5.c5
 g6



Black wants to fianchetto his dark-squared bishop and then just castle. This gives White the opportunity to develop his dark-squared bishop to a very nice position reinforcing the control over the important e5-square.

6.h3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}f4$

With the little move h3 thrown in, White will not be bothered by ... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ by Black, because he then simply withdraws the bishop to h2.

7...0–0 8.e3 $\mathbb{Q}f5\text{!?$

An interesting fighting idea. The normal – and probably best – move is 8... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ which would transpose to the 5... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ line as covered in Game 50.

9. $\mathbb{W}b3$

This disturbs Black.

On 9. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ could follow 9... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 10.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ and Black will get in ...e7-e5 with good counterplay.

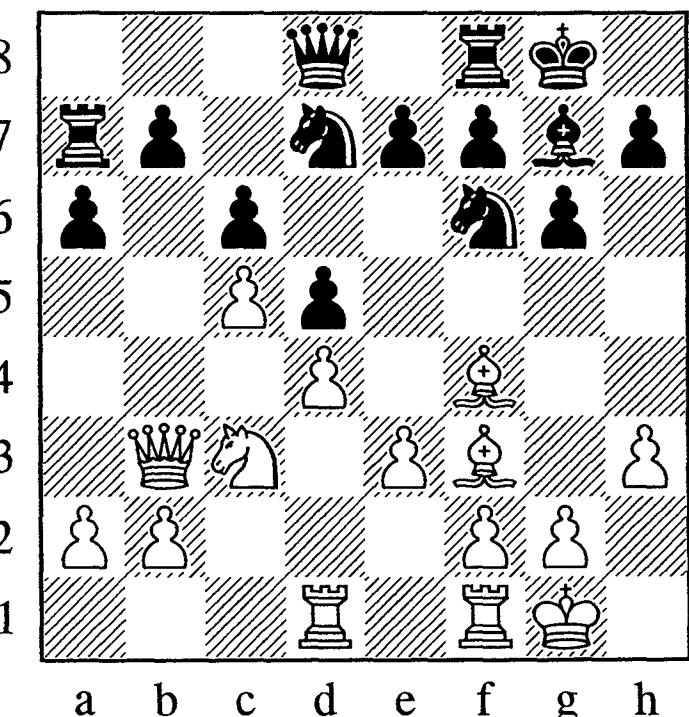
9... $\mathbb{Q}a7$

On 9... $\mathbb{W}c8$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ Eljanov suggested the following line in his notes to the game in *New in Chess Magazine*: 11. $\mathbb{Q}h4!$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ e5 13. $\mathbb{Q}d1\pm$ Black managed to play ...e7-e5, but his pieces stand clumsily and especially the knights are in each other's way.

10. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4\text{!?$

The key move. Kamsky wants to give up the bishop for the white knight. 10... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 11.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ was Mikhalevski – Lobzhanidze, Groningen 1996, when 12. $\mathbb{Q}fd1\pm$ looks normal.

11.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$



A critical position for the evaluation of the $\mathbb{Q}f5\text{-}e4\text{-}xf3$ idea.

13... $\mathbb{W}c8$

Kamsky refrains from the obvious plan: playing ...e7-e5.

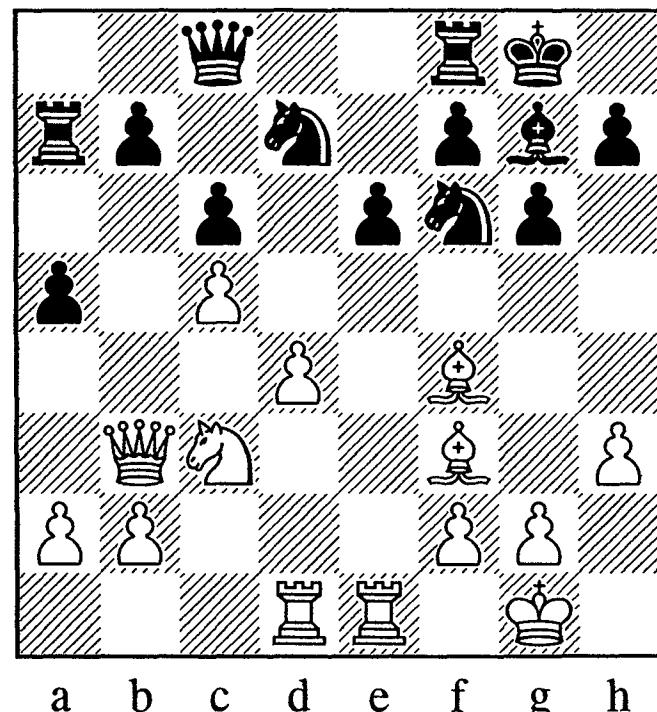
The natural move was 13... $\mathbb{E}e8$, but then White can advance first in the centre: 14.e4 dxe4 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ e6 16. $\mathbb{B}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}g3\pm$ with more space and the pair of bishops.

14. $\mathbb{B}f1$ e6 15.e4 dxe4 16. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$!

It is important to keep the knight. After 16. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ Black would be very solid and have the good d5-square for his knight.

16...a5

Not 16... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ when there is a big hole on d6.

17. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 

The opening stage is over and White can be satisfied. He has maintained the extra space he took with 5.c5 and in the meantime he has also gained the pair of bishops. Both factors are long-term assets. Here and now, a little manoeuvring game takes place and White's spatial superiority makes it easier for him to regroup, while it is evident that Black has more difficulties coming up with a plan.

17... $\mathbb{B}a6$ 18.a3 $\mathbb{B}d8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}df6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 22.h4!

The opening of the h-file could be an important achievement for White.

22... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 23.h5 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 24. $\mathbb{W}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 25.hxg6

A bit hasty: better was 25. $\mathbb{W}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 26. $\mathbb{W}e3\pm$.

25...hxg6 26. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd5?$

Somewhat surprisingly, White gives away the bishop pair, but the knight on d5 was strong and White can still make something out of the d6-outpost.

27...cxsd5 28. $\mathbb{Q}h4$

28. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ a4 29. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}d6\pm$

28... $\mathbb{B}f8$

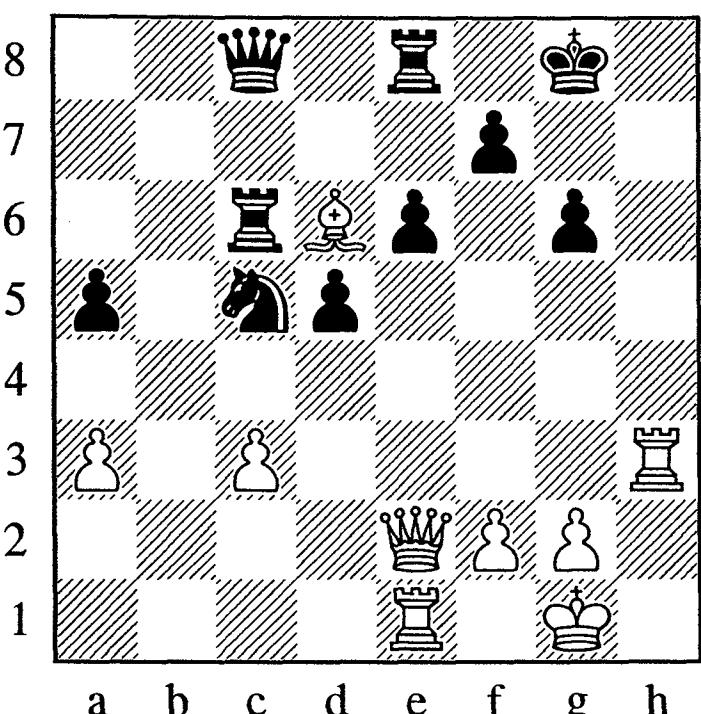
On 28... $\mathbb{E}e8$ comes 29. $\mathbb{Q}c3$.

29. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ b6

Black finally gets some counterplay.

30. $\mathbb{Q}e7$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ bxc5 32.dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}xc3??$

It is very risky to exchange the strong fianchetto bishop that protects the king. Better was 32... $\mathbb{B}d8$ 33. $\mathbb{B}c1\pm$.

33.bxc3 $\mathbb{B}c6$ 34. $\mathbb{B}d3!$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 35. $\mathbb{B}h3$ 

The positional advantage has led to a direct attack.

35...e5

Only move.

35... $\mathbb{E}xd6$ 36. $\mathbb{W}e5$ or 35... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ f6 37. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 38. $\mathbb{E}xe4$ $dxe4$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}xf6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 40. $\mathbb{W}f4\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 41. $\mathbb{W}e5\#$ and Black is mated.

36. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{E}xc5$ 37. $\mathbb{W}e3$ f6

37...f5 38. $\mathbb{W}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 39. $\mathbb{E}g3$ $\mathbb{E}e6$ 40. $\mathbb{E}b1$ and Black cannot defend against the inclusion of the second rook into the attack: 40... $\mathbb{E}c7$ 41. $\mathbb{E}b8!$ $\mathbb{W}xb8$ 42. $\mathbb{W}h7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 43. $\mathbb{W}h8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 44. $\mathbb{W}xb8$ and wins.

Finally, 37... $\mathbb{W}c6$ 38. $\mathbb{W}h6$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 39. $\mathbb{W}h7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 40. $\mathbb{W}h8\#$ $\mathbb{W}xh8$ 41. $\mathbb{E}xh8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 42. $\mathbb{E}xe5\#$ wins a whole rook.

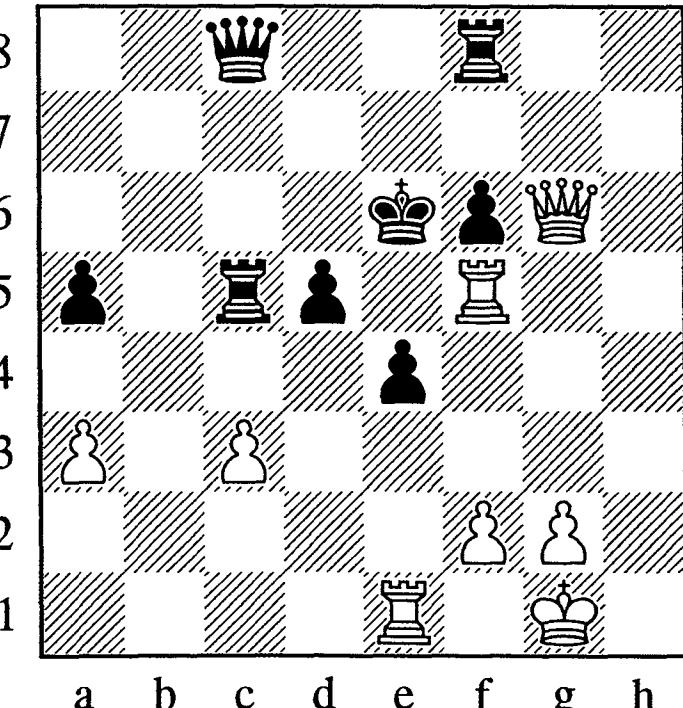
38. $\mathbb{W}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$

Or 38... $\mathbb{E}e7$ 39. $\mathbb{W}xg6\#$ $\mathbb{E}g7$ 40. $\mathbb{W}h5$.

39. $\mathbb{W}h7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 40. $\mathbb{W}xg6$ e4

Not 40... $\mathbb{E}g8$ 41. $\mathbb{E}xe5\#$! $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 42. $\mathbb{E}e3\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 43. $\mathbb{W}xf6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 44. $\mathbb{E}e7\#$ winning.

41. $\mathbb{E}h5$ $\mathbb{E}h8$ 42. $\mathbb{E}f5$ $\mathbb{E}f8$



43. $\mathbb{E}d1!$

With precise play Eljanov finishes the heavy piece attack in style. 43.f3 $\mathbb{E}xc3$ was not so clear.

43... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 44. $\mathbb{E}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 45.c4 $\mathbb{W}e6$ 46. $\mathbb{W}g3\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 47. $\mathbb{E}hxd5\#$ $\mathbb{E}xd5$ 48. $\mathbb{E}xd5\#$

1-0

Conclusion: 5...g6 gives White easy play. With 6.h3 and 7. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ White gets an active bishop and good central control which, in connection with his space advantage, will be felt for a long time.

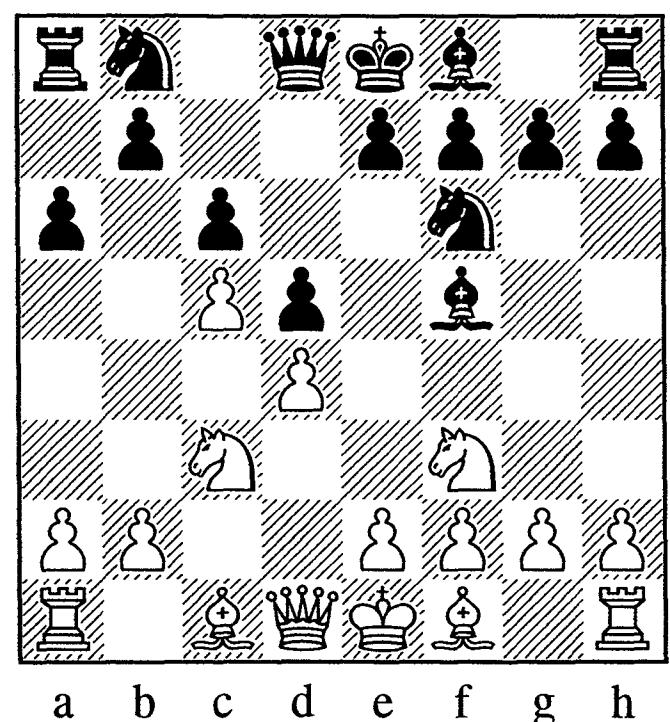
The 5... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ Variation

Game 49

Schandorff – Buhmann

Germany 2006

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ a6 5.c5 $\mathbb{Q}f5$



The most solid way. Black solves the problem with the light-squared bishop which often has an insecure future on c8, and always risks being locked out of the game. Furthermore 5... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ avoids immediate infighting, so both

sides can finish their development without too much concern. The extra space guarantees White a small plus in the ensuing middlegame but Black's structure is very solid and he has good chances to hold the balance.

6. $\mathbb{Q}f4$

Natural development, but 6. $\mathbb{W}b3$ to disturb Black on the queenside is also possible.

6... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 7. e3 e6

The great a6-Slav connoisseur Gata Kamsky has been experimenting with 7... g6 8. h3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$! with the point that 10. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ e5! gives good counterplay.

For example: 11. dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 14. exf4 $\mathbb{Q}xc5=$ Alekseev – Kamsky, Moscow 2007.

Or: 11. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ exd4 12. exd4 0–0 13. f3 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ gxf5 15. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ f4 17. 0–0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ And Black seemed okay in Mamedyarov – Kamsky, Moscow 2007.

Instead of 9. $\mathbb{Q}e2$, White should consider the sharp 9. g4! when White was somewhat better after 9... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 0–0 12. 0–0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 13. e4 dxe4 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ in Rusev – Diaz Nunez, Spain 2008.

In his new book about the Chebanenko Slav, Bologan proposes:

7... $\mathbb{Q}h5$

Play can continue:

8. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ f6

8... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ gives White easy play: 9. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 11. $\mathbb{W}xd3$ with a pleasant space advantage.

More stubborn is 8... $\mathbb{Q}hf6$ but again the simple 9. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 10. $\mathbb{W}xd3$ gives White a plus.

9. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ e5 10. $\mathbb{Q}h4!$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$

Not 10... $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 11. hxg3 $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xh7$.

11. $\mathbb{W}b3$

Bologan only analyses 11. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ hxg6 12. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ e4 14. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 15. fxg3 $\mathbb{W}c7$ which is absolutely fine for Black.

11... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 12. 0–0–0 $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 14. $\mathbb{W}c2$ b6 15. cxb6 $\mathbb{W}xb6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}g4$

White set up some annoying threats in Pappier – Riedener, corr. 2006.

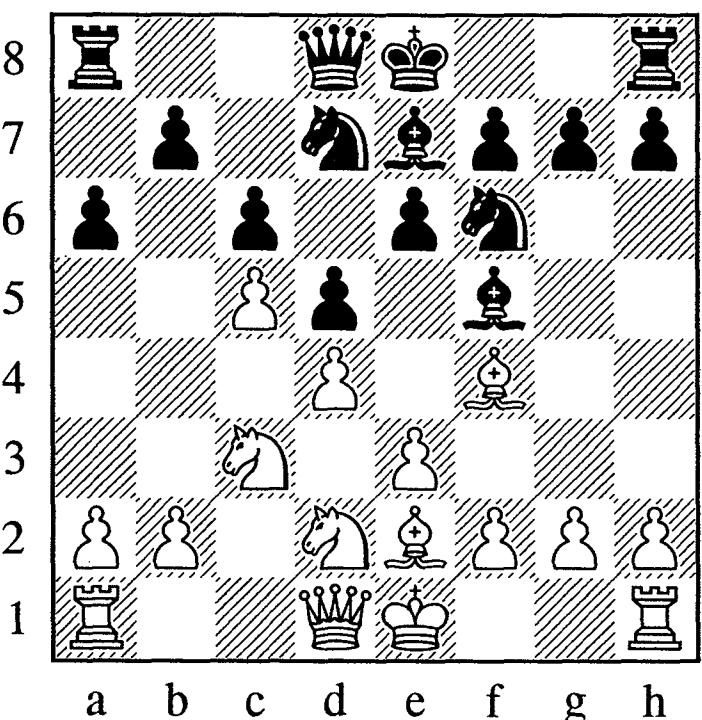
8. $\mathbb{Q}e2$

The most precise move order is 8. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ which would transpose to the game.

8... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

Because here Black had the extra option 8... $\mathbb{Q}e4$, which reduces the pressure by exchanging a knight.

9. $\mathbb{Q}d2!$



A promising way to regroup. It prevents the aforementioned ... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ idea and opens the way for a pawn storm on the kingside if Black should be so naive as to castle without taking precautions. Later White will probably expand on the queenside with b2-b4 and a2-a4, the knight can go to b3 and from there maybe even to a5, attacking the soft spot in Black's camp – b7.

9... $\mathbb{Q}g6$

Let's see what happens if Black castles into the storm:

9...0-0 10.g4! $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 11.h4

With a strong initiative.

11...h6 12.g5 hxg5 13.hxg5 $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$

Or 14... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 16. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{E}a7$ 17.0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 18. $\mathbb{E}dg1$ with good play for the pawn on the open g- and h-files. The white queen can come back via d1 and join the other forces.

15. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ fxg6 16. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{E}f5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$

18.f4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 19. $\mathbb{W}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xg6$

With an overwhelming position, Kopasov – Nikologorsky, St Petersburg 2006.

Also popular is 9...h6 10.0-0 0-0 11.b4 with play similar to the main game.

10.0-0

White could also keep the tension for another move with:

10.b4

When Black has to worry if it is safe to castle or if it is still answered by g2-g4. Here is a typical example of the resulting middlegame from my own practice:

10...h6 11.0-0 0-0 12. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$

14.a4 $\mathbb{Q}h4$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ $\mathbb{W}xh4$ 16.f4

Preventing ...e5 and keeping the space advantage.

16... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{E}fb8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 21. $\mathbb{E}ab1$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 22.e4! dxе4 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ f5 25. $\mathbb{Q}d6\pm$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 26. $\mathbb{E}be1$ $\mathbb{Q}cd5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 28. $\mathbb{W}e2$

Winning material.

28... $\mathbb{E}e8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ $\mathbb{E}xe8$ 31. $\mathbb{W}b2$ $\mathbb{E}d8$ 32.b5 axb5 33.axb5 $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 34. $\mathbb{E}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 35.g3 $\mathbb{E}c8$ 36.bxc6 bxc6 37. $\mathbb{E}b3$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 38. $\mathbb{E}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}dc3$ 39. $\mathbb{E}b4$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 40. $\mathbb{E}a7$ $\mathbb{E}d8$ 41. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e2\pm$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ 1-0

Schandorff – Rod. Perez, Istanbul (ol) 2000.

10...0-0 11. $\mathbb{E}c1$

A slightly unusual move. Of course I knew that the standard move is 11.b4, when Black answers 11... $\mathbb{W}c8$, but by putting my rook on c1, maybe Black would have second thoughts about placing his queen on the same file. At least it gave him something to think about and, with hindsight, he lacked this time for the crucial moves before the time control at move 40. Anyway, the position is closed and there is plenty of time to regroup and manoeuvre. But let's see the more direct 11.b4 as well.

11.b4 $\mathbb{W}c8$

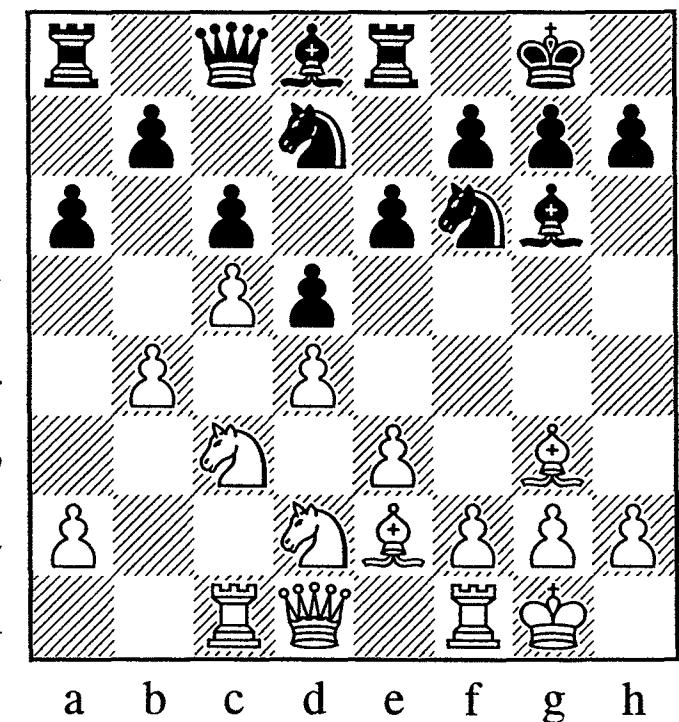
11... $\mathbb{E}e8$ could be an improvement.

12.a4 b6 13.cxb6

13.a5! b5 14.g4!? was played in a rapid game between Mamedyarov – Buhmann, Pardubice 2008. With the queenside closed, White expands on the kingside. This idea looks very promising.

13... $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 14.a5 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 15. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{E}fc8$ 17. $\mathbb{E}fc1$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$

With fine counterplay, Gyimesi – Kovacevic, Murska Sobota 2007.

11... $\mathbb{E}e8$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 13.b4 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 

A standard reaction. Black plans $\mathbb{Q}e7-d8-c7$ to exchange White's powerful bishop on g3.

14.♗b3

Piket once played 14.f4 to prevent Black's intended bishop exchange, but his own bishop on g3 looked rather artificial. 14...b6 15.cxb6 ♜xb6 16.♗a4 ♜b7 17.♗b3 ♜d8 18.♗c3 ♜e7 19.♗c5 ♜xc5 20.bxc5 ♜d7= Piket – I. Sokolov, Amsterdam 2000. Black has the freeing move ...♗e4 whenever he likes.

More natural is 14.a4 but with 14...e5 15.b5 axb5 16.axb5 exd4 17.exd4 ♜c7 Black solved most of his problems in the blitz game Grischuk – Movsesian, Moscow 2008.

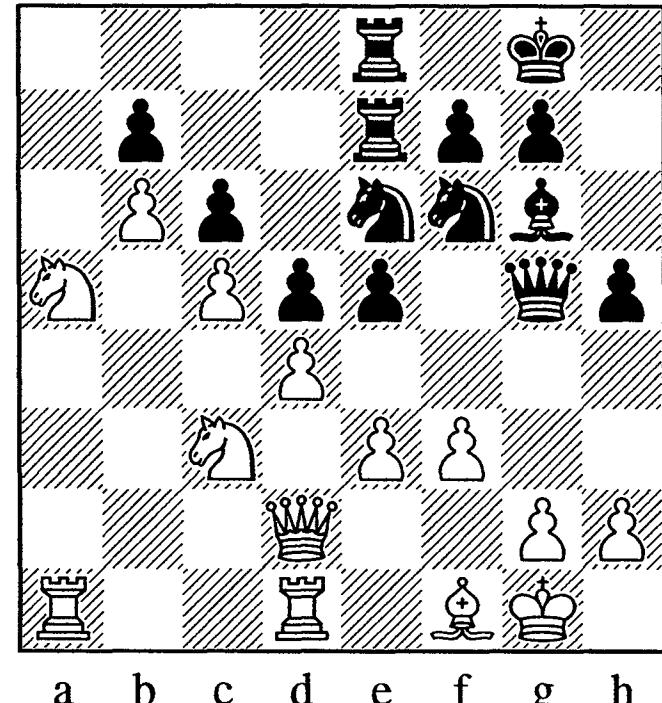
14...♜c7 15.♜xc7 ♜xc7 16.f3!?

Another practical decision, just like 11.♗c1. I allow Black to play ...e6-e5 because it leads to complicated play with chances for both sides. The standard move is 16.f4 and after 16...♗e4 the position is about equal, but it would have been much more difficult for me to play for a win.

**16...e5 17.♗d2 h6 18.♗f1 ♜e7 19.a4 ♜f8
20.b5 axb5 21.axb5 ♜ae8 22.b6!**

Fixing the b7-pawn, which can later be attacked by ♜a7 and ♜a5.

**22...♝c8 23.♝a1 ♜f5 24.♝a5 ♜g5 25.♝ed1
♝e6 26.♝f1 h5**



Black has his trumps on the kingside. The position is highly unclear and both players were drifting into time trouble.

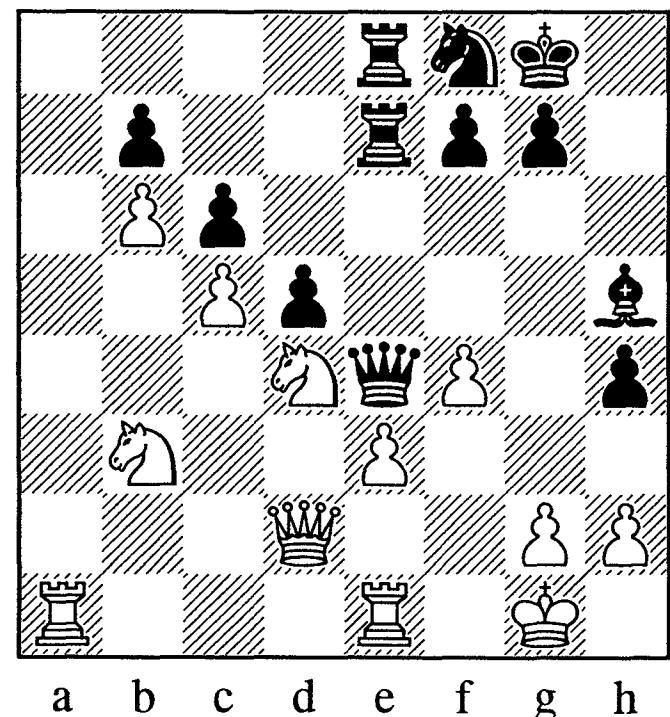
27.♗e2 h4 28.♗b3 ♜h5?!

Misplacing the bishop. Black had a good chance with 28...h3! when the obvious 29.g3 runs into the spectacular 29...♜c2! with the nasty point 30.♗xc2 ♜xe3† 31.♔h1 ♜xf3† 32.♔g1 ♜g4 winning.

29.dxe5 ♜xe5 30.♝ed4 ♜f8?!

Black is losing track, but it was not so easy anymore. A model variation is 30...♝xd4 31.♝xd4 ♜xe3† 32.♝xe3 ♜xe3 33.♝f5 ♜3e5 34.♝d6 ♜b8 35.♝a7 ♜e7 36.♝a6! where the importance of fixing b7 is highlighted.

**31.♝e1 ♜g5 32.f4 ♜g6 33.♝d3 ♜e4 34.♝xe4
♜xe4**

**35.♜c2!**

Trapping Black's queen and forcing a good ending where the weakness on b7 really can be felt.

35...♜xc2 36.♝xc2 ♜g6 37.♝cd4 ♜d7

Or 37...♝xe3 38.♝xe3 ♜xe3 39.♝a7 ♜e7 40.♝xc6.

38.♝a7 ♜f6 39.f5 ♜h5 40.♝a5 ♜xe3

41. $\mathbb{B}xe3$ $\mathbb{B}xe3$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{E}e1\#$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{B}d1$
44. $\mathbb{Q}f3!$

With control.

Not so convincing was 44. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}g4\#$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5\#$.

44... $\mathbb{Q}e4\#$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ h3 46. g4! $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 48. b7 $\mathbb{B}b1$ 49. $\mathbb{B}a8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 50. b8= \mathbb{W} $\mathbb{B}xb8$ 51. $\mathbb{B}xb8$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 52. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 53. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$

White is winning: the rook is superior to the knight which lacks a secure outpost.

53... $\mathbb{Q}e5\#$ 54. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 55. $\mathbb{B}e8$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$
56. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ g5# 57. $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 58. $\mathbb{B}c8$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$
59. $\mathbb{B}xc6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 60. $\mathbb{B}g6$ g4# 61. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ d4
62. $\mathbb{B}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 63. $\mathbb{B}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 64. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 65. f6
 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 66. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}xh2\#$ 67. $\mathbb{Q}f4$

1-0

Conclusion: 5... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ is a very solid way to play for Black: with the clever manoeuvre $\mathbb{Q}e7-d8-c7$ Black neutralizes most of the pressure. Still White can use his extra space on the queenside to push for the point.

The 5... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ Variation

Game 50

Shirov – Bologan

Germany 1993

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ a6 5. c5 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$

The mainline. Black fights for the important e5-square. Generally if he can achieve the break ...e7-e5 then he is happy.

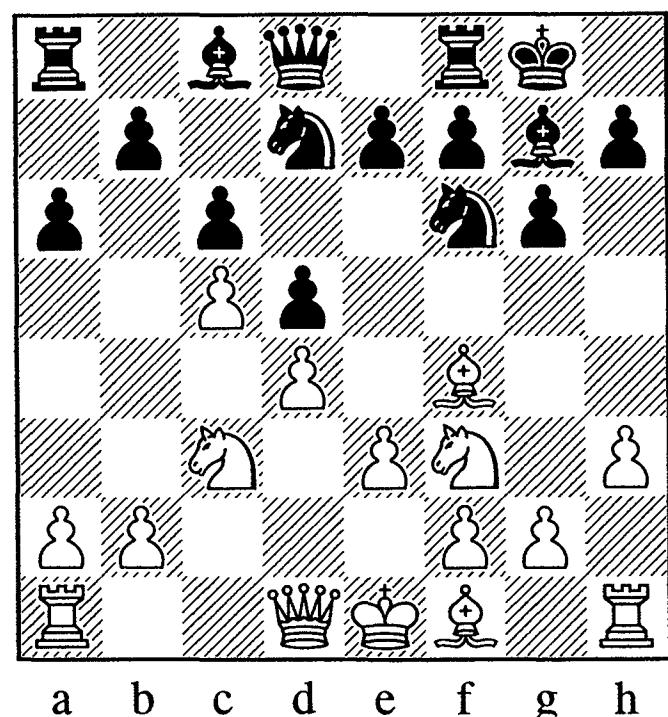
6. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ g6

The classical approach. These days it has almost completely been replaced by 6... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ which we will examine in the next game.

7. h3

Giving the bishop a retreat on h2.

7... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 8. e3 0-0



The starting position of this old variation. Many roads leads to Rome, and in this particular game Bologan actually chose the move order 5...g6 6. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 7. h3 0-0 8. e3 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ as discussed earlier in Game 48. In the beginning of the history of the a6-Slav these ...g6-setups were quite common, but they are rather passive and lately attention has switched to more direct and forcing lines. However we could be witnessing a comeback of ...g6 because the position is still a hard nut to crack for White, at least theoretically. In practical play, though, he scores very well. The distinct space advantage and the good bishop on f4 gives at least a slight positional plus.

9. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8!$

This deep manoeuvre shows the potential in Black's position. He wants to continue ... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ and ... $\mathbb{B}e8$ followed by the desired thrust ...e7-e5. Other moves are somewhat inferior, but let's check the main alternatives.

9... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 10. 0-0 e5

10... f5 secures the knight. A good way to play for White was shown in the following game:

11. $\mathbb{Q}c1 \mathbb{E}e8$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}a4 e5$ 13. $dxe5 \mathbb{W}e7$ 14. $b4 \mathbb{Q}xe5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}b6 \mathbb{E}b8$ 16. $a4 h6$ 17. $b5 axb5$ 18. $axb5 \mathbb{Q}g5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d4\pm$ With strong pressure in Mikhalevski – Roussel, Las Vegas 2006.

11. $\mathbb{Q}xe5 \mathbb{Q}xc3$ 12. $bxcc3 \mathbb{Q}xe5$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xe5 \mathbb{Q}xe5$ 14. $dxe5 \mathbb{E}e8$ 15. $\mathbb{W}d4 \mathbb{W}e7$ 16. $f4 f6$ 17. $exf6 \mathbb{W}xe3\ddagger$ 18. $\mathbb{E}f2 \mathbb{W}xd4$ 19. $cxd4 \mathbb{E}f8$ 20. $g4 \mathbb{E}xf6$ 21. $\mathbb{E}b1\pm$

With a better ending for White, Bareev – Burmakin, Elista 1995. Huebner suggests 21. $\mathbb{Q}d3 \mathbb{E}e6$ 22. $\mathbb{E}f3$, restraining Black, as even better in his ChessBase analysis.

9... $b6$ 10. $cx b6 \mathbb{W}xb6$ 11. $\mathbb{W}c2 c5$ 12. $0-0 cxd4$ 13. $exd4 \mathbb{Q}b7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}a4 \mathbb{W}a7$ 15. $b4\pm$ Movsziszian – Foisor, Lorca 2001.

9... $\mathbb{E}e8$ 10. $0-0 \mathbb{Q}f8$ 11. $b4 \mathbb{Q}6d7$

This is another way to get in ...e7-e5.

12. $\mathbb{W}d2 e5$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xe5 \mathbb{Q}xe5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe5 \mathbb{Q}xe5$ 15. $dxe5 a5$

Or 15... $\mathbb{E}xe5$ 16. $e4$ with an initiative.

16. $a3 \mathbb{W}e7$ 17. $f4 \mathbb{E}d8$

17... $f6$ 18. $e4\pm$

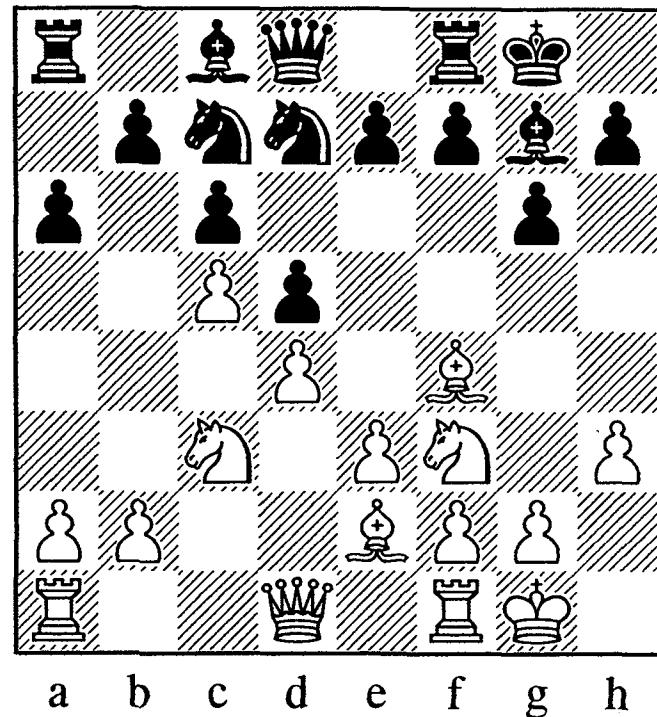
18. $\mathbb{E}ad1$

18. $\mathbb{Q}d3\pm$

18... $axb4$ 19. $axb4 \mathbb{W}h4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f3 \mathbb{Q}e6$ 21. $\mathbb{E}a1$

White kept the extra pawn in Izeta – Burmakin, Cappelle la Grande 1998.

10. $0-0 \mathbb{Q}c7$

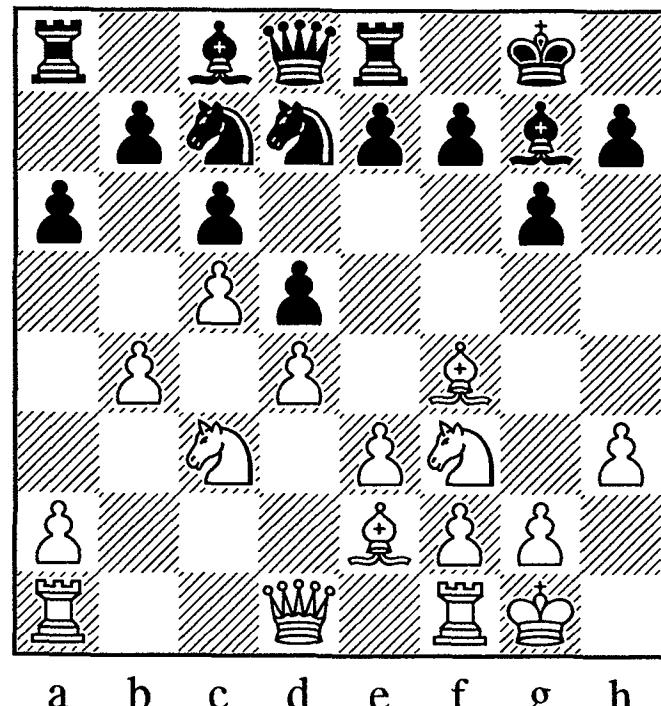


11. $\mathbb{b}4$

The normal move, but a brand-new try was 11. $\mathbb{E}e1\!?$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 12. $e4 dxe4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xe4 \mathbb{Q}d5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ which looks quite interesting. After 14... $b6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}c4!$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 16. $\mathbb{W}d2 h6$, Rusev – Arnaudov, Athens 2008, White could have secured his big advantage with 17. $\mathbb{E}ac1$. 14... $\mathbb{Q}7f6$ must be better, but even here White seems on top.

The sophisticated 11. $\mathbb{Q}a4 \mathbb{E}e8$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ should be met by the standard thrust 12... $e5$ when 13. $\mathbb{Q}b6 \mathbb{Q}xb6$ 14. $cx b6 \mathbb{Q}e6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe5 \mathbb{W}xb6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xg7 \mathbb{Q}xg7$ 17. $\mathbb{W}d2 \mathbb{Q}f5$ 18. $b4 \mathbb{Q}d6$ 19. $\mathbb{W}c3 \mathbb{Q}f5$ was okay for Black in Eljanov – Dovzik, Simferopol 2003.

11... $\mathbb{E}e8$



12. $\mathbb{W}d2$

This leads to a slightly better position, but one that Black should be able to hold.

There is an alternative to stir up some more complications:

12. $\mathbb{Q}g5\!?$

Pinning the e-pawn.

12... $a5$

12... $f6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}h4 e5$ 14. $dxe5 g5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}g3 fxe5$ 16. $e4\! d4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c4\ddagger \mathbb{Q}h8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}a4 \mathbb{Q}e6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe6 \mathbb{E}xe6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{Q}f6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}b6 \mathbb{E}b8$ 22. $\mathbb{E}e1 \mathbb{W}e8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}dc4\pm$ This looks to me

like a horrible King's Indian, Franic – Samovojska, Makarska Tucepi 1995.

13.a3 b6 14.cxb6 ♦xb6 15.♔b3 ♦a6

Nicely solving the problem with the bishop.

16.♕xa6 ♕xa6=

Hulak – Ibragimov, Djakovo 1994. Instead White could keep the tension with 14.♔c2 with an edge.

12...e5 13.♕xe5 ♦xe5 14.♕xe5 ♦xe5

15.dxe5 a5

15...♗xe5 16.e4 a5 will transpose.

16.a3

The automatic answer. Instead 16.♕a4 axb4 17.♕b6 ♕b8 18.f4 f6 gives Black excellent counterplay.

16...♗xe5 17.e4 axb4

17...♔f6!? 18.f4 ♕e8 19.e5 ♔h4 P. Horvath – Burmakin, Balaguer 2005, was an interesting attempt by the great a6-Slav expert Vladimir Burmakin. Black seems fine. One of his possibilities is ...♔xh3 and if White takes back there is a perpetual check.

18.axb4 ♕xa1 19.♕xa1 ♔f6 20.♕d1

Instead 20.exd5 ♕xd5!= was Gelfand – Shirov, Linares 1994.

20...dxe4 21.♔d8† ♔xd8 22.♕xd8† ♕e8

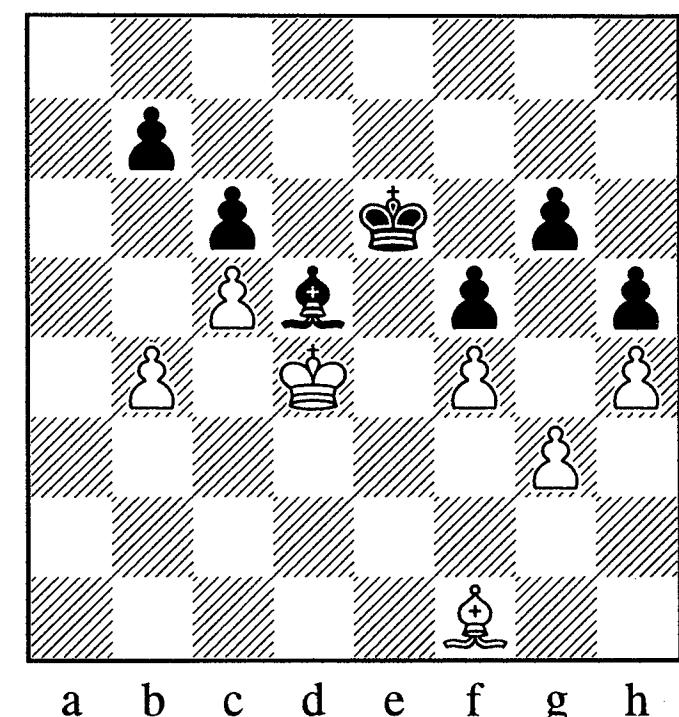
23.♕xe8† ♦xe8 24.♕xe4

A fairly simple ending has been reached. With more space and good bishop vs. bad, White has some winning chances but objectively it should just be a draw.

24...♔e6 25.f4 ♦c7 26.♕c3 ♦d5?

A little too cooperative, but easy to understand: Bologan believes that the bishop ending is a dead draw. But a bad bishop issue is always tricky. In a later game Black played 26...♔g7 27.♔f2 h6 28.♔e3 f5 and eventually held, Izeta – Magem, Zaragoza 1994.

27.♕xd5 ♕xd5 28.♔f2 f6 29.♔g4 f5 30.♔e2
♔f7 31.g3 ♔e6 32.♔e3 ♔g2 33.♔c4† ♔d5
34.♔f1 h6 35.h4 h5 36.♔d4



36...♔h1 37.b5! cxb5 38.♕xb5 ♔c6 39.♔c4†
♔f6?

39...♔e7 40.♔e5 is unpleasant, but it is not easy to make progress for White because the pawn ending 40...♔f3 41.♔d5 ♕xd5 42.♔xd5
♔d7 is just a draw: 43.♔d4 ♔d8 44.♔c4 ♔c8
45.♔b5 ♔c7

40.♔d5!

Now it just wins.

40...♕xd5

There is no salvation in 40...♔e7 41.♔xc6
bxcc6 42.♔e5.

41.♔xd5 ♔e7 42.♔e5 ♔d7 43.♔f6 ♔c6
44.♔xg6 ♔xc5 45.♔xf5 b5 46.♔e6 b4
47.f5 b3 48.f6 b2 49.f7 b1=♔ 50.f8=♔†
♔c4 51.♔f4† ♔c3 52.♔e5† ♔d2 53.♔xh5
♔b6† 54.♔f7 ♔c7† 55.♔g6 ♔e1 56.♔f3
♔d6† 57.♔f5 ♔d7† 58.♔f4 ♔d6† 59.♔g4
♔e6† 60.♔f5 ♔g8† 61.♔h3
1–0

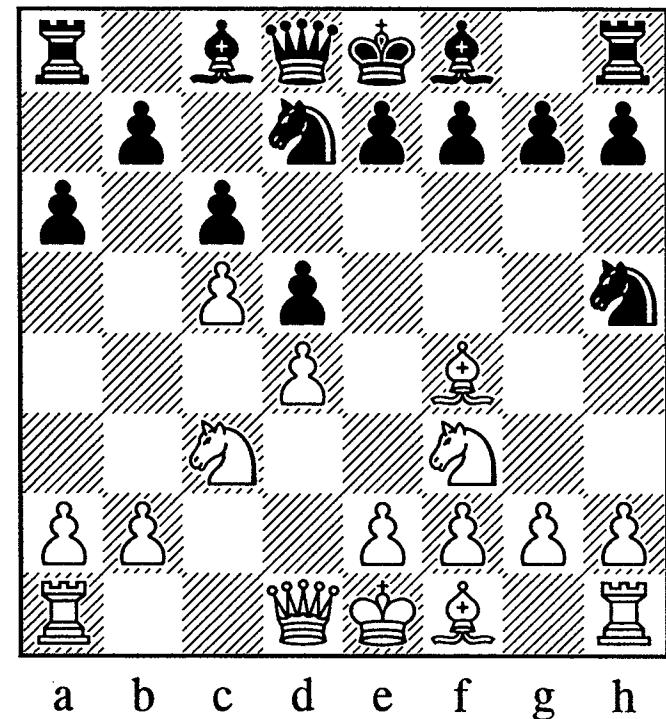
Conclusion: 5...♗bd7 followed by ...g6 is a solid set-up for Black, but again White's extra space should count for something.

Game 51

Krasenkow – Laznicka

Ostrava 2007

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 a6 5.c5
♗bd7 6.♗f4 ♘h5**



The sharpest and most popular choice.

7.♗d2!?

A new and rather intriguing concept, but the other moves are also interesting.

For a long period White just played:

7.e3 g6 8.♗d3

8.h4!? is an ultra-modern move that leads to double-edged play.

8...♗g7 9.0–0 ♗xf4

If 9...0–0 then 10.♗g5.

10.exf4 0–0

When the f4-pawn gave extra control over e5. Then a cunning way of regrouping for Black changed players' views. Let's see an example from my own catalogue:

11.♗d2 ♗e8 12.♗fe1 ♗c7 13.g3 ♗f8

The new plan: Black prepares ...♗g4 and ...f6 to get in ...e5 after all.

14.♗e3

However the last word may not have been said yet. Bologan proposes the new move 14.♗g2!? to be able to play h2-h3 and thereby prevent the annoying ...♗g4: 14...f6 15.h3! ♗e6 16.♗c2 ♗d7 17.♗h1 White is better, so perhaps the 7.e3 variation will have another boost of popularity.

14...f6 15.♗ae1 ♗g4 16.♗h4 e5 17.fxe5 fxe5 18.dxe5 ♗xe5

Black was already better in Huebner – Schandorff, Germany 2003.

Also popular is saving the bishop:

7.♗d2 ♗hf6 8.♗c2

Here 8.♗c1 g6 9.h3 ♗c7 10.g3, with the idea ♗f4, gives White a small advantage.

8...♗c7 9.e4

A very direct way of playing, but maybe White is not strong enough to force matters.

**9...♗xe4 10.♗xe4 dxe4 11.♗xe4 ♗f6 12.♗c2
♗e6 13.♗e2 ♗d5 14.0–0 ♗xf3 15.♗xf3 e6**

Black was extremely solid in Krasenkow – Grabarczyk, Poland 2005.

Finally the finesse 7.♗g5 h6 8.♗d2 was recently met by 8...♗hf6 9.♗c2 ♗c7 10.e4 e5!? and the complications seemed okay for Black: 11.exd5 cxd5 12.b4 ♗e7 13.g3 0–0 14.♗g2 a5 White could not keep his structure intact in Navara – Bacrot, Baku 2008.

With 7.♗d2 White goes for quick development and active play, not minding giving up the pair of bishops.

7...b6

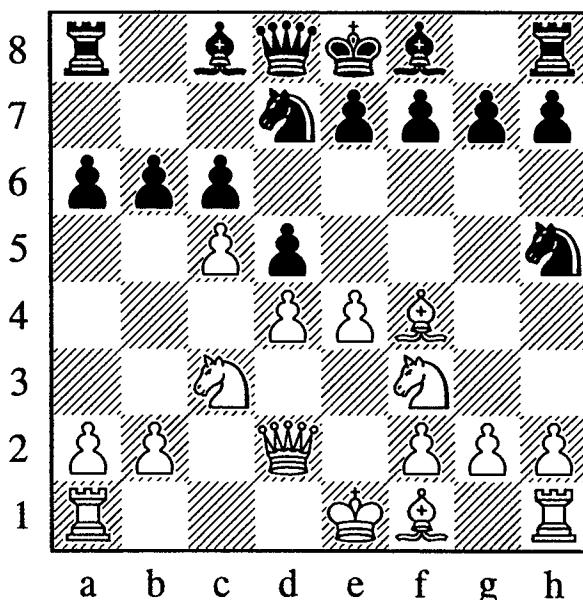
7...♗xf4 8.♗xf4 e6 9.e4 b6 will transpose to the main game.

8.e4

Active play is the theme.

8...♗xf4

Bacrot came up with:



8...bxc5!? 9.exd5 cxd4 10.Wxd4 c5! 11.Wd2 Qxf4 12.Wxf4 g6

And had some kind of Benoni-structure.

After:

13.Qe5 Qxe5 14.Wxe5 Bg8! 15.Qc4 Qg7
16.We2 Qd4 17.0-0 Qf8

He had lost the right to castle, but the strong dark-squared bishop gave him fine play, Mamedyarov – Bacrot, Baku 2008.

Instead of 13.Qe5, White could try the sharp:

13.d6!? exd6 14.0-0-0

With great compensation, for instance:

14...Qb7 15.Qc4 Wf6 16.Bh1† Qd8 17.Wxf6† Qxf6 18.Qe5 Qc7 19.Qxf7 Bg8 20.Qe6 Qe8
21.Qd5† Qxd5 22.Qxd5±

Probably Black should answer 13.d6 with the cool 13...e6!, when the d6-pawn in the middle of his position could be a nuisance but could also turn out to be a weakness. Black's bishop will again be strong on g7 and his rook can use the open b-file.

9.Wxf4 e6 10.exd5 exd5

An inaccuracy is 10...cxd5 because of 11.c6!
Qf6 12.Qd3 Qd6 13.Qe5 Wc7 14.0-0 0-0
15.Bac1 and White keeps the pawn on c6:
15...b5 16.Bc2 b4 17.Qa4 a5 18.Qc5 Qxc5
19.Bxc5 Qa6 20.Qxa6 Bxa6 Czakon – Aliavdin,
Rewal 2007, and now 21.f3+ takes away e4
from the black knight, when the strong passed
pawn ties Black down and gives White a big
long-term advantage.

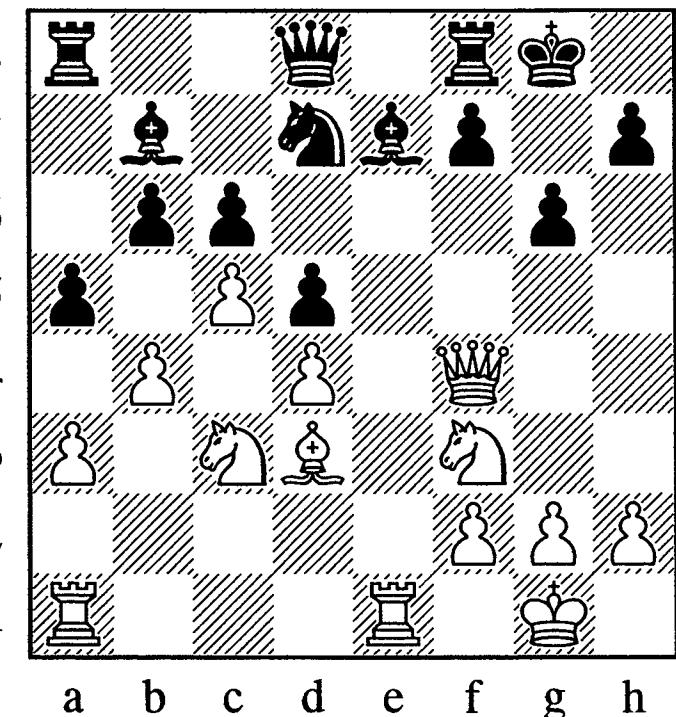
11.b4 Qe7 12.Qd3 0-0 13.0-0 a5 14.a3 g6

Or 14...Qf6 15.Wd6 Qb8 16.Wxd8 Qxd8
17.cxb6 Qxb6 18.b5 Qg4 19.Qa4 Qd8 20.Qe5
cxb5 Prohaszka – Bui Vinh, Budapest 2008,
when 21.Qxb5 Qf5 22.g4 Qe6 23.Qc5 would
give White strong pressure.

15.Bfe1

Krasenkow has also played more directly:
15.h4 Qb7 16.h5 Qf6 17.cxb6 axb4 18.axb4
Qxb6 19.Bxa8 Qxa8 20.Qa4 Qc7 21.Qc5
Qc8 22.Ba1± Krasenkow – Movsesian, Ostrava
2007.

15...Qb7



16.h4!

White is very active with the queen on f4 and he starts active operations on the kingside; Black lacks counterplay and has to sit tight.

16...Bf8 17.h5 Wb8 18.Wd2 axb4 19.axb4
Bxa1 20.Bxa1 Qf6 21.Qa4 Wc7?!

With 21...bxc5 22.bxc5 Qf8 Black would have had good chances to defend.

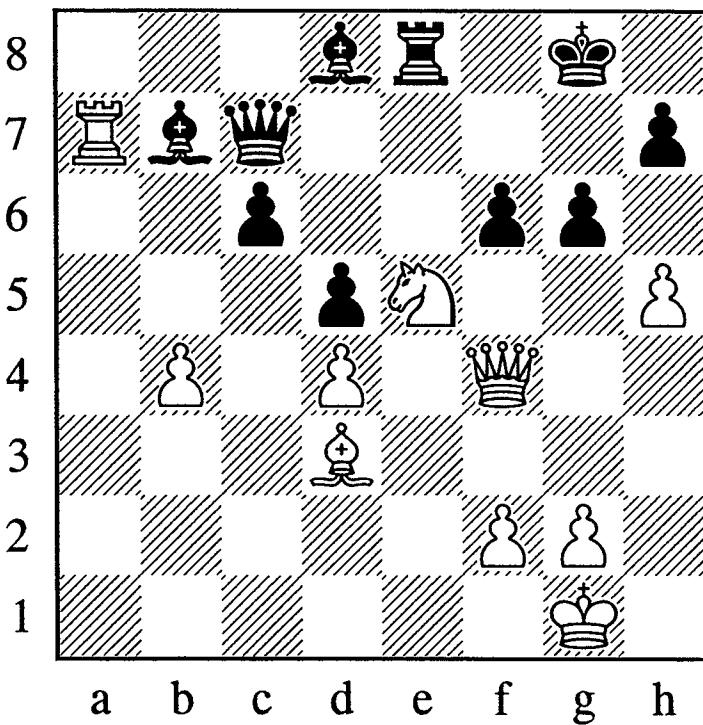
22.cxb6 Qxb6 23.Qxb6 Wxb6 24.Wf4

Back to this nice square.

24...Qd8?!

Removing a key defender: Better is 24...Qg7!

25.♘e5 ♜c7 26.♗a7! f6



27.hxg6!

This strong knight sacrifice blows Black away.

27...fxe5 28.gxh7† ♔h8 29.dxe5 ♜g7

30.♔a6!

The point. White immediately wins material back.

30...♝f8 31.♛e3 d4

**31...♝f7 32.e6 ♚e7 33.♕xb7 ♞xb7 34.♝a8
♛f6 35.e7 ♛xe7 36.♛xe7 ♞xe7 37.♞xd8†
♚xh7 38.♝c8** with a won rook ending.

32.♛e4 ♛f7

Or 32...♞c7 33.♞xb7 ♛xe5 34.♛xe5† ♚xe5 35.♞d3 and White holds onto the h7-pawn with an easy win.

33.♛xd4 ♛a2 34.e6† ♞f6 35.e7

1–0

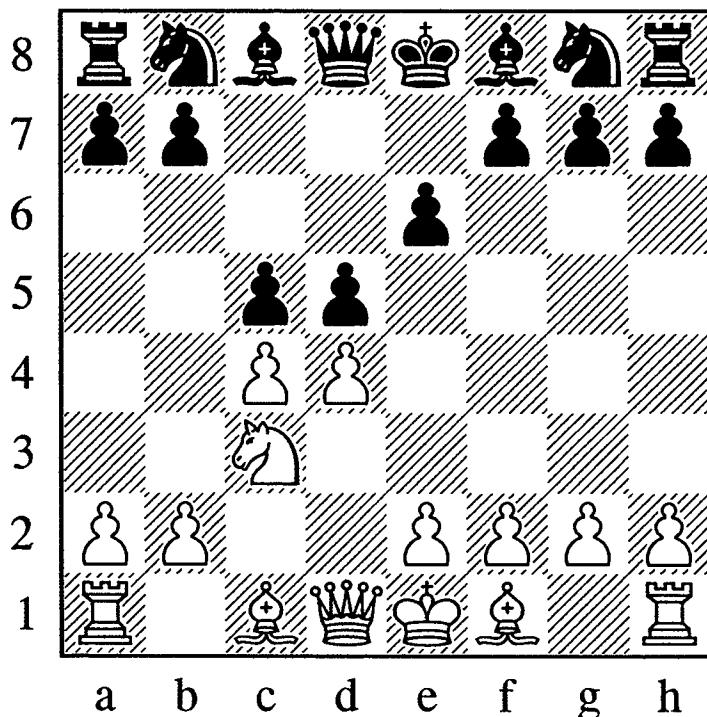
Conclusion: With 5...♝bd7 6.♕f4 ♜h5 Black seeks active counterplay at once. However, the little explored move 7.♗d2!? sets him completely new problems and gives White the initiative. The last word is Bacrot's Benoni-like approach, which should be studied carefully. Otherwise White could always return to 7.e3 or 7.♔d2. Both seem to lead to a safe edge.

Chapter Conclusion: The a6-Slav is a good fighting opening with many hidden layers. The logical 5.c5 leads to complicated play but is at the same time a rather simple antidote. It secures more space and makes White's position more pleasant in all variations.

Chapter 6

The Tarrasch

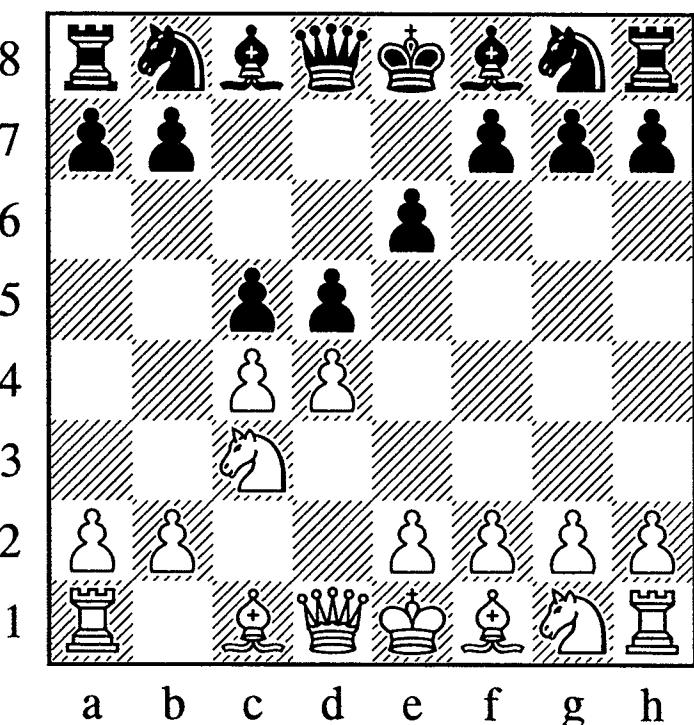
*You don't need a weatherman
To know which way the wind blows*
– Bob Dylan



1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5

Positional Play	page 182
Theory	page 187
The 9...c4 Variation	page 191
The 9...♗e6 Variation	page 194
The 9...cx d4 Variation	page 197

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5



The Tarrasch. Black plays actively from the beginning and does not mind getting an isolated queen's pawn, as he counts on quick development as dynamic compensation.

The problem with such an approach is that perhaps the activity and dynamic features will come to a halt and then all that is left is a weakness on d5 that just won't go away.

4.cxd5 exd5

The romantic 4...cxd4 is known as the Von Hennig-Schara Gambit. It has nothing to do with a traditional Tarrasch and is covered in the last chapter in the book, where strange gambits and other antiquities are stored.

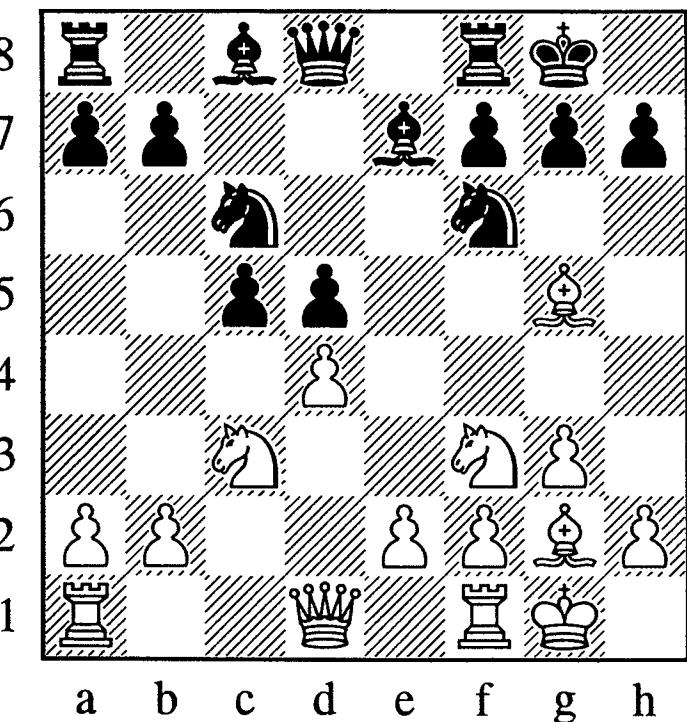
5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.g3

The most natural development: from g2 the bishop will exert pressure on Black's vulnerable d5-pawn.

6...♘f6 7.♗g2 ♘e7

Not much need be said – both sides complete development.

8.0-0 0-0 9.♗g5



By threatening the knight on f6, a defender of the d5-pawn, White renews his pressure against the soft spot in Black's camp. This is more or less the starting position of the Tarrasch. It has been heavily debated for many years without reaching a final verdict. The opening had its peak of popularity in the 80s when a young Garry Kasparov used it on his way to the World Championship. However, as we will soon see, it did not stand the test of Anatoly Karpov's persistent positional play in their first match. As a result, Kasparov abandoned the Tarrasch and the feeling that White is somewhat better lingered on. The opening is still a frequent guest in modern tournament play though, so it pays to have at least some idea of how to handle it. To show us, I have naturally chosen Karpov as our role model.

Positional Play

Anatoly Karpov was a master of maintaining and increasing small advantages. This is an integrated part of great positional play in general and of the following game in particular. The game also showcases the characteristic Tarrasch elements: the key to understanding the opening is of course the isolated d-pawn. From White's point of view this game nicely illustrates that the d-pawn is a structural

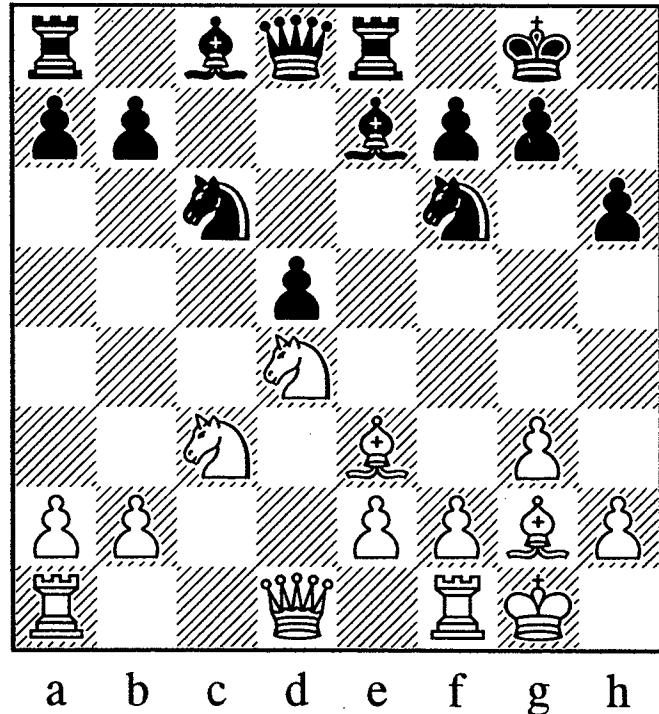
deficiency in Black's position that can influence the course of play from beginning to end.

Game 52

Karpov – Kasparov

Moscow (9) 1984

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.g3 ♘f6 7.♗g2 ♘e7 8.0–0 0–0 9.♗g5 cxd4 10.♗xd4 h6 11.♗e3 ♘e8

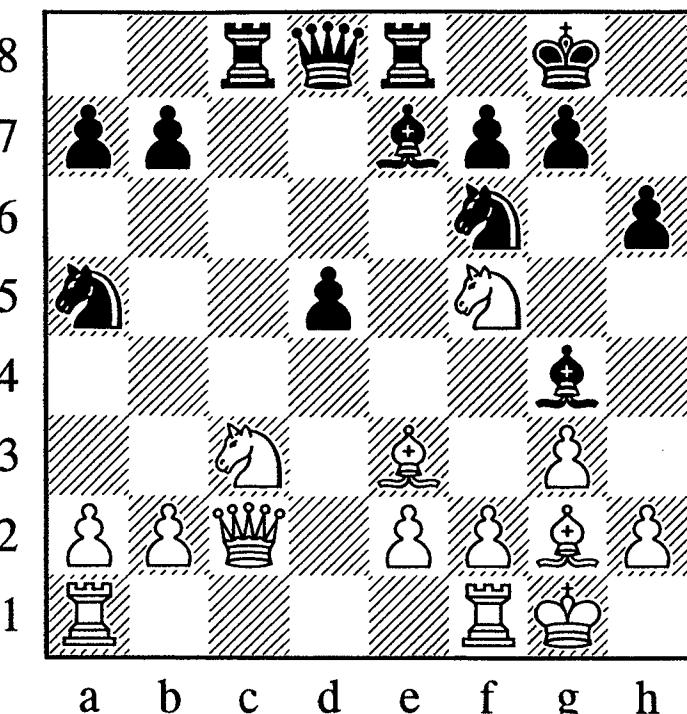


12.♗b3

An interesting move that was specially prepared by Karpov for the match. White puts d5 under pressure and forces Black to misplace his knight to kick the annoying queen back. For our repertoire I propose the even more aggressive queen sortie 12.♕a4, hitting the knight on c6. There will be much more said below when we get to the theory.

12...♘a5 13.♗c2 ♘g4 14.♗f5! ♘c8

Pinning the knight. Absolutely terrible was 14...♗xf5 15.♗xf5 when d5 is hopelessly weak. The modern solution however is 14...♗b4 15.♗d4 ♘xc3 16.♗xc3 ♘xe2 when White has good compensation after 17.♗d3 or 17.♗d1, but nothing is clear.



15.♗d4!

Karpov is the first to deviate. He intensifies the pressure without premature exchanges.

Two games earlier in the match he played the natural:

15.♗xe7† ♘xe7 16.♗ad1

But after:

16...♗e8

Black had adequate counterplay.

17.h3 ♘h5 18.♗xd5

Karpov at least takes a pawn, but parting with the light-squared bishop that should be comforting the king is not without risk.

18...♗g6 19.♗c1 ♘xd5

Or 19...♗e4 and Black seems to hold the balance: 20.♗d2 ♘xd5 21.♗xd5 ♘xd5 22.♗xd5 ♘c4 23.♗c5 ♘e5 24.♗xc4 ♘exc5 With activity for the pawn, for instance 25.♗d3 ♘e6 hitting a2 and h3.

20.♗xd5 ♘c4 21.♗d4 ♘ec7 22.b3 ♘b6 23.♗e5 ♘d7 24.♗e3 f6 25.♗c5 ♘xc5 26.♗xc5 ♘xh3 27.♗d1

White keeps some initiative, but Black should hold. Kasparov chooses to weaken his position:

27...h5?! 28.♗d4! ♘d7 29.♗d6 ♘f7 30.♗d5 ♘xd5 31.♗xd5

White is still only marginally better, but in severe time trouble, Black blunders:

31...a6 32.♗f4 ♘f8 33.♗d3 ♘g4 34.f3 ♘g6

35.†f2 ♜c2?

Kasparov should have chosen the ending: he won't get a second chance.

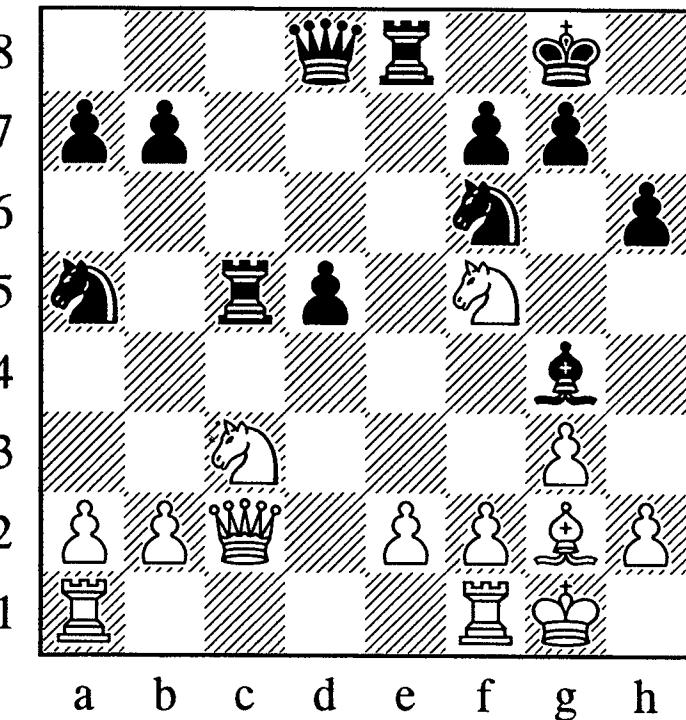
36.†e3! ♜c8 37.†e7 b5 38.†d8 ♜xd8 39.†xd8 ♜f7 40.†d6

Black is tied up and loses material.

40...g5 41.†a8 ♔g7 42.†xa6 1–0

Karpov – Kasparov, Moscow (7) 1984.

15...†c5 16.†xc5 ♜xc5



The first phase is over. White has managed to exchange the dark-squared bishops, which is quite serious progress. He gains control over the important d4-square in front of the isolated pawn, and with every exchange Black's possibilities to play actively are drastically diminished.

17.†e3

Attacking d5. White allows 17...d4 when the pin 18.†ad1 is awkward to meet. At the time Kasparov bought the argument, but in his new book about the match he claims that Black can survive the complications and therefore should have tried the active move.

17...†e6 18.†ad1

White has control. The difference between the two armies is striking. White's pieces shoot at d5, while Black's are forced to defend. The

opening has ended to White's advantage. Although objectively speaking White is probably still only slightly better, the trend is going up. Basically Black's initial activity is gone and he is just left with a weakness. That is not to say he can't hold, but the rest of the game will be a struggle and it will be played on conditions dictated by White.

18...†c8 19.†a4 ♜d8 20.†d3 a6 21.†fd1 ♜c4

Good active defending.

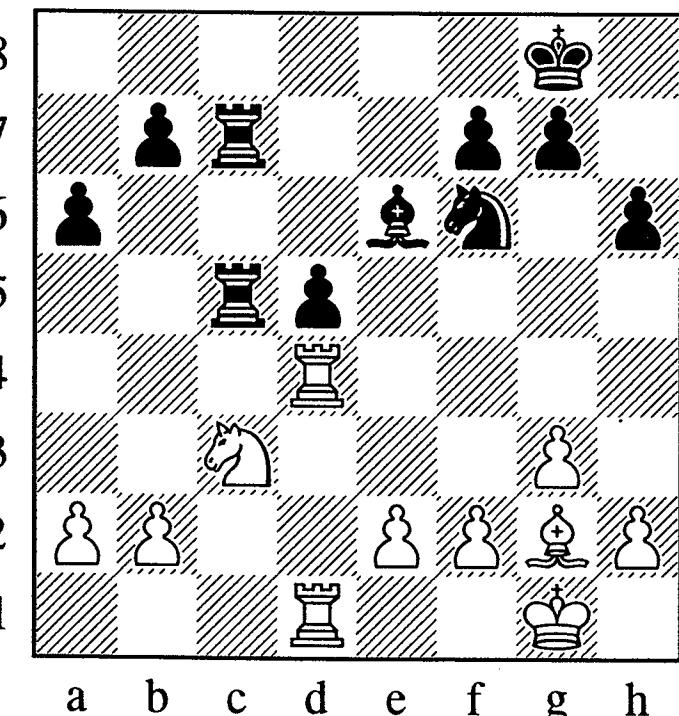
22.†xc4 ♜xc4 23.†a5

23.†b3 was an interesting alternative.

23...†c5 24.†b6

Or here 24.†a3 to keep the queens on.

24...†d7 25.†d4 †c7 26.†xc7 ♜dxc7



The second phase is over. The queens have been exchanged, but the characteristics of the position are the same in the endgame. White's persistent pressure on d5 completely ties up Black, but it is not easy to break through. However it is obvious that there are only two possible results: either White wins or it is a draw. Always a nice scenario in a practical game.

27.h3

Because of the great impact the finish of this game made, players were tempted to try this line themselves. A correspondence game even reached this very position, when White chose to deviate by just bringing his king to the centre. The rest of the game is rather instructive and shows that these simple endings are far from simple to defend:

27.♔f1 ♔f8 28.♔e1 ♕c4 29.e3 ♕xd4 30.♕xd4 ♕c5 31.♔d2 a5 32.a3 b6 33.b4 axb4 34.axb4 ♕c4 35.♕xc4 dxc4 36.h3 ♔e7 37.e4 ♔d7 38.f4 f6 39.♔b5!± Black got rid of the isolated pawn but the c-pawn is not looking too good either. White's spatial dominance also tells: Black can hardly improve his position and quickly goes down. 39...f5 40.e5 g5 41.♔d4 gxf4 42.gxf4 ♔f8 43.♔f1 ♔g6 44.♔e3 c3 45.♔d3 ♔h4 46.♔f2 ♔d7 47.♔g3 1–0

Raupp – J. Andersen, corr 1986. On 47...♔g6 the simplest is probably ♔e2 and ♔xc3.

Please note that taking the pawn with 27.♔xd5 ♔xd5 28.♔xd5 ♔xd5 29.♔xd5 ♕xd5 30.♔xd5 ♕c2 just leads to a draw.

27...h5 28.a3 g6

Black puts all his pawns on the same colour as his bishop – the good thing about a bad bishop is that it can at least protect your pawns.

29.e3 ♔g7 30.♔h2

Karpov is an expert in slow regrouping. He plans ♔f3 and therefore protects the h3-pawn with the king, but here it is too slow. Instead he could have played the much more straightforward 30.♔f1, followed by f2-f3 and g3-g4 seizing more space on the kingside and maintaining the advantage.

30...♕c4

Kasparov uses the chance to simplify.

31.♔f3 b5 32.♔g2 ♕7c5 33.♕xc4

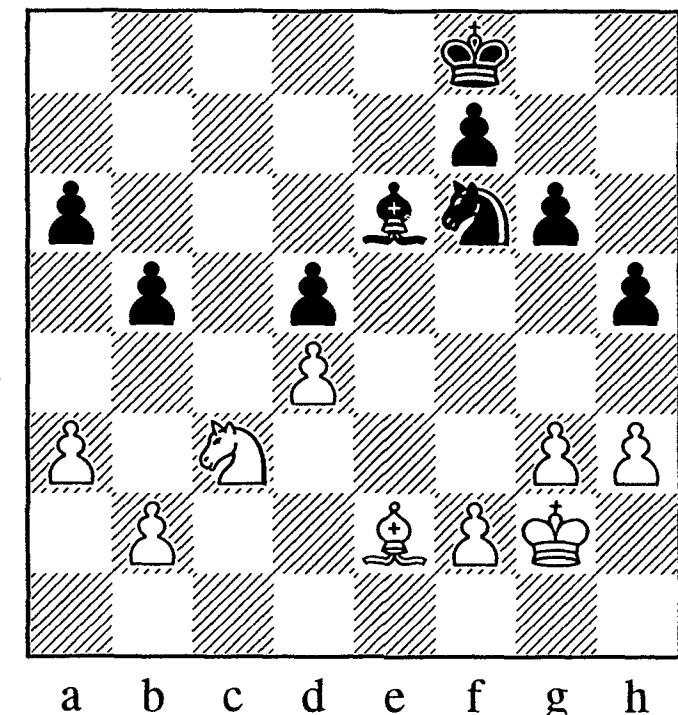
Practical chess. Karpov gives Black a difficult choice. How should he take back?

33...♕xc4

It was tempting to get rid of the d-pawn with 33...dxc4 but then White has the d-file and can penetrate with his rook. Also 33...bxc4 has its points but then 34.♖d4 followed by g4 is promising for White. In the end Kasparov just takes back with the rook maintaining the structure. He can safely do that because if White takes on d5 the black rook again gets to c2 and draws.

34.♖d4

Karpov needed a new plan.

34...♔f8 35.♔e2 ♕xd4 36.exd4

Phase three is over. The position has transformed into a symmetrical pawn structure. White is still slightly better because Black is left with a passive bishop that has to defend d5. Karpov of course keeps playing. He risks absolutely nothing and he can hope to get knight against bad bishop when there would be serious winning chances.

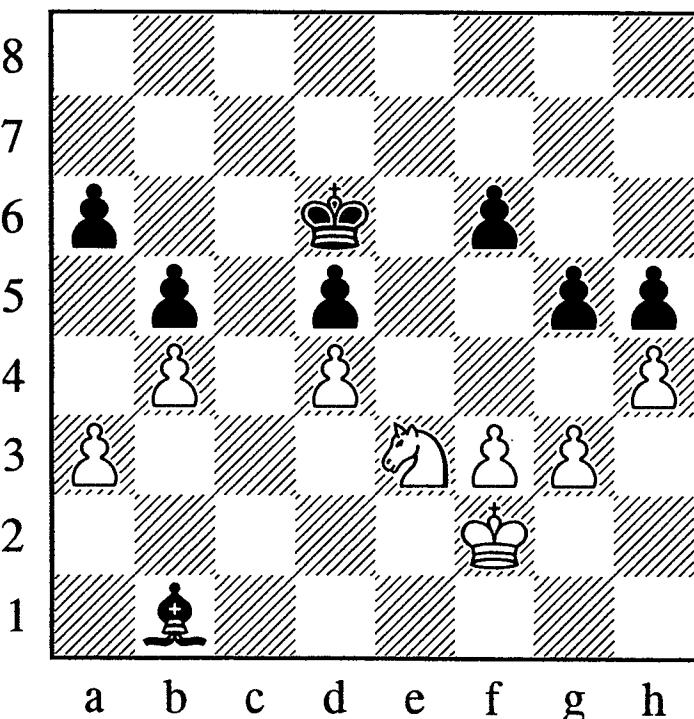
36...♔e7 37.♔a2 ♕c8 38.♔b4 ♔d6 39.f3 ♔g8 40.h4 ♔h6 41.♔f2 ♔f5 42.♔c2

The game was played in the good old days, so it was adjourned here. Black sealed his next move.

42...f6 43.♘d3 g5

Black defends actively, allowing White to get the knight vs. bishop ending. A defensive strategy could easily worsen Black's chances: 43...♝e7 44.♝e3 Perhaps threatening g4. 44...f5?! 45.♗g2 ♘d7 46.♗e3 With big holes on f4 and g5.

44.♗xf5 ♘xf5 45.♗e3 ♘b1 46.b4



The game has reached its final phase. White closes the queenside leaving Black with a permanent weakness on a6. That pawn can be attacked by the white knight from the great outpost c5, but then the black bishop defends it from c8 and so what? The only winning chance is to break in with the king and that can only happen on the seemingly closed kingside. Karpov nevertheless manages to do exactly that in amazing fashion. The next move is simply chess history. No more, no less. It is one of the most famous sequences from a World Championship match.

46...gxh4?

Blindly expecting White to take back, when Black withdraws the bishop to g6 and easily

holds the position. True, White has the f4-square but his king and knight cannot both use it at the same time and therefore there is no real chance of making progress. In the light of what happens it is clear that Black should have played 46...♝e6 with good drawing chances.

47.♗g2!

White sacrifices a pawn to get access to the black fortress. This famous ending has been analysed by many experts including Dvoretsky, Marin, Mueller and of course Kasparov. This is an opening book and big chapters have been written on this ending – I just want to give some of the flavour of what is happening.

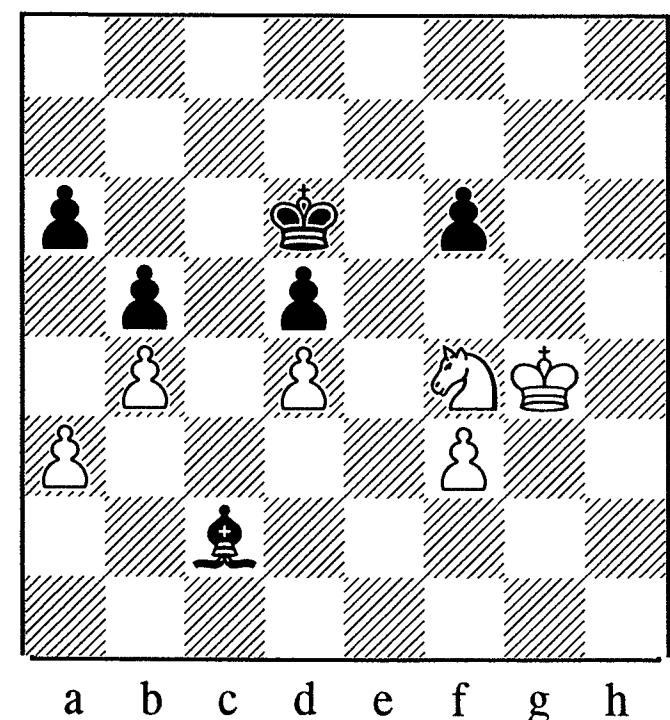
47...hxg3† 48.♔xg3 ♘e6

Or 48...♝g6 49.♗f4 ♘f7 50.♔h4 followed by ♘xh5.

49.♗f4† ♘f5 50.♗xh5 ♘e6

White was threatening ♘g7† followed by ♘e8-c7.

51.♗f4† ♘d6 52.♗g4 ♘c2



53.♔h5! ♘d1 54.♗g6 ♘e7

The best chance, as 54...♝xf3 55.♗xf6 was hopeless. White will regroup the knight so that he can give a check and then gain e5 for his king. Then some more regrouping with the knight

and the d5-pawn drops. Translated to moves it could be something like 55... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 56. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 57. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 58. $\mathbb{Q}f5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ (58... $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 59. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ is a lost pawn ending) 59. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 60. $\mathbb{Q}e7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 61. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ and wins.

55. $\mathbb{Q}xd5\#?$

The temptation was too great: a free pawn with check! However it turns out that the move is inaccurate. Correct was 55. $\mathbb{Q}h5!$, when White is winning even against the toughest resistance, as the experts have shown.

55... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 56. $\mathbb{Q}c7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d7?$

Missing 56... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 57. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 58. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ and Black holds the draw.

57. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 58. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 59. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 60. $\mathbb{Q}f4$

The king wins a tempo on the bishop and gets back in time to defend d4.

60... $\mathbb{Q}h1$ 61. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 62. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 63. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}g2$ 64. $\mathbb{Q}e5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 65. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 66. $\mathbb{Q}e7$ $\mathbb{Q}b7?$

This loses rather quickly, whereas with 66... $\mathbb{Q}h1!$ Black could put up some resistance and it is generally accepted that the position is still drawn! Kasparov believes that, as shown in his analysis in the aforementioned book.

67. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}g2$

The toughest defence was 67... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ although it still loses: 68. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ and now Mueller proved that 69. $\mathbb{Q}g7\#!$ was the way to win. Marin had previously claimed White could win with 69. $\mathbb{Q}e3$, but Dvoretsky found a way to draw.

Sounds complicated? That's because it is. Even famous analysts can lose their way in such positions. If you enjoy this sort of thing, then check out the specialist books.

68. $\mathbb{Q}d6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 69. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 70. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 1-0

A good practical game. Actually, after the impressive opening play Karpov did not do much until the spectacular finish. Or so it seemed. In fact he managed to keep the game going without ever letting Black fully neutralize the weakness on d5, and it paid off in the end. So the game confirms the general belief that White has good chances of getting a small but long-lasting positional advantage against the Tarrasch.

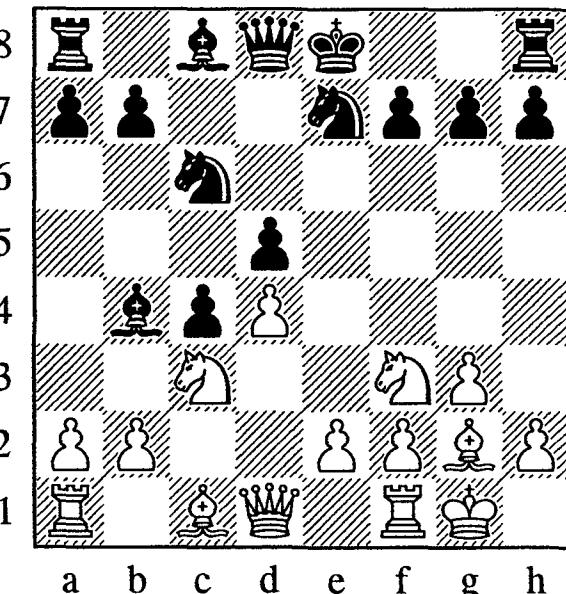
Theory

Usually Black enters the long mainlines that we cover below, but here is a mini-guide to early deviations.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6.g3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$

Sometimes Black tries:

6...c4 7. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 8.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}ge7$



A very flexible system. The disadvantage is that it does nothing to hinder White from expanding in the centre with e2-e4: 9.e4

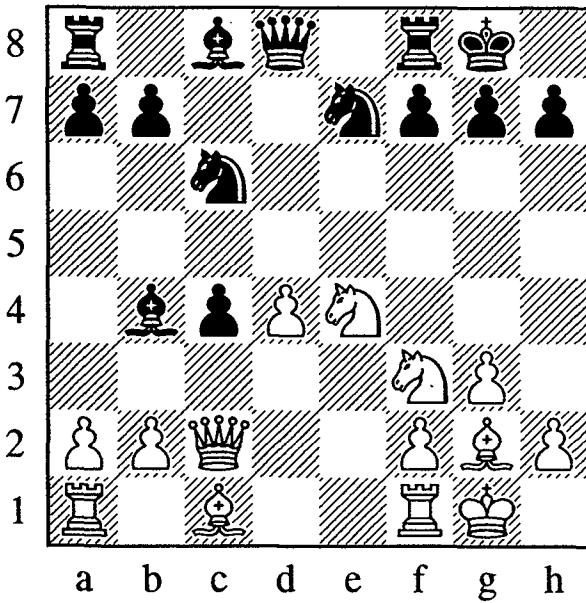
Here it makes sense to look at two lines. The main option is 9...0-0, but we should not neglect the alternative, 9...dxe4 10. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$, which is more risky. Black has three options:

- a) 10... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 11.a3 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 14.d5 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ 15.dxc6 $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 0-0 17. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}xg2\#$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}fxd1\pm$

Black had problems with his c-pawn in Drozdovskij – Jakimov, Kharkov 2007.

b) 10... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ (11... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$?! 12. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 13. $\mathbb{W}c2$) 12.a3 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ fxe6 15. $\mathbb{W}h5\#$ g6 16. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 18. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}d3$? (18...0–0 19. $\mathbb{Q}h6$) 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc6\#$ 1–0 Arencibia – Bruzon, Santa Clara 2005. On 19...bxc6 comes 20. $\mathbb{W}e5$ hitting a5 and h8.

c) 10...0–0 11. $\mathbb{W}c2$



11... $\mathbb{Q}g4$

11... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ and Black is in trouble, or 11... $\mathbb{W}d5$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{W}b5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ hxg6 15.a3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 16.d5! $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 17.d6 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}ad1\pm$ Reshevsky – Stahlberg, Zürich 1953. The d-pawn is a monster.

12. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$

13... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8?$ 15. $\mathbb{W}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}c2$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}f6\#$ gxf6 17. $\mathbb{W}g4\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}b1\pm$ Gual – Moskalenko, Paretana 2000.

14. $\mathbb{W}b3\pm$

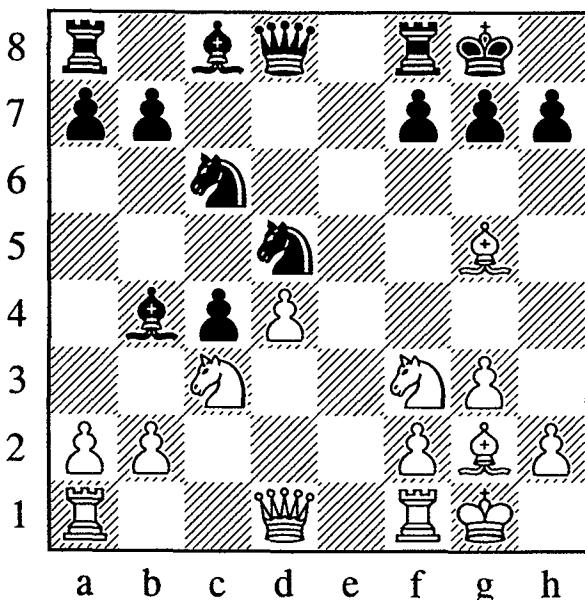
14. $\mathbb{W}e2$ is also possible.

14... $\mathbb{Q}e5$

On 14... $\mathbb{Q}f5$!? 15.a3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ White can choose between 16. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xb6$ axb6 18. $\mathbb{Q}c3\pm$ with a pleasant ending, or the pawn grab 16. $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ 18. $\mathbb{W}a6$. 15. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}c4$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 17.a3 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c5\pm$ Black could not defend b7 in Gordenko – Arutiunov, Kiev 2002.

We have seen the problems with 9...dxe4, so let's return to the position after 9...0–0:

10.exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}g5$



This is the most annoying line for Black.

11. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ also looks promising for White although Black has scored okay after either 13... $\mathbb{W}b5$ or 13... $\mathbb{Q}e4$.

11... $\mathbb{W}a5$

11... $\mathbb{f}6$ is somewhat inferior: 12. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}b5$ 14.a4 $\mathbb{W}a6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 16. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xd2\pm$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e7$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xe8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 23.a5 $\mathbb{W}b5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}c1\pm$ The weak pawns on the c-file begin to tell, Tregubov – Moskalenko, Alushta 1994.

Also 11... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 12.bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 16. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 17.f4 $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 18.f5 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}f4\pm$ gave White a good grip, Brooks – Parkkinen, corr. 2000.

12. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 13.a3 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}b5$ 15.a4 $\mathbb{W}a6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 17. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}fc1$ $\mathbb{Q}ab8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f1\pm$ $\mathbb{W}b6$

Black forces a lot of exchanges, but the problems remain.

20. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$

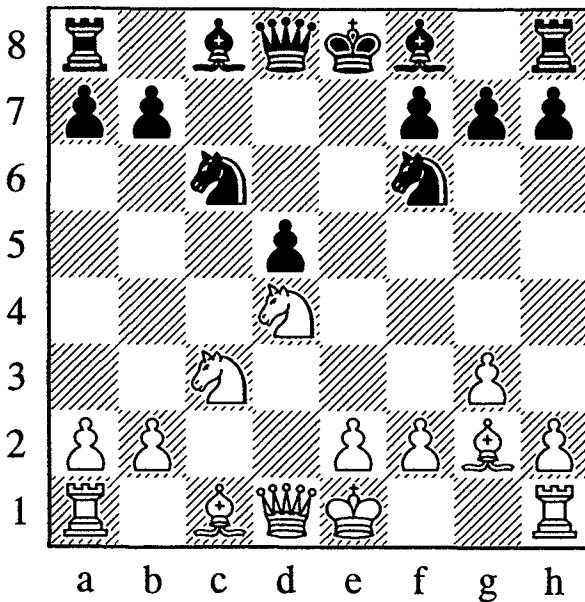
Or 21...fxe6 22. $\mathbb{Q}e3$.

22. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1\#$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ fxe6 25. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}a6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}a1$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d1$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}a8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}a7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xg7\pm$

White managed to win the ending in Timoschenko – Tseitlin, Palma de Mallorca 1989.

7. $\mathbb{Q}g2 \mathbb{Q}e7$

In the old days many Black players did not understand the subtleties of the opening and prematurely exchanged pawns in the centre just opening the position for White's initiative:
7...cxd4 8. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$



8... $\mathbb{W}b6$

Safer but not quite good enough is 8... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}b3 \mathbb{Q}b4$ (or 9... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 10.0–0 d4 11. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ 0–0 12. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ axb6 [12... $\mathbb{W}xb6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}g5$] 13. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 15. f3 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4\#$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{E}xe2$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ with a good ending, Breazu – Jensen, corr. 1991) 10.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ (10... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ could transpose) 11. $bxc3$ 0–0 12. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ (or 12... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 13. h3) 13. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ fxe6 15. c4 dxc4 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 17. $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ (no better is 17... $\mathbb{W}b4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{E}xf6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ $\mathbb{W}a4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}b7$ with an initiative, Varnusz – Lengyel, Budapest 1958) 18. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{E}xf6$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}ac1\pm$ Rubinstein – Marshall, Breslau 1912. White has the better pawn structure and a nice positional advantage. Of course the great Rubinstein won the ending.

9. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 10.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e6$

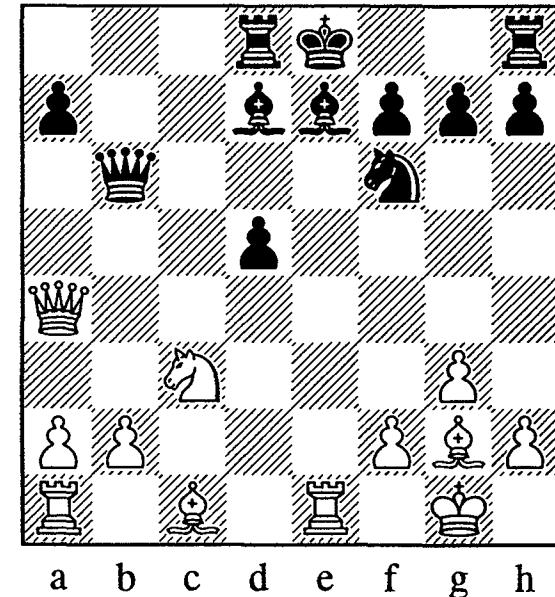
Worse is 10... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 11. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 12. b3 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 13. $\mathbb{W}f4\pm$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{W}xb5$

16. $\mathbb{W}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 17. $\mathbb{W}e5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 18. b4! $\mathbb{W}xb4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}ab1$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}c3$ 1–0 Rubinstein – Salwe, Vilnius 1909.

11. e4!

Another classic game continued 11. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 13. a3 c5 14. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$. A fine positional combination that looks very promising. 14... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 15. b4 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 16. axb4 $\mathbb{W}xb4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 0–0 18. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxf6 19. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ But it turns out that there are too few pieces left. 19... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 20. e3 $\mathbb{E}fc8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}a1$ d4 22. exd4 $\mathbb{E}xd4$ 23. $\mathbb{W}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}fb1$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 25. h3 $\mathbb{E}c2$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}a2$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ ½–½ Rubinstein – Tarrasch, San Sebastian 1912.

11... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 12. exd5 cxd5 13. $\mathbb{W}a4\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e1\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$



15. $\mathbb{Q}xe7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 16. $\mathbb{W}a3\#$ $\mathbb{W}d6$

Another game went 16... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ d4 18. $\mathbb{Q}xd4\#$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e1\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xe4\#$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ and White won in Divanbaigyzand – Kaminski, corr. 1999.

17. $\mathbb{W}xa7\pm$

With a pawn for the exchange and the black king caught in the centre, White is much better.

17... $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 18. $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}h3\#$

An elegant finish.

20... $\mathbb{W}xh3$ 21. $\mathbb{W}c5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 22. $\mathbb{W}b6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}hd8$ 24. $\mathbb{W}c5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e1\#$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe6\#$ fxe6 27. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 28. $\mathbb{W}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 30. $\mathbb{W}b8$ 1–0

D. Fischer – Schaar, corr. 2000.

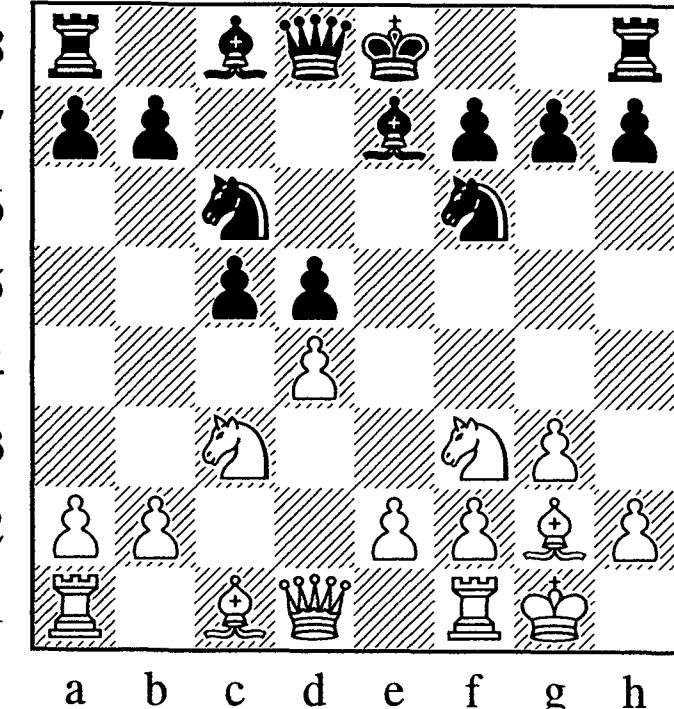
Black can also try to develop the light-squared bishop to either e6 or g4:

7... $\mathbb{B}e6$ 8.0–0 h6 Black is preventing $\mathbb{B}g5$, so White just takes the bishop out on the other flank: 9.b3 a6 10. $\mathbb{B}b2$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 11.e3 $\mathbb{B}e7$ 12.dxc5 $\mathbb{B}xc5$ 13. $\mathbb{B}e2$ 0–0 14. $\mathbb{B}f4$ $\mathbb{B}e4$ 15. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{B}e7$ 16. $\mathbb{B}d4$ $\mathbb{B}xd4$ 17. $\mathbb{B}xc8$ $\mathbb{W}xc8$ 18. $\mathbb{B}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 19. $\mathbb{W}a1$ $\mathbb{B}f6$ 20. $\mathbb{B}xf6$ $\mathbb{B}xf6$ 21. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 22. $\mathbb{W}c3\pm$ This is a dream position against the isolated d-pawn, Roiz – Akopian, Khanty-Mansyisk 2007.

7... $\mathbb{B}g4$ 8. $\mathbb{B}e3$ cxd4 9. $\mathbb{B}xd4$ $\mathbb{B}b4$ 10.0–0 0–0 And now, for instance, White can create positional pressure with the new move 11. $\mathbb{W}b3\pm$.

Finally, 7...c4 8.0–0 $\mathbb{B}b4$ is a mix-up of two ideas. It could be met by 9. $\mathbb{B}g5$ $\mathbb{B}xc3$ 10.bxc3 h6 11. $\mathbb{B}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 12. $\mathbb{B}d2$ followed by e2-e4 with pleasant play.

8.0–0



8...0–0

8...cxd4 9. $\mathbb{B}xd4$ 0–0 10. $\mathbb{B}g5$ transposes to the mainline.

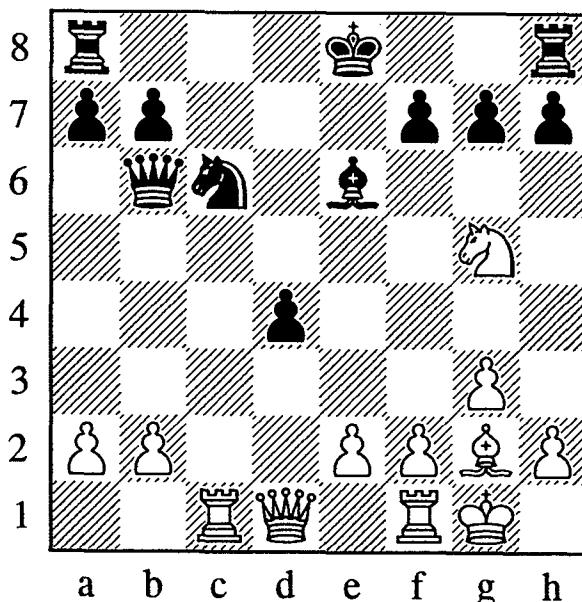
There is an independent option:
8... $\mathbb{B}e6$ 9.dxc5

The text is more promising than 9. $\mathbb{B}g5$ $\mathbb{B}e4$: 10. $\mathbb{B}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 11. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{B}xc3$ 12. $\mathbb{B}xc3$ c4 which is okay for Black.

9... $\mathbb{B}xc5$ 10. $\mathbb{B}g5$ d4

10...0–0 transposing to the 9... $\mathbb{B}e6$ -line is better.

11. $\mathbb{B}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 12. $\mathbb{B}e4$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 13. $\mathbb{B}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 14. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 15. $\mathbb{B}g5!$



White takes the opportunity to play aggressively.

15... $\mathbb{B}xa2$

Not 15...0–0 16. $\mathbb{B}xc6$ bxc6 17. $\mathbb{W}c2$ g6 18. $\mathbb{B}xe6$ fxe6 19. $\mathbb{W}xc6\pm$ Tukmakov – Guera, Crans Montana 1999.

16. $\mathbb{B}xc6$

The novelty 16. $\mathbb{W}d3$ h6 17. $\mathbb{B}xc6\ddagger$ bxc6 18. $\mathbb{W}e4\ddagger$ $\mathbb{B}f8$ 19. $\mathbb{B}xc6$ also seems strong.

16...bxc6 17. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{B}b3$ 18. $\mathbb{B}xc6\ddagger$ $\mathbb{B}d8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}a3$

White has good compensation.

19... $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xb3$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xf7$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 22. $\mathbb{W}f4$ h6 23. $\mathbb{B}f7\ddagger$ $\mathbb{B}e7$ 24. $\mathbb{B}e5$ $\mathbb{W}e6$

This was Yaksin – Rakhmanov, Voronezh 2007, and now 25. $\mathbb{B}a1$ keeps the pressure.

9. $\mathbb{B}g5$

And we are back where we started. Black must react to the strong pressure on d5, and so he has three sensible moves: 9...c4, 9... $\mathbb{B}e6$ or 9...cxd4. Much less sensible is 9...h6?! when 10. $\mathbb{B}xf6$ $\mathbb{B}xf6$ 11.dxc5 is simply good for White. We will study these moves later in this chapter.

Conclusion: Black has an interesting set-up with 6...c4 7.♗g2 ♗b4 8.0–0 ♔ge7, but with 9.e4 White takes the initiative and gets the better chances. Otherwise there are few sensible ways to deviate. An early ...cx d4 opens the position to White's benefit and a premature development of the light-squared bishop tends to increase the problems rather than solve them.

The 9...c4 Variation

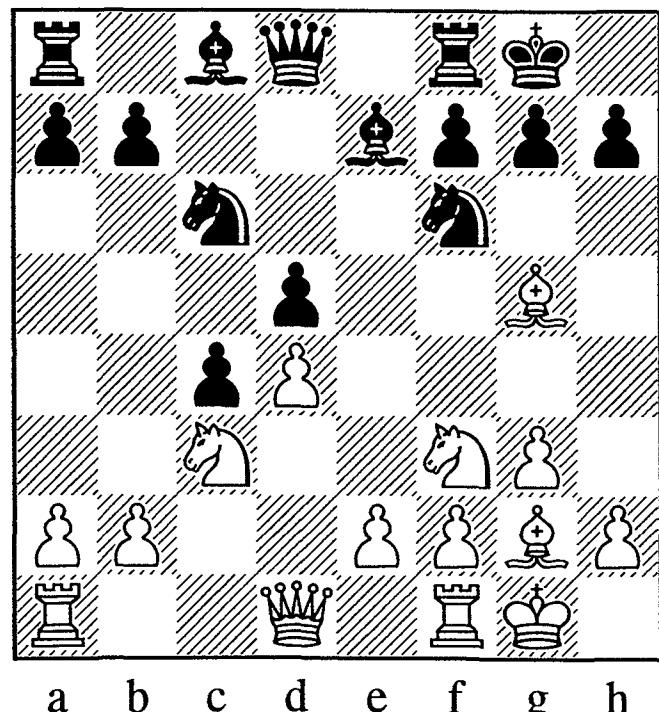
This was once a popular sideline, but Black's results with it have faded. Often White seems to get a small but nagging positional advantage. The following game is an excellent display by the young Chinese super-talent Wang Hao.

Game 53

Wang Hao – Iuldachev

India 2008

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗f3
♗c6 6.g3 ♗f6 7.♗g2 ♗e7 8.0–0 0–0 9.♗g5
c4



Black closes the position. The drawback of

the move is that it releases the tension a bit too soon: White takes the initiative by attacking the black centre.

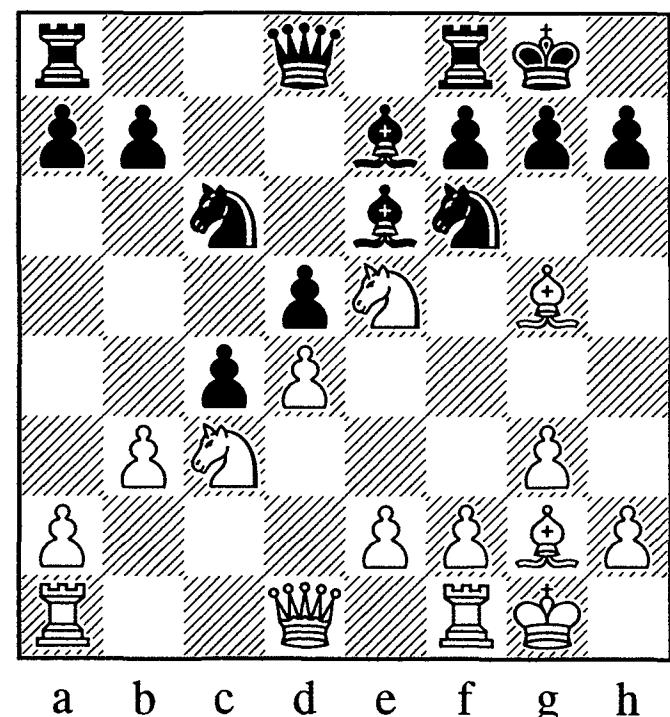
10.♘e5

This forward jump is very annoying for Black since 10...♘xe5 11.dxe5 would lose the d-pawn.

10...♔e6

Black had to reinforce d5.

11.b3



White continues the aggressive strategy and does not give Black time to consolidate.

11...♗a5

Black answers with an active move and tries to defend tactically.

11...cxb3 is a slight positional concession and after 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.axb3 White is better. Play can continue 13...h6 14.♗xf6 ♗xf6 15.♗a4 ♗f5 16.♗d2 ♗d6 17.♗c5± P.H. Nielsen – Rogers, Turin (ol) 2006.

12.♗d2!

Precisely played. 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.♗a4 has been played hundreds of times, but after 13...♗ab8 14.♗c2 ♗fc8 Black has good counterplay.

12...♝b4

Black again tries to be active.

The alternative is the cunning 12...♝ad8. Now if 13.bxc4 ♜xd4! then this unexpected trick solves the problems in the centre. 14.♛xd4 dxc4 15.♝e3 ♜c5 Black wins the piece back, and White can hardly keep the game going. 16.♛f4 ♜xc3 17.♝xf6 gxf6 18.♛xf6 This was Malakhatkko – Meinhardt, Paris 2005, and now Black has a simple solution in 18...♜d6 when White does not have anything better than 19.♛g5† ♜h8 20.♛f6† ♜g8 with a draw.

Therefore on 12...♝ad8 White should play:

13.♝xc6 bxc6 14.♝fd1

14.bxc4 dxc4 15.♝xc6 ♜b4 16.♝fc1 ♜b6 and Black wins the pawn back with fine play.

14.♝a4!? ♜xd2 15.♝xd2 cxb3 16.axb3 is a tempting try, but 16...♝e4 17.♝a5 ♜b8 18.♝fb1 ♜f5 gave Black enough counterplay in Brodsky – Ikonnikov, Le Touquet 2007. A possible improvement is 17.♝f4.

14...♝b4

This is Black's typical way of seeking active piece play. Now White can take the opportunity to disrupt Black's kingside pawns with ♜xf6. However it is also possible to protect c3 with a rook, but which one?

a) 15.♝ac1 c5! 16.♝xf6 gxf6 was fine for Black in Golod – Kristensen, Bornholm 2008. 17.bxc4 is answered by 17...cxsd4! 18.♛xd4 ♜xc3 19.♛xc3 ♜xc3 20.♝xc3 dxc4 and Black's strong passed pawn even gives him the better chances in the ending.

b) The new move 15.♝dc1 is interesting though:

b1) Now 15...c5 is well met by 16.♝xf6 gxf6 17.bxc4 dxc4 18.d5! ♜xd5 19.♝xd5 ♜xc3 20.♛xc3 ♜xc3 21.♝xf7† ♜xf7 22.♝xc3± with

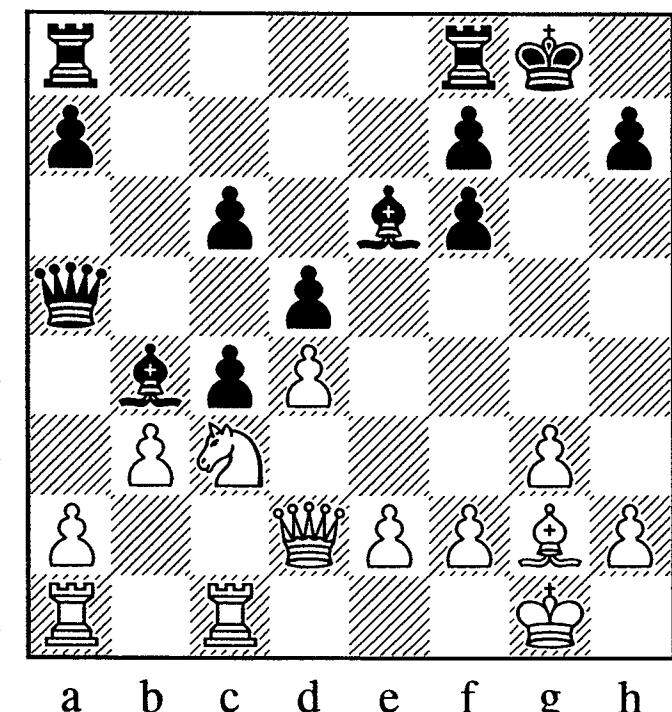
a good rook ending. In this variation 17...cxsd4 18.♛xd4 is no good because f6 hangs.

b2) So after 15.♝dc1 Black should probably try 15...♜a3, yet 16.♝c2 ♜f5 17.e4 looks good for White. Compared to the variation below, Black cannot play 17...♜g6 18.♝xd5! ♜xd2 19.♝xf6† gxf6 20.♝xd2 ♜xd4 21.♝e3±. This means Black is forced to take on e4 with the pawn, when White can play ♜xf6 followed by ♜xe4.

c) 15.♝xf6 gxf6 Black cannot take on c3 because of ♜g5 followed by mate. 16.♝dc1 ♜a3 17.♝c2 ♜f5 18.e4 ♜g6 19.bxc4 dxc4 20.♝e3 ♜fe8 21.h4!? (21.♝d1 is more normal: 21...f5 and now 22.♝b1 ♜f8 23.♝xc4 or 22.♝f1!? fxe4 23.♝xc4 both look slightly better for White, but it is complicated and the advantage is far from stable.) 21...f5 22.♝b1 ♜f8 23.♝d2 fxe4 24.♝xc4 ♜d5 25.♝acl c5 26.♝b3 cxd4 27.♝xd4 ♜e5 28.♝xd8 ♜xd8 29.♛xa7 With a pawn more and some winning chances, Loginov – Yevseev, St Petersburg 2002.

13.♝xf6 gxf6

Not 13...♜xc3? 14.♛g5 g6 15.♛h6 and Black's ears will become red. Very red.

14.♝xc6 bxc6 15.♝fc1

Black's active possibilities have more or less been exhausted and he is left with a permanently weakened pawn structure.

15... $\mathbb{E}ac8$

15... $\mathbb{Q}a3$, with the hope 16. $\mathbb{E}d1$ $\mathbb{E}ab8\infty$, is refuted by 16. $\mathbb{E}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 17.e4.

16.bxc4 dxc4 17.a3! $\mathbb{Q}xc3$

The text is too submissive, but 17... $\mathbb{Q}xa3?$ did not work either. The pin on the a-file is lethal after 18. $\mathbb{W}a2$.

17... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ is somewhat passive. On the other hand it does not simplify into a worse endgame, so probably Black should try it. 18.e4 $\mathbb{E}fd8$ 19.d5 cxd5 20.exd5 $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 21. $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ and Black was okay, Muhammad – Bluvshstein, New York 2003. White should settle for a move such as 18.e3, just securing his structure and keeping a positional edge.

18. $\mathbb{W}xc3$

White goes for the ending.

He could also keep the pieces on:

18. $\mathbb{E}xc3$ $\mathbb{E}fd8$ 19. $\mathbb{E}ac1$ $\mathbb{E}d6$

Better is 19... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 20. $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{W}g5$, but 20.e3 keeps some advantage.

20. $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{E}cd8$ 21.e3 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 22.h4! \pm c5 23.d5! $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{E}xd5$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}g4\uparrow$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 27. $\mathbb{W}f3$

White has an initiative in the heavy piece middlegame.

27...f5

A better try was 27... $\mathbb{Q}g7$.

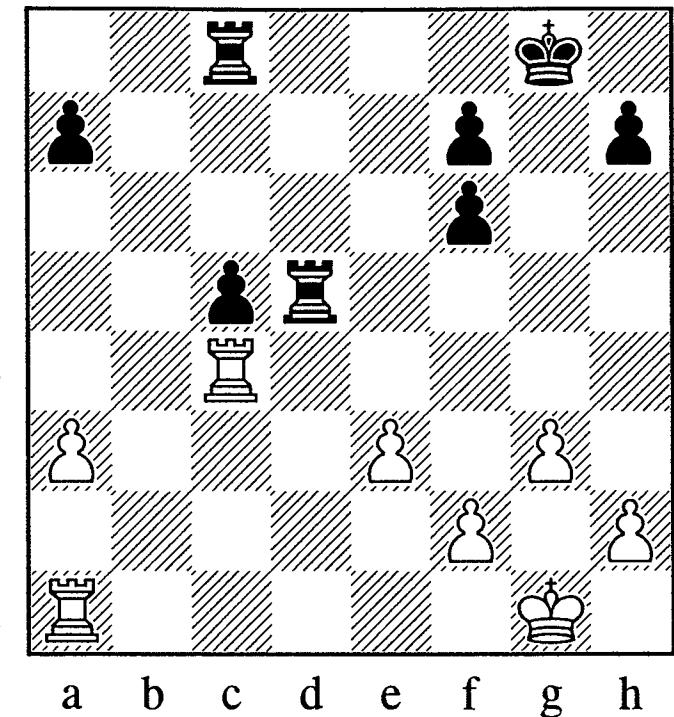
28.e4! fxe4 29. $\mathbb{W}xf7$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 30. $\mathbb{E}xc5$ $\mathbb{E}xc5$ 31. $\mathbb{E}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 32. $\mathbb{W}f6\uparrow$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 33. $\mathbb{W}xd8\uparrow$

With a won queen ending.

33... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 34. $\mathbb{W}d7\uparrow$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 35. $\mathbb{W}xh7$ $\mathbb{W}xa3$ 36. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ a5 37.h5 a4 38. $\mathbb{W}g6\uparrow$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 39. $\mathbb{W}g7\uparrow$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}b3$ 41.h6 $\mathbb{W}d5\uparrow$ 42.f3 1–0

Loginov – Monin, Budapest 1994.

18... $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 19. $\mathbb{E}xc3$ $\mathbb{E}fd8$ 20.e3 c5 21.d5! $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{E}xd5$ 23. $\mathbb{E}xc4$



White has a pleasant rook ending. He can double rooks on the c-file and put pressure on the weak c5-pawn. At the same time the rook on c4 is exceptionally well placed because it can switch to the kingside along the fourth rank and shoot at the weak black pawns there as well.

23... $\mathbb{E}b8$ 24. $\mathbb{E}ac1$ $\mathbb{E}b5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 26.h4 $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 27. $\mathbb{E}1c2$ $\mathbb{E}a5$ 28.a4 $\mathbb{E}d6$ 29. $\mathbb{E}f4$

29. $\mathbb{E}xc5$ $\mathbb{E}xa4$ 30. $\mathbb{E}c7$, to get on the seventh rank, was not so clear after 30...a6 31. $\mathbb{E}a7$ f5 32. $\mathbb{E}cc7$ $\mathbb{E}f6$.

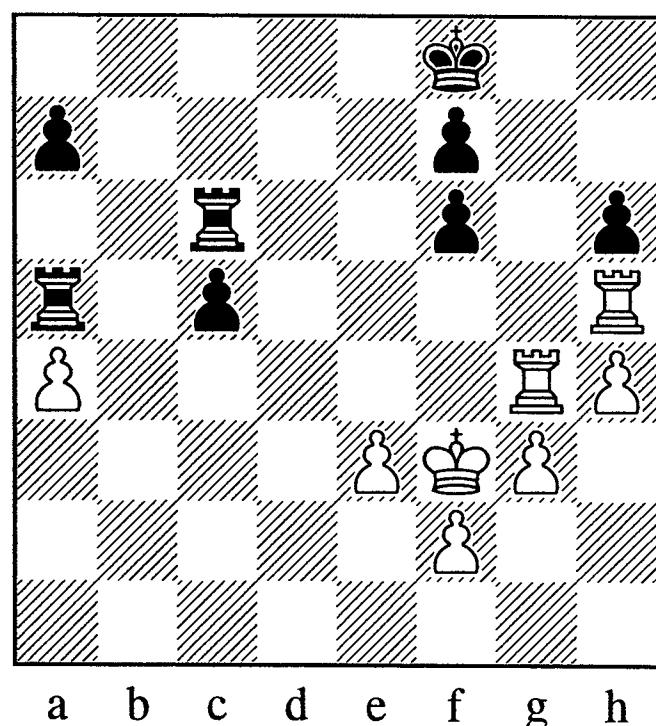
29... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 31. $\mathbb{E}e4\uparrow$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 32. $\mathbb{E}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 33. $\mathbb{E}cc4$ $\mathbb{E}b6$ 34. $\mathbb{E}gf4$ $\mathbb{E}e6$ 35. $\mathbb{E}c2$ $\mathbb{E}c6$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 37. $\mathbb{E}cc4$ h6?!

It was better to stay passive with 37... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ when 38. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{E}ca6$ 39. $\mathbb{E}g4\uparrow$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ is nothing for White because of 40. $\mathbb{Q}h6\uparrow$ f5†.

38. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{E}b6$ 39. $\mathbb{E}f5$ $\mathbb{E}ba6$

39... $\mathbb{E}c6$ 40. $\mathbb{E}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 41. $\mathbb{E}g4\uparrow$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 42. $\mathbb{E}d5$ $\mathbb{E}c7$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}e2\pm$

40. $\mathbb{E}d5$ $\mathbb{E}c6$ 41. $\mathbb{E}d8\uparrow$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 42. $\mathbb{E}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 43. $\mathbb{E}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 44. $\mathbb{E}g4\uparrow$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$



Giving up the h-pawn, but 44... $\hat{Q}h7$ 45. $\hat{B}d5$ $\hat{E}c7$ 46. $\hat{Q}e2$ was also bad. The black pieces are scattered all over without any communication.

45. $\hat{Q}e2$

There is no hurry. First the king takes the enemy passed pawn under control.

45... $\hat{B}aa6$ 46. $\hat{B}xh6$ $c4$ 47. $\hat{B}h8\#$ $\hat{Q}e7$ 48. $\hat{B}e4\#$ $\hat{Q}d6$ 49. $\hat{B}d4\#$ $\hat{Q}c5$ 50. $h5$

White is winning.

50... $f5$ 51. $\hat{B}f8$ $\hat{B}xa4$ 52. $\hat{B}xf7$ $\hat{B}a2\#$ 53. $\hat{B}d2$ $\hat{B}a1$ 54. $\hat{B}d1$ $\hat{B}a2\#$ 55. $\hat{B}d2$ $\hat{B}a1$ 56. $\hat{B}xf5\#$ $\hat{Q}b4$ 57. $\hat{B}b2\#$ $\hat{Q}c3$ 58. $\hat{B}bb5$ $\hat{B}a2\#$ 59. $\hat{Q}f3$ $\hat{B}b2$ 60. $\hat{B}bc5$ $\hat{B}bb6$ 61. $g4$ $\hat{Q}d3$ 62. $g5$ $c3$ 63. $h6$ $c2$ 64. $h7$

1–0

Conclusion: 9... $c4$ solves the problem with the isolated d-pawn, because Black doesn't get one! What he often gets instead is a weak c-pawn, so at the end of the day he has not achieved anything.

The 9... $\hat{Q}e6$ Variation

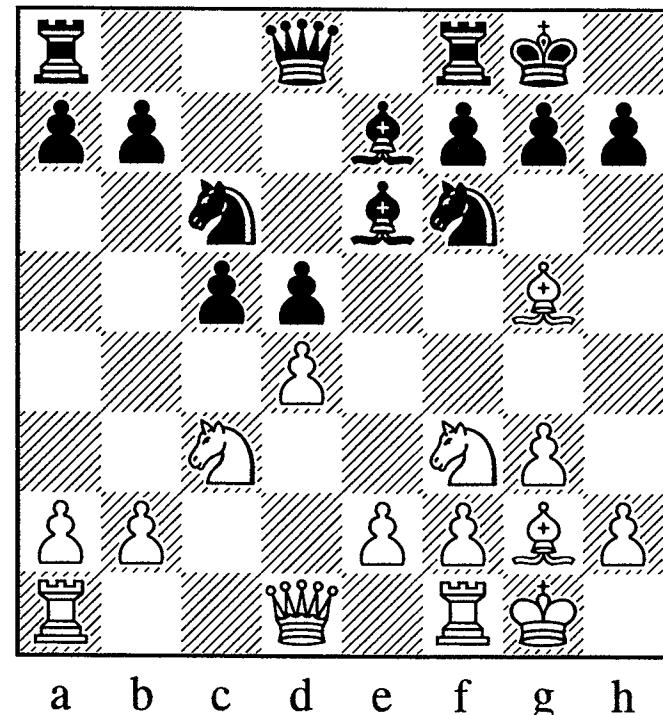
This looks like a solid choice, but White can force a very favourable ending.

Game 54

Yusupov – Spraggett

Quebec 1989

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. $\hat{Q}c3$ $c5$ 4. $cxd5$ $exd5$ 5. $\hat{Q}f3$ $\hat{Q}c6$ 6. $g3$ $\hat{Q}f6$ 7. $\hat{Q}g2$ $\hat{Q}e7$ 8.0–0 0–0 9. $\hat{Q}g5$ $\hat{Q}e6$



Just developing the last piece and defending d5. Additionally Black gets the option of playing ... $\hat{Q}e4$. The reason the move has never caught on is that White can force a superior ending with good winning chances and almost no risk of losing.

10. $dxc5$

Keeping the tension with 10. $\hat{Q}c1$ is of course also possible.

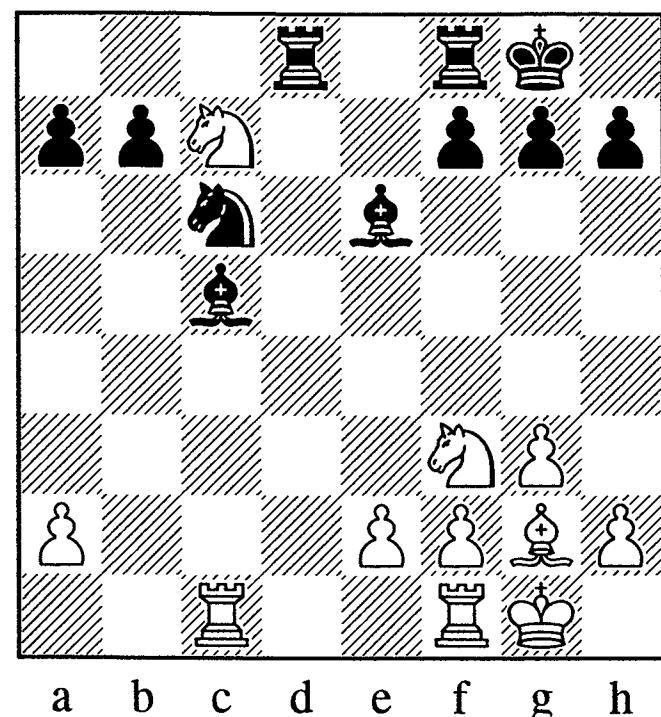
10... $\hat{Q}xc5$

Not 10... $d4$ 11. $\hat{Q}xf6$ $\hat{Q}xf6$ 12. $\hat{Q}e4$.

11. $\hat{Q}xf6$ $\hat{W}xf6$ 12. $\hat{Q}xd5$ $\hat{W}xb2$

Restoring material equality. There now follows an instructive transition to an interesting endgame.

13. $\hat{Q}c7$ $\hat{B}ad8$ 14. $\hat{W}c1!$ $\hat{W}xc1$ 15. $\hat{B}axc1$



The bishop on c5 hangs, so Black must either move it or defend it. White will then take on e6 eliminating the pair of bishops and weakening Black's pawn structure.

15... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

Black wants to redeploy the bishop to f6 where it stands well. Let's have a closer look at the alternatives.

15... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $f\times e6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c4$! A nice square: White is slightly better. The following is a typical development of events: 17...h6 18.h4 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ Putting pressure on e6. 20... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 24.e3 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$? 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ e5? Black tries to solve all his problems in one go, but he missed White's next: 28. $\mathbb{Q}d2$! Winning material. 28... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$? $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ And White won in L.B. Hansen – Antonio, Novi Sad (ol) 1990.

15...b6 16. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $f\times e6$ 17.e3 h6 18. $\mathbb{Q}c4$! $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e4$

Once again we see this manoeuvre.

19... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 20.h4 $\mathbb{Q}f7$

In some correspondence games Black has played 20... $\mathbb{Q}fd5$, but it does not really alter the position. White can play 21. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ and have the usual small positional pull.

21. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 22.g4

White can expand on the kingside.

22... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 23.g5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}h3$? $\mathbb{Q}d6$

Or 24... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ † $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ †.

25. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}cc4$

White keeps finding new ways to regroup. Black can never completely neutralize the pressure.

27...a5?! 28.a4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}f1$!

There is a nice square on b5.

30... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$?

Necessary was 31... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ † 32. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ but then 33. $\mathbb{Q}ec4$ and White will still have all the fun.

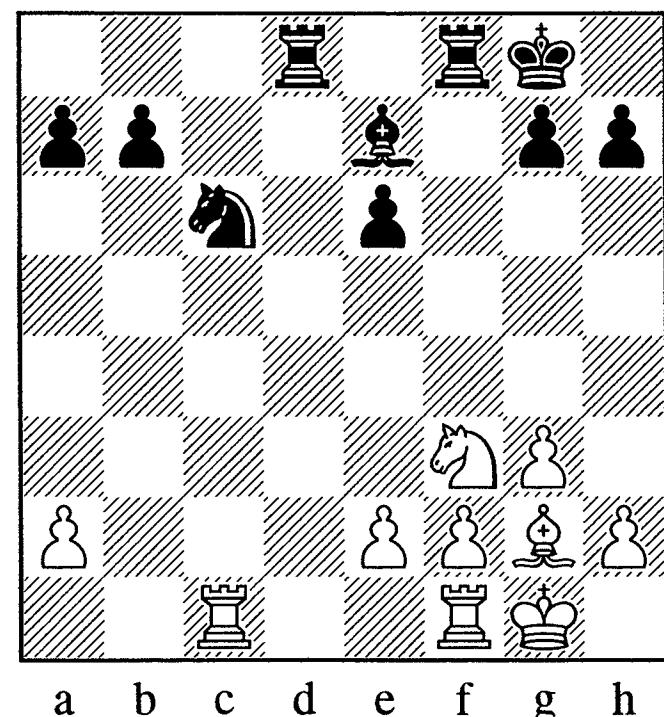
32. $\mathbb{Q}d4$! $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}c4$

Winning at least a pawn.

33... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ † 34. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $h\times g5$ 36. $h\times g5$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ † 39. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}dxe6$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ † 41. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 1–0

Huzman – Stripunsky, Simferopol 1990.

16. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $f\times e6$



The position looks completely equal, especially with the opposite-coloured bishops. In fact, that is exactly wrong – because of the opposite-coloured bishops, White has a long lasting positional initiative.

I know this may be hard to believe, but I will explain the details in depth within the next few moves.

17.♖c4!

A key move. On c4 the rook is excellently placed. It can shift between the two flanks on the fourth rank, and it is very safe on a light square – as a consequence of the opposite-coloured bishops, White is clearly superior on the light squares. If you played through the two examples in the last note then this move would not come as a big surprise, but you are probably lazy like me and just skimmed the text. That's a pity! Go back! Set up the position on your board or find the games in your database and see them for real. They will help you to get a feeling for the position. This particular variation is about excellent endgame technique and profound chess understanding.

17...♗f6

Also possible is 17...♖d6 18.♖fc1 ♖fd8 to exchange rooks. 19.h4 ♖d1† 20.♔h2 ♖xc1 21.♖xc1 h6 22.♗e1!? (22.e3± was the normal set-up) 22...♖d2 23.♗xc6 bxc6 24.♖c2 ♖xc2 25.♗xc2 Kharitonov – Legky, Spasskoe 1996, and White had a better technical endgame.

18.e3!

Taking control of d4 and preventing the black knight from landing there to simplify. If there only remained opposite-coloured bishops the draw would be inevitable, but as long as there are other pieces on the board the opposite-coloured bishops actually help the aggressor because the weaker party cannot neutralize the bishop.

18...♖d6 19.h4!

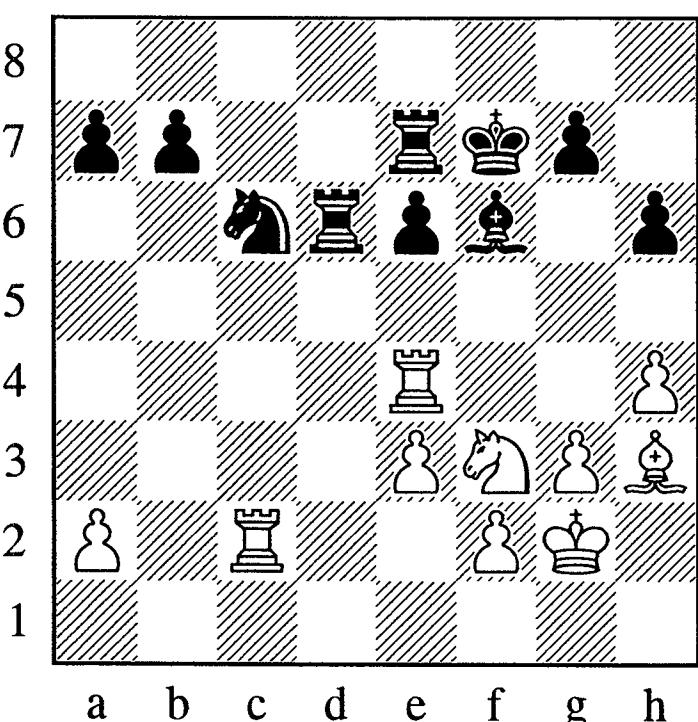
White has a pawn majority on the kingside so it is natural to take some more space there. Furthermore White plans ♘h3, but it would be a bit silly to put the bishop in front of the h-pawn.

19...h6 20.♗e4

A strong centralization and it also prevents Black from playing ...♗e5, a move that so far has been impossible anyway because it would lose the b7-pawn.

20...♖fd8 21.♗h3

With concrete pressure on the weak spot e6.

21...♔f7 22.♔g2 ♖e8 23.♖c1 ♖e7 24.♖c2

Note the pattern in the diagram: White puts his pieces on white and his pawns on black to restrict Black's forces.

24...b6 25.♖f4 ♔g6 26.g4

The next phase begins. White cannot enjoy his position forever: he has to do something.

26...♗a1 27.♖c1 ♗b2 28.♖c2 ♗a1 29.a4

He could also have played the sharper 29.h5† ♔h7 30.g5 with an initiative.

29...♗e5

Black uses the opportunity to exchange the knights and simplify.

30.♗xe5† ♗xe5 31.♖f8 ♖dd7 32.f4 ♖c7 33.♖d2 ♗c3 34.♖d6

But White still has his rooks and he keeps finding active possibilities.

34... $\hat{Q}h7$ 35.g5 hxg5

A careless exchange. Better was 35...g6 with chances to hold.

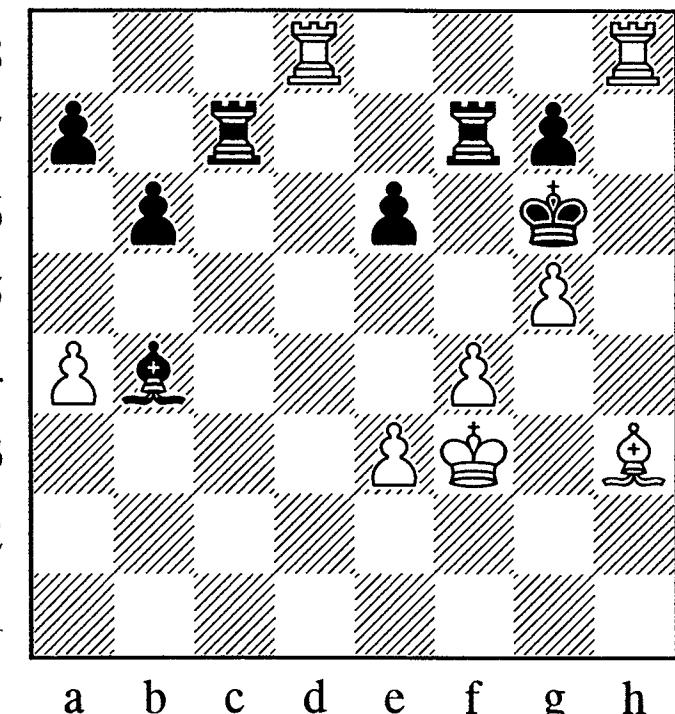
36.hxg5 $\hat{Q}b4$

Or 36...g6 37. $\hat{Q}xe6$ $\hat{Q}b4$ 38. $\hat{Q}d1!$ (that's the difference with an open h-file) 38... $\hat{Q}xe6$ 39. $\hat{Q}h1\#$ $\hat{Q}g7$ 40. $\hat{Q}fh8$ and now to avoid mate Black has to play the drastic 40... $\hat{Q}c2\#$ 41. $\hat{Q}f3$ $\hat{Q}xe3\#$ 42. $\hat{Q}xe3$ $\hat{Q}f7$ or maybe he should just resign.

37. $\hat{Q}dd8$

Yusupov misses the wonderful mate 37.g6! $\hat{Q}xg6$ 38. $\hat{Q}f5\#$ $\hat{Q}h6$ 39. $\hat{Q}h8\#$. However, the move played wins rather easily all the same.

37... $\hat{Q}g6$ 38. $\hat{Q}f3$ $\hat{Q}f7$ 39. $\hat{Q}h8$



The black king is trapped in a danger-zone. White has $\hat{Q}g4-h5$ ready.

39...e5 40. $\hat{Q}g4$ exf4 41. $\hat{Q}d5!$

Now there is no defence against $\hat{Q}h5\#$.

41...fxe3\# 42. $\hat{Q}g3$

1-0

Conclusion: Who says endings are boring?

The 9...cx d4 Variation

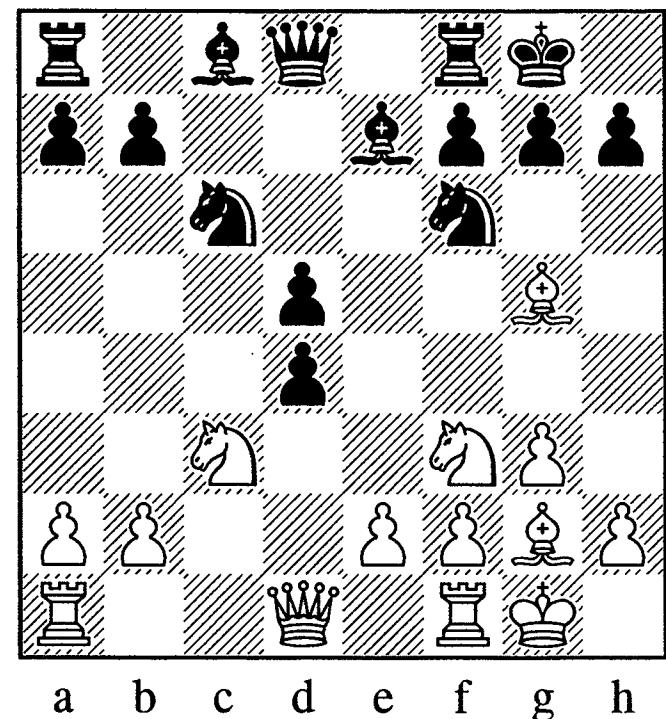
Finally we have reached the big mainline.

Game 55

Bocharov – Bezgodov

Kazan 2006

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. $\hat{Q}c3$ c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5. $\hat{Q}f3$ $\hat{Q}c6$ 6.g3 $\hat{Q}f6$ 7. $\hat{Q}g2$ $\hat{Q}e7$ 8.0–0 0–0 9. $\hat{Q}g5$ cx d4



The mainline. Black releases the tension and accepts the isolated d-pawn. He follows up by hitting the bishop on g5 and thereby removing most of the imminent pressure on d5. However, as we saw in the Karpov – Kasparov game, the d-pawn is a long-term weakness.

10. $\hat{Q}xd4$ h6

This is almost universally played.

Instead 10... $\hat{Q}e8$ is well answered with 11. $\hat{W}a4$ $\hat{Q}d7$ 12. $\hat{Q}fd1$, as in the main game, while the seemingly aggressive 10... $\hat{W}b6$ quickly backfires after 11. $\hat{Q}b3$ $\hat{Q}e6$ 12. $\hat{Q}e3\pm$ with control over the important squares d4 and c5.

11.♗e3

White withdraws the bishop and overprotects the important square in front of the isolated pawn. Black's point was that 11.♗xf6 ♗xf6 is nothing for White because the knight hangs on d4.

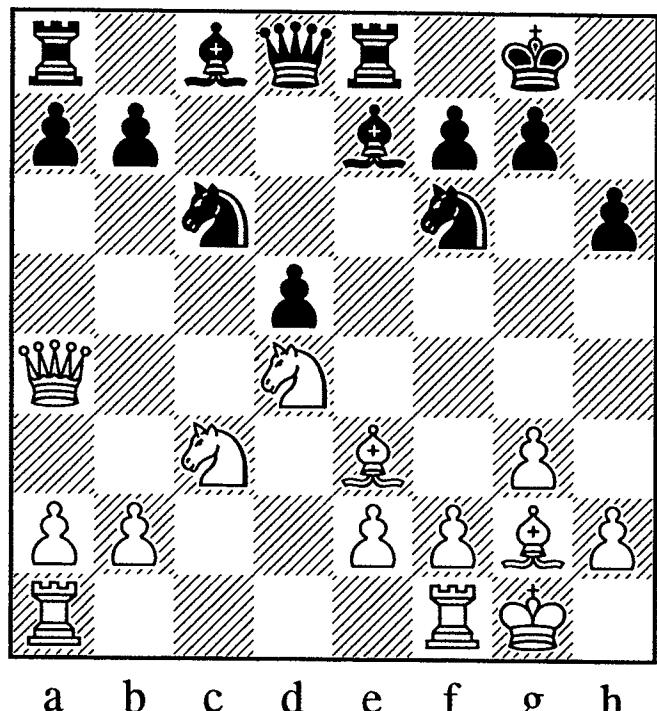
The other retreat 11.♗f4 is sometimes played when Black answers 11...♗g4 with typical Tarrasch play.

11...♝e8

A sound and deep move that prepares for counterplay along the e-file, for instance after ...♝f8 next.

If Black instead develops the light-squared bishop White will most probably get a good version of the game:

11...♗g4 12.♗a4 ♖d7 13.♗fd1± White has pressure. 13...♘h3 14.♘h1 And to keep the pressure he avoids simplifications. 14...♗fd8 15.♗b3 ♖f5 16.♗b5 Black definitely had some problems to solve in Smejkal – Marjanovic, Vrsac 1977.

12.♗a4

A very direct approach that I like a lot, but also interesting is Karpov's direct attack on the d-pawn with 12.♗b3.

The natural 12.♗c1 ♗f8 13.♗xc6 bxc6 14.♗a4 ♗d7 15.♗c5 gains control over the dark squares: 15...♗xc5 16.♗xc5 ♗g4 17.♗e1 ♖a5 Yet Black has adequate counterplay, as has been confirmed in many games.

12...♞d7

The pressure on the knight on c6 was a little awkward to meet.

The main alternative 12...♗a5 is covered in the next game.

A sequence like 12...♗xd4 13.♗xd4 gives White a dream Tarrasch position where Black has no counterplay, for instance 13...♞d7 14.♗b3 ♗c6 15.♗ad1 preparing ♗xf6 and ♗xd5.

13.♗fd1!

This is the rook we would rather place on d1, if possible. Of course ♗ad1 is playable too but that rook could be useful on c1.

To prove my point Suba has on several occasions started with:

13.♗ac1

When play can continue:

13...♗a5 14.♗c2 ♗c8 15.♗d3 ♗c4
15...♗g4?! 16.♗f5 ♗b4 17.♗xd5 ♗xd5
18.♗xd5 ♖f6 was Gajic – Madl, Thessaloniki
1984, when 19.♗xc8 ♗xc8 20.♗xh6†! gxh6
21.♗e4, hitting both bishops, would have
won instantly.

16.♗xd5 ♗xd5 17.♗xd5 ♗xe3 18.♗xe3 ♗f6
19.♗d3

White has won a pawn though Black has some compensation, Suba – Vladimirov,
Oviedo 1993.

13...♗a5

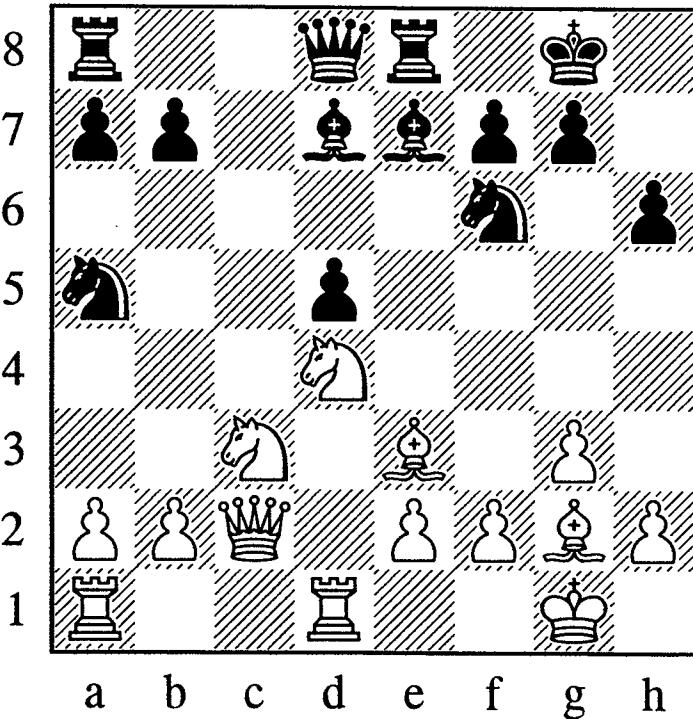
There was no easy solution.

13...♗b4 14.♗b3 a5 15.a4 This gave White a small but steady advantage in Kaidanov –

Akopian, Las Vegas 2001. After 15... $\mathbb{Q}c5??$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}fxd5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 19. $\mathbb{E}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 20. $\mathbb{E}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 21. $\mathbb{W}d6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 22. $\mathbb{E}xd6$ $\mathbb{E}e4$ 23.b3 the advantage was transformed into an endgame with a pawn more.

13... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ This looks active but costs the pair of bishops after 14. $\mathbb{Q}e6!$ fxe6 15. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ b6 16. $\mathbb{Q}d6$. White is on top, for instance: 16... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 17. $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 19. $\mathbb{E}ab1$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 20.h3 $\mathbb{E}c5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ gxf6 23. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ dxe4 24. $\mathbb{E}xd7\pm$ 1–0 Wang Yue – Petrosian, Tiayuan 2005.

14. $\mathbb{W}c2$



White's position is harmonious, while the black bishop on d7 is passive and the knight on a5 is temporarily out of play. In addition to all that, d5 is hanging.

14... $\mathbb{E}c8$

Pinning the c3-knight is the most obvious move.

Instead 14... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 17.fxe3 hardly gives Black enough for a pawn: 17... $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 18.e4 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 19. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}xb3$ 20.axb3 \pm Black had some serious defending ahead of him in Birarov – Soltau, corr. 2001.

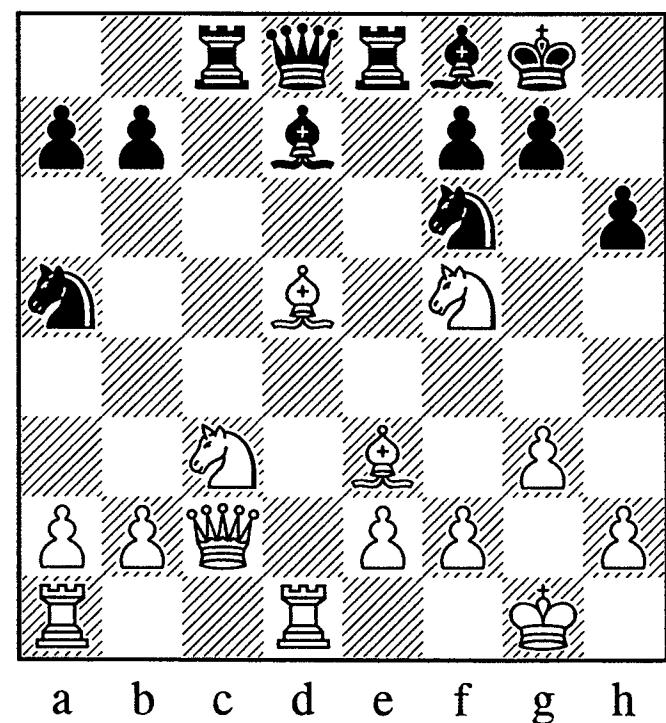
15. $\mathbb{Q}f5!$

A standard move in such positions. Either Black must sacrifice the d5-pawn or part with the dark-squared bishop.

15... $\mathbb{Q}f8$

He chooses the former, as most players do. Instead 15... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xe7\#$ $\mathbb{E}xe7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{E}d7$ 18. $\mathbb{E}ac1\pm$ was very promising for White in Cvitan – Handoko, Zagreb 1985.

16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$



Winning a pawn. White should not be afraid to give up this otherwise important bishop as Black cannot generate a dangerous attack.

16... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

Black takes the bishop and gets some positional compensation. The alternatives have received rough treatment:

16... $\mathbb{E}e5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xh6\#$! gxh6 18. $\mathbb{W}g6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{E}xe3$ This is Coelho – Cavalcanti, Guarulhos 2005, and here the computer likes 20. $\mathbb{E}xd7!$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ when White is winning.

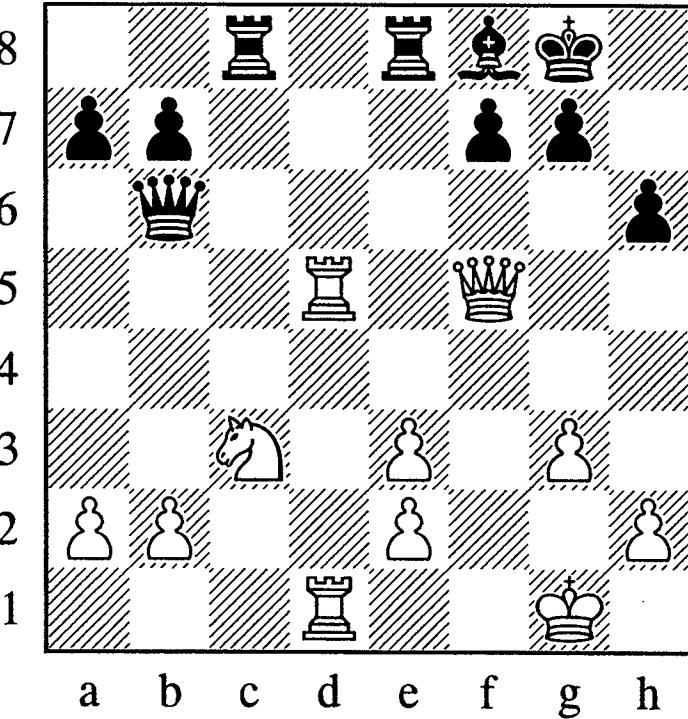
16... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ This is the last word from a stubborn Tarrasch player. 17. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 18. $\mathbb{E}xd5$ $\mathbb{E}e5$

19. $\mathbb{B}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ Verleur – Soltau, corr. 2006, and now 20. $\mathbb{B}d1$ must be better for White.

17. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$

Now Khenkin has tried to keep the bishop with 18. $\mathbb{B}f4$ and Ionov was tempted to take a second pawn with 18. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$, but Bocharov has other intentions.

18. $\mathbb{B}ad1!$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 20. $fxe3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$



21. $\mathbb{B}d7!$

Going for the attack.

21... $\mathbb{W}xb2$

21... $\mathbb{W}xe3\#$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ defends f7 but drops the b-pawn.

22. $\mathbb{W}xf7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d5?!$

White missed the great move 23. $\mathbb{B}1d6!$ when the threat is $\mathbb{B}xh6\#$ mating, and ... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ is impossible because of the pressure on g7. The forced 23... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 24. $\mathbb{B}xe7$ $\mathbb{B}xe7$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 26. $\mathbb{B}d8\#$ $\mathbb{B}xd8$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xd8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 28. $\mathbb{W}d3\#$ $\mathbb{W}xd3$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ leads to a lost pawn ending for Black.

23... $\mathbb{W}xa2$ 24. $\mathbb{W}f3$

White still has active play on the light squares and in the end Black succumbs to the pressure.

24... $a5$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}c2$ 26. $\mathbb{B}1d3$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 27. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{W}e4$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 29. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $\mathbb{B}xe4$ 30. $\mathbb{B}xb7$ $a4$ 31. $\mathbb{B}dd7$ $\mathbb{B}g4?$

The astonishing 31... $\mathbb{B}xe3!$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{B}xe2$ holds.

32. $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{B}xf8$ 33. $\mathbb{B}a7$

Now White has good winning chances.

33... $\mathbb{B}e8$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{B}f8\#?!$

Better was 34... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ so g7 does not drop with check.

35. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{B}ge4$ 37. $\mathbb{B}xg7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 38. $\mathbb{B}h7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 39. $\mathbb{B}xh6$

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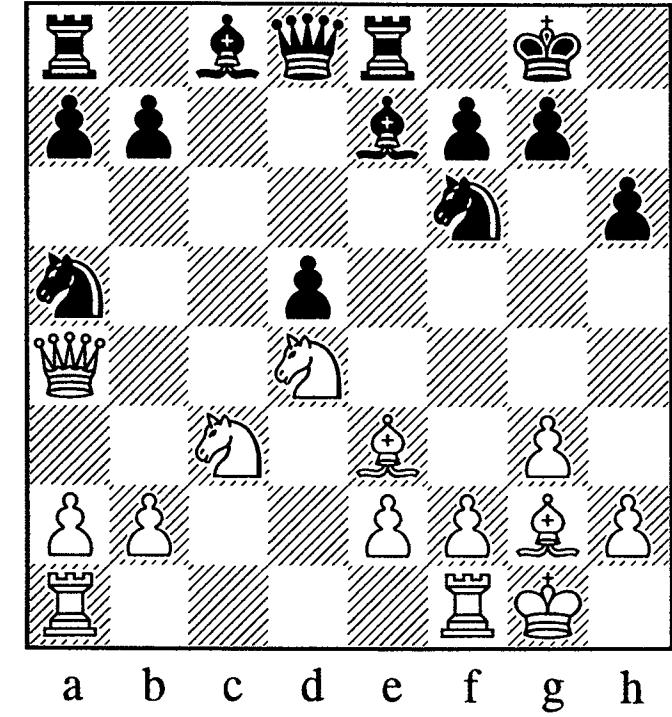
Conclusion: With 12. $\mathbb{W}a4$ White immediately puts pressure on Black's position. After 12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 14. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ the key move 15. $\mathbb{Q}f5!$ is very strong.

Game 56

Leotard – Romanov

Correspondence 2001

1. $d4$ $d5$ 2. $c4$ $e6$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $c5$ 4. $cxd5$ $exd5$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6. $g3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8. 0–0 0–0 9. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $cxd4$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $h6$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{B}e8$ 12. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$



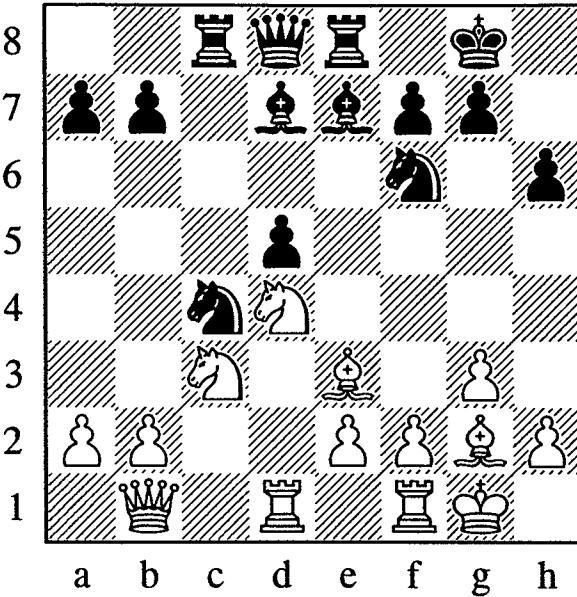
13.♗ad1!

This time White takes the other rook to d1. Black's knight is on its way to c4, so White plans to retreat the bishop to c1 and still wants his rooks to be connected.

13...♘c4

The alternative is:

13...♗d7 14.♗c2 ♜c8 15.♗b1 The queen steps out of the pin. 15...♘c4



And now there are two options:

16.♗f4 ♜a5 17.♗b3 ♜a6 18.♗xd5 ♘xd5
19.♗xd5 ♜h3 20.♗fe1 ♜f6∞ This was Bocharov – Reutsky, Moscow 2007, where Black was very active. Instead White could take the pawn:

16.♗xd5 ♘xd5 17.♗xd5 ♘xe3 18.fxe3 ♜f6 As in Lechtynsky – Damjanovic, Vilnius 1978, when White has a strong novelty: 19.♗xf6! ♜xf6 20.♗f1 ♜e5 21.♗xf7† ♔h8 22.♗xe8 ♜xe3† 23.♔g2 ♜xe8 24.♗d3 White is a pawn up.

14.♗c1

As planned, the bishop gets out of the way.

14...♗d7

There is no ideal alternative:

14...♗b6

Black becomes too passive and the weakness on d5 tells more and more.

15.♗b3 ♜g4 16.♗e3 ♜c5 17.h3 ♜d7 18.♗c2!
♗c7 19.♗xc5 ♜xc5 20.♗d4

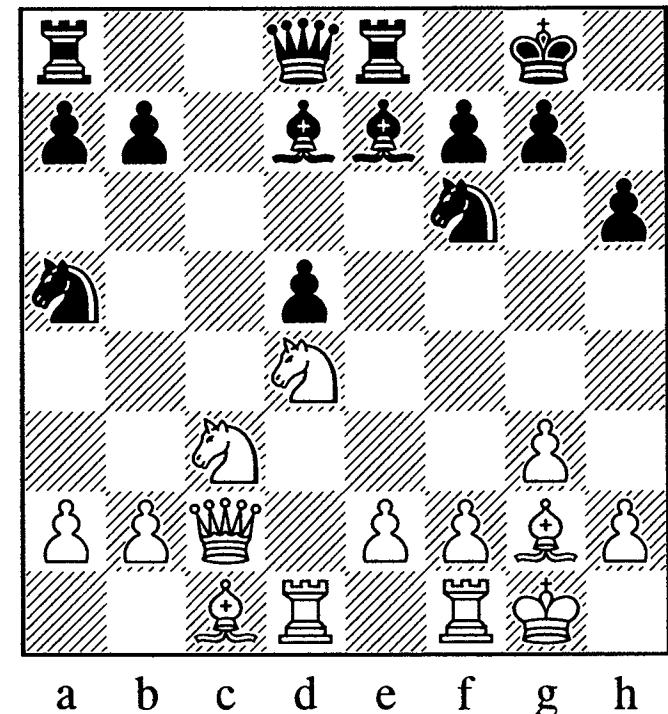
White has managed to exchange the dark-squared bishops and has the typical small but clear anti-IQP advantage.

20...♗ac8 21.♗fd1 ♜e6 22.♗b4 ♜a5 23.♗bx5
♗fxd5 24.♗xd5 ♜c5 25.e3 ♗xd5 26.♗xd5
♗b5 27.♗d3 ♗xd5

Or 27...♗xb2 28.♗xe6 fxe6 29.♗g6 ♜f8
30.♗xe6†.

28.♗xd5 ♜xd5 29.♗xd5 ♜b6 30.b3

With a clear pawn more, Bellmann – Weber, corr. 1998.

15.♗b3 ♜a5 16.♗c2

White has managed to coordinate very well and d5 is ripe.

16...♗b4

Black defends tactically. The pin 16...♗c8 is well answered with 17.♗d3 but the sharper 17.♗f5 also seems good: 17...♗b6 18.♗xd5
♗xd5 19.♗xd5 And White was a pawn up in Skembris – Martidis, Nea Makri 1990.

17.♗xd5!

White is up to the challenge. Instead 17.♗f5 ♜xc3 18.bxc3 ♜xf5 19.♗xf5 ♜c8 is unclear.

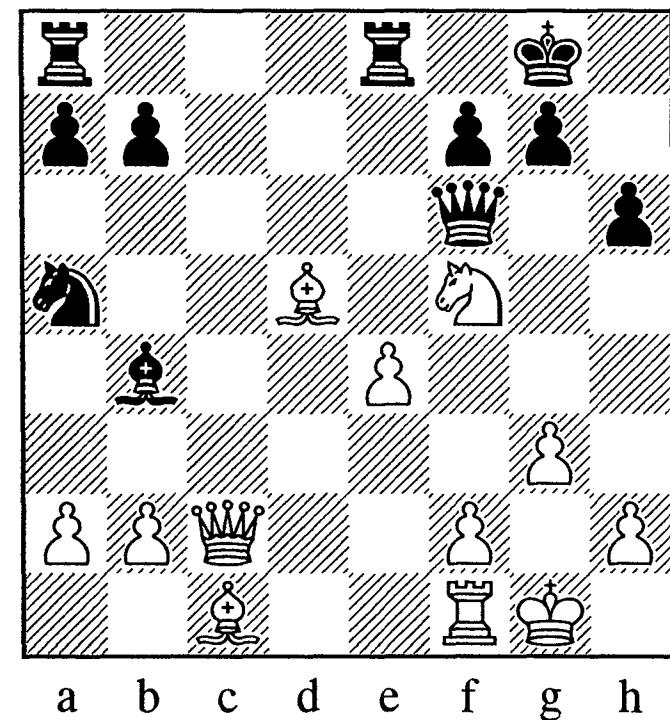
17...♗xd5 18.♗xd5!

A strong novelty. Lautier once played 18.a3?! $\mathbb{E}c8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}d3$ but he probably missed 19... $\mathbb{Q}a4$! though he managed to hold: 20.b3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 21.bxa4 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 22.axb4 $\mathbb{E}xc1$ 23.bxa5 $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 24. $\mathbb{W}b5$ $\mathbb{E}xf1\#$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}d1$ 26. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$ 27. $\mathbb{W}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}d1$ 28. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b2$ With a repetition, Lautier – Grischuk, Biel 2001.

18... $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f5!$

White sacrifices the exchange. Instead 19. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ was nothing: 19... $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{W}d5\#$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}xa2$ and Black has regained the pawn.

19... $\mathbb{W}f6$ 20.e4 $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 21. $\mathbb{E}xf1$



White has a pawn and a fantastic bishop on d5 for the exchange.

21... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 22. $\mathbb{W}c7$

White goes for a second pawn, but allows some counterplay. 22. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{E}ac8$ 23. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}c3\pm$, with play all over the board, was probably more convincing.

22... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$

The opposite-squared bishops give Black some hope of holding. However, that White is still much better is beyond all reasonable doubt.

27. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{E}ac8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{E}f8$ 29. $\mathbb{E}c3$

The rook is on its way to f3 to increase the pressure on Black's soft spot f7, but it is not as clear as it may appear. I would prefer a move like 29. $\mathbb{Q}d5$, just stabilizing the position.

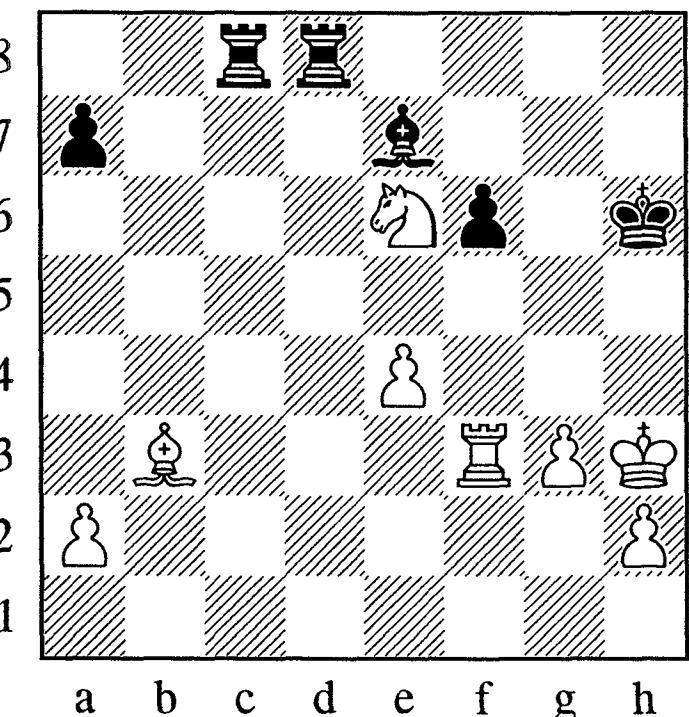
29... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 30. $\mathbb{W}d5$ $\mathbb{E}fd8!$ 31. $\mathbb{W}xf7$ $\mathbb{E}d2$

Suddenly Black becomes active. Who would have believed that a few moves ago?

32. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $\mathbb{G}xf6$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{E}xb2$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{E}xf2\#$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}h3$

However it turns out that White keeps some initiative even in the ending. To begin with, $\mathbb{Q}f4$ is threatened.

35...h5 36. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{E}d2$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{E}dd8$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 40. $\mathbb{E}f3$



White's pieces begin to swarm around the naked black king. Suddenly it is clear that the opposite-coloured bishops help the attacker, just like the books tell us. White has the cunning idea of bringing the rook into a direct assault via f4 and then to g4 or h4.

40... $\mathbb{E}h8$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 42. $\mathbb{E}f4$ $\mathbb{E}h5$ 43. $\mathbb{E}g4\#$ $\mathbb{E}g5$

Desperation, but 43... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 44. $\mathbb{E}g7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 45. $\mathbb{E}xe7$ lost instantly as did 43... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 44. $\mathbb{Q}c7\#$

$\hat{\square}f8$ 45. $\hat{\square}g8\#$. Finally, on 43... $\hat{\square}h6$ decisive is
44. $\hat{\square}g7$ $\hat{\square}g5$ 45. $\hat{\square}f5\#$.

44. $\hat{\square}xg5$ $f \times g5$ 45. e5

White releases his rook and wins easily with the two extra pawns.

45... $\hat{\square}c5$ 46. e6 a5 47. $\hat{\square}d4$ $\hat{\square}e5$ 48. $\hat{\square}f3$ $\hat{\square}f5$ 49. h4 $gxh4$ 50. $gxh4$ $\hat{\square}g6$ 51. $\hat{\square}g4$ $\hat{\square}g7$ 52. $\hat{\square}c4$ $\hat{\square}f8$ 53. $\hat{\square}f4\#$ $\hat{\square}e8$ 54. $\hat{\square}b3$ $\hat{\square}d8$ 55. $\hat{\square}d4$ $\hat{\square}f6$ 56. $\hat{\square}c4$ $\hat{\square}d8$ 57. $\hat{\square}c2$ $\hat{\square}h8$ 58. $\hat{\square}d2\#$ $\hat{\square}e8$ 59. $\hat{\square}f2$ $\hat{\square}e4\#$ 60. $\hat{\square}f4$

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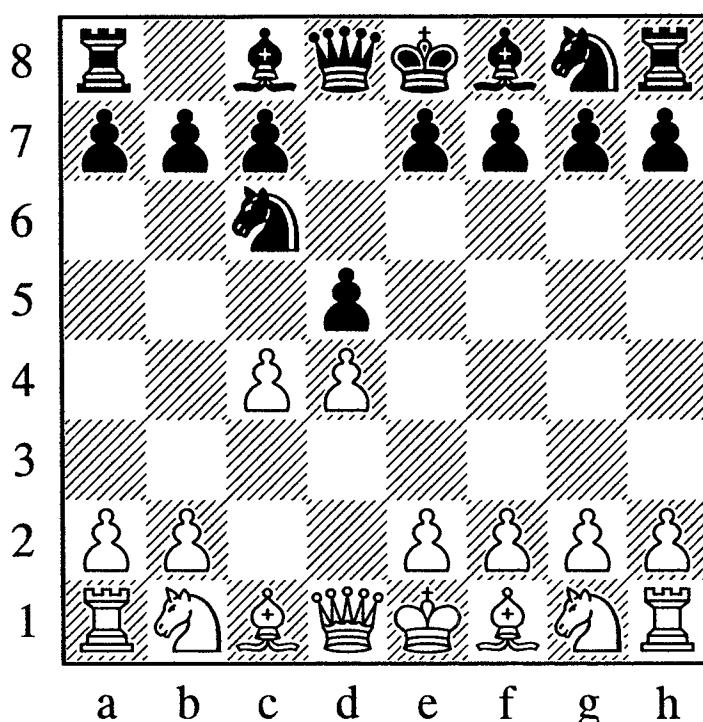
Conclusion: After 12. $\hat{W}a4$ $\hat{\square}a5$ the move 13. $\hat{\square}ad1!$ keeps Black under pressure.

Chapter Conclusion: To be honest I think the Tarrasch is unsound. The isolated queen's pawn is no joke, so it is a nice opening to face. The biggest problem is mental: you must be able to shift to a positional mode and be content with a small but long-term advantage. If you can do this you have every reason to look ahead with optimism as the games in this chapter show.

Chapter 7

The Chigorin

I don't wanna be a product of my environment, I want my environment to be a product of me.
– Frank Costello, *The Departed*

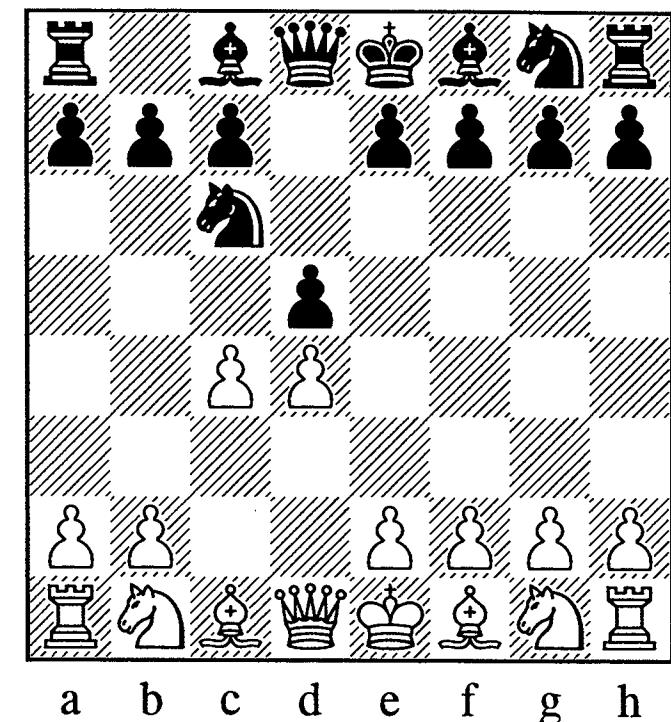


1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♞c6

- The System
- The a6-variation
- The active 4...♝g4
- Early Deviations

- page 206
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- page 214

1.d4 d5 2.c4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$



A provocative move. Quick development and direct confrontation: that's the game Black is playing. He is not hiding his aggressive intentions. As early as move 2 he initiates sharp piece-play full of tactics and allsorts of stuff. If you are looking for a quiet day at the office with the usual safe edge for White, then this is very annoying.

The Chigorin was considered unsound for a long period. The black knight's early outing seemed naive and mainly attracted romantics and hustlers, but then Morozevich started to play it and everything changed almost overnight. Some Russian imagination, coupled with many new ideas, and suddenly everybody wanted to be Moro. The theory of the Chigorin expanded and the opening had a much needed makeover. Many strong players got lost in the chaotic maze and the message to the rest of the world was clear – work had to be done! There was no simple route to a clear advantage for White.

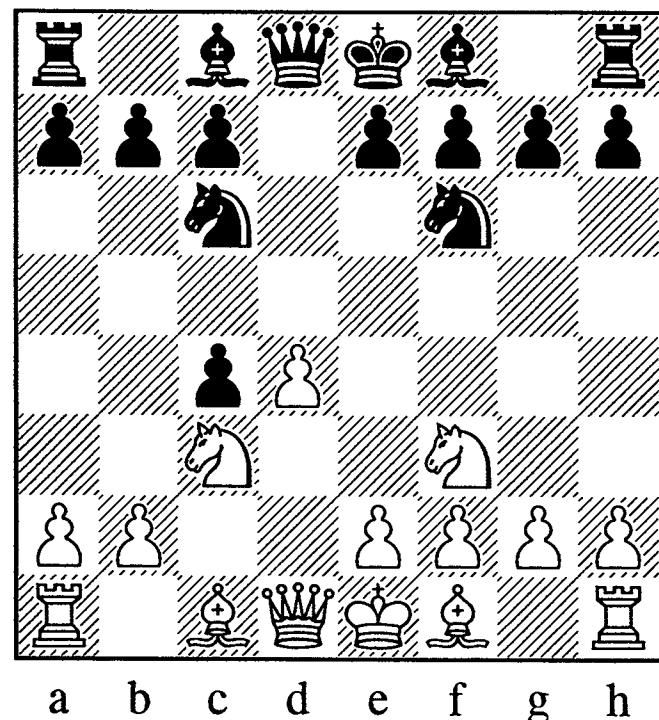
3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$

The other main lines are 3.cxd5 $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 4.e3 e5 5. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{B}b4$ or 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{B}g4$. Black develops quickly and is very active: he is more than willing to concede the bishop pair in the fight for the initiative.

3... $\mathbb{Q}f6$

3...dxc4 is usually just an alternate move order, but we will see more about this topic below.

4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ dxc4



A critical position. The normal 5.e4 leads to very complicated play after 5... $\mathbb{B}g4$, as we saw in the chapter on the Queen's Gambit Accepted. Since I have a choice, I prefer a more stable positional advantage that is as solid as a helmet while my opponent is throwing all his pieces at my face. After all, Black seems eager to burn his bridges and he could incur structural problems that will never go away. The move 5.e3, and then regaining the pawn with $\mathbb{Q}xc4$, is solid alright, but it seems too calm to really threaten Black. Before the Danish Championship some years ago, where I knew one of my opponents was a Chigorin aficionado, I did some serious work on this opening and found an active yet positional approach that has served me well ever since.

The System

It is 9 o'clock in the morning in Germany. You are sitting at the board, but would rather have stayed in bed for at least another hour. The Bundesliga match is about to begin.

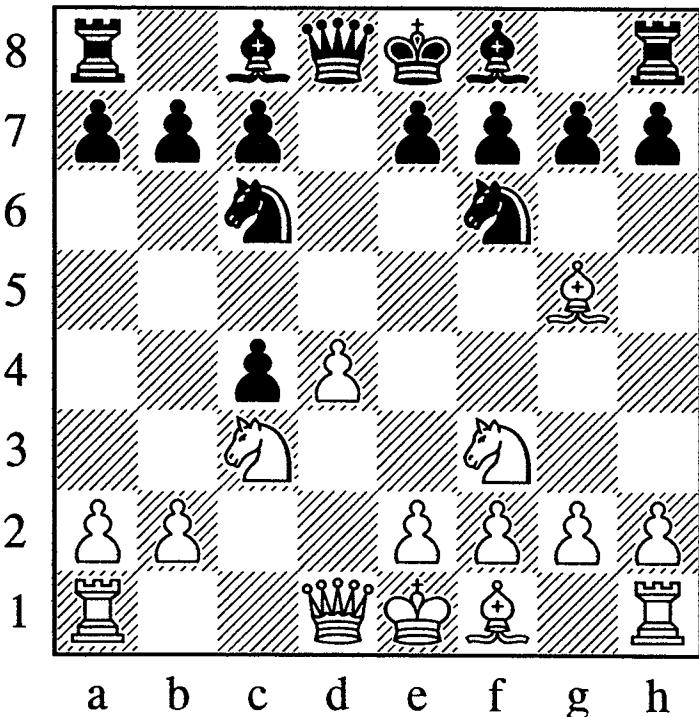
Fortunately you are White against a lower rated opponent and you intend just to play a quiet positional game waiting for an error. But then he surprises you with the sharp Chigorin. You had no idea that he even had this wild opening in his repertoire, so you didn't prepare for it at all. Thank God you have a system to rely on.

Game 57

Schandorff – Willsch

Germany 2004

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♜c6 3.♘c3 ♜f6 4.♗f3 dxc4
5.♕g5**



That's it! White develops the bishop to an active post and is ready to continue with e2-e3 and ♜xc4 with a good position.

5...h6

Black immediately disturbs the bishop. This is by far the most common move, but there are others. The main alternative is 5...a6, with the idea of protecting the pawn with ...b7-b5. This is covered in the next game.

The speculative 5...♝d5 6.e4 ♜xc3 7.bxc3 ♜a5 has been tried by the Chigorin expert

Miladinovic. A simple solution for White is 8.♕xc4! ♜xc4 9.♗a4† c6 10.♗xc4± with more space and a pleasant position. A recent game of mine continued 10...g6? 11.♗e5 ♜e6 12.d5! cxd5 13.♗b5† ♜d7 14.♗xd5 ♜e6 15.♗xb7 ♜c8 16.♗b5† ♜d7 17.♗b3 ♜e6 18.♗b5† ♜d7 19.♗xd7 ♜xd7 20.♗b1 and White was a clear pawn up, Schandorff – Olsson, Helsingør 2008. This is an opening book, so I suggest we leave the game here.

The active 5...♝g4 will backfire. 6.d5 ♜xf3 7.exf3! ♜e5 8.♗d4 ♜d3† 9.♗xd3 cxd3 10.0–0–0 and White regains the pawn with a very nice attacking position, Zhukova – Fakhridou, Yerevan 1996.

6.♗xf6

White gladly gives up the bishop for a knight to gain time and weaken Black's pawn structure.

The sharper 6.♗h4 a6 is more unclear. Black hopes to benefit from the inclusion of the moves ...h6 and ♜h4, but White still gets interesting play for the pawn with 7.e4, as analysed in detail by Avrukh in his brand-new book...

6...exf6

The right recapture. After 6...gxf6 Black will never have a safe king, and if he later seeks active play with ...e5 he seriously weakens the light squares, especially the important square f5.

7.e3 ♜d6

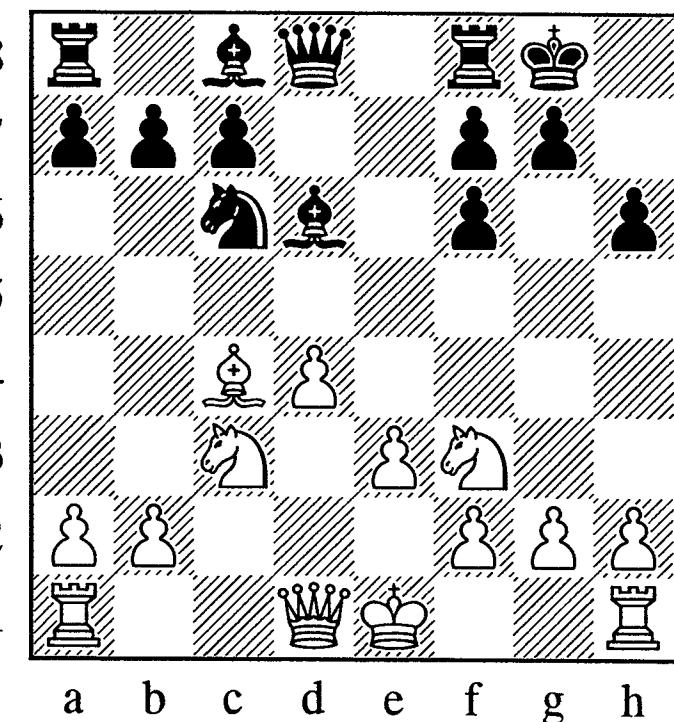
In my debut with this line Black played 7...♝b4 8.♗xc4 0–0 9.♗c2 ♜xc3†? 10.♗xc3 ♜d6 11.0–0 ♜g4 12.♗d2 ♜ae8 13.♗d3 and White enjoyed his superiority in the centre, Schandorff – Lindfeldt, Nyborg 2001.

Dubious is 7...♝a5 because after 8.♗a4† c6 9.b4! cxb3 10.axb3 the knight is in trouble.

10... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 11. $\mathbb{W}xa5$ $\mathbb{W}xa5$ 12. $\mathbb{B}xa5$ $\mathbb{B}b4$ 13. $\mathbb{B}c5!$
wins material: 13... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 15. $dxc5$
 $b6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c2\pm$ Gyimesi – Korpics,
Hungary 1999.

Safer is 10... $b5$, but 11. $\mathbb{Q}xb5!$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}c3$
 $\mathbb{W}b8$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}d3\pm$ is positionally
undesirable for Black, Knudsen – Millstone,
corr. 2001.

8. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 0–0



A rare moment – both sides were striving for exactly the same position! When I play 5. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ I hope for 5... $h6$ so I can take on f6. For my opponent, something similar is the case. He plays 5... $h6$ and is probably a little afraid of the sharp 6. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ so he also hopes for 6. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$. At first sight you can understand him, as Black seems fine. He has easy development, the bishop pair, and perhaps some possibilities on the kingside later on. However after closer study I think White is slightly but distinctly better. White has a superior pawn structure which is very visible in the centre. Maybe even more important from a practical point of view is that White can generate some positional pressure on the queenside, while it is more difficult for Black to use his pawns on the kingside.

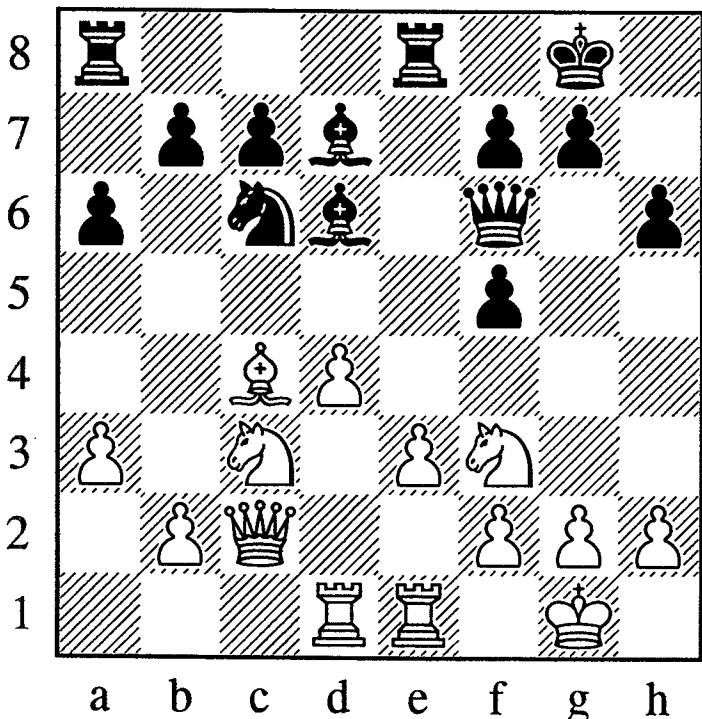
9. $\mathbb{W}c2$

Other natural moves are 9.0–0 and 9.a3 and often they will lead to the same position. The game is slow and strategic, so concrete moves are less important than plans.

9... $a6$ 10.a3 $f5$ 11.0–0 $\mathbb{W}f6$ 12. $\mathbb{B}ad1$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$

In another game White regrouped the knight with 13. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}f4$. After 14... $\mathbb{W}f6$ 15. $g3$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16. $b4\pm$ he had some positional pressure, Agrest – Brynell, Skara 2002.

13... $\mathbb{Q}d7$



Both sides have completed their development without much drama. The strong centre is a long-term advantage, but it also gives some dynamic possibilities connected to the break e3-e4.

14.b4±

Simply taking more space on the queenside.

14... $g5?!$

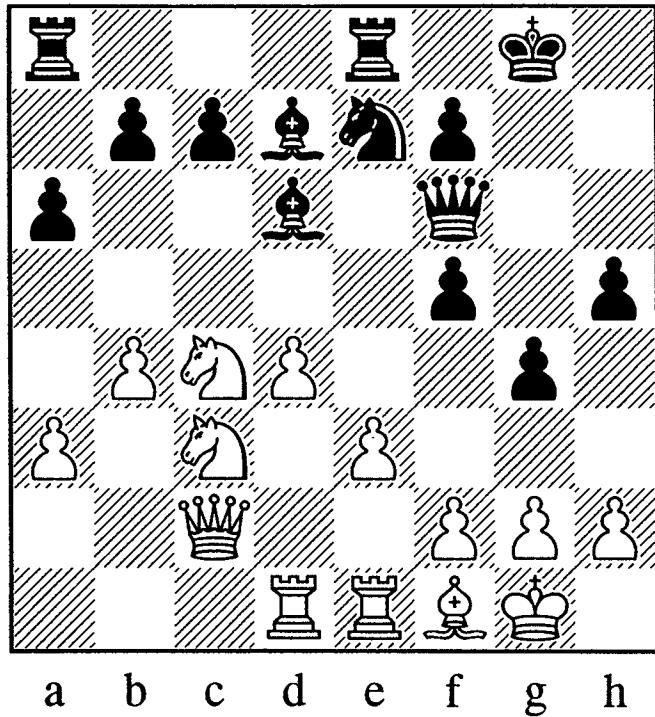
Black is eager to gain counterplay and he similarly takes more space on the kingside. The difference between the two pawn moves is striking though. Black seriously weakens his own king's position by advancing its shelter. Instead he should have stayed calm with a move such as 14... $\mathbb{B}ad8$ or 14... $\mathbb{W}g6$.

15.♘f1

A clever defensive move. White clears a good square for the f3-knight before it is kicked away.

Immediate action with 15.b5 ♘a5 16.♘f1 axb5 17.♘xb5 ♘xb5 18.♘xb5 c6 19.♘d3 or 15.e4 fxe4 16.♘xe4 ♘g6 was not so clear.

15...g4 16.♗d2 h5 17.♗c4± ♘e7?!

**18.e4!**

The break. White's pieces coordinate excellently.

18...fxe4 19.♘xe4 ♘g6 20.♘d3

White is already winning. Equally strong was 20.♘e5 ♘xe5 21.dxe5 ♘f5 22.♘d3 ♘xe4 23.♘xe4 ♘b6 24.e6! fxe6 25.♘c1 followed by ♘g5†.

20...♗h6

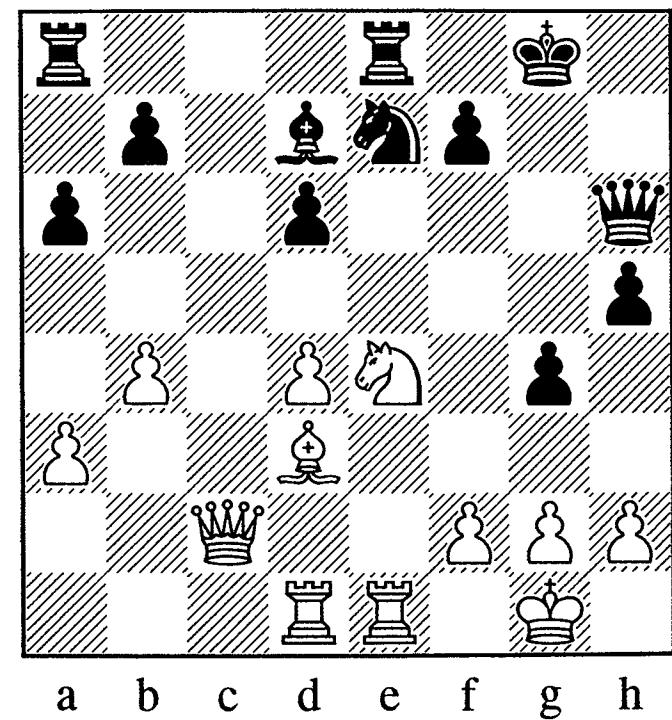
A better try was 20...♘f5 because the combination 21.♘exd6 cxd6 22.♗xe7? ♘xd3 23.♗xe8† ♘xe8 does not work due to back rank problems. Instead 21.♘e5! is strong, as in the previous note.

Not to be recommended was 20...♗f5 21.♘cx d6 cxd6 22.♗g3 and the pin decides.

21.♘cx d6

Also good was 21.♘exd6 cxd6 22.♗b6 ♘ad8 23.♗c7 ♘e6 24.♗xb7.

21...cx d6



22.♗c7

Now I am winning material.

**22...♘a4 23.♘xd6 ♘xd1 24.♗xe8 ♘xe8
25.♗xe7**

The text simplifies, but just as good was 25.♗xd1.

**25...♗xe7 26.♗xe7 ♘d2 27.♗e3 ♘b2
28.♘c4 ♘a4 29.h3**

The extra pawn should decide.

29...gxh3 30.gxh3 ♘b1† 31.♔h2 ♘c2

Black could put up more resistance with 31...♘f5 although he always seems to end up in a difficult bishop ending: 32.♗g3! ♘d7 33.♔h4 (probably even stronger was 33.♘f1 ♘f8 34.♗f4 ♘g6† 35.♔h4) 33...♘f6† 34.♗g5† ♘xg5† 35.♗xg5 ♘xh3 36.♔xh5.

**32.♘d5 ♘c6 33.♗g5† ♘f8 34.♘xc6 bxc6
Not 34...♗xf2† 35.♔g2.**

35.♗c5†

With an easily won pawn ending.

35... $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 36.dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}f4$
 $\mathbb{Q}d5$

38...f6 39.h4 is no better: 39... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 41.f4 and the king penetrates next.

39. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 40. $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 41.h4

1-0

Conclusion: After 2... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ dxc4 the 5. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ variation is interesting. If Black answers 5...h6, just take on f6 and enjoy the much better pawn structure.

The a6-variation

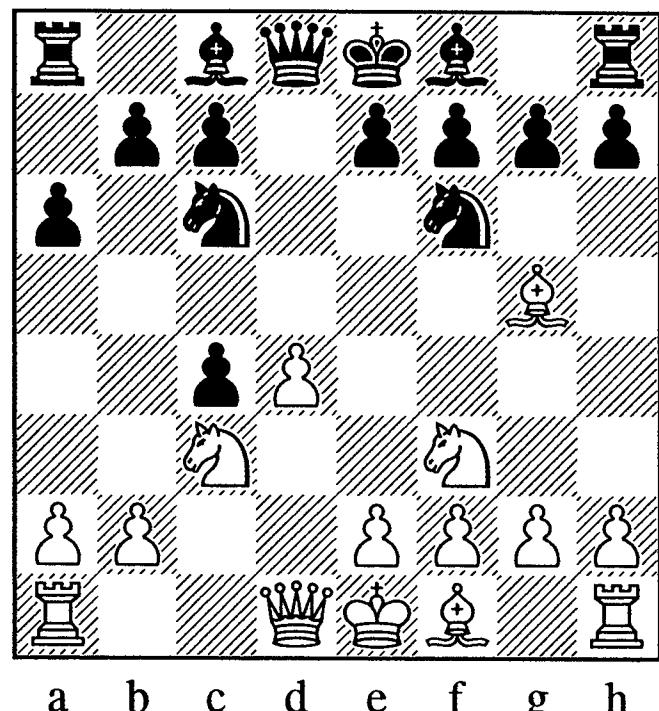
The Queen's Gambit is not usually a real gambit, but it becomes one if Black takes on c4 and is able to follow up with ...a6 and ...b5.

Game 58

Ivanchuk – Arencibia

Havana 2005

1.d4 d5 2.c4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ dxc4 4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$
5. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ a6



A consistent try. Black prepares ...b5 protecting the c-pawn, so White must play actively.

6.d5 $\mathbb{Q}a7$

Another benefit from the little move ...a6: the knight has an extra square.

Instead

6... $\mathbb{Q}a5$

leads to trouble after:

7. $\mathbb{W}a4\#$ c6 8.b4 cxb3 9.axb3 e6 10. $\mathbb{Q}d2!$

The knight on the rim is more or less lost, but some accuracy is required, as 10. $\mathbb{W}xa5?$ $\mathbb{W}xa5$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ would be embarrassing. After 10. $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ Black gets three pawns for the piece, but it should be good for White:

10...b6

Or 10... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}c7\#$

$\mathbb{W}xc7$ 13. $\mathbb{W}xb3\pm$

11.b4 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 12. $\mathbb{W}xb4$ exd5 13.e3 c5 14. $\mathbb{W}a3?!$
0-0 15. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 16. $\mathbb{W}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 17.0-0 b5∞
18. $\mathbb{Q}xc4?!$ dxc4

And now the pawns were a real factor in P. Horvath – Antal, Budapest 2003, but much better would have been 14. $\mathbb{W}b2!±$ 0-0 15. $\mathbb{Q}a4$.

7.e4 $\mathbb{Q}b5$

Bringing the knight back into play and at the same time indirectly threatening White's e-pawn.

Bad was 7...b5 8.e5.

8. $\mathbb{W}a4?!$

Winning the pawn back, which is always nice.

On the other hand it also made good sense to be fast and furious with:

8. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 9.bxc3 b5 10.a4 $\mathbb{Q}b8$

Or 10... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ h6 12. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ and now 12...g5 would seriously weaken the kingside, while looking for counterplay with 12...c6 13.dxc6 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 14.e5! $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 15. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 16. $\mathbb{W}d4$ leaves Black's pieces rather vulnerable.

11.axb5 axb5 12. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}e2$

White has excellent compensation for the pawn.

13... $\mathbb{W}c8$ 14.0–0 c5 15.dxc6 $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 16.e5 $\mathbb{Q}e4$

17. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 18.e6! g6 19.exf7† $\mathbb{Q}xf7$

This was Berkvens – Bromann, Esbjerg 2003, and now the stunning 20. $\mathbb{Q}g4!$ creates irresistible threats, for example 20... $\mathbb{W}xg4$ 21.f3 $\mathbb{W}d7$ 22.fxe4† $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 23.e5 winning.

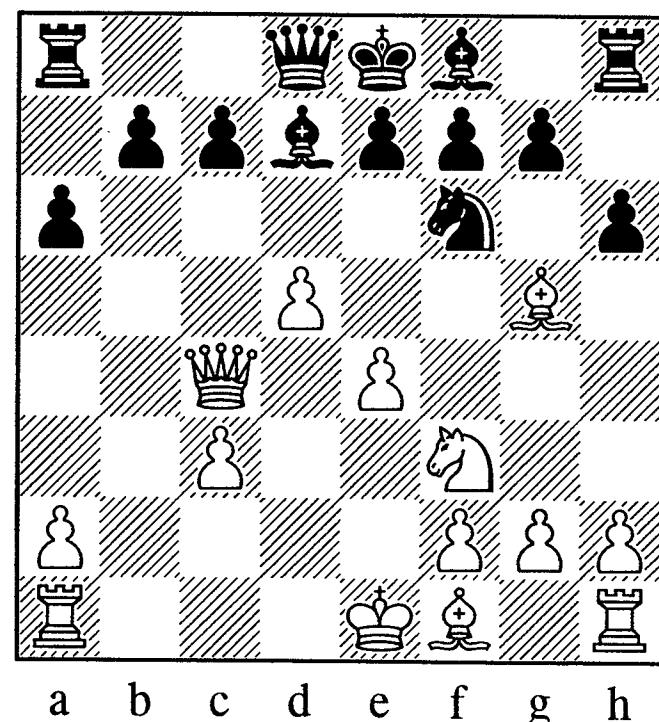
8... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 9. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$

9...h6 10. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ g5 11. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 12.e5 $\mathbb{Q}h5$

13.e6 fxe6 14.dxe6 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 16. $\mathbb{W}d3$

0–0 was fine for Black in Campora – Martinez Martin, Madrid 2007; but better was 10. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ as in the main game.

10.bxc3 h6



11. $\mathbb{Q}f4$

Probably the strongest, not just because it attacks c7, but it is also more flexible than the alternatives.

11. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ b5

Not 11...e6? 12.e5, but 11...g5?! 12. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ is possible.

12. $\mathbb{W}d3$ c6 13. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ cxd5 14.exd5 g5

An improvement could be 14...g6?! 15. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ exf6 and Black is okay after 16. $\mathbb{W}e3†$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 17. $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 18.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$.

15. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}c8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 17. $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 18.0–0
0–0

This was Malmstroem – Migliorini, corr. 2002. Now after:

19. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}fe8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d3$

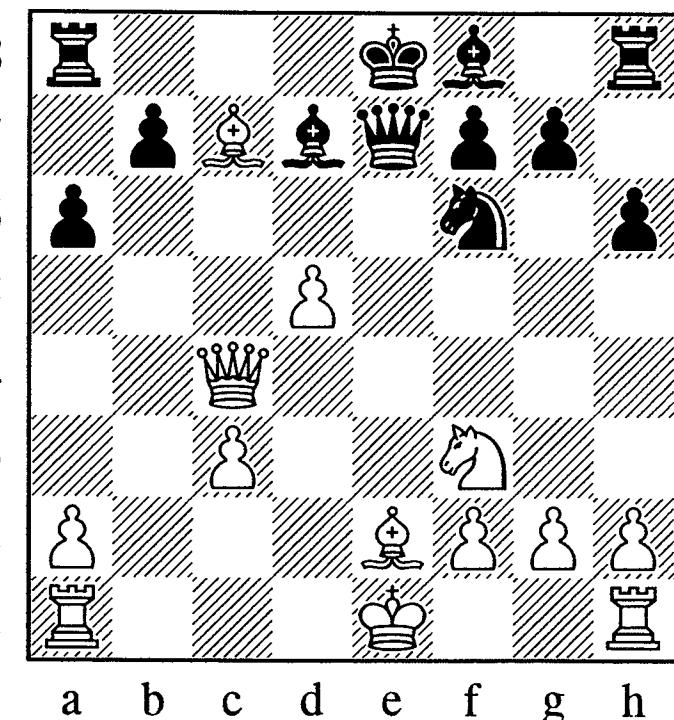
White has some pressure, especially since he can always confront Black's kingside with the move h2-h4.

Finally, 11. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ exf6 followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ is okay for Black.

11...e6

11...b5?! 12. $\mathbb{W}d4$ leaves White nicely centralized. Yet after 12...e6 it is not so easy and following 13. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ exd5 14.exd5 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 0–0 16.0–0 c5! 17.dxc6 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ Black has almost equalized. Still, instead of 16.0–0, by playing 16. $\mathbb{Q}f3$! White could prevent Black's sudden liberation and keep some pressure.

12. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ exd5 13.exd5 $\mathbb{W}e7†$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e2$



Ivanchuk has calculated well. The tactical motifs are on White's side and it is hard for Black to justify his sacrifice.

14...b5

On

14... $\mathbb{Q}b5$

White has

15.d6! $\mathbb{W}xe2\#$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xe2\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$
18. $\mathbb{Q}ab1!$

A nice tactical solution.

18... $\mathbb{Q}xc3\#$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xb1$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e1\#$! $\mathbb{Q}d7$
21. $\mathbb{Q}e5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$
21... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c1\#$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$
24. $\mathbb{Q}d7\#$

22. $\mathbb{Q}g6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d5!$

It is not over yet.

23. $\mathbb{Q}xh8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xh8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}b4$
25. $\mathbb{Q}xb1$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}d8!$
25...a5 26. $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}e7$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$
29.a3 b5 30. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$

And White is better in the ending.

15. $\mathbb{W}d4$

White is a pawn up, but Black can still put up a fight.

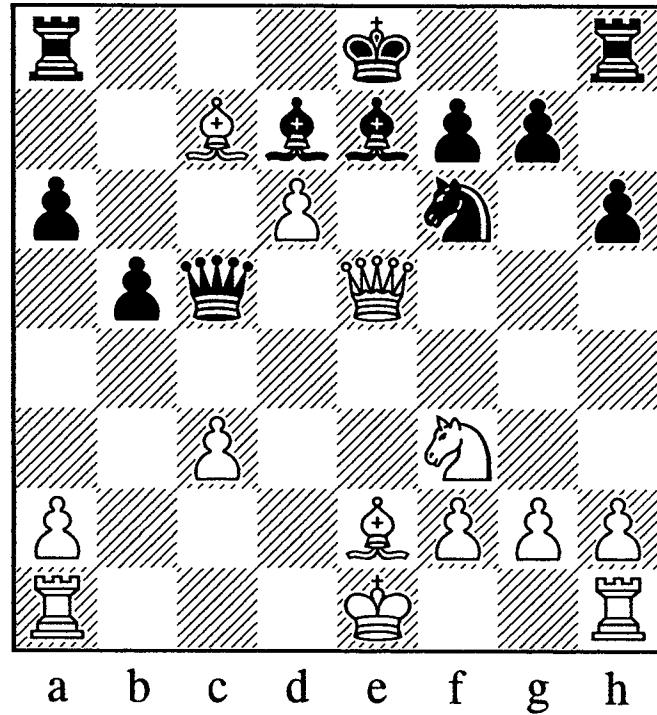
15... $\mathbb{W}c5?!$

But he chooses not to.

The only move was 15... $\mathbb{W}e4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$
17. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 0–0–0! 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$
20.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ and the bishop pair gives some compensation.

White should consider playing for the initiative with 16. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$
18. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 20.0–0 which is probably stronger.

16. $\mathbb{W}e5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 17.d6!



Now everything goes White's way and Ivanchuk quickly picks up the point.

17... $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$

Or 18... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 19.0–0–0 $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$
21. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xb5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}he1\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$
24. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3\#$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}b2+$ — with a pawn more.

**19. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 21.0–0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e6$
22. $\mathbb{Q}c6$**

Threatening $\mathbb{Q}d8\#$.

22... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}he1$ h5 24. $\mathbb{Q}a7$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}c6$
1–0

Conclusion: After 2... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$
 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ Black's flank play with 5...a6 is well tamed by White's expansion in the centre: 6.d5 $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 7.e4 $\mathbb{Q}b5$. As a bonus White can even choose between regaining the pawn with 8. $\mathbb{W}a4?$ or playing for quick development with 8. $\mathbb{Q}c2$. Both seem good.

The active 4... $\mathbb{Q}g4$

So far we have focused on 4... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$. Instead, the aggressive bishop move 4... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ is appealing to many Chigorin fans, but it is probably inaccurate. Let's have a look.

Game 59

Ribli – Wittmann

Dubai (ol) 1986

1.d4 d5 2.c4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$

The desired move. Unfortunately for Black, his influence in the centre is not secure and White can release the tension and take the initiative.

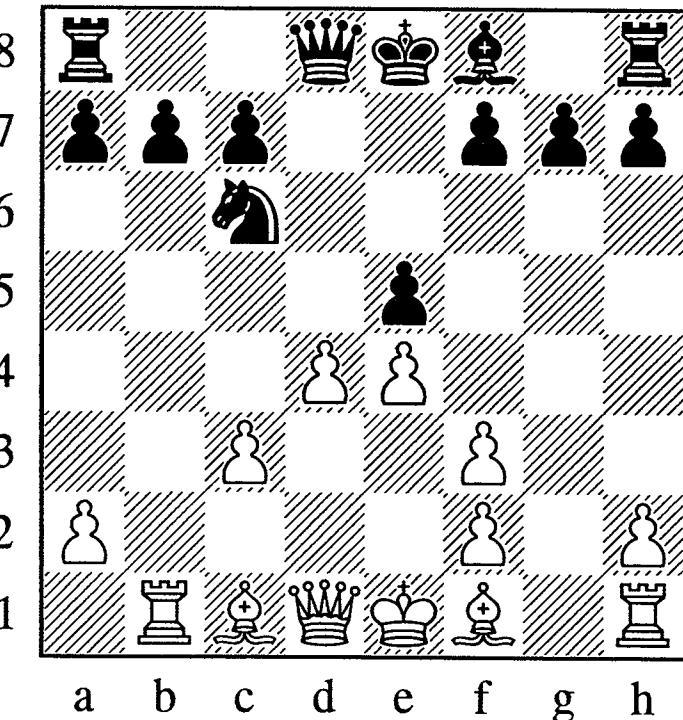
5.cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 6.e4 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$

At least this weakens the white pawns. 6... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 7.bxc3 e5 8.d5 $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 9. $\mathbb{W}a4\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}f6$, with the idea 11. $\mathbb{Q}xd7?$ $\mathbb{W}xc3\#$, has been tried. However 11. $\mathbb{Q}e2!±$ is simply good for White.

7.gxf3 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$

7... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 8.d5 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 9.f4 is overwhelming for White. The following is a very convincing example: 9... $\mathbb{Q}ed7$ 10.a4 c6 11.a5 $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 12.a6 (with a series of aggressive pawn moves Khalifman crushes his opponent) 12... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 13.axb7 $\mathbb{W}xb7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}a6$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 15. $\mathbb{W}a4$ cxd5 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}b7$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 18.e5 White was completely winning. The finish came quickly: 18... $\mathbb{Q}cb6$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xa7$ $\mathbb{B}xb7$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 21. $\mathbb{B}a8\#!$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 22. $\mathbb{W}c8\#$ 1-0 Khalifman – Kaftan, Bad Wiessee 1997.

8.bxc3 e5 9. $\mathbb{B}b1!$



A key move. The pressure on b7 is not so easy to parry and Black feels the absence of the light-squared bishop.

9... $\mathbb{Q}d6$

Black accepts the inevitable and just develops.

The alternatives are truly horrible:

9... $\mathbb{Q}a5?$ turns out badly after 10. $\mathbb{B}b5$ b6

11. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ (or 11...c6 12. $\mathbb{B}xe5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}a3$) 12. $\mathbb{B}xa5$ 1-0 Burkart – Haubt, Germany 1989.

9... $\mathbb{B}b8?$ 10. $\mathbb{W}a4!$ is also precarious for Black, for instance 10... $\mathbb{W}f6$ 11.dxe5 $\mathbb{W}xf3$ 12. $\mathbb{B}xb7!+–$.

Finally on 9...exd4 both 10. $\mathbb{B}xb7$ and 10. $\mathbb{W}a4$ seem very strong.

10.d5

A surprising decision.

Taking the pawn is obvious but double-edged: 10. $\mathbb{B}xb7$ 0-0

Black has some compensation, primarily because the white king will never be satisfied. The only practical example I could find is not of much value though:

11. $\mathbb{W}a4$

Possible is 11.d5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12. $\mathbb{B}gl$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 14. $\mathbb{W}b3$.

11... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12.f4!? exf4 13.e5?

13. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ was forced.

13... $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}g2$

14.dxe5? $\mathbb{W}d5$, hitting both rooks, is a fun line and probably what White overlooked.

14... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 15. $\mathbb{B}xa7$ $\mathbb{B}xa7$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$

Now Black is better.

17. $\mathbb{Q}a3?$ $\mathbb{W}e7\#$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3$

And now he was a piece up in Vareille – Dubois, Marseilles 2001.

White could try to benefit from the second open line and use the other rook to hit g7 with 10. $\mathbb{B}g1!$? when Black cannot castle because of $\mathbb{Q}h6$. Then 10...exd4 11.cxd4 $\mathbb{W}e7$ 12. $\mathbb{B}b5$ (12.d5) 12... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ 14. $\mathbb{B}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 16. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{W}f6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 18. $\mathbb{B}hc1$ f6 19. $\mathbb{B}xc6\#$ and White had some pressure in Hoffmann – Hermann, Germany 1992.

10... $\mathbb{Q}b8?!$

The only move was 10... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ when 11. $\mathbb{W}a4\#$ $c6$ 12. $\mathbb{E}g1$ $g6$ 13. $c4$ 0–0 14. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $b6!$ is quite solid for Black. With 15. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $cx d5$ 16. $cxd5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 17. $\mathbb{W}d7!$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xd8$ $\mathbb{E}fxd8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e2\pm$ White keeps an edge in the ending with the bishop pair. If that is not enough, then worth a try is 11. $\mathbb{E}g1$ $g6$ and now 12. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ or 12. $\mathbb{Q}h6$.

11. $\mathbb{E}g1!$ $g6$ 12. $\mathbb{E}xb7\pm$

Now there is not much to show for the pawn.

12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $f6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 15. $h4$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 16. $\mathbb{E}b5$ $a6$ 17. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{E}ab8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}a4$

Very cooperative: there was no reason to exchange queens. Black could have tried 19... $\mathbb{E}xb1$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xb1$ $\mathbb{W}a4$ although 21. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ keeps White's advantage.

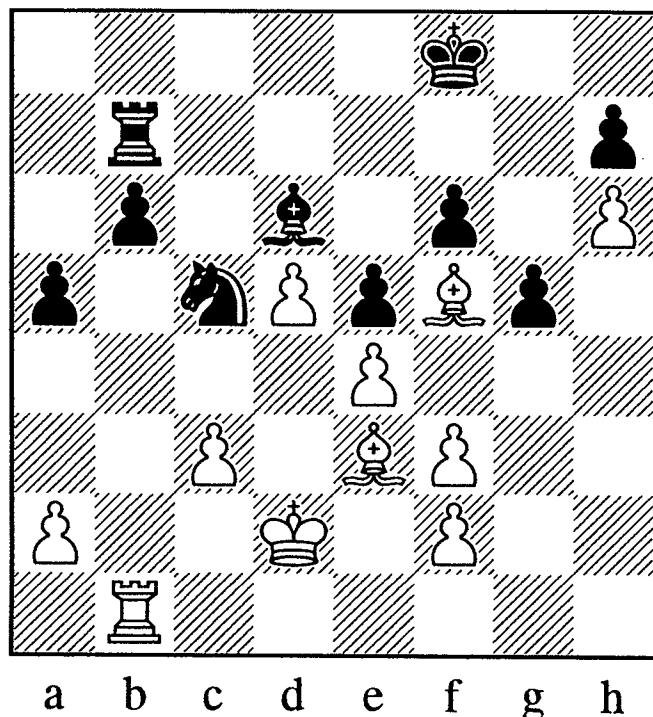
20. $\mathbb{W}xa4$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d2$

Now Black has no counterplay.

21... $\mathbb{E}a8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{E}hb8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{E}b6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 25. $\mathbb{E}b4$ $\mathbb{E}ab8$ 26. $\mathbb{E}gb1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $a5$ 29. $\mathbb{E}xb6$ $cxb6$ 30. $h5$ $g5$ 31. $h6$

Fixing the weakness on h7.

31... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{E}b7$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}c8$ $\mathbb{E}b8$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{E}b7$



35. $\mathbb{Q}xh7!$

A drastic solution. The position remained very closed and White was in desperate need of an entry point.

35... $\mathbb{E}xh7$ 36. $\mathbb{E}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 37. $c4$

The queenside pawns are very strong. If Black tries to use his rook to stop them he has to leave the h-pawn and that will prove to be fatal.

37... $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$

Or 37... $\mathbb{E}c7$ 38. $c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 39. $\mathbb{Q}xc5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 40. $\mathbb{E}b8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 41. $h7$ and wins.

38. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 39. $\mathbb{E}c6$

Preparing c4-c5.

39... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 40. $c5$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}d3$

The king joins the other forces and secures the victory with an impressive finish.

41... $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 43. $d6$ $g4$ 44. $\mathbb{E}c7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $gxf3$ 46. $c6$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 47. $\mathbb{E}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}c5$

1–0

Conclusion: The tempting 4... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ is just asking for trouble and after 5. $cxd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 6. $e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 7. $gxf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 8. $bxc3$ $e5$, Ribli's 9. $\mathbb{E}b1!$ is the punisher.

Early Deviations

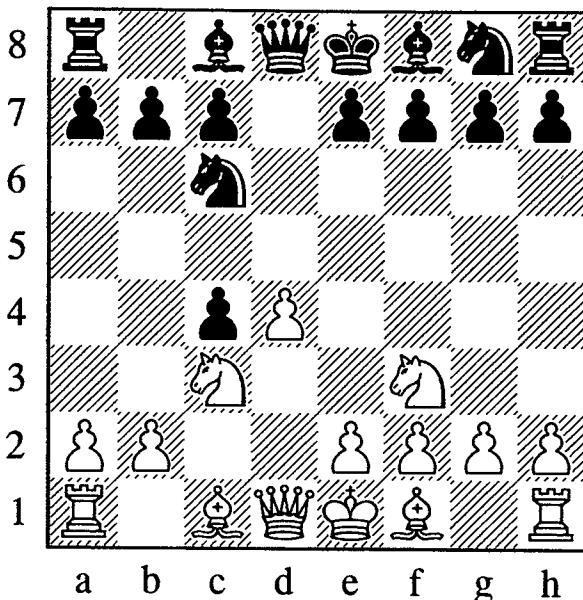
Black has few possibilities to avoid the lines presented above, so here is a quick overview of the lines to know.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$

A logical move, but Black has two other options.

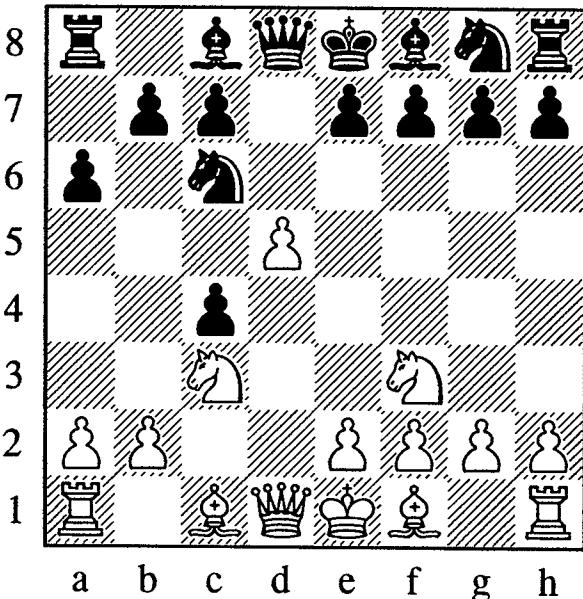
Firstly he could take on c4 at once. This could actually be the most precise move order:

3...dxc4 4.♘f3



But now Black should definitely play 4...♘f6 transposing to the main line. Other tries are insufficient.

a) 4...a6 5.d5 is promising for White no matter where the knight goes:



a1) 5...♘a5 lands the knight in trouble as usual. 6.♗a4† c6 7.b4 cxb3 8.axb3 e6 9.♗d2! (not 9.♗xa5? ♗xa5 10.♗xa5 ♗b4) 9...b6 10.b4±

a2) 5...♘a7 We know this finesse by now. 6.e4 b5 7.a4 and the black pawns are under pressure. 7...b4 8.♘a2 e6 9.♗xc4± White has regained the pawn with advantage.

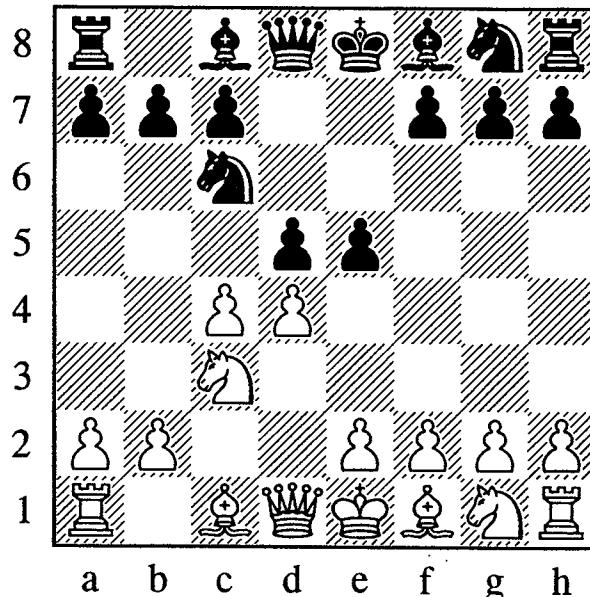
a3) 5...♘b8 6.a4 Preventing ...b5 and thereby restricting Black and trying to win the pawn back. (6.e4 b5 7.♗f4∞ was the alternative) 6...e6 7.e4 exd5 8.♗xd5 ♘c6 9.♗xd8† ♘xd8

10.♗xc4 With active play for White which – even without the queens – should count for something. 10...♗d6 Schmidt – Vaassen, corr. 1990, and 11.e5 ♗b4 12.♗d2 ♗e6 13.♗d5 ♗xd2† 14.♗xd2 ♗xd5 15.♗xd5 ♗e7 16.♗e4± gives White the better ending.

b) 4...♗g4 5.d5 ♗xf3 6.exf3! Once again this is the right capture. 6...♘e5 (6...♘a5? 7.♗a4† c6 8.b4+) 7.♗f4 ♗g6 (after 7...♘d3† 8.♗xd3 cxd3 White can choose between 9.♘b5, 9.♗xd3 and 9.0–0: they all seem very strong) 8.♗xc4! With the point 8...♘xf4? 9.♗b5† c6 10.dxc6 and wins. Instead Black must play 8...♘f6 and now the main line is 9.♗g3 while Ivanchuk has tried 9.♗e3. I will propose a third move, the novelty 9.♗a4†! ♘d7 10.♗e3 a6 11.♗e2 b5 12.♗b3 ♘f6 13.0–0± and Black won't survive for long.

c) 4...e6 5.e3 (5.e4 is also good of course) 5...♘f6 6.♗xc4 ♗d6 7.0–0 0–0 8.♗b5!± Preventing ...e5 and keeping control, Schandorff – Olesen, Denmark 2004.

Black's second option is to play the Albin-like: 3...e5



This is romantic, but hardly correct. After 4.cxd5 ♘xd4 5.e3 ♘f5 it already starts to look suspicious. Play can continue 6.♘f3 ♗d6 7.e4 ♘fe7 8.♗b5† ♗d7 9.♗b3± and White has a small, but very pleasant, advantage.

4.♘f3

Actually it is not only Black who can deviate.

White has the interesting possibility 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.♘f3. Then Black's two most obvious moves transpose to favourable lines for White: 5...♗f5 6.♗b3 as shown below and 5...♗g4 6.e4 which we know from the Ribli game.

However, the discussion is rather academic because Black can always use the 3...dxc4 4.♘f3 ♘f6 move order as mentioned above.

4...♗f5!?

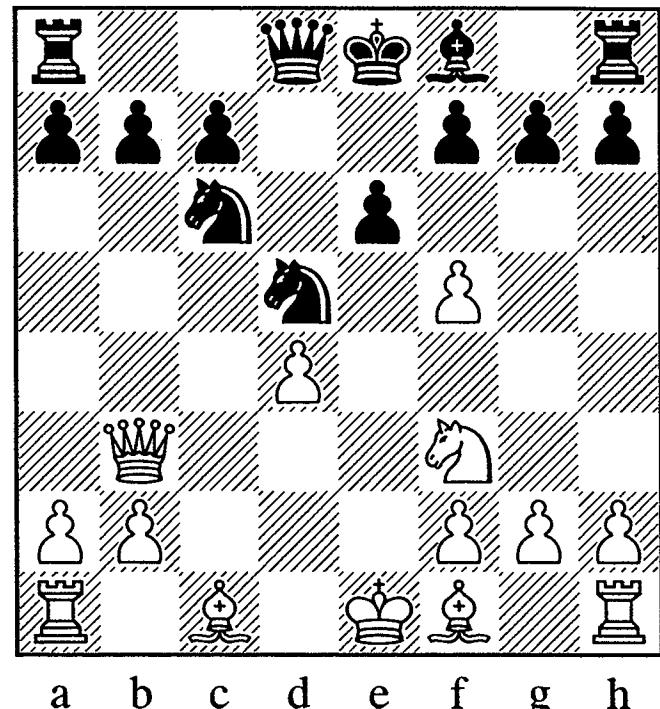
The last attempt. Just like the 4...♗g4 variation, it is rather risky though: Black's best move is 4...dxc4 transposing to our mainlines. Worth mentioning is 4...e6 5.♗g5 with a nice Queen's Gambit Declined for White, as the knight is misplaced on c6.

5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♗b3!

Taking the initiative with direct threats.

6...e6 7.e4

Not 7.♗xb7? ♘db4.

7...♘xc3 8.exf5 ♘d5**9.♔d2!**

A strong novelty. Instead 9.♗xb7 ♘b4† 10.♔d1 ♘de7 11.♗b5 0–0 12.♗xc6 ♘b8 13.♗a6 ♘b6 14.♗c4 ♘xc6 15.fxe6 fxe6 16.♗e3 ♘a5 17.♗c2 ♘d5 gave Black great play in Abbasov – Miladinovic, Colomiers 2008.

9...♗d6

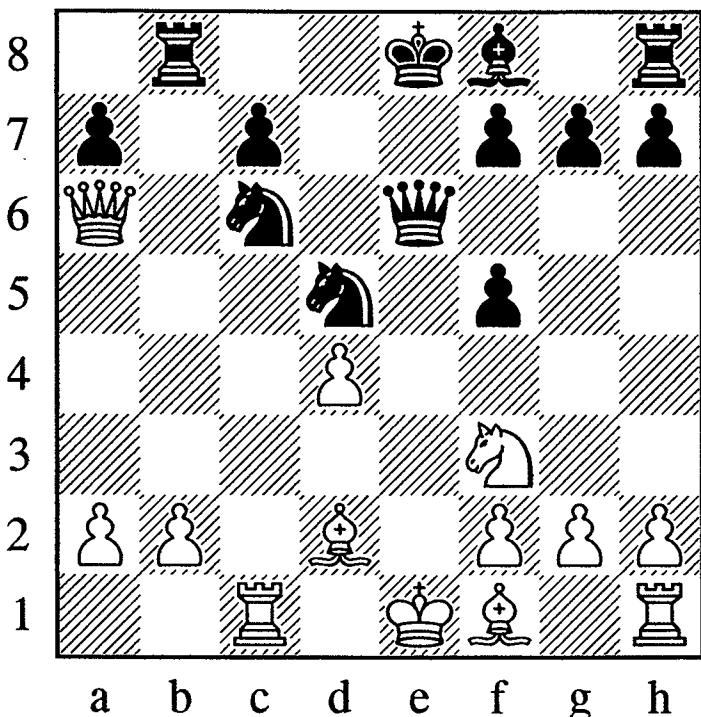
9...♗b8 10.fxe6 fxe6 11.♗b5±

10.♗xb7!

Now that Black does not have a disruptive check on b4, this is strong.

10...♗b8 11.♗a6 exf5

Safer was 11...♗e7 but White is still much better after 12.♗c1 ♘b6 13.♗a4 0–0 14.♗b5.

12.♗c1 ♘e6†

This was Sargissian – Miladinovic, Plovdiv 2008, and now after the improvement:

13.♔d1!

White is completely winning. The knight on c6 is hanging and ♘b5 and ♘e1 are coming.

Conclusion: Black sometimes tries 3...dxc4, but after 4.♘f3 he does best to get back in line and transpose to the main variation with 4...♗f6. The alternatives are clearly worse. Also after 3...♗f6 4.♘f3 the attempt to avoid the dxc4-line with the seemingly active 4...♝f5 was blown to pieces by Sargissian's brilliant play.

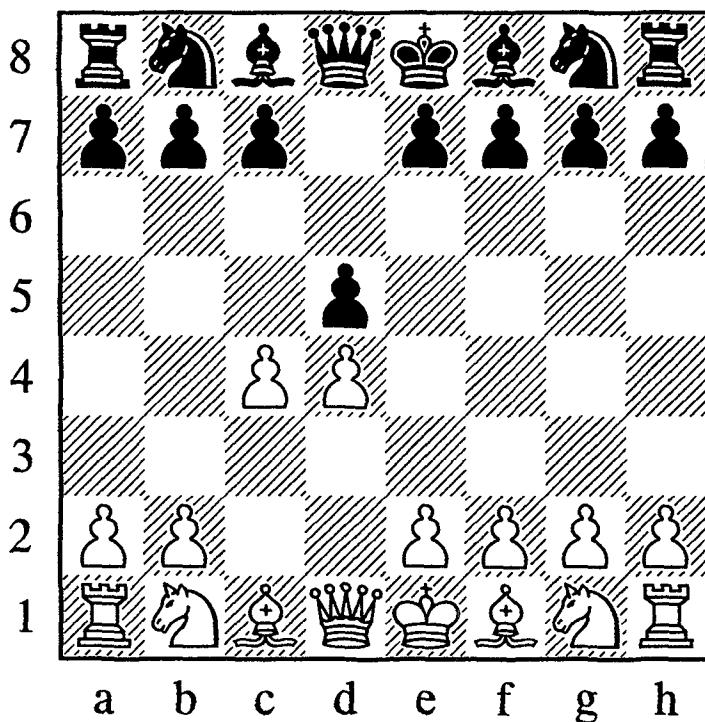
White should be aware that he can also vary! After 3...♗f6 he has 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.♘f3 as an interesting extra option.

Chapter Conclusion: The 5.♗g5 variation is an easy-to-learn and rather attractive way of meeting the Chigorin. White fights for the initiative while also keeping a sound structure. As you have probably guessed by now, I don't think too highly of the Chigorin in general, so I am quite sure White can get an advantage in several ways. If you already have an antidote to it, then just stick with that, or else you can try 5.♗g5 and see if you like it.

Chapter 8

Minor Lines

Convince me that the truth is always grey
– The Killers



1.d4 d5 2.c4

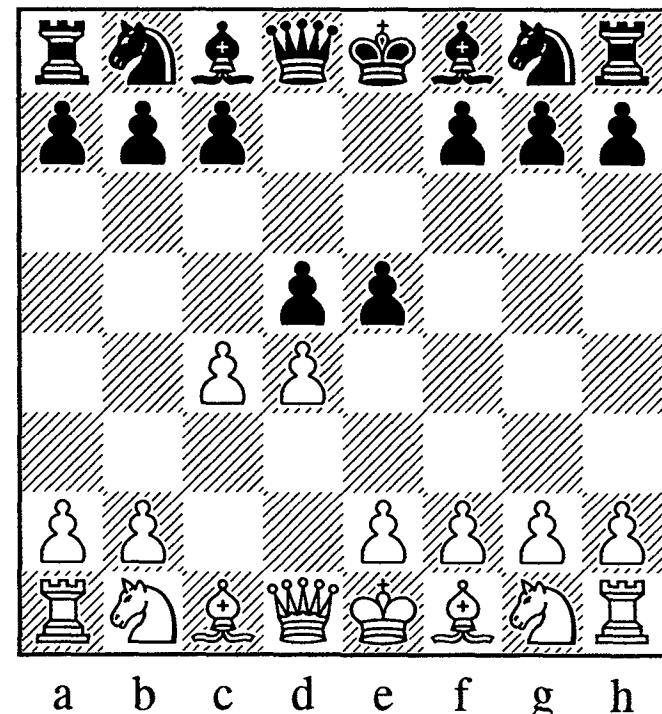
The Albin Counter-Gambit	page 220
The Von Hennig-Schara Gambit	page 223
The 2... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ Variation	page 226
The Symmetrical 2...c5	page 229
The Triangle Variation	page 231
The Semi-Tarrasch	page 236
The QGD with 3... $\mathbb{Q}b4$	page 238

In this final chapter we will briefly examine Black's various other tries after 1.d4 d5 2.c4. These openings are very different from each other, but what they do have in common is that they are too small, too rare or too bad to have their own chapter.

We start with a classic.

The Albin Counter-Gambit

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5

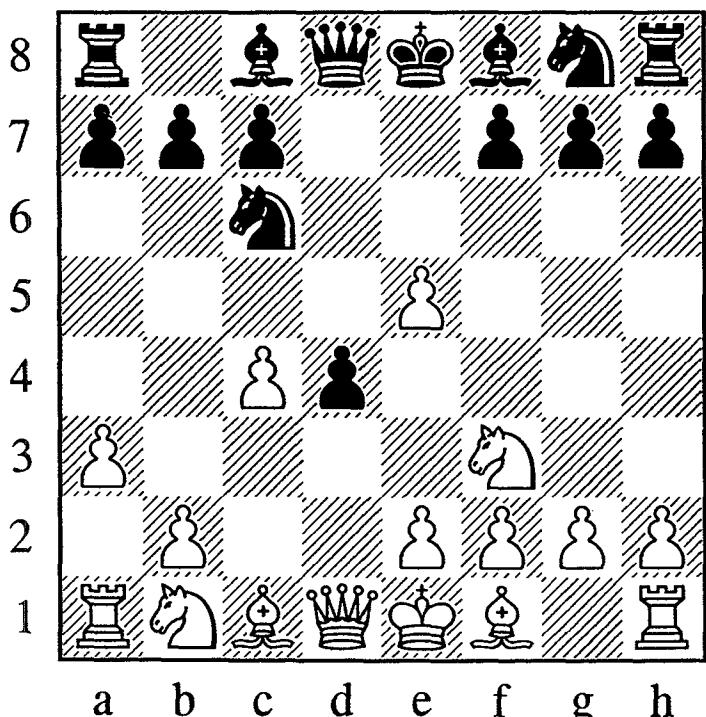


The Albin. Black counterattacks in the centre and answers White's gambit with a gambit of his own. Black sacrifices the e-pawn in search of central control and rapid development. The opening originates from the romantic era and is hardly correct. It received a boost when the inventive Russian Morozevich suddenly used it, but now the time has come to bury it again.

3.dxe5 d4

The positional point: Black's d-pawn hinders White's normal development, and Black is ready to follow up with ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$, ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$, ... $\mathbb{W}d7$ and then castle long with an active position.

4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 5.a3!



A simple and very strong move: White plans b4 and $\mathbb{Q}b2$ hitting the d-pawn. The traditional mainline has been 5.g3, but I believe the future belongs to 5.a3.

5... $\mathbb{Q}ge7$

The choice of Morozevich. Black intends ... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ and capturing on e5. This will be examined in Game 60. Here we will take a look at the alternatives.

5...a5 Stopping White's expansion. 6. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ Threatening $\mathbb{Q}b3$ with an attack on the d-pawn. 6... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 7.h3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ (on 7... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 8. $\mathbb{W}b3$ is strong) 8. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 9.h4!? $\mathbb{Q}ge7$ 10.h5± White has prevented ... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ and is much better. 10... $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 12. $\mathbb{W}c2$ a4 13. $\mathbb{Q}h4$! $\mathbb{W}e7$ 14.g3 $\mathbb{W}e6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 17.e6! fxe6 18. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ White was winning in Kujoth – Stoppel, corr. 1948.

5...f6 6.exf6 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 7.e3 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ and Black has nothing for the pawn.

5... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}ge7$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ (7... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 8. $\mathbb{W}d3$ ±) 8. $\mathbb{Q}bxsd4$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 9. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 11.e3 $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ ± The bishop pair rules, Ivanisevic – Khenkin, Subotica 2008.

5... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 7.h3 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 8. $\mathbb{W}a4$ 0–0–0 9.b4 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ (9... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}b2$) 10. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$

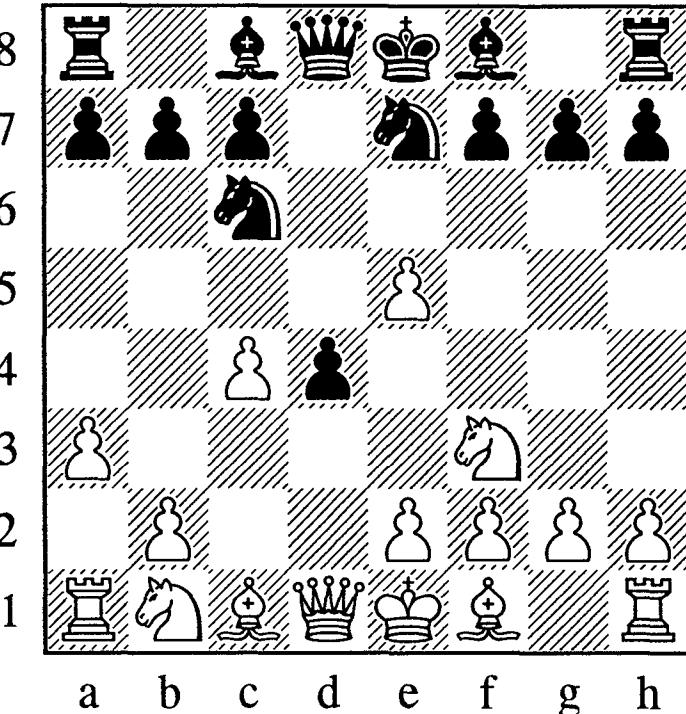
11.♗b2 ♗b8 12.g4 ♗g6 13.♗g2 ♖f6 14.♗f3
 ♖f4 15.0–0± White simply wants to take on d4 and if Black takes back with the rook then e2-e3 is winning. 15...h5 16.♗xd4! ♖xd4 17.e3
 ♖d6 18.♗xd4 hxg4 19.♗fd1 gxh3 20.♗c6†
 bxc6 21.♗xd6 ♗xd6 22.♗xc6 ♖h5 23.c5
 h2† 24.♗h1 1–0 P.H. Nielsen – Rasmussen,
 Denmark (ch) 2008.

Game 60

Topalov – Morozevich

Monte Carlo 2005

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 d4 4.♗f3 ♗c6 5.a3
 ♗ge7



6.b4 ♗g6

Black goes for the weak e5-pawn.

6...♗g4 7.♗b2 ♗f5 8.♗d3 g6 has been played a couple of times. Avrukh suggests 9.♗e4! ♗xf3 10.exf3 ♗h6 11.f4 0–0 12.♗d2±.

7.♗b2 a5

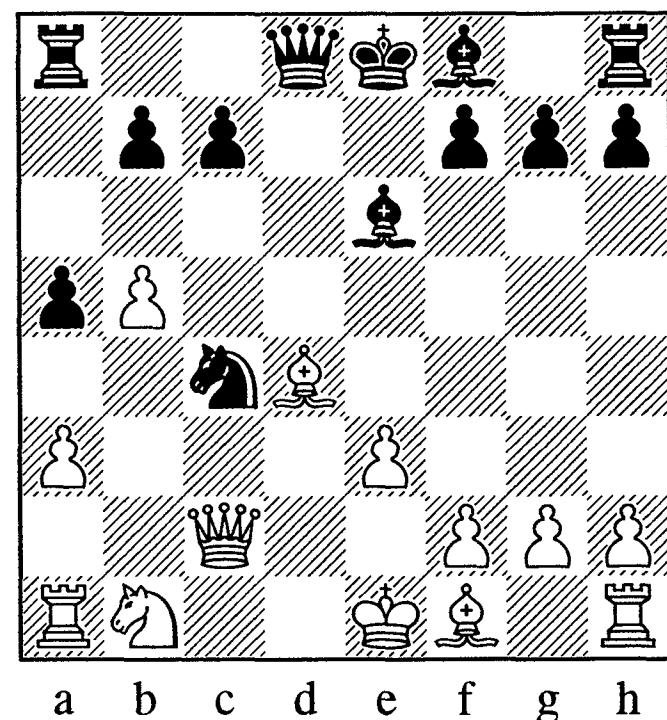
First he weakens White's pawn structure. The immediate 7...♗gxe5 8.♗xe5 ♗xe5 9.e3 ♗e6 10.♗xd4 is definitely not better.

8.b5 ♗cxe5 9.♗xe5

Here White could also go for a pleasant ending with 9.♗xd4 ♗xd4 10.♗xd4 ♗xc4 11.e3 ♗d6 12.♗bd2 ♗d7 13.a4 f6 14.♗d3 ♗f5 15.♗e2± ♗e4? 16.g4! ♗xd2 17.gxf5 ♗b3 18.fgx6 ♗xa1 19.♗xa1± Stojanovic – Tadic, Vrsac 2007.

9.♗xd4 has also been tried, but is less clear.

9...♗xe5 10.e3 ♗e6 11.♗xd4 ♗xc4 12.♗c2



12...♗d6

Nigel Davies suggests 12...♗d5 in his book *Gambiteer 2*. It is hard to understand, as 13.♗c3 ♗g5 14.f4 ♗g6 15.♗d3 f5 16.0–0± is just good for White.

13.♗d3 ♗g5 14.f4

14.0–0 ♗xb5 is unclear.

14...♗h4†

Another try was 14...♗d5 15.♗c3 ♗b3 but after Avrukh's precise 16.♗f2 ♗f5 17.♗xf5 ♗xf5 18.e4 0–0–0 19.0–0 (not 19.exf5 ♗c5!) 19...♗c4 20.♗d5!± Black is in dire straits because 20...♗xe4 drops the queen to 21.♗b6† cxb6 22.♗ac1.

15.g3 ♗h5

Better is 15...♗h3 when 16.♗f2 ♗e7 17.♗d2 0–0 18.♗xc7 ♗fe8 gives Black some compensation.

Instead Avrukh suggests: 16.e4 $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 17.f5 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ (17... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d5!$) 18.fxe6 $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 21.hxg3 $\mathbb{W}xe3\#$ 22. $\mathbb{W}e2\pm$ White's extra piece is stronger than the three pawns in the ending.

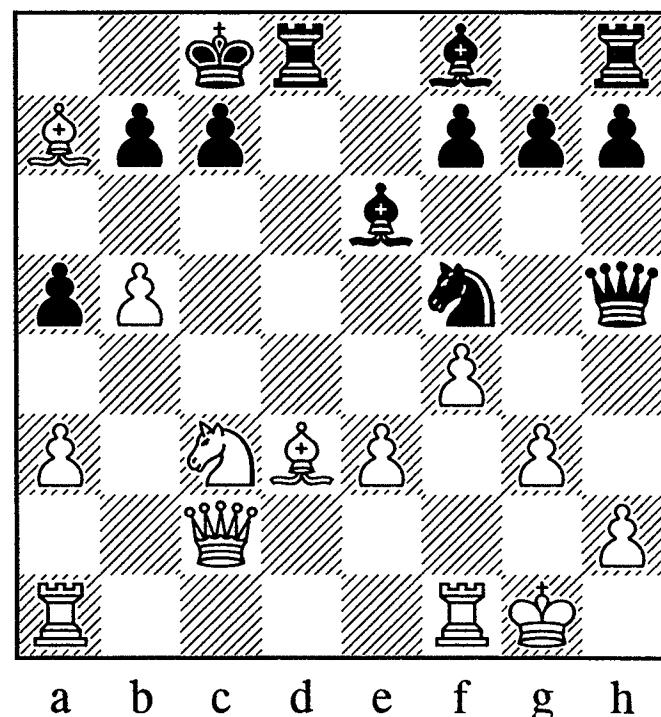
16. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 17.0–0 0–0–0

Missing White's next, but the alternatives were not worth much anyway.

17... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 19.e4 $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 20.e5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (20... $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}h3$ 22. $\mathbb{W}e4\#$ wins) 21. $\mathbb{Q}d5\pm$.

Or 17... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 0–0–0 19.f5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xc7!\pm$ $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ winning.

18. $\mathbb{Q}a7!$



A wonderful move that simultaneously preserves the bishop and takes away a vital escape route for the black king.

18... $\mathbb{W}g4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e4$

This was a rapid game and Topalov misses the brilliant 19. $\mathbb{Q}a4!$ which threatens mate in one with $\mathbb{Q}b6$. The only move is 19... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ but then comes 20. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ and it will soon be curtains.

19... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}fd1?!$

Topalov begins to stumble. 20. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}g6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}fc1$ was still overwhelming.

20... $\mathbb{W}f3$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3!$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc2$ b6

Trapping the bishop and making certain that he wins the piece back. Remarkable defence by Morozevich, but there is no reason White should get into trouble.

24. $\mathbb{Q}e5?!$

24. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 25.a4 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}c5\#$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}e4\#$ and 24. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd1\#$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}f5\#$ were two variations where White surely would not lose.

24... $\mathbb{Q}xd1\#$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}xa3!$

The turning point: Black just takes this important pawn to begin with. The trapped bishop will not run away.

26.f5 $\mathbb{Q}a2$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5\#$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}e1?!$

29. $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ was the last chance. Opposite-coloured bishops always give hope of a draw.

29...f6 30. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe1\#$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4$

It is all over.

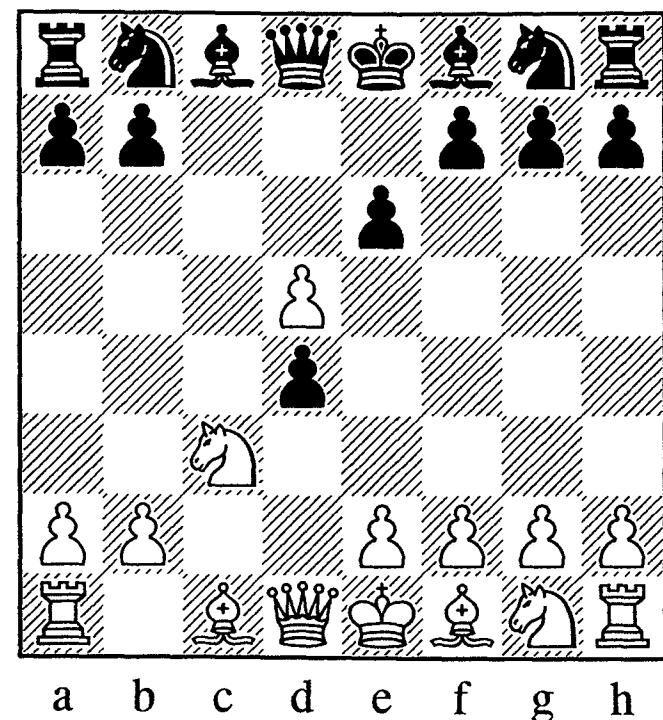
34. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}e6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$
0–1

Conclusion: 5.a3 seems to be a direct and dangerous weapon against the Albin Counter-Gambit.

We move straight on to another gambit.

The Von Hennig-Schara Gambit

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 cxd4



The Von Hennig-Schara Gambit uses a similar move order to the Tarrasch, but these two lines have little else in common. In this case, Black gives up a central pawn for quick development, but it is hard to believe it can be good.

5.♗xd4

5.♗a4† ♜d7 6.♗xd4 exd5 7.♗xd5 ♘c6 just transposes.

5...♘c6 6.♗d1 exd5 7.♗xd5 ♜d7

Play now takes on a surprisingly forced character.

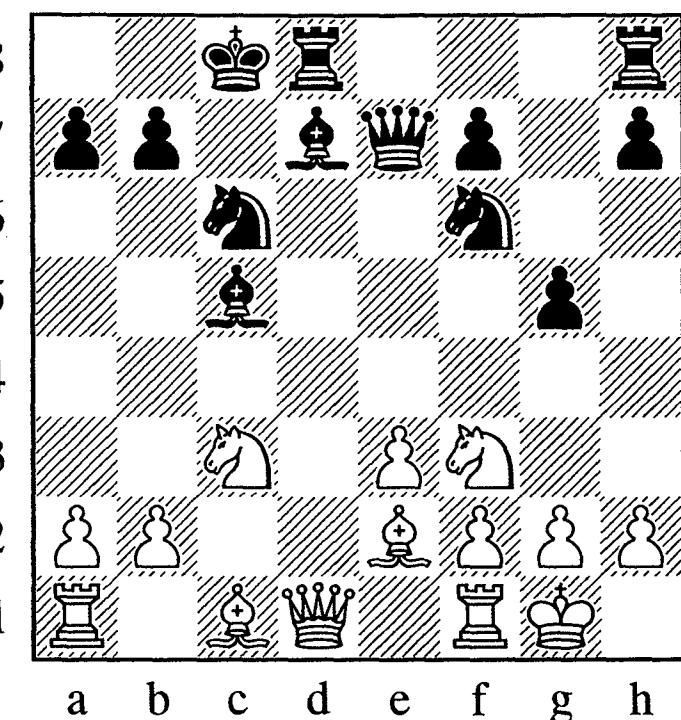
8.♘f3 ♘f6 9.♗d1

9.♗b3 has also been tried, but then the queen is in the way – when you see the mainline you will understand why.

9...♗c5 10.e3 ♗e7 11.♗e2 0-0-0

Jonny Hector, the Swedish fighter with the mythological name, has been experimenting with 11...g5!? 12.0-0 g4 13.♘d4 ♗e5, but after 14.♗xc6 ♗xc6 White can get away with taking a second pawn with 15.♗xg4±. At least my computer believes so.

12.0-0 g5



Black's offensive can quickly become rather uncomfortable for White. Fortunately he can strike back and wrench the initiative out of his opponent's hands.

13.b4!

That's it. One of the big advantages of being a pawn up is that you can return it at an appropriate moment. White's attack on the queenside turns out to be more dangerous than Black's on the kingside.

See Game 61 for the continuation:

Game 61

Illescas – Rodriguez Vargas

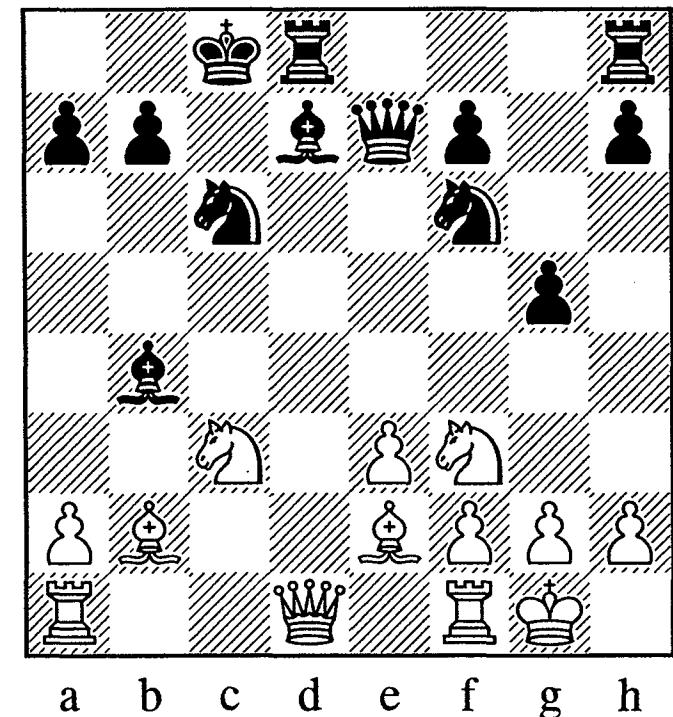
Catalonia 1996

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 cxd4
5.♗a4† ♜d7 6.♗xd4 exd5 7.♗xd5 ♘c6
8.♘f3 ♘f6 9.♗d1 ♘c5 10.e3 ♗e7 11.♗e2
g5 12.0-0 0-0-0 13.b4! ♜xb4**

Black must take the bait. 13...g4 14.♘d4 ♜xb4 would just transpose, while 13...♘xb4 looks wrong. A good answer is 14.♘d4.

14.♗b2

Developing the bishop to a great diagonal. If 14.♗b3 then 14...♝e6 would be a little annoying.

**14...g4**

Black has an important alternative in: 14...♝hg8 when White has tried many moves.

Most promising seems:

15.♗c2 ♜b8 16.♗fd1 g4 17.♗d4 ♛xd4
18.♗xd4 ♜c6 19.♗b5!

Pay attention to this manoeuvre.

19...♝e4?

Black can play better moves, but White still has the advantage: 19...♝c8 20.♗f5 ♜xb5
21.♗xb5 ♜c3 22.♗xc3 ♜xc3 23.♗f4† ♜a8
24.♗d6± For instance, 24...♝e4 25.♗d7
♜c5 26.♗f1.

20.♗xb4! ♜xb4 21.♗e5† ♛d6 22.♗xd6 ♜xd6
23.♗b1 1–0

This was Comas Fabrego – J. Rodriguez, Catalonia 1996. On 23...♜a3 24.♗xc6 exploits two pins.

White can even try:

15.♗b5 a6 16.a3! ♜c5 17.♗c1 ♛e4

Or 17...g4 18.♗d2 ♜g6 19.♗xf6 ♜xf6
20.♗xc5 ♜xc5 21.♗e4 ♜e7 22.♗xf6 ♜xf6
23.♗d6! ♜xd6 24.♗xd6† ♜c7 25.♗xf7 and

White has won a pawn, Ezat – Pisk, Tanta 2000.

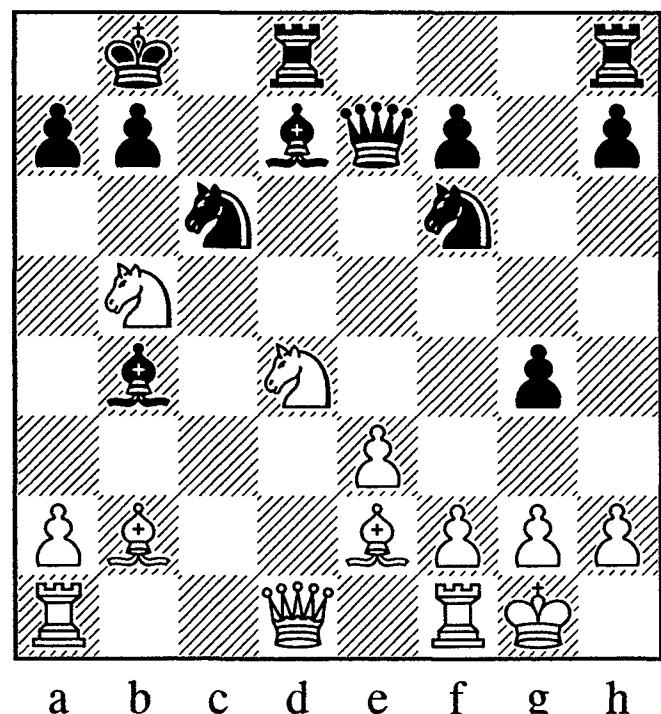
17...axb5 18.♗xf6 ♜xf6 19.♗xc5±
18.♗c3± ♜xf2?! 19.♗xf2 ♜xe3 20.♗f1 ♜xf2†
21.♗xf2 ♜xf2† 22.♗xf2 g4 23.♗h4 ♜b8
24.♗e4±

White's two pieces were much better than Black's rook and two pawns, Barrance – Fitzpatrick, corr. 2002.

15.♗d4 ♜b8

15...♝xd4 16.♗xd4 ♜c5 17.♗d5! ♜xd5
18.♗fc1 and Black is being crushed: 18...♝hg8
19.♗xc5† ♜c6 20.♗xg4† ♜b8 21.♗e5† ♜a8?!
22.♗xd5 1–0 Comas Fabrego – Martin, Benasque 1995.

15...h5 or 15...♝hg8 are both answered by 16.♗cb5 when 16...♜b8 would transpose to the next note.

16.♗cb5

The critical position. The battle is very tense, but White's progress on the queenside always seems to be a little ahead of Black's on the kingside. And the initiative matters, as we know by now. It has been a guiding star throughout the whole book.

16...♝e5

This is hardly the best move, judging from the fact that this game is over in four moves!

Black had two serious alternatives:

16...h5 17.Wa4 a6 18.Qxc6†

The text has always been played. I will take the opportunity to suggest the new move 18.Qab1!? when play can develop something like this: 18...We4 19.Qd3! Wxd3 20.Qxc6† Qxc6 21.Wxb4 Qd5 22.Qe5† Wa8 23.Wb2 Bh6 24.Qd4±

18...Qxc6 19.Qxf6 We4!

19...Wxf6 20.Wxb4 axb5 21.Qxb5 was just a pawn down for Black in Polugaevsky – Zaitsev, Soviet Union (ch) 1968.

20.f3 Wxe3† 21.Qh1 Wxe2

21...Qd2!? is an interesting survival attempt. 22.Wxb4 gxf3 23.Wf4† Wa8 24.Qc7† Qa7 25.gxf3? Bhg8 26.Qg5 Bd3

And Black was winning in Krush – Kapnisis, Oropesa del Mar 1999. However with 25.Qd4† b6 26.Qf2 fxe2† 27.Qg1 the result would have been reversed. The finish could be 27...Wd3 28.Qe6! fxe6 29.Wc7† Qb7 30.Wxb6† Qb8 31.Wa7† Qc8 32.Qc1†.

16...Bhg8 17.Qc1

The natural 17.Wa4 just leads to a perpetual after 17...a6 18.Qxc6† Qxc6 19.Qxf6 We4! 20.Qe5† Wa8 21.Qc7† Wa7 22.Qb5† Wa8. Also 17.Wb3 has been tried frequently, but it is not so clear after 17...Qe4.

17...a6 18.Qxc6† Qxc6 19.Qd4 Qd5 20.Qc4 Bg5 21.Qxd5

Also possible was 21.Wb3±.

21...Qxd5

Or 21...Bxd5 22.Wb3.

22.Wc2 Bh5 23.Qf5± Qd6 24.g3 Qb4 25.Wb1 Wd7 26.e4 Qf8

Firt – Pisk, Czech Republic 1998, and here 27.Bfd1 We8 28.Bxd8† Wxd8 29.a3 is winning a piece after either 29...Qd3 30.Bd1 or 29...Qc6 30.Bxc6.

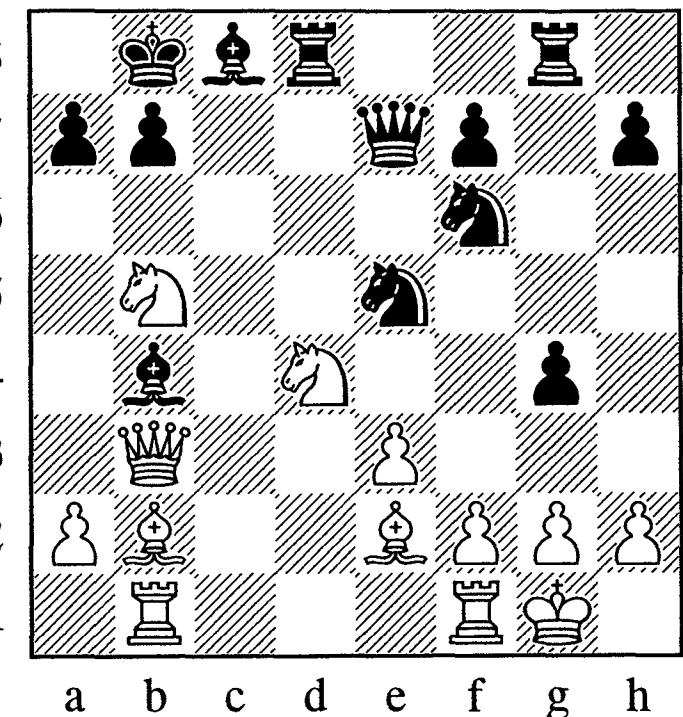
17.Wb3 Bhg8

17...a6 is countered with the spectacular 18.Qe6! Qf3† 19.Qxf3 Qxe6 20.Qe5† Qd6 21.Wb2±.

18.Qab1±

White has strong pressure after the text, but 18.Qe6 was again also possible.

18...Qc8?!



19.Qxa7! Qe4

Or 19...Qxa7 20.Qb5† Qb8 21.Wxb4 Wxb4 22.Qxe5† winning.

20.Qdc6†!

1–0

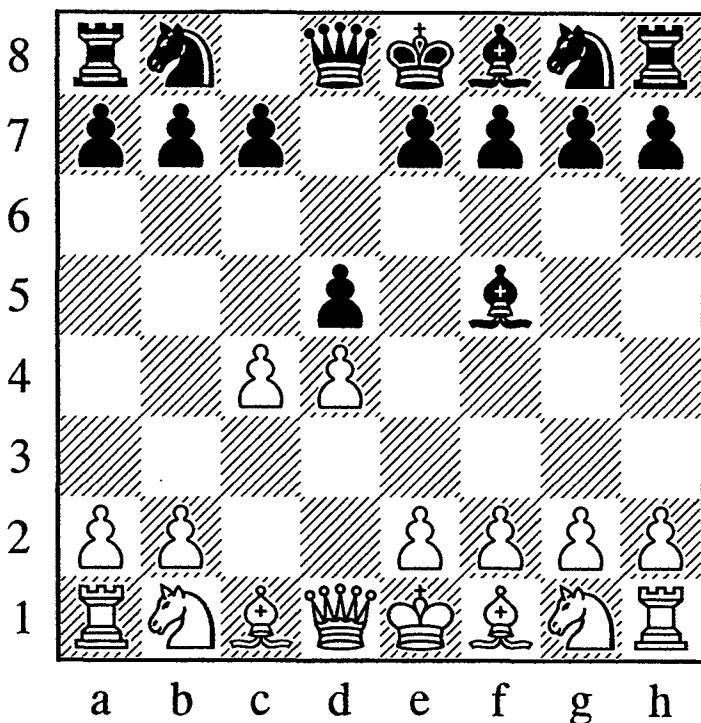
On 20...Qxc6 21.Qxc6† bxc6 there follows 22.Qe5†! Wa8 23.Wa4† Wa7 24.Wxb4 and White is completely winning.

Conclusion: The Von Hennig-Schara Gambit is surprisingly unclear, but with the precise 13.b4! White gives the pawn back and in return gets the initiative, which is much more important in such a sharp position.

Next we will consider a couple of rare second moves by Black. First, we have a provocative bishop move.

The 2... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ Variation

1.d4 d5 2.c4 $\mathbb{Q}f5$



To complete the repertoire, we must look at an extravaganza of odd moves.

3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$

As I have emphasized earlier in the book, I like to meet these strange outbursts by Black in a positional way. Black hopes to provoke a tactical mess like 3. $\mathbb{W}b3$ e5, and even the often played 3.cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xb1$ 4. $\mathbb{W}a4\#$ c6 5. $\mathbb{B}xb1$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ is only slightly better for White, as Black's position is solid.

3...e6 4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c6

The most natural choice.

If Black instead chooses to stay in the department of bizarre chess with:

4... $\mathbb{Q}c6$

Then White should not have too many problems gaining a positional advantage.

5. $\mathbb{Q}f4$

The immediate 5.cxd5 also looks fine. In such QGD Exchange structures the knight is usually misplaced on c6.

5... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 6.e3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$

6... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ is more active. Then 7. $\mathbb{B}c1$ when 7...0-0 8.a3 stops Black's momentum and

7... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 8.cxd5 exd5 9. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 0-0 10.0-0 is also a little better for White.

7.cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ 0-0 9. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 10. $\mathbb{W}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$

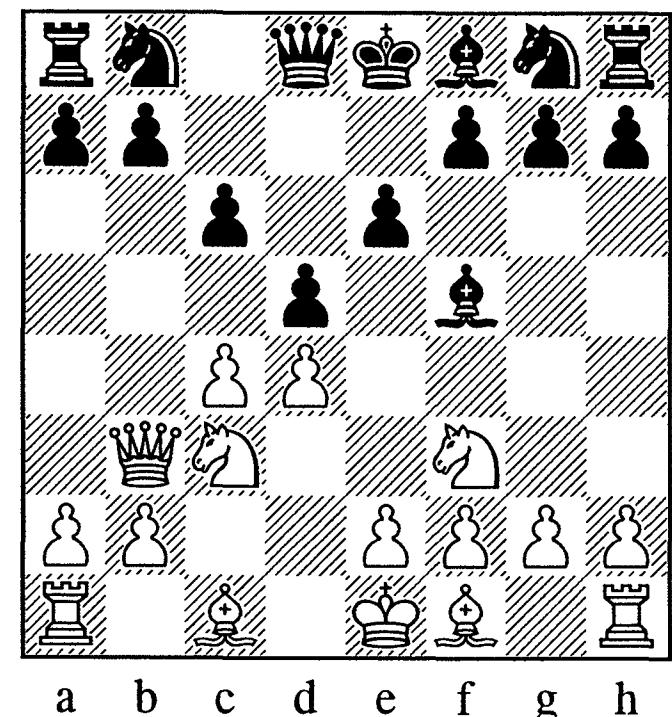
10... $\mathbb{Q}ce7$ 11.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 13.e4 $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 14.hxg3 $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 15.bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}d1\pm$
Horta – Vostrotin, corr. 2005.

11.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 12.hxg3 $\mathbb{W}d6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}ce7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d1\pm$ c6 16. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 17.e4 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e5$

White's extra space gave Black a hard time in Kramnik – Short, Horgen 1995.

If 4... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ then 5. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ is simple and strong. 6... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ is answered by 7. $\mathbb{B}c1$ and after 6... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 7. $\mathbb{W}a4\#$ c6 8. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ gxf6 9.cxd5 exd5 10.e3 $\mathbb{W}b6$ 11.0-0-0 0-0-0 12. $\mathbb{Q}d3\pm$ Black has no compensation for his weakened pawn structure.

5. $\mathbb{W}b3$



It turns out that the early bishop development has left b7 rather weak.

5... $\mathbb{W}b6$

On 5... $\mathbb{W}c7$ White has the tactical finesse 6. $\mathbb{Q}f4!$ when 6...dxc4 7. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ cxb3 8.e4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 9.a3 leads to a pleasant endgame. White will win the pawn back with $\mathbb{Q}f3$ -d2 and prefers not to weaken his pawn structure. 9... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

(9...a5 10.♗d2 a4 protects b3 but allows 11.♕xa4 ♜xa4 12.♗xb8 ♗f6 13.f3 ♜xd4 14.♗xb3 ♜a4 15.♔e2± Sutkus – Ruefenacht, corr. 1996.) 10.♗d2 ♜d8 11.♗xd8 ♔xd8 12.♗xb3 ♜d7 13.♗c1 ♗e7 14.f3 ♜c8 15.♗f2± Kramnik – Hertneck, Germany 1995. As is so often the case, Black lacks space.

5...b6?! is too weakening and can be punished immediately with 6.cxd5 exd5 7.e4! dxe4 (or 7...♗xe4 8.♗xe4 dxe4 9.♗e5 ♜e7 10.♗c4 ♜b4† 11.♔e2 ♜xb3 12.♗xb3 and Black managed to exchange queens, but f7 will still fall with devastating effect) 8.♗e5 ♜e6 (8...♜c7 9.♗c4 ♜g6 10.♗f4 ♜b7 11.♗b5! cxb5 12.♗d5 ♜b4† 13.♗f1 ♜e7 14.♗c1 ♜d7 15.♗xa8 winning material, Nittschalk – Ganzer, corr. 2000) 9.♗c4 ♜xc4 10.♗xc4 ♜e7 11.♗xc6 ♜c7 12.d5 White already had a winning position in Ribli – Kurajica, Novi Sad 1982.

6.c5 ♜c7

This is the main move and will be covered in Game 62, but we will first check out the alternative.

6...♜xb3 7.axb3

This is good for White.

On 7...♗d7 comes 8.b4 a6 9.b5! cxb5 10.♗xb5, so the more common choice is:

7...♗a6

Black tries to hold back the white pawns.

8.♗f4 f6

After 8...♗f6 the safe choice is 9.e3 ♜b4 10.♔d2±, but White could try for more with 9.♗xa6!? bxa6 10.e3 ♜h5 11.♗c7 followed by ♜xa6 with great positional compensation for the exchange.

9.e3 ♜b4 10.♗a4! ♜d3† 11.♗xd3 ♜xd3 12.♔d2±

With a big lead in development. On 12...♗g6 White has b3-b4 and b5, so Black must misplace the bishop. A game of mine continued:

12...♗b5 13.♗aa1 g5? 14.♗xg5!

White scores a pawn, because on 14...fxg5 there is 15.♔e5 picking up the rook on h8. 14...e5 15.♔e6

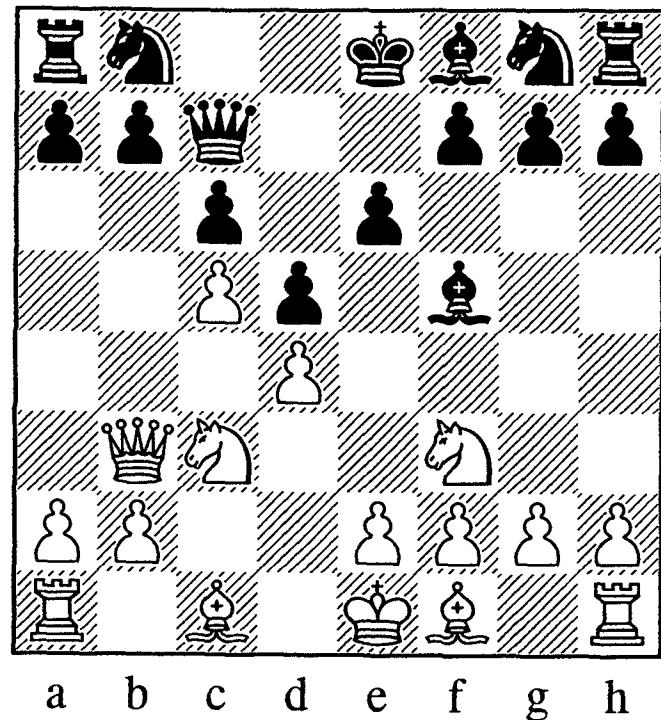
I was winning in Schandorff – S. Petersen, Denmark 2008.

Game 62

Kramnik – Gelfand

Wijk aan Zee 1998

1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♜f5 3.♗c3 e6 4.♗f3 c6 5.♗b3 ♜b6 6.c5 ♜c7



7.♗f4!

Once again we see this tactical motif. Black cannot take the bishop because it would allow ♜xb7 and the rook on a8 is gone.

7...♜c8 8.♗h4

Kramnik goes for the bishop pair, which has always been one of his trademarks.

There was also a simple solution in 8.e3 ♜f6 9.h3 ♜e7 10.♔e2 ♜bd7 11.♗d1 0–0 12.b4± with play similar to the a6-Slav.

8...♗g6

Black could choose between different variations of the same unpleasantness:

8... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 10.e3 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}d3\pm$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12. $\mathbb{W}c2$ g6 13.0–0 0–0 14.b4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ exf5 16.b5 White had the initiative, Schlosser – Khalifman, Germany 1997.

8... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 9.h3 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 10.g4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}g3\pm$ Khenkin – Gleizerov, Stockholm 2004.

8... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 9.f3 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ hxg6 11.e4± Gausel – Rowson, Oxford 1998.

8... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ exf5 10.e3±

9. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ hxg6 10.e4

The most active. 10.e3 was of course also playable.

10... $\mathbb{Q}f6$

10...dxe4 11. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ and there is a big hole on d6.

11.exd5

Opening the position.

In a previous game Kramnik had played 11. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ dxe4 12. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14.0–0–0 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$, but Black was very solid in Kramnik – Short, Dos Hermanas 1997.

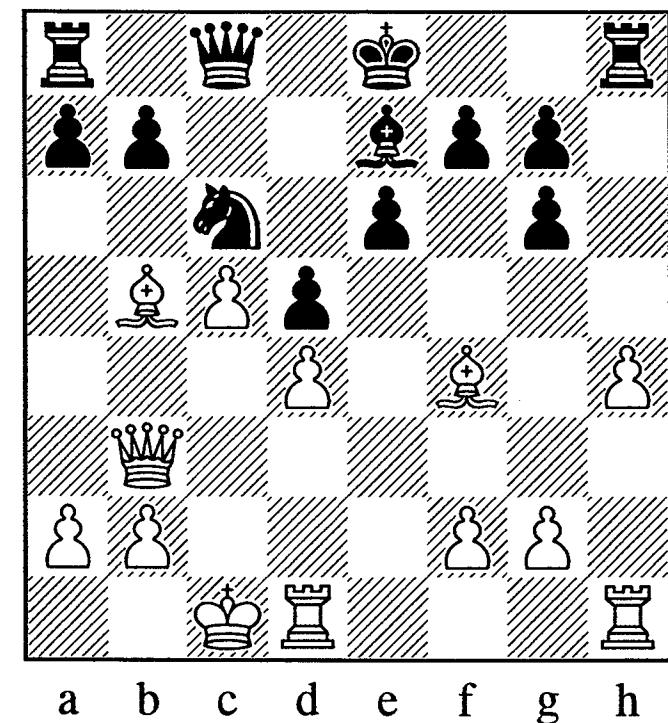
11... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

If 11...exd5 then 12.0–0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ is very awkward for Black.

12. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ cxd5 13. $\mathbb{Q}b5\ddagger$

Again White chooses the sharpest line. 13. $\mathbb{Q}xb8$ $\mathbb{W}xb8$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}b5\ddagger$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 15.g3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ is not so clear. Black has lost the right to castle, but he will get counterplay after 16.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ b6!? as pointed out by Huebner in his ChessBase annotations.

13... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 14.0–0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 15.h4



White grabs space all over the board. Later he can maybe play h4-h5 and open the position under favourable circumstances. It is too dangerous to castle, so Gelfand's king is forced to remain in the centre. That is seldom a good sign.

15... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ a6 17. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}a5?!$

Seeking counterplay, but it just backfires.

Better was 17... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ but Black's position is difficult to play.

18. $\mathbb{W}f3$ b6?!

Continuing the wrong plan.

19.cxb6 $\mathbb{W}b7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c1?!$

This works well in the game, but is actually a small slip.

The violent 20.h5 g5 21.h6! was very strong: 21... $\mathbb{W}xb6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ f6 and now 23. $\mathbb{Q}c1!$ increases the pressure and puts Black in a hopeless position. He cannot get the knight back into play because 23... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ simply loses to 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$.

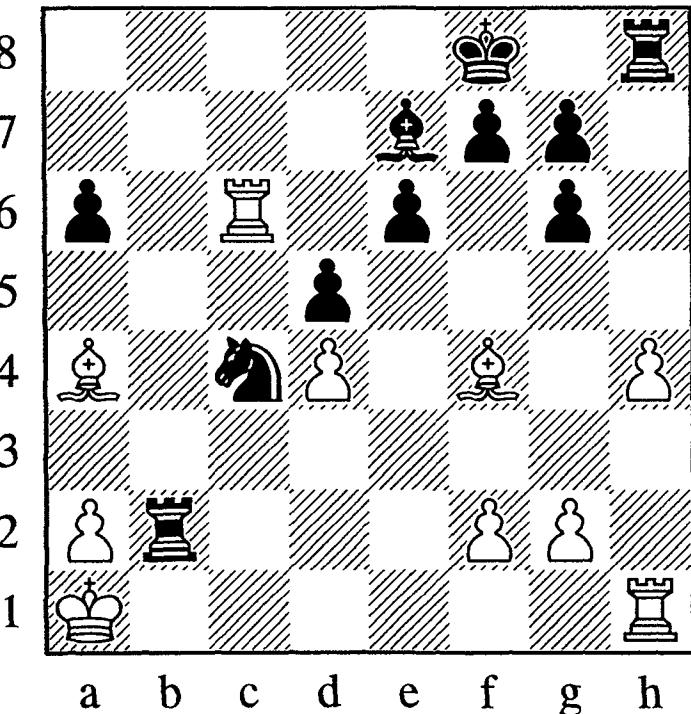
20... $\mathbb{W}xb6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}c7$

Striking with 21.h5 was still interesting.

21... $\mathbb{E}b8?$!

21... $\mathbb{E}d8$ was rather unclear and should have been tried.

**22. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 23. $\mathbb{E}c6$ $\mathbb{W}xb2\#$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xb2$ $\mathbb{E}xb2\#$
25. $\mathbb{Q}a1$**



Black has miscalculated: he is completely lost, because he cannot parry both White's threats of $\mathbb{E}xc4$ and $\mathbb{E}c8\#$.

**25... $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 26. $\mathbb{E}xc4$ $\mathbb{E}xf2$ 27. $\mathbb{E}c8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$
28. $\mathbb{E}xh8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xh8$ 29.g3 $\mathbb{Q}a3$ 30. $\mathbb{E}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$
31. $\mathbb{E}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$**

Or if 31... $\mathbb{E}f1\#$ then 32. $\mathbb{Q}d1$.

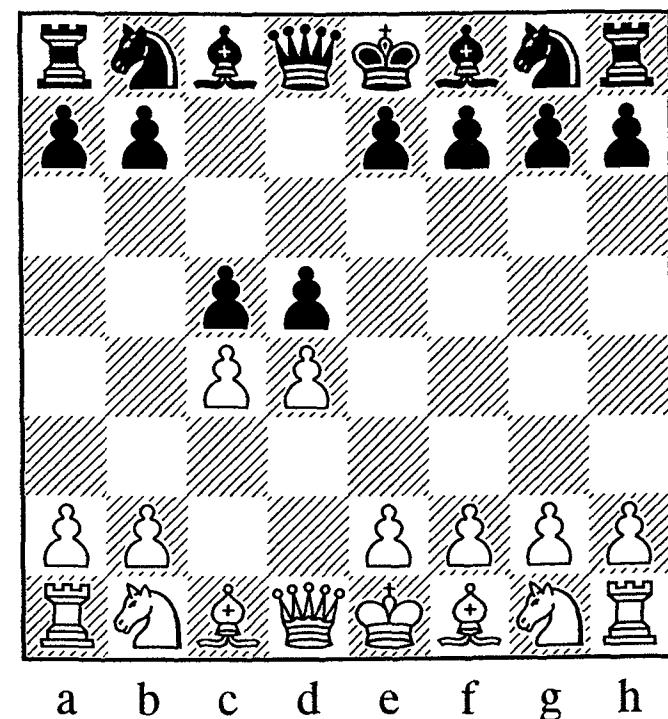
**32. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ g5 33.hxg5 $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$
35. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ g5 36.a4 f5 37.a5 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 38. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ f4
39.gxf4 gxf4 40. $\mathbb{E}d1$ 1-0**

Conclusion: The experimental 2... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ is well answered by 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ e6 4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ c6 5. $\mathbb{W}b3$ with good play in all variations.

Next is another unusual second move by Black. It poses the relevant question, what happens if your opponent does the same as you?

The Symmetrical 2...c5

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c5



Black tries to equalize by liquidating the centre. Pawns will inevitably be exchanged, but the advantage of moving first will be visible: White gets a pleasant positional initiative.

3.cxd5

The most natural choice.

3... $\mathbb{Q}f6$

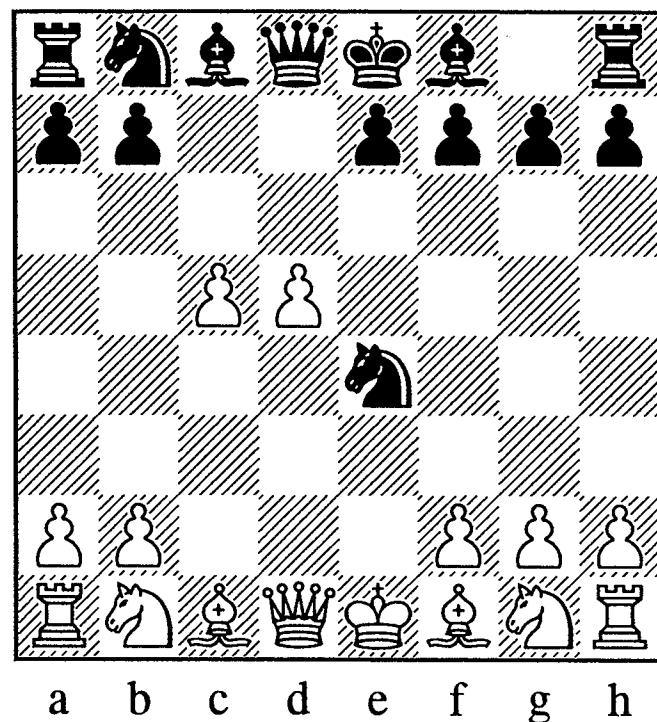
3... $\mathbb{W}xd5$ will lose time due to the exposed queen: 4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ cxd4 5. $\mathbb{Q}c3!$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ shows what I mean. 6... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ and now the simplest is probably 7.g3±. For instance, 7...e5 8. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ with ideas such as $\mathbb{Q}g5$ gaining control over the key square d5.

4.e4

This is the sharpest and most promising line.

Instead 4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ cxd4 5. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}xd4\pm$ leads to a slightly better endgame, but because of the many exchanges and the pawn symmetry, the risk of drawing is quite high.

4... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 5.dxc5

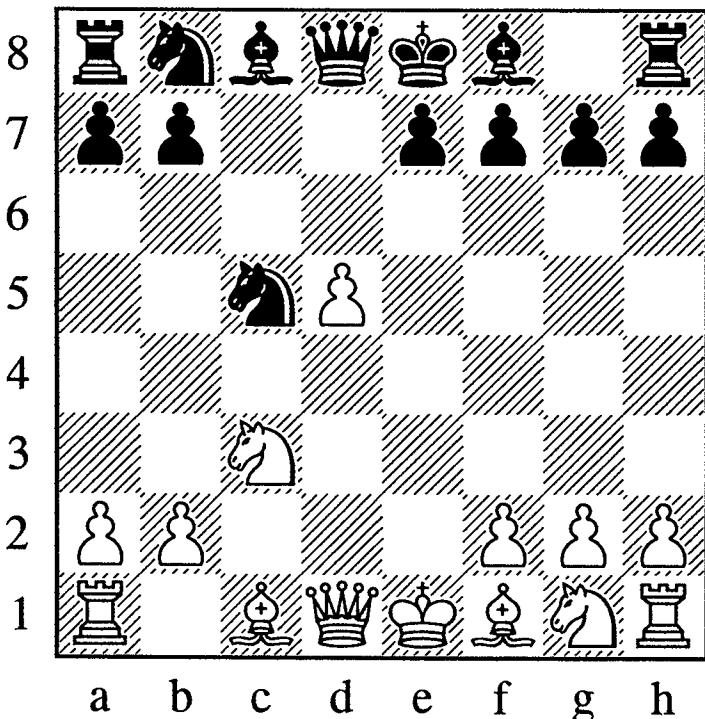


Game 63

A. Jorgensen – Casares Ripol

Correspondence 1995

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c5 3.cxd5 ♜f6 4.e4 ♜xe4
5.dxc5 ♜xc5 6.♘c3



5...♞xc5

Not a great square for the knight.

The alternative is 5...♝a5†. This looks too risky though: 6.♗d2 ♜xd2 7.♝xd2 ♜xc5 8.♘a3 With the threat of ♜c1. 8...♝d7 9.♝c1 ♜b6 10.♘c4 White has a strong initiative. 10...♝f6 11.♗f3 g5 12.♘ce5 ♜h6 This was Goossens – Zaitsev, Belgium 2007, and now 13.♝b4 is clearly better for White.

Or 10...♝h6 11.f4

11.♝xh6 gxh6 12.♗f3 cannot be bad either.

11...♞a6

11...e6 12.d6 ♜c6 13.♗f3 f6 was suggested by Breutigam. A simple response is 14.♔e2 e5 15.fxe5 ♜xd2† 16.♔xd2 fxe5 17.♕he1±. 12.♘e5 ♜d6 13.♘xd7 ♜xd7 14.♗f3 e6 15.♔xa6 bxa6 16.0–0 ♜d8 17.♔e2 ♜xd5 18.♔fd1 ♜a5 19.♔xd8† ♜xd8 20.♔xa6 ♜b6† 21.♜xb6 axb6 22.♔f1 f6

H. Olafsson – Westerinen, Reykjavik 1997, and now White has 23.♔c7±.

6.♘c3

The most active move, which we will check out in Game 63. For those who love a small but steady positional advantage, it is worth considering 6.♗f3 e6 7.♘c3 exd5 8.♜xd5 with an initiative in the ending.

6...e5

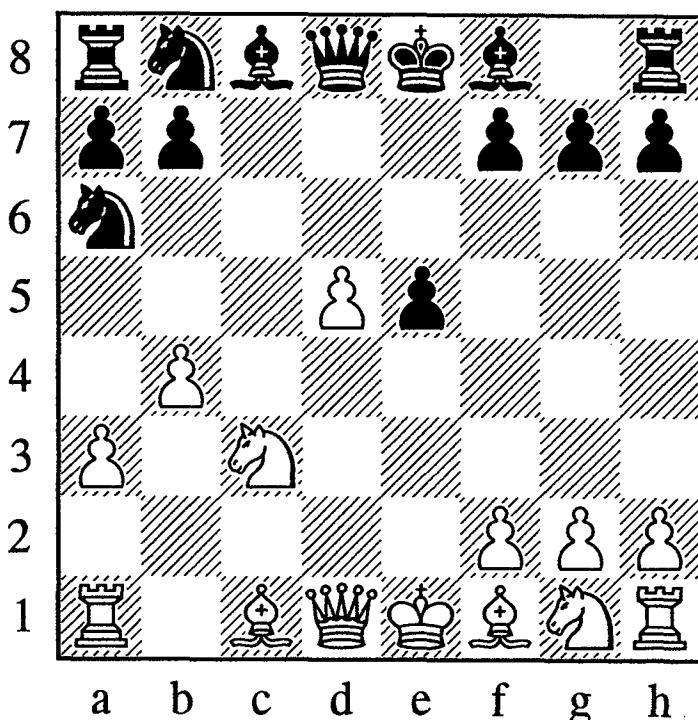
Black wants to close the position. This was recommended in a survey in ChessBase Magazine, but my guess is that the author Breutigam did not know this game.

Trying to keep liquidating pawns in the centre by means of 6...e6 runs into 7.b4! ♜f6 8.♗c2 ♜ca6 9.a3 exd5 (otherwise Black's position is just awful) 10.♘xd5! ♜e5† 11.♘e3 ♜e6 (He still cannot take the rook: 11...♜xa1 12.♜xc8† ♜e7 13.♗f5† ♜f6 14.♗d8† 1–0 Zambo – Papp Zoltan, Hungary 2002. 14...♗xf5 15.♔d3† and mate in a few moves.) 12.♔b2 ♜c7 13.♔b5† ♜c6 14.♗f3±

7.b4!

Anyway. Of course. Strangely this obvious idea is not mentioned by Breutigam. 7.♗f3 ♜d6 is less clear.

7... $\mathbb{Q}ca6$ 8.a3



The knight on a6 gives Black some positional headaches. It is not so easy to bring it back into the game, especially since its colleague on b8 also needs to get out. Actually, in the rest of the game neither of them moves!

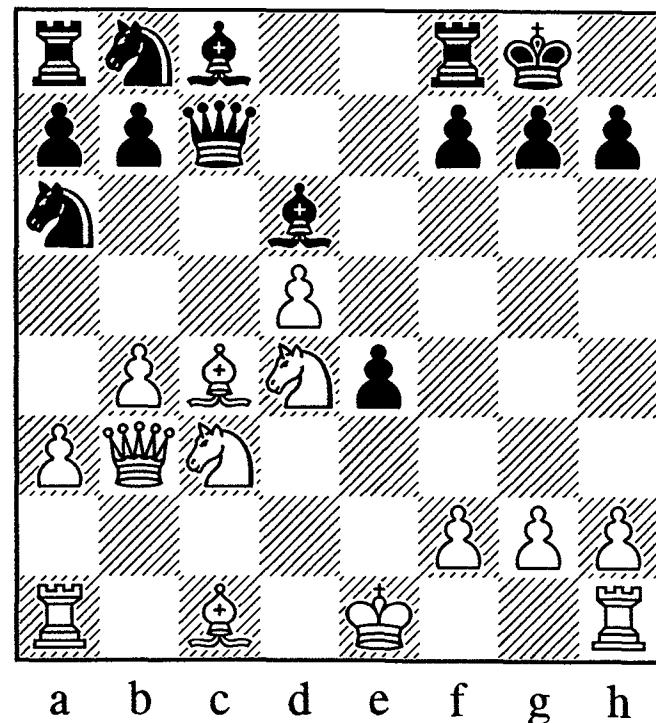
8... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 0-0 10. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ e4

Maybe better is 10... $\mathbb{Q}f5$.

11. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}c7?!$

And here 11... $\mathbb{E}e8$.

12. $\mathbb{W}b3\pm$



12... $\mathbb{Q}xh2?$

This loses. 12... $\mathbb{W}e7$ had to be played when 13. $\mathbb{Q}db5$ leaves White on top.

13. $\mathbb{Q}cb5$ $\mathbb{W}e5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}b2$

Black will not get out of this mess.

14...e3

If 14... $\mathbb{W}h5$ then 15. $\mathbb{Q}e6!$ fxe6 16.dxe6 $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 17.e7 $\mathbb{E}e8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}f7$ could follow.

15. $\mathbb{Q}f3$

This wins a piece.

15...exf2† 16. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}f4$ 17. $\mathbb{E}xh2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$
18. $\mathbb{Q}e5$

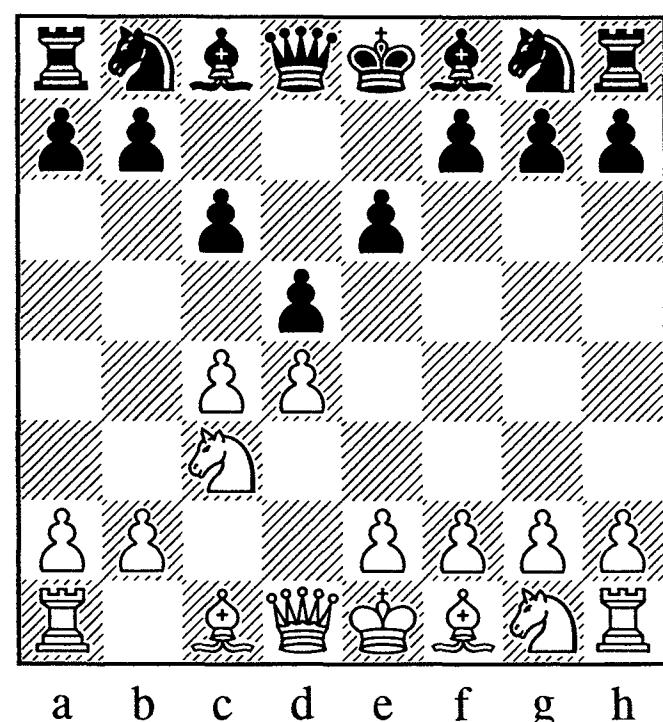
1-0

Conclusion: 2...c5 is too naive. White's lead in development gives him the edge in all variations.

And now for something completely different – a well respected opening system.

The Triangle Variation

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ c6



The Triangle: a younger relative of the Semi-Slav. The Triangle is a popular move-order for many Black players who want to sidestep

annoying variations like the Exchange Slav or the Catalan and still reach the well-trodden paths of the Semi-Slav. There are some original roads as well, as we will soon see.

4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$

Natural development.

White could also try the interesting Marshall Gambit 4.e4 dxe4 5. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4\ddagger$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{W}xe4\ddagger$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ with a fantastic dark-squared bishop as compensation for the pawn. I think in our repertoire it fits better just to develop. After all, we are not afraid of the Semi-Slav.

If we were Meran supporters we would of course play 4.e3 when 4... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ transposes. Black, for his part, could vary with 4...f5!?

4...dxc4

The Noteboom Variation, in which Black strives for complications. Most players opt for 4... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ with a normal Semi-Slav, but there are other lines.

4...f5 is a kind of Stonewall Dutch which basically is outside the scope of this book. A simple and good way to continue is 5. $\mathbb{Q}f4\pm$ with control over e5: 5... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 6.e3 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (on 6... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ White is not forced to take, but can play 7. $\mathbb{Q}d3$) 7. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 0–0 8.h3!? (also 8. $\mathbb{W}c2$ and 8.0–0 are normal) 8... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 9.g4 This is an interesting idea of Dreev, with play all over the board.

Sometimes Black even plays 4... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ or 4... $\mathbb{Q}d6$, but the problem with such moves is that they do nothing to fight for the centre and White can play e4 free of charge. Let's see:

4... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 5.e4 dxe4 6. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}gf6$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}b4\ddagger$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 11.a3 (also fine is 11.0–0) 11... $\mathbb{Q}xd2\ddagger$ 12. $\mathbb{W}xd2$

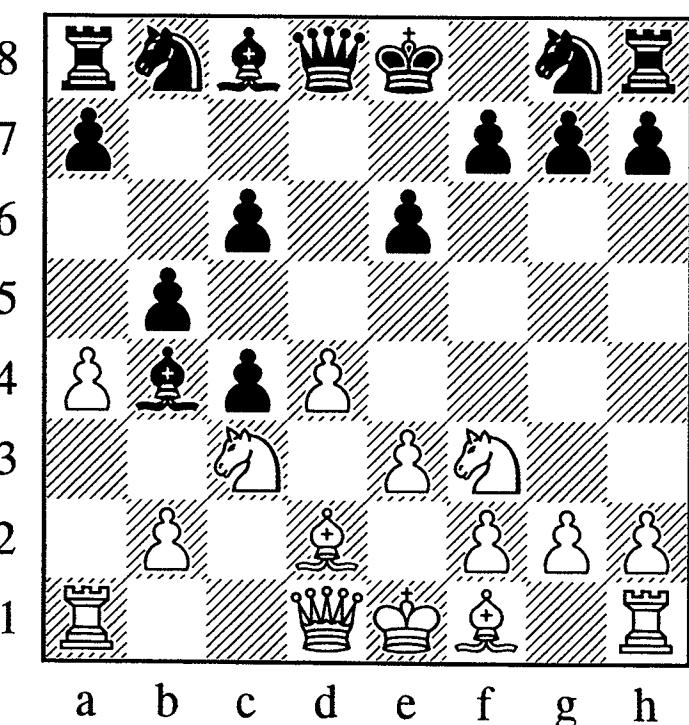
$\mathbb{W}xd2\ddagger$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}he1\pm$ White had a comfortable ending in Karpov – Korchnoi, Vienna 1986.

4... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 5.e4 dxe4 6. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}b4\ddagger$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2\ddagger$ 8. $\mathbb{W}xd2\pm$ looks even worse.

5.a4

Preventing ...b5 and expecting to win the pawn back with a pleasant space advantage, but Black has a way to get in ...b5 after all.

5... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 6.e3 b5 7. $\mathbb{Q}d2$



Unpinning the knight and putting severe pressure on the black pawns.

7...a5

The mainline. Black has a deep positional manoeuvre planned that leads to highly unbalanced positions. He has tried many other moves though. Let's see the most important of them.

a) 7... $\mathbb{W}b6$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}e5$

This is dangerous for Black.

8... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ cxb5 11. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 12. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 13. $\mathbb{W}f4$

This gave White excellent compensation for the pawn because of Black's uncastled king in an old Alekhine game. The master of attack

finished in his usual sparkling style:

13...a5 14.♗e2 ♗b7 15.0–0 h5 16.♗g5 ♗xg5
17.♗xg5 ♘h6 18.e4! h4? 19.♗xa5! f6 (19...♗xa5
20.♗b4†) 20.exf6 ♗xf6 21.♗xb5 1–0

Alekhine – Kashdan, New York 1929.

In this line 8...♗f6 is no better: 9.axb5 cxb5 10.b3 ♗d5 11.♗xb5! c3 12.♗xc3 ♗xc3 13.♗c2 ♗c6 14.♗xc3 (14.♗c4± was strong)
14...♗xe5 15.dxe5 ♗b7 16.♗c4 ♗xg2 17.♗g1
♗e4 18.♗xe4 ♗xc3† 19.♗e2 0–0? (19...♗d8)
20.♗xg7†! ♘xg7 21.♗g1† ♘h8 22.♗d3 f5
23.exf6 ♗c7 24.♗g7 White was winning in
Bromberger – Cacco, Saint Vincent 2005.

b) 7...♗e7 8.axb5 ♗xc3 9.♗xc3 cxb5 10.d5!
This shows the bishop's potential. 10...♗f6 11.d6 ♗b7 12.♗xf6 (12.b3 ♗e4 is more complicated)
12...gxf6 13.♗e2 a6 14.b3 cxb3 15.♗xb3± Beliavsky – Feygin, Germany 2001.
The d6-pawn is phenomenal and Black's pawns are seriously weakened.

c) 7...♗b7 8.axb5 (8.b3 is also possible)
8...♗xc3 9.♗xc3 cxb5 10.d5 Again we see this motif. 10...♗f6 11.dxe6 ♗xd1† 12.♗xd1 ♗xf3 (12...fxe6 13.♗d4±) 13.exf7† ♘xf7 14.gxf3 ♗c6
White's bishops and active rooks are a strong force. One example continued: 15.♗d6 ♗ac8 16.♗g1 ♘he8 17.♗h3 ♗c7 18.♗g5! ♗b8 19.♗c5
♗b6 20.♗a5 ♗xa5 21.♗xc7† ♘g6 22.♗xb6
axb6 23.♗e6 ♗b3 24.♗b7 ♗c5 25.♗xb6 1–0
Straeter – Rausis, Hastings 1996.

d) 7...♗f6 8.axb5 ♗xc3 9.♗xc3 cxb5 10.b3 0–0 11.bxc4 bxc4 12.♗xc4 ♗c7 13.♗b3± a5 14.0–0 ♗b7 15.♗fc1 ♗g4? 16.d5!± Piket – Kupreichik, Lvov 1988. On 16...exd5 comes 17.♗d3 with numerous threats.

8.♗b1!?

This relatively little known but very subtle move poses new problems for Black, as we shall see in Game 64.

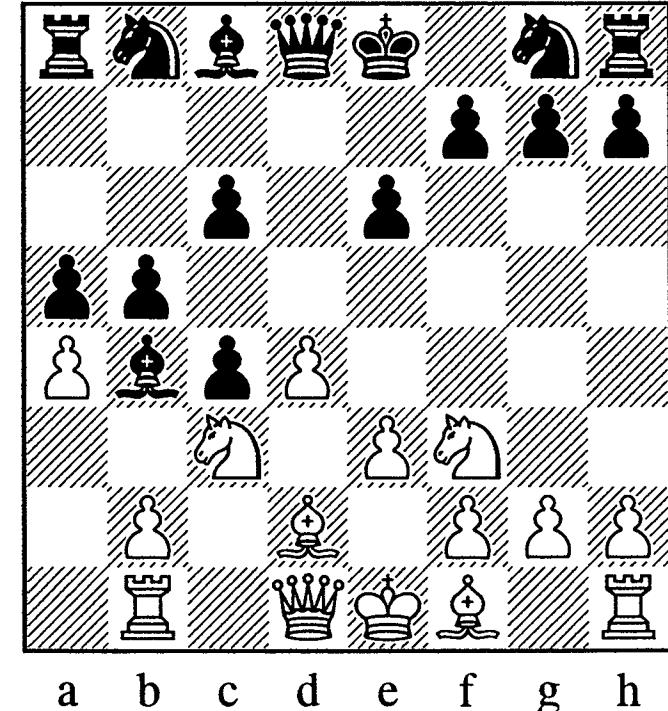
The traditional mainline is 8.axb5 ♗xc3 9.♗xc3 cxb5 10.b3 ♗b7 11.bxc4 (11.d5?) 11...b4 12.♗b2 ♗f6 13.♗d3 0–0 14.0–0 ♗bd7 and now White's most popular move is 15.♗e1 planning to expand further in the centre. The variation is still far from resolved. Despite hundreds of tries White has not been able to find anything clear-cut yet. The big centre and the pair of bishops are important, but so are Black's two connected passed pawns!

Game 64

Elwert – Binder

Correspondence 1993

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 c6 4.♗f3 dxc4 5.a4
♗b4 6.e3 b5 7.♗d2 a5 8.♗b1



A difficult move to understand at first, but it is the surprising result of some aggressive prophylactic thinking. Here is the reasoning behind it: a key move for Black in the Noteboom is ...♗xc3 to save the b5-pawn, but now White introduces the idea of taking back with the pawn on c3 and opening the b-file for the rook, thus renewing the attack on b5.

8...♗a6

Therefore Black defends b5 in advance. There are other ways to do so.

a) 8... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

This looks clumsy, but is without a doubt Black's most solid option. White can easily finish his development and get the usual good long-term compensation for the pawn, but perhaps no more than that, as Black's position is rather solid.

9. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 10. $\mathbb{W}f3$

Activating the queen.

The more modest 10. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0-0 11. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{B}a7$ 12.0-0 was a good alternative.

10... $\mathbb{B}a7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 0-0 12.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 13. $e4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$

Or 13... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 14. $bxc3$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}f4\infty$.

14. $\mathbb{W}g3$

Also interesting is the new move 14. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ which increases the pressure. Black probably has to answer 14... $\mathbb{Q}e8$. Taking the second pawn with 14... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 15. $bxc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ can be punished tactically with 16. $\mathbb{W}g3$ f6 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc4!$ $bxc4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}h6$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 19. $\mathbb{B}xb8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 20. $\mathbb{B}xf8\ddagger$ $\mathbb{W}xf8$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $gxh6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ a4 23. $\mathbb{W}g3\ddagger$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 24. $\mathbb{B}b1\pm$ with good play.

14...f6 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 16. $\mathbb{B}fd1\infty$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 17. $axb5$

$cxb5$ 18.d5! $\mathbb{Q}d6$

Or if 18...exd5 then 19. $\mathbb{Q}g4$.

19. $\mathbb{W}h3$ exd5 20. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{W}e8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e6\ddagger$

Even stronger was first 21. $\mathbb{Q}f5$.

21... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 23.exd5

White seemed better, although the position was still fairly unclear, Mayo – Riera, Mataró 2005.

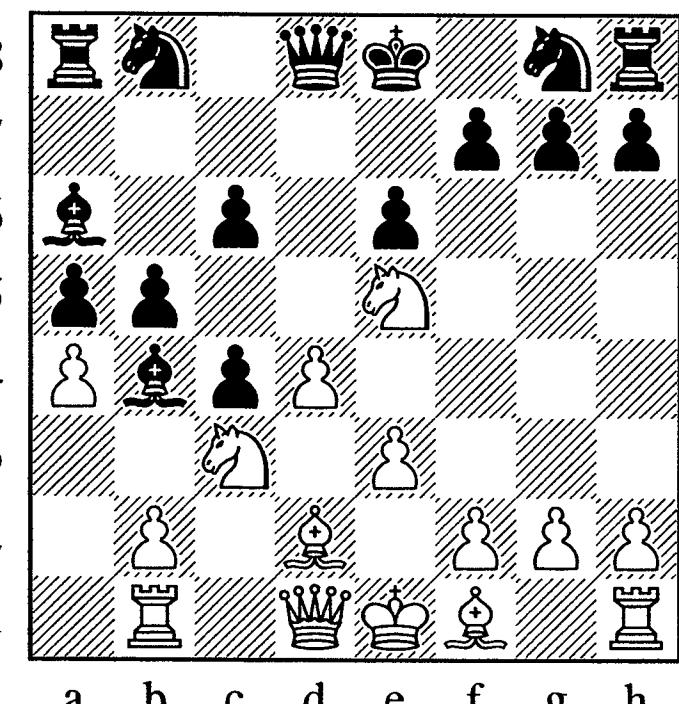
b) 8... $\mathbb{W}b6$ defends with the queen. 9. $axb5$ (9.b3 $cxb3$ 10. $\mathbb{W}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ b4 12.d5? $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $gxf6$ 14. $\mathbb{W}b2$ $cxd5$ 15. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ $\mathbb{B}f8$ was unclear, but seemed okay in Beaumont – A. Shaw, corr. 1998) 9... $cxb5$ 10.b3 Actually a new move, but the most obvious one in the position. 10... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $cxb3$ (not 11...b4 12. $bxc4$) 12. $\mathbb{W}xb3$ b4 13.d5 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $gxf6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ With good play for the pawn.

c) 8... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 9. $bxc3$ The point. 9... $\mathbb{W}d5$ 10.e4! $\mathbb{W}xe4\ddagger$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ (if 11... $\mathbb{W}d5$ then 12. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ with the threat of 13. $\mathbb{Q}f3$) 12. $axb5$ $cxb5$ 13. $\mathbb{B}xb5\pm$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 15. $\mathbb{B}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 16.f3 $\mathbb{W}h4\ddagger$ 17.g3 $\mathbb{W}h3$ 18. $\mathbb{B}xa8\ddagger$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ White was winning in Grachev – Doric, Pardubice 2005.

d) 8... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ is a mistake: 9. $axb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 10. $bxc3$ $cxb5$ 11. $\mathbb{B}xb5\pm$ Once again we see the effect of the little rook move.

e) 8... $bxa4$ is a radical way to solve the problem with the b-pawn. White wins the pawn back and gets a distinct positional plus. 9. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 0-0 11.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 12. $\mathbb{B}c1\pm$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{W}xb4$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 20.b3± Babula – Matlak, Czech Republic 1997.

9. $\mathbb{Q}e5$



9... $\mathbb{W}c7$

The position was already full of poison.

9... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ A surprising strike. (10. $\mathbb{W}f3$ is a good, more traditional, alternative) 10... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 11. $axb5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ (better was 11... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 12. $bxc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6\pm$) 12. $bxa6$ $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 14. $\mathbb{W}xd2$ $\mathbb{W}xd2\ddagger$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4\ddagger$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2$

Delchev – Nikolov, Bulgaria 1991. And now 17.♖hf1 when White's strong a-pawn gives good winning chances.

9...♜a7 10.♕xc6 (again we see this small combination, and again a good alternative is 10.♗f3) 10...♝xc6 11.axb5 ♜b7 12.bxc6 ♜xc6 13.♕xc4 (13.f3± would secure a positional edge) 13...♝g5 Black had counterplay in Moskalenko – Malisauskas, Norilsk 1987.

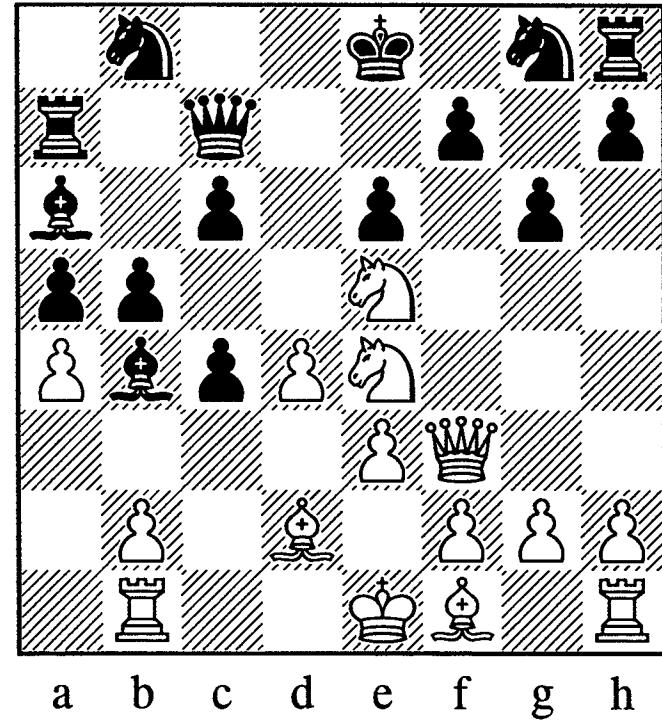
10.♗g4

White wants to provoke some weaknesses. The immediate 10.♗f3 has also been played, but the text move is stronger.

10...g6

10...f5 loses material: 11.♗h5† g6 12.♕xg6 ♜f7 (12...♝f6 13.♗h3 ♜g8 14.♗f4±) 13.axb5! hxg6 (not 13...cxb5 14.♗f3 and both rooks are hanging) 14.♗xh8 cxb5 Black did not have anything for the exchange, Bernal Moro – Candela Perez, Ponferrada 1997. A simple way to make progress is 15.h4 followed by h5.

11.♗f3 ♜a7 12.♕e4!



And now we see the effect: Black is very weak on the dark squares.

12...f5

12...♜xd2† 13.♕xd2! is no better.

13.♕xb4 axb4 14.♘c5

A nice square. White is clearly better.

14...b3 15.♗e2 ♜c8 16.0–0 ♜e7 17.♗fc1 ♜d6

17...0–0 should have been tried.

18.♗f4 ♜d7

Now it was too late: 18...0–0 19.♘xg6 ♜xf4 20.♘xf4 with horrible pawns.

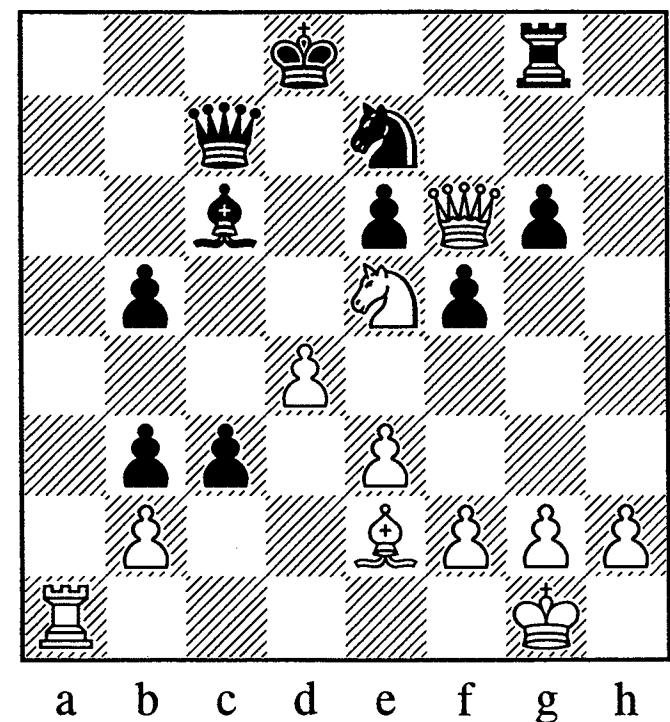
19.axb5 cxb5 20.♘cxd7 ♜xd7 21.♗h6

The queen enters on the kingside.

21...♜c6 22.♖a1

And the rook on the queenside.

22...♜c7 23.♗g7 ♜f8 24.♗xh7 ♜xa1 25.♖xa1 ♜d8 26.♗g7 ♜g8 27.♗f6 c3



28.♖a7!

A nice blow.

28...♜b7

Or 28...♜xa7 29.♘xc6†.

29.♗xe6

1–0

On 29...cxb2 White plays 30.♘f7† ♔e8

31. $\mathbb{Q}d6\#$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xb5\#$! $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 33. $\mathbb{W}xd6$ b1= \mathbb{W} 34. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ and wins. This variation is quite possible to calculate in a correspondence game, so Black did not feel like seeing it played out. It reminds me of a little anecdote. In the Dresden Olympiad it was illegal to accept a draw before move 30. My Danish team-mate Peter Heine Nielsen suggested that then it should also be forbidden to resign before move 30!

Conclusion: The interesting move 8. $\mathbb{B}b1$ is a promising way to combat the Noteboom Variation.

The Semi-Tarrasch offers Black a way out of the normal Queen's Gambit Exchange Variation.

The Semi-Tarrasch

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4. cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

Black avoids the typical Exchange Variation pawn structure with 4...exd5 and tries instead to play the solid Semi-Tarrasch.

5.e4

Of course White takes the centre.

5... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 6. bxc3 c5

Black seeks simplification. After the natural 7. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ we have a genuine Semi-Tarrasch, where Black usually continues 7... cxd4 8. cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2\#$ 10. $\mathbb{W}xd2$ 0-0 with a slightly passive but very solid position. However White does not have to be so cooperative. He can use the particular move order to his advantage by preventing the ... $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$ idea. One way to do that is 7. $\mathbb{B}b1$, the other is:

7.a3!

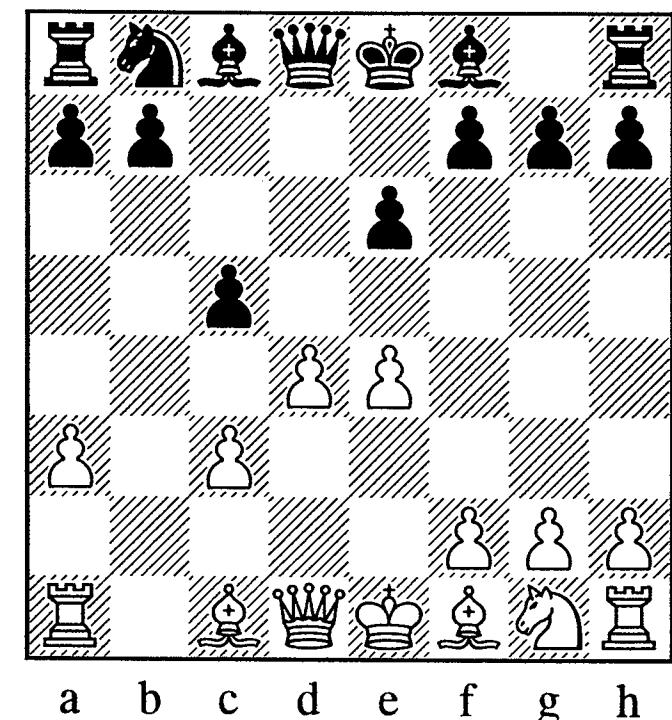
White hopes to use his extra space to build up some serious pressure on Black's kingside. Which is exactly what happens in the following game.

Game 65

Bareev – Hracek

Pardubice 1994

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 4. cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$
5.e4 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 6. bxc3 c5 7.a3



Nice prophylaxis against ... $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$. White has the centre and much more space, so of course he is interested in keeping as many pieces on the board as possible.

7... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

7... cxd4 8. cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ will just transpose.

8. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 0-0 9. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ cxd4

And so will 9... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ cxd4 11. cxd4.

10. cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$

10... b5 just creates a weakness, so White can shift to positional mode: 11. 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ a6 13. a4! $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14. $\mathbb{W}e2$ bxa4 15. $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}b1\pm$ I. Sokolov – Teske, Calatrava 2007.

11. $\mathbb{Q}b2$

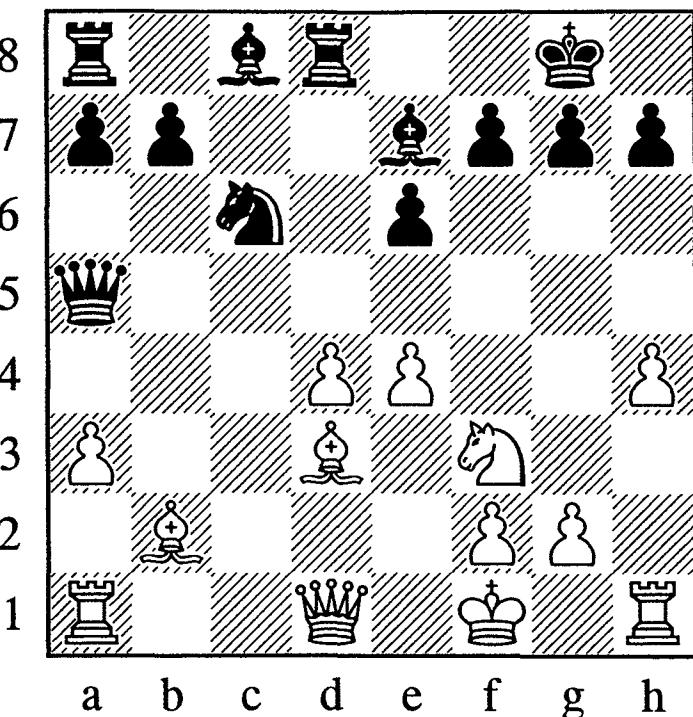
Dynamic chess. The bishop is placed on the long diagonal pointing towards the black king.

All that is needed is the pawn break d4-d5 to make it come alive.

11... $\mathbb{W}a5\ddagger$

Black tries to disturb White before his army is fully developed. White could play safe and just offer the exchange of queens with 12. $\mathbb{W}d2$, but Bareev comes up with a very creative attacking scheme.

12. $\mathbb{Q}f1!$ $\mathbb{E}d8$ 13.h4!



The rook can enter the fight via h3 and g3, adding further pressure against Black's king position. The threats can quickly become serious. Both white bishops are ready to join the attack after pawn moves such as d4-d5 and/or e4-e5.

13...b6

Preparing ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$.

14. $\mathbb{W}e2$

Preventing it.

14... $\mathbb{Q}b7$

The most natural. Black could be insistent with 14... $\mathbb{Q}b8$, but then 15. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{W}xa6$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{E}d7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c1\pm$ gives White a pleasant positional advantage, Lafuente – Lopez Martinez, La Massana 2008.

15. $\mathbb{E}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$

Passive play will not save Black. However there was no easy solution: 15... $\mathbb{E}d7$ 16. $\mathbb{E}h3$ $\mathbb{E}b8$ And now the powerful pawn sacrifice: 17.d5! exd5 18.e5 This opens lines and leaves Black's king rather vulnerable. 18...h6 19. $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ (or 19...hxg5 20. $\mathbb{W}h5$ g6 21. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ winning) 20.hxg5 d4 21.f4 It is all over. 21...g6 22. $\mathbb{E}xh6$ $\mathbb{E}e7$ 23. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 24.f5 1–0 Raykin – Rogemont, corr. 1999.

16. $\mathbb{E}h3$ $\mathbb{E}ac8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 18.h5 h6 19.d5!

Again we see this instructive pawn sacrifice.

19...exd5 20.e5 d4

Black returns the pawn hoping for some simplifications – a hope, it turns out, which has nothing to do with reality.

21. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 22. $\mathbb{E}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$

This allows the white knight access to the dream-square f5, when the attack will be irresistible. However, Black's position was beyond repair anyway.

23. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$

Every likely combination wins.

24. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$

Just as strong was 24. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 25. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{E}g8$ 26. $\mathbb{W}f5$ with a nasty threat of mate on h7.

24... $\mathbb{W}e6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\ddagger$ $\mathbb{W}xf7$ 26.e6 $\mathbb{W}f4$ 27.h6

The bishop on b2 is really the hero of the day.

27... $\mathbb{Q}d4$

Or 27... $\mathbb{W}xh6$ 28. $\mathbb{E}h3$.

28.hxg7 \ddagger $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 29. $\mathbb{W}h5\ddagger$ $\mathbb{W}h6$ 30. $\mathbb{W}xh6\ddagger$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 31.e7

The final blow.

31...♝d5

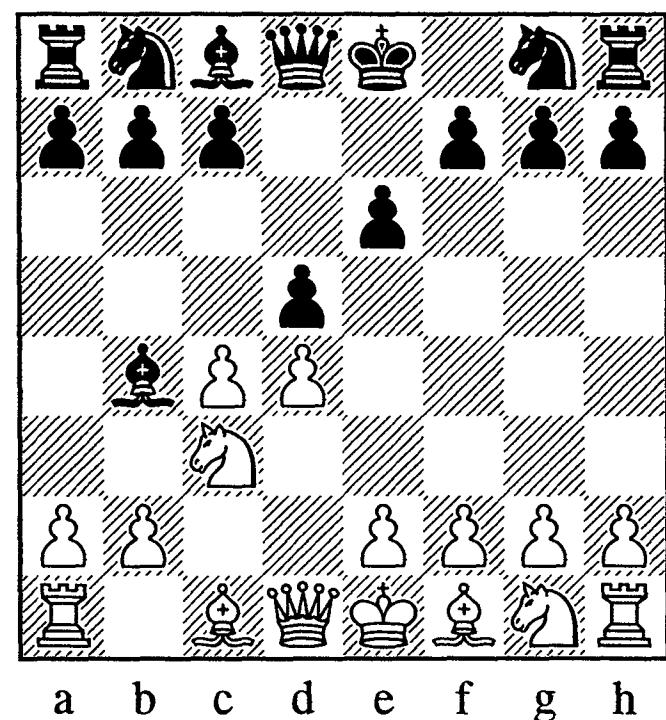
Nothing works: 31...♝e8 32.♝xd4† or 31...♝d6 32.♝f5.

32.♝e4

1–0

Conclusion: Black's attempt to reach a normal Semi-Tarrasch is countered by the clever 7.a3, when White benefits from his extra space and quickly gets a very promising position.

Our final line is a QGD-Nimzo hybrid.

The QGD with 3...♝b4**1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♞c3 ♘b4**

Active development and pinning the white knight in a mixture of the Queen's Gambit Declined and the Nimzo-Indian Defence. After 4.♞f3 ♜f6 we would have the popular Ragozin Variation. However it is tempting to try to take advantage of the early bishop move.

4.a3 ♘xc3† 5.bxc3 ♜f6

Black can try to avoid theory with the unusual 5...♜e7, but if White continues sensibly the knight can hardly be better placed on e7 than on f6. 6.e3 0–0 7.♞f3 c5 (7...b6

8.♝d3 h6 9.0–0 ♜a6 10.cxd5 exd5 11.♝xa6 ♜xa6 12.♝d3 ♜c8 13.c4 dxc4 14.♝xc4± I. Sokolov – Giorgadze, Debrecen 1992) 8.♝d3 ♜bc6 9.0–0 dxc4 10.♝xc4 ♜c7 A Nimzo-Indian with a strange knight: 11.♝d3 e5 12.♝c2 h6 13.e4±

6.e3

Play has now transposed to a real Nimzo position, which can be reached with the move orders 1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 e6 3.♞c3 ♜b4 4.a3 ♘xc3† 5.bxc3 d5 6.e3 or 4.e3 d5 5.a3 and so on. In both cases Black has refrained from the most intriguing lines, and the game position is rightfully judged as somewhat more pleasant for White.

6...0–0

6...c5 7.cxd5 exd5 8.♝d3 leads to the same position as later in the text, as does 6...b6 7.cxd5 exd5 8.♝d3.

An independent line is 6...c6 with the idea of taking back on d5 with the c-pawn. The evaluation however is the same: 7.♞f3 0–0 8.♝d3 b6 Black prepares ...♜a6. 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.♝e2 And White prevents it. 10...♜b7 11.♝b2 ♜c6 (or 11...♜c8 12.♝c1 ♜a6 13.c4 dxc4 14.♝xc4 ♜xc4 15.♝xc4± I. Sokolov – Hou Yifan, Zafra 2007) 12.0–0 ♜a5 13.♝d2 ♜c8 14.f3± Kramnik – Morozevich, Nice 2008.

7.cxd5

White clarifies the pawn structure in a favourable way, just like in the Queen's Gambit Exchange Variation.

7...exd5 8.♝d3 b6

8...c5 9.♝e2 b6 10.0–0 ♜a6 is another transposition. If Black instead drops the desired exchange of the light-squared bishops and opts for 9...♞c6 he will nevertheless face the same white set-up: 10.0–0 ♜e8 11.f3 b6 12.♝g3

$\mathbb{Q}b7$ 13. $\mathbb{R}a2$ An instructive rook transfer. 13... $\mathbb{E}c8$ 14. $\mathbb{E}e2$ cxd4 15.cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 16. $\mathbb{E}fe1\pm$ $\mathbb{E}c7$ (16... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ b5 18.e4±) 17. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ g6!? 18.e4 dxe4 Peralta – Ibarra Jerez, Barcelona 2008, and now 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{E}xe2$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 23. $\mathbb{W}xd3$ looks promising for White, for instance 23... $\mathbb{W}d5$ 24. $\mathbb{E}e8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 25. $\mathbb{W}e3\pm$.

9. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$

The culmination of Black's grand positional scheme. He exchanges White's good bishop and ends up with a knight against the passive remaining bishop on c1. The knight even has a potentially great outpost on c4. So what is wrong? Has White been outplayed so quickly? No! In this case the first impression does not last. Actually White's position is preferable and the reason lies in the dynamic pawn structure. White has a concrete plan of playing f3 and e4 with an initiative. Then the bishop will wake up and there are serious prospects on the kingside, just like we saw in the first chapter of this book. White's pawn power is very similar to the situation in the Exchange Variation of the QGD.

10. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 11. $\mathbb{W}d3$

Politely asking the knight what it intends to do.

11... $\mathbb{W}c8$

Probably best. Regrouping with 11... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 12.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 13.f3 $\mathbb{Q}a5$ takes time and White can execute his own expansion in the centre: 14. $\mathbb{R}a2$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}g3\pm$ c5 16.e4! cxd4 17.cxd4 $\mathbb{E}c8$ 18.e5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19.f4 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{W}c3$ 21. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{E}c6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}c4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}b4$ $\mathbb{W}xe2$ 24. $\mathbb{E}xe2\pm$ De Santis – Iotti, Arvier 2002.

12.f3

The most exact. 12.0–0 will usually transpose, but Black gets the extra option 12... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 13.f3 $\mathbb{W}a6\?$ which is a little annoying.

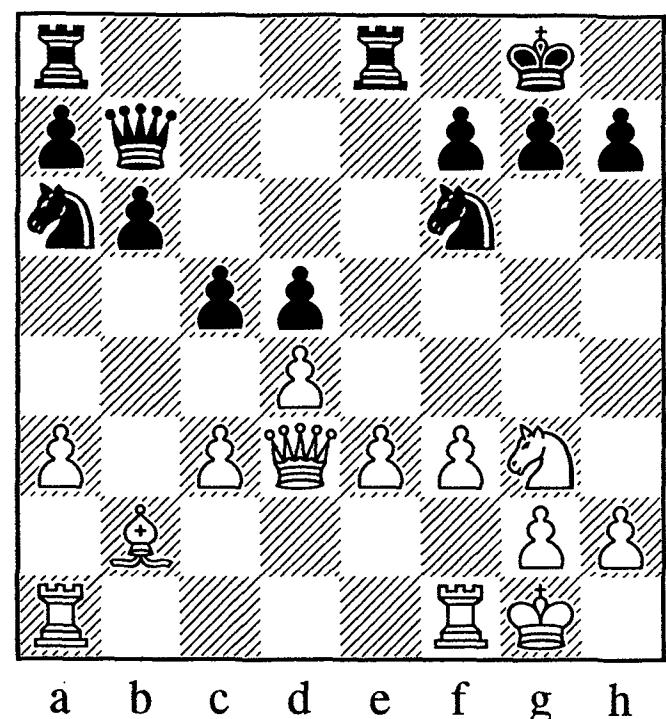
12...c5

Or 12... $\mathbb{E}e8$ 13.0–0 c5, which is just a transposition.

13.0–0 $\mathbb{E}e8$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}b7$

The fight for control over e4 continues.

15. $\mathbb{Q}b2$



Also popular is transferring the rook with 15. $\mathbb{R}a2$ followed by $\mathbb{E}e2$, but I like the bishop move more. I think White is slightly better, which I will back-up with a few examples.

15...c4 This is seldom a good idea – see the instructive final game. 16. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 17. $\mathbb{R}ae1$ b5 18. $\mathbb{W}f2!$ $\mathbb{E}e6$ And now the break 19.e4± is made possible by the pressure along the f-file, Jurkiewicz – Romantowski, Olkusz 1995.

15... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 16. $\mathbb{R}ae1$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ 17. $\mathbb{W}d2$ cxd4 18.cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 19.e4! $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ With a strong attack. 20...h6 21. $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ b5 23. $\mathbb{Q}xg7!$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xh6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 25.e5± Winning the piece back with interest, Hoi – Sanchez Martin, Copenhagen 2002.

15... $\mathbb{E}e6$ 16. $\mathbb{R}ae1$ $\mathbb{E}ae8$ 17.c4 Opening lines for the bishop. I said it could turn out to be good. 17...cxd4 18. $\mathbb{W}xd4\pm$

The time has come to leave. This book started with some outstanding games by Botvinnik, so what better way to end it than by presenting another masterpiece by the Patriarch, created by his profound feeling for dynamic pawn structures.

Game 66

Botvinnik – Capablanca

Holland 1938

1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♜b4

Many places in the book I have changed the real move order of a game to explain my repertoire, but I cannot fiddle with this classic.

**4.e3 d5 5.a3 ♜xc3† 6.bxc3 c5 7.cxd5 exd5
8.♕d3 0–0 9.♘e2 b6 10.0–0 ♜a6 11.♕xa6
♘xa6 12.♕b2?!**

Imprecise. Better was 12.♗d3.

12...♗d7 13.a4

Now on 13.♗d3 Black would have the rather annoying queen move 13...♗a4 already infiltrating on the queenside.

13...♝fe8?!

Black could have played more actively with 13...cxd4 14.cxd4 ♜fc8 followed by ...♝c4 and ...♝ac8 with a fine position. White could seriously consider 14.♘xd4, but of course Black is okay.

14.♗d3

Back to normal.

14...c4?!

Capablanca makes a deep strategic mistake. From a strictly positional view the move is desirable. Black closes the position and intends to follow up with the knight manoeuvre ♜a6–

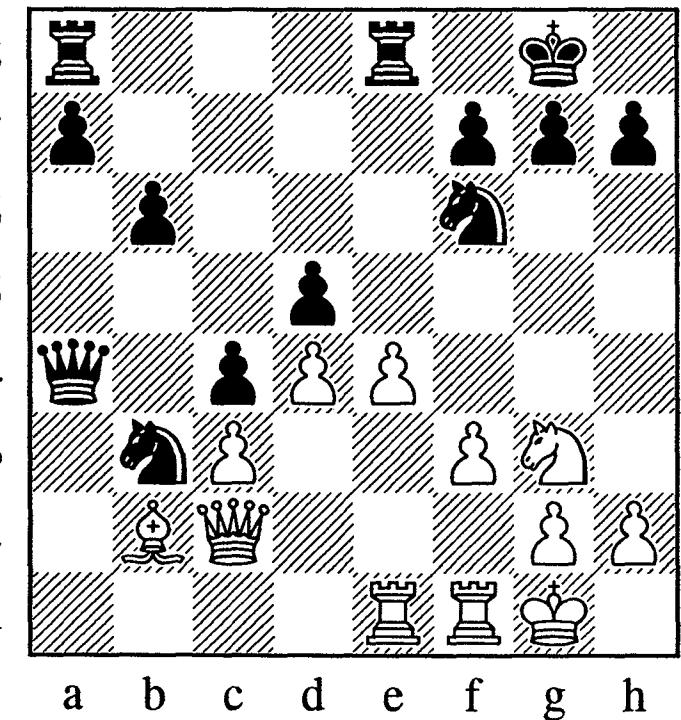
b8-c6-a5-b3, when the a4-pawn would be difficult to defend. However Capablanca completely misjudges the dynamic features in the position. If White manages to advance in the centre with f3 and e4 he will get a strong initiative that can quickly be transformed into a fierce attack.

In that light, Black should have chosen 14...♝b7.

15.♗c2 ♜b8 16.♘ael ♜c6 17.♘g3 ♜a5

On 17...♝e4 White answers coolly with 18.♘h1 followed by f3, and then the white knight would return.

18.f3 ♜b3 19.e4! ♜xa4



Black has won the pawn, but White's advance in the centre leads to a direct offensive.

20.e5!

Gaining more space.

20...♝d7 21.♗f2 g6

Black is on the defensive. From now on he will have no spare time to breathe or consolidate. Here he is preventing the white knight from jumping to f5 and d6.

22.f4 f5

Otherwise White plays f5 himself.

23.exf6 ♜xf6 24.f5 ♜xe1

Black simplifies by trying to exchange all the rooks.

25.♜xe1 ♜e8

25...♜f8 26.♝f4 was not easy to defend, for instance 26...♝d7 27.♝e6± with strong pressure.

26.♝e6!

Now the exchange will come at a high price: the passed e6-pawn will be very strong.

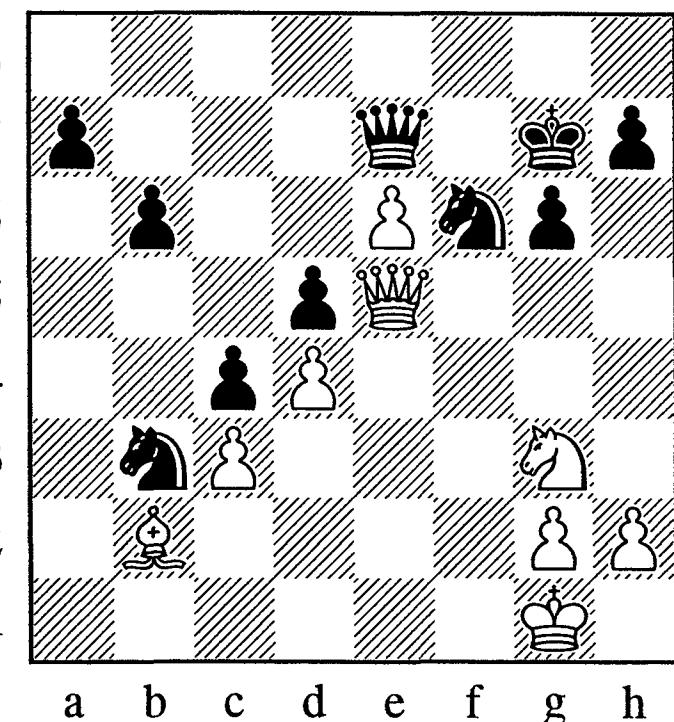
26...♜xe6 27.fxe6 ♔g7 28.♝f4

Activating the queen. Black is very vulnerable on the dark squares and White is already threatening 29.♝f5† gxf5 30.♝g5† and ♜xf6.

28...♝e8 29.♝e5

A little inaccurate, because now Black had the chance to put up some resistance with 29...h6. Simpler was 29.♝c7† ♔g8 30.♝e5, but then we would not have the following historic finish.

29...♝e7



30.♔a3! ♜xa3 31.♝h5†!

A spectacular combination. White sacrifices two pieces to open the way for the e6-pawn.

31...gxh5 32.♝g5† ♔f8 33.♝xf6† ♔g8

Not 33...♔e8 34.♝f7† ♔d8 35.♝d7#.

34.e7

There is no perpetual check.

34...♝c1† 35.♔f2 ♘c2† 36.♝g3 ♘d3† 37.♔h4 ♘e4† 38.♔xh5 ♘e2† 39.♔h4 ♘e4† 40.g4 ♘e1† 41.♔h5

1–0

Conclusion: White should meet 3...♝b4 with 4.a3 and get a good Nimzo-Indian. The dynamic pawn structure is known to us from the QGD Exchange Variation: White plays a quick f3 and hopes to follow with e4 gaining the initiative.

Chapter Conclusion: It is hardly surprising that White does not have many problems gaining the upper hand against Black's various minor lines. The exception is the Triangle move order leading to the Noteboom Variation, which is worthy of serious study.

We have been on a long journey through very different openings, which require skills ranging from positional and strategic understanding to hardcore calculation. Together, the chapters in this book give a good picture of how varied and complex the modern game has become. But it is also a collection of excellent chess, and I hope that will be the final impression. So long.

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Index of Variations

This index is self-explanatory with one exception – some of the variations have two page numbers next to them. This is because the coverage of some variations is split – an introduction to the themes of the line at the start of a chapter, and in-depth theoretical coverage later.

Chapter 1 – Queen's Gambit Declined

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3

a) 3...♗f6 4.cxd5 exd5

4...♗xd5 5.e4 ♗xc3 6.bxc3 (18)

5.♗g5 c6

5...♗e7 6.e3 0–0 7.♗d3 (18)

5...♗bd7 6.e3 c6 7.♗d3 ♗d6 8.♗c2 (18)

6.♗c2 ♗e7

6...♗a6 7.e3 ♗b4 8.♗b1 (19)

7.e3 ♗bd7

7...♗g4 8.h3 (19)

8.♗d3 0–0

8...♗h5 (19)

9.♗ge2 ♗e8 10.0–0 ♗f8 11.f3 ♗e6 (21)

11...♗h5 (23)

11...♗g6 (26)

11...h6 (21)

11...g6 (21)

11...c5 (21)

b) 3...♗e7 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗f4 c6

5...♗f6 6.e3 ♗f5 7.♗ge2 0–0 8.♗c1 c6

9.♗g3 ♗e6 (37)

9...♗g6 10.h4 (37)

10.♗d3 ♗bd7 (37)

10...♗e8 (37)

11.0–0 ♗e8 12.♗b3 b5 (37)

12...♗b6 (37)

12...♗b6 (37)

6.e3 ♗f5

6...♗d6 (29)

6...♗f6 (30)

7.g4 ♗e6

7...♗g6 (30)

8.h4 ♗d7

8...♗xh4 9.♗b3 b6 (32)

9...g5 10.♗xb7 (32)

10.♗e5 (32)

10.♗h2 (32)

10.♗f3 ♗e7 11.♗e5 ♗f6 (33)

11...g5 (33)

8...♗f6 (30)

8...c5 (30)

8...♗d6 (30)

8...♗b6 (31)

9.h5 ♗b6

9...♗h6 (31)

10.♗b1 ♗gf6 11.f3 h6 (34)

11...0–0 (34)

Chapter 2 – Queen's Gambit Accepted

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4

3...e5

3...b5 4.a4 (41)

3...c5 4.d5 e6 (43)

4...♗f6 5.♗c3 b5 6.♗f4 (43)

5.♗xc4 ♗f6 6.♗c3 (46)

3...♗c6 4.♗f3 ♗g4 5.♗xc4 (61)

5.d5 (61)

5...e6 (61)

5...♗xf3 (61)

3...♗f6 4.e5 ♗d5 5.♗xc4 ♗b6 (66)

5...♗c6 6.♗c3 (64)

6.♗d3 ♗c6 7.♗e3 ♗b4 (67)

7...♗e6 (67)

7...g6 (67)

8.♗e4 f5 9.exf6 exf6 10.♗c3 (67)

4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ exd44... $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ (49)**5. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$** 5... $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ (52)**6.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e6$** 6... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 7. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ (54)**7. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ (56)**7. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ (56)**Chapter 3 – The Slav****1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$**

3...dxc4 4.e3 b5 (73)

4... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ (73)**4. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ dxc4**

4...g6 (72)

4... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ (72)4... $\mathbb{W}b6$ (72)**5. a4 $\mathbb{Q}f5$** 5... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 6.e4 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ (76)5... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 6. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ (78)6... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ (78)7.f3 $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ (78)

7...e6 (78)

8. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ e5 9.e4 (79)5...e6 6.e4 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 7.e5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ (82)7... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ (82)8. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ (82)5... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ (73)

5...c5 (73)

5...a5 (73)

6. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 6... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 7.e3 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ e6 9.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (86)9... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ (86)9... $\mathbb{Q}c2$ (86)**a) 6...e6 7.f3 $\mathbb{Q}b4$** 7...c5 8.e4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ (85, 95)8...cxd4 9.exf5 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ (95)9... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ (95)9. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ (96)8.e4 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 9.fxe4 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xe4\#$ 12. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2\#$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ $\mathbb{W}d5\#$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 0–0–0 (88)

15...0–0 (90)

15...b5 (93)

15... $\mathbb{W}f5\#$ (93)15... $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$ (93)15... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (93)**b) 6... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 7. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}c7$** 7... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ (98)

7...e6 (98)

7... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ a5

8...e6 (106)

9. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ (106)

9.f3 (106)

9.g3 (106)

9...h6 (106)

9...g6 (106)

9... $\mathbb{Q}fd5$ (107)**8.g3 e5 9.dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}fd7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ g5**11... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ (99)11... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ (99)11... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ (99)11...f6 12.0–0 $\mathbb{Q}c5$ (99)12... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ (100)

12...0–0–0 (100)

12. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ gxf4 13. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 0–0–0 14. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ (103)14... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ (103)14... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ (103)14... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ (103)

14...fxg3 (104)

Chapter 4 – The Semi-Slav

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♗g5
 5...♗e7 6.e3 0–0 7.♗d3 ♗bd7 8.0–0 h6
 (158)

8...dxc4 (158)

8...b6 (160)

8...♗e8 (160)

a) 5...♗bd7 6.e3 ♕a5 7.cxd5 ♗xd5

7...cxd5 (148)

7...exd5 (148)

7...♗e4 (149)

8.♕d2 ♘b4

8...♗7b6 (149, 152)

9.♗c1 h6

9...e5 (150)

9...f6 (150)

9...c5 (150)

10.♗h4 c5

10...0–0 (150)

11.a3 ♘xc3 12.bxc3 b6

12...♕xa3 (151)

13.c4

13.♗d3 (151)

13.e4 (151)

13...♕xd2† (151)

b) 5...dxc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.♗h4 g5

9.♗xg5

9.exf6 (115)

9...hxg5

9...♗d5 10.♗xf7 (115, 120)

10.♗xg5 ♗bd7

10...♗e7 (115, 122)

11.g3

11.exf6 (116)

11...♗b7

11...♗g8 (116, 124)

11...♕a5 (116, 127)

12.♗g2 ♕b6

12...♕c7 (116)

13.exf6 0–0–0 14.0–0 c5

14...♗e5 (117)

14...♗h6 (117)

15.d5 b4 16.♗a4

16.♗b1 (118)

16...♕b5 (118, 131)

16...♕a6 (118, 129)

16...♕d6 (118)

c) 5...h6 6.♗h4

6.♗xf6 (133)

6...dxc4 7.e4 g5 8.♗g3 b5 9.♗e2

9.h4 (133)

9.♗e5 (133)

9...♗b7

9...b4 (134)

9...♗b4 (134)

9...♗h5 (135)

9...♗bd7 (135, 137)

10.h4

10.0–0 (135)

10...g4

10...b4 (135)

11.♗e5 ♗bd7 (137, 139)

11...♗g8 (137, 140)

11...h5 (137, 142)

11...b4 (136)

Chapter 5 – The a6-Slav

- 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 a6 5.c5 ♘bd7**
 5...♗f5 (171)
 5...b6 6.cxb6 ♗xb6 (165)
 6...♘bd7 (165)
- 5...♗g4 6.♘e5 ♗h5 (166)
 6...♗e6 (167)
 6...♗f5 (167)
 7.♗b3 ♗a7 8.e4 (167)
 8.♗f4 (167)
- 5...g6 (169)
- 6.♗f4 ♘h5**
 6...g6 (175)
- 7.♗d2**
 7.e3 (178)
 7.♗d2 (178)
 7.♗g5 (178)
- 7...b6 8.e4 ♘xf4**
 8...bxc5 (179)
- 9.♗xf4 e6 10.exd5 exd5 (179)**
 10...cxd5 (179)

Chapter 6 – The Tarrasch

- 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.g3 ♘f6**
 6...c4 (187)
7.♗g2 ♗e7
 7...cxd4 (189)
- 8.0–0 0–0**
 8...♗e6 (190)
- 9.♗g5 cxd4**
 9...c4 (190, 191)
 9...♗e6 (190, 194)
 9...h6 (190)
- 10.♘xd4 h6 11.♗e3 ♗e8**
 11...♗g4 (198)
- 12.♗a4**
 12.♗b3 (183, 198)
 12.♗c1 (198)
- 12...♘a5**
 12...♘xd4 (198)
 12...♗d7 13.♗fd1 (198)
 13.♗ac1 (198)
 13...♘a5 (198)
 13...♘b4 (198)
 13...♗c5 (199)
- 13.♗ad1 ♘c4 (201)**
 13...♗d7 (201)

Chapter 7 – The Chigorin

1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♜c6 3.♘c3 ♜f6

3...e5 (215)

3...dxc4 4.♗f3 a6 (215)

4...♝g4 (215)

4...e6 (215)

4.♗f3

4.cxd5 ♜xd5 5.♗f3 (216)

4...dxc4

4...♝f5 (216)

4...♝g4 5.cxd5 ♜xd5 6.e4 ♜xf3 (212)

6...♞xc3 (213)

7.gxf3 ♜xc3 (213)

7...♝b6 (213)

8.bxc3 e5 9.♝b1 (213)

5.♝g5 h6

5...♞d5 (207)

5...♝g4 (207)

5...a6 6.d5 ♜a7 (210)

6...♞a5 (210)

6.♜xf6 exf6 7.e3 ♜d6

7...♝b4 (207)

7...♞a5 (207)

8.♜xc4 0–0 (208)

Chapter 8 – Minor Lines

1.d4 d5 2.c4

2...e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 cxd4 (223)

2...♝f5 (226)

2...e6 3.♘c3 ♜b4 (236)

2...e6 3.♘c3 ♜f6 4.cxd5 ♜xd5 (236)

2...c5 (229)

a) 2...e5 3.dxe5 d4 4.♗f3 ♜c6 5.a3 ♜ge7

5...a5 (220)

5...f6 (220)

5...♝e6 (220)

5...♝g4 (220)

6.b4 ♜g6

6...♝g4 (221)

7.♝b2 a5

7...♞gxe5 (221)

8.b5 ♜cxe5 9.♞xe5

9.♝xd4 (221)

9...♞xe5 10.e3 ♜e6 11.♝xd4 ♜xc4 12.♝c2

♞d6 (221)

12...♝d5 (221)

b) 2...e6 3.♘c3 c6 4.♗f3 dxc4

4...f5 (232)

4...♞d7 (232)

4...♝d6 (232)

5.a4 ♜b4 6.e3 b5 7.♝d2 a5

7...♝b6 (232)

7...♝e7 (233)

7...♝b7 (233)

7...♝f6 (233)

8.♝b1

8.axb5 (233)

8...♛a6

8...♝d7 (234)

8...♝b6 (234)

8...♞xc3 (234)

8...♝f6 (234)

8...bxa4 (234)

9.♞e5 ♜c7 (234)

9...♝f6 (234)



Playing the Queen's Gambit

– A Grandmaster Guide

By Lars Schandorff

The power of the Queen's Gambit is beyond question, even though it allows some serious defences – the Slav and Semi-Slav are favoured by the elite, Kasparov was playing the Queen's Gambit Accepted until he retired, and the Queen's Gambit Declined has been trusted for a century.

The principled way for White to build a repertoire after 1.d4 d5 2.c4 is to play the critical main lines. Take as much space as possible – no compromises. That is Lars Schandorff's attitude and so his choice is clear:

- 5.♗g5 against the Semi-Slav
- 6.♘e5 versus the 5...♗f5 main line Slav
- 3.e4 against the Queen's Gambit Accepted
- The Exchange Variation versus the Queen's Gambit Declined
- 5.c5 against the 4...a6-Slav

The Tarrasch, Chigorin, Albin and all minor lines are also met with the same vigour – this is a complete White repertoire after 1.d4 d5 2.c4.

Lars Schandorff is a grandmaster from Denmark who is renowned on the international circuit for the depth of his opening preparation.



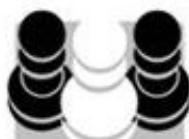
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