

GRANDMASTER PREPARATION

# STRATEGIC PLAY

JACOB AAGAARD



QUALITY CHESS

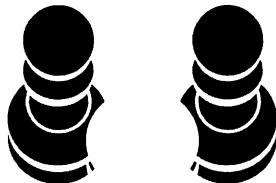


*Grandmaster Preparation*

# STRATEGIC PLAY

By

## Jacob Aagaard



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First edition 2013 by Quality Chess UK Ltd

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# GRANDMASTER PREPARATION – STRATEGIC PLAY

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Paperback ISBN 978-1-907982-28-6

Hardcover ISBN 978-1-907982-29-3

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Distributed in North America by Globe Pequot Press,  
P.O. Box 480, 246 Goose Lane, Guilford, CT 06437-0480, US  
[www.globepequot.com](http://www.globepequot.com)

Distributed in Rest of the World by Quality Chess UK Ltd through  
Sunrise Handicrafts, ul. Skromna 3, 20-704 Lublin, Poland

Typeset by Jacob Aagaard

Proofreading by Andrew Greet & John Shaw

Edited by Colin McNab

Cover design by Jason Mathis

Back cover photo by John Saunders

Photo page 39 by Harald Fietz

Printed in Estonia by Tallinna Raamatuträkikoja LLC

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# Key to symbols used

+	White is slightly better
+	Black is slightly better
+	White is better
+	Black is better
+-	White has a decisive advantage
-+	Black has a decisive advantage
=	equality
	with compensation
⇄	with counterplay
?	unclear
?	a weak move
??	a blunder
!	a good move
!!	an excellent move
?!	a move worth considering
?!	a move of doubtful value
#	mate
△	White to move
▼	Black to move

# Series Introduction

---

Ever since I was a junior I have been a chess trainer. At times my dissatisfaction with the conditions for trainers has caused me to be a player as well; and not without some success. But at the end of the day I have had to accept that my destiny is not to feel comfortable on the stage, but rather in the anonymity of the locker room. I have always cared more for the results of my students than my own, just as I have always had lots of passion for training others, but none for training myself.

Over the years I have developed some of the skills necessary to become a decent trainer, not least of all the ability to earn a living by other means! Among other things this means I have become a chess writer. From the moment I started taking pride in my work, I have developed into a not entirely bad one, to the degree where I am finally comfortable enough to publish this series of books, which I have been dreaming about for years.

The series title *Grandmaster Preparation* is of course a little joke, as the six books planned do not include any coverage of the opening. But it is also a serious point at the same time. Grandmaster play does not occur in a vacuum, and it consists of much more than opening preparation, random intuition and even more random calculation. There are rules and methods that have been successful for many decades and will continue to be so in the future. One of my main objectives with this project has been to merge this classic understanding of chess with my own ideas and create a serious training plan for ambitious players.

This is the most ambitious project I have undertaken in my professional life, and there is no escaping the unavoidable imperfection of the execution. I hope the reader will forgive me in advance for any mistakes, but at the same time offer me the confidence to believe in most of what I claim throughout these books. They are heavily researched and based on my experience of working with close to a thousand individuals over the years: from my own daughters, who recently discovered the joy of capturing a piece, to friends who have been involved in World Championship matches. So, please develop your own understanding of chess by questioning everything I say, but at the same time, please never disregard anything I say as unfounded.

When I was a young man I had no access to a classical chess education, and many other grandmasters have had the same experience. It is my hope that this series will help to change this picture in the same way that Mark Dvoretsky's books have, and the way that Artur Yusupov's series of nine books (*Fundamentals, Beyond the Basics* and *Mastery*) have given juniors and amateurs a clearly-structured method of improvement.

The ultimate goal for this series is to show a path towards playing chess at grandmaster level for those who do not have access to a good trainer. I have worked with some grandmasters who had the kinds of holes in their chess understanding that would baffle the average man on the street. Obviously they excelled in other aspects of the game simultaneously, but over time their weaknesses became obvious to their opponents and their results duly suffered. This series is meant to help those players as well.

Jacob Aagaard, Glasgow 2012/2013



# Foreword

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by GM Surya Shekhar Ganguly

I got to know Jacob's chess skills and understanding after our game in the Politiken Cup in 2010. I had won that game from a seemingly equal position. As I was having dinner later that evening, he came to my table and started explaining where I had gone wrong and how I could have improved. My first thought was: "Wait a minute, didn't I just beat this guy today?" However, as I kept listening to him, I realized that he had a good understanding of chess and I liked the way he studied a player. Our days of working together had begun!

Jacob was impressed with my tactical skills but he wasn't particularly impressed with my positional play. Therefore he sent me lots of books to read on positional chess, written by him as well as by various other authors. More importantly, he sent me strategic positions to solve and increased the level of the positions gradually. Soon I got addicted to these positions and books.

Jacob's examples in this book are mostly taken from recent games and are analysed in depth with crystal-clear explanations, which will help readers improve their understanding of the games and positions. I have also annotated a few games from my recent tournaments. These games are based on subtle positional ideas rather than sharp tactics and so are suitable for this book. I hope the readers will enjoy them.

Solving the positions Jacob showed me has improved my understanding of chess strategy a great deal. Likewise, I am sure the readers will also benefit immensely from the games and exercises in this book.

**Karen Grigoryan – Surya Ganguly**

---

Indonesia 2011

This game was played in the 2011 Indonesia Open, immediately after an open tournament which I played in China. The tournament in China was a complete disaster. I had started with 2½/4 and was Black in my fifth game, which I tried desperately to win, and soon found myself on 2½/5. So before this round, having got into the same situation of being on 2½/4, I was already upset about my performance, but since it was a double-round day there was not much time to prepare or to think about strategy! I had lost the morning round as White from a completely dominating position in time pressure, and before I could recover there was already another round coming.

**1.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.  $g3$   $g6$  3.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  4. 0–0–0–0 5.  $d4$**

Not exactly what I wanted him to play. I decided not to go for the Grünfeld, and chose the King's Indian instead.

**5...  $d6$  6.  $c4$   $\mathbb{Q}bd7$  7.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $e5$  8.  $\mathbb{Q}c2$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  9.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $c6$  10.  $b3$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$**

10... $\mathbb{W}e7!?$  was played in Ivanchuk – Yusupov, Brussels 1991. If any readers have not seen this amazing game then I would highly recommended going through it.

### 11.e4 a5

11...exd4 12. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  a5! was also possible in order to deny White the option of taking on e5.

### 12. $\mathbb{Q}a3$

White could have gone for 12.dxe5 dxe5 13. $\mathbb{Q}a4!?$ , which should give him a slight edge.

### 12... $\mathbb{Q}f8$

12...exd4 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}c5\infty$

### 13. $\mathbb{W}d2$

Having already lost a game in the morning, I was disgusted with my current position, and did not find it attractive at all. I wanted to win this game but could not see how to get him out of his comfort zone. Then there were the psychological issues from the similar situation in China where I had played too riskily in Round 5. So should I play safe here or try to complicate things? I decided to take a chance again...

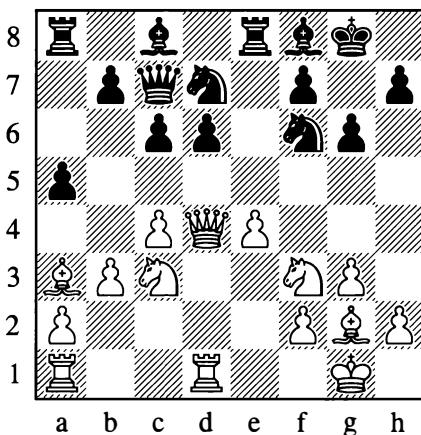
### 13...exd4!

13...b6 would have been the safe choice.

### 14. $\mathbb{W}xd4$

While he was thinking about which piece he would use to recapture on d4, I could almost hear my heart thumping as I realized that my intended way of complicating things would in reality lose a piece in two moves! My depression quickly reached the point where the result would no longer bother me. It was this moment that I started to take a fresh look at the position and a unique way to save the d6-pawn occurred to me! His a1-rook!

14. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}c5\rightleftharpoons$



### 14...a4!!

14... $\mathbb{Q}c5??$  was my “brilliant” way of complicating things, which I had initially planned when taking on d4: 15. $\mathbb{W}xf6$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  16. $\mathbb{W}f4+-$  I had missed this! One can blame the tiredness of the double round and also being upset over the morning loss. At least it was good to spot it before playing the move!

At one point I was almost ready to resort to the awful-looking 14...c5.

### 15.bxa4?!

It's not clear what else he could have done.

15. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$   $\mathbb{Q}xd6$  16. $\mathbb{W}xd6$   $\mathbb{W}xd6$  17. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$   $axb3\bar{\square}$

15. $\mathbb{Q}e1$  was perhaps the best way to react, but that is very hard to find, especially when just a few minutes before he had been thinking that his position was overwhelming.

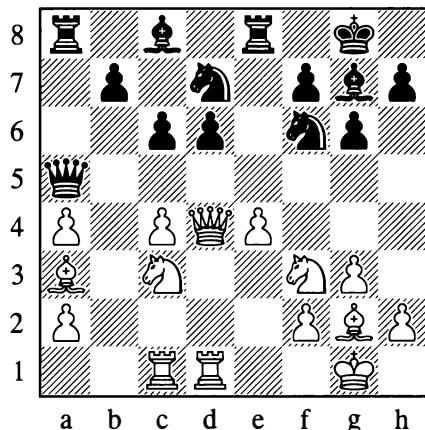
### 15... $\mathbb{W}a5!$

My emotions had reached the lowest ebb, but now bounced back – I was full of energy and completely elated with my position, and I started to calculate with absolute precision from now on. It also changed the entire tournament for me; from such a depressing moment ten minutes earlier I was now highly motivated.

**16.♗ac1**

16.♗ab1 ♗g7 (16...♗g4↑) 17.♗d2 (17.♗b4 c5!) 17...♗c5 18.♗xc5 dxc5↑

**16...♗g7!↑**



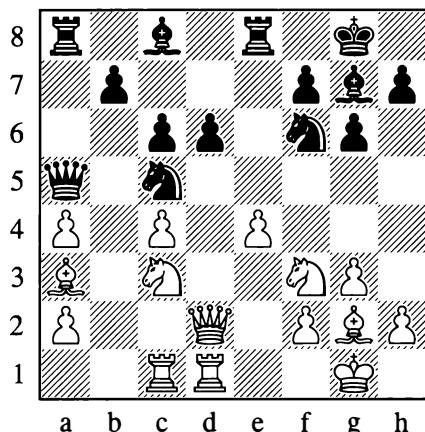
Again Black saves the d6-pawn tactically.

**17.♗d2**

Other moves are little better: 17.♗xd6 ♗xe4+; 17.♗xd6 ♗f8+; 17.♗d3 ♗c5 18.♗xc5 dxc5 19.♗c2 ♗d7!↑

**17...♗c5**

17...♗b6 18.♗xd6 ♗xc4 19.♗c2 ♗xd6 20.♗xd6 ♗d7↑ was also possible, but I was happier with the text move.

**18.♗g5?!**

18.♗xc5 was his best try: 18...dxc5 19.e5 ♗d7 20.♗e4 ♗xe5↑ However, it is clear that White is far from equality.

**18...h6! 19.♗xd6 ♗cd7**

Threatening both ...hxg5 and ...♗f8.

19...♗fd7? 20.♗xf7 ♗xf7+→

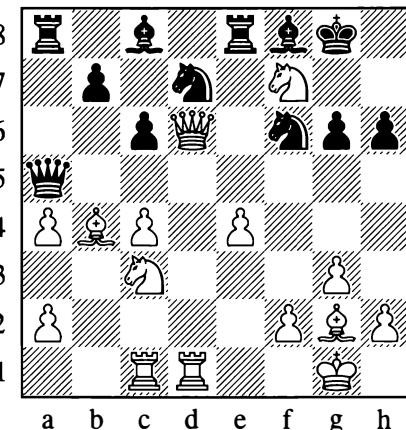
19...♗xa4 20.♗xa4 hxg5 21.♗b2 ♗g4+

**20.♗xf7 ♗f8!**

20...♗xf7 21.♗b4 ♗a7+ was also possible, but I was keen on taking the bishop instead.

**21.♗b4**

In the event of 21.♗xh6↑ I would have first taken the bishop with 21...♗g7 22.♗f4 ♗xa3, and then the knight: 23.♗c2 ♗h8+→

**21...♗h5!**

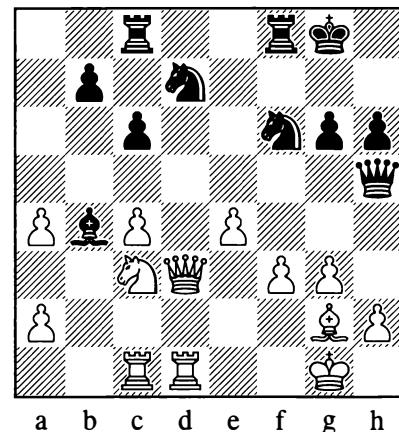
21...♗xd6 22.♗xa5 ♗xf7 23.♗xd6 ♗xa5 24.f4!+

21...♗xb4 22.♗xb4 ♗xb4 23.♗d6 ♗d8 wins as well.

**22.♗d3**

22.♗f4 ♗xb4 23.♗f3 ♗c5+→

22...♗xb4 23.♗d6 ♗f8 24.♗xc8 ♗axc8 25.f3



**25... $\mathbb{Q}c5\#!$**

I also saw that I could win with 25... $\mathbb{Q}e5$  26. $\mathbb{W}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}c5\#$  27. $\mathbb{Q}h1$   $\mathbb{Q}eg4$  28. $f\text{x}g4$   $\mathbb{Q}xg4$  29. $h3$   $\mathbb{Q}f2\#$  30. $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{W}xe2$  31. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$   $\mathbb{Q}xd1$  32. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$   $\mathbb{E}cd8+$ , but felt that the move I played was stronger.

26. $\mathbb{Q}h1$   $\mathbb{Q}e5$  27. $\mathbb{W}b1$   $\mathbb{E}cd8$  28. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}d2$  29. $\mathbb{Q}c2$   $\mathbb{Q}d3$  30. $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}f2\#$  31. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$   $\mathbb{W}xf2$  32. $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{E}fe8$  33. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$   $\mathbb{E}d3$  34. $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{E}e3$  35. $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{E}xd3$

**0-1**

This game gave me confidence, and I went on to win a few more games.

### Surya Ganguly – Vladislav Tkachiev

Indonesia Open 2011

In Round 6 I won against Paragua in a King's Indian as White, and then I beat Fier in a morning round. I was waiting eagerly for the Round 8 pairing but it would not be ready until 2pm. With two hours to go I decided to go to sleep and forget about the pairing. After waking up from my usual nap before the round I saw I was playing Tkachiev, who can play almost any line. In fifteen minutes of preparation I managed to take one very important decision.

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e3!**

The exclamation mark is for the fact that I guessed correctly that he wanted me to play 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  4.e3  $\mathbb{Q}g4$ , and so I avoided that. I was aware that Tkachiev sometimes opted for this rare line, and I was sure for this game he would try to bypass a theoretical discussion and take me there. With very little time available for preparation, I decided to make sure that he did not get what he wanted.

**3... $\mathbb{Q}f6$**

After quite some thought; this made me happy as it confirmed my assumption.

In the fifteen minutes of my preparation, 3... $e5$  and 3... $c5$  were the only two moves that I checked briefly.

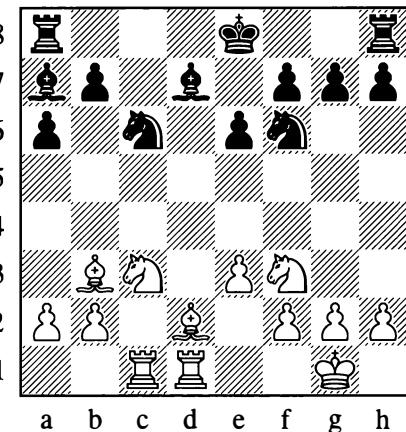
**4. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$  a6 5. $\mathbb{Q}f3$  c5 6.0-0 e6**

So I had got him into a main line QGA where I have huge experience from the black side.

**7. $\mathbb{Q}b3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  8. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  9.dxc5**

Once again I was delighted to get into this particular line; as Black I never liked such positions.

**9... $\mathbb{W}xd1$  10. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$   $\mathbb{Q}xc5$  11. $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  12. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$   $\mathbb{Q}a7$**

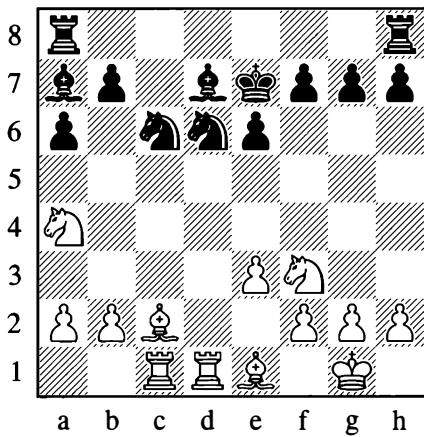


**13.♗e1**

This line is recommended in Avrukh's books.

**13...♝e7 14.♕a4 ♜e4**

It seemed that he did not know this line (judging by the time he consumed), and I was overoptimistically hoping that he might fall for the tactic from a famous Karpov game: 14...b6 15.♗xd7† ♜xd7 16.♕xb6† ♜xb6 17.♗a4 ♜c8 18.♗e5 ♜b8 19.♗xc6† ♜b7 20.♗e5± Karpov – Gulko, Spain 1996.

**15.♗c2 ♜d6****16.♗b1N**

Technically speaking this is a novelty, although it was already mentioned in Avrukh's book.

16.b4 ♜ac8 17.♗c5 ♜xb4 18.♗xb7 ♜xb7  
19.♗xb4† ♜c5 20.♗e5 ♜hd8 21.♗e1 ♜a3  
22.♗xd7 ♜xd7 23.♗xd7† ♜xd7 24.♗a4†  
♗d8=

**16...♜hd8**

This was new to me. 16...♜ac8 17.♗c5 is what I remembered.

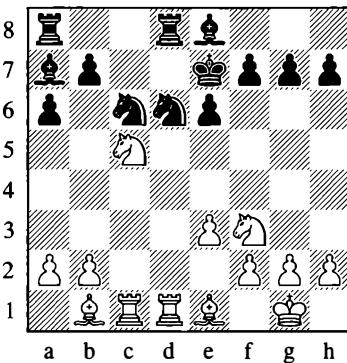
**17.♗c5**

After some thought I realized that I had to go for this, and I also realized that when playing

...♜hd8 he actually wanted to play ...♝e8 after this move, but that it is not possible tactically.

**17...♝xc5**

I assume he did not want to take on c5 while playing ...♜hd8, as in that case he would have preferred to take the c-file instead!

**17...♝e8**

18.♗xd6! After the game he admitted that when playing ...♜hd8 he underestimated this sac. 18...♜xd6 19.♗xb7 is the fine tactical point: 19...♜d7 (19...♜d5 20.♗e4 ♜b5 21.♗a5 ♜c8 22.♗xc6 ♜xb2 23.♗e5±) 20.♗xc6 ♜xb7 21.♗xa6 f5 (After 21...♜b5 22.♗a5 Black might be okay, but in a practical game it looks very scary.) 22.♗c3 ♜b5 23.♗a5 ♜c8 24.h3↑

**18.♝xc5**

Black wants to play ...f6 and ...e5. If he can achieve this then White will not have much advantage.

**18...h6**

He protects the h7-pawn before playing ...f6 and ...e5.

**19.e4!**

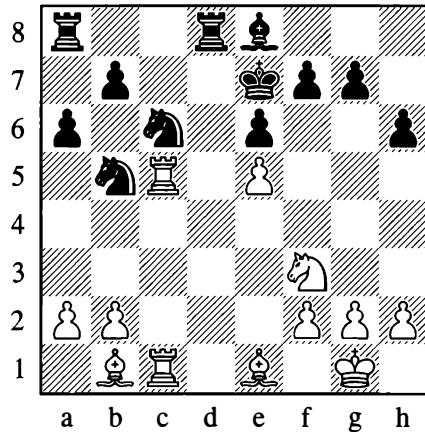
Naturally I wanted to stop this plan.

**19...♝e8**

Since I was mainly scared of his ...e5-plan, I had to calculate: 19...b6 20.♗cc1 e5

21.♕xe5! ♕xe5 22.♗b4 ♔g4! (22...♔b5 23.♖c7† ♔e6 24.f4↑) 23.f3 ♔xf3 (23...a5 24.♗c3 ♕xf3† 25.gxf3 ♔xf3 26.♗d3±) 24.gxf3 ♕xf3† 25.♗f2 ♕e5 26.♗d5 ♔e6□ 27.♗cd1 ♕b7 28.a4↑ White's idea is ♔a2 next.

**20.e5 ♕b5 21.♗dc1±**



Now a long-lasting advantage is secured.

**21...♕bd4 22.♕xd4 ♕xd4**

I wasn't really expecting this. On the other hand, 22...♗xd4 23.♗c3 ♗d5 24.♗xd5 exd5 25.f4± is not a dream for Black either.

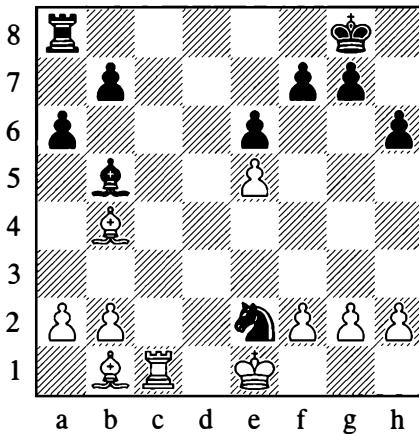
**23.♗b4 ♔f8 24.♗c8†**

The human way. An engine has its own way of playing strong chess: 24.♔h1! I wanted to bring my king towards the centre so never took this move seriously, but computers are beyond such principles. 24...♔g8 25.♗a5! ♗db8□ 26.♗c4 ♕c6 27.♗c7 ♗c8 28.♗d6↑ With amazing harmony, all White's pieces are beautifully coordinated.

24.♗h7 threatens mate, but unfortunately Black would not allow it: 24...g6–+

**24...♔g8 25.♗xa8 ♗xa8 26.♔f1 ♔b5† 27.♔e1 ♕e2**

Accompanied with a draw offer!



**28.♗c7!**

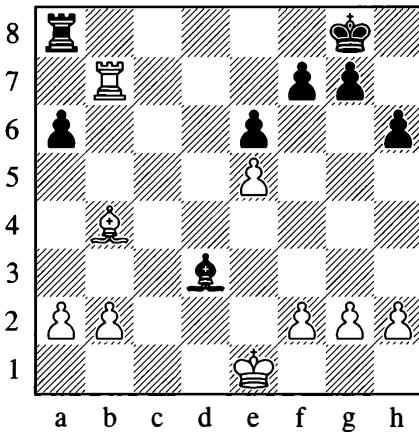
I assume that 28.♗d1 ♕f4 29.♔e4 ♔c6 30.♗xc6 bxc6 was the sort of position he wanted.

**28...♕f4 29.♗xb7 ♕d3†  
29...♕xg2† 30.♔d2±**

I was mainly hoping for: 29...♗d3 30.♗xd3 ♕xd3† 31.♔e2 ♕xb2 32.♔c3 ♕c4 (32...♕a4 33.♔d4±) 33.♔d3 ♗c8 34.♗b4↑ Black is not close to equality.

**30.♗xd3 ♕xd3**

So we have got into a very interesting endgame where Black apparently has very good chances to make a draw.



**31.♖c7!**

It was important to understand that only the c-file could be dangerous. As the c2-square is protected, a black rook on the c-file would become very active. However, the rook on b-file will not be as strong.

**31...a5 32.♕d6 a4**

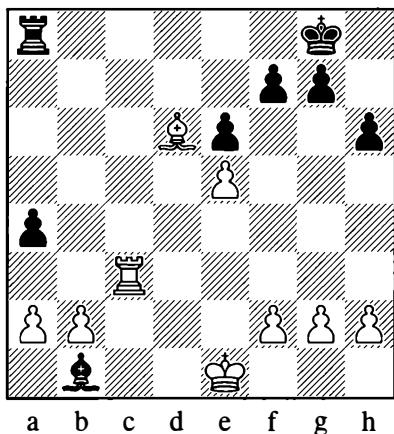
He wants to force me to play a2-a3 by playing ...♜b1 next, after which it would be extremely difficult to make any kind of progress.

**33.♗c3!**

33.f3 ♜b1 34.a3 ♜a2∞

**33...♜b1**

33...♜e4 34.g3! ♜d5 35.♗a3 Now Black's problem is that his rook is fixed on a8 and White has a concrete plan of getting into an opposite-coloured bishop ending by playing b2-b4 at the right time. Black's other major problem is that his king is cut off and to get it into the game he must weaken his kingside pawn structure.

**34.♗a3 ♜c8**

Since he did not like the passive position mentioned above, it was understandable that he looked for some sort of activity.

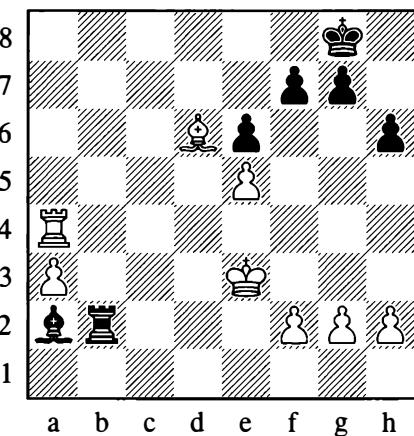
35.♗xa4 ♜c1† 36.♗d2 ♜c2† 37.♗e3 ♜xb2

**38.a3**

The main problem for Black is that his king never gets into the game.

**38...♜a2**

38...♜b3† 39.♗d4 ♜b2 40.♗b4+–

**39.♗b4!**

A good move in general and even better in time pressure. It made him think about whether he can take or not!

**39...♜c2**

39...♜xb4 40.axb4 ♜d5 41.b5 f5 42.exf6 gxf6 43.g4!+–

**40.♗d4**

After 40.♗f4 ♜d5 41.g3 g5 42.♗f6 ♜g7 I wouldn't be so happy about my rook's position.

**40...♜d5 41.g3 ♜h7?!**

It's hard to say what Black should play. 41...♜a2 42.h4 might well get him into a similar kind of position.

**42.♗f4! ♜g8**

42...♜g6 43.h4 h5 44.♗d3±

**43.h4! h5?!**

I think this move is practically a blunder and that after this the game is totally lost.

43... $\mathbb{R}a2$  was a better try in order to keep the option of ...g5 open. However I think the position should still be lost with accurate play.

#### 44. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{R}a2$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}c3$

Now the rook is multi-tasking: defending f2, attacking f7 and thus controlling the black king and ...f6 counterplay, and finally threatening a3-a4. The worst part for Black is that he can do nothing about this rook.

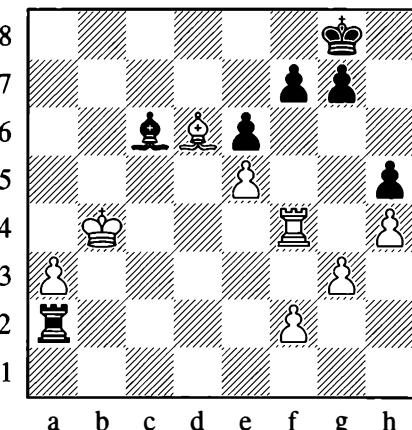
#### 45... $\mathbb{Q}c6$

He was still under the impression that this was some sort of a fortress, as I can't move my a-pawn further.

#### 46. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}d5\#$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}b4$

However, I had something else in mind.

#### 47... $\mathbb{Q}c6$



#### 48. $\mathbb{Q}c5!$

The king heads for the f7-pawn!

#### 48... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

48... $\mathbb{Q}e8$  49. $\mathbb{Q}b6$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  50. $\mathbb{Q}c7$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  51. $\mathbb{Q}d8$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  52. $\mathbb{Q}e7$   $\mathbb{Q}b2$  53. $\mathbb{Q}b4+-$

49. $\mathbb{Q}b6$   $\mathbb{R}a1$  50. $\mathbb{Q}c7$   $\mathbb{Q}b5$  51. $\mathbb{Q}d8$   $\mathbb{Q}d3$   
52. $\mathbb{Q}e7$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  53.a4  $\mathbb{R}a2$   
53... $\mathbb{Q}c2$  54. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$   $\mathbb{R}xa4$  55. $\mathbb{Q}f8\#$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$   
56. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+-$  should be very easy.

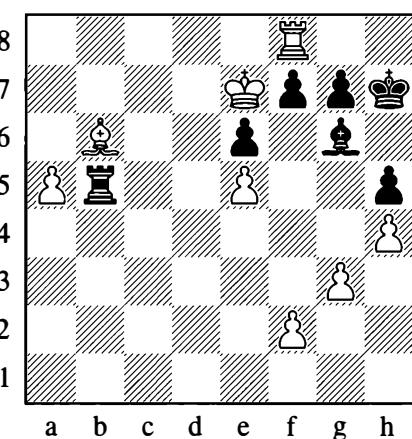
#### 54. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{R}a1$ 55.a5 $\mathbb{R}a2$ 56. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{R}a1$ 57. $\mathbb{Q}d4$

The rook goes to f8 and frees White's king.

#### 57... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 58. $\mathbb{Q}d8$ $\mathbb{R}b1$

58... $\mathbb{R}a2$  59. $\mathbb{Q}f8$   $\mathbb{R}a1$  60. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$   $\mathbb{Q}xf7$   
61. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+-$

#### 59. $\mathbb{Q}f8$ $\mathbb{R}b5$



#### 60. $\mathbb{Q}d6!$

There were other ways too, but once I realized that I no longer needed my king to fix his kingside, I knew my move.

60... $\mathbb{R}d5\#$  61. $\mathbb{Q}c7$   $\mathbb{Q}d3$  62. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$   
63. $\mathbb{Q}d7$   $\mathbb{Q}xd7\#$  64. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$   $\mathbb{Q}f5$  65. $\mathbb{Q}c7$   $\mathbb{Q}c4$   
66. $\mathbb{Q}c6$   $\mathbb{Q}e4$  67. $\mathbb{Q}b7$   $\mathbb{Q}d5\#$  68. $\mathbb{Q}a7$   $\mathbb{Q}c4$   
69.a6  $\mathbb{Q}d4$  70. $\mathbb{Q}b7$

1–0

After a last round draw against Wang Yue, I shared first place in the tournament with Li Chao.

## Surya Ganguly – Arkadij Naiditsch

Spain 2011

After the Indonesian Open I had to leave immediately to play in the Spanish league. In the first round I was paired with Naiditsch who had shown excellent form in the European Team Championship prior to this tournament.

### 1.d4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2.c4 e6 3.g3

I had picked up the Catalan just a few months prior. I had played very few games with it, so there was no way for my opponent to guess my repertoire here.

### 3...c5

Already this was a new position as far as my previous tournament games were concerned.

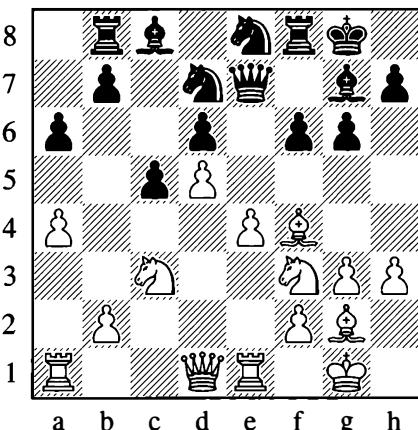
### 4.d5 d6 5. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ exd5 6.cxd5 g6 7. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 0-0 9.0-0 a6 10.a4 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 12.h3 $\mathbb{E}b8$

12... $\mathbb{Q}h5$  is an interesting line which became popular recently: 13. $\mathbb{Q}g5$  f6 14. $\mathbb{Q}d2$  f5 Black prevents e2-e4, and the play is generally quite complicated hereafter.

### 13.e4 $\mathbb{Q}e8$

This was played relatively quickly – a sign that Naiditsch knew this line well.

### 14. $\mathbb{E}e1$ f6



I wasn't impressed with this idea, and got the feeling that he was just blitzing moves out in an attempt to confuse me.

### 15. $\mathbb{Q}d2\pm$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$

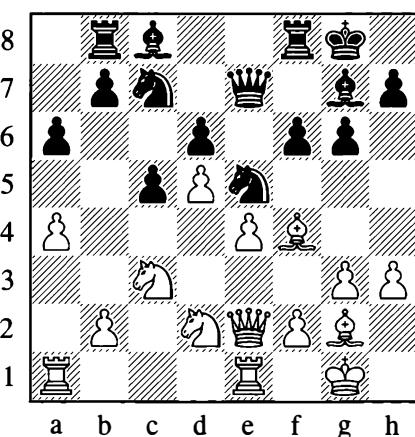
This is practically forced in order to stop  $\mathbb{Q}c4$ . Instead 15...b5 16.axb5 axb5 17. $\mathbb{W}e2\pm$  is not what Black wants.

### 16. $\mathbb{W}e2$

16. $\mathbb{Q}e3$  was also interesting. The idea is to play f2-f4 next, but Black could consider 16...f5?!!.

### 16... $\mathbb{Q}c7$

Black is obviously aiming for ...b5 as early as possible.



### 17. $\mathbb{Q}e3$

17.a5 b5 18.axb6  $\mathbb{Q}xb6\rightleftharpoons$  merely helps Black to obtain counterplay along the half-open b-file. The a6-pawn is not as weak as the one on b2, so this option made no sense to me.

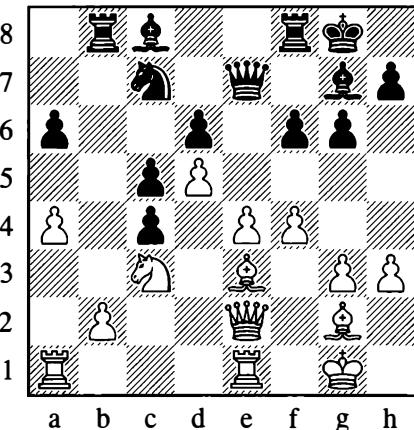
### 17...b5 18.f4 $\mathbb{Q}c4?!$

I found this more surprising than his 14th move. I guess he simply missed my reply.

18... $\mathbb{Q}f7$  was needed. Although White remains slightly better, Black should have enough counterplay to make a fight: 19.axb5

$\text{axb5}$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}b3?$ ! (20.  $\mathbb{R}a7$   $\mathbb{B}b7$  21.  $\mathbb{R}ea1\infty$ )  
 20...  $b4$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}a5$   $\mathbb{B}d7$  (21...  $bxcc3?$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}c6+-$ )  
 22.  $\mathbb{Q}a4\pm$

### 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $bxcc4$



### 20. $\mathbb{Q}d1!$ ±

The simplest way to pick up the loose pawn.

20.  $\mathbb{W}xc4$   $\mathbb{B}xb2$  21.  $\mathbb{R}ab1$   $\mathbb{B}xb1$  22.  $\mathbb{R}xb1$  could be better for White, but why exchange pawns when you can take one for free?

### 20... $\mathbb{B}e8$

20...  $a5$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}d2\uparrow$

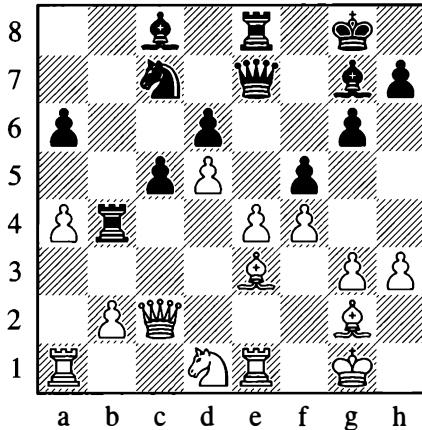
20...  $f5$  21.  $e5$ ? is an important point: 21...  $dxe5$  22.  $\mathbb{W}xc4$   $exf4$  23.  $d6\uparrow$   $\mathbb{W}e6$  24.  $dxc7+-$

### 21. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{B}b4?$ !

The rook will prove vulnerable here, and only helps White to gain an important tempo with  $\mathbb{Q}d2$  in the near future. 21...  $\mathbb{W}f7$  was a better try.

### 22. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $f5$

The exchange sac leads nowhere: 22...  $\mathbb{B}xe4$  23.  $\mathbb{W}xe4$   $\mathbb{W}xe4$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{B}xe4$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{B}b4$  (25...  $\mathbb{B}e8$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}h2\pm$ ) 26.  $\mathbb{Q}xc5!$   $dxc5$  27.  $\mathbb{B}e7+-$



### 23. $e5!+-$

As mentioned before, the rook has become vulnerable and will have to lose some tempos.

### 23... $\mathbb{W}d8$

23...  $a5$  is met by 24.  $\mathbb{Q}h2!$  with the threat of taking on d6 followed by on c5.

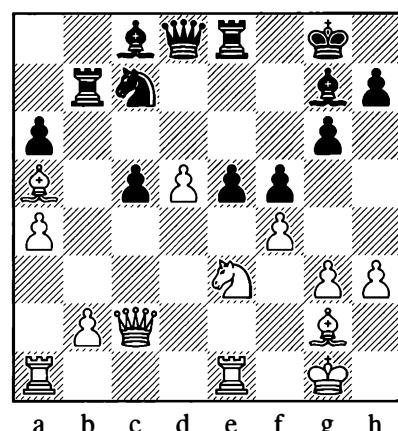
### 24. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{B}b8$

Neither 24...  $\mathbb{B}d4$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}a5+-$  nor 24...  $\mathbb{B}b7$  25.  $e6+-$  help Black.

### 25. $\mathbb{Q}a5!$ $\mathbb{B}b7$

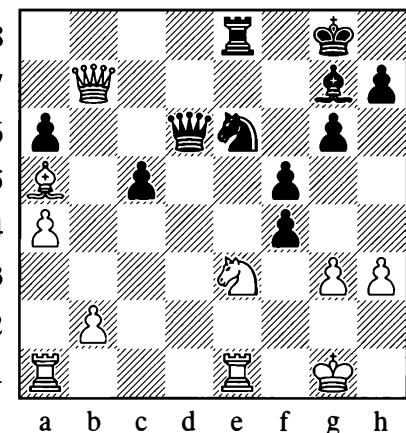
25...  $dxe5$  26.  $\mathbb{W}xc5+-$

### 26. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $dxe5$



27.d6  $\mathbb{W}xd6$  28. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$   $\mathbb{Q}xb7$  29. $\mathbb{W}b3\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$   
29... $\mathbb{Q}d5$  30. $\mathbb{Q}xc7+-$

30. $\mathbb{W}xb7$  exf4

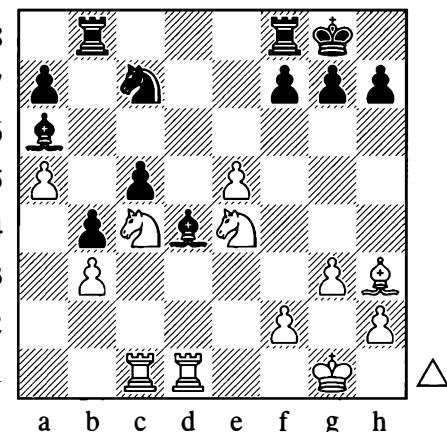


31. $\mathbb{W}d5!$   $\mathbb{W}e7$  32. $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}d4\uparrow$  33. $\mathbb{Q}h1$  fxg3  
34. $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{W}h4$  35. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$   $\mathbb{Q}xe6$  36. $\mathbb{W}xe6\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$   
37. $\mathbb{W}d7\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}h6$  38. $\mathbb{Q}d2$

1–0

### Surya Ganguly – Tania Sachdev

Dubai 2012

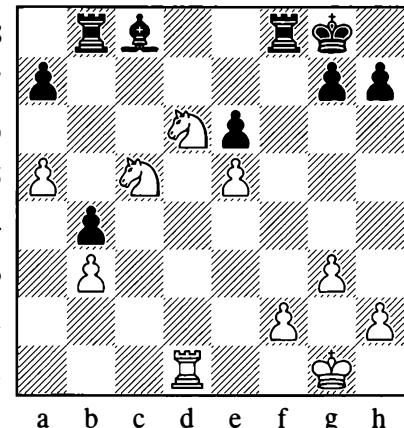


After some opening and early-middlegame inaccuracies from both sides, we reached the following position where Black has made the last mistake of playing 23...c5?:

24. $\mathbb{Q}cd6!$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$

White's position is better, but Black still has a pair of bishops and might create counterplay if an opportunity presents itself. Fortunately there is a nice exchange sac.

25. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$  fxe6 26. $\mathbb{Q}xc5!$   $\mathbb{Q}xc5$  27. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$   $\mathbb{Q}c8\Box$



Black is almost paralysed. Two amazing knights are dominating Black's two rooks and bishop!

28.h4

There is no need to rush, as Black has no good way to get out. Therefore I decided to gain more space on the kingside.

28... $\mathbb{Q}d8$

Threatening ... $\mathbb{Q}b5$ .

29. $\mathbb{Q}d4!$

Preventing Black's idea while bringing the rook into play.

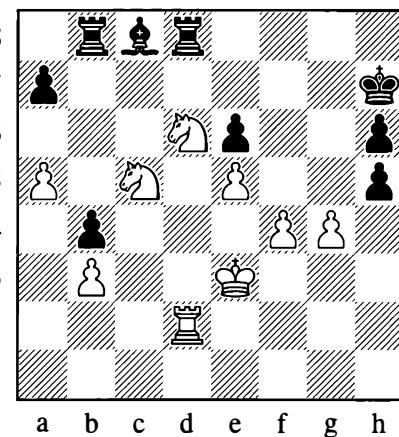
29...h6 30.f3  $\mathbb{Q}f8$  31. $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  32. $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$

There is not much for Black to do.

33.h5  $\mathbb{Q}h7$  34.g4  $\mathbb{Q}d8$  35.f4 g6 36. $\mathbb{Q}d2$

36. $\mathbb{Q}ce4!$  was more precise: 36... $\mathbb{Q}g7$   
37. $\mathbb{Q}f6+-$

36...gxh5



**37.f5??**

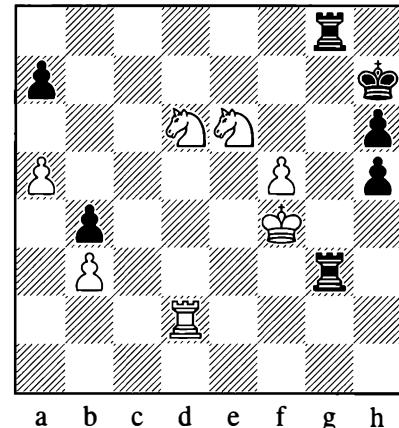
Not the best way, but in time pressure I could not see any defence for Black.

Instead 37.gxh5!  $\mathbb{E}g8$  38. $\mathbb{Q}ce4+$ — was simplest.

**37...exf5 38.e6  $\mathbb{Q}xe6$**

Correct was 38...fxg4! 39.e7  $\mathbb{E}g8$  40.e8= $\mathbb{W}$   $\mathbb{Q}xe8\#$  41. $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ . White should still win this, but Black has some chances to resist.

**39. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$   $\mathbb{E}g8$  40.gxf5  $\mathbb{E}g3\#$  41. $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{E}bg8$**



**42. $\mathbb{Q}f8\#!$**

**1–0**

## Yaroslav Zinchenko – Surya Ganguly

Paleochora 2012

As I was trailing the leader by half a point, it was important for me to win this game in order to fight for first place.

**1.e4 e6**

My opponent has a fixed repertoire against the French, and I had prepared an interesting line against his preferred system.

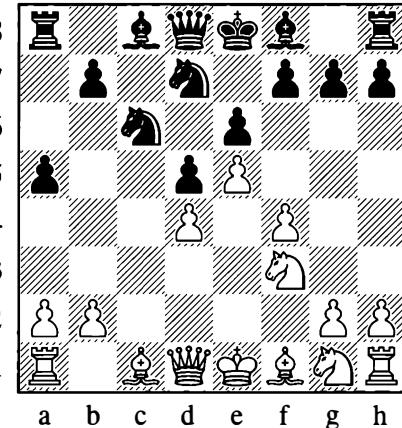
**2.d4 d5 3. $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  4.e5  $\mathbb{Q}fd7$  5.c3 c5 6.f4  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  7. $\mathbb{Q}df3$**

All according to plan.

**7...cx $d$ 4**

7... $\mathbb{W}b6$  is the main line, either now or after exchanging on d4.

**8.cxd4 a5??**



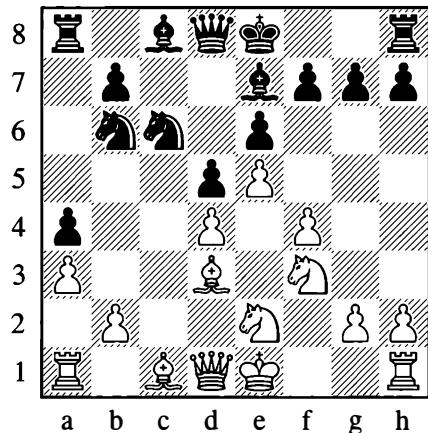
Not a popular line, but an interesting one in my view. Black more or less ignores White's development and carries out his own plan on the queenside.

**9. $\mathbb{Q}d3$  a4 10.a3**

10. $\mathbb{Q}e2$  was the main move I had analysed. Indeed I do not believe White needs to bother blocking the a-pawn, and simply going for his

own attack is far more dangerous. Nevertheless the text move makes a certain amount of sense and I considered it in my preparation.

**10...♝b6 11.♞e2 ♜e7**



**12.♝f2?!**

White should have either castled or gone for the attack with 12.g4?!, both of which I looked at in my preparation.

**12...♞d7**

Waiting for White to commit himself on the kingside. Black is never going to castle on the short side, but on the other flank ...♝a5 is coming next.

**13.g4 ♜c4!↑**

I knew there was nothing scary in allowing White to play f5, and this is especially true with the king on f2 blocking his pieces.

**14.f5 ♜b6! 15.♔g3 h5?!**

15...♝6a5? 16.♗b1 ♜b3 17.♗f4 ♜c8↑

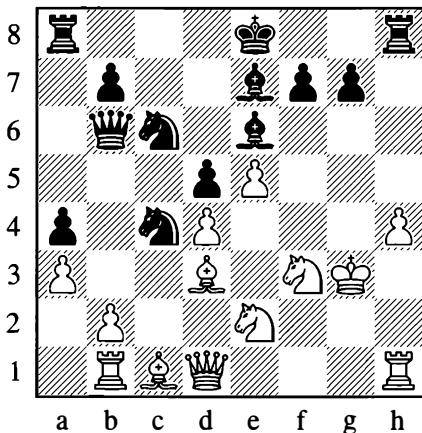
**16.fxe6**

16.h3 0–0–0!↑

**16...♜xe6 17.gxh5 ♜xh5 18.h4 ♜h8!**

Stopping ♜f4.

**19.♗b1**



**19...♛a7!**

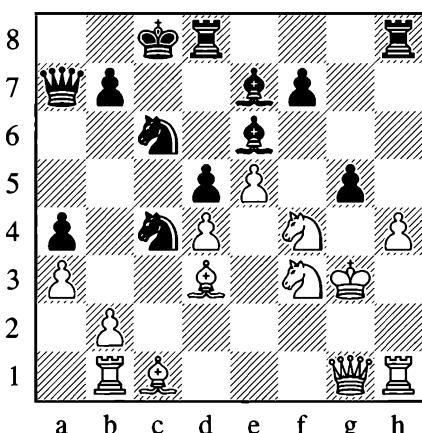
I like this move, which looks odd but has a simple idea: Black defends the a4-pawn in order to prepare long castling.

**20.♗g1?!**

20.♔c2 0–0–0! 21.♗xa4 ♔f5 22.♗c2 ♜e4↑

**20...0–0–0 21.♗f4 g5**

This move looks obvious, but it turns out that White can defend himself with accurate play. The noncommittal 21...♝b8!↑ was more precise.



**22.♗xe6?**

White had to play:

22.hxg5

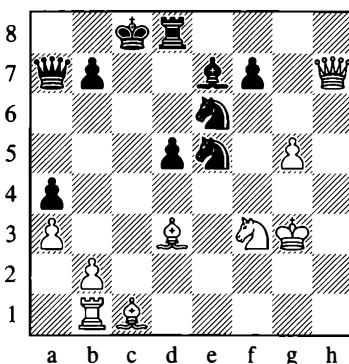
I had prepared a good reply, but underestimated White's defensive resources.

22... $\mathbb{E}xh1$  23. $\mathbb{W}xh1$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  24. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ !  $\mathbb{Q}xe6$

After 24... $fxe6$  25. $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}xf3$  26. $\mathbb{W}xf3$   $\mathbb{E}f8$  27. $\mathbb{W}g4$  White obtains counterplay.

25. $\mathbb{W}h7$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

I calculated this far and was happy with the position.



However, the engines point out that White can still hold with the following cool move:

26. $\mathbb{Q}f5!$

26. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  is not good enough: 26... $\mathbb{W}g1$ +

27. $\mathbb{Q}h3$   $\mathbb{W}h1\uparrow$  28. $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{W}e1\uparrow$  29. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{W}xe5\uparrow$

26... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$  27. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$

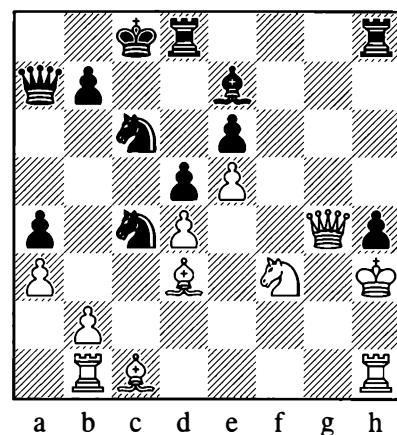
Computers never sweat, even when a king finds himself on f3 with no shelter at all.

Precise calculation is what counts.

27... $\mathbb{W}d4$  28. $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{W}e5$  29. $\mathbb{Q}xe6\uparrow$   $fxe6$  30. $\mathbb{W}xe7$

$\mathbb{W}e4\uparrow$  31. $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{W}xb1$  32. $\mathbb{W}xe6\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$  33. $\mathbb{W}e5\bar{\infty}$

22... $\mathbb{gxh4}\uparrow$  23. $\mathbb{Q}h3$   $fxe6$  24. $\mathbb{W}g4$



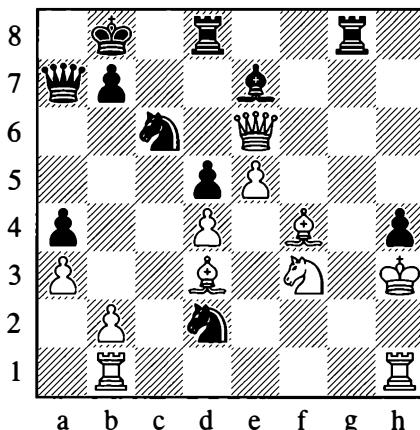
24... $\mathbb{E}hg8!\uparrow$

Forcing the game towards its conclusion.

25. $\mathbb{W}xe6\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$  26. $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}d2!$

There are other winning moves, but this seemed to me to be the clearest, as well as the most spectacular.

26... $\mathbb{Q}xd4?$  27. $\mathbb{W}xe7$   $\mathbb{Q}xf3$  28. $e6\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}a8$  29. $\mathbb{E}bf1$   $\mathbb{Q}ce5\uparrow$



27. $\mathbb{Q}h7$

27. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$   $\mathbb{E}g3\uparrow$  28. $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4\uparrow$

27. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$   $\mathbb{W}xd4$  28. $\mathbb{E}bf1$  (28. $\mathbb{W}f5$   $\mathbb{E}df8$  29. $e6\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}a8\uparrow$ ) 28... $\mathbb{W}xd3\uparrow$  29. $\mathbb{E}f3$   $\mathbb{W}e2\uparrow$

27... $\mathbb{E}gf8$  28. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$   $\mathbb{E}xf3\uparrow$  29. $\mathbb{Q}g4$   $\mathbb{W}xd4\uparrow$

30. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$   $\mathbb{E}f8\uparrow$  31. $\mathbb{Q}f5$   $\mathbb{W}e4\uparrow$

0–1

With this important win I caught the leader and ended up sharing first place in the tournament.

# Author's Preface

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*“Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler.” – Albert Einstein*

This is the most difficult chess book I have written, although it will probably not be nearly as difficult for the reader as it was for the author! This is not to say that the book does not contain chess of mind-boggling complexity, it does. Rather I want the reader to spend just a few seconds feeling pity for the poor author who worked for months putting this book together. It is absolutely imperative that this should happen now, as all forms of compassion are likely to leave the reader’s mind once he gets bogged down in the very first exercise!

I am not sure that the title of this book is entirely accurate, maybe it would have been better to call it *Complex Positions*, but this would probably convince the already very limited number of people interested in this book that it is dull and torturous. Instead I decided to call the book *Strategic Play*, because the skills exercised in this book are to a great extent the same ones used when we make strategic decisions: the combination of calculation, positional evaluation and long-term abstract thinking.

## Four types of decisions

*“I never think of the future. It comes soon enough.” – Albert Einstein*

One of the key ideas I try to pass on to the people I work with is that chess is not about winning, but is rather about solving a lot of small puzzles as successfully as possible. In order to do this we are provided with only a limited amount of time. So, even though winning (or at times drawing) is certainly our wish, we simply do not have time to focus on that aspect of the game. Instead we need to focus on the position we have right now and make a good decision as quickly as we can, but no quicker than that, of course.

I think it makes sense to divide the decisions we make in a game into four categories, in order to identify our weaknesses better. This is especially useful for those suffering from time trouble addiction, who can work out where all of their time is lost. But it also makes sense for others to look at their errors through this window.

### 1) Decisions where you know what to do

This includes opening preparation, endgame theory, and recaptures or similarly forced moves. There are two typical mistakes in this category: either spending too much time thinking over decisions that have already been made, or assuming that something is forced, when in reality there are choices.

A simple awareness that your next decision seems to belong to this category should be useful. You do not spend a lot of time thinking, you check for any surprising alternatives that would throw the position into another category, and if there are none, you execute your move.

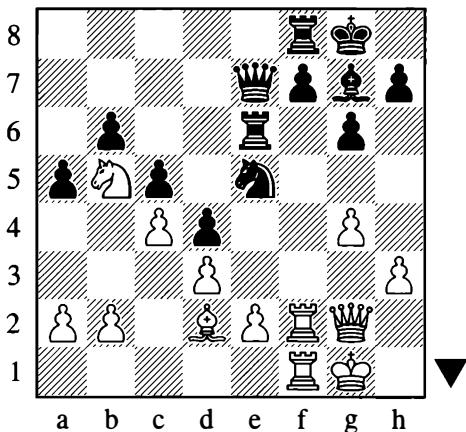
## 2) Simple decisions

This includes decisions of limited significance. You may need to make two or three poor choices in this type of position before there is a noticeable deterioration in your position; and even then it might only lead to long-term problems. A typical question may be whether to recapture with a knight or a bishop, when there are no pressing circumstances, such as tactics, to suggest which one is the right one.

A limited amount of tactics is a feature of this sort of decision. Generally calculation cannot be used to solve the problem, and anyone trying to do so will feel endless frustration. Often those people will also characterize such positions as boring, which actually means that they do not know what to look for, and this frustrates them.

Here is a good example:

**M. Gurevich – Adams**, Ostend 1991



*Black to play (solutions at the end of the chapter)*

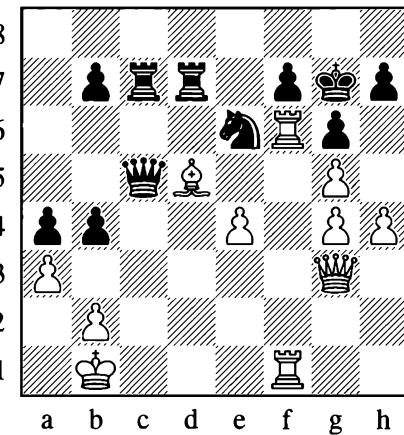
This is the sort of decision described in *Grandmaster Preparation – Positional Play*. If you have not read that book, I would seriously suggest that you do so; it is the natural precursor to this book.

## 3) Critical moments

Critical moments refer to positions that are so tactical that this feature is naturally what we must focus on. You should quickly realize that a mistake will cost you dearly; if not the game, then at least the chance to use your advantage decisively.

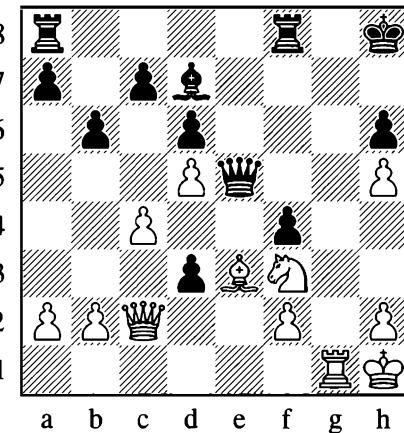
Here are a few obvious examples:

**Aronian – Caruana**, Moscow 2012



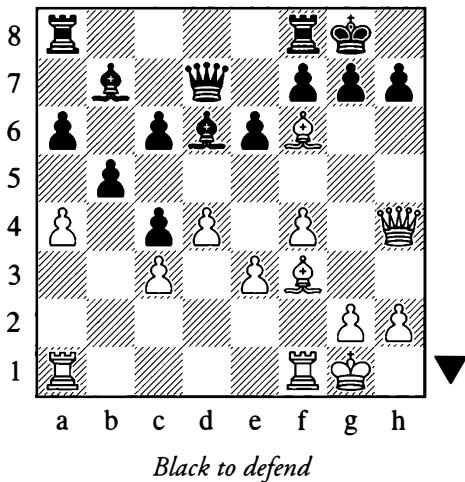
*White wins*

**Petrosian – Spassky**, Moscow (12) 1966



*White wins*

## Cramling – Shen Yang, Istanbul 2009



### 4) Complex decisions

This is the most difficult group of decisions to describe. There may be a significant element of “critical moment” about the position, but it cannot be solved exclusively with calculation or by positional judgement. The horizon is often too far away for computers to calculate everything to the end, leaving us poor humans entirely without hope of doing so. And the necessary reaction can at times seem anti-positional, because it weighs some gains against losses, or because the positional gains are long-term, dependent on tactical circumstances.

It is this sort of decision that this book is about.

Some of these complex positions clearly require strategic decisions (as defined below), while others are so complex that putting them into any box will always be an exercise in reductionism. For practical purposes this is what I have done, but this does not make it a theoretical stance – it was simply the best way I could find to structure the material for this book.

### Time trouble addiction – a quick note

I have over the years developed the opinion that time trouble is not something we need to debate with our therapist. I would not psychoanalyse it at all. Rather it is an accumulation of inefficient patterns in our brain, which for some have grown stronger with age. The problem with such patterns, also known as bad habits, is that they never really disappear from our nervous system. But we can, with focused work, create stronger patterns. We are, after all, masters in our own house – even if all the servants are not doing as we instruct them!

I recently discussed time trouble with a famous addict over a lunch with friends. He immediately located the type of decisions he spent too much time on. As this was only lunch, we did not take this further. But it was a promising start. Once you know what you are doing wrong, you are in a much better position than you were before.

### General principles have little value in positions of great complexity

I have a lot of time for general principles in chess. Obviously we do not think as much in this way when we are playing, but rather calculate the moves our intuition selects for us. But our intuition does not develop in a vacuum and guiding it is not a bad idea in my opinion.

Having said that, it is clear that tactics in general override any rule of thumb.

The general patterns we discover in chess are after all a way for us to take shortcuts to better decisions in a game. Our mind cannot calculate a million moves a second, as any computer program does, and it could for that reason be logical to think that humans would never be able to make better decisions than

computers. If you follow the logic of some chess authors to the end, you would come to this obviously ludicrous conclusion. I only mention this because some of these authors have done exactly the same to my point of view, taking the logic too far in order to trash it. And although I am not bitter, I have been influenced by the tone of the debate.

My training system for dealing with “simple positions” is based on the three questions, *Where are the weaknesses?*, *Which is the worst-placed piece?* and *What is the opponent’s idea?*, as described in *Grandmaster Preparation – Positional Play*. This is meant to do little more than direct your focus to the commonly most important features in chess. The working principle is that after having solved hundreds or thousands of exercises asking yourself these questions, you will be more alert to different patterns than you were before.

So, despite my reluctance to involve general principles with the complex positions in this book, I would ask the reader to consider asking himself these three questions before diving deep into these positions. And with this I obviously do not mean that you are not allowed to look at the things that jump into your mind for a few seconds; rather I mean that before you start to systematically calculate various options, you should do the work necessary to see moves that might not come to you by themselves.

### The difference between positional chess and chess strategy

*“Intellectuals solve problems; geniuses prevent them.” – Albert Einstein*

I remember an early training session with an eager and talented young pupil, where I asked him if he knew the difference between the two common chess terms, *positional* and *strategic*.

He quite confidently answered that he indeed knew the answer, as he had just read about that in a chess book the day before – *they are the same*, the boy said proudly. Unfortunately I had to disappoint him, as it is not so. It is true that many authors and most publishers will use the words with some poetic licence and at times interchangeably. However, I must insist that positional chess and chess strategy are quite different things.

The (Oxford) dictionary meanings for these two words are:

**Positional** is, as a word, a derivative of the word *position*, which has a lot of meanings beside the obvious one. Most notably it includes the meanings *the correct place* and *a place where a part of a military force is posted*.

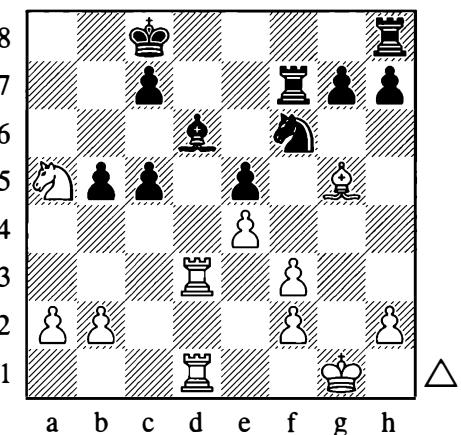
**Strategy** is a word with fewer meanings. The first of only two entries in the Oxford dictionary is *a plan designed to achieve a particular long-term aim*.

In chess this means that a positional move is dealing with the position we have right in front of us. A typical example is this:

### Alexander Ivanov – Shen Yang

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Moscow 2007



It is of course possible that Ivanov cooked up some deep strategy for how he was going to play the next ten to fifteen moves of the game, but it is not very likely. Rather he saw a simple move that would improve his position by forcing his opponent to make a huge concession.

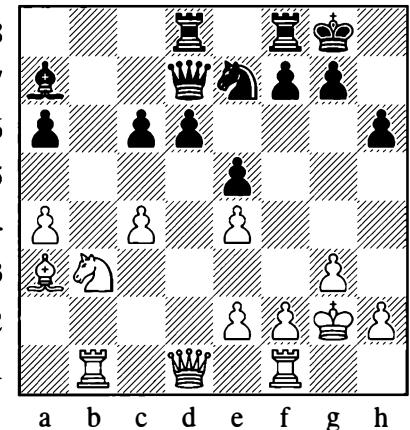
### 18.♗b3! b4 19.♘c4†

The knight now has an excellent square from where it can put pressure on the e5-pawn. White went on to win the game in fine style.

Strategic thinking is somewhat more complex. What we try to do when we think strategically is to aim in a general direction and arrive there somewhere down the line. The best move in the following position looks anti-positional at first, but may be found once we realize that not everything is as it initially appears.

### Mihail Marin – Jonathan Rowson

Porto Mannu 2008



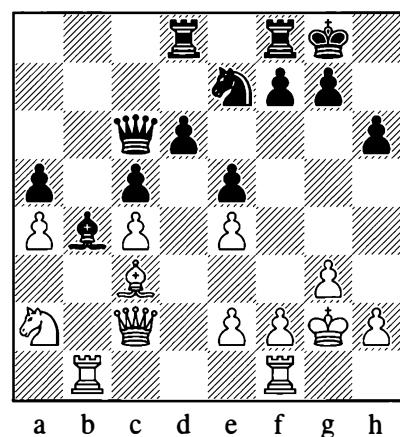
### 21...c5!!

At first sight this is a terrible crime to the a7-bishop. It also creates a big hole on d5. I was sitting more or less next to the players when the game was played and, like many others,

I immediately looked at the position when Rowson advanced his c-pawn.

Mihail was clearly not prepared for this move and he quickly started to look uncomfortable. It does not take long to realize that the bishop is only poor in the short term. In the long term it is White who will suffer with a poor bishop, hemmed in by the black pawns. The weakness of the d5-square and the d6-pawn are less important factors.

### 22.♗c1 ♕c6 23.♗c2 ♔b6 24.♔a2 ♔a5 25.♔b2 ♔b4 26.♔c3 a5



The optical impression has changed over the last five moves. It is now clear that Black has seen deeper and it is White who has to defend.

It is a testament to Marin's great fighting spirit and abilities as a chess player that he did not become flustered, but managed to hold this uncomfortable position.

27.♔a1 f5 28.♘c3 ♔xc3 29.♔xc3 fxe4  
30.♔xa5 ♔a8 31.♔b6 ♕c7 32.♔a6 ♕d7  
33.♔xa8 ♕xa8 34.♔c3 ♕xa4 35.♔d1 ♕xc4  
36.♗b3 ♕e6 37.♗xd6 ♕xd6 38.♕xc4†  
♕d5 39.♕xd5† ♘xd5 40.♔xe5 c4 41.♔f1  
g5 42.g4 e3 43.♔e1 c3 44.fxe3 c2 45.♔d2  
♘xe3 46.♔c1 ♘xg4 47.♔b8 ♘f7  
½-½

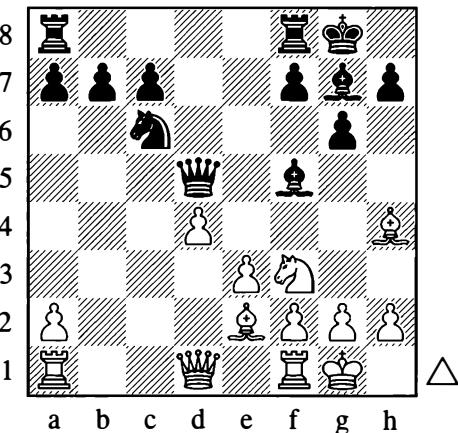
## A note on the selection for this book

It has been quite difficult to find suitable exercises for this book and even harder to squeeze them into five square boxes. Clearly there will be positions that the reader will feel do not fully fit within the given theme. I apologize for this in advance and ask for your understanding. But there is also a relevant point to be made here: the responsibility for how the reader thinks is entirely with the reader! Although it is my job to advise and support the reader in improving his thought processes, it is also my job to tease and trick him, toughen him up for the games ahead. So, please, stand up to me and be hard to trick.

To illustrate the problems I faced when sampling positions for this book, let us have a look at a position I found in another book with this kind of exercises.

### Mark Taimanov – Albert Kapengut

Leningrad 1969



At this point White played an attractive move, intended to be the solution to the exercise.

### 13. $\mathbb{Q}d2$

This is quite a logical move. White activates the bishop via f3 and the knight heads for c5, where it will help to put pressure on b7.

### 13... $\mathbb{E}fe8$ ?

This turns out to be rather complacent.

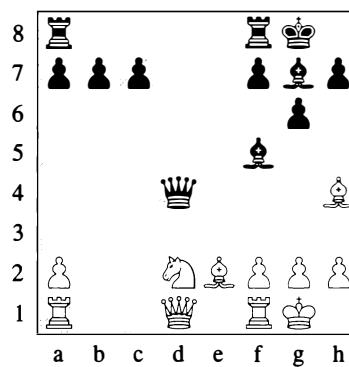
### 14. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}d7$

14...  $\mathbb{W}b5$  15.  $\mathbb{W}b3\pm$  also favours White.

### 15. $\mathbb{Q}b3\pm$

White has a fine position and won the game on move 36.

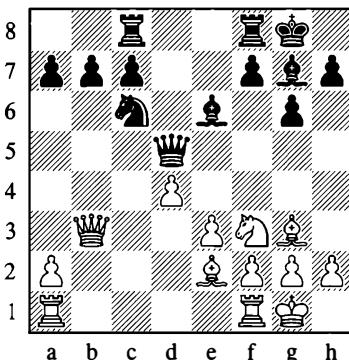
When I showed the intended solution to Sabino Brunello, he suggested: 13...  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  14.  $\mathbb{W}xd4$   $\mathbb{W}xd4$



15.  $g4$   $\mathbb{W}xa1$  16.  $\mathbb{W}xa1$   $\mathbb{Q}xg1$  17.  $\mathbb{E}xg1$   $\mathbb{E}ae8$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  He felt that this endgame was anything but clear. There is no reason to disagree with him; White might be better, but then again, maybe he is not!

When analysing this position deeply, I thought that maybe White should play 13.  $\mathbb{Q}g3?!$ , with the intention 13...  $\mathbb{E}ac8$  14.  $\mathbb{W}b3$ .

Here I failed to find anything significant after 14...  $\mathbb{E}e4!$ . White is a little better, but nothing special, as long as Black does not play 14...  $\mathbb{Q}e6?$  as actually happened in a game.



After 15.  $\mathbb{W}xd5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  16.  $\mathbb{E}fc1\pm$  White won quite nicely on move 29 in Galyas – Kaposztas, Ajka 2009. But this solution is not thoroughly convincing,

After analysing the position after 14...  $\mathbb{Q}e6?$  carefully, I came upon a less obvious idea:

15.  $\mathbb{W}b2!$

Preparing  $\mathbb{E}fc1$ . Black's main defensive idea should be:

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

But here White has:

16.  $\mathbb{W}a3!$

Preventing ...c5. Black has no active play and White is able to complete his development:

16...  $\mathbb{E}fd8$  17.  $\mathbb{E}fc1$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  18.  $\mathbb{W}c3\pm$

Black is struggling.

To make an exercise based on move 13 would not make sense. First of all, it would be too difficult to find move 15 at this distance for almost everyone. Secondly, White also has other good moves at move 13. Probably the simplest is 13.  $\mathbb{E}c1!?\pm$  as suggested by Sabino Brunello after a long think. But I really find this hard to say with certainty.

I could have made an exercise out of Galyas – Kaposztas of course, and several exercises in this book are this kind of bastardization of what I originally intended.

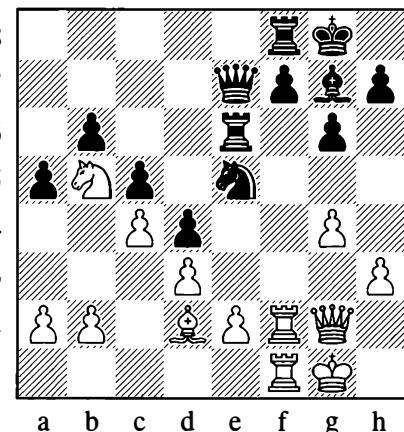
I am certain that there will be exercises in this book where the reader will find reasons to

disagree with the poor author. If that moment arises, then please remember that I have done my best and not taken any shortcuts. But chess is difficult, very difficult, and so far no serious chess book has earned the label "flawless".

## Solutions to the four exercises

### M. Gurevich – Adams

Ostend 1991



Both bishops are out of play. With his next move Black prepares to bring the g7-bishop into the game, while at the same time keeping the d2-bishop from transferring successfully to g3 via f4.

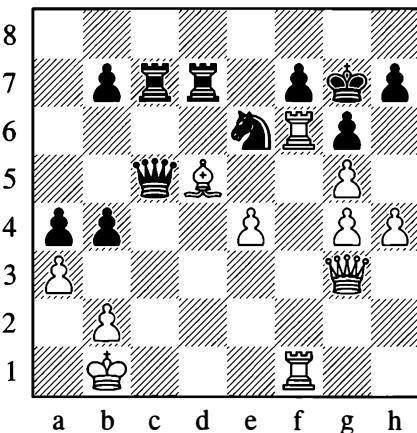
25...  $\mathbb{g}5!$

Black begins the regrouping of his bishop and knight. He now has a slight advantage, and in what follows Adams outplays his opponent impressively.

26.  $\mathbb{W}h2$   $\mathbb{h}6$  27.  $\mathbb{E}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  28.  $\mathbb{W}c7$   $\mathbb{E}xe2$   
 29.  $\mathbb{W}xe7$   $\mathbb{E}xe7$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}d6$   $\mathbb{E}e6$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}f5$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$   
 32.  $a3$   $a4$  33.  $b4$   $axb3$  34.  $\mathbb{E}b1$   $\mathbb{E}f8$  35.  $\mathbb{E}xb3$   
 $\mathbb{Q}e5$  36.  $a4$   $\mathbb{Q}f4$  37.  $a5$   $\mathbb{Q}e3\ddagger$  38.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}f4$   
 39.  $\mathbb{E}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}xd2$  40.  $\mathbb{E}xd2$   $bxa5$  41.  $\mathbb{E}b7$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$   
 42.  $\mathbb{E}a2$   $\mathbb{h}5$   
 0–1

## Aronian – Caruana

Moscow 2012

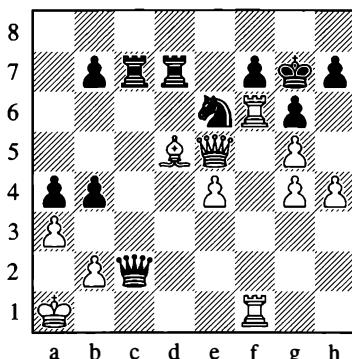


I am not sure to what extent Aronian solved this position and to what extent he decided that only one move was practical. After all, the game was approaching move 40 and time may have been in short supply.

Had this position been in *Grandmaster Preparation – Calculation*, I would probably have put it in *elimination*.

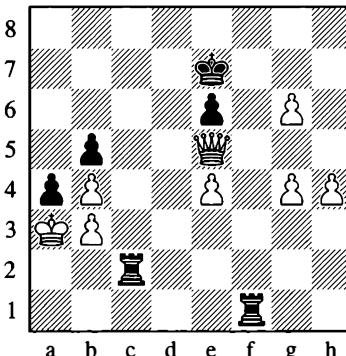
38.  $\mathbb{E}xe6??$  fails to 38...  $\mathbb{W}c2\uparrow$  39.  $\mathbb{Q}a1$   $\mathbb{E}xd5!$  40.  $\mathbb{Exd5}$   $\mathbb{W}c1\uparrow$  41.  $\mathbb{E}xc1$   $\mathbb{E}xc1\uparrow$  42.  $\mathbb{Q}a2$   $b3\uparrow$  and Black wins.

38.  $\mathbb{W}e5$   $\mathbb{W}c2\uparrow$  39.  $\mathbb{Q}a1$  is more complicated and is the only real alternative to what Aronian played.

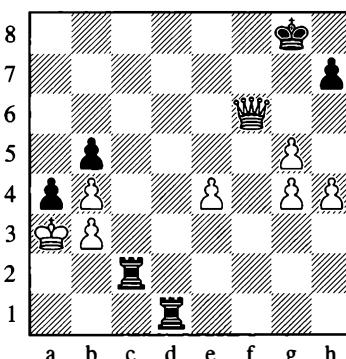


Here Black has a critical resource. If you begin to investigate it, you will quickly understand that it is nearly impossible to work out all the details.

39...  $\mathbb{W}c1\uparrow$ ! 40.  $\mathbb{E}xc1$   $\mathbb{E}xc1\uparrow$  41.  $\mathbb{Q}a2$   $\mathbb{E}xd5$  42.  $\mathbb{E}xg6\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  43.  $\mathbb{W}h8\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  44.  $\mathbb{E}xe6\uparrow$  44.  $\mathbb{axb4}$   $\mathbb{E}dd1$  44...  $\mathbb{fxe6}$  45.  $\mathbb{W}f6\uparrow$  45.  $\mathbb{axb4}$   $\mathbb{E}dd1$  46.  $b3$   $\mathbb{E}c2\uparrow$  47.  $\mathbb{Q}a3$   $b5$  48.  $\mathbb{W}xh7\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  49.  $\mathbb{W}h8\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  50.  $\mathbb{W}f6\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  51.  $\mathbb{W}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  52.  $g6$   $\mathbb{E}f1!!$  Golubev.



53.  $\mathbb{W}g5\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  54.  $\mathbb{W}d8\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  55.  $\mathbb{W}e7\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}xg6$  56.  $\mathbb{W}xe6\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  57.  $\mathbb{W}e7\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}g8=$  45...  $\mathbb{Q}e8$  46.  $\mathbb{W}xe6\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  47.  $\mathbb{axb4}$   $\mathbb{E}dd1$  48.  $\mathbb{W}f6\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  49.  $b3$   $\mathbb{E}c2\uparrow$  50.  $\mathbb{Q}a3$   $b5$

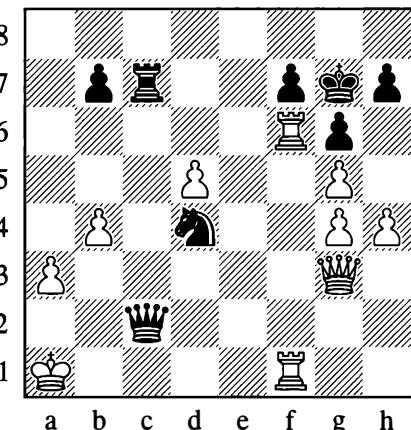


Again White cannot make progress.  
51.  $g6$   $\mathbb{hxg6}$  52.  $\mathbb{W}xg6\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$

White has nothing more than perpetual check.

Instead Aronian won the game with a nice sequence.

**38.axb4!  $\mathbb{W}c2\#$  39. $\mathbb{Q}a1$  a3 40.bxa3  $\mathbb{E}xd5$   
41.exd5  $\mathbb{Q}d4$**



**42. $\mathbb{E}xf7\#!$   $\mathbb{E}xf7$  43. $\mathbb{W}e5\#$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$**

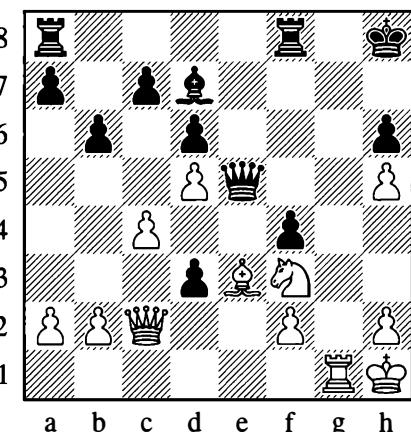
**43... $\mathbb{Q}g8$  44. $\mathbb{W}e8\#$**

**44. $\mathbb{W}b8\#$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  45. $\mathbb{E}xf7\#$   $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  46. $\mathbb{W}xb7\#$   
 $\mathbb{Q}e8$  47. $\mathbb{W}b8\#$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  48. $\mathbb{W}a7\#$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  49. $\mathbb{W}xd4$   
 $\mathbb{W}c1\#$  50. $\mathbb{Q}a2$   $\mathbb{W}c2\#$  51. $\mathbb{W}b2$   $\mathbb{W}c4\#$  52. $\mathbb{Q}a1$   
 $\mathbb{W}xg4$  53. $\mathbb{W}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  54. $\mathbb{W}c5\#$**

**1–0**

### Petrosian – Spassky

Moscow (12) 1966



This example is a lot harder, which is underlined by the fact that the World Champion failed to get it right in his otherwise successful title defence match. Admittedly, Petrosian was not famous for his tactical abilities, but as World Champion you cannot be entirely clueless either!

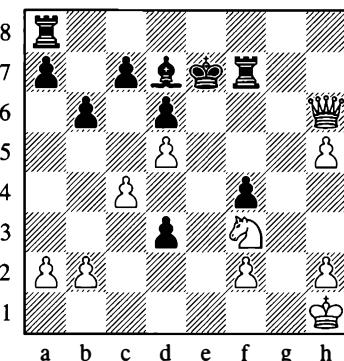
**32. $\mathbb{Q}xe5?$**

It is possible that this was played under the influence of time trouble. In such a case it is understandable that Petrosian chose to bale out with a perpetual, even if it was not the strongest continuation.

Let's have a look at some of the alternatives.

**32. $\mathbb{W}d1?$**  also does not leave White with anything special: 32... $\mathbb{W}xe3$  33. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{W}xe5$  34. $\mathbb{W}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}g4!$  and White's advantage is negligible.

**32. $\mathbb{W}c1?$**  was a serious option. The critical line goes: 32... $\mathbb{W}e7$  33. $\mathbb{Q}d4\#$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  34. $\mathbb{E}g7\#$   $\mathbb{W}xg7$  35. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$   $\mathbb{Q}xg7$  36. $\mathbb{W}g1\#$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  37. $\mathbb{W}g6\#$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  38. $\mathbb{W}xh6$   $\mathbb{E}f7$



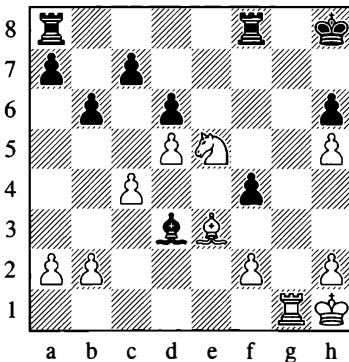
White can get this sort of advantage in several ways, but it is not entirely clear-cut. Still, it is better than what Petrosian did in the game.

The winning line was:  
**32. $\mathbb{W}xd3!$   $\mathbb{Q}f5$  33. $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$**

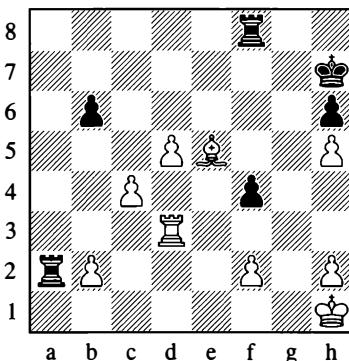
Again it was possible to win the queen with 33.♕e2 fxe3 34.♗xe5 exf2 35.♗g2 ♜ae8 36.♗xf2 ♜xe5, but I do not feel that this guarantees a win for White, despite his obvious advantage.

33...♝xd3

This is the point where you had to spot the right idea to solve the puzzle. White wins with a series of windmill checks.



34.♔d4! dxе5 35.♔xe5† ♔h7 36.♗g7† ♔h8  
37.♗xc7† ♔g8 38.♗g7† ♔h8 39.♗xa7† ♔g8  
40.♗g7† ♔h8 41.♗g3† ♔h7 42.♗xd3 ♜xa2



43.d6 ♜a5 44.♔c3 ♜af5 45.♔d4

The bishop is not really inferior to the rooks in this endgame; but the two extra pawns are most useful.

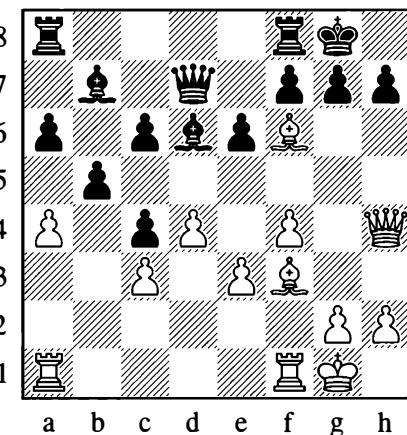
32...dxс2 33.♔d4 dxе5 34.♔xe5† ♔h7  
35.♗g7† ♔h8 36.♗f7† ♔g8 37.♗g7† ♔h8  
38.♗g6† ♔h7 39.♗g7†  
½–½

## Cramling – Shen Yang

Istanbul 2009

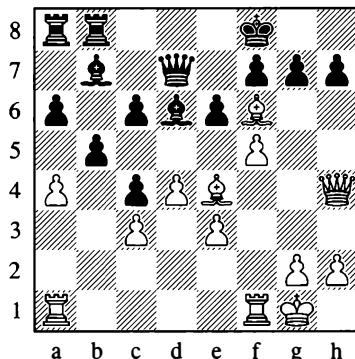
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♗f3 ♜f6 4.♗c3 e6 5.♗g5  
dxc4 6.a4 ♜b4 7.e3 b5 8.♗e2 ♜b7 9.0–0  
a6 10.♗e5 ♜bd7 11.f4 ♛c7 12.♗f3 ♜d5  
13.♗e1 ♜xc3 14.bxc3 ♜d6 15.♗h4 0–0  
16.♗xd7 ♜xd7 17.♗f6!!

I have a small confession to make. This game can also be found in *Attacking Manual 2*. I do not usually perpetrate such “green” writing, but you are allowed a bit of latitude in the introduction...



17...♗fe8!

This is the only square for the rook. If it goes elsewhere it will be sorely missed on the e-file. For example: 17...♗fb8 18.♔e4 ♜f8 19.f5!

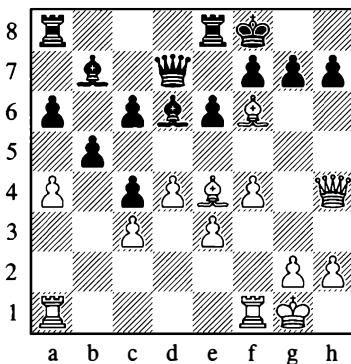


Black is busted, for instance 19...gxf6 20.fxe6 ♜xe6 21.♕xf6 and the attack runs straight through.

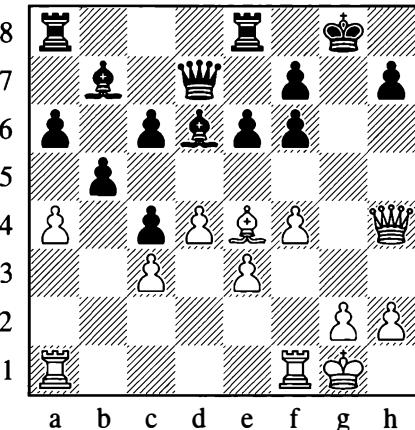
### 18.♔e4 gxf6?

An understandable error. Some commentators missed that Black could save the day, even though they were undoubtedly checking the game with a computer. The reason for this is simple: the engines start off with the text move as drawing and when it turns out that this is a fallacy, it is easy to forget that it gave a second option as playable at this point.

18...♚f8!! was the only move. The black king tries to escape the killing zone. White now has several options, but none of them are devastating.



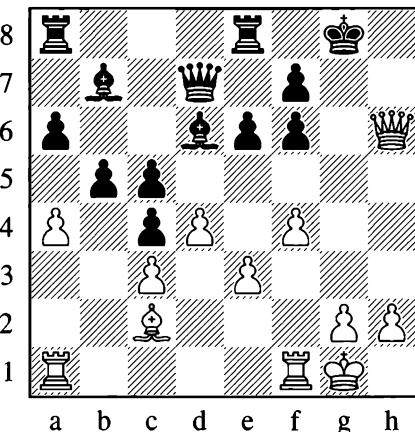
19.♔e5 h6 leads to an unclear game. So does 19.♗xg7† ♕xg7 20.♕xh7† ♔f8 21.♗g6 ♜c7! 22.f5 f6 23.♗h8† ♔e7 24.♗xe8 ♜xe8 25.♗g7† ♔d8 26.♗xf6† ♔c8, while a draw can be agreed after 19.f5 gxf6 20.♗xf6 ♔c7 21.♗h4 exf5 22.♗h6† ♔e7 23.♗h4† ♔f8.



### 19.♗h6!

The point of the sacrifice. The black king no longer escape the killing zone. Mate follows effortlessly.

19...c5 20.♗xh7† ♔h8 21.♗c2†  
22.♗h7† ♔h8 23.♗c2† ♔g8



24.♗f3! ♜xf3 25.gxf3 cxd4 26.♗h1  
1-0



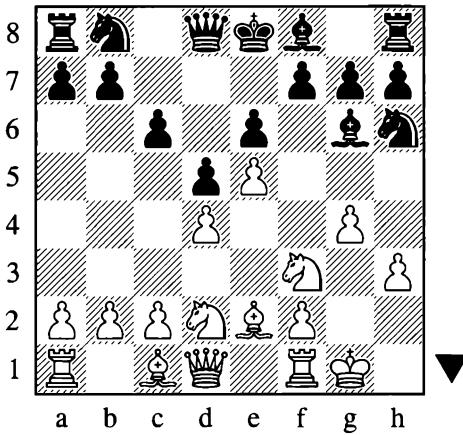
# Chapter 1

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## Squares

Alexei Shirov – Dragan Solak

Novi Sad 2009



*Black to play*

Black played a very original move that his opponent could hardly have expected.

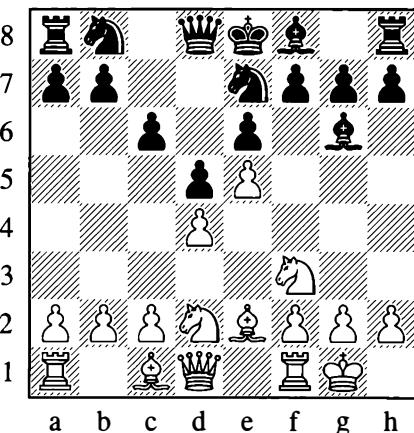
The 28 exercises in this chapter all have something to do with squares, be it as weaknesses, as strongpoints, or in some other way. It is quite easy to say some general things about weaknesses, but this is hardly the right time and place to do so. Rather I would like to give two examples where a fight for specific squares helped shape the game.

The first example is quite classical. Black provokes his opponent into advancing his pawns, judging that this will weaken rather than strengthen White's position. Taking the identity of his opponent into consideration, this was a monumental gamble.

### Alexei Shirov – Dragan Solak

Novi Sad 2009

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♜f5 4.♘f3 e6 5.♗e2 ♜e7 6.0-0 ♜g6 7.♗bd2



7...♝f5

This had previously been seen as a way to transfer the knight to h4 in order to exchange it; essentially to create more space for the rest of the black pieces. But in this game Solak had a different idea.

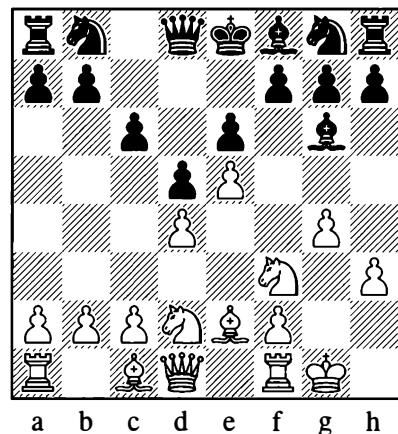
8.g4

Shirov most likely played this without hesitation.

8...♞h6!?

A remarkable idea; the knight expends more time.

9.h3 ♞g8!!



This is the entire point of Solak's play. The knight has made four moves and has returned to its place of origin. But unlike many other lines where White plays g2-g4, the knight is not poorly placed, nor does it cause Black troubles in any other way. Next comes ...h5, opening up the h-file for the rook. White has to waste time reacting to this. If Black is allowed to play ...h5 and ...hxg4 unchallenged, he can then attack the g4-pawn with ...♞h6. White would then be faced with a horrible choice: either to play g4-g5, giving Black eternal control over the light squares on the kingside, spelling positional ruin for White; or to move the knight and allow ...♛h4, which looks deeply unpleasant. If executed correctly, perhaps with ...♝xg4 or ...♞f5 first, it could even lead to a decisive attack.

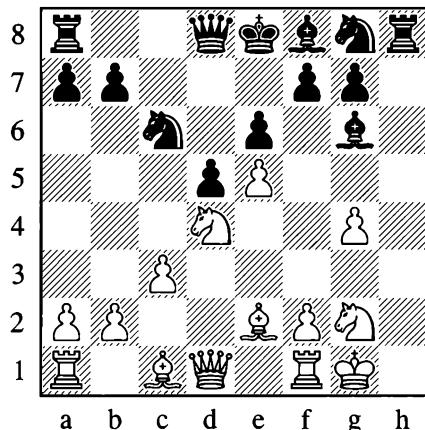
10.♘e1

The knight heads to g2, where it can defend the h4-square while keeping the g-pawn protected.

**10...h5 11.Qg2 hxg4 12.hxg4 c5 13.c3**

13.f4? cxd4 14.f5 does not work on account of 14...d3! and the tables are turned.

**13...Qc6 14.Qf3 cxd4 15.Qxd4**



**15...Qc5**

15...Qge7?! also looks good. In any case, it is obvious that the opening has certainly not been a disaster for Black. The game eventually ended in a draw after lots of complications, in which White definitely had his chances.

But what should we think about this idea? It is really hard to tell. Shirov later repeated his play with White and was clearly ready to risk being worse (as the computer says he is); maybe because the first game had gone well up to a point, or maybe because the play fits his style perfectly. After all, no one really navigates chaos the way Shirov does...

In the next example Black sets up a structure which involves controlling the b4- and c5-squares, but in the process he weakens the b5-square and thus allows White to put strong pressure on d6 and c7. Mamedyarov's initial exploitation of this feature is fabulous, but after he successfully destroys the black centre, it all descends into chaos, tactics and what appears to have been desperate time trouble.

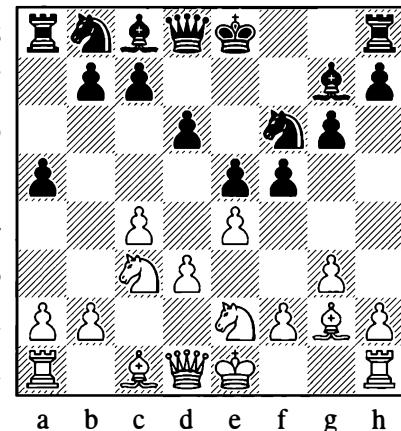
**Shakhriyar Mamedyarov – Krishnan Sasikiran**

Sofia 2007

**1.c4 e5 2.g3 d6 3.Qg2 g6 4.Qc3 Qg7 5.d3 f5 6.e4 Qf6 7.Qge2 a5?**

This is quite a reckless move. In 1996 I showed a game of mine to Bent Larsen. My opponent had made a similarly inflexible move, deciding on a pawn structure before it was necessary, giving me the chance to position myself advantageously. I did not intellectually understand this at the time, it just felt odd. Bent shook his head immediately and said: "This not only loses a tempo, it also weakens the e3-square."

In this case the same can be said of Sasikiran's move, except the weakening is of the b5-square.



White has the chance to change the pawn structure in a way that benefits him in the long term. Black is not developed enough to make dynamic use of his fluid pawn structure.

**8.exf5! gxf5**

8...Qxf5 does not look serious to me. Black would not have enough compensation for the pawn in any reality...

**9.d4 0–0 10.Qg5 We8**

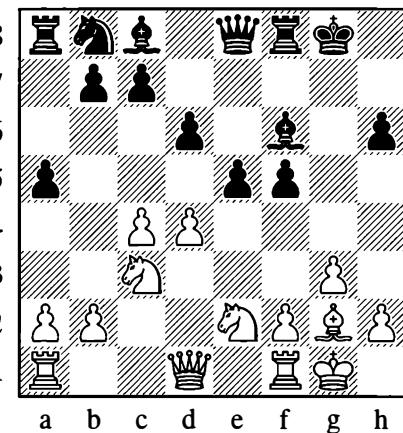
Quite a quirky move. Black is already behind in development, but in this phase he neglects it even further.

### 11.0–0 h6

This not only loses time, it also seriously weakens the black king's position. The upside is supposed to be gaining the bishop pair (if we choose to forget that 12.♗h4?! is a perfectly sensible move). But this is not enough. Black is already too far behind in development to waste further time. He might have two bishops, but the c8-bishop has nowhere to go... I think the real problem is that Sasikiran could not find a good move!

After 11...♝c6 12.♝b5! Black would have to play more artificial moves in order to keep his position together.

### 12.♝xf6 ♜xf6



### 13.c5!!

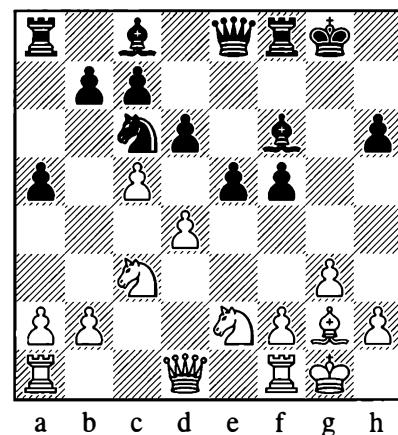
This deep move compromises the black structure considerably and is very strong.

13.♝d2 ♜g7 14.♜ae1 looked more natural to me and it took a while for me to understand that I was quite simply wrong. Mamedyarov correctly understood that he should use his lead in development to benefit structurally.

Also, I am not entirely sure how well White would fare in a game with a fluid structure in the centre after something like 14...c6?!. He is better, but how much?

### 13...♝c6

13...dxc5 14.♝d5 ♜d8 15.dxe5 ♜xe5 16.♞ef4± would give a very strong initiative.

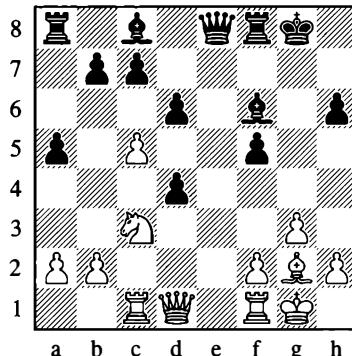


### 14.♝b5?!

#### 14.♜c1!

This would have been even stronger, including the rook in the game before deciding what direct action to take. I really cannot see a decent option for Black. In particular, I do not think he would prosper from direct action:

14...♞xd4 15.♝xd4 exd4

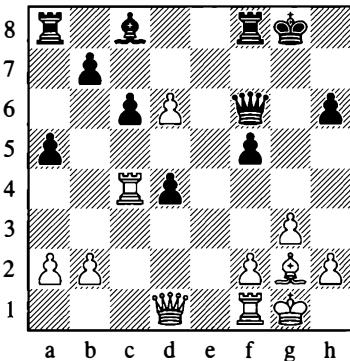


16.♝d5 ♜f7 17.cxd6 c6

Forced; after 17...cxd6? 18.Qc7 White wins.  
18.Qxf6†

The knight would also be well placed on c7, but this leads to a very safe and clear advantage.

18...Qxf6 19.Qc4±

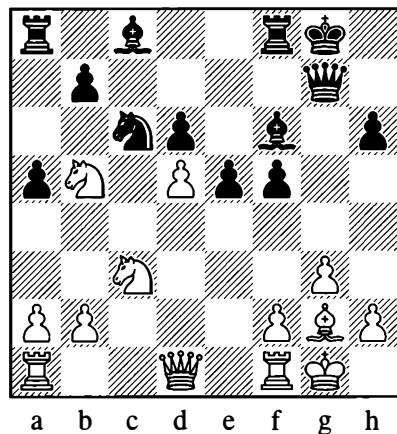


White has the better structure and a lead in development; his advantage is beyond question.

**14...Qe7?!**

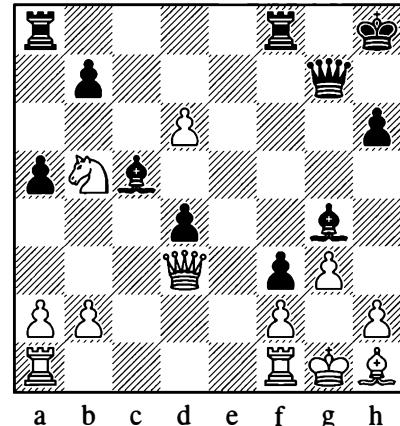
14...Qd8!± would have been better. Sasikiran's sacrifice of the d6-pawn is rather reckless.

**15.Qec3 Qg7 16.cxd6 cxd6 17.d5**



White's advantage is quite obvious; nevertheless, the game goes on.

17...Qd4 18.Qxd4! exd4 19.Qb5 f4  
20.Qxd6 Qg4 21.Qd3 Qe7 22.Qb5 f3?  
23.Qh1 Qc5 24.d6 Qh8  
24...Qac8 25.Qad1 Qf6 26.Qfe1± and White is in control.



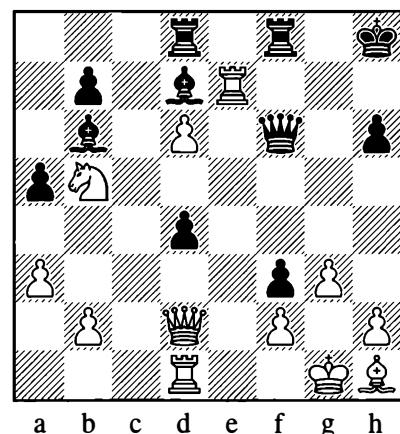
**25.Qad1?!**

25.Qael! was stronger, though slightly artificial. White has a clear advantage after 25...Qf5 26.Qc4 Qac8 27.Qe7 Qf6 28.Qd5±, although the position is not totally under control.

**25...Qad8?**

25...Qae8!± was a better defence. The main tactical point is 26.Qxd4 Qh3!.

**26.a3 Qb6 27.Qfe1 Qf5 28.Qd2 Qf6 29.Qe7 Qd7**



**30.♕de1??**

This looks quite natural, but is actually a big blunder, giving away more or less all of the advantage.

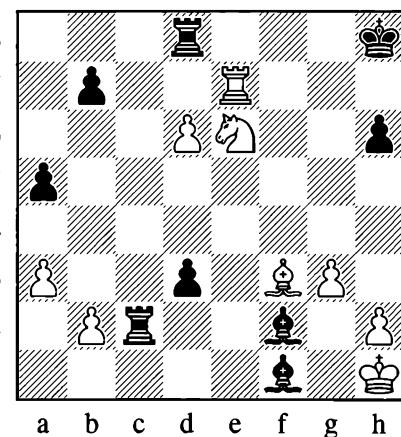
30.♕c7! would have kept the advantage. Black is struggling to find a good move, as 30...♗xd6? 31.♖e6! would tear him apart.

**30...♗g5! 31.♗d3 ♗f5 32.♗d2 ♗g5 33.♗c2 ♗f5 34.♗xf5 ♗xf5 35.♕c7† d3 36.♗d1 ♗c5 37.♗xf3 ♗c2 38.♗f1!?**

I am not sure why Mamedyarov thought it was so important to defend the f2-pawn.

After 38.♗d5 ♗xf2† 39.♔h1 ♗c6 40.♗xd3 White would have the better side of a likely draw.

**38...♔h3 39.♕e6 ♗xf2† 40.♔h1 ♗xf1**

**41.d7??**

What a horrible move! It was absolutely necessary to play 41.♗xd8 ♗c1 42.♔f7†, when Black has to allow a perpetual check on account of 42...♔g7?? 43.♕e5† leading to mate in five more moves.

**41...♗g8**

41...♗g2†!! also won, but the text move is a simple way to end the game.

**0–1**

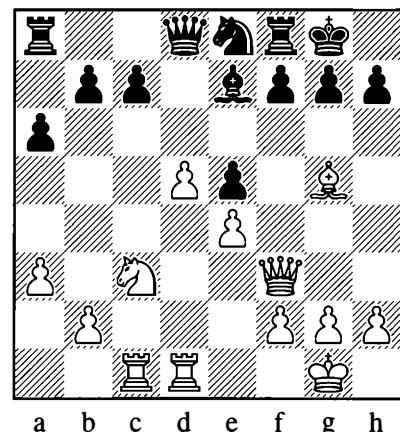
I am not sure if these two examples will have made you any wiser, but if not, then at least I hope they have offered their own fascination.



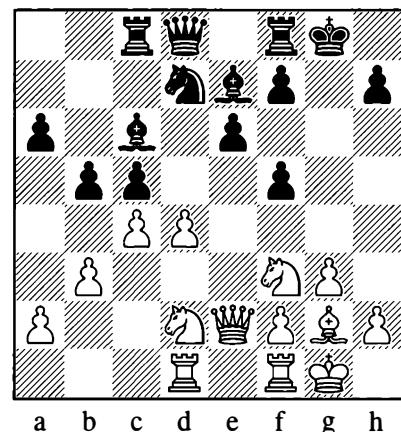
Ivanisevic – Miladinovic, Mataruska Banja 2007

Ponomariov – Morozevich, Moscow 2001

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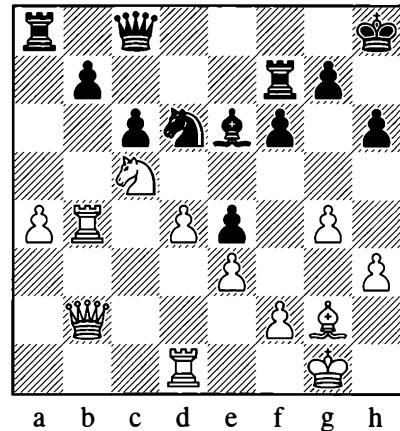
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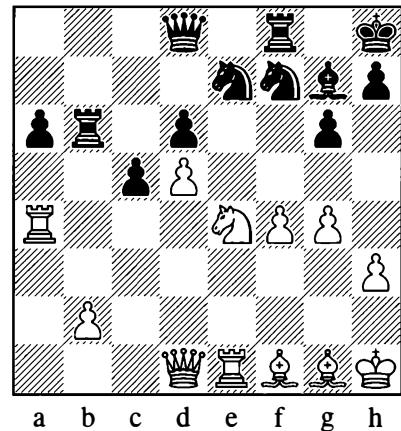
Aronian – Karjakin, Amber (rapid) 2008

Shankland – Bryant, Fremont 2012

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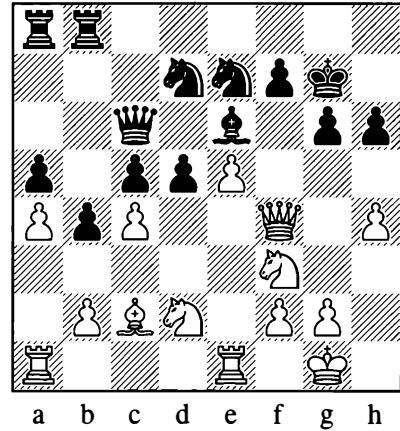
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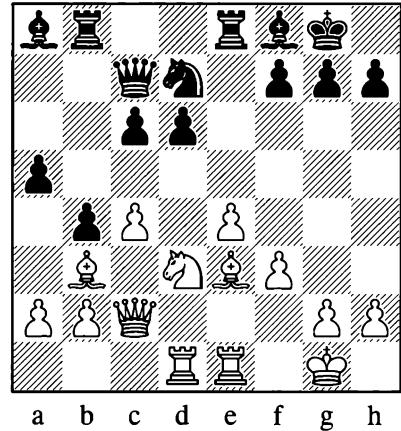
Efimenko – Short, Mukachevo (2) 2009

Leko – Mamedyarov, Wijk aan Zee 2008

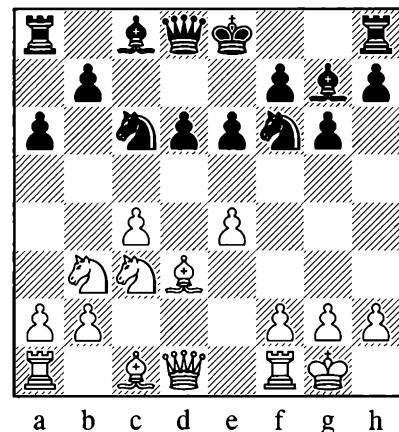
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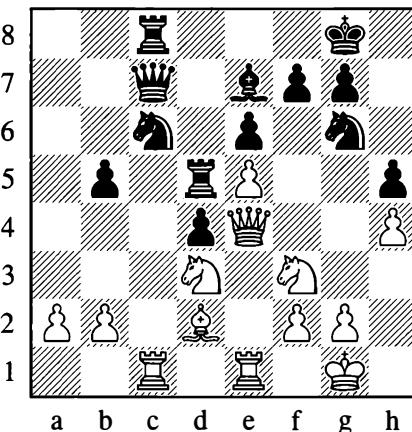
Karjakin – Bacrot, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007



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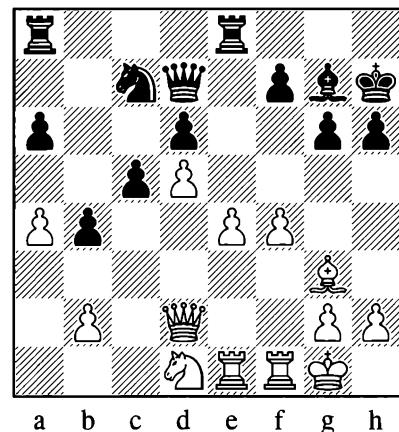
Motylev – Maletin, Olginka 2011



10



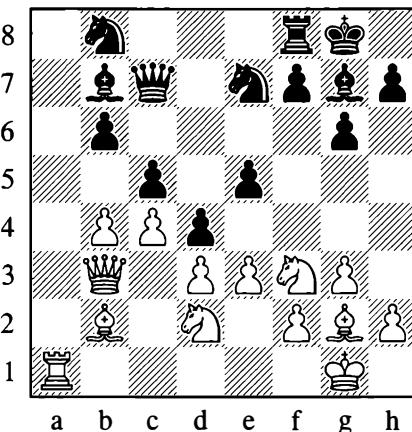
Eljanov – Radjabov, Wijk aan Zee 2008



8



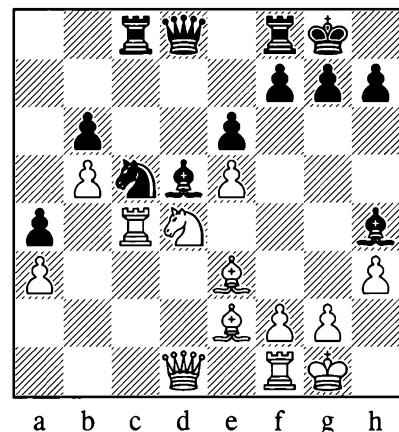
Gulko – P. Nikolic, Reykjavik 1991



11



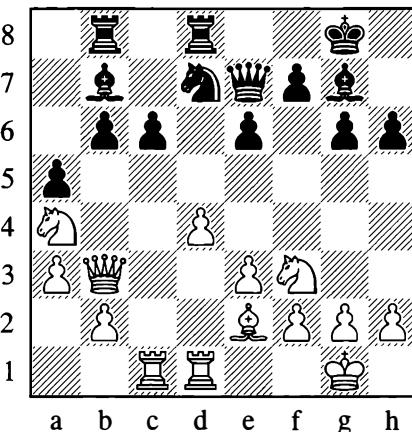
Adams – Monroy, Gibraltar 2011



9



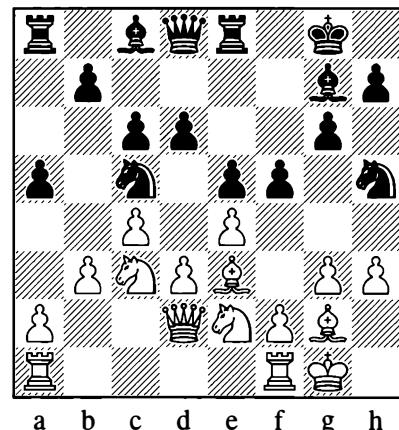
Obolenskikh – Sjugirov, Moscow 2012



12

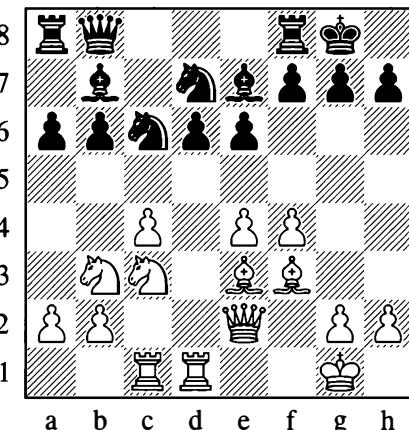


Bilek – Ciocaltea, Skopje (ol) 1972



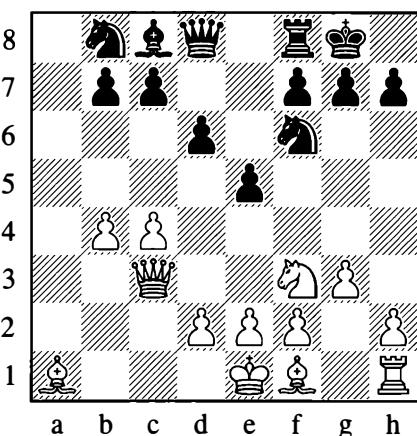
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Gelfand – Papaioannou, Leon 2001



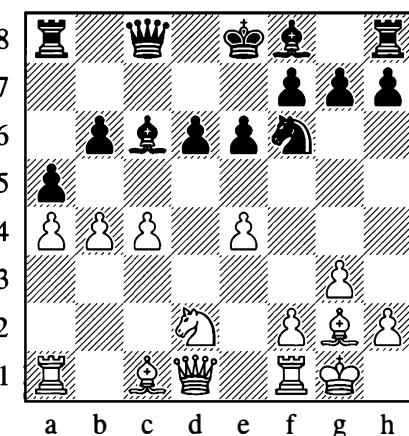
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Kramnik – Ivanchuk, Monte Carlo 2007



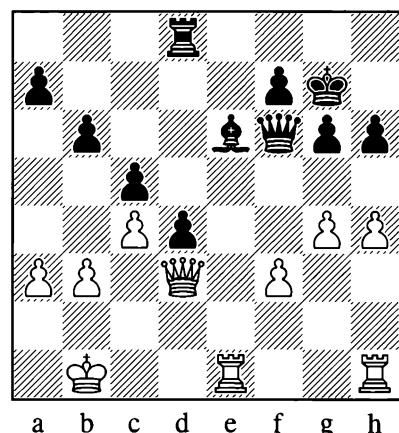
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Milos – Mekhitarian, Sao Paulo 2006



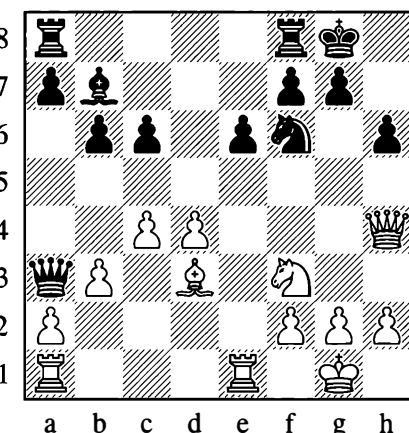
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Dobrov – Bartel, Moscow 2012



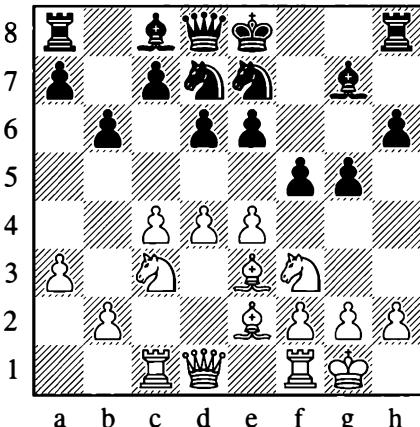
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Cvetkovic – Miljkovic, Serbia 2008

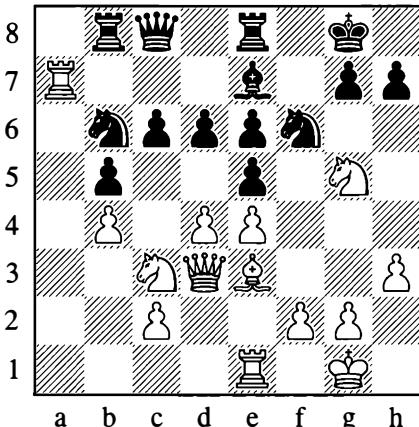


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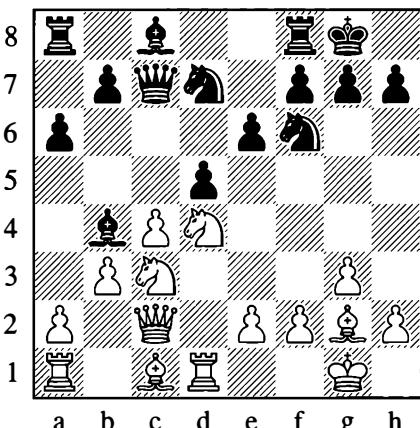
Baburin – McShane, Kilkenny 2002



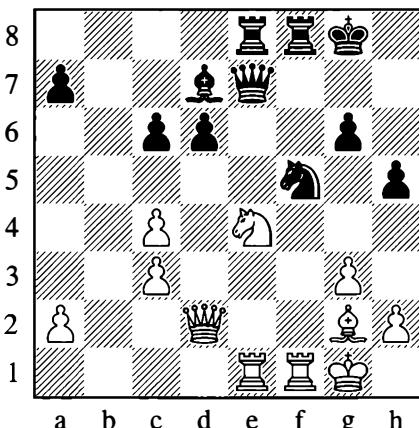
Caruana – Hautot, Novi Sad 2009



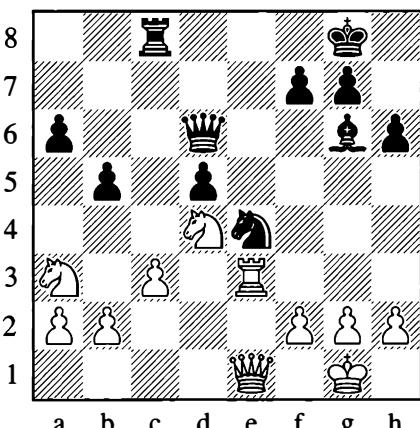
Aronian – Ponomariov, Wijk aan Zee 2007



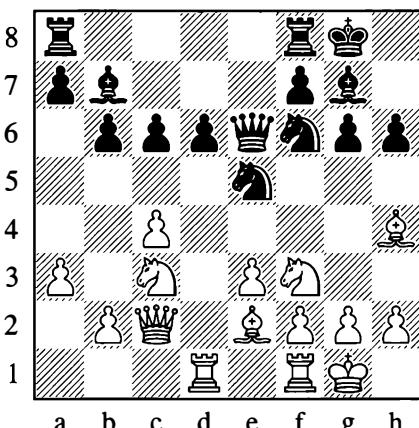
Korchnoi – Polugaevsky, Leningrad 1963



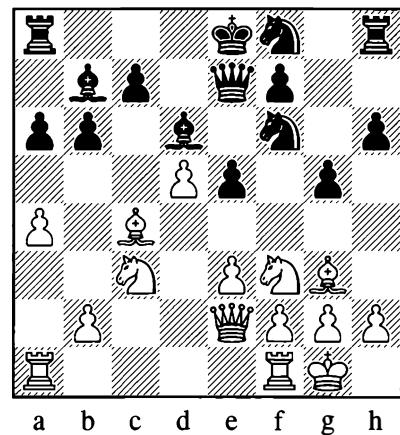
Tiviakov – Granda Zuniga, El Sauzal 2008



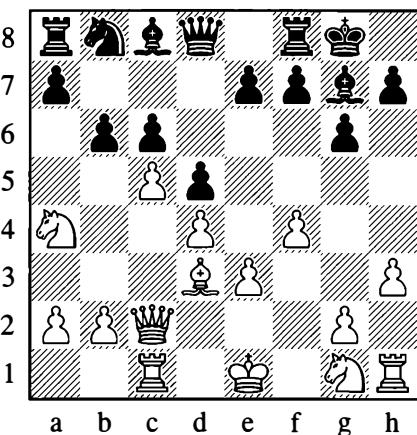
Gelfand – Chandler, Moscow 1990



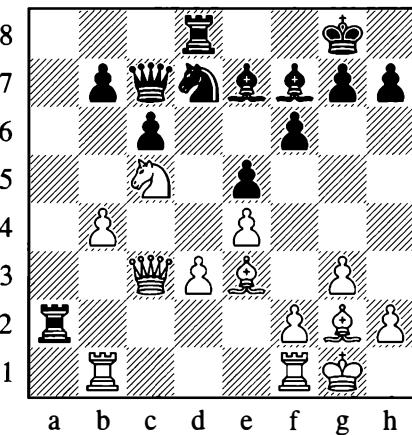
Ding Liren – Ipatov, Athens 2012



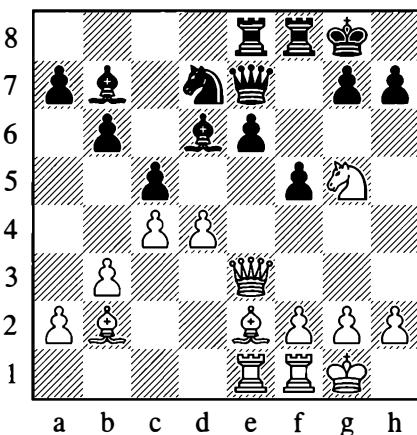
Wang Yue – Carlsen, Nanjing 2009



Marin – De La Villa Garcia, Benasque 2010



Gajewski – Gustafsson, Dresden 2008

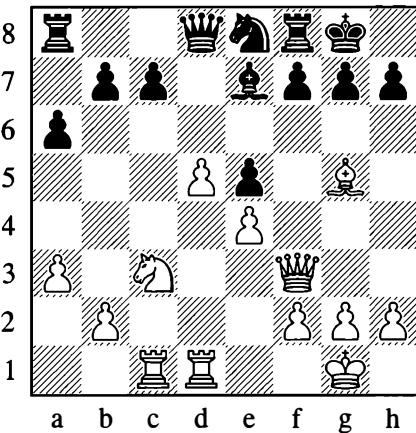


27

28

## 1. Ivanisevic – Miladinovic

Mataruska Banja 2007



White's main advantage is a lead in development. All of his pieces are active and could not be placed much better, maybe with the exception of the knight.

**18... $\mathbb{Q}xe7$   $\mathbb{W}xe7$  19.d6!**

White is very slightly better after 19. $\mathbb{Q}a4$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  20. $\mathbb{Q}c5\pm$ , but I would expect Black to draw this position with good play, as White lacks targets. Still, this was an interesting option as well.

**19...cx d6**

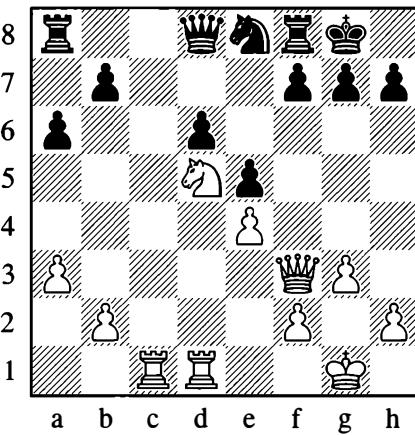
19... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$  20. $\mathbb{Q}d5$  leads to a clear advantage in various lines. This should be quite apparent, so there is no need to go into details.

**20. $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $\mathbb{W}d8$**

White has obvious positional compensation. The knight on d5 is beautiful and it will take some time and pain to remove it. Until this happens it is not easy for Black to get his pieces into play. For this reason White has time to strengthen his position slowly.

**21.g3!**

21. $\mathbb{E}c3\text{?}$  was more direct, and also good for White.



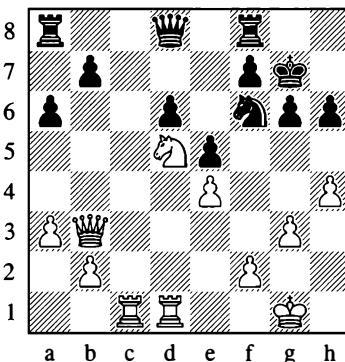
**21...g6 22.h4 h6 23. $\mathbb{W}e3$ ?**

White seems to lose his grip around here and starts playing without a real plan. There was still room for improvement in his position. He could for example have played 23. $\mathbb{W}b3$  immediately, or 23. $\mathbb{E}c4$  with the intention of doubling the rooks on the c-file, or the aggressive 23.h5! to create weaknesses in the black position.

The extent of the advantage is always debatable in this kind of position, as it is not so easy to penetrate the black position; and White is actually a pawn down...

**23... $\mathbb{Q}g7$  24. $\mathbb{W}b3$   $\mathbb{E}b8$ ?**

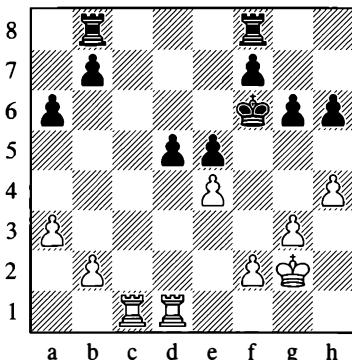
24... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ ! was the chance to get back in the game.



**25. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$   $\mathbb{W}xf6$  26. $\mathbb{E}c7\pm$**

**25. $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  26. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$   $\mathbb{W}xf6$  27. $\mathbb{W}b6$   $\mathbb{E}fc8$**

27...d5?! 28.♗xf6† ♕xf6



29.♗xd5 ♜bc8 would give Black real drawing chances in the endgame arising after 30.♗xc8 ♜xc8 31.♗d7 b5! 32.♗d6† ♔e7 33.♗xa6 b4!.

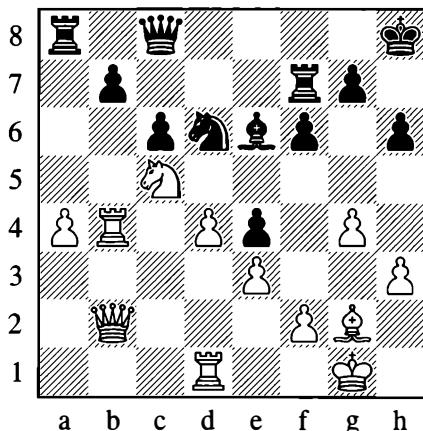
But I still fancy White's chances after 34.h5!, creating an additional weakness on the kingside.

**28.♗xd6±**

White won after further inaccuracies by both players.

## 2. Aronian – Karjakin

Amber (rapid) 2008

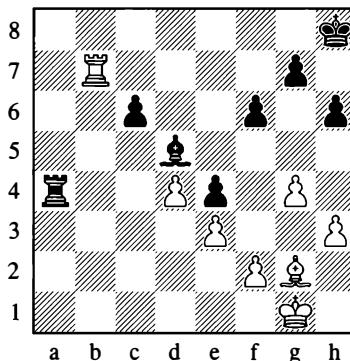


This position is about structure. The black bishop on e6 is not a great piece, whereas the white knight on c5 is. However, to be able

to create targets in the black position, White needs to exchange the good knight for the less impressive bishop.

**29.♘xe6!**

29.♗b1!? looks attractive, but it gives Black the chance to play 29...♔d5! 30.♗xb7 ♘xb7 31.♗xb7 ♜xb7 32.♗xb7 ♘xb7 33.♗xb7 ♜xa4.



Black has fair chances of holding the ending, even though his bishop is little more than a big pawn.

**29...♗xe6 30.d5!**

The point! The pawn on c6 was keeping Black's structure together, mainly by keeping the position closed. Once it is opened up, the knight on d6 lacks stability and the pawns on e4 and b7 quickly become serious weaknesses.

**30...cxd5 31.♗d2!**

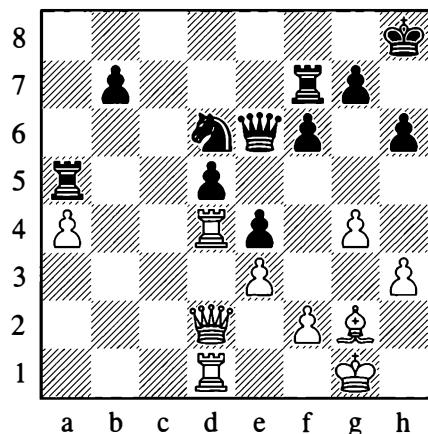
An accurate move.

31.♗bd4? ♜c7 32.♗xd5 ♘f7± would not be too damaging to Black.

**31...♗a5**

This loses in a fairly straightforward manner, but the alternatives were grim. For example: 31...♗e7 32.♗xd5 ♜xd5 33.♗xd5 ♜a6 34.♗dd4± and White should be able to win the resulting rook ending, although it will require good technical play.

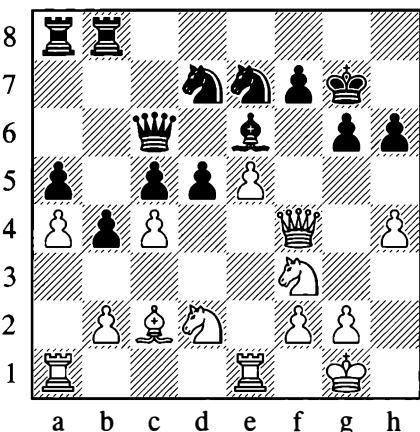
**32.♗d4!±**



32...b6 33.♗xd5 ♗b7 34.♗xa5 bxa5 35.♗c2  
 ♗5 36.gxf5 ♗xf5 37.♗xe4 ♗g5† 38.♗g2  
 ♗d8 39.♗d5 ♗f6 40.♗xa5 ♗f8 41.♗a8  
 ♗a1† 42.♗f1 ♗a3 43.♗d2 ♗c6 44.♗xf8†  
 ♗xf8 45.♗d5 ♗f6 46.♗g2 ♗a1† 47.♗h2  
 ♗e5 48.♗d4 ♗xd4 49.♗xd4 ♗c4 50.♗g3 g5  
 51.♗g4  
 1–0

### 3. Efimenko – Short

Mukachevo (2) 2009



If White had the chance to make just one more move, it would be to play b2-b3 to consolidate the queenside and take full

control over the c4-square. He would then follow up with ♗d3 before turning his focus to the kingside. White's advantage would be considerable.

Black has a little more space on the queenside and would desperately hate this scenario. For this reason he has only one choice.

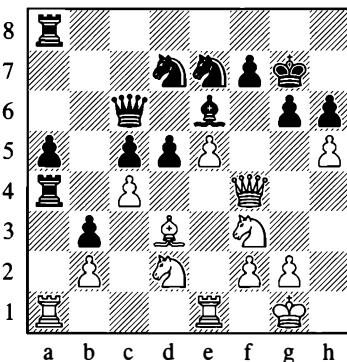
**24...b3!**

This pawn sacrifice is the only way for Black to keep level chances.

**25.♗xb3?!**

A committal decision. White does not want to give away the b4-square without getting something in return – a pawn.

The alternative is 25.♗d3 ♗b4 26.h5 ♗xa4.



This leads to wildly unclear play with chances for both sides. White obviously is not without chances on the kingside, but by winning the a-pawn, Black has managed to create chances of his own on the queenside.

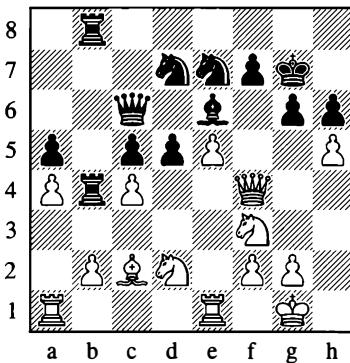
**25...♗b4**

Black clearly has compensation for the pawn; the rook is very difficult to dislodge from b4 and White will find it very difficult in practice to cope with this.

**26.cxd5?!**

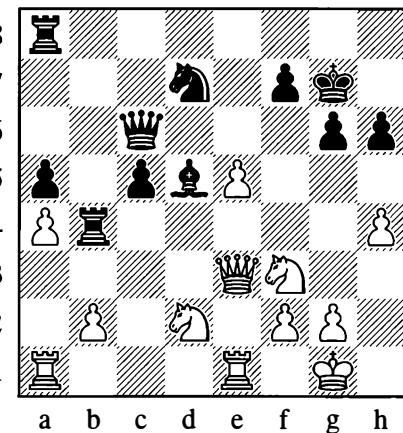
I do not like this decision at all.

Better was 26.h5!, when the position is entirely unclear. e.g. 26... $\mathbb{E}ab8$  27. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ , when White is focusing on his chances on the kingside.



Black should play 27... $dxc4!$  with approximate equality, as after 27... $\mathbb{E}xb2$  28. $\mathbb{E}ac1$  White would have the initiative. Black should already be thinking about giving up the exchange to get rid of the dangerous bishop on c2.

**26... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  27. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  28. $\mathbb{W}e3$**



**28... $\mathbb{Q}f8!$**

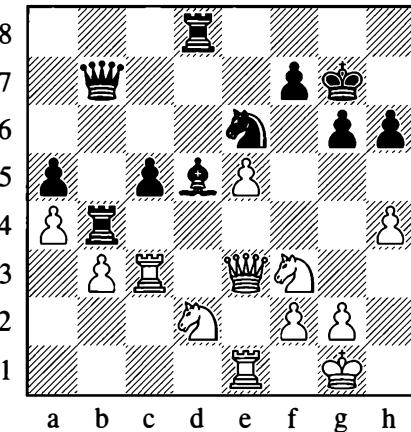
This might not be the only objectively good move, but I like the thinking a lot. The poorly-placed knight on d7 is transferred to e6, where it will have access to lots of great squares. White keeps his extra pawn, but Black keeps control of the game.

White was most likely intending to meet 28... $\mathbb{E}xa4$  with 29. $\mathbb{W}c3$ , when the queen has the queenside under control and the chances are about equal.

**29.b3  $\mathbb{Q}e6$  30. $\mathbb{E}ac1$   $\mathbb{W}b7$  31. $\mathbb{E}c3$**

31.h5!?

**31... $\mathbb{E}d8$**

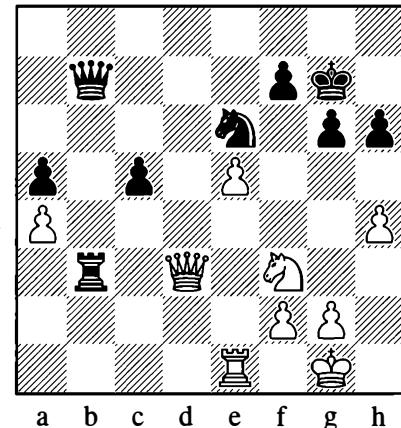


Black clearly has the easier task, but White is still in the game. Maybe 32.g3 was a sensible move here. Instead White fell for a tactic:

**32. $\mathbb{E}d3?$   $\mathbb{Q}xf3!$  33. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$**

33.gxf3  $\mathbb{E}xd3$  34. $\mathbb{W}xd3$   $\mathbb{E}d4$  and ... $\mathbb{W}d5$  is even more unpleasant.

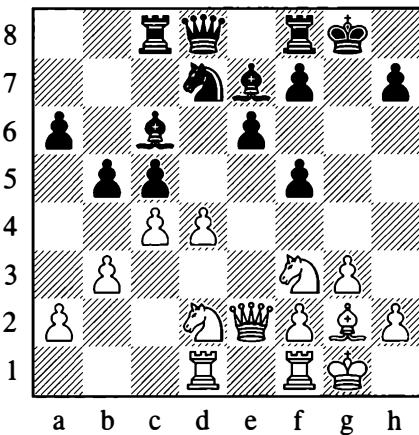
**33... $\mathbb{E}xd3$  34. $\mathbb{W}xd3$   $\mathbb{E}xb3$**



White has lost the extra pawn and all arguments for his position. Short converted his advantage on move 52.

#### 4. Ponomariov – Morozевич

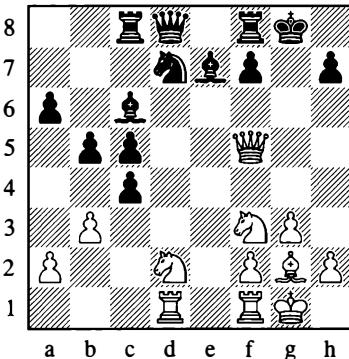
Moscow (1) 2001



White has a rare chance to strike at the black centre. Blowing it apart might cost a pawn in the short term, but it gives Black structural problems he will not easily recover from.

**17.d5! exd5 18.♗d3 bxc4**

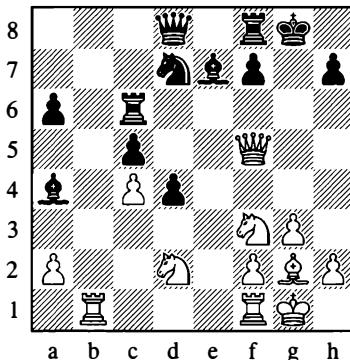
18...dxc4 19.♗xf5 looks dangerous:



For example: 19...c3 20.♘e4 forces Black to play 20...♗xe4 21.♗xe4 ♘f6 22.♗e5 ♗c7 23.♗xc3±, when the weakened black king is a critical long-term issue.

**19.bxc4 ♗a4 20.♗b1 dxc4?!**

20...d4?! 21.♗xf5 ♘c6 was probably the best chance.



White is better, but Black can hope that the d4-pawn counts for something in the long run.

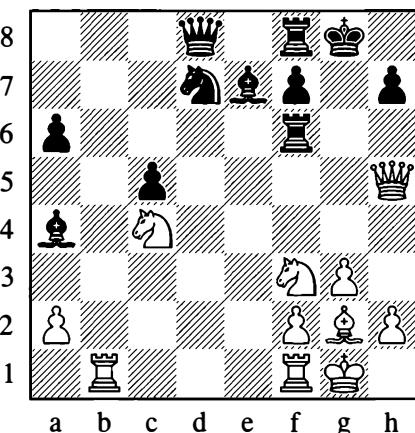
**21.♗xf5!**

Regaining the material without letting go of the advantage.

**21...♘c6**

21...c3 22.♗g4† would pick up the bishop and leave White with a solid positional plus.

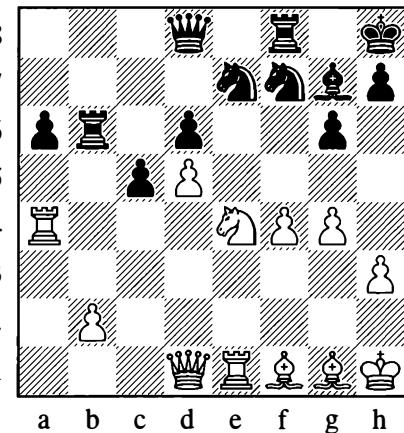
**22.♗xc4 ♘f6 23.♗h5±**



White's advantage is evident. He won on move 60.

## 5. Shankland – Bryant

Fremont 2012

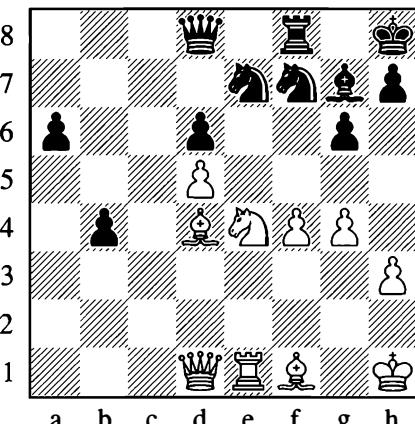


White has the advantage after normal moves such as 29.b3, but he can use his opponent's inability to defend himself properly on the dark squares with a simple punch:

**29.b4!  $\mathbb{B}xb4$**

There is no real alternative to this.

**30. $\mathbb{B}xb4$   $cxb4$  31. $\mathbb{Q}d4$**



The point; Black is under direct attack.

**31... $\mathbb{E}g8$**

This is the only way to avoid  $\mathbb{Q}xg7\#$  followed by  $\mathbb{W}d4\#$  and  $\mathbb{Q}f6\#$ .

**32. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$**

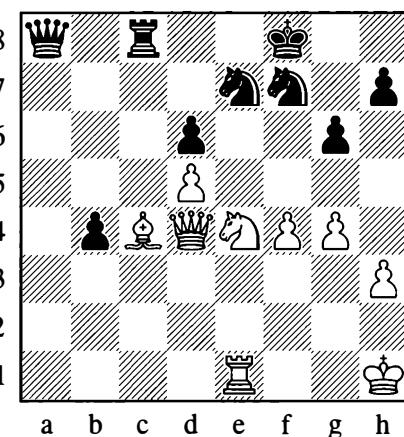
A simple move that does not change things. White is just winning.

32. $\mathbb{Q}f6$  with the idea of  $\mathbb{W}a1$  next is also okay. Black can try 32... $\mathbb{Q}f5?$  33. $\mathbb{Q}xg8$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  34. $\mathbb{Q}e7$  a5, but White should be winning here. Still, Shankland must have decided that there was no reason to give Black even an illusion of counterplay with the a-pawn.

**32... $\mathbb{W}a8$**

32...h5 33. $\mathbb{Q}g2$  does little to improve Black's position. White is on his way with  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  and  $\mathbb{W}a1$  all the same.

**33. $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{E}c8$  34. $\mathbb{Q}xg7\#$   $\mathbb{Q}xg7$  35. $\mathbb{W}d4\#$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$**



**36. $\mathbb{Q}f6?!$**

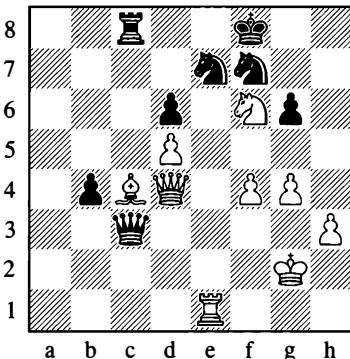
36. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$  wins because 36... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$  37. $\mathbb{W}f6\#$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  38. $\mathbb{E}xe7$  leads to mate, so Black has nothing better than a lost ending after 36... $\mathbb{E}xc4$  37. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$   $\mathbb{W}xd5\#$ .

But most convincing of all was 36. $\mathbb{Q}g5!$  with the deadly threat of  $\mathbb{Q}e6\#$ . Black cannot allow this, but after 36... $\mathbb{Q}xg5$  37. $\mathbb{W}f6\#$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  38. $\mathbb{E}xe7$  he is mated.

**36... $\mathbb{W}a3$  37. $\mathbb{Q}xh7\#$   $\mathbb{Q}e8?$**

No doubt the result of time trouble.

After 37... $\mathbb{Q}g8$  38. $\mathbb{Q}f6\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  39. $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{W}c3$  White has to play a few good moves to keep the advantage:

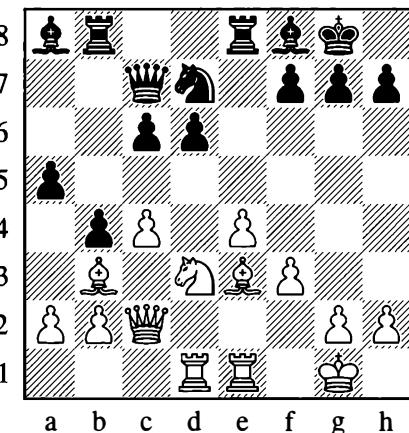


40. $\mathbb{Q}d7\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  41. $\mathbb{W}xc3$   $bxc3$  42. $\mathbb{Q}a6$   $\mathbb{E}a8$  43. $\mathbb{E}xe7$   $\mathbb{E}xa6$  44. $\mathbb{E}e8\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  45. $g5$   $\mathbb{E}a7$  46. $\mathbb{Q}f6$   $\mathbb{Q}h6$  47. $\mathbb{E}c8$  White will be two pawns up in the ending, but it will still present a few technical problems.

**38. $\mathbb{Q}b5\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  39. $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}xg5$  40. $\mathbb{W}b6\uparrow$**   
1–0

## 6. Leko – Mamedyarov

Wijk aan Zee 2008

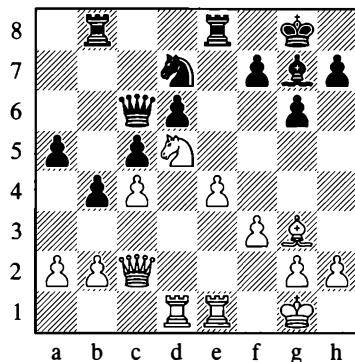


**21.c5!±**

A great move that opens up lines for all of the white pieces. Black does get rid of his weakness

on d6, but another appears on c6, and the a5-pawn suddenly becomes a bit exposed, as does the f7-pawn.

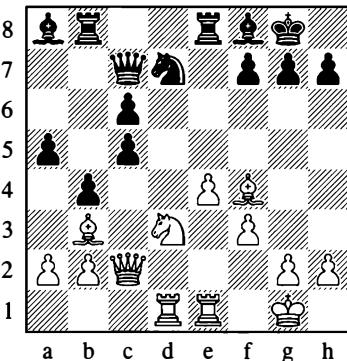
It feels very natural to play 21. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ , and then after 21... $c5$  to exchange a pair of bishops with 22. $\mathbb{B}a4$   $\mathbb{B}c6$  23. $\mathbb{B}xc6$   $\mathbb{W}xc6$ , before putting the knight on d5 with 24. $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $g6$  25. $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  26. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ .



But although everything here looks aesthetically pleasing, White's advantage has diminished all the way along this variation. Black finds it easy to defend his weakness on d6 and has some counterplay connected to the long diagonal. Obviously Black will be fully okay, maybe even better, should he manage to transfer the d7-knight to d4.

**21... $\mathbb{Q}b7$**

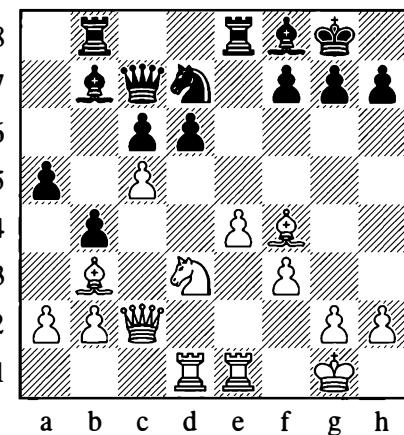
21... $dxc5$ ? 22. $\mathbb{Q}f4!$  and White has a winning position.



For example: 22... $\mathbb{Q}d6$  23. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$   $\mathbb{W}xd6$  24. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$   $\mathbb{W}e7$  25. $\mathbb{Q}d3$  and positionally Black is busted.

21... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$  may be Black's best move, but after 22. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$   $dxc5$  23. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$  it is clear that White has the better pieces and will put real pressure on Black's weaknesses.

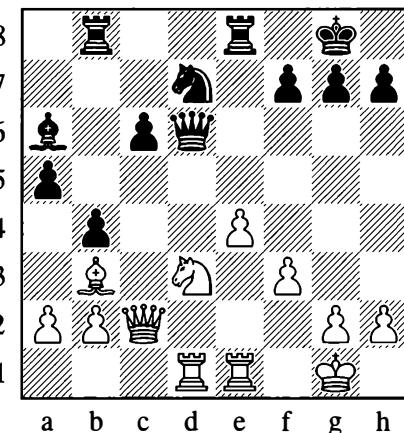
**22. $\mathbb{Q}f4$**



**22... $\mathbb{Q}a6?$**

The final mistake. Necessary was 22... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ , but White is clearly better nonetheless. For example: 23.cxd6  $\mathbb{Q}xd6$  24. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  25. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  26.f4  $\mathbb{Q}ee8$  27.e5

**23.cxd6  $\mathbb{Q}xd6$  24. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$   $\mathbb{W}xd6$**



**25. $\mathbb{Q}e5!$**

A nice little combination to conclude the game.

**25... $\mathbb{W}xe5$  26. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$   $\mathbb{Q}ed8$**

26... $\mathbb{Q}f8$  27. $\mathbb{W}xc6$  and wins.

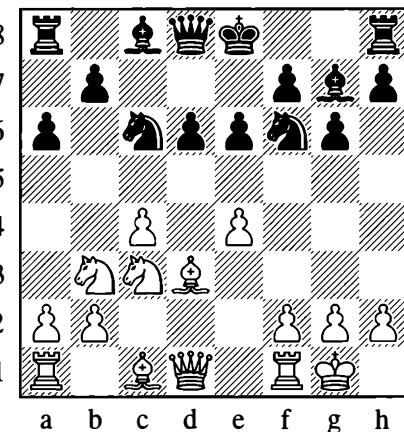
**27. $\mathbb{Q}ed1$**

Black had had enough. He could fight on for a while, with a slim hope of something happening, but objectively his position is lost.

**1-0**

## 7. Karjakin – Bacrot

Khanty-Mansiysk (3.4) 2007



Black's position is very difficult to defend. Especially as 27...c5 leads to great problems after 28. $\mathbb{Q}c1$   $\mathbb{Q}bc8$  29.e6!.

This position is a very instructive example of the theme of the missing bishop. By combining the typical hedgehog set-up with the early development of the bishop to g7, Black has exposed himself to pressure on the d6-pawn. White has yet to choose the correct places for his bishop on c1, his queen and his rooks.

By directing these pieces to attack the weakness on d6, White manages to put Black under pressure before he has completed his development.

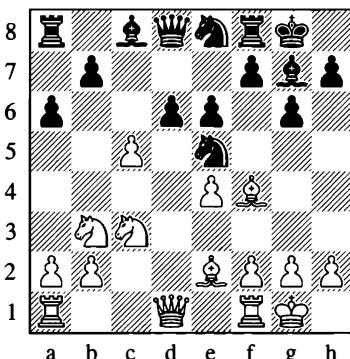
### 10.♗e2!

Karjakin directs his forces against Black's weak spot, the pawn on d6. This could of course also have been done by 10.♗f4 and 11.♗e2.

Black has done well in several games where White played the placid 10.♗e3.

### 10...♝c7

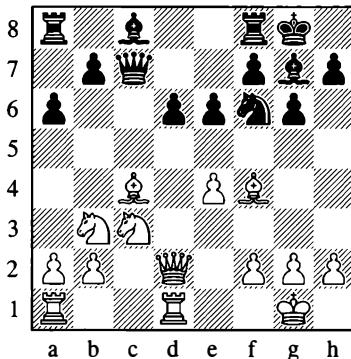
10...0–0 11.♗f4 ♛e5 12.c5 ♛e8 would also be very uncomfortable for Black.



Here the computer points out that 13.♗e3!± with threats to d6 and b6, is very strong.

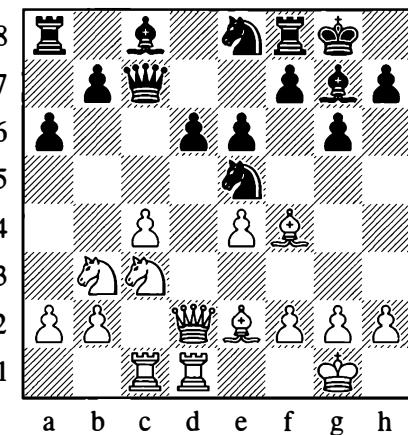
### 11.♗f4 ♛e5 12.♗d2 0–0 13.♗fd1 ♛e8

It is always a good idea to check if the pawn on c4 is hanging: 13...♛xc4 14.♗xc4



Black cannot play 14...♛xc4 15.♗xd6 ♜d8 because of 16.♘a5!, trapping the queen. Instead he has to try the tricky 14...e5, but White can play 15.♗xf7+ ♜xf7 16.♗g5± with a much better pawn structure.

### 14.♗ac1±

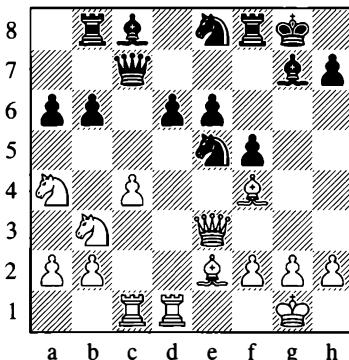


White is fully mobilized and we can already see that Black should not be entirely happy with the opening. However, after 14...b6 intending to complete his development, his inferiority should be minimal. Instead he chooses to launch a completely unjustified attack.

### 14...f5? 15.exf5

Karjakin sets out to punish his opponent immediately.

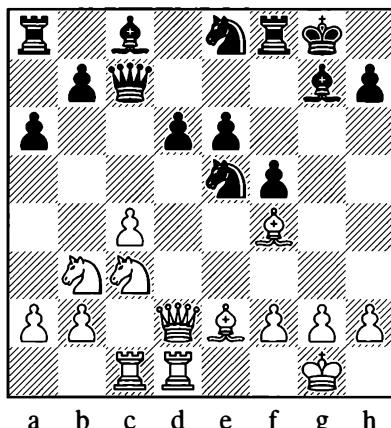
15.  $\mathbb{W}e3$ ! was interesting; White does not need to hurry. For example: 15...b6 16.exf5 gxf5 17.  $\mathfrak{Q}a4$   $\mathbb{E}b8$



18. c5! bxc5 19.  $\mathfrak{Q}bxc5$  and Black will lose a pawn in most lines.

### 15...gxf5

White is now more than happy to open the position at a moment when only his pieces are playing.



### 16. c5! dxc5 17. $\mathbb{W}e3$

17.  $\mathfrak{Q}a4$  was also very strong.

### 17...c4 18. $\mathfrak{Q}a4$ b5 19. $\mathfrak{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$

Black cannot avoid losing material. After 19...  $\mathbb{E}b8$  20.  $\mathfrak{Q}xc8$   $\mathbb{E}xc8$  21.  $\mathfrak{Q}d4$  Black cannot defend the e6-pawn.

### 20. $\mathfrak{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 21. $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathfrak{Q}h8$ 22. $\mathfrak{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$

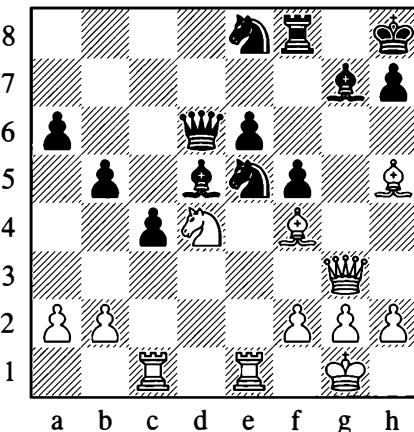
### 23. $\mathbb{E}e1$

23.b3?!

### 23... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ !?

Typical rapid chess; not every move is accurate. After 23...  $\mathbb{E}g8$ ! Black might still have some chances.

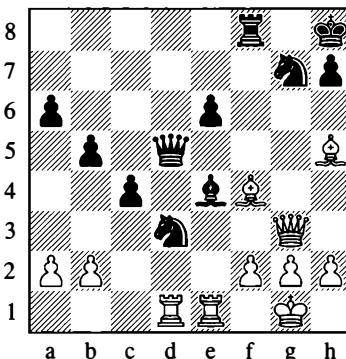
### 24. $\mathbb{Q}h5$



Black resigned, probably a little prematurely.

**1–0**

He could have tried 24...  $\mathbb{Q}e4$ !?, 25.  $\mathbb{E}cd1$  and now the surprising: 25...  $\mathbb{Q}d5$ ! 26.  $\mathfrak{Q}xf5$   $\mathfrak{Q}d3$  27.  $\mathfrak{Q}xg7$   $\mathfrak{Q}xg7$

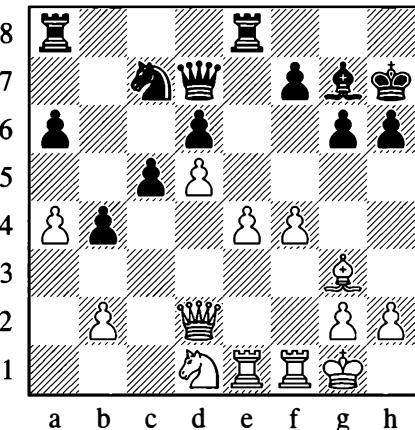


Black can at least fight on for a while.

So White's last move was probably inaccurate. Instead 24.  $\mathbb{E}cd1$  and 24.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$  would both have won immediately.

## 8. Eljanov – Radjabov

Wijk aan Zee 2008



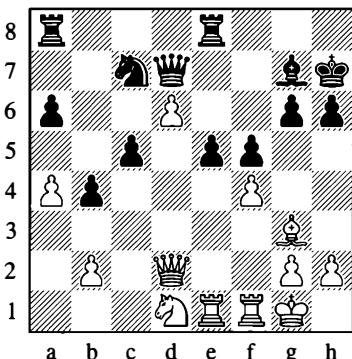
**25...f5!**

The strongest move. Black undermines the white centre and especially the d5-pawn; all reliant on a tactical point.

25... $\mathbb{W}xa4$  26.e5 is perhaps also better for Black, but it needlessly gives White a lot of counterplay.

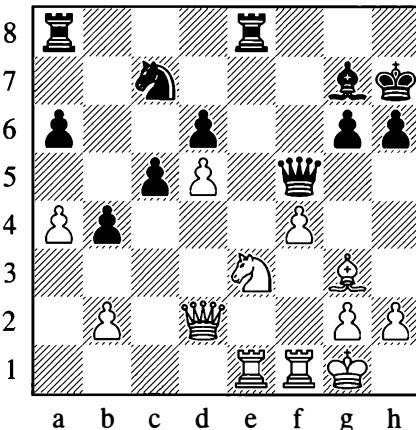
**26.exf5**

26.e5 dx $e$ 5 27.d6 does not work at all.



Both 27...e4 and 27...exf4 give Black a winning position.

**26... $\mathbb{W}xf5$  27. $\mathbb{Q}e3$**



**27... $\mathbb{B}xe3$ !**

This is the point. Black will give up his strong bishop, realizing that his king's safety will not be significantly weakened.

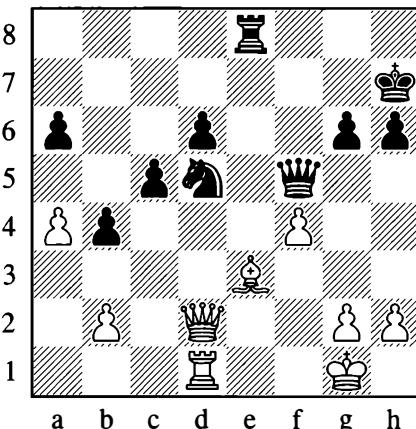
Both 27... $\mathbb{W}e4$  28.f5! and 27... $\mathbb{Q}d4$  28. $\mathbb{W}xd4$  cxd4 29. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$  gxf5 30. $\mathbb{E}d1$   $\mathbb{E}e4$  31. $\mathbb{Q}f2$  lead to equality.

**28. $\mathbb{B}xe3$   $\mathbb{Q}d4$  29. $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{B}xe3$  30. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$**

This wins the game and so cannot be criticized.

But Black also had a beautiful option in 30... $\mathbb{E}e8$ ! 31. $\mathbb{E}d1$   $\mathbb{W}h5$ !, and after White defends against the threatened ... $\mathbb{B}xe3$ , Black would be ready to take the d5-pawn under more favourable circumstances.

**31. $\mathbb{E}d1$   $\mathbb{E}e8$**

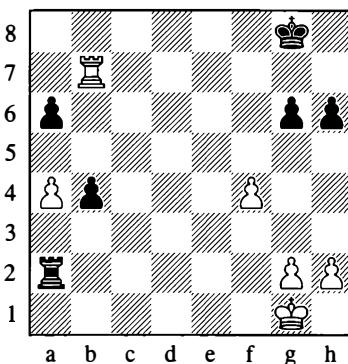


**32.♕f2?!**

This loses immediately.

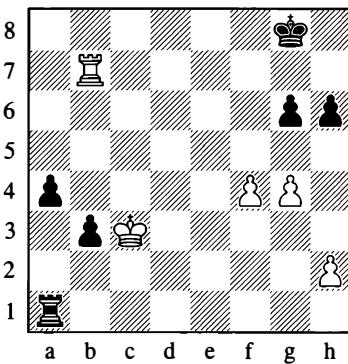
White could have fought on into the ending with:

32.♕xd5 ♕xd5 33.♕xd5 ♕xe3 34.♕xd6 ♕e2  
 35.♕c6 ♕xb2 36.♕xc5 ♕a2 37.♕c7† ♕g8  
 38.♕b7



But I do not think that White can hold this ending, even though it is quite close.

38...a5 39.g4 ♕xa4 40.♕f2 ♕a3 41.♕e2 b3  
 42.♕d3 a4 43.♕c3 ♕a1



44.♕b4

This is forced because of a nice tactical point:

44.h4 a3! 45.♕xb3 ♕c1† and Black wins.

44...♕f7 45.h4 ♕e6 46.♕b6† ♕d5 47.♕b5† ♕c6 48.♕b4 ♕c5 49.♕c4† ♕b5 50.♕b4† ♕a5  
 51.♕b8 ♕c1† 52.♕d4 ♕c2 53.f5 gx5 54.gxf5  
 ♕f2 55.♕e4 b2 56.♕e3 a3 57.♕xf2 a2

Black wins eventually.

**32...♕xf4 33.♕xd6?**

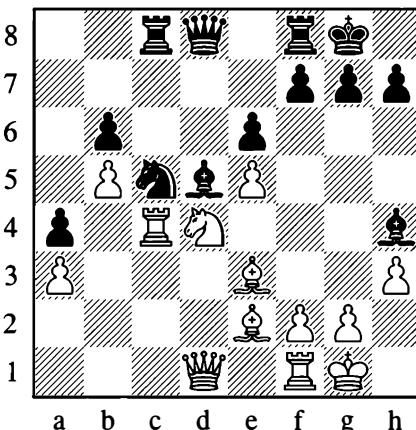
A final mistake, making it easier for Black.

**33...♕e4**

**0–1**

**9. Adams – Monroy**

Gibraltar 2011



Obviously the white rook is hanging and could retreat, but we should always look into the active options as well.

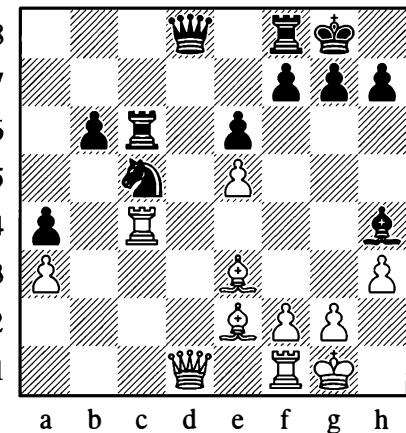
**25.♕c6!**

25.♕c1 was not bad of course, but after 25...♕b3 26.♕c6 ♕c7! the situation is rather unclear. The position after 27.♕c3 ♕xc6 28.♕xc6 (28.bxc6 ♕e7! and Black is at least okay) 28...♕xe5 29.♕xb6 ♕b2 30.♕d3 ♕e7 might favour White somewhat, but in the end this sort of advantage is not clear-cut and we are playing for three results.

**25...♕xc6 26.bxc6 ♕xc6?**

This fails to the point behind White's 25th move.

26...♕e7 27.♕f3± would give White an enduring technical advantage.



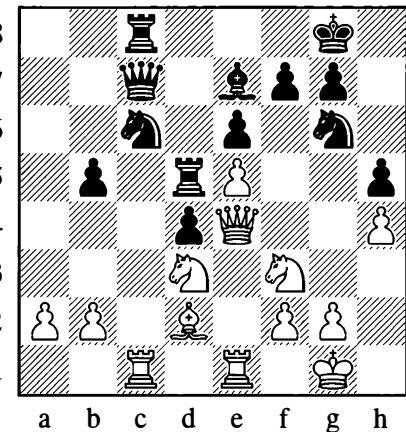
27.♗d4! ♖e7 28.♗b5 ♖cc8 29.♗h5

The bishop is trapped. Black resigned.

1–0

## 10. Motylev – Maletin

Olginka 2011



White has some pressure down the c-file and it is quite natural to look for ways to take advantage of this factor. For this reason, 22.♗c2?! with an advantage is very natural.

But actually White has a greater basis for an advantage at the kingside.

### 22.g4!

Entirely justified. The rook on c1 is keeping the black pieces in check and the knights are

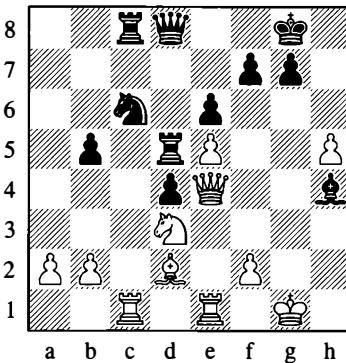
defending the e5-pawn more than adequately. So, White has the chance to open up the g-file and launch an assault on the black king.

### 22...hxg4

This defensive try seems to be slightly inferior; although I have the feeling that the position is close to lost in any case.

The best attempt was:

22...♖d8? 23.gxh5 ♜xh4 24.♗xh4 ♜xh4



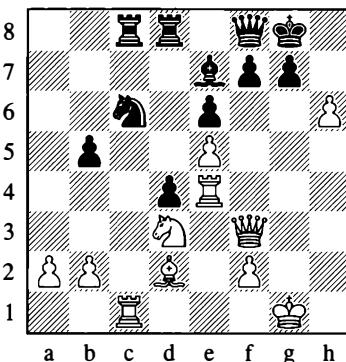
Here the white queen is not as strong on e4 as it would be on g4. This is especially spelled out by the next move!

25.♕g4 ♜e7

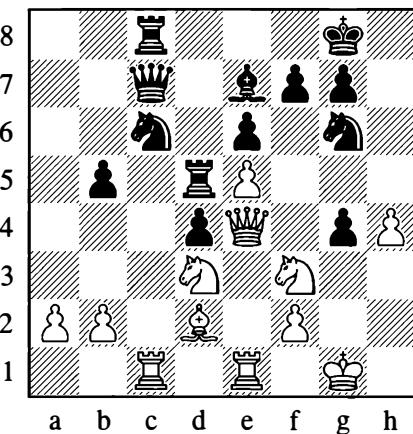
This retreat seems forced.

25...♗h8 26.♗f4!± and Black has no satisfactory way to defend the f7-pawn. For example: 26...♗g8 27.h6 g6 28.h7† ♗g7?!, 29.♗b4!, with the point 29...♗xb4 30.♗xc8 ♖xc8 31.♗xh4 ♗c6 32.♗h6† ♗xh7 33.♗g5† and Black is mated.

26.h6 ♖f8 27.♗e4 ♖dd8 28.♗f3

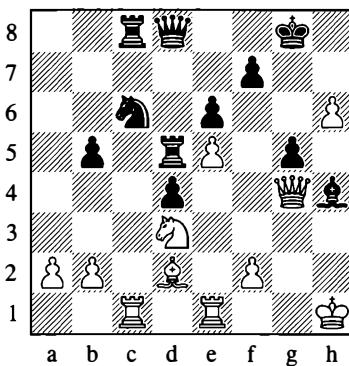


White has a fantastic position. An important point is that 28...g6 is met with 29.h7! ♖xh7 30.♕f4, with a double threat on f7 and c6.



**23.♗xg4 ♖h8**

Black could have tried: 23...♗d8 24.h5 ♖h4 25.♖xh4 ♖xh4 26.h6 g5 (26...g6 27.♗e4 ♖e7 28.♗f4 and White is about to land a deadly piece sacrifice.) 27.♗h1



White is strategically winning. He will play ♗g1 and f2-f4 if nothing happens; and if anything does happen, he is perfectly placed to deal efficiently with it.

**24.♔h1**

24.h5 ♖f8 25.h6 obviously also worked.

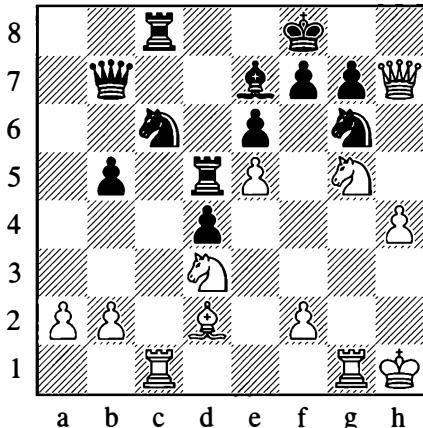
**24...♗b7**

Black lacks active play.

**25.♗g1**

The threat of h4-h5 forces Black's hand.

**25...♗f8 26.♗h5† ♖g8 27.♗g5 ♖e7  
28.♗h7† ♖f8**



**29.♗xe6†!**

One shot, one kill.

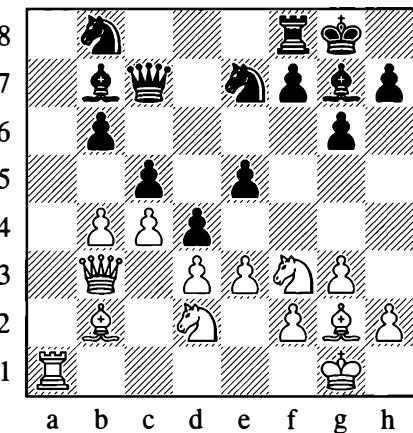
**29...♗e8**

29...fxe6 30.♗xg6 and pain follows.

**30.♗xg7† ♖d7 31.e6† ♖d6 32.exf7 ♖ce5  
33.♗xg6†**  
**1–0**

## 11. Gulko – P. Nikolic

Reykjavik 1991



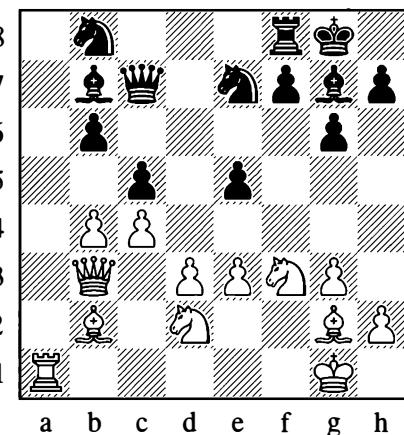
White has played e2-e3, hoping to go for a standard Benoni-type structure.

### 15...dxe3!

Not a difficult move; the point of the exercise is on the next move. With this move Black creates small weaknesses in White's central pawn structure.

15... $\mathbb{Q}bc6?$  would play into White's dreams. After 16.exd4 cxd4 17. $\mathbb{Q}g5\pm$  he has a good version of standard Benoni activity.

### 16.fxe3



### 16...cxb4!

This is a key move. The knight on b8 needs to come to c5 with a gain of tempo to exploit the weakened pawns on d3 and e3. None of the alternatives are dangerous for White:

16... $\mathbb{Q}bc6?!$  17.b5  $\mathbb{Q}b4$  18.d4! exd4 19.exd4  $\mathbb{Q}f5$  20.d5= The black pieces have not become as dominant as they deserve.

16... $\mathbb{Q}d7?!$  17.b5  $\mathbb{Q}f5$  18. $\mathbb{E}e1=$  is also no great problem for White. Because Black's pieces are less active, he cannot exploit the slight weakening of the white position.

16... $\mathbb{Q}f5?$  is a disaster. White plays 17.bxc5!, which cannot be recaptured. And after

17... $\mathbb{Q}xe3$  18.cxb6  $\mathbb{W}c8$  19. $\mathbb{Q}e4\pm$  Black does not have enough compensation.

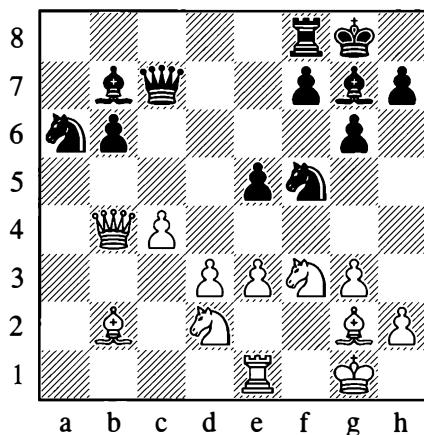
### 17. $\mathbb{W}xb4$

17.d4 avoids structural problems in the centre after 17...exd4 18.exd4, but Black hangs on to an extra pawn with 18... $\mathbb{Q}a6\mp$ .

### 17... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 18. $\mathbb{E}e1$

18.e4  $\mathbb{Q}e3\mp$  is also nice for Black, of course.

### 18... $\mathbb{Q}a6\mp$



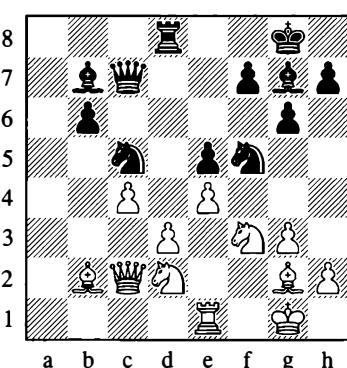
### 19. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$

19...e4 20. $\mathbb{Q}d4$  exd4 $\mp$  would also give Black a clear positional edge.

### 20. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{E}d8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f1$

White is under extreme pressure and has to defend accurately to keep his head above water.

21.e4? fails to:



21... $\mathbb{Q}xd3!$  22.exf5  $\mathbb{W}c5\#$

And 21.d4 exd4 22.exd4  $\mathbb{Q}e6\#$  leads to other big problems. For example: 23.d5?  $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$

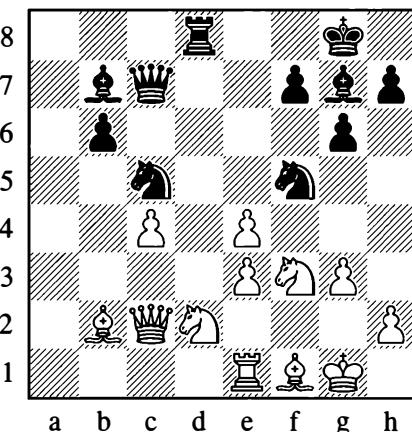
**21...e4**

21...f6 also gives Black a slight edge.

**22.dxe4?**

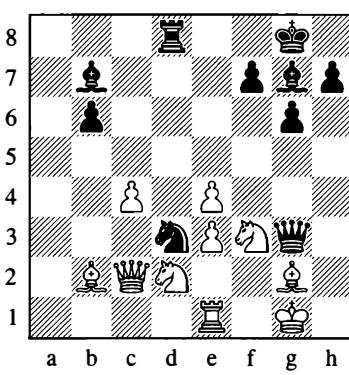
It is quite understandable that under pressure, Gulko makes a tactical error.

It was necessary to keep the 2nd rank clear with: 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{Q}xb2$  23. $\mathbb{W}xb2$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  24.dxe4  $\mathbb{Q}xe4\#$  and White has structural problems, but stays in the game.



**22... $\mathbb{Q}xg3!$  23. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$**

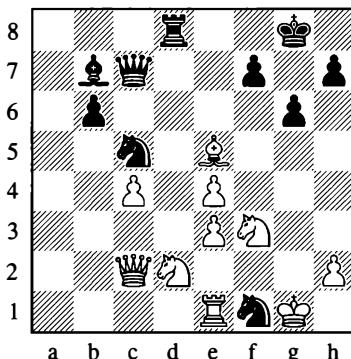
23.hxg3 loses to 23... $\mathbb{W}xg3\#$  24. $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}d3!$  when the double threat is decisive.



White's only try is 25. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ , but Black wins after 25... $\mathbb{Q}xb2$  26. $\mathbb{Q}xb2$   $\mathbb{Q}xb2$  27. $\mathbb{W}xb2$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$  28. $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}d1$  and it will all be decided quite soon.

**23... $\mathbb{Q}xf1$  24. $\mathbb{Q}a1$**

24. $\mathbb{Q}e5$  is refuted by:



24... $\mathbb{Q}xd2!$  25. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$   $\mathbb{Q}xf3\#$  26. $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}d2$  27. $\mathbb{Q}b1$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ , when White cannot defend himself. For example: 28. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}xe2$  29. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$   $\mathbb{Q}c3\#$  and so on.

**24... $\mathbb{Q}xh2$  25. $\mathbb{Q}xh2$   $\mathbb{W}g3\#$  26. $\mathbb{Q}f1$**

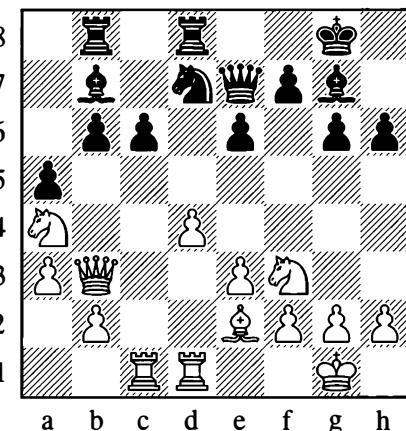
26. $\mathbb{Q}h1$   $\mathbb{Q}xd2!$  and Black wins.

**26... $\mathbb{W}xh2$  27. $\mathbb{W}c3$  f6**

0–1

## 12. Obolenskikh – Sjugirov

Moscow 2012



Black is reasonably well placed and simply has to work out what he wants to do. This is where the only real weakness in the white position comes into play; the pawn on b2. Black exploited this beautifully in the game.

### 18...c5!

This will of course lead to an isolated pawn on c5, but this is not as important as the b2-pawn, because the a3-pawn is likely to fall with it.

### 19.dxc5?!

White goes for the critical line, but this only leads to great problems.

It would have been better to accept a slightly inferior position after either 19.Qc3 cxd4 20.exd4 Bbc8† or 19.Wc2 cxd4 20.Qxd4 Bbc8 21.Qc3 Qe5!?, where Black's advantage is very limited.

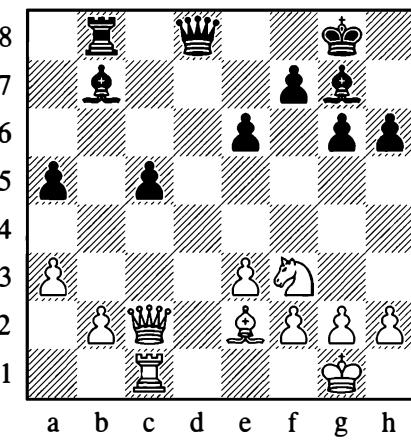
### 19...Qxc5 20.Bxd8†

20.Qxc5 also leads to great problems for White. After 20...bxc5 21.Wa4 Bxd1† 22.Bxd1 Qd5† the bishops come into their own.

### 20...Wxd8

Keeping the rook on the b-file.

### 21.Qxc5 bxc5 22.Wc2



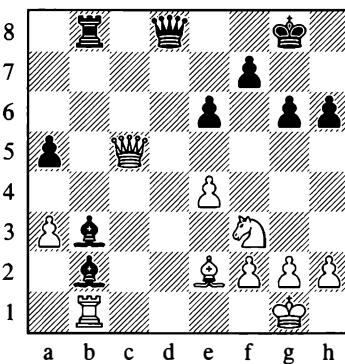
### 22...Qd5?!

This gives White a small opportunity to fight back.

It would have been better to play 22...Qxf3 23.Qxf3 Qxb2 24.Qd1 Wc7†, or 22...Qxb2!† with the idea of 23.Wxb2 Qxf3, in both cases with excellent winning chances due to the extra pawn.

### 23.Wxc5?!

White missed the chance to play: 23.e4 Qb3 24.Wxc5 Qxb2 25.Qb1†

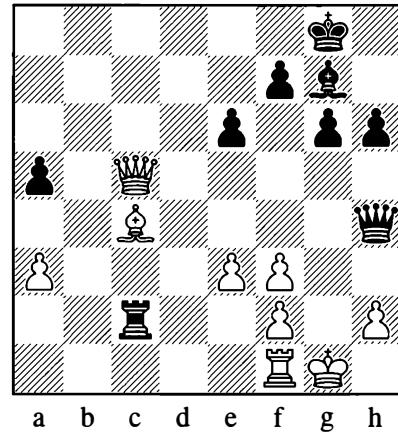


Although White is still worse, at least he has gotten rid of his weakness on b2.

### 23...Bxb2 24.Qc4?

24.Qf1 Ba2† is also bad, but in the game White loses a piece.

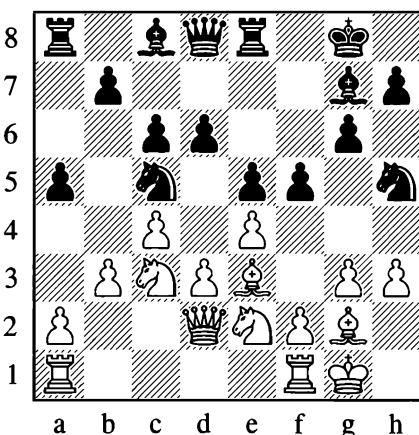
### 24...Qxf3 25.gxf3 Wh4 26.Qf1 Qc2!



**27.f4 ♜g4† 28.♔h1 ♜f3† 29.♔g1 ♜e4  
0–1**

### 13. Bilek – Ciocaltea

Skopje (ol) 1972



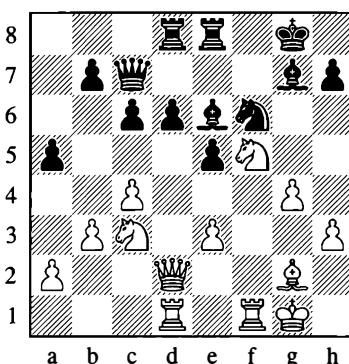
White manages to exploit the weaknesses in the black pawn structure with two strong pawn moves.

#### 14.exf5! gxf5

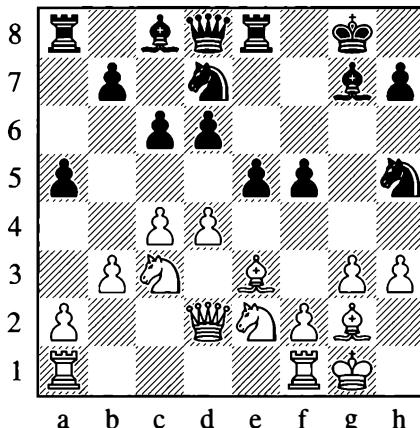
14...♜xf5? 15.g4 does not work, of course.

#### 15.d4 ♜d7

Not a pleasant retreat to make, but the alternatives were pretty dire as well: 15...exd4 16.♖xd4 ♜e5 17.♖ad1 ♜f6 18.♖fe1± and 15...♜e6 16.d5! f4 17.dxe6 fxe3 18.fxe3 ♜xe6 19.g4! ♜f6 20.♖ad1 ♜c7 21.♖g3 ♜ad8 22.♖f5±



Both give White a considerable positional advantage, even if the game is some way from won. Out of the three alternatives, the move in the game was probably the worst, but not by a significant margin.



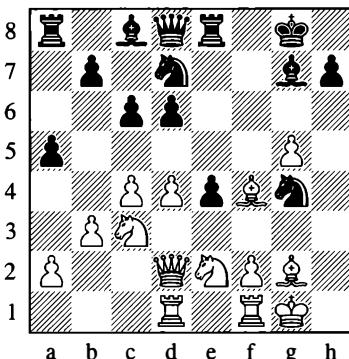
#### 16.♗g5!?

This move certainly has some advantages, but it is not necessarily the best.

Also good for White was 16.d5!? c5 17.♖ae1±, although it is not absolutely clear how White is going to exploit his structural advantage.

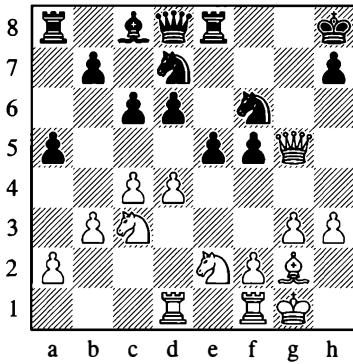
The strongest move was 16.♖ad1! to immediately challenge Black in the centre. It is hard to suggest a move for Black, for example:

16...e4 17.g4! fxg4 18.hxg4 ♜hf6 19.g5 ♜g4 20.♖f4



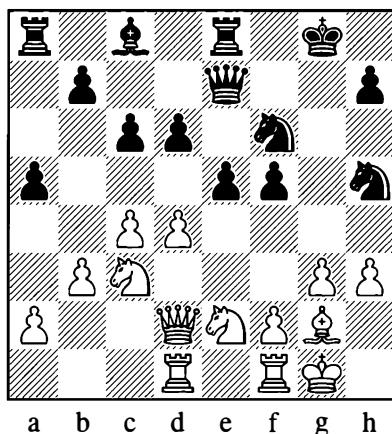
Black is about to lose material without any compensation at all.

- 16... $\mathbb{Q}hf6$  17. $\mathbb{Q}h6$   $\mathbb{Q}xh6$  18. $\mathbb{W}xh6$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$   
19. $\mathbb{W}g5$



Black's position is falling apart.

- 16... $\mathbb{Q}f6$  17. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$   $\mathbb{Q}dxf6$  18. $\mathbb{B}ad1$   $\mathbb{W}e7$



19. $f3!?$

There are pluses and minuses to this move.

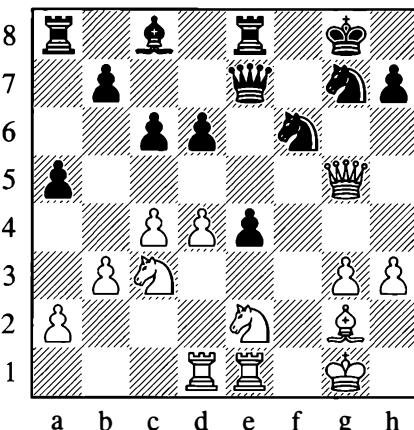
White should prepare for the clash in the centre, rather than make permanent decisions about his pawn structure now. Better was therefore 19. $\mathbb{B}fe1$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  20. $dxe5$   $dxe5$  21. $\mathbb{W}d6\pm$  with an excellent position.

- 19... $\mathbb{Q}g7$  20. $\mathbb{B}fe1$   $e4$

This pawn push does not make much sense.

20... $\mathbb{Q}e6\pm$  was better.

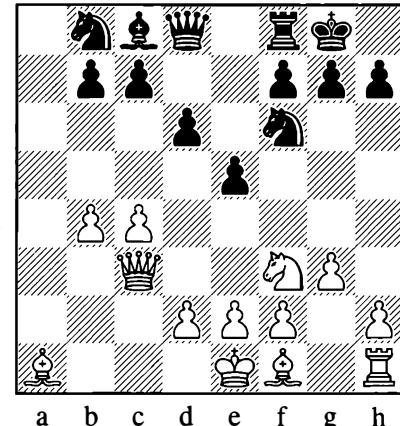
21. $fxe4$   $fxe4$  22. $\mathbb{W}g5!$



White still held some advantage, and won an eventful game on move 65.

#### 14. Kramnik – Ivanchuk

Monte Carlo (rapid) 2007



This position arose from a hybrid system somewhere between the Nimzo-Indian and the English that Kramnik has favoured for a long time. White's opening strategy is to claim the two bishops and put pressure on the

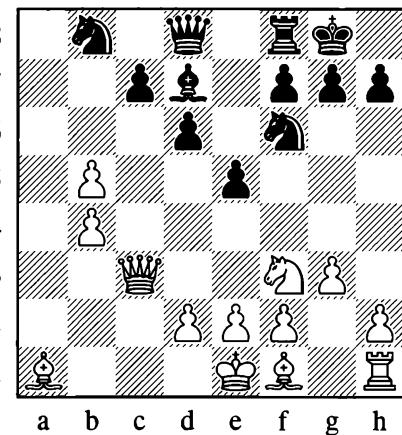
opponent in the middlegame. Ivanchuk comes up with a great concept in this game, choosing to challenge the white pawn on c4 and only then think about where to put his pieces. This does make a lot of sense in many ways, as the black pieces are lacking good squares. So, if you cannot put your bad pieces on good squares, you need to create them first.

### 11...b5! 12.cxb5

This seems to be the most natural reply. White gains nothing from 12.c5?  $\mathbb{Q}c6! \mp$ , when the b4-pawn is terribly weak and already under fire.

### 12... $\mathbb{Q}d7!$

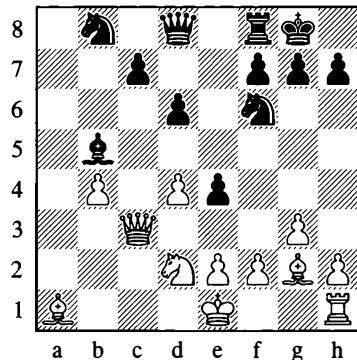
Black did not really want to sacrifice a pawn; he would prefer to get it back.



### 13.e3?

After this move White is simply worse. It was just not realistic to try to keep the extra pawn. Actually, it looks like a simple rule breaker without much strategic advantage. Usually we are taught that we should not play g3 and e3 together, as it weakens our light squares, as well as losing time. If there is a justification, fine, but here, there really is none.

Better was something along the lines of: 13.d4! e4 14. $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}xb5$  15. $\mathbb{Q}g2=$



This position is not very exciting for White and especially for his bishop on a1, but it was what he should have settled for.

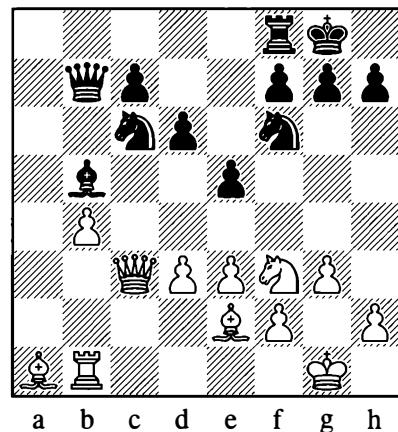
### 13... $\mathbb{W}c8!$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 15.d3

15. $\mathbb{W}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}g4$  is not any better. White would have to play 16.e4 to avoid losing a piece.

### 15... $\mathbb{Q}xb5\mp$

15... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ ? 16.e4  $\mathbb{W}xb5$  with the idea of ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$  heading for d4 was also attractive, but the play in the game is not to be criticized.

### 16.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 17. $\mathbb{E}b1$



### 17... $\mathbb{W}a6!$

The computer wants to play 17...e4?, but surely this is not the right way to put pressure on d3; the bishop on a1 should be kept out of play.

18.♕b3 ♕a8 19.♘d2 ♕a2 20.♗c3 ♕xb3

21.♗xb3

21.♗xb3 ♕a3† is also very uncomfortable.

21...♕a2 22.♗f1?

Losing, but 22.♗f3 ♘e7! would force White to play a series of humiliating moves to avoid losing material as in the game.

22...♘d5! 23.♗g2 ♘ce7!

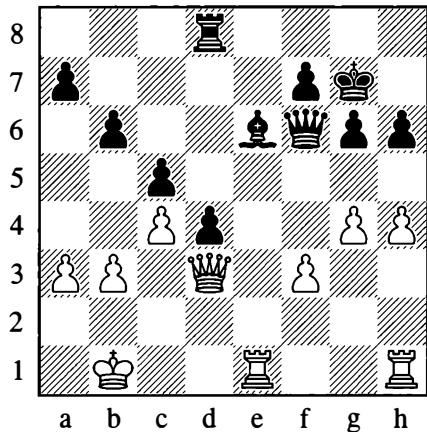
White loses a piece.

24.♗b2 ♕a4 25.♗a3 ♕xb2 26.♗xa4 ♘b6!  
 27.♗a7 ♕xd2 28.♗xc7 ♘f8 29.♗b7 ♕d1†  
 30.♗f1 ♘ec8 31.b5 ♕a1 32.♗c7 g6 33.h4  
 ♘b1 34.d4 exd4 35.exd4 ♘e7 36.♗g2 h5  
 37.♗b7 ♘bd5 38.♗b8† ♘g7 39.♗d8 ♘b2  
 40.♗g1 ♘f5 41.♗c4 ♘b1† 42.♗h2 ♘f6  
 43.f3 ♘b2† 44.♗h3 ♘xd4

0–1

## 15. Dobrov – Bartel

Moscow 2012



Black has given up the exchange in order to get a strong pawn on d4. It is obvious that he has enough compensation, but only as long as the queens stay on the board and he has dynamic potential.

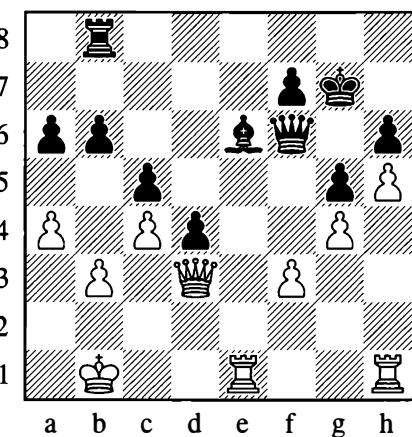
26...a6?!

It seems quite natural to play for opening the queenside where White's king is. But this ignores White's chance to improve the situation on the kingside before he has to defend on the queenside.

27.h5! g5 28.a4

Here I prefer 28.♗h2! b5 29.♗he2 ♘b8 30.♗a2, when White will give back the exchange at the right moment to ensure equality.

28...♗b8



29.♗h1?

What exactly White hoped to achieve with this move is hard to understand; probably something with f3-f4 that never happened.

29.♗h2! made good sense. After 29...b5 30.axb5 axb5 31.♗b2 White is still more or less okay.

29...b5 30.cxb5 axb5 31.♗xe6

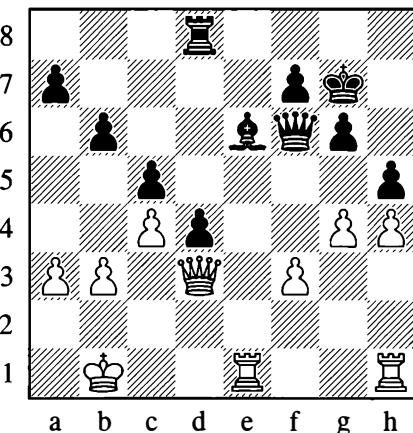
White returns the exchange without receiving much in return. The reason was of course 31.axb5 ♘d7, which would be very uncomfortable.

31...♕xe6 32.axb5 ♘d7 33.f4 ♘xb5  
 34.♗xb5 ♘xb5 35.fxg5 ♘xb3† 36.♗a2 ♘b7

37.gxh6† ♖xh6 38.♗f5 c4 39.♗d5 d3  
 40.♗d4 ♖g5 41.♗xc4 ♗d7 42.♗c1 d2  
 43.♗d1 ♖xg4 44.h6 f5 45.♗b3 ♖f3  
 0–1

The right move was therefore:

**26...h5!!†**



Black wants to gain access to the f5-square and increase the potential for his bishop. Also, he is simply threatening to take the g4-pawn! White has to react to this, but there are no good moves.

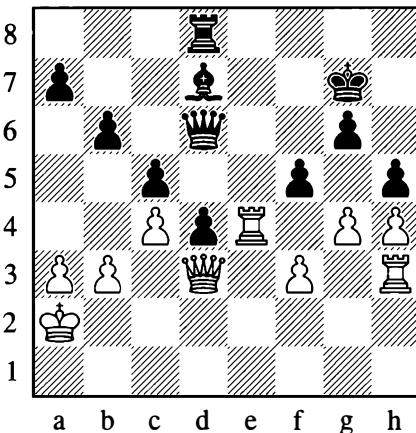
**27.♗e4**

27.g5 ♖f4 cedes Black the f5-square. This gives Black more options and is clearly an improvement for him on the game. In my opinion it is not necessary to decide exactly how much better Black is. The main point is that he will simply play ...♖g8 if White is threatening to exchange the queens on e5.

**27...♗d7!**

This would have been an even more difficult move to find, though Black has other options too. But here all I want to do is to prove that Black has one route to the advantage.

**28.♗h3 ♖d6 29.♗a2 f5**

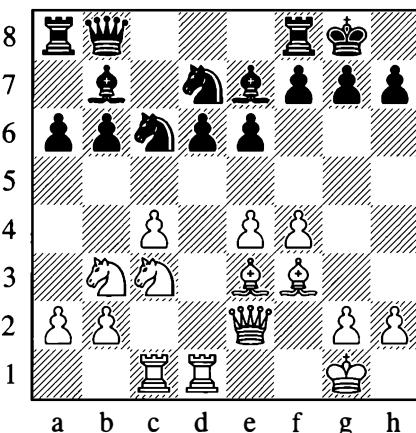


**30.♗e1 f4xg4 31.f4xg4 ♖xg4 32.♗hh1 ♖f5**

Again the discussion is not about whether Black has the advantage, but rather about how big the advantage is.

## 16. Gelfand – Papaioannou

Leon 2001



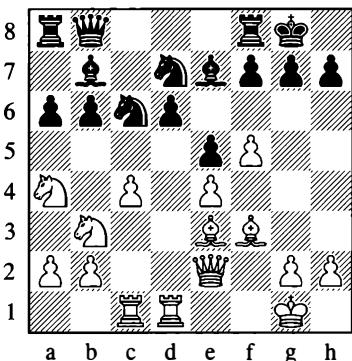
We have a seemingly normal hedgehog position, where Black has not managed to put all of his pieces into the correct positions yet. Clearly White had been threatening to play ♖d5, forcing the black queen to retreat. If Black had the necessary time to reorganize his forces, he would be fine, but White can use the moment to put pressure on his weaknesses and maybe create additional ones.

**16.♕a4!**

Putting the b6-pawn under immediate pressure.

**16...♛c7**

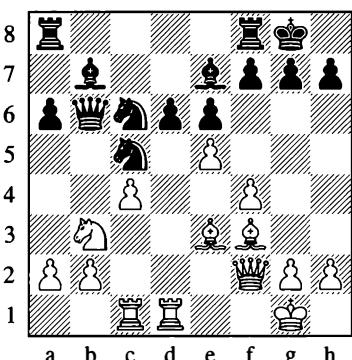
The computer's "original" solution of 16...e5 is met by 17.f5±.



This would leave Black with a very weak square on d5 without solving the problems with the b-pawn.

**17.♛f2 b5**

The crucial point of Gelfand's play is that after 17...♞c5 he intended to play 18.♕xb6!! ♜xb6 19.e5±.



The pressure on the dark squares is too much for Black to handle. There are many lines and options, but none that do not lead to misery for Black.

**17...♝d8**

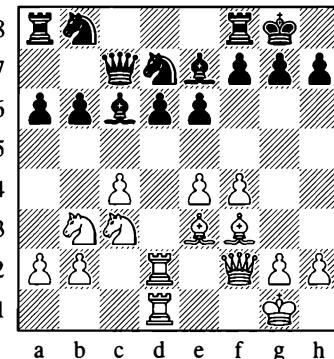
This passive move has its own problems.

**18.♝d2**

White will put pressure on the d6-pawn quickly.

**18...♞cb8**

18...b5 19.cxb5 axb5 20.♕c3 and Black loses a pawn.

**19.♝cd1 ♜c6 20.♕c3 ♜e7**

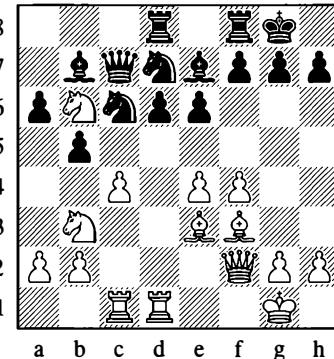
Black has protected everything, but his position has become even less organized, while White's has improved considerably. White can ensure an almost decisive positional advantage with:

**21.♝d4 ♜b7 22.f5±****18.♞b6**

18.cxb5 would be inaccurate. After 18...axb5 19.♕c3 Black can more or less equalize immediately with 19...♛b8!?.

**18...♞xb6**

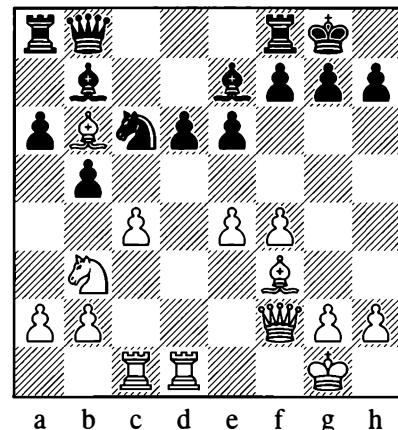
Literally forced.

**18...♝ad8**

19.  $\mathbb{Q}d5!$  is possibly even worse for Black here than this type of sacrifice normally is.

And after 18...  $\mathbb{B}ae8$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}xd7$   $\mathbb{W}xd7$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}c5$   $\mathbb{W}c7$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}xb7$   $\mathbb{W}xb7$  22. e5, Black loses material because of the threat of cxb5.

### 19. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{W}b8$



### 20. c5!

White crowns his strategy by taking control over the c5-square without giving Black any of the activity he would normally hope to achieve with the ...b5-break.

20. e5 makes less sense. Obviously White is better here, but there is no reason to give Black any hope of counterplay.

### 20... e5

20... dxc5 21.  $\mathbb{Q}xc5$  is also awful for Black.

### 21. cxd6 $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{E}d8$

White has a clear advantage but the fight is not over, and for the remainder of the game Papaioannou put up stubborn resistance.

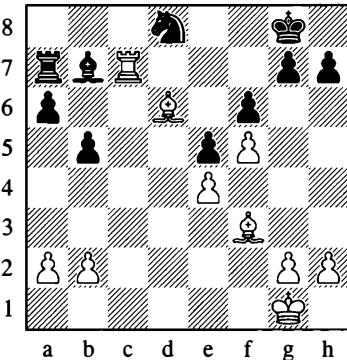
### 24. f5 f6 25. $\mathbb{E}d5$

25.  $\mathbb{E}b6!$  was more accurate according to Gelfand. White has a substantial advantage no matter what.

### 25... $\mathbb{Q}d4!$

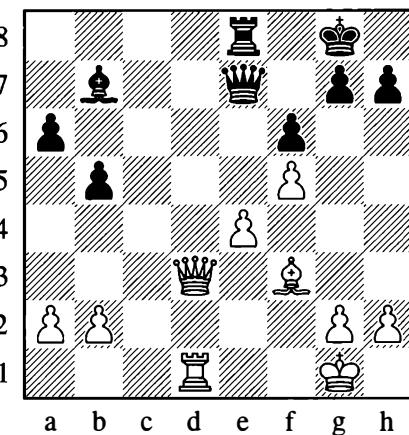
The best practical chance.

25...  $\mathbb{E}c8$  26.  $\mathbb{E}d7$   $\mathbb{E}d8$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}d6$  and Black must give up his queen, in view of: 27...  $\mathbb{W}a7$  28.  $\mathbb{W}xa7$   $\mathbb{E}xa7$  29.  $\mathbb{E}xd8\#$  30.  $\mathbb{E}c7$



With absolute domination; Black has no defence against  $\mathbb{E}e7$ .

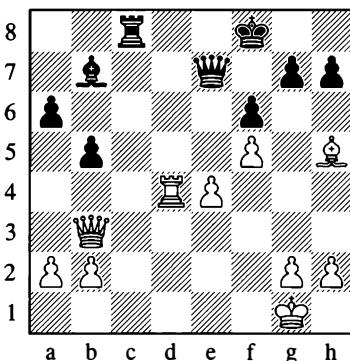
26.  $\mathbb{E}xd8\#$   $\mathbb{W}xd8$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$  exd4 28.  $\mathbb{E}d1$  d3  
29.  $\mathbb{W}e3$   $\mathbb{W}e7$  30.  $\mathbb{W}xd3$   $\mathbb{W}e8$



### 31. $\mathbb{W}d4$

Also quite interesting was 31.  $\mathbb{W}b3\#?$ . If the black king heads into the corner, White can then find time to create threats of his own, because of the back-rank issues.

And after 31...  $\mathbb{Q}f8$  he has: 32.  $\mathbb{Q}h5$   $\mathbb{E}c8$  33.  $\mathbb{E}d4$

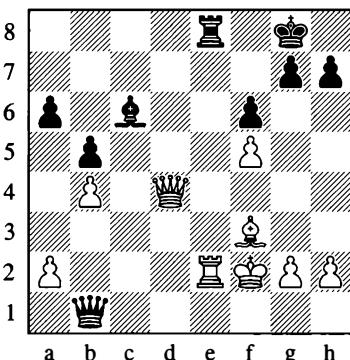


White has a clear advantage with an extra pawn and reasonable control of the position.

**31...Wc7 32.b4 Wc2 33.Wd3**

White would also retain winning chances with 33.Ed2, when Black has a choice of checks.

33...Wb1† 34.Qf2 Qxe4 does not work, as the pin combined with the bank-rank problems gives White a winning sequence: 35.Qe2 Qc6



36.Qd5†! Setting up the bank-rank mate. 36...Qh8 37.Qxc6 Qxe2† 38.Qxe2 Wc2† 39.Qd2

33...Wc1† 34.Qf2 is also better for White, although Black has some compensation from the e5-square.

**33...Wxd3**

Black hopes for a draw in the ending, something he is fortunate to achieve in the

game. It might have been more practical to retreat the queen to c7, keeping things fluid.

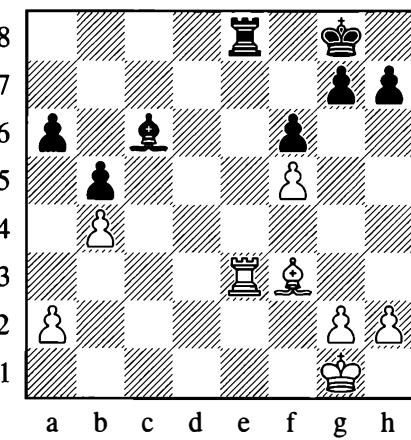
All he had to avoid is 33...Wxa2, which loses after 34.Qd7 Wf7 35.Qxf7† Qxf7 36.Qd7† Qe7, because of 37.Qh5† and White gets a bishop ending with a pawn more and domination on the queenside.

**34.Qxd3 Qxe4?**

This, on the other hand, is a grave error that deserved to lose by force.

Black had to try 34...Qf8, when White's technical job would be difficult, as the e-pawn remains weak.

**35.Qe3 Qc6**



**36.Qxe8†??**

A horrific error that needlessly throws a half point away. My PC does not immediately understand the bliss of the human move 36.Qf2!, when a forced line is 36...Qc8 37.Qc3 Qd7 38.Qxc8† Qxc8 39.Qe3! and the king makes it to c5. In that case Black cannot defend the a6/b5 edifice in the long term. White wins.

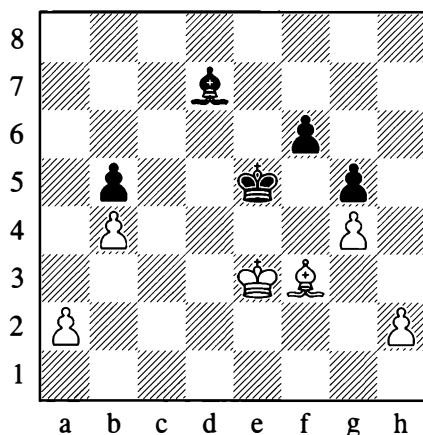
**36...Qxe8 37.Qb7**

37.Qf2 is too slow now. After 37...Qf8 38.Qe3 Qe7 39.Qd4 Qd6 White can win the

a6-pawn, but as we see in the game, this is not enough.

37... $\mathbb{Q}f8$  38. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  39. $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  40.g4  
 $\mathbb{Q}d6$  41. $\mathbb{Q}b7$  g6 42.fxg6 hxg6 43. $\mathbb{Q}f3$  g5  
44. $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}e5$

Black is in time. White has no way through.

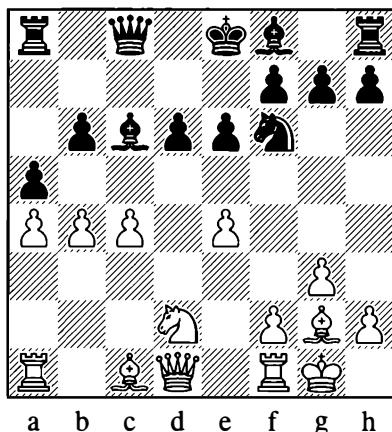


45.a3  $\mathbb{Q}e8$  46. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  47. $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  48. $\mathbb{Q}f5$   
 $\mathbb{Q}c6$  49. $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$

½–½

## 17. Milos – Mekhitarian

Sao Paulo 2006



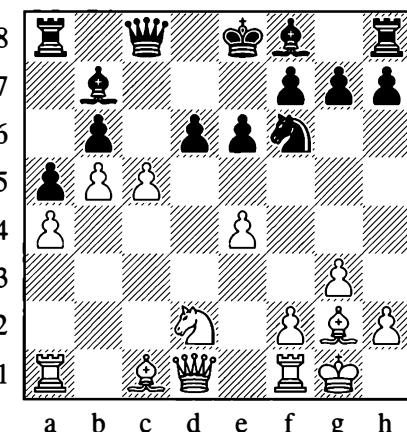
White is able to sacrifice a pawn, which allows him to get a great square for his knight

on c4 (attacking the weaknesses on b6 and d6), thus transforming the badly placed knight into a good piece. The move order is not critical.

### 13.b5

13.c5!  $bxc5$  (13...axb4 14.cxb6 is close to winning, so Black cannot avoid the transposition) 14.b5  $\mathbb{Q}b7$  transposes to the note to Black's 14th move below.

### 13... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 14.c5!!



Filling up Black's good square and obtaining the c4-square.

### 14... $\mathbb{W}xc5$

This would not have been possible if White had chosen the other move order, but I do not think it is an improvement for Black.

### 14... $bxc5$

This is probably best met with:

#### 15. $\mathbb{Q}e1!$

Preparing the knight jump.

White can also play the direct 15. $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  16. $\mathbb{W}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  17. $\mathbb{Q}b6$   $\mathbb{W}b8$  18. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$   $\mathbb{W}xb7$  19. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$   $\mathbb{W}xa8$  20. $\mathbb{Q}d2\pm$ , when White will win the a5-pawn and have good chances with his two outside passed pawns and the extra exchange.

#### 15... $\mathbb{Q}e7$

15...c4?! 16.Qb2! and the c4-pawn has simply become a target.

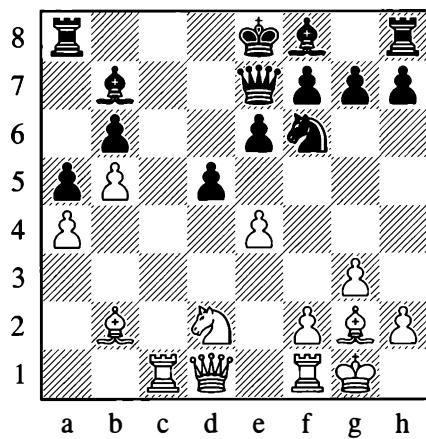
16.Qb2 Wb8 17.Qc4 0–0 18.Qa3

Bringing the worst-placed piece into the game to attack the d6-weakness.

**15.Qb2 d5**

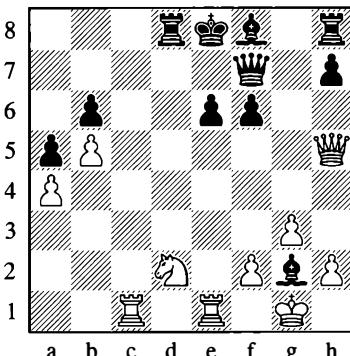
White has many ways to achieve a large advantage here.

**16.Qc1 We7**



**17.Qxf6! gxf6 18.exd5 Ed8 19.Qc4**

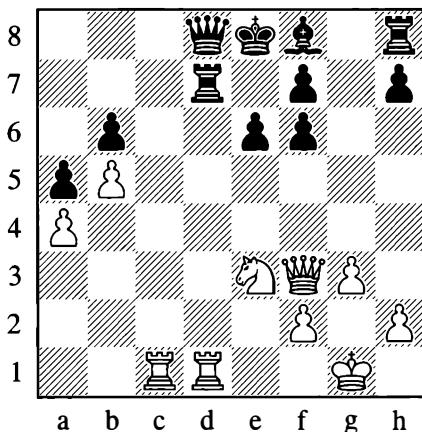
19.dxe6! was even stronger. White is just winning, because of the following point:  
19...fxe6 20.Qe1 Qxg2 21.Wh5† Wh7



22.Exe6† Qe7 23.Exe7† Qxe7 24.Qc7†

**19...Qxd5 20.Qxd5 Exd5 21.Qf3 Wd8**

**22.Qe3 Ed7 23.Qfd1**

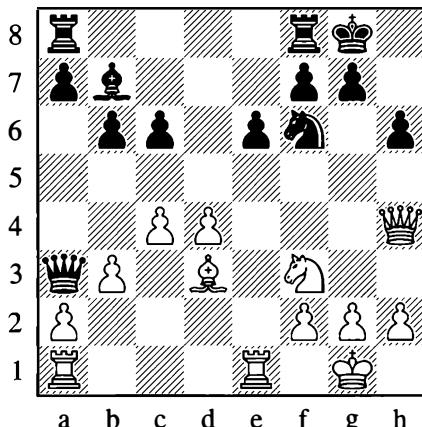


23...Qc5 24.Qxd7 Wxd7 25.Qd1 Wc8  
26.Wxf6 Eg8 27.Qc4 Qe7 28.Wf3 Qf8  
29.Qxb6 Wc2 30.Qd7† Qg7 31.Wg4† Qh8  
32.Wd4† f6 33.b6 e5 34.Wd5 Ed8 35.b7  
Qc5 36.b8=Q

1–0

### 18. Cvetkovic – Miljkovic

Serbia 2008

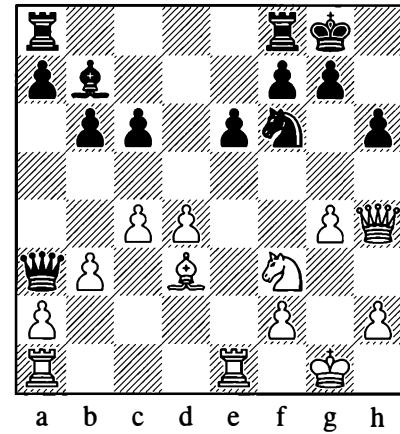


This position is seemingly quiet with nothing special going on. But actually White has the chance to create a kingside attack because of several factors: the black queen is offside, all of White's pieces are pointing

towards the kingside, and there is no way for the black pieces to defend his kingside.

### 17.g4!!

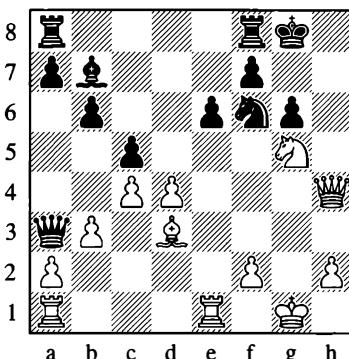
This is rather a brutal move, but there is really no good way to meet it. Within a few moves, the black kingside will be taken completely apart.



### 17...♝fd8?!

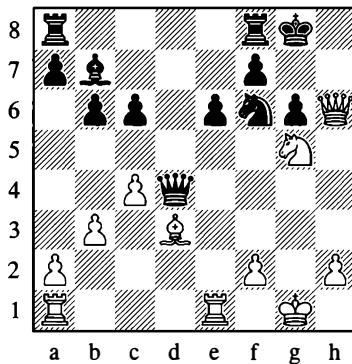
This does not work, but neither does anything else. Here is a long list of variations:

17...c5 18.g5 hxg5 (18...♝xf3 19.gxf6 and wins) 19.♝xg5 g6



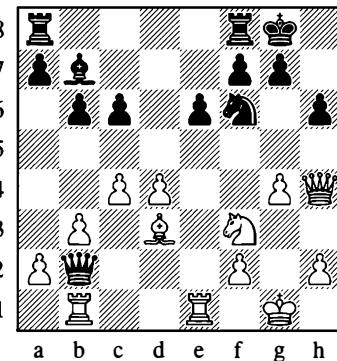
20.♝xe6! fxe6 21.♛h6 Black is lost.

17...♛d6 18.g5 hxg5 19.♝xg5 g6 20.♛h6  
White has a winning attack. He is threatening ♛xg6 and after 20...♛xd4 he has:



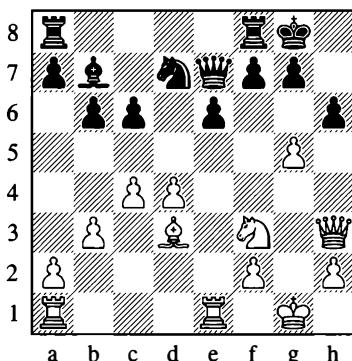
21.♝e4! ♛xa1† 22.♚f1 and Black is mated.

17...♛b2 is another way to attack d4, but Black cannot keep the tension: 18.♝ab1!



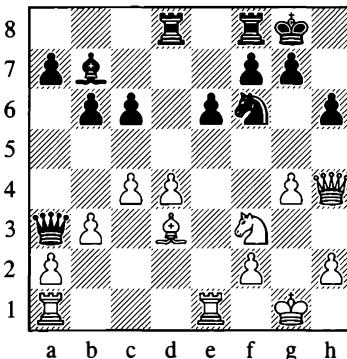
Now 18...♛c3 19.♝e3 leads to a winning attack, as does 18...♛xa2 19.g5 hxg5 20.♝xg5. For example: 20...g6 21.♝e2 ♛a3 22.♝xe6 fxe6 23.♝xe6 and White wins material.

17...♛e7 is one of the better tries. White has a large advantage after 18.g5 ♛d7 19.♛h3±.



White will win a pawn. Sure, he has compromised his kingside, but he is the more active player on that part of the board.

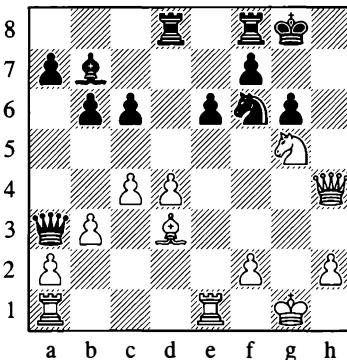
17... $\mathbb{E}ad8$



This is probably the best try. However, White is doing very well all the same:

18.g5 hxg5 19. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$  g6

White has a strong attacking position.

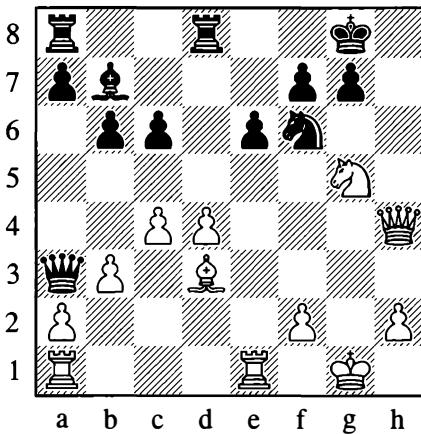


20. $\mathbb{Q}xg6!$  fxg6 21. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$   $\mathbb{E}d7$  22. $\mathbb{W}g5$   $\mathbb{E}g7$   
 22... $\mathbb{E}f7$  23. $\mathbb{Q}h1$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  24. $\mathbb{W}h4\#!$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$   
 25. $\mathbb{Q}g1$  and White wins.  
 23. $\mathbb{W}h6$   $\mathbb{E}f7$  24. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$   $\mathbb{E}xg7$  25. $\mathbb{E}e6$   $\mathbb{W}b2$   
 26. $\mathbb{E}a1\pm$

Black is balancing on the edge, though the game is not yet decided.

**18.g5 hxg5 19. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$**

White is winning. There is no good defence to the threat of 20. $\mathbb{Q}h7\#$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  21. $\mathbb{Q}g6!$  and the light squares disintegrate.



19... $\mathbb{W}b2$

19... $\mathbb{Q}c8$  20. $\mathbb{Q}h7\#$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  21. $\mathbb{Q}e4$  and White wins at least a pawn.

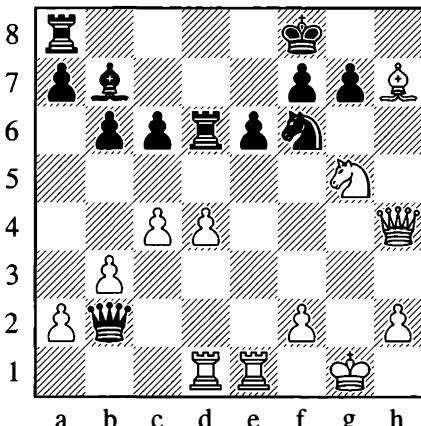
**20. $\mathbb{Q}h7\#$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  21. $\mathbb{E}ad1!?$**

21. $\mathbb{Q}g6!$  may have been a short cut, but White is headed for the right place anyway.  
 21... $\mathbb{W}xd4$  22. $\mathbb{W}h8\#$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  23. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$   $\mathbb{W}g4\#$   
 24. $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{W}xg5$  25. $\mathbb{W}xg8\#$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  26. $\mathbb{Q}xe6\#$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$   
 27. $\mathbb{Q}e8\#$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  28. $\mathbb{W}f7$  and so on.

**21... $\mathbb{E}d6$**

21... $\mathbb{W}xa2$  22. $\mathbb{Q}g6!$  and White wins immediately.

21... $c5$  22. $d5$  and White wins.



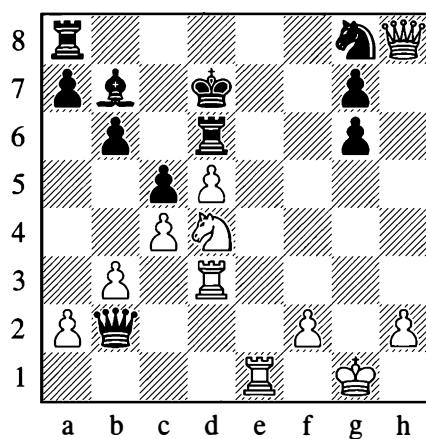
22.♕g6! ♖xg6 23.♖h8† ♔g8 24.♖d3

24.c5! bxc5 25.♖d3 wins instantly.

24...c5 25.d5 ♔e7 26.♕xe6 ♔d7

26.♖xe6 27.♖xe6† ♔f7 28.♖f3† ♔f6  
29.♖exf6† and White wins.

27.♕d4



27...♖d8

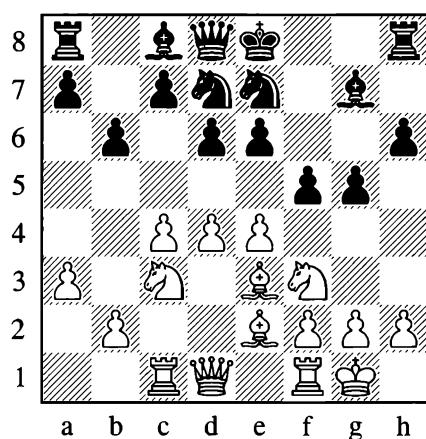
27...cxsd4 28.♖xg7† ♔c8 29.♖f3 and wins.

28.♖h3† ♔c7 29.♖b5† ♔b8 30.♖xd6  
♖xd6 31.♖g3

1–0

### 19. Baburin – McShane

Kilkenny 2002

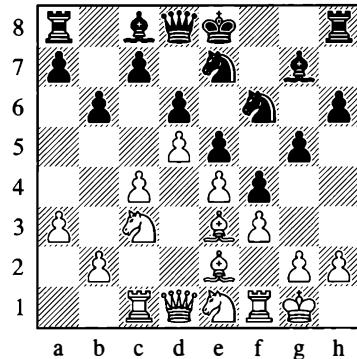


Alexander Baburin is the chief editor of *Chess Today* as well as Ireland's only grandmaster. He moved there from Russia in the early 1990s and has been an important part of their chess scene ever since. In *Chess Today* he gave the above position from one of his own games.

11.c5!

It is important for White to create weaknesses in the black position. Other moves do not easily achieve this goal:

11.d5 e5 leads to a typical sort of King's Indian position, where all of Black's moves make perfect sense, but a2-a3 less so: 12.♕e1 ♔f6 13.f3 f4



14.♖f2 h5 and the position is completely unclear. White can try 15.c5?!, aiming to get there first, but it looks like Black is coming on fast as well.

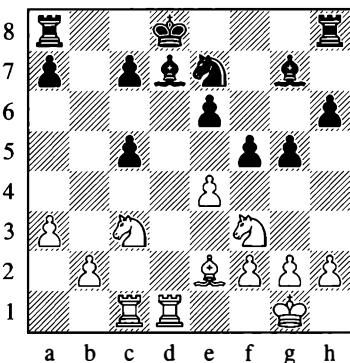
11.exf5 ♔xf5 does not expose the black position in any significant way.

11...0-0

It is difficult for Black to do anything but accept the opening of the c-file. The relevant lines are:

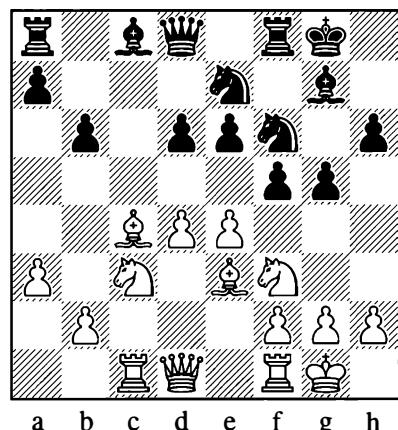
11...dxc5 12.exf5! This is very strong, now that the centre has been opened. Both 12...exf5 13.dxc5 and 12...♔xf5 13.♕c4! are very promising for White.

11... $\text{b}x\text{c}5$  12. $\text{d}x\text{c}5$   $\text{Q}x\text{c}5$  is more principled, but Black's chances of reaching a dignified position are low. White plays simple chess and enjoys a large positional plus: 13. $\text{Q}x\text{c}5$   $\text{d}x\text{c}5$  14. $\text{W}x\text{d}8+$   $\text{K}x\text{d}8$  15. $\text{E}f\text{d}1\uparrow$   $\text{Qd}7$



Here White has the option of playing 16. $\text{e}xf5$   $\text{Q}xf5$  17. $\text{B}b5$   $\text{Q}d6$  18. $\text{Q}xd7$   $\text{Q}xd7$  19. $\text{Q}a4!$ , or the possibly even stronger 16. $\text{Q}a4$   $\text{fxe}4$  17. $\text{Q}xc5$   $\text{Q}d5$  18. $\text{Q}d4$   $\text{Q}e7$  19. $\text{Q}xd7$   $\text{Q}xd7$  20. $\text{Q}g4$   $\text{Q}xd4$  21. $\text{Q}xd4$   $\text{Q}d6$  22. $\text{Q}xe4$ , in both cases with a clear plus and good control.

**12.cxd6 cxd6 13.Qc4 Qf6**



**14.e5**

14. $\text{exf5}!$  would leave Black with a poor structure in the centre and a problem on the c-file.

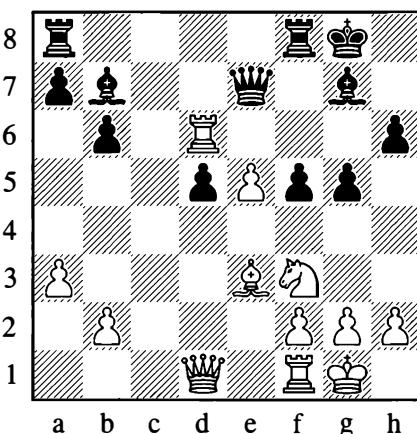
**14...Qfd5?!**

McShane misses his chance to play 14... $\text{dxe}5$ , when White should probably play 15. $\text{Q}xe5!$  with a slight pull, rather than allow Black to get into a defendable ending after 15. $\text{dxe}5$   $\text{W}xd1$  16. $\text{E}cx\text{d}1$   $\text{Q}g4$ .

**15.Qxd5 Qxd5 16.Qxd5 exd5 17.Ec6 dxe5 18.dxe5**

18. $\text{Q}xe5$  was more natural, but the position, though better for White, is still relatively complex.

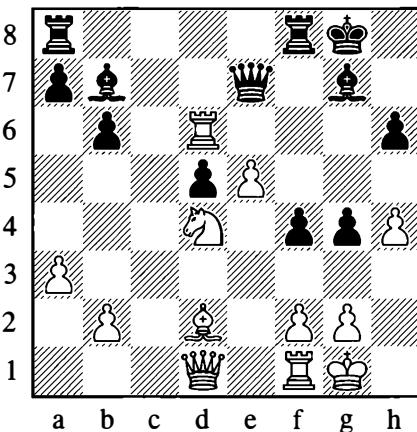
**18...Eb7 19.Ed6 We7**



**20.h4?**

20. $\text{E}e1!$  and White might still retain some advantage.

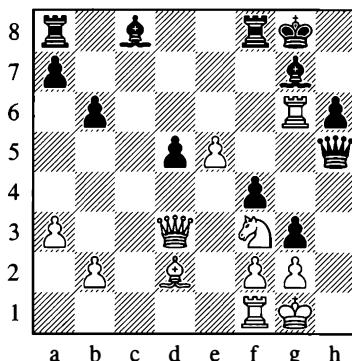
**20...g4 21.Qd4 f4 22.Qd2**



**22... $\mathbb{W}xe5??$**

Chess blindness.

22... $\mathbb{W}xh4$  followed by ...g3 or ...f3! would have given Black a strong initiative. The game could continue: 23. $\mathbb{E}g6$  g3 24. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{W}h5$  25. $\mathbb{W}b1$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  26. $\mathbb{W}d3$



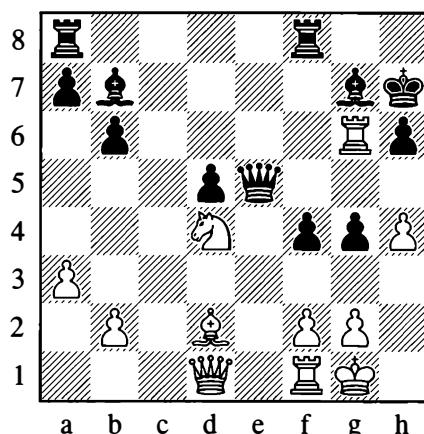
26... $\mathbb{Q}h8!$  27. $\mathbb{E}d6$   $\mathbb{Q}g4$  It is now White who has to defend. I am sure he can, but the responsibility is on his head.

**23. $\mathbb{E}g6!$**

23. $\mathbb{E}d7!$  was also strong.

**23... $\mathbb{Q}h7?$**

23... $\mathbb{E}f6$  had to be tried, although the position after 24. $\mathbb{E}e1!$  is very dangerous for Black.



**24. $\mathbb{E}e1!$**

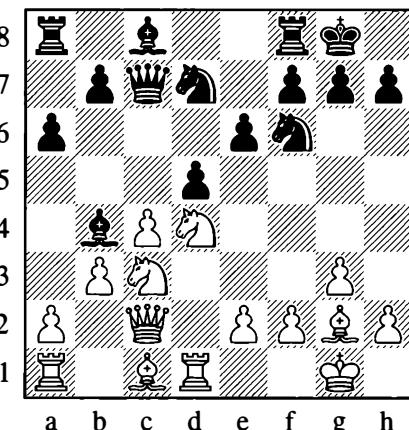
White brings in the last bit and the game comes to a quick conclusion.

24... $\mathbb{W}h5$  25. $\mathbb{E}xg4$  f3 26. $\mathbb{W}c2\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  27. $\mathbb{E}xg7$   $\mathbb{Q}xg7$  28. $\mathbb{E}e7\uparrow$   $\mathbb{E}f7$  29. $\mathbb{Q}f5\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  30. $\mathbb{E}xf7\uparrow$   $\mathbb{W}xf7$  31. $\mathbb{Q}b4\uparrow$

1–0

## 20. Aronian – Ponomariov

Wijk aan Zee 2007



The position appears to require immediate action, but actually Black's "threats" would only open files to the benefit of White.

**12. $\mathbb{Q}a4!$**

The main alternative also attempts to make something out of the b-file:

12. $\mathbb{E}b1?$

But this gives Black the chance to strike in the centre:

12... $\mathbb{Q}xc3?$  13. $\mathbb{W}xc3$  e5 14. $\mathbb{Q}f5$

14. $\mathbb{Q}f3$  d4 15. $\mathbb{W}c2$  a5 also looks fine for Black; his dark squares are well protected.

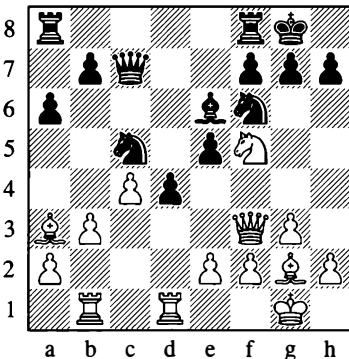
14... $\mathbb{Q}c5$  15. $\mathbb{W}f3$

I should mention 15. $\mathbb{Q}xg7?$   $\mathbb{Q}xg7$  16.cxd5  $\mathbb{W}d6$ , when White has sufficient compensation, but the evaluation of the position is entirely unclear.

15...d4 16.Qa3

The bishop does not achieve much on the other diagonal. After 16.Qg5 Qfe4 17.Qe7† Qh8 18.Qh4 Qc3 19.Qd5 Qxd5 20.cxd5 f6 Black is fine. White's bishops are not anything special here.

16...Qe6



I believe Black is okay here. The critical line seems to be:

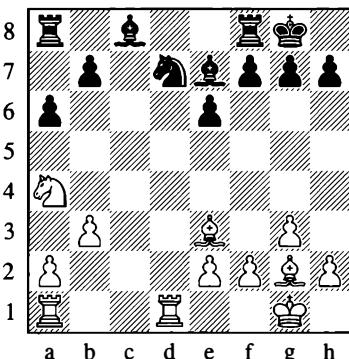
17.e3 d3 18.e4 Qxf5 19.exf5 e4 20.Qe3 b6

If White is better, it is not a lot.

**12...dxc4**

Black appears to have no alternative to opening up the g2-b7 diagonal and the b-file.

12...Qe7 13.cxd5 Qxc2 14.Qxc2 Qxd5  
15.Qe3! Qxe3 16.Qxe3±



Black is entirely tied up. Surviving this against Aronian would be quite an achievement.

**13.Qxc4 Qxc4**

This leads to a seriously unpleasant technical position.

13...Qa5 14.Qf4 Qe7 15.Qac1± looks pretty gloomy as well, but might give Black a few more chances of survival.

**14.bxc4 Qe8**

14...Qe7 15.Qb1 Qb8 16.Qf4 is pure devastation for Black.

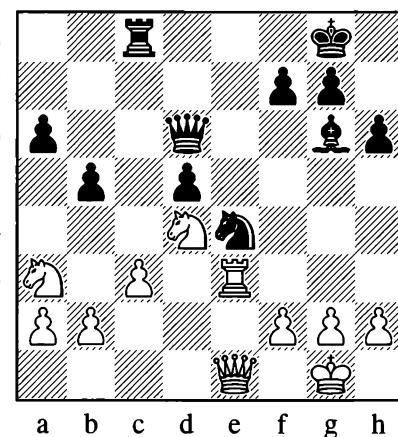
**15.Qb1**

It is difficult to judge White's advantage accurately here. Slight or significant? Somewhere in between is my guesstimate.

In the game Aronian did not give his opponent too many chances. The advantage oscillated between slight and large until he won on move 39.

## 21. Tiviakov – Granda Zuniga

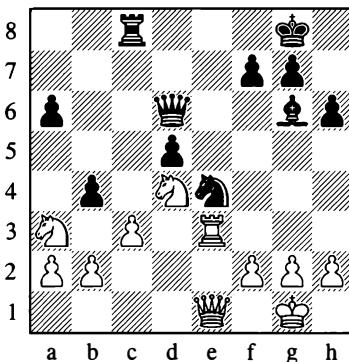
El Sauzal (rapid) 2008



**24...Qf6?!**

24...Qc5?! with the idea of ...Qa4 would give Black a decent position.

But strongest is: 24...b4!!†



This is a fantastic move for many reasons, but let us start with focusing on the two most prominent ones:

1) It anticipates and prevents White's idea of playing  $\mathbb{Q}a3-c2-b4$ , as indeed happened in the game. If we think prophylactically, we will hopefully understand that we need to do something about this before it happens. Granda Zuniga had a bad day and did not pay attention to it until it was already on the board and thus too late.

2) The stability of the knight on d4 is greatly undermined. Black will be able to exploit this with energetic play. White will go from a position of control to a total meltdown.

There are other small points as well, such as the creation of a passed d-pawn and opening the c-file for the rook; all factors that will be useful later on. But these two are the main reasons for this move.

$25.\mathbb{Q}ac2$   $bxc3$   $26.bxc3$   $\mathbb{W}c5$  would lead to a great advantage for Black. White cannot realistically hold the c-pawn.

$25.cxb4$

This is the only critical reply. If White cannot play this, then Black has greatly improved his position.

$25...\mathbb{W}f6!$

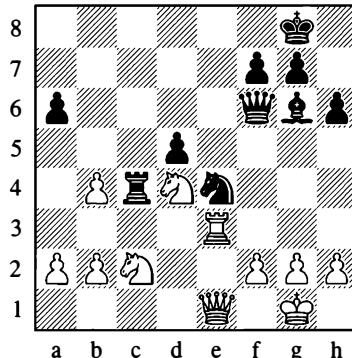
Already we see that the stability of the knight is undermined.

$26.\mathbb{E}d3$  loses to  $26...\mathbb{Q}xf2!$ , so White has to play:

$26.\mathbb{Q}ac2$

Black continues his attack with:

$26...\mathbb{E}c4!$

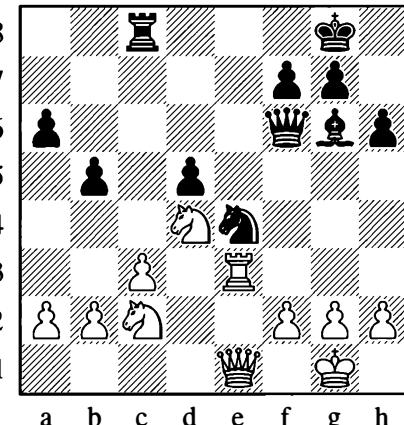


Black is much better. For example:

$27.f3 \mathbb{Q}g5$   $28.\mathbb{W}d2 \mathbb{Q}e6$

And White loses some material. He still has fighting chances, but essentially he is struggling.

$25.\mathbb{Q}ac2$



$25...\mathbb{Q}d6?$

A simple blunder.  $25...\mathbb{W}d6\pm$  with a passive but defendable position was better.

**26.♕b4**

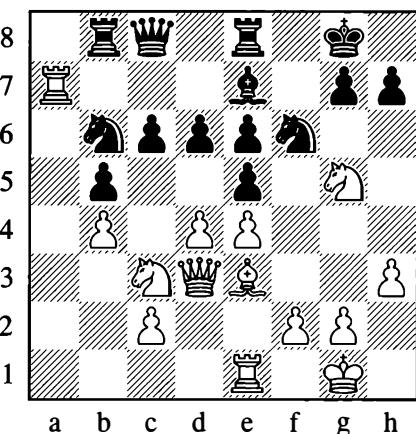
White wins a pawn and the game.

**26...♝e4 27.f3 ♕c4 28.♝e2 a5 29.♕bc6**

1–0

**22. Caruana – Hautot**

Novi Sad 2009



White has many ways to keep an edge, but nothing compares with the idea of taking control over the light squares and having a good knight against a bad bishop, as Caruana accomplished in the game.

**19.d5! exd5**

Not yet ready to resort to desperate measures, Black allows White to carry out his strategic idea.

**19...♝bx d5**

This is not as stupid as it looks at first sight.

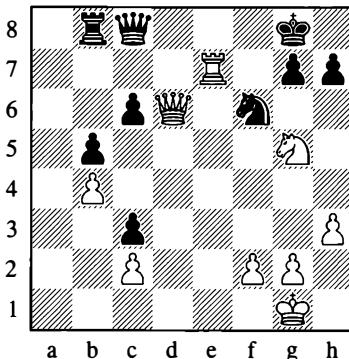
But White still enjoys a serious edge after:

**20.exd5 exd5 21.♗d1!±**

White is ready to regroup his pieces.

The main point is of course that White is winning after:

**21...d4? 22.♕xd4 exd4 23.♝exe7 ♜xe7 24.♝xe7 dx3 25.♛xd6**



A possible conclusion to this hypothetical game could be:

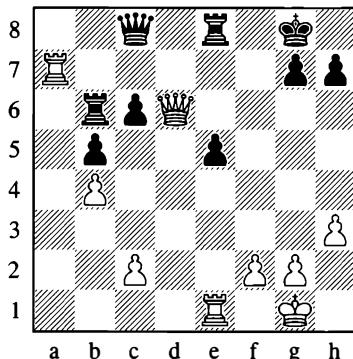
**25...h6 26.♝xg7†! ♜xg7 27.♛e7† ♜g6 28.♞f3! ♜g8 29.♞h4† ♜g5 30.♛e5† ♜xh4 31.♛xf6† ♜g5**

**31...♝h5 32.g4† and wins.**

**32.g3† ♜h5 33.♛f7† ♜g6 34.♛f3† ♜g5 35.h4#**

**20.♝xb6! ♜xb6**

Black could also seek his chances in the fourth phase with **20...dxe4 21.♞cxe4 ♜xe4 22.♞xe4 ♜xb6 23.♞xd6 ♜xd6 24.♛xd6**.



But this would also give White a big advantage. Black is weak everywhere you look.

**21.exd5 ♜a6 22.♝xa6 ♜xa6 23.♞ge4 ♜b8**

**23...♝xe4 24.♛xe4 ♜c8 25.♛g4 ♜c7 26.dxc6 and White is winning, based on ♜e6† and ♜d5.**

**24.♗d1**

24.♕xf6† ♜xf6 25.♗f5 was slightly more accurate, although White is significantly better no matter what.

**24...♝b7**

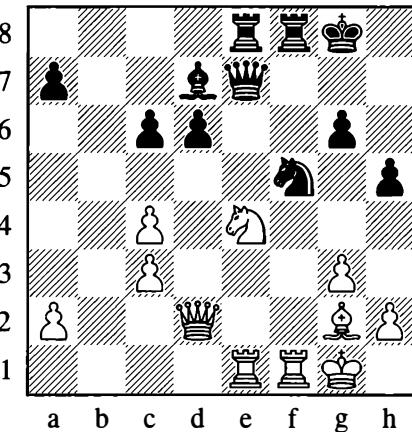
24...♝xe4 25.♗xe4± would also allow White to keep control over the light squares.

25.♕xf6† ♜xf6 26.♗e4 ♜e7 27.dxc6 ♜xc6  
 28.♗xd6 ♜xd6 29.♗xd6 ♜xd6 30.♗xd6  
 ♜c8 31.♗d5 e4 32.♗xb5 ♜xc2 33.♗c5 ♜b2  
 34.♗c4 ♜b1† 35.♗h2 ♜e1 36.♗g3 e3 37.fxe3  
 ♜xe3† 38.♗f4 ♜b3 39.♗e5 ♜f7 40.♗d6 h5  
 41.♗c6 ♜f6 42.b5 ♜b2 43.b6 ♜xg2 44.b7  
 ♜b2 45.h4 g5 46.hxg5† ♜xg5 47.♗c5† ♜g4  
 48.♗b5 ♜c2† 49.♗d6 ♜d2† 50.♗c7

1–0

**23. Korchnoi – Polugaevsky**

Leningrad 1963

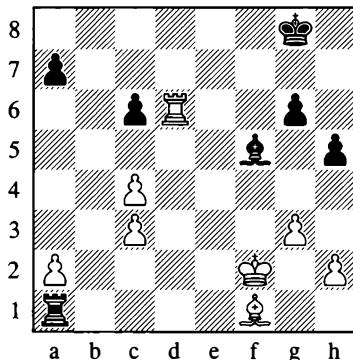


The white knight on e4 is beautifully stable (Black not being able to push ...d5 right away). Therefore White is able to look towards the d6- and f6-squares with confidence.

**24.h3!**

In a position as fluid as this one, it is always pleasing when slow play is as strong as it is here.

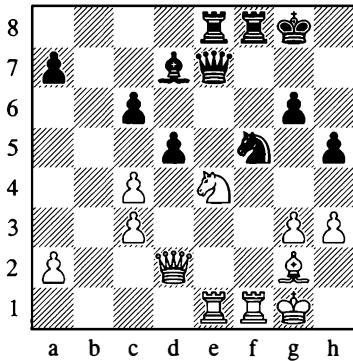
White has a combination at his disposal, but it is of little value: 24.♗xd6?! ♜xd6 25.♗xd6 ♜xd6 26.♗d1 White does indeed win the pawn back, but Black is able to become active and should hold the endgame with decent play after 26...♜xf1† 27.♗xf1 (27.♗xf1?! ♜xc4!) 27...♜f5 28.♗xd6 ♜e1 29.♗f2 ♜a1.



White has some pressure of course, but Black should cope with it.

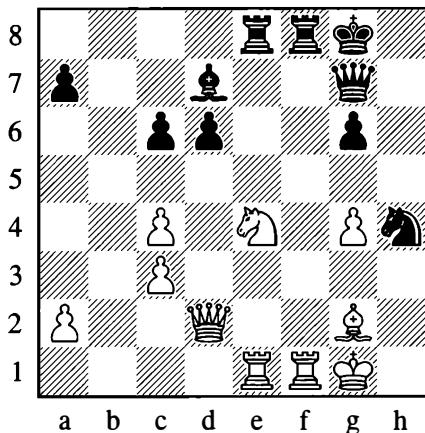
**24...♝g7?!**

This fails to put up a serious defence. 24...d5! was a better try, though White is of course preferable after this pawn sacrifice.



25.cxd5 cxd5 26.♗xd5† ♜e6 27.♗c6 ♜c8 28.♗a6± Black does not have sufficient compensation, although he has created enough confusion to make the outcome a little unclear.

**25.g4 hxg4 26.hxg4 ♜h4**



**27.g5±**

Exchanging on f8 was a bit more accurate.

**27...♝xf1†?**

This makes things worse, but White's advantage was of course immense.

**28.♝xf1 ♜xe4**

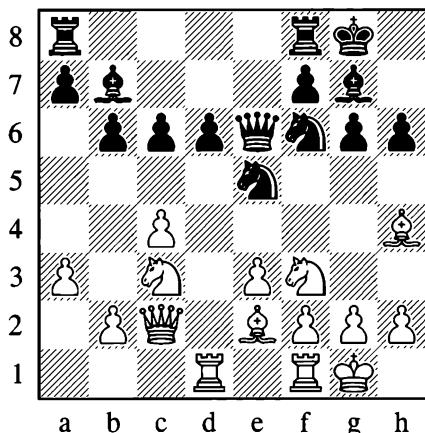
28...♜xg2 29.♝f6† ♜h8 30.♝xg2 and White wins.

**29.♝xe4 ♜f5 30.♝xf5 ♜xf5 31.♝e1 ♜d7  
32.♝d4 ♜c2 33.♝e2 ♜f5 34.♝d2 ♜e4  
35.♝e3 ♜g4† 36.♝f2 ♜f5† 37.♝e1 d5  
38.♝f2 ♜g4 39.♝f4 ♜g1† 40.♝f1 ♜c5  
41.♝f7† ♜h8 42.♝e8†**

1–0

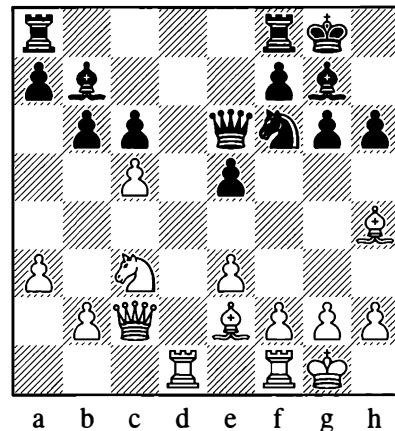
## 24. Gelfand – Chandler

Moscow 1990



White would have a normal slight edge after 15.♝d4 followed by 16.e4, but Gelfand found a stronger plan, based on the transformation of advantages. Instead of putting pressure on the slightly weak pawn on d6, he puts pressure on the black queenside and shuts both bishops out of the game.

**15.♝xe5! dxе5 16.c5!**



Black is now put in a difficult position. His structure is poor and he is lacking slightly in development. If he does not do something now, and something good, he will find himself facing problems that cannot be solved no matter how well he plays subsequently.

**16...♝d5?!**

I have analysed a number of moves here, as the position can quickly get surprisingly concrete.

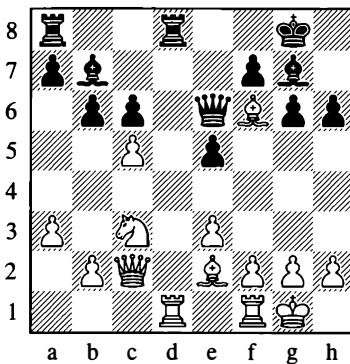
16...bxc5?! 17.♝a4 would be a structural disaster.

**16...♝fd8?!**

This looks natural, but is refuted with direct measures:

**17.♝xf6!**

This solution is the strongest, although 17.♝xd8 ♜xd8 18.♝a4! is also interesting.



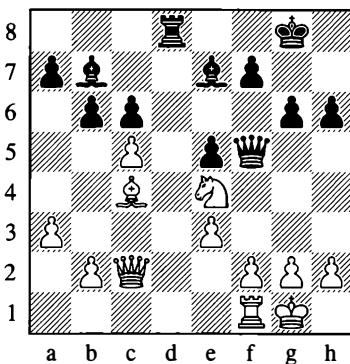
17... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$

17... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$  18. $\mathbb{W}b3! \pm$  is very uncomfortable.

18. $\mathbb{Q}e4$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$

18... $\mathbb{W}e7$  19. $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  20. $f4$  and White wins.

19. $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{W}f5$  20. $\mathbb{Q}xd8\#$   $\mathbb{Q}xd8$



21. $f4!$

White has a crushing attack.

16... $g5$

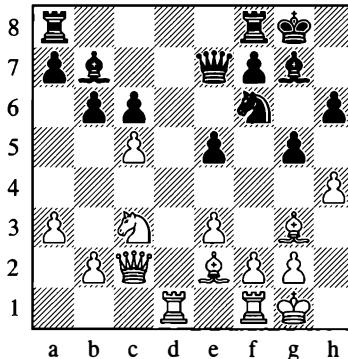
This was definitely the best try.

17. $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{W}e7!$

Black has to fight for the dark squares or he will be crushed. The following is very difficult chess and would not necessarily be found over the board, even by the best players in the world. But it is important to understand what the “best play” is, in order to improve our intuition and decision making.

18. $h4!!$

White puts pressure on this new weakness in order to keep the initiative. If he spent time on the queenside with 18. $cxb6$ , he would still be better, but would feel some of the momentum disappear, reducing his initiative (and thus his advantage).



Black now has two options worth analysing in depth.

a) 18... $g4$

Quite a natural move. If Black has time to cramp the bishop, he will have adequate counterplay. The only problem is he is not well enough developed.

19. $\mathbb{Q}e4!$

This looks counter-intuitive, provoking the advance of the black f-pawn. But without the support of a fully developed army, the advance will prove very risky.

19. $\mathbb{W}f5$   $\mathbb{W}xc5$  20. $\mathbb{W}xe5$   $\mathbb{W}xe5$  21. $\mathbb{Q}xe5\pm$

19. $\mathbb{Q}d2?!$   $\mathbb{W}xc5$  20. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$  also offers White a dangerous initiative for a pawn he is very likely to get back.

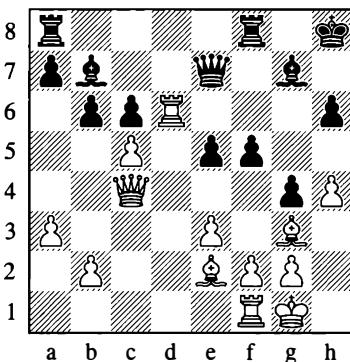
19... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  20. $\mathbb{W}xe4$   $f5$  21. $\mathbb{W}c4\#$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$

Maybe the king is better on h7, but White has a big advantage in any case.

22. $\mathbb{Q}d6\pm$

The rook is established as a plank in Black’s eye. To remove it would leave a deadly splinter in the form of a passed pawn.

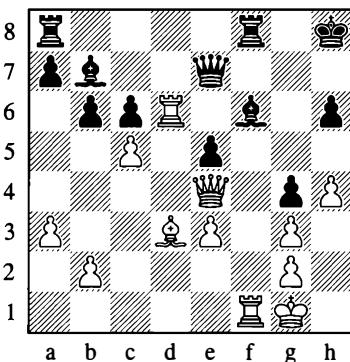
If Black tries to solve his problems through active play, White is ready:



22...f4?! 23.♕e4!! fxg3

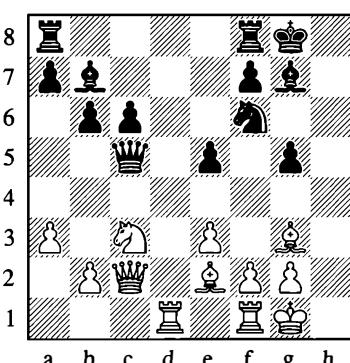
23...♚c8 24.exf4 and White wins.

24.♗d3 ♚f6 25.fxg3



Black cannot defend his king.

b) 18...♛xc5 19.hxg5 hxg5

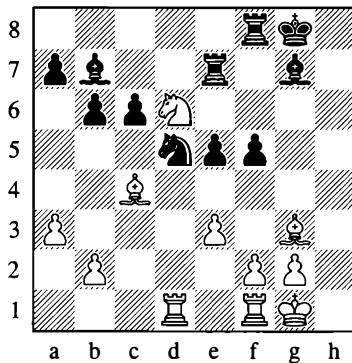


20.♛f5!

White regains his pawn soon enough. Black's position is heading towards being X-rated.

20...♝ae8

20...e4 21.♛xc5 bxc5 22.♝a4± would be true joy for a strong technician like Gelfand.  
21.♛xg5 ♜d5 22.♝e4 ♛e7 23.♛xe7 ♜xe7  
24.♝d6 f5 25.♝c4



25...♝c8

25...♜a8 26.e4 fxe4 27.♝xe4± again gives White a considerable technical advantage.

26.♝fe1!±

Including the last piece in the play and threatening ♜xf5! followed by e3-e4; or just ♜xc8 and e3-e4.

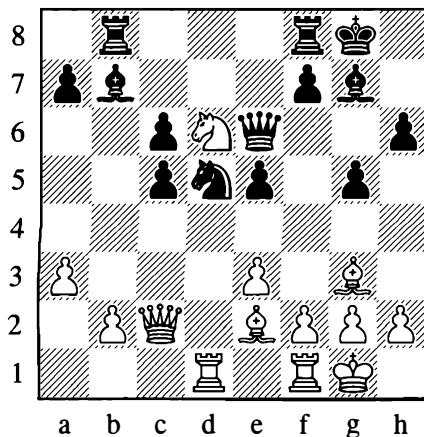
17.♝e4 g5 18.♝g3 ♜ab8

18...f5 19.♝d6 ♜ab8 20.e4 also gives White an enormous structural advantage.

19.♝d6

White's advantage is obvious.

19...bxc5



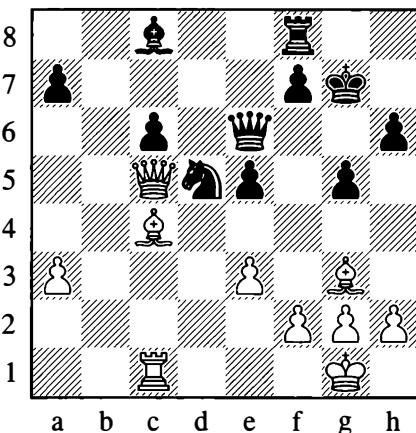
**20.♘f5!?**

There was nothing wrong with the simple 20.♗xc5±, but Gelfand decides to obtain dominance of the dark squares on top of his other positional advantages. It involves a temporary pawn sacrifice and not everything is entirely clear, but it works brilliantly in practice.

**20...♝c8 21.♞xg7 ♘xg7 22.♗xc5**

White continues his grand operation on the queenside.

**22...♝xb2 23.♗c4 ♜c2 24.♝cl ♜xc1 25.♝xc1**

**25...e4?**

After 25...f5 White can secure his advantage with 26.e4! fxe4 27.♗e1±, but this was still Black's best chance.

**26.♗xa7**

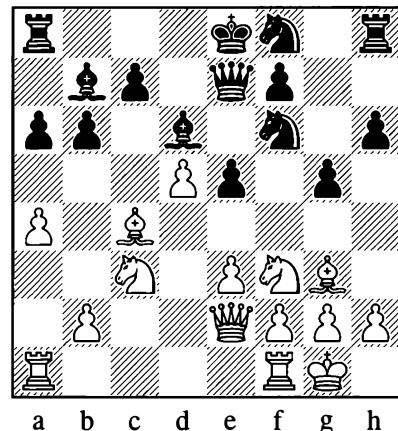
White is technically winning.

**26...♝g8 27.♗c5 ♘d7 28.a4 ♜a8 29.a5 ♘c8  
30.♔b3 ♘a6 31.♔a4 ♘b7 32.h3 ♜f6 33.♔h2  
h5 34.♗b1 h4 35.♗xb7 hxg3† 36.fxg3 ♜f2  
37.♗b3 ♜e8 38.♗xc6**

**1–0**

**25. Ding Liren – Ipatov**

Athens 2012



Obviously every game in a tournament is significant, but this moment is no doubt the one that Ding Liren will remember with regret. If he had won this game, he might have gone on to win the tournament, instead of having to settle for the bronze medal behind Ipatov.

**15.♘d2?±**

This move is fine, of course, but it achieves nothing positive. The game was eventually drawn on move 32.

The powerful option was:

**15.a5!**

This pins down the a6-pawn. White evidently rejected this option on account of:

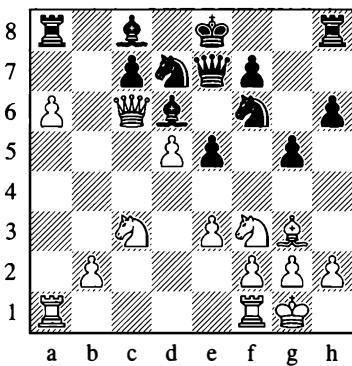
**15...b5**

But here White has a strong combination:

**16.♗xb5†! axb5 17.a6!**

Surprisingly it turns out that White will win back the piece.

If Black retreats with 17...♝c8, White has: 18.♗xb5 ♘d7 19.♗c6

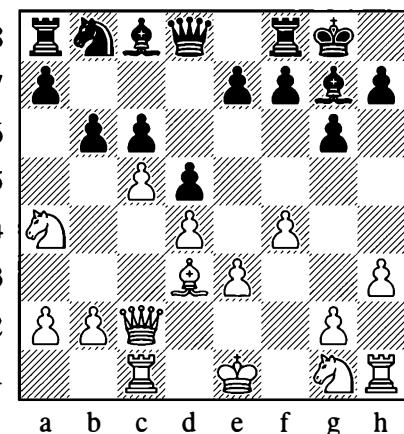


Black has to return the piece.

After 17... $\mathbb{Q}xa6$  18. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$   $\mathbb{Q}xa6$  19. $\mathbb{W}xb5\#$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  20. $\mathbb{W}xa6\#$  White has a small positional advantage, but also an extra pawn for the long lonely nights.

## 26. Wang Yue – Carlsen

Nanjing 2009



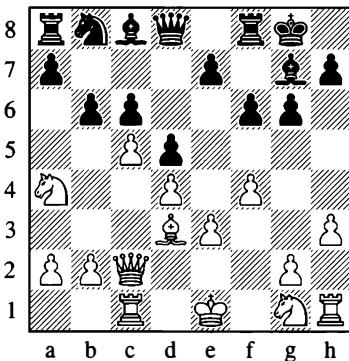
White's major weakness is on the dark squares and the e3-pawn in particular. As sometimes happens, getting to the weakness requires breaking through at the strongest point.

### 13...e5!!

Black correctly decides that to take advantage of the dark squares, he needs to act speedily. Technically this is a pawn sacrifice, but this

is actually not so significant; the weaknesses and the time gained are far more important. In the game White decides to return the pawn in order to reach the middlegame with as few aches and pains as possible.

Black could of course have prepared this break, but White could then have muddied the waters by attacking the newly created weakness in the black position: 13...f6



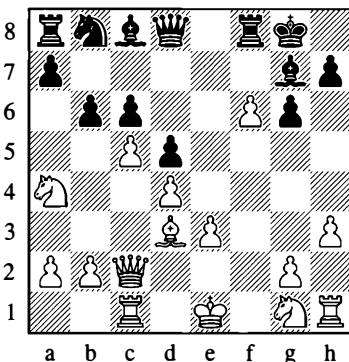
14.h4! e5 15.h5 $\infty$

**14.dxe5**

14.fxe5

This is of course also possible.

14...f6 15.exf6



Here Black has an extra option worth considering (in addition to the reasonable recaptures):

15... $\mathbb{Q}h6!\mp$

The purpose is to prevent the white king from escaping to the safety of the h1-square, which would then require the knight to make it from b8 to g3 in order to create serious threats.

White can choose to enter a full blooded battle with:

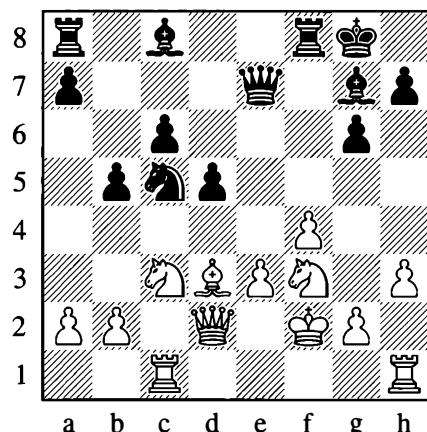
16.♕xg6 ♖xf6 17.♕xh7+ ♔g7 18.♘f3 ♕xe3

The white king is very uncomfortable in the centre, but the black pieces are not ready to take full advantage of it.

#### 14...f6 15.exf6

Black also has a better game after 15.e6 ♕xe6 16.♘f3 b5 17.♘c3 ♘a6+, when the two bishops will be a strong long-term weapon; especially in the hands of such a technician as Carlsen.

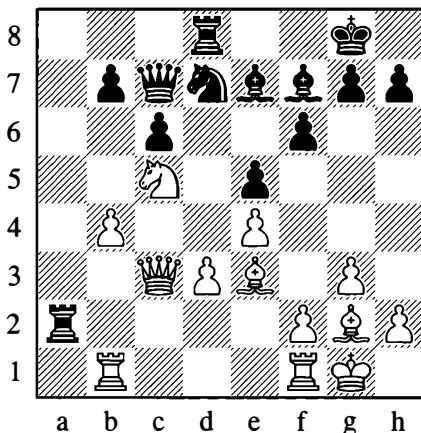
15...♖xf6 16.♘f3 ♖e7 17.♗f2 b5 18.♘c3 ♘a6! 19.♗d2 ♘xc5+



Black has a most pleasant game for various reasons; nevertheless White managed to hold the draw in 58 moves.

#### 27. Marin – De La Villa Garcia

Benasque 2010



White's knight is very strong on c5 and will have to be eliminated in due course. It is therefore right that Black prepares his structure for this. Currently, if Black takes the knight the recapture would be bxc5, making the b7-pawn backward and weak. Therefore the right move is:

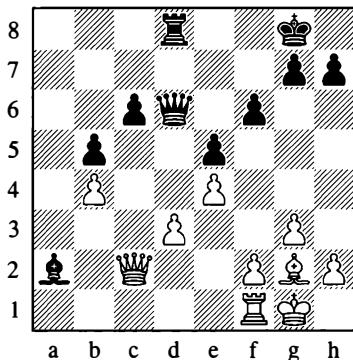
#### 22...b5!

White's choice is now quite difficult, which already shows the strength of Black's last move.

#### 23.♗fd1?!

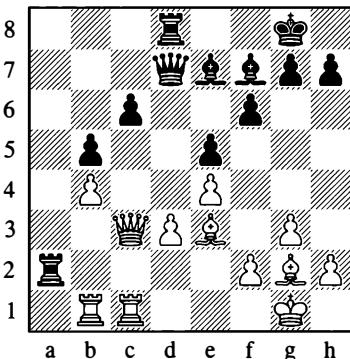
Passive play leads to a slightly worse position where Black is allowed to be active.

23.♗a1 ♘xc5 24.♗xa2 ♗xa2 25.♗xc5 ♗xc5  
26.♗xc5 ♖d6 27.♗c2+



This may be slightly better than the game, as the queen is quite well placed on c2.

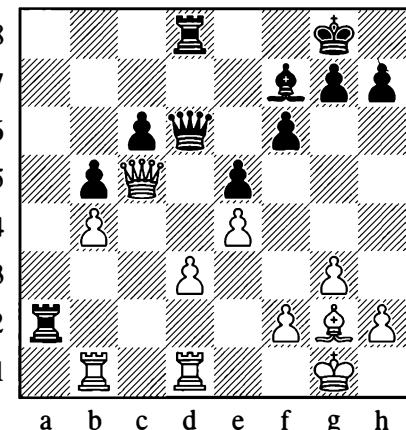
But the best defence was undoubtedly 23.Qxd7! ♖xd7 24.♖fc1, with quick counterplay against the c6-pawn.



Black has an easier game after 24...♜a6 with ideas such as 25.♕f1 ♜da8! and 25.♕a1 ♜a4!.

The best move is probably 25.♖d1, when Black is very comfortable after something like 25...♝h5 26.♖d2 ♜e6, although it is not really enough to call an advantage.

**23...Qxc5 24.♕xc5 ♜xc5 25.♕xc5 ♜d6!**



Black's understanding that keeping the queens on would be in White's favour is rather beautiful. White now struggles to create counterplay.

**26.♗xd6 ♜xd6† 27.♕f1 g5!? 28.♕a1?**

This only accelerates White's troubles because of tactics.

28.♖dc1 ♜f8†

**28...♜a4!**

The problems with the b-pawn increase.

**29.♕e2**

This move appears timid, but Black needs to stay alert.

**29...h5?**

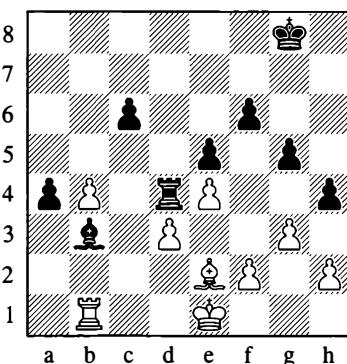
This may seem expansionist, but in practice all it does is to put the pawn in harm's way.

29...♜d4† would have been deeply unpleasant for White.

**30.f4**

Creating activity for the king and seeking the exchange of pawns.

30.♕xa4? bx a4 31.♕a1 ♜b3 32.♕f1 ♜d4 33.♕e1 h4 34.♕b1†



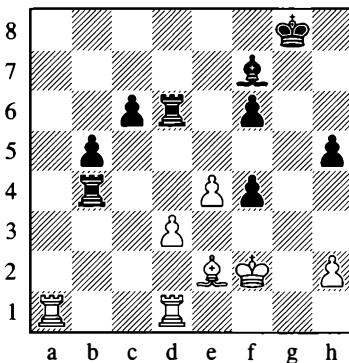
White plans to continue ♜d2-c3, with drawing chances. The main idea is that 34...♜xb4? 35.♕d1! would lead straight to a draw, but Black does not have to go for this, of course.

**30...gx f4**

30...♜xb4† was stronger, I think.

**31.gxf4 exf4 32.Qf2 Qg7**

32...Bxb4? would show us one point of 30.f4.



After 33.Bg1†! Qf8 34.Ba8† Qe7 35.Bg7 White has good counterplay, and it is perhaps Black who now has to be careful: 35...Bd7! 36.Qxh5 Bb2† 37.Qe1 Qe6! 38.Qg4† f5 39.Qxf5† Qf6 40.Qxd7 Qxg7 41.Qxc6 b4 and so on...

### 33.Qf3 f5

33...Bxb4 34.Bg1†! Qh6 35.Ba8 and White has enough counterplay.

### 34.Qxf4?!

White could have drawn with: 34.Bxa4 bxa4 35.Ba1 fxe4† (35...Qb3 36.Qxf4=) 36.dxe4 h4 37.Qxf4 Bd2 38.Qe3 Ba2 39.Bxa2 Bxa2 40.Qd4 a3 41.Qc3 Qf6 42.b5 cxb5 43.Qb4 Qe5 44.Qxa3 Qc4 45.Qxc4 bxc4 46.Qb4 Qd4 47.e5!=

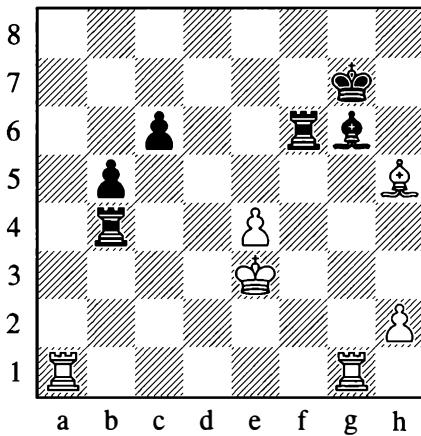
**34...fxe4 35.dxe4 Bf6† 36.Qe3 Bxb4†**

**37.Bg1†**

37.Bd7!† would have given better drawing chances, though there are still some practical problems.

**37...Bg6 38.Qxh5**

38.Qd3 Bd6 39.Qa3 was better, but feels somewhat artificial.



**38...Bxe4†**

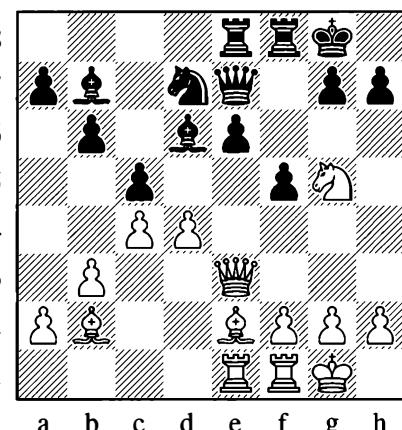
It seems very likely Black is winning by this point. Big fans of rook endings can invest a full day's analysis on this question and tell me the result!

39.Qd3 Bd6† 40.Qc3 Qh6 41.Bxg6† Bxg6 42.Qxg6 Qxg6 43.Qd3 Bc4 44.Bf1 Qg5 45.Bf8 c5 46.Bc8 Qg4 47.Bg8† Qf5 48.Bh8 Bd4† 49.Qe3 Qe6 50.h4 b4 51.Bc8 Qd5 52.Bd8† Qc4

0–1

## 28. Gajewski – Gustafsson

Dresden 2008



White had an exceptional option available here, but it required him to investigate very deeply.

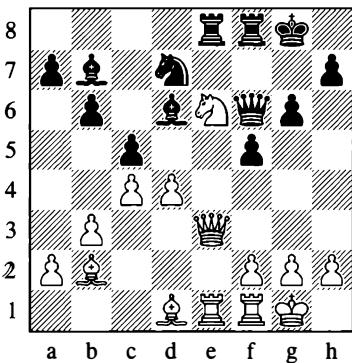
### 17.♕h5!

17.♕d1 ♕f6! works in much the same way as 18.♕d1 ♕f6! in the next comment.

### 17...g6 18.♗d2!!

This exceptional move is very surprising. It takes advantage of the weakness of e6 in quite a beautiful way. Obviously there are details, which we will come to once we get the alternatives out of the way.

18.♕d1 looks very tempting, but Black can defend the e6-pawn with 18...♕f6!. If now 19.dxc5 ♕xh2†, then the position is in a wacky balance. The main point is however that 19.♕xe6 loses the knight:



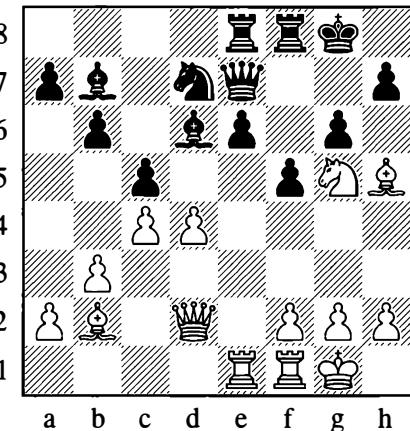
19...♕f7 20.dxc5 ♕xb2 21.cxd6 ♕f6 22.b4 ♕f8 23.c5 ♕xe6 24.♗d2∞ Still, nothing is decided.

In the game White played the logical looking 18.♕f3 ♕xf3 19.♕xf3 ♕f6, when he should have tried 20.♕e5?! with a slight pull. Instead he continued 20.♗d3?!

Black could now have equalized with 20...cxd4 21.♕xd4 ♕e4.

Instead he went entirely wrong and lost

after: 20...♕e4 21.d5! (21.♕e2±) 21...exd5 (21...♕f7 22.♕xe4 fxe4 23.♕c3 ♕f6! 24.♕xf6 ♕xf6 25.♕g5 ♕f7!∞) 22.cxd5 ♕d8 23.♕e2 ♕d7? 24.♕xe4 fxe4 25.♕c3 ♕e7 26.♕e1 h6? (26...♕d7 27.♕h8† ♕f7 28.♕xh7† ♕e8 29.♕xg6† ♕f7 30.♕xe4† ♕d8 31.♕e6±) 27.♕h8† ♕f7 28.♕xh6 ♕e8 29.♕g5 1–0

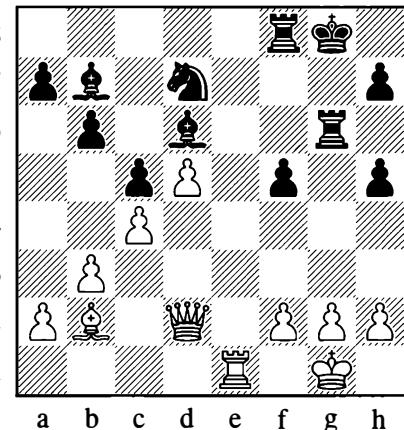


### 18...gxh5

Black has no alternative to entering the dark labyrinth of complications.

18...♕e4 19.♕f3± does not bring Black any relief.

**19.♕xe6 ♕xe6 20.♕xe6 ♕xe6 21.d5 ♕g6 22.♕e1±**



The reason why White has the advantage is not entirely obvious. Black has bishop, knight and rook for queen and pawn. But the advantage is secured by various other factors: the control of the e-file, the weakening of the black kingside, the h5-pawn's short shelf-life and the way the d5-pawn dominates the black pieces.

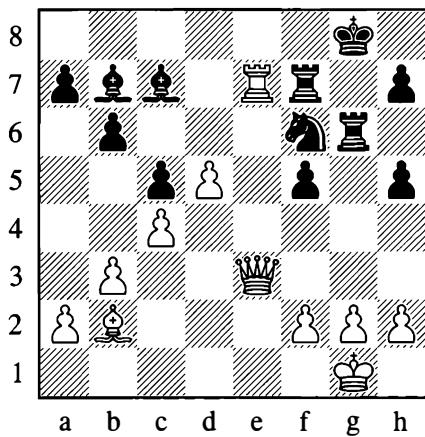
### **22...♝f6**

22...♝f7 23.♛e2 ♜c8 24.♛xh5 ♜g8 25.f3 also gives White control of the position, and in my opinion a significant advantage.

### **23.♝e6 ♜c7**

Here there are various options. One which looks reasonable is:

### **24.♝e7 ♜f7 25.♛e3±**



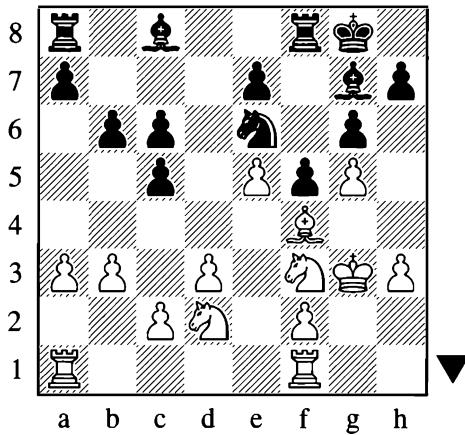
# Chapter 2

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## Pieces

John Shaw – Suat Atalik

Plovdiv 2003



*Black to play*

Organizing our pieces correctly for the long term is a skill most chess players never master, if indeed any at all do. Kasparov famously talked about “real chess players” as players who know where the pieces belong. One of the problems is that sometimes we need to put the pieces on their natural squares, while at other times, the correct move seems about as logical as digging for apples.

There are two general concerns in chess – static and dynamic features. Most players have a tendency towards favouring one of the other. Personally I have always favoured dynamic features of my positions and tried to gain dynamic advantages in return for static concessions; most commonly material. Others think differently.

But no matter what, piece activity and quality are always important. They can have both short-and long-term consequences, and you would be a fool not to consider them carefully at all points throughout a game. Well, actually we are all fools, most of the time – maybe with the exception of Magnus Carlsen. Here he shows perfect understanding of piece coordination against a player who is certainly no fool, and in my opinion is one of the world's most entertaining and compelling players right now.

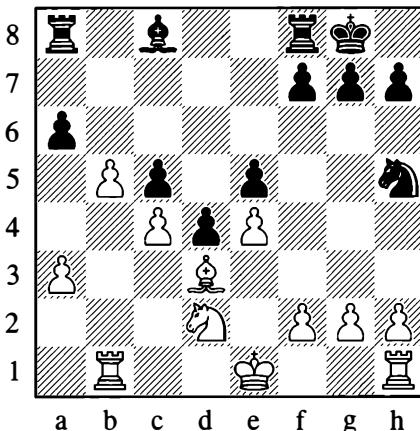
### Magnus Carlsen – Arkadij Naiditsch

Khanty-Mansiysk (2.3) 2007

1.d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}b4$  4. $\mathbb{W}c2$  d5  
 5.a3  $\mathbb{Q}xc3\#$  6. $\mathbb{W}xc3$  c5 7.dxc5 d4 8. $\mathbb{W}g3$   
 $\mathbb{Q}c6$  9.b4 e5 10.e4 0–0 11. $\mathbb{Q}d3$  b6 12. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   
 $\mathbb{Q}h5$  13. $\mathbb{W}g5$   $\mathbb{W}xg5$  14. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$  bxc5 15.b5  
 $\mathbb{Q}a5$  16. $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}b3$  17. $\mathbb{B}b1$   $\mathbb{Q}xd2$  18. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$   
 a6

Probably it made more sense for the knight to go to f4 immediately; at least this is the obvious conclusion when you flick through the game quickly. But I am not sure this move is bad in itself.

We start seriously discussing at the game at a point where it is probably in balance. Both players have their pluses, White the passed pawn, Black the double threat of ... $\mathbb{Q}f4$  along with taking the a3-pawn.



### 19.g3!

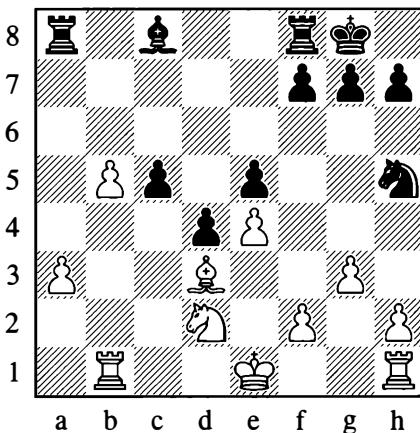
White takes the f4-square away from the knight in return for a pawn. But with the c-file opened and the c4-square available, White will have plenty of positional trumps in return for the pawn.

### 19...axb5

The most natural move, even though it gives the c4-square to White.

19... $\mathbb{Q}f6$  20. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}d7\pm$  also looks logical to me. This would be improving a poorly-placed piece, while the white pieces would not become as active as they do in the game.

### 20.cxb5



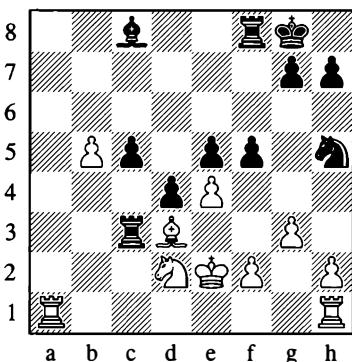
At this point it was truly time for Black to start wondering where his pieces belong. The obvious arrangement is the bishop on e6 and the knight on d7. Naiditsch did not seem to get this feeling, but instead believed he had time to steal a pawn.

### 20... $\mathbb{B}xa3?$

20... $\mathbb{B}e6$  21. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  22. $\mathbb{B}hc1$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  would have kept the game equal; on the next move the rook will come into play. In the game the cowardly knight only returns to active duty after the battle is lost.

### 21. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}b7?!$

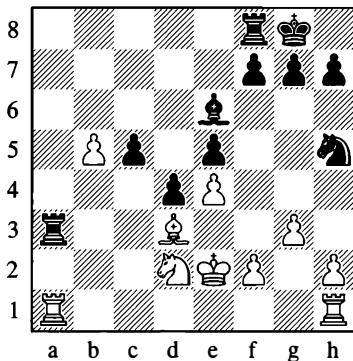
21... $f5?!$  looks active, but does not work. White eliminates the active black pieces and gains a clear edge: 22. $\mathbb{B}a1!$   $\mathbb{E}c3$  (22... $\mathbb{B}xd3$  does not work: 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$   $fxe4\#$  24. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  25. $\mathbb{Q}xc5!$  and White wins.)



23. $\mathbb{B}hc1!$  The rook on c3 is neutralized and White can focus on regaining his pawn, before exploiting the great stature of the b5-pawn.

21... $\mathbb{B}e6$  tries to emulate the set-up recommended on move 20, but now it fails to 22. $\mathbb{B}a1!.$  (22. $\mathbb{B}hc1$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  23. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  is less critical, though White still has some advantage.)

Here Black has two ways to continue:

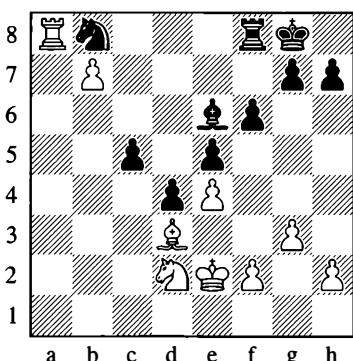


22... $\mathbb{B}c3$  23. $\mathbb{B}hc1$   $\mathbb{E}xc1$  24. $\mathbb{B}xc1$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  25. $\mathbb{B}xc5$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  26. $\mathbb{B}c7$  is quite unpleasant for Black. For example: 26... $\mathbb{B}b8$  27. $\mathbb{Q}c4$  (27.f4? might be stronger, but I like this simple move.) 27... $\mathbb{Q}f8$  28. $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}xc4\#$  29. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  30. $\mathbb{B}c6$  and White has an obvious advantage.

### 22... $\mathbb{B}xa1$ 23. $\mathbb{B}xa1\pm$

White has the advantage here, despite being a pawn down. Black should probably play 23...g5 or something similar, preparing to get the king off the back rank and giving his rook freedom, as he would be in a bad way after: 23... $\mathbb{Q}f6?$  24.b6!  $\mathbb{Q}d7$  25.b7 f6 26. $\mathbb{B}a8!$  Threatening  $\mathbb{B}b5.$

### 26... $\mathbb{Q}b8$



27.f4! $\pm$   $\mathbb{exf}4$  28.gxf4  $\mathbb{B}d8$  29.f5  $\mathbb{Q}f7$  30. $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  31. $\mathbb{Q}a5!$

Black is paralysed. If his king comes any nearer, White wins instantly. There is also the threat of  $\mathbb{B}b5$  followed by  $\mathbb{Q}c6.$

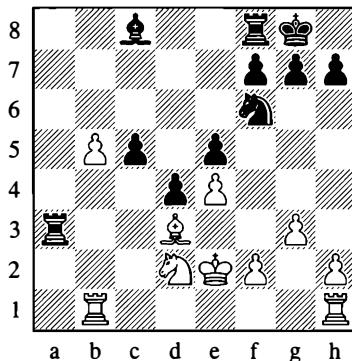
31... $\mathbb{Q}e8$

This is forced, but White has:

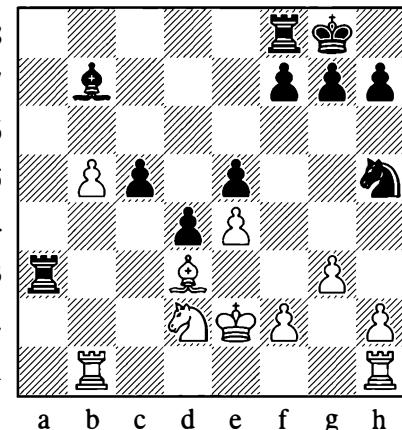
32. $\mathbb{Q}b3!$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  33. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  34. $\mathbb{Q}d2$

Again Black is unable to move. If he comes closer with the king, White wins a piece with  $\mathbb{Q}a6$ .

21... $\mathbb{Q}f6!$  was necessary. It is clear that the knight has to come here while the c8-bishop still has some flexibility.



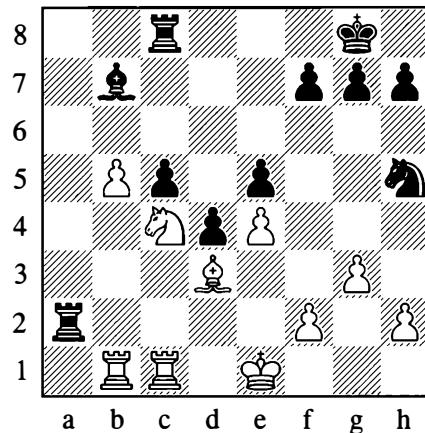
However, White still has better chances after: 22. $\mathbb{Q}hc1$  (22. $\mathbb{Q}a1$   $\mathbb{Q}c3$  23. $\mathbb{Q}hc1$  can this time around be met with 23... $\mathbb{Q}b7!$ , with some sort of counterplay.) 22... $\mathbb{Q}e6$  (Black may not be doomed after 22... $\mathbb{Q}d7$  23. $\mathbb{Q}a1!$   $\mathbb{Q}xa1$  24. $\mathbb{Q}xa1$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  25. $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}xc4$  26. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  27. $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$  28. $f4\pm$ , but it just feels awfully passive.) 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  24. $\mathbb{Q}c6\pm$



22. $\mathbb{Q}hc1$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$

22... $\mathbb{Q}c3$  was better, though White keeps a solid edge after 23. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ .

23. $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}a2\#$  24. $\mathbb{Q}e1\pm$



White is on the verge of winning. The activity of his pieces is everything, while the black knight is still lost in the wilderness.

24... $\mathbb{Q}d8$

24... $\mathbb{Q}f6$  was perhaps best, but Black is still close to defeat after 25. $\mathbb{Q}d6$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$  26. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$   $\mathbb{Q}a3$  27. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$   $\mathbb{Q}xd3$  28. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ , when the activity of the pieces is clearly important.

25. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  26. $\mathbb{Q}c4$  d3 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$   $\mathbb{Q}aa8$   
28.f3

White has gone a pawn up, and he has not lost any of his control.

28... $\mathbb{Q}d7$  29. $\mathbb{Q}b3$   $\mathbb{Q}dc8$  30. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  31. $\mathbb{Q}bc1$   $\mathbb{Q}a3$  32. $\mathbb{Q}b2$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  33. $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}xc4$  34. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$   $\mathbb{Q}ca8$  35. $\mathbb{Q}xa3$   $\mathbb{Q}xa3$  36. $\mathbb{Q}e2$  f5 37.exf5  $\mathbb{Q}xf3$  38. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$   $\mathbb{Q}xf3$  39. $\mathbb{Q}b1$   $\mathbb{Q}d3$  40.b6  $\mathbb{Q}d8$  41.b7  $\mathbb{Q}b8$  42. $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  43. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  44.g4 h6 45. $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  46.h4  $\mathbb{Q}xb7$  47. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$   $\mathbb{Q}xb7$   
48.g5 hxg5 49.hxg5  
1-0

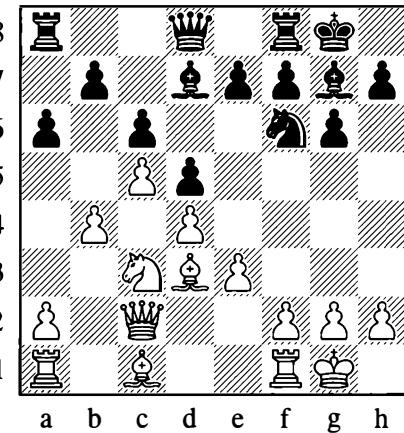
Carlsen excels in this form of natural piece play. It is extremely rare that you see him let any of his pieces down in the way in which Naiditsch let down the knight on h5 in this game. I do not think that Carlsen found it at all challenging to give up that pawn, but rather he was probably pleasantly surprised when Naiditsch took it.

Indeed this kind of natural piece organization is something we should all strive to master. The following example is beautiful in its pristine logic. We shall not look at it in too great detail; it is after all a rapid game.

### Gyula Pap – Rainer Buhmann

Pardubice (rapid) 2012

1.c4 c6 2.Qc3 d5 3.e3 Qf6 4.Qf3 a6 5.Wc2 g6 6.d4 Wg7 7.Qd3 0–0 8.0–0 Wg4 9.Qe5 We6 10.c5 Qbd7 11.Qxd7 Wxd7 12.b4



It is by no means clear where Black should put his heavy artillery, but what is obvious is that his minor pieces are doing little good at the moment and that none of them currently support the logical ...e5-break. For this reason I am impressed with Buhmann's decision, which creates a purpose for all of Black's minor pieces, as well as preparing this break.

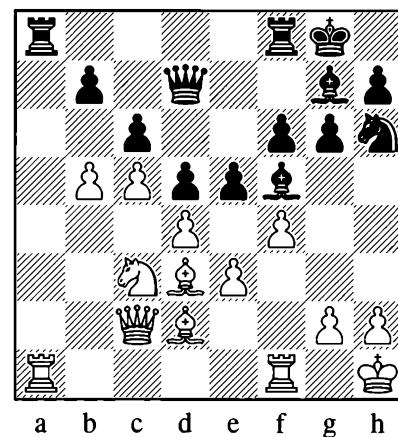
### 12...Qg4!

The knight is headed for h6 to support the exchange of Black's bad bishop.

### 13.f4

White has other options here, but none clearly leading to an advantage.

13...Qh6 14.a4 Qf5 15.Qd2 f6 16.Qh1 Wd7  
17.b5 axb5 18.axb5 e5



The chances are about equal.

### 19.Qxa8 Qxa8 20.fxe5?!

This looks like a poor decision, activating the g7-bishop.

20...fxe5 21.e4 dxe4 22.Qxe4 Qf7!

The white centre is obviously in crisis.

### 23.Qc4 exd4

23...cx b5 24.Qb3 exd4 seems even stronger, but the text is also good.

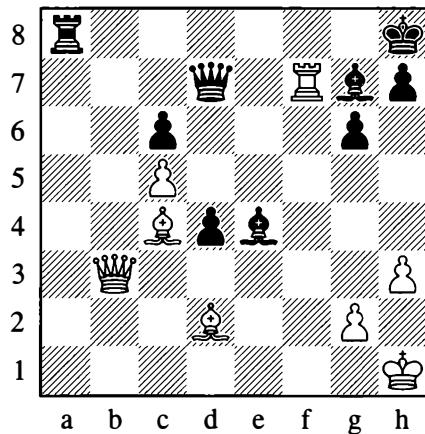
### 24.bxc6 bxc6 25.Wb3

White is hoping for counterplay after 25...Qh8 26.Qg3, but Black has seen further.

### 25...Qxe4! 26.Qxf7 Qh8! 27.h3?

27.Qg1 Wg4 28.Qf1 was necessary to stay in the game. Black has a healthy extra pawn, but it will take some time to convert it, even after

the accurate 28... $\mathbb{W}c8!$ , preventing the white queen invading on the 7th rank.



**27... $\mathbb{W}xf7!$**

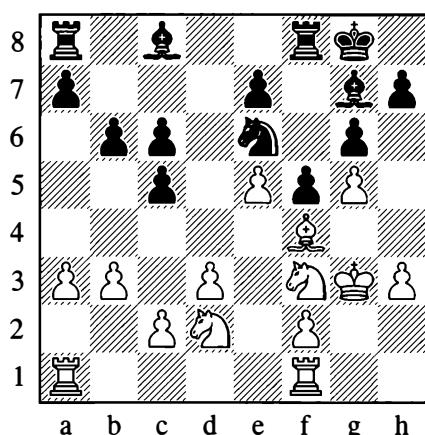
White resigned. After 28. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$   $\mathbb{Q}a1\#$  29. $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}e5\#$  the end is nigh.

**0-1**

Both these examples are as clean, clear and as easy to follow as a Hollywood romance. However, life is usually grittier than that. This is where we transform from being positional players with sensible logical decisions, into strategists that make ugly-looking moves with side-effects of a positive nature.

### John Shaw – Suat Atalik

Plovdiv 2003



White has reasonable control over the e5-square and Black does not seem to be able to improve his position greatly. Both the knight and the bishop on c8 lack scope, while the bishop on g7 is completely blocked in.

All this is true until you notice that the knight on e6 would be fabulously placed on h5. From there on Black's route to an advantage is clear:

**18... $\mathbb{N}h8!$**

This move came as a shock to John. The e6-knight goes to h5, where it will not be out of play, but will be excessively annoying to White's fragile set-up.

**19. $\mathbb{Q}c4$**

Houdini thinks that White has better chances of establishing a decent defence after 19. $\mathbb{Q}b1!$ ?  $\mathbb{Q}g7$  20. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ , when the knight will re-emerge on c3. Black is a little better, but this may indeed be a better way to defend.

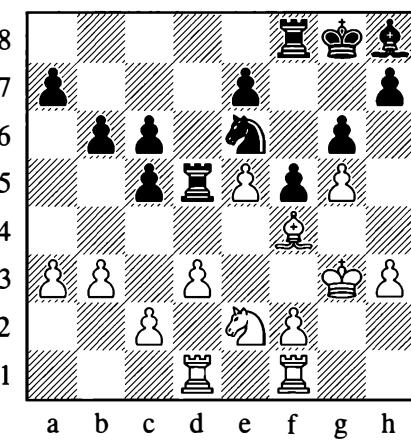
**19... $\mathbb{Q}g7$  20. $\mathbb{Q}g1$**

I think that 20. $\mathbb{Q}g2$  was a better defence, but Black is a bit better in any case.

**20... $\mathbb{Q}e6$  21. $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}ad8$  22. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$**

Now ... $\mathbb{Q}h5\#$  is a real threat.

**23. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  24. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$**



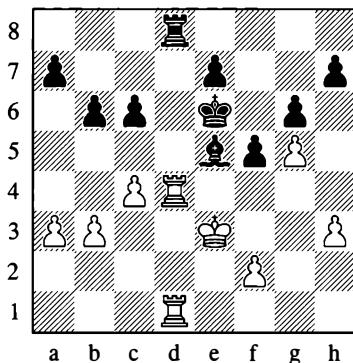
Having allowed the c8-bishop to get into the game, the knight returns to a much more natural square.

### 25.c4?!

This shows White's displeasure with his position. Unfortunately this move is almost devoid of positive attributes...

### 25... $\mathbb{B}d7\#$ 26. $\mathbb{B}d2$ $\mathbb{B}fd8$ 27. $\mathbb{B}fd1$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 28.h4

White is already teetering on the brink. For example: 28. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}xf4$  29. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  30.d4 cxd4 31. $\mathbb{Q}xd4\#$   $\mathbb{B}xd4\#$  32. $\mathbb{B}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5\#$  33. $\mathbb{Q}e3$



33...f4#! 34. $\mathbb{Q}e4$   $\mathbb{B}xd4$  35. $\mathbb{B}xd4$   $\mathbb{B}xd4\#$  36. $\mathbb{B}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}f5$  37.h4 e5#! and Black wins.

### 28... $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

Black should win; only the details remain.

### 31.f4 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 32.a4

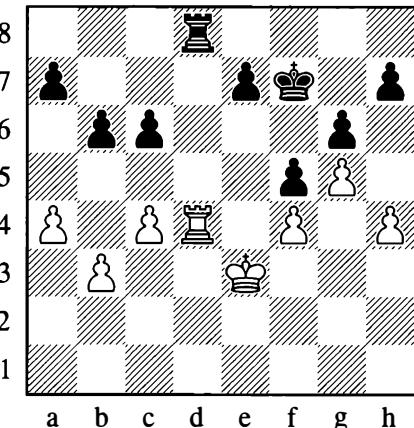
32.h5 gxh5 33. $\mathbb{B}h1$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  34. $\mathbb{B}xh5$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  35. $\mathbb{B}h1$  e5 and Black wins.

### 32... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 33.d4

Not happy with just waiting, John wants to exchange all the pieces on d4 and see if the

resulting pawn ending is a draw, which both players suspected it might be.

33...cxd4#! 34. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4\#$  35. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   
36. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$



### 36... $\mathbb{B}d6$ !?

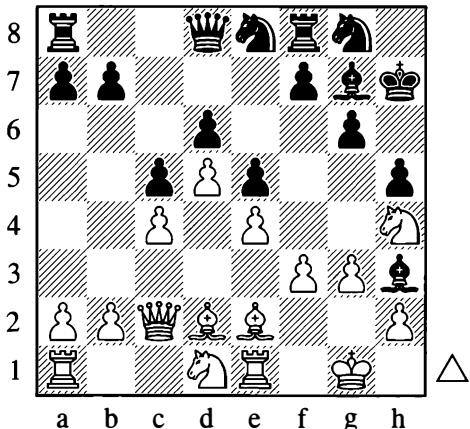
This was Atalik's way of avoiding the "drawn" pawn ending.

But actually 36... $\mathbb{B}xd4$  37. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  38.c5 bxc5#! 39. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  40.b4  $\mathbb{Q}c7$  would also have won for Black, even if Atalik did not feel entirely confident about it at the time.

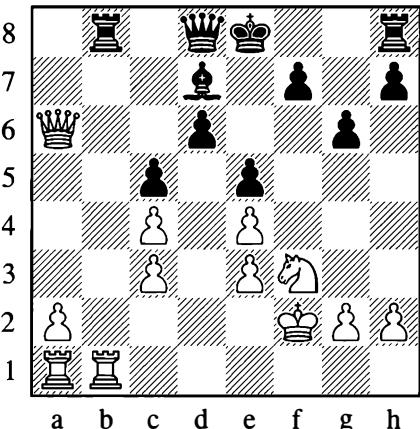
37. $\mathbb{B}xd6$  exd6 38. $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  39.b4 c5#!  
40.bxc5 bxc5#!  
0-1

The following 26 exercises will go from the obvious/natural to the truly astonishing and mind-bending. As you engage on this journey down the rabbit's hole, please commit yourself to always looking after your pieces, even if it is with the intention of leaving one or two of them behind for the greater good!

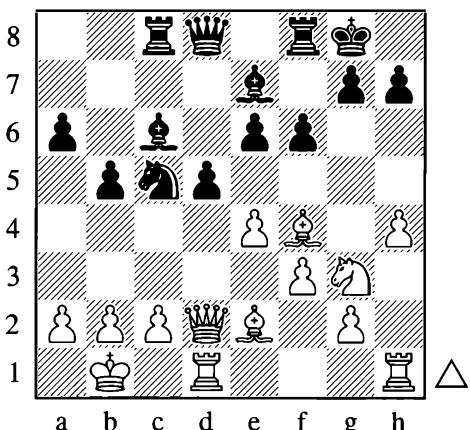
Atalik – Heinig, Dresden 2005



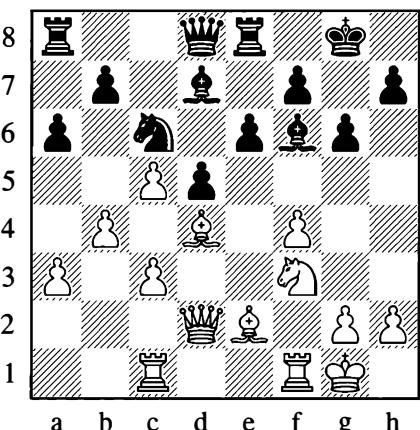
Akopian – Shirov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007



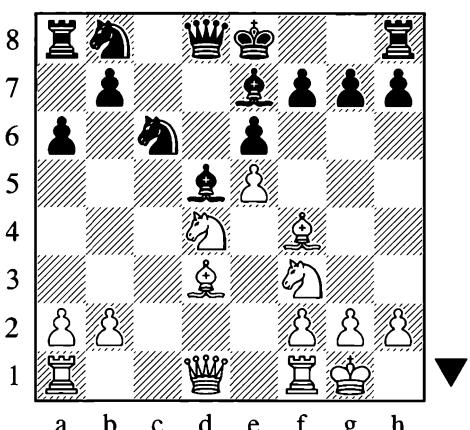
Luther – Koscinski, Bad Zwesten 2006



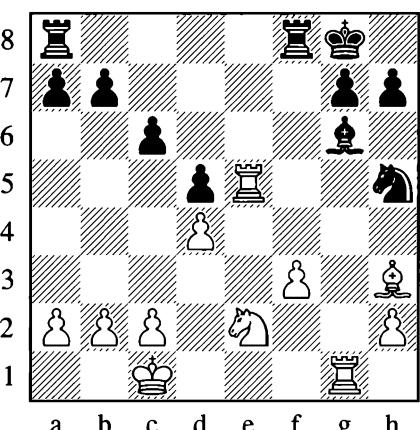
Conquest – Williams, Canterbury 2010



Inarkiev – Riazantsev, Olginka 2011

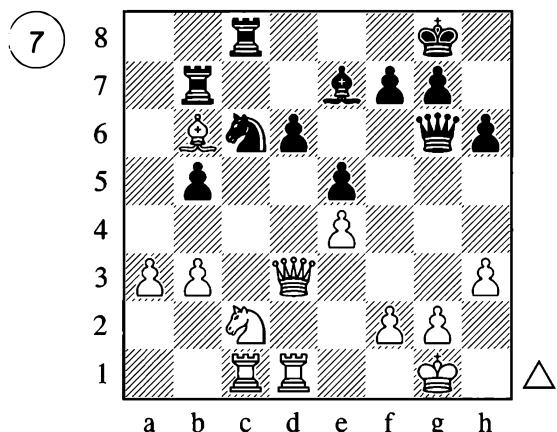


Kogan – Gurevich, Cappelle la Grande 1999

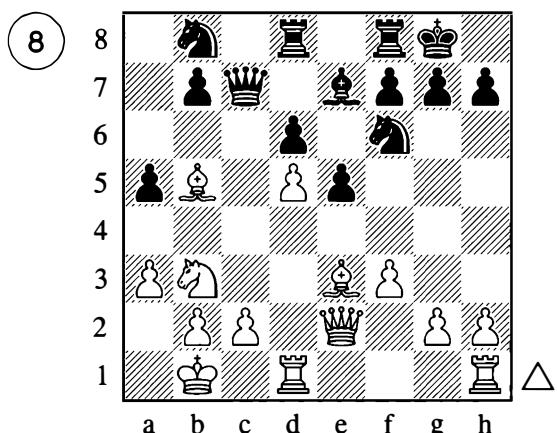


Volokitin – Bologan, Rogaska Slatina 2011

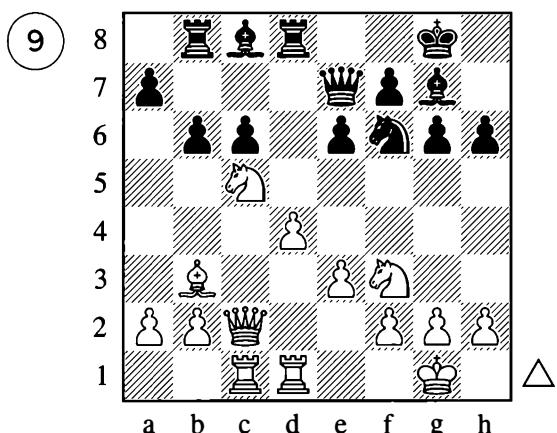
Ivanchuk – Radulski, Antalya 2004



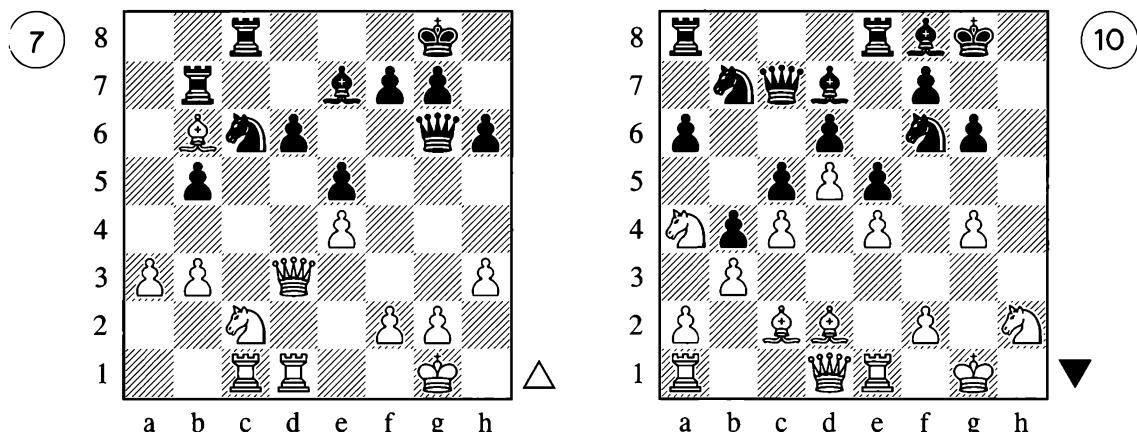
Sax – Quinteros, Moscow 1982



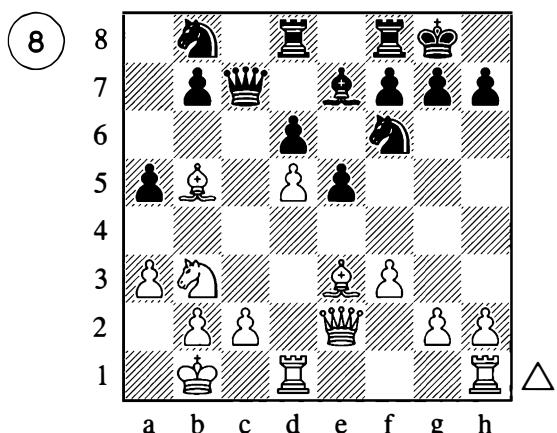
Beliavsky – Rodshtein, Pamplona 2007



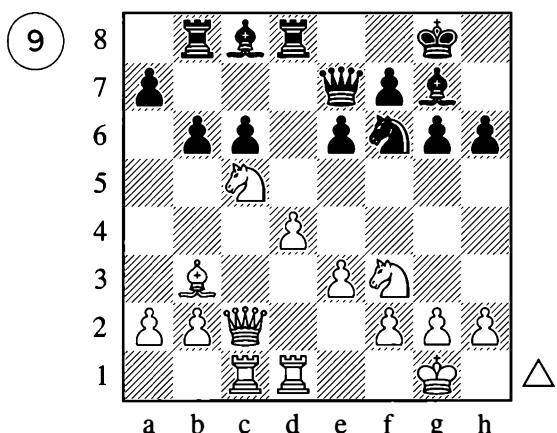
Postny – Caruana, Aix-les-Bains 2011



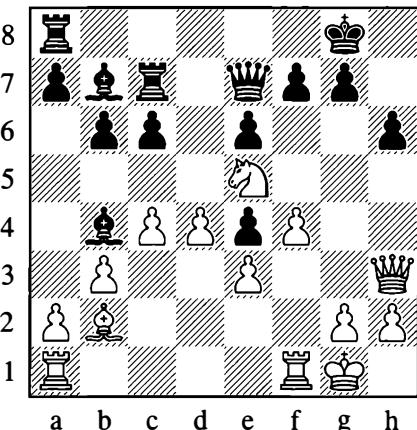
McKay – Aagaard, Glasgow 2012



Postny – Caruana, Aix-les-Bains 2011



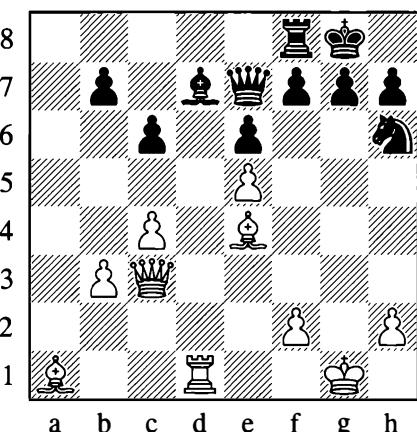
Kramnik – Van Wely, Dortmund 2008



13



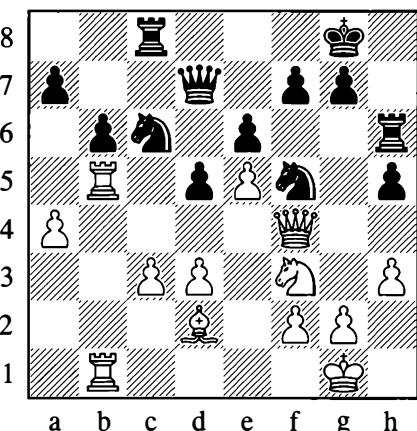
Beliavsky – Salov, Moscow 1988



14



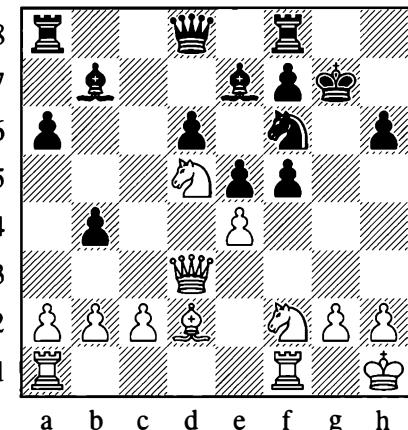
Kamsky – Ivanchuk, Dresden (ol) 2008



15



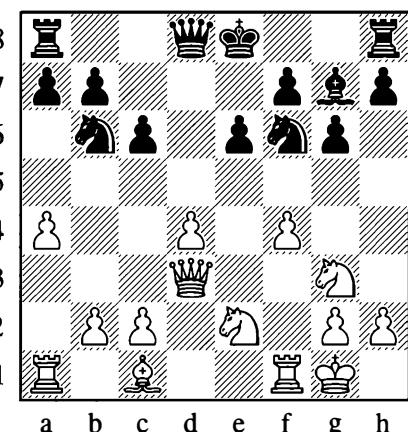
Chernobay – Savchenko, Moscow 2012



16



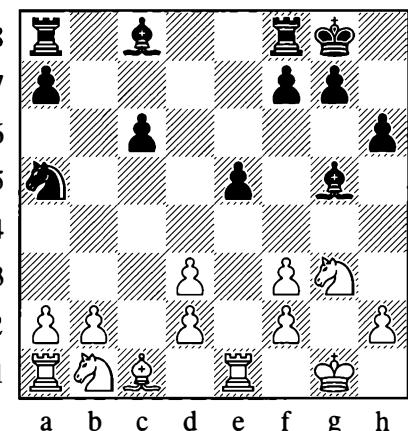
Aagaard – K. Rasmussen, Greve 2003



17



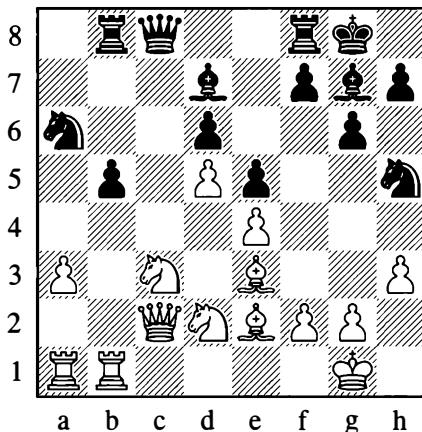
Kaidanov – Onischuk, USA 2008



18

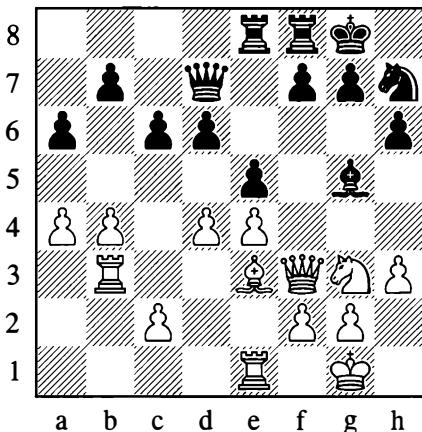


Debashis – Shimanov, Athens 2012



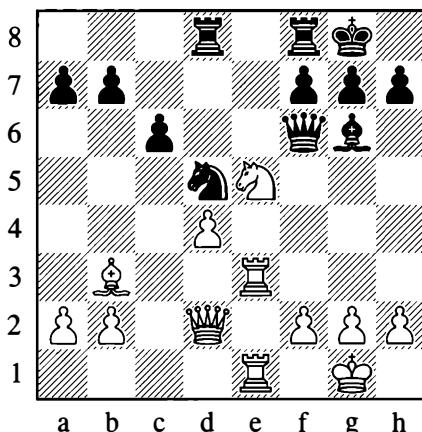
19

Short – Ganguly, Spain 2010



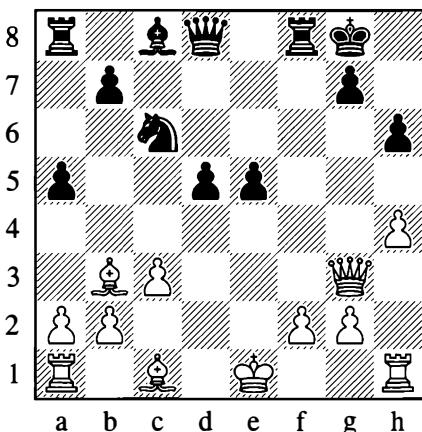
22

J.C. Fernandez – Remon, Cuba 1979



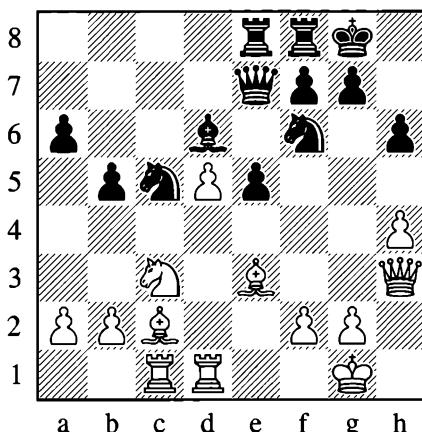
20

Rozentalis – Vallejo Pons, Calvia (ol) 2004

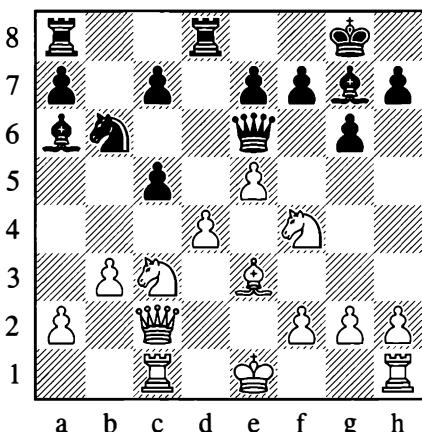


23

Nguyen Ngoc – Gomez, Ho Chi Minh City 2011 Gashimov – Hansen, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011



21

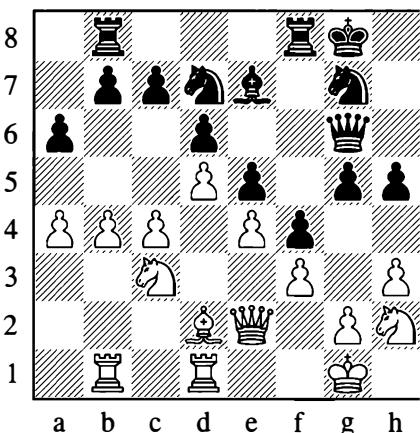


24

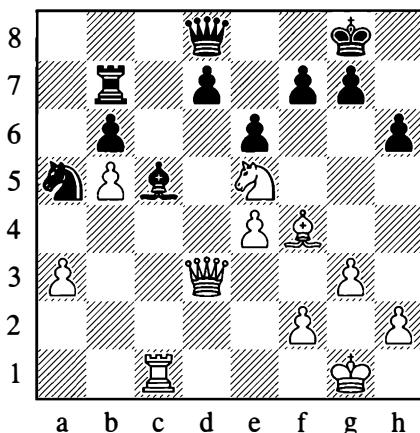
**Anand – Carlsen**, Monaco (rapid) 2011

**Gheorghiu – Andersson**, London 1980

25

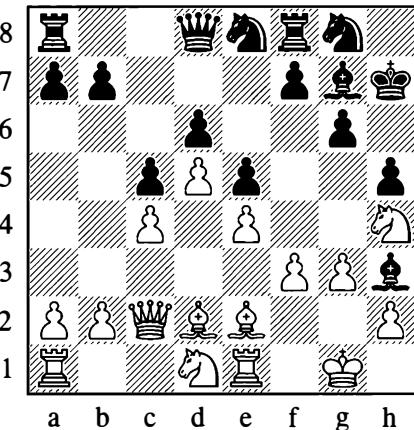


26



## 1. Atalik – Heinig

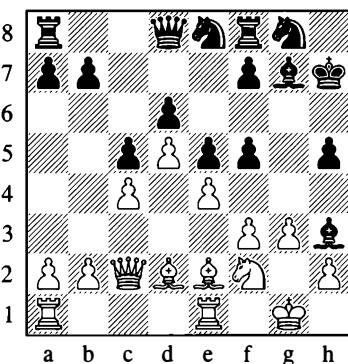
Dresden 2005



**17.♕f2!?**

Not a bad move, but just because we are working with strategic exercises, we should not neglect to look for candidates.

Thus the point of this exercise is Atalik's missed opportunity: 17.♕f5! would have regained the bishop after 17...gxsf5 18.♕f2±.

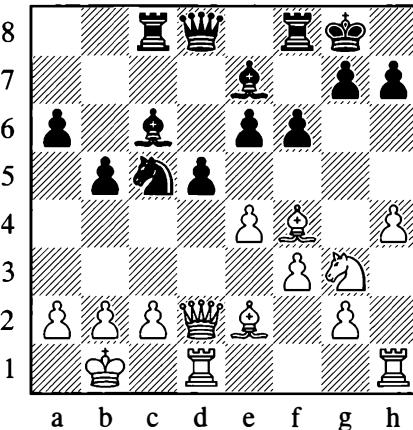


White has a significant advantage.

Despite this small mistake, White still won the game in 63 moves.

## 2. Luther – Koscinski

Bad Zwesten 2006



White's most ineffective piece is the knight on g3. Luckily he can exchange it for one of Black's bishops with a nice tactic.

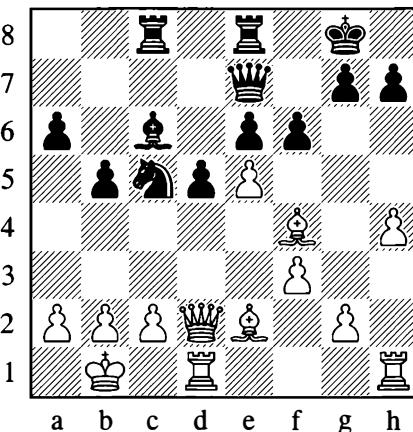
**18.♕f5!**

Trapping the bishop on e7.

**18...♝e8**

The tactical points are that 18...dxe4? 19.♕xe7† ♜xe7 20.♗d6 drops a piece, and 18...exf5 19.exd5± regains the piece and gives White a slight edge because of the two bishops.

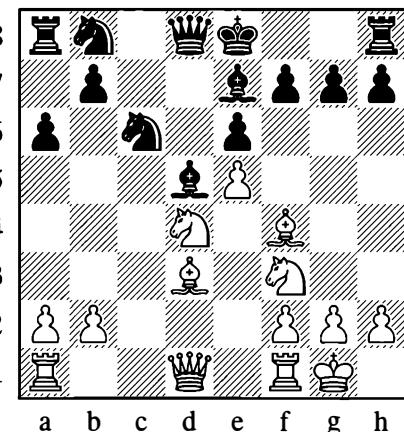
**19.♕xe7† ♜xe7 20.e5**



White is slightly better because of the two bishops. He won on move 41.

### 3. Inarkiev – Riazantsev

Olginka 2011

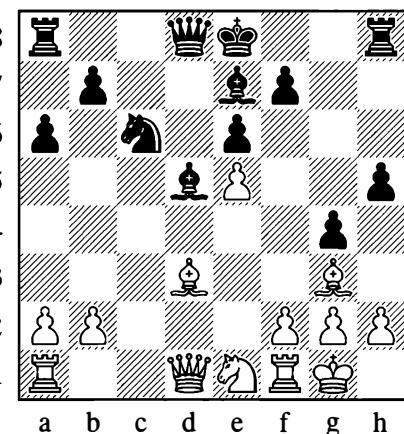


At times we should take material even if it means weakening our own position. In this case it is worth doing so; mainly because the white pieces are being pushed backwards at the same time and weaknesses appear around the white king.

#### 13...g5! 14.♗g3

Here the bishop is a target, but 14.♗e3 g4 15.♕e1 ♗xe5 does not offer White a lot of compensation for the pawn.

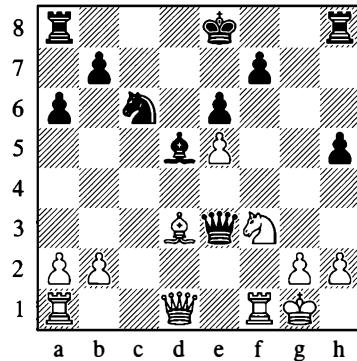
**14...g4 15.♘xc6 ♘xc6 16.♘e1 h5!**



#### 17.♗f4

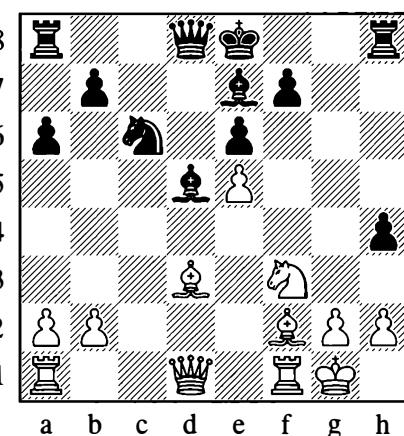
This critical weakening of the kingside leads to a decisive attack.

It was better to play 17.♗f4, although Black has the advantage after 17...♗g5!. It is not possible to hold on to the e-pawn, and White's best chance would be to seek compensation after: 18.♗xg5 ♗xg5 19.f4 gxh3 20.♘xf3 ♗e3†



21.♗f2†

**17...gxh3 18.♘xf3 h4 19.♗f2**



**19...h3?!**

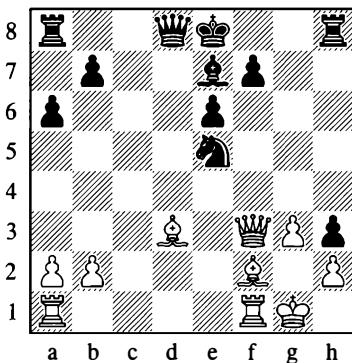
This is a very natural move, especially when you think of its tactical attractions; moreover it leaves White extremely weak on the light squares.

Still, I do not like giving White the chance to effectively close the semi-open g-file, and I think that 19... $\mathbb{E}g8!$  was even stronger.

### 20. $\mathbb{E}e1$

20.g3 is an uncomfortable move to play for many reasons, making it quite likely that Inarkiev decided to reject it on general grounds alone. Certainly it does not look good, but with the possibility of following up with  $\mathbb{W}e2$  and  $\mathbb{Q}e4$ , it is not necessarily fatal either.

Another possibility is that he rejected it on tactical grounds, seeing simply that 20... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$  21. $\mathbb{W}xf3$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  appears to win a piece.



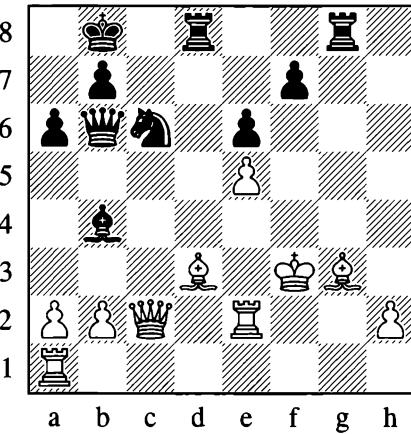
And indeed this is the best option, although White has some resources left: 22. $\mathbb{W}e4!$   $\mathbb{W}xd3$  23. $\mathbb{W}xe5$   $\mathbb{E}h6$  24. $\mathbb{Q}a7?$ ! Black's safest path to a clear advantage is probably 24... $\mathbb{Q}d6$  25. $\mathbb{W}g7$   $\mathbb{W}g6$ . White may not have a great deal of hope, but he still has some practical chances in the ending.

### 20... $\mathbb{Q}b4!$

Black wins.

21. $\mathbb{E}e2$   $\mathbb{E}g8$  22. $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{W}b6\uparrow$  23. $\mathbb{Q}h1$  0–0–0  
24. $\mathbb{W}c2$   $\mathbb{W}xg2\uparrow$  25. $\mathbb{W}xg2$   $\mathbb{Q}xf3\uparrow$  26. $\mathbb{W}xf3$   
 $\mathbb{Q}b8$

The knight comes to d4 no matter what; and there will be something to take afterwards.

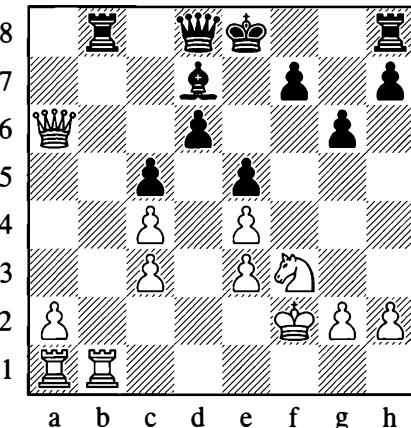


27. $\mathbb{E}e4$   $\mathbb{Q}d4\uparrow$  28. $\mathbb{E}xd4$   $\mathbb{W}xd4$  29. $\mathbb{Q}e4$   $\mathbb{E}xg3\uparrow$   
30. $\mathbb{W}xg3$   $\mathbb{W}xe5$  31. $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{E}g8$  32. $\mathbb{E}g1$  f5  
33. $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$

0–1

### 4. Akopian – Shirov

World Cup Khanty-Mansiysk (4.1) 2007



### 19... $\mathbb{Q}e7!$

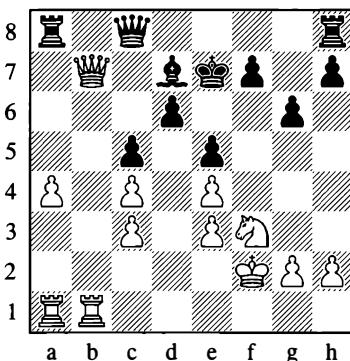
The king is very safe in the centre, and this also allows the king's rook to enter the game quickly.

19... $\mathbb{W}c7?$ ! 20. $\mathbb{E}xb8\uparrow$   $\mathbb{W}xb8$  21. $\mathbb{Q}d2$  would give White time to fight for the b-file.

### 20. $\mathbb{Q}d2$

White is trying to get organized for the coming queenside clash, wanting to hold on to the extra pawn.

20.  $\mathbb{W}a7 \mathbb{E}a8$  21.  $\mathbb{W}b7 \mathbb{W}c8$  22. a4



22...  $\mathbb{E}a6$ ! and White is struggling with his many weaknesses.

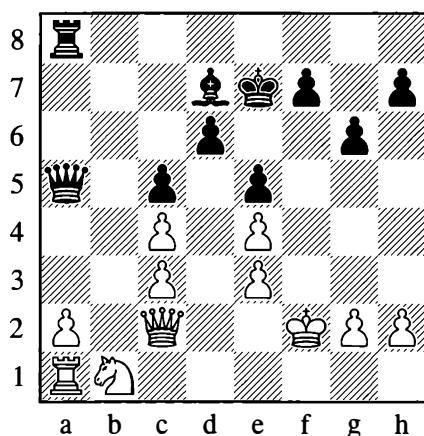
**20...  $\mathbb{E}a8$  21.  $\mathbb{W}b7$**

After 21.  $\mathbb{W}b6$   $\mathbb{W}xb6$  22.  $\mathbb{E}xb6$   $\mathbb{E}a3$  Black is on his way to winning back a pawn, or at least forcing all the white pieces into passivity.

**21...  $\mathbb{W}a5$**

With a direct attack on c3. White now has to go straight into retreat.

**22.  $\mathbb{W}b2$   $\mathbb{E}hb8$  23.  $\mathbb{W}c2$   $\mathbb{E}xb1$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}xb1$**



**24...  $\mathbb{E}b8$ ?**

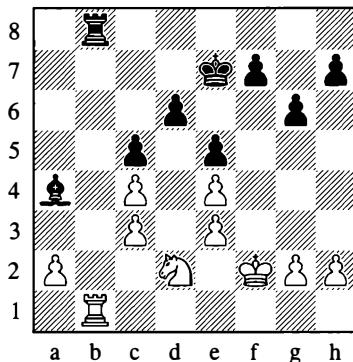
This gives White an extra chance. 24...  $\mathbb{W}a4$ ! would reach the set-up obtained in the game, and was therefore more accurate.

**25.  $\mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{W}a4$ !**

Black is looking for an endgame where he can take advantage of all the weaknesses White has accumulated.

**26.  $\mathbb{E}c1$ ??**

White's only chance was to play 26.  $\mathbb{W}xa4$   $\mathbb{Q}xa4$  27.  $\mathbb{E}b1$ !!.



Either the rooks come off, or White's rook has a better future on b2 than on a1. Black is still in charge of things, but maybe White can ride the storm without too much suffering.

**26...  $\mathbb{W}xc2$  27.  $\mathbb{E}xc2$**

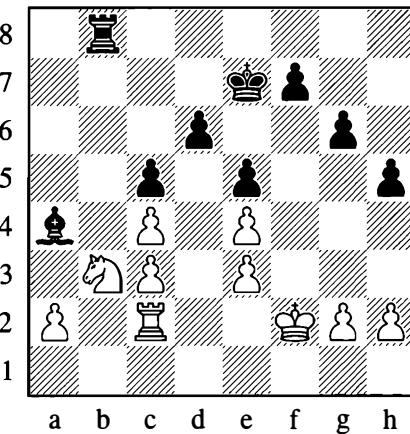
Black is now in control of the b-file.

**27...  $\mathbb{Q}a4$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}b3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}a4$**

It is almost always useful to get more time on the clocks when you have the advantage.

**30.  $\mathbb{Q}b3$  h5!**

Black has the advantage on the queenside and in the centre, but he will have to create targets on the kingside as well if he is to win this game.



31.♔e1 h4! 32.♕d2 ♜c6 33.♕d3 f5!

34.exf5?!

After this Black takes control over many important squares in the centre and his bishop's scope is enhanced significantly. I believe that with good technique, Black is already winning.

34.♕d2 was necessary, but White's position is rather pitiful.

34...gxh5 35.♕f2 ♔e6 36.♔e2 ♜a8 37.♔e1 ♜a4

White has reached the point where he can no longer protect his weaknesses.

38.g3 hxg3?!

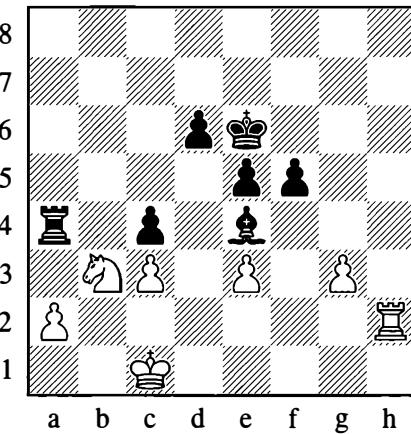
Black should not exchange pawns unless forced to do so. Slightly more exact was 38...♜a8 39.♕d2 h3!, when there are more pawns to scoop up.

39.hxg3 ♜e4 40.♕h2?!

40.♕d2 ♜d3 followed by ...♜xa2 would level the material. The question is then: which pawn will fall next? Still White could fight on with: 41.♕g2 ♜xa2 42.g4 and the number of pawns is diminishing.

40...♜xc4 41.♕d2 ♜a4 42.♕c1 c4!

Forcing the knight into the corner.



43.♘a1 ♜a8!

Having won the battle on the queenside, the rook is on its way to victory on the kingside.

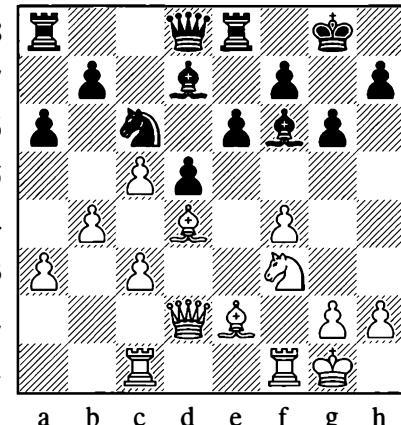
44.♖d2 ♜g8 45.a4 ♜xg3 46.♘c2 ♜xc2

47.♖xc2 ♜xe3 48.a5 ♜d7 49.a6 ♜c7

0–1

## 5. Conquest – Williams

Canterbury 2010



19.♕f2?

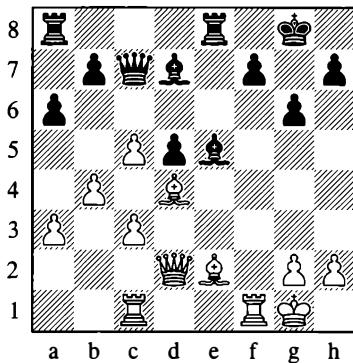
White definitely should not allow Black to get the advantage of the two bishops.

19...♘xd4 20.cxd4 ♜g7 21.♕d3 ♜a4

Both players have their chances and eventually Black made most of his, winning on move 35.

Some other options were:

19.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$ , which seems fine and solid. Black could also try: 19...e5?! 20.fxe5  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  21. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  22. $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $\mathbb{W}c7$



Black's activity would make up for the slightly weakened d5-pawn.

19.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  20.cxd4  $\mathbb{Q}g7$  and Black is okay.

White's best option was to play:

### 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf6!$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$

And now White would have to choose between two pawn advances on the queenside. He can keep his options open with 20.a4?!, or go for the more natural push:

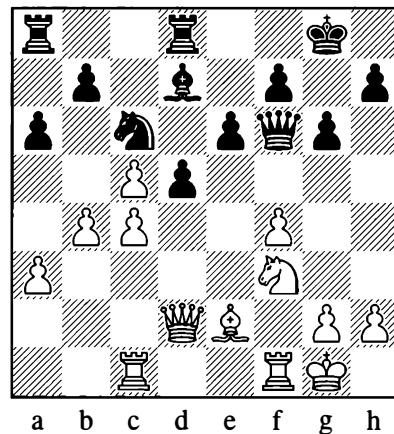
### 20. c4

This immediately puts Black's centre under pressure.

### 20... $\mathbb{Q}ed8!$

The obvious 20... $\mathbb{Q}ad8?$ ! is inferior, as then White does not need to worry about a black rook becoming active on the a-file and can play: 21.b5  $\mathbb{Q}b8$  22. $\mathbb{Q}e5\pm$

20...  $\mathbb{Q}e7$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}a4$  22.cxd5 and if 22... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ , then  $\mathbb{Q}c4-d6$  is annoying. And after 22...exd5± Black's structure is worse and the d-pawn is a liability.



White now has a lot of interesting options. The one I like the best is slightly peculiar:

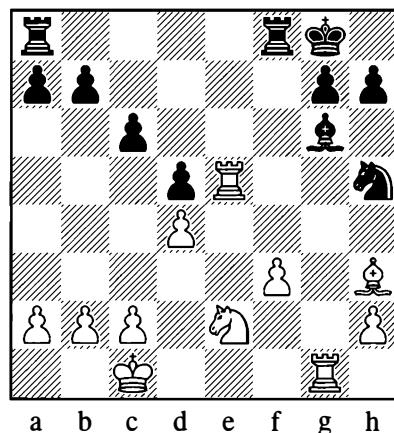
### 21. f5?!

The squares that White obtains and the wrecking of the black pawn structure should be worth a pawn.

21...  $\mathbb{gxf5}$  22.cxd5 exd5 23.  $\mathbb{W}f4\pm$

## 6. Kogan – M. Gurevich

Cappelle 1999



If White has time to play  $\mathbb{Q}g4$ , he will be more or less fine. So Black needs to give up two pieces for a rook in order to fight for an advantage.

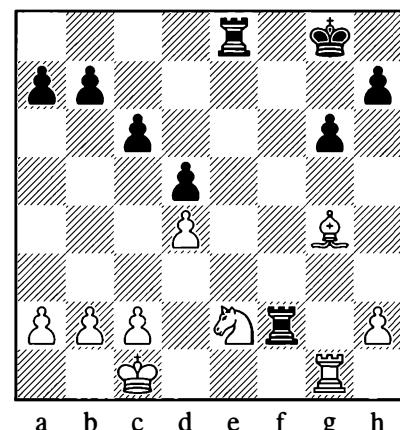
**19... $\mathbb{B}xf3!$  20. $\mathbb{Q}g4$   $\mathbb{B}f2$  21. $\mathbb{B}xh5$   $\mathbb{Q}xh5$  22. $\mathbb{Q}xh5$  g6**

Black will pick up the h2-pawn and then be entirely winning with rook and two pawns against two minor pieces. The main thing that could make the advantage even more convincing is if a set of rooks were exchanged, limiting the dynamics.

**23. $\mathbb{Q}g4$**

23. $\mathbb{Q}d2?$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  24. $\mathbb{Q}g4$  h5 and Black would win immediately.

**23... $\mathbb{B}e8$**

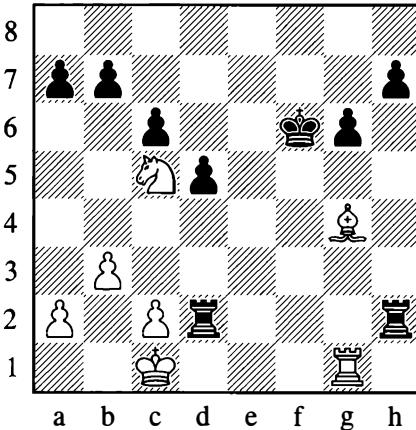


**24. $\mathbb{Q}d1$**

White is too passive to survive.

24.h4  $\mathbb{B}xe2$  25. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$   $\mathbb{B}xe2$  26.h5 was a try, but the black rook is too active for White to have any realistic defensive chances.

**24... $\mathbb{B}xh2$  25.b3  $\mathbb{Q}g7$  26. $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{B}e4$  27. $\mathbb{Q}e6\#$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  28. $\mathbb{Q}c5$   $\mathbb{B}xd4\#$  29. $\mathbb{Q}c1$   $\mathbb{B}dd2$**

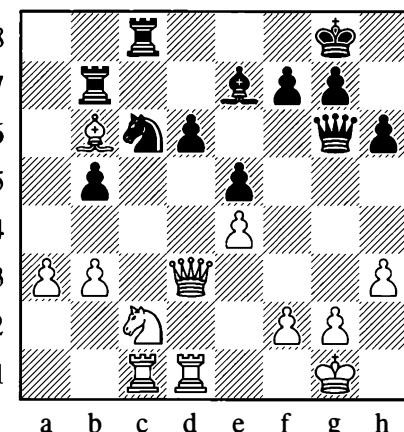


The crowning of Black's strategy.

**0–1**

## 7. Volokitin – Bologan

Rogaska Slatina 2011



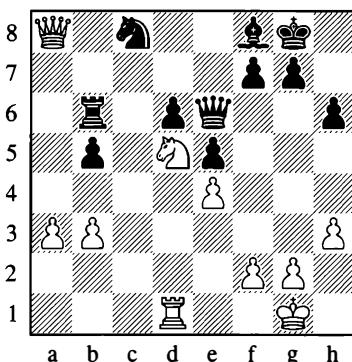
At times tactics appear that allow us to obtain standard positional advantages. We should not miss those, of course.

**25. $\mathbb{Q}b4!$   $\mathbb{B}xb6$  26. $\mathbb{W}d5!$**

White will get good knight against bad bishop and a clear advantage.

**26... $\mathbb{Q}g5$**

26.. $\mathbb{Q}a7$  does not work: 27. $\mathbb{B}xc8\#$   $\mathbb{Q}xc8$  28. $\mathbb{W}a8$   $\mathbb{W}e6$  29. $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$



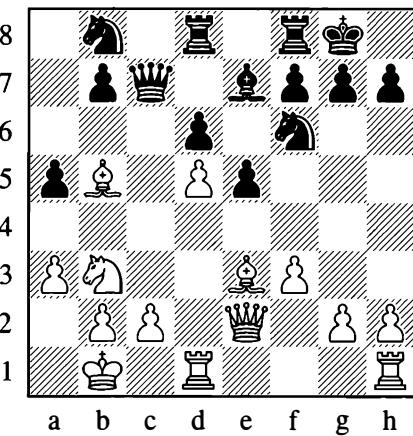
30.  $\mathbb{E}c1$  and White wins.

### 27. $\mathbb{E}xc6\#$

White's advantage is obvious. He won on move 70.

## 8. Sax – Quinteros

Moscow 1982



White has several advantages of a static nature: two bishops, the b5-square, the e4-square and the weakness of the a5-pawn. Taking all these factors into account establishes the slightly surprising conclusion for this position with opposite castling: White will be better off in the endgame than he is in the middlegame.

19.  $\mathbb{W}c4!!$

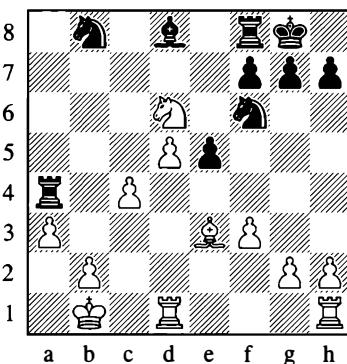
It is of course also tempting to play 19. g4, but there are no guarantees that the attack will be successful, even if it is clear that White has the better chances.

19...  $\mathbb{W}xc4$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}xc4$

I think that technically White is more or less winning here; whereas in the middlegame the extent of his advantage would be a debate.

20...  $\mathbb{E}c8$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}b5!$

Sax correctly decides not to take any chances, though he probably wondered if it was stronger to play 21.  $\mathbb{Q}xa5!?$ , with the idea: 21...  $\mathbb{Q}d8$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}xb7$   $\mathbb{E}xc4$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}xd6$   $\mathbb{E}a4$  24. c4±



The pawns are very strong. I think this is a winning combination, but still it would be incorrect to play it. As the game goes, White should win with good play, but even with poor play he is unlikely to lose, whereas it would certainly be possible to lose from this position.

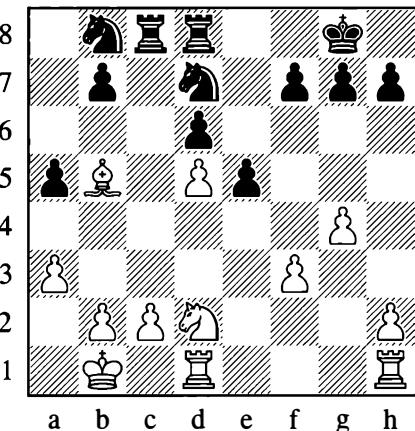
21...  $\mathbb{Q}d8$  22. g4  $\mathbb{Q}fd7$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}g5$

White wants to keep control over the c4-square.

24...  $\mathbb{Q}d8$

Necessary was something like 24... f6 25.  $\mathbb{Q}h4$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$  b6±, which is of course without prospects against a player of Sax's status.

25.  $\mathbb{Q}xd8$   $\mathbb{E}fxd8$

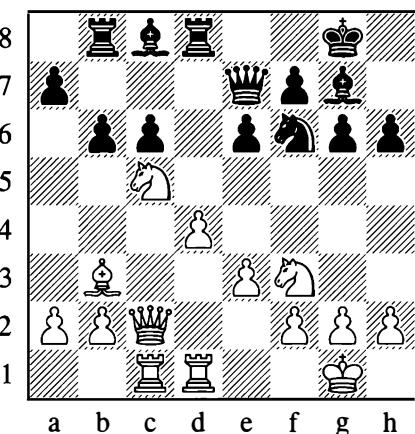


**26.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$**

White won on move 40.

### 9. Beliavsky – Rodshtein

Pamplona 2007



**17.  $\mathbb{Q}e5!$**

White has to act with urgency, otherwise he will see his advantage evaporate.

17.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}fe5$   $\mathbb{Q}bc8$  would give Black time to get organized. In this position White cannot hope for any advantage at all.

**17...  $bxc5$**

17...  $\mathbb{Q}d6$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}e4$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}xe4\pm$  would not relieve Black of the pressure he is under.

**18.  $\mathbb{Q}xc6$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}xc5!$**

An important tempo gain.

**19...  $\mathbb{Q}e8$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}xb8$   $\mathbb{Q}xb8$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}a4?$**

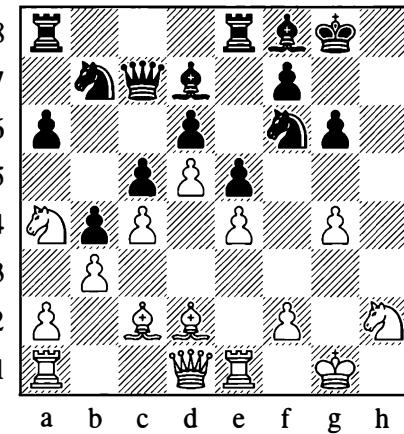
Certainly not a bad move, but in my opinion 21.  $\mathbb{Q}c7!\pm$  would have been stronger. White is generally better in positions where he has rook and two sound pawns against bishop and knight. I cannot see why this position should be any different. As Black's main hope in such positions is the two minor pieces' ability to create counterplay against the white king, exchanging queens make a lot of sense.

**21...  $\mathbb{Q}f8$  22.  $b4$   $\mathbb{Q}g4$  23.  $g3$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  24.  $a3$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}b5\pm$**

White is somewhat better and won the game on move 55.

### 10. Ivanchuk – Radulski

Antalya 2004



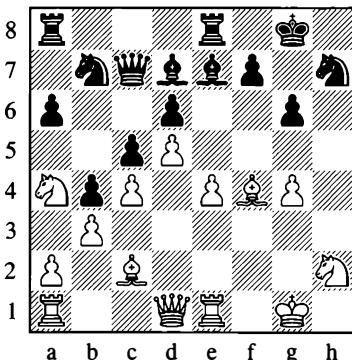
**20...  $\mathbb{Q}e7!$**

The correct strategy; Black needs to get to the h-file quickly.

There does not seem to be any serious reason why 20...  $\mathbb{Q}g7!$  followed by ...  $\mathbb{Q}e7$  is not just as good.

**21.♘b2**

21.f4?! is entirely misguided: 21...exf4 22.♕xf4 ♘h7!†

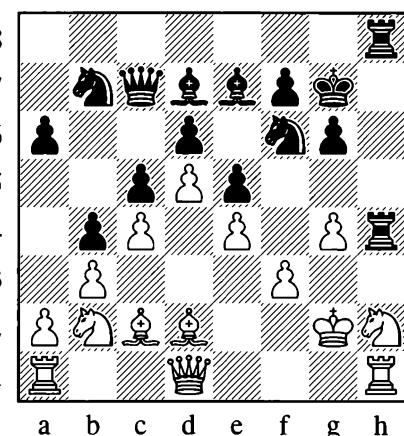


Black prepares an assault on the dark squares. 23.e5 dxe5 (23...♞xa4 24.e6!?) 24.♕xe5 ♜d6 25.♕xd6 ♜xd6 and the white kingside is far too weakened.

On 21.♗f3 Black has 21...♘h7!† as an additional option.

**21...♞g7 22.♗g2 ♘h8 23.♗h1 ♘h4**

It would also have been interesting to play 23...♘h7?!, in order to reroute the knight before putting both the rooks on the h-file. There may be several pieces wanting to use the h7-square later on.

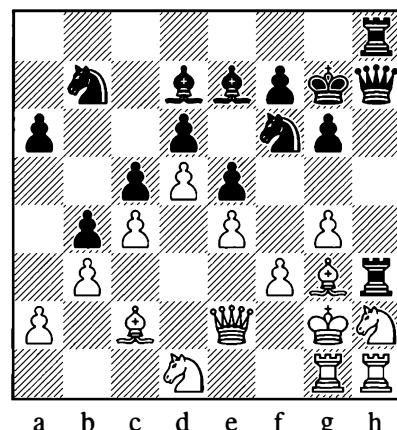
**24.f3 ♘ah8†**

Black has managed to establish himself on the kingside. White could probably defend better over the next few moves, but it is clear that he is the one with problems to solve.

**25.♗e2 ♘c8 26.♗ag1 ♗g8 27.♗e1 ♘h3****28.♗d1?**

The final mistake in a difficult position.

28.♗f1 was better, but life is difficult after 28...♘h7†.

**28...♗h7 29.♗g3****29...♘xg4!**

A nice finish.

**0–1**

30.fxg4 ♘xg3†! 31.♗xg3 ♗h3† 32.♗f2 ♘h4† and Black wins.

**11. McKay – Aagaard**


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Glasgow 2012

The following game was played on board one in the local league where I live. Roddy McKay is a talented IM who these days just plays for fun. Many times I have been in trouble against him, but then made up for it in time trouble. Recently I seem to have gotten the better of him. This game was played with one hour for

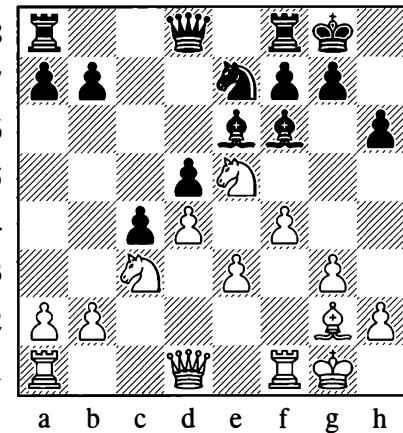
30 moves, then an additional 15 minutes to finish. I played quite fast while Roddy got into time trouble, accelerating his downfall. Most of the game it was just unclear, I think.

1.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$  d5 2. g3 c5 3.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  4. d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  5. 0–0 e6 6. c4  $\mathbb{Q}e7$  7. cxd5 exd5 8.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$  0–0 9.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$  c4 10.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}f5$

10...h6 is interesting, as a preparation for ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ , but I was ready for the main line a moment ago and I am ready now. Such options are more important for people who want to play 9.  $\mathbb{Q}g5$  cxd4.

The important point is to avoid: 10... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ ?! 11.  $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ ! dx $c$ 4 12. d5±

11.  $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  12. e3 h6 13.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6$   $\mathbb{Q}xf6$  14. f4  $\mathbb{Q}e7$

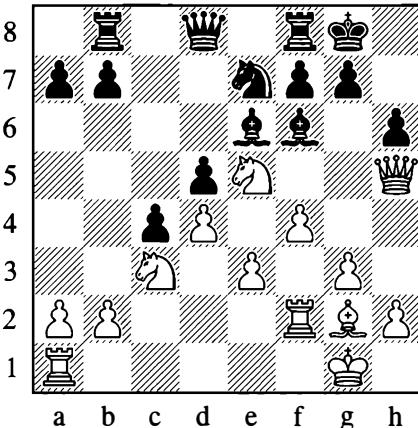


### 15. $\mathbb{Q}f2$

This had been played twice in the database. My response is obvious, but was still a novelty. Knowing the typical ideas of the positions helped me a lot during this game.

15.  $\mathbb{g}4$  is Khalifman's idea, but it is neutralized by 15...b5!N, as can be seen in Chapter 4 of *Grandmaster Repertoire 10 – The Tarrasch Defence*.

15...  $\mathbb{Q}b8$ !N 16.  $\mathbb{W}h5$



### 16...g6!

I could not resist the temptation of hitting the queen and playing this standard regrouping, especially after calculating the consequences of 17.  $\mathbb{W}xh6$  accurately.

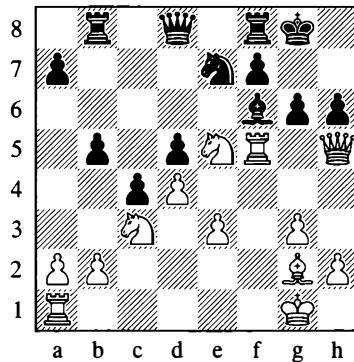
However, in the cold light of day, it is tempting to ask what White's idea is after:

16...b5 17. f5

White's intention is 17...  $\mathbb{Q}c8$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}g4$ .

But what about:

17...  $\mathbb{Q}xf5$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}xf5$  g6



Here the computer gives the amazing line:

19.  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ !  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ !

19...  $\mathbb{g}xh5$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ †  $\mathbb{Q}h8$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}xh5$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$  with compensation.

20.  $\mathbb{Q}xg6$   $\mathbb{Q}xe3$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{W}xd4$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}xf8$   $\mathbb{Q}xf8$

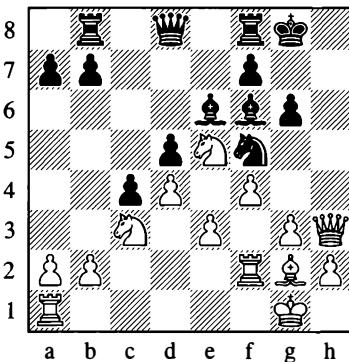
23.♗b1

Allegedly the position is equal – though I prefer Black in a practical setting.

23...♝d1† 24.♚h1 ♜e8 25.♛f5 ♜e1† 26.♝f1 ♜g7∞

17.♛e2

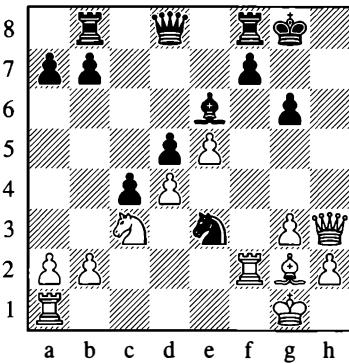
17.♛xh6?! ♜f5 18.♛h3 was the critical line.



18...♝xd4?! does not work because of 19.♝g4!.

18...♝xe3?! also fails, because of 19.g4 ♜xe5? 20.♛xe3±. Of course Black should play 19...♝xg4!∞, but still this is not what I was aiming for.

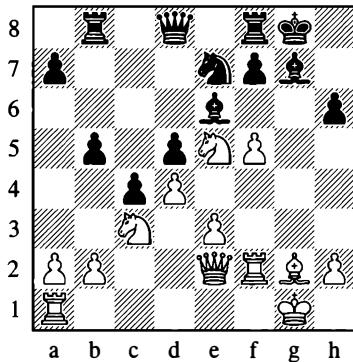
After some time I realized that the right way to play would be 18...♜xe5!. The move order is important. 19.fxe5 ♜xe3±



White does not want to exchange queens, but there is not really any way he can avoid it: 20.g4? ♜xg4 21.♝f4 ♜xe5 22.♛h6 ♜g4!±

17...♜g7 18.♛g4 f5

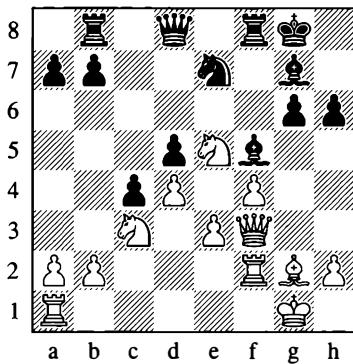
This is not the normal way to play, and here I think it is slightly inaccurate. I played quite quickly throughout the game, not spending enough time to see that 18...b5 was a touch more accurate, and that White did not have: 19.f5 gxsf5 20.gxf5



20...♝xf5! 21.♝c6 ♜g5↑

19.h3

Rather slow. Better was: 19.gxf5! ♜xf5 20.♛f3 (20.e4?! dx4 21.♛xc4† ♜h7∞)



20...♝e6 21.♛g3 ♜f5 22.♛f3=

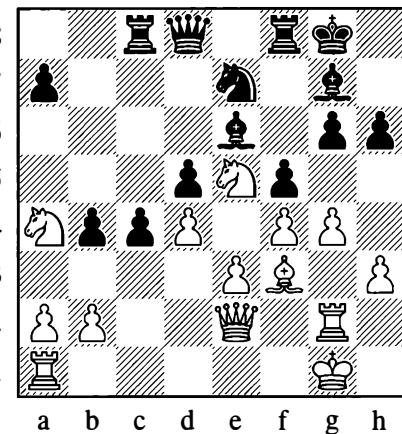
19...b5 20.♝f3 b4!?

Preparing to sacrifice the exchange, if allowed.

20...♛d6 21.♝g2∞

21.♝a4 ♜c8 22.♝g2

22.♝c5 ♜xc5 23.dxc5 ♜xe5 24.fxe5 ♜c7∞

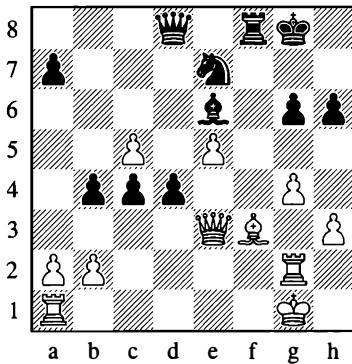


**22...fxe5 23.fxe5 f4**

23... $\mathbb{W}a5$  24.b3 c3∞ was also possible. The computer says Black is just better, but I personally find the position rather unclear. I preferred to keep my queen centralized.

#### 24. $\mathbb{W}d2$

24. $\mathbb{Q}c5?$  certainly does not work now:  
24... $\mathbb{B}xc5$  25.dxc5 fxe3 26. $\mathbb{W}xe3$  d4+

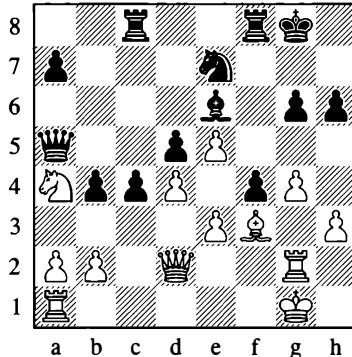


White's position is horrendous.

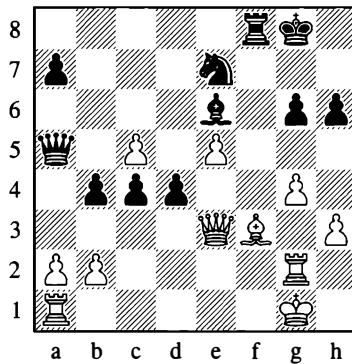
#### 24... $\mathbb{W}d7$

I quite liked this move, even if the details escaped me at the time.

There are other good moves such as 24...c3!?, but the main question is of course why I did not play 24... $\mathbb{W}a5$ .



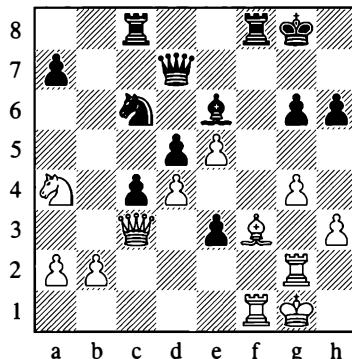
What I saw was that my usual idea does not work here: 25. $\mathbb{Q}c5$   $\mathbb{B}xc5$  26.dxc5 fxe3?  
(26...g5!?) 27. $\mathbb{W}xe3$  d4



28. $\mathbb{W}xd4!$   $\mathbb{B}xf3$  29. $\mathbb{W}d6$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  30. $\mathbb{B}f1\pm$  One of Black's minor pieces will drop, leaving White the exchange up without having to face an avalanche of pawns.

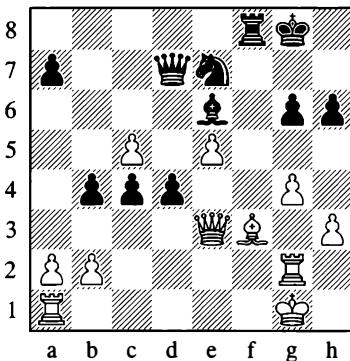
#### 25.b3

I was not entirely sure about: 25. $\mathbb{W}xb4$  fxe3  
26. $\mathbb{B}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  27. $\mathbb{W}c3$



27... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  28.dxe5  $\mathbb{W}xa4$  29. $\mathbb{W}xe3$   $\mathbb{Q}h7\mp$  But Black is doing okay here.

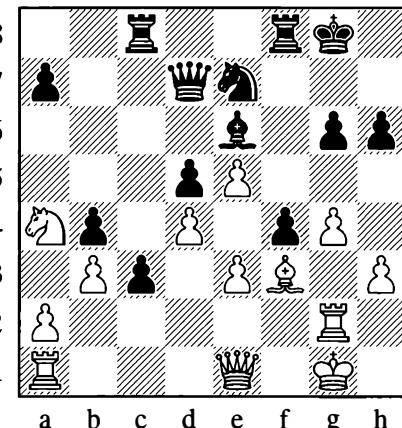
25. $\mathbb{Q}c5$  is still met with: 25... $\mathbb{B}xc5$  26.dxc5  $\mathbb{F}xe3$  27. $\mathbb{W}xe3$  d4 $\mp$



Although the position is not nearly as clear as I imagined during the game (and even then I found it pretty unclear), the main point is that it is unpleasant for White.

25...c3 26. $\mathbb{W}e1?$

I expected 26. $\mathbb{W}d3$ , which is stronger because it fights against Black's ... $\mathbb{Q}g6-h4$  manoeuvre. It was to become apparent that my opponent had not anticipated this idea at all.



26...g5!

The attraction of putting the knight on h4 is just too great to resist.

26... $\mathbb{Q}c6\?!$ , with the tactical point 27. $\mathbb{Q}c5\!?$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ !, was something I did spot during the game; but I did not see how Black would continue if White did not fall for this tactic. However, Black can follow up with ... $\mathbb{W}e7-g5$ , aiming to force White to take on f4, after which the d4-pawn will fall. Too deep for me to comprehend during the game, I must say.

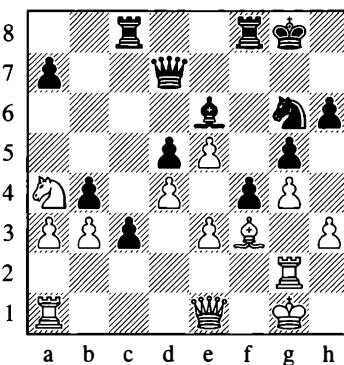
27.a3

Seeking counterplay.

27.h4?  $\mathbb{Q}g6$  28.hxg5 hxg5 would only favour Black, as he is the one attacking.

27...bxa3!?

I refrained from playing the immediate 27... $\mathbb{Q}g6\!?$ .



I just did not see what to do after 28.axb4?  $\mathbb{Q}h4$  29. $\mathbb{E}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}xf3\!\dagger$  30. $\mathbb{E}xf3$   $\mathbb{Q}xg4$  31.hxg4  $\mathbb{W}xg4\!\dagger$  32. $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{F}xe3\!\dagger$  33. $\mathbb{W}xe3$ . Admittedly I did not look very hard, or I would have seen 33... $\mathbb{E}xf3\!\dagger$  34. $\mathbb{W}xf3$   $\mathbb{E}f8$  winning at once. Again I was a bit restless and playing too fast.

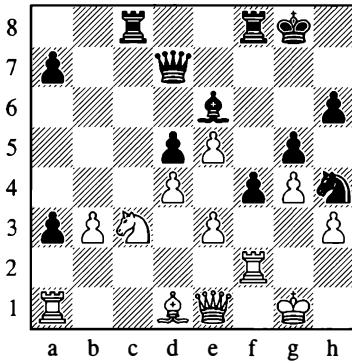
28. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$

Maybe there is some difficult improvement here, but in practice there was nothing better for him with 40 seconds on the clock.

28... $\mathbb{Q}g6\!\dagger$  29. $\mathbb{E}xa3\!?$

My opponent succumbs to time pressure.

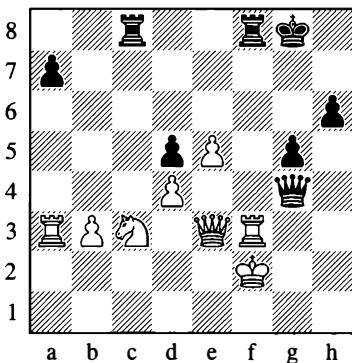
29.♕d1 ♔h4 30.♗f2



My intention here was to play 30...♔e7, which it turns out is actually quite a good move. But even stronger would have been 30...h5! 31.exf4 hxg4 with a devastating attack.

**29...♔h4 30.♕e2**

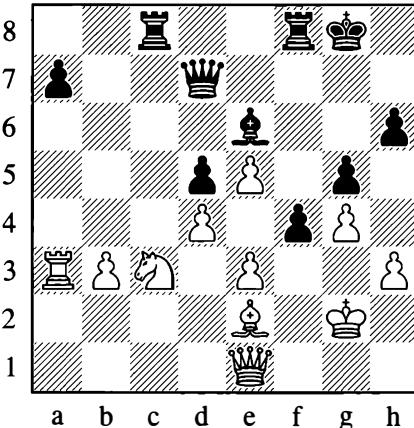
I was expecting: 30.♗f2 ♔xf3† 31.♗xf3 ♕xg4 32.hxg4 ♔xg4† 33.♗f2 fxe3† 34.♔xe3



Here I had looked at ideas such as ...♗xf3† with ...♗xc3† to follow, but had I reached this position I am sure I would have gathered my thoughts and found the simple solution: 34...♗xf3†! 35.♗xf3 and now either 35...♔xd4† or 35...♗f8, just winning.

**30...♔h2**

30...f3 also won of course, but I saw a simple way to win a rook and went for it.



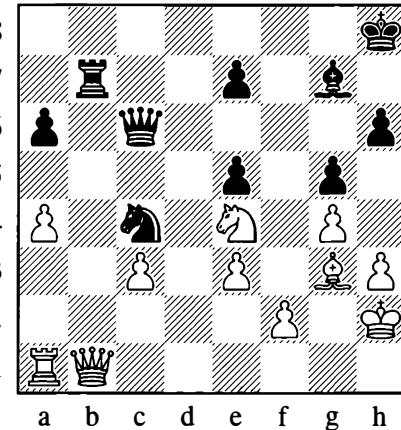
**31...f3†! 32.♗xf3 ♔f7**

White resigned. The point is that after 33.♗e2 Black wins with 33...♗xc3! 34.♗xc3 ♔f2† 35.♗h1 ♔xe2 36.♗a1 ♔f2 and mate is near.

**0–1**

## 12. Postny – Caruana

Aix-les-Bains 2011



White has a close-to-winning position, based on his extra pawn and better structure. But Black is rather active and it is not easy for White to get his pieces into the game. Finding the best way to do so is the point of the exercise.

**31.♔xg2**

**36.♔h1!**

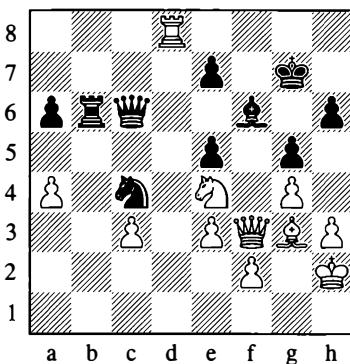
The strongest move. The queen supports the knight brilliantly and leaves the d1-square for the rook. At the same time White is preparing h3-h4, freeing the bishop from g3.

36.  $\mathbb{W}c2\pm$  or similar was somewhat weaker.

### 36... $\mathbb{B}b2$

This is the most active-looking move, but it achieves nothing.

36...  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  37.  $\mathbb{E}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  38.  $\mathbb{E}d8$   $\mathbb{B}b6$  39.  $\mathbb{W}f3$



This also sees White improve his position greatly.

36...  $\mathbb{E}c7$

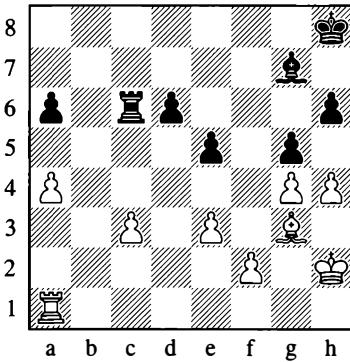
This may be the best defensive move, but White has a clear edge nonetheless.

37. h4!

Putting pressure on the black position.

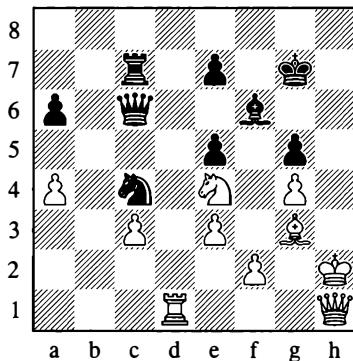
37...  $\mathbb{Q}f6$

37...  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  38.  $\mathbb{Q}xd6$   $\mathbb{Exd}6$  39.  $\mathbb{W}xc6$   $\mathbb{E}xc6$



40.  $\mathbb{E}b1!\pm$  gives White excellent chances of winning the endgame. For example: 40...e4 41.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  42.  $\mathbb{Hxg}5$   $\mathbb{Hxg}5$  43.  $\mathbb{E}c1$  and White regains his extra pawn.

38.  $\mathbb{Hxg}5$   $\mathbb{Hxg}5$  39.  $\mathbb{E}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$

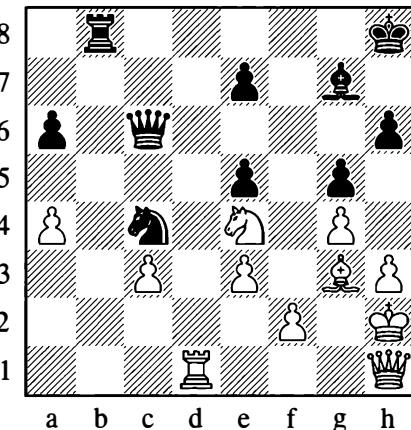


40.  $\mathbb{W}f3$

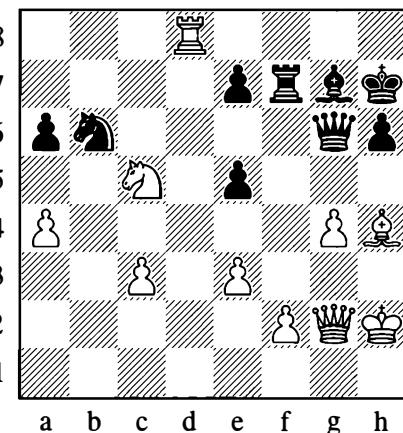
White has a clear advantage and any black counterplay is receding rapidly.

37.  $\mathbb{E}d1$   $\mathbb{B}b8$

Black has to backtrack, based on 37...  $\mathbb{W}xa4$ ? 38.  $\mathbb{E}d8\#$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  39.  $\mathbb{Q}c5$   $\mathbb{W}c2$  40.  $\mathbb{W}d5$  and White wins. For example: 40...  $\mathbb{Q}xe3$  41.  $\mathbb{W}g8\#$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  42.  $\mathbb{Q}e6$  and mate is near.



38. h4!±  $\mathbb{Q}xh4$  39.  $\mathbb{Q}xh4$   $\mathbb{W}g6$  40.  $\mathbb{W}f3$   $\mathbb{E}f8$   
41.  $\mathbb{W}g2$   $\mathbb{E}f7$  42.  $\mathbb{E}d7$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  43.  $\mathbb{E}d8\#$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$   
44.  $\mathbb{Q}c5$



**44... $\mathbb{Q}f6?$**

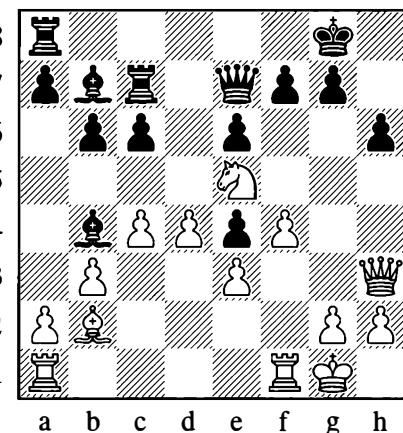
Losing quickly, although 44...a5 45. $\mathbb{Q}h3$  is also winning for White in the long run.

**45. $\mathbb{Q}xf6 \mathbb{B}xf6 46.a5 \mathbb{Q}c4 47.\mathbb{Q}d7$**

**1–0**

### 13. Kramnik – Van Wely

Dortmund 2008

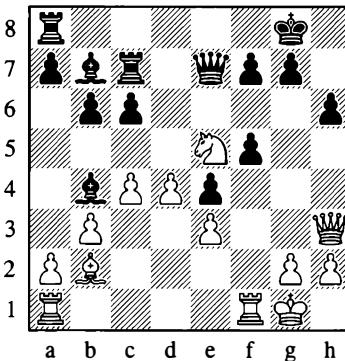


The weakest square in Black's position is the g7-square, and White's most ineffective piece is the b2-bishop. Black's plan is to neutralize the white pressure and enjoy the two bishops in the long term, although more realistically, he is hoping for opposite-coloured bishops and a draw.

### 18.c5!!

A somewhat counter-intuitive move, making use of the exposed position of the bishop on b4 to open up the long diagonal for the b2-bishop. It involves a pawn sacrifice, but to accept it, Black has to let his queen stray to the queenside. But as the queen is the only defender of the kingside, White can easily afford a pawn for this.

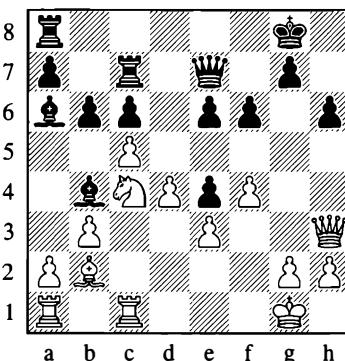
It is possible that Van Wely was expecting something along the lines of: 18.f5? exf5



19. $\mathbb{B}xf5?$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  does not work, of course. So White has to play 19. $\mathbb{W}xf5$ , which is met with 19... $\mathbb{E}e8$ , when all of the black pieces would be perfectly placed to deal with White's threats.

### 18...bxc5

Van Wely decides to take on the challenge, but seeing how the game ended, maybe it would have been better to accept the slightly inferior position after 18...f6 19. $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}a6$  20. $\mathbb{B}fc1\pm$ .



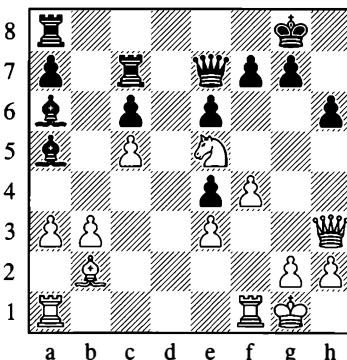
Kramnik would be a terrifying opponent to face here, but the position is not that bad. For example: 20... $\text{bxc5}$  21. $\text{a3}$   $\text{Qxc4}$  22. $\text{Bxc4}$   $\text{Qa5}$  23. $\text{dxc5}$   $f5$  24. $\text{b4}$   $\text{Bb7}$  and White is of course better, but nothing is decided yet.

Still, it is understandable that Van Wely decided that this was a very dangerous approach against such a strong technical player as Kramnik. And criticizing a chess player for such a decision is generally unfair; especially when you know the end of the game and have a computer to assist you. However, we are not trying to evaluate Van Wely here, but rather to improve our own chess. And in that connection, objective evaluations are invaluable.

### 19. $\text{a3}$ $\text{Qa5}$ 20. $\text{dxc5}$ $\text{Wxc5?}$

This is a very logical move, but it turns out to be the decisive mistake.

It may not have been obvious to Black that he had a serious alternative in 20... $\text{Qa6}!!$ .

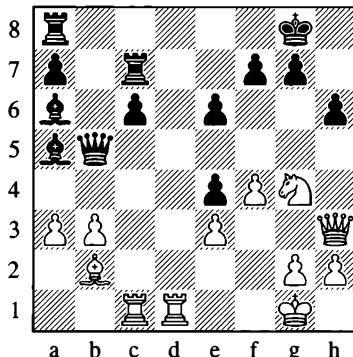


White has a choice of replies:

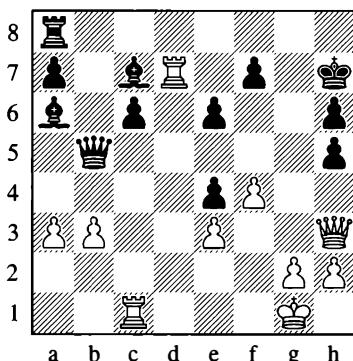
21. $\text{Bfd1}!!$   $\text{Wxc5}$  22. $\text{Bac1}$

Black's great idea is that 22.b4  $\text{Wc2}!!$  is even better for Black than it seems at first.

22... $\text{Wb5}$  23. $\text{Qg4}$

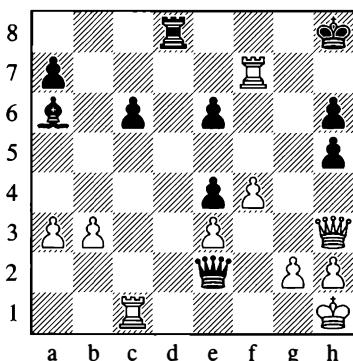


White's threats of  $\text{Qxh6}!!$  and  $\text{Qxg7}!!$  look devastating. But Black survives with:  
23... $h5!!$  24. $\text{Qh6}!!$   $\text{Qh7}$  25. $\text{Qe5}$   $\text{gxh6}$  26. $\text{Qxc7}$   $\text{Qxc7}$  27. $\text{Bd7}$



27... $\text{Wc2}!!$  28. $\text{Wg3}$

28. $\text{Qh1}$   $\text{Bf8}$  29. $\text{Bxc7}$  (29. $\text{Wxe6}$   $\text{Qg8}$  30. $\text{Wxh6}$   $\text{Wxe3}$  and White has nothing better than perpetual check.) 29... $\text{Ed8}$  30. $\text{Bxf7}!!$   $\text{Qh8}$  Suddenly it may look as if Black is winning, but White has an escape hatch:



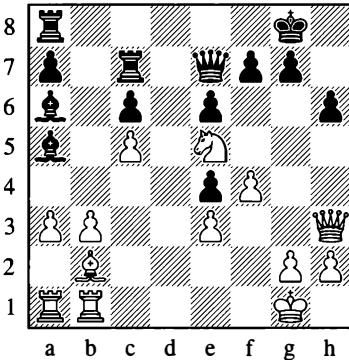
31.  $\mathbb{E}f8\#!!$   $\mathbb{E}xf8$  32.  $\mathbb{W}xe6$  and Black cannot escape the perpetual. 32...  $\mathbb{Q}g7$  33.  $\mathbb{W}e7\#$   $\mathbb{E}f7$   
 34.  $\mathbb{W}e5\#$ =  
 28...  $\mathbb{E}g8$  29.  $\mathbb{E}xf7\#$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  30.  $\mathbb{W}f2$   $\mathbb{W}xf2\#$   
 31.  $\mathbb{Q}xf2$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$

White's advantage is so small that it hardly exists.

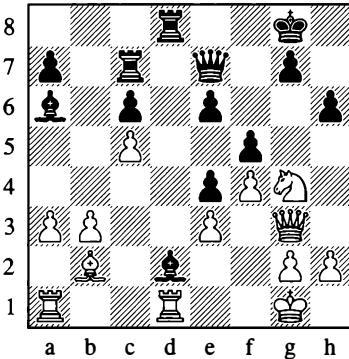
After the more mundane 21.  $b4$   $f6$  22.  $\mathbb{E}fd1$   $\mathbb{F}xe5$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}d3\pm$  White's advantage is somewhat limited.

21.  $\mathbb{E}fb1$ !

This is therefore the best option, defending the  $b2$ -bishop and preparing  $b3$ - $b4$ , winning a piece. A possible line could be:



21...  $\mathbb{Q}d2$  22.  $\mathbb{E}d1$   $\mathbb{E}d8$  23.  $\mathbb{W}g3$   $f6$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}g4$   $f5$

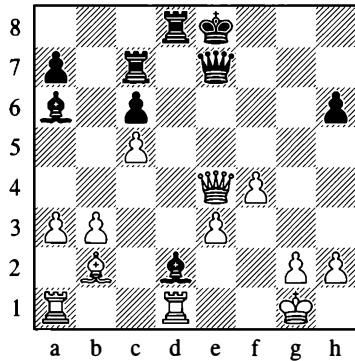


25.  $\mathbb{Q}f6\#?$

Clearly the most dangerous option, although the outcome is far from clear.

25.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $fxg4$  26.  $\mathbb{E}xd2$   $e5!$  27.  $\mathbb{F}xe5$   $\mathbb{W}e6\pm$  and

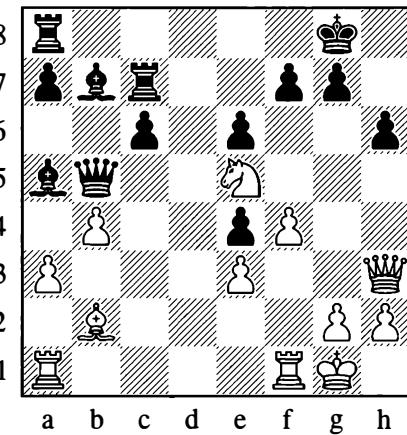
White's advantage is not too serious; Black has good counterplay on the light squares.  
 25...  $\mathbb{Q}f7$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $fxe4$  27.  $\mathbb{W}xg7\#$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$   
 28.  $\mathbb{W}g8\#$   $\mathbb{W}f8$  29.  $\mathbb{W}xe6\#$   $\mathbb{W}e7$  30.  $\mathbb{W}g6\#$   $\mathbb{W}f7$   
 31.  $\mathbb{W}xe4\#$   $\mathbb{W}e7$



32.  $\mathbb{Q}e5\pm$

21.  $b4$   $\mathbb{W}b5$

21...  $\mathbb{W}c2$  does not work now. White wins a piece with 22.  $\mathbb{E}f2$ .



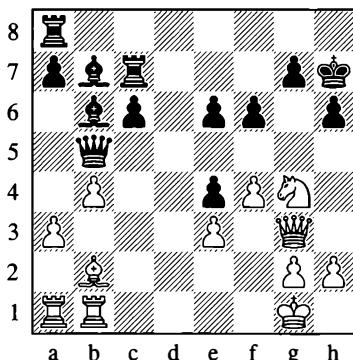
22.  $\mathbb{W}g3!$

The triumvirate of queen, bishop and knight can produce real threats surprisingly quickly; indeed, White's attack is decisive already.

22...  $\mathbb{Q}b6$

Black has various options here, but none of them work. The other variations are:

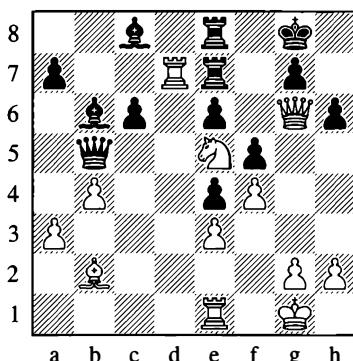
22...f6 23.Qg4 Qh7 (23...Qh8 24.f5 e5 25.Qxe5 fxe5 26.bxa5 and the attack starting with 27.f6 will be devastating.) 24.Qfb1 Qb6



25.a4! Wxb4 (25...Wf5 26.a5 and White wins a piece.) 26.a5 Qxa5 27.Qxf6 Wd2 28.Qd1 Wc2 29.Qd8 White wins material.

22...f5 23.Wg6 Qe7 24.Qad1 Qb6  
24...We2 25.bxa5 Wxb2 26.Qf2 Wxa3  
27.Qfd2 Wxa5 28.h3 and White will win not long after penetrating to the 7th rank with the rook.

25.Qfe1 Wa8 26.Qd7 Qc8



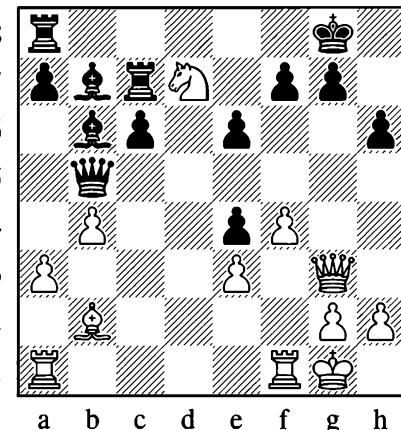
It looks as if Black has managed to keep everything together, even if somewhat shakily. However, as so often happens in attacking positions, White can ignore a threat to material and come up with an imaginative move.

27.Qf7!

This launches the final assault; mate is within reach.

27...e5 28.Qxh6† Qh8 29.Qf7† Qg8 30.Qg5 Wc4 31.Qh7† Qf8 32.Wxf5† Qg8 33.Qxe7 Qxf5 34.Qxe8#

**23.Qd7**



The final wave is initiated.

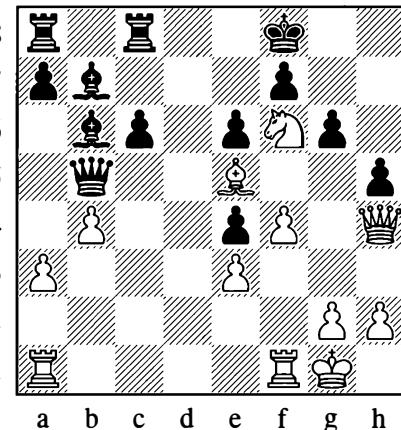
**23...g6**

23...f6 24.Qxf6† Qf8 25.Qg4 Wf5 26.Qfd1 and White is winning in more or less every way possible.

**24.Qf6†**

24.Qxb6!! Wxb6 25.f5 exf5 26.Qxf5 with the idea of Qh5 was also absolutely devastating.

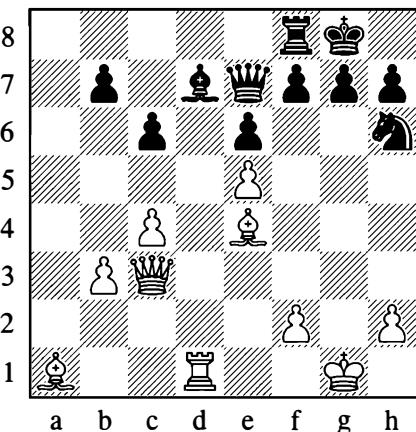
**24...Qf8 25.Qe5 Qcc8 26.Wh4 h5**



27.♕h7† ♔e8 28.♖d6 ♕c7 29.♖fd1  
1–0

#### 14. Beliavsky – Salov

Moscow 1988



White's position is poor for a number of reasons, which all stem from the missing g-pawn. Black also faces some problems, again all related to one factor: the bad bishop on d7. Black found a brilliant way to solve this in the game.

#### 24...c5!

With the threat of ...♗c6, challenging White's control over the vital long diagonal.

#### 25.♗xb7

25.♘f3 ♗c6! is not much different.

#### 25...♗c8!!

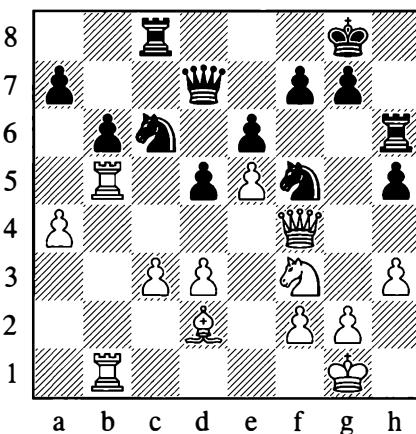
The bishop is activated decisively.

#### 26.♗g2 ♗b7†

Black's advantage is huge. He won the game on move 39.

#### 15. Kamsky – Ivanchuk

Dresden (ol) 2008

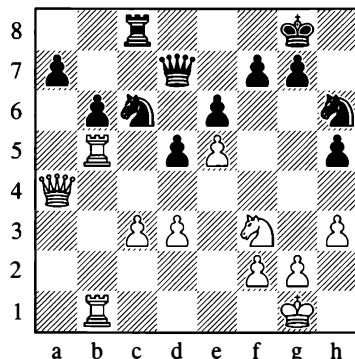


Black has two weaknesses: the hook on b6, which currently seems to be well-guarded by the knight, and the X-ray against the stupid rook on h6. White is able to use both to his advantage with a powerful tactic:

#### 21.a5!! bxa5

Forced but unpleasant.

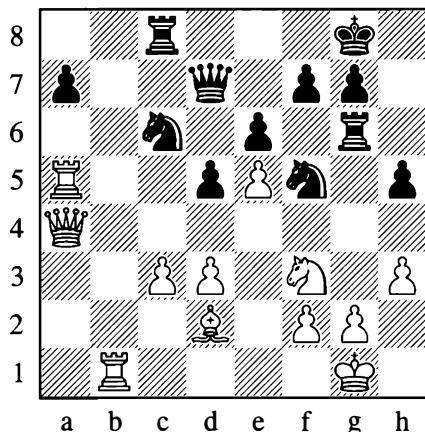
21...♗xa5 would lose the exchange to 22.♘a4!. Then after 22...♗c6 23.♖xh6 ♗xh6 White needs to open the position to make positive use of his extra material.



24.c4! gives White a close to winning advantage. Black cannot withstand 24...d4 25.c5!; and 24...dxc4 25.dxc4 ♘f5 is met with

26.♕d1! ♜cd4 27.♔h1!, when White will penetrate along the d-file.

22.♗a4 ♘g6 23.♗xa5±



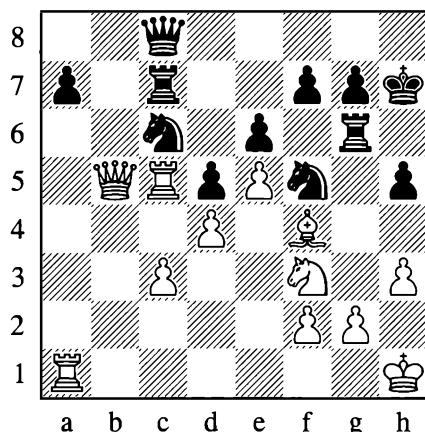
White has a great advantage, and managed to press Black backwards in convincing fashion:

23...♝c7 24.♝ab5

24.♝a6!!

24...♛c8 25.♚f4 ♔h8 26.♚h2 ♔g8 27.♚h1  
♔h8 28.♜c5 ♔g8 29.d4 ♛d7 30.♛b5 ♛c8  
31.♜a1 ♔h7

31...a5 would not save the game either.



32.♜a6! ♜ce7

32...♞fe7 loses to 33.♚h4.

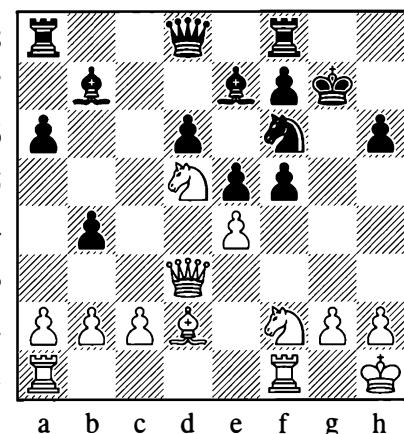
33.♚g5† ♘xg5

33...♚g8 34.♜xc7 ♛xc7 35.♛e8#

34.♜xg5 ♘xc5 35.dxс5 ♜g6 36.c6 ♜xe5  
37.♛b7 ♜d6 38.♛xc8 ♜xc8 39.♛e3 ♜g6  
40.c7  
1-0

## 16. Chernobay – Savchenko

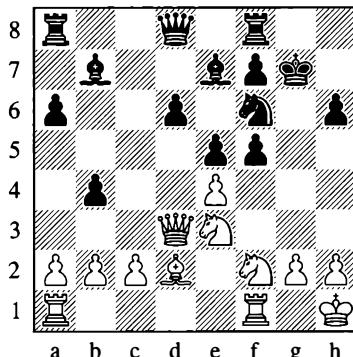
Moscow 2012



23.♛g3†?

It is hard to understand why White refrained from 23.♞xf6 ♜xf6 24.exf5± with the ideas ♜ae1-e3 and ♜e4/g4 with good attacking chances.

This is unless he had played 23.♚e3!, when the black king is truly exposed:



23... $\mathbb{Q}c8$  (Or 23...fxe4 24. $\mathbb{Q}f5\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  25. $\mathbb{W}h3$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  26. $\mathbb{Q}g4!$  with a strong attack. For example: 26... $\mathbb{Q}c8$  27. $\mathbb{Q}gxh6$  d5 28. $\mathbb{W}h5$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  29. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$   $\mathbb{W}xe7$  30. $\mathbb{Q}xb4!$   $\mathbb{W}xb4$  31. $\mathbb{W}xe5\uparrow$  f6 32. $\mathbb{W}xe6\pm$ ) 24.exf5  $\mathbb{Q}h8$  25. $\mathbb{Q}eg4\pm$  with a wonderful attacking position.

**23... $\mathbb{Q}h7\bar{f}$  24. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$   $\mathbb{W}xe7$  25. $\mathbb{Q}xh6?$**

The lesser evil was 25. $\mathbb{W}h3$  f4 26. $\mathbb{Q}xb4\bar{f}$ .

**25... $\mathbb{Q}h5$**

25... $\mathbb{Q}xh6?$  would have allowed a perpetual check.

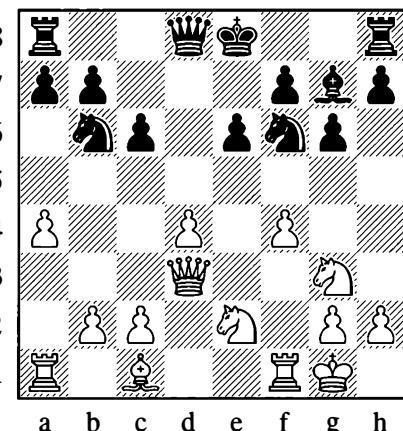
**26. $\mathbb{W}h3?$**

26. $\mathbb{W}g5\bar{f}$  had to be played.

**26... $\mathbb{Q}xh6$  27. $\mathbb{W}xf5$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  28.g4  $\mathbb{Q}f4$  0–1**

## 17. Aagaard – K. Rasmussen

Greve 2003



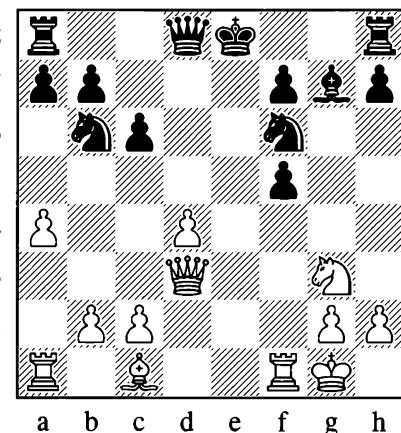
All of White's pieces are limited by the f4-pawn. On the other hand, he has a lead in development and can use this to his advantage in the normal way; by increasing it, no matter the cost.

**13.f5! exf5 14. $\mathbb{Q}xf5!$**

Without this follow-up, the pawn sacrifice would not make sense.

**14...gxf5 15. $\mathbb{Q}g3\bar{e}$**

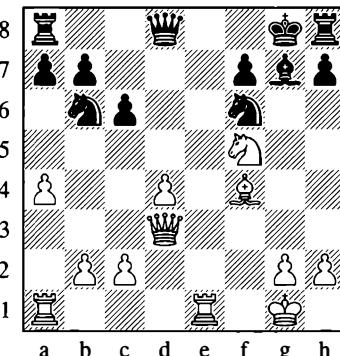
Hopefully you found this solution – perhaps by intuition, or otherwise by noticing how poorly all your pieces were doing, and realizing their prospects had to be improved.



**15...0–0?!**

This looks natural, but it may not be the best move.

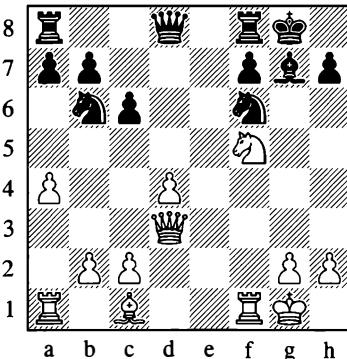
Probably it would have been better to play: 15...f4 16. $\mathbb{Q}e1\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  17. $\mathbb{Q}f5$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  18. $\mathbb{Q}xf4\pm$



White definitely has enough compensation for the pawn, even if the final outcome remains in doubt.

**16.♗g5!?**

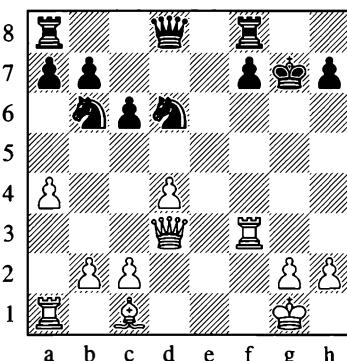
This move is not as bad as I originally thought; nevertheless I prefer 16.♕xf5.



a) 16...♝e8 17.♗f3 ♐d6

17...♞d5? is clearly wrong, as the knight is soon kicked back to the queenside: 18.♗h3 ♐ef6 (18...♞df6 19.♗g5 leaves Black hopelessly tied up.) 19.c4 ♐b4 20.♗g3 ♐e8 21.♗g5 f6 22.♗h4 and the white attack crashes through. Who is counting pieces when the king is about to be driven into the middle of the board?

18.♕xg7 ♔xg7



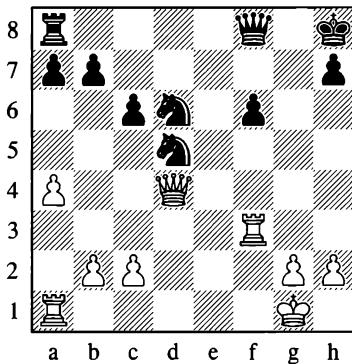
19.♗h6†! ♔h8

19...♔xh6 20.♗h3† ♔g7 21.♗xh7† ♔f6 22.♗e1! and mate is only a few moves away.

20.d5!

Creating a serious threat of ♜d4†.

20...♝xd5 21.♗d4† f6 22.♗xf8 ♜xf8



23.c4±

White ends an exchange up and will win the game with good technical play.

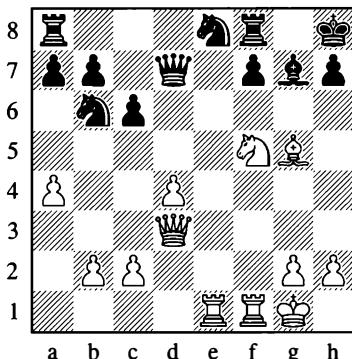
b) 16...♝bd5 17.♗g5 ♜d7 18.c4 ♐b4 19.♗h3 ♜h8 20.♗f4± With the simple ideas of ♗h4 or ♗af1, White's attack looks to be crushing.

c) 16...♜d7 17.♗g5 ♐e8

This appears to be the most resistant, but White's advantage is not really in doubt.  
18.♗ae1!

The most energetic continuation is also the best, as is so often the case when you have the initiative.

18...♚h8



19.♗xe8! ♜fxe8 20.♗xg7

Recapturing would now lead to mate, so Black instead has to choose a path of less and longer suffering.

20...♜g8 21.♗h5!

The point – the threat of  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  means that White ends up only the exchange for a pawn down, but he controls the game based on his dominance of the dark squares.

21... $\mathbb{E}g6$  22. $\mathbb{H}4\pm$

And so on...

### 16...h6?

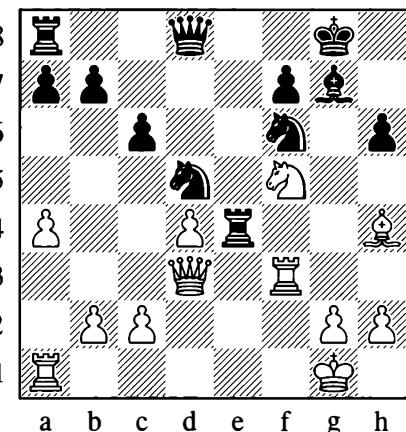
This creates additional weaknesses around the black king.

It was better to play 16... $\mathbb{E}e8$  17. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$ , when the position appears entirely unclear.

**17. $\mathbb{Q}h4$  f4!?** 18. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$   $\mathbb{Q}bd5$  19. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{E}e8$

19... $\mathbb{W}b6$  20. $\mathbb{Q}f5$   $\mathbb{W}xb2$  21. $\mathbb{Q}af1$  is the computer's initial idea, but to me it looks reckless to go for the b2-pawn when you are a piece up but lagging in activity. Getting your bits into the game is the right strategy.

**20. $\mathbb{Q}f5$   $\mathbb{E}e4$**



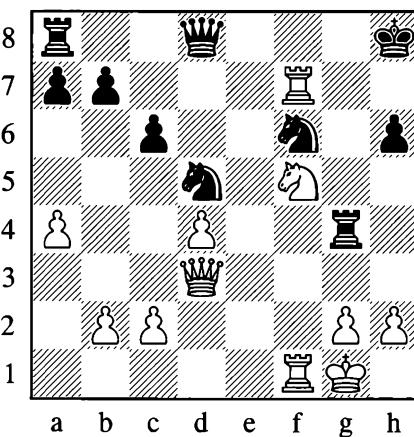
**21. $\mathbb{E}g3?$**

To this day I cannot understand why I did not play 21. $\mathbb{Q}af1\pm$ , when Black has to deal with the threat of  $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ . I can come up with no reason other than that I happened to play really badly that day. Or maybe I was just not a very good player at that time?

21... $\mathbb{E}xh4$  22. $\mathbb{Q}xg7\#$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  23. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$   $\mathbb{E}g4!$   
24. $\mathbb{Q}f1?$

After a series of uninspired moves, I completely miss one of my opponent's threats.

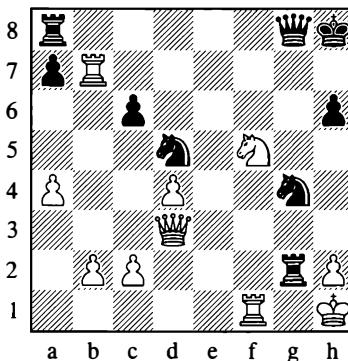
24. $\mathbb{W}f3$  was the correct defence. Black can then choose to force a repetition with 24... $\mathbb{E}f4$  25. $\mathbb{W}g3$   $\mathbb{E}g4$  26. $\mathbb{W}f3$ , or can play 24... $\mathbb{W}b6$  25. $\mathbb{Q}b1$   $\mathbb{E}ag8$  26.g3 with approximately even chances.



24... $\mathbb{W}g8!$  25. $\mathbb{Q}xh6?$

This effectively loses the game.

The last chance was 25. $\mathbb{E}xb7$   $\mathbb{E}xg2\#$  26. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ , although 26... $\mathbb{Q}g4!$  then appears very dangerous.



For example: 27. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$   $\mathbb{Q}ge3\#$  28. $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{E}f8$   
29. $\mathbb{W}e4$  (29. $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{W}e6$  30. $\mathbb{E}g3$   $\mathbb{E}xf5\#$  31. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ )

$\mathbb{E}f1\#$  32.  $\mathbb{W}xf1$   $\mathbb{Q}xf1$  33.  $\mathbb{E}b8\#$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  34.  $\mathbb{E}b7\#$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  35.  $\mathbb{Q}xf1$  h5 and Black should win the ending.) 29...  $\mathbb{E}xf5\#$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{E}xf1$  31.  $\mathbb{W}e5\#$   $\mathbb{E}f6$  32.  $\mathbb{E}b8$   $\mathbb{Q}xc2$  33.  $\mathbb{E}xg8\#$   $\mathbb{Q}xg8$  and White still has drawing chances.

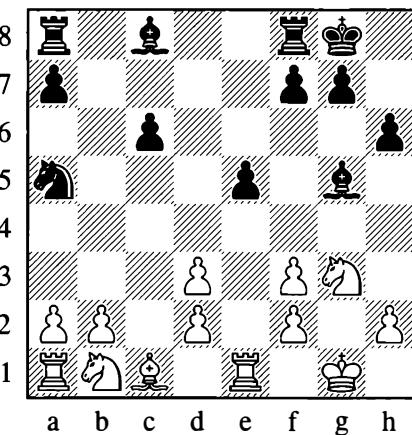
25...  $\mathbb{E}xg2\#$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}h1$   $\mathbb{W}g6\#$  27.  $\mathbb{W}h3?!$

27.  $\mathbb{W}xg6$   $\mathbb{E}xg6$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}f5$  was “better”.

27...  $\mathbb{Q}f4$  28.  $\mathbb{W}f3$   $\mathbb{E}xh2\#$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}xh2$   $\mathbb{W}xh6\#$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{E}g8\#$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{W}h4\#$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{E}g3$  0–1

## 18. Kaidanov – Onischuk

USA 2008



Black has the advantage even though he is a pawn down. White has a bad structure and is lacking in development. Obviously it is possible for Black to accept simple positional compensation, but he can also use his lead in development to increase his advantage and attack the weaknesses before White can get organized.

17...c5!!

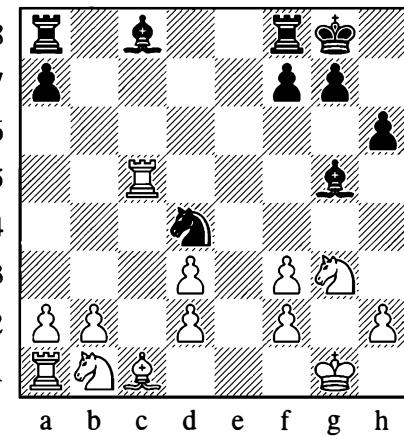
17...f6# would lose some of the initiative and allow White to fight back with either 18.b3 or 18.d4? exd4 19.d3, when Black's advantage would be less impressive.

18.  $\mathbb{E}xe5$

18.b3 is too slow. After 18...  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}b2$   $\mathbb{Q}b4!$  White is on the verge of defeat.

18.  $\mathbb{Q}a3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}c2$  aims to stop Black making use of the d4-square, but White is clearly worse after 19...  $\mathbb{Q}a6!.$

18...  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  19.  $\mathbb{E}xc5$   $\mathbb{Q}d4$



20.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$

20.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$

This might have offered a little more resistance. But Black has a significant advantage after:

20...  $\mathbb{Q}b7$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}a3!$

White needs to activate his pieces at some point.

21.  $\mathbb{Q}e4$  f5 22.  $\mathbb{Q}xg5$   $\mathbb{H}xg5\#$

21...  $\mathbb{E}xf3$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}c7$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$

Black has great winning chances, though the game is not over yet.

20...  $\mathbb{Q}xf3\#$

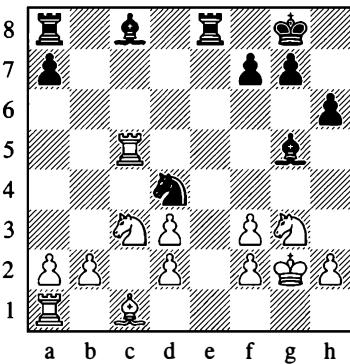
Although Black is doing very well in the game, he had an even stronger continuation here:

20...  $\mathbb{E}e8!$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$

This does not work, but everything else loses even more simply.

For example, 21.  $\mathbb{Q}ce4$   $\mathbb{Q}h3$  22. b3 f5 and

Black wins a knight, as he also does after 21.♕h1 ♜h3 22.♕ce4 f5.



21...♕c2! 22.♕b1 ♜e1† 23.♕h1 ♜xd3

The threat of 24...♜e1† 23.♕g2 ♜f4# means that Black wins material.

### 21.♕h1 ♜e1†

21...♜e8! still offers Black a bigger advantage.

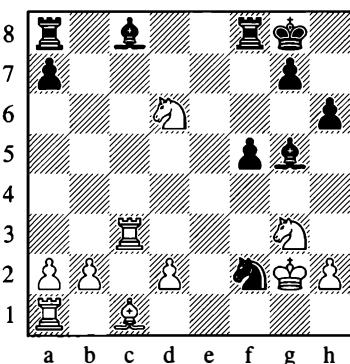
### 22.♕ce4 f5!! 23.♕d6?

Black would also hold on to his advantage after 23.♕xg5 hxg5 24.♕g1 ♜e8!#. Still, White should have played this.

### 23...♜e7

It was stronger to play:

23...♜xd3! 24.♕c3 ♜xf2† 25.♕g2



25...f4!

This gives Black a winning attack.

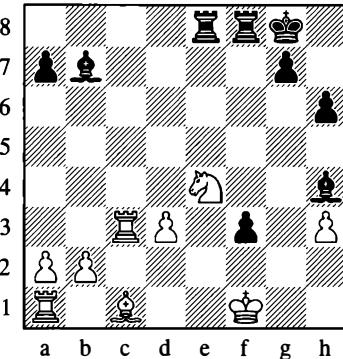
26.♕ge4

Or 26.♗xc8 ♜axc8 27.♗xc8 ♜d3 28.♗d6 fxg3 29.hxg3 ♜f2† 30.♔g1 ♜e2 and Black wins a piece.

26...♗xe4 27.♗xe4 ♜h4

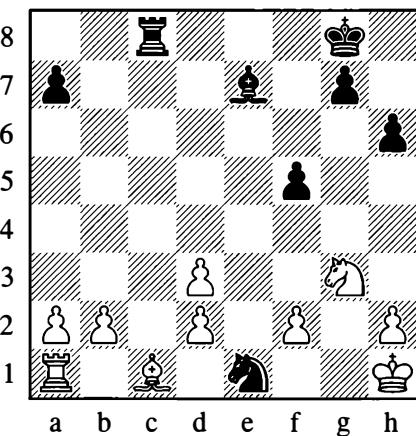
Black is threatening ...♜g4.

28.h3 ♜b7 29.d3 f3† 30.♔f1 ♜ae8



White has no defence against ...♜xe4 followed by ...♜a6 – or the other way around.

### 24.♗xc8 ♜axc8 25.♗xc8 ♜xc8



### 26.b4

This does not offer a lot of resistance, but White is probably lost anyway.

26.♗xf5 ♜f8 27.♗d4 (27.b4 ♜xd3 28.♗a3 a5! and Black wins a piece.) 27...♗xd3 28.♗b3 ♜xf2† 29.♗g2 ♜d3 30.♗f3 ♜e8 and Black will win eventually. White cannot get his pieces out.

**26...Qxd3 27.Qa3 g6**

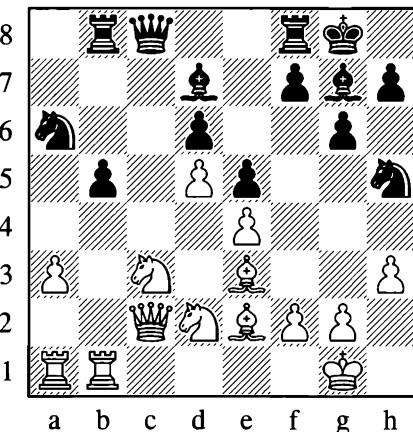
Black dominates the white pieces, and is winning.

28.Qb1 Qc2 29.Qf1 Qxa2 30.Qb3 Qxf2†  
 31.Qg1 Qe4 32.Qb2 Qf7 33.d3 Qg5  
 34.Qd2 Qf6 35.Qc4 Qf3† 36.Qg2 Qxb2  
 37.Qxf3 Qd4 38.Qg3 g5 39.Qa3 Qxa3  
 40.Qxa3 Qe6 41.Qc2 Qe5 42.h3 Qb6

0–1

### 19. Debasish – Shimanov

Athens 2012



The most important aspects of this position are the weak pawn on b5 and the inactive rook on a1.

**20.Wb3?**

This leads nowhere.

**20...Qf4 21.Qf1 Qc5 22.Wc2 Qa4**

The game was agreed drawn on move 30.

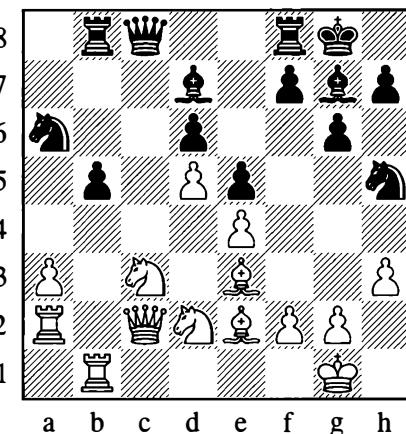
20.Qxh5± is of course slightly better for White structurally, but overall Black is not suffering too much, as he is fairly active. It is better to delay this exchange so as to keep the potential threat to the a6-knight alive.

White can instead organize his pieces in the

strongest formation, ready to exploit Black's problems in the optimal way:

**20.Qa2!!**

This was the right move. Black has problems defending the b5-pawn.



**20...Qc7**

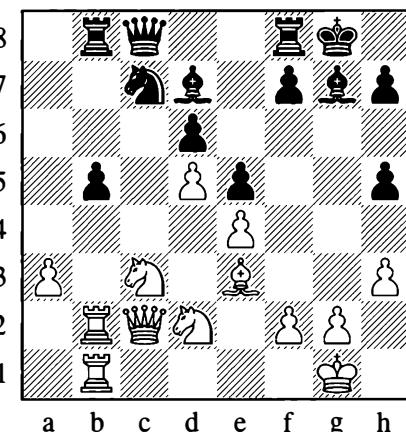
The only move that does not lose a pawn. But now Black is passive, and it is time to go for him.

**21.Qxh5**

Weakening his pawn structure and preventing counterplay with ...Qf4.

**21...gxh5 22.Qab2**

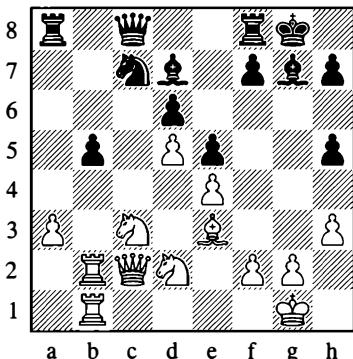
Threatening both a3-a4 and Qc4.



**22...f5**

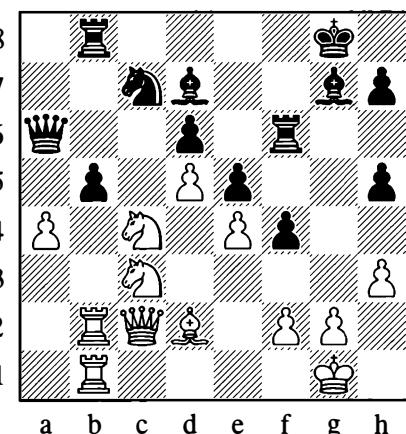
22... $\mathbb{Q}a6$  23. $\mathbb{W}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  24. $\mathbb{W}f1$  and the b-pawn falls.

22... $\mathbb{E}a8$



23.a4!  $bxa4$  24. $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{E}a6$  25. $\mathbb{Q}b6$   $\mathbb{W}e8$  26. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$   $\mathbb{W}xd7$  27. $\mathbb{B}b7$  White has a winning initiative. For example: 27... $\mathbb{W}c8$  28. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  29. $\mathbb{W}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}xe3$  30. $\mathbb{W}xa6$   $\mathbb{Q}c2$  31. $\mathbb{W}xa4$  and it is all a matter of technique.

**23. $\mathbb{Q}c4!$   $\mathbb{W}a6$  24.a4 f4 25. $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{E}f6$**



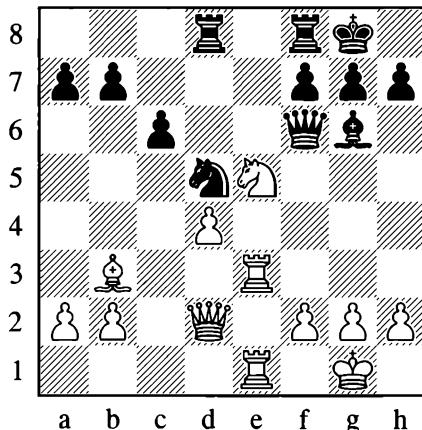
**26. $\mathbb{Q}a5!±$**

White has other tempting options here, for example: 26.axb5!?  $\mathbb{Q}xb5$  27. $\mathbb{W}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  28. $\mathbb{Q}a2!$   $\mathbb{E}g6$  29. $\mathbb{Q}b4$   $\mathbb{W}c8$  30. $\mathbb{Q}c6$   $\mathbb{Q}xh3$  31.g3 fxg3 32.fxg3 h4 33. $\mathbb{Q}e1$  hxg3 34. $\mathbb{E}xb5$   $\mathbb{E}xb5$  35. $\mathbb{E}xb5$   $\mathbb{W}g4$  36. $\mathbb{E}b8±$

26... $\mathbb{Q}h8$  27. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  28. $\mathbb{Q}c7$   $\mathbb{E}xb2$  29. $\mathbb{E}xb2$   $\mathbb{W}e2$  30. $\mathbb{Q}xe8$   $\mathbb{Q}xe8$  31. $\mathbb{Q}c6$  White is winning.

## 20. J.C. Fernandez – Remon

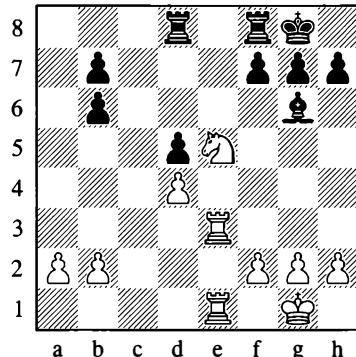
Cuba 1979



In a seemingly innocuous position, White found a brilliant tactical idea to force a positional gain.

**20. $\mathbb{Q}xd5!!$   $\mathbb{E}xd5?!$**

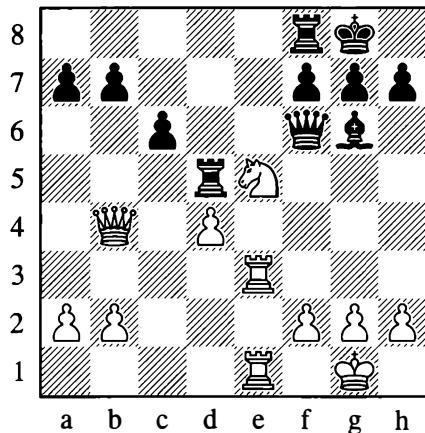
This loses material, but the alternative was also unpleasant: 20...cxsd5 21. $\mathbb{W}a5$   $\mathbb{W}b6$  22. $\mathbb{W}xb6$  axb6



This endgame gives White a lot of attractive options. He can play slowly and claim that his knight is better than the bishop, or he can go

for 23.  $\mathbb{Q}xg6!?$   $f\text{x}g6$  24.  $\mathbb{E}e7$   $\mathbb{E}f7$  25.  $g3$  with a favourable rook ending. Nothing is conclusive, but everything is unpleasant for Black.

21.  $\mathbb{W}b4!$

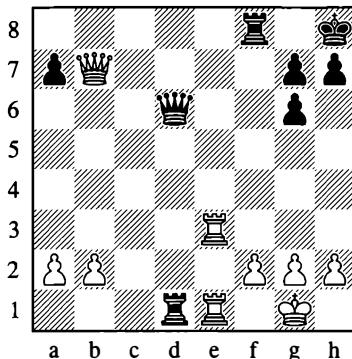


I believe it was only at this moment that Black realized what White's idea was. The threat of mate in three by 22.  $\mathbb{W}xf8\#$  forces Black to give up a pawn.

21...  $\mathbb{W}d6$  22.  $\mathbb{W}xb7$   $\mathbb{E}xd4$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}xc6$   $\mathbb{E}d2?$

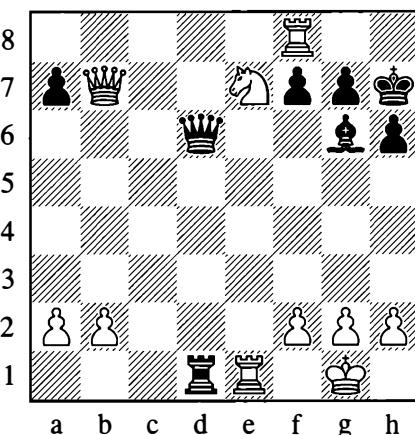
After this, Black loses everything.

The last chance was 23...  $\mathbb{E}d1$ , although White should win after: 24.  $\mathbb{Q}e7\#$   $\mathbb{W}h8$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}xg6\#$   $f\text{x}g6$  (25...  $h\text{x}g6$  26.  $g3\#$ )



26.  $\mathbb{W}e7!$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  27.  $\mathbb{W}xd6$   $\mathbb{E}xd6$  28.  $g3$  and the extra pawn should count.

24.  $\mathbb{E}e8$   $h6$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}e7\#$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  26.  $\mathbb{E}xf8$   $\mathbb{E}d1$

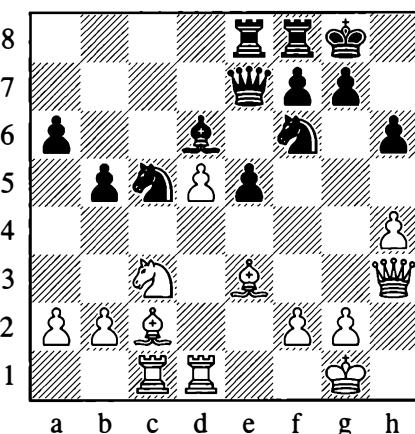


27.  $\mathbb{E}h8\#$   $\mathbb{Q}xh8$  28.  $\mathbb{W}c8\#$   $\mathbb{W}d8$  29.  $\mathbb{E}xd1$

1–0

## 21. Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son – J.P. Gomez

Ho Chi Minh City 2011

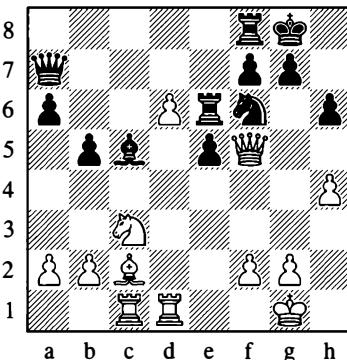


There are two big weaknesses in the black position: the f5-square and the c6-square. The dream would be to put a knight on f5 and a rook on c6, causing maximum damage to the black position. This is not so difficult to arrange, though White did not look in this direction in the game.

23.  $\mathbb{Q}xc5?!$   $\mathbb{Q}xc5$  24.  $d6?!$   $\mathbb{W}d8?$

24... $\mathbb{Q}xd6?$  25. $\mathbb{W}d3!$  was White's clever tactical point. He wins a piece based on the threat of  $\mathbb{Q}d5$ .

But Black had a real defensive option in 24... $\mathbb{W}a7!$ , and after 25. $\mathbb{W}f5$   $\mathbb{E}e6$  his position seems to be holding together. White is a little better, but there is nothing totally concrete.



Best is 26.h5!  $\mathbb{Q}d8$  27. $\mathbb{Q}e4$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  28. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ , when White has some play on the light squares. But Black can to some extent keep his position together with 28... $\mathbb{Q}f8$  29. $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd6$  30. $\mathbb{W}h7$   $\mathbb{Q}f6\pm$ . Certainly Black's position is unpleasant, but the outcome has yet to be decided.

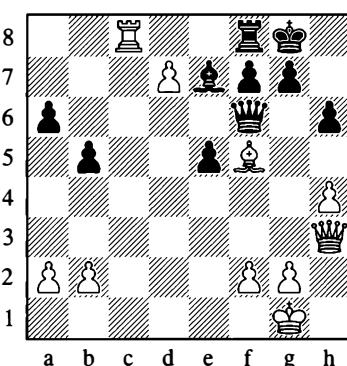
### 25.d7 $\mathbb{E}e6$

25... $\mathbb{E}e7$  26. $\mathbb{Q}e4$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  27. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{Q}d4$  28. $\mathbb{Q}f5$  and 29. $\mathbb{Q}c8$  wins for White as well.

### 26. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

White wins in all lines. Here is a typical way this could happen:

28... $\mathbb{Q}e7$  29. $\mathbb{Q}c8$   $\mathbb{W}b6$  30. $\mathbb{Q}xf6\uparrow$   $\mathbb{W}xf6$



### 31. $\mathbb{E}e8!$

Preventing Black from properly blockading the d8-square.

### 31...g6

Otherwise White plays h4-h5 and blocks Black in.

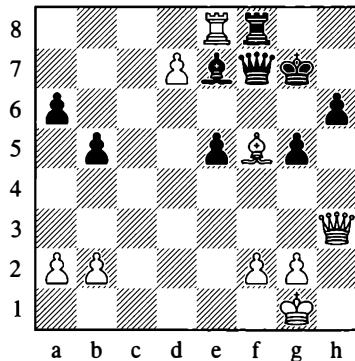
### 32.h5!

But it comes anyway with great strength.

### 32... $\mathbb{Q}g7$

32... $\mathbb{Q}xf5$  33. $\mathbb{W}g3\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  34.d8= $\mathbb{W}$  and White wins.

33.hxg6  $\mathbb{Q}xf6$  34. $\mathbb{W}g3$  g5 35. $\mathbb{W}h3$   $\mathbb{W}f7$



### 36. $\mathbb{W}e3!$

White plans g2-g4, with a position that will win slowly. Black cannot play 36... $\mathbb{E}e8$  37. $\mathbb{W}xe5\uparrow$  as all moves then lose material.

### 29. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ g6

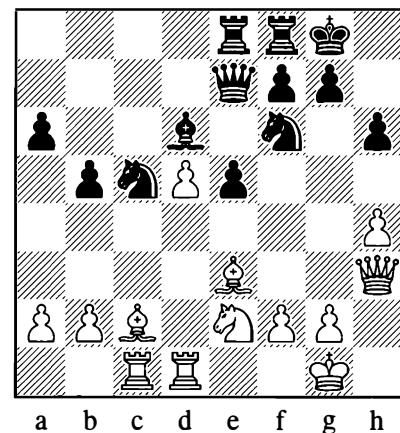
29... $\mathbb{W}f6$  30. $\mathbb{Q}c8$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  31. $\mathbb{E}e8!$  is very similar to the last note, though White's bishop is on e4 instead of f5.

### 30. $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 31.h5

1–0

This was of course quite successful, but if Black had defended better, the outcome could have been different. For this reason White should have played:

### 23. $\mathbb{Q}e2!!$



This was the strongest move. The threat of  $\mathbb{Q}g3-f5$  is very strong. For example:

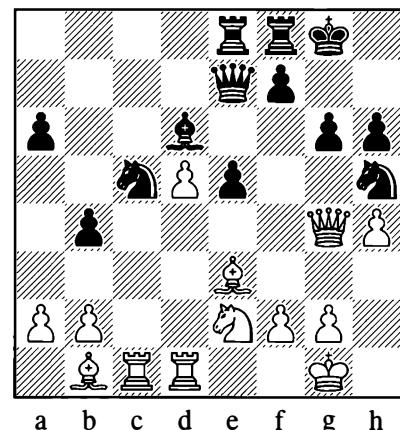
**23...Qh5 24.Qb1**

With the idea of b2-b4 followed by  $\mathbb{Q}c6$ . Black finds this almost impossible to meet.

**24...b4**

24... $\mathbb{Q}c8$  25.b4  $\mathbb{Q}d7$  26. $\mathbb{Q}c6$  with a clear advantage for White.

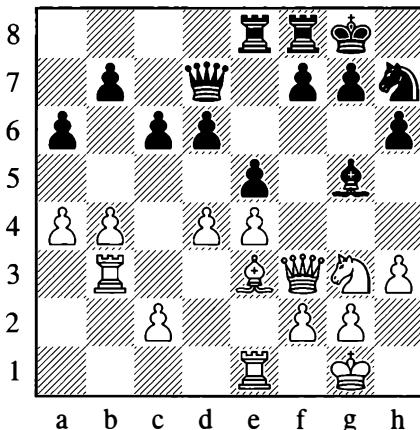
**25.Wf5 g6 26.Wg4**



White wins a pawn, based on 26... $\mathbb{Q}g7$  27. $\mathbb{W}xb4$   $\mathbb{Q}d3$  28. $\mathbb{W}d2\pm$ .

## 22. Short – Ganguly

Spain 2010



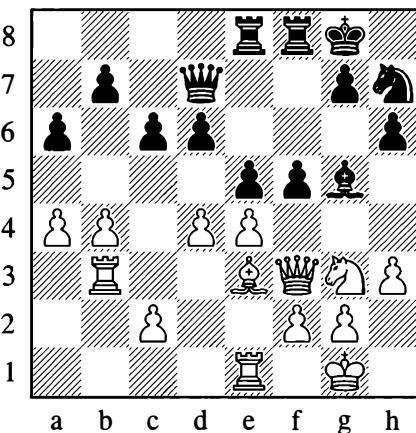
One of the main features we should look at when we study the pieces is which pieces are unprotected; and we should also look for major pieces in trouble. Here the rook on e1 is unprotected and furthermore caught in an X-ray from e8 to e1. At the same time the queen on f3 is caught in another X-ray from f8-f3. Obviously it is not easy to see a way to exploit these right away, but had Surya noticed they were there he would not have missed his great chance. The purpose of training with the three questions is to have your subconscious cut to the chase and point to these things before we even have a conscious thought.

**19...Qxe3? 20.Wxe3±**

Black was increasingly on his heels on his way into time trouble, but eventually escaped with a draw on move 45.

But instead of suffering it could have been a joyful experience if Surya had noticed a strong tactical idea that would have taken advantage of the poor placement of the white queen and the rook on e1.

**19...F5!!**



This is a dream move to play. Black would love to play this, but might be discouraged by the tactics. But at times it is a good question to ask yourself: what would I play if I did not concern myself with tactics? More often than you would imagine, the tactics work out to support the positional desires. And indeed this is the case here.

#### **20.♕xg5**

A very sad move, but it is the best available.

20.♕f1 exd4 21.♕xd4 fxe4 and Black is winning.

20.exf5 exd4 and Black wins a piece.

20.♕xf5 exd4! and Black wins a piece with ...♕xf5 next.

#### **20...♕xg5 21.♗d1 f4 22.♕f5 exd4**

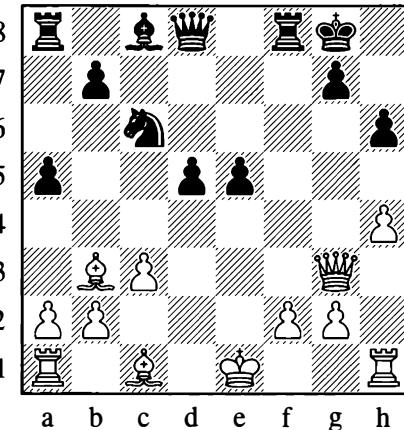
22...d5! is also very strong.

23.f3 d5 24.♕xd4 dxe4 25.h4 ♕e6 26.♕xe6 ♗xd1 27.♗xd1 ♗xe6 28.fxe4 ♗xe4

Black has every chance of winning this ending due to the extra pawn.

### 23. Rozentalis – Vallejo Pons

Calvia (ol) 2004



In order to play good strategic chess, we need to have a vision for what all of our pieces are supposed to do. Where will Black's entire back rank be placed best? This is the first question. The second is where our opponent is weakest; or even likely to be weakest in a few moves from now. The final question is what he is intending to do. Let us try to answer them in the opposite order.

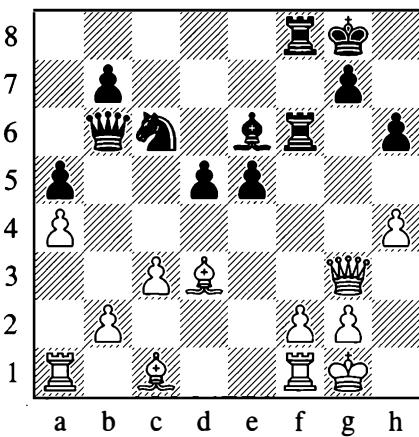
First of all, White is considering taking on h6, should we not defend against it. But more important (or at least something that will take more of our attention) is what he will do once we protect it. Castling and the development of the c1-bishop sound reasonable. Where the bishop goes is not so easy to say (which indicates that we have done something right already).

He is also likely to prevent ...a4, which we would consider playing soon.

His weaknesses are h4, f2 and soon b2/b3 – undefended pieces are always weak, while the h4-pawn is advanced and the f2-pawn is on a semi-open file.

So finally this brings us to the organizing of our pieces. The queen should be on b6, from where she can attack three of the four weaknesses. The h4-weakness is hardest to get to anyway; we will wait with that one until further down the line. To allow the queen to move, the bishop should be on e6. And as we need to defend h6, it makes sense to put the rook on f6 and the other on f8. Job done; we can turn to calculation for a bit.

**17...♝f6! 18.a4 ♜e6 19.0–0 ♜b6 20.♕c2 ♜af8 21.♗d3**



White is struggling to complete his development and decides to block the queen's pressure on b2.

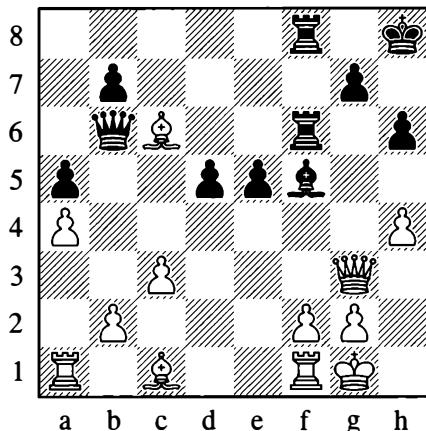
**21...♚h8 22.♗b5 ♜f5!**

As play has developed and White has defended a lot of his weaknesses, new ones have arisen. The g2-pawn (and with it the king) is one, the c2- and b3-squares are others.

**23.♗xc6?**

This is too compliant.

23.h5 was necessary, though Black has some strong ideas. Probably he would play 23...♝h7?! planning to advance the d-pawn. If he is significantly better is hard to say, but his life is more fun.



**23...♝g6!**

Vallejo does not want to miss the chance to put the rook here.

**24.♗xe5**

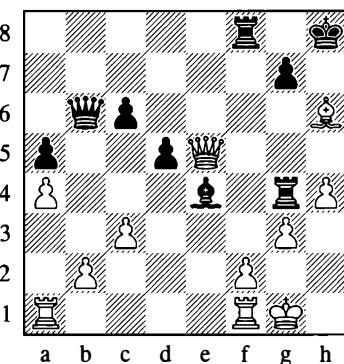
White should consider things such as 24.♗f3 bxc6 25.h5 ♜g4 26.b4, and although his position is clearly under a lot of pressure, Black is lacking the killer blows which arise once he manages to get the bishop to e4.

**24...♜e4 25.g3 bxc6**

I honestly do not think the white position can be saved at this stage. One of the things Black is threatening is ...♜d8 followed by ...♝f5-h5, coming so fast that White will have no idea what hit him.

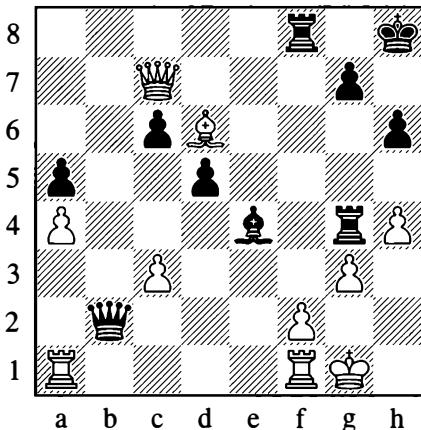
**26.♗f4 ♜g4! 27.♗c7**

The best chance. After 27.♗xh6 Black wins in style:



27... $\mathbb{E}f5$ ! 28. $\mathbb{W}e8\#$  (28. $\mathbb{W}d6$   $\mathbb{E}f3$ ! and White cannot defend his king) 28... $\mathbb{Q}h7$  29. $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{E}gxf4$ ! 30.gxf4  $\mathbb{W}c7$  White will last a few moves, but will ultimately be mated.

**27... $\mathbb{W}xb2$  28. $\mathbb{Q}d6$**



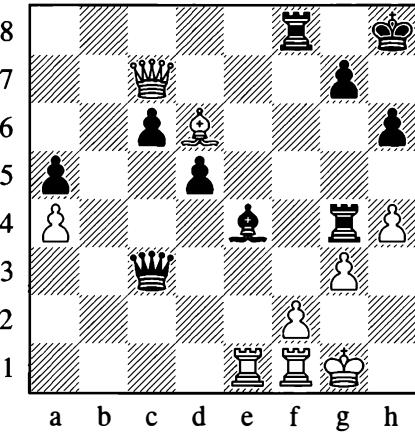
**28... $\mathbb{W}xc3?$**

This is a sad blunder, almost ruining what was otherwise a complete masterpiece.

Black would have won the game comfortably with the simple 28... $\mathbb{E}xf2!$ , when the following moves are all forced and not at all hard to calculate: 29. $\mathbb{E}xf2$   $\mathbb{W}xa1\#$  30. $\mathbb{E}f1$   $\mathbb{W}a2$  31. $\mathbb{E}f2$   $\mathbb{W}b1\#$  32. $\mathbb{E}f1$   $\mathbb{W}c2$  33. $\mathbb{E}f2$   $\mathbb{W}d1\#$  34. $\mathbb{E}f1$   $\mathbb{W}e2$  35. $\mathbb{E}f2$   $\mathbb{W}e1\#$  36. $\mathbb{E}f1$   $\mathbb{W}e3\#$  37. $\mathbb{E}f2$  and now simply 37... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ , when Black will soon start to steal pawns, taking advantage of White being tied down to the defence of his kingside.

**29. $\mathbb{E}ae1?$**

White misses his chance to come back from the dead with 29. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$   $\mathbb{W}f3$  30. $\mathbb{Q}xg7\#$ !, when Black will have to retreat his rook sooner or later to put an end to the checks. I am sure that Vallejo would favour his chances after 30... $\mathbb{E}xg7$  31. $\mathbb{W}c8\#$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  32. $\mathbb{W}h3$   $d4\#$ , but I reckon that White can put up a fight with  $\mathbb{E}ae1$  followed by  $\mathbb{Q}h2$  and  $g3-g4$ , leading to the exchange of queens.



**29... $\mathbb{E}xf2!$**

This time there are no complicating details and Vallejo does not mess it up.

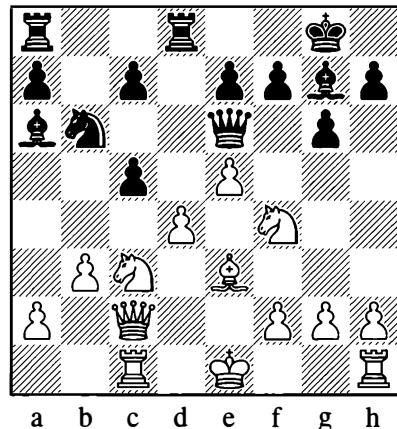
**30. $\mathbb{W}c8\#$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  31. $\mathbb{W}xg4$   $\mathbb{E}g2\#$  32. $\mathbb{Q}h1$   $\mathbb{E}e2\#$**

A queen move to the second rank would have forced mate in eight according to the computer, but after the move played in the real world, White resigned.

**0–1**

## 24. Gashimov – E. Hansen

Khanty-Mansiysk (1.2) 2011



Black has a promising position because of the bishop on a6, but there is the small matter of the pawn hanging on c5 and the queen hanging on e6.

**15... $\mathbb{W}c6?$** 

This is the wrong square, for the simple reason that the queen is walking straight into a pin!

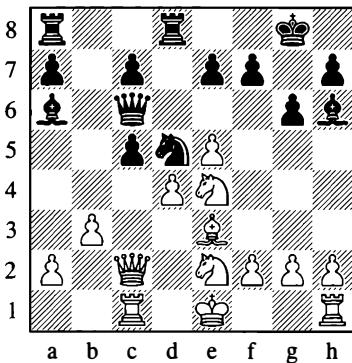
15... $\mathbb{W}c8?!$  16.dxc5 g5! $\infty$  is possible, but it is clear that Black is not playing for an advantage.

**16. $\mathbb{Q}e4?!$** 

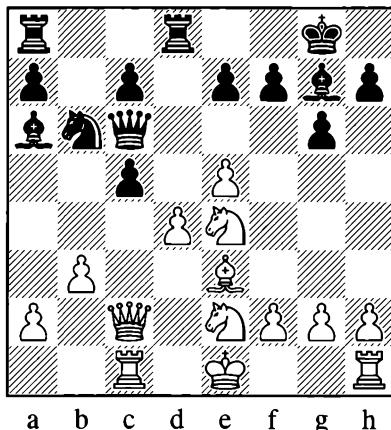
Simpler was 16. $\mathbb{Q}ce2!$  preparing to castle. The position is about equal.

**16... $\mathbb{Q}h6! 17.\mathbb{Q}e2 \mathbb{Q}g7$** 

Missing the clever 17... $\mathbb{Q}d5!.$



White would have to liquidate into a drawn ending with 18. $\mathbb{W}xc5!,$  as he would be in serious trouble after 18. $\mathbb{Q}xh6? \mathbb{Q}b4!.$

**18.f3?!**

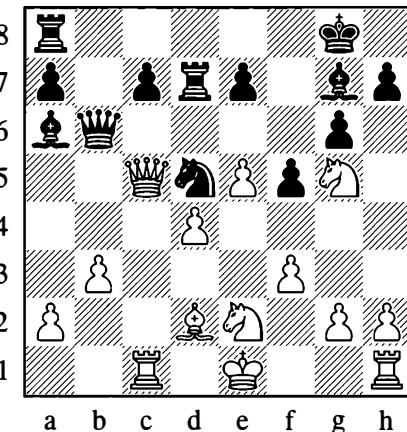
More accurate was 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc5! \pm.$

**18... $\mathbb{Q}d5 19.\mathbb{W}xc5 \mathbb{W}b6 20.\mathbb{Q}d2 f5?$** 

After something like 20... $\mathbb{Q}d3$  Black would not have been much worse.

**21. $\mathbb{Q}g5 \mathbb{Q}d7?$** 

21... $\mathbb{E}ab8 22.h4 \pm$



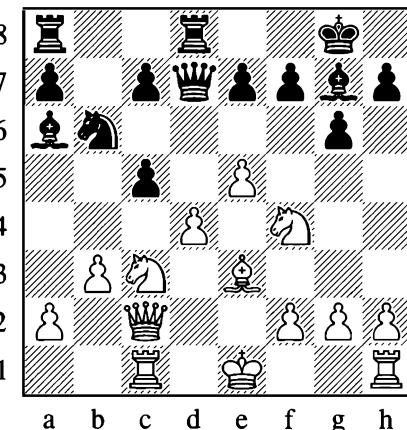
22. $\mathbb{W}c6! \mathbb{E}ad8 23.\mathbb{W}e6\# \mathbb{W}xe6 24.\mathbb{Q}xe6 \mathbb{Q}xe2 25.\mathbb{Q}xd8$

1–0

The right way to play is rather elegant:

**15... $\mathbb{W}d7!!$** 

The pressure on the centre increases, and at the same time the tactics work in Black's favour.



**16.dxc5**

The critical test and the only move that makes much sense; otherwise White's centre will fall apart.

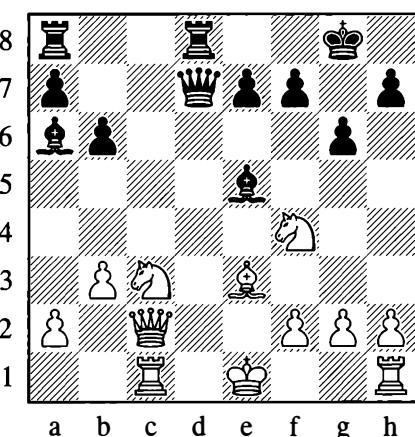
16.♕ce2 cxd4 17.♗xd4 ♕xe2 18.♗xe2 ♜g4!† and Black wins two minor pieces for a rook.

**16...♕xe5!**

Black sacrifices a piece, though only temporarily.

**17.cxb6**

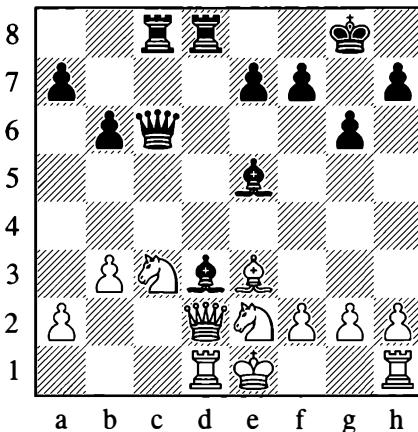
17.f3!† is a humiliating move to have to play. Black can reply 17...♗xf4 18.♗xf4 ♜d4 19.♗e4 ♜xc5, with advantage.

**17...cxb6!**

The point; Black will play ...♝ac8, and White must feel like he is providing the targets in a shooting gallery.

**18.♗fe2 ♜ac8 19.♗d1**

19.0–0 is another defensive try. Even though 19...♝xe2 leaves Black a pawn ahead and with good winning chances, he is not ideally organized yet.

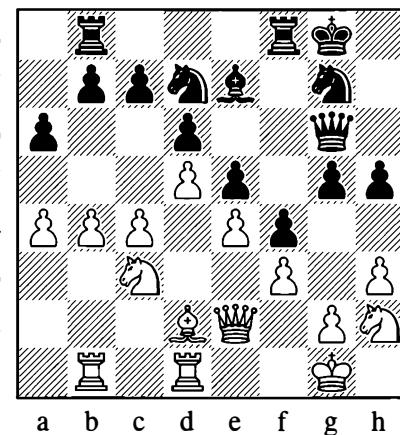
**19...♝d3 20.♗d2 ♜c6!†**

And due to the threat to g2, White will lose his extra piece, leading to an ending where Black has winning chances with his extra pawn, despite the opposite-coloured bishops.

**25. Anand – Carlsen**


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Monaco (rapid) 2011

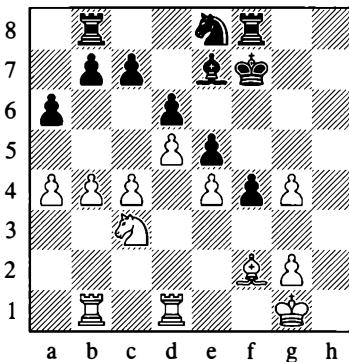


Black's plan is not so difficult in this position. The advance of the g-pawn is his only idea. However, it needs to be prepared and it needs to be prepared in a good way. This is done by regrouping the poorly-placed knight from g7 to f6.

**21...♝e8!!**

Carlsen said: "It is important to put this knight, which was just an obstruction on g7, on f6, rather than the other one, which has a very useful defensive function on d7." The principle of the worst-placed piece in action.

21... $\mathbb{Q}f6$  is far less dangerous for White. 22. $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  23. $\mathbb{Q}f2$  even favours White it seems, though Black can generate serious counterplay: 23...g4! 24.fxg4 hxg4 25. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$   $\mathbb{Q}xg4$  26. $\mathbb{W}xg4$   $\mathbb{W}xg4$  27.hxg4  $\mathbb{Q}e8!$  with the idea ... $\mathbb{E}g8xg4$ .



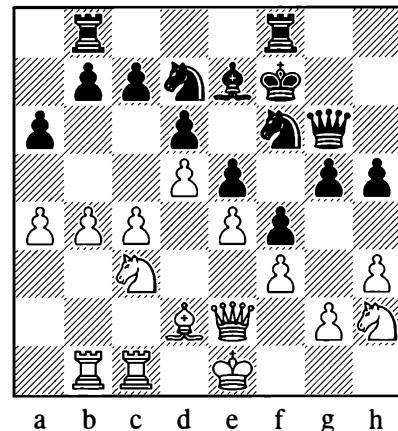
Here White can try 28.g5! to make it harder for the knight to come into play. For example: 28... $\mathbb{Q}xg5$  29.b5  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  30.c5, when White has at least the illusion of pressure on the queenside, without the prospect of getting mated.

21...g4 is better than it looks at first sight, but I think it is White who is playing for an advantage after 22.fxg4 hxg4 23. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ , though Black obviously has lots of active play.

## 22. $\mathbb{E}dc1$

Anand decides to run with the king. It is easy to understand why he made this decision after calculating lines such as the following: 22. $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}ef6$  23. $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  24.c5 g4 25.hxg4 hxg4 26. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$   $\mathbb{Q}xg4$  27.fxg4  $\mathbb{E}h8$  Black has a very strong attack. At the right moment he will play ... $\mathbb{Q}f6xg4$  and break through the white defences.

22... $\mathbb{Q}ef6$  23. $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  24. $\mathbb{Q}e1$



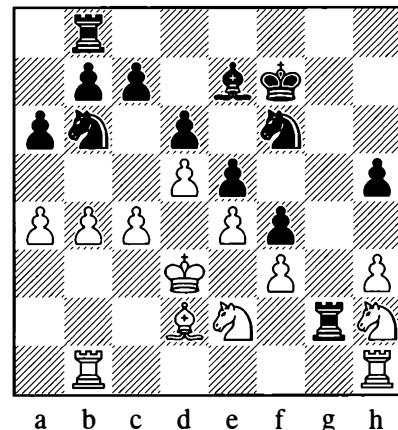
24...g4!†

It is time. White has been completely outplayed.

## 25. $\mathbb{Q}d1$

White is in deep trouble. For example: 25.hxg4 hxg4 26. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$   $\mathbb{E}h8$  27. $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}xg4$  28.fxg4  $\mathbb{E}bg8$  and Black wins.

25...gxh3 26.gxh3  $\mathbb{E}g8$  27. $\mathbb{Q}c2$   $\mathbb{W}g2$  28. $\mathbb{E}h1$   $\mathbb{W}xe2$  29. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$   $\mathbb{E}g2$  30. $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}b6!$



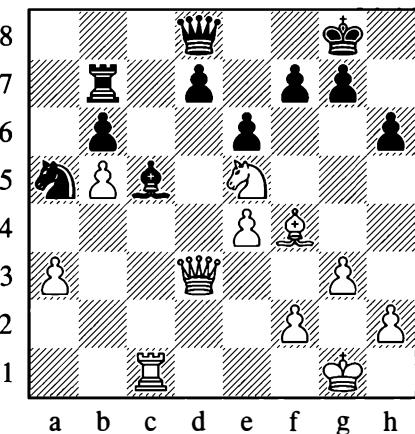
Black wins a pawn and then the game.

31. $\mathbb{E}bg1$   $\mathbb{E}bg8$  32. $\mathbb{E}xg2$   $\mathbb{E}xg2$  33.a5  $\mathbb{Q}xc4$  34. $\mathbb{Q}c1$  b5 35.axb6  $\mathbb{Q}xb6$  36. $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$

37.h4 ♜f8 38.♗d2 ♜g6 39.♗e1 ♜a4  
 40.♗g1 ♜xg1 41.♗xg1 ♜xh4 42.♗d2 ♜e7  
 43.♗h3 ♜d7  
 0–1

## 26. Gheorghiu – Andersson

London 1980



White is a little more active and the black knight on a5 looks stupid. But if nothing happens soon, Black will manoeuvre out of these problems. So White came up with an ingenious way to put him under more pressure.

### 24.♗c6!!

Without this idea, I fear White has very little. For example: 24.♗e3 ♜xe3 25.♗xe3 ♜c7 and White's advantage is negligible. 26.♗d1 ♜c4 27.♗xc4 ♜xc4 and Black should draw.

### 24...♝a8

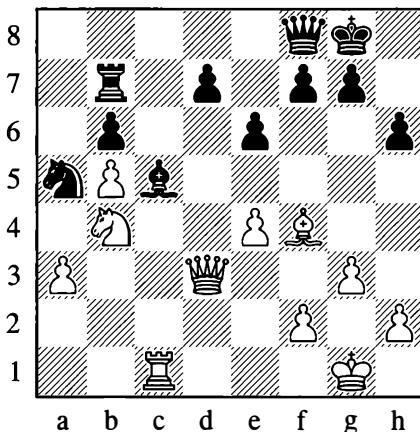
24...♜xc6 25.bxc6 ♜a7 is unplayable on account of 26.♗d1!±, and Black will have to defend a rook endgame a pawn down.

### 25.♗b4

White continues his manoeuvre. The knight is heading for a6, from where it will dominate the black pieces in an original way.

### 25...♛f8

It is very difficult for Black to find a way to fight against the current. For example: 25...d5 26.exd5 ♜d7 27.♗f3! exd5 28.♗xh6 and White has a big advantage – mainly because of his extra pawn!



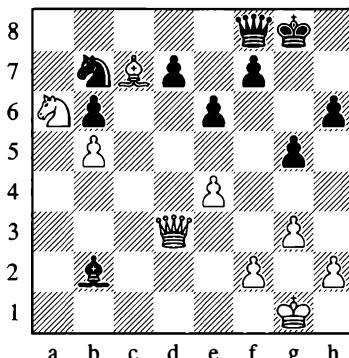
### 26.♘a6! ♜xa3

After 26...♝a7 27.a4 Black's position would be very unpleasant. White is contemplating both ♜d2 and ♜c7.

### 27.♗c3!

In the game Black played more weakly with: 27.♗c7?! ♜xc7?

27...g5! 28.♗xb7 ♜xb7 29.♗c7 ♜b2!±



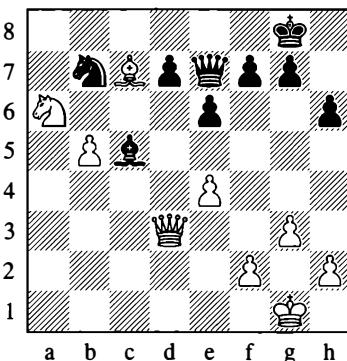
30.♗xb6? ♜d6 31.♗xd6 ♜xd6 32.♗c7 ♜xe4 and maybe White should consider playing for a draw very soon!

28.♕xc7 ♜e7??

28...♕c5 29.♗xd7 ♜c4± is good for White, but not over yet.

29.♕xb6 ♜b7 30.♕c7 ♜c5?

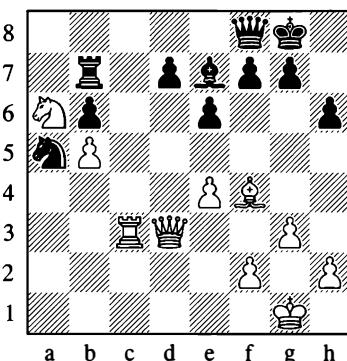
30...f6±



31.♕xc5 ♜xc5 32.♕d6 1–0

27...♜b2

27...♜e7



This allows White to show his main point:

28.♛c2!

The 8th rank is conquered.

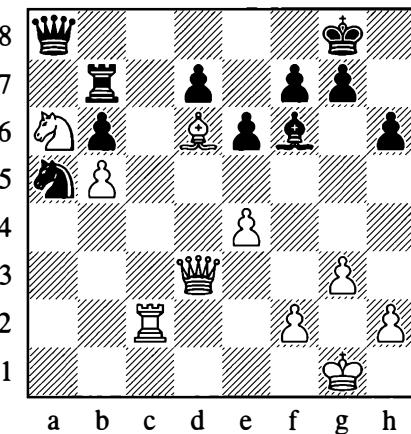
28...♝d8 29.♝c8

White is winning; the rest is just a question of how. One possible continuation is:

29...d6 30.♝b8 ♜e7 31.♝d3 e5 32.♝xe5! dxе5 33.♝c6! ♜xc6 34.bxc6 ♜a7 35.♝xd8† ♜h7 36.♝d7 ♜a1† 37.♝g2

White has a technically winning position here, though it may still be hard to prove this in practice. But then it is even harder to achieve a draw from a lost position, so White should not complain.

28.♕d6 ♜a8 29.♝c2 ♜f6



30.♝c7!

This seems to be the most accurate.

30...♝d8

30...♝a7 is killed off with: 31.♝xe6! dxе6 32.♝c8† ♜h7 33.e5† g6 34.exf6 ♜d7 35.♝d2 and Black is mated.

31.e5 ♜e7

31...♜xe5 32.♜xe5 d5 33.♞a6 and White wins eventually.

32.♞xe7 ♜xe7 33.♞d5 ♜d8 34.♝c8

White wins.

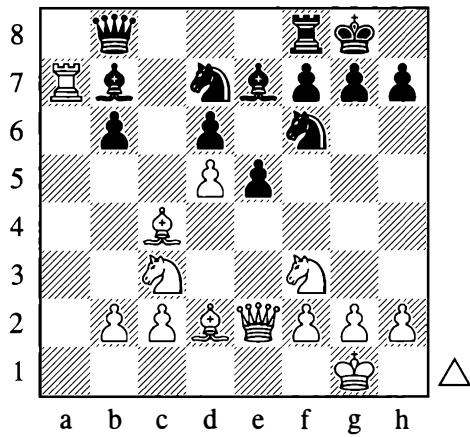
# Chapter 3

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## Prophylaxis

Ivan Salgado Lopez – Aleksa Strikovic

Novi Sad 2009



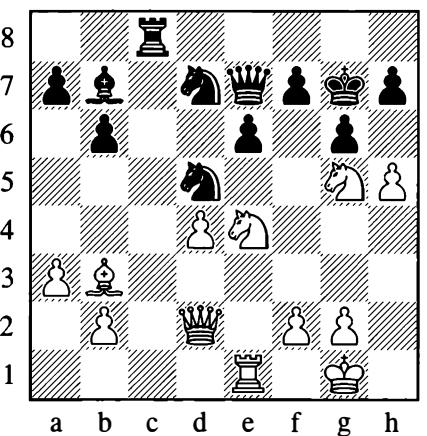
*White to play*

White's rook is threatened, and protecting it with the knight makes little sense.  
Which retreat square would you choose and why?

The greatest weakness of most chess players is that they overlook their opponent's intentions or possibilities. The importance of this deficiency cannot be underestimated. After all, only half of the moves played in our games are our own. But everyone can get so infatuated with their own ideas that they forget to check if the opponent is actually planning to go in the same direction. This can happen even to the most seasoned grandmasters.

### Arkadij Naiditsch – Peter Leko

Istanbul (ol) 2012



**27...gxh5?**

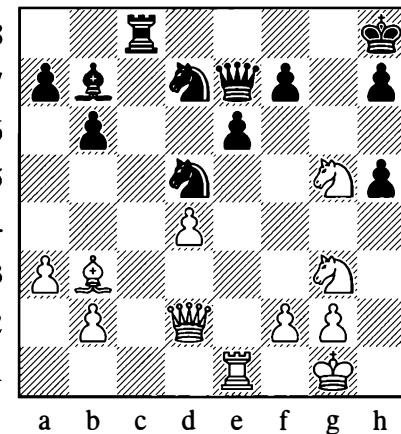
This is way too optimistic and is severely punished.

27... $\mathbb{Q}f6$  was safer, even though White is better after 28.h6†  $\mathbb{Q}g8\pm$ .

**28. $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$**

28... $\mathbb{Q}g8$  was objectively better, though Black is just worse after 29. $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ . There is not really a need for variations here. Anyway, once you have missed something, there is a tendency to continue to miss it, so lesser evils at this stage are not too interesting if you look at the game as a narrative that happened within a certain context, rather than simply a

collection of moves and positions, each with a story of its own.



**29. $\mathbb{Q}f5!$**

This must have come as a shock to Leko. It is evident that he had been too focused on his own ideas to consider anything other than 29. $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ , when he surely intended 29... $\mathbb{Q}g8$  30. $\mathbb{Q}e4$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  with play down the g-file.

**29... $\mathbb{Q}f6$**

29... $\mathbb{Q}f8$  30. $\mathbb{Q}d6!$  is similar.

**30. $\mathbb{Q}d6!$**

White wins.

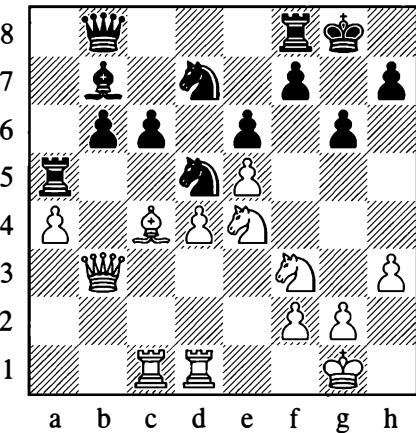
30... $\mathbb{Q}g8$  31. $\mathbb{Q}dxh7†$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  32. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$   $\mathbb{Q}f4$  33. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$   $\mathbb{Q}xf4$  34. $\mathbb{Q}e7$

1–0

When we think about prophylaxis, we often think of it in almost purely positional terms. This is of course a fallacy. Our opponents think in tactical terms, just as we do. We might for example want to free our position from positional pressure, but find that we have to react carefully to a specific line of action. To do so we may have to calculate quite far.

## Das Debasnis – Yu Yangyi

Athens 2012



**20...c5!**

Accurately played. If Black does not do something now, he will soon find himself under intolerable pressure.

**21.♔b5 ♔c7**

This is the critical moment for White in the game. Either he decided to go for a draw here, or he failed to see as far as his opponent. The latter I find hard to believe. It would be rather naïve to think that Black would go down this sharp line, exposing his 7th rank, without some specific idea in mind.

**22.dxc5?!**

22.♗xd7 ♗xe4 23.dxc5 ♗xc5 is harmless.

The correct move was 22.♗e3!± to keep the pressure on.

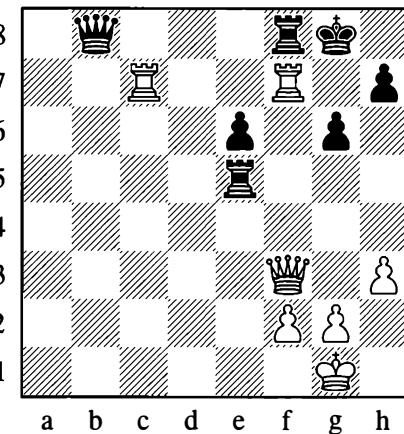
**22...♗xe4! 23.♗xd7 ♔xb5 24.axb5 ♗xf3**

The move order is important. 24...bxс5? 25.♗xc5 ♗xf3 26.gxf3 would leave White with an extra pawn.

**25.♗xf3**

25.gxf3? ♗xe5 does not make sense.

**25...bxс5 26.♗xc5 ♗xb5 27.♗cc7 ♗xe5 28.♗xf7**

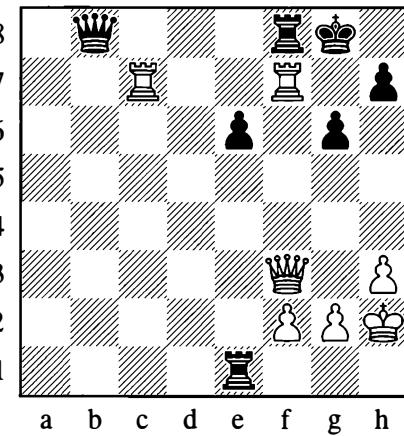


**28...♗e1†**

The most accurate move.

28...♗xc7 is also possible here, but it is inaccurate. After 29.♗xf8† ♗g7 30.g4± Black's position is a bit shaky, although it should be held.

**29.♔h2**



**29...♗xc7†!**

This was the point Black was relying on all the way.

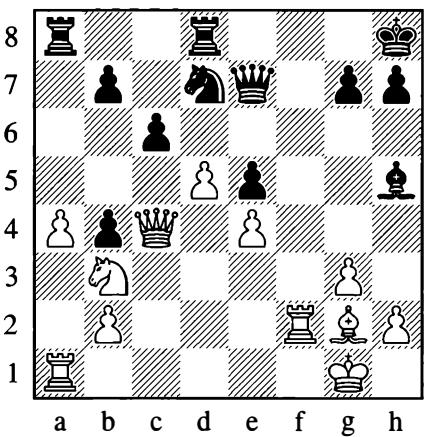
**30.♗xc7 ♗xf3 31.gxf3**

½–½

The ability to understand what your opponent is up to, and to either stifle his plans or find flaws in them, are invaluable tools in a game of chess, which is after all conducted between two humans beings, often blind to each other's ideas; especially the opponent's prophylactic ideas.

### Vassily Ivanchuk – Francisco Vallejo Pons

Istanbul (ol) 2012



#### 21... $\mathbb{Q}ac8?$

This is the beginning of a losing plan, refuted by White's 25th move.

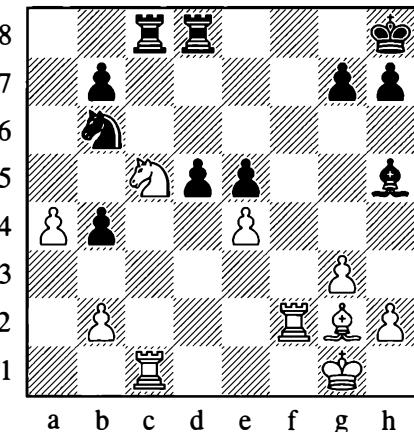
Black could have equalized with 21...cxd5, when 22. $\mathbb{W}xd5$  b6 is maybe even better for Black, and 22.exd5  $\mathbb{Q}ac8$  23. $\mathbb{W}b5$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  is perfectly okay for him. There are other playable moves for Black, but the main point is how Ivanchuk was able to understand what Vallejo was trying to do and find a fault in the variation.

#### 22. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6?$

22... $\mathbb{Q}e8?!$  was objectively a little better, but still poor. White would have a highly promising position after 23. $\mathbb{Q}h3!$  h6 24. $\mathbb{W}d3$  cxd5 25. $\mathbb{W}xc8$   $\mathbb{Q}xc8$  26.exd5, when the d-pawn is very strong.

The only try was to play 22... $\mathbb{Q}f6?!$ , although White still has an advantage after 23.a5  $\mathbb{Q}g4$  24. $\mathbb{W}c5\pm$ .

#### 23. $\mathbb{W}c5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ cxd5



#### 25. $\mathbb{Q}h3!!$

A shocker for Black; his position entirely collapses.

25. $\mathbb{Q}cf1$  also favours White, though only slightly. After 25... $\mathbb{Q}e2!$  26. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$   $\mathbb{Q}xc5$  27.exd5  $\mathbb{Q}xa4\pm$  Black has decent drawing chances.

#### 25... $\mathbb{Q}a8$

Black is lost. Other lines go:

25... $\mathbb{Q}c6$  26.a5  $\mathbb{Q}a4$  27. $\mathbb{Q}cf1!$  g5 28. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$  29.exd5  $\mathbb{Q}a6$  30. $\mathbb{Q}f8\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}xf8$  31. $\mathbb{Q}xf8\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  32. $\mathbb{Q}b8$  and the d-pawn marches on.

25... $\mathbb{Q}c7$  26.a5  $\mathbb{Q}a8$  27. $\mathbb{Q}cf1$  followed by  $\mathbb{Q}e6$  and White wins.

26.a5  $\mathbb{Q}c4$  27. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  28. $\mathbb{Q}xf8\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}xf8$  29.exd5  $\mathbb{Q}xb2$  30.d6  $\mathbb{Q}f3$  31. $\mathbb{Q}c8$   $\mathbb{Q}xc8$  32. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  33.d7  $\mathbb{Q}xd7$  34. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$   $\mathbb{Q}c4$  35. $\mathbb{Q}e6$  b3 36. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$  b2 37. $\mathbb{Q}a2$

1–0

While the exercises that follow will stretch the concept of prophylaxis as much as is humanly possible, we should not be deceived into thinking that prophylaxis is always desperately difficult. To some extent it is only a state of mind; once you get used to including the opponent in your line of thinking, he will never leave.

The final game before I throw you to the wolves impressed me a lot. There are no truly deep moments, but the line of thought is one of control and prophylaxis all the way through.

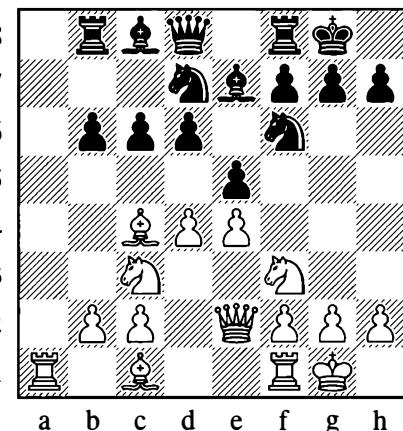
### Ivan Salgado Lopez – Alekса Strikovic

Portugal 2012

**1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♜f6 3.♗c3 e5 4.♗b3 ♜bd7  
5.♕c4 ♜e7 6.a4?**

Practical prophylaxis, restraining the opponent's options. The idea is to avoid 6.0–0 exd4 7.♗xd4 ♜b6, which has become popular recently.

**6...0–0 7.0–0 c6 8.a5 ♜b8 9.♗e2 b5 10.axb6  
axb6**



Here several moves are possible. Ivan chooses to counter Black's ...b5-idea head on.

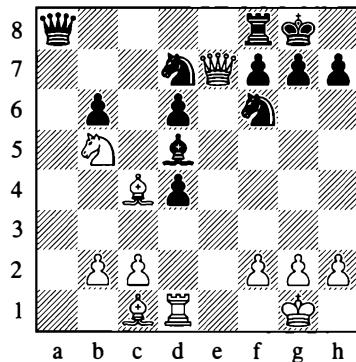
**11.d5 cx d5 12.exd5 ♜b7 13.♗a7 ♜c8**

An earlier game in this line continued:

13...♜c7 14.♗b5 ♜c8 15.♗d1 ♜a8 16.♗xa8  
♜xa8 17.♗fd4

Also plausible is: 17.♗g5!N ♜xd5 18.♗xd5  
♝xd5 19.♗e4 ♜7f6 20.♗xf6† ♜xf6  
21.♗xd6 ♜d8 22.♗c4 ♜xd1† 23.♗xd1 ♜b8  
24.♗g5±

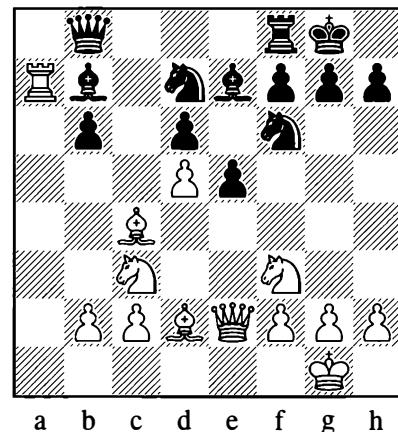
17...exd4 18.♗xe7 ♜xd5



So far we have followed Sutovsky – Azmaiparashvili, Pune 2004, where White soon went out over the cliff in his trademark style. Instead I recommend:

19.♗f1!N ♜e4 20.♗xd6 ♜xc2 21.♗xd4 ♜b3±

**14.♗d2 ♜a8 15.♗fa1 ♜xa7 16.♗xa7 ♜b8**



This is where the game effectively starts. White has played his opening idea and Black

has reacted to it. For the first time White needs to think deeply. 17.♘b5 ♘c8! 18.♘c3 (18.♘h4 g6 does not greatly improve the white position) 18...♗b8 with a repetition leads nowhere, so White needs to retreat, but to where?

### 17.♘a1?

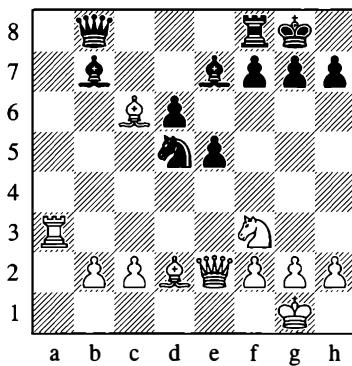
Ivan failed to see his opponent's equalizing idea, but was fortunate that his opponent missed it too.

The correct move was:

### 17.♘a3!!±

The game would probably continue much as it did. The main point here is that Black cannot free himself easily, for example:

17...b5? 18.♗xb5 ♘b6 19.♗c6 ♘bxd5 20.♗xd5 ♘xd5



### 21.♗b3!

The difference.

21...♗xc6 22.♗xb8 ♗xb8 23.c4 ♘f6 24.b4±

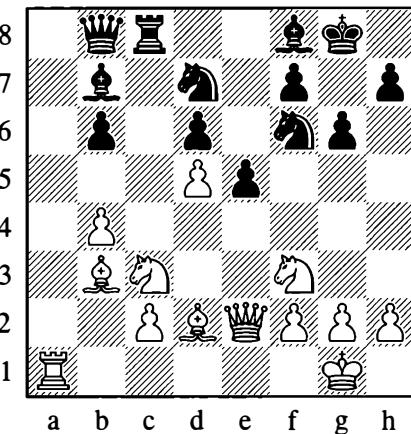
### 17...♗c8?

Black misses his chance. Correct was 17...b5! 18.♗xb5 ♘b6= Su.B. Hansen – Haddouche, Istanbul (ol) 2012.

### 18.b4± ♗6 19.♗b3 ♗f8

Here Black's long-term idea is to advance his pawns on the kingside to create activity. It will be more difficult to attack without knights,

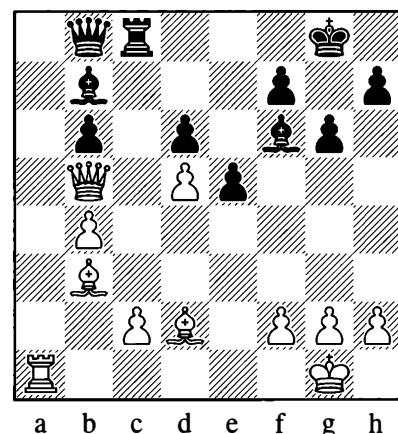
so White decides to exchange his poorly-placed knights.



### 20.♘g5! ♗g7 21.♗ge4 ♘xe4 22.♗xe4 ♘f6

I have long mind-bending analysis on 22...h6 23.♗b5 ♗d8 24.g4! leading to a clear advantage for White. The point is that Black cannot advance on the kingside without leaving great weaknesses on the light squares. Here we shall just agree that this is logical and save our energy for the exercises that will come up soon enough!

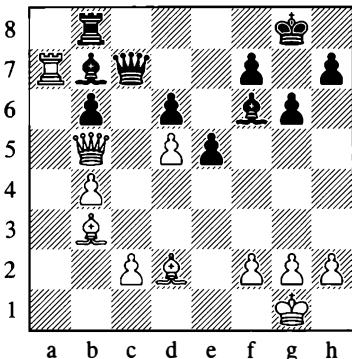
### 23.♗xf6† ♗xf6 24.♗b5



White has managed to eliminate Black's activity. The technical phase is brilliantly executed by Salgado Lopez.

**24... $\mathbb{W}c7$  25. $\mathbb{E}a7$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$**

25... $\mathbb{E}b8$  would be met with:

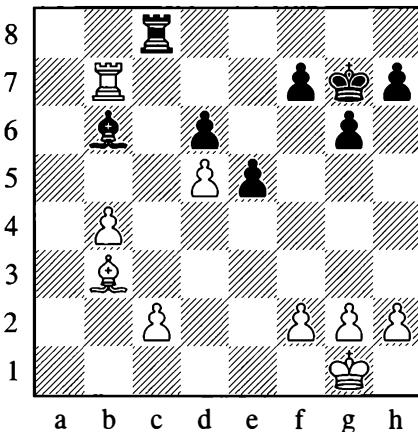


26. $\mathbb{E}e3!$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  27. $\mathbb{E}h6!$ , when Black's position is highly unpleasant.

**26. $\mathbb{E}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  27. $\mathbb{E}xb6!$**

Accurate. 27... $\mathbb{W}xb6?$  would have been poor on account of 27... $\mathbb{W}c3!$  28. $\mathbb{W}b5$   $\mathbb{W}e1\uparrow$  29. $\mathbb{W}f1$   $\mathbb{W}xb4$  and Black is okay.

**27... $\mathbb{W}xb6$  28. $\mathbb{W}xb6$   $\mathbb{E}xb6$  29. $\mathbb{E}xb7$**



White has won a pawn and he soon won the game.

**29... $\mathbb{E}d4$  30. $\mathbb{E}f1$   $\mathbb{E}a8$  31. $\mathbb{E}c7$   $\mathbb{E}a1\uparrow?$**

31... $\mathbb{E}f8$  was better, but the extra pawn is still a big problem for Black.

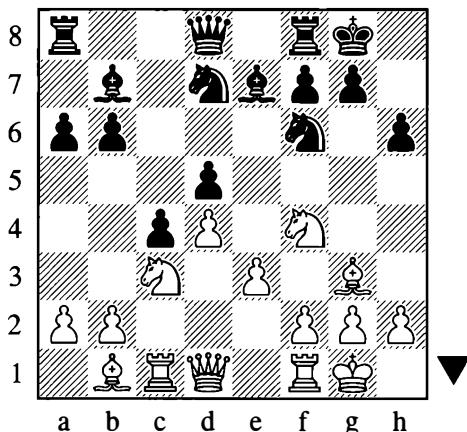
**32. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{E}b1$  33. $\mathbb{E}c6$   $e4$  34. $b5$   $\mathbb{E}a1$**

34... $\mathbb{E}g1$  35. $b6$   $\mathbb{E}xg2$  36. $b7$   $\mathbb{E}xf2\uparrow$  37. $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{E}g2$  38. $\mathbb{Q}c4$  and White wins.

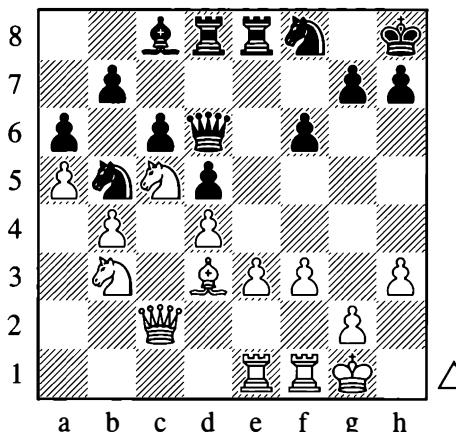
**35. $b6$   $\mathbb{E}a8$  36. $b7$   $\mathbb{E}b8$  37. $\mathbb{E}c7$**

**1–0**

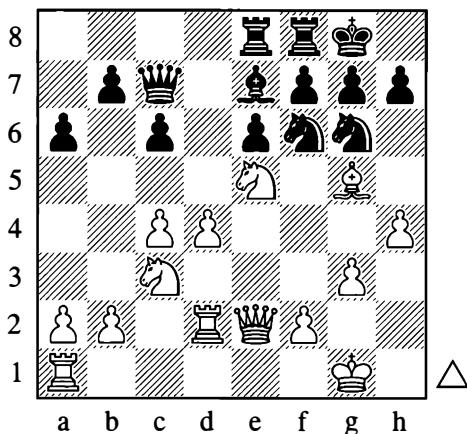
Maslowski – Stachowiak, Zakopane 2001



I. Sokolov – Rogers, Gibraltar 2007

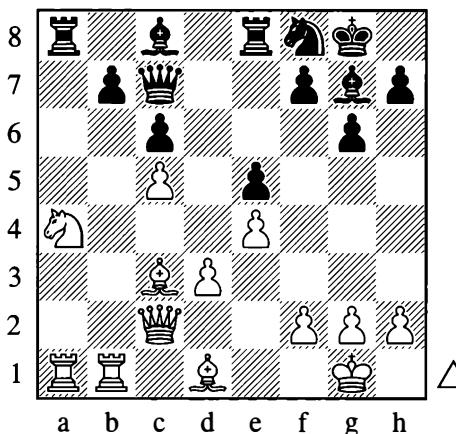


Sasikiran – Rozentalis, Warsaw 2008

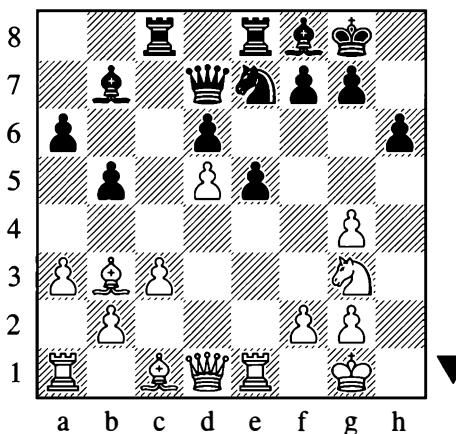
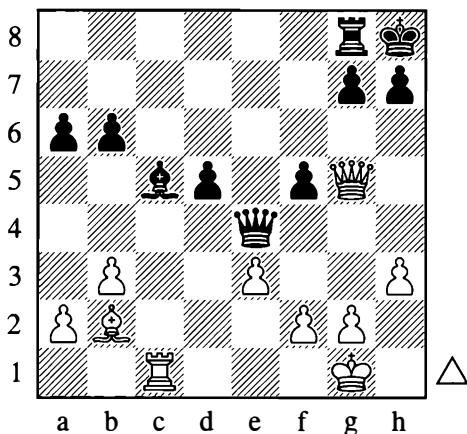


Roiz – Nikolov, Plovdiv 2012

Planinec – R. Maric, Novi Sad 1972



Navara – Saric, Aix-les-Bains 2011

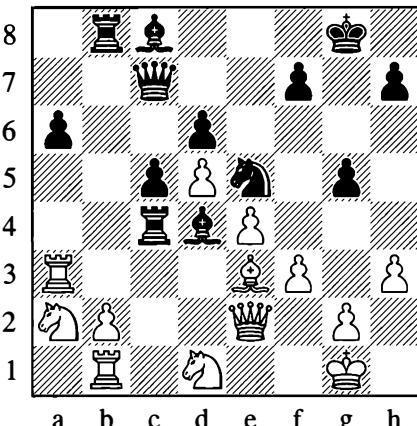


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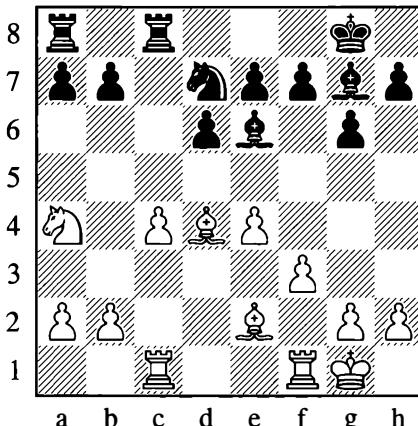
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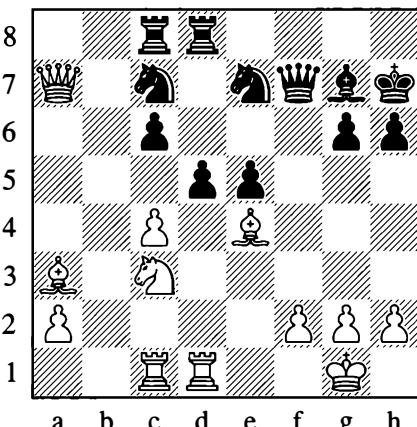
Khismatullin – Inarkiev, Moscow 2006



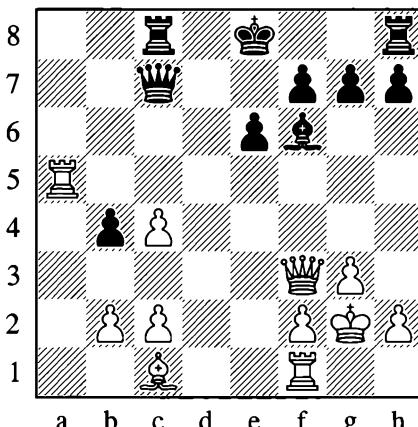
Stojanovic – Paunovic, Valjevo 2011



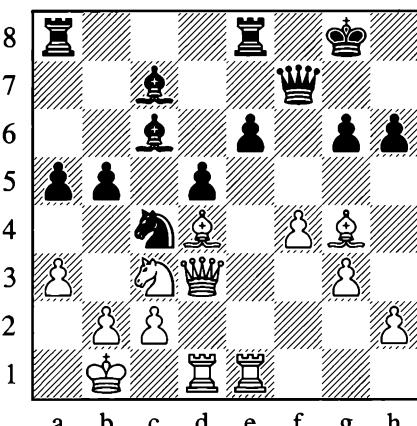
Eljanov – Nataf, Mallorca (ol) 2004



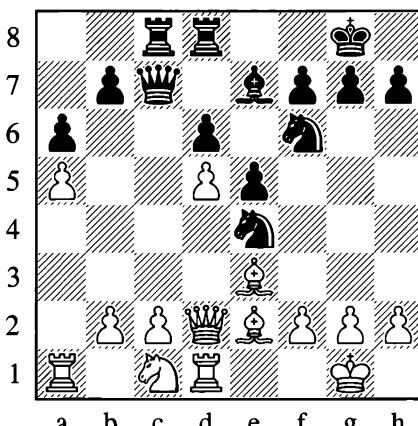
Harikrishna – Hossain, Edinburgh 2003

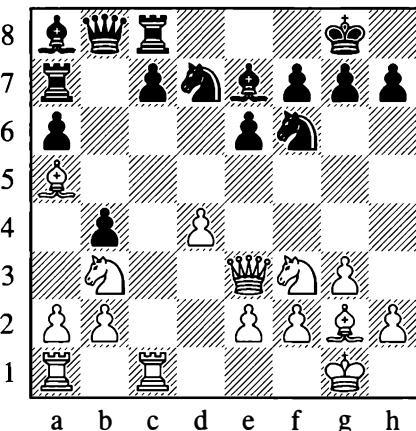


Kholmov – Glek, Borzhomi 1984

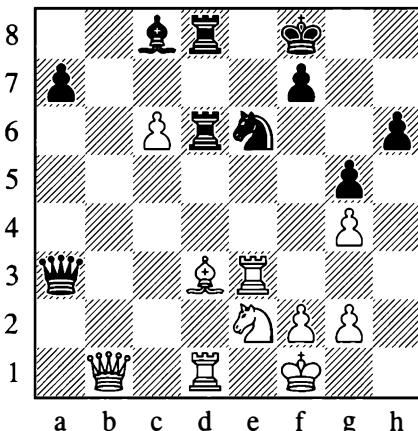


Short – Bu Xiangzhi, Liverpool 2007

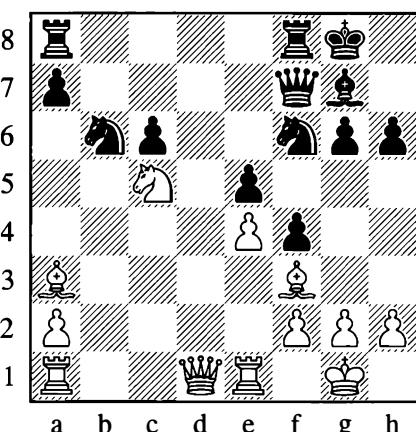


**Gelfand – Harikrishna, Bermuda 2005**

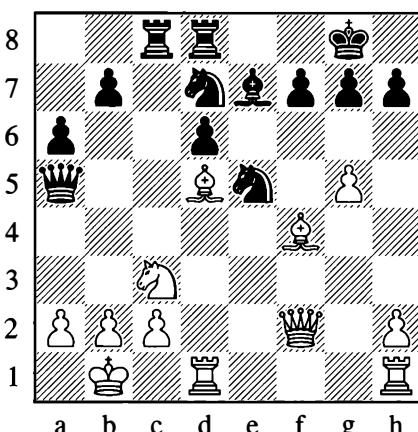
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**I. Sokolov – Short, Hoogeveen 2004**

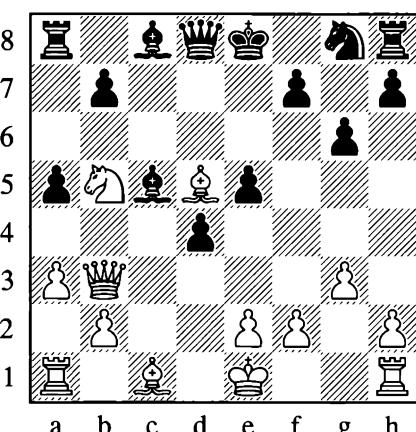
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**Kramnik – Gelfand, Belgrade 1997**

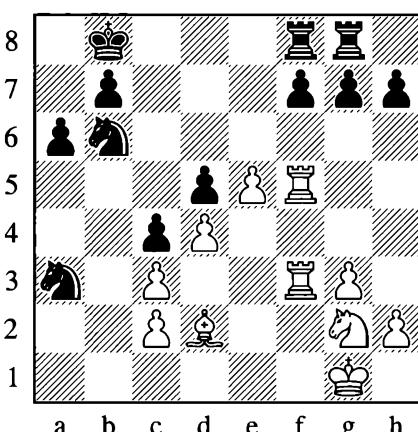
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**J. Polgar – Kaidanov, Hilton Head 2010**

17

**Aagaard – Stojanovski, Copenhagen 2010**

15

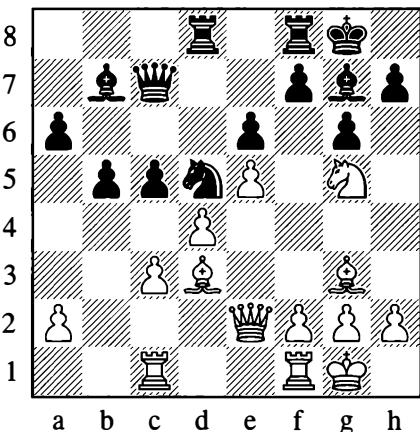
**Rowson – Motwani, Aberdeen 2001**

18

Lenic – Sutovsky, Moscow 2011

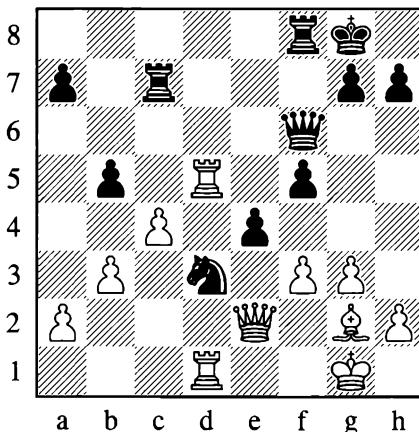
Cheparinov – Halkias, Helsingør 2012

19



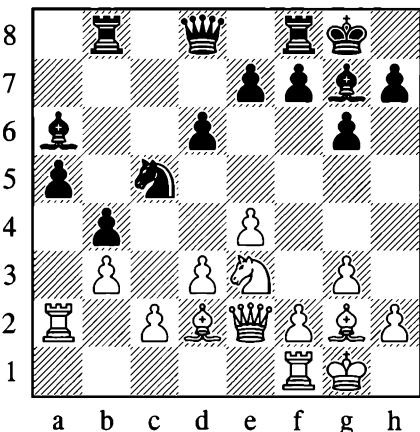
Adams – Anand, Dortmund 1998

22



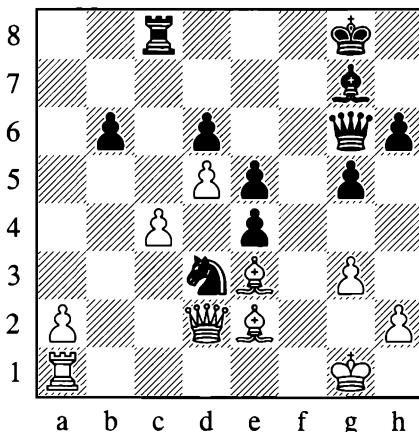
Gelfand – Sutovsky, Pamplona 2004

20

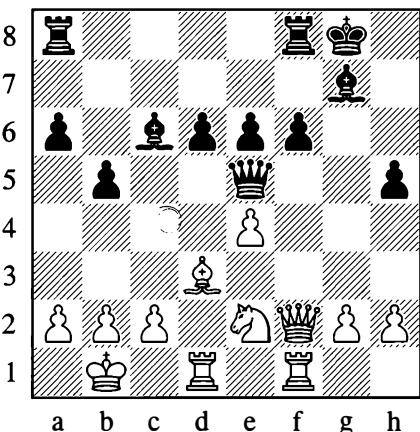


Chr. Pedersen – Kristiansen, Aarhus 2012

23

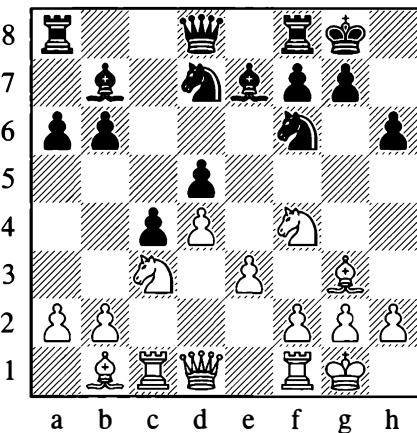


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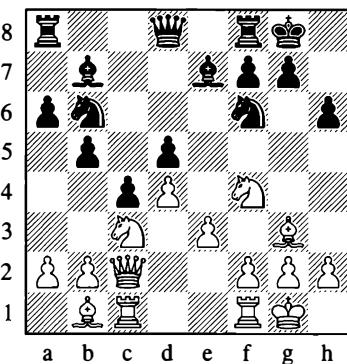


## 1. Maslowski – Stachowiak

Zakopane 2001



The most natural move in the world is 14...b5?, but then White has 15.♘c2!, threatening to capture on d5. Black can try 15...♗b6, but then he is exposed on f6 in other ways:



16.♗h4! and Black cannot defend his position.

For example, 16...g5 17.♗h5 is hopeless. A possible end could be: 17...♗e4 18.f3 gxh4 19.fxe4 dxе4 20.♗xe4 f5 21.♗ef6† ♗xf6 22.♗xf5 and White wins.

And after 16...♗e4 17.♗xe7 ♗xe7 18.♗fxd5! White wins a pawn.

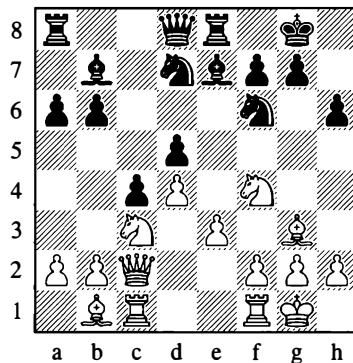
So through simple prophylaxis and being prepared, the correct move is:

14...♗e8!

Besides improving the rook and creating an escape route for the king (f8-e7) in case of any sacrifices, it also gives the knight a good square on f8 to defend h7. Black is now ready to advance the b-pawn on the next move.

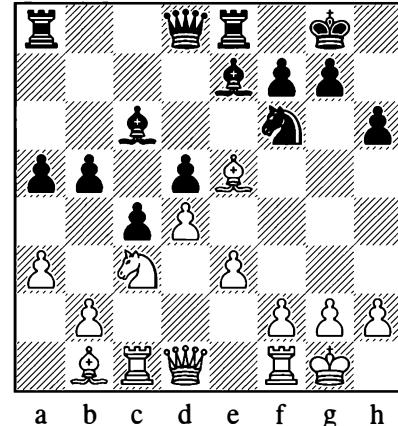
15.♗h5

15.♗c2 no longer troubles Black:



15...♗f8 yields an equal, though by no means simple game.

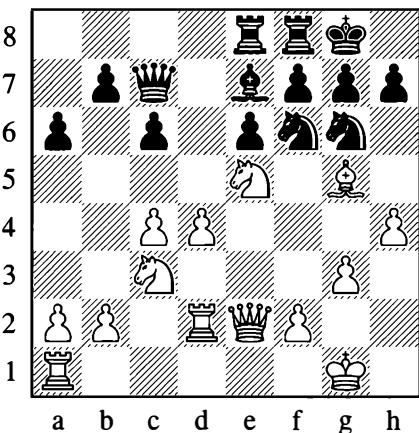
15...b5 16.♗xf6† ♗xf6 17.a3 ♗c6 18.♗e5 a5



Black had a comfortable game, and eventually won in 45 moves.

## 2. Sasikiran – Rozentalis

Warsaw 2008

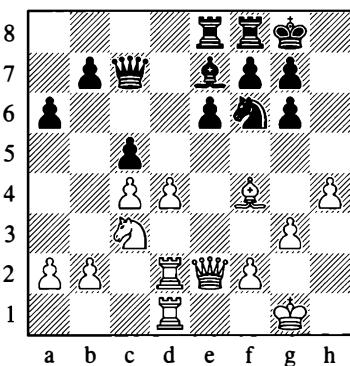


Although as a basic rule we should include all our pieces in the game before taking action, we have to remember to be aware of what our opponent is up to. Here Black is actually fully mobilized (though somewhat passively) and is ready to strike. In this case the way to deal with that is to strike first.

### 18.h5!

Forcing Black to take on e5.

In the game Sasikiran played mechanically with 18.Qad1?, when a lot of his advantage was gone after 18...c5!± 19.Qxg6 hxg6 20.Qf4.



But then Black in turn went wrong: 20...Qd6?! 21.Qxd6 Qxd6 22.Qe5± White had a good ending and won on move 52.

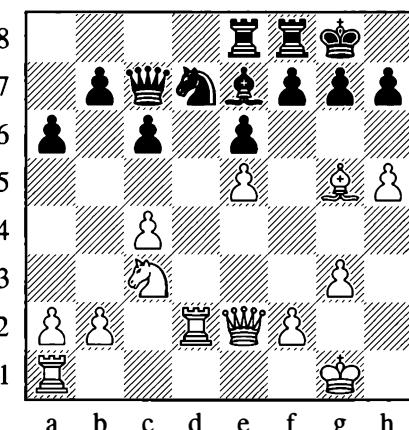
Instead Black should have played 20...Qc8, when White's advantage is very small, if it exists at all.

### 18...Qxe5

18...Qh8 is of course possible, but we do not need to investigate the resulting position; we can simply say that we have made serious progress.

### 19.dxe5 Qd7

19...Qd5 20.cxd5 Qxg5 21.d6 is more or less winning for White.



This is the critical position. Of course White still wants to get his queen's rook into play, and the point is that now it can be done with gain of tempo.

### 20.Qad1! Qxg5

This looks horrible, but that is just a symptom of the position.

20...Qxe5 21.Qf4 f6 22.Qd7 Qb6 23.Qxe5 fxе5 24.Qe4 and White has a decisive advantage.

20...Qc5 21.Qe3

Not the only strong move, but perhaps the most convincing.

21... $\mathbb{Q}xg5$

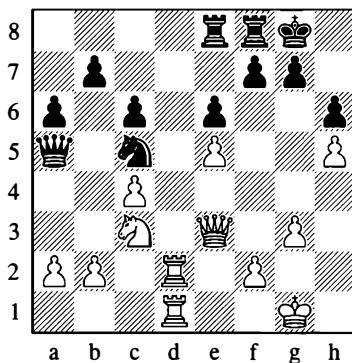
21...a5 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$   $\mathbb{W}xe7$  23. $\mathbb{Q}d6$   $\mathbb{Q}a6$ –24.h6 and White is positionally winning.

22. $\mathbb{W}xg5$  h6 23. $\mathbb{W}e3$

Black is busted.

23... $\mathbb{W}a5$

23...b6 24.b4 followed by 25. $\mathbb{Q}d7$  is just winning.

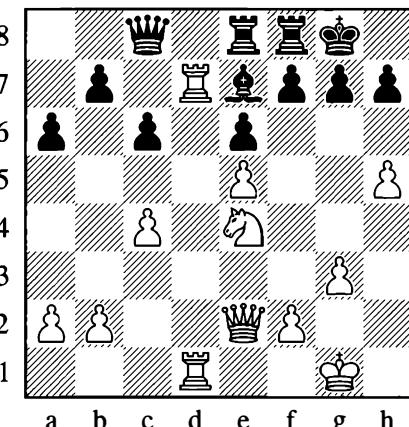


24. $\mathbb{Q}b1!$

White wins a piece. For example:

24... $\mathbb{W}b4$  25.a3  $\mathbb{W}xc4$  26. $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $\mathbb{W}b3$  27. $\mathbb{Q}b4$   $\mathbb{W}c2$  28. $\mathbb{W}xc5+$

**21. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$   $\mathbb{W}c8$  22. $\mathbb{Q}e4$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$**

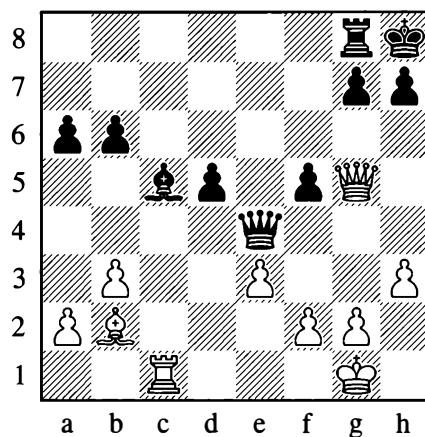


**23.h6!**

White is winning.

### 3. Roiz – Nikolov

Plovdiv 2012



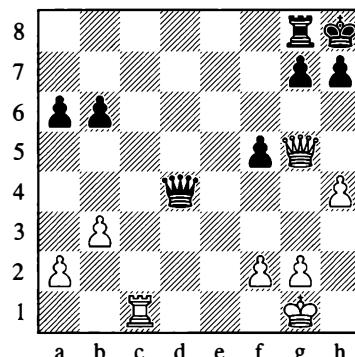
White has the better structure and pressure against g7, but he also needs to anticipate how Black will try to defend. Black's main idea is ...We6 followed by ...h6 and ...Qh7, slowly solving the problems of the kingside.

**28.h4!!**

This move has several functions. It threatens h4-h5-h6, increasing the pressure on g7, and at the same time it counters Black's defensive idea.

**28...We6**

28...d4 29. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  30.exd4  $\mathbb{W}xd4$  (30...h6 31. $\mathbb{W}e3$   $\mathbb{W}xh4$  32. $\mathbb{Q}c6\pm$  would give White a great position and excellent winning chances.)

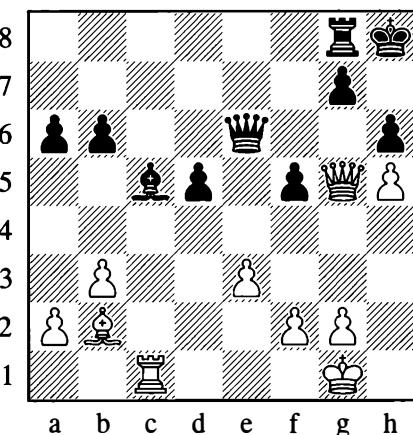


31.  $\mathbb{W}xf5 \mathbb{W}xh4$  32.  $\mathbb{B}c8\pm$  White will win one of the queenside pawns and try to win the technical ending. However, this was probably Black's best chance.

By the way, 28... $\mathbb{Q}e7?$  is not possible; White plays 29.  $\mathbb{W}xg7\#$  and mates in a few moves.

## 29.h5 h6

29... $\mathbb{Q}e7$  is possible now, as the black queen defends c8, but it does not solve Black's problems. After 30.  $\mathbb{W}f4 \mathbb{Q}f6$  White can play either 31.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6 \mathbb{W}xf6$  32. g3 or 31.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$  h6 32.  $\mathbb{B}c7$ , with excellent winning chances. White's active pieces and the black kingside weaknesses should make themselves felt.



## 30. $\mathbb{W}g6! \pm$

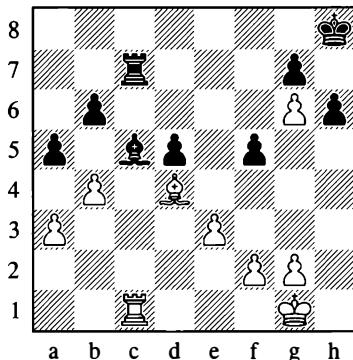
The endgame with the black king stuck in the corner is excellent for White.

## 30... $\mathbb{W}xg6$ 31. $hxg6$ a5 32. $\mathbb{Q}d4!$

Exchanging pieces underlines the hopeless position of Black's king; the rook ending is a complete breeze.

## 32... $\mathbb{B}xd4$

32...  $\mathbb{B}c8$  does not solve anything; after 33. a3! White threatens to win material. Black's only try is 33...  $\mathbb{B}c7$ , but here both 34.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$  and 34. b4 lead to a decisive advantage. The latter continues:



34...  $a5$  35.  $axb4$  35.  $axb4$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  36.  $\mathbb{B}xc7$   $\mathbb{Q}xc7$  37. b5 and White wins easily because of the two weaknesses, the pawns on g7 and b6.

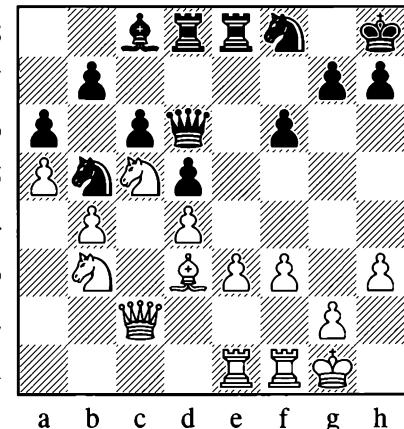
## 33. $\mathbb{B}xd4$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 34. $\mathbb{B}c6$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 35. $\mathbb{B}d6$

Roiz goes for the simple win.

35...  $\mathbb{Q}f8$  36.  $\mathbb{B}xd5$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  37.  $\mathbb{B}e5\#$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$   
38.  $\mathbb{B}xf5$   
1-0

## 4. I. Sokolov – Rogers

Gibraltar 2007



It is obvious that White has the advantage with his good bishop versus bad bishop. But he also needs to make progress. The game will clearly be decided on the kingside, not the queenside. But before he can do this, it is a

good idea to work out what the opponent is up to. This gets us to the main point of this position – that Black wants to get the f8-knight into the game and White can prevent this.

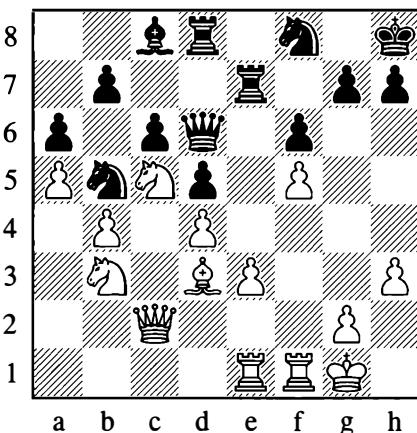
### 26.f4!!

Black wants to play ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$  at some point and also he has a bishop on c8 he would like to activate. By starting with f4-f5, White makes life much more difficult for Black. One of the deep points of this game is that the e3-pawn is not a serious weakness and that White will be able to navigate around it.

26.g4± is of course not bad, but it does not accurately address the deeper points in the position.

### 26... $\mathbb{E}e7$ 27.f5!

Black now finds himself unpleasantly bound up.



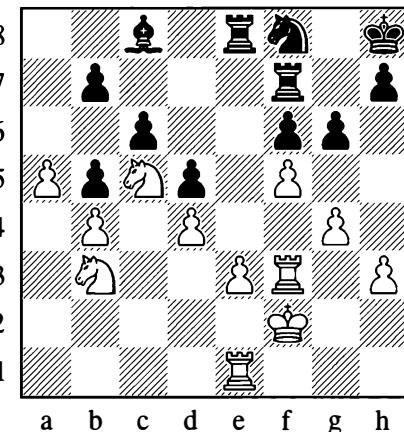
### 27... $\mathbb{W}g3$

With the coming assault on the kingside, it is understandable that Black wants to exchange queens.

### 28. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}de8$ 29. $\mathbb{E}f3$ $\mathbb{W}h4$ 30. $\mathbb{W}xb5$

White could also have taken the knight earlier.

30... $\mathbb{A}xb5$  31. $\mathbb{W}f2$   $\mathbb{W}xf2\#$  32. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$   $\mathbb{E}f7$  33.g4  
g6



34.e4!±  $\mathbb{G}xf5$  35. $\mathbb{G}xf5$   $\mathbb{D}xe4$

35... $\mathbb{Q}d7!?$

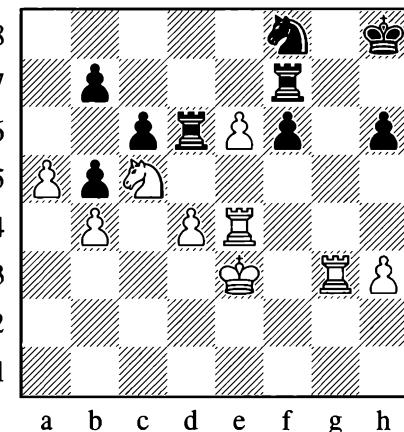
36. $\mathbb{E}xe4$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  37. $\mathbb{Q}e6$

37. $\mathbb{E}fe3!$   $\mathbb{Q}xf5$  38. $\mathbb{E}e7$  was clear-cut; the b7-pawn falls and Black is unable to cope with the passed a-pawn.

37... $\mathbb{E}d5$  38. $\mathbb{Q}bc5$  h6 39. $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{E}d6$  40. $\mathbb{E}g3!?$

A tactical oversight, but as it was too deep for Black to see, it can easily be forgiven.

40... $\mathbb{E}xe6$  41.fxe6



**41...♝e7?!**

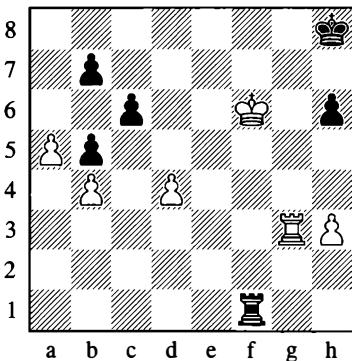
Black misses a nice tactical opportunity:

41...♞xe6! 42.♝xe6  
42.♞xe6 f5 43.♝f3 ♜f6 44.♝e5 ♜fxe6  
45.♝fxf5 ♜g8±

42...♝xe6† 43.♞xe6 ♜e7

Black regains the piece, although White is still close to winning.

44.♛e4 ♜xe6† 45.♛f5 ♜e1 46.♛xf6 ♜f1†



47.♛e6!±

White has great winning chances, as the black king remains out of play, but this was certainly Black's best practical chance.

We should note that it would be wrong to play: 47.♛g6 ♜g8 48.♛xh6†? (48.d5! still gives chances) on account of 48...♜f7 49.♜g7† ♜f6 50.h4 ♜b1 51.♜xb7 ♜xb4 52.♜c7 ♜xd4 53.♜xc6† ♜f7 54.h5 ♜a4 and Black is holding.

**42.♝f3 ♜h7 43.h4**

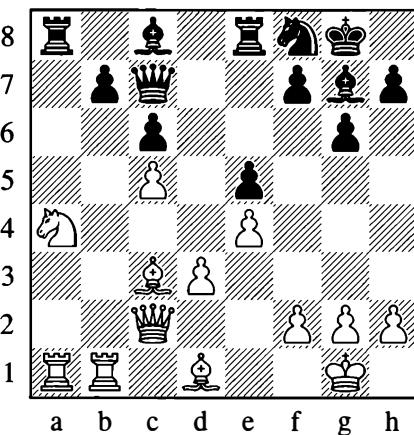
43.♞xb7 would have won instantly, but the move played is good enough.

43...♝d5 44.♝d3 f5 45.♝e5 ♜f6 46.♝exf5  
♝xf5 47.♝xf5 ♜g7 48.h5 ♜d5 49.♝e4 b6  
50.axb6 ♜xb6 51.♝f1 ♜c4 52.♝g1† ♜h7  
53.♞d7 ♜g7 54.♞f6† ♜h8 55.♝a1 ♜e7  
56.♝a8†

1–0

**5. Planinec – R. Maric**

Novi Sad 1972



It is quite difficult to find something useful for White to do in this position.

At moments like this it is important to fully grasp what the opponent is trying to do. In this case the manoeuvre from f8 to d4/f4 with the knight is strong and should be anticipated and reduced in strength, if nothing else.

**25.♝a2?!**

This does not address this key issue of the position. White is dreaming if he thinks he will be able to put significant pressure on b7 by simply doubling rooks on the b-file.

In my opinion White would have been best off preventing ...♞e6-f4 and eliminating the defence of the b7-pawn at the same time with:

25.♞b6!

Play is likely to continue:

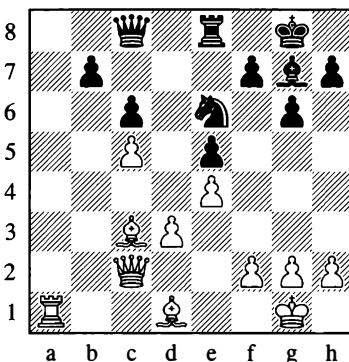
25...♜xa1 26.♜xa1

26.♜xa1 ♜e6?!

26...♞e6

26...♞e6 27.♝a7± would mean that Black had blocked the path out for his knight.

27.♞xc8 ♜xc8



28.♗g4!

White gets rid of his bad bishop; he has eliminated all of Black's small advantages, without losing any of his own.

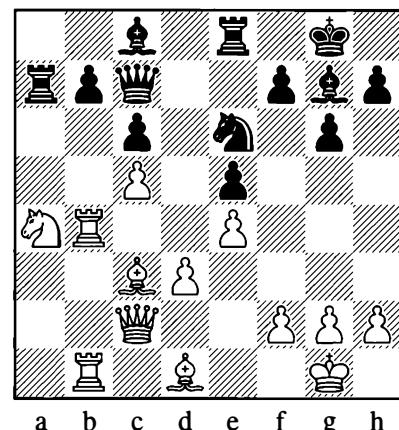
28...♝d8

28...♝d4 29.♗xd4 ♜xg4 30.♗e3±

29.♗xe6 ♜xe6 30.g3±

White has an edge. Although the most likely result is a draw, Black will have the more uncomfortable journey to that end, with some pitfalls on the way.

25...♝e6 26.♝ab2 ♜a7 27.♝b4

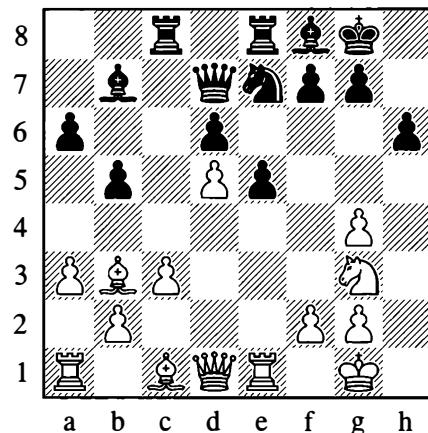


27...♝e7?!=

Black eventually won the game on move 75, but here he would have been even better off playing 27...♝d8! 28.♗g4 ♜f4=, when he is already enjoying a sweeter life.

## 6. Navara – Saric

Aix-les-Bains 2011



White is threatening a standard attack on the queenside, with a4, axb5 and ♜a7, securing a slight advantage. Black needs to get counterplay quickly. He did so with a standard exchange sacrifice.

19...♝c4!

19...♝g6

This is the only real alternative I can come up with, trying to get the bishop on f8 into the game. But by relieving the pressure on d5, Black is abandoning the idea of the ...♝c4 sacrifice.

20.a4± ♜a8 21.♗f3!

White keeps pressure on both sides of the board and finds time to bring his remaining pieces into the game.

21...♝e7 22.♝f5 ♜g5

22...♝d8 23.♝c2!

23.♗xg5 hxg5 24.axb5 axb5 25.♗e3±

White has targets on both sides of the board, as well as the much better pieces.

20.♗xc4 bxc4

Black will win the d-pawn and have fair compensation for the exchange. I evaluate the chances as being just about equal here.

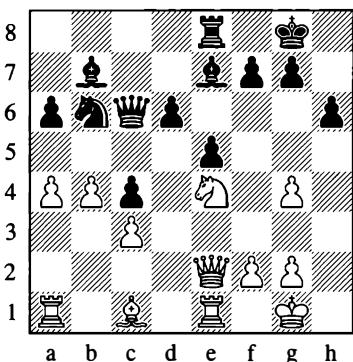
**21.b4 ♖xd5 22.♖e4**

22.♗d2 was maybe a little better. The bishop is not great on d2, but at least it is performing a function there and allowing the queen's rook to enter the game.

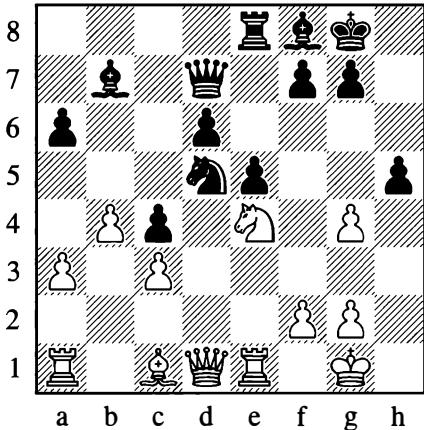
**22...h5!?**

I think this is too drastic. Maybe Saric did not feel fully confident about his compensation.

After 22...♗e7 I cannot see that Black should be worse. For example: 23.♕e2 ♖b6 24.a4 ♕c6



25.f3 d5 and Black is starting to look like the colour of choice.

**23.g5!**

It is very human to decline such pawn sacrifices, and in this case it was the strongest option.

I think White could also have fought for an advantage with 23.gxh5?!, based on 23...f5 24.♗g5. But probably Black can hold the balance with 24...♗e7 (24...♕c6?! does not achieve anything after 25.f3!±) 25.♕c2 e4 26.♗h3 ♖f6 27.♗d2 ♖e5 and Black is not worse.

**23...♕c6**

23...♕g4 24.♗d2±

**24.♕xh5!**

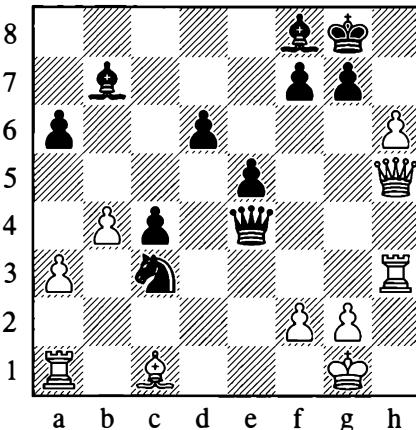
Navarra correctly enters the complications.

**24...♗xc3 25.♗e3 ♕e6**

25...♗xe4 26.♗h3 and Black is mated.

**26.♗h3 ♕h6 27.gxh6 ♕xe4**

This is all rather fantastical, but also too good to be true.

**28.f3?**

As much a positional as a tactical mistake. How can you leave your rook in such a desperate position on h3? I believe this is a case of relying too much on calculation and not trusting positional factors enough.

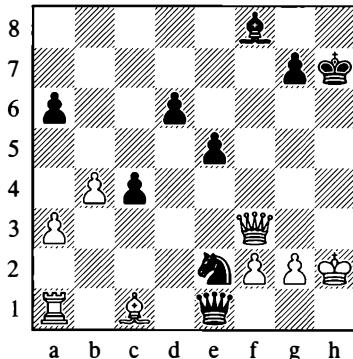
**28.♗f3!±**

This was the correct move. The tactics work out in this way:

28... $\mathbb{W}e1\#$

28... $\mathbb{Q}e2\#$  29. $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  30. $\mathbb{Q}e3\pm$

29. $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}xf3$  30. $h7\#$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  31. $\mathbb{W}xf7$   $\mathbb{Q}xh7$   
32. $\mathbb{W}xf3$   $\mathbb{Q}e2$



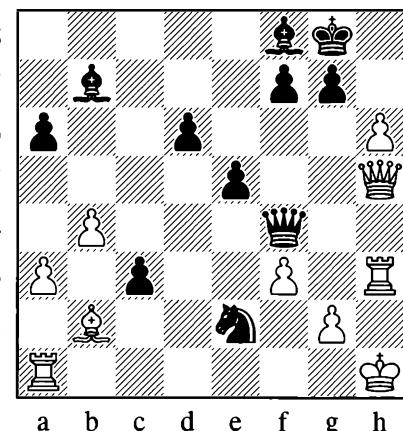
33. $\mathbb{W}e4\#$   $g6$  34. $\mathbb{W}h4\#$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  35. $\mathbb{W}xc4\#$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$   
36. $\mathbb{W}h4\#$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  37. $\mathbb{Q}b2$   $\mathbb{W}d2$  38. $g3!$

White is more or less winning. The main tactical point is:

38... $\mathbb{W}xb2$  39. $\mathbb{W}c4\#$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  40. $\mathbb{B}a2$

White wins back the piece.

28... $\mathbb{W}d4\#$  29. $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}e2$  30. $\mathbb{Q}b2$   $\mathbb{W}f4\#$   
31. $\mathbb{Q}h1$   $c3$



32.hxg7#!

32. $\mathbb{Q}xc3?$   $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  33. $\mathbb{W}h4$   $\mathbb{W}xh4$  34. $\mathbb{Q}xh4$   
looks better for Black too, but the endgame should be a better shot for White than mutual attacks on the kings.

32... $\mathbb{Q}xg7$

White's king will almost always be more exposed in positions with this balance of material.

33. $\mathbb{W}h7\#$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  34. $\mathbb{Q}c1$   $\mathbb{Q}xc1$  35. $\mathbb{W}c2$   $\mathbb{Q}h6$

36. $\mathbb{W}xc3$   $\mathbb{Q}e2$  37. $\mathbb{W}e1$

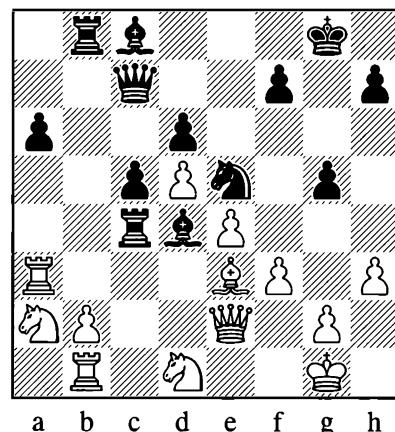
37. $\mathbb{W}c7$   $\mathbb{Q}g3\#$  38. $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{W}d4\#$  39. $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}f5$   
40. $\mathbb{B}f1$   $\mathbb{W}f4\#$  41. $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}d5\#$

37... $\mathbb{Q}d4$  38. $\mathbb{W}h4$   $\mathbb{W}xh4$  39. $\mathbb{Q}xh4$   $\mathbb{Q}g7\#$

Black is well placed and won the game on move 87.

## 7. Khismatullin – Inarkiev

Moscow 2006

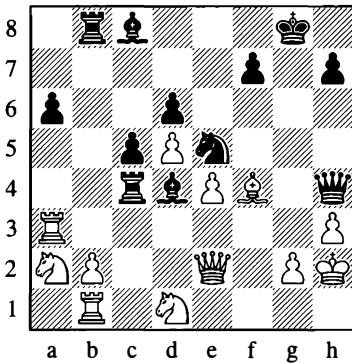


White needs to exploit the weaknesses in the black position, namely the pawn on g5 and the rook on c4. This can only be done in one way, by thinking prophylactically.

27.b3?

27. $\mathbb{Q}c1?!$   $\mathbb{Q}xc1$  28. $\mathbb{Q}xc1$   $h6$  does not cause Black any difficulties. After all, his main problem was supposed to be that the rook on c4 was poorly placed.

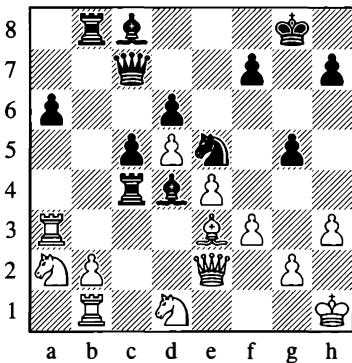
27. $\mathbb{Q}h2?!$   $\mathbb{W}e7$  28.f4 (28.b3  $g4! \rightarrow$ ) 28... $gxf4$  29. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$   $\mathbb{W}h4$  should be compared with the line below where the king is on h1.



The main difference is that White will not be able to win material with  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  as Black recaptures with check.

A possible line here could go: 30.  $\mathbb{Q}g3\#$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  31.  $\mathbb{W}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}c2?$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}h6\#$  33.  $\mathbb{W}xc2$   $\mathbb{W}xh6\#$  and I think I would prefer Black in a practical game. White's pieces are just too poorly placed. However, White can probably hold the balance with  $\mathbb{W}c1-g5$ , seeking the exchange of queens.

27.  $\mathbb{Q}h1!$



This was the accurate move, threatening both to take on g5 and to play f3-f4. Black now has no good moves:

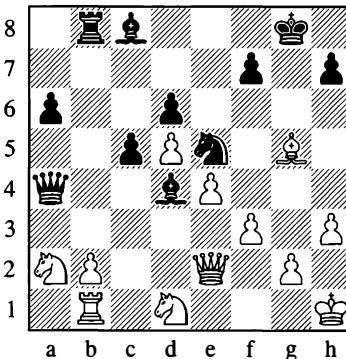
27... $h6?$  28.  $f4$  gives Black problems on both e5 and h6 and thus cannot be recommended.

27... $\mathbb{Q}xe3?$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}xe3$   $\mathbb{Q}d4$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}c2!$  traps the rook. Black's position is in serious crisis.

27... $f5$  also does not work here. The main point is that 28.  $\mathbb{Q}xg5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  is refuted by 29.  $f4+-$ .

27...  $\mathbb{W}e7$  28.  $f4!$   $\mathbb{Q}xf4$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}xf4$   $\mathbb{W}h4$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}g3!$   $\mathbb{W}f6$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  32.  $\mathbb{W}xc4$   $\mathbb{W}f4$  33.  $g3+-$  and so on.

27...  $\mathbb{W}d7?!$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}xg5$   $\mathbb{Q}a4$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}xa4$   $\mathbb{W}xa4$



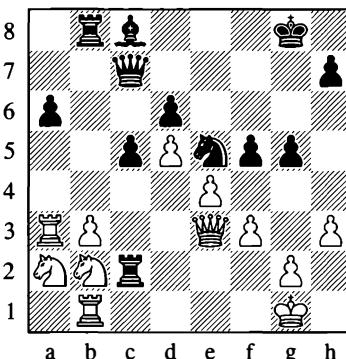
30.  $\mathbb{Q}ac3\pm$  Black does not have compensation for the pawn and the d6-pawn is just as weak as the b2-pawn.

27...  $f5! \rightarrow$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}b2$

28.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}xe3$  29.  $\mathbb{W}xe3$   $f4$  30.  $\mathbb{W}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}d4$  gives Black a good game as well.

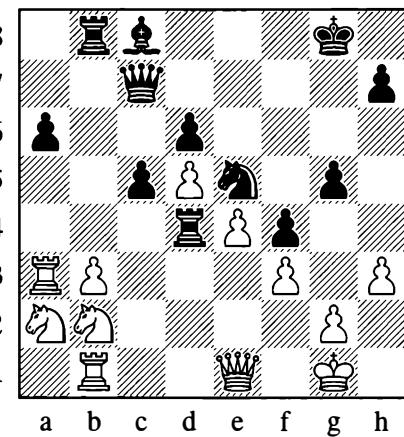
28...  $\mathbb{Q}xe3\#$  29.  $\mathbb{W}xe3$   $f4$

A natural move to play, but perhaps it was even stronger to first move the rook to its most active position: 29...  $\mathbb{Q}c2!?$



A likely way for the game to go is: 30.♗g5† ♗g7 31.♗xg7† ♖xg7 32.♕d1 fxe4 33.fxe4 ♖xh3 34.♗b2 ♕xb2 35.♗xb2 ♖c8† and the endgame is better for Black, though not yet decided.

**30.♗e1 ♕d4**



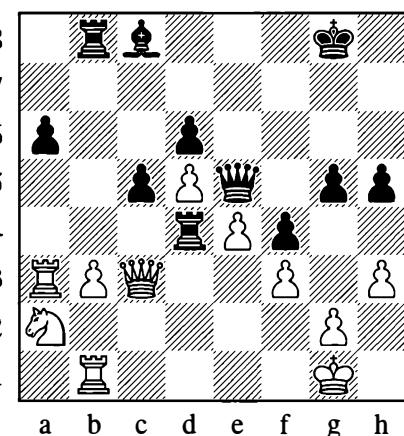
**31.♗c4!**

A good practical attempt.

**31...♗e7!**

After 31...♗xc4?! 32.bxc4 ♕xc4 33.♗xb8 ♘xb8 34.♗a5! White would have real counterplay.

**32.♗xe5 ♘xe5 33.♗c3 h5**



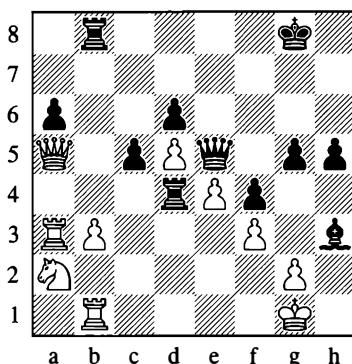
**34.♗a5?**

It is of course tempting to seek active counterplay, but this just does not work.

34.♗h1 g4 35.♗g1† would have given Black significantly more practical problems in making his advantage tell.

**34...♗e7**

34...♖xh3?!† was also very strong.



The main point is that 35.gxh3 ♕d3! gives Black a decisive attack, due to the queen check on d4 along with the threats of ...♗xf3 and ...g4.

**35.♗c3 ♕db4 36.♗e1 g4 37.e5**

37.fxg4 hxg4 38.hxg4 ♖xg4 39.♗xa6 ♘e5 40.♗d1 c4 41.bxc4 ♖xd1 42.♗xd1 ♘b1 43.♗ad3 f3! with a devastating attack.

**37...dxe5**

37...gxh3?! may have been stronger. For example: 38.e6 ♘g7 39.♗d8† ♖h7 40.♗a2 ♘xc3 and White does not have enough compensation for the piece. However, to make such a decision at move 37 would be truly reckless.

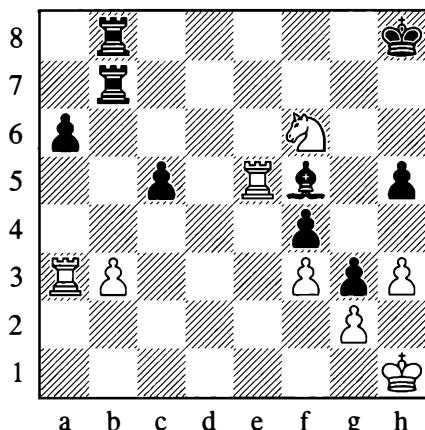
**38.d6**

38.hxg4 hxg4 39.fxg4 f3!† was also dangerous for White, but maybe not entirely clear.

38... $\mathbb{W}xd6$  39. $\mathbb{Q}e4$   $\mathbb{W}d4\#$  40. $\mathbb{Q}h1$   $\mathbb{Q}f5$   
41. $\mathbb{Q}f6\#$

41. $\mathbb{W}xa6\?!$  was probably the last chance.

41... $\mathbb{Q}h8$  42. $\mathbb{W}c7$   $\mathbb{B}4b7$  43. $\mathbb{W}xe5$   $\mathbb{W}xe5$   
44. $\mathbb{B}xe5$  g3!



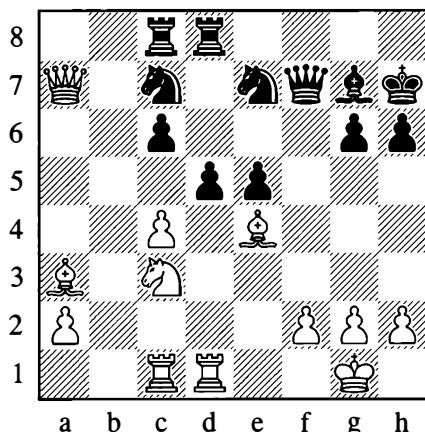
45. $\mathbb{B}e1$

45. $\mathbb{B}xf5$   $\mathbb{B}xb3$  and White is back-rank mated.

45... $\mathbb{B}xb3$  46. $\mathbb{B}xa6$  c4 47. $\mathbb{B}aa1$  c3 48. $\mathbb{B}ac1$  c2 49. $\mathbb{Q}xh5$   $\mathbb{B}3b4$  50. $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$   
0–1

### 8. Eljanov – Nataf

Mallorca (ol) 2004



The big strategic struggle in this position is for the d5-square. The winner of this struggle can expect success in the game; even though for Black that only means achieving a draw! Eljanov realized that he was able to put extra pressure on d5 without fearing any of Black's apparent threats.

26. $\mathbb{W}b7!$

Incorrect would be: 26.cxd5?!  $\mathbb{Q}exd5\#$  27. $\mathbb{Q}b2$   $\mathbb{B}a8$  28. $\mathbb{W}c5$   $\mathbb{Q}e6!$  29. $\mathbb{W}xc6$   $\mathbb{B}ac8$  30. $\mathbb{W}a6$   $\mathbb{Q}df4\#$

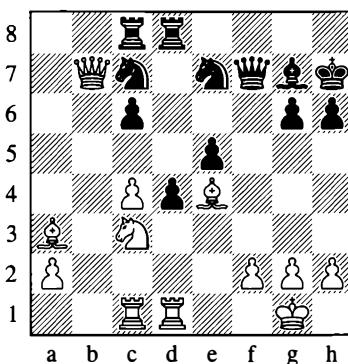
After 26. $\mathbb{Q}xe7?$   $\mathbb{W}xe7$  27.cxd5 cxd5 it is White who should be looking for equality.

26... $\mathbb{B}f8$

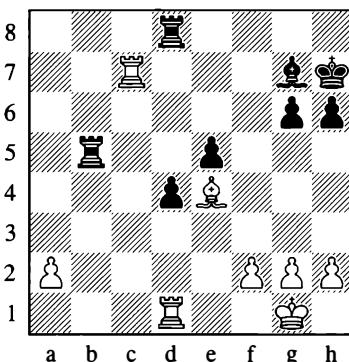
It is hard to find a good move and I suspect Nataf ended up just playing the move that felt most active. Other options were:

The main tactical point behind the move in the game is that after 26...dxe4 27. $\mathbb{B}xd8$   $\mathbb{B}xd8$  28. $\mathbb{W}xc7$  White is just winning.

26...d4 gives White full control over lots and lots of squares.



White would be pretty happy with 27. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ , but even stronger is: 27. $\mathbb{Q}b5!!$   $\mathbb{C}xb5$  28. $\mathbb{B}xe7$   $\mathbb{W}xe7$  29. $\mathbb{C}xb5$  and Black is in a nasty set of pins. For example: 29... $\mathbb{B}b8$  30. $\mathbb{W}xc7$   $\mathbb{W}xc7$  31. $\mathbb{B}xc7$   $\mathbb{B}xb5$

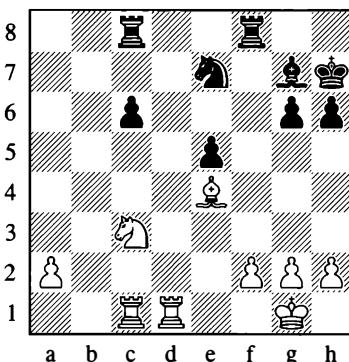


32.h4± White will win the g6-pawn and have excellent chances in the endgame. Black's bishop is rather helpless.

Black could also try 26... $\mathbb{W}e8$ , but White can either take on e7 with a standard advantage, or play 27.cxd5  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  28. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  29.h3 with a fantastic bishop on e4, and near total control of the board. An important point is that challenging the bishop with 29... $\mathbb{Q}f6?$  drops the pawn on c6.

#### 27. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 28.cxd5 cxd5?!

It is understandable why Nataf would rather exchange knights, even at the cost of a pawn, but keeping the c6-pawn would have kept control of some important squares in the centre: 28... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  29. $\mathbb{W}xe7$   $\mathbb{Q}xe7$

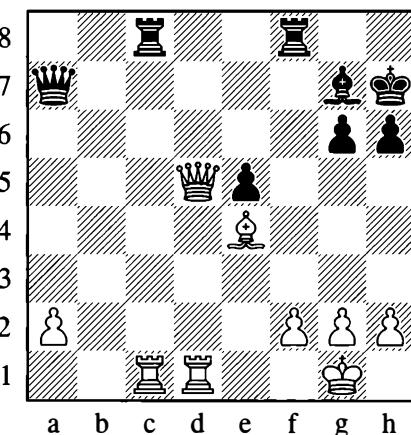


30.a4 White's advantage is extensive, but it is probably still a bit early to look for the next day's pairings.

#### 29. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 30. $\mathbb{W}xd5$

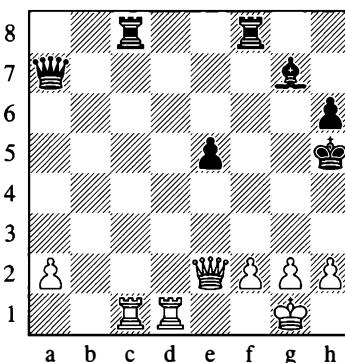
White is technically winning, though a few practical problems remain. However, you would feel quite confident knowing you could substitute yourself with such an excellent technical player as Eljanov at this point!

#### 30... $\mathbb{W}a7?$ !



#### 31. $\mathbb{W}d2?$ !

Perhaps the striker was substituted too soon, as here White missed an unexpected chance to take a short cut to the full point. He could have launched a mating attack with: 31. $\mathbb{Q}xg6†$ !  $\mathbb{Q}xg6$  32. $\mathbb{W}e4†$   $\mathbb{Q}h5$  33. $\mathbb{W}e2†$ !

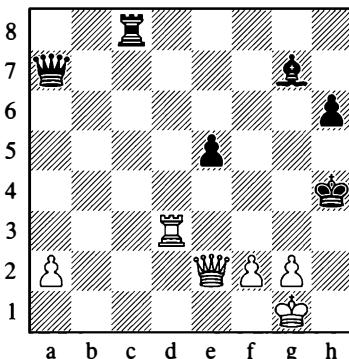


I find this a really surprising move, although the main idea quickly becomes clear – f2 is defended so that White has time to exchange on c8.

33... $\mathbb{Q}g5$  34. $\mathbb{B}xc8$   $\mathbb{B}xc8$  35. $h4\#!$   $\mathbb{Q}xh4$

Black has no choice. After 35... $\mathbb{Q}f6$  36. $\mathbb{W}f3\#$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  37. $\mathbb{W}g4!$   $\mathbb{B}g8$  38. $\mathbb{W}b4\#$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  39. $\mathbb{W}c4$   $\mathbb{E}f8$  40. $\mathbb{W}e6\#$   $\mathbb{W}e7$  41. $\mathbb{W}c6\#$  White wins the queen, and then the a-pawn wins the game.

36. $\mathbb{B}d3$



The black king is helpless.

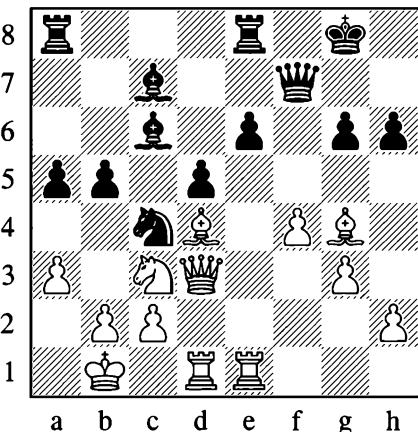
31... $\mathbb{B}cd8$  32. $\mathbb{W}e2$   $\mathbb{B}d4$  33. $\mathbb{B}xd4$   $\mathbb{W}xd4$  34. $h4$

$\mathbb{B}f4$  35. $\mathbb{B}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  36. $g3$   $\mathbb{B}f6$  37. $h5$

White won on move 56.

## 9. Kholmov – Glek

Borzhomi 1984



Black is threatening ... $b4$ , which would appear to be inconvenient for White, at least enough for him to consider it seriously. But this

does not mean that he should automatically bow to this threat, just that he should take it seriously. The way to do this is to bring the rook on d1 into the game and attack the big weakness on e6.

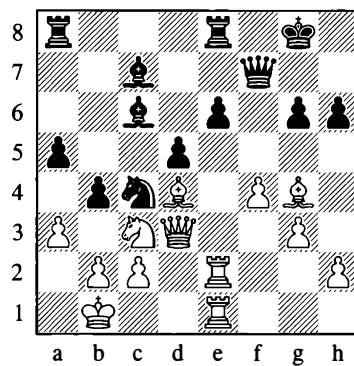
29. $\mathbb{B}e2!!$

29. $\mathbb{Q}c5$  was of course possible, but 29... $\mathbb{Q}h7$  or 29... $\mathbb{B}ab8$  would give Black reasonable counter-chances.

29... $e5$

Black feels compelled to get rid of his weakness, even if this puts some of his other weaknesses under pressure.

White's main point is of course that 29... $b4$  is no threat at all. The knight on c3 is White's worst piece and currently not doing anything at all. White can just ignore the threat and play 30. $\mathbb{B}de1!!$



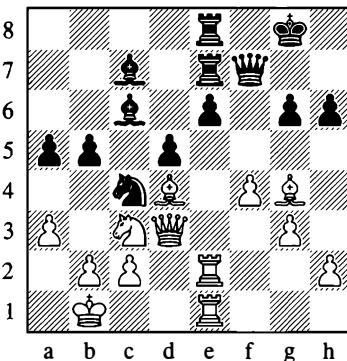
White has ideas such as 30... $\mathbb{Q}d7$  31. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ ! and 30... $bxc3$  31. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$   $\mathbb{B}xe6$  32. $\mathbb{B}xe6$ , when the triple threat of  $\mathbb{B}xc6$ ,  $\mathbb{B}xg6\#$  and  $\mathbb{B}e7$  wins the game.

29... $h5$  30. $\mathbb{Q}h3$  does not change anything.

29... $\mathbb{B}e7$

This is a more passive approach, and although it makes good sense in many ways, the concrete lines turn out badly for Black.

30. $\mathbb{B}de1$   $\mathbb{B}ae8$



Here White could claim a clear advantage with 31.  $\mathbb{Q}c5$ , but he can also try a direct attack on the black position:

31.a4!? b4

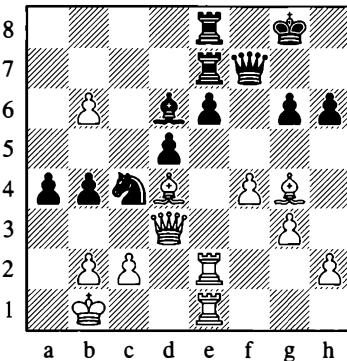
The key tactical point behind the pawn push is 31...bx a4 32.  $\mathbb{Q}c5$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}xd6$   $\mathbb{Q}xd6$  34.  $\mathbb{W}a6!$  and White wins.

32.  $\mathbb{Q}b5\pm$

White has certainly improved his position.

For example:

32...  $\mathbb{Q}xb5$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}xb5$  a4 34. b6  $\mathbb{Q}d6$



35.  $\mathbb{Q}f3!+/-$

Preventing ...e5. White will win sooner or later; Black has no counterplay.

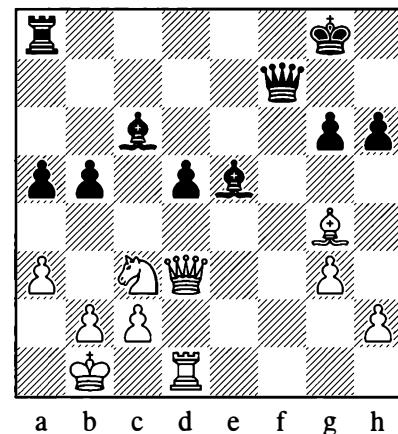
**30.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5?$**

A tactical error in a difficult position.

30...  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}de1\pm$  would leave White with a great advantage, but it was still Black's best chance.

**31.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$**

31...  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}xb5$   $\mathbb{W}f6$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$  would leave White with a winning technical position.



**32.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$**

It seems that 32.  $\mathbb{Q}xb5!$  was even stronger. Black has no compensation for the pawn, and the opposite-coloured bishops would not help him at all.

**32...  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}xd5\pm$**

Black has some compensation with the two bishops, but White obviously has good winning chances.

**33...  $\mathbb{Q}h7$  34.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$**

In the following phase White loses some of his advantage.

34.  $\mathbb{W}e3!$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  35.  $\mathbb{W}c5\pm$  was stronger.

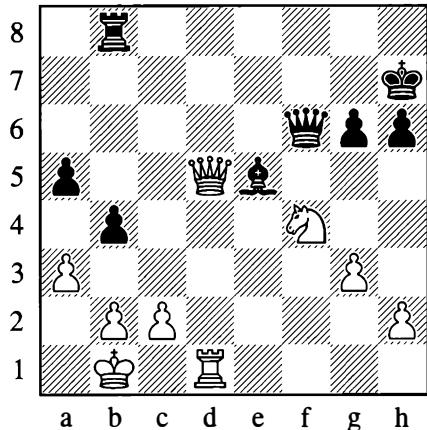
**34...  $\mathbb{b}4$  35.  $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}xf3$  36.  $\mathbb{W}xf3$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$  37.  $\mathbb{W}d5$**

37.  $\mathbb{axb}4$   $\mathbb{Q}xb4$  38.  $\mathbb{W}d5$   $\mathbb{Q}xb2\uparrow$  39.  $\mathbb{Q}c1$   $\mathbb{W}e7$  40.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{W}a3$  41.  $\mathbb{Q}xb2$   $\mathbb{W}xb2\uparrow$  42.  $\mathbb{Q}d2\pm$  is of course better for White, but winning it would not be easy.

**37...  $\mathbb{W}f6?$**

The dogmatic decision to keep the queens on the board ruins Black's chances.

37... $\mathbb{W}xd5$  38. $\mathbb{B}xd5$   $\mathbb{Q}xf4$  39. $gxf4$   $bxa3$  40. $b3$   
 $a4\pm$  would have given Black real drawing chances in the rook ending; the white pawns are divided and exposed.

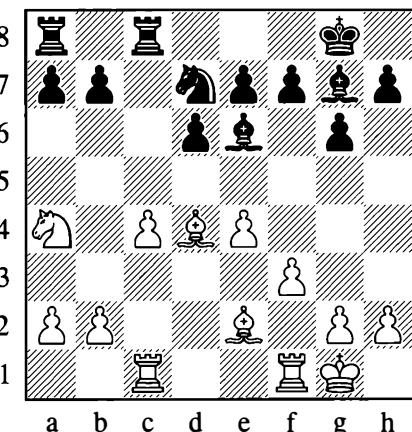


38. $\mathbb{W}xa5$   $\mathbb{Q}xf4$  39. $gxf4$   $\mathbb{B}b7$  40. $\mathbb{W}d5$   $\mathbb{E}g7$   
41. $\mathbb{W}d4$   $\mathbb{W}h4$  42. $f5$

1–0

### 10. Stojanovic – Paunovic

Valjevo 2011

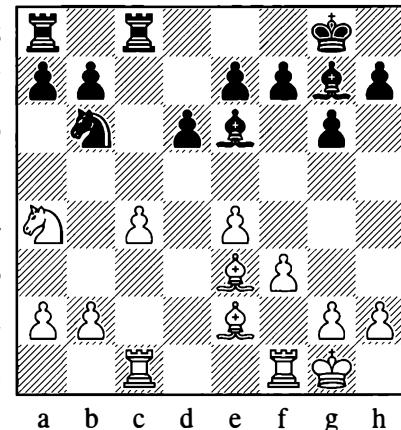


A complicated case of prophylaxis in which White evidently did not see Black's idea coming.

15. $\mathbb{Q}e3?$

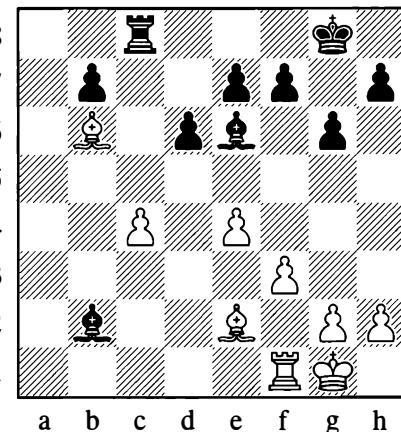
The only way to play this position is 15. $\mathbb{Q}xg7!$   $\mathbb{Q}xg7$  16. $b3$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  17. $\mathbb{Q}c3=$  and although White has the "bad" bishop, he does not have a bad position.

15... $\mathbb{Q}b6!!$



A great move and probably a great surprise for White as well. Now he had to play the horrid-looking 16. $b3$  and accept a ruined pawn structure. Instead he invited a vampire into his house (which is a famous no-no in chess ever since Jonathan Rowson's book *The Seven Deadly Chess Sins*).

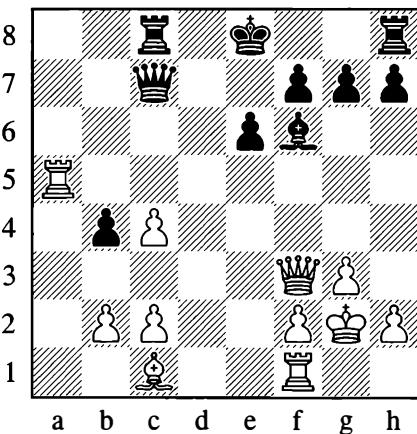
16. $\mathbb{Q}xb6?!$   $axb6$  17. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$   $\mathbb{E}xa2$  18. $\mathbb{E}c2$   
 $\mathbb{E}xb2$  19. $\mathbb{E}xb2$   $\mathbb{Q}xb2$



Black has an extra pawn and won the game on move 76.

## 11. Harikrishna – Hossain

Edinburgh 2003



The main point here is prophylaxis. Black intends to take on c4 and White has to be ready to meet this.

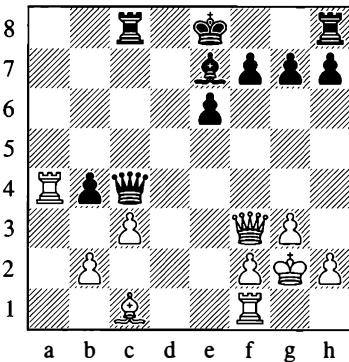
### 19. $\mathbb{E}a4!!$

Black has no problems after 19.  $\mathbb{E}a8 \mathbb{W}xc4$  20.  $\mathbb{E}xc8\#$   $\mathbb{W}xc8$  21.  $\mathbb{A}d2 \mathbb{E}e7$ . For example: 22.  $c3$   $bxc3$  23.  $\mathbb{E}xc3$  0–0 with equality.

### 19... $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 20. $c3$ $\mathbb{E}b8?$

The losing mistake, although Black's position was already unpleasant.

20...  $\mathbb{E}e7$

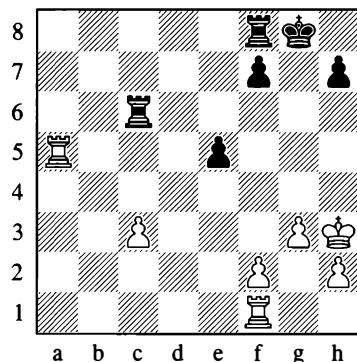


It was necessary to defend the pawn this way. White's strongest reply is now:

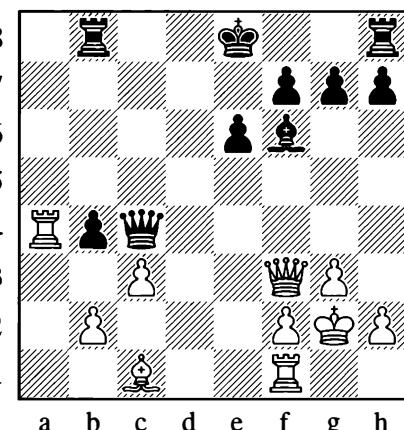
21.  $\mathbb{E}a7!$   $\mathbb{E}f6$

21...  $bxc3?$  is refuted by 22.  $\mathbb{W}b7!$ , when Black either gives up a piece for the dubious compensation of having a pawn on c2, or loses in a fully fledged battle: 22...  $\mathbb{W}c6\#$  23.  $\mathbb{E}xc6\#$   $\mathbb{E}xc6$  24.  $\mathbb{E}a8\#$   $\mathbb{E}d8$  25.  $\mathbb{E}d1 \mathbb{E}e7$  26.  $bxc3$   $\mathbb{E}xc3$  27.  $\mathbb{A}b2 \mathbb{E}b3$  28.  $\mathbb{E}xg7 \mathbb{E}g8$  29.  $\mathbb{E}a7\#$   $\mathbb{E}e8$  30.  $\mathbb{E}xd8\#$  and White wins.

22.  $\mathbb{E}g5$   $bxc3$  23.  $\mathbb{E}xf6$   $gxf6$  24.  $\mathbb{W}xf6$  0–0 25.  $\mathbb{E}a5$   $\mathbb{W}c6\#$  26.  $\mathbb{A}h3$   $e5$  27.  $\mathbb{W}xc6$   $\mathbb{E}xc6$  28.  $bxc3$



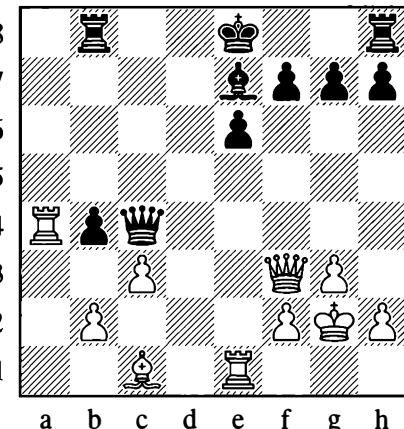
Black has real drawing chances in this rook ending, but he will have to suffer for the half point.



21.  $\mathbb{E}e1!$   $\mathbb{E}e7$

21...0–0 22. $\mathbb{E}e4$  and White emerges with an extra pawn.

21... $\mathbb{W}c8$  22. $\mathbb{A}f4$   $\mathbb{W}d7$  23. $\mathbb{E}aa1$   $\mathbb{E}d8$  24. $\mathbb{E}ed1$   $\mathbb{W}b5$  25. $\mathbb{E}xd8†$   $\mathbb{A}xd8$  26.cxb4 White has won a pawn and should win the game.



## 22. $\mathbb{E}a7!$

Black is once again prevented from castling; White is already winning.

## 22...h6

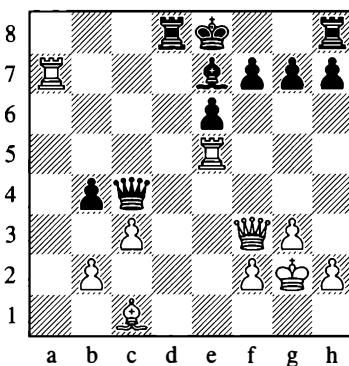
22...bxc3 23.bxc3 only makes things worse for Black. On top of everything else, White is now threatening  $\mathbb{A}a3!$ .

## 22... $\mathbb{E}d8$

This is again met with a strong prophylactic move.

## 23. $\mathbb{E}e5!$

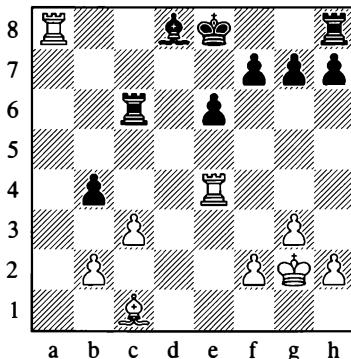
Preventing Black from playing ... $\mathbb{W}d5$  to ease the pressure.



## 23... $\mathbb{E}c8$

After 23...bxc3 24. $\mathbb{A}g5$   $\mathbb{E}d7$  (24...f6 25. $\mathbb{W}b7!$ ) 25. $\mathbb{E}xd7$   $\mathbb{A}xd7$  26. $\mathbb{W}xf7$   $\mathbb{E}e8$  27.bxc3, White will win with his extra pawn and better king.

24. $\mathbb{W}b7$   $\mathbb{W}c6†$  25. $\mathbb{W}xc6†$   $\mathbb{E}xc6$  26. $\mathbb{E}a8†$   $\mathbb{A}d8$  27. $\mathbb{E}e4!$



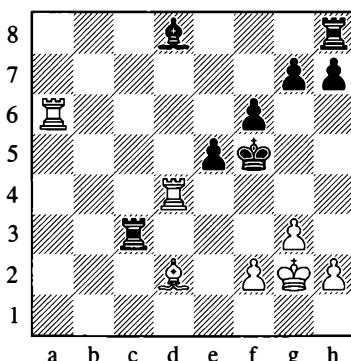
Winning a pawn. Black can go for a critical line to try and avoid this, but he will not avoid defeat:

27...bxc3 28. $\mathbb{E}d4$   $\mathbb{A}e7$  29.bxc3  $\mathbb{E}xc3$  30. $\mathbb{A}g5†$  f6 31. $\mathbb{A}d2$  e5

31... $\mathbb{E}b3$  32. $\mathbb{E}a7†$   $\mathbb{A}e8$  33. $\mathbb{E}xd8†$  and White wins.

32. $\mathbb{E}a7†$   $\mathbb{A}e6$  33. $\mathbb{E}a6†$   $\mathbb{F}5$

33... $\mathbb{A}e7$  34. $\mathbb{E}g4$  and wins.



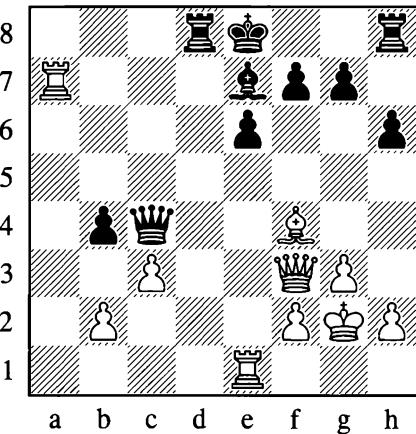
## 34.g4†

An important move, preventing ... $\mathbb{E}xg3†$ .

34... $\mathbb{A}g6$  35. $\mathbb{E}xd8$   $\mathbb{E}xd8$  36. $\mathbb{A}xc3$

White wins.

**23.♕f4 ♕d8**



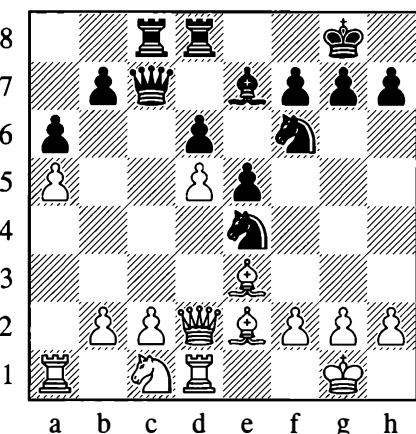
**24.♕e5 f6 25.♕c7 ♕c8 26.♗b7**

Hossain resigned. After 26...0–0 27.♗d6 White wins a piece.

**1–0**

## 12. Short – Bu Xiangzhi

Liverpool 2007

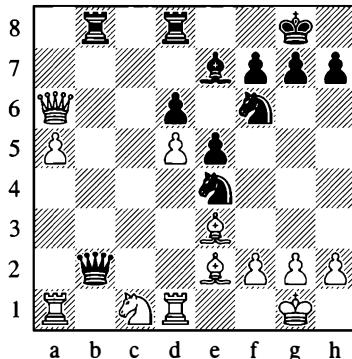


White's choice is limited as his queen is under attack. Moves like 17.♗b6 and 17.♗d3 ♕xc2 do not inspire, so all in all White is left with only two options.

**17.♗e1!!**

This passive-looking move is surprisingly the strongest.

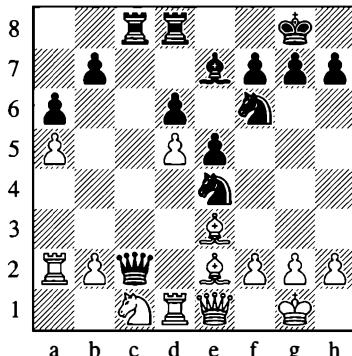
It was possible for White to play 17.♗b4, but he would have no advantage after 17...♕xc2 18.♗xb7 ♜b8 19.♗xa6 ♜xb2.



White should be happy that he can force equality with 20.♖a2 ♜b4 21.♘d3 ♜b3 22.♘c1, either with a repetition of moves, or with approximately even chances after 22...♕c3 23.♗d3, when the a-pawn has real value.

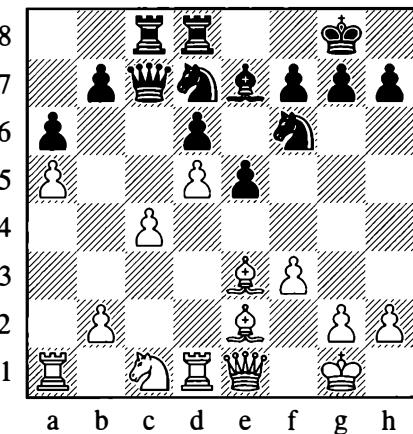
**17...♘d7**

17...♕xc2! was the critical test. Here Nigel had prepared the brilliant 18.♖a2!!.



White intends to play either f2-f3 followed by b2-b4, or ♘d3 followed by ♗b6, in both cases winning a piece. Black has nothing better than 18...♕c7, when after 19.♗b6± White wins the exchange and has the easier game.

**18.f3 ♘ef6 19.c4±**



White has been allowed to set up his ideal pawn formation. Black finds it difficult to create any counterplay, especially with his pieces where they are. Nigel played most of the game brilliantly, although towards the end it all became a mess.

**19...Qh5 20.b4 h6 21.Qf1**

Also possible was 21.Qd2 Qf4 22.Qf1±.

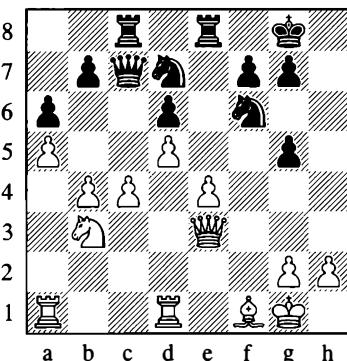
**21...Rxe8**

21...Qf6 22.Ra2±

**22.Qb3 Qg5 23.Qxg5 hxg5 24.Qe3 Qf4?!**

Black is slowly being strategically outplayed. It was already time for drastic measures.

24...e4?! 25.fxe4 Qhf6



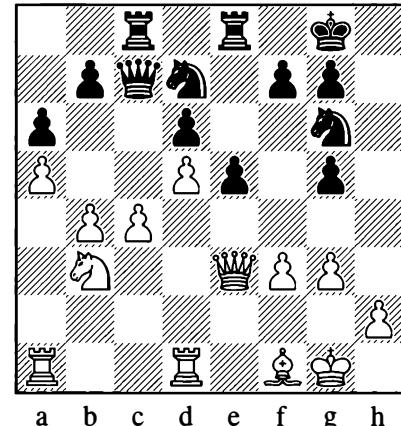
26.Qd2± and White's advantage has been kept to a minimum.

**25.g3**

25.Qd2!?:±

**25...Qg6**

25...Qh5 26.Qxg5 Qhf6 27.Qe3 e4 28.f4±



**26.Qxg5**

It is of course tempting to take this pawn, but 26.Qd2!± was even stronger.

**26...e4 27.f4?!**

White is still better after this, but stronger was 27.fxe4 Rxe4 28.Qd3 Re5 29.Qd2± and there are many reasons why White is significantly better.

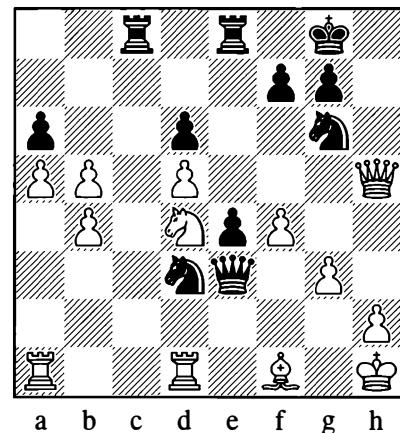
**27...b5?!**

Desperation. The longer you have a bad position, the more difficult it becomes to accept it psychologically, even though you may be making small improvements to your position along the way.

27...Qf6 28.Qd4± was the lesser evil.

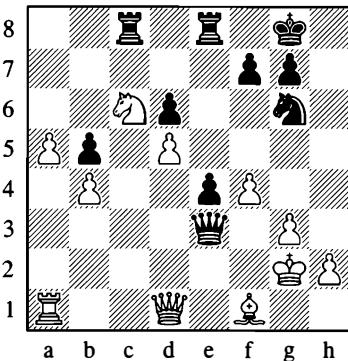
**28.cxb5 Qc3 29.Qd4 Qe3† 30.Qh1 Qd3**

From this point the game clearly gets out of control for both players.



**32.♘f5?**

The correct move was: 32.♘c6! ♘f2† 33.♗g2 ♘xd1 34.♗xd1 axb5



35.♗b1!! and White wins. The immediate threat is ♗b3 and after 35...♔a3 36.♗b3 ♗xb3 37.♗xb3 White has an overwhelming positional advantage, despite being the exchange down.

**32...♘f2† 33.♗g2 ♘xf4†!**

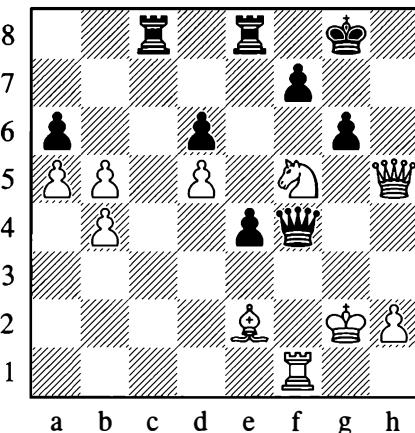
Bu does not miss his chance to gain active counterplay, something he has been dreaming of all game.

**34.gxf4 ♗xf4 35.♗e2 ♘xd1 36.♗xd1 g6**

Black's tactical point. However, it appears that he was running out of time at this point.

**37.♗f1**

The only move.

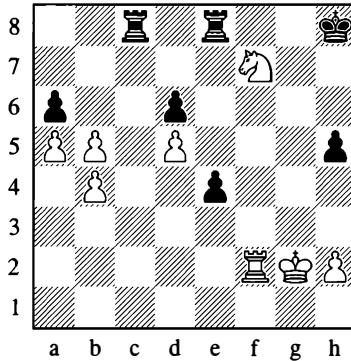


**37...♗d2?**

Bu loses his way. Black should have played 37...♗xf1†! 38.♗xf1 gxh5 39.bxa6 with entirely unclear consequences.

**38.♗h6† ♔h8**

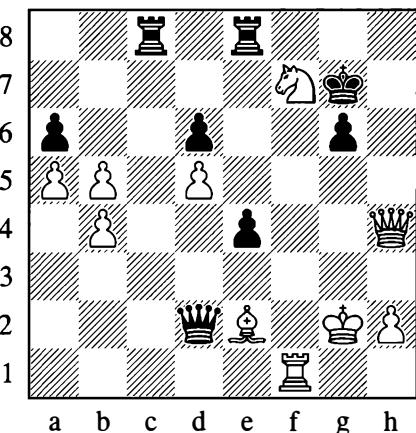
Here the question is: how did the game actually end? In the database the last move of the game is 39.♗h4?, but this would not be a move to resign against: 39...♔xe2† 40.♗f2 ♗h5 41.♗xh5 gxh5 42.♗xf7†



42...♔h7! The king avoids blocking the g-file. 43.♗xd6 ♗g8† 44.♗f1 ♗c1† 45.♗e2 axb5 46.♗xe4 ♗d8± Black has reasonable drawing chances.

The decisive way to end the game was:

**39.♗xf7† ♔g7 40.♗h4!**

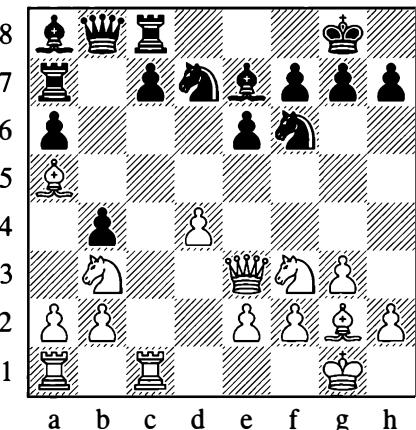


The queen would also be well placed on g4, but this makes sense of the notation to some extent. White wins here, for example: 40... $\mathbb{W}xe2\#$  41. $\mathbb{E}f2$   $\mathbb{W}h5$  42. $\mathbb{W}xh5$   $gxh5$  43. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$  and the endgame is elementary.

**1–0**

### 13. Gelfand – Harikrishna

Bermuda 2005



White will have a significant advantage if he is able to keep the black queenside pawns separated and also retain control over the c-file. Black on the other hand will be close to equality if he manages to play ...c5 and rid

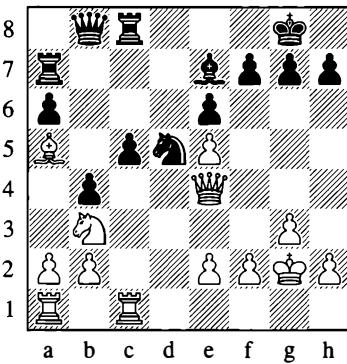
himself of his weak pawn and fight for the c-file.

White can prevent this in two ways, one being better than the other.

#### 17. $\mathbb{E}c2!$

This is the most accurate move. White aims to double his rooks on the c-file, taking full control over it. The only persuasive case for rejecting this move would be if Black could play ... $\mathbb{Q}e4$  and harass the rook; but White has a strong answer to this.

17. $\mathbb{Q}e5$  is the obvious alternative, and it also leads to some advantage for White. The only argument against the move is that the text move is far more convincing. 17... $\mathbb{Q}xg2$  18. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  (18... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  19. $dxe5$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  20. $\mathbb{W}e4$   $c5$  21. $f4\pm$ ) 19. $\mathbb{W}e4$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  20. $dxe5$   $c5$

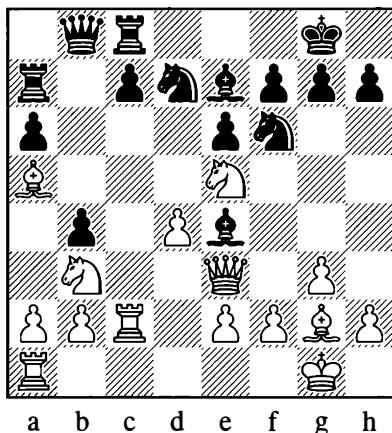


21. $\mathbb{E}c4$   $\mathbb{W}b5$  22. $\mathbb{E}ac1\pm$

#### 17... $\mathbb{Q}e4$

Black can also play other moves, such as 17... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ , but after 18. $\mathbb{E}ac1$  intending  $\mathbb{Q}e1$  or  $\mathbb{Q}e5$ , White has a clear advantage. The real question is how Black intends to continue, for example 18... $\mathbb{Q}e4$  can be met by 19. $\mathbb{Q}e5!$  as in the game.

#### 18. $\mathbb{Q}e5!$



**18...Qxg2**

The only sensible move.

**18...Qxc2?** 19.Qc6 and White just wins.

**18...Qxe5?!** 19.Qxe4 Qeg4 20.Wf3 Qxe4 21.Wxe4 Qf6 22.Wc6± is a much worse version of events for Black; the c7-pawn is a big problem.

**19.Qxd7 Qxd7**

19...Wb7 is worse: 20.Qdc5 Wc6 21.f3 Wh3 22.Wd2 Wb5 23.e4 and the b-pawn will be lost. For example 23...Ea8 24.Ea1, and the threat of Ee4 is impossible to deal with.

**20.Qxg2 Wb5**

20...Wb7† 21.Wf3 does not do Black any good. The exchange of queens would leave the squares on the c-file irrevocably weak.

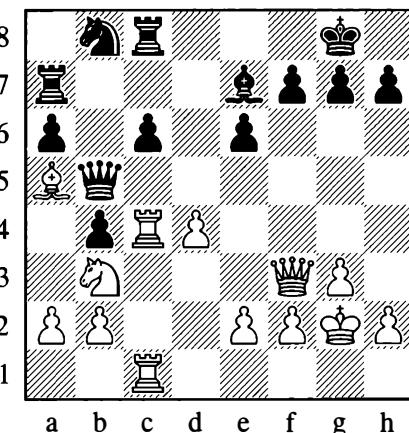
**21.Eac1 c6**

21...Qg5 22.f4 is not a significant weakening of the white position, as Black has no way to take advantage of it.

**22.Wf3 Qb8**

22...c5 also fails to solve Black's problems: 23.dxc5 and now 23...Qxc5 24.Ec4! wins for White, as does 23...Qxg5 24.Wd3!.

**23.Ec4**



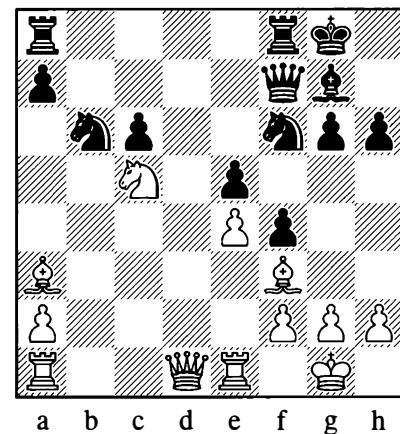
The strategic battle in connection with the end of the opening phase is over. White is the clear winner – he has prevented Black playing ...c5 and has put the queenside pawns under such pressure that Black has had to misplace his knight. Still, the game goes on and Gelfand had to play well in order to increase his advantage.

23...Ead7 24.e3 h6 25.We2 Ee8 26.Wel Wa4  
27.Qxb4 Wxa2 28.Wc3 Qxb4 29.Qxb4 c5  
30.dxc5 a5 31.Qxa5 Wd5† 32.e4 Wa8 33.c6  
Qc7 34.Qc4 Qa6 35.b4 Wb8 36.Qb7 Qxc6  
37.Qxc6 Wxb7 38.Qc8

1–0

#### 14. Kramnik – Gelfand

Belgrade 1997



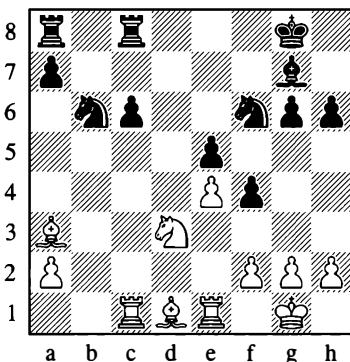
This position still looks desperately difficult to me, even though the solution is remarkably simple and logical. The e6-square is very weak, the bishop on f3 is badly placed and Black wants to play ... $\mathbb{Q}c4$  in order to disturb the bishop on a3. White is able to deal with all of these issues with a single move.

### 23. $\mathbb{W}c1!! \mathbb{W}c4$

After 23... $\mathbb{Q}h7$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{E}fc8$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}b3$   $\mathbb{W}e8$  26.  $\mathbb{W}c3$  White has full control over the position. All that remains is for him to bring his rooks into the game and he will win.

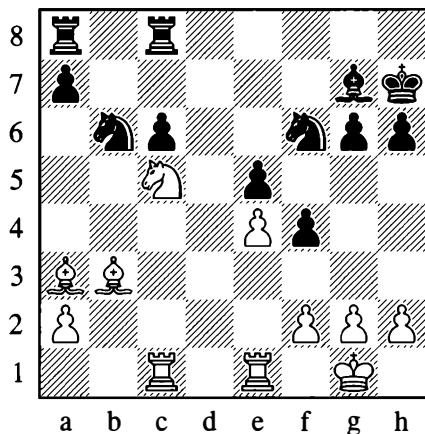
### 24. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{W}xc1$ 25. $\mathbb{E}xc1$ $\mathbb{E}fc8$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}b3!?$

Kramnik's play is entirely logical, but it so happens that 26.  $\mathbb{Q}d3!$  was even stronger.



Black cannot defend the e5-pawn in a way that does not encourage  $\mathbb{Q}d6$  or  $\mathbb{Q}g4$ , putting Black under a lot of pressure.

### 26... $\mathbb{Q}h7$



### 27. $\mathbb{Q}e6!?$

This is a very logical decision that leads to a long-term advantage of the two bishops (a favourite of the young Kramnik) against two knights. But again there were stronger moves available.

First of all there is 27.  $\mathbb{Q}a6!?$ , which would be very awkward for Black.

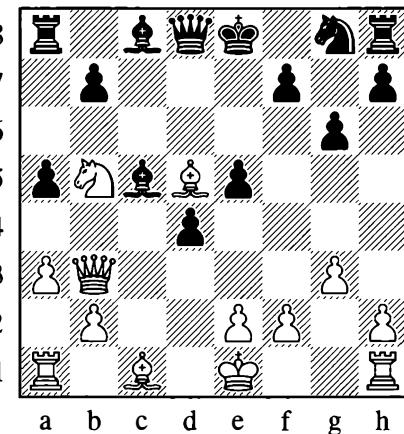
And there is 27.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$  once again. The idea is that after 27...  $\mathbb{Q}fd7$  28.  $f3!$  White can put optimum pressure on Black, and can hope for his eventual collapse. And if Black tries tactics, he will find himself in a poor situation: 28...  $c5$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}xc5$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}xd7$   $\mathbb{Q}xa3$  31.  $\mathbb{E}xc8$   $\mathbb{E}xc8$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5\pm$  and the extra pawn looks valuable to me.

### 27... $a5$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 30. $\mathbb{E}ed1$ $\mathbb{E}a7\pm$

Black is evidently struggling at this point, but nonetheless Gelfand managed to achieve a draw in a further 34 moves.

## 15. Aagaard – Stojanovski

Copenhagen 2010

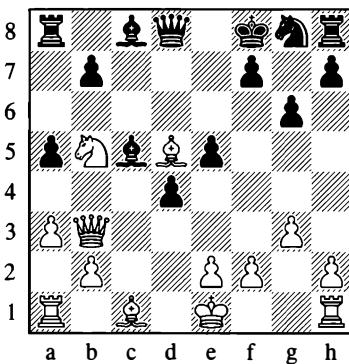


### 12... $\mathbb{W}e7!?$

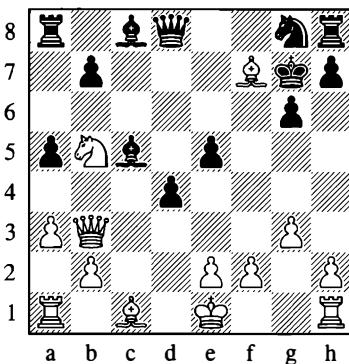
This looks like the most natural move in the

world, but it is a mistake. White's actual threat in the above position is not 13.♕xf7† in itself, but depends on being able to meet 13...♝f8 with 14.♗xg8 ♜xg8 15.♕h6†. But this can be avoided if Black hurries to g7 with the king. In this case White will find himself lacking in development and with his pieces pointing in completely pointless directions.

Black had the chance to improve his position greatly with 12...♝f8!!<sup>1</sup>, when it becomes apparent that the threat against f7 is completely harmless.



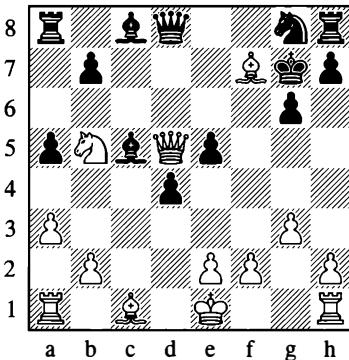
- a) 13.h4 ♘g7 14.h5 (14.♕g5 ♘f6) 14...♝f6 15.h6† ♘f8 16.♗xg8 a4 17.♗c4 ♜b6†
- b) 13.♕xf7 ♔g7!



It is positionally senseless to take on g8 now, but something has to be done about the bishop. If White does not act immediately, he can find himself in all sorts of trouble.

For example 14.0–0 ♜h3, followed by ...♝f6 and ...♜f8, leaves Black with a serious initiative. The opening of the f-file is starting to be a serious problem!

For this reason White should probably try 14.♗d5.

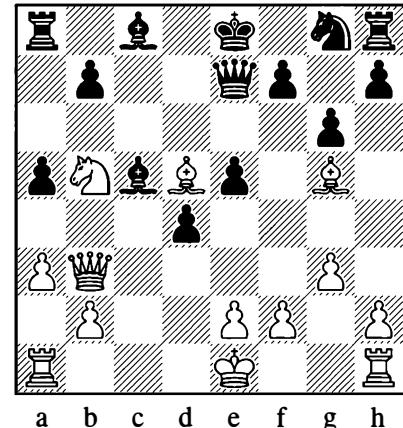


White is hoping for 14...♜e7? 15.♗xg8 ♜xg8 16.♗g5, when he would be doing well. Simplest is therefore 14...♜xd5 15.♗xd5 ♘f6, when after 16.♗g2† White can fight on, despite the unpleasant aspects of his position.

### 13.♗g5!

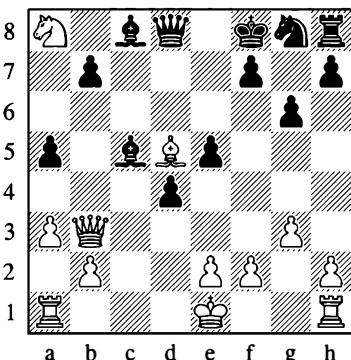
Although this was based on a miscalculation, it was played with the right intentions and worked out excellently in practice.

I could also have played more calmly with 13.h4!?, ♘f6 14.♗g5=.



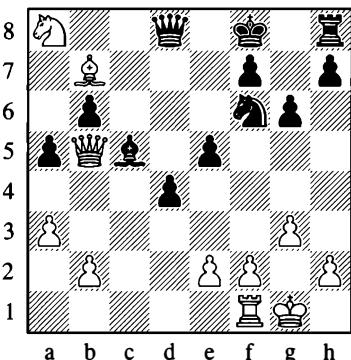
**13...f6?**

This is simply a miscalculation. Black should have played 13... $\mathbb{W}xg5!$  14. $\mathfrak{Q}c7\#$   $\mathfrak{Q}f8$  15. $\mathfrak{Q}xa8$   $\mathbb{W}d8$ .



Both players had missed that 16. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$  is met strongly with 16... $\mathbb{Q}b4\#$ !, when Black ends up with two minor pieces for a rook, and the slightly better game.

Instead White would be better playing the active 16.0–0!, when taking the b7-pawn is a real threat, so Black must reply 16...b6. The following is a computer line, but it makes perfect sense. White's only sensible break is b2–b4, and he uses tactics to achieve it: 17. $\mathbb{W}b5!$   $\mathbb{Q}h3$  (17... $\mathbb{W}xd5$  18. $\mathfrak{Q}xb6$ ) 18. $\mathbb{Q}b7$   $\mathbb{Q}xf1$  19. $\mathbb{Q}xf1$   $\mathfrak{Q}f6$



20.b4 axb4 21.axb4  $\mathbb{Q}e7$  22. $\mathfrak{Q}xb6$   $\mathfrak{Q}g7$  and a draw is most likely.

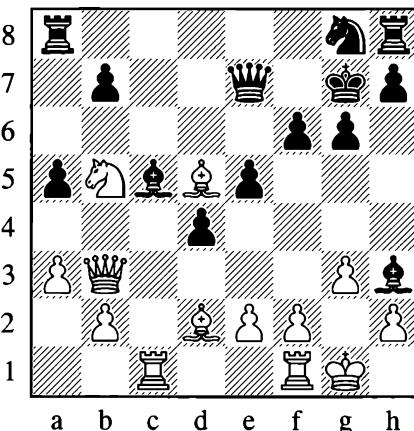
**14. $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathfrak{Q}f8$  15.0–0±**

My opponent had been daydreaming about

15. $\mathbb{Q}xg8?$   $\mathbb{W}xg8$  16. $\mathbb{Q}h6\#$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$ , when he would already be better.

**15... $\mathfrak{Q}g7$  16. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$   $\mathbb{Q}h3?$** 

16... $\mathbb{Q}b6$  17. $\mathbb{Q}c4$  gives White obvious compensation for the pawn, but Black still has some defensive resources.

**17. $\mathbb{Q}xc5!$** 

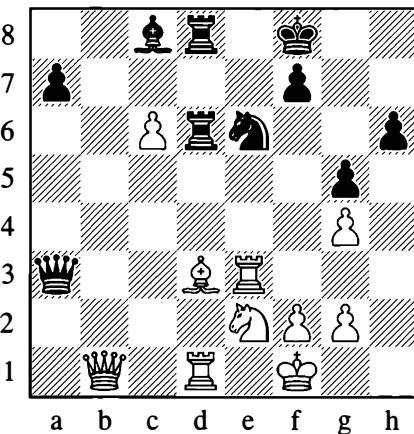
White now wins with a direct attack against the black king.

17... $\mathbb{W}xc5$  18. $\mathbb{Q}c1$   $\mathbb{W}f8$  19. $\mathbb{Q}c7\#$   $\mathfrak{Q}e7$  20. $\mathbb{Q}e6$   $\mathbb{Q}f5$  21. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$   $gxf5$  22. $\mathbb{W}e6$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  23. $\mathfrak{Q}d6$   $\mathfrak{Q}g6$  24. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$

**1–0**

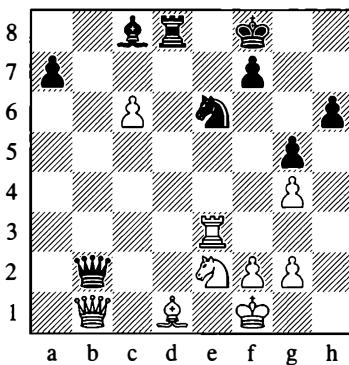
**16. I. Sokolov – Short**

Hoogeveen 2004



White has a number of issues to be aware of. First of all, he is about to lose his pawn on c6, but if you think about this seriously, you will see that the pawn is not so important. Black's king is exposed and White will have counterplay with  $\mathbb{Q}e2-g3-f5$  for example. The real problem is the pin down the d-file. Black is about to play ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$  and put pressure on the d3-bishop as well as X-raying the king on f1. White needs to deal with this pressure urgently. And now we come to the deep point of the exercise.

$26.\mathbb{Q}c2?$  is refuted by  $26...\mathbb{B}xd1\#$   $27.\mathbb{B}xd1 \mathbb{W}b2!!$



The weakness of the back rank is decisive. White can try  $28.\mathbb{W}c2$ , but after  $28...\mathbb{B}d2$  it is clear that things have gone wrong.

$26.\mathbb{W}c2$  gives Black a number of good options. A very strong one is  $26...\mathbb{W}c5!$ , when the pin down the d-file is a terrible problem for White.

Sokolov saw these lines and played the only move:

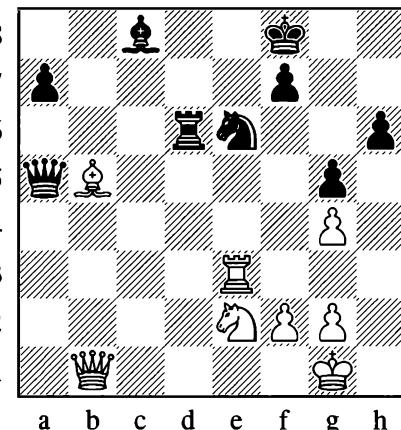
### 26. $\mathbb{Q}g1!!$

Simple prophylaxis, but not easy by any means!

### 26... $\mathbb{B}xc6$

$26...\mathbb{W}a4$   $27.\mathbb{Q}c3 \mathbb{W}xc6$   $28.\mathbb{B}c1$  also gives White sufficient compensation for the pawn; the chances are roughly equal.

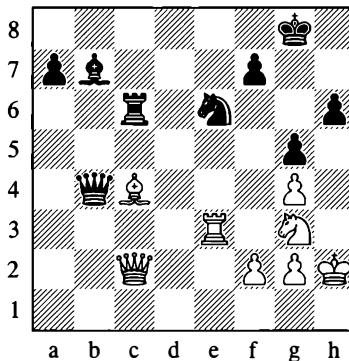
$27.\mathbb{Q}b5 \mathbb{B}xd1\#$   $28.\mathbb{W}xd1 \mathbb{B}d6$   $29.\mathbb{W}b1 \mathbb{W}a5$



$30.\mathbb{Q}g3 \mathbb{B}b6$   $31.\mathbb{W}b2 \mathbb{Q}g8$   $32.\mathbb{W}c2 \mathbb{Q}b7$   
 $33.\mathbb{Q}c4 \mathbb{W}c5?$

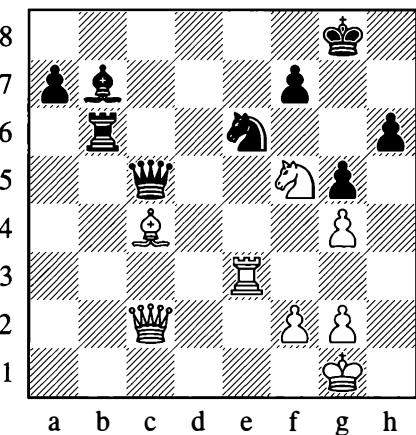
This indicates that the position was more difficult for Black in practice.

The correct move here was  $33...\mathbb{W}b4!$ , with the goal of exchanging queens. After  $34.\mathbb{Q}h2 \mathbb{B}c6$  White needs to execute a tactical operation that will most likely lead to a draw.



$35.\mathbb{B}xe6$   $fxe6$   $36.\mathbb{W}g6\#$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$   $37.\mathbb{W}xh6\#$  and White's compensation will be good enough to draw, but no more.

### 34. $\mathbb{Q}f5!$



**34...♝d5?!**

34...♝b4 was necessary, although White is to be preferred after 35.♛xh6† ♜g7 36.♛f5† ♜f6 37.♝c3±.

**35.♛xh6† ♜f8 36.♝h7 ♜b1†**

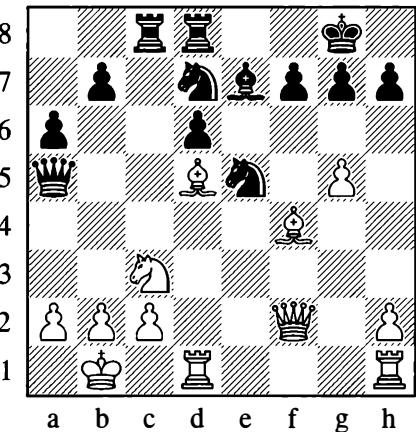
36...♜e8 37.♝xd5 ♜xd5 38.♝xf7 and the black king is caught in the middle.

**37.♝xb1 ♜xc4 38.♝b8†**

1–0

### 17. J. Polgar – Kaidanov

Hilton Head 2010



White's moves might appear to play themselves. First you prevent the exchange

sacrifice on c3 with ♜c3-e4, then you play h4-h5 and create threats to the black king. What in the world could be easier? It is when you are thinking like this that you are on the wrong track. Because your opponent's ideas and possibilities are not included in your thoughts!

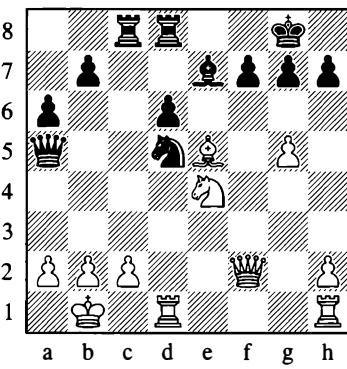
**20.♝xe5!!**

A surprising decision if you look from a non-analytical perspective. White is after all giving up her bishop pair and accepting opposite-coloured bishops.

On the other hand opposite-coloured bishops do favour the attacker in dynamic positions and the endgame is far away. What is much more important is that Black cannot do anything to get rid of the powerful d5-bishop after his forced recapture with the knight. White will be able to develop her attack unhindered, and Black is left paralysed.

In case you noticed that Black is a pawn up, you are right – it is irrelevant.

20.♝e4?! would be met with 20...♜b6 21.♝xe5 ♜xd5, when Black has already achieved a small victory by eliminating the bishop.

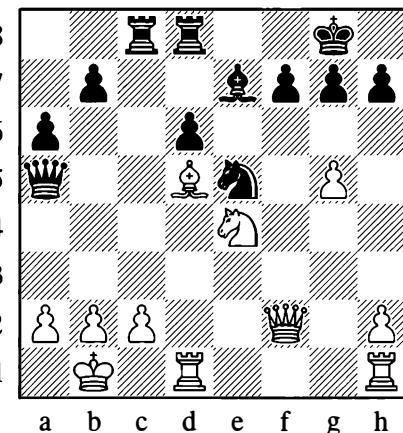


White can still keep an edge with: 22.♝xg7! ♜xg7 (22...♝b4 23.a3 ♜xg7 24.axb4 ♜xb4 25.♝he1 would be very much in White's favour. Keeping the queens on can only be a good thing for her.) 23.♝d4† ♜g8 24.♝xd5 ♜xd5 25.♝xd5 Black is clearly passive and

fighting for a draw in the ending. Then again, this is a gain for him; after all he is still fighting! Whether White's advantage is small or large can be debated; what is obvious is that Black has real hopes of saving the game.

20.♗b3?! ♜xc3 21.bxc3 ♜xc3± is also better for White, but not to a great extent. Black is solid and the white king may be a little unsafe later on.

**20...♝xe5 21.♝e4**



White can now develop her attack unhindered.

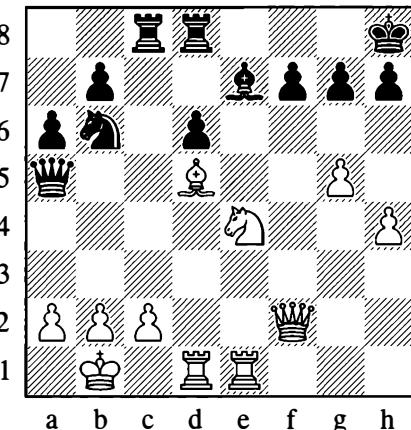
**21...♝h8 22.h4 ♜c4 23.♝he1**

This is a typical Judit Polgar move. Black would like to play ...♜b6, but this is prevented by tactical means.

**23...♝b6**

Black had various moves that were better than this – but still bad. For example 23...♝f8 24.♝f6! and White wins.

The important line to mention is 23...♜b6 24.♝xc4! and White wins a piece.

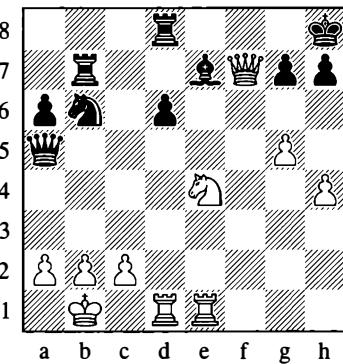


**24.♝xb7!**

White initiates a nice tactical win, though it was not the only way.

**24...♜b8 25.♝xf7 ♜a4**

White's point is revealed after: 25...♜xb7



White has 26.♝xd6!, when several of Black's pieces are hanging.

**26.♝xe7 ♜b6**

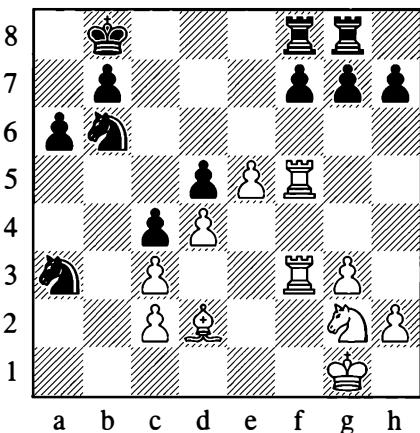
26...♝xb2 27.♝xb2 ♜b6† 28.♝a1 ♜xb7 is convincingly met with 29.♝xd8† ♜xd8 30.♝xd6, and White ends up a piece ahead.

**27.b3 ♜xb7 28.♝e6 ♜b4 29.♝xd6 ♜c3† 30.♝a1 ♜f8 31.♝xb7 ♜xd1 32.♝xd1 ♜xb7 33.♝b2**

**1–0**

## 18. Rowson – Motwani

Aberdeen 2001

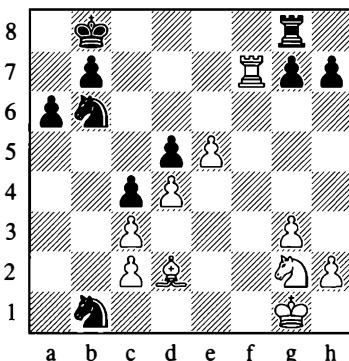


Sometimes the strategic evaluation hangs on seeing an important option at the end of a long line:

### 28.e6!

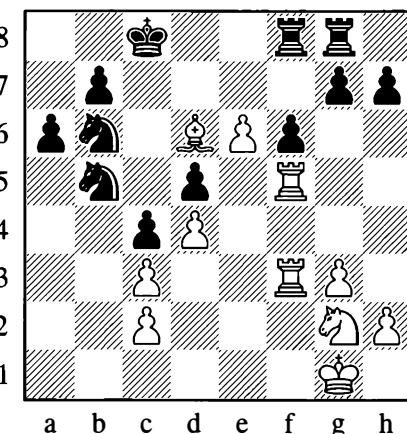
This wins the exchange, but that is by no means the end of the story.

In his notes Jonathan indicated that he believed 28... $\mathbb{E}xf7$  to be stronger. However, after 28... $\mathbb{E}xf7$  29. $\mathbb{E}xf7$   $\mathbb{Q}b1!$  Black has reasonable counterplay, for instance:



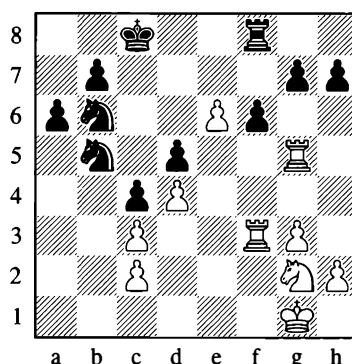
30. $\mathbb{Q}c1$   $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  31. $\mathbb{Q}f2$  a5 32. $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}b5$  33. $\mathbb{Q}e6$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  and the position is entirely unclear. The passed a-pawn is quite strong.

28...f6 29. $\mathbb{Q}f4\#$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  30. $\mathbb{Q}d6$   $\mathbb{Q}b5$



31. $\mathbb{Q}c5?$

Jonathan feared that Black would have serious compensation after 31. $\mathbb{Q}xf8$   $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ , but had he seen one move farther, he would have realized that White can break through the black fortress-like position with 32. $\mathbb{E}g5!$ .



The forced line goes as follows: 32... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  33. $\mathbb{E}xg7$   $\mathbb{Q}e2\#$  34. $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  35.e7  $\mathbb{E}e8$  36. $\mathbb{E}xf6$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  37. $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  38. $\mathbb{E}xh7$  If Black tries to advance his a-pawn, White can play  $\mathbb{Q}g6$  and  $\mathbb{E}f8$  to force a simplification, after which the extra exchange is decisive.

31... $\mathbb{Q}c7$

This is a natural move, but Black had a fine tactical way to solve his problems: 31... $\mathbb{E}e8!$  32. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$   $\mathbb{E}xe6$  33. $\mathbb{Q}c5$  b6 34. $\mathbb{E}xd5$

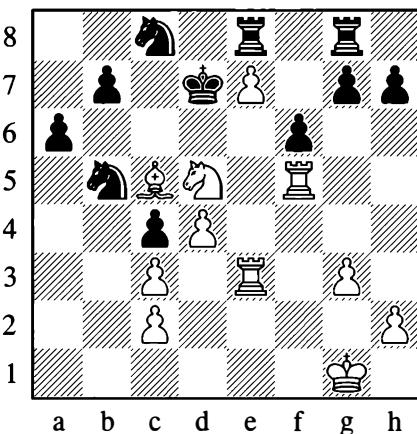
$\text{bx}c5$  35.  $\text{Bxc5}\dagger$   $\text{Qd}7$  36.  $\text{Bxc4}$   $\text{Bge}8$  White's advantage, if there at all, is minimal.

32.  $\text{Qf}4\pm$   $\text{B}e8$  33.  $\text{B}e3$   $\text{Qc}8$  34.  $\text{Qxd}5\dagger$   $\text{Qd}8?$

A horrible end.

After 34...  $\text{Qc}6$  35.  $\text{Bb}4\dagger$   $\text{Qc}7$ , White has nothing special.

35.  $e7\dagger$   $\text{Qd}7$



36.  $\text{Bxf}6!\pm$   $\text{gx}f6$  37.  $\text{Bxf}6\dagger$   $\text{Qc}6$  38.  $\text{Bxg}8$   $\text{Qbd}6$  39.  $\text{Bxd}6$   $\text{Qxd}6$  40.  $\text{Qf}2$   $\text{Qxe}7$

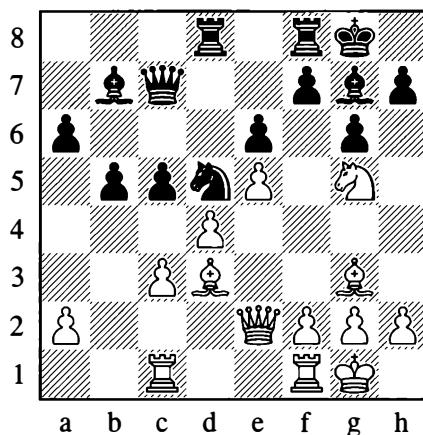
The pawn ending is hopeless. I think 40...  $a5$  was the last try.

41.  $\text{Qxe}7$   $\text{Bxe}7$  42.  $\text{Bxe}7$   $\text{Qxe}7$  43.  $g4$   $\text{Qf}6$  44.  $h4$   $h6$  45.  $\text{Qe}3$   $a5$  46.  $\text{Qd}2$   $b5$  47.  $\text{Qc}1$   $\text{Qe}6$  48.  $\text{Qb}2$   $\text{Qd}5$  49.  $h5$   $\text{Qe}6$  50.  $g5$

1–0

## 19. Lenic – Sutovsky

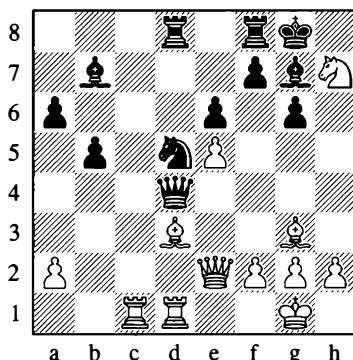
Moscow 2011



18...  $\text{Qh}6!!$

I find this simply an amazing solution to the position. Black takes what looks like a great bishop and exchanges it for a knight. But contrary to what you might think at first, the dark squares are not weak around the black king; instead it is the white dark-squared bishop which is left completely out of play, blocked by its own pawns.

An equally strong solution would be 18...  $\text{cx}d4$  19.  $\text{cx}d4$   $\text{Wb}6$ , but the main point is that after 20.  $\text{fd}1$  you need to accurately analyse: 20...  $\text{Wxd}4$  (20...  $\text{Qh}6!?$ ) 21.  $\text{Qxh}7$



21...  $\text{Qh}6!$  22.  $\text{Qxb}5$   $\text{Qc}3!!$  and the tactics work

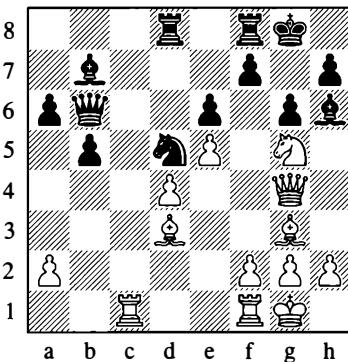
out in Black's favour. All very complicated, and it is worth noting that even a super-strong tactician such as Sutovsky did not go for this solution.

### 19.h4

Not a pleasant move to make, but it is possible that White did not yet fully understand how bad things were becoming.

After 19.♕e4 Black does not need to decide if White would have serious compensation for the exchange, as he can play 19...cxd4! and be in complete control.

Probably the best chance for White to gain counterplay was 19.♗g4?!, though Black remains better. 19...cxd4 20.cxd4 ♗b6 is the most natural way to continue.

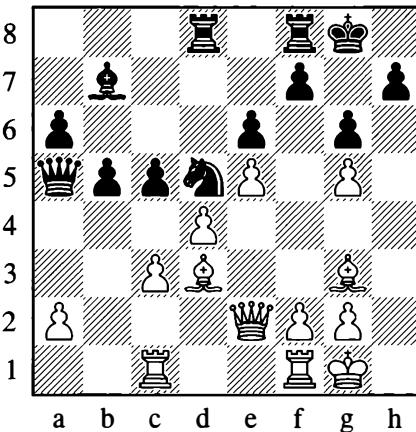


White should now try: 21.♗h4 (After 21.♗fd1 b4 22.♗d2 ♜c3 the d4-pawn is going to fall anyway, but with additional positional consequences for White.) 21...♝xg5 22.♗xg5 ♘xd4 23.♗cd1 White is clearly worse, but his dark-square control gives him some practical compensation.

### 19...♝xg5

This seems a bit rushed. It may have been better to keep his options open, although the difference is probably not too great.

### 20.hxg5 ♘a5



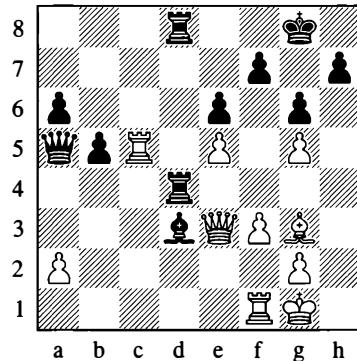
### 21.♗e4

Desperation – White is hoping that the opposite-coloured bishops will give him defensive chances.

After 21.♗b2 cxd4 22.cxd4 ♘b4 23.♗b1 ♘xb2 24.♗xb2 ♜e7 White cannot protect the d4-pawn. But he still has a way to fight for a draw with 25.♗c1!, and after 25...♝xd4 he can play 26.♗xb5! axb5 27.♗c7 ♘d1† 28.♗h2 ♘xg2 29.♗xg2 ♜d5 30.♗a7 followed by exchanging the queenside pawns. White is struggling big time, of course, but some technical challenges remain for Black.

### 21...♝xc3 22.♗xc3 ♜xe4 23.♗xc5 ♘xd4 24.♗d1?

A blunder. White should have tried: 24.f3 ♘d3 25.♗e3 ♘fd8



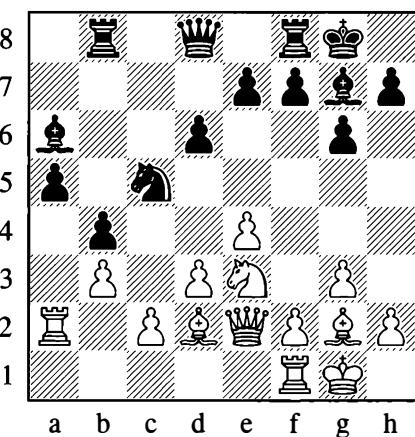
26.  $\mathbb{E}a1 \mathbb{Q}c4$  Black is still winning, but it would probably take quite a while to carry home the full point.

24...  $\mathbb{E}xd1\#$  25.  $\mathbb{W}xd1$   $\mathbb{W}xa2$  26.  $\mathbb{W}d7$  b4  
27.  $\mathbb{Q}h2 \mathbb{Q}g7$  28.  $\mathbb{W}d4$  b3

0–1

## 20. Adams – Anand

Dortmund 1998



Black's plan of playing ...a4 and ...b3 is not too difficult to see, but it is hard to defend against.

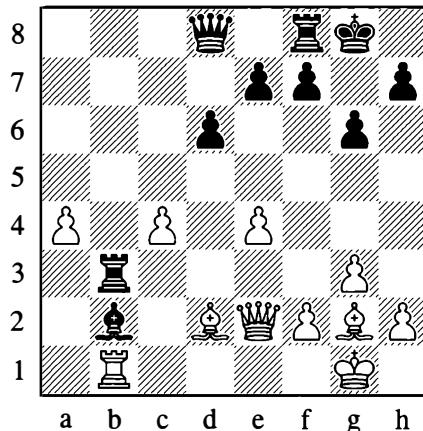
18.  $\mathbb{Q}c4?!$  a4! 19.  $\mathbb{B}xa4$

Otherwise ...a3 will give Black a large advantage. 19.  $\mathbb{B}b1$   $\mathbb{Q}xc4$  20.  $\mathbb{D}xc4$  a3 is the computer's suggestion, but it does not look like a lot of fun for White.

19...  $b3$  20.  $\mathbb{E}a3$   $\mathbb{Q}xc4$  21.  $\mathbb{D}xc4$   $\mathbb{Q}b2$

21...  $\mathbb{B}xc2$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{B}b2$  23.  $\mathbb{E}c1$  would also be uncomfortable for White, but Black prefers to gain a material advantage.

22.  $\mathbb{E}xb3$   $\mathbb{Q}xb3$  23.  $\mathbb{C}xb3$   $\mathbb{E}xb3$  24.  $\mathbb{E}b1$



24...  $\mathbb{W}c7??$

A thoroughly disgusting blunder. 24...  $\mathbb{E}b8$  25.  $a5$   $\mathbb{W}c7\#$  was correct.

25.  $\mathbb{Q}c1$   $\mathbb{Q}xc1$  26.  $\mathbb{E}xb3\#$

White won on move 57, even though the ending a pawn down should probably be defendable.

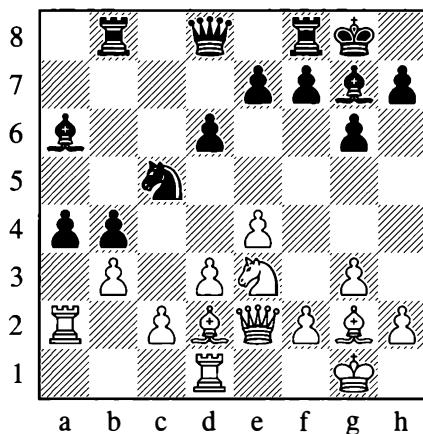
The correct move was:

18.  $\mathbb{E}d1!!$

The point is that although White cannot effectively prevent Black's plan, he is able to position himself in the best possible way to deal with the aftermath.

18... a4

There are other moves, but unless Black plays this advance, White is basically okay.



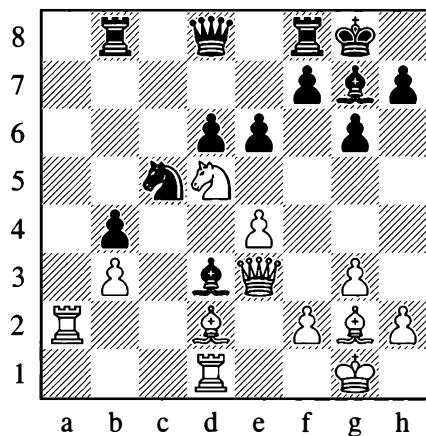
**19.  $\mathbb{Q}d5!$** 

Attacking the b4-pawn.

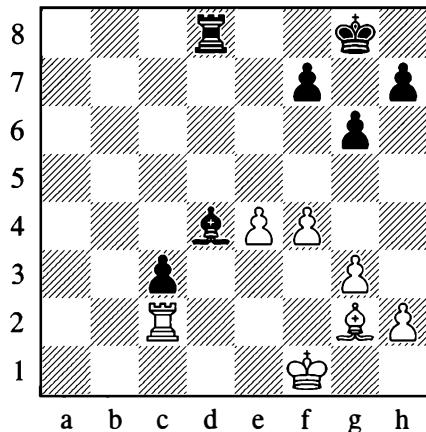
19.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $e6\mathbb{F}$  would dominate the white pieces and prepare ...a3 with an edge.

**19... $\mathbb{a}xb3$  20. $\mathbb{c}xb3$   $\mathbb{Q}xd3$  21.  $\mathbb{W}e3$** 

White has enough counterplay here. The computer line is typically sharp and continues:

**21... $e6!$** 

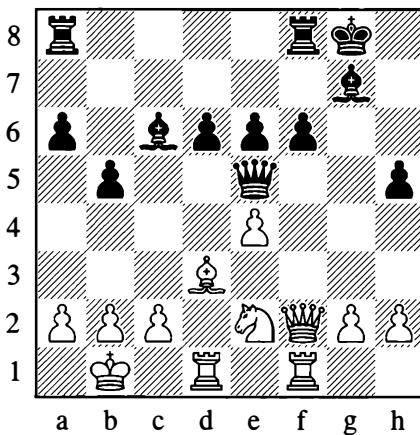
**22.  $\mathbb{Q}xb4!$   $exd5$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}xc5$   $dxc5$  24.  $\mathbb{W}xd3$   $c4$  25.  $\mathbb{b}xc4$   $dxc4$  26.  $\mathbb{W}xd8$   $\mathbb{E}fxd8$  27.  $\mathbb{E}xd8\mathbb{t}$   $\mathbb{E}xd8$  28.  $f4$   $c3$  29.  $\mathbb{E}c2$   $\mathbb{Q}d4\mathbb{t}$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$**



Black will not win this ending.

**21. Chr. Pedersen – Kristiansen**

Aarhus 2012

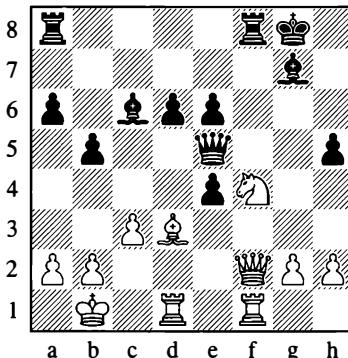


White is struggling with two problems at the same time: the e4-pawn is hanging, and there is a weakness on b2 and thus a threat of ...f5. In the game White failed find a good way to deal with this.

**20.  $\mathbb{W}f4?$** 

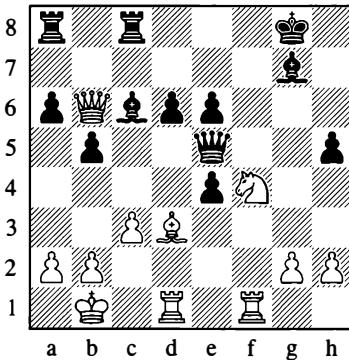
It took me a while to understand this position, which underlines just how difficult this exercise is!

20.  $\mathbb{Q}f4?!$  may seem natural, but then 20... $f5$  21.  $c3$   $fxe4$  looks quite lost for White.



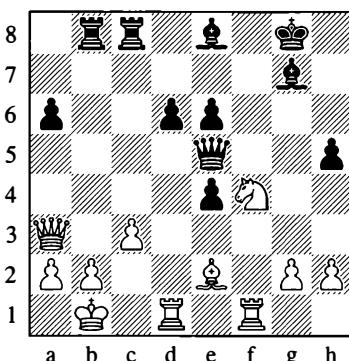
However, he can actually resist a little with 22.  $\mathbb{W}b6$ , creating some counterplay.

But short term tactics cannot solve the great structural problems in White's position. Black is better with simple play, either exchanging the bishops or the more human (that is, less chaotic) 22... $\mathbb{E}fc8!?$ .



White has two sensible tries here:

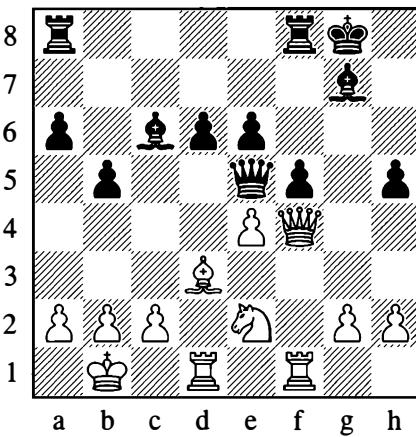
- a) 23. $\mathbb{Q}e2$  b4! 24. $\mathbb{W}xb4$   $\mathbb{E}ab8$  gives Black a devastating attack. It is easy to imagine that a game between two humans would end with: 25. $\mathbb{W}a3$   $\mathbb{Q}e8!?$  (25...e3 might be stronger)



26. $\mathbb{Q}a1? \mathbb{E}xc3!$  27. $\mathbb{W}xc3$   $\mathbb{W}xc3$  28.bxc3  $\mathbb{Q}xc3\#$

- b) 23. $\mathbb{Q}c2$  d5 This is the simplest. (White has some tricks after 23...b4! 24. $\mathbb{W}e3!$  with  $\mathbb{Q}g6-e7$  ideas.) 24. $\mathbb{W}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}e8\#$  The extra pawn and the attacking chances are good reasons for favouring Black.

**20...f5!**



The double threat of mate and simply taking on e4 causes White's position to collapse.

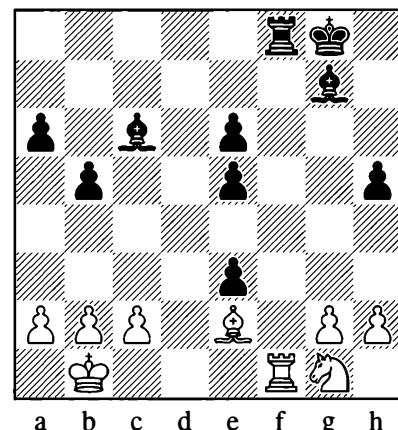
**21. $\mathbb{W}xe5$  dx $e$ 5 22. $\mathbb{Q}g1$**

22.exf5 e4 is clearly also a disaster.

**22...fxe4 23. $\mathbb{Q}e2$  e3**

Black has excellent winning chances. 23...h4 was another strong option.

**24. $\mathbb{E}xf8\#$   $\mathbb{E}xf8$  25. $\mathbb{E}f1$**



**25... $\mathbb{E}f2?!$**

Tempting, but not the most accurate.

Simply taking the g-pawn was strong, but even better was 25... $\mathbb{E}f5!$  and Black is just winning,

based on 26.g3  $\mathbb{E}f2$  27. $\mathbb{E}xf2$  exf2 28. $\mathbb{Q}h3$   $\mathbb{Q}f3$  29. $\mathbb{Q}f1$  e4 30. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$  e3 31. $\mathbb{Q}d3$  e2 32. $\mathbb{Q}h3$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$ , and all the technical difficulties have been taken care of.

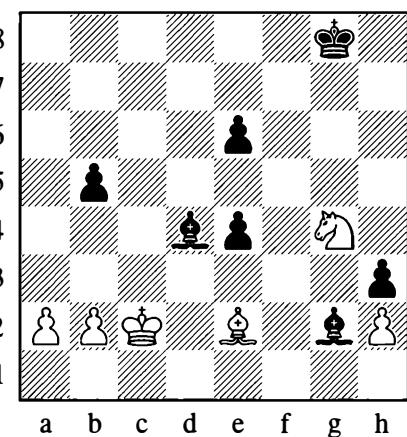
**26. $\mathbb{E}xf2$  exf2 27. $\mathbb{Q}h3$   $\mathbb{Q}xg2$  28. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$  h4**

Stronger was 28...e4! 29. $\mathbb{Q}xh5$   $\mathbb{Q}d4$  30. $\mathbb{Q}g4$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$ .

**29.c4 e4 30.cxb5  $\mathbb{Q}d4$  31. $\mathbb{Q}g4$  axb5 32. $\mathbb{Q}c2$**

32. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$   $\mathbb{Q}f3$  33.h3  $\mathbb{Q}g2$  and Black wins.

**32...h3**



**33.b4**

33. $\mathbb{Q}d2$  b4 34.a3 was the last chance, even though Black is close to winning after 34... $\mathbb{Q}xb2$  35.axb4  $\mathbb{Q}d4$ , when the king can march up the board without hindrance.

**33... $\mathbb{Q}g7$  34. $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}B$**

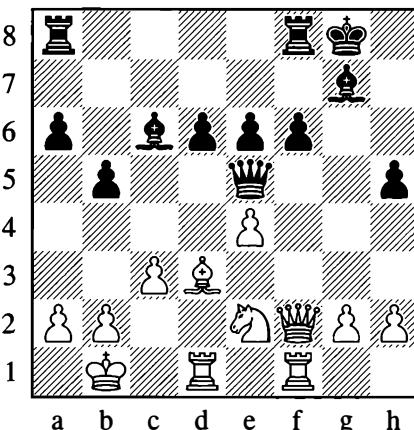
White cannot improve his position, which makes it just lost.

**35. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$  exf3 36. $\mathbb{Q}d3$  e5 37. $\mathbb{Q}e4$  f2 38. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$   $\mathbb{Q}xf2$  39. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}g3\#$  40. $\mathbb{Q}f5$   $\mathbb{Q}xh2$**

**0–1**

The correct move was:

**20.c3!**



Black can try several things here, but the strongest must be to compete for the long diagonal.

**20...b4!**

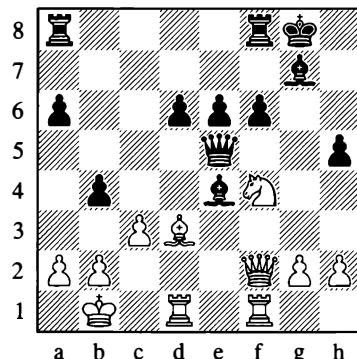
20... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  21. $\mathbb{Q}f4$  is good for White. Then 21... $\mathbb{Q}xd3\#$  22. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$   $\mathbb{W}g5$  23. $\mathbb{Q}f4\pm$  would be disastrous for Black; his pawns are way too weak. And after 21...f5 22. $\mathbb{Q}xh5\pm$  White has easier play and the safer king.

**21. $\mathbb{Q}f4!$   $\mathbb{E}fe8!$**

This seems to be the best move. The alternatives look poor.

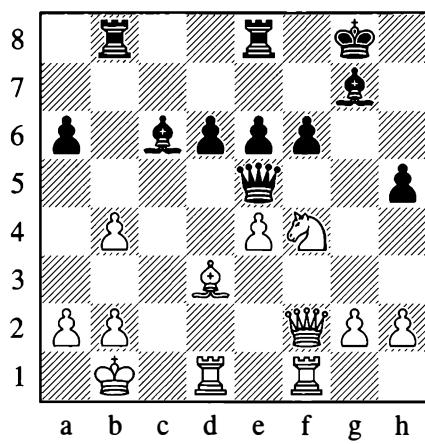
21...bxc3? 22. $\mathbb{Q}g6$  and White wins the c6-bishop with a fork.

21... $\mathbb{Q}xe4?$ ! is also too greedy.



22.  $\mathbb{W}c2!$   $\mathbb{Q}xd3$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}xd3$   $\mathbb{W}xh2$  24.  $cxb4\pm$   
 White has fantastic compensation on the light squares. It is not easy for Black to find a good way to meet the threats of  $\mathbb{E}h1$  and  $\mathbb{Q}f4$ .

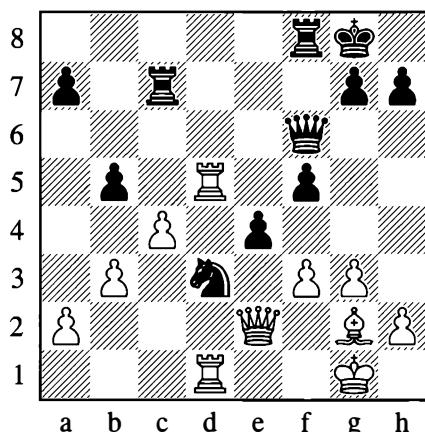
## 22. $cxb4$ $\mathbb{E}ab8$



The game is very sharp with chances for both sides. It is not easy to come to definite conclusions, even after considerable analysis.

## 22. Cheparinov – Halkias

Helsingor 2012

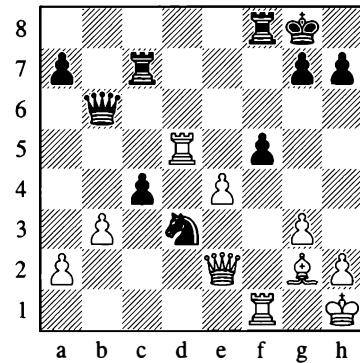


The main problem with the black position is that the knight on d3 is not stable. The way the game goes, with lots of pawns being

swept away, Black is worse, but not critically so. Instead White could have exploited the knight's predicament to increase Black's problems.

## 27. $fxe4$ ?

27.  $\mathbb{E}f1!!$  would have brilliantly taken advantage of the suspect black pawn structure:  
 27...  $bxc4$  28.  $fxe4$   $\mathbb{W}b6\pm$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}h1\pm$

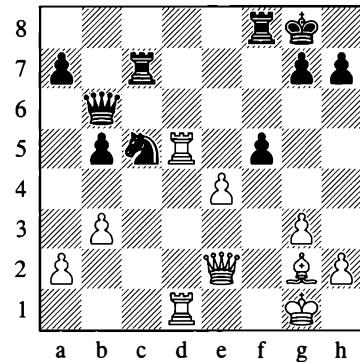


It is obvious that Black is in serious trouble; the stability of his knight is going, while his pawn structure has already gone.

## 27... $bxc4$ ?

27...  $fxe4$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $bxc4$  29.  $bxc4$   $\mathbb{W}b6\pm$   
 would have transposed to the game without giving White a second chance to find the above solution.

27...  $\mathbb{W}b6\pm$ ? does not work on account of:  
 28.  $c5!$   $\mathbb{Q}xc5$  (28...  $\mathbb{E}xc5$  29.  $\mathbb{E}5xd3$ )

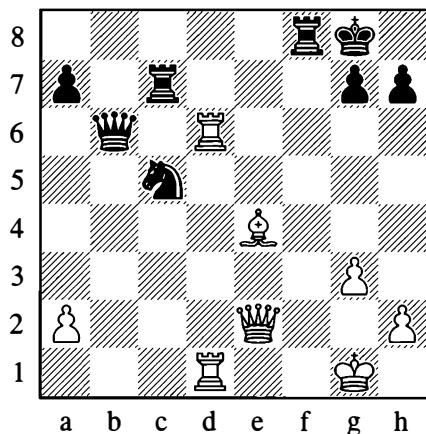


29.  $\mathbb{E}d6!$  and White will next take on f5 with a winning position.

## 28.bxc4?

28.  $\mathbb{E}f1! \pm$  was still great, of course.

28...fxe4 29.  $\mathbb{E}xe4$   $\mathbb{W}b6\uparrow$  30. c5  $\mathbb{Q}xc5$  31.  $\mathbb{E}d6$

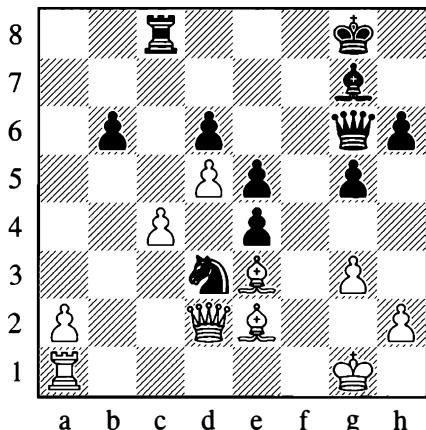


Now Stelios played 31...  $\mathbb{W}b8?!$ , when we have reached the position given on page 43 of *Grandmaster Preparation – Positional Play*.

Instead he should have played the more active 31...  $\mathbb{W}b4! \pm$ , when he would have to endure a bit of pressure, but would not suffer defeat unless he committed mistakes.

## 23. Gelfand – Sutovsky

Pamplona 2004

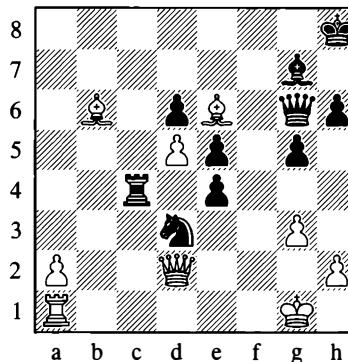


White realized that his chances were connected with pushing the a-pawn forward, but he did not fully appreciate Black's chances of creating counterplay, and thus played his hand in the wrong order.

## 26. $\mathbb{E}xb6?$

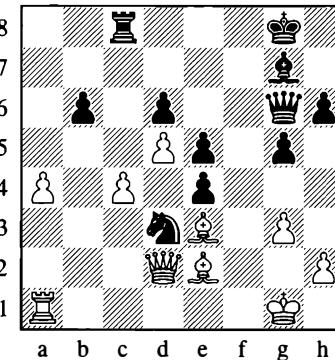
This fails to achieve an advantage for quite spectacular reasons, as we shall see below.

26.  $\mathbb{E}g4?$  would indicate a misvaluation of the position. White does not have serious attacking chances on the kingside; the black king will be safe on h8. 26...  $\mathbb{E}xc4$  27.  $\mathbb{E}e6\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  28.  $\mathbb{E}xb6$  (28.  $\mathbb{E}f1?$   $\mathbb{Q}f4!\uparrow$  would be the start of a disaster)



28...  $\mathbb{W}e8!$  The outcome of the game is by no means clear. If Black is permitted, he may well give up the front e-pawn and then play ...e5-e4 to activate his bishop.

The correct solution was 26.a4!! with the aim of transposing into the game if Black takes on c4.



If Black responds with 26... $\mathbb{E}b8$ , then White plays 27. $\mathbb{E}b1\pm$  in order to take with the rook on b6.

### 26... $\mathbb{E}xc4?$

Black misses the chance to gain counterplay.

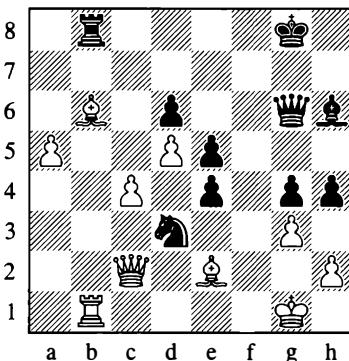
### 26... $\mathbb{E}b8!$

This was the correct move, with the intention of ... $\mathbb{E}b2$  if the bishop moves.

### 27. $\mathbb{E}b1$

Now there will always be exchange sacrifices on b6 in the air. The main line, showing how Black has enough time to create counterplay, goes like this:

27...g4 28.a4 h5 29.a5  $\mathbb{E}h6$  30. $\mathbb{W}c2$  h4



Black has decent counterplay. For example:  
31. $\mathbb{E}f1$  hxg3 32.hxg3  $\mathbb{E}xb6$

32... $\mathbb{W}h5$  may be slightly more annoying for White, but the end result will still be a draw.  
33.axb6  $\mathbb{E}e3\#$  34. $\mathbb{E}g2$   $\mathbb{W}h5$  35. $\mathbb{E}xg4$

35. $\mathbb{E}h1?$   $\mathbb{E}e1\#!$

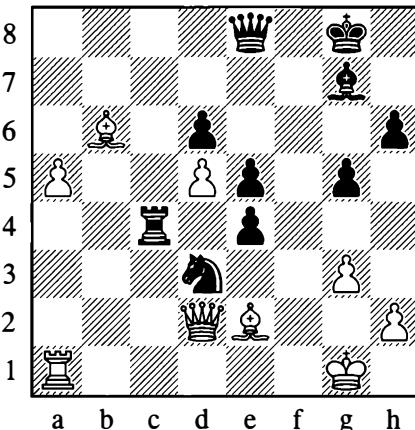
35... $\mathbb{W}xg4$  36.b7  $\mathbb{E}e1\#$  37. $\mathbb{E}xe1$   $\mathbb{W}f3\#$

With perpetual check.

### 27.a4 $\pm$

The a-pawn is now a great asset.

27... $\mathbb{W}e8$  28.a5



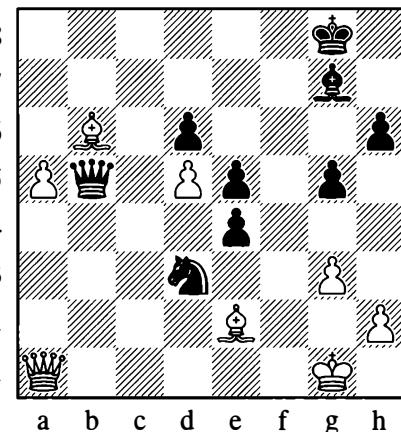
### 28... $\mathbb{E}a4?$

28... $\mathbb{W}b5!$  was the only move to restrain the a-pawn. White should respond with 29. $\mathbb{E}e3!$   $\mathbb{E}a4$  30. $\mathbb{W}c3\pm$ , when he would have good chances to squeeze Black backwards.

### 29. $\mathbb{W}d1!$ $\mathbb{E}xa1$

29... $\mathbb{E}b2$  also loses after 30. $\mathbb{W}f1$   $\mathbb{W}b8$  31. $\mathbb{W}b1$ , and the a-pawn will soon be going places.

### 30. $\mathbb{W}xa1$ $\mathbb{W}b5$



31. $\mathbb{E}e3$   $\mathbb{W}b3$  32. $\mathbb{E}d1$   $\mathbb{W}b4$  33. $\mathbb{E}g4$   $\mathbb{E}c5$   
34.a6  $\mathbb{E}xa6$  35. $\mathbb{W}xa6$   $\mathbb{E}e1\#$  36. $\mathbb{E}g2$   $\mathbb{W}xe3$   
37. $\mathbb{E}e6\#$   $\mathbb{E}h7$  38. $\mathbb{E}f5\#$   $\mathbb{E}g8$  39. $\mathbb{W}c8\#$   
1-0

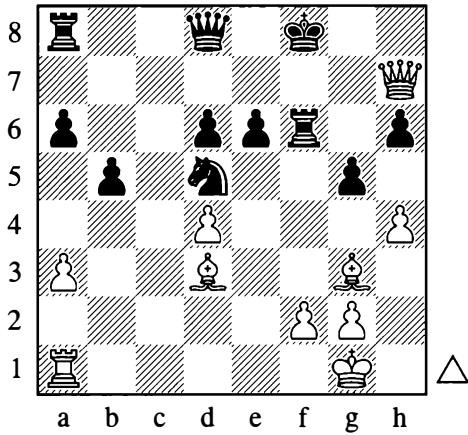
# Chapter 4

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## Dynamics

**Richard Rapport – Mikhail Antipov**

Athens (variation) 2012



*White to play*

White has just sacrificed an exchange. The black king is vulnerable and the black pieces are uncoordinated. How would you continue?

Many players have graves deficiencies in their understanding of chess. For some it is a lack of appreciation of long-term factors; they weaken their pawn structure carelessly and are ground down by strong technicians again and again. Hopefully these players have found help in the previous chapters of this book, as well as in *Grandmaster Preparation – Positional Play*.

Then there are those who are poor at handling dynamics. Usually this is because they don't have a good feel for them, something which is probably harder to develop than a good feel for statics.

The two commonest flaws I see in technically-inclined players when they handle dynamics are either a full-tilt-with-no-steering approach, where any hurdle on the way becomes a gravestone; or a lack of momentum.

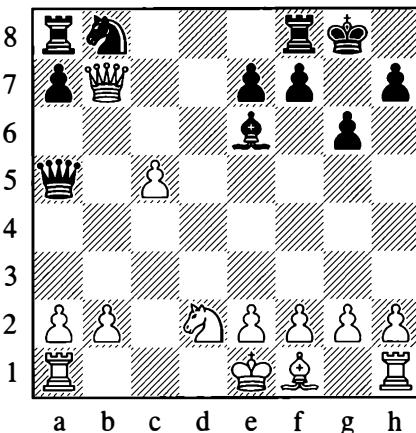
We could consider handling dynamics as being a bit like driving Formula One. To win you need to maintain the highest possible speed, but you also need to slow down for the bends.

In our first example, we shall see a strong grandmaster fail to get out of the pit lane. We should note that this is a rapid game and that both players have to make more intuitive than strategic decisions. Therefore we might be justified in questioning Belov's feeling for momentum, even though it is always dubious to come to general conclusions based on one example!

### Mustafa Yilmaz – Vladimir Belov

Moscow (rapid) 2013

1.d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.c4 g6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$  d5 4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$   
 5. $\mathbb{Q}g5$  c5 6.dxc5  $\mathbb{W}a5$  7.cxd5  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  8. $\mathbb{W}xd5$   
 $\mathbb{Q}xc3\#$  9. $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  10. $\mathbb{W}xb7$   $\mathbb{Q}xd2\#$  11. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$   
 0–0



I do not know all the ins and outs of this variation by any means, but it is safe to say that neither did White. Black was probably well prepared for the critical 12.b4  $\mathbb{W}a4$  13.e3  $\mathbb{Q}d7$  14.a3  $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ , where you will need to study the position deeply to come to any clear conclusions.

Obviously White cannot just win a rook here. After 12. $\mathbb{W}xa8$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  there is a double threat of mate in one and ... $\mathbb{Q}d5$  trapping the queen. So White is forced to play 13.b4  $\mathbb{W}xb4$  14. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ , when Black in turn has to force a draw with 14... $\mathbb{Q}xd2$  15. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$   $\mathbb{W}b1\#$  16. $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{W}b4\#$  17. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ , as first seen in Lipka – Dudas, Czechoslovakia 1990.

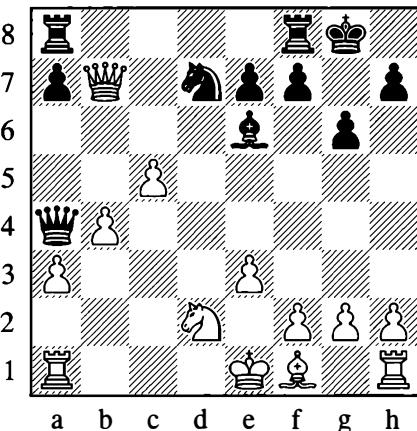
### 12.a3?!N

Not a terrifying novelty, and Black should have felt quite happy that his opponent played this, but instead of having a deep think and finding an active continuation, Belov opted to rely on a frail memory.

### 12... $\mathbb{Q}d7\#?$

Faced with a novel situation, Black decides to transpose into the standard lines, which he then cannot remember!

### 13.b4 $\mathbb{W}a4$ 14.e3

**14...a6??**

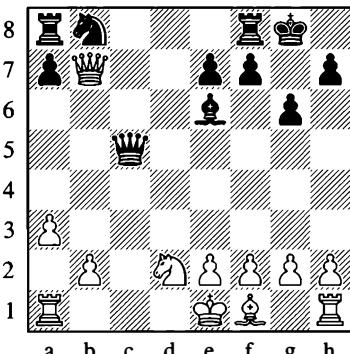
A horrible move. Black decided to rely on dynamics, but then plays as if he has all the time in the world. But the world stops for no one; White now finishes his development.

14... $\mathbb{E}f8$  with a return to the murky main line was necessary.

**15. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{E}fb8$  16. $\mathbb{W}c7\pm$** 

And so on. White won the game in 82 moves.

However, at move 12 Black had two excellent ways to use his dynamic potential to secure even chances:

**a) 12... $\mathbb{W}xc5!$** **13. $\mathbb{Q}e4!$** 

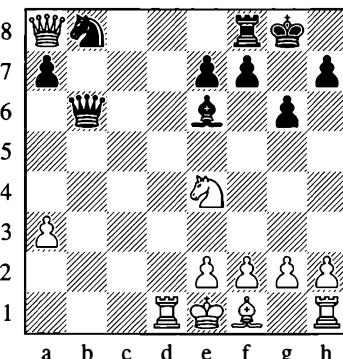
13. $\mathbb{W}xa8?$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  is a disaster for White. Of course he could give up his queen, but Black would penetrate to c2 all the same. After 14. $\mathbb{W}b7$   $\mathbb{Q}d4$  White is in serious trouble. Best is 15.e3!, when he can fight for equality. He would soon see himself rolled over after something like 15. $\mathbb{E}b1?$   $\mathbb{E}d8$  16.e3  $\mathbb{Q}c2\#$  17. $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{W}d6!$  and mate is near.

**13... $\mathbb{W}c2!$ ?**

13... $\mathbb{W}a5\#$  14. $\mathbb{W}b4$  is instant equality.

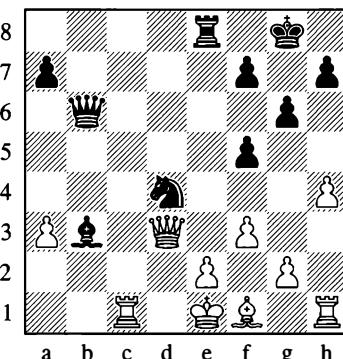
**14. $\mathbb{W}xa8$   $\mathbb{W}xb2$  15. $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{W}b6!?$** 

15... $\mathbb{Q}b3$  16. $\mathbb{W}b7$   $\mathbb{W}c2$  17. $\mathbb{E}a1$   $\mathbb{W}b2$  again leads to an instant draw.

**16. $\mathbb{Q}f6\#$ !**

The queen has to come home at some point; and better sooner than not at all!

16...exf6 17. $\mathbb{W}e4$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  18.f3  $\mathbb{E}e8$  19.h4 f5 20. $\mathbb{W}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}b3$  21. $\mathbb{E}c1$   $\mathbb{Q}d4$

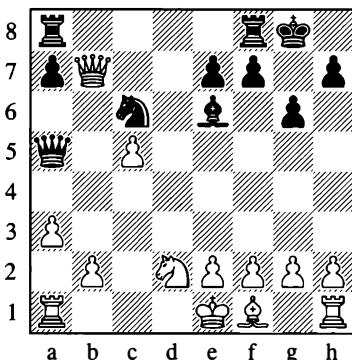


Black has obvious compensation for the exchange, but what will happen beyond this is impossible to predict.

b) Even funkier is:

12... $\mathbb{Q}c6!!$

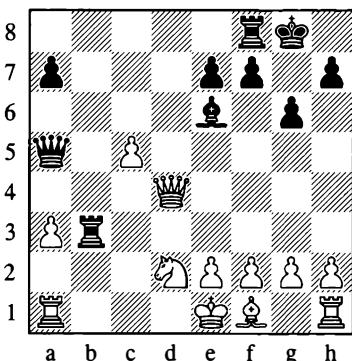
This also works out!



13. $\mathbb{W}xc6$   $\mathbb{B}ab8$  14. $\mathbb{W}e4$ !

14. $\mathbb{B}b1!!$  would allow Black to build up the pressure, starting with: 14... $\mathbb{B}b3!$  15. $\mathbb{W}e4$   $\mathbb{Q}f5$  16. $\mathbb{W}d5$   $\mathbb{B}d8$  17. $\mathbb{W}xd8\#$   $\mathbb{W}xd8$  18.e4  $\mathbb{Q}e6$  19. $\mathbb{Q}xb3$   $\mathbb{Q}xb3$  20. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{W}a5\#$  21. $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{W}xc5\#$  and the ending is unpleasant for White.

14... $\mathbb{B}xb2$  15. $\mathbb{W}d4$   $\mathbb{B}b3$



16.e3  $\mathbb{B}d8$  17. $\mathbb{W}xd8\#$   $\mathbb{W}xd8$  18. $\mathbb{Q}xb3$   $\mathbb{Q}xb3$

19.f3  $\mathbb{W}a5\#$  20. $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{W}xc5$  21. $\mathbb{Q}e2$

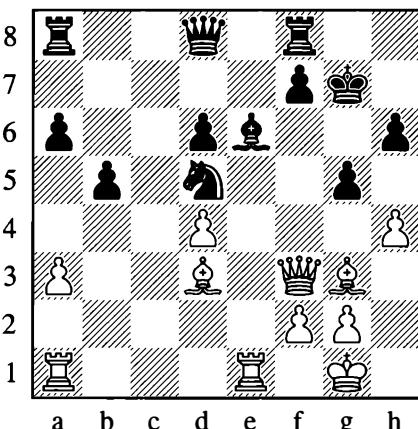
The ending seems about equal to me; the black bishop is very useful.

The ability to turn when we get to a bend is quite difficult to master; even great attackers like Kasparov, Tal and Alekhine have on occasion failed to handle this perfectly. The

following example illustrates probably the most common type of mistake.

### Richard Rapport – Mikhail Antipov

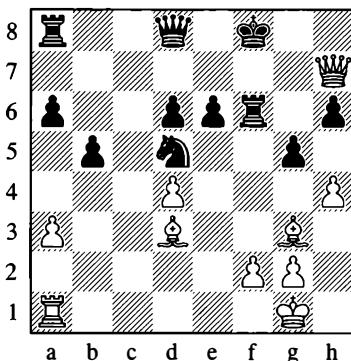
Athens 2012



Rapport played the decent 24. $\mathbb{H}xg5!!$   $\mathbb{H}xg5$  25. $\mathbb{B}ac1\pm$  and won the game by simple means by move 35. Clearly there is little to criticize with this approach, but there is an interesting discussion that relates to our topic.

The principled continuation was of course demolishing the defence of the light squares around the black king:

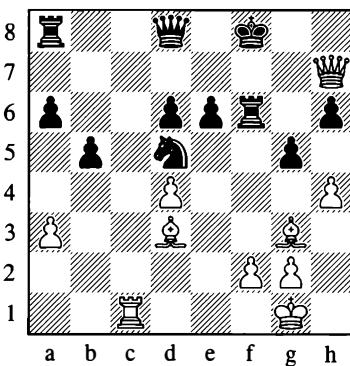
24. $\mathbb{B}xe6$   $\mathbb{F}xe6$  25. $\mathbb{W}e4$   $\mathbb{B}f6$  26. $\mathbb{W}h7\#$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$



Rapport of course saw this. There could be two reasons for not playing this:

- a) Not wanting to take any risks (which does not sound like Rapport at all).
- b) He did not stop to look at the position at the end of the line. Had he done so, he would have seen that the weakness is now on d6 and that White's two worst-placed pieces are the a1-rook and the g3-bishop. For this reason White should play:

27... $\mathbb{E}c1!!$



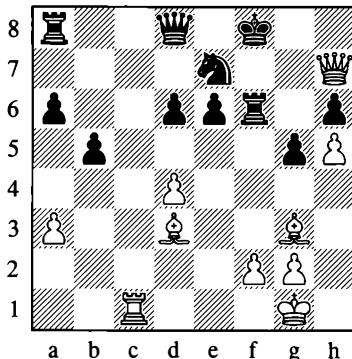
Even very strong grandmasters can forget about including all of their pieces in the game once the bombs start going off. Here the rook goes from being useless to threatening to attack the hugely important weakness on d6, or to arrive on the 8th rank with deadly effect.

27... $\mathbb{E}g6$  would be poor, even if it looks like it creates a lot of threats. Black can take control over the c-file and re-enter the game: 27... $\mathbb{W}c7$ ! White can now take the rook on a8, but the bishop on g6 will go. Probably it would be stronger to play 28... $\mathbb{W}h8\#$   $\mathbb{E}e7$  29... $\mathbb{W}g7\#$   $\mathbb{E}d8$  30... $\mathbb{W}xh6$   $\mathbb{W}e7\pm$ , but Black has a real chance to fend off his opponent's attack.

27... $\mathbb{E}e7$

Forced. Black loses quickly after 27... $\mathbb{E}b8$  28... $\mathbb{E}c6$   $\mathbb{E}b6$  29... $\mathbb{E}c8!$ , or 27... $\mathbb{E}f7$  28... $\mathbb{W}xh6\#$   $\mathbb{E}e7$  29... $\mathbb{E}e1$  and the black position crumbles.

28.h5!!



Another quiet move. White pays no attention to the psychological pressure that sacrificing the exchange may have put him under. The pawn goes from being an extra to being a supporting actor, preparing the bishop's ascent to stardom on the g6-square.

I think that if this had happened in the game, Black would have squirmed like a worm on a hook until eventually he would have collapsed or maybe just stopped the clock, admitting the futility of going on.

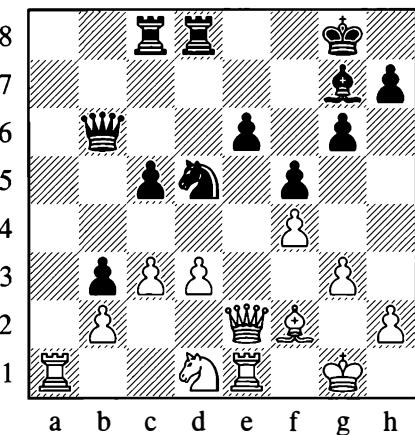
The last four World Champions, Kasparov, Kramnik, Topalov and Anand have all had a near-perfect feel for dynamics. You can see how this was an advantage in the crucial moments of their matches against Karpov, Leko and Gelfand, whose primary strengths are the technical aspects of the game. However I do not think this observation should be overgeneralized, as a counterexample might soon be found if Magnus Carlsen takes the World Championship on his way to 2900...

There are other players who have a great understanding of dynamics, but are less fabulous technically. An obvious example is Hikaru Nakamura, who can mate just about anybody, but fails to convert technically winning positions at an alarming rate. Another example is the former Russian and European Champion Nepomniachtchi. In the next example we shall see how he gets a lot out of

his dynamic potential at several points during the game, but fails to play the quiet moves required.

### Vadim Zvjaginsev – Ivan Nepomniachtchi

Moscow 2010



White is threatening the e6-pawn and preparing to play  $\mathbb{Q}d1-e3-c4$  with even chances. The knight would of course be exchanged, but this is certainly not a tragedy. For this reason Nepomniachtchi decided to let the weakness go and focus on the positives in his position.

#### 26... $\mathbb{B}a8!!$

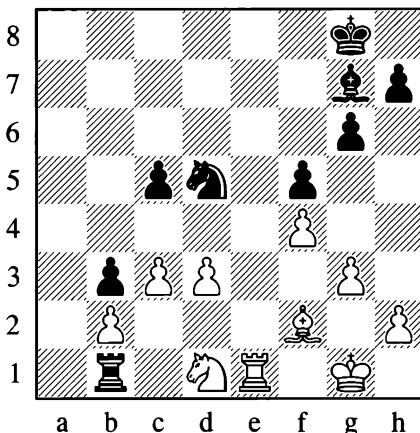
Although this does not change the objective evaluation of the position, it is clear that playing with the initiative was a good idea from a practical perspective.

#### 27. $\mathbb{B}xa8!$

Sometimes accepting material and going into the trenches is the only way to meet such a bold advance. 27. $\mathbb{B}b1 \mathbb{Q}f7$  and 27. $\mathbb{Q}e3 \mathbb{Q}xe3$  28. $\mathbb{W}xe3 \mathbb{B}a2$  are not seriously problematic for White, they are just somewhat unpleasant situations.

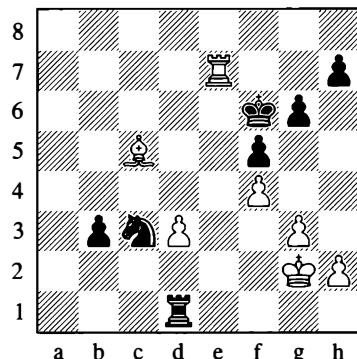
27... $\mathbb{B}xa8$  28. $\mathbb{W}xe6\#$   $\mathbb{W}xe6$  29. $\mathbb{B}xe6 \mathbb{B}a1$

#### 30. $\mathbb{B}e1 \mathbb{B}b1$



#### 31. $\mathbb{Q}f1?$

This is the beginning of White's problems. He had an opportunity to force a draw with 31. $\mathbb{Q}xc5!$ , based on: 31... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  32.bxc3  $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  33. $\mathbb{Q}g2!$   $\mathbb{B}xd1$  (33... $\mathbb{Q}xd1$  34. $\mathbb{Q}d4!$  would see the bishop dominate the knight; Black cannot improve his position at all.) 34. $\mathbb{B}e8\#$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  35. $\mathbb{B}e7\#$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$



36. $\mathbb{B}b7$  and the game is immediately drawn.

#### 31... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}e2 \mathbb{Q}b6!$ 33.d4 c4 34.d5!

White needs to bring his bishop into the game. The draw may still be attainable.

#### 34... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}d4 \mathbb{Q}g7!$

The bishop is the only good white piece and thus should be eliminated.

**36.♕xg7**

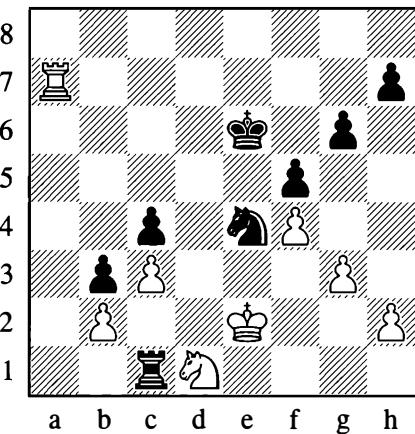
36.♕c5? ♜f6! would be too dangerous for White.

**36...♗xg7 37.♔d2 ♗f7**

37...♝b6 38.♝e7† ♗h6 would allow White to force an immediate draw with 39.♝a7!, when Black cannot make use of his rook at all.

**38.♝e5 ♜f6 39.♝a5 ♜e4† 40.♔e2 ♜c1**

40...h5!! was perhaps better, giving Black some advantage.

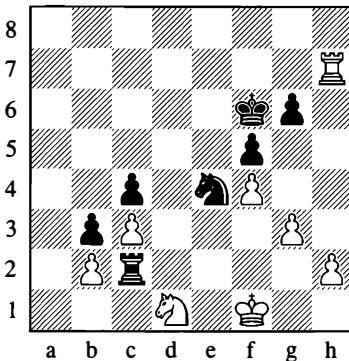
**41.♝a7† ♗e6****42.♝xh7?**

I assume that Zvjaginsev chose not to play 42.♝e3! ♜xc3† 43.♔d2 ♜a2 44.♝c7 on account of 44...♝d6, but he does not have to take on c4, when ...♝h1! would be a pain, but can play 45.♝c8! ♜d7 46.♝c5, when he is ready to take on c4 with the knight, defending b2. I think a draw is getting closer here.

**42...♝c2† 43.♔f1 ♜f6??**

An odd blunder, which can possibly be described as a case of over-activity. The need to do something is too great and Black fails to appreciate the value of small improvements.

43...♝f6! would have placed White in zugzwang.



If White plays 44.♝h8, then 44...♝g7 would give him an unpleasant dilemma. And after 44.♔e1 ♜c5! he is desperately close to losing a pawn he will sorely miss.

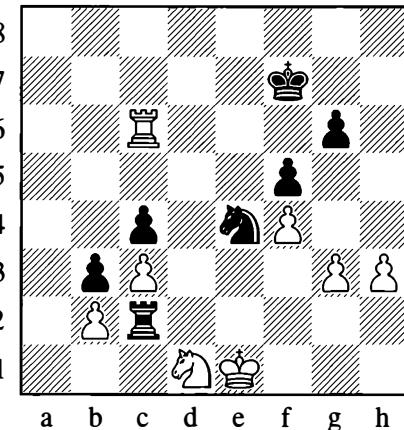
**44.♝c7?!**

44.♝g7! would have drawn more easily.

**44...♜g4**

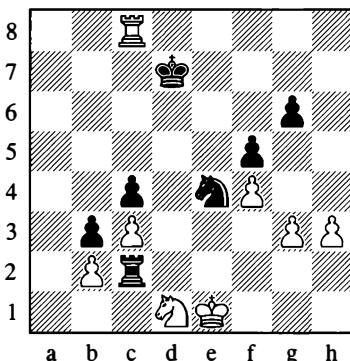
44...♝xh2!?

**45.h3 ♜h2† 46.♔e1 ♜f3† 47.♔f1 ♜d2†  
48.♔e1 ♜e4 49.♝c6† ♜f7**

**50.♞e3!**

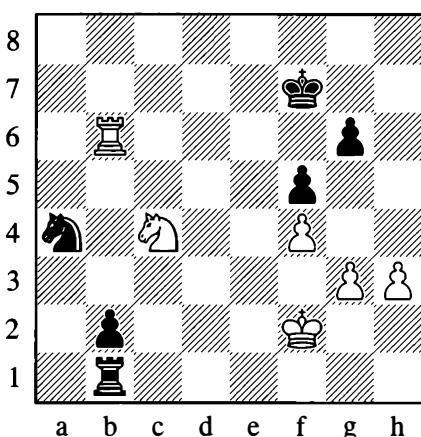
50.♝xc4? ♜xg3 would pose White an unsolvable problem.

But White could also have tried 50.♝c7†!? ♜e8 51.♝c8† ♜d7 with the point:



52.  $\mathbb{R}xc4!$   $\mathbb{Q}xg3$  53.  $\mathbb{R}d4\#$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  54.  $\mathbb{R}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}h5$   
55.  $\mathbb{R}f2$  and it is doubtful whether Black can make any progress at all.

50...  $\mathbb{R}xb2$  51.  $\mathbb{Q}xc4$   $\mathbb{R}b1\#$  52.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$  b2 53.  $\mathbb{R}b6$   $\mathbb{Q}xc3\#$  54.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}a4$



55.  $\mathbb{R}b7\#?$

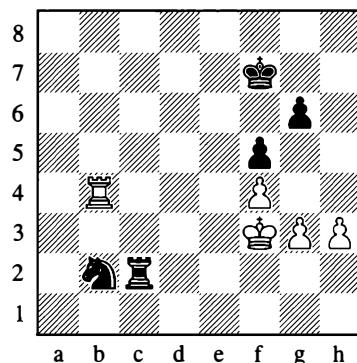
White missed the chance for a Houdini escape (a chess pun as bad as a French bishop):  
55.  $\mathbb{R}b4$ !

This would have saved the game. Black wins the knight, but afterwards his own knight is so misplaced that he cannot do anything with his material advantage. He would only be able to hope for luck and miracles in a rook and knight vs. rook ending.

55...  $\mathbb{R}c1$

55...  $\mathbb{R}h1$  56.  $\mathbb{Q}xb2$   $\mathbb{Q}xb2$  57.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{R}b1$  is too awkward to take entirely seriously.

55...  $\mathbb{Q}e6$  56.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{R}a1$  57.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}c3$   
58.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$  b1=  $\mathbb{W}\#$  59.  $\mathbb{Q}xb1$   $\mathbb{Q}xb1$  is not an improvement either.  
56.  $\mathbb{Q}xb2$   $\mathbb{R}c2\#$  57.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}xb2$



58.  $\mathbb{R}b7\#$

White is in time to create counterplay. He wants to take the black g-pawn and exchange the f-pawn.

58...  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  59.  $\mathbb{R}b6\#$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$

If Black abandons the g-pawn, he will have no chance of winning the game either.

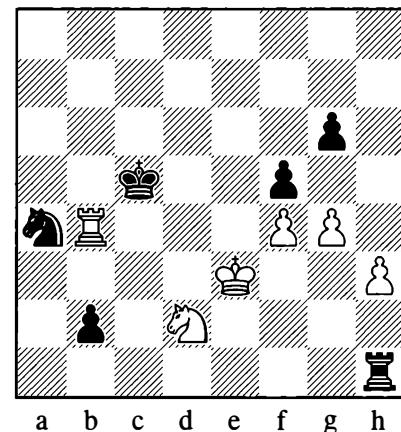
60.  $\mathbb{R}b7\#$   $\mathbb{Q}h6$  61. g4

The draw is not far away in theoretical terms, even if it could be some fifty-odd moves away in practical terms.

55...  $\mathbb{Q}e6$  56. g4

56.  $\mathbb{R}b4$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  does not work either.

56...  $\mathbb{Q}d5$  57.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{R}d1$  58.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{R}h1$  59.  $\mathbb{R}b5\#$   
 $\mathbb{Q}c6$  60.  $\mathbb{R}b4$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$



**61.♕c4†**

61.♕xa4 would have lost to 61...♕xh3† 62.♔e2 ♕h2† 63.♔e3 ♕xd2 and the pawn queens.

**61...♔b5 62.♕c8 ♕xh3† 63.♔d4 ♖xg4  
64.♕b8† ♔b6 65.♕g8 ♕h2 66.♔b1 ♕h1  
67.♔c3† ♔a6 68.♕xg6 ♕c1**

**0–1**

A good effort from Nepomniachtchi, but still one that exposed certain flaws.

For those wanting to study dynamics further, I recommend my own *Attacking Manual 1*, which presents the readers with a usable model presenting dynamics, breaking it down into seven features of using a dynamic advantage. I do not in any way claim that this model is *the* model, but I have found that it is truly useful for those struggling with dynamics, and that it gives them a language with which to describe their flaws and thus work to improve them.

For the last example of this chapter, I want to show a near-perfect example of piece organization and handling of dynamics. Jobava probably found this game relatively easy to play, being a natural *activist* like the great idol Mikhail Tal.

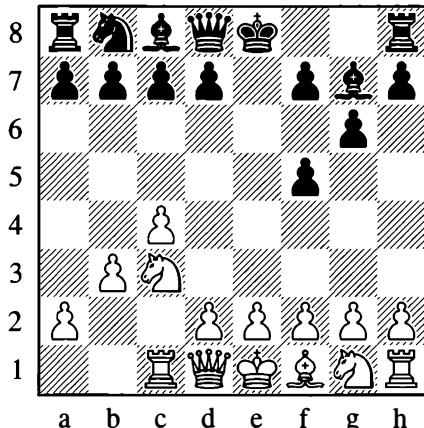
**Baadur Jobava – Shakhriyar Mamedyarov**

Beijing (rapid) 2012

**1.b3**

Jobava has tried most offbeat openings. At some point the turn of the Nimzowitsch-Larsen system had to come.

**1...♗f6 2.♗b2 g6 3.♗xf6 exf6 4.c4 ♗g7  
5.♗c3 f5 6.♕c1**



Although this position looks quite original, it has occurred in 28 games. This is the first time it was been played at the absolutely top level, but still it is astonishing how widely chess theory is beginning to develop in the 21st century, with obscure openings occurring in bucket-loads of games...

**6...0–0 7.g3 ♕e8 8.♗g2**

Clearly nothing too special has happened. Black has a doubled pawn, but it does not weaken his position substantially. At the same time White is not too sad that his bishop is gone. The other one is working excellently and the knights will find good stable squares such as d5 and f4 to conduct their business. White is slightly ahead in development, but this probably would not have been important had Black not decided to change the nature of the game from build-up to concrete action at this very point.

**8...f4?!**

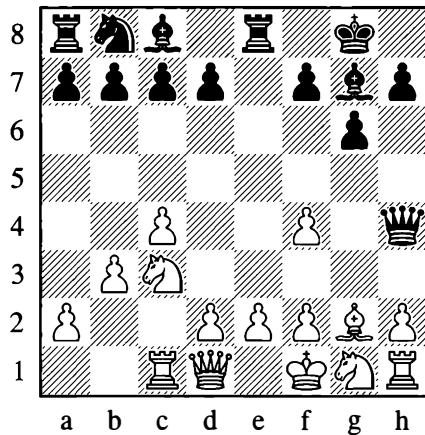
Mamedyarov's plan is obvious. Black will win back the pawn and no longer have a doubled pawn. But the loss of time and the necessity of exchanging the bishop are more important factors.

**9.gxf4 ♘h4 10.♔f1!!**

A wonderful move, protecting the bishop

and threatening to defend the f4-pawn. But most of all, the move coordinates White's pieces excellently.

10.e3  $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  11. $\mathbb{B}xc3$   $\mathbb{W}xf4$  with an even game is probably what Mamedyarov was intending.



**10... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$**

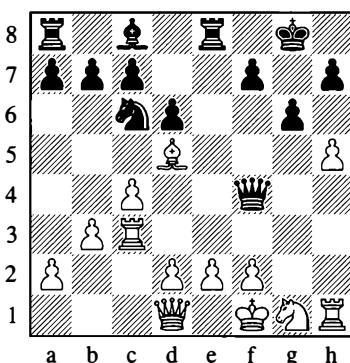
10... $\mathbb{W}xf4?$  would be a blunder. 11. $\mathbb{Q}d5$  and the c7-pawn cannot be defended for long.

**11. $\mathbb{B}xc3$   $\mathbb{W}xf4$  12.h4!**

White's only chance to use his lead in development is with an attack on the kingside, where the exchanges have left the dark squares weakened.

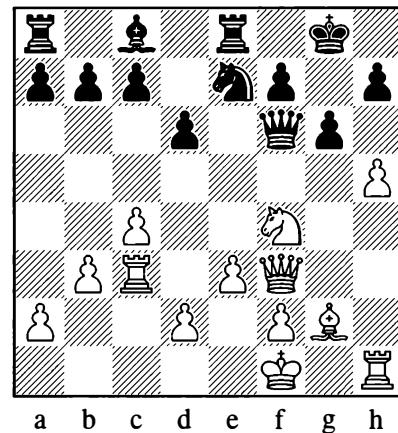
**12...d6 13.h5  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  14. $\mathbb{Q}h3!$ ?**

I think 14. $\mathbb{Q}d5!$  might have been stronger.



Black has to play 14... $\mathbb{Q}d8\pm$ , which is hardly pleasant, as after 14... $\mathbb{Q}e6?$  15.hxg6  $\mathbb{W}xg6$  16. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$   $\mathbb{B}xe6$  17. $\mathbb{B}ch3$  he would be dead lost.

**14... $\mathbb{W}d4$  15.e3  $\mathbb{W}f6$  16. $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  17. $\mathbb{W}f3\pm$**



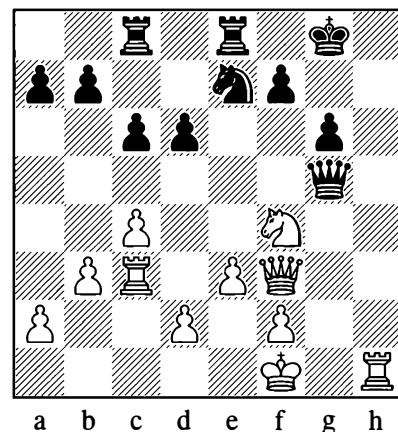
**17... $\mathbb{W}g5?$**

Black should have taken the chance to go into a slightly inferior endgame immediately: 17... $\mathbb{g}5!$  18. $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $\mathbb{W}xf3$  19. $\mathbb{B}xf3$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  20.cxd5 $\pm$

**18. $\mathbb{B}h3!$**

A somewhat surprising move, preparing the penetration down the h-file. The bishop looked so active on g2 and the black bishop so passive on c8. But this game is not being decided on the queenside...

**18...c6 19. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$   $\mathbb{B}axc8$  20.hxg6  $\mathbb{W}xg6$**



**21.♕h5! f5 22.♗d3!**

Bringing the last piece into the game.

**22...♔f7**

Black has no defence.

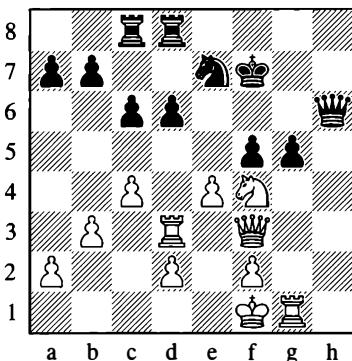
22...♝cd8 23.♗g1 ♜h4 24.♗d4 and White wins.

22...♝ed8 23.♗g1 ♜h6

This was perhaps the most stubborn. But White wins in a more or less forced variation:

24.♕f4 g5 25.e4! ♔f7

How else to counter exf5?



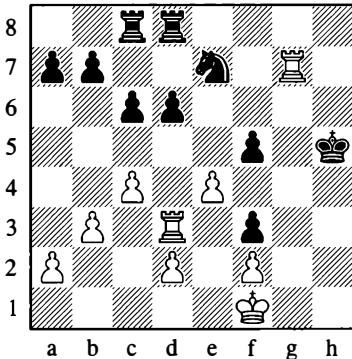
26.♗h1! g4

Otherwise ♜h5† will be very strong.

27.♗xh6 gxh6 28.♗h7† ♔f6 29.♕h5† ♔g6

29...♔e6 30.♗e3! and Black is dead.

30.♗g7† ♔xh5



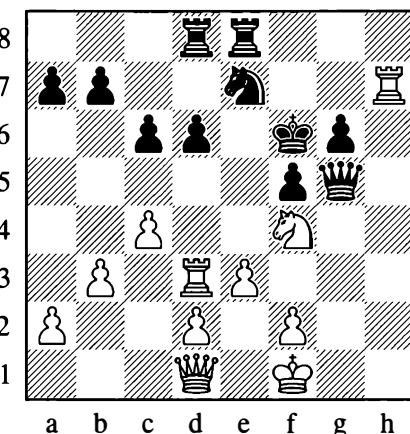
31.♗xf3 ♔h6 32.♗g1 ♜g6 33.♗h3† ♔g7  
34.exf5

White regains the piece and wins the ending easily.

**23.♕f4 ♜cd8**

23...♝f6 24.♗h7† ♔g8 25.♗h3 gives White a winning attack as well. There is no good defence against ♜h6 followed by ♔e6.

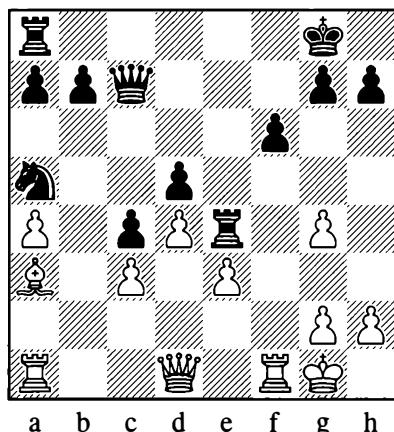
**24.♗h7† ♔f6 25.♗d1!**



A deadly check from the corner is on its way.

**1–0**

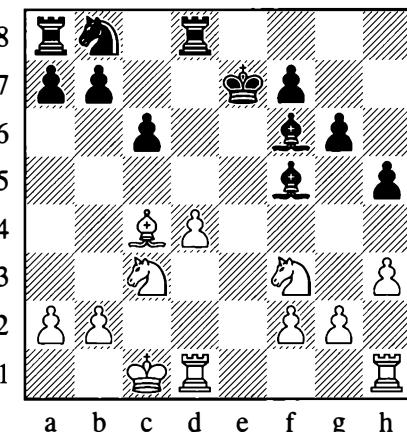
Peralta – Graf, Deizisau 2009



1



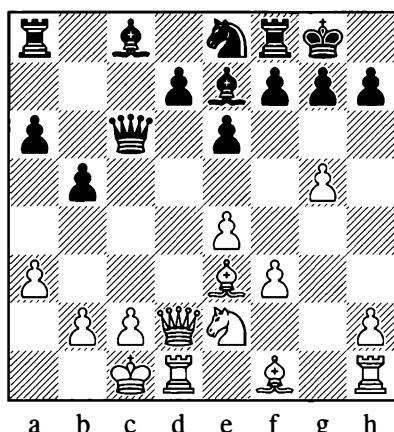
Tomashevsky – Maletin, Olginka 2011



4



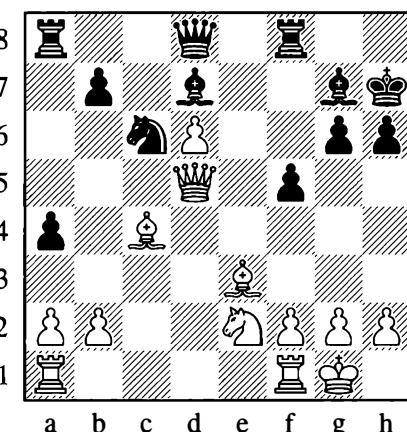
Fluvia Poyatos – Strohhaeker, Montcada 2008



2



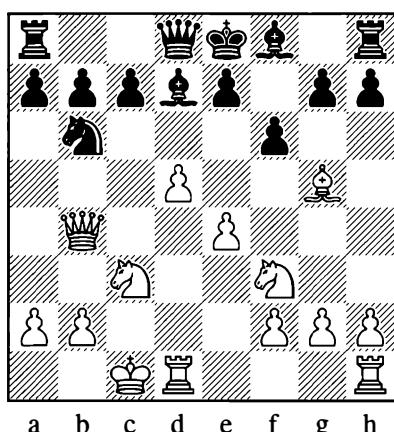
De la Riva – Razuvaev, Zaragoza 1996



5



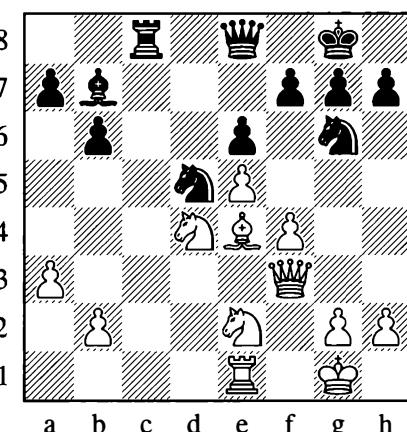
Greet – Swan, Glasgow 2011



3



Ivanchuk – Ehlvest, Yerevan 1996



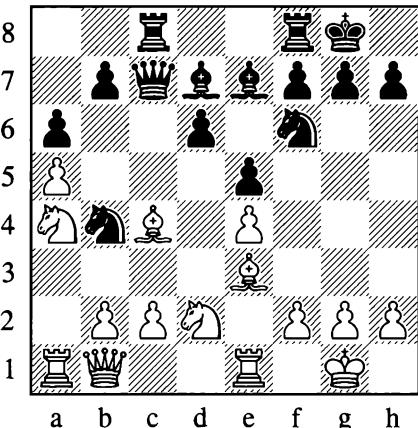
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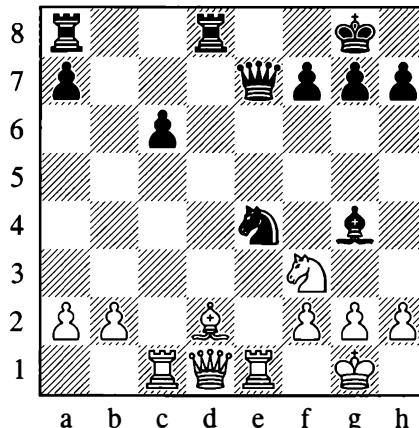
**Magem Badals – Hess**, Barcelona 2010

**E. L'Ami – Aagaard**, Helsingør 2012

7

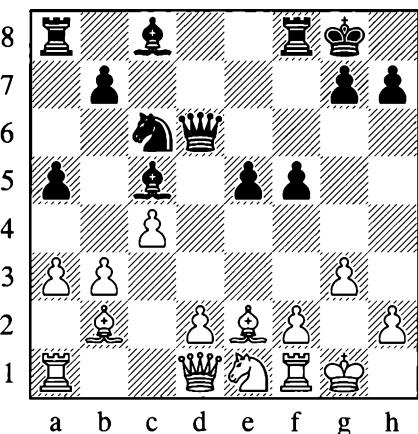


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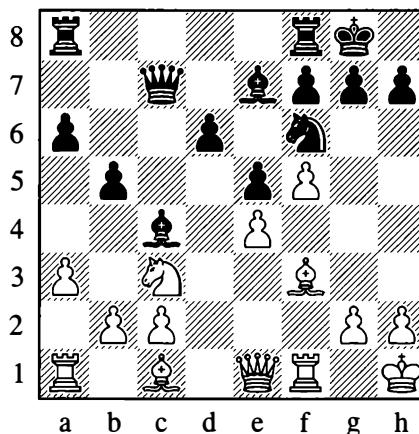


**Etruk – Tal**, USSR 1972

8

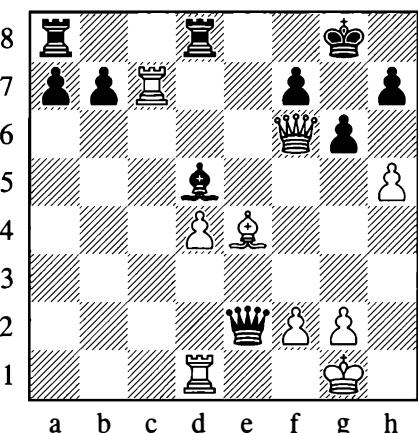


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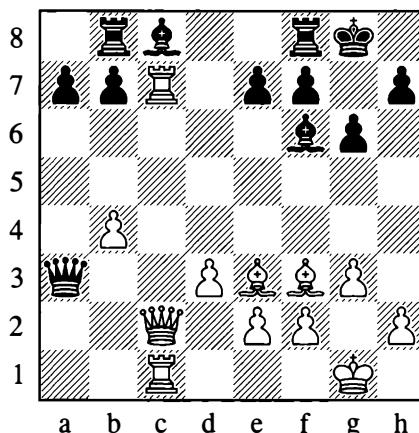


**Rublevsky – Motylev**, Moscow 2005

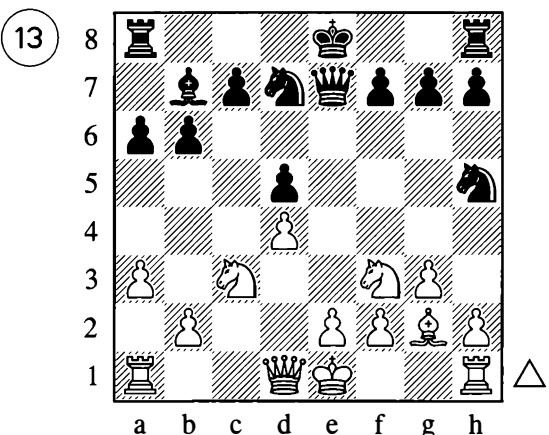
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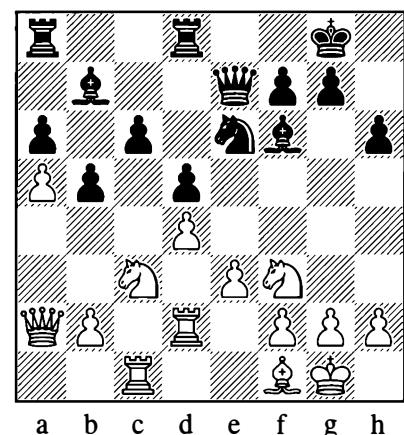


Kasparov – Antoshin, Baku 1980

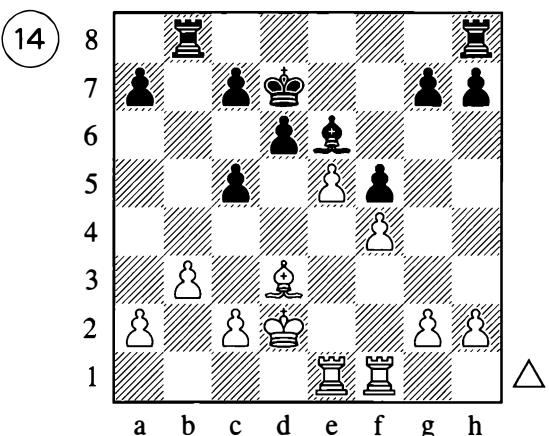


Aagaard – Hebden, Glasgow 2012 (after 17...f7-f5)

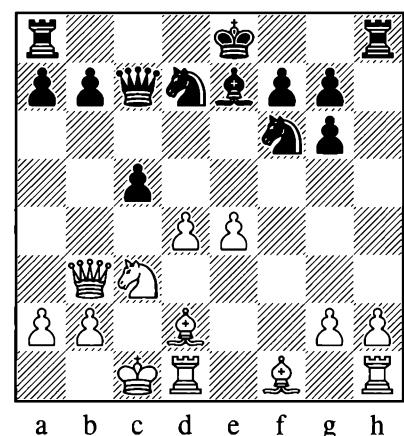
Illescas Cordoba – Short, Pamplona 1999



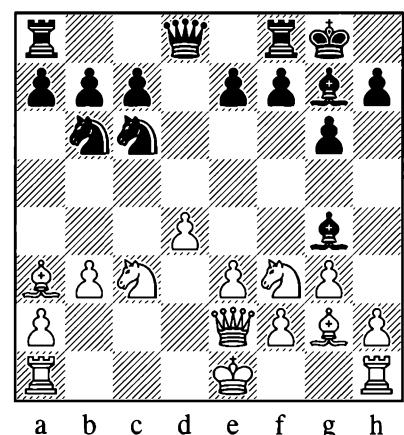
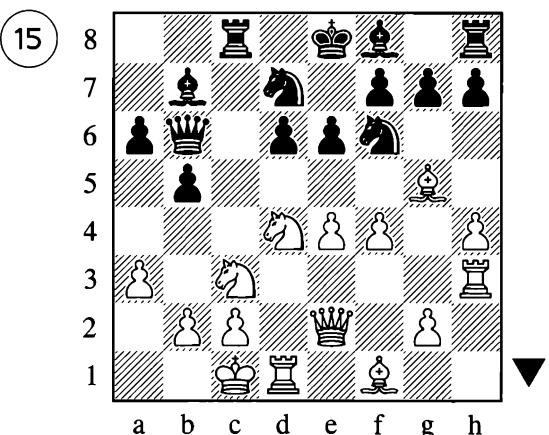
Wang Yue – Anand, Nice (blindfold) 2009



Azarov – Shomoev, Moscow 2012



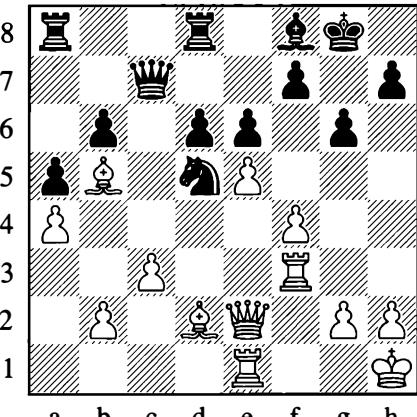
Krasenkow – Ftacnik, Polanica Zdroj 1995



Lechado Artigues – Oms Pallisse, Palma 2009

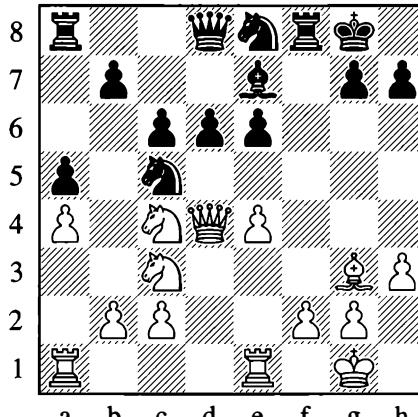
Ni Hua – Wang Rui, Taizhou 2012

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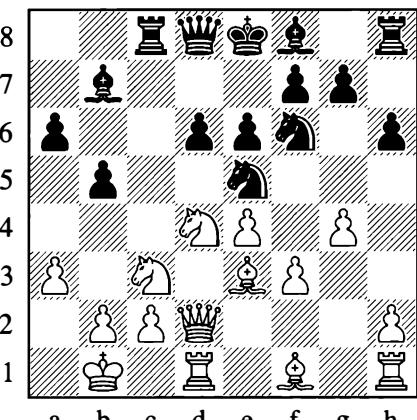
McKay – Aagaard, Giffnock 2008

22



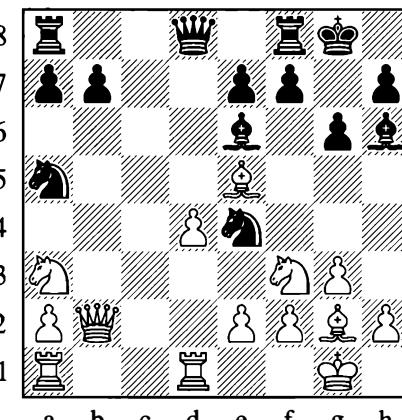
Yaksin – Tomczak, Gaziantep 2008

20



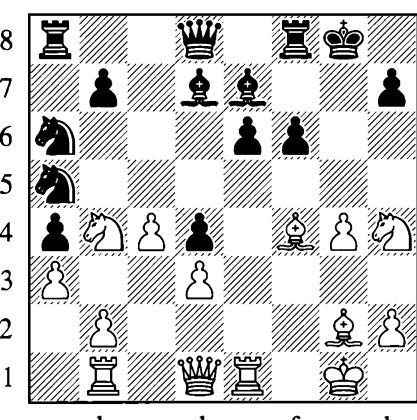
Ivanchuk – Alekseev, Jermuk 2009

23

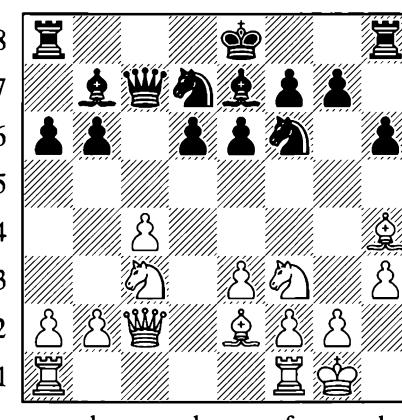


Pomar Salamanca – Ljubojevic, Palma 1972

21



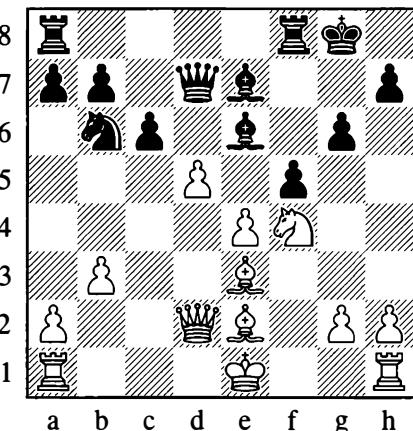
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Nakamura – Adams, London 2012

Kislinsky – Kolosowski, Legnica 2011

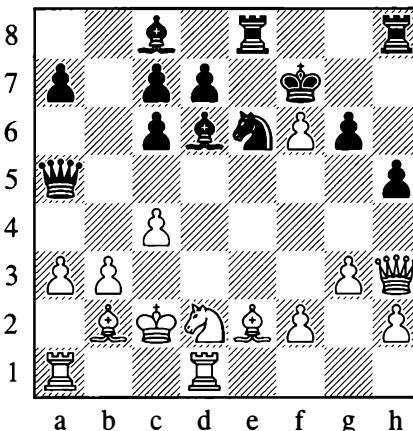
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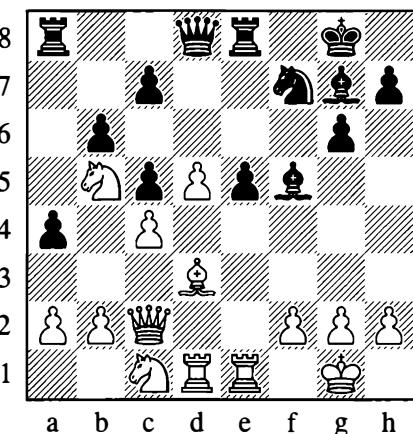
A. Smirnov – Fedorov, Izhevsk 2010



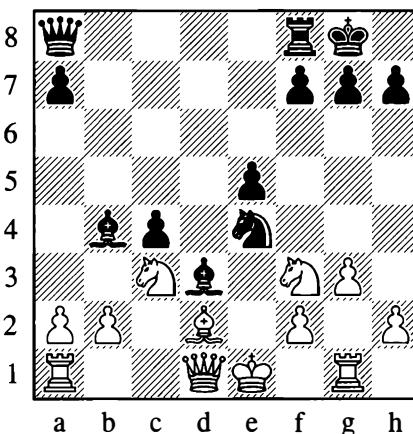
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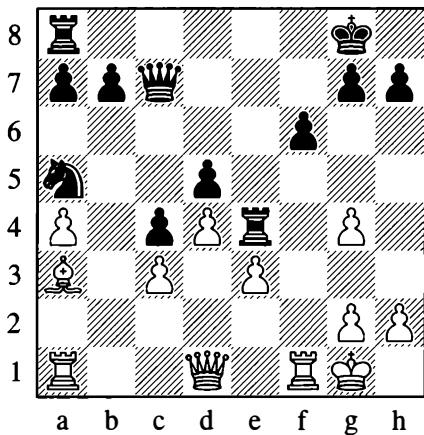


28



## 1. Peralta – Graf

Deizisau 2009



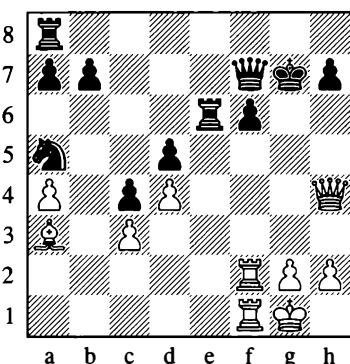
Structurally, White is close to lost. His pawns on a4, c3 and especially e3 are weak. He has weak squares on b3 and e4 (and d3 if it ever comes to that) and the knight is overall more suited for this position than the bishop. However, if the battle were to take place along the f-file and on the kingside, White is actually quite well positioned for it.

**!0.g5!**

20.♗a2 h6!±

**!0...fxg5**

20...♛f7 is a miserable defence, but maybe best. After 21.gxf6 gxf6 22.♗a2±, White is calling the shots. Black cannot get away with taking a pawn and holding on to it: 22...♝xe3 23.♗af2 ♛e6 24.♗g4† ♜h8 25.♗h4 ♜g7



Black will be entirely cut up by 26.♗c1!.

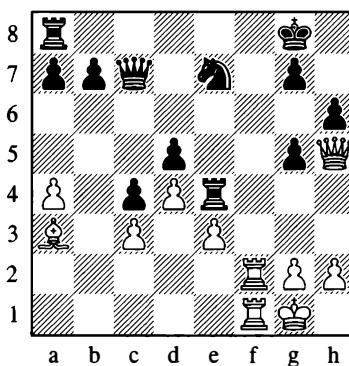
**21.♗a2±**

The rooks will double on the f-file and penetrate to the 7th rank, and to this simple plan there is no satisfactory defence.

**21...g4?**

Black is trying to prevent the queen from joining the attack from h5, but unfortunately for him this is not White's only idea. I think that White is winning already, though the evidence is not entirely conclusive:

21...h6 22.♗af2 ♛c6 23.♗h5 ♛e7



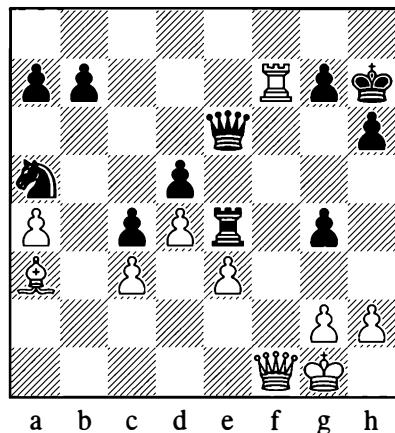
24.♗f7† and 25.♗f6! with ideas such as ♗d6-e5. I find it hard to believe that Black can survive the pressure.

21...♛c6 22.♗af2 ♛e7 23.♗h5 ♛g6 looks logical to me, but after 24.♗xg5 ♛c6 25.♗f7 ♛e6 26.♗g3 ♜h8 27.♗c7± Black is very passive. However, this is probably his only chance of saving the game. White wins a pawn, but still has some long-term problems with his bishop and pawns.

**22.♗af2 h6**

22...g6 also loses by force: 23.♗f8† ♜xf8 24.♗xf8† ♜g7 25.♗f1 ♛e6 26.♗g8†!

**23.♗f8† ♜xf8 24.♗xf8† ♜h7 25.♗f1 ♛d7 26.♗f7 ♛e6**



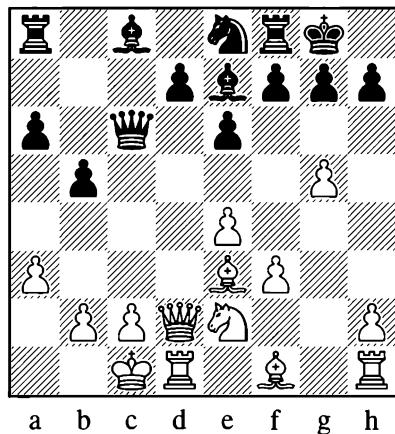
**27.♗f8!**

The bishop joins the game conclusively.

27...♝c6 28.♝xg7† ♜h8 29.♝f7 ♜xe3  
30.♝f6 ♜e4 31.♝xh6†  
1–0

## 2. Fluvia Poyatos – Strohhaecker

Montcada 2008



White's position is a picture of harmony. Should he be allowed to continue unhindered he would play h2-h4-h5 and g5-g6 with a strong attack on the black king. The passively placed black pieces cannot spend time getting into action; they would find themselves arriving late and penniless.

The only good thing in the black position is that White has made the move a2-a3, creating a hook for Black to hang his counterplay on. There is no time to waste, and indeed Black did not waste any time.

**14...b4!**

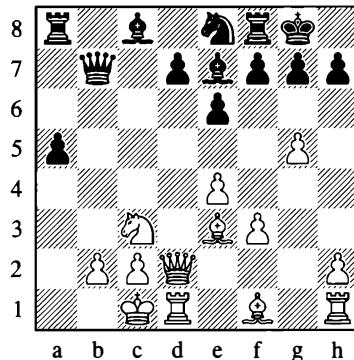
14...♝d6 15.♝d4 ♜c7 is also playable, but to my eyes White looks a bit better after 16.h4±.

**15.axb4**

15.♝d4 ♜a4 is not an improvement for White.

**15...a5 16.bxa5?!**

It would have been better not to open the a-file, but to return the pawn: 16.b5! ♜xb5 17.♝c3 ♜b7

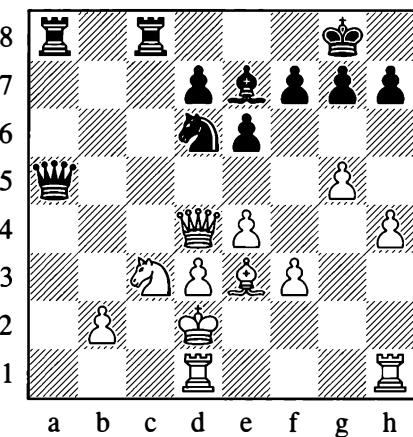


18.♝a4! The game is highly unclear, and we should not underestimate White's attacking chances on the kingside.

**16...♜a4 17.♝d4**

17.♝c3 ♜xa5 18.♝b1 ♜a1 looks unpleasant as well, but White would have had a chance of putting up a fight here.

**17...♜xa5 18.h4 ♜d6 19.♝c3 ♜a6 20.♝d3 ♜xd3 21.cxd3 ♜fc8 22.♝d2**



**22...Qb5?**

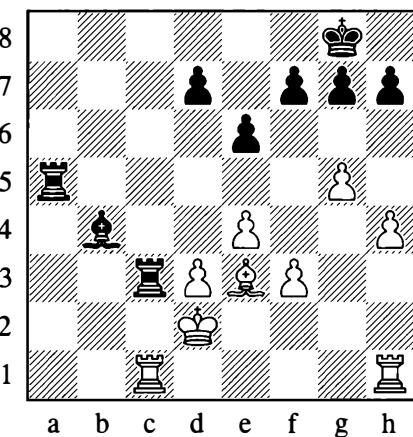
This allows White to reduce the pressure considerably by exchanging queens.

22...Rab8, with the point 23.Qb1 Rb4! 24.Qa7 Rxb2†, would have won immediately.

**23.Qb6 Qxc3?!**

23...Rb4†

**24.Qxa5 Rxa5 25.Rc1 Rb4 26.bxc3 Rxc3**



**27.Qd4??**

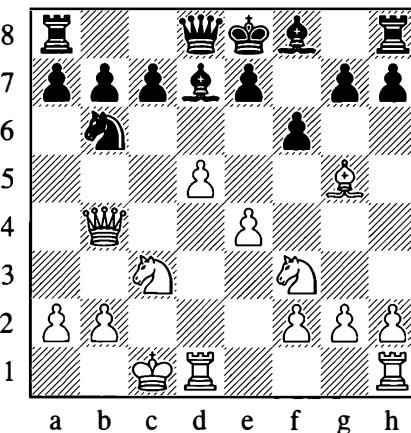
A horrible blunder. 27.Qxc3 Ra2† 28.Qd1 Rxc3 is better for Black, but the game is likely to end in a draw with accurate defence. For example 29.Qf4 with the idea of Rh2.

**27...Ra2†**

**0–1**

### 3. Greet – Swan

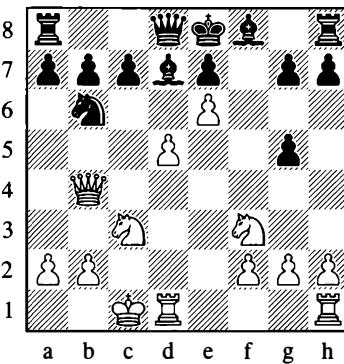
Glasgow 2011



If Black is allowed to play ...e5 and ...Qd6, his position would not be bad. So White has to act immediately if he wants to take advantage of the many bizarre things about Black's position.

**12.e5!! e6**

12...fxg5 13.e6± would give Black plenty of problems.



He has no hope in hanging on to the extra piece: 13...Qc8? 14.Qxg5 Qd6 15.Qe4 and White will pick up the rook on h8. So Black must leave the bishop to be taken on d7, though White does not need to rush to take it and may even prefer Qe5 or Qxg5 first!

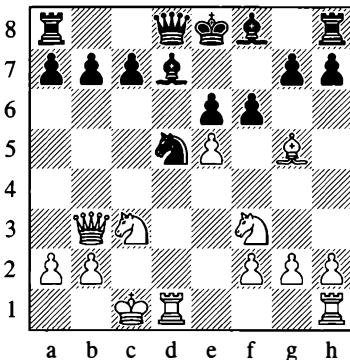
**13.♗b3**

13.♗f4? does not work: 13...fxg5 14.♕xg5 ♖e7

**13...♔e7**

Probably the only move.

13...fxg5? 14.dxe6 and Black is torn to bits.

**13...♕xd5**

White has several ways to cause problems, for example 14.exf6 ♕xf6 15.♖he1 is simple and strong.

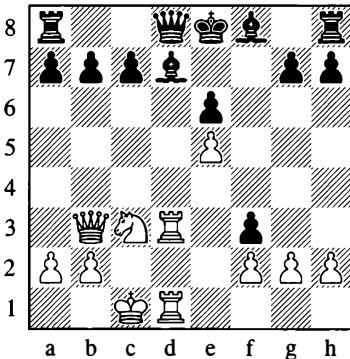
But the tactician is naturally attracted to:

**14.♖xd5!?**

A sacrifice that obviously cannot be accepted.

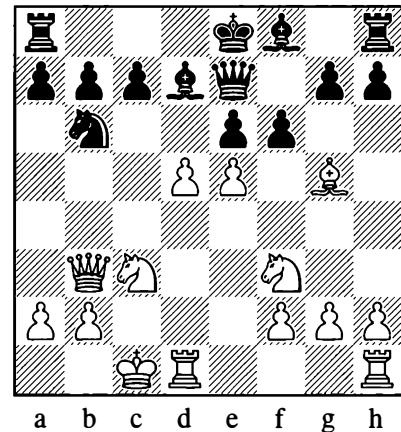
Play therefore continues:

14...fxg5 15.♗d3 g4 16.♗hd1 gxf3

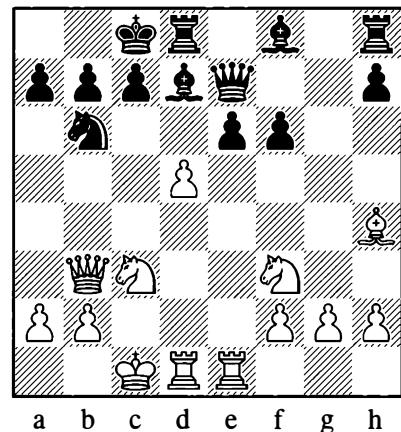


17.♗xd7 ♘xd7 18.♗xd7 ♔xd7 19.♗b5† ♔e7  
20.♗xb7 fxg2 21.♗xc7† ♔e8 22.♗c6† ♔f7  
23.♗f3† ♔g8 24.♗xg2

White is close to winning outright. Were I to give a practical evaluation of the two approaches, I would say that putting all the pieces in the middle always seems more attractive to me than forcing some endgame.

**14.♗h4?**

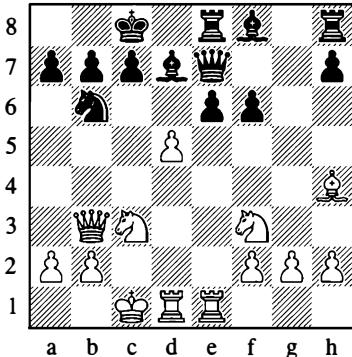
It looks very logical to keep the pin and the pressure on f6, but 14.♗e3! was even stronger. Black can hardly contemplate 14...0–0–0 15.d6!, and after 14...fxe5 15.♗xe5 things have only become worse. Forced is therefore 14...♗b4 15.dxe6 ♖c6, when White has many strong options, my preference being 16.♗c2 to keep the queens on, the computer's suggestion being 16.exf6 ♘xb3 17.axb3 gxf6 18.♗d4 with a quite overwhelming endgame.

**14...0–0–0 15.exf6 gxf6 16.♗he1**

**16...♝h6†?**

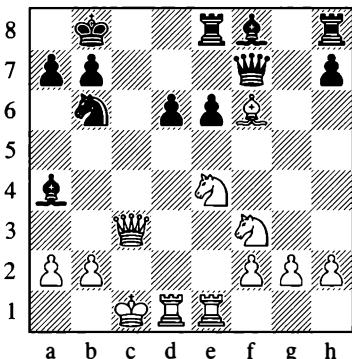
This looks like a tempo gain, but the bishop needed to keep control of the d6-square.

16...♝e8! was the best move, holding the position together.



White's best chance to fight for an advantage seems to be 17.♗c2!, although that is certainly no refutation of Black's move.

White can go for a tactical approach, but it leads to nothing better than equality: 17.d6!? cxd6 18.♕e4 ♜a4! 19.♗c3† ♜b8 20.♗xf6 ♜f7

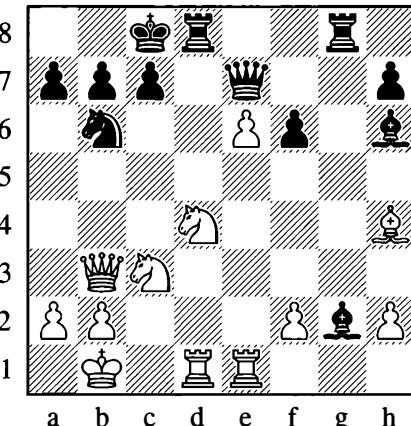


21.♕xd6! (21.♕xh8 ♜c8 is at least okay for Black) 21...♜xd6 22.♕xd6 ♜hf8 23.♕e5 ♜a8 24.♗b1 ♜c8 25.♗b4 ♜c4 26.♗xa4 ♜f5† 27.♗a1 ♜xe5 and Black is not worse.

16...e5!? 17.♗xe5 ♜f5 was also reasonable. White probably has an edge with 18.♗g4 and 19.♗e3, but it is nothing spectacular.

**17.♗b1 ♜hg8?!**

"Preferable" was 17...♜he8 18.d6 cxd6 19.♕e4±, though White is close to winning.

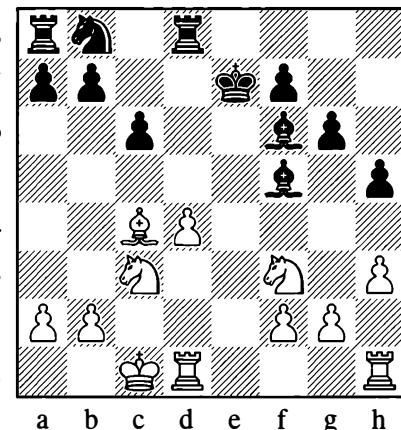
**18.dxe6 ♜c6 19.♗d4 ♜xg2?****20.♗f5 ♜xd1† 21.♕xd1 ♜e8 22.e7**

Black resigned. A great game by Andrew, who has edited some of my previous books, but has stayed away from the *Grandmaster Preparation* series, because he wants to use the books to push himself the final few yards over the finishing line!

**1–0**

**4. Tomashevsky – Maletin**

Olginka 2011



White has a serious lead in development. Structurally he is neither better nor worse, and the two bishops are not necessarily going to be a big factor later. All in all, the outcome will depend on whether White is able to use his lead in development in a creative way. Actually it is not too difficult; all he needs to do is to force an immediate confrontation – and there is only one way to do so...

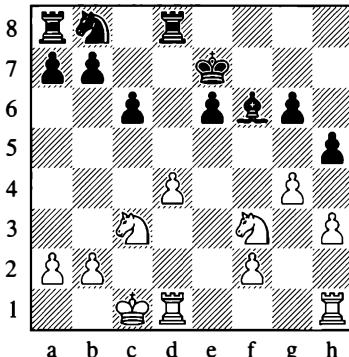
### 15.g4!

An attempt to activate the rook on h1 before Black can finish developing. The resulting attack on f7 is made possible through an initial attack on the heavily guarded g4-square; a typical attacking theme.

### 15...hxg4?

This allows White to go through with his attack. Comparing the attacking and defensive forces, this seems like suicide.

Black had to accept some weaknesses with:  
15... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ ! 16. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$   $fxe6$



17. $\mathbb{Q}e2!$ ± White will put pressure on all of the black weaknesses.

### 16.hxg4 $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}h7$

The rook is activated with gain of tempo.

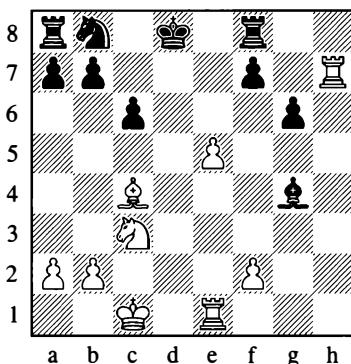
### 17... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e1\uparrow$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e5$

One more piece comes into the attack.

### 19... $\mathbb{Q}f5$

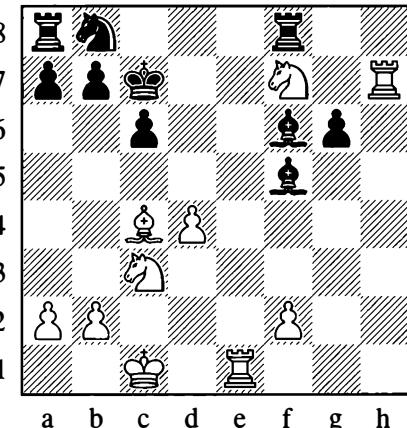
Black has to let the f7-pawn go, which underlines how mistaken his strategy has been. The best he can do is to save his bishop and defend the g6-pawn; clearly a poor man's move.

19... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  20.dxe5 only makes things worse.



Neither 20... $\mathbb{Q}e7$  21.e6! nor 20... $\mathbb{Q}e8$  21. $\mathbb{Q}e4$  is any good, and after something like 20... $\mathbb{Q}a6$  21. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  the double threat of e5-e6 and  $\mathbb{Q}xg6$  is just about decisive.

### 20. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\uparrow$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$



The position has changed a lot since move 15, when White chose to “revolutionize” it with a head-on confrontation. So here it helps a lot to remember the revolution/evolution idea: that

we first build up our attack (evolution) and then we make use of our potential before the dynamic advantage disappears (revolution).

All of this comes naturally to all players over a certain level. But for some reason a lot of them never become good attacking players. It is either because they never get a good sense for momentum, or because they fail to understand emotionally that after revolution, it is often time to build up the forces again, or simply regroup. Things on the ground have changed, so it is necessary to let your pieces change too. Back to evolution mode! Here the knight on c3 still needs to get a function.

### 21.♘g5†!!

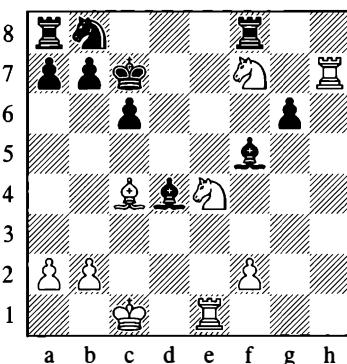
It is always more fun to play with the active pieces, but getting the most out of your position means making the most of all of your pieces. This is a truth that should be taught to both beginners and World Championship challengers. In my opinion this is the most basic idea in chess – but then I am dynamic in all my natural thinking!

### 21.♘e4!

This was the best move. Here 21...♗xe4 22.♘e5†! is an important point; Black does not get his knight into the game on d7.

So Black should maybe take the d4-pawn:

21...♗xd4



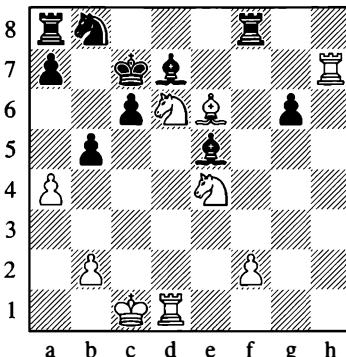
22.♘fd6† ♘d7

22...♘d7 does not work. White plays 23.♗d1! c5 24.♗xf5 and wins material after 24...gxsf5 25.♗xc5 or 24...♗xf5 25.♗e6.

23.♗d1 ♘e5

23...♗xf2 24.♗b1† and White is threatening lots of things, for example ♘f6!.

24.♗e6 b5 25.a4†

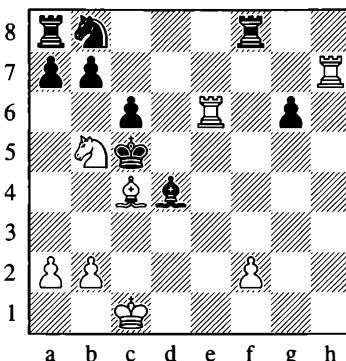


Black is under a lot of pressure. His only drawing chances are based on the limited number of pawns left on the board.

### 21...♘d7?

After this the game appears lost.

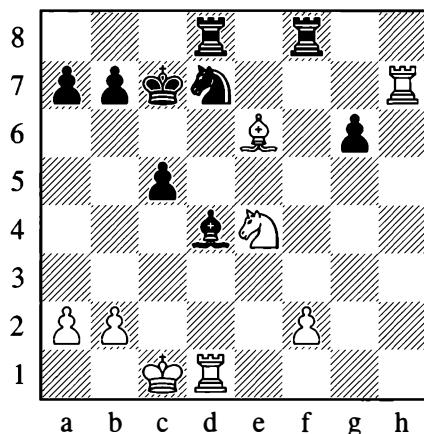
Black should have tried 21...♗b6?!, when White is better, but not decisively so: 22.♗e6 ♗xe6 23.♗xe6 ♘xd4 24.♗b5 ♘c5!



Here White could try 25.♗c7 ♘xc4 26.♗xa8 ♘a6 27.♗c7 ♘c5, which looks fine for Black, or he could try 25.♗xd4 ♘xd4 26.♗e2 b5 27.f3†.

**22.♕e6† ♜xe6 23.♗xd8 ♜xd8 24.♕e4 ♜xd4**

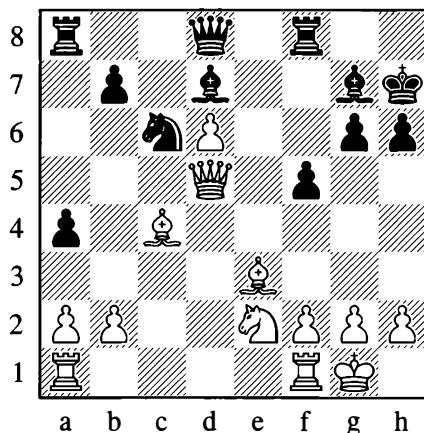
24...b6 also fails to work. Black is tied up and cannot really avoid the continuation that occurs in the game. For example: 25.b4 a6 26.♗h3 ♜xd4 27.♗d1 c5 28.♗xd7 ♜xd7 29.♗xd7† ♜xd7 30.bxc5 bxc5 31.♗xc5† ♜c6 32.♗e6 and White wins.

**25.♗d1 c5**

26.b4! b6 27.bxc5 bxc5 28.♗xd7 ♜xd7 29.♗xd7† ♜xd7 30.♗xc5† ♜c6 31.♗e6 ♜xf2 32.♗xd4† ♜c5 33.♗c2 ♜g2 34.♗d7 ♜b6 35.♗b2 ♜g3 36.♗d5 ♜g4 37.♗e5 ♜c6 38.♗c3 g5 39.♗d4† ♜b6 40.♗b5† ♜a6 41.a4  
1–0

**5. De la Riva – Razuvayev**

Zaragoza 1996



Black has sacrificed a pawn and his compensation springs from the white bishop on c4 being short of squares. With energetic play he is able to set up all sorts of tactical threats that push White over the edge into the abyss.

**20...b5!**

20...a3? 21.b3! ♜xa1 22.♗xa1† would give White excellent long-term compensation on the dark squares.

**21.♗xb5**

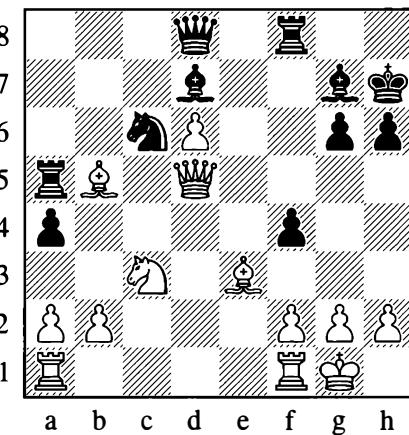
The only move that does not lose the bishop.

**21...♜a5 22.♗c3**

22.♗d2 was the alternative. Now the obvious 22...♝xb5 23.♛xb5 ♜d4† gives Black excellent play with two minor pieces against a rook. White's position has some good points, mainly the pawn on d6, but I seriously doubt whether it is enough for equality.

**22...f4!**

The inactive rook will now enter the game with strong threats.

**23.♗c5?!**

This loses quickly.

After 23.♗d2 ♜d4 White is apparently losing a piece, but he can fight for complications:

24.  $\mathbb{B}ae1 \mathbb{Q}c6!$  (24...  $\mathbb{B}f5$  25.  $\mathbb{W}xd4 \mathbb{Q}xd4$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}xd7 \mathbb{B}fe5\#$ ) 25.  $\mathbb{Q}xc6 \mathbb{B}xd5$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}xd5 \mathbb{W}xd6\#$  and Black has excellent winning chances.

### 23... $\mathbb{B}f5$ 24. $\mathbb{W}c4 \mathbb{Q}e5$

Another way to win was 24...  $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ , picking up a piece immediately.

### 25. $\mathbb{W}d5$

25.  $\mathbb{W}b4 \mathbb{Q}xb5$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}xb5 \mathbb{Q}d3$  and Black wins.

### 25... $\mathbb{B}xb5$

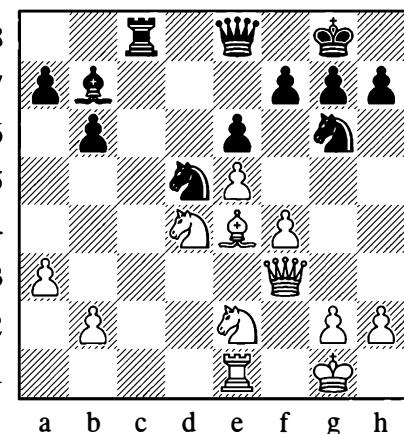
25...  $\mathbb{B}xb5$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}b4 \mathbb{W}h4!$  would have decided the game by an attack. But the text move forced resignation, so cannot be criticized.

### 26. $\mathbb{Q}xb5 \mathbb{Q}xb5$

0–1

## 6. Ivanchuk – Ehlvest

Yerevan 1996

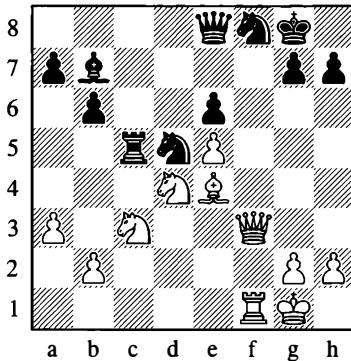


White is able to use his strength on the light squares to commence action with a temporary pawn sacrifice.

### 27. $f5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$

The passive 27...  $\mathbb{Q}f8$  allows White to attack Black in various places: 28.  $fxe6$   $fxe6$

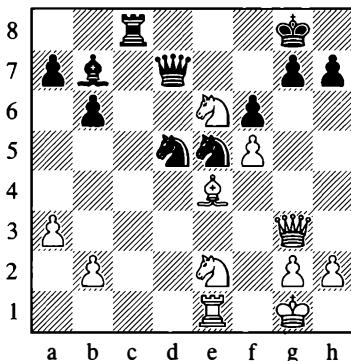
29.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{B}c5$  30.  $\mathbb{B}f1!$  Threatening a simple combination.



30...  $\mathbb{Q}g6$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}cb5 \mathbb{Q}a6$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}xg6 hxg6$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}d6 \mathbb{W}e7$  34.  $\mathbb{B}e1$  and White has full control of the position, with ideas such as b4-b5 and  $\mathbb{W}g3$ , pressing Black all over the board.

### 28. $\mathbb{W}g3 \mathbb{Q}d7$

28...  $f6$  is no good either. White has a simple continuation: 29.  $\mathbb{Q}xe6 \mathbb{W}d7$  (29...  $\mathbb{W}e7$  30.  $\mathbb{B}d1$  and the knight cannot be defended, for example 30...  $\mathbb{Q}a6$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}xd5 \mathbb{Q}xe2$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}f4\#$ .)



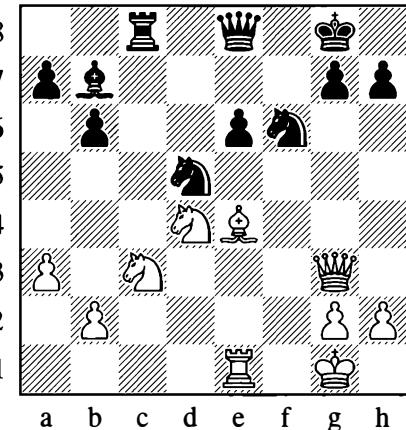
30.  $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  31.  $\mathbb{B}d1 \mathbb{Q}xe6$  32.  $\mathbb{B}xd7 \mathbb{Q}xd7$  33.  $\mathbb{W}b3\#$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  34.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$  and White has great winning chances in the ending. Still, this might be Black's best chance.

### 29. $fxe6$

29.  $\mathbb{Q}c3!$  was more accurate. 29...  $\mathbb{Q}7f6$  30.  $fxe6$   $fxe6$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}f5!$  then transposes to the game.

**29...fxe6 30.Qc3 Qf6**

Black should have tried 30...Wf7 31.Qcb5 Qf8 32.Qxd5 Qxd5 33.Qd6 Wd7 34.Qxc8 Wxc8, and although White is better, the strong bishop gives Black some slim chances.

**31.Qf5!**

White is winning.

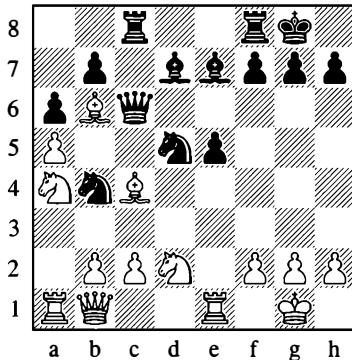
31...Qh5 32.Wf3 Qh8 33.Qxe6 Qhf4  
34.Qxd5 Qxd5 35.Wf2 Qf6 36.Qxc8  
Wxc8 37.h3 h6 38.Qe6 Wd7 39.Wd4 Qd5  
40.Qxg7 Wxg7

**1–0**

White is heading to b6 with his knight to take control over the d5-square. If he had time to do this, he would be at least equal. However, Black can use the awkwardness of the white pieces at this very moment.

**15...d5! 16.exd5**

Black is also better after 16.Qb6 Wc6 17.exd5 Qfxd5.



Now White should not be greedy and grab the e5-pawn, as Black will become very active: 18.Qxe5? Qd6 The bishop would also be well placed at f6, but intuitively I like this better. 19.Qxd5 Qxd5 20.Qe4 Qf4 and Black has a major advantage, based among other things on 21.Qe3 Qxg2!†.

**16...Qf5 17.Qb6!**

White has to fight back. After 17.Qc1 Qfxd5† he is being entirely outplayed.

**17...Qxc2!**

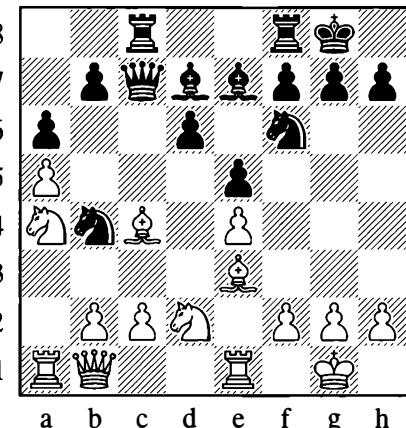
17...Ecd8 18.Qb3! is not entirely clear.

**18.Qxc8?!**

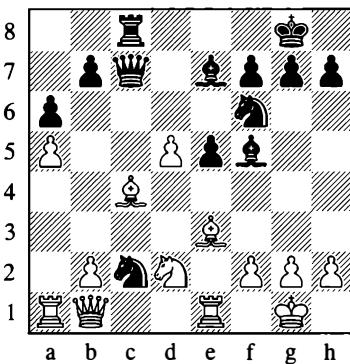
Probably it was better to play 18.Qg5!?, when after 18...Qg6 19.Qxc8 Exc8 20.Ea4 Qxe1 21.Wxe1 h6† Black is better, but White can fight.

**18...Wxc8?**

This move is based on a deep tactical oversight.



The correct recapture was also more natural:  
18... $\mathbb{Q}xc8!$



This position looks quite critical for White. It is hard to see what he should do now.

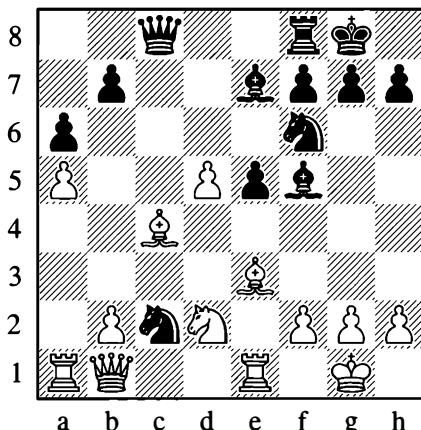
19. $\mathbb{Q}b6$

19. $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  20. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$   $\mathbb{Q}xe7$  would just leave White a pawn down.

19... $\mathbb{W}d7$  20. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  21. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$   $\mathbb{W}xf5$  22. $\mathbb{Q}b3$   $\mathbb{Q}xh2\uparrow$  23. $\mathbb{Q}xh2$   $\mathbb{W}f4\uparrow$  24.g3  $\mathbb{W}xd2$  25. $\mathbb{Q}xc2$   $\mathbb{Q}xc2$  26. $\mathbb{W}f1$   $\mathbb{W}xd5$

Black has excellent winning chances with his extra pawn.

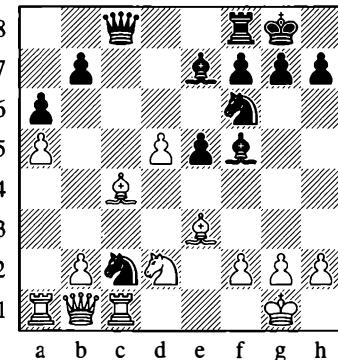
Another critical moment has arisen. Only the best is good enough at moments like this!



19. $\mathbb{W}a2?$ !

White misses a golden chance to save the game:

19. $\mathbb{Q}c1!!$



19... $\mathbb{Q}xe3??!$

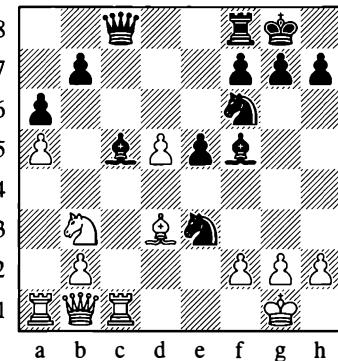
This is the critical move, but I am not sure it is any good. Still, it is the one to analyse.

19... $\mathbb{Q}xa1$  20. $\mathbb{W}xa1$  is nothing special for Black.

20. $\mathbb{Q}d3!$

This double threat saves the day. Now there are some complications:

20... $\mathbb{Q}c5$  21. $\mathbb{Q}b3!$



21...e4 22. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$   $\mathbb{W}b8$  23. $\mathbb{Q}c2$   $\mathbb{Q}exd5$  24. $\mathbb{W}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  25. $\mathbb{W}d4!±$

Black has some compensation, but I would rather have the extra exchange!

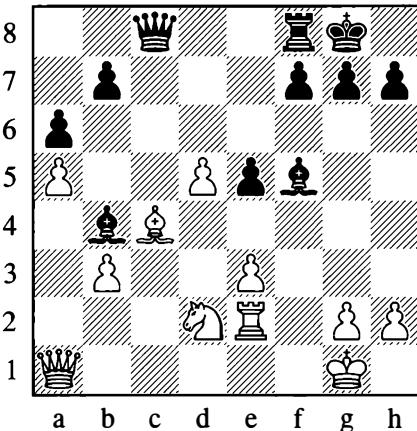
19... $\mathbb{Q}b4$  20.b3

20. $\mathbb{W}b3$   $\mathbb{Q}xe1$  21. $\mathbb{Q}xe1$   $\mathbb{Q}xa5$  would leave White a pawn down.

20... $\mathbb{Q}g4!$  21. $\mathbb{Q}e2$

21.♗b6 ♗xd2 22.♗e2 ♗xa1 23.♗xd2 ♗c2 and White will not have enough compensation for the exchange.

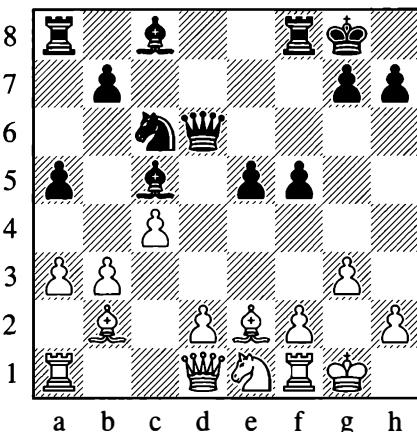
**21...♗gxe3 22.fxe3 ♗xa1 23.♗xa1**



Black's advantage is clear, due to his two strong bishops. He won the game on move 45.

## 8. Etruk – Tal

USSR 1972



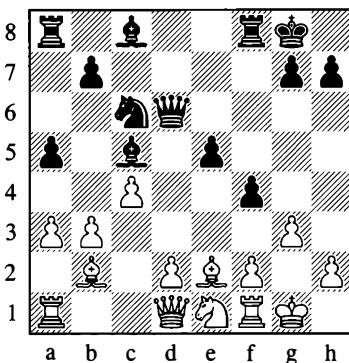
Black has given up a pawn in order to take control of the d4-square and attack the white king.

**19...♗d4?**

After this White equalizes easily.

**19...f4!**

This was the correct move.



Now we have a number of different lines:

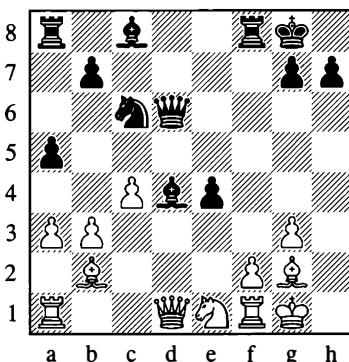
**20.b4 axb4 21.axb4 ♗xa1 22.♗xa1 ♗xb4†**

**20.♗f3 fxg3 21.hxg3 e4 22.d4!**

Obviously the only move.

**22...♗xd4 23.♗g2**

23.♗xd4 is met with 23...exf3, after which ...♗h3 will win the exchange.



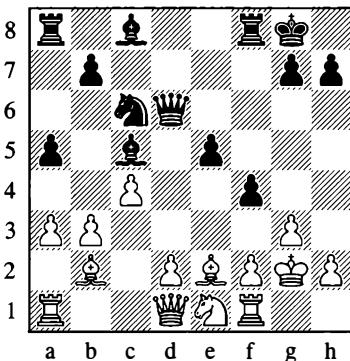
Black is obviously doing very well here, but reassuringly he even has a direct way to make the advantage more concrete:

**23...e3! 24.♗xd4 ♗xd4 25.♗d5†**

25.fxe3 ♗xf1† 26.♔xf1 ♗f6† wins the exchange under even more favourable circumstances, on account of 27.♗g1 ♗e2†.

**25...♗e6 26.♗xd4 e2†**

20.♕g2? does defend against the indirect attack on g3, but it leads to other problems:

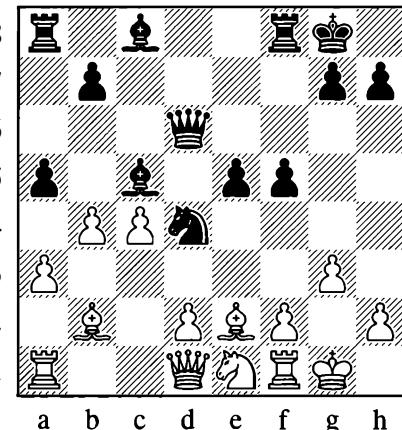


20...e4! 21.f3 fxg3 22.hxg3 ♕h6 23.♕h1 ♔g5 and White has no decent defence against ...♔d6.

20.♕g2 fxg3 21.hxg3 ♔d4 leaves White without any good moves. His only try is to play 22.b4 axb4 23.axb4 ♕xa1 24.♕xa1 ♕xb4 25.♕xd4 ♕xd4 26.d3 and fight for a draw, but it will not be pleasant.

## 20.b4!

The simplest solution.



20...axb4 21.axb4 ♕xa1 22.♕xa1 ♕xb4 23.♕xd4 ♕xd4

23...exd4 24.♕d3 and 25.♕f3 might even leave White with a slight edge.

## 24.♕c2! ♕d6?!

Tal is playing for an advantage, but instead finds himself heading for a slightly worse position.

24...♕xd2 should be played, although after 25.♕xb4 ♕xb4 26.♕d5† White is out of trouble.

## 25.♕xb4 ♕xb4 26.d4 e4

26...exd4 was perhaps safer.

## 27.♕c2 ♕e7 28.♕e1 ♕f6 29.♕d2?!

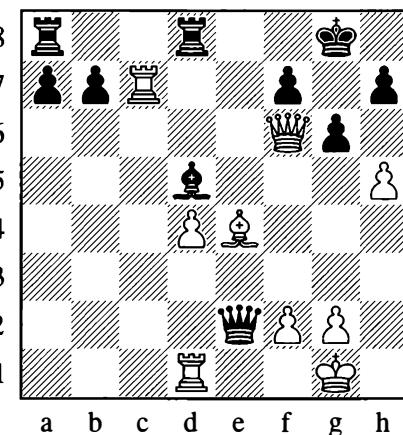
29.♕d1!± would have given Black some problems to solve before a draw could be achieved.

## 29...f4 30.♕xf4 ♕xd4

½-½

## 9. Rublevsky – Motylev

Moscow 2005



With various threats towards the black king, White need not be too concerned about the threat to his rook.

## 24.f3!!

This keeps the tension in the centre, not allowing Black to get his rook to d5.

24.♕f3 ♜a6 25.♗xa6 bxa6 is a much better version of the game continuation for Black. He is ready to play ...♗g7 (to prevent h5-h6), and is threatening to ruin the white pawn structure. After 26.♕xd5 ♘xd5 27.h6 ♔f8 Black will continue ...♝ad8 with full equality.

#### 24...♜a6!

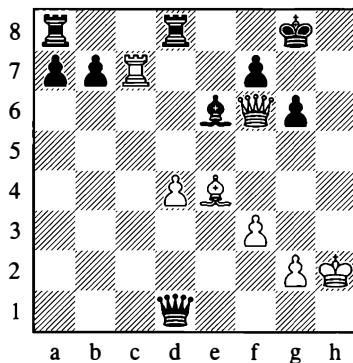
The only move.

Black loses after:

24...♝xd1†? 25.♔h2 ♔e6

25...♝d6 is probably the best try, but still not good enough: 26.♗xd6 ♔e6 27.d5 and White will win eventually.

26.hxg6 hxg6



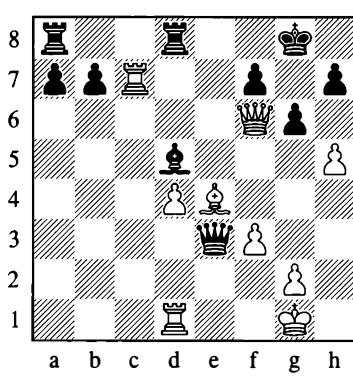
27.♔xg6 ♜b3 28.♗g5!

A strong move, leaving Black with only one way to avoid mate.

28...♝d7 29.♔c2† ♔f8 30.♗c5†

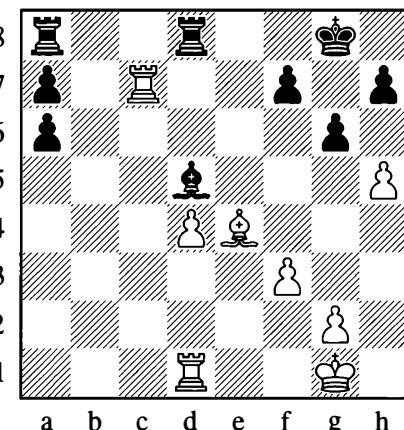
And White wins.

24...♝e3†? is also refuted beautifully:



25.♔f1! ♔e6 26.hxg6 hxg6 27.♔xg6 ♕d7 28.♝d3! trapping the queen.

#### 25.♗xa6 bxa6



#### 26.h6!±

White has some advantage, and he won the ending in fine style.

#### 26...♝d6 27.♔f2 g5?

27...♝ad8?± was better, though Black remains on the defensive.

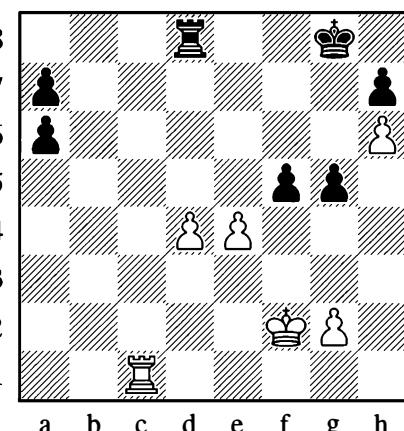
#### 28.♝dc1!

Transposing into a rook ending in which Black is very passive.

28...♝xe4 29.♔c8† ♕d8 30.♝xd8† ♕xd8

#### 31.♔xe4 f5

31...♔f8 32.♔e3 ♕d6 33.e5 ♕xh6 34.d5± would also give White great winning chances.



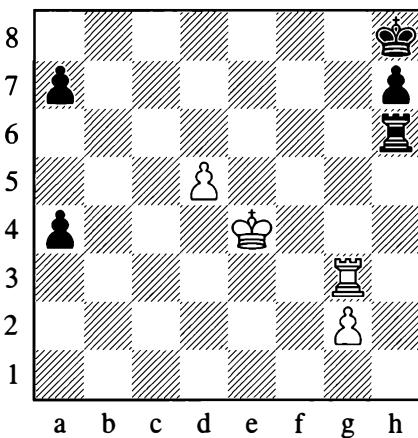
**32.♕e3! fxe4 33.♕c7**

It was stronger to activate the king immediately with 33.♕xe4! ♜d7 (33...♜d6 34.♕c8† ♕f7 35.♕c7† ♕g6 36.♕e5 wins for White) 34.♕c6 a5 35.d5 ♕f7 36.g4 and White is dominating, even though he is a pawn down.

**33...♜d6 34.♕g7† ♕h8?**

I suspect that this is the decisive mistake.

After 34...♗f8 35.♕xh7 ♕g8 36.♕xa7 ♜xh6 37.♕xe4 g4! I think Black will secure the draw. For example: 38.d5 ♕f8 39.g3 ♜f6 40.♕a8† ♕f7 41.♕e5 ♜f3 42.d6 ♜d3 and he should be holding.

**35.♕xg5 ♜xh6 36.d5 a5 37.♕xe4 a4 38.♕g3!****38...a3**

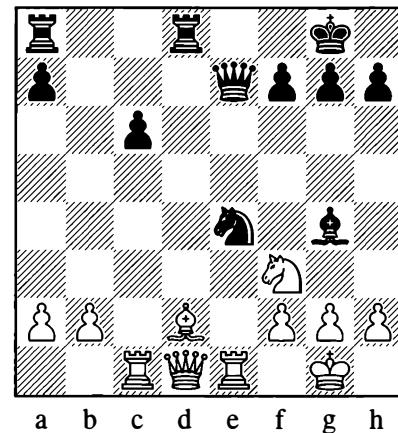
This looks pretty desperate; and indeed it is.

38...♜b6 also fails to work. White wins in beautiful fashion: 39.♕d3! ♕g7 40.d6 ♜b4† 41.♕e5 ♜b5† 42.♕e6 ♜b6 43.♕g3† ♕f8 44.♕f3† ♕e8 45.♕c3 ♜b8 46.♕g3 ♕f8 47.♕f3† ♕g8 48.d7

**39.♕xa3 ♕g8 40.♕d4 ♕f8 41.♕e3 ♜h2  
42.♕e2 ♜h1 43.d6 a5 44.♕c5 ♜c1† 45.♕b6  
爵b1† 46.♕c7 ♜c1† 47.♕d8 a4 48.♕a2  
1–0**

**10. E. L'Ami – Aagaard**

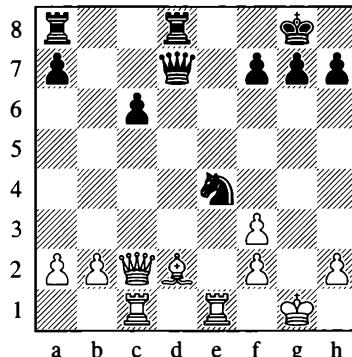
Helsingør 2012



In this game I got away with my overambitious opening play, even though I should not have. The main point of this exercise is tactical, which at times is more important than strategy. We should never close our eyes to this fact, not even when a position is in a strategy book!

**20.♗e2?**

20.♗c2! ♜xf3 (Or 20...♝f5 21.♗f4 and Black's problems on the e-file mean he does not have time to save his c-pawn.) 21.gxf3 ♜d7 This was what I had intended and the reason Erwin rejected this line.



But White wins: 22.♕xe4! ♜xd2 23.♕e8†

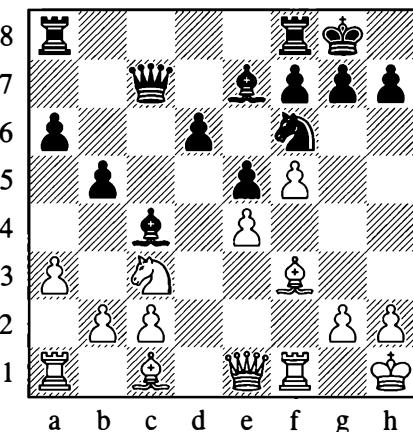
20... $\mathbb{Q}e8$  21. $\mathbb{W}e3$   $\mathbb{W}d7$  22. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}xc3$

After 23. $\mathbb{W}xc3$   $\mathbb{Q}xf3$  24. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ , the black queen lands on d2 and Black equalizes.

$\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$

## 11. Smirin – Grischuk

Kallithea 2008



Having played f4-f5 White has more or less carved the position up into two parts; queenside and kingside. It is obvious that Black's chances are on the queenside with ...a5 and ...b4, or with ...d5. White's chances are on the kingside with g2-g4-g5. For this reason he should place his pieces accordingly, and most importantly, he should not give up the indirect control he has over the d5-square.

### 16. $\mathbb{Q}e2?$ !

This hands over the initiative to Black. The dream of  $\mathbb{Q}g5\times f6$  followed by putting a knight on d5 is positionally sound, but just not possible to enforce in the real world.

### 16...d5

This is rather a pleasant break to play.

### 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{W}xc4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}g5!$

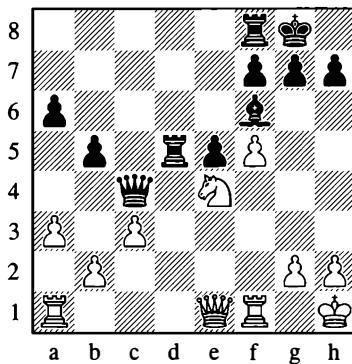
This pawn sacrifice is natural, but still slightly desperate.

18.exd5  $\mathbb{Q}xd5\bar{=}$  is also unpleasant.

### 18...d4

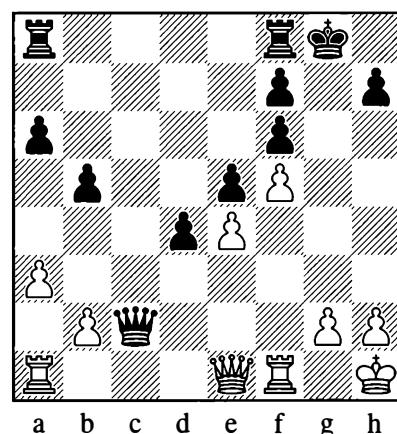
It appears that White had an opportunity to force a draw after this move.

Stronger was: 18...dxe4!?: 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$   $\mathbb{Q}xf6$  20. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{Q}ad8$  21.c3  $\mathbb{Q}d5\bar{=}$



Black has the slightly more pleasant position.

### 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{W}xc2$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xf6\uparrow$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$



### 22. $\mathbb{W}h4?$

This is very natural, but White's most accurate move was probably:

### 22. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ !

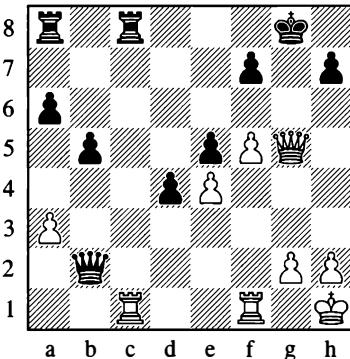
After this he can count on a draw.

### 22... $\mathbb{W}b3$

After 22...Wb2 23.Wg3+ Qh8 24.Wh4 Qg8

25.  $\mathbb{W}xf6\#$   $\mathbb{B}g7$  26.  $\mathbb{B}g1$  White has enough counterplay to secure a draw.

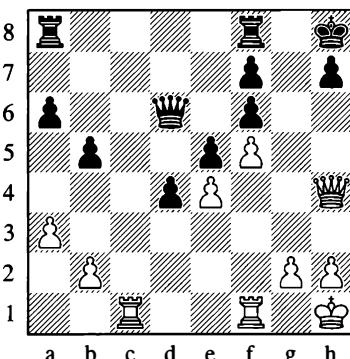
23.  $\mathbb{W}h4!$   $\mathbb{B}fc8$  24.  $\mathbb{W}xf6$   $\mathbb{W}xb2$  25.  $\mathbb{W}g5\#$



This is also a draw, as after 25...  $\mathbb{B}f8??$  26.  $\mathbb{B}a1!!$  White has a winning attack. It is certainly not obvious that protecting the a-pawn should be White's priority. However, Black's only defensive idea involves ...  $\mathbb{W}xa3-f8$ , and with this out of the picture, White has great chances – hence the double exclam.

22...  $\mathbb{B}g7$  23.  $\mathbb{W}g4\#$   $\mathbb{B}h8$  24.  $\mathbb{W}h4$   $\mathbb{B}g7$   
25.  $\mathbb{W}g4\#$   $\mathbb{B}h8$  26.  $\mathbb{W}h4$   $\mathbb{B}g8$

26...  $\mathbb{W}c6$  looks more dangerous to me, although White can remain on equal terms with: 27.  $\mathbb{B}ac1$   $\mathbb{W}d6$

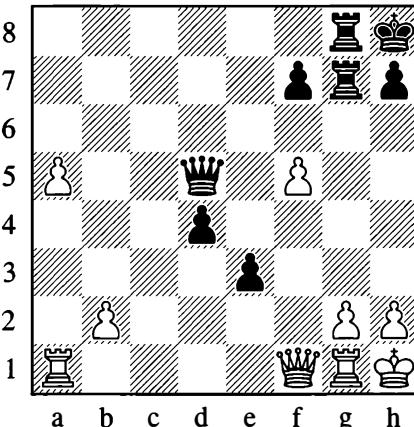


28.  $\mathbb{B}c7!!$  Black can either allow a perpetual or accept that White has decent compensation after 28...  $\mathbb{B}ac8$  29.  $\mathbb{B}d7$   $\mathbb{W}c6$  30.  $b4$ , when the rook is very active on the 7th.

27.  $\mathbb{W}xf6\#$   $\mathbb{B}g7$  28.  $\mathbb{B}g1$   $\mathbb{B}e8$  29.  $\mathbb{W}xa6?$

It was necessary to play 29.  $\mathbb{B}ael$  a5 30.  $\mathbb{W}b6$  with an unclear game. Now Black takes over.

29...  $\mathbb{W}xe4$  30.  $\mathbb{W}xb5$   $\mathbb{B}eg8$  31.  $\mathbb{W}f1$   $\mathbb{W}d5$  32.  $a4$   $e4$  33.  $a5$   $e3?$



34.  $a6$

34.  $\mathbb{B}d1$   $\mathbb{B}g5!$  and Black keeps full control.

34...  $d3$  35.  $a7$

35.  $f6$   $\mathbb{B}g6$  36.  $a7$   $\mathbb{B}a8$  and my long-term bet is on Black. Still, it was a slightly better try.

35...  $e2$  36.  $\mathbb{W}f2$   $f6$  37.  $b4$   $h6$  38.  $b5$   $\mathbb{B}h7$  39.  $b6$   $\mathbb{B}e7$  40.  $\mathbb{W}h4$   $d2$  41.  $a8=\mathbb{W}$   $\mathbb{B}xa8$  42.  $\mathbb{W}xf6$   $\mathbb{B}g7$

White resigned.

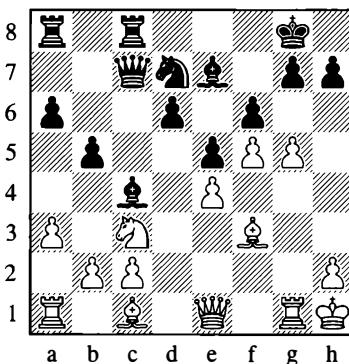
0–1

Returning to the exercise position, much more aggressive was:

16.  $\mathbb{B}g1! \pm a5$

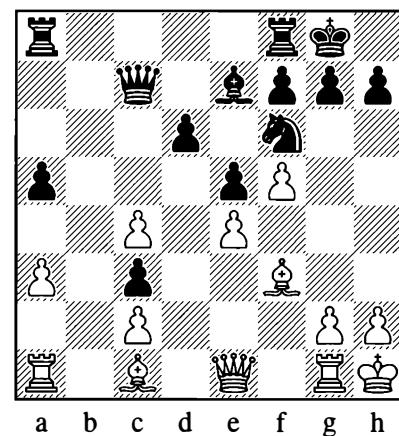
The most natural reply. Black advances pawns on the side of the board where he is stronger.

16...  $\mathbb{B}fc8$  17.  $g4$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  18.  $g5$  also gives White a good attacking position. Because of the potential threat of  $\mathbb{B}d2$  followed by  $b2-b3$ , Black could be misled into playing the incredibly ugly 18...  $f6?$ .



19.g6! might already be winning for White: 19...h6 20.♖h4 ♖f8 21.♕xh6 gxh6 22.g7 ♕xg7 23.♕xh6 ♖f8 24.b3 and the attack is absolutely decisive.

**17.b3 b4 18.bxc4 bxc3**



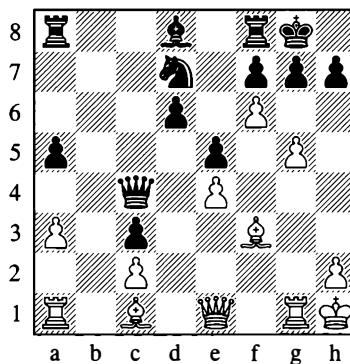
**19.g4!**

Having stabilized the position on the queenside, White attacks on the kingside. The following variation is by no means forced, but it shows the attacking potential.

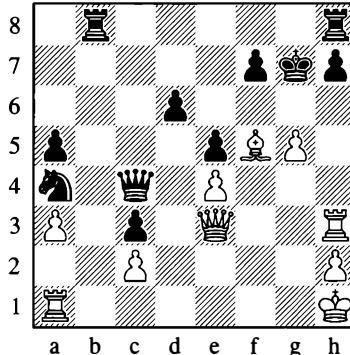
**19...♗xc4 20.g5 ♔e8!**

A vital move.

It is tempting to go to the more active d7-square, but this gives White an important tempo: 20...♘d7 21.f6 ♕d8

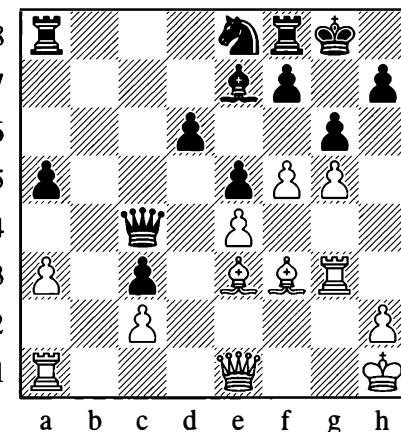


22.♕g4! ♘c5 23.♗xg7 ♔xg7 24.♕f5 ♕h8 25.♗g3 ♘a4 26.♗h3 Black's defensive tasks are immense, for example: 26...♗b6 27.♕e3 ♘xe3 28.♗xe3 ♘ab8



29.♗g3 and White will arrive at his destination first.

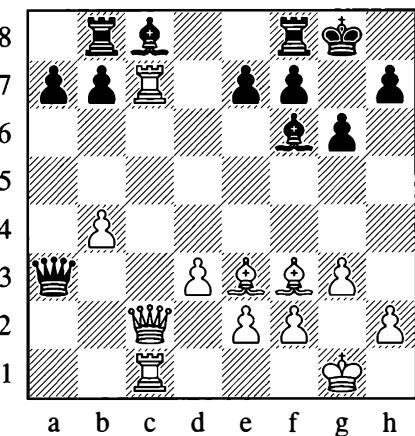
**21.♕e3 g6 22.♗g3**



White has attacking chances on the kingside, but excellent defensive play from Black has kept him in the game.

## 12. Gheorghiu – Korchnoi

Palma de Mallorca 1972

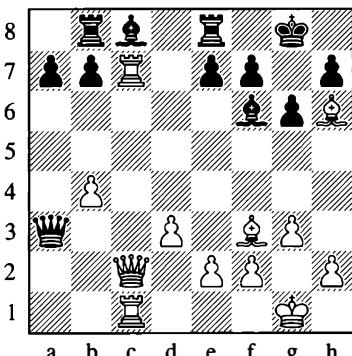


After 20.b5!? or something similar, White's advantage may be enough to win a practical game. But we should not miss the chance to increase our advantage!

### 20.♗h6! ♗g7

This exchange is a disaster for Black; nevertheless it is the only move that keeps alive the illusion that the game is not already over.

Even worse is 20...♝e8?, when the main tactical point behind White's last move is revealed:



21.♖xc8! and Black would have to resign.

### 21.♕xg7 ♔xg7 22.♗c5

Probably the most accurate, though White can win in many different ways, for example taking on e7.

### 22...♝b2 23.♗xa7

I don't like this unnecessary pawn grab.

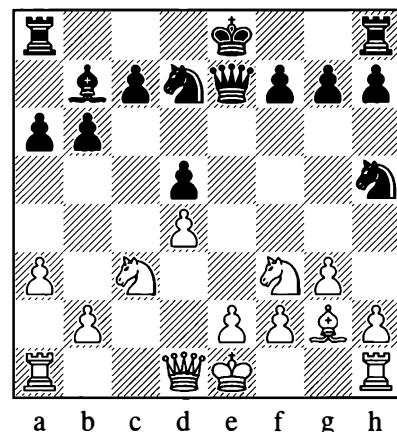
23.♔g2! looks better to me. White will definitely win material and will also have a safe king. Korchnoi might even have resigned against such a simple move!

### 23...♚h3 24.♗a1 ♜xa1 25.♗xa1

White won the game on move 47.

## 13. Kasparov – Antoshin

Baku 1980



Black has three weaknesses, the f5-square, the d5-pawn and the temporarily loose knight on h5. Kasparov found a way to make use of all of them in his typically energetic style.

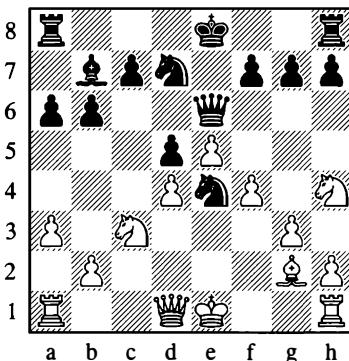
### 12.♘h4! ♘hf6

Black had two other options we should look at:

### 12...♝e6

This gives White the chance to exploit the loose knight in order to transform the pawn structure.

13.e4 ♜hf6 14.e5 ♜e4 15.f4



The degree of White's advantage is illustrated by these lines:

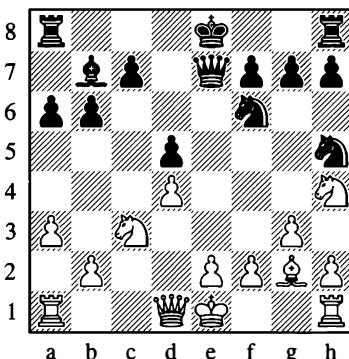
15...0–0

15...f5 is refuted by 16.♘xe4 dxe4 17.d5! followed by 18.♘xf5, and White is basically winning.

16.♗c1 ♜xc3 17.♗xc3 c5 18.0–0±

White has a strong position, but Black can still kick and scream a bit.

12...♝df6



This was probably the best option. White's strongest move looks to be:

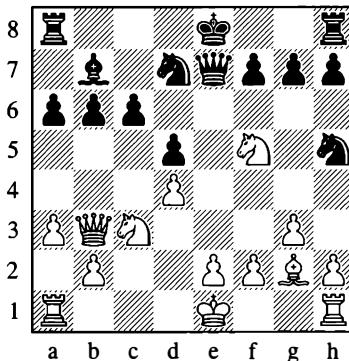
13.♗a4†! c6

Black has no wholly satisfactory way to reply. On 13...♝d7, White would be happy to

exchange the queens and enjoy a technical advantage with a good bishop, pressure on d5 and in addition the oddly placed black knights.

13...b5 14.♗c2 gives White a lasting advantage because of the black pawn structure.

14.♗b3 ♜d7 15.♘f5



White has a clear advantage. For example:

15...♝e6 16.e4 g6 17.♘e3 dxe4 18.♗xe6† fxe6 19.♘xe4 ♜e7 20.0–0±

Black will face discomfort on the e-file.

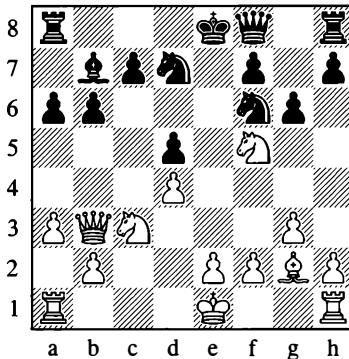
**13.♘f5 ♜f8 14.♗b3**

White's advantage is overwhelming.

**14...0–0–0**

This is the only move that makes sense to me.

The computer's suggestion of 14...g6 is refuted with tactics:

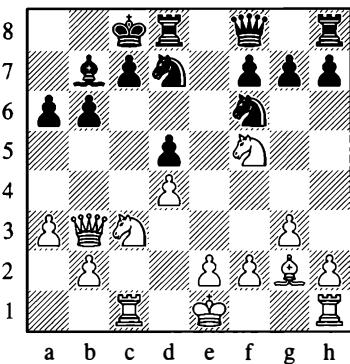


15.♕xd5 ♕xd5 16.♕xd5 0–0–0 (16...c6 17.♗xf7†! is a nice little detail) 17.♗xb7† ♜xb7 18.♘f3† ♜b8 19.♕e3 White has an extra pawn and great winning chances.

### 15.0–0–0?

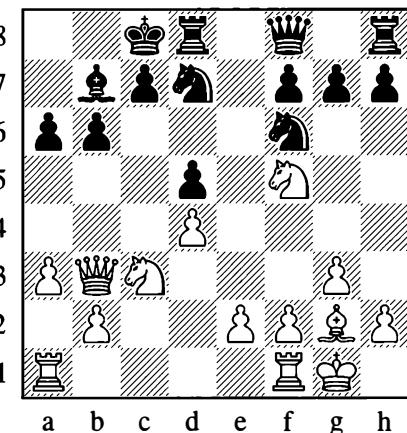
Sometimes you should forget about castling, because there are no threats to your king and there are more important things to do than to bring the rook on h1 into the game.

Taking on d5 immediately makes some sense, but I think 15.♖c1! is most accurate.



15...♝b8 can be met simply with 16.♕xd5 ♜xd5 17.♕xd5 ♜xd5 18.♘xd5±, when Black has no compensation. For example: 18...g6 19.♕e3 ♜f6 20.♘c4 ♜d6 21.♘xa6 ♜xd4 22.0–0 ♜xb2 23.♘b1 ♜a2 24.♘c4+–

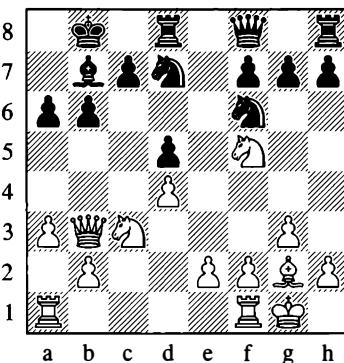
And after 15...g6 White has 16.♕e3! and the d5-pawn falls.



### 15...♝b8?

A very odd manoeuvre. Black is of course trying to defend the d5-pawn, but it should have hurt his insides to make a move like this.

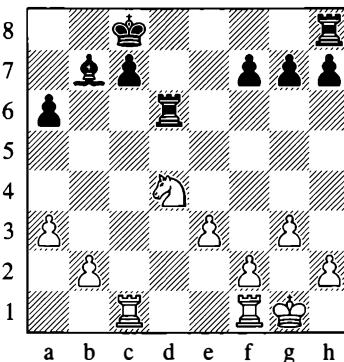
15...♝b8? was right.



The justification is that after 16.♕xd5?!, ♜xd5 17.♕xd5 ♜c5! 18.dxc5 ♜xd5 White's advantage would almost have disappeared.

### 16.♖ac1 ♜c6 17.♕xd5! ♜xd5 18.♕xd5 ♜xd4 19.♘c4?

This is reasonably strong, but Kasparov believed that it would have been better to play 19.♕xd4 ♜xd5 20.♘xb6 ♜d6 21.♘xd6 ♜xd6 22.e3.



Kasparov considered this ending to be technically winning. However, I think he made a decision which was appropriate for a teenager, keeping the queens on and using his

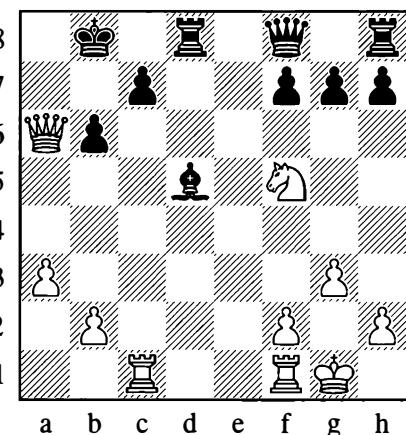
great understanding of dynamics to win the game quickly.

### 19... $\mathbb{Q}xe2\#?$

This loses by force. But this game was played before everyone knew that you should never tempt Kasparov with tactics...

19...c5 20. $\mathbb{W}xd4$   $\mathbb{B}xd5$  21. $\mathbb{W}f4\pm$  would give White a very strong attacking position. Black is not definitely lost yet, but it is getting very close.

### 20. $\mathbb{W}xe2$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xa6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$



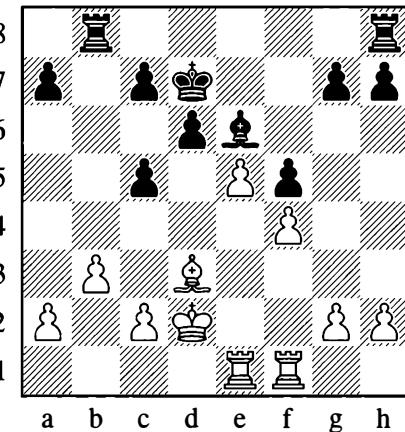
### 22. $\mathbb{B}xc7!$

Typical Kasparov; Black is blown off the board.

22... $\mathbb{Q}xc7$  23. $\mathbb{W}a7\#$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  24. $\mathbb{B}c1\#$   $\mathbb{W}c5$   
25. $\mathbb{B}xc5\#$   $bxc5$  26.b4  $cxb4$  27.axb4  $\mathbb{B}he8$   
28. $\mathbb{Q}e7\#$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  29. $\mathbb{W}c5\#$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  30. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$   
1–0

## 14. Aagaard – Hebden

Glasgow 2012



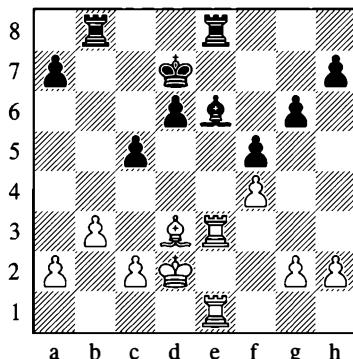
### 18.exf6!?

Quite a natural reaction, creating split pawns on the kingside.

But White had a fantastic move here: 18.exd6!!

If Black recaptures with 18... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$  then 19. $\mathbb{E}e5$  gives White full control.

And after 18... $cxd6$  19. $\mathbb{E}e3$  Black will lose material. The main point is: 19... $g6$  20. $\mathbb{E}fe1$   $\mathbb{E}he8$



21.a4! and there is no defence against  $\mathbb{B}b5\#$ .

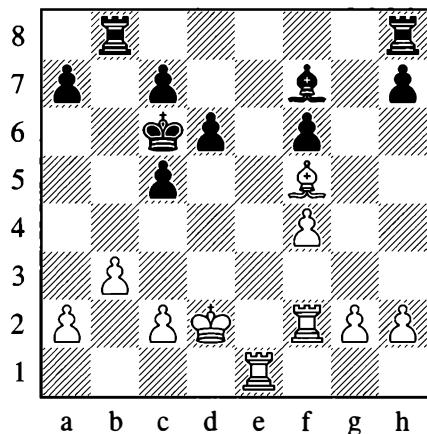
### 18... $\mathbb{gxf6}$ 19. $\mathbb{E}f2!$ $\mathbb{Q}f7?$

This seems to be a total blunder.

The correct defence was 19... $\mathbb{E}be8$  20. $\mathbb{E}fe2$

$\mathbb{Q}f7$  21.  $\mathbb{E}xe8$   $\mathbb{Q}xe8$  and although Black is worse, White is not penetrating his position as easily as in the game.

20.  $\mathbb{Q}f5\#$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$

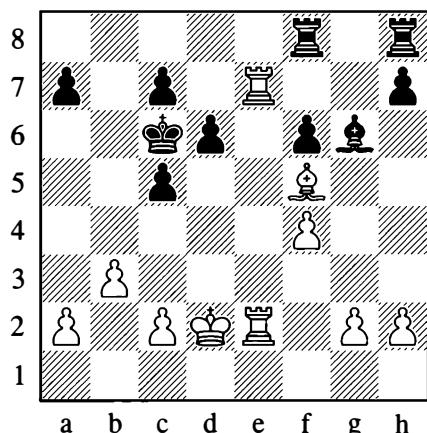


21.  $\mathbb{Q}e7$

I felt sure that my position was winning here.

21...  $\mathbb{E}bf8$  22.  $\mathbb{E}fe2$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$

I half expected this move. I could not see any other active moves for him and thus expected it, but at the same time I had something strong prepared against it, which I did not think he would allow. In the event, he made this move without too much consideration.

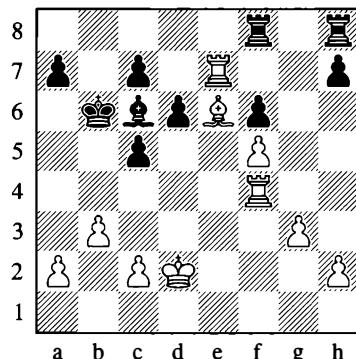


23.  $\mathbb{Q}d7\#!$

23.  $\mathbb{Q}e6$  was also attractive, but I did not want to allow him to play 23...  $f5$ , which may look passive but does at least prevent White's planned  $f4-f5$ .

23...  $\mathbb{Q}b6$  24.  $\mathbb{F}5$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$

24...  $\mathbb{Q}h5$  25.  $\mathbb{E}2e4$  with the idea of  $\mathbb{Q}h4$  should also be winning for White. For example: 25...  $\mathbb{E}fg8$  26.  $g3$   $\mathbb{Q}f3$  27.  $\mathbb{E}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}e6$   $\mathbb{E}f8$  Otherwise the f6-pawn falls.



29.  $\mathbb{E}g4!$  and the appearance of this rook on g7 secures White's complete domination. Depending on how Black reacts, White may bring his king to f4 and create a passed f-pawn, or he may just win something on the 7th rank.

25.  $\mathbb{Q}e6$   $\mathbb{Q}xe6$

25...  $\mathbb{Q}e8$  does not work; White plays  $\mathbb{E}e3-g3$  with a winning position.

26.  $fxe6$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}e3!$   $h5$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $h4$  29.  $\mathbb{E}f7$   $\mathbb{E}e8$  30.  $\mathbb{E}xf6$   $\mathbb{Q}h5$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}g4$   $\mathbb{E}h7$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}f7!!$  32.  $c4+-$  was simpler.

32...  $\mathbb{E}xe6$  33.  $\mathbb{E}xc7\#$   $\mathbb{E}xc7$  34.  $\mathbb{E}xe6$   $\mathbb{E}g7\#$  35.  $\mathbb{Q}h3$   $\mathbb{E}f7$

During the game I wondered if Mark would go for 35...  $\mathbb{E}h7$  36.  $\mathbb{E}e4$   $\mathbb{E}f7$ , when I was planning to take on h4 with the rook and win the race. But of course I could keep things simple by just playing 37.  $\mathbb{E}e2$ , transposing to the game.

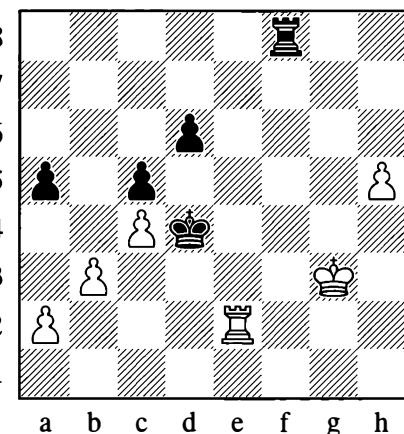
**36.♗e2 ♘f4 37.g4 hxg3 38.♕xg3**

For some reason Mark wrote hxg3 on his scoresheet without looking up. I definitely want the passed pawn as far away from the black king as possible. In fact I was surprised that he did not simply resign here; as far as I could see his position was hopeless.

**38...♗f8 39.h4 ♔d5 40.h5 ♔d4 41.c4?!**

I wanted to fix his pawn on d6 and not allow his king to be strong on c3. But it wouldn't actually be strong there and the d-pawn cannot advance without being exchanged anyway. I was clearly being too superficial at this point.

An easy win would have been achieved by 41.♗g4 and a simple march up the board.

**41...a5**

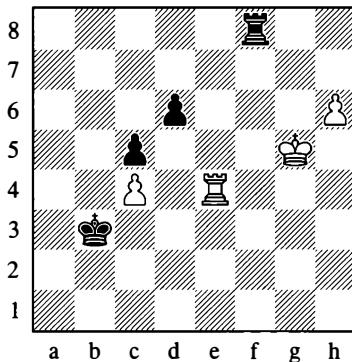
Here I thought for maybe 40 minutes to get my head around everything. I was sure that I was winning; the main thing is to avoid Black winning the b3-pawn.

**42.♗g4 a4 43.h6**

This is a simple human way to play. The king supports the h-pawn and the tactics gets minimized.

**43...♔c3 44.♗e3†**

44.♗g5? axb3 45.axb3 ♔xb3 46.♗e4 does not win.



Black manages to draw with 46...♗d8!, when he will get his passed pawn very soon.

**44...♗b2 45.♗h5**

45.bxa4 d5 was too messy for me, even though I felt sure it was enough to win. One of the things I certainly did not want was to reach queen against rook; won in theory, but not always in practice.

**45...d5**

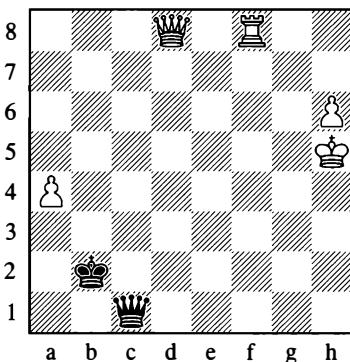
45...a3 46.♗e2† ♗b1 47.h7 also wins easily for White. I had calculated a long winning line, but easiest is just ♗h2 followed by going with the king to take the d6-pawn.

**46.cxd5 ♗xa2**

I had actually missed the idea of 46...♗f5† 47.♗g6 ♗xd5, but it does not provide much resistance. I quickly found 48.h7 ♗d6† (48...♗d8 49.bxa4 c4 50.♗h3 and White is many tempos ahead.) 49.♗f7 ♗d7† 50.♗e7 ♗d8 51.bxa4 and the a-pawn(s) will be glorious assets at the end of the line.

**47.bxa4 c4**

On 47...♔b2 I had calculated the following line: 48.d6 c4 49.d7 c3 50.♗e8 c2 51.♗xf8 c1=♕ 52.d8=♕



And the white king will hide from the checks on h8 with  $\mathbb{W}d8-f6$  to defend it. I really liked the geometry of this, but of course there are a lot of other solutions.

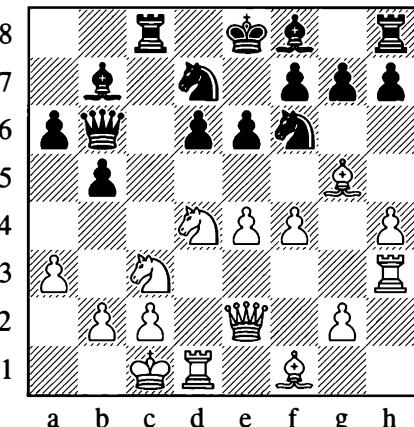
#### 48. $\mathbb{B}c3!$

Not the computer's favourite, but it kills all need for calculation, so for the practical player this is the right move.

48...  $\mathbb{B}f5\#$  49.  $\mathbb{B}g6$   $\mathbb{B}xd5$  50.  $\mathbb{B}xc4$   $\mathbb{B}d6\#$   
51.  $\mathbb{B}g7$   $\mathbb{B}d7\#$  52.  $\mathbb{B}f8$   
1–0

#### 15. Azarov – Shomoev

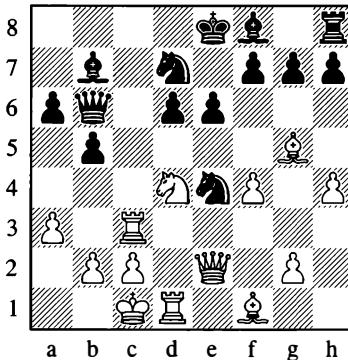
Moscow 2012



White has played a few odd-looking moves, giving Black the chance to fight for the

initiative. However, he has to be very careful how he does so.

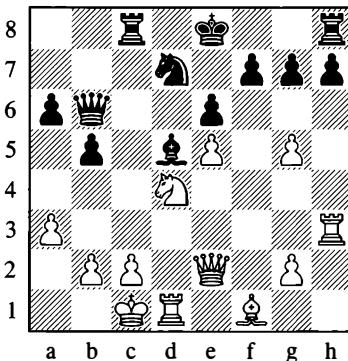
Here Black played: 12...  $\mathbb{B}xc3?$  13.  $\mathbb{B}xc3$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4?$



14.  $\mathbb{W}xe4!$  and he was just lost. He struggled on until move 41 before resigning.

#### 12... $\mathbb{B}c4!$

12...  $\mathbb{Q}e7?!$  does not work well. White can strike immediately in the centre, taking the initiative: 13.  $e5!$   $dxe5$  14.  $fxe5$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$   $\mathbb{Q}xg5\#$  16.  $hxg5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

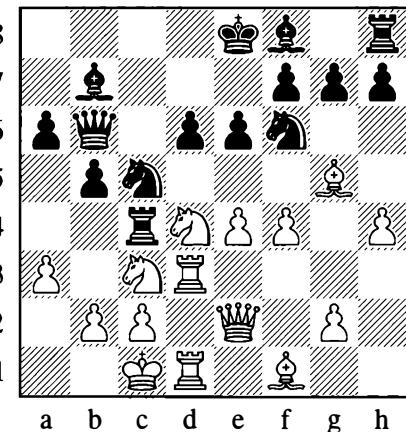


17.  $\mathbb{Q}f5!$   $exf5$  18.  $\mathbb{B}xd5\pm$  The bishop is better than the knight and White enjoys a lot of activity. The only question is how large the advantage is.

12...  $h6$  makes some sense. After 13.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6$   $\mathbb{Q}xf6$  14.  $\mathbb{Q}b1$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  15.  $g4$  both players have some things going for them, with approximately even chances in a fighting position.

**13.♗hd3**

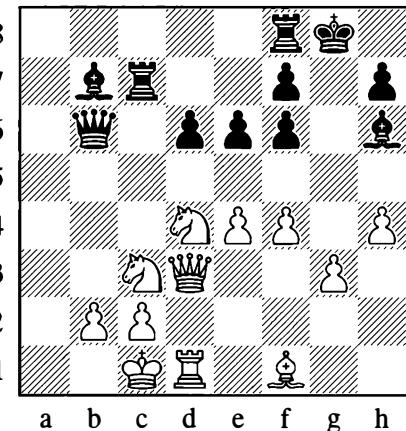
13.♗d2? may look healthy, but now 13...♝xc3!† works.

**13...♝c5****14.♝xf6 ♜xd3† 15.♗xd3**

After 15.cxd3 the simplest is probably 15...♝xd4†, gaining the advantage of the two bishops.

**15...gxh6 16.a4!?**

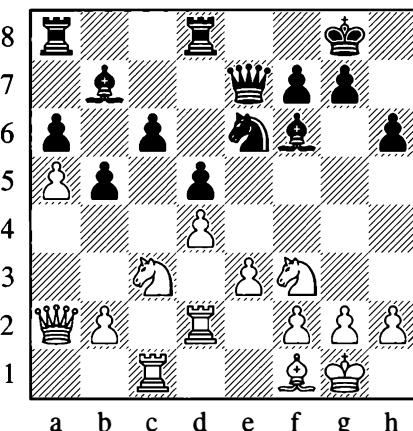
If White does not do something, he will just be the exchange down.

**16...♝h6 17.g3 0-0 18.axb5 axb5 19.♝dxb5  
♝c6 20.♝d4 ♜c7†**

Black has both a material advantage and the better chances if it comes to a big dogfight.

**16. Illescas Cordoba – Short**

Pamplona 1999



If White had time to play ♔e1-d3 and b2-b4, he would have a wonderful position, but at the moment he has not managed to clamp down fully on the dark squares. From Black's perspective he would like to change the poor placement of his queen's bishop, but this can of course only happen through a push in the centre.

The only problem with this is that a ...c5-break risks leaving Black with an isolated pawn.

**19...c5!†**

But these concerns are all overcome with great tactics. If White now does nothing, Black will have a nice choice between ...c4 and ...cxd4, with points in favour of both.

**20.dxc5!?**

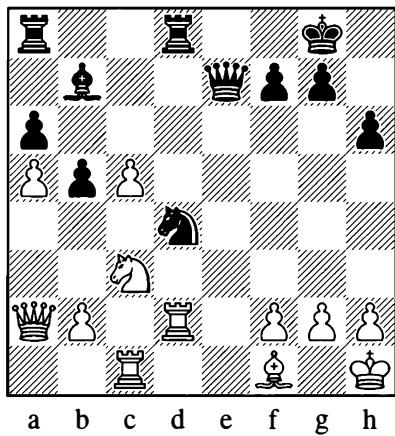
This is the critical choice and it is easy to understand why Illescas decided to take up the challenge.

**20...d4!**

Opening up the position for all the pieces. The white queen is clearly offside on a2, which means the defence is very difficult.

### 21.♕xd4 ♜xd4 22.exd4 ♜xd4 23.♗h1

Objectively it might have been better to play 23.♗d3 ♜f3† 24.♗xf3 ♜xf3, but the prospects are rather dim of course.



### 23...♝f3!

It is possible to overlook this move, as it does not come with check.

23...♛xc5† would lose a lot of the attack's momentum.

### 24.♗xd8†?!

This only helps Black to bring his last piece into the attack, while removing the white rook from the defence.

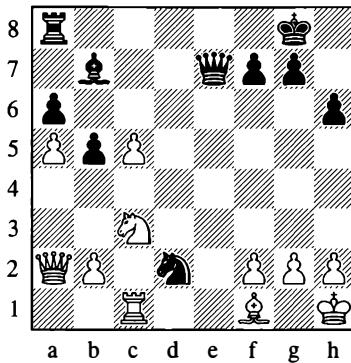
### 24.♗dc2

This was objectively stronger, but White is hanging on to a very slippery rope at the edge of the cliff. The following line shows how bad things can get:

24...♗d2† 25.♗xd2

25.b4? ♛h4 and White is mated.

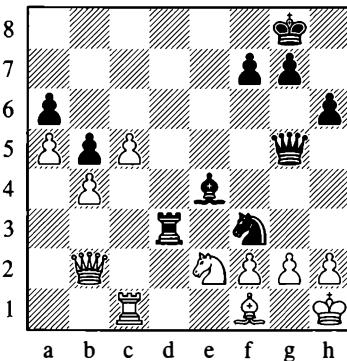
25...♛xd2



26.b4?!

26.♛a3!†

26...♝d8 27.♝c2 ♛g5! 28.♛e2 ♛e4 29.♝d1  
♝f3 30.♛b3 ♘d3 31.♛b2  
31.♝c3 ♘d2!



31...♛h4!! 32.gxf3 ♘xf3 33.♔g2 ♘xf2 34.♝g1  
♛h3

White is facing mate. For example:

35.♚f4 ♛xg2† 36.♝xg2 ♛xg2† 37.♛xg2 ♘f1#

### 24...♝xd8

Black is winning.

### 25.c6

25.♛e2 ♛g5 26.♝d1 ♘xd1† 27.♛xd1 ♛e5!  
and wins.

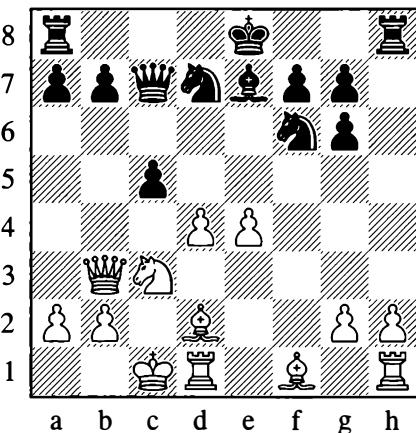
25...♛xc6 26.♛e2 ♛h4! 27.gxf3 ♛xf2

28.♚f4 ♛xf3† 29.♚g2 ♘d2 30.♝g1 ♛e4

0–1

## 17. Wang Yue – Anand

Nice (blindfold) 2009



If it was only structure that mattered, Black would be doing well. White's centre is about to break apart and Black will have control of the dark squares. But these are just the static features. The dynamic features talk about Black not being fully ready.

### 15.♗c4!!

It is very rare that you can exploit a dynamic advantage without putting dynamic considerations above static. Here this means that White cannot hope to exploit his advantage by thinking about the pawn structure in the centre; instead he needs to sacrifice a piece in order to create immediate threats.

15.e5 leads nowhere: 15...cx d4 16.ex f6 dx c3 17.♗xc3 ♗xf6 18.♗b5 0–0–0 and Black is not worse.

15.♗b5 ♗c8 16.e5 ♗e4 is also not too dangerous for Black.

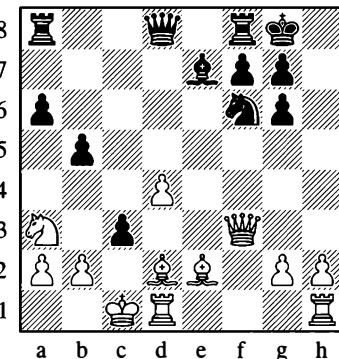
### 15...cx d4!?

I personally do not like this choice, accepting the piece sacrifice but allowing his opponent to unleash a strong attack. However, Black

managed to draw in the game, and it is hard to argue against the final result – still, I would like to argue!

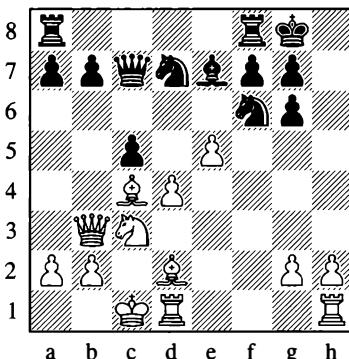
I would have preferred to fight for the initiative with 15...0–0–0!, when I have analysed two critical lines:

16.♗b5 ♗d8 17.e5 a6! Black sacrifices a piece to fight for the initiative. 18.exf6 ♗xf6 19.♗a3 b5 20.♗e2 c4 21.♗f3 c3!



Winning back the piece. 22.♗xc3 b4 23.♗xb4 ♗xb4 24.♗c4± White is a pawn up, but the bishops are opposite-coloured, the d4-pawn might be weak in the long term, and there are open files leading to the white king.

### 16.e5!



This highly tactical decision seems to be the best option, with an evaluation similar to the

game; but with a much higher requirement for accuracy.

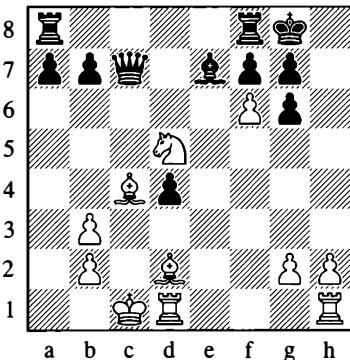
16...cxd4 17.exf6 ♜c5!

This line is all about dynamics.

18.♗d5!!

This queen sacrifice is the only way to fight for the initiative.

18...♝xb3† 19.axb3



19...♛c5

Black has to stay away from the d-file.

19...♛d7 20.fxe7 ♛fe8 21.♕c3! leads to a large advantage for White: 21...b5 22.♕xd4

♛b7 23.♕d3±

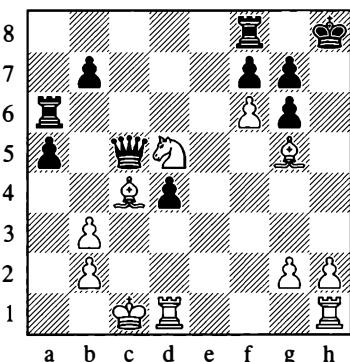
20.♗xe7† ♜h8 21.♗d5

Threatening ♜b4.

21...a5

The inclusion of the moves 21...♜fc8 22.♗b1 does not help Black. After 22...a5 23.♕g5 ♜a6 24.♕hf1 White's attack has only strengthened.

22.♕g5 ♜a6



23.fxg7†!

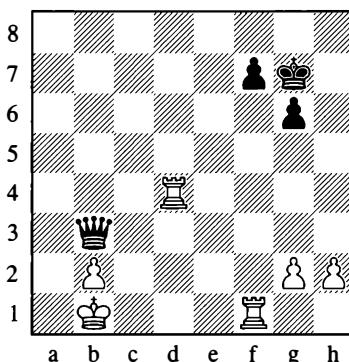
23.♕hf1?! does not work here. Black has not spent time putting the rook on c8, so he can put it directly on e8, where it belongs:

23...♜e8! 24.♗d3 b5 25.♕h3† ♜g8 26.fxg7 ♜xg7 27.♕f6† ♜xf6 28.♗xf6 ♜e1†! 29.♗xe1 ♜xf6=

23...♜xg7 24.♕e7 ♜d6 25.♕hf1 a4

25...b5 26.♗f6± bxc4? loses to 27.♗d7.

26.♗b1 b5 27.♗f6 ♜c6 28.♕xd6 ♜xd6 29.♕xb5 axb3 30.♗e8† ♜xe8 31.♕xe8 ♜d5 32.♕a4 ♜c4 33.♕xb3 ♜xb3 34.♕xd4±



White has excellent winning chances in this ending, although there are still great practical challenges ahead.

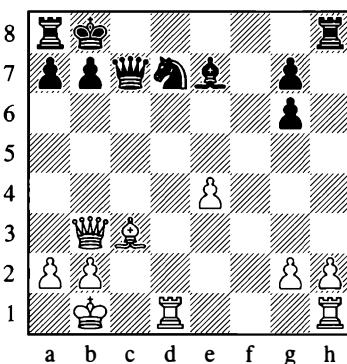
**16.♗xf7† ♜d8**

16...♜f8?: 17.♕xg6 ♜e5 18.♗f4 is entirely hopeless.

**17.♗b1 dxс3 18.♕xc3 ♜xe4**

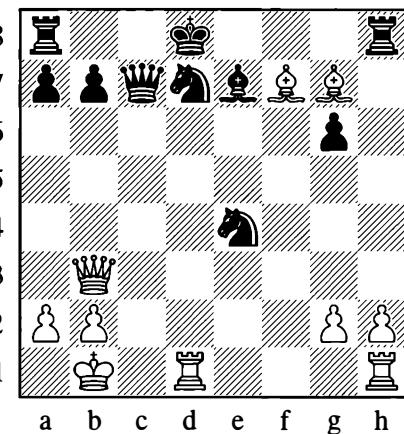
Black could also fight for survival with 18...♜b6, when White can exchange queens and seek winning chances in the ending with opposite-coloured bishops, or be more aggressive with 19.e5 ♜xb3 20.♕xb3 ♜c7 21.exf6 ♜xf6 22.♕a5† b6 23.♗c1†± with a continuing initiative.

Trying to run away with 18...♜c8 is, however, completely hopeless. White wins with: 19.♕e6 ♜b8 20.♕xd7 ♜xd7



21... $\mathbb{E}xd7!$  followed by  $\mathbb{E}e5\#$ .

19.  $\mathbb{E}xg7$



19... $\mathbb{E}ec5!$

Anand is defending tenaciously. He avoids a quick defeat after something like 19... $\mathbb{E}h7?$  20. $\mathbb{E}e5!$   $\mathbb{W}xe5$  21. $\mathbb{W}xb7$ , when White will remove the black rook and a-pawn from the board and obtain a technically winning position.

20.  $\mathbb{W}e3$   $\mathbb{E}h4$

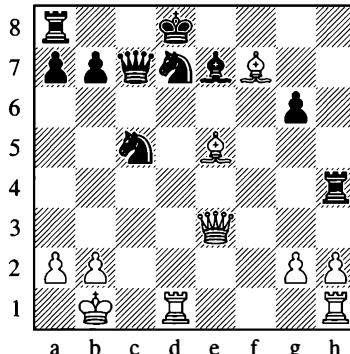
The only move. 20... $\mathbb{E}h7?$  21. $\mathbb{E}he1$  is over immediately.

21.  $\mathbb{E}he1?$

An automatic move that fails to take the opponent's idea into account. The fact that this was a blindfold game explains everything:

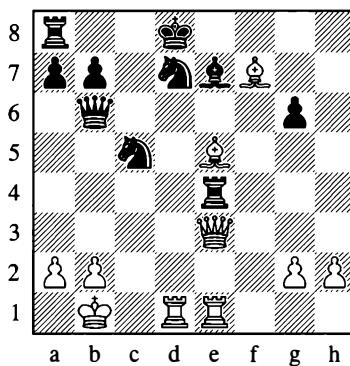
Wang Yue simply did not see his opponent's next move!

White is close to winning after 21. $\mathbb{E}e5!$ , when Black has two possible moves, both leading to a clear edge for White.



21... $\mathbb{W}c6$  22.  $\mathbb{E}d5$   $\mathbb{W}b6$  23.  $\mathbb{E}he1$  with a fantastic initiative for White. Black has no simple way to reduce the pressure and it is quite likely that he will quickly fall apart in practice. A possible variation is 23... $g5$  24.  $\mathbb{E}d4$   $\mathbb{E}f6$  25.  $\mathbb{E}xf6\#$   $\mathbb{W}xf6$  26.  $\mathbb{W}e8\#$   $\mathbb{E}c7$  27.  $\mathbb{W}xa8$   $\mathbb{E}b4$  28.  $\mathbb{E}e2\pm$  and Black has a difficult defence ahead of him. Even the chance to swindle his opponent might disappear at any moment.

21... $\mathbb{W}b6$  22.  $\mathbb{E}he1\pm$  is also very dangerous for Black. For example, he cannot play the same defensive idea as in the game: 22... $\mathbb{E}e4?$



White is winning after 23.  $\mathbb{W}h3$ , or he can choose the forcing line: 23.  $\mathbb{E}xd7\#$   $\mathbb{E}xd7$

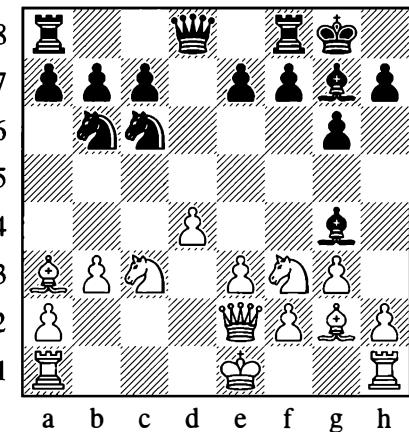
24.  $\mathbb{E}d1\uparrow \mathbb{Q}d6$  25.  $\mathbb{W}h3\uparrow \mathbb{Q}e7$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}xd6\uparrow \mathbb{W}xd6$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}xd6 \mathbb{Q}xd6$  28.  $\mathbb{W}g3\uparrow \mathbb{Q}e5$  29.  $\mathbb{W}xg6\uparrow$  and the win is a matter of technique, and probably not too difficult for the Chinese player.

### 21... $\mathbb{E}e4!$

The game was now unclear and ended in stalemate on move 85!

## 18. Krasenkow – Ftacnik

Polanica Zdroj 1995



White has neglected his development and weakened his position slightly, with the intention of preventing Black's standard break ...e5.

The first thing we should consider in positions where our opponent plays with this sort of brutal prophylaxis is whether it actually achieves its goal. Here it does not; the exchange (an active bishop on a3 for an inactive rook on f8) is a price well worth paying for control over the dark squares and the chance to take over the initiative.

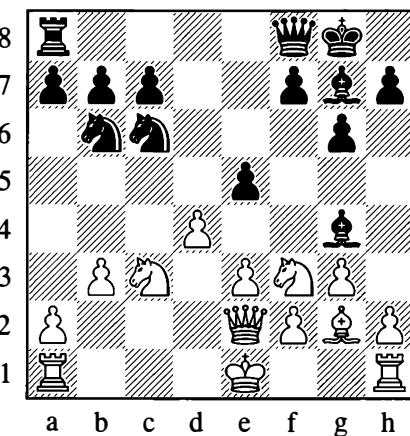
### 11...e5!!

In the game Black took his time with 11... $\mathbb{E}e8?$ , and after 12.  $\mathbb{E}d1\pm$  he struggled to achieve activity, eventually losing on move 37.

### 12. $\mathbb{Q}xf8$

There is nothing else. If Black has time for ...exd4 and ... $\mathbb{E}e8$ , his advantage will be overwhelming.

### 12... $\mathbb{W}xf8$

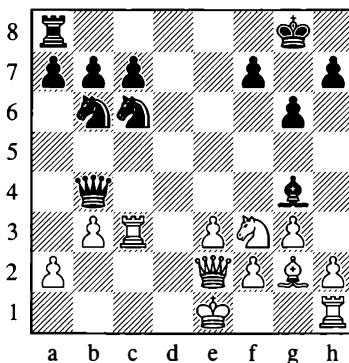


### 13.0–0!

White has to complete his development before it is too late. And as often happens when you are under attack, too late can be quite soon.

White has a few possible ways to go down:

- a) 13.  $dxe5?$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$  Taking with the knight is also strong, but this is simply decisive. 14.  $\mathbb{E}c1$   $\mathbb{Q}xc3\uparrow$  15.  $\mathbb{E}xc3$   $\mathbb{W}b4$



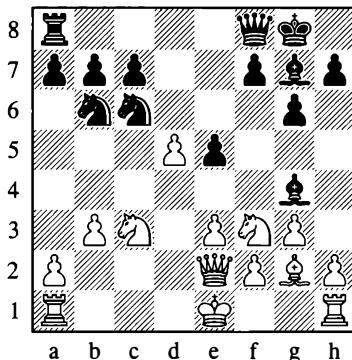
16.  $\mathbb{W}d2$  (16.  $\mathbb{W}c2?$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  wins) 16...  $\mathbb{E}d8$   
17.  $\mathbb{E}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}xc4$  18.  $\mathbb{W}xb4$   $\mathbb{Q}xb4$  19.  $bxc4$   $\mathbb{Q}d3\uparrow$

20.♕e2 ♕e6 Black is winning a pawn and should win the endgame.

b) 13.0–0–0? is just silly, but let's have a look all the same: 13...exd4 14.exd4 ♖xd4 15.♗d3 ♜a3† 16.♔b1 ♖xb3 White is being wiped off the board.

c) 13.♖c1?! exd4 14.♗d1 ♜e8† with a serious initiative. White's extra exchange will matter only if we reach the endgame, something that is becoming less and less likely.

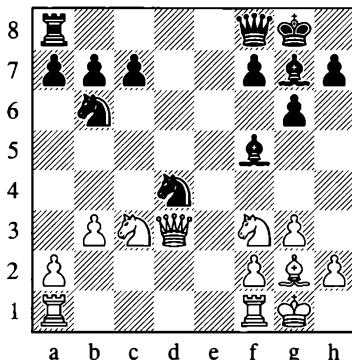
d) Okay, there is another possible move. White can try 13.d5.



But after 13...♖d4! 14.exd4 exd4 15.0–0 dxc3† Black's life is wonderful.

### 13...exd4 14.♗b5

Forced. White should not get tangled up in: 14.exd4? ♖xd4 15.♗d3 ♜f5!



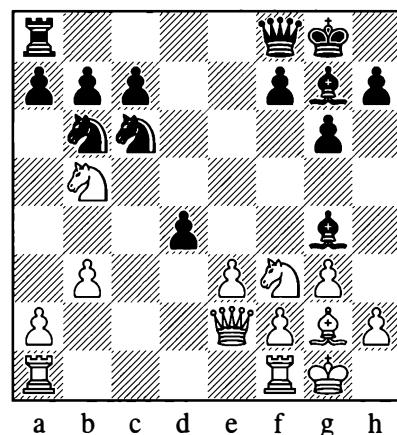
The queen lacks good squares. White has to go voluntarily into a pin with:

16.♔e4

16.♗d2 loses a piece to 16...♖xf3† 17.♕xf3 ♜d8 18.♖c1 ♜d3.

16...♖xf3† 17.♕xf3 ♜d8

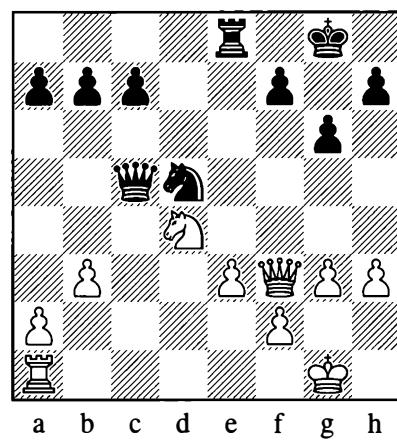
Followed by ...♜xa1 and ...♝e7, when Black will enjoy his extra pawn.



14...♜e8!

Black should certainly play for the initiative, although of course he could equalize with 14...d3. Now a possible line is:

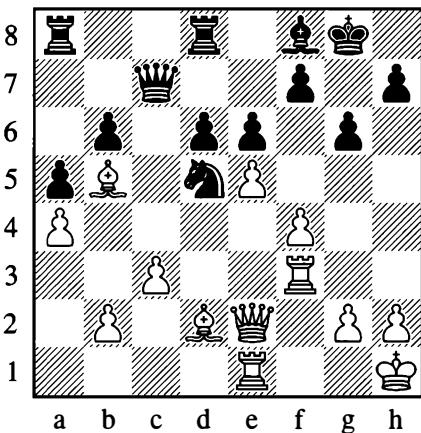
15.h3 d3 16.♗xd3 ♜xf3 17.♕xf3 ♔e5  
18.♗e2 ♖xf3† 19.♗xf3 ♜xa1 20.♗xa1 ♜c5  
21.♗d4 ♜d5



Black's position is slightly more pleasant; it is White who has to look for equality.

## 19. Lechado Artigues – Oms Pallisse

Palma de Mallorca 2009



In this situation a 2100 player has the chance to launch a strong attack against a grandmaster. Black is suffering from what I like to refer to as “the missing bishop”; which basically means that the light squares are weak, because his bishop has been exchanged. As this is where White’s advantage lies, it is only natural that he should strike on the light squares.

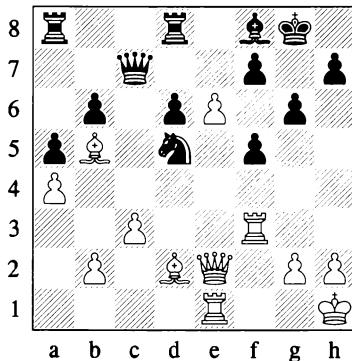
### 23.f5! exf5!?

23...gxf5 24.♗g3† ♖h8 25.♗h5 is very dangerous for Black. For example: 25...f6 26.c4!± and the knight cannot leave due to its responsibilities on the kingside.

Best was maybe 23...dxe5, but White can play simply and get a big positional plus: 24.fxe6 fxe6 25.♗g5 ♖e7 26.♗xe7 ♗xe7 27.♗e3±

### 24.♗g5!?

24.e6! was much stronger.



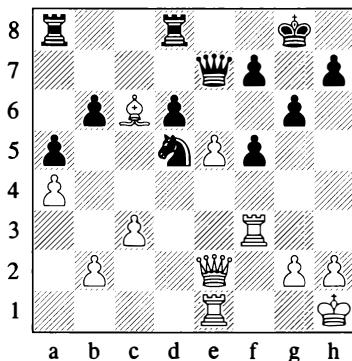
White is threatening ♗c4, so 24...♗dc8?! suggests itself as a defence. But after 25.g4! Black's position is falling apart.

Not also that 24...fxe6? is impossible: 25.♗xe6† ♖f7 26.♗xf7† ♖xf7 27.♗c4 and White wins the knight.

### 24...♗e7 25.exd6??

A sad blunder. The lower-rated player has gone from a winning position to an almost lost one in only two moves.

### 25.♗xe7 ♖xe7 26.♗c6±



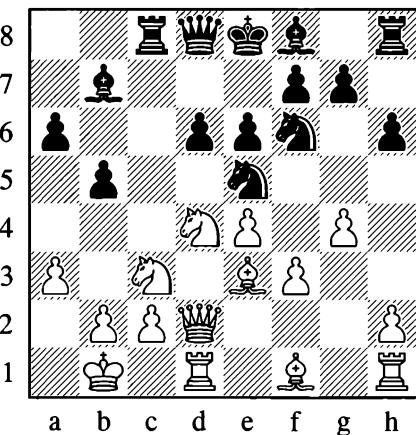
This would still have picked up the exchange, though for some compensation.

### 25...♗xd6 26.♗e7 ♖e6!†

After this there was no mercy. Black won on move 37.

## 20. McKay – Aagaard

Giffnock 2008



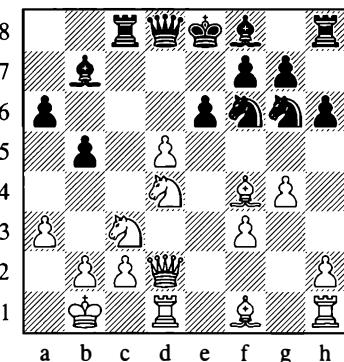
White has lost a tempo compared to a regular English Attack in the Najdorf by going 6.♘g5 e6 7.♗d2 and retreating the bishop to e3 when Black played ...h6. For this reason I decided to act with great aggression.

### 13...d5!

The most active move. The consequences of 13...♝xf3?! 14.♝xf3 ♛xe4 15.♝xe4 ♜xe4 16.♝g2!† are not fully clear; White gets a lot of pieces for his queen.

### 14.exd5?

This is too compliant. 14.♕f4 ♜g6 15.exd5 gives Black a pleasant choice:



15...b4!? with an attack, or 15...♜xc3! 16.bxc3 ♜xf4 17.♗xf4 ♜xd5 18.♗d2 ♜xa3 with a winning attack.

The only move was therefore:

### 14.f4!?

Now Black has to play accurately to fight for the initiative.

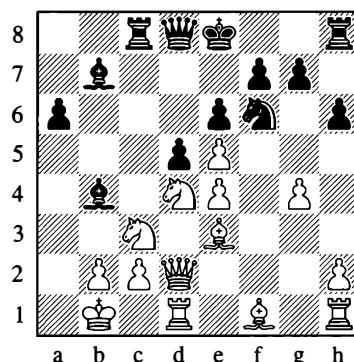
### 14...b4!

14...♜xc3 15.♗xc3 ♜xe4 16.♗e1 does not seem critical for White.

Neither does 14...♛exg4 15.e5, when White has compensation for the pawn.

### 15.axb4 ♜xb4 16.fxe5

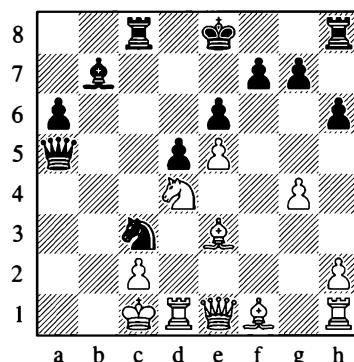
Otherwise White's play does not make sense.



### 16...♜xc3!

No queen sacrifices today! This is stronger than 16...♛xe4 17.♛xe4!.

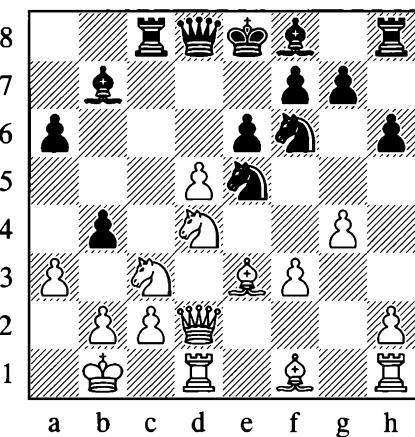
### 17.bxc3 ♜xe4 18.♗e1 ♜xc3† 19.♔c1 ♜a5†



The direct win is beyond the engine's horizon, but Black's attack is not to be

underestimated. White cannot get rid of the knight on c3, nor can he prevent Black from returning to evolution mode and setting up a serious attack.

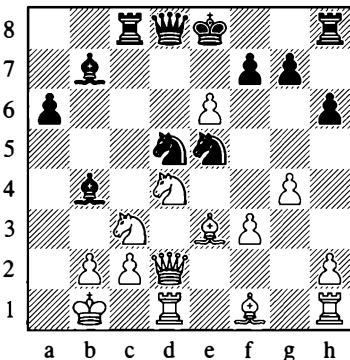
### 14...b4!!



The point of Black's play. White is becoming vulnerable on the dark squares.

### 15.axb4 ♜xb4 16.♗f4

16.dxe6 is best met with 16...♝d5! and Black's attack is very strong.

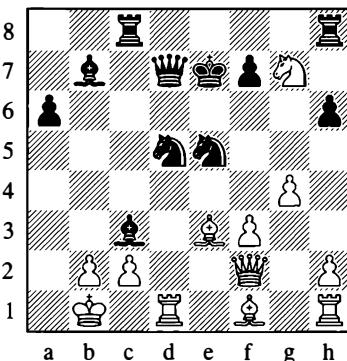


17.♝f5 ♜xc3 does not help White at all. For example: 18.exf7† ♜f8 19.♗f2 ♜a5 and White is lost.

17.♝de2 0–0 does not help White either. All the threats remain and Black is just about

fully mobilized. The best chance may be the desperate 18.♗xd5?! ♜xd5 19.♝xd5, which falls short to 19...fxe6! 20.♗b6 ♜xd5 21.♝xd5 exd5 and White does not have enough for the exchange.

17.e7 ♜d7 18.♝f5 (18.♝xa6 ♜xa6 19.♝f5 ♜xc3† 20.bxc3 ♜xd2 21.♝xg7† ♜xe7 22.♝xd2 ♜a3 does not give White serious drawing chances, even if immediate mate has been averted.) 18...♜xc3 19.♝xg7† ♜xe7 20.♗f2



20...♜c7! 21.♝c1 ♜f8 22.♝f5 ♜a5 23.♝d3 (23.♝d4 ♜c5–+) 23...♝b4 24.♝xh6† ♜xh6 25.♝xc3 ♜a2† 26.♝c1 ♜xc3 27.bxc3 ♜d6 28.♝xd6 ♜xf3–+

### 16...♝xd5

This was a prosaic solution in a game with reduced time.

Also strong was 16...♜xc3?! 17.bxc3 ♜xd5 18.♝xe5 ♜xc3†, with the point that after 19.♝b2 ♜xd1† 20.♗xd1 f6! Black wins back the piece with ...e5, and thus emerge an exchange up.

### 17.♝xe5

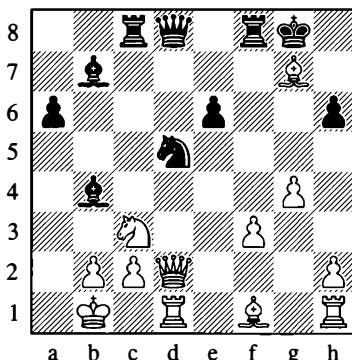
This loses simply.

### 17.♝xe6 fxe6 18.♝xe5

This would have defended c3, but White's

position is still very insecure. Black just develops:

18...0–0† 19.♕xg7?



Although tricky, this is refuted in several ways. Easiest is probably:

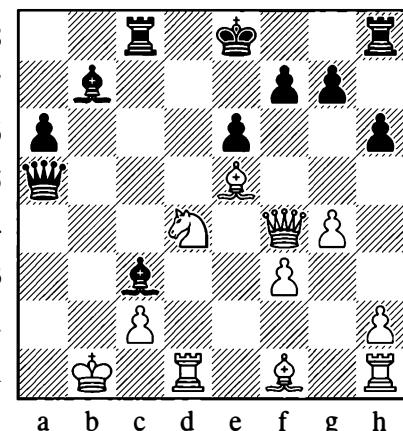
19...♗xc3! 20.♗xc3 ♗xc3† 21.bxc3 ♗xf3  
22.♗d3

22.♗xd8 ♗cxd8 23.♗xd8 ♗xd8 24.♗g1  
♗d1† followed by ...♗e2 wins for Black.

22...♗b6† 23.♗c1 ♗f6 24.♗hf1 ♗c5

And the white king is visibly weaker.

17...♗xc3† 18.bxc3 ♗xc3 19.♗f4 ♗a5



20.♗b5†

20.♗b3 ♗xe5 is not any better.

20...axb5 21.♗b3 ♗b4

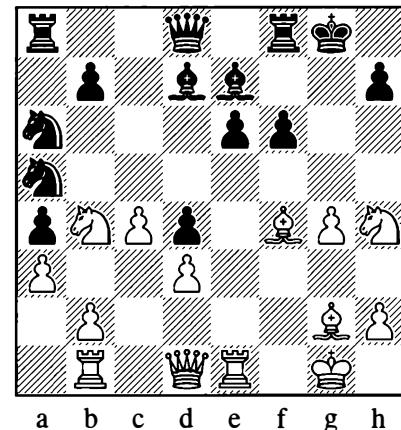
Closing time.

22.♗xb4 ♗xb4 23.♗hf1 0–0 24.♗d6 ♗xd6  
25.♗xd6 ♗d5 26.f4 ♗c4 27.♗f2 g5 28.♗xg5  
hxg5 29.♗b6 b4 30.h3 ♗g7 31.♗b2 ♗h8  
32.♗d2 ♗d4 33.♗h2 ♗xg4

0–1

## 21. Ivanchuk – Alekseev

Jermuk 2009



Black has been quite successful in taking control of the centre and preventing White from gaining the normal active Benoni-style play on the queenside with b2-b4. But it has come at a serious price, the odd placement of the knights and the weakening of the kingside. The main problem for him is actually that all of his pieces are entirely passive. This gives White a chance to quickly attack the black king.

**21.♘d5!!**

A strong knight sacrifice that opens up a lot of files and diagonals for the white pieces.

**21...exd5**

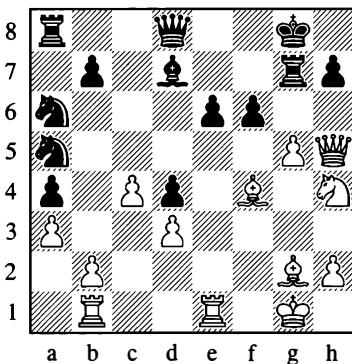
The only option is to accept the sacrifice. Black cannot live with a knight in this glorious position.

All other lines are relatively simple:

21...e5 looks logical, but White benefits from his knight being on d5. White wins with 22.g5!, because of 22...fxg5 23.Qxe7† Qxe7 24.Qxe5 and Black is swept off the board.

21...Qc5 22.g5! fxg5 23.Qg4 e5 24.Qxg5† Qxg5 25.Qxg5 and White has a decisive positional advantage. If nothing else, then the threats of Qxe5 and Qf6† are enough to win.

21...Bf7 22.Qxe7† Qxe7 23.g5!Bg7 24.Wh5 gives White a winning attack.



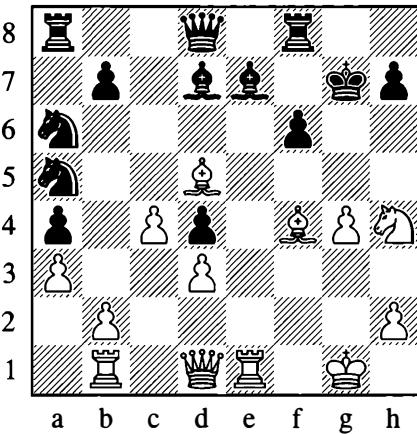
For example: 24...fxg5 25.Qe5! gxh4 26.Qxg7 Qxg7 27.Qe4 with ideas such as Qf2 and Qh1 to include the rooks in the attack.

Black can also try 24...Qc5, but White is winning here too. One line is: 25.Qbd1 Qe8 26.Wh6 fxg5 27.Qe5 Bf7 28.Qf1 and Black cannot defend the dark squares at all.

## 22.Qxd5† Qg7??

This may look logical, but the only thing Black achieves with this move is to expose his king to a check on h6.

22...Qh8 was a better try, even though White has a tremendous attack after 23.Qf3 with the threat of Qg6†. The best defence is 23...Qe8, when White will play 24.Qe2 with great winning chances.



## 23.Qh1!!

This is a natural move, intending to bring the rook to the g-file and press on with g4-g5.

However, White missed the option to win the game immediately:

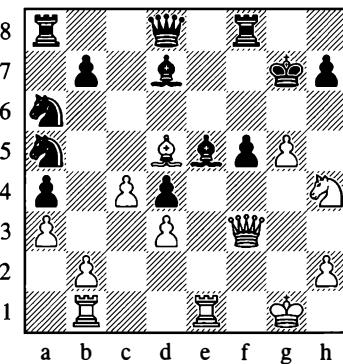
## 23.Qf3!!

The point is that after something like 23...Qc5, White has 24.Qh3!!, winning directly because of the threat of Qh6† leading to mate in four. So Black should try:

## 23...f5

But White can still win with:

## 24.Qe5† Qf6 25.g5 Qxe5



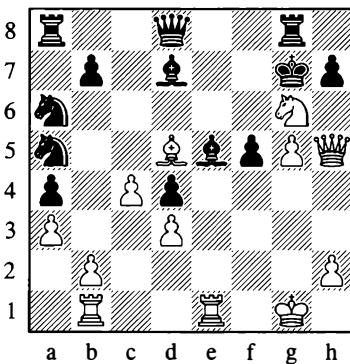
## 26.Wh5!!

There is no adequate defence against Wh6† followed by Qg6#.

Desperate defences such as 26...Bf6 27.Qxe5 bring no hope.

Neither does:

26... $\mathbb{E}g8$  27. $\mathbb{Q}g6!!$



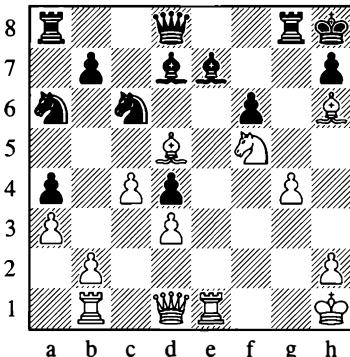
White wins.

**23... $\mathbb{E}e8?!$**

Alekseev misses his only chance to stay in the game.

23... $\mathbb{Q}h8?!$  would not have solved any of Black's problems. White wins with 24.g5! fxg5 25. $\mathbb{W}h5$  with ideas such as 25...gxh4 26. $\mathbb{E}xe7$ ! and 25... $\mathbb{E}e8$  26. $\mathbb{Q}e5\#$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  27. $\mathbb{W}h6$ !, when Black is lost.

However, Black should have tried to bring his knight into the game with 23... $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ , when White's advantage is not entirely clear: 24. $\mathbb{Q}f5\#$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  25. $\mathbb{Q}h6$   $\mathbb{E}g8$ !

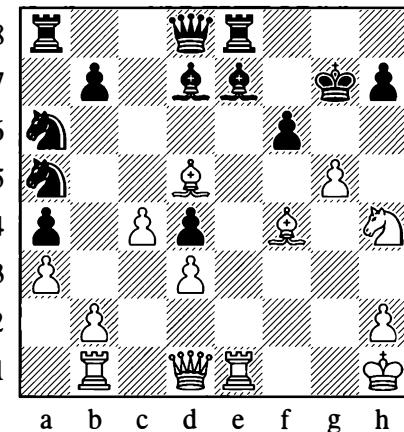


26. $\mathbb{Q}xg8$   $\mathbb{Q}xg8$  27. $\mathbb{W}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}xf5$  28.gxf5  $\mathbb{Q}h8$ . White certainly has more than enough compensation here, but Black has serious

defensive options as well. 29. $\mathbb{E}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  30. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ ! White prepares  $\mathbb{E}g3$  and  $\mathbb{E}bg1$ , with attacking options.

**24.g5**

The attack can no longer be stopped.

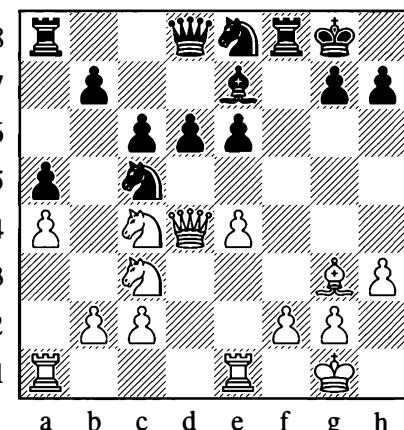


24... $\mathbb{Q}h8$  25. $\mathbb{W}h5$   $\mathbb{E}g8$  26. $\mathbb{Q}xg8$   $\mathbb{Q}xg8$  27.g6  $\mathbb{Q}c6\#$  28. $\mathbb{E}e4$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4\#$  29.dxe4 hxg6 30. $\mathbb{W}xg6\#$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  31. $\mathbb{W}h5\#$

1–0

## 22. Ni Hua – Wang Rui

Taizhou 2012



White has a lead in development. He manages to transform this into an advantage in the endgame with a nice combination.

**16.♗ad1! d5**

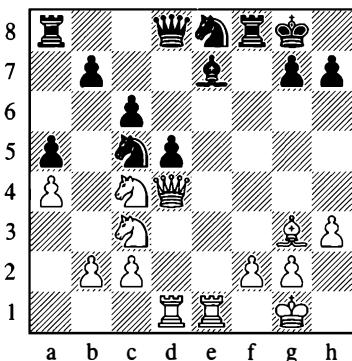
16...e5? does not work. White wins after 17.♕xe5! with the idea of ♜c4†.

**17.exd5**

17.♘e3 gives Black a chance to protect everything with 17...♝f7!, when White lacks anything conclusive. This is a good example of the Steinitz dictum; use it or lose it – referring to a dynamic advantage, the only type of advantage which was fully understood in the 19th century.

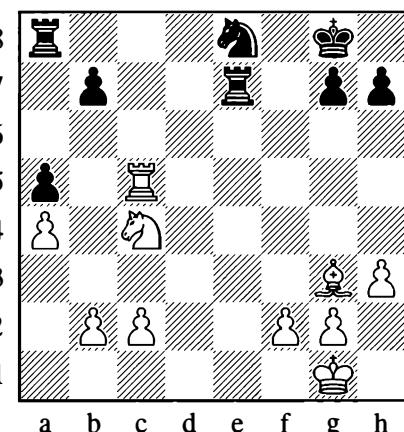
**17...cxsd5**

17...exd5 would be even worse.



White plays 18.♗e3! ♘f7 19.♕e5 ♘f6 20.♘xc6± and wins a pawn.

**18.♘xd5! ♘xd5 19.♗xd5 exd5 20.♗xd5 ♘f7  
21.♗xe7 ♘xe7 22.♗xc5**



White has sacrificed the exchange for two pawns, which might sound like a small gain. However, we may also note that the bishop on g3 is good, the knight on e8 is poor and the pawn on a5 is weak. All in all, White has significant winning chances.

**22...♝e1† 23.♔h2 ♘e2**

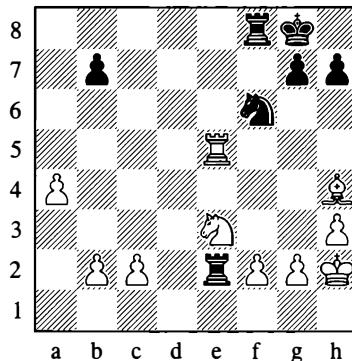
23...♘f6 24.f3 ♘e2 25.c3 also leads to a clear edge for White. For example: 25...♝c2 26.h4 h6 27.♘c7±

**24.♘e3**

24.c3 ♘f6 25.f3 transposes to the previous note.

**24...♝d8?! 25.♗xa5 ♘f6 26.♗a7?!**

26.♗h4! ♘f8 27.♗e5± would have been much stronger.



Chess is difficult and at times we make such small inaccuracies, it just cannot be avoided.

**26...♝d7 27.a5 h5?**

From here on it is downhill all the way.

27...♝f7! was necessary. White is still better after 28.b4 ♘e4 29.b5 ♘xg3 30.♗xg3 ♘xf2±, but Black has real drawing chances here, having destabilized the knight on e3.

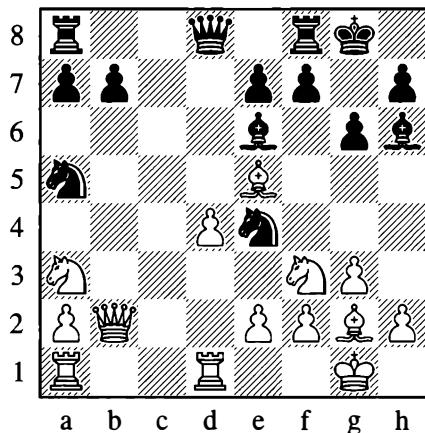
**28.b4 ♘e1 29.b5 ♘f7 30.b6 ♘a1 31.f3 ♘a2  
32.♗c7 ♘h7 33.♗xb7 ♘xa5 34.♗a7 ♘b5**

35.c4  $\mathbb{B}b3$  36. $\mathbb{Q}d5$  h4 37. $\mathbb{Q}xf6\#$  gxf6 38.c5  
 $\mathbb{Q}g6$  39.c6  $\mathbb{E}e7$  40. $\mathbb{B}a4$   $\mathbb{Q}h5$  41. $\mathbb{E}e4$   $\mathbb{E}g7$   
42. $\mathbb{Q}d8$

1–0

### 23. Yaksin – Tomczak

Gaziantep 2008



White has a lead in development and the better-placed pieces, and he immediately took advantage of this in the game.

#### 15.d5!

Less dangerous is something like 15. $\mathbb{W}c2$   $\mathbb{Q}d6\pm$ .

#### 15... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

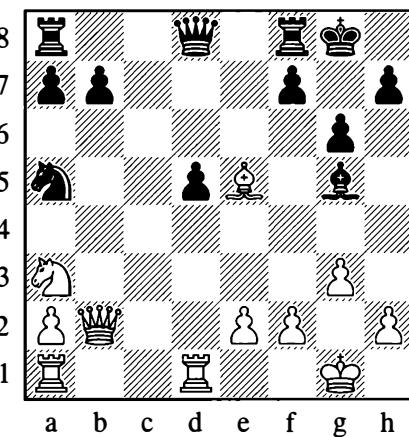
Black feels obliged to accept the challenge.

15... $\mathbb{Q}d7$  16. $\mathbb{W}b4$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  17. $\mathbb{Q}c3$  b6 18. $\mathbb{Q}e5$  gives White a significant advantage. He will continue with  $\mathbb{Q}xd7$  and e2-e4 with strong pressure in the centre.

#### 16. $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$

Black's best chance was probably 16... $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ ! 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$   $\mathbb{W}b6$ , even though White retains the advantage after 18. $\mathbb{B}b1$ , when the strength of the two bishops in the ending secures White good winning chances.

17. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  e6 18. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  exd5



#### 19.e4!

The point of the combination. White will get a strong passed pawn on the d-file.

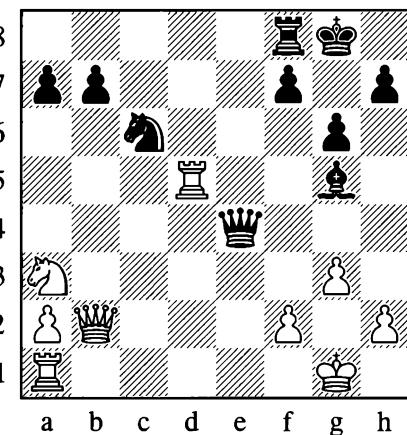
#### 19... $\mathbb{Q}c6$

Black's positional troubles would have been considerable after 19... $\mathbb{W}b6$  20. $\mathbb{W}xb6$  axb6 21.exd5±, when all White's pieces are superior.

#### 20. $\mathbb{B}xd5$

Although I said White would be getting a passed d-pawn, this capture is now correct for tactical reasons; White wins material.

20... $\mathbb{W}e7$  21. $\mathbb{Q}d6$   $\mathbb{W}xe4$  22. $\mathbb{Q}xf8$   $\mathbb{B}xf8$

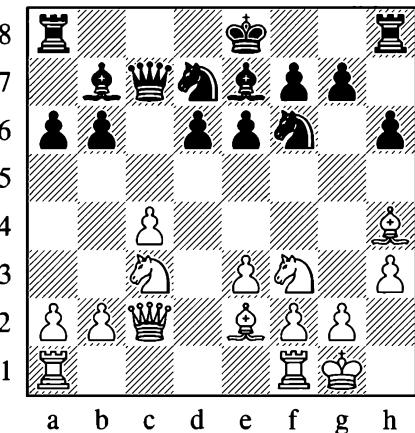


**23.  $\mathbb{E}ad1\pm$** 

White went on to win a long game.

**24. Pomar Salamanca – Ljubojevic**

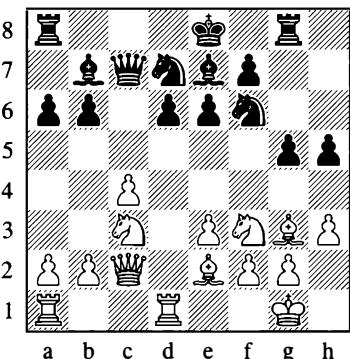
Palma de Mallorca 1972



White has played too timidly in the opening, and it seems natural that Black should seize the opportunity to do something aggressive. In addition to this, the h-pawn has moved to h3, making it possible for Black to open the position.

**13...g5! 14.  $\mathbb{E}g3$  g4?!**

Stronger was: 14...  $\mathbb{E}g8!$  15.  $\mathbb{E}fd1$  h5



Black has an even stronger attack on the kingside than in the game. 16.h4 appears to be necessary, but it is certainly not a pleasant move to play. 16...gxh4 17.  $\mathbb{E}xh4$   $\mathbb{Q}e5$  Black's

position is more pleasant, but the position is quite complicated of course.

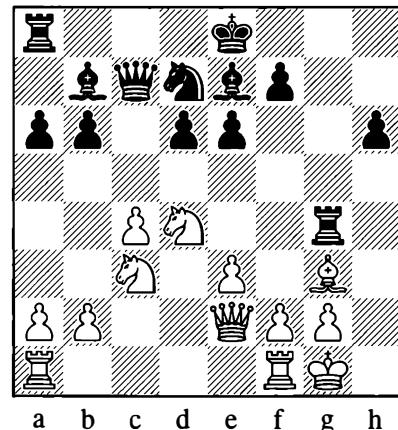
**15.  $\mathbb{E}hg4$   $\mathbb{Q}xg4$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}d4?!$** 

Removing the defender from the kingside is not a good idea.

16.  $\mathbb{E}ad1$   $\mathbb{E}g8$  would have been quite unclear.

**16...  $\mathbb{E}g8$  17.  $\mathbb{E}xg4$   $\mathbb{E}xg4$  18.  $\mathbb{W}e2?!$** 

18.  $\mathbb{Q}ce2?!$

**18...h5? 19.  $\mathbb{E}ac1$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  20. e4**

Rather a desperate move.

**20...  $\mathbb{Q}xe4$** 

20...  $\mathbb{W}c5!$  21.  $\mathbb{E}fd1$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  would have been an improved way to take the e-pawn.

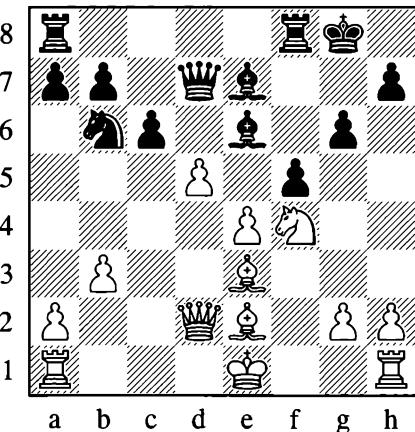
**21.  $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{E}xe4$  22.  $\mathbb{W}xh5$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}b3$** 

White could also have tried 23.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$  0–0–0 24. c5? bxc5 25.  $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $\mathbb{E}xg5$  26.  $\mathbb{W}xg5?$ , although Black keeps the better chances of course.

**23...  $\mathbb{E}xc4$  24.  $\mathbb{E}xd6$   $\mathbb{W}c6$  25.  $\mathbb{W}h2$   $\mathbb{E}xb2$   
26.  $\mathbb{E}xc4$   $\mathbb{W}xc4$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}c7$   $\mathbb{W}c6$  28.  $\mathbb{W}g3?!$   
28. f3?****28...  $\mathbb{E}c8$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}d6$   $\mathbb{W}e4$  30.  $\mathbb{E}d1$   $\mathbb{W}g6?$  31.  $\mathbb{W}h3$   
 $\mathbb{E}d8$  32.  $\mathbb{W}h2?$   $\mathbb{Q}e5!$  33. f4  $\mathbb{E}xd6$   
0–1**

## 25. Nakamura – Adams

London 2012



Black has undermined the white centre with the typical strike ...f5 in order to gain control of the d5-square. Nakamura has reacted in his usual style with the aggressive 19.d5?! pawn sacrifice. Without too much consideration Adams took the pawn, and White obtained compensation.

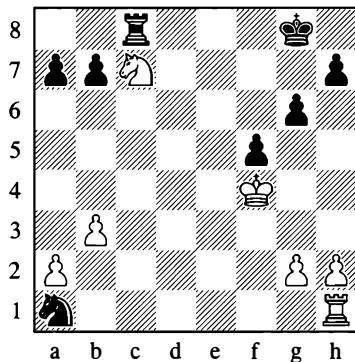
**19...cxd5?!**

A natural move, but a bad idea.

**20.e5!?**

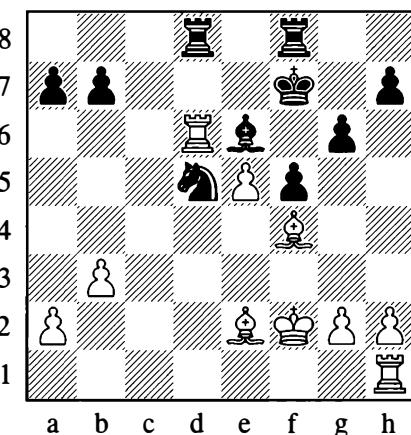
When you delve into the position, it becomes clear that this is the strongest option. White has a lot of good squares for his pieces and the knight on b6 is suddenly horrible.

A curious line was: 20.exd5 ♕xd5 (20...♕f7! is better; it is then hard to say whether Black has a slight edge or if White is just about equal.) 21.♖c4 ♕b4 22.♗xb4 ♕xb4 23.♗xe6† ♔xe6 24.♕xe6 ♕fe8 25.♕c7 ♕xe3† 26.♗f2 ♕c8 27.♗xe3 ♕c2† 28.♗f4 ♕xa1



29.♗c1 and Black is facing great problems, despite his extra pawn.

20...♗g5 21.♗d1 d4 22.♗xd4 ♗xd4  
23.♗xd4 ♕xf4 24.♗xf4 ♕ad8 25.♗d6 ♕f7  
26.♗f2 ♕d5



27.♗g5 ♕xd6 28.exd6 h6 29.♗xh6 ♕d8  
30.♗f3 ♕xd6

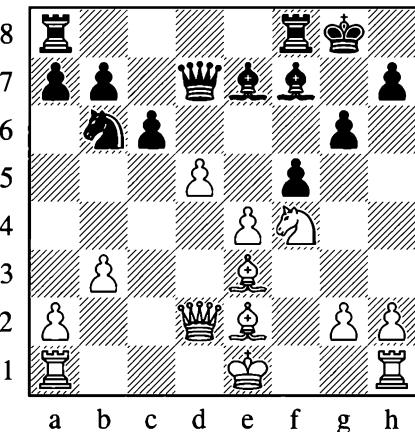
White's advantage is minimal; the game ended in a draw on move 69 with just two kings left.

If Black decides not to take the pawn, then there is only one alternative:

**19...♕f7!**

This was much stronger. The strategic concept is to continue the fight against the white centre and to occupy the light squares.

Once you get this idea, it comes down to calculation and then it is difficult to find anything playable for White.



## 20.exf5

Almost at random I have chosen this as the main line. The alternatives are not encouraging for White:

20.♗d1 fxe4 and White is losing control.

20.dxc6 ♜xc6 21.0–0 (21.exf5 ♜h4† leaves White with only a few options, all of them unpleasant.) 21...♗ad8 22.♗e1 ♜c5 and Black has the initiative.

20.♗c1?! fxe4 21.dxc6 bxc6 22.♗xd7 ♜xd7 23.♗xc6 ♜b4† 24.♗d2 a5 25.♗f1†

## 20...♜xd5 21.0–0

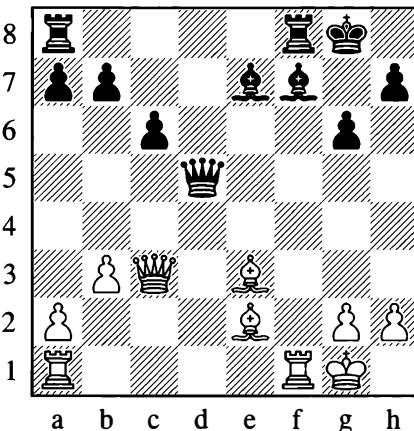
Trying to catch up in development.

## 21...♝xf5

Black has another good option in 21...♝b4 followed by ...♝xf5.

## 22.♞xd5 ♜xd5 23.♝c3

White will struggle to gain adequate compensation.



The correct move here is:

## 23...♝d6!

If Black is allowed to continue with...♝d5, he will be doing very well.

## 24.♝xf7?? ♜xf7!

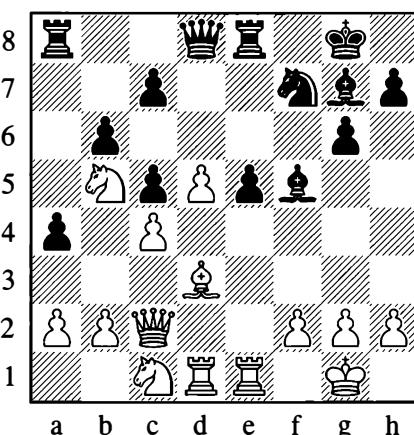
24...♝xf7 25.♗d1 ♜b4 26.♗xb4 ♜xb4 27.♗c4 ♜e8 28.♗d7 ♜ee7 29.♗d8† ♜g7 30.♗d4† ♜h6 31.♗xf7 ♜xf7 32.♗xa7 and White saves the draw.

## 25.♗d1 ♜b4 26.♗xb4 ♜xb4 27.♗d7† ♜f6

White does not have enough compensation for the exchange.

## 26. A. Smirnov – Fedorov

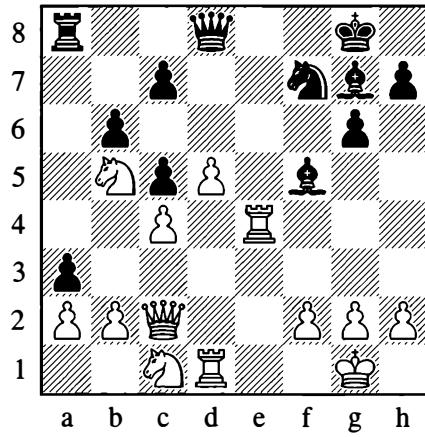
Izhevsk 2010



**19...e4!**

This is a typical pawn sacrifice in this kind of position, but making it work can be a great challenge. Here Black will show he is up to the task.

**20.♕xe4 ♜xe4 21.♗xe4 a3!!**



This is the brilliant point to Black's play. The white knight is deflected, as after 22.bxa3 ♜xe4 23.♗xe4 c6! the knight is trapped on b5, having just been deprived of its retreat squares.

**22.♘xa3 ♜d6 23.f3 ♜d4† 24.♔h1**

Although 24.♗xd4 cxd4 25.♘b3 ♜xe4 26.fxe4 ♜f6 gives White two pawn for the exchange, he has various weaknesses (the e4-pawn, the a3-knight, his exposed king) and is likely to lose.

**24...♜xe4 25.fxe4 ♜h4**

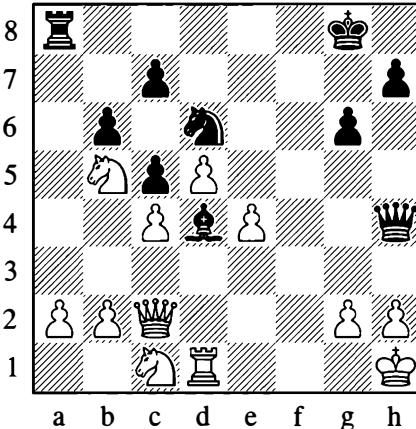
Black clearly has an edge, but it is not yet decisive.

**26.♘b5?**

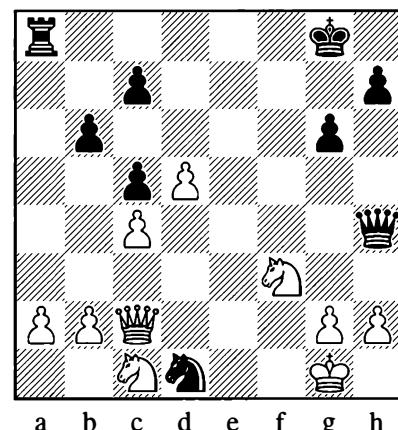
White did not fully understand the nature of the black threat, and loses in a tactical battle.

26.♘e2? also fails to work. Black has a winning attack after 26...♞xe4 27.♘xd4 cxd4 28.♗g1 ♜f8, when he will arrive on f2 with deadly threats.

26.g3 was the only move. The ending after 26...♝xe4† 27.♝xe4 ♜xe4 28.♘d3 ♜xb2 29.♘b5 ♜xa2 30.♘xc7 ♜d6 would offer Black some advantage, but White should be able to draw it with decent play.



**26...♝xe4† 27.♝xe4 ♜d4† 28.♗g1 ♜xd1  
29.♘f3**



**29...♞e3!**

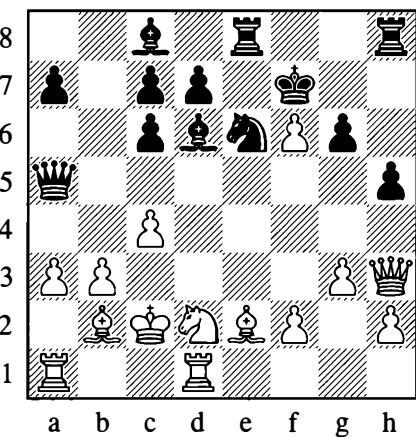
The final point.

**30.♗d3 ♜e7 31.b3 ♜e8 32.h3 ♜f5 33.♗f2  
♘d4 34.♗d2 ♜xf3 35.gxf3 ♜h4† 36.♗g2  
♝e5 37.f4 ♜e1 38.♗f2 ♜e4 39.♘d3 ♜d1**

**0-1**

## 27. Kislinsky – Kolosowski

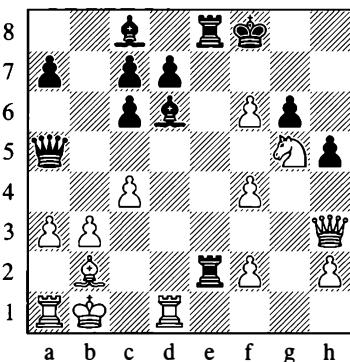
Legnica 2011



**23.c5!**

This move is clearly better than the alternatives:

23.♘f3?! ♘f4! 24.gxf4 ♜xe2† 25.♔b1 ♜he8 26.♘g5† ♜f8 was what happened in the game.



Now White should have gone for a repetition with knight to h7 then back to g5, but instead went for 27.♗d3? ♜xf4! 28.f7 ♜e8e7 and had to retreat, eventually losing the game on move 48.

23.♘e4?! ♜e5! 24.♗h4 ♜xb2 25.♗xb2 ♜e5† 26.♘c3 ♜xf6±

23.♕c3?! ♘d4†! 24.♗b2 ♜b6 25.♗d3 ♜e5 would leave the position quite unclear.

**23...♜e5!**

23...♜xc5? 24.♘c4 and wins.

More complicated is:

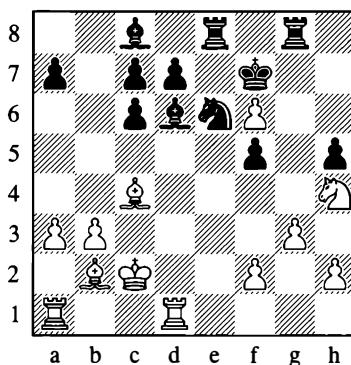
23...♛xc5†? 24.♘c4

White is threatening ♘d2-e4-g5. It is not so easy for Black to do anything about this. If he plays 24...♝xf2, then White has 25.♝f1. 24...♛f5† 25.♛xf5 gx5 26.♘f3 ♜hg8

White has several strong continuations. The one I like best is:

**27.♘h4!?**

The idea is simply to take on f5.



If Black plays 27...♜f8 White has 28.♗a6! with a serious advantage.

And should he play 27...f4? it is time for a wonderful exchange sacrifice: 28.♝xd6! cxd6 29.♘f5 ♜f8 30.♘xd6 ♜g6 31.♝d1 and White just wins.

**24.♜xe5**

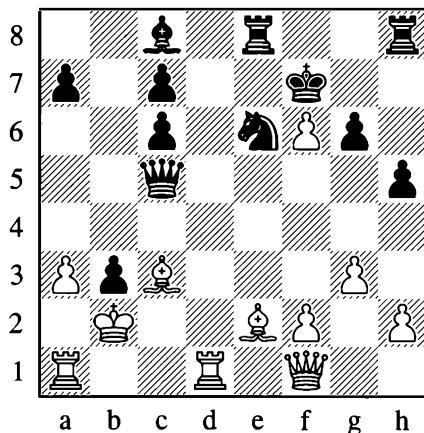
24.♘c4 just transposes.

**24...♛xc5† 25.♘c4 d5 26.♝f1!?**

A bizarre computer idea.

White also has a big advantage after the more human 26.b4 ♘d4† 27.♝xd4 ♜xd4 28.♔xd4 ♜xe2† 29.♘d3 dxc4† 30.♘xe2 ♜xh3 31.♔xa7 and the passed a-pawn is an asset. Still, I think Black has some drawing chances here.

26...dxc4 27.Qc3 cxb3† 28.Qb2



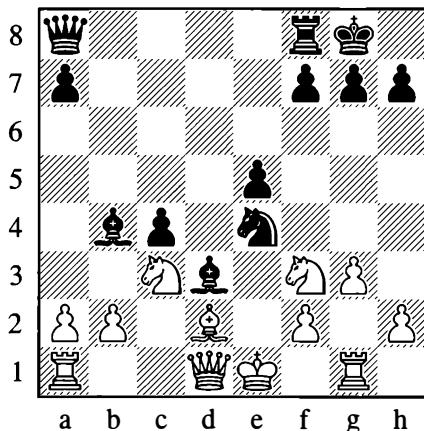
White has given up a pawn, but if he is given the time to paralyse his opponent's position with  $\mathbb{Q}c4$  he will just be winning. He would quickly put pressure on along the e-file and collect a piece. Black therefore has to play:

28...Qf8

Now White can try 29.Qc4†, 29.f4 or 29.Qac1, in all cases with a promising position.

## 28. Pantsulaia – J. Polgar

Aix-les-Bains 2011



One of the great things about the European Championship is that you have some real stars

playing there, simply to qualify for the World Cup. Judit Polgar is used to checkmating Topalov, in both rapid and normal chess, but she can also do this to mere human grandmasters.

Here Judit won a great game, even if she did not play the right move in this position.

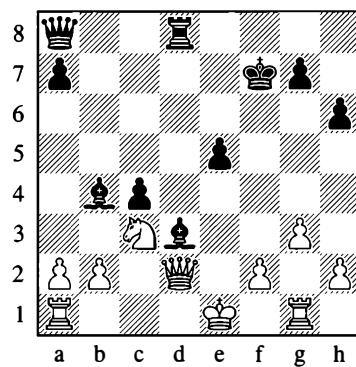
18...Qd8?

This looks entirely logical, but after this White is able to keep his position together. It was extremely difficult to see that all of Black's advantage is connected to penetration along the b-file, not with the obvious pressure down the open d-file. Although it is not easy, I believe that the best players in the world *can* solve this position, especially if they have the hint that this is a critical moment.

19.Qc1

Probably best.

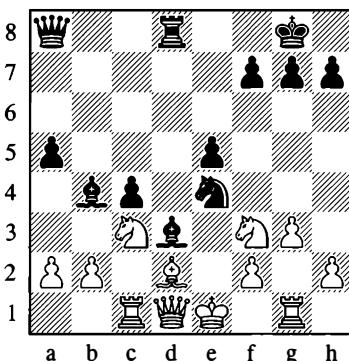
Another interesting (and entirely unclear) line was 19.Qg5 Qxd2 20.Qxd2 h6 (20...f6 21.Qe6 is a useful tempo compared to 18...Qb8. After 21...Qd6 22.Qc7 Qb7 23.Q7b5 Qb6 24.a3∞ the chances are probably balanced.) 21.Qxf7 Qxf7



22.0–0–0∞ and who knows what is happening?

19...Qxc3

19...a5 was suggested by Marina Brunello. Here the critical line goes:

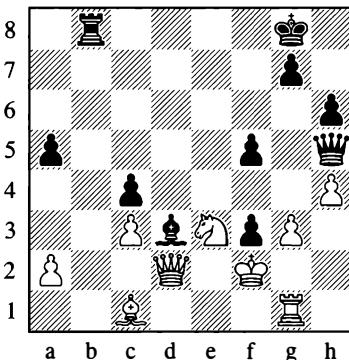


20.♕e3! a4 21.a3 ♜xc3 22.♗xc3 ♜xc3†  
23.bxc3 ♜b8 24.♕d2 ♜b2 25.♔a1 ♜b7 26.g4  
e4 27.♗g3 It is not clear how either player can make progress.

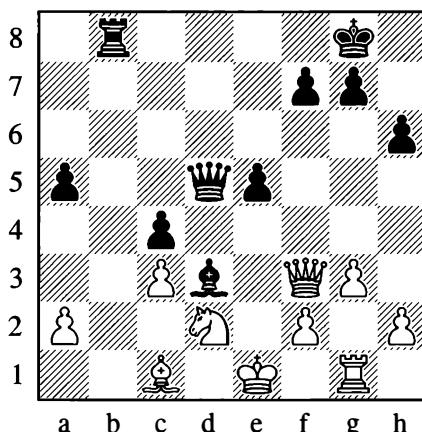
**20.bxc3 ♜a3 21.♕e3 ♜xcl 22.♗xcl ♜b8**  
**23.♕d2 ♜d5 24.♔a4 a5 25.♔d1 h6**  
**26.♗f3??**

A fatal blunder. White still had time to reorganize his pieces in several ways, all offering an acceptable defence in this complicated position.

One possible line is: 26.♕f1 e4 27.♕e3 ♜e5  
28.♔d2 ♜h5 29.f4 exf3 30.h4 f5 31.♗f2



Black obviously has compensation, but the king is remarkably safe on f2. Rybk4 assesses the position as approximately equal, which could be true – or may just show that even the machine cannot work it out.



**26...♜b1! 27.♔d1**

White also cannot hold after 27.♔d1 ♜a1 28.a4 e4, when he is completely paralysed. One possible continuation is 29.♕f1 ♜e5! 30.♔d2 ♜b8 31.♕e3 ♜b1 32.♔d1 ♜a2 and the queen is awkwardly trapped.

**27...e4**

27...♝d7 also wins, due to 28.♗xb1 ♜e4†.

**28.♗f4 ♜a1 29.♗b8† ♜h7 30.g4 ♜d7**  
**31.♗e5 e3!**

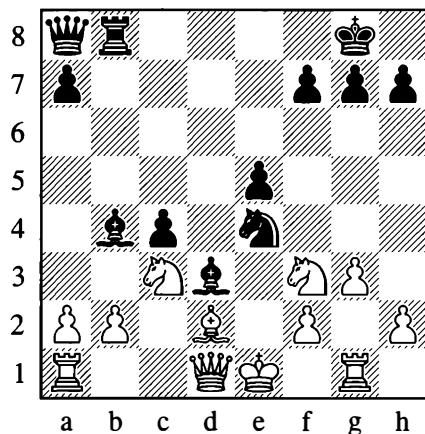
Black could play 31...♝a4† 32.♗b3 first, but then 32...e3 would be essential to prevent the perpetual with ♜f5†.

**32.♗xe3 ♜a4† 33.♔e1 ♜xc1† 34.♔f2 ♜xg1**  
**0–1**

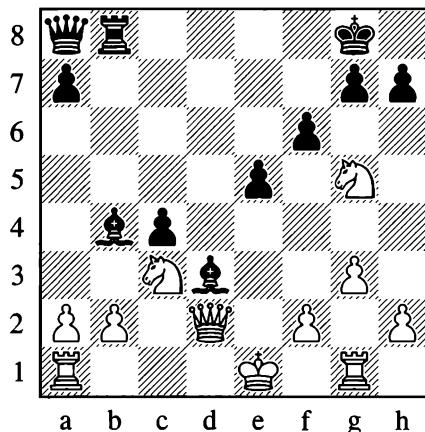
You might already have worked out from the comments above what the right move was – to put the least active piece on the line where it will be able to do most later on. It sounds simple when you put it this way, and so it is. But at the same time it is also very difficult to find. I have shown this exercise to various strong players, but I don't think anyone has solved it. A problem is of course that most have already seen the game and find it hard to imagine that Judit could have made a mistake!

**18...♝b8!!**

18...♜a5!? is also a very good idea, but as the point is that the rook can come to the b-file, I will try to keep my feet on the ground and not fly away on a red balloon filled up with abstract ideas!

**19.♝g5**

I cannot find any other useful moves. For example: 19.♝c1 ♜xc3 20.bxc3 ♜a3+– and Black penetrates along the b-file.

**19...♝xd2 20.♛xd2 f6****21.♝e6**

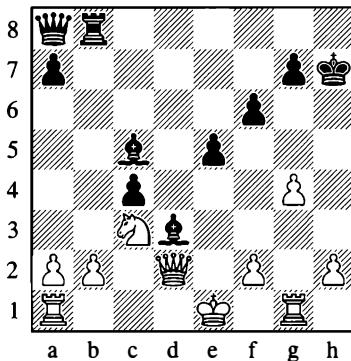
The only move.

21.a3 ♜xc3 22.bxc3 fxg5 23.♛xg5 h6 24.♛e3

♝b2 and the win is a matter of technique – attacking technique. Ideas like ...♛b8 followed by ...♝b3 or ...♝b1† are very appealing.

**21.♛xh7 ♜xh7 22.g4 ♜c5!–+**

This gives Black a winning attack.



23.0–0–0 ♜a3! 24.bxa3 ♛b7 25.♝b5 ♛xb5  
26.♛b4 ♛e8 27.♝xd3

27.♛c3 ♛g6–+

27...cxsd3 28.♛e4† ♜h8 29.♛xd3 e4

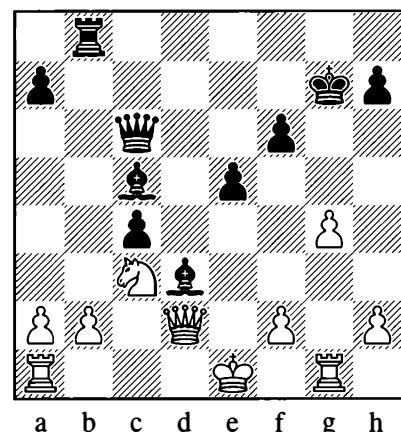
White will be checkmated one way or another.

**21...♛c6 22.♝xg7 ♜xg7**

This gives Black a promising attacking position, although the game is not entirely decided.

**23.g4 ♜c5?!**

23...♛f3†



**24.0–0–0!**

After 24.g5  $\mathbb{W}f3$ ! Black has assorted threats, such as ...f5 and ... $\mathbb{Q}d4$  followed by ... $\mathbb{E}xb2$ !, with mate to follow. White cannot play 25.gxf6†  $\mathbb{Q}f7$ , when there is no defence to ... $\mathbb{E}g8$ .

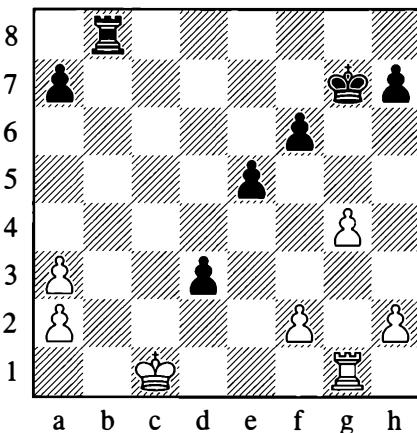
**24... $\mathbb{Q}a3$ !?**

Maybe too concrete, but very tempting.

**25.bxa3  $\mathbb{W}b6$  26. $\mathbb{Q}b5$   $\mathbb{W}xb5$  27. $\mathbb{W}b4$   $\mathbb{W}e8$   
28. $\mathbb{W}c3$   $\mathbb{W}g6$  29. $\mathbb{E}xd3$**

Forced.

**29... $\mathbb{W}xd3$  30. $\mathbb{W}xd3$  cxd3†**



White will lose the a-pawns and Black the d-pawn. White has some drawing chances, but Black's winning chances look greater.



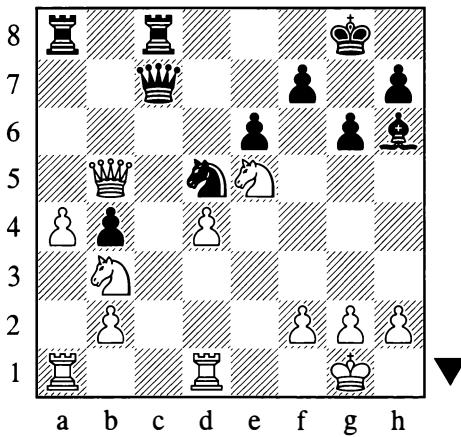
# Chapter 5

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## Fighting the Tide

Michael Adams – Leinier Dominguez Perez

Istanbul (ol) 2012



White is a pawn up so if nothing happens, he is likely to win. But Black should not go gentle into the good night, rather he should rage, rage against the dying of the light.

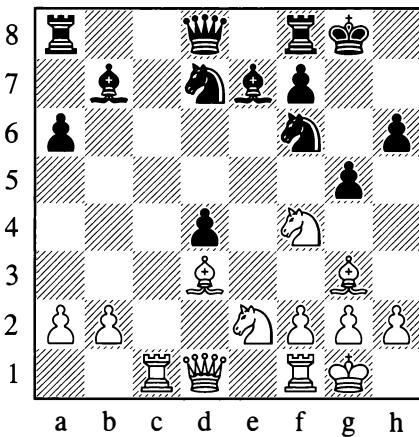
The final section in this book is a typical odds-and-ends chapter, containing exercises I chose not to put into the other chapters for various reasons. Some of the positions have defensive aspects, some of them are dynamic reactions to positional threats, and some others simply ended up here by chance.

The main reason for the title of this chapter is the few examples I want to show before we move on to the exercises.

The first is from a game I was shown in connection with a training weekend in a local club in Odense, Denmark. It was played in the World Under-14 Championship and was a superb fight, with more drama and brilliant moments than the average grandmaster game.

### Jesper Thybo – NR Vignesh

Slovenia 2012



### 17.♘h3

Jesper had played this move without thinking, but was rather unhappy with the position he had a few moves later, quite rightly. Given his young age it is no surprise that he did not fight the tide, but a more experienced player would have realized that it would most likely be better to take risks while complicating

matters, rather than allow himself to be pushed backwards.

We shall look at the possibilities of doing this below.

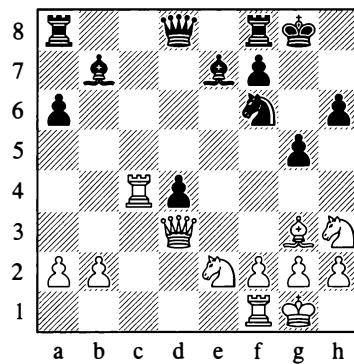
### 17...♝c5 18.♝c4?

Trying to attack the d4-pawn, but this fails tactically in several ways.

It was necessary to play 18.♗e1, when I believe the most natural way for Black to play is 18...♝c8! 19.f3 ♝xd3 20.♗xd3 ♜c5, when I prefer Black, but White is by no means in crisis.

### 18...♛d5

There is no fault to this move, but Black also had a nice trick in: 18...♝xd3?! 19.♗xd3 (19.♗xd4 ♞xf2! and Black ends a pawn up)

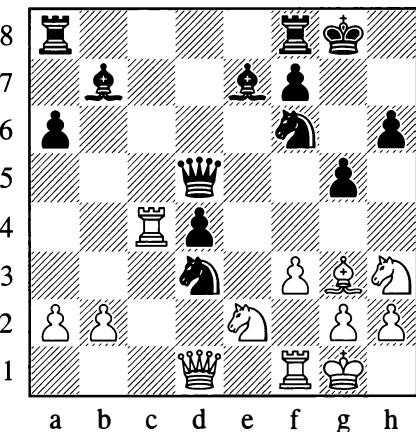


19...♝e4! A beautiful move, pushing White back. Black will keep the two bishops as well as a strong passed pawn. The tactical justification is that 20.♗xd4? ♜d3! leads to material losses for White.

### 19.f3 ♝xd3

This is the natural way to continue; Black starts an attack on the light squares.

Instead, Black played 19...♝e6? and after 20.♗f2∞ Jesper was back in the game and eventually won on move 48.



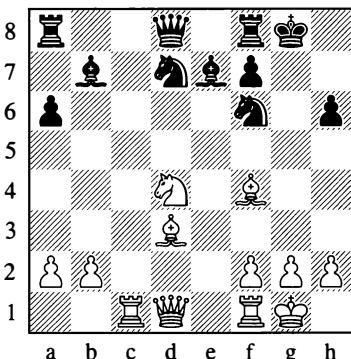
**20.  $\mathbb{W}xd3$  a5! 21.  $\mathbb{E}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}c5!$**

Black wins the exchange. There is a lot of work to do before he can pocket the full point, but he is definitely on the way.

While preparing for this training weekend, where I had asked the organizer if I could get 3-4 of the participants' games, I soon realized that my wording could have been more exact. With about 30 attending, I ended up with more than 50 games! Close to 50 more than I had wanted to analyse to start with.

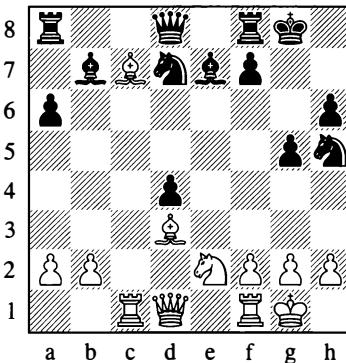
But I quickly decided that I could carry my points across based on the participants' games and went to work.

For this particular game, at this moment, I thought White could have tried to give up a piece in an interesting way with 17.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4?$   $\mathbb{g}xf4$  18.  $\mathbb{E}xf4$ .



My analysis continued: 18...  $\mathbb{Q}c5!$  (Black cannot prevent White getting three pawns for the piece, as after something like 18...h5? 19.  $\mathbb{Q}c7$   $\mathbb{W}e8$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}f5$  Black will quickly be run over) 19.  $\mathbb{Q}b1$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}xe6$   $\mathbb{W}xd1$  21.  $\mathbb{E}fxd1$   $f xe6$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}xh6$  White has reasonable chances. With only two pawns left, I find it hard to believe that Black has serious winning chances in the ending, but also I could not imagine a way he could lose without blundering.

At the training weekend the trainer for the Danish Women's Team, Thomas Schou-Moldt, came up with another imaginative idea that entirely baffled me: 17.  $\mathbb{Q}h5$   $\mathbb{Q}xh5$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}c7$

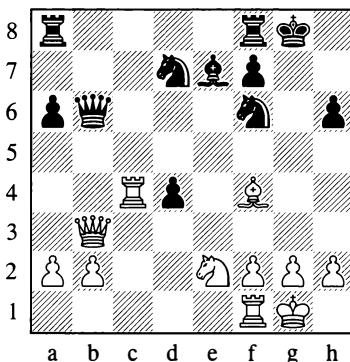


Rather than getting a pawn for the piece, White is relying on the tempo on the knight on h5 to gain counterplay.

It would indeed be easy for Black to go astray, for example: 18...  $\mathbb{W}c8$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}df6$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}f5$   $\mathbb{W}e8$  21.  $\mathbb{E}e1$  and I would rather be White.

But with careful attention, we see that Black can play 18...  $\mathbb{W}e8$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}df6$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}f5$   $\mathbb{W}d7!$ . The compensation is inadequate it seems, but still the idea must be said to be truly profound.

Back at my desk I eventually settled on a third alternative as the one I would prefer: 17.  $\mathbb{W}b3?$   $\mathbb{g}xf4$  18.  $\mathbb{E}xf4$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}xc4$  (19...  $\mathbb{Q}c5$  20.  $\mathbb{W}h3$  benefits only White) 20.  $\mathbb{E}xc4$   $\mathbb{W}b6$



With a quick swing to the kingside, White seems to gain adequate compensation.  
 21.  $\mathbb{W}g3\#$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}xh6$   $\mathbb{Q}h5$  23.  $\mathbb{W}g4$   $\mathbb{W}xh6$   
 24.  $\mathbb{W}xd7$   $\mathbb{B}ae8$  (24...  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  25.  $\mathbb{W}h3$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$   
 26.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  and White is not worse) 25.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   
 $\mathbb{Q}f6$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}f5$   $\mathbb{W}h7$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$  White has managed to coordinate his forces and can fight on as an equal in the middlegame.

Jesper was fortunate that his opponent did not exploit his positional advantage, but against stronger players there will be no such luck. If the opponent has a static advantage, we need to make as much out of our dynamic properties as possible. Otherwise... well the following is a good example of what will happen otherwise.

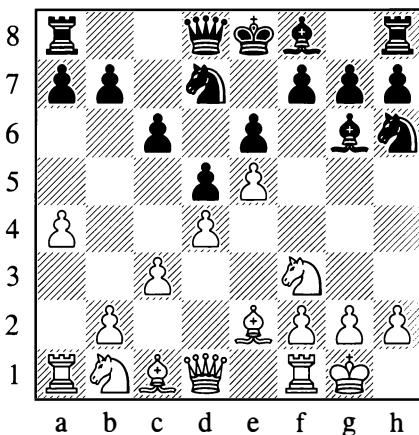
### Michael Adams – Stuart Conquest

Canterbury 2010

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5  $\mathbb{B}f5$  4.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$  e6 5.  $\mathbb{B}e2$   
 $\mathbb{Q}d7$  6. 0-0  $\mathbb{Q}g6$

Objectively I do not like this move much. The plan looks logical, but I would not want to make choices on where this bishop is best placed already; it could turn out that it was better placed on g4.

7. c3  $\mathbb{Q}h6$  8. a4!?



As far as I can see, this move has not been played before in this position. The idea is quite popular these days, especially in the line with 4.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$  e6 5.  $\mathbb{Q}b3$ , where it is difficult for Black to play ...c5.

One idea is to put the pawn on a5 and follow up with c4, with the point that Black cannot play ...  $\mathbb{Q}d7$ -b6-d5 anymore; this is the main idea in the 4.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$  line. Here it appears that Adams was thinking more about throwing the pawn all the way to a6, with the idea that it will be difficult for Black to play ...c5 without seriously weakening the queenside (now the bishop is located away on g6).

### 8... $\mathbb{B}c8?$

8...  $\mathbb{Q}a5!$  is the move I would play. Of course it is not comfortable for Black to play ...c5 for the time being, but later on this option will be nice to have. The way it goes in the game is a disaster for Black. This is really the moment I am talking about the difference between Conquest's active style, and Adams' fine feeling for structure.

### 9. a5!

Black now has an uncomfortable choice: he can either allow White to put the pawn on a5, where it will always be an annoyance, or he can block it. Unfortunately for Black it seems that blocking it brings even more ills than no

which is why I am being so preposterous as to claim that the last (natural-looking) move was a mistake.

### 9...a6

I really want to criticize this decision, but I am not convinced that it is more pleasant to have the pawn penetrate to a6. Possibly I just want to avoid the proven ills of the game, rather than the theoretical unpleasantness of the pawn reaching a6.

9... $\mathbb{Q}e7$  would still be my choice to keep some flexibility in the position.

### 10. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$

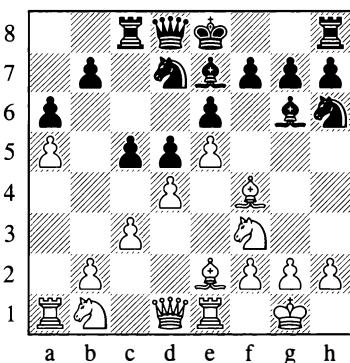
Black does not have time to free himself with 10...c5? as White can strike in the centre with 11.c4!, when White's minor pieces are much better placed. 11...cx $d$ 4 12.cxd5 is an obvious disaster, and 11...dxc4 12.d5! exd5 13. $\mathbb{W}xd5$  is possibly even worse.

### 11. $\mathbb{B}e1$

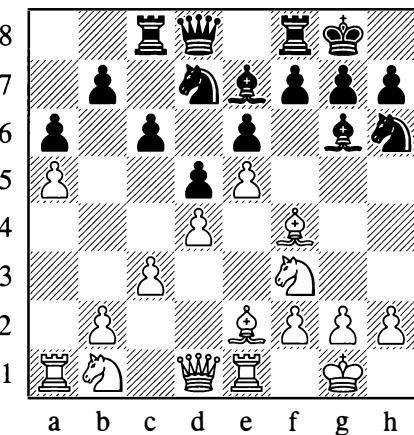
Slowly improving the position. Somehow I have the feeling that Adams' choice was as much aimed against a quick ...f6.

### 11...0–0

This time around there are a few more details to refuting 11...c5, but the principles are basically the same:



12.c4 cx $d$ 4 (12...dxc4 13.d5 is hopeless again) 13.cxd5 d3?! 14. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$   $\mathbb{Q}xd3$  15. $\mathbb{W}xd3$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  16. $\mathbb{W}c3$ ! Black cannot recapture with the queen, as 17.b4 would win a piece. After 16... $\mathbb{Q}e4$  then 17. $\mathbb{W}b3$  is another disaster. For example: 17... $\mathbb{W}xd5$  18. $\mathbb{W}a4\#$ . So 16...exd5 17. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$  gxh6 18. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ ! and Black's position is repulsive. With even material, all Black's pawns are future targets.



### 12.b4!

Since ...c5 will not be bad forever, White prevents it. Black is already positionally lost; all of his minor pieces lack active options and any attempt to be active will lead to serious weaknesses in the pawn structure. The only viable way to try to defend this position is to endure and put the responsibility on White's shoulders to build up an offensive, presumably on the kingside. However, this strategy is difficult to endorse when you are as active a player as Conquest. Still, I am sure that Adams was secretly pleased when he saw Black's next move.

### 12...f6?!

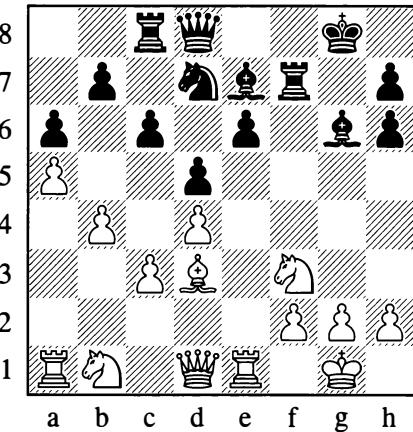
A decision like this is utterly committal. If Black fails to create real activity for his pieces, the downturn will be huge: this move seriously weakens his pawn structure and creates a big weakness on e6, as well as a weak square on e5.

Later on in the game Adams shows great technical play in his conversion of these and other positional advantages.

### 13.exf6 $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}g5$

Before taking on h6, White pushes the rook away from its semi-useful position.

### 14... $\mathbb{E}f7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{G}xh6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}d3$

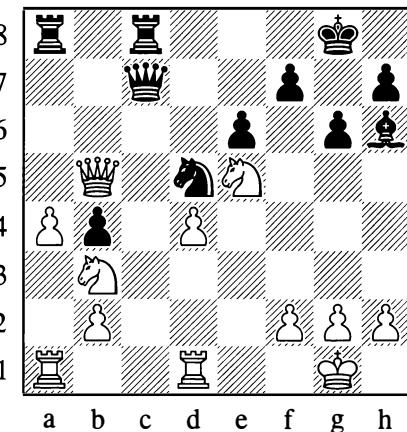


We have seen enough. Conquest fought hard all the way, making it to a lost pawn ending. But he never did regain the early chances of becoming truly active. The holes in his position were under constant duress. He did not manage to hold back the tide – and eventually he drowned...

The next game also saw Black failing to keep his boosters burning in a position where the long term meant being dead and buried. But Black could have kept the balance, had he made the most of his active opportunities.

## Michael Adams – Leinier Dominguez Perez

Istanbul (ol) 2012



The game went: 29... $\mathbb{E}f4$ ? 30. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  31. $dxe5$   $\mathbb{W}c2$  32. $\mathbb{W}xc2$   $\mathbb{E}xc2$  33. $\mathbb{Q}d2\pm$  and Adams converted his extra pawn on move 52.

Although the bishop seemingly has no function or future at the moment, simply exchanging it made no sense. Black had to find a way to use this weakness as a strength:

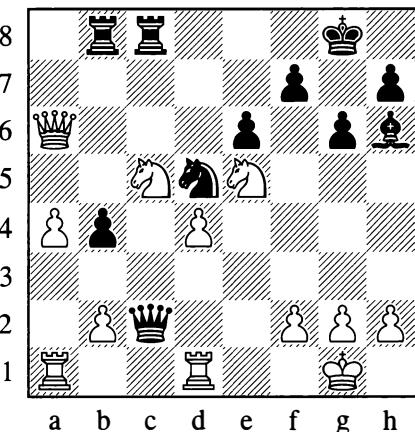
### 29... $\mathbb{W}c2!$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}c5!$

Attacks against f7 look tempting, but do not actually create any real damage. After both 30. $\mathbb{W}b7?$   $\mathbb{W}xb3$  31. $\mathbb{W}xf7\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  32. $\mathbb{W}xe6$   $\mathbb{E}e5$  and 30. $\mathbb{Q}xf7?$   $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  31. $\mathbb{W}d7\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  32. $\mathbb{E}e5$   $\mathbb{W}c4$  33. $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}g5$  34. $\mathbb{Q}f3\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  White is somewhat worse, wondering what he gave up a piece for.

### 30... $\mathbb{E}ab8$ 31. $\mathbb{W}a6$

Clearly this is the critical move. Black cannot continue attacking the queen, as it would go to the 7th rank and attack f7. And at the same time White is threatening  $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$ , which would secure a nice advantage.

Both 31. $\mathbb{W}f1?$   $\mathbb{W}xb2\mp$  and 31. $\mathbb{W}c4$   $b3!$  fail to improve anything for White.



**31...♝e3!**

The bishop appears from the wilderness to play an important role. White has to retreat his formidable cavalry.

**32.♞cd3**

32.♛f1 ♜xd4 and Black equalizes.

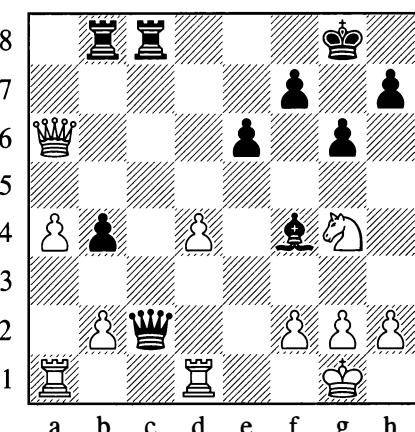
**32...♞f4!**

This is what Mikhail Tal called launching. The pieces are all active, even if there is no immediate target.

**33.♝g4**

There are other moves, but none better.

**33...♜d2 34.♝xf4 ♜xf4**

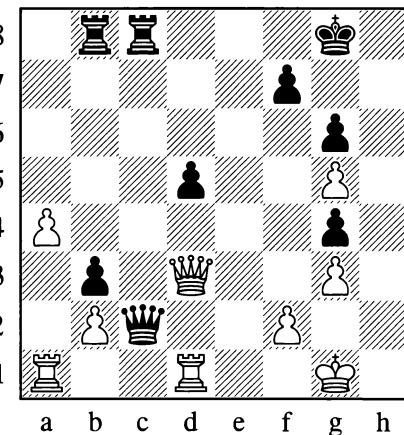


Black has secured compensation for the pawn. His bishop is back in the game, White is disorganized and the b2-pawn is a target. During a game it would of course have been very difficult to see even this far, but as we are in the process of understanding what is best play, not finding it, we can afford to go on to the (not so) bitter end.

**35.♛d3**

35.g3 ♛f5 36.♛e2 ♜c2! secures Black compensation for the pawn all the way into the rook ending. The resource of ...b3 is important there as well.

**35...b3 36.g3 ♜g5 37.h4 h5! 38.hxg5 hxg4 39.d5? exd5**



**40.♛d4**

40.♛xd5 ♛xb2 is fine as well.

**40...♛e4 41.♛xd5 ♛c2! 42.♝d2 ♜d8 43.♛xd8† ♜xd8 44.♝xd8† ♜g7 45.a5 ♛xb2 46.♝dd1 ♛e5 47.a6 b2 48.♝ab1 ♛xg5 49.♝xb2 ♜a5**

Black makes a draw.

Obviously this understanding of pushing the dynamic qualities of our position is not only related to positions where we are worse. It is a simple understanding of what is good

about our position and what is bad about it. The overall evaluation is far less important for the understanding of how we should handle it. For example; should we lose momentum, it is important to understand this and then play accordingly, which does not mean that we should no longer care about dynamic features.

### Vladislav Kovalev – Aleksandr Shimanov

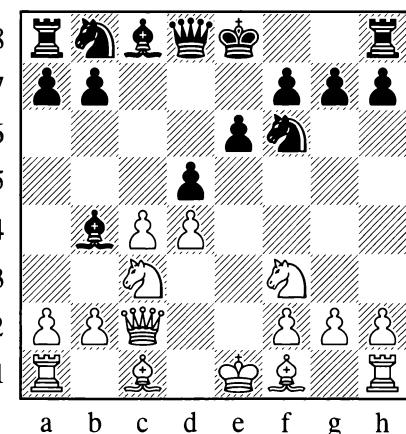
Athens 2012

#### 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4

I used to be fairly competent in the Panov; enjoying playing it with both colours. The main thing to understand about this line is that White has already taken a statically inferior position, in return for quick development. A lead in development either grows and is used, or it withers and dies. There is no stage beyond full mobilization and if you are not able to use it at this point, it will naturally diminish.

This means that White cannot lose momentum in the opening in this line; he would squander the positives of his position without holding back the negatives. This is exactly what happened in this game.

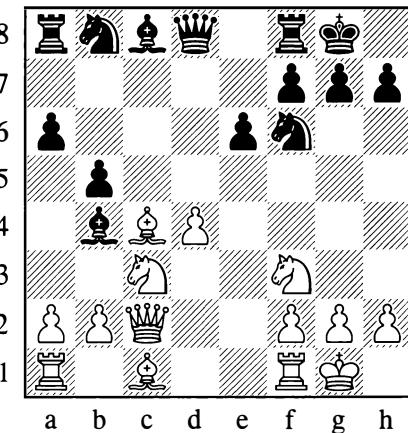
#### 4... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ e6 6. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 7. $\mathbb{W}c2?$



A question mark is maybe a bit harsh, but

I really dislike this move. What is the point? If Black takes on c3 White should probably take back with  $bxc3$  anyway. So all this move achieves is to lose a tempo. This is hardly in tune with keeping up the momentum.

7...0–0 8. $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $dxc4$  9. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$  a6 10.0–0 b5



This is really the position I wanted to discuss. White has already lost precious time on his 7th move and the chance to keep strong pressure on Black has been wasted. He should have realized this and played 11. $\mathbb{Q}e2$  with a more defensive outlook. Then quick development and a2-a4, with realistic hopes of keeping the balance. Instead he continues as if he has all the time in the world.

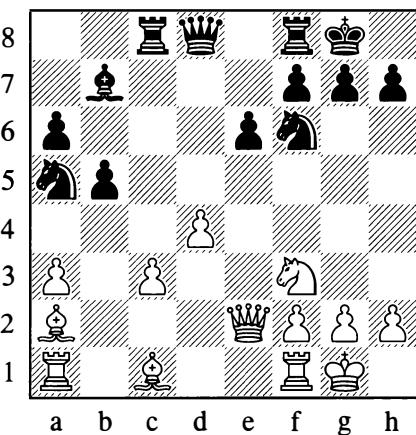
#### 11. $\mathbb{Q}b3?$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$

Not a difficult move to predict, but now White loses more time.

#### 12. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 13.a3?

Also this is a poor move. It does indeed protect the d4-pawn, but it does nothing to mobilize the white forces. Actually it is Black who gains time once again. The correct move was 13. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ , when Black's advantage is not yet critical.

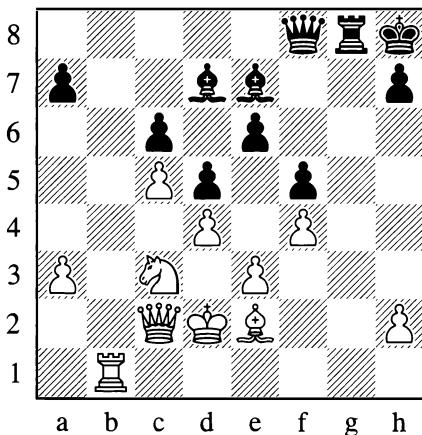
13... $\mathbb{Q}a5$  14. $\mathbb{Q}a2$   $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  15. $bxc3$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$



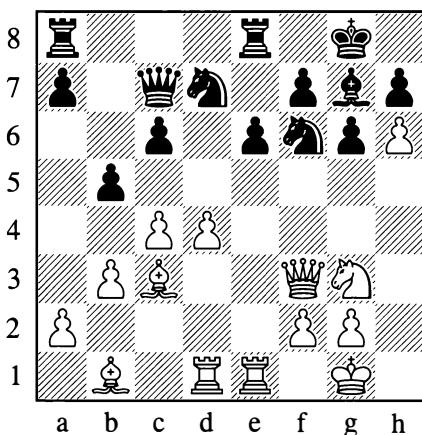
Black is fully developed, while White is still stuck in the starting blocks. Structurally White's position is a disaster, with fatally weak light squares everywhere. The fact that he kept the game going till move 92 shows that the first 15 moves do not represent his true playing strength.

Hopefully these few examples will have helped you to prepare for solving the last 18 exercises of this book. If you have made it this far then you are a tough competitor, and I feel the need to warn the exercises to look out, rather than warn you of the resistance they will offer!

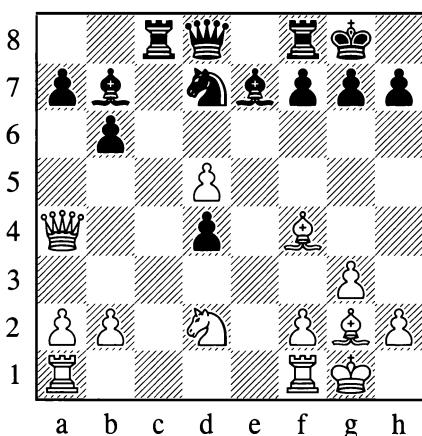
Topalov – Giri, Istanbul (ol) 2012



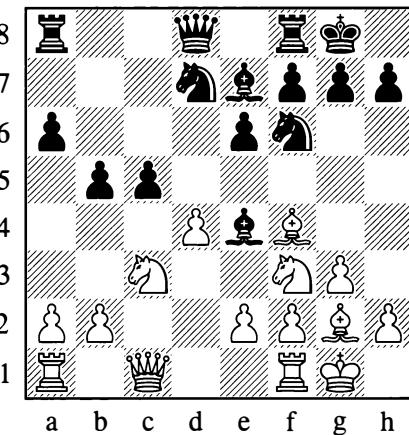
Shirov – Chernin, Groningen 1993



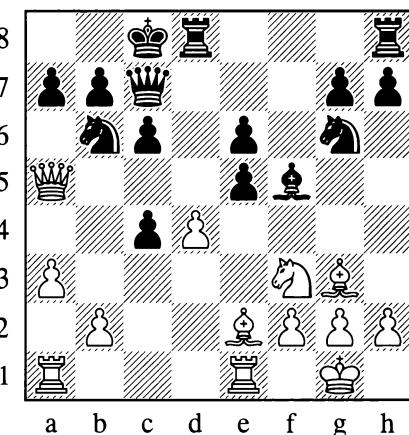
Novotelnov – Averbakh, Moscow 1951



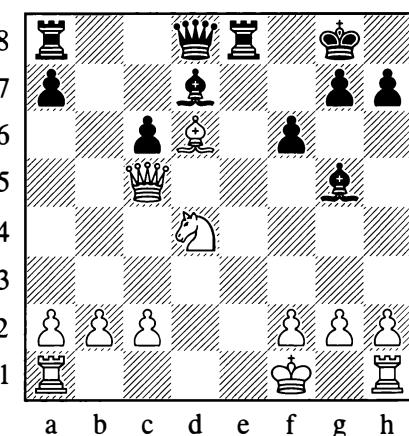
Zaragatski – Wantola, Netherlands 2008



Zawadzka – E. Paehtz, Antakya 2010



E. Berg – Byklum, Oslo 2010

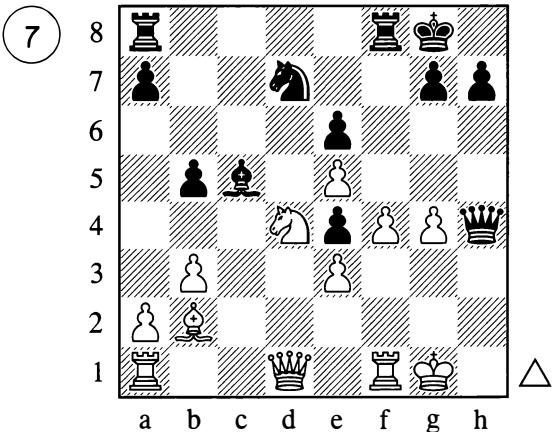


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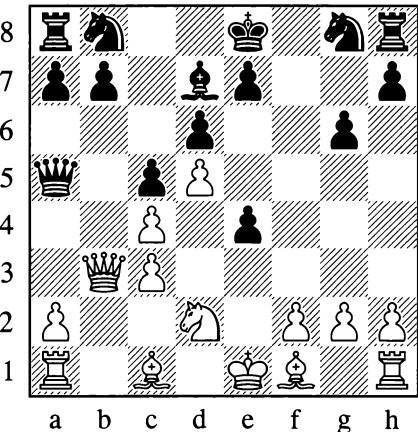
6

**Smejkal – Sunye Neto, Rio de Janeiro 1979**



Brkic – A. Kovacevic, Bihac 2010

Arun Prasad – Markowski, Dresden 2011



Holt – Ipatov, Athens 2012

Morozevich – Giri, Biel 2012

The diagram shows a chessboard with the following pieces:

- White King: e1
- White Queen: d1
- White Rook: c1, f1
- White Bishop: b1
- White Knight: a1
- White Pawn: a2, b2, c2, d2, e2, f2, g2, h2
- Black King: h8
- Black Queen: g8
- Black Rook: f8
- Black Bishop: e8
- Black Knight: d8
- Black Pawn: a7, b7, c7, d7, e7, f7, g7, h7

The board has light and dark squares, with the light squares being the starting square for the white pieces and the dark squares for the black pieces.

Tikkanen – E. Berg, Vaxjo 2008

▼

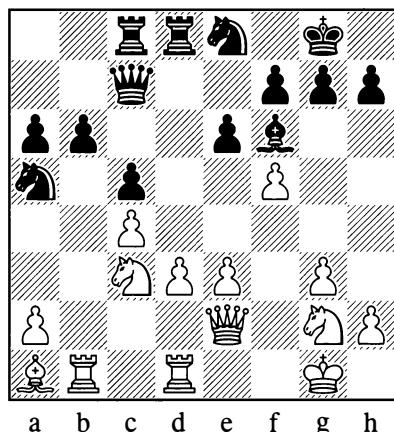
A diagram of a chessboard showing a pawn endgame. The board is a 8x8 grid with light and dark squares. The pieces are as follows: White King at h1, White Queen at g1, White Rook at f1, White Knight at e1, White Bishop at d1, White Pawn at c1. Black King at h8, Black Queen at g8, Black Rook at f8, Black Knight at e8, Black Bishop at d8, Black Pawn at c8. The pawns are on the 1st rank for White and the 8th rank for Black. The board has a hatched pattern where every second square is shaded.

10

11

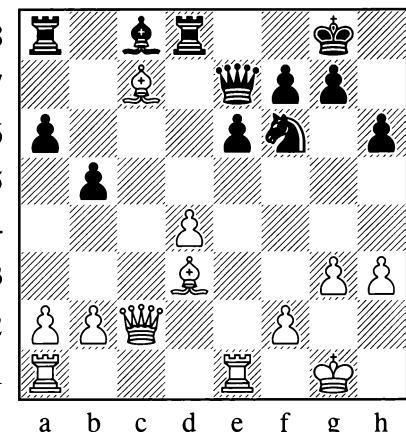
12

**McNab – Su.B. Hansen, Istanbul (ol) 2012**



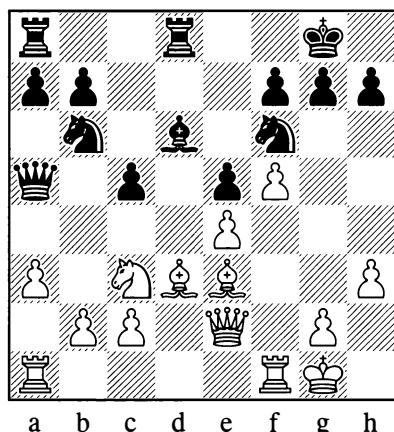
13

**Caruana – So, Biel 2010**



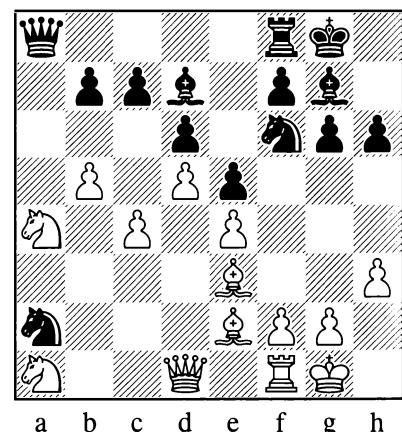
16

**Yakovich – Romero Garcia, Seville 1999**



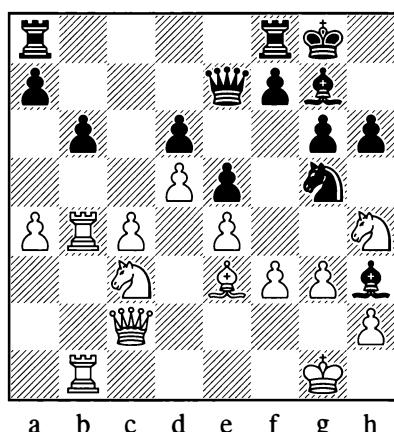
14

**Bareev – Svidler, Elista (6.6) 1997**



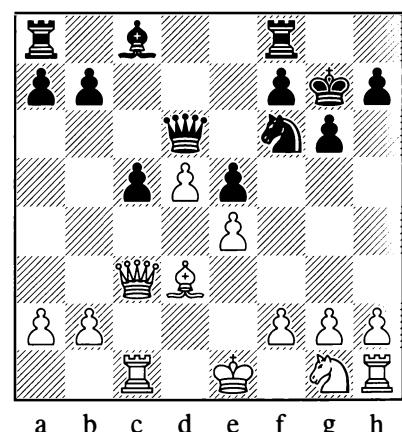
17

**Gelfand – Smirin, Saint Vincent 2005**



15

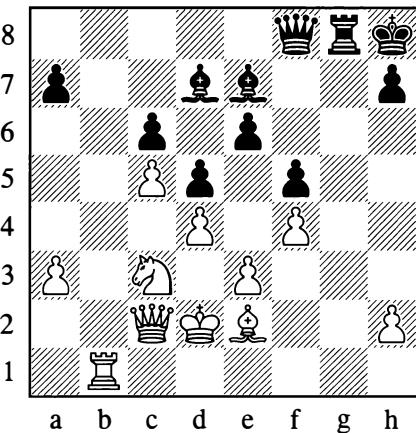
**Di Berardino – Barbosa, Campinas 2011**



18

## 1. Topalov – Giri

Istanbul (ol) 2012



White has control of the b-file and will be better if Black does nothing. For this reason Black challenged the deadlock on the dark squares with a freeing sacrifice:

**24...e5!!**

Black has to do something for his bishops.

**25.dxe5?!**

I am not too impressed with this decision. Black's bishops come strongly to life now.

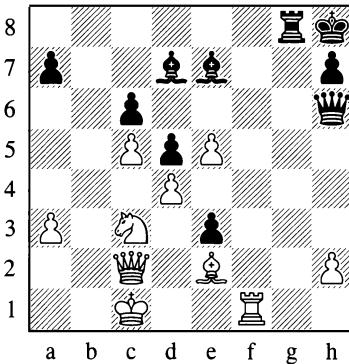
**25.fxe5 f4**

This looks terribly risky for White. It is easy to understand why Topalov ignored this option.

**26.♗f1**

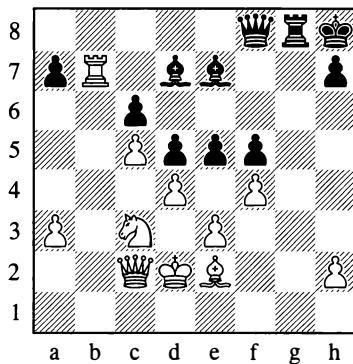
26.♗b7 ♜c8! 27.♗b8 fxe3† 28.♗c1 ♜f4 with clearly better chances for Black.

26...fxe3† 27.♗c1 ♜h6



Black has the initiative, though I have the feeling that White can keep the balance with accurate play.

25.♗b7? was a reasonable alternative.



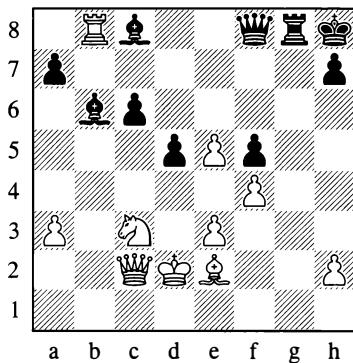
After 25...exd4 26.exd4 ♜e8 27.♗xa7 ♜f6 28.♗d3 ♜h6 Black has excellent counterplay. The chances are about even in this unclear position.

**25...♗xc5 26.♗b7**

26.♗f3?!

**26...♗c8 27.♗b8 d4?**

Giri misses the chance to activate his queen with 27...♗b6!..



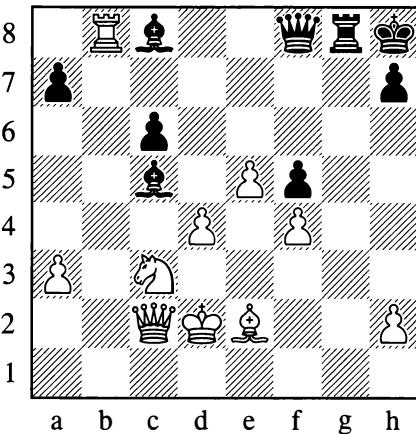
White is under a strong attack on the dark squares and has to act quickly to create counterplay:

**28.♕a4? ♜a5†!**

28.  $\mathbb{W}a4$   $\mathbb{W}c5$  29.  $\mathbb{B}c2$   $\mathbb{A}e6\#$  and the bishops dominate.

28.  $\mathbb{A}a6!$   $\mathbb{A}xe3\#$  29.  $\mathbb{B}xe3$   $\mathbb{W}c5\#$  30.  $\mathbb{B}f3$   $\mathbb{A}xa6$  31.  $\mathbb{W}b3!$  Black's advantage is kept to an absolute minimum.

## 28. $\mathbb{exd}4$



## 28... $\mathbb{W}h6?$

This is a horrible miscalculation. I am not sure exactly what Giri missed; but it is obvious that he somehow overvalued the threat to the f4-pawn.

28...  $\mathbb{A}xd4$  29.  $\mathbb{A}a6$   $\mathbb{A}e3\#$  30.  $\mathbb{B}xe3$   $\mathbb{W}c5\#$  31.  $\mathbb{B}f3$  (31.  $\mathbb{B}d2$   $\mathbb{W}f2\#$  32.  $\mathbb{B}e2$   $\mathbb{A}xa6$  is equal) 31...  $\mathbb{A}xa6$  32.  $\mathbb{B}xg8\#$   $\mathbb{B}xg8$  and White's advantage is so small it is almost not there.

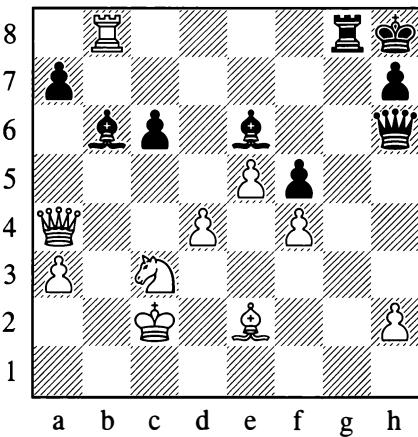
## 29. $\mathbb{W}a4!$

White clears the c2-square for his king and, given the chance, will take on c6 with a double threat of  $\mathbb{B}xc8$  and  $\mathbb{W}f6\#$ .

## 29... $\mathbb{A}b6$

29...  $\mathbb{W}xf4\#$  30.  $\mathbb{B}c2$   $\mathbb{A}xd4$  31.  $\mathbb{W}xc6$  and White wins a piece.

## 30. $\mathbb{B}c2!$ $\mathbb{A}e6$



## 31. $\mathbb{B}b7?$

A very strange move.

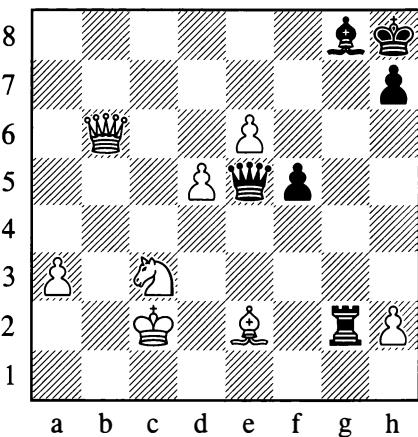
31.  $\mathbb{B}xg8\#$   $\mathbb{B}xg8$  32.  $\mathbb{B}c4$  would have left White a pawn up against hardly any counterplay.

31...  $\mathbb{W}xf4$  32.  $\mathbb{B}xb6$   $\mathbb{axb}6$  33.  $\mathbb{W}xc6$   $\mathbb{B}g6$  34.  $d5$   $\mathbb{B}g8$  35.  $e6$   $\mathbb{W}e5?$

35...  $\mathbb{W}e3!$  would have both stopped the e-pawn and defended the b6-pawn, thereby keeping the balance.

## 36. $\mathbb{W}xb6$ $\mathbb{B}g2?$

36...  $\mathbb{B}h6!$  was the last chance to create counterplay.



## 37. $\mathbb{B}d3!$

A strong prophylactic move.

**37...♝xh2**

37...♝g7 38.a4 and White should win.

**38.♛d4**

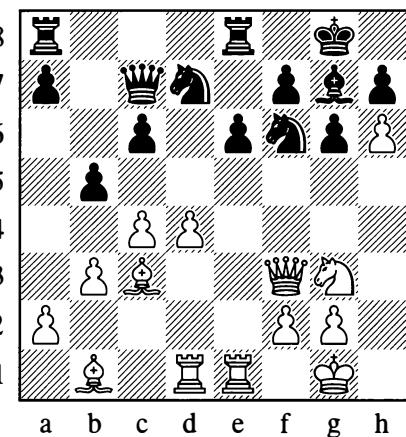
This seals the deal.

**38...♝h3† 39.♝c4 ♜xd4† 40.♝xd4 ♜g7  
41.e7 ♜f7 42.d6 ♜h4† 43.♝e5 ♜e8 44.♝b5  
♝xb5 45.♞xb5 ♜f7 46.♞c7 ♜e4† 47.♝xf5  
♝e1 48.a4**

**1–0**

## 2. Shirov – Chernin

Groningen 1993



Shirov has just played 19.h6?. In his annotations he states that it would have been much better to play 19.♝d2! with the idea 20.h6 and 21.♝g5, with a serious advantage.

**19...♝xh6!**

There is no way that Black can accept the poor position resulting after 19...♝h8 or 19...♝f8 20.d5±, so this sacrificial continuation is forced.

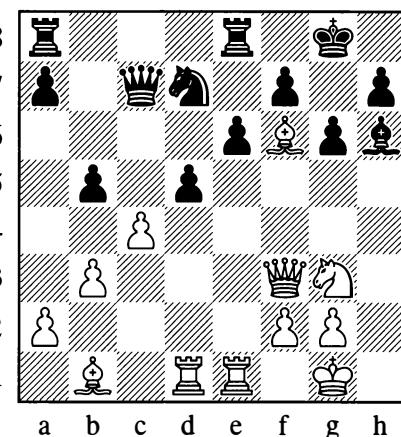
**20.d5**

This was Shirov's idea.

**20...cx d5**

Again there is really no choice.

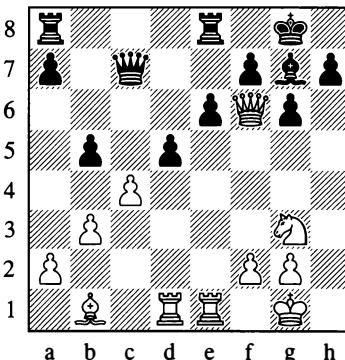
**21.♝xf6**



**21...bx c4??**

Nor was there a real choice at this point, but Chernin created one and got it all wrong.

21...♝xf6 22.♛xf6 ♜g7= was natural and correct.



Black obtains compensation in view of his dominance of the dark squares.

**22.♝b2!**

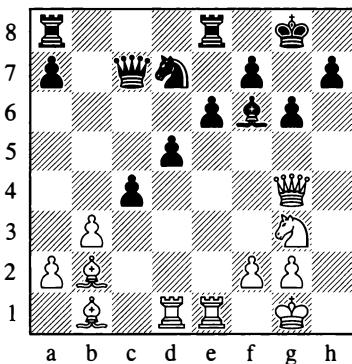
Shirov wants to keep his dark-squared bishop.

**22...cx b3**

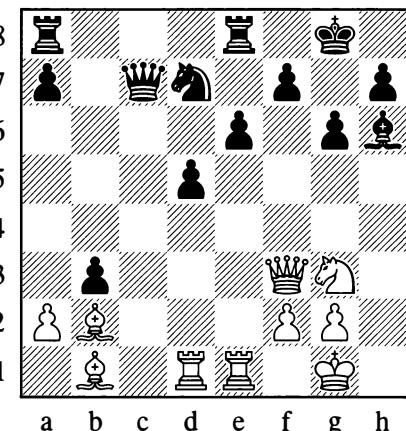
This looks a bit reckless as well, but Black's position has already become bad.

22...♝g5 23.♛g4 ♜f6 was perhaps a better try,

but White can gain the advantage in several ways, for example:



24.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6$   $\mathbb{Q}xf6$  25.  $\mathbb{W}h4$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  26.  $\mathbb{E}c1\pm$  and Black does not have the great control over the dark squares he could have had. Instead his position is passive and under pressure.



### 23. $\mathbb{Q}h5!!$ $f5?!$

This “head first” approach is doomed to fail.

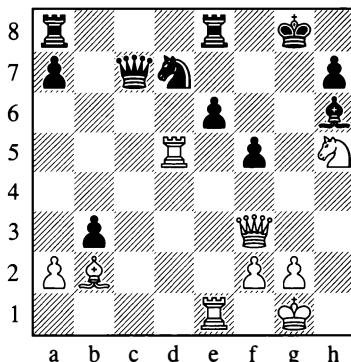
Black is also losing after 23... $gxh5$  24.  $\mathbb{W}xh5$   $\mathbb{W}f4$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}c1$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  26.  $\mathbb{W}h3$ .

But Black had a chance to create practical problems for White with 23... $\mathbb{Q}g5?!$ , when I have not managed to kill Black off entirely. However, White can try something like: 24.  $\mathbb{W}g4$   $h6$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}xg6$  Not forced, but strong. 25... $fxg6$  26.  $\mathbb{W}d4$   $e5$  27.  $\mathbb{W}xd5\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  28.  $\mathbb{W}xd7$   $\mathbb{W}xd7$

29.  $\mathbb{E}xd7$   $gxh5$  30.  $\mathbb{E}xe5$   $\mathbb{E}xe5$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  32.  $axb3\pm$  White has great winning chances in this technical ending, but it is not decided yet.

### 24. $\mathbb{E}xd5!$

An attractive combination, but with today’s PC-power we can see that White has an even stronger combination: 24.  $\mathbb{Q}xf5!!$   $gxh5$  25.  $\mathbb{E}xd5$



The b1-bishop bought immunity for the knight on h5, as that piece is more dangerous to Black. For example: 25...  $\mathbb{Q}g5$  26.  $\mathbb{E}xf5$   $h6$  27.  $\mathbb{W}d3$  and Black will be torn apart in a moment.

### 24... $gxh5$

24... $exd5$  does not work. White wins with 25.  $\mathbb{W}xd5\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}a3\uparrow$  and the black queen is lost.

25.  $\mathbb{E}xf5$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  26.  $\mathbb{E}xh5$   $bxa2$  27.  $\mathbb{E}xa2$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$   
 28.  $\mathbb{W}g4$

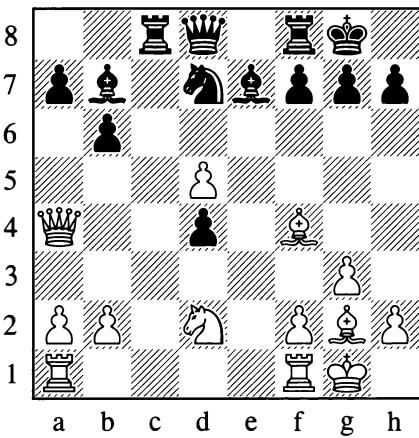
A shorter route to the full point was: 28.  $\mathbb{E}g5\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  29.  $\mathbb{E}xe6$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  30.  $\mathbb{W}e4!$   $\mathbb{E}f8$  (30...  $\mathbb{E}xe6$  31.  $\mathbb{W}xa8\uparrow$ ) 31.  $\mathbb{Q}xg7\uparrow$   $\mathbb{W}xg7$  32.  $\mathbb{E}gxg6$   $hxg6$  33.  $\mathbb{E}xg6$  and Black is lost.

28... $\mathbb{Q}h8$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}xg7\uparrow$   $\mathbb{W}xg7$  30.  $\mathbb{E}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$   
 31.  $\mathbb{Q}b1$   $\mathbb{W}c3$  32.  $\mathbb{E}d1$   $\mathbb{W}f6$  33.  $\mathbb{E}d7$   $\mathbb{E}e-$   
 34.  $\mathbb{E}xe7$   $\mathbb{W}xe7$  35.  $\mathbb{Q}xg6$   $\mathbb{E}g8$  36.  $\mathbb{W}d4\uparrow$   $\mathbb{E}g-$   
 37.  $\mathbb{E}h5$   $e5$

1-0

### 3. Novotelnov – Averbakh

Moscow 1951



White has strong threats to a7 and d4; there is only one successful way to meet them.

**15... $\mathbb{Q}c5!$**

Black solves his problems with tactics.

15...g5? does not trap the white bishop on account of a simple double attack: 16.d6!  $\mathbb{Q}xg2$  17.dxe7  $\mathbb{W}xe7$  18. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$  gxf4 19. $\mathbb{W}xd4\pm$  and the black king is weakened.

15... $\mathbb{Q}f6?$  is even worse. After 16. $\mathbb{W}xa7$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  the queen may be almost trapped and the d5-pawn hanging – but White has 17. $\mathbb{Q}c4!$  taking control of all the important squares.

**16. $\mathbb{W}xd4$**

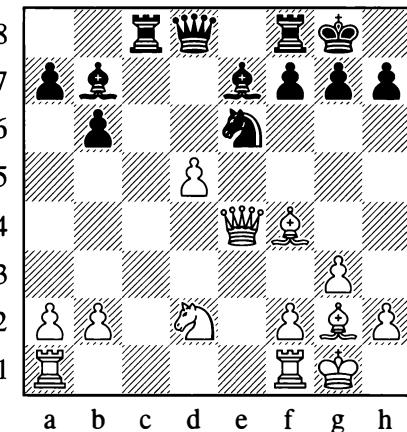
16. $\mathbb{W}xa7?$   $\mathbb{Q}a8$  is an obvious no-no.

**16... $\mathbb{Q}e6$**

The whole point. Black is able to remove the bishop from f4.

**17. $\mathbb{W}e4$**

This needlessly gives Black an extra option. However, 17. $\mathbb{W}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}xf4$  18. $\mathbb{W}xf4$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  is also pleasant for Black.



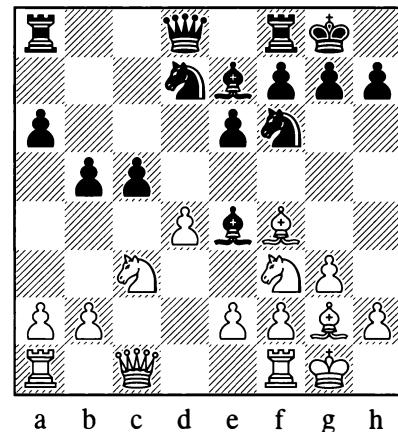
17... $\mathbb{B}c5!$  18. $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  19. $\mathbb{W}b1$   $\mathbb{Q}xg2$   
20. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$   $\mathbb{B}d5\#$

The transition from opening to middlegame has been a complete success for Black.

21. $\mathbb{B}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  22. $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{B}e8$  23.a4 h5 24. $\mathbb{Q}c4$  h4 25. $\mathbb{Q}c2$  h3 26. $\mathbb{W}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}d4$  27. $\mathbb{W}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}f3\#$   
28. $\mathbb{Q}h1$   $\mathbb{B}xd1$  29. $\mathbb{B}xd1$   $\mathbb{W}a8$   
0–1

### 4. Zaragatski – Wantola

Netherlands 2008

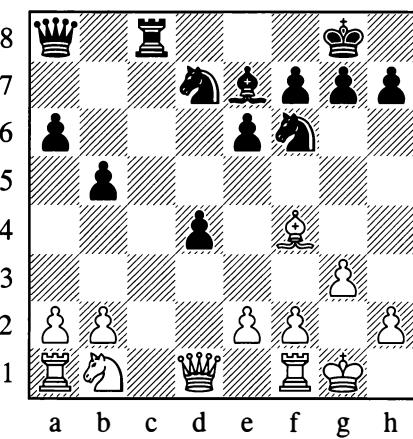


Black should sacrifice the exchange, because in the resulting position he is able to harass the dark-squared bishop.

**13... $\mathbb{Q}xf3!$** 

In the game Black played less strongly with 13... $\mathbb{Q}b7?!$ , which allowed White to neutralize the pressure quite easily: 14.dxc5  $\mathbb{Q}xc5$  15. $\mathbb{W}d2$   $\mathbb{W}b6$  16. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$   $\mathbb{Q}fd8$  17. $\mathbb{Q}d6$  b4 18. $\mathbb{Q}a4$   $\mathbb{W}xd6$  19. $\mathbb{W}xd6$   $\mathbb{Q}xd6$  20. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  21. $\mathbb{Q}b6$   $\mathbb{Q}xb6$  22. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$   $\mathbb{Q}db8$  23. $\mathbb{Q}xb8\#$   $\mathbb{Q}xb8$  24. $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  25. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  26. $\mathbb{Q}d3$  a5 27.e4  $\mathbb{Q}b6$   $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$

**14. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$  cxd4! 15. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$   $\mathbb{W}xa8$  16. $\mathbb{Q}b1$   $\mathbb{E}c8$  17. $\mathbb{W}d1$**

**17... $\mathbb{Q}d5\#$** 

Black has more than adequate compensation.

17... $\mathbb{W}d5?!$  18. $\mathbb{W}b3$   $\mathbb{W}f5\#$  also seems most agreeable for Black.

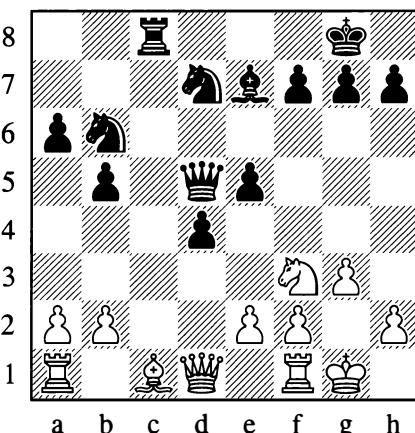
**18. $\mathbb{Q}c1$** 

The bishop does not appear to have any other good squares. But now White is of course pitifully underdeveloped.

18. $\mathbb{W}xd4?$  e5! 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{E}c4$  and Black would win a piece.

**18...e5**

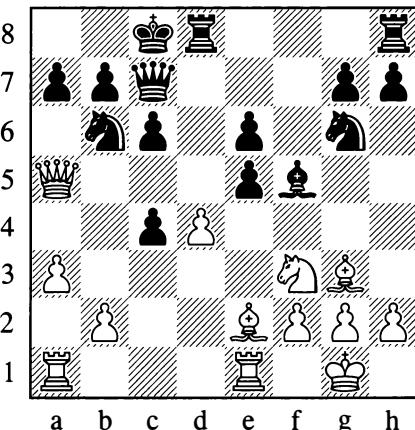
18... $\mathbb{Q}f6$  19.a4! may not be so bad for White.

**19. $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}5b6$  20. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{W}d5$** 

Most grandmasters would surely prefer Black here; the white pieces cannot find any good squares.

**5. Zawadzka – E. Paehtz**

Antakya 2010



White seems to have everything under control; she is attacking the a7-pawn and bearing down on e5 from all directions. However, Paehtz had likely foreseen how she could convincingly deal with White's attacking intentions:

**16... $\mathbb{Q}d5!$** 

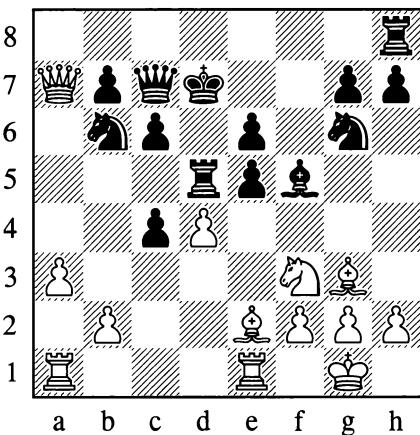
Something like 16...h5 would be weaker. After 17. $\mathbb{W}xa7$  h4 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  19.dxe5 h3

the game is rather unclear, but perhaps slightly better for White.

### 17. $\mathbb{W}xa7?$

Walking the plank. 17.  $\mathbb{W}c3$  was more sensible, although Black is somewhat better after 17...exd4 18.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{W}d7$ , when on top of her fine position she will even remain a pawn up.

### 17... $\mathbb{Q}d7!$



This is the point; the white queen is in deadly trouble.

### 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe5 \mathbb{Q}x e5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f3$

19.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}x e5$  20.  $dxe5$   $\mathbb{Q}a8$  and the queen is trapped.

### 19... $\mathbb{Q}a8$

19...  $\mathbb{Q}xf3 \dagger$  20.  $gxf3$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  was another option, simply leaving Black a piece up.

### 20. $\mathbb{W}xa8 \mathbb{Q}xf3 \dagger$ 21. $gxf3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xc7 \mathbb{Q}xc7$

White's structure is in tatters, making Black's modest material advantage absolutely decisive.

### 23. $\mathbb{Q}ed1 \mathbb{Q}b5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}ac1 \mathbb{Q}xd4$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g2 \mathbb{Q}d3$

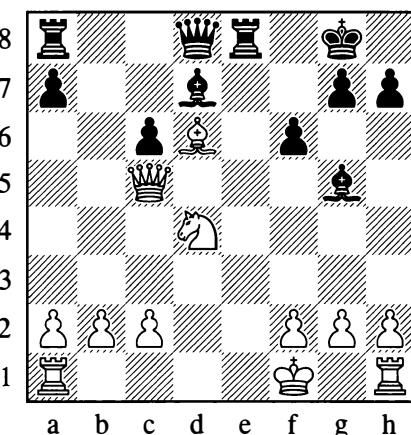
### 26. $h4 \mathbb{Q}b5$ 27. $b4 \mathbb{Q}d5$ 28. $a4 \mathbb{Q}e2$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}a1 c3$

### 30. $\mathbb{Q}el c2$

0–1

## 6. E. Berg – Byklum

Oslo 2010



Black is struggling to prove full compensation for the pawn. His bishops might be a pair, but they are a long way away from being impressive. Both of them could be rated as being as ineffective as the rook on a8. It is therefore the improvement of his four dormant pieces (the rook on e8 passes its MOT test this time around) that should be foremost in Black's mind.

### 17... $\mathbb{W}b6!$

An excellent move that brings the queen to an active square and even threatens to exchange queens, followed by ... $\mathbb{E}e5$  and ... $c5$ , disrupting the stability of the white pieces and activating the bishop from d7.

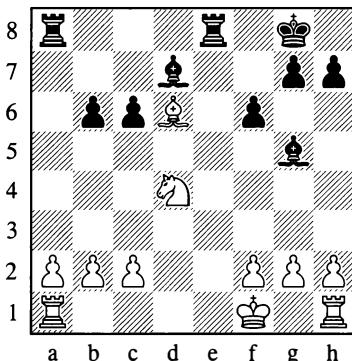
### 18. $\mathbb{W}c3!$

This seems the most obvious reply. White keeps his control over the dark squares (especially e5) and defends the b2-pawn at the same time.

The alternatives were:

18.  $\mathbb{W}c4 \dagger$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  19.  $b3$   $\mathbb{Q}e4 \bar{\infty}$  Black will get his pieces into play with pleasing fluency.

18.  $\mathbb{W}xb6$   $axb6\bar{\mp}$  would entirely hand over the initiative to Black.



The main threat is ...c5 followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}b5\bar{t}$ , forcing the white pieces to embarrassing squares. And after 19.f4 Black can try either 19... $\mathbb{E}e4!$ ? or 19... $\mathbb{Q}xf4!$  20. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$   $\mathbb{E}e4$ , in each case with the more pleasant position.

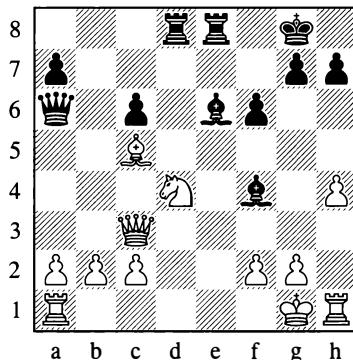
18.b3  $\mathbb{W}xc5$  19. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$   $\mathbb{E}e5$  20. $\mathbb{Q}a3$   $\mathbb{E}ae8$  gives Black excellent compensation. White has to answer the threat of ... $\mathbb{Q}d2-c3$  with 21. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{E}e2$  22. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$   $fxg5$  23.c4, but after 23...g4 it is obvious that White will not be able to get much out of his pieces for a long time. My evaluation is that the position is equal, because f2 can be protected, but it is White who needs to be a bit careful.

### 18... $\mathbb{E}ad8$

This move is most natural and seemingly best. Black is struggling a little after the alternatives:

18... $\mathbb{E}e4$  19. $\mathbb{Q}c5$   $\mathbb{W}a6\bar{t}$  20. $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{E}ae8$  21.h3± and it is not easy to see how Black can get the d7-bishop into the game.

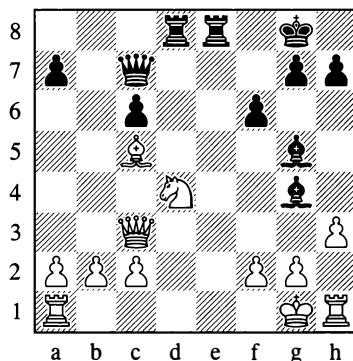
18... $\mathbb{Q}e6?$  19. $\mathbb{Q}g1!$  (On the other hand 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$   $\mathbb{E}xe6$  20. $\mathbb{Q}c5$   $\mathbb{W}b5\bar{t}$  21. $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}d2!$  would give Black enough counterplay.) 19... $\mathbb{E}ad8$  20. $\mathbb{Q}c5$   $\mathbb{W}a6$  21.h4  $\mathbb{Q}f4$



22.h5± White will continue with  $\mathbb{Q}h4$  and enjoy his extra pawn.

### 19.h4

19. $\mathbb{Q}g1!$ ? looks like the greatest challenge. But if Black plays actively enough, he should be able to equalize: 19... $\mathbb{Q}g4!$ ? 20. $\mathbb{Q}c5$   $\mathbb{W}c-$  21.h3 (21.g3  $\mathbb{Q}h3$  22.f4  $\mathbb{Q}h6\infty$ )

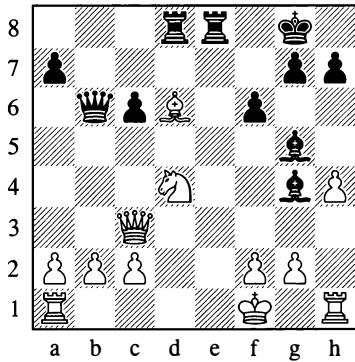


21... $\mathbb{Q}h5!$  The bishop is heading for g6, where it will put real pressure on c2. White will fight to keep his stability on the dark squares, but it will take a long time before the rook on h1 joins the game. I do not rate Black's chances to be in any way inferior.

### 19... $\mathbb{Q}h6?$

A passive move. Black had to fight for the initiative to justify having sacrificed the pawn.

I think his chances are decent after: 19... $\mathbb{Q}g4!$

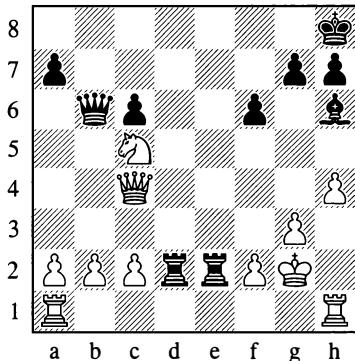


20... $\mathbb{Q}c5$   $\mathbb{W}a6\#$  21. $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}f4\#$  and all Black's pieces are active.

### 20.g3 c5

Black decides to sacrifice another pawn before White can block the c5-square with his bishop. In this way Black gets a dangerous diagonal for his light-squared bishop against the open white king. However, two pawns is a large material advantage, so it's not easy to justify it. The fact that both players were approaching serious time trouble might have been a good reason for Black to complicate matters.

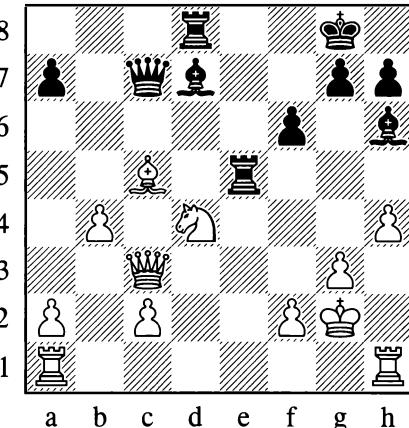
20... $\mathbb{Q}e6$  looks tempting, but in the very concrete line that follows, we can see that the poor position of the bishop on h6 is a decisive factor. Black is simply playing with a piece less: 21. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$   $\mathbb{Q}xd6$  22. $\mathbb{Q}c5$   $\mathbb{Q}d2$  23. $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}ee2$  (23... $\mathbb{Q}e3$  24. $\mathbb{Q}ae1!+-->$ ) 24. $\mathbb{W}c4\#$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$



25. $\mathbb{Q}ae1!!$   $\mathbb{Q}xf2\#$  26. $\mathbb{Q}h3$   $\mathbb{W}b8$  27. $\mathbb{W}e6\pm$

20... $\mathbb{Q}d2$  also fails to solve all the problems. After 21. $\mathbb{W}xd2$  c5 22. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$   $\mathbb{W}xc5$  23.c3  $\mathbb{W}d5$  24.f3± White will eventually untangle and have some extra pawns.

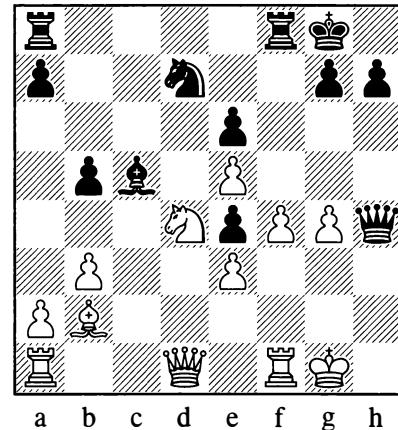
21. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$   $\mathbb{W}c7$  22. $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}e5$  23.b4±



Black does not have sufficient compensation for the pawns, and he lost the game on move 38.

## 7. Smejkal – Sunye Neto

Rio de Janeiro 1979

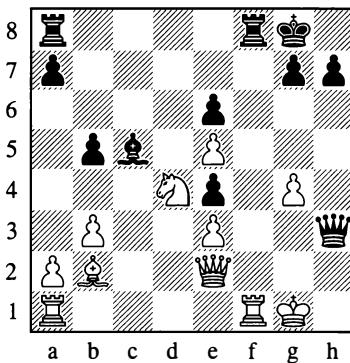


This is all about prophylaxis. Black is threatening to play ... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ ; in the game White

missed this. I have put this position in this section to encourage you to carefully check your instincts!

### 21.♕g2?

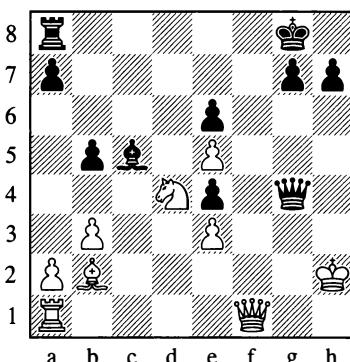
21.♕e2! was the only move. White needs to defend the pawns on e3 and g4. 21...♝xe5 is still possible, but it no longer leads to disaster for White: 22.fxe5 ♜g3† 23.♔h1 ♜h3† 24.♔g1



Black has no real way to strengthen his attack and a draw seems to be the likely outcome.

### 21...♝xe5! 22.♕h1

22.fxe5 would have been even worse:  
22...♜xf1 23.♝xf1 ♜xg4† 24.♔h2

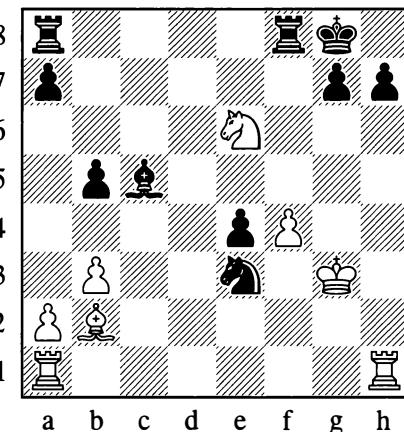


24...♜xd4! The most accurate move order.  
25.♜xd4 ♜f8 26.♝g2 ♜h5† 27.♔g1 ♜f5 The rook comes to g5 with great force. 28.♝xe4 ♜g6† 29.♝g2 ♜g5 and Black wins.

### 22...♜xg4† 23.♝xg4 ♜xg4†

Black will emerge a pawn up.

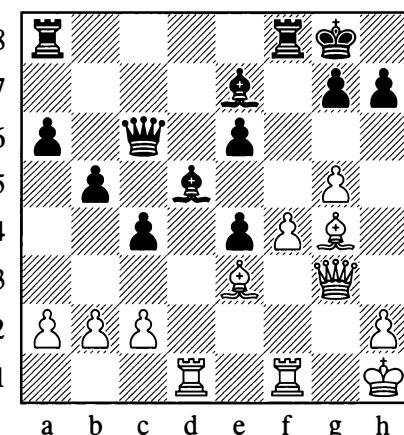
### 24.♝xe6 ♜xe3† 25.♔g3



In the game Black now sacrificed the exchange with 25...♝f5† 26.♔g4 ♜f2† and won on move 54, but simply remaining a pawn up with 25...♜fc8! 26.♝xg7 ♜c6 would have been even stronger.

## 8. Brkic – A. Kovacevic

Bihac 2010



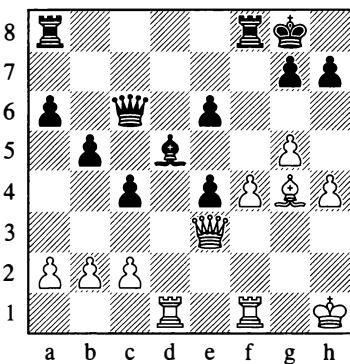
White has sacrificed a pawn and needs to demonstrate compensation. As the white pieces are probably as well placed as they are

ever going to be, while Black still needs one or two moves to become fully mobilized, White's best hope is through immediate action:

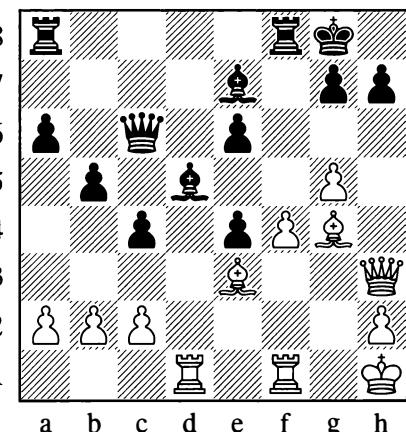
### 23. $\mathbb{W}h3!$

This is what White should play, aiming to create a winning attack by combining ideas of  $\mathbb{B}xd5$  and g5-g6.

In the game White went down quickly after allowing Black time to get organized: 23.h4?  $\mathbb{A}c5\#$  24.  $\mathbb{W}g1$   $\mathbb{A}xe3$  25.  $\mathbb{W}xe3$



25...c3 26.b3 b4 27.h5 a5 28.  $\mathbb{W}d4$   $\mathbb{W}c7$  29.h6  $\mathbb{B}f7$  30.  $\mathbb{A}h5$  g6 31.  $\mathbb{A}g4$   $\mathbb{B}af8$  32.  $\mathbb{W}g1$   $\mathbb{B}xf4$  33.  $\mathbb{B}xf4$   $\mathbb{B}xf4$  34.  $\mathbb{W}g2$   $\mathbb{W}e5$  35.  $\mathbb{B}g1$  e3 36.  $\mathbb{A}xe6\#$   $\mathbb{A}xe6$  37.  $\mathbb{B}d8\#$   $\mathbb{B}f8$  0–1

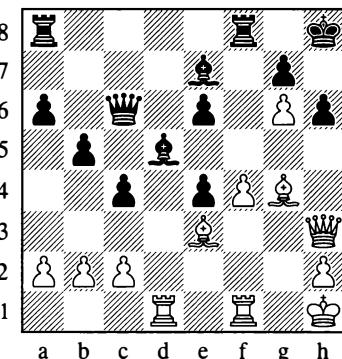


### 23... $\mathbb{A}c5!$

The only move that avoids going down in

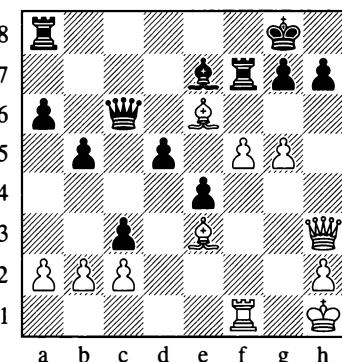
flames. Black needs to challenge the dark-squared bishop before it gets the chance to sacrifice itself on h6. The alternatives are all dealt with swiftly:

### 23... $\mathbb{A}h8?$ ! 24. g6 h6



25. f5 exf5 (25...  $\mathbb{A}g8$  26.  $\mathbb{B}xd5$ !  $\mathbb{W}xd5$  27. f6 and White wins) 26.  $\mathbb{A}xh6$   $\mathbb{W}xg6$  27.  $\mathbb{A}g5\#$   $\mathbb{A}g8$  28.  $\mathbb{A}xf5$   $\mathbb{B}xf5$  29.  $\mathbb{W}xf5$   $\mathbb{W}xg5$  30.  $\mathbb{W}xd5\#$   $\mathbb{W}xd5$  31.  $\mathbb{B}xd5$  and White has great winning chances in the ending.

### 23... c3? 24. $\mathbb{B}xd5$ exd5 25. $\mathbb{A}e6\#$ $\mathbb{B}f7$ 26. f5

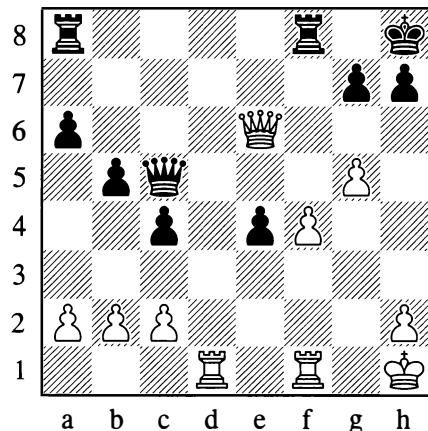


26...  $\mathbb{A}xg5$  27.  $\mathbb{A}xg5$  cxb2 28.  $\mathbb{A}xf7\#$   $\mathbb{A}xf7$  29. f6 with a decisive attack.

23...  $\mathbb{B}ae8?$  24.  $\mathbb{B}xd5$  exd5 25.  $\mathbb{A}e6\#$   $\mathbb{A}h8$  26. g6 h6 27. f5 White wins.

23...  $\mathbb{W}d6?$  24.  $\mathbb{B}xd5$  exd5 25.  $\mathbb{A}e6\#$   $\mathbb{A}h8$  26. g6 h6 27. f5 and wins.

24.♕xc5 ♕xc5 25.♕xe6+ ♔xe6 26.♗xe6+ ♖h8

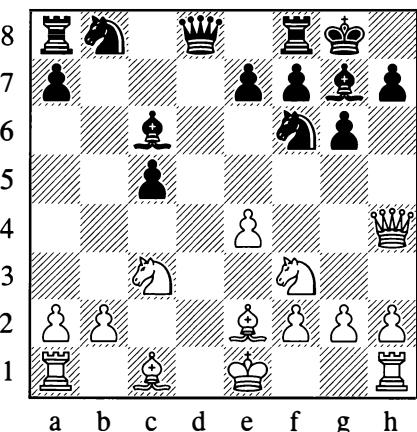


27.♗xe4 ♜ae8 28.♗g2±

White has an extra pawn, but due to Black's activity, his advantage is not that great. Still, facing a slight edge beats being gunned down!

## 9. Morozevich – Giri

Biel 2012

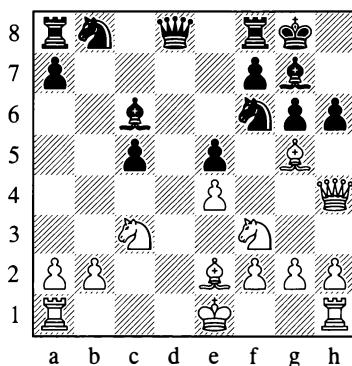


If nothing happens to change things, then Black will have to struggle ever so slightly with a poor structure and a weak c-pawn. The open files will not be enough to compensate for this.

**13...e6!!**

Something placid like 13...♝bd7 14.0–0 ♜c7 would give White an edge due to his better pawn structure. It really is not a lot, but it would be slightly unpleasant for Black: 15.♗d1 ♜ab8 16.♗b1 ♛h5 17.♗d5 ♜xd5 18.exd5 ♜d6 19.b3 and I prefer White, even if it is not much.

13...e5 aims for the same tactical trick that we shall see in the game, but it weakens the d5-square. White can take advantage of this: 14.♗g5 h6 (14...♝bd7 15.♗d2 and White is close to perfectly placed.)



15.♗xf6 ♜xf6 16.♗xf6 ♜xf6 17.0–0± and Black has not fully solved the problems with the light squares.

**14.♗g5**

14.0–0?! ♜xe4! and White will struggle for compensation.

14.♗f4 ♜bd7 15.0–0 ♜b8 is also slightly unpleasant for White, who now has to deal with the defence of his e4-pawn.

**14...h6!**

This was the point of Black's play.

**15.♗xh6 ♜xe4**

With the removal of White's greatest asset in the centre, Black has solved all of his problems.

**16.♘f4**

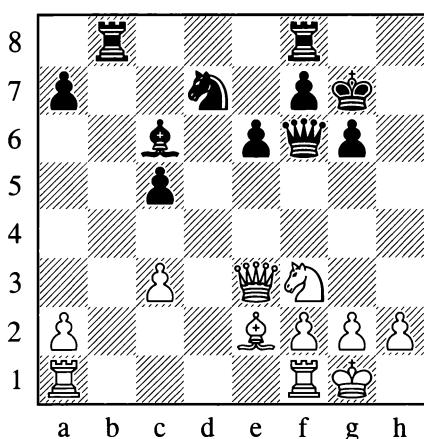
16.♘xd8 ♜xd8 17.♗xg7 ♔xg7 18.♕c1 would also have kept the position about level.

**16...♝xc3 17.♗xg7 ♔xg7**

17...♝xe2? 18.♕h6+–

**18.bxc3 ♜f6**

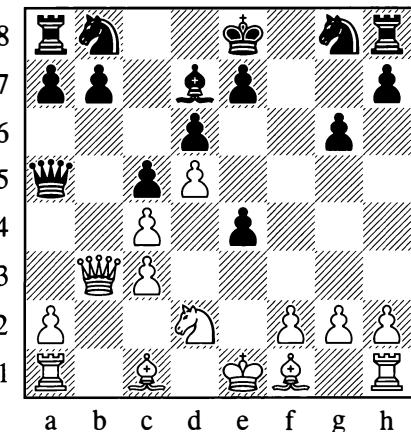
18...♝d7 is also equal.

**19.♗e3 ♜d7 20.0–0 ♜ab8**

Black is not worse at all. He won on move 51 after mutual mistakes.

**10. Arun Prasad – Markowski**

Dresden 2011



White has temporarily sacrificed a pawn, clearly intending to regain it immediately. Black could defend b7, but he can also play for the initiative by focusing on his development.

**10...♝f6!!**

Black sacrifices a rook in order to get his pieces into play quickly. Obviously he needed to calculate a lot of lines to be able to do this, but he also needed to take a leap of faith.

10...♜a6 11.♝xe4 would even favour White somewhat.

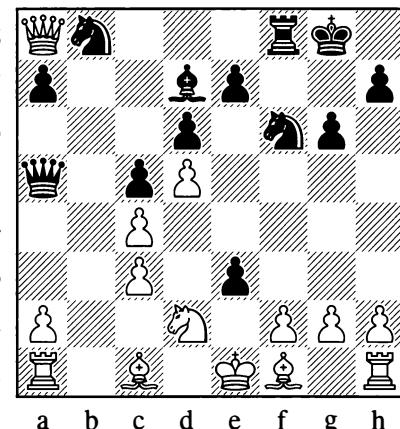
**11.♗xb7**

11.♔e2?! could be considered. White has some compensation for the pawn, but certainly not enough for an advantage.

**11...0–0 12.♗xa8**

White is taking no prisoners.

12.♝b3 ♜b6 13.♗xa8 (or 13.♗xb6=) 13...♝c8 14.♗b1 ♜b7 15.♝d2 ♜xb1 16.♝xb1 ♜xa8 leads to approximately equal play.

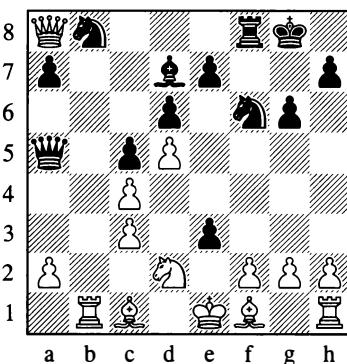
**12...e3!****13.fxe3!**

Markowski did not like this move in his annotations, but it seems to me that everything else is worse.

13.♕e2? exd2† 14.♕xd2 ♕b6†

13.♗b1?!

This was Markowski's preference, but Black has a route to the advantage:

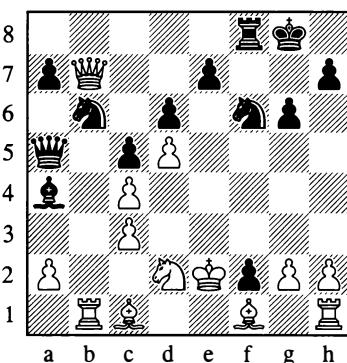


13...exf2†! 14.♗d1

14.♗xf2 ♕xc3 15.♕e2 ♔g4† 16.♔e1 ♔a6  
17.♕xa7 ♔b4 gives Black a winning attack.

14...♔a4† 15.♔e2

15.♗b3 ♔bd7 16.♗b7 ♔b8 and Black wins.  
15...♔bd7 16.♗b7 ♔b6∞



White's king is in serious trouble and his queen could easily be lost as well. This is how he fares against one of the computer's choices.

17.h4 ♔d7!

17...♕xc3 18.♗b2 ♕c2 also leads to a winning position for Black.

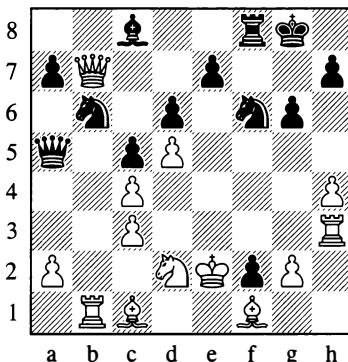
18.♗h3?!

The computer's attempt to eliminate the bishop.

18.♗f3 ♕xa2† 19.♗b2 ♕xc4† 20.♗xf2  
♕xc3+ and the attack rages on.

18...♔c8!

18...♔xh3 19.gxh3 ♔h5 20.♗xe7 ♔g3†  
21.♗d3 ♕xa2 22.♗e6† ♔g7 23.h5 ♔f3†  
24.♗xf3 ♕xb1† and Black regains his material investment with a huge advantage.



19.♗c7 ♔xh3 20.gxh3 ♕a4

Black intends to create a mating net around the white king; next will come ...♔h5. Black wins in all lines, for example:

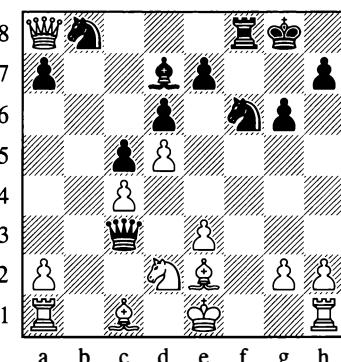
21.♗xb6 axb6 22.♗xb6 ♔h5 23.♗b3 ♔g3†  
24.♗d1 ♕d7

Black wins on points.

13...♕xc3 14.♗b1?

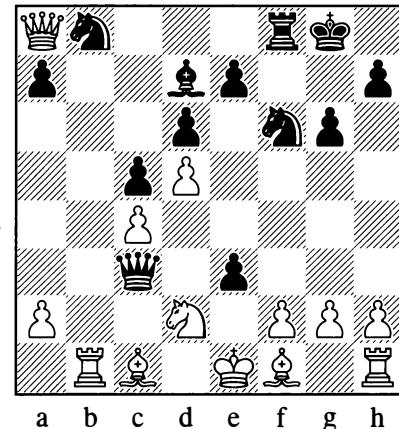
White cannot afford to neglect his development in this way.

It was absolutely necessary to play 14.♕e2!, when Black has several interesting replies:



14... $\mathbb{Q}a6!!$  and 14... $\mathbb{Q}c6$  (against which White would give up his queen) are both possible.

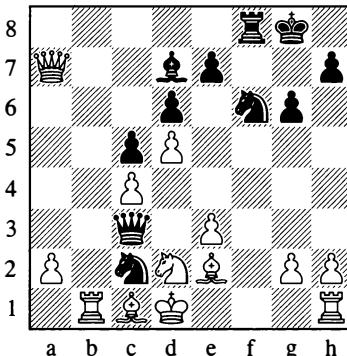
14... $\mathbb{W}xa1$  15.0–0  $\mathbb{W}c3$  16. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{W}c2$  17. $\mathbb{E}e1$   $\mathbb{W}xa2$  18. $\mathbb{W}b7$   $\mathbb{W}a6$  19. $\mathbb{W}b2$   $\mathbb{Q}g4\infty$  Black has an extra pawn, but the game goes on and there are a few positive things to say about the white position as well.



14... $\mathbb{Q}a6!$  15. $\mathbb{W}xf8\ddagger$

Simply forced.

15. $\mathbb{W}xa7$   $\mathbb{Q}b4$  gives Black a winning attack. For example: 16. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}c2\ddagger$  17. $\mathbb{Q}d1$  and Black can force mate in four moves!



17... $\mathbb{Q}g4!$  18. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$  (18. $\mathbb{Q}b2$   $\mathbb{Q}cxe3\ddagger$  19. $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}xg2\ddagger$  20. $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}f2\#$ ) 18... $\mathbb{Q}xg4\ddagger$  19. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}xf3$  20. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$   $\mathbb{Q}xf3\#$

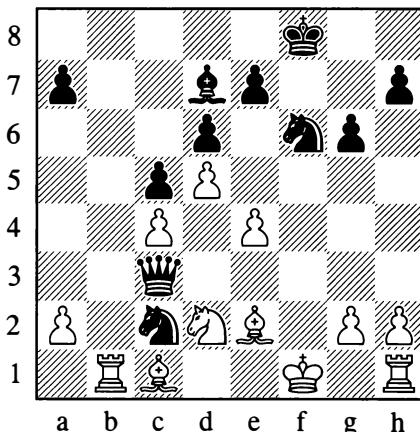
15... $\mathbb{Q}xf8$

Black is winning. Materially the situation is about even, but in practice the value of the white pieces is very low.

16.e4

16. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}f5$  17.e4  $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  18. $\mathbb{Q}b2$   $\mathbb{W}e3$  19. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  20. $\mathbb{Q}f1\ddagger$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  21. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{W}d2\ddagger$  22. $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{W}b4$  and Black wins material.

16... $\mathbb{Q}b4$  17. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}c2\ddagger$  18. $\mathbb{Q}f1$

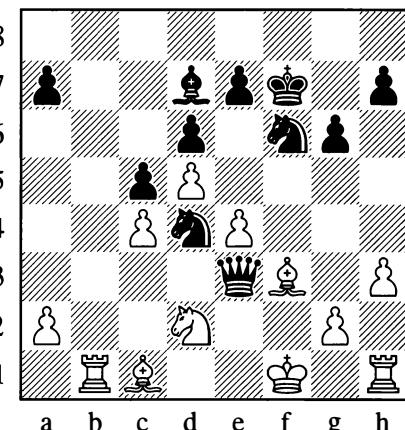


18... $\mathbb{Q}d4$

18... $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$  19. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}e3\ddagger$  20. $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{W}c2$  would have won even faster.

19.h3  $\mathbb{W}e3$  20. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$

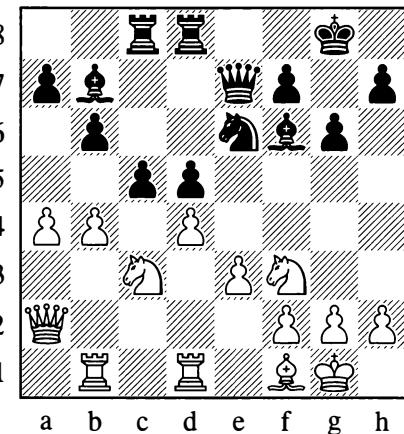
20... $\mathbb{Q}c2$  21. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}h5!$  is more direct.



21.♗b2 ♗c2 22.♗xc2 ♖d3† 23.♔f2 ♖xc2  
 24.a3 ♖c8 25.♗e1 ♗d7 26.♗g1 ♗e5 27.♗f1  
 ♗g7 28.♗e2 ♗a6  
**0–1**

### 11. Holt – Ipatov

Athens 2012



Things have gone wrong for White in the Queen's Gambit Declined. Black is very active and has used the pin along the a1-h8 diagonal to break in the centre with ...c5. This proved successful in the game, which Black won convincingly.

#### 20.♗e2?

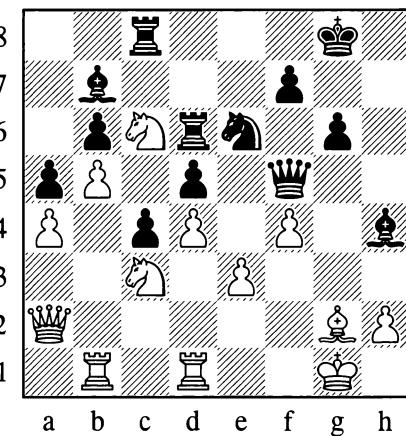
This move fails in several ways. White is meeting a direct attack with the defensive tactics of an ostrich.

20.♗a3 is rather a passive way to play, but even so it would have been objectively better than the game. Black can then choose between 20...c4† and 20...cxd4? 21.♗xd4 ♗xd4 22.exd4†.

#### 20...c4?!†

Black should take the opportunity to grab a pawn: 20...cb4! 21.a5 ♖d6!† White lacks any compensation.

21.♗c3 a6 22.g3 h5 23.♗g2 h4 24.gxh4  
 ♖xh4 25.b5 a5 26.♗e5 ♖d6 27.♗c6 ♖g5  
 28.f4 ♖f5



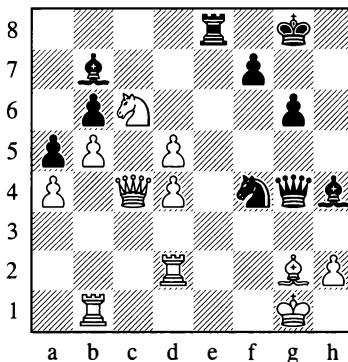
#### 29.♗xd5?!

A faulty combination in an unpleasant position.

29.♗h1†

#### 29...♗xd5 30.e4 ♖g4 31.exd5 ♗xf4 32.♗f1

32.♗d2 was also insufficient, as Black has a lovely tactic: 32...♗e8 33.♗xc4

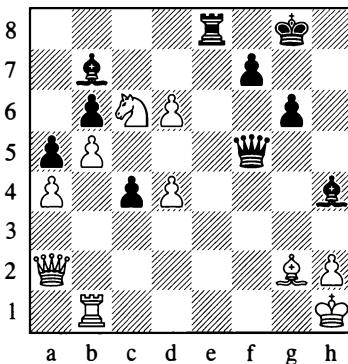


33...♗f2†!! 34.♗xf2 ♗h3† 35.♗f1 ♗xf2  
 36.♗c2 ♗h3 and White should not manage to defend in the long run.

#### 32...♗e8 33.♗e5

33.♗xf4 ♖xf4 34.d6 would not have saved

the game either. My analysis goes: 34... $\mathbb{W}e3\uparrow$   
35. $\mathbb{Q}h1$   $\mathbb{W}d3$  36. $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{W}f5$  37. $\mathbb{Q}g2$

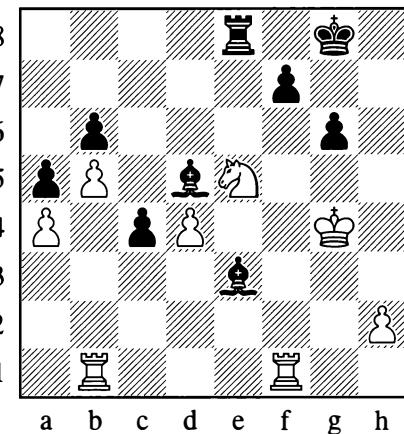


37... $\mathbb{Q}e2!$  38. $\mathbb{W}xe2$   $\mathbb{W}xb1\uparrow$  39. $\mathbb{W}f1$   $\mathbb{W}xf1\uparrow$   
40. $\mathbb{Q}xf1$  c3 41. $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  42. $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  43. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   
 $\mathbb{Q}f6$  and Black appears to be in control. He will improve his king and eliminate the d6-pawn.

33... $\mathbb{W}xg2\uparrow$  34. $\mathbb{W}xg2$   $\mathbb{Q}xg2$  35. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5\uparrow$   
36. $\mathbb{Q}h3$   $\mathbb{Q}g5$

Black is much better, although White still needs to be finished off.

37. $\mathbb{Q}g4$   $\mathbb{Q}e3$



38. $\mathbb{Q}be1$

White is lost no matter what: 38. $\mathbb{Q}bd1$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$   
39. $\mathbb{Q}f3$  f5 $\uparrow$  40. $\mathbb{Q}g3$  f4 $\uparrow$  41. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$  c3 42. $\mathbb{Q}f2$   
 $\mathbb{Q}b3$  43. $\mathbb{Q}f3$  c2 44. $\mathbb{Q}df1$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  45. $\mathbb{Q}xb3$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5\uparrow$   
46. $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  47. $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}b2-$

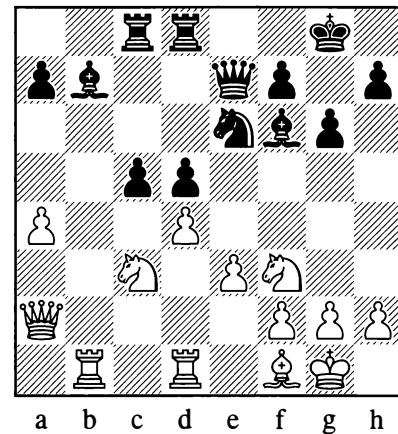
38... $\mathbb{Q}d2$  39. $\mathbb{Q}e2$  c3 40. $\mathbb{Q}ef2$   $\mathbb{Q}e3$  41. $\mathbb{Q}c2$   
 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  42. $\mathbb{Q}c6$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  43. $\mathbb{Q}cc1$   $\mathbb{Q}e3$  44. $\mathbb{Q}ce1$   
 $\mathbb{Q}e6\uparrow$  45. $\mathbb{Q}xel$  46. $\mathbb{Q}xe1$  c2

A great game by Ipatov, which led to his victory in the World Junior (after he took a draw in a completely winning position in the last round).

0-1

However, going back to where we started, White missed his chance to equalize. He should have defended actively with:

20.bxc5 bxc5



21.dxc5!

The knight is sacrificed, but only for a moment.

21. $\mathbb{W}d2$  c4 22.g3  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  23. $\mathbb{Q}g2\infty$

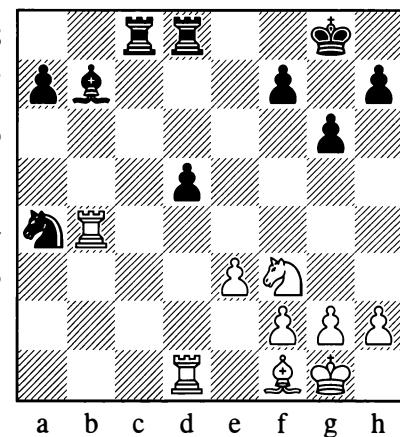
21. $\mathbb{W}a3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  22.dxc5 d4 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   
24.exd4  $\mathbb{Q}xd4\uparrow$

21. $\mathbb{W}b2$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  22. $\mathbb{Q}a6$   $\mathbb{Q}b8\mp$

21... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$

This is the only critical move.

22. $\mathbb{W}b3$   $\mathbb{Q}xc5$  23. $\mathbb{W}xc3$   $\mathbb{Q}xa4$  24. $\mathbb{W}b4$   $\mathbb{W}xb4$   
25. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$



White has a lot of counterplay against the a7-pawn. The positional compensation appears to be enough to keep the balance.

**25...Qc5 26.Qa1 a6**

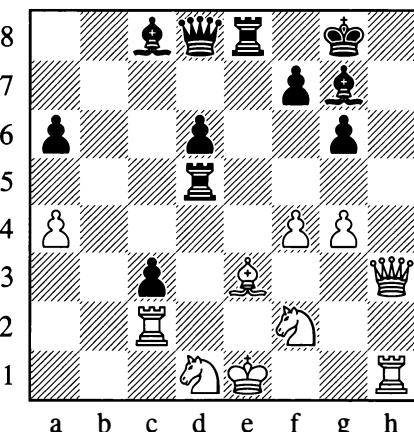
26...Ba8? 27.Bb5! Qdc8 28.Baa5 would even allow White to win a piece!

**27.Qc1 Qa8 28.Qb6#**

A draw seems highly likely.

## 12. Tikkannen – E. Berg

Vaxjo 2008



**29.Qf1?**

A blunder. White wants to keep his rook on the h-file, but he has no real threats there.

White should be aiming to keep control of the position, and in time his extra material will tell.

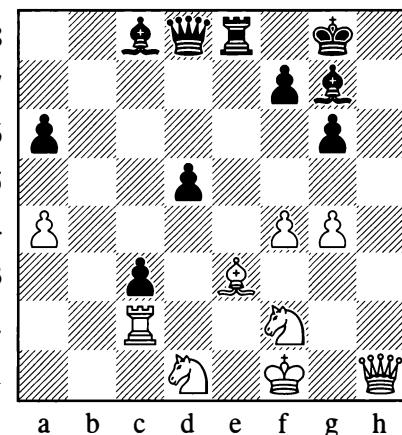
Also poor is 29.Qxc3, as after 29...Bh5! Black wins.

**29...Bh5! 30.Qg2**

After 30.gxh5 Qxh3† 31.Bxh3 d5 followed by ...d4, it also looks winning for Black.

**30...Bxh1† 31.Qxh1 d5**

Black is winning.



**32.Qf3**

32.Qxc3 d4 33.Qxd4 Qxd4 is level material, but the difference in the effectiveness of the material is so great that Black should win without difficulty.

**32...d4 33.Qc1 Qd7 34.Qa2?**

This cuts the game short, but it was lost all the same.

After 34.Qe2 Qxa4 Black has a third pawn for the piece and White's pieces don't have much life.

**34...Qb7 35.Qd3 Qd5**

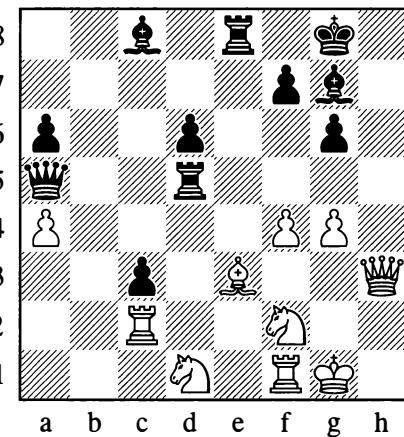
**0–1**

Instead of this, White needed to activate his rook as well as bringing his king to safety. The right move was:

**29.0–0!**

White is threatening  $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ , and it cannot be prevented.

**29... $\mathbb{W}a5$**



**30. $\mathbb{Q}xc3!$**

But for this, the position would be pretty even, though very complicated.

**30... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  31. $\mathbb{E}fc1\pm$**

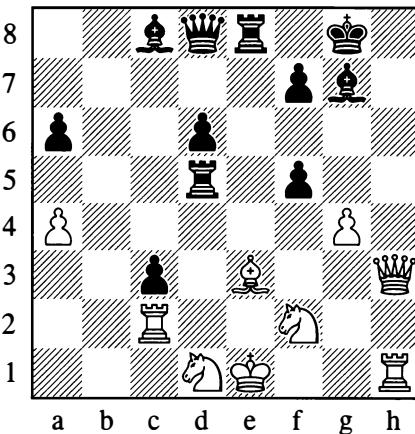
Black is losing material without sufficient compensation.

A more complex option, which also looks very dangerous, tries to disprove my previous words about the possibility of attacking the black king; but it has to be done with the rook on f1 nonetheless!

**29.f5!  $\mathbb{gxf5}$**

29... $\mathbb{E}de5?!$  30.fxg6 fxg6 31. $\mathbb{W}h7\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  32.0–0  $\mathbb{E}h8$  33. $\mathbb{Q}d3\uparrow$   $\mathbb{E}f5$  34.gxf5  $\mathbb{E}xh7$  35.fxg6 $\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  (35... $\mathbb{Q}xg6$  36. $\mathbb{E}g2\uparrow$  and White wins) 36.gxh7 $\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}xh7$  37. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  White has a winning position, although there could be some practical problems to

overcome before the win is finally chalked up.



**30. $\mathbb{W}h7\uparrow$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  31.0–0!**

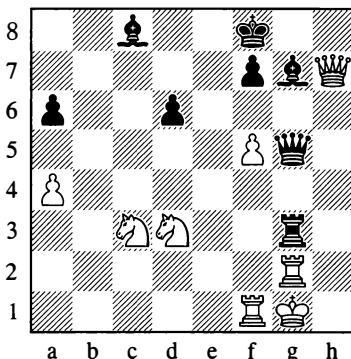
Threatening  $\mathbb{Q}h6$ .

**31... $\mathbb{E}e6$**

Black defends against the threat, but now the tactics run in White's favour.

**32. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$   $\mathbb{E}d3?!$  33. $\mathbb{Q}xd3!$   $\mathbb{E}xe3$  34. $\mathbb{Q}d5!$**

34.gxf5?!,  $\mathbb{W}g5\uparrow$  35. $\mathbb{E}g2$   $\mathbb{E}g3$

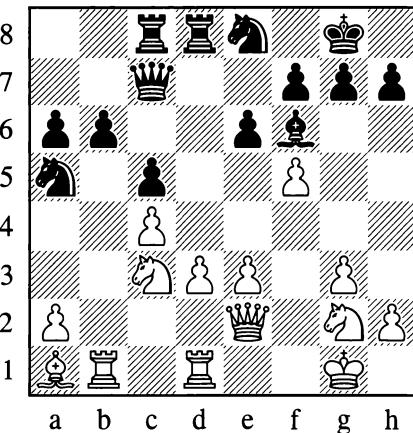


36.f6!  $\mathbb{E}xg2\uparrow$  37. $\mathbb{Q}h1$   $\mathbb{Q}xf6$  38. $\mathbb{Q}e4$   $\mathbb{W}g7$  39. $\mathbb{W}xg7\uparrow$   $\mathbb{E}xg7$  40. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$   $\mathbb{Q}b7\uparrow$  41. $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{E}g2\uparrow$  42. $\mathbb{Q}h3$   $\mathbb{E}a2$  Despite everything, Black has enough counterplay to hold the game.

**34... $\mathbb{E}xd3$  35. $\mathbb{E}xf5!±$**

### 13. McNab – Su.B. Hansen

Istanbul (ol) 2012



I was sitting alongside Sune in this match between Denmark and Scotland, which was quite odd for me, as I used to play for Scotland. In 2011 I was quite ruthless in a similar match at the European Championship and won almost straight from my preparation, although the match only ended 2–2.

This time I paid the penalty and blundered a back-rank mate (or a few pawns, depending on how you look at it).

At more or less the same time Sune had entirely missed White's last move, 22.f5, with the purpose of creating a strong square on d5. I am quite convinced that if Sune had not been disappointed at not playing ...g6! on the previous move, he would have solved his problems here by a simple method of elimination.

#### 22...exf5!!

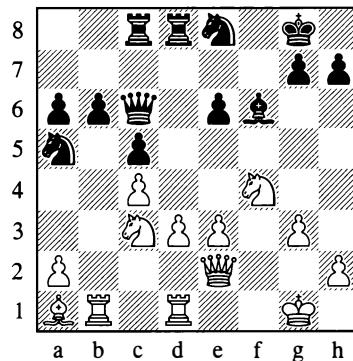
It would be good to be able win the battle for the centre, but if it cannot be done, you need to adjust. In this case Black's only chance is to give up control of the d5-squares in the most favourable way possible.

In the game Sune got into serious trouble after:

22... $\mathbb{W}c6?$  23.fxe6 fxe6

23... $\mathbb{W}xe6$  24. $\mathbb{Q}f4$  gives White a decisive initiative after a knight lands on d5.

24. $\mathbb{Q}f4$



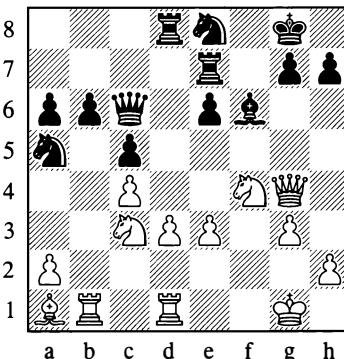
24... $\mathbb{E}c7$

I cannot find a sensible alternative.

24... $\mathbb{E}d7$  25. $\mathbb{W}g4$   $\mathbb{E}e7$  26. $\mathbb{E}f1$   $\mathbb{E}cc7$  27. $\mathbb{W}h3!$  looks devastating. After something along the lines of 27... $\mathbb{Q}b7$  28. $\mathbb{Q}e4$   $\mathbb{Q}xa1$  29. $\mathbb{E}xa1$  White is threatening  $\mathbb{Q}g5$  and I cannot see that Black can do anything sensible about it. As an example, 29... $h6$  30. $\mathbb{Q}g6$   $\mathbb{E}f7$  31. $\mathbb{Q}e5$  wins. The queen is almost trapped, and certainly of no use on a4.

24... $b5$  25.cxb5 axb5 26. $\mathbb{W}g4$  also gives White a very strong attack. Black can try various things here, but nothing really works. One example is: 26... $\mathbb{E}d7$  27. $\mathbb{E}f1$   $\mathbb{E}f7$  28. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$   $\mathbb{W}d7$  29. $\mathbb{Q}e4$   $\mathbb{Q}xa1$  30. $\mathbb{E}xa1$  and White is winning – *and a pawn up!*

25. $\mathbb{W}g4!$   $\mathbb{E}e7$



26.♕h5?

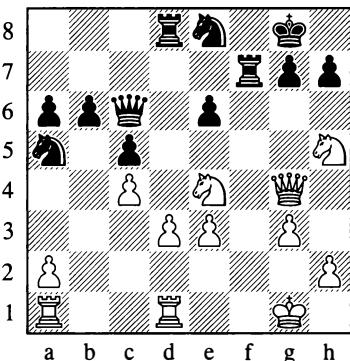
A breach of the golden rules of attack (see *Attacking Manual 1*, Chapter 1, or the forthcoming *Attack and Defence* volume in this series). Black is given a second chance.

26...♝f1! prepares the onslaught and was much stronger.

26...♝f7 27.♕e4

27.♕f1? is still better, though Black now has serious chances of a successful defence.

27...♞xa1 28.♝xa1



28...♝f5?

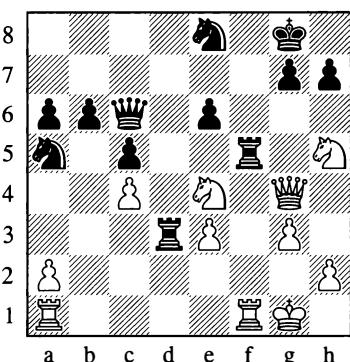
Sune was still shaken, which explains why he missed the chance to defend his kingside with 28...e5! 29.♝f1 ♜g6!, when my analysis suggests that Black can hold the draw.

29.♝f1

From here on, there is no mercy shown.

29...♝xd3

29...g6 30.♛h4! and Black dies on f6.



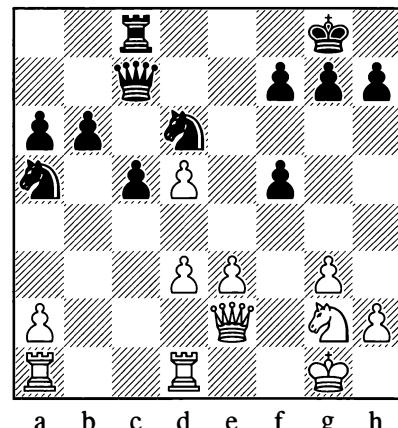
30.♛ef6† ♜xf6 31.♛xf6† ♜xf6 32.♜xf6 ♜d2  
33.♝f3 h6 34.♝af1 ♜h7 35.h4 ♜d6 1–0

23.♝d5

White of course has other decent moves, but nothing that makes real sense.

For example: 23.♛f1 ♜xc3 Not the only move, but a reasonable one. 24.♝xc3 b5! Undermining the control of the d5-square. 25.cxb5 axb5 26.♝xb5 ♜b7 27.♝f4 ♜d7 28.♝bb1 ♜a8 and Black is no worse.

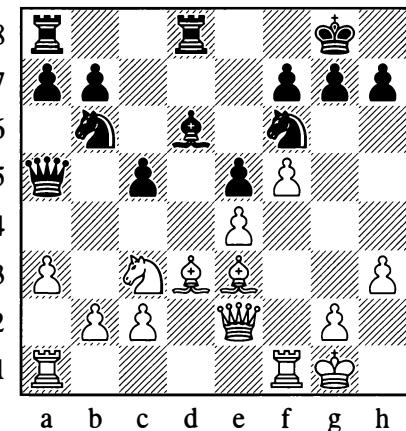
23...♝xd5! 24.cxd5 ♜xa1 25.♝xa1 ♜d6



An evaluation of this position is not so easy. I would tend to favour White from an emotional standpoint, but if you start looking at the idleness of the knight on g2, and see how strong the black knights really are, as well as the superiority of his pawn structure, you start to understand why Houdini proclaims approximate equality. In any case, this is absolutely how Black must play, and had he done so, most of the battle would probably have been ahead of him rather than behind him.

## 14. Yakovich – Romero Garcia

Seville 1999

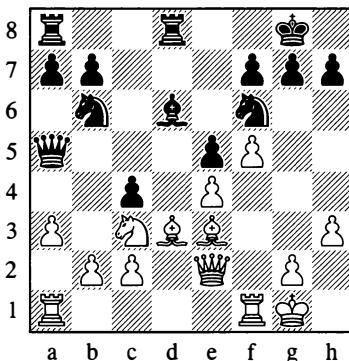


The theme here is prophylaxis, as so often before. White has just played 16.a3; if instead he had played 16.Qc4, Black would have been able to reply 16...Qxc4 17.Wxc4 Wb4!, when White would not be able to keep his structure intact. Now that White has taken control over the b4-square, Black should prevent White's occupation of the c4-square.

### 16...Wac8?

16...Qa4?! leads to better play for White after both 17.Qd1± and 17.Qxa4 Wxa4 18.Qg5±, which is slightly unpleasant for Black in different ways.

16...c4!



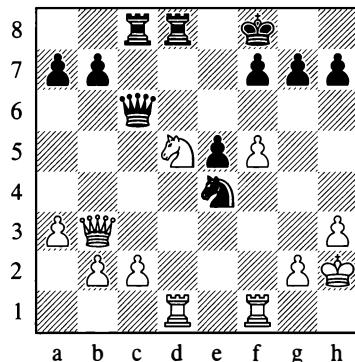
This was absolutely essential. Black obtains good activity in exchange for the pawn, making it very hard for White to achieve an advantage.

17.Qxc4 Qxc4 18.Wxc4 Eac8 19.Wb3 19.We2 Qxc3 20.bxc3 Qxe4 seems to offer Black reasonable compensation. White might have ideas, but so does Black.

19...Qc5 20.Qxc5

20.Qae1 is also possible, although it does not seem to be critical. 20...h6 Creating an airhole for later. 21.Qh2 Qd4 22.Qxd4 White tries to play for an advantage in the sharp lines. (22.Qd2 Qd7 and Black will play positionally; White is very clumsily placed.) 22...exd4 23.e5 dxc3 24.exf6 Wc7† 25.Qh1 cxb2 26.Wxb2 Wc3! and the ending holds no real dangers for Black.

20...Wxc5† 21.Qh2 Wc6 22.Qad1 Qxe4 23.Qd5 Qf8!



White probably does not have an advantage here either. If Black is allowed to play ...f6 he should be fine, and after:

24.f6 Qxf6 25.Wb4†

25.Qxf6 gxf6 26.Wb4† Qg7=

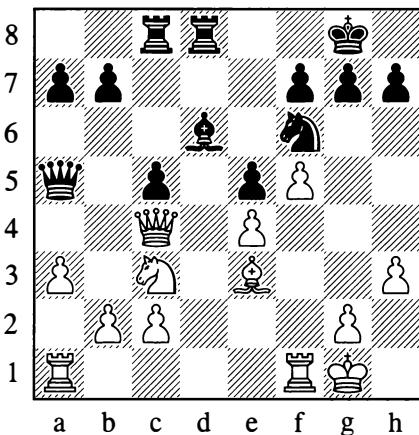
25...Wc5 26.Qxf6 Qxd1 27.Qxd1 Wxb4+ 28.Qxh7† Qg8 29.axb4 Qxh7

The ending is a draw.

### 17.Qc4! Qxc4

After something like 17...a6 18.Qg5 Qe= 19.Qxf6 Qxf6 20.Qd5 Qxd5 21.Qxd5± White has persistent pressure on the light squares.

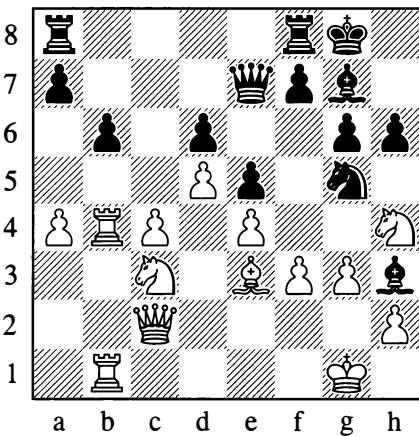
18.  $\mathbb{W}xc4\#$



White has a slight edge due to his control of the light squares and d5 in particular. He won a good game on move 48.

## 15. Gelfand – Smirin

Saint Vincent 2005



This is a classical race, where White wants to use his superiority on the queenside while Black hopes to deliver mate on the kingside.

White's next move is likely to be 21.a5, unless Black does something to distract him. This is not necessarily a disaster for Black, but it does focus the attention on the queenside and

it gives White at least even chances. For this reason it is best for Black to act with urgency on the kingside.

20...f5!!

Gelfand was probably not shocked by this move; very little shocks the great strategist. But he might have thought that it was riskier for Black than it actually is.

Other moves were:

20... $\mathbb{E}ac8$  21. $\mathbb{W}e2!$  and Black finds it more difficult to play ...f5, while White is preparing a4-a5.

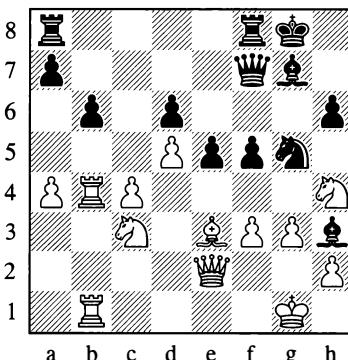
20... $\mathbb{E}fc8$  is more defensive; Black gives up the idea of attacking on the kingside for now, but White's initiative on the queenside is hampered somewhat. The chances are just about even.

21.  $\mathbb{Q}xg6?$

The players in chess history to whom I would compare Gelfand would be Korchnoi, Botvinnik and of course Rubinstein. All three were great defenders of static advantages in the fight against dynamic advantages; not because they necessarily valued static advantages more, but rather because they were better at making use of them.

In this case the strategy of taking the material and then defending is not the correct one, but maybe the lack of an attractive alternative convinced Gelfand that this was the most practical try, even if he did not feel full of confidence when he took the exchange.

21. $\mathbb{W}e2$  was certainly possible, but 21... $\mathbb{W}f7$  leaves Black with the initiative; he has the dual threats of ...f4 and ...fxe4, depending on what White does. It might therefore be natural to play 22.exf5, but this does not seriously alter the scenario: 22...gxf5

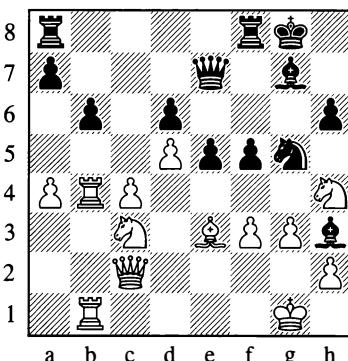


23.♕b5 f4! 24.gxf4 exf4 25.♗f2 ♕ae8 and Black has a serious attacking position.

21.exf5

This was probably the best move, in order to close the f-file. However, it does not solve all of White's problems; he might have closed the f-file, but he will not be successful in closing the kingside completely.

21...gxf5†



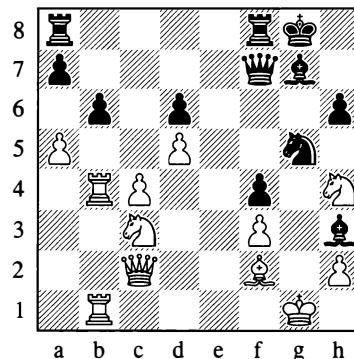
22.a5

With this move White goes for glory, but he will find that Black's attack is strong.

22.♔h1 is possible. The best reply might be 22...♗f7!, preparing the inclusion of the other rook on the f-file in some lines, preventing ♔g6 winning the exchange

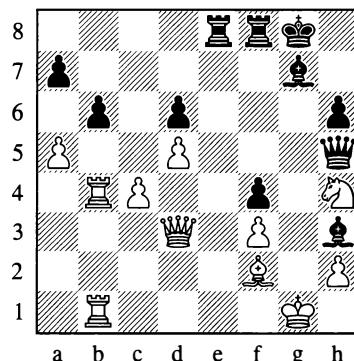
and defending the 7th rank. I like Black's position, but his advantage is not huge.

22...f4 23.gxf4 exf4 24.♗f2 ♕f7!



The significant weakness is the light squares around the white king.

25.♕d3 ♘h5† 26.♗e4 ♗xe4 27.♗xe4 ♕ae8  
28.♕d3



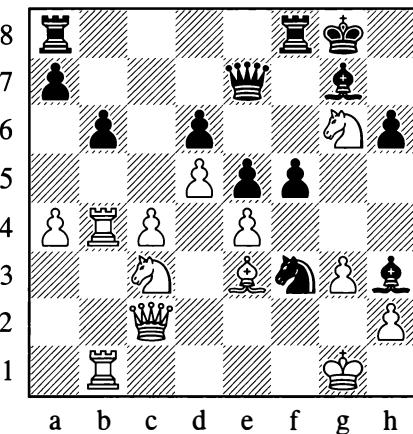
28...♘e3! 29.♗g6 ♘g5† 30.♗xg5 hxg5  
31.♗g6 ♘fe8

Black wins. The knight is trapped on g6 and can be picked off later, and the white king is under horrible pressure. For example:

32.axb6 axb6 33.♗xb6 ♔d4

Threatening ...♗e1† with mate.

21...♗xf3†



**22.♔h1**

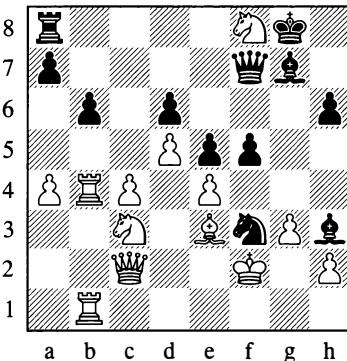
Boris's sense of danger did not betray him here. The alternative was unplayable:

**22.♕f2?**

White's king has no chance in the open, and his extra material will not matter.

22...♗f7 23.♘xf8

23.♕xf3 ♗xg6 is easily winning.



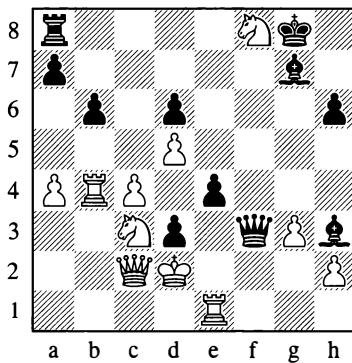
**23...fxe4**

Black has a winning attack. He has a lot of threats and will only be an exchange down. Variations are unnecessary, but easy to produce, so here we go:

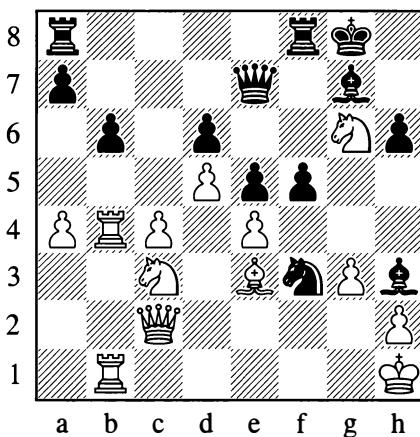
24.♔e2 ♘d4† 25.♗xd4 ♗f3† 26.♔d2 exd4

The threats to the white king are accumulating. First of all there is ...♗e3†, which would decide the game immediately.

27.♗e1 d3



The dangers of ...♗f2† should not be underestimated. The attempt to get organized with 28.♗d1 loses most brutally to 28...e3†.



**22...♗f6?**

A strange mistake. It is hard to see why Smirin did not choose to put his queen on f7, from where it can come to h5 and have a great influence on the light squares. As far as I am concerned, there are no visible advantages to putting it on f6. You almost get the feeling that he had invested too much time in the earlier phase of the game and played this a little too quickly.

My best guess at an explanation for this move is that he wanted to meet 23.exf5? with 23...♗f7!, when Black is essentially winning. But taking on f5 is not a great move anyway, so objectively this reasoning fails. But then, chess is horribly difficult and we all do a lot of things for all the wrong reasons...

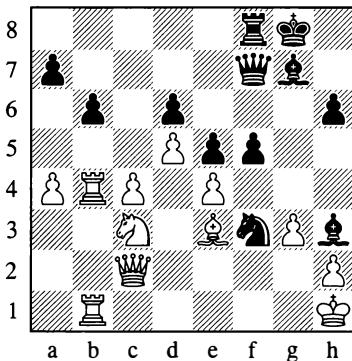
22... $\mathbb{W}f7!$

This would have left Black with a serious advantage.

23. $\mathfrak{Q}xf8$

23.exf5  $\mathbb{A}fe8!$  does not help White at all. Black has a serious initiative on the light squares and White has problems with his knight.

23... $\mathbb{E}xf8\#$



The exchange does not matter much; all of Black's pieces are better placed and the showdown is definitely going to be on the kingside, underlining the absurdity of the rook's placement on b4. This is how it feels to be late! There are a lot of options for White here, but none of them are reassuring.

24.exf5

The main move. White is not in a position to survive the ...f5-f4 break.

24.a5 f4#

24. $\mathbb{W}f2$   $\mathbb{W}h5\#$

24. $\mathbb{E}4b2$  f4#

24. $\mathfrak{Q}b5$  f4 25. $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{W}h5-$ +

24... $\mathbb{Q}xf5$  25. $\mathbb{W}e2$

25. $\mathbb{W}g2$   $\mathbb{W}h5\#$

25... $\mathfrak{Q}d4$  26. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  exd4 27. $\mathfrak{Q}b5$  d3 28. $\mathbb{W}e3$

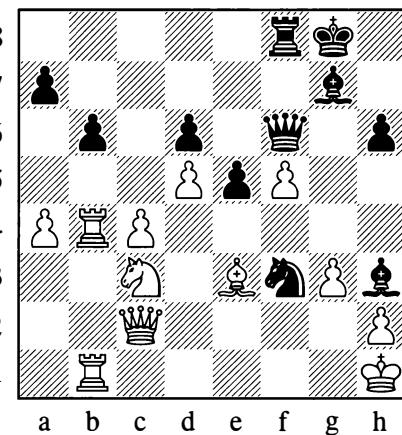
$\mathbb{E}e8$  29. $\mathbb{W}f4$   $\mathbb{W}h5$  30. $\mathfrak{Q}xd6$   $\mathbb{E}e2$  31.h4  $\mathbb{Q}h3$

Black's attack is entirely decisive.

**23. $\mathfrak{Q}xf8$   $\mathbb{E}xf8$  24.exf5?!**

White's best defensive move would have been 24. $\mathbb{W}f2!$ , when after 24...fxe4, he has

been given a respite and can play 25.a5? with unclear play. After 24... $\mathbb{Q}g4\infty$  White can consider 25. $\mathbb{W}g2\infty$ , but I think 25.h3? is probably most logical. Black then has many options, but all of them seem to lead to a similar end: 25... $\mathbb{W}g6$  (25... $\mathbb{Q}h5$  26. $\mathbb{E}f1\infty$ ) 26.hxg4  $\mathbb{W}xg4$  27. $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathfrak{Q}h4\#$  28. $\mathfrak{Q}h2$   $\mathfrak{Q}f3\#$  with a draw by perpetual check.



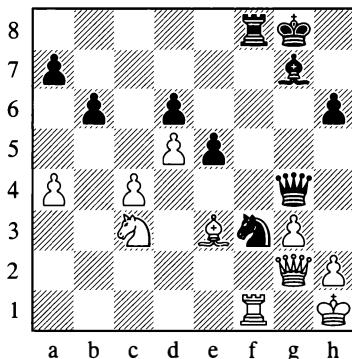
24... $\mathfrak{Q}xf5$

24... $\mathfrak{Q}d4!?\#$

**25. $\mathbb{W}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}xb1$  26. $\mathbb{E}xb1$  e4?!**

This loses a lot of the control over the light squares and throws away Black's advantage.

It was stronger to play 26... $\mathbb{W}g6$  27. $\mathbb{E}f1$   $\mathbb{W}g4$  with pressure on the light squares.

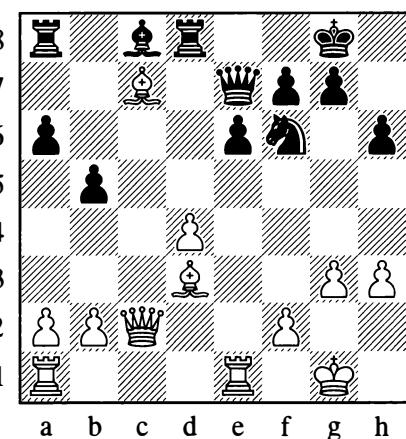


For example: 28. $\mathfrak{Q}b5$   $\mathbb{W}e4$  29. $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{W}d3\#$  and the e-pawn is now an asset.

27.♕b5 ♜e7 28.♗h3 a6 29.♕a3 ♔d4  
 30.♗g4 ♔f5 31.♕c2 ♜e5 32.♗f4 ♜c3  
 33.♗e2 ♜e8  
 ½–½

## 16. Caruana – So

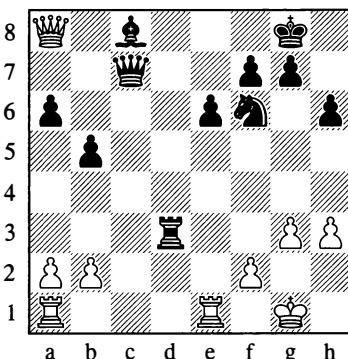
Biel 2010



White has just played the ingenious 21.♗f4–c7. Taking the d-pawn will cost Black material, and otherwise White aims to put pressure on the b5-pawn. Black did not fight back against White's idea and soon found himself under pressure that he was unable to throw off.

**21...♝d7?!**

The correct way to play was to go for compensation on the light squares by sacrificing one, or even two, exchanges:  
 21...♝xd4! 22.♗c6 ♘xd3 23.♗xa8 ♗xc7!



Only this active move makes sense. But it seems to have an obvious drawback:

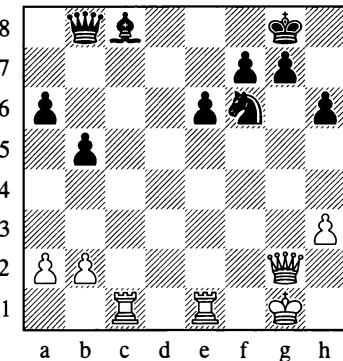
24.♗ac1 ♜xg3†!

The point of it all. Otherwise White would have a clear advantage with the extra exchange.

25.fxg3

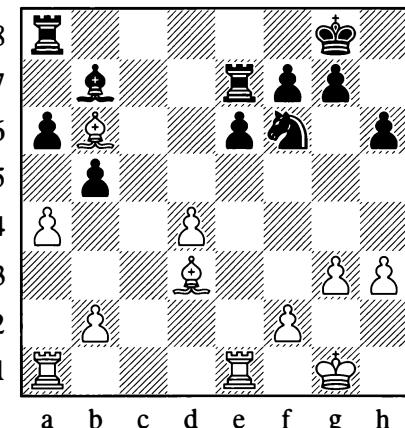
25.♗f1 ♜f4 is obviously okay for Black.

25...♜xg3† 26.♗g2 ♜b8



Black has massive compensation for the two exchanges. The outcome is fully in doubt.

22.♗c6 ♘a7 23.♗b6 ♘b7 24.♗c5 ♘a8  
 25.♗xe7 ♘xe7 26.a4!±



Caruana's point. The position is unpleasant for Black.

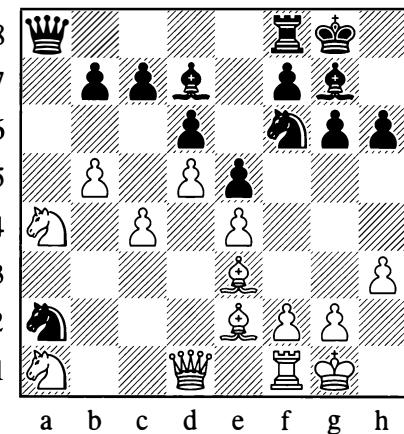
**26...♞d7**

26...b4 27.♗c5 ♘d7 28.a5±

27.♕a5 bxa4 28.♕xa4 ♔b8 29.♕b6 ♔c6  
 30.♕b4 a5 31.♕xa5 ♕ea7 32.♕b6 ♕a1 33.♕f1  
 ♕xf1† 34.♕xf1 ♔f3 35.♕e1 ♔c6 36.♕b5  
 ♔e7 37.♕d2 ♔c6 38.♕a5 ♕b8 39.♕c5  
 ♕xb2† 40.♕c3 ♕xf2 41.♕xe7 ♕f3 42.♕d2  
 ♕xg3 43.♕c5 ♕d7 44.♕c7 ♕e8 45.♕c8 f6  
 46.♕d6 ♕g2† 47.♕e3 ♕f7 48.♕h7 e5 49.d5  
 1–0

### 17. Bareev – Svidler

Elista (6.6) 1997



19...♔a5?

Also not good is:

19...c5?! 20.♗b3 ♔b4

This would have been a passive way of dealing with the knight's issues. White can play:

21.♘f3!

21.♘b6 ♔a5 22.♘xd7 ♔xd7 23.♘c2 is slightly better for White because of the two bishops, though Black has some counterplay.

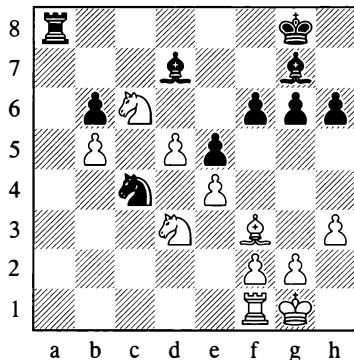
21...♔a7

Probably the best try, aiming to bring his rook to the a-file. But the position remains in White's favour.

22.♗xb4! cxb4 23.♕xa7 ♔a8 24.♕c5!

We should mention that Black has some counterplay here too:

24...dxc5 25.♕xc5 b6 26.♘d3 ♔e8! 27.♘c2 ♘d6 28.♘xb4 ♘xc4 29.♘c6 f6

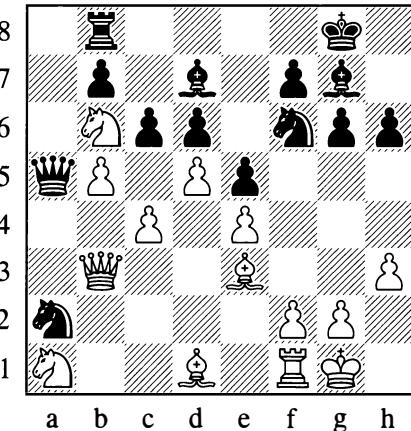


30.♘g4±

20.♗b3! ♔a8 21.♕d1 c6?

Black could have tried 21...♔xa4 22.♔xa4 ♕xa4 23.♔xa4 ♔xe4, but after 24.♘c2± his compensation should not be enough.

22.♘b6 ♕b8

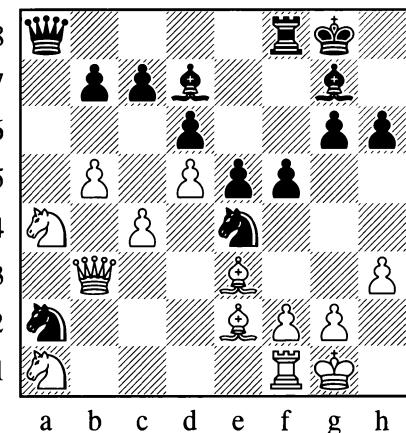


23.♘xd7±

White won on move 41, but the game could have been much shorter had he played 23.♗b2! ♘c3 24.♗b3 ♕b4 25.♕d2, winning a piece, as the queen would be trapped after 25...♘xd1 26.♕xd1.

Once you realize that you cannot rescue the knight on a2, you are ready to see that you need to focus on your counterplay instead:

19...♘xe4!! 20.♗b3 f5



Gives up the knight for just a pawn, in order to activate all his other pieces. The following lines show the potential in the black position.

### 21.♘d3!

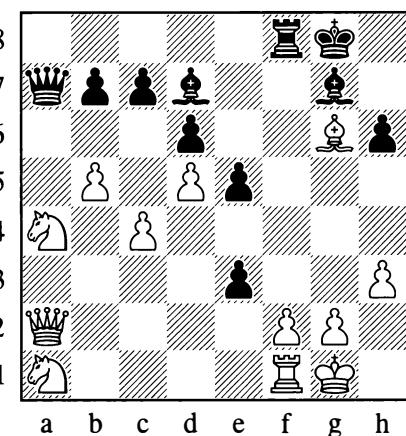
It makes sense to ignore the knight for now, first challenging the active black pieces.

21.♗xa2?! f4 22.♕c1 ♔c5 23.♗d1 (23.♗c3? ♗xa2 24.♗xa2 ♜a8 just wins for Black) 23...♔xa4 24.♗xa4 ♜a7! Bringing in the rook. Black will win back the piece and be much better: 25.♗b3 ♜xa2 26.♗xa2 ♜a8 27.♗b1 ♜xa1 28.♗xg6 ♜a4+ White is suffering.

### 21...f4 22.♗xe4 fxe3 23.♗xa2 ♜a7!

Black has play on the dark squares and gets enough compensation for the piece.

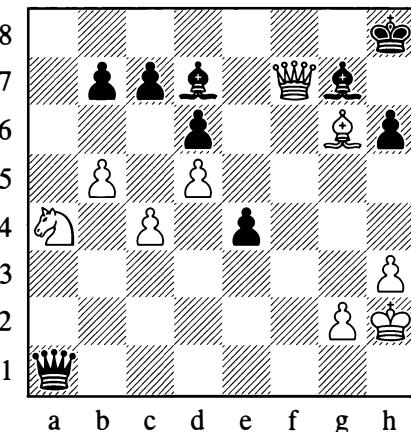
### 24.♗xg6



### 24...♗d4!

Black is attacking, with threats including ...exf2† and ...e4. It seems that White can survive with:

25.♗e2 ♜xf2 26.♗xf2 exf2† 27.♗xf2 ♜xal†  
28.♗h2 e4 29.♗f7† ♜h8



### 30.♗xe4! ♜e5†

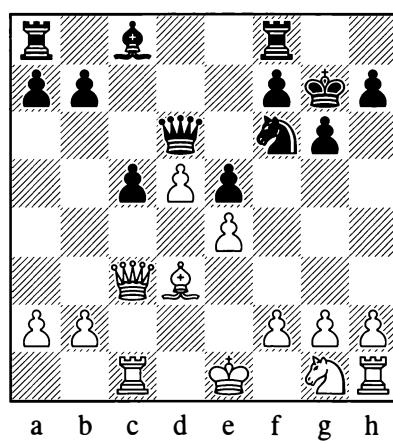
30...♜e1 31.♗g6! also draws.

### 31.g3 ♜xe4 32.♗xd7

The position is drawn; White may well consider himself lucky that nothing bad is happening to him.

## 18. Di Berardino – Barbosa

Campinas 2011



Black cannot be satisfied with the mechanical: 14...b6? 15.♕f3 ♕e8 (15...♕f5 is quite imaginative, but it does not work in this version. After 16.♕d2 Black may have to try an adventurous piece sacrifice, but with limited chance of success.) 16.♕d2 It is obvious that White has an advantage; the only discussion is how big. Somewhere between large and really large, I would say.

So Black had to come up with a deep and energetic way to fight for the initiative:

#### 14...c4!!

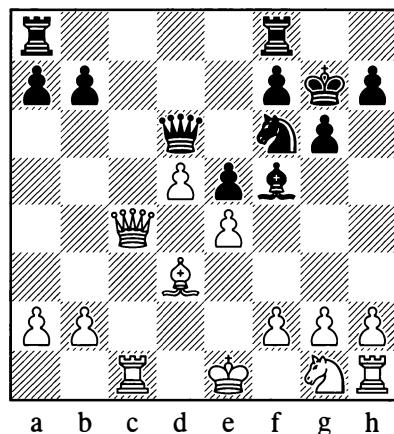
A move with lots of functions: opening the c-file for tactical reasons, undermining the e4-pawn, preventing ♔f3-d2-c4 and winning time. All this at the cost of only a pawn!

#### 15.♔xc4

White takes on the challenge, probably oblivious to his opponent's next move!

It was perhaps better to play 15.♔b1, although 15...♕d7 then looks okay for Black. If White has any pull, it is firstly very limited, and more importantly it is far more manageable than it would have been after 14...b6!

#### 15...♕f5!!



I love this type of super-active move. Black combines the threat of ...♕fc8 with the

possibility of ...♕xe4, which would not only win back his pawn, but would also undermine the previously impressive d5-pawn.

#### 16.♔e2?

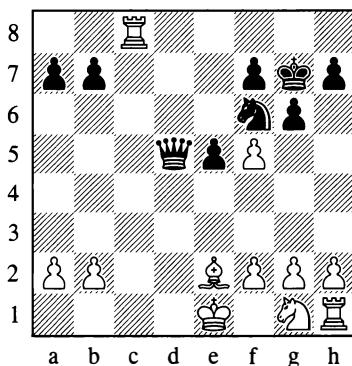
An understandable move, but it is not possible for White to successfully combine all his desired activities: developing and defending both the c1-rook and the e4-pawn.

Correct was therefore:

#### 16.exf5!

Accepting a material advantage.

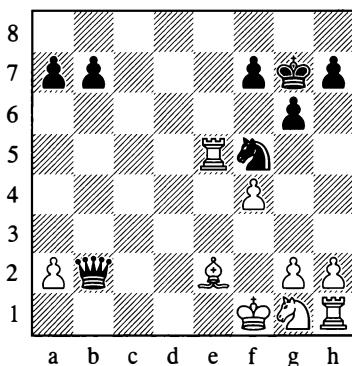
16...♕fc8 17.♕xc8 ♕xc8 18.♕xc8 ♘xd5  
19.♔e2



Here I am not sure if Black is badly off if he takes on a2, but I prefer the more forcing:

#### 19...♔e4

Black's counterplay here should be enough to convince anyone that 14...c4! was correct.  
20.f3 ♘d2† 21.♔f1 ♔d6 22.♕c5 ♘xf5  
23.♕xe5 ♘xb2 24.f4

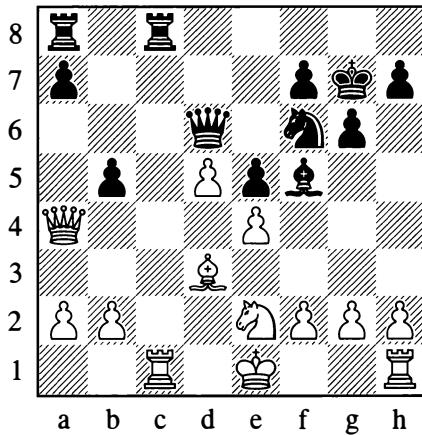


If nothing else, Black can force perpetual check:

24... $\mathbb{W}a1\#$  25. $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{W}d4\#$  26. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{W}c3\#$

**16... $\mathbb{Q}fc8$  17. $\mathbb{W}a4$  b5?!**

This energetic move is just one of several ways for Black to play for an advantage here.



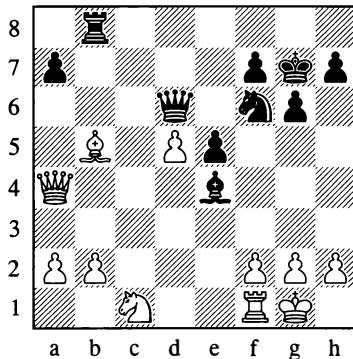
**18. $\mathbb{Q}xb5?!$**

From here on the moves of the two players start to decline in quality.

The best defence was 18... $\mathbb{W}xb5$   $\mathbb{Q}xc1\#$  19. $\mathbb{Q}xc1$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$  20. $\mathbb{W}a5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  21. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  22.0–0, although Black is still to be preferred for his activity after 22... $\mathbb{Q}xb2\#$ .

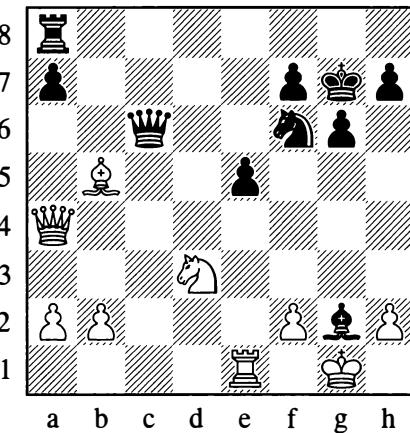
**18... $\mathbb{Q}xc1\#$  19. $\mathbb{Q}xc1$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  20.0–0  $\mathbb{Q}xd5?!$**

This throws away a lot of the advantage.



And after something like 21. $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  22.b3  $\mathbb{W}c5$ , Black's activity promises him good chances.

21. $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{W}b6$  22. $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{W}b7$  23. $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}xg2$  24. $\mathbb{Q}a6$   $\mathbb{W}c6$  25. $\mathbb{Q}b5$   $\mathbb{W}b7$  26. $\mathbb{Q}a6$   $\mathbb{W}c6$  27. $\mathbb{Q}b5$



½–½

Black should have continued his energetic play with 20... $\mathbb{Q}b8!$ , which threatens ... $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ .

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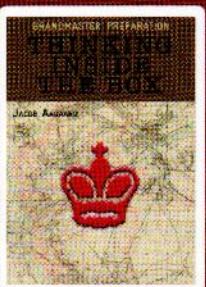
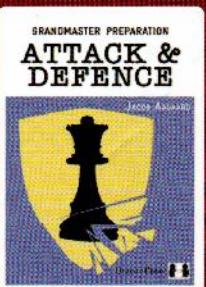
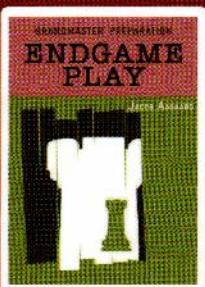
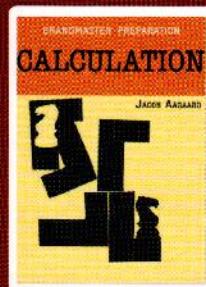


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