

# Cyrus Lakdawala

1...d6

move by move



EVERYMAN CHESS

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[www.everymanchess.com](http://www.everymanchess.com)

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# Contents

**Series Foreword**

**Bibliography**

**Introduction**

**Part I: 1 e4 d6**

**1 The Default Variation**

**2 Pribyl/Rat versus the Austrian Attack: 5 e5**

**3 Pribyl/Rat versus the Austrian Attack: 5 Bd3 and others**

**4 Fourth Move Alternatives**

**5 Second and Third Move**

## Alternatives

**Part II: 1 d4 and Others**

**6 1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5**

**7 The Wade Variation: 1 d4 d6**

**2 Nf3 Bg4**

**8 English, King's Indian Attack  
and Others**

**Index of Complete Games**

# Series Foreword

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

All the way through, readers will be challenged to answer searching questions and to complete exercises, to test their skills in chess openings and indeed in other

key aspects of the game. It's our firm belief that practising your skills like this is an excellent way to study chess openings, and to study chess in general.

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

John Emms  
Everyman Chess

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# Introduction

When I told friends I was working on a 1 ... d6 book they usually asked if I meant Pirc. Next, they would incorrectly guess Modern. I actually had trouble explaining just what the no-name opening was. In Canada, where I grew up, we called 1 ... d6 "the Rat", but this was invariably a euphemism for the old Pirc/Modern complex. This book covers a patchwork of opening repertoires created by many players over the decades, but mostly

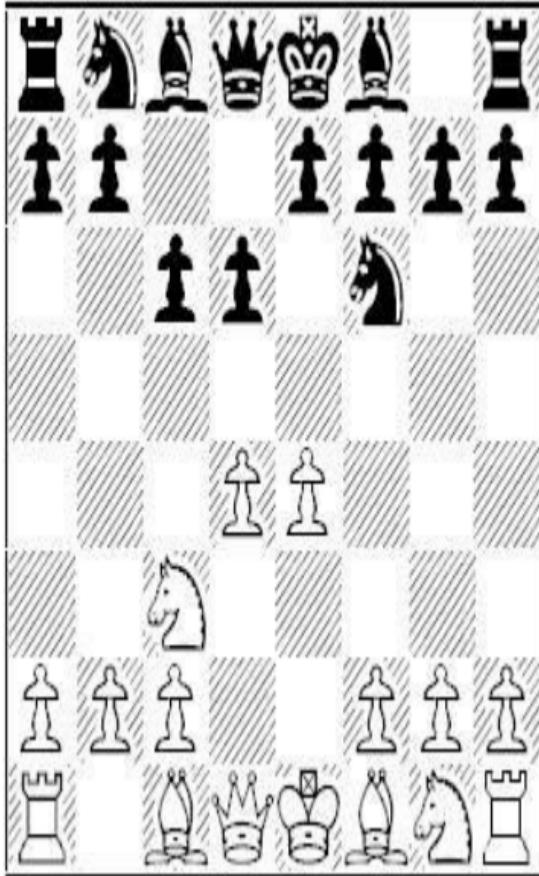
through the work of Czech IM Josef Pribyl and English IM Robert Wade, who transformed it into a real system.

The Pribyl/Wade/Rat/No-name System defies the corporatization of pedigreed opening systems. In the way a cave engulfed in darkness for a half billion years may be illuminated by a single flashlight, the hope is to turn this little known fringe idea into the mainstream of theory by trying to explain what was formally theoretically incomprehensible. Having tested out the lines in blitz versus IMs and GMs over the internet, I was

staggered to discover that even FIDE 2600+ players knew little about the opening, yet usually entered the sharpest lines. Many were just making moves up as they went along! If GMs and IMs barely know it, what need for explanation about your club opponent's knowledge of it? Mastery of the Pribyl/Wade/Rat ensures you of a clear experience/theory advantage from the get go.

1 ... d6 is intended to be a universal system which can be employed against virtually any first move. In essence the book divides into two sections, with Chapters

One through Five dealing with 1 e4  
and Chapters Six through Eight  
dealing with queen's pawn and  
English setups from White. Now, on  
to business:

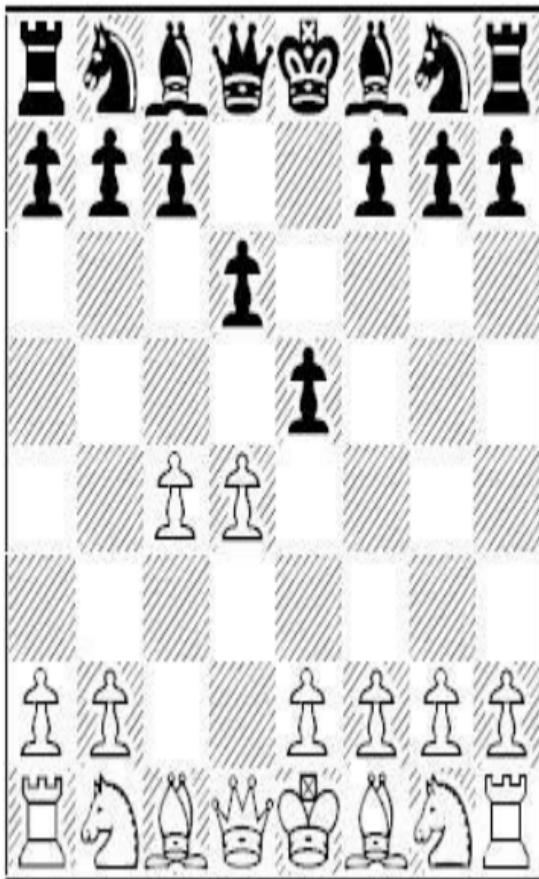


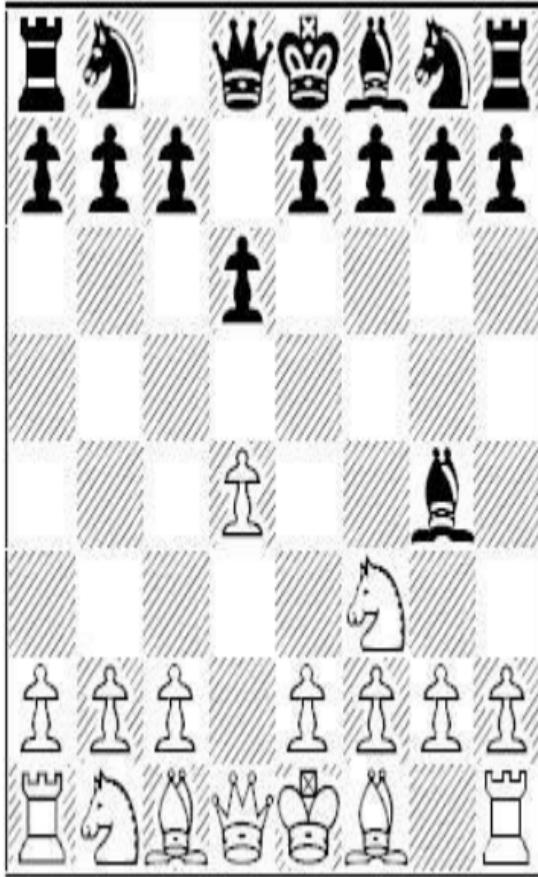
Here we arrive at the main starting position of the e-pawn sections of the book. The pawn

structure is so fluid and unorthodox that it essentially constitutes a blank slate. White can respond with critical lines like 4 f4, the Austrian Attack (Chapters Two and Three). Or he can try quieter lines like 4 Nf3 (Chapter One). On virtually all other responses we weave in and out of Philidor structures with ... Nbd7 and ... e5, mixed with strange Pribyl ideas. Black's position is maddeningly slippery from White's perspective, and it is deceptively hard to catch and checkmate us. Quite often our counterattacks come through first. We see a pattern of Black successfully exiting

through back windows when our opponents, in trembling fits, try to kick in our front door.

The next two diagrams represent our main challenges in the queen's pawn sections.





Here, unlike many of the 1 e4 segments, White doesn't try to refute our line by playing directly

for mate. Instead, we engage in heavyweight strategic battles which are no less tricky. As mentioned before, your biggest weapon will be your familiarity of this virtually unknown, oddball line. Soon, you will add experience as a second weapon. Let's get our opponents thinking on move two rather than move 22.

## **The Format**

The Move by Move format is designed to be interactive and simulate a chess lesson as closely as possible. Walt Whitman wrote: "The process of reading is not a half

sleep, but in the highest sense an exercise, a gymnastic struggle, that the reader is to do something for himself." The Move by Move books are not intended to be a passive process and the reader is expected to get involved and sweat a bit! We start with a question-and-answer format in the early part of the game, which mainly deals with theory (what little there is!). Many of the questions are ones asked by my own students, ratings ranging from 1000-2400, so some questions are basic; others sophisticated. Then as we move into the middlegame and endgame we

begin drilling with exercises to test your skills and understanding with planning, critical decisions, combination alerts, multiple choice quizzes and homework assignments. My goal as a teacher is to help you develop your entire game, not just the opening, and the aim is to drive you toward your highest potential.

Let's begin the book with a game where the godfather of our opening system shows how to befuddle a higher-rated opponent:

Game 1

**E.Vasiukov-J.Pribyl**

## **1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6**

Game on! Pribyl faces down a GM, armed with his understanding of an unknown and quirky system and distilled by his experience in the line. Pribyl was the underdog in this game but one should never underestimate the value of experience (it's a reasonable assumption that Vasiukov's sum total of experience in the Pribyl/Rat was zero!). To understand, one must first do!

## **4 Nf3 Bg4**

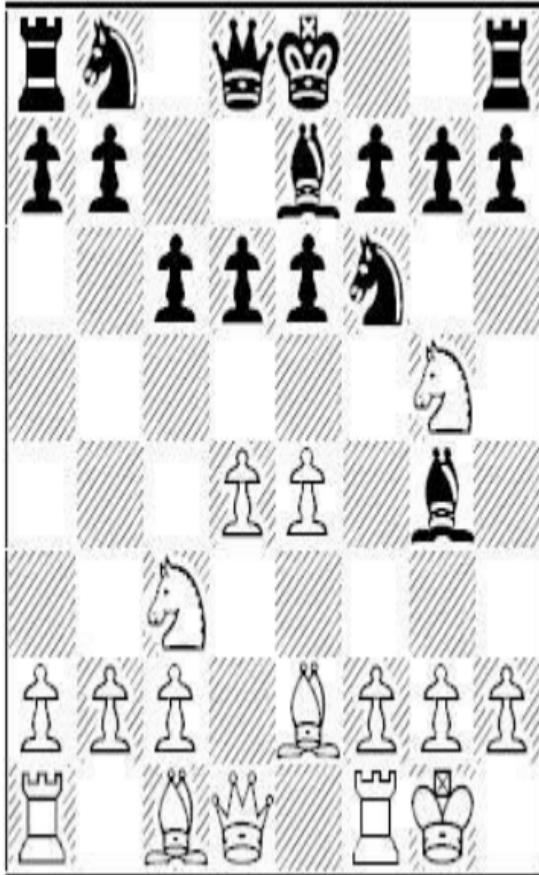
Reaching the starting position of

Chapter One. This move must have come as a surprise to Vasiukov, who probably expected 4 ... g6 and a transposition to the Pirc.

## **5 Be2**

5 h3 Bh5 6 Qe2 intending g4 and Nh4 is the scariest line for us. We cover this one in detail in Chapter One.

## **5 ... e6 6 0-0 Be7 7 Ng5!?**



A novelty at that time and one which isn't particularly dangerous to us.

**Question:** Why not?

**Answer:** By swapping White breaks the principle: Avoid exchanges when the opponent is cramped.

**Question:** But Black can swap anyway on f3 even if

White avoids his last move, correct?

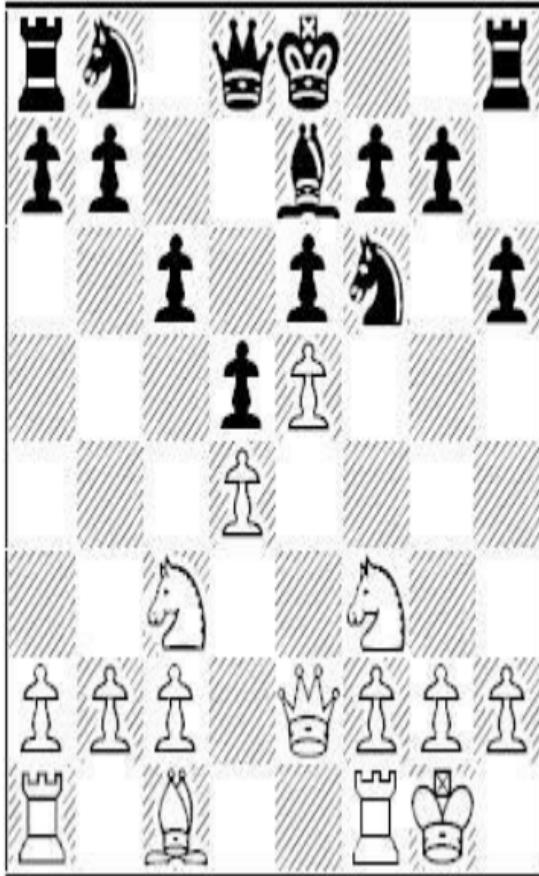
**Answer:** Correct, and we see this plan arise in Game 2, Langeweg-Petrosian. In this case White gets the bishop pair, although it's debatable whether the bishop pair actually constitutes an edge in such a blocked position.

7 ... Bxe2 8 Qxe2 h6 9 Nf3

**d5**

The main idea. Black gets a French sans bad bishop.

**10 e5**



**Question:** Hasn't White gained a typical advantage against the French or Caro-Kann

now?

**Answer:** No. White's last move, although gaining space, actually violates a few principles:

1. Don't place too many pawns on the same colour as your remaining bishop.
2. Don't close the position when your opponent owns the knights.
3. Don't close the position when leading in development.

**Question:** So was White's move an error?

**Answer:** Paradoxically, no. White gets nothing as well if he retains the central tension: 10 Bf4 0-0 11 Rad1 dxe4 12 Nxe4 Nxe4 13

Qxe4 Qd5! with equality, S.Neamtu-I.Cosma, Herculane 1996. The lesson: Following principles doesn't work 100% of the time. There are always exceptions.

## **10 ... Nfd7**

**Question:** Doesn't White have the edge with his extra space?

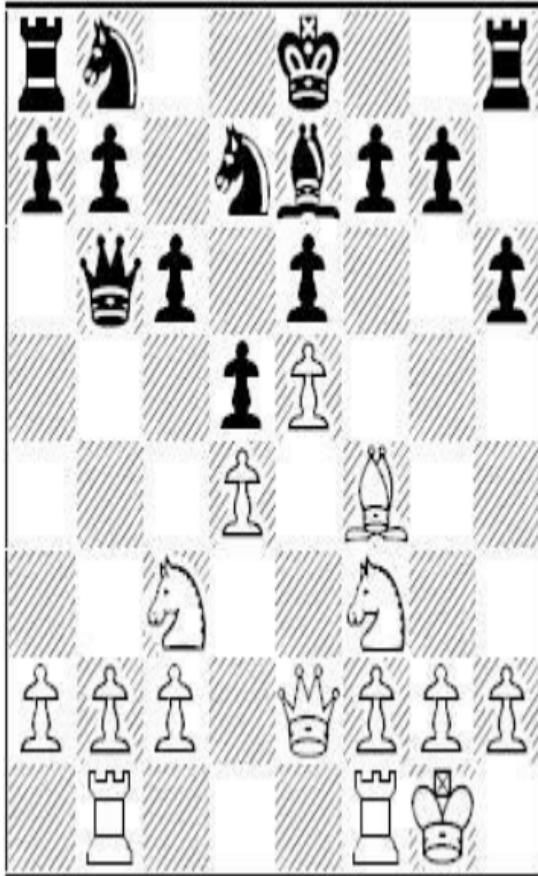
**Answer:** Black has equality at a minimum. Here is why:

1. The position resembles a French except that White's good and Black's bad bishop are missing.
2. White's natural attacking chances go way down without his powerful light-squared bishop.
3. Black has ... c5, at the

moment the only real break in the position for either side.

### **11 Bf4**

If this bishop is waiting for Black to help out with ... f6? he will be waiting a long time! **11 ... Qb6 12 Rab1**



**12 ... Qa6!**

A queen swap would take away  
White's only plus in this position:

attacking chances due to his extra space. Compare 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5 Bf5 4 Bd3 Bxd3 5 Qxd3 e6 6 Ne2 Qb6 7 0-0, where Capablanca used the same idea and reached a favourable ending after 7 ... Qa6! 8 Qd1 c5 9 c3 Nc6 10 Nd2 cxd4 11 cxd4 Qd3 12 Nb3 Qxd1 13 Rxd1, H. Atkins-J. Capablanca, London 1922.

### **13 Qd1**

**Question:** Why was 12 ... Qa6 given an exclamation?

It looks ineffective since White simply dodged the queen trade.

**Answer:** Black attained the following with his manoeuvre:

1. White lost time backing up his queen, since moving to d2 walks into pins on c3, and moving to e3 allows ... c5, ... cxd4 and ... Bc5 with more time lost.

2. Black increased his control over the light squares, the colour on which White is weaker.

3. Black's queen takes aim at a2 and may induce queenside pawn weaknesses from White.

### **13 ... c5**

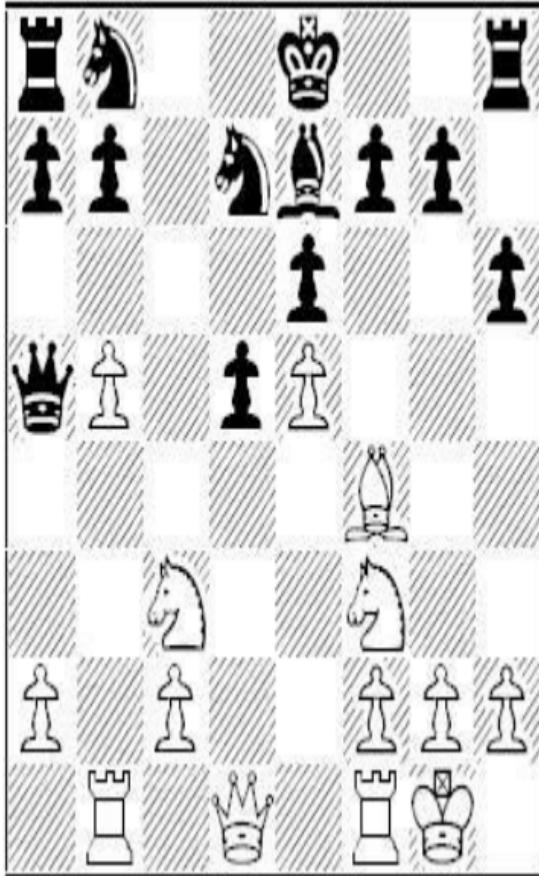
With this pawn break Black swaps off a wing pawn for a central pawn, but on the downside White gains d4 for his pieces and opens the game when ahead in

development.

**14 dxc5 Bxc5!?**

I would play 14 ... Nc6 to avoid what follows.

**15 b4! Be7 16 b5 Qa5!?**



## **Exercise (critical decision):**

Should White remain calm and play positionally? Or should he,

upon the mildest provocation,  
fly into a paroxysm of rage,  
accept the challenge and sac on d5?

### **Answer: 17 Nxd5!**

Rage it is! The “give and let live” philosophy is correct here. White burned his bridges positionally; hence the position calls for drastic measures. Sometimes one must take on sensible debt in the face of a strategic emergency.

16 ... Qb6 would have prevented the sac on d5.

### **17 ... exd5 18 e6?**

There is boldness and then there is leaping off a cliff. This is the wrong way.

White gets full compensation for the piece with 18 Qxd5!. For example, 18 ... Qc7 (or 18 ... Qb6 19 e6! fxe6 20 Qh5+ Kf8 21 Rfe1) 19 Rfe1 Nb6 20 Qxf7+! Kxf7 21 e6+ Kg6 22 Bxc7 and White's huge development lead compensates him in this unbalanced ending.

**18 ... fxe6 19 Nd4 0-0 20 Nxe6 Nf6**

Giving White the choice of either rook.

**21 Nxf8**

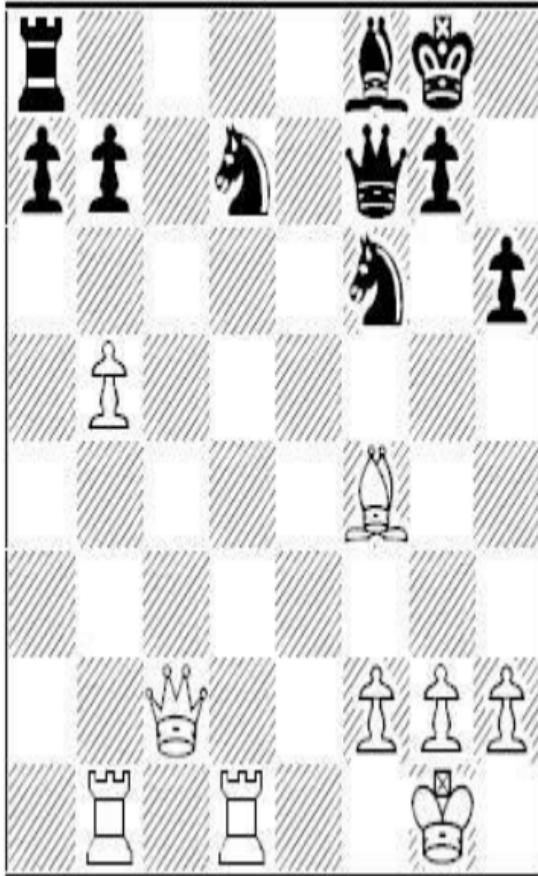
White didn't get enough for his sac. If 21 Qe2 then 21 ... Re8 (preventing Nxg7) 22 Nc7 Nbd7 23 Nxa8 Bc5! wins the a8-knight with

advantage.

**21 ... Bxf8 22 c4**

Hoping to milk his development lead.

**22 ... Qxa2 23 cxd5 Qxd5 24 Qc2 Nbd7 25 Rfd1 Qf7**



Black consolidates. His knight pair is worth more than a rook.

**26 Bd6 Nb6 27 Bxf8 Rxf8 28**

## **Qb3!?**

Vasiukov is concerned about the safety of his own king and allows queens off the board. The plan of keeping queens on and going after a7 isn't all that tempting either. For example, 28 Ra1 Nfd5 29 Rxa7 Nc3! 30 Re1 Nxb5.

**28 ... Ne4 29 f3 Qxb3 30 Rx<sub>b</sub>3 Nc5 31 Rb4**

31 Ra3 is met with 31 ... Nc8 32 Rd5 b6.

**31 ... Rf5 32 Ra1 Nc8**

Divided we stand. In the next few moves Black harmonizes his clunky knights.

**33 h4 Rd5 34 Kh2 b6 35 Kg3**



**Exercise (planning):** Black guarded his queenside property with

meticulous frugality. Still, he finds himself a bit tied down to his weakness on a7. Is there a way he can do the same to White by targeting the b5-pawn?

**Answer:** There is, by heading to d6.

**35 ... Nb7! 36 Rc1 Rc5 37 Re1**

Or 37 Rxc5 bxc5 38 Ra4 Nbd6 39 Ra5 Kf7 and Black should win.

**37 ... Nbd6**

Forcing White's rooks into indenture, guarding b5.

**38 Reb1**

38 Kf4 Nx b5 39 Re8+ Kf7 40

Rxc8 Rxc8 41 Rxb5 Rc4+ is totally lost for White, who has no chance against the connected queenside passers.

**38 ... Ne7 39 Kh3 Nd5 40**

**R4b3 Nc3!**



There goes b5, after which a knight conveniently covers a7. White could resign here.

**41 Re1 Kf7 42 g4 Ndxb5 43 Rb4 Nd5 44 Rbe4 Nd6 45 Rd4 Nc8 46 h5 Nce7 47 Kg3 b5 48 Re5 a5 49 Rf4+ Ke8 50 g5 Rc1 51 gxh6 gxh6 52 Rd4 Rc5 53 Rde4 Kd7 54 Rg4 b4 55 Rg6 b3 56 Rb6 Nx b6 57 Rxc5 a4 0-1**

**Summary:** Our opening is weirdly deceptive. Read on and the next 400 or so pages explain why!

I wish the reader good luck with the Pribyl/Wade/Rat/No-name System. May your booked up opponents give you perplexed looks when you employ it!

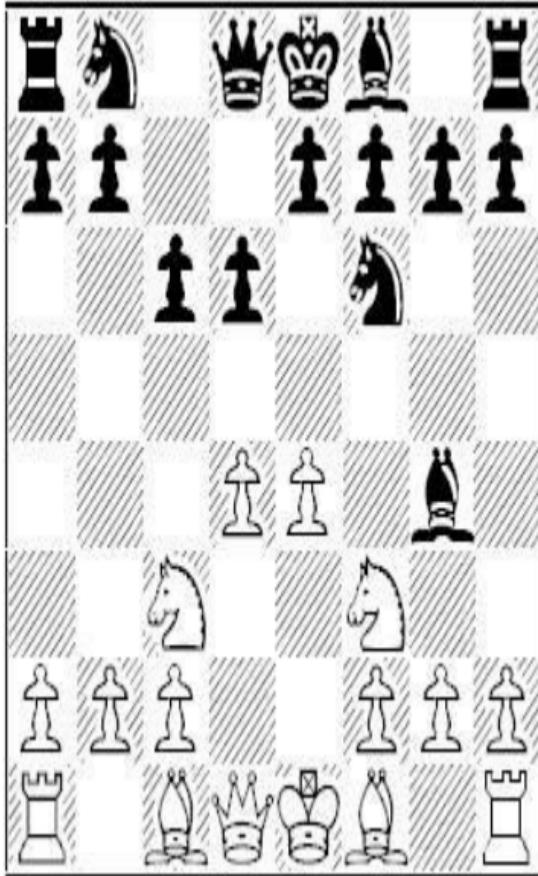
## **Acknowledgements**

Thanks to editor John Emms, for his untiring help and encouragement throughout the book. To Nancy for proofreading and also for kindly agreeing to urgent pleas that she stop talking about the royal wedding; and to Tim for nursing my elderly computer, keeping it rosy cheeked, skipping about and clapping its hands in delight at every variation in the book.

# **Chapter One**

## **The Default Variation**

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 Nf3 Bg4**



GM John Emms dubbed White's 4 Nf3 the "Default line". He feels that players who have never so

much as heard of the Pribyl/Rat believe they are about to enter a Pirc, and so, in their innocence, bang out 4 Nf3. However, their unshakeable belief in the coming of Pircdom is a bit cart before horse. Now comes the sneaky part. We have no intention of entering the waters of the Pirc. Instead we play 4 ... Bg4!, with the devious plan ... c6, ... e6 and ... d5, switching the pawn structure to that of a dream French, with our bad bishop on the outside of the pawn chain.

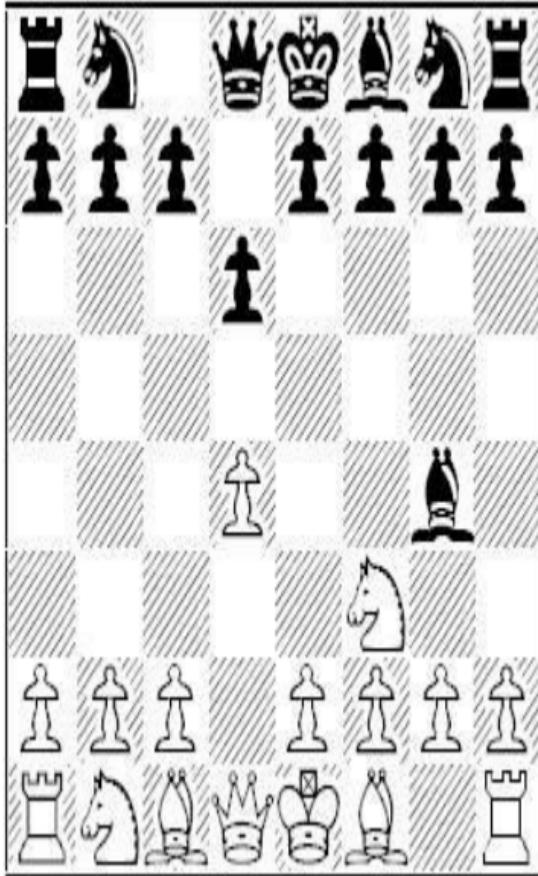
Having tested this line in internet blitz games against befuddled IMs and GMs, and also in

a few tournament games, I offer you a written guarantee: This strategic plan will confound the daylights out of your opponents. And for the gift wrapping and bow, in their confusion, your opponents will believe you are the one who is confused!

## Game 2

**K.Langeweg-T.Petrosian**  
Amsterdam 1973

**1 Nf3 d6 2 d4 Bg4**



**Question:** This is an odd-looking move, isn't it?  
I thought we would play

something like ... Nf6 and ... g6.

**Answer:** 2 ... Nf6 followed by ... g6 leads to the King's Indian, which is outside the scope of this book.

**Question:** So why go for something strange, like 2 ... Bg4?

**Answer:** You just gave the answer. We play it because it is strange! We lure our booked-up opponents out of their theoretical comfort zones while remaining in ours. If you play the King's Indian, odds are your opponent hits you with his pet line, which he tested 50 times before in tournament games, and which he understands inside and out. Petrosian's move, turning

the game into a Pribyl/Rat, is far sneakier. It's a chameleon-like opening that transforms the game into hybrids of the following openings:

1. Pirc

2. Modern/King's Indian/Old Indian

3. Philidor/Closed Ruy Lopez

4. Alekhine's Defence

5. French

6. Caro Kann/Scandinavian

7. Classical Dutch

The list actually goes on – those mentioned are merely the most common. I don't make a false equivalency, claiming that you need

to know all these openings just to play the Pribyl/Rat. What I am saying is that positions move in and out into positions similar to these openings, and it wouldn't be a bad idea to become somewhat familiar with the main ideas and structures of them.

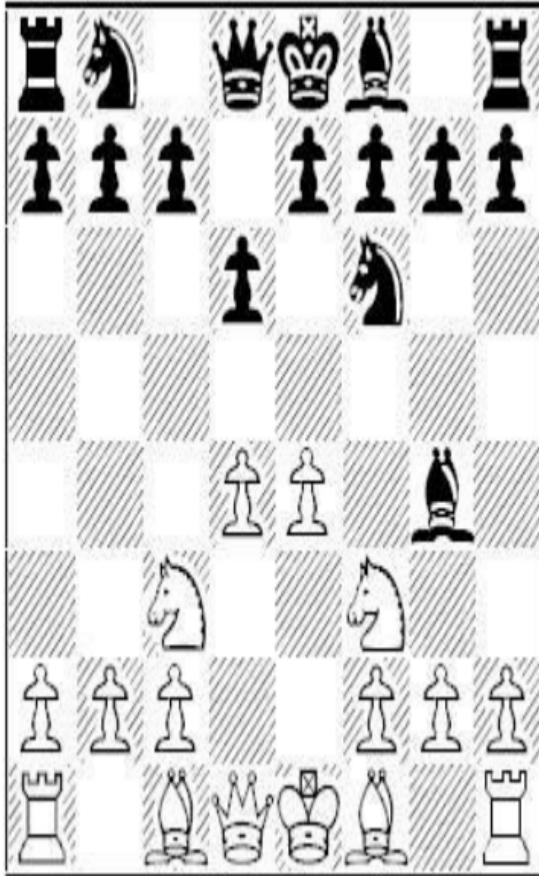
**Question:** How on earth do we get a French or Caro structure after we already played 1 ... d6? The French structure is ... e6 and ... d5, while the Caro is ... c6 and ... d5. Here, Black went for the exact mirror image with ... d6, intending ... e5.

**Answer:** Who said anything

about playing ... e5? True, in some of our lines, like when we transpose to the Philidor, we do indeed play for ... e5. But in others, like this game, Black's idea is the very devious ... Bg4, followed by the bait-and-switch of the structure with ... e6 ... c6 ... and ... d5. In essence we get a French, a tempo down, but with our formally bad light-squared bishop on the outside of the pawn chain; or a Caro where White's pieces look oddly placed, especially a knight on c3 preventing White from bolstering his pawn centre with the pawn push c2-c3. There is a high likelihood that your

opponents may firmly believe you just made the moves up, not realizing that they have been lured into actual theory (albeit weird theory!).

**3 e4 Nf6 4 Nc3**



There are three lines where White avoids blocking his c-pawn with his knight:

a) 4 h3 Bh5 5 Bd3 e6 6 c4.

**Question:** What is this opening?

**Answer:** I don't know what it is! Sometimes in this line both sides end up in strange places! 6 ... Be7 7 Nc3 Nc6 8 Be3 0-0 9 Qe2 was G.Kasparov-V.Anand, Paris (rapid) 1992. Black looks alright despite White's space if he follows a dark-square strategy fighting for d4, starting with 9 ... Bxf3! 10 Qxf3 Nd7! 11 0-0 Bf6 12 d5 (12 Ne2? Nde5! is a sweet cheapo, absconding with a pawn) 12 ... Nd4 13 Qd1 e5, or 13 ... c5 to keep the dark-squared bishop's diagonal open.

b) 4 Bd3 e6 follows the same strategy as in our main game: 5 0-0 Be7 6 c3 c6 7 Nbd2 Bh5 8 Re1 0-0 9 Nf1 d5 and now:

b1) 10 exd5 cxd5 11 Ng3 Bg6 12 Bxg6 hxg6 and Black comfortably equalizes, B.Schmidt-M.Bezold, German League 1995.

b2) 10 e5 Nfd7 and Black follows soon with ... c5. In comparison to similar positions with a knight on c3, White can more easily defend his d4-pawn with c3, but Black, with his bad bishop on the outside of the pawn chain, is still okay.

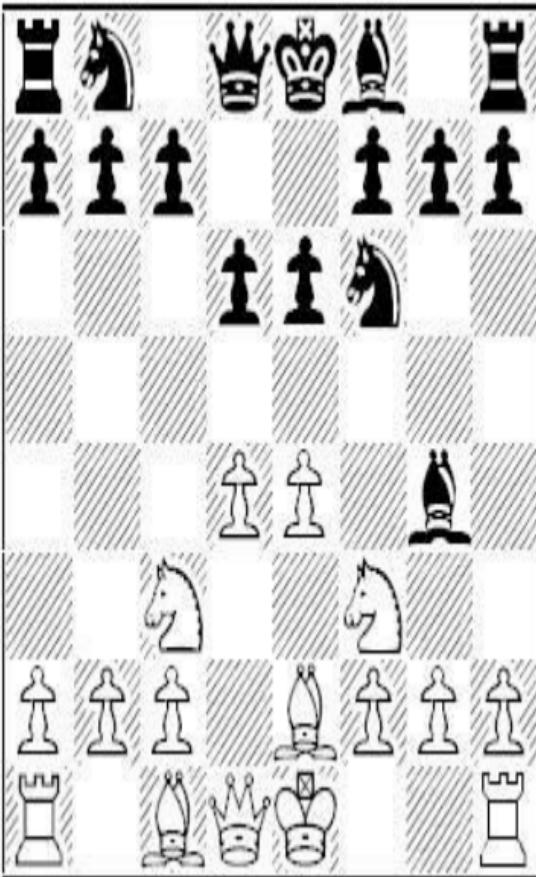
c) 4 Nbd2 e6 should transpose to note 'b'. Black can also play the

plan of 4 ... Nbd7 5 Bd3 e5 (see Game 52), or similarly 4 ... e5 against 4 Bd3.

## **4 ... e6!**

And here is the bait and switch! Black had no intention of continuing with a Pirc strategy. 4 ... c6 is a commonly played alternative which almost always transposes, and that position also arises via 1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 Nf3 Bg4.

## **5 Be2**



Unlike when it's played against the Pirc or Modern, this quiet setup leads to nothing for White. A few

games later we examine White's most aggressive plan, beginning with 5 h3!.

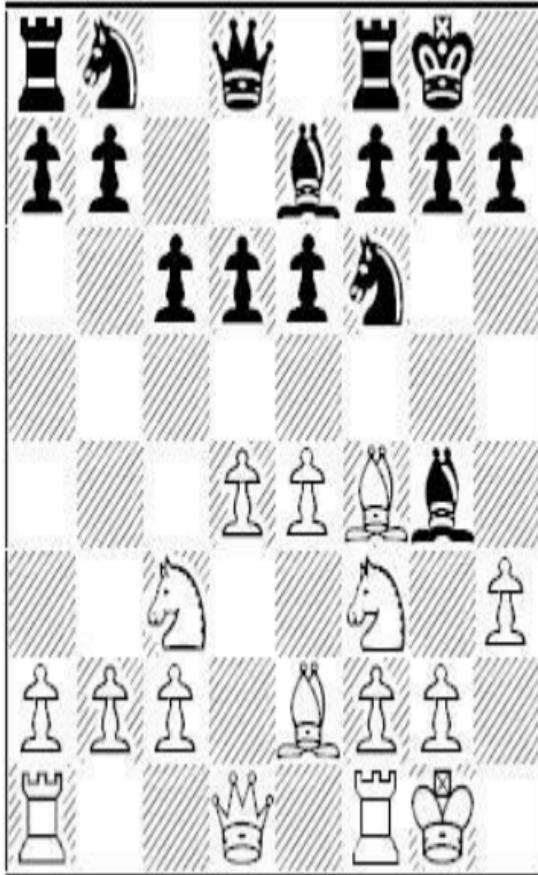
### **5 ... Be7 6 0-0 0-0 7 Bf4**

White dutifully develops his bishop but one is hard pressed to describe what it does there, besides stare blankly at d6!

7 Be3 d5! 8 exd5 (8 e5 Nfd7 gives Black a great French with his normally bad light-squared bishop on the outside of his pawn chain) 8 ... Bxf3! 9 Bxf3 exd5 10 Ne2 c6, as in L.Gutman-V.Hort, German League 1987, turns the game into an Exchange French where White gets less than nothing. Black may

even play for the win due to the imbalance of knight versus no-so-hot bishop on f3, which stares at the wall on d5.

**7 ... c6 8 h3**



**8 ... Bxf3**

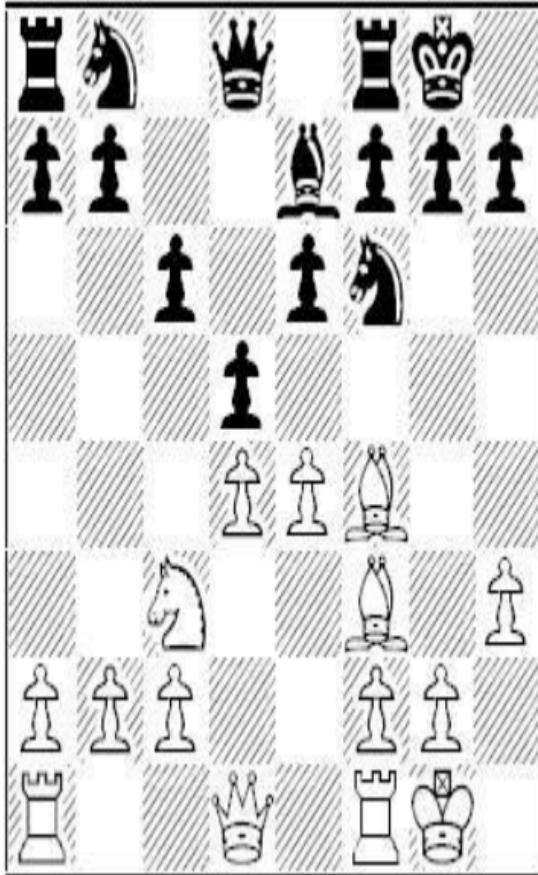
Step 1: Eliminate the bad bishop  
and create a knight versus bishop

minor piece imbalance. We play for the win!

**Question:** Can Black also preserve his bishop?

**Answer:** Absolutely. There is nothing wrong with 8 ... Bh5 9 Qd2 d5. Now watch how easy it is for White to lose the thread: 10 Rad1?! (10 Ne5 Bxe2 11 Qxe2 is equal) 10 ... Bb4! 11 e5?! (he had to try 11 exd5 cxd5 12 Qe3 with an awkward but playable position) 11 ... Ne4 12 Qe1 c5. White's pieces look misplaced and he already fights for equality, J.Segurado Garcia-R.Perez Garcia, Trevias 2000.

**9 Bxf3 d5!**



Step 2: Black switches the pawn structure to favour his remaining bishop.

## **10 Qd3**

**Question:** Why wouldn't White go for 10 e5, which looks strong?

He has the bishop pair, kingside space advantage and an attack coming on the kingside.

**Answer:** Consider this:

1. By playing e5 White blocks the position for his rather unimpressive bishop pair.
2. By playing e5 White releases the central tension and it is Black who retains the only strong pawn break in the position, ... c5!
3. What kingside attack? All I see is white pieces in the way, blocking a kingside pawn avalanche

plan with f4, g4 and f5.

Conclusion: An e5 push can be a strategic error for White. So far, Langeweg correctly keeps central tension.

## **10 ... a6!?**

Petrosianic. Normal would be 10 ... Nbd7 11 Rad1 Nb6 12 Rfe1, as in P.Nemec-J.Hlavnicka, Czech League 1999. White dutifully retained the central tension. But now what? I don't see a useful plan to improve his game.

## **11 e5!?**

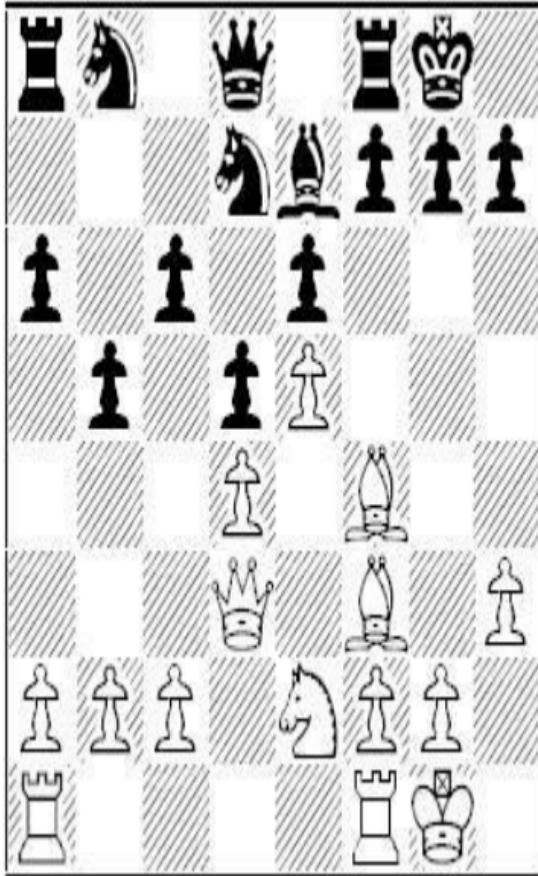
He couldn't resist! As pointed out earlier and in the previous game, my feeling is this move may

do more harm than good. I don't trust most e5 pushes in such positions. The few positives are outweighed by the many negatives.

**11 ... Nfd7 12 Ne2**

Preparing c4 and transferring the knight to assist in his kingside attacking dreams.

**12 ... b5!**



Rybka, a gifted tactician and calculator, at times gets confused in such blocked games and claims an

advantage for White. The truth is:

1. White's awkwardly placed pieces are ill-suited for a kingside attack.
  2. White's space is meaningless unless he actually gets a kingside attack going (which he probably can't!).
  3. Black's knight over White's bishop is a plus in this blocked position.
  4. Black is the boss of the queenside, which only he can open.
- Conclusion: Black stands at least equal, and more than likely, a tad better.
- The ... c5 break is mistimed

here: 12 ... c5?! 13 c4! allows White to favourably open the position.

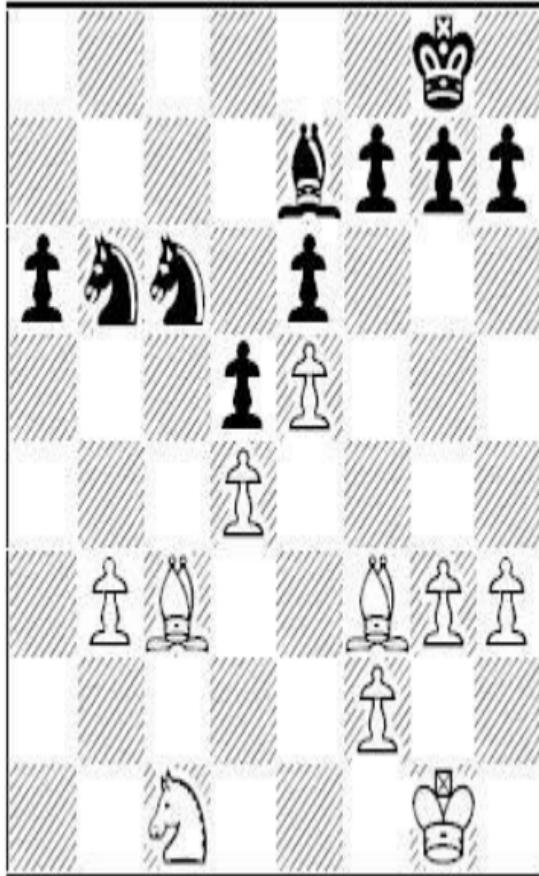
**13 a4 Nb6 14 axb5 cxb5 15 Ra2 Ra7 16 c3 b4!**

Petrosian pries open the queenside, his theatre of operations.

**17 b3 bxc3 18 Qxc3 Qd7 19 Rc1 Rc8 20 Qa1 Rac7 21 Rxc7 Rxc7 22 Bd2 Qc8 23 g3**

Better to play 23 Ba5! Rc6. Perhaps later White may get his bishop to the f1-a6 diagonal and get counterplay on Black's a6-pawn.

**23 ... Rc2 24 Rxc2 Qxc2 25 Qc3 Qxc3 26 Bxc3 Nc6 27 Nc1**



**Exercise (planning):** Find a manoeuvre that forces White to part

with his good bishop and remain with his bad one. This is a tough one and you need to think counter-intuitively to find the solution.

A Kumbaya moment? Should the players just give in to the inevitable and agree to a peaceful draw? No! Black has a path which turns the game in his favour.

Black's slight advantages in the position are:

1. A fixed pawn target on d4.
2. The b3-pawn is shaky as well.
3. Black's knights are at least as good as or better than White's bishops.

## **Answer: 27 ... Na8!!**

Petrosian comes up with a strange yet potent plan of ... Nc7 and ... Nb5, adding a third hit on d4. This forces White to part with his good light-squared bishop.

**28 Be2 Nc7 29 Kf1 f5!**

Tigrano plants more pawns on the opposite colour of his remaining bishop.

**30 Bd3**

30 exf6? drops the d-pawn to 30 ... Bxf6.

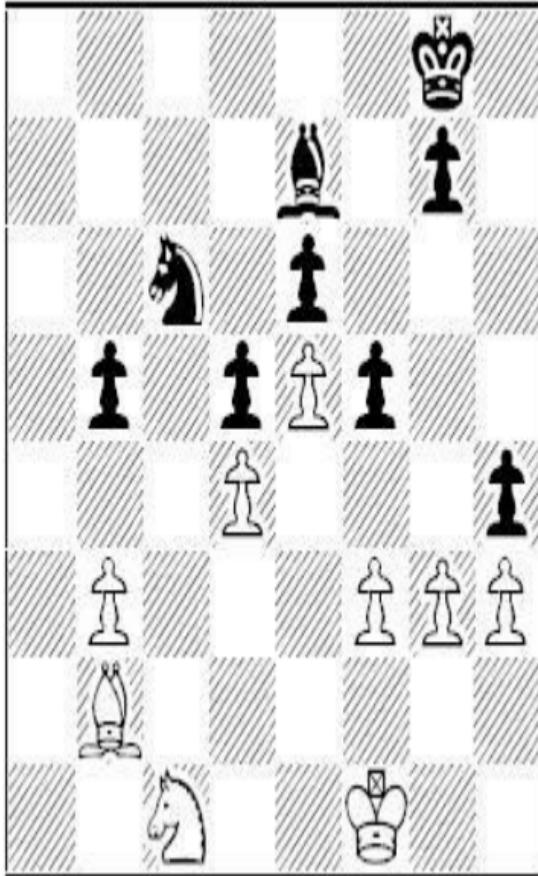
**30 ... Nb5 31 Bxb5 axb5 32 Bb2 h5!**

Yet more pawns on the opposite colour of his remaining bishop.

**33 f3?!**

Allowing Black to create a small tear in his position. It was better not to touch the kingside pawns just yet and play 33 Ke2.

**33 ... h4!**



**34 gxh4**

**Question:** I don't see how Black enters the position

if White simply bypasses with 34 g4.

**Answer:** It isn't easy. But win he does, in the following manner:  
As a calculation exercise, try to follow this note as far as you can without moving the pieces. Stop when it gets hazy, but strain a bit and see how far your sight takes you.

34 ... fxg4 35 fxg4 Bg5 36 Ne2 Be3 37 Kg2 Nb4 38 Kf3 Nc2 39 Bc3 Kf7 40 Kg2 b4 41 Bb2 Ne1+ 42 Kf1 Nd3 43 Ba1 Kg6 44 Kg2 Ne1+ 45 Kf1 Nc2 46 Bb2 Kg5 (White is perilously close to zugzwang) 47 Kg2 Ne1+ (I like the hypnotic back-and-forth gyrations of this knight)

48 Kf1 Nd3 49 Ba1 Nf4! 50 Nx<sub>f</sub>4 Kx<sub>f</sub>4 and Black infiltrates decisively. If you arrived here after 34 ply and still see the position in your mind's eye, then you are a monster calculator and should perhaps be thinking about your upcoming world championship match against Anand!

### **34 ... Bxh4 35 Nd3 Bd8?!**

Little mistakes often have huge consequences. Petrosian commits a tiny slip which may have allowed Langeweg to draw. Correct was 35 ... Be7! keeping an eye on c5.

### **36 Nc1?**

Black may not have a win after 36 Nc5!. For example, 36 ... Kf7 37

Ke2 Be7 (threatening to take on c5 with a good knight versus bad bishop ending) 38 Na6 g5 39 Nc7! b4 40 Kd3 Bd8 41 Nb5 Bb6 42 Nd6+ Kg6 43 Ne8 Na5 44 Kc2 Nb7 45 Kd3 Kf7 46 Nd6+ Nxd6 47 exd6 Ke8 48 Bc1 f4 49 Bd2 Ba5 50 Be1 Kd7 51 h4 gxh4 52 Bxh4 Kxd6 53 Bg5 e5 54 dxe5+ Kxe5 55 Be7 and Black can't win, despite his extra pawn.

### **36 ... Bb6 37 Ne2 b4!**

Petrosian builds a fence to corral White's pieces to the queenside. Now b3 turns into a target. Progress comes only with exasperating difficulty. Still, the wheel turns, however slowly.

**38 Kg2 Kf7 39 Ba1 Na5 40 Nc1 Kg6 41 Bb2 Kg5 42 Kg3 f4+!**

A farsighted move. Petrosian opens up f5 for an invasion with his knight later on. He doesn't allow White to seal the position with f4+.

**43 Kg2 Kh4 44 Kh2 g5 45 Kg2 Kh5 46 Kh2 Nc6 47 Ne2 Ne7 48 Kg2 Nf5 49 Kh2**



**Exercise:** Infiltration is the issue for Black.  
How does Petrosian manage it?

White's pieces make a sorry sight: his bishop, stuck to the defence of d4, sends its regrets that it cannot attend the kingside party. His knight prances with the grace of one of those pack mules you rent when hiking the Grand Canyon. Finally, White's king just wants to be left alone and in peace.

**49 ... Kh4!**

**Answer:** Zugzwang!

**50 Kg2**

If White shuffles his bishop with 50 Ba1, then 50 ... Ne3 51 Bb2 Nc2! reaches the same position as in the game.

**50 ... Ne3+ 51 Kh2 Nc2! 0-1**

After 52 Kg2 Ne1+ a pawn falls, since 53 Kf2?? gets hit with the fork 53 ... Nd3+. Back in '73 I played through this game, which was published in Canada's Chess Chat magazine, and I still remember the bewildered feeling all the strange shifts in pawn structure left me with. It felt like Petrosian won simply by magic and through no error on his opponent's part.

**Summary:** Remember our basic strategy:

1. Play ... Bg4.

2. Switch the pawn structure with ... e6!, ... c6 and ... d5.

3. Chop the f3-knight, creating a favourable knight-versus-bishop imbalance, as well as leaving ourselves with a remaining good bishop.

At club level this plan is guaranteed to confuse your opponents, who mistakenly believe they are on the White side of a Pirc.

### Game 3

**L.Sussman-C.Lakdawala**

Gambito (rapid), San Diego 2011

**1 d4 d6 2 e4**

**Question:** I'm somewhat confused about the move orders.

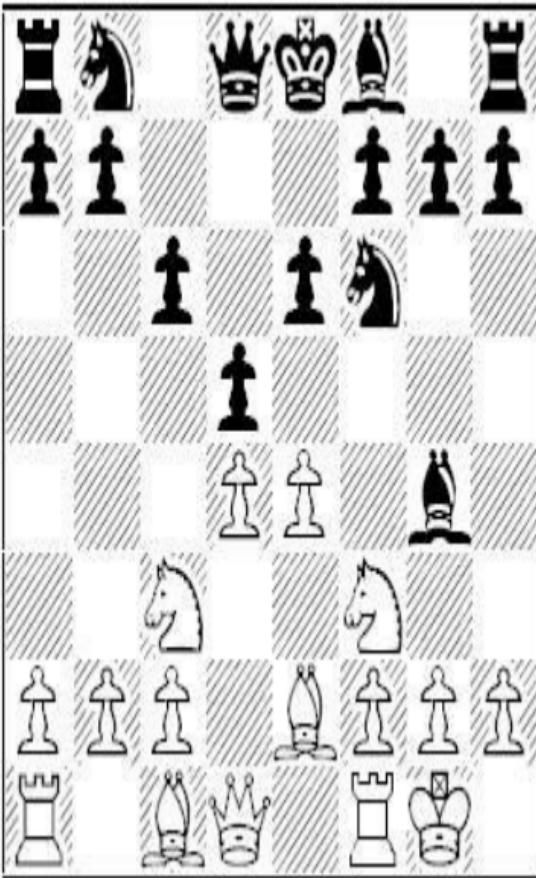
Do we normally get to our lines from 1 d4 or from 1 e4?

**Answer:** There is no other opening quite like the Pribyl/Rat. We can get to our position from 1 e4, 1 d4 and also 1 Nf3 move orders. If you think White's move orders are confusing, they are nothing when compared to Black's move orders, which tend to confuse White even more!

**2 ... Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 Nf3 Bg4  
5 Be2 e6**

Sorry, no Pirc.

**6 0-0 d5**



**Question:** Last game Petrosian played ... Be7 and castled before playing the ... d5 break. Why did

you play it immediately?

**Answer:** Both options are playable. It's probably safer to play it Petrosian's way but I was in a belligerent mood this game and itched for a fight. It's maddeningly difficult to exploit White's development lead and open the position.

## 7 e5

Grabbing space. Other tries include:

a) 7 exd5 cxd5 8 Ne5 Bxe2 9 Qxe2 Nc6 10 Qb5 Qc8 11 Be3 Bd6 12 Nxc6 bxc6 13 Qe2 0-0 14 Na4 Re8 15 c3 e5 16 dxe5 Rxe5, T.Sabure-E.Danielian, Ekaterinburg

2007. Black already stands better with centralized pieces, greater central control and a looming kingside attack. The position has the feel of a Scotch Game gone slightly sour for White (please add the Scotch to our list!).

b) 7 Ne5 Bxe2 8 Qxe2 dxe4 9 Nxe4 Nxe4 (the d4-pawn was poisoned due to the Ng5 threat) 10 Qxe4 Nd7 11 Re1 Nf6 12 Qd3 Be7 13 Bg5 0-0 and Black gets a comfortable but somewhat boring Caro position due to the exchange of four minor pieces, U.Andersson-J.Hodgson, German League 2001.

**7 ... Nfd7 8 Nd2!?**

This move is a novelty.

8 Ne1 is White's most common choice in the position. Black can either swap or avoid it:

a) 8 ... Bxe2 9 Nxe2 c5 10 c3 Nc6 11 f4 g6 12 Be3 is a French where Black has rid himself of his bad light-squared bishop, "rpenquin"-C.Lakdawala, Internet blitz 2010.

b) 8 ... Bf5 9 Bd3 Bg6 10 Ne2 c5 11 c3 Nc6 12 Be3, "Sallatkongurinn"-C.Lakdawala, Internet blitz 2011. We reach a position similar to the Short Variation of the Advance Caro and the chances are equal.

## **8 ... Bf5**

**Question:** Why wouldn't you take on e2? This follows two principles:

1. Trade when cramped; and
2. Swap off the bishop which stands on the same colour

as your pawns. This is your bad bishop.

**Answer:** All true, but I out-rate my opponent and, as a result, am fearful of drawish positions. My move keeps the game more complicated. Also, his knight sits rather awkwardly on c3, so he can't play c3 or c4 in response to a ... c5 pawn break. I didn't want to help

him out with 8 ... Bxe2 9 Nxe2 c5 10 c4! when I'm behind in development and the game opens.

## **9 Nb3**

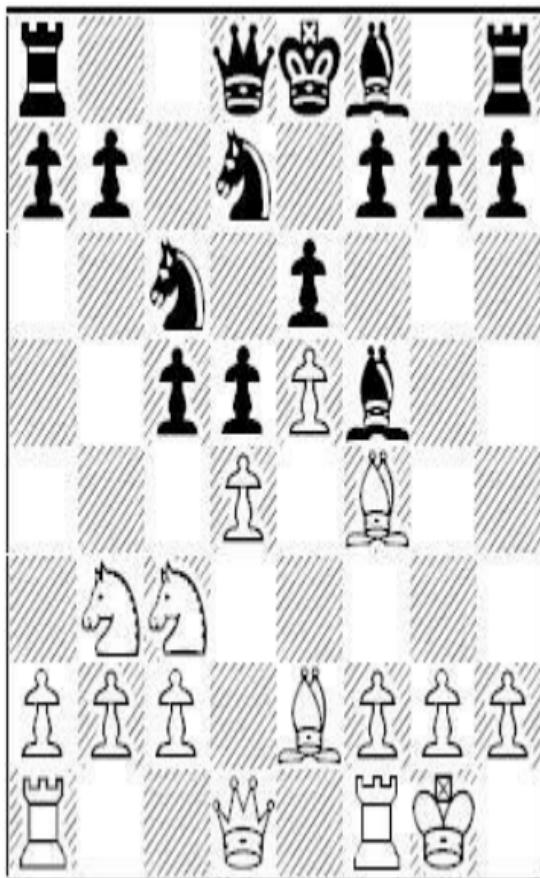
**Question:** Isn't 9 g4!? dangerous?

**Answer:** It is dangerous, but for which side?! 9 ... Bg6 10 f4 c5!? 11 f5 cxd4! 12 Nb5! (12 fxg6 hxg6 with compensation) 12 ... Qb6 13 Bd3 a6 14 fxg6 hxg6 15 Nd6+ Bxd6 16 exd6 Qxd6 17 Rf2 Nc6. With three pawns and an attack for the piece, I would gladly take Black.

## **9 ... c5 10 Bf4!?**

I would clear d4 immediately with 10 dxc5.

**10 ... Nc6**



Black threatens to undermine  
the e5-pawn.

## **Exercise (multiple choice):**

Find White's best plan:

- a) 11 Re1, offering to sac his e-pawn;
- b) 11 Bb5 undermining the underminer with the latent pin;
- c) 11 dxc5 clearing d4 for his pieces.

### **11 Re1?**

**Answer:** He should play 11 dxc5!. We get a French-like position with Black's bad bishop on the outside of his pawn chain, but White also looks good with his firm grip over d4.

### **11 ... c4!**

I had no plans to go after his e-

pawn. White gets good play in the line 11 ... cxd4?! 12 Nxd4 Bg6 13 Ncb5. Now the grab on e5 is suicidal after 13 ... Ncxe5?? 14 Bg4! Be4 15 Nxe6 fxe6 16 Bxe6 with a winning attack.

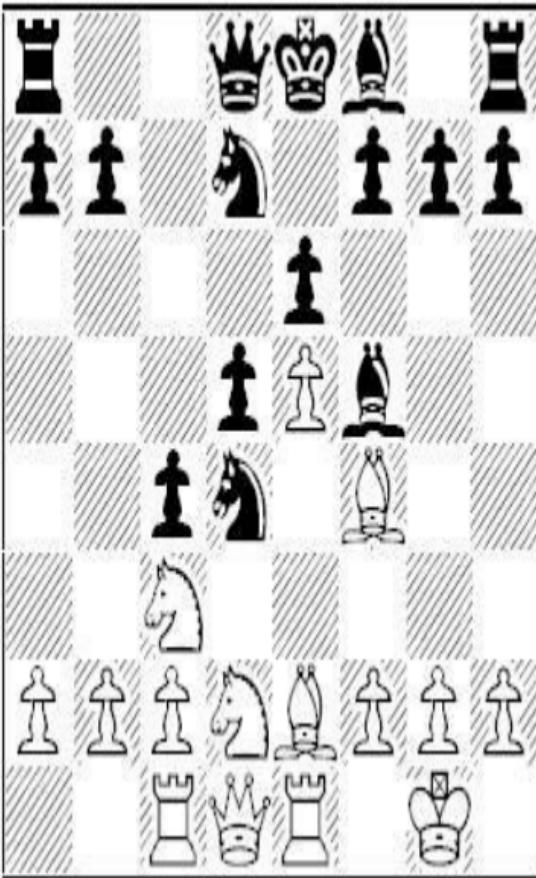
## **12 Nd2**

Only move.

**Question:** Why give up the d-pawn when 12 Nc1 secures it?

**Answer:** Moving the knight to c1 is a blunder. White loses material and gets tangled up to boot after 12 ... Qb6! (or even 12 ... Nb4! going after c2).

## **12 ... Nxd4 13 Rc1**



**13 ... g5?!**

The wannabe Tal strikes, but there is no rational reason for this

artificial pseudo-attacking move. My true chess nature is that of an initiative-challenged chess dullard. Trouble arises when I forget. Occasionally I talk myself into the delusional belief that, through sheer will, I can miraculously transform into an embryonic Nakamura or Morozevich.

Black should discard the fancy g-pawn thrust and keep it simple with 13 ... Bc5, after which he is up a healthy central pawn with precious little compensation for White.

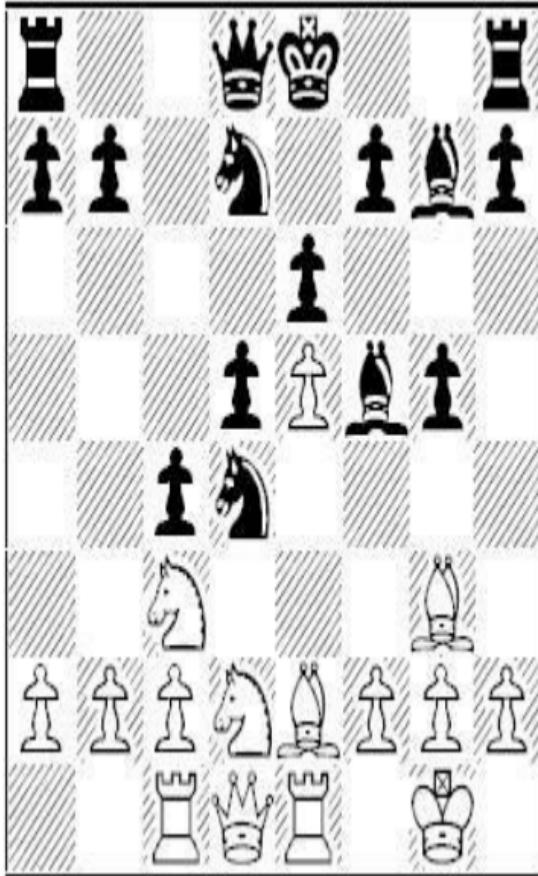
### **14 Bg3**

On 14 Be3 I had planned 14 ... Nxe2+ 15 Nxe2 Nxe5!? 16 Ng3 Bg6

17 Bd4 f6 18 Nf3! Nxf3+ 19 Qxf3 Kf7. White gets practical chances for his pawns but Black should be winning with careful play.

### **14 ... Bg7**

I probably shouldn't allow his knight to f3. Better is 14 ... Nxe2+! 15 Qxe2 h5 16 h3 g4!.



**15 Nf3**

**Question:** Could White try the  
sac 15 Bxc4 dxc4 16 Nxc4 Nc6 17

Nd6+ Kf8

18 Nxf5 exf5 19 e6? It looks like he gets a strong attack for the piece.

**Answer:** The sac looks fishy after 19 ... Nde5!. Black threatens to swap queens and also win a second piece with ... f4.

### **15 ... Nxe2+**

I also considered 15 ... Nc6 but by now I regretted the ... g5 decision and just wanted to take pieces off the board to reduce his attacking chances. I rejected 15 ... Nxf3+ because I had my heart set on a Tal-like mating attack with ... h5 coming!

**16 Nxe2 h5!?** 17 h4 g4 18

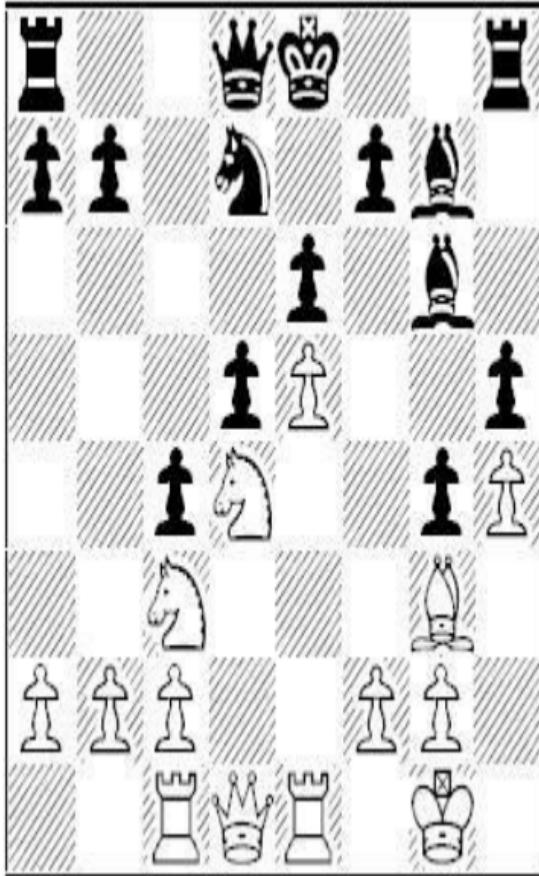
**Nfd4 Be4**

**Question:** Why would you move to a square where

you immediately lose a tempo?

**Answer:** My move is not a tempo loss if all other moves also lead to the loss of a tempo! For example, 18 ... Bg6 19 Nf4 or 18 ... Bh7 19 Nf4.

**19 Nc3 Bg6**



## **Exercise (critical decision):**

White leads in development,  
a temporary advantage. Work

out the ramifications of

a knight sac on d5 followed by e6. Should he risk it or not?

With 19 ... Bg6 I play dangerously and challenge my friend Lenny to a game of chicken, provoking him to sac on d5 if he dares.

## **20 Nxd5!**

**Answer:** Sacrifice, the opiate of the masses! He dares, banging down the move almost instantly. The deduction from the speed of his decision is clear: my opponent hasn't calculated the sac and plays it purely intuitively. Technically, the move is unsound, and an error.

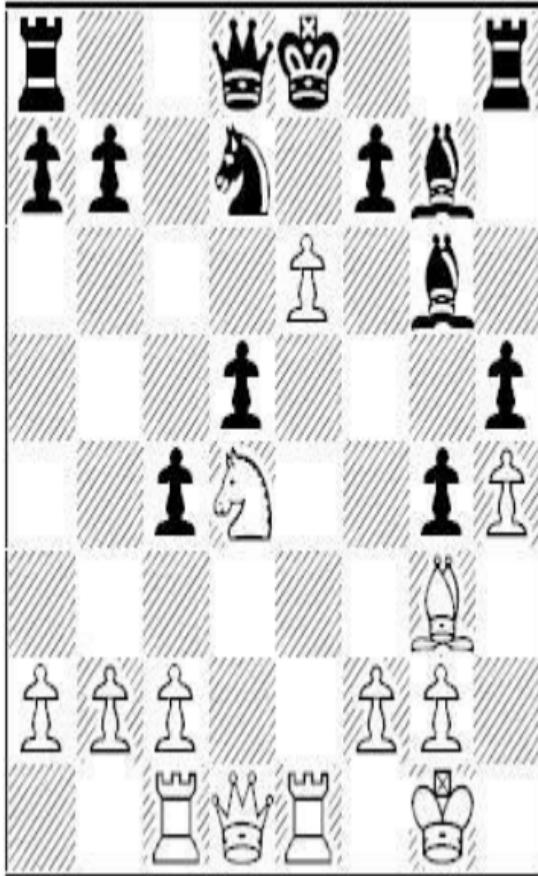
However, he certainly gets good practical chances from such a sac in a rapid game.

**Question:** If the sac is unsound shouldn't it get a question mark rather than an exclam?

**Answer:** Don't be so reasonable! One shouldn't discount the potency of over-the-board practical chances. If soundness was the highest criterion, then players like Tal, Nakamura and Morozevich would all peak as Class A players! Also, consider White's alternative of playing quietly. Do you believe his chances would improve playing a

pawn-down position without a trace of compensation? The sac clearly optimizes his chances.

**20 ... exd5 21 e6**



## **Exercise (multiple choice):**

What should Black do?

- a) 21 ... Nc5;

b) 21 ... Nf6;

c) Both work for Black!

My instincts told me Black should be able to defend. Then again, my instincts added that Black, especially with me in the driver's seat, could also mess it up big time! I took the White pieces and tested this position out on several students (ranging from 1800-2100 rating level). Not a single one of them defended Black's position accurately. Clearly, White's sac proves to be a reasonable risk to take.

## **21 ... Nc5!**

The most accurate move,

watching over the critical e6-square.

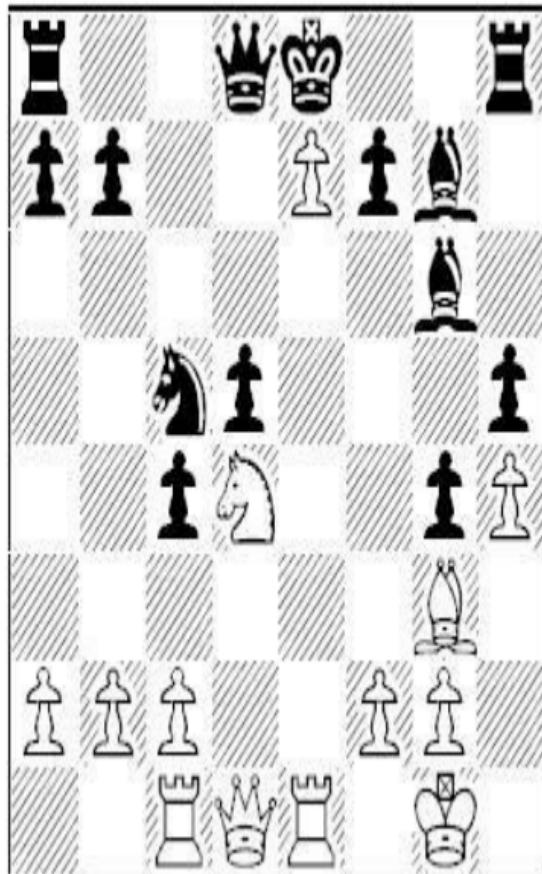
**Answer:** c) Both defences work for Black. For example, 21 ... Nf6 22 Nb5! (White threatens e7 should Black castle, as well as nasty knight checks on c7 and d6) 22 ... fxe6! and now:

a) 23 Rxe6+ Kf7 24 Rd6 Qe7 25 Rxd5 Rhd8! 26 Nd6+ Kg8 and White's attack runs out.

b) 23 Nc7+ Kf7 doesn't bother Black a bit. He defends easily after 24 Nxe6 Qd7 25 Nxg7 Kxg7 26 Be5 Rhe8 27 Qd4 Qc6. Black should be able to shake off the pressure and win. If worse comes to worst, Black

can always sac back an exchange  
on e5 and still come out ahead.

**22 e7?**



During the game I was quite concerned about 22 Nb5!, a critical move, until I finally worked out the defence 22 ... fxe6!. Black is happy to get forked on c7 and give up an exchange to douse White's attack with cold water, while after 23 Nd6+ Kf8 Black consolidates.

### **22 ... Qd7**

Conveniently covering b5.

### **23 b4**

Forcing Black's knight to the spot it wants. I didn't see anything better for White. Black now has a 3-step plan to consolidate:

### **23 ... Ne4**

Step 1: Block the e-file.

**24 Bf4 Qxe7**

Step 2: Kill off the annoying e7-pawn.

**25 f3 gxf3 26 gxf3 Qxh4**

Step 3: Return the piece, if necessary, in exchange for our king's safety and his king's misery.

**27 Qd2 0-0 0-1**

Black regains his piece with a crushing position after 27 ... 0-0 28 fxe4 Bxd4+ 29 Qxd4 Qxf4.

**Summary:** In every chess game, be true to your own nature and your own style. If you are a poor man's Botvinnik, then don't take on airs of being a poor man's Tal!

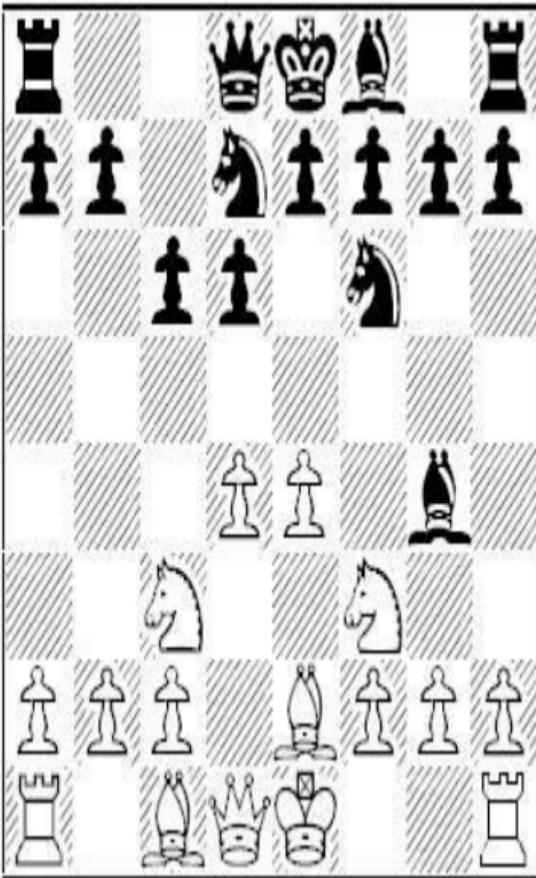
## Game 4

**W.Browne-J.Benjamin**

US Championship, Key West 1994

**1 d4 d6 2 e4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4  
Nf3 Bg4 5 Be2 e6**

5 ... Nbd7!? is also played here.



**Question:** When Black plays his knight early to d7, doesn't he rob himself of a retreat square when

White eventually plays e5?

**Answer:** Black doesn't intend to allow White to play e5. In fact, with 5 ... Nbd7 Black isn't aiming for the normal plan ... e6 and ... d5. If he were then this move would be inaccurate. Black plans a strange Philidor setup with ... e5.

**Question:** Why would that be strange?

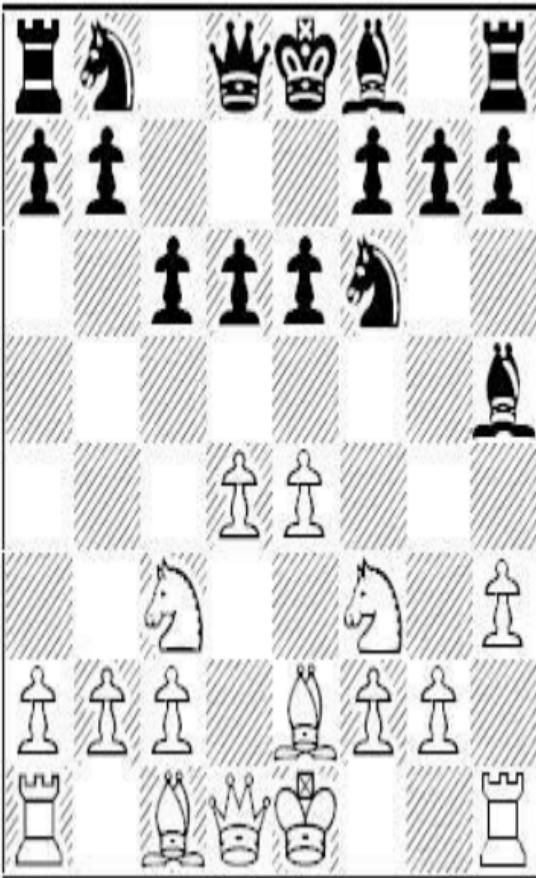
**Answer:** Because normally in a Philidor, Black's bishop sits on c8 and he doesn't get to develop it to g4.

Let's follow the game G.Garcia-V.Akopian, Chicago 2009: 6 h3 Bh5 7 0-0 (White can force e5 here with

the sequence 7 g4?! Bg6 8 e5?! Ne4 but all he gets is an overextended Alekhine's Defence) 7 ... e5 8 Be3 Be7 9 Nd2 Bg6 10 f4?! exf4 11 Bxf4 0-0 12 Bf3 Qc7 13 a4 Rfe8 14 Nc4 Rad8 15 Qd2?! (15 Bg3! is an improvement but still nothing special for White) and now 15 ... Ne5! was a cute tactic to pick up the bishop pair.

## **6 h3 Bh5!?**

Provocation! Benjamin  
welcomes complications from g4.

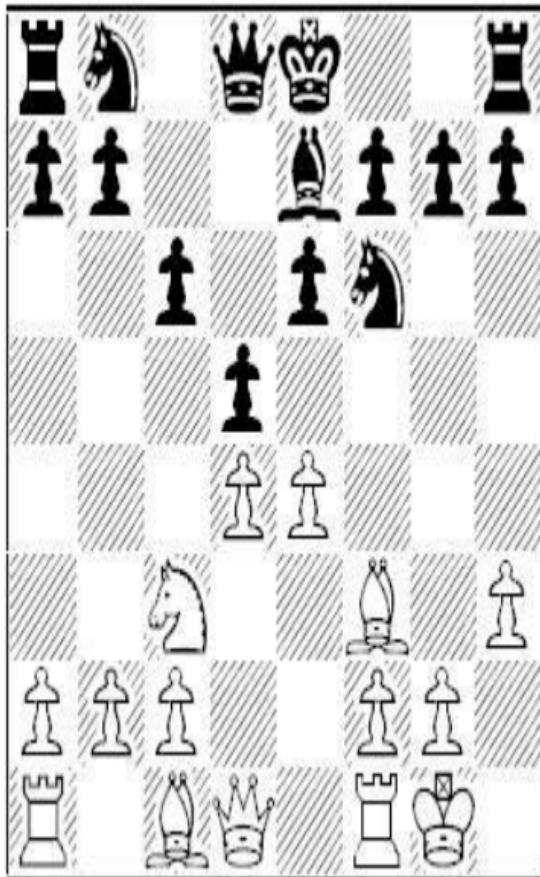


**Question:** I assume from your last comment that chopping the knight on f3 is fine for Black?

**Answer:** Correct. You can also take a quieter approach with 6 ... Bxf3 7 Bxf3 d5 8 0-0 and:

a) 8 ... Bb4?! is not a good deal for Black, who insists upon a resolution to the central tension at the high cost of handing White a tempo with a future c3 kick: 9 e5 Nfd7 10 Ne2 Be7 11 Nf4 Qb6 12 Re1 0-0 13 c3 c5 14 c4! (this is the penalty for the tempo loss; White achieves his dream break, prying open the position for his bishop pair) 14 ... Nc6 15 cxd5 Nxd4 16 Bg4 with a solid edge for White, A.Kosten-G.Andruet Val Maubuee 1989.

b) 8 ... Be7!



9 e5 (White sees nothing better, which leaves Black up a full tempo

up on note 'a') 9 ... Nfd7 10 Ne2 c5 11 c3 (White should still go for 11 c4! cxd4 12 Bf4 Nc6 13 cxd5 when I prefer White in the complications) 11 ... Nc6 12 Be3. Black achieved a good French and equalized in D.Sully-J.Hodgson, Monmouth 2004.

c) 8 ... dxe4?! leads the game into a Caro-Kann setup, but one in White's favour: 9 Nxe4 Nbd7 10 c4 Nxe4 11 Bxe4 Nf6 12 Bf3 (White plays for the d5 break) 12 ... Qd7 13 Be3 Be7 14 Qb3 0-0 15 Rfd1, L.Hetey-A.Czerwonski, German League 1999. White has all the chances with his bishop pair and potential for a d5 break.

## **7 0-0 Be7 8 Be3**

White decides to play it conservatively and sets up as he would when facing a Pirc.

## **8 ... Nbd7**

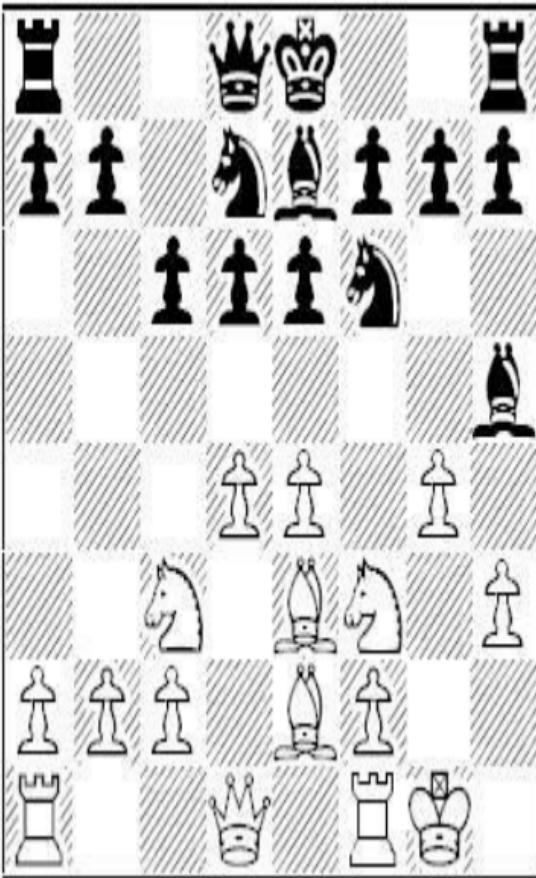
A bit odd. Usually Black reserves d7 for his f6-knight, should White push forward with e5. Normal is 8 ... d5:

a) 9 exd5 cxd5 10 Ne5 Bxe2 11 Qxe2 Qb6 12 Rad1 Nc6 13 Rd3 Qa6 14 Bg5 Nb4 15 Rd2 Qxe2 16 Rxe2 Rc8, J.Kochetkova-N.Kabanov, Salekhard 2006. Black already holds an edge in the ending due to the open c-file.

b ) 9 e5 Nfd7 10 Nh2 Bxe2 11

Nxe2 c5, F.Lopez Gracia-J.Magem Badals, Pamplona 2003. The game is essentially a French without a bad bishop for Black, and therefore equal.

**9 g4!?**



**Question:** You just said White plays it “conservatively”, didn’t you?  
**Answer:** Oops! Mea tiny little

culpa! What I really meant was: "White, with his not-so-subtle last move, initiates an open declaration of war!"

GM Walter Browne and I clashed several times, and each game was an adventure. He usually begins quietly, but then, at some point in the game, his massive surplus of nervous energy erupts. He bangs out some bonkers move and the game plunges into chaos. Often oblivious to his clock, Browne pours over each position, physically shaking from the strain of concentration. Normally White plays g4 when his king sits on e1, ready

to scurry away to the queenside if necessary. Here, Browne commits to the pawn avalanche with his king right behind it!

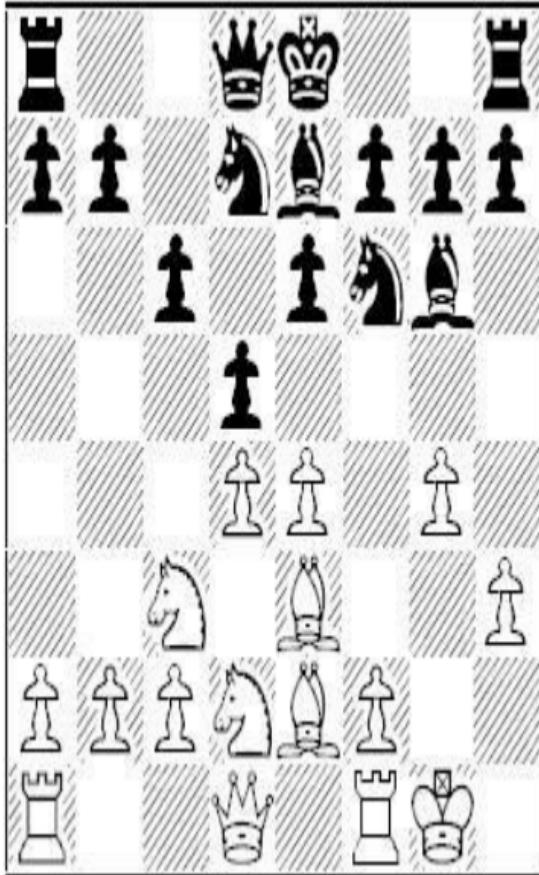
Usually White takes a more strategic path with 9 Nd2 Bxe2 10 Qxe2 0-0 11 f4 d5 12 e5 Ne8, as in P.Petersen-M.Krasenkow, Copenhagen 1992. The trouble is, Black once again achieves a good French, sans bad bishop and with comfortable equality.

**Question:** Can White take advantage of Black's move with 9 e5?

**Answer:** The push shouldn't bother Black after 9 ... dx $e$ 5 10

$\text{dxe5 Nd5}$  with a nice-looking Alekhine's Defence position for Black.

**9 ... Bg6 10 Nd2 d5**



**11 f3**

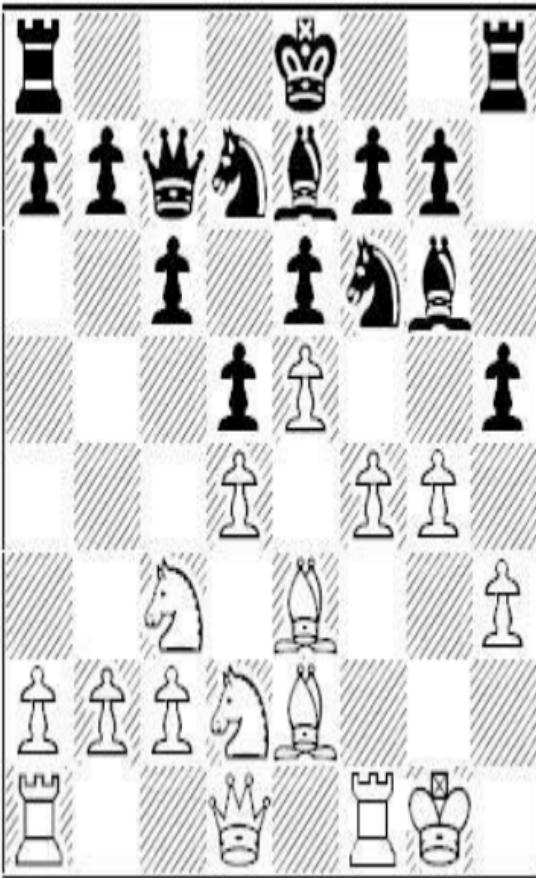
**Question:** Why not go forward with the e-pawn?

**Answer:** Black has several paths to counterplay if White takes this route: 11 e5 Ng8 (after 11 ... Ne4!? 12 Ncxe4 dxe4 13 c3 White can win the e-pawn with awkward moves like Qb1 next, but Black gains compensation with 13 ... c5) 12 f4 h5. Now if White continues his policy of going forward only with 13 f5 Black gets excellent counterplay with 13 ... exf5 14 gxf5 Bg5! 15 fxg6 Bxe3+ 16 Kh1 fxg6 17 Nf3 Ne7 18 Bd3 0-0 19 Qe2 Rxf3! followed by chopping on d4, giving Black two pawns for the exchange and a good position.

**11 ... Qc7 12 e5 h5**

Naturally the threat to take on f6 remains a non-threat as long as Black's queen has access to g3.

**13 f4**



Exercise (critical decision):  
White threatens the knight on f6  
and also f4-f5, sending Black's

bishop into oblivion.

Should Black risk sac'ing a piece with 13 ... hxg4 or not?

After 13 Kg2 hxg4 14 hxg4 0-0-0 15 Rh1 Rxh1 16 Qxh1 Ne8 I don't trust White's king position. Black is all set to pry things open with ... f6, possibly followed by sacs on e5.

**Answer:** Black should allow himself to be pushed around only so much. When the position reaches critical mass, as in this case, we must stand our ground or die trying. Benjamin correctly makes the bold and perfectly sound decision to sac:

**13 ... hxg4! 14 hxg4!**

Browne correctly declines. 14

$\text{exf6?}!$   $\text{Rxh3!}$  is good for Black:

a) 15  $\text{fxe7}$  (15  $\text{Bxg4}$   $\text{Rxe3}$  16  $\text{fxe7}$   $\text{Nf6}$  transposes) 15 ...  $\text{Rxe3}$  16  $\text{Bxg4}$   $\text{Nf6}$  and Black continues ...  $\text{Kxe7}$  and ...  $\text{Rh8}$  with a strong attack.

b ) 15  $\text{fxg7?}$  0-0-0 and Black regains his piece since 16  $\text{Bf2??}$   $\text{Qxf4}$  17  $\text{Re1}$   $\text{Qh2+}$  18  $\text{Kf1}$   $\text{g3}$  19  $\text{Bg1 g2+}$  20  $\text{Kf2 Bh4}$  is mate.

### **14 ... Ne4 15 Ncxe4**

Black isn't bothered by 15  $\text{f5}$   $\text{Nxc3}$  16  $\text{bxc3 Bh7}$  followed by queenside castling with good chances against White's overextended kingside.

### **15 ... dxe4!?**

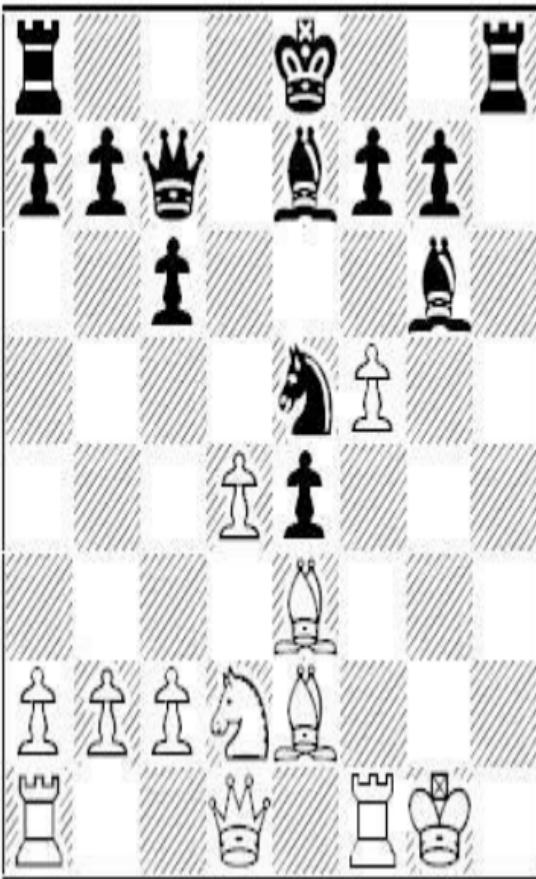
More provocation. He eggs White on to chase his bishop. Black gets a safe edge after 15 ... Bxe4 16 Nxe4 dxe4 17 c3 0-0-0 18 Qc2 f5.

### **16 f5 exf5 17 gxf5**

**Question:** Now what? White's last move attacks the bishop and simultaneously threatens the e4-pawn.

**Answer:** We reached a point of no return. A central piece sac is in order to dismantle White's imposing pawn centre.

### **17 ... Nxe5!**



The hidden clause in fine print.  
It's important to develop an instinct  
for such a quick-strike counterattack

in this line should White overextend.

### **Exercise (multiple choice):**

White's defensive menu includes:

- a) Decline and pin with 18 Bf4;
- b) 18 Nxe4 and Black must deal with all his hanging pieces;
- c) Eat the knight with 18 dxe5;
- d) Eat the bishop with 18 fxg6.

Be careful. Only one of these is playable. The other three lose for White.

### **18 Nxe4?**

This fails, as does 18 dxe5? Qxe5 19 Rf4 Bxf5 with three pawns for the piece and a close to winning attack; and 18 fxg6?? Nxg6 when

the multiple threats ... Qh2 mate and ... Qg3 mate overwhelm White.

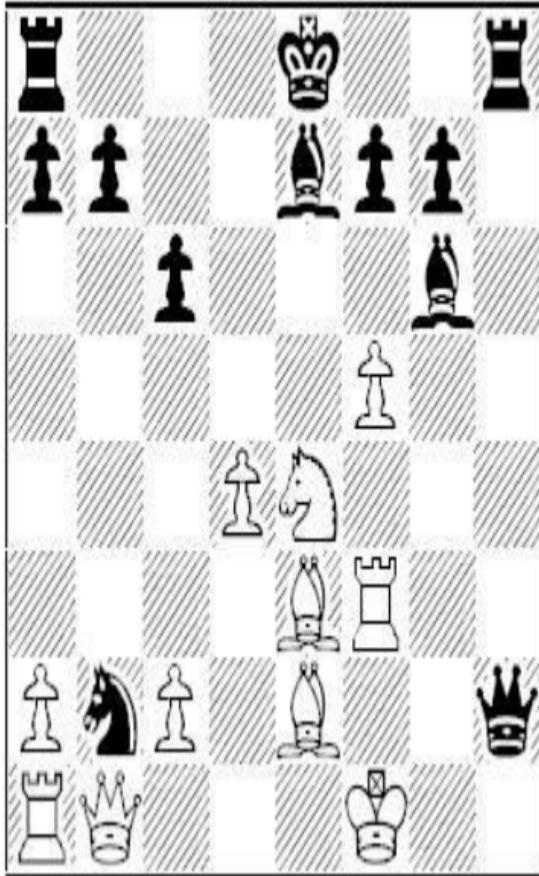
**Answer:** a) 18 Bf4! is White's best shot and keeps him alive for the moment. After 18 ... Bxf5 19 Bxe5 Qd7 I still prefer Black's attacking chances over White's extra piece.

### **18 ... Nd3!**

Cute. He uncovers the mate threat on h2 and simultaneously blocks Bf4 as a defence.

**19 Rf3 Qh2+ 20 Kf1 Nxb2**

**21 Qb1**



## **Exercise (combination alert):**

Look for a path which wrecks  
White's plans.

White's king appears to be in no immediate danger and two hanging black pieces means a coming material advantage. White looks to be on track to reach his goal of survival. However, sometimes a track runs in a circle!

### **Answer: 21 ... Bxf5!**

The bishop is untouchable and the tactics work in Black's favour.

### **22 Nf2**

22 Rxf5 Qh3+ 23 Ke1 Qxe3! 24 Nf2 Qxd4 leaves White hopelessly busted.

### **22 ... Bh3+ 23 Rxh3**

23 Nxh3 Rxh3 24 Qxb2 Qh1+! wins.

**23 ... Rxh3 24 Qxb2 Rxe3 25**

**Qxb7 Rd8**

Down an exchange and under fire, White's king gets carried away by the current.

**26 Bc4 Kf8 27 Qxc6 Qf4 28**

**Rd1 Rf3 0-1**

**Summary:** You can just chop White's knight on f3 on the sixth move if you want to avoid such chaos as Black. But it sure looks like fun!

Game 5

**Comp Deep Blue-G.Kasparov**

New York 1997

**1 e4 c6 2 d4 d6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 Nc3 Bg4**

We arrive at our position from Black's strange anti-computer move order.

**5 h3 Bh5**

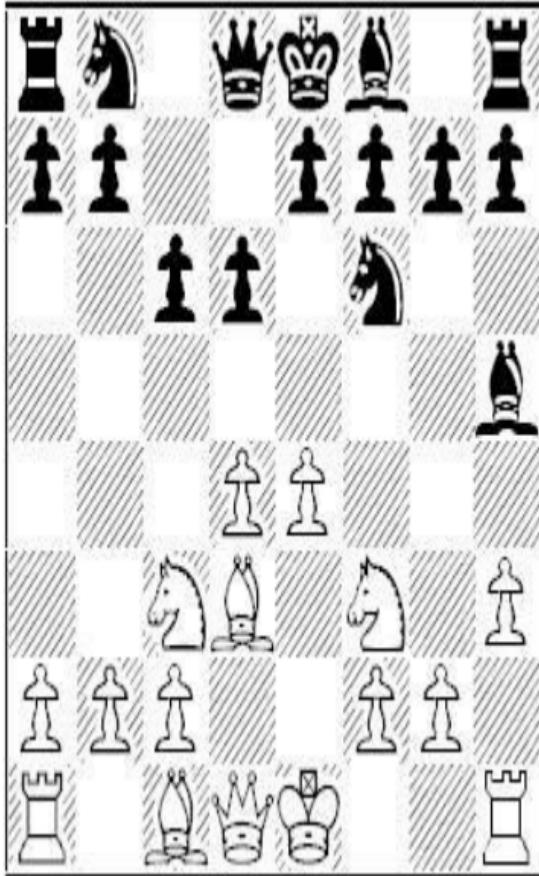
**Question:** If our plan is to switch the structure with ... e6 and ... d5,

then shouldn't we unload our future bad bishop right now with 5 ... Bxf3?

**Answer:** Your move is playable but perhaps a tad early since White may keep the central structure fluid for his bishops. Also, I don't want

the queen on f3, where she can slide over to g3 later and hit g7, menacing a kingside attack. For example, 5 ... Bxf3 6 Qxf3 e6 7 Bd3 d5 8 0-0! dxе4 (8 ... Be7?! 9 e5 Nfd7 10 Qg3 looks dangerous for Black) 9 Nxе4 Nxе4 (Black is asking for it if he grabs the d-pawn with 9 ... Qxd4?! 10 c3 Qd8 11 Rd1 Nbd7 12 Qg3, with big compensation for the pawn) 10 Qxе4 Nd7 11 c3 Nf6 12 Qe2, M.Godena-R.Mantovani, Arvier 2010. Not the end of the world for Black, but White's bishop pair certainly gives him an enduring edge.

## **6 Bd3**



Too meek. White should play 6 Qe2! if he has any hopes for an opening advantage.

**Question:** Why would anyone block the bishop with the queen?

What could possibly be wrong with such a natural developing move, playing the bishop to d3?

**Answer:** Deep Blue wants to play Qe2 without blocking in the bishop on f1, but this is a costly tempo and allows Black equality. In the next few games we examine the dangerous line 6 Qe2! intending to go ballistic with g4 next. In this line White's bishop usually gets developed to the more aggressive h3-square, where it eyes breaks on f5 and sacs on e6.

## **6 ... e6 7 Qe2 d5 8 Bg5**

Alternatives are inferior:

a) 8 exd5 Bxf3! 9 Qxf3 cxd5 10 0-0 Nc6, K.Chernyshov-J.Maiwald, Dresden 1995. Black gets a good version of an Exchange Caro with the trade of his bad bishop.

b) 8 e5 Nfd7 9 g4 Bg6 10 Bd2,W.Daniel-M.McDonald Ross, Dresden 2002. Here Black reaches a good version of an Advanced Caro with White's knight misplaced on c3, and he may already stand slightly better after 10 ... c5.

## **8 ... Be7 9 e5**

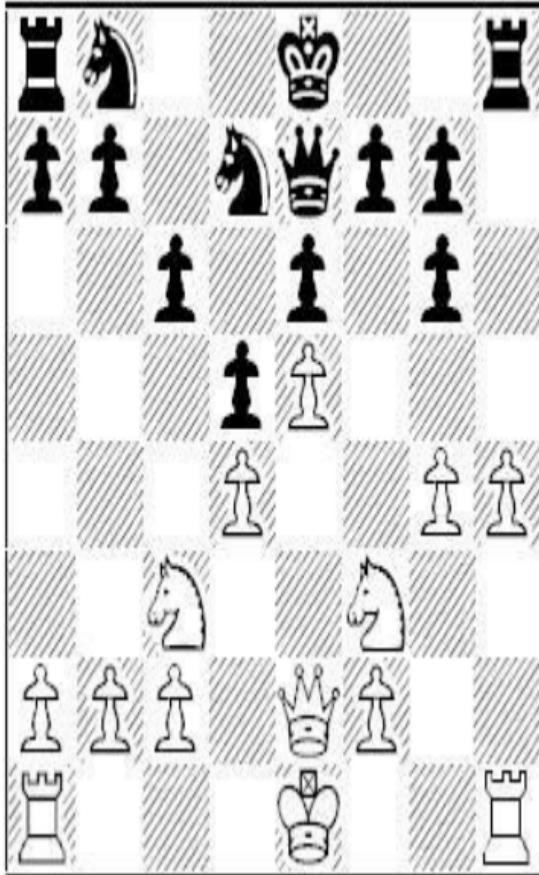
After 9 Bxf6 Bxf3 10 Qxf3 Bxf6 11 Ne2 Nd7 12 c3 dxe4 13 Qxe4

Qc7 14 0-0-0 0-0-0 the position looks like a mainline Caro where Black achieved full equality, G.Kastanieda-V.Komliakov, Moscow 1998.

**9 ... Nfd7 10 Bxe7 Qxe7 11 g4 Bg6 12 Bxg6!?**

Opening the h-file only benefits Black.

**12 ... hxg6 13 h4**

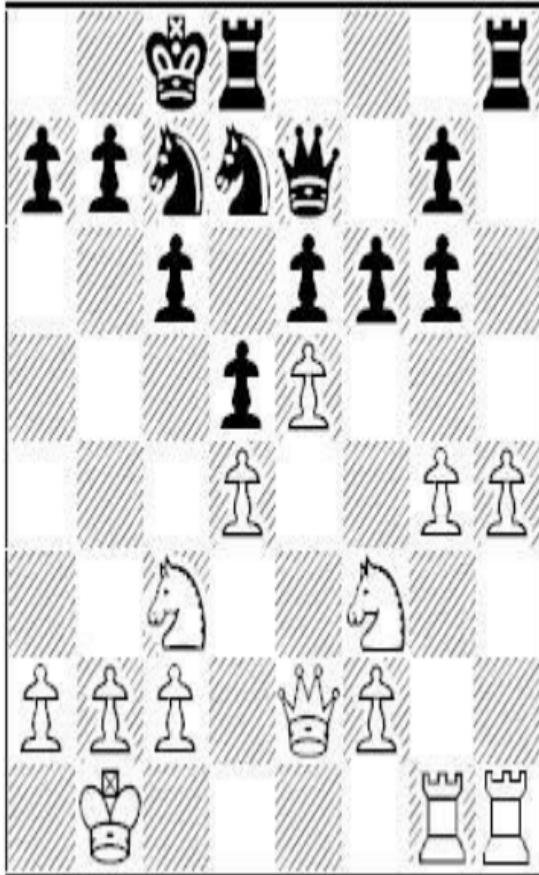


**13 ... Na6**

**Question:** Why not strike in the centre immediately with 13 ... c5?

**Answer:** It's premature and allows entry to tender spots d6 and c7 after 14 Nb5. However, if we prep the break with 13 ... a6! and only then follow with ... c5 I like Black's game. Kasparov plays pragmatically and probably doesn't want to open the position against the computer, so he avoids the ... c5 break altogether.

**14 0-0-0 0-0-0 15 Rdg1 Nc7  
16 Kb1 f6!**



Good judgment. Normally the principle is: Don't attack a pawn chain at its head. Here we see an

exception. Kasparov senses that the principle should be violated because he generates counterplay along the f-file. f3 and f2 have been weakened since White threw in g4.

### **17 exf6**

17 Re1?! fxe5 18 Nxe5?! Nxe5  
19 Qxe5 Rxh4 picks off a pawn.

### **17 ... Qxf6**

The e6 pawn isn't all that weak. Meanwhile, White must scramble to defend down the f-file.

### **18 Rg3 Rde8 19 Re1 Rhf8**

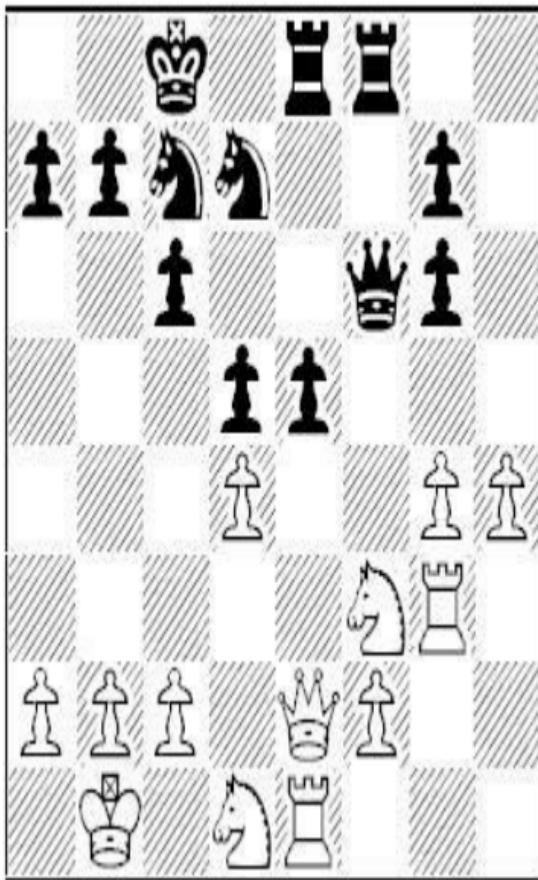
### **20 Nd1**

**Question:** How does Black fight for e5?

**Answer:** By plugging up the

square with his backward e-pawn, thereby robbing White the use of the square for his pieces:

**20 ... e5!!**



A profound pawn sac,  
eliminating the backward pawn and  
seizing the initiative.

When driving along the freeway I tend to stay in my lane, as most people do. In this way most of us respect the opponent's natural boundaries when in a chess battle. Kasparov, an exception, is one of those players with a natural sense of entitlement at the chessboard. Due to his extraordinary gifts, Kasparov at his core feels he alone rules the board like an all-powerful and unchallenged monarch views his kingdom. As a result he continually finds methods of violating his opponent's territorial birthright. One would assume White's knight as ruler of e5. With

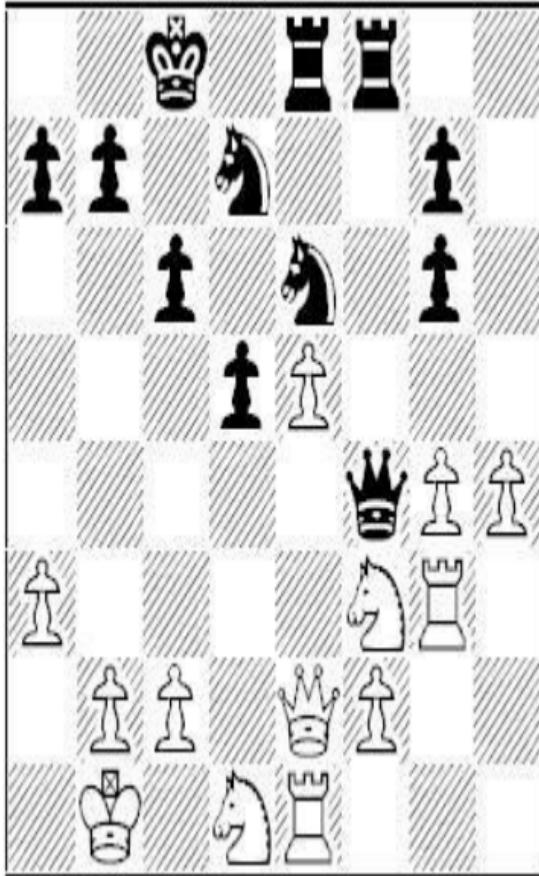
his last move Kasparov proves the f3-knight is but a pretender.

## **21 dxe5**

**Question:** Why not take with the knight on e5?

**Answer:** 21 Nxe5? isn't possible since after 21 ... Nxe5 22 dxe5 Qxh4 Black regains his pawn with a superior position and plenty of white pawn targets. Ideas like ... Ne6 and even ... g5 are on the way, with a powerful blockade. In essence, Black receives all the benefits of the sac without the material investment.

## **21 ... Qf4 22 a3 Ne6!**



**Question:** What tangible plusses does Black get for his pawn?

**Answer:** The following:

1. Pressure down the f-file.

2. Pressure on e5.

3. A firm blockade on f4 meaning that White will never connect with his e-pawn, which remains artificially isolated.

4. White's pieces are in a defensive tangle.

5. A black knight radiates power from its blockade square e6.

Conclusion: Black has more than enough for the pawn.

**23 Nc3 Ndc5 24 b4?!**

Only computers get away with such moves. If I were playing White I would just sit and do nothing and

see how Black makes progress. It's near certain that Deep Blue incorrectly assessed itself as holding a plus.

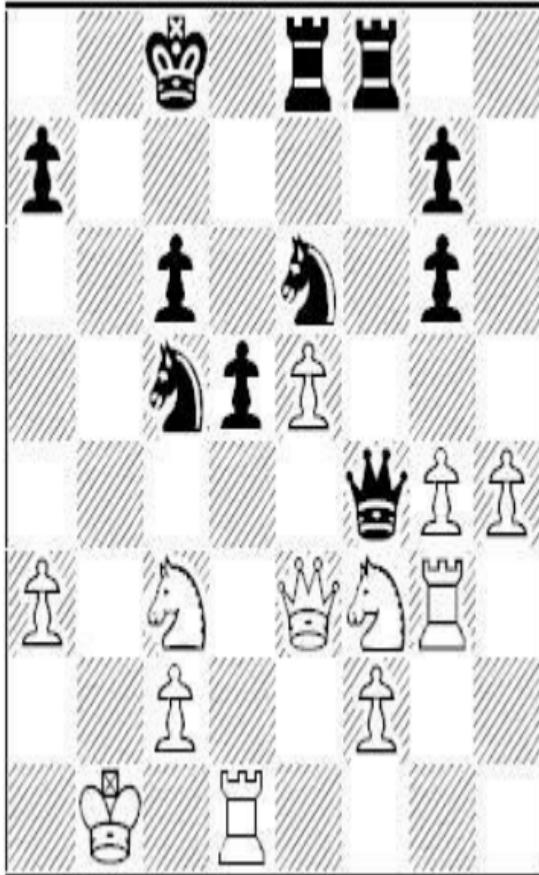
### **24 ... Nd7 25 Qd3 Qf7**

Or 25 ... Nb6!? and if White takes the bait on g6, 26 Qxg6 Nc4 gives Black a ferocious initiative for the pawns.

### **26 b5?!**

Deep Blue still acts like it is winning. Its last move looks unwise, opening up c5 for a black knight. A human would play 26 Na4.

### **26 ... Ndc5 27 Qe3 Qf4 28 bxc6 bxc6 29 Rd1**



**Exercise (planning):** How to proceed?

**Answer:** Kasparov clears the

way for a rook along the b-file:

**29 ... Kc7! 30 Ka1**

**Question:** Why does the computer keep allowing Kasparov to take on e3, wrecking White's pawn structure?

**Answer:** His pawn is even weaker on f2, vulnerable to file pressure.

**30 ... Qxe3**

Better was 30 ... Rb8! which virtually forces a favourable queen trade on f4 since 31 Rd2?! Qc4 puts White's king in grave danger.

**31 fxe3 Rf7 32 Rh3 Ref8 33 Nd4 Rf2 34 Rb1 Rg2 35 Nce2**

**Question:** Why hand over the

g-pawn?

**Answer:** After the alternative  
35 g5 Rd2! 36 Nce2 Rf2 White's  
position is on the verge of cracking.

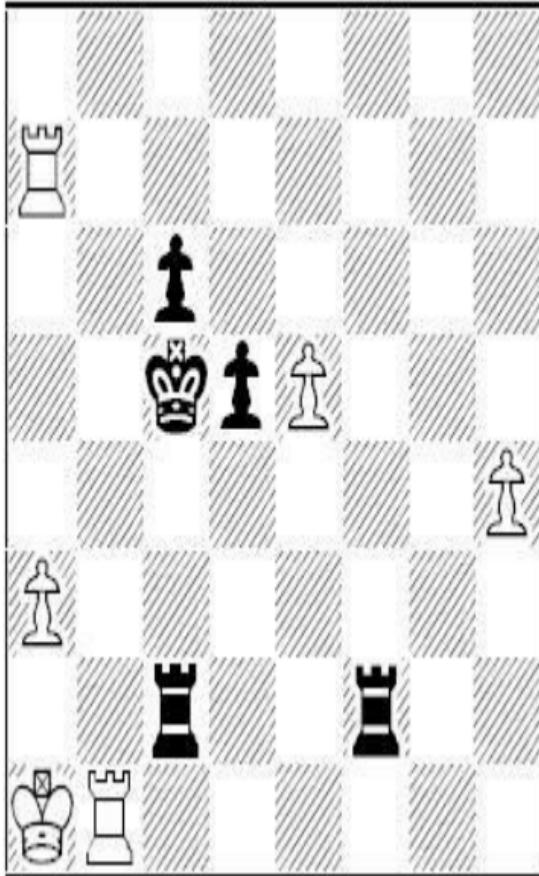
### **35 ... Rxg4**

I don't blame him for re-establishing material parity, but the Kasparovian move 35 ... Rff2!? also puts Black under pressure.

**36 Nxe6+ Nxe6 37 Nd4!**  
**Nxd4 38 exd4 Rxd4 39 Rg1!**  
**Rc4 40 Rxg6 Rxc2 41 Rxg7+**  
**Kb6 42 Rb3+ Kc5 43 Rxa7**  
**Rf1+?**

43 ... Re8 or 43 ... d4 may have been enough to take the full point.

### **44 Rb1 Rff2**



**Exercise:** White to play and draw.  
It looks like the game is over.

Black threatens mate on a2 and also to push forward with ... d4. How do we prevent both?

**Answer: 45 Rb4!!**

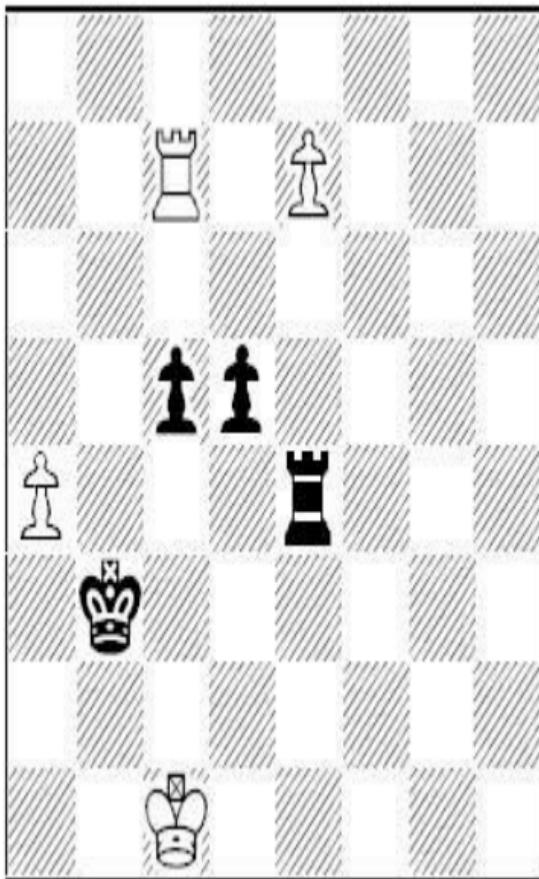
White threatens a mate in one while simultaneously defending his king. Deep Blue deftly dodges the executioner's axe, grabs it away and threatens to behead the executioner himself.

**45 ... Rc1+**

A nasty point is that Black can't push forward with 45 ... d4?? because of 46 Ra5 mate. Nasty point number two is 45 ... Ra2+ 46 Kb1 Rx a3 47 Rx a3 Kxb4 48 Rh3 Re2 49 h5 Rx e5 50 h6 Re8 51 h7 Rh8 52

Kc2 when Black is obviously too tied down by the advanced h-pawn to win the game.

**46 Rb1 Rcc2 47 Rb4 Rc1+  
48 Rb1 Rx b1+ 49 Kxb1 Re2 50  
Re7 Rh2 51 Rh7 Kc4 52 Rc7 c5  
53 e6 Rxh4 54 e7 Re4 55 a4  
Kb3 56 Kc1 ½-½**



**Exercise (calculation):** Go as far as you can in the following line without

moving the pieces. 56 ... c4 57  
a5 c3 58 Rb7+ Kc4 59 Rc7+ Kd3 60  
Kd1 d4

61 a6 Rh4 62 e8Q Rh1+ 63 Qe1  
c2+ 64 Rxc2 Rxе1+ 65 Kxe1 Kxc2  
66 a7 d3 67 a8Q d2+ 68 Kf2  
d1Q and I'm pretty sure this is  
drawn!

So the computer swindles a  
draw after being thoroughly  
outplayed by the human. GM Hans  
Ree called the result of this match  
the "trivialization of chess". But is  
it? Humans are the ones who  
created computers, so don't we get  
the credit for their brilliant moves!?

**Summary:** 6 Bd3 is too meek to give White anything.

Game 6

**G.Agamaliev-V.Malaniuk**

Swidnica 1997

**1 d4 d6 2 Nf3 Bg4 3 e4 Nf6 4 Nc3 c6**

**Question:** Does it matter if you play 4 ... e6 before 4 ... c6?

**Answer:** There is little difference if you play 4 ... e6 here. The positions tend to transpose.

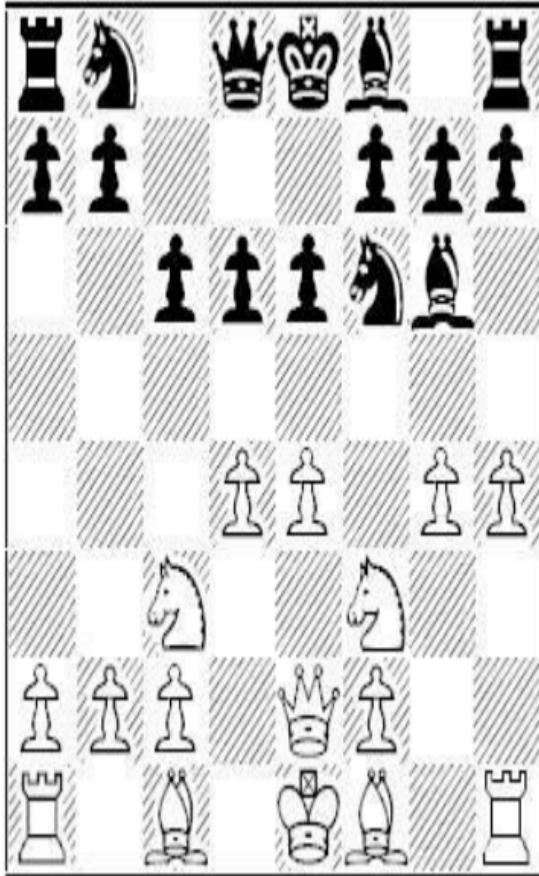
**5 h3 Bh5 6 Qe2**

White can also play the move order 6 g4 Bg6 7 Qe2 which

normally transposes to the game position.

## **6 ... e6 7 g4! Bg6 8 h4!**

Of course, White's g-pawn can't be touched due to the h5 threat to trap Black's light-squared bishop. This is the starting position of the most challenging line for us in this chapter.



**Question:** This looks committal for White, doesn't it?

**Answer:** Sure, it's committal.

However, White's alternatives are less scary for Black. For example:

a) 8 Bg2 Nbd7 9 Bf4 h6 10 0-0-0,  
"garparov1"-C.Lakdawala,  
Internet blitz 2010. The game is  
dynamically balanced after 10 ...  
d5.

b) 8 Bg5 Be7 9 h4 h5 10 Bxf6  
gxf6!? 11 Bh3 hxg4 12 Bxg4 d5 13  
exd5 cxd5 14 h5 Bh7, M.Hebden-  
M.Adams, Hastings 1996/97. The  
position looks like a Bronstein-  
Larsen line of the Caro-Kann where  
White overpressed. I don't believe  
White's attacking chances outweigh  
his raggedy pawn structure and  
Black's bishop pair.

c) 8 g5 Nfd7 9 h4 Bh5 (a nice little cubby hole for Black's bishop, which harasses White with the pin on f3) 10 Bg2 Be7 11 Be3 Qa5 12 0-0-0 b5 13 a3 Nb6 left Black with better attacking chances than White's on the other wing, Comp Chessmaster 5000-J.Van der Wiel, The Hague 1997.

### **8 ... h5**

We look at 8 ... h6 next game. 8 ... h5 is a more forcing move and gives White fewer options since it forces him to resolve the pawn structure immediately.

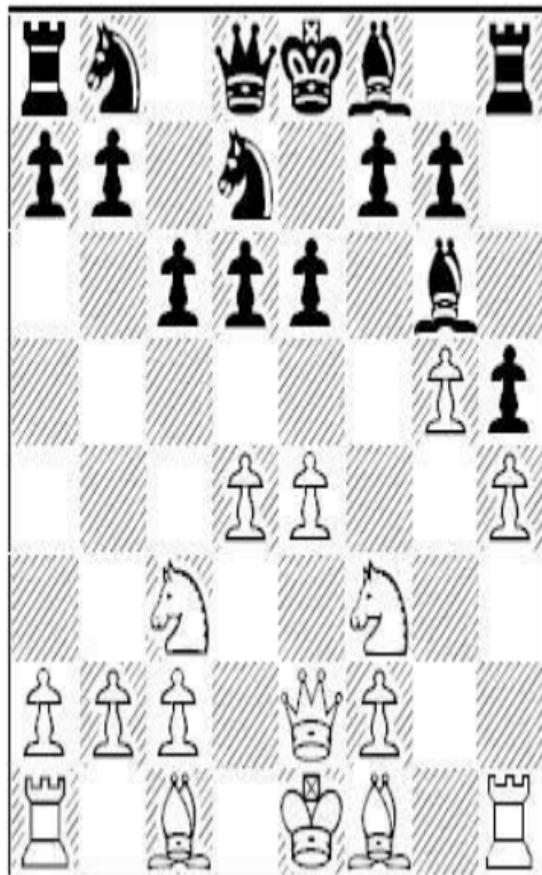
### **9 g5 Nfd7**

White desires to either

annihilate or absorb everything in its path – scary stuff. My advice is to stand your ground and don't get pushed any further back. An assessment:

1. White enjoys a monstrous space advantage on the kingside.
2. White controls more central space.
3. Black's central structure is incredibly flexible. He can play for ... d5, ... e5 or ... c5 at any time in the future, forcing White's vigilance against all of them.
4. Black's position is cramped but also very solid.
5. White's psychological danger

is that of overestimating his position and going off the cliff in a fit of overextension.

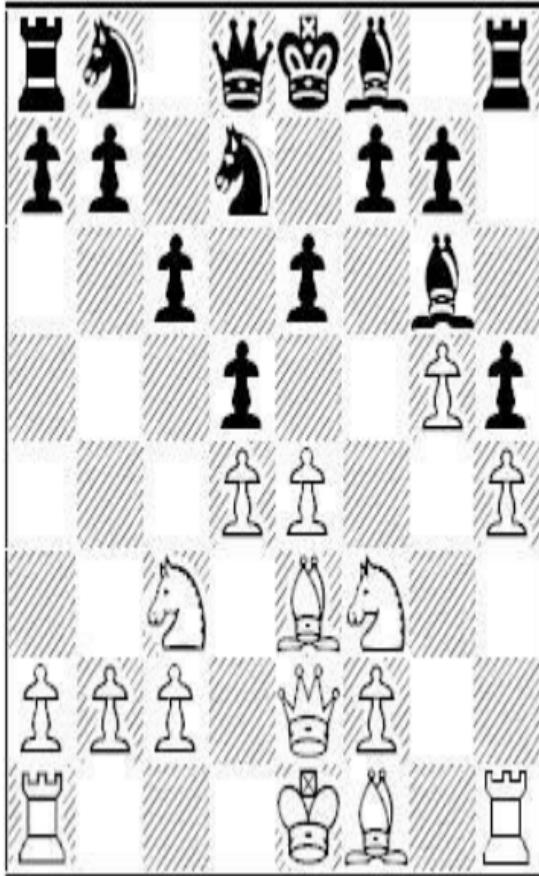


Conclusion: We allow the muscle bound bully (White!) to push us around for a while, but the bully underestimates our speed and tenacity at his peril.

## **10 Be3**

10 Bh3 Be7 11 Be3 d5! (we can't allow White the time for f4-f5) 12 Nd2 Na6 13 f4 dxе4 14 Ndxe4 Qa5 15 0-0 Bf5! 16 Bxf5 Qxf5 17 a3 Nc7 was A.Yermolinsky-J.Benjamin, Chicago 1995. The position looks like a Scandinavian that went well for Black. I'm not crazy about White, with his bad bishop and the potential for overextension.

## **10 ... d5!**



In the words of Captain Jean Luc Picard: "The line must be drawn here! This far, no further!" Don't

hesitate to stake out central space. If you stall on such moves, there is a strong possibility you are destined for assimilation into the Borg Collective.

**Question:** How do we know the timing for ... d5 in such positions?

**Answer:** The timing varies from game to game. The answer probably is: Play ... d5! when you feel assimilation imminent! Your feel for the timing gets better as you accrue experience in the position and in turn, your intuition becomes more refined.

## **11 Nd2 Na6**

Alternatively:

a) 11 ... Bb4 12 Bg2 Nb6 13 0-0 Na6 14 f4 dxe4 15 Ndx e4 Bxc3 16 bxc3 Nd5, C.Matamoros Franco-J.Hodgson, Candas 1992. Black intends to blockade f5 with ... Ne7 and ... Nf5. The position looks like a sharp Scandinavian with slightly favourable chances for White due to his dark-square control.

b) 11 ... Qb6! is Black's best move: 12 Rb1 (12 0-0-0 Bb4 13 Qd3 Qa5 14 Nb3 Qc7 looks risky for White but is also possible) 12 ... Be7 13 Bg2 Qa6! (borrowing the Capablanca idea we saw in Game 1) 14 0-0 Qxe2 15 Nxe2 dxe4 16 Nxe4, M.Fraschini-S.Slipak Buenos

Aires 1993. Black looks comfortable, since White's structure is geared for attack, not an ending.

### **12 a3**

Putting an end to both ... Nb4 and ... Bb4.

### **12 ... Nc7**

The knight watches the sensitive squares e6 and d5, where White dreams of sacs.

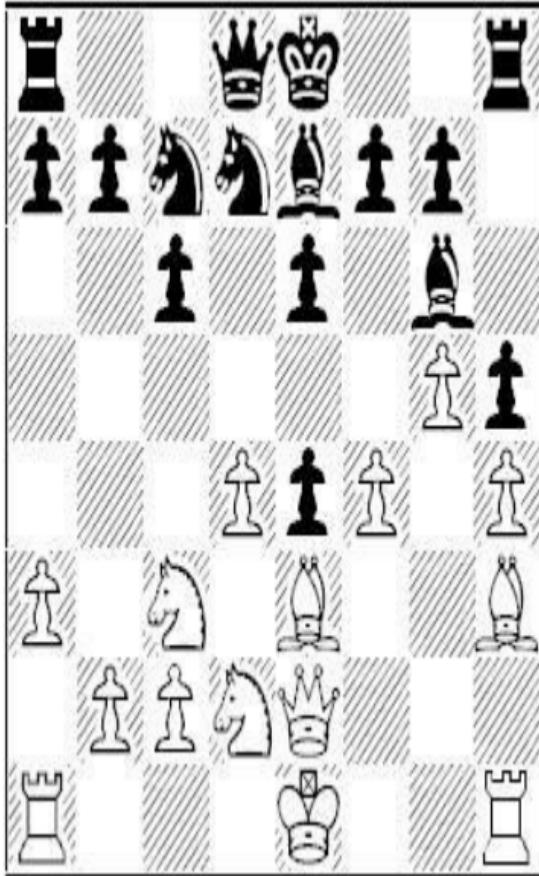
### **13 Bh3**

The goal: f4 and eventually force f5.

### **13 ... Be7 14 f4**

Threatening f5 and leaving Black with little choice.

### **14 ... dxе4**



## 15 Ndxe4

15 Ncxe4 leaves open the possibility of c4. N.Babu-J.Hodgson,

Novi Sad Olympiad 1990, went 15 ... Nd5 16 0-0 Bf5! (an instructive moment: Black agrees to some damage to his structure) 17 Bxf5?! (tempting as it is, he should probably avoid this swap) 17 ... exf5. With the swap on f5 Black attained a good bishop, control over e4 and increased light-square control.

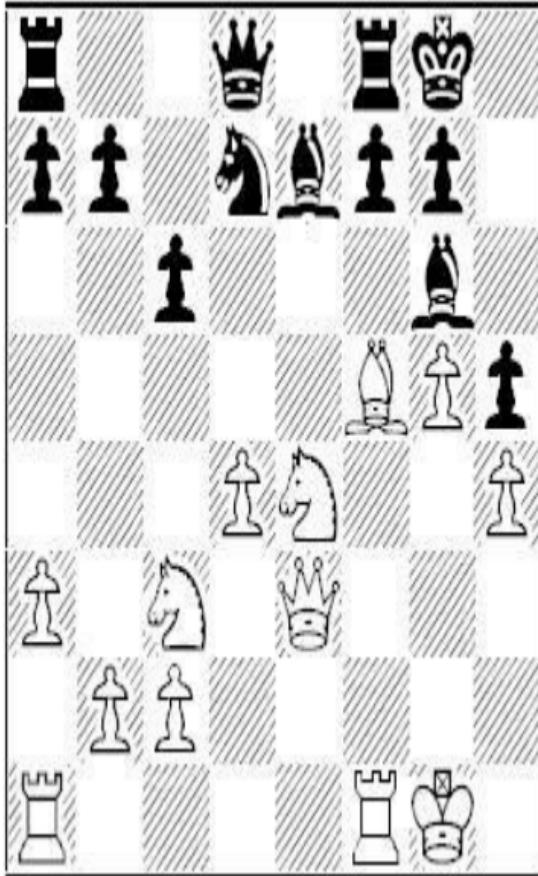
The game continued 18 Nf2 0-0 19 c4?! (overestimating his position and weakening d4) 19 ... Nxe3 20 Qxe3 Re8 21 Rae1 Nf8 22 Qd3 g6 23 d5 cxd5 24 cxd5 Qc7 25 Qc4 Qb6 26 b4 Bd6 and White looked overextended.

**15 ... Nd5 16 0-0 Nxe3**

Principle: Trades help the cramped side.

**17 Qxe3 0-0 18 f5 exf5 19**

**Bxf5**



## **Exercise (critical decision):**

Should Black take on f5 or let  
White trade on g6? Assess the

resulting positions.

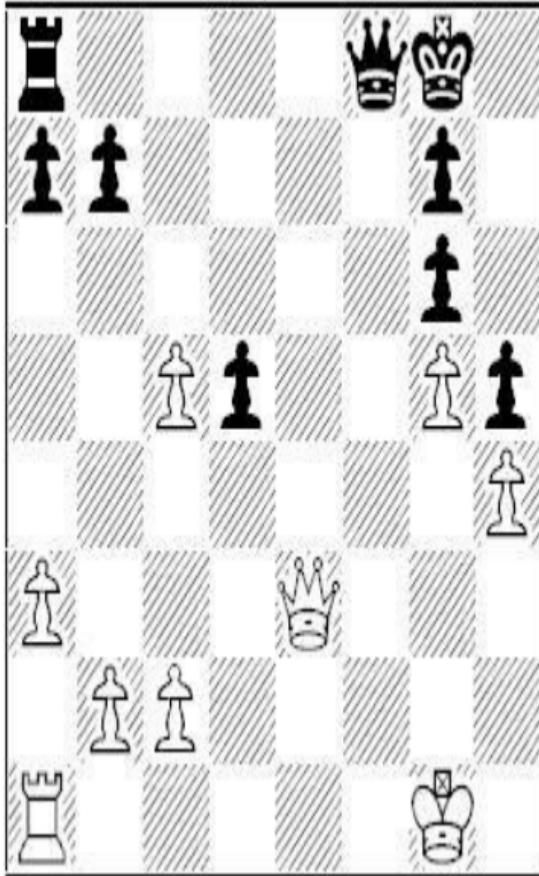
## **Answer: 19 ... Nb6!**

An excellent decision. Black agrees to the devaluation of his kingside pawns. In exchange, he gets a super-safe king. In this case Black understands the larger narrative: king safety is of paramount importance.

## **20 Bxg6 fxg6 21 Nc5**

I don't see any other useful plan.

## **21 ... Bxc5 22 dxc5 Nd5 23 Rxf8+ Qxf8 24 Nxd5 cxd5**



## **Exercise (multiple choice):**

What would you play?

- a) 25 Re1 taking over the e-file;

- b) 26 Rf1 gaining a tempo on Black's queen;
- c) 26 Qe6+ forcing an ending or picking off Black's d-pawn.

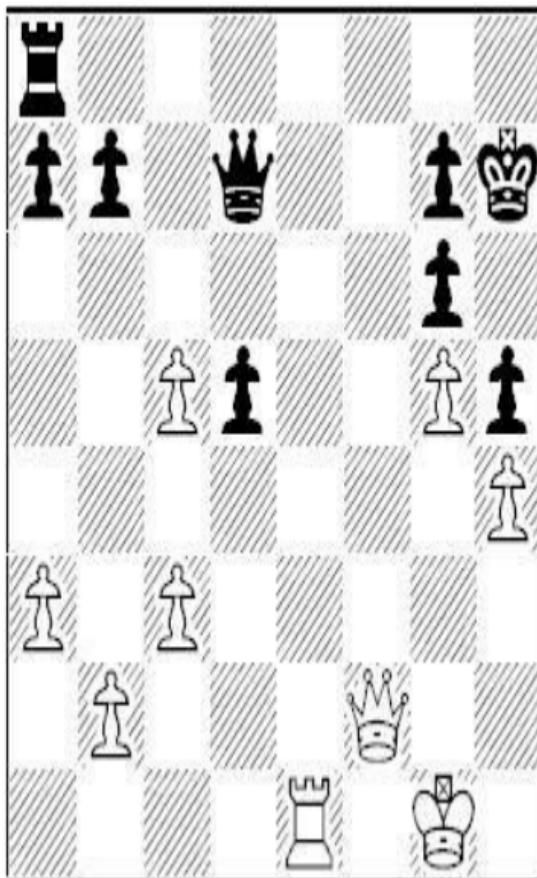
## **25 Re1**

**Answer:** Both a) and b) are playable; c) is not! White's king pays the price if he gets greedy with 25 Qe6+? Kh7!, with no intention of swapping queens. 26 Qxd5? Rd8 27 Qc4 Qf3! with a winning attack.

## **25 ... Kh7 26 Qf2 Qd8**

A queen swap favours White, who has the superior pawn structure for a rook ending as well as the better king.

**27 c3 Qd7!**



Black's decision on the 19th move begins to pay dividends.

White's king feels a cold wind, whereas Black's sits nestled comfortably. I get the feeling that White doesn't sense the danger to his king due to the reduced material.

**28 Re5 Rd8 29 Kg2 a5 30**

**Qf4**

White's position degenerates after 30 b4?! Qg4+ 31 Qg3 Qc4. Black threatens a decisive attack with ... d4, as well as ... Qa2+.

**30 ... a4**

Artificially isolating the c5-pawn, and ... Qb5 is also in the air.

**31 Kg3 Rc8! 32 Kf2?**

White may hold the game with

32 Qd4! allowing Black a trick: 32 ... Rxc5! 33 Qxc5 Qg4+ 34 Kf2 Qf4+ 35 Kg2 Qxe5 36 Qb4 Qe2+ 37 Kh3 b5 38 Kg3 d4 (White should also hold after 38 ... Kg8 39 Kf4) 39 Qxd4 Qxb2 40 Qb4 Qe2. Progress comes only with great difficulty, despite his safe king and extra pawn. If Black's king comes out of the corner White's prospects of perpetual check go way up.

### **32 ... Rxc5 33 Qf8**

Hoping to play Re8 next.

### **33 ... Rc8**

Oh no you don't!

### **34 Qe7 Qg4**

Once again, the difference is

king safety. Soon White's king falls face first, like Saddam's statue pulled to the ground.

### **35 Rxd5 Qxh4+ 36 Ke3?**

The clock strikes midnight and he hangs the queen, but it doesn't matter. Black gets there first after 36 Kg2 Qg4+ 37 Kh2 Rc4 38 Rd7 Qh4+ 39 Kg2 Rg4+.

### **36 ... Qe1+ 0-1**

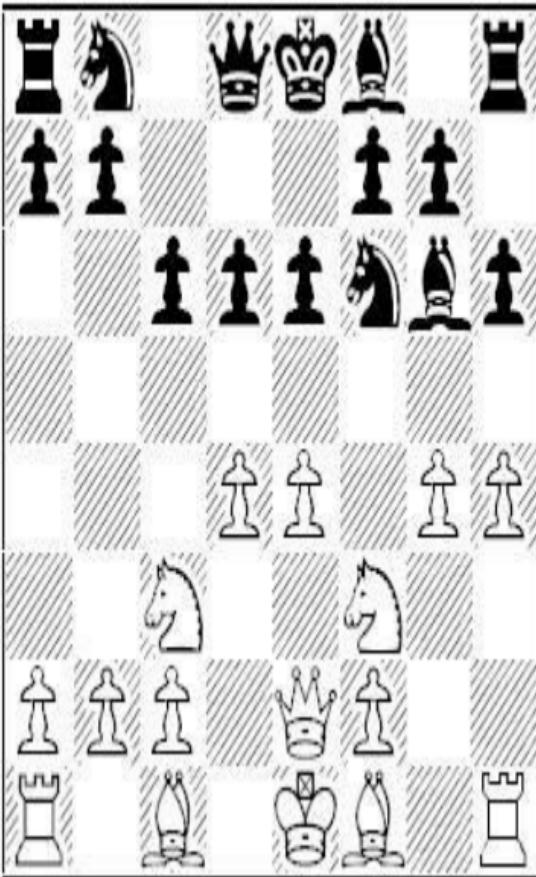
**Summary:** Black's position after 9 ... Nfd7 is surprisingly flexible. Also, stand your ground!

Game 7

**D.Berczes-R.Tischbierek**

# German League 2007

**1 d4 d6 2 Nf3 Bg4 3 e4 Nf6 4 Nc3 e6 5 h3 Bh5 6 Qe2 c6 7 g4 Bg6 8 h4 h6**



**Question:** What is the main difference between 8 ... h5 and 8 ... h6?

**Answer:** With 8 ... h5 Black forces White into playing 9 g5 and clarifies the situation somewhat. With 8 ... h6 Black refuses to force the issue and keeps his (and White's) structure fluid. This way probably leads to greater complications for both sides.

## **9 h5**

Here he comes.

**Question:** Can White play the position in a more restrained fashion at this point?

**Answer:** Yes, he has a couple of safer options:

- a) 9 Rg1 d5 10 exd5 Nxd5!

(depriving White of the g5 tempo gain) 11 Nxd5 Qxd5 12 Ne5 Be4 13 c3 Bd6 14 f3 Bh7 15 f4 Qe4! (a manoeuvre borrowed from the Caro-Kann) 16 Be3 Qc2! (White's space means much less with queens off the board) 17 Bg2 Qxe2+ 18 Kxe2 Nd7, P.Lukacs-L.Vadasz, Hungarian League 1993. Black has a slightly cramped but weakness-free Caro/Scandinavian ending which looks satisfactory.

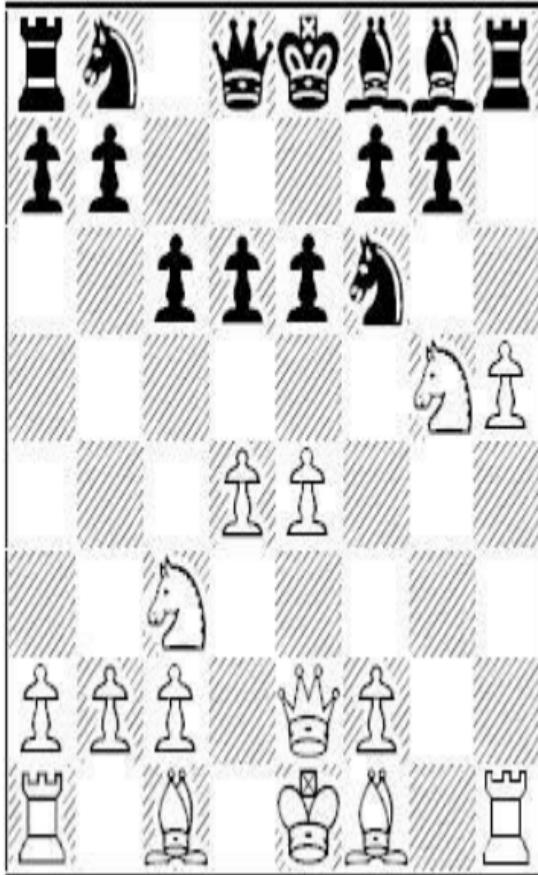
b) 9 Bh3 Nbd7 10 g5 Nh5 11 Be3 d5 12 Nd2, V.Yemelin-A.Motylev, St Petersburg 2000. Black looks fine after 12 ... Nb6 13 Bg4 hxg5. White must recapture with the bishop

since 14 hxg5?? loses instantly to 14 ... Ng3.

**9 ... Bh7 10 g5**

Going Keres Attack-style.

**10 ... hxg5 11 Nxg5 Bg8!**



**Question:** An exclam? Black's last move looks rather eccentric doesn't it?

**Answer:** Rats love dark places!

Black plays rope-a-dope and follows a key martial arts principle, which is to avoid providing an easy target for the opponent. With 11 ... Bg8, Black hides his bishop, covers his most sensitive squares, f7 and e6, and frustrates White by remaining weakness free.

## **12 Be3 Nbd7**

I like the way Pribyl handled it:  
12 ... Qa5 13 Bg2 Nbd7 14 Bd2 Qb6  
15 e5 Nd5 16 Nxd5 cxd5 17 0-0-0  
Qxd4 18 exd6 Rc8! and Black has  
the more promising position,  
M.Taggatz-J.Pribyl, Marianske Lazne  
2005. Notice how that powerhouse

on g8 discourages White from sacs.

## **13 d5!?**

Principle: Create confrontation when ahead in development. The Pribyl/Rat is truly the most mutable of openings. Now the game turns into an Open Sicilian-style position.

**13 ... cxd5 14 exd5 e5 15 Bh3 Qa5 16 0-0-0 0-0-0 17 Bf5 Kb8**

White commands more space but at the same time must tend to a few pawn weaknesses.

## **18 Rh4 Nb6!**

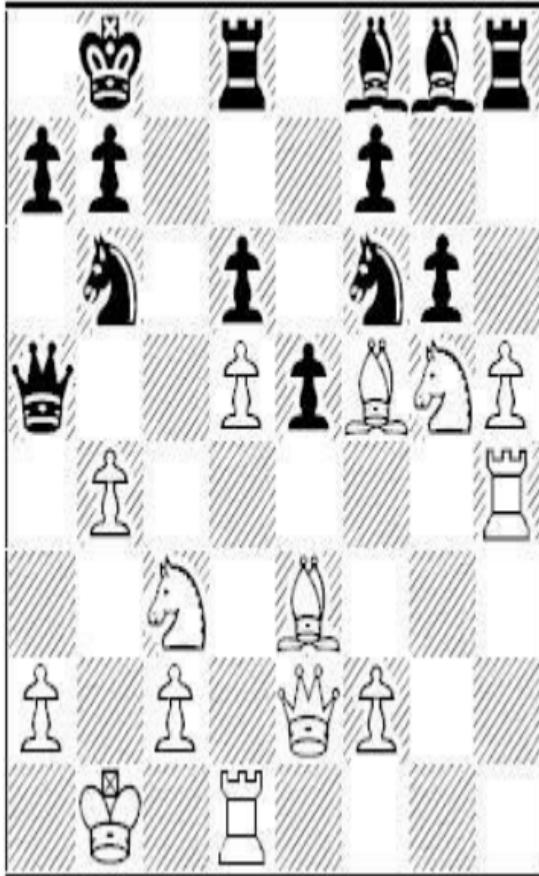
Multipurpose. The knight move cuts out White's Ra4 tricks covers c4, and adds pressure to the d5-

pawn.

**19 Kb1 g6!**

Not only gaining a tempo on the bishop, but also exploiting the pin on the h4-rook.

**20 b4?**



White believes Black's queen to be in danger, an optical illusion.  
**Exercise (combination alert):**

Find the trick to free  
Black's queen and grab the  
initiative.

**Answer:** There is no need to move the queen just yet:

**20 ... Na4! 21 Rd3?**

He probably should just agree to go into a rancid position after 21 Nxa4 Qxa4 22 Bh3 Rxh5.

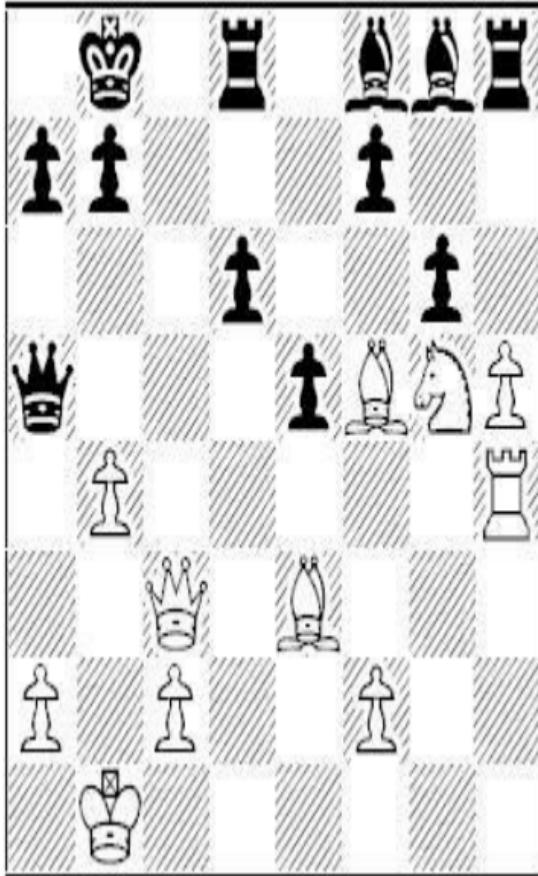
**21 ... Nxc3+ 22 Rxc3 Nxd5!**

He pulls off the same fork trick with two different knights.

**23 Qc4**

White is no better off after 23 Rcc4 Qa4 or 23 Rd3 Qa6!.

**23 ... Nxc3+ 24 Qxc3**



**24 ... Qa4?**

This keeps White alive. 24 ... Qb5 or 24 ... Qd5 would win for

Black.

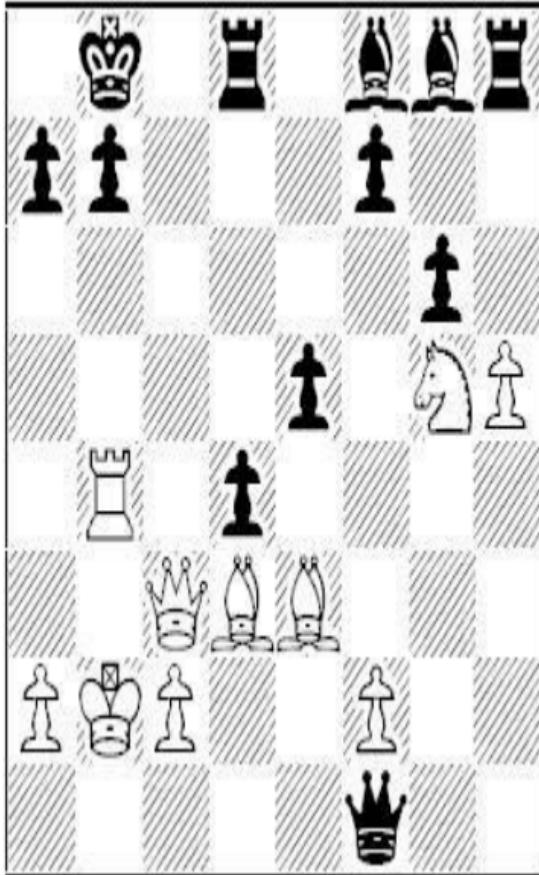
## **25 b5! Qxb5+??**

White's point is revealed in the line 25 ... Qxh4? 26 Bxa7+! Kxa7 27 Qa5+ Kb8 28 Qxd8+ with perpetual check. Black should still win, but with some difficulty, after 25 ... e4! 26 Qxh8 Qxb5+ 27 Qb2 Qxf5 28 Nxe4 (28 h6 Be7! wins) 28 ... Be7. Black remains up two pawns and should consolidate.

## **26 Rb4 Qf1+ 27 Kb2**

Now Black gets slaughtered after the greedy 27 ... gxf5?? 28 Qc6 b6 29 Bxb6.

## **27 ... d5 28 Bd3! d4**



**Exercise (calculation):** What a turnaround! A rook sac on b7 forces mate in 12 moves. Try to

work it out in your head  
as far as you can without  
moving the pieces.

## **29 Rx**7+! Kxb7 30 Be4+!****

Normally it's a time of great rejoicing when you win the opponent's queen, but not here. White has a mate. He shouldn't sell out for mere material after 30 Qb3+ Kc7 31 Qc4+ Kd7 32 Bxf1.

## **30 ... Kb8 31 Qc6?!**

**Answer:** This looks like a killing shot. What else can Black do but resign? The truth is White missed the quickest path, which lies in 31 Qb3+! Kc7 32 Qb7+ Kd6 33 Nxf7+ Ke6 (or 33 ... Bxf7 34 Qc6+ Ke7 35

Bg5 mate) 34 Nxd8+ Kf6 35 Qc6+ Kg7 (or 35 ... Ke7 36 Bg5 mate) 36 Qxg6 mate.

### **31 ... Rd7!**

**Question:** Why would you give an exclamation mark to a totally forced but hopeless try?

**Answer:** The exclam is for not resigning! Sometimes playing on in what looks to be an utterly hopeless situation turns out to be a good chess decision. Black tries one last trick.

### **32 Qxd7?**

White gets cheapoed after this move. 32 Qa8+! Kc7 33 Ne6+!!

wins:

a) 33 ... fxe6 34 Qb7+ Kd6 35 Qc6+ Ke7 36 Bg5+ Ke8 37 Bxg6+ Bf7 38 Qc8+ Rd8 39 Qxd8 mate!

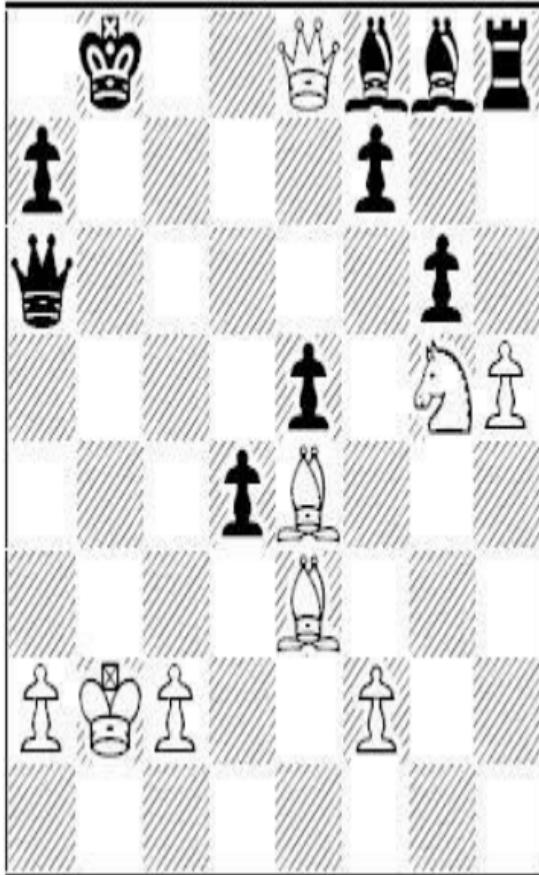
b) 33 ... Kd6 34 Qc6+ Ke7 35 Bg5+ f6 36 Nxf8! and there are too many attackers swarming around Black's king for any chance of survival.

### **32 ... Qa6!**

Now Black should hold the draw.

32 ... Ba3+! also worked: 33 Kxa3 Qa6+ 34 Kb4 dxe3 35 Qe8+ Kc7 and White has nothing better than to take the perpetual.

### **33 Qe8+**



**Exercise (critical decision):**  
Block with the queen or slide the king to c7?

**33 ... Qc8??**

**Answer:** Incorrect! In one move Black goes from drawing to dead, and dead is very bad since death tends to greatly curtail most of our life choices! After 33 ... Kc7! 34 Qxf8 dxe3 White has nothing better than to take the perpetual.

**34 Qxe5+ Qc7 35 Bf4**

Missing mate in three with 35 Qe8+! Qc8 36 Bf4+ Bd6 37 Bxd6 mate.

**35 ... Bd6**

35 ... Qxe5 36 Bxe5+ Kc8 37 Bxh8 is hopeless for Black, but it's the only way to prevent mate.

**36 Qe8+! 1-0**

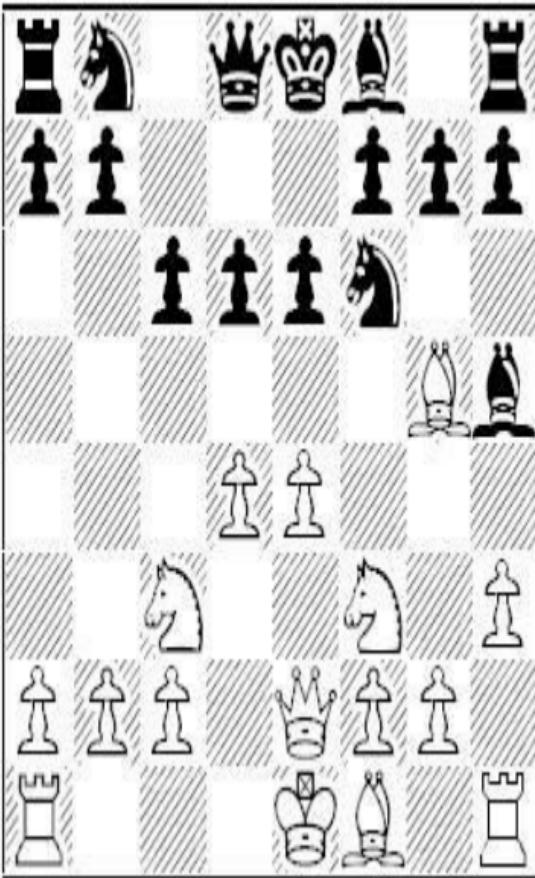
**Summary:** The positions after 8 ... h6 look even sharper than those after the more forcing 8 ... h5. Remember the ... Bg8! manoeuvre in this version, but don't leave it there for the entire game, as Black did in this one!

Game 8

**G.Newerovski–R.Ovetchkin**

Tula 2003

**1 Nf3 d6 2 d4 Bg4 3 e4 Nf6 4 Nc3 c6 5 h3 Bh5 6 Qe2 e6 7 Bg5?!**



**Question:** Is he trying for e5, in conjunction with the pin?

**Answer:** This isn't White's main

idea behind 7 Bg5. Remember, Black normally plays for ... d5 and White responds with e5, so White's idea behind the pin is a plan to unload his potentially bad dark-squared bishop in exchange for Black's knight.

**Question:** That doesn't seem like such a bad idea. Why don't you like it?

**Answer:** There are three problems:

1. It violates the principle: Avoid swaps when you have a space advantage.

2. White forks over the bishop pair in a fluid position which may

later open.

3. If White avoids the swap on f6 he may later be vulnerable to tactics involving ... Nxe4. 7 ... **Be7**  
**8 Bxf6**

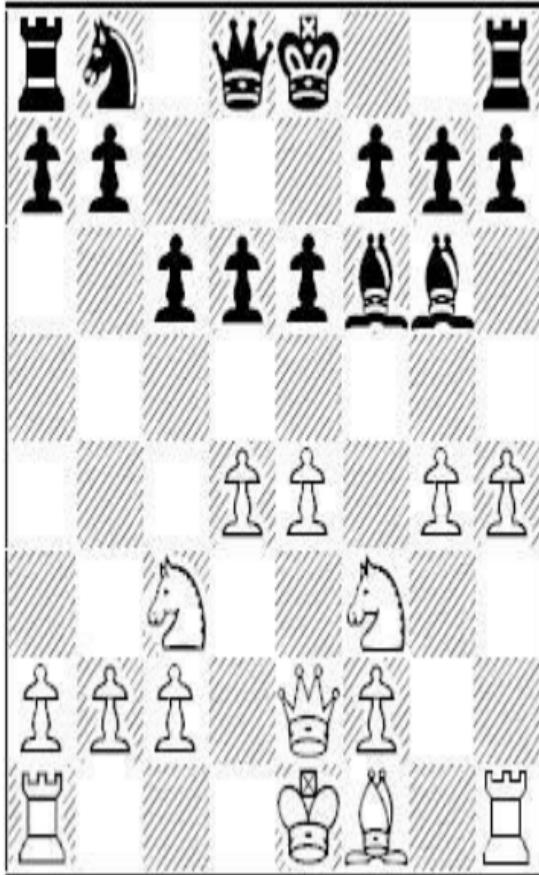
Consistent but probably faulty. White gives up his bishop pair, and some dark squares in the process, but doesn't even make Black pay the price of a tempo with ... h6. The alternative is to delay the capture on f6 with 8 0-0-0:

a) 8 ... Nbd7 9 Kb1 d5 10 g4 Bg6, but now he must submit to the unforced capture on f6 anyway: 11 Bxf6 Nxf6 was played in G.Todorovic-K.Mokry, Tuzla 1990. I

would try the more adventurous 11 ... gxf6!? denying e5 to White's pieces and increasing the hold over the dark squares.

b) I would avoid the trick 8 ... Nxe4?! which wins the exchange but also hands White many strategic plusses: 9 Nxe4 Bxf3 10 Bxe7 (10 Qxf3? Bxg5+ drops a pawn) 10 ... Bxe2 11 Bxd8 Bxd1 12 Bh4 Bh5 and a draw was agreed in P.Dezan-P.Toulzac, Toulouse 2000. White has excellent compensation for the exchange after 13 Nxd6+ Kd7 14 Nxb7.

**8 ... Bxf6 9 g4 Bg6 10 h4**



Once again White goes forward in his decision to napalm the kingside.

**Question:** And this doesn't make you nervous?

**Answer:** No. Somehow these rushing pawns don't make me nervous because Black hasn't committed his king to that side of the board. The position, for now all fun and games for White, may sour for him later since he risks serious danger of overextension.

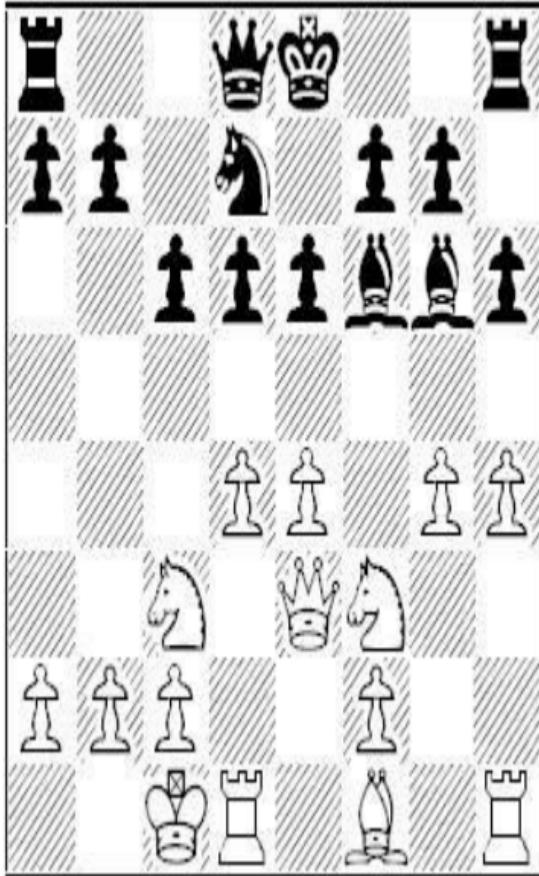
## **10 ... h6**

It makes more sense to keep the position fluid now that it is Black who has the bishop pair. Still, 10 ... h5 looks fully playable: 11 g5 Be7 12 0-0-0 Nd7 13 Bh3 d5 14 Ne5 Nxe5 15 dxe5 Qa5 16 exd5 cxd5 17

f4 0-0 18 f5 exf5 19 Rxd5 Qb4 20 Bg2 Rfe8 21 Kb1 Bf8 22 Qf2 a6 23 Rhd1 Rac8 with mutual chances, V.Epishin-K.Mokry, Vienna 1991. Black's king looks slightly more secure to compensate for White's more centralized pieces.

### **11 0-0-0 Nd7 12 Qe3!**

Multipurpose: he adds heat to the g5-square in order to push his g-pawn, his queen eyes a7, in case Black castles queenside, and he covers his c3-knight in order to play d5 at some point.

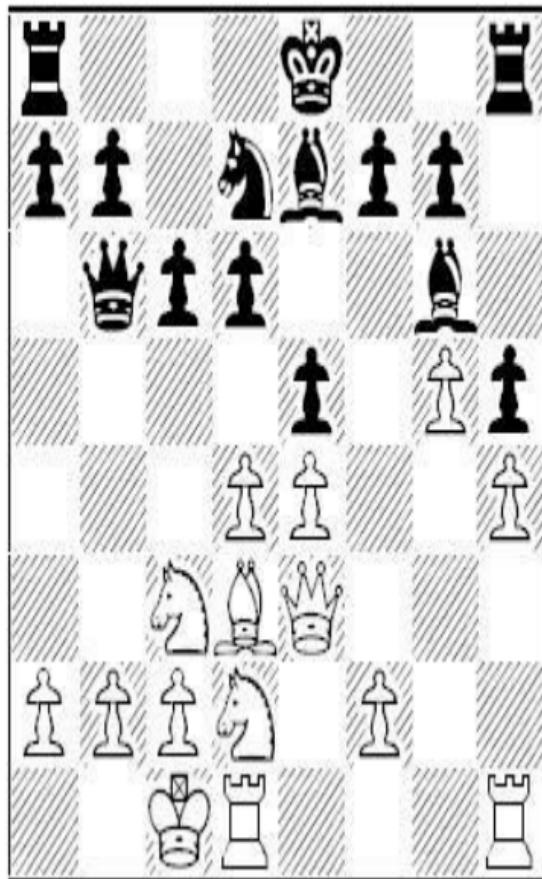


**12 ... Be7 13 Bd3 h5!?**

I would have left the kingside fluid and played 13 ... Qb6

intending to castle queenside.

**14 g5 Qb6 15 Nd2 e5!**



**Question:** Why an exclamation when

Black violates a principle by opening the position when behind in development? Also, shouldn't Black

be playing for ... d5, and not ... e5, which we have seen in previous games?

**Answer:** Black isn't all that far behind in development. He violates the principle you mentioned, but follows one of opening the game when owning the bishop pair. At some point you must take your stand and fight back in the centre. Also, remember you don't always play for ... d5. Sometimes ... e5 may be superior. We must remain

flexible. White threatens to overwhelm Black with f4 and f5, so Black logically plants his flag on e5.

## **16 Ne2 f6!**

Bit by bit, Black chips away at White's imposing pawn centre. After 16 ... exd4 17 Nxd4 Ne5 18 f4 Ng4 19 Qg1 0-0-0 20 f5 Bh7 White stands better due to his space and the buried black bishop on h7.

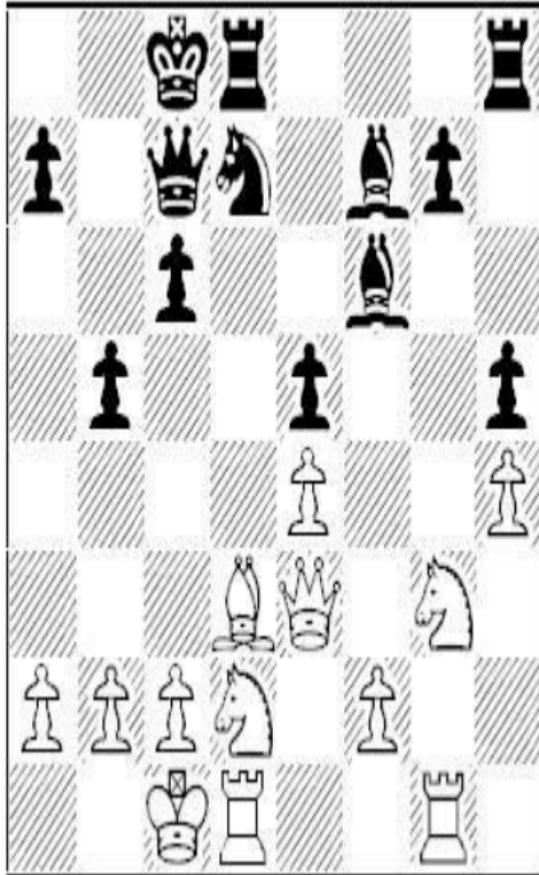
## **17 Nc4 Qc7 18 gxf6**

The early release of tension probably helps Black. However I also like Black's position if White keeps the tension with 18 f4 Bf7 19 Kb1 0-0-0 20 dxe5 dxe5 21 Qxa7 exf4.

**18 ... Bxf6 19 dxe5?!**

Ditto. Too early. Once again White releases central tension and falls victim to the law of diminishing returns. If you push all your pawns forward and then later lose momentum, a position tends to go south quickly. Remember the old saying: Early is late if you believe tomorrow is yesterday! Better was 19 f4 Bf7.

**19 ... dxe5 20 Rhg1 Bf7 21 Ng3 b5! 22 Nd2 0-0-0**



An assessment:

1. Black owns the bishop pair in a semi-open position.

2. Black controls the dark squares.

3. White is saddled with a potentially bad bishop.

4. h4 is weak.

Conclusion: The advantage swings to Black.

## **23 c4?!**

**Question:** I noticed you gave White's aggressive move a dubious mark.

Why force your pacifist philosophy on your readers? Some of us actually

prefer to fight for the initiative, take risks and eat red meat!

**Answer:** There is a thin line

between controlled aggression, which is good, and just flailing about, which is not! Fischer once said that to get squares one must sometimes give up squares. It's perfectly understandable that White doesn't want to sit around and wait while Black improves his position. However, his move compromises control over the key d4-square. I have difficulty pinpointing just what he "gets" for the weakening besides the purely optical aggression and initiative you speak of.

## **23 ... Qb6!**

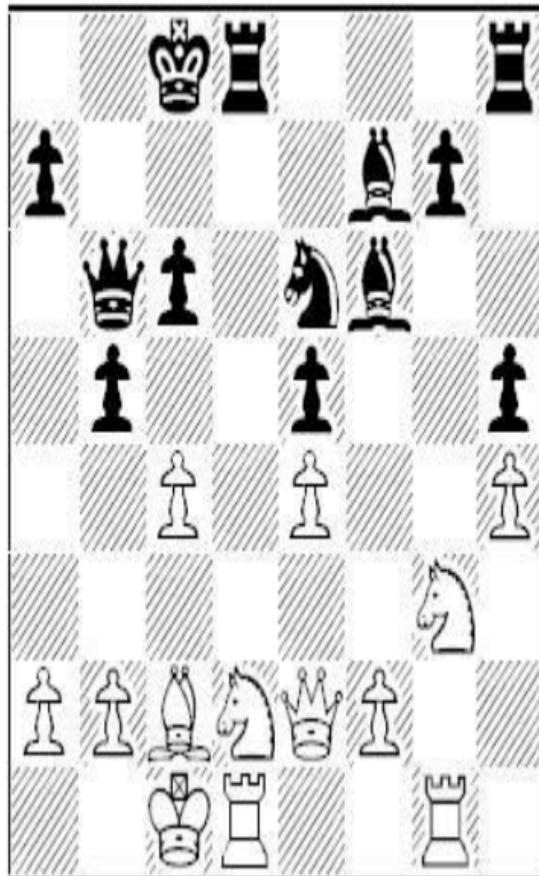
The dark-square weaknesses spread like an infection in White's

camp. Another good plan at Black's disposal is to force the superior ending after 23 ... g6! 24 cxb5 cxb5+ 25 Kb1 Qa5 26 Nb3 Qb6 27 Qxb6 Nxb6 28 Bxb5 Bxb3 29 axb3 Rxd1+ 30 Rxd1 Bxh4. The doubled, isolated b-pawns virtually leave White a pawn down. Black's menacing, passed h-pawn will make White sweat to try to hold the ending.

## **24 Qe2?!**

24 cxb5! cxb5 25 Qxb6 Nxb6 26 Bxb5 Bxh4 27 Nf5 Bf6 28 Nxg7 h4 gives Black terrific compensation for his missing pawn. Still, this was White's best shot.

**24 ... Nc5 25 Bc2 Ne6**



A spreadsheet of White's strategic woes:

1. White must deal with punctures on f4, d4 and c5.
2. Black holds a grip on the dark squares.
3. Black's bishops grow more powerful as the game continues to open.
4. The h4-pawn is weak.

Conclusion: White stands on the border of busted.

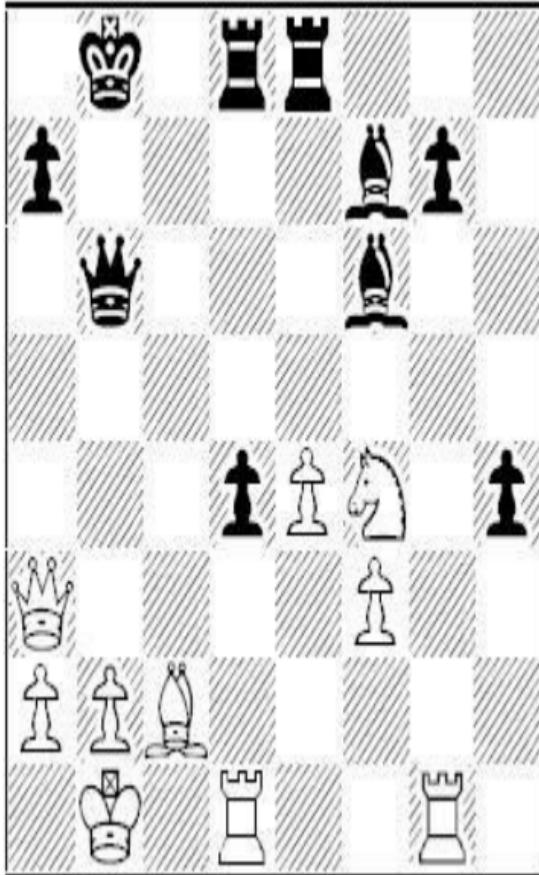
**26 cxb5 Nd4 27 Qe3 Bxh4**

27 ... Bxa2! is even stronger since White can't respond with 28 b3?? in view of 28 ... Qc5! winning.

**28 Nf3 Bf6 29 bxc6 Qxc6 30 Nxd4 exd4 31 Qa3 Kb8 32 Kb1 h4 33 Ne2**

Or 33 Nf5 h3 34 f4 h2 35 Rh1 d3! 36 Rxd3 Qb6! with a nasty threat to check on g1.

**33 ... Rhe8 34 f3 Qb6 35 Nf4**



**Exercise (planning):** Should Black go for a touchdown with his h-pawn or directly after

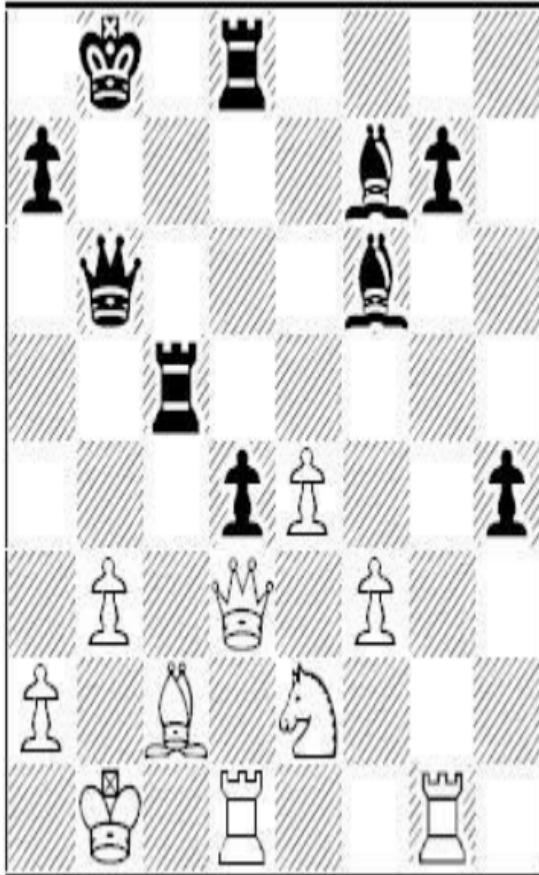
White's king?

**Answer:** Black should go after the king, with all his guns aimed in that direction.

**35 ... Re5! 36 Qd3 Rb5 37 b3**

Fatally weakening the dark squares around his king.

**37 ... Rc5 38 Ne2**



**Exercise (combination alert):**  
Find the move which bludgeons all hope.

**Answer: 38 ... Bc4! 0-1**

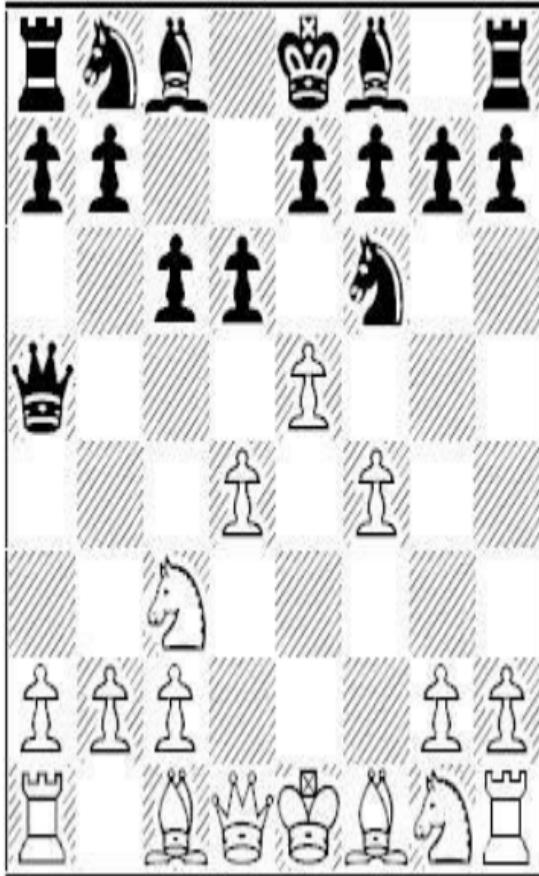
39 Qd2 d3 wins.

**Summary:** No need to concern ourselves about the strategically suspect 7 Bg5?! after which I believe White fights for equality.

# **Chapter Two**

## **Pribyl/Rat Versus The Austrian Attack: 5 e5**

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 f4  
Qa5 5 e5**



Chess clubs can be a breeding ground for strange rumours and theories. For instance, one of the

members of the San Diego Chess Club recently informed me that the above diagram is the “refutation” of the Pribyl/Rat. I do admit that the Austrian Attack lines from this chapter and the next are probably Black’s biggest challenges. But a refutation? No.

White may be thinking he is playing an Austrian Attack against the Pirc, but in actuality we are doing something totally different from the Pirc, fighting mainly for control over the central light squares. In this chapter we add to our arsenal a few stealthy and relatively unknown tricks for Black,

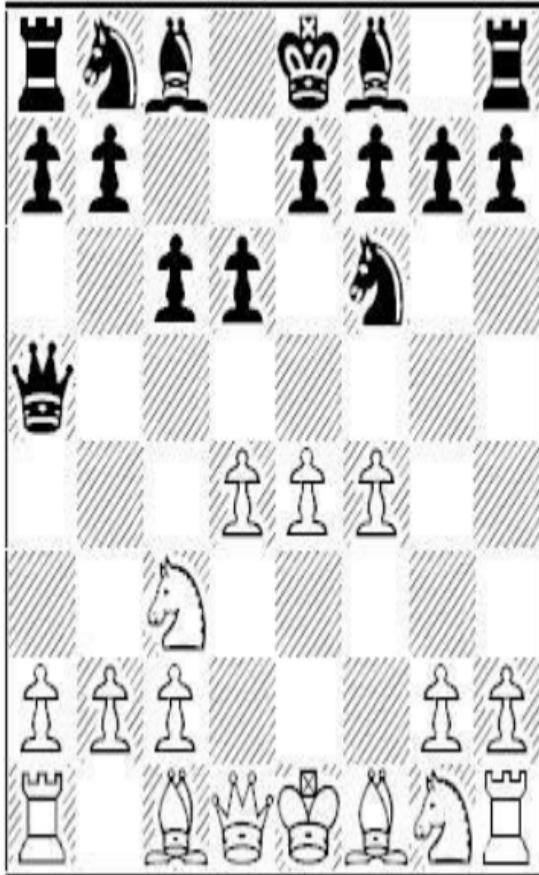
like the one Hodgson pulled in the opening in his game against Suetin. Until Wikileaks releases top secret documents clearly refuting the line, we should remain sceptical about my chess club friend's claims and play the Black side with confidence.

Game 9

**J.Timman-J.Hodgson**

Biel 1995

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 f4  
Qa5**



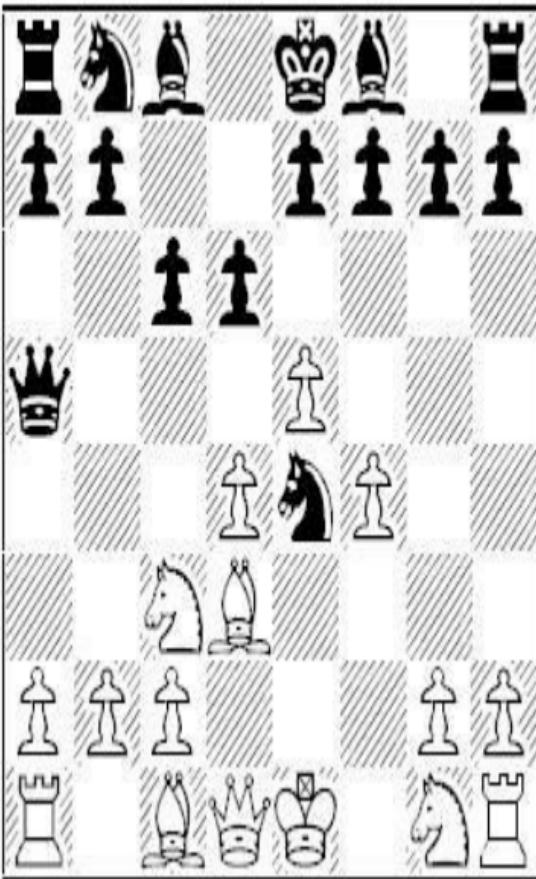
The message is clear: Meet me at high noon, and don't be late! Many strong players believe the

Austrian Attack is the refutation of the Rat/Pribyl. Our survival revolves around solutions to the coming e5, which threatens to push us off the board.

## **5 e5**

A few optimists have tried the rather shady-looking pawn sac (or pawn hang!) 5 Nf3?! Nxe4, but I don't think this one even deserves any analysis. It looks unsound at worst and dubious at best.

## **5 ... Ne4 6 Bd3**



A critical position for Black.  
According to my databases, this is  
the position of White's highest score

against our opening.

**Question:** It looks like White sacs two pawns with this move.

Does his development lead compensate?

**Answer:** It's a pretend sacrifice! If Black takes on c3, White responds with the pinning move Qd2! regaining the piece.

**Question:** What if White tries 6 Nf3?

**Answer:** Black should avoid 6 ... Nxc3?! 7 bxc3 Bg4 (if Black grabs on c3, White's space, development lead and attacking chances more than make up for the lost pawn) 8 Bd2 dxe5? 9 fxe5 e6 10 Bd3 and

White had everything,  
A.Morozevich-H.Brendel, Mainz  
(rapid) 2004.

In this case the threat is stronger than its execution. Black shouldn't take immediately on c3 but instead choose 6 ... Bg4!. Now White finds it awkward to defend the square, and after 7 Bd3 Nxc3 8 Qd2 Bxf3 9 gxf3 e6 10 bxc3 g6! 11 Rb1 Qc7 12 c4 Nd7 Black's flexible and superior pawn structure make up for White's bishop pair and extra space. For example, 13 a4 Be7 14 Ba3 c5 15 Be4 Rb8. Perhaps a natural attacker would still favour White. I, on the other hand, feel

like White stands on the cusp of overextension and would happily take the black pieces.

## **6 ... Nxc3**

The main line. Against 6 ... d5 I believe the simple 7 Bd2! leads to a White advantage in all lines:

a) 7 ... Qb6 8 Bxe4 dxe4 9 Nge2 f5 10 Na4 Qc7 11 c4 e6 12 Rc1 Qd8 13 0-0 Be7 14 Qb3 0-0 15 Bb4!, I.Ibragimov-A.Young, Minneapolis 2005. With Black's bishop pair eliminated, he remains with a bad bishop. Black also lacks a good method of contesting White's massive territorial advantage. Black's connected passed e-pawn,

his only plus, should give him little comfort.

b) 7 ... Nxd2 8 Qxd2 Qb6 9 Nge2 g6 (Black is too far behind in development to get away with the grab and snatch on b2) 10 0-0 Bh6 11 Na4 Qd8 12 b3, E.Perelshteyn-A.Young, Chicago 2006. White's development lead, space and attacking chances mean more than Black's bishop pair in this closed position.

## **7 Qd2! c5**

Time for us to fight back. To my mind this is one of Black's best ideas, forcing White to retake the knight immediately. We examine

the psychotic 7 ... g6!? in the next couple of games. Black's other viable options are:

a) 7 ... e6 8 bxc3 c5 9 Nf3 d5 10 c4! Qxd2+ 11 Bxd2 dxc4 12 Bxc4 a6 13 a4 cxd4 14 Nxd4 Nd7 15 a5 Nc5 16 Be3 Bd7 17 Be2 Rc8 18 Bf3 Rc7 19 0-0, M.Al Sayed-V.Akopian, Gibraltar 2009. White's bishop pair and pressure down the b-file mean more than Black's slightly superior pawn structure. Still, Black's game looks fully playable.

b) 7 ... dxe5 8 fxe5 c5 and now:

b1) 9 Qxc3!? (Black always welcomes a queen swap in this line since it alleviates his greatest fear:

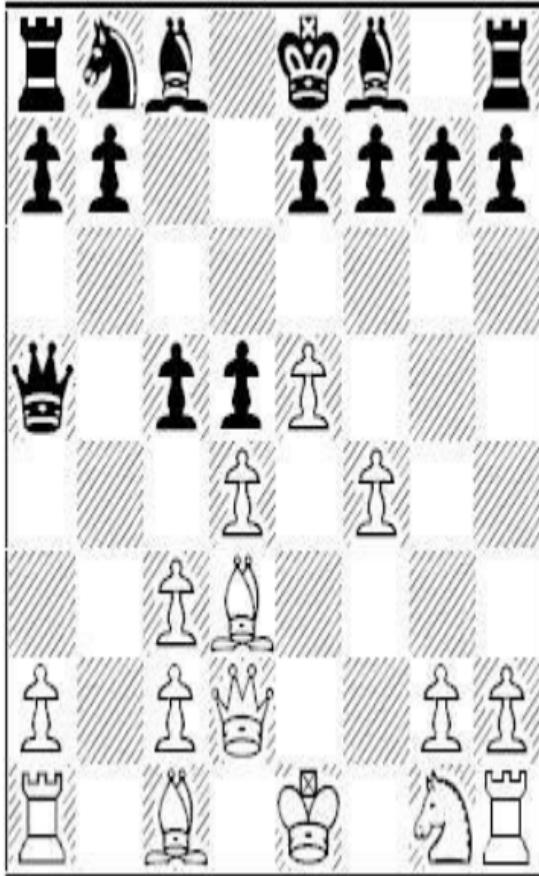
mate!) 9 ... Qxc3+ 10 bxc3 Nc6 11 Be3, A.Cherniaev-A.Summerscale, Coulsdon 1999. Now perhaps Black should play 11 ... Be6! when he has prospects on the central light squares, like c4, to offset White's imposing pawn centre.

b2) 9 bxc3 Nc6 10 Ne2 g6 also looks playable for Black, who gets Grünfeld-like counterplay against White's centre. (Please add Grünfeld Defence to our list!)

c) 7 ... d5 8 Ne2 c5 9 Nxc3 e6 10 dx<sub>c</sub>5 Qxc5?! (it's better to get kicked around but develop quicker with 10 ... Bxc5 11 Nb5 Qb6 12 b4 Be7 13 a4 0-0 14 a5 Qd8 with a

playable French for Black) 11 a3 Bd7 12 b4 Qb6 13 Bb2 Nc6 14 Na4 Qc7 15 0-0, I.Nepomniachtchi-A.Ivanov, Dagomys 2010. The position resembles one arising from a Classical French, but a version I prefer for White, who controls d4 and has attacking chances on the kingside.

**8 bxc3 d5!**



**Question:** Are you sure this is playable? White has a space plus and an ominous

development lead.

**Answer:** Finding an antidote to White's development lead is precisely why we play this move. Hodgson intends to plug up the works as quickly as possible with ... c4!

### **9 Nf3**

**Question:** If White worries about his opponent's plan of clogging the

game, then why not play 9 dxc5!? to ensure that the game remains open?

**Answer:** Your idea is indeed playable, but not without cost – White damages his pawn structure

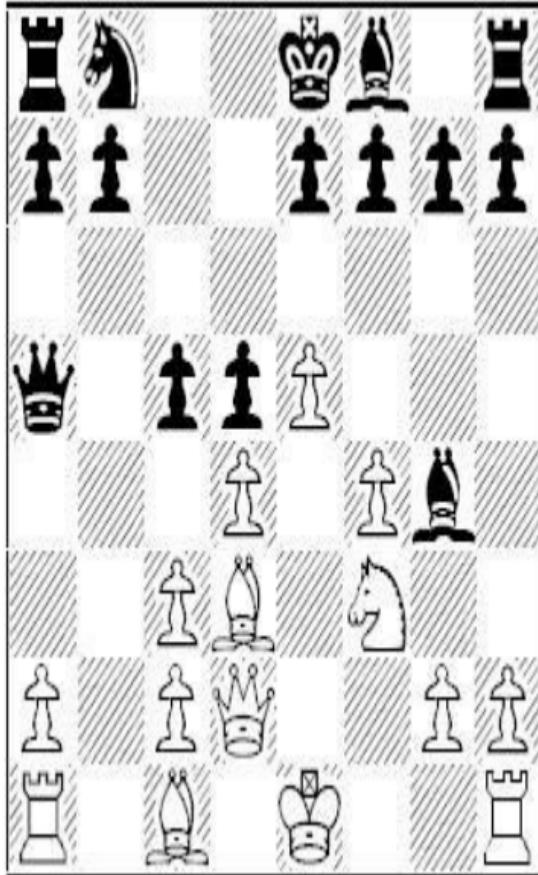
to keep the game open. After 9 ... e6 10 c4 Qxd2+ 11 Bxd2 dxc4 12 Bxc4 Bxc5 13 Nf3 Bd7 Black is in good shape. His superior structure compensates for White's extra space and slight development lead, M.Manik-R.Zadrapa, Tatranske Zruby 2004.

### **9 ... Bg4**

**Question:** Isn't Black worried about the weakening of b7?

**Answer:** Yes, we must be aware of the b7 target. If you don't like the position Hodgson got in this game then you can take a French Defence route and play 9 ... Nc6 10 0-0 e6 11 dxc5 Bxc5+ 12 Kh1 a6 13

Qe1 Bd7 14 a4 Qc7 15 Qg3 g6, as in D.Ariel-L.Altounian, Seattle 2002. Once again, Black's superior structure compensates for White's attacking chances. French and some Sicilian players arrive at such positions routinely, and it looks quite playable for Black.



**10 Rb1**

Following an initiative-over-structure game plan. 10 c4! is a

critical alternative. 10 ... Qxd2+ and now:

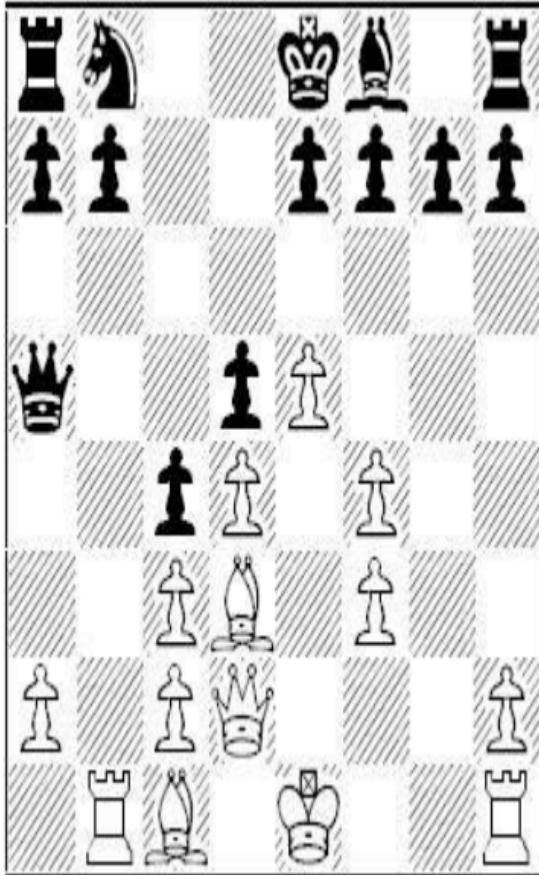
a) 11 Nxd2 dxc4 12 Bxc4 cxd4 13 Rb1 Nc6! 14 Rxb7 Na5 15 Rc7 (15 Bb5+?? drops the exchange to 15 ... Kd8!) 15 ... Nxc4 16 Rxc4 Be6 17 Rxd4 Bxa2. I'm not sure about the assessment:

1. Black owns the bishop pair.
2. Black controls the light squares.
3. Black's a-pawn looks more dangerous than White's c-pawn.
4. White has a space advantage with his e5-pawn wedge.
5. White enjoys a big development lead.

Conclusion: Unclear. The next 10 or so moves remain critical. If Black manages to unravel (which I am not so sure he will be able to achieve!) he stands better.

b) 11 Bxd2 dxc4 12 Bxc4 Nc6! 13 d5 (I also wouldn't mind playing Black after 13 dxc5 Bxf3 14 gxf3 e6 15 Be3 0-0-0 when his superior structure fully compensates him for the pawn) 13 ... Bxf3 14 gxf3 Nd4 15 0-0-0 g6 with an odd, ugly Grünfeld-like position.

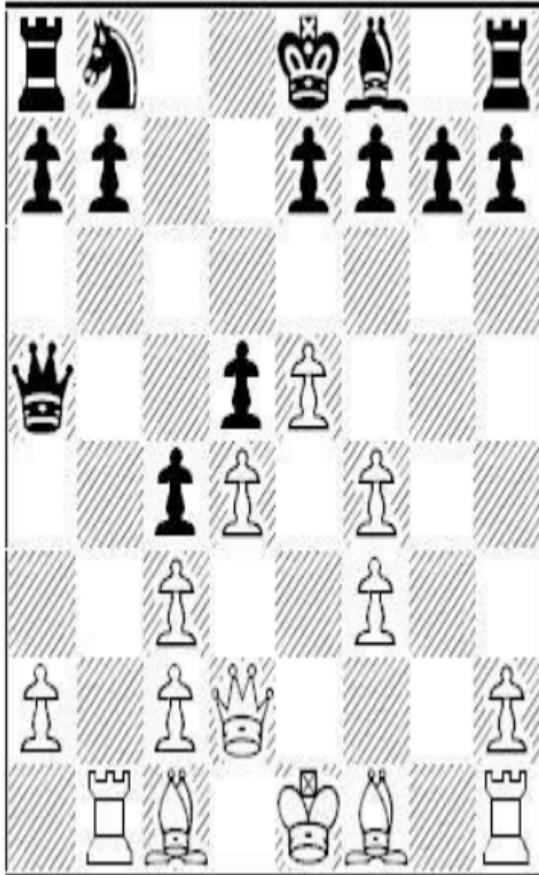
**10 ... Bxf3 11 gxf3 c4!**



The crucial element of Black's plan: keep the position closed. White has a huge plus score in the

database in this line. The main reason is the players who were brave enough to take on Black's position retained the central tension for too long, later allowing White to favourably open the position. Here Hodgson bogs his opponent down, having the effect of trivializing Timman's development lead.

## **12 Bf1**



**Exercise (critical decision):**  
Should Black play 12 ... b6 or take  
on a2?

## **Answer: 12 ... Qxa2!**

A nice call! This is a move which could only be made by a very weak player, or a very strong one. Hodgson breaks two principles:

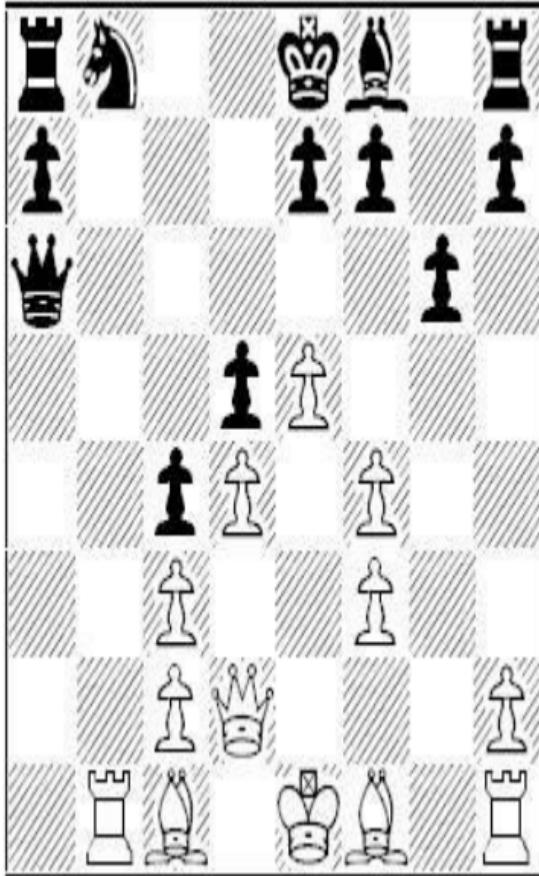
1. Don't open the game when you are behind in development.
2. Don't open the game when the opponent possesses the bishop pair.

Amazingly, Hodgson's move is an exception to these rules and accomplishes the following:

1. He gives himself a passed a-pawn.
2. He doesn't waste a tempo on ... b6.

12 ... b6 leads to great complications after 13 f5! Qxa2 14 Rb5. Now if Black sets a trap with 14 ... Qa4 15 Rxd5! e6 (if 15 ... Qc6?! the impudent rook stands unpunished on d5 after 16 Bg2! e6 17 Rd6! Bxd6 18 f4, with advantage to White) 16 Rd6 Bxd6 17 exd6 White's gets compensation for the exchange with bishop pair, dark-square control, lead in development and potential for attack.

**13 Rxb7 Qa6 14 Rb1 g6**



The position grows more and more rigid, to White's chagrin.  
**Exercise (multiple choice):**

How does Timman manage to ensure the game remains open?

- a) 15 h4, planning to pry open the kingside with h5;
- b) 15 Bh3, planning f5;
- c) 15 f5 sac'ing to open.

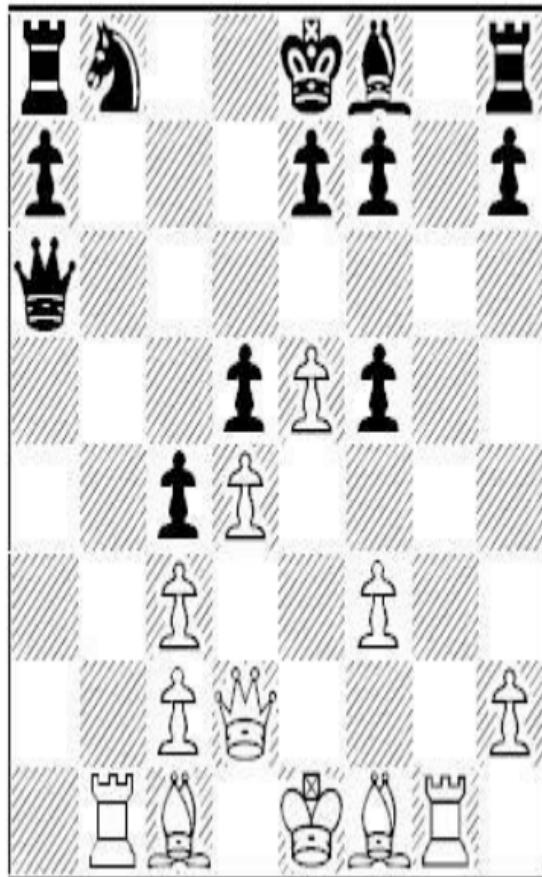
**Answer: 15 f5!**

Virtually forced, since White's bishops get shut out of the game if he allows ... e6. If 15 Bh3? e6 and that is pretty much the end of White's attack!

**15 ... gxf5 16 Rg1**

Black is up a solid, extra, passed a-pawn, while White leads in development with both rooks

staring down the b- and g-files.



**Exercise (planning):** Find Black's most efficient development

plan.

## **Answer: 16 ... Nd7!**

Black, with this simple move, covers many problems:

1. The knight is ready to block the b-file with ... Nb6 in case he wants to castle queenside. From b6 the knight may later head for a4, menacing c3.

2. Black needs to play ... e6 to continue developing. When he plays it his dark-squared bishop can't simultaneously cover both g7 and f6. So the plan may be to leave his knight on d7 and bishop on f8, covering both sensitive squares.

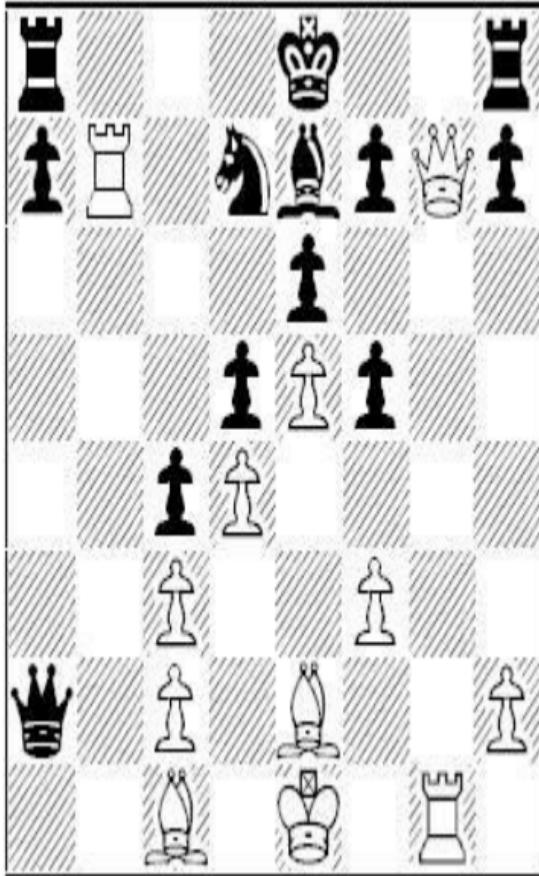
**17 Be2 e6 18 Qg5**

Fishing around for a target on the kingside.

**18 ... Qa2**

White looks like he is in serious trouble in the line 18 ... h6! 19 Qh4 Qa2 20 Rb2 Qa5 21 Kd2 Nb6 threatening ... Na4.

**19 Rb7 Be7 20 Qg7**



**Exercise:** It looks like the queen invasion makes headway.  
What should Black play here?

## **Answer: 20 ... 0-0-0!**

A move which looks almost illegal. Black simultaneously covers h8 while gaining a tempo on the startled b7-rook.

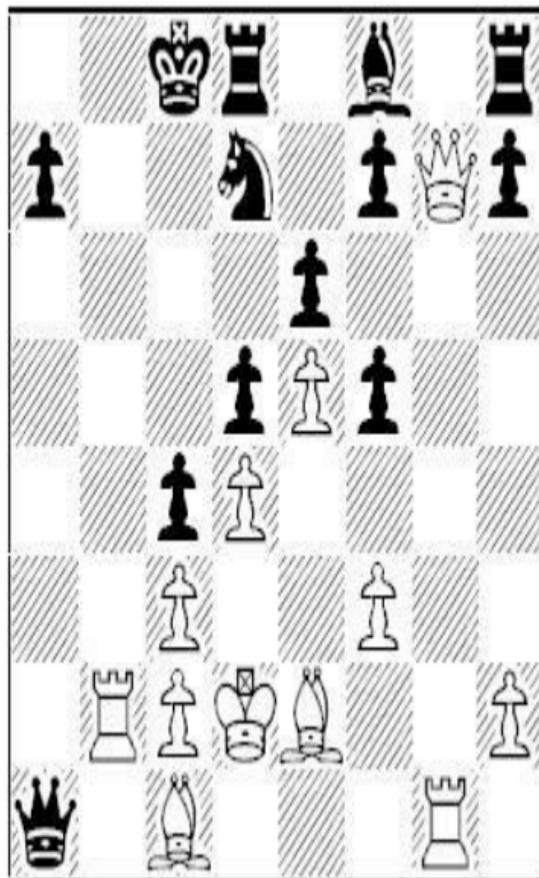
### **21 Rb2?**

The time has come to make things messy with the rook sac 21 Qxf7!? Bh4+ 22 Kd2 Kxb7 23 Qxe6 Qa6 24 Qxd5+ Qc6 25 Qf7. Black should still be better in the chaos, but it won't be easy to convert.

### **21 ... Qa1 22 Kd2**

If 22 Kf2 Bh4+ 23 Ke3 Rhg8 24 Qxg8 Rxg8 25 Rxg8+ Kc7 26 Rg1 Nb6 and ... Na4 comes with crushing effect.

**22 ... Bf8!**



**23 Qg5**

The result of White's kingside

hostility: no harm done to Black, just a little white noise. Notice White couldn't touch f7 since ... Bh6+ won on the spot.

### **Exercise (combination alert):**

White hasn't made headway

and now it's Black's turn. Black to play and win.

**23 ... h5?!**

This isn't it.

**Answer:** Black can take advantage of White's awkward king position on d2 to pull off a combination with 23 ... Rg8! 24 Qxg8 (24 Qe3?? Rxg1 25 Qxg1 Bh6+ is even worse) 24 ... Bh6+ which forces 25 Qg5 Bxg5+ 26 Rxg5

Nb6! and White must cough up even more material since ... Na4! follows.

**24 Qe3 f4**

24 ... Ba3! 25 Rb5 Rhg8 26 Rf1  
Rg2 still leaves Black in control.

**25 Qf2 Nb6 26 Rb5**



**26 ... Qa6?!**

Black chases the nearly trapped rook back to safety, but 26 ... Kc7!

with the threat of ... Kc6! wins material.

**27 Rb1 Be7 28 Bb2 Rhg8 29 Ra1 Qb7 30 Ra2 Bh4! ½-½**

Black still stands better in the final position.

**Summary:** Gregg Easterbrook wrote: "Torture numbers and they will confess to anything!" If we follow Hodgson's treatment after careful study of this game, I don't believe Black stands worse – despite the bad stats.

Back in the 90's, I played an offbeat line in the Scandinavian which at that time scored a very

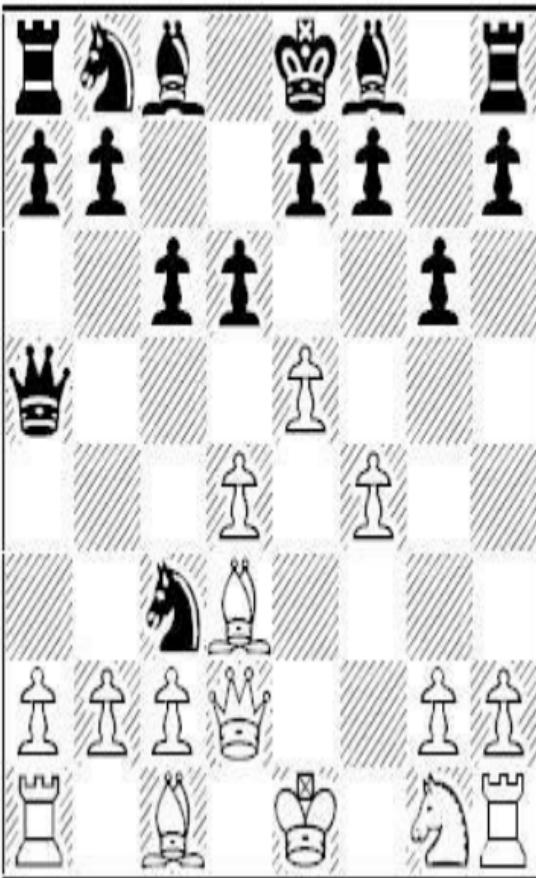
healthy 55% for Black. Then came a game where White tried a new idea that forced Black into a thankless, unpromising ending. I tried for a week with the help of Fritz to salvage the line for Black but couldn't – Black's position remained awful and I was forced to dump the line. So the new meaningless stats were: a 55% score for Black in a line which is close to a forced loss! A saying attributed to Mark Twain goes: "There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies and statistics!"

Game 10

**A.Suetin-J.Hodgson**

London 1991

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 f4  
Qa5 5 e5 Ne4 6 Bd3 Nxc3 7  
Qd2 g6**



Once again we rely on the devious mind of the rat-loving GM Hodgson to show us new paths to

befuddle White.

**Question:** Why is Black fianchettoing into a pawn wall on e5?

**Answer:** Who said the bishop is headed for g7! Stay tuned!

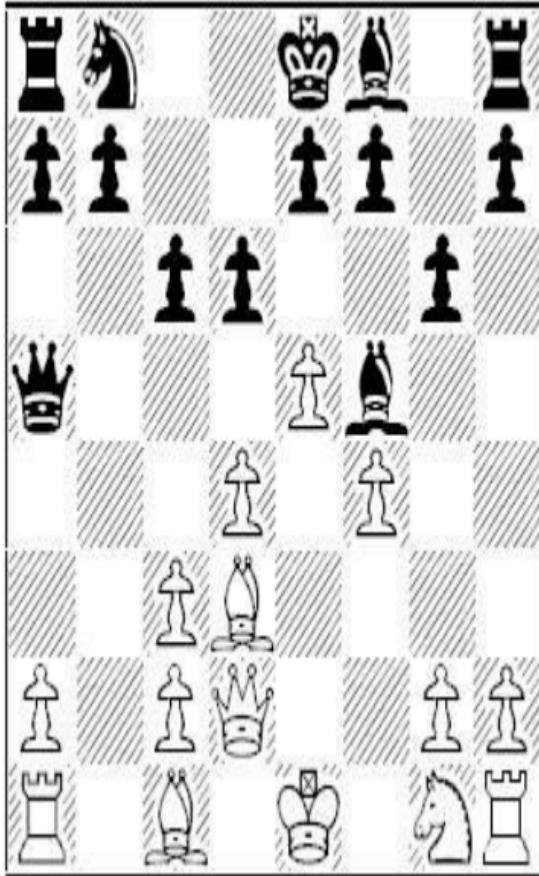
### **8 bxc3**

If White gets cute and delays recapture with 8 Ne2 then we up the cuteness ante and respond with 8 ... Qd5! 9 Nxc3 Qxd4. The pawn grab is sound and White's development lead is not as great as it looks due to the awkward positioning of his queen on d2. After 10 exd6 Qxd6 (10 ... Nd7! is a possible improvement, giving Black

a tiny edge after 11 dxe7 Bxe7; Black is slightly better developed and ... Nc5 follows) 11 Ne4 White's extra development and Black's extra pawn lead to a dynamic middlegame with mutual chances, V.Pacl-P.Spacek, Czech League 1994.

## **8 ... dxe5**

**Question:** Is it possible for Black to proceed more quietly, for instance with 8 ... Bf5?



**Answer:** Sure, if Black's play in this game looks decidedly masochistic to you, we have the

positional alternative 8 ... Bf5. Two points:

1. Just let the bishop sit on f5. This is a good square, and eventually White probably swaps himself by taking on f5.

2. Black plans to pull the old pawn-structural switch with ... e6 and ... d5. This leaves him with a good remaining bishop and White with a bishop hampered by pawns on its own colour. Some lines:

a) 9 Nf3 e6 (planning ... d5 next) 10 c4 (a logical move but White may not want to swap queens because it greatly reduces his attacking chances) 10 ... Qxd2+

11 Bxd2 d5 12 Bxf5 gxf5 13 Rb1 b6  
14 cxd5 cxd5 15 a4, S.Djachkov-V.  
Bachin, Ekaterinburg 2002. Once  
again we have a battle of  
development versus superior  
structure. The next few moves will  
be critical for Black, who should be  
okay if he plays 15 ... Nc6.

b) 9 Bxf5 gxf5 10 Ne2 e6 11 0-0  
Nd7 12 Qd3 d5 13 Bd2 Qa4 14 Kh1  
h5, F.Niebling-G.Richter, Bad  
Wiessee 1999. I already prefer  
Black, who clamped down on  
White's only two pawn breaks with  
c4 and g4.

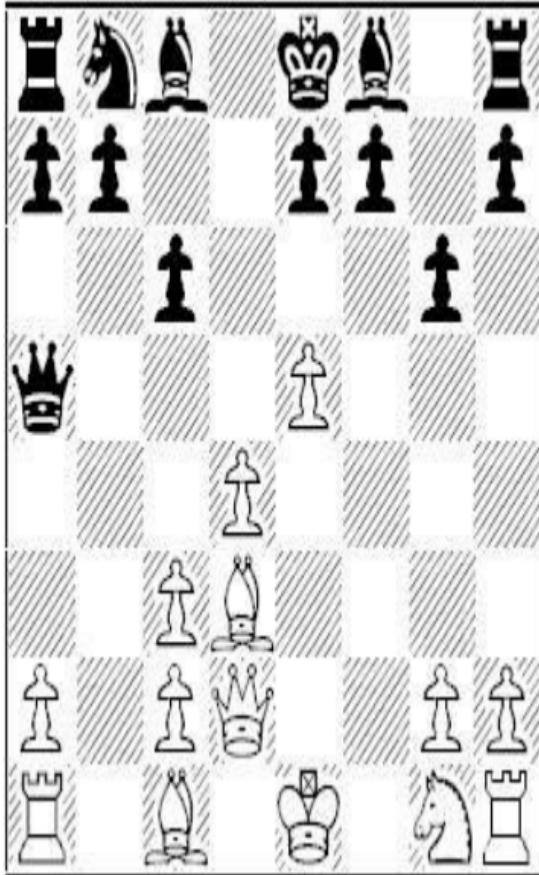
c) 9 c4 Qxd2+ 10 Bxd2 d5 11  
Rb1 b6 12 Bxf5 gxf5 13 cxd5 cxd5

14 c4!? dxc4 15 Rb4 e6 16 Rxc4 Kd7 17 Nf3 Nc6, M.Naalden-M.Klinova, Vlissingen 2002. White has better development and possibilities of the disruptive d5 pawn break, while Black has the superior pawn structure and a queenside pawn majority. If White can't find a way to shake things up in the next 10 moves, then Black stands better.

Conclusion: I still prefer White due to his space and think our best path is to follow Hodgson's ideas.

## **9 fxe5**

Now Black has a trick which wins material.



**Question:** Seeing the coming trick, can White avoid it by playing 9 dxe5?

**Answer:** Your move avoids Black's trick but also degrades White's structure and loses the initiative after 9 ... Bh6, threatening to deflect White's queen by taking on f4. It's actually better for White to recapture with the f-pawn, as in the game, and sac an exchange.

### **9 ... Bh6!**

Hodgson's sneaky idea behind 7 ... g6: he deflects White's queen and wins an exchange and a pawn in return for handing White the attack.

**Question:** So did White get swindled?

**Answer:** Possibly not! For the

exchange and pawn White gets:

1. A development lead;

2. The dark squares;

3. Queen infiltration into g7;

4. Attacking chances on f7 based on Ng5 and e6; and

5. The potential to wipe out Black's entire kingside pawns.

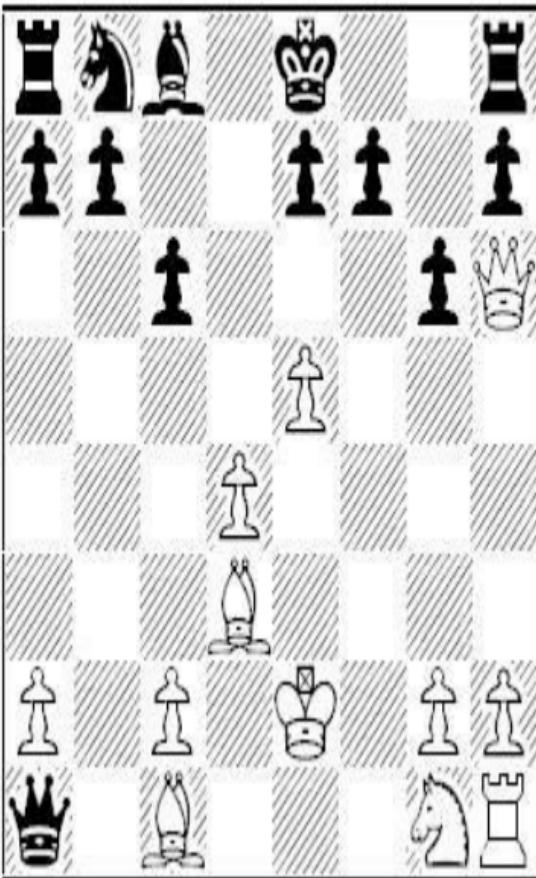
**Question:** That sounds like quite a bit of

compensation for White. Is it worth it for Black?

**Answer:** Yes, it's worth it. Here is the deal: White always enters this line expecting something for nothing. With this sense of entitlement he feels he deserves to

be rewarded with a huge space advantage and attacking chances at no cost. With Black's last move we give him his space and attacking chances, but he must pay up the steep price of a full exchange and pawn for the privilege.

**10 Qxh6 Qxc3+ 11 Ke2 Qxa1**



**12 Qg7**

It may be more accurate to develop the knight first to f3, as he

does in the next game.

**Question:** Why is 12 Nf3 more accurate?

**Answer:** 12 Nf3! transposes to Qg7 lines but denies Black the option to favourably return the exchange with 12 ... Qxc1! (see the next note).

### **12 ... Rf8**

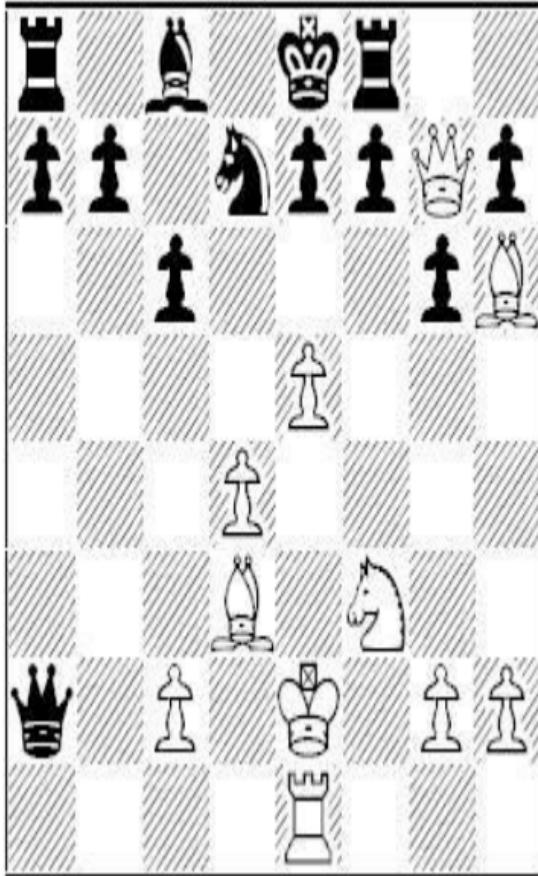
Greed is a bottomless pit. The correct timing of when to return material is a vital defensive chess skill. Here 12 ... Qxc1! is a clear improvement, and after 13 Qxh8+ Kd7 14 Qxh7 Kc7! White has two problems to overcome:

1. He can't develop his kingside

without hanging his h1-rook.

2. Black's f7-pawn is  
untouchable: 15 Qxf7?? Bg4+ 16  
Kf2 Nd7 17 Qxe7 Rf8+ and if White  
refuses to give up a rook by  
blocking with his knight, he is  
mated after 18 Kg3 Qf4+.

**13 Nf3 Qxa2 14 Bh6 Nd7 15  
Re1!?**



A surprisingly slow plan. White intends to castle by hand and blast open with e6. Black is so far behind

in development that he must allow it.

15 Ng5 is covered in our next game.

### **15 ... b6 16 Kf2 Bb7?!**

He should proceed more vigorously in his defence with 16 ... Ba6! 17 Bxa6 Qxa6 18 e6 fxe6 19 Qxh7 0-0-0 20 Bxf8 Rxf8 21 Qxe7 Qc4 which looks equal but unbalanced.

### **17 e6 fxe6 18 Qxh7 Rxf3+?!**

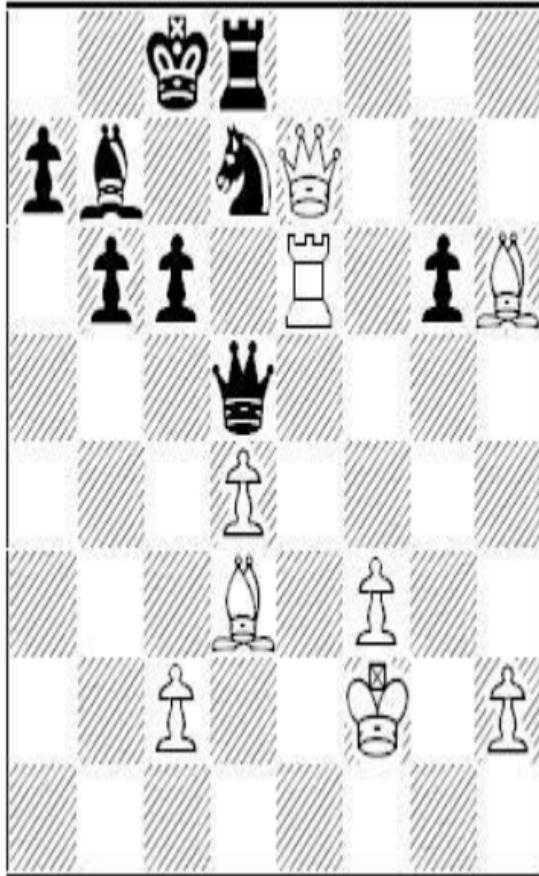
The position degenerates into a bar room brawl. A better way to return the material would be 18 ... 0-0-0! 19 Bxf8 Rxf8 20 Qxg6 c5 21 Rxе6 Bxf3 22 gxf3 Qd5 23 Qe4

Qxe4 24 Rxe4 Kd8 with an equal ending.

**19 gxf3 0-0-0 20 Qxe7 Qd5**

**21 Rxе6**

Rybka gives 21 Re4! as leading to an edge for White after 21 ... c5 22 Qxe6.



**21 ... Qxd4+?!**

Black should play 21 ... c5! 22 Be4 Qxd4+ 23 Be3 Qh8 24 Bxb7+

Kxb7 25 h4 Qf8. He should be okay here.

**22 Be3 Qh8 23 Bf4**

Threat: Qd6. Suetin is happy to draw against his higher-rated opponent. White stands better after 23 Kg3!.

**23 ... Qd4+ 24 Be3 Qh8 25 Bf4 Qd4+ ½-½**

**Summary:** By now perhaps I remind you of that untrustworthy mayor from the movie Jaws who reassured the townsfolk about how safe it was to swim off the beaches. Somehow you may not be inclined to believe me when I tell you to dip

your feet into the water! 7 ... g6!? is reserved exclusively for the hungriest, bravest, (and possibly most foolhardy!) among us. Black puts himself at risk in order to gain material. If you don't believe me, then show the position to Rybka and Fritz. Neither computer believes in White's attack and both prefer Black's position after 9 ... Bh6!. Take White from this position, try to attack the computers and learn how they defend.

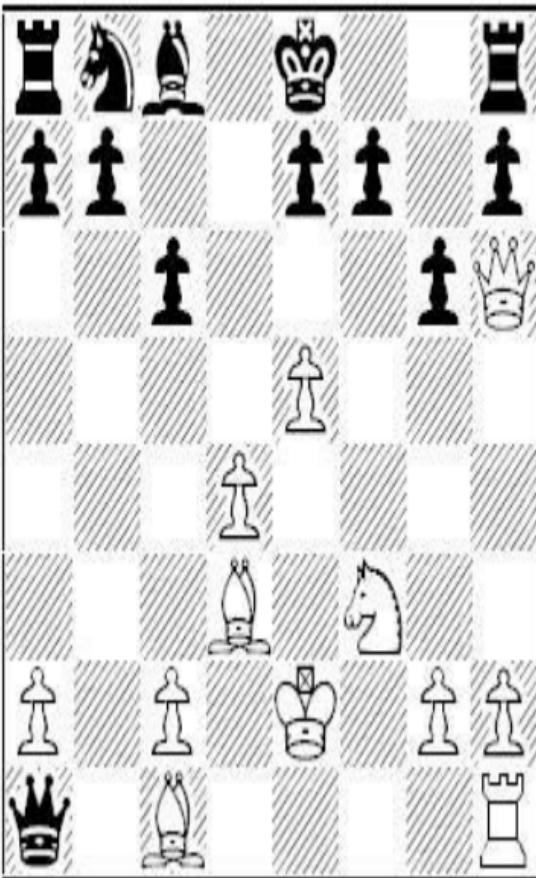
## Game 11

**A.Finkel-M.Oratovsky**  
Israel 1994

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 f4 Qa5 5 e5 Ne4 6 Bd3 Nxc3 7 Qd2 g6!?**

Here we are again, same bat time; same bat channel. I love the purity of the treachery behind this move, simply because of its external innocence.

**8 bxc3 dxe5 9 fxe5 Bh6! 10 Qxh6 Qxc3+ 11 Ke2 Qxa1 12 Nf3!**



White narrows Black's choices with 12 Nf3! and avoids the line 12 Qg7 Qxc1! which we talked about

last game.

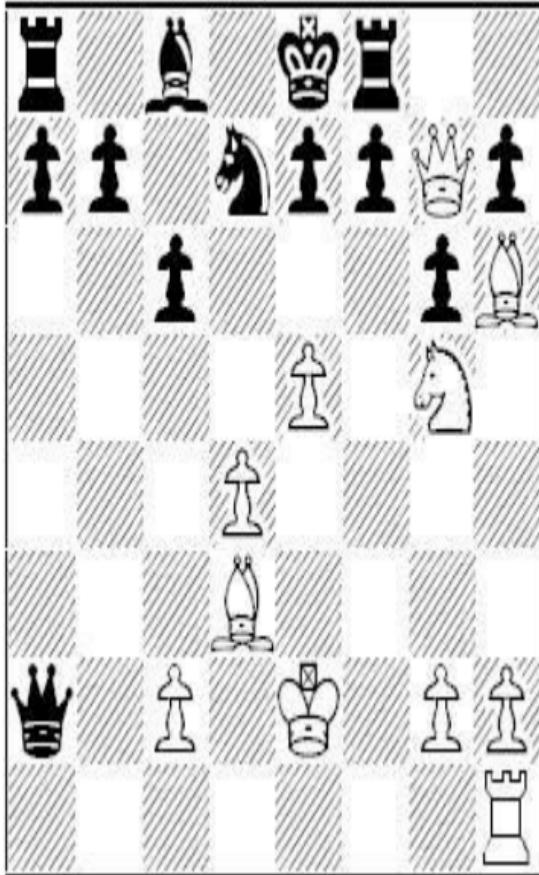
**12 ... Qxa2**

**Question:** Can Black try to run immediately

to the queenside with 12 ... Kd8?

**Answer:** He can, but after 13 Qg7 Re8 14 Qxf7 Bg4 15 Rd1 White has more than enough compensation for the exchange. Black's king is insecure and his kingside pawns are weak.

**13 Qg7 Rf8 14 Bh6 Nd7 15 Ng5!**



**Question:** What specifically, are White's threats?

**Answer:** The nasty list

includes:

1. Nxh7 and then Nxf8.

2. Increased pressure on f7 with Rf1 coming.

3. Disruption ideas with e6.

**Question:** And you are certain Black has adequate defensive resources?

**Answer:** As the Mayor of Amity would say: Come on in, the water's fine! Yes, I believe Black defends successfully, but you must know what you are doing. You can't just wing it over the board and improvise. This means studying the position and playing around with it before you face it over the board.

**Question:** What if White just chooses to bail out and equalize the material with 15 Qxh7?

**Answer:** Remember, at this point White is down an exchange and two pawns. Even if he plays the line you suggest he doesn't recoup all his losses. For example, 15 ... b6 16 Bxf8 Nxf8 17 Qh4 Ba6 18 Ke3 Bxd3 19 cxd3 left White down a pawn, with the less secure king in "dbv"-C.Lakdawala, Internet blitz 2011.

### **15 ... b6**

Here is a secondary defensive idea: 15 ... Kd8!? 16 Rf1 b6 17 e6

(Black stands better after 17 Nxf7+?! Kc7) 17 ... Ba6! 18 Bxa6 Qxa6+ 19 Ke1 Qa5+ 20 Kd1 (Black gets too many pawns in the winning attempt 20 Ke2? Qb5+ 21 Ke1 Qb4+ 22 Ke2 Qc4+ 23 Ke1 f6 24 exd7 Kxd7) 20 ... Qa1+ with perpetual check.

## **16 e6!**

**Question:** What if White sacs a rook to deflect with 16 Ra1?

**Answer:** A dangerous idea, but everything is still under control after 16 ... Qxa1 17 e6. White threatens to take on f7 followed by a nasty knight check on e6. At this point we transact a buyout and return the

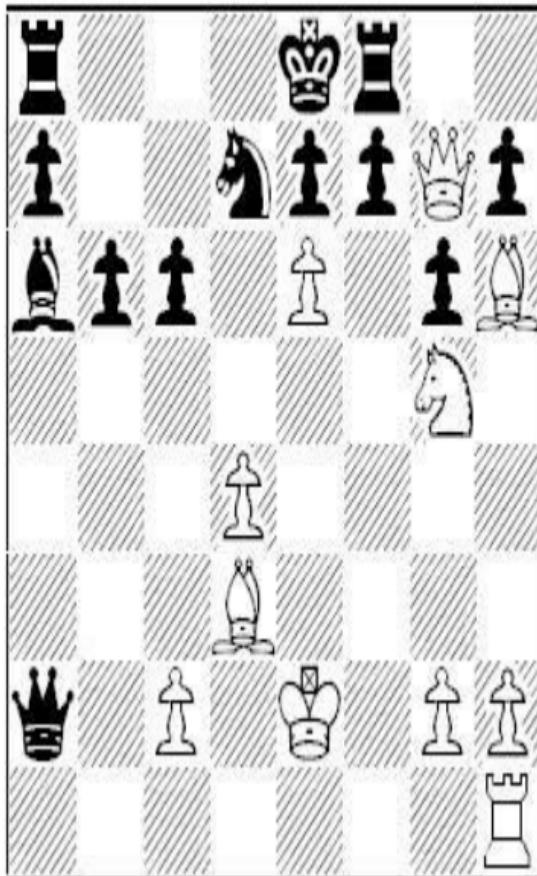
material for a good ending: 17 ... Qa2! 18 exd7+ Kxd7 19 Qxf8 Bb7 (the winning attempt; Black can even try 19 ... Ba6!? 20 Qxa8 Qxc2+ 21 Ke1 Bxd3 when according to Rybka the position is drawn) 20 Qxf7 Qxf7 21 Nxf7. Let's assess:

1. The material balance: White's bishop and knight versus Black's rook and two pawns – a good deal for Black, especially in an ending.

2. Black's weak kingside pawns are not especially relevant since White will be busy trying to halt Black's nasty passed a-pawn.

Conclusion: Black holds the edge.

# 16 ... Ba6!



An improvement over 16 ... Bb7.  
Black pools his time and resources

into salvage operations on the queenside, and threatens ... Qxc2+. The great defensive players of the past taught us the following sequence of survival techniques: shameless greed, followed by selfless generosity.

### **17 exd7+**

Alternatives look worse for White:

a) 17 exf7+? Rxf7 18 Qg8+ Nf8 19 Nxf7 Bxd3+! (19 ... Qxc2+ 20 Ke1! leads to a draw) 20 Kxd3 Qxf7 21 Qxf7+ Kxf7 22 Rf1+ Kg8 consolidates.

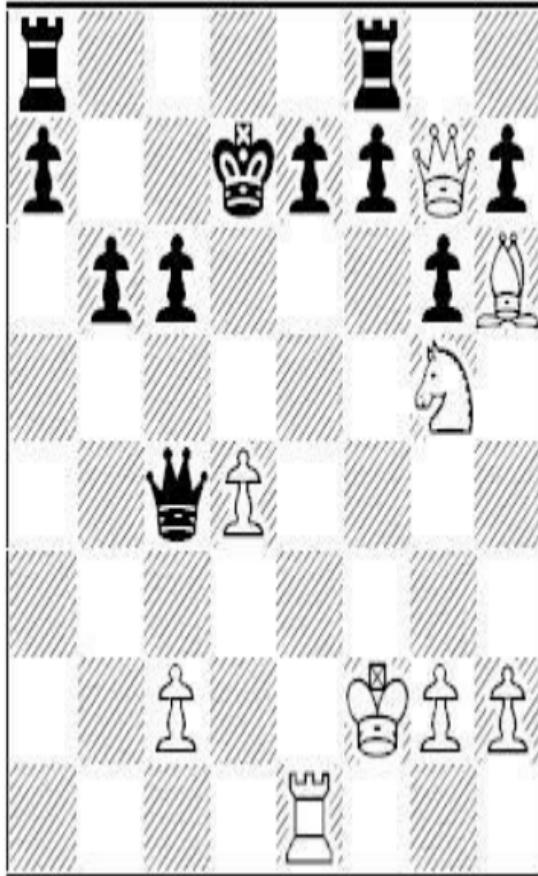
b) 17 Bxa6? Qxa6+ 18 Ke3 fxe6 19 Nxh7 0-0-0 20 Nxf8 Nxf8 21

**Qxe7 Qc4!.**

**17 ... Kxd7 18 Bxa6 Qxa6+**

**19 Kf2 Qc4 20 Re1**

A position critical to the assessment of this line.



**Exercise:** What is Black's most efficient defensive setup?  
**20 ... Rfe8**

**Answer:** Black should use both rooks on the kingside to assist his king: 20 ... Rg8! 21 Qe5 (the f-pawn is untouchable: 21 Qxf7?? Qxf7+ 22 Nxf7 Rgf8! and when the air clears, Black emerges up two pawns) 21 ... Rae8 (threatening ... f6 and also ... Qxc2+) 22 Qe4 a5!. I prefer Black, who threatens to march his pawn down the board.

### **21 Kg1 f6 22 Ne6!**

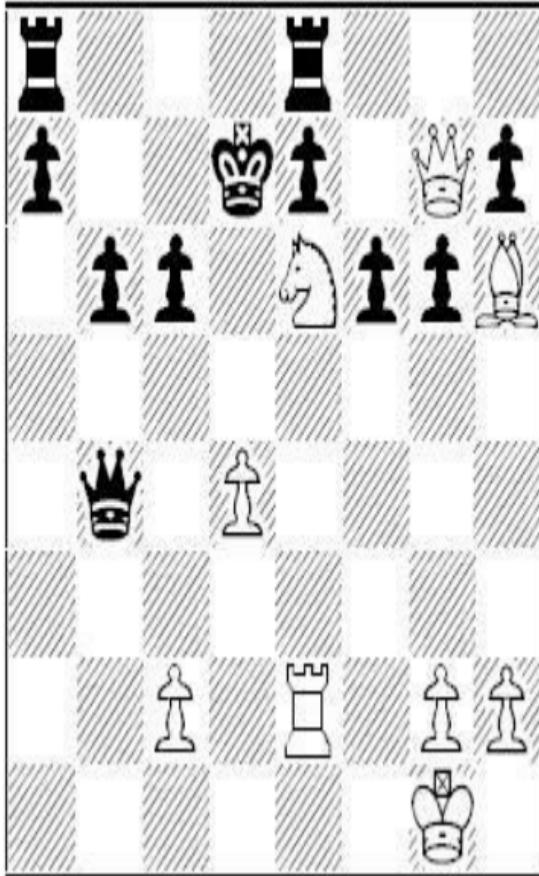
This guy on e6 becomes a real pain for Black.

### **22 ... Qb4**

22 ... Qxc2 23 Bf4 Qc3 24 Bg3 Qxe1+!? (or White's attack is very powerful) 25 Bxe1 Kxe6 26 Qxh7 g5

isn't enough for Black. I suspect White's queen and bishop duo are fully capable of creating mating threats and should easily outweigh those black queenside passers.

**23 Re2**



**23 ... Qb5?!**

Black should utilize his one giant trump in the position: his passed a-

pawn with 23 ... a5!.

## **24 Re1 Qa5?!**

Continuing to drift and miss the red flags appearing in his position. Once again he should get his passer into motion with 24 ... a5!.

## **25 Re3 Qb4?!**

The continuation of laissez faire philosophy doesn't work in such situations. Black's play in this game is how I tend to lose games. Not through overextension, but instead through underextension and inaction. Black should try the more radical path 25 ... Qd2! 26 Qxh7 Qd1+ 27 Kf2 Qxc2+ 28 Kg3 Qf5 29 Ng7 Qd5 30 Nxe8 Rxe8 31 Qxg6!

intending Bg7 and the push of the h-pawn. Still, it's a race and anything can happen.

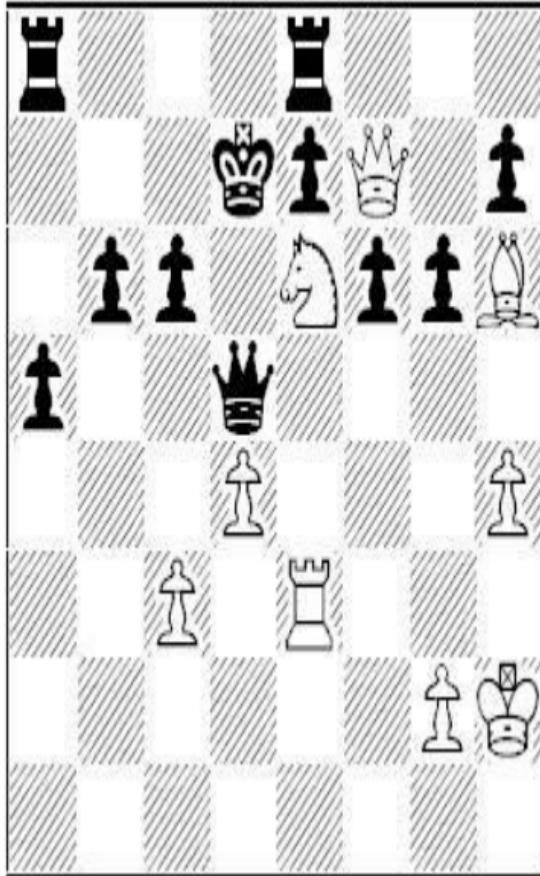
**26 h4 a5**

At last, but it comes very late.

**27 c3**

Black's king is in more trouble than it looks after 27 Qxh7! Qb1+ 28 Kh2 Qxc2 29 Nc7!! Kxc7 (29 ... Rab8 30 Nxe8 Rxe8 31 h5! wins) 30 Rxe7+ Kd6 31 Rd7+ Ke6 32 Qf7+ Kf5 33 Rd6 and Rybka declares mate in 12 moves.

**27 ... Qb1+ 28 Kh2 Qf5 29 Qf7 Qd5**



**Exercise:** Find a way to break the pin on White's knight.  
At this stage Black doesn't have

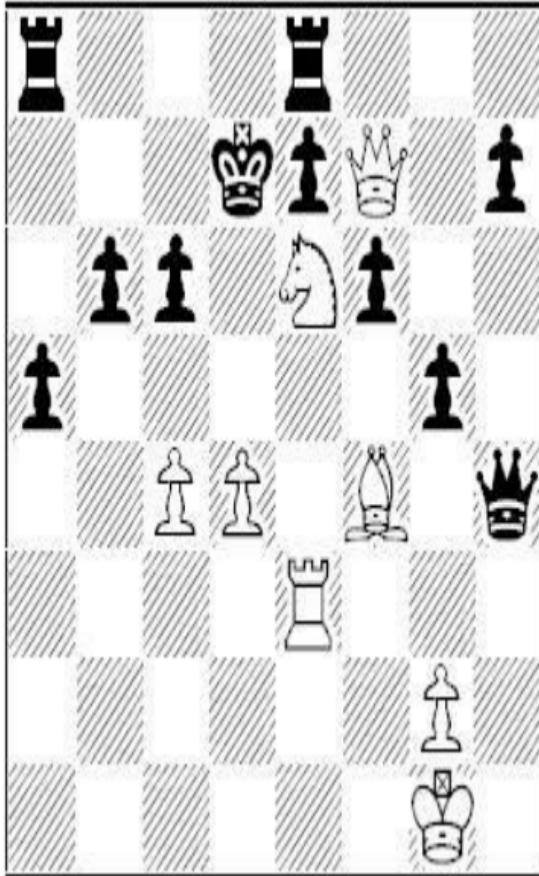
a path to save himself.

**Answer: 30 c4!**

The pawn can't be touched due to Nc5+.

**30 ... Qh5 31 Bf4 Qxh4+ 32**

**Kg1 g5**



**Exercise (combination alert):**  
White to play and mate in a few moves.

**Answer:** Clearance:  
**33 Nc5+!**

White's queen, rook, bishop and knight, four separate components working perfectly in harmony, create a combustible force far more potent than that produced by the sum of the separate parts.

**33 ... bxc5 34 Qe6+ Kd8 35 dxc5!**

With this calm recapture White wrings the last drop of force from his pieces, rendering his opponent helpless.

**35 ... Qxf4 36 Rd3+ Kc7 37 Qd7+ 1-0**

**Summary:** White won this game but Black may console himself with the fact that 7 ... g6 continues to hold theoretically.

Game 12

**L.Krzsany-T.Tolnai**

Balatonbereny 1996

**1 d4 d6 2 e4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 f4  
Qa5 5 e5**

**Question:** What if White tries a different move order and plays 5 Qf3?

**Answer:** We don't fret if White plays this move order since we get a direct transposition to the game

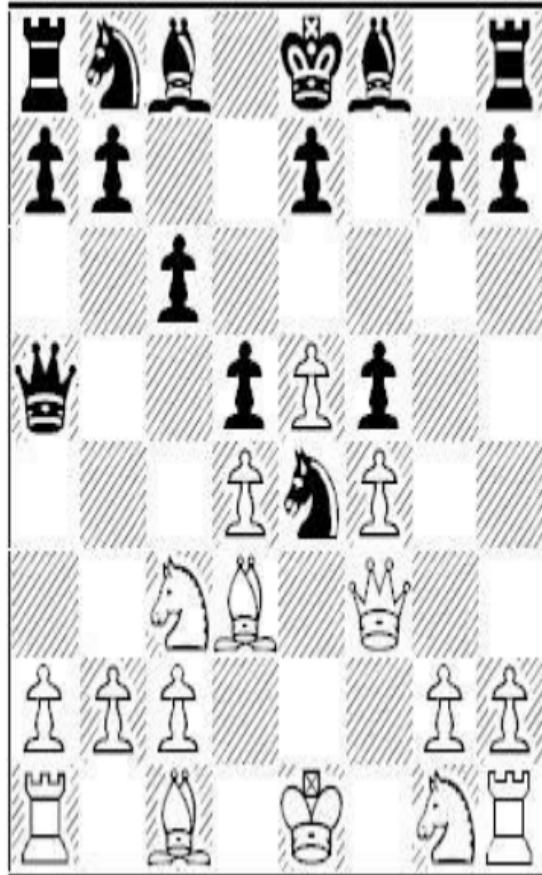
after 5 ... d5 6 e5 Ne4. If you want to avoid the pawn sac in our main game you could take the Philidor route with 5 ... e5. For example, 6 dx<sub>e</sub>5 dx<sub>e</sub>5 7 f5 b5 8 Bd2 Qb6 9 g4 h6 10 Nge2 Nbd7 11 h4 Bb7 12 Ng3 0-0-0 13 0-0-0 Bc5 14 Be2 Ne8 15 g5 and White's kingside space gives him the edge, A.Romero Holmes-V.Tseshkovsky, Palma de Mallorca 1989.

### **5 ... Ne4 6 Qf3**

Here we are at yet another bogus refutation of our opening. The truth is very few players understand this position simply because of its rarity. It is playable,

but Black must thread the needle carefully to survive.

**6 ... d5 7 Bd3 f5!**



A new move at the time. Black willingly offers a pawn for the light squares. Only a handful of games have been played from this position but what we have looks rather promising for Black.

**Question:** Are there alternatives to this pawn sac just in case we don't like it?

**Answer:** Yes, there are a couple of commonly played alternatives:

a) 7 ... Na6 8 Nge2 Nb4 and now:

a1) 9 Bxe4? dxе4 10 Qxe4. Here Hodgson pulled off a bizarre computer shot with 10 ... f5! 11

exf6 Bf5 winning material in J.Emms-J.Hodgson, Plymouth 1989.

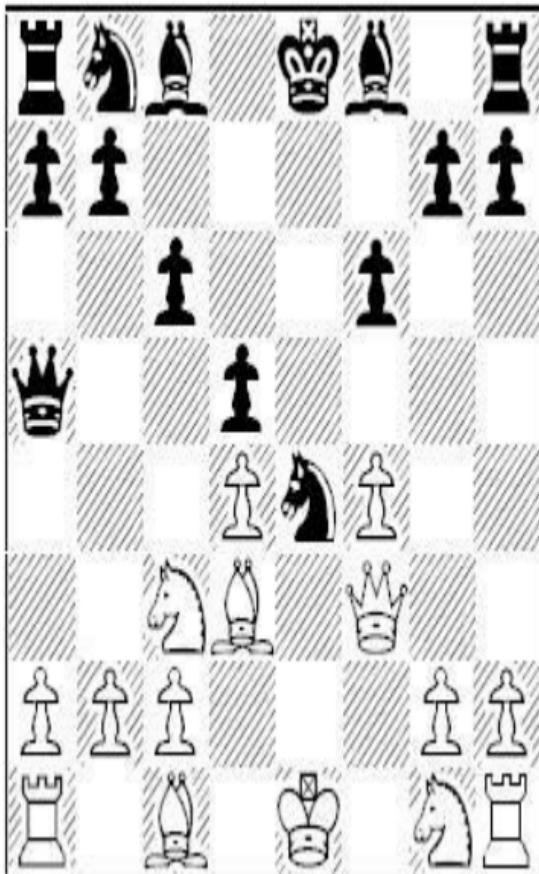
a2) 9 f5! Nxd3+ 10 cxd3 Nxc3 11 bxc3 e6 12 f6 g6 13 0-0, E.Tate-A.Young, Chicago 2008. I suppose Black's game is playable but I certainly prefer White's massive space advantage in the centre and kingside over Black's unimpressive bishop pair.

b) 7 ... Nxc3 8 Bd2 e6 9 Ne2! Qb6 10 Bxc3 c5 11 dxc5 Bxc5 12 f5 Nc6 13 Qg3 with a position resembling a Classical French where White stands a tad better, M.Zaitsev-D.Marcziter, Bergheim 2003.

**8 exf6**

We look at 8 Nge2 in Game 14.

**8 ... exf6!**



The point. Black won't back down and play 8 ... Nxf6?! which grants White space, a development lead, a clamp on e5 and a backward e-pawn to pick on.

## **9 Bd2**

The most natural move. White offers up the bishop pair to eliminate the monster knight from e4, relying on his development lead.

I don't see a single game where White bites and grabs the pawn with 9 Bxe4! dx<sub>e</sub>4 10 Qxe4+ which may indeed be his best plan in the position. Let's take a deeper look at Black's possibilities here.



**Question:** Is the following what we “get” for our pawn?:

1. Black is down a pawn.

2. He is behind in development.
3. It looks like his king is in danger.

**Answer:** All true. Yet I believe the position gives Black compensation for the pawn. Be patient and you will see it later on:  
10 ... Be7! (the trouble with the more natural 10 ... Kf7?! is that it allows a disruptive tactic after 11 Nf3 Bf5? 12 Ne5+! with clear advantage to White) 11 Qe2 Kf7 12 Nf3 Qa6! (the natural 12 ... Re8? loses to 13 Ne5+ fxe5 14 Qh5+) 13 Qxa6 Nxa6 14 Be3 Nb4 15 0-0-0 Bf5 16 Rd2 Rhe8.



Rybka and Fritz assess that Black has full compensation for his pawn. I do too, based on the

following factors:

1. Black has the bishop pair.
2. Black controls the light squares.
3. White must deal with a hole on e4.
4. White has a bad bishop with d4- and f4-pawns stuck on the same colour.

I played out a few games against Rybka and Fritz, and was able to keep the balance with Black. It's actually similar to endings which arise in the Marshall Attack of the Ruy Lopez. Black, down a pawn, always drums up some sort of counterplay on the

light squares.

**9 ... Nxd2 10 Kxd2**

White conveniently clears the e-file for his rook with this recapture.

**10 ... Bd6**

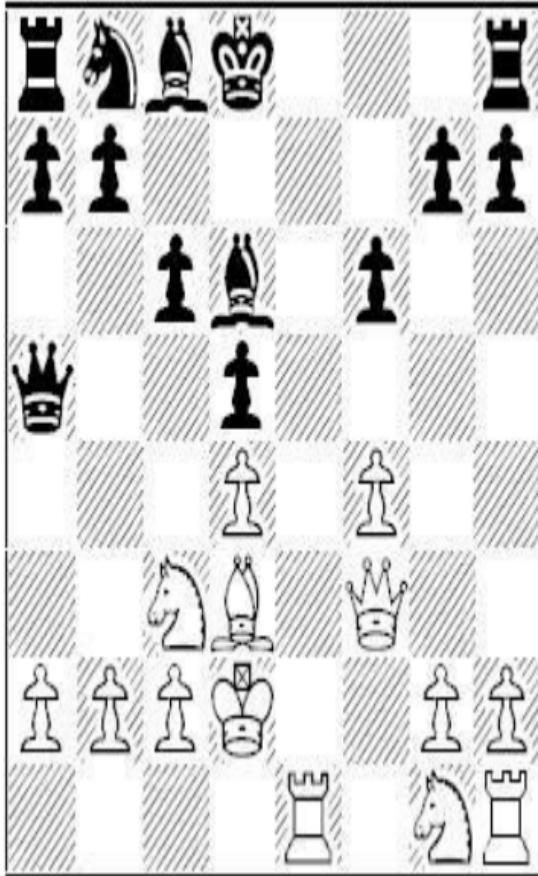
Next game we look at the provocative 10 ... Qb6!?.

**11 Re1+**

11 Qh5+ Kd8 doesn't bother Black much.

**11 ... Kd8**

Hiding in plain sight. Black's king is a lot safer than it may appear because White has no easy method of prying open the centre.



**12 Nge2 Na6**  
Eyeing b4 and c7.  
**13 Nc1**

I would have kept Black's knight out with 13 a3.

### **13 ... Qc7**

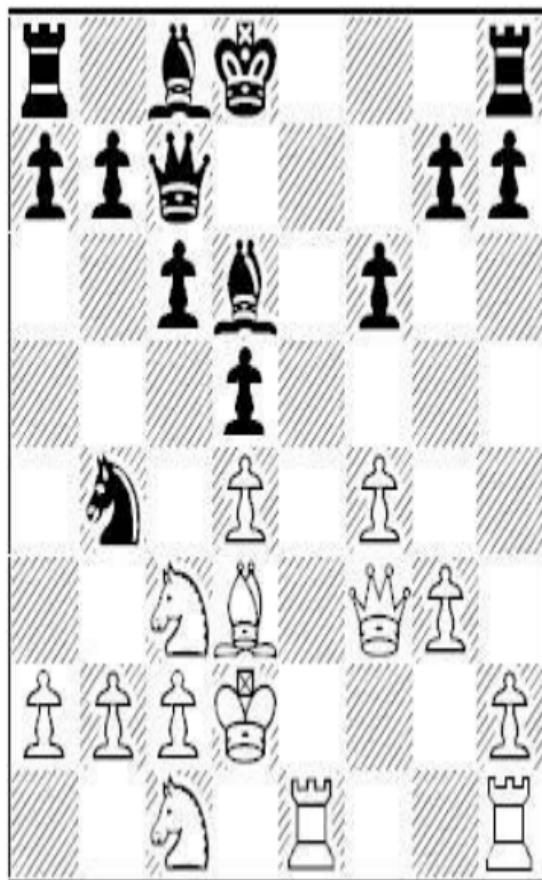
After 13 ... Nb4 14 f5 Qc7 15 g3 a5 16 a3 Nxd3 17 Nxd3, perhaps there is some potential for Black's bishop pair later on but White's compensation would be the more harmonious king position.

### **14 g3**

I would try 14 Bxa6!? bxa6! (14 ... Bxf4+? falls for the cheapo 15 Kd1 bxa6 16 Nxd5!) 15 g3 Bf5 16 Nb3 Rb8 17 Kc1 h5. This looks unclear, but as nearly always I prefer White's knights and structural superiority over Black's bishop pair

and open b-file.

**14 ... Nb4**



**15 a3**

**Question:** Why doesn't White hang on to the bishop pair?

**Answer:** He must contort to do so with 15 Be2 Bf5 16 Bd1 a5 17 a3 Na6. Still, it's an idea which doesn't seem to put White out of sorts for too long since he gains time back with the kick of Black's knight.

**15 ... Nxd3 16 Nxd3 Bf5**

Black's pieces begin to emerge. Notice his uncontested hold over e4 and the kingside light squares.

**17 Nc5!?**

Forcing Black to hand over one of his bishops.

**17 ... Bxc5 18 dxc5 Qd7!**

Making certain White can't throw

in g4 or h3.

**19 Kc1 Kc7 20 Qf2 Rae8**



**21 Rxe8**

**Question:** How about the plan

21 Ne2 intending

to plant a knight firmly on d4?

**Answer:** The trouble is that you give Black uncontested control over e4. After 21 ... Re4! 22 Nd4 Rhe8 I prefer Black. White's knight, although impressive-looking on d4, really doesn't bother Black much.

**21 ... Rxe8 22 Re1 Rxe1+ 23**

**Qxe1 d4!**

Black's queen and bishop make a better fighting team than White's queen and knight. Still, White should hold the draw with correct play.

**24 Nd1**

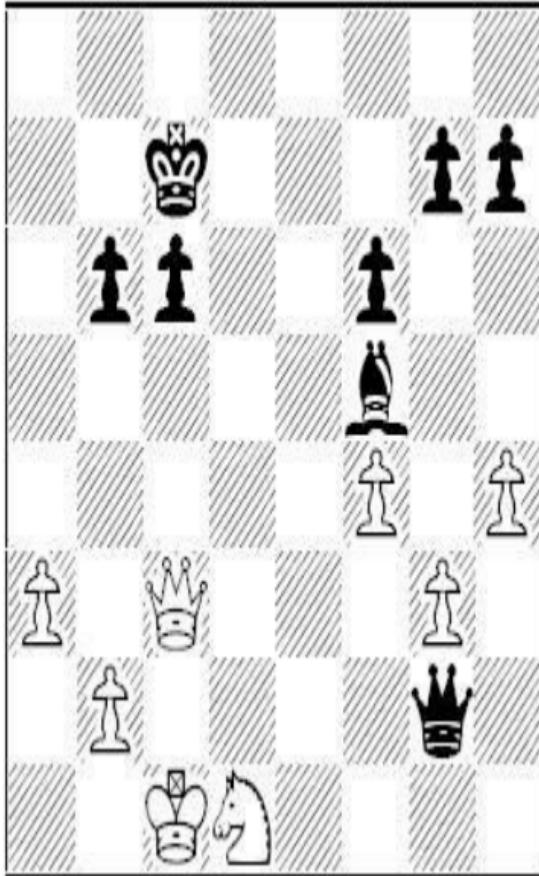
Rybka points out that 24 Ne4!? is playable since 24 ... Qe7 is met with 25 Qa5+.

**24 ... b6 25 Qb4 d3 26 cxd3**

I wouldn't let Black's queen in like this. Better was 26 Ne3 dxc2 27 Nxc2.

**26 ... Qxd3 27 cxb6+ axb6**

**28 Qc3 Qe4! 29 h4 Qg2**



**Exercise (planning):** White looks tied down and passive.  
Find an idea to drum up

counterplay.

## **Answer: 30 b4!**

Step 1 of 2: Create an outside passed pawn with a4 and a5.

### **30 ... Be4**

30 ... b5 prevents the creation of the outside passer at the cost of king safety. Black's king is too exposed to play for the win after 31 Qc5!.

### **31 a4!**

Step 2: The idea of an outside passed a-pawn emerges.

### **31 ... Qf1 32 Qe3**

He wants to play a5 and expose Black's king, hoping to land a perpetual check later on.

**32 ... Qg2 33 Nf2 Bf5 34 a5  
bxa5 35 Qa7+ Kd6 36 Qc5+  
Ke6!?**

Risky. He moves his king away from White's passed a-pawn in order to dodge the perpetual attempt.

**37 Qe3+ Kf7?!**

Now Black risks the loss. His king should go the other way and be happy with the draw.

**38 bxa5 Kg6 39 Qe8+?!**

White has excellent winning chances if he eliminates the dangerous bishop, even at the cost of a pawn, with 39 g4! Bxg4 40 Nxg4 Qxg4 41 a6. The a-pawn sinks

in deeply and Black will be very fortunate to draw. If necessary, White may run his king and take shelter behind Black's c-pawn to dodge perpetual check attempts.

**39 ... Kh6 40 Qe3 Qf1+ 41 Kd2 Qa1 42 Qc3**

White still has some chances to win after 42 Qc5! Qa2+ 43 Ke1. His king slips into a safe haven on the kingside soon.

**42 ... Qa2+ 43 Ke1 Qb1+ 44 Kd2 Qa2+ ½-½**

The coalition of the unwilling! The queen, knight and passed a-pawn still give White chances, and I would have played on.

**Summary:** I like Black's pawn offer 7 ... f5!. If White accepts, it leads to original Ruy Lopez Marshall Gambit-style positions which you will surely understand better than your opponents. Note: please add the Marshall Gambit to our growing list of satellite openings!

Game 13

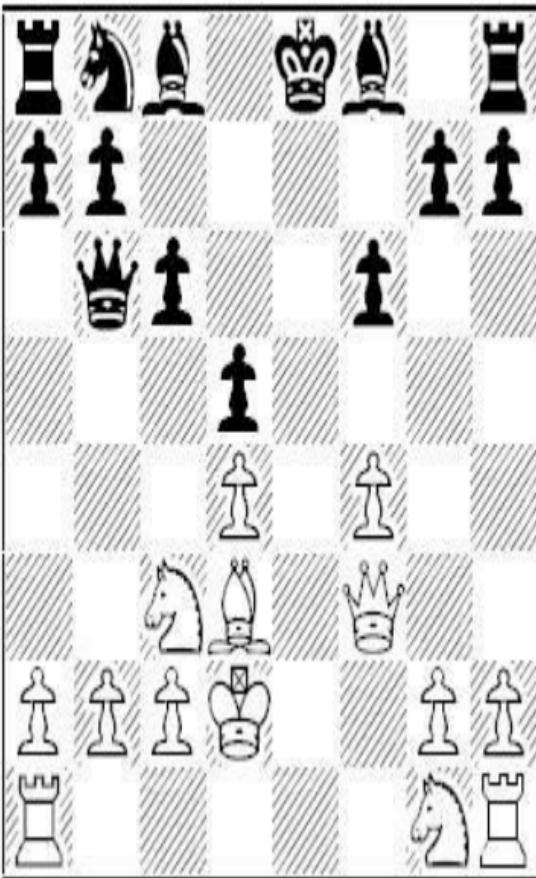
**J.Shaw-A.Miles**

British Championship, Scarborough  
2001

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 f4  
Qa5 5 e5 Ne4 6 Qf3 d5**

Next game we look at a move order tweak with 6 ... f5.

**7 Bd3 f5 8 exf6 exf6! 9 Bd2 Nxd2 10 Kxd2 Qb6!?**



**Question:** The first piece we develop is our queen – and only to go pawn grabbing?

**Answer:** Black, with zero development, goes after the b-pawn. He banks on the fact that the pawn structure, for now rigid, won't open to endanger his king.

Tony was a notoriously optimistic pawn grabber, and I was positive his last move was madness. So I took White against Rybka and Fritz to try to prove it. I couldn't! Black kept holding his/her/its own! Again we see an example of the Rat alternate universe in action, where the normal laws of physics don't seem to apply.

**11 Qh5+ Kd8 12 Nf3**

**Question:** 12 Re1 looks powerful, doesn't it?

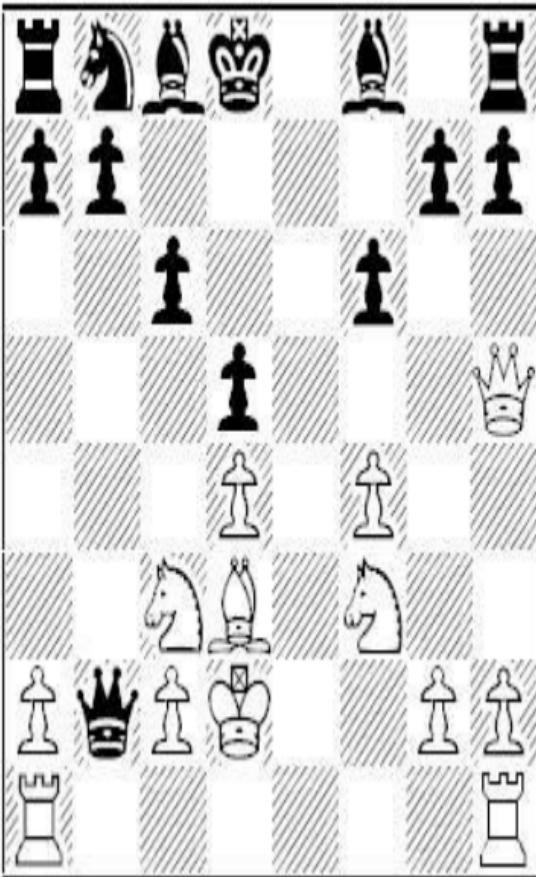
**Answer:** The move isn't a problem: 12 Re1 Bd6 13 g3 Qxb2 14 Qf7? Bb4 15 Nge2 Re8 16 Qxg7 Nd7 17 Rb1 Rxе2+ 18 Kxe2 Qxc3 and Black wins. Yet another example of the alternate universe theory in action. Black breaks all the rules and then wins!

**Question:** What if White sacs the d-pawn for even more development?

**Answer:** I don't believe in White's compensation after 12 Rb1?! Qxd4 13 Nge2 Qb6. Black, up a pawn with a safe king and bishop

pair, should be happy. White's dilemma is that each time he sacs he can't seem to pry open the game enough to bust Black.

**12 ... Qxb2**



**Question:** You must admit that this pawn grab looks risky, doesn't it?

**Answer:** Stop fretting and drink a cup of chamomile tea! I only admit that it looks delicious.

### **13 a3**

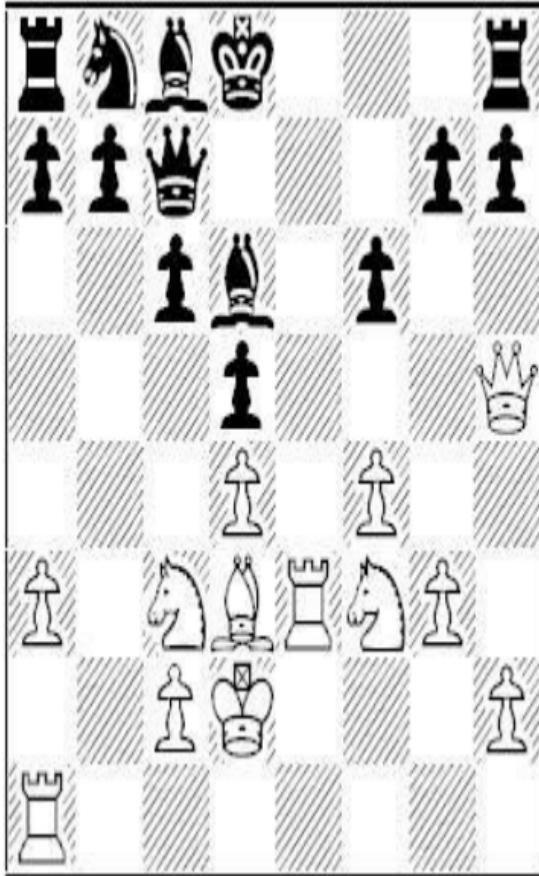
He worries about the b4-square. If 13 Rab1 Qa3 14 Rhe1 Bd7! 15 Rb3 (15 Rxb7?! is met with 15 ... Bb4 and White must give up the exchange) 15 ... Qa5 16 Nh4! (with the nasty threat Ng6!) 16 ... Bd6 17 Qf7 Bxf4+ 18 Kd1 Bg4+ 19 Nf3 Qc7 20 Rxb7 Qxf7 21 Rxf7 Bh6 and ... Bh5 follows. Rybka assesses the position at dead even.

### **13 ... Qb6 14 Rhe1 Bd6**

Another flight plan for completion of development lies in

14 ... Bd7 15 Qf7 Kc8 16 Bxh7 Qc7  
17 g3 b6 18 Bd3 Kb7 19 f5 Na6 20  
Ne2 Bd6! 21 Qxg7 Rhg8 22 Qxf6  
Raf8 23 Qh6 and Black can either  
take the repetition by perpetually  
attacking White's queen or play for  
the win with 23 ... Bxf5!?, with  
Rybka claiming that Black stands  
better.

**15 g3 Qc7 16 Re3**



**Exercise (planning):** How should Black unravel?  
**Answer:** By opening up a cubby

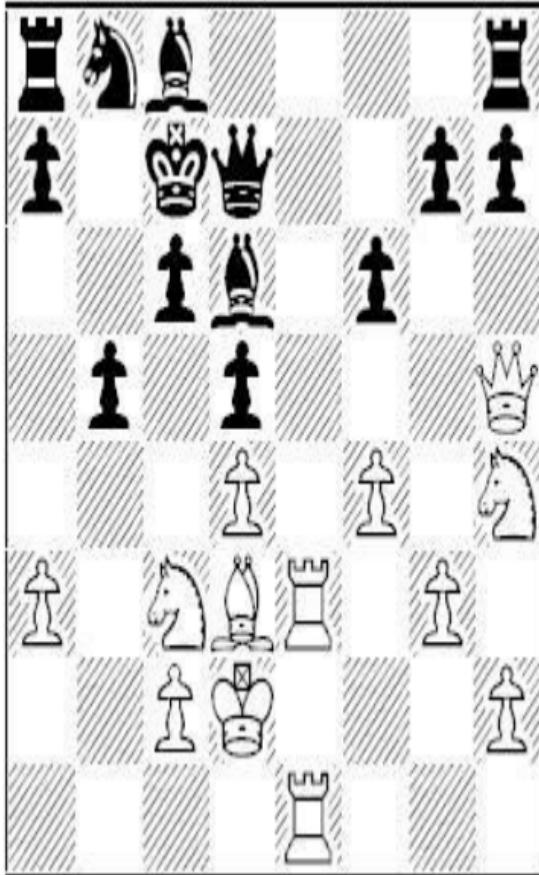
hole for his king on c7:

**16 ... Qd7! 17 Rae1 Kc7!?**

Playing for the win. He has a draw if he wants one by forcing repetition with 17 ... Qg4 18 Qf7 Qd7.

**18 Nh4! b5?**

Black should try 18 ... Qd8.



**19 Bxb5!**

Strong, but even better was 19 Ng6! Rd8 20 Ne7! Ba6 21 Bf5 g6 22

Nxg6! hxg6 23 Qxg6 trapping Black's queen in broad daylight.

### **19 ... Bxa3**

19 ... cxb5? fails to the combination 20 Re7! Bxe7 21 Rxe7 Bb7 22 Qf7 a6 23 Qxg7. White wins since Black's forces are scattered, his king is still in danger from White's queen and two knights, and Black drops more pawns.

### **20 Nxd5+!**

Or 20 Ng6!.

**20 ... Qxd5 21 Qxd5 cxd5 22 Rxa3 Kd6**



**Exercise (planning):** Come up with an effective way to exploit White's development

lead.

An assessment:

1. White regained his sac'ed pawn.
2. Every white piece participates in the attack.
3. Misery loves company, but here Black's only developed piece is his hunted king sitting all alone in mid-board!

Conclusion: The lights in the room are on and we begin to see Black is in deep trouble.

**23 Rae3?!**

The rook was well placed where it stood.

**Answer:** White should

maximize his forces with the plan to blast through with c4: 23 Ng2! (transfer the knight to e3, where it eyes f5 and forces the c4 break) 23 ... Be6 24 Ne3 Rc8 25 Kd3! (he needs all his firepower on the c4-square) 25 ... a6 (Black's problem is he can't easily develop his knight due to the Ra6 threat) 26 f5 Bf7 (26 ... Bd7 fails to 27 Bxd7 Nxd7 28 Ra5 Nb6 29 Nxd5!) 27 c4!. Mission accomplished. The attack continues.

**23 ... Nc6 24 Bxc6 Kxc6 25 Re7 Rg8 26 Rf7**

Black looks hopelessly lost. White is about to double rooks on

the seventh and wipe out all the pawns.

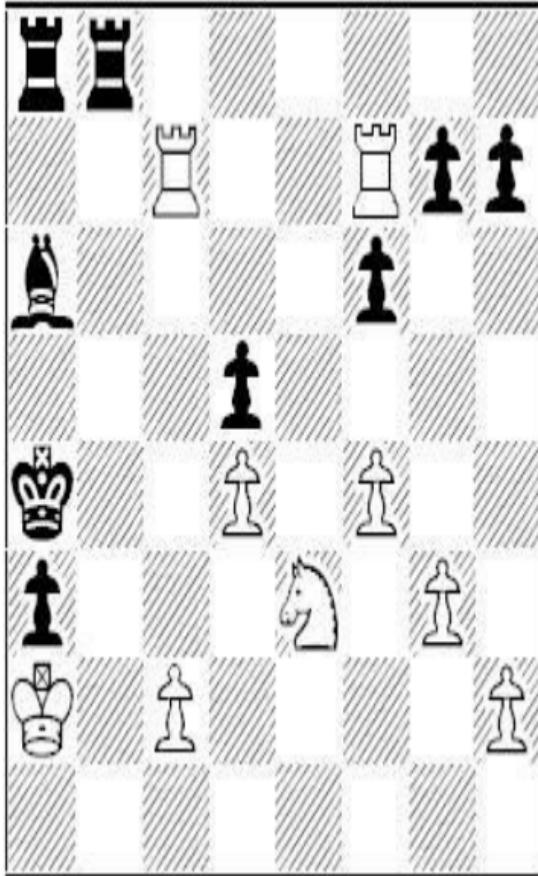
**26 ... a5!**

Resourcefully playing his only trump: the passed a-pawn.

**27 Ree7 a4 28 Kc1 a3 29 Kb1 Ba6 30 Rc7+ Kb6 31 Nf5 Rgb8**

His kingside pawns are not important. Black puts his resources into his one prayer.

**32 Ne3 Ka5+ 33 Ka2 Ka4!**



How Steinitzian, using his king  
in the attack!

**34 Nxd5 Rb2+ 35 Ka1 Re8!**

Threatening mate in one.

**36 Nc3+**

White gets nervous and forces the draw. He is probably still winning if he calculates the following line: 36 Rfe7 Rxe7 37 Nxe7 Rb4 38 d5 Rd4 39 Ra7 Kb5 40 Ka2 Kb6 41 Rd7 Ra4. In real life, there are too many variables for White to worry about, and that a-pawn looks too scary, so Shaw is happy to split the point.

**36 ... Kb4 37 Nd5+ Ka4 38 Nc3+ Kb4 39 Nd5+ ½-½**

**Summary:** I'm recovering from elbow surgery as I write this, and

this may just be the Oxycontin talking, but I am beginning to believe that we rats are above the law. Compelling evidence of the truth of this statement: GM Miles fell behind in development by about five tempi to grab a pawn and survived to tell the tale!

## Game 14

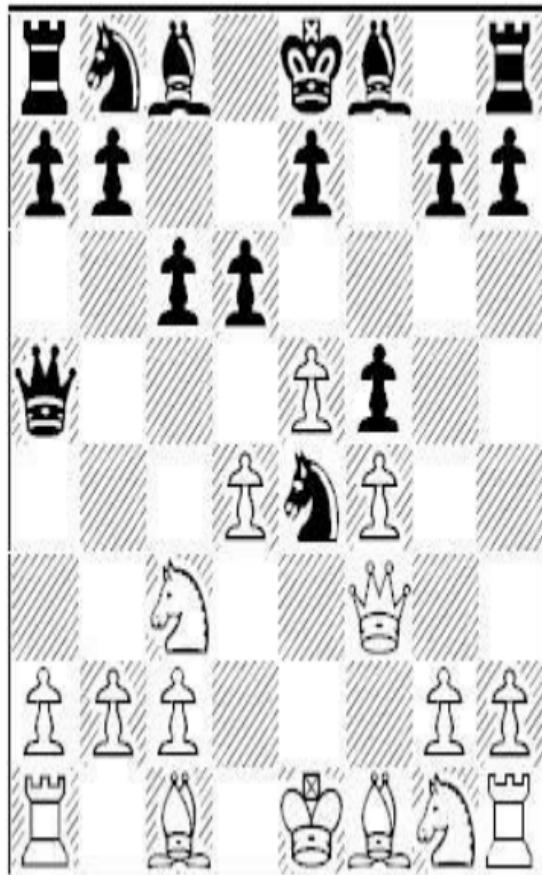
**A.Stearns-L.Altounian**

Linklater Memorial, San Francisco  
2001

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 f4  
Qa5 5 e5 Ne4 6 Qf3 f5**

I analysed 6 ... f5 with IM Levon

Altounian at this IM/GM norm tournament. It may be Black's most accurate move order.



**Question:** Why? It looks like it makes no difference whether Black plays 6 ... f5 or 6 ... d5.

**Answer:** 6 ... f5 can transpose to positions we get after 6 ... d5, but it avoids the lines we examined in Games 12 and 13, including the pawn sac line. In essence it's a safer alternative.

### **7 Bd3**

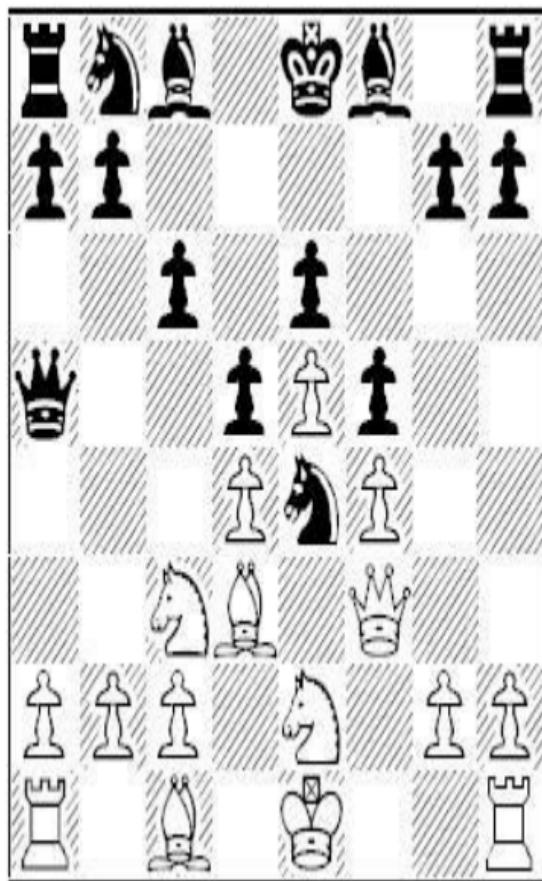
Next game we study the independent path 7 exf6.

### **7 ... d5**

Now we get a direct transposition to the 6 ... d5 lines, but without giving White the option

of 6 ... d5 7 Bd3 f5 8 exf6.

**8 Nge2 e6**



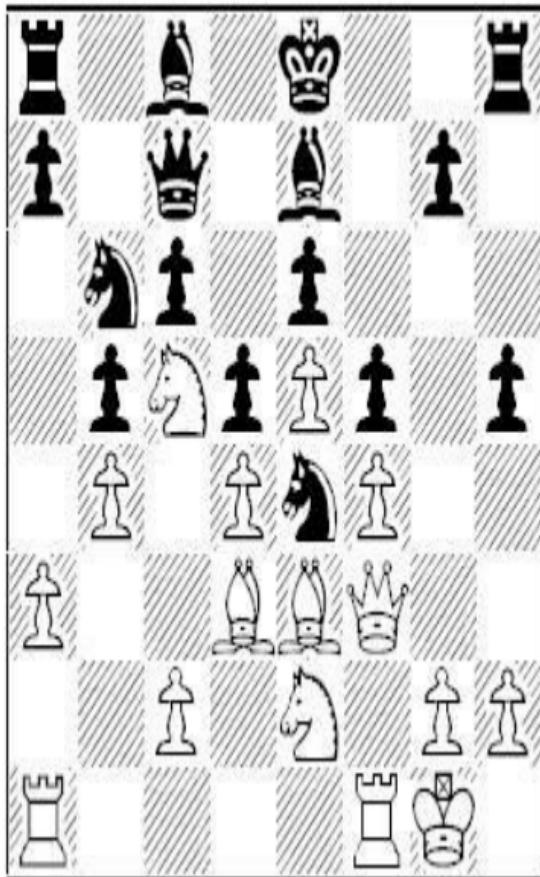
**Question:** Doesn't White have

an advantage with his extra space?

**Answer:** I doubt White stands better. It looks like a normal French except for the powerful, entrenched knight on e4, which should give Black equality.

8 ... h5!? aims to halt or stall g2-g4. I like this plan to delay ... c5, which hands over the d4-square to White. Let's follow F.Cardenas-F.Cruz, Peru 2000: 9 0-0 (now it will be difficult to engineer g4, but I don't have a better suggestion) 9 ... e6 10 a3 Be7 11 Be3 Nd7 12 b4!? (gaining space but also creating a hole on c4; another plan is 12 Nd1!? intending c4) 12 ... Qc7 13 Na4 b5!

(clamping down on c4) 14 Nc5 Nb6.



15 Bxe4? A case of strategic charity: White gives up his good

bishop, control over the light squares, the bishop pair and hands over d5 to Black. That is a lot of things to give up, and I can't think of a single thing he gets for it! 15 ... dxe4 16 Qg3 Kf8 17 d5? (White's sac shows commendable generosity of spirit, but still, it's a poor decision and a clear escalation of the irrationality. The sac is completely unsound and White can't do a thing with the d4-square. Black, on the other hand, is happy as can be with his extra pawn. After 17 Nc3 a5 18 Rfb1 a4 Black retains an advantage, but this line is infinitely preferable to his last move.) 17 ... Nxd5 18

Nd4 Bxc5 19 bxc5 h4 20 Qh3!? This is no more than a strategic cheapo. White wants to play g4 next, which Black easily prevents: 20 ... Rh6!. Now White is left wondering why he placed his queen on h3, and also possibly with an uneasy feeling that his clearance sac didn't exactly go as planned.

## **9 0-0 c5**

Black plays his only break, which frees his pieces but gives White access to the d4-square.

## **10 dxc5**

**Question:** Why give Black a tempo with check?

**Answer:** White, ahead in

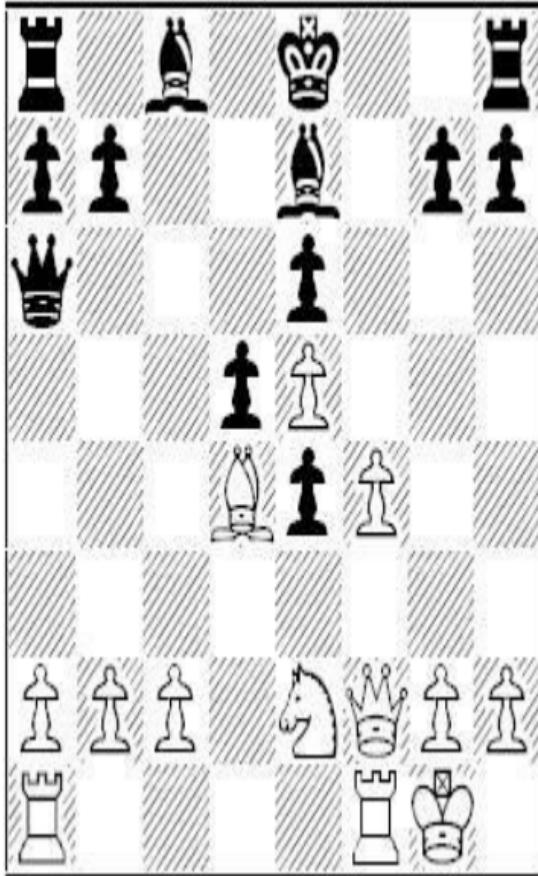
development, wants to open the position. He also wants to take control over d4 for his pieces and so clears the square.

**Question:** Yes, but by taking on c5 he helps Black develop, and also there is no guarantee White will wrest control over d4, correct?

**Answer:** All correct!

The alternative is 10 Be3 Nc6 11 Bxe4 (after 11 a3?? Nxc3 12 Nxc3 cxd4 13 b4 Qd8 14 b5 dxe3 15 bxc6 bxc6 White is busted, down at least one pawn and missing his powerful dark squared bishop, O.Korneev-C.Lakdawala, Internet blitz 2011;

this line can throw off even strong GMs) 11 ... fxe4 12 Qf2 Nxd4 13 Nxd4 cxd4 14 Bxd4 Be7 15 Ne2 Qa6!, forestalling c4.



1. White remains a shade ahead in development.
2. White controls d4 and the

dark squares.

3. Black has the bishop pair, which doesn't mean much here.

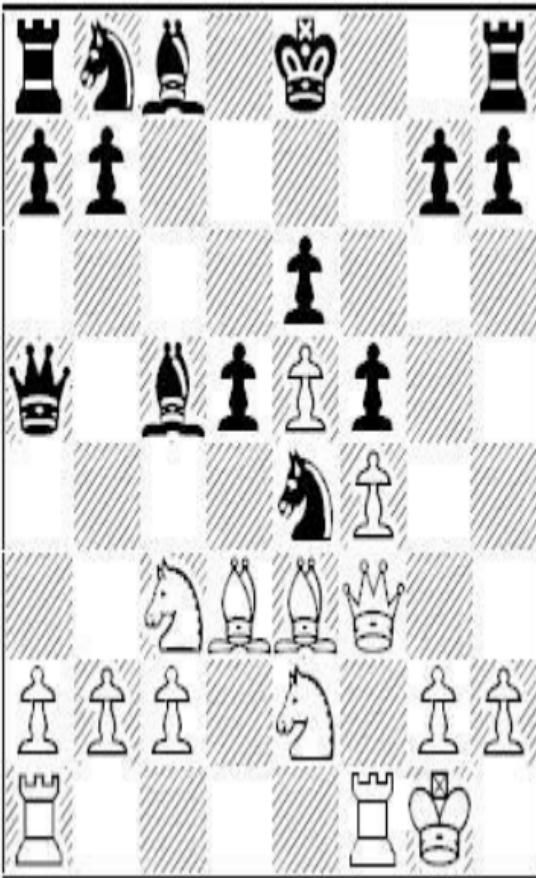
4. Black controls the light squares and has a protected passed pawn on e4.

5. It will be difficult for White to efficiently engineer an f5 break so Black's king remains relatively safe.

6. White's best plan is to somehow force c4, disrupting Black's centre.

Conclusion: Perhaps White has a tiny edge.

**10 ... Bxc5+ 11 Be3?**



**Exercise (combination alert):**  
White's natural and innocent  
last move overlooks a trick.

What is it?

**Answer: 11 ... Nd2!**

An easy move to miss, since in the back of White's mind d2 was still covered.

**12 Bb5+ Nc6 13 Bxc5!?**

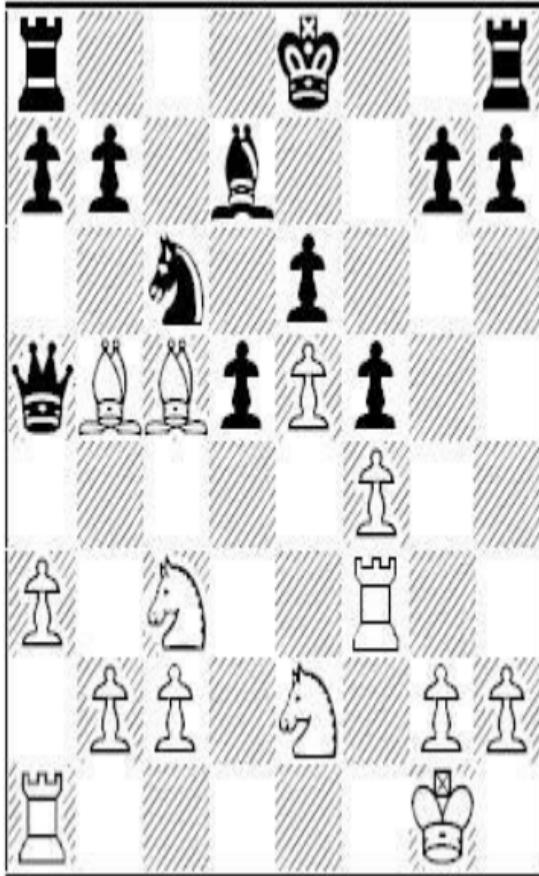
Okay then, let's go with blind rage! A madman and a mad man aren't the same thing, and one must be aware that irrationality often follows annoyance. This move looks like an overreaction and an emotional decision based on the irritation White undoubtedly felt after missing 11 ... Nd2. White takes the berserker route, upping the ante, and chooses to play with

two pieces for the queen instead of minus an exchange.

In such situations when we overlook a move and find ourselves suddenly busted, we should take a moment to calm down and carefully plot out our path of greatest resistance. Most importantly, we should do it without emotions urging us to radical paths. Still, it's funny how a bayonet at a man's back exponentially increase bravery, and Stearns may reply to my argument with his, saying that his queen sac could be his best shot since he is just as busted here as he would be down an exchange for

zero compensation. And he may add: "You are entitled to your math, and I am entitled to mine!"

**13 ... Nxf3+ 14 Rxf3 Bd7 15 a3**



There is nothing better for  
White.

**Exercise (combination alert):**

Black has a little combination.

**Answer:** 15 ... Nxe5! 16 fxe5  
**Bxb5** 17 b4 Qa6 18 Nd4 Bd7 19  
**Nce2 Rc8 0-1**

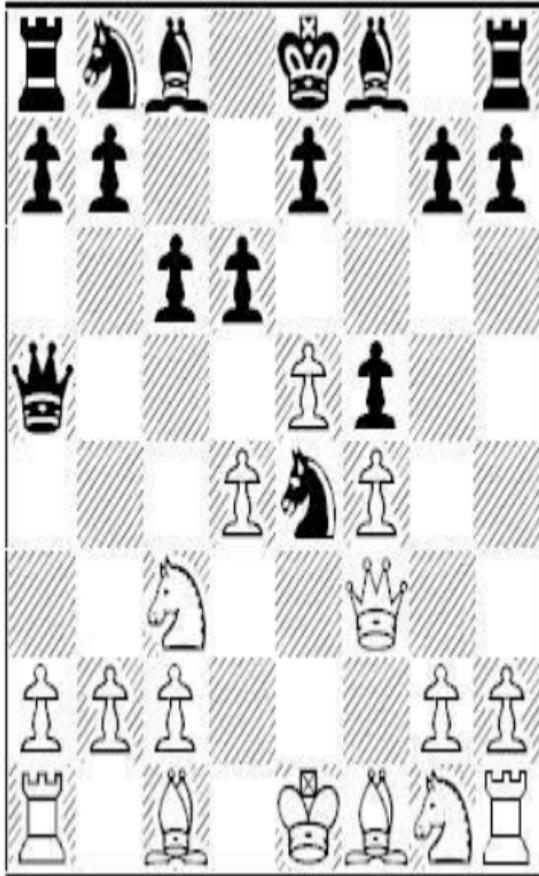
White has had enough.

**Summary:** After 8 ... e6, Black reaches a very reasonable French-style position with an entrenched knight on e4.

Game 15

**S.Brynell-T.Hillarp Persson**  
Linkoping 2001

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 f4  
Qa5 5 e5 Ne4 6 Qf3 f5**



**7 exf6**

**Question:** A good move? He gains time by forcing Black's knight

to retreat.

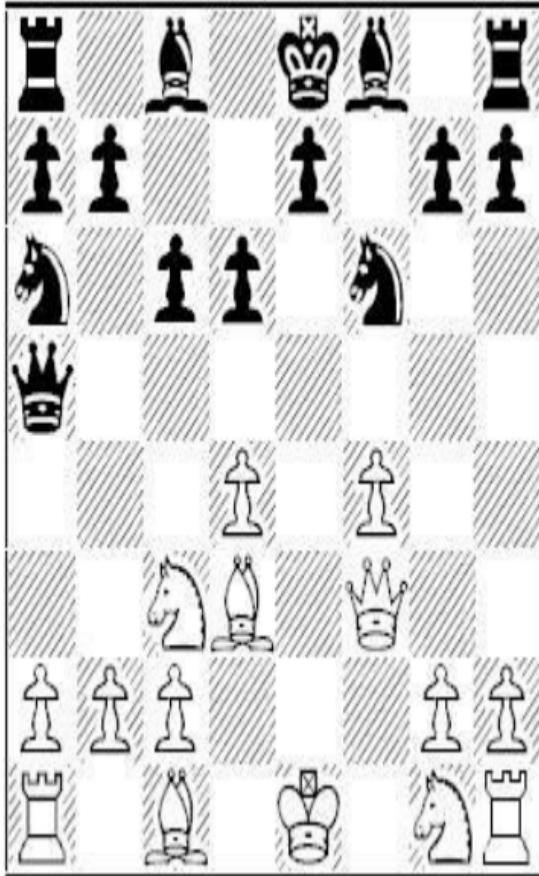
**Answer:** Black may argue that White's e4, e5 and exf6 were all a pure waste of time, and that White's once imposing centre received a bit of a dent and is no longer so impressive. So White's move doesn't look all that great and his opening salvo fails to inflict any real damage to Black.

## **7 ... Nxf6 8 Bd3**

V.Nowik-O.Sparwel, German League 1997, went 8 Bd2 Qb6 and here White played the startling 9 0-0-0!? offering an exchange for the light squares (the safer alternative is to offer his b-pawn with 9 Bd3).

The game continued 9 ... Bg4 10 Qd3 Bxd1 11 Nxd1 and now 11 ... Na6!, covering e6, looks good for Black.

**8 ... Na6!**



**Question:** You gave this move an exclam. Why?  
It violates the principle to

centralize pieces.

Don't you remember the rhyme  
"A knight on the rim is dim"?

**Answer:** One must be flexible. The key to Black's survival is control over the light squares. Here he goes after White's bishop which sits on d3. By following a principle blindly we allow White the superior game after 8 ... Nbd7?! 9 Bd2.

## **9 Nge2**

White has other tries here:

a) 9 Bc4 (trying to take the sting out of ... Nb4) 9 ... Bf5 10 Bb3 0-0-0 11 Bd2 Qc7 12 Qe2 Kb8 13 Nf3 Nb4 14 Nb5 cxb5 15 Bxb4, V.Okhotnik-V.Ryzhonkov, Nyiregyhaza 1999.

Now Black should stir up some trouble in the centre with 15 ... e5! with unclear play.

b) 9 a3 g6 10 Nge2 Bg7 11 0-0 0-0 12 Bd2 Qh5 13 Qxh5 Nxh5 14 Ne4 Nc7 15 c3 Bf5 16 Rae1 Rae8 17 h3 Nf6, G.Newerovski-A.Ivanov, Smolensk 2005. I wouldn't mind taking Black, whose position reminds me of a favourable Leningrad Dutch queenless middlegame.

**9 ... Nb4 10 0-0 Bg4**

**Question:** Can Black try 10 ... Bf5?

**Answer:** I like your idea. It looks like Black gets the advantage

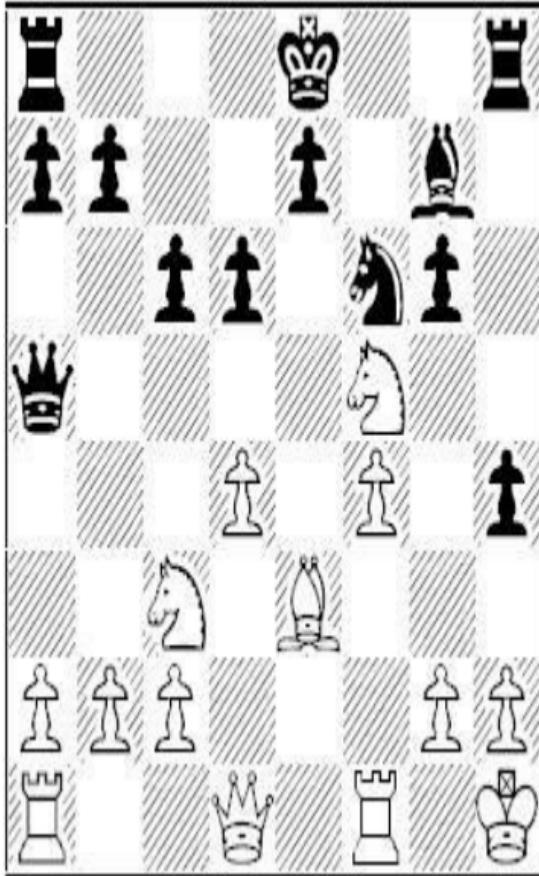
no matter how White plays it: 11 Bxf5 (otherwise Black damages White's pawn structure at no cost) 11 ... Qxf5 12 Ng3 Qxc2 13 f5 (let's never forget that we rats are special and can get away with such brazen pawn snatches) 13 ... Qd3 14 Qf2 0-0-0. I don't believe White gets full compensation since Black has a firm lock on d5 and can challenge the f5 point with ... g6 later on.

**11 Qe3 Nxd3 12 Qxd3 Bf5  
13 Qd1 g6 14 Ng3 h5!**

**Question:** Why not preserve the bishop pair and back off with the bishop?

**Answer:** We fight to take command of the central light squares, so the bishop pair isn't nearly as important.

**15 Be3 Bg7 16 Kh1 h4 17 Nxf5**



## **Exercise (critical decision):**

Which way to recapture?

**17 ... Qxf5?!**

**Answer:** 17 ... gxf5! is the correct path, followed after 18 h3 by 18 ... 0-0-0 intending ... d5 and ... Ne4. Black's advantages include:

1. The open g-file for his attack.
2. The superior bishop. White's remaining bad bishop coils around his neck.
3. White can't tolerate a black knight sitting at his comfort on e4 and will be forced to swap. Black recaptures with his f-pawn creating a connected passer.
4. White will try some kind of counter-assault on the queenside, but this doesn't look too promising because he will be tied down

himself from Black's pressure down the g-file. Conclusion: Clear advantage to Black.

### **18 h3**

Otherwise Black plays ... h3 himself, further debilitating the light squares.

**18 ... Nh5 19 Kg1 Ng3 20**

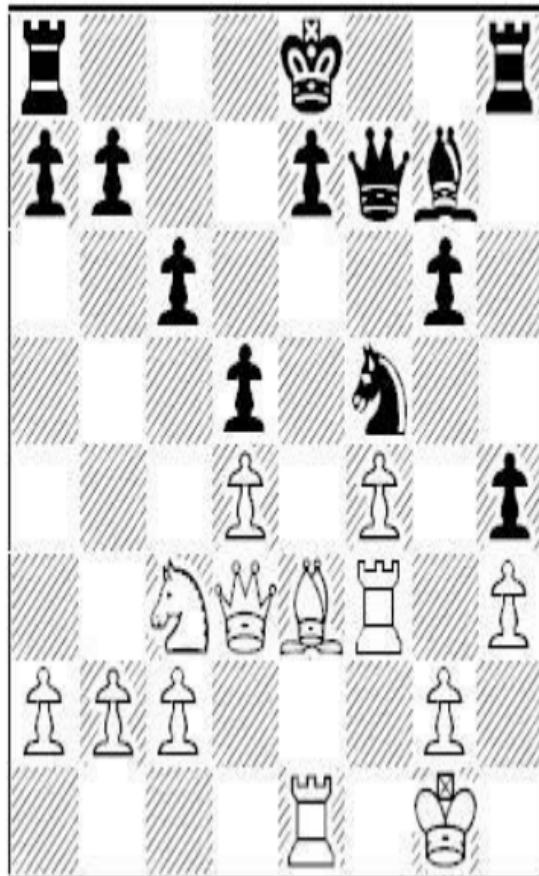
**Rf3 Qf7!**

Clearing f5 for the knight.

**21 Qd3 d5**

Denying White use of e4 and placing more pawns on the opposite colour of his remaining bishop. Meanwhile, White's bishop looks rather sluggish, hemmed in by f4 and d4.

**22 Re1 Nf5**



**Exercise (planning):** It looks like Black has all the trumps.

Come up with a defensive plan for White which improves his position.

### **Answer: 23 Nd1!**

The key to the defence is to maximize every piece. The knight, which did nothing on c3, heads for the green pasture on g4 and improves White's position.

**23 ... 0-0-0 24 Nf2 Kb8 25**

**Ng4 Rc8**

Black would be happy to chop the white knight, should it ever appear on e5.

**26 c3 Rhd8 27 Bf2 Bf6 28**

**Qe2 Qg8!**

Playing for the ... g5 break.

**29 Rd3 Ka8 30 Qf3 Rf8 31  
Rd2 g5! 32 Rde2 Bh8 33 Re6  
gxf4**

Black's final chance to retain his edge lay with the calm 33 ... Rce8! (threatening to take on f4) 34 a4 gxf4 35 Nh6 Nxh6 36 Rxh6 e5! although admittedly this is still probably not enough to win.

**34 Nh6!**

White's knight, the defensive hero of the game, applies a soothing balm which heals all trouble. The elimination of Black's knight takes the steam out of Black's attack.

**34 ... Nxh6 35 Rxh6 Bf6 36**

**Bxh4 Qg7 ½-½**

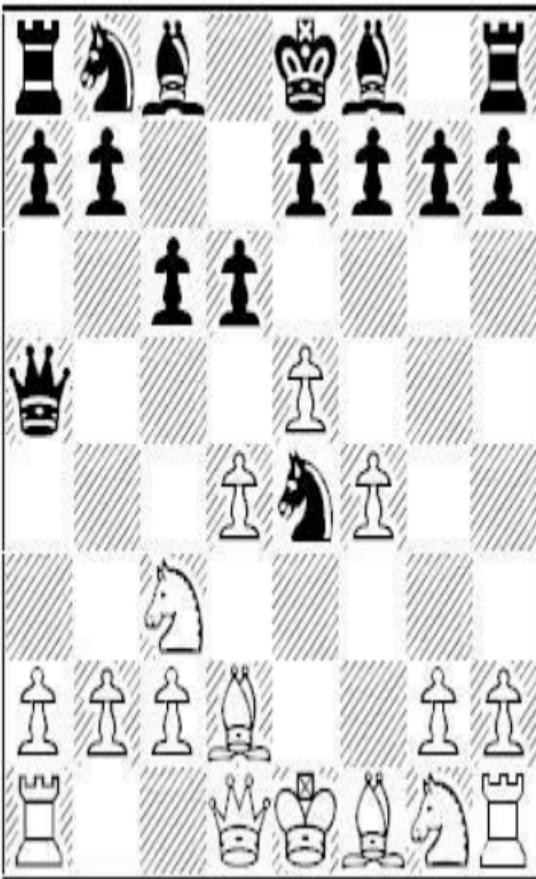
**Summary:** After 7 ... Nxf6 our course is clear: play for control of f5 and the central light squares.

Game 16

**D.Grazian-C.Lakdawala**

Gambito (rapid), San Diego 2010

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 f4  
Qa5 5 e5 Ne4 6 Bd2**



White refuses to play games and  
breaks the pin immediately.  
**Question:** What are the plusses

and minuses of 6 Bd2?

**Answer:**

1. He broke the pin, but at a cost – the bishop pair.
2. Black's dark-squared bishop sits unopposed.
3. White retains his huge space advantage.
4. White retains a slight development lead.
5. The exchange eases Black's game since swaps favour the side which is more cramped.

Conclusion: I think White loses more than he gains in this line.

**6 ... Nxd2**

**Question:** What about 6 ...

Nxc3 to fight for the light squares?

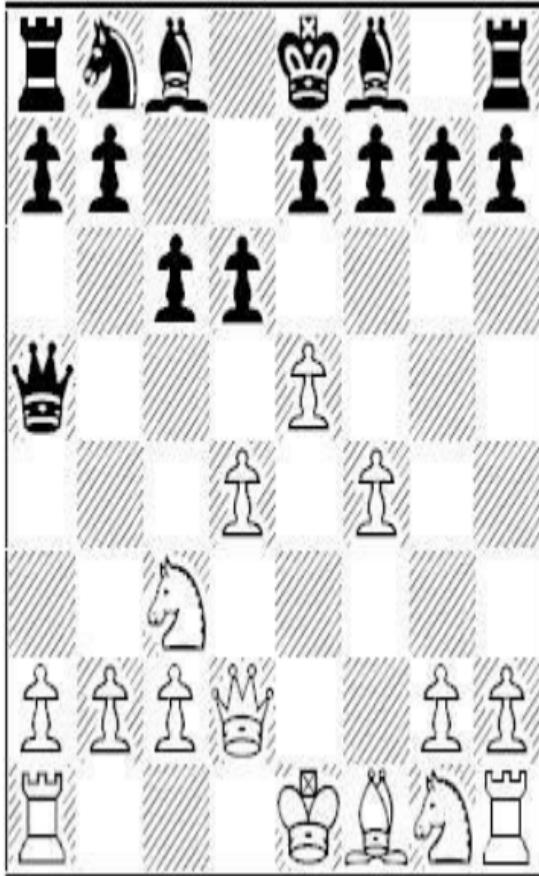
**Answer:** The move doesn't make as much sense. White retains his massive space advantage at little or no cost to himself: 7 Bxc3 Qd5 8 Nf3 Qe4+?!.

**Question:** Why is this dubious?  
You said rats are special  
and can get away with such bold  
pawn grabs.

**Answer:** All things in moderation! Black simply can't get away with this pawn hunting misadventure. If you recall, in the other positions where Black went on risky but approved pawn grabs, he was behind in development but

the positions remained relatively closed. Here Black tries to pull off the same thing in an open position. Unfortunately the laws of physics do indeed apply in this case. After 9 Be2 Bf5 10 0-0 Qxc2 11 Qe1 e6 12 d5! Black found himself too far behind in development and unlikely to survive in A.Goldin-A.Young, Minneapolis 2005.

**7 Qxd2**



**7 ... d5!?**

Playing the position in French Defence style. Alternatively:

a) 7 ... Bf5. It's logical to get rid of this bishop before playing ... e6, but somehow the move doesn't appeal to me since after the swap f5 arrives with great force. I actually want to keep my bad bishop inside the pawn chain!  
V.Kornilovich-V.Malaniuk, Minsk 1997, continued 8 0-0-0 e6 9 Bd3 Bxd3 10 Qxd3 Na6 11 Kb1 Be7 12 Nf3 d5 13 g4 Nc7 14 f5 c5 15 dxc5 Qxc5 16 Rhf1 0-0-0. I don't like Black's position.

b) 7 ... e6 8 0-0-0 d5 9 Kb1 c5, as played in K.Georgiev-J.Panajotov, Sunny Beach 2006, looks similar to the main game.

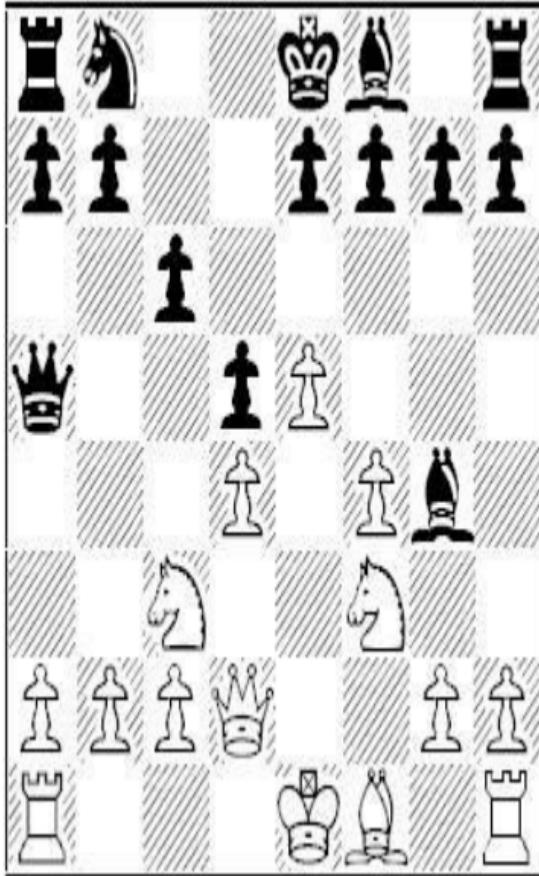
c) 7 ... g6 8 exd6?! (the check on the e-file doesn't bother Black) 8 ... exd6 9 0-0-0 Bg7 10 Qe3+ Be6 11 d5 cxd5 12 Rxd5 Qb6 13 Bb5+ Nc6 14 Qxb6 axb6 15 Rxd6 Ke7 16 Rd1 Bxc3 17 bxc3 Rxa2 and Black stands better in the ending, with superior development as well as structure, G.Aglietti-A.De Santis, Novara 2002.

## **8 Nf3**

Or 8 Bd3 e6 9 Nf3 c5 10 f5 Nc6 11 Nb5 Qd8!? 12 fxe6 Bxe6 13 Ng5 a6 14 Nd6+ Bxd6 15 exd6 c4 16 Qe3 Qxd6 17 Bf5 (B.Adhiban-D.Bocharov, Dubai 2009) and here Black is doing fine after 17 ... Qe7!

18 Bxe6 0-0! since 19 Nxf7? is met by 19 ... Nxd4 with advantage to Black.

**8 ... Bg4**



**Question:** I thought you were going to keep this bishop and play it French style with ...

e6.

**Answer:** White didn't play 8 Bd3 so I changed my mind and decided to eliminate a defender of d4. One must be quick to adapt to new circumstances. On 8 Bd3, I had planned 8 ... e6 as Bocharov played in the note above.

8 ... Bg4 follows three principles:

1. Eliminate the bishop which stands on the same colour as your pawns.
2. Trade when cramped.
3. It's a closed position so my bishop pair "advantage" may not be one! I am happy to swap it off for White's knight, a key observer of

d4.

**Question:** What is so important about control over d4?

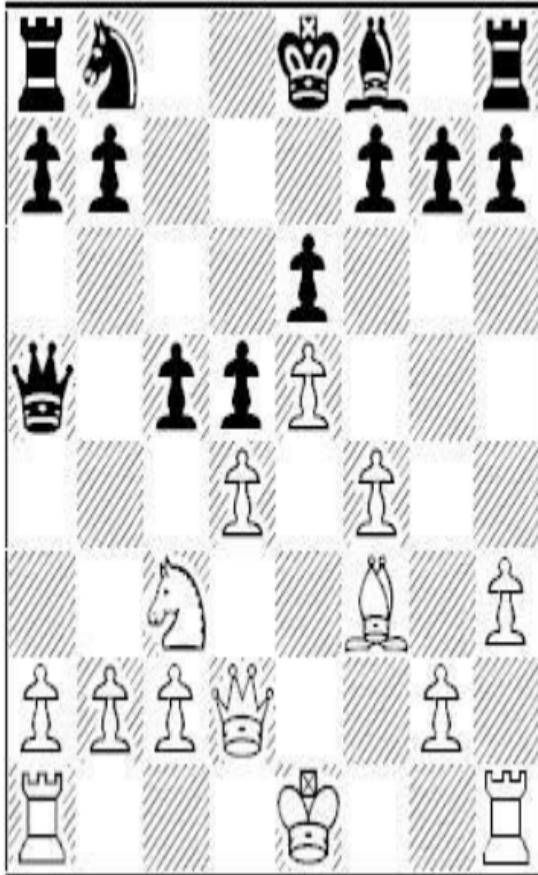
**Answer:** Black needs ... c5 in order to create counterplay. When White's d-pawn gets traded for Black's c5-pawn this leave open a gap on d4, a square which White would ideally like to occupy with a knight. I deny my opponent this possibility by the swap on f3.

### **9 Be2 e6 10 h3**

He wants to resolve the situation, but it costs him a move to do so. B.Dizdarevic-B.Khropov, Belgrade 2006, instead went 10 0-0 c5 11 Kh1 Bxf3 12 Rxf3 Nc6. White's

pieces look a tad misplaced when compared to a normal French Classical position since he lacks control over d4.

**10 ... Bxf3 11 Bxf3 c5**



**Exercise (critical decision):**  
White's choices are to castle queenside

or play 12 Ne2, swapping down.  
Which one is correct?

## **12 0-0-0?**

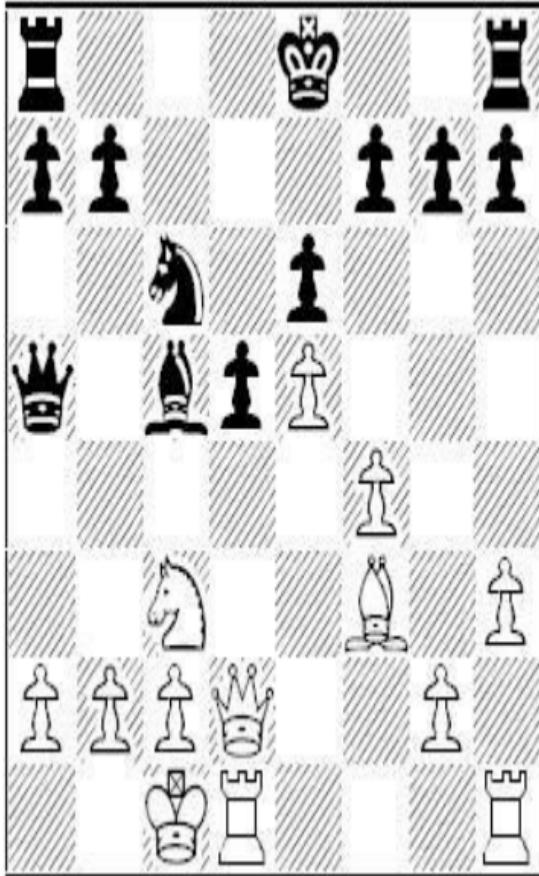
**Answer:** An error in judgment.  
White finds himself flatfooted in the  
coming fight.

**Question:** Why? He is miles  
ahead in development.

**Answer:** White feels that his  
development lead will protect him.  
It doesn't! He soon faces problems  
on the dark squares. He should play  
12 Ne2 Qxd2+ 13 Kxd2, with  
equality.

## **12 ... Nc6 13 dxc5 Bxc5**

Threatening a nasty pin with ...  
Bb4.



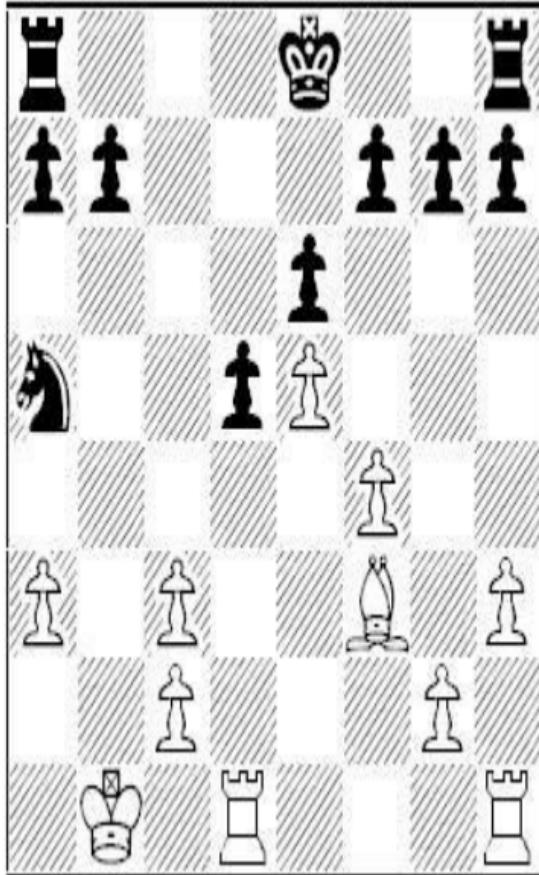
**Exercise:** Calculate the consequences of the sac line 14 a3 Bxa3.

## **14 Kb1**

Silence is consent. He resigns himself to a rotten ending.

**Answer:** My opponent had undoubtedly planned 14 a3 here, but then realized that Black gets a nasty attack after 14 ... Bxa3! (of course!) 15 bxa3 Qxa3+ 16 Kb1 Nb4 17 Rhe1 Rc8 18 Re3 Rc6 19 Qc1 Qa5 (threat: ... Rb6, forcing his next move) 20 Qb2 Rb6 21 Ne2 Nxc2!.

**14 ... Bb4 15 a3 Bxc3 16 Qxc3 Qxc3 17 bxc3 Na5**



An assessment:

1. Three pawn weaknesses;
2. Pressure on the c-file;

3. A hole on c4, as well as c5 and a4;
4. Black's king is centralized; and
5. Black's knight has more potential than White's bishop.

**18 Be2 Rc8 19 Kb2**

**Question:** Did you consider playing 19 ... Nc4+?

**Answer:** No. Why should I give away my good knight for his so-so bishop? A double rook ending increases his drawing chances.

**19 ... Ke7 20 Rhf1 h5 21 Rf3**

Deciding upon passive defence. I expected the sharper 21 f5!?

**21 ... g6 22 Rf2?!**

It was crucial to toss in 22 g3! to prevent Black's next move.

## **22 ... h4!**

Now Black can later isolate White's e-pawn with the plan of placing a rook on g8 followed by ... g5 at the right time.

**23 Rff1 Rc6 24 Rf3 a6 25 Rd4 Rc5**

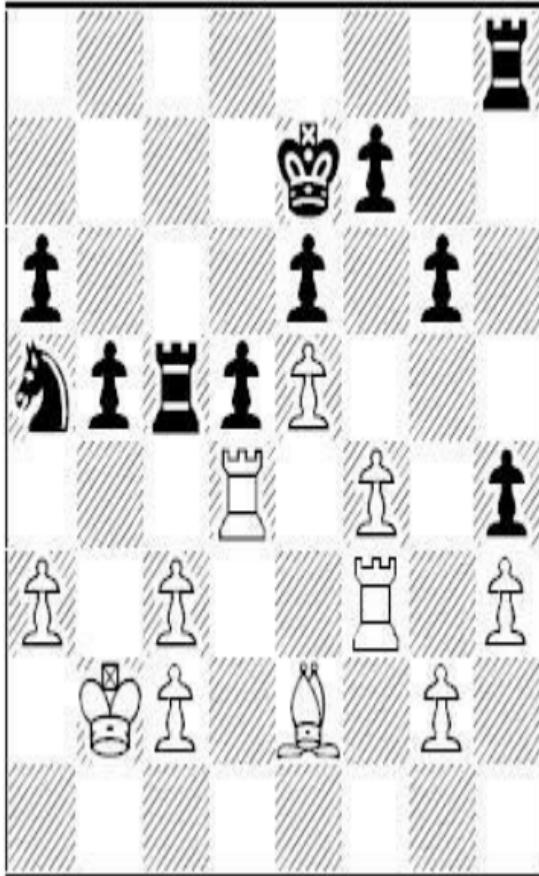
There is no rush. In such positions I deliberately proceed at a leisurely pace, just in case my opponent gets tired of defending and decides to lash out unsoundly.

## **26 Re3 b5!?**

This allows him to liquidate his weak a-pawn with a4, but I didn't

mind 27 a4 Nc6 28 Rd1 Rb8 29 axb5 axb5 30 Kc1 b4 31 cxb4 Rxb4 32 Rf1. Black's initiative continues as he targets both the c- and f-pawn.

**27 Rf3**



Staying consistent with his strategy of passive defence. At this point I considered three possible

battle plans:

**Plan A:**

1. Double rooks on the c-file, perhaps on c6 and c8.

2. Play the knight manoeuvre ...

Nb7-c5 and then either ... Ne4 or ... Na4, ganging up on c3.

**Plan B:** (this is the one I went for)

1. Double rooks on the c-file (or place a rook on g8, depending on how White sets up).

2. Play ... g5 at the correct moment.

3. Undermine and win his e-pawn.

**Plan C:**

1. Put my rooks on c5 and b8.
2. Play ... a5 and b4, which eliminates his weak c3-pawn but also flairs up my initiative and activates my pieces.
3. Go after his king.
4. Be on alert for a possible ... g5 trick if the opportunity arises.

I'm still not sure which of the three plans is best.

**Question:** I get into such situations all the time. I realize I stand clearly better but don't know how to formulate such plans.

Is there a trick to coming up with a plan?

**Answer:** No, there is no easy

trick to finding a plan. The problem I have discovered with students who have difficulties in planning is they look at the position in a purely mathematical sense, basically reciting variations. To learn to think schematically one must switch to the verbal and logical, first breaking down the position imbalances and then seeing which principles fit. Then ask yourself simple questions, like: "Where do I want my pieces placed to be at their optimal potential?" Think of it this way: Calculation is prose; planning is poetry.

**27 ... Nc6 28 Rd2 Rb8**

Toying with Plan C.

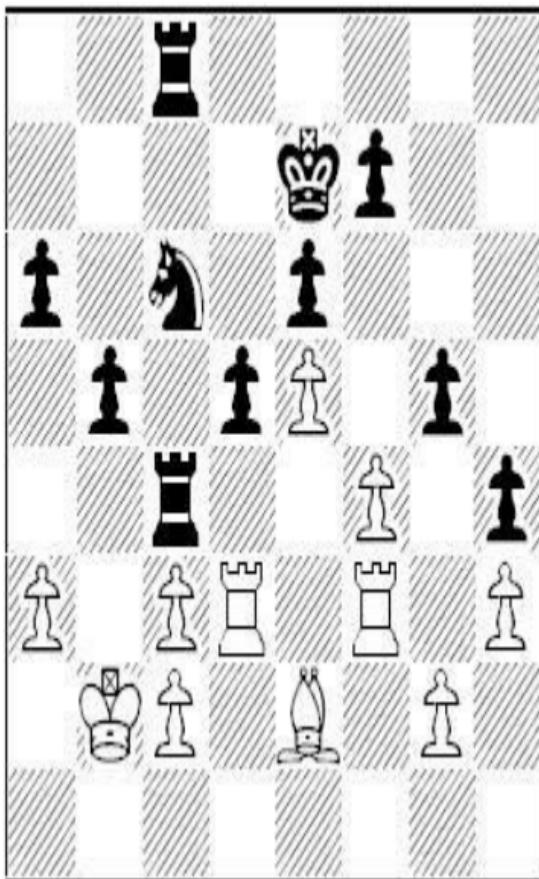
**29 Rdd3 Rc8**

But actually intending Plan B. This is a good trick to remember. Don't rush in such positions. A feint here and a bluff there sometimes has the effect of either confusing or provoking the opponent into rash action. Set up a smokescreen to hide your real intentions.

**30 Rfe3?**

The wrong waiting move. White's rooks, as if caught in a revolving door, circle aimlessly, without paying attention to Black's strategic idea ... g5. He should play 30 Rd1.

**30 ... Rc4! 31 Rf3 g5!**



Twice as scary now that his  
rooks find themselves on forkably

delicious squares, f3 and d3! White faces Hobson's choice:

- a) Lose his e-pawn; or
- b) Lose his e-pawn!

### **32 Rde3**

Or 32 fxg5 Rg8! 33 Rde3 Ra4 34 g4 Rxg5 and his e-pawn falls.

**32 ... gxf4 33 Bxc4 fxe3 34**

**Be2 Nxe5 35 Rxe3 Kd6 36 g3**

An attempt to drain the swamp a bit. True, he creates a passed h-pawn, but at the high cost of giving Black two connected central passers and turning his passed h-pawn into a potential weakness.

**36 ... hxg3 37 Rxg3 Rh8 38**

**a4**

He may as well. The time for passivity has passed.

**38 ... bxa4 39 Bxa6 f5**

Threat: ... f4, winning the h3-pawn.

**40 Bf1 Rb8+ 41 Ka3 Rb1 42**

**Be2 Ra1+ 43 Kb2 Rh1**

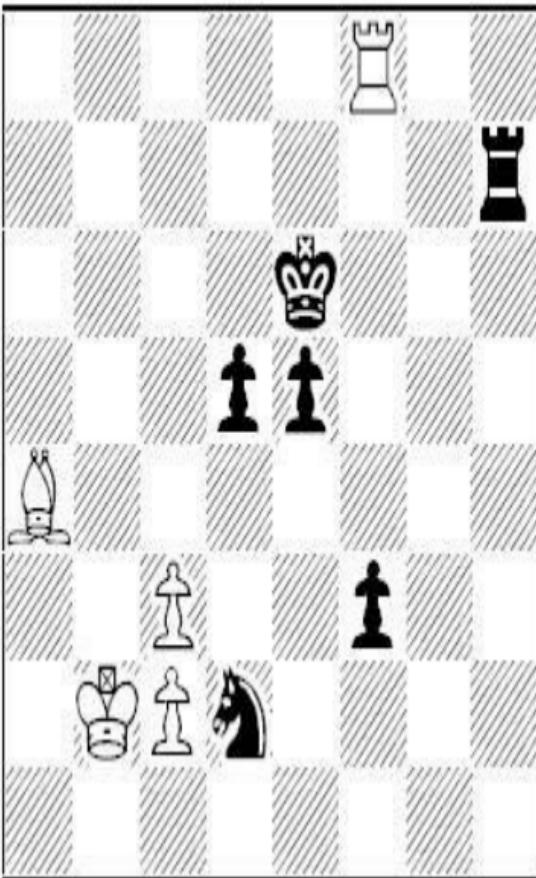
Renewing the ... f4 threat.

**44 Bb5 f4 45 Rg8 Rxh3 46**

**Bxa4 Nc4+ 47 Kb3 Nd2+ 48**

**Kb2 f3 49 Rf8 Ke7 50 Rf4 e5 51**

**Rf5 Ke6 52 Rf8 Rh7**



A Capablanite at heart, I always prefer the smoothest path over the best path! ... Rf7 costs

White material. Voltaire once wrote: "Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good." From my viewpoint, rapid games are less about art and more about warfare.

### **53 Kc1 Nc4 54 Kb1**

The f-pawn is quite safe: 54 Rxf3 Rh1+ 55 Rf1 Rxf1 mate.

### **54 ... Rf7 0-1**

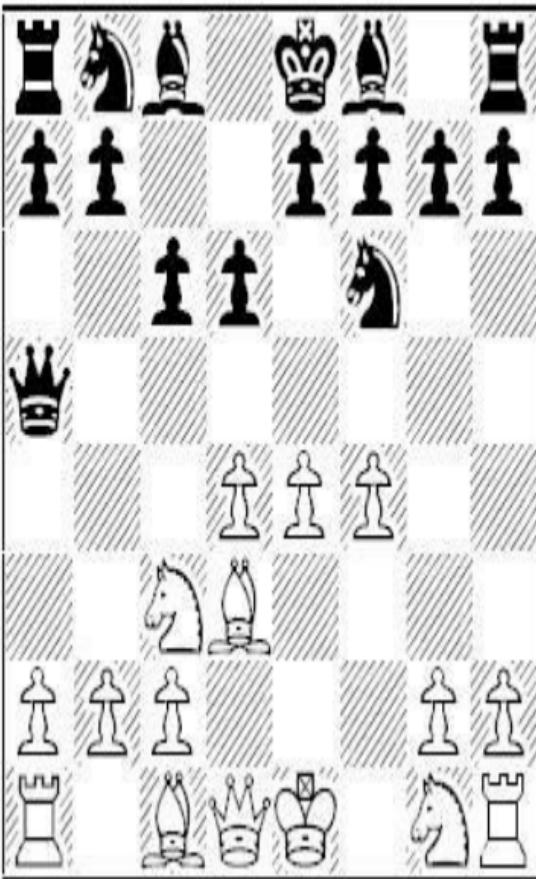
**Summary:** After 6 Bd2 take the bishop and then you have a choice of playing in French style or you can try 7 ... g6 in Pirc fashion, which also looks playable. White's space advantage loses some of his potency when you pick off his

bishop for your knight.

# **Chapter Three**

## **Pribyl/Rat Versus the Austrian Attack: 5 Bd3 and Others**

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 f4  
Qa5 5 Bd3**



For the players who claim the 5 Bd3 Austrian Attack refutes our opening, it's time for a dose of

sodium pentothal to extract the truth: Black scores 52% in the position after 5 ... e5 6 Nf3 exd4 7 Nxd4 g6!

White comes at us with all he has on the kingside, hoping for a quick mate. But one must also factor in the huge energy expenditure to attain the goal of mate. If an enemy wishes an audience with a king, the king doesn't travel to the opposing country. Instead, the enemy must travel with his army of mercenaries to the king's country, at great expense, hardship and risk. White must come to us, doing all the

work. Meanwhile we prepare for the coming assault, staying put behind our protective mote and create queenside and central counterplay, often picking on and picking off the attacker's e-pawn. Our defensive tasks are:

1. Don't get mated!
2. Counterattack and pillage the vacated White queenside while he is busy attacking.
3. Play on the principle "Counter in the centre when attacked on the wing" by hammering away at his weakened e-pawn.
4. Trust that the imminent mate is an optical illusion and our

defensive barrier isn't so easy to blow away.

Game 17

**M.Sion**

**Castro-**

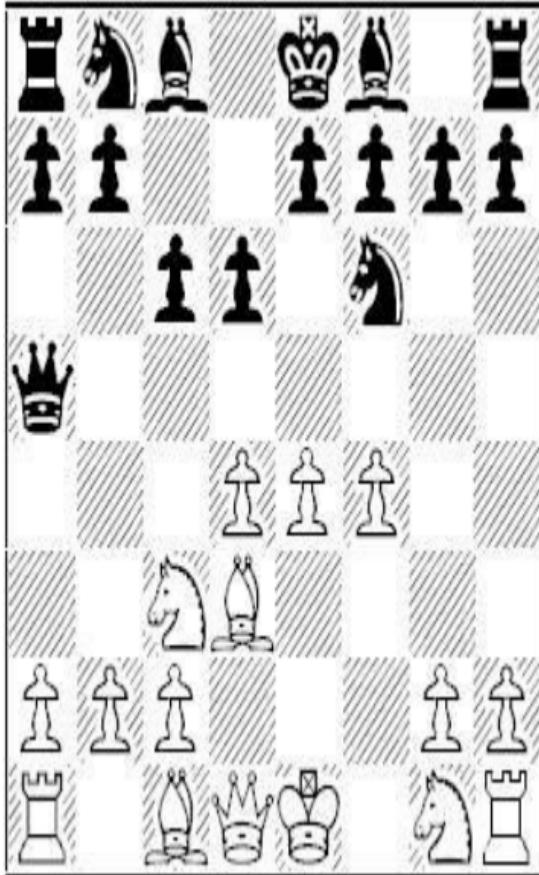
**Z.Azmaiparashvili**

San Roque 1996

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 f4  
Qa5**

We can always dream that our opponents may miss our ... Nxe4 threat, can't we?

**5 Bd3**



“Refutation” number two! Here we arrive at the darling position of most titled players when facing the

Pribyl/Rat. White avoids an early e5, continues to develop and prepares to attack on the kingside.

## **5 ... e5**

We strike back in the centre and reclaim some space.

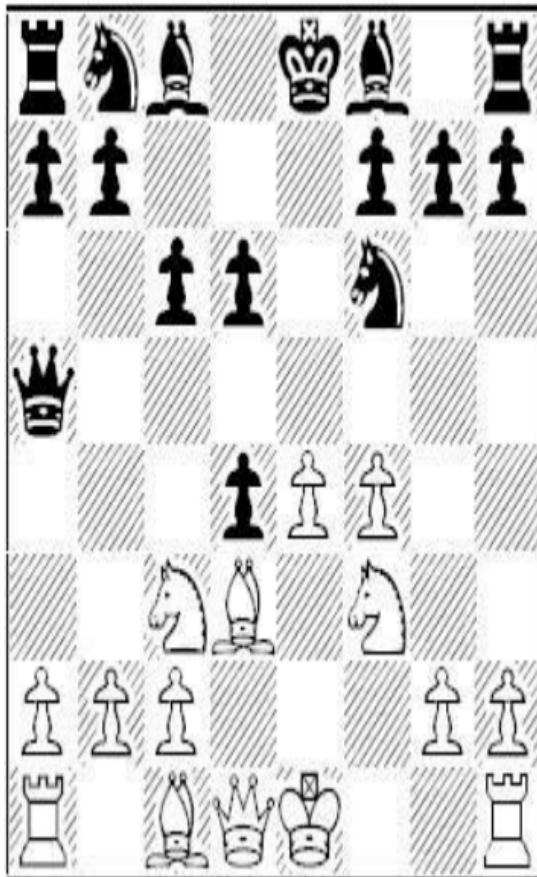
**Question:** What if White captures twice on e5?

When Black's queen recaptures, White hits again with Nf3.

Won't Black become too far behind in development?

**Answer:** We won't recapture with the queen on e5. Instead we play 6 fxe5 dxe5 7 dxe5 Ng4!. We look at e5 capture lines later in the chapter.

## 6 Nf3 exd4



**Question:** Why did Black just give away the centre?

**Answer:** In this chapter, we concentrate on this sideline which also may be Black's best option. By taking on d4 Black ensures the creation of a target: White's e4-pawn.

**Question:** How is e4 weakened?

**Answer:** We gang up on it the following way:

1. A rook on e8.
2. A knight on f6.
3. A bishop on b7.
4. The potential for ... Nd7-c5.
5. Queenside pawn pushes like ... b5, ... a5, ... b4 (ejecting a defending knight from c3), and ...

c5-c4 (ejecting a defending bishop from d3).

Black's mainline alternatives are:

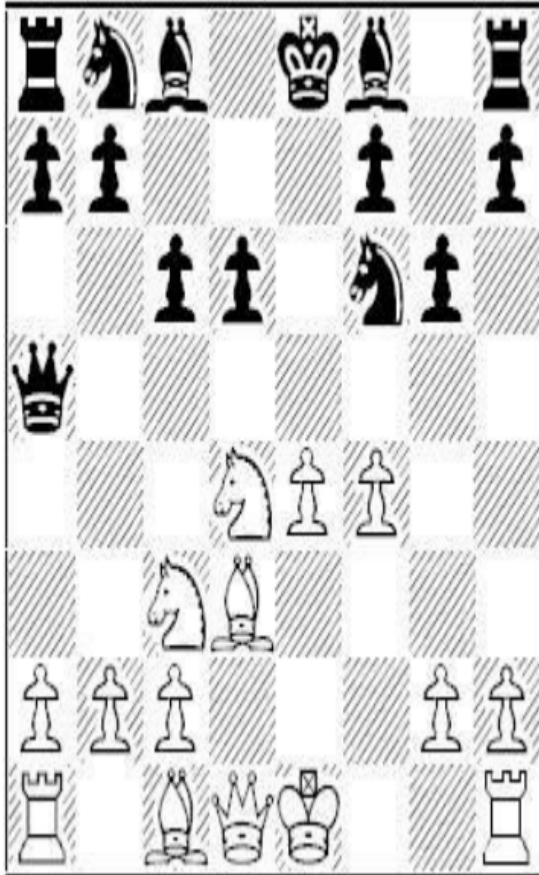
- a) 6 ... Bg4.

**Question:** Why does Black prepare to hand over the bishop pair?

**Answer:** By eliminating the knight, Black removes a potentially dangerous attacker. The main line runs 7 Be3 Nbd7 8 0-0 Be7 9 h3 Bxf3 10 Qxf3 0-0 11 Ne2. I'm not a fan of Black's position. I don't see what he received to offset White's bishop pair, space advantage and potential for a kingside attack.

b) 6 ... Nbd7 is not so bad. 7 0-0 Be7 8 Kh1 0-0 9 Qe1 (with the strategic threat Nd5!) 9 ... Qc7 10 Bd2 b5 11 a3 a6 was C.Bauer-K.Maslak, Internet blitz 2003. Black remains flexible and may have sufficient chances against White's pawn centre to compensate for the near certain attack on the kingside.

**7 Nxd4 g6!**



"Abandon all hope all ye who enter here!" Actually, don't believe everything Dante says.

We observe one of those wonderful chess anomalies which optically looks shaky for one side but actually is not. Black's rich sources of counterplay include:

1. White's weak e-pawn.

2. A flexible centre: ... d5 or ...

c5 may be thrown in at any moment.

3. Mobile queenside pawns with ... b5 and ... b4, which expels White's defending knight from c3.

4. Possibilities of ... Bb7 and ... c5-c4, chasing away White's bishop on d3.

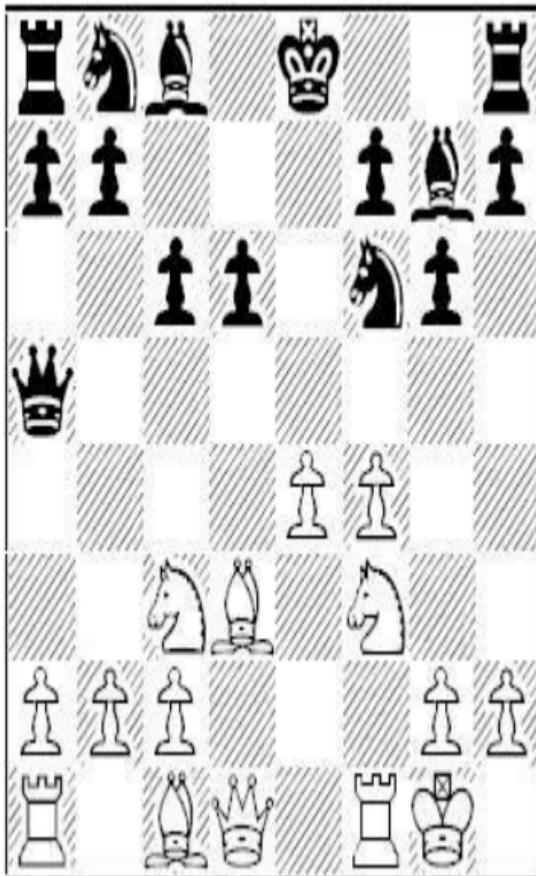
If you don't believe me even after this awesome sales pitch then

let me remind you of the stats. Black's score from this position: an impressive 52%.

## **8 Nf3**

White transfers his knight, which may become a target on d4, to the kingside, where Black's king must surely reside, in preparation for an attack. Later in the chapter we examine 8 0-0, 8 Nb3, 8 h3, 8 Be3 and 8 Qe2. Many of these lines eventually merge and transpose into one another. Don't trouble yourself with such details. Just go over the games with the intention of getting a foothold on Black's strategic and defensive ideas.

**8 ... Bg7 9 0-0**



**9 ... 0-0**

**Question:** In similar Pirc-style

positions Black normally plays ...  
Bg4

to reduce White's attacking chances. Is this idea playable here?

**Answer:** Yes. Black may borrow an idea from our cousin the Pirc, where he willingly hands White the bishop pair in order to remove some of the heat from White's attack. After 10 Be3 Nbd7 11 h3 Bxf3 12 Qxf3 0-0 13 Rad1 b5 14 a3 Qc7 15 Rd2 a5 16 Rfd1 Rfe8 Black has play against White's e-pawn, A.Badmatsyrenov-S.Yudin, Irkutsk 2009.

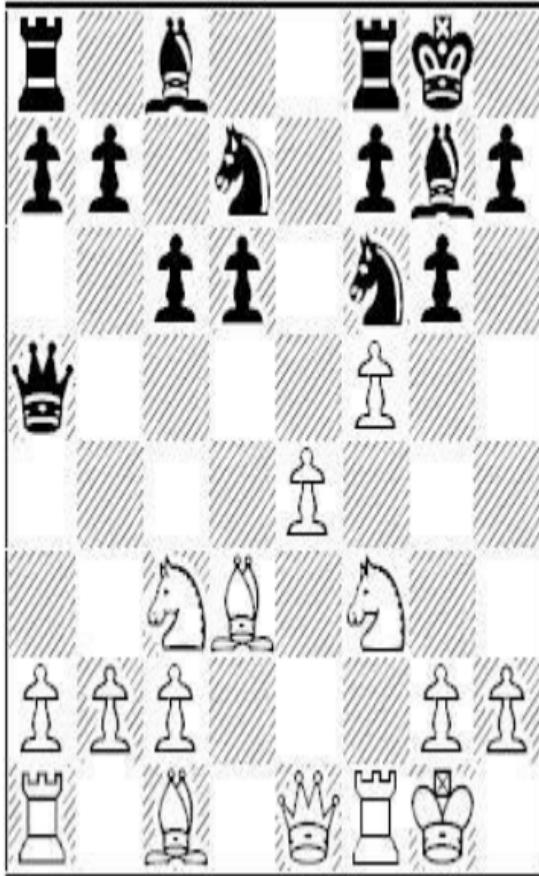
## **10 Qe1**

Playing it Sicilian style to h4

later.

10 Kh1 Nbd7 11 a3 b5 12 Bd2 Qc7 13 Qe1 Bb7 14 Qh4, M.Congiu-C.Gadarinian, Marseille 2005, is the setup Black wants. He should follow up with ... Rae8 and then begin to push the queenside pawns.

**10 ... Nbd7 11 f5!**



“Carpe diem!” wrote the Roman poet Horace – “Seize the day!” White draws a line in the sand with

this no-nonsense approach. He hands over the e5-square in order to accelerate his kingside assault.

In my research, the scariest lines for Black are those where White avoids caution and plays directly for mate with a quick f5. Most players as White, however, find the early f5 push too committal and are unwilling to hand over e5 so quickly to Black. After all, the pawn can never go back home again to f4, and playing it to f5 is a bit like a space mission of sending astronauts to Mars without contemplating how to bring them back. It's lucky for us that most

players love the concept of taking big risks in the abstract, but are far less likely to go through with those risks in the concrete.

**Question:** I would love it if my opponents played an early f5 on me. Just look at that weak e4-pawn and the hole on e5. Why are you nervous about the early f5 lines?

**Answer:** I'm nervous about the looming threat of mate! A hole on e5 and a weak e4-pawn are great, but they don't do us much good if our king goes belly-up in the next 20 moves. Our biggest problem is that it's hard to use e5 since playing

... Ne5 weakens control over the critical f6-square.

## **11 ... Nc5!?**

A high risk move.

**Question:** Why?

**Answer:** Azmai (I refuse to spell out his entire name!) believes in aggressive defence and hits the bishop on d3, as well as increasing pressure on the e4-pawn. The downside is that ... Nc5 weakens his grip on e5, and more importantly, f6.

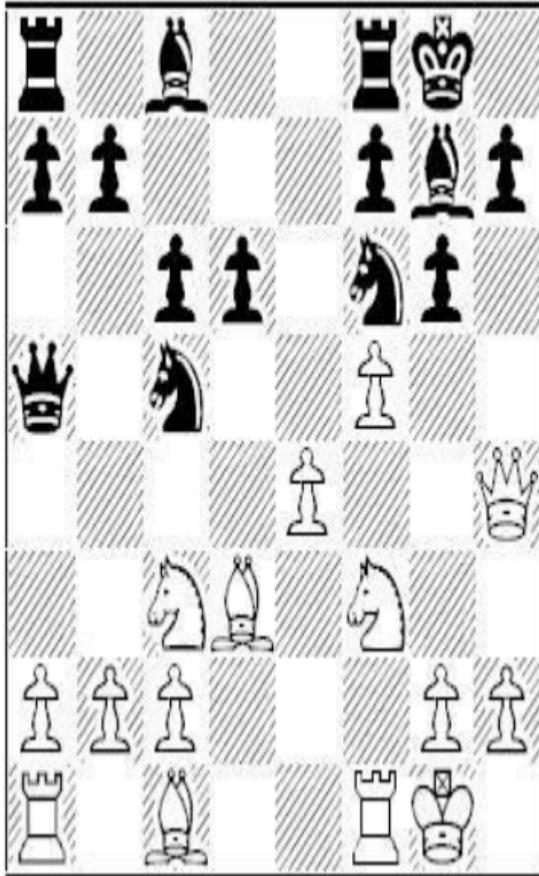
I tend to retain a black knight on d7 whenever White plays a quick f5. A possible sequence is 11 ... Re8 12 Qh4 b5 13 Bg5 b4 14 Ne2 Ba6 15

Ng3 Qb6+! (eventually the queen manages to connect defensively with the f6-knight) 16 Kh1 c5 (worrying White with ... c4 ideas) 17 Nd2 and now 17 ... d5!, a dual-purpose move:

1. Black strikes back in the centre; and
2. Black's queen connects with f6, a vulnerable square in this line.

Perhaps the chances are dynamically balanced.

**12 Qh4**



**Exercise (critical decision):**  
White plans the no-brainer Sicilian Grand

Prix attacking plan with Bh6 and Ng5. How should Black respond?

### **Answer: 12 ... gxf5!**

If Azmai were a political leader he would be minister of defence. Here he tries a radical but sound defensive idea. He takes the principle "Counter in the centre when attacking on the wings" to a new level of chutzpah.

### **13 Bh6!**

White didn't sac a pawn just to go into a difficult ending with 13 exf5?! Nxd3 14 cxd3 Qxf5! 15 Bh6 Qg4!. The point – White must exchange queens.

**Question:** This is crazy. After

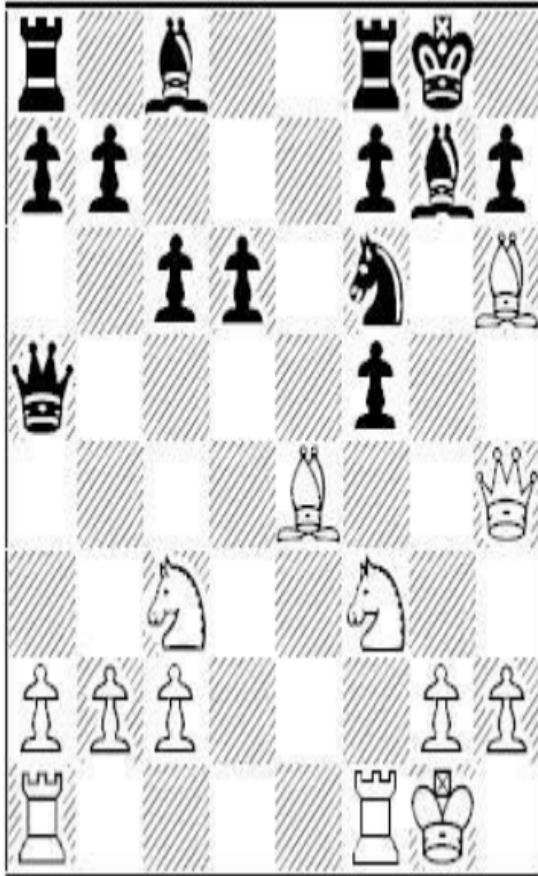
13 Bh6 it looks to me like Black is on the verge of getting mated. How to save our king?

**Answer:** I admit that the Pribyl/Rat is ill-suited for players with nervous dispositions! Relax, Black is still okay according to a higher authority – the computers.

### **13 ... Ncxe4**

Covering against both Qg5 and Qg3.

### **14 Bxe4**



**Exercise (critical decision):**  
Which way should Black recapture?  
**14 ... fxe4?**

**Answer:** Black is okay if he swaps another piece with 14 ... Nxe4! 15 Bxg7 Kxg7 16 Nxe4 fxe4 17 Qxe4 Bf5 18 Qd4+ f6 19 Qxd6 Rad8 15 Nxe4 fxe4, and if 16 Qg3 Black has the resource 16 ... Qb6+! 17 Kh1 Qxb2 which leaves him up three pawns and there's no mate for White.

### **15 Ng5! Bf5 16 Bxg7**

White shouldn't get carried away with 16 Rxf5?? Qxf5 17 Rf1 since 17 ... Qg4! wins.

### **16 ... Kxg7 17 Qf4!**



## **Exercise (multiple choice):**

Which line is Black's best?

- a) 17 ... h6; b) 17 ... Qc5+; or c)

17 ... Qb6+.

The ending which arises after 17 Qf2 Kg6 18 Ngxe4! Nxe4 19 Nxe4 Qb6! 20 Nxd6 Qxf2+ 21 Rxf2 Be6 22 Nxb7 Rfb8 23 Na5 Rxb2 24 Nxc6 looks drawish due to the reduced material on the board.

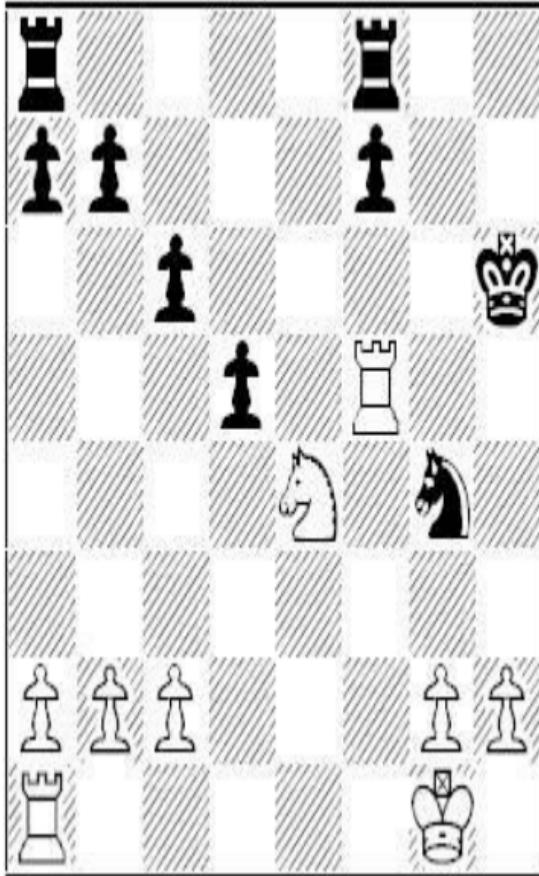
### **17 ... h6?**

It's understandable that Black feels he must swap queens with some urgency. However, he trades one problem for another and lands in an inferior ending.

**Answer:** The queen must participate in the defensive work with c) 17 ... Qb6+! 18 Kh1 Qxb2. Now White can win a piece with 19

Na4 Qe5 20 Qxe5 dxe5 21 Rxf5 h6  
but Black's three pawns give him reasonable counter-chances.

**18 Qxf5 Qxf5 19 Rxf5 hxg5  
20 Rxg5+ Kh6 21 Rf5 Ng4 22 Nxe4 d5**



**Exercise:** Should White go after Black's king by playing his knight to g3? Or should he

plunge into d6 looking for pawn targets?

## **23 Ng3?**

**Answer:** He continues to go after Black's king, but the wrong way. 23 Nd6! leaves Black struggling. White threatens both a direct attack on Black's king and to pick off pawns.

## **23 ... Kg6 24 c3 Rae8**

The storm has passed.

## **25 Rf4 Ne3! 26 Re1 Re5 27 Re2 Rfe8 28 Ref2 f5!**

Black grabs more central space and contains White's pieces on the kingside. Suddenly Black stands better with:

1. More centralized pieces;
2. A more mobile pawn majority;
3. A more active king; and
4. White's passed h-pawn is hard to push and easily contained.

**29 h3 c5!**

Black's queenside majority rolls forward.

**30 Nf1 Nc4!**

Preparing to transfer the knight to its optimal spot on d6.

**31 Ng3 Nd6 32 R2f3 Re1+**

**33 Kh2 R8e5 34 Rh4 Rb1 35 b4!**

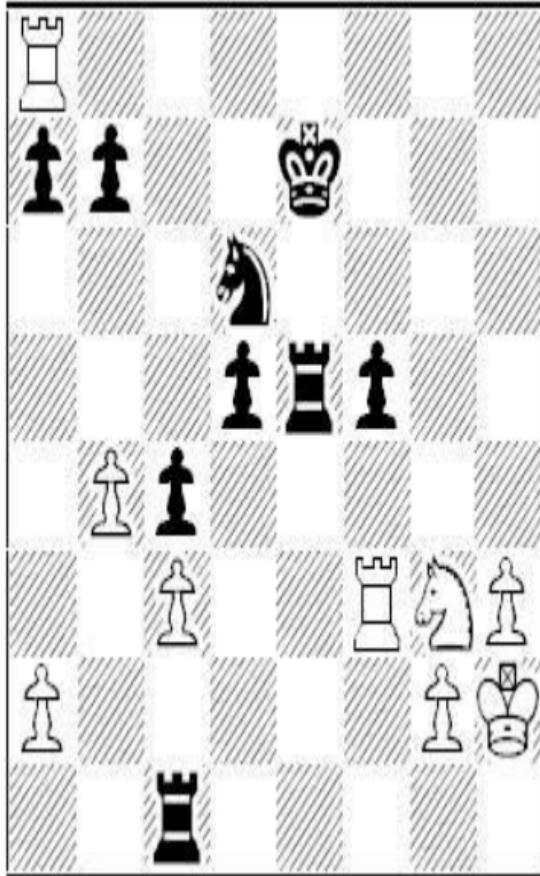
Better than going passive with 35 Rf2.

## **35 ... c4!?**

The alternative is to create a passed d-pawn with 35 ... cxb4 36 cxb4 Nc4.

## **36 Rh8 Rc1 37 Rg8+ Kf7 38 Rd8 Ke7 39 Ra8?!**

Going after a useless pawn.  
Better to stay active with 39 Rh8!.



**Exercise:** Black has a winning idea. Can you find it?

**Answer:** 39 ... f4!

Deflection!

**40 Rxf4**

40 Nh1 Ree1 41 Nf2 Re2 42 Rxf4 Rcc2 43 Kg1 Rxc3 is of no help to White. Black's central passers move too quickly.

**40 ... Rxc3**

Black's passed c- and d-pawns easily outrace White's kingside passers.

**41 Rg8 Rce3 42 Rg7+ Ke8  
43 h4 c3 44 Rf2 d4 45 h5 d3 46  
h6 Re6! 47 h7 Rh6+**

Ending the pawn's dream of upward mobility.

**48 Kg1 c2 0-1**

**Summary:** 11 f5!? is scary stuff, but we command adequate resources if we keep our cool. If you don't like the position Black got in this game then try 11 ... Re8.

**Homework Assignment:** This is the kind of position you should play around with on a computer. Take White's side after 11 f5 and attack. Learn how your computers defend.

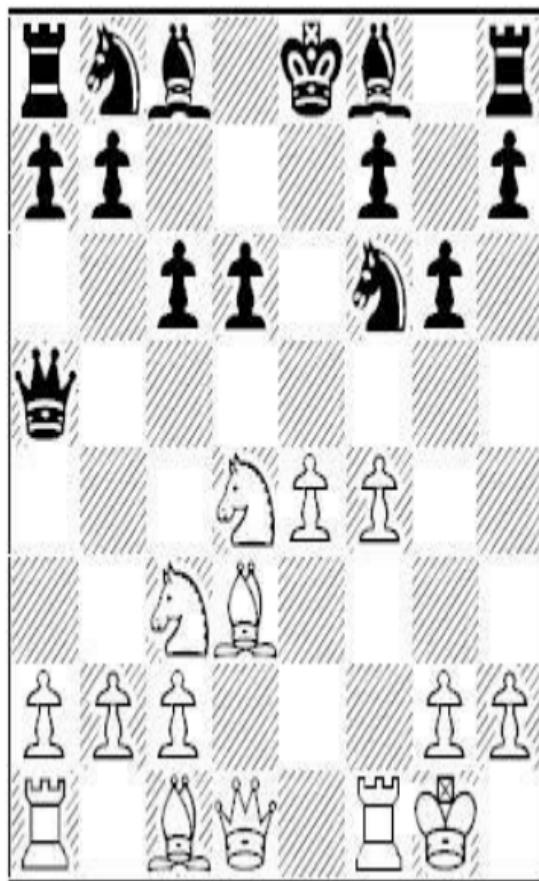
Game 18

**R.Hungaski-R.Felgaer**

Buenos Aires 2005

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 f4**

**Qa5 5 Bd3 e5 6 Nf3 exd4 7 Nxd4 g6 8 0-0**



**Question:** Doesn't Black have a

method of  
exploiting the pin on the g1-a7  
diagonal?

**Answer:** No, I wish there was. White, undaunted by potential ghosts on the g1-a7 diagonal, reasons that there is no good reason to waste time and retreat the well posted d4-knight. White isn't bothered by 8 ... Qb6 9 Be2! Bg7 10 Be3! Qxb2?! 11 Qd2 when his massive development lead and coming attack easily outweigh Black's extra pawn.

**Question:** So does White save a tempo this way?

**Answer:** In theory yes, but in

practice no. White nearly always moves his knight to b3 or f3 later on. So this temporary gain of a tempo is just that – temporary.

### **8 ... Bg7 9 Kh1**

Vacating the diagonal and preparing Be3 to meet a future ... Ng4 with Bg1.

**Question:** White is miles ahead in development.

What if he just goes for it with 9 e5?

**Answer:** We must be psychologically prepared for these huffy lunges, and learn to nimbly grab the bait and run! 9 ... dxe5 10 fxe5 Ng4 11 Ne4 and now:

a) If Black plays the cool 11 ... 0-0 12 Nf6+ Bxf6 13 exf6 Qb6! (hitting d4, as well as generating the nasty threat ... c5 and ... c4+) 14 Be2 Rd8 15 c3 c5 16 Bxg4 cxd4 17 c4 d3+ 18 Kh1 Bxg4 19 Qxg4 Qd4 20 Qh3 h5 the position remains somewhat unclear:

1. Black, for now, managed to seal off avenues to the leaky dark squares and White's attack.

2. The monster d-pawn is Godzilla approaching Tokyo.

Conclusion: Either Black gets mated or squashes White with the advanced d-pawn – I'm not sure which. Rybka's assessment: dead

even at 0.00!

b) We can also risk our lives with 11 ... Qxe5 12 Nf3 Qd5 13 h3 Ne5 14 Nxe5 Bxe5 15 Qe2 Be6. Yes, White's development lead provides compensation for the pawn, but we rats shouldn't mind taking a bit of heat. Think of it as an attempt to grab the cheese from the rat trap without getting one of our paws snapped off.

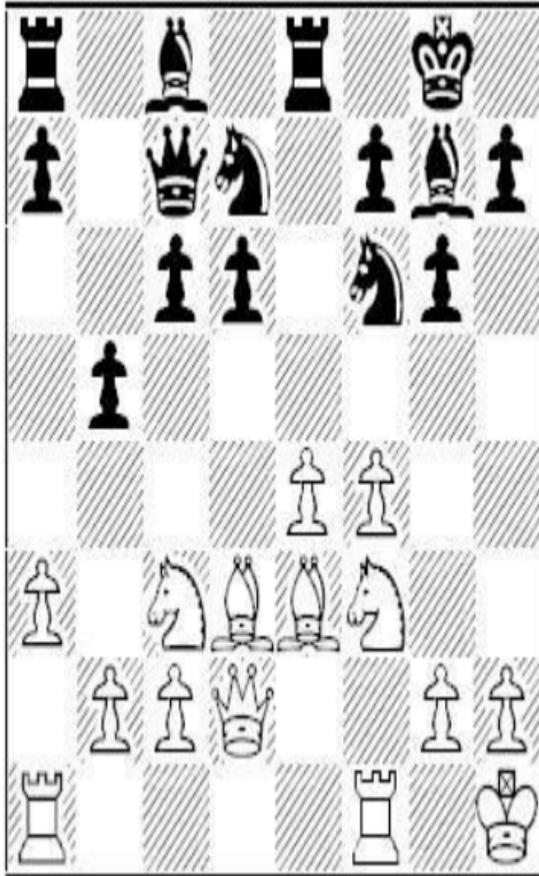
**9 ... 0-0 10 Be3 Re8 11 Qd2 Nbd7 12 a3 Qc7 13 Nf3**

**Question:** Why an unforced retreat?

**Answer:** This was what we discussed earlier. In a sense this is

an admission that the knight on d4 wasn't all that great after all, and it heads to the kingside to help the attack.

**13 ... b5!**



Thematic and multipurpose. Just remember, the Pribyl/Rat is a black sheep cousin of the Pirc, Modern

and Philidor. And we often borrow strategies used in those openings. Black has designs on White's weak e4-pawn. I mentioned this plan last game but it's worth repeating:

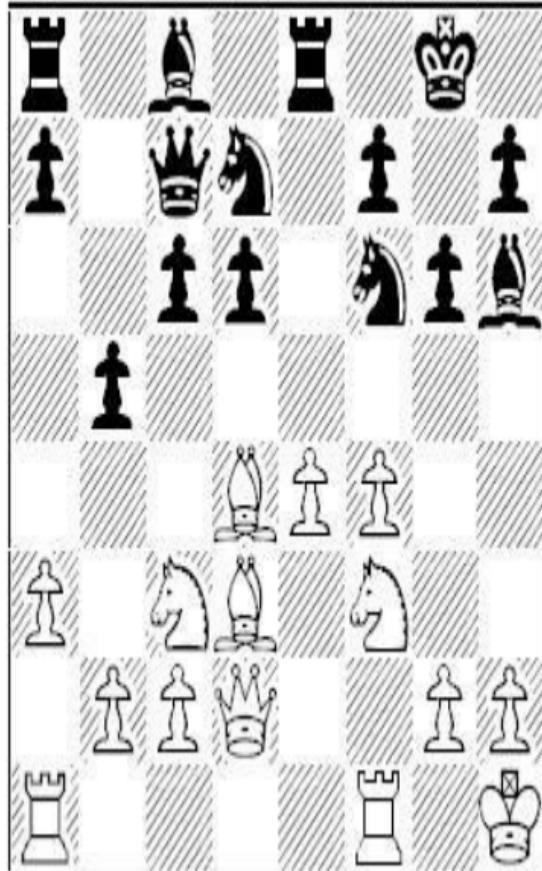
1. Play the bishop to b7 and a rook to e8, which takes aim at e4.
2. Play ... a5 and ... b4, which ejects the defending white knight from c3.
3. Or, play ... a6 and ... c5, which threatens both ... c4, bumping off White's defender on d3, and ... b4, kicking the c3-knight from the defence of e4 once again.

## **14 Bd4?!**

Wasting time. He should

continue developing with 14 Rae1  
or just go for it with 14 f5.

**14 ... Bh6?!**



An original, albeit crazy idea. I tell some of my students that they would play so much better if they could only suppress their creative urges during the game! My advice to them is “Play simple, logical moves”, but most don’t listen. Many suffer from the Kasparov/Shirov syndrome, which is the compulsion to reinvent the wheel and attempt to create a masterpiece every game. While it seems to work well for the Kasparovs and Shirovs of the world, this strategy generally blows up on the rest of us non-geniuses.

Black gets a nice position if he plays thematically with 14 ... a6! 15

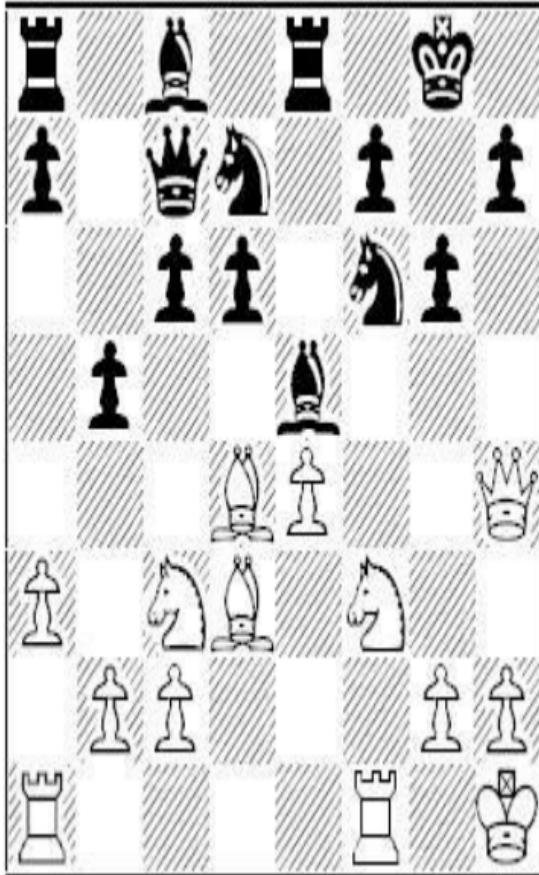
Rae1 c5 followed by ... Bb7.

**Question:** I like 14 ... Bh6, don't you? It ties White's queen down to the f-pawn with an annoying pin and discourages attacking ideas like Qf2 and Qh4.

**Answer: 15 Qf2!**

Does it? White simply sacs it for a strong attack.

**15 ... Bxf4 16 Qh4 Be5**



## **Exercise (critical decision):**

Should White take on e5 with his bishop, which gains time, or

should he take with the knight which takes control over the dark squares?

**Answer:** Equation: time>dark squares.

**17 Bxe5! dxe5 18 Ng5!**

With the inexorable threat to sac on f7.

**18 ... Kg7!**

Only move. Attempts to cover f7 fail miserably:

a) 18 ... Re7?? 19 Nxh7.

b) 18 ... Rf8? 19 Qh6! Qd6 20

Rad1 Qe7 21 Bc4!! bxc4 22 Rxd7! destabilizes f6 and mates.

**19 Nxf7! Ng8**

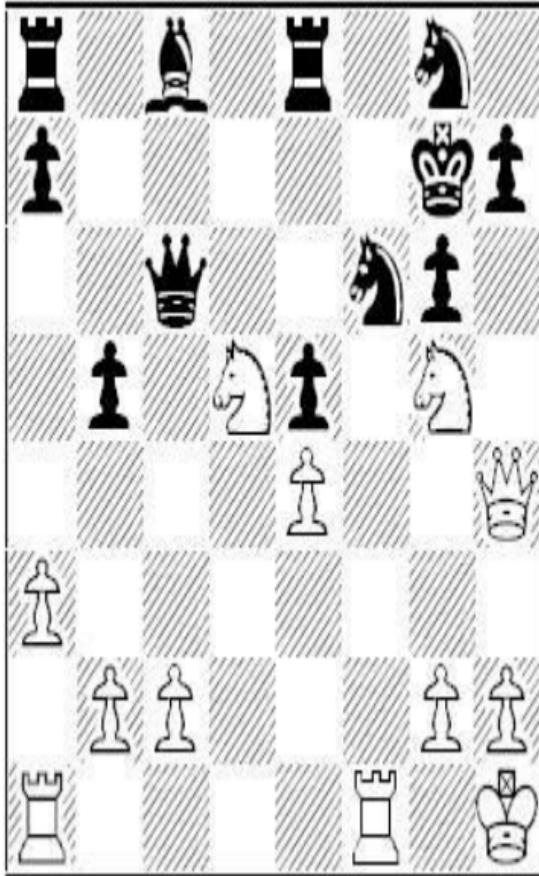
Covering h6. Black's misfortunes

continue to pile up. Acceptance leads to immediate annihilation after 19 ... Kxf7?? 20 Qxh7+ Ke6 21 Rxf6+! Kxf6 22 Rf1+ Ke6 23 Qxg6+.

## **20 Bxb5!**

Nice! White finds a way to send in fresh reserves for the attack by clearing d5. He isn't satisfied with the slight advantage he gets with 20 Ng5.

**20 ... cxb5 21 Nd5 Qc6 22 Ng5 Ndf6**



## **Exercise (multiple choice):**

Continue White's attack:

- a) 23 Rf3, preparing to double

rooks;

b) 23 Nf7, plunging in with a deflection sac;

c) 23 Rxf6, annihilating another defender.

### **Answer: 23 Rxf6!**

White prepares the rapid entry of the a1-rook into the attack.

### **23 ... Nxf6 24 Rf1**

Despite being a rook in the hole, White's ferocious attack means more.

### **24 ... h6 25 Rxf6**

The knight on g5 sits immune to prosecution.

### **25 ... Be6! 26 Nf7!**

White brilliantly continues to

peel off layer after layer of Black's defences by exploiting the pin to go after the new target, h6.

## **26 ... Bxd5!**

The only move to stay alive. Black deftly avoided yet another path to slaughter which lay in 26 ... Rh8?? 27 Rxg6+! Kxg6 28 Nxe5+ Kg7 29 Qe7+ Kg8 30 Nf6 mate. Black's weary king, having been driven under so many buses, must by now see them in his dreams.

## **27 Rxc6 Bxc6 28 Nxh6 Rf8!**



**Exercise (calculation):** Does  
29 Nf5+ work for White?  
**29 Nf5+?**

**Answer:** No, it only leads to a draw. In this game Hungaski displays an almost spiritual contempt for the value of the material he tosses his opponent's way. In this instance he goes so far into debt that he simply runs out of pieces to sacrifice.

If White had played the calmer 29 Kg1! Rad8 30 h3! his queen and knight team would have every chance to score a knockout punch on Black's king.

**29 ... gxf5 30 Qg5+**

30 Qe7+ leads to perpetual check.

**30 ... Kf7 31 Qxf5+ Ke7 32**

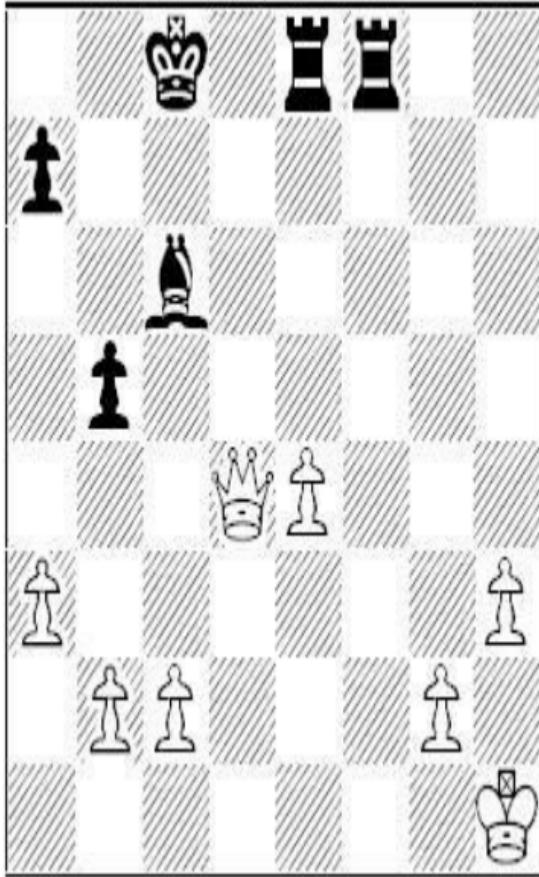
## **Qxe5+ Kd7 33 h3?!**

Watering his lawn while his house is on fire. One of the hardest things to do in chess is to let go of the memory of a previously winning position. White, numb to the danger, mistakenly plays for a win when it is high time to grasp the draw with 33 Qg7+ Kd6 34 Qg3+ Kc5 35 Qe3+.

### **33 ... Rae8**

Suddenly the perpetual disappeared and only Black holds the chances to win.

### **34 Qd4+ Kc8**



**Exercise (calculation):** Follow the line 35 Qxa7 Rxe4 36 Qa6+ Kc7 37 Qa7+ Kd6 38 Qa5 Rg8

Target: g2. 39 Qd2+ Kc7 40 Qa5+ Kb7

(the checks end) 41 Qd2 Rxg2!  
and Black wins.

An impressive 14-ply if you visualized it to the end.

**Question:** You keep handing out calculation exercises which are way past my capabilities. Do I just skip them?

**Answer:** Absonotly! Do the exercises and just go as far as you can until the position gets completely fuzzy in your mind, even if it is 3-ply! These visualization exercises take practice. Make a determination to work up to 4-ply,

and try to keep moving the number higher. I have read that each ply you push further boosts your rating by about 100 points! So don't discount even a small gain in your visualization abilities.

**35 Qc3 Kb7 36 Qg7+ Ka8**

Black's king reaches a safe haven. All that is left is for his pieces to take aim at White's king.

**37 Qc7 Bxe4 38 Kg1 Bb7 39 Qc5**

The once proud queen has been brought low and now has nothing to do but simply drift like an unmanned (unwomaned?) probe in deep space.

**39 ... Rc8 40 Qb4 Rg8 0-1**

After 41 g4 Rxc2 42 Qd6 Rgc8 a back rank mate is not far off.

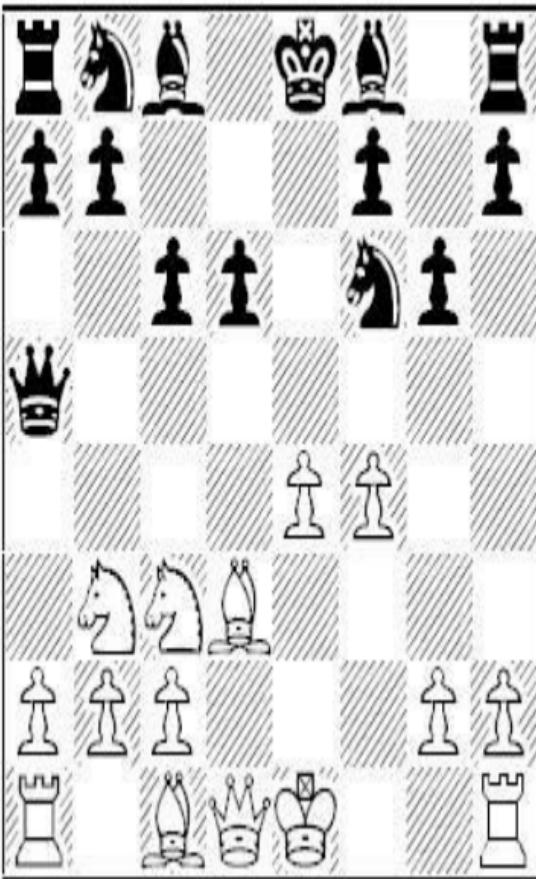
**Summary:** 8 0-0 is White's most popular choice, but no improvement over 8 Nf3 since he tends to move his knight later to f3 anyway.

Game 19

**S.Lovlu-N.Murshed**

Sakthi 1996

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 f4  
Qa5 5 Bd3 e5 6 Nf3 exd4 7  
Nxd4 g6 8 Nb3**



Common, but illogical to my mind.  
**Question:** Why illogical? He

gains a tempo.

**Answer:** Illogical for the following reasons:

1. White chases Black's queen to where it wants to go.

2. White normally builds up for a kingside attack. So why transfer the knight over to the queenside?

3. The knight finds itself vulnerable to ... a5-a4.

**8 ... Qc7**

8 ... Qb6? loses a tempo to 9 h3! Bg7 10 Qf3 0-0 11 Be3.

**9 0-0 Bg7 10 Kh1**

Alternatively:

a) 10 Qe1 0-0 11 Qh4 a5! 12 a4 Na6 13 h3 Qb6+!, C.Shytaj-

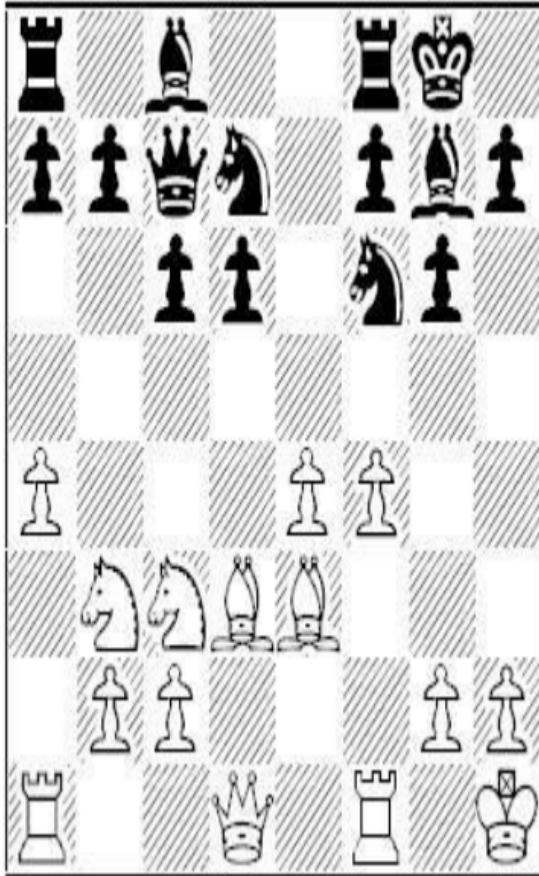
P.Lovati, Bratto 2003. Now White is pretty much forced to swap queens since 14 Kh1?! is met with 14 ... Nb4 15 Rf3 Be6 targeting b3 and d3.

b) 10 f5 Nbd7 11 Bf4 Ne5 12 Qd2, J.Gomez-M.Vassallo Barroche, Mislata 2005. Black's control over e5 gives him compensation for White's kingside space.

c) 10 e5?! (Black's position isn't as fragile as it looks and he easily withstands this kamikaze attempt) 10 ... dxe5 11 fxe5 Ng4 12 e6?? Qxh2 mate! "JohnnyBallgame"- C.Lakdawala, Internet blitz 2010. Even after the superior 12 Bf4 Nxe5

I don't see any real compensation for White, as he can't exploit the pin.

**10 ... 0-0 11 Be3 Nbd7 12 a4!?**



**Question:** Why mess around on the queenside?  
Shouldn't he be attacking on the

other wing?

**Answer:** This is a new plan for White. He feels no great urgency in going all out for a kingside attack and instead restrains Black's queenside expansion, similar to how White plays positionally against the Scheveningen Sicilian.

**12 ... b6!**

**Question:** To prevent a5?

**Answer:** Black, undaunted by White's a4, sticks to his plan of enforcing ... b5 with ... a6, ... Bb7 and ... b5.

**13 Qd2 a6!**

Reminding White that a4 delayed, but didn't halt, Black's

queenside expansion.

## **14 Be2**

Perhaps nervous about future plans of ... Nc5 or ... c5 and ... c4, White re-routes his bishop to f3 in preparation of adding pressure to d6.

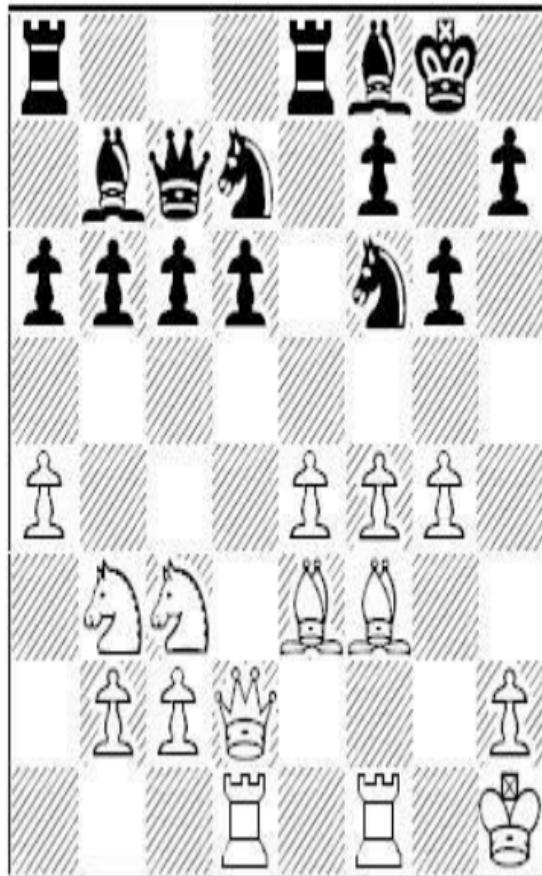
**14 ... Re8 15 Bf3 Bb7 16**

**Ra1 Bf8**

**Question:** Is Black on the defensive and in trouble?

**Answer:** No. Don't mistake a temporary retreat for loss of initiative. We rats are humble, kind folk, who don't mind occasionally backing down in order to protect our backward d-pawns.

# 17 g4?!



Some of my students tremble  
like 9-year-old girls at a Justin

Bieber concert when their opponents bang out g4. Whenever I play the Black side of an Open Sicilian, I just love when White goes gaga and tosses in g4. Here, White's central position is even more volatile than in the Sicilian, and it just looks like over-optimism on his part. The key is for Black to find ways to distract and disrupt in the centre and queenside before White's attack gets out of control.

## **17 ... b5**

The forecast: good with a 80% chance of terrific! Black doesn't buy into the alleged ferocity of White's attack and begins his counterattack

immediately.

## **18 Qg2?**

Hoping to cauterize the wound on e4.

18 g5 Nh5 19 Bxh5? isn't a real threat since it creates chronic weaknesses on the light squares in the centre after 19 ... gxh5 20 Qg2 b4 21 Ne2 c5 22 Nd2 d5!. I don't like White's position after 19 Qg2 but it must be played.

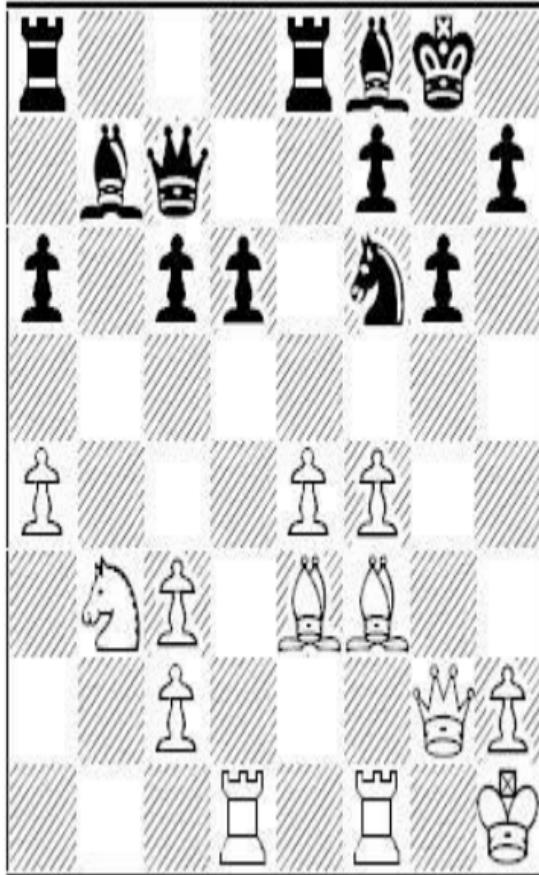
## **18 ... b4 19 g5**

Agreeing to allow his queenside pawns to be turned into chutney paste. However, 19 Ne2 Nxe4! 20 Bxe4 Rxe4 wasn't exactly tempting either.

**19 ... bxc3 20 gxf6 Nxf6 21**

**bxc3**

Just look at White's ugly pawn structure!



**Exercise (combination alert):**  
Murshed missed a difficult combination here. Can

you spot what it is?

**21 ... Bg7?!**

**Answer:** 21 ... Nxe4! (21 ... Rxе4! is also very good) 22 Bxe4 Rxе4 23 Qxe4 c5 24 Rd5 and now the key idea is 24 ... Re8!! 25 Qxe8 Bxd5+ 26 Kg1 Bc6! trapping the queen on e8!

**22 Bf2 c5 23 Nd2 Bc6 24**

**Rfe1 Rad8 25 Ra1 Nd7**

White must have regretted his g4. It's just a matter of time before pawns begin to drop.

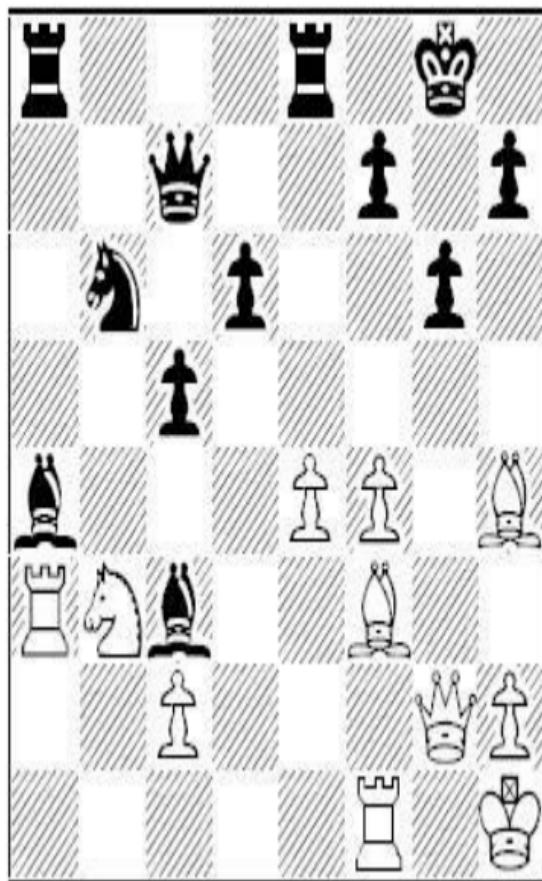
**26 Ra3 a5 27 Nc4 Nb6 28**

**Nxa5 Bxa4 29 Bh4?!**

29 Nc4 Bxc2 30 Ne3 Bd3 was forced.

29 ... Ra8 30 Nb3 Bxc3 31

Rf1



**Exercise (combination alert):**

Well, not really a combination  
as much as a path for Black to  
win material.

**Answer: 31 ... Nc4! 32 Rxa4**

He must pick his poison. If he backs up he gets forked after 32 Ra2 Ne3.

**32 ... Rxa4 33 Qf2 Nb6 34 f5  
Bg7 35 Bg5 Raxe4! 0-1**

The simplest.

**Summary:** 8 Nb3, planning to play the game in Sicilian style, doesn't look logical since the move deflates White's kingside attack and only stalls Black on the queenside. Also, if White plays g4, strike back hard

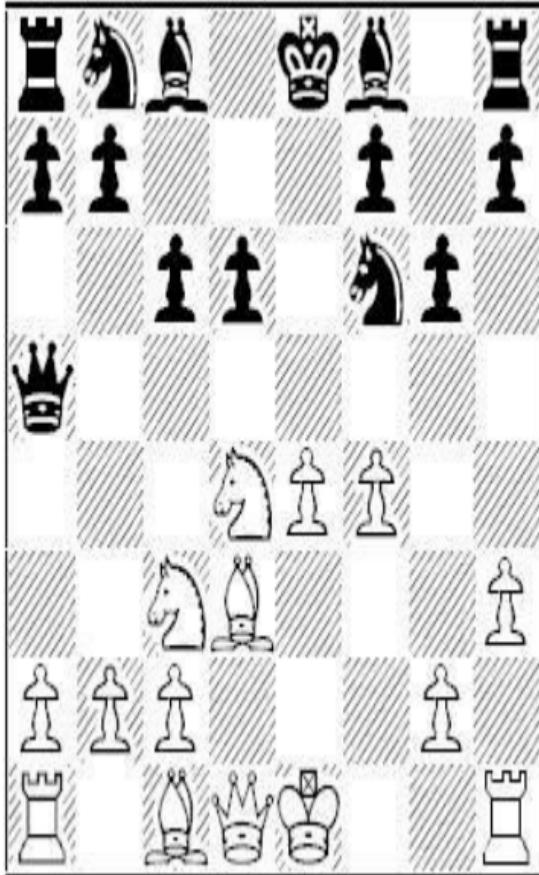
and fast in the centre.

Game 20

**S.Sjugirov-D.Bocharov**

Serpukhov 2008

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 f4  
Qa5 5 Bd3 e5 6 Nf3 exd4 7  
Nxd4 g6 8 h3**



**Question:** Isn't this move passive?

**Answer:** Think of it as an

insurance policy where White remains cheapo-free by covering the g4-square before doing anything else.

### **8 ... Bg7 9 Be3 0-0 10 0-0**

A student asked me if it would be crazy to castle queenside. My Answer: "Yes!" It looks like Black's attack arrives incredibly fast with ... b5 and ... b4. Also, Black's queen on a5 and bishop on g7 take direct aim at White's king. One other factor to take into account is that it's hard to find any high-rated games where White does castle queenside. If GMs dodge this path, they probably know something the rest of us

don't.

**10 ... Nbd7 11 Qf3 Re8 12 Rad1**

## **Rad1**

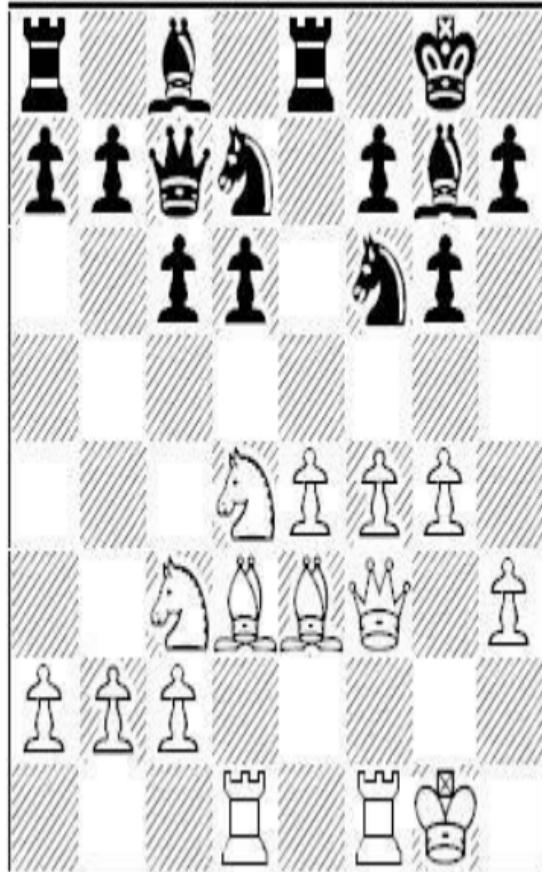
Showing remarkable restraint in holding back g4. Two examples of 12 g4:

a) 12 ... Nc5 13 f5 (V.Varadi-L.Kernazhitsky, Szombathely 2003) and now Black should probably head back with 13 ... Qd8 14 Rae1 Nfd7. I would take Black if I had a choice.

b) 12 ... h6 13 Qf2 Re7 14 Nf3 b5 15 e5!? dxe5 16 fxe5 Nxe5 17 Nxe5 Rxe5 18 Bd4 Re6 19 Rae1 Qc7!, A.Onischuk-R.Schmaltz, Viernheim 1995. White should have

taken the draw with 20 Rxe6 Bxe6  
21 Bxf6 Bxf6 22 Qxf6 Qg3+.

**12 ... Qc7 13 g4**



Another recovering g4-holic succumbs to temptation.

**Question:** I hate to challenge your deep-seated resentment towards g4,

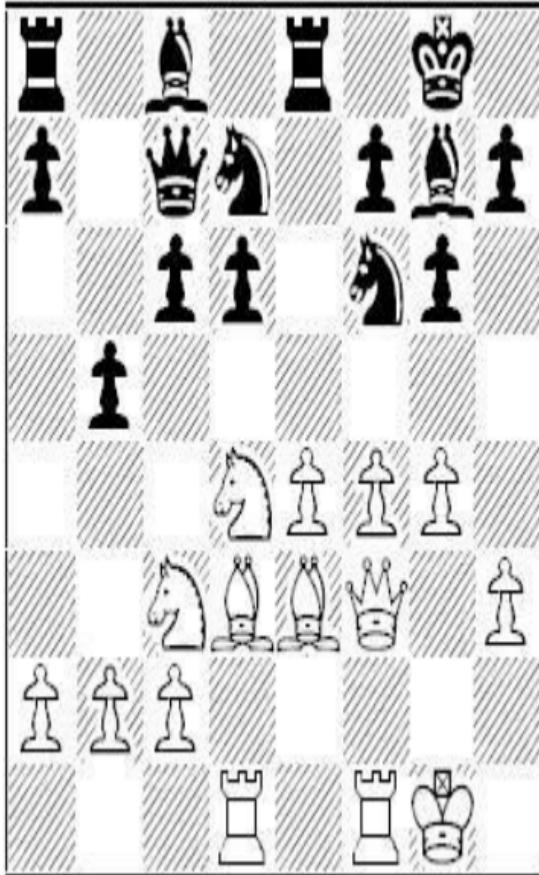
but here the thrust looks rather dangerous for Black, doesn't it?

**Answer:** We already saw this movie last game, and we already know how it turned out. There is a fine line between bravery and suicide! Unlike the last game, 13 g4!? looks sounder but it's still high risk in this position. This time the e4 point looks well covered and he may transfer his c3-knight to g3. White's problem may be more

psychological. Once he plays g4 he can't resist and keeps going forward in a mad rush – many times over the cliff!

### **13 ... b5?!**

Mistimed. There was no urgency for this move. He should throw in 13 ... h6! first.



**Exercise (multiple choice):**  
Before White lies an array of temptations:

- a) 14 g5: push the g-pawn forward;
- b) 14 Bxb5: sac a piece to demolish Black's centre;
- c) 14 e5: strike in the centre.

## **14 g5?!**

See what I mean? These serial g-pawn pushers can't stop. Their hands begin shaking and move closer and closer to that g-pawn.

**Answer:** b) 14 Bxb5! looks good for White. White gets three pawns plus initiative for the piece if Black accepts the offer. Black should decline and instead sac a pawn of his own to gain time: 14 ... Bb7! 15 Bd3 a6 (intending ... c5

next) 16 g5 c5! 17 gxf6 cxd4 18 Bxd4 Bxf6. Black gets some, but probably not full, compensation for the pawn due to White's looseness.

### **14 ... Nh5 15 f5!?**

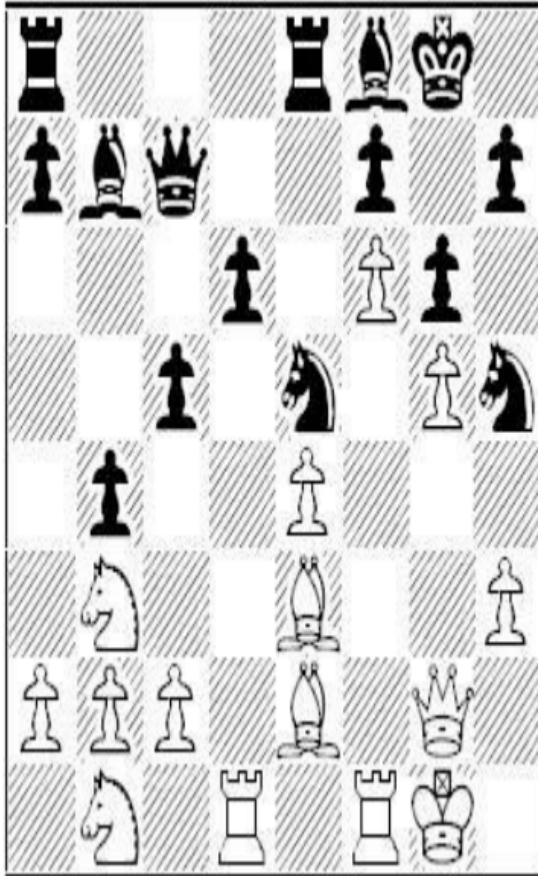
The compulsion to push overwhelms the voice of restraint. Now White begins to overextend. Perhaps he should take the plunge into the complications of 15 e5 dxe5 16 Ndxb5 cxb5! 17 Qxa8 exf4 18 Nxb5 Qe5. Black gets loads of compensation, but at least White has the exchange to comfort him.

### **15 ... Ne5 16 Qg2 Bb7**

Black wins a pawn after 16 ... b4! 17 Nce2 Nxd3 18 cxd3 c5 19

Nb3 Bxb2. Still, it's understandable that he wanted to hang on to the powerhouse on e5.

**17 f6 Bf8 18 Be2 b4 19 Nb1 c5 20 Nb3**



**Exercise (planning):** One gets the impression that the initiative swung to Black's side. How

exactly do we proceed?

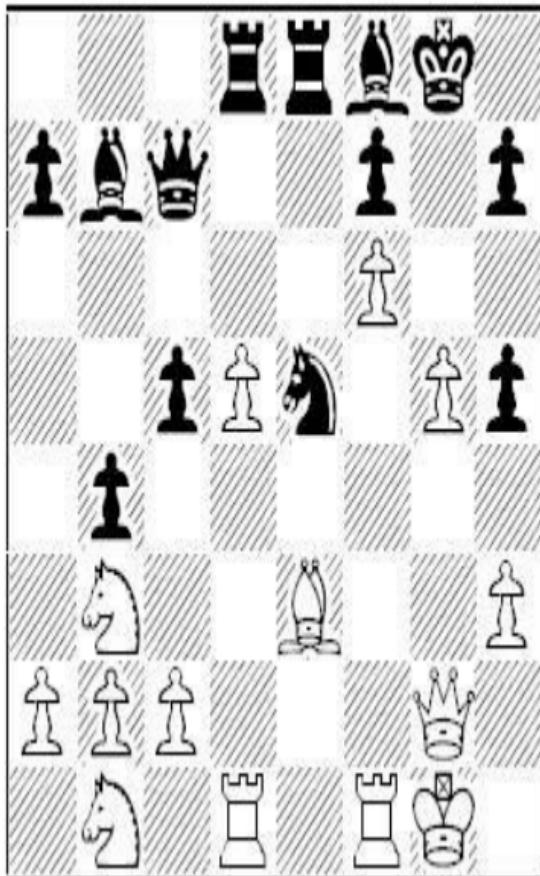
## **Answer: 20 ... d5!**

Principle: Meet a wing attack with a central counter. A move like this should be automatic by now. The central push-back arrives, sending White's mob of disorganized pieces scattering, with all the leaders of the uprising now dead or captured. As in the last game Black is unafraid of Bxh5, since he gets mega-compensation on the light squares.

## **21 Bxh5**

21 exd5 c4 22 Nd4 Nd3! 23 Bxh5 Rx e3 24 Bf3 Nxb2 25 Rd2 Bc5 is awful for White.

**21 ... gxh5 22 exd5 Rad8**



Just as in the last game, White overextended:

1. His own attack is at a dead end;
2. His exposed king resides in grave danger down the h1-a8 diagonal; and
3. His pawns look loose and it's highly unlikely he will hold on to his extra pawn on d5.

### **23 Bf4**

Equally depressing is 23 Qg3 Bxd5 24 N1d2 Nf3+! 25 Rxf3 Qxg3+!.

### **23 ... c4 24 Nd4 Rxd5**

White's position begins to cave in. He loses the extra pawn and now the nasty long diagonal rips open.

**25 Qg3 Qd7 26 c3 Nd3 27**

**Rd2 Re4**

A quicker crush lies in 27 ...

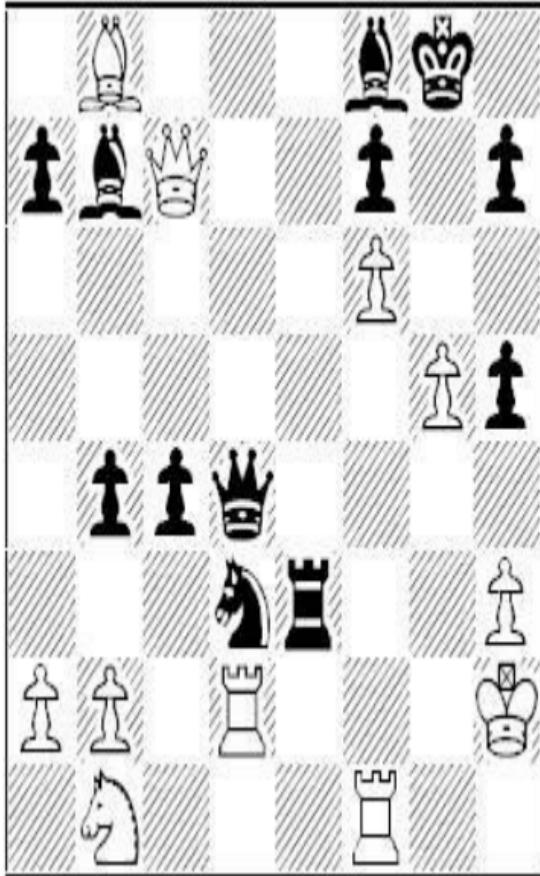
Rxd4! 28 cxd4 Qd5 29 Qh2 Nxf4 30 Rxf4 Bd6.

**28 Bb8 Rdx d4!**

Snatching victory from the jaws of victory. Virtually everything wins. It makes sense to destroy White's only effective piece.

**29 cxd4 Qxd4+ 30 Kh2 Re3**

**31 Qc7**



### **Exercise (combination alert):**

# Mate in four moves.

**Answer:** 31 ... Rxh3+! 32

**Kxh3 Qg4+ 33 Kh2 Qh4+ 34 Kg1 Qh1 mate! (0-1)**

**Summary:** 8 h3 tempts White to play the very risky g4 later on.

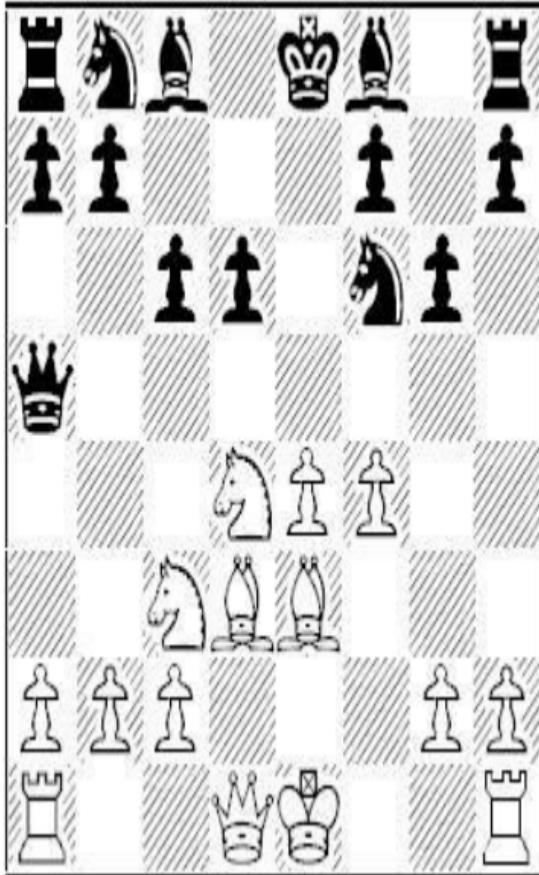
Game 21

**M.Vaseptsov-N.Kabanov**

Kazan 2010

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 f4  
Qa5 5 Bd3 e5 6 Nf3 exd4 7  
Nxd4 g6 8 Be3**

He keeps Black guessing as to which direction he will castle.

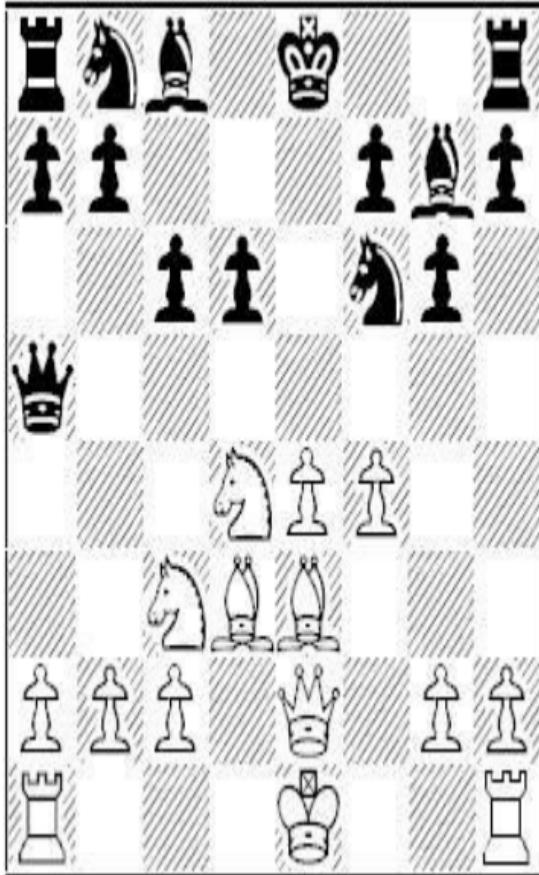


**8 ... Bg7**

**Question:** Should we chase the bishop with ... Ng4?

**Answer:** 8 ... Ng4?! is pointless and fails to gain time if that was Black's intention. 9 Bg1 Bg7 10 h3 regains the lost time and picks up the useful move h3 for free.

**9 Qe2?**



**Question:** Why is this move an error?  
**Answer:** It isn't logical to place

the queen on e2 since a black rook soon appears on the half open e-file. d2 and f3 look like better potential home bases for White's queen:

a) 9 Qd2 0-0 10 h3 Re8 11 0-0-0!?

We talked about this earlier in the chapter. Castling long may indeed be playable, but in my opinion White may be underestimating the force of Black's attack.

11 ... b5 12 Nb3 Qc7 13 Rhe1 Nbd7, A.Aerni-R.Felgaer, Caleta 2010.

Black's attack looks faster. He gets a free kick with ... b4, followed by ... a5-a4.

b) 9 Nb3 Qc7 10 Qd2 0-0 11 0-0-

0?! (queenside castling doesn't mix well with Nb3 lines) 11 ... b5 12 f5 b4 13 Ne2, O.Korneev-C.Lakdawala, Internet blitz 2011. Black's attack arrives at least as quickly as White's after 13 ... a5.

**9 ... 0-0 10 Nb3**

**Question:** Gaining a tempo?

**Answer:** No. We discussed this tempo "gain" a while back. As in some ... Qb6 Sicilian lines, Black happily offers a tempo to decentralize White's knight. Also, the knight on b3 falls victim to ... a5-a4, so there goes the alleged tempo gain he counted on.

**10 ... Qc7 11 0-0 b5**

**Question:** Shouldn't Black complete his development first before undertaking this move?

**Answer:** Probably a wise rule of thumb to follow. Here though, I don't see any method of White exploiting Black's rather strange move order.

### **12 Rae1 Re8 13 Qf3**

An admission of the inaccuracy of 9 Qe2. 13 a3 a5 14 Qf3 b4 doesn't change much.

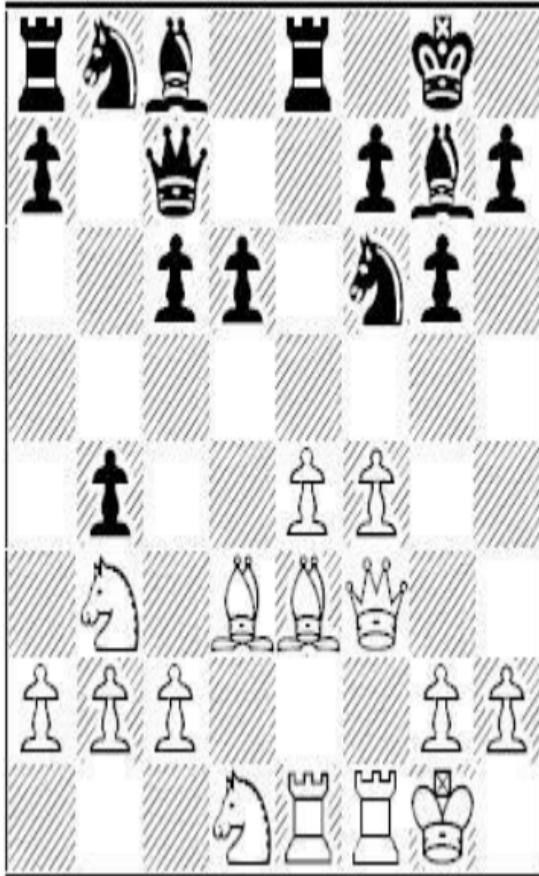
### **13 ... b4**

There goes one defender of e4.

### **14 Nd1**

I don't trust the line 14 e5?!

dxe5 15 Nb5 cxb5 16 Qxa8 Nc6 17 Nc5 when Black has a number of ways to get excellent compensation for the exchange.



**Exercise:** Find a forcing sequence for Black to win a pawn.  
This is an interesting

psychological moment. White, single-mindedly intent on attacking, sacs a pawn. I have my doubts about the level of compensation for his pawn.

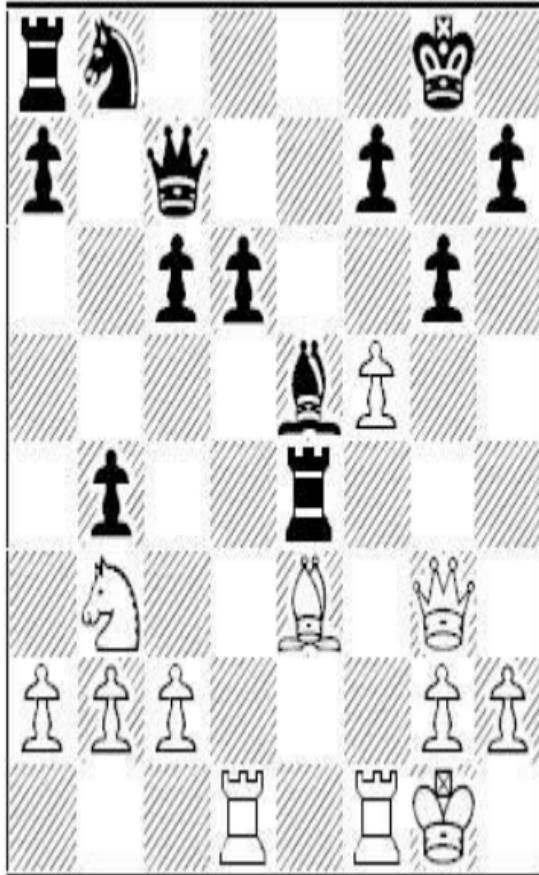
A recent psychological study revealed that when a person invests emotional energy and time into a cause for a long time, the glaring truth of the actual facts – even when they clearly contradict the cherished belief – isn't enough to change the person's mind. As it is in religious and political beliefs, so it is also in chess. Natural attackers always have faith that their attack triumphs in the end, even when

there is no evidence to back up this conclusion. No matter what the actual position, their conclusion always remains: "In this position I must attack!"

**Answer: 14 ... Bg4! 15 Qg3  
Bxd1! 16 Rxd1 Nxe4 17 Bxe4  
Rxe4 18 f5**

White's idea: For the pawn he gets a small development lead and some pressure down the f-file.  
Conclusion: Admittedly White retains some practical chances, but I would take the pawn-up side.

**18 ... Be5**



**Exercise (critical decision):**  
Should White challenge Black's e5-bishop

with 19 Bf4, or should he keep the pieces on the board with 19 Qh3?

## **19 Bf4?**

**Answer:** This move depletes the force of White's attack. He should try 19 Qh3.

## **19 ... Rxf4**

Now White loses time unravelling from the pin.

## **20 Rxf4 d5 21 Rdf1 Nd7 22 Qh4 Bxf4 23 Rxf4 Qe5!**

Black consolidates through centralization.

## **24 Rf1 c5 25 Qf2 Qe7 26 Qf3 Qd6 27 h4**

Black hangs on to everything in

the line 27 fxg6 fxg6 28 Qf7+ Kh8 29 Re1 Ne5 30 Qb7 Re8 31 Kh1 Rf8 32 h3 a6 33 Qa7 Nd7.

## **27 ... Rf8 28 h5**

White, like a disgruntled ex-employee who carries a grudge against the company that fired him, calls in a bomb scare. This bomb scare tactic may cause anxiety, but in reality the people in the building remain quite safe.

## **28 ... Nf6**

For a long time the fastest horse had been held back. Now it's time to enter the race.

## **29 h6 Ne4**

Centralization, the universal

remedy when defending an attack, ensures that White's ambitions remain unfulfilled. Correspondingly, just take a look at the tourist on b3, enjoying the interesting sights in a far off land.

### **30 Rd1**

Threatening the cheap shot on e4.

**30 ... Qe5 31 Na5 Re8 32 fxg6 hxg6 33 Nc6!?**

A desperate move.



## **Exercise (multiple choice):**

Black has many tempting options,  
but one is superior to the

others:

- a) 33 ... Qxb2 raiding the queenside pawns;
- b) 33 ... Qd6 covering d5 as well has hitting his knight;
- c) 33 ... Qc7 taking away the knight's flight path.

**Answer: 33 ... Qc7!**

Where are you going? White's knight crossed the unauthorized zone. Now the authorities take it into custody.

**34 Rxd5 Qxc6 35 h7+ Kg7**

**0-1**

36 h8Q+ Kxh8 37 Qxf7 Qe6 38 Qb7 Nf6 39 Rd1 Qe3+ 40 Kh1 Ng4 mates.

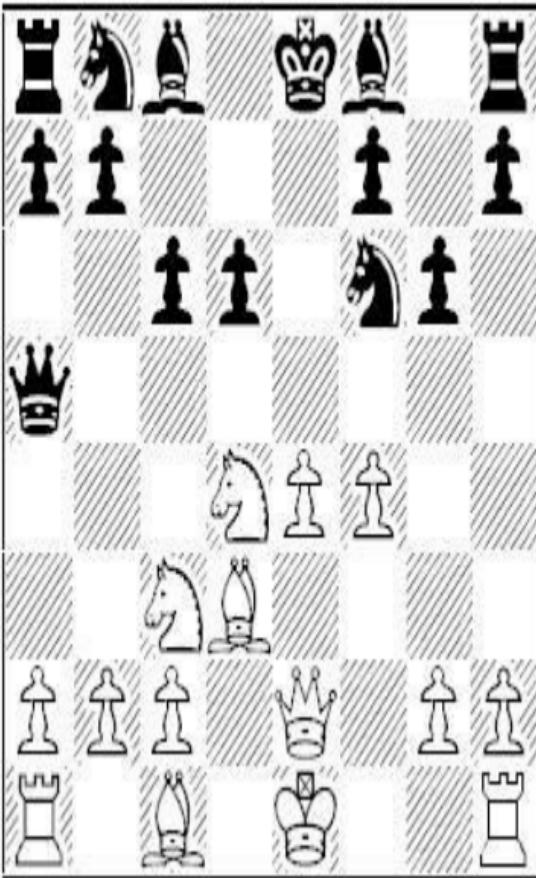
**Summary:** Your opponents who post their queens on e2 later come to regret it when Black's rook arrives on e8.

Game 22

**J.Garcia Albarracin-A.Garcia del Castillo**

Malaga 1997

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 f4 Qa5 5 Bd3 e5 6 Nf3 exd4 7 Nxd4 g6 8 Qe2?!**



**Question:** I realize your anti-Qe2 stance,  
but here it looks pretty scary

doesn't it?

**Answer:** White just doesn't believe in the soundness of Black's setup and plans a quick blowout by jamming the immediate e5 and e6 down Black's gullet. At first glance White's coming attack looks impressive, but in reality it lacks substance, like a Hollywood movie set.

### **8 ... Bg7 9 e5!?**

Pushing is logical if B follows A. However, White's entire plan simply falls short. If he tries 9 Bd2 0-0 10 Nb3 Qc7 11 h3, as in C.Castelfranchi-P.Lovati, Bratto 2003, White's queen, as we

discussed last game, is misplaced on the e-file but at least he isn't down a pawn for nothing.

**9 ... dxe5 10 Nb3**

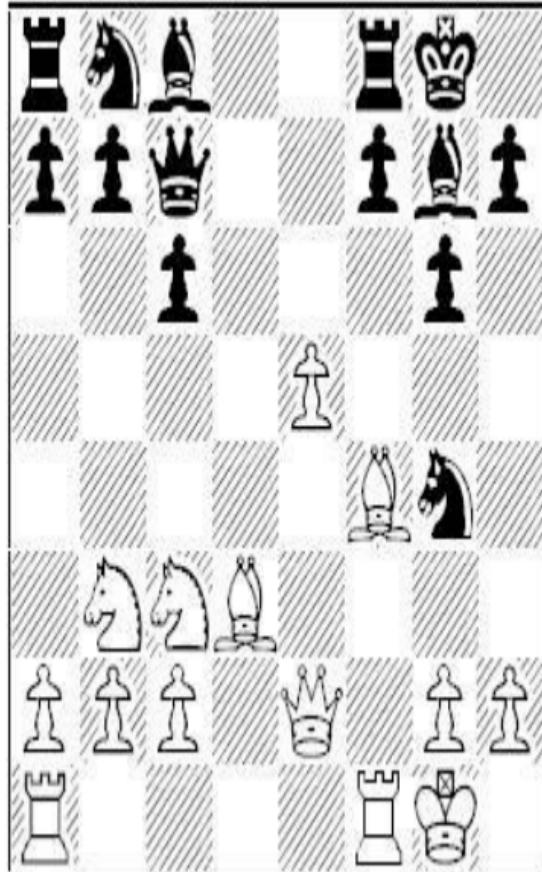
**Question:** I don't understand why he didn't just recapture the pawn immediately and follow with e6?

**Answer:** 10 fxe5?! Ng4 11 e6 f5! refutes this idea. After 12 Nb3 Qe5 the advanced e-pawn is a goner and queens come off the board. Remember this sealing trick if your opponent plays for a quick strike e5-e6.

**10 ... Qc7 11 fxe5 Ng4 12 Bf4**

If 12 e6 Black again plays 12 ... f5! and ... Qe5 follows.

**12 ... 0-0 13 0-0**



**13 ... Bxe5**

Thanks!

**14 g3 Be6 15 Ne4 Nd7**

Zippo compensation for the pawn!

**16 Rae1 Rae8 17 Nbc5?**

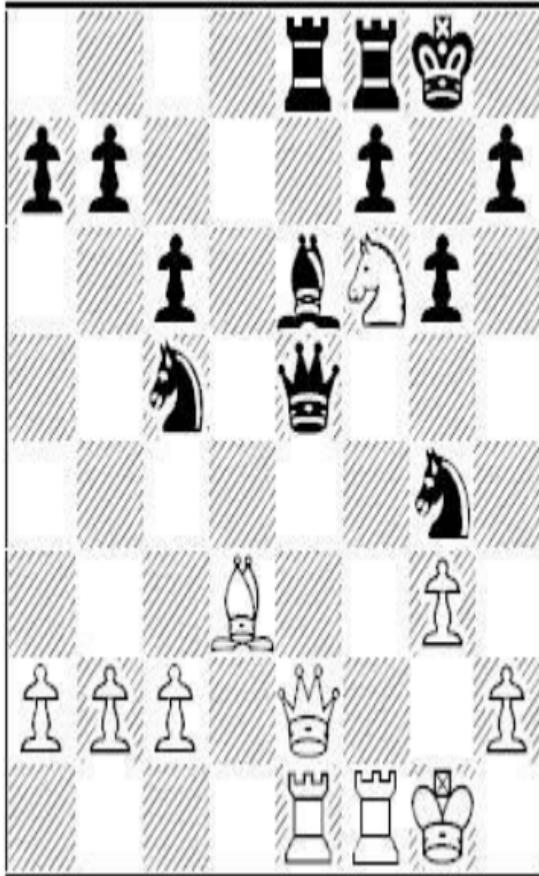
This is the beginning of an incorrect combination.

**17 ... Nxc5 18 Bxe5**

18 Nxc5 Qb6 19 b4 Bd4+ 20 Kg2 Bd5+ 21 Ne4 f5 is a bloodbath.

**18 ... Qxe5 19 Nf6+**

The point of White's combination.



**Exercise (critical decision):**  
Should we move our king  
to h8 or sac the queen for his

knight on f6?

**Answer: 19 ... Qxf6!**

White's combination fails miserably if we simply fall into it!

**20 Rxf6 Nxf6**

White's pieces fall like withered leaves on an old tree. Black gets a rook, two knights and a pawn for the queen – way too much. White could comfortably resign here.

**21 Qf2 Nxd3 22 cxd3 Bh3**

White's weak back rank means the end is near.

**23 Rc1 Ng4 24 Qd2 Re3 25 Re1 Rfe8 26 Rxe3 Rxe3 27 a4**

He can't prevent the rook from getting to the f-file. If 27 Qd1 then

27 ... Re5 28 d4 Rf5.

**27 ... Rf3 0-1**

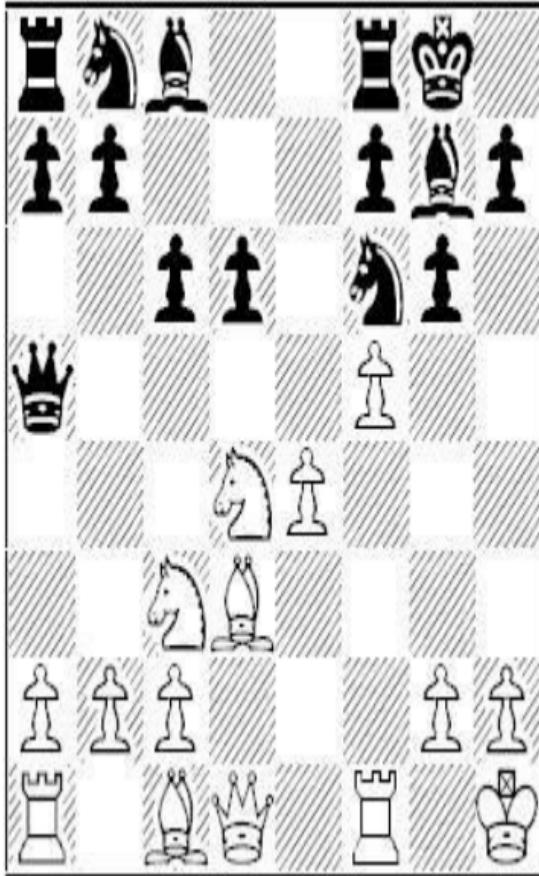
**Summary:** Black's position is durable enough to withstand early e5-e6 blowout attempts.

Game 23

**I.Motsar-V.Ianov**

Kiev 2010

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 f4  
Qa5 5 Bd3 e5 6 Nf3 exd4 7  
Nxd4 g6 8 0-0 Bg7 9 Kh1 0-0  
10 f5!**



Message to Black: What's mine is yours (e5) and what's yours is mine (Black's king!). John Emms, a

player whose attacking instincts I trust, believes this to be White's most dangerous attacking plan. When a GM offers such a warning, it shouldn't go unheeded and we should treat this setup with great care. White rudely violates our natural boundaries and with reckless abandon gives up e5 in order to generate a dangerous, Sicilian Grand Prix-style attack, just as Sion Castro tried against Azmai.

White's plan is Qe1-h4, Bh6, Nf3-g5 and possibly double rooks on the f-file. Black in turn must find disruptive counterplay on the queenside, in the centre and

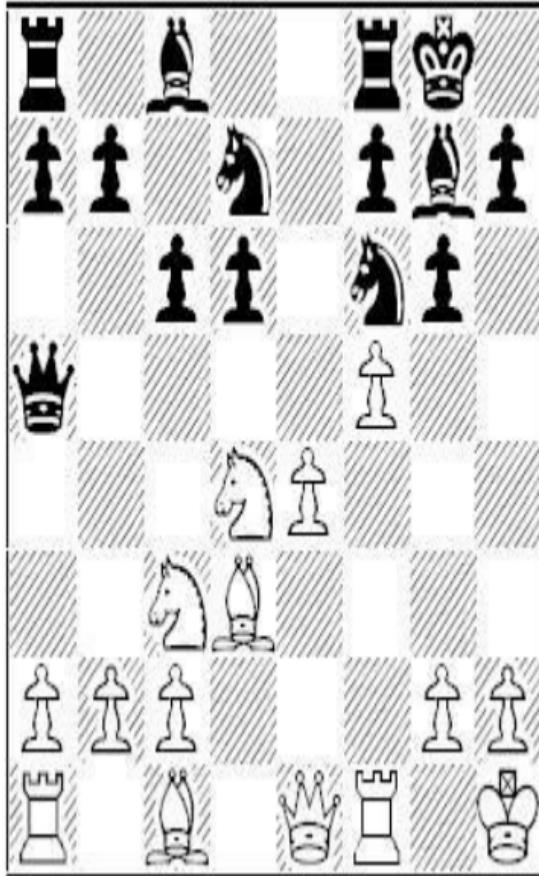
against the weakling on e4.

**10 ... Nbd7 11 Qe1!**

**Question:** You criticized White every time he played his queen to e2, since

it's vulnerable on the e-file. So why stay silent when his queen goes to e1?

**Answer:** e1 is just a temporary rest stop. White's queen soon heads for h4, far away from the e-file.



**11 ... a6**

Planning immediate queenside action with ... c5 and ... b5. This

position is tricky for Black. White threatens the autopilot attack commencing with Qh4, Bh6 and Ng5. Most club players will find such manoeuvres so we must be on high alert defensively. Some alternatives:

a) 11 ... Nc5!? is risky. Black makes use of his d7-knight but at the same time removes a defender from f6. L.Dominguez-W.Arencibia Rodriguez, Havana 2005, continued 12 Qh4 Qb4 13 Nf3 Nxd3 14 cxd3 Nd7 15 Bh6. Now Black should go for it with 15 ... Qxb2 16 Bxg7 Kxg7 17 Rac1 f6. White has compensation for the pawn, but no

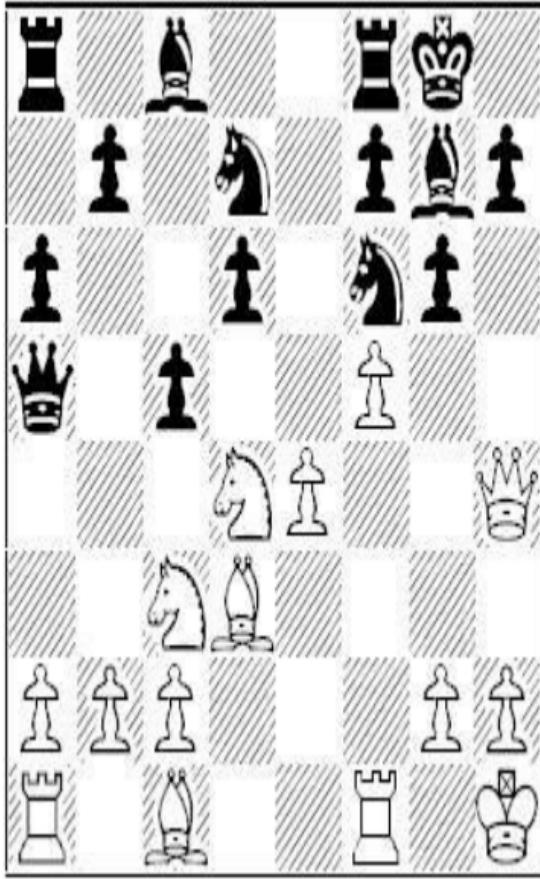
more.

b) 11 ... Re8 12 Qh4 Ne5 13 Nf3 Nfg4 14 Be2 Qd8 15 Ng5 Nf6 16 Nf3 Nfg4 17 Ng5 Nf6 18 Qg3 b5 19 a3 a5 was S.Maze-D.Bocharov, Moscow 2009. White didn't know how to proceed with the attack and saw nothing better than to retreat with 20 Nf3 – always a bad sign when attacking. Chances may be balanced but Black's position is easier to play since he can attack straightforwardly on the queenside, whereas White still needs to come up with an effective attacking plan on the other side.

c) 11 ... Qc7?! is possibly too

slow. Black may not have time for the normal plan ... b5, ... Bb7, ... b4 and ... c5. After 12 Qh4 b5 13 Nf3 b4 14 Nd1 Bb7 15 Bh6 Rae8 16 Ne3 White had an attack with Ng5 and Ng4 looming in “teryon”- C.Lakdawala, Internet (rapid) 2011.

**12 Qh4 c5**



**Question:** Why chase White's knight into the attack?

**Answer:** White's knight heads

for f3 no matter what Black plays. He needs quick counterplay, so he activates his entire queenside.

**13 Nf3 b5 14 Nd5**

To eliminate a black defender.

**14 ... Nxd5 15 exd5 c4?!**

He should harass White's queen with 15 ... Qb4!.

**16 Be4**

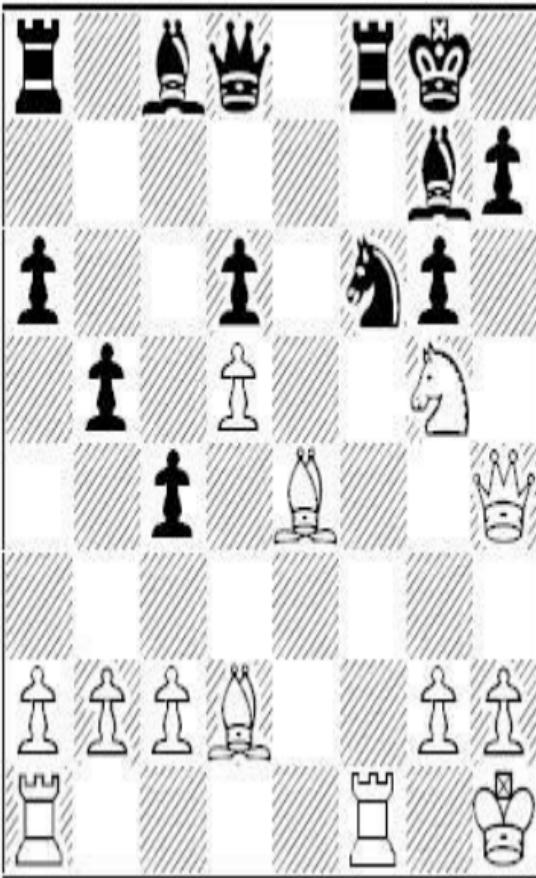
White has a messy forcing line in 16 fxg6 fxg6 17 Bd2 Qc7 18 Ng5 Rxf1+ 19 Rxf1 Nf6 20 Nxh7! Nxh7 21 Bxg6 Nf8 22 Bf7+ Qxf7 23 Rxf7 Kxf7 24 Qf4+ Kg8 25 Qxd6, with queen and three pawns versus rook and two minor pieces.

**16 ... Nf6 17 Bd2 Qd8 18**

**fxg6**

18 Bg5! keeps Black tied up in an annoying pin.

**18 ... fxg6 19 Ng5**



**Exercise (planning):** White's  
ominous build-up looks decisive.  
Come up with a plan which

maximizes Black's defensive chances.

**Answer: 19 ... Ra7!**

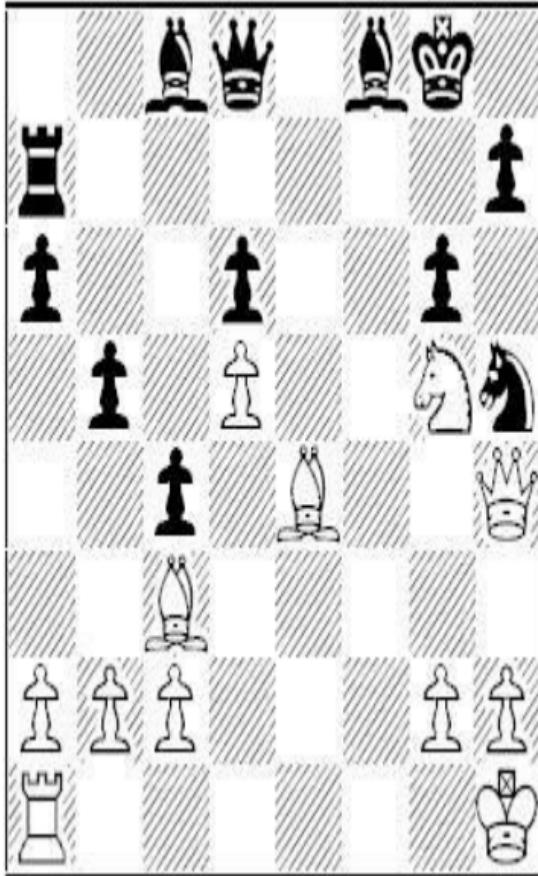
Good defence, indirectly protecting h7.

**20 Bc3 Nh5?!**

But now a stumble. He should bring the rook into play with 20 ... Re7!.

**21 Rx<sub>f</sub>8+ Bx<sub>f</sub>8**

Black avoids 21 ... Qxf8 22 Nxh7!.



**Exercise (planning):** Come up with an attacking plan for White.

**Answer:** Pile up on the f-file:

**22 Qf2! Re7 23 Rf1 Bg7 24 Bxg7 Kxg7 25 Nf7!**

Simultaneously hitting Black's queen while covering e5 and threatening Qd4+.

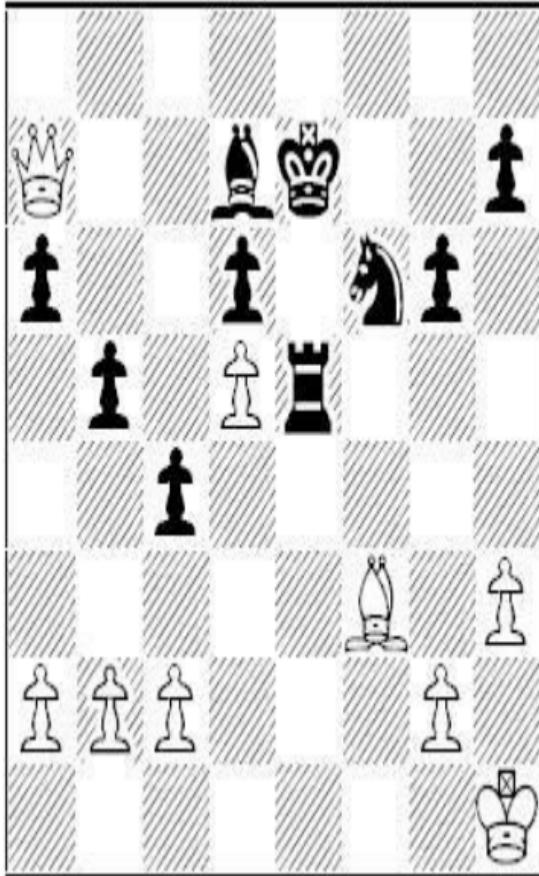
**25 ... Qf8 26 Qd4+ Re5**

26 ... Kg8?? is a no-go: 27 Qh8 mate.

**27 Rf3 Qxf7!**

Only move. 27 ... Qe7? loses quickly to 28 Nxe5 dxe5 29 d6!.

**28 Rxf7+ Kxf7 29 Qf2+ Nf6  
30 Bf3 Ke7 31 Qa7+ Bd7 32 h3**



It looks like White is winning and should mop up quickly, but Black may not even be worse! Let's

assess:

1. White's queen lacks targets.
2. White's bishop stinks.
3. Black's pieces coordinate perfectly.
4. White's queenside pawns are in some danger if White takes risks.

**Exercise (planning):** A fortress plan isn't enough for Black. He needs counterplay. How?

**Answer: 32 ... h5!**

Destabilize White's bishop and run it out of town!

**33 Qxa6 g5!**

The point: ... g4 becomes a serious worry for White.

**34 g4 hxg4**

The tricky zwischenzug 34 ... c3!  
is even stronger.

**35 hxg4 Re1+ 36 Kg2 Rc1**

He gets to the soft underbelly of  
White's position.

**37 c3 Rc2+ 38 Kg3 Rxb2 39**

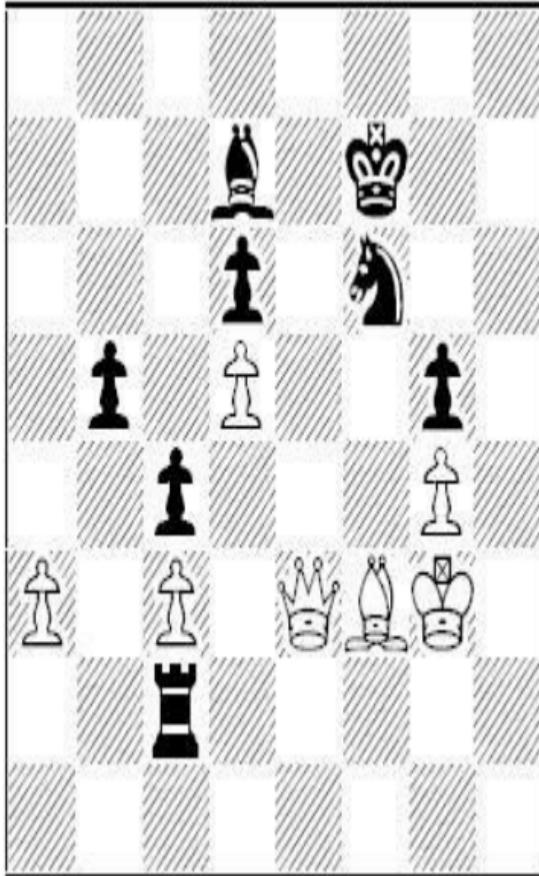
**Qa7**

Planning to go after the g5-  
pawn.

**39 ... Rc2 40 Qe3+ Kf7 41**

**a3?**

41 Kh3! prevents Black's next  
move.



**Exercise (combination alert):**  
Exploit the geometry to find a shot  
for Black.

## **Answer: 41 ... Bxg4!**

Lightning out of a clear blue sky.

This may have been the “OMG!” moment for White, who probably realized that she may well be busted from this point on. There is no obvious way to force a perpetual and White’s pawns begin to drop.

### **42 Qa7+**

42 Bxg4?? loses straight away to  
42 ... Rxc3! 43 Qxc3 Ne4+.

### **42 ... Bd7 43 Bg4 Rxc3+**

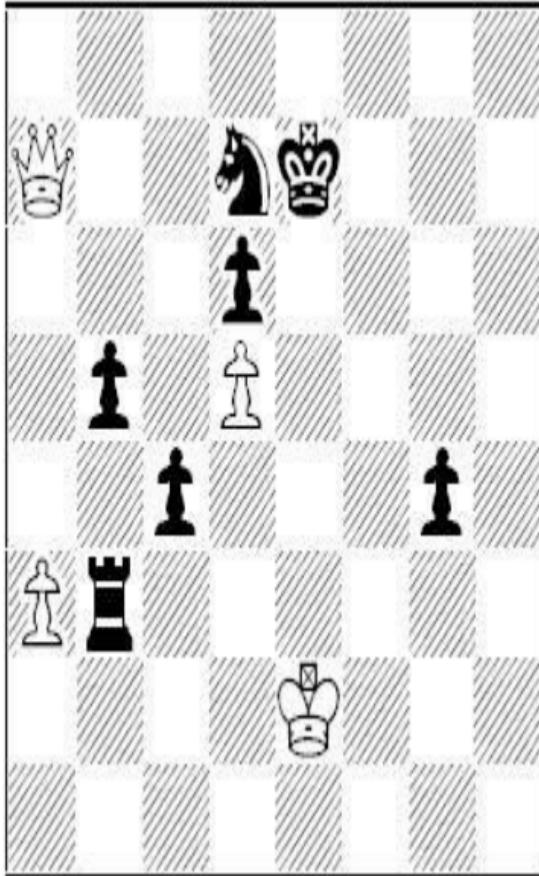
White pawns drip away like drops of water from a leaky bucket.

### **44 Kg2 Ke7 45 Be6 Rd3 46 Qb7 Rb3 47 Qa7 Rd3**

Perhaps he was just testing

White. Black has all the winning chances and should go for it with 47 ... c3! 48 Bf5 Rb2+ 49 Kg3 c2 50 Qc7 Ra2 and a3 falls with check.

**48 Qb7 Rd2+ 49 Kf3 Rb2 50 Bxd7 Rb3+ 51 Ke2 Nxd7 52 Qa7 g4**



What a nightmare for White:

1. No perpetual anywhere in sight;

2. Nothing to attack;
3. Black g-pawn surging down the board; and
4. Black c-pawn ready to do the same.

Conclusion: White is busted. Her only chance is to deliver perpetual check.

**53 a4 bxa4 54 Qxa4 Ne5 55 Qa7+ Kd8**

Black should still win after this passive move, but it prolongs the game. He should just let his d-pawn go: 55 ... Kf6! 56 Qa6 Kf5! 57 Qxd6 g3 58 Qe6+ Ke4 59 Kf1 Rb2.

**56 Qa5+ Kc8 57 Qa6+ Kc7  
58 Qa5+ Kb7 59 Qd8 Rb6**

Everything covered and still no perpetual.

**60 Qe7+ Ka6 61 Qe8 Ka5!**

**62 Qa8+ Kb5?!**

62 ... Kb4! is better.

**63 Ke3!**

Suddenly it's not so easy for Black.

**63 ... g3 64 Qg8?**

64 Qa2! should hold the game.

**64 ... Kc5!**

The g-pawn can't be touched and d5 is in danger.

**65 Ke4 c3?**

After 65 ... Rb2! 66 Qxg3 Re2+! (cutting off White's king) 67 Kf4 Nd3+ 68 Kf3 Re5 69 Qg7 Kd4! the

c-pawn is ready to march.

**66 Qc8+! Kb4 67 Qc7! Ka5**

As mad scientists are fond of saying: "Back to the drawing board!"

**68 Qxc3+?!**

68 Qa7+! Kb5 69 Qa2! may hold the draw.

**68 ... Rb4+ 69 Kf5?**

The king needs to help. 69 Ke3 Ka4 70 Ke2 may yet hold the draw.

**69 ... g2 70 Qe1 Nf3!**

Taking control over the queening square.

**71 Qa1+ Kb5**

That's it. No more checks.

**72 Qa8 Nd4+ 73 Kf6 0-1**

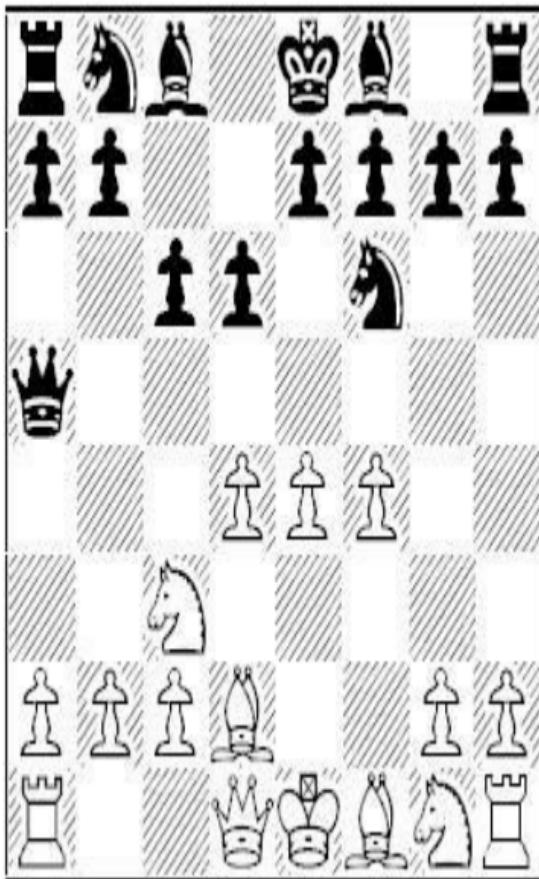
**Summary:** The position after 10 f5 is critical for us. Fortunately Black has many defensive plans after that. It is up to you to sort through them and pick the one you think maximizes our chances.

Game 24

**M.Tal-M.Rivas Pastor**

Barcelona 1992

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 f4  
Qa5 5 Bd2**



White refrains from 5 e5 and 5 Bd3 and calibrates his gun on Black's impudent queen, which

broke a sacred chess law by emerging early in the game.

## **5 ... e5!**

5 ... Qb6 is a common alternative which I don't trust: 6 Nf3 Bg4 (It stretches the imagination that Black has a reasonable chance of surviving 6 ... Qxb2?!) 7 Na4! Qc7 8 h3 Bxf3 9 Qxf3 e5 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 0-0-0 when Black found himself sans bishop pair and development in a semi-open position in J.Nunn-I.Hausner, German League 1990.

## **6 Nf3**

White maintains the tension. We examine tricky lines involving Nd5

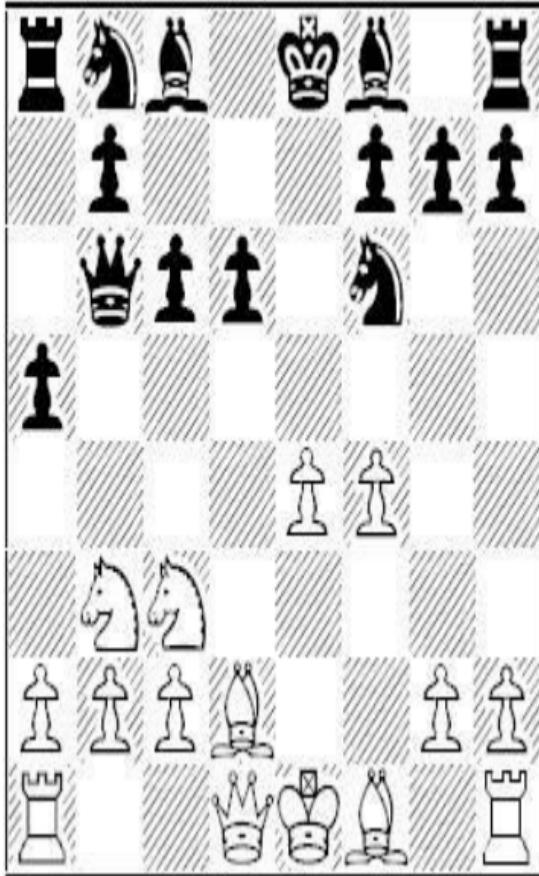
and captures on e5 in the next two games.

## **6 ... exd4!**

**Question:** Pinning with 6 ... Bg4 makes more sense doesn't it?

**Answer:** This move, which is actually played quite often here, is a mistake: 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 fxe5! Bxf3 (8 ... Nfd7 9 Bc4 Nxe5? 10 Nxe5!! Bxd1 11 Bxf7+ Kd8 12 Rxd1 gives White a winning attack) 9 gxf3 Qxe5 10 f4 Qd4 11 Qf3 Bc5 12 0-0-0, P.Keres-A.Ufimtsev, Soviet Union 1967. This is a disaster for Black.

## **7 Nxd4 Qb6 8 Nb3 a5!**



**Question:** Why is Black pushing pawns rather than developing?

**Answer:** White has no method

of exploiting his development lead at the moment. Black intends to either shove White's knight around or soften White's queenside should he respond with a4 next move.

## **9 Rb1!**

White's position degenerates if he stands his ground. 9 a4?! is met by 9 ... Na6!, and if White refuses to take the knight on a6 and accept the slightly inferior game, he pays after 10 Be2? Nb4 11 Bf3 Ng4! 12 Bxg4 Bxg4 13 Qc1 Be6 threatening ... Nxc2+.

## **9 ... a4 10 Nc1 g6!?**

**Question:** Once again, isn't this move rather slow?

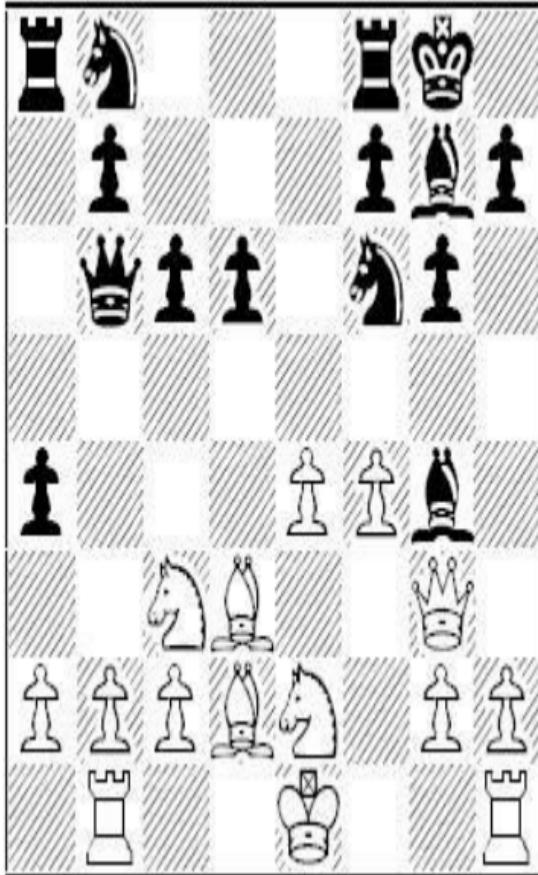
**Answer:** And once again, Black gets away with it! But Black also achieved a nice position after the more straightforward 10 ... Be7 11 Qf3 0-0 12 Be2 Bg4 13 Qg3 Bxe2 14 N1xe2 Nbd7 15 Be3 Qb4! 16 Qf3 Nc5 17 a3 Qc4 in R.Gunajew-R.Lobejko, Krakow 1999. Black has serious pressure against White's weak e-pawn, ... Rfe8 and ... Bf8 follow, and ... b5-b4 may also turn into a source of counterplay.

**11 Qf3 Bg7 12 Bd3 0-0 13 N1e2!?**

Perhaps White should try 13 Be3.

**13 ... Bg4 14 Qg3?!**

Tal overestimates his own attacking chances while underestimating his opponent's. The endgame after 14 Qf2 Qxf2+ 15 Kxf2 Nbd7 was roughly equal.



**Exercise:** Should Black take on e2, giving up the bishop pair?  
**Answer:** Yes.

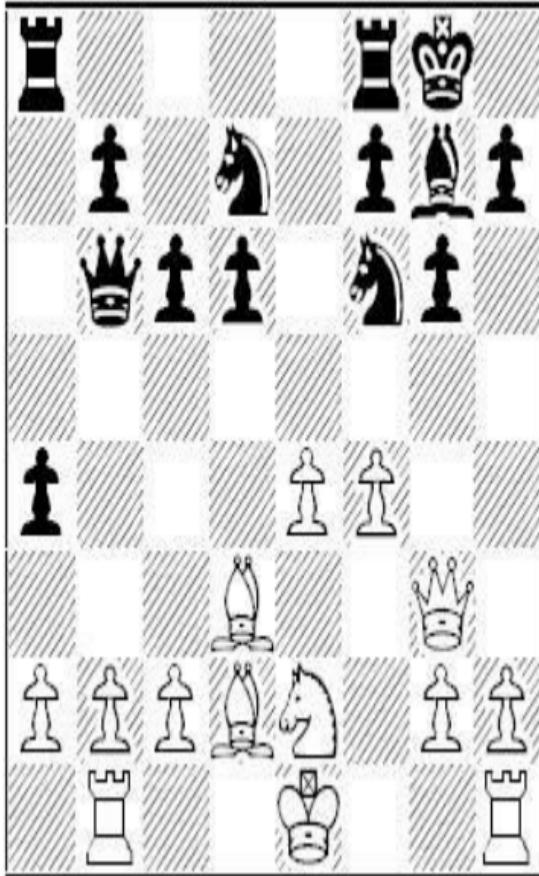
## **14 ... Bxe2!**

Principle: The cramped side should seek exchanges.

## **15 Nxe2**

Perhaps White should castle manually with 15 Kxe2!? Nbd7 16 Rhe1 Rfe8 17 Kf1 Nc5.

## **15 ... Nbd7**



## **Exercise (calculation): 16**

Be3?? would be a losing blunder on White's part. Prove it with a

variation.

An assessment after 15 ... Nbd7:

1. Black leads in development.

2. It is not as easy as it looks for

White to achieve castling.

3. White must nurse that weak e-pawn.

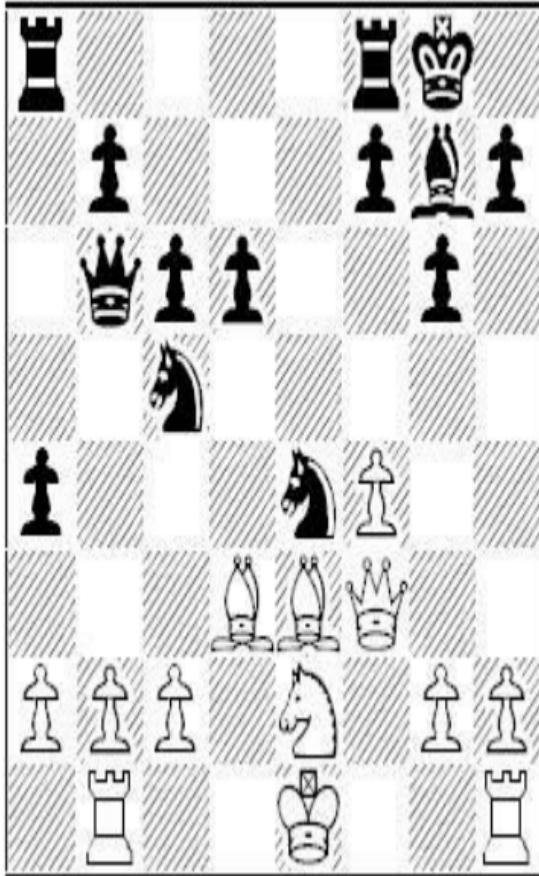
4. White's bishop pair means nothing since Black's active knights easily hold their own against them.

Conclusion: Black stands better.

## **16 Qf3**

**Answer:** 16 Be3?? Nxe4! wins a key, central pawn for zero compensation after 17 Bxe4 Qb4+! or 17 Qf3 Nec5.

## **16 ... Nc5 17 Be3 Nfxe4!?**



**Question:** A brave sac or an act of folly?

**Answer:** I'm not sure. Rivas

Pastor, playing the legend, decides to speculate and attempts to out-Tal Tal! He also had a few moderate lines at his disposal:

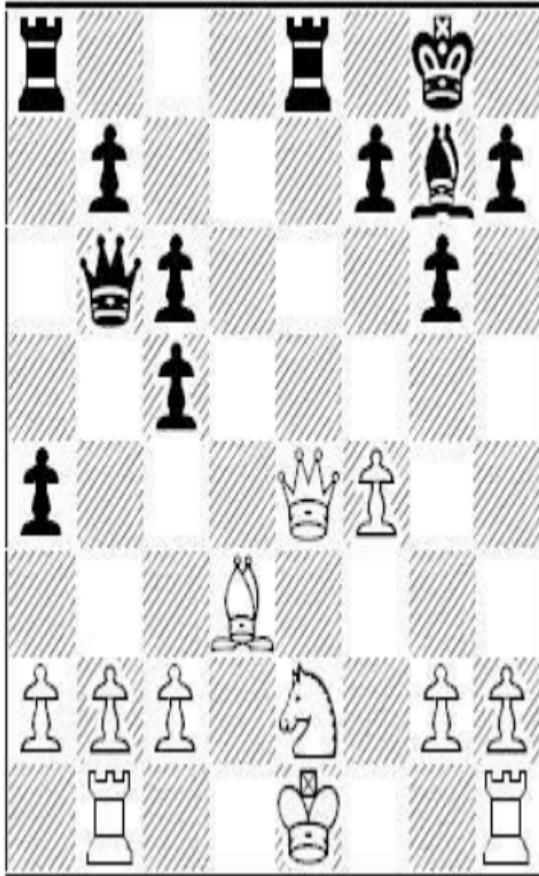
a) 17 ... Qb4+ 18 Bd2 Qb6 forces a draw by repetition.

b) Black gets a risk-free advantage after 17 ... Nxd3+! 18 cxd3 Qb5! 19 Bd4 (Black also exerts pressure after 19 Bd2 Nd7! 20 Bc3 Nc5) 19 ... c5! 20 Bc3 c4! 21 d4 Rae8 22 e5 Nd5 23 0-0 f6 and White's overextended pawn centre gets hammered.

## **18 Qxe4!**

18 Bxe4?? loses to 18 ... Qb4+!.

## **18 ... Rfe8 19 Bxc5 dxc5!**



**Exercise:** Find White's only move. Miss it and White loses!

**Answer: 20 Qc4!**

White must defend with absolute precision. The careless 20 Qf3? loses to 20 ... c4! (that old ... Qb4+ trick once again) 21 Be4 f5.

After 20 Qc4 it doesn't look like Black has enough for his piece, but

...

## **20 ... Qa7!**

Black's phantasmagorical plan reveals itself. Suddenly White faces an army of zombies coming at him with ... b5 and ... c4. Tal, however, doesn't panic because he understands the secret of zombie combat. These barely mobile undead are burdened with a fundamental weakness: they move

a tad on the slow side. All you have to do is keep up a brisk walk to stay ahead of them.

## **21 b4!**

A clever defensive idea to interfere with the flow of the zombie army. White is under enormous strain after 21 f5 b5 22 Qg4 Re3 23 fxg6 hxg6 24 b3 Rae8 25 Kf1 Qe7.

## **21 ... axb3 22 Qxb3 b5 23 c4!**

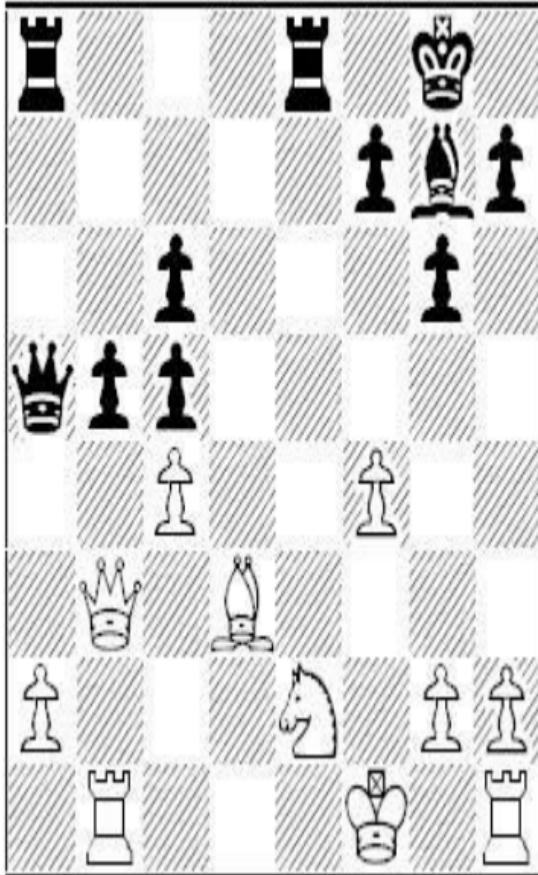
Normally the trick to outwitting zombies is to just stay ahead of them. Here, however, Tal challenges the army by placing a roadblock on c4.

## **23 ... Qa5+**

After 23 ... b4! 24 0-0 Qxa2! 25 Qxa2 Rxa2 26 Rfe1 Ra3 27 Rbd1 b3 Black's monster b-pawn gives him full compensation for the piece.

## **24 Kf1?!**

The strain of defending begins to take its toll. 24 Kf2 connects the rooks, but Tal was never as comfortable on the defence and possibly saw a ghost in that variation.



## **Exercise (multiple choice):**

Find Black's best move:

- a) 24 ... b4;

- b) 24 ... Qxa2;
- c) 24 ... Rad8.

## **24 ... Rad8?**

Overambitious.

**Answer:** It was time to bail out with a draw with 24 ... Qxa2! 25 Qxa2 Rxa2 26 cxb5 Rd2! 27 Bc4 Rc2 28 Bd3 Rd2.

## **25 Rd1 Rb8**

A sign that things have gone awry for Black.

## **26 Qc2 bxc4 27 Bxc4 Rb2 28 Qc1**

Everything is protected.

## **28 ... Qb4**

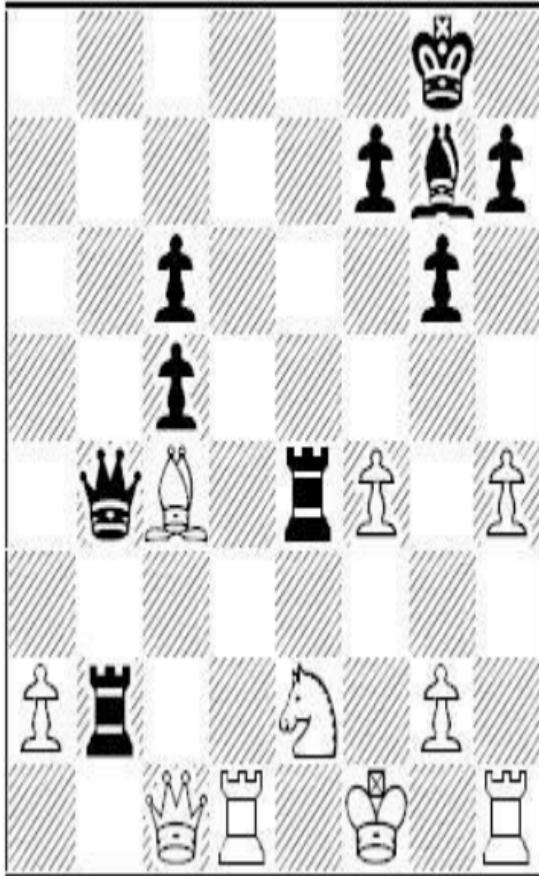
It looks like Black has enduring pressure for the piece mainly

because White's h1-rook is shut out of the game, but Tal finds a way to activate it:

**29 h4!**

Idea: Rh3, and White's last undeveloped piece emerges.

**29 ... Re4**



**Exercise (combination alert):**  
White has a  
problem-like move to short-

circuit Black.

## **Answer: 30 a3!!**

A move like this separates a strong grandmaster from a genius. Tal conjures up a hidden interference trick, short-circuiting Black's attack.

### **30 ... Qb8**

Alternatively:

a) 30 ... Qxa3 31 Rd8+ Bf8 32 f5! (threatening Qh6) 32 ... Rxc4 (if 32 ... Kg7 33 Rd7) 33 Qxc4 Qa1+ 34 Nc1 Rb1 35 Kf2 and White's extra rook wins the game.

b) 30 ... Qxc4 31 Rd8+ Bf8 32 Qxb2 Rxf4+ 33 Kg1 and Black's attack ends.

**31 Rh3! Qe8 32 Nc3! Rxc4**

**33 Qxb2 Rxf4+ 34 Rf3?!**

He allows Black back into the game. 34 Kg1! consolidates.

**34 ... Rxh4 35 Qe2 Rh1+ 36**

**Kf2 Bd4+ 37 Rxd4! Qxe2+ 38**

**Nxe2 cxd4 39 Nxd4**

The ending, obviously in White's favour, is not as easy as it looks since Black organizes counterplay by advancing his kingside pawns.

**39 ... c5 40 Nc6 Ra1 41 Rc3**

**Ra2+ 42 Kf3 f5 43 Na7?!**

White's pieces coordinate better with the plan 43 Ne5! Kg7 44 Nd7 g5 45 Nxc5 h5 46 g3 Kf6 47 Nd3 Ra1 48 Rc6+ Kf7 49 Ra6. Black's

kingside army can't make progress.

**43 ... Kg7 44 Nb5 h5 45 g3  
g5 46 Rxc5 Kf6 47 Rc3 g4+ 48  
Kf4 Rf2+ 49 Ke3 Rg2 50 Kd4**



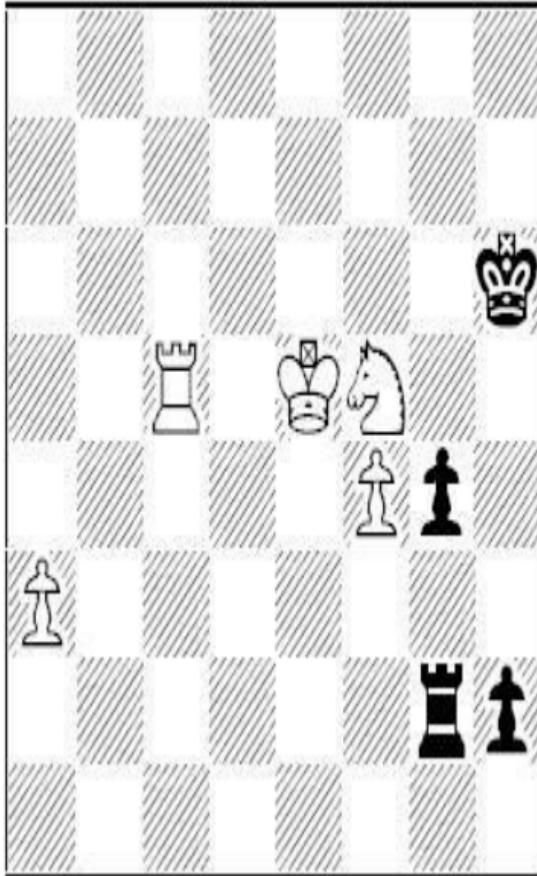
**Exercise (planning):** Come up with a way for Black to make a fight of it.

**Answer:** Create a second zombie army of two connected passed pawns, with White's king away from the action:

**50 ... f4!**

The rook sac on g3 doesn't cut it.

**51 Rc6+ Kg5 52 Rc5+ Kh6  
53 gxf4 h4 54 Ke5 h3 55 Nd6  
h2 56 Nf5+**



**Exercise:** Should Black play to g6 or h7?  
**56 ... Kg6?**

**Answer:** 56 ... Kh7! holds the game since after 57 Kf6 h1Q White has nothing better than to take a perpetual check with 58 Rc7+.

### **57 Rc6+ Kf7**

Here is the trouble: 57 ... Kh5?? 58 Rh6 mate!

### **58 Rc7+ Kg8!**

Black puts up maximum resistance. 58 ... Kg6?? allows 59 Rg7+ Kh5 60 Rg5 mate, while 58 ... Ke8? lasts only a bit longer: 59 Ng7+ Kf8 60 Kf6! Kg8 61 Kg6 Kf8 62 Rf7+ Kg8 63 Ne6 h1Q 64 Rf8 mate.

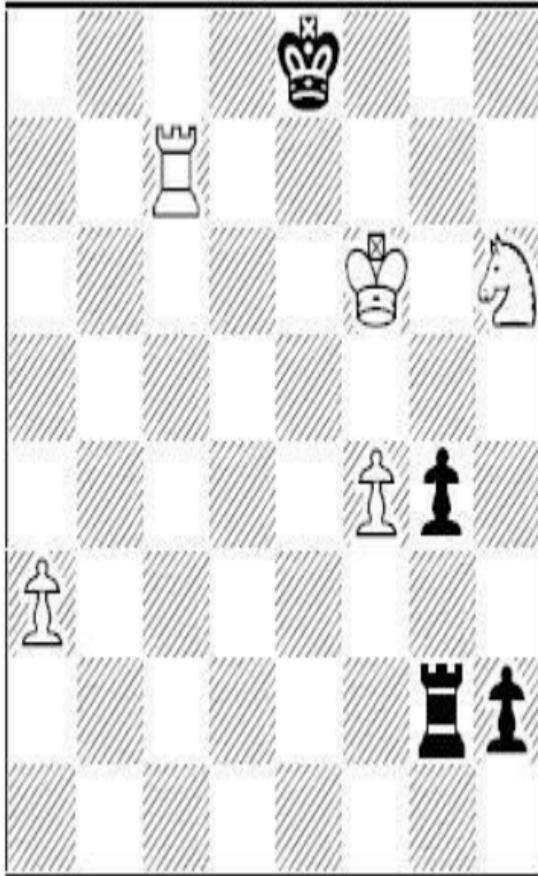
### **59 Nh6+! Kf8!**

59 ... Kh8?? 60 Kf6! h1Q 61

Nf7+ Kh7 62 Ng5+ mates next move.

## **60 Kf6 Ke8?**

Black still had a path to a study-like draw after 60 ... Re2! 61 Rc8+ Re8 62 Rc1 g3 63 Ng4 Re4 64 Kf5 Re2 65 Nxh2 (65 a4 Rc2! 66 Re1 Re2! draws) 65 ... gxh2 66 Rh1 Ra2 67 a4 Rxa4 68 Rxh2 Ra6! reaches Philidor's position – a draw!



**Exercise (combination alert):**  
Tal finds a way  
to either mate or wipe out

Black's pawns.

**Answer: 61 Nf5!! Kd8 1-0**

Time sees to it that eventually all legends fall – but not in this game!

Let's work out the reason Black resigned:

a) 61 ... h1Q 62 Ng7+! Kd8 (62 ... Kf8 63 Rc8 mate!) 63 Ne6+ Ke8 64 Re7 mate. Amazing! Why can't we get variations like this in our own games?

b) 61 ... Kd8 62 Rh7 puts Black's queening ambitions to a halt, and 62 ... g3 63 Nxg3! (a correctly timed liquidation) 63 ... Rxg3 64 Rxh2 Rxa3 65 Re2! reaches

Lucena's position – a win with Black's king cut off: 65 ... Ra6+ 66 Kg5 Ra7 67 f5 Re7 68 Rxe7! Kxe7 69 Kg6 and the f-pawn promotes. Whew!

**Summary:** Confidently meet 5 Bd2 with 5 ... e5! without fear of the discoveries on our queen.

Game 25

**F.Andrades    Campo,Francisco-R.Felgaer**

Santa Cruz de la Palma 2005

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 f4 Qa5 5 Bd2 e5 6 fxe5**

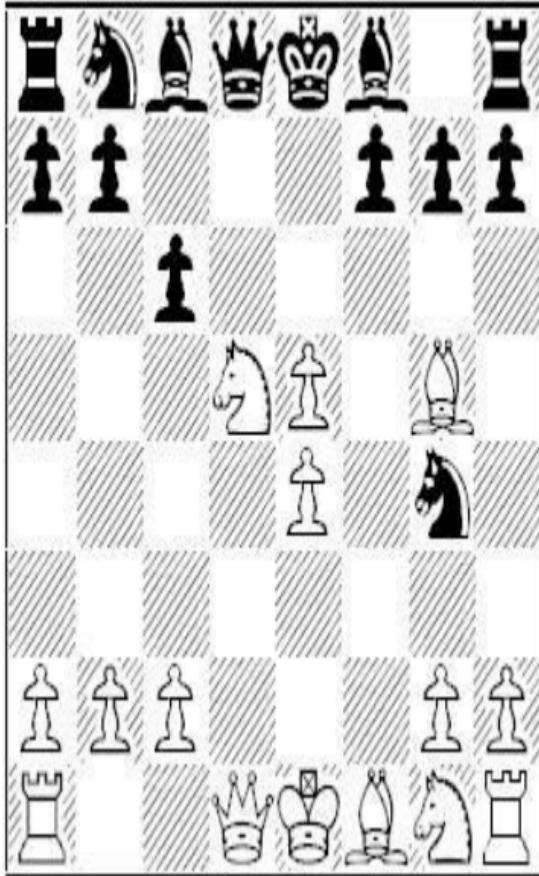
**Question:** Why did White release the central tension?

**Answer:** White reasons that opening the game favours his development lead even if he hands over the e5-square to Black.

**6 ... dxe5 7 dxe5**

This pawn will be the soloist who leads the choir. Next game we examine 7 Nd5.

**7 ... Ng4 8 Nd5 Qd8 9 Bg5!**



**Question:** Where did that come from!? Did White just play a nasty drawing trick on his

higher-rated opponent?

**Answer:** Black has a tricky way out of the draw as we will soon see.

**9 ... Qa5+**

White's point is 9 ... Qxg5?? 10 Nc7+ Ke7 11 Qd6 mate.

**10 Bd2 Qd8 11 Bg5**

Draw, grandmaster?

**11 ... Bb4+!**

No thanks! Black can play for the win after all.

**12 Nxb4**

If 12 c3?! Qxg5! there is no mate, and after 13 Nc7+ Ke7 Black has advantage no matter how White plays it:

a ) 14 Nxa8?? Qe3+ 15 Qe2

Bxc3+! wins.

b) 14 cxb4 Qxe5 15 Nxa8 Qxb2 (threatening mate on f2) 16 Ne2 Ne3 17 Qc1 Qxa1!. White stands much worse in the ending, if not losing outright.

c) 14 Qd4 Qe3+ 15 Qxe3 Nxe3 16 Ke2 Bc5 17 b4 Nxg1 18 bxc5 Na6 19 Nxa8 Be6 20 Kxf1 (20 Rb1?? Bc4+ 21 Kf2 Rxg5 wins) 20 ... Rxg5. Black has more than enough for the exchange due to White's horribly misaligned pawns.

**12 ... Qxg5 13 Nf3 Qe3+?!**

White should hold the edge after this move since he now stubbornly holds on to his extra e-pawn.

**Question:** If the position is bad for Black, then he should have taken the draw earlier after all, right?

**Answer:** Wrong. Here is the improvement: 13 ... Qf4!, threatening the e-pawn, as well as the e-pawn! Black stands no worse after 14 Qd4 0-0 15 Nd3 Qh6 16 h3 Nd7 17 Qd6 Ndx e5! 18 Qxh6 Nxd3+ 19 cxd3 Nxh6.

**14 Qe2 Qb6 15 Nd3 Ne3 16 b3?!**

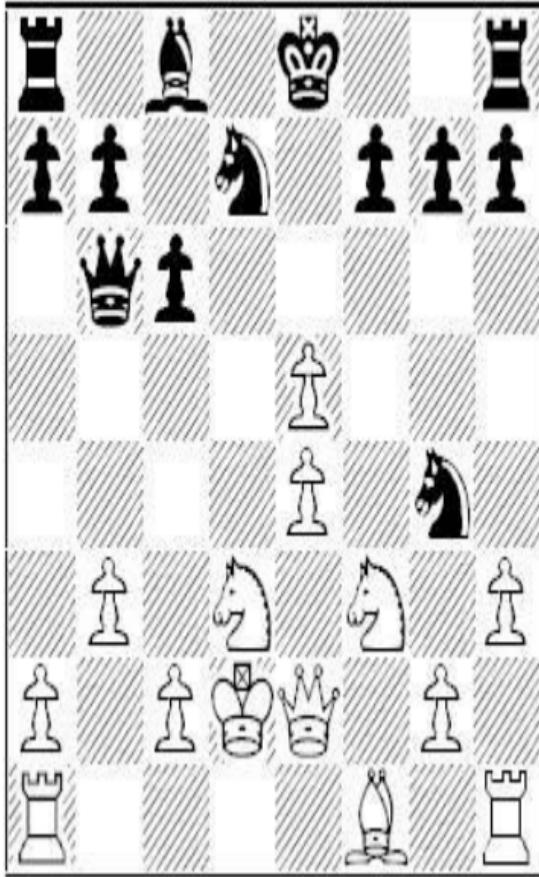
After 16 a4! a5 17 Qf2! (threat: Ke2!) 17 ... Nd7 18 Kd2 Nc4+ 19 Ke2! Black begins to lose the initiative and remains down a

pawn.

## **16 ... Nd7 17 Kd2?!**

Despite the fact that Black keeps pitching slow, curveballs over the plate, White still refuses to take a swing. He misses another chance to play 17 a4! a5 18 Qf2!.

## **17 ... Ng4 18 h3**



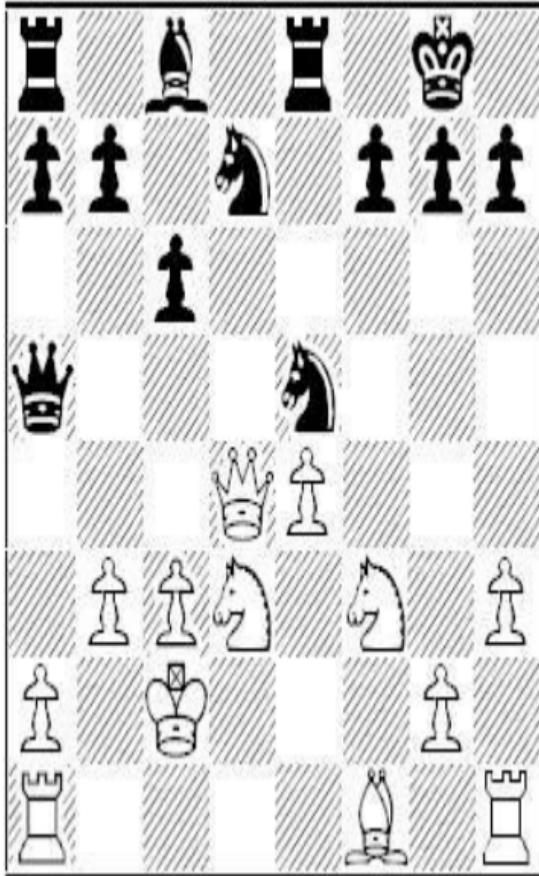
## **Exercise (combination alert):**

How does Black regain his pawn?

**Answer: 18 ... Ngxe5!**

Black regains his missing pawn and stands better. 19 Nfxe5 Nxe5 20 Nxe5? Qd4+ 21 Qd3 Qxe5! is advantage Black, but he should avoid the greedy 21 ... Qxa1?? 22 Qd6 Be6 23 Bc4! Qxh1 24 Bxe6 with a winning attack for White.

**19 Qe3 Qa5+ 20 c3 0-0 21 Kc2 Re8 22 Qd4**



## **Exercise (multiple choice):**

Find Black's best continuation:

- a) 22 ... Nxd3: swap off a good

defender;

b) 22 ... f6: stabilize e5;

c) 22 ... c5: play for the initiative.

**22 ... Nxd3**

**Answer:** White looks like he is in deep trouble after c) 22 ... c5! 23 Qe3 Nxf3 24 gxf3 c4!.

**23 Bxd3 Nc5 24 Qb4!?**

White doesn't like the way things are going for his king and is willing to hand over a pawn to get the queens off the board. Perhaps it would have been better to face the attack and stay even on material. From my own experience, I have precious few happy memories

whenever I found myself down a pawn in an ending against a GM.

**24 ... Qxb4 25 cxb4 Nxe4 26 Rae1 Nf6 27 Rxe8+ Nxe8 28 Rf1**

**Question:** Why didn't White attempt to invade the seventh rank with 28 Re1?

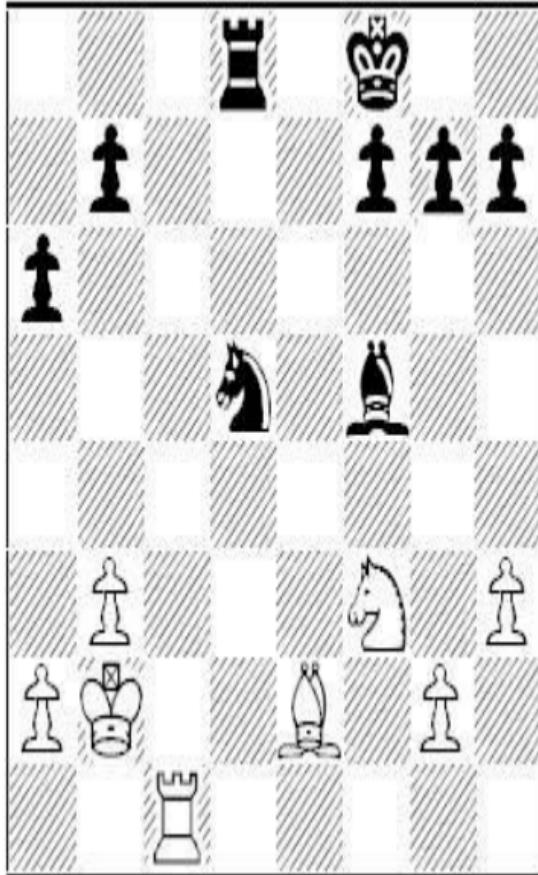
**Answer:** Infiltration attempts are strictly temporary after 28 ... Nf6!. Now 29 Re7?! fails to 29 ... Kf8 30 Rc7?? Nd5 which blows up horribly on White.

**28 ... Nf6 29 Re1?!**

Wishy-washy. White finds nothing of interest on the f-file and

switches to the e-file. The question comes to mind: Why then did White play his rook to f1 last move?

**29 ... Kf8 30 b5 cxb5 31 Bxb5 Bf5+ 32 Kb2 Rd8 33 Rc1 a6 34 Be2 Nd5**



**35 g4**

35 Rd1? Re8! sidesteps the pin with ease.

**35 ... Be4 36 Ng5 Bg6 37**

**Rd1 Re8!**

The same idea as the above note. White's pin is an illusion.

**38 Bf3 Ne3 39 Rd4**

39 Rd6?? h6! traps the knight.

**39 ... b6 40 Be4?!**

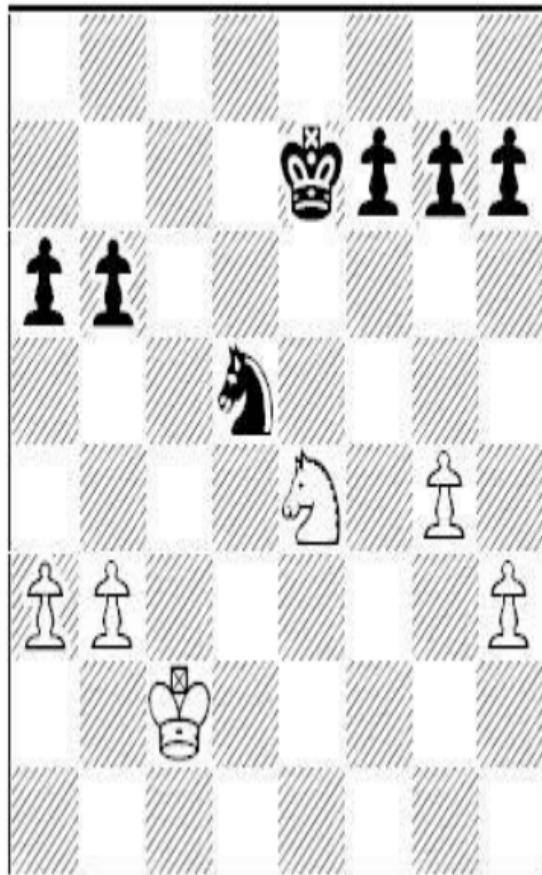
I wouldn't play this. Every trade harms White.

**40 ... Bxe4 41 Rxe4?!**

Reductio ad absurdum! He keeps trading and his position continues to deteriorate. Simplicity and boiling things down to their essence isn't always the best path. Sometimes complications are necessary, especially when behind

in material.

**41 ... Rxe4 42 Nxe4 Nd5 43 Kc2 Ke7 44 a3**



**Exercise (planning):** Come up with a plan for Black to make progress.

**Answer: 44 ... h6!**

Dual purpose: he thinks about nailing down White's h-pawn to h3 with a future ... g5, and he enables ... Ke6 without worrying about Ng5+.

**45 Nd2**

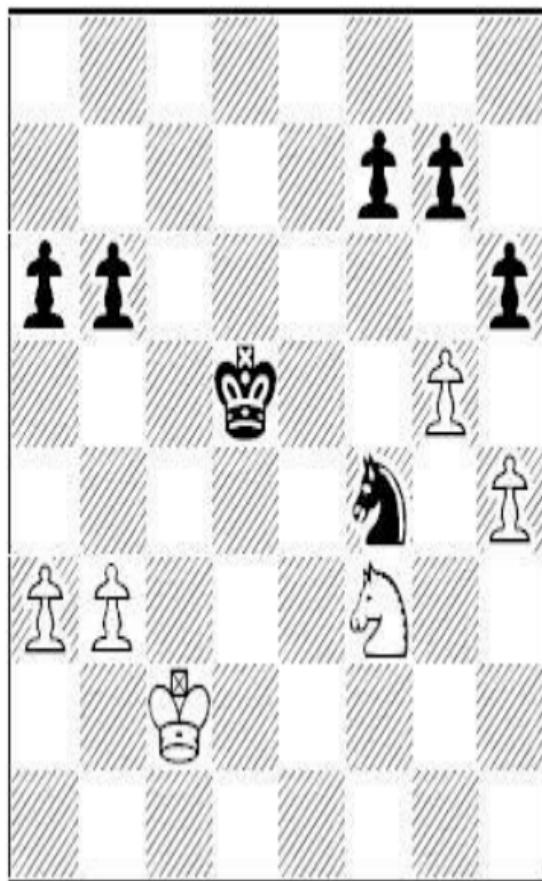
45 Kd3?? Nf4+ picks off another pawn.

**45 ... Ke6 46 Nf3 Nf4 47 h4  
Kd5**

Deceptively clean endgame technique on Black's part. His king takes a pleasant Sunday afternoon

stroll to e4.

**48 g5**



**Exercise:** Should Black swap

pawns?

**Answer:** No.

**48 ... h5!**

Principle: The pawn-up side should swap pieces and retain as many pawns on the board as possible. Also, Black sets up a target on h4 which ties down White's knight, turning the game into a virtual king and pawn ending.

**49 Kc3 Ng6! 50 a4 f6**

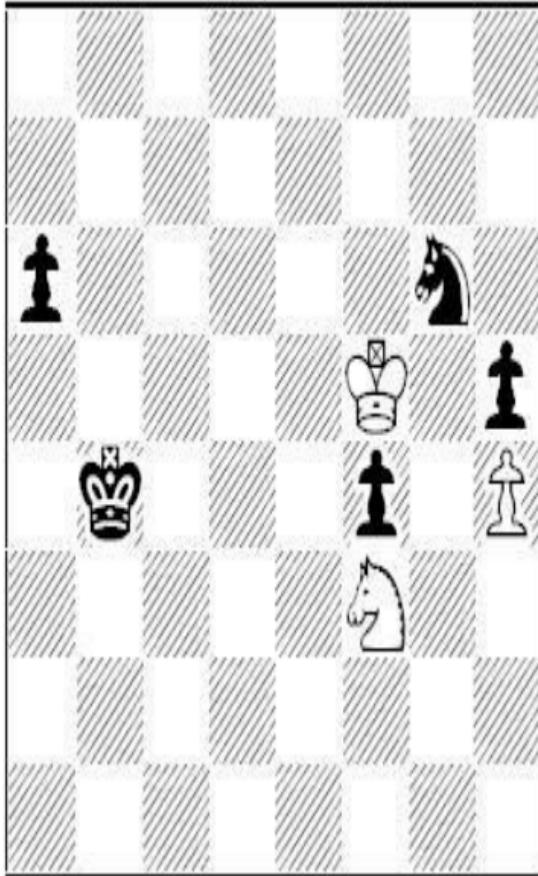
Creating a passer.

**51 gxf6 gxf6 52 b4 f5 53 a5  
bxa5 54 bxa5 f4 55 Kd2 Ne5 56  
Ng5 Ng6 57 Nf3 Kc5 58 Kc2?!**

Blowing a tempo, but it didn't matter. Black wins by a tempo,

even in this line: 58 Kd3 Kb4 59 Ke4 Kxa5 60 Kf5 Kb4! 61 Kxg6 a5 62 Kxh5 a4 63 Kg4 a3 64 Nd4 a2 65 Nc2+ Kc3 66 Na1 Kb2 67 h5 Kxa1 68 h6 Kb1 69 h7 a1Q. Just in time!

**58 ... Kb4 59 Kd3 Kxa5 60 Ke4 Kb4 61 Kf5**

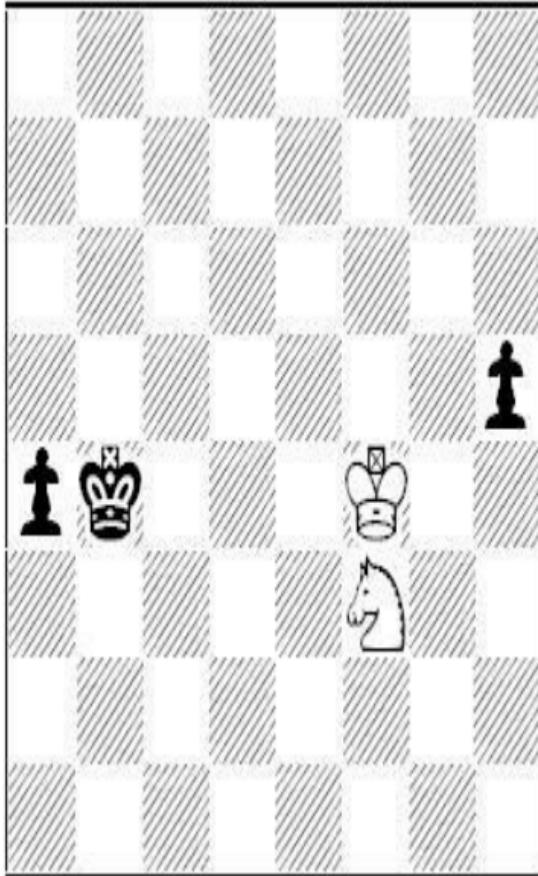


**61 ... Nxh4+!**

Black sacs to eliminate all of White's pawns. The extra knight is

helpless and can't cope with the surging, passed a-pawn. For the record, 61 ... a5 also wins but why make it a race?

**62 Nxh4 a5 63 Kxf4 a4 64 Nf3 0-1**



**Exercise (calculation):** Work out the finish.  
**Answer:** The trouble is White's

knight can't sac itself for the a-pawn. After 64 ... a3 65 Nd4 a2 66 Nc2+ Kc3 67 Na1 Kb2 the knight is forced to kneel and kiss the hated enemy king's ring.

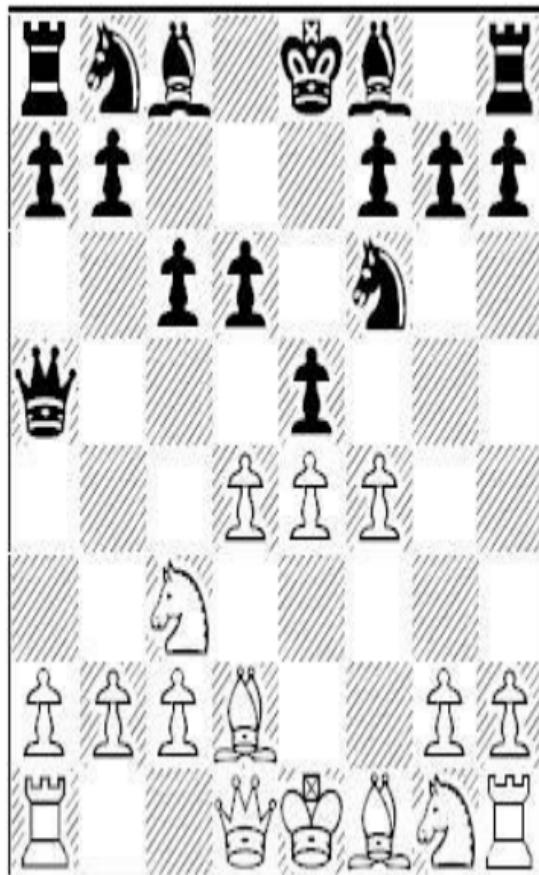
**Summary:** 6 fxe5 is actually quite dangerous for Black, who falls behind in development. But the combination of our control over e5 and Coach Rybka's analysis gives Black a playable game.

Game 26

**E.Fernandez      Aguado-M.Rivas  
Pastor**

Albacete 1989

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 f4  
Qa5 5 Bd2 e5**



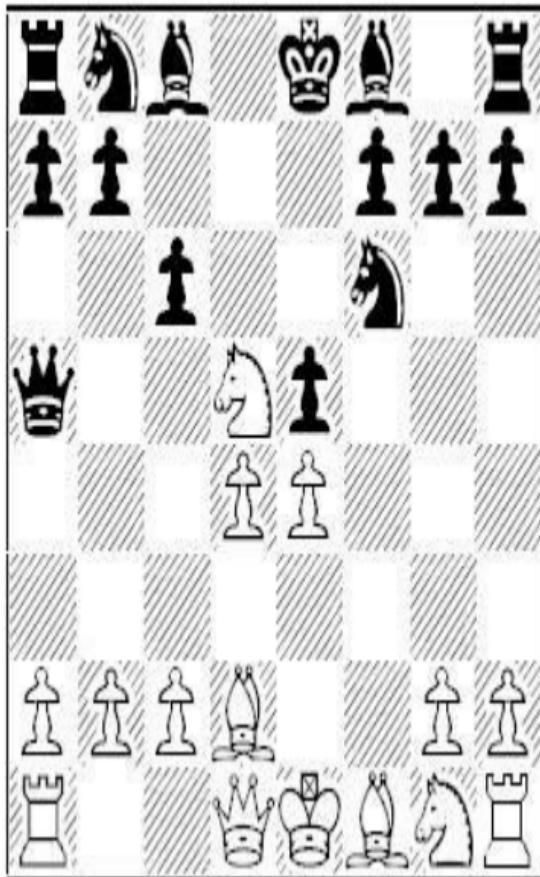
## **6 fxe5**

White opens the f-file hoping for a quick kill on f7. Two other alternatives:

a) 6 Nd5 Qd8 7 Nxf6+ Qxf6 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 Nf3 exf4 10 e5 Qh6 11 g3 Bg4 12 Bxf4 Qg6 13 Bg2 Qe4+ 14 Qe2 Qxe2+ 15 Kxe2 Na6 16 Rhd1 Nc7 with an equal position, L.Brunner-K.Mokry, Graz 1991.

b) 6 dxe5 dxe5 7 f5 (7 fxe5 transposes to Game 25) 7 ... Qb4!? 8 a3 Qxb2 9 Nf3 Qb6 10 Nxe5 Nbd7 11 Nc4 Qd4 12 Bd3 Bc5 13 Qf3 (E.Bareev-K.Mokry, Novi Sad Olympiad 1990) 13 ... b5 14 Na5 Ne5! looks good for Black.

## **6 ... dxe5 7 Nd5**



This is a dangerous line for Black, and I caution you to know

the analysis well. In fact, it may be best if you cut out this diagram from the book and keep it in your wallet!

**7 ... Qd8 8 Nxf6+**

Luring Black's queen to the f-file.

**8 ... Qxf6 9 Nf3!**

9 dxe5?? Qh4+ isn't much fun for White.

**9 ... exd4!**

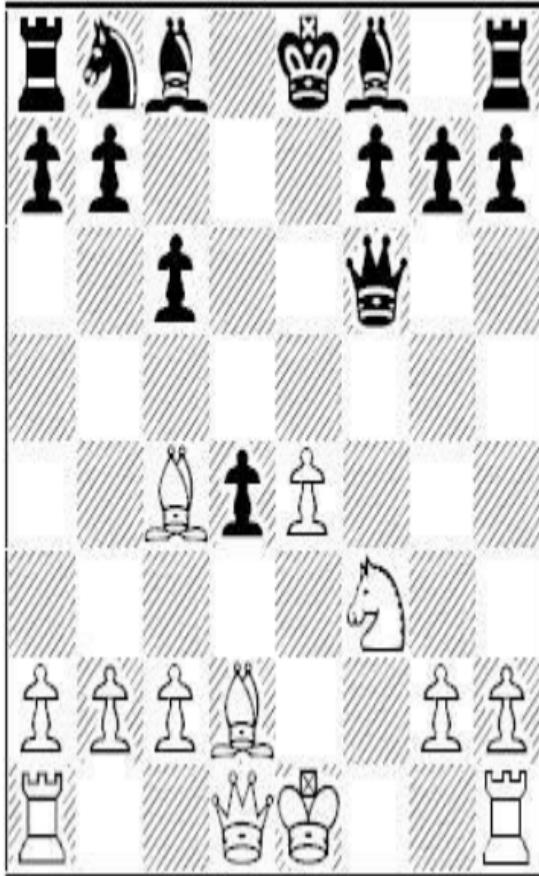
We have strong stomachs and rarely decline free meals, even when laced with a touch of poison.  
Alternatively:

a) 9 ... Nd7?! 10 Bc4 Qe7?? (I still hate Black's position after the correct 10 ... Qd6 11 0-0!) 11 Ng5

f6 12 Bf7+ and there goes Black's queen, V.Tomescu-M.Radu, Odorheiu Secuiesc 1993.

b) 9 ... Bg4 is a playable alternative but just a tad on the passive side: 10 dxe5 Qg6 11 Bd3 Nd7 12 Bc3 0-0-0 13 Qd2 Bc5 14 0-0-0 Rhe8 15 Kb1 Bxf3 16 gxf3 Nxe5 17 Bxe5 Rxe5 18 f4 Ree8 19 e5 with only a microbe of an edge for White, V.Tomescu-G.Scipioni, Porto San Giorgio 2007.

**10 Bc4**



**Question:** You are joking. Do you actually expect us to take on the Black pieces from

this position?

Grabbing on d4 has to be radioactive for Black.

**Answer:** Admittedly the position looks a lot like one of those deadly lines from the Fantasy Variation of the Caro-Kann where Black always gets bludgeoned. What is worse is that our queen sits on the open f-file. I am reminded of what John F. Kennedy once declared: "Sometimes party loyalty asks too much."

Time for an assessment:

1. White enjoys a big lead in development.
2. White's bishop, knight, and

very soon, a rook on f1, all zone in on f7.

3. Black's queen is exposed and liable to get bumped around.

4. Now for the good news: we are up a pawn and hope to later control e5.

Here is an argument for Black's side: I took White against Rybka, who defended every time. The Pribyl/Rat is a breeding ground of bizarre defensive ideas and anomaly positions, and this is one of them. It looks like Black's position is resignable. If so then I ask you: Why is it that the computers survive here? The

answer is that the position is optically bad, but if you know what you are doing (and as a person who had the brilliant insight to purchase this excellent, non-refundable book, you do!), you have good chances, not only of survival, but of victory. All the readers who believe me, please raise your hands. I thought so: not a single hand! Take a look at the rest of the game and let me prove it.

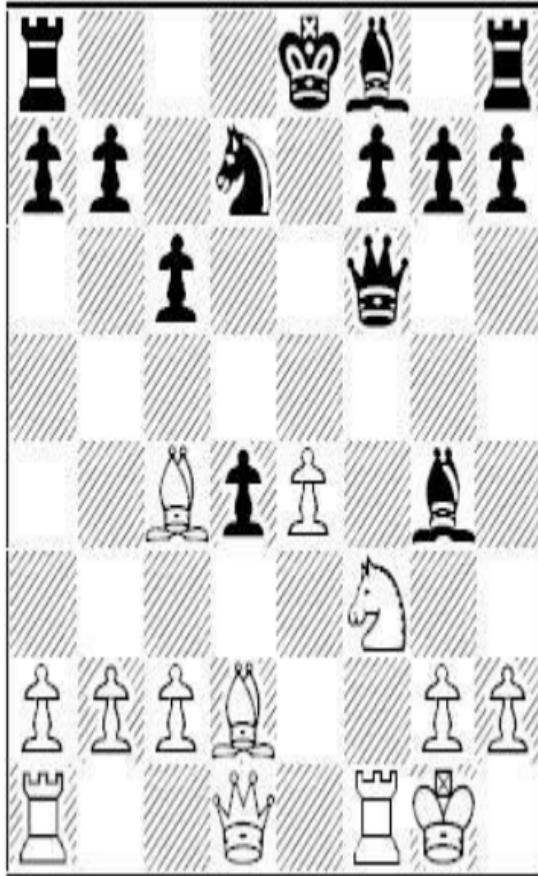
## **10 ... Bg4!**

It is only with this move that Black takes the heat out of White's attack.

## **11 0-0**

After 11 e5 Bxf3 (11 ... Qe7!?)  
12 exf6 Bxd1 13 Rxd1 Nd7 14 0-0  
gxf6 15 Rde1+ Kd8! 16 Bxf7 Kc7  
Black's extra pawn compensates for  
White's bishop pair, superior  
development and better structure.

**11 ... Nd7**



**12 Qe1**

Unpinning his knight and preparing Ng5.

I spent several days working on this line, convincing myself that it is indeed quite playable for Black despite the horror of its outward appearance. White's attacking tries in the notes for the next few moves are some of the lines cooked up by students, who bristled with righteous indignation when I told them Black's position is not worse here. It is my sad duty to report that all failed miserably in their quest to bust Black. Here are some of their tries:

a) The trouble with 12 h3?! is that it sends Black's bishop to a place it wants to go, covering g6:

12 ... Bh5 13 e5 (13 g4 Bg6 14 Ng5 Qd6! looks at g3 and saves the day for Black) 13 ... Qe7 14 Re1 Nb6 15 Be2 Qc5! and Black suddenly stands better, J.Cornu-H.Otte, correspondence 2008.

b) 12 e5 Qg6 13 Qe1 Be6 14 Bxe6 fxe6 15 Nxd4 0-0-0 and I prefer Black.

c) 12 Bg5? fails to 12 ... Bxf3 13 Qd2 (after 13 Rxf3 Qxg5 14 Bxf7+ Kd8 White simply doesn't have enough for the piece) 13 ... Qg6 14 Rxf3 Ne5, winning material.

d) 12 c3 Bc5 13 Kh1 Ne5 14 Nxe5 Bxd1 15 Rxf6 gxf6 16 Nd3 Be2! 17 Nxc5 Bxc4 18 Nxb7 and

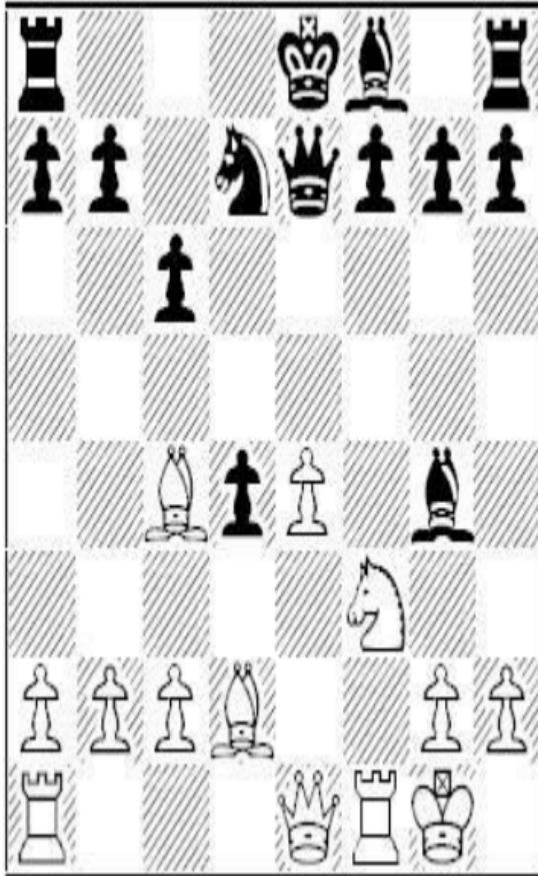
Black, up an exchange, may yet be able to convert despite his sickly pawns.

e) 12 Qc1 Qe7 13 c3 Bxf3 14 Rxf3 Ne5 15 cxd4 Nxf3+ 16 gxf3 0-0-0. My ever optimistic student Mike claimed compensation for the exchange – an assessment vigorously opposed by Rybka and myself. The game continued 17 Be3 Qf6 18 Kf2 Rxd4! and Mike hung his head in shame, finally conceding the error of his ways.

f) 12 Bxf7+?? was suggested by another supremely optimistic student, who begged me to keep his name out of the book after what

followed: 12 ... Qxf7 13 Ng5 (13 Ne5 Nxe5 wins) 13 ... Qh5 14 Qe1 Be7 15 Rf5 Qg6 16 Qf2 h6 17 Nf7 0-0!. White dropped a load of material for no compensation.

**12 ... Qe7!**



It is only due to this unnatural Pribylian move that Black survives. Black clears the f-file and ... Qc5 is

in the air.

## 13 Nxd4

**Question:** Why isn't Black just getting crushed after 13 Ng5?

**Answer:** Black has the resources to sidestep the lunge with 13 ... f6 and now:

a) 14 Nf7 Ne5! 15 Nxe5! (White is busted after the naive 15 Nxh8? Nxc4 – Black already has enough for the exchange and White's wayward knight on h8 is a goner) 15 ... Qxe5 16 Bf4 Qc5 17 Bb3 0-0-0 18 Qg3 h5 19 h3 Bd7 20 Bb8 Qa5 21 Rf5 Bxf5 22 exf5 b5!. Admittedly it's still very complex, but my feeling is White lacks full

compensation for the exchange.

b) 14 Bf7+ Kd8 15 Qh4 Ne5 16 Bb3 Kc7 17 Qg3 fxg5! 18 Rf7 Qxf7 19 Bxf7 Bd6 (threatening the bishop on f7 and also ... Nf3+) 20 Qb3 Rhf8. Black has rook, knight and pawn plus initiative for the queen – a good deal.

13 Bf4 prevents queenside castling in view of 13 ... 0-0-0 14 Qa5!, but after 13 ... Qc5! 14 Bb3 f6 15 e5 0-0-0 16 exf6 gxf6 17 Rd1 Bxf3 18 Rxf3 Ne5 Black stands no worse.

### **13 ... Ne5**

**Question:** How did Black survive when he broke the principle

of falling behind in development in the opening?

**Answer:** Control over e5 is the fulcrum upon which our survival tilts. This square and the defensive power which comes as a package deal with its control saved Black.

### **14 Bb3 0-0-0**

Do you feel better? Don't you like Black's position now?

### **15 Be3 Qc7 16 Nf5 Bxf5 17 exf5**

I prefer Black after 17 Rxf5 f6.

### **17 ... Ng4 18 Bf4 Bd6**

Following the principle: Swap off a pair of bishops if your opponent owns the bishop pair.

**19 Qg3 Bxf4 20 Qxf4 Ne5?!**

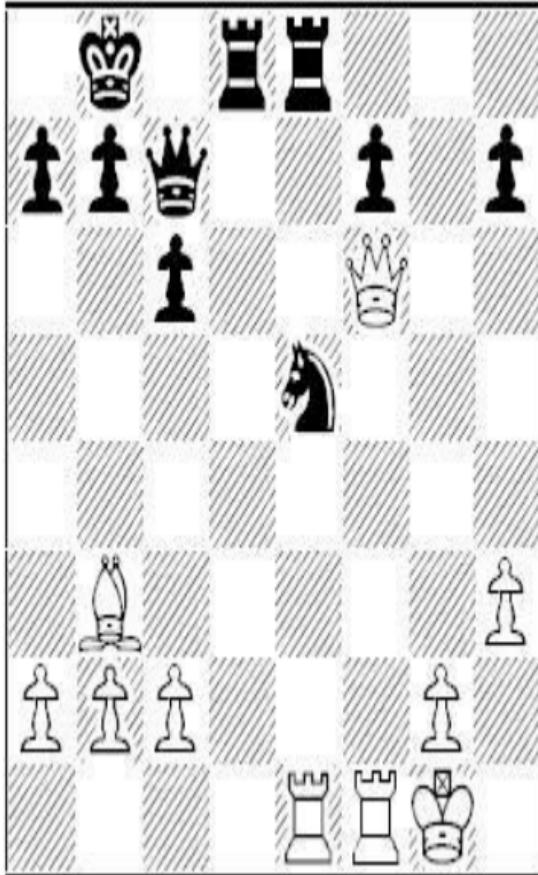
Black holds here, but it was stronger to play 20 ... Qb6+! 21 Kh1 Rd4 22 Qg3 Qc7 23 Qxc7+ Kxc7 24 Bxf7 Ne3. Black has full compensation for the pawn due to his grip over the d-file and potential infiltration of d2.

**21 f6! gxf6**

Bypassing leaves Black in trouble after 21 ... g6?! 22 Rae1 Rhe8 23 Re4. White threatens to double on the e-file and infiltrate e7, and f7 is critically weak.

**22 Qxf6 Kb8 23 Rae1 Rhe8**

**24 h3**



**24 ... a5?**

Black is playing for the win but risks losing on this path. 24 ... Re7!

leads to a strange draw after 25 Bxf7 Rf8 26 Qg7 Rd8 27 Qf6 Rf8.

**25 Bxf7 Nxf7 26 Rxе8 Rxе8  
27 Qxf7 Qb6+ 28 Kh2 Re2 29  
Qg7?!**

White has the better chances after 29 Qxh7!.

**29 ... Rxc2 30 Qe5+ Ka7 31  
Rf8 Rxb2 32 a4?**

After 32 Qb8+ Ka6 33 Qe5 Qb4 34 Ra8+ Kb6 35 Qb8 Rxa2 36 Qa7+ Kc7 37 Qb8+ Black must accept the perpetual since 37 ... Kd7?? 38 Qd8+ Ke6 39 Qg8+ Kd6 40 Qxa2 pops a rook.

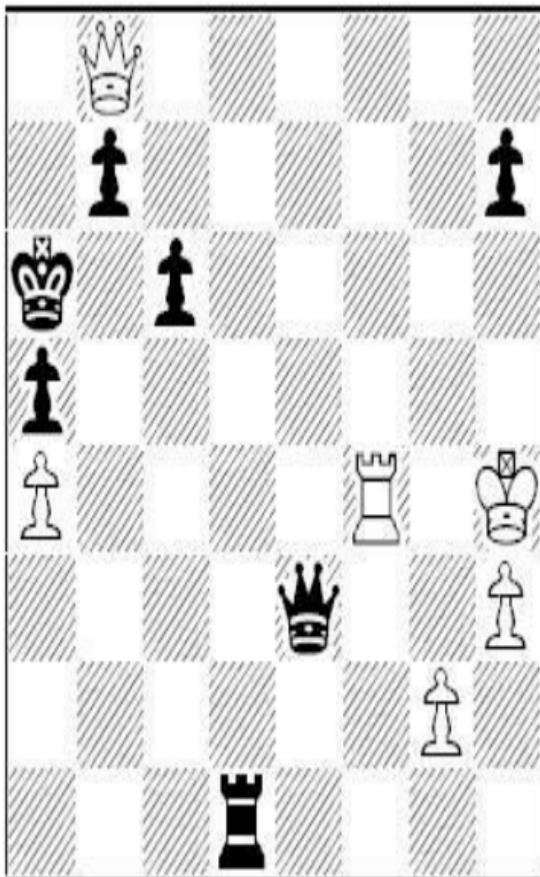
**32 ... Rb1 33 Kg3 Rd1 34  
Qb8+ Ka6 35 Kh4?**

Suicide. White's best shot at survival is to centralize with 35 Qe5 Rd3+ 36 Kh2 Qb4.

### **35 ... Qe3!**

The extra pawn isn't what matters. King safety, which White lacks, is the crucial factor.

### **36 Rf4?**



### **Exercise (combination alert):**

Black to play and trap  
White's Queen. You heard me

correctly.

**Answer: 36 ... Qe7+! 37 Kg3  
Rd8! 0-1**

How bizarre to witness White's queen trapped out in the open.

**Summary:** Don't believe your lying eyes! We are okay after 10 Bc4, I promise.

Game 27

**M.Schulz-S.Conquest**

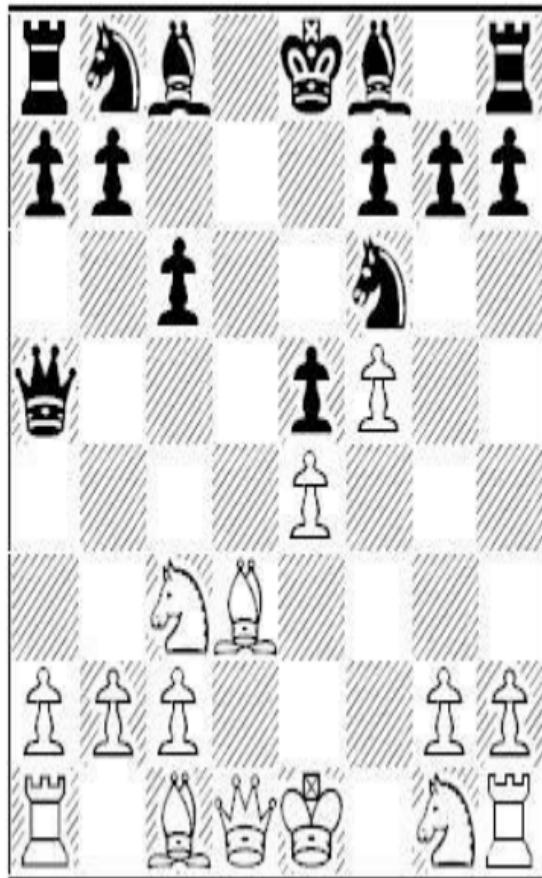
Reykjavik 2000

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 f4  
Qa5 5 Bd3 e5 6 dxe5**

Taking on e5 is less effective

with 5 Bd3. White will be lucky to escape with equality.

**6 ... dxe5 7 f5**



**Question:** He hems in our c8-bishop. How do we eventually develop it?

**Answer:** The bishop emerges via b7 or a6. With 7 f5 White immediately resolves the central tension and grabs an annoying space advantage, hoping he can make something of his cramping f5-pawn. All very impressive sounding, but the stats show that White scores under 50% from this position.

Next game we examine the equally unimpressive 7 fxe5. If instead 7 Nf3 Nbd7 8 0-0 Be7 9 Kh1 0-0 10 Qe1 Qc7 11 f5, as in

G.Airapetian-E.Khlian, Voronezh 2007, White achieves a better version of f5 than in our main game. However, White's rigid position still doesn't appeal to me. The game continued 11 ... b5 12 Bg5 Nc5 13 a4 b4 14 Nd1 Nxd3 15 cxd3 Rd8 16 Bxf6 Bxf6 17 Qxb4 Rxd3. I think Black stands slightly better here, since he has the bishop pair in a semi-open position, potential pressure down the b-file and a potential target on e4. White's only compensation is pressure down the c-file and on c6, but I don't believe it's enough to secure equality.

**7 ... b5 8 Bd2 b4**

**Question:** This kick looks meaningless. What purpose does it serve?

**Answer:** Two ideas behind the move:

1. It disorganizes White by sending the knight to e2. This gives Black time to take control over the g1-a7 diagonal with ... Qb6 without White challenging it with Qe2 and Be3.

2. Black prepares a future ... a5 and ... Ba6, unloading his hemmed-in bishop.

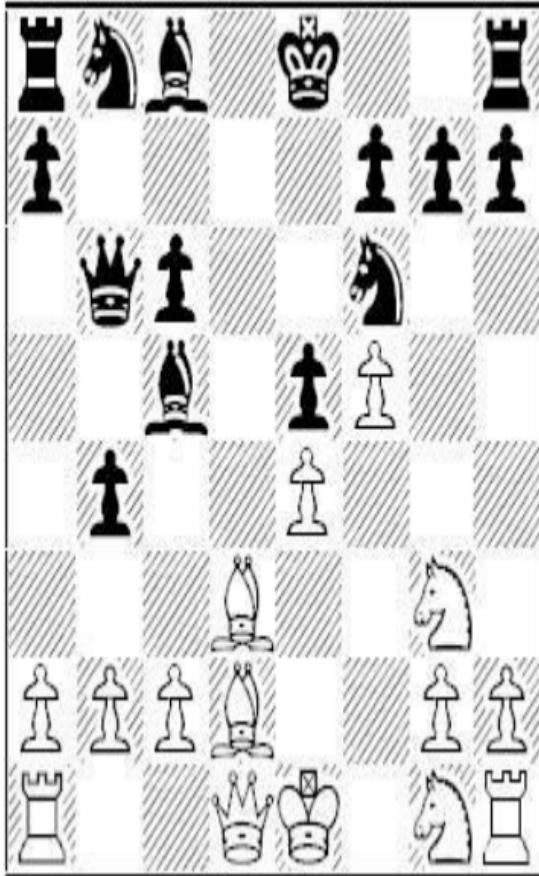
**9 Nce2**

**Question:** Isn't a3 in the air?

**9 ... Qb6!**

**Answer:** Easily solved. Black sidesteps the strategic threat of a3 and also seizes control over the g1-a7 diagonal.

**10 Ng3 Bc5**



**Exercise:** Should White play his knight to h3 to cover against ... Bf2+?

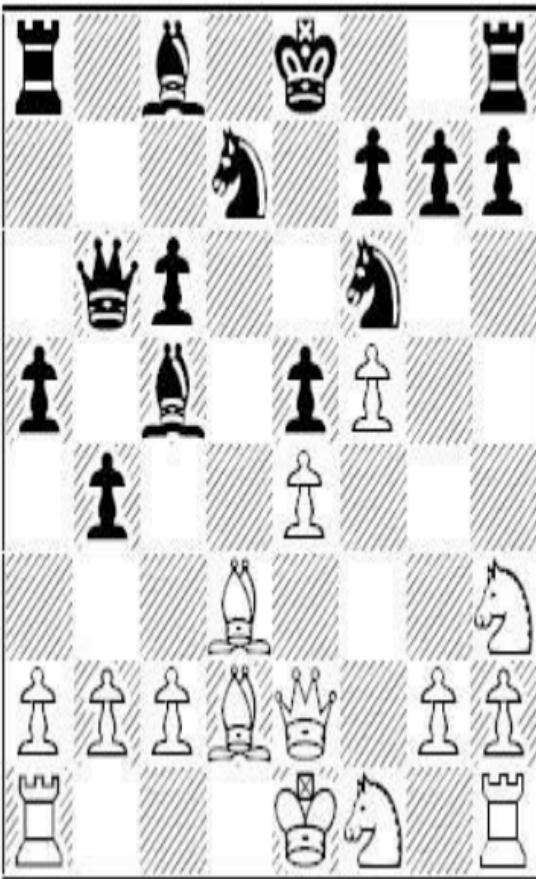
or play the knight to the more natural square, f3, and ignore the threat?

## **11 Nh3!?**

**Answer:** My intuition tells me he should have ignored the “threat” and played the knight to the superior f3-square. After 11 Nf3 Bf2+ 12 Kf1 it looks like Black just wasted time with the check.

## **11 ... Nbd7 12 Qe2 a5 13 Nf1**

A bad sign. White goes into contortions to fight for control over e3.



**Exercise (critical decision):**  
Should Black offer the swap of  
his good bishop for White's bad

bishop with ... Ba6?

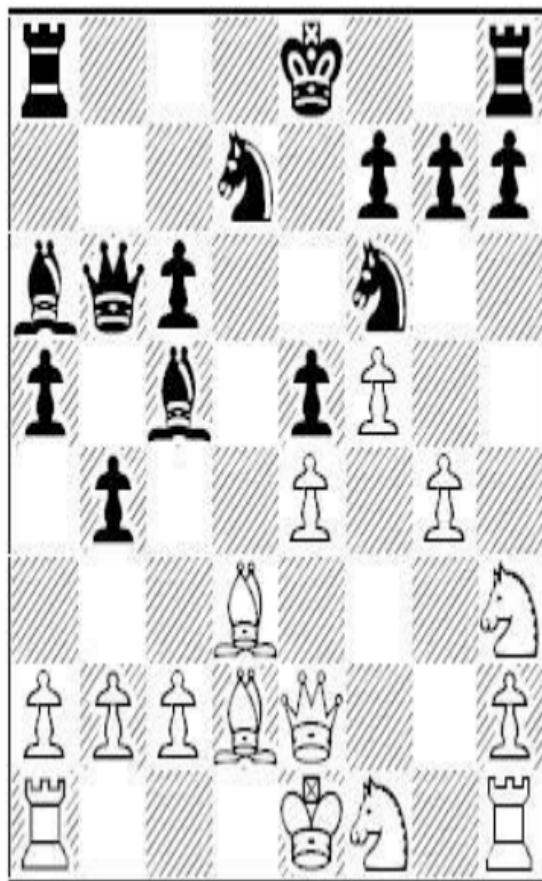
**Answer:** Yes, for the following reasons:

1. White's f5-pawn limits the scope of Black's light-squared bishop, which is no longer so good if it is unable to reach e6.
2. White's bad bishop on d3 also performs the important function of covering e4. If White swaps on a6, then e4 is weakened. If White avoids the swap and allows Black to take on d3, then cxd3 leaves him with a backward and weak d-pawn.

**13 ... Ba6! 14 g4?!**

What is it in the human psyche that convinces us to go on the

attack when we are the ones in trouble?



**Exercise (planning):** Improve

Black's position.

## **Answer: 14 ... h5!**

Principle:

Welcome

confrontation when your pieces are better posted than the opponent's.

## **15 g5**

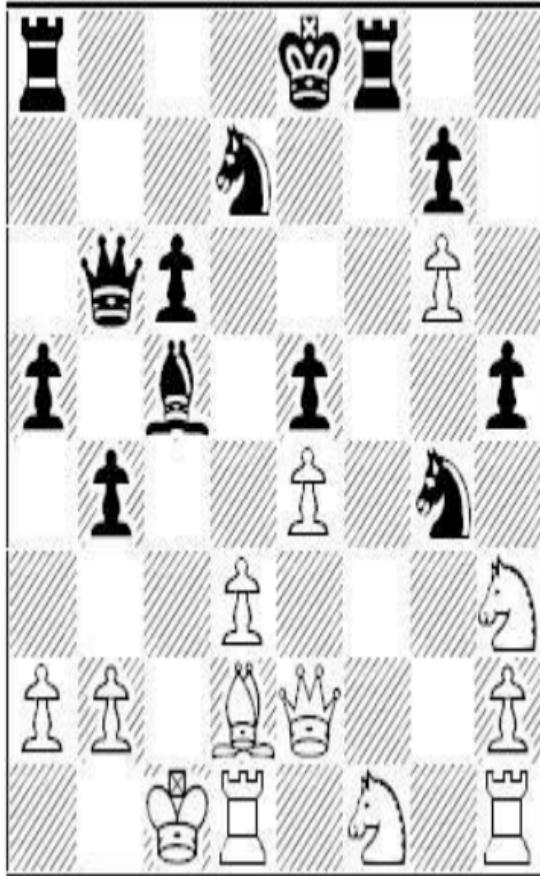
After 15 gxh5 Bd4! White must proceed with great care. For instance, 16 0-0-0? Bxd3 17 Qxd3 (17 cxd3?? b3 18 a3 Qc5+ wins) 17 ... Nc5 18 Qf3 Na4 19 b3 Nc3 gives Black a winning attack.

## **15 ... Ng4 16 g6?**

This looks like another overdose of aggression. White just opened lines for Black's attack! He should play 16 Bxa6.

**16 ... fxg6 17 fxg6 Bxd3 18 cxd3 Rf8 19 0-0-0**

Hoping to find some measure of security on the queenside after Kb1 and Rc1.



**Exercise (planning):** Prove that White doesn't have time to consolidate his king on the

queenside.

**Answer: 19 ... b3!**

A move that constricts the field of battle strictly to the queenside from this point on.

**20 a4**

**Question:** Why on earth would he avoid 20 a3?

**Answer:** The pawn creates a sac target after 20 ... Nf2! 21 Nxf2 Rxf2 22 Qe1 Bxa3!. If White accepts the piece, a queen check on c5 mates.

**20 ... Bd4 21 Kb1**

21 Bc3 Bxc3 22 bxc3 Nf2! (the recurring dirty trick which either wins material or airlifts a black rook

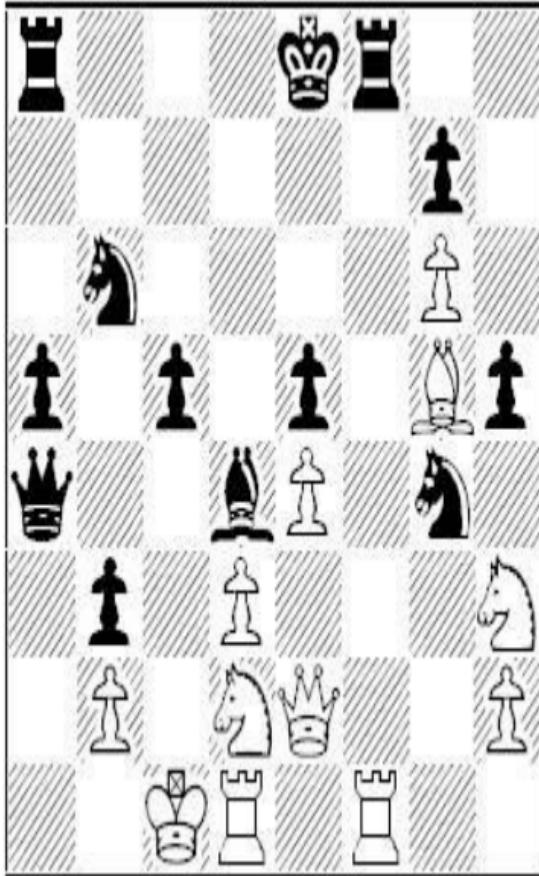
to the seventh rank) 23 Nxf2 Rxf2  
24 Qe3 Rxf1! wins a piece.

**21 ... c5 22 Bg5 Qb4!**

Conquest, an attacking purist, isn't interested in material gain with 22 ... Nf2.

**23 Nd2 Nb6 24 Rhf1 Qxa4**

**25 Kc1**



## **Exercise (combination alert):**

Black to play and mate in three.

If instead 25 Rxg8+ Kxg8 26

Qf3+ Nf6! and White doesn't have time to take on f6.

**Answer: 25 ... Bxb2+! 0-1**

**Summary:** 7 f5?! calcifies White's structure and leaves him with little to do after that. His extra kingside space is easily offset by Black's queenside surge of the a- and b-pawns.

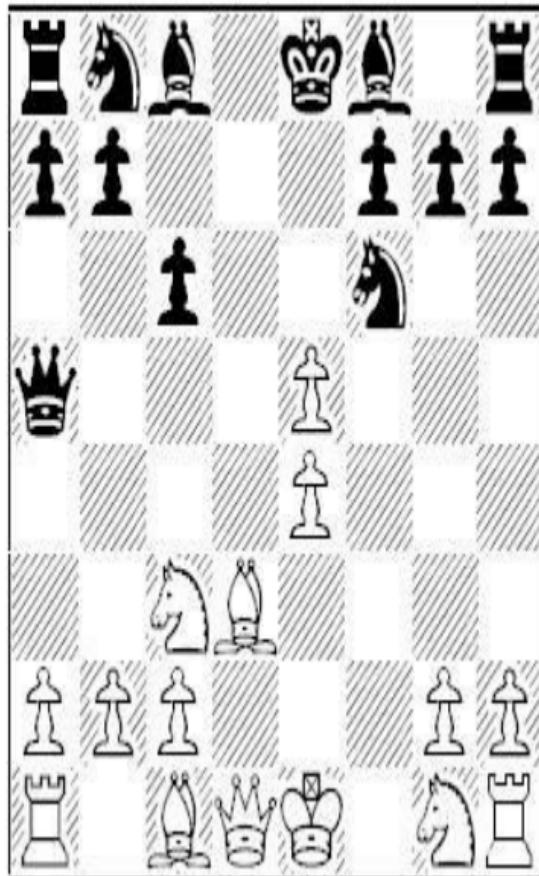
Game 28

**A.Berg-R.Ciemniak**

Gausdal 1994

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 f4  
Qa5 5 Bd3 e5 6 dxe5?! dxe5 7**

**fxe5**



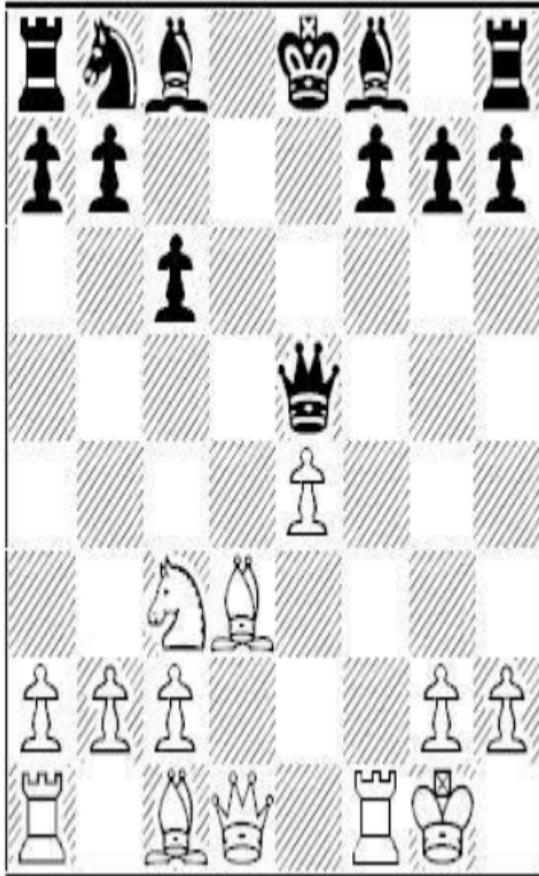
White hands over e5 in the hope  
that his development lead

compensates. Behind the external mask of power lies the true nature of White's position. The trouble is that, yes, White indeed does lead in development, but his passive c3-knight and d3-bishop allow Black to escape unscathed while retaining his positional trumps.

**7 ... Ng4 8 Nf3 Nxe5**

I prefer this simple positional move to 8 ... Bc5 9 Qe2 Bf2+ 10 Kf1 Bb6.

**9 Nxe5 Qxe5 10 0-0**



**Question:** Here we go again.  
Why are we  
always the ones behind in

development?

**Answer:** Forbidden fruit tastes sweeter than the kind you buy in your grocery store! Sure, we are behind in development, but – you guessed it – that magical square e5 protects us from harm's way. White's fictional advantage is simply another optical illusion. Openings where Black falls behind in development yet comes to no harm is an ungoogleable subject, but the Pribyl/Rat is loaded with such lines so stop being so shocked at these anomaly positions and start believing the truth. We are above the law!

## **10 ... Bd6 11 Bf4**

Trading off the dark-squared bishops helps Black take a firm grip of e5. Nobody has yet tried the very risky 11 g3!? which keeps the dark-squared bishops on the board at the cost of weakening White's king. I prefer Black after the simple 11 ... Nd7 intending ... Qe7 and ... Ne5.

## **11 ... Qd4+**

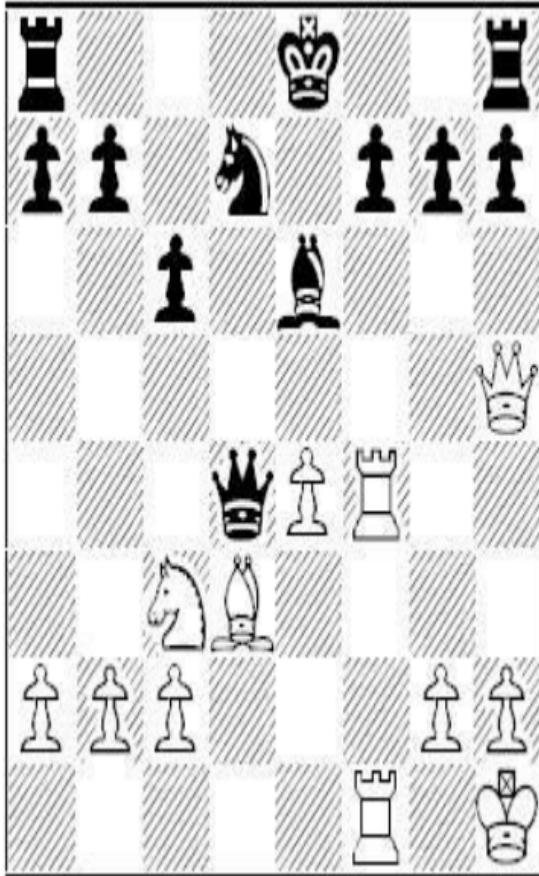
The trouble with 11 ... Qc5+ is that White may later gain a tempo with the pawn sac e5 followed by Ne4. Even so, after 12 Kh1 Bxf4 13 Rxf4 Be6 14 e5 (he has no choice but to clear e4 because his position runs out of steam if Black

establishes a blockade on e5) 14 ... Nd7 15 Bf5 0-0-0 16 Bxe6 fxe6 17 Qg4 Qxe5 18 Re4 Qf5! 19 Qxf5 exf5 20 Re7 g6 White didn't get full play for the pawn in E.Relange-V.Okhotnik, Cannes (rapid) 1992.

**12 Kh1 Bxf4 13 Rxf4 Be6 14 Qh5 Nd7**

The temporary sugar-high White got from his earlier development totally evaporated.

**15 Raf1**



**15 ... Qe5**

15 ... 0-0-0! is better, when  
White has zero compensation for

his loss of control over e5.

## **16 Qe2 Qc5?!**

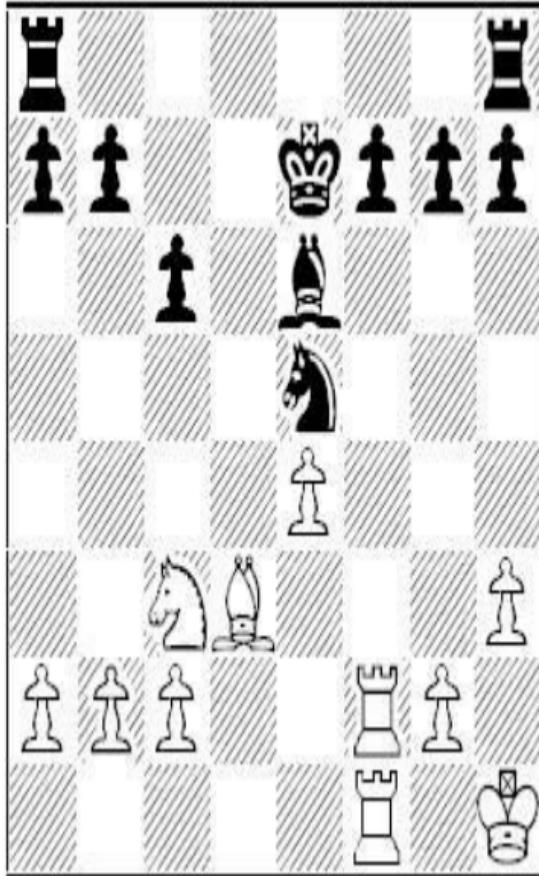
Black reacts in leisurely fashion and allows White a clearance sac.  
16 ... f6! retains board control and leads to an edge after 17 Bc4 Bxc4  
18 Qxc4 Qe7 19 Ne2 0-0-0 20 Nd4 Ne5.

## **17 Qf2?**

Voluntarily entering the ending is poor strategic decision. To me, a move like this is worse than hanging a pawn for no compensation. White agrees to an ending where he ends up with a bad bishop and Black in firm control of e5. Instead, White should react

with vigour and clear e4 with 17 e5! Nxe5 18 Bf5! when he achieves counterplay.

**17 ... Qxf2 18 R4xf2 Ne5 19 h3 Ke7**



Many players would automatically castle queenside here, decentralizing their king.

There is no danger to Black's king, so he centralizes.

Time to take stock of the ending and list Black's advantages:

1. He has a powerful blockading knight on e5.

2. White suffers from bad bishopitis with his lemon on d3.

3. The e4-pawn is isolated and a potential future target.

4. Black's centralized king clearly outshines his counterpart on h1.

5. Black has a grip on the dark squares, and if rooks come off the board Black may be able to motor his king to e5.

6. Black may expand on the

queenside with ... b5 and ... a5, and/or clamp down on the kingside dark squares with ... h5-h4 and ... g5.

Conclusion: White looks strategically busted and lacks even a trace of counterplay.

## **20 Rd1 b5**

Seizing space on both wings.

## **21 Rfd2 h5 22 Kg1 h4! 23**

## **Kf2 g5!**

The final frontier. Black continues to grab space and expand.

## **24 Be2 Rag8!**

Idea: ... Rg6, ... Rhh6, ... Rf6, ... Rf4 and finally ... Rhf6. This

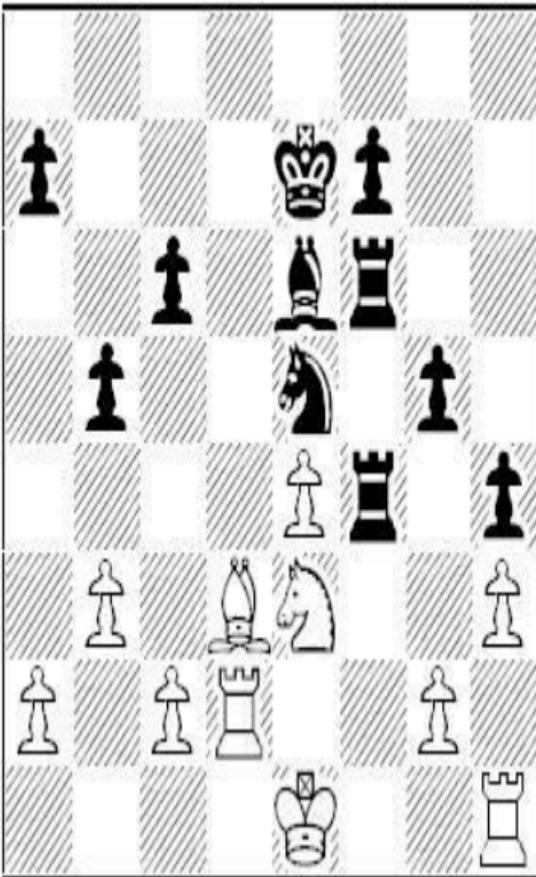
accomplishes two goals:

1. Black adds pressure to e4, making White's bad bishop's job even tougher than it already is.
2. If rooks come off the board Black's king travels to e5 with decisive effect.

## **25 Rh1**

He mistakenly believes that Black plans ... g4.

**25 ... Rg6! 26 Nd1 Rhh6! 27 Ne3 Rf6+ 28 Ke1 Rf4 29 Bd3 Rhf6 30 b3**



The great grandfather of bad bishops sits in his rocking chair on d3! Every single white pawn sits on

the wrong colour.

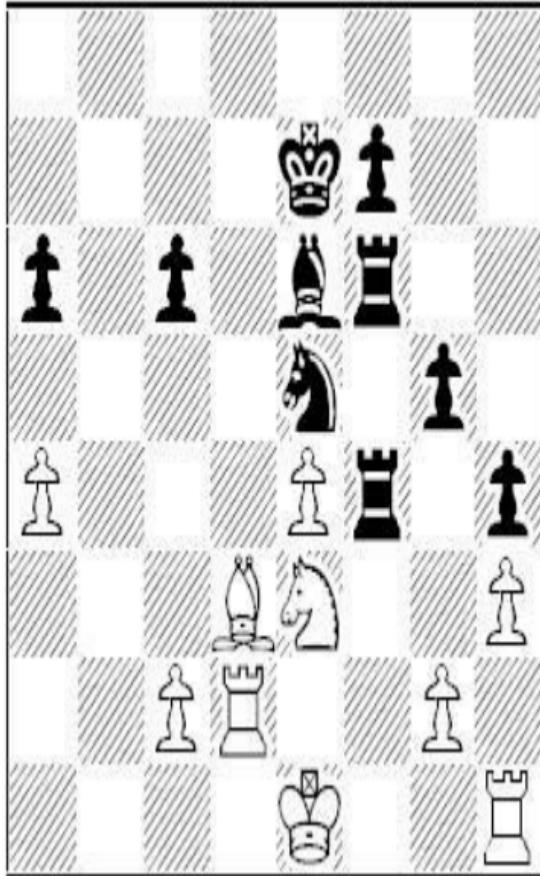
### **30 ... a6!**

Your average anaconda would envy Black's squeezing skills. Now ... c5-c4 is in the air.

### **31 a4**

If he sits around he just haemorrhages on the dark squares:  
31 Rf1 Rx<sub>f</sub>1+ 32 Nxf1 c5 33 Rf2 g4  
34 Rx<sub>f</sub>6 Kxf6 35 hxg4 Kg5 36 Ne3  
Kf4 37 Nf5 Bxf5! 38 gxf5 f6 39 Kf2  
c4 40 bxc4 bxc4 41 Be2 Kxe4 and  
Black wins.

### **31 ... bxa4 32 bxa4**



**Exercise (planning):** Make progress for Black.  
**Answer:** 32 ... c5!

Threat: ... c4, which deflects the bishop and wins e4.

**33 Bxa6 Rxe4 34 Re2 Rxa4**

Black won a pawn and retains his overwhelming strategic advantages. The only thing to comfort White is that he no longer has a bad bishop!

**35 Bd3 Ra1+ 36 Nd1 Nxd3+**

Rest in peace!

**37 cxd3 Kd6 38 Kd2 Rf4 39 Nf2 Rxh1 40 Nxh1 Bd5!**

Now White's knight takes the bad bishop's place and sits trapped in the corner!

**41 Ke1 Ra4 0-1**

42 Kf2 Ra1 43 Re1 Rxe1 44 Kxe1

Bxg2 wins another pawn.

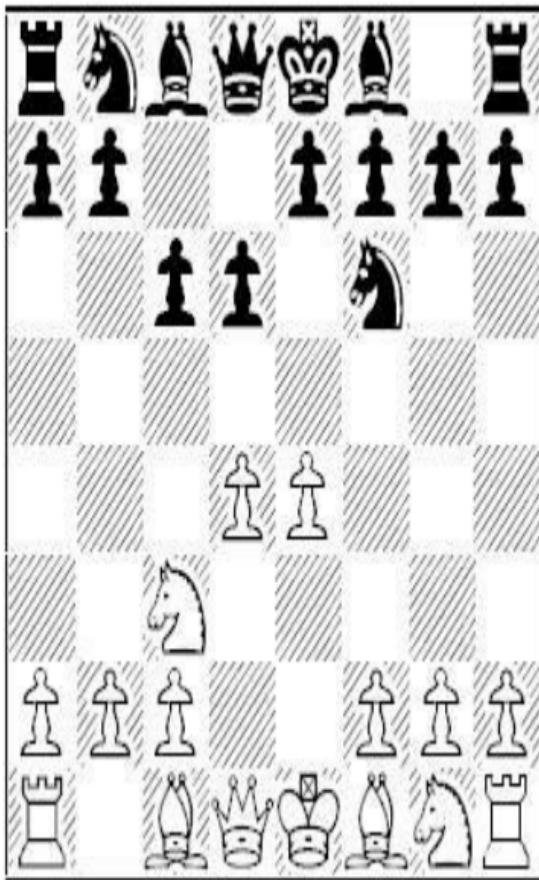
**Summary:** White can't exploit his development lead after 7 fxe5. Black soon takes charge of e5.

# **Chapter Four**

## **Fourth Move**

# **Alternatives**

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6**



In this chapter we examine four fourth-move alternatives, most of which lead to classical Philidor

positions. It wouldn't be a bad idea to familiarize yourself with the Philidor proper. Whenever it's possible, though, in this chapter we try to contaminate the normal Philidor lines by tossing in a Pribylian move in place of a Philidor move.

White's choices are:

**a) 4 f3**

Many of the lines in this chapter lead to quiet manoeuvring games – not here! White intends to take our heads off with a Dragon-style attack with g4, h4 and possibly queenside castling. This line is one of the most intimidating we face,

but in reality it isn't critical to our survival. Instead, this line is much like the blowfish, who puffs itself up three or four times its real size to intimidate predators and create the illusion of size and strength. Our position remains flexible and Black gets ample opportunity for queenside and central counters to deal with this ultra-aggressive line.

### **b) 4 Be3**

Very common at club level. When you face this one, your opponent usually mistakenly believes he's in a Pirc and gets ready for the 150 Attack. Here we try to confuse him with 4 ... Ng4 or

4 ... Qb6. In either case your opponent gets unceremoniously tossed from his comfort zone into a strange Pribyl/Philidor hybrid.

### **c) 4 a4**

The opponent wants nothing to do with the Pribyl and insists on a Philidor. We oblige but with a clause. We toss in 4 ... Qa5 and give him a contaminated Pribyl/Philidor which is certain to confuse.

### **d) 4 g3**

The opponent seeks peace and quiet with the fianchetto line against a pure Philidor. Against 4 g3 we have no method of Pribylizing

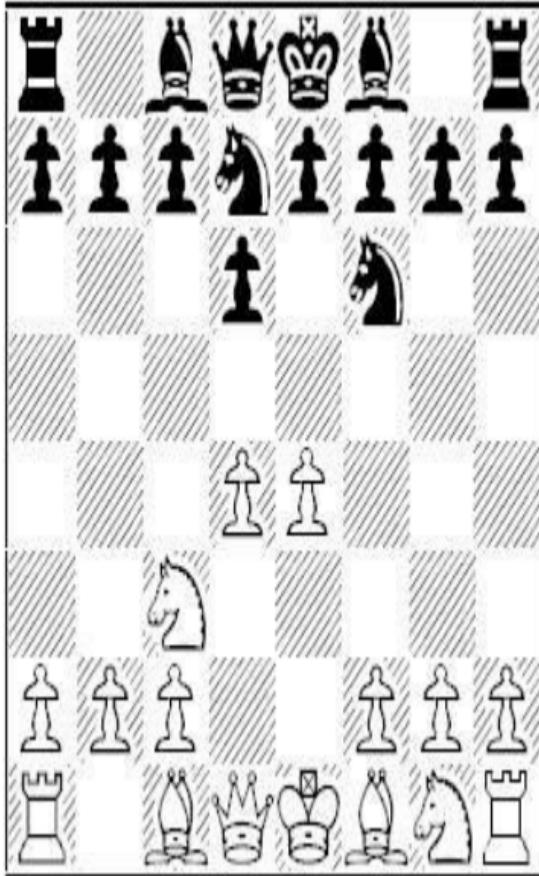
the position and must prepare for the hand-to-hand combat that follows in the strategic manoeuvring positions. The game usually heats up when White begins to push forward with a kingside pawn storm. Black has easy access to compensating central and queenside play here too.

## Game 29

**N.Arutyunov-C.Lakdawala**

Gambito (rapid), San Diego 2010

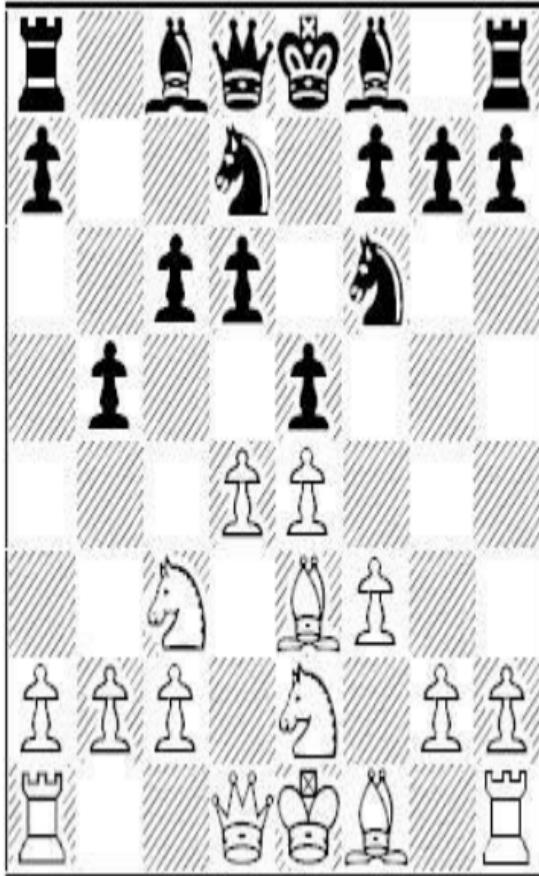
**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 Nbd7**



**Question:** Aren't you supposed to play 3 ... c6 here?  
**Answer:** Yes, it's hard to know

where one line ends and another begins. 3 ... c6 is the Pribyl/Rat approved move order but at the time of this game I normally went with the Philidor/Lion move order, 3 ... Nbd7. Actually, the Pribyl and the Philidor often merge. Observe 3 ... c6! 4 f3 e5 5 Be3 Nbd7 and we transpose to the main game.

The less common 5 Nge2 (instead of 5 Be3) may be slightly less accurate since White loses some options such as developing the knight to h3 later on. After 5 ... Nbd7 6 Be3 b5 White's options include:



a) 7 d5!? Bb7 8 dx<sub>c</sub>6 Bx<sub>c</sub>6 9 Ng3  
a6 10 Qd2 g6 11 Bh6 Bxh6! 12  
Qxh6 (my opponent felt he had

infiltrated; I thought his queen was out of play) 12 ... Nc5 13 0-0-0 Qe7 14 Be2 0-0-0 (be flexible about where you castle in this line) 15 a3 Kb7 16 Nf1 d5 17 exd5 Nxd5 18 Nxd5 Bxd5 19 Ne3 Be6 20 Rxd8 Rxd8 21 f4? Qc7! 22 Rd1 (I saw him reach for his rook and then jerk back as if his hand touched a hot stove; he may have planned 22 Rf1?? but then saw 22 ... Nb3+ 23 Kb1 Nd2+ picking off the f1-rook) 22 ... Nb3+! 23 Kb1 Nd4 24 Bd3 exf4 25 Be4+? Kb6 26 Nd5+ (26 Nf1 Nf5 wins) 26 ... Rxd5 27 c3 Nf5 0-1, H.Tsang-C.Lakdawala, San Diego (rapid) 2011.

b) 7 a3 Qc7 8 Ng3 h5! 9 Bd3 h4 10 Nge2 h3 11 g3 Be7 12 Qd2 a6 13 a4 Rb8 14 axb5 axb5 15 0-0 b4 16 Nd1 c5 17 dxc5 Nxc5 and Black stands well in this Najdorf-like position, L.Yudasin-R.Schmaltz, New York 2002.

c) 7 Qd2 b4! 8 Na4 d5! 9 dxe5 Nxe5 10 Ng3 Be7 11 Nc5 Qa5 12 Nb3 Qc7, Z.Susak-M.Kazhgaleyev, Sibenik 2007. Black already stands slightly better. His attack looks quicker should White castle queenside.

d) After 7 g4 b4 8 Na4, I like 8 ... h6! intending ... d5!.

**4 Be3 e5 5 f3**

This setup, a favourite of attacking players, is one I recommend for White in my book A Ferocious Opening Repertoire. White feels comfortable playing Sicilian Dragon style. He reinforces his e-pawn and follows with automatic attacking moves like Qd2, g4, 0-0-0, h4 and, he hopes, a quick mate. However, it is a lot less straightforward for White than the normal Dragon attacks.

**Question:** Why?

**Answer:** In a typical Dragon it's all piece play from Black's end. Here, White must watch out for multiple shifts in Black's pawn

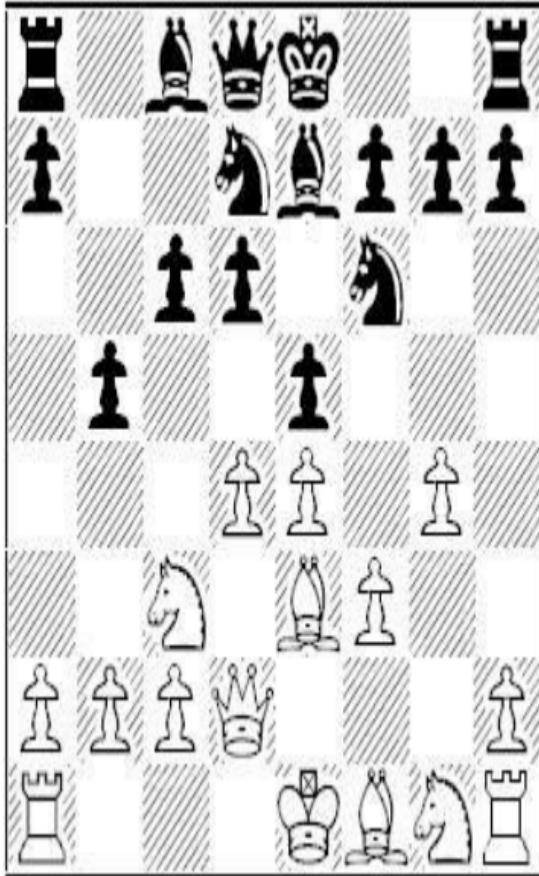
structure, so the two lines, although externally similar, are not so alike after all.

### **5 ... c6 6 Qd2 Be7 7 g4!?**

Signalling that he isn't messing around.

7 0-0-0!? is a high-risk venture. White commits his king early to the queenside, where Black already started a pawn storm. 7 ... 0-0 8 g4 b5 9 Kb1 Nb6 10 Qe1 b4 11 Nce2 Nc4 12 Bc1 was J.Polgar-C.Bauer, Cannes 2001, and here the attacking race looks about even after 12 ... Qa5.

### **7 ... b5**



**8 h4**

**Question:** Aren't you nervous about that kingside pawn storm?

**Answer:** Sure, it's intimidating, but we must understand that when your opponents open with the f3 lines, hostile intent is at the core of their chess natures, and one must be ready for episodic spasms of violence. This isn't a one-sided equation where only White gets to attack. His kingside pawn lunges also constitute non-developing moves, and development of pieces – not pawns – is the Magna Carta of opening principles. It's easy to get carried away with one's attacking ambitions and suddenly fall prey to Black's counterattack due to a sudden lag in development. White's

last move may also be interpreted as an opponent wanting more than his fair share of the position.

**Question:** I like the move 8 d5 which seems to undermine Black's queenside. Is this a good idea?

**Answer:** It may even win a pawn, but not without consequences. After 8 ... b4 9 dxc6 bxc3 10 cxd7+ Bxd7 11 Qxc3 0-0 Black's development lead and the open b- and c-files offer him good compensation for the pawn.

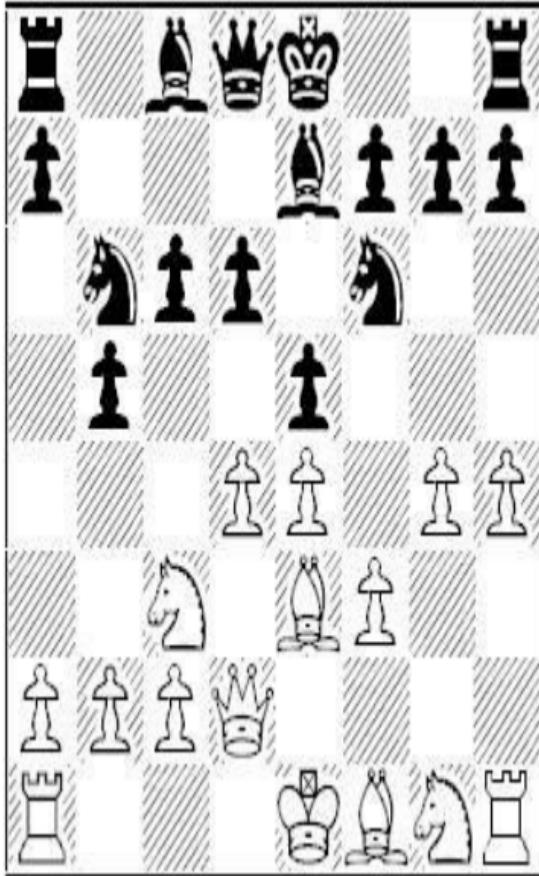
## **8 ... Nb6**

Making room on d7 for the f6-knight, should White push forward

with h5 and g5.

**Question:** You don't mind trading queens?

**Answer:** No, Black has a comfortable ending should White swap on e5. All those kingside pawn moves don't help him. On the other hand, I feel that Black's queenside space represents progress.



## 9 Rd1?

This line is hair trigger and one slip from either side can be fatal.

**Question:** Why do you think this move is a mistake? In my opinion

White cleverly avoids castling on the side where you are attacking.

**Answer:** The move looks incorrect on two counts: Now his king is unsafe wherever it goes. Also, White's knight must undevelop to b1.

These combined factors mean loss of initiative for White.

**Question:** What is the assessment if White swaps queens here with 9 dxe5?

**Answer:** An even ending after 9 ... dxe5 10 Qxd8+ Bxd8. In

practice, such a line is highly unlikely since players who favour the f3, g4 lines tend to be psycho attackers and endgame loathers.

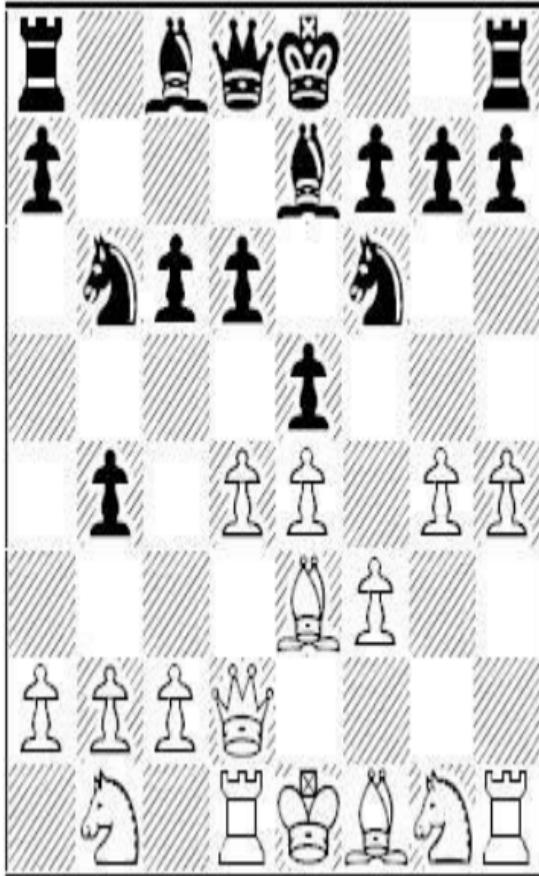
### **9 ... b4**

**Question:** When should I play such a move and when should I hold back?

**Answer:** Rule of thumb: Always flick this move in if you force White's knight back to its room on b1.

### **10 Nb1**

Of course he had to avoid 10 Nce2? Nc4.



**Exercise (planning):** White lags in development and his pieces are out of sync. How to

exploit this for Black?

**Answer: 10 ... exd4**

Not even deserving of an exclam. Such moves should be automatic. Always create confrontation when you sense your opponent isn't ready for a fight.

**11 Bxd4 0-0**

**Question:** You give this move without comment. How did you know

you wouldn't get mated? His kingside attack is well underway.

**Answer:** His pawns may be well underway but his pieces are not! White fell seriously behind in development. In such situations,

this factor allows Black to castle directly into the storm with confidence.

## **12 Qh2**

12 Nh3? Bxg4! 13 fxg4? Nxe4 14 Qd3 Bxh4+ 15 Ke2 Ng3+ wins.

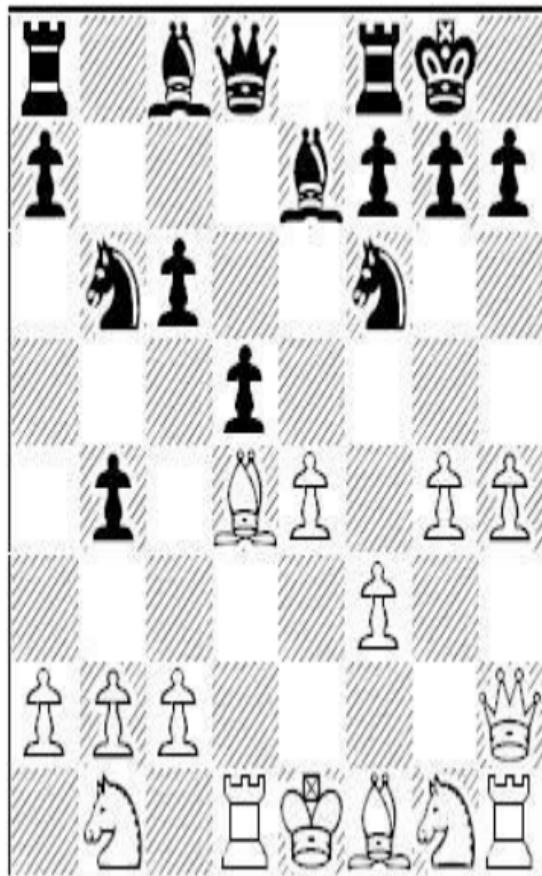
By playing 12 Qh2 White keeps his queen out of the way of ... Nxe4 should Black sac on g4, covers h4, and also plans e5 in response to ... d5.

## **12 ... d5**

Following three principles:

1. Open the position when ahead in development.
2. Create confrontation when ahead in development.

3. Counter an attempted kingside attack with a central thrust.



## **13 e5 Re8**

How brave I am with sacrifices  
when the opponent can't accept!

## **14 Ne2 Nfd7 15 Nd2?!**

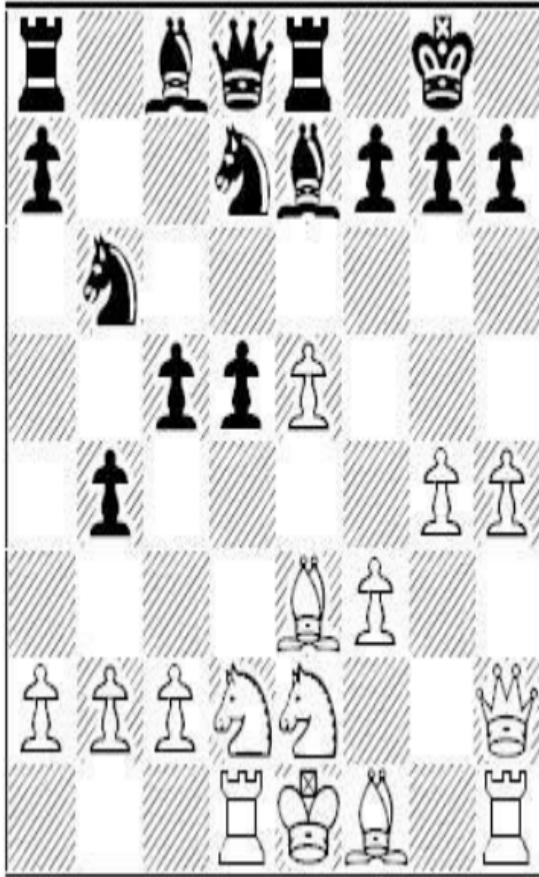
He had to try 15 f4 f6! (the same three principles apply as in the above note) 16 e6 Nf8 17 f5 Bd6 18 Qf2 Bxe6! 19 fxe6 Nxe6. Black's strong compensation includes:

1. Two pawns for the piece and a powerful attack;
2. Scattered, disorganized and undeveloped white pieces; and
3. White's king looks like a patient in end-of-life hospice care.

The one plus for White is that at

least he stays up material to comfort him somewhat for his miserable position. In the game White gets all the rotten and none of the good.

**15 ... c5 16 Be3?!**



## **Exercise (combination alert):**

Black's trick is not so hard to see.

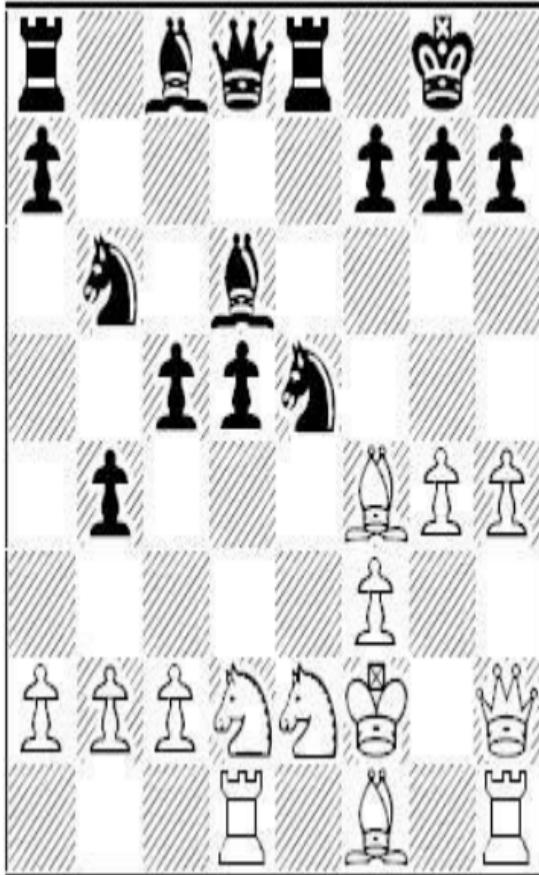
To be fair, White is still

completely busted after 16 Bf2 f6!.

**Answer: 16 ... Nxe5!**

White can resign here, down a pawn in a train wreck of an overextended position.

**17 Bf4 Bd6 18 Kf2**



## **Exercise (combination alert):**

Do you see the trick your blind author missed?

## **18 ... Ba6?**

I was blinded by that deadly cocktail of a warm, fuzzy feeling of imminent victory, mixed with dull complacency. Often a player reaches the lowest level of alertness when he knows he is winning. He lacks the motivation to look for a knockout punch and laziness rules with the subliminal thought: "Why bother looking? Everything wins!"

**Answer:** 18 ... Bxg4! picks off more material.

**Question:** And the open g-file?

**Answer:** White can't do a thing with the open g-file since his own

king is under fire and his pieces uncoordinated.

**Question:** I miss such tactics all the time. Am I a weak tactician?

**Answer:** Not necessarily. I do such tactics puzzles on a daily basis, yet over the board I miss tactics all the time. The difference is, here nobody told me: "Hey, wake up! Black to play and win a pawn." If they had I would have found 18 ... Bxg4! Your issue, like mine, may not be that you miss tactics so much as you don't sense the existence of a combination in the position. So we are like people who score 100% on the written

driving test but fail the actual driving exam. Theory is so much easier than practice!

**19 g5 Qc7 20 Bxe5?!**

Strategic suicide, but nothing worked here.

**20 ... Bxe5 21 f4 Bxe2 22 fxe5 Bxd1 23 Bb5 Bh5 24 Bxe8 Rx e8 0-1**

**Summary:** Be ready when White goes berserk in this line in his quest to blow Black off the map. In doing so, White may fall behind in development and sometimes pays a price.

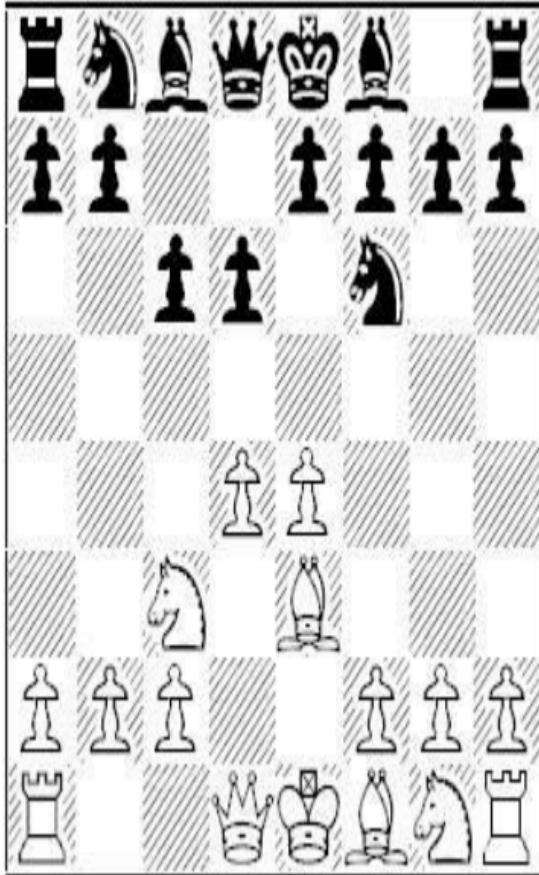
Game 30

**S.Barrantos  
V.Akopian**

Cali 2007

**Chavarriaga-**

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4  
Be3**



At club level, the 150 Attack is a popular way to meet the Pirc and Modern. Many club players, who

don't know what the Pribyl is, believe they are in a Pirc of some sort and just play Be3 automatically.

#### **4 ... Qb6!?**

With this audacious move, we remind White this is not a Pirc. Black also has quite a few other options:

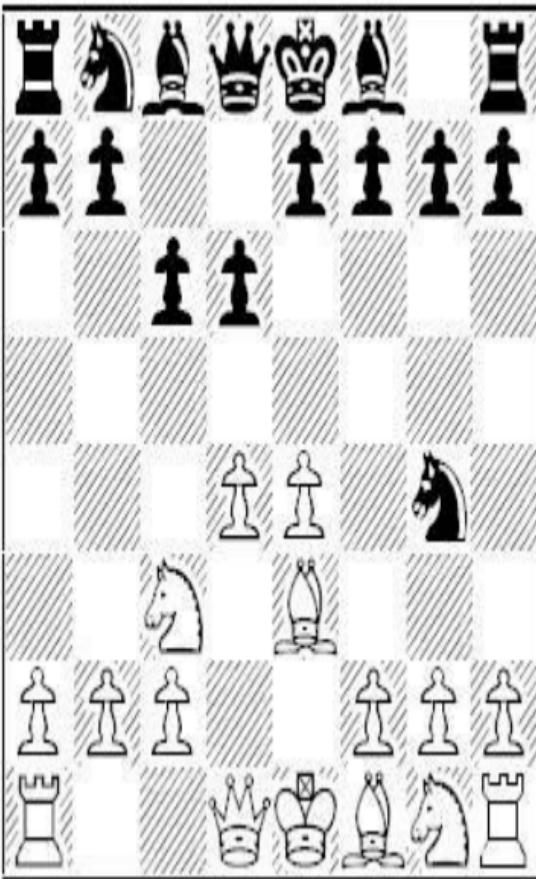
a) 4 ... Qa5 (threatening to pick off e4) 5 f3 e5 6 Nge2 Be7 7 Qd2 b5 8 g4 h5!? 9 g5 Nfd7 10 Bh3 b4 11 Nd1 d5! 12 Ng3 g6 with complications not unfavourable to Black, A.Virag-E.Mozes, Hungarian League 2005.

b) If you play 4 ... Nbd7 White

may return to Austrian territory with 5 f4!?. Then 5 ... Qa5 6 Bd3 e5 7 Nf3 reaches note 'b' to Black's 6th move in Game 17.

c) 4 ... e5 5 dxe5!? (5 f3 Nbd7 transposes to Game 29) 5 ... Ng4! 6 exd6!? (greedy: he should probably retreat to c1, with an equal position) 6 ... Nxe3 7 fxe3 Qxd6 with loads of compensation for the pawn, R.Prasanna Raghuram-D.Bocharov, Bhubaneswar 2010.

d) 4 ... Ng4!? is an interesting idea.



**Question:** What is the purpose of this move?

**Answer:** To chase the bishop

off e3. This allows us ... Qb6 and ... e5 which simultaneously pressures b2, d4 and f2.

**Question:** Is it really a “threat” to chop the bishop on e3?

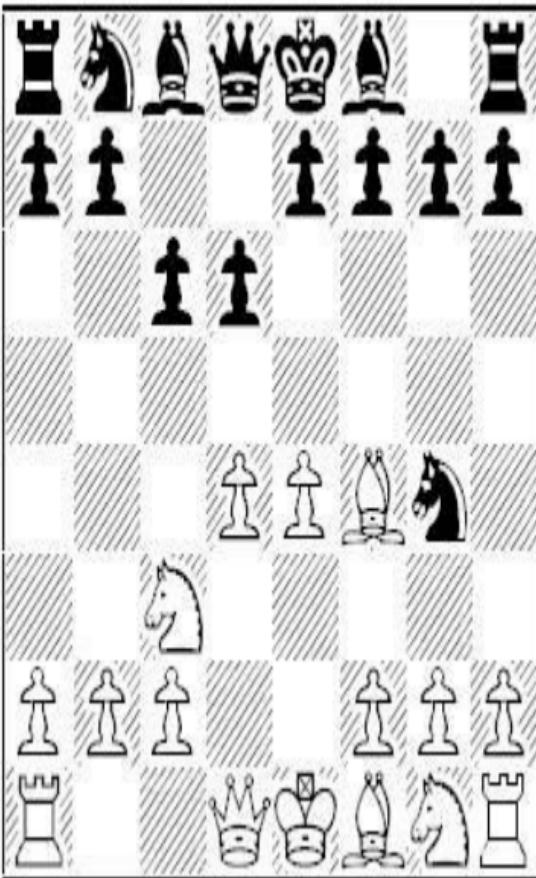
What’s wrong with 5 Qd2 Nxe3 6 fxe3? This would open the f-file.

**Answer:** True, but he didn’t get it for free. He gave up both the bishop pair and control over the dark squares. Chances should be at least equal for Black after a line like 6 ... g6 7 Nf3 Bg7 8 Bc4 0-0 9 0-0 Nd7. Pressure on f7 isn’t such a problem. Black meets any lunge with ... e6 and retains all his strategic advantages as well.

Let's look at two bishop moves after 4 ... Ng4:

d1) 5 Bg5 Qb6 6 Qd2!? (most players are not afraid to sac for development in such situations; 6 Rb1 e5 transposes to the note on 5 Rb1, below) 6 ... Qxb2 7 Rb1 Qa3 8 Bc4 Nd7 9 Nf3 e5 10 0-0 and White's development lead compensates him for the pawn, L.Guidarelli-M.Caposciutti, Monte Carlo 2000.

d2) I fail to see the logic behind 5 Bf4.



This move walks into a tempo loss if Black plays 5 ... e5! 6 dxe5 Qb6! 7 Qd2 dxe5. After 8 Bg3 Qxb2

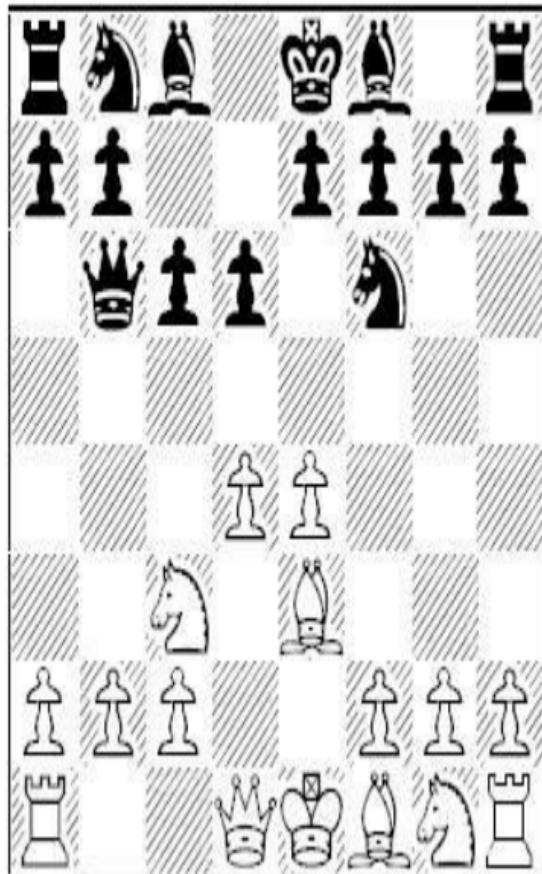
9 Rb1 Qa3 10 h3 Nf6 11 Bxe5 Nbd7  
12 Bd4 Bb4 13 Bd3 0-0 I prefer  
Black, who:

1. Keeps up with White in development;
2. Enjoys the superior pawn structure;
3. May use c5 for a bishop or a knight later on; and
4. Exerts annoying pin pressure on c3.

In N.Arutyunov-C.Lakdawala, San Diego (rapid) 2010, I instead chose 5 ... Qb6!? but after 6 Be2 Qxb2 White surprised me with 7 Bd2!. For some reason this natural move escaped my attention and

now I faced a heavy assault.

Let's return to the main game and Akopian's 4 ... Qb6:



## 5 a3

Alternatively:

a) 5 Rb1 Ng4 6 Bg5 e5 7 Nf3

(after 7 Be2? Nx $f$ 2! 8 Kxf2 exd4 9 Na4 Qa5 Black regains the piece with clear advantage, S.Lalic-M.Muresan, Thessaloniki 1988) 7 ... h6 8 Bh4 Nd7 9 Be2 Qc7 10 0-0 Ngf6 reaches a Philidor with White's bishop slightly misplaced on h4, P.Bauer-J.Pribyl, Berlin 1987.

b) 5 Qd2!?, sac'ing a pawn, is the most consistent move. However, after 5 ... Qxb2 6 Rb1 Qa3 7 h3 e6 8 Nf3 d5 9 e5 Nfd7 10 Bd3 Bb4 11 Rb3 Qa5 I have doubts about White's compensation since

the position is quite blocked and White can't do much with his development lead, C.Munoz-V.Akopian, Alajuela 2006.

## **5 ... Ng4**

**Question:** Why not grab his b-pawn?

**Answer:** Let's all do our best to avoid 5 ... Qxb2?? 6 Na4 and it's time for Black to resign before making his sixth move!

## **6 Bc1**

After 6 Bg5 e5 7 Nf3 Black should play 7 ... h6 8 Bh4 Nd7 when he gets a good Philidor once again.

**Question:** Why a good version?

**Answer:** Two reasons:

1. White's bishop is misplaced on h4 and vulnerable to a swap for Black's dark-squared bishop with ... Be7 and ... Nh5 at some later date.

2. The bishop is also out of play if posted on the h2-b8 diagonal.

### **6 ... e5 7 Nf3**

7 Nge2 leads the position back to paths similar to Game 29, but possibly an inferior version for White since castling queenside becomes hazardous. For example, after 7 ... Be7 8 f3 Nf6 9 Be3 0-0 10 Qd2 Qc7 11 0-0-0?! b5 12 g4 a5 White's pawn push to a3 clearly accelerates Black's queenside attack.

**7 ... Nd7 8 h3 Ngf6 9 Be3**

**Qc7 10 Qd2**

10 a4 steers the position into 4 a4 territory, which we cover next game.

**10 ... b5**

Whenever Black achieves ... b5 in one shot in the Philidor, he usually gets equality.

**11 Bd3**

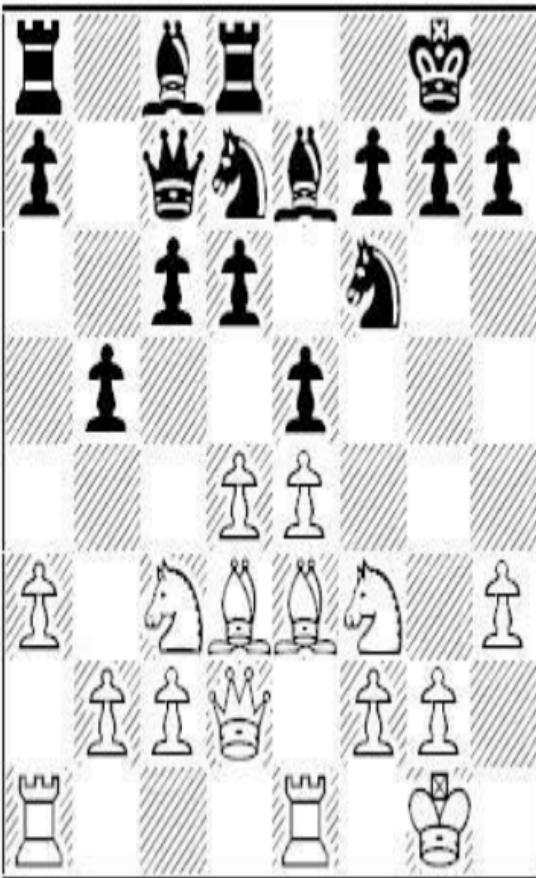
**Question:** Wouldn't 11 Nh4 induce the weakening 11 ... g6?

**Answer:** It does, but keep in mind Black often plays ... g6 later anyway in the Philidor. And let's not forget the waste of time White incurs by moving his knight to h4

and then soon back to f3, so the move doesn't keep me up at night with worry.

**11 ... Be7 12 0-0 0-0 13**

**Rfe1 Rd8!?**



An original, un-Philidorian experiment. Akopian's rook stares down White's queen on d2. Still, the

rook looks inappropriate on d8, much like the guy who sends text messages to friends from a funeral. As I mentioned in an earlier game, originality doesn't necessarily equate to strength. 13 ... Re8 would be the more normal move, since White's e4-pawn gets targeted.

## **14 Bg5**

This is the fourth time he has moved this piece.

**Question:** True, but what else should he play?

**Answer:** I would go with the normal 150 Attack-style plan 14 Ne2 intending c3 and Ng3 with a Closed Lopez feel to the position.

**14 ... h6 15 Bh4 a6**

**Question:** I don't see the point of this move.

Why duplicate the protection of b5?

**Answer:** Akopian wants to worry White about sudden ... exd4 and ... c5 possibilities.

**16 Bg3**

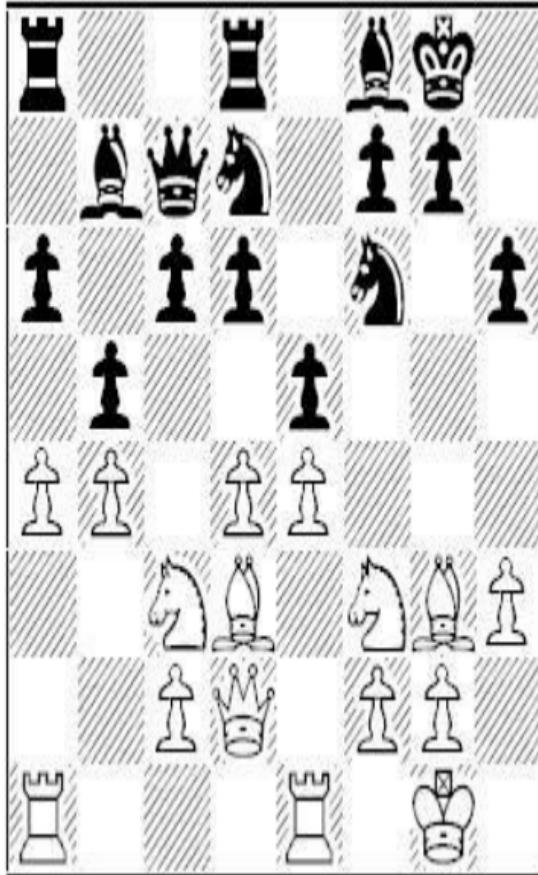
Number five! This bishop thinks he can come and go as he pleases. As I mentioned earlier, the bishop on this diagonal stares blankly at e5 and isn't well placed.

**16 ... Bb7**

Remember the target: White's e-pawn.

**17 b4?! Bf8 18 a4?!**

Consistent with White's last move and also incorrect. He just broke the principle: Don't create a confrontation on your opponent's strong wing.



**Exercise (planning):** Come up with a plan that exploits White's decision.

## **Answer: 18 ... a5!**

Meet confrontation with more confrontation. A fight breaks out in the schoolyard and Akopian proves to be the meaner, tougher kid since the queenside remains Black's natural turf in Philidor structures.

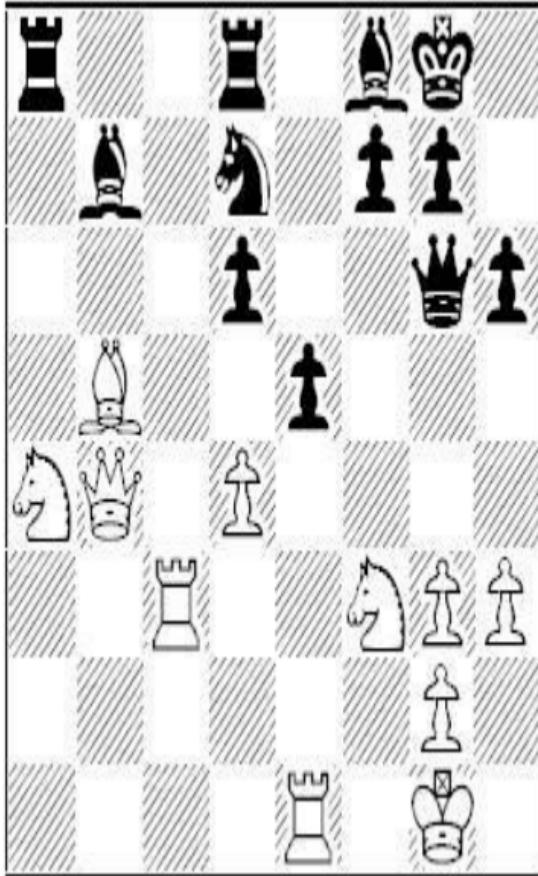
### **19 axb5?!**

White also gets kicked around after 19 bxa5 b4 but still this was his best pick in the position.

### **19 ... axb4 20 Na4**

20 Ne2 c5! is also clearly in Black's favour.

**20 ... cxb5 21 Bxb5 Nxe4 22 Qxb4 Nxg3 23 fxg3 Qxc2 24 Rac1 Qg6 25 Rc3**



Black's gains from the scramble:

1. He won a pawn;
2. He gained the bishop pair;

3. He damaged White's structure; and

4. He weakened White on the dark squares.

**Exercise (calculation):** Now can he get ambitious and pick up the

second pawn on g3? Give a variation to back up your answer.

**25 ... Bxf3**

**Answer:** Sure, why not? We aren't afraid of ghosts. Let's take the pawn: 25 ... Qxg3! (threat: ... Bxf3) 26 Re2 Qf4 27 Rc7 Bxf3 28 Rf2 Qxd4 29 Qxd4 exd4. As Tal once said in a position where several of his pieces stood hanging,

"My opponent can only take one piece at a time!" After 30 Rxf3 Ne5 White's position is a disaster: he is down two pawns and Black threatens both the rook on f3 and ... Rdb8 overloading White's uncoordinated minor pieces.

**26 Rxf3 e4 27 Rc3 d5 28 Qb3 Nf6 29 Rc6 h5!**

Ensuring that the weakness on g3 remains so.

**30 Nc5 Rdb8?!**

Black wins with 30 ... Bd6! 31 Kf2 Qf5+ 32 Kg1 Qg5 33 Kf2 Qd2+.

**31 Na6**



## **Exercise (calculation):**

Calculate the ramifications of sac'ing

the exchange on b5, followed by ... Qxg3. Should Black risk it?

### **31 ... Rb7**

**Answer:** Yes, it works: 31 ... Rxb5! 32 Qxb5 Qxg3 33 Qe2 Bd6 34 Qe3 Qh2+ 35 Kf1 Bf4 36 Qg1 Qg3 37 Qf2 Qd3+ 38 Qe2 Qxd4 picking up a third pawn for the exchange, as well as retaining complete domination of the dark squares.

### **32 Nc5 Bxc5**

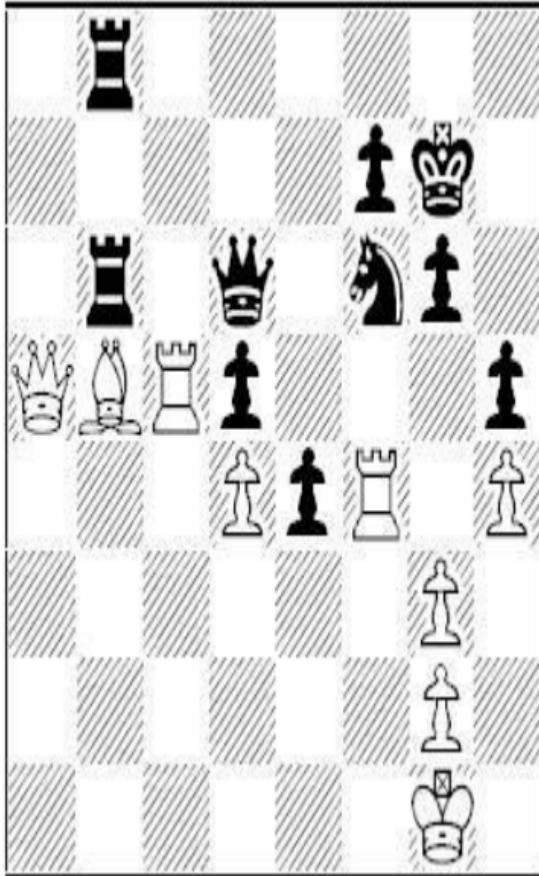
Apathetic indecision or sangfroid? Once again I would play 32 ... Rxb5! 33 Qxb5 Qxg3 34 Qe2 Bd6.

**33 Rxc5 Rab8 34 Kh2 Qg5  
35 Qa4 g6 36 Rf1 Kg7 37 Rf4**

## **Rb6 38 h4?**

He hastens defeat with this rash move. Now White adds a weak back rank to his growing list of troubles.

**38 ... Ng4+ 39 Kg1 Qd8 40 Qa5 Qd6 41 Bf1 Nf6 42 Bb5**



**Exercise (planning):** Find a plan to break through  
White's defensive barrier on b5.

**Answer: 42 ... R8b7!**

Clear b8 for the queen.

**43 Kh2 Qb8!**

Message to White's blockade:

This band must disband! Akopian utilizes Alekhine's gun manoeuvre and now White's bishop must give way as Black enters White's second rank with decisive effect.

**Question:** Did you just make that up?

**Answer:** No. Alekhine's gun is when the queen teams up behind the rooks.

**44 Be2 Ra7! 45 Qd2 Rb2 46 Rc2 Raa2 0-1**

White drops a second pawn

after 46 ... Raa2 47 Rxb2 Qxb2 48 Qxb2 Rxb2 49 Ba6 Rd2.

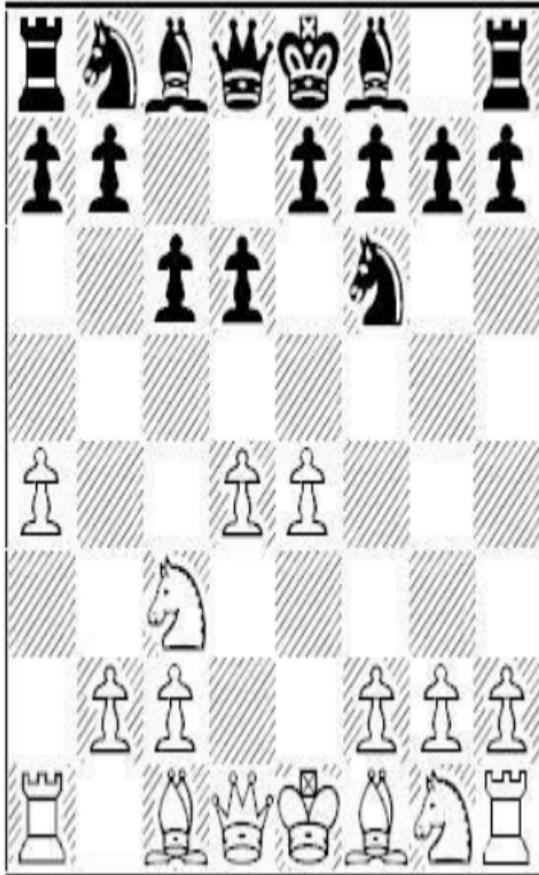
**Summary:** 4 ... Qb6, along with 4 ... Ng4, is an effective method of meeting the 150 Attack against our Pribyl/Rat.

Game 31

**X.Zhang-Zhang Zhong**

Manila 2007

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 c6 4 a4**



White isn't interested in challenging Black in the Pribyl/Rat lines and tries to force the game

back to the Philidor.

**Question:** Is there a way we can keep the position independent?

**Answer:** Yes!

### **4 ... Qa5!?**

This Pribylian move may throw White off. Black has the option, of course, to head towards main lines of the Philidor with 4 ... Nbd7 or 4 ... e5, or the Pirc with 4 ... g6.

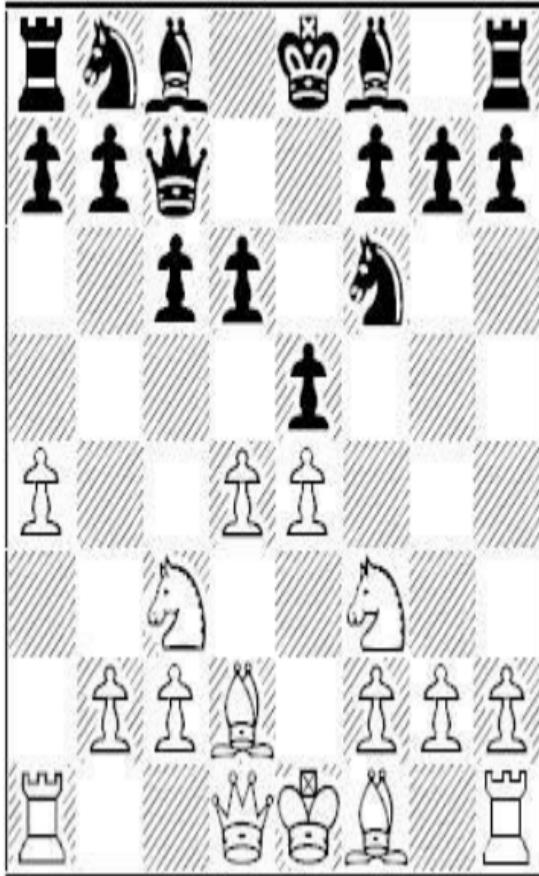
### **5 Bd2**

After 5 Bd3 e5 6 Nge2 Be7 7 0-0 0-0 8 h3 Nbd7 9 Bd2 Qc7 10 Re1 Re8 11 a5 Rb8 12 d5 Nc5 13 b4 Nxd3 14 cxd3 cxd5 15 exd5 White's extra space and Black's bishop pair balance each other out, A.Grant-

J.Hodgson, Perth 1997.

5 f3 differs from the 4 f3 we looked at earlier in the chapter. The inclusion of the moves a4 and ... Qa5 changes things since White can't castle queenside. A.Mitenkov-V.Chekhov, Moscow 1995, went 5 ... e5 6 Be3 Be7 7 Qd2 Nbd7 8 Nge2 0-0 9 Ng3 Re8 10 Be2. Now Black, leading in development, logically opened the game with 10 ... d5! 11 0-0 dxе4 12 Ncxe4 Qxd2 13 Nxd2 Nd5 14 Bf2 exd4 15 Bxd4 and here he could even claim a tiny edge after 15 ... Nc5.

**5 ... Qc7 6 Nf3 e5**



**Question:** I don't get it. Aren't you just in a Philidor a move down? You took two moves to play

your queen to c7.

**Answer:** True, but look at his extra move, the clunky bishop on d2. We denied White any future ideas of b3 and Bb2 or Ba3. Also, the bishop, in the way of White's pieces, obviously needs to move to either e3 or g5 later on, so we regain our lost tempo. In essence our move 4 ... Qa5 achieved its objective, which is to contaminate our opponent's theory by forcing him into Pribyl/Rat waters and out of a pure Philidor, the one with which he is probably familiar.

## 7 Bg5

This is not the ideal square for

White's bishop in Philidor setups.

**Question:** What is wrong with g5? It looks like a perfectly natural square.

**Answer:** We talked about this last game, but it's worth repeating. The bishop is an important piece for White. After ... Be7 White experiences vulnerability to ideas like ... h6 and ... Nh5!, allowing Black to swap it off. Also, it isn't well placed on the h2-b8 diagonal.

Other tries include:

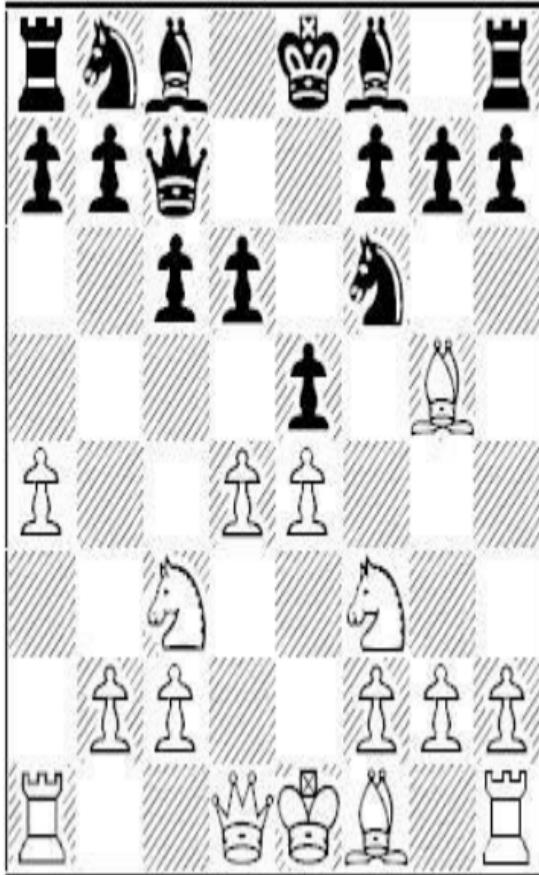
a) 7 h3 (in order to place his bishop at e3 without fear of ... Ng4)  
7 ... Be7 8 Bc4 0-0 9 0-0 Nbd7 10 Re1 b6 11 Qe2 a6 12 d5 c5 13 Nh2

Ne8 14 Nf1 Qd8 15 Nd1 Bg5,  
B.Baker-C.Lakdawala, San Diego  
(rapid) 2011. Black stands well  
here: He has freed his bad bishop;  
he attains access to the plan ... g6,  
... Ng7, ... f5 and ... Nf6 with a  
King's Indian-like kingside attack  
brewing; and finally, White  
experiences difficulty opening the  
game on the other side of the  
board.

b) 7 Bc4 Be7 8 0-0 a5!? 9 dxe5?!

(the beginning of a dubious plan;  
he should play 9 h3) 9 ... dxe5 10  
Ng5?! 0-0 11 f4 (Black's structure is  
too solid to be easily blown away as  
White hopes) 11 ... h6 12 Nf3 exf4

13 e5 Ng4 14 Kh1 Qb6 15 Qe2 Ne3  
16 Bxe3 Qxe3 17 Qxe3 fxe3 18 Nd4  
Nd7 19 Rxf7?! Nxe5! and White  
found himself struggling in  
V.Kotronias-G.Titov, Moscow 1989.



**7 ... Be7**

**Question:** How am I supposed  
to know when

to play ... exd4 and when to hold back?

**Answer:** Play ... exd4 if you see some concrete gain out of it, like added pressure on his e4-pawn.

## 8 Be2

**Question:** Why post the bishop on e2 when he has 8 Bc4 available?

**Answer:** I have played Philidor setups for a long time and have never been able to understand why White sometimes deliberately plays the bishop to the solid but passive e2-square rather than to c4. The answer may be simply that the bishop sits less secure on c4, vulnerable to ... d5, ... b5, ... Ne5

and ... Be6 ideas from Black.

Other moves:

a) 8 dxe5 (I love when my opponents play this way, handing Black equality on beautiful chinaware) 8 ... dxe5 9 Bc4 0-0 and White has nothing, M.Venkatesh-T.Gareev, Kochin 2004.

b) 8 Qd2 h6 9 Bh4 Bg4 10 h3!? Bxf3 11 gxf3 g5! 12 Bg3, S.Maettig-W.Schatz, German League 1997. White's dark-squared bishop got shut out of the action for the rest of the game but Black weakened his light squares to achieve this. The position looks dynamically balanced.

**8 ... h6 9 Bh4 Nbd7 10 Qd3!?**

The queen may later be vulnerable to ... exd4 and ... Nc5 tricks.

**10 ... b6**

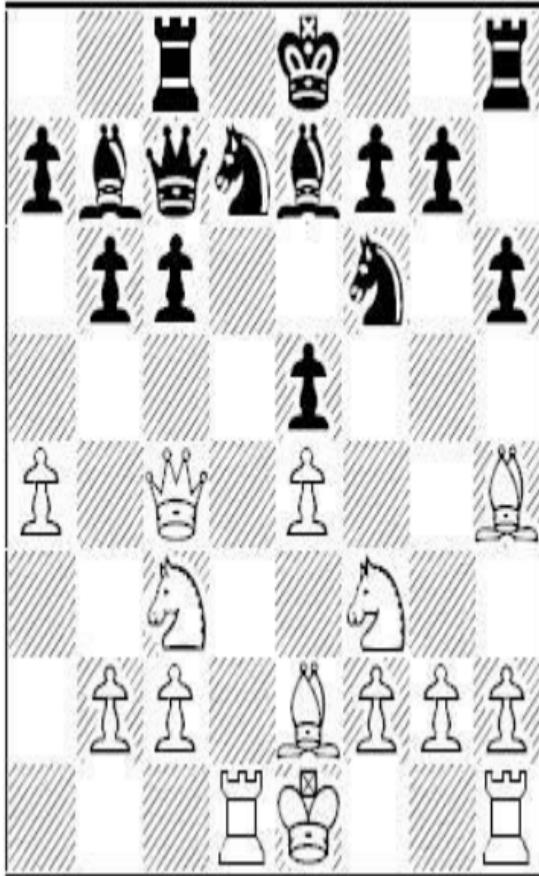
Beginning the standard expansion plan: ... a6, ... Bb7 and ... b5.

**11 Qc4 Bb7 12 Rd1 Rc8**

Just in case White dreamed of Nb5.

**13 dxe5 dxe5**

White, the lower-rated player, resolves the central tension.



**Question:** This looks drawish.  
How does a player  
go about spicing up such a

position?

**Answer:** This is not a dead draw by any means. Every piece remains on the board and the pawns are flexible. Openings like the Exchange Slav and Exchange French can be a pain for the higher-rated player to try to win as Black. The central exchange here in the Philidor/Pribyl/Rat doesn't constitute the same thing. Black's shifting queenside pawns increase the dynamism factor.

### **14 0-0 a6 15 b4**

Depriving Black of the use of c5, but also creating a source of confrontation.

**15 ... b5 16 Qb3 0-0 17**

## **Rxd7?!**

The idea is to sucker punch Black with Nxe5 followed by Ng6. Some players with mercurial temperaments find it next to impossible to resist the thrill of the chaos from such testosterone infused ideas. The sequence certainly spikes the complications, but in Black's favour. White desires a chaotic clash where anything can – and probably will – happen. And if we factor in over-the-board pressures, perhaps White has his chances. Still, there is something artificial about the entire

"combination".

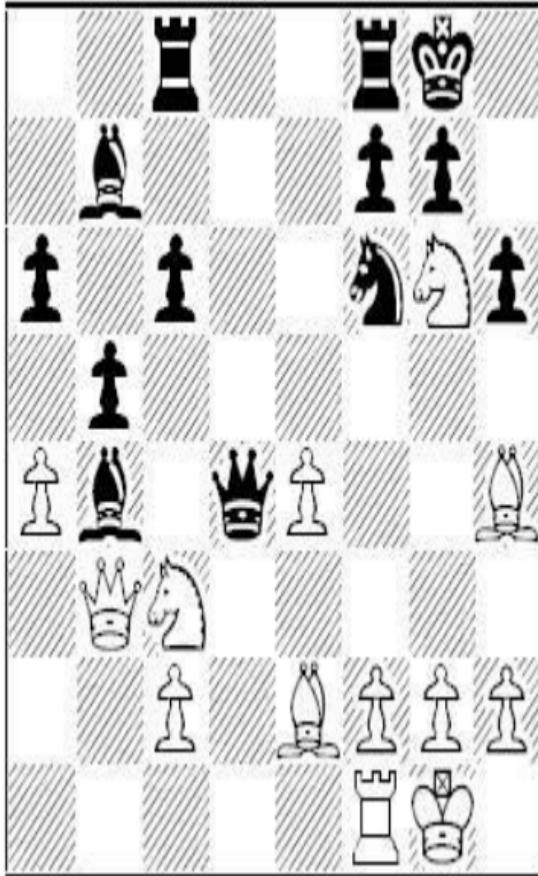
**17 ... Qxd7 18 Nxe5 Qd4**

Black wanted more than a favourable ending after 18 ... Qe6 19 Qxe6 fxe6.

**19 Ng6**

The warhorse responds to the bugle call and plunges in.

**19 ... Bxb4!**



## **Exercise (multiple choice):**

It's hard to know what to do.

White's confusing choices are:

- a) 20 Bxf6, simplifying;
- b) 20 Nxf8, bailing out;
- c) 20 Na2 increasing the complications.

White attains some compensation after 19 ... Rfe8 20 Nxe7+ Rxe7 21 Rd1 Qe5 22 Bg3.

## **20 Na2?**

**Answer:** White retains drawing chances after b) 20 Nxf8! Nxe4 21 Nxe4 Qxe4 22 axb5 axb5 23 Ng6! Qxe2 24 Qxb4 fxg6 25 Qb3+ Kh7. Black is up a pawn but faces practical difficulties in converting the advantage to a full point.

## **20 ... bxa4!**

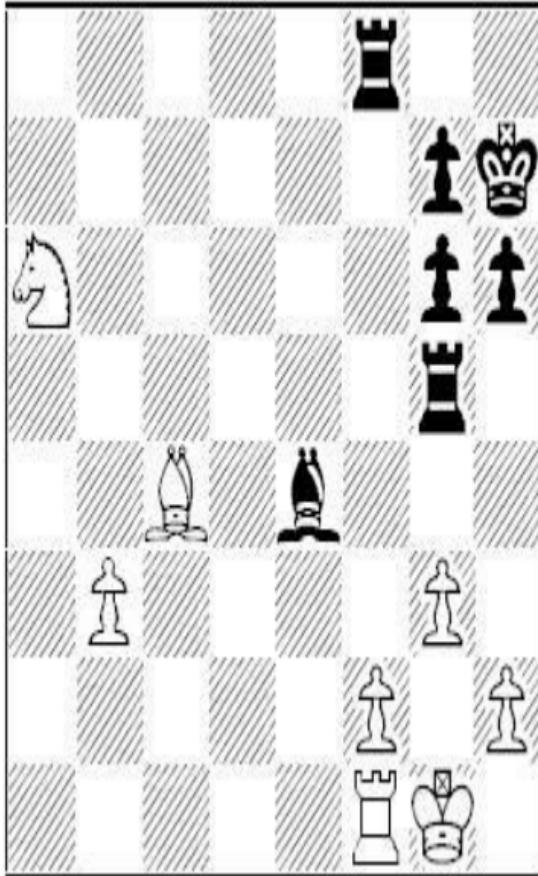
The move that brings White's

initiative to heel. 20 ... Rfe8 is also strong.

**21 Bxf6 axb3 22 Bxd4 fxg6**

22 ... bxa2 also looks winning for Black.

**23 Nxb4 c5 24 Bc4+ Kh7 25 Bxc5 Rxc5 26 cxb3 Bxe4 27 Nxa6 Rg5 28 g3**



**Exercise (planning):** How should Black proceed to make progress?

**Answer:** Eliminate the defender of b3, and then go after the pawn itself.

**28 ... Bd5!**

Step 1: Kill the defender.

**29 h4 Bxc4 30 bxc4 Ra5**

Step 2: Chase off a potential defender.

**31 Nc7 Rc8**

Step 3: Hit the weak pawn.

**32 Ne6 Re5**

Back to Step 2!

**33 Nf4 Rxc4**

Step 4: Eat the pawn!

White, despite the exchange deficit, has drawing chances. Black soon targets f2, the weakest point

of entry in White's fortress.

**34 Kg2 g5! 35 hxg5 hxg5 36 Rh1+ Kg8 37 Rh5 Kf7 38 Nd3 Rd5 39 Nf4 Re5 40 Nd3 Rd5 41 Nf4**

Black repeated moves, probably to reach time control.

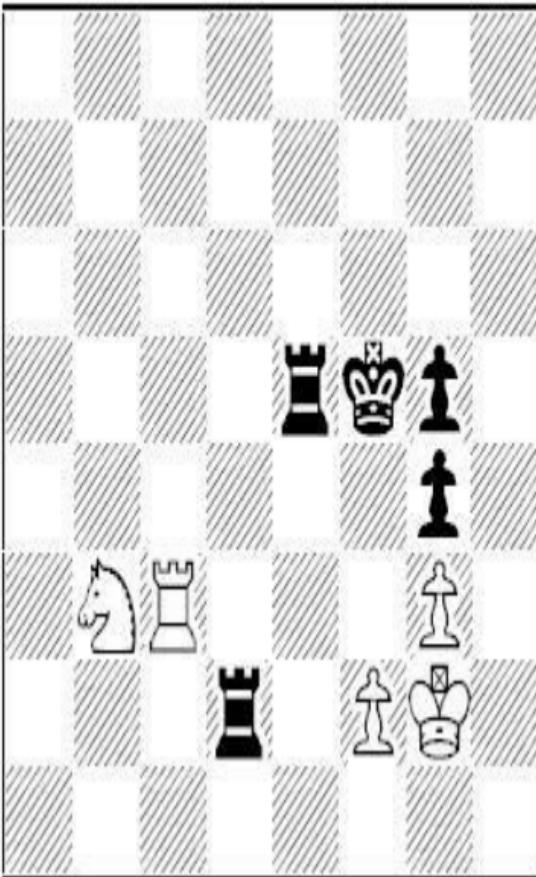
**41 ... Rf5 42 Nh3 Kf6 43 Rh8 Kg6 44 Ra8 Kh7**

Enjoying a game of ring around the rosy.

**45 Ra1 Rd4 46 Rf1 g4 47 Nf4 g5 48 Ne2 Rd2**

Target: f2. Notice how White's once proud knight, now destabilized, is a horse without a country.

**49 Nc3 Rf3 50 Ne4 Rd5 51  
Re1 Kg6 52 Re2 Rfd3 53 Rc2  
Kf5 54 Nc5 Rd2 55 Rc3 Re5 56  
Nb3**



**Exercise (planning):** White managed to fend off the threats on f2. Do you see another plan

for Black?

**Answer: 56 ... Rd1!**

White's king, awakened from his sleep and glassy eyed, sees menacing visions of ... Ree1, ... Rg1+, ... Rh1+ and ... Rdg1 mate dancing in his head.

**57 Re3?**

57 Rc5 was a better way to swap rooks.

**Question:** Wouldn't that be a draw?

**Answer:** No. In this version f2 eventually falls from a king/rook gang-up.

**57 ... Rxe3 58 fxe3**

The oyster on g2, once so

secure inside its shell, is cracked open.

**58 ... Rd3 59 Nd4+ Ke4 60 Ne6 Rd2+ 61 Kg1 Kxe3 62 Nxg5 Rd5 0-1**

The g3-pawn falls.

**Summary:** I like the confusing 4 ... Qa5!?, which takes the game from a Philidor to a Pribyldor. The shift may knock your opponents out of their prep.

Game 32

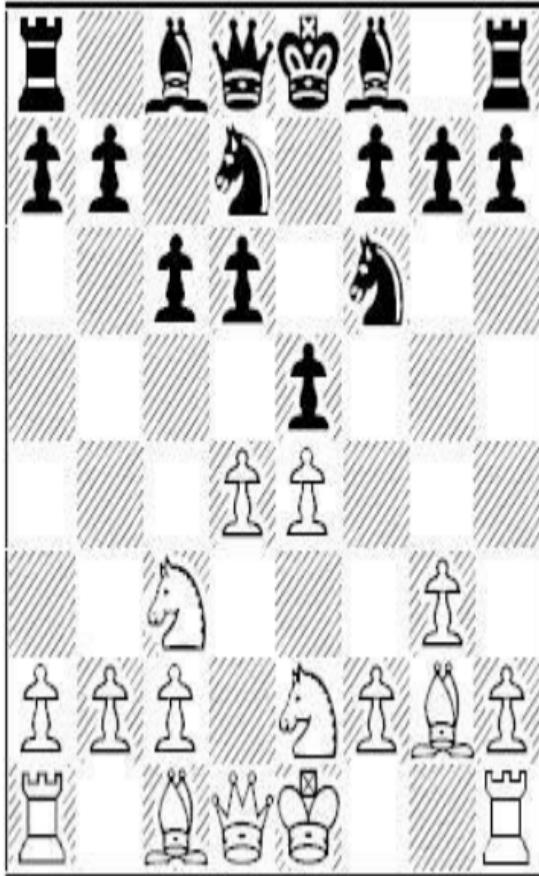
**B.Baker-C.Lakdawala**

Gambito (rapid), San Diego 2010

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Nc3 Nbd7**

Today, I would play 3 ... c6 4 g3 Nbd7 5 Bg2 e5 6 Nge2 which transposes to the game position via the Pribyl/Rat move order.

**4 g3 e5 5 Nge2 c6 6 Bg2**



With the Fianchetto line, insidiously difficult to meet, White hopes to build a kingside attack

slowly, with 0-0, h3, f4 and sometimes g4. I find it a tough line to beat when White plays it conservatively. But remember, people also claimed the Titanic was unsinkable. Any opening, no matter how solid, can be broken down and beaten if you understand the structure.

**Question:** Why didn't White play 6 a4 to halt your queenside ambitions?

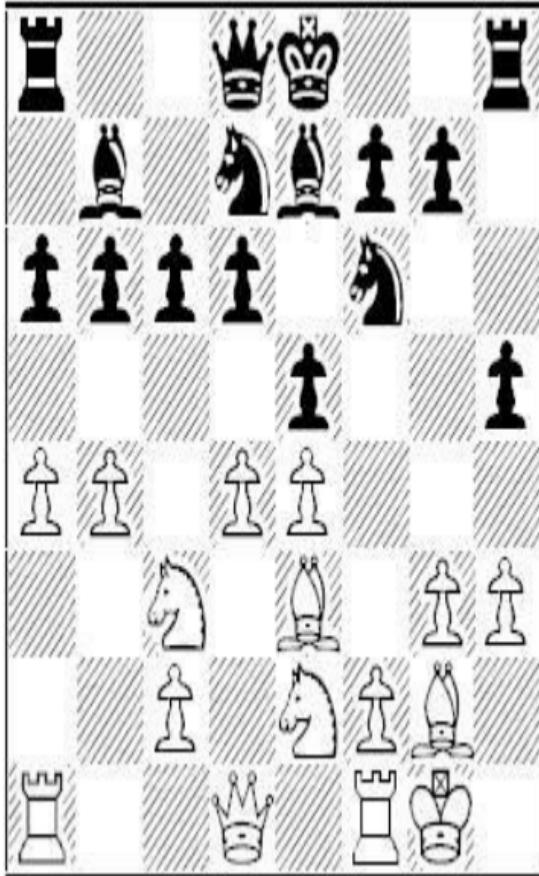
**Answer:** a4 doesn't halt Black's queenside expansion ambitions, but it may slow them down. Two philosophies for White:

1. Play a4 to slow Black down on

the queenside. The trouble is, White wants to attack on the kingside and doesn't want to get drawn into a fight on what is traditionally his opponent's strong wing.

2. Avoid a4, and avoid making a single pawn weakness on the queenside. Then, who cares if Black expands but lacks targets?

Let's take a look at philosophy number one when White flicks in a4: 6 a4 Be7 7 Bg2 b6 8 0-0 a6 9 h3 h5! 10 Be3 Bb7 11 b4 (notice how White gets drawn into a fight on the queenside rather than the kingside)



11 ... 0-0 12 b5!? cxb5 13 axb5  
axb5 14 Rb1 Ra5 15 d5 Nc5 16 Nc1  
Ra3! 17 Bxc5 (Black's idea is

revealed in the line 17 Nxb5?! Rxe3! 18 fxe3 Nfxe4 19 Ne2 h4 which gives Black a pawn, initiative and dark-square control for the exchange – too much) 17 ... Rxc3 18 Bb4 Rc4 19 Qe2 h4!, V.Malakhov-D.Khismatullin, Moscow 2010. Now it's next to impossible for White to achieve the f4 break. The position resembles a g3 Old Indian gone well for Black.

## **6 ... b5 7 0-0**

7 a3 creates a target for Black to open the queenside: 7 ... Be7 8 0-0 0-0 9 h3 a5 10 g4 Ba6 11 Ng3 b4 12 Nce2 bxa3 13 Rxa3 d5 14 Re3 dxе4 15 Re1 Qc7 16 Nf5 with great

complications, M.Carlsen-T.Radjabov, Biel 2007. Black should be holding his own after the correct 16 ... Rfe8.

**7 ... Bb7 8 Re1**



**Question:** You said White plays for h3 and f4 earlier.  
Wouldn't it have been more

logical to leave his rook on f1 if he plans f4?

**Answer:** 8 Re1 reinforces e4. Black's counterplay often comes via pressure on the e4-pawn. If White keeps his rook on f1, his e-pawn may become vulnerable to a plan similar to one we saw in Chapter 3: ... Be7, ... 0-0, ... Re8, ... Bf8, ... a5, ... b4 chasing the defender away from c3, ... Bb7, ... exd4 and ... c5.

**8 ... Be7 9 h3 0-0**

**Question:** You talked earlier in the game about the two philosophies

for White on the queenside. What about the same for Black?

Can you play 9 ... h5 to curb White's kingside expansion ambitions?

**Answer:** I think you are right. I should play 9 ... h5!, despite the risk of compromising my kingside castling position.

### 10 a3

**Question:** You said White doesn't want to get drawn into a queenside fight. Why start pushing queenside pawns now?

**Answer:** He wants to stabilize e4 by ensuring that his c3-knight gets to remain where it is. But, in a sense you are correct. It is a queenside pawn move and a3

makes it easier for Black to create trouble there. Still, I feel his move is necessary.

M.Hajek-J.Pribyl, Karvina 1986, went instead 10 f4 Re8 11 a4?. He should play his pawn to a3 and avoid this temptation. Now watch how quickly White's game goes downhill: 11 ... b4 12 Na2 a5 13 c3 c5 14 fxe5 dxe5 15 d5 c4! 16 Be3 b3 17 Nac1 Bc5. Black reached a strategically won game.

### **10 ... Re8**

**Question:** If he develops his bishop to e3 he weakens his e-pawn. How can White develop that piece?

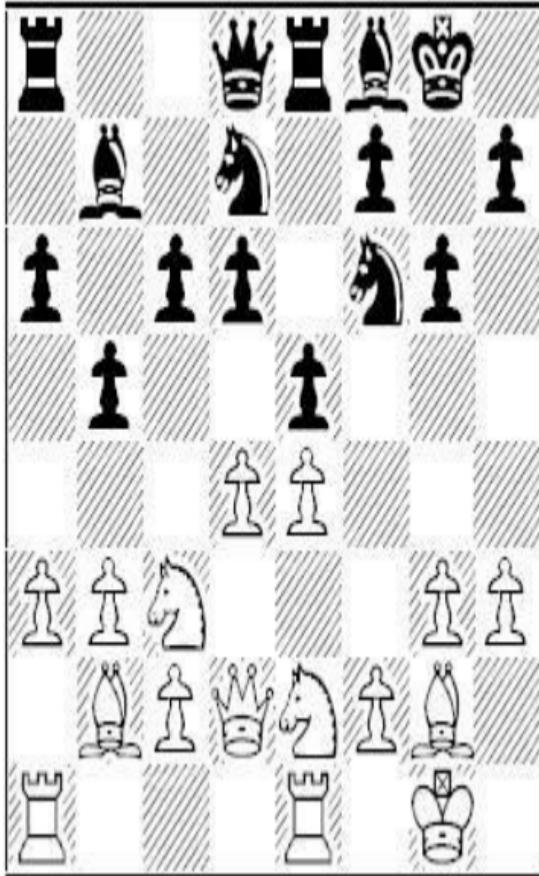
**Answer:** By fianchettoing it:

**11 b3! Bf8 12 Bb2 a6**

Thinking about a sudden ... exd4 followed by ... c5.

**13 Qd2 g6**

Timing is the key. Black should avoid the premature 13 ... exd4?! 14 Nxd4 c5 15 Nf5 when he gets tied down to the weakness on d6.



**14 dxe5**

The Wyatt Earp philosophy:  
Leave your guns aside at the

Tombstone city limits. This was a final-round game with my opponent and I tied for first. He played to simplify, but not necessarily to draw.

**Question:** What do you mean? It looks like he is trying to draw.

**Answer:** My opponent and I have played each other in close to 300 rated tournament games over our lifetimes! I know him rather well by now. He often plays a drawish path but secretly to win, playing on my higher rating and counting on the fact that I may overpress to try to win. Think of his move as a bargaining chip more

than an attempt to draw. Sometimes it is a disadvantage to be the one with the higher rating.

White's e-pawn comes under fire if he maintains the central tension for too long. For example, 14 Rad1 Qc7 15 f4 Rad8 16 g4 exd4 17 Nxd4 c5.

**14 ... dxe5 15 Rad1 Qb6 16 Nc1**

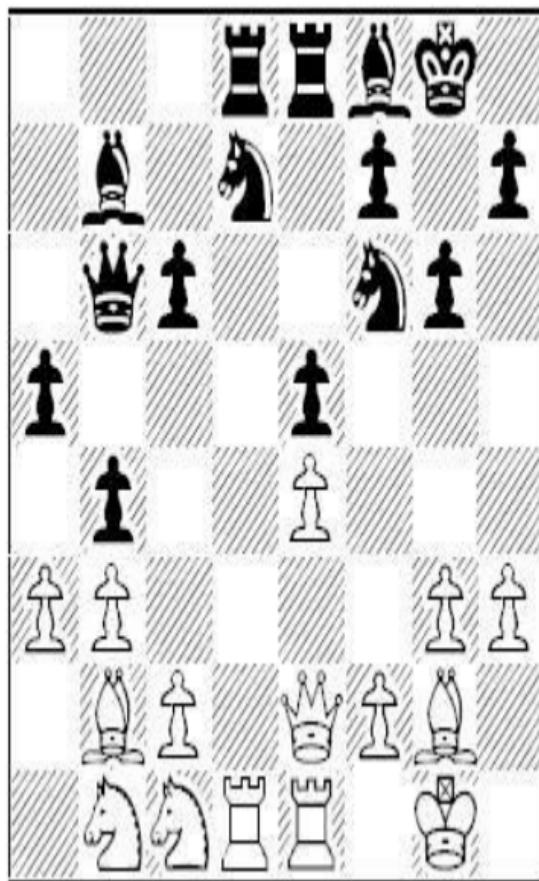
Preparing to redeploy to the more effective d3-square.

**16 ... Rad8 17 Qe2 a5 18 Nb1!**

Steinitz approved. White gets out of the way of Black's queenside pawns without yielding Black pawn

targets.

**18 ... b4!?**



**Question:** You just handed over

control of c4. Why?

**Answer:** I admit my last move was a risky decision. I weakened the c4-square in order to make spatial gains on the queenside. If I don't take action the position is drawish. Remember, we talked about Fischer's motto: One must give up squares in order to get squares.

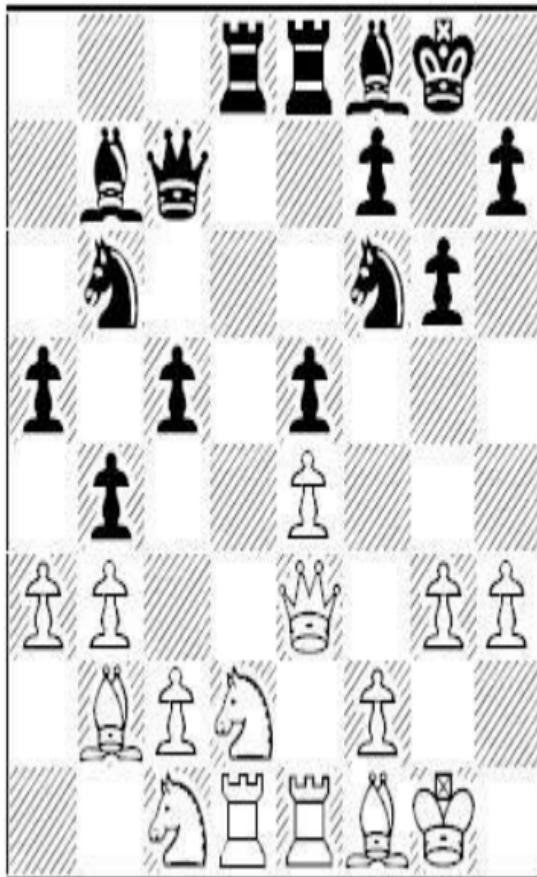
### **19 Qf3 c5**

I wasn't sure if opening the queenside with 19 ... a4!? led to anything but liquidation.

### **20 Nd2 Qc7 21 Qe3**

Avoiding the trap 21 Nc4? Nxe4! 22 Rxe4? f5.

**21 ... Nb6 22 Bf1?**



**Exercise (planning):** Come up with a plan for Black to grab the

initiative.

Sometimes one can think too positionally. My opponent, caught up in plans of occupation of c4, underestimates the dynamic factors.

**Answer: 22 ... Rxd2!**

Black gets big compensation for the exchange.

**23 Qxd2 Nxe4 24 Qe2 c4?!**

I missed 24 ... bxa3! 25 Ba1 (25 Bxa3 Nc3 regains the exchange plus one pawn) 25 ... Ng5 26 Bg2 Bxg2 27 Kxg2 Qc6+ 28 f3 e4 which wins since after 29 f4?? e3+ White falls victim to a horrific knight fork on f3.

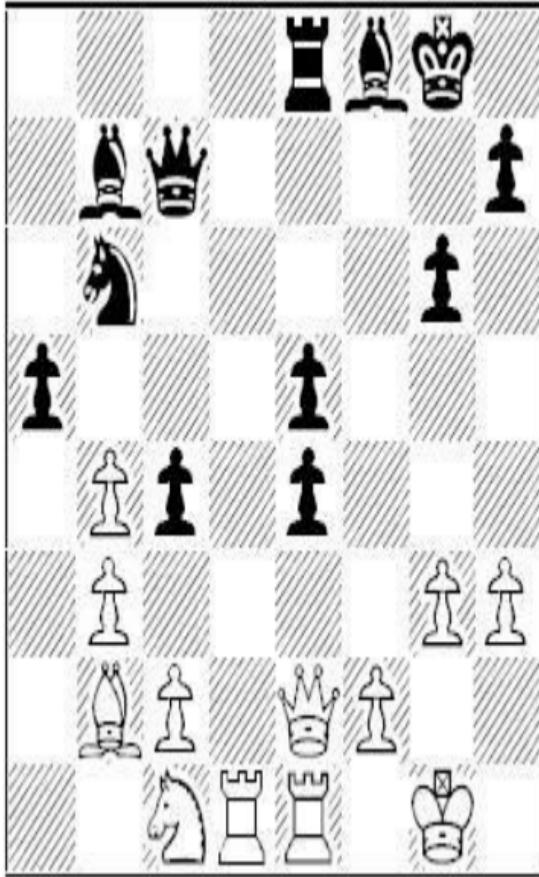
**25 Bg2 f5?**

Tragically, your writer remains initiative-challenged and generally sucks in those rare moments when he actually has it! I lack what Barack Obama called “the fierce urgency of now” and tend to putz around, tinkering with some subtlety. Of course I should have buried his bishop with 25 ... c3! 26 Ba1 f5.

## **26 Bxe4 fxe4!?**

The plan: apply pressure on f2 with ... Bc5 and ... Rf8. 26 ... Bxe4, to keep the diagonal open, also looks promising.

## **27 axb4**



**Exercise (multiple choice):**  
Which way?  
a) 27 ... e3 to clear the long

diagonal;

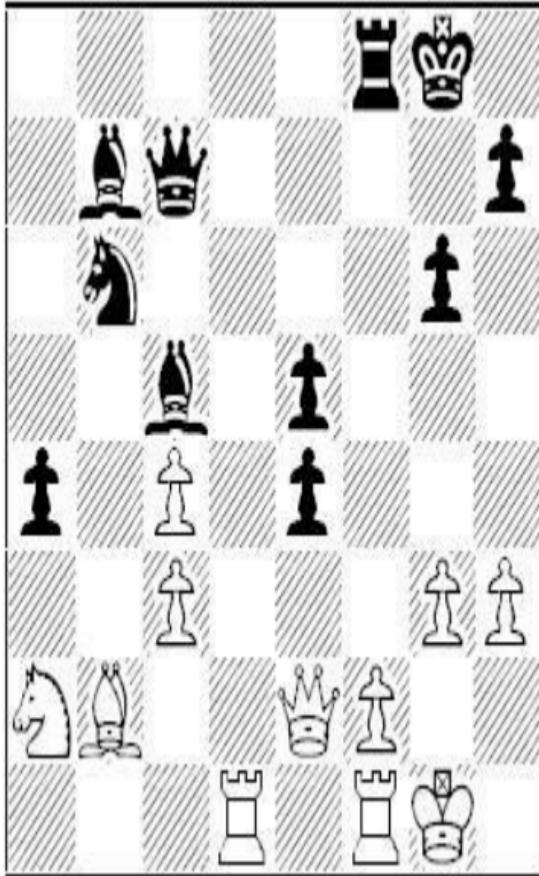
b) 27 ... Bxb4, gaining a tempo on White's rook;

c) 27 ... c3, threatening the bishop.

## **27 ... Bxb4?!**

**Answer:** Once again I should push the c-pawn. After 27 ... c3! 28 Bxc3 Qxc3 29 Na2 Qc6 30 bxa5 e3 31 f3 Nd5 32 Rf1 Black should be able to drum up a winning attack.

**28 c3!? Bc5 29 bxc4 Rf8 30 Rf1 a4 31 Na2**



**Exercise (planning):** Can you do better than I did?  
Come up with the most effective

winning plan for Black.

Black's advantages, all for the low price of an exchange:

1. Black's bishops focus their angry gazes on the white king.
2. White fights pressure down the f-file and experiences vulnerability on f3.
3. Black's a-pawn keeps White worried about its further advance.
4. The c4-pawn is teetering and on the brink of falling.

Conclusion: White's game is a disaster.

## **31 ... Ba6?**

Ready. Set. Wait ... I'm not quite ready to go! True to form I play it

safe and rush to regain material equality instead of taking action and going for the knockout.

**Answer:** 31 ... Rf3!

(threatening to take on g3) 32 Kh2 Qf7 33 Rd2 Nxc4 34 Rc2 e3 annihilates White.

**32 Nb4 Bxc4 33 Qxe4 Bxf1**

**34 Rxf1 Qf7 35 Nd3 Bd6 36 Bc1?!**

He should try his luck in the following ending: 36 Nxe5! Qe6 37 c4 Bxe5 38 Qxe5 Qxe5 39 Bxe5 Nxc4 40 Ba1 a3. A win for Black is not so automatic here.

**36 ... Qc4 37 Qxc4+ Nxc4**

The passed a-pawn wins.

**38 Kg2 e4 39 Nb2 Nxb2 40**

**Bxb2 a3 41 Bc1**

Blockading a1 also fails to save him: 41 Ba1 Bc5 42 f3 exf3+ 43 Rxf3 Rb8 44 Rf1 a2 wins.

**41 ... Bc5 42 h4 Rf3 0-1**

The a-pawn costs White a piece.

**Summary:** The Fianchetto line leads to a slow, positional struggle but often heats up later on.

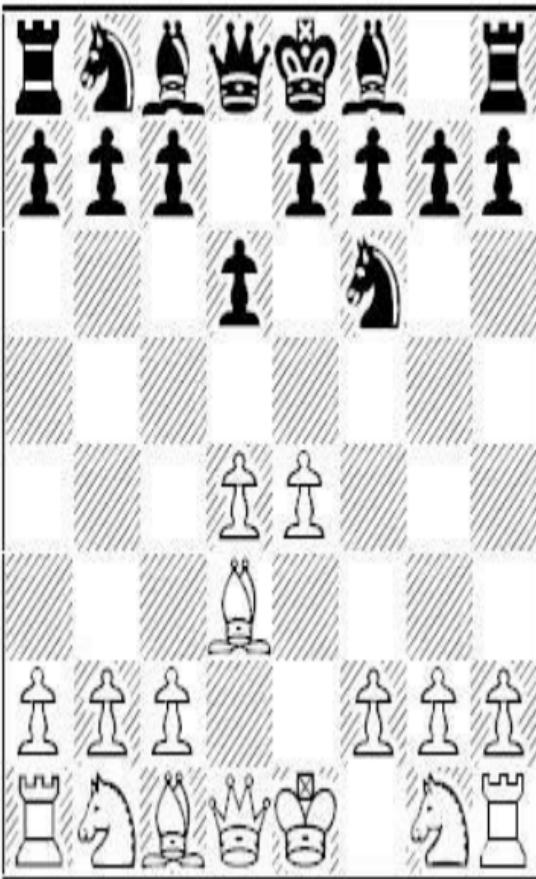
# **Chapter Five**

## **Second and Third**

### **Move Alternatives**

Prepare yourselves for a test of wills this chapter. In a chess game, deeds not done can be more numerous than those played on the board. In each case White wants no association whatsoever with Rats, Pribyls or Philidors and insists upon his own niche lines. In the first two games White avoids Nc3. In the third and fourth games White is quick to play Nc3 but avoids d4

altogether. With 3 Bd3 he wants to trick us into a King's Indian Defence.

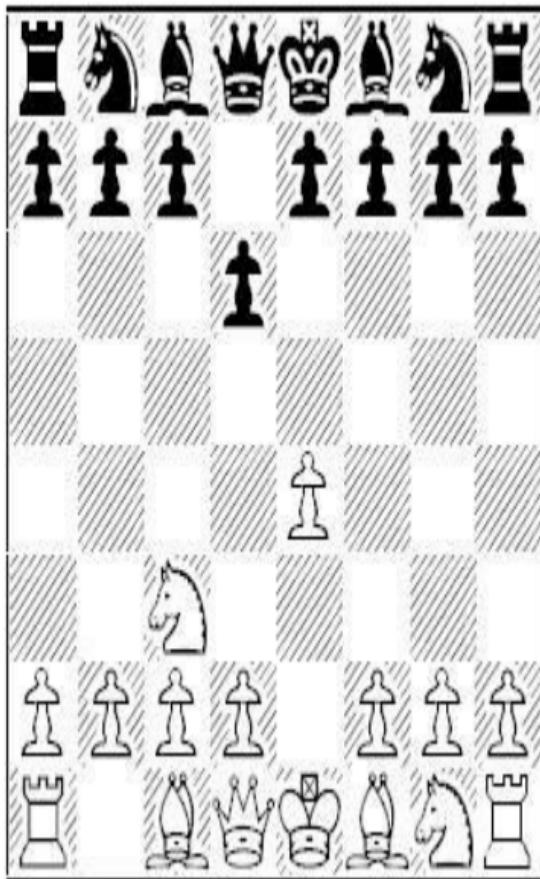


We allow a KID, but only one where we are a move up, by playing the move order 3 ... Nc6 4

c3 e5. Now when he pushes with d5 and then backs up with c4, he is in a KID a full move down since he took two moves to achieve c4.

With 3 f3 White is after a King's Indian Sämisch. We dodge it by playing ... e5 and then developing Old Indian style with ... Be7. After all, the Old Indian is nothing more than a queen's pawn Philidor.

With 2 Nc3 White desires a Grand Prix Attack or Closed Sicilian.



We give him neither, stubbornly ignore him and play it Philidor style once again with ... Nf6, ... e5, ...

Be7, ... c6 and ... Nbd7.

Game 33

**C.Tannous-L.Van Wely**

Ajaccio (rapid) 2006

**1 e4 d6 2 d4 Nf6 3 Bd3**

With the devious intent to force Black into a King's Indian or Old Indian setup. This is often the reason White holds back on blocking his c-pawn with his knight.

**Question:** What if I don't want to go into a KID or OID setup?

**Answer:** We can't avoid the setup but we can make White pay a high price by forcing him into an

inferior version. Watch:

### **3 ... e5**

I would avoid this move order and go with 3 ... Nc6! 4 c3 e5.

**Question:** Why, what difference does it make?

### **4 c3**

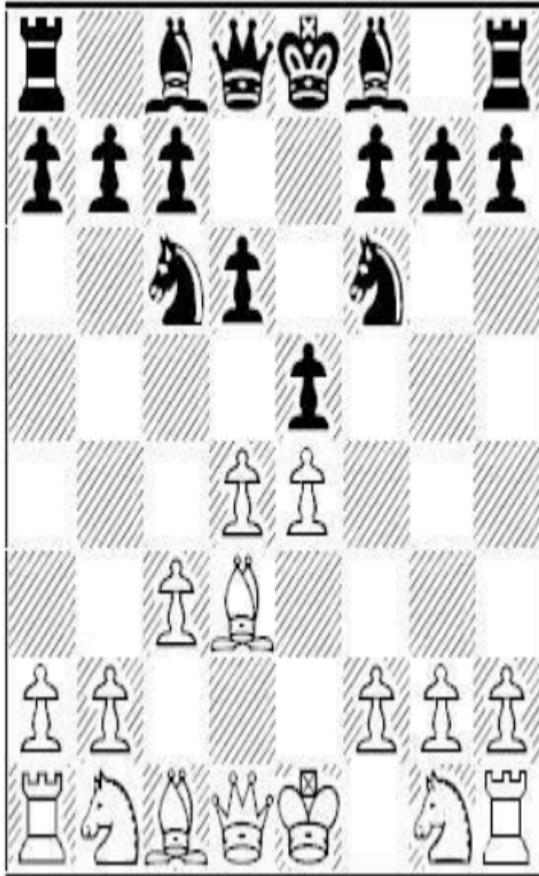
**Answer:** He may play 4 d5 and follow up with c4 next, which lead to King's Indian or Old Indian positions.

**Question:** What is wrong with either of them?

**Answer:** Nothing, and if you have experiential overlap in either of those lines then go right ahead. In fact, next game White pretty

much forces us into the Old Indian. The move order I suggest forces White into the game position without giving him the option of a KID or OID. And it's usually beneficial to reduce an opponent's options.

## **4 ... Nc6**



We attempt to out-trick the trickster.

**5 Ne2**

**Question:** Why would White play his knight to a more passive square instead of f3?

**Answer:** White wants to keep options open for a quick f4.

**Question:** How did 4 ... Nc6 change anything? Can't White just force

a King's Indian or Old Indian setup if he pushes now with 5 d5 Ne7 6 c4?

**Answer:** Our Jedi mind control trick worked! Everything has changed in this version, since White took two moves to play c4. This means he is in the King's Indian a

full move down – a factor which alters the evaluation in such a sharp opening. After 6 ... g6 7 Nc3 Bg7 8 Nge2 Nd7 9 Be3 f5 10 f3 0-0 11 Qd2 Black achieved equality at the very minimum, and possibly even an edge, in A.Chernin-B.Gulko, New Delhi/Teheran 2000.

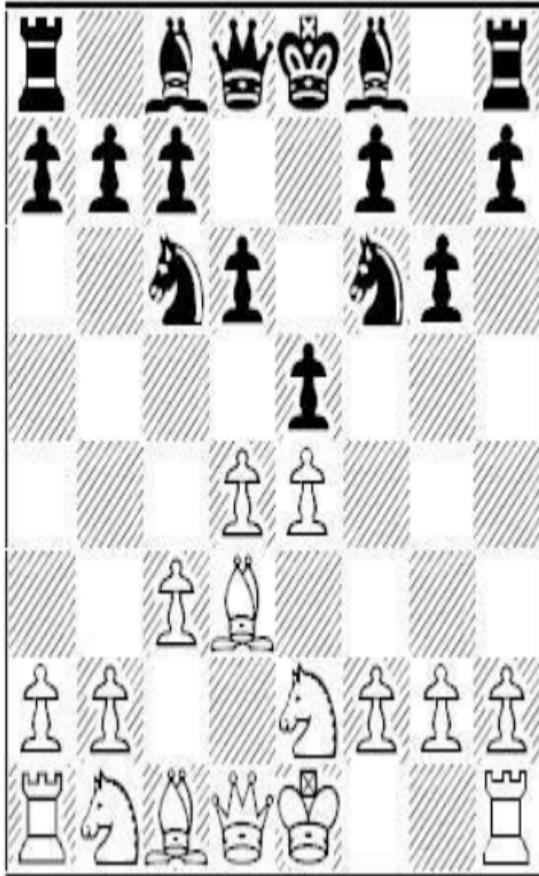
Another possible line is 5 Nf3 g6 6 0-0 Bg7 7 Nbd2 0-0 8 Re1 Nh5 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 Bf1 Kh8 11 Qc2 f5 12 Nc4 f4 (Black can also go for active piece play with 12 ... fxe4) 13 Be2 g5 14 Rd1 Qf6 15 h3 Qg6 with a classic central play versus kingside attack situation, A.Yegiazarian-R.Ponomariov, Kiev 1997.

**Question:** Wouldn't 5 ... Bg4, adding pressure to d4, be a more logical reply to 5 Nf3 than 5 ... g6?

**Answer:** 5 ... Bg4 is playable but I would avoid it since we return to the KID after 6 d5 Ne7 7 c4. Now Black experiences a dilemma: ... g6 blocks our path of ... Bh5 when the bishop gets kicked. This is our good bishop and we don't want to give it away for the knight. But, if after h3 we head back to d7, then we return our extra tempo and find ourselves back in a normal KID. Be careful of the mind games in this line! 7 ... Ng6 8 g3 Be7 9 Nc3 Qc8 10 Be2 0-0

11 h4 c5 12 Nd2! (White wants to swap off his bad bishop for Black's good bishop) 12 ... Bd8 13 Bxg4 Nxg4 14 Nb5 Be7 15 h5 Nh8 16 f3 Nh6 17 g4 with advantage to White,  
V.Anand-J.Timman, Linares 1991.

**5 ... g6**



You may prefer this move since most rats like shadowy places to hide their pieces behind their

pawns. If you like open positions then 5 ... d5 also offers Black full equality. For example, 6 exd5 Qxd5 7 0-0 exd4 8 Re1 Be7 9 cxd4 0-0 10 Nbc3 Qd8 with a balanced isolani position, H.Nakamura-S.Movsesian, Moscow 2010.

### **6 0-0 Bg7 7 Na3**

7 f4 is the logical point behind developing the knight to e2, but even here Black doesn't seem to have real problems. E.Heyken-V.Malaniuk, Dortmund 1993, continued 7 ... 0-0 8 Nd2 Bg4 9 d5 Ne7 10 fxe5 dxe5 11 Nf3 Nxd5! 12 Nxe5 Nb6 13 Bg5 Bxe2 14 Qxe2 Qd6 15 Nf3 Ng4 16 Rad1 h6 17 Bc1

Nd7 18 Bc4 Qe7 and White's open f-file is counterbalanced by Black's grip on our favourite square, e5.

**7 ... 0-0 8 f4 Bg4**

Black also has the plan of giving up the centre in order to attack it with 8 ... exd4!? 9 Nxd4 Nxd4 10 cxd4 Re8 and it's unclear whether White's centre is a benefit or a burden.

**9 fxe5 dxe5 10 d5 Ne7 11 Bg5**

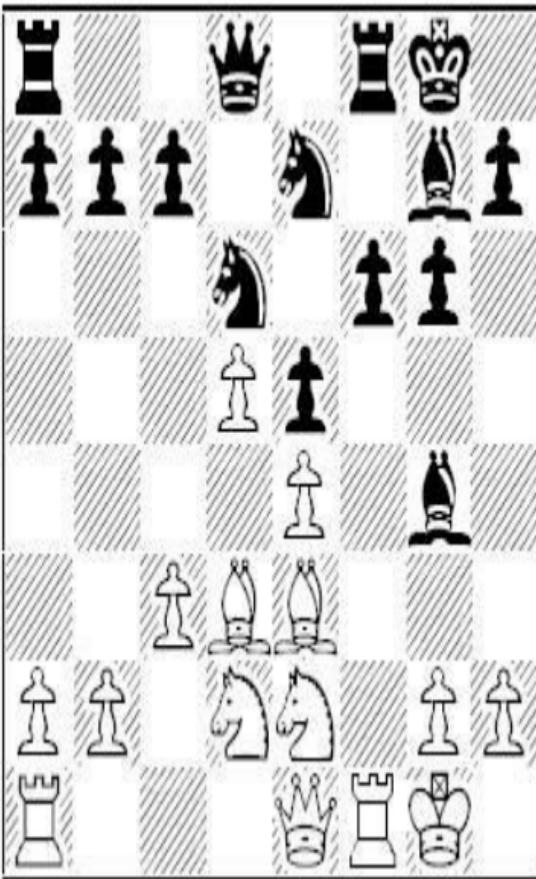
Chasing the knight to where it wants to go.

**11 ... Ne8 12 Qe1**

Perhaps he should begin pushing his majority straightaway with 12

c4 c5 13 Nc2 f6 14 Be3 b6 15 Qd2  
(the immediate 15 b4 cxb4 16 Nxb4  
f5 is also possible) 15 ... Nd6 16  
Nc3 Bd7 17 a3 f5 with typical King's  
Indian-style play, not unfavourable  
to Black.

**12 ... f6 13 Be3 Nd6**



**Question:** Well, aren't we back to a King's Indian, something you said most of us

should avoid?

**Answer:** Yes and no. We are in a KID territory, but don't forget White's tempo loss with c3 and then c4. So basically, we tell White: We are prepared to go into your pet opening, but only if you bribe us with a tempo. 14 c4 f5 leads to sharp KID play where our extra tempo must be significant.

**14 Nc4 f5 15 Nxd6 cxd6 16 Bg5?!**

**Question:** Why doesn't White get on with

his queenside attack and play 16 c4?

**Answer:** He probably feared

the line 16 ... f4! 17 Bd2 Qb6+ 18 Kh1 f3.

## **16 ... h6**

16 ... Bf6! 17 Bh6 Qb6+ 18 Kh1 Bg7 19 Bg5 fxe4! is in Black's favour.

## **17 Bxe7 Qxe7 18 h3**

If White gets tricky with 18 exf5!? Black should respond with 18 ... Qg5! which threatens a nasty check on e3 (and avoid 18 ... gxf5? 19 Nf4! when White's knight heads for e6).

## **18 ... Bxe2 19 Qxe2**

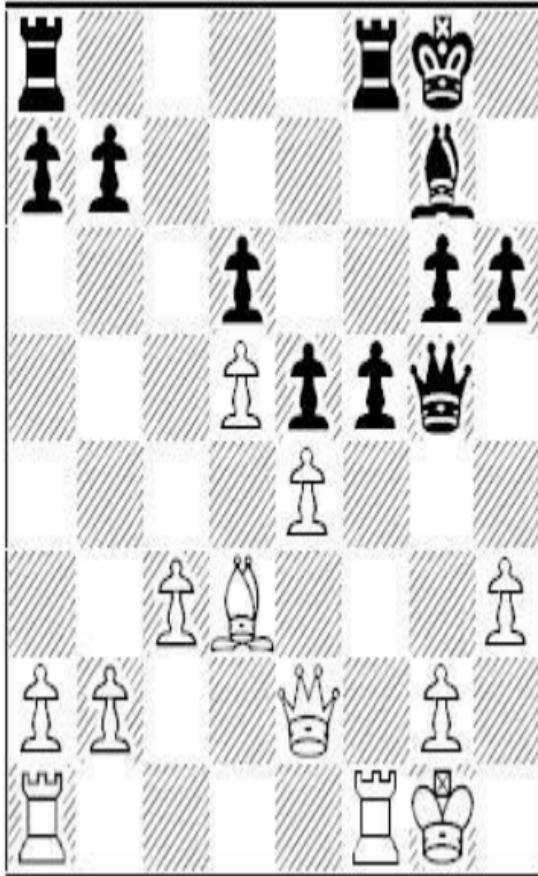
**Question:** I am certain this is the position White, the lower-rated player, wanted. A probable draw

due to opposite-coloured bishops?

**Answer:** One must develop antennae for the currents of danger. The position isn't drawish, at least not yet. The principle to apply is: Opposite-coloured bishops favour the attacker. Since Black's pawn majority is on the kingside, this must give him the edge.

### **19 ... Qg5?!**

19 ... f4! was correct, with an edge to Black.



**Exercise (planning):** White's trouble is that his bishop isn't so hot. Find a plan which

activates it.

## **20 Rf2?!**

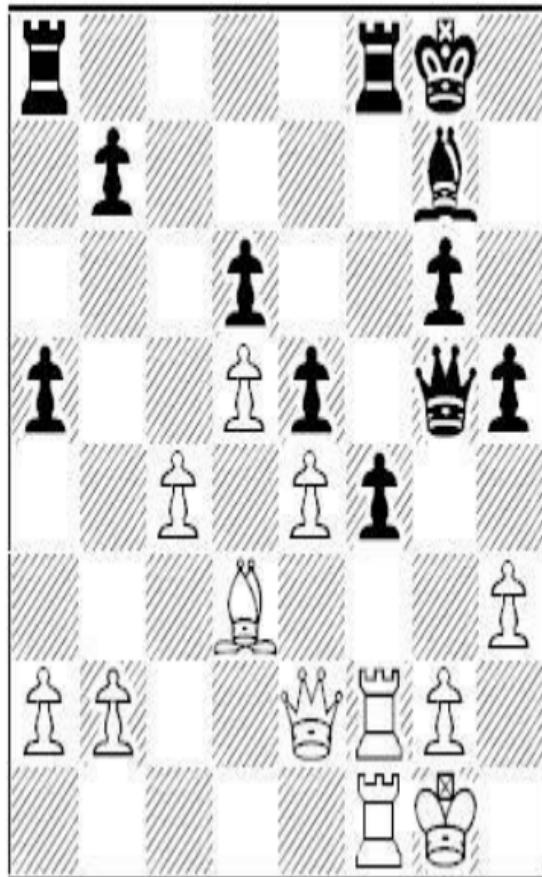
**Answer:** White can turn things around on Black with 20 h4! Qxh4 21 exf5 when suddenly White owns the stronger bishop and has some advantage.

## **20 ... h5 21 Raf1 f4 22 c4 a5?**

More accurate was 22 ... Rac8! 23 b4 b6 24 Bc2! (intending to activate the bishop via a4) 24 ... Rf7! 25 Ba4 Bf8! with advantage to Black, who:

1. Effectively nullified the c5 pawn break.
2. Slowly prepares the ... g4

break, with an attack to follow.



**Exercise (planning):** Black's last move, a serious strategic error,

allows White to come roaring back into the game. How?

## **23 Qc2?**

**Answer:** The glue that holds White's position together is a plan which involves freeing his bad bishop and transforming it into a high-potency piece with the pawn sac 23 c5! dx<sub>c</sub>5 24 Bc4 Kh7 25 d6! Rfd8 26 Rd1. An assessment:

1. The once dysfunctional white bishop now towers over his sickly counterpart on g7.
2. That passed d-pawn may later muscle its way to d7, with Bb5 first, tying Black up.
3. Black's queenside pawn

majority is essentially annulled since he doesn't have a prayer of forcing ... b5.

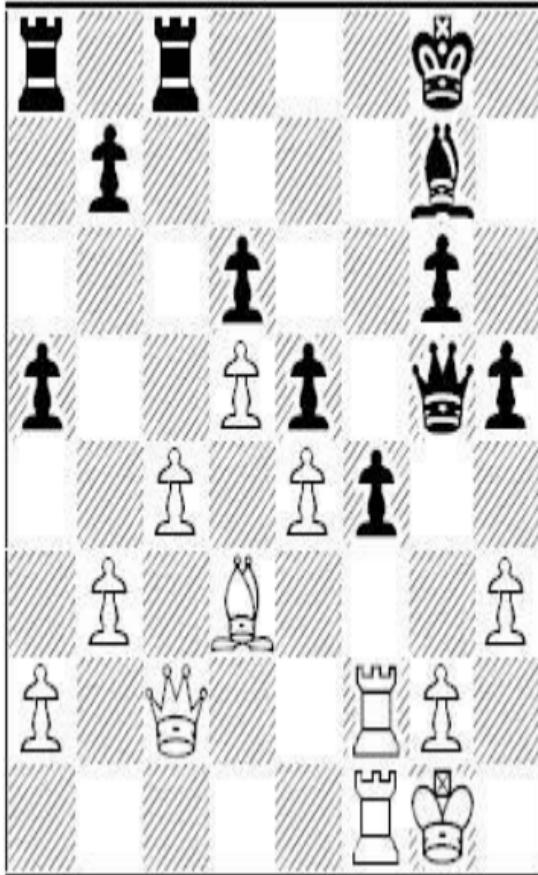
4. Black's kingside pawn majority, though still mobile, will be difficult to herd forward since his pieces are tied down by White's advanced d-pawn.

Conclusion: White gets full compensation for the pawn. In fact, I prefer White here.

### **23 ... Rfc8**

Now White's majority stalls on c5.

### **24 b3?!**



**Exercise (planning):** Black's bishop sits around doing nothing. Is there a way to

activate it?

**Answer:** Transfer it to the g1-a7 diagonal:

**24 ... Bf6!**

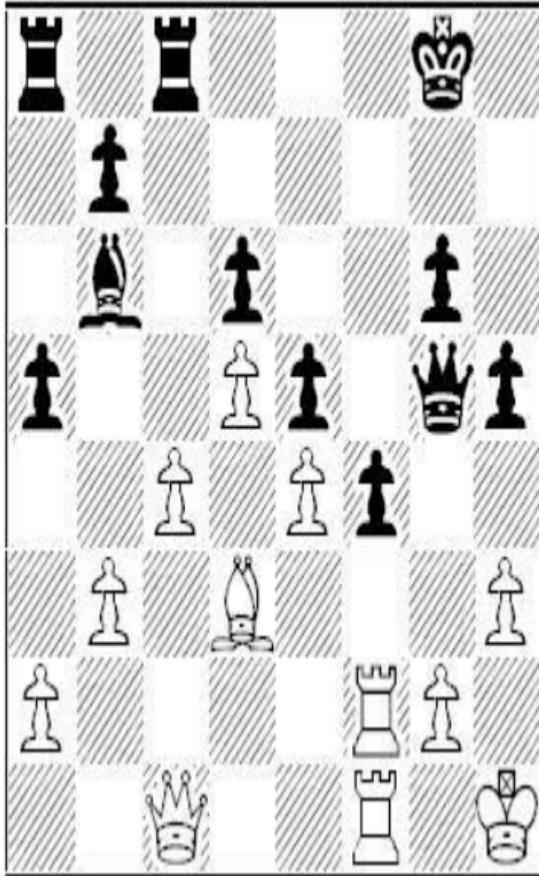
As they say with children's toys: Some assembly required. Van Wely redirects the bishop to a far more effective diagonal on b6. Note that White's last move blocks out Qb3, which makes it easier for Black to land a bishop on the g1-a7 diagonal.

**25 Qc1?**

White still has access to a tricky path to thwart Black's plan of transferring the bishop to the g1-a7 diagonal: 25 Rf3! Bd8 26 Qf2!

(Alekhine's gun again, but this time used as a defence more than an attack) 26 ... Rc5 (intending ... Bb6) 27 Kh1. If Black now tries to implement his plan with 27 ... Bb6?, White unexpectedly gets an attack on the other side of the board with 28 g3! and the game swings in White's favour.

**25 ... Bd8 26 Kh1 Bb6**



The other day I heard the lyrics  
to a rap that went: "But that  
homie's dead. He just doesn't know

it yet!" I asked a few students rated between 1600 and 1900 to assess this position. They all incorrectly claimed a slight edge for Black. They shouldn't feel bad. Even Rybka, who was obviously under the weather with a low-voltage day, chimed in with an assessment of just an edge for Black. The correct assessment is --+. Black has a winning attack. What a transformation from just a few moves ago:

1. Black's bishop rules the central diagonal like an all-powerful, unchallenged emperor. On the other hand, White's bishop

is a bit of a loser.

2. White can forget about ever pushing his queenside majority past the c5 blockade.

3. Black's kingside pawn majority soon begins to roll forward. This means White's king falls under attack.

Add all this to the law of opposite-coloured bishops (favours the attacker) and White is busted.

**27 Rc2 Kg7 28 Qe1**

**Question:** What if he begins to roll his majority forward with 28 a3?

**Answer:** Maybe your suggestion is the best practical chance, but it should still fall short

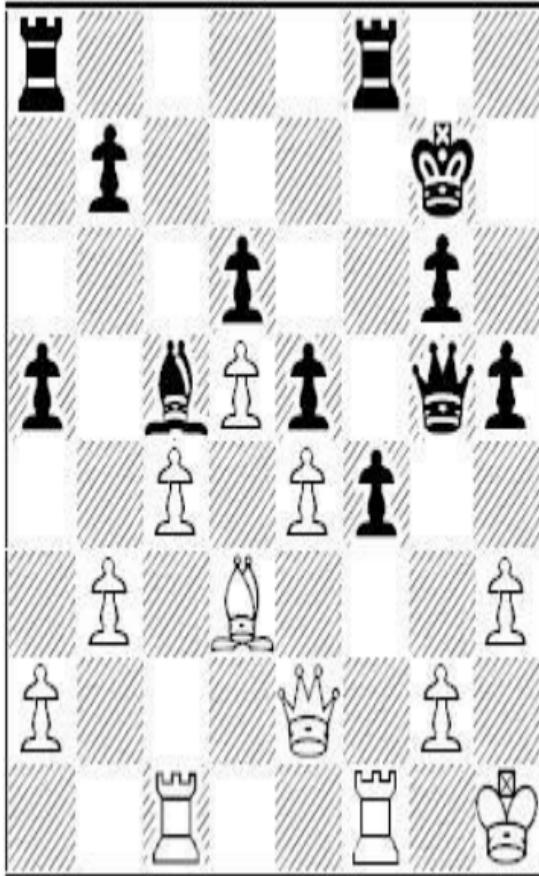
after 28 ... Qh6 29 b4 axb4 30 axb4 Be3 31 Qb2 b6! when once again:

1. White's dream of the c5 pawn break ends; and
2. White is at an impasse of how to stop the ... g5-g4 plan.

**28 ... Bc5 29 Qe2 Rf8**

The rook's work has been completed on the queenside. Now Black turns his attention to the white king.

**30 Rcc1**



## **Exercise (planning):**

Opposite-coloured bishops favour the attacker. So prove it with a

plan of attack for Black.

**Answer: 30 ... Qh6!**

Idea: ... g5 and ... g4. Nothing can be done about this plan.

**Question:** How about the plan 30 ... Qh4 and then ... g5?

**Answer:** Inaccurate, since ... g5 cuts off Black's queen retreat. White responds with Qe1! and queens come off the board, along with Black's attacking hopes.

**31 Qf3 g5 32 Be2**

Creating a roadblock on g4, since he has three on the square ...

**32 ... g4!**

Hey, I said "Creating a roadblock on g4", didn't I? Black

makes good use of the fact that White's unfortunate king sits on h1. A move earlier, 32 g4 fxg3 33 Qxg3 g4! also gave Black a winning attack.

### **33 Qd3 Qg5 34 Rc3**

Praying he has the power to form a barrier on f3 and h3. He doesn't!



**Exercise (planning):** Find the next step in Black's attack.

**Answer:** 34 ... Qh4!

The apocalypse is at hand.

Threat: ... f3.

**35 Qd1 f3**

Game over.

**36 Qe1**

Equally hopeless are the lines:

a) 36 Bd3 fxg2+ 37 Kxg2 Qxh3

mate!.

b) 36 Bxf3 gxf3 37 Rcx<sub>f</sub>3 Qxe4

38 Rg3+ Kh6 39 Qc1+ Rf4 and

White's would-be attack runs dry.

**36 ... Qxe1 0-1**

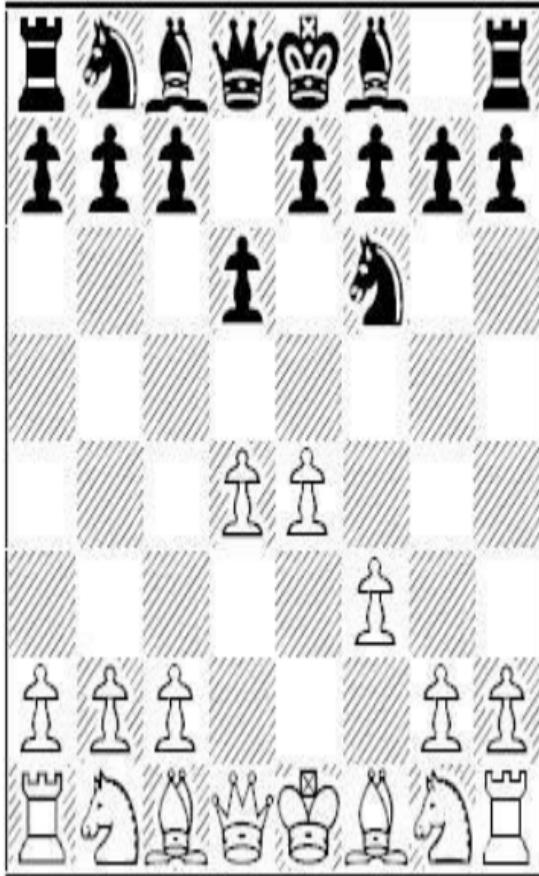
**Summary:** Agree to your opponent's demands to force you into a King's Indian. But don't forget to have your attorney add the

following clause to your contract:  
“The party of the first part shall pay  
the party of the second part the  
sum, in full, of one free tempo,  
should the party of the first part  
wish a King’s Indian.”

Game 34

**E.Moradiabadi-T.Markowski**  
Mainz (rapid) 2010

**1 d4 d6 2 e4 Nf6 3 f3**



**Question:** What is the idea behind White's last move? 3 Nc3 looks more

natural.

**Answer:** His idea is to keep his c-pawn free and force Black into a King's Indian Sämisch by later playing c4.

**Question:** I don't know the King's Indian from the Black side! Is there any way to avoid it?

**Answer:** Relax, we won't allow him a King's Indian. Instead, we develop our bishop to e7, leading to the Old Indian, which is in a sense the queen's pawn version of the Philidor.

### **3 ... e5**

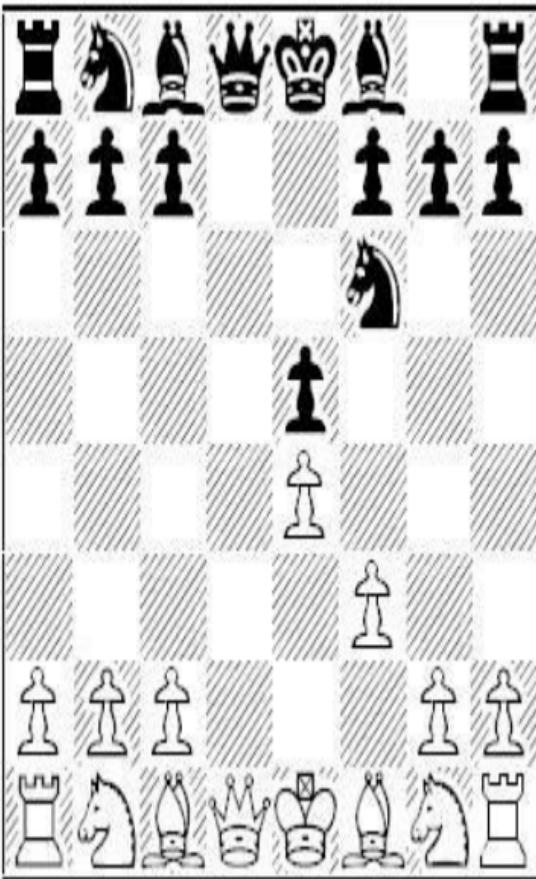
We give White the option of a

harmless ending. If you don't want the ending and would prefer to keep the game more complicated, then choose 3 ... Nbd7 and follow with ... e5, which normally transposes except Black can no longer play Markowski's plan. In this case we revert back to the standard ... Nh5 and ... Bg5 plan.

#### **4 d5**

He takes space, but releasing the central tension is good news from our standpoint. In general we are better off when White resolves the tension since then we can build for the ... f5 break without fear of a central counter.

4 dxe5 dxe5 is harmless (see following diagram). White scores an unimpressive 50% after the move. But be warned, it also takes some of the life out of the position and a draw is the likely result. 5 Qxd8+ Kxd8 6 Bc4 Ke8 7 Be3 Nbd7 8 Ne2 a5 9 a3 Bc5 was equal and somewhat dull in E.L'Ami-V.Bologan, Wijk aan Zee 2007.



**Question:** What if I don't want a drawish ending?

**Answer:** Remember, you have

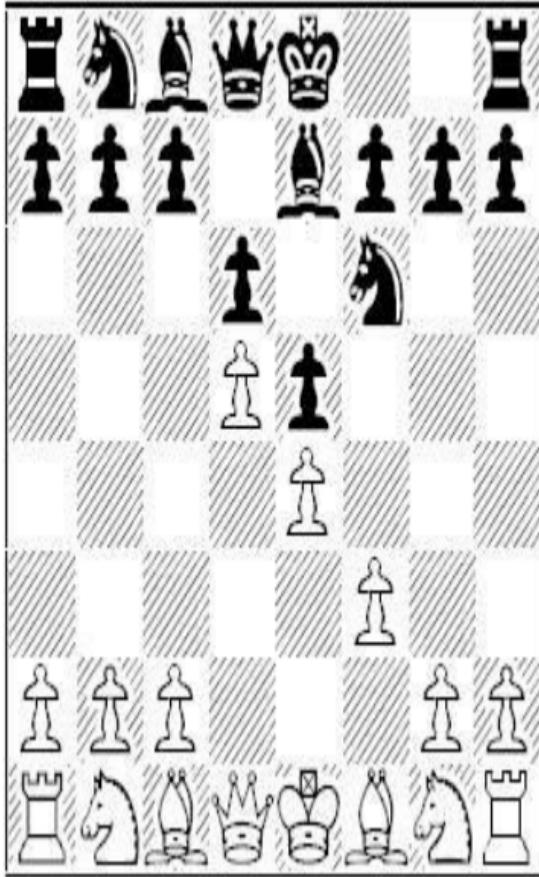
the option 3 ... Nbd7 and only then ... e5 if you want to dodge this ending.

**Question:** What if he maintains the central tension with 4 Ne2?

**Answer:** White can't keep the central tension in flux indefinitely. For example, 4 ... Be7 5 c4 0-0 6 Nbc3 c6 7 Be3 Nbd7 8 Qd2 (if White changes his mind and plays 8 d5 I would go with the standard Old Indian plan 8 ... Ne8 9 Qd2 g6 intending ... f5) 8 ... d5! 9 cxd5 cxd5 10 exd5 exd4 11 Bxd4 Nb6 12 Nf4 Nbxd5! 13 Nfxd5 Nxd5 14 Bxg7 Re8! 15 Be2 (15 0-0-0?? Bg5 wins the queen) 15 ... Ne3 16 Bh6 (16

Qxd8 Bxd8 with a double attack on the g7-bishop as well as the fork on c2) 16 ... Nxg2+! 17 Kf2? (17 Kd1 is forced) 17 ... Qb6+! 18 Kxg2 Qg6+ 19 Kf1 Bh3+ 20 Ke1 Qg2! with a crushing attack, I.Novikov-J.Dorfman, Lvov 1984. 21 Rf1 is met with 21 ... Rad8 22 Qf4 Qxf1+! 23 Bxf1 Bh4, double check and mate!

**4 ... Be7**



By posting our bishop on e7 we insist on entering an Old Indian, which remains within our realm.

**Question:** What are some of the differences between posting the bishop on e7 and playing it KID style with ... g6 and ... Bg7?

**Answer:**

1. Playing it Old Indian style cuts down on the theory you need to learn.
2. When we play our bishop to e7 we aim for the plan ... Nh5 (or sometimes ... Ne8 or ... Nfd7) and ... Bg5. This swap of dark-squared bishops favours Black, who saddles White with a remaining bad bishop.
3. We can also develop our bishop to b6, a terrific diagonal, via d8.

4. As in the KID, even with our bishop on e7 we may also play for ... f5, sometimes in conjunction with ... g6 and sometimes à la carte.

## **5 c4**

Alternatively:

a) 5 Be3 often just transposes if White plays c4 in the next few moves, but sometimes the game can take an independent turn: 5 ... Nh5 (our plan: ... Bg5) 6 Ne2 (6 Qd2 doesn't halt the plan since we have 6 ... h6) 6 ... Bg5 7 Bf2 g6 8 h4 Bh6 9 c4 f5 (now the game really is like a King's Indian) 10 Nbc3 0-0 11 exf5 gxf5 12 Rg1 Kh8

13 g4? (Imagining that he has the attack) 13 ... fxg4 14 fxg4 Rxf2! and the ... Qxh4+ threat gives Black a winning attack, T.Hillarp Persson-Z.Azmaiparashvili, Benidorm 2003.

b) 5 Bd3.

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

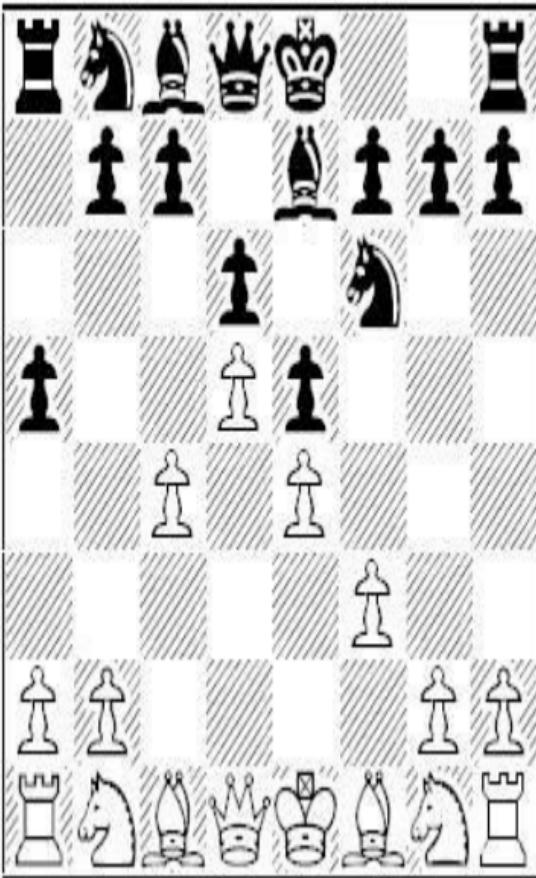
Developing to e3 looks more logical.

**Answer:** White sees ... Bg5 coming and reasons: If I am destined to swap off my good bishop, then why should I waste a tempo on developing it to e3, only to swap it off next move? The problem with White's logic is that it

is still good for Black to swap off!  
After 5 ... c6 6 c4 Nfd7 7 Ne2 Bg5  
Black effortlessly equalized in  
G.Giorgadze-V.Malaniuk, Forli 1992.

c) 5 Nc3 soon transposes to a  
harmless Philidor version from  
Chapter 4 where White released the  
central tension too early.

**5 ... a5!?**



A little offbeat but not a bad idea. In fact, I prefer it to the normal plan.

**Question:** What is the idea?

**Answer:** Black wants to post a knight on c5 without fear of the b4 kick. Instead of the normal plan ... Nh5 and ... Bg5, Black plays for ... Nfd7 and ... Bg5. This may be an improvement since a knight on h5 usually gets the boot eventually with g4, while a knight on d7 avoids this and reinforces c5.

5 ... Nh5 6 Nc3 Bg5 7 Bxg5 Qxg5  
8 Qd2 Qe7!? (I think Black should have gone into the ending, which is approximately equal) 9 0-0-0 0-0 10 Bd3 Bd7 11 Nge2 Na6 12 g4 Nf6 13 Ng3 Nc5 14 Bc2 was R.Kasimdzhany-D.Bocharov,

Internet 2006. The acceleration of White's attack means more than the absence of his good bishop.

5 ... 0-0 6 Nc3 Nfd7 7 Nh3 Nc5 8 Nf2 a5 9 Nd3 Nba6 10 Be3 Bg5 11 Bf2 c6 was T.Ernst-J.Johansson, Sweden 2009. Black looks fine after 12 h4 Bh6 13 g4 f6 since his normally bad bishop sweeps the c1-h6 diagonal.

## **6 Nc3 0-0**

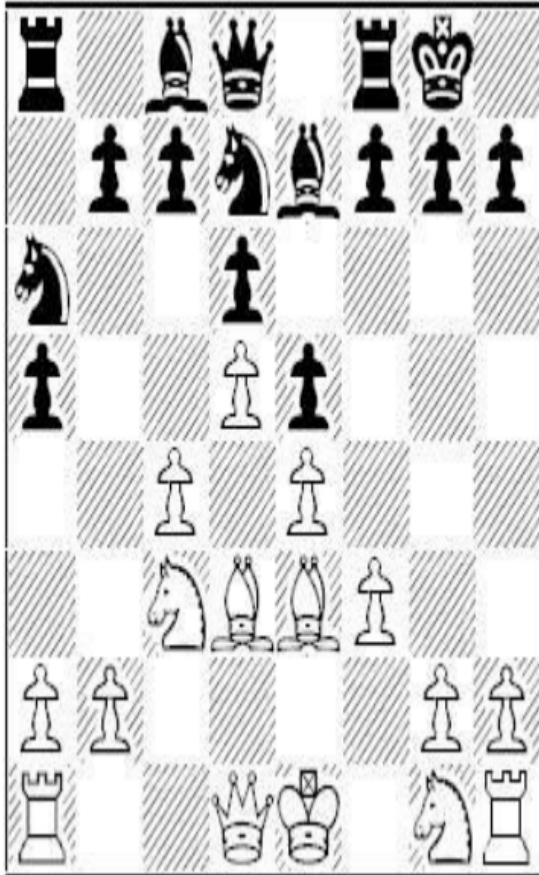
I suggest 6 ... Nfd7!? before castling.

**Question:** For what purpose?

**Answer:** We don't give White time for Be3 and Qd2, thwarting the "Operation Dump the Bad Bishop"

plan which entails ... Bg5. 7 Nh3 Nc5 8 Nf2 Bg5 9 Be2 Bxc1 10 Qxc1 Nbd7 11 0-0 0-0 12 Qd2 reached equality in D.Soroka-R.Granko, Evpatoria 2008. This was played in a Ukrainian under-12 tourney. We like to indoctrinate them young!

**7 Be3 Na6 8 Bd3 Nd7!**



**Question:** Why do you prefer this move over the more normal ... Nh5 and ...

Bg5 idea?

**Answer:** As I mentioned earlier, the trouble with ... Nh5 is that Black almost always later gets nailed for tempo loss when White engineers g4. The knight on d7 reinforces c5 and avoids this tempo loss.

## **9 Qd2**

Preventing ... Bg5.

## **9 ... Ndc5 10 Bb1!?**

He may be going too far preserving his bishop. White probably feared 10 Bc2 Nb4 11 Bb1 and the trouble is White isn't inclined to play a3 without fear since there is that b3 fork to contend with.

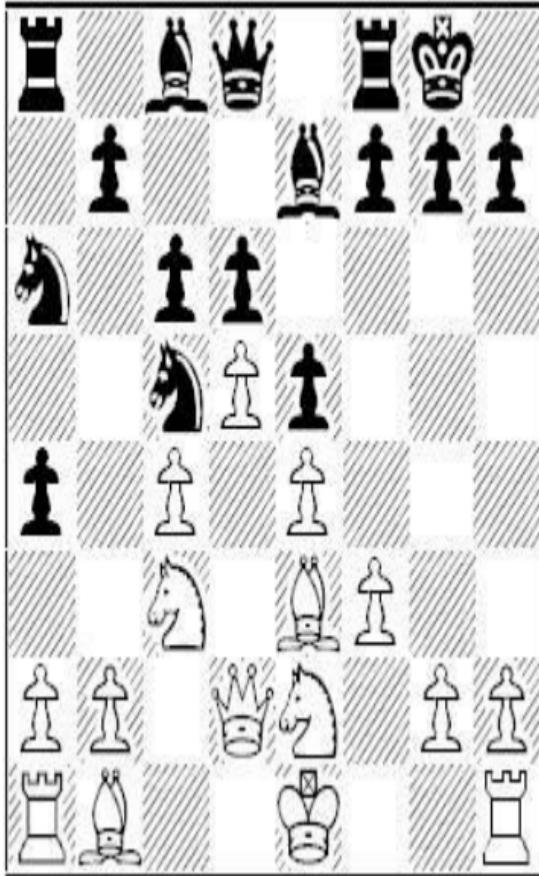
**Question:** Why would White fear the exchange of his bad bishop?

**Answer:** It's his bad bishop right now, but later the game may open when Black engineers ... f5, or ... c6 and possibly ... b5, in which case he would want his bishop. In general you are correct and White probably shouldn't contort like this to preserve the underachieving bishop.

**10 ... a4**

Seizing more queenside space.

**11 Nge2 c6**



**Question:** What purpose does a move like this serve?

**Answer:** It opens a pathway to

the queenside for Black's queen.

**12 0-0 Qa5 13 f4**

Logical. White reasons that too many black pieces are posted on the queenside, so he plays for mate on the other wing.

**13 ... Qb4!**

Target: c4.

**14 fxe5**

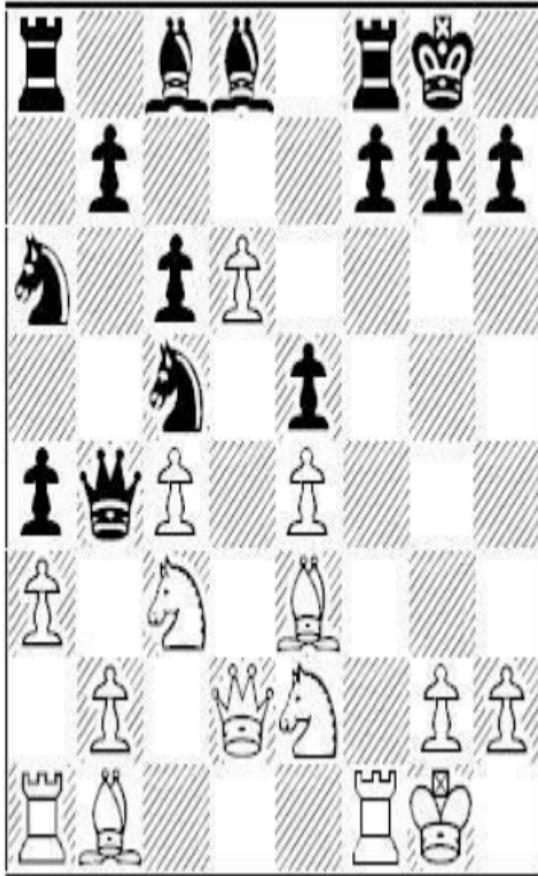
14 a3! Qxc4 15 Ba2 Nb3 16 Bxb3 axb3 17 fxe5 with an unclear position. Black can't play the natural recapture with 17 ... dxe5? since 18 d6 costs him material due to the d7 threat.

**14 ... dxe5 15 d6!?**

**Question:** Overextension?

**Answer:** It's hard to say, but my intuition says yes. GM Markowski tempts White's once safe d-pawn forward and then cuts it off from help. White should have held back his d-pawn and continued 15 a3! Qxc4 (or 15 ... Qa5 16 Bc2 and the pressure is off the c4-pawn) 16 Ba2 Qd3 17 Qxd3 Nxd3 18 Nxa4 leading to a sharp ending.

**15 ... Bd8 16 a3**



**Exercise (critical decision):**  
Should Black grab  
the pawn on c4 or back off to

a5?

## **Answer: 16 ... Qa5!**

There is no reason to clear c4 and activate White's bad bishop with 16 ... Qxc4?! 17 Ba2 Qd3 18 Qxd3 Nxd3 19 Nxa4 b5 20 Bb1! Nf4 21 Nac3 Ne6. White's advanced d-pawn is a source of concern to Black in the ending and White's once-bad light-squared bishop once again comes alive on a2.

## **17 Ba2**

The disgruntled worker on a2 must yet again punch in his time card and get to his hated job covering b3. If 17 Bc2?! Be6 and c4 is loose once again.

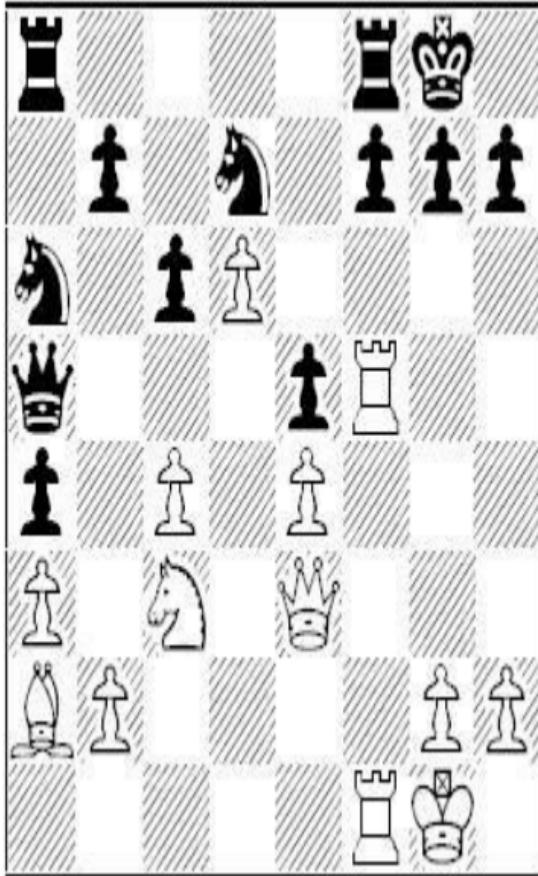
**17 ... Be6 18 Ng3 Nd7**

He firmly blockades d7 and prepares to activate his brother on a6. Black can also try 18 ... Nb3 19 Bxb3 axb3 20 Nf5 f6! (20 ... Bxc4?! 21 Rf3 gives White a strong attack) 21 Rf3 Nc5 with an unclear position. The c4-pawn may later fall but it looks like White is building for a dangerous attack on the kingside as compensation.

**19 Nf5 Bxf5 20 Rxf5?!**

He should clear e4 for his pieces and recapture with the pawn.

**20 ... Bb6 21 Raf1 Bxe3+ 22 Qxe3**



**Exercise (planning):** How does Black improve his position?  
**Answer:** By forcing an ending.

Then:

1. He snuffs out White's kingside ambitions.
2. In an ending, White wishes he had not pushed his now overextended pawn to d6.
3. White's bad bishop becomes that much worse with queens off the board.
4. Black has a bind on the c5-square.

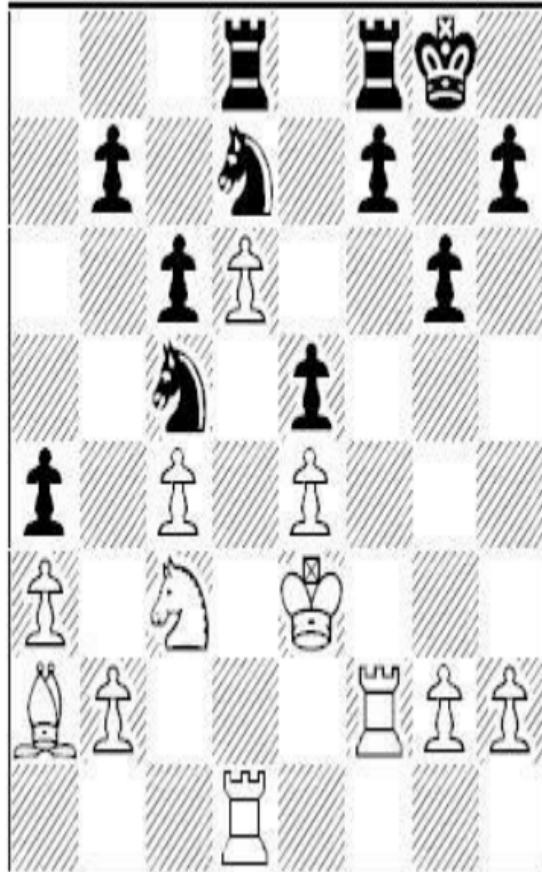
**22 ... Qc5! 23 Qf2 Qxf2+ 24 Kxf2!**

Improving his king position. Many players would recapture with a rook. Just because you are in a difficult position doesn't mean you

stop making good moves.

**24 ... Nac5 25 Ke3 g6 26**

**R5f2 Rad8 27 Rd1**



**Exercise (planning):** Come up with a concrete plan to annex and finally pick off White's straggler on d6.

**Answer:** Step 1: Tie White down to c4.

**27 ... Nb6 28 g3**

Step 2: Load up on d6 by doubling rooks.

**28 ... Rd7 29 Rfd2 Kg7 30**

**h4 Rfd8 31 h5 Nc8**

Step 3: Add a third attacker to the weakling on d6.

**32 Rh2 Rxd6**

Step 4: White must bid d6 goodbye. The ending is resignable for White.

We witness the ruins of a classic overreach, the moral of which is: Perishable items spoil quickly. Perhaps White should have left his d-pawn in deep freeze on d5.

**33 Rxd6 Rxd6 34 h6+ Kf8  
35 Ke2 Nb6 36 g4 Ke7 37 g5  
Rd4 38 Rf2 Rd6**

There was nothing wrong with 38 ... Nxe4.

**39 Bb1 f6 40 Rg2 Nxc4 41  
gxf6+ Kxf6 0-1**

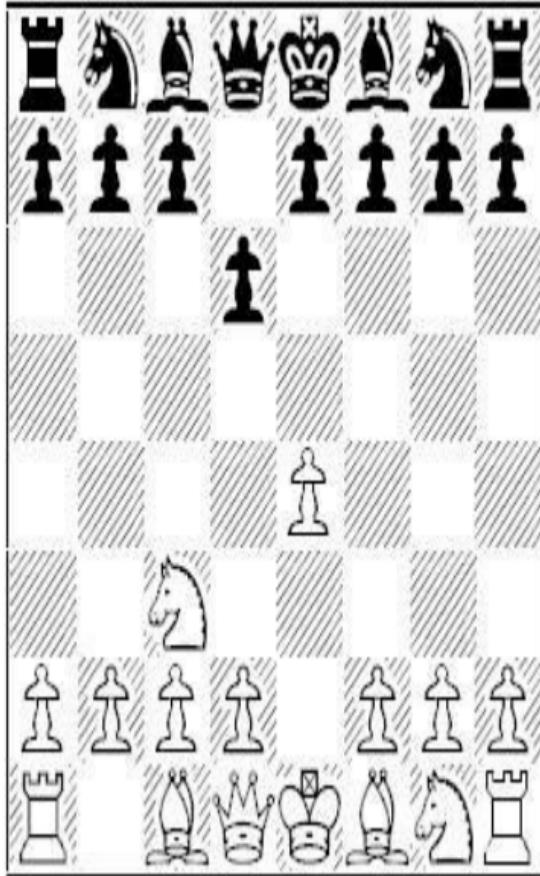
**Summary:** Markowski's plan ... a5, ... Nfd7! and later ... Bg5 looks at least as good as the normal ... Nh5 and ... Bg5 plan.

Game 35

**D.Bryson-J.Shaw**

Edinburgh 1996

**1 e4 d6 2 Nc3**



White is determined to avoid d4.

**Question:** What would be the point of that?

Why not take the centre when offered?

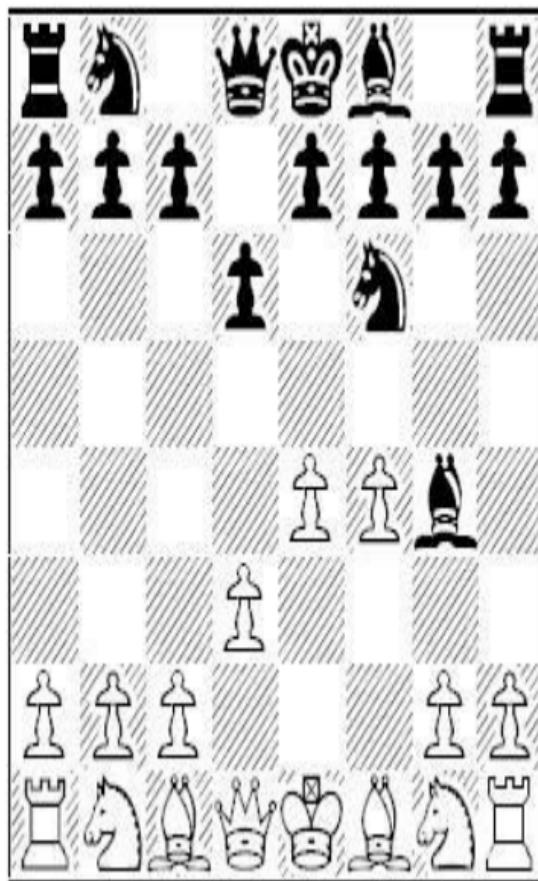
**Answer:** The vast majority of your opponents do, indeed, play d4 here. The ones who play 2 Nc3 are typically players who specialize in either Closed Sicilian or Sicilian Grand Prix style positions. The point of avoiding d4 altogether is to avoid giving Black any targets whatsoever, as well as remaining within his own realm of knowledge.

The following is a parade of annoying second moves designed to avoid playing d4. None of these are particularly dangerous to Black; all are annoying!:

a) 2 Nf3 Bg4 3 h3 (of course there are a million other moves White can play here, but nothing to worry us; 3 d4 Nf6 4 Nc3 transposes to Chapter One) 3 ... Bh5 4 Nc3 e5 (4 ... e6 with our ... d5 plan to follow is also perfectly fine for Black.) 5 Bc4 Nf6 6 d3 c6 7 a3 Be7 8 Ba2 Nbd7 9 Ne2!? d5 (if Black desires imbalance then he can try 9 ... Bxf3!? 10 gxf3 d5) 10 Ng3 Bg6 11 Qe2 dxe4 12 dxe4, E.Dizdarevic-V.Kovacevic, Solin 1998. It looks pretty close to even. Black's only worry is that bishop on g6, which remains slightly out of play.

b) 2 f4 (Grand Prix style; the

move order can also go 2 d3 Nf6 3 f4) 2 ... Nf6 3 d3 Bg4.



We follow the Chapter One

game plan:

1. Eliminate the light squared bishop.
2. Switch structure with ... e6 and ... d5.

After 4 Nf3 (or 4 Be2 Bxe2 5 Qxe2 e6 6 Nf3 Be7 and ... d5 follows, reaching a French without a bad bishop, J.Sereda-Z.Horak, Brno 1998) 4 ... d5 5 e5 Nfd7 6 d4 e6 7 Be2 c5 Black fulfills the French dream. His once-bad bishop sits pretty outside the pawn chain, P.Williams-S.Ansell, Hastings 2010.

c) 2 Bc4 c6 (getting ready to punish the bishop with ... d5) 3 Bb3 Nf6 4 d3 d5 5 e5 Nfd7 6 d4 e6 7 c3

c5 (an Advance French with White's bishop misplaced on b3) 8 Ne2 Nc6 9 0-0 b5 10 f4 Qb6 11 Be3 Ba6 12 Nd2 g6 13 Nf3 b4 and White's chunky bishop on b3 makes an odd impression, R.Schlindwein-A.Sokolov, Viernheim 1992.

d) 2 g3 Nf6 3 Bg2 Bg4!? (there is no compulsion to play this, but I admire the way Black strains to stir up trouble!) 4 Ne2 (or 4 f3 Bd7 5 Nc3 e5 6 d3 c5 7 Nge2 Nc6 8 0-0 Nd4 9 Bg5 Be7 10 Kh1 0-0 11 Qd2 Nxe2 12 Qxe2 Bc6 13 f4 b5 with some sort of strange Ruy Lopez/Closed Sicilian hybrid, S.Melnikov-I.Idrisov, Ufa 2004) 4 ...

Qc8 5 h3 Bd7, Wians,C-Van der Wiel,J Budel 1987; I like the messy, flexible position Black attains. Both ... e5 and ... c5 are available to him. White can't castle without the weakening g4.

e) 2 c4 (an attempt to King's Indianize!) 2 ... c5 3 Ne2 Nf6 4 Nbc3 e5 (Oh, no you don't! Black prevents d4) 5 d3 Nc6 6 h3 Be7 7 g3 with a Closed Sicilian/Ruy Lopez hybrid, M.Vokac-J.Pribyl, Frenstat 1982.

f) 2 b3 is ineffective. White's bishop hits a wall on e5: 2 ... Nf6 3 Nc3 e5 4 Bb2 Be7 5 Nf3 Bg4 6 Be2 0-0 7 0-0 Nbd7 8 h3 Bh5 9 d4 c6 10

Re1 Re8 11 dxe5 dxe5 12 Nh4 Bxe2 13 Qxe2 g6 and we come back to a Philidor where White's bishop on b2 fails to impress, R.Crespo-A.Moran Nuque, Guayaquil 2003.

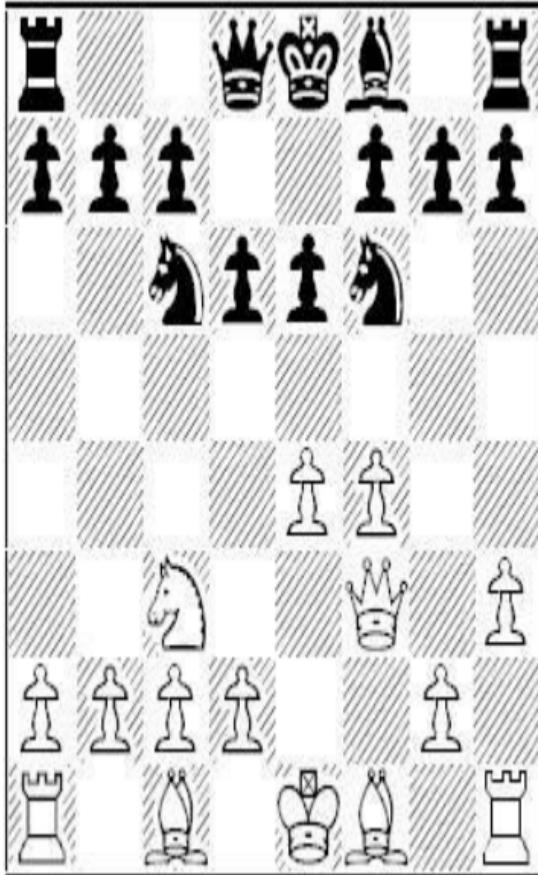
### **2 ... Nf6 3 f4**

We cover 3 g3 next game.

### **3 ... Bg4 4 Nf3**

The more combative move. 4 Be2 Bxe2 5 Qxe2 Nc6 6 Nf3 e6 7 0-0 Be7 8 d3 0-0 9 Kh1 d5 reaches easy equality because Black has dumped his bad bishop, P.Adams-J.Shaw, Oban 2000.

### **4 ... e6 5 h3 Bxf3 6 Qxf3 Nc6**



**Question:** Why would he block his c-pawn?

**Answer:** Consider this: Black's

remaining bishop is dark-squared. This means he must be careful about placing too many pawns on dark squares. For example, 6 ... d5 7 d3 c5 8 g4 Nc6 9 Qf2 d4 10 Nd1, C.Loeffler-H.Poettlinger, Austrian League 2005. Two of Black's pawns are stuck on the same colour as his bishop. Still, his extra central and queenside space may compensate.

## 7 d3

**Question:** What if White plays Ruy Lopez style with 7 Bb5?

**Answer:** 7 ... d5 8 Bxc6+ bxc6 9 d3 doesn't harm Black, who gets the b-file and extra central control in exchange for the slight disruption

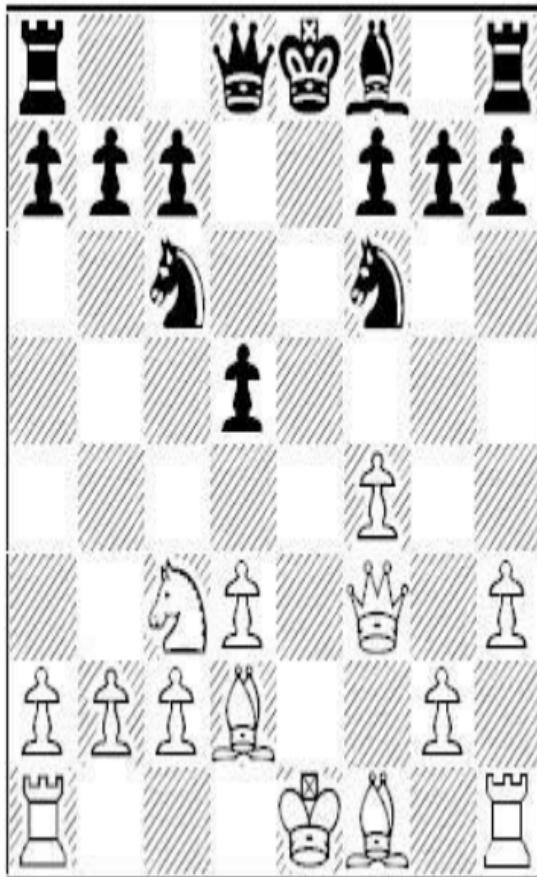
to his pawn structure.

**7 ... d5 8 exd5?!**

**Question:** I don't understand the motivation behind this move. Why take when he can push?

**Answer:** In essence White declares an ideological war, opening the game for his bishop pair, but in doing so he underestimates the fragility of his dark squares. White should play 8 e5 Nd7 9 g3 Nd4 10 Qf2 c5 11 Bg2 Be7 12 0-0, as in K.Keosidi-E.Kharashuta, Novokuznetsk 2007. I wouldn't mind taking Black's position after 12 ... h5.

**8 ... exd5 9 Bd2**



**Exercise (planning):** White plans to castle queenside and

proceed

with g4 and Bg2. Find a path to disrupt the smooth flow of White's plan.

**Answer:** 9 ... Qe7+! 10 Qe2

Forced:

a) 10 Kf2? Qc5+ and White can't block the check since the ... d4 threat wins.

b) 10 Kd1?! 0-0-0 and White falls behind in development.

c) 10 Be2?? Nd4 forks.

d) 10 Ne2?? Nd4 ditto.

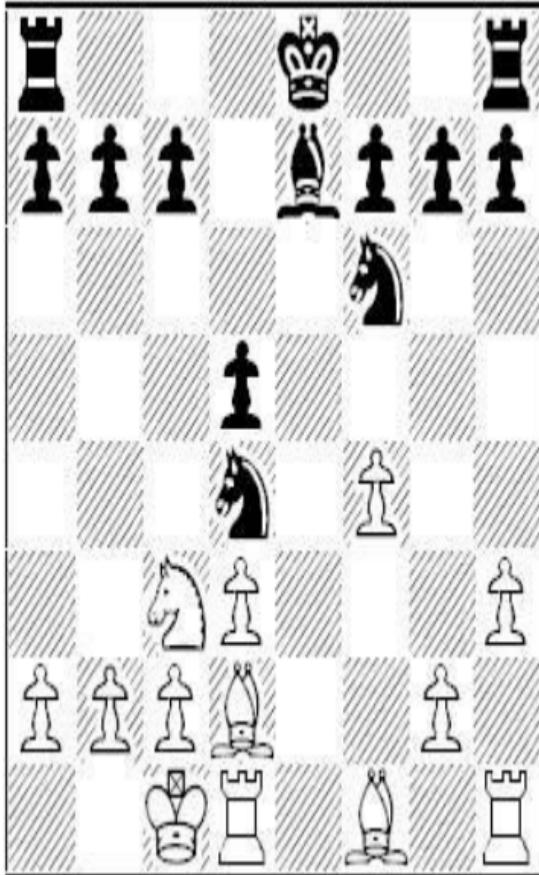
**10 ... Nd4 11 Qxe7+ Bxe7 12 0-0-0**

**Question:** It looks to me like White stands better with his bishop

pair.

He later plays 0-0-0, g4 and Bg2. Am I correct in this assessment?

**Answer:** The assessment is incorrect. Sometimes “later” may be too late. White subtly weakened his structure on the dark squares and kingside, and he doesn’t have time to set up your plan. Black’s next move proves this.



**12 ... h5!**

After this move Black holds a nagging edge.

## **13 Ne2**

13 g3 Nf5! 14 Bg2 c6 15 Ne2

Bc5 is advantage Black.

**13 ... Nf5 14 g3 0-0-0 15**

## **Bg2 Bc5! 16 Bf3 Rde8**

16 ... Bf2! also looks good: 17 Be1 Bxe1 18 Rdx e1 Rde8 19 Kd2 Re3 20 g4 Rxf3 21 gxf5 Ne8!. Black can go after f5 with the plan ... Kd7, ... Rh6 and ... Rf6.

## **17 Rh2 Re6**

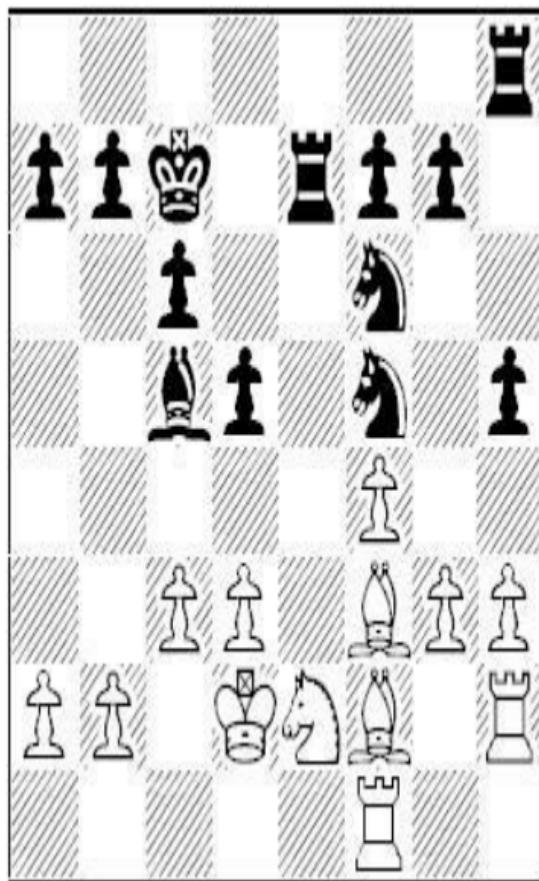
He should probably occupy e3 with 17 ... Be3.

## **18 c3 c6 19 Rf1**

I would actually give up the e4-square in order to push Black back a bit with 19 d4!?.

19 ... Kc7 20 Be1 Re3 21

Kd2 Re7 22 Bf2?!



**Exercise (combination alert):**

It doesn't look like much is going on.

Yet Black has a way of manufacturing a crisis and improving

his position with a combination.  
Do you see it?

**Answer: 22 ... Bxf2! 23**

**Rhxf2 Ne4+!**

That came from nowhere! But before nowhere:

1. Remember, White weakened his dark squares.
2. This led to tangled pieces.
3. Which in turn, led to this combination.

Moral: There are no accidents in

chess.

## **24 dxe4 dxe4**

Dual threats: ... e3+ and ... exf3.

## **25 Bxe4 Rxe4 26 Rg1 Rd8+**

**27 Kc1 g6 28 g4 hxg4 29 hxg4**

**Ne3 30 Nd4 c5**

30 ... Nd5 31 f5 g5, with ... Nf6 to follow, also looks promising.

## **31 Nc2?!**

The knight falls out of play here. Better was 31 Nb3! b6 32 Nd2.

## **31 ... Nd5 32 Rgf1 Rh8**

Threatening ... Rh4. I would fix a sitting duck target on f4 with 32 ... f5 33 gxf5 gxf5.

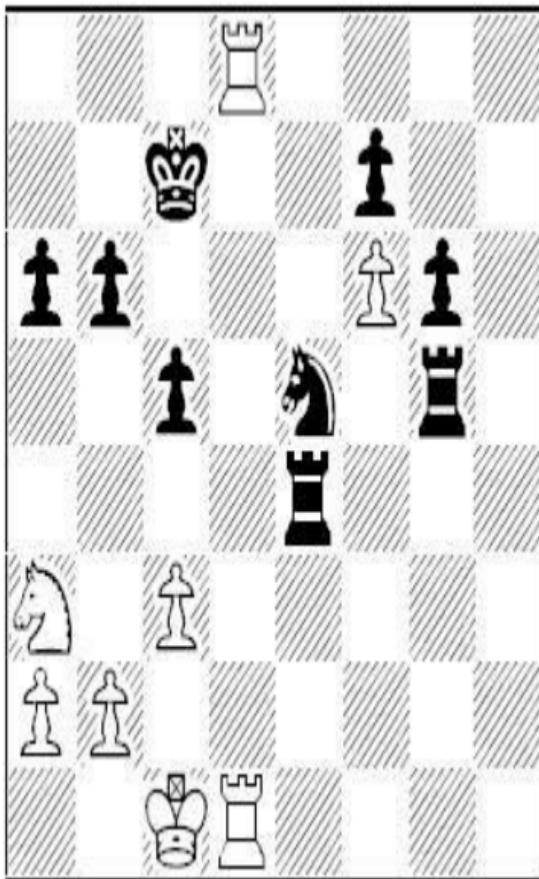
## **33 g5 Rh4 34 f5 Rhg4 35**

**Rd2 Ne7 36 f6 Nc6 37 Rfd1  
Ne5**

The knight stands sentinel against seventh rank invasion.

**38 Rd5 b6 39 Na3 a6 40 Rd8**

**Rxg5**



The first domino falls. The health and welfare of f6 is now a big concern.

**41 Ra8 Kb7 42 Rad8 Rf5 43**

**R8d6 Rf2**

White's dilemma:

1. He can't afford to challenge the second rank with his rook because he desperately needs his rooks to create counterplay against Black's king.
2. He can't afford not to challenge the second rank either!

**44 b3!?**

White lures Black into taking on a2. He then plans to slam the door shut with Nc2.

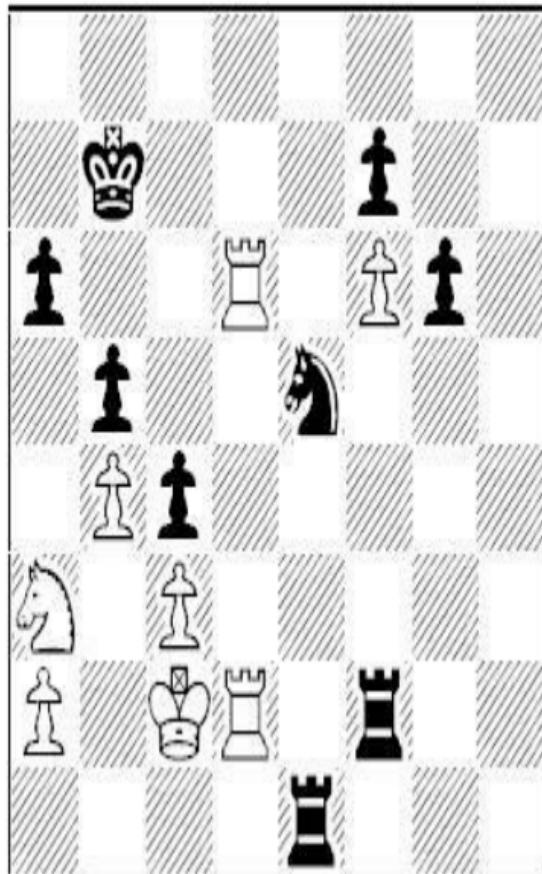
**44 ... b5**

He can grab it: 44 ... Rxa2! 45 Nc2 c4! 46 bxc4 Rxc4 47 Re1 Rxc3

48 Rxe5 Raxc2+ 49 Kb1 Rc7.

**45 b4 c4 46 R1d2 Re1+ 47**

**Kc2**



**Exercise (planning):** White's king isn't safe. Prove it.

**Answer: 47 ... Rff1!**

Threat: ... Rc1+ followed by ... Nd3+.

**48 R2d5 Re2+**

Rybka gives the following mating attack: 48 ... Rc1+! 49 Kd2 Nf3+! 50 Ke3 Rce1+ 51 Kf4 Nd2+ and goes on and on to prove her point. The real point is we humans can't calculate such lines.

**49 Rd2 Re3 50 R2d5 Rf2+  
51 Kd1 Rxg2 52 Nc2 Rd3+!**

Cold and calculating. Killers who dispatch their victims with cool dispassion are somehow more

chilling than those who kill with rage. He forces White to the unfortunate c1-square or a swap. Every trade hurts White.

### **53 Kc1**

Black also consolidates after 53 Rxd3 cxd3 54 Ne3 Rh2 55 Rd5 Rh5.

**53 ... Rxc3 54 Rxe5 Raxc2+  
55 Kd1 Rd3+! 56 Kxc2 Rxd6 57  
Re7+ Kc6 58 Rxf7 Kd5 0-1**

White's f-pawn isn't going anywhere.

**Summary:** Against the Grand Prix, we fall back on our elemental, E=MC squared, Pribyl formula from Chapter One with ... Bg4, bishop

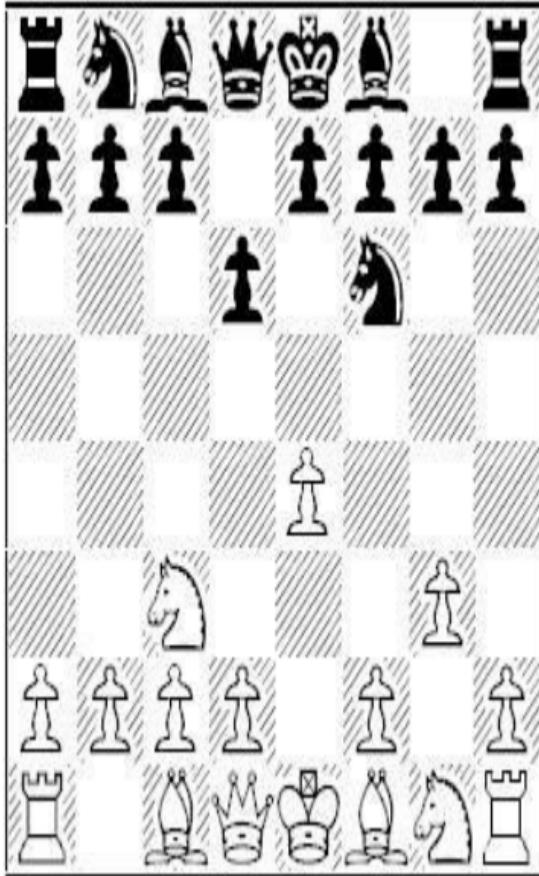
takes something, ... e6 and ... d5.

Game 36

**B.Predojevic-P.Eljanov**

Sarajevo 2005

**1 e4 d6 2 Nc3 Nf6 3 g3**



White insists on a Closed Sicilian, while we, in turn, insist on a Philidor.

**3 ... e5**

**Question:** Could I play 3 ... c5

here?

**Answer:** Absolutely, as long as you feel confident in a Closed Sicilian position. But remember, this is exactly what White wants.

**4 Bg2 Be7 5 Nge2**

The majority of players prefer to develop their knight to e2. Alternatively:

a) 5 d3 intending f4 and only then Nf3 looks like the most logical plan to me: 5 ... 0-0 6 f4 c5 7 Nf3 Nc6 8 0-0 Bd7 9 h3, T.Narva-A.Kuvsinov, Panevezys 2008. Now Black may meet the wing attack

with the central counter 9 ... exf4!? 10 gxf4 (10 Bxf4?! is met with 10 ... Nh5!) 10 ... Re8. Black follows with ... Bf8 and plays for either ... d5, ... Nd4 or ... Rb8 and ... b5.

b) With 5 Nf3 White intends to play d4 later: 5 ... Nbd7 6 0-0 0-0 7 d4. Now we are back to Chapter Four and the fianchetto line, but with one difference: White develops his knight to e2 in the fianchetto line. A knight on f3 hinders the f4 pawn break, so perhaps this is an inferior version for White.

c) 5 h3 stays flexible. White may want to post his bishop on e3 without fear of ... Ng4.

## **5 ... c6 6 0-0**

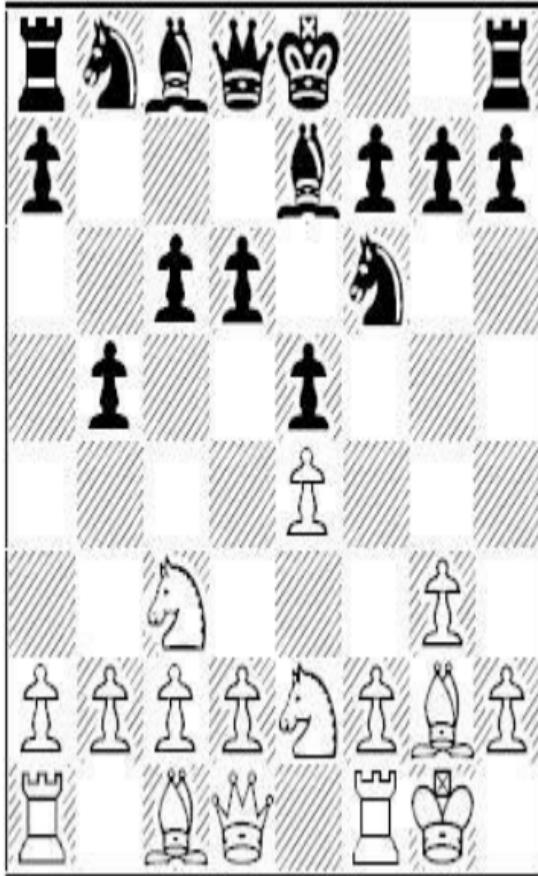
6 a4 0-0 7 d4 transposes the fianchetto line from Chapter Four.

**Question:** What if he tosses in a4 but then plays

d3 to go back to the Closed Sicilian?

**Answer:** There, Black's best plan may be to play for ... d5, with ... Re8 and ... Bf8 first.

## **6 ... b5**



**7 a3**

Just remember this: When White holds back on d3, he can play d4 at

any point to transpose to the fianchetto line. For example, 7 d4 Nbd7 8 a3 0-0 9 h3 a5 10 g4 Ba6 11 Ng3 b4 12 Nce2 bxa3 13 Rxa3 d5 14 Re3 with complications, M.Carlsen-T.Radjabov, Biel 2007.

### **7 ... Nbd7 8 h3 a5 9 g4!?**

Quite risky if Black hasn't committed to kingside castling yet.

**Question:** You aren't going to go on another anti-g4 tirade

like you did in Chapter Three are you?

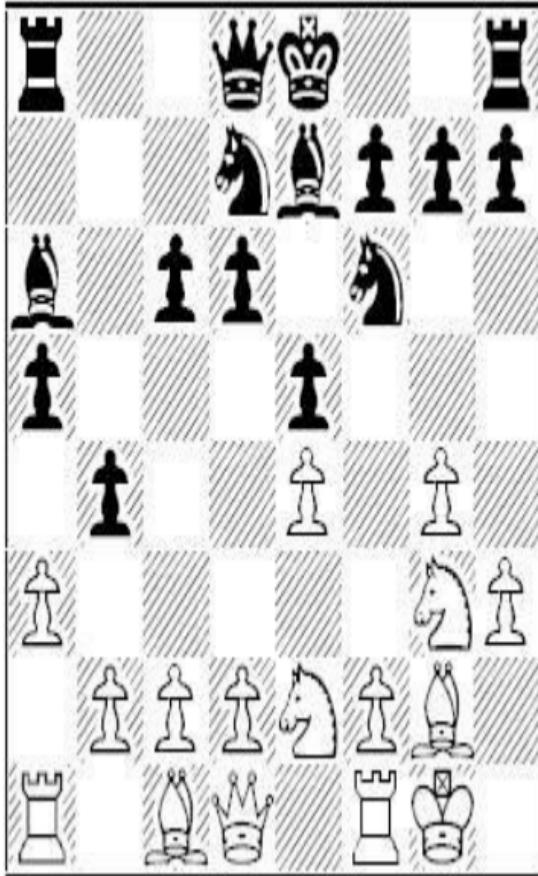
**Answer:** I make no promises!

### **9 ... Ba6! 10 Ng3**

He clears e2 for his knight. If 10 d3 then 10 ... b4 sends the knight in

the opposite direction, and 11 Na4 h6 12 Ng3 g6 13 f4 Bb5 allows Black counterplay based on the wayward knight.

**10 ... b4 11 Nce2**



White obviously builds for a kingside assault. Black, on the other hand, looks like he chases the wind

on the queenside, devoid of targets or counterplay.

**Exercise (planning):** Come up with a plan which shows that

Black indeed generates queenside counterplay.

**Answer: 11 ... b3!**

This temporary pawn sac ensures counterplay.

**12 d3**

**Question:** Where is Black's combination if

White accepts the pawn with 12 cxb3?

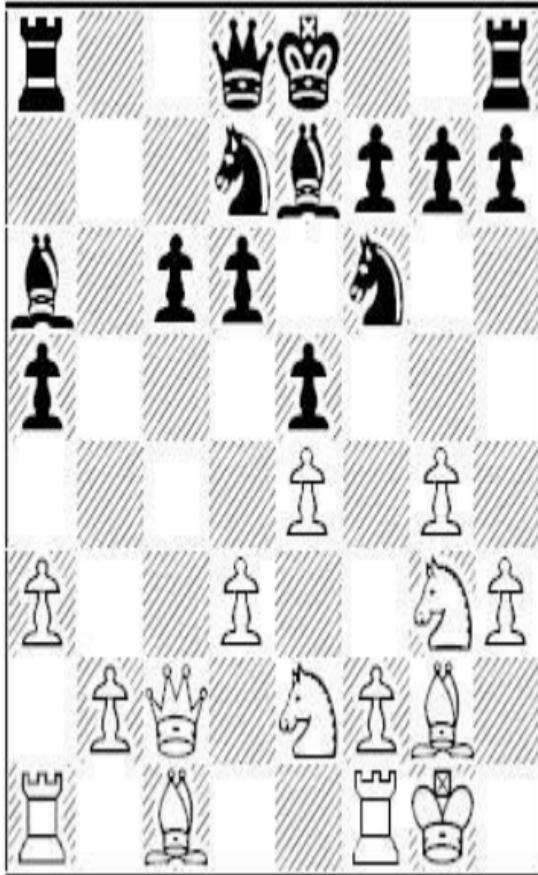
**Answer:** No combination. Just a bind after 12 ... Bd3!.

**Question:** Then can White try

12 c3 to keep the queenside closed?

**Answer:** White gets asphyxiated after 12 ... Bd3! 13 Qxb3 Nc5 14 Qd1 a4!, and if he protects his e-pawn he dies horribly after 15 f3?? Nb3 16 Ra2 Bb1.

**12 ... bxc2 13 Qxc2**



Mission accomplished. Black managed to pry open the queenside.

**13 ... 0-0!**

**Question:** When is Black supposed to play

13 ... g6 and when does he omit it?

**Answer:** It changes from game to game and position to position. In this particular case 13 ... g6?! looks wrong because Black gets booted after 14 g5! Ng8 15 Qxc6 Bxd3 16 Qd5, with a bind.

**14 Nf5 Re8 15 Neg3**

Threatening to win a piece next move with 16 g5.

**15 ... Nc5 16 Rd1**

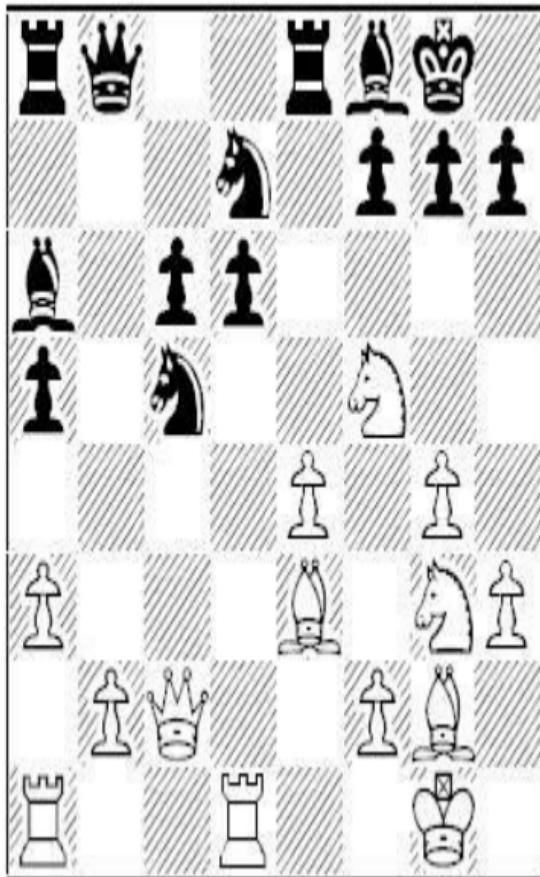
**Question:** Is it worth it to pick off the dark-squared bishop?

**Answer:** Probably not. I like Black at the end of the following line: 16 Nxe7+ Qxe7 17 Nf5 Qc7 18 Rd1 Ne6 19 d4 g6 20 dxe5 dxe5 21 Nh6+ Kg7 22 Be3 c5. At some point Black's monster knight lands on d4, which more than makes up for his weakness on the dark squares. Also, White probably needs to play the weakening g5 to free his h6-knight, unless he later finds a way to sac it.

**16 ... Bf8 17 d4 exd4 18 Nxd4 Qb6**

Targeting b3 and b2. White, in turn, goes after the weakling on d6 and also c6. Chances look even.

**19 Be3 Nfd7 20 Ndf5 Qb8**



**Exercise (multiple choice):**  
How should White proceed?

- a) 21 Qc3 targeting g7;
- b) 21 Nh5 targeting g7;
- c) 21 b4 liquidating pawns.

## **21 b4?**

**Answer:** A miscalculation.

White intends to swap his a- and b-pawns for Black's a- and d-pawns. It doesn't work out that way. Both a) 21 Qc3 and b) 21 Nh5 are playable options.

**21 ... axb4 22 axb4 Qxb4 23**

## **Rab1**

**Question:** Why doesn't White regain his pawn with 23 Nxd6?

**Answer:** This is a forehead-smacking moment for White. I'm certain that is exactly what he

intended but then realized the move is a big error. Black has the interference shot 23 ... Bd3! winning material. He can't touch the bishop since his a1-rook hangs with check. This trick is the reason White's 21st move was an error.

**23 ... Qa3 24 Rbc1 Bd3! 25 Qc3 Red8?!**

25 ... Reb8! intending ... Rb3 keeps Black in control.

**26 Nd4?!**

26 Bf4! Qxc3 27 Rxc3 regains the pawn on d6.

**26 ... Ne5 27 f4 Nc4 28 Bf2 Nb2 29 Qxa3 Rxa3 30 Rd2 Nc4 31 Rxd3!**

White has a mini-combination that wins two pieces for a rook.

**31 ... Nxd3 32 Rxc4 d5?!**

The bad news for White is he still may stand worse, despite his combination, after 32 ... c5! 33 Nde2 Rb8 34 Rc2 Rb2 35 Rxb2 Nxb2 and the passed c-pawn may eventually cost White a piece.

**33 exd5?**

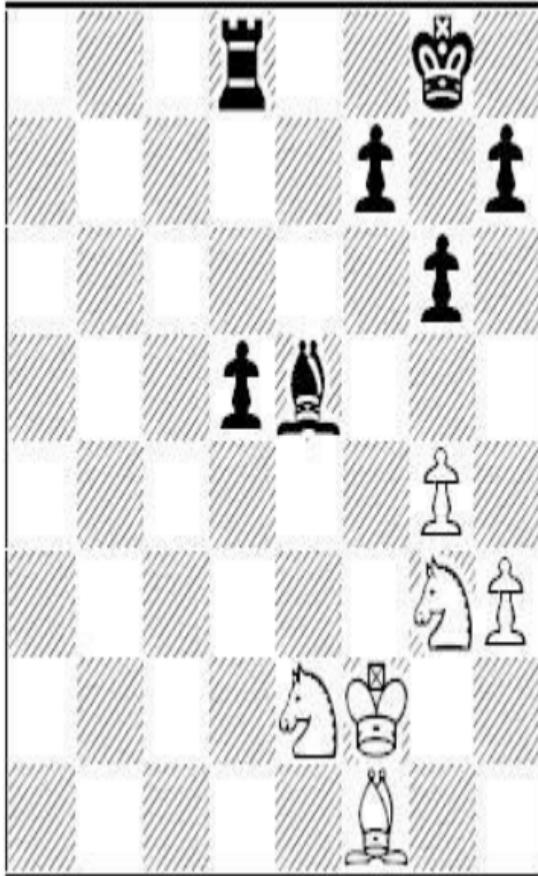
After 33 Rxc6! Nxf2 34 Kxf2 dxe4 35 Nde2 e3+ 36 Kf3 g6 White stands slightly better.

**33 ... cxd5 34 Rc2 Nxf4 35 Bf1 g6 36 Nde2 Nd3! 37 Rc3?**

A mistake. Principle: If you are the side with the two minor pieces

versus the opponent's rook and pawns, don't swap off your remaining rook. The best plan is 37 Nd4 Nxf2 38 Kxf2 and White fights on in an inferior position.

**37 ... Nxf2 38 Kxf2 Rxc3 39 Nxc3 Bg7 40 Nce2 Be5**



**Exercise (planning):** White must find an effective way to blockade the passed d-pawn.

Come up with  
the optimal defensive piece  
setup for White.

**Answer:** Step 1: d3 is the  
optimal blockade square.

### **41 Nc1! f6**

Step 2: The other knight is transferred to e2, where it watches over d4 and f4.

**42 Nge2! Kf7 43 Nd3 Ke6 44  
Bg2 Rb8 45 Ke3 Kd6 46 Bf3  
Rb3**

Step 3: Do absolutely nothing, wait awhile, and then do more nothing!

**47 Bg2 Ra3 48 Bf3 f5 49  
gxf5 gxf5 50 Bg2 Bg7 51 Nef4**

**Bh6 52 Kd4 Ra4+ 53 Ke3  
Bxf4+!**

Making it harder for White to continue his blockade.

**54 Nxf4 d4+ 55 Kf2 Ra2+  
56 Kf1 Rd2 57 Ke1 Rb2 58 Kf1  
Rc2 59 Bf3**

After 59 Ke1 Ke5 60 Nd3+ Kf6 61 Bf3 Kg5 62 Be2 Kh4 Black infiltrates.

**59 ... h6?**

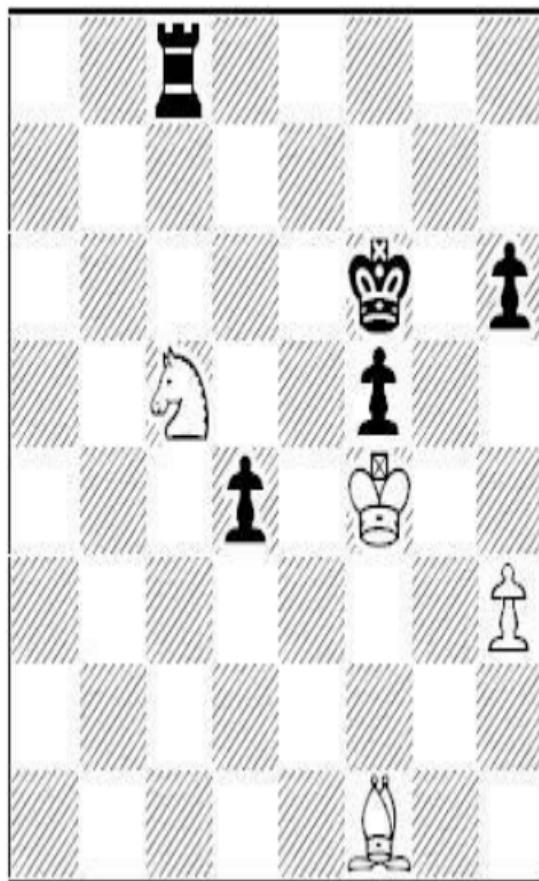
Missing 59 ... Rc3! 60 Kf2 Ke5 61 Ng2 Rc2+ 62 Ke1 d3 infiltrating and winning.

**60 Nd3 Rd2 61 Be2 Ra2 62  
Kf2 Ra8**

Thus far Black's king/rook dance

team reminds one vividly of Bristol Palin's performance with her dance partner on Dancing with the Stars! The black rook works beautifully, sashaying and twirling about where it pleases. Black's klutzy king remains the problem, unable to infiltrate effectively. Black still has time to reboot. Rather than 62 ... Ra8, his best shot at the win is to try to infiltrate the kingside: 62 ... Ke6! 63 Kf3 Kf6 64 h4 Rc2 65 Kf2 Rc8 66 Kf3 Re8! 67 Kf2 Re4! 68 h5 and Black's king enters via g5. Admittedly though, the win is still quite far away, even from this point.

**63 Kf3 Re8 64 Bf1 Ke6 65  
Kf4 Kf6 66 Nc5 Rc8**



**Exercise (combination alert):**

White has a forcing path to a draw.

Do you see it?

White should also hold after 66  
... Re3 67 Bd3 Rxh3 68 Nd7+ Ke7  
69 Ne5 h5 70 Bxf5.

**Answer: 67 Nd7+! Ke6 68**

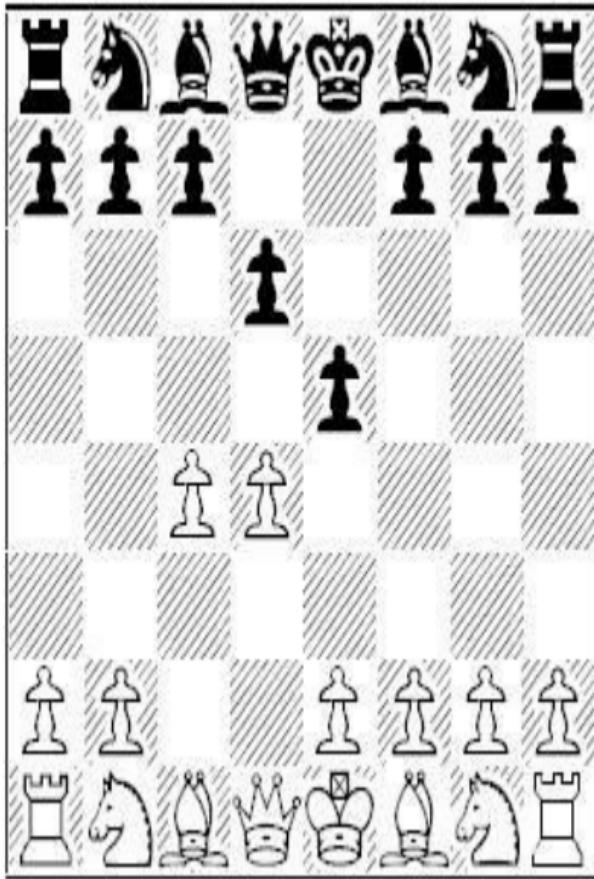
**Bd3!**  $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$

Black's chances for the win end  
after 68 ... Kd6 69 Bxf5.

**Summary:** Philidorize your  
opponent if he tries to corner you  
into a Closed Sicilian.

# **Chapter Six**

## **1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5**



Our classical Queen's Pawn opponent opens with 1 d4 d6 2 c4.

White's stage is set, his actors ready with well-rehearsed lines and the curtain draws open to begin the play with what he believes to be his familiar repertoire of King's Indian, Old Indian or Modern. Let's ignore the whims of polite society and hit back with a little twist on the normal with 2 ... e5!?. This aggressive move gives the game an independent flavour and scores very well for Black. In fact, the stats are the reverse of average, with Black, not White, scoring a surprising 55%.

We aren't interested in transposing back to the King's

Indian, Old Indian or Modern with 2 ... Nf6 or 2 ... g6. Instead we thrust upon White unwanted and unfamiliar problems to solve over the board. A normally competent player, when removed from his or her familiar opening patterns, can quickly morph into a confused, bumbling opponent.

The menu of White responses in this chapter:

### a) 3 Nf3 (Games 37-40)

The main line and our biggest theoretical challenge. White plays a move expressly designed to provoke. We accept the challenge and begin the adventure by kicking

his knight.

**b) 3 dxe5?!** (Games 41-42)

Usually the choice of lower-rated opponents who mistakenly assume they achieve the easy draw. They don't. In fact, it is White who does all the suffering in this queenless middlegame.

**c) 3 Nc3** (Games 43-44)

After 3 ... exd4 4 Qxd4 White has a space advantage but Black gains time by attacking the queen with ... Nc6.

**d) 3 d5** (Games 45-46)

White is determined to keep the game along KID or OID paths. Instead we enter a favourable

looking Dutch with 3 ... f5.

### e) 3 e3 (Game 47)

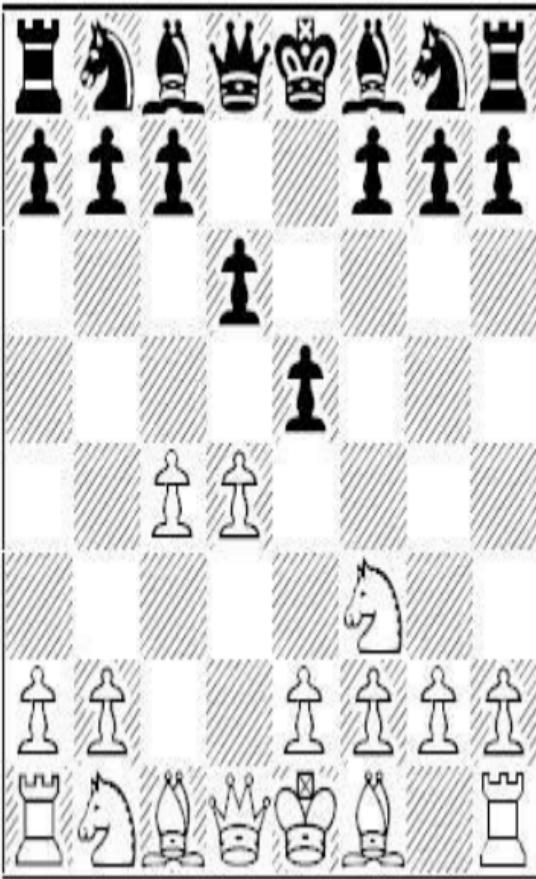
White is content with entry to a Reversed French versus a King's Indian Attack. We again mess up his plans with 3 ... Nc6! turning it into a favourable version for our side.

Game 37

**K.Georgiev-B.Chatalbashev**

European Club Cup, Plovdiv 2010

**1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 Nf3**



**Question:** Is this some kind of strange Reversed Alekhine's Defence idea? It looks like White

encourages us to kick his f3-knight.

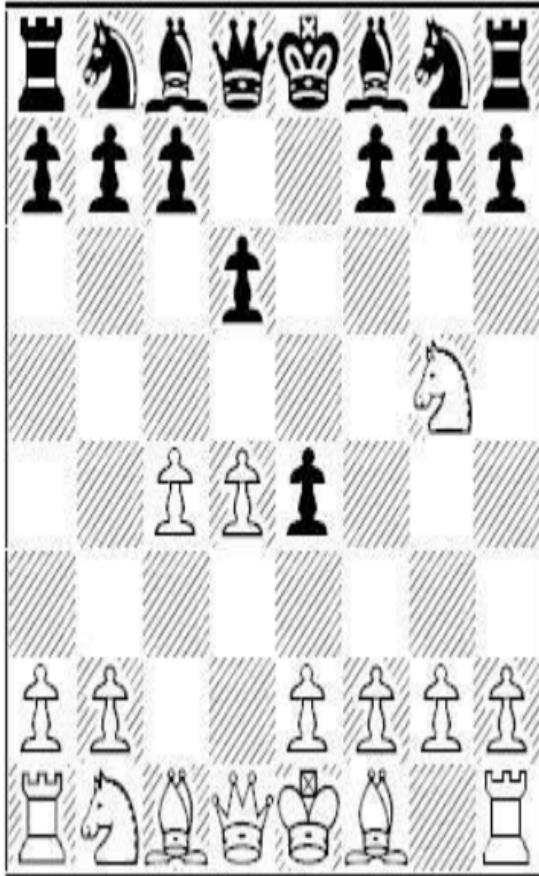
**Answer:** 3 Nf3, designed to provoke, taunts us forward in what is considered White's main line, and our biggest theoretical challenge.

**Question:** So should we chase his knight or play 3 ... Nd7?

**3 ... e4**

**Answer:** Let's get ambitious and make White pay for taunting us! Rarely does Black attempt to grab space and initiative so early in any chess opening. Statistics prove we can get away with just such an outrage.

**4 Ng5**



The most popular move in the position. White moves his knight over and over.

**Question:** But to what purpose?

**Answer:** Perhaps in the hope of overextending Black, who often goes bonkers with ... h6 and ... g5. Keep in mind, though, sometimes Black goes bonkers and mates! The knight usually gets kicked back to h3 and from there it goes to f4 or even to f2 after playing f3.

Later in the chapter we examine White's major alternatives 4 Nfd2 and 4 Ng1.

**4 ... f5**

**Question:** Are we in a Dutch now?

**Answer:** In a sense we are in a Dutch/Reversed French hybrid.

White must exert effort reining in his runaway knight on g5.

**Question:** Can we also cover our advanced e-pawn with pieces?

**Answer:** We can, but White gets an advantage in a line like 4 ... Nf6 5 Nc3 Bf5 6 g4!. Black doesn't do well in this position, so it's best to back up our e4-point with our f-pawn.

## 5 Nc3

Alternatively:

a) 5 g3 Be7 6 Nh3 (White wants to avoid any sort of h4 weakening) 6 ... Nf6 7 Bg2 c6! (time to bulk up the centre) 8 0-0 (he can try 8 d5 at the cost of handing over e5 to a

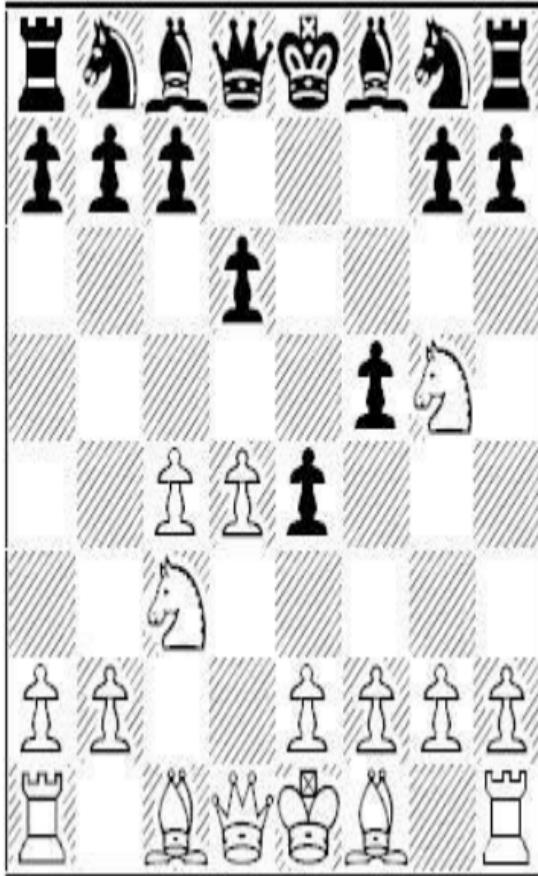
black knight) 8 ... Nbd7 9 f3 Nb6! 10 b3 d5 11 a4 Be6 12 Ng5 Bd7! 13 fxe4 fxe4 14 c5 Nc8 15 b4 h6 16 Nh3 g5! (good judgment: denying White the use of f4 and gaining space is more important than the potential weakening of his kingside) 17 Nc3 Be6 18 Nf2 Bf8! 19 b5 Bg7 20 a5 a6 21 bxc6 bxc6 22 Qa4 Na7!, A.Rakhmanov-V.Bologan, Dagomys 2010. I prefer Black, who is ready to plug up the queenside with ... Nb5. Meanwhile, he retains bad intentions on the other wing.

b) 5 Nh3 is a bit strange. The knight runs away even before being threatened. 5 ... Nf6 6 Nc3 c6 7 Bg5

(Of all the nerve! White steals our Pribyl plan from Chapter One, swapping his bad bishop before altering the structure.) 7 ... h6 8 Bxf6 Qxf6 9 Nf4 g5!? 10 Nh5 Qf7 11 e3 Na6 12 Be2 Be7 13 Qb3 Nc7 14 d5 cxd5 (14 ... Na6!? taking advantage of the new vacancy on c5 is also possible) 15 cxd5 0-0 16 h4 gxh4! 17 0-0-0 Bg5 18 Nf4 b5! 19 Bh5 (19 Bxb5 Nxb5 20 Qxb5 a5 offers Black compensation) 19 ... Qf6 with pleasant chaos, S.Palatnik-V.Anand, Rome 1990.

c) 5 h4? has been played a few times but is just a blunder: 5 ... h6 6 Nh3 Qxh4. Thanks! A free pawn.

d) 5 f3 Be7 6 Nh3 c6 7 Nc3 Nf6 8 Bg5 exf3 9 exf3 0-0 10 Be2 Na6,  
A.Anastasian-A.Minasian, Yerevan  
2011. White's extra space shouldn't  
worry Black much, who remains  
solid.



## 5 ... Be7

This move order is possibly inaccurate since it allows White a

trick next move. But there is an easy fix. Next game we look at 5 ... c6! which I believe is the most accurate move in the position. Two other options:

a) 5 ... Nf6 6 f3 h6 7 Nh3 g5 8 Nf2 Qe7 9 fxe4 fxe4 10 e3 Bg7 11 Be2 0-0 12 0-0 c6, G.Siegel-A.Sokolov, Viernheim 1995. It's not clear if that advanced e-pawn is a plus or a minus. As a French player I prefer White, but I would bet most of you would rather take Black.

b) 5 ... h6?! looks too radical. Black falls behind in development. After 6 Nh3 g5 7 Ng1 Bg7 8 h4 Be6 9 hxg5 hxg5 10 Rxh8 Bxh8 11 e3 g4

12 Qb3 b6 13 Nge2 I like White's game, which once again looks like a nice Reversed French, R.Hübner-H.Bohm, telex 1977.

## **6 Nh3**

IM Vladimir Barsky, in his book 1 d4 d6 A Universal Weapon, doesn't mention the clever trick 6 Nd5! which exploits Black's last move. White targets both the e7-bishop and c7. R.Koehler-A.Skripchenko, German League 2010, continued 6 ... Bxg5!? 7 Bxg5 Qxg5 8 Nxc7+ Kd8 9 Nxa8 e3. Of course Rybka says Black is dead here. I'm not so sure, but I would definitely avoid this as Black. You don't have to

take the nuclear option and can bail out with 6 ... c6 7 Nxe7 Qxe7. However, you do give up the bishop pair in this chicken version.

## **6 ... Nf6 7 g3**

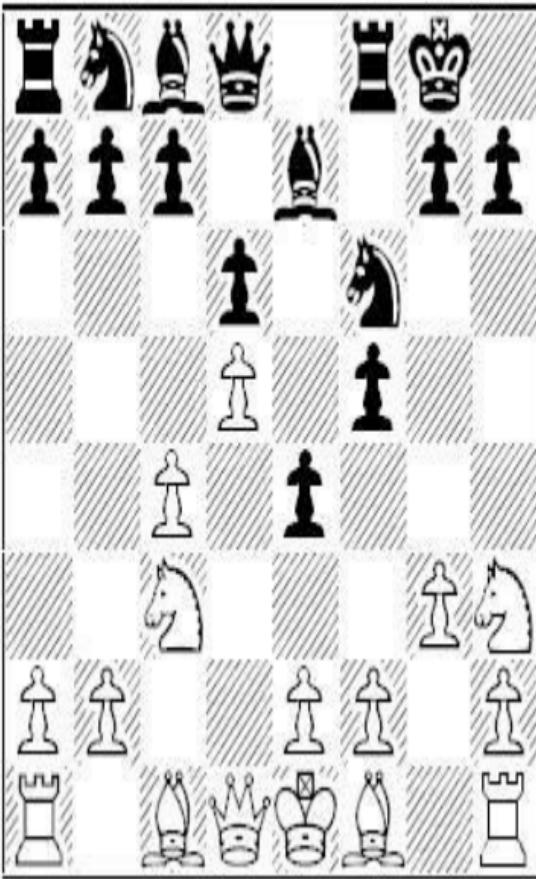
White can also take a pure Reversed French route with 7 e3 0-0 8 Be2 c6 and now:

a) 9 0-0 Na6! (heading for c7, the ideal square to support d5) 10 f3 Nc7 11 fxe4 fxe4 12 Nf4 d5 13 cxd5 cxd5 14 Bd2 Bd7! (heading for the ideal square on c6) 15 Qb3 Bc6 16 Be1 Qd7 17 Bg3, S.Polgar-V.Hort, Biel 1987. White gets no more than equality since it's difficult to add any more pressure to d5.

b) 9 d5 Nbd7 10 b3 Ne5 11 Bb2 a5 12 dx<sub>c</sub>6 bx<sub>c</sub>6 13 c5, E.Bareev-V.Bologan, Ajaccio (rapid) 2006. Now Black should play 13 ... Qc7 14 cx<sub>d</sub>6 Bx<sub>d</sub>6. I prefer Black here:

1. He has kingside space and a near certain kingside attack.
2. A piece may later land on d3.
3. White, in turn, works on the target on c6, and holes on c4 and c5.

**7 ... 0-0 8 d5**



**Question:** Why the unprovoked push? White's last move doesn't even gain a tempo by

hitting a knight at c6.

**Answer:** It's a trade-off:

1. White, a bit annoyed at Black's unbridled aggression, attempts to neutralize Black's territorial advantage by staking out some for himself.

2. White eyes the e6-square, with its potential for line opening sacs with Nf4 and Ne6.

3. White gives up e5 and allows Black's knight there.

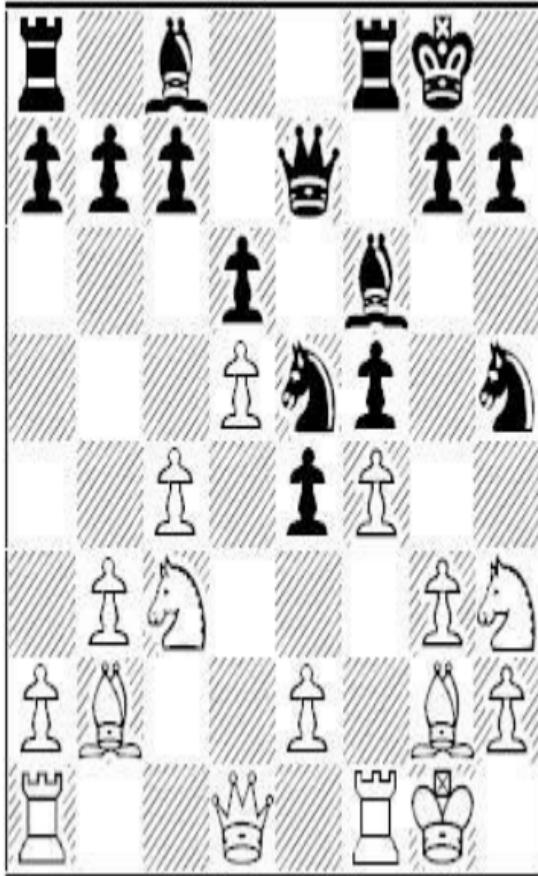
**8 ... Nbd7 9 Bg2 Ne5 10 b3**

**Nh5!**

Multipurpose: Black makes it rather difficult for a white knight to get to e6. Black also clears f6 to

allow his bishop access to the a1-h8 diagonal. One point of Black's idea is that 11 Nf4 Nxf4 12 Bxf4 Bf6 lures White's bishop off the long diagonal. I already prefer Black.

**11 0-0 Bf6 12 Bb2 Qe7 13 f4?**



## **Exercise (combination alert):**

It's understandable that  
White desires to stake out some

kingside space before Black can get anything going there. Yet his last move is a blunder. Why?

**Answer: 13 ... exf3 14 exf3 Nxc4!**

Opening up a double attack shot on e3.

**15 bxc4**

No choice since 15 Re1?? Nxb2 adds to White's misery by giving up all the dark squares.

**15 ... Bxc3 16 Bxc3 Qe3+ 17 Kh1 Qxc3 18 Rc1 Qa5 19 c5!**

White's position is close to freefall. His last move is a good practical attempt to disrupt the

smooth flow of Black's game.

**19 ... dxc5 20 d6 Nf6 21**

**Qb3+ Kh8 22 Ng5 h6**

There is no reason to enter the more adventurous 22 ... cxd6!? 23 Nf7+ Rxf7 24 Qxf7 Bd7 with three pawns for the exchange.

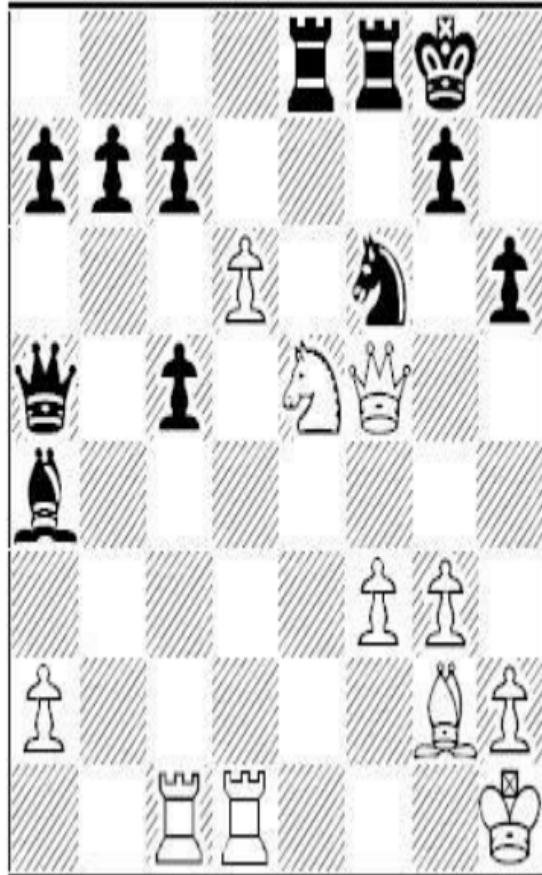
**23 Nf7+ Kh7 24 Rfd1 Bd7?!**

Eyeing a4. Black's last move wasn't the best. He can put his opponent away immediately with 24 ... Qb4! 25 Qxb4 (avoiding the queen swap is also hopeless) 25 ... cxb4 26 Rxc7 Nd7! (the stray knight on f7 is in mortal danger) 27 Rdc1 Kg8.

**25 Ne5 Ba4 26 Qe6 Rae8?!**

He should take the exchange immediately.

**27 Qxf5+ Kg8**



Black over-finessed and mistakenly assumed the exchange wasn't going anywhere.

### **Exercise (combination alert):**

White's position, in desperate need of

a catalyst, gets a boost. Find a way for White to achieve such an infusion.

### **Answer: 28 Bf1!**

He begins his own light-square assault with a deadly threat of checking on c4. A couple of false paths for White:

- a) 28 Rd3?? Nd7! winning a piece.
- b) 28 Re1? cxd6 29 Nd3 Bc6 and

Black stands two clean pawns up.

## **28 ... Rxe5**

Forced. Black avoids two inferior paths:

a) 28 ... Bxd1?? 29 Bc4+ Kh8 30

Ng6+ Kh7 31 Nxf8+ Kh8 32 Qh7+!  
Nxh7 33 Ng6 mate.

b) 28 ... b5? 29 Nc6 Qb6 30

Ne7+ Kh8 31 Ng6+ Kg8 32 Nxf8  
Bxd1 33 Rxd1 Rxf8 34 dxc7 Qxc7 35  
Bxb5 and White's grip on the light  
squares gives him the advantage.

## **29 Qxe5 Bxd1 30 Rxd1 cxd6**

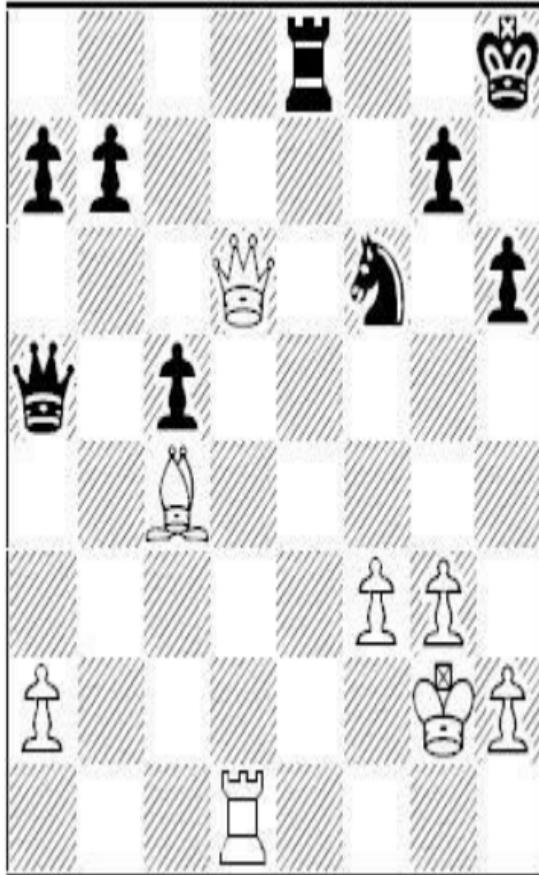
## **31 Qxd6**

Suddenly, Black's mop up is not so easy. He is only up one pawn and his light squares are weak.

**31 ... Re8 32 Bc4+?!**

White pays for this inaccuracy later with his a-pawn. He should play 32 Rc1! b6 33 Bc4+.

**32 ... Kh8 33 Kg2**



**Exercise:** Find a forcing line which either picks off the a2-pawn or gives Black a

winning attack.

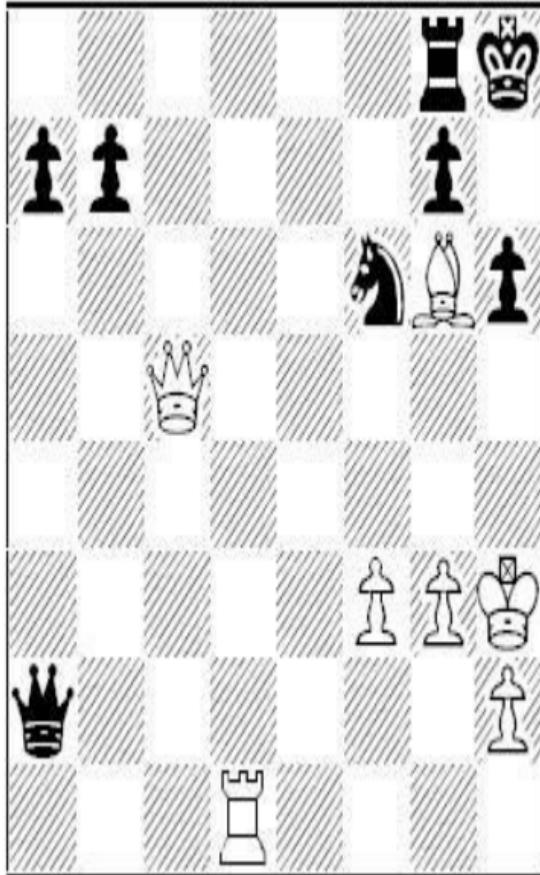
**Answer: 33 ... Qc3! 34 Bd3**

White now realized 34 Bb3?? loses to 34 ... Re2+ 35 Kh3 c4 36 Ba4 Qxf3.

**34 ... Qb2+ 35 Kh3 Qxa2 36 Bg6**

Making Black very nervous about his back rank.

**36 ... Rg8 37 Qxc5**



An assessment:

1. Black is up a pawn.
2. Black has two connected

passed pawns on the queenside.

3. White's bishop outguns Black's knight since it rules the light squares.

4. Black must be careful on his back rank.

5. White's domination of the light squares ties Black's pieces down. For example, his rook can't leave the back rank and his knight must be vigilant of mates on h7.

6. Black's passive pieces make it very tough for him to efficiently roll his passed pawns up the board without danger of dropping one or both of them.

7. White's king remains safe for

now, chiefly due to Black's passivity.

Conclusion: It's not so easy for Black to convert his extra pawn.

**37 ... Qe2 38 Rd3 Qf1+ 39**

**Kh4**

Taunting Black, who wishes dearly he had ... g5+.

**39 ... Qe2 40 Kh3 Qf1+ 41**

**Kh4**

Watching White's king shuttle between h3 and h4, I am reminded of my own sad parallel parking skills. White's tyres are up on the curb on h4.

**41 ... Qg2!**

A little progress. White's king is

far less secure on h4 since he must watch out for ... g5 tricks which would mate him if Black found a way to break the blockade on g6.

### **42 h3 b6 43 Qd4?**

Black would have had a rough time winning after the more accurate 43 Qe3!.

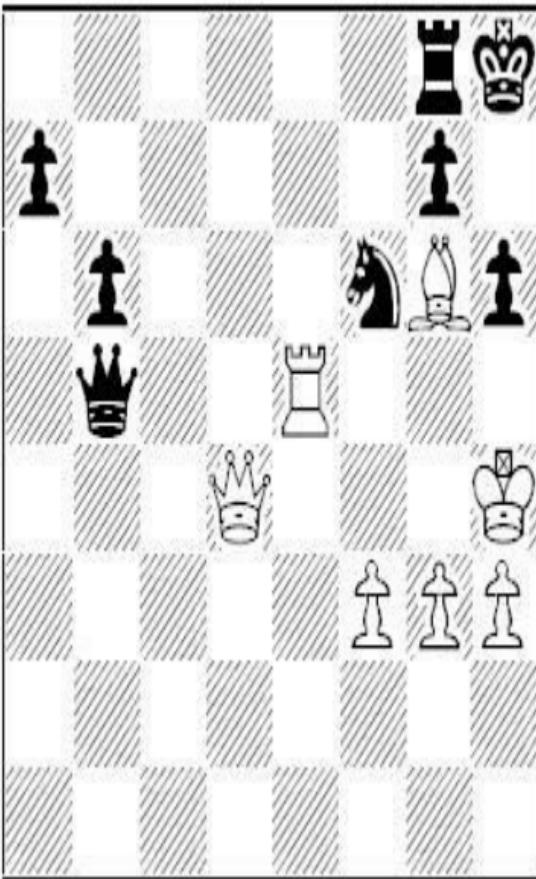
### **43 ... Qe2!**

Threat: ... Qe7!

### **44 Re3 Qb5!**

Threat: ... Qg5 mate!

### **45 Re5?**



Sometimes logic finds itself at odds with the world around it. Black has at his disposal a totally illogical-

looking move, which, when examined deeper, is airtight in its logic.

### **Exercise (combination alert):**

Prepare yourself and

find Black's mind-blowing combination.

Alternatives to 45 Re5 also leave White busted. For example:

a) 45 f4? Qh5+!! 46 Bxh5 g5+ 47 fxg5 hxg5 mate!

b) 45 Qe5! Qxe5 46 Rxe5 is White's best line since he can continue resistance.

### **Answer: 45 ... Qb1!!**

My hat off to any reader who found this visually stunning move!

When I first went over the game I thought for a second that Black's move was a typo.

## **46 Re4**

No choice since 46 Bxb1?? g5+ 47 Rxg5 hxg5 is mate.

## **46 ... Nxe4 47 Bxe4 Qb5**

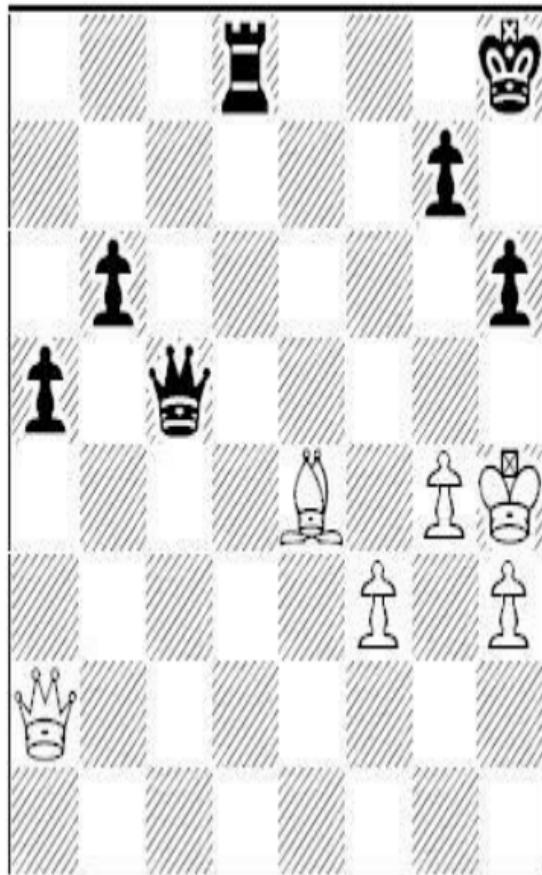
Relentless. Back to the mate threat on g5.

## **48 g4**

Or 48 f4 Qc5 49 Qd7 g5+ 50 Kh5 gxf4+ 51 Kxh6 Qg5 mate! The king leads the charge, but are you a leader if nobody is behind you? 51 Bf5 Qxf5+! 52 Qxf5 Rg5+ 53 Qxg5 hxg5 is also quite rough for White who loses the king and pawn

ending.

**48 ... Qc5 49 Qd7 a5 50 Qe6  
Rd8 51 Qa2**



Black is of course winning, yet we all know from personal experience that such positions are sometimes botched.

**Exercise (planning):** Come up with an attacking plan for Black which maximizes the pressure on White's king.

**Answer:** Step 1: The first principle of a king hunt: Don't mindlessly check the hunted king to safety. Instead, cut off escape routes.

## **51 ... Qe5!**

Barricading a departure via g3.

## **52 Qc4**

Step 2: Roll the queenside

passers to distract the defenders, making it harder to defend White's king.

**52 ... b5 53 Qa2 b4 54 Qc4**

Step 3: Back up the passed b-pawn with a rook, conveniently defended by Black's killer queen on e5.

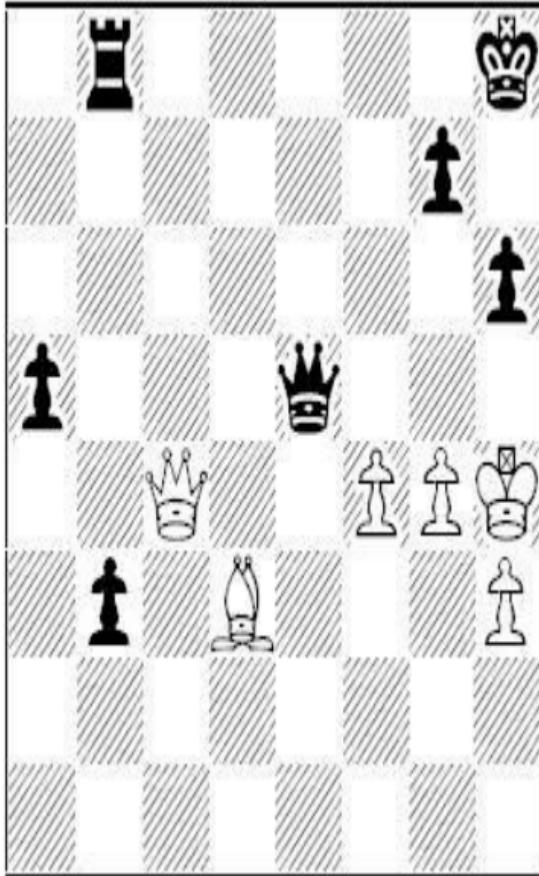
**54 ... Rb8 55 Bd3**

Preparing the disruptive f4. At last, Black's pressure has managed to lure that hated blockading bishop away from g6.

**55 ... b3**

The simplest. Other moves like the pawn check on g5 also win.

**56 f4**



**Exercise (combination alert):**  
Destroy the protective cocoon  
around White's king and simplify

to an easy win.

**Answer: 56 ... Qxf4! 0-1**

A man with a license to shill!  
There it is again, that nasty ... g5+ idea.

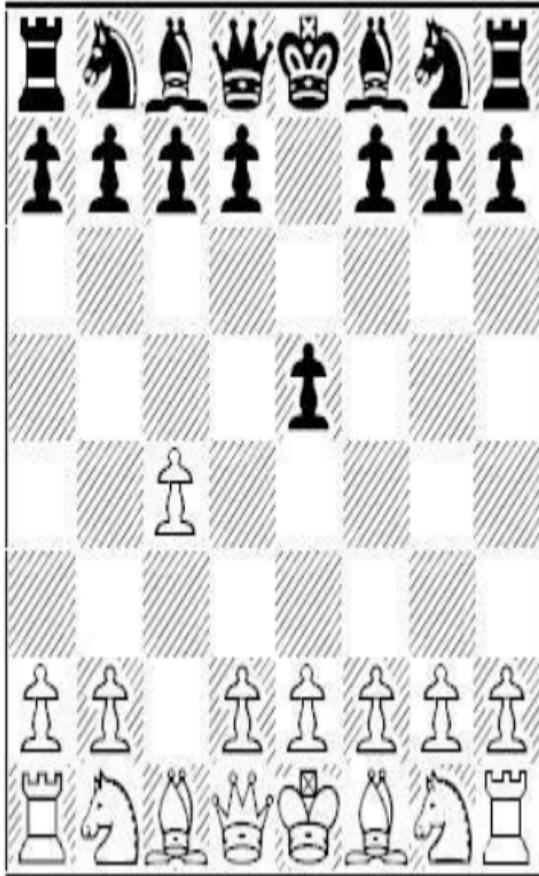
**Summary:** My feeling is that Black should be able to equalize in the 4 Ng5 line simply because White moves his knight repeatedly, with no visible gain except the hope of overextension from Black's side. Remember to steer clear of the 5 ... Be7?! move order and substitute it with 5 ... c6! which allows us to avoid White's dirty trick 6 Nd5!.

Game 38

**B.Gulko-N.Short**

Elenite 1995

**1 c4 e5**



**Question:** Why don't you doctor  
the move  
orders to fit the lines in your

books?

**Answer:** I believe chess writers who do this too often make a mistake. The reader must learn to avoid getting confused by different move orders. The only way to learn is to be shown the various orders as they are, over the board. In the heat of battle your opponent isn't going to tap you on the shoulder and tell you that you have just been tricked into another opening. In essence, the doctored move orders are like training wheels on a child's bicycle. One day we must remove them to learn to ride the bike with the big kids.

**2 Nc3 d6 3 Nf3 f5 4 d4 e4**

There we go, back to our position. The opening moments of a chess game sometimes remind me of classical musicians tuning their instruments. We hear the atonal, random notes forming their own music. That part of the game is over. Now the symphony begins.

**5 Ng5 c6!**

As mentioned last game, this may be Black's most accurate move order. We leave open the ... Be7 possibility without allowing any annoying Nd5 tricks.

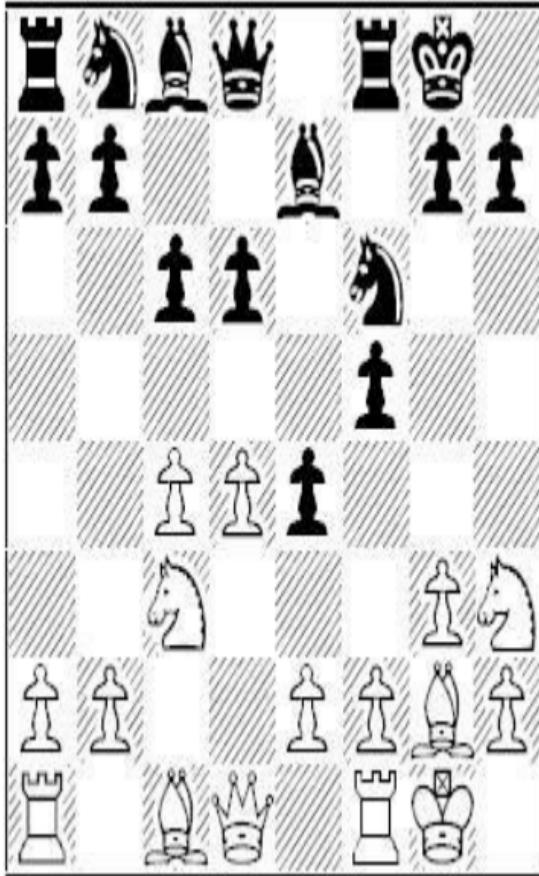
**6 g3 Be7 7 Nh3**

**Question:** Why not back up the

knight with 7 h4?

**Answer:** It's playable but not best. The trouble with that plan is when White later plays f3, the g3-square gets weakened. 7 ... Nf6 8 Bg2 0-0 9 0-0 Na6 10 a3 Nc7 11 b4 d5 is advantage Black, R.Krasiewicz-L.Cybrowski, Chojnice 2006. White is reluctant to play f3 since it weakens his king. But if not f3, then what is his plan?

**7 ... Nf6 8 Bg2 0-0 9 0-0**



**Exercise (planning):** Come up with the best development scheme for Black.

## **Answer: 9 ... Na6!**

Remember this plan, which is typical for Black in our line:

Step 1: Black desires ... d5. To do so he needs to back it up with ... Nc7.

Step 2: Once he gets in ... d5 and stabilizes the position, the knight heads for e6 where it helps engineer the ... f4 break and also prepares for an assault on White's king.

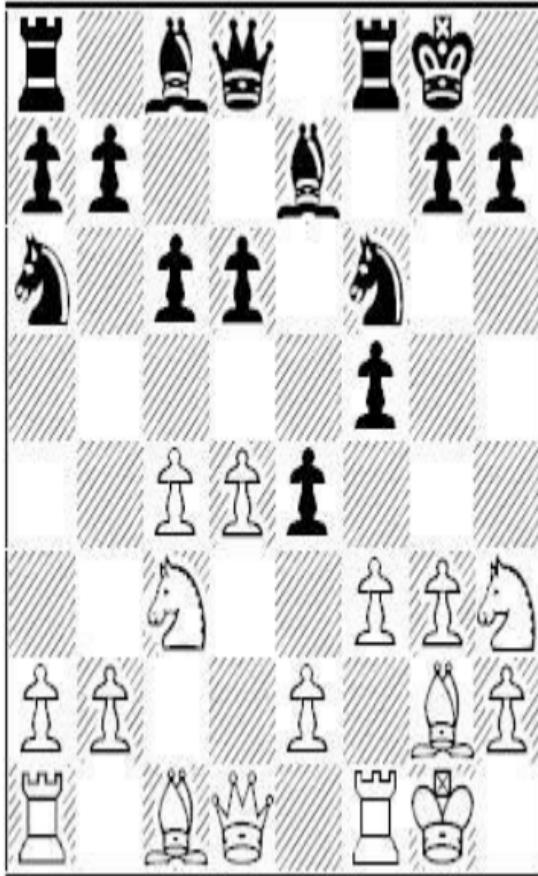
**Question:** What if White messes up this plan by tossing in d5 before Black can play ... d5 himself?

**Answer:** That is the plan Gulko

tried in this game. In this case Black's knight still heads for c7 where it serves three purposes: it covers the sensitive e6-square from White knight invasions, prepares queenside counterplay with the ... b5 break and adds heat to White's d5-pawn.

## **10 f3**

10 d5 Nc7 11 f3 cxd5 12 cxd5 b5! 13 a3 exf3 14 exf3 a5 15 Qb3 was M.Sebenik-O.Biti, Nova Gorica 2003. Now Black can try 15 ... Nd7 16 Nf4 Nc5 17 Qc2 Bd7 with counterplay.



**10 ... exf3**

**Question:** Can Black get away with supporting the big centre with

10 ... d5?

**Answer:** It's tricky and he must play very accurately: 11 cxd5 cxd5 12 Qb3 Kh8! (Black should probably keep queens on the board; after 12 ... Qb6?! 13 Qxb6 axb6 14 Bg5 Black's big centre is more of a burden than a blessing in the ending, M.Illescas Cordoba-J.Lautier, Linares 1994) 13 Bg5 Nc7 14 Nf4 b6 15 Bxf6 Bxf6 16 e3 Bb7 stabilizing his centre with an approximately equal position.

### **11 exf3 Nc7**

Be careful about rushing in with ... d5. 11 ... d5 12 cxd5 Nxd5 13 Nf4 Nc7 (I would try 13 ... Nxf4 14

Bxf4 Bf6) 14 Qb3 Bf6 15 Rd1 Rf7 16 Nfxd5 Nxd5 17 Nxd5 Qxd5 18 Qxd5 cxd5 19 Bf4 Be6 20 Be5 left White with a nagging edge due to his control over e5 in L.Van Wely-M.Adams, Groningen 1995.

## 12 d5

**Question:** What should we do if White avoids d5

and simply plays for control over e6?

**Answer:** Fight for e6! 12 Nf4 Re8! 13 Re1 Bf8 14 Be3 g6 15 Qd2 Bg7 16 Rac1 Bd7 was D.Fuhrmann-J.Van der Wiel, German League 1997. White's slight space edge doesn't amount to much if he is

unwilling to go forward with d5. Meanwhile, Black can slowly prepare the ... b5 break if White refuses to take action.



**12 ... cxd5 13 cxd5**

**Question:** Why does White always recapture

with the pawn? Why not with the knight?

**Answer:** Recapturing with the knight violates the principle: Avoid trading if the opponent is cramped. On 13 Nxd5 the correct recapture is 13 ... Nfxd5 14 cxd5 because Black clears f6 to liberate his bishop and the c7-knight watches over e6, pressures d5 and helps prepare ... b5.

### **13 ... b5!**

We talked about this multipurpose plan earlier:

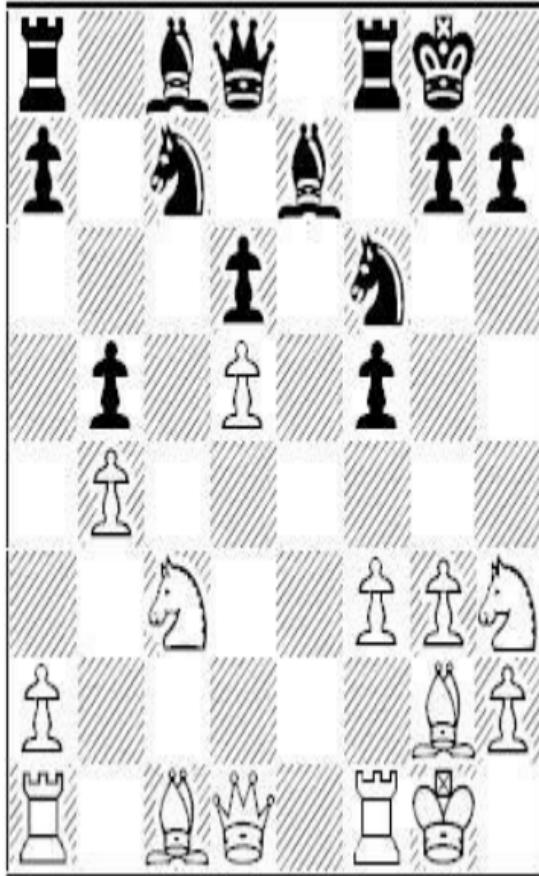
1. Black prepares to undermine White's knight, a defender of d5.
2. Black gains space and

generates queenside action.

3. ... Bb7 is in the air, adding more pressure to d5.

4. Black may try the disruptive plan ... a5, ... Ba6 and ... b4.

**14 b4**



Trying to put an end to Black's queenside counterplay.  
**Exercise:** Should Black play ...

a5, swapping White's b4-pawn?

This leaves an aftermath of isolated pawns for both sides.

**Answer:** Yes. Even though Black's b-pawn actually remains weaker than White's a-pawn, Black's pieces receive a compensating spike in activity on the queenside.

**14 ... a5! 15 Rb1 axb4 16 Rx<sub>b</sub>4 Bd7 17 a3 Na6 18 Rb1 Qc7 19 Qd4**

White gets tangled if he takes the bait with 19 Nxb5?! Qc5+ 20 Nd4 Nxd5 21 Bb2 Bf6.

**19 ... Qc5!**

Eliminating White's most active

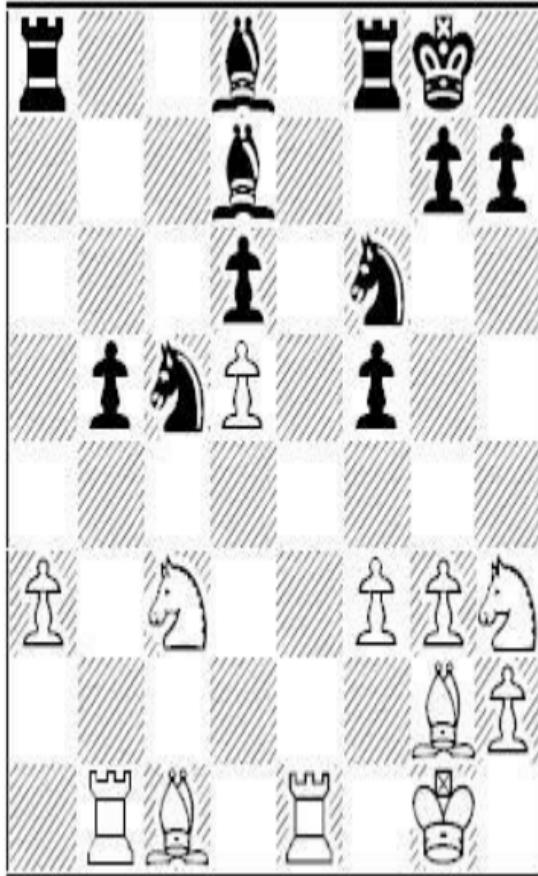
piece.

## **20 Qxc5 Nxc5 21 Re1**

It looks like things have gone wrong for Black, whose bishop and b-pawn are simultaneously attacked. But Short has seen deeply into the position and relied on his piece activity.

21 Nxb5?! is premature since Black regains the pawn with interest in the line 21 ... Rab8 22 Nc3 Rxb1 23 Nxb1 Nxd5.

## **21 ... Bd8**



**Exercise:** Should White take on  
b5 or not?  
**22 Nx b5?!**

**Answer:** No he shouldn't. White underestimates the force of Black's initiative. He should cover d3 with 22 Rd1.

**22 ... Nd3! 23 Rd1 Bb6+ 24 Kh1 Nxc1 25 Rdx<sub>c</sub>1 Bc5 26 Nf4?**

White should settle for the difficult ending after 26 Bf1 Bxb5 27 Bxb5 Rxa3.

**26 ... Be3! 27 Rc4 Bxb5 28 Rxb5 Rxa3 29 Rb1 Rfa8!**

Typically, Short goes for activity over the pawn grab 29 ... Bxf4 30 Rxf4 Nxd5 31 Rd4 Nc3 32 Re1 d5 33 f4 Ra5 which leaves Black a bit tied down to his extra d-pawn.

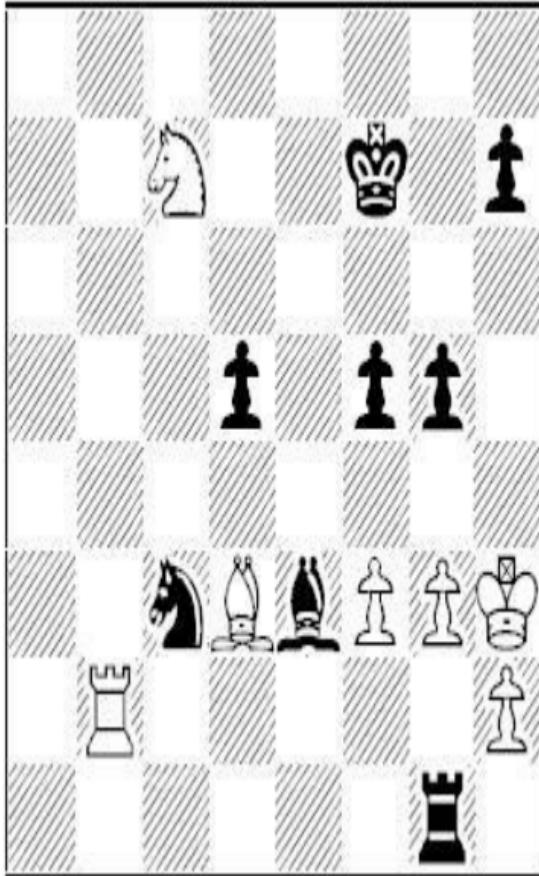
**30 Bf1 g5!**

As simple as that. Black wins d5 for nothing, all the while retaining his piece activity.

**31 Ne6 Nxd5 32 Rc2?!**

Gulko underestimates Black's attacking potential in the position. He should try to take pieces off the board with 32 Nc7.

**32 ... Ra1 33 Rcb2 Nc3 34 Rx<sub>a</sub>1 Rx<sub>a</sub>1 35 Kg2 Kf7 36 Nc7 d5 37 Bd3? Rg1+ 38 Kh3**



**Exercise (combination alert):**  
Short, probably by now in time pressure,

missed an immediate knockout.  
You have more time. Do you see it?

**38 ... Kf6?**

**Answer:** 38 ... Nd1! double attacks b2 and f2 and 39 Rc2 Nf2+ wins on the spot.

**39 f4**

A desperate attempt to free his king at the cost of another pawn.

**39 ... gxf4 40 gxf4**



The last move of the time control.  
**Exercise:** Should Black grab the

pawn on f4 or  
break the d3 blockade by  
playing 40 ... Rd1?

**40 ... Rd1?!**

**Answer:** Incorrect. Black should grab the f-pawn immediately with 40 ... Bxf4.

**41 Rb3!**

Setting a clever trap.

**41 ... Bd4**

Black reluctantly realizes he can't take the knight or win the f-pawn: 41 ... Rxd3? 42 Rxc3! Rxc3 43 Nxd5+ Ke6 44 Nxc3 Bxf4 leaves White with good drawing chances.

**42 Ba6 Kg6 43 Rb8 Bf6 44 Rb6 Ne4 45 Ne8 Rd2 46 Bc8**

## **h5?!**

This is an error which greatly endangers Black's win. He should have tried 46 ... Rb2 47 Rc6 Rb8 48 Nxf6 Nxf6.

## **47 Nd6!**

This swaps knights and makes Black sweat it out with opposite-coloured bishops and only a few pawns left on the board.

## **47 ... Nxd6 48 Rxd6 h4**



**Exercise:** White must decide on  
49 Be6 or 49 Bd7.  
Choose with care. One draws;

the other loses!

## **49 Be6?**

**Answer:** What a difference just one square makes. 49 Bd7! draws. For example, 49 ... d4 50 Be8+ Kg7 51 Rd7+ Kg8 52 Bf7+ Kf8 53 Bg6 Rd3+ 54 Kg2 h3+ 55 Kf1 Bh4 56 Rh7 Rf3+ 57 Ke2 Rxf4 58 Kd3 Kg8 59 Rh5 and Black's extra pawns begin to fall.

## **49 ... d4 50 Bd7**

I don't think so! Now Gulko spots the drawing idea and tries to pull a fast one by attempting a hasty do-over of his previous mistake. Short doesn't give him the chance.

**50 ... Re2!**

Halting the check on e8.

**51 Bc6 Re3+ 52 Kg2 h3+!**

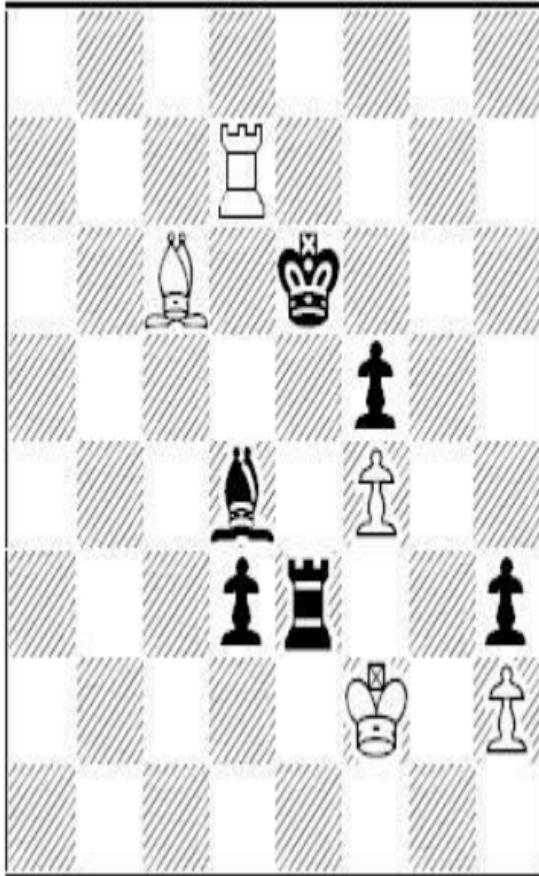
Fixing both h2 and f4 as targets  
for Black's bishop.

**53 Kf1 Kf7 54 Rd7+ Ke6**

Threat: ... Bh4 and ... Re8 mate!

**55 Rh7 d3 56 Kf2 Bd4 57**

**Rd7**



## **Exercise (combination alert):**

The players must be tiring.

Short missed another game-

ender. Can you find it?

**57 ... Bc5**

**Answer:** Short could have sent Gulko home with 57 ... Re4+! 58 Kf3 d2 59 Ba4 Re3+ 60 Kf2 d1Q! 61 Bxd1 Kxd7 which leaves Black up a rook.

**58 Rd8!**

Threat: cheapo on e8.

**58 ... Kf6 59 Kf1 Bb6 60 Rd6+ Ke7 61 Rd7+ Ke6 62 Rd5 Bc7!**

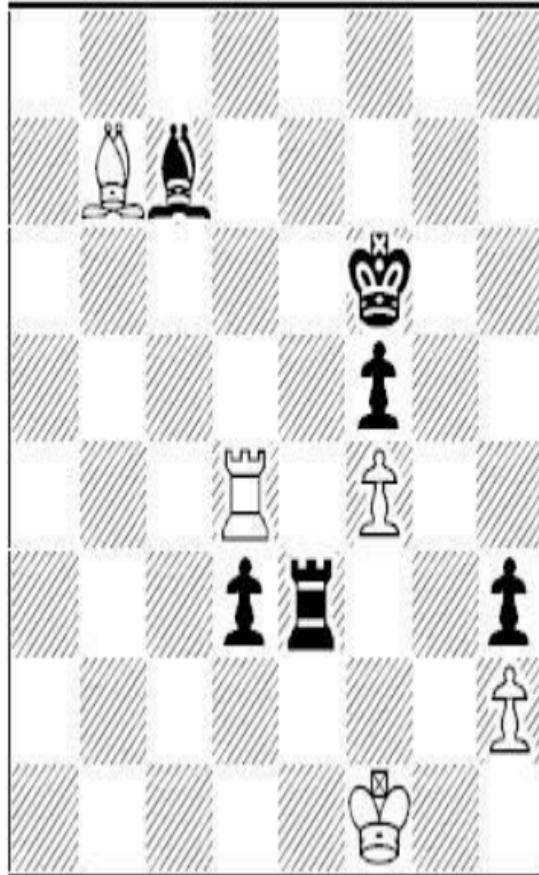
It's a treat to witness Short's technique from this point on. Step 1: Target f4.

**63 Rd4 Kf6!**

Step 2: Zugzwang! If 64 Bb5?

Rf3+ 65 Ke1 (65 Kg1 Bb6) 65 ...  
Ba5+ 66 Kd1 Rf1 mate!

## 64 Bb7



## **Exercise (combination alert):**

Step 3:

Black clears off a second pawn.

How?

**Answer:** By taking it!

**64 ... Bxf4! 65 Ba6**

The bishop can't be touched: 65

Rxf4?? d2 66 Rd4 Re1+ 67 Kf2 d1Q.

**65 ... Rf3+ 66 Ke1 Bxh2 67**

**Rxd3**

Well, at least it's something.

The hungry are thankful even for a scrap of food.

**67 ... Bg3+**

Clearing the way for the h-pawn.

**68 Ke2 Rf2+ 69 Ke3 h2 70**

**Rd1 f4+ 71 Kd3 Rb2!**

To stop Bb7.

**72 Bc4 Ke5!**

To stop Bd5.

**73 Kc3 Rg2!**

Getting White nervous about ...

Rg1 ideas.

**74 Rd5+ Ke4**

Effortless technique. Note how Short managed to clear the kingside of white pieces and now all one hears is the sound of crickets as Black's pawns march forward. Such endings are notoriously hard to handle since it's easy to get disoriented and play without a directional compass. The trick is to collect the disparate, random data

and then transform it into a cohesive plan.

**75 Rh5 f3 76 Bd5+ Ke3 77 Rh7 Be5+**

Just so Re7 won't come with an annoying check. The curtain finally goes down.

**78 Kc4 Rg1 0-1**

**Summary:** 5 ... c6 is Black's most accurate move order. Also, when White chooses the g3 plan, reply with ... c6, ... Na6 and ... Nc7, and go for ... d5 or ... b5.

Game 39

**Y.Seirawan-B.Larsen**

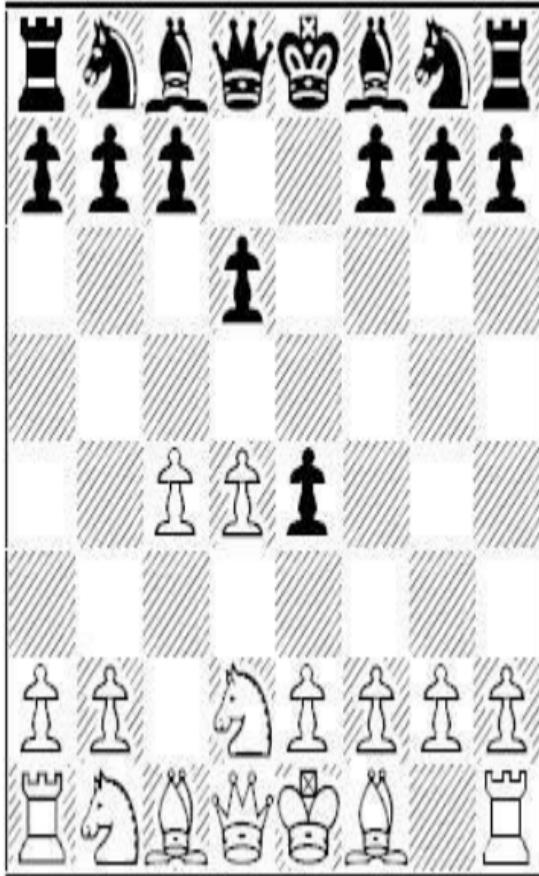
# America-Europe, Mar del Plata 1981

I met Yasser when we were both 15 years old at a Canadian Open in New Brunswick. We were both gifted prodigies: Yasser at a 2450 rating; me a shade behind at 1750 (but closing the gap fast!). I spent hours watching him play other masters at blitz. What struck me was that he had the Capablanca gift, winning his games without appreciable effort. Yasser, more than anything, desired to play like Nimzowitsch – or perhaps Larsen! Perhaps it's difficult to play against one's hero.

**1 c4 d6 2 d4**

We cover the pure English versus 1 ... d6 in Chapter Eight.

**2 ... e5 3 Nf3 e4 4 Nfd2**



Avoiding the adventures involved with the g5-square and playing it more like a French.

**4 ... f5**

**Question:** Can Black go with a piece-play plan with 4 ... Nf6?

**Answer:** Yes, but you must be willing to take on the following position: 5 Nc3 Bf5 6 g4! (ensuring the swap of a wing pawn for Black's central pawn) 6 ... Bxg4 7 Ndx e4. I prefer White, with his potential for greater central control.

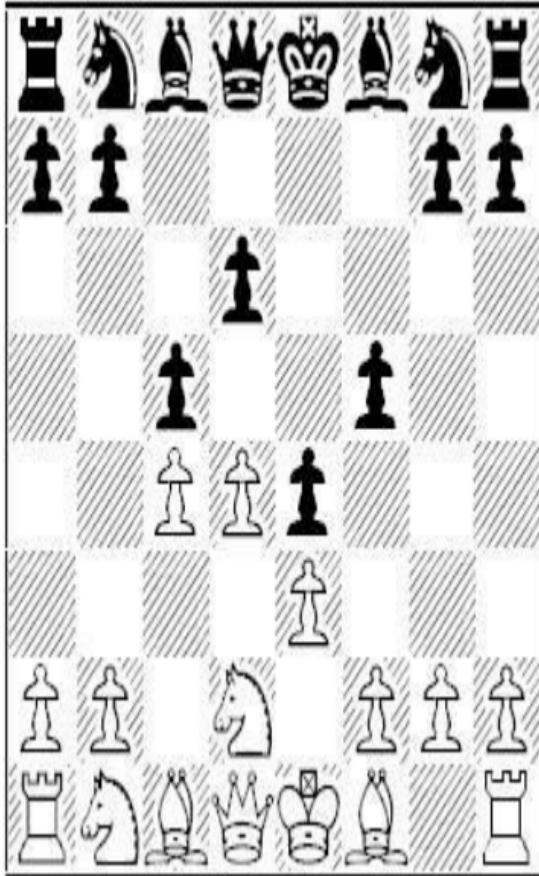
**5 e3**

**Question:** What if White lures us forward with 5 Nc3 Nf6 6 f3?

**Answer:** Get lured! 6 ... e3!? 7 Nb3 f4 8 g3 g5 (Black is in too deeply to back down now) 9 Rg1 (9 h4? Nh5! favours Black) 9 ... Bh6 10

d5. Rybka claims that this is even, while I claim Black has a bind due to his pincers on f4 and e3! Pick who you believe.

**5 ... c5!**



I believe Larsen's rare move, an idea borrowed from the King's Indian Attack versus the French, is

the strongest in the position and offers Black equality at a minimum.

**Question:** What is Black's idea behind 5 ... c5?

**Answer:** 5 ... c5 is multipurpose:

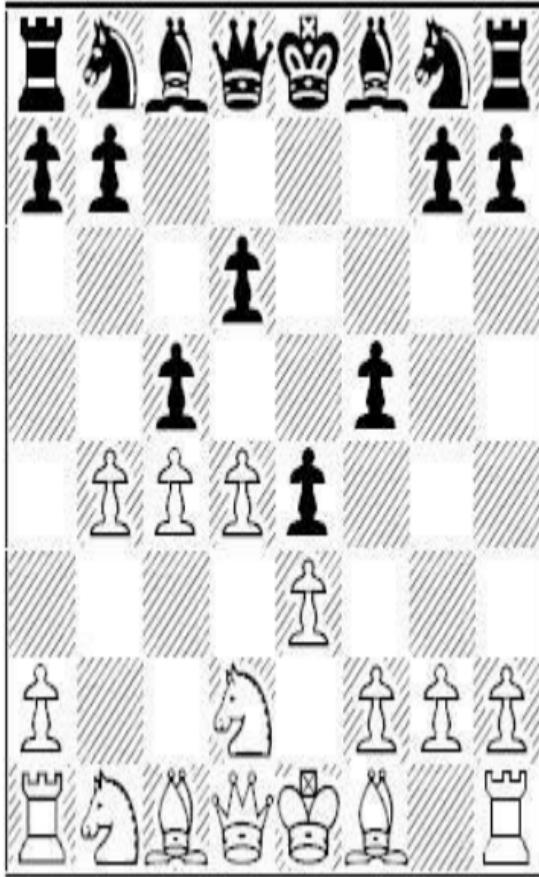
1. Black increases pressure on d4.

2. He leaves open the possibility of ... cxd4 and when White recaptures with his e-pawn, Black may get the superior pawn majority.

3. If White retains central tension with Nb3, Black simply plays ... b6! misplacing the b3-knight.

4. If White pushes his d-pawn to d5, this hands Black the tasty e5-square.

**6 b4!?**



The Benko Gambit line of the Pribyl/Wade/Rat? If a mad scientist were to clone a couple of copies of

Nimzowitsch from old DNA and then have the Nimzos play each other, this is what the game would look like. 6 b4 is a radical attempt to resolve the central tension. It is perhaps the only logical way to play for a win when compared to alternatives. Even so, the objective evaluation doesn't change. Black still looks good after Larsen's response. Alternatively:

a) 6 Nb3 Nc6 7 Be2 Nf6 8 Nc3 Be7! (not fearing an ending where Black's extra space is meaningful) 9 0-0 0-0 10 f3 b6 11 Bd2 a5 12 fxe4 a4 13 Nc1, S.Agdestein-A.Khalifman, Narva 1998. I like

Black's super-active position after  
13 ... cxd4 14 exd4 Nxe4.

b) 6 d5?! (conceding e5, just what Black wants) 6 ... Nd7 7 Nc3 Ngf6 8 f3 (after 8 Be2 Ne5 9 0-0 g6 I already prefer Black, who can look forward to a future kingside attack, J.Beutelhoff-E.Porper, Badenweiler 1990) 8 ... exf3 9 Nxf3 g6 10 Bd3 Bg7 11 0-0 0-0 12 e4 fxe4 13 Nxe4 Nxe4 14 Bxe4 Ne5 and Black stands a shade better due to his control over e5, "grobdeg"-C.Lakdawala, Internet blitz 2011.

c) 6 f4!? cxd4 (6 ... Nf6 looks at least equal for Black) 7 exd4 Nf6 8 Be2 Be7 (8 ... d5!) 9 Nc3 0-0 10 d5

Na6 11 Nb3 Nc5 12 Nxc5 dxc5,  
V.Tichy-J.Trapl, Czech League 2001.

Both sides are happy with their passer, but Black a bit happier since he has equalized effortlessly.

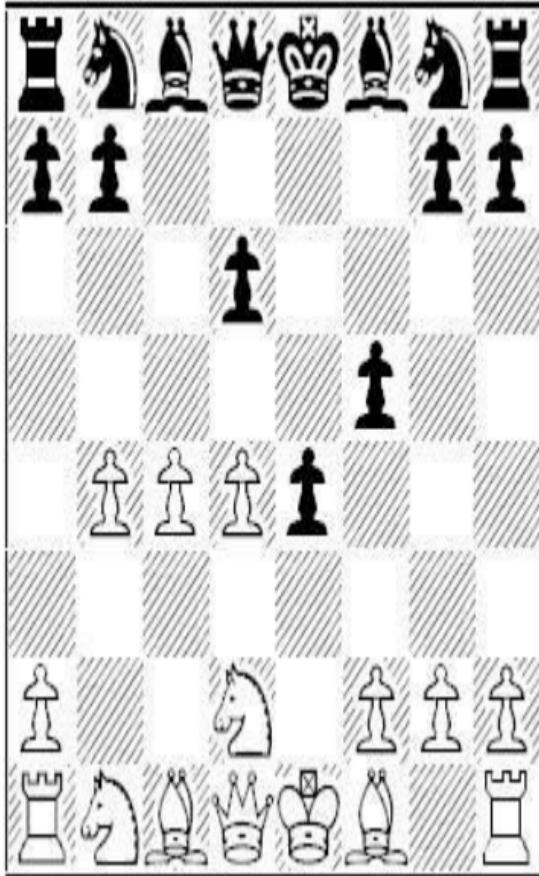
## **6 ... cxd4!**

Terrific positional judgment.

**Question:** Was 6 ... cxb4 a poisoned pawn?

**Answer:** No, White just gets file pressure for the pawn, similar to Benko Gambit, after 7 Qa4+ Nc6 8 a3 Bd7 9 Qb3 a5 10 axb4 Nxb4 11 Nc3 and Ba3 next.

## **7 exd4**



Each side has four-to-three pawn majorities. But not all majorities are equal.

**Question:** So you prefer Black?

**Answer:** Yes. Here is why:

1. When Black plays ... d5 he also seizes a huge tract of central space.

2. White's king situation is tenuous at best:

a) If White castles kingside his king faces an attack.

b) If White castles queenside his king faces an attack!

**7 ... Nf6 8 Nb3**

**Question:** What if White plays 8 d5 here or during

the next few moves to prevent ... d5?

**Answer:** That solves one problem but may create another since it hands over e5 to Black's pieces. Still, I don't like the position White got in the game so maybe your suggestion is best.

**8 ... Be7 9 Be2 0-0**

I would play the immediate 9 ... d5.

**10 Be3 Na6**

Very Nimzowitschian, but maybe he should get on with it and play 10 ... d5!.

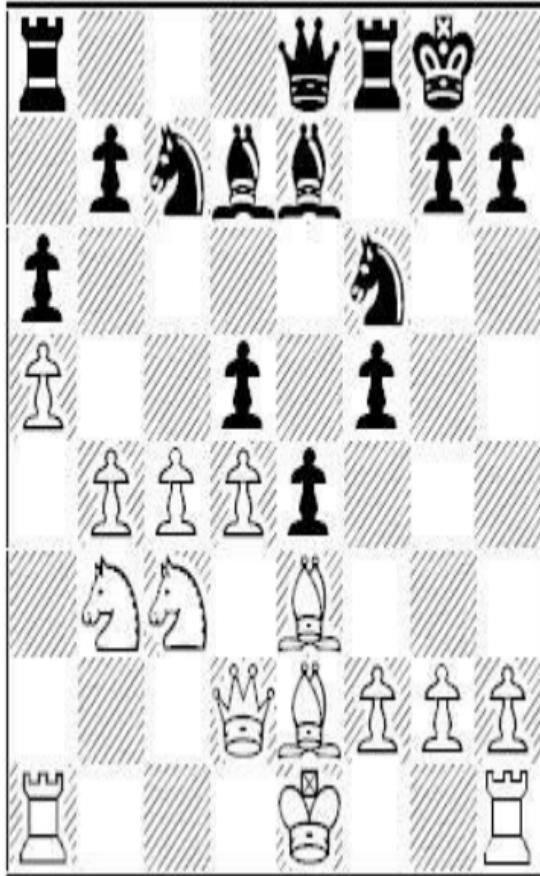
**11 Qd2 Qe8 12 a3**

If 12 d5 Nh5!.

**12 ... Nc7 13 Nc3 Bd7 14 a4  
a6**

As I mentioned earlier, White should probably have tossed in d5 while Black should have played ... d5 also!

**15 a5 d5**



At last!

**Exercise (critical decision):**

Should White

occupy c5 with a pawn or with a piece?

**16 c5?!**

**Answer:** I think this move may be the seed of White's future troubles. Black's kingside pawn majority, with its superior expansion possibilities, clearly outshines White's in the ensuing position. 16 Nc5! was correct, with an unclear position.

**16 ... Ne6 17 g3 Bd8!**

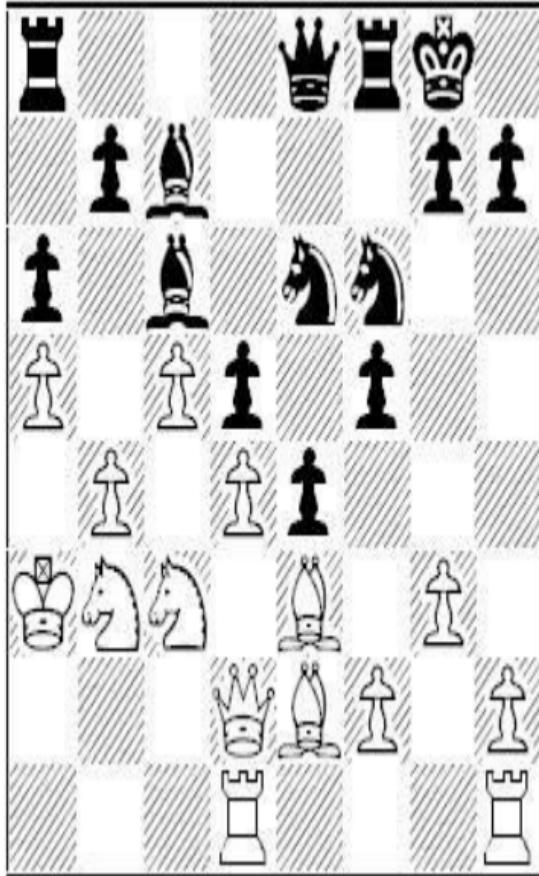
Black would love to force the ... f4 pawn break by redeploying his bishop to c7.

**18 0-0-0!**

A good decision. His king would get pried open on the other side.

**18 ... Bc7 19 Kb2 Bc6 20**

**Ka3!**



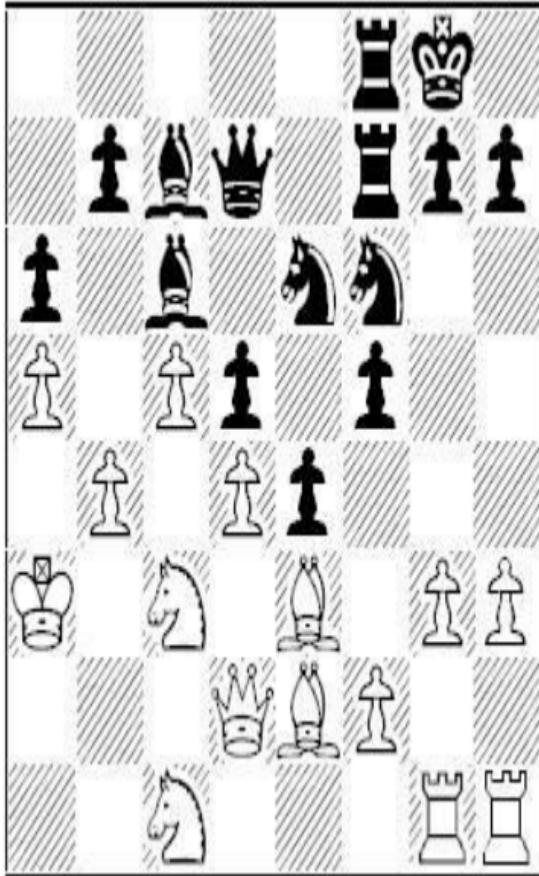
It looks like White can do nothing but wait around while Black engineers ... f4. Seirawan refuses to

wait idly and finds a subtle path to improve his position. Any position, even a bad one, can be gradually improved by absorbing the subtleties. White's last move opens up a few options. White hopes for future counterplay by playing for the b5 pawn break. If Black's queen moves from e8, White also may play Na4 and then sink into b6. Or, White may play Bd1 and force Na4.

**20 ... Qd7 21 h3 Rf7!**

Black continues his single-minded ... f4 quest.

**22 Nc1 Raf8 23 Rdg1**



He prepares to seize the open g-file if Black persists in the ... f4 plan.

**Question:** Should Black shy away from the ... f4 plan?

White may get the attack if Black gives his rooks the open g-file.

**Answer:** It's a bluff. White's kingside attack down the g-file is an optical illusion. Black not only has more central space but also more pieces on the kingside. These two factors minimize the danger from any attacking ideas by White.

### **23 ... Ne8**

Black clears the way for the rooks to slam in ... f4.

### **24 h4 Nf6**

Black dismisses ... f4 the way a

fisherman tosses an inedible fish back into the ocean.

**Question:** Isn't this aimless play from Black?

He is moving back and forth. How about nowish as a time to take action and do something – anything!?

**Answer:** Not at all. I admit that Black looks like he moves forward on a journey to nowhere, but keep in mind that the greatest positional players are always supremely patient. It's perfectly okay to tuck about and waste time if you deem that the opponent can't improve his position in the meantime. White

weakened g4 so the knight goes back. Also, Larsen may not have liked the line 24 ... f4 25 gxf4 Nxf4 26 Bg4.

## **25 Bd1!**

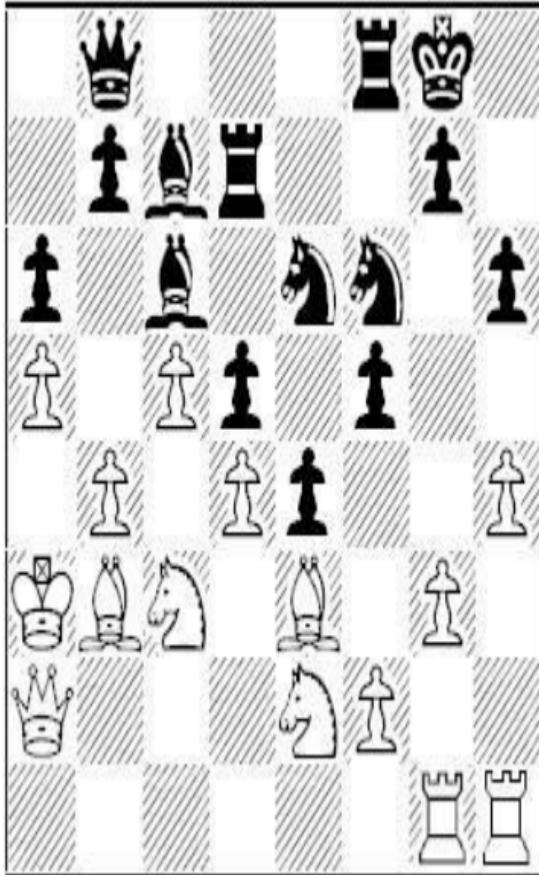
Idea: Bb3, N1e2 (making it more difficult for Black to jam in ... f4), and Qa2, tying Black down to the d5-pawn.

## **25 ... Qd8**

Larsen is in no hurry and seeks to discover what Seirawan is up to. He clears d7 for his rook.

## **26 Bb3 Rd7 27 N1e2 Qb8 28 Qa2 h6!?**

The risky option: play for ... g5.



**29 Rf1**

**Question:** Doesn't 29 h5 stop this plan?

**Answer:** It does, but at the cost of creating a weakness on that very square. Black may later load up by manoeuvring his bishop to f7 and a queen to e8. Then he will patiently work in the ... f4 break.

## **29 ... Kh7 30 f3!?**

Human beings are capable of achieving the remarkable in every field of endeavour except one: we have never been able to achieve perfection in the ability to patiently wait when under pressure! But who can blame us? Here, Seirawan pounces on a chance to muck it up. Unwarranted activity is often the grim reaper of passive positions.

But as I mentioned earlier, who among us wants to sit around at the whim of the opponent, who may or may not play ... f4 at his choosing? The fabric of the position lies in a delicate but unequal balance of power. Any disturbance strains the uneasy accord and now the game erupts.

### **30 ... Bxg3!**

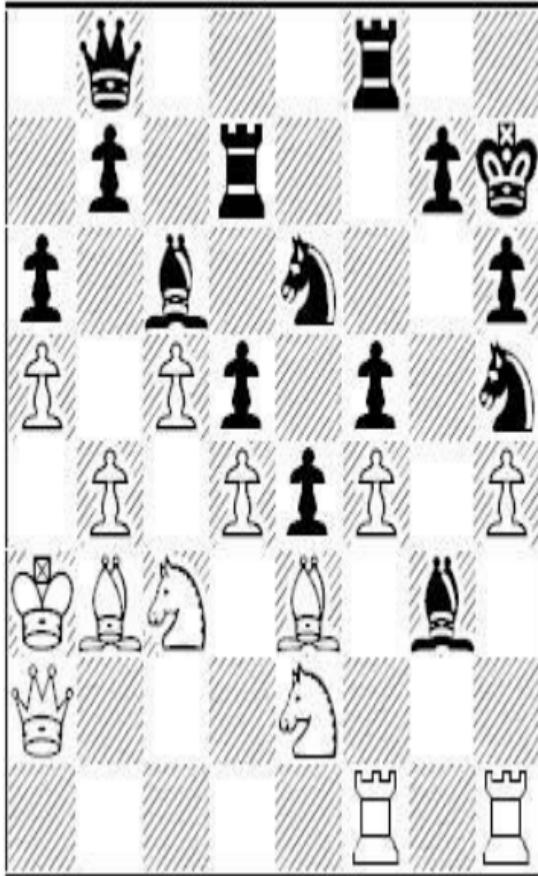
Accepting the challenge.

### **31 f4!**

Slamming the door shut in the bishop's face. Black must be very confident in his calculation abilities to enter such a line. One error and the g3-bishop perishes.

## **31 ... Nh5!**

Superior to 31 ... Ng4 32 Bg1 (32 Bc1? Bf2 wins the d4 pawn) 32 ... Bxf4 33 Nxd5 when White's central pawns look every bit as dangerous as Black's passers on the kingside.



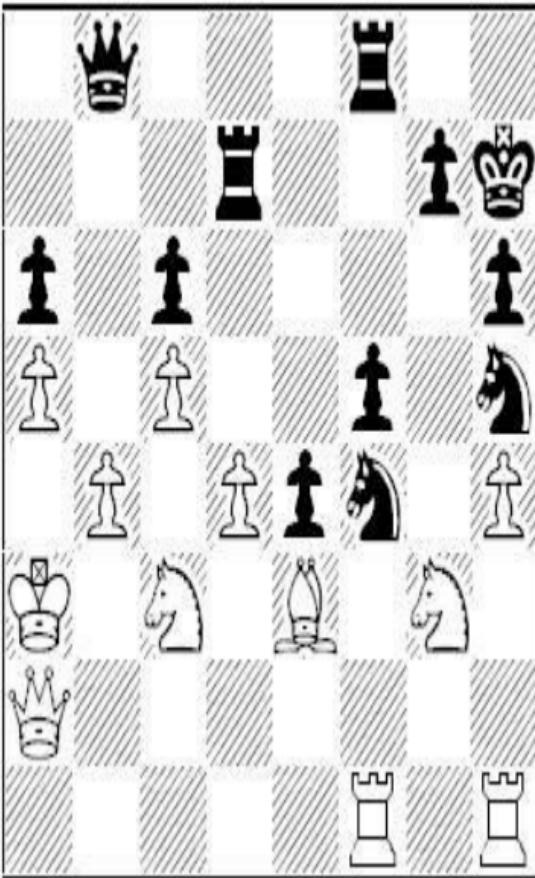
**Exercise:** Which way to capture  
on d5? With knight or bishop?  
**32 Bxd5?**

**Answer:** The wrong way. 32 Nxd5! Bxd5 33 Bxd5 Nxf4 34 Bb3 Nxe2 35 Qxe2 g6 36 Bc1! leaves the position in a happy muddle since Black can't touch the d4-pawn.

### **32 ... Nxf4! 33 Bxc6?**

Yasser must have been low on the clock. His last move is strategic suicide since he just nullified his own pawn majority. He should play 33 Bc4! Nxe2 34 Qxe2 g6 35 d5 Qe5! with a mind-bendingly complex position which Rybka assesses as 0.00, while Fritz gives White the edge.

### **33 ... bxc6 34 Nxg3**



## **Exercise (combination alert):**

It looks like White just won  
a piece. He didn't. How does

Black escape material loss?

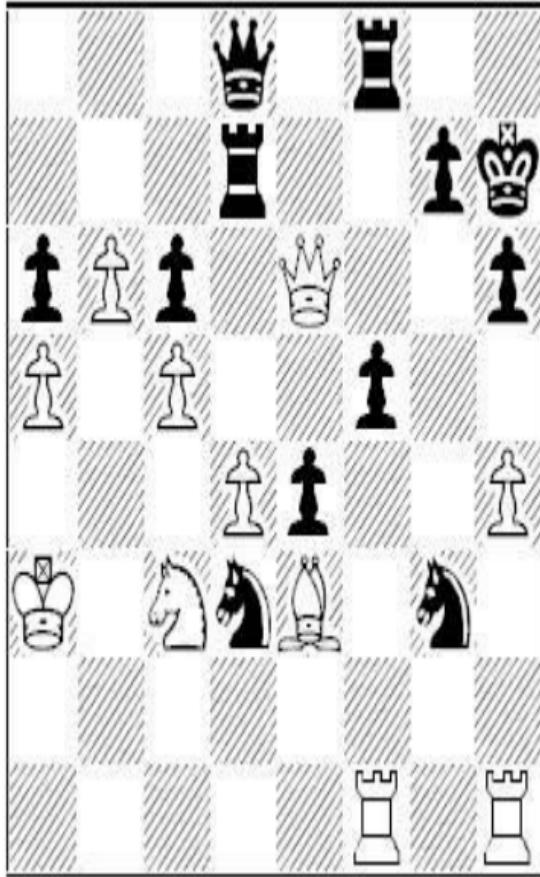
**34 ... Nd3!**

**Answer:** A game-ending zwischenzug: Black removes the hanging knight from f4 and threatens mate on b4. Meanwhile, White's g3-knight continues to hang, with a fork to follow.

**35 b5 Nxg3**

This must have been a major buzzkill for White. Nothing to take on f4 and his rooks get forked to boot. He can't even take on c6 due to the mate on b4.

**36 Qe6 Qd8 37 b6**



**Exercise:** How to get to White's king?  
**Answer: 37 ... Rxd4!**

Larsen's pieces go after White's king with the ferocity of a pack of 8-year-olds beating the stuffing out of a piñata at a birthday party!

**38 Qxc6 Ne5! 39 Qe6 Nc4+  
40 Kb3 Nxе3 41 Rfg1 Rf6 42  
Qe5 Qg8+! 0-1**

How appropriate to end the game with a Nimzowitschian move. Nimzo would probably have been delighted to witness this battle between past and future incarnations of himself.

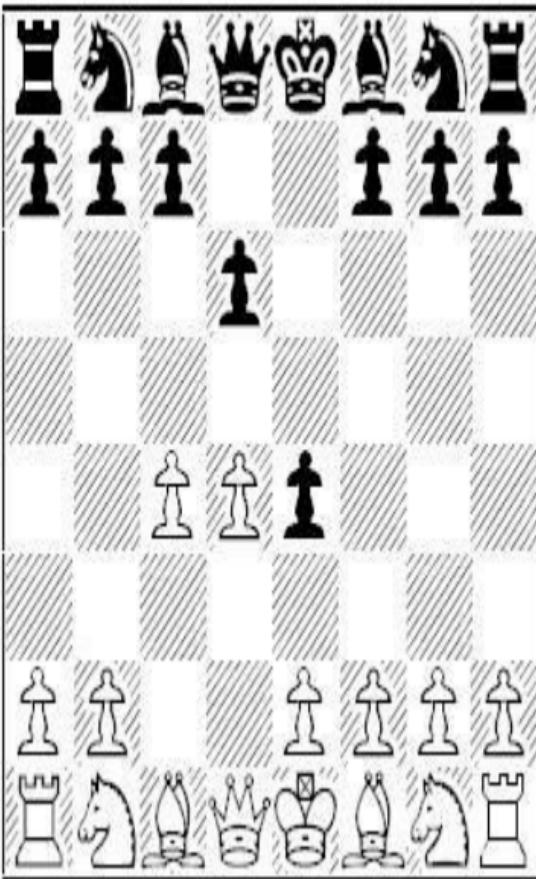
**Summary:** 5 ... c5! is a complete answer to the 4 Nfd2 line. At the very minimum it yields equality.

Game 40

**S.Lputian-V.Epishin**

Rostov on Don 1993

**1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 Nf3 e4 4 Ng1**



**Question:** Why would White take his ball and go home when he has access to

g5 and d2?

**Answer:** Of all the knight moves at his disposal, the one to g1 gives White the most options and is the one I would play as White. The problem with g5 is that he gets kicked and must dance to Black's whims. 4 Nfd2, as we saw last game, must deal with 5 ... c5!.

The retreat to g1 is dangerous to Black for the following reasons:

1. White re-routes, but at his leisure, to e2 (or h3) and then either to f4 or g3 in case he wants to pressure the advanced black e-pawn with f3. Compare this to the Ng5 lines where White gets his

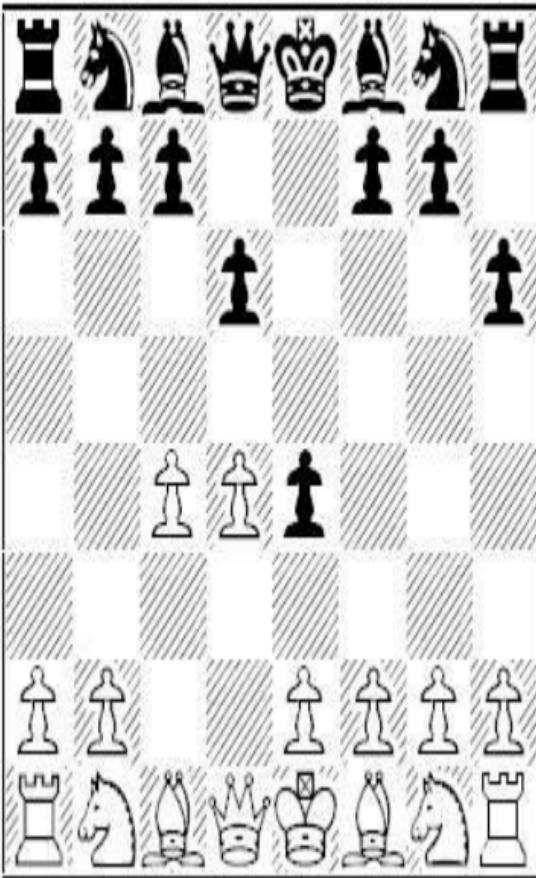
marching order from Black.

2. By playing Ng1 White clears the path for his bishop to g5. For instance, when a black knight appears on f6 he then steals our Pribyl plan and plays Bg5! followed by e3, giving him a French position with his bad bishop on the outside of his pawn chain. As you know, I am normally an evangelist for this plan. But not when it is directed as a weapon against us!

**Question:** I don't like Black's position if he has access to the plan just mentioned. What can Black do about it as a coping mechanism?

**Answer: 4 ... h6!**

As the head picker outer of lines, I suggest we skip 4 ... f5 lines, which your opponents will certainly be more familiar with, and go with the rare 4 ... h6!, which is nothing more than a dose of homeopathic prevention. We don't allow White his plan and protect our future knight on f6 from the undesired swap.



**Question:** But the move can't be correct can it?  
We aren't developing our pieces.

**Answer:** Do you see a lot of development on White's side? We have time for such luxuries. The database shows only four games with this line, Black scoring three wins and a draw – a most auspicious start!

### **5 Nc3 Nf6**

No ... f5 this time.

### **6 e3**

Alternatively:

a) 6 Bf4 (White plays London System style) 6 ... g5!? (Sorry about this! Bronstein was the Morozevich of his day and occasionally careened toward bouts of overexcitement. For the calmer

among us – me included! – the more sedate 6 ... Be7 7 e3 0-0 8 Qc2 Bf5 9 h3 Re8 would be the preference.) 7 Bd2 (I would play 7 Bg3) 7 ... Bg7 8 e3 Bf5 9 Nge2 Bg6 10 Qb3 b6 11 Ng3 0-0 12 Be2 c5! 13 dxc5 bxc5 and Black's active pieces make up for his structural woes, A.Bisguier-D.Bronstein, Budapest 1961.

b) 6 g3 (White doesn't buy that Black has enough resources to cover e4 and goes for an all-out siege of the pawn) 6 ... c6! 7 Bg2 d5 8 Bf4 Be6 9 cxd5 cxd5 10 Bxb8 Rxb8 11 Nh3 (Black gets enormous compensation for the pawn if White

gets greedy with 11 Qa4+?! b5 12 Qxa7 b4 13 Nd1 Bd6) 11 ... Bd6 12 Qd2 b5 and Black stands clearly better with his uncontested space advantage, G.Danner-K.Sakaev, Vienna 1995.

## **6 ... c6**

We leave the ... d5 option open just in case White gets serious about his threats on our e-pawn.

## **7 Nge2 Bf5**

7 ... Na6 8 Ng3 d5 9 Nh5 Nxh5 10 Qxh5 Nc7 11 cxd5 cxd5 12 Bd2 Be6 13 Rc1 Bd6 14 Nb5 Nxb5 15 Bxb5+ Kf8 16 Qd1 Qg5 17 g3 g6 was C.Kamstra-J.Hodgson, Leeuwarden 1993. I prefer Black for

the following reasons: his space advantage, which White can't challenge just yet; his safer king because of his space; and White's pieces have no entry or targets on the c-file or queenside.

In effect, I don't know what to do as White, while Black may expand on the kingside and try to attack there.

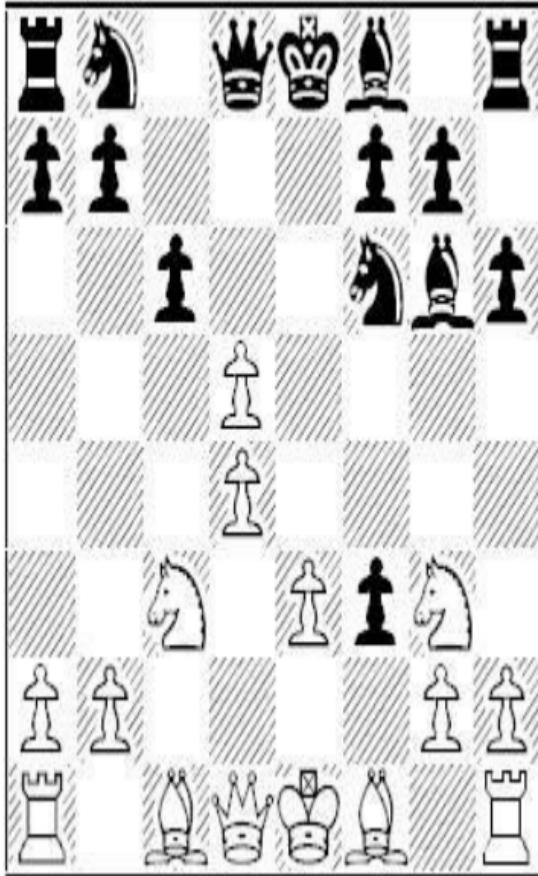
### **8 Ng3 Bg6 9 f3 d5**

He wants to hang on to his space advantage. This is more logical than 9 ... exf3 10 Qxf3 Be7 11 Be2 0-0 12 0-0 Nbd7 13 Nf5 Re8 14 Bd3 when White can claim an edge with his aggressively posted

kingside pieces.

## **10 cxd5 exf3!**

Well timed. After 10 ... cxd5 11 fxe4 dxe4 12 Qb3 Qc7 13 Bb5+ Nbd7 14 0-0 Be7 15 Bd2 White clearly has the initiative, with control over f5 and a gain of more time on Black's queen with Rac1.



**11 gxf3!?**

The most ambitious plan. White hopes to get in e4 and dominate

the centre later on. The position is rich with possibilities:

a) 11 Qxf3 cxd5 12 Nf5 Nc6 13 Bd3 Bh5! 14 Qf2 g6 (ejecting the intruder on f5) 15 Ng3 Bg4 16 0-0 Bg7 17 b3 0-0 18 Ba3 Re8 looks like a typical French position with colours reversed. I like Black due to his control over e4 and the potentially weak backward e3-pawn.

b) 11 dxc6 fxg2 12 Bxg2 Nxc6 13 0-0 Bd6 with a battle to expand or blockade those central white pawns. I'm not sure who stands better and Rybka assesses it as dead even.

**11 ... cxd5**

**Question:** Won't this pawn become a target?

What if Qb3, intending Bg2 and f4?

**Answer:** Let's look at your plan:  
12 Qb3 Qd7 13 Bg2 Nc6 14 0-0 Be7  
15 f4 Rd8 16 f5 Bh7 17 Bd2 0-0 18  
Rac1 Rfe8 19 Na4 h5! and Black takes the initiative.

**12 Bd3 Bxd3 13 Qxd3 Nc6  
14 Bd2 Rc8 15 0-0**

**Question:** What if White goes for it and castles queenside?

**Answer:** 15 Rg1 g6 16 0-0-0 Nb4 17 Qb5+ (forced since Qb1 is too passive a move in an opposite-

wing attack situation) 17 ... Qd7 18 Qxd7+ Kxd7 19 Kb1 looks balanced.

### **15 ... g6**

A knight perched on f5 would be intolerable.

### **16 e4!?**

Lputian senses weakness in Black's camp and strikes. The calmer, positional course would be 16 Rac1 with approximate equality.

### **16 ... dxe4**



## **Exercise (multiple choice):**

How should White proceed?

- a) 17 Rae1: postpone the

recapture and pin;

b) Recapture on e4 with his g3-knight;

c) 17 fxe4: open the f-file for his attack.

### **17 fxe4?**

**Answer:** b) Best to recapture on e4 with the g3-knight, which leads to unclear play. After 17 Ngxe4! Bg7 18 d5 0-0 19 Nxf6+ Bxf6 20 Bxh6 Re8 Black's central initiative coupled with many targets gives him full compensation for the pawn in an unclear position.

### **17 ... Bc5!**

Suddenly Black attacks d4 three times when it's defended only once.

White probably banked on 17 ... Nxd4?! 18 Nd5! with a dangerous initiative for his pawn.

## **18 Kh1 Bxd4**

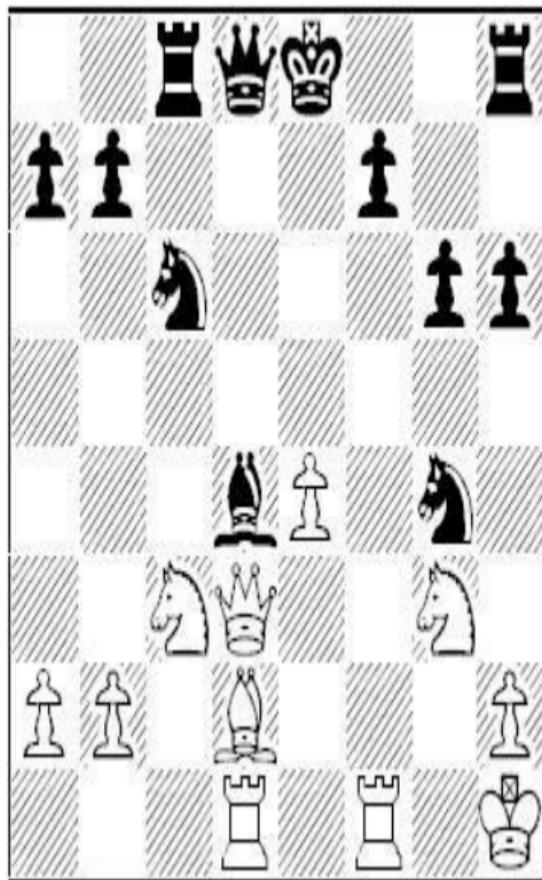
White picked this fight and it's clearly not going as planned.

**Question:** Is Black's advantage such a lock? White leads in development and has the open f-file for his attack.

**Answer:** Black's advantage is a lock, locked inside a locked safe! As we saw in Chapter Three, e5 is our Alpha and the Omega. In this case Black holds a powerful grip over this key square, which in turn keeps his

king safe.

**19 Rad1 Ng4!**



Two ideas: the path is cleared

for ... Qh4 and Black tightens his grip over e5.

## **20 Qe2?!**

20 Nge2 Bxc3! (20 ... Be5 21 Qf3 is dangerous for Black) 21 Qxc3 Nce5 22 Qg3 Qd3! 23 Qg2 Rc2 24 Nf4 Qb5 leaves Black in control with the dual threats ... Ne3 and ... Qxb2.

**20 ... Qh4 21 Nb5 0-0! 22 Rf4 h5 23 Nxd4 Nxd4 24 Qg2 Rc2**

Black's piece activity has spun out of control. White is helpless.

## **25 e5 Ne6 26 Rb4 a5 27 Re4**

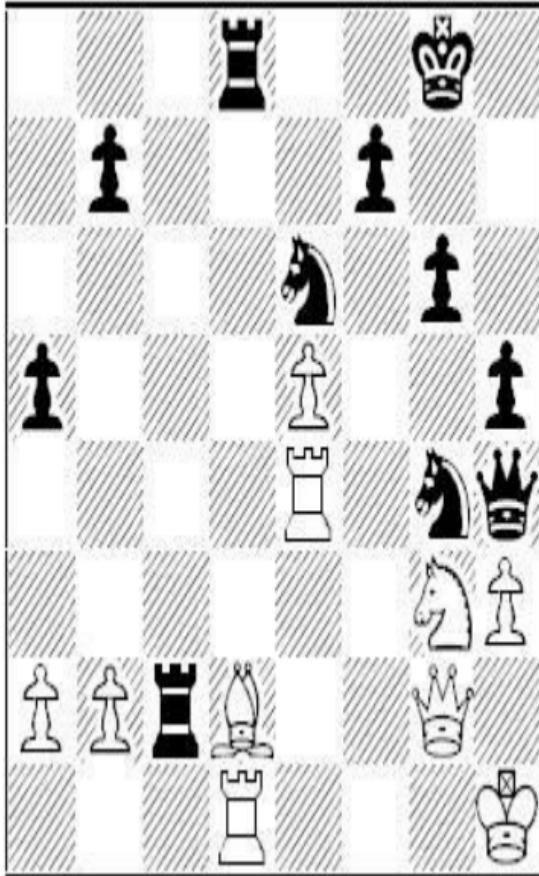
He must cover the ... Ne3 threats.

## **27 ... Rd8**

Pins, pins, laterally, horizontally

– everywhere! White's position reminds me of the running of the bull festival in Spain. White's pieces desperately try to evade the unlucky goring.

## **28 h3**



**Exercise:** Find a powerful move that ends White's resistance.

**Answer: 28 ... Rd3! 0-1**

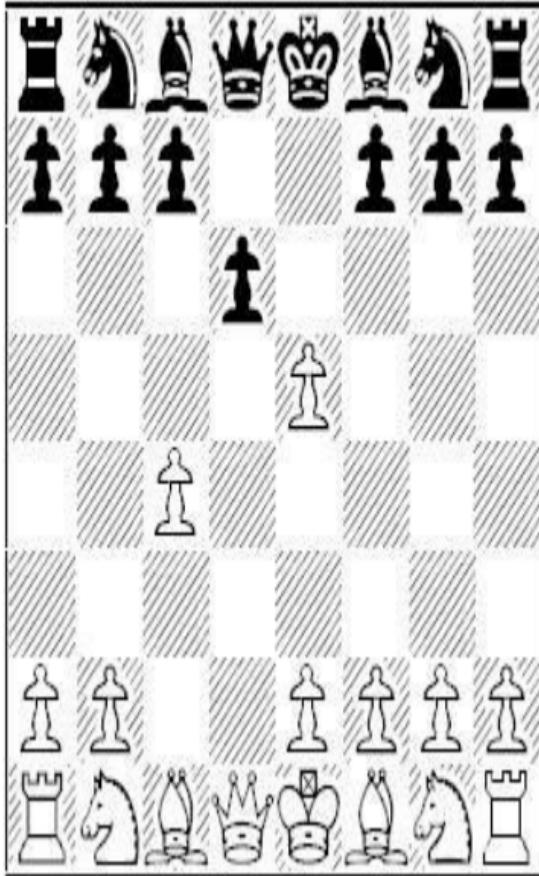
**Summary:** We meet strangeness with even more strangeness after 4 Ng1!? h6!?. Just remember, this is the only version of the 3 Nf3 lines where Black avoids ... f5. We can back up our advanced e-pawn with either ... Bf5 or the ... Na6, ... c6, ... d5 plan.

Game 41

**Aung Aung-M.Krasenkow**

Sufe Cup, Shanghai 2000

1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 dxе5?!



White opts out of a sharp game but in doing so lets the energy out of his position. If you happen to be

a good endgame player at club level, this line will be your goose that laid the golden eggs.

**Question:** How could you possibly give such a benign move a “?!” mark?

Black loses his right to castle, not White, and the ending looks drawish.

**Answer:** You must understand that I view chess from the prism of a guy who wants to stay safe and am normally quite sympathetic to such lines. Not here. Black stands slightly better in the coming ending since he has a lot more to do than White. His king in the middle may

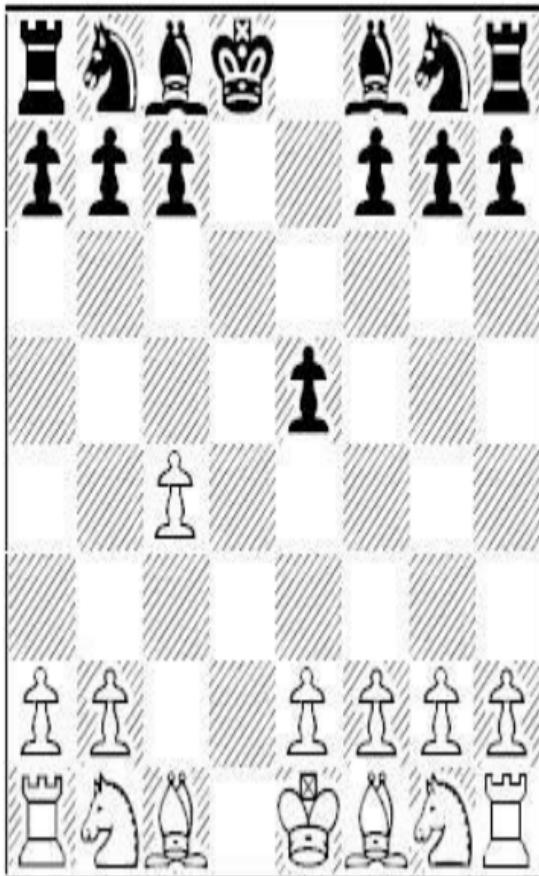
be a plus rather than a minus. Database stats: Black scores 69%, from over 1100 games!

The real trouble with White's position is not any specific detail. Instead, this trouble lies in the fact that his position has little potential for improvement and is caught in limbo. David Bowie describes White's stasis dilemma best in his song Ashes to Ashes: "I never done good things. I never done bad things. I never did anything out of the blue."

### **3 ... dxe5 4 Qxd8+**

Avoiding a queen trade at this point doesn't make sense for White.

**4 ... Kxd8**



**5 Nf3**

Watch how easy it is to lose this

drawish ending as White. The following is a game played by one of my students, rated 2100, against another expert-rated player. Rick was Black in a must-win situation, trailing his opponent, the tournament leader, by a half point in the final round. I suggested this line and correctly predicted his opponent would jump to enter the “drawish” ending! 5 Nc3 (this almost always transposes to 5 Nf3) 5 ... c6 6 Nf3 f6 7 a3!? Be6 8 e4!? Nd7 9 b4?! a5 10 b5 (creating a hole on c5; he should continue with 10 Rb1) 10 ... Kc7 11 Na4!? Nc5 12 Nxc5 (if 12 b6+ Kc8 and b6

becomes a target) 12 ... Bxc5 13 Be2 Ne7 14 0-0 Nc8 15 a4 Nd6 16 Nd2 Bb4 17 Ba3? (an imaginative attempt but it accelerates the loss) 17 ... Bxd2 18 Bxd6+ Kxd6 19 Rfd1 Kc5 and Black's king ran amok, M.Gusev-R.Aeria, San Diego 2006.

The following examples also show just how deceptive the position is:

a) 5 e4 (seizing space at the very high cost of creating a giant hole on d4) 5 ... Bb4+ 6 Bd2 Bxd2+ 7 Nxd2 Be6 8 Ngf3 f6 9 Be2 Nd7 10 0-0 a5 11 b3 Ne7 12 Rfd1 Nc6 13 Nf1 Kc8 14 Ne3 Nc5 15 Nd2 Nd4. White, with a bad bishop and a

gash on d4, stood clearly worse in X.Grigorian-A.Miles, Adelaide 1990.

b) 5 g3 (the fianchettoed bishop usually hits a pawn wall on c6) 5 ... c6 6 Bg2 a5 7 Nf3 f6 8 Nc3 a4 9 Be3 Be6 10 Nd2 Bb4 11 Rc1 Nd7 12 0-0 Ne7 13 f3 Kc7 14 a3 Ba5 15 Rfd1 Rhd8 16 Nce4 Nf5 17 Bf2 Nd4 18 Bf1 Bxd2 19 Nxd2 Nc5 20 Bxd4 Rxd4 21 e3 Rd7 22 Ne4 Rxd1 23 Rxd1 Nxe4 24 fxe4 Kb6 25 Kf2 Kc5, M.Stierle-V.Georgiev, Bad Wörishofen 2003. The Sherpa effortlessly scales the summit while White finds himself busted.

**5 ... f6 6 Nc3 Be6 7 e3**

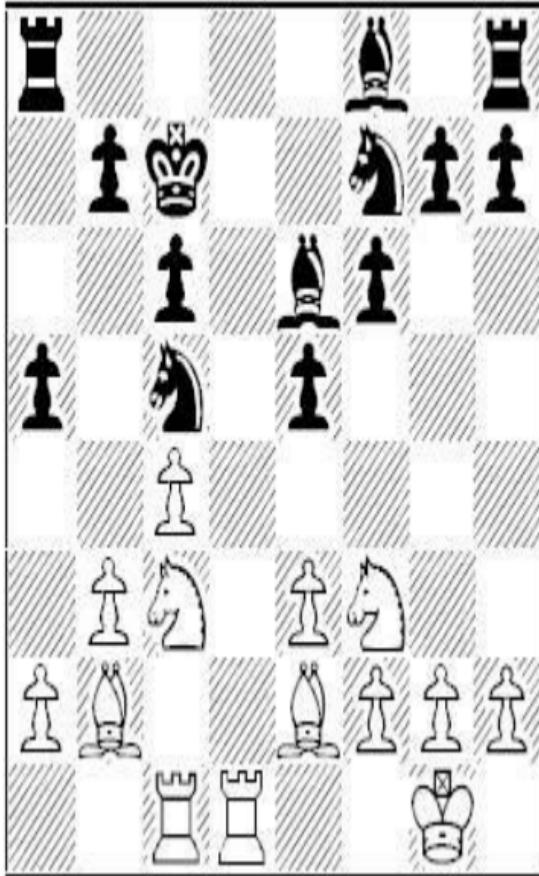
7 b3 often just transposes to 7

e3 lines. 7 ... Nd7 8 g3 c6 9 Bg2 Bb4 10 Bd2 Nh6 11 0-0 Nf7 12 Rfd1 a5 was A.Utnasunov-Y.Balashov, Elista 2000. White's pieces have come out. Now what? Black controls more central space and ... a4 ideas are in the air.

**7 ... Nd7 8 Be2 c6 9 0-0 Nh6  
10 Rd1 Nf7 11 b3 a5**

He locks down c5 for his knight and keeps White nervous about ... a4 later on.

**12 Bb2 Kc7 13 Rac1 Nc5**



**Question:** Why isn't this position even and drawish? Rybka says equal.

**Answer:** Subtlety isn't Rybka's strong suit! Though gifted tactically, he/she/it is a bit of a dunce in such quiet positions and often misevaluates. Black stands better, having accumulated subtle advantages. Let's break down the yin and yang of the position:

1. White's position contains a massive surplus of yin and finds his stock quite low on yang!
2. Black's king is centralized, while White's isn't. A word of caution though: be aware of Nd5+ tactics when your king sits on c7, facing his c1-rook.
3. Black controls more central

space and may expand further. If White tries to match the space and play e4, he incurs the penalty of a hole on d4.

4. Black controls c5, which may be a launching pad to d3 later on.

5. Black is the only one with a pawn break in the position. White must be on the lookout for ... a4 tricks.

Conclusion: The new assessment: everything is exactly as it was – except for Black's five advantages which appeared by magic!

## **14 Nd2**

He plans to relieve his slightly

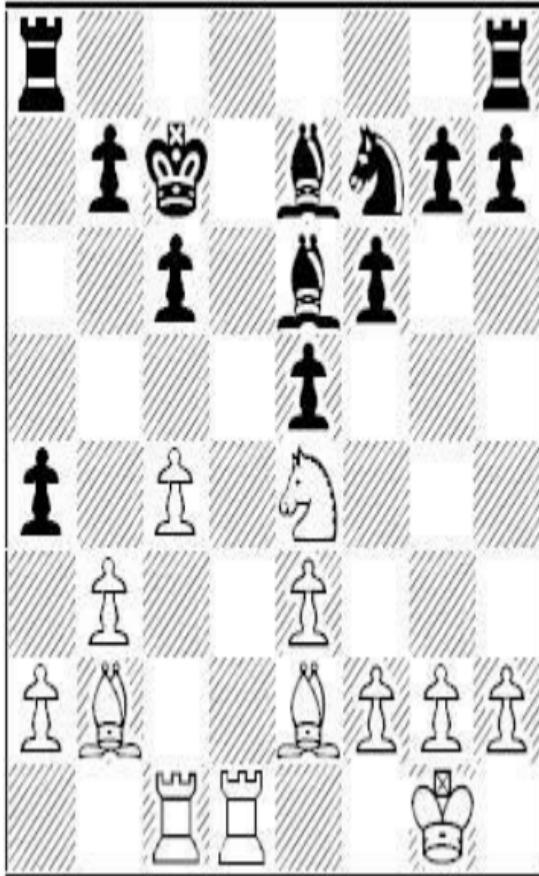
cramped situation via a trade of knights on e4.

## **14 ... Be7**

**Question:** Shouldn't Black play 14 ... f5 to prevent White's next move?

**Answer:** I would do just that, based on the principle: The side with extra space should keep his opponent cramped by avoiding trades. As well as following this principle, Black gains useful kingside space.

## **15 Nde4 Nxe4 16 Nxe4 a4**



Just as in life, we often trade one problem for another. White's knight left c3, allowing Black this

break.

## **17 Nc3 axb3 18 axb3**

Black managed to weaken b4, b3 and c5.

## **18 ... Ba3!?**

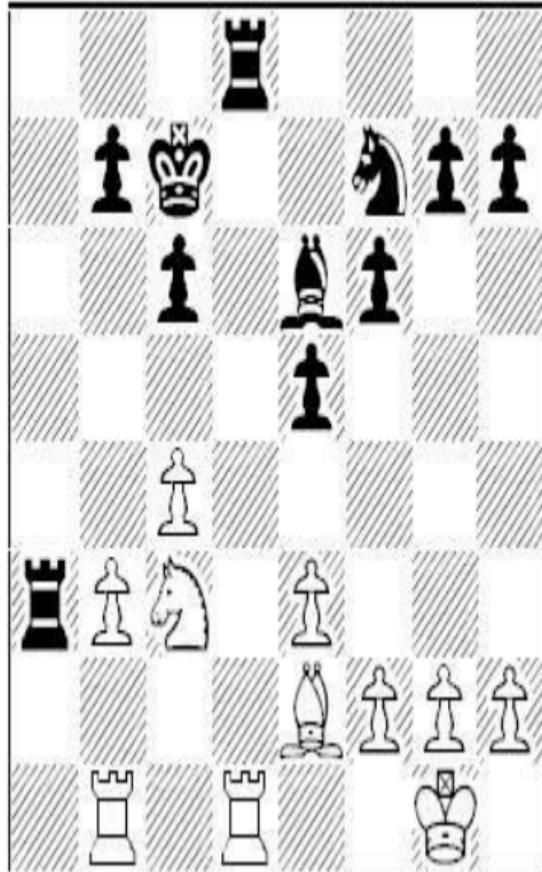
Logically swapping off dark-squared bishops and sticking White with a remaining bad bishop. This swap also weakens the dark squares on the queenside. Still, 18 ... Ba3 may actually be premature since White has the ability to switch his queenside pawn structure.

## **19 Bxa3 Rxa3 20 Rb1?!**

A passive decision. White is nervous about pushing forward on the queenside but he should do so

with 20 b4! Rd8 21 Rxd8 Nxd8 22 c5.

**20 ... Rd8!**



Either taking control over the d-file or swapping off White's only active piece.

**21 Rxd8 Nxd8 22 Kf1 Bf5!**

He either contorts White's rook or forces the detrimental e4.

**23 Rb2 Ne6 24 Bd1 Ra8**

If 24 ... Bd3+ 25 Ke1 (25 Be2?? Ra1+! wins) 25 ... Bxc4?? then 26 Nb1! wins a piece.

**25 Bc2?!**

Black's rook is too active to be left untended. White should challenge the file with 25 Ra2!.

**25 ... Bxc2 26 Rxc2 Nc5! 27 b4 Nd3 28 b5**

There it is again: c5 is now

available to Black's king.



**Exercise (planning):** White plans to wait.

How does Black improve his game?

**Answer:** Grab kingside space:  
**28 ... f5!**

Taking control over e4 and seizing more central territory.

**29 Ke2 Nc5 30 f3 Ra3 31 bxc6 bxc6 32 Nd1 Ra1 33 Kd2 g5**

And more space.

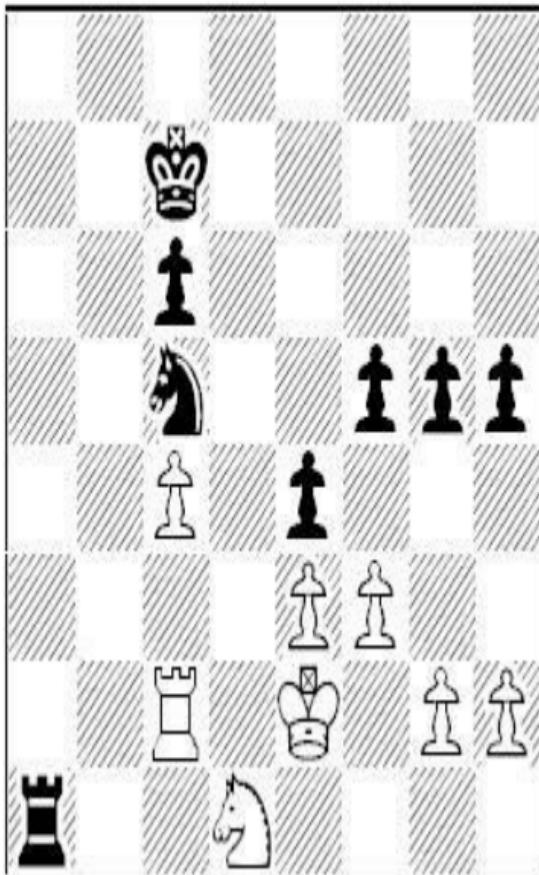
**34 Ke2**

White's magnetic north continues to point south. To take action is to risk failure. But in some cases, as in the 3 dxe5?! line, perhaps inaction entails even greater hazards for White.

**34 ... e4 35 Kd2 h5**

And even more.

**36 Ke2**



Black unquestionably enjoys the advantage with superior king, rook and knight when compared to their white counterparts, who continue to move in hallucinatory slow motion.

### **36 ... exf3+!**

Creating a diversionary passed pawn on the kingside.

### **37 gxf3 g4 38 Nf2**

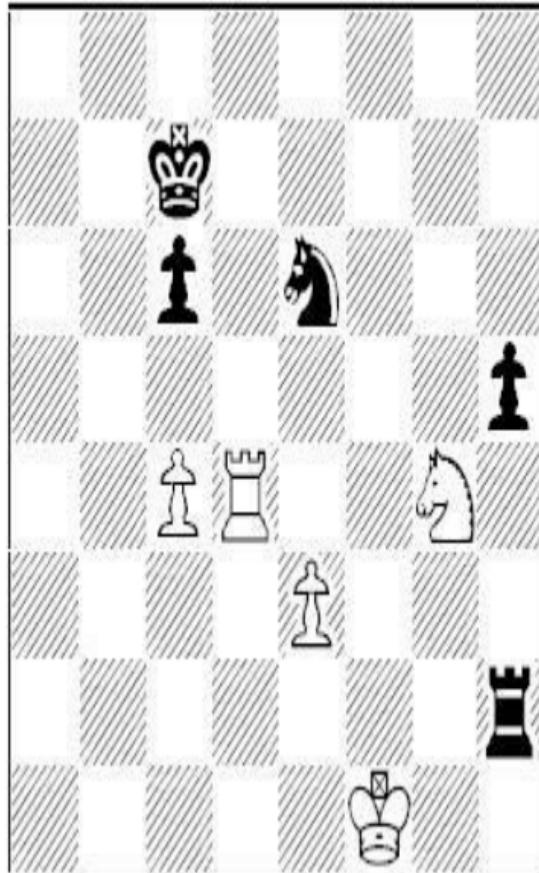
Allowing rook entry. But not moving the knight also loses after 38 fxg4 fxg4 39 Rd2 Ne4 40 Rc2 Ng5! 41 Rb2 Nf3 and now 42 h3 is met with 42 ... Ng1+ 43 Kd2 gxh3 winning.

### **38 ... Rg1 39 fxg4 fxg4!**

Preparing for his outside

passer(s).

**40 Rd2 Rg2 41 Kf1 Rxh2 42 Rd4 Ne6 43 Nxg4!?**



White suddenly takes bold action with a desperate knight sac for two pawns.

### **Exercise (combination alert):**

We can just take the

knight right away but is there something even better?

**Answer: 43 ... Rh1+!**

**44 Kg2 Rh4! 45 Kg3 Rxg4+**

There go the rooks, simplifying Black's technical chore.

**46 Rxg4 hxg4 47 Kxg4 Kd6**

**48 Kf5 Nc5 49 e4 Nd7 50 Kf4**

**Kc5 51 Kf5 Kxc4 52 Ke6 Nb6**

Rybka announces mate in 14 moves! Be very thankful I don't ask you to solve this one!

**53 Kd6 c5 54 e5 Kd4 55 e6  
Nd5 0-1**

**Summary:** White must grovel for the draw (which he usually doesn't get) in the 3 dxe5?! ending. In effect he often sustains defeat without the messiness of a war.

Game 42

**G.Battaglini-K.Sakaev**

Chigorin Memorial, St Petersburg  
2009

**1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5?!**

We revisit the grovel line. White once again attempts to channel

Capablanca in an ending Capa would be hard pressed to hold as White!

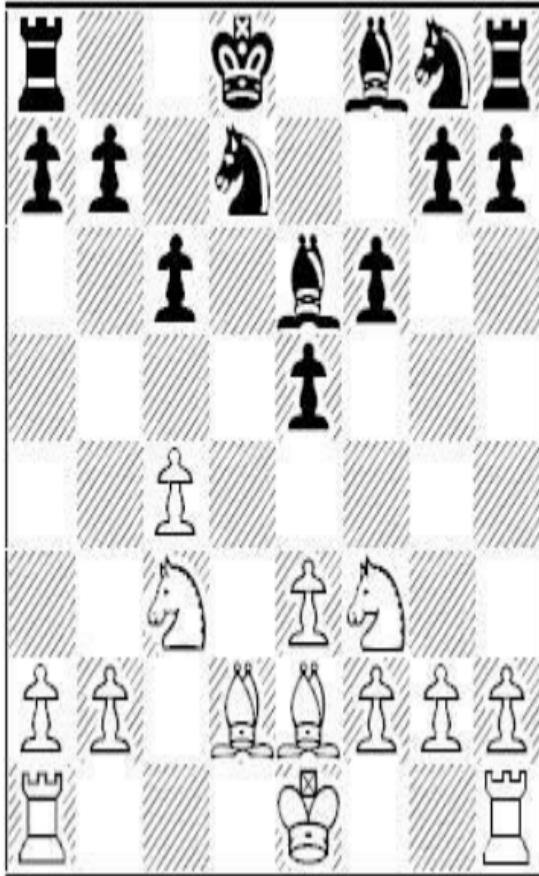
**3 ... dxe5 4 Qxd8+ Kxd8 5**

**Nc3 Be6 6 Nf3 f6**

Of course Black isn't interested in swapping his central pawn for White's c-pawn.

**7 e3 Nd7 8 Be2 c6 9 Bd2**

White understands some of the troubles he faces with ... a5 and ... a4 if he fianchettoes the bishop on the queenside, so he tries a more ambitious approach (although "ambitious" is most certainly the wrong word when describing the 3 dxe5?! line).



**Question:** How is placing the bishop on d2 more ambitious?  
The move actually looks more

passive than fianchettoing.

**Answer:** White hopes to enforce a future a3 and b4, taking queenside space and hopefully the initiative too. The trouble is, Black rules the queenside in this line and any clash in that sector will be in his favour.

### **9 ... a5**

Black stakes out the c5-square for his pieces and makes it harder for White to play b4.

### **10 0-0 Ne7**

**Question:** Can Black develop via 10 ... Nh6 intending ... Nf7-d6?

**Answer:** e7 is the more flexible square, since after ... Nc8 Black has

the option of posting his knight to b6 as well.

**11 Rfd1 Nc8 12 Na4**

**Question:** Why is he decentralizing?

**Answer:** The knight is well placed on a4 but is only there for a visit. White's goal is a3, b4 and work in c5 at some point. 12 Na4 fights for the sensitive c5- and b6-squares. The trouble is White lacks the firepower to achieve this plan.

**12 ... Kc7 13 a3 Ncb6**

Eliminating White's only active piece.

**14 Nxb6 Nxb6 15 Rac1**



**Exercise:** Should Black sensibly finish his development with 15 ... Be7, or take action

and launch a raid with 15 ... Na4?

## **15 ... Be7**

**Answer:** Sensible isn't always the best. Black plays it safe but it wasn't too early to go off on an adventure with 15 ... Na4! 16 b3 Nc5 17 Rb1 Ne4! (picking off the bishop pair; there are targets on a3, c3 and d2, and White can't cover all of them) 18 b4 Nxd2 19 Rxd2 axb4 20 axb4. White is in deep trouble: Black's bishops focus their gazes at those queenside pawns, which are clear targets. Black's rook controls the only meaningful open file, and Black's king helps out in the fight while

White's is out of commission on the kingside.

## **16 Be1**

**Question:** Why does White contort like this?

**Answer:** He wants to activate his knight via d2.

## **16 ... Nd7!**

Perhaps he intends ... a4 and ... Nc5.

**Question:** Why isn't 16 ... Na4 still good for Black?

**Answer:** Black doesn't get the bishop pair this time in the line 17 b3 Nc5 18 b4 axb4 19 axb4.

**Question:** White is playing very passively.

Why not go for it with the thematic 16 ... a4?

**Answer:** White's pieces begin to uncoil after 17 c5 Nd7 18 Bb4.



**17 Nd2**

The attempt to seize the initiative with 17 b4? isn't very

tempting. The trouble is White is at a disadvantage on the queenside and most b4 attempts favour Black, as in this case. After 17 ... axb4 18 axb4 c5! 19 b5 Ra2 20 Bf1 Nb6 White must contend with chronically passive pieces and a weak pawn on c4.

### **17 ... Nc5 18 Nb1**

White goes into total lockdown mode. It isn't healthy to pick a fight with mother nature by playing 18 b4?. Black's natural advantages on the queenside ensure that complications fall in his favour. After 18 ... axb4 19 axb4 Na6! 20 b5 Nc5 21 bxc6 bxc6 Black owns

title and deed of the c5 property. If rooks come off the board Black can easily gang up on c5 by adding his king to the ganger uppers!

**18 ... Nb3 19 Rc3 a4 20 f3**

**Bf5**

Provoking White into e4.

**21 Nd2**

White refuses to bite ... for now.

**21 ... Nc5 22 Bf2 Bg6 23 e4**

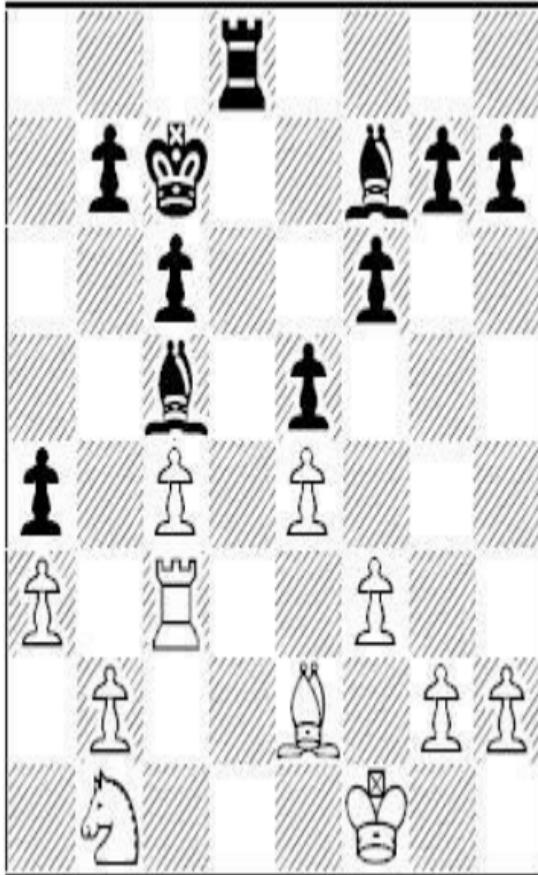
White picks his poison and reluctantly agrees to the weakening of his d4-square. If he avoids playing e4 he slowly gets squeezed after 23 Nf1 f5 with a fate similar to White's in our last game.

**23 ... Bf7 24 Nb1 Rhd8 25**

## **Rxd8 Rxd8 26 Bxc5?**

An overreaction. White eliminates a powerful knight, only to hand over all his dark squares in the process. White should silently endure the pressure with something like 26 Kf1.

**26 ... Bxc5+ 27 Kf1**



If this diagram won't discourage players from the 3 dxe5?! line, then nothing will!

**Exercise (planning):** Improve Black's already very impressive position.

**Answer: 27 ... Kb6!**

Henry V would disguise himself as a commoner, mingling with the masses in order to learn how his subjects truly felt about him. Here Black's king merges into the crowd, heading for the pub on c5. Let's list Black's advantages:

1. Bishop pair.
2. Monster king ready for coronation on c5.
3. Ruler of the dark squares.
4. White must grudgingly deal with a rotten bishop. In fact, this

poor guy reminds one of the unfortunate creatures in a taxidermist's display.

5. And a rotten knight.

6. And a pretty much rotten everybody else!

Conclusion: Strategically busted for White.

**28 Rc2 Bd4 29 Nd2 Bc5**

Playing with White's head. Of course the former Russian champ isn't going to take the draw.

**30 Nb1 g6**

Preparing to expand.

**31 Nc3 Ra8 32 Bd3 Bd4 33**

**Nb1**

Anti-Darwinian. We witness

evolution in reverse.

**33 ... h5 34 Nd2 Bc5 35 h3**

**Be6 36 g4?!**

This attempt to shift the balance of power on the kingside is misguided. It was unwise to open up a second front when so badly tied down. White's best strategy at this point is no strategy – namely, do nothing and hope to create a fortress.

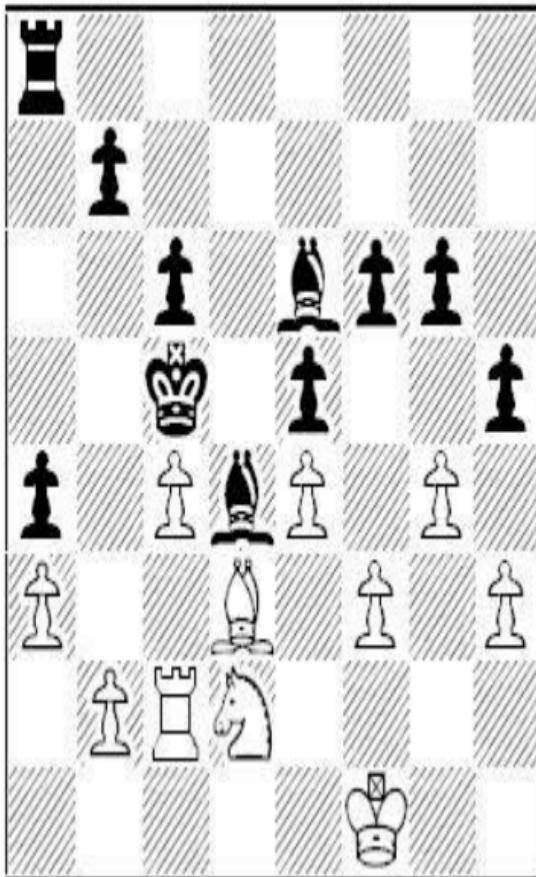
**36 ... Kc7 37 Nb1 Kb6**

Now he is just being cruel. Come on Henry, get on with it!

**38 Nc3 Bd4 39 Nb1 Kc5**

Finally, Black's king reveals that he truly is king.

**40 Nd2**



**Exercise (planning):** White's position is as miserable as

one can imagine. Still, he fights on, toying with b4+ ideas.

Should Black worry about this? Also, how to infiltrate?

**Answer:** Clear d4 for rook or king.

### **40 ... Be3!**

If Black is allowed to take that knight White has no chance since he drops his c-pawn.

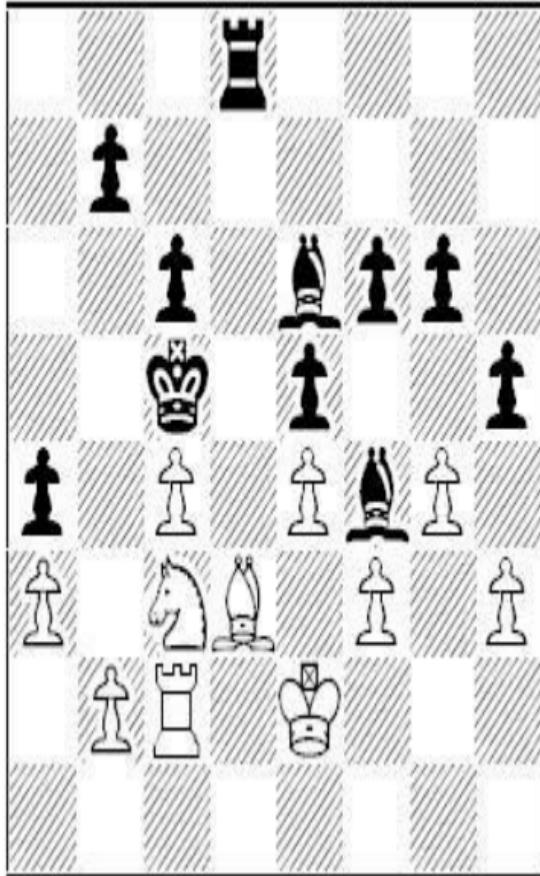
### **41 Nb1**

41 b4+? Kd4! 42 Ke2 (or 42 Be2 Rh8!) 42 ... Rh8! wins. Moves such as 41 ... Kd4! require great confidence in one's calculation ability. I remember once in the early 80's I was in Black's situation,

got cocky, overlooked a trick and found myself unceremoniously caught in a net.

**41 ... Rd8 42 Ke2 Bf4! 43**

**Nc3**



**Exercise (combination alert):**  
Nobody should  
be shocked that Black has a

knockout.

**Answer: 43 ... Rxd3! 0-1**

White's choices are getting mated or dropping a piece.

**Summary:** White's idea of developing his bishop on d2 changes nothing and he remains worse.

Game 43

**R.Hübner-G.Kasparov**

Hamburg 1985

**1 c4**

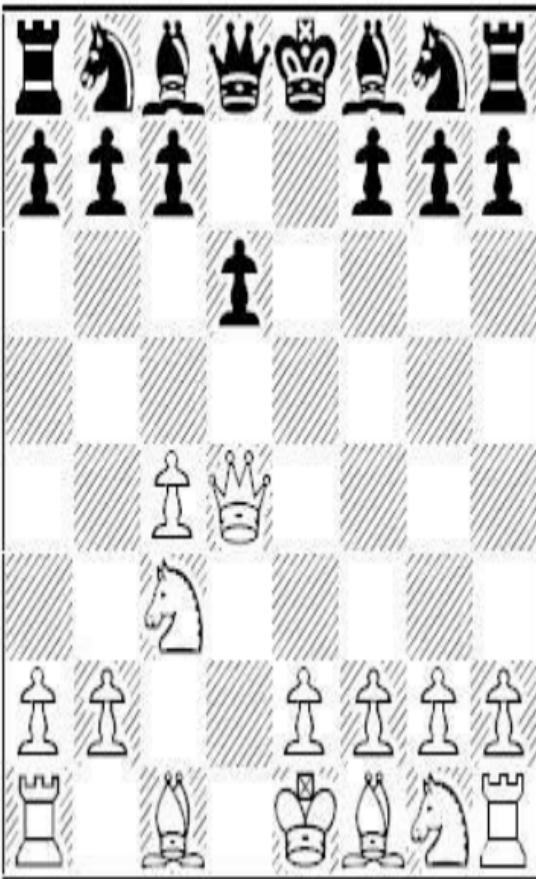
Our move order would normally go 1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 Nc3!? exd4 4

**Qxd4.**

**1 ... e5 2 Nc3 d6 3 d4 exd4 4**

**Qxd4**

IM Vladimir Barsky says of this position: "White has a minimal space advantage, while Black has a slight initiative. The question now is whether White will stabilize the position and exploit his pluses, or will Black succeed in creating advantageous complications?"



**Question:** And your opinion of the position?

**Answer:** I add: Black must play

with vigour since quiet play tends to establish White in his space/bind. Use your development lead to quickly create trouble or risk getting squeezed.

#### **4 ... Nf6**

**Question:** Why doesn't Black gain a tempo on the queen?

**Answer:** The tempo isn't running away and the positions usually transpose. A few independent paths after 4 ... Nc6 5 Qd2:

a) 5 ... g6 6 b3 Bg7 7 Bb2 Nf6 8 g3 0-0 9 Bg2 a5! 10 Nh3 Ne5 11 Rc1 Bd7! and Black achieved counterplay based on the annoying

... a4 strategic threat, J.Hjartarson-N.Short, Amsterdam 1989.

b) 5 ... Be6 6 b3 Nf6 7 e4 a5! 8 Be2 g6 9 Nf3 Bg7 10 Bb2 0-0 11 0-0 a4! 12 Nxa4 Nxe4, D.Djoric-B.Damljanovic, Bar 2005. Swapping the a-pawn for White's important e-pawn was a good bargain and Black already has the edge.

## **5 g3**

This move may be too slow and White's expectations are just too high for the position. He doesn't have time to leisurely seize a grip on the d5-square like this without a high cost. Development matters!

a) 5 Bg5 Be7 6 Nf3 Nc6 7 Qd2

Bf5 8 e3 Ne4!. This freeing exchange brought Black equality in Wang Yue-I.Smirin, Khanty Mansiysk 2005.

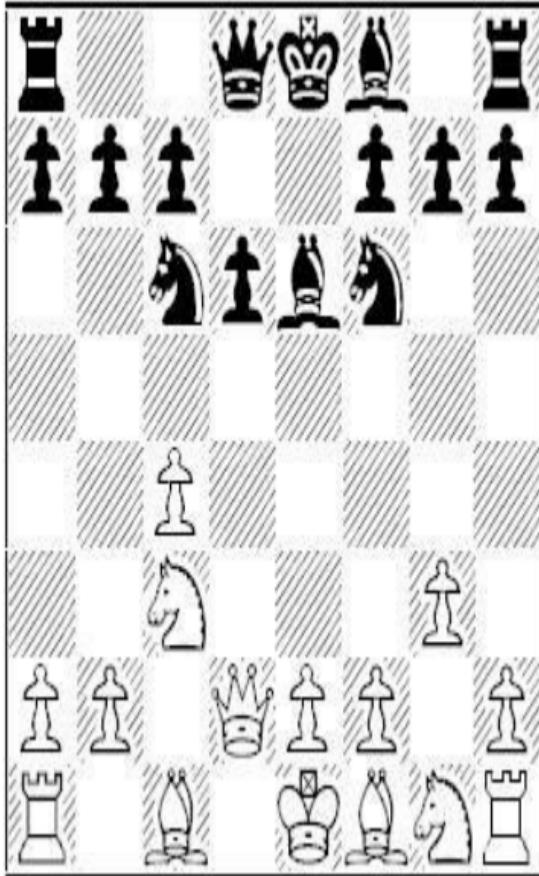
b) 5 e4! is the best move in my opinion. White must subdue the ... d5 break like a dictator dealing with dissent. B.Kouatly-S.Belkhodja, Belfort 2004, went 5 ... Nc6 6 Qd2 g6 7 b3 Bg7 8 Bb2 0-0 9 Bd3 a5 10 Nge2 Re8 11 f3 Nd7 12 Nd5 Nce5 13 Bd4 c6 14 Ndc3 Nc5 15 Bc2 f5!. This key disruptive break gives Black at least equality. White shouldn't push it with 16 exf5? as after 16 ... Ned3+! 17 Kf1 Bxd4 18 Nxd4 Qf6 19 Nde2 Bxf5 he will find

it very hard to unravel.

**5 ... Nc6 6 Qd2**

Hübner handed Kasparov a development lead. What could possibly go wrong?

**6 ... Be6!**



**Question:** Why would you give such a simple developing move an

exclam?

**Answer:** The move fulfils the requirements of the position. Time is of the essence and Black threatens to blast open the game in his favour with ... d5.

## **7 Nd5**

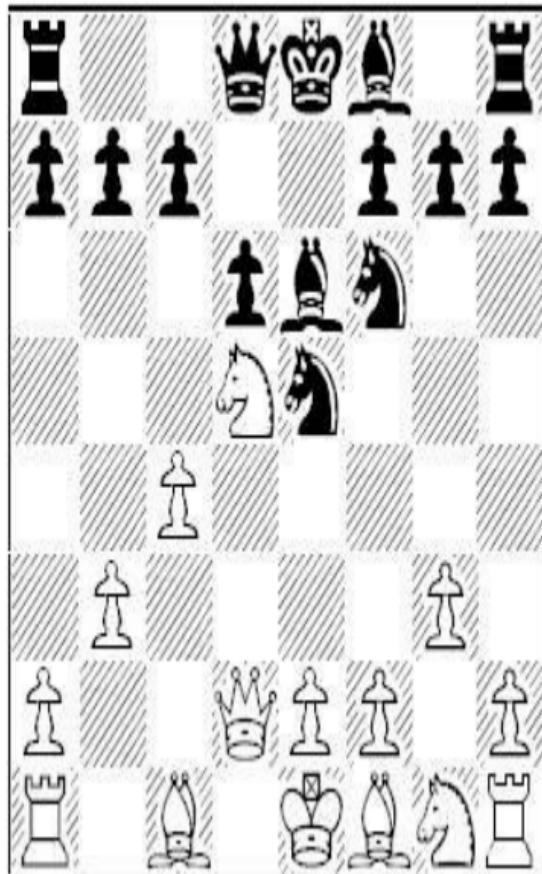
After 7 e4 a5! 8 b3 a4! I would be getting very nervous as White, who remains seriously behind in development, S.Cvetkovic-K.Sakaev, Budva 2009.

## **7 ... Ne5**

Centralizing his knight and preparing to eject White's with ... c6. Kasparov offers us a workshop in how to exploit a development

lead and initiative versus an opponent's static space advantage.

## 8 b3



**Question:** I realize White is behind in development but his space alarms me. How does Black disrupt things before the space gels into a clear White edge?

**Answer:** Through a policy of unceasing harassment! Watch how Kasparov organizes the insurgency.

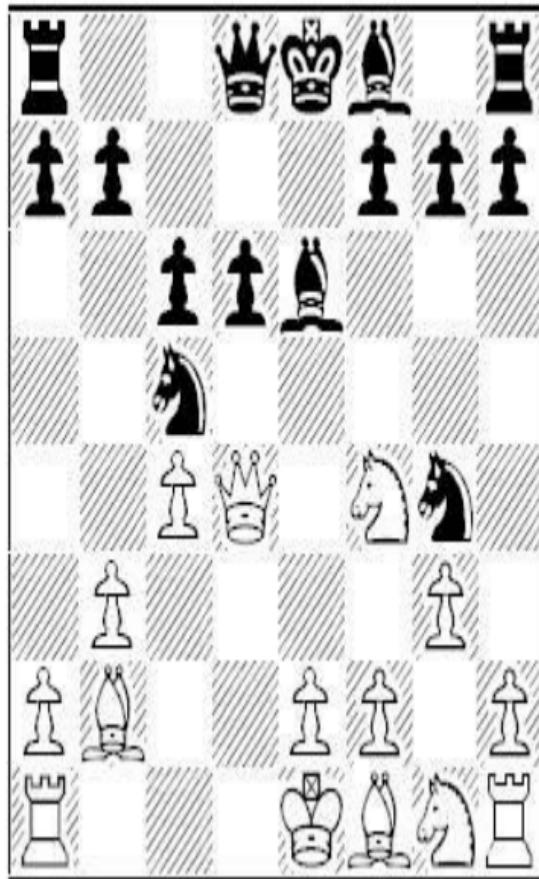
**8 ... Ne4! 9 Qe3 Nc5 10 Bb2  
c6 11 Nf4 Ng4!**

Dance!

**12 Qd4**

Leave me be! Note that 12 Nxe6 fxe6 13 Qf4 Qa5+ 14 Kd1 Ne4! 15 Nh3 d5! ( ... Bd6 is a nasty overload threat) 16 Kc2 Bd6 17 Qc1 dxс4

gives Black a crushing attack.



**Exercise (combination alert):**

This one is tough to spot but not

deep.

Hint: Find a way to harass White's king along the e1-a5 diagonal.

**Answer: 12 ... Ne4!!**

I have often pondered if the ability to play excellent chess is a telltale sign of a wasted life! Witnessing moves like Black's last one makes me think it is time well spent. Kasparov's staggering blow is infallible proof of my once-ridiculed Rat/optional gravity theory. Black's knight shoots off into the void and somehow retains stability without visible support. Also, I like the Norman Bates

quality to the move. Earlier the knight shuffled around in mild mannered fashion. Then abruptly, it put on a dress and wig and attacked with a butcher's blade in the shower!

### **13 Bh3!**

"When a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully!" wrote Samuel Johnson. One of the great overriding challenges in a chess game is coping with an unexpected shot. Many fall apart in such situations, but not Hübner, who manages to retain his equilibrium, despite the shock.

Capture of the cheeky e4-knight remains verboten: 13 Qxe4?? Qa5+ 14 Kd1 Nxf2+ wins the queen.

**13 ... Qa5+**

If 13 ... Ngxf2 14 Nf3 Qa5+ 15 Kf1 Nxh3! 16 Nxe6 Nh2 Black retains a nasty attack.

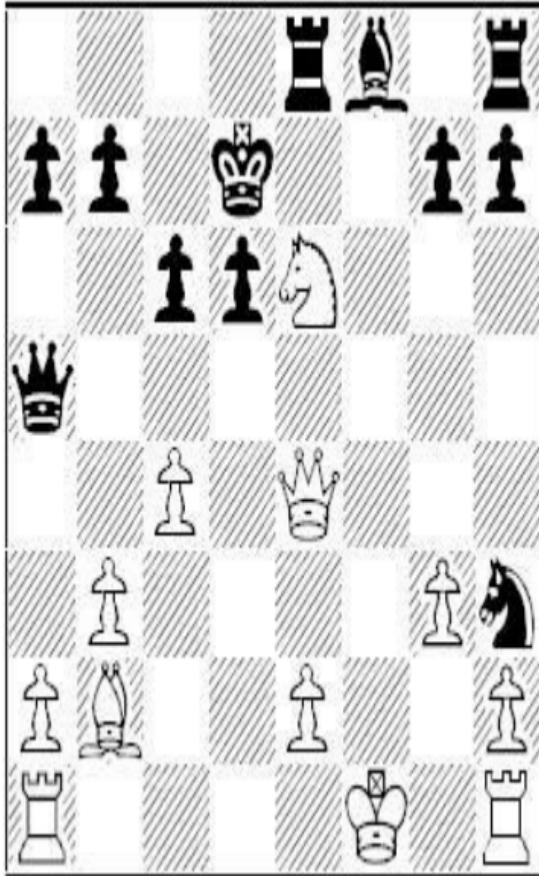
**14 Kf1 Ngxf2 15 Bxe6 fxe6**

**16 Nxe6 Kd7**

A good move, but 16 ... Qf5! is even stronger. After 17 Nc7+ Kd7 18 Nxa8 c5! 19 Qd5 (no choice since 19 Qe3?? Ng4+ 20 Qf3 Nd2+ hangs the queen) 19 ... Qxd5! 20 cxd5 Nxh1 21 Nh3 Be7 22 Kg2 Nhxg3 23 hxg3 Bf6! (Why not save his g-pawn? The a8-knight isn't

going anywhere.) 24 Bxf6 Nxf6 25 Rh1 Rxa8 the position clears with Black up a pawn and with a great position to boot.

**17 Nh3! Nxh3 18 Qxe4 Re8**



## **Exercise (critical decision):**

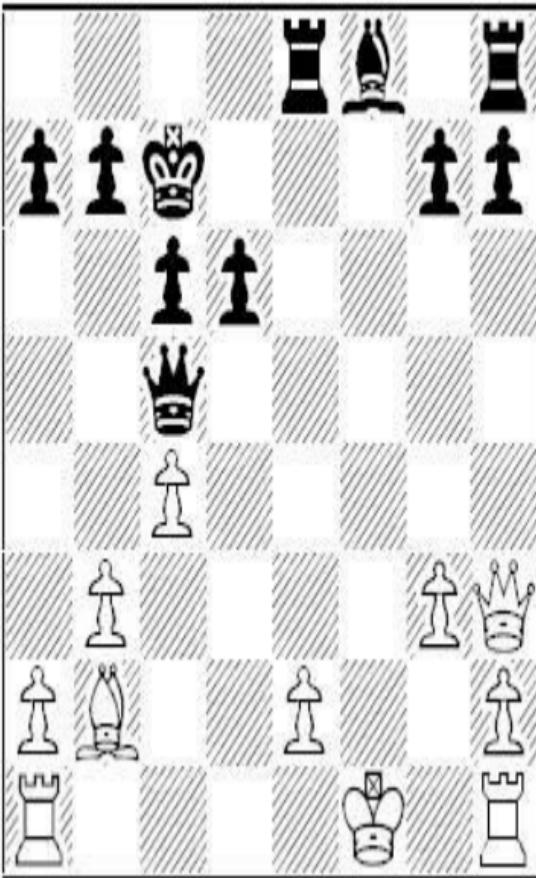
White must swap off his e6-knight for Black's h3-knight. Should

White play 19 Qg4 or  
19 Nc5+ Qxc5 and only then  
check on g4?

**Answer: 19 Nc5+!**

Only move. Hübner continues to put up fierce resistance in the face of the onslaught. If 19 Qg4?? Rxe6 20 Qxh3 Qd2 21 Ba3 Qxe2+ 22 Kg1 d5! things get ugly for White.

**19 ... Qxc5 20 Qg4+ Kc7 21 Qxh3**



**Exercise:** Black has a scary-looking development lead.  
How to exploit it to get at

White's exposed king?

**Answer:** Clear the f-file no matter the cost:

**21 ... Be7!**

I remember Korchnoi said playing Kasparov was like being in the ring with a boxer who carries a single deadly punch. Korchnoi claimed if he survived this punch he would be okay. In essence, Korchnoi claimed Kasparov was built like a musket, which carries just one shot. I never believed this theory. Here, one-shot Gary organizes the deadly second wave of the attack.

**22 Bxg7 Rhf8+!**

I repeat: No matter the cost!

**23 Bxf8 Rxf8+**

Rybka declares mate in 16 moves. Kasparov is the only human in the world who sees it.

**24 Ke1 Qf2+ 25 Kd1 Qd4+!**

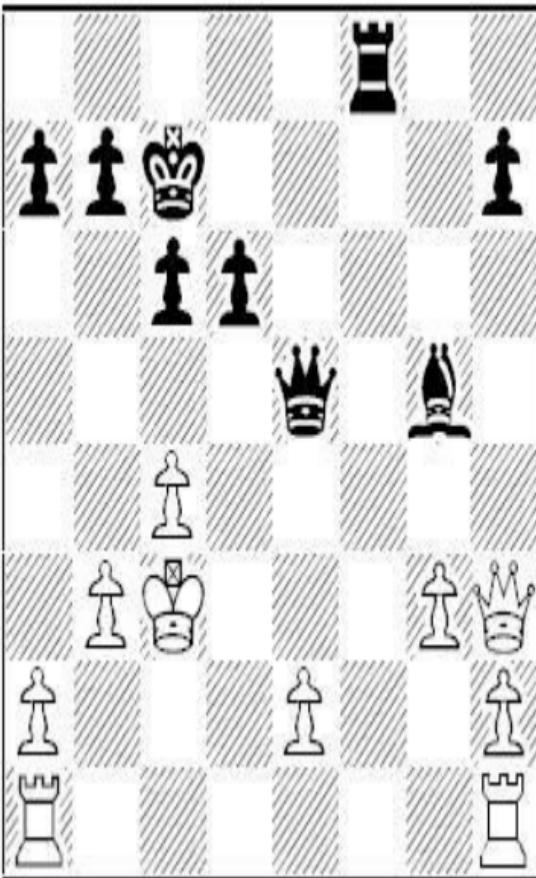
**26 Kc2 Qe4+! 27 Kd2**

If 27 Kc3 Qe3+! 28 Kb2 Qxe2+ 29 Ka3 d5+ 30 Ka4 Qd2! 31 a3 b5+! 32 cxb5 Kb6! (this move is cool; the king participates in the mating hunt) 33 b4 Qc2 mate!

**27 ... Bg5+ 28 Kc3 Qe5+! 0-**

**1**

Kasparov is a computer in such positions. He never goes astray in pure calculation situations like this.



**Exercise (calculation):** If you aren't too exhausted try to visualize this one: 29 Kb4 (or 29 Kd3)

Qe3+ 30 Kc2 Qxe2+ 31 Kb1 Rf2  
32 Qxh7+ Kb6 and nothing to be  
done for White's poor king)  
29 ... Kb6! (threatening mate on  
a5) 30 Ka3 Qa5+ 31 Kb2 Qd2+  
32 Ka3 Bf6! (threatening mate  
on a5 again) 33 Qh5 c5! and mate  
in two.

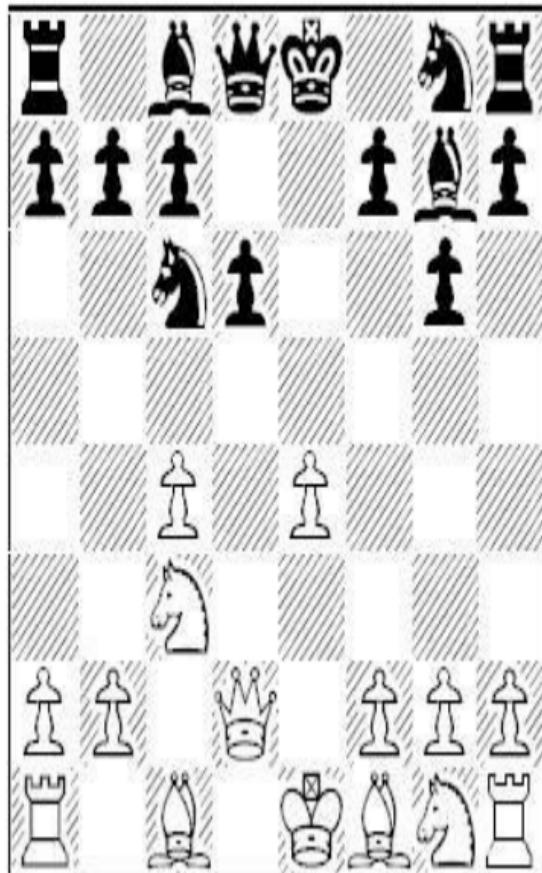
**Summary:** Play with Kasparovian  
vigour after 4 Qxd4. Utilize your  
development lead!

Game 44

**J.Mellado Trivino-J.Hodgson**  
Zaragoza 1993

**1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 Nc3**

Or 3 e4 exd4 4 Qxd4 Nc6 5 Qd2 g6 6 Nc3 Bg7 and now:



a) 7 Nf3 Nf6 8 h3 0-0 9 Bd3,  
J.Patino Romaris-M.Krasenkow,  
Ponferrada 1991. Black got  
excellent play with the plan ... Nd7,  
... Nc5, ... a5, when he was ready  
for ... f5. White wasn't ready for  
such a central confrontation since  
he lagged in development.

b) 7 Nge2 and now:

b1) 7 ... Nf6 8 f3 0-0 9 b3 Re8  
10 Bb2 Ne5, E.Moreno-A.Santos,  
Asturias 1999. The position looks  
equal and sharp after 11 0-0-0.

b 2 ) A suggestion for an  
improvement here: everyone  
develops their knights to f6, but  
why not e7 to keep the f-pawn free

to challenge with ... f5? 7 ... Nge7 8 h4! intending h5 may make this plan awkward for Black. Still, it looks very playable after 8 ... f5 9 h5 fxe4 10 Nxe4 Bf5 11 N2g3 Qd7 intending to castle queenside. I wouldn't mind Black here.

**3 ... exd4 4 Qxd4 Nc6 5 Qd2**

**Nf6 6 b3 Be6**

Intending ... d5.

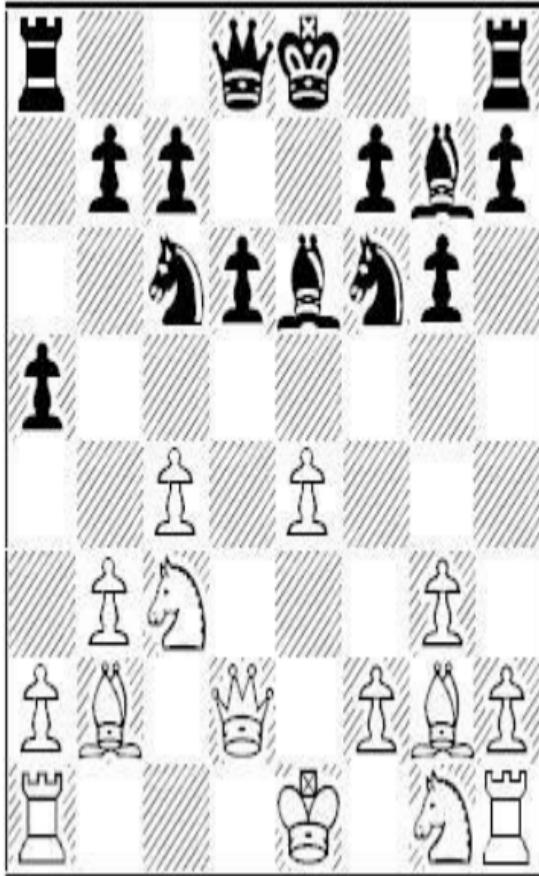
**7 e4**

Churchill said: "There are two kinds of success: initial and ultimate." White may claim success in the former with his space advantage. Yet this space cost him time. It is our job as Black to use

our development lead to claim ultimate success.

White must halt the ... d5 pawn break at all costs since he lags badly in development.

**7 ... g6 8 Bb2 Bg7 9 g3 a5  
10 Bg2**



**Exercise:** White kept careful watch over both ... d5 and ... a4 pawn breaks. If Black can't open

soon, White catches up in development and retains his space edge. What can Black do about it?

### **Answer: 10 ... a4!**

Anyway! Black exploits his development lead to its fullest potential.

### **11 Rb1**

Black's cute point: 11 Nxa4 is met with 11 ... Bxc4! achieving the following:

1. Black swapped his a-pawn for a much more valuable white c-pawn.
2. The removal of the c-pawn decreases White's grip on d5,

allowing Black more opportunities to engineer ... d5.

3. Black's bishop may decide it likes the f1-a6 diagonal and stay there.

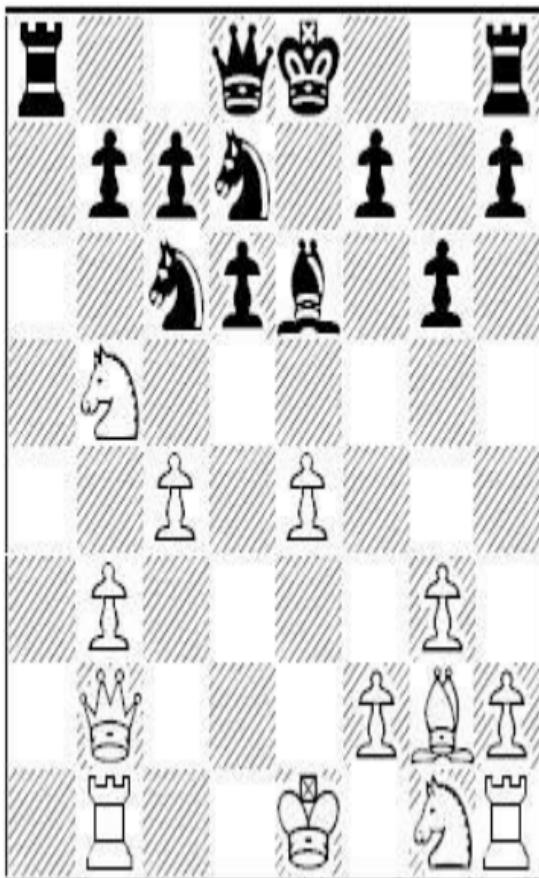
### **11 ... axb3 12 axb3 Nd7**

c5 and b4 have become squares of concern for White.

### **13 Nb5**

Hoping to take command of the a1-h8 diagonal. The depressingly passive alternative would be to curl up in a ball with 13 Nge2 Nc5 14 Bc1 h5! 15 h4 0-0 with advantage to Black, who has his eye on the following squares: b4, c5, d3, f3 and g4.

**13 ... Bxb2 14 Qxb2**



**Exercise:** Castling looks forced.  
Is there a superior alternative for

Black?

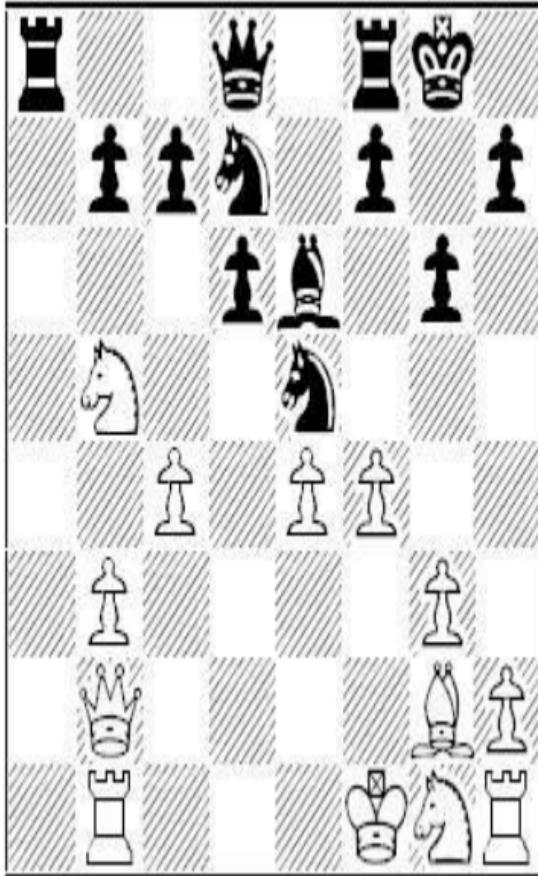
## **Answer: 14 ... Nce5!**

The nasty check on d3 takes precedence.

## **15 Kf1**

Now his h1-rook remains out of play for quite some time. The alternative 15 Qd4, threatening 16 f4, isn't very tempting either: 15 ... Ra2! (halting f4!) 16 Nc3 c5! 17 Qxd6 Qa5 18 Nge2 Rxe2+! 19 Kxe2 Qxc3 with advantage to Black.

## **15 ... 0-0 16 f4?**



## **Exercise (combination alert):**

White picks a fight  
before he is ready. How to

exploit this?

## **16 ... f5?!**

An admirable decision, following the chivalric code of attacking at all costs. Still, it's not the most effective.

**Answer:** Hodgson missed 16 ... Nxc4! 17 bxc4 Bxc4+ 18 Ke1 Ra2 19 Qb4 Bd3! (stronger than 19 ... Bxb5 20 Qxb5 Rxg2 21 Ne2) 20 Rb2 c5 21 Qc3 Rxb2 22 Qxb2 Qb6 regaining the piece with two pawns' interest.

## **17 Ne2!**

**Question:** Can't White get away with grabbing the knight on e5?

**Answer:** No. 17 fxe5? fxe4+ 18

Ke1 Nc5! 19 Rd1 (or 19 Bf1? dxe5 with a winning attack since 20 Qxe5? Rxf1+! 21 Kxf1 Qd3+ wins) 19 ... Nd3+ 20 Rxd3 exd3 and White's king is too exposed to survive.

### **17 ... fxe4 18 Bxe4 c6**

After 18 ... Nc5! White's king in terrible danger.

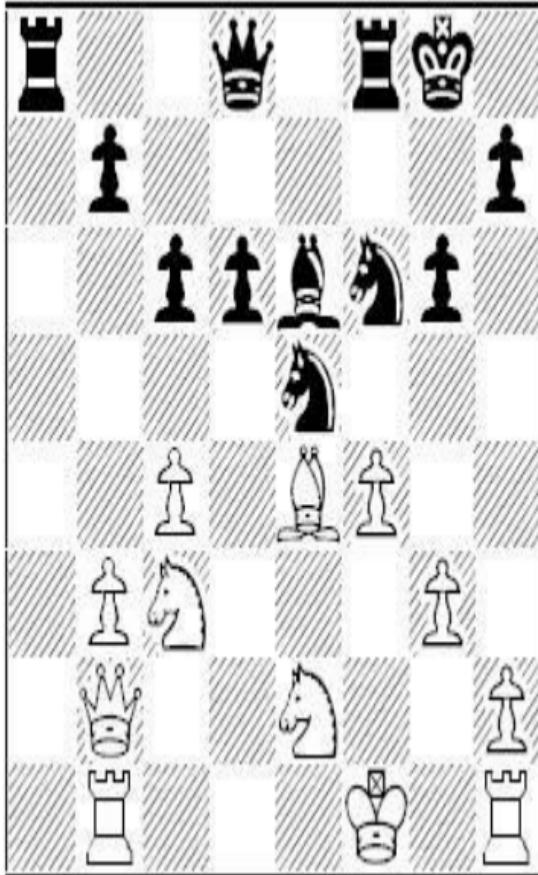
### **19 Nbc3?!**

There is no reason to decline the d-pawn. He had to try 19 Nxd6!.

### **19 ... Nf6**

What struck me now is how utterly inferior we humans are to computers in such positions. Hodgson attacks his opponent quite

effectively (for a human!) for the next 15 moves, yet along the way Rybka continually points out superior paths for both sides. The truth is logic, the human forte, loses much of its power in the realm of pure mathematics. The rest of the game is almost a reminder of lines unfulfilled, like unwashed dishes sitting in the sink. As the agent from the Matrix declared to Neo: "Only human."



**20 Bg2 Nfg4**

White's king gets overwhelmed after 20 ... Bf5! 21 Rd1 Nd3 22 Qd2

**Qb6 23 Nc1 Ng4!.**

**21 Nd1?!**

21 Nd4!.

**21 ... Bf5! 22 Ra1 Rxal**

22 ... Nd3! gaining a tempo on the queen was more accurate.

**23 Qxa1 Bc2! 24 Nf2 Nxlf2**

**25 Kxf2 Nd3+ 26 Ke3**

26 Kf3 Qg5! yields a winning attack.

**26 ... Re8+ 27 Kd2 Qe7 28**

**Nd4 Qe3+**

28 ... Bb1! 29 Qxb1 Qe3+ 30 Kd1 (30 Kc3 Nb4+! mates.) 30 ... Qxd4 leads to mate.

**29 Kxc2 Nb4+ 30 Kd1**



**Exercise:** We all realize Black is winning. Find the cleanest way.  
**Answer: 30 ... c5!**

White's knight, frozen to d4, can't move on pain of mate: 31 Nf3 Qe2+ 32 Kc1 Qc2 mate!

### **31 Qa4 Qxd4+ 32 Kc1**

By now the complications have subsided as we reach an exhausted aftermath, better known as the mop-up operation. White's king has no chance of survival with so many swarming black attackers nearby.

### **32 ... Qc3+ 33 Kb1 Re1+ 34 Rxe1 Qxe1+ 35 Kb2 Qd2+ 0-1**

It's mate in two.

**Summary:** In the 3 Nc3 line just remember our game plan: unabated harassment based on our

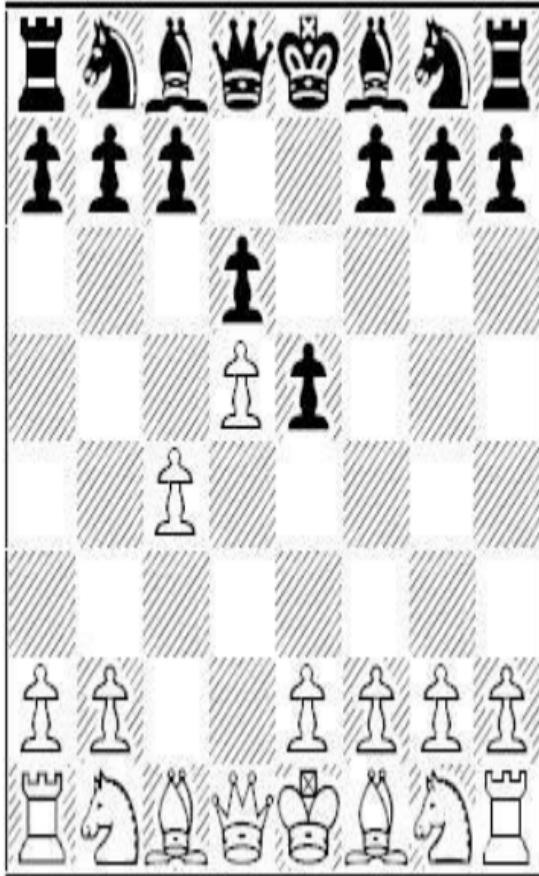
development lead.

Game 45

**V.Mikhalevski-G.Milos**

Cappelle la Grande 2000

**1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 d5**



White wants a Petrosian System King's Indian. Instead we give him a Dutch-style position.

### **3 ... f5**

Just to keep us within familiar territory.

**Question:** What are Black's other options?

### **Answer:**

a) 3 ... g6 is an attractive option since Black hopes to arrive at a good King's Indian with an unblocked f-pawn: 4 Nc3 Bg7 5 e4 Nd7 6 Bd3 Ne7 7 Nge2 (I would toss in 7 g4 to discourage ... f5) 7 ... f5, S.Foisor-Wang Yue, Gibraltar 2008. Normally in the KID Black's knight sits on f6 and to achieve ... f5 he must waste time moving it. No so here, as Black achieves ... f5

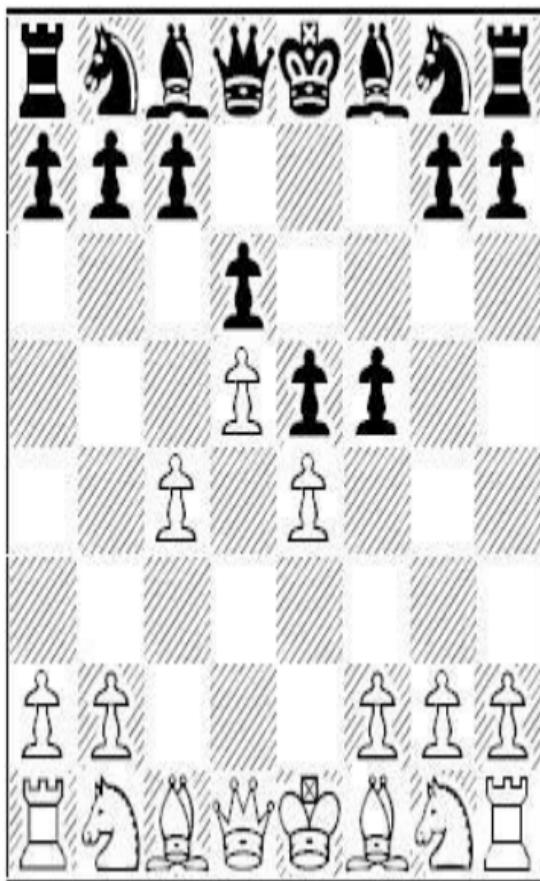
without time loss.

b) 3 ... Be7 hopes to unload the bad bishop via a swap on g5. 4 Nc3 a5 5 e4! White is willing to allow the swap. In exchange he gets a dangerous development lead. 5 ... Bg5 6 Bxg5 Qxg5 7 Nf3 Qe7 8 c5! A strong pawn sac applying the principle: open the game when ahead in development. E.Postny-F.Nijboer, Budva 2009, continued 8 ... dxc5 9 Nb5 intending d6 next, with a strong initiative.

c) I would avoid 3 ... Nf6. Why voluntarily block our f-pawn and acquiesce to a King's Indian or Old Indian when we have fewer

theoretical options available?

**4 e4**



**Question:** Isn't this really a

pawn sac from White?

**Answer:** Since he regains his pawn, the move really doesn't count as a sac. Our job is to make White strain so hard to regain it that he hands us equality in doing so.

Watch for this trick: 4 Nc3 Nf6 5 Bg5 Be7 6 e3? Nxd5! picking off a key central pawn, "daorange"-C.Lakdawala, Internet blitz 2010. A percentage of your opponents will walk into it.

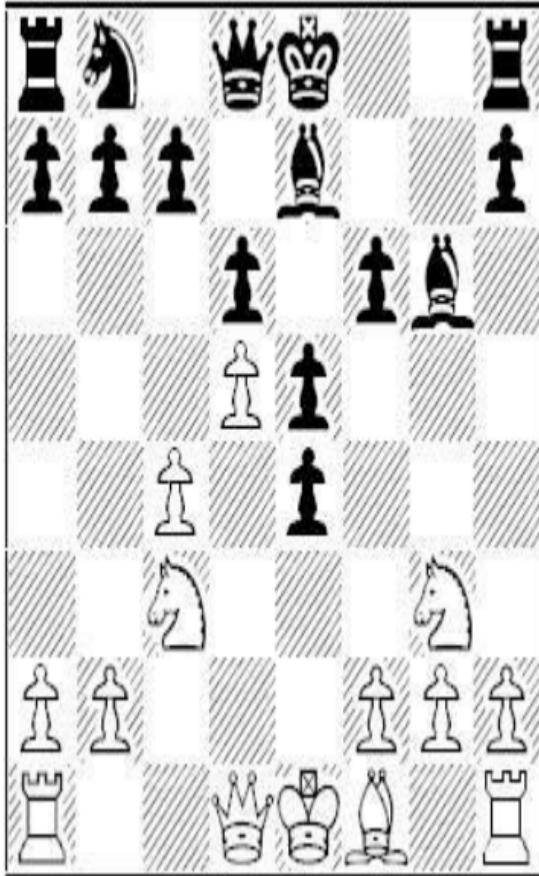
**4 ... fxe4 5 Nc3 Nf6 6 Nge2  
Bf5 7 Ng3 Bg6 8 Bg5!**

Superior to 8 h4, which we examine next game.

## **8 ... Be7 9 Bxf6**

It may be worth inducing ... h6 by tossing in 9 h4 first: 9 ... h6 10 Bxf6 gxf6 11 Qg4 (T.Minogina-C.Lakdawala, Internet blitz) 11 ... Rg8. Now White should take a repetition after 12 Qe6 Bf7 13 Qf5 Bg6. Instead 12 Ncxe4?! Qd7 favours Black, who seizes control over f5.

## **9 ... gxf6!**



**Question:** Recapturing with the pawn looks reckless.  
Why not recapture with the

bishop?

**Answer:** Flexible, not reckless. We fight for control over e4. By recapturing with the pawn we prepare ... f5. 9 ... Bxf6?! is just too obliging and gives White exactly what he is after: 10 Ngxe4 with a grip on e4.

## **10 h4!**

This disruptive move is White's only try for an advantage. After 10 Ngxe4?! f5 11 Ng3 Nd7 12 Bd3 e4 13 Bc2 Bf6 14 Ba4 0-0 Black has a dream King's Indian, D.Kosmas Lekkas-N.Ninov, Kalamaria 2006.

## **10 ... Qd7!**

Control over f5 is our goal in this

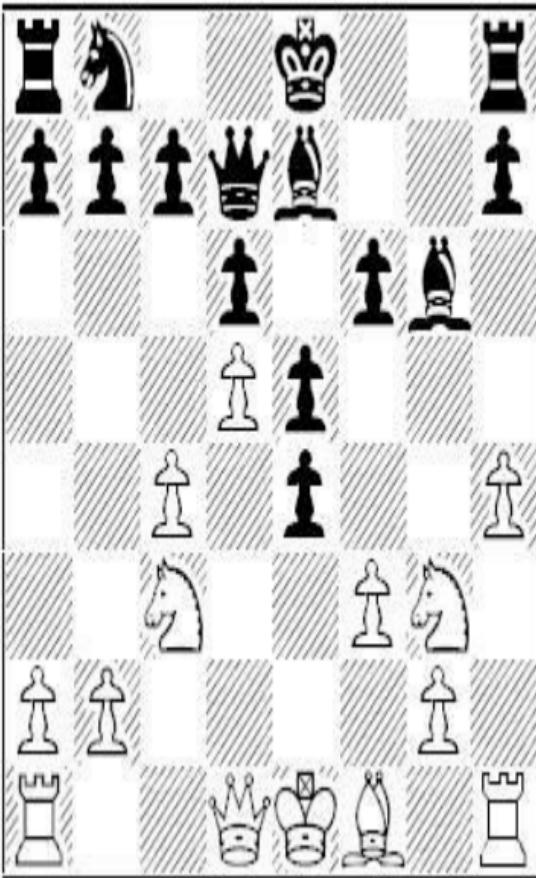
line.

**Question:** What about the b8-knight?

**Answer:** The knight will be activated via a6 and then on to c5 or c7, depending on how White plays it.

### **11 f3!?**

In pure gambit style. 11 h5 Bf7 12 Ngxe4 f5 13 Nd2 Rg8 14 g3 Na6 15 Qc2 looks like a nice King's Indian for Black, who has the bishop pair and mobile central pawns, Y.Gozzoli-S.Belkhodja, Evry 2003. 15 ... 0-0-0 is fine since 16 Bh3! is well met with 16 ... Rg5.



**11 ... f5**

I like 11 ... exf3!. If we are to be thieves, then let's be honest

thieves. Black runs off with a pawn in exchange for loss of control over the light squares. J.Kociscak-L.Voloshin, Prague 2007, continued 12 Qxf3 h5 13 Bd3 Bxd3 14 Qxd3 Qg4! 15 Nce4 Nd7 16 0-0 Rg8. Sure, White has a grip on the light squares. Still, I would rather be the pawn-up side.

### **12 h5 Bf7 13 fxe4 fxe4?!**

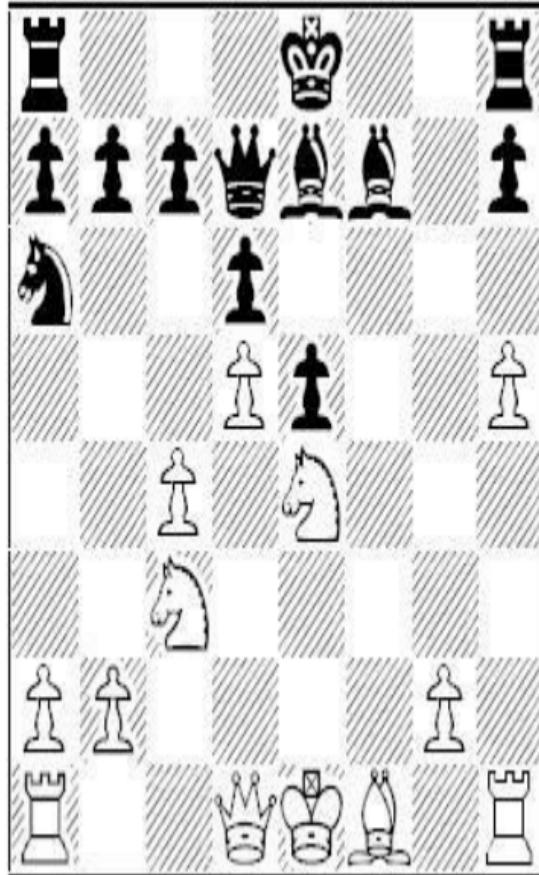
It may be a mistake to hand over e4 to White's pieces. Black should probably go for 13 ... f4! 14 Nf5 Rg8 15 Qf3 Na6. White may still stand a shade better even here.

### **14 Ngxe4**

I would have recaptured with

the other knight, maintaining control over f5.

**14 ... Na6**



**Exercise (planning):** Black plans to castle long next move. How can White thwart this plan?

**Answer: 15 g3!**

The Bh3 threat forces Black to castle kingside.

**15 ... 0-0 16 Bh3 Qe8 17 Bf5**

**Kh8 18 Qd2 Rd8!**

In order to back up d6 and follow with ... c6.

**19 0-0-0 c6 20 Rdf1 Bg8**

**Question:** White left his h-pawn hanging for

several moves. Is it worth grabbing?

**Answer:** I see the need for all

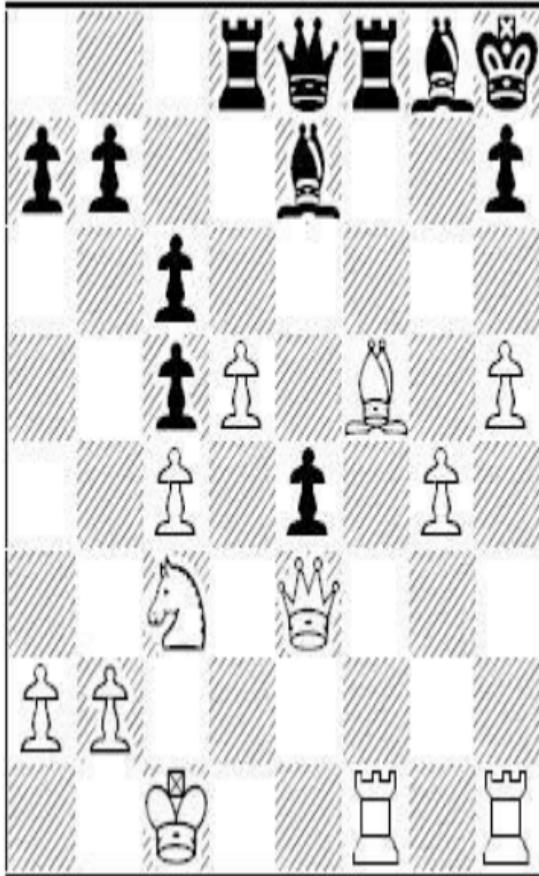
caps to emphasize the answer: NO! It is suicide to grab such a pawn in front of your castled king.

**21 g4 Nc5 22 Nxc5 dxc5 23**

**Qe3**

Having built up a powerful position White begins to slip. 23 g5! gives White a winning attack by disarming Black's uprising even before it begins. The key is to keep Black's bishop off the a1-h8 diagonal. Black's bishop isn't his best piece; it is, however, his most important piece.

**23 ... e4!**



Here is the ripple effect from White's decision on his last move. Black seizes upon his best practical

chance by attempting to activate his dark-squared bishop.

## **24 Nxe4?**

It's not too late to sabotage the implementation of Black's plan with 24 g5!, which gives White a winning attack – just as it did the move before.

## **24 ... cxd5 25 cxd5 Bf6!**

Taking advantage of the pinned e4-knight to bring his bishop into the game. This bishop, snubbed for so long, returns in a jealous rage and now auditions to play Othello.

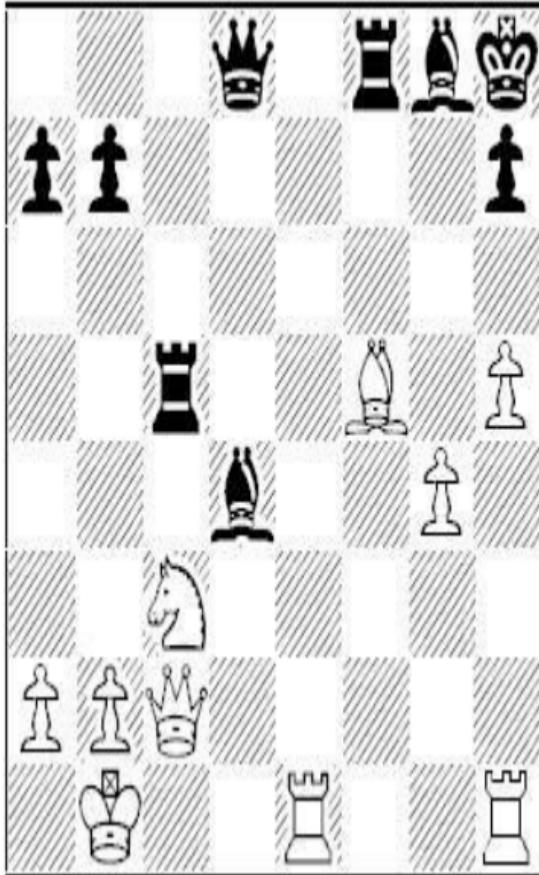
## **26 Qxc5 Rxd5 27 Qc2 Bd4**

Black is back in the game.

## **28 Re1 Qd8 29 Nc3?!**

This counterintuitive retreat loses the initiative. The best remedy for surviving an attack is to mindlessly centralize! Best was 29 Rd1 Qb6 30 Rhe1.

**29 ... Rc5 30 Kb1?**



## **Exercise (combination alert):**

Black has a path to winning the queen.

How?

### **30 ... Qa5**

**Answer:** 30 ... Bxc3! 31 bxc3

Rb5+ and now:

a) 32 Ka1 Bxa2! leaves White with the unpleasant choice of giving up his queen or facing annihilation.

b) 32 Kc1? Rxf5! 33 gxf5 Qg5+ 34 Qd2 Rb1+! 35 Kc2 Rb2+ wins the queen and mates in ten moves as a bonus.

### **31 Rh3?**

Looks like a time trouble blunder. White had to try 31 Be6! Rf2 32 Re2.

### **31 ... Bxa2+**

Not very hard to see. White's

knight is pinned.

## **32 Kc1 Bg8**

32 ... Bf6! threatening a nasty check on g5 is the most efficient path.

## **33 Qd2?**

Making matters worse.

## **33 ... Rd8! 34 Qc2**

Or 34 Rd3 Bxc3 35 bxc3 Qa1+ 36 Kc2 Bb3+! 37 Kxb3 Rb5+ 38 Kc4 (38 Kc2 Rb2 mate) 38 ... Qa4 mate.

## **34 ... Bf6! 0-1**

The unanswerable threat is ... Bg5+.

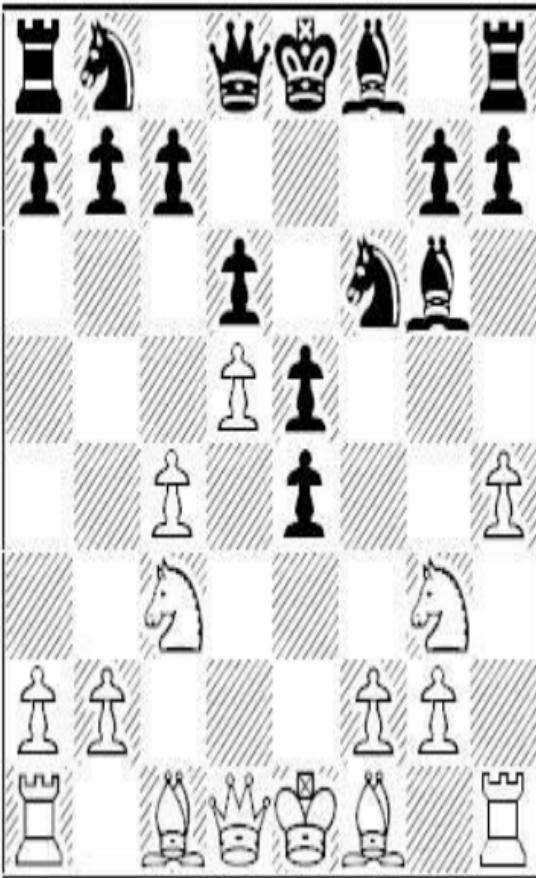
**Summary:** When White offers us a pawn with 11 f3!? we should accept

the offer. Returning the pawn allows White to keep an edge. Also, if you have a King's Indian background, then go with 3 ... g6 which may give Black a favourable version.

## Game 46

**T.Paunovic-D.Solak**  
Vrnjacka Banja 2006

**1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 d5 f5 4 Nc3  
Nf6 5 e4 fxe4 6 Nge2 Bf5 7 Ng3  
Bg6 8 h4**



Foregoing  $Bg5$ . White prepares to chase off a protector of  $e4$ .

**8 ... h6**

Ignoring the problem doesn't make it go away. 8 ... Be7?! 9 h5 Bf7 10 Ncxe4 gave White what he wanted in R.Tuominen-T.Nippula, Finnish League 2003: he regained his pawn and controls e4.

**Question:** Is pushing the h-pawn two squares playable?

**Answer:** 8 ... h5!?, admittedly radical, is also probably playable. 9 Qe2 Be7 10 Bg5 Na6 11 Ngxe4 Nxe4 12 Nxe4 Bxg5 13 Nxg5 Qf6 14 Ne4?! Bxe4 15 Qxe4 Nc5 16 Qc2 e4 left Black dangerously ahead in development in M.Koch-A.Schirbel, correspondence 2002.

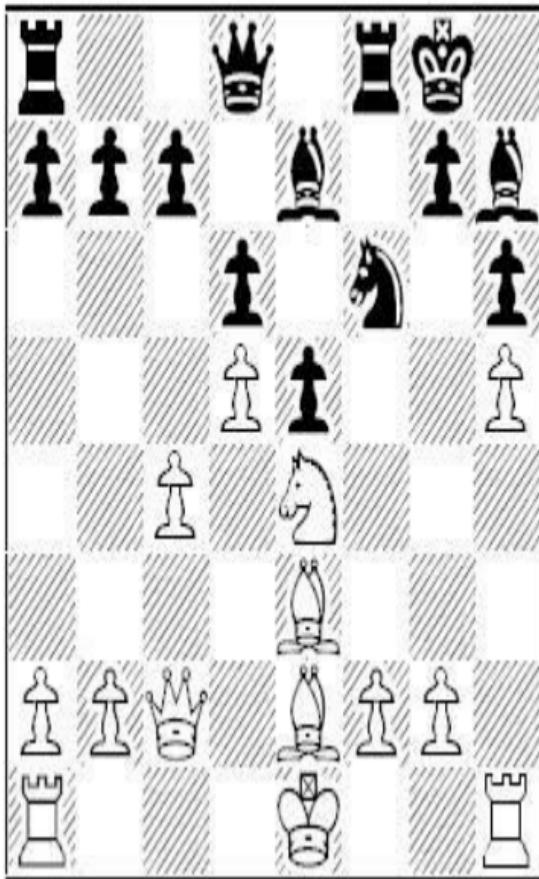
**9 Be3**

**Question:** Why not 9 Qc2 regaining the pawn immediately?

**Answer:** It's easy for White to fall behind in development in this line if he single-mindedly pursues that e4-pawn. 9 ... Na6 10 Ncxe4 Nxe4 11 Nxe4 Nc5 12 Bd3 Nxd3+ 13 Qxd3 Be7 14 h5 Bh7 15 Be3 0-0 16 0-0-0 c6 was V.Teofilovic-O.Biti, Portoroz 2004. I prefer Black, who pins the e4-knight and has the safer king since White's g4-g5 break looks next to impossible to implement.

**9 ... Be7 10 h5 Bh7 11 Be2 0-0 12 Qc2 Nbd7 13 Ngxe4 Nxe4 14 Nxe4 Nf6**

Continually challenging e4.



**15 Nxf6+ Bxf6**

**Question:** You said the fight for

e4 is critical.

Why not sac a pawn with 15 ... gxf6 16 Bd3 f5 17 Bxh6 Rf7?

**Answer:** Fight for e4, but also be aware of the cost, which in this case is too high. You gave up a pawn and also the pawn cover around Black's king.

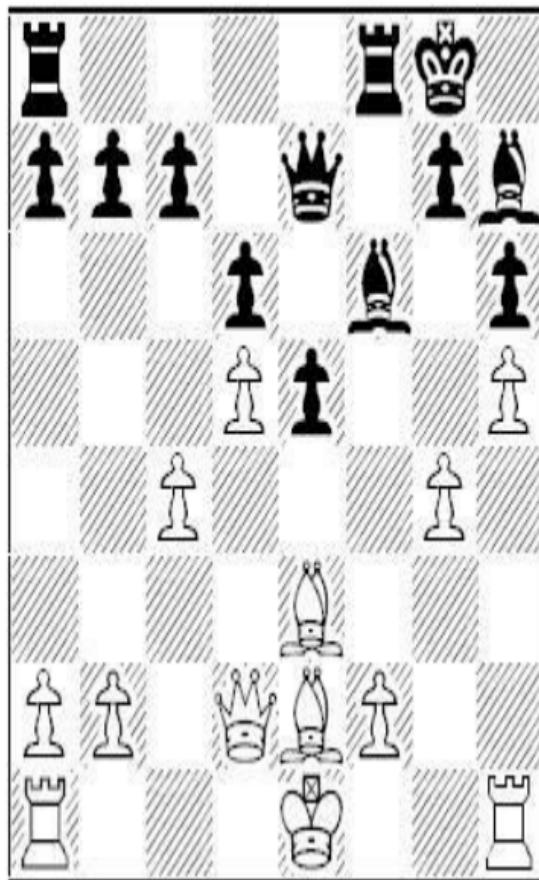
## **16 Qd2**

**Question:** Why not back up the e4-square with 16 Bd3?

**Answer:** White doesn't have time to move his bishop a second time since he already lags in development. After 16 ... Bxd3 17 Qxd3 Bg5 White has a dilemma over where to put his king, since 18

0-0-0?? loses to 18 ... Rxf2.

**16 ... Qd7 17 g4 Qe7!**



Taking control over g5 seals

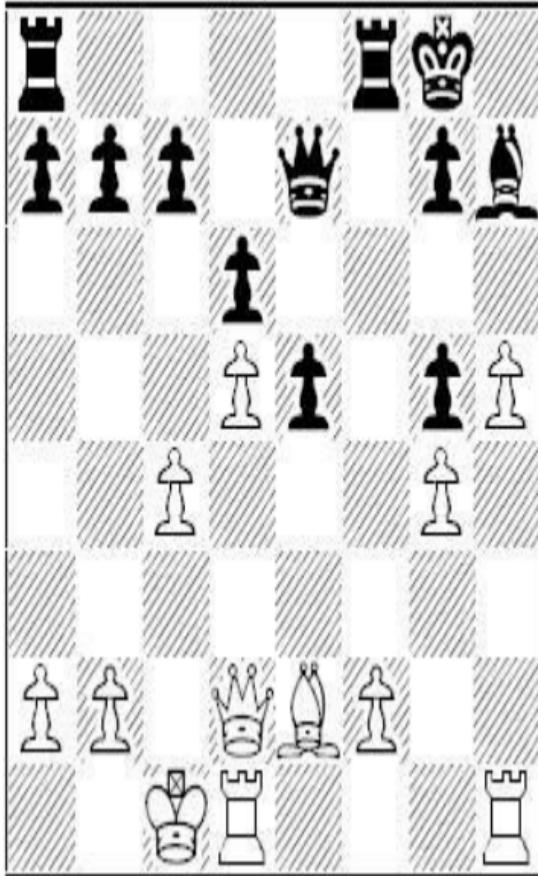
Black's advantage. Black stands better despite appearances. White's attack isn't going anywhere and it slowly becomes clear that Black has both attacking chances and the superior structure.

**18 0-0-0 Bg5 19 Bxg5**

**Question:** Should he swap queens or take back with the pawn?

**Answer: 19 ... hxg5!**

This bold move, keeping queens on the board, is the superior choice and shows good judgment. Black's king is not in danger.



## **Exercise (multiple choice):**

The road reaches a fork  
and it's time for White to choose

his path:

- a) 20 Qe3: hunker down for a long, passive defence;
- b) 20 h6: sac his f-pawn and go for it by opening the h-file.

## **20 h6?**

**Answer:** White overestimates his nearly non-existent attacking chances. He has to protect with 20 Qe3! Rf4 21 Rd2 a6. Black's advantages:

- 1. He controls f4.
- 2. His f4-rook eyes targets on f2, g4 and c4.
- 3. He may build for a queenside attack with a well-timed ... c6 or ... b5.

4. White has no constructive way of improving his game and must simply await events.

Conclusion: Unpleasant pressure on White. Still, he puts up far more resistance in this line than with his choice of the pawn sac.

## **20 ... Rxf2**

In some societies there are the haves and the have mores! There is no reason not to take the offered pawn.

**Question:** I disagree with your unemotional assessment.

Why not take a bold stance and go down fighting with the pawn sac?

**Answer:** In the words of Master Po: "Sometimes one must cut off a finger to save a hand." Your argument would be correct if there was indeed even a trace of an attack, but I see none. Black retains all his advantages, plus the extra pawn you just gave him. White's chances to hold the game are much higher in the passive line. We must learn to avoid giving in to the flux of feelings in a game. Instead, gather the data and go where it takes us. Even when it's not to our liking, logic still rules over emotion in this game.

**21 hxg7 Qf6!**

Idea: ... Qg6. Black's last move was more accurate than 21 ... Qxg7 22 Rh5.

## **22 Qe3 Kxg7 23 Rh5 Bg6!**

He invites the rook into g5 as an honoured guest and then a few moves later indentures his guest, and makes him wash the windows and clean the toilets!

## **24 Rxg5**

Self-trapping his rook, but White's position is so bad by now that his move isn't even an error. 24 Rh3 Qf4 25 Kd2 Rf8 is also completely hopeless for White who remains down a pawn with a miserable position.

**24 ... Qf4 25 Qxf4 Rxf4**

An execution date has been set for the g5-rook.

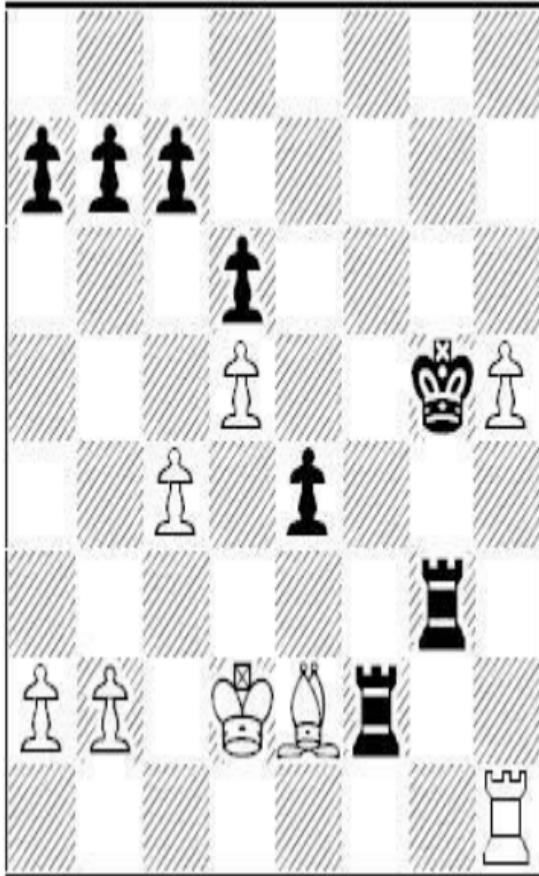
**26 Bd3 e4 27 Be2 Kh6 28**

**Rh5+ Bxh5 29 gxh5 Rg8**

A model of efficiency: Black's rooks control both open files while his king blockades the passed h-pawn.

**30 Kd2 Rg3 31 Rc1 Rf2 32**

**Re1 Kg5 33 Rh1**



**Exercise (planning):** Can you come up with a clear, multi-step plan to ensure

victory?

**33 ... Rgg2**

**Answer:** Step 1: Tie White's king and rook down in the pin.

**34 Re1 Kf4**

Step 2: Prevent Ke3 and put White close to zugzwang.

**35 b3 a5 36 Kd1**

He can't keep going with the pawn moves since 36 a3 Rg3 prepares to mow down the queenside.

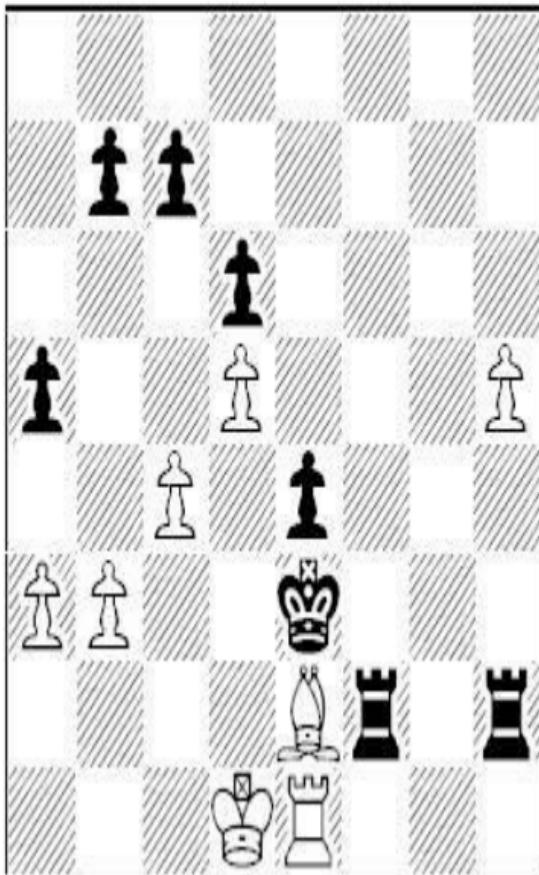
**36 ... Rh2**

Step 3: Zugzwang. Get our rook behind the passed h-pawn which prevents future cheapos.

**37 a3**

37 Kd2 drops the h-pawn to 37  
... Rxh5.

**37 ... Ke3 0-1**



Step 4: We don't fear ghosts and infiltrate with our king. The finish would run something like 38 Bf1+ Kf3 39 Kc1 Ra2 (threatening mate on a1) 40 Kb1 Rhb2+ 41 Kc1 Ra1+ 42 Kxb2 Rxe1.

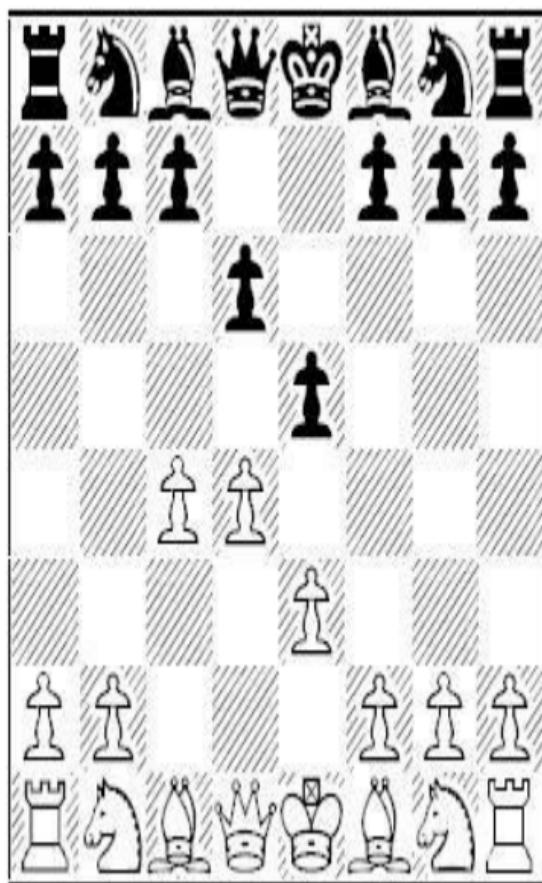
**Summary:** White expends so much energy regaining his lost e-pawn that it gives Black ample time to equalize. Also, Black's play down the open f-file compensates him fully for White's control over e4.

Game 47

**M.Saud-M.Himdan**

Tanta 1997

**1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 e3**



Not one of the more intimidating

lines from our perspective. White wants to play a Reversed French versus our King's Indian Attack.

**Question:** My problem is I don't play the King's Indian Attack – much less one down a move. Is there a way for me to avoid the KIA?

**Answer:** No, but how about the next best thing? We force a very good KIA for Black, which we get with:

**3 ... Nc6!**

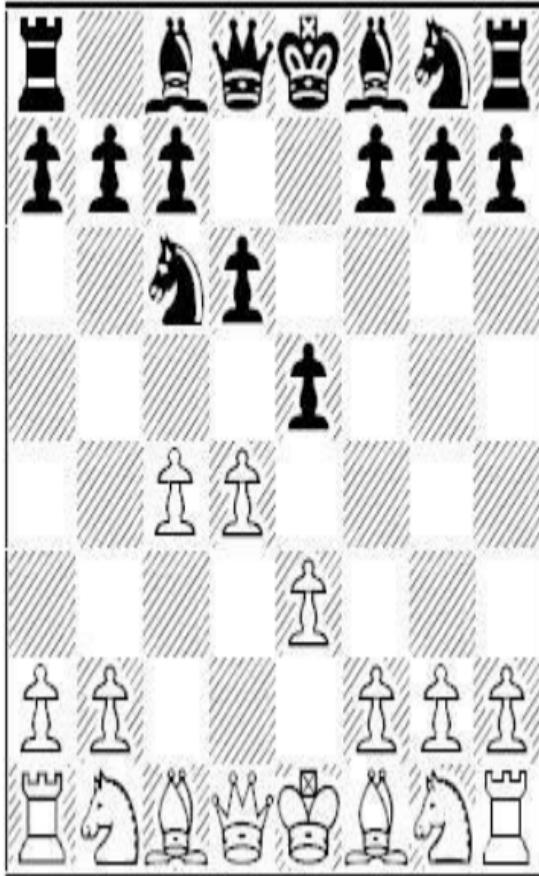
**Question:** Why is this a superior version?

**Answer:** Normally French versus KIA goes 1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3

Nd2 c5. Notice the difference. Our knight is now placed on the more promising c6-square. This square is so much better than d7 because on c6 the knight adds pressure to White's centre.

**Question:** What if White just pushes on the knight with d5?

**Answer:** Then we give White his old headache: the King's Indian a move down. Later on he will want his e-pawn on e4. He takes two moves to play a move he could have played in one, leaving us up a tempo.



**4 Nc3 g6 5 Nf3**

A couple of alternatives we shouldn't fear:

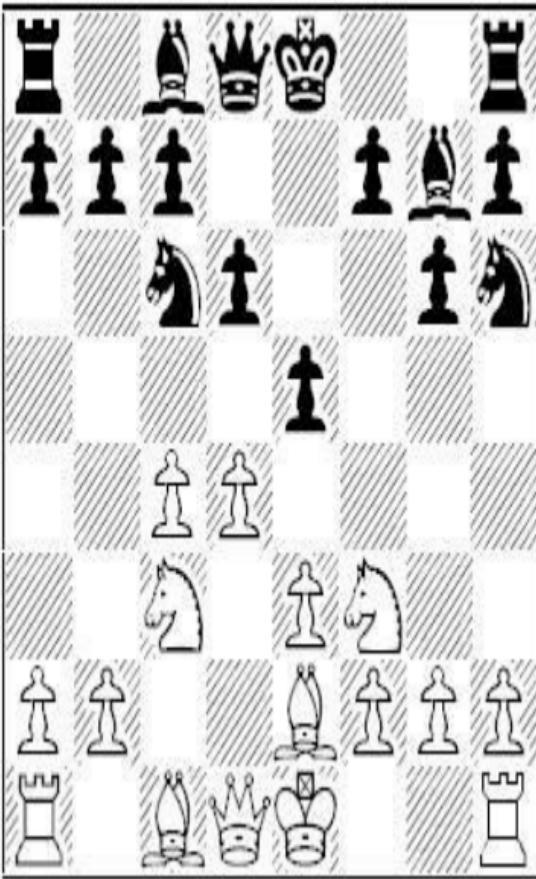
a) J.Timman-A.Yusupov,

Wolvega 2006, continued 5 d5 Nce7  
6 f4! (Timman cleverly avoids the  
rote 6 e4?! which leaves him down  
a move in a normal King's Indian) 6  
... Bg7! (I believe Timman's idea  
lay in the line 6 ... exf4 7 Qd4! – an  
awkward move for Black – 7 ... f6 8  
exf4 Bg7 9 Nf3 Nh6 when maybe  
White stands a shade better, but  
even here Black's position is fully  
playable) 7 fxe5 Bxe5 (Yusupov is  
willing to give up a tempo in order  
to control e5; 7 ... dxe5 8 e4  
resembles Game 33) 8 Nf3 Bg7 9 e4  
Nf6 10 Be2 0-0 11 0-0 Bg4 12 Ne1  
Bxe2 13 Qxe2 Nd7 and Black's

control over e5 gives him a reasonable position.

b) 5 dxe5?! is so insipid that it comes close to reaching the lameness of the 3 dxe5?! line we looked at earlier: 5 ... dxe5! (this is an ending we want) 6 Qxd8+ Nxd8 7 b3 Ne6, A.Miles-V.Liberzon, Bad Lauterberg 1977. Black can seize central space much easier than White.

**5 ... Bg7 6 Be2 Nh6!**



**Question:** Why did Black purposefully decentralize his knight?  
**Answer:** He targets d4, via f5,

with the King's Indian goal to force White into a resolution of central tension.

## **7 0-0**

Or 7 dxe5 dxe5 8 0-0 Nf5 9 Qc2 0-0 10 Rd1 Bd7 11 Bd2 Qc8 12 Nd5 Re8 13 Bc3 Nce7 14 Nxe7+ Rxe7 15 Rd2 c5 16 Rdd1 Bc6 with an equal position – until White's next move: 17 Nd2? Nd4! left White in serious trouble in W.Hug-R.Hartoch, Biel 1979.

## **7 ... 0-0 8 d5?!**

White, seeing the coming build-up with ... Bg4, ... exd4 and ... Nf5, gives in and heads for the old, down-a-move King's Indian path. It

was better to settle for 8 dxe5 and hope for equality.

## **8 ... Ne7 9 e4**

With 9 b4 White decides to make the best of it and play a b4 KID with his pawn on e3 rather than e4. Note also that Black is clear to play ... f5 without first having to move a knight from f6. I would focus on the king's wing with the immediate 9 ... f5. If White then tries to occupy e6 we respond with 10 Ng5 Nf7 11 Ne6? Bxe6 12 dxe6 Ng5 picking off the straggler on e6.

## **9 ... f5?!**

Played by Black in every single game in the database from this

position. Yet, the move may be premature. I would play 9 ... f6 10 Bd2 Nf7 (first watching over g5) 11 Rc1 and only now play 11 ... f5.

## **10 Ne1?!**

Now it really is a KID a full move or even more down for White. White should seize his chance and pounce on e6 with 10 Ng5! f4 (10 ... fxe4 11 g4! wrecks Black's intention to plant a knight on d4) 11 Ne6! Bxe6 12 dxе6 Nc6 13 c5! Nd4 (White stands better after 13 ... dxc5 14 Qb3 Kh8 15 Qxb7 Nd4 16 Bc4, M.Malac-I.Novak, Bratislava 1990) 14 Bc4 Kh8 15 cxd6 Qxd6 16 Ne2 f3 17 Nxd4 fxg2 18 Kxg2 exd4

with great complications. I don't believe White is any worse here, despite his airy king. His bishop pair and advanced e-pawn are meaningful.

## **10 ... f4**

The autopilot KID attack: ... g5, ... g4 and ... mate!

## **11 Rb1?!**

The rook is meaningless on the b-file. White should play for two goals:

1. Aim for a c5 break.
2. Slow down Black's ... g4 break.

For example, 11 Bd2 g5 12 f3 Rf6 13 Rc1 Nf7 14 Nd3 intending b4

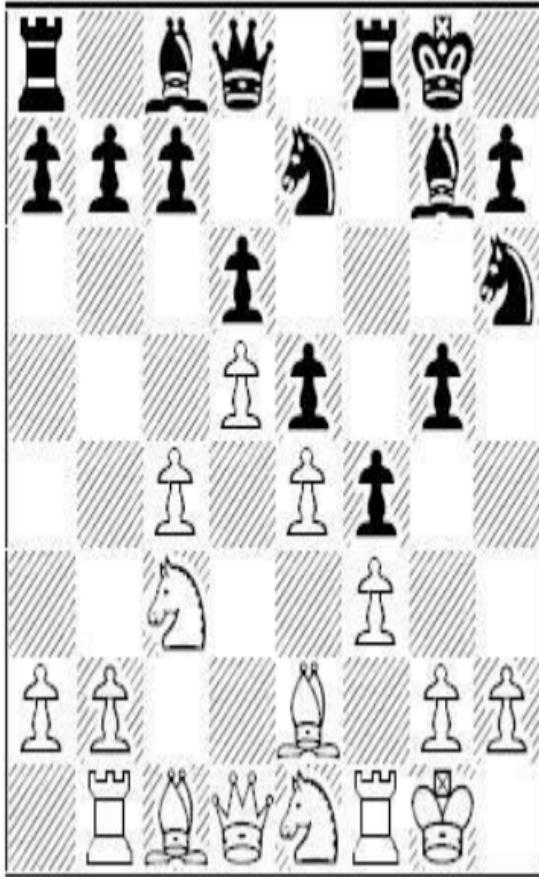
and c5 on offence, and Nf2 and h2-h3 to stall ... g4 for defence. White can also play for g2-g4 to get some breathing room around his king, which is a typical plan in such KID structures.

**11 ... g5 12 f3**

**Question:** What if White keeps his options

of Bg4 open and plays 12 h3?

**Answer:** Black attacks in the following way: 12 ... Ng6 13 b4 Nh4 14 c5 Bd7 15 a4 Qc8! menacing both ... g4 and also sacs on h3.



**Exercise (planning):** Black needs to achieve the ... g4 break. How should he arrange his

pieces?

**Answer: 12 ... Kh8!**

He clears g8 for his knight, in order to get to f6.

**13 b4 Neg8! 14 c5 Nf6 15 Nd3**

**Question:** Should he try to stall Black and temporize with 15 h3?

**Answer:** Probably so. Play may continue 15 ... Rg8 16 Nd3 Nf7 17 Nf2 h5 18 a4 Nh6 19 Ba3 g4 and Black's kingside attack looks fast. Rybka, who continually gives White the edge, is at its weakest in assessments of such positions.

**15 ... g4 16 a4 g3!?**

I would play 16 ... Rg8 retaining

the tension.

## **17 hxg3**

If 17 h3 Black can set up a piece sac for the two pawns surrounding White's king with 17 ... Nf7 18 Ba3 Ng5.

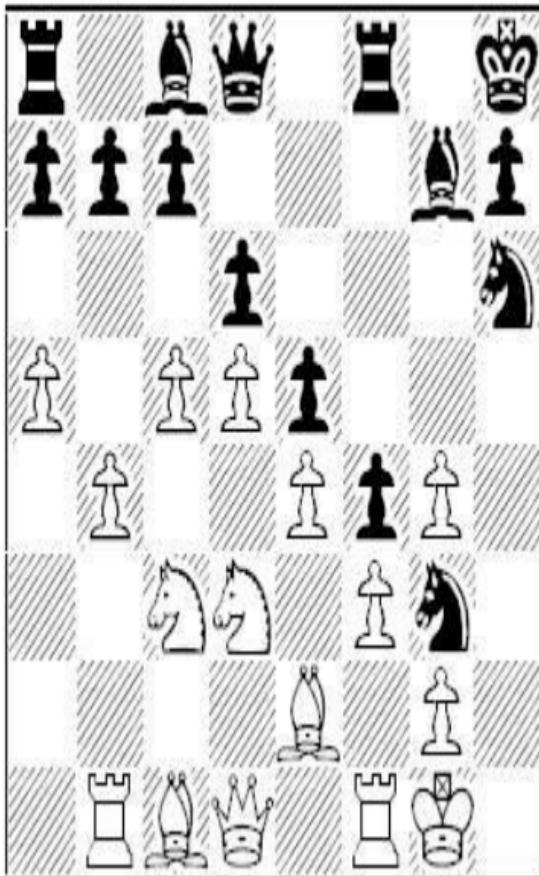
## **17 ... Nh5!**

As Mr. Burns from The Simpsons is so fond of saying: "Release the hounds!" Such sacs are standard operating procedure in the KID.

## **18 g4?!**

I would apply the principle "Counter in the centre when attacked on the wing", play 18 gxf4 exf4 19 Bb2 Ng3 20 Qd2 and then pray for the safety of White's king.

**18 ... Ng3 19 a5**



**Exercise:** Should we take the money and grab the

exchange on f1, or retain our knight for the attack?

## **19 ... Qh4**

**Answer:** Of course! Black's titan on g3 is worth far more than White's lame f1-rook, which Black should decline with contempt.

## **20 Nf2**

White intends to seal the kingside with Nh3. How to meet this blockade idea?

## **20 ... Nf7!**

This multipurpose move cuts White's plan off at its knees:

1. Black opens the path for ... h5.
2. Black also has ... Ng5 options

to meet the h3 blockader.

3. When Black's knight reaches g5 he clears the path for ... Rf6! and ... Rh6!.

## **21 Nb5**

The queenside attack comes a day late and a dollar short. If 21 Nh3? h5 22 Nb5 hxg4 23 fxg4 Nxg1 24 Qxf1 Qe7 Black consolidates and remains up material.

## **21 ... Ng5 22 Re1**

22 Nxc7 Who cares? 22 ... Rf6! also gives Black a winning attack.

## **22 ... Rf6! 23 Bf1 Rh6**

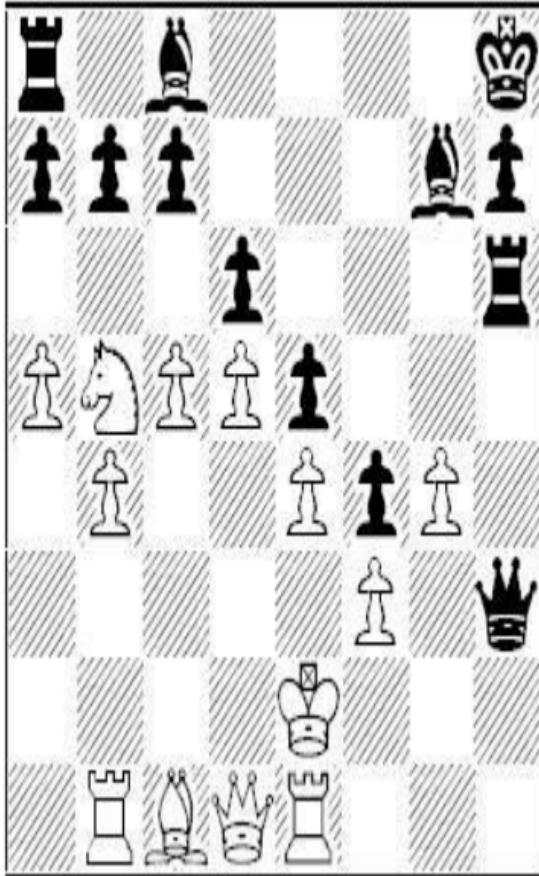
Just look at Black's attackers! Queen, knights and rook quiver with power and each harbour ambitions

to surpass the others in their thirst for blood.

**24 Nh3 Nxh3+ 25 gxh3 Nx<sub>f</sub>1**

**26 Kxf1 Qxh3+ 27 Ke2**

We are going down. Abandon ship!



**Exercise:** White's king dreams of escaping to safety to the queenside. Can he?

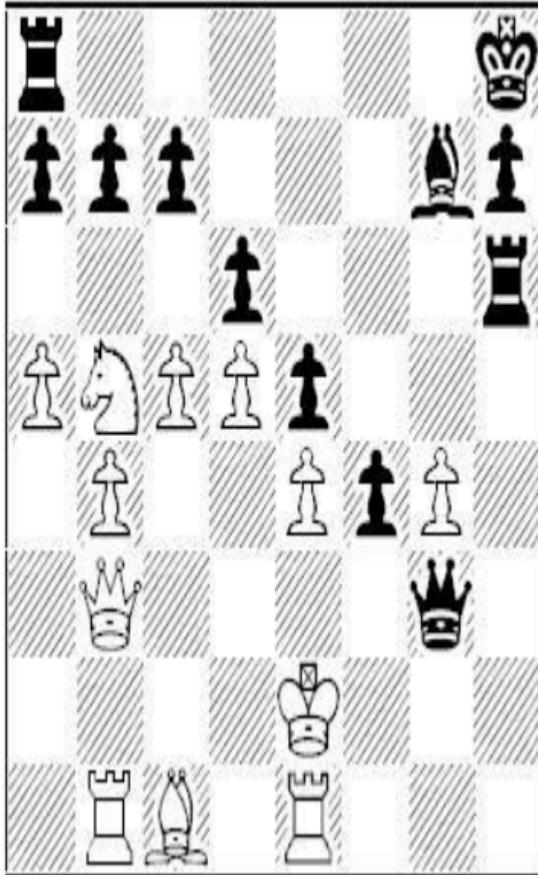
**27 ... Bxg4!**

**Answer:** No. This sac destroys the remaining pawn cover around White's king and goes after the tenderloin of White's structure: f3.

**28 fxg4 Qg3!**

Clearing h2 for the rook to join in.

**29 Qb3 0-1**



**Exercise (calculation):** Mate in four moves.  
Work it out without moving the

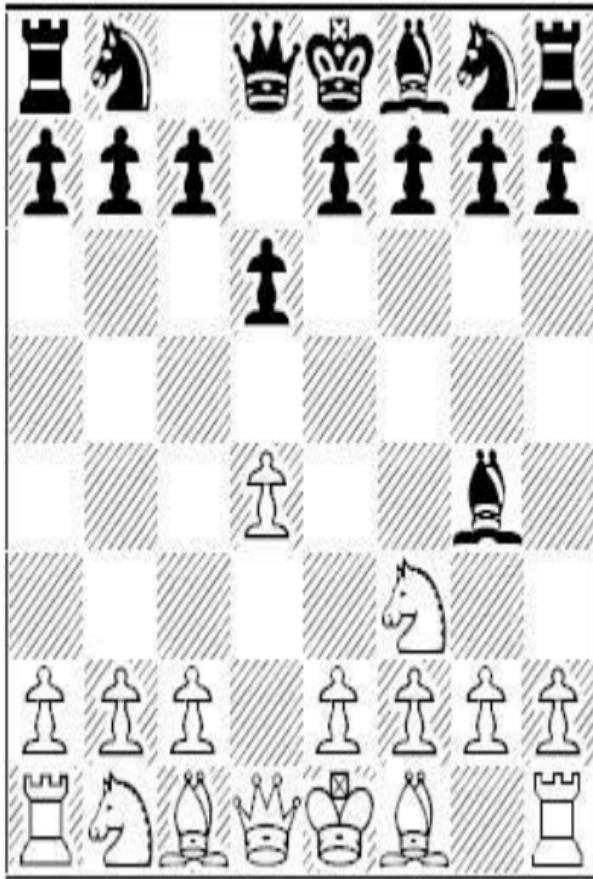
pieces.

**Answer:** 29 Qb3 Rh2+ 30 Kd1 Qxg4+ 31 Qf3 Qxf3+ 32 Re2 Qxe2 mate!

**Summary:** 3 e3 is met by 3 ... Nc6!, a favourable version of the Reversed King's Indian Attack.

# **Chapter Seven**

## **The Wade Variation: 1 d4 d6 2 Nf3 Bg4**



This line is named after IM Robert Wade, who championed an

unusual plan to create an early imbalance. As usual, White tries to stick to his classical queen's pawn script, and as usual, our goal is to disrupt. In this book we cultivate odd ideas like greenhouse plants, so you shouldn't be surprised when we override the rule of chess law and develop our bishop (before our knights) to g4, in order to swap it for a knight and puncture his hull on f3. By taking on f3, next move (in Trompowsky style) or later on, we hope to ruffle the smooth fabric of White's position. Whether he recaptures with e-pawn, g-pawn or even his queen (which weakens d4

as in Game 50), in each case White also gives up something in exchange for the bishop pair.

I realize some readers may be ideologically suspicious of such a plan, but bear with me. Some advantages of the Wade Variation:

1. It is strategically combative and we create an imbalance from the start.

2. We immediately evict our opponents from their theoretical comfort zones. Can you think of another opening where Black gets White thinking on move three?

3. We retain a super-fluid pawn structure which bends to our will,

similar to the structures we attain in Chapter One but even more fluid. Just go through the games in this chapter, paying close attention to Black's structural changes, to get a feel for what we are after.

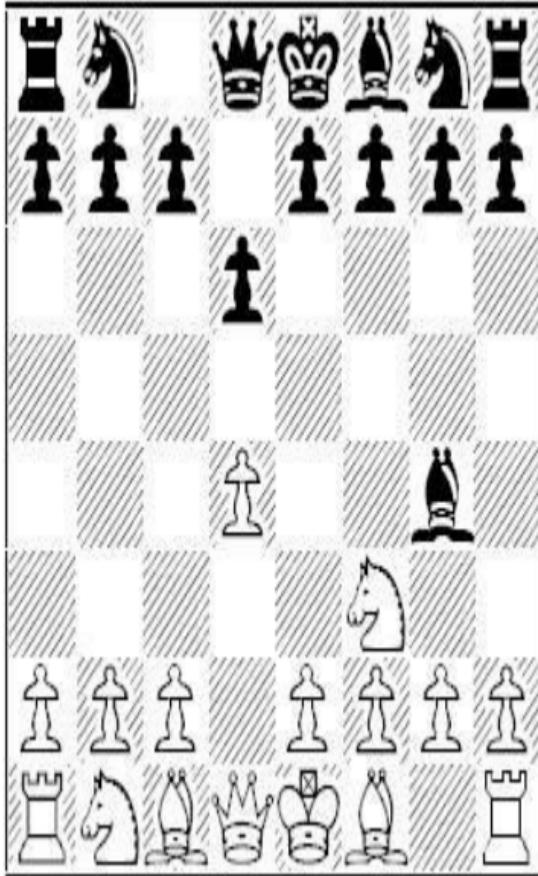
4. Stats have Black scoring 47%, slightly above average.

Game 48

**P.Nielsen-P.Svidler**

Copenhagen (rapid) 2010

**1 d4 d6 2 Nf3 Bg4**



### 3 c4

The main move. White doesn't fear ... Bxf3 and continues in typical

fashion, grabbing more central territory. This chapter we focus on 3 c4, 3 Nbd2 and 3 e3 lines. The following is a cascade of sidelines:

a) 3 c3 may transpose to 3 Nbd2 and 3 e3 lines. 3 ... Nd7 (you can also take on f3, which sharpens the game) 4 Qb3 Rb8 5 Nbd2 Ngf6 6 g3 e6 7 Bg2 Be7 8 0-0 0-0 9 a4 c5 10 e4 d5! 11 e5 (White should probably go for 11 exd5 Nxd5 which is also quite comfortable for Black) 11 ... Ne8 was I.Charkhalashvili-K.Shanava, Tbilisi 2007. Black's g4-bishop sits on the outside of its pawn chain, while White's fianchettoed bishop on g2 hits a

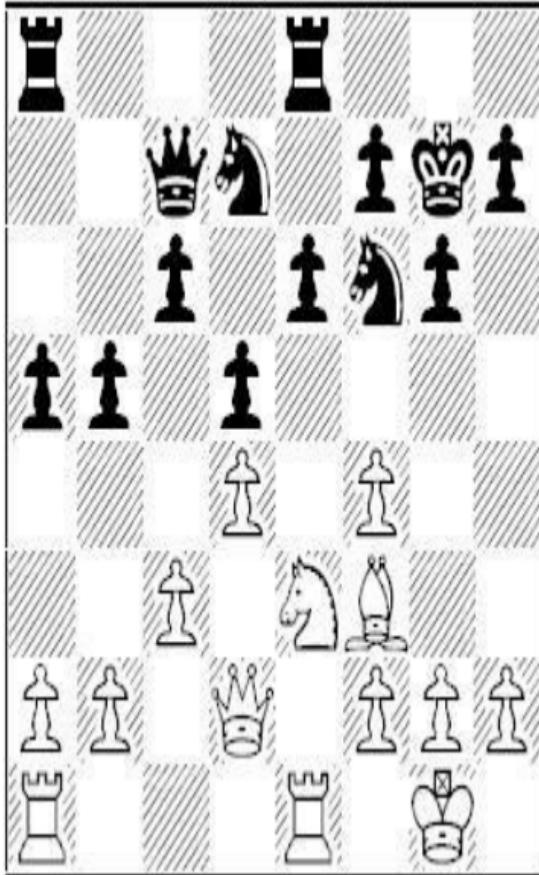
wall on d5 and his queen is misplaced on b3. White is in an odd Advanced French position and has equality at best.

b) We welcome 3 h3 since we planned to capture on f3 unprovoked. After 3 ... Bxf3 4 exf3 g6 5 c3 Nd7 6 Be3 Bg7 7 Qb3 Qc8 8 Bc4 (Black wants ... e6 and ... d5 anyway, so this turns out to be a loss of time) 8 ... e6 9 0-0 Ne7 10 Re1 d5 11 Bf1 0-0 12 Nd2 Black got a nice Reversed Trompowsky with ... c5 coming in K.Arnold-C.Lakdawala, San Diego (rapid) 2011.

c) 3 Qd3?! misplaces the queen

in the hope for cheapos on b5. 3 ... c6 ends that dream, and after 4 e4 Nf6 5 Nbd2 e6, as in S.Lagrotteria-A.Miles, Toscolano 1996, we get a position similar to those in Chapter One with the difference being White's silly queen move to d3!

d) There's nothing wrong with 3 Bg5 but it fails to bother Black, who simply ignores it: 3 ... Bxf3 4 exf3 g6 5 c3 c6 6 Qd2 Nd7 7 Na3 Ngf6 8 Be2 Bg7 9 0-0 0-0 10 Bh6 Re8 11 Bxg7 Kxg7 12 Nc4 Qc7 13 Rfe1 a5 14 f4 e6 15 Bf3 b5 16 Ne3 d5, M.Hossain-Z.Rahman, Dhaka 2008.



Again Black emerges with a favourable Reversed Trompowsky with ... c5 coming.

e) 3 g3 Bxf3 4 exf3 e6 followed by ... d5. Mission accomplished: Black exchanged off his bad bishop and now switches the structure to favour his remaining bishop.

f) 3 Bf4 Bxf3 (Black chops right away before White tosses in his other knight to d2 to get the boring position he is after) 4 exf3 Nd7 5 Nc3 c6 6 Bc4 (I love when they provoke ... d5, the move we want to play!) 6 ... d5 7 Bb3 e6, M.Vasilev-A.Delchev, Dupnica 1998. Mission accomplished once more. White's bishop on b3 looks lost and confused.

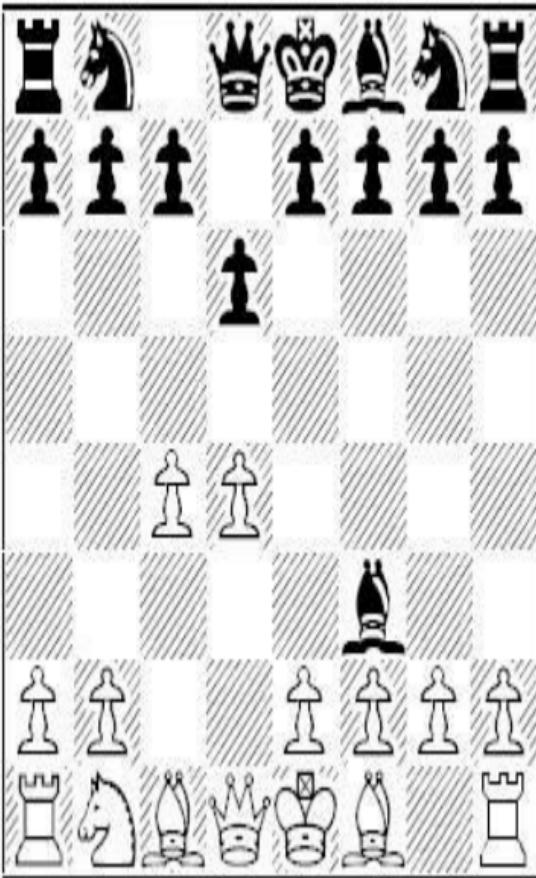
g) 3 b3 Bxf3 4 gxf3 (if 4 exf3 g6

5 Bb2 Bg7 6 Qd2 d5 and Black follows with ... e6 and ... Ne7 with at least equality, D.Stobik-Z.Ksieski, German League 1995) 4 ... g6 5 Bb2 Bg7 6 e4 e6! 7 Nc3 Ne7 8 Qd2 c6 9 0-0-0 d5, F.Adell Corts-L.Gomez Cabrero, Burjasot 1997. The rigid structure favours Black's knights in this sharp position.

**Question:** Why didn't you mention the obvious 3 e4?

**Answer:** Because after 3 ... Nf6 4 Nc3 we transpose back to Chapter One. The Pribyl/Rat/Wade variations can be baffling. Keep a sharp eye out for transpositions.

**3 ... Bxf3!?**



**Question:** Why would Black give up his bishop pair unprovoked?

**Answer:** In some openings, like

the Trompowsky and QGD Chigorin, players adhere to the golden rule: "Take unto knights before you would take unto bishops." I admit taking unprovoked is a risky business and not to every reader's taste, but we also get something for it: We slightly damage White's pawn structure. Also, we immediately create an imbalance. If you are the higher-rated player with Black and desire to spice up the game, this is not such an easy thing to accomplish in openings like the Exchange French and Exchange Slav.

**Question:** What if I'm not so

interested in creating  
an imbalance and want to keep  
the bishop pair?

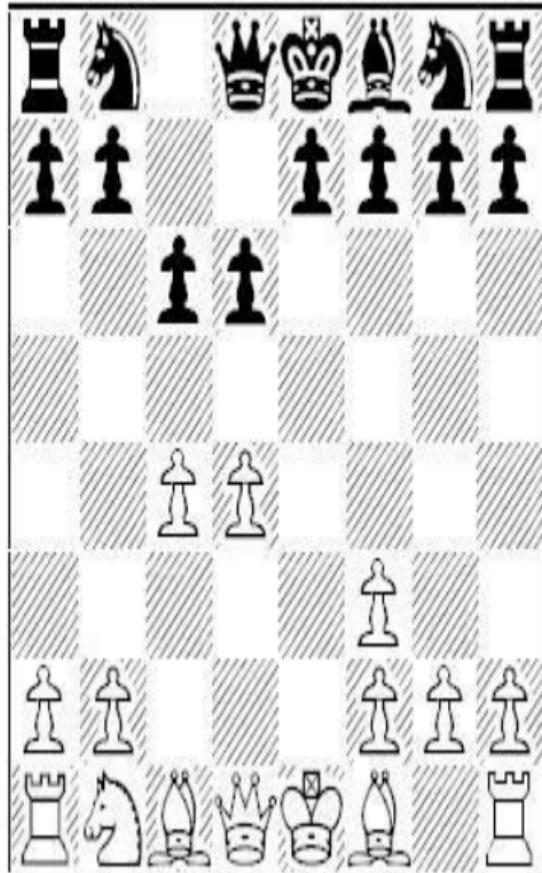
**Answer:** If your goal is equality, then you have a better (and safer!) chance of reaching it with 3 ... Nd7, which we examine in Game 50. But even in that line Black simply delays taking on f3 and ends up doing so later. By taking now we deny White future Qxf3 (or Bxf3) options and sharpen the game.

#### **4 exf3**

Logical. White captures away from the centre, enhancing development and opening the e-file

for his rooks. We look at 4 gxf3 next game.

**4 ... c6**



**Question:** Could you explain this odd-looking move?

**Answer:** Qb3 ideas must be taken into account. By playing 4 ... c6, Black opens a space for the queen on c7 just in case White tosses in Qb3.

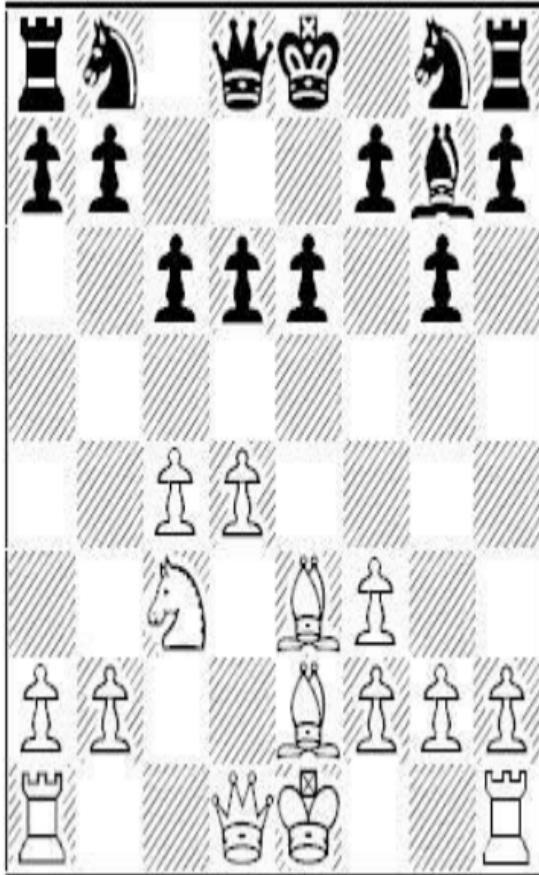
4 ... g6 is also playable since we meet 5 Qb3 with 5 ... Nc6!. After 6 d5 (Black looks good after 6 Qxb7!? Nxd4) 6 ... Nd4 7 Qd1 Bg7 8 Nc3 c5 White's Qb3 adventure turned out to be a waste of energy in J.Yrjola-E.Torre, Manila Olympiad 1992. Black's powerfully anchored d4-knight makes up for White's bishop pair and extra space.

4 ... Nd7 is another legitimate option. Black clears b8 to defend b7 with a rook. J.Pryor-C.Lakdawala, San Diego (rapid) 2011, continued  
5 Bg5!? (annoyingly preventing ... e6) 5 ... g6 6 Qd2 Bg7 7 Nc3 c6 8 g3 Ngf6 9 Bh3 0-0 10 0-0 (if 10 d5 Black gets counterplay with 10 ... Ne5 11 Qe2 Qb6! – threatening a trick on b2 – 12 0-0 Qb4!) 10 ... d5 11 Bxf6?! (playing for a draw based on the opposite-coloured bishops) 11 ... Nxf6 12 c5 e6 13 b4 b6 14 Na4 Nd7 15 f4 a5 16 a3 axb4 17 axb4 bxc5 18 bxc5? (he had to recapture with the knight) 18 ... Qf6 19 Rfd1 Rfb8 20 Kg2 h5 21 Kh1 Ra7

22 Qc2? Rb4 23 Nb6 Rxa1 0-1.

White drops a couple of pawns.

**5 Nc3 g6 6 Be3 Bg7 7 Be2 e6?!**



## **Exercise (multiple choice):**

Black's last move was  
an inaccuracy. How can White

exploit this?

a) 8 d5, based on the principle:

Open the game when ahead in development;

b) 8 Qb3, based on the principle:

Create confrontation when leading in development.

At times it's easy to get carried away with our love of unconventional flexibility and forget about other things – namely development! Here is what Black had in mind:

1. Reach a Reversed Trompowsky "V" formation with ... d5 next.

2. Keep White guessing about which central pawn he pushes forward.

3. Develop the knight to e7, which keeps the bishop's diagonal open and also clamps down on the f5-square, in case White had ideas of a future f5 push.

4. All well and good, but Black also falls seriously behind in development, which overrides numbers 1, 2 and 3!

Black looks okay after the more sober 7 ... Nf6! 8 d5 (White rushes to play this move before Black does the same and plays ... d5) 8 ... Nbd7 9 0-0 0-0 10 Qb3 Qc7 11 Rac1

a6 12 Rfe1 Rfc8, V.Dobrov-R.Hasangatin, St Petersburg 2002. Black's position remains flexible and target-free. Still, White's space and bishop pair give him a slight edge.

## **8 d5**

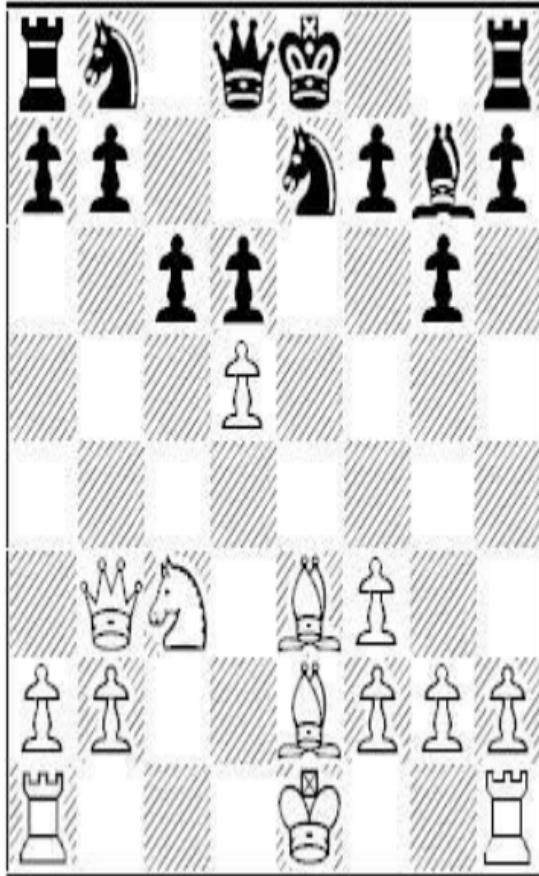
The second best move. He later plays Qb3, but the order should be reversed.

**Answer:** 8 Qb3! forces Black to weaken with 8 ... b6 (8 ... Qc7?! is met with 9 Ne4! which threatens the sneaky shot 10 Qxb7!) and now 9 d5!, R.Vera Gonzalez Quevedo-P.Villalba Izquierdo, Valencia 2002. Black finds himself in serious trouble, behind in development and

lacking the bishop pair with the game opening rapidly.

**8 ... exd5 9 cxd5 Ne7 10 Qb3**

White is reluctant to toss in the pawn exchange 10 dxc6 bxc6 11 0-0 0-0 12 Re1 d5. Black's compensation for White's bishop pair is greater central influence, a passed d-pawn and a healthy central majority, as opposed to White's damaged majority on the kingside.



**10 ... Qd7**

**Question:** This blocks his b8-knight's path. Should he go to c7

instead?

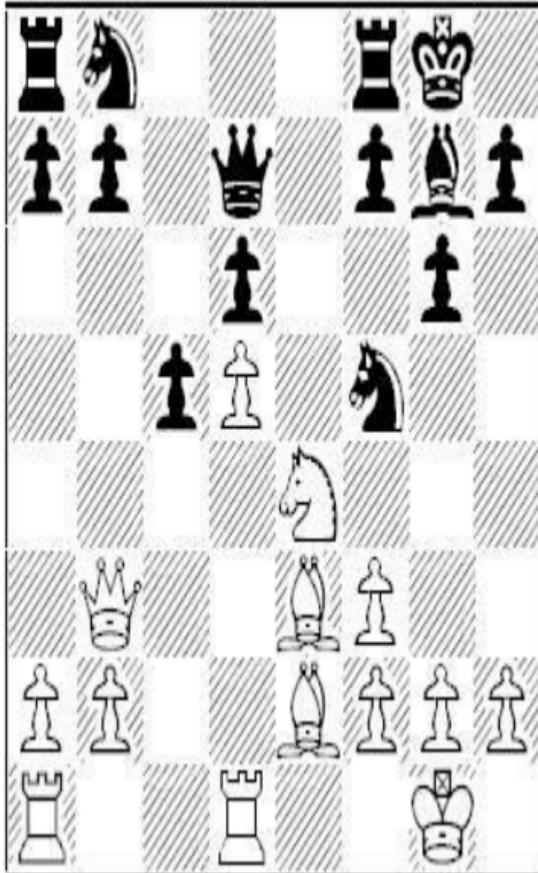
**Answer:** It's not a good idea to have your queen on the same file as your opponent's rook. Black must continually look over his shoulder for tricks after 10 ... Qc7 11 dxc6 bxc6 12 Rc1! though I admit the queen on d7 might face a rook on d1. In essence, it's an unpleasant choice for Black no matter which way he goes.

**11 0-0 0-0 12 Rfd1 Nf5 13**

**Ne4**

Black is at least equal in the line 13 dxc6 bxc6 14 Bf4 d5 15 Bd3 Nd4 16 Qa3 a5.

**13 ... c5**



**Exercise (planning):** White needs a target. Should he go after d6 or f6?

This opening appears in many incarnations due to the incredible flexibility in the pawn structures. In this case we land in a strange Benoni. An assessment:

1. Black's majority on the queenside may later roll, whereas White can't make good use of his extra pawn on the kingside.
2. Black owns the d4-square.
3. The f6-square may spell trouble for Black. White has gang-up ideas like Ne4 and Bg5.
4. The d6-square is also a problem area for Black. White has the plan Ne4 and Bf4.

Conclusion: White's dynamic

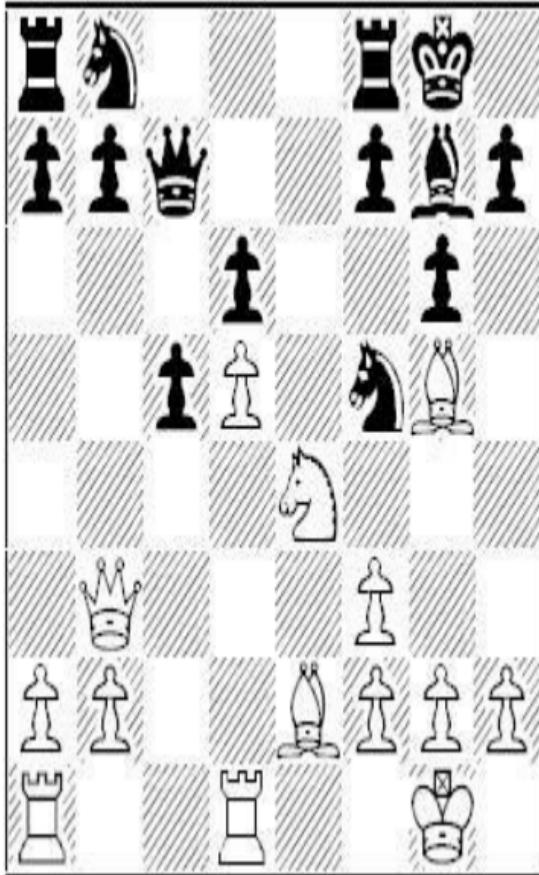
chances based on d6 and f6 are worth slightly more than Black's long-term structural advantages.

## **14 Bg5**

**Answer:** White should go after d6, the softer target. 14 Bf4! puts Black under strain. For example, 14 ... Qc7 15 g4 Nd4 16 Rxd4 Bxd4 17 Bxd6 regains the exchange with interest, while 14 ... Nd4?! 15 Rxd4 Bxd4 16 Bxd6 looks awful for Black.

## **14 ... Qc7**

Clearing d7 for his b8-knight. White gets compensation for the exchange after 14 ... Nd4 15 Rxd4! Bxd4 16 Bf4!.



**15 Bf6**

Going wholeheartedly after f6.

**Question:** Why can't White

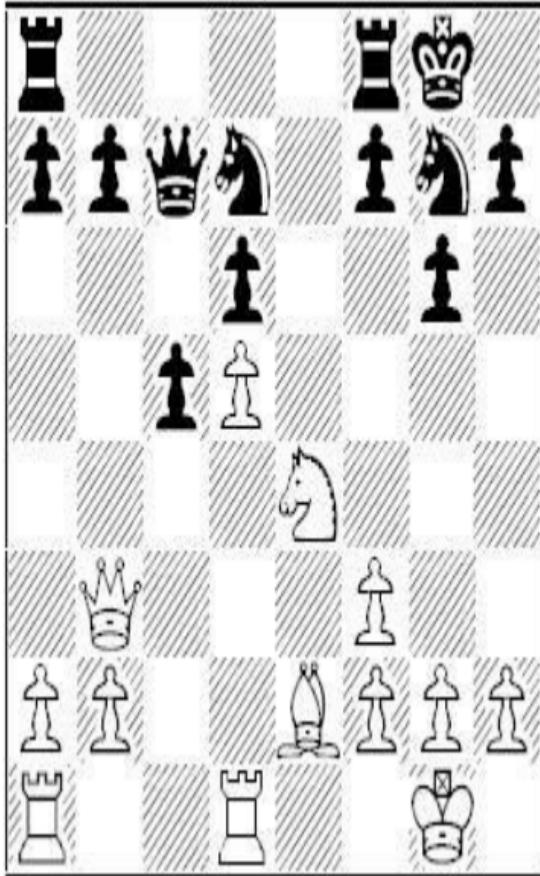
come charging

in with the forcing line 15 Nf6+?

**Answer:** It's probably in Black's favour after a line like 15 ... Kh8 16 Qa4 Nd4 17 Bf1 b5! 18 Bxb5 h6 19 Bh4 g5 20 Ne8 Rxe8 21 Bxe8 gxh4 22 h3 Qb7.

### **15 ... Nd7 16 Bxg7 Nxg7**

Black would like to recapture with his king, preserving d4 for his knight, but there is a tactical problem: 16 ... Kxg7? 17 Qc3+ f6 18 g4! spells trouble for Black. White is about to play Ng5 and takes advantage of the fact that 18 ... Nd4?? loses instantly to 19 Rxd4.



17 Bb5!

White tries to eliminate his bad bishop and goes after a defender of

f6. Once he lands his knight on f6 it will be difficult for Black to eject the intruder.

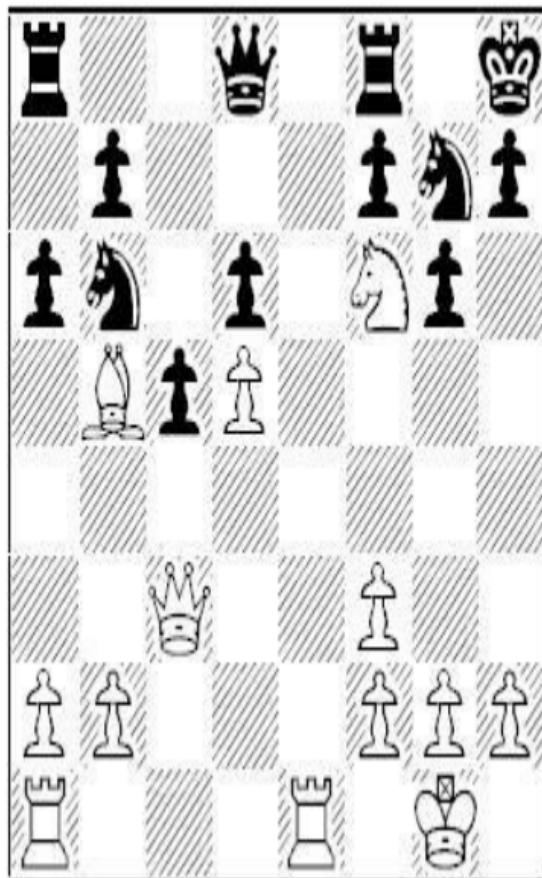
## **17 ... Nb6!?**

Svidler may be underestimating the power of a white knight landing on f6. He should pay White off and give him e6 instead. Black survives after 17 ... f5! 18 Ng5 a6 19 Bxd7 Qxd7 20 Ne6 Rfe8 21 Re1 Qb5 22 Qc3 Nxe6!. White can't make anything of the e6 outpost no matter which way he recaptures.

## **18 Nf6+ Kh8 19 Re1 Qd8?**

19 ... Nf5!, intending to block the a1-h8 diagonal with ... Nd4, was essential.

**20 Qc3! a6**



**Exercise:** Black has all the long-term chances if he can

unravel. Unfortunately for him, White has an idea which ties him up. (Hint: e8 is the key.)

## **21 Re8?!**

The wrong piece to e8.

**Answer:** 21 Be8! is tougher for Black to meet:

a) 21 ... Nxd5?? 22 Nxd5 Rxe8 23 Rxe8+ Qxe8 24 Nc7 picks off the exchange.

b) 21 ... Rc8! is better: 22 Re4 Nxd5 23 Nxd5 Rxe8 24 Rxe8+ Qxe8 25 Re1 Qf8 26 Re7 b5 27 Qf6 Re8 28 g4 Rxe7 29 Nxe7 and White regains the pawn while retaining some pressure.

## **21 ... Rxe8 22 Bxe8 Rc8**

A good move but even stronger was the unexpected 22 ... Nf5! 23 Nd7+ Kg8 24 Nf6+ Kg7! 25 Nd7+ Nd4 26 Nxb6 Qxb6 which is in Black's favour:

1. His knight on d4 rules over White's rather awkward bishop.

2. Black still has his healthy queenside pawn majority, in contrast to White's limping majority on the kingside.

## **23 Re1**

Note that 23 Bxf7?? drops a piece to 23 ... Na4!.

## **23 ... Rc7!**

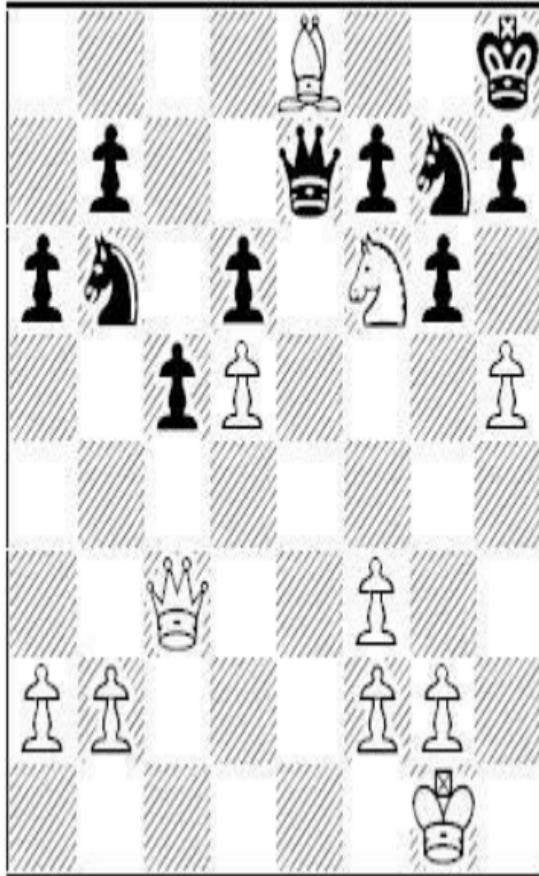
Not only covering f7 but also

preparing to challenge the e-file. The discovery of such little defensive ideas keeps one alive in the worst of positions.

**24 h4 Re7 25 Rxe7 Qxe7 26**

**h5**

At this point 26 ... Qe5? is a false path for Black. 27 Qxe5 dxe5 28 Bxf7 Nxh5 29 Ne8! freezes out Black's king and prepares to push his passed d-pawn.



**Exercise:** White's threat of 27  
h6 looks  
terminal, but Black can deal with

it. How?

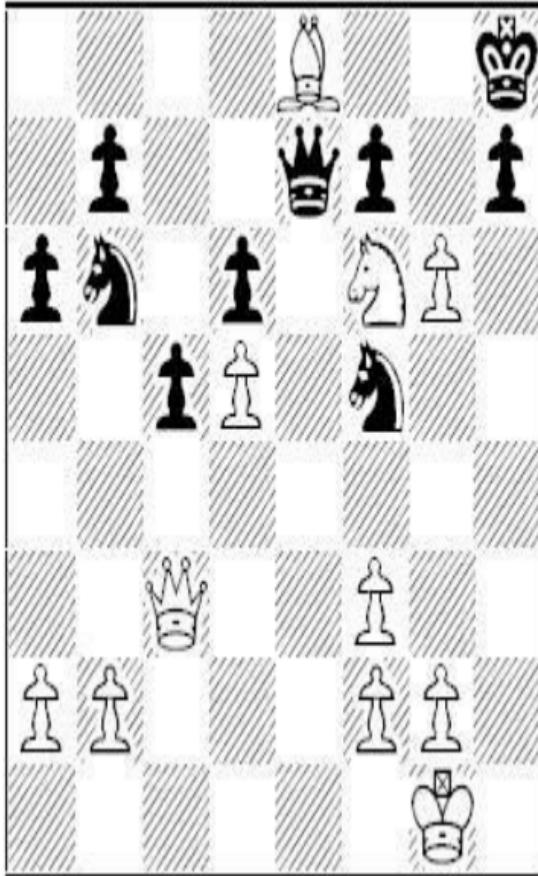
## **Answer: 26 ... Nf5!**

The “pinned” g7-knight nonchalantly moves, allowing a toothless discovered check.

### **27 hxg6?**

If 27 Ng4+?! Nd4 28 Qe3 Nxd5 29 Qxe7 Nxe7 30 Bxf7 Kg7 and Black’s super majority on the queenside looks faster.

27 Nd7+! Nd4 28 Nxb6 Qxe8 is White’s best line, but he must still fight for the draw since Black’s queenside majority remains healthy.



**Exercise (combination alert):**  
White's last move is a blunder  
which loses material. What is

your solution?

## **Answer: 27 ... Nd4!**

A game-ending zwischenzug. This knight, the hero of the game, has eyes which see around corners, and refuses to yield either to logic, threats or persuasive requests! Great players don't always make the automatic move, even in rapid games. In one swoop Black threatens to fork on e2, he threatens White's hanging knight on f6 and also White's bishop on e8, should White move his knight away.

## **28 Qe3**

White manages to cover two out of three threats. There is an old

saying which goes: "Two out of three ain't bad." Here, I'm afraid two out of three just doesn't cut it. Black grabs the piece and White's deep f7 passer goes nowhere.

If White tries the cheapo 28 Nh5 Black avoids the ridiculous 28 ... Qxe8?? 29 g7+ Kg8 30 Nf6+ and wins with 28 ... fxg6!.

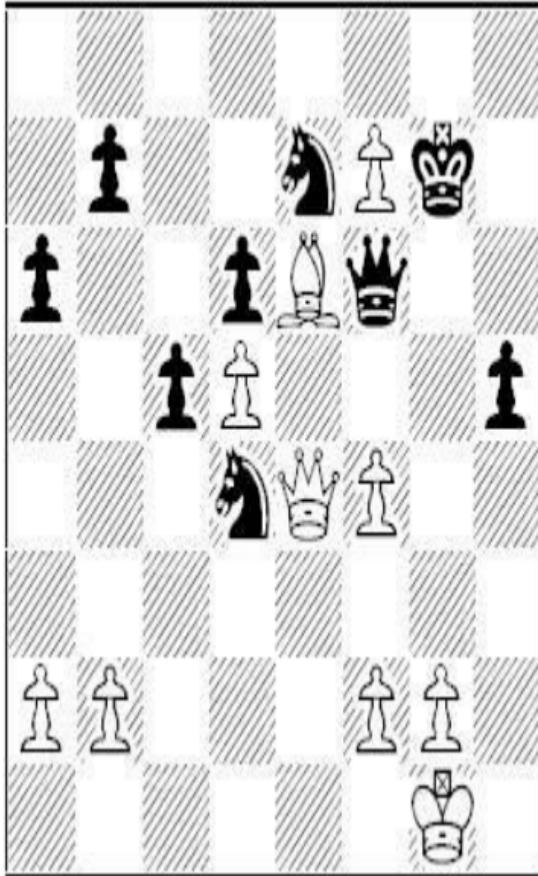
**28 ... Qxf6 29 gxf7 Kg7 30 Qe4 h5**

Cutting out Qg4+ possibilities.

**31 f4 Nc8**

The cavalry arrives to bolster the defensive barrier.

**32 Bd7 Ne7 33 Be6**



## **Exercise (combination alert):**

Find a shot that wipes away resistance.

**Answer: 33 ... Qxf4! 0-1**

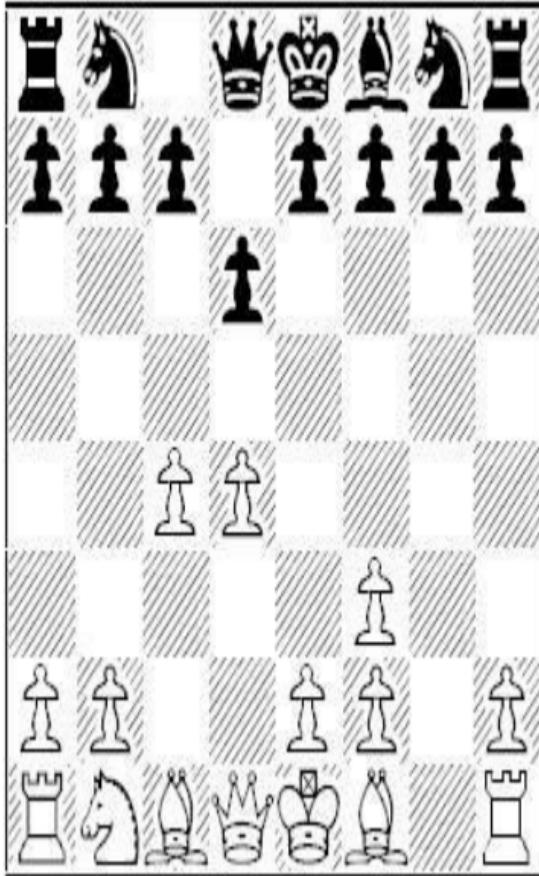
**Summary:** The pawn structure in this line is one of the most fluid in the entire book. Be aware that you could find yourself in odd hybrids (in this game, a Benoni).

Game 49

**J.Pinter-L.Christiansen**

Reggio Emilia 1987

**1 d4 d6 2 Nf3 Bg4 3 c4 Bxf3 4 gxf3**



**Question:** Why recapture this way when 4 exf3 frees White's bishop and opens

the e-file?

**Answer:** There are also benefits to recapturing towards the centre:

1. Well, first of all White follows the principle: Recapture towards the centre! This, in turn, allows White greater central influence because he transformed his wing g-pawn into a central f-pawn.

2. White opens the g-file for his rooks and a potential attack, should Black decide to castle kingside later on.

3. The capture towards the centre gives White a flexible pawn structure. He can play for e4,

flooding the centre with pawns; or e3 and f4, aiming for a grip on e5 and potentially for the f5 pawn break to pry open Black's king in case Black fianchettoes on the kingside.

#### **4 ... g6**

Possibly inaccurate. As mentioned last game, Black must stay aware of ambush attempts on b7. Let's make it a habit to play either 4 ... c6 or 4 ... Nd7.

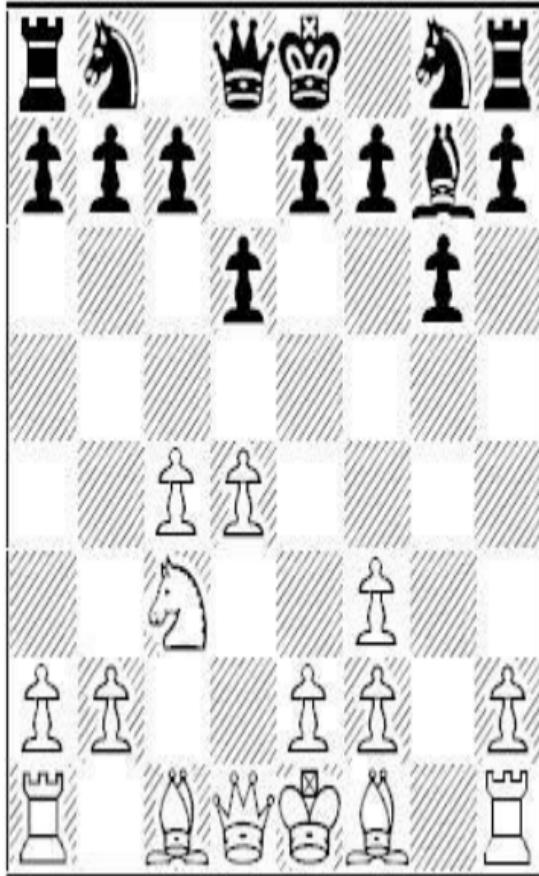
#### **5 Nc3**

**Question:** Why didn't White go for 5 Qb3?

**Answer:** He probably should have. After 5 Qb3 Nc6 6 e3 Qc8 7 f4

I prefer White, who controls more space and has the bishop pair,  
R.Schoene-G.Lorenz,      Karl-Marx-Stadt 1990.

**5 ... Bg7**



**6 f4**

He increases his grip on e5 and clears the h1-a8 diagonal for his

bishop.

**Question:** Isn't it more logical to fully take the centre by pushing his e-pawn two squares?

**Answer:** Here is an example of White deciding to occupy the centre: 6 e4 Nc6 7 Be3 e5 8 d5 Nd4 9 Nb5 Nxb5 10 cxb5 Nf6 11 Qd2 Nh5, B.Leiber-R.Hartoch, Ostend 1987. I prefer Black. He may later just play ... Nf4 sac'ing a pawn for absolute control over the dark squares.

**6 ... c6**

Finally covering the Qb3 tricks.

**7 e3**

**Question:** Is 7 h4 possible?

**Answer:** Yes, this is a dangerous blowout attempt. After 7 ... Nd7 8 h5 Qb6 9 e3 Ngf6 Black looks okay. I don't mind if White surges with 10 h6!? Bf8. True, we are inconvenienced, but that advanced h-pawn is ours in any ending which may later arise.

**7 ... Nd7 8 Bd3 e6**

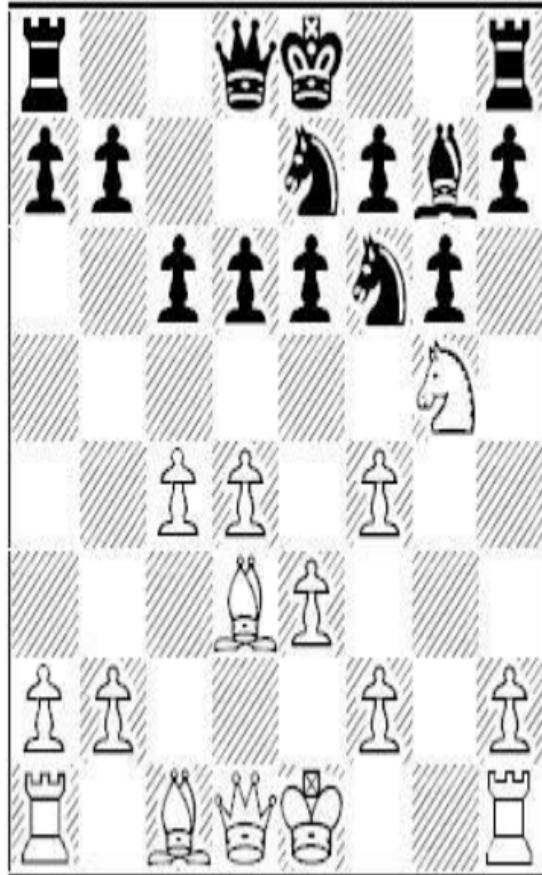
Prevent f5 if you can.

**9 Ne4**

Leading to nothing, but I don't see an improvement. Black mysteriously equalized –typical of this line. 9 d5? looks premature since Black has 9 ... exd5 10 cxd5

cxd5! and White can't recapture due to ... Qa5+.

**9 ... Ndf6 10 Ng5 Ne7**



**Question:** Tarrasch certainly wouldn't believe your claim that Black equalized. After 11 e4 doesn't White have both a gigantic centre and the bishop pair?

**Answer:** Let's test your hypothesis. I see White's position as an attractive but vain person with no redeeming features other than external beauty. Where does White strike? I see no targets. After 11 ... Nd7 12 Be3 c5! 13 d5!? (13 dx<sub>c</sub>5 leads to nothing for White) 13 ... exd5 14 cx<sub>d</sub>5 Bxb2 15 Rb1 Bc3+ 16 Kf1 Rb8 maybe White has compensation for his pawn, and

then again, maybe he doesn't! Or 12 e5 dxe5 13 dxe5 (if 13 fxe5? c5! and Tarrasch's big centre goes up in smoke) 13 ... Nc5 14 Bc2 Qxd1+ 15 Kxd1 f6 16 exf6 Bxf6 and White looks slightly overextended for the ending.

### **11 Qb3**

This doesn't seem to help White at all and may even lose time.

### **11 ... Rb8 12 Bd2 a6!**

Giving advance notice to White: ... b5 is in the air.

### **13 Rc1 0-0 14 Qa3**

White is nervous about an upcoming ... b5, so he moves his queen off the b-file and targets d6.

**14 ... Nf5 15 Bb4 Ne8!**

Black stays flexible and avoids giving White any targets.

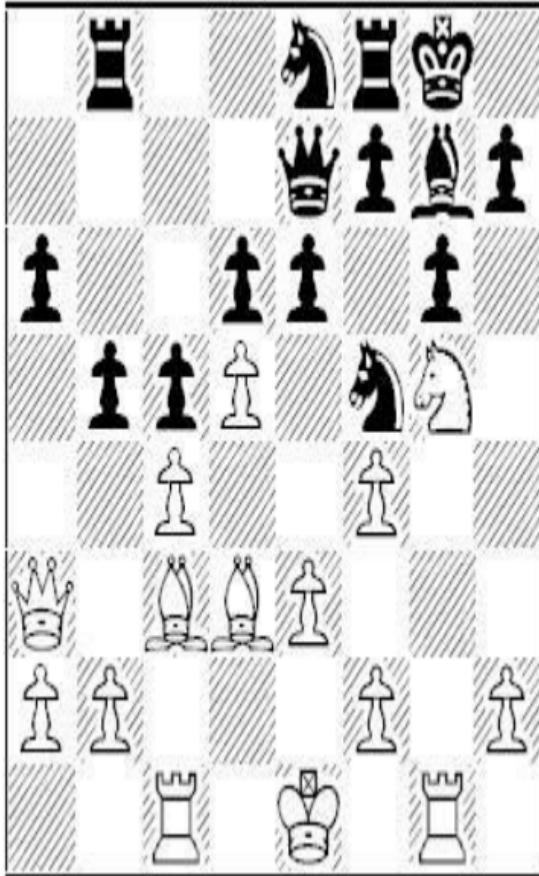
**16 d5?!**

This impatient break loses the initiative and allows Black to start calling the shots. 16 h4 is White's most consistent move.

**16 ... c5 17 Bc3 Qe7**

I like Black after 17 ... exd5!? 18 Bxf5 d4.

**18 Rg1 b5!**



**Exercise (multiple choice):** It is clear that White has lost, or soon will lose, the initiative.

How can he minimize the damage?

- a) 19 Bxg7: get out of the way of potential ... b4 tricks;
- b) 19 Qxa6: grab a pawn;
- c) 19 cxb5: open things up on the queenside.

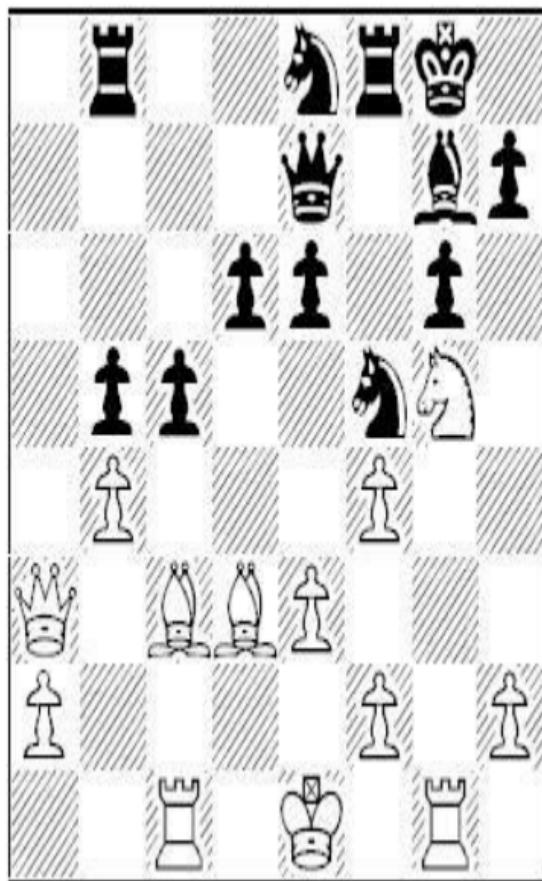
### **19 cxb5?!**

He activates a mob of queenside pawns.

White's game sours quickly if he gets greedy and grabs a6: 19 Qxa6? Nc7 20 Qc6 Bxc3+ 21 bxc3 bxc4 22 Bxc4 exd5 23 Bxd5 Nxe3! gives Black a winning attack.

**Answer:** Best was a) 19 Bxg7 Nxe7 although even here I prefer Black.

**19 ... axb5 20 dxe6 fxe6 21 b4?!**



**Exercise (critical decision):**

Black has two tempting paths  
but one is clearly stronger than  
the other:

- a) Play 21 ... e5 in order to open the centre and get at White's king;
- b) Play positionally with 21 ... c4, securing a protected, passed c-pawn.

### **21 ... e5?!**

Tempting but not the best. Getting a natural attacker to resist the temptation to go after an opponent's king is akin to convincing a schizophrenic to ignore the whispered commands of voices in his head.

**Answer:** Black should seize

strategic gains with b) 21 ... c4! 22 Bb1 d5. The reason 21 ... c4 is superior is that White's king looks no safer in this line but Black gains the added benefit of securing a clearly superior pawn structure. Indeed, White's position looks god-awful after 23 Kf1 d4!.

**22 bxc5 exf4 23 cxd6 Bxc3+  
24 Qxc3 Nxd6 25 Qb3+ Kh8  
26 Bxf5 Nxg5 27 Qc3+ Ng7 28  
e4 f3**

28 ... h6! wins a pawn: 29 Qh3 Nh5 30 Qe6 Qe8! (I bet this is the move Larry missed in his analysis) 31 Qxe8 Rbxe8 32 Nf3 Rxe4+.

**29 Rg3!**

Pinter manages to swap his e-pawn for Black's f-pawn.

**29 ... h6 30 Nxf3 Qxe4+ 31 Kf1 g5**

White stands slightly worse due to his more exposed king. He defends well for the next 15 moves or so.

**32 Kg1 Qf5 33 Qb2 Rbd8 34 Re1 Rde8 35 Rd1 Re4 36 Nd4?!**

This floating knight suffers from an identity crisis. It's centralized but insecure, unsupported by pawns and about to be pinned.



**36 ... Qf6**

36 ... Qe5! looks more accurate.

After 37 Qd2 Nh5 38 Re3 Nf4

White's king is in danger.

### **37 Rf3!**

Seizing upon Black's inaccurate last move and forcing another trade.

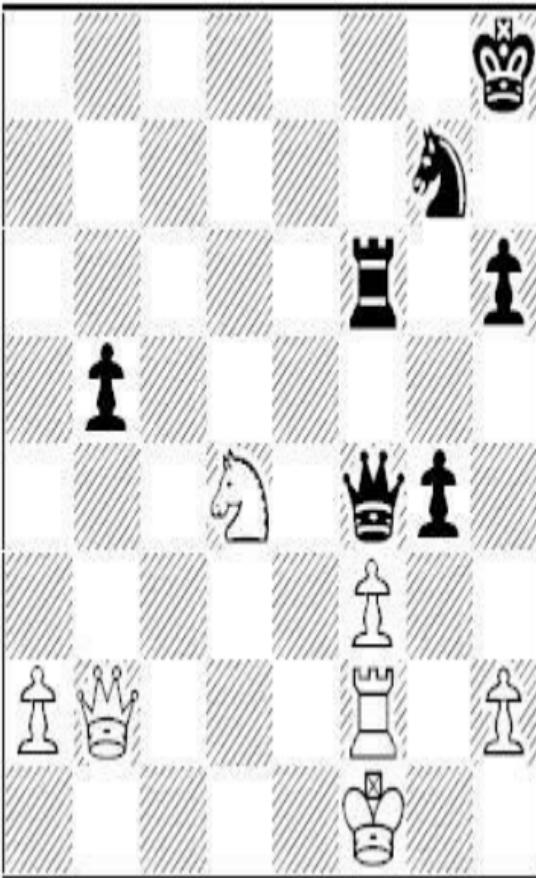
**37 ... Rg4+ 38 Kh1 Rf4 39 Rxf4 Qxf4 40 f3 Rd8 41 Rd3 Qe5 42 Rd2 Qe3 43 Kg2 Qf4 44 Nb3 Rf8 45 Nd4 g4**

In order to expose and strip search White's king.

### **46 Rf2 Rf6**

Black's attack has been ongoing, but clearly not ongoing all that well! White's defences seem to be holding – until his next move.

### **47 Kf1?**



**Exercise:** Now Black's would-be attack takes real form. How?  
With 47 Kf1?, finally White

cracks. His king, on the run for the last 25 moves or so, looks for a hiding place where there is none. It would not be that easy for Black to make progress after 47 a3! h5 48 Qc3.

### **Answer: 47 ... Rd6!**

White finds his pieces out of sync after this move.

### **48 Nc2?**

He puts up more resistance after 48 Nb3 gxf3 49 Nd2 Qc4+! 50 Kg1 Qg4+ 51 Kh1 Qe4 52 h3 Still, it's hard to believe White can save himself even here.

### **48 ... gxf3 0-1**

Admittedly a bit of an anti-

climax. White's exposed king can't survive for long. 48 ... Qc4+! is even stronger.

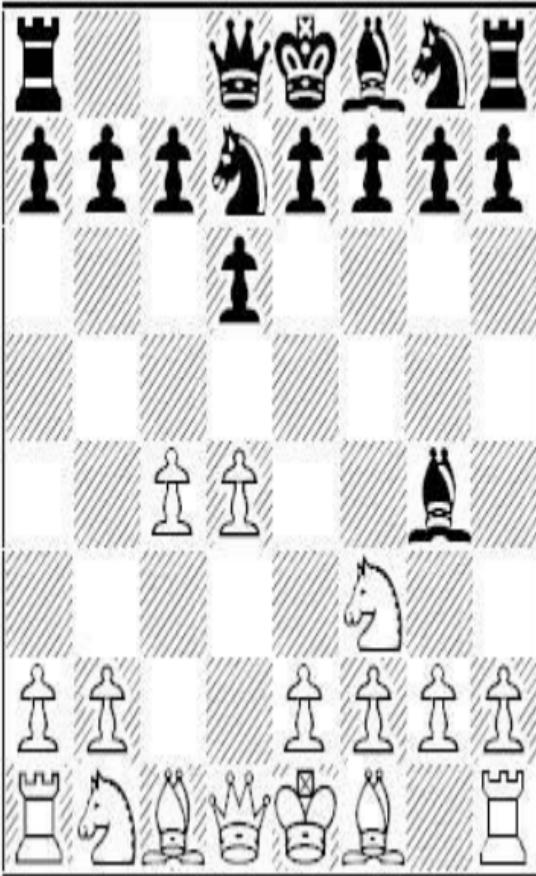
**Summary:** 4 gxf3 is different but not any stronger than 4 exf3.

Game 50

**V.Topalov-M.Adams**

Dortmund 1996

**1 Nf3 d6 2 d4 Bg4 3 c4 Nd7**



Deep in my bishop-hating heart  
I sense this is possibly the better  
move. Black holds off taking on f3

to keep his options open. GM Boris Avrukh considers 3 ... Nd7 and 3 ... c6 Black's main lines in the Wade Defence.

## **4 e4**

White chooses a King's Indian formation for his pawns, reasoning that Black's light-squared bishop, usually his good one, will be swapped off at some point. White's array of alternatives:

a) 4 Nc3 Bxf3 soon transposes to our first two games in this chapter. Black goes for his standard ... e6, ... c6 and ... d5 ideas. It somehow doesn't make sense to play ... Bg4 and then not take, but

you can also play 4 ... e5, 4 ... g6 or 4 ... c6 and postpone chopping on f3.

b) 4 Qb3 Rb8 5 h3 Bxf3 6 Qxf3 g6 7 e3 Bg7 8 Nc3 c5 9 d5 (overestimating his bishops) 9 ... Bxc3+!. I would play this in a heartbeat! Black inflicts permanent damage to White's pawns. Of course White gets both bishops, but for now the structure stays rigid and looks fine for the Black knights. After 10 bxc3 Ngf6 11 g4!? Qa5 12 Qd1 h5! White borders on overextension, if not already there, A.Miles-M.Adams, Tilburg 1993.

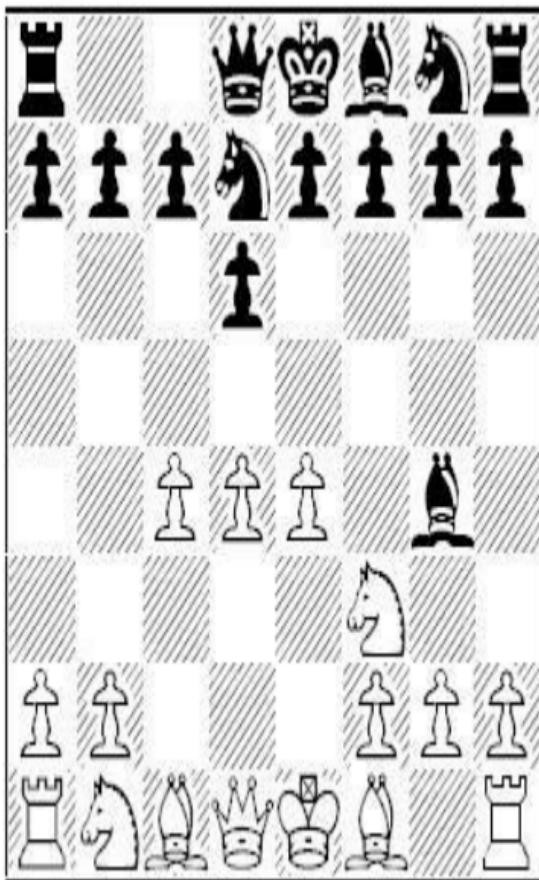
c) 4 g3 Bxf3 5 exf3 g6 6 Bg2 Bg7

7 0-0 Nh6! aims to lure White's pawns forward with ... Nf5. Black dares White to either give up his bishop pair by taking on h6, or play the very risky 8 g4!? with an unbalanced game.

d) The idea behind 4 d5 is to play Nd4 followed by f3 and e4. 4 ... e5 5 dx<sub>e</sub>6 fx<sub>e</sub>6!? (a true Rat would prefer this rare move over the standard 5 ... Bx<sub>e</sub>6 6 e4 after which White gets a Maroczy bind) 6 Nd4 Qe7 7 h3 Bh5 8 Nc3 c6 9 g4 Bf7 10 Bg2 Qd8 11 Ne4 h6 12 g5 d5 with an irrational position which Rybka says is equal, I.Rajlich-A.Minasian, Cappelle la Grande 1999.

e) 4 e3 e5 5 Nc3 Ngf6 6 Be2 Be7

transposes to Game 54.



**4 ... Bxf3!**

**Question:** Again taking unprovoked? This time Black gets nothing

from the swap since he didn't even dent White's pawn structure.

**Answer:** Ah, but he did get something. He lured White's queen to f3, away from support of d4. Later White needs to move his queen back to d1. So Black gets a full tempo for the swap.

I prefer the unbalancing 4 ... Bxf3! over an Old Indian position with Black's bishop on g4: 4 ... e5 5 Be2 Be7 6 Nc3 Bxf3 7 Bxf3 Bg5 (Black gets rid of his bad bishop at the cost of falling behind in

development) 8 Bxg5 Qxg5 9 0-0 Qd8 10 dxe5! dxe5 11 Qb3! Qb8 12 Qa3 c6 13 Bg4. Black is in trouble because he can't castle easily, V.Kramnik-K.Mokry, German League 1994.

## 5 Qxf3

**Question:** Why not recapture with the pawn?

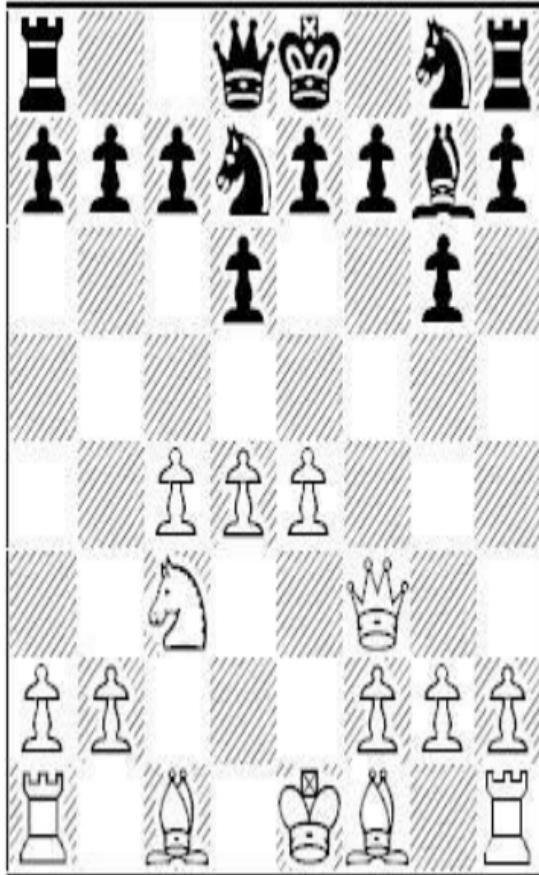
**Answer:** After 5 gxf3 it's easy for White to overextend. In fact, White lost every game from this position in my database. For example, 5 ... g6 6 Nc3 Bg7 7 Bg2 (maybe White should try 7 f4!?) 7 ... e5 8 d5 Ngf6 9 f4 Nh5 10 fxe5 Bxe5 11 Qg4 (the fight for f4

begins) 11 ... Nc5! 12 0-0 Nd3 13 Rb1 Nxc1 14 Rfxc1 Nf4 sees White strategically busted since he lost the fight for f4, A.Ivanisvili-V.Slapikas, Plateliai 1999.

**5 ... g6**

Target: d4.

**6 Nc3 Bg7**



**7 Qd1**

**Question:** Why retreat the queen? Why not 7 Be3?

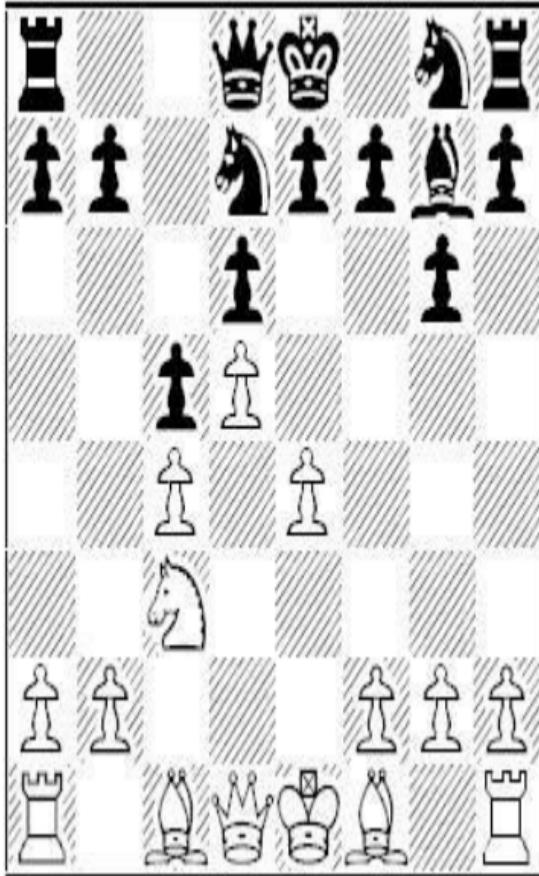
**Answer:** He needs the queen to support d4. After 7 Be3 c5, White saw nothing better than to retreat now with 8 Qd1 in P.Graves-C.Lakdawala, San Diego rapid (if 8 d5 then 8 ... Bxc3+! as in the main game), and here 8 ... cxd4! 9 Bxd4 Bxd4 10 Qxd4 Ngf6 gives Black a favourable Maroczy bind position: he managed to swap two pairs of minor pieces. This considerably eases his cramped situation. Black swapped off White's good bishop, and White's remaining bishop may turn into a lemon later. Typically for a Maroczy bind position, White controls more space but Black's

position remains weakness free.

### **7 ... c5**

7 ... e5!? is an untried idea, which may not be a strategic error since Black has a path to unload his bad bishop after 8 d5 Bh6 (or 8 ... h5 intending ... Bh6 next move).

### **8 d5**



**8 ... Bxc3+!**

I have a fondness for this move when venturing a Modern Defence.

Black plays a delayed Dzindzi-Indian idea, damaging White's structure; we boldly take on White's bishop pair.

**Question:** Isn't giving up the dark squares and both bishops strategically suicidal?

**Answer:** No! I will explain in a few moves why Black may actually stand better.

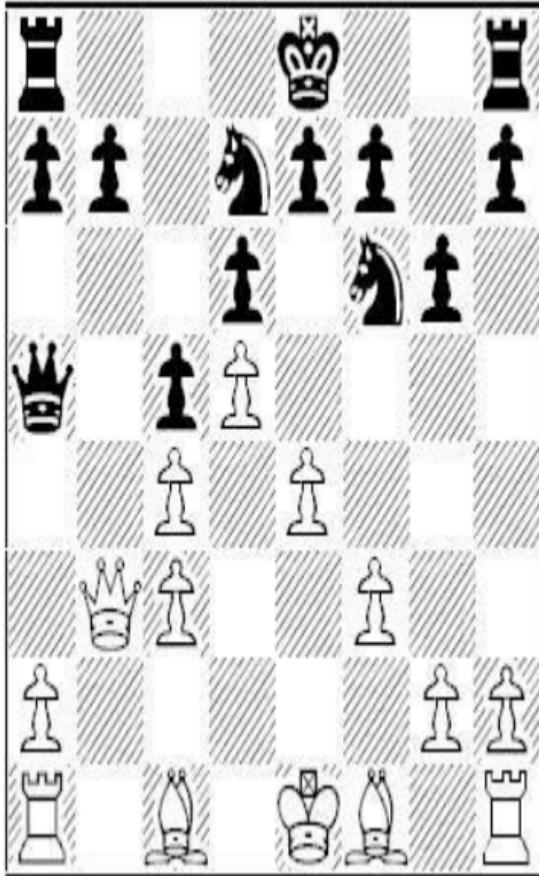
### **9 bxc3 Ngf6**

9 ... Qa5 is similar: 10 Qc2 Ngf6 11 f3 h6! (idea: ... g5! to fight for the dark squares) 12 Be2 g5 13 0-0 0-0-0 14 Rb1 Kb8 15 Rb3 a6 16 Be3 Ka7 17 Rfb1 Rb8 18 g3 Rhg8 19 Kh1

h5 with a close resemblance to our main game, D.Arutinian-M.Gagunashvili, Tbilisi 2007.

### **10 f3 Qa5 11 Qb3**

This move may be inaccurate since Topalov later moves his queen back to c2.



**Exercise (planning):** What should Black do next?  
**Answer:** 11 ... 0-0-0!

Castle into it!

**Question:** This looks irrational.

Black castles into an

open b-file. Why give the move  
an exclam?

**Answer:** My heart beats a bit

faster with all this strangeness!

Black paradoxically castles into an  
open file for the following reasons:

1. White's pawns are rigid on  
the queenside and can't engage in  
a pawn storm like Black can on the  
kingside.

2. White only has a single target  
on b7 which is easily defended as  
many times as it can be attacked.

3. White's clumsy bishops prove

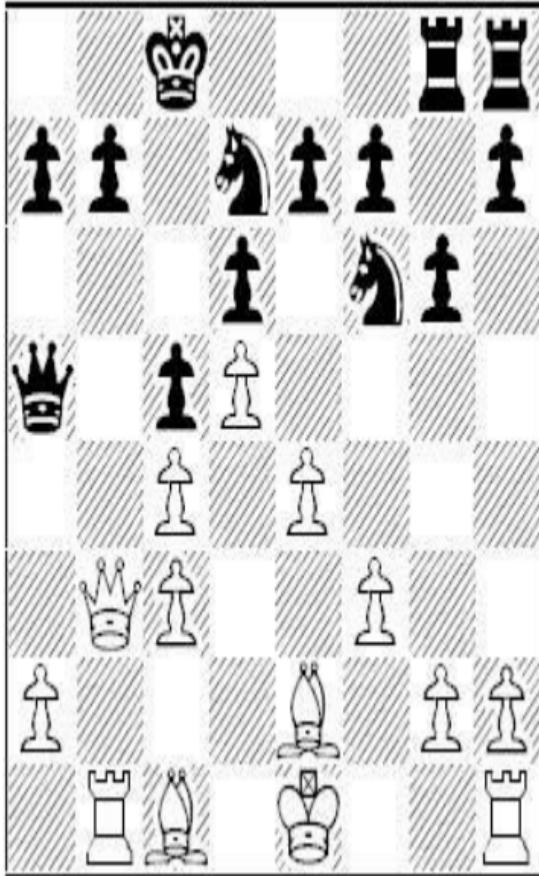
to be incompetent attackers in this congested situation.

Conclusion: Black's king is safe on the queenside and he can seek counterplay on the other wing.

## **12 Be2 Rdg8!**

Idea: ... g5! to grab control of the kingside dark squares.

## **13 Rb1**



Have fun storming the impregnable fortress! Black, with only one target to worry about,

easily defends against White's would-be attack down the b-file. Containment with 13 h4! disrupts Black's plan after 13 ... h6 14 Kf2 since now 14 ... g5? drops a pawn.

### **13 ... Qc7 14 Be3**

White should still play 14 h4! and misses another chance next move.

### **14 ... Kb8**

Not necessary. Better to seize kingside space with 14 ... g5!.

### **15 Qc2?!**

White will play f4 if Black allows him to.

### **15 ... g5!**

He doesn't. Up to this point

Black constructed a moat around his own king. Now he begins to gaze outward, with hostile intent upon White's king.

**16 0-0 Rg6 17 Rb2**

White plans to load up on b7 and force ... b6. Then he will follow by pushing his a-pawn. Black finds an effective method of waylaying White's plan.

**17 ... Ka8!**

Black has no intention of playing ... b6 and clears b8 for a rook.

**18 Rfb1 Rb8 19 Kh1 h5**

Note just how lame White's bishops look in the blocked position.

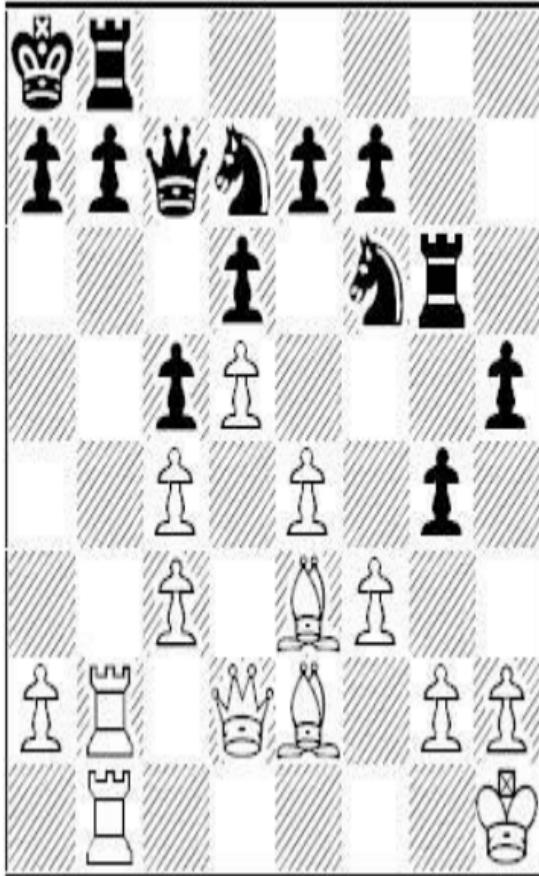
**20 Qd2!?**

Provocation!

Topalov

deliberately takes his eye off e4 and goads Black into ... g4. He didn't want to sit around while Black increases his grip with 20 a4 h4!.

**20 ... g4!**



Provocation accomplished.

**Question:** Isn't Black breaking a principle by

opening the game for White's bishops?

**Answer:** Yes, but in this case he is correct. Adams opens the position for White's bishops, but more importantly he also exposes White's king, a factor Topalov underestimates.

### **21 Qc2 gxf3 22 gxf3**

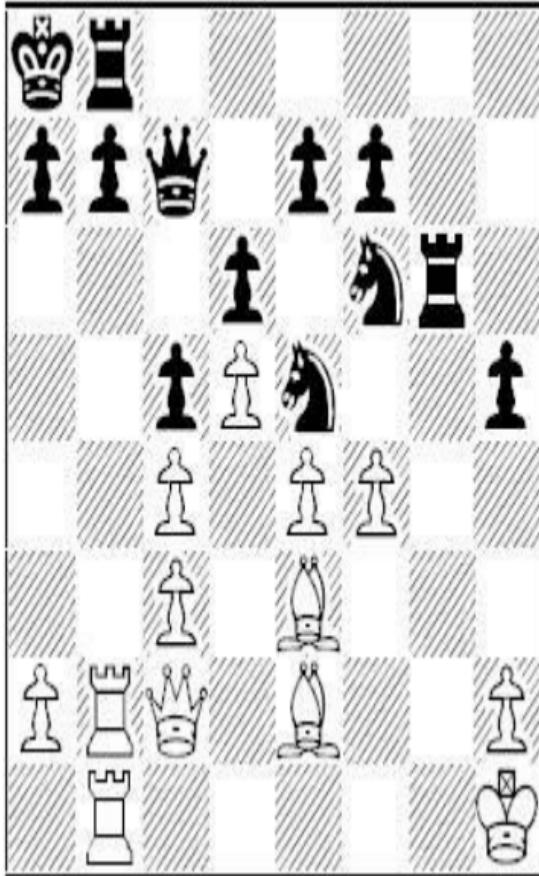
22 Bxf3 Ne5 gives Black an iron grip over e5 and leads to a position which looks like a Nimzo-Indian gone wrong for White.

### **22 ... Ne5!**

This knight is the goat tied to the tree in order to lure the tiger from the jungle.

## **23 f4?!**

Topalov, not known for turning the other cheek, takes the bait. Topalov plays chess the way I exercise – he routinely overreaches and then pays a heavy price, as he does here.



## **Exercise (combination alert):**

White is under the impression  
that he stands better and is

about to take over the initiative on the kingside. Black's next move sets him straight and makes him pay for his recklessness. What is it?

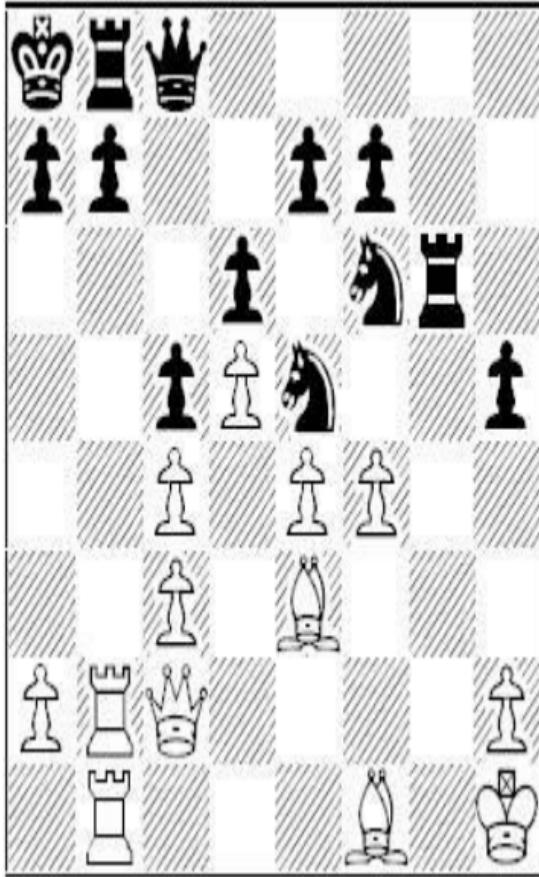
### **Answer: 23 ... Qc8!**

Threatening a devastating invasion into h3. You also get full credit if you found 23 ... Qd7!.

### **24 Bf1?**

If 24 fxe5?? Qh3 25 Rg1 Rbg8! (threatening ... Rg2!) 26 Rbb1 Qxe3 27 Rxg6 Rxg6 and the knight can't be touched since 28 exf6?? Qf2! ends resistance.

White's only chance was to go for the strategically awful 24 f5.



**Exercise (combination alert):**  
White's last move is a blunder.  
Look for a shot which overloads

one of White's pieces.

## **Answer: 24 ... Nxc4!**

This knight, showing White's bishops just who is boss, steals watch and lunch money while the f1-bishop witnesses the crime helplessly. It can't simultaneously cover c4 and h3.

## **25 Bxc4**

No choice. He loses material if he ignores the knight.

## **25 ... Qh3**

Black's hostage demands: I want my piece back with interest, or else White's king gets it! Black threatens both ... Qxe3 and ... Qf3+.

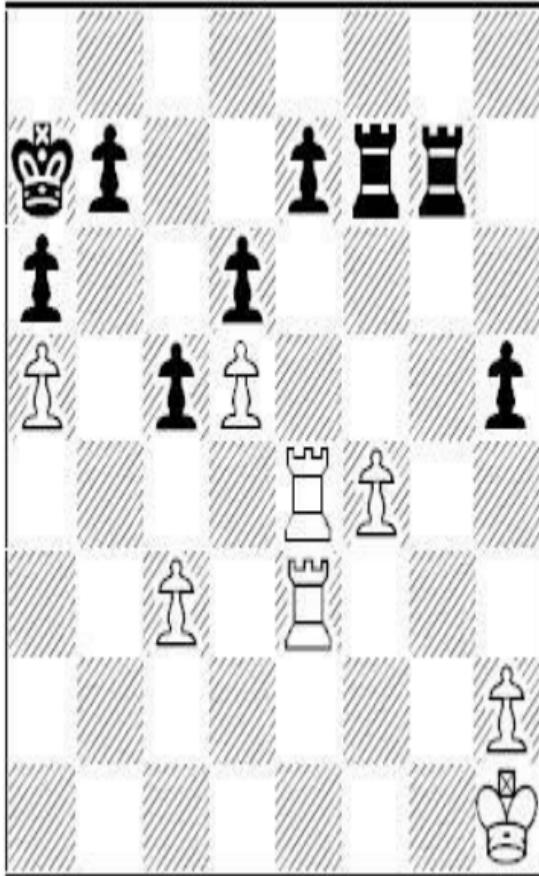
## **26 Rf1**

26 Qe2?? fails to 26 ... Nxe4 (threatening to fork on g3) 27 Rg1 Rxg1+ 28 Kxg1 Rg8+ 29 Kh1 Ng3+.

## **26 ... Qxe3**

White is busted, down material and overextended.

**27 Qd3 Qxe4+ 28 Qxe4  
Nxe4 29 Bd3 f5 30 Bxe4 fxe4  
31 Re2 a6 32 Rxe4 Rg7 33 a4  
Ka7 34 Rfe1 Rf8 35 a5 Rff7 36  
R1e3**



**Exercise (critical decision):**  
Should Black go for it with 36 ...  
Rg4

or try to create a passer on the queenside instead?

## **Answer: 36 ... Rg4!**

The rook ending is in Black's favour. The ripe fruit stage begins and pawns begin to fall for both sides.

**37 Rxе7 Rxе7 38 Rxе7 Rxе4  
39 Re6 Rc4 40 Rxе6 Rxс3 41  
Rh6 Rd3! 42 Rxh5 c4 43 Rh4  
c3 44 Rc4 Rxе5 45 Rxс3 Rxе5  
46 h4 Rh5 47 Rh3**

47 Rc4? loses a crucial tempo to  
47 ... b5.

## **47 ... b5**

Black's winning plan:

1. Push his queenside pawns

with the help of his king.

2. Sac his rook for White's h-pawn.

3. White's rook will be helpless against the black passers since White's king is on the other side of the world.

4. If White's king heads for the queenside, as in the game, White's h-pawn is blockaded and cannot go further without the help of the king.

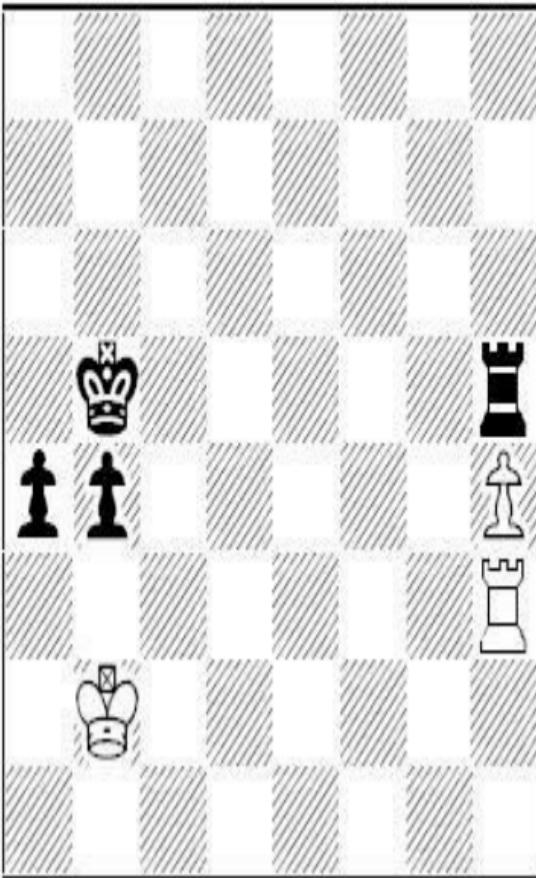
**48 Kg2 Kb6 49 Kf3 a5 50**

**Ke2**

White doesn't even come remotely close if he ignores Black's passers and works to promote his h-pawn: 50 Kg4? Rh8 51 h5 a4 52

h6 b4 53 h7 b3 54 Kg5 b2 55 Rh1  
a3.

**50 ... b4 51 Kd2 Kb5 52 Kc2  
a4 53 Kb2**



**Exercise (planning):** How to make progress? If Black pushes either pawn he gets blockaded.

If he moves his rook to help out this frees White's passed h-pawn.

**53 ... Rf5!**

**Answer:** Allow White's h-pawn forward. Black is faster.

**54 h5 a3+! 55 Kb1**

Now it's a matter of picking which trench White's king wants to die in. 55 Kb3 Rf2! 56 h6 Rb2 is mate!

**55 ... Rf1+ 56 Ka2 Ka4 57 Rh4 Rf2+ 58 Ka1 a2 59 h6 Ka3 0-1**

Black's king looks like a man about to commit a murder, or one who just did!

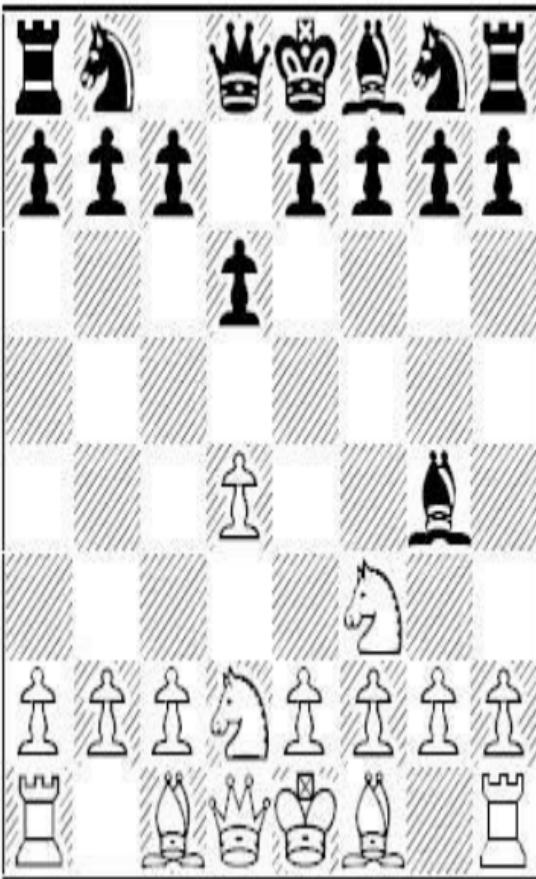
**Summary:** Keep in mind the Dzindzi-Indian/Nimzo-Indian idea of snapping off the knight on c3 to damage White's structure in exchange for Black's dark-squared bishop.

Game 51

**V.Filippov-A.Czerwonski**

Voronezh 1998

**1 Nf3 d6 2 d4 Bg4 3 Nbd2**



White, determined to thwart our attempts at imbalance, tries to lead us by our noses into the realm of

tedium by playing a super-safe Colle style move. On top of this annoyance, 3 Nbd2 is more dangerous than it looks.

**Question:** Why? It looks totally harmless to Black.

**Answer:** The poison behind the line is that if we toss in ... d5, we get a Colle a move down.

**Question:** Is a move-down Colle the end of the world?

**Answer:** Black may still equalize there, but winning is another matter.

### **3 ... Nd7**

3 ... Nf6 is covered in Game 53.

### **4 b3**

An attempt to Zuke us with a Colle-Zukertort setup. Alternatively:

a) 4 e4, which we examine next game, may be White's only shot at an edge.

b) 4 h3 Bh5 5 g4 Bg6 6 Nh4 e6 7 Nxg6 hxg6 8 Bg2 c6, A.Rivera-H.Urday Caceres, Matanzas 1992. I would be happy with Black, who for the low price of the bishop pair gets White to weaken his kingside and retains a flexible structure.

c) 4 g3 e5 5 Bg2 Ngf6 6 0-0 Be7 7 h3 Bh5 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 Nh4 c6 10 Nf5 0-0 is equal, N.Giffard-S.Schmidt Schaeffer, Cannes 1995. White gets nothing after 11 Nxe7+

Qxe7 since he commands no central influence with his pawns. He can't even play e4 without weakening first with g4.

d) 4 c3 Ngf6 5 g3 e6 6 Bg2 Be7 7 0-0 0-0 8 e4 c6 9 Re1 d5! 10 e5 Ne8, H.Jia-Z.Rahman, Kuala Lumpur 2008. Black's position compares favourably to similar ones in Chapter One. White's fianchettoed bishop, hitting the pawn wall on d5, makes an odd impression.

e) 4 e3 e5 5 Be2 Be7 6 c4 Ngf6 7 0-0 a5 8 b3 c6, D.Gibeon-G.Welling, Isle of Man 1995. Black has more than equalized since White now sits in an ultra-passive

Old Indian. His knight belongs on c3, as in Game 53.

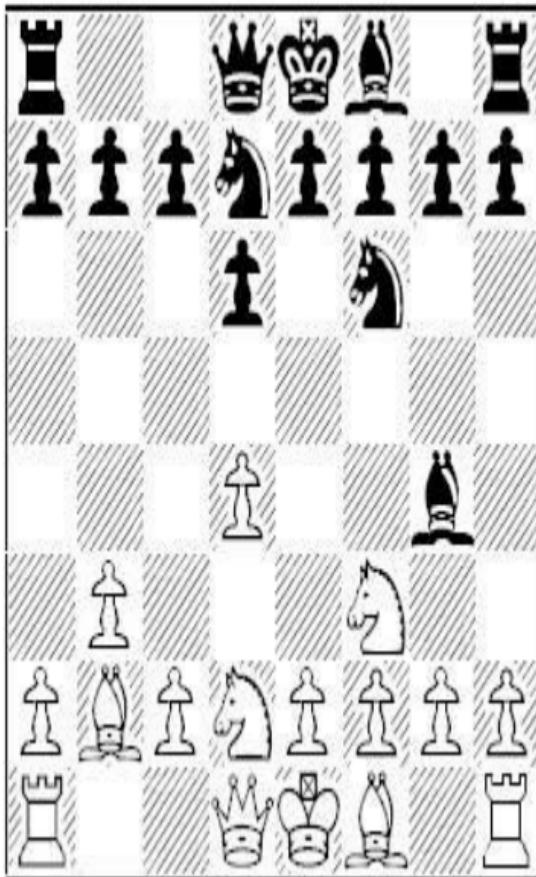
## **4 ... Ngf6**

Another idea is 4 ... e6 5 Bb2 d5 6 g3 f5 7 Bg2 Ngf6, W.Fluegel-R.Wade, Bad Wörishofen 1992. Let's assess:

1. Black is in a Stonewall Dutch a move down since he took two moves to play ... d5.
2. Black's bishop, normally on the dismal c8-square in a Stonewall Dutch, magically jumped his pawn chain to appear on g4, meaning a gain of several tempi.

Conclusion: Black achieves equality.

## 5 Bb2



**5 ... d5!?**

Playable but perhaps not best.

**Question:** Why?

**Answer:** It may be better to hold off on this move since White gets a Colle-Zukertort a move up. Remember, Black took two moves to achieve ... d5.

**Question:** But I don't see a rational plan for Black

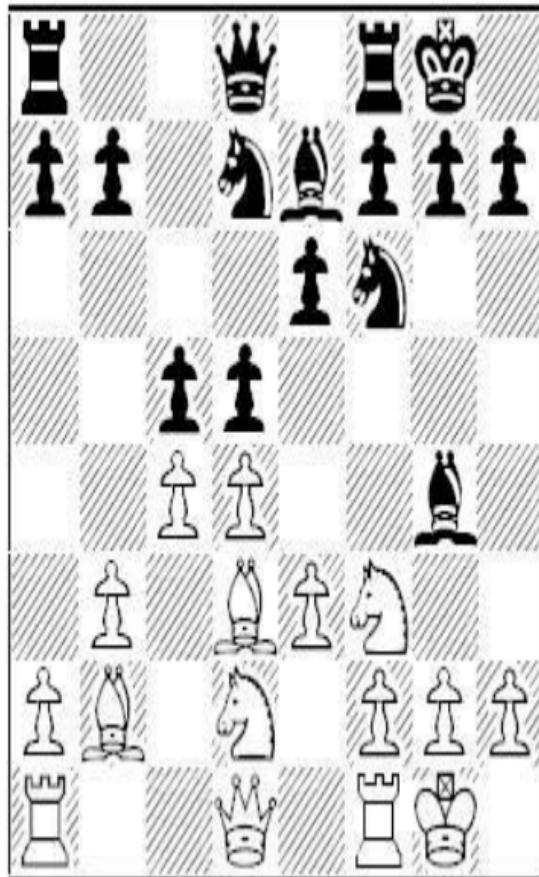
except ... d5. What else is there?

**Answer:** How about 5 ... e6 and hold off on playing ... d5 unless White plays e4? If White declines to play e4 then Black should probably go for ... c5 at some point, turning the game into a harmless version of the Hedgehog formation since

White has played in such a passive fashion. I couldn't find a game with this plan in the database but believe it is best for Black. Here is what I'm talking about: 6 e3 Be7 7 Bd3 0-0 8 0-0 c5 9 h3 Bh5 10 c4 b6! 11 Re1 cxd4 12 exd4 (12 Bxd4 looks like a rather passive Hedgehog for White) 12 ... d5. This looks like a mainline Alekhine's Defence which went well for Black. We will soon play ... Bg6 and try to swap his good bishop in Pribyl fashion. Note that Black first tossed in ... b6 to prevent White from playing c5 after ... d5.

**6 e3 e6 7 Bd3 Be7 8 0-0 0-0**

**9 c4 c5**



**10 Qc2**

His queen will sit on the same

file as a black rook on c8. The alternative is to stay in the pin on e2: 10 Qe2 Rc8 11 Rac1 dxc4 12 bxc4 (12 Nxc4 is also possible but I doubt this move is anything special for White either) 12 ... Qc7 13 h3 Bh5 14 Rfd1 Bd6 15 Nf1 e5! with dynamic equality, F.Trommsdorf-D.Nuvoloni, Paris 1991.

### **10 ... Rc8 11 Ne5**

Hoping to initiate a kingside attack. All his pieces aim in that direction.

### **11 ... dxc4**

Principle: Counter in the centre when attacked on the wing.

### **12 bxc4**

**Question:** Can White recapture on c4 with a piece?

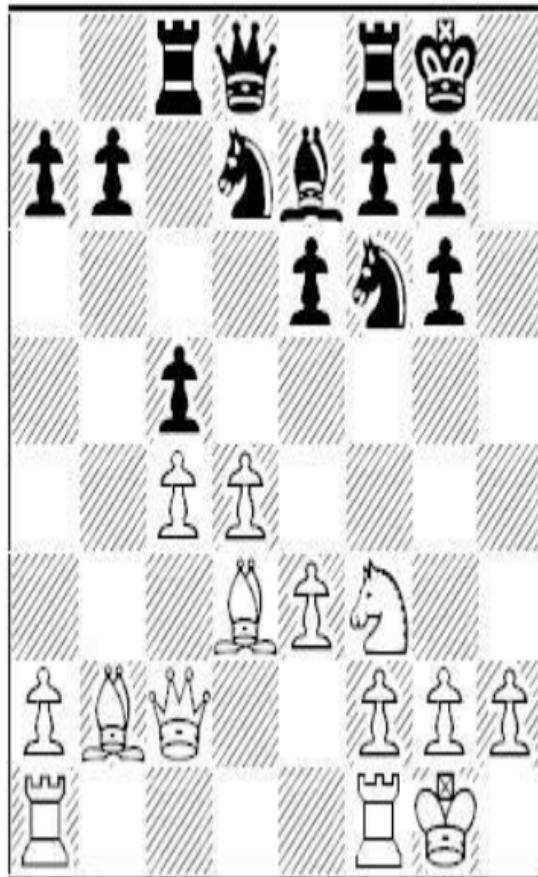
**Answer:** Such a move is counterintuitive with Black's rook sitting on c8. Let's see: 12 Ndxc4 cxd4 (threat: ... b5) 13 Nxg4 Nxg4 14 Qd1 Nge5 15 Nxe5 Nxe5 16 Bxh7+ Kxh7 17 Qh5+ Kg8 18 Qxe5 Bf6 and if anyone is better it is Black, who leads in development.

**12 ... Bh5 13 Ndf3 Bg6**

**Question:** Why did Black give up the bishop pair?

**Answer:** It was a prudent decision. For the swap Black got a strengthened kingside and eliminated a white attacker.

**14 Nxg6 hxg6**



**Exercise (critical decision):** I  
feel like White must have the edge

with a bishop pair in the open position coupled with some extra space. So the question is: Should he go for Black's king or just play positionally in the centre and queenside?

### **15 Ne5?!**

**Answer:** White decides to play the fear card and attack, which plants the seed of an unjustified plan. To do so he commits himself to an inferior pawn structure and an attack without knights. White stands a shade better if he plays on the queenside with something like 15 Qb3! Qc7 16 Rab1 Rfd8 17 Rfc1.

### **15 ... cxd4 16 exd4**

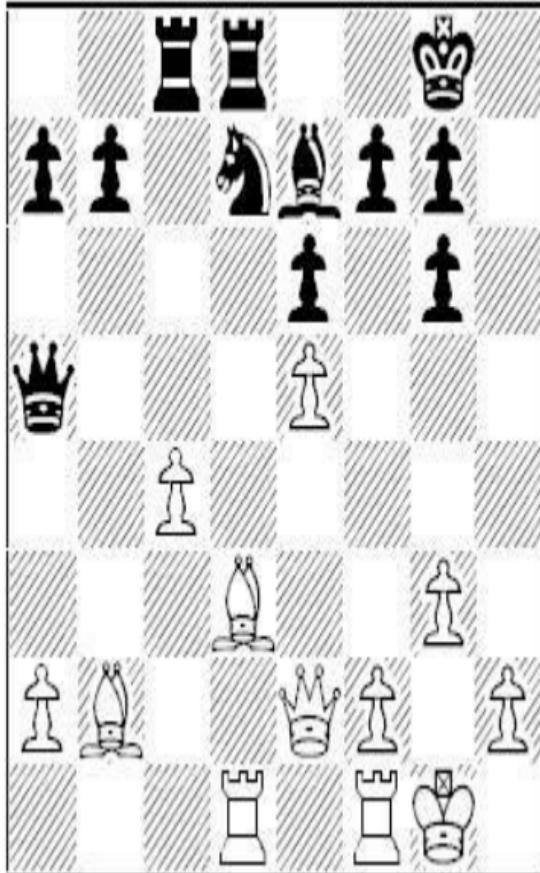
It may not be too late to bail out of the attacking plan with 16 Nxd7. Such a move would be psychologically very difficult to make since it would be admitting to an inaccuracy on his last move. After 16 ... Qxd7 17 exd4 b5! 18 c5 Nd5 Black's control over the d5-square easily compensates for White's bishop pair and protected passed pawn, but White doesn't stand worse.

### **16 ... Nxe5 17 dxe5 Nd7**

c5 is a nasty square for Black's knight.

### **18 Qe2 Qa5 19 g3 Rfd8 20**

### **Rad1**



**Exercise (planning):** White is all set for f4, g4 and f5; or h4 and h5 to

get something pried open. How can Black disrupt the smooth flow?

## **20 ... Bb4!**

**Answer:** Idea: ... Bc3, which obeys no less than three of the emperor's edicts:

1. Counter in the centre when attacked on the wing.
2. When the opponent has the attack, swap pieces.
3. When the opponent has the bishop pair, trade one of them off.

## **21 f4 Bc3 22 Bc1!**

White manages to hang on to his e-pawn while avoiding the trade of his bishop, all at the cost of retreating.

**22 ... Nc5**

Now the knight harasses.

**23 Bb1**

Those bishops sing a sorrowful duet. It's hard to attack if most of your pieces cower on the first rank.

**23 ... Bd4+ 24 Kh1 Na4!**

Threatening an invasion on c3.

**25 Qf3 Qb6**

25 ... Nc3 is met with the pinning move 26 Bd2.

**26 Bd3 Rc7**

Preparing to double on the d-file.

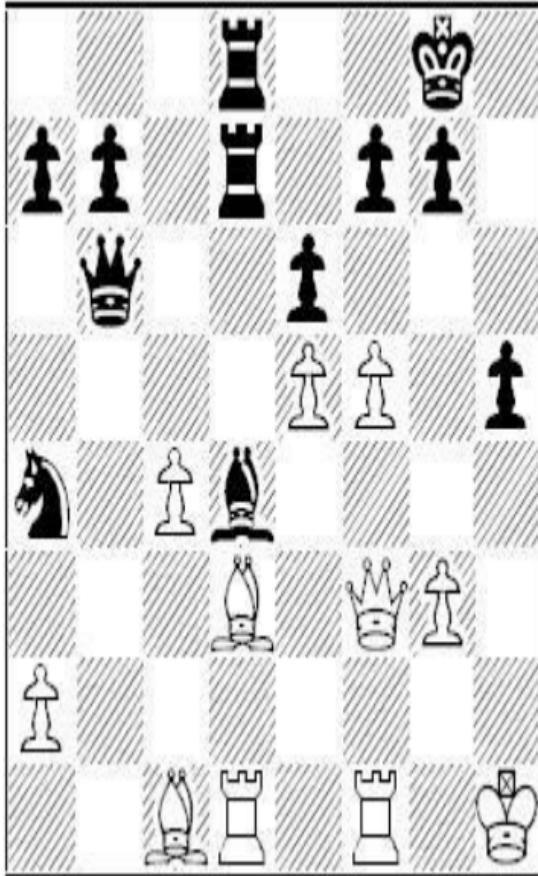
**27 h4**

At last, White begins his attack.

**27 ... Rcd7 28 h5 gxh5 29**

**f5!**

Despite the painful rebuffs over the last ten moves, White seizes upon his only chance. 29 Qxh5? Qc6+! 30 Kh2 g6 31 Qg5 Nc3 32 Rd2 f5!! is terminal for White's king since the d7-rook joins Black's counterattack.



**29 ... Nc5 30 Bg5 Rc8 31  
fxe6 Nxe6 32 Qxh5 Qc6+ 33  
Kh2 g6 34 Qg4 Bxe5 35 Be4**

**Qxc4!**

Overloading White's d-rook.

**36 Rc1**

White's king is too exposed in the line 36 Rxd7 Qxf1 37 Bxg6 Bxg3+! 38 Qxg3 fxg6 39 Bd2 Qf5.

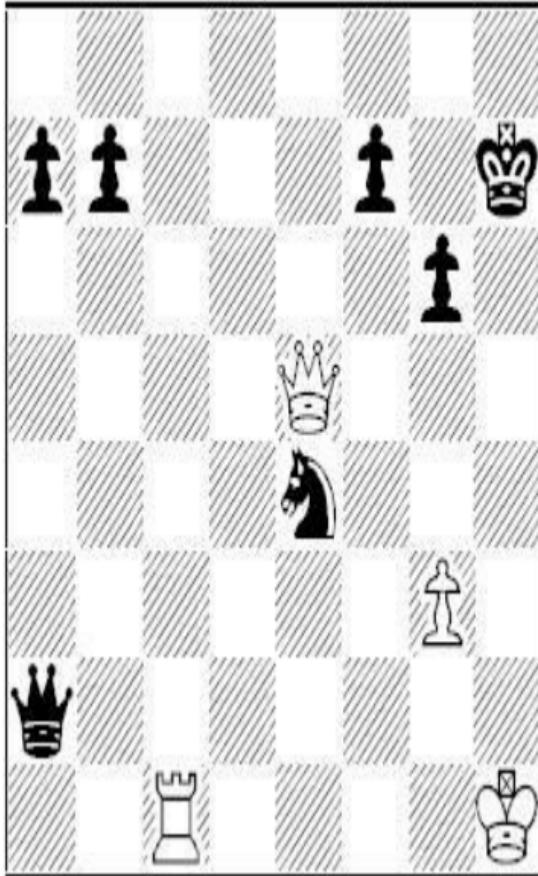
**36 ... Qxa2+ 37 Kh1 Rxc1 38**

**Rxc1 Nxg5!**

The human move. Computers like 38 ... f5! which wins faster.

**39 Qxd7 Nxe4 40 Qe8+ Kh7**

**41 Qxe5**



White's furious attacking exertions finally picked up an exchange at the cost of shearing

away his king's defenders.

## **Exercise (combination alert):**

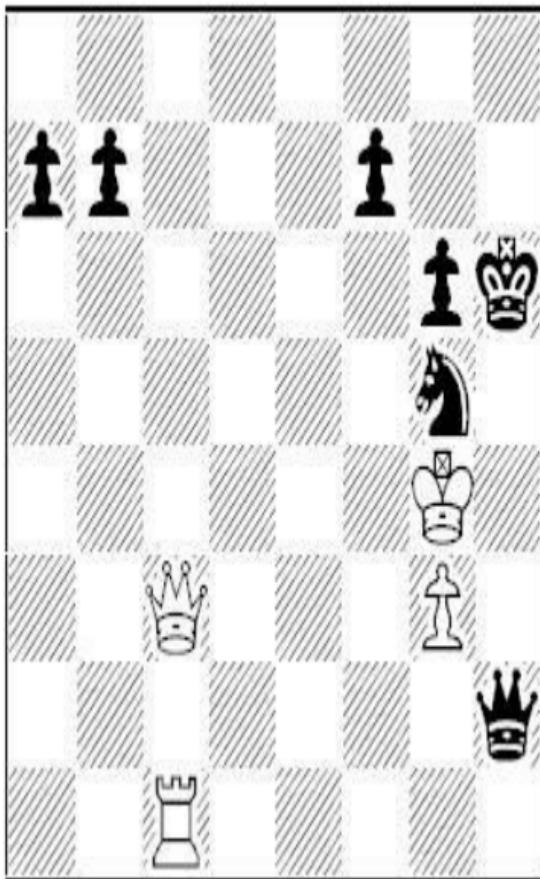
Black has two ways to win.

You just have to find one of them.

### **Answer: 41 ... Qe2!**

Threatening ... Nf2+. If you are a butcher at heart, there is nothing wrong with the second win 41 ... Nf2+! 42 Kg1 Nd3 43 Qc7 Nxc1 44 Qxc1 leaving Black up three pawns.

**42 Qc7 Qf3+! 43 Kh2 Qf2+**  
**44 Kh3 Ng5+! 45 Kh4 Kh6! 46**  
**Qc3 Qh2+ 47 Kg4**



### **Exercise (combination alert):**

# Find the forced mate.

**Answer: 47 ... Qe2+! 0-1**

It's mate after 48 Kf4 Nh3 or 48 Kh4 Qh5.

**Summary:** Entering a move-down Colle-Zukertort makes me nervous. My advice is to stay away from ... d5 and try the plan ... e6/ ... d6 and then play for ... c5.

Game 52

**C.Wonnell-C.Lakdawala**

Gambito (rapid), San Diego 2011

**1 d4 d6 2 Nf3 Bg4 3 Nbd2**

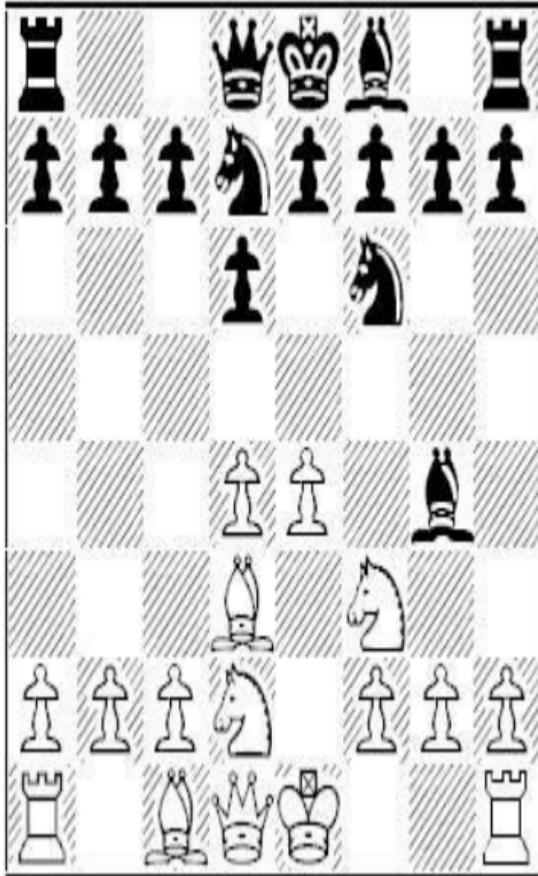
Black wants a fight; White doesn't. I out-rate my opponent by 500 points, so we witness an

asymmetry of zealotry! The annoying Colle setup is the perfect choice since it denies Black even the slightest imbalance associated with ... Bxf3.

### **3 ... Nd7 4 e4!**

In my opinion, best. When you get a chance to grab the centre, do so.

### **4 ... Ngf6 5 Bd3**



**5 ... e5!?**

**Question:** Why didn't you go for the Pribyl plan

... e6 and ... d5 from Chapter One?

**Answer:** The position after 5 Bd3 is similar to those discussed in Chapter One, but there are two differences which are both slightly in White's favour:

1. White's knight sits on d2 rather than c3. This means White can more easily defend his d4-pawn with c2-c3 when Black later plays ... c5 in the Advance French-style positions.

2. Black's queen's knight is already committed to d7. This means that after ... d5 and e4-e5, the d7-square is unavailable and

Black's f6-knight must retreat to a more passive square (usually e8).

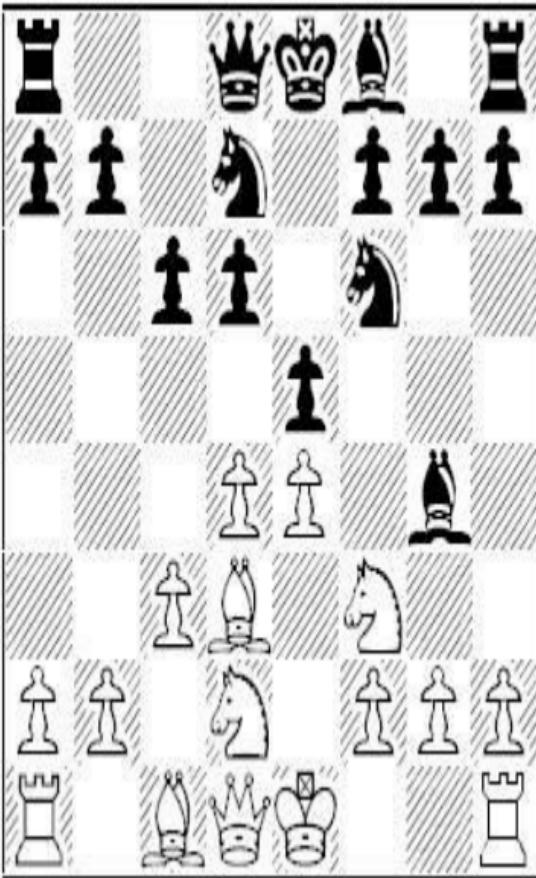
So the plan doesn't work so well for Black in this position. For example:

a) 5 ... e6 6 c3 c6 7 Qe2 Be7 8 h3 Bxf3?! 9 Nxf3 0-0 10 0-0 d5?! 11 e5 Ne8 12 Re1, A.Musat-V.Sanduleac, Predeal 2007. White achieves a favourable French, with his usual space advantage and attacking chances on the kingside, whereas Black finds it hard to exert much pressure on d4.

b) Black, however, can improve with careful play: 5 ... e6 6 c3 Be7 7 h3 Bh5! (this time Black keeps his

bishop) 8 0-0 0-0 9 Re1 c6 (or 9 ... c5 10 b3 cxd4 11 cxd4 Bg6 12 Qe2 d5 13 e5 Ne8 14 Bb2 Rc8 15 Rac1 Nc7 16 g3 Nb8 17 Bxg6 fxg6!? 18 Kg2 Qd7 19 h4 Qb5 and Black is okay, E.L'Ami-T.Petrosian, Dresden Olympiad 2008) 10 Nf1 Be7 8 0-0 0-0 9 Re1 c6 10 Nf1 d5 11 Ng3 Bg6 12 Bf4 (12 e5 Ne8 is a better chance for an edge, but at least Black can exchange White's light-squared bishop) 12 ... dxe4 13 Nxe4 Nxe4 14 Bxe4 Bxe4 15 Rxe4 c5 and Black achieved equality in A.Karpov-V.Salov, Alma-Ata 1995.

**6 c3 c6**



**Question:** White's pawn structure looks too conservative to yield an advantage. Am I

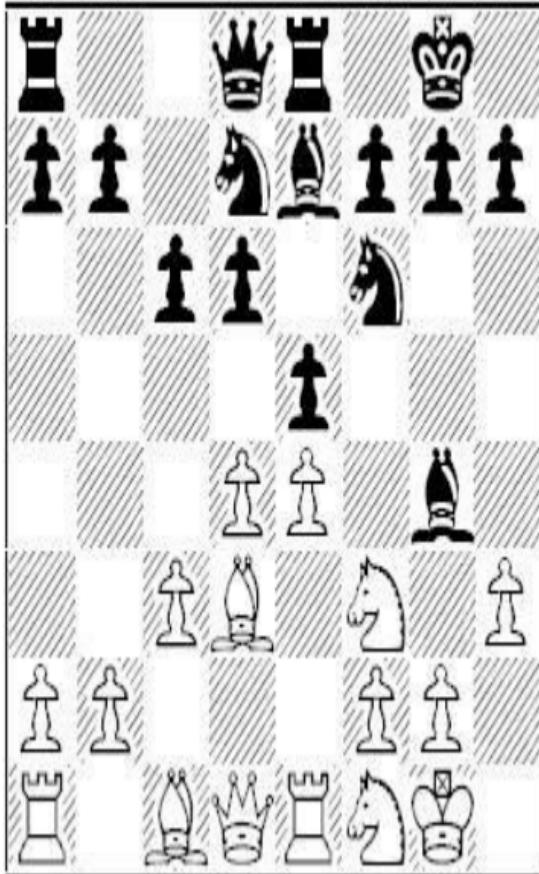
correct in this assessment?

**Answer:** Not quite, for the following reasons: If Black's bishop was still on c8 then I would agree with you. But since the bishop is committed to g4 White may yet be able to extract an edge with the Ruy Lopez manoeuvre h3, Nf1, Ng3 and go after Black's good light-squared bishop. Also, White still holds a tiny advantage in space due to two central pawns on the fourth rank as opposed to Black's single pawn. Conclusion: Black still has something to prove before he can rightfully claim full equality.

**7 0-0 Be7 8 Re1 0-0 9 Nf1!**

He decides to go after the light-squared bishop.

**9 ... Re8 10 h3**



**10 ... Bh5**

**Exercise (planning):** I

considered a dark-square strategy beginning with 10 ... Bxf3. Is it playable?

**Answer:** Yes, I didn't look far enough ahead and misevaluated.  
11 Qxf3 exd4 12 cxd4 Qb6 13 Qe3  
(13 Be3 c5 14 dxc5 dxc5 15 Qe2 Ne5 also looks playable for Black)  
13 ... c5 14 dxc5 Nxc5 15 Bc2. Now I mistakenly thought White stood better, missing the trick 15 ... Nfxe4! 16 Bxe4 Bf6 17 Qf3 d5 18 Bxh7+ Kxh7 with an active position for Black.

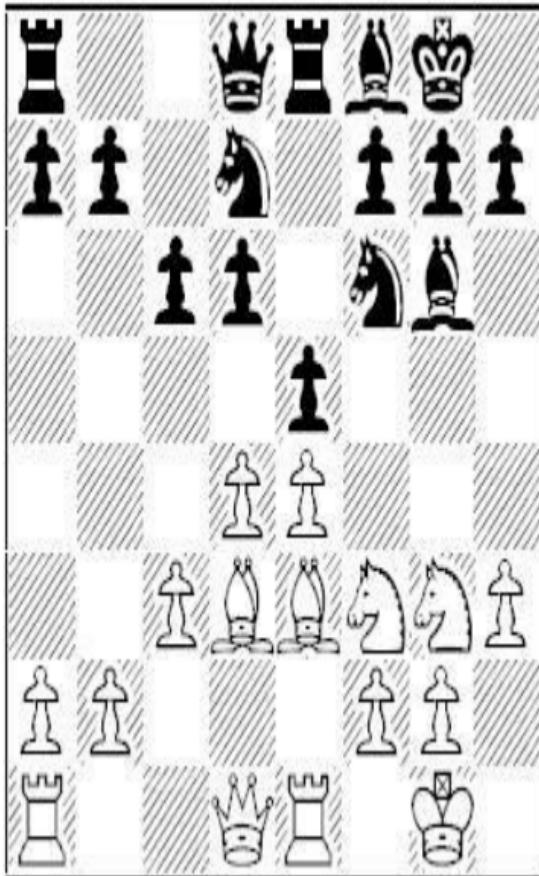
**11 Ng3 Bg6 12 Be3**

**Question:** Does 12 Nh4 get White the bishop pair and the advantage?

**Answer:** No, Black has the tactical trick 12 ... Bxe4! (12 ... Nf8?! 13 Nhf5 allowed White to profit from his inaccuracy in L.Aronian-V.Vorotnikov, Moscow 1996) 13 Nxe4 Nxe4. White can regain the pawn with 14 Nf3 Ng5 15 Bxg5 Bxg5 16 Qb3! Rb8 17 Qa3, but only gets equality.

After 12 Qc2 h6! (hanging on to his light-squared bishop) 13 a4 a5 14 dxе5 dxе5 15 Bd2 Nh7 Black had full equality in K.Hynes-J.Hodgson, Blackpool 1990.

**12 ... Bf8**



**Exercise (multiple choice):**

White must pick his path:

- a) 13 Qc2, securing the e4-pawn;
- b) 13 Nd2, again securing e4;
- c) 13 Nh4. To heck with e4, he wants the bishop pair!

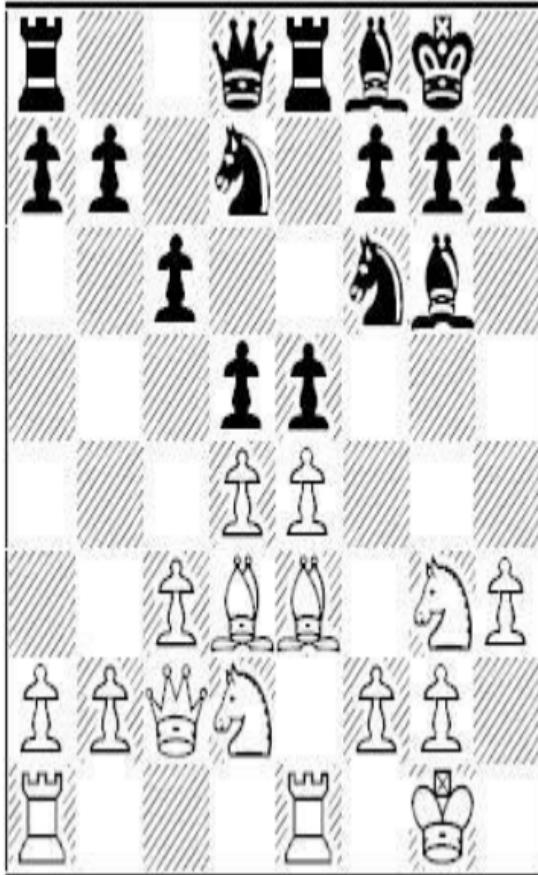
## **13 Nd2?!**

**Answer:** c) 13 Nh4?! fails to a tactic: 13 ... exd4 14 Bxd4 Bxe4! 15 Nxe4 Nxe4 and White doesn't get enough for the pawn. The best option is a) 13 Qc2! to which Black replies 13 ... h6 to keep his bishop. Maybe White has a sliver of an edge due to his extra space. Still, there is a lot of play in the position and Black shouldn't be too unhappy here.

**13 ... d5**

Taking full advantage of White's inaccurate 13 Nd2?! by playing on the loose bishop on d3.

**14 Qc2**



**Exercise (planning):** Black has a path to an edge. Come up with something.

**Answer: 14 ... dxe4!**

Clearing d5 for the knight, which yields the bishop pair.

**Question:** Didn't you just break the principle which states:

Don't be the one to break the central tension?

**Answer:** The principle is: Don't be the one to break the central tension without good reason. In this case, I deemed the clearance of d5 for my knight just such a good reason to break the principle. Remember, principles are just suggestions to guide us, not laws never to be broken.

**15 Ndxe4 Nd5 16 dxe5**

After 16 Bg5 f6 17 Nxf6+ N5xf6 18 Bxg6 hxg6 19 Qxg6 exd4 20 Nf5 Kh8 White gets an initiative and two pawns for the piece and some practical chances, but no knockout punch. Black stands better assuming he defends properly over the next ten or so moves.

### **16 ... Nxe3**

Rybka claims 16 ... Nxe5, increasing the tension, is the more accurate path.

### **17 Rxe3 Nxe5 18 Rd1**

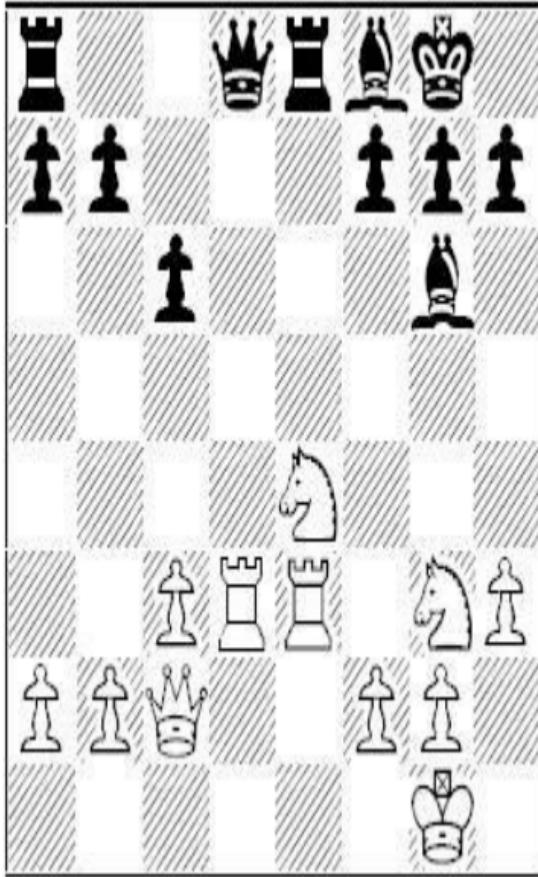
Alternatives fare no better.

a) 18 Bf1? drops material to 18 ... f5!.

b) 18 Rae1 Nxd3 19 Rxd3 Qh4

20 Rdd1 f5 21 Nd2 Bc5 (threat: ... Qxg3) 22 Nh1 Bh5 23 Ra1 Qg5 and Black's bishops dominate.

**18 ... Nxd3 19 Rxd3**



## **Exercise (critical decision):**

Where should the queen go?

- a) 19 ... Qh4. Plunge in. Take

into account

White's possible answer 20 Rd4.

b) 19 ... Qc7. Keep the queen out of harm's way.

**Answer:** 19 ... Qh4!

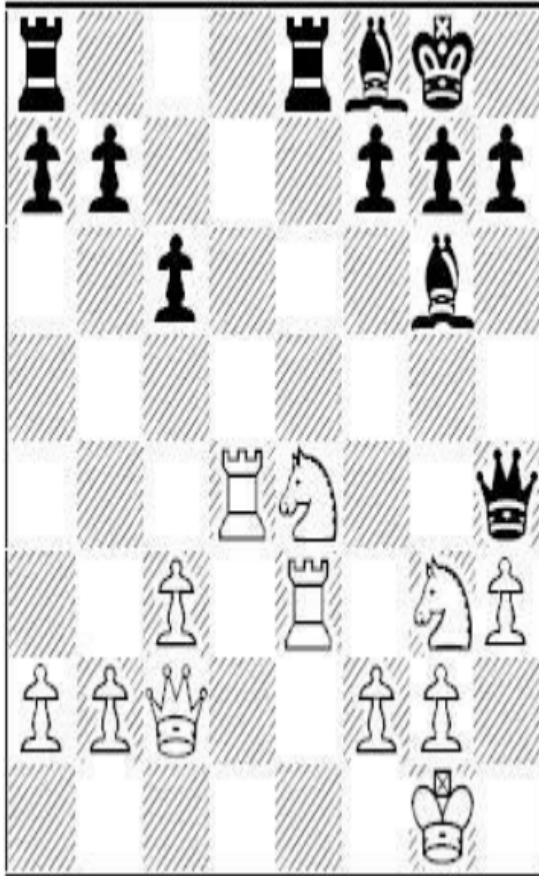
**Question:** Aren't you being a bit generous giving yourself an exclam for a rather obvious move?

**Answer:** Let's try to understand the lay of the land. Your writer, not so bad in logical and simplified positions, isn't so hot for a titled player in open/initiative based games. It's very difficult for me to make such a move. Don't ask me why. I guess there is some inner

compulsion to remain safe. I also took the tournament status into account. This was a final-round game and I led by a full point. It was also a rapid game and I was getting short on the clock. The only way to blow clear first was to go off on some crazy adventure and miscalculate. 19 ... Qh4 is thematic but it accelerates the complications and knocks Black out of his safety zone – one miscalculation could mean defeat from a once-good position. In the end I made the move I knew in my heart to be correct, but it took a bit of an inner pep talk to overcome my cautious

side to do so. I very nearly played the safe 19 ... Qc7 which preserved a safe edge due to the bishops.

**20 Rd4?!**



## **Exercise (combination alert):**

This is the move I worried about.  
Black to play and win material.

**Answer: Step 1: 20 ... Bc5!**

Taking advantage of the pinned knight on e4.

**21 Nxc5?!**

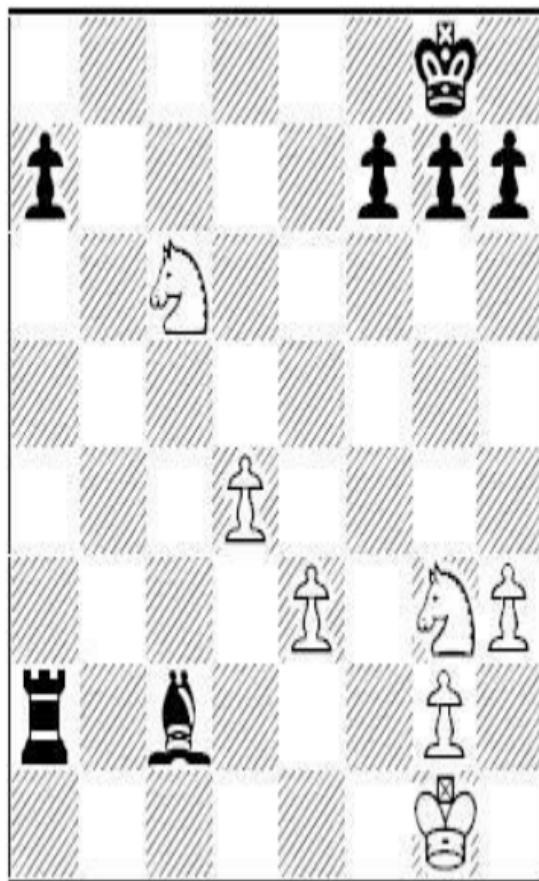
White can minimize the damage with a little combination of his own:  
21 Qe2! Bxd4! (falling into it) 22 Nf6+ gxf6 (no back rank mate!) 23 Rxe8+ Rxe8 24 Qxe8+ Kg7 25 cxd4 Qxd4 26 Qe2. Black should be able to convert the extra pawn since his queen and bishop remain very active.

**Step 2: 21 ... Qxd4!**

The key move in the sequence. The queen sells itself dearly.

**22 cxd4 Bxc2 23 Nxb7 Rxe3**

**24 fxe3 Rb8 25 Na5 Rx<sub>b</sub>2 26 Nxc6 Rx<sub>a</sub>2**



Step 3: Assess the aftermath of

the line. I calculated to this point when initiating the complications stemming from 19 ... Qh4!. Black's a-pawn wins as long as he is careful about White's passed d-pawn.

## **27 e4**

**Question:** Won't it get close if White tries to force the d-pawn through by pushing immediately?

**Answer:** No. It's not even close to being close! Simply slide your king over with 27 d5 Kf8 28 d6 Ke8 and the d-pawn isn't going anywhere. The moral: Don't throw away a won game by paranoid rejection of a winning line due to an

opponent's fictional counterplay.

Now, one final accurate move which seals Black's win:

**27 ... Ba4!**

Put the gun down and step away from the a-pawn! This trick allows Black to blockade White's passed d-pawn with ease.

**28 Ne5**

The idea: 28 Nxa7?? Bd7 traps the knight.

**28 ... f6 29 Nf3 Bd7 30 e5  
Bc6 31 Nf5 Bxf3 32 gxf3 fxe5  
33 dxe5 Kf8 34 Kf1 Ra5 0-1**

**Summary:** This one is tough to crack if Black is playing for the win.

Don't underestimate 4 e4, which may give White a microbe of an edge.

Game 53

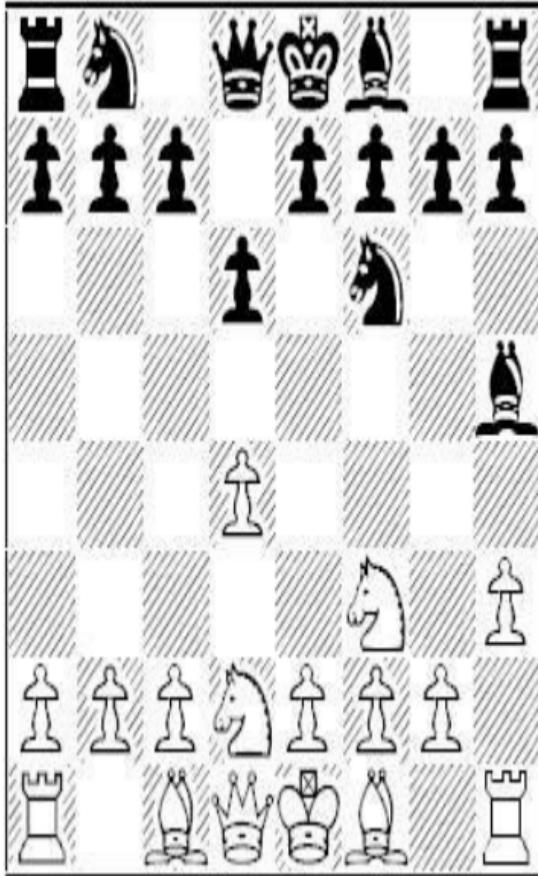
**S.Ledger-J.Hodgson**

Southend 1998

**1 d4 d6 2 Nf3 Bg4 3 Nbd2 Nf6**

Often this just transposes to 3 ... Nd7 lines. In this game we look at an idea which only arises with the 3 ... Nf6 move order.

**4 h3 Bh5**



**5 b3**

**Question:** I don't see how playing 3 ... Nf6 changes anything.

White wants a Colle-Zukertort.  
What has changed?

**Answer:** Patience! There is a big surprise awaiting White on Black's next move.

White's alternatives (the final two being especially wimpy!):

a) 5 e4 should transpose to sidelines we looked at in Game 2, and may be White's best option here.

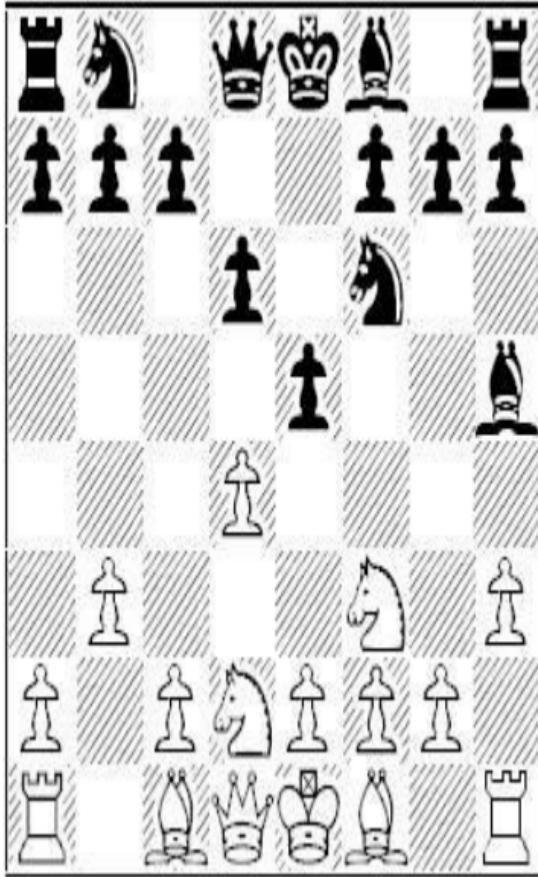
b) 5 g4 Bg6 6 Nh4 Be4! (White gets bishop for a knight but Black picks which one, leaving the other dangling on h4) 7 Nxe4 Nxe4 8 Bg2 d5 9 Nf3 e6 and Black has a nice position with the standard trade of

his bad bishop, V.Ravikumar-J.Hodgson, Eastbourne 1990.

c) 5 e3 Nbd7 6 Be2 c6 7 0-0 e5 and White's knight is somewhat misplaced on d2, P.Canizares Cuadra-L.Campos Gambuti, Albacete 2003.

d) 5 g3 e6 6 Bg2 Be7 7 0-0 Nbd7 8 c3 c6 9 e4 d5! and Black gets equality, J.Barle-K.Hulak, Pula 1990. Remember, wait for e4 before playing ... d5!.

**5 ... e5!?**



**Question:** What the heck?

**Answer:** Please remain calm!

Hodgson attempts to stir up a mess

with a strange pawn sac. Not every Rat lover is a positional player. This sac is not such a bad idea since it certainly has the effect of rattling the “safety first” doctrine of your Colle-Zukertort opponents. Black’s alternatives:

a) 5 ... e6 6 Bb2 Be7 7 g3 c6 8 Bg2 h6 9 0-0 Nbd7 10 e4 d5! (correctly timed, after White plays e4) 11 Qe2 Bg6 12 exd5 cxd5 13 c4 0-0 14 Ne5 Bh7 15 Rfe1 Re8 and White may still hold an edge, L.Polugaevsky-A.Romero Holmes, Logrono 1991.

b) 5 ... Nbd7 6 Bb2 e6 7 e3 c6 8 Be2 Be7 9 0-0 0-0 10 c4, J.Bellon

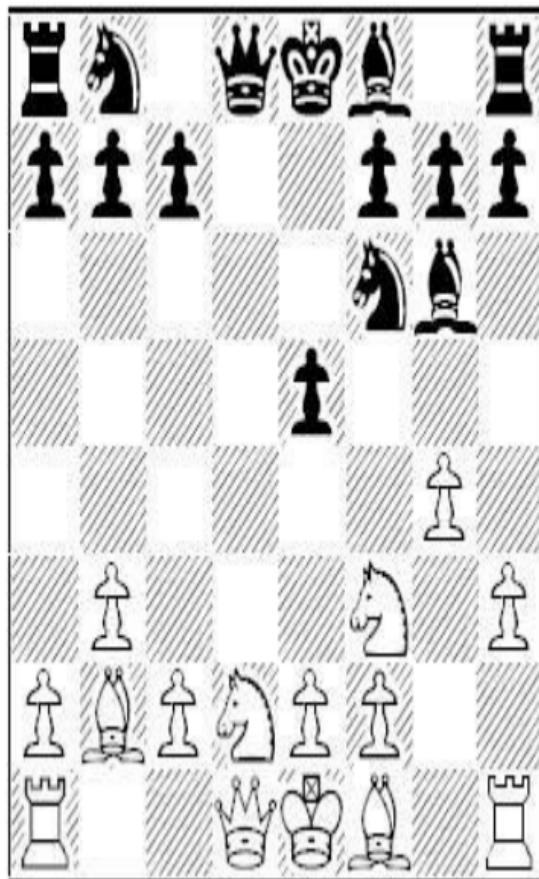
Lopez-V.Epishin, Logrono 1991.  
Now, someone, anyone, try my idea  
of 10 ... c5! rather than playing ...  
d5 and entering the Colle-Zukertort  
a move down.

## **6 g4!**

6 dxe5 dxe5 7 Bb2 (7 Nxe5??  
Qd4 is one clever idea behind the  
pawn sac) 7 ... e4 8 Bxf6? (selling  
his dark squares and development  
for another pawn) 8 ... Qxf6 9 Nxe4  
Bb4+ 10 Nfd2 Bxd2+ 11 Nxd2 Nc6  
12 g4 0-0-0! 13 e4 Bg6 14 g5 Qc3  
15 Bd3 Ne5 16 f3 Bh5 17 Rf1 Bxf3!  
was crushing in A.Sakadin-A.Vaulin,  
Pardubice 1994.

## **6 ... Bg6 7 dxe5 dxe5 8**

# Bb2?!



**Exercise (critical decision):**  
Black achieves at least equality

with the simple 8 ... Nc6, but should he take the Cro-Magnon route with the surge pawn sac 8 ... e4 followed by 9 ... e3?

8 Bb2?! gives in to the pressure. Instead White should test the Hodgson hypothesis with 8 Nxe5!. He obviously regarded the pawn as kryptonite. I think taking it is his only option. After 8 ... Qd4 9 Nxg6 hxg6 10 Rb1 Nc6 11 Bg2 0-0-0!? clearly Black has some initiative for the pawn, but the alternative is to suffer without the extra pawn!

**Answer: 8 ... e4! 9 Ne5 e3!  
10 fxe3**

**Question:** Why does Black

throw himself into a skirmish  
when he isn't ready for it? Black  
isn't really ahead in  
development here. What  
specifically does he get for the  
pawn?

**Answer:** He is indeed ready for  
such a skirmish:

1 The pawn sac sets White  
tremendous practical problems to  
overcome as anarchy erupts in the  
streets (but all on White's side of  
the street!).

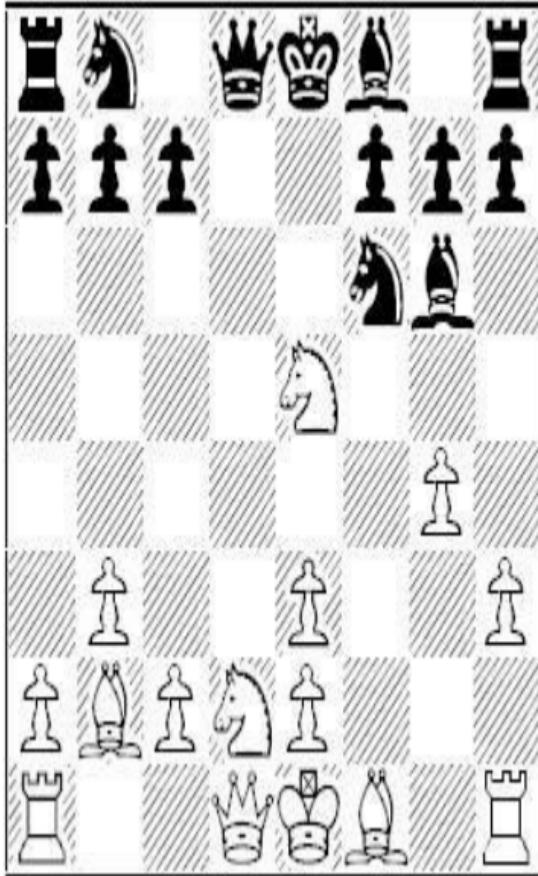
2. It weakens all the dark  
squares around White's king.

3. Is it really a sac? We saddle  
White with those clumsy, doubled,

isolated pawns which look like a pair of goofy kids in a picnic sack race.

**Question:** What is wrong with the simple 8 ... Nc6?

**Answer:** This one depends on your style. If you like quieter positions there is nothing wrong with Rybka's choice, 8 ... Nc6, with a safe, tiny edge. After 8 ... Nc6 it's unwise for White to grab the e-pawn: 9 Bxe5?! Ne4! or 9 Nxe5?! Nxe5 10 Bxe5 Qd5!.



**10 ... Nd5**

Threatening mate on move ten,  
yet the move may not be best. 10

... Nbd7 is a serious alternative:

a) 11 Nxg6? hxg6 12 Bg2? Nxg4 yields a crushing attack.

b) 11 Bg2! Nxe5 12 Bxe5 Bd6 13 Nc4 Bxe5 14 Nxe5 Qe7 and White is under pressure. Note that b7 doesn't hang due to Black's ... Qb4+ trick.

## **11 Ndf3 Na6 12 c4?**

**Question:** Why give this move a question mark? White,

who is under pressure, is understandably eager to swap queens.

**Answer:** White underestimates Black's endgame initiative. He had little choice but to enter 12 Nxg6

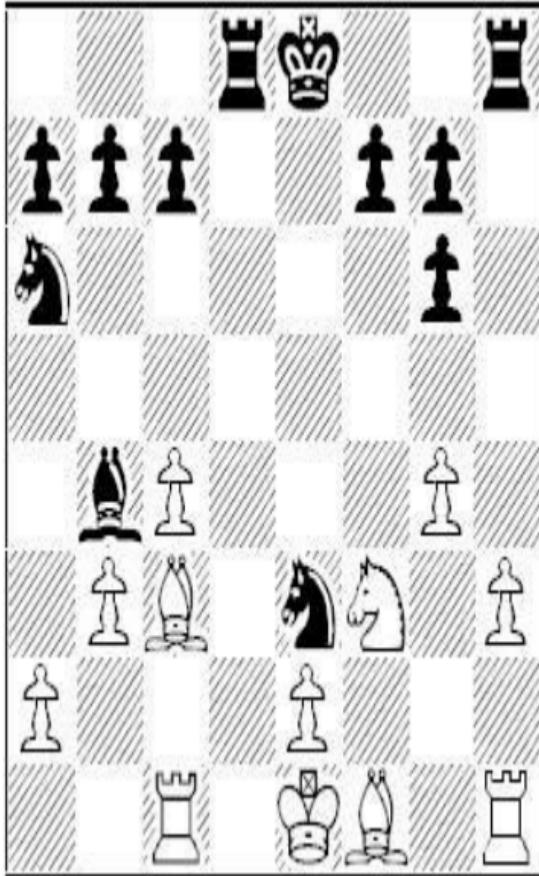
hxg6 with an unclear position.

**12 ... Nxe3 13 Qxd8+ Rxd8**

**14 Nxg6 hxg6**

Black threatens both the c2 fork  
and ... Nxg4.

**15 Rc1 Bb4+ 16 Bc3**



**16 ... Rd1+!**

More mischief with a slick deflection. The simple 16 ... Bd6!

threatening mate in one move is also very strong.

**17 Rxd1 Bxc3+ 18 Rd2**

18 Nd2? Nb4 and the check on c2 leaves White helpless.

**18 ... Nxg4**

Ensuring a material advantage.

**19 Bg2 Ne3 20 Kf2 Bxd2 21**

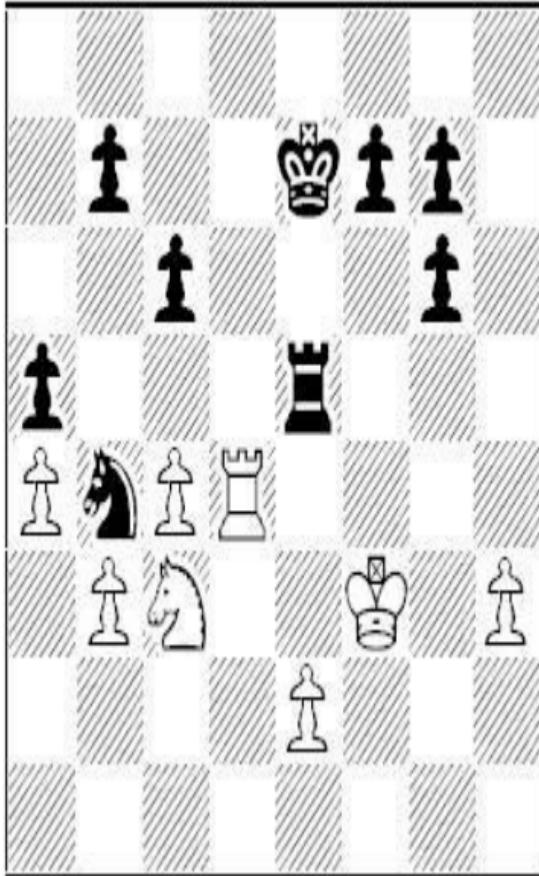
**Nxd2 Nxg2 22 Kxg2 Rh5**

After the hurricane initiated by Black's 16th, here is where we stand: Black is up a clean pawn; Black's pieces remain more active than White's; and White's position is riddled with pawn targets on the queenside, e2 and h3. Conclusion: Hopeless for White.

**23 Ne4 Nb4 24 Nc3 Re5 25  
Kf2 Rf5+ 26 Kg3 Rg5+ 27 Kf2  
Ra5 28 a4**

White agrees to weaken further.  
The alternative is to bow  
obsequiously with 28 Ra1.

**28 ... Rf5+ 29 Kg3 Re5 30  
Kf2 c6 31 Rd1 a5 32 Rd4 Ke7  
33 Kf3?**



**Exercise (combination alert):**  
Hodgson has a terrific sense  
of knowing when opportunities

for treachery are afoot.

Do you see the unstoppable triple attack his next move initiates?

### **Answer: 33 ... Nc2!**

This threatens: White's hanging rook on d4, ... Re3+ to pick off White's knight on c3, and just in case White finds a way to ward off threats 1 and 2, Black also has ... Na1! picking off b3.

### **34 Re4**

The only path to cover threats 1 and 2. Oh yes, I forgot. Threat number four: 34 Rd3?? Ne1+ forking.

### **34 ... Rxe4 35 Kxe4**

35 Nxe4 drops b3 just the same after 35 ... Nd4+.

**35 ... Na1**

There goes another pawn.

**36 Kd3 Nxb3 37 Ne4 b6 38 Kc3 Nc5 39 Nxc5 bxc5 40 Kd3 g5 0-1**

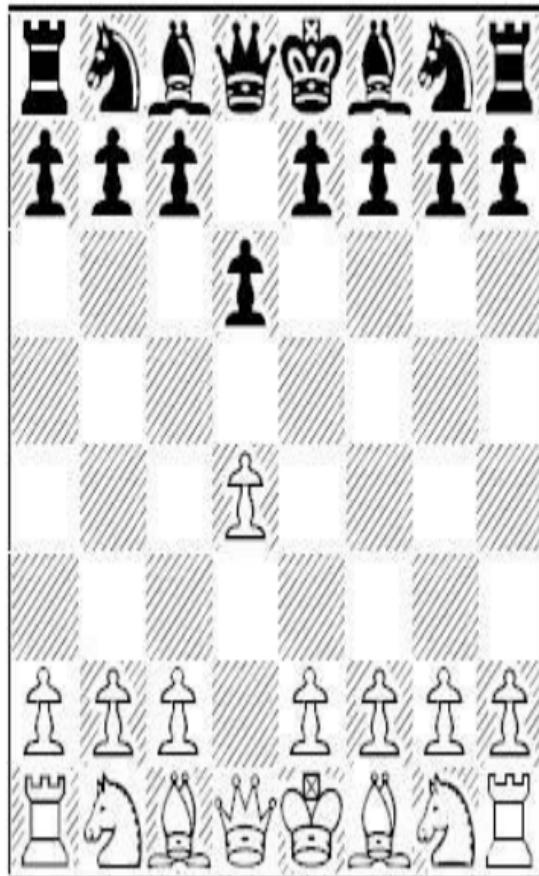
**Summary:** What I like most about the 3 ... Nf6/ 5 ... e5!? pawn sac is that it messes with the Colle-Zukertort opponent's head!

Game 54

**J.Tisdall-B.Gulko**

San Francisco 1995

**1 d4 d6**



Let's briefly look at some second-move alternatives for

White:

a) Against the Trompowsky-style 2 Bg5 Black can employ a Philidor setup where White's dark-squared bishop might be slightly misplaced on the h4-d8 diagonal. After 2 ... Nd7 3 Nf3 Ngf6 4 Nbd2 e5 5 c3 Be7 6 e4 h6 7 Bh4 0-0, White even has to be careful, since 8 Bd3 can be met by the trick 8 ... exd4 9 cxd4 Nxe4! 10 Bxe7 Qxe7 11 Bxe4 d5, winning a pawn.

b) 2 Nc3 Nf6 3 Bg5 (White plays Veresov style) 3 ... Nbd7 4 e4 e5 5 Nf3 Be7 is another Philidor with White's bishop not ideally placed on g5 (compare the notes in Game

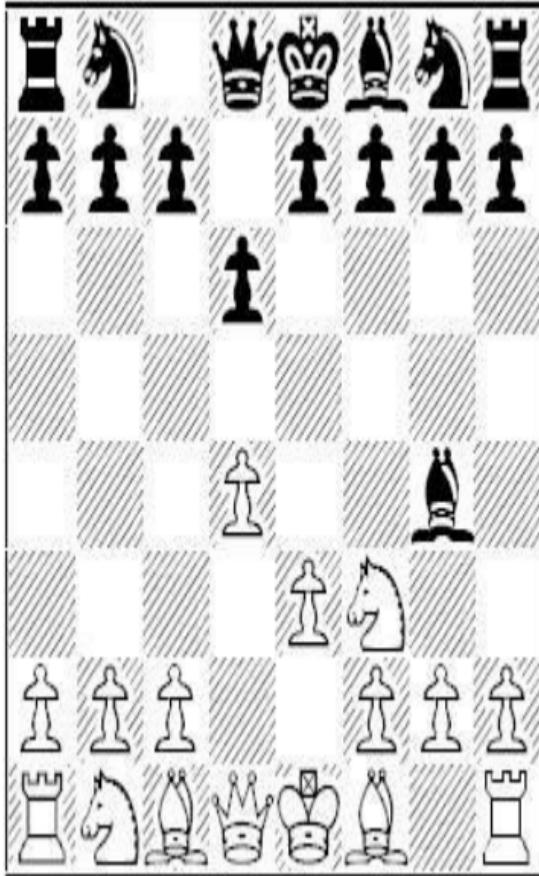
30).

c) 2 Bf4 reaches London versus King's Indian, but one where Black can get in ... e5 much earlier than usual because he hasn't played ... Nf6. For example, 2 ... g6 3 Nf3 Bg7 4 e3 Nd7! 5 h3 e5! 6 Bh2 Qe7 7 Be2 Ngf6 (7 ... f5 is also good) 8 0-0 0-0 9 c4 Ne4 10 Qc2 f5 and Black is more active than in a normal London, Z.Kozul-O.Cvitan, Novi Sad 1985.

d) 2 g3!? e5!? 3 dxe5 dxe5 4 Qxd8+ Kxd8 is more favourable than the lousy 1 d4 d6 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5?! dxe5 4 Qxd8+ Kxd8 ending, since c4 is no longer a weakness,

but this is still playable for Black.  
For example, 5 Nc3 Nf6 6 Nf3 Bd6 7  
Nb5 Nc6 8 Nxd6 cxd6 9 c3 Ke7 10  
Bg2 h6 11 0-0 Be6 with an equal  
position, A.Miles-M.Rivas Pastor,  
Seville 1994.

**2 Nf3 Bg4 3 e3**



3 c4 Nd7 4 Nc3 e5 5 e3 was the game's move order. Be aware that the 3 c4 and 3 e3 lines may later

transpose.

### **3 ... Nd7 4 c4 e5 5 Nc3**

This is a better square for the knight than d2 if White is going for the b3 and Bb2 setup.

### **5 ... Ngf6 6 Be2 Be7**

**Question:** Why doesn't Black play 6 ... e4

followed by the swap of White's good bishop?

**Answer:** Be careful. Sometimes it is possible to be too positional! Sure, you achieve the swap but what about the defence of your now advanced e-pawn? Let's look: 7 Ng5 Bxe2? (following your plan) 8 Qxe2 Qe7 9 Qc2 Nb6 10 b3 d5 11 cxd5

Nbxd5 12 Ngxe4 and the advanced e-pawn is picked off. 7 ... Bf5 is better, but 8 f3 exf3 9 Bxf3 c6 10 0-0 also leaves Black in a tricky situation since he lags in development, he conveniently opened the f-file for White, and White's big centre may soon roll forward.

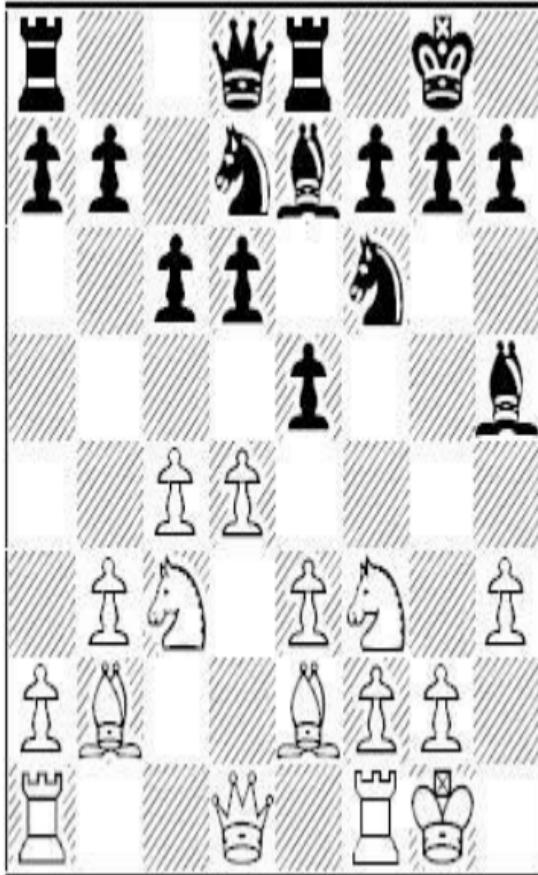
**7 0-0 0-0 8 b3 Re8 9 Bb2 c6**

**Question:** Have we transposed into an Old Indian?

**Answer:** Correct. Once again we lured White into a somewhat harmless line of the Old Indian. Note though, that in a normal OID Black's bishop sits on c8 rather than

g4. Here it helps Black since White doesn't have access to the manoeuvre h3, Nf1 and Ng3, as he did in Game 52.

**10 h3 Bh5**



**Exercise:** Should White take a chance and go after the bishop pair with 11 g4

followed by 12 Nh4?

**11 g4!**

**Answer:** In this case the most war-like path is also the best one.  
Alternatives:

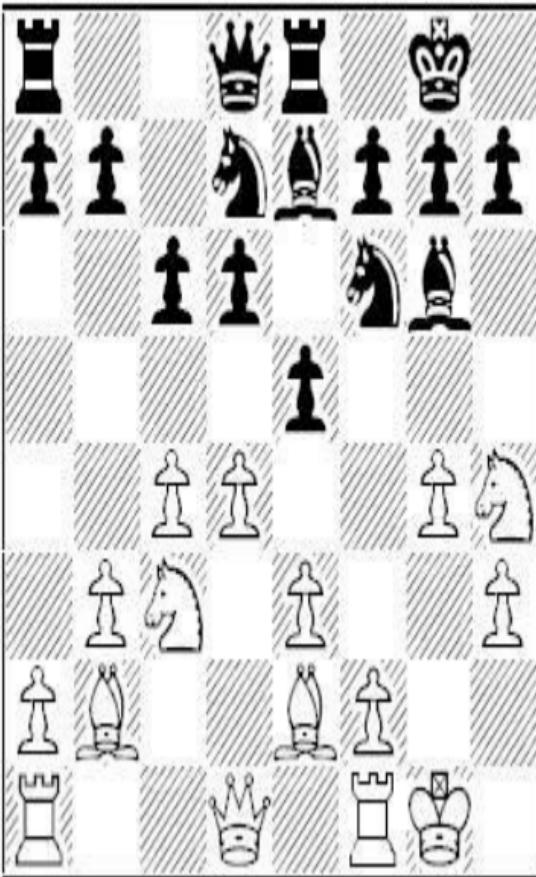
a) 11 dxe5 (such moves don't automatically give White the draw)  
11 ... dxe5 12 Nxe5? (the start of a faulty combination; after 12 Nh4 Bxe2 13 Qxe2 g6 White's position isn't inspirational but at least he keeps his piece!) 12 ... Nxe5 13 Bxh5 Nd3 14 Be2 Nxb2 15 Qc2 Ba3 16 Nb1 (regaining his piece?) 16 ... Bd6! (No! ... Be5 is in the air) 17 c5 Be5 18 Nd2 Nd5 19 Nf3 Bf6 20 Nd4 Bxd4 21 exd4 (regaining his piece?)

21 ... Nf4 (No!) 22 Bg4 Qd5! and White resigned since ... Qxd4 comes next, B.Thorfinnsson-B.Chatalbashev, Eforie Nord 2010.

b) 11 d5 e4!? (this aggressive reaction isn't obligatory) 12 dx<sub>c</sub>6 bxc6 13 Nd4 Bxe2 14 Qxe2 Ne5, B.Larsen-B.Spassky, Malmo 1968. Black's control over e5 compensates for his slightly looser pawn structure.

c) 11 Nh4 Bxe2 12 Nxe2 Bf8 13 Nf5 g6 14 Nfg3 a5 and Black equalized, R.Tibensky-V.Jansa, Stary Smokovec 1991.

**11 ... Bg6 12 Nh4**



**12 ... Bf8?!**

Too quiet a response, which allows White to grab the initiative.

**Question:** Black's last move looks very natural. Why criticize it?

**Answer:** Black should counter in the centre with 12 ... exd4! 13 Qxd4 (13 exd4 d5 looks fine for Black) 13 ... Nc5 14 Nxg6 hxg6 15 Bf3. Perhaps White still has an edge here too, but nothing much. Black may later generate counterplay on White's loose kingside.

### **13 Nxg6 hxg6 14 Bf3!**

GM Tisdall correctly plays for the win against his higher-rated opponent.

**Question:** Isn't 14 g5 stronger? We kick Black around.

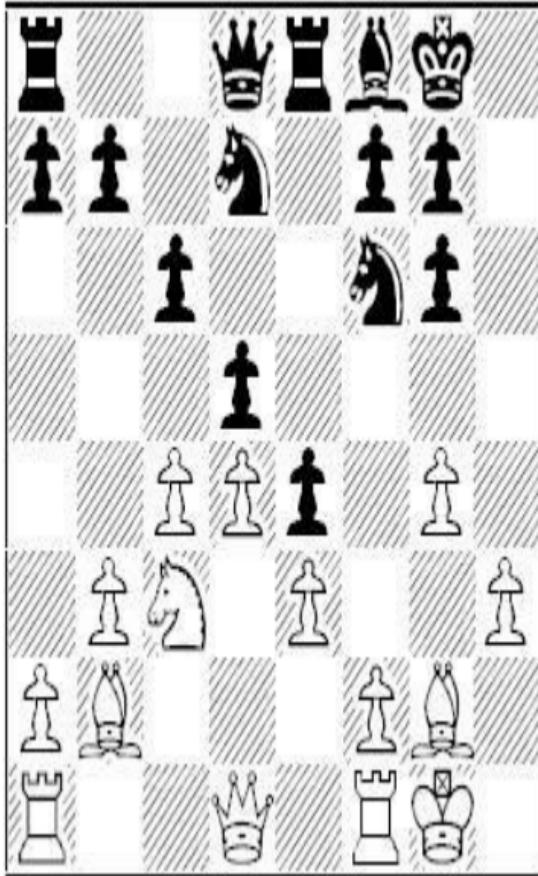
**Answer:** You kick Black around

but also expose your king: 14 ... Nh7 15 f4 Nxg5! (otherwise Black stands worse) 16 fxg5 Qxg5+. Now White should probably take the draw after 17 Kf2 Qh4+ 18 Kg2 Qg5+ with perpetual check, since 17 Kh2!? d5! intending ... Bd6 looks too risky.

### **14 ... e4**

14 ... exd4 15 exd4! allows White a pleasant space advantage.

### **15 Bg2 d5?!**



**Exercise (critical decision):**  
One senses that White's  
position gains ground. How

should he proceed?

## **16 f3?!**

**Answer:** 16 g5! puts Black under tremendous pressure. For example:

a) 16 ... Nh5 17 cxd5 cxd5 18 Nxd5 Qa5 19 Nc3 Qxg5 20 Qg4! forces the win of e4.

b) 16 ... Nh7 17 h4 followed by f3 leaves Black in a bind. I have vast, unpleasant experience in similar positions when my Slavs go badly wrong, leaving White with the bishop pair, space and attacking chances.

## **16 ... Bb4!**

Reinforcing his e4-point by

threatening an attacker of e4.

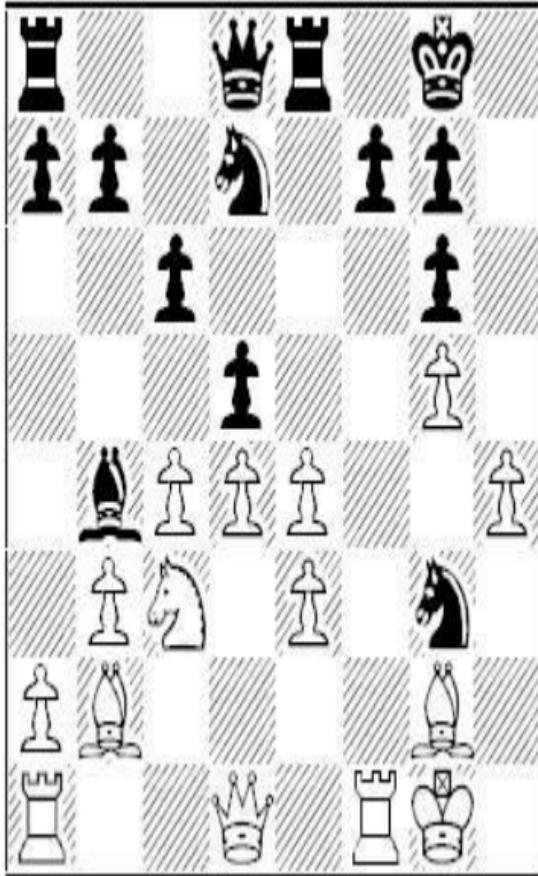
## **17 g5!?**

White is under the mistaken impression he still holds the initiative. He should play 17 f4 with an approximately even position.

## **17 ... Nh5 18 h4?**

A strategic error which allows Black a blockade on e4. Once again White should close with 18 f4.

## **18 ... Ng3 19 fxe4**



**19 ... Bxc3!**

Black correctly chooses board control over greed and avoids 19 ...

Nxf1?! 20 Qxf1 Bxc3 21 Bxc3 dxe4 22 Qf4 when White gets play for the exchange in the form of a bishop pair in a semi-open position, an open f-file and pressure on e4.

**Question:** Surely a full exchange up must take precedence over abstract strategic edges?

**Answer:** In my opinion it's arithmetic folly to sell initiative and strategic advantages to an opponent for cash. Expense must bow to need!

## **20 Bxc3 Nxe4**

The returns are in and the ballot count complete:

1. Knights rule over bishops.  
Black's e4-knight radiates power  
and fishes for compliments from  
passers by.

2. One rank below e4 sits a  
sickly, potential target: e3.  
3. White controls the open f-file.  
Conclusion: Advantage Black.

## **21 Bb4**

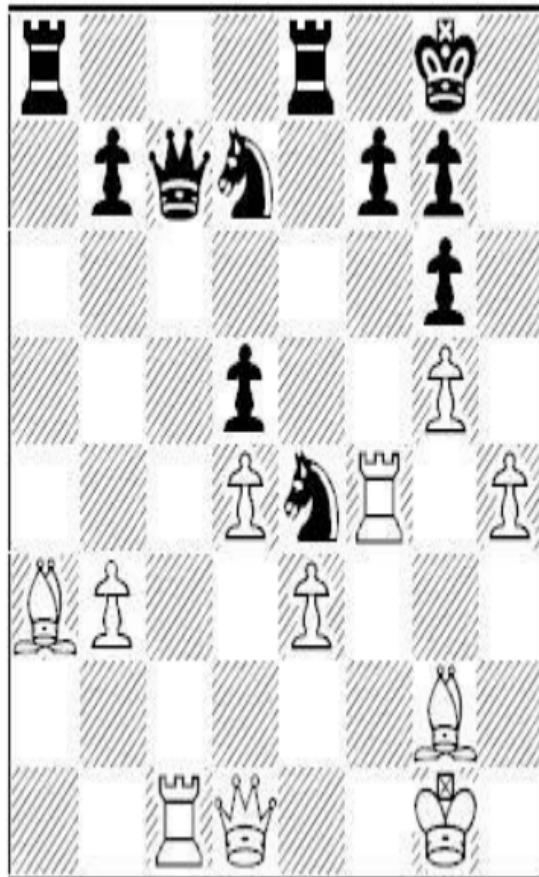
Maybe this is a matter of style  
but I would go for the more  
cautious 21 Be1.

## **21 ... a5 22 Ba3**

Still refusing to defend by  
playing to e1.

**22 ... a4 23 Rf4 axb3 24  
axb3 Qc7 25 cxd5 cxd5 26**

# Rc1?



**Exercise (combination alert):**  
Can you do better

than a strong GM and find Black's trick?

## **26 ... Qa5?!**

**Answer:** 26 ... Nc3!, deliberately walking into a pin, wins the exchange after 27 Qc2 (or 27 Bb4 Qxf4!) 27 ... Ne2+! (the key move in the combination) 28 Qxe2 Qxf4!.

## **27 Bxe4?!**

White, understandably, is sick and tried of staring at that monster e4-knight. But handing over his defending bishop puts his king at grave risk.

## **27 ... Rxe4**

Eliminating the last defender

around White's king.

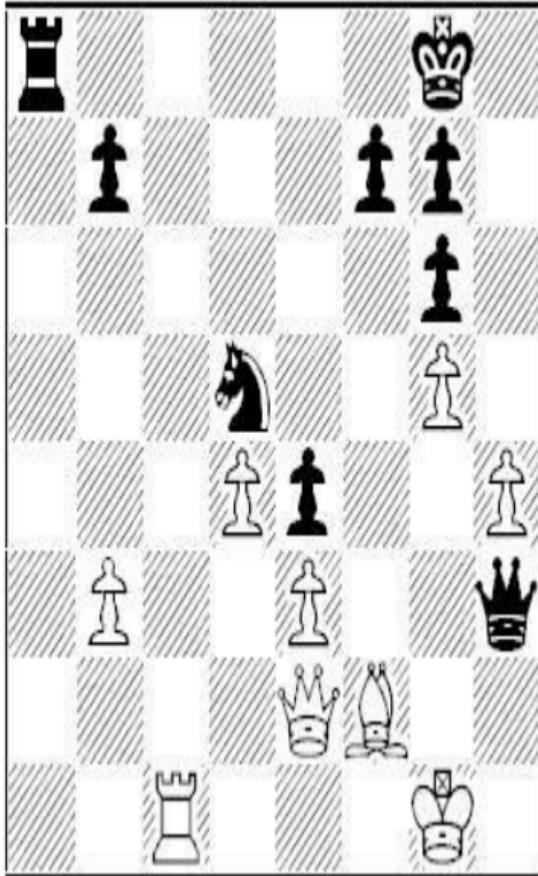
**28 Rxe4 dxe4 29 Bd6 Qf5!**

**30 Bf4**

Better to go to g3 right away.

**30 ... Nb6 31 Qe2 Nd5 32**

**Bg3 Qh3 33 Bf2**



The bishop, shoulders sagging,  
must now defend e3. There is no  
question White's game is in freefall.

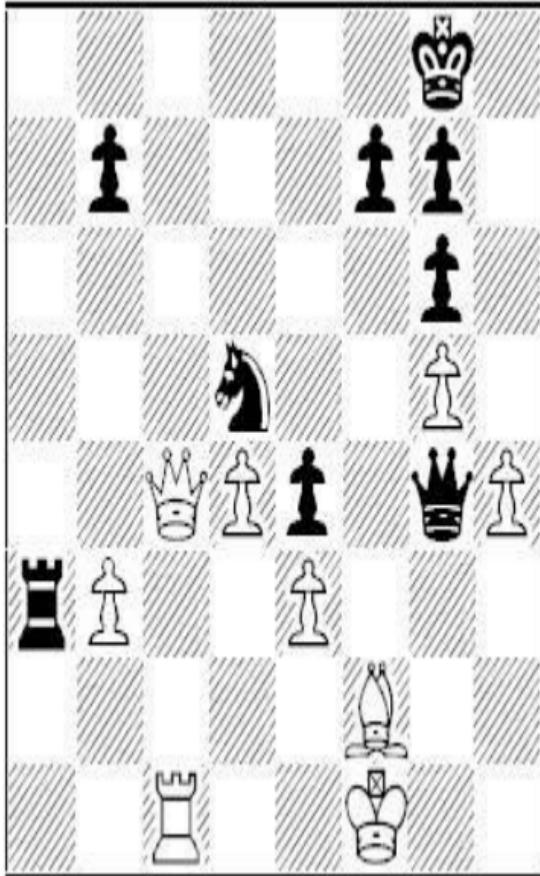
His pieces, now a patchwork of clans, are uncooperative and at odds with each other.

**Exercise:** Black's rook is the last piece which needs to enter the fight ...

**Answer: 33 ... Ra3!**

Go after b3. Black's mob soon approaches White's king on the balcony. A hungry man is an angry man.

**34 Qc4 Qg4+! 35 Kf1**



### **Exercise (combination alert):**

Find the tipping point which shatters

resistance.

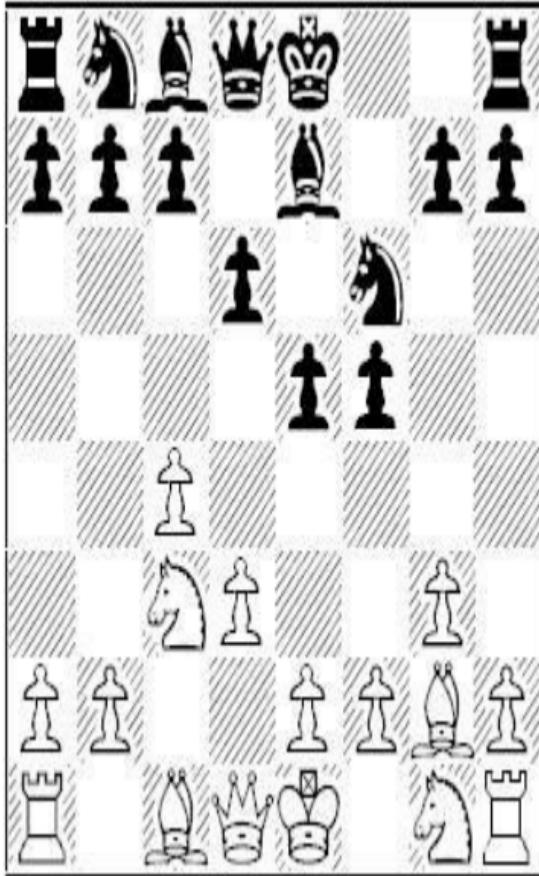
**Answer:** 35 ... Nxe3+! 36 Bxe3 Qf3+ 37 Bf2 Ra2! 0-1

**Summary:** The 3 e3 lines lead to a passive version of an Old Indian for White. Black should be able to manage equality.

# **Chapter Eight**

## **English, King's Indian Attack and Others**

Against the English, KIA and even 1 b3 (Larsen's Opening), we fall back on our reliable ... d6, ... e5 and ... f5 Dutch structure.

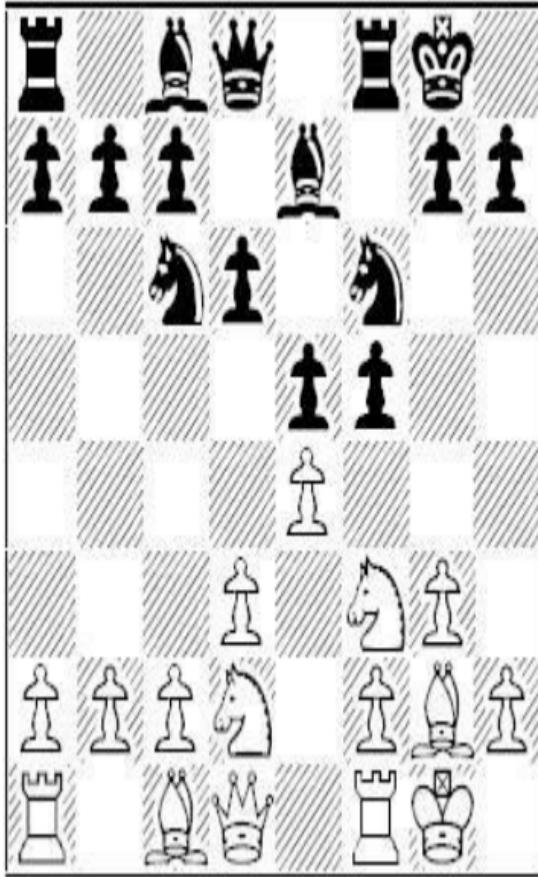


Against all the English setups we employ a pawn formation associated with the Classical Dutch,

but up a move since we achieve ... e5 in one go rather than two. Our choice of plans, one aggressive, one positional:

1. The Neanderthal Grand Prix Attack plan ... 0-0, ... Qe8, ... Qh5, ... Nc6, ... f4 and ... Bh3 has its charms, since it gives us an opportunity to play for checkmate. I believe Black's chances are equal to White's on the other wing.

2. We can also mirror a plan seen from Chapter Six, blanketing the centre with pawns by playing for ... d5 with the manoeuvre ... c6, ... Na6, ... Nc7 and ... Be6.



Researching the opening, I was shocked to discover just how lame the KIA was against our Rat/Dutch

setup. White plays into our hands by allowing us ... fxe4 opening the f-file, or ... f4 with a very good version of the Grand Prix Attack. In each case White allows us the easy-to-play attack commencing with ... Qe8 and ... Qh5. Here, White fails to achieve his customary counterplay in the centre or on the queenside.

Finally we briefly cover the blank slate of "others" like 1 b3 (Larsen's Opening), 1 b4 (Orangutan), and 1 f4 (Bird's opening). With the first two, we again go for ... d6, ... e5, ... f5 and Rat Dutch, while against the Bird we play the Palliser

formula ... d6 and ... Bg4.

Game 55

**M.Kostic-A.Graf**

Kavala 1998

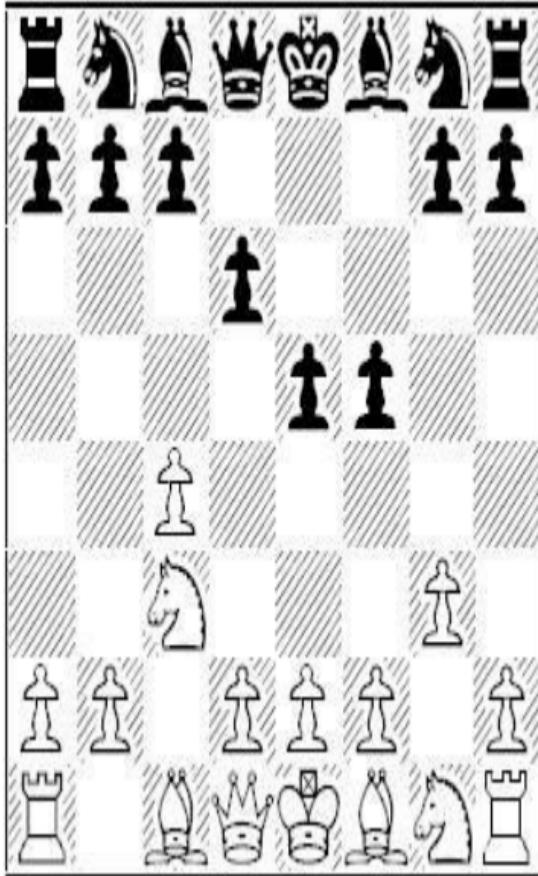
## **1 c4 e5**

Our order would be 1 ... d6 2 Nc3 e5. Now watch this: 1 c4 f5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 g3 e6 4 Bg2 Be7 5 0-0 0-0 6 Nc3 d6 7 d3 e5. Nothing special, right? Except that Black is a full tempo behind our game. The reason: In the Dutch, Black plays ... f5, ... e6, ... d6 and only later ... e5. Our version goes ... d6, ... e5, ... f5, a full move up!

**2 Nc3 d6 3 g3**

A pure English. 3 Nf3 f5 4 d4 e4  
transposes to Chapter Six.

**3 ... f5**



## 4 Bg2

With 4 d4 White makes us revisit positions similar to those we

get in Chapter Six. It's important to understand the differences. After 4 ... Be7! 5 Bg2 Nf6 6 Nf3 e4! (only push when we gain the tempo) 7 Ng5 c6 8 f3 d5 Black was fine in G.Kaidanov-G.Sagalchik, New York 1997.

**Question:** Why not push earlier with 4 ... e4?

**Answer:** This would get us to similar positions, except we don't gain our customary tempo attacking a knight on f3. This means White is at least one move up on games from Chapter Six.

**Question:** Fair enough, but what about playing 4 ... exd4?

**Answer:** After 5 Qxd4 Nc6 6 Q d 2 we once again return to positions from Chapter Six, but this time Black inserted the unnecessary move ... f5, possibly making it a inferior version for Black.

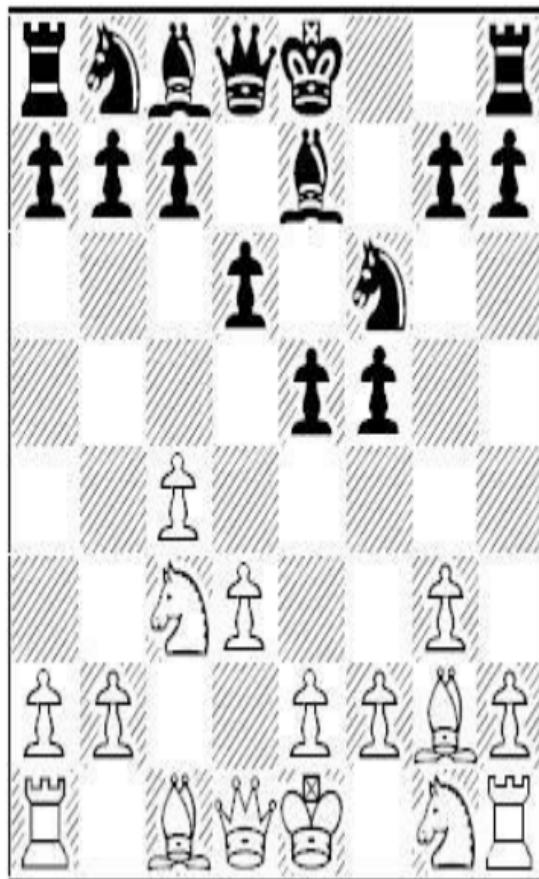
**Question:** And if White plays 4 dxe5 after 4 ... Be7, then what?

**Answer:** We recapture and are very happy to enter that ending, also similar to those we looked at in Chapter Six, but this time Black doesn't have to lose castling privileges and may recapture on d8 with his bishop.

#### **4 ... Nf6 5 d3 Be7**

5 ... g6 is King's Indian versus

English.



**6 Nf3**

**Question:** I have seen several

## English setups

for White. Can you list some of them?

**Answer:** Next game we examine the e3/Ne2 setup. Here are two others:

a) 6 e4 (with the "V" formation White immediately challenges Black's central space) 6 ... c6 (there is nothing wrong with taking on e4 right away to open the f-file) 7 Nge2 0-0 8 0-0 Na6 and now:

a1) 9 d4!? is probably premature: 9 ... Qe8 10 a3 fxe4 11 dxе5 dxе5 12 Nxе4 Nxе4 13 Bxе4 Nc5 14 Bg2 Bf5, K.Varberg-B.Gulko, Copenhagen 1996. Black's initiative

and control over the central light squares mean a lot more than the slight potential weakness of the isolated e-pawn.

a2) 9 h3 Qe8 10 exf5 Bxf5 11 g4 Be6 12 f4 h6 with a sharp position where White may have a touch of an edge, C.McNab-S.Ansell, British League 2004.

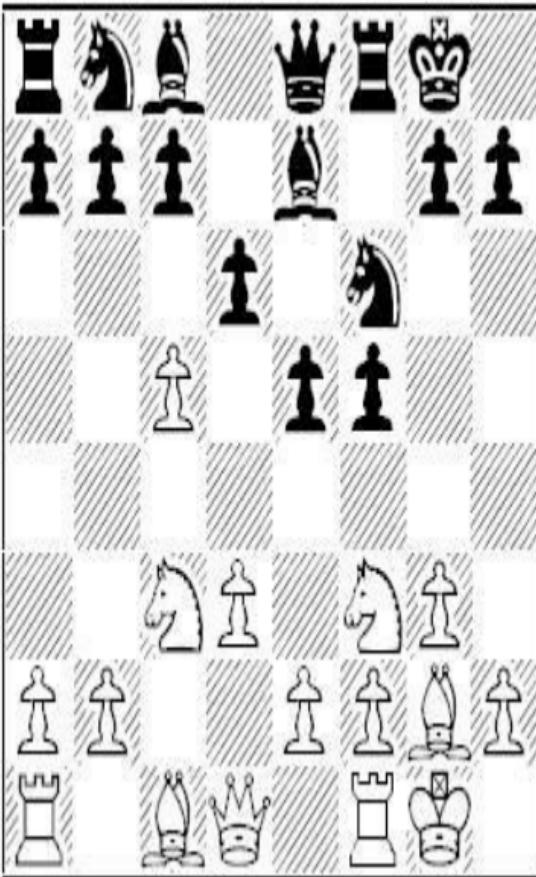
b) 6 f4 is a move favoured by GM Serper. White strikes the centre from the side. If given time he may set up like this: Nh3, 0-0, b3, Bb2 and Qd2. Playing the immediate 6 ... exf4 limits White's recapture options:

b1) 7 Bxf4 develops quickly but

loses control over e5. 7 ... 0-0 8 Nf3 c6 9 Qd2 Na6 10 0-0 Nc5 11 Nd4 Ng4 12 h3 Ne5 13 Rf2 Bf6 was equal in G.Serper-S.Dolmatov, Manila Olympiad 1992.

b2) I would go for the more positional route 7 gxf4 c6 8 Nf3 Qb6 9 e3 0-0 10 0-0 Kh8 11 Kh1 a5 12 b3 Na6 13 Na4 Qd8 14 Bb2 Bd7 15 Qd2 Rb8 16 Nc3 Nc5 17 Nd4 Ng4 18 h3 Nh6 19 Rf3 Bf6, which looks dynamically equal, G.Serper-A.Yermolinsky, Manila Olympiad 1992.

**6 ... 0-0 7 0-0 Qe8 8 c5**



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

**Answer:** Be aware of this

common trick. White seeks to pry open the queenside.

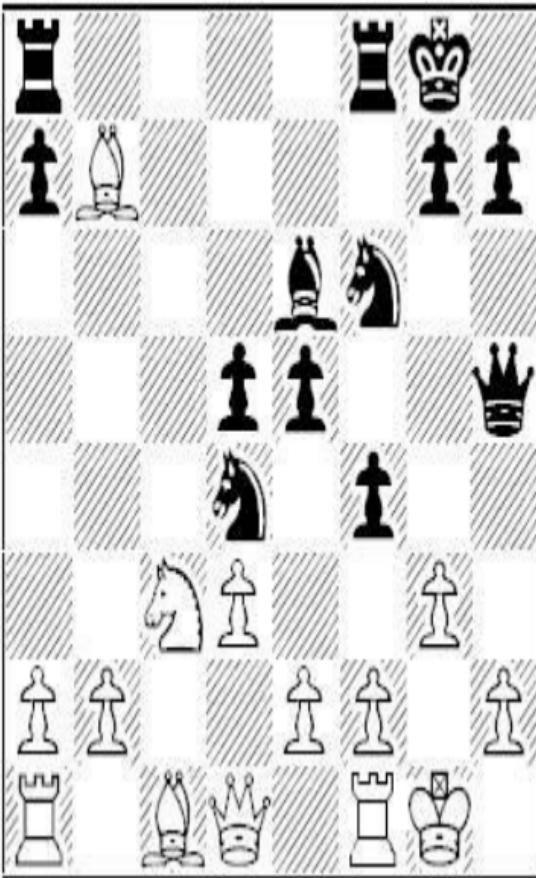
**Question:** What happens if he plays in pure English style and takes space on the queenside with 8 Rb1 followed by b4?

**Answer:** Ignore him as much as possible on the queenside and commence your attack on the other wing with 8 ... Qh5 intending ... f4, ... Bh3 and ... Ng4 later on. Likewise, after 8 b4 Qh5 9 Qb3 Kh8 Black is ready for the same plan. These positions are probably dynamically balanced.

## **8 ... Kh8**

The following game is an

example of the horrible consequences facing White if he gets carried away with his queenside ambitions: 8 ... Nc6 9 cxd6 Bxd6 (recapturing with the pawn is also possible) 10 Nd2 Be6 11 Qa4 Qh5 12 Nc4 Nd4 13 Nxd6 cxd6 14 Qd1 f4 15 Bxb7 d5!!.



White's all-important light-squared bishop is denied a re-entry visa to the kingside. The rest is a

bloodbath: 16 Bxa8 f3! 17 Re1 fxe2 18 Nxe2 Nf3+ 19 Kg2 Qxh2+ 20 Kxf3 Ng4+ 0-1, O.Stefanopoulos-I.Ibragimov, Athens 1993.

## **9 Qb3**

The queen is vulnerable here. 9 Bg5 scores the best. After 9 ... c6 10 cxd6 Bxd6 11 Rc1 Na6 12 e4 fxe4 13 Nxe4 Nxe4 14 dxe4 Bc5 15 Qb3 Bb6 16 Qc3 Bg4 17 Nxe5 Be2 18 Nc4 Bxf1 19 Rxf1 White has compensation for the exchange, but no more, T.Sammalvuo-J.Yrjola, Helsinki 2000.

## **9 ... Nc6 10 cxd6 cxd6**

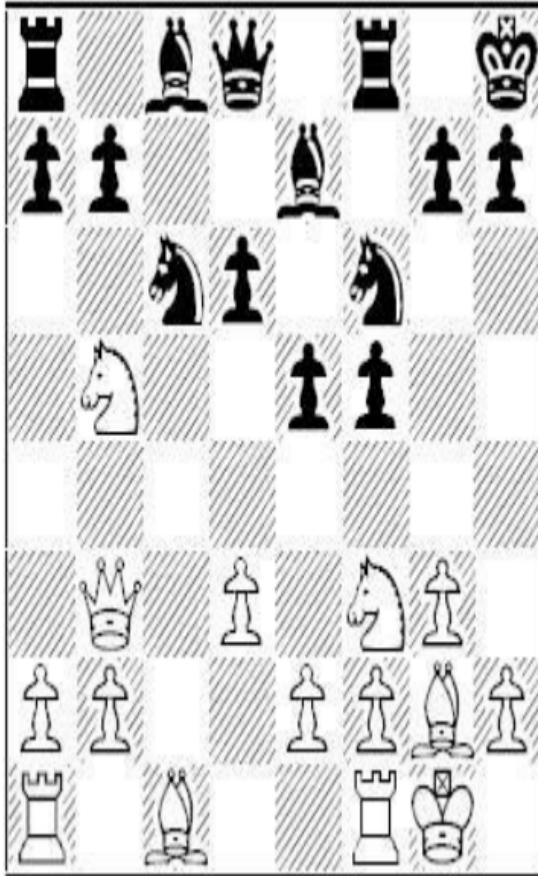
As we saw in the note above, Black may also elect to recapture

with his bishop.

## **11 Nb5**

Not a real gain of time. He inconveniences Black's queen but eventually loses time when his knight gets kicked back.

## **11 ... Qd8**



**12 d4?**

White demands his fair share of central control but this move turns

out to be nothing but bluster, and one of those errors a player makes when he relies on intuition instead of working out the moves. He sees that both his knights cover d4, keeping it secure, right? Wrong! He should continue with 12 Bg5 and fight for control over d5.

### **12 ... e4**

There goes one defender of d4.

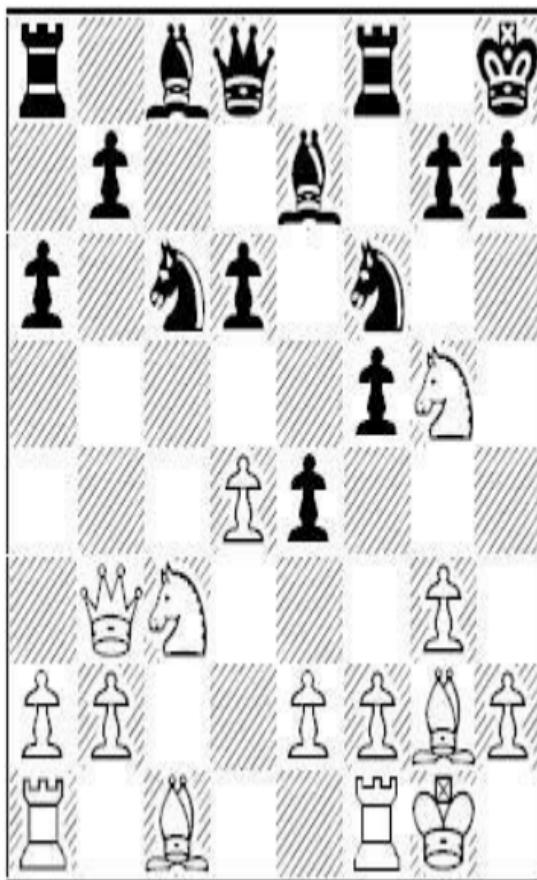
### **13 Ng5**

Threatening a fork on f7. White's bold knights fly forward believing themselves to be leaders seizing the initiative. In fact, they are simply misleaders.

### **13 ... a6**

And there goes the other!

**14 Nc3**



**Exercise:** Should Black grab

White's loose d4-pawn or not?

**14 ... d5?!**

**Answer:** Yes he should. Perhaps Graf didn't want to get enmeshed in a central distraction and preferred initiative from a consolidated, strong centre. Or maybe he feared 14 ... Nxd4! 15 Qc4 double attacking d4 and f7 (15 Nf7+?? Rxf7 16 Qxf7 Be6 traps the queen). However, Black has the resource 15 ... Nc2! (possibly the move Graf overlooked or rejected) 16 Rb1 d5 17 Qa4 Nb4 with a clean getaway and loot in hand. Moral: Sometimes personal sacrifice (like temporary loss of initiative) must

be endured for the greater good of the clan (free pawn!).

**15 Rd1 b5**

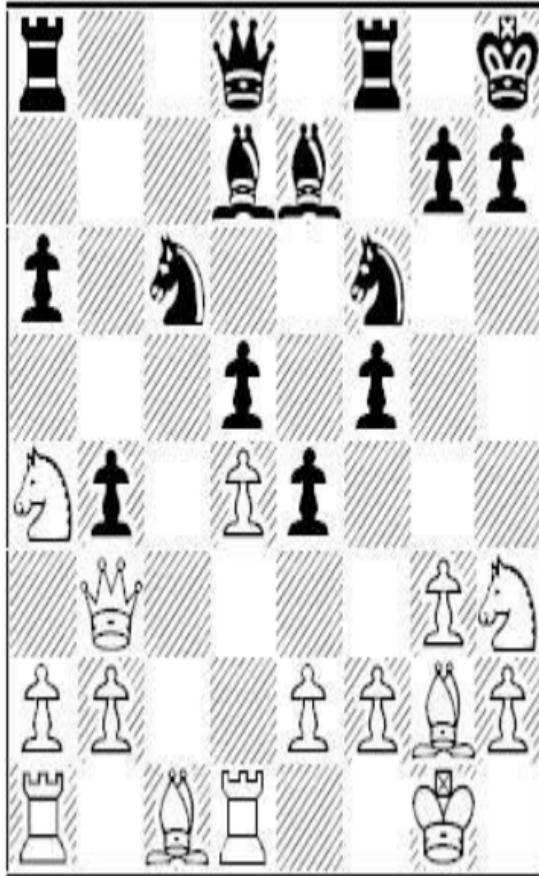
White gets squeezed on the queenside and in the centre.

**16 Nh3 b4!**

Even stronger than 16 ... Be6. Black correctly evaluates the hole on c5 as superficial.

**17 Na4 Bd7**

Intending ... Na5.



**Exercise:** White's knight on a4 itches to get into the action. Should White play 18

Nc5?

**18 Nc5?**

**Answer:** No! It's a tactical blunder which drops the d-pawn after all:

**19 ... Nxd4! 19 Rxd4**

19 Qxb4 Nxe2+ 20 Kh1 Rc8 is even worse for White.

**19 ... Bxc5 20 Rd1 Qa5!**

Sneaky stuff! Black threatens ... Ba4!.

**21 Qc2 Rac8 22 Qd2 Qb6 23 e3 Bb5 24 b3 Ng4!**

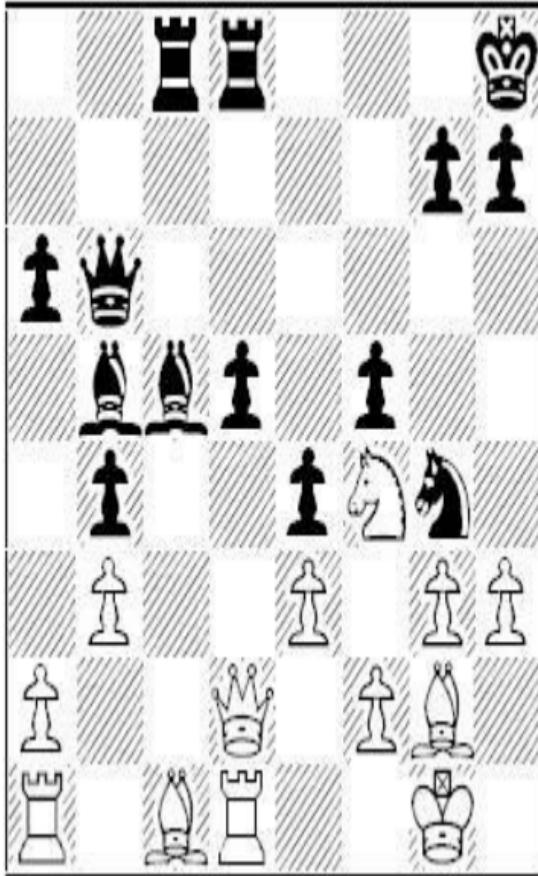
The d5-pawn isn't hanging due to either rook to d8. Black, meanwhile, contemplates ... Ne5 and also sacs on e3.

## **25 Nf4**

White still can't develop his queenside. 25 Bb2?? is met harshly with 25 ... Nxe3!.

## **25 ... Rfd8 26 h3**

26 Nxd5?? drops a piece to 26 ... Qh6 27 h3 Nf6.



**Exercise (combination alert):**  
Black's knight is attacked.  
Does he really have to move it?

**Answer:** He doesn't!

**26 ... d4!**

Black surges forward and White's position crumbles like a water-soaked log.

**27 hxg4 dxe3 28 Qxd8+ Rxd8 29 Rxd8+ Qxd8 30 Bxe3 Bxe3 31 fxe3 Qd2 32 gxf5 Qxe3+ 33 Kh2 Qd2 34 Kh3 e3**

This pawn costs White even more material.

**35 Bf3 e2 0-1**

After 36 Ng2 Qc3! wins another piece though the double attack on a1 and f3.

**Summary:** Our favourite ... d6, ...

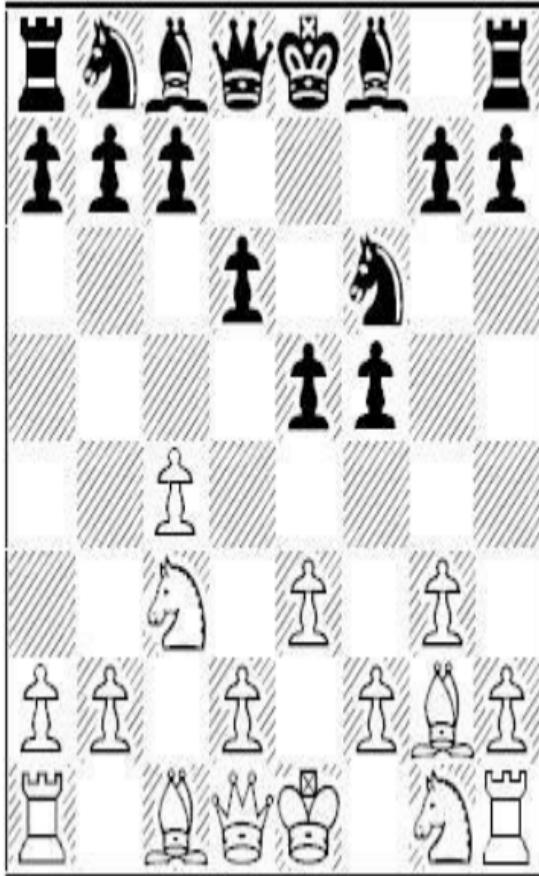
e5, ... f5 pawn structure gives us a full extra tempo over the normal Classical Dutch lines versus the English.

Game 56

**S.Jacobi-A.Yermolinsky**

US Open, Concord 1995

**1 c4 e5 2 g3 d6 3 Bg2 f5 4 Nc3  
Nf6 5 e3**



White begins a flexible setup with Ne2 next.

**Question:** What is the point of

playing the knight to e2 in two moves when he can develop to f3 in just one move?

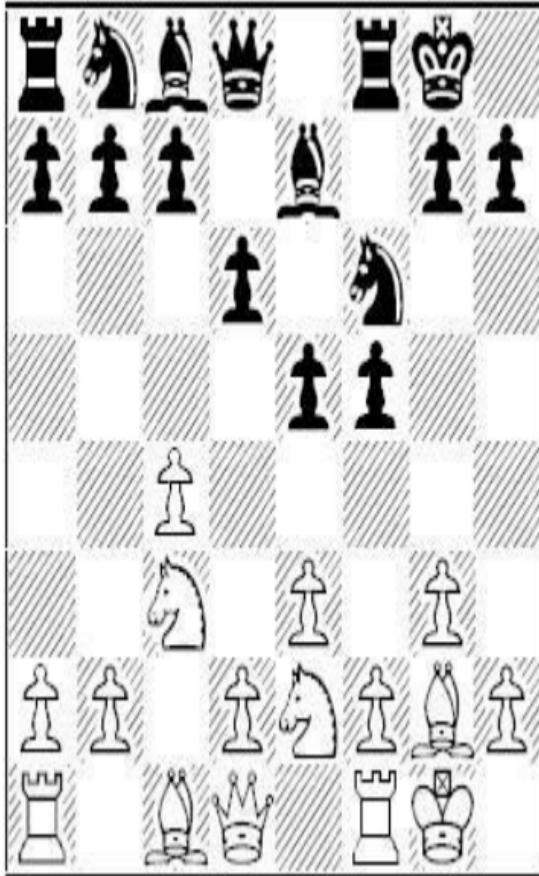
**Answer:** Three ideas:

1. White leaves the bishop's long diagonal unblocked.

2. White fears the ... f4 break so he loads up on that square, making it difficult for Black to achieve it.

3. White may later get ambitious and aim for f4 himself.

**5 ... Be7 6 Nge2 0-0 7 0-0**



**7 ... c6**

The most common move.

**Question:** It looks like this

plays into White's hands if he plays Rb1, b4 and b5. Doesn't 7 ... c6 give White a connection point to open the queenside?

**Answer:** True, but we must take another factor into account. Black reasons that White's knight on e2 fails to put any pressure on his e-pawn. If this is the case then why not get ambitious and play for ... c6 and ... d5, taking over the centre?

Black can also play the simple 7 ... Qe8. For example, 8 d4 Qh5 (leaving the central tension) 9 b4 Nc6 10 b5 Nd8 11 Nd5 Nxd5 12

cxd5 Nf7 and Black massed his forces on the kingside, whereas White has only one target on c7, L.Stark-J.Rotstein, Solingen 2005.

## **8 d3 Be6**

Intending to toss in ... d5 soon.

## **9 f4**

Seizing kingside space and making it more difficult for Black to achieve ... d5.

## **9 ... Nbd7 10 b4 Rc8 11 Rb1**

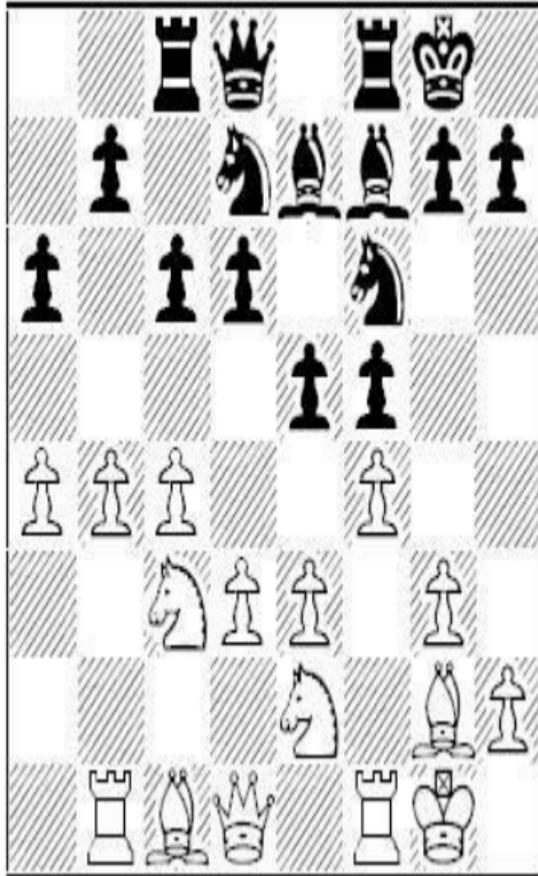
**Question:** Does White need the rook? Can he

push forward with 11 b5 immediately?

**Answer:** He can, but he gets no advantage after 11 ... d5!? 12 fxe5

Nxe5 13 Nd4 Qd7 14 bxc6 bxc6 15 Nxe6 Qxe6 16 cxd5 Nxd5 17 Qb3 Kh8 18 Nxd5 cxd5 19 Bxd5 Qh6!. Black has excellent attacking chances for the pawn. He intends ... Bg5 and ... Ng4 intensifying the pressure on e3 and White's king.

**11 ... a6 12 a4 Bf7**



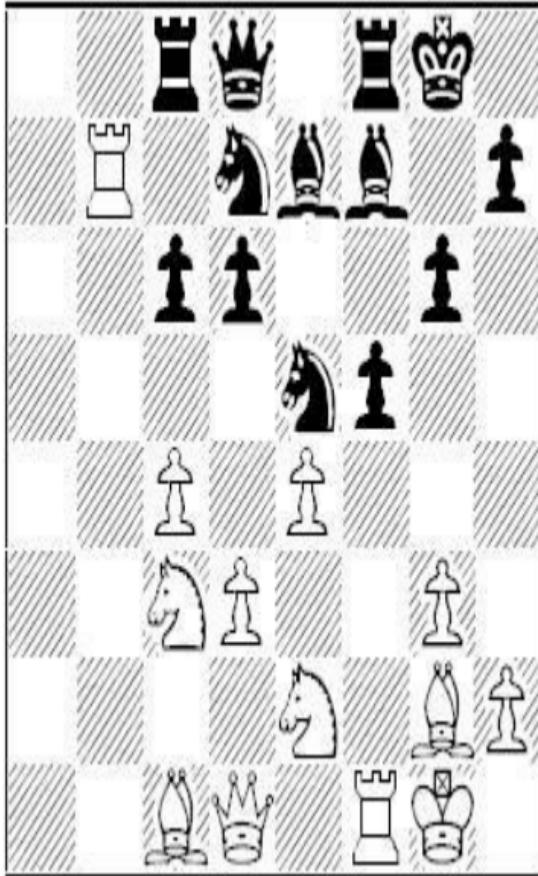
**Exercise:** Did Black just drop his f5-pawn?  
**13 fxe5 Nxe5 14 b5**

**Answer:** No. 14 Rxf5!? Bg6 virtually forces White to sac the exchange on f5 since retreating the rook leads to trouble on d3.

**14 ... axb5 15 axb5 g6 16 bxc6 bxc6 17 Rb7 Nfd7!**

Threatening ... Nc5.

**18 e4!?**



**Exercise (critical decision):** If

18 ... Nc5 White sacs

the exchange on e7 and forks

Black's knight's with d4.

Who comes out better in the end?

**Answer:** The Yerminator possesses uncanny positional skills. He correctly enters a multi-tiered plan which nets him the advantage:

**18 ... Nc5!! 19 Rxe7**

Only move.

**19 ... Qxe7 20 d4**

**Question:** This has to be good for White. It almost looks

like Black fell for a trap. Why go into such a mess?

**Answer:** It's not a mess to Yermo, who has the power to navigate safely through such

complications and, more importantly, evaluate them correctly at the end.

**20 ... Nxe4 21 dxe5**

21 Nxe4 fxe4 22 dxe5 Qxe5 transposes to the game.

**21 ... Qxe5 22 Nxe4 fxe4 23**

**Bh6**



**Exercise:** This looks like the start of a nasty dark-square initiative. What should Black do

about it?

**Answer:** Give up an exchange for a pawn:

**23 ... Bxc4!**

In this way, the logical extension of his original idea, Black gets three connected passers for the piece and eliminates his dark-square worries. From this point on White never really gets to grips with how to halt the passers. Meanwhile, Black's position continues to improve as his passers march forward.

**24 Bxf8 Rxf8 25 Rxf8+ Kxf8**

**26 Bf1**

Rybka insists 26 Nd4 gives

White chances to hold but if you play the scenarios out, Black always comes out on top.

**26 ... c5 27 Nf4 Bf7!**

Black needs the bishop on the board to control d5. Only then do his pawns begin to roll.

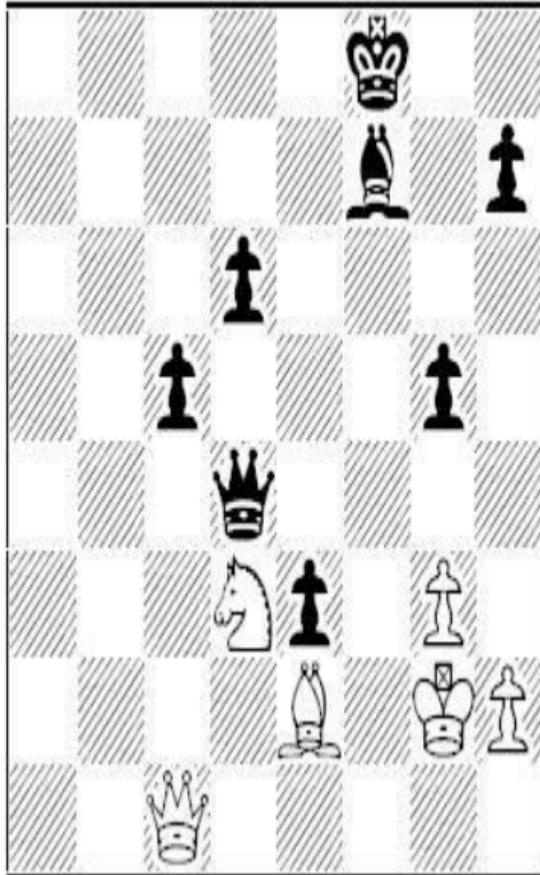
**28 Qc1 Qd4+ 29 Kg2 e3!**

Now ... g5 followed by ... Bd5+ gives White headaches.

**30 Be2 g5**

Intending a hostile corporate takeover of the h1-a8 diagonal.

**31 Nd3?**



**31 ... Qd5+?**

The wrong square. After 31 ...  
Qe4+! 32 Kg1 Bd5 33 Qf1+ Ke7

White has no escape other than to cough up his knight with 34 Nf2 exf2+.

## **32 Kf1??**

Oops! Time pressure or fatigue-induced short circuits have the power to transform one's mind into an arena of confused notions. White may yet be able to save the game in the 11th hour with 32 Kg1 c4 33 Nb4.

## **32 ... Qh1 mate! (0-1)**

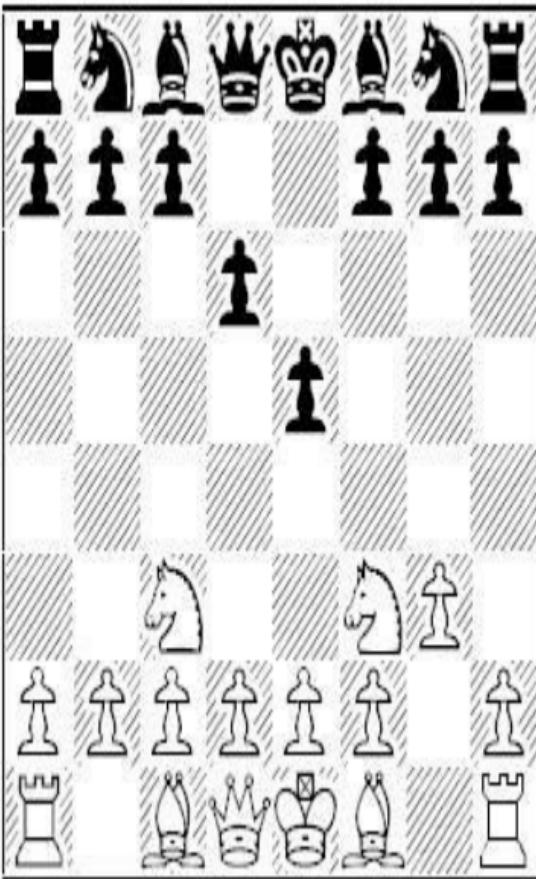
**Summary:** Against the Ne2 English you have a choice of going after the opponent's king or playing for ... c6 and ... d5.

Game 57

**D.Kishnevsky-C.Lakdawala**

Gambito (rapid), San Diego 2011

**1 Nf3 d6 2 g3 e5 3 Nc3!?**



**Question:** This isn't normal, is it?

**Answer:** My opponent, Dmitry

Kishnevsky, enjoys de-booking booked up opponents with strange moves. Other moves tend to weave in and out of English and King's Indian Attack versus Dutch Rat:

- a) 3 Bg2 f5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Be7 6 d3 reaches Game 55.
- b) 3 c4 f5 should also transpose to Game 55.
- c) 3 e4 f5 4 d3 Nf6 is the King's Indian Attack versus Dutch Rat (see the next game).
- d) 3 d4 e4 4 Ng5 f5 5 h4 Nf6 6 c4 c6 7 Nc3 Be7 reaches a position similar to those discussed in Chapter Six.

**3 ... f5 4 d3 Nf6 5 Bg2 Be7 6**

## **0-0 0-0 7 Bg5 Qe8**

7 ... Nbd7! is an improvement for next time. The idea is to recapture on f6 with a knight, which adds heat to Black's coming kingside attack.

## **8 Bxf6**

**Question:** Giving up the bishop pair unprovoked?

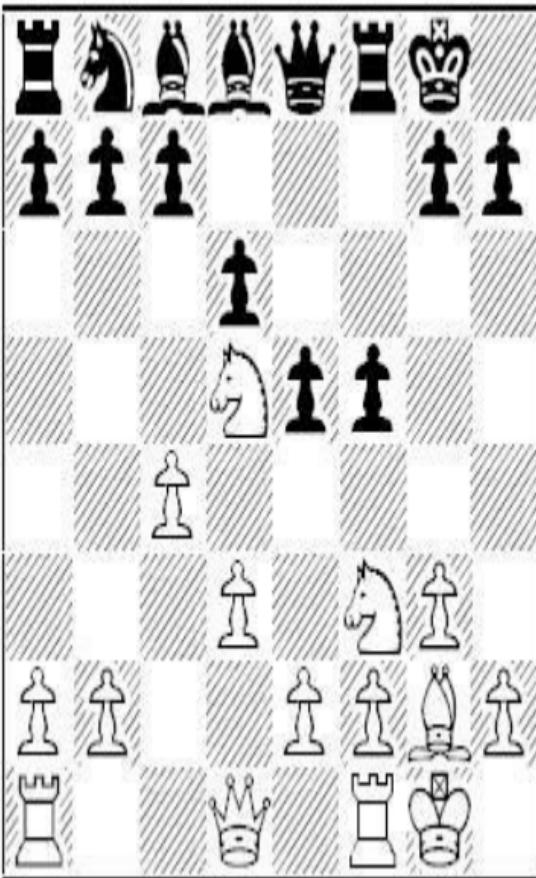
**Answer:** The Bg5 and Bxf6 idea is sometimes seen in the English. Black was all set for the robotic war plan: ... Qh5, ... f4, ... Bh3 and ... Ng4. White saw it coming and eliminated one of the attackers. Bxf6 also weakens Black's control over the key d5-square. On the

other hand, it does give the opponent the bishop pair and loses some control of the dark squares.

**8 ... Bxf6 9 Nd5 Bd8 10 c4**

So the position gels into English versus Dutch, but with the usual Rat twist of an extra tempo for Black since he achieved ... e5 in one move rather than two.

Black has two normal plans at this point:



1. Play for ... d5: 10 ... c6 11 Nc3 Na6 12 Nd2 Be6 13 a3 Nc7 14 b4      d5,      A.Pahor-A.Grobelsek,

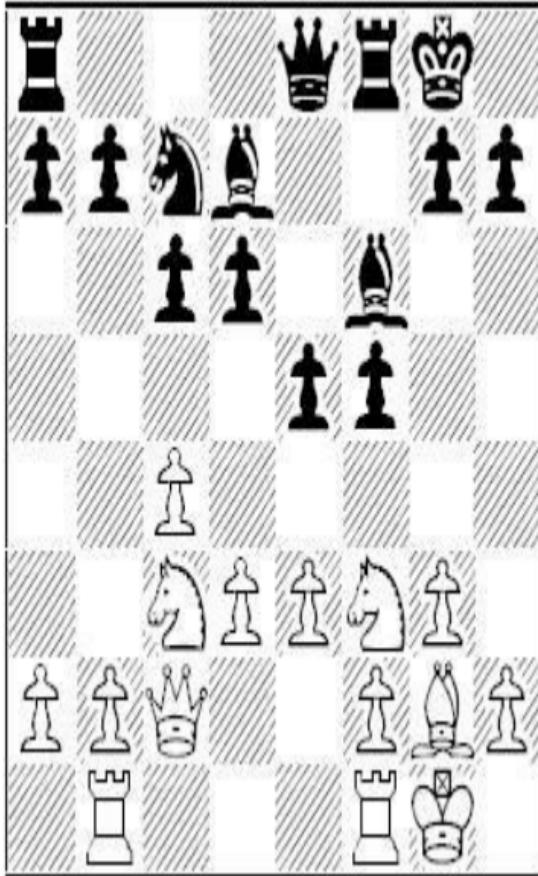
Bosnjaci 2004. Black may already stand slightly better due to his extra central space and bishop pair.

2. Play the robot attack with ... Qh5 and ... f4. This one didn't seem as logical since White destroyed one of my key attackers, the f6-knight. Still, Black can play ... c6 followed by ... Nd7 and ... Nf6 when the queen's knight takes the place of the other one.

I chose something different:

**10 ... Na6 11 Rb1 c6 12 Nc3**

**Bf6 13 e3 Nc7 14 Qc2 Bd7!?**



This is the beginning of a strange plan. I had seen GM Yasser Seirawan, one of the most original

strategists in the world, try a similar plan over the ICC several times in a comparable position with colours reversed. His befuddled opponents always lost control over the dark squares. Let's say White proceeds normally and attempts to force b5 as quickly as possible. The usual responses for Black are to counter with a kingside attack or in the centre. Seirawan's idea is to challenge the opponent on his strong wing, the queenside, and try to take over the dark squares there. Remember, White gave away his dark-squared bishop earlier in the game, and this may be his one

vulnerability.

## **15 Rfd1**

Let's see if the plan works. 15 b4 a6 16 a4 Rb8 17 b5 Ne6 and now:

a) 18 Nd2 Qd8 19 Rb2 Qc7 20 Rfb1 g5!? with an edge for Black. I don't see what to do next for White on the queenside, in which case Black expands on the other wing.

b) 18 bxa6 bxa6 19 Rxb8 Qxb8 20 Rb1 Qc7 21 Nd2 Rb8 22 Nb3 a5. Once again Black stands better; he intends ... Rb4 with a dark-square grip on the queenside.

## **15 ... Kh8**

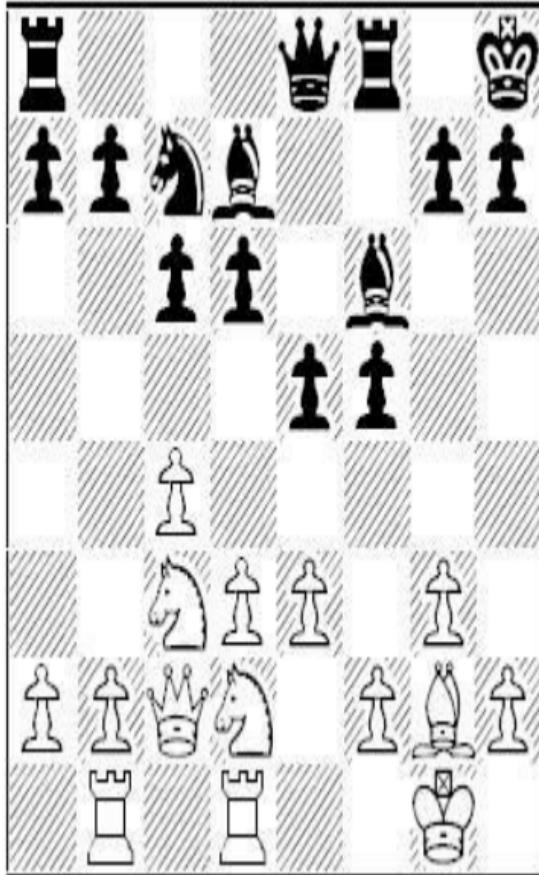
**Question:** I see this kind of

move played all the time. What is the

purpose of losing a tempo to tuck the king away like this?

**Answer:** White traded his dark-squared bishop, so logic dictates that Black's king is safer on a dark square.

**16 Nd2!?**



When such a move is played the meaning is clear: White invests his knight, a defender of his king, and

puts him on loan to the queenside to soup-up his attack there. The move:

1. Increases White's chances of success in his queenside ambitions.
2. Increases his chances of getting mated because one of his defenders is on vacation on the queenside!

**Question:** Is White's last move a good decision?

**Answer:** I don't know! Intuitively, I wouldn't remove a defender like this, but it is very hard to say whether the move is correct or not.

**Question:** Shouldn't White

agitate the centre with 16 d4?

**Answer:** His queenside play slows down after 16 ... e4 17 Nd2 c5! (go back to Game 39 for a similar manoeuvre) 18 Nb3 b6 while Black is ready to expand on the kingside.

**Question:** Okay, then how about 16 b4?

**Answer:** I think that is what he should have played. White must create a tear in the queenside or risk being overwhelmed on the kingside later on.

## **16 ... Rd8**

I'm still fishing around for a plan, now thinking about ... d5.

## **17 b4 a6 18 Nb3 Rb8?!**

My old bane, indecision, returns to haunt me. Black doesn't have all day and should take action with 18 ... f4! 19 Ne4 Be7 20 exf4 exf4 21 Re1 Qf7 when his attacking chances outweigh White's queenside push.

## **19 Ne2!?**

I expected 19 a4 f4.

## **19 ... Qf7**

Plan: ... g5 and ... f4 next.

## **20 f4!?**

This move challenges Black's kingside space ambitions but also gives Black a reference point on the kingside to attack.

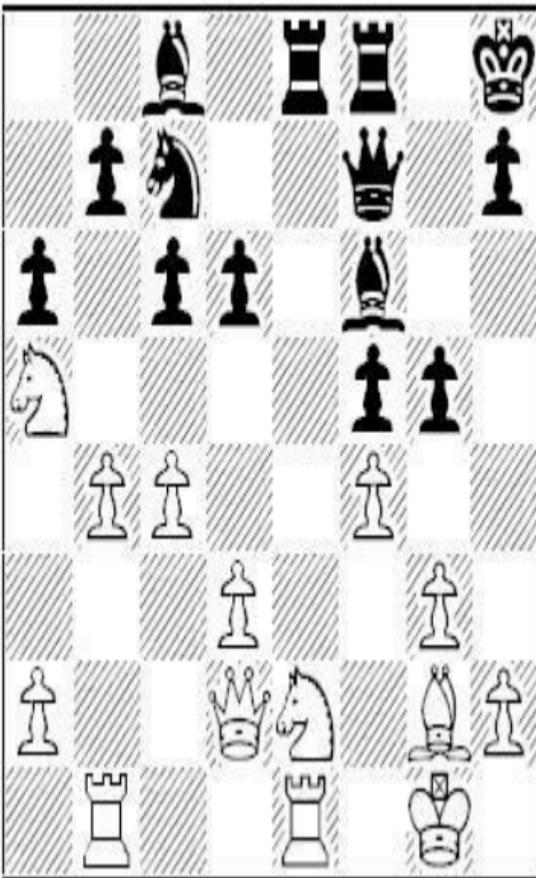
## **20 ... Rbe8 21 Re1 g5**

We must work the malleable pawn structure to our needs. This move is a declaration of martial law. Neighbouring countries tend to share common security and risk. If one is in peril, the danger quickly spreads and so are the others. In this case both kings begin the process of mutually increased danger as the pawn cover erodes.

## **22 Na5**

I was happy to see this piece stray so far from the defence of his king.

**22 ... Bc8 23 Qd2 exf4 24 exf4**



I have a choice of two plans: 24 ... Qg7 to keep the tension, or 24 ... g4 and ... h5-h4-h3 which makes his

back rank vulnerable.

**Question:** Which one is better?

**24 ... Qg7**

**Answer:** Rybka prefers my choice, but my gut instinct tells me 24 ... g4! is better. My cautious side won the debate and I rejected 24 ... g4 based on the philosophy: Bravery, like most virtues, is best applied in moderation! Sure enough, I played out scenarios after 24 ... g4 against Rybka, with Black emerging with the attack.

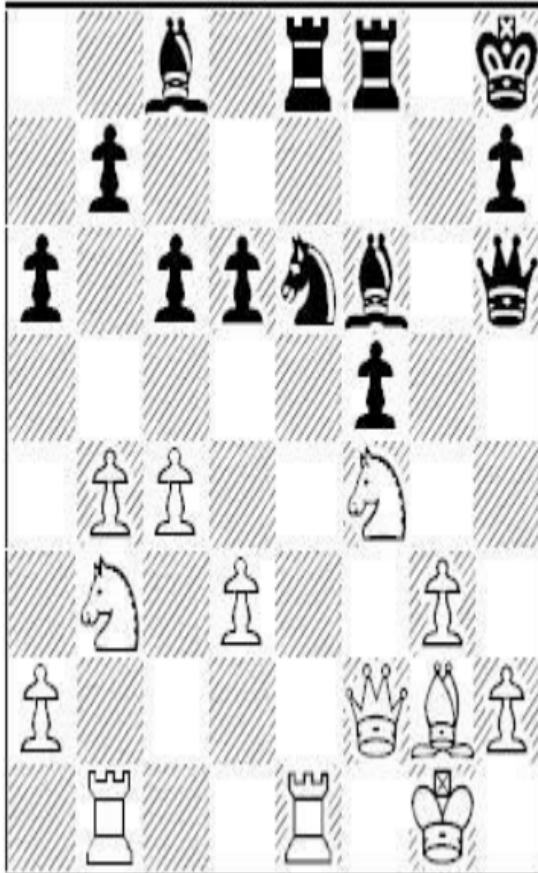
**25 fxg5?!**

A violation of two principles:

1. Don't open the game when the opponent has the bishop pair.

2. Don't release central pawn tension without a good reason.

**25 ... Bxg5 26 Nf4 Ne6 27 Nb3 Qh6 28 Qb2+ Bf6 29 Qf2**



**Exercise:** Can Black get away with the pawn grab beginning with 29 ... Bc3, or will taking the

pawn put the bishop out of play?

**29 ... Nxf4?!**

**Answer:** Paranoia is the poisoner of logic. I should have grabbed the pawn with 29 ... Bc3! 30 Nxe6 Bxe6 31 Rec1 Bxb4 but I saw some ghost and rejected the line.

**30 Rxe8 Rxe8 31 gxf4!**

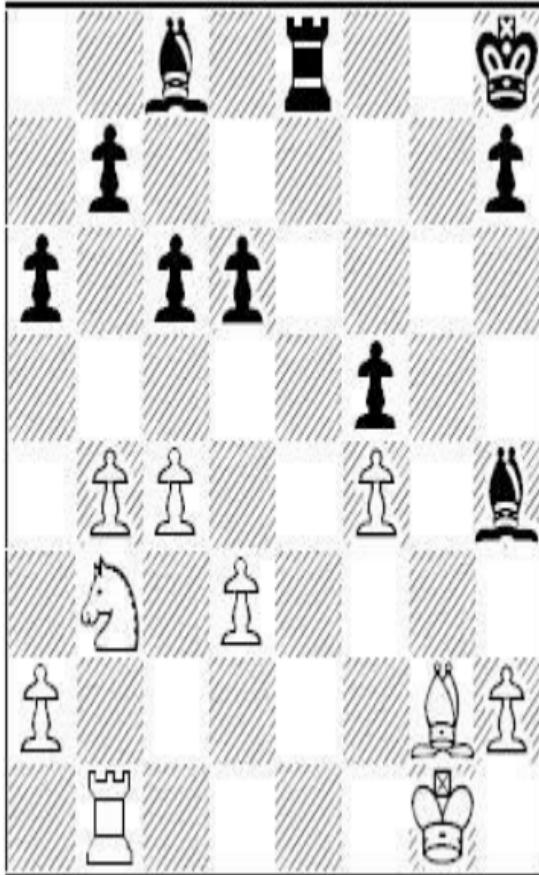
Only move. White can't hold if he allows rook entry with 31 Qxf4? Qxf4 32 gxf4 Re2.

**31 ... Qh4!?**

I'm not sure I should be trading queens, since his king may be in more danger than mine. But this was a practical decision. We were

both in time trouble, and I tend to play endings better than complex middlegames. If clocks are running low I would rather be in a situation which plays to my strength.

**32 Qxh4 Bxh4**



**Exercise (planning):** What is the key to White attaining the draw?

**33 Bf1!?**

**Answer:** The path to the draw is to eliminate as many pawns as possible, starting with 33 b5! axb5 34 cxb5 cxb5 35 Nd4 b4 36 Rxb4 Re1+ 37 Bf1. I doubt Black has enough to win.

**33 ... Kg7 34 Kg2 Kf6 35**

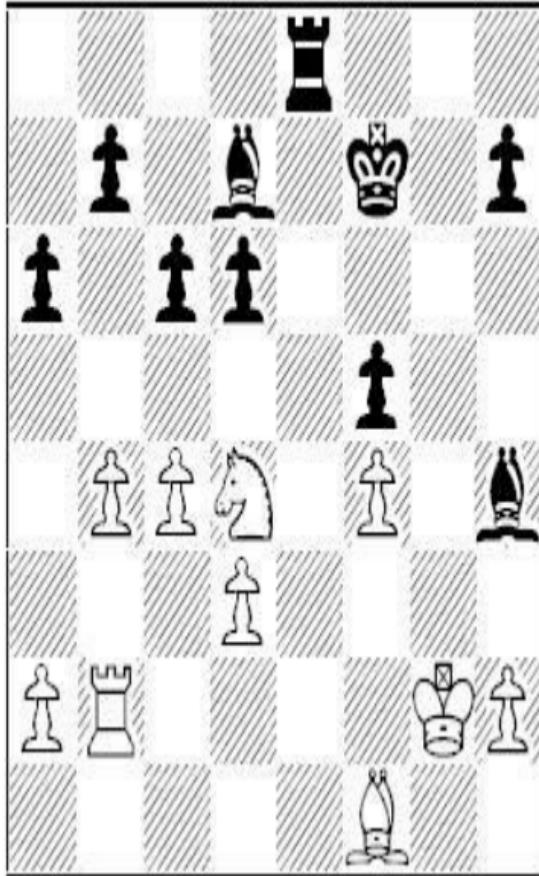
**Nd4**

**Question:** Is 36 Nf3 a threat to trap your bishop?

**35 ... Bd7**

**Answer:** No. After 36 Nf3? Rg8+ 37 Kh3 Bf2 there is no good defence to 38 ... Be3.

**36 Rb2 Kf7**



Setting up the time scramble  
cheapo ... Bf6.  
**37 Be2??**

In the fog of time scrambles it becomes hard to discern which is what and what is which! He sets up the counter cheapo on h5, only to get cheapoed first.

**37 ... Rg8+**

No more skewer on e8.

**38 Kh3**

38 Kf3 Bf6 39 Ke3 Re8+ also wins the knight.

**38 ... Bf6 39 Bh5+ Kf8 0-1**

**Summary:** Black has more than one good plan in the ... d6, ... e5, ... f5 setup. He doesn't have to play for mate with ... Qe8-h5.

Game 58

**K.Iliadis-V.Kotronias**

Komotini 1993

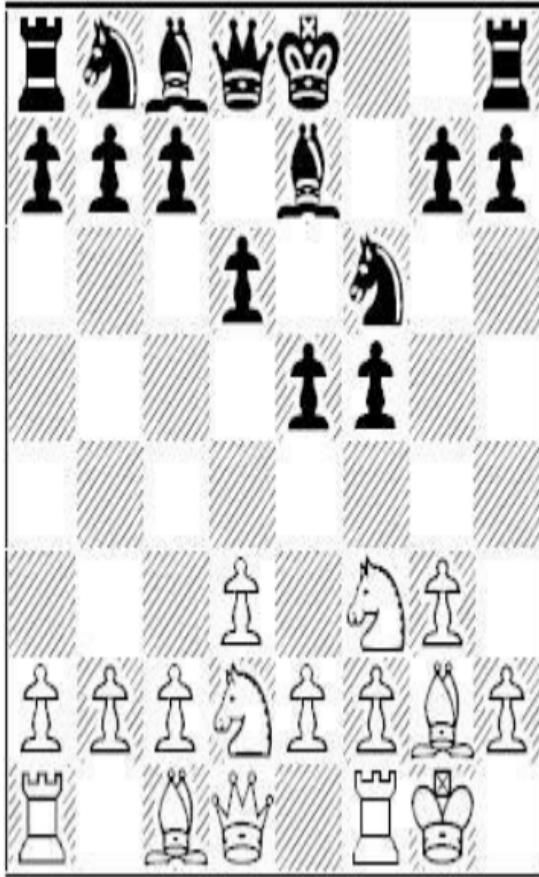
**1 Nf3 f5**

1 ... d6 2 g3 e5 3 Bg2 f5 4 d3

Nf6 would be our move order.

**2 d3 d6 3 g3 e5 4 Bg2 Nf6 5**

**0-0 Be7 6 Nbd2?!**



The King's Indian Attack plays into our hands.  
**Question:** You can't be serious?

From what I understand

the KIA is a rock-solid option  
against any Black setup.

**Answer:** Any Black setup but this one! I realize this claim may be interpreted as presumptuous to some who venerate opening tradition. Here is my reasoning: By stubbornly playing for e4, White opens the f-file for our rook (or even allows ... f4), instantly handing us attacking chances. White's counterplay in the centre and queenside falls short here. The moral is: Don't play any opening automatically. Most openings, no matter how steeped in tradition,

contain one or two counter-lines where the venerated opening just doesn't work well.

6 c4 transposes to English versus Rat and is a better choice for White.

**6 ... 0-0 7 e4**

**Question:** If what you say about KIA versus Rat is true, is it too late to head back to the English with 7 c4?

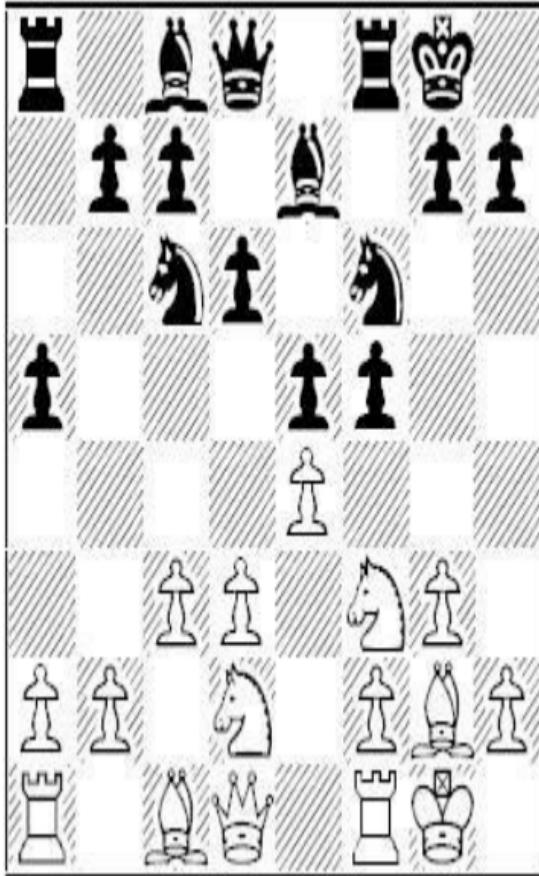
**Answer:** If White gets cold feet and tries to head back to the English he gets an inferior version since his knight belongs on c3, not d2.

**7 ... Nc6 8 c3 a5**

**Question:** Isn't Black violating a principle with his last move?

He plays on White's strong wing.

**Answer:** No, it is a wise precaution to stall White on the queenside rather than allow him to expand easily with b4. Still, 8 ... a5 isn't strictly necessary and Black can aim for straightforward kingside action with 8 ... Kh8. For example, 9 b4 Qe8 10 a4 fxe4 11 dxe4 Bg4 12 Qc2 Qh5 and Black's kingside play looks more potent than White's on the opposite side of the board, M.Barker-P.Corbin, St Michael 2003.



**Exercise:** Did Black overlook a tactic on his last move?  
Evaluate the pawn grab 9 exf5

Bxf5 10 Qb3+.

## **9 a4**

**Answer:** The pawn is poisoned.

For example, 9 exf5 Bxf5 10 Qb3+ d5! 11 Qxb7? Qd7 (threatening to swing his f-rook to b8, trapping White's queen) 12 Qb3 (12 Qb5 Rab8 doesn't help White a bit) 12 ... Bxd3 and White is busted: 13 Re1 a4 14 Qd1 e4 15 Ng5 Ne5 with a winning attack. Black's threats include gang-ups on f2 with ... Bc5 and ... Nfg4.

## **9 ... Kh8**

A useful precaution since he doesn't want to bother himself with Qb3+ calculations on each move. I

would play 9 ... fxe4 first, denying White exf5 ideas.

## **10 Qc2**

I would toss in 10 exf5 Bxf5 11 Nc4 now, or over the next few moves. This denies Black the possibility of ... f4 ideas.

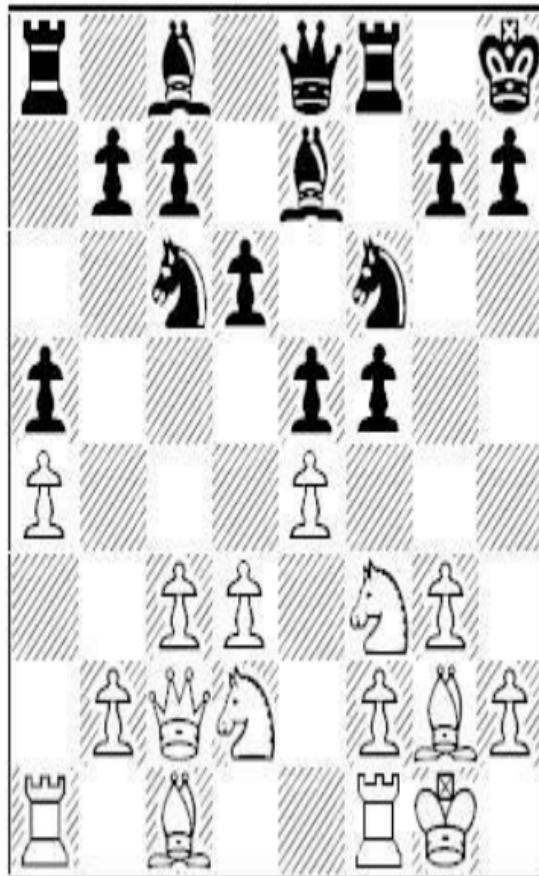
**Question:** On what basis?

**Answer:** Based on the principle: Counter (or at least distract) in the centre when attacked on the wing.

**Question:** What attack? Black doesn't have a kingside attack.

**Answer:** Have patience. It builds very quickly and efficiently over the next dozen or so moves.

**10 ... Qe8**



We attack White pretty much as we do in the English, except here

White's queenside play is virtually nonexistent.

## **11 Rb1**

Intending to stir up a war on the queenside, but really it's more of a proxy war since White soon becomes busy in the defence of his own king.

## **11 ... Qh5 12 Re1 fxe4**

12 ... f4 also looks quite promising. For example, 13 gxf4?! (White hopes for some central counterplay; 13 d4 g5 doesn't look like much fun either) 13 ... Bh3! 14 Bxh3 Qxh3. Now if White attempts to clog the attacking artery with 15 f5?, then 15 ... g6! pries it open

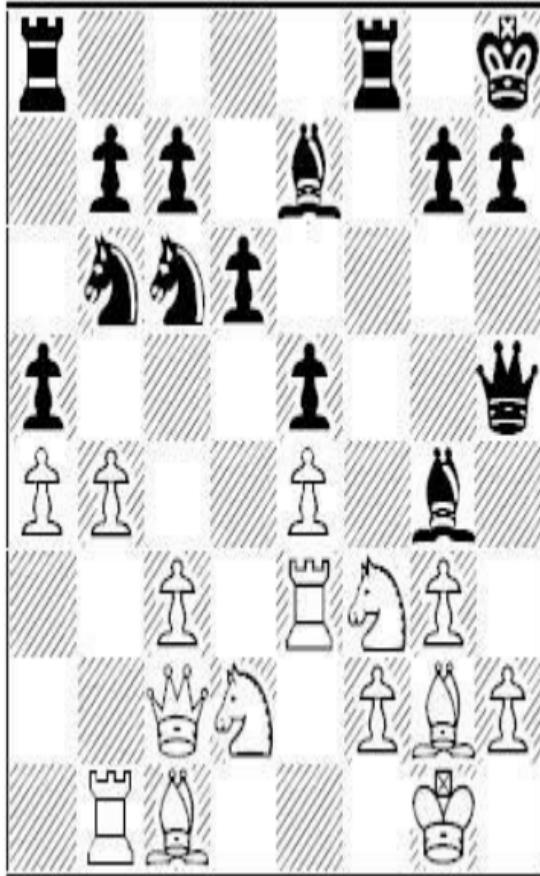
anyway.

### **13 dxe4 Bg4 14 b4 Nd7**

Forcing White to contort to defend f3. Notice how Black avoids ... axb4 which would only help White open lines on the queenside.

### **15 Re3 Nb6!**

I like this move, which urges White to plug up the queenside and, with it, all hopes of counterplay.



**Exercise (planning):** White is in a sorry state, but a player shouldn't

stop planning just because he lands in a rancid position. Find a way to improve his position, even if the improvement is microscopic.

## **16 b5**

**Answer:** I would try 16 h4! denying Black's bishop (or a future knight) the key g5-square. The intention is to play Nh2 next if allowed.

## **16 ... Nd8**

The knight conveniently heads for e6, eyeing both the kingside and the fresh hole on c5.

## **17 Ba3 Ne6 18 c4?!**

White underestimates Black's

control over g5. He should once again toss in 18 h4!.

### **18 ... Nd7**

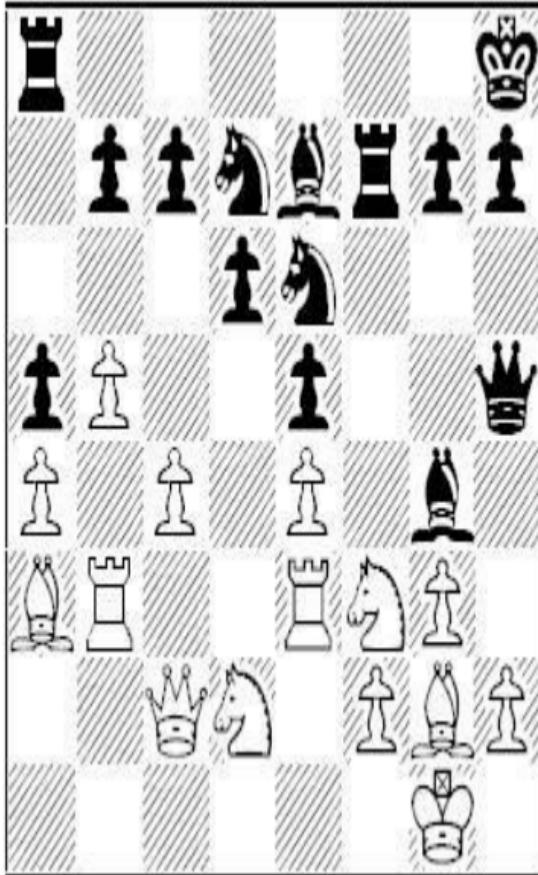
The knight on b6 fulfilled its job and now turns its sights toward a blockade over c5.

### **19 Rbb3**

A curious sight. All the pieces find themselves magnetically drawn to the f3-square.

### **19 ... Rf7**

Nothing could be simpler. Black prepares to double on the f-file. Also, ... Nd4! removing the f3 blockader emerges as a serious threat, not to mention ... Ng5 ideas.



**20 Kf1**

White is busted since he can't do anything to stop Black's plan.

Salvage operations come too late:

a) 20 Bb2 Ng5!, before White can play h4, leaves White busted. Both ... Raf8 and ... Nc5 are threatened.

b) It's also too late for 20 h4 since 20 ... Raf8 prevents Nh2.

### **20 ... Raf8 21 h3**

Absolute desperation. 21 h4, preventing ... Ng5, fails miserably to 21 ... Nd4.

### **21 ... Bxh3 22 Bxh3 Qxh3+**

### **23 Ke2**

23 Kg1 Nd4 is also totally hopeless.

### **23 ... Nd4+**

Game over. Despite White's

supreme caution of reinforcing all the available locks in his house, Black nevertheless finally manages to break into f2. At this point, playing on is as fruitless as an argument over the bill between passenger and bartender on the Titanic, moments after striking the iceberg.

**24 Nxd4 Rxf2+ 25 Kd1 exd4  
26 Re1 Ne5 27 c5 Bg5 28 Bc1  
Qg4+ 0-1**

**Summary:** King's Indian Attack is probably one of White's worst choices against the Rat.

## Game 59

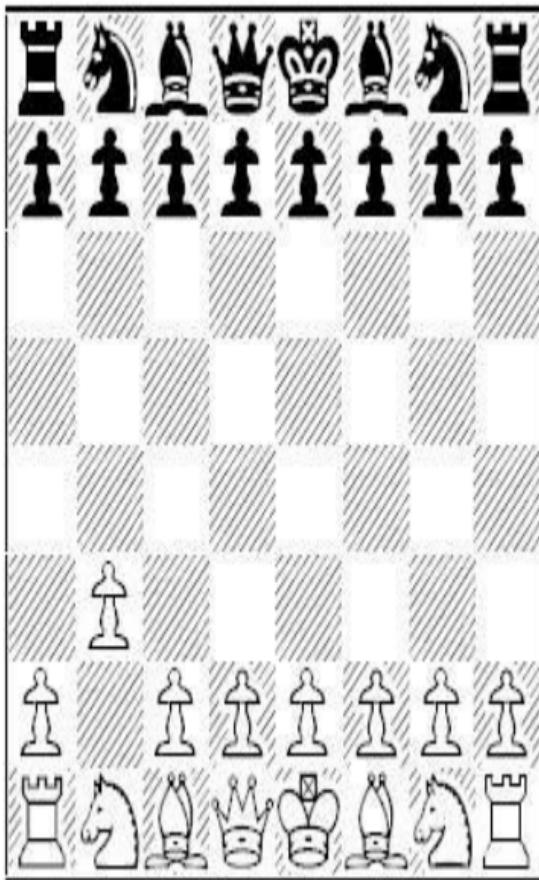
**D.Kurzawa-S.Galdunts**

Recklinghausen 1998

### **1 b3**

Larsen's opening. Curiously, Larsen's most famous game with 1 b3 was the one where he got horribly mangled by Spassky in 17 moves.

Let's quickly look at a few other options:



- a) 1 f4 (Bird's Opening) 1 ... d6  
2 Nf3 (2 e4 transposes to 1 e4 d6 f4, covered in Game 35) 2 ... Bg4 3

e3 e5 is a line recommended by IM Richard Palliser. After 4 h3 Be6! 5 d3 (5 fxe5 dxe5 6 Nxe5? is just asking for pain after 6 ... Bd6) 5 ... exf4 6 exf4 c6 7 d4 Be7 8 Qe2 Nf6 9 g3 d5 Black already stood clearly better in A.Harvey-R.Palliser, Halifax 2010.

b) 1 g3 d6 usually transposes to the English or King's Indian Attack. 2 Bg2 e5 3 b3 is one we haven't looked at, the Hippopotamus, double fianchetto setup. White develops his knights to e2 and d2 soon. After 3 ... f5 4 Bb2 Nf6 5 d3 Be7 6 e3 0-0 7 Ne2 Nc6 Black may either play for ... d5 or the usual ...

Qe8 plan, J.Egeland-S.Martinsen,  
Brattas Skole 2000.

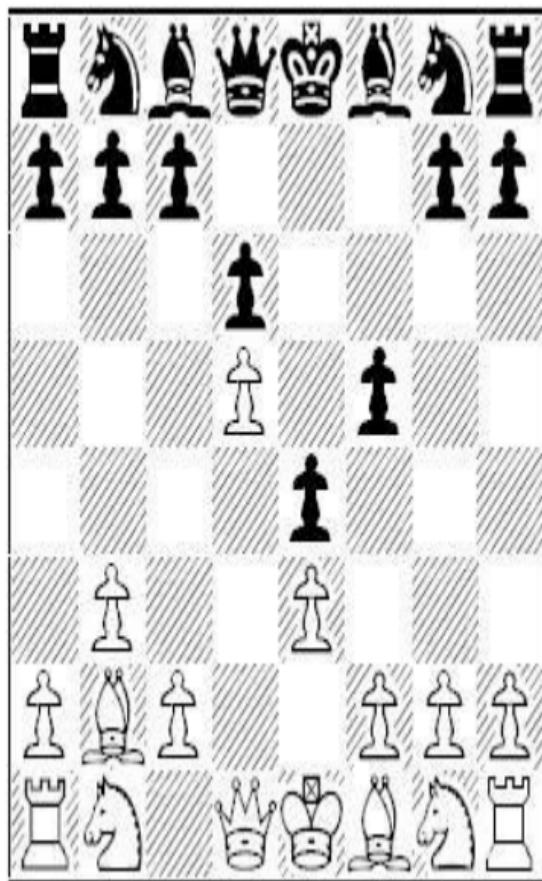
c) 1 b4 is the Orangutan. Every time someone plays this I am reminded of the hated orangutan, Dr. Zaius, who was the most evil of all the multitude of mean-spirited simians from the Planet of the Apes. After 1 ... d6 2 Bb2 e5 3 e3 f5 4 c4 Nf6 5 Nf3 Be7 6 Nc3 0-0 7 d4 e4 8 Nd2 c6 9 d5 cxd5 10 Nxd5 Nxd5 11 cxd5 Bf6 Black should be happy. He swaps off his bad bishop and has control over e5, Y.Lapshun-J.Vila Gazquez, Barcelona 2007.

### **1 ... e5 2 Bb2 d6**

Correct. We would probably

reverse the order and play 1 ... d6.

**3 e3 f5 4 d4 e4 5 d5!**



The most dangerous of White's

options.

**Question:** Why? It doesn't help his development.

**Answer:** It clears d4 for a knight, which then gets us nervous about e6. On our side though, he hands us e5, so we shouldn't be too unhappy.

When White avoids d5 he tends to toss it in a few moves later, otherwise Black takes over the central space. For example, 5 c4 Nf6 6 Nc3 Be7 7 Nge2 c6 8 Nf4 Na6, J.Hodgson-E.Agrest, Harplinge 1998. Now White feared ... Nc7 and ... d5, and played 9 d5 0-0 10 Be2 Nc7 11 h4 with a position similar to

those covered in Chapter Six.

**5 ... Nf6 6 Be2 Nbd7 7 Nh3**

**Ne5 8 Nf4 Be7**

**Question:** Why always post the bishop on e7?

Why not fianchetto, where the bishop eyes e5?

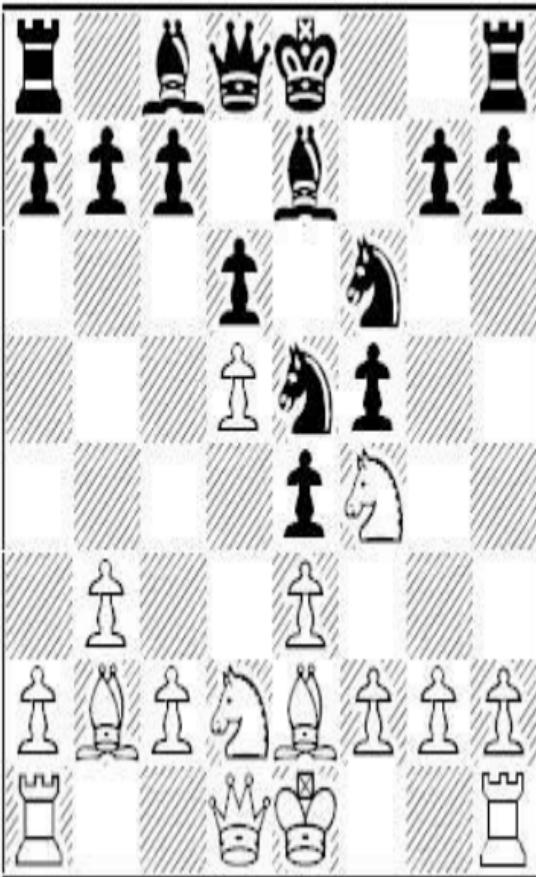
**Answer:** There is nothing wrong with fianchettoing, but by developing our bishop to e7 we deny White a connection point with h4 and h5. Also, our bishop is actually more flexible on e7. For example, we can play it to d8 and also to f6, which would be similar to fianchettoing except without incurring pawn weaknesses on the

kingside.

## **9 Nd2?!**

**Question:** This looks odd. What is his idea?

**Answer:** It is odd! White wants to play his knight to c4 to challenge e5. I would go for a normal plan like 9 h4 and then c4, Na3 and Nc2 hoping to achieve Nd4.



**9 ... 0-0**

**Question:** I am tempted to play  
**9 ... g5** to punish

White for the omission of h4. Is this okay?

**Answer:** Rybka claims it's playable, but it's obviously risky and you court trouble. I would avoid it and play the way Black did in the game.

**10 Nc4 Qe8 11 Qd2 Nfg4!**

**Question:** Why the exclam? Doesn't this move just lose a tempo?

**Answer:** No. It's a multi-purpose move:

1. Black plans to swap on c4 and then play the g4-knight to e5.
2. This also frees f6 for Black's bishop.

3. In general, the swap helps Black unclutter his pieces.

### **12 h3 Nxc4**

He can also try 12 ... Bf6 which forces White to deal with tricks on b2.

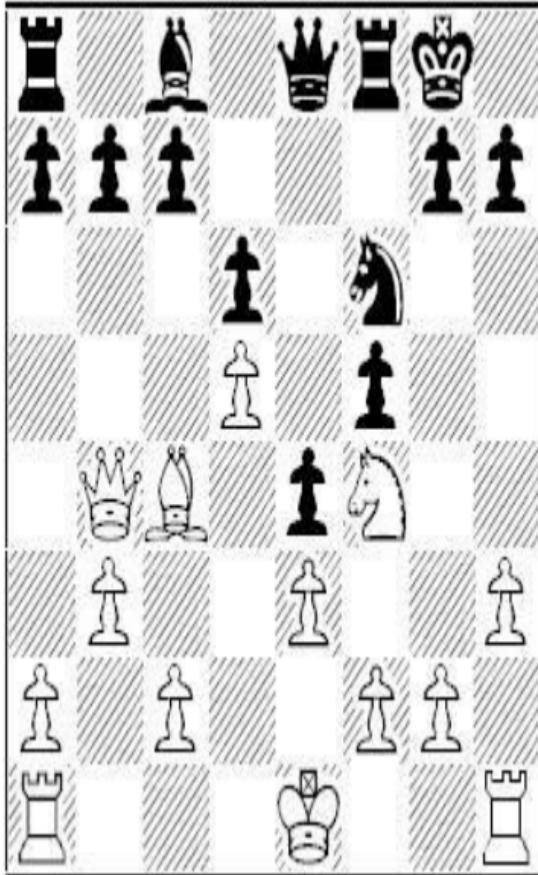
### **13 Bxc4 Bf6**

Certainly not 13 ... Ne5?? 14 Bxe5 dxe5 15 d6+.

### **14 Bxf6 Nxf6**

White's bishop on c4 is oddly placed and vulnerable to a ... b5 gain of time.

### **15 Qb4?!**



**Exercise:** Should we seize the moment and disturb the balance? Evaluate the

aggressive but also committal 15 ... g5.

## **15 ... a5**

**Answer:** 15 ... g5! is strong:

a) 16 Ne2? a5 17 Qb5 (otherwise ... b5 traps the c4-bishop) 17 ... Qf7! and White is in big trouble. For example, 18 h4?? Bd7! 19 Qxb7 Rfb8 20 Qxc7 Ne8 traps the queen.

b) 16 Ne6 Bxe6 17 dxe6 d5 18 Be2 b6 19 Qc3 Qxe6 20 Qxc7 Rac8 21 Qxa7 Rxc2 with clear advantage to Black. White's king is in danger and his pieces fester like rotten fruit sitting too long in the bowl.

## **16 Qd2 b5**

16 ... g5! wins material while retaining the initiative: 17 Ne6 (the trouble is 17 Ne2?? drops a piece to 17 ... b5) 17 ... Bxe6 18 dxe6 Qe7! rounds up the e-pawn since White has no answer to the coming ... c6 and ... d5.

### **17 Bf1**

Okay, that didn't work. Time to sound the retreat.

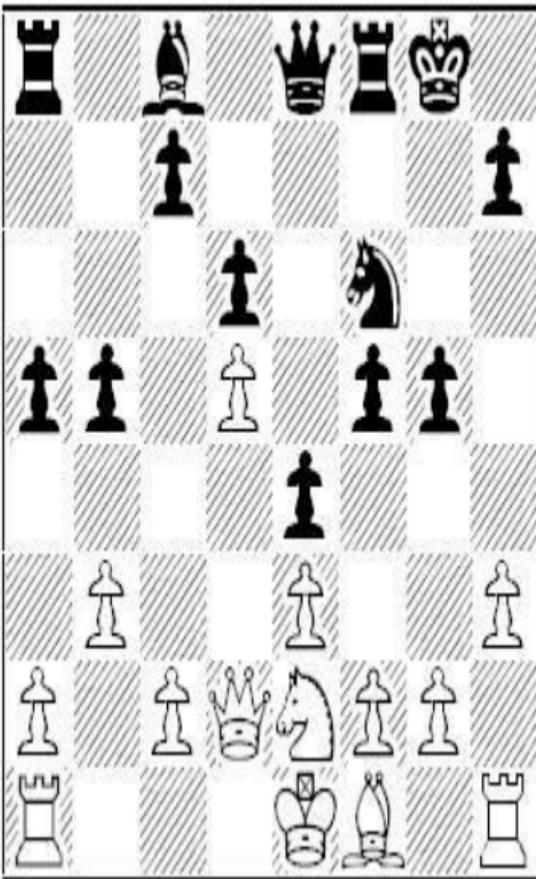
**Question:** Why all the way back?

**Answer:** White juggles two issues:

1. The original sin: by retreating to home base on f1 White falls drastically behind in development.

2. The depressing alternative would be to turn a weakness into a virtue by buying Black off with a pawn: 17 Be2 g5! 18 Ne6 Bxe6 19 dxe6 Qxe6 and the b5-pawn is taboo due to the ... Qe5 double-attack trick.

**17 ... g5! 18 Ne2**



White's pieces flow in reverse.  
Both Fritz and Rybka make the  
outrageous claim that the position

is even. There is a Bowie lyric which goes: "Homo sapiens have outgrown their use." Apparently not, if Fritz and Rybka continue to make such boneheaded assessments!

Once again 18 Ne6 drops a clean pawn (with a rotten position) to 18 ... Bxe6 19 dxe6 Qxe6.

### **18 ... Qe5**

A surreal moment. More than half of White's pieces are on their original squares while Black works over d5 and prepares a strike on the kingside with ... f4.

### **19 Rd1 Bd7 20 c4**

Rybka likes this move; I don't.

White is miles behind in development, and 20 c4 allows Black opportunities to open the position. 20 Nd4! looks better but I still hate White's position.

## **20 ... a4**

Principle: Open the game when ahead in development.

## **21 Nd4**

Perhaps it was better to try 21 b4 bxc4 22 Nc3 f4 23 Bxc4 when at least pieces emerge from the shadows.

## **21 ... axb3 22 axb3 bxc4 23 Bxc4 f4**

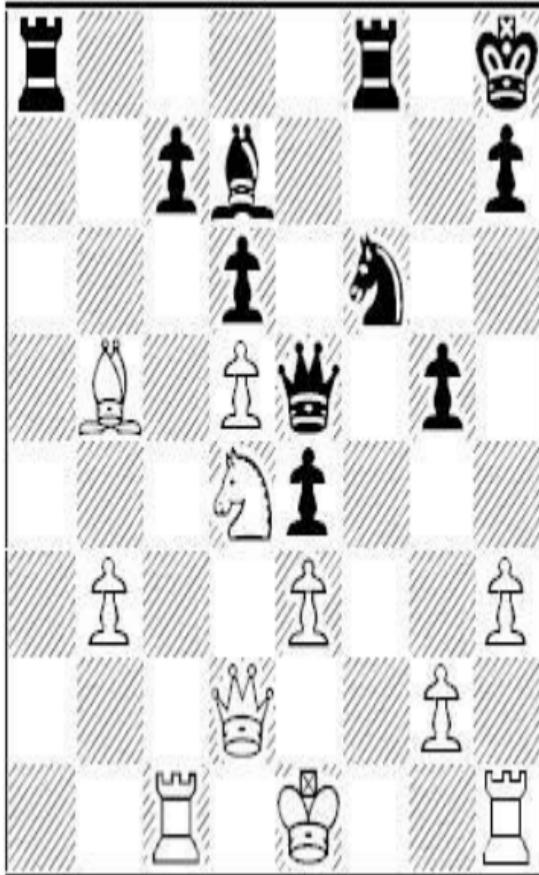
The same principle applies. White's trouble is he can't survive

kingside castling with that massive Black pawn roller coming his way.

**24 Rc1 Kh8 25 Bb5?**

He had to castle and hope for a miracle.

**25 ... fxe3 26 fxe3**



## **Exercise (combination alert):**

26 ... Qg3+ is tempting, but not the strongest move. Can you

find the shot which ends White's hopes?

**Answer: 26 ... Nxd5!**

White's position collapses. He can't castle and Black threatens ... Qg3+ followed by ... Rf2 or ... Nxe3. 27 Bxd7 allows the violence to filter down to White's king after 27 ... Qg3+ 28 Kd1 Nxe3+ 29 Ke2 Qf2 mate.

The simpler 26 ... Bxb5 27 Nxb5 Nxd5 is also good, but not as strong crushing as 26 ... Nxd5.

**27 Ke2 Qg3! 0-1**

**Summary:** Larsen's Opening soon gets us into positions similar to those we looked at in Chapter Six.

# **Index of Complete Games**

**Agamaliev.G-Malaniuk.V,  
Swidnica 1997**

**Andrades Campo Francisco.F-  
Felgaer.R, Santa Cruz de la  
Palma 2005**

**Arutyunov.N-Lakdawala.C,  
Gambito (rapid), San Diego  
2010**

**Aung Aung-Krasenkow.M, Sufe  
Cup, Shanghai 2000**

**Baker.B-Lakdawala.C, Gambito  
(rapid), San Diego 2010**

**Barrientos Chavarriaga.S-**

Akopian.V, Cali 2007

Battaglini.G-Sakaev.K, Chigorin Memorial, St Petersburg 2009

Berczes.D-Tischbierek.R, German League 2007

Berg.A-Ciemniak.R, Gausdal 1994

Browne.W-Benjamin.J, US Championship, Key West 1994

Brynell.S-Hillarp Persson,T, Linkoping 2001

Bryson.D-Shaw.J, Edinburgh 1996

Comp Deep Blue-Kasparov.G, New York 1997

Fernandez Aguado.E-Rivas Pastor.M, Albacete 1989

Filippov.V-Czerwonski.A,  
Voronezh 1998

Finkel.A-Oratovsky.M, Israel  
1994

Garcia Albarracin.J-Garcia del  
Castillo.A, Malaga 1997

Georgiev.K-Chatalbashev.B,  
European Club Cup, Plovdiv  
2010

Grazian.D-Lakdawala.C,  
Gambito (rapid), San Diego  
2010

Gulko.B-Short.N, Elenite 1995

Hübner.R-Kasparov.G,  
Hamburg 1985

Hungaski.R-Felgaer.R, Buenos  
Aires 2005

Iliadis.K-Kotronias.V, Komotini  
1993

Jacobi.S-Yermolinsky.A, US  
Open, Concord 1995  
Kishnevsky.D-Lakdawala.C,  
Gambito (rapid), San Diego  
2011

Kostic.M-Graf.A, Kavala 1998

Krizzsany.L-Tolnai.T,  
Balatonbereny 1996

Kurzawa.D-Galdunts.S,  
Recklinghausen 1998

Langeweg.K-Petrosian.T,  
Amsterdam 1973

Ledger.S-Hodgson.J, Southend  
1998

Lovlu.S-Murshed.N, Sakthi

1996

Lputian.S-Epishin.V, Rostov on Don 1993

Mellado Trivino.J-Hodgson.J,  
Zaragoza 1993

Mikhalevski.V-Milos.G, Cappelle la Grande 2000

Moradiabadi.E-Markowski.T,  
Mainz (rapid) 2010

Motsar.I-Ianov.V, Kiev 2010

Newerovski.G-Ovetchkin.R,  
Tula 2003

Nielsen.P-Svidler.P,

Copenhagen (rapid) 2010

Paunovic.T-Solak.D, Vrnjacka Banja 2006

Pinter.J-Christiansen.L, Reggio

Emilia 1987

Predojevic.B-Eljanov.P,

Sarajevo 2005

Saud.M-Himdan.M, Tanta 1997

Schulz.M-Conquest.S,

Reykjavik 2000

Seirawan.Y-Larsen.B, America-Europe, Mar del Plata 1981

Shaw.J-Miles.A, British Championship, Scarborough 2001

Sion Castro.M-

Azmaiparashvili.Z, San Roque 1996

Sjugirov.S-Bocharov.D,

Serpukhov 2008

Stearns.A-Altounian.L, Linklater

Memorial, San Francisco 2001  
Suetin.A-Hodgson.J, London  
1991

Sussman.L-Lakdawala.C,  
Gambito (rapid), San Diego  
2011

Tal.M-Rivas Pastor.M,  
Barcelona 1992

Tannous.C-Van Wely.L, Ajaccio  
(rapid) 2006

Timman.J-Hodgson.J, Biel 1995  
Tisdall.J-Gulko.B, San Francisco  
1995

Topalov.V-Adams.M, Dortmund  
1996

Vaseptsov.M-Kabanov.N, Kazan  
2010

Vasiukov.E-Pribyl.J,

Stary

Smokovec 1988

Wonnell.C-Lakdawala.C,

Gambito (rapid), San Diego  
2011

Zhang.X-Zhang Zhong, Manila  
2007