

THE WOODPECKER METHOD 2

Positional Play



AXEL SMITH

QUALITY CHESS



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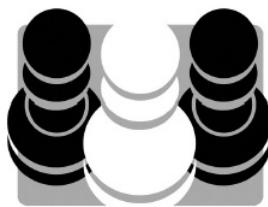
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The Woodpecker Method 2

By

Axel Smith



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Axel Smith

Key to symbols used

\pm	White is slightly better
\mp	Black is slightly better
$\pm\pm$	White is better
$\mp\mp$	Black is better
$+-$	White has a decisive advantage
$-+$	Black has a decisive advantage
$=$	equality
\approx	with compensation
\rightleftarrows	with counterplay
\uparrow	with an initiative
\circlearrowleft	unclear
$?$	a weak move
$??$	a blunder
$!$	a good move
$!!$	an excellent move
$!?$	a move worth considering
$?!$	a move of doubtful value
\square	only move
$\#$	mate

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Foreword by Hans Tikkannen

Wow! The amount of hours and the dedication that must have been put into this book...

When the prospect of writing a second Woodpecker book arose after the success of the first one, my initial thought was that it should contain positional rather than tactical exercises. I soon realized that it was likely to be a harder and more time-consuming project than the first volume.

Despite a part of me really wanting to be involved in *The Woodpecker Method 2*, I decided for practical reasons that it was better not to involve myself. I think everyone involved is thankful for that – the fact that it took me months just to write this short preface is an indication of how severely delayed the book might have been!

Having read Axel's preface and looked through some of the exercises and solutions, I can see that a tremendous amount of work has been done to provide both the quality and quantity of exercises that were required. The content of this Woodpecker sequel is fully in keeping with what I envisaged years ago, when the idea was first discussed.

Just as the original book is a good complement to other types of tactical books – for instance, those with lots of explanatory text, and/or complex, hard-to-calculate variations – I believe and hope that this one will be a great companion to other types of books on positional chess. Best of luck to all the hard-working chess students at the start of this journey – and also to all us not-so-hard-working chess enjoyers!

Hans Tikkannen
Gullringen, June 2023

Preface

I never get tired of examples showing the ability of the human brain to process information subconsciously. A test on elite volleyball players showed that they needed to see a photo for only 16 milliseconds (i.e. 0.016 of a second) to understand what's going on. Even without seeing the ball, the body positions tell them all they need to know. This is not a skill they have deliberately practised – it's called experience.

This book is designed to boost the reader's experience, pattern recognition and subconscious ability in the realm of positional chess, the way its predecessor did with chess tactics.

What is the Woodpecker method anyway? For those who are not yet familiar, it was developed by my friend Hans Tikkannen as a self-training method to develop his own tactical ability. Hans solved a vast number of tactical puzzles (in excess of a thousand), then repeated the same set of puzzles over and over, getting faster each time and enabling his brain to assimilate the patterns at an unconscious level. After training with this method in 2010, Hans achieved three GM norms in just a seven-week period. The Finnish word Tikkannen is roughly translated as “small woodpecker” in English, and the term also fits perfectly with the repetitive nature of the method. I wrote a bit about the method in my 2013 book *Pump Up Your Rating*, and the readers took notice. It was only natural for Hans and I to author *The Woodpecker Method* in 2018, in which we assembled and presented a full set of over a thousand tactical exercises, along with detailed instructions and recommendations for carrying out the training.

I think it's a great idea to repeat relatively simple exercises over and over again, and Hans' success after using his method speaks for itself. Even so, we did not foresee how popular *The Woodpecker Method* would become. The readers have been more ambitious than I ever imagined, and several young players have asked me for coaching while mentioning that they have worked through the book up to eight times. I have heard about the book in the unlikeliest of places, from being recognized by a stranger while dumpster-diving for food one night, to being sent a photo of a reader posing with the book at the summit of Kilimanjaro.

A while ago I started learning Swahili in preparation for a trip to Kenya. I tried to do it the Woodpecker way, avoiding text books in favour of translating sentences back and forth – mostly via Duolingo, where Quality Chess co-founder John Shaw has a streak of more than 1800 days. However, at some point I had to resign myself to borrowing a grammar book from the library, after encountering a two-word sentence in Swahili that became twelve words when translated into English. In Kenya, I visited St Patricks, a high school which has produced more than thirty-five Olympic and World Champions in athletics. While many students visibly did sports, the school also had a thriving chess club. Even though Swahili is never used in chess, meeting the players taught me Swahili in a way that Duolingo, grammar books and university courses could not do. I do not have a ‘Grand

Theory of Learning' that I can pass on to you, other than the general guideline that while passive learning (for instance by reading) can help to fill some gaps in one's knowledge, learning by *doing* tends to yield the best results. This book contains 1000 positional exercises to turbo-charge your active learning.

After the success of our Woodpecker tactical workbook, it was natural to think about using the same method to improve one's positional chess. *The Woodpecker Method 2* was born, and I began the process of assembling and annotating suitable exercises in February 2019. I discovered that it was much more difficult to write a positional Woodpecker book than a tactical one. The general idea of the method is to keep the exercises and solutions fairly short and simple, in order to work through a high volume of examples – too much intervention from the author and the momentum is lost. This isn't too difficult with short tactical puzzles, as one can quickly see if the solution leads to mate, gain of material or some other obvious benefit. Positional exercises are not so straightforward, as the reader may require a more detailed explanation and possibly more thinking time to understand and accept the solution. As the project progressed and feedback was received from numerous test solvers, the exercises and solutions gradually evolved until, nearly five years after work on this project began, I was satisfied with all 1000 exercises and solutions.

I would like to thank Kaan Küçüksari, Alexander Nord and August Jalving, as well as Lunds ASK for the use of their library.

Thanks also to the test solvers, who included Renier Castellanos, Christopher Yoo, Sam Shankland and Nodirbek Abdusattorov. By the way, Nodirbek worked through most of the 1000 exercises (as well as many others which were subsequently cut) and has since rocketed to 4th in the live rankings at the time of writing.

I am also grateful for valuable help from Ellinor Frisk, and invaluable help from Jacob Aagaard.

Axel Smith
Lund, March 2024



Introduction

Before we get started, I will present a general overview of this book. As explained earlier, the Woodpecker concept involves solving a high volume of exercises, then repeating the process multiple times. This book contains a total of 1000 exercises, divided into two main categories, each containing three sub-sections. As with *The Woodpecker Method*, the exercises come from games involving World Champions – with a few exceptions, as will be explained.

Part 1 – Priyome

Priyome is a Russian noun without a direct English translation. In Russian, when it is used in a chess context, it describes some sort of thematic technique or manoeuvre. In this section of 545 exercises, the overarching theme will be common pawn structures and the positional motifs associated with them.

In my previous books, I have mentioned how great it would be to have a book exploring the details of *every* pawn structure. I had a rough draft almost a decade ago, and wanted to work on it with Ulf Andersson, who is hand-in-glove for the task. However, he was impossible to convince. Having abandoned the idea, I felt a certain sense of relief. Chess is too complex, and Ulf's knowledge cannot be transferred into a book with clear guidelines.

Let's approach pawn structures the Woodpecker way. The Priyome exercises show standard positional moves in a variety of common pawn structures. Don't expect to find any move with two exclamation marks. Such moves need to be not only strong, but also difficult and surprising. That's not what we are looking for.

The Priyome section also contains some simple tactical combinations that should be part of your positional repertoire. Many such moves should simply seem *normal*, not deserving of an exclamation mark. They nevertheless need to be 'woodpecked'.

Public Education

You may have seen video clips where Magnus Carlsen is shown positions from games of World Champions. He recognizes all of them: the players, the tournament and the continuation. Such skills are easy to admire but hard to achieve. Fortunately our aim is not to remember the exact positions, the players or the year the games were played. Typical ideas are enough, and we have the luxury to 'woodpeck'. Let's aim to include the ideas from the first 296 positions in your public chess education.

Exam

The second Priyome section is a smaller one, featuring certain ideas and pawn structures which I regard as important but which I couldn't find in the games of the World Champions. Some of the 43 test positions occurred in games involving other players, while in a few cases when I couldn't find a suitable example of a certain motif, I composed a realistic-looking position myself to demonstrate the key idea. Most of these positions take place during or shortly after the opening phase.

Academic Level

The last Priyome section consists of 206 exercises, still involving standard ideas in thematic pawn structures, but at a slightly higher level than before. You can expect to find more subtle ideas in the solutions, and a bit of calculation may be needed to justify the standard moves.

Part 2 – Positional Rules of Thumb

In this section we will be focusing on positional ‘rules of thumb’ rather than ideas associated with pawn structures. Well, it’s hardly possible to keep these elements completely separate, so in the first section you can expect to find certain positional principles in action which could also be applied in other pawn structures, while in the second section you will find examples where the pawn structure is still of some relevance to the principle on display. So the difference between the two sections lies in the overall emphasis of each, rather than an absolute distinction.

When I first started playing chess, I was taught twenty positional rules, such as “place rooks on open files”, “don’t move pawns in front of your king” and so on. The list later expanded to sixty-four positional principles which started to build upon, combine and sometimes contradict some of the previous rules. For instance, “when your opponent has the advantage of the bishop pair, it will often have cost some time, in which case the side with the knight(s) should open the position as fast as possible” – contrary to the more general principle about bishops preferring open positions and knights being better suited to closed positions.

Let there be twenty, or sixty-four, or 400, or 5,362 rules. They are useful guidelines – not an exact science.

Medium Difficulty

Part 2 starts with this section of 194 exercises. By the way, the exercises in each section are arranged in chronological order, so they generally start with games involving Steinitz and end with those of Carlsen or another of the champions from the modern era. Apologies to Ding Liren, who became World Champion too late for his games to be included. By the time he achieved the highest title in April 2023, I had already finished selecting exercises and was into the phase of refining the solutions.

Hard Challenge

The difficulty level increases in the next 241 exercises. Of course the difficulty level is just an

approximate guide – I would expect most players to solve at least a few of the “harder” exercises with relative ease, and to struggle with some “easier” exercises.

Expert

Finally we will meet 20 exercises which I’m sure most readers will find more challenging.

We will end with an Epilogue, featuring some further discussion of positional concepts and decision-making. It’s a little unorthodox to include such a discussion at the end rather than the start of the book, but it’s the Woodpecker way. You will work hard in solving so many exercises for multiple cycles. The Epilogue will give you a break from solving, along with some final food for thought regarding the challenges of making complex decisions at the board, especially when we need to weigh up competing positional principles.

Selection Process for Exercises

A database containing all the games of the World Champions consists of more than 50,000 games. Since it would not have been a practical use of time to play through all of them, I searched for different openings and manoeuvres and chose positions where the intended solution is objectively the best continuation.

From time to time, solutions can be disputed. An example of a grey area could be when a World Champion chooses a move connected with a manoeuvre or other positional idea of clear instructive value – but the latest Stockfish narrowly prefers a different option, or assesses multiple moves with its favourite 0.00 evaluation. I received valuable feedback from the various test solvers named in the preface, as well as from Jacob Aagaard who checked every exercise and solution. After taking everyone’s comments and feedback into account, I took the final decision on discarding and replacing certain exercises, while keeping some others with some debatable aspect to them.

In the great majority of these 1000 exercises, the side to move stands better and the solution is the strongest continuation, confirmed by the engine. However, there are three types of exercises that you might not be used to:

1) Positions with multiple winning continuations

It’s not always easy to convert a winning advantage. Thus, when a certain continuation wins more convincingly than the others and also contains a wider instructive point, I consider it a worthy exercise.

2) Positions where you stand worse

We all reach bad positions sometimes, and we still need to search for good moves. In a few exercises, the solution is the best way to limit the disadvantage while also demonstrating an important positional motif, which makes it a valid exercise according to my way of thinking.

3) Positions where the engines evaluate several moves equally

Generally in these situations there is still a correct positional plan, but it might be possible to delay it for a move or two. In such cases, it is generally better to play the key idea and then make the more peripheral decisions based on the opponent's reaction. Also, let's remember that the engine evaluation is based on what it sees as optimal play on both sides, which does not reflect the practical reality of human chess. To take an abstract example, you might set up an endgame with rook and bishop versus rook, which the tablebase will instantly prove to be a draw; and if the stronger side then allows its rook to be captured, the position is still a draw – so does that mean it wasn't a mistake to throw away the rook?

In each of the above three scenarios, I considered the arguments against the exercise in question and ultimately used my best judgement. I discarded and replaced several, but kept some others. When you encounter such exercises and check the solution, you might not agree that it was a good exercise to include. Such cases are a small minority in a pool of 1000 exercises, so just move on to the next one.

Other Background Information

As with *The Woodpecker Method*, I selected almost all the exercises from games involving World Champions, except for the 43 exercises in the Priyome Exam. For the avoidance of any confusion, when I refer to World Champions I mean players who held the highest title at some point in their careers – not necessarily when the games were played. I tried to avoid the absolute most famous games, though of course it's likely that you will have seen some of the examples before. If you recognize some positions and already know the continuation then no problem – you have many more exercises to work through, and our training method relies on reinforcement through repetition anyway.

In the majority of the exercises, the World Champion executes the key positional idea in a classical game against a strong opponent. Kasparov scored 83% from the 132 relevant positions in this book, and half of the points he dropped came in games against other World Champions. However, there are also some positions where the solution was overlooked by a champion. We will also see a small number of exercises where the solution was played, or could have been played, against a World Champion. Chess history is not written by games from simultaneous exhibitions, but I did not shy away from using such games when they contained sufficiently instructive ideas. I also selected a few examples from games involving faster time controls and even blindfold events.

Don't expect to find any endgame positions. When the game enters its final phase, typical middlegame principles are often superseded by new and contradictory priorities. Perhaps a theme for a future book?

Evaluation Symbols

Chess Informant-style symbols are forbidden in the chess magazine where I am editor. I consider them a lazy shortcut compared to using words to explain what's happening. Quality Chess has also moved away from using evaluation symbols in some of their publications. However, in this book the evaluation tools are included as a useful complement to the text. If the solution says, for instance, that weak squares are more important than a pawn which has been sacrificed, it is useful to know if that means the position is clearly better or only slightly better. In my magazine or a normal chess book, all this could be expressed in words. However, I have already spoken in the Preface about the challenges of keeping the solutions from getting too lengthy, so the space-saving benefits of symbols are the most important consideration.

We are almost ready to begin your positional Woodpecker training! The next few pages will provide everything you need to know about organizing your solving sessions and generally getting the most out of the process.

General Instructions

The next four mini-chapters will cover the following topics:

- A five-step program for carrying out your Woodpecker training
- Possible ways to customize the training to fit your playing strength, lifestyle and competing commitments
- Whether or not to keep score, and how to do so
- Miscellaneous advice and guidelines

Some of the advice has been reproduced from *The Woodpecker Method*, with minor edits for this book.

The concept of the Woodpecker Method is to solve a high volume of exercises, then start all over again and do them faster. In the following pages, I will recap the main solving instructions as presented in *The Woodpecker Method*, with some minor adaptations for the positional exercises presented here. Even if you have already completed your Woodpecker tactical training, I recommend reading the instructions presented here before getting started.

First, a couple of important definitions:

A set: The exercises which you will solve before you start all over again.

A cycle: One round of solving the set. Normally you will perform up to seven cycles with the same set.

General Advice Before Getting Started

Positional exercises are very much about finding the correct plan but, as in a real game, you are always required to choose a move.

Positional evaluations and small tactics can't be completely separated. So even though positional moves are the focus, you need to calculate as well. A few standard combinations are also included.

The first time you solve the exercises, you will definitely want to check the solutions. Solutions to positional exercises generally take more time to understand than tactical ones. On the second cycle, with the benefit of memory, it may be enough to check only the first move of the solution to know if

you have solved it. In later cycles, you might remember some solutions clearly enough that you don't need to refer to them at all.

Should a Real Board and Pieces be used?

Whether or not one should solve using a real board is a contentious issue among trainers. Some, especially more old-school trainers, might argue that you always should. Artur Yusupov is one example of a renowned trainer who emphasizes the importance of using a board and pieces in his multi-volume training series (also published by Quality Chess). Others don't see it as being so important. You obviously have to choose for yourself, but I can give you my two cents: neither I nor Hans used a board and pieces for our Woodpecker tactical training. There is most likely a generational divide: players of a certain age, who developed their chess skills before the computer era, are more likely to value a board and pieces; whereas those who have spent a significant portion of their formative years studying chess using computers tend not to be put off by the two-dimensional aspect of solving from diagrams in a book (or on a screen, for those who purchased this work on a digital platform).

Obviously you should do what feels right for you. A possible compromise is to take an initial glance at each exercise directly in the book. If you solve it within a few seconds, then move on to the next exercise. On those occasions when you have yet to find the solution within roughly one minute (or whatever timeframe you find most appropriate), set the position up on a board if it helps you to think more clearly. One optional way to get some extra training out of this process is to set the position up from memory as far as possible – but don't forget the main purpose of your training.

My general thinking is that with the huge amount of positions which we study nowadays from diagrams with computer databases, internet play and so on, solving from the book should mostly use the same neural configurations and thus be similar enough and good enough for these short exercises. True, classical tournament play still involves a physical board and pieces, so an argument could be made for replicating that in training. You may also wish to take into account the extra time invested in setting up the pieces, which adds up to quite a lot when you are dealing with anything up to a thousand exercises. From my point of view, this time could be better spent by solving more exercises (or with loved ones). If I were solving harder exercises requiring ten or more minutes of effort, I would probably use a board, but that's the kind of training used to develop deeper calculation rather than pattern recognition.

There is one absolute advantage that I see in using a board and pieces (apart from the aesthetic/hedonistic one): that is, the possibility of playing the moves out in order to see the final pattern take shape on the board, while possibly developing some muscle memory at the same time. For some players, the process of playing out the solution might negatively impact on their overall speed and ability to focus on the main task, while others might find it helpful having a micro-break for setting up the pieces before moving on to the next exercise.

Ultimately, my advice is to think about the pros and cons of each approach; experiment with a mixed approach if you need to; and ultimately do what works best for you.

The Five Steps of Woodpecking

Step 1

Cycle 1: Solve as many exercises as you can manage in four weeks. These exercises are your *set*; and solving them brings you to the end of your first *cycle*. The four-week time period can be adjusted according to your lifestyle and circumstances, but try not to spend much more than four weeks. If you find yourself taking significantly longer than four weeks, you have probably either not been putting in sufficient time, or have included too many exercises in your set.

Step 2

Take a break from chess for at least a clear day, and up to a week if you need it.

Step 3

Cycle 2: Solve the same set of exercises but faster: within two weeks is the target.

Step 4

Repeat steps 2 and 3, and repeat again. Aim to complete each cycle in half the number of days as the previous cycle (rounded up, when dealing with an odd number of days).

Step 5

The Woodpecker Method has been completed when the full set of exercises has been solved entirely in one day – or after the 7th cycle, if you are unable to solve the full set in a day. In the final two cycles, you should focus more on spotting ideas, patterns and motifs at speed, and less on the finer details of calculation.



Customizing the Woodpecker Method

The five-step plan is straightforward enough, but a crucial variable is missing: how much time should you spend solving during the initial four weeks? Since the answer will depend on your level of ambition and life situation, it has to be your decision. Before you begin, we recommend that you set a target timetable with upper and lower limits. Between five and ten hours per week would seem realistic for an amateur player with work and/or family commitments. By setting a loose schedule, you ensure a certain amount of personal accountability for your training, while also having some leeway for unforeseen events. Life may have a tendency to get in the way; but if chess improvement is *really* important to you, we urge you to set an ambitious schedule and follow it ruthlessly (barring any life-changing events of course).

As an optional extra to setting a target number of hours per week, some players may find extra motivation by choosing the number of exercises beforehand. The appropriate number will depend on one's playing strength, ambition and time available. A club player with work/family commitments might aim for a set of 296 positional exercises at the minimum, possibly increasing to 339 or 545 – corresponding to the first one, two or three Priyome sections. Ultra-ambitious players with significant time and energy to devote to training may go for anything up to the full set of 1000.

Remember to take into account the gradually increasing difficulty level, and be ready to adjust your target as you go along. For instance, if you set a target of 739 exercises (corresponding to the full Priyome section plus one additional chapter from the next section), but barely solved half that number after four weeks, you probably set the initial target too high.



Keeping Score

After each session, note the time taken and the number of exercises. Counting the number of points you have scored is optional. I consider the score to be of secondary importance, and keeping count of it takes up some of your time and focus. Hans and I trusted our conscience when doing our tactical Woodpecker training: if we overlooked too many moves, we slowed down for the next session (or during the current one).

On the other hand, keeping a record of your accuracy also brings certain benefits. It may serve as a motivator when you know you will be competing with yourself and striving to score more points than in your previous cycle(s). It also provides feedback as to whether you are seeing enough. This is especially important from the second cycle onward, to avoid being satisfied with only remembering the first move of the solution. (This last point was more relevant to the first Woodpecker book on tactics – but some solutions to these positional puzzles also rely on tactical details; and even for those that don’t, it’s still important to look deeper than the first move.)

Downloadable Scoresheet

A scoresheet template is available to download in both Excel and PDF formats at:

<https://qualitychess.co.uk/woodpecker2scoresheet.xls>

<https://qualitychess.co.uk/woodpecker2scoresheet.pdf>

After each solving session, you can log your time along with number of exercises and points scored (should you wish to keep track of your score). If you use the spreadsheet, it will automatically calculate the total time and percentage score for each cycle, so you can track your improvements from one cycle to the next. For those who prefer to print a physical copy using the PDF link, it should be simple enough to calculate those things yourself.

An Important Change

In *The Woodpecker Method*, Hans and I went to a lot of trouble to insert ‘’ signs next to key moves in the solutions, showing the important details that needed to be seen for maximum points to be awarded. For positional exercises, it doesn’t make as much sense to do this, as the solutions generally don’t rely on tactical details two or three moves down a forcing line.

Let’s keep things simple: for each exercise in this book, award yourself one point per correct solution. If you found the main idea but missed an important supporting detail, award yourself half a point – or adapt the scoring in some other way that makes sense to you. The exact scoring details are less

important than tracking your scoring improvements across cycles. That is, if you opt to keep score at all.



Other Advice & Guidelines

Solve the exercises in order. If you are stuck and unable to find a solution, then choose a move anyway, as you would have to do the same in a game.

In *The Woodpecker Method* we recommended trying to limit the amount of time you spent writing down and checking solutions. Things are a bit different for this book, as positional decisions are likely to require a bit more thought and consideration to understand the point behind them, compared to “bang-bang!” tactics. So take as much time as you need to understand the solutions – especially during your first one or two cycles of solving. Invest some time and effort early, and you will find it easier to speed up in later cycles.

Motivation

To push yourself, there are at least two types of goals you can set yourself in every training session.

Pace: In each solving session during your first cycle, aim to solve at least as many exercises as in your previous session (assuming the exercises are of the same difficulty level) in the same amount of time.

Score: If you decide to keep track of your scoring, then aim to increase your percentage as you go along while maintaining your pace.

Beyond the First Cycle

Once you have finished the full set and enjoyed/endured your break, it’s time to start again. Your main goal for the second cycle is to solve more quickly, ideally halving the overall time. With the third cycle, aim to halve your time again, and so on. With every additional cycle, your increased recognition should compensate for the decreasing deadlines.

Although speed is key, **do not** satisfy yourself with spotting only the first move of the solution. Even if you are sure it’s the right move, be sure to consider the follow-up. And remember, even when making positional decisions, tactics are never far away!

Reaching the End

The Woodpecker Method has been completed when the full set of exercises has been solved in a single day (or after seven cycles, if one day proves unattainable). Time to celebrate! But where should

you go from here? First and foremost, the ideal next step will be able to play some tournaments and put your improved positional ability to use. As far as subsequent training is concerned, this will depend on your playing strength and goals. Woodpecker training is hard, so you will probably want to take a break from it for a while, and perhaps train some other aspect of your game. When you are ready though, you may wish to consider one of the following approaches.

If your first bout of Woodpecker training comprised a set of, say, the first 296 exercises from this book, the way to build upon your progress is obvious: after taking a suitable break, begin a new four-week cycle starting with exercises from the next chapter. The difficulty level will creep up as you progress through the book, but you should be well and truly ready for it by now.

Readers who began their Woodpecker positional training with a high level of playing strength and ambition may have been able to take on a larger set, perhaps even extending to the full 1000 exercises. If you were able to complete a set like this within a day (or over seven cycles) then your positional ability should have taken a significant leap. Strong players searching for an extreme challenge might even attempt, on their final cycle, to solve all 1000 exercises not within a single day but within a single session for the ultimate Woodpecking challenge!

Summary of Instructions

Step 1) Cycle 1: Solve a set of exercises over approximately four weeks

Step 2) Take at least the next day off

Step 3) Cycle 2: Solve the same set, but within two weeks

Step 4) Repeat steps 2-3, completing each cycle in half the number of days (rounded up where necessary)

Step 5) The method is complete when the set has been solved in one day (or after seven cycles)

Now there's no more text to delay the exercises. Have fun and may the unconscious be with you!
(At least after a while...)

Chapter 1

Public Education Exercises

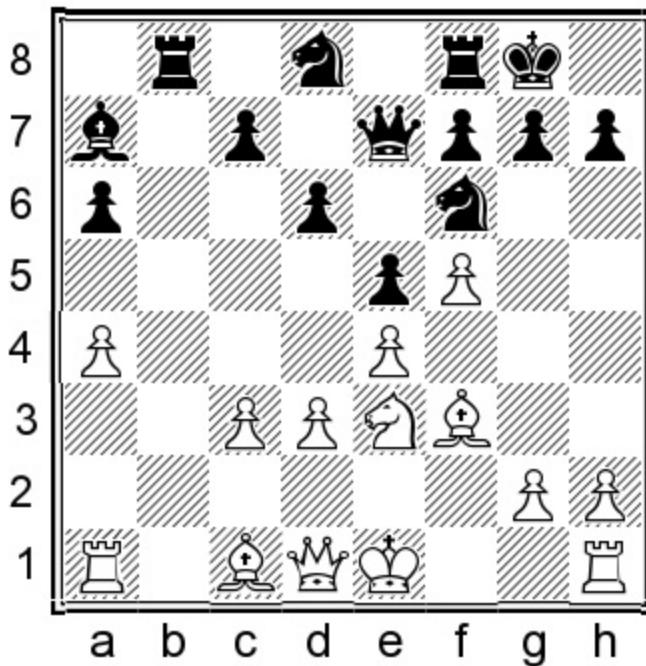


Few things are as psychologically brutal as chess. – Garry Kasparov

*To be champion requires more than simply being a strong player;
one has to be a strong human being as well. – Anatoly Karpov*

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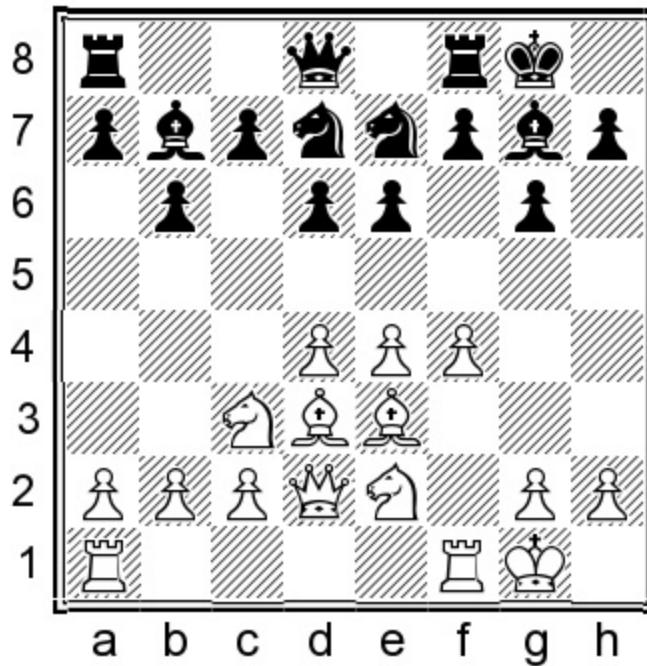
1. Steinitz – Robey, London 1862



Show/Hide Solution

16.g4!± Launching an attack. 16.0-0 was played in the game, but White should be happy that the king is still on e1. A plausible continuation: **16...♝d7 17.h4 c6** Stopping ♝d5. **18.g5 f6** White continues with g5-g6 or ♝g4, ♜a2-g2 and h4-h5.

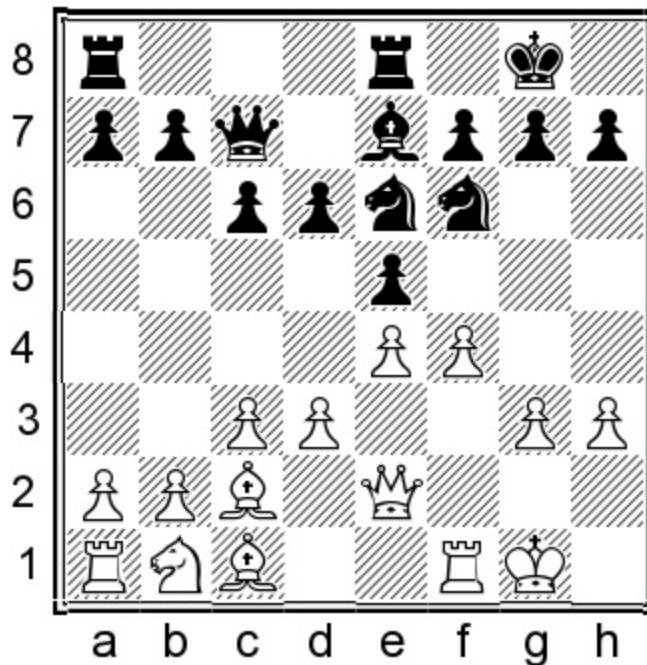
2. Steinitz – Blackburne, London (1) 1862



Show/Hide Solution

10.f5! Increasing the scope of the f1-rook, e3-bishop and e2-knight; and after the next move, also the remaining pieces on d3, c3 and a1. It can hardly be better! If White does not push immediately, Black can play 10...d5 and it will be too late. **10...exf5** Otherwise Black would get a weak e-pawn after fxe6. **11.exf5±** White continues with ♜g5 or ♜h6, playing on the kingside.

3. Steinitz – MacDonnell, Dublin 1865

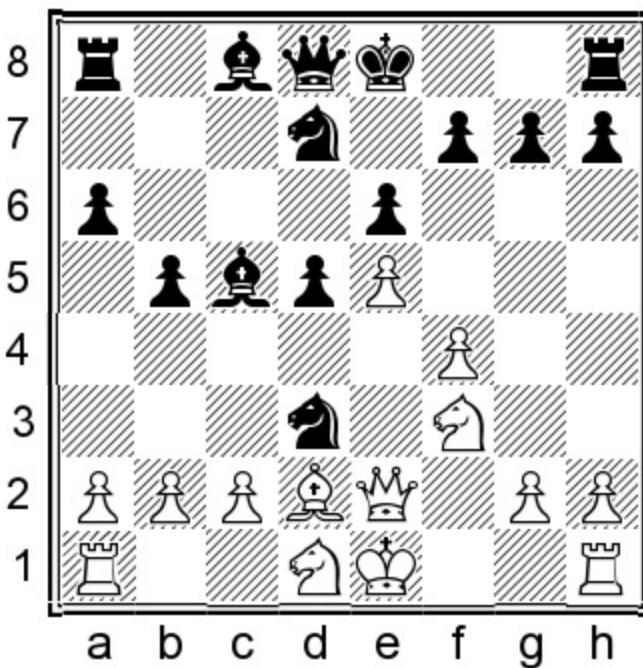


Show/Hide Solution

14.f5! Steinitz played 14.♘d2 which allows 14...exf4 15.gxf4 g6, when the open centre (rook against

queen!) gives Black some counterplay. **14...Qc5** Since the centre is closed, White obtains a dangerous attack by advancing the g-pawn. In the event of **14...Qf8 15.g4 h6** a possibility that might be worth remembering is: **16.h4** (The simple **16.Qd2±** is also good.) **16...Q6h7** A standard defence. **17.g5 hxg5 18.Qh1!↑** With **Qg1** coming next.

4. Steinitz – Sellman, Baltimore 1885

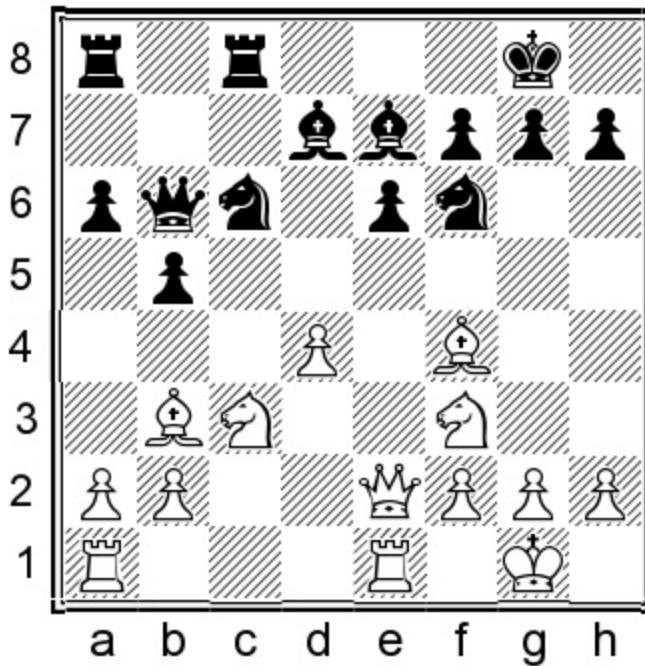


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12.cxd3! This improves White's structure since:

- a) It controls the c4- and e4-squares (the main point)
- b) White can use the open c-file
- c) Black can't use his queenside pawns to open files (not relevant in this game)
- d) The pawn can advance to d4
- e) It closes the a6-f1-diagonal. "It may seem strange to attach an exclamation mark to a move which today would be automatically made by any candidate master," wrote Kasparov in the book series on his predecessors. "But then, in 1885, the consequences of the pawn capture were by no means obvious, and the majority of players were simply unable to think long-term." According to Kasparov, Black had to play **12...b4** followed by ...a6-a5 and ...Ba6. **12...a5** has the same idea. **12...d4** opens the long diagonal for the light-squared bishop, but also gives up the e4-square. **13.Qf2±**

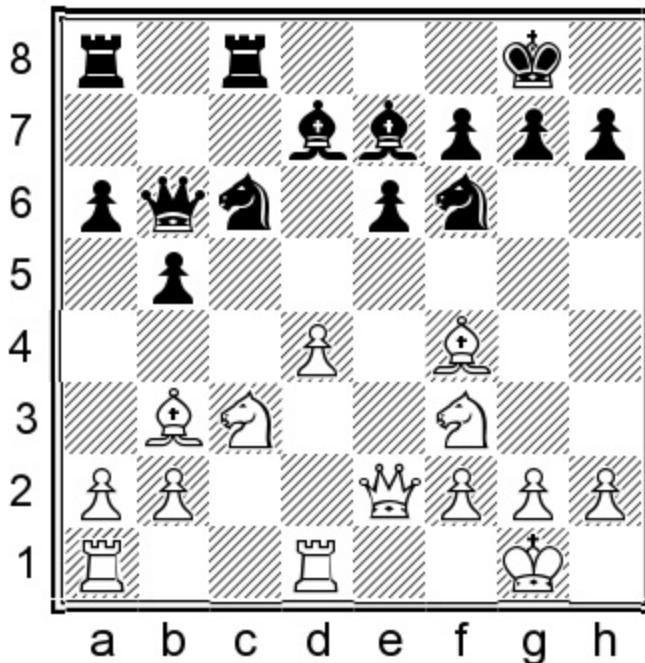
5. Zukertort – Steinitz, USA (13) 1886



Show/Hide Solution

17.d5! A standard isolated queen's pawn position. Pushing and exchanging the pawn is usually favourable, as White's pieces are more actively placed. Zukertort missed this opportunity by playing 17.♗ed1?, which takes us to the next exercise. 17...exd5 18.♗xd5 ♗xd5 19.♗xd5 ♗f6 20.♗ad1 ♗f8 21.♗e4 All White's pieces are on excellent squares and Black has no good defence. For instance, 21...♗ad8 22.♗c2 with a double threat – or triple if you count ♗d6.

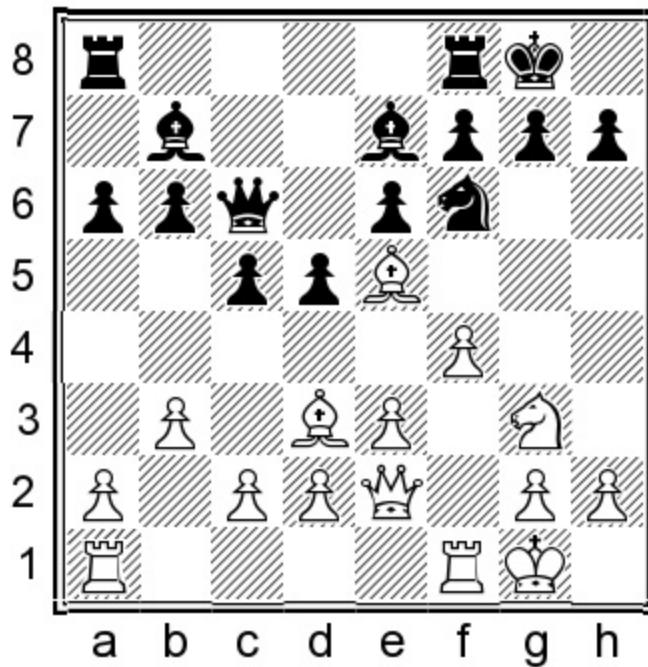
6. Zukertort – Steinitz, USA (13) 1886



Show/Hide Solution

17...♝a5! Chasing back the bishop to increase Black's control over the important d5-square. 17...b4 is met by 18.♝e4= and if ...♝d5, White can trade on d5. **18.♝c2 b4 19.♝e4 ♝d5†** The isolated pawn is blocked for the foreseeable future.

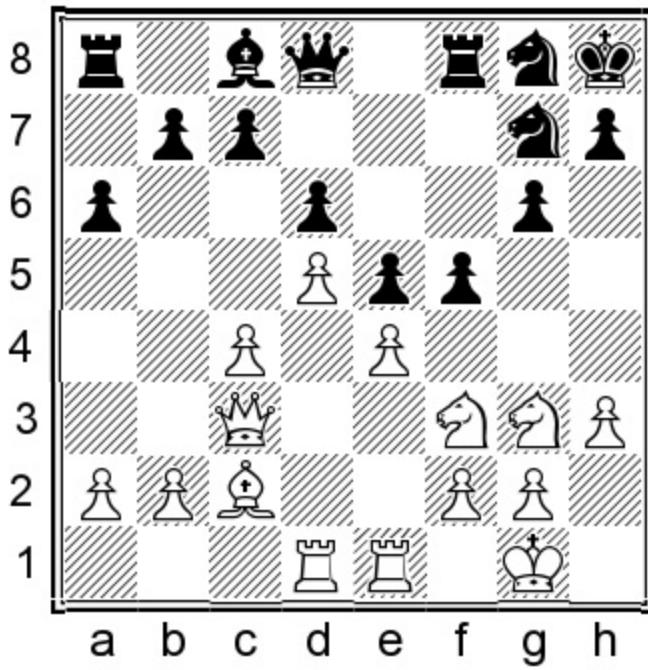
7. Lasker – Bauer, Amsterdam 1889



Show/Hide Solution

14.♝h5! Exchanging the key defender. 14.f5 g6!± defends quite well. **14...♝xh5 14...♝e8 15.♛xg7!** ♛xg7 16.♗g4 wins. 14...♜fc8! was the best defensive try, when White can win the h7-pawn but the black king escapes to the centre and the game continues. **15.♝xh7†! 15.♗xh5 f5= 15...♚xh7 16.♗xh5† ♜g8 17.♗xg7!! ♜xg7 18.♗g4† ♜h7 19.♗f3** Black has to give up too much material to avoid mate. **19...e5 20.♗h3† ♜h6 21.♗xh6† ♜xh6 22.♗d7!** White could have won more slowly, but the double threat ends the game in short order. Why are we seeing a tactical combination in a book of positional exercises? Because classic combinations such as this one should be part of one's foundational knowledge, which can guide us towards correct positional decisions – in this case, exchanging the defensive knight.

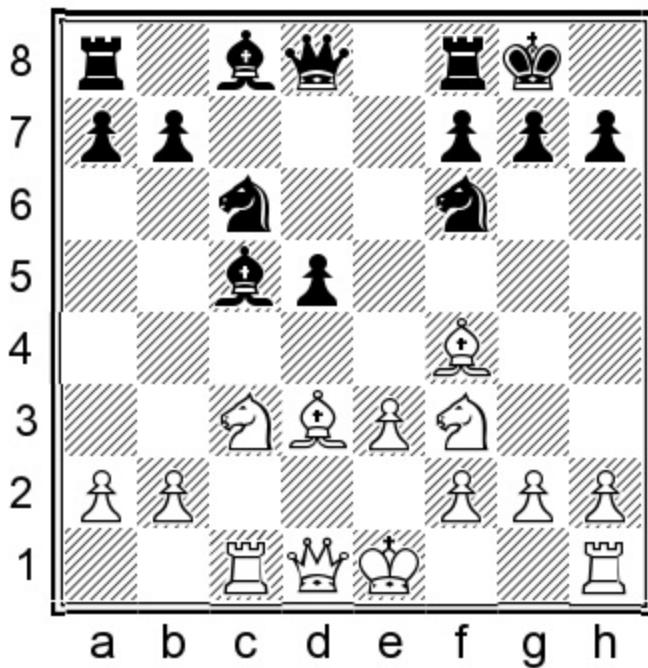
8. Lasker – Steinitz, St. Petersburg 1895



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21...f4! Closing the centre and gaining space. Black prepares to push the g-pawn and launch an attack, using as many pieces as possible on the kingside. After the game continuation 21...fxe4? White gets a nice square on e4. 21... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 22.exf5 gxf5 opens things up for White's pieces. There is even 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe5!?$ dx e 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ with compensation, as Black is cramped. **22. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ b6 23. $\mathbb{Q}1d2$** After 23.b4 a5 24.a3 g5 25.c5 h5 White's pieces are not well placed to attack on the queenside. **23...g5 24. $\mathbb{Q}f1! \infty$** White should run from the kill zone.

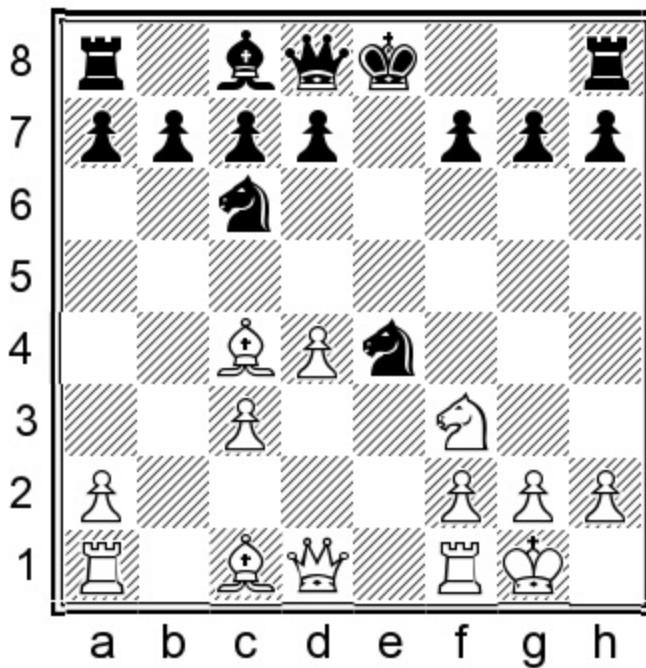
9. Steinitz – Lasker, St. Petersburg 1895



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10...d4 Following the school book by exchanging the isolated pawn to release the active pieces behind it. **11.exd4** $\mathbb{E}e8\#!$ An irritating intermediate move, forcing White to retreat. There is no need to calculate further. Lasker played 11... $\mathcal{Q}xd4$ with a balanced position

10. Steinitz – Lasker, Moscow (3) 1896



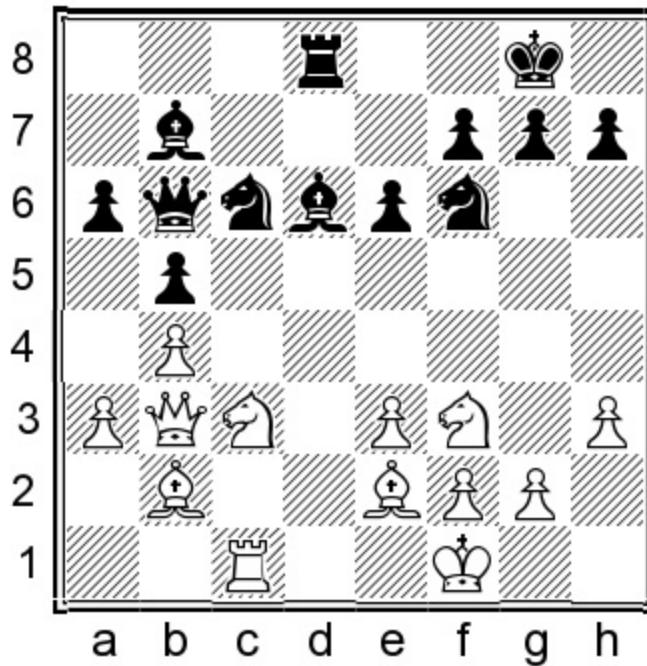
Show/Hide Solution

9...d5! White should not be allowed to gain space with d4-d5. 9...0-0? 10.d5± **10.Ła3?** White should play something else, but in that case Black simply castles with a good game. The only downside to Black's last move would be if White could catch the king in the centre, so this is the only critical move to check. **10...dxc4** **11.Łe1** Black has several decent moves, so you didn't need to decide between them before choosing 9...d5. Best is: **11...Łd5** **12.Łd2 Łe6** Followed by long castling.

William Steinitz“

A sacrifice is best refuted by accepting it. ”

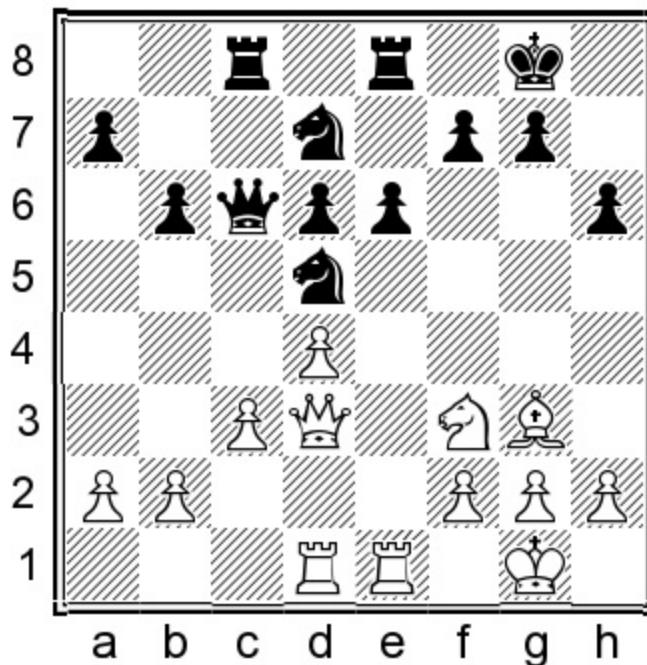
11. Lasker – Maroczy, London 1899



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18...Qe5! Opening the diagonal for the bishop on b7, and also in some way preparing ...Qe5 which neutralizes White's bishop on b2. In many similar positions with the c- and d-pawns exchanged, both players try to be first with ...Qe5 or Qe4, to exploit their respective diagonals. **19.Qxe5** Instead Lasker accepted doubled pawns on f3, a long-term concession. **19...Qxe5 20.Wc2** Black has slightly more active pieces, but it's not enough to claim a real advantage.

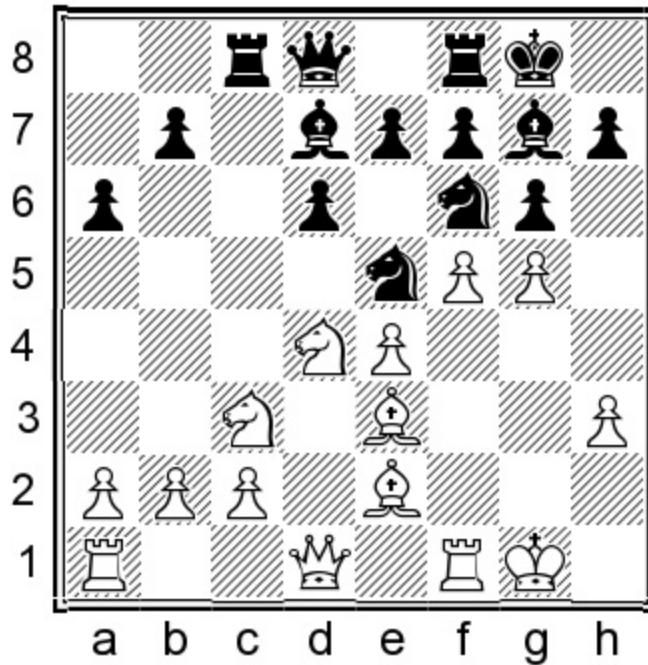
12. Blackburne – Lasker, London 1899



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18...b5 A standard minority attack, to eventually create a weak white pawn on the queenside – and in the meantime, solidifying the c4-outpost for a knight. 18...f5 is also a good move, gaining space and controlling the light squares. The game continuation is more straightforward though.

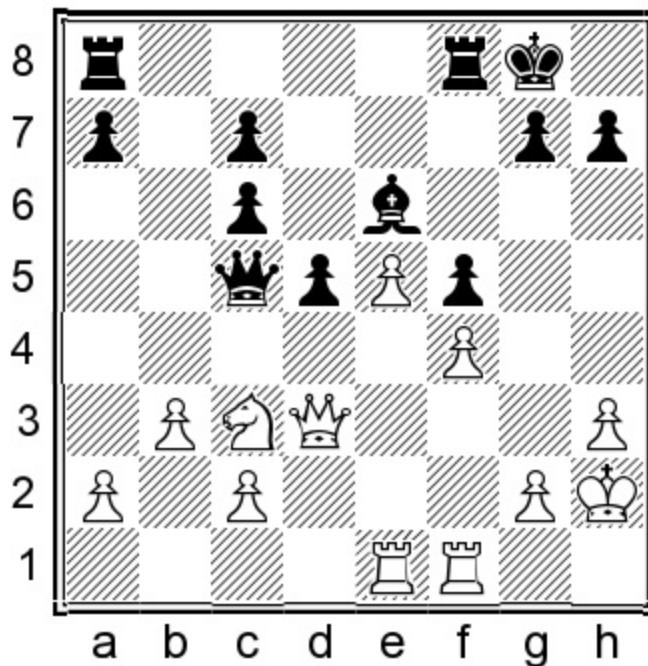
13. Lasker – Mackay, Great Britain (Simul) 1908



Show/Hide Solution

13...♝xc3! For the exchange, Black destroys White's structure and picks up a valuable central pawn.
14.bxc3 14.gxf6 ♛xe3 15.fxg7 ♔xg7+– 14...♞xe4+– Lasker went on to lose this simul game.

14. Lasker – Cohn, St. Petersburg 1909



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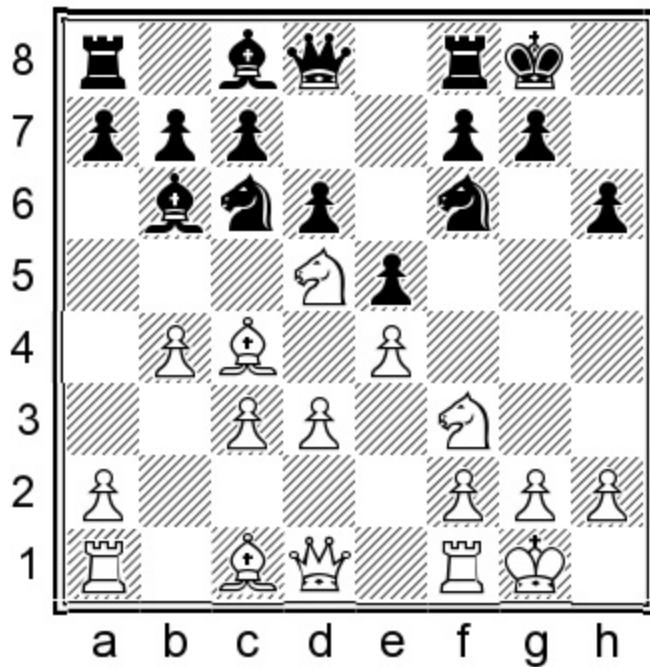
14. Emanuel Lasker – Erich Cohn, St. Petersburg 1909

20. $\mathbb{Q}a4!+–$ Taking control over the dark squares, where Black is helpless due to the immobile doubled c-pawns. Other moves are also good (winning), but that's no reason not to choose the most logical and convincing path.

Emanuel Lasker

“To refer to the oft-mooted question, ‘Which piece is stronger, the bishop or the knight?’ it is clear that the value of the bishop undergoes greater changes than that of the knight.”

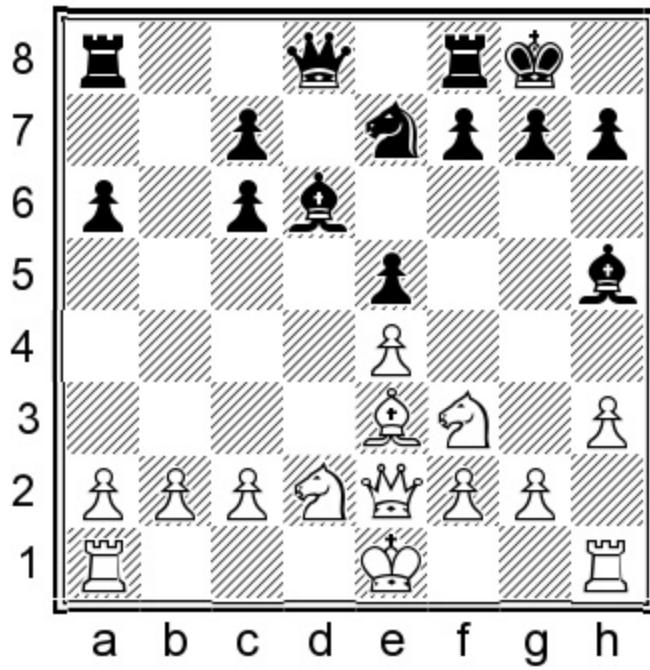
15. Alekhine – Cohn, Karlovy Vary 1911



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10. $a4!±$ Black is forced to move the a-pawn and recapture with ... $cxb6$, weakening his structure and giving up the d5-square.

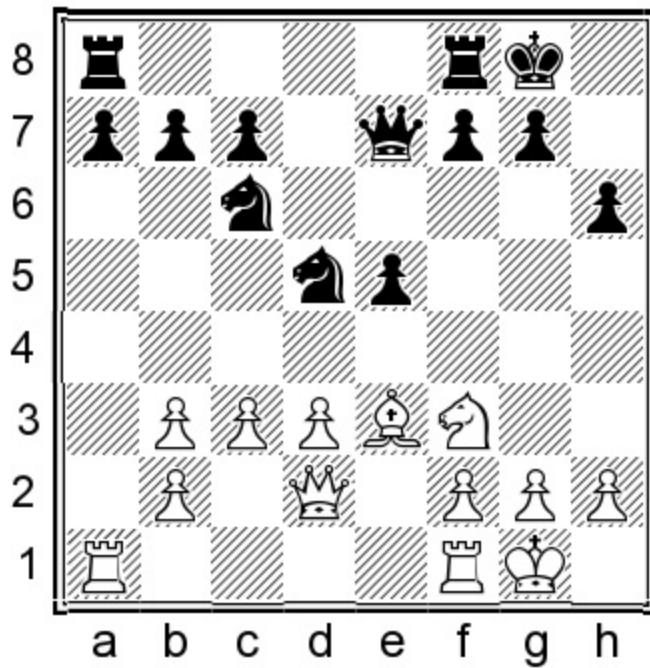
16. Znosko-Borovsky – Alekhine, St. Petersburg 1913



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12.g4! With a closed centre, White can afford to advance on the wing. **12...Bg6 13.h4 f6 13...h5 14.Qg5! hxg4 15.h5 Qh7 16.h6 g6** and it's tempting to use another diagram to embarrass the bishop on h7. **14.h5 Qf7** White failed to find the best continuation: **15.g5!** Before Black has a chance to stop it with ...h7-h6. The attack is winning.

17. Ed. Lasker – Alekhine, Scheveningen 1913

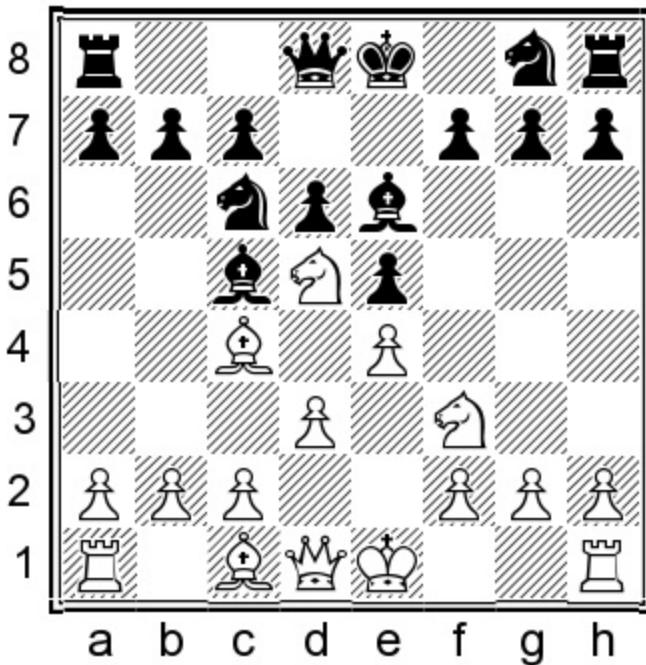


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14...a5!† Stopping b3-b4.

The game went: 14...f5 15.b4=

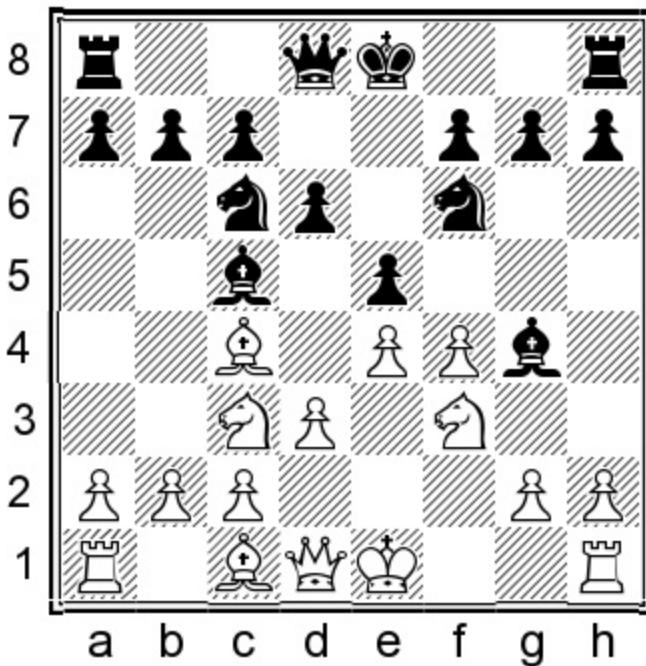
18. Mieses – Alekhine, Mannheim 1914



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6... $\mathbb{Q}a5!$ Picking up the bishop – the most ambitious and best move. Note that 7.b4? $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$ wins a pawn or destroys White's structure.

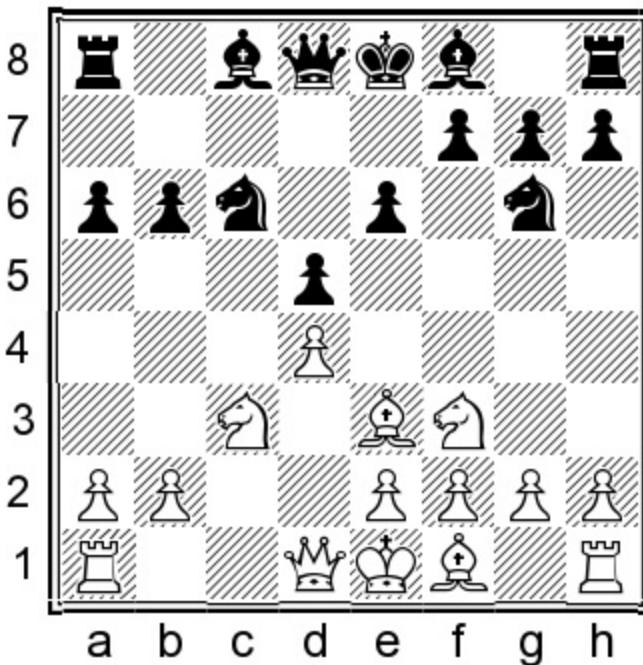
19. Alekhine – Teichmann, Berlin 1921



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7. $\mathbb{Q}a4! \pm$ Hunting down the bishop and thus preparing to castle.

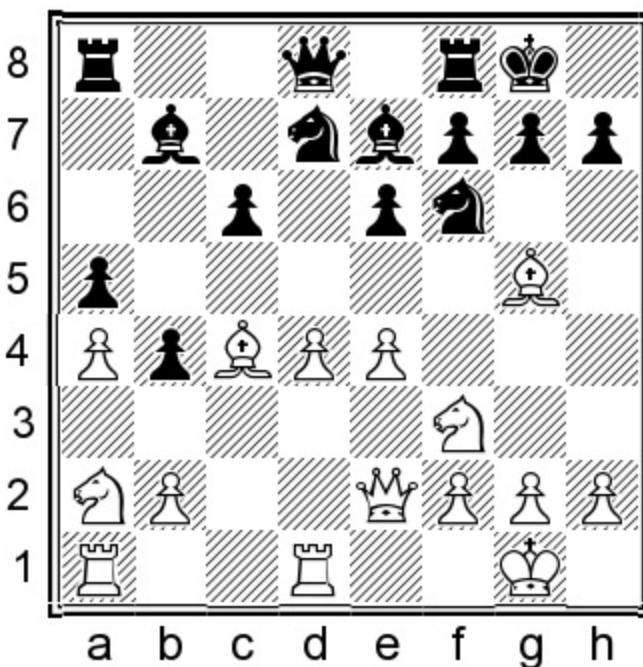
20. Alekhine – Rubinstein, The Hague 1921



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9.h4! A standard move against the knight on g6. **9...♝d6** After 9...h5 White clearly has more use for the g5-square than Black has for the g4-square. 9...h6 is the best defence. **10.h5 ♛ge7 11.h6 g6 12.♗g5 0-0 13.♗f6** Black was not mated on g7, but surviving on the dark squares meant giving up an exchange and eventually losing the game.

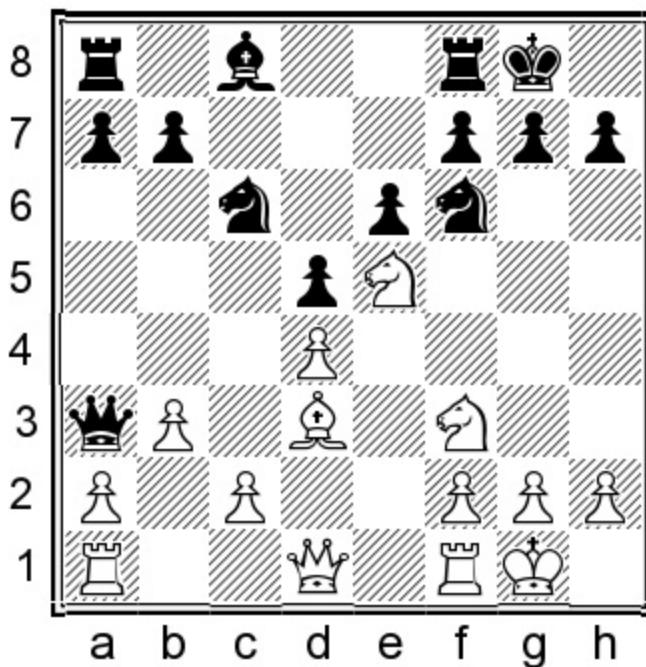
21. Alekhine – Tarrasch, Hastings 1922



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13...c5 First things first: Black gets rid of the backward pawn and opens the diagonal for the b7-bishop. 13... $\mathbb{E}e8$ was played in the game. **14.dxc5** 14.d5 exd5 15.exd5 $\mathbb{Q}b6+$ picks up the loose pawn. (The pin along the d-file yields nothing for White.) **14... $\mathbb{W}c7\#$** The knight is misplaced on a2, and the e4-pawn is vulnerable.

22. Bogoljubow – Capablanca, New York 1924



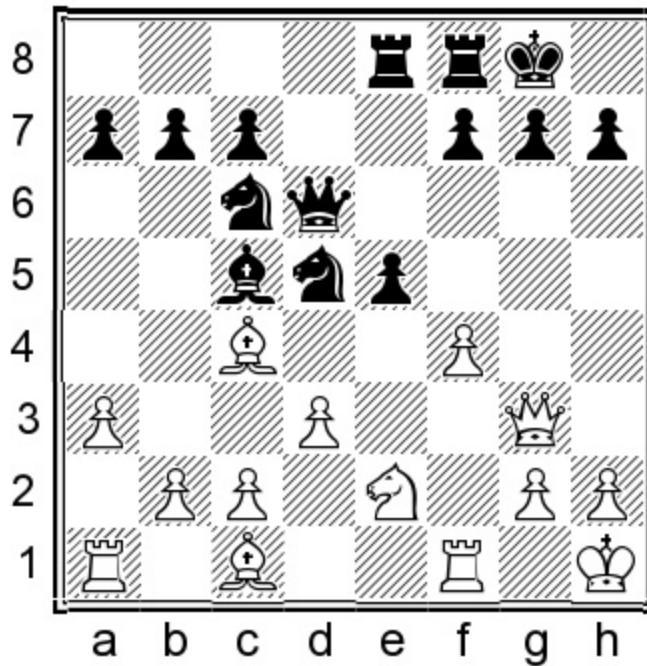
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12... $\mathbb{Q}b4!$ Threatening to exchange White's strong bishop. Capablanca's 12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ should have been met by: 13.c3!± 13. $\mathbb{B}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ 14. $\mathbb{B}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 14...b6= is a way to avoid an early draw. **15. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}e4!=$** Leading to a repetition. 15... $\mathbb{Q}xe2\#?$! 16. $\mathbb{B}xe2$ exchanges the bishop, but Black will then miss the knight that defended the kingside. White continues with c2-c3 and $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ to play with knight against bishop.

Jose Raul Capablanca

“Chess is something more than a game. It is an intellectual diversion which has certain artistic qualities and many scientific elements.”

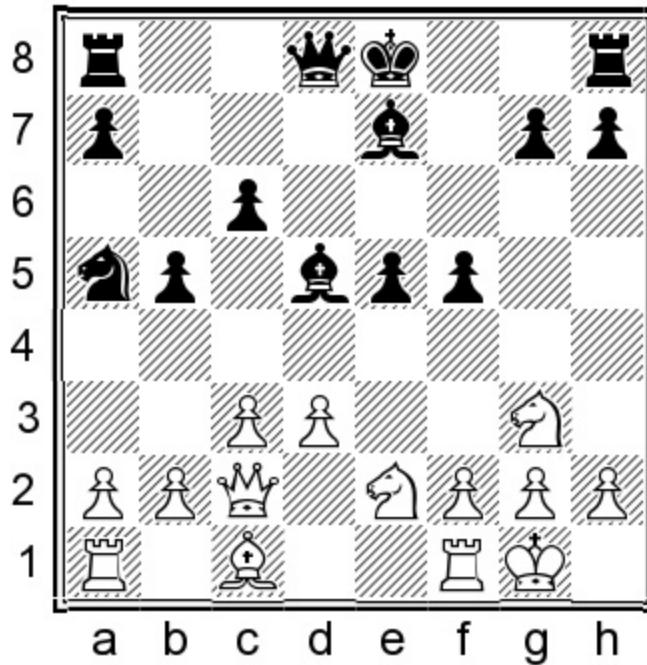
23. Alekhine – Dusek, Czechoslovakia (Simul) 1925



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14.f5!± White gets the e4-square and an initiative on the kingside. 14.♖xd5?! was played. After 14...♗xd5 15.♘c3 Black can go for 15...exf4!? 16.♕xf4 ♗d7 17.♕xc7 f5∞ with decent play for the pawn. **14...♘f6 15.♘c3 ♘h8 16.♕g5** White is close to winning.

24. Spielmann – Euwe, Wiesbaden 1925

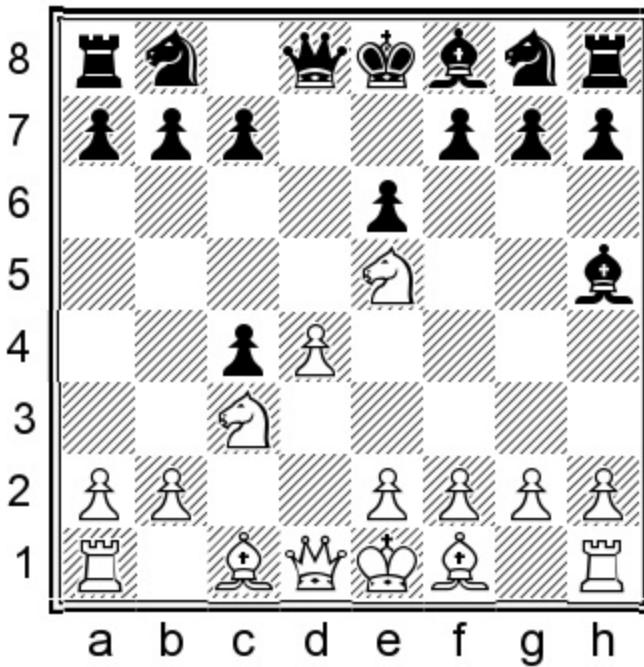


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14...f4!? Turning the e2-knight and c1-bishop into bad pieces is much more important than giving away the e4-square. Black will later get coordinated with ...c6-c5 and ...♘c6. 14...0-0? allowed:

15.f4= **15.♗e4** 15.♗f5 0-0 16.♗xe7† ♜xe7 17.f3 c5† **15...0-0 16.f3 c5†**

25. Alekhine – Grünfeld, Semmering 1926



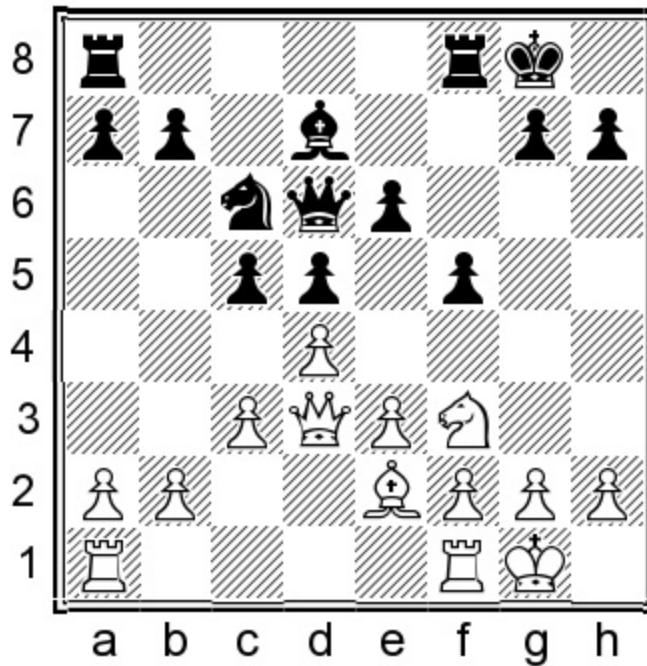
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6.g4! ♖g6 7.h4 f6 White can exchange on g6 and attack on the light squares, but it's more exact to start with Alekhine's **8.♘a4†!** as Black cannot respond with ...♗c6, ...♗d7 or ...♗f7. 8.h5 is also good. **8...c6 9.♗xg6 hxg6 10.♗xc4+–** White is positionally winning.

Alexander Alekhine

“Playing on both sides of the board is my favourite strategy.”

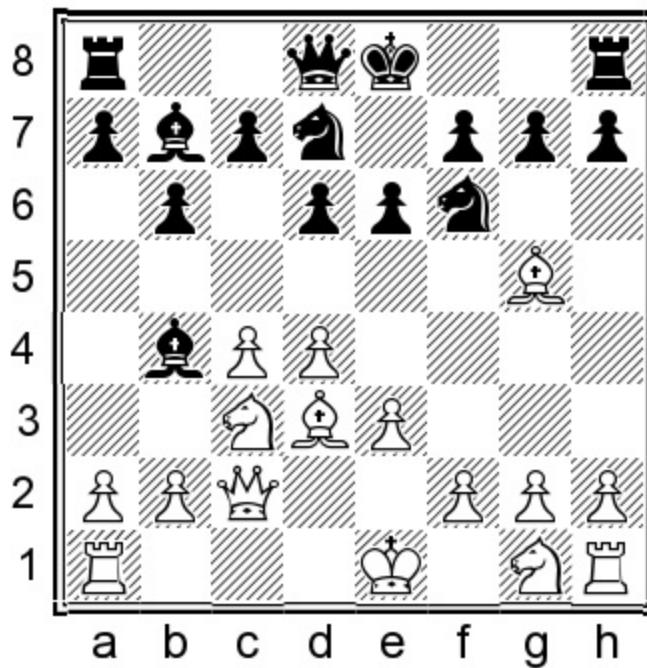
26. Kmoch – Alekhine, Semmering 1926



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13...c4!= Black gains space and will follow up by pushing the a- and b-pawns. This method of releasing the tension normally comes with the drawback of giving White a free hand to play in the centre with e3-e4, but that is not on the agenda here.

27. Alekhine – Nimzowitsch, New York 1927

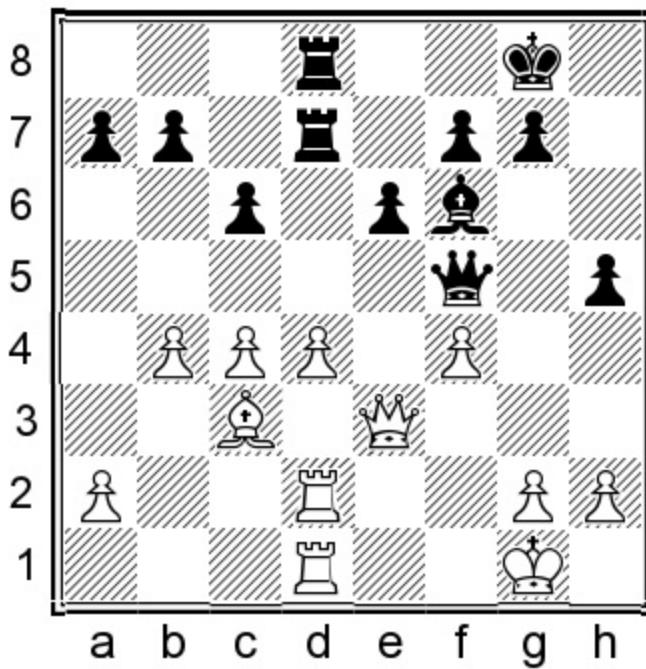


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8.f3! A nice set-up against the bishops on b7 and b4, both of which fight for the e4-square. 8.e4?! is risky when White is less than fully developed. Black obtains good counterplay with: 8...c5! 9.d5 exd5

10.cxd5 This is the only critical move, but 10... $\mathbb{W}e7$ leaves Black with an improved Benoni position because the bishop is well placed on b4.

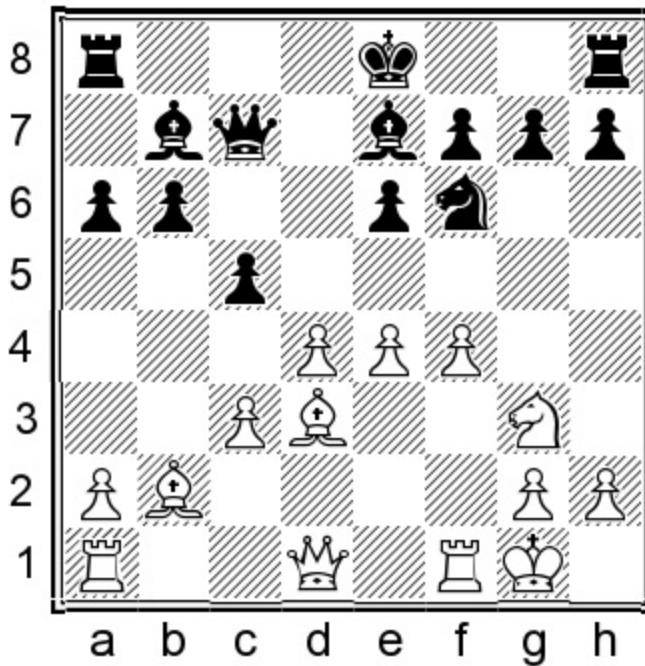
28. Kmoch – Alekhine, Kecskemet 1927



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22...b5! Winning the d5-square for a heavy piece before White has time to interfere with a2-a4. 23.c5 Opening the c-file only helps Black, as the white rooks are busy defending the d-pawn. Kmoch tried 23. $\mathbb{W}f3+$ but he lost a pawn and eventually the game. 23...g5# Having obtained a dominant position, Black can set about creating a second weakness.

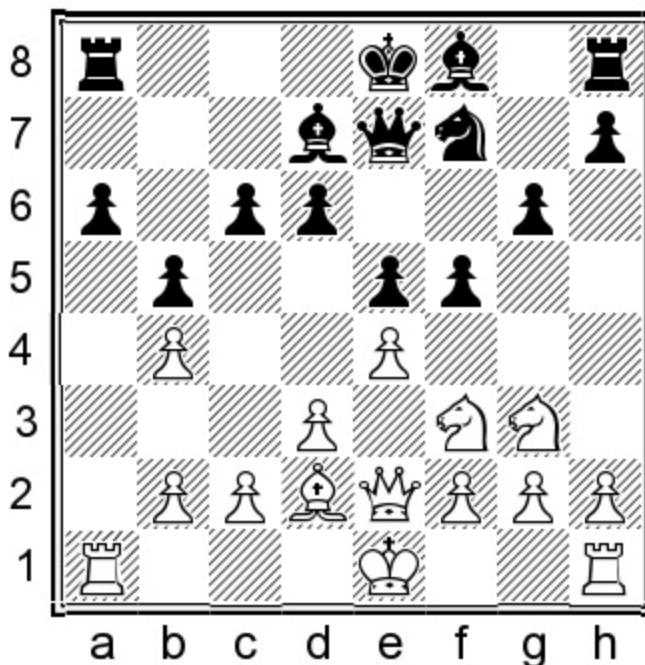
29. Bogoljubow – Alekhine, Germany/Netherlands (8) 1929



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14...h5! Challenging the knight with extra force, as the e4-pawn is loose. There is no point in starting with 14...c4; it's better to retain the option of ...cxd4. **15.♗e2** 15.e5 gives Black the d5-square, but there is also 15...h4!?, leading to a line which is not especially relevant, but which may still be of interest to those who are curious: 16.exf6 hxg3 17.fxe7 ♘xh2 18.♗f3! ♖xe7 19.♗xg3 ♗xf4 20.♗g4 (20.♔xh2? ♘h8†+) 20...♗xg2† 21.♗xg2 ♗e3† 22.♔f1 ♗xd3† The position is close to equal, but I slightly prefer Black's chances with three pawns versus a piece. **15...h4** **16.♘h1†** The knight can't easily return to the game, as White needs to defend the f-pawn.

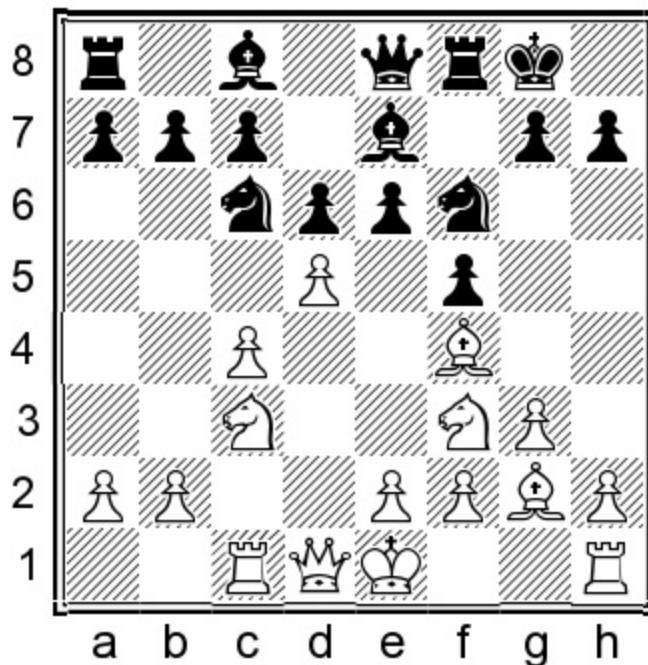
30. Yates – Alekhine, San Remo 1930



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16...f4! Black gains space and avoids giving White a chance for exf5. Black will follow up by pushing the g-pawn.

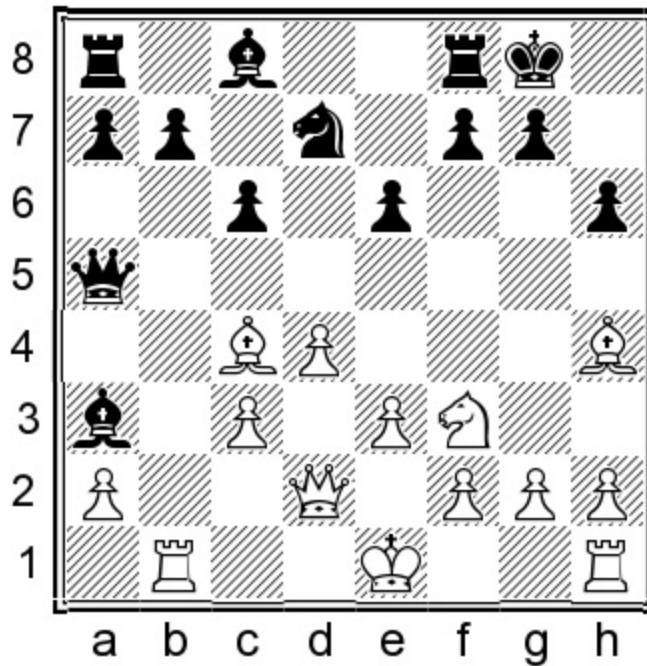
31. Bogoljubow – Alekhine, Germany (11) 1934



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9...♝d8! Black avoids gifting White an open c-file, and prepares to recapture on e6 with the knight.
9...exd5? 10.cxd5± **10.♝b5** is met by **10...♛d7** or even **10...♝xd5!?**.

32. Alekhine – Nimzowitsch, Zurich 1934

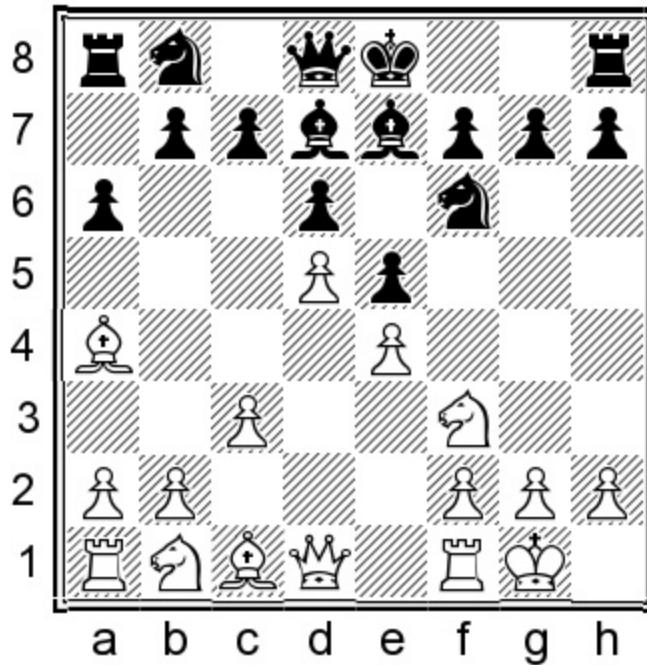


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13...e5!= The bishop on c8 is no longer a problematic piece, and the potential queen exchange on d2 will suit the player with fewer central pawns.

13...b6 is an attempt to exchange bishops but 14.♔d3!± is a good reply.

33. Alekhine – Johner, Zurich 1934



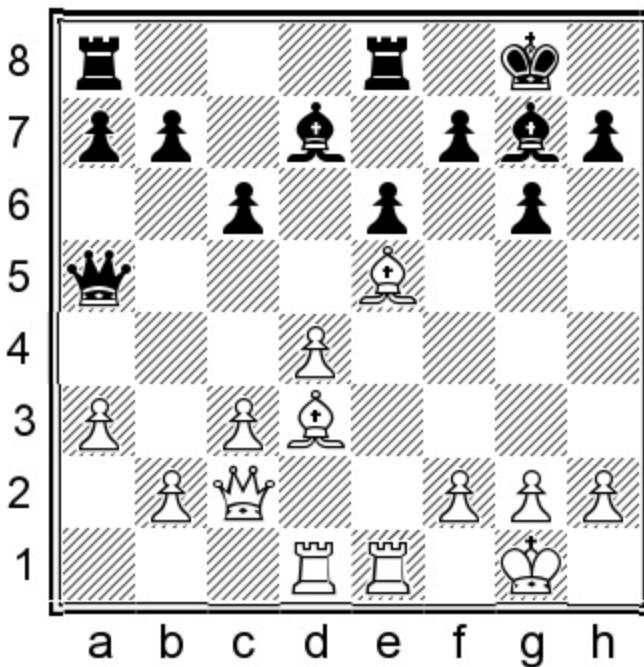
Show/Hide Solution

9.♗c2! Avoiding simplifications is best, as Black's light-squared bishop and queenside knight both belong on d7. Black needs the bishop to support future counterplay with ...f5, so ideas involving

... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ and exchanging on f3 are nothing to be afraid of.

9. $\mathbb{Q}xd7\# \mathbb{Q}bx d7=$

34. Lasker – Capablanca, Moscow 1935



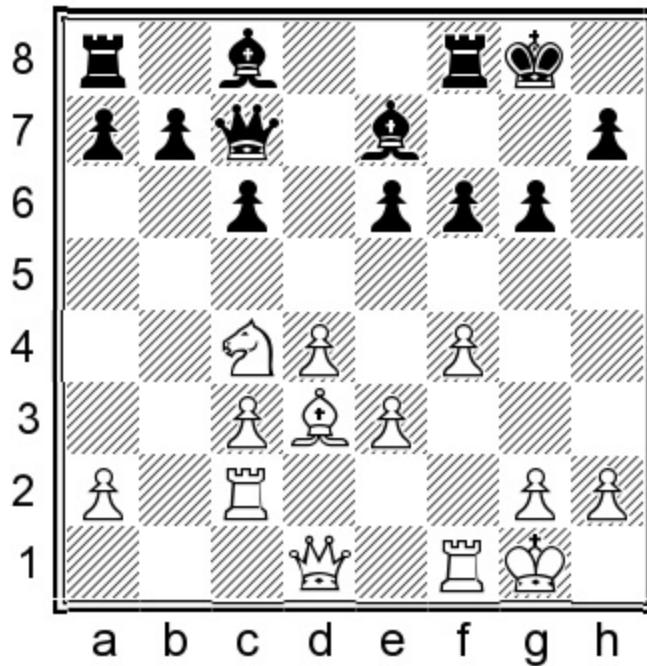
Show/Hide Solution

19.h4! With a few black pieces stuck on the queenside, White has time to open the h-file and go for an attack. A test solver opined that 19. $\mathbb{W}c1 \mathbb{E}ad8$ 20.b4 is a good alternative. It's true that White stands much better here too, but I see no point in delaying the more incisive plan of attacking on the kingside. 19... $\mathbb{W}d8$ 20.h5 $\mathbb{W}g5$ Black needs to defend against a sacrifice on g6. 21.hxg6 21. $\mathbb{Q}xg7?$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ makes life easier for Black, who now has the option of bringing a rook to h8 in case the h-file opens up 21...hxg6 22. $\mathbb{E}e3+-$ White has a decisive attack.

Jose Raul Capablanca

"People who want to improve should take their defeats as lessons, and endeavour to learn what to avoid in the future. You must also have the courage of your convictions. If you think your move is good, make it."

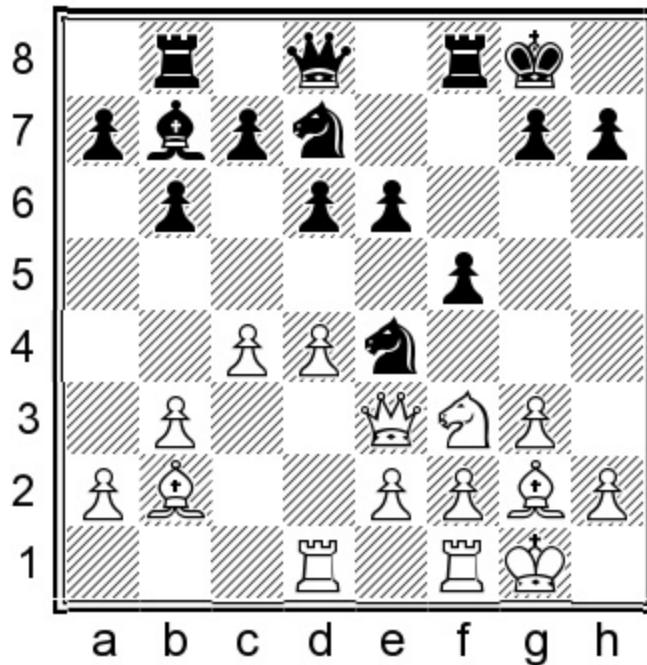
35. Lasker – Bogoljubow, Nottingham 1936



Show/Hide Solution

18.h4!↑ Pinpointing the weakened g6-pawn. 18.e4= was played in the game.

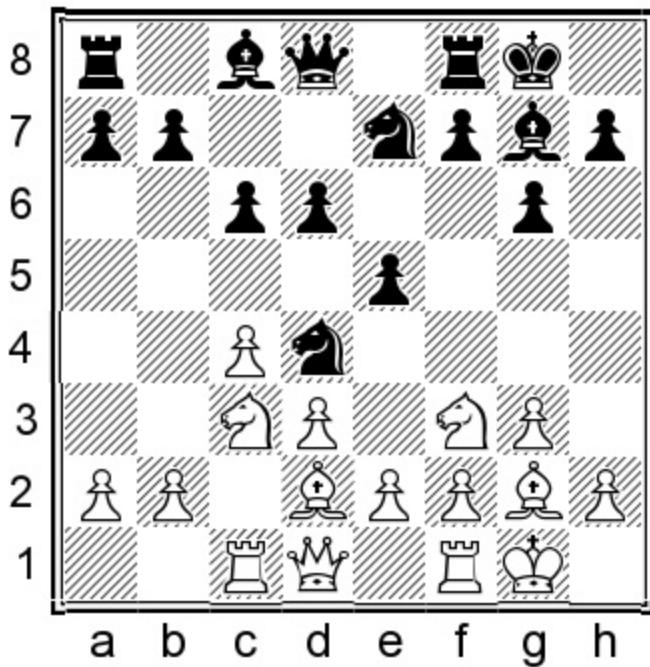
36. Alekhine – Alexander, Nottingham 1936



Show/Hide Solution

13.d5! Undermining the f-pawn. 13...exd5 13...e5 is the move Black would like to play, but 14.♘h4! wins at least a pawn. **14.cxd5 ♘df6 15.♘h4 ♖d7 16.♗h3!+–** Black is losing, due to the weakness of the f5-pawn along with the additional threat of f2-f3.

37. Lasker – Alexander, Nottingham 1936

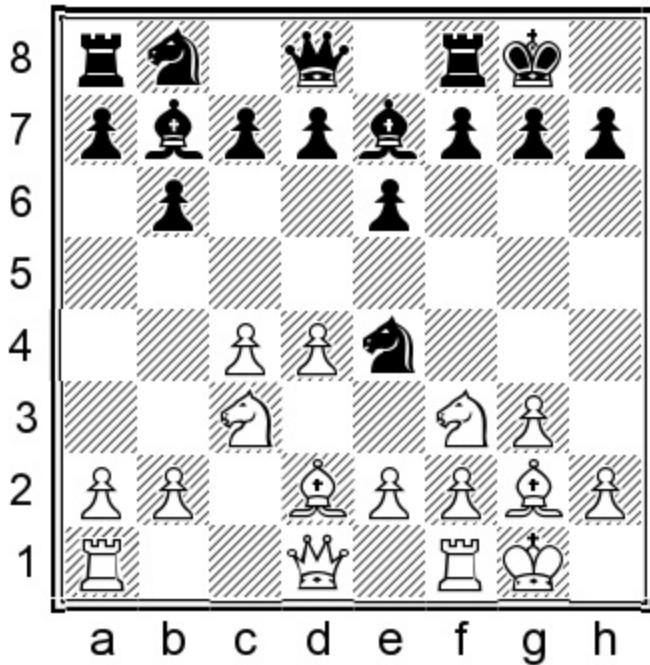


Show/Hide Solution

10.b4 Starting White's main plan: to soften up the long light-squared diagonal. (Even though the rook would be better on b1 than c1.)

10.♗xd4? exd4 11.♗e4 f5 12.♗g5 h6 13.♗h3 g5± only helps Black to advance.

38. Euwe – Alekhine, Netherlands (21) 1937



Show/Hide Solution

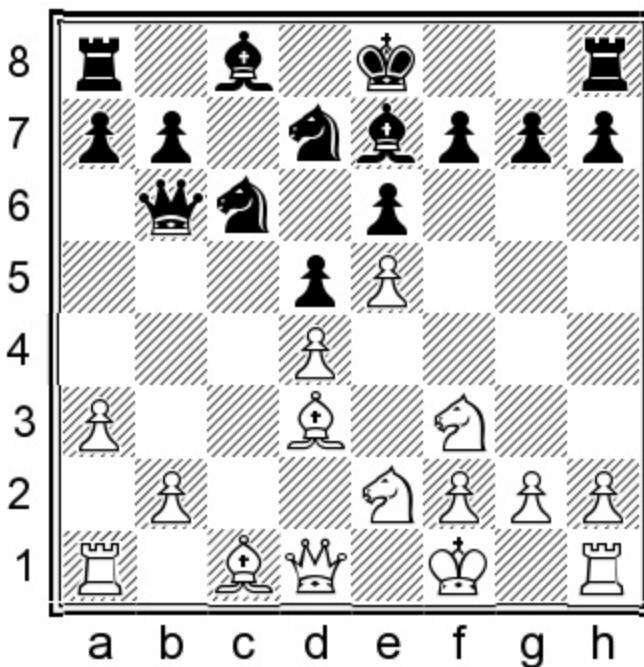
Nowadays this is known as a common theoretical position which arises with Black to move. **9.d5!**

Obstructing the b7-bishop and fighting for the e4-square. 9... $\mathbb{Q}e1$?! saves the bishop, but is slow. 9... $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 9...exd5 gives White a choice between recapturing on d5 with the knight or the pawn, both with a clear advantage. 10. $\mathbb{W}xd2\pm$ White's central control and nullifying of the b7-bishop are more important than Black's bishop pair.

Max Euwe

"Alekhine is a poet who creates a work of art out of something that would hardly inspire another man to send home a picture post card."

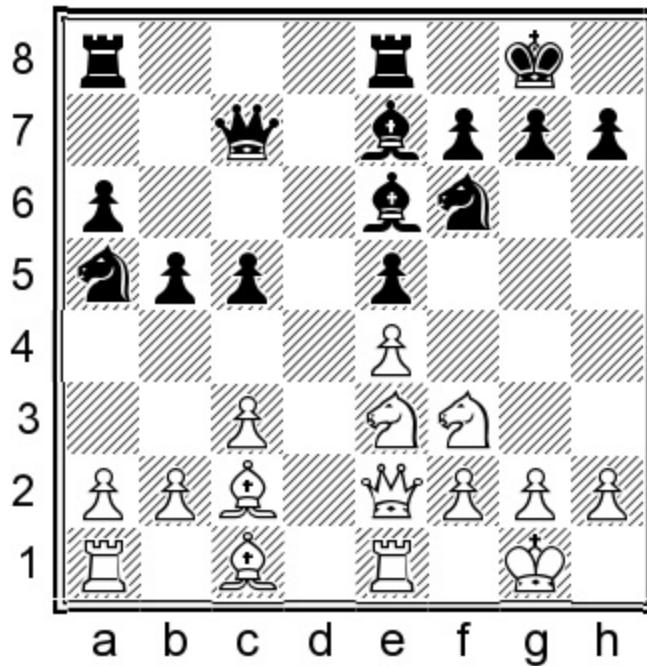
39. Alekhine – Capablanca, Netherlands 1938



Show/Hide Solution

11...f6! Immediately challenging for the centre. 11... $\mathbb{Q}f8$? 12.b4+– was the game. 11... $\mathbb{Q}a5$?! 12.h4 $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}b1\pm$; 11...0-0?! 12. $\mathbb{W}c2$ h6 13.h4, 12. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 12.exf6 $\mathbb{Q}xf6\mp$ White needs more than a square on e5 to compensate for the king on f1. 12... $\mathbb{Q}dxe5$! 12...fxe5?! only leads to unclear complications. 13. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ (13.dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}dxe5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 15. $\mathbb{W}h5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f7\#$) Capturing the e6-pawn tends to be the critical try in this structure, but Black has many possible continuations, 13...e4 14. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}f7\#$ being one example. 13.dxe5 fxe5 14. $\mathbb{Q}h5$?! Safest is giving back the piece: 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5\mp$ 14...0-0 15. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ Necessary to defend f2. 15... $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ e4 \mp Black has three pawns for the piece, plus an ongoing initiative.

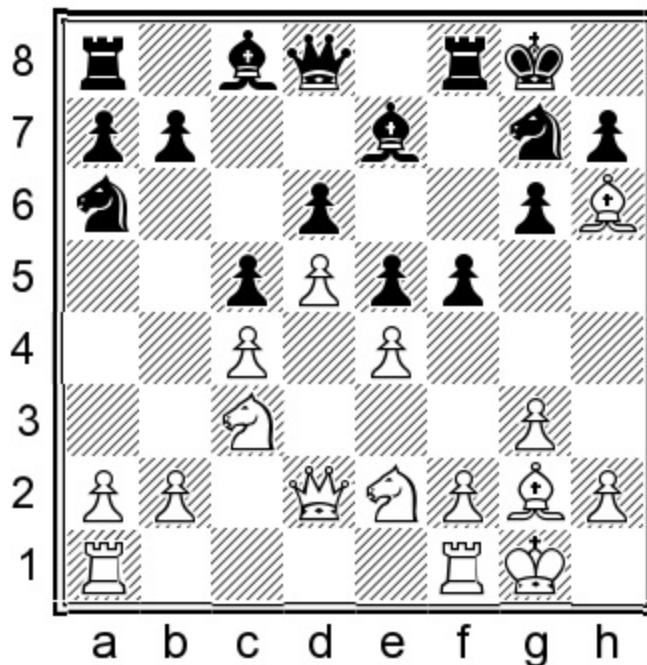
40. Alekhine – Flohr, Netherlands 1938



Show/Hide Solution

16. $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ Black needed the pawn on h6 to ensure the safety of the bishop on e6. 16. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ opens up for the bishop on c2, but also for Black's rook against White's queen. 16... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 17. $exd5$ e4! 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}d7=$ Black wins back the pawn. **16... $\mathbb{Q}d7$** The game move 16...c4 is not challenging; White simply captures the bishop. 16... $\mathbb{Q}c4?!$ is unsatisfactory: 17. $\mathbb{W}f3$ h6 18. b3 hxg5 19. bxc4± Black suffers from a weakened kingside. **17. $\mathbb{Q}d5\pm$**

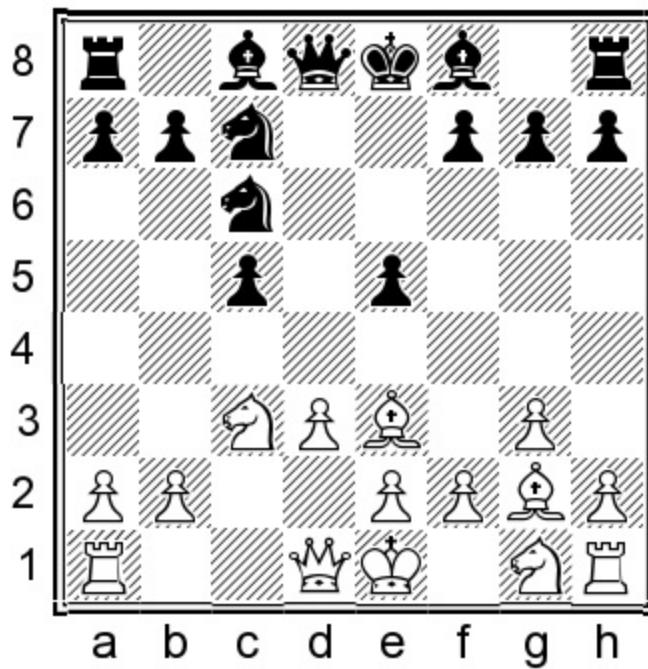
41. Georgadse – Petrosian, Tbilisi 1945



Show/Hide Solution

12.f4! The way to increase the pressure. Black doesn't want to capture on either e4 or f4 since it would help White's knights forward. However, the exf5 and especially fxe5 exchanges tend to be good moves for White. Another important factor is that Black's knight on a6 is misplaced. In this Czech Benoni set-up, it would have wanted to chase away White's bishop with ... $\mathbb{Q}b8-d7-f6-g8$. Remember this manoeuvre, as there will be no further reminders in this book. I initially wanted to include an exercise with the knight manoeuvre, but it was eventually discarded since Black's position was too bad. By the way, White could have made some other move and followed up with f2-f4, but the sooner the better. **12... $\mathbb{Q}c7$** **12... $\mathbb{Q}f6$** defends e5, but the bishop will be less effective than a knight on the central square, because it will be vulnerable to knight threats. There are many good continuations, **13. $\mathbb{Q}ae1$** **$\mathbb{Q}c7$** **14.fxe5** **$\mathbb{Q}xe5$** **15. $\mathbb{Q}f4$** being one example. **13.exf5** **13. $\mathbb{Q}ae1$** was the game, where Black eventually escaped with a draw. **13...gxf5** **13... $\mathbb{Q}xf5$** **14.fxe5** gives Black an isolated pawn. White continues with h2-h3 and g3-g4, then puts a knight on e4. **14.g4!** This is not forced, but it's both strong and instructive. **14...fxg4** **15.fxe5** **dxe5** **16. $\mathbb{Q}xf8\#$** **$\mathbb{Q}xf8$** **17. $\mathbb{Q}g3+-$** White's pieces will smoothly join the attack.

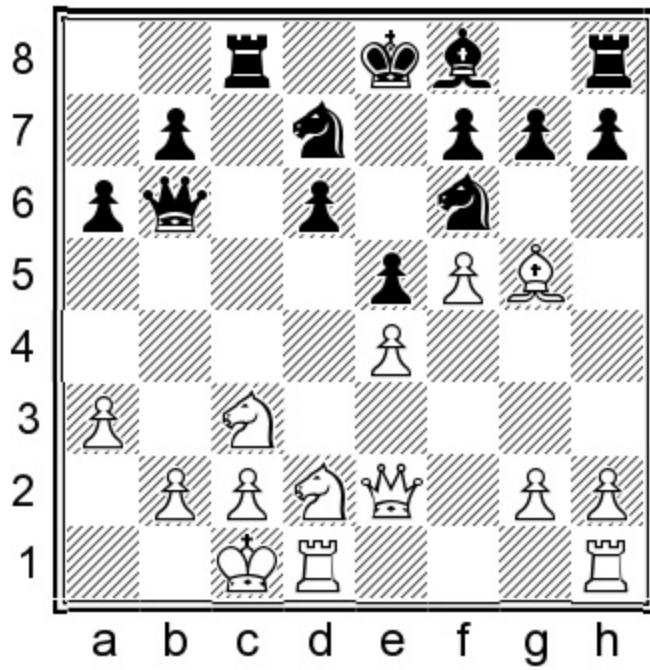
42. Smyslov – Lilienthal, Budapest 1950



Show/Hide Solution

8. $\mathbb{Q}xc6\#!$ **bxc6** **9. $\mathbb{Q}a4$** Black does not have an effective way to open lines for the bishop pair. Smyslov won convincingly, and exchanging on c6 has since been a standard device in such positions. In the game Black became passive, but strong players nowadays would consider **9... $\mathbb{Q}e6!?\pm$** , offering the c6-pawn in the hope of gaining some initiative.

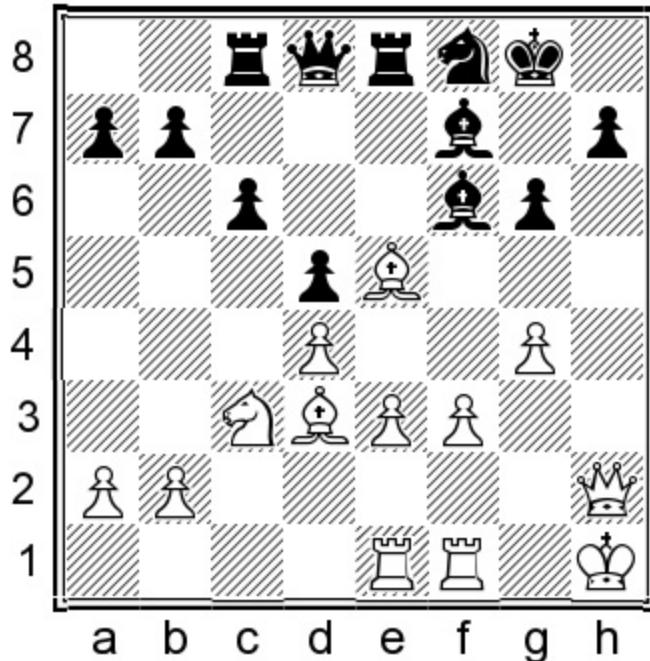
43. Szabo – Petrosian, Saltsjobaden 1952



Show/Hide Solution

14...Bxc3 15.Bxc3 d5 The exchange sacrifice is so standard that you hardly need to consider what to play next, until the opponent has executed the only move. **16.Qb1 dxе4!??** This improves on the game continuation of 16...Qxe4 17.Qxd5!, when Black's best is to take on b1 and remove the queens, leading to approximate equality. Instead Petrosian took on g5 and stood worse, though he eventually won.

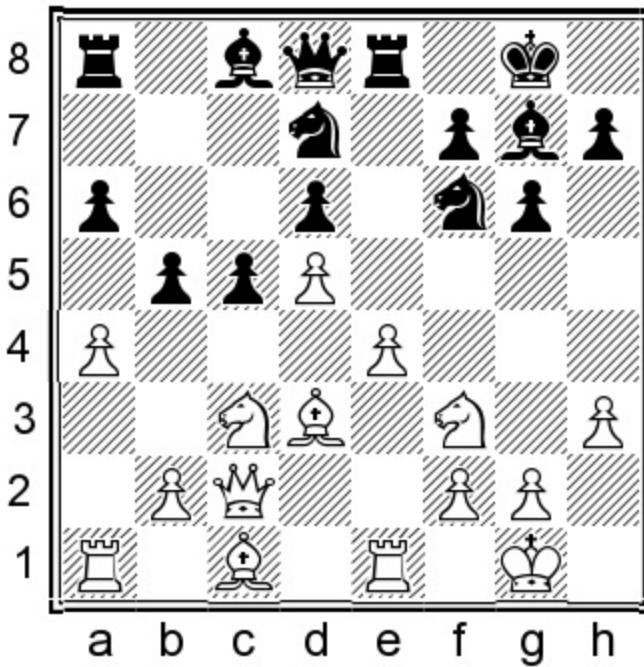
44. Petrosian – Vaitonis, Saltsjobaden 1952



Show/Hide Solution

23.f4! Bolstering the bishop on e5 to keep the e-file closed. 23.♗xf6 ♗xf6± 23...♝xe5 24.dxе5!± Keeping the f-pawn to threaten Black's king.

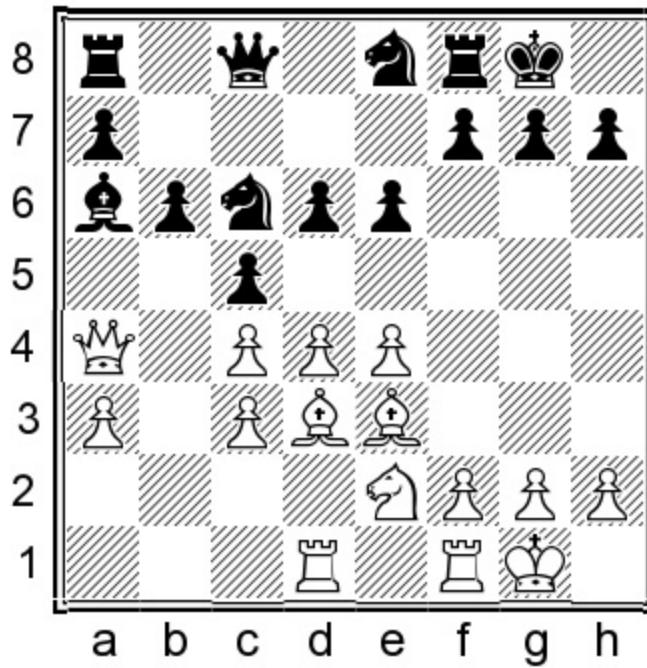
45. Taimanov – Petrosian, Gagra (Training) 1953



Show/Hide Solution

13...c4! Black should play actively in the Benoni, and Petrosian took the opportunity in this training game. 14.♗f1 b4 15.♗b1 ♜c5! 16.♗xc4 a5! 16...♗fxe4 was Petrosian's choice, which gave him a pleasant game but nothing more. If White captures the b4-pawn, Black's active pieces will offer more than enough compensation. The text move is even better than the game continuation. Black's initiative is developing with the speed of a carbon bike, for instance: 17.♗bd2 ♜a6 18.♗c2 ♜xf1 19.♗xf1 ♜c8 20.♗b1 ♜b6+–

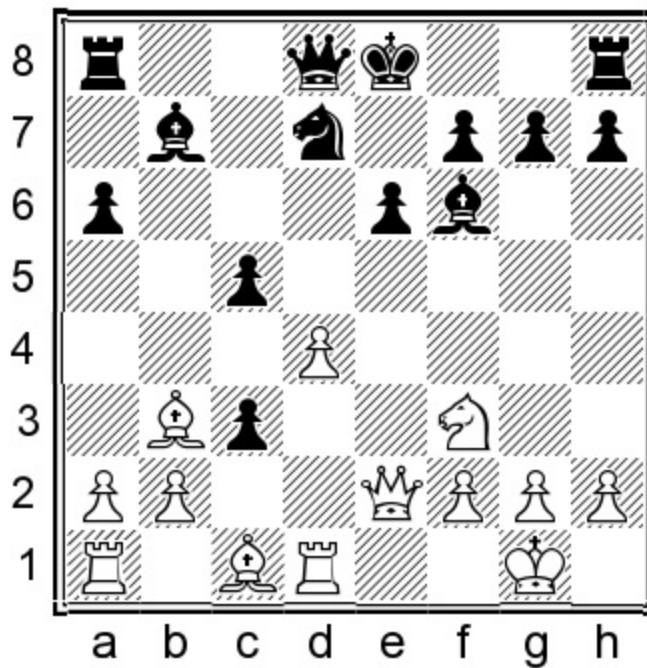
46. Geller – Smyslov, Zurich 1953



Show/Hide Solution

13...Qa5 Threatening the weak c4-pawn. **14.dxc5** There are two other ways to defend the pawn, the passive 14.Qc1 and 14.d5. However, neither of these will work well, as Black exchanges queens with either ...Qc7 or ...Qf6 followed by ...We8 (or ...Wd7). White would like to attack and leave the weak pawn to its fate, but after something like 14.f4 cxd4 15.cxd4 Qxc4+ it becomes clear that the queen's placement on a4 is completely incompatible with a kingside attack. **14...dxc5** A move ago White had a nice-looking pawn centre. Now White's structure looks ugly, and Black went on to win.

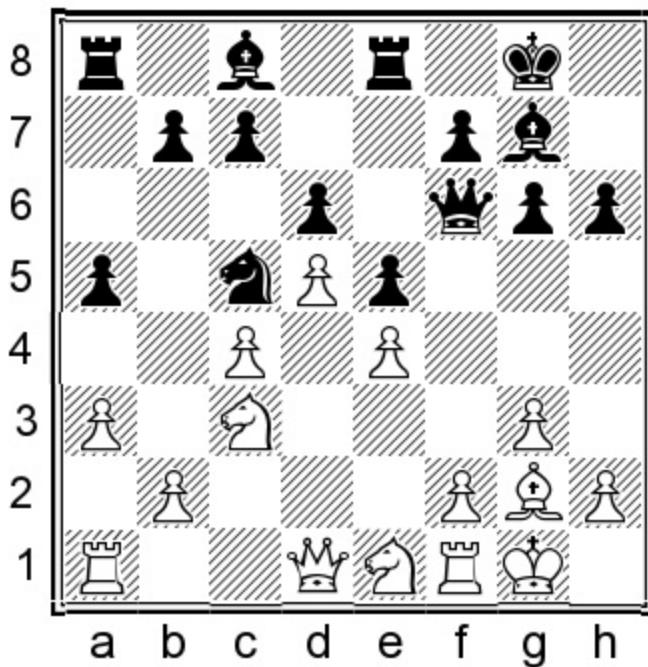
47. Smyslov – Keres, Zurich 1953



Show/Hide Solution

14.d5! An obvious move which hardly requires any serious calculations. **14...cxb2** **14...e5** **15.bxc3+–** was the game. **15.Qxb2** A good alternative is: **15.dxe6!?** **bxa1=Q?** **16.exd7†** **Qf8** **17.Qc4** The only move, but easily good enough since **17...Qe7** **18.d8=Q†** leads to a quick mate. The above variation featured a rare case on move 15 where Black's best option would have been to underpromote to a knight without having a check or fork in mind. Even in that case, Black is still losing. **15...Qxb2** **16.dxe6!** This is strongest, although the straightforward **16.Qxb2** is also clearly better for White.

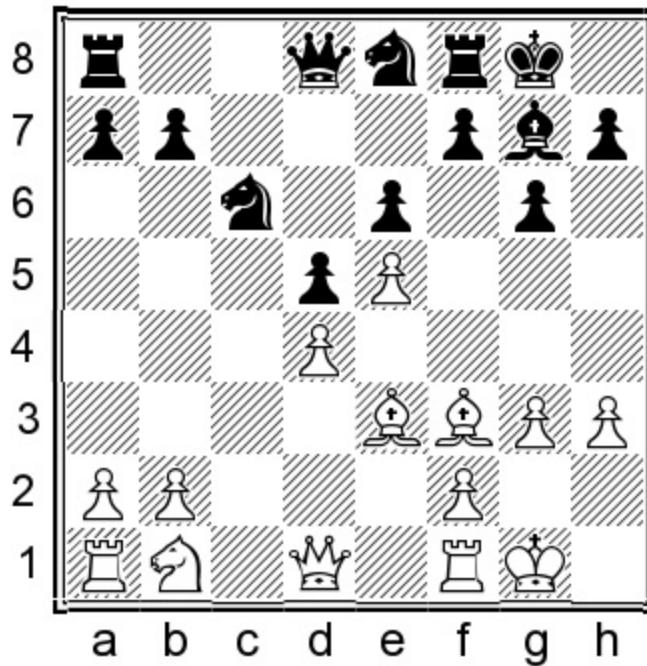
48. Stahlberg – Petrosian, Zurich 1953



Show/Hide Solution

13...a4! Freezing White's ambitions on the queenside. (Stahlberg's last move **13.a3?** wasn't clever.)

49. Smyslov – Botvinnik, Moscow (17) 1954



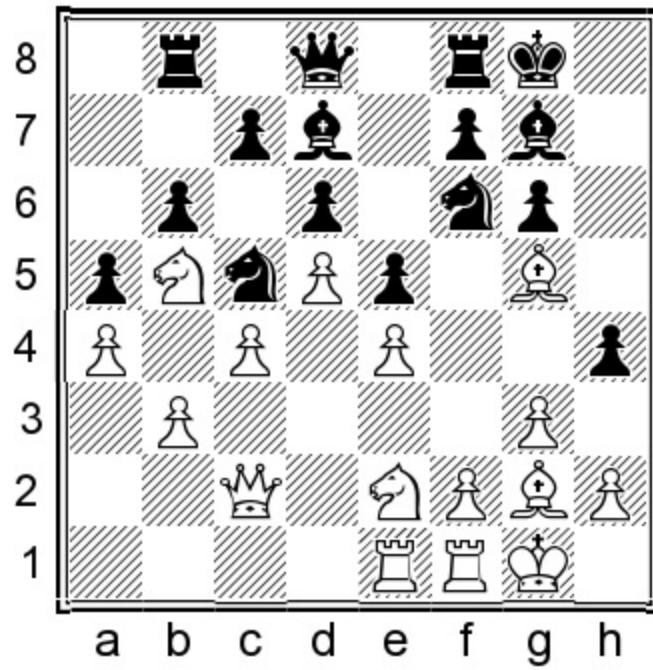
Show/Hide Solution

13...f6! Activating the rook, bishop and knight. **14.♘g4** 14.exf6 ♜xf6† **14...fxe5!** Not 14...♝e7?! 15.f4 when White consolidates. **15.dxe5 d4†** Black is active.

Mikhail Botvinnik

"When my opponent's clock is going, I discuss general considerations in an internal dialogue with myself. When my own clock is going, I analyse concrete variations."

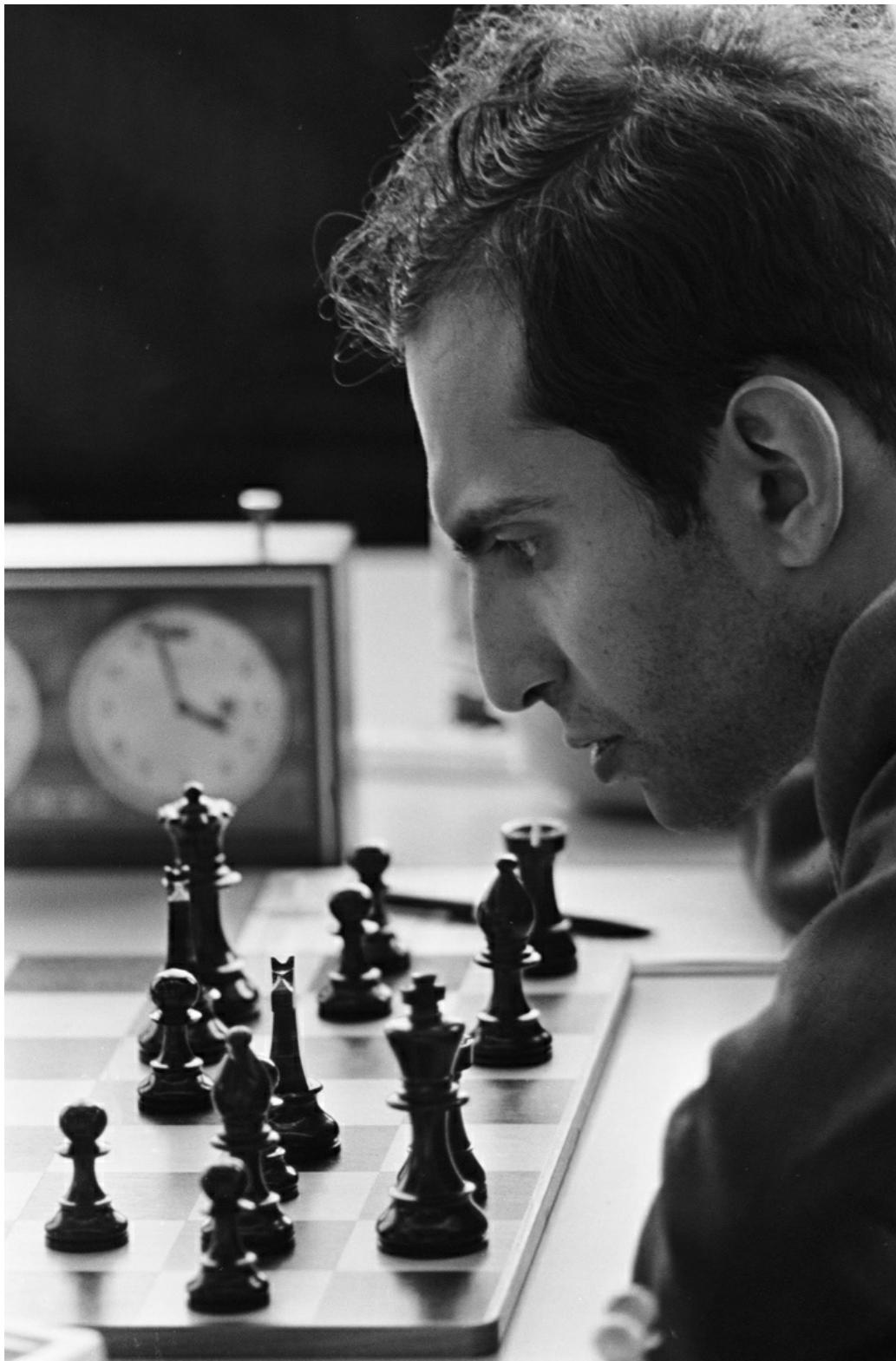
50. Botvinnik – Smyslov, Moscow (18) 1954



Show/Hide Solution

18...h3! The pawn was threatened and 18...hxg3? would have been a losing mistake due to 19.fxg3! with a deadly pin. **19.♕h1 ♜c8!=** Stepping out of the pin before it becomes a problem.

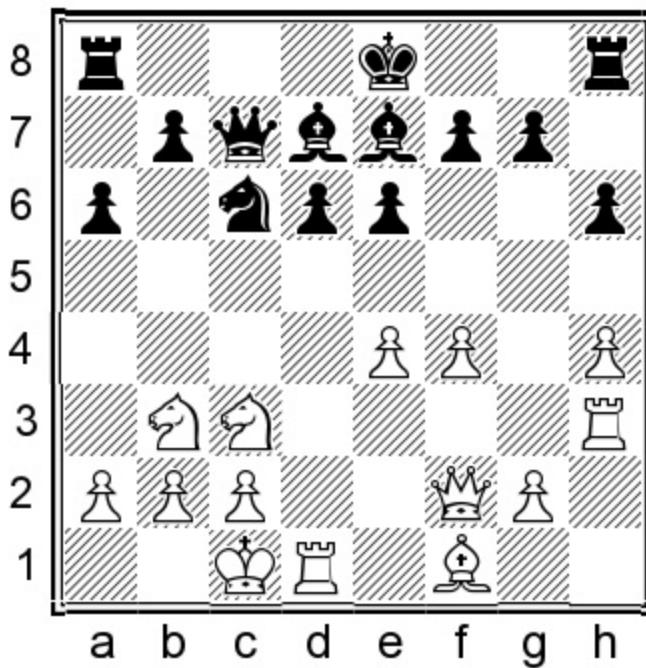
Public Education Exercises 51-100



In November, there was a USSR Championship in Moscow. Open championship, perhaps the last one – I don't know. On 9th November, I played there and made my draw, and Alexei Shirov from Riga won brilliantly, came to me and said, "I'm glad that it was today, 9th November (Tal's birthday), that I played so good. I dedicate this game to you." Very moving. – Mikhail Tal

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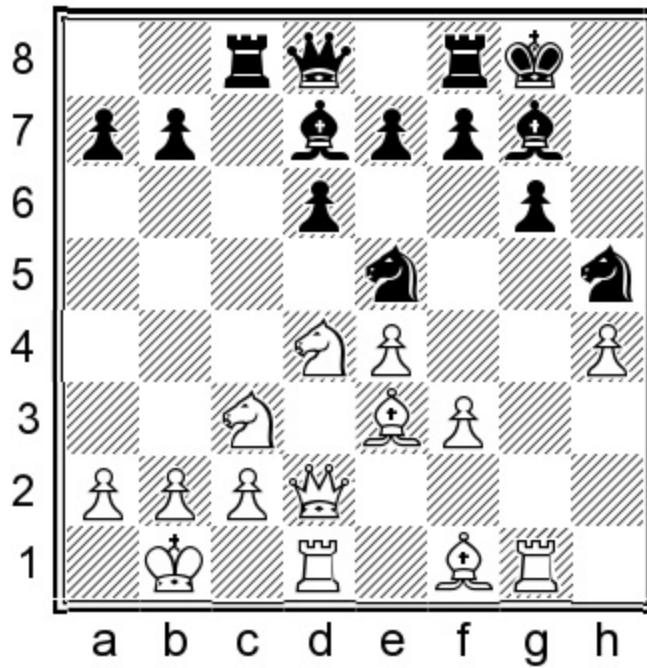
51. Vesterinen – Smyslov, Amsterdam (Ol) 1954



Show/Hide Solution

14...b5!? Black should delay castling to speed up the attack. Smyslov played 14...0-0-0?! when Black's king will be slightly weak for a long time. 14...0-0 15.g4 is dangerous for Black. 14...h5 invests a tempo to stop White's g-pawn before going ...b7-b5. But White can disrupt Black's plan with 15.Qa4!? Qd8 16.Qc3!, when it's hard for Black to find a better idea than repeating the position, since 16...b5? 17.Qxb5± favours White. **15.g4** White should try something else, but Black stands better anyway. **15...b4 16.Qe2 a5?** Black is clearly ahead in the race.

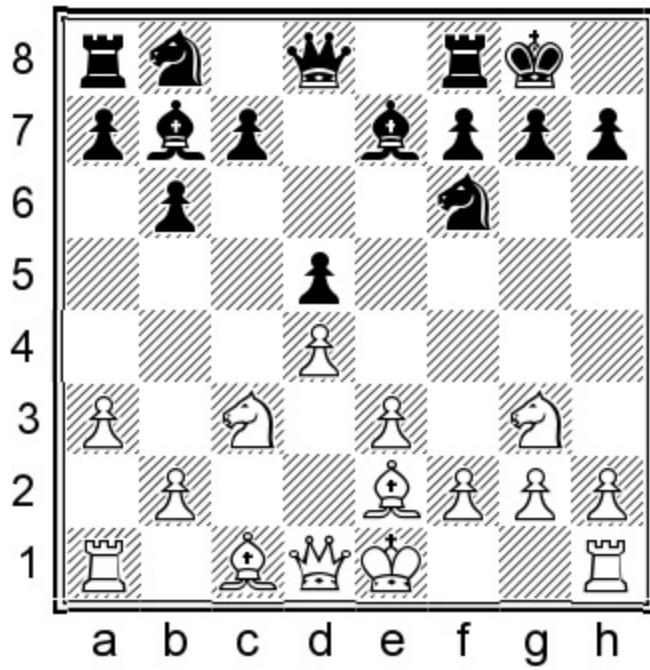
52. Czerniak – Smyslov, Amsterdam (Ol) 1954



Show/Hide Solution

15...Bxc3! 15...e6? was not a move in Dragon style. The game was subsequently drawn after further mutual errors, but at this point 16.f4 Qc4 17.Qxc4 Bxc4 18.f5+– was a straightforward path to a decisive advantage for White. **16.bxc3** 16.Wxc3 Qxf3? 16...Wc7 I didn't want to debate whether or not Black has enough compensation. The important thing in a game would be to recognize that the exchange sacrifice is the only option to offer a fighting chance. However, it is worth mentioning **17.Qh6 Qxh6 18.Wxh6 Wb6† 19.Qa1 Wa5 20.Wxh5 Qe6 21.Qb3 Wxc3† 22.Qb1 Qc8 23.Qg2 a5=** as one critical line which should eventually lead to a draw.

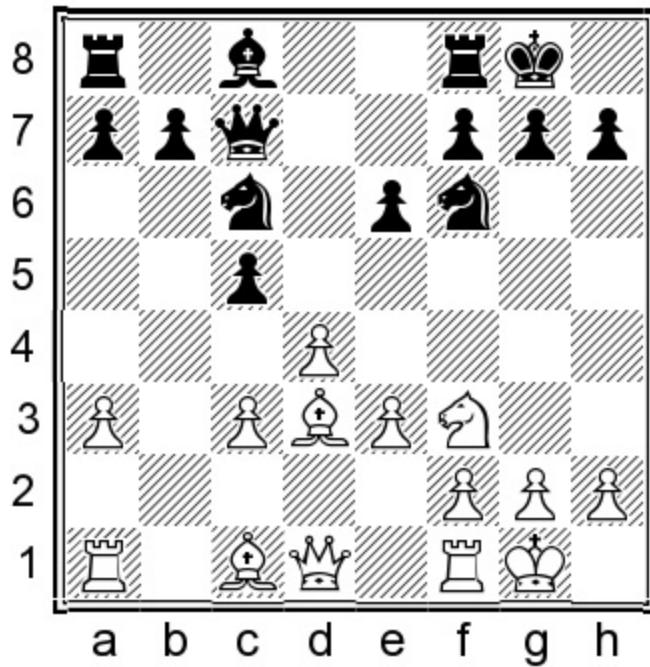
53. Fairhurst – Smyslov, Hastings 1955



Show/Hide Solution

10.♗f5! Before the bishop can retreat to f8. **10...♝e8 11.♞xe7†±** The knight looks nice, but after 11.0-0?! ♜f8= it will be kicked back by ...g7-g6. Therefore White should exchange on e7 and aim for a gradual exploitation of the bishop pair.

54. Furman – Spassky, Moscow 1955

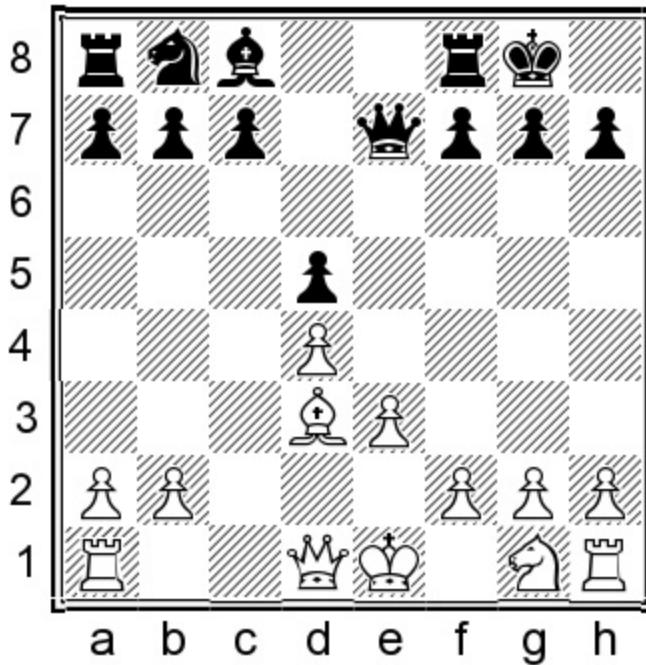


Show/Hide Solution

11...e5! Putting pressure on the d4-pawn before White has played e3-e4 (which would make d4-d5

possible). It is possible to start with 11... $\mathbb{R}d8$, but the rook move is less flexible. The rook may prove better on e8 to reinforce a possible ...e5-e4.

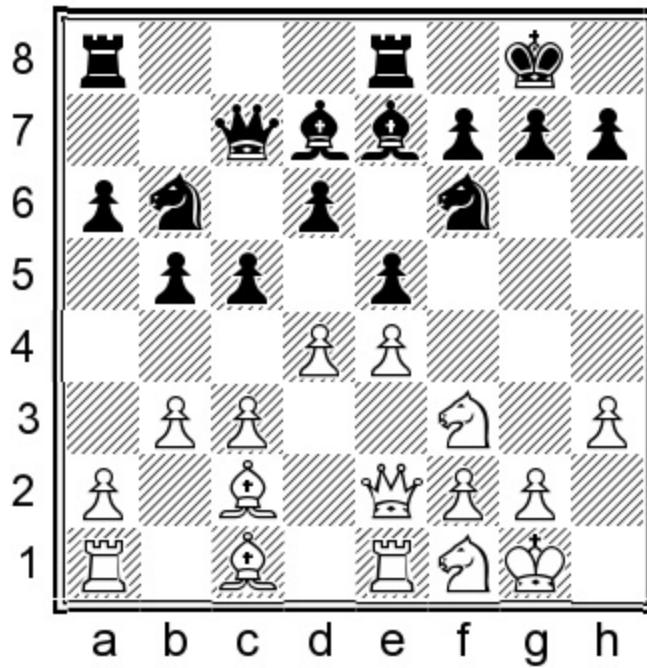
55. Smyslov – Geller, Moscow 1955



Show/Hide Solution

9...c5! Acting before White has castled. 9... $\mathbb{W}g5?$ runs into 10. $\mathbb{B}f3!$ $\mathbb{W}xg2$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xh7\#$ — when capturing the bishop will lead to the loss of the black queen. 10. $\mathbb{B}e2$ 10.dxc5 d4!↑ 10... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ More ambitious was: 10...c4 11. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 12.f3 $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 13. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}g6\mp$ With a third pair of minor pieces soon to be exchanged, Black's queenside majority is more important than White's central majority. 11.dxc5 d4 12.exd4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4=$

56. Smyslov – Ivkov, Zagreb 1955



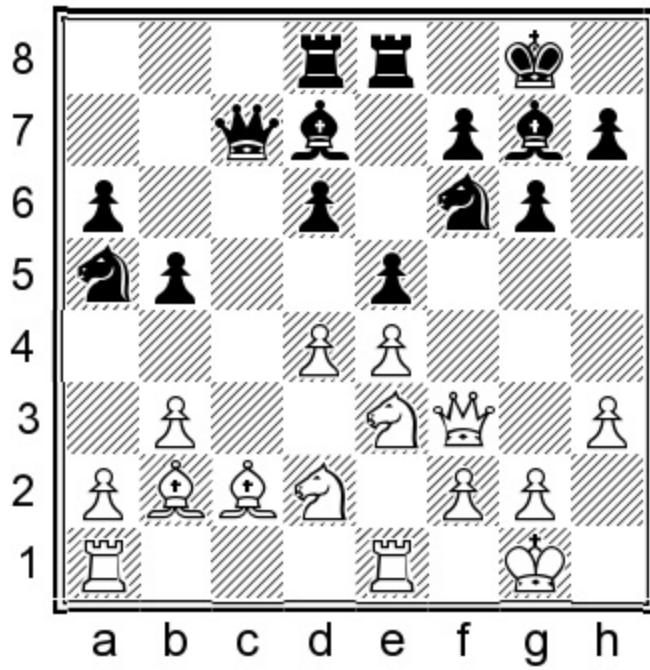
Show/Hide Solution

16.dxe5 dxe5 17.c4! A standard reaction, preparing $\mathbb{Q}f1-e3-d5$ while Black's knights are far away from d4! **17...Qc6** Holding back the intended knight manoeuvre, but not forever. The easiest way to prepare it is: **18.Qb2 Qf8 19.Q3d2±**

Vasily Smyslov

"The Ruy Lopez occupied a constant place in my opening repertoire. In it is reflected the classical interpretation of the problem of the centre."

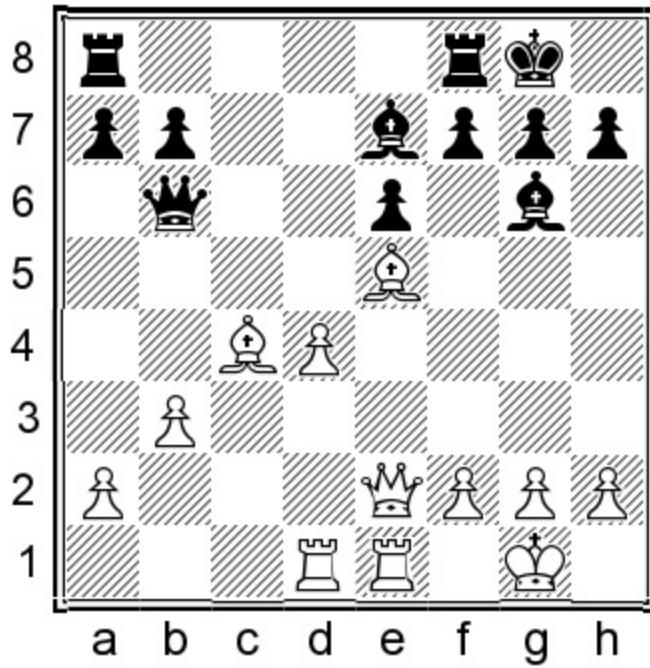
57. Fuderer – Smyslov, Zagreb 1955



Show/Hide Solution

19...Qc6 There's no time to wait. White threatened to keep the knight sidelined by means of d4-d5.
20.d5 Qd4 21.Qd1 Qxc2†

58. Smyslov – Trifunovic, Zagreb 1955

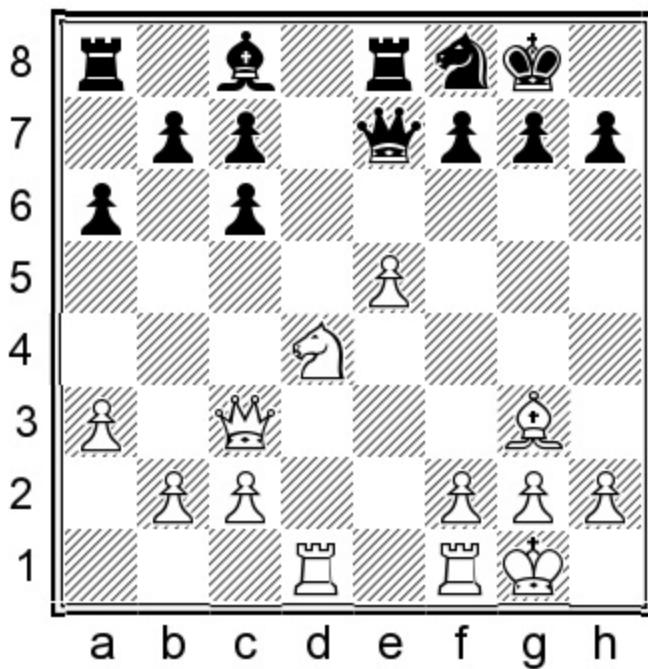


Show/Hide Solution

21.d5! Exchanging the isolated pawn unleashes the full power of White's bishops and heavy pieces. You don't need to calculate further to make this decision, so consider the following variations

supportive rather than necessary. 21... $\text{exd}5$ 21... $\text{b}4$ gives White a choice: 22. $\text{dxe}6!?$ (A simple alternative is 22. $\text{f}1 \text{ exd}5$ 23. $\text{xd}5\pm$ when $\text{b}5$ is a threat, and after 23... $\text{a}6$ 24. $\text{h}4!$ White harasses the bishop.) 22... $\text{xe}1$ 23. $\text{xe}1 \text{ fxe}6$ 24. $\text{b}2\pm$ Black can't save the g7-pawn, as 24... $\text{f}7$ is met by 25. $\text{xg}7!$ anyway: 25... $\text{xg}7$ 26. $\text{xe}6+-$ 22. $\text{xd}5\pm$ But not 22. $\text{xd}5? \text{b}4$ 23. $\text{f}1 \text{ fe}8$ 24. $\text{b}2 \text{ f}8$ when White can't use the nice-looking bishop for anything useful.

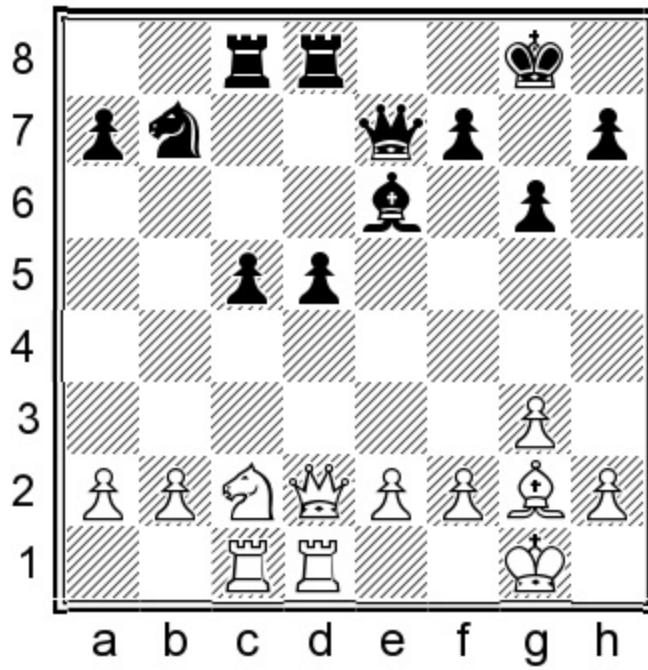
59. Karaklajic – Smyslov, Zagreb 1955



Show/Hide Solution

17... $\text{c}5!$ Chasing the knight before White's f-pawn starts to run. 17... $\text{d}7$ is too slow: 18. $\text{f}4 \text{ c}5$ 19. $\text{b}3 \text{ b}6$ 20. $\text{f}5+-$ 18. $\text{f}3$ After 18. $\text{b}3 \text{ b}6$ 19. $\text{f}4 \text{ f}5=$ Black is in time to block the pawns. 18... $\text{b}6!=$

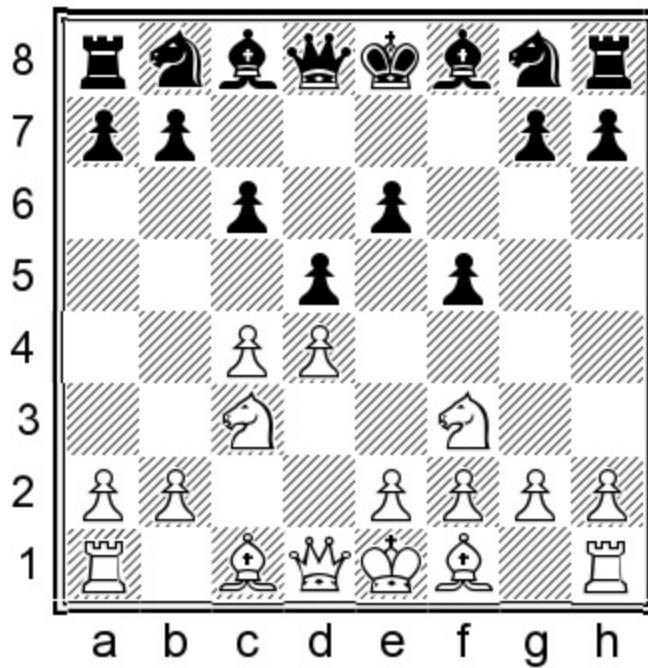
60. Spassky – Ravinsky, Leningrad 1957



Show/Hide Solution

21.b4! Splitting the hanging-pawns couple and gaining access to the d4-square. 21.♗e3 d4 22.♗c4 ♖d5= 21...♗d6 21...c4±; 21...cxb4 22.♗xb4± **22.bxc5 ♖xc5 23.♗d4±**

61. Taimanov – Spassky, Moscow 1957

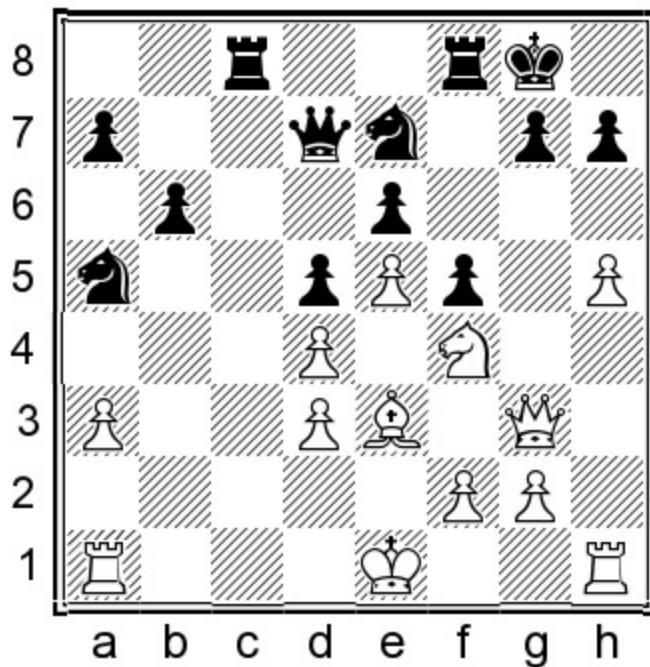


Show/Hide Solution

5.♗f4 If Black goes for the Stonewall before e2-e3 or g2-g3 has been played, White should take the chance to develop the bishops more actively. The bishop on f4 is in contact with the weak e5-square.

White will follow up with e2-e3, including against ... $\mathbb{Q}d6$, as the exf4 structure is excellent for White. Notice that the other bishop should avoid g2, where it would be obstructed by the well-defended d5-pawn. A possible set-up is e2-e3, $\mathbb{W}c2$, $\mathbb{Q}d3$, 0-0-0 and g2-g4.

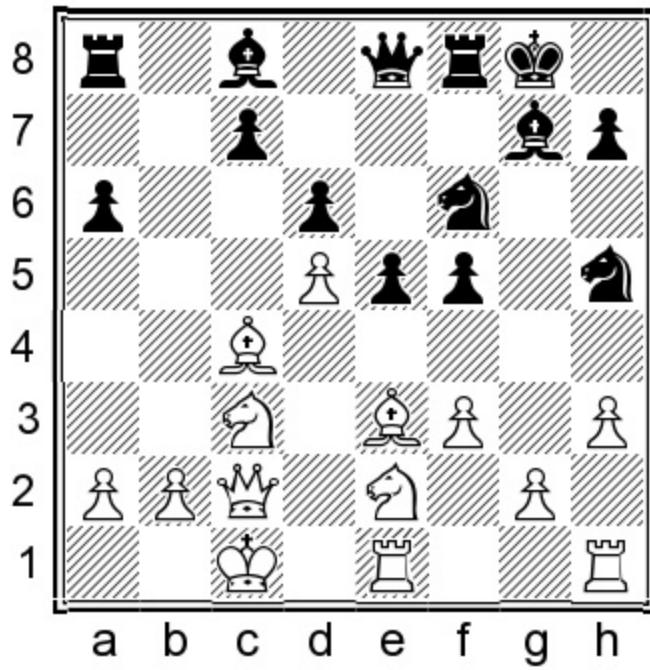
62. Smyslov – Botvinnik, Moscow (14) 1957



Show/Hide Solution

18.h6! g6 19.0-0± Black is eternally weak on the dark squares.

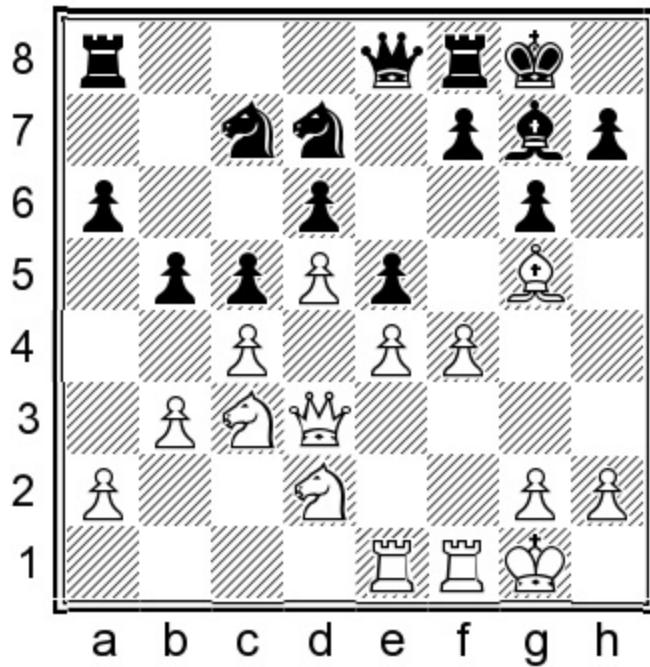
63. Tal – Dittmann, Reykjavik 1957



Show/Hide Solution

16...f4!= Giving up the e4-square is a small price to keep the kingside closed. 16... $\mathbb{W}f7?$ 17.g4+– opened up Black's king in the game. 16... $\mathbb{W}g6?!$ 17.g4 $\mathbb{Q}h6$ also opens Black's kingside: 18. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ $\mathbb{W}xh6\#$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}f4?$ 20.g5+–

64. Petrosian – Taimanov, Leningrad 1959

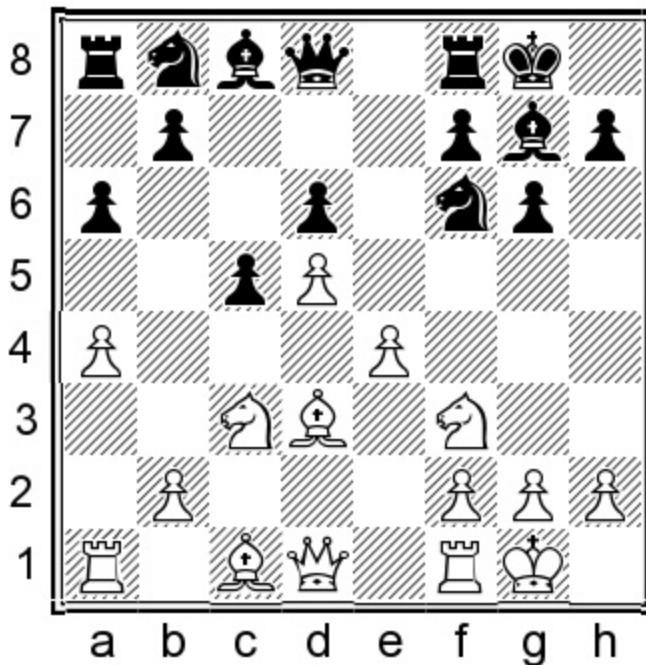


Show/Hide Solution

Black's last move was **15...e5**, so the question is whether or not to capture en passant. **16.f5!**

Preventing Black from exchanging on f4, which would open the g7-bishop's diagonal and take control over the e5-square. According to Stockfish, 16.dxe6 ♜xe6 17.♗h4 is almost equally good, but to me it feels strange to give Black access to the d4-square. **16...f6 17.♗e3 b4** The game continued: 17...g5 18.cxb5 axb5 19.♗xb5 ♜xb5 20.♗xb5 ♜xa2 21.♗a1+– **18.♗a4 g5±** White will gradually prepare to open a kingside file. Having more space means that it's easier to manoeuvre the pieces towards the kingside.

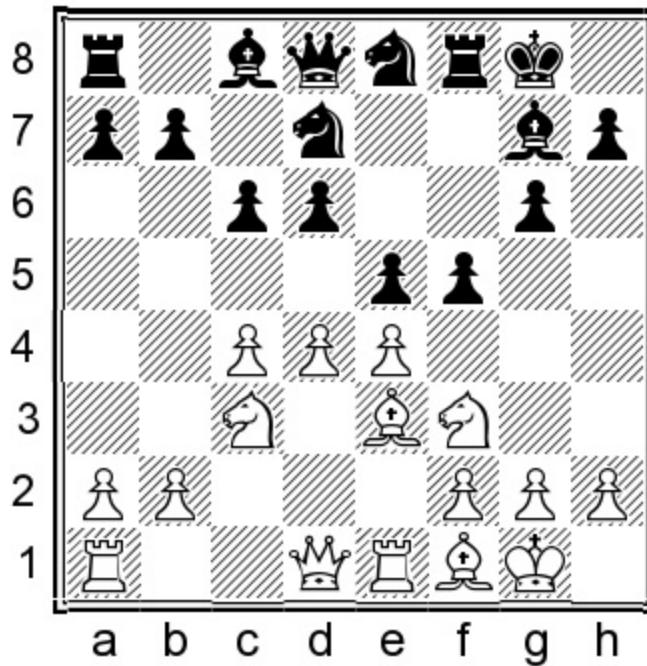
65. Donner – Tal, Zurich 1959



Show/Hide Solution

10...♝g4! Black has two minor pieces that can be developed to d7, so it's wise to get rid of one of them. **11.h3 ♜xf3 12.♝xf3 ♜bd7** Threatening another piece exchange in Black's favour. **13.♝f4 ♜c7 14.♝e2 ♜fe8 15.♝h2 ♜ac8=**

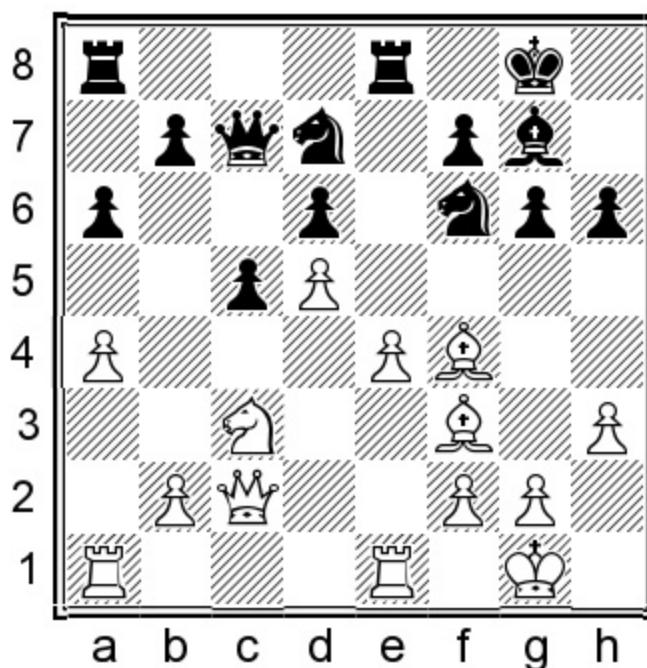
66. Spassky – Lutikov, Tbilisi 1959



Show/Hide Solution

If Black pushes ...f7-f5 before White has closed the centre, the normal reaction is to capture twice. **12.exf5** **12.dxe5?!** $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ allows Black to take back on f5 with the bishop. **12...gxf5** **13.dxe5** $\mathbb{Q}xe5\pm$ The Black structure is not harmonious; the pawn on f5 is a long-term weakness without any real redeeming features. **13...dxe5** **14.Qc5** wins material, and it's no surprise that Black is busted. **14...Qf7?** **15.Qxe5** is the main point, exploiting the pin on the d-file.

67. Geller – Tal, Tbilisi 1959



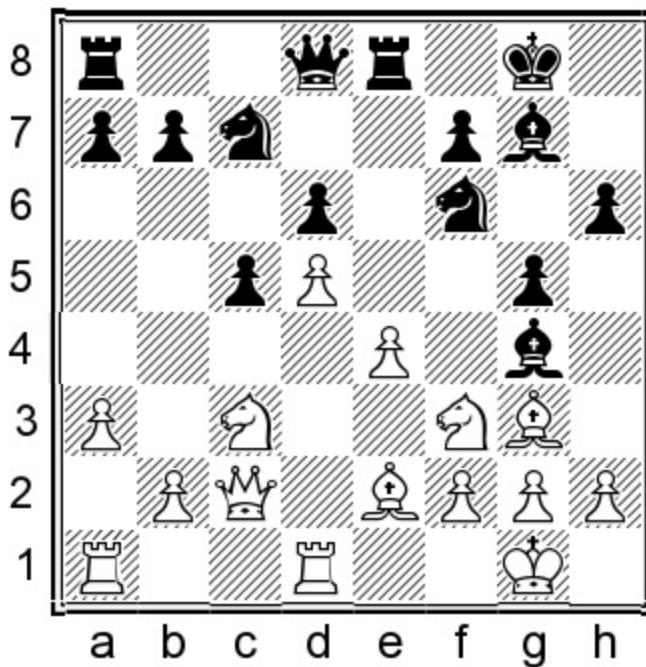
Show/Hide Solution

16...c4! Tal demonstrates his own saying that Black has to be active in the Benoni – even if it's not possible. On this occasion, it is. Preparing ...c5-c4 with 16... $\mathbb{H}ac8$ also works, but there is no reason to delay the advance. **17. $\mathbb{K}e2$ $\mathbb{H}ac8\rightleftharpoons$** Keeping the knight flexible before deciding whether it will go to e5 or to c5.

Mikhail Tal

"I believe most definitely that one must not only grapple with the problems on the board – one must also make every effort to combat the thoughts and will of the opponent."

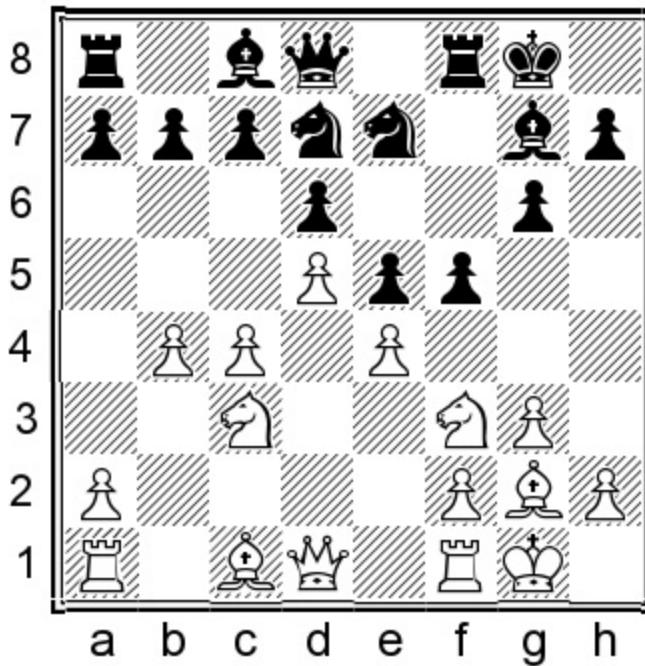
68. Klasups – Tal, Riga (Ol) 1959



Show/Hide Solution

15... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ Having weakened the kingside with ...g6-g5, Black should hunt down the g3-bishop before White creates an escape square on h2. **16. $\mathbb{Q}d2!$** 16.h3?! was played in the game. **16... $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$** White is ready to recapture on g3 with the knight, targeting the weak f5-square. Black should therefore switch to a different plan for the time being. **17... $\mathbb{Q}b5!?$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}b3!?\rightleftharpoons$** With mutual chances.

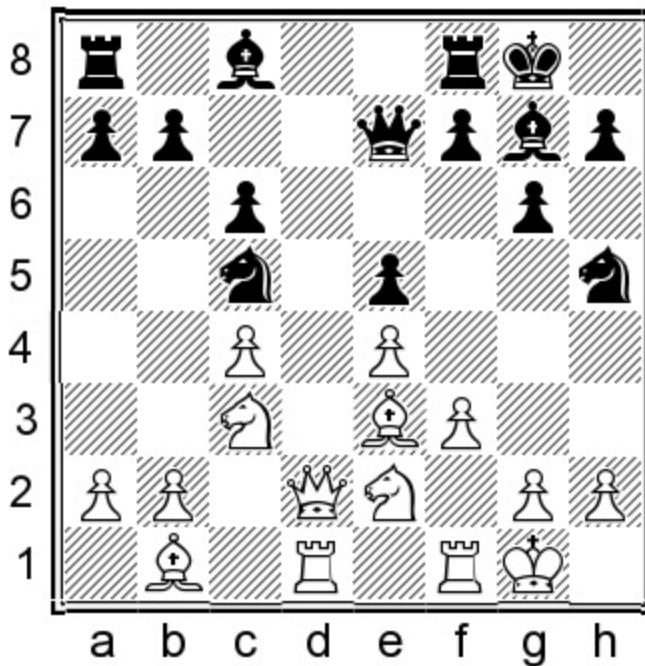
69. Najdorf – Fischer, Mar del Plata 1959



Show/Hide Solution

11.♗g5! In an effort to save time, Black elected not to prepare ...f7-f5 with ...h7-h6. The consequence is being forced to part with the light-squared bishop, while opening the long diagonal for White's bishop. **11...♝f6 12.a4!?** Stockfish's suggestion. 12.♗a3 was played in the game, but it's a bit early to determine if the bishop will have a good future on this square. 12.♗e6 is possible straight away, but why not wait for Black to spend a tempo on ...h7-h6? **12...a5 13.b5±** The knight will jump to e6 soon, and Black will have obvious problems on the light squares.

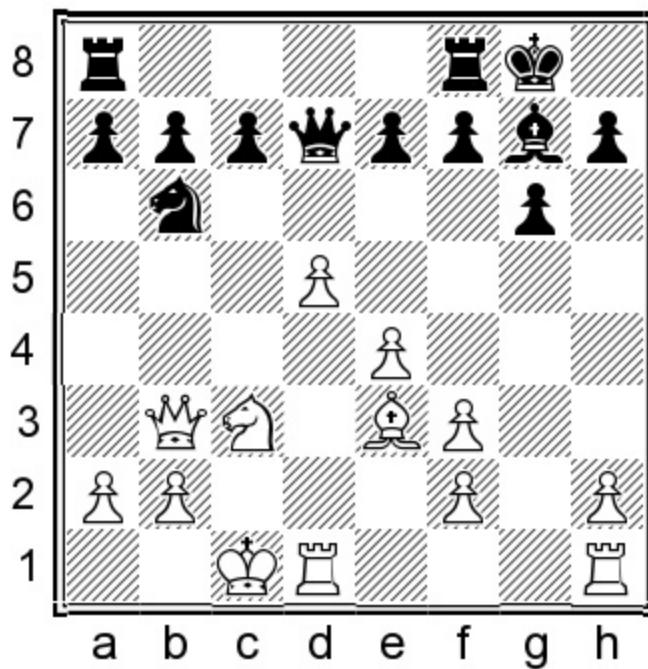
70. Botvinnik – Tal, Moscow (17) 1961



Show/Hide Solution

13...♞e6 Putting the knight on its best square. The sacrifice 14...♝hf4 is in the air. 13...a5?! 14.♗d6± favours White. 13...♝e8!? is a good alternative. Black begins to redirect the bishop towards c5, and if 14.♗d6 ♜f8= Black is fine. Botvinnik should probably have played **14.g3** when Black has some dynamic potential, but nothing more. The game went 14.♗e1 and Black was comfortable. 14.♗d6?! ♜f6!± shows another advantage of Black's 13th move.

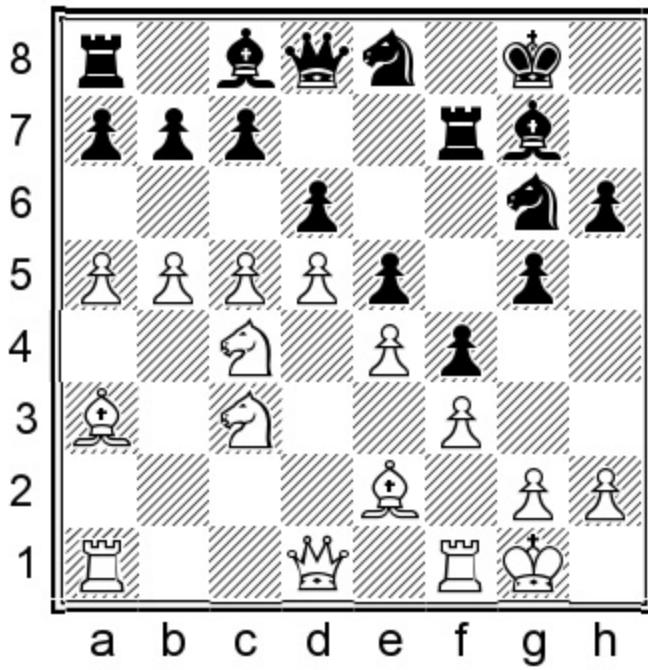
71. Petrosian – Botvinnik, Moscow (15) 1963



Show/Hide Solution

17.h4 Preparing h4-h5 followed by opening the h-file, or perhaps h5-h6 in some cases. **17...h5** Preventing the above plan but also making a concession, as Black's king is less secure. There is no need to think any deeper before deciding on 17.h4.

72. Smyslov – Ciocaltea, Sochi 1963

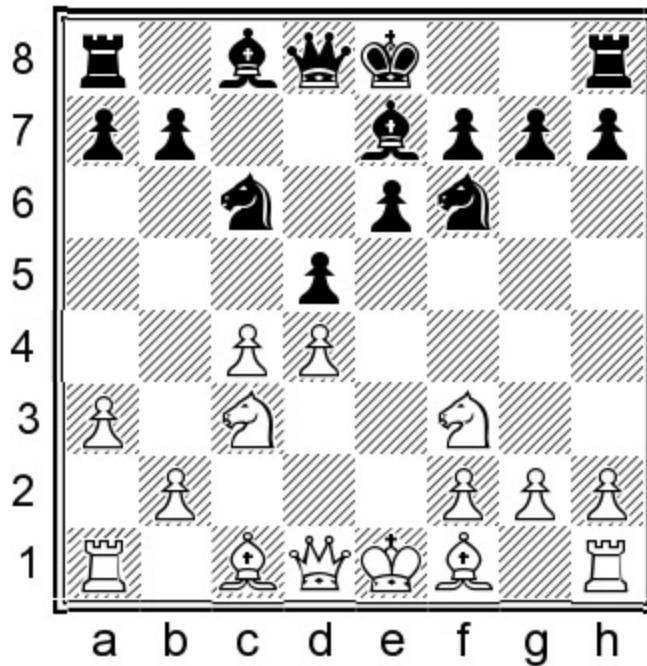


Show/Hide Solution

18.b6! The standard way of opening lines on the queenside. Black can't avoid exchanging two pawns. By the way, the same move normally gives a huge initiative even with the a-pawn still on a4.

18...axb6 18...cxb6 is met by 19.axb6, as 19.cxb6 a6 unnecessarily gives Black some time before White breaks through. **19.axb6 cxb6** White has succeeded in undermining Black's central pawn chain, and there are many good ways to proceed. **20.Qxb6** 20.cxd6 Qf8 is good for White, but the game continuation is better. **20...Bb8 21.Qb5 Qf8 22.Qa7** Smyslov held on to his advantage until (according to the database) a draw was surprisingly agreed on move 28. Better is 22.Wc2 to bring the rook from f1 to the queenside.

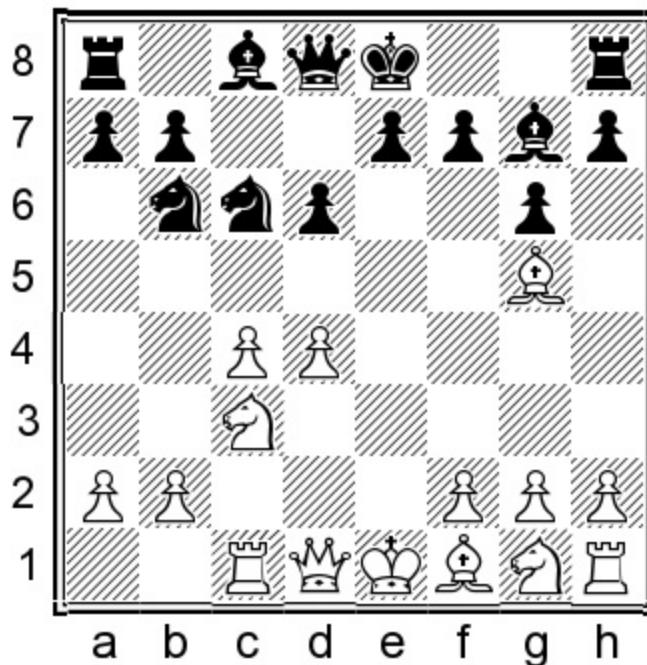
73. Petrosian – Olafsson, Los Angeles 1963



Show/Hide Solution

8.c5! A strong move with Black's knight on c6. The reason is that the consistent follow-up b2-b4 also prepares to attack the knight. **8...b6?!** is a typical retort but it doesn't work here due to: **9.♗b5±** Threatening the misplaced knight on c6. 9.b4 is also possible, and if 9...a5? 10.b5+– White once again exploits the misplaced knight.

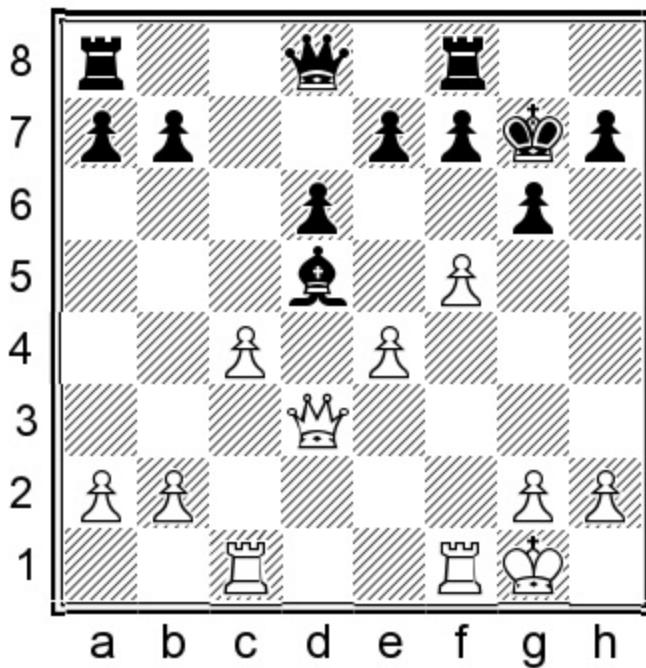
74. Petrosian – Dreyer, Tel Aviv (Ol) 1964



Show/Hide Solution

9.d5! It is important to play this advance before Black gets time for ...e7-e5 or ...d6-d5. (White should play the same move even if the pawn was defended by a bishop on e3.) 9.♘f3 ♜g4↑; 9.♗e3 e5⇄ 9...♝e5 10.♗e2 Capturing on c4 runs into an embarrassing check. (I have tried!) Starting with 10.b3 is also fine. 10...0-0 11.b3±

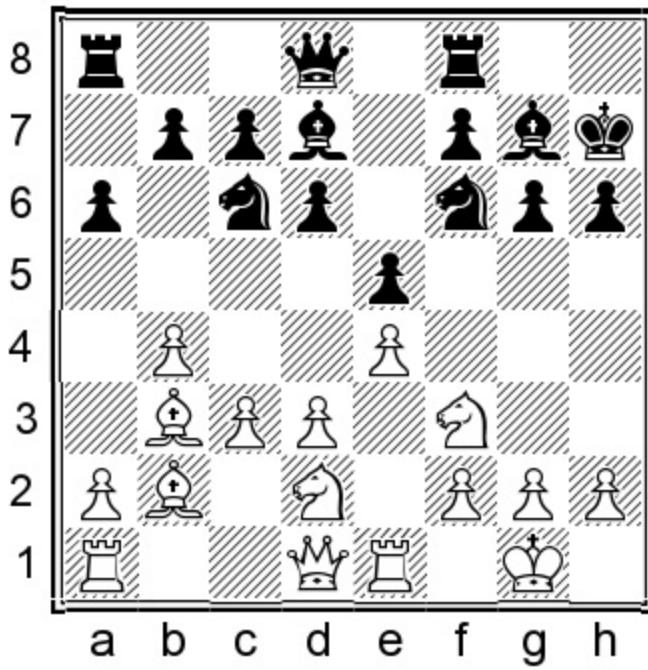
75. Smyslov – Carrean, Tel Aviv (Ol) 1964



Show/Hide Solution

19.exd5± By not opening the c-file, White keeps all the heavy pieces on the board and can successfully attack Black's king. Moves like ♘c3, ♜d2 and ♜h3 are likely to be on the agenda.

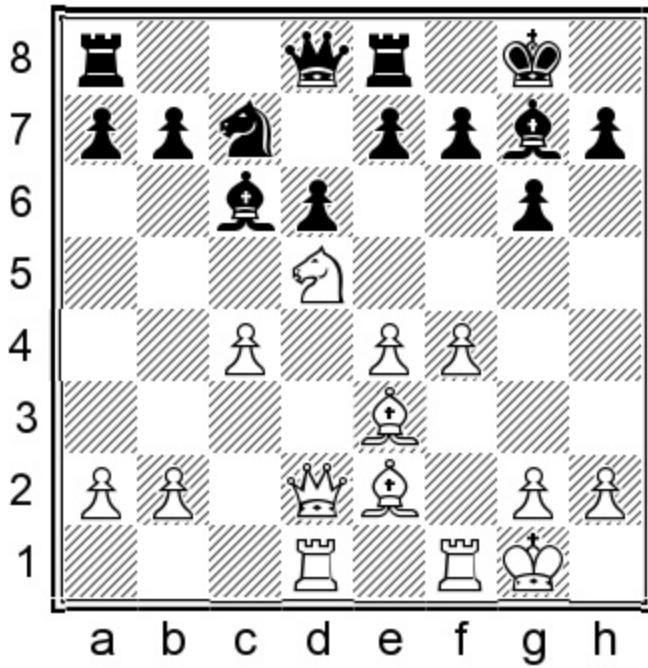
76. Karpov – Ravinsky, Leningrad 1966



Show/Hide Solution

12...♝h5!† Heading for f4, a strong square as White has fianchettoed the dark-squared bishop. The ...f7-f5 advance is also in the air.

77. Larsen – Petrosian, Santa Monica 1966

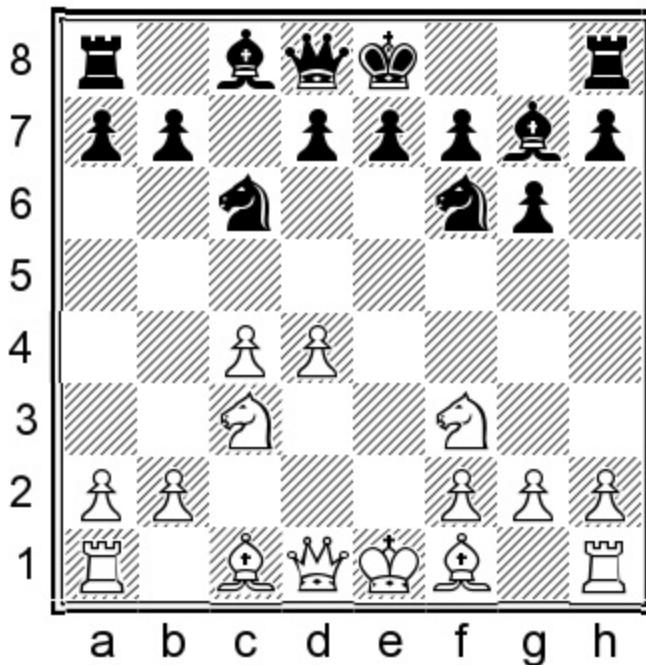


Show/Hide Solution

16.f5!, Preparing a kingside attack with moves like ♜h6, fxg6, ♖f3 and ♜f4. The weak e5-square is less important, since Black's knight is several moves away from reaching it. 16.b4 ♞xd5 17.exd5

$\mathbb{Q}d7\pm$ should be tolerable for Black. 16... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 17. $exd5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d3\pm$

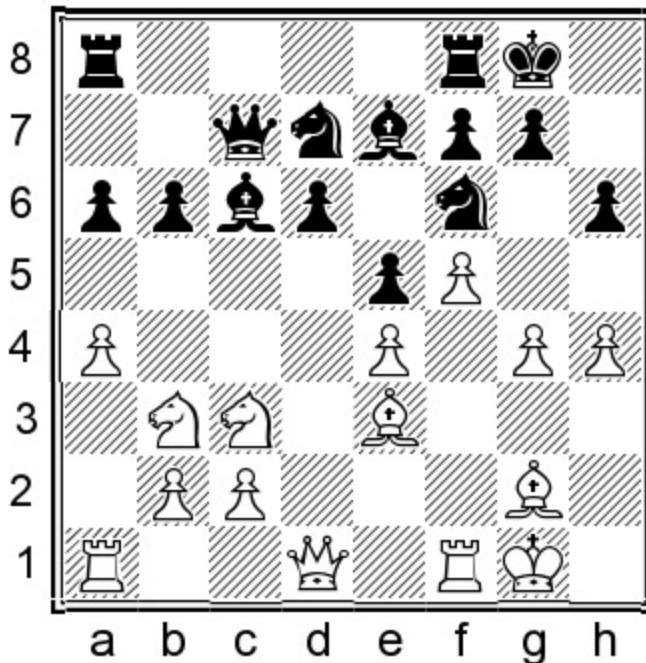
78. Petrosian – Jimenez Zerquera, Havana (Ol) 1966



Show/Hide Solution

7.d5!± Advancing the d-pawn to the fifth rank with gain of tempo is usually a good idea. Matters after e4-e5 (when it is possible) are more double-edged, as the e-pawn typically has less support.

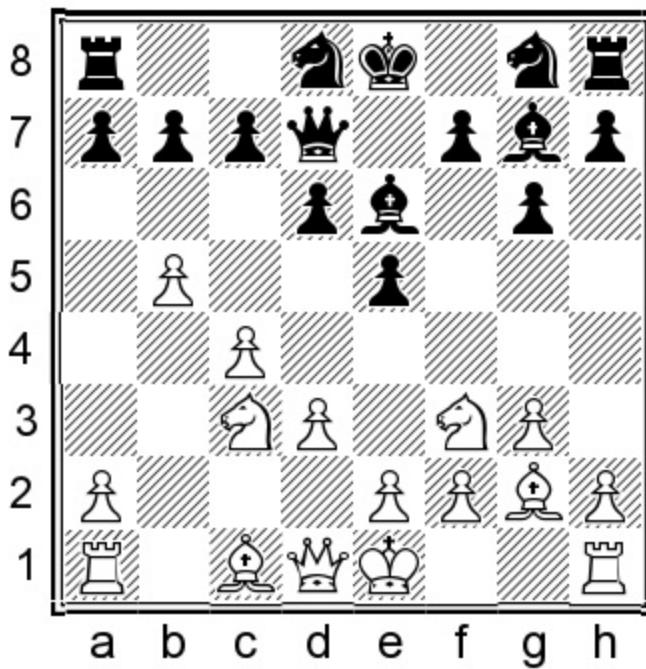
79. Karpov – Lilein, Leningrad 1967



Show/Hide Solution

15...Qh7! Stopping g4-g5 while threatening the h-pawn. It takes a while for White to get a rook to the g-file, and Black always has ...Qd8 if necessary. **16.Qf2** 16.Qe1 Qfc8 17.Qg3 Qd8!+ brings an end to White's ambitions. **16...Qfc8±**

80. Petrosian – Estrin, Moscow 1968



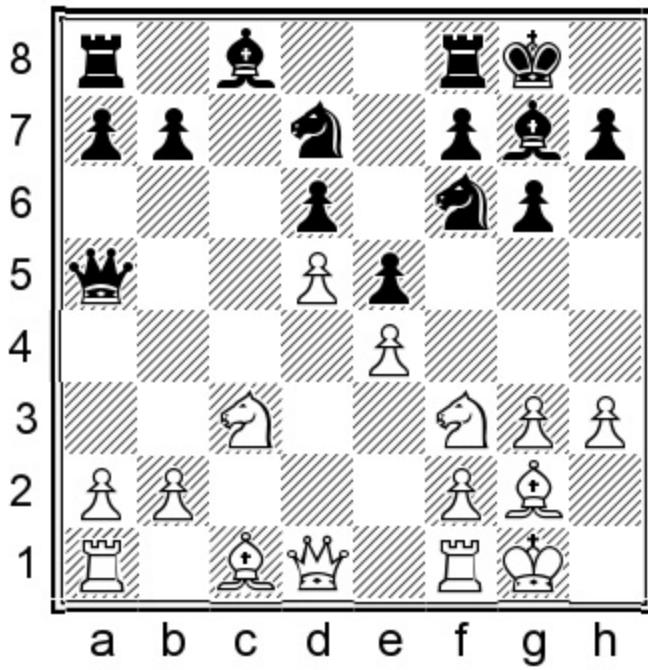
Show/Hide Solution

9.Qg5 Instead of allowing a bishop exchange with ...Qh3, White traps the bishop. **9...Qf5** 9...e4? is a shot into empty air. **10.Qb2+– 10.e4±**

Tigran Petrosian

“Some consider that when I play I am excessively cautious, but it seems to me that the question may be a different one. I try to avoid chance. Those who rely on chance should play cards or roulette. Chess is something quite different.”

81. Buslaev – Smyslov, Riga 1968

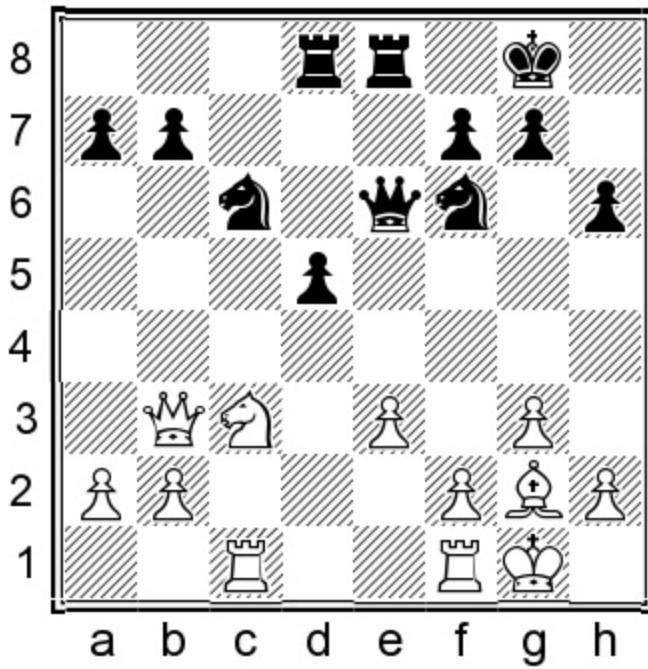


Show/Hide Solution

11...b5! Taking space on the queenside is often possible when White has fianchettoed the light-squared bishop, which no longer points towards b5.

11... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}a6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}a3\pm$ would maintain an edge for White.

82. Mecking – Spassky, Palma de Mallorca 1969

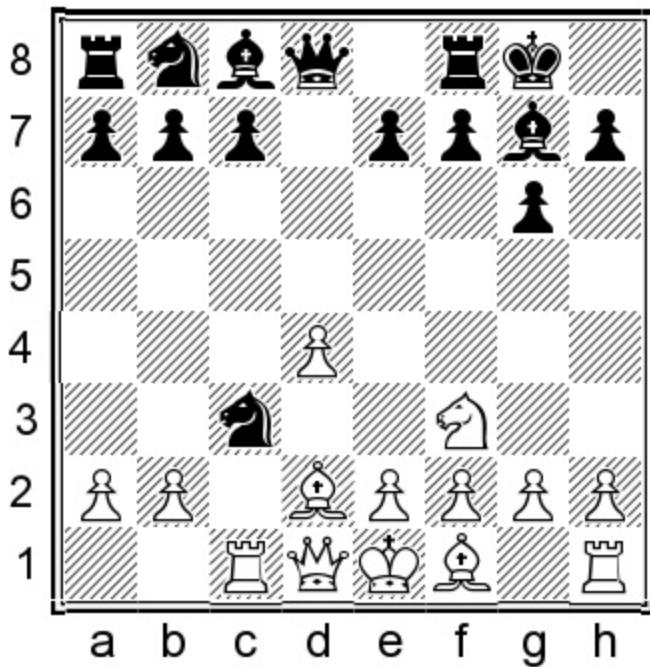


Show/Hide Solution

18...d4! Exchanging the isolated pawn. 19. $\mathbb{W}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4=$ 20... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ looks more natural,

but Spassky's move is also fine.

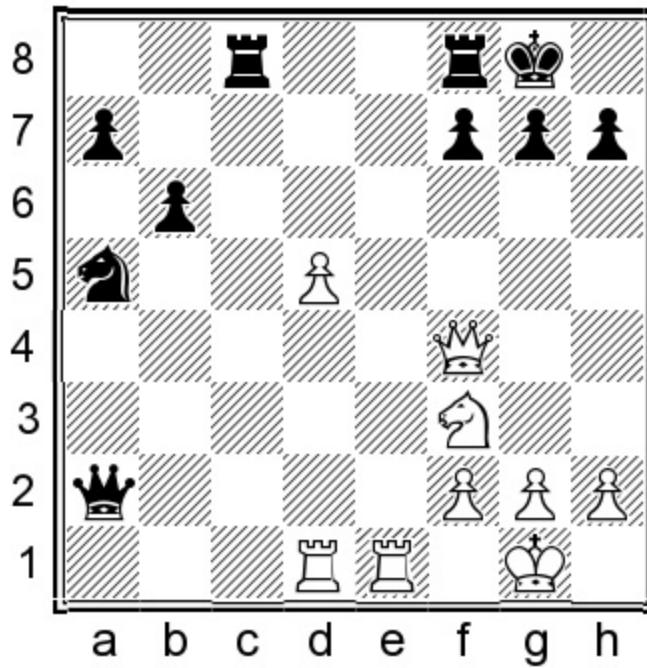
83. Smyslov – Hort, Monte Carlo 1969



Show/Hide Solution

8.♗xc3 8.bxc3?! c5 leads to a situation where the ♜d2 and ♜c1 moves make little sense. **8...c5** One of the points behind White's set-up is that **9.dxc5** can be played without conceding an isolated pawn on c3. Another option is 9.d5!? ♜xc3† 10.♖xc3 with a semi-active rook. In both cases, White has some chances for an opening advantage, but Black should be okay after accurate play.

84. Spassky – Petrosian, Moscow (5) 1969



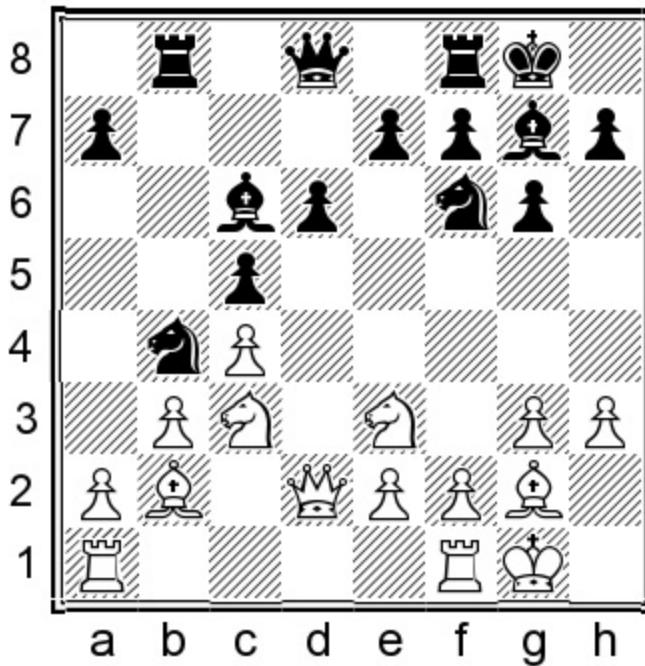
Show/Hide Solution

21.d6!± “Passed pawns must be pushed.” Black is a pawn up, but will be tied down with the rooks stuck on the eighth rank.

Boris Spassky

“When I am in form, my style is a little bit stubborn; almost brutal. Sometimes I feel a great spirit of fight which drives me on.”

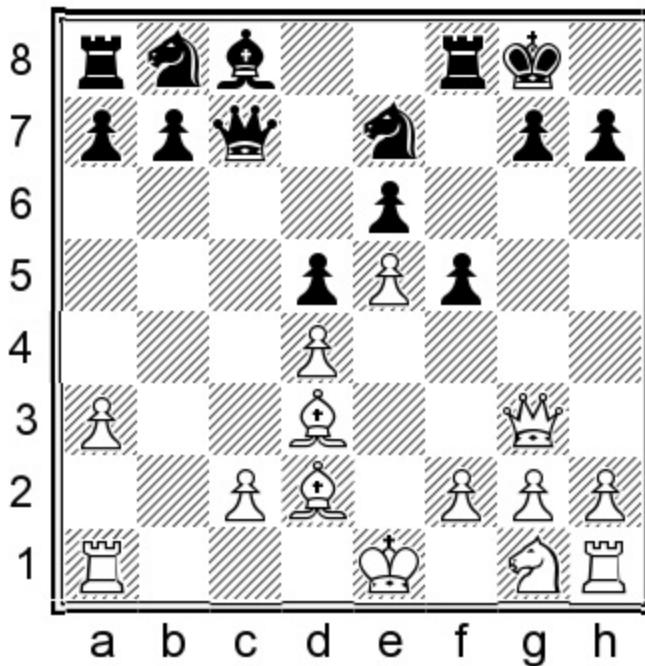
85. Karpov – Rashkovsky, Kuibyshev 1970



Show/Hide Solution

17. $\mathbb{Q}cd5!$ White should not allow Black to exchange the light-squared bishops “for free”. **17... $\mathbb{Q}bx d5$** 17... $\mathbb{Q}fxd5$ is worse, since it exchanges the king’s best defender: the bishop on g7. 18. $cxd5 \mathbb{Q}xb2$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xb2 \mathbb{Q}b5\pm$ The pawn on d5 makes it difficult for Black to manoeuvre the minor pieces to the kingside. White will build up an attack with f2-f4 and/or h3-h4. **18. $cxd5 \mathbb{Q}b5\pm$** Just like in the note above, White will play on the kingside. It’s not as easy with the knight on f6 and bishop on g7, so White can only claim a slight advantage.

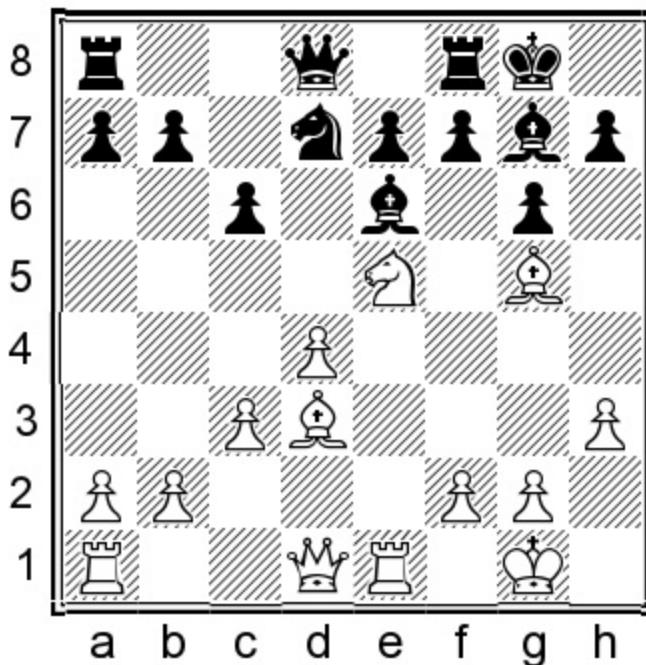
86. Hort – Petrosian, Kapfenberg 1970



Show/Hide Solution

11...b6! Preparing to exchange the bad bishop with ... $\mathbb{B}a6$. No more moves are needed! By the way, some test solvers queried this exercise on the basis that Black stands clearly worse even after the solution. Statistics reveal a 57% score for White from over 600 games, and the engine likes White. However, I think it's important to be able to play good moves even if the position is dubious.

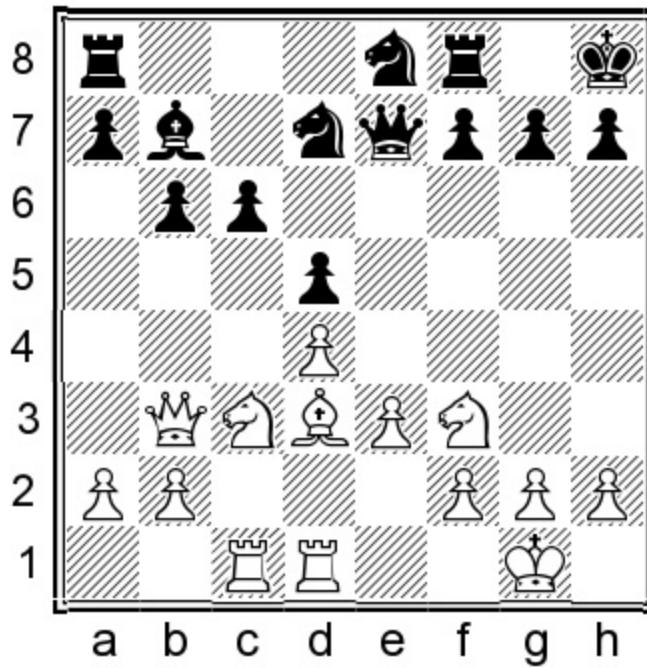
87. Tal – Kolarov, Kapfenberg 1970



Show/Hide Solution

15. $\mathbb{Q}f3!$ \pm It's useful to avoid exchanges since White has more space. 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{W}xd7\pm$ would allow Black to untangle with ... $\mathbb{B}f6$ and ... $\mathbb{B}f5$.

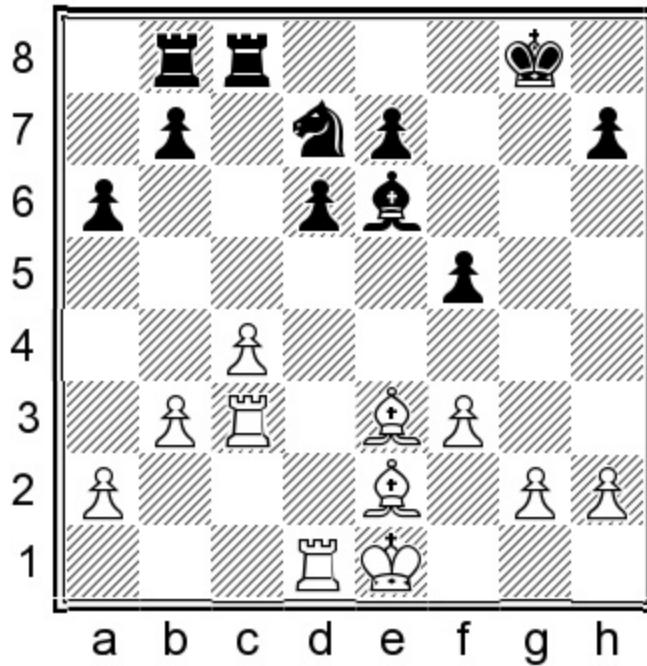
88. Korchnoi – Petrosian, Moscow 1971



Show/Hide Solution

14.e4! This is a standard pawn lever in this structure with Black's bishop hidden behind the c6-pawn, and it becomes even more effective when $\mathbb{E}d1-e1$ harasses the black queen. That's all you would need to know to play the move. Stockfish's evaluation of +1.5 merely confirms what we can already see from looking at the board. 14... $\mathbb{W}a4?!$ was played. 14...dxe4 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ h6 15... $\mathbb{B}ef6?$ runs into 16. $\mathbb{Q}eg5!+$ — when Black has no good defence against $\mathbb{E}e1$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}xf7\#$. 16. $\mathbb{E}e1$ Black's queen needs to retreat, and White clearly has a strong initiative.

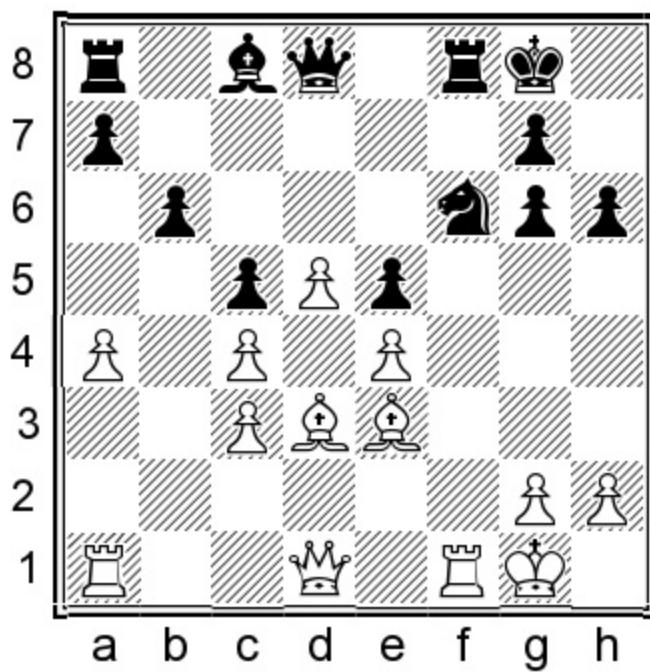
89. Petrosian – Jansa, Sarajevo 1972



Show/Hide Solution

20...b5 Black has two possible follow-ups: ...b5-b4 with a dark-square blockade, or (more likely) ...b5xc4 to leave White with a weak pawn. **21.♗dc1** The most natural reply. **21...♗f6=** Prophylaxis against cxb5, which would now run into ...♗xc3 followed by ...♗d5.

90. Spassky – Fischer, Reykjavik (5) 1972



Show/Hide Solution

16...a5!? Stopping a4-a5 has two advantages. Firstly, the b6-pawn is easier to defend with the a-file closed; and secondly, White will need to keep an eye on the a4-pawn. It would have been even more important to stop White's a-pawn if Black had castled long. 16...♗g4 does not achieve anything special, so it would be better to keep such ideas in reserve. The main merit of the knight jump is that it doesn't stop Black from going ...a7-a5 next!

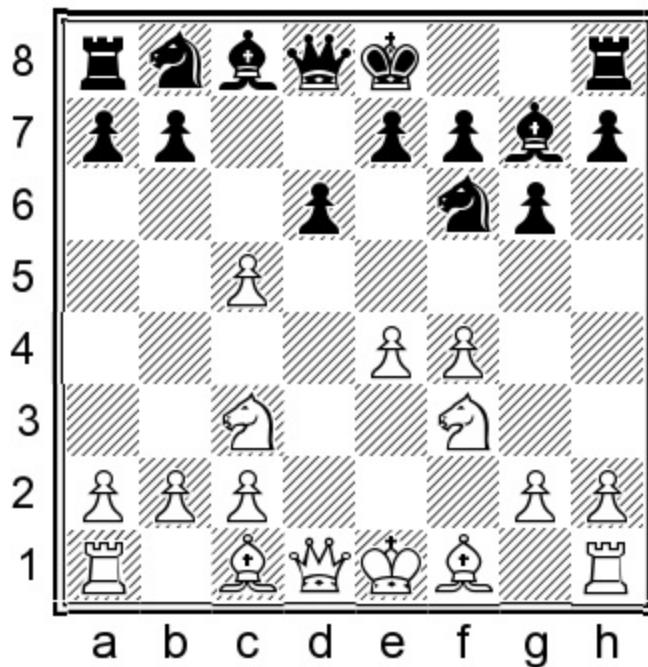
Bobby Fischer

"Too many times, people don't try their best. They don't have the keen spirit; the winning spirit. And once you make it you've got to guard your reputation - every day go in like an unknown to prove yourself. That's why I don't clown around. I don't believe in wasting time. My goal is to win the World Chess Championship; to beat the Russians. I take this very seriously."

Boris Spassky

"I still hope to kill Fischer."

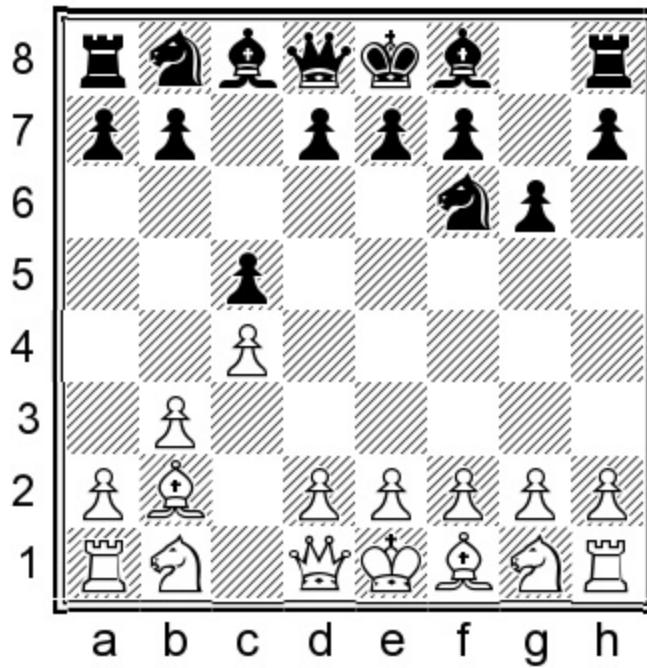
91. Spassky – Fischer, Reykjavik (17) 1972



Show/Hide Solution

6... $\mathbb{W}a5!$ A standard move, available in many similar positions. 6...dxc5? 7. $\mathbb{W}xd8\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 8.e5+– is horrible for Black. The king is vulnerable on d8, the g7-bishop is passive, and White can swiftly attack the f7- and c7-squares. 7. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 7.cxd6?! $\mathbb{Q}xe4\#$ is good for Black. 7... $\mathbb{W}xc5$ Black keeps the pawn on d6, reaching a reasonable version of a Dragon structure.

92. Karpov – Browne, San Antonio 1972



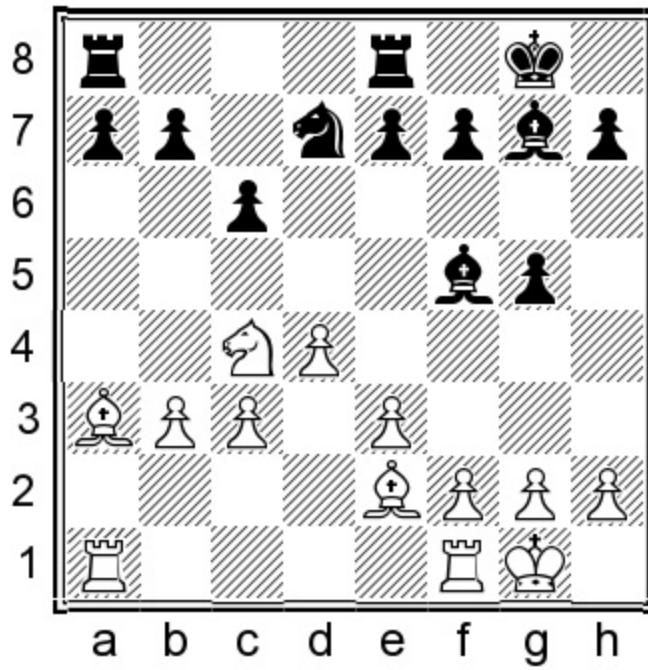
Show/Hide Solution

4.♕xf6! The placement of Black's c-pawn makes this move strong: White gains full control over the d5-square. 4...exf6 5.♘c3 ♕g7 6.g3±

Anatoly Karpov

"Pawns not only create the sketch for the whole painting; they are also the soil, the foundation, of any position."

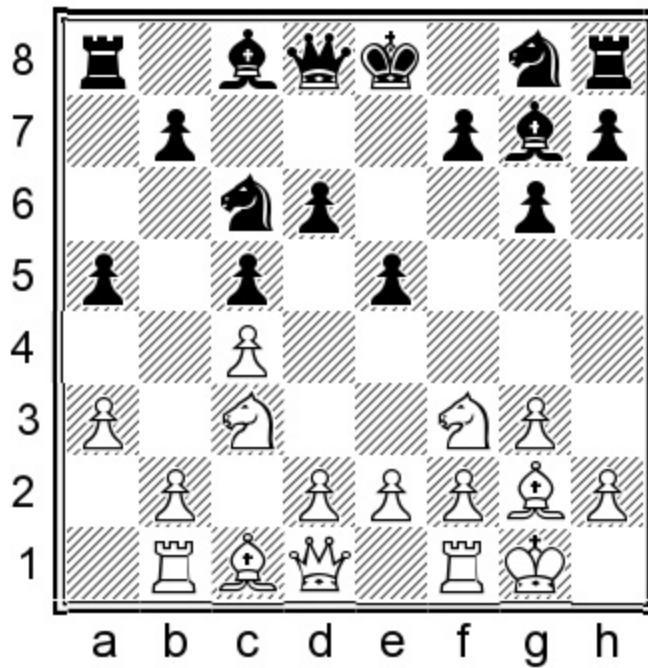
93. Petrosian – K. Smith, San Antonio 1972



Show/Hide Solution

15. $\mathbb{Q}a5!$ Attacking the b7-pawn, which can't move. **15... $\mathbb{E}ab8\pm$** Before Black can get rid of the irritating knight, White has a couple of moves in which to create an initiative.

94. Evans – Karpov, San Antonio 1972

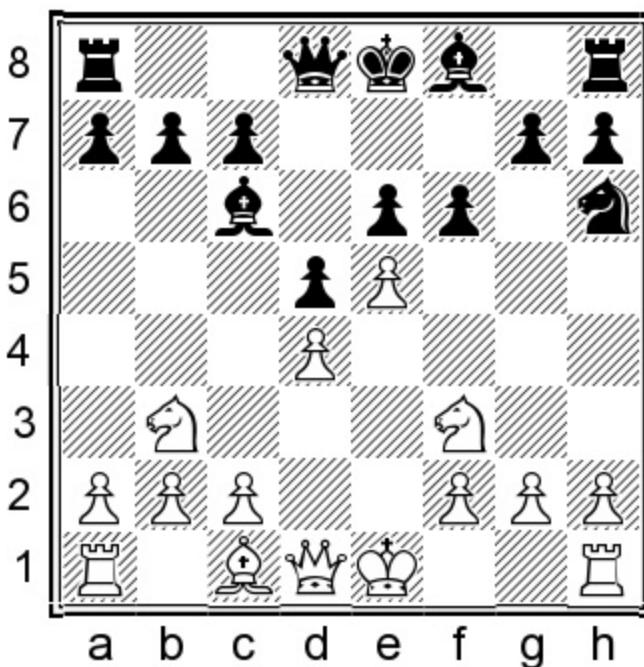


Show/Hide Solution

8... $\mathbb{Q}ge7$ A knight on f6 could be pinned, and would also block the f-pawn. **8... $f5?!$** argues that the knight is better on f6, but the queenside is too exposed for Black to have realistic chances for a

kingside attack. 9.d3 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ (9...h6 is slow, and 10.e4!? $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}h4\pm$ is unpleasant.) 10. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ h6 11. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 0-0 13.b4 \pm Black's kingside advances have only created weaknesses. **9.d3 0-0** This position is still often seen nowadays. The exercise is over, but it's worth including some additional moves from the game, which featured logical play from both sides. **10. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{B}b8!$** A useful move, avoiding ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ as long as White has $\mathbb{Q}g5$. 11. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ d5! Before White clamps down with $\mathbb{Q}e3$. 13.cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 15.b4 $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ b5 17.bxa5 $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ We can see that the rook on b8 is useful!

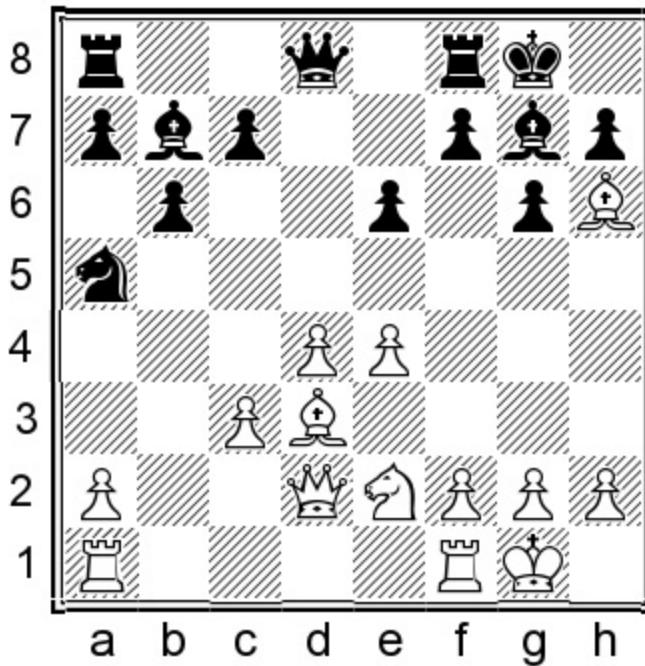
95. Kasparov – Vasilchenko, Kyiv 1973



Show/Hide Solution

8... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ Avoiding $\mathbb{Q}xh6$. Developing the knight with ... $\mathbb{Q}h6-f7$ is common when the c1-bishop is blocked (as was the case with the knight on d2 in this game), but sometimes it's okay to allow $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ leading to a damaged pawn structure after ...gxh6. However, the present position is not one of those cases, as the earlier exchange on c6 would make it easier for White's knights to exploit Black's structural weaknesses after ...gxh6. The exercise ends there, but it is worth noting after the text move that Black should not be in a hurry to exchange on e5, which would allow dxe5 and $\mathbb{Q}bd4$. Instead, Black should simply develop with ... $\mathbb{W}d7$ and ...0-0-0 before planning his next move.

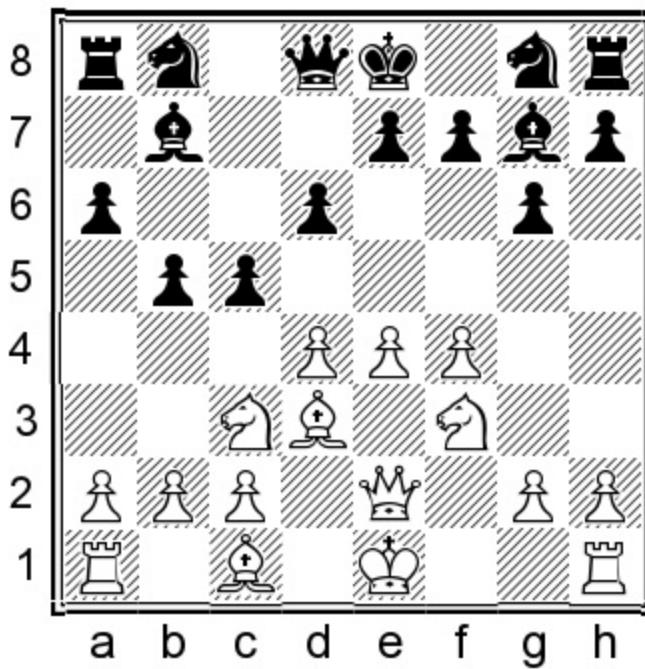
96. Rashkovsky – Tal, Sochi 1973



Show/Hide Solution

13...c5 No exclamation mark – it's a move that must be played. Black intends to fight for the c4-square with ... $\mathbb{R}c8$ and ...c5xd4. 13... $\mathbb{Q}xh6?!$ 14. $\mathbb{W}xh6$ c5 makes it easier for White to attack: 15.e5±. The threat is $\mathcal{Q}e2-f4-h5$.

97. Tal – Szabo, Sochi 1973

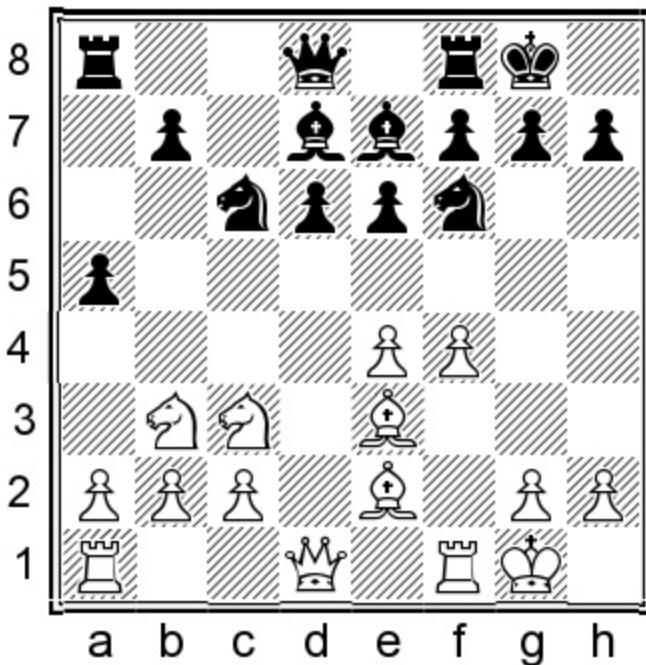


Show/Hide Solution

8.dxc5! dxc5 8... $\mathbb{Q}xc3\#$ 9.bxc3 dxc5 10.c4± An eventual mate on g7 would not be a surprise. **9.e5!±**

Blocking the bishop on g7 and getting the e4-square for the bishop or the knight. (Black can't play both ...c5-c4 and ...b5-b4.) Szabo should have prepared ...c7-c5 with ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

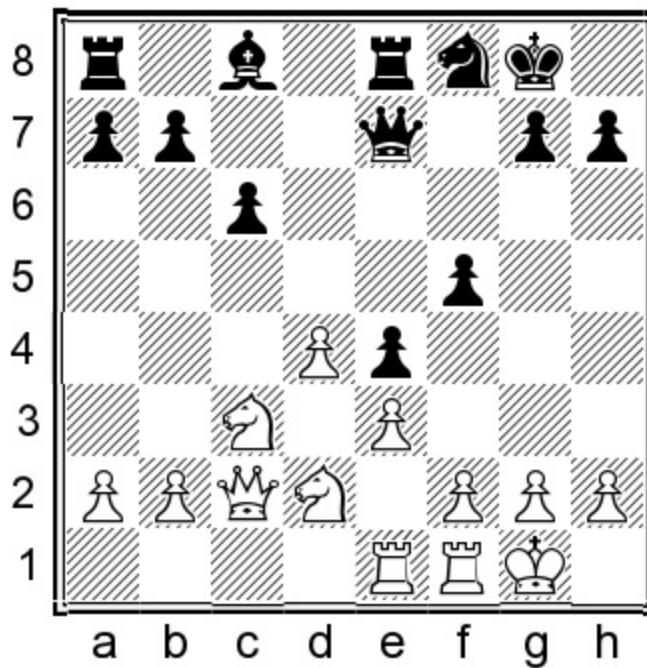
98. Karpov – Spassky, Leningrad (9) 1974



Show/Hide Solution

11.a4! Securing the outpost on b5. Black gets a square on b4 for the knight, but it will not be able to stay there forever. Karpov eventually played c2-c3 on his 26th move. Black's knight had to retreat to a6, where it was out of play, after which a sudden kingside attack decided matters in White's favour. However, for now White is content to gain space and restrict Black's play. A move like 11. $\mathbb{Q}h1?$! allows 11...a4 12. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ a3 when White's queenside is weakened. 11.a3 a4 12. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6=$ 11... $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ g6 14. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ e5 15. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ bxc6 16.fxe5 dxe5 Black has defended against any e4-e5 ideas, but instead White gets the c4-square, which Karpov highlights with his next move. **17. $\mathbb{Q}f1!$!** White went on to score a masterful victory.

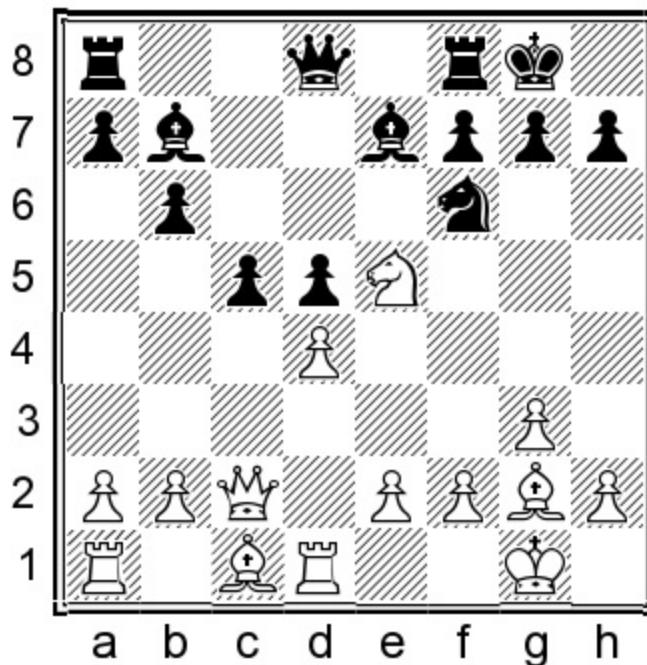
99. Tal – Vaganian, Riga 1975



Show/Hide Solution

15.f3 The rooks on e1 and f1 would otherwise have no purpose. **15...exf3 16.Qxf3 Qe6 17.e4! fxe4 18.Qxe4=** It's the usual scenario with an isolated pawn: White has more active pieces but a potential weak pawn. The pawn will not be attacked in the near future, and there will probably be a lot of exchanges leading to a draw.

100. Karpov – Spassky, Riga 1975



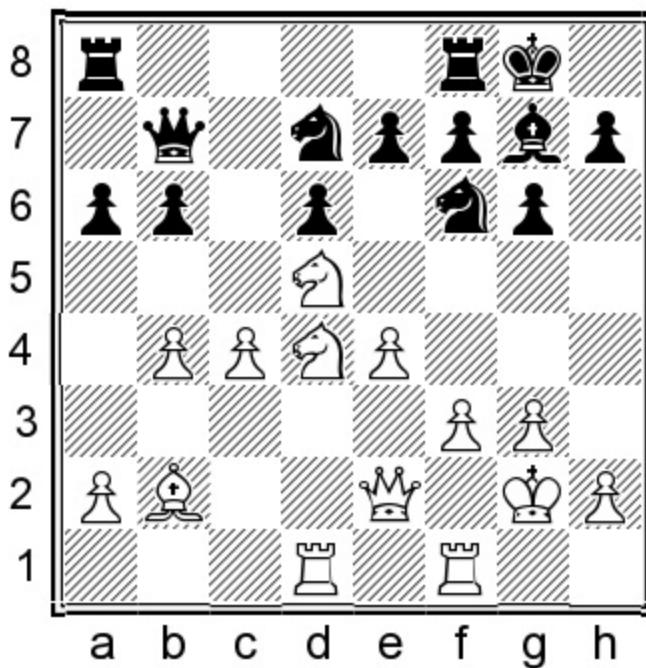
Show/Hide Solution

13.dxc5 Forcing Black to decide what kind of weak pawn(s) to get: an isolated pawn or a hanging pawn couple. **13...♝xc5** 13...bxc5 14.♗g5 also leaves Black under unpleasant pressure; it's hard to decide which option is the lesser evil. **14.♘d3 ♛d6 15.♗f4±**

Public Education Exercises 101-150

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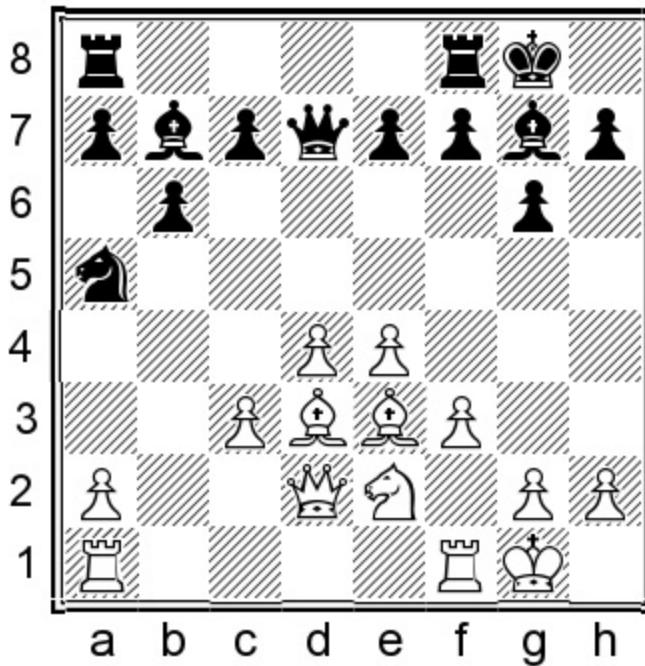
101. Smyslov – Weinstein, Lone Pine 1976



Show/Hide Solution

17... $\mathbb{Q}fe8!=$ Black keeps the structure solid. Next he will play ...b6-b5 or ...e7-e6. 17... $\mathbb{Q}xd5?!$ gives White the c6-square after either recapture. Play could continue: 18.cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ Avoiding $\mathbb{Q}d4-c6$. 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ b5 20.h4±

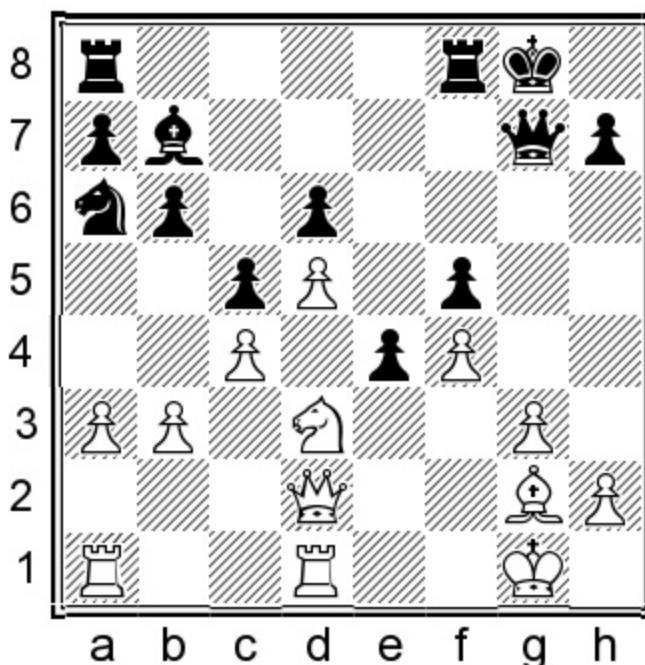
102. Karpov – Kavalek, Montilla 1976



Show/Hide Solution

13...c5 Black should not delay the usual Grünfeld move any longer. 13... $\mathbb{E}fd8?!$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}h6$ c5 15. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 16.d5 e6 17.c4! \pm The last move becomes possible after the g7-bishop has been exchanged. **14. $\mathbb{Q}h6$** 14.d5 e6=; 14.dxc5 is “always” compensation – many moves are possible. **14...cxd4 15. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 16.cxd4 $\mathbb{E}ac8$ 17. $\mathbb{E}ac1$** If White wanted more, the rooks had to be kept. Instead Karpov offered a draw, which was accepted. 1/2–1/2

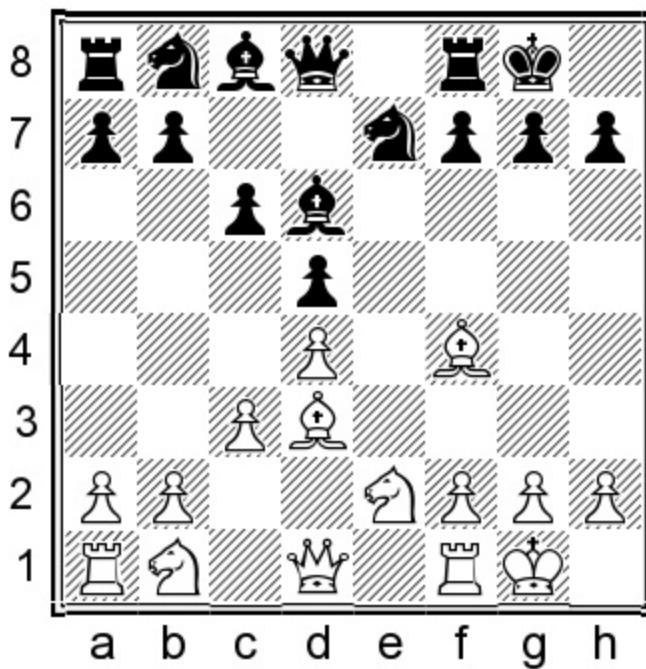
103. Vaganian – Karpov, Moscow 1976



Show/Hide Solution

23. $\mathbb{Q}e1\pm$ On the way towards e3, a blockading square where the knight puts pressure on f5 and controls the g4-square.

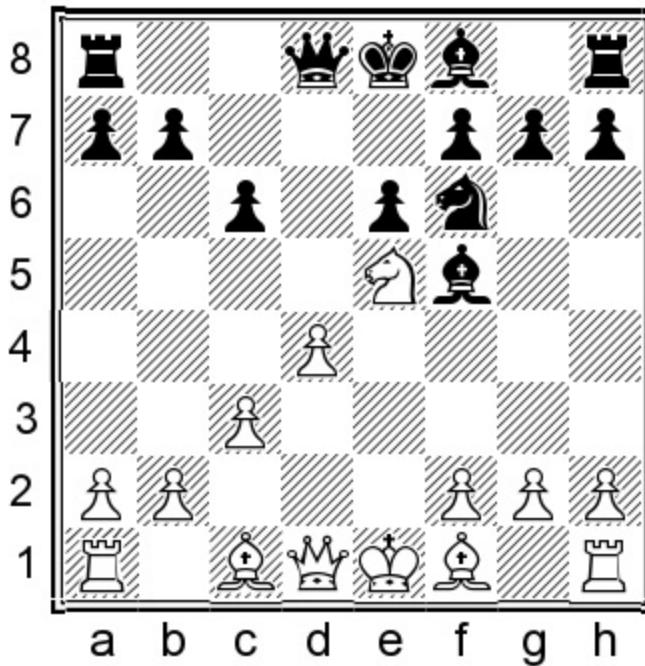
104. Hort – Petrosian, Hastings 1977



Show/Hide Solution

8... $\mathbb{Q}f5!=$ Exchanging the bad bishop. (With a move more, White would stop it with $\mathbb{W}c2$.) 8... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}xd6 \mathbb{W}xd6$ 10. $\mathbb{W}c2\pm$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}xd6 \mathbb{W}xd6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}g3 \mathbb{Q}xd3$ 11. $\mathbb{W}xd3 \mathbb{Q}d7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ The players agreed a draw. $1/2-1/2$

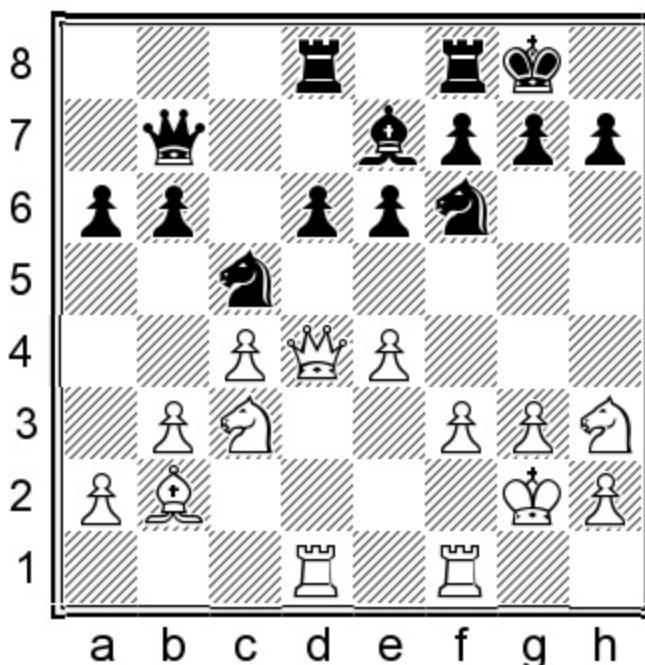
105. Karpov – Hort, Bugojno 1978



Show/Hide Solution

9.g4 Bg6 9...Be4 10.f3 Bd5 11.c4+– 10.h4 To avoid losing the bishop to h4-h5, Black has to allow the ugly ...f7xg6 **10...h5 11.g5 Qd5 12.Qxg6 fxg6 13.Wc2+–**

106. Pavlenko – Kasparov, USSR 1979



Show/Hide Solution

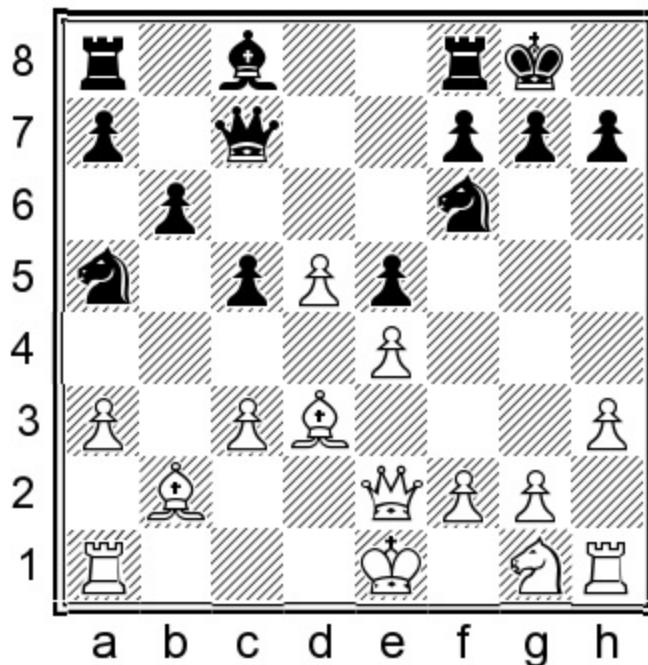
17...b5! It's also possible to go for 17...Bc8 followed by ...b6-b5, but there's no reason to delay the pawn break. **18.Qf2** In the event of 18.cxb5 axb5± White risks being left with a weak pawn on the

queenside. 18... $\mathbb{Q}c8! \mp$ 18... $bxc4$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ d5= was Kasparov's choice. 18... $b4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ a5 allows 20. $\mathbb{W}e3=$ intending $\mathbb{Q}d4-b5$. 19.cxb5 axb5 20. $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}b8! \mp$ The queen is not the ideal blockading piece.

Garry Kasparov

"I see my own style as being a symbiosis of the styles of Alekhine, Tal and Fischer."

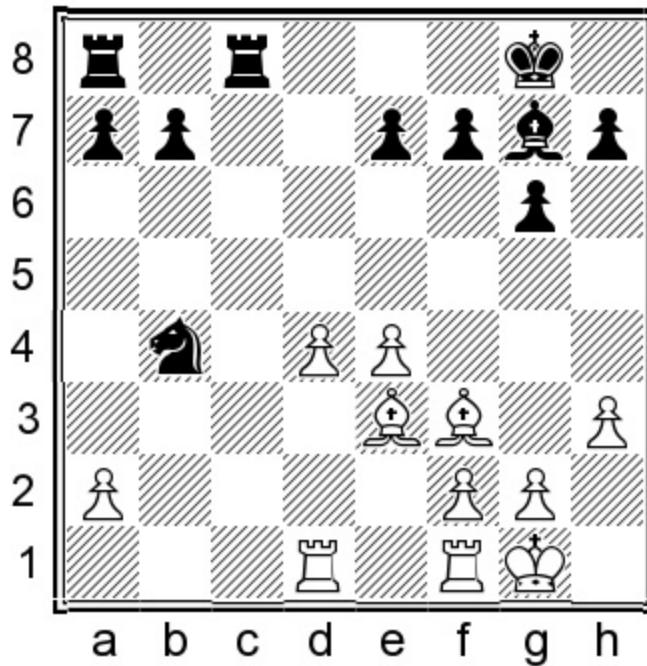
107. Petrosian – Najdorf, Buenos Aires 1979



Show/Hide Solution

14...c4! A must before White plays c3-c4. 14... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 15.c4± 15. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ Najdorf now missed an opportunity to obtain excellent play on the queenside with: 15... $\mathbb{Q}b3$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ a5!± Planning ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}c5-d3$.

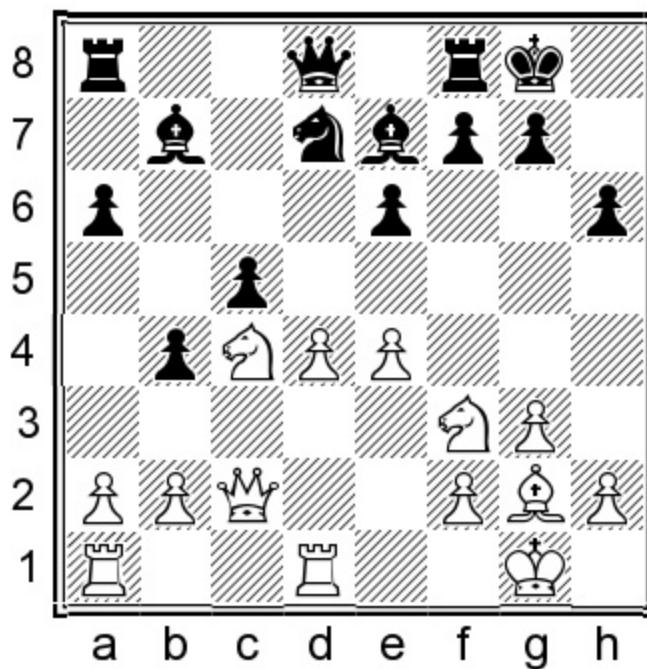
108. Karpov – Ljubojevic, Montreal 1979



Show/Hide Solution

17.e5 Opening the diagonal for the bishop on f3. Black doesn't have time to fortify the d5-square. Two illustrative lines: **17...♝ab8** 17...♝c7 18.♝b1 ♗xa2 19.♝b3± Followed by ♜a1 on the next move. **18.e6!** fxe6 **19.♝f4±** Black is in trouble.

109. Sosonko – Karpov, Waddinxveen 1979

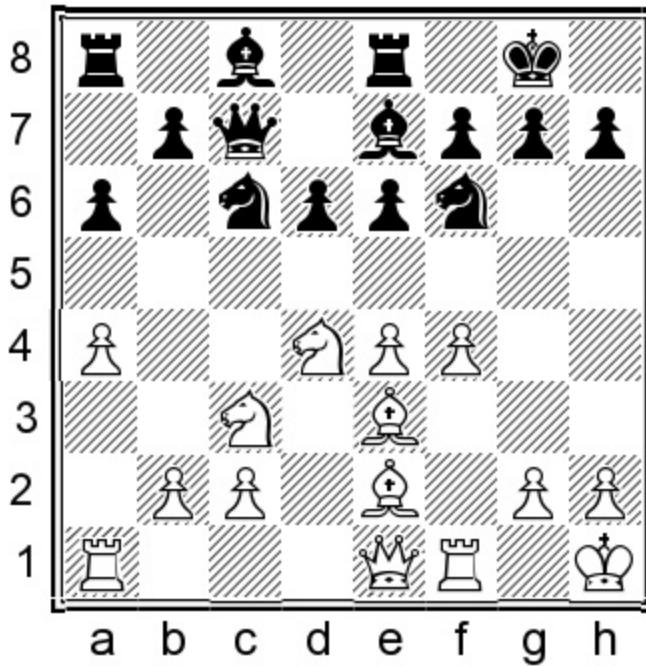


Show/Hide Solution

19.d5± White's advantages are the passed pawn and the nice square on c4. 19.dxc5? released Black's

pieces. Sosonko tried to hang on to the pawn, but in vain: 19... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 20. $\mathbb{B}xd7$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{W}b5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{B}xa8$ 23. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{B}c8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ Black is at least fine.

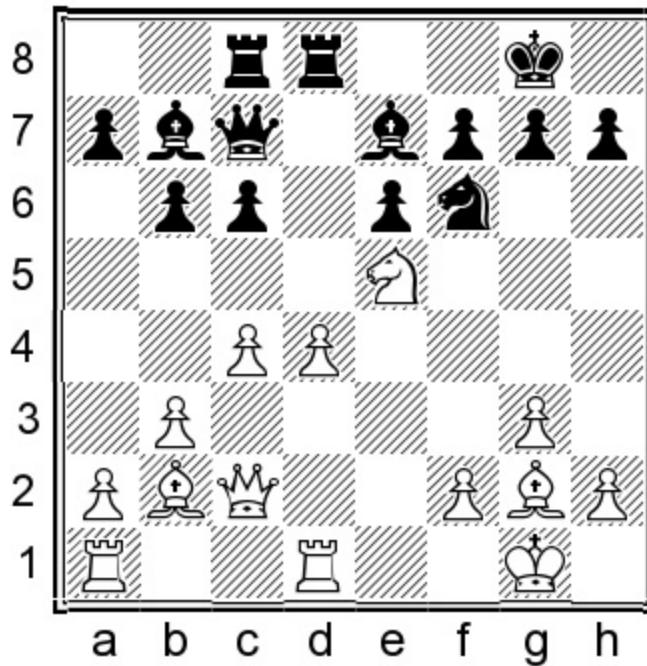
110. Tal – Kasparov, Minsk 1979



Show/Hide Solution

12... $\mathbb{Q}xd4!$ 12... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13. $\mathbb{W}g3\pm$; 12... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 13. $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}c1\pm$ **13. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ e5** Equalizing in the centre. **14.fxe5** In the event of 14. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ Black should not allow f4-f5. 14...exf4 15. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ Black's plan is ... $\mathbb{Q}d7-e5$. The knight manoeuvre is a standard procedure in this structure, and worth remembering. **14...dxe5 15. $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}d8=$** The only move. Black defends the e-pawn and also the queen, thus threatening ...exd4.

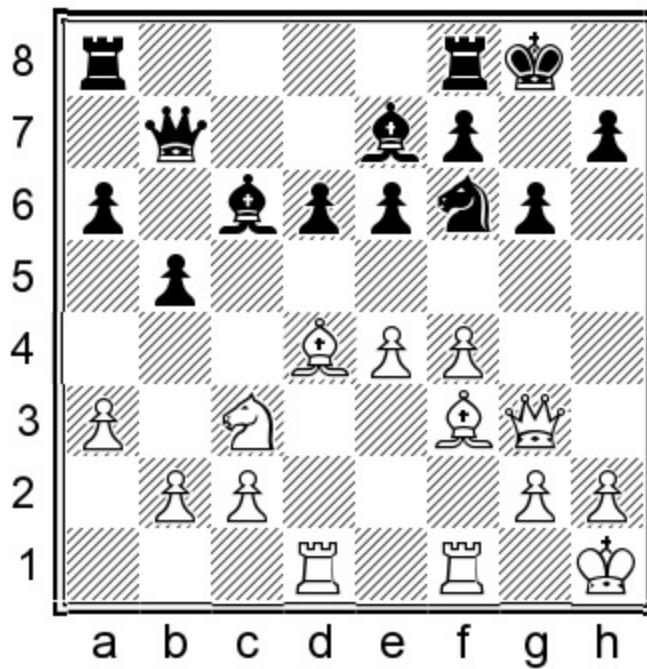
111. Smyslov – Koch, Los Polvorines 1980



Show/Hide Solution

17.c5± Otherwise Black would have released the bishop with ...c6-c5. White is better on both wings, but it's more logical to play on the kingside where the b7-bishop can't take part, but the b2-bishop can.

112. Karpov – Hübner, Bad Kissingen 1980

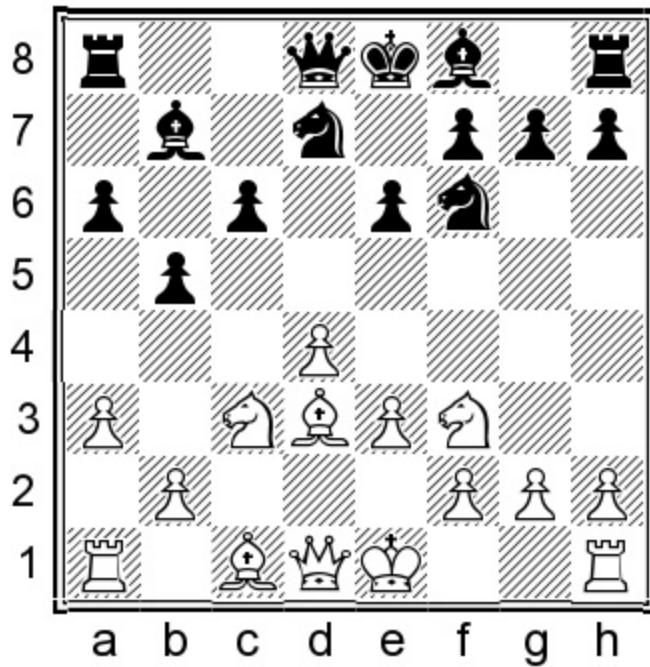


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17.f5 White can exert further pressure with $\mathbb{W}h3$ or perhaps $\mathbb{W}h4$ (depending on the specific tactics

after the reply ...e6-e5). Note that White should not rush to exchange on e6, as this would open space for Black's rook and deprive White of a potential f5-f6. 17...e5 18.♗e3± White will continue to harass the knight on f6 with moves like ♗g5 and ♘h4.

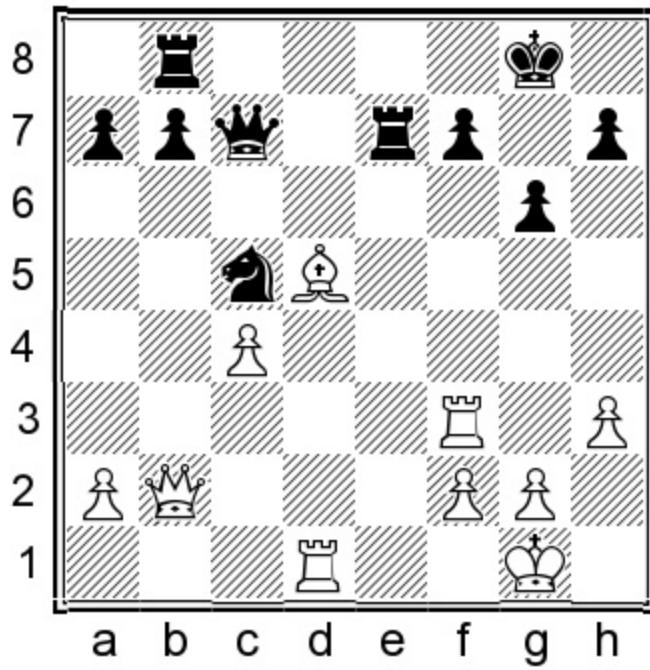
113. Petrosian – Torre, Moscow 1981



Show/Hide Solution

10.b4 The only way to fight for an advantage is by stopping the move Black absolutely wants to play (...c6-c5). With ...c6-c5 unavailable, the b7-bishop will be passive for a long time. However, Black will attack the b-pawn (...a6-a5, ...♗d6, ...♘e7, ...♗d5) and will also look for a good moment to play ...e6-e5.

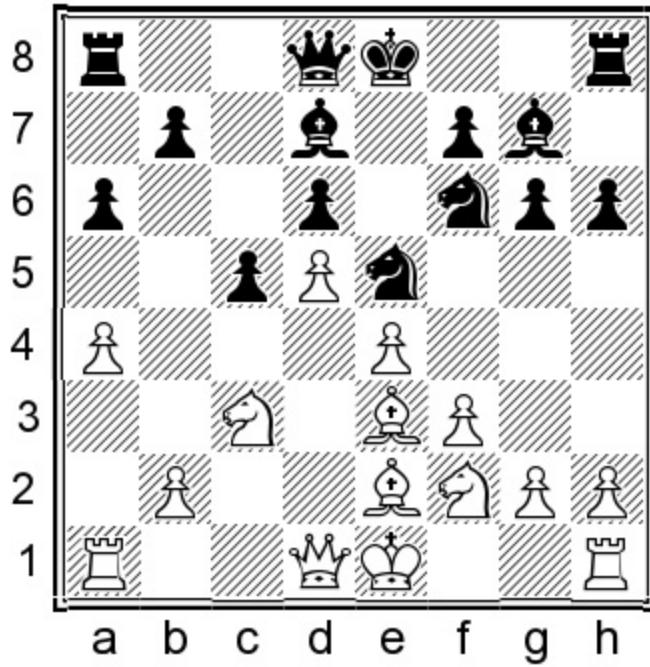
114. Karpov – Smyslov, Moscow 1981



Show/Hide Solution

24.h4± With control over the position, it's possible to attack the black king with h4-h5-h6, or sometimes h4-h5xg6. **24...h5?** 24... $\mathbb{E}be8$ does not trouble White after 25.g3. **25. $\mathbb{W}f6+-$** Threatening to take on g6. Even 25. $\mathbb{E}xf7?!$ $\mathbb{E}xf7$ 26. $\mathbb{W}f6$ wins.

115. Galko – Kasparov, Frunze 1981

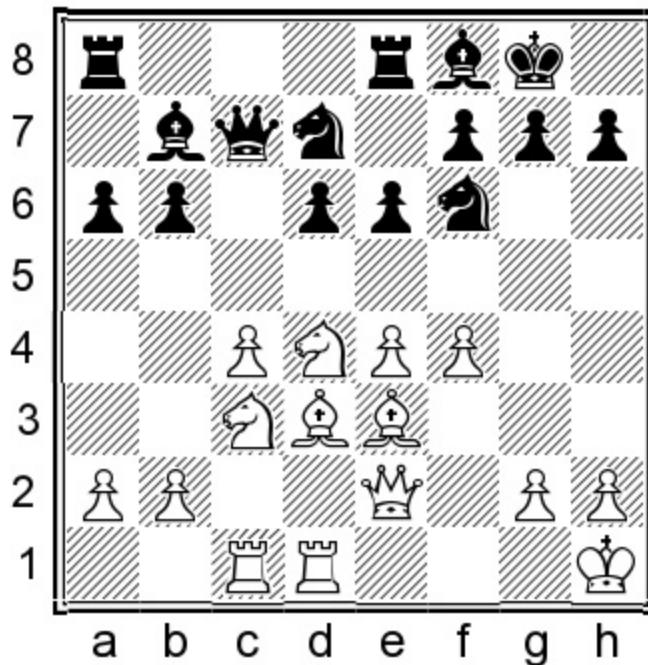


Show/Hide Solution

13...g5!± Black stops f3-f4 (which would actually have trapped the knight) and prepares to take

further control of the dark squares with ... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}h5$. You have to be able to find good moves in disadvantageous positions, as well as in advantageous ones.

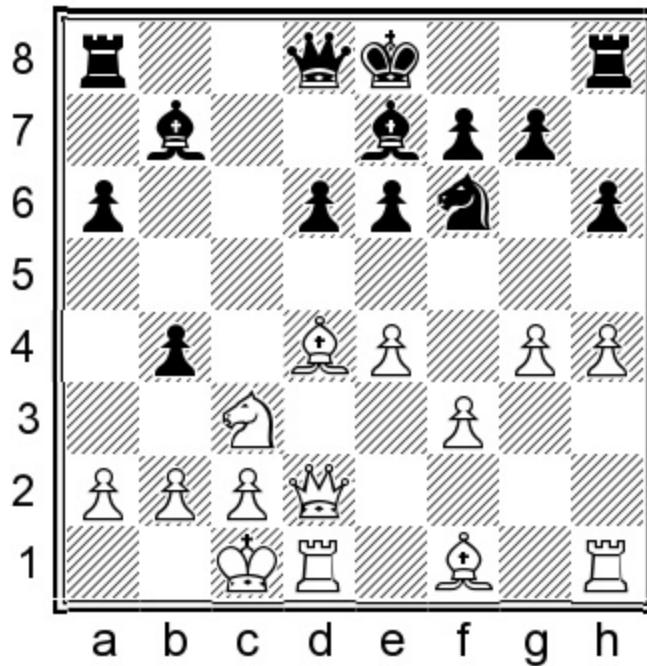
116. Karpov – Bellon Lopez, Linares 1981



Show/Hide Solution

15.b4!? Stopping ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$. **15... $\mathbb{R}ac8$** 15...d5?? cannot be played with Black's queen standing opposite the white rook. 16.cxd5+– **16. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}b8$ 17.a3** Safest. We have a normal Hedgehog position. 17.a4!? prepares a4-a5 and $\mathbb{Q}xa5$, but the b-pawn is a problem after: 17... $\mathbb{W}a8$ 18.a5 d5!?; 17. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ was Karpov's choice.

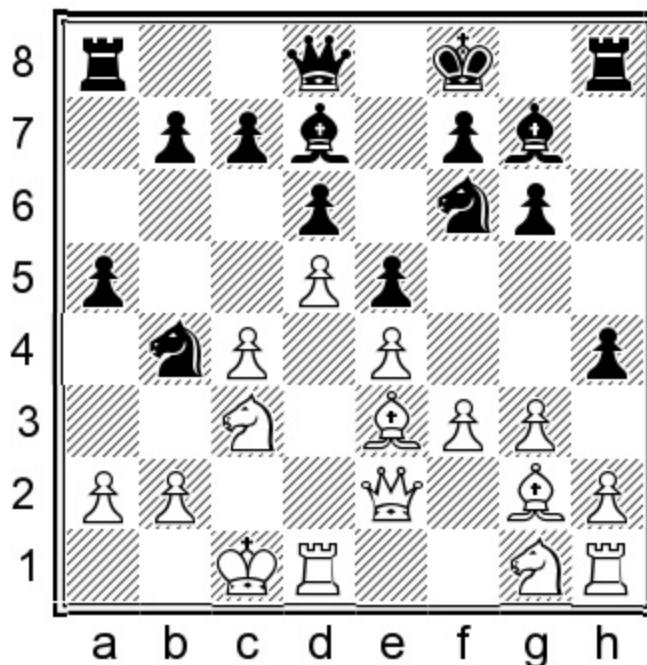
117. Karpov – Franco Ocampos, Mar del Plata 1982



Show/Hide Solution

14. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ This is usually the correct square for the knight, blocking Black's a-pawn while looking towards b6. 14. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ e5 16. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ d5 \Rightarrow 14... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $\mathbb{B}b8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c4\pm$ 16. $\mathbb{W}f2\pm$

118. Portisch – Petrosian, Tilburg 1982

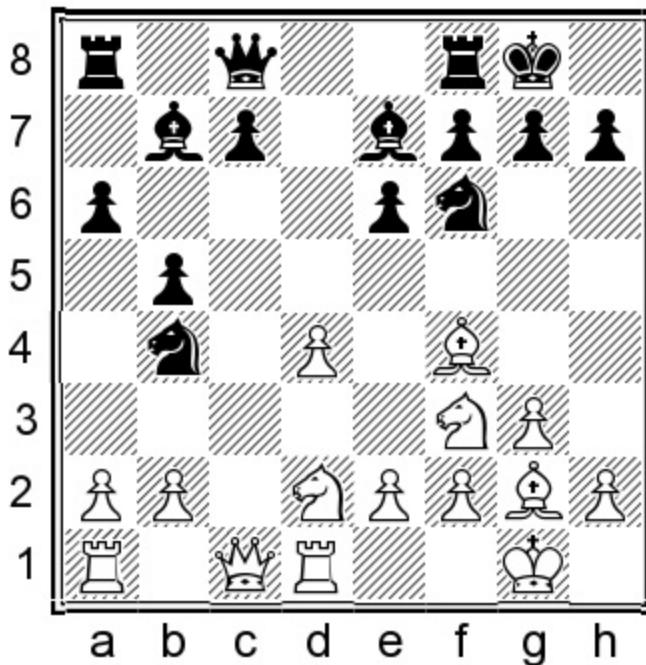


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16... $\mathbb{Q}h6!=$ Exchanging the passive restricted bishop and giving the king a square on g7. 16...a4 can be met with 17.g4 (or 17.a3 first) and it's too late for Black to exchange bishops. After 16... $\mathbb{Q}h5$

17. $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ it's possible to go 18.f4 as Black doesn't have an immediate knight jump to g4. 17.f4?! $\mathbb{Q}g4$ is good for Black, since 18. $\mathbb{Q}d2?$ allows 18... $\mathbb{Q}f2!$.

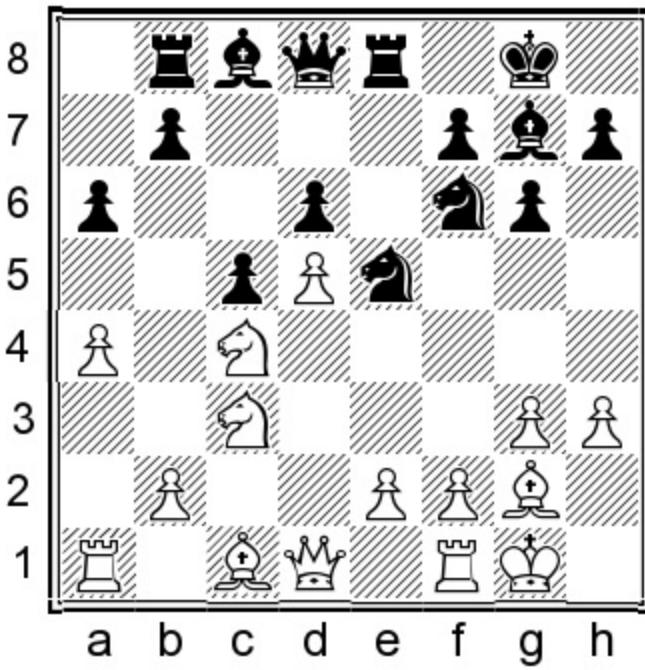
119. Andersson – Karpov, Tilburg 1982



Show/Hide Solution

13...c5!= Exchanging the backward (and threatened) pawn. The game continued for another eight moves. Guess the result...

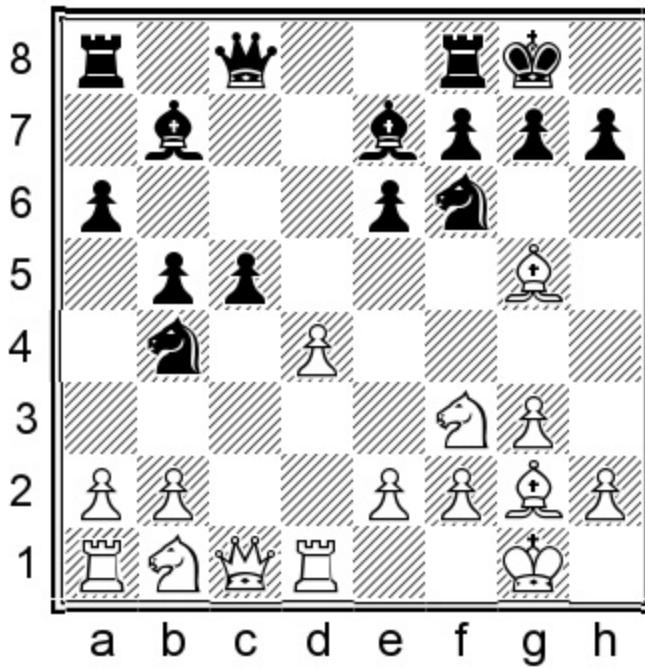
120. Korchnoi – Kasparov, Lucerne (Ol) 1982



Show/Hide Solution

14. $\mathbb{Q}a3!$ Keeping the knights (White has more space) and also stopping ... $b7-b5$. Black is fine according to current theory; but since White's last move is the only logical and critical try, it nevertheless qualifies as an exercise. 14. $\mathbb{Q}e3?$ $b5\#$; 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe5 \mathbb{Q}xe5$ 15. $a5$ $b5$ 16. $axb6 \mathbb{Q}xb6=$ The $a6$ - and $b2$ -pawns are both weak. **14... $\mathbb{Q}h5!$** Black opens up for ... $f7-f5$. **15. $e4$** Theory has been well established after more than a thousand games from this position. Theoretical details are not the topic of this book, but it's worth mentioning a few lines involving instructive and typical moves. 15. $g4$ gives Black multiple ways to sacrifice a piece for good compensation. 15... $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ (15... $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ and 15... $\mathbb{W}h4$ also offer dynamic equality.) 16. $hxg4 \mathbb{Q}xg4$ A spectacular drawing line continues: 17. $\mathbb{W}d3 \mathbb{Q}xc3$ 18. $bxcc3 \mathbb{Q}e3!$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe3 \mathbb{W}h4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}fd1 \mathbb{Q}e8!$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}c4 \mathbb{Q}f4$ (21... $\mathbb{Q}xe3=$ is also good.) 22. $\mathbb{Q}xf4 \mathbb{W}xf2\#$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}h1 \mathbb{W}h4\#$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ With a draw. **15... $\mathbb{Q}d7$** Kasparov played 15... $\mathbb{Q}f8$. **16. $a5$** Black must now choose between taking and sacrificing a pawn. **16... $b5!$** This is the most reliable choice. 16... $\mathbb{W}xa5$ 17. $g4 \mathbb{Q}f6$ 18. $f4$ Trapped! 18... $\mathbb{Q}exg4$ 19. $hxg4 \mathbb{Q}xg4$ 20. $f5$ The position is approximately equal but White does have some attacking chances. **17. $axb6 \mathbb{Q}b5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}axb5$ $axb5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xb5 \mathbb{W}xb6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}a3 \mathbb{W}b3\#$** Black is doing fine.

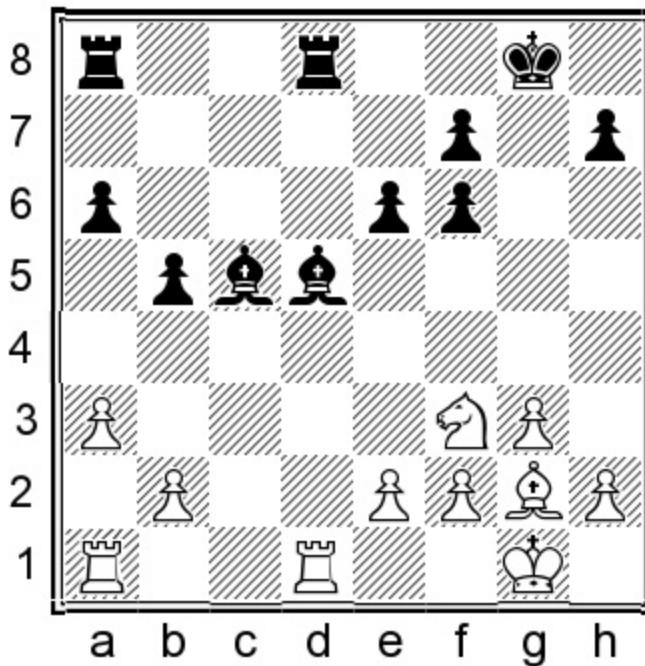
121. Agzamov – Karpov, Moscow 1983



Show/Hide Solution

14.♗xf6! Not being able to take back with the bishop, Black must accept doubled pawns. **14...gxf6** 14...♗xf6 15.a3! (15.dxc5 allows 15...a5!= and possibly ...♗b4-a6.) 15...♗d5 16.dxc5± **15.a3** 15.♗c3 was played in the game. As we will see below, it helps White to avoid obstructing the c-file. **15...♗d5** **16.♔h6** White does not play for an immediate attack. An important reason why Black is unhappy with the doubled f-pawns is that the structure rules out ...e6-e5, which would now weaken the f5-square too much. **16...♗d8** **17.♗c1!±**

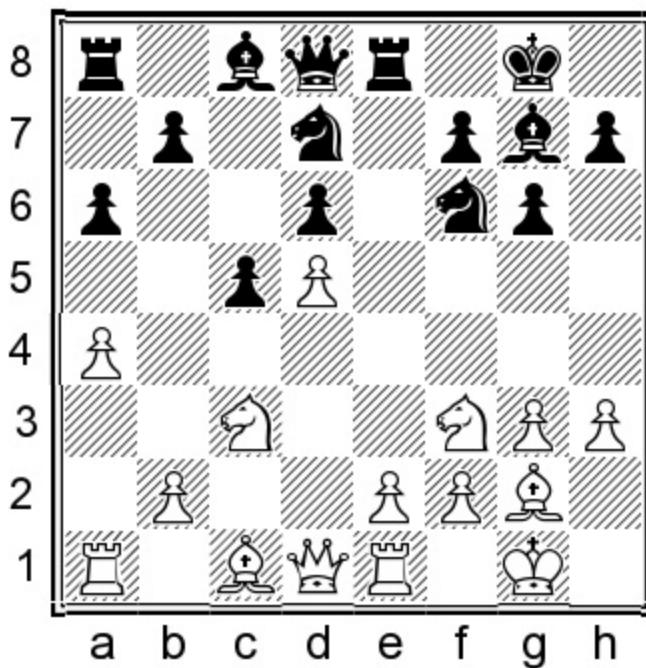
122. Agzamov – Karpov, Moscow 1983



Show/Hide Solution

20.♗e1! Exchanging bishops while preparing to put the knight on its best square, d3. **20...♝xg2** 20...♝b3? is critical but runs into a brilliant tactic: 21.♝d3! (It's hard to spot short moves along an open file when it's possible to exchange.) 21...♝xd3 22.♞xd3 ♜c8 23.♝c1+– **21.♞xg2 f5 22.♝xd8† ♜xd8 23.♞d3 ♜e7 24.♝c1±** The squares on the c-file will not lead to anything concrete by themselves, but White can also try to improve the king and push the kingside pawns. For instance, h2-h3, g3-g4 and hxg4 could lead to an open h-file against Black's lonely h-pawn. The game went 24.a4 bxa4 and Karpov held a draw quite comfortably.

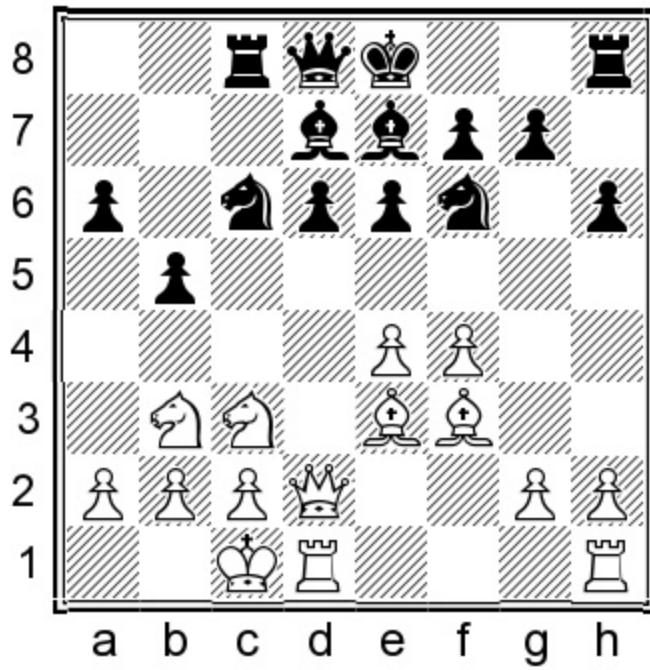
123. Razuvayev – Tal, Moscow 1983



Show/Hide Solution

12...♝e4! Black is happy to exchange pieces and open the diagonal for the g7-bishop. **13.♞xe4 ♜xe4** The rook might continue to b4.

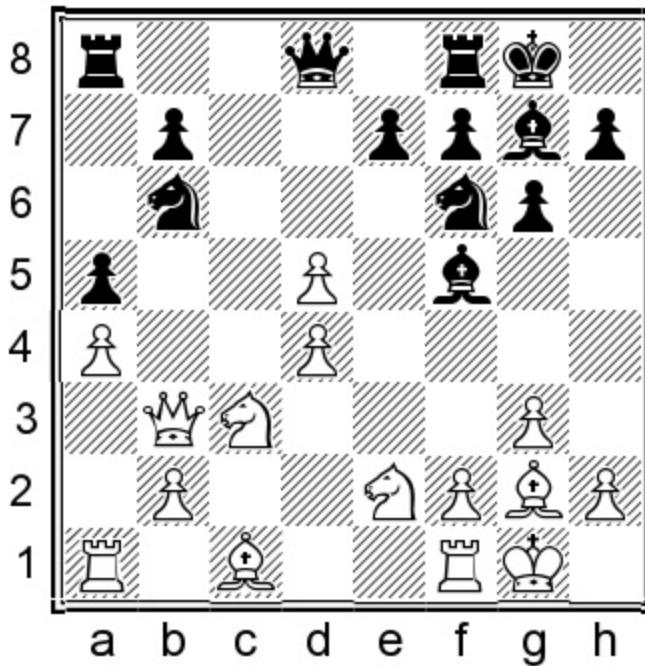
124. Chandler – Anand, London 1984



Show/Hide Solution

13...Qa5! In the Sicilian, Black's semi-open c-file tends to be worth more than White's d-file. Abstractly, I think this has something to do with the open part of the file being longer. (White can seldom put pawns on b3 and c3, unlike Black's equivalent formation with pawns on d6 and e6.) In this example, the fact that White has castled queenside makes the c-file especially relevant. To avoid the knight settling on c4, White needs to exchange it, thus facilitating the development of the enemy queen. 13...b4?! 14.Qa4± 14.Qxa5 Qxa5 15.Qb1 15.e5 b4!—+ 15...b4 16.Qe2 0-0— The game move 16...Qc6 could have been met by 17.Qd3 0-0 18.Qd4= when White is okay.

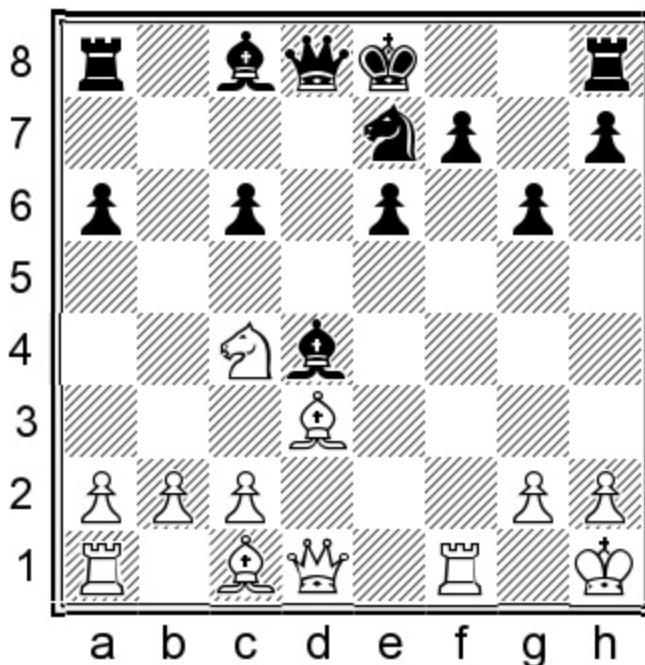
125. Hübner – Smyslov, Tilburg 1984



Show/Hide Solution

12...Qd3 A creative route to attack the pawn on d5. (But a standard motif in the positions arising from this opening variation.) It's the best way to fight for equality. **13.d6!** White takes the last chance to exchange the doubled pawn for Black's b-pawn. **13...exd6 14.Qxb7 Qb8** Black has some compensation along the b-file, with ...Qc4 and ...Qbd5 being the next two moves. **15.Qf3** Stockfish doesn't think Black has full compensation but, as stated previously, we still need to be able to find good moves in worse positions.

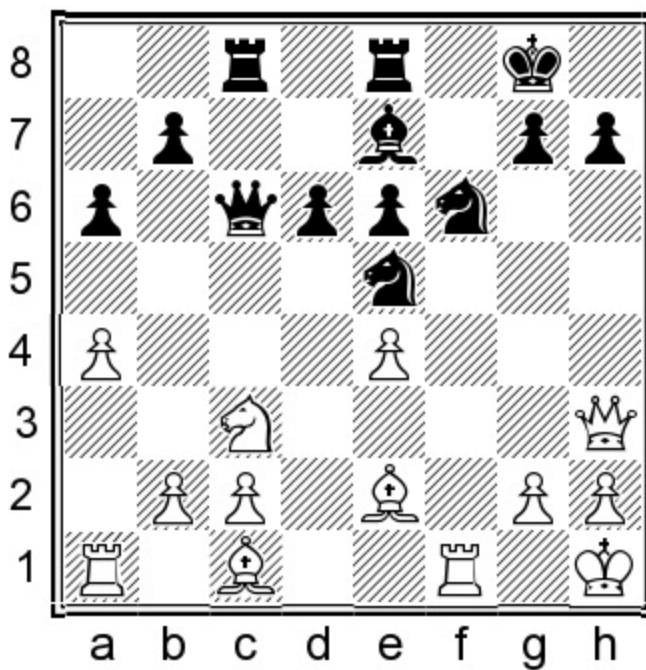
126. Van der Wiel – Anand, Thessaloniki (Ol) 1984



Show/Hide Solution

14. $\mathbb{Q}h6!+-$ Stopping Black from castling. Black's extra pawn is of little value.

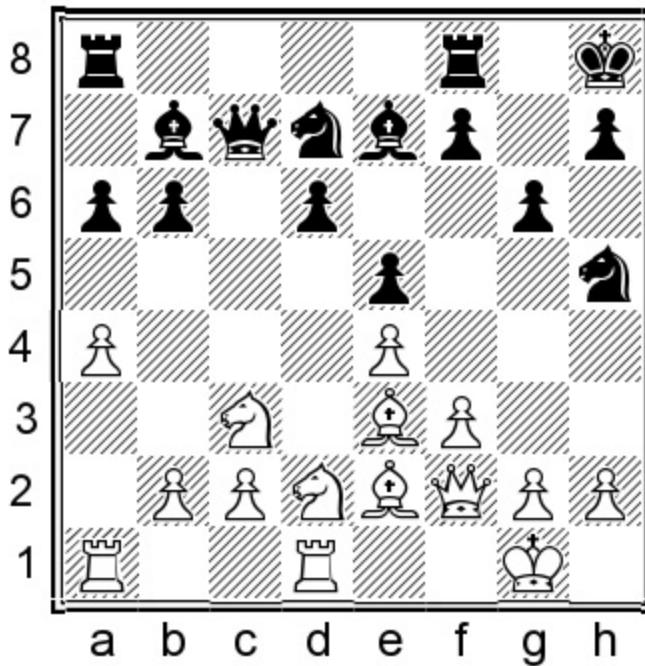
127. Karpov – Martinovic, Amsterdam 1985



Show/Hide Solution

21... $\mathbb{Q}d8!$ A bishop on a5 puts pressure on White's centre. Black should avoid trading e-pawns, as 21... $\mathbb{Q}xe4?!$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xe6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}xc2$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xb7\pm$ gives White an advantage on the light squares. 22. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ White does not have time for 22.a5 due to 22... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$, although perhaps this should still have been played. For instance, after 23. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ d5 \mp Black stands better but White does have some compensation. 22... $\mathbb{Q}a5\mp$ 22... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ was played, but is overly cautious.

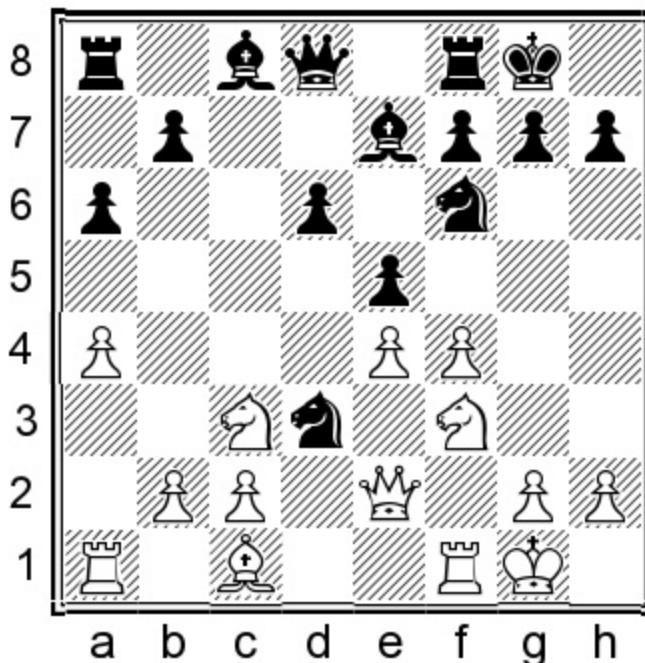
128. Anand – Howell, Sharjah 1985



Show/Hide Solution

16...f5! Increasing the scope of the b7-bishop, f8-rook and h5-knight. (The last by enabling the rook to cover the f4-square.) **17.exf5?** White should avoid the capture on f5 and instead give the bishop an escape square by: 17.♗e1! fxe4 (17...♝df6∞) 18.♝dxe4 ♘df6∞ **17...d5!†** A strong intermediate move. 17...gxf5?! 18.♝c4∞ was the game.

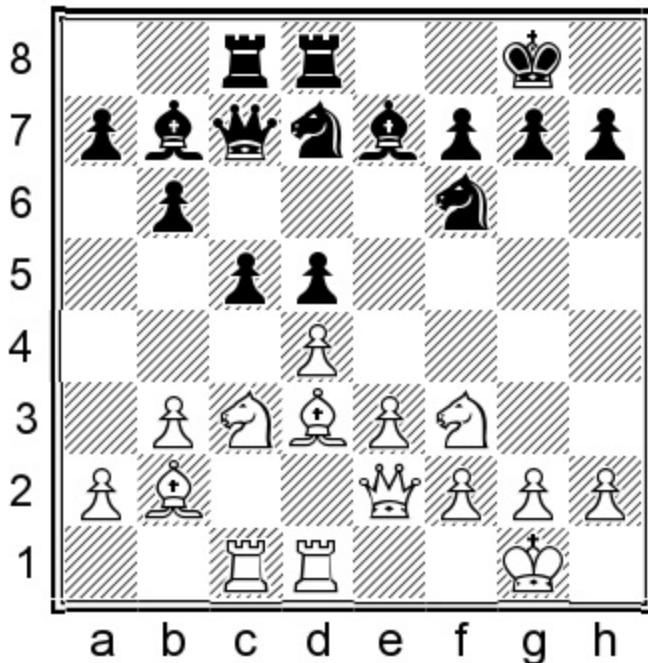
129. Khalifman – Kengis, Minsk 1985



Show/Hide Solution

12.cxd3 Capturing towards the centre. Well, a better argument is that the pawn vacates its slightly vulnerable spot on the c-file, and now performs a useful function in covering the c4-square against a future bishop incursion. 12.♘xd3 ♘c7± is a standard Sicilian position where Black is happy with the bishop pair. Black puts a rook on c8, eying the c2-pawn. 12...exf4 13.♗xf4 ♗e6=

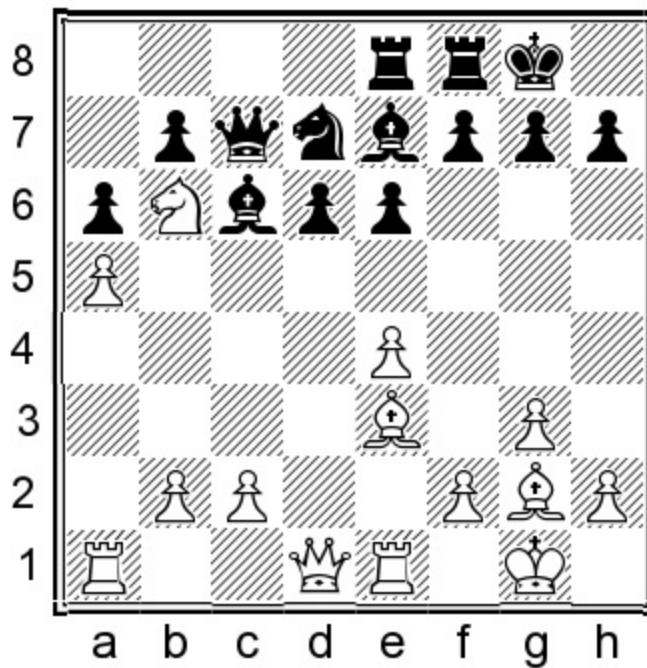
130. Tal – Rozentalis, Volgograd 1985



Show/Hide Solution

14.♗f5! Activating the bishop before Black plays ...♗e4. It is better on f5 than on b5 for a few reasons, the main one being that it pins the d7-knight. Moreover, threatening the bishop with ...g7-g6 slightly weakens the black king – and if it happens, the bishop can stay on its newfound diagonal by retreating to h3. 14...g6 15.♗h3 ♜a8 Moving out of the pin before ♗e5 can be played. White's 14th move has paid off. 15...♗e4 runs into: 16.♗xe4! White could maintain some advantage by quieter means, but the concrete approach works well. 16...dxe4 17.♗d2! (17.♗e5? ♜xe5! 18.♗xc8 ♗d3=) 17...♗f6 18.♗a3± White wins a pawn 16.♗e5 16.♗a1!± was interesting, to use the diagonal with ♜b2. 16...♗xe5 17.dxe5 ♜e4 18.♗xe4 dxe4 19.e6↑

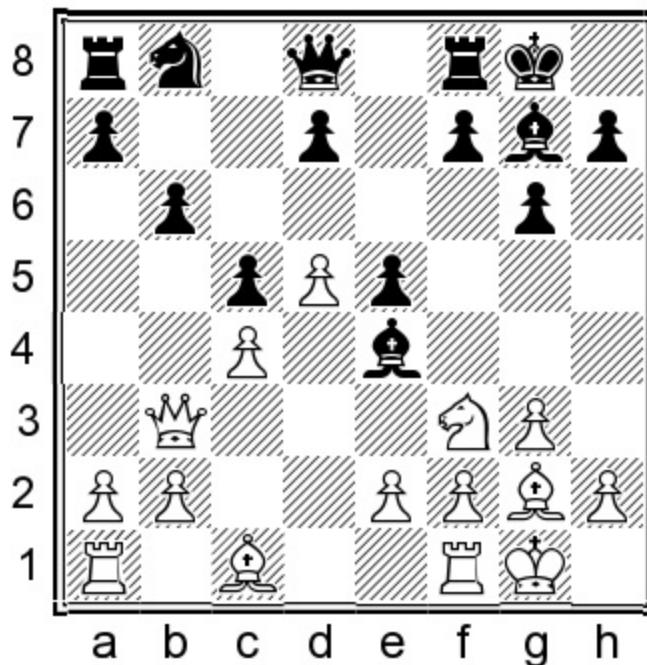
131. Anand – Jansa, Kolkata 1986



Show/Hide Solution

15...f5! Otherwise Black's rook would look – and be! – stupid. Still, White's position is to be preferred slightly since Black will soon have three pawn islands against two. (And with several minor pieces exchanged, the two centre pawns don't cramp White.) 15... $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 17.c4± 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{W}xd7$ 17. $\mathbb{W}d3$ fxe4 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ d5=

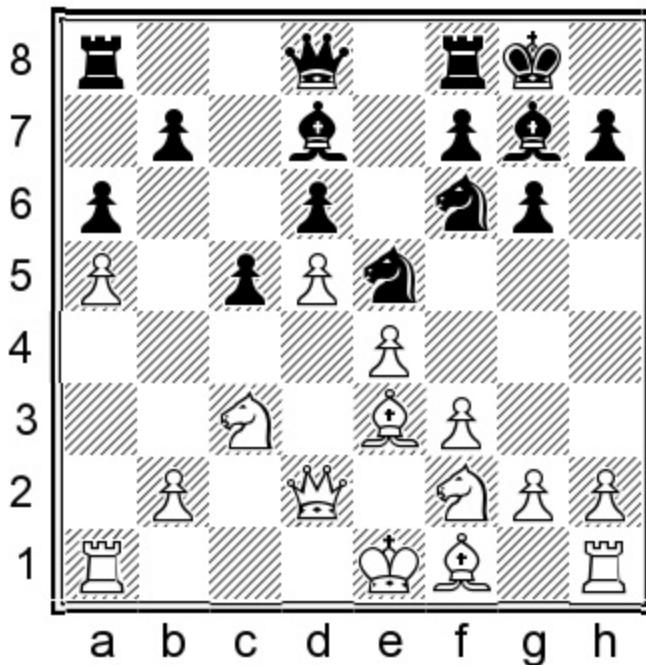
132. Karpov – Timman, Brussels 1986



Show/Hide Solution

11.♗h3! Taking the retreat square from Black's bishop, while preparing ♗g5 or ♗d2. **11...♝xf3** Forced. **12.♝xf3±** White has space and the bishop pair.

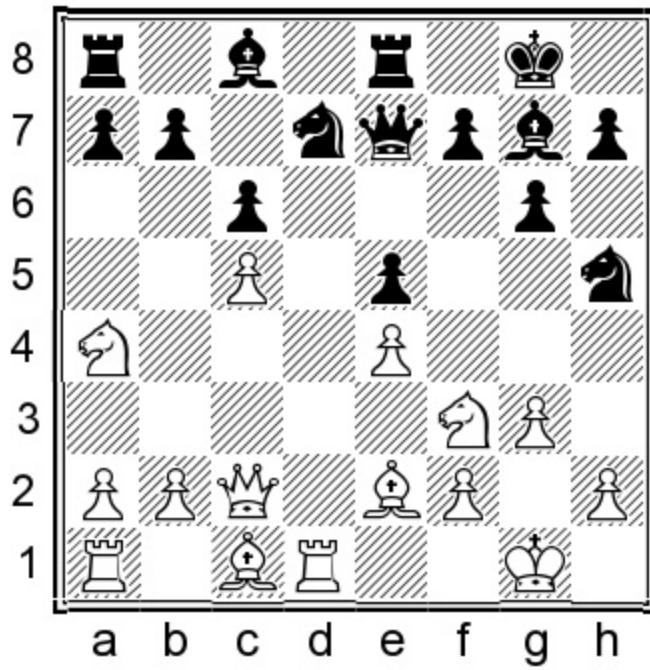
133. Moussa – Anand, Doha 1986



Show/Hide Solution

13...b5! Black should act immediately to create counterplay. After h2-h3 followed by f3-f4, it would be too late. **14.axb6 ♜xb6 15.♝e2 ♜b5=** 15...♜fb8 was also possible.

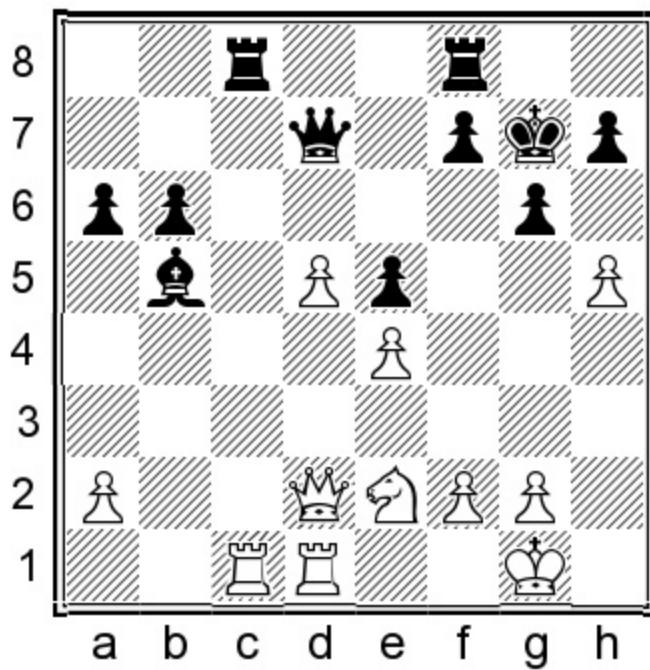
134. Marin – Anand, Oakham 1986



Show/Hide Solution

13...♝f8 Allowing the bishop to develop, and at the same time manoeuvring towards d4. Black's next moves are likely to be ...♜g4, ...♝e6 and ...♝ad8.

135. Kasparov – Lutz, Frankfurt (Simul) 1986

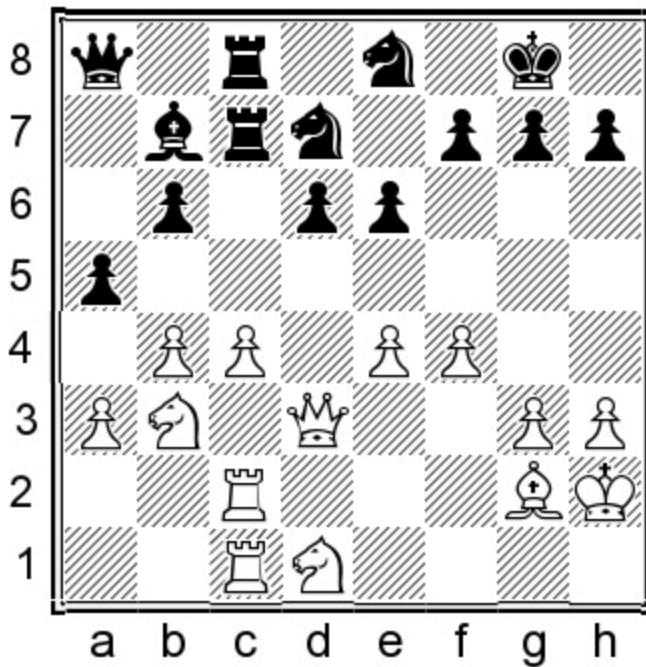


Show/Hide Solution

23.h6†+– The pawn will irritate Black for a long time. Even in rook endings, there might be back-rank mates or a rook penetration with ♜h8xh7, leading to a dangerous passer. Taking into account the

above advantage plus White's protected passed pawn and better minor piece, we can evaluate the game as positionally over.

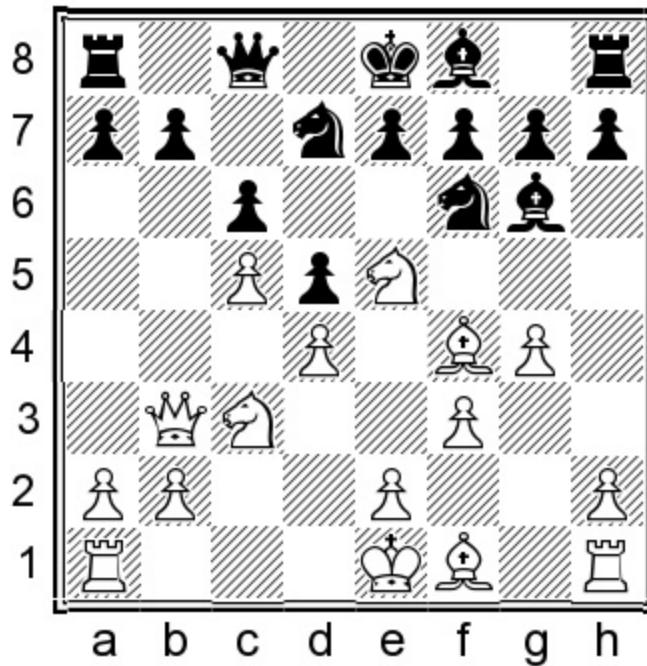
136. Karpov – Ribli, Dubai (Ol) 1986



Show/Hide Solution

32. $\mathbb{Q}d4\pm$ Heading towards b5. No additional variations are needed. Ribli had missed that the b3-knight could reach b5, only considering $\mathbb{Q}d1-c3-b5$.

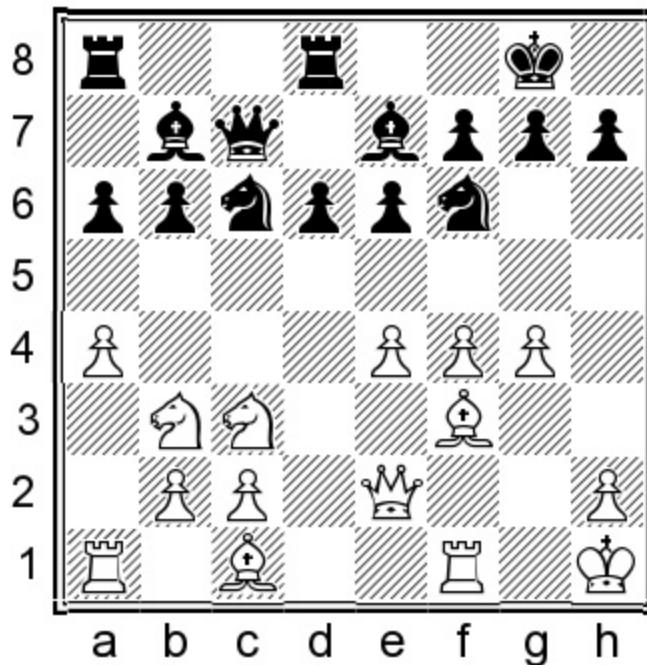
137. Kasparov – Torre, Brussels (Blitz) 1987



Show/Hide Solution

11.h4 There's no acceptable defence against h4-h5. **11...h6 12.♗xg6 fxg6+–** The g6-pawn is too weak.

138. Arnason – Tal, Jurmala 1987

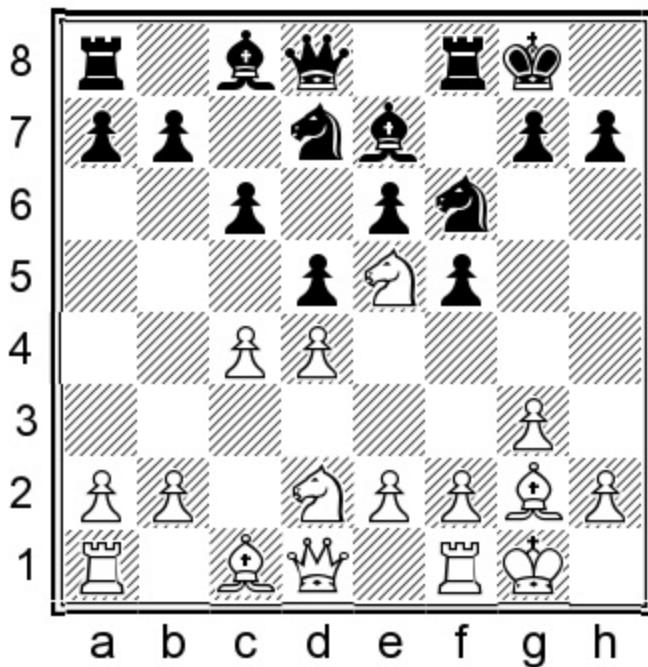


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14...d5! A flank attack is best met by a counterattack in the centre. If Black delayed this break, White would secure an advantage with g4-g5. **15.e5 15.exd5 ♗xd5 16.♗xd5 ♖xd5!!†** White's king is weak,

regardless of whether or not the exchange sacrifice is accepted. (16...exd5± followed by ...d5-d4 gives Black a lesser advantage.) 15... $\mathbb{Q}d7\mp$ The exercise ends here, but let's see Tal's nice sacrifice: 16. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}dxe5!$ 17.fxe5 d4 18. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ dxe3 20. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5-$ + White surely regretted g2-g4.

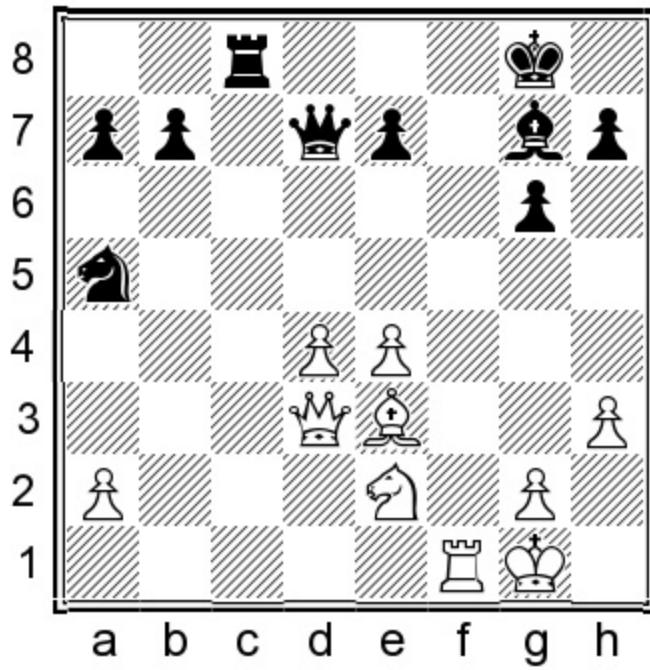
139. Kasparov – Short, Brussels 1987



Show/Hide Solution

9. $\mathbb{Q}d3!$ A normal white plan in the Stonewall is $\mathbb{Q}f3-e5-d3$ in conjunction with $\mathbb{Q}d2-f3-e5$, and eventually f2-f3 to kick away the black knight which usually goes to e4. It takes some time and leaves the h2-pawn undefended for a few moves, but Black's attacking tries with ... $\mathbb{W}e8-h5$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ or ... $\mathbb{Q}f6-h6$ are more naive than dangerous. 9. $\mathbb{Q}df3$ is less effective due to 9... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}d7!$ when avoiding the exchange would leave the c4-pawn hanging. White keeps some edge, but the e5-square is worth less without knights. 9... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 10. $\mathbb{W}c2$ Protecting the c4-pawn. 10... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 10... $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xd2\pm$ Black should keep the knight on e4 as long as possible. 11. $\mathbb{Q}f3!±$

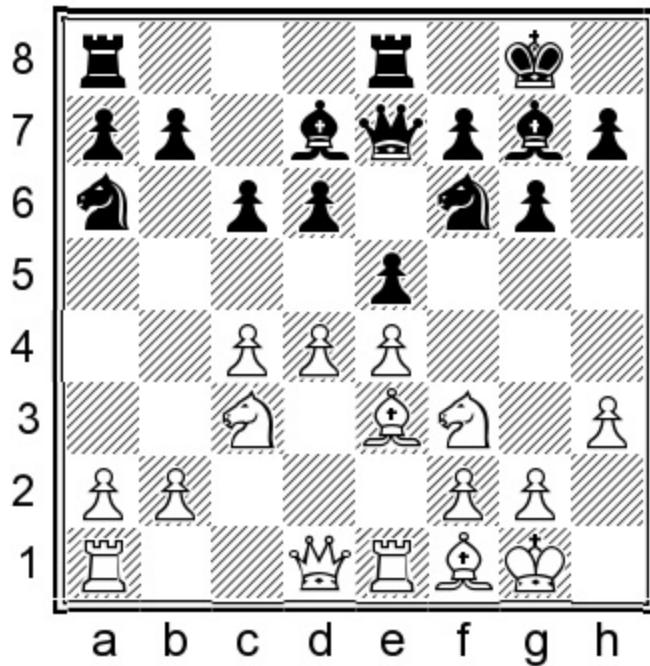
140. Karpov – Kasparov, Seville (9) 1987



Show/Hide Solution

20.d5 Threatening $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ and preparing both $\mathbb{Q}d4$ and $\mathbb{Q}d4-e6$. **20...Qc4 21.Qd4 e5!** In the event of $21...Qe5\pm$ White moves the queen and prepares $\mathbb{Q}f4-e6$. **22.dxe6** White should not allow a good blockading knight on d6. **22...Wxe6 23.Qxg7 Qxg7 24.Qf4↑** Black's king is weak but material is limited, which keeps White's advantage small.

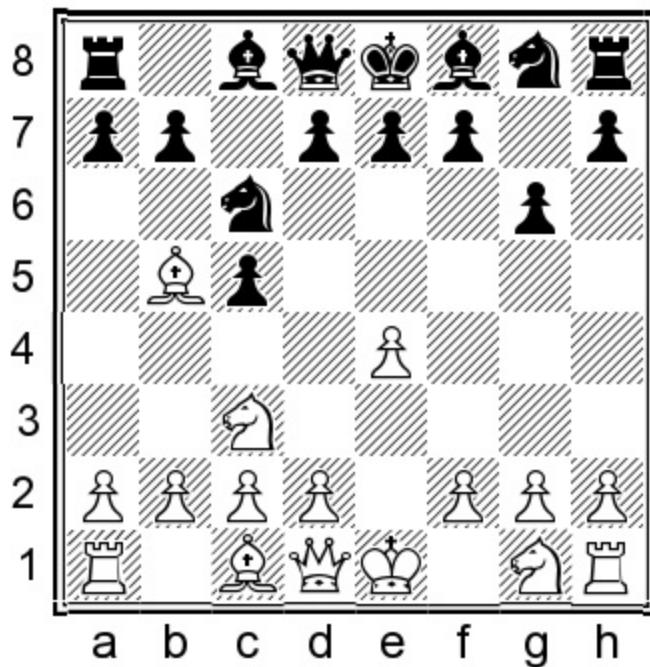
141. Karpov – Ehlvest, Mazatlan (Rapid) 1988



Show/Hide Solution

12.c5! A standard move in similar positions, preparing $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ while undermining Black's pawn centre (since there is no pawn on c7 defending d6). Here it's even stronger than usual – Black actually loses material
12...exd4 12...dxc5 13.dxe5+– 13.cxd6 $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 14.e5+–

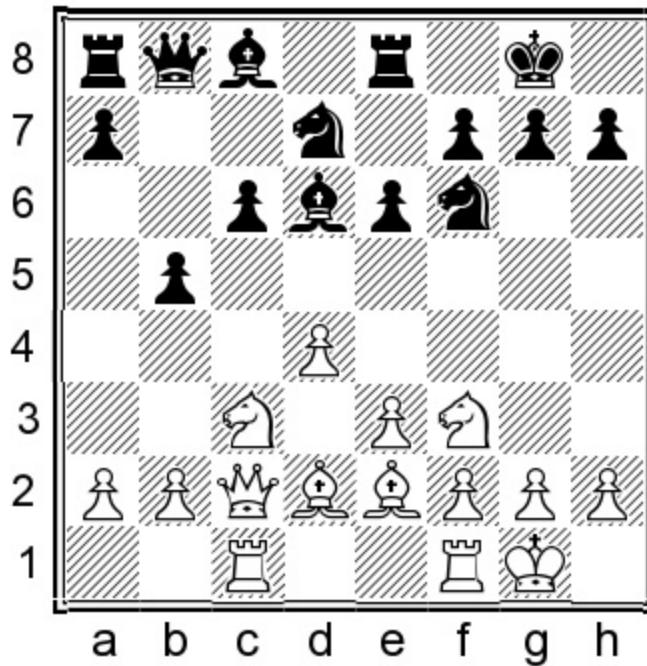
142. Spassky – Hort, Germany 1988



Show/Hide Solution

4. $\mathbb{Q}xc6!±$ When f2-f4 is still possible (i.e. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ has not been played), White gets a good version of the Rossolimo, continuing with the standard moves d2-d3, f2-f4, $\mathbb{Q}f3$, 0-0, $\mathbb{We}1$ and so on. The doubled pawns make it difficult for Black to push pawns without creating a weakness. For example, **4...bxc6** followed by ...d7-d5 makes c5 weak.

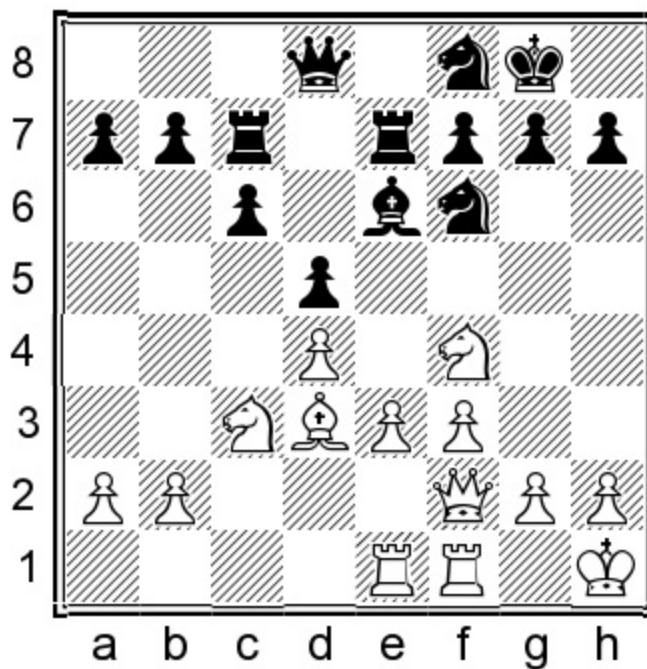
143. Karpov – Van der Wiel, Tilburg 1988



Show/Hide Solution

13.♘e4! Increasing White's control over the weak squares on the c-file. 13.♗fd1?! is slow. 13...♝b7 and it's too late to go ♘c3-e4. **13...♞xe4 14.♗xe4 ♜b7 15.♗d3 f5 16.♗h4±** Black can't push the c-pawn and there is always b2-b4 if necessary. Another threat is e3-e4.

144. Kasparov – Andersson, Belfort 1988

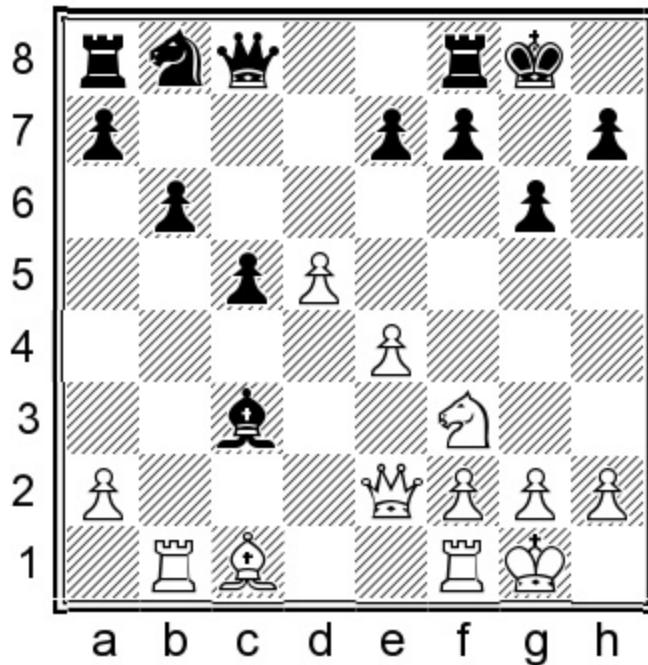


Show/Hide Solution

17.e4 This is one of White's main positional plans in the Carlsbad structure. If Black doesn't react,

White continues with e4-e5 (and later f3-f4-f5). 17...dxe4 18.fxe4 $\mathbb{E}cd7$ 19.d5!? Kasparov's move is strong, but there was no need to hurry. 19.h3 was possible, as 19... $\mathbb{E}xd4?$ is refuted by: 20. $\mathbb{Q}cd5+-$ 19...cxd5 20. $\mathbb{Q}b5 \mathbb{E}c7$ 21.exd5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 21... $\mathbb{Q}xd5?$ 22. $\mathbb{E}d1+-$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e2\pm$

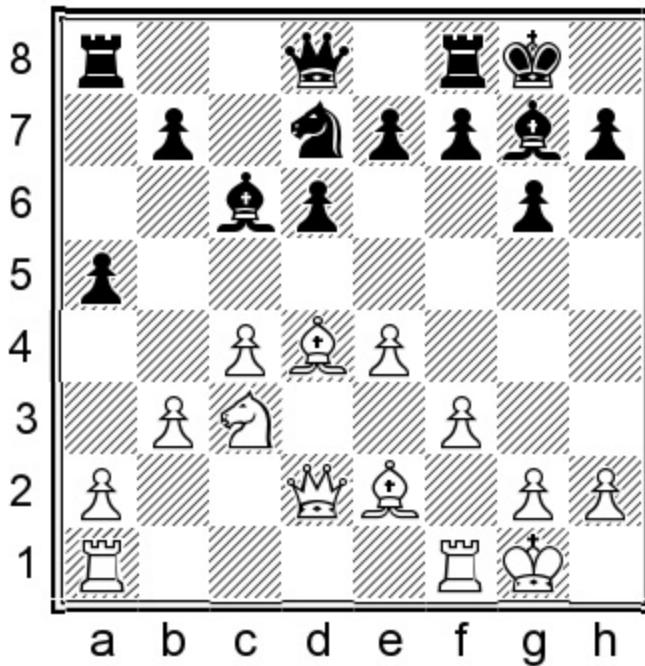
145. Khalifman – Lau, Rotterdam 1988



Show/Hide Solution

15.e5! No return for Black's bishop. **15... $\mathbb{W}f5?!$** For better or worse, Black had to allow the bishop to be exchanged with 15... $\mathbb{Q}d4$, either now or on the next move. **16. $\mathbb{E}b3 \mathbb{Q}a5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}h4+-$** White is not "a" piece up on the kingside, but two or three pieces up.

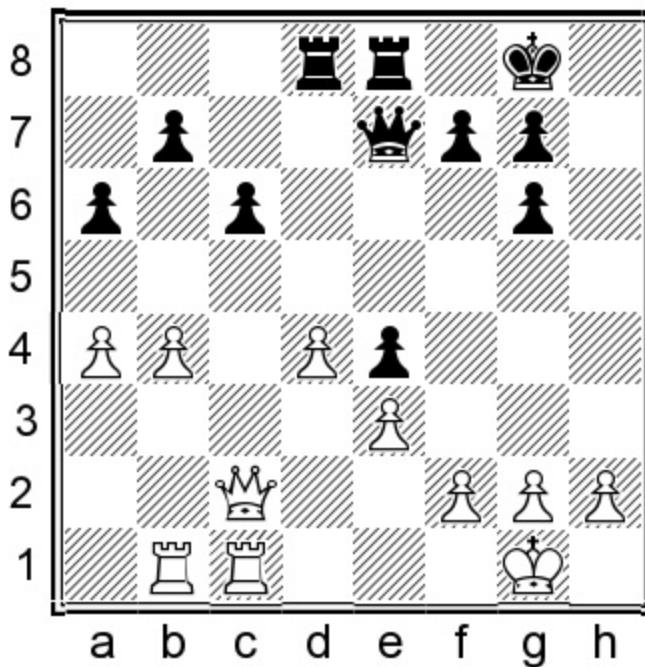
146. Anand – Larsen, Cannes 1989



Show/Hide Solution

14.♗e3! Avoiding exchanges as White has more space. The bishop stops Black from developing with ...♝b6. 14.♗f2!? also counts as a correct solution. The same general comments apply, although it feels slightly less active not to have the bishop operating on the c1-h6 diagonal.

147. Karpov – Ljubojevic, Linares 1989

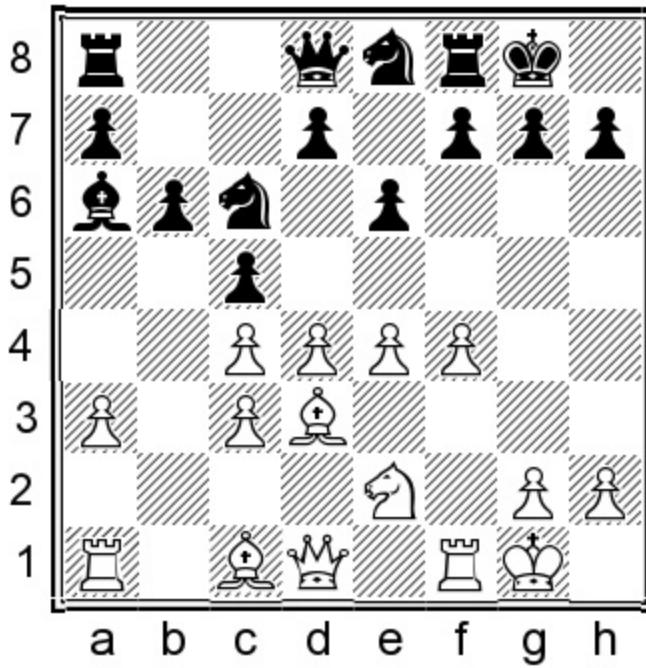


Show/Hide Solution

20.b5± There is no reason to delay the standard minority attack. It gives Black a weak pawn, and

Ljubojevic decided to accept one on a6. It was lost on move 38. 20. $\mathbb{W}c5\pm$ gives White a lesser advantage.

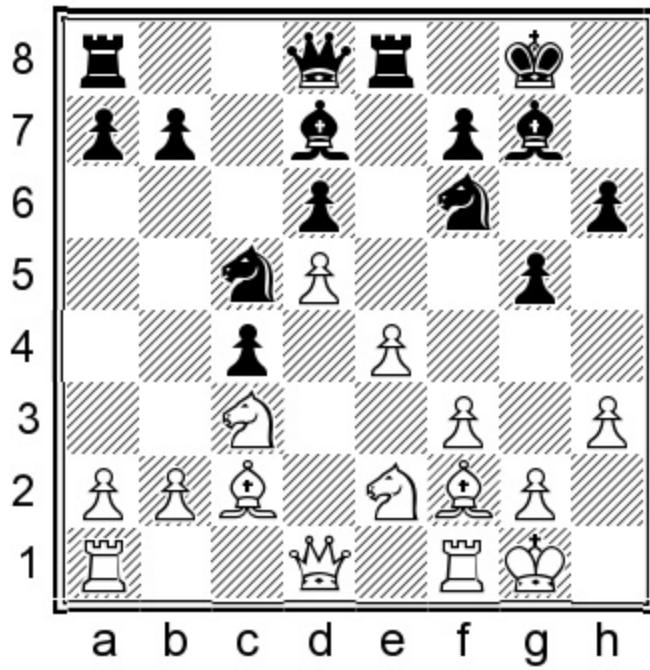
148. Yusupov – Karpov, London (6) 1989



Show/Hide Solution

11...f5! Before continuing to attack the c-pawn, Black stops f4-f5 and thus limits the scope of all three of White's minor pieces, as well as the f1-rook. By the way, Karpov also played the same move against Yusupov four years later in Linares.

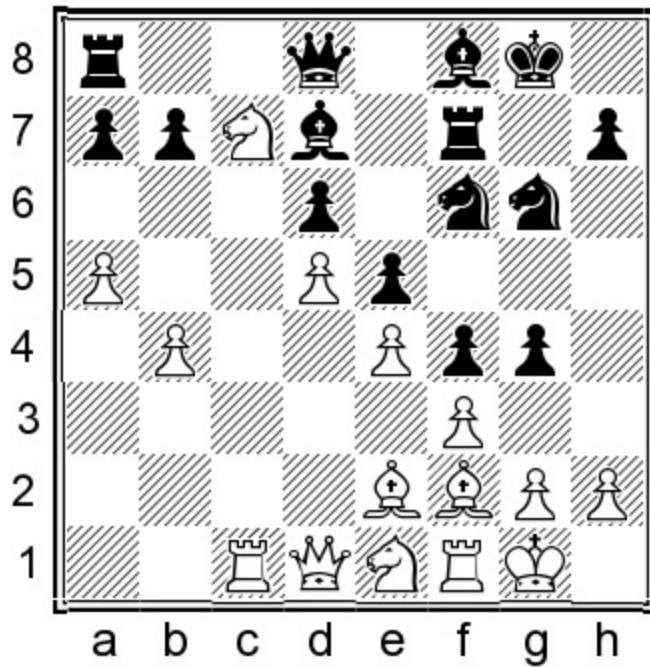
149. Haik – Kasparov, Evry (Simul) 1989



Show/Hide Solution

16...Qh5∞ Eying the dark squares, and intending to continue with ...Qe5 and/or ...Qf4 soon. There's no need to be afraid of Qxc5. 16...b5?! is well met by 17.Qd4!± when White will do well on the light squares.

150. Piket – Kasparov, Tilburg 1989



Show/Hide Solution

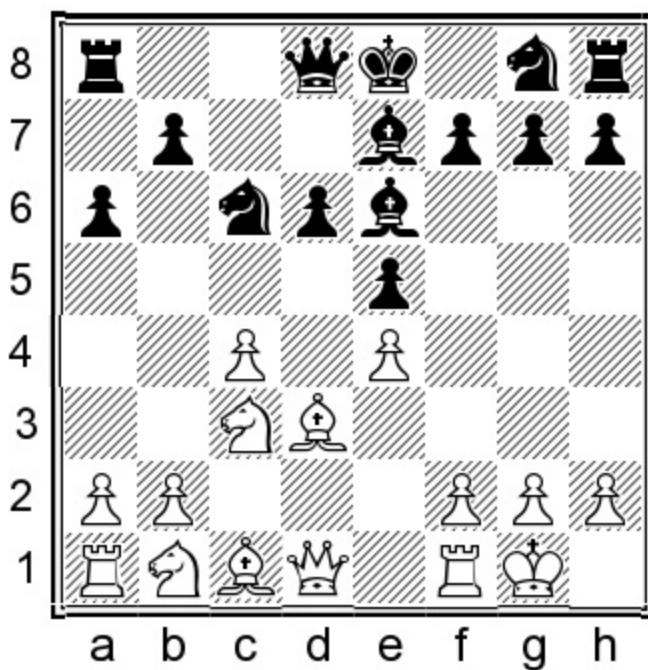
20...g3! Sacrificing a pawn and/or a rook to speed up the attack. **21.hxg3** The game went 21.Qxa8?

$\mathbb{Q}h5!$ and Black won in great style. (Kasparov's move was best, but 21...gxf2† 22. $\mathbb{E}xf2$ $\mathbb{W}xa8$ was also good enough.) 21...fxg3 21... $\mathbb{Q}h5?$ allows 22.g4! $\mathbb{Q}g3$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ intending 23... $\mathbb{W}h4?$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xa7+$ and the king escapes. 22. $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}h2?$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 24. $\mathbb{E}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ and the knights invade with decisive effect. 23... $\mathbb{Q}gf4\uparrow$ Stockfish's main line goes: 24. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ $\mathbb{W}g5$ 25.g4 $\mathbb{Q}h3\uparrow$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}5f4$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 28. $\mathbb{W}xe2$ $\mathbb{W}xc1\bar{\mp}$

Public Education Exercises 151-200

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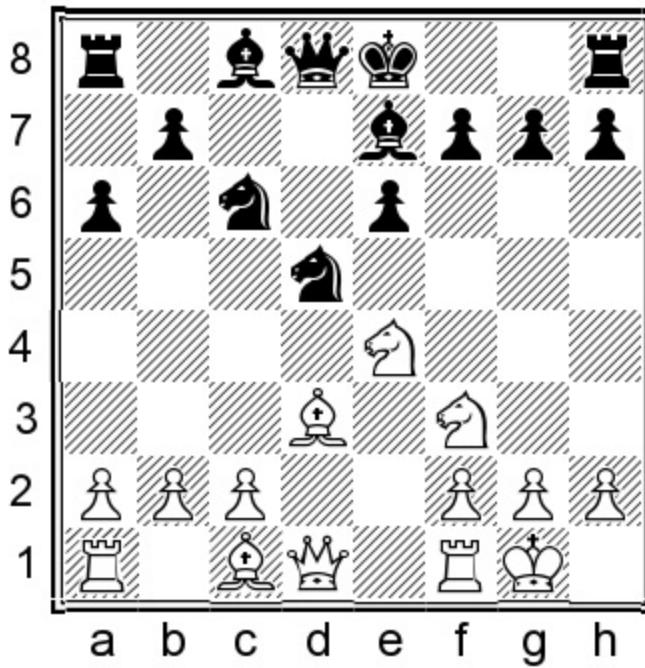
151. Anand – Arakhamia-Grant, Oakham 1990



Show/Hide Solution

9...♝g5! Getting rid of (or at least activating) the bad bishop before developing the g8-knight. I am not concerned that Stockfish thinks 9...♝c8 10.♞a3 ♝f6 is of equal value. Black would like to exchange the dark-squared bishops. 9...♝f6 is met by 10.♞d5± without ...♝g5 being possible. **10.♞d2** ♝f6 The knight may aim for the c5-square. 10...♝ge7 was also possible.

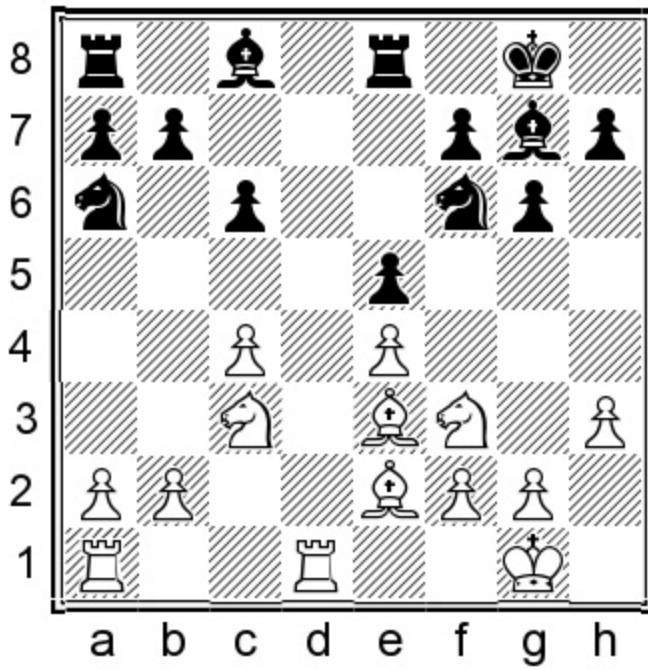
152. Anand – Gurevich, Wijk aan Zee 1990



Show/Hide Solution

A common pawn structure where White has three pawns on each wing and Black an extra pawn on the kingside. It's not often that Black manages to use the majority with ...e6-e5 and ...f7-f5. (Black is, after all, Black.) On the queenside, White can use the majority to gain space, but Black can also use the pawns for a minority attack. The question is often: who is first? **10.c4!±** If it were Black's move, 10...b5 would be a good choice. **10...♝f6** Black's pieces find themselves restricted. 10...♝db4?! does not help, since after 11.♝b1± Black's knight is in danger. **11.♛e2 0-0 12.♝d1 ♛c7 13.♝g5 ♝xe4 14.♝xe7 ♛xe7 15.♝xe4±** The c8-bishop is still a problem.

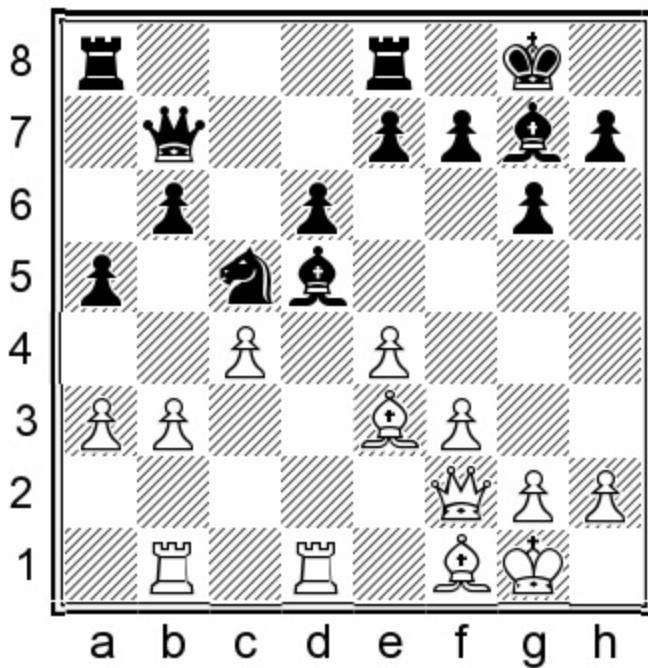
153. Karpov – Kasparov, Lyon/New York (5) 1990



Show/Hide Solution

12...♝f8 To slowly take control over the d4-square, which is potentially weak since White has advanced both the c- and e-pawns. Black's next move might be ...♞c5, attacking e4 and getting the knight closer to e6 and ultimately d4. Without ...♝f8, White would have pushed c4-c5 with the threat of ♜xa6, while also preparing ♝d2-c4, aiming at d6.

154..Kramnik – Ostojevic, Leningrad 1991



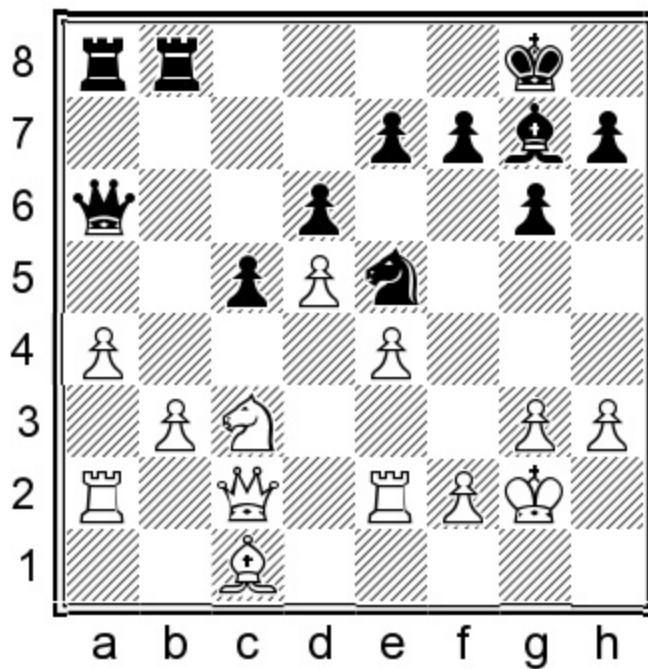
Show/Hide Solution

22.cxd5± With $\mathbb{Q}b5$ coming next, White has great prospects on the queenside light squares.

Vladimir Kramnik

"For me art and chess are closely related; both are forms in which the self finds beauty and expression."

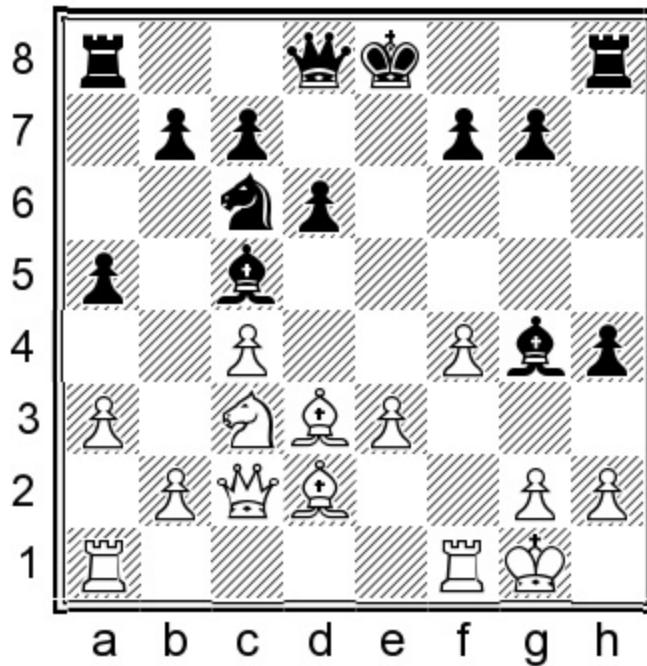
155. Spassky – Koch, Montpellier 1991



Show/Hide Solution

20. $\mathbb{Q}b5!±$ The set-up with a2-a4, b2-b3 and $\mathbb{Q}b5$ makes for a highly effective configuration on the queenside, depriving Black of any activity along the a- and b-files. Since Black can't challenge the knight, it's a positional disaster. **20...c4!?** is the best try for counterplay, but nothing that scares White. Black has no threats, and remember that White is a pawn up.

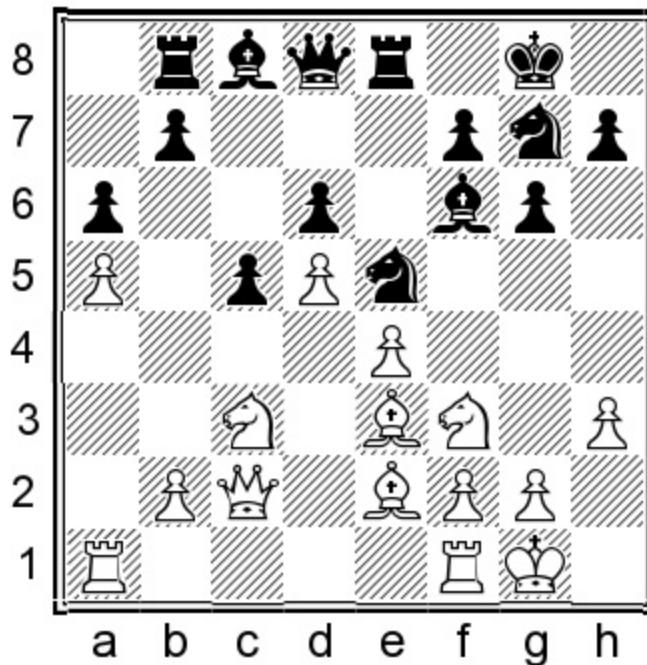
156. Smyslov – Blasek, Gelsenkirchen 1991



Show/Hide Solution

14.h3!± Not allowing ...h4-h3. White's minor pieces are much better than Black's, in addition to White's favourable pawn structure.

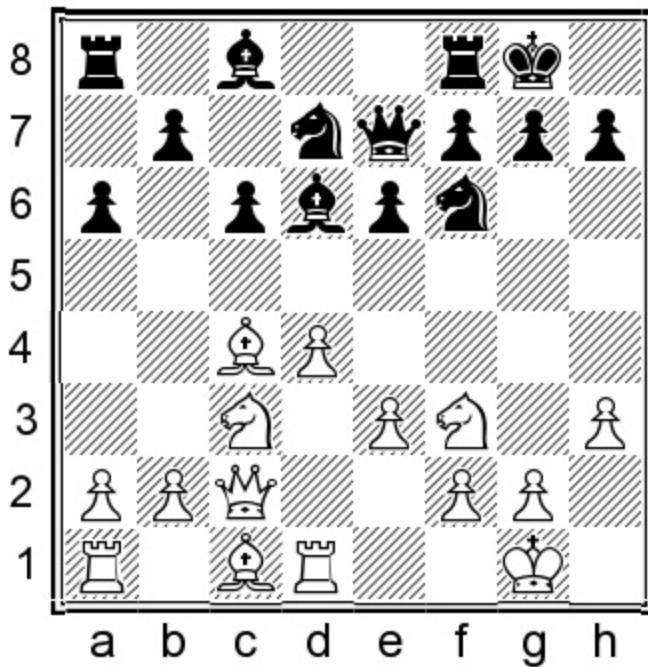
157. Topalov – Dochev, Pazardzik 1991



Show/Hide Solution

17.♗d2± Avoiding unnecessary exchanges, and preparing f2-f4 followed by ♘c4.

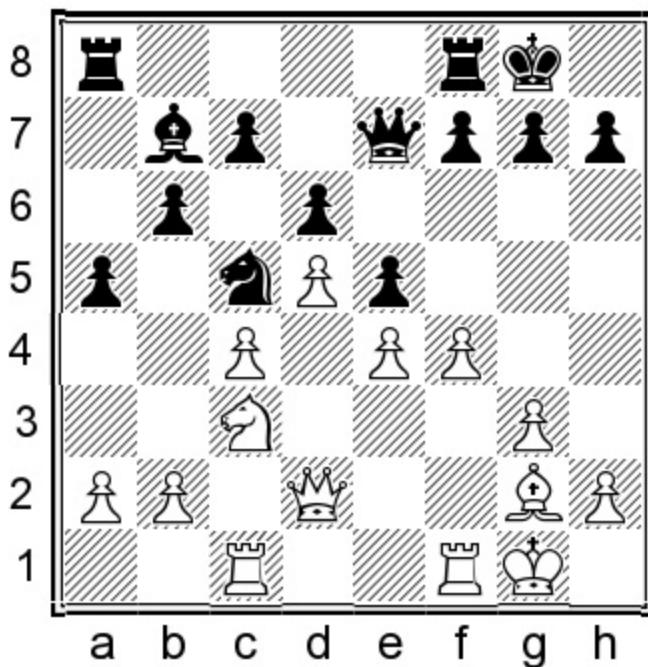
158. Karpov – Anand, Brussels (2) 1991



Show/Hide Solution

11...b5 11...c5 12.dxc5 ♜xc5 13.a4± 12.♗d3 c5= Since Black had already played ...a7-a6, it was possible to advance the c-pawn immediately after advancing its neighbour. Note that **13.♗e4** is met by **13...c4! 14.♗xd6 ♗xd6 15.♗f1 ♗b7** when Black's control of the light squares compensates for White's bishop pair.

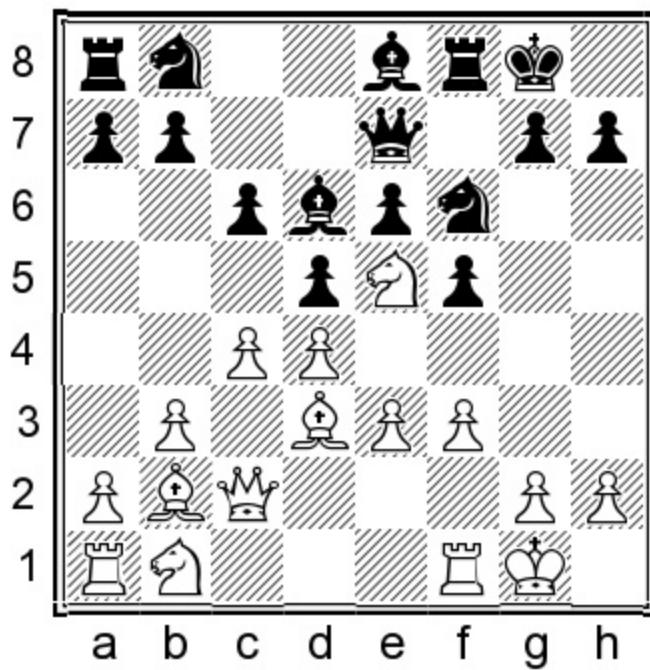
159. Karpov – Salov, Reykjavik 1991



Show/Hide Solution

17.f5± There was no way to increase the pressure on the e5-pawn, so instead White takes space and plans to advance further on the kingside (18.f6 is a threat). Moreover, the plan of b2-b3, a2-a3 and b3-b4 can also be prepared. The pawn structure gives White an advantage all over the board.

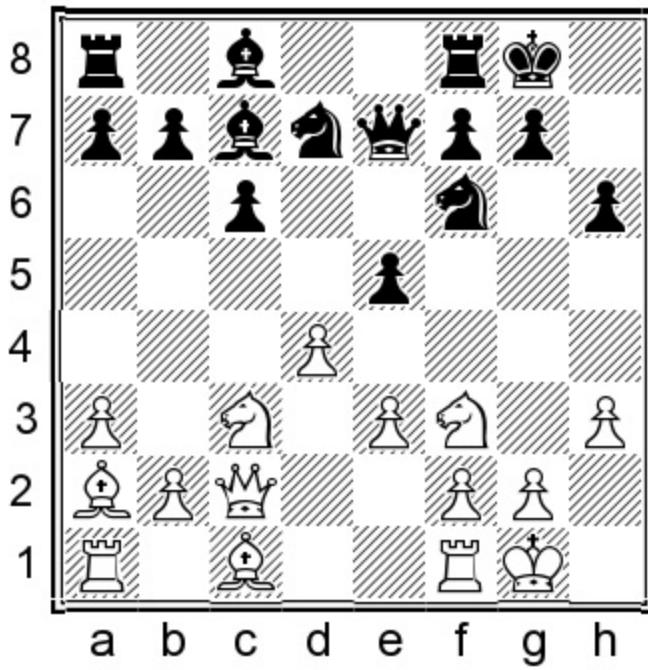
160. Lindstedt – Kramnik, Maringa 1991



Show/Hide Solution

11...c5! Not allowing White to gain space with c4-c5. Kramnik's move also gives the b8-knight the option of moving to c6. 11...♝bd7 12.c5 ♝c7 13.b4 a5 14.a3±

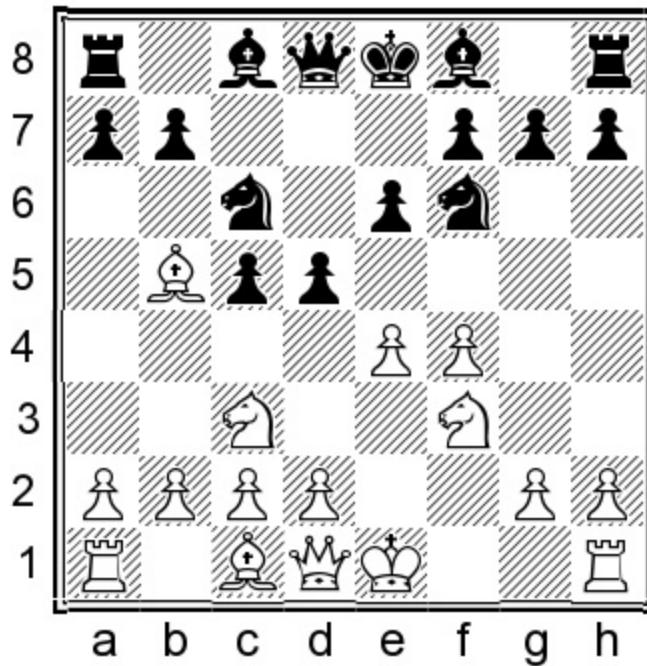
161. Karpov – Anand, Brussels (8) 1991



Show/Hide Solution

13. $\mathbb{Q}h4!$ Threatening 14. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ and 14. $\mathbb{Q}f5$. 13. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ e4! was the move Black planned when playing ...h7-h6, as $\mathbb{Q}g5$ is no longer possible. 14. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}g6$ $\mathbb{W}d6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}e6\infty$ 13... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 13... exd4 14. exd4 $\mathbb{W}d6$ 15. g3± White is threatening $\mathbb{Q}f4$, winning a piece, and after 15... $\mathbb{W}xd4?$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ that is going to happen. **14. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{W}f8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}b5!$** Exploiting Black's temporary lack of coordination. 15. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ leads to an IQP position with a modest plus for White. The game move is better. **15... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 15... cxb5 16. $\mathbb{W}xc7\pm$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}d2$** On the way to b4, trapping the queen. **16... a5 17. $\mathbb{Q}c3\pm$** White keeps a nice advantage. 17. dxе5 was played in the game.

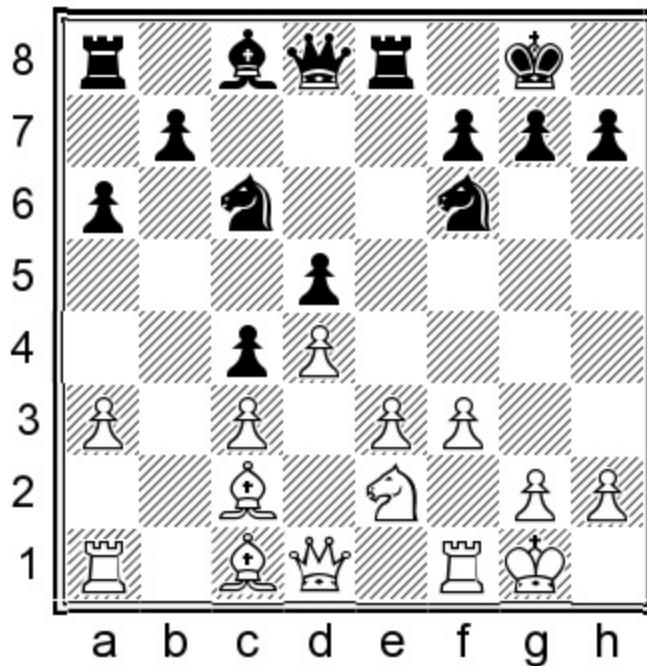
162. Kasparov – Garrido Fernandez, Cordoba (Simul) 1992



Show/Hide Solution

6.♗xc6†! Black should generally strive to avoid doubled pawns on the c-file when White still has the option of f2-f4. (Or if f2-f4 has already been played, as is the case here.) It is also possible to start with 6.e5 before taking on c6. **6...bxc6 7.d3 7.♗e2?!** allowed 7...c4! and Black will get rid of the doubled pawn while activating the bishop via a6. **7.e5 ♗d7 8.d3** is a promising alternative. (**8.b3 ♗a6 9.d3 c4** gives Black reasonable play.) **7...c4!?** Black should immediately exchange one of the c-pawns. **8.e5 ♗d7 9.d4±** Black still has a restricted light-squared bishop.

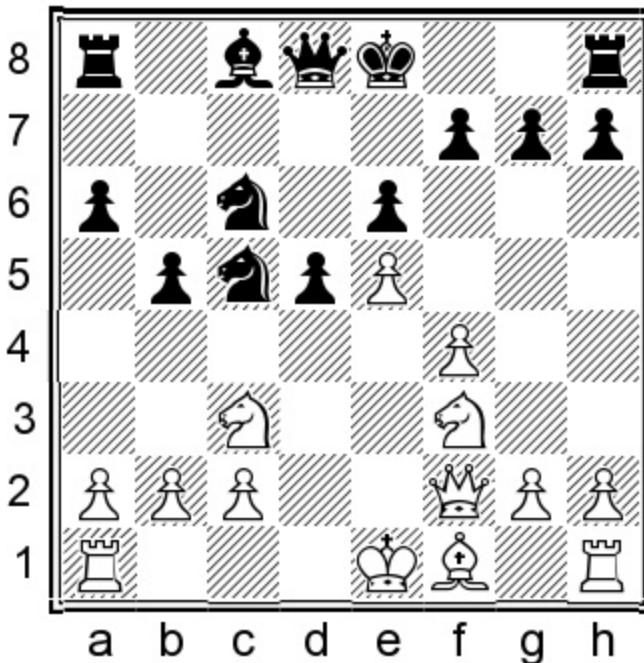
163. Kasparov – Tejero, Cordoba (Simul) 1992



Show/Hide Solution

13.♘g3 The best square for the knight, preparing e3-e4. 13.g4 h5!? \rightleftarrows ; For the record, Stockfish suggests the nonsense move 13.♖b1. A rook on an open file is useful, but White should concentrate on the centre. **13...♗a5** 13...h5! stops e3-e4 for the moment, at the cost of weakening the kingside. 14.h4!? \pm forces through e3-e4, even if it gives Black the g4-square. **14.♗d2 b5 15.e4+**

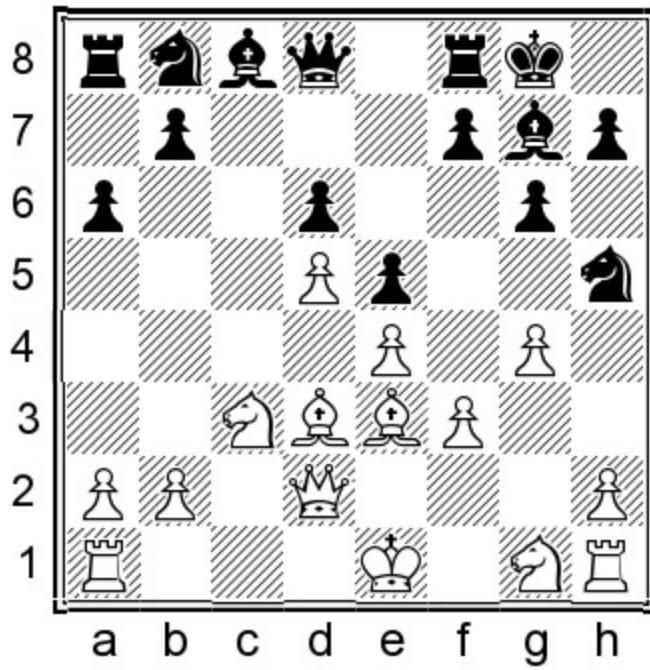
164. Anand – Bareev, Dortmund 1992



Show/Hide Solution

11...♗b6 Better than retreating with the knight. The pin is no problem and Black can follow up with ...b5-b4 and ...a6-a5. Trying to be active backfires: 11...♘e4? 12.♗xe4 dxе4 13.♗d2 ♗d4 14.c3 e3 15.cxd4 exf2† 16.♔xf2 ♗xd4 17.♗e4 \pm

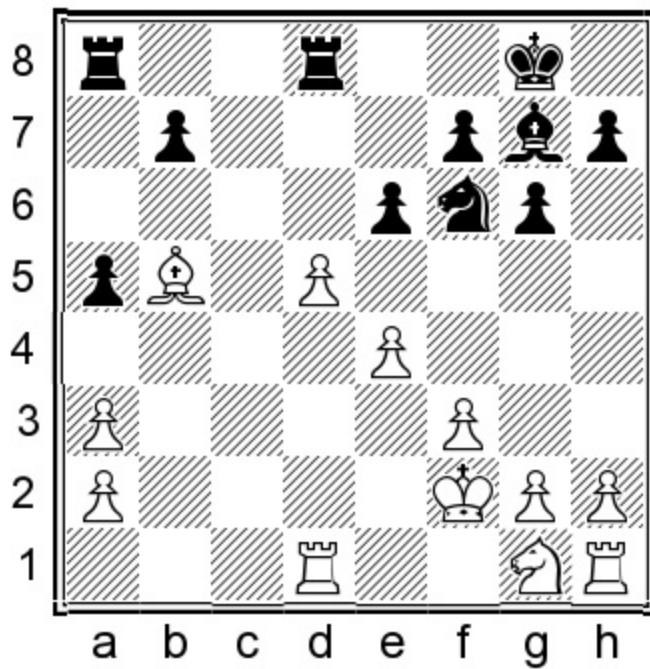
165. Kamsky – Kasparov, Manila (Ol) 1992



Show/Hide Solution

11... $\mathbb{Q}f4!$ Rather than going backwards, Black offers a pawn to open the diagonal. Kamsky declined, but if he had taken the pawn, the game might have continued: **12. $\mathbb{Q}xf4?$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 13. $\mathbb{W}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14. $\mathbb{W}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 15. $\mathbb{W}a3$ $b5\uparrow$**

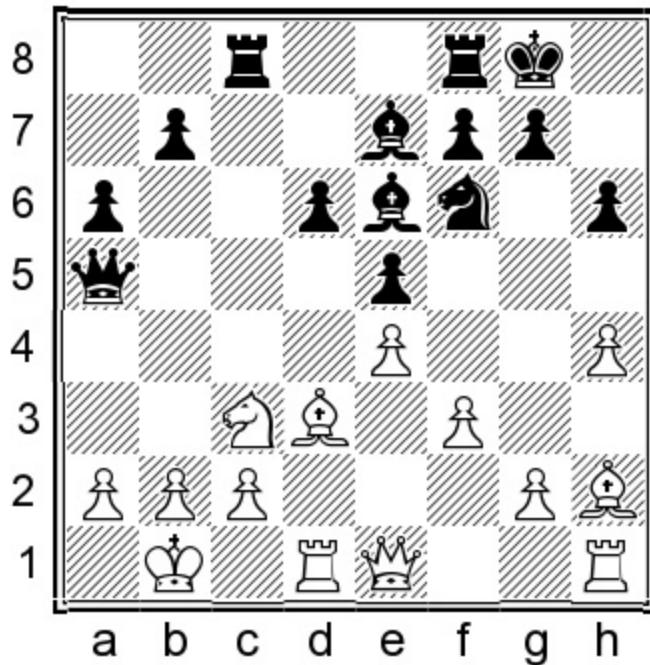
166. Kramnik – Nunn, Manila (Ol) 1992



Show/Hide Solution

17.d6± The pawn won't queen in the near future, but it keeps Black restricted.

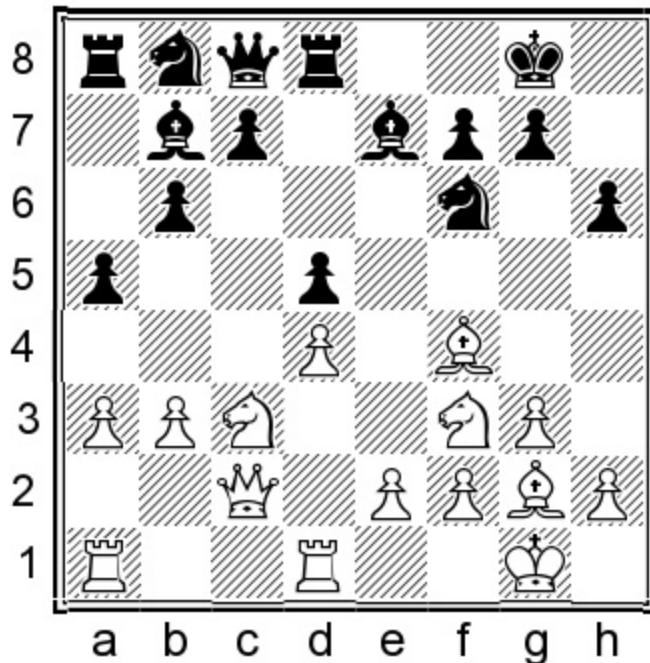
167. Kveinys – Kramnik, Debrecen 1992



Show/Hide Solution

18... $\mathbb{B}xc3!$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xc3$ $\mathbb{W}xa2\#$ 20. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $d5!+$ Activating the bishop and avoiding $\mathbb{W}a3$ with a queen exchange. Now ... $\mathbb{B}c8$ followed by ... $\mathbb{W}a1\#$ and ... $\mathbb{B}b4\#$ is a strong threat. 20... $\mathbb{B}c8?$ 21. $\mathbb{W}b4=$ enables White to survive.

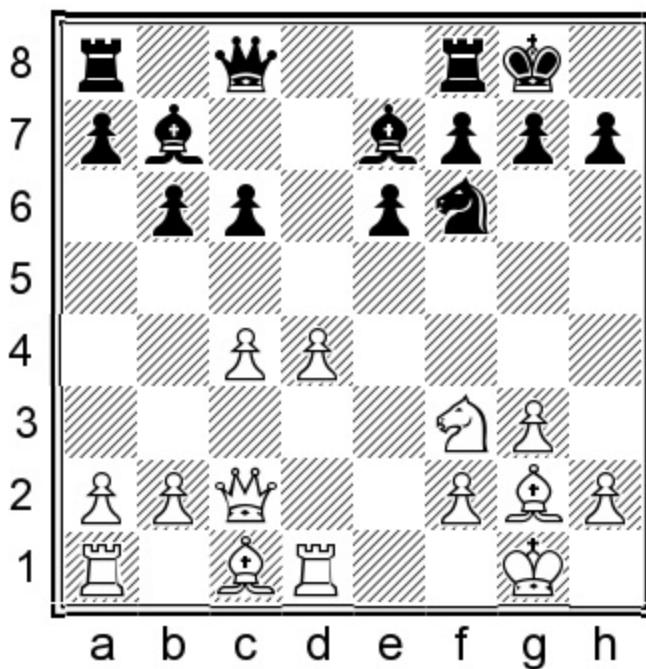
168. Karpov – Lobron, Baden-Baden 1992



Show/Hide Solution

15.♗h4!± A standard idea when Black has fianchettoed the light-squared bishop (no ...♝xf5) and played ...h7-h6 (no ...g7-g6). 15.♗a4 does not win material due to 15...♝a6. 15.♗e5± is a decent option but the text move is stronger. By the way, it is also necessary to see that 15...g5? doesn't win a piece due to 16.♗f5 with a huge threat.

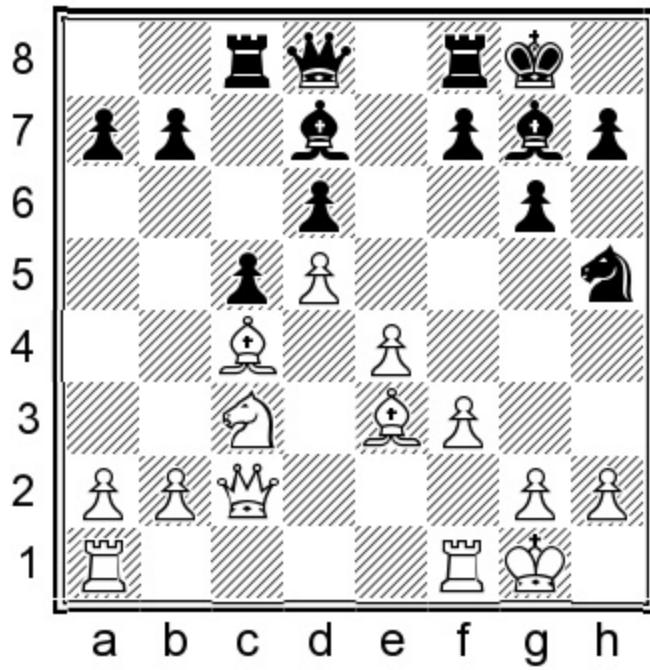
169. Kasparov – Dubiel, Katowice (Simul) 1993



Show/Hide Solution

14.c5!± Locking in Black's bishop on b7 makes it worth giving up the d5-square. White can manoeuvre the knight with ♘e5-c4, and also wants to exchange dark-squared bishops with ♘g5 or ♘f4-d6.

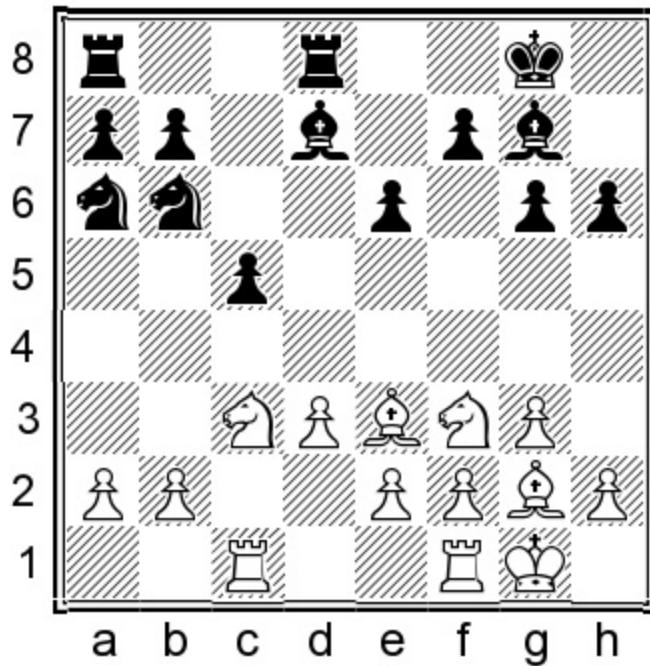
170. Karpov – Timman, Moscow (Blitz) 1993



Show/Hide Solution

16...f5 Threatening ...f5-f4 to fortify the e5-square. It's possible to include 16...a6 17.a4 before 17...f5; 16...Qd4?! is ineffective. 17.Wd2± 17.exf5 gxf5± 17...Qxf5 is also possible, but taking over the e4-square with the pawn is more ambitious. 18.Qfe1 18.f4 Qe8 gives White concrete problems. **18...Qe5±** Timman played 18...Wh4.

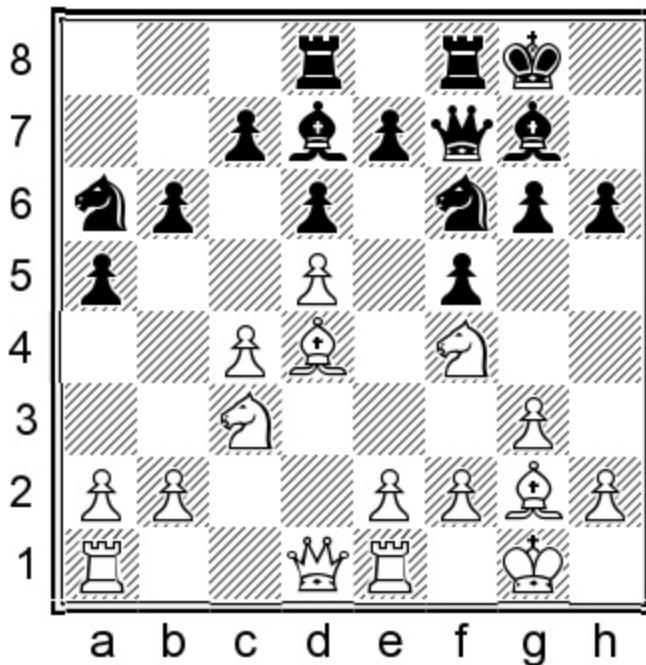
171. Kramnik – Short, Amsterdam 1993



Show/Hide Solution

14.♘d2!± The knight heads towards b3 (a threat) and a5 (a severe threat). It's important to open the long diagonal before Black gets time for ...♝c6.

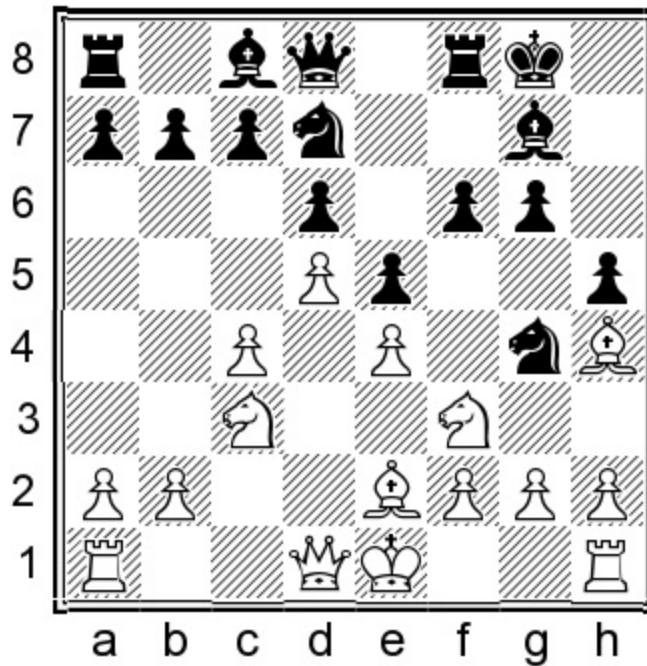
172. Oll – Topalov, Groningen 1993



Show/Hide Solution

16.e4! Achieving e2-e4 is usually a good sign for White in the Dutch. Black will be left with two central pawns against one, but also a weakened kingside (without the f-pawn). In this particular case, White obtains nice pressure along the e-file. **16...fxe4 17.♘xe4 g5 18.♘e6±** Forcing Black to part with the bishop, after which White plays on the light squares.

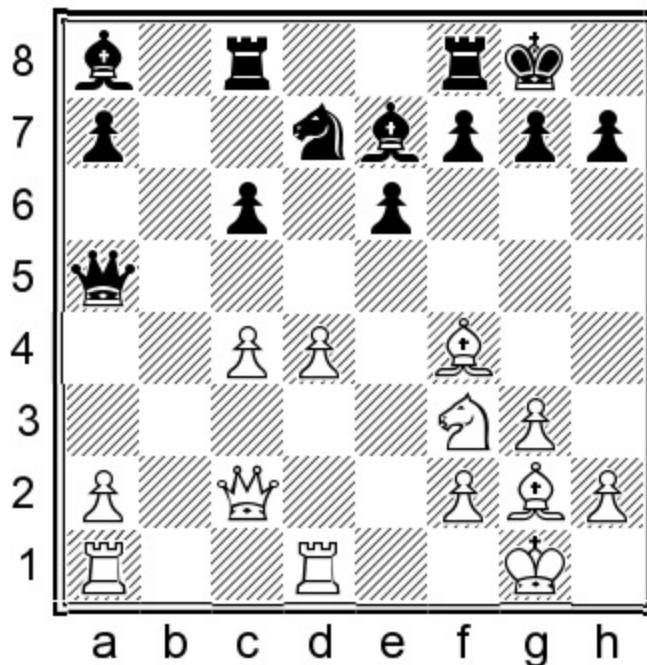
173. Kramnik – Kasparov, Moscow (Rapid) 1994



Show/Hide Solution

11...♝d2 11.h3 also saves the bishop, but it won't be happy on h2. **11...♝h6 12.f3** The bishop can retreat to f2 in case of ...g5, which was a threat in the initial position. The resulting position has been tested dozens of times in top-level games, so I guess that the players on both sides are happy with their chances.

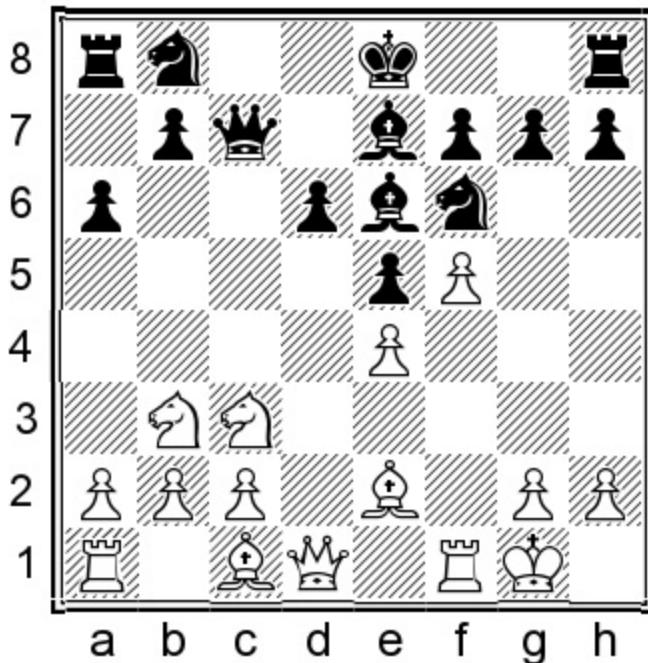
174. Salov – Spassky, Montpellier 1994



Show/Hide Solution

17.c5! Killing the bishop on a8, and getting a winning positional advantage. More white than black pieces can reach the kingside, so White will win there in the long run. Let's see how Salov executed another plan and quickly got a tremendous knight on d6. 17... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d6!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd6+-$

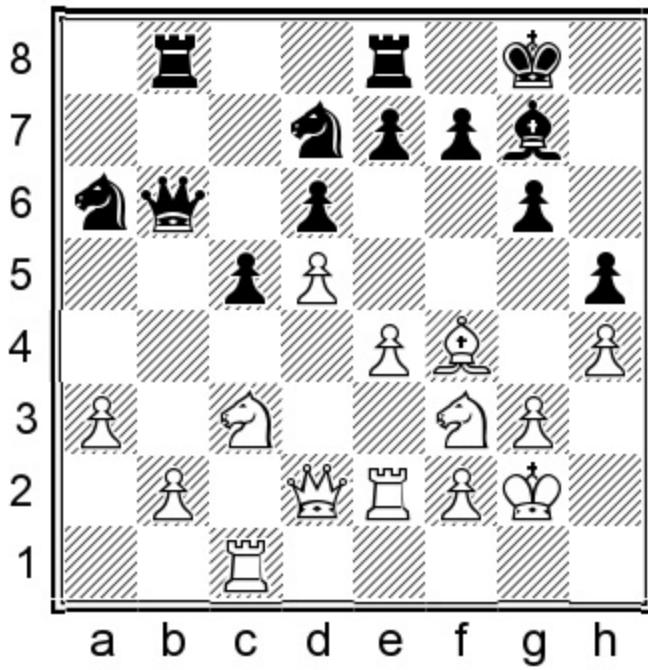
175. Oll – Kasparov, Moscow (Ol) 1994



Show/Hide Solution

A few dozen grandmasters have reached this position, and everyone chose 10... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ with decent results for Black. 10... $\mathbb{Q}xb3?$ \pm gives up the bishop with the light squares already weakened, and White stands clearly better after either recapture. 10... $\mathbb{Q}d7!?$ moves backwards and blocks the best square for the knight. Some test solvers preferred it though, as it keeps a piece that can control d5. Still, this is a chapter about standard moves, so we will note the retreat as an interesting alternative while keeping our main line as the primary solution.

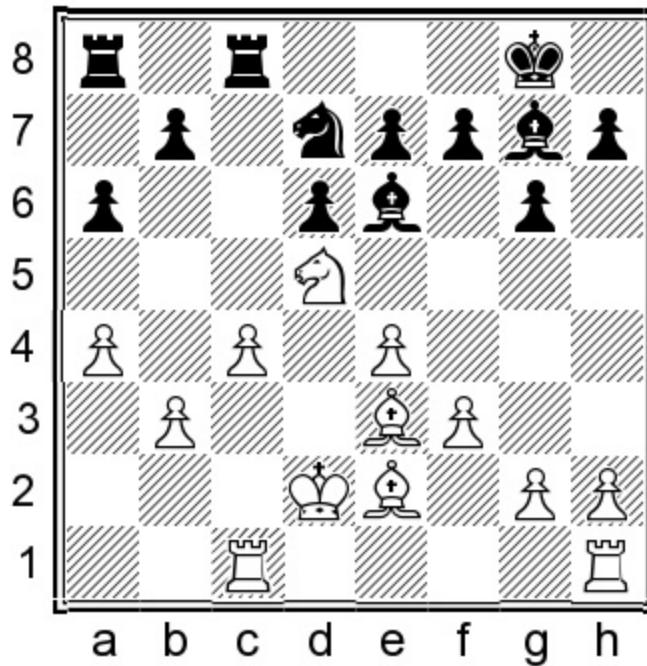
176. Karpov – Polgar, Alma-Ata (Blitz) 1995



Show/Hide Solution

20.e5!+– Black is much slower than usual on the queenside and has not managed to exchange any of the knights. There is thus time for White's main pawn lever in Benko positions: e4-e5. It activates the rook on e2, closes the bishop on g7 and prepares ♜e4 (which will not necessarily be played). Here White also threatens e5-e6, weakening the g6-pawn decisively. There is one key position to evaluate after the exchanges on e5: **20...dxe5 21.♗xe5 ♛xe5 22.♗xe5 ♛xe5 23.♗xe5 ♕xb2** White avoids the queen exchange and gets a winning attack with ♜e4 and/or g3-g4. **24.♕f4!+–** is the best among several possible moves.

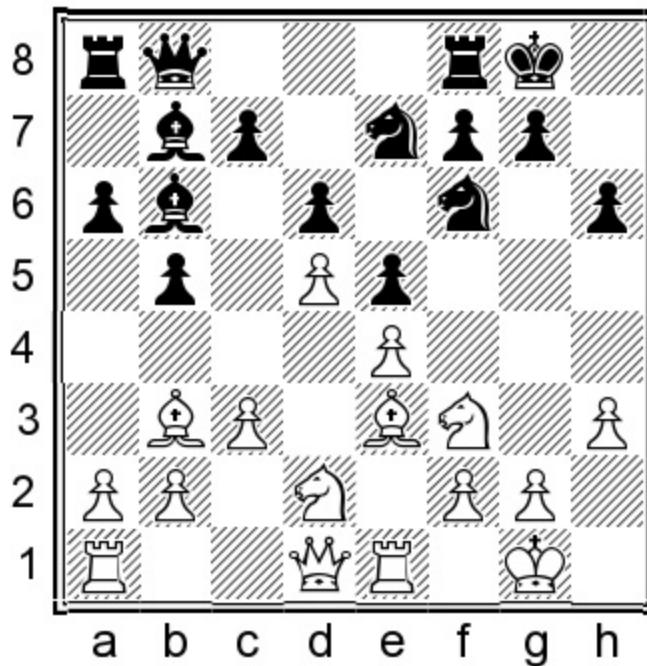
177. Hracek – Khalifman, Germany 1995



Show/Hide Solution

16...♝xd5! Rather than spending a tempo to defend the e7-pawn, Black gives up the bishop pair to play for a dark-square blockade. It is worth knowing ...♝b2-a3-c5 as a possible manoeuvre, as well as ...♝e8 followed by ...e7-e6 as a way to create counterplay. Black should avoid simply waiting, which allows White to push the kingside pawns with an initiative. **17.cxd5 ♘b2!±** The bishop is on its way to c5 to exchange one half of White's bishop pair and play for the dark squares. It also fights for control over the c-file.

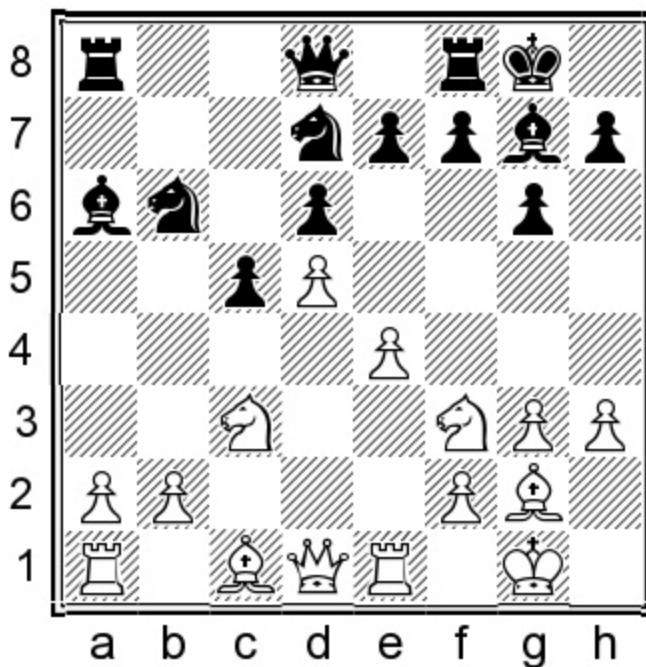
178. Anand – Kamsky, Las Palmas (3) 1995



Show/Hide Solution

14. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $cxb6\pm$ The change in the queenside structure means that Black can no longer attack the centre with ...c7-c6. White will slowly prepare the standard kingside attack.

179. Aseev – Khalifman, St. Petersburg 1995



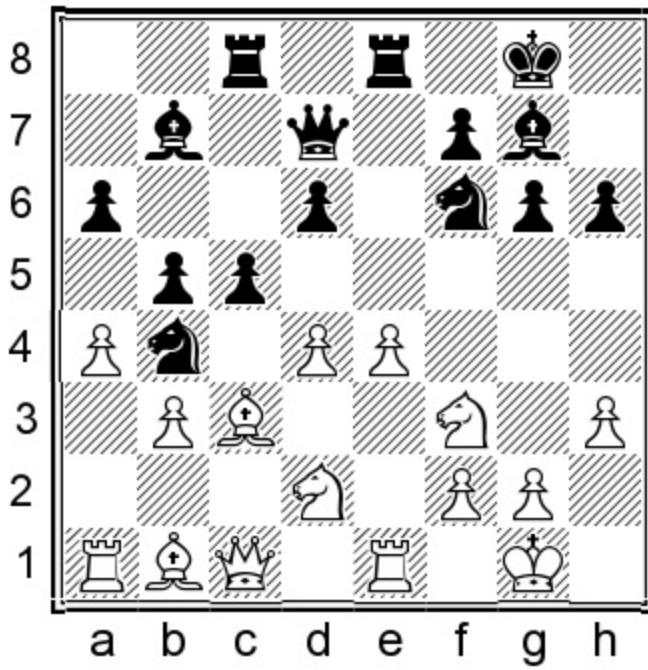
Show/Hide Solution

13... $\mathbb{Q}c4! \mp$ Preparing ... $\mathbb{W}a5/b6$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}de5$. The knight on c4 is difficult to chase away.

Alexander Khalifman

“Never play for the win, never play for the draw – just play chess!”

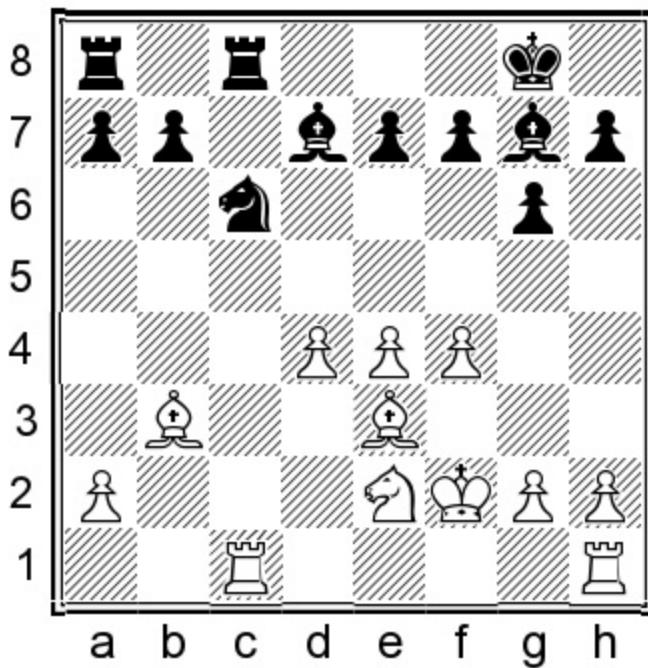
180. Anand – Kamsky, Las Palmas 1995



Show/Hide Solution

20.d5!± Avoiding problems on the c-file, while leaving Black's queenside pieces awkwardly placed. It's not easy for White to break through, although in the long run it may be possible to use the f-pawn. 20.dxc5?? would of course be met by 20... $\mathbb{Q}xc5+$ with a terrible pin. 20. $\mathbb{W}b2?$ leaves the f4-square undefended (... $\mathbb{Q}f6-h5-f4$), but it also has another flaw: 20... $\mathbb{Q}bd5!$ 21.exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xe1\#$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe1$ b4±

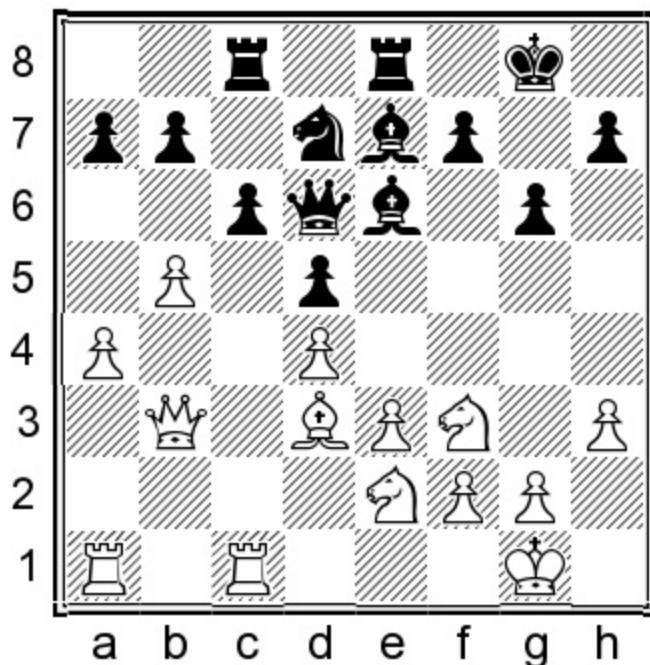
181. Kamsky – Anand, Las Palmas (10) 1995



Show/Hide Solution

16... $\mathbb{Q}a5\rightleftarrows$ Heading for c4, Black's key square in the Grünfeld. White has to allow ... $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ or ... $\mathbb{Q}c4$.

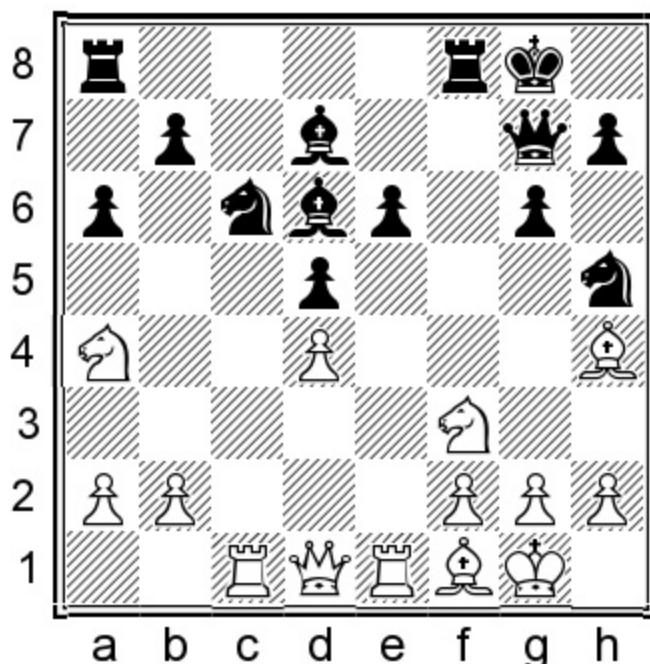
182. Karpov – Piket, Monte Carlo (Rapid) 1995



Show/Hide Solution

18...c5! Black should not allow bxc6. 19.dxc5 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 20. $\mathbb{W}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}fd4=$ The squares on the c-file, mainly c4, compensate for the isolated pawn.

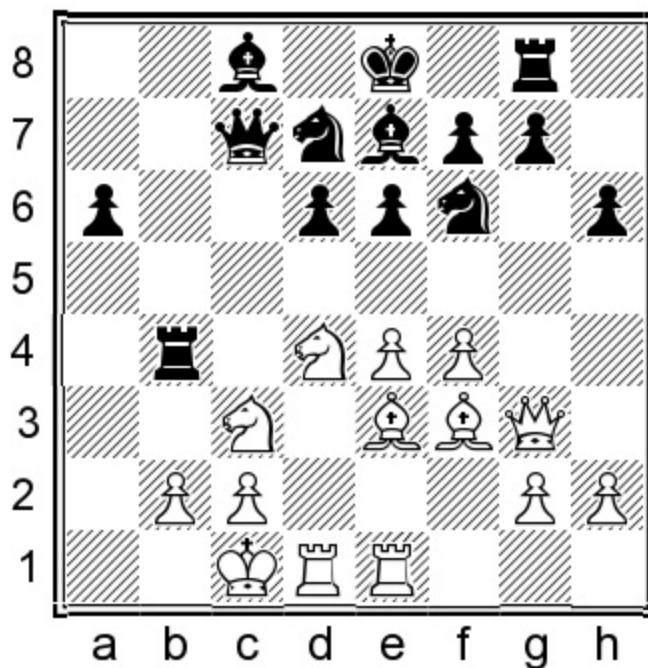
183. Ponomariov – Firman, Kyiv 1995



Show/Hide Solution

18...♝xf3! A standard sacrifice in the French. It's almost too simple now, as Black immediately picks up the d-pawn. **19.gxf3** **19.♛xf3?** **♛xd4!** forks the loose pieces on a4 and h4. **19...♝xd4+** Black should keep the queens on the board, as White's king is weak. **19...♛xd4?** was the incorrect choice made by Black in the game.

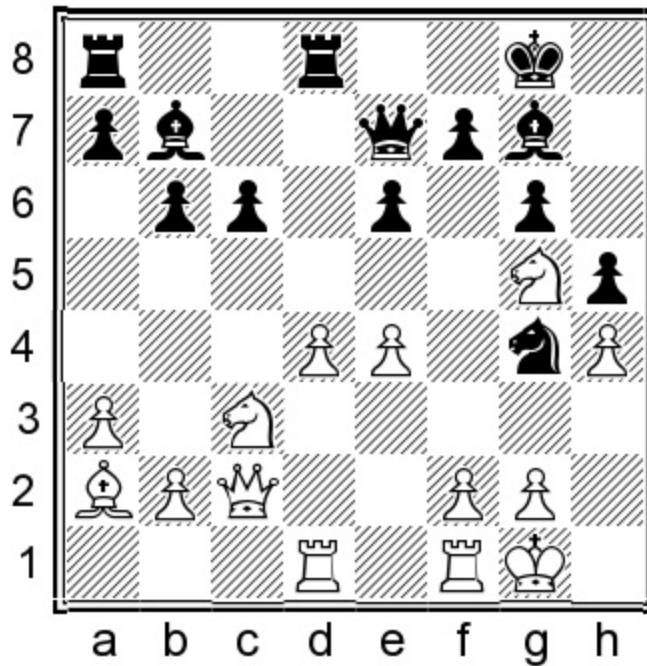
184. Morozevich – Anand, Moscow (Rapid) 1995



Show/Hide Solution

16...g5! **17.f5?** **17.fxg5 hxg5+** gives Black the e5-square, but White should have preferred this. **17...e5** **18.♝b3 g4 19.♝e2 ♜xb3!** **19...♝xe4+** is also good, but the exchange sac is immediately winning. **20.cxb3 ♜xe4–+** The queen is trapped.

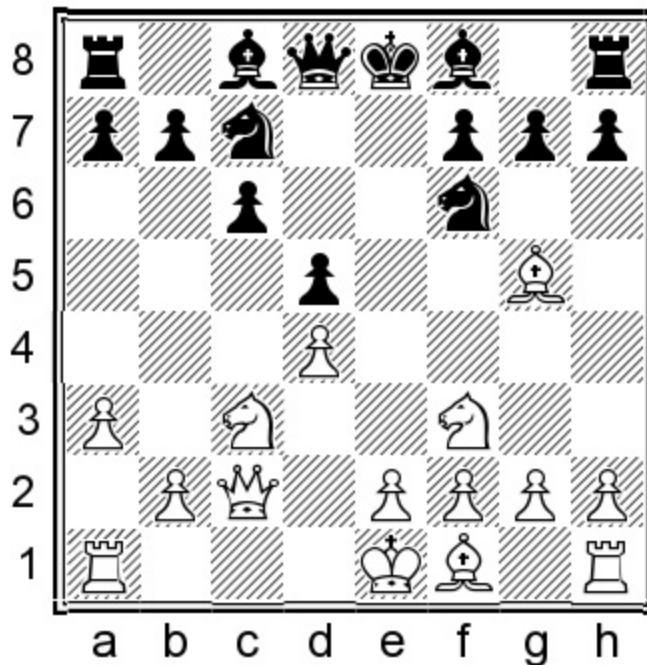
185. Kramnik – Short, Dortmund 1995



Show/Hide Solution

20.e5!± 21.♖xe6 followed by 22.♗xg6 is a threat, and ♜e2-f4 is a way to include another piece in the attack. Weakening the d5-square is no problem, as Black does not have a suitable piece to post there.

186. Vaganian – Kasparov, Horgen 1995

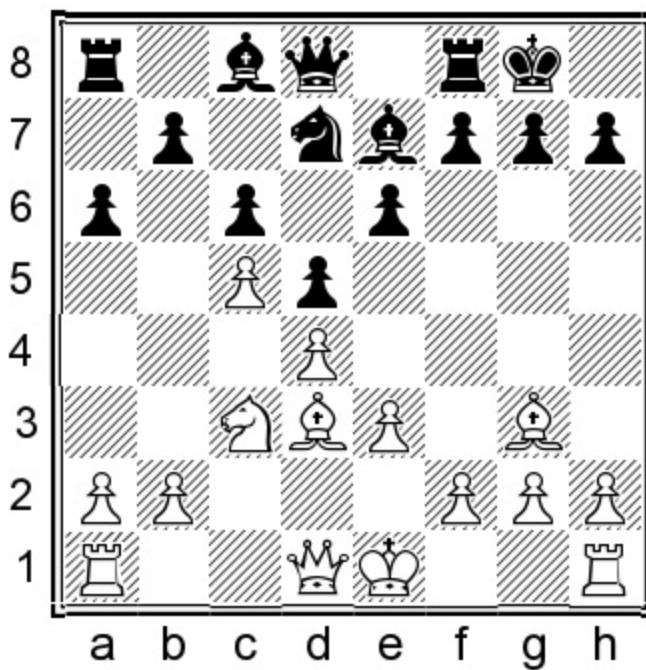


Show/Hide Solution

8...g6! Developing the bishop to f5 before White has time to stop it with ♖d3. A test reader argued that 8...♝e6 9.♖h4 ♝e7 is just as good, as there's no constructive way for White to stop ...g7-g6,

$\dots \mathbb{Q}g7$ and $\dots \mathbb{Q}f5$. However, I don't agree. Executing $\dots \mathbb{Q}f5$ immediately gives more flexibility. Maybe the knight can jump to another square than g7. 9.e3 9.e4 dxe4 10. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}e7=$ leaves Black ready for further exchanges. 9... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 11. $\mathbb{W}xd3=$ Black has got rid of a piece that's normally passive. The other bishop will go to e7, as placing it on g7 would leave it with few active prospects.

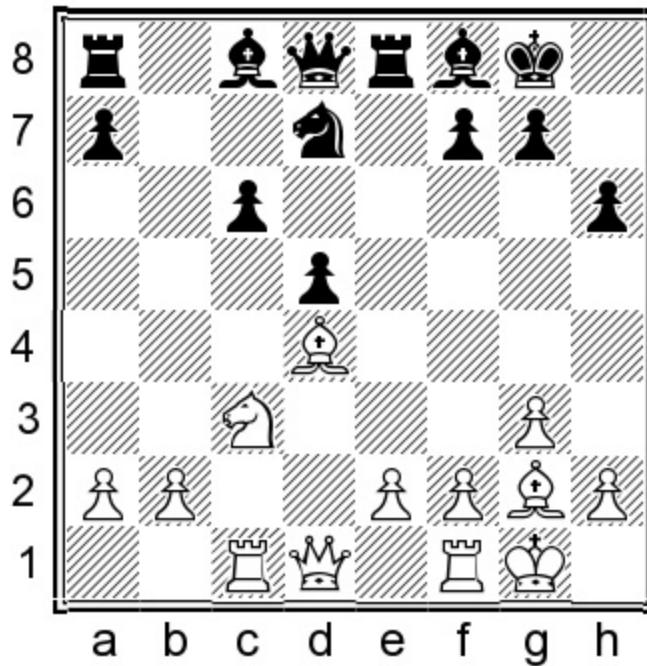
187. Kasparov – Frolik, Internet (Simul) 1995



Show/Hide Solution

11...e5! Undermining the c5-pawn. White will not capture, but Black is happy to exchange pawns on d4, as the d4-pawn will be slightly weak and it will be easier for Black to fight for the e4-square. Black could also consider the space-gaining ...e5-e4, possibly as a first step in an attack. Either way, Black has better prospects than in the cramped structure with the pawn on e6. It is possible to delay ...e6-e5 but, as I have stated so often during those exercises, starting with the essential idea gives you more flexibility.

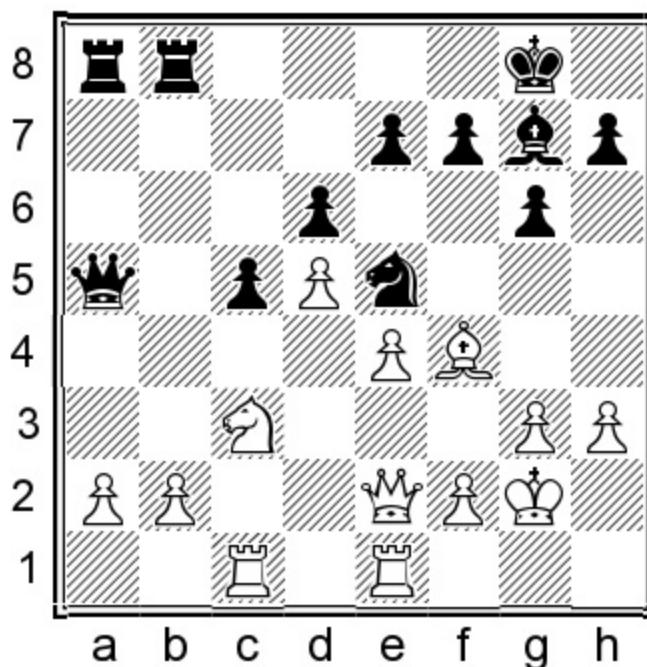
188. Karpov – Fritz, The Hague 1996



Show/Hide Solution

15. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ Taking control over the c5-square. Karpov later exchanged the dark-squared bishops and the queens, increasing the significance of Black's weaknesses. 15.e4? c5+

189. Karpov – Salov, Belgrade 1996

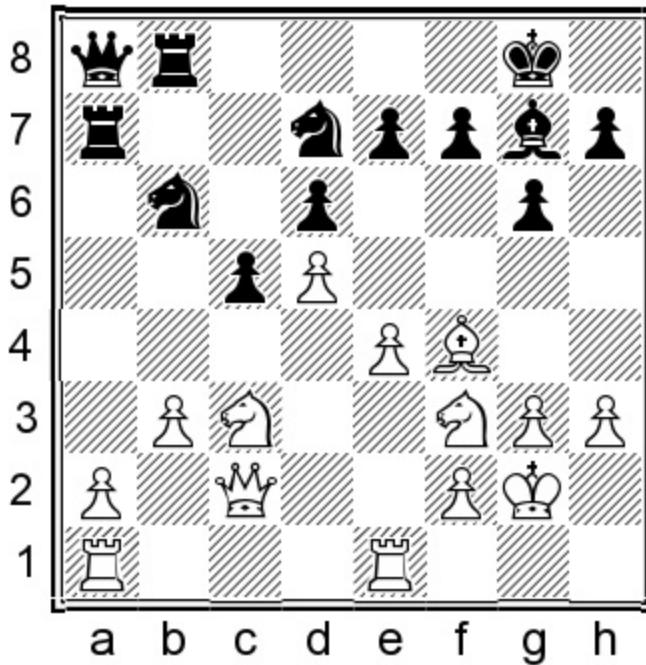


Show/Hide Solution

17... $\mathbb{W}a6!$ Black is not unhappy to exchange queens, but more important is the ability to access the c4- and d3-squares. For that reason, White needs to capture on e5. **18. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 19. $\mathbb{E}c2$ $\mathbb{W}xe2$**

20.♖exe2 Black can either take on c3 or double the rooks. The ...♗a6 idea can be delayed in the initial position, but... you know the rest.

190. Ulibin – Khalifman, Elista 1996

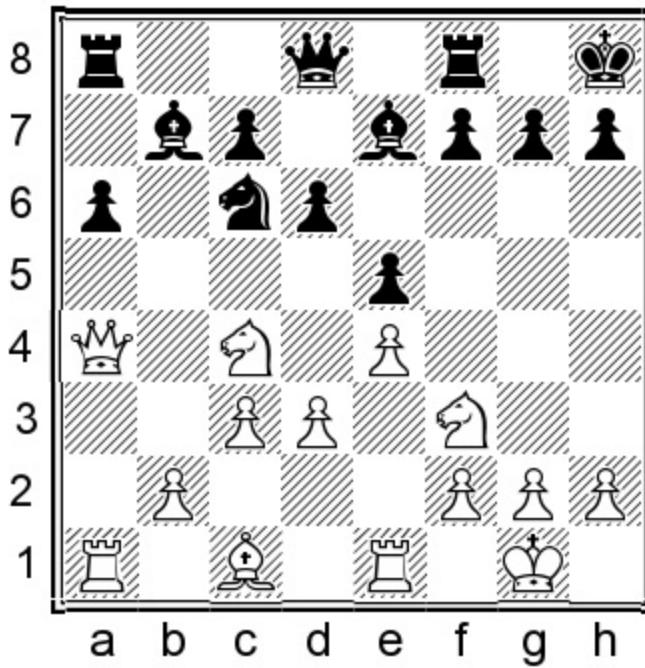


Show/Hide Solution

17.a4!± Before Black has time for ...c5-c4. A slow move like 17.♖e2 is punished by 17...c4 when 18.b4? is met by: 18...♗a3+– Black can win back the pawn but it backfires: 17...c4 18.b4 ♖xc3

19.♗xc3 ♗xa4 The square that will secure White a winning position is not g7, but c6: **20.♘d4!+–**

191. Anand – Timman, Amsterdam 1996



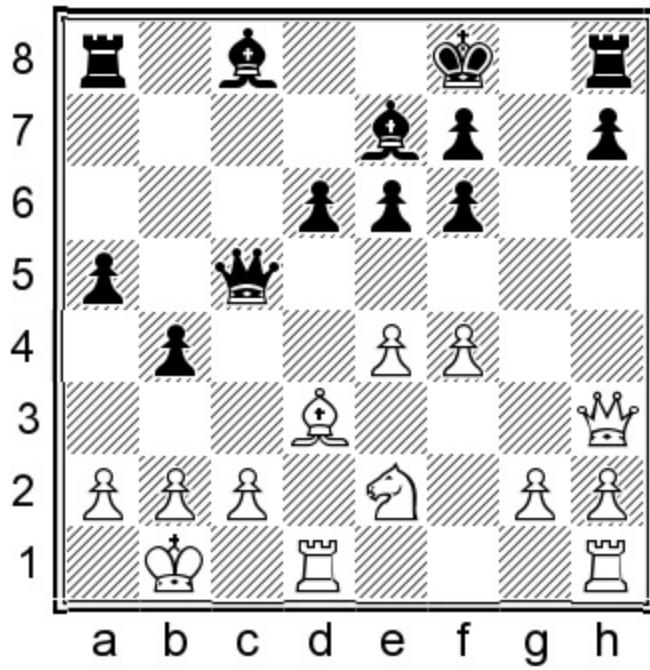
Show/Hide Solution

15...f5! Softening up the long diagonal for the light-squared bishop that has no counterpart. **16.♗e3** **16.exf5 ♖xf5 17.♗e3 ♖xf3!?** is a good exchange sacrifice, although retreating the rook is also entirely possible. **16...f4** **16...fxe4 17.dxe4 ♜e8=** was possible, but Timman aims for a kingside attack. **17.♗d5 g5∞**

Viswanathan Anand

"In 1996, the players at the VSB tournament in Amsterdam sent me a card for my wedding with this dedication: 'Anand, congratulations on your wedding. You were a great player – now be ready to lose 50 points.'"

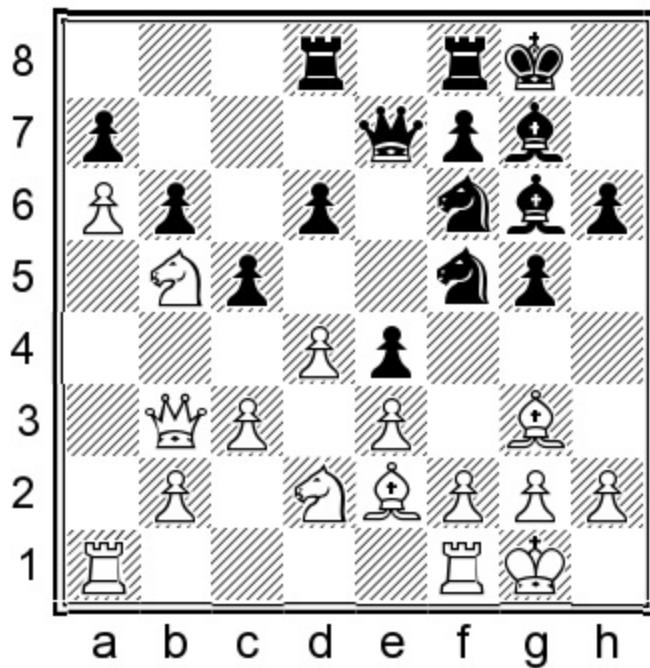
192. Kasparov – Kramnik, Amsterdam 1996



Show/Hide Solution

17...h5! Preventing $\mathbb{W}h6\#$, as well as stopping White from posting a piece on h5 later. **18.¤c1** 18.f5 is met by 18...a4 19.¤f4 $\mathbb{W}e5\#$ and ...a4-a3. **18...a4** Kramnik's proposal, which is nice for Black. 18...d5?! was the game. Also possible is the unusual 18...f5!? 19.exf5 exf5# intending ...a5-a4 and ...¤f6.

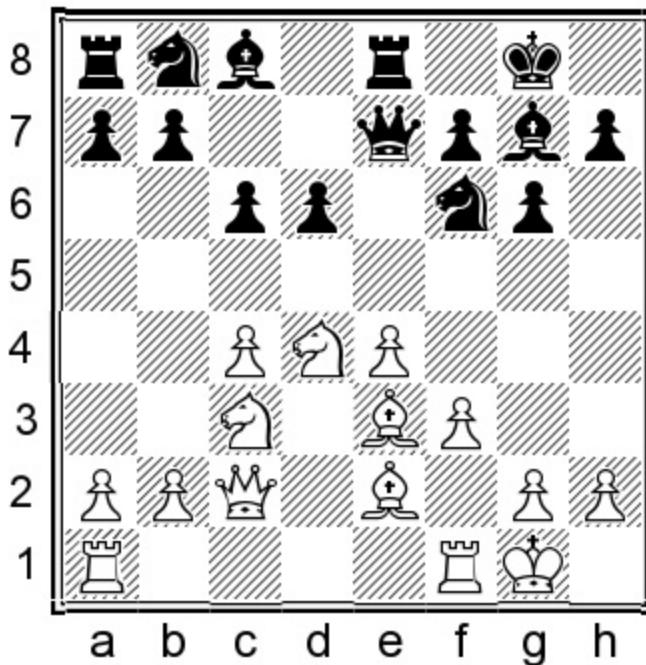
193. Short – Kramnik, Moscow (Rapid) 1996



Show/Hide Solution

20...h5, Kramnik has all his minor pieces on the kingside, and uses the exposed bishop on g3 as a point of attack. Other moves are playable, but less threatening for the opponent. The following lines are not a part of the exercise, but just showing that it's not easy for White to find the best moves.
21.♘c4! 21.dxc5?! bxc5 22.♘c4 allows 22...d5!± as the knight can't jump to e5. **21...h4 22.♗xd6 ♗xd6 23.♗bxd6! ♘xd6** 23...cx d4 24.cxd4 ♘xd6 25.♗xd6 ♖xd6 26.♗b5!↗ White gets counterplay against the g5-pawn and on the c-file. **24.dxc5!** 24.♗xd6? ♖xd6± **24...♖e6 25.cxb6 axb6=**

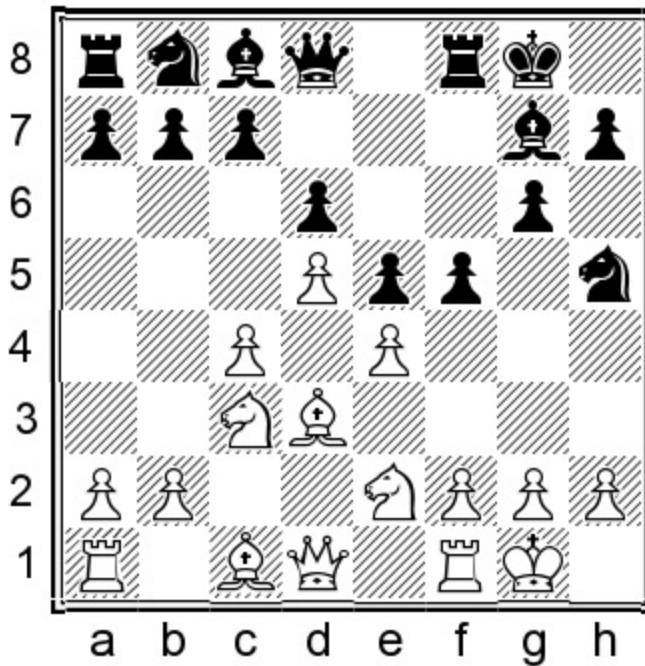
194. Shirov – Topalov, Dortmund 1996



Show/Hide Solution

11...d5! Releasing Black's position thanks to the threats along the e-file. (White to move would have stopped it by ♕fe1, with rook against queen.) **12.cxd5 cxd5 12...♗xd5 13.♕f2 ♗xc3 14.bxc3± 13.♗d3=** 13.♗b5 ♗d7=

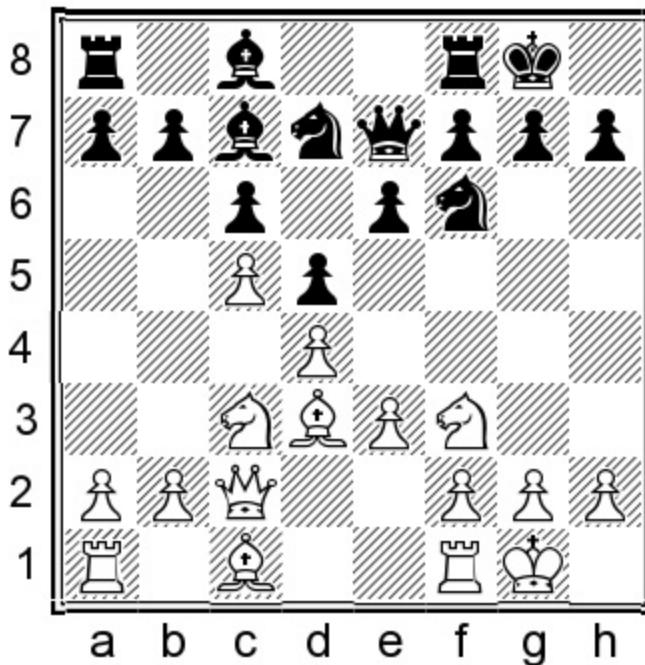
195. Kasparov – Maroulis, Corfu (Simul) 1996



Show/Hide Solution

9.exf5! With the bishop on d3, White should make sure to open the diagonal. (Otherwise Black closes it with ...f5-f4.) 9. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}f4!$ 10.exf5 $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 11. $\mathbb{W}xd3$ gxf5 \rightarrow **9...gxf5 10.f4** White's normal development plan is $\mathbb{Q}e3$, $\mathbb{W}d2$ and $\mathbb{Q}ae1$. Black will probably go ...e5-e4 sooner or later, reaching a pawn structure discussed in other exercises. 10.f3!? stops ...e5-e4 while keeping the f5-pawn as a possible target. A downside is that it allows ...f5-f4!?. 10. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 11.fxg3! \pm is a promising alternative.

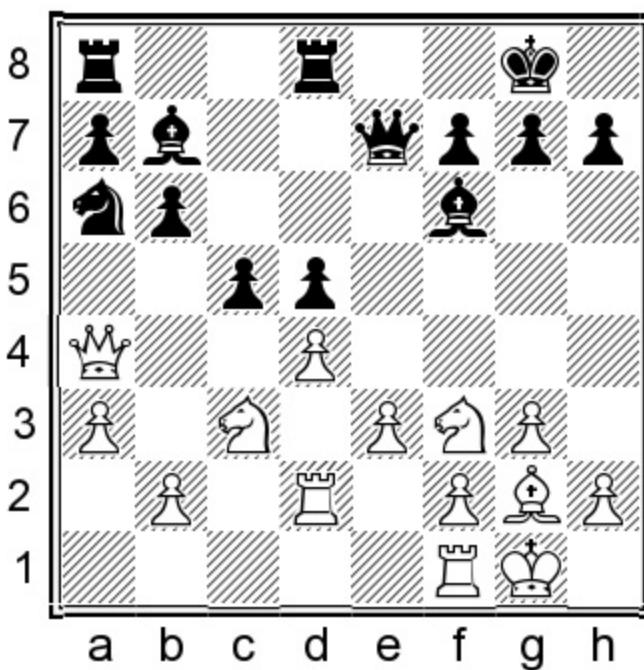
196. Kramnik – Dreev, Linares 1997



Show/Hide Solution

10.e4! It's important to play this before Black gets time for ...e6-e5. **10...dxe4 11.♗xe4±** Black will find it difficult to activate the bishop on c8. For example: **11...h6 11...e5? 12.♗xf6†+–** is no good for Black. **12.♔e1** Black still cannot play ...e6-e5.

197. Gelfand – Topalov, Novgorod 1997



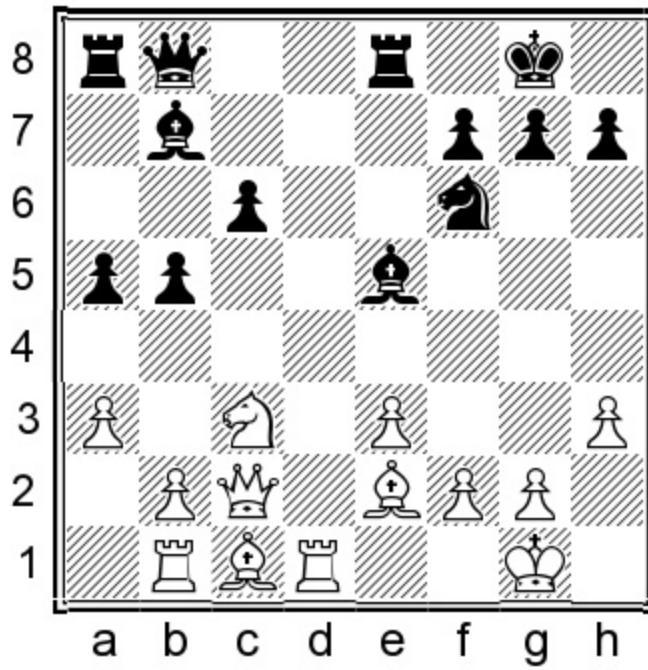
Show/Hide Solution

15...♝c7 Overprotecting d5 and preparing to expand on the queenside with ...c5-c4 and ...b6-b5. Black could play other moves first, but as the knight has to be brought into play it's most flexible (and best) to do it immediately. Let's see some illustrative lines, including a beautiful queen sac! **15...♝b8?** is temporarily passive; and compared to the main line, the knight would be worse on c6 than on e6. **16.♝e5±; 15...c4 16.b3± ♝c5!** (**16...cxb3 17.♛xb3±** Both black bishops are passive and White will soon control the c-file – it's difficult for Black to double up there.) **17.dxc5 ♛xc3 18.♝c2 ♛f6 19.bxc4 d4± 16.♝fd1 c4!?** **16...♝e6** was Topalov's choice **17.♝e5! b5 17...♝xe5? 18.dxe5 ♛xe5 19.♛xc4!+– 18.♛a5 18.♝xb5? ♛xe5 19.dxe5 ♛c6+– 18...a6∞**

Veselin Topalov

“...unlike some of the other top players, I fight to the full in every game.”

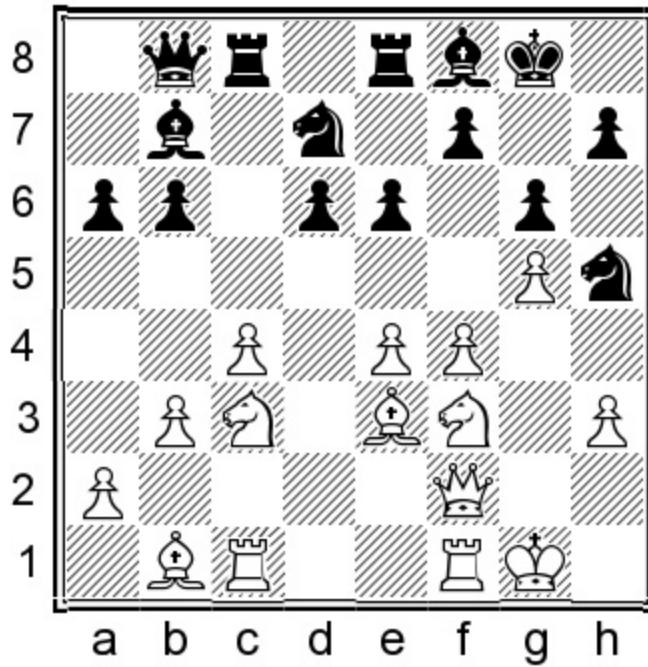
198. Karpov – Mephisto, Gelsenkirchen (Rapid) 1997



Show/Hide Solution

17.b4! Avoiding ...b5-b4 followed by ...c6-c5, releasing the bishop on b7. 17.b3 b4 18. $\mathbb{Q}a4 \mathbb{Q}e4 \rightarrow$

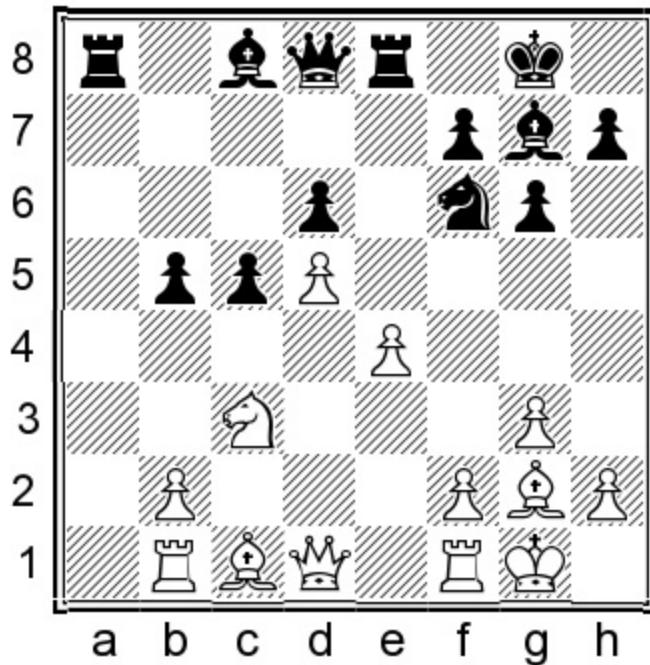
199. Ptacnikova – Khalifman, Sweden 1997



Show/Hide Solution

22...d5! With the h5-knight and queen combining to threaten the f4-pawn, it's a good moment for the pawn lever Black wants to achieve in the Hedgehog. 22...b5!? 23.cxb5 axb5 24. $\mathbb{Q}xb5 d5\bar{+}$ works as well, but Black can get the same effect without sacrificing the queenside. **23.cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xf4\bar{+}$**

200. Karpov – Adianto, Jakarta (4) 1997



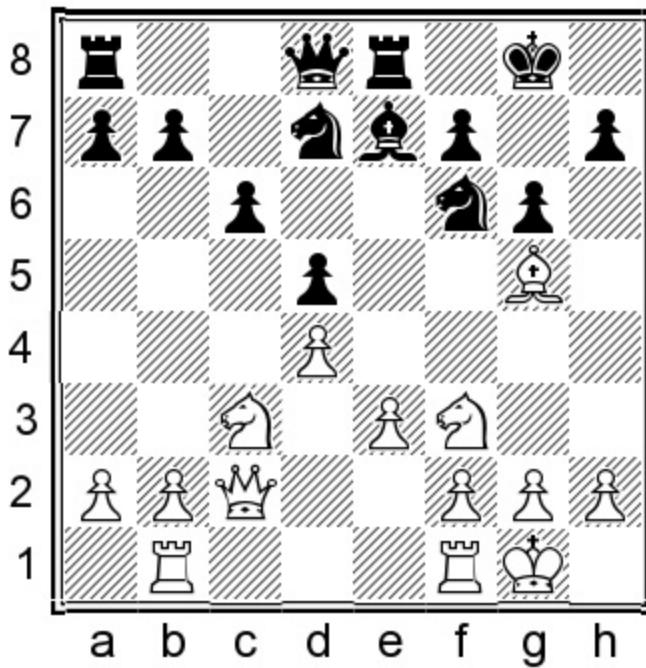
Show/Hide Solution

17.b4!? Black has active prospects on the queenside, but allowing ...b5-b4 would be much worse.

Public Education Exercises 201-250

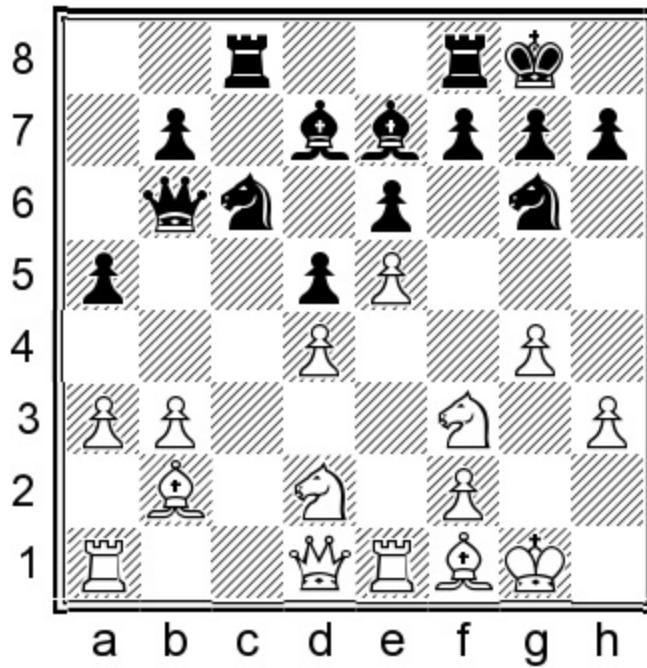
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201. Gyimesi – Khalifman, Ulcinj 1998



Show/Hide Solution

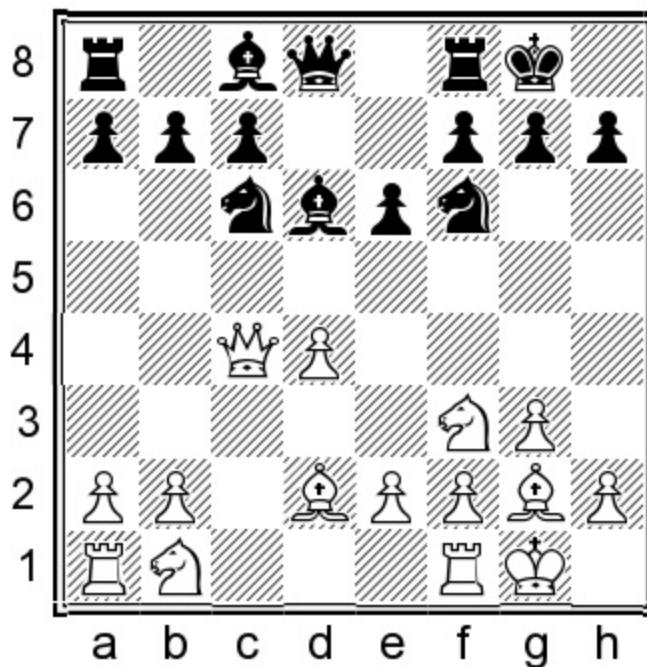
13... $\mathbb{Q}e4$! The knight occupies an excellent square, and if White exchanges it, Black gets a strong pawn on e4. Other moves are playable, but less logical and less strong. 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $dxe4$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $c5=$ Before White stops it with b2-b4.



Show/Hide Solution

16...f6!–+ Opening the f-file, which White has weakened seriously with g2-g4. 16...f5 allows 17.g5+ when White is still in trouble, but has chances to stay in the game. 16...Qf4+ is also strong, but the text move is clearly best. 17.Qc1 17.exf6 Qxf6 and the only way to defend the d-pawn is to retreat with the knight to b1. 17...fxe5 18.dxe5 Black has more than one way to win. The simplest is to take material with: 18...Qc5 19.Qe2 Qf4+–

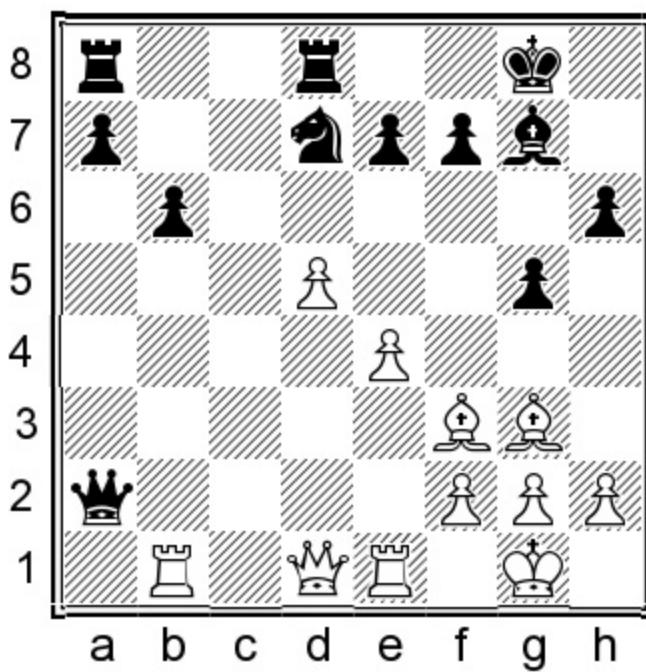
203. Karpov – Kramnik, Wijk aan Zee 1998



Show/Hide Solution

9...e5 To develop the bishop on e6 – otherwise Black would be worse. Chess does not have to be difficult. **10.dxe5** 10.d5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ keeps more tension, but after something like 11...h6 12. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$ a6= Black is not worse. **10... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$** **11. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$** $\mathbb{Q}xe5=$ Black is ready for ...c7-c6 followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$.

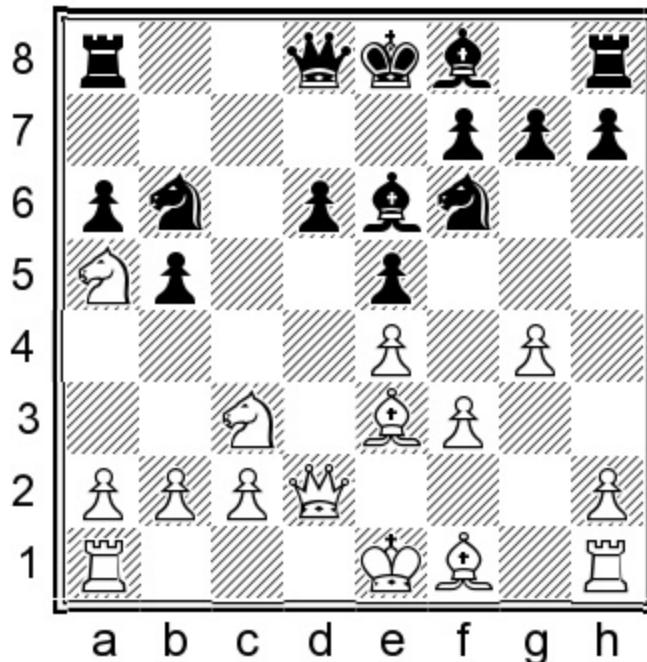
204. Anand – Illescas Cordoba, Madrid 1998



Show/Hide Solution

19.e5! White will use the pawns to open space around Black's king. 19. $\mathbb{Q}e2\pm$ **19... $\mathbb{Q}ac8$** 19... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 20.d6 $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d5+-$ The line could be continued, but let's stop here. **20.e6! fxe6** 21. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+-$ The e7-pawn is hanging and Black's light squares are chronically weak; d5-d6 followed by $\mathbb{Q}d5$ is one of many threats.

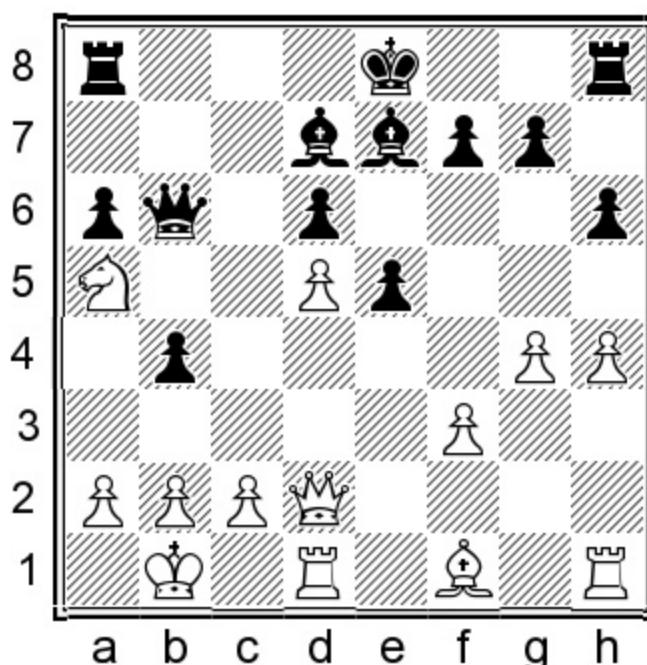
205. Svidler – Kasparov, Internet (Blitz) 1998



Show/Hide Solution

11...b4! 11...d5 12.g5 d4 13.gxf6 dxe3 14.♗xd8† ♕xd8 15.fxg7 ♔xg7† is good, but Kasparov's choice is even better. **12.♘e2 d5 13.g5 ♘fd7†** White has lost control over the centre.

206. Topalov – Kasparov, Leon (Advanced) 1998

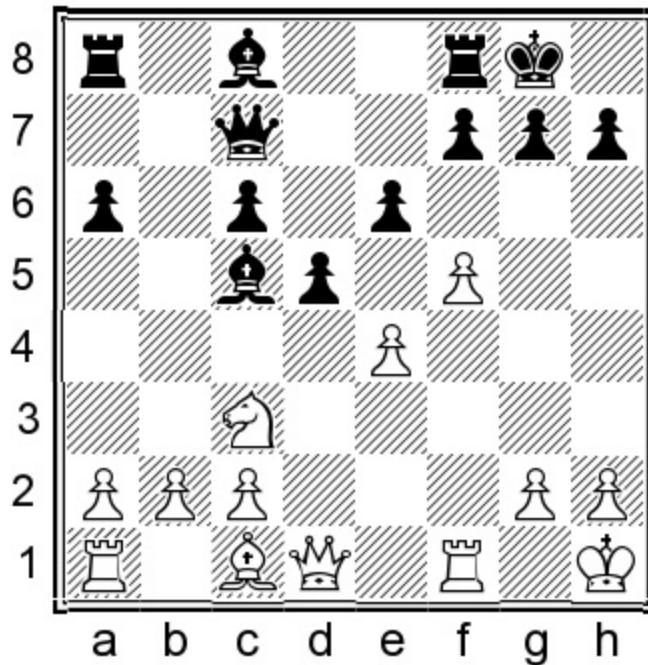


Show/Hide Solution

18.¤c6 A thematic sacrifice to weaken the light squares. It's interesting to see a few more moves of this game in which two elite players could use computer assistance. **18...¤xc6 19.dxc6 ¤xc6**

20.♗xb4 20.b3 offers good compensation, but it allows Black to give back the pawn with 20...d5 to simplify matters and relieve the pressure. **20...d5** 20...♗xf3 21.♗a4† Without castling, Black is doomed. **21.♗b3 ♗d8 22.c4↑**

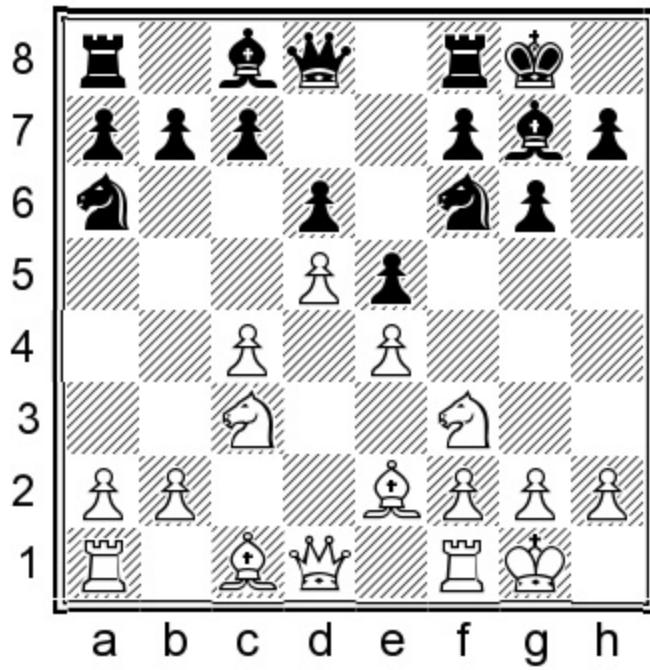
207. Smyslov – Arakhamia-Grant, Roquebrune 1998



Show/Hide Solution

13.f6! Creating a kingside weakness, before Black has time to open up for the light-squared bishop with ...exf5. 13.♗a4!? tends to be a good positional move in this central structure, but it's strange to combine it with kingside play: 13...♝d6 14.f6! Despite the previous comment, this is still clearly best. 14...♝d8± Black has better survival chances than in the game. **13...♝d8** 13...gxf6? gives White a choice of winning lines using the queen, rook and bishop to attack. 13...g6 14.♗a4! Not the only winning move, but the most precise, as the bishop can't stay on the b4-f8 diagonal. 14...♝d6 15.e5! ♜xe5 16.♝d2 Without ...♝f8, there is no defence. **14.fxg7+–** Smyslov won without trouble.

208. Miladinovic – Topalov, Elista (Ol) 1998

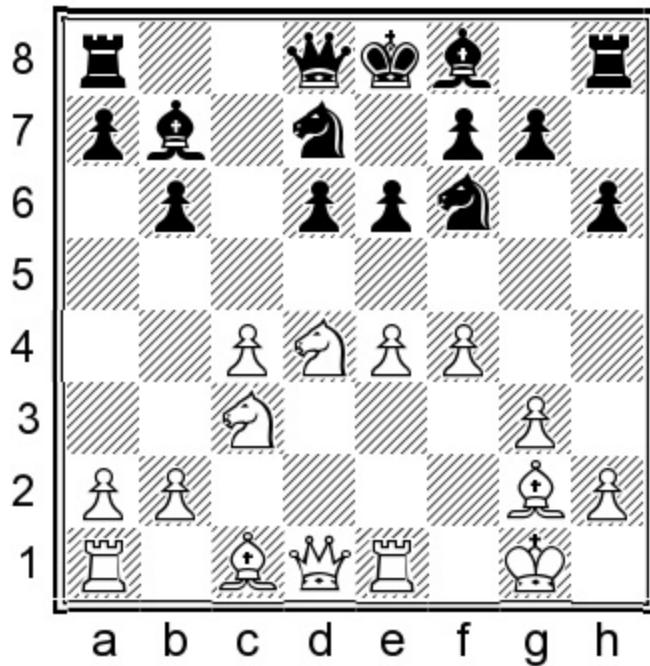


Show/Hide Solution

8... ♜c5 Going to c5 with tempo, not allowing White to push b2-b4. **9. ♜c2 a5** Before White kicks the knight with b2-b4, Black needs to get contact with e4 (normally ...f7-f5). There's plenty of time.

10. ♜g5 10.a3? a4 immobilizes White's queenside. **10...h6 11. ♜e3 b6 12. ♜d2 ♜g4!?**∞ 12... ♜h7 13.a3 f5 was standard and fine.

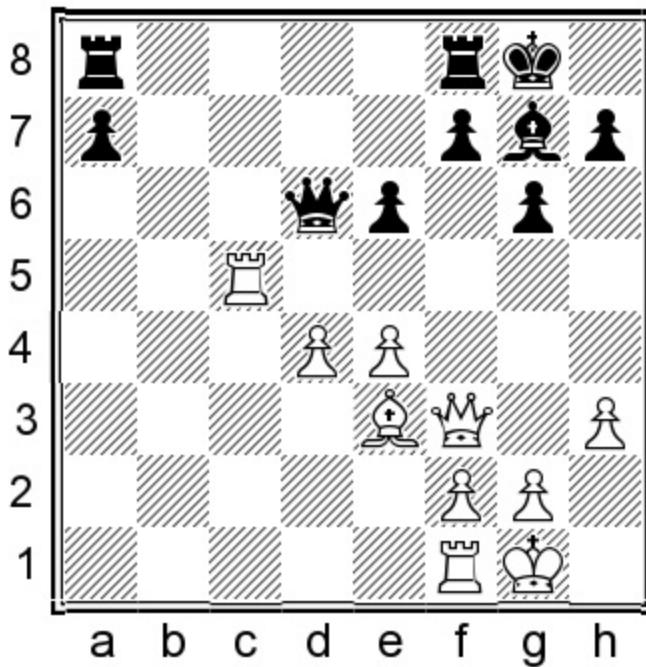
209. Kramnik – N.N., Paris (Simul) 1999



Show/Hide Solution

12.e5! $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ It's important that this doesn't threaten the rook on f1. **13.exf6** With Black's bishop on e7, it would have been game over immediately. Now it lasts another move (or three). **13... $\mathbb{Q}b7$** **14. $\mathbb{Q}xe6\#$** Or with the knight. **14...fxe6 15. $\mathbb{W}h5\#$ g6 16. $\mathbb{W}xg6\#$** Why is this exercise in a positional book? It's a positional concept that in a Hedgehog structure with a pawn on e4 and bishop on g2, Black needs to have the bishop on b7 defended.

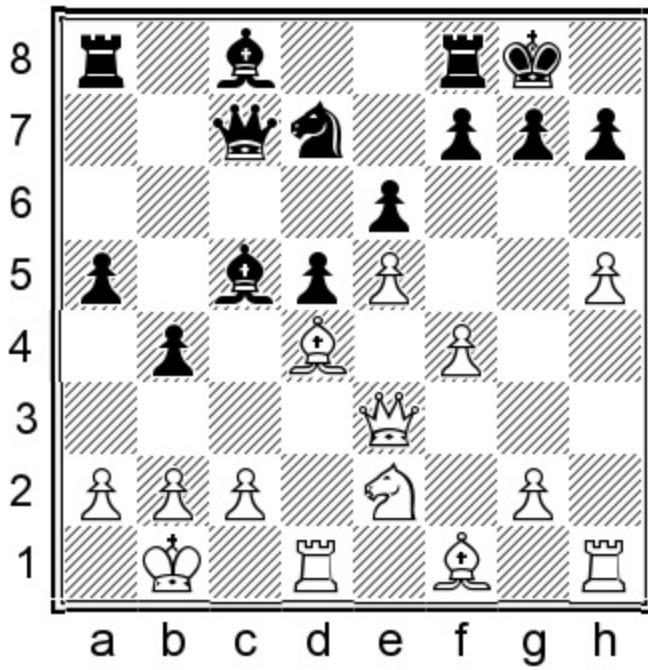
210. Anand – Shirov, Monte Carlo (Blindfold) 1999



Show/Hide Solution

19.e5! $19.\mathbb{Q}d1$ defends the pawn, but the rook should get a more active task. $19...a5\rightleftarrows; 19.d5 a5\rightleftarrows$ **19... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}a1\pm$** White will attack a7 with everything. $20.\mathbb{Q}a5\pm$ is practically the same.

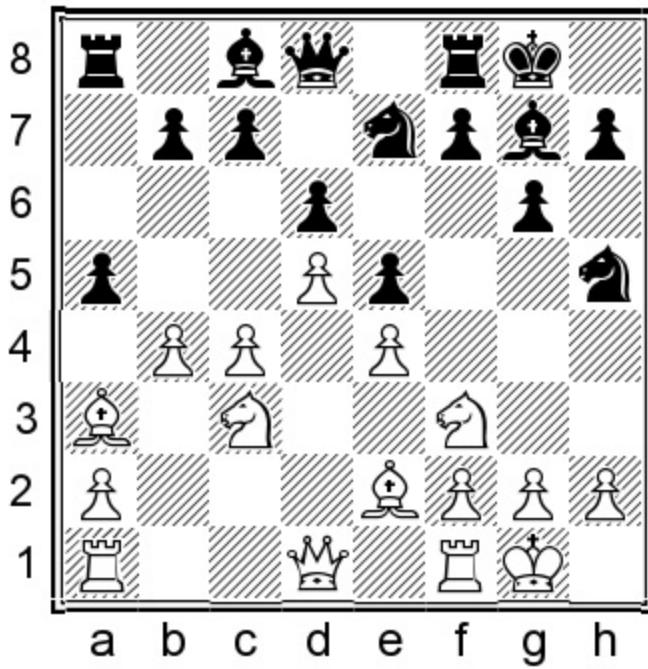
211. Topalov – Morozevich, Sarajevo 1999



Show/Hide Solution

16...♝a6 Activating the bishop and connecting the rooks before pushing the queenside pawns. 16...a4 17.c3! ♜b8 18.♕c1 subjects Black to unnecessary problems on the c-file. 16...♝b7 places the bishop on a passive square. **17.♝xc5 ♛xc5→** Keeping the queens on the board to attack.

212. Topalov – Polgar, Frankfurt (Rapid) 1999

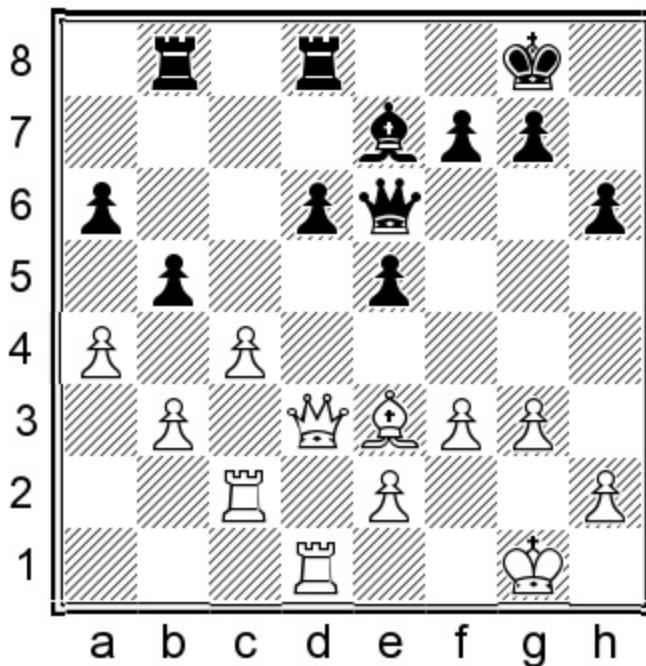


Show/Hide Solution

11.c5! White's main pawn lever to open the position. 11.bxa5 can be met by 11...b6!? to stop c4-c5,

even though White probably keeps an edge. 12.♗b4 (12.axb6!? ♜xa3 13.♗b5 ♜a8 14.bxc7±) 12...bx_a5 13.♗a3 ♜f4 14.c5± 11...♜f4 12.b5 Threatening b5-b6. 12.bxa5 ♜xa5 13.♗b4 allows 13...♜xc5!? 14.♗xc5 dx_c5 with some compensation. 12...b6 13.cxd6 cxd6± White increases the pressure with ♜d2-c4 and ♜c1.

213. Topalov – Kramnik, Las Vegas (Rapid) 1999

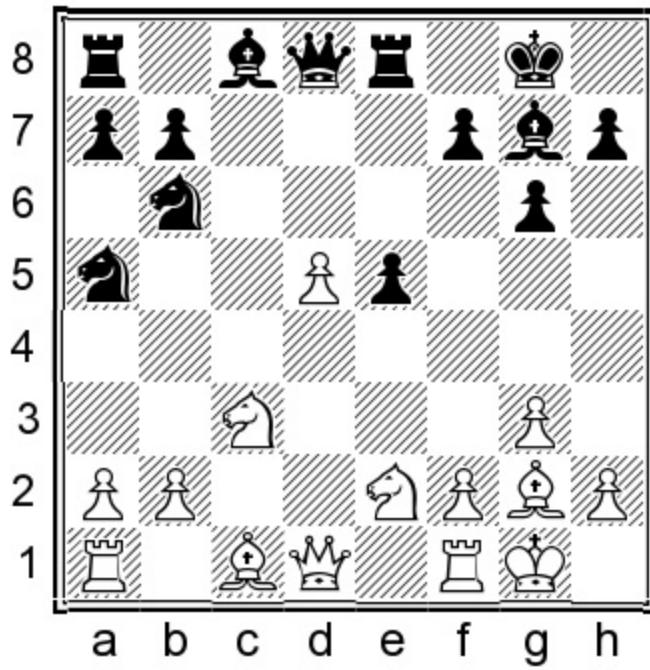


Show/Hide Solution

26.cxb5! axb5 27.a5 White has created a passed pawn, and Black's centre is not too important with only one minor piece on the board. 27.axb5 d5 may also be better for White, but it's messier. 27.♗d5 holds on to the d5-square, but with few pieces on the board, it's not enough for an advantage.

27...♗xd5 28.♗xd5 bx_a4 29.bxa4 ♜b3 30.♗f2 ♜g5= 27...d5 28.♗b6± The b5-pawn drops, but after 28...e4 White can change plans to 29.♗e3!? winning one of the central pawns, with ♜cd2 coming next.

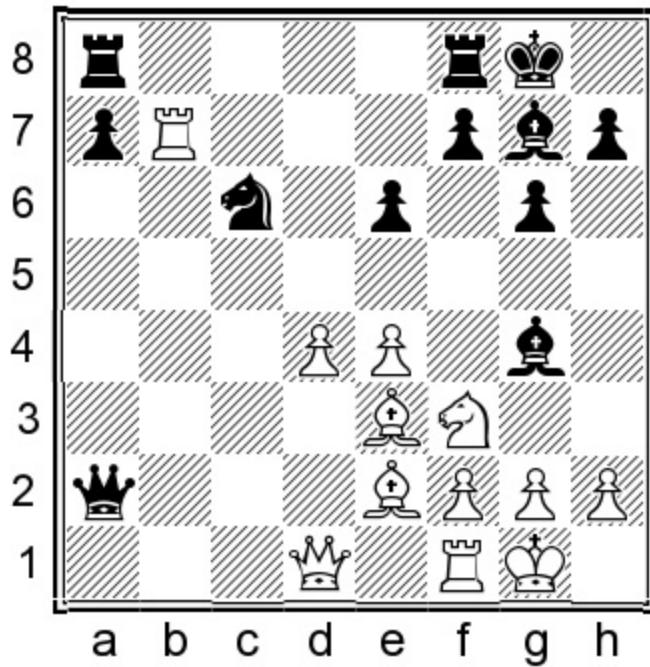
214. Smejkal – Khalifman, Germany 2000



Show/Hide Solution

16...♞ac4 The knight is the best blockading piece, not being afraid of exchanges by enemy pieces, while still having influence over the squares on the other side of the passed pawn. The knight should jump to d6 before b2-b3 prevents it. 16...♝f5 17.h3 h5 18.b3 e4 19.♝e3±

215. Ivanchuk – Kramnik, Monte Carlo (Rapid) 2000

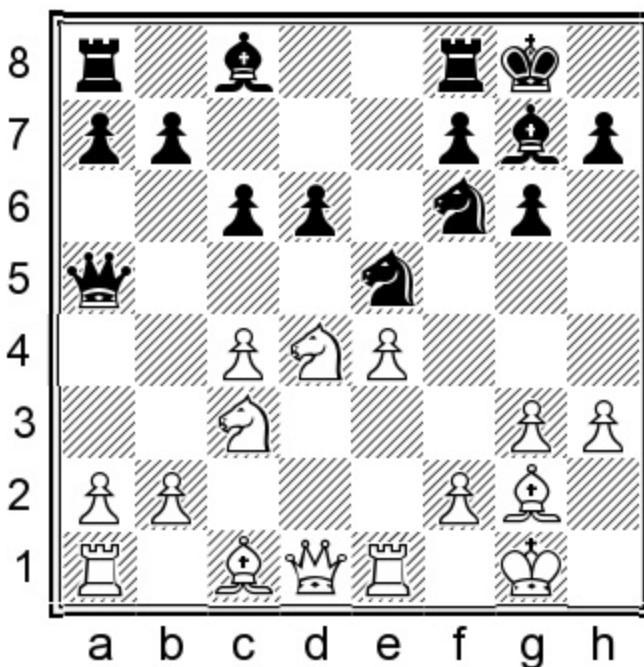


Show/Hide Solution

15.d5! White's passed pawn and active rook can be considered more valuable than Black's a-pawn

and pressure along the d-file. However, the pawn must be pushed before Black stops it with ... $\mathbb{E}d8$. **15...exd5** 15... $\mathbb{E}ad8$?! 16.d6±; 15... $\mathbb{E}fd8$?! gives White a choice of strong continuations, the best being: 16. $\mathbb{E}xf7$!+– Intending $\mathbb{Q}g5$ † if the rook is captured. The following line is not relevant for the exercise: 16...exd5 17. $\mathbb{B}b5$ dxe4? 18. $\mathbb{E}xg7$ † $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 19. $\mathbb{W}c1$ exf3 20. $\mathbb{W}c3$ †+– **16.exd5** In this line of the Grünfeld, White's passed d-pawn, supported by the rook on the seventh rank and the dark-squared bishop, is usually more important than Black's passed a-pawn. **16... $\mathbb{E}fd8$** 16... $\mathbb{Q}e5$?! 17.d6± was the game. 16... $\mathbb{E}ad8$?! 17.d6± **17.d6±** 17.dxc6!? $\mathbb{E}xd1$ 18. $\mathbb{B}xd1$ is also possible, although Black can hold.

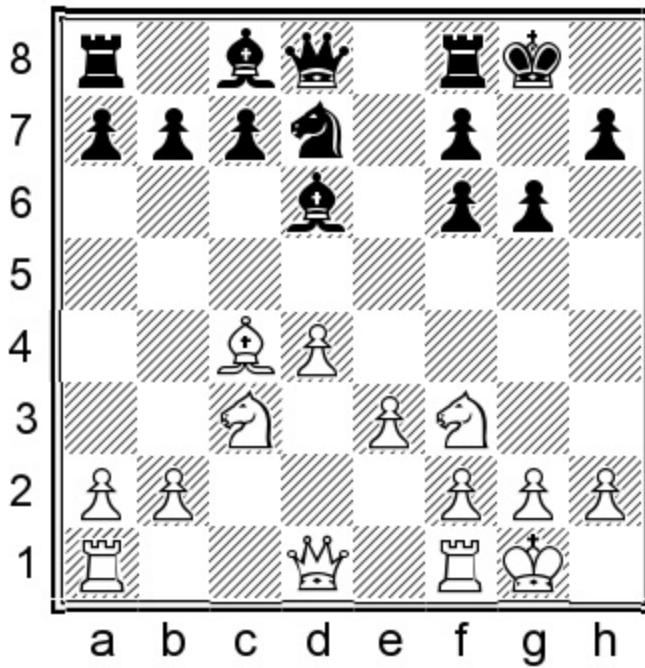
216. Karpov – Topalov, Monte Carlo (Blindfold) 2000



Show/Hide Solution

12. $\mathbb{B}f1$ Defending the pawn. The bishop counts as developed, even though it's back on its initial square. There's actually no other good way to defend, as b2-b3 is impossible and the queen wants to keep an eye on the d4-knight. The $\mathbb{B}f1$ retreat is a standard idea to keep in mind in these positions. 12. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}c5$! is a double threat.

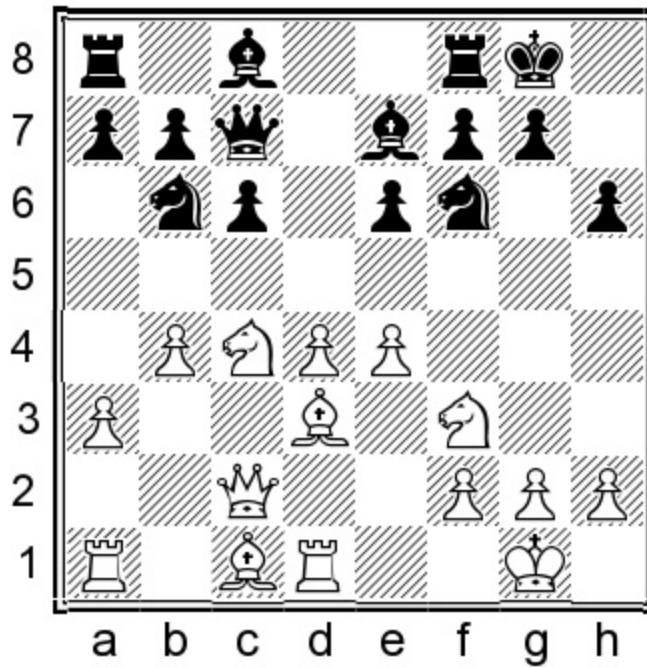
217. Kasparov – Baramidze, Frankfurt (Simul) 2000



Show/Hide Solution

9...f5 Avoiding e3-e4, and vacating the f6-square for the knight. A test solver offered 9... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ and claimed that 10.e4 c5 is equal. Maybe, but White doesn't need to go e3-e4 immediately – and if not, Black's best follow-up is to play ...f6-f5 anyway. 9...c5 aims to open the centre, which is logical with the bishop pair, but Black is also behind in development. 10. $\mathbb{H}c1$ White will get some initiative. 10... $\mathbb{H}c1$ was the game continuation, with a draw after only five more moves. **10...fxe4 11. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6=$ 11... $\mathbb{Q}e7?$!** Black can't play for an advantage by keeping the bishop pair. White has active pieces and at least one strong knight in the centre. 12. $\mathbb{H}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}e5\pm$

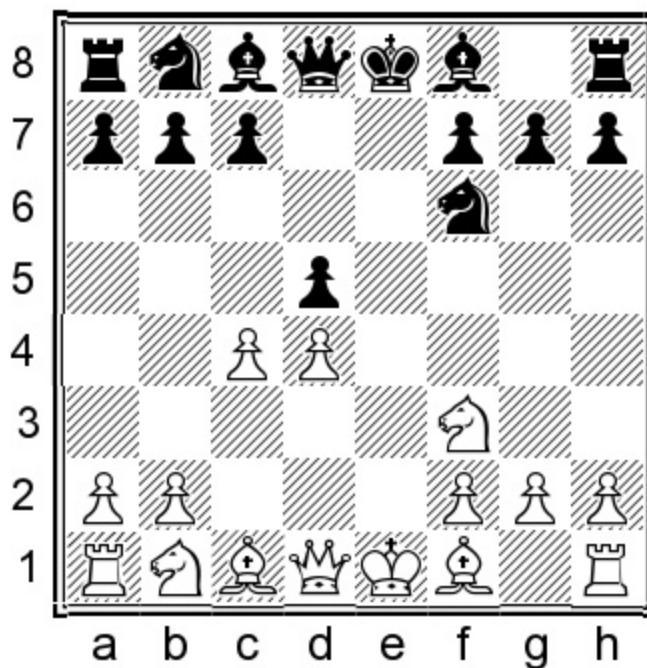
218. Karpov – Galanis, Rethymno (Simul) 2001



Show/Hide Solution

16. $\mathbb{Q}a5!$ Keeping pieces, as Black has less space. The knight is strong on a5, making it difficult for Black to develop with ...b7-b6. White is positionally winning. A test solver queried the suitability of this exercise, on the basis that 16.e5 $\mathbb{Q}fd5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}d2+$ also gives White a decisive advantage. Nevertheless, it's still preferable to gain the maximum advantage possible from the position, making it easier to find a path to victory later.

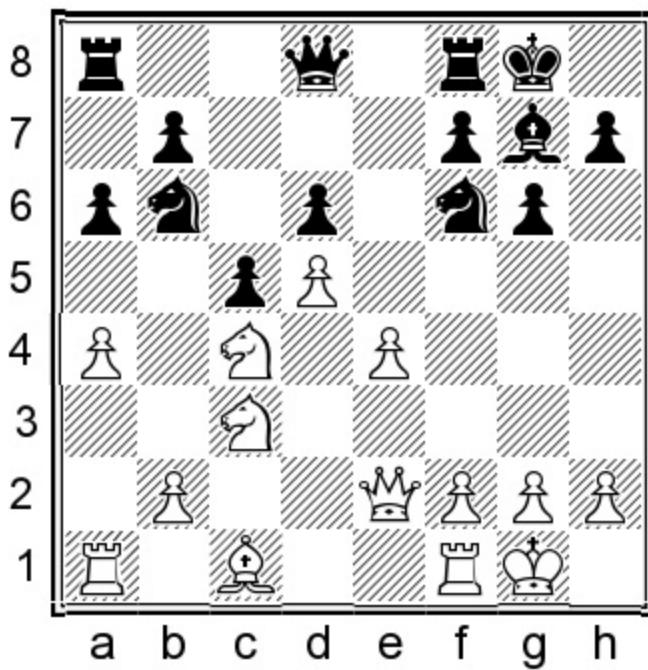
219. Spassky – Korchnoi, Zurich 2001



Show/Hide Solution

5... $\mathbb{Q}b4\text{!}$ Black “punishes” White for playing c2-c4 slightly prematurely. It’s likely that we will get a position with either an isolated pawn on d4 or hanging pawns after an exchange on c3. In both cases, Black is happy to exchange minor pieces.

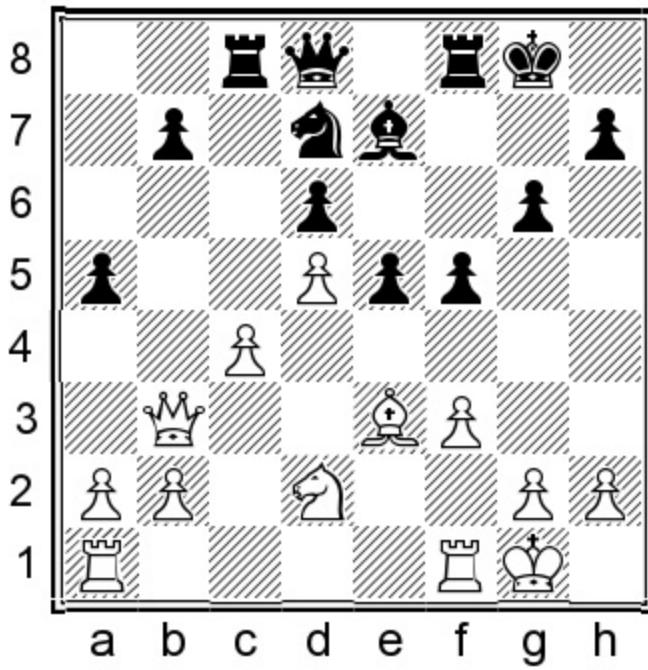
220. Anand – Hernandez, Mirabal (Rapid) 2001



Show/Hide Solution

14. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ Avoiding the exchange as White has more space. White will soon kick back the knight with a4-a5. 14. $\mathbb{Q}a3\text{?!$ serves the same purpose, but runs into 14... $\mathbb{Q}e8\text{?}$ intending: 15.a5? $\mathbb{Q}bx d5\text{--+}$
14... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 15.a5±

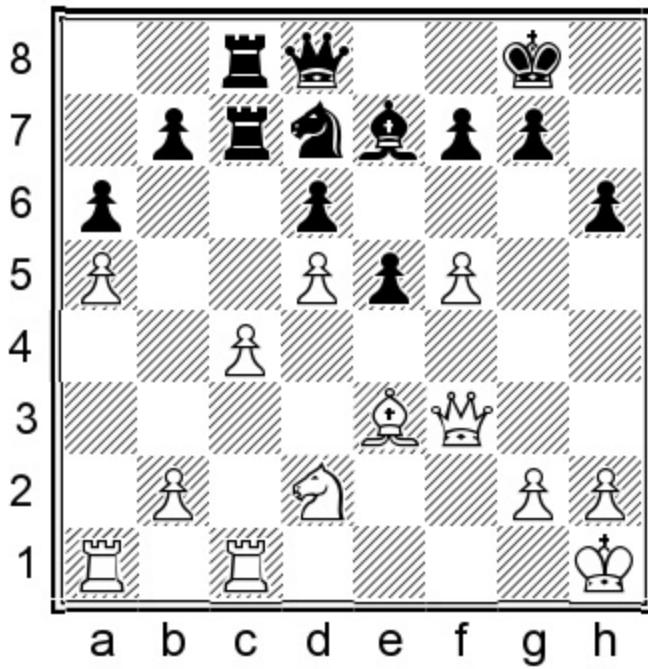
221. Anand – Shirov, Leon (Advanced) 2001



Show/Hide Solution

19...♝g5 It is also possible to start with 19...♝c5 or 19...b6, with ...♝g5 to follow. **20.f4?!** Weakening even more dark squares. 20.♖ae1= **20...exf4** **21.♝xf4** **♝c5** There are other ways as well. **22.♗g3** **♝xf4** **23.♗xf4** **♗f6** **24.b3** **g5†**

222. Kolev – Anand, Villarrobledo (Rapid) 2001

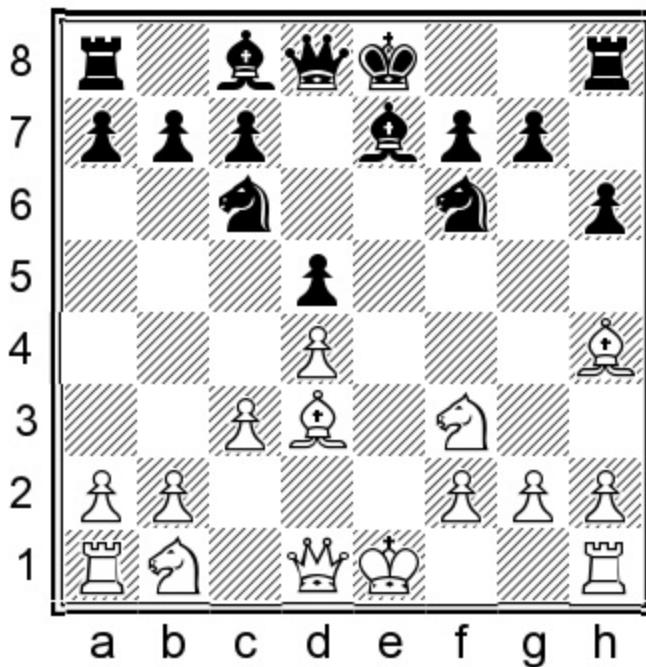


Show/Hide Solution

21...♝g5 Exchanging the passive bishop. If 21...e4 22.♗e2!± White captures the pawn with the

knight. **22.♗xg5!** White's position is loose after 22.b4 ♜xe3 23.♘xe3 ♜h4 with ...♝f6-g4 as a threat. 22.b3 ♜xe3 23.♘xe3 ♜f6= **22...♝xg5 23.♝e4 ♜e7 24.b3 ♜f6** Black has less space but is close to equality due to the limited material.

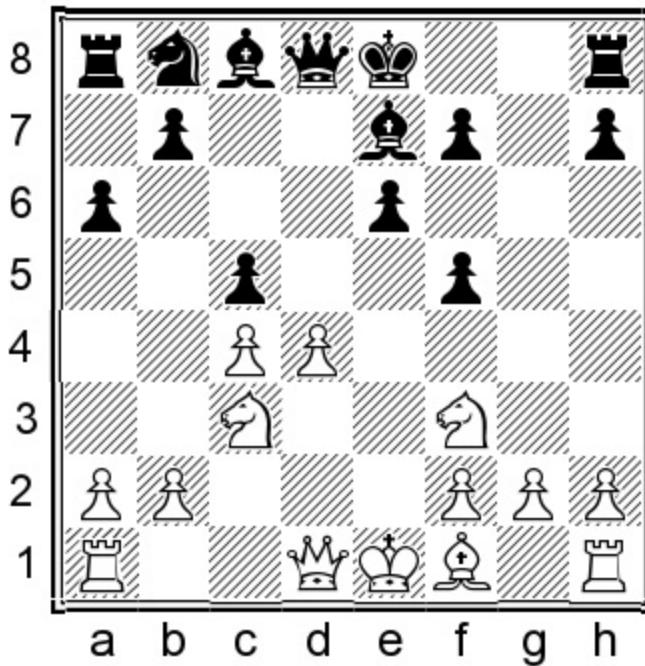
223. Kramnik – Bareev, Monte Carlo (Rapid) 2002



Show/Hide Solution

8...♝h5! Pinpointing the f4-square that has been weakened with ♜g5-h4. **9.♗g3** Black will be happy with the bishop pair. **9.♗xe7 ♜xe7† 10.♗e2 ♜f4 11.♗xe7† ♜xe7 12.♗f1 ♜f5** gives Black a lead in development.

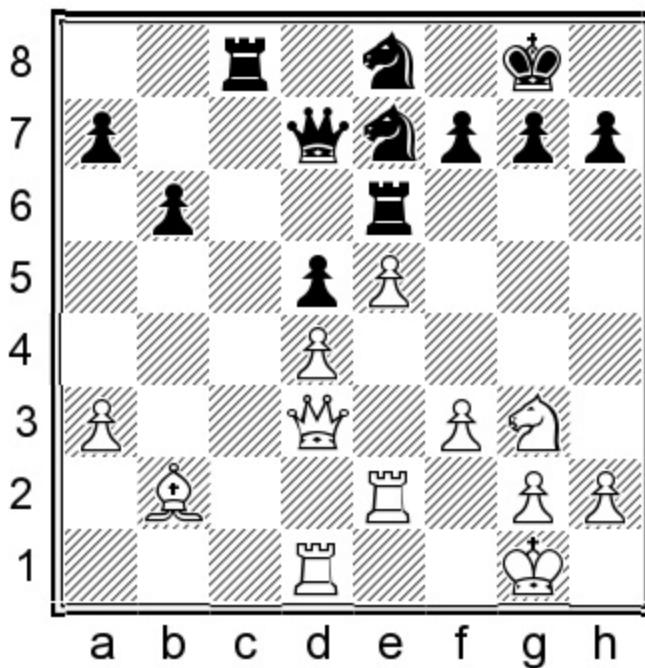
224. Anand – Short, Dubai (Rapid) 2002



Show/Hide Solution

10.d5 Black's last move (...c7-c5) forces the d-pawn to move or get exchanged, thus increasing the scope for Black's dark-squared bishop. To play for an advantage – and to avoid being worse – White needs to get a passed d-pawn in return.

225. Khalifman – Bologan, Prague (Rapid) 2002

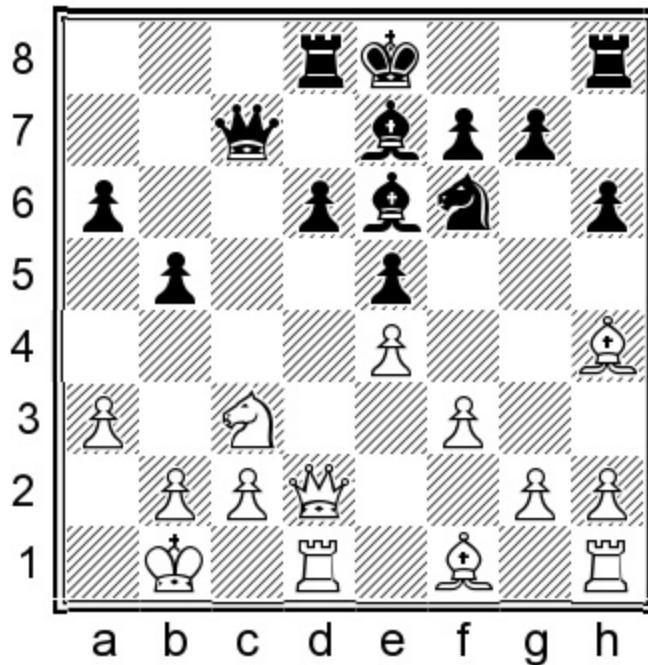


Show/Hide Solution

21.f4! Using the pawn majority. **21...g6!** Black's best chance, though far from ideal. **21...♝ec6 22.f5±**

White can double up on the f-file before advancing further. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ is another dangerous attacking move. **22.f5!** Before Black has time for ... $\mathbb{Q}g7$. **22... $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ gxf5 24. $\mathbb{W}xf5\pm$** Black's king misses the g-pawn, even though the advantage is not big.

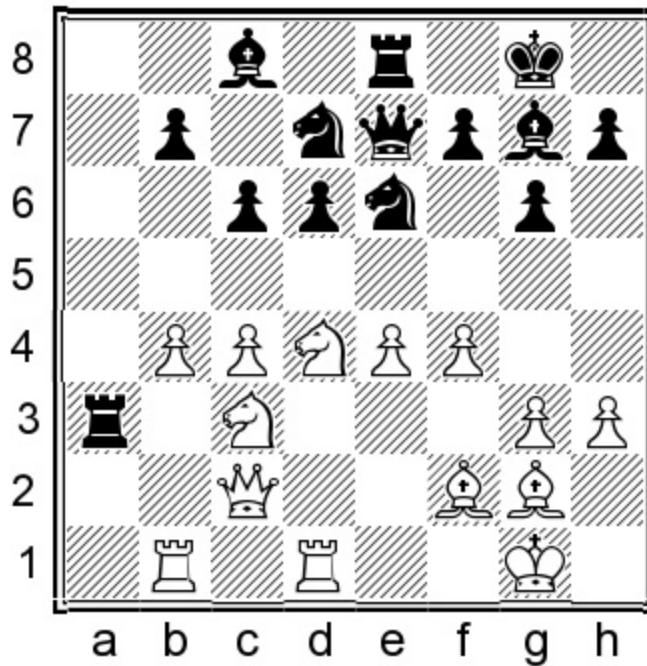
226. Anand – Ivanchuk, Prague (Rapid) 2002



Show/Hide Solution

17. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ Winning the d5-square. Black threatened 17... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ but was also ready to move the knight to other squares. **17... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xd5\pm$** White's plan is to attack on the kingside, but an endgame could also be favourable with weak black pawns on the queenside. With the better structure, stronger bishop and safer king, White has at least a small advantage.

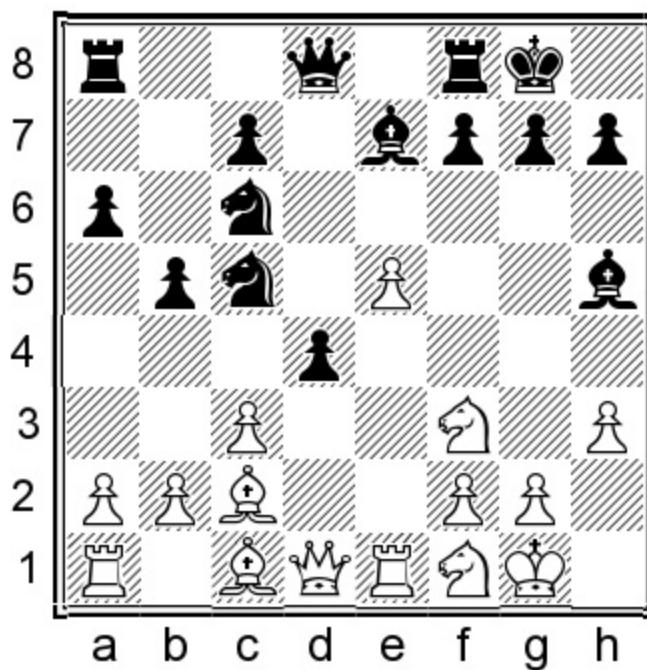
227. Khalifman – Kovalev, Bled (Ol) 2002



Show/Hide Solution

21. $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ Black's pieces are cramped, so White should avoid exchanges. The next idea might be to double rooks on the d-file. Khalifman won the d-pawn on move 29. Note that after **21...g5!?** White should stay with the pawn on f4.

228. Ponomariov – Krasenkov, Bled (Ol) 2002

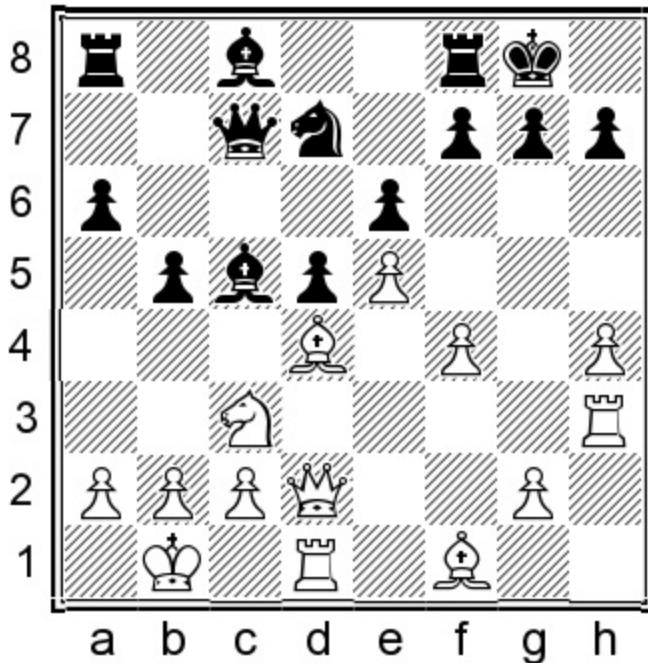


Show/Hide Solution

15. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ The pin was annoying, so White needs to break it immediately. 15.g4 is too weakening with

the centre wide open. Black's best is 15...d3! 16.gxh5 dxc2 17.♗xc2 ♗d5 with at least compensation for the pawn. **15...♝xf3 16.♗xf3±**

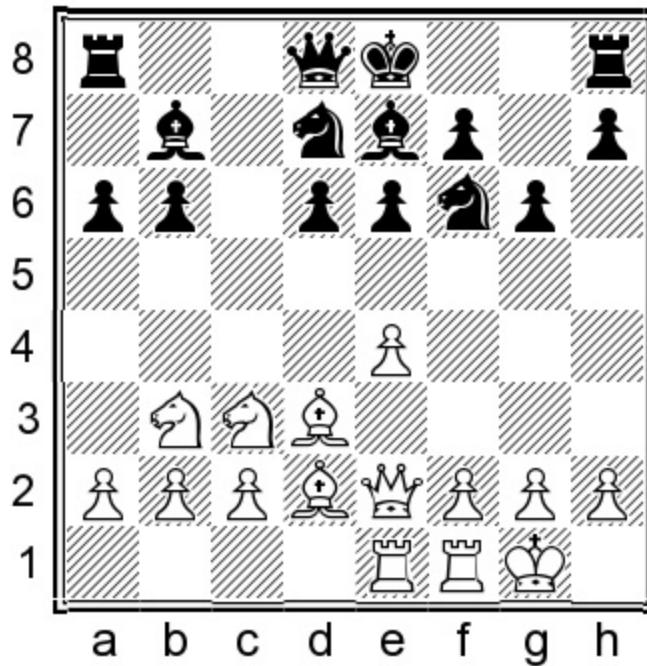
229. Anand – Buhmann, Germany 2002



Show/Hide Solution

14...b4 Kicking away the knight and starting to push pawns towards White's king. It's important to be quick! 14...♝b7 can be met by 15.a3!?. **15.♞a4 ♜xd4 16.♗xd4 a5** Buhmann played 16...♜b8. **17.h5** 17.♝b5 was played in Glek – Korchnoi, Willingen 1999. **17...h6!?** Black seems to have enough counterplay.

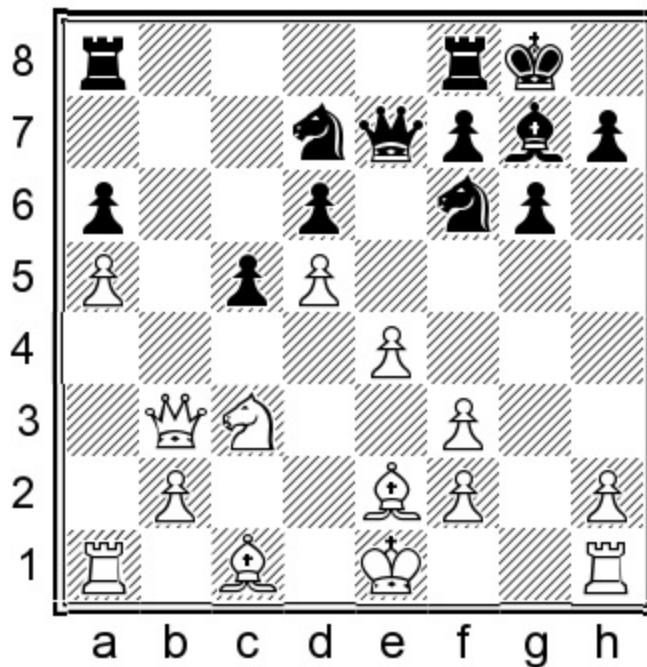
230. Motylev – Topalov, Bastia (Rapid) 2003



Show/Hide Solution

13.Qh6! Prophylaxis against castling. **13...Qf8 14.Qxf8** **14.Qd2±** is also possible, to keep Black's king in the centre. It may actually castle long. **14...Qxf8** The exchange of bishops has weakened the d6-pawn, but also Black's king's position. **15.f4±**

231. Karpov – Stark, Kamp Lintfort (Simul) 2004

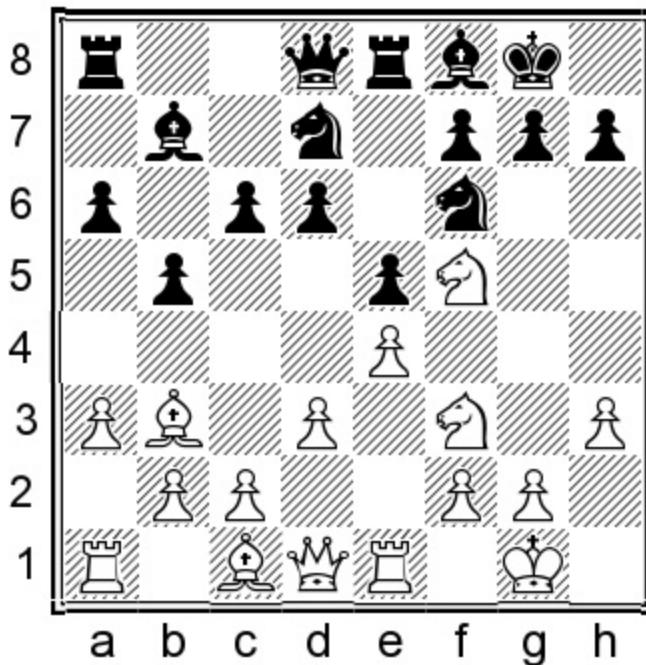


Show/Hide Solution

14...Qh5! Soon taking control over f4 with ...Qe5, ...f7-f5 (opening the f-file for the rook) and/or

$\dots \mathbb{W}h4$. 15. $\mathbb{E}a4$ 15.f4? is too weakening. 15... $\mathbb{E}ab8$ 16. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{W}h4+$ 15... $\mathbb{E}e5\#$ The game ended prematurely with a draw. 1/2–1/2

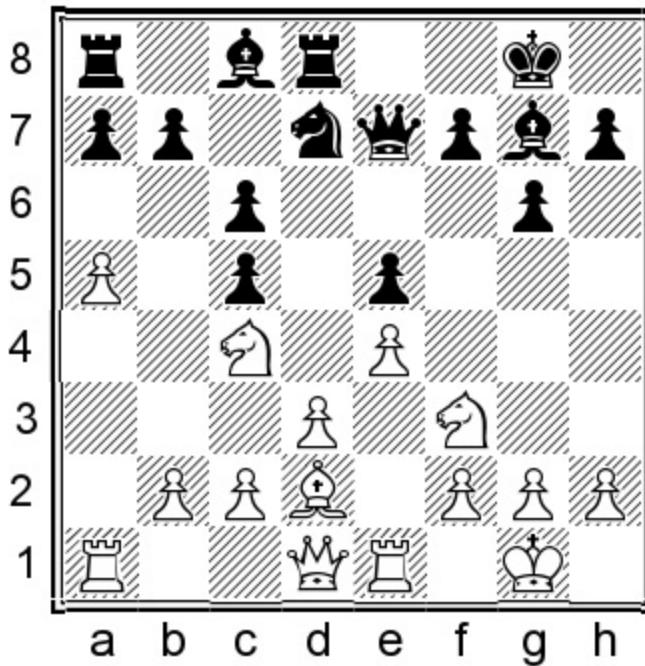
232. Kramnik – Shirov, Monte Carlo (Blindfold) 2004



Show/Hide Solution

15. $\mathbb{Q}h2!$ ± Preparing $\mathbb{W}f3$ and $\mathbb{Q}g4$ (intending $hxg4$, if Black exchanges) – a standard way to build a slow attack. 15.g4 $c5\rightleftarrows$; 15.d4? $exd4-$ The e4-pawn is lost.

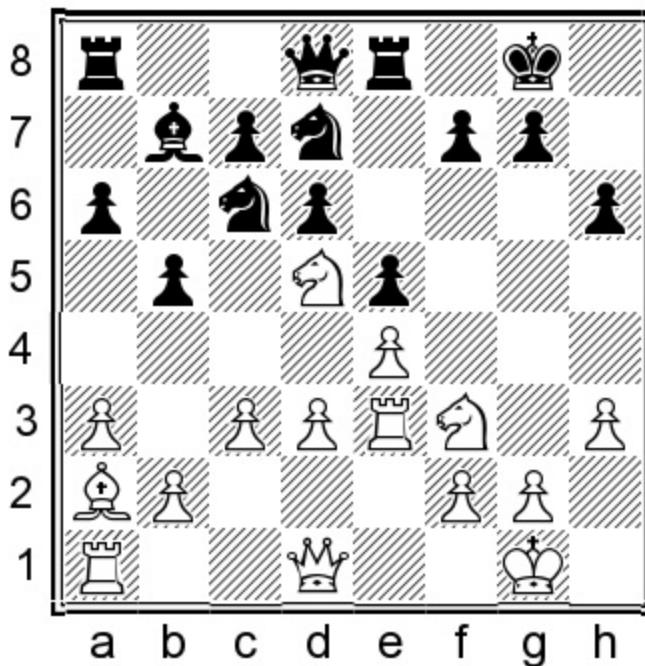
233. Anand – Leko, Monte Carlo (Rapid) 2004



Show/Hide Solution

12...♞f8 The best square for the knight is e6, controlling d4 and f4. But it's not certain that it will go there immediately – Black also wants to develop the light-squared bishop. **13.♝b1 f6 13...♝c7** is another way to keep e5 defended after ...♞e6. **14.b4 ♞e6! 14...♝e6 15.bxc5 ♞xc5 16.♝b4± 15.♞e3 b6 15...cx b4= 16.axb6 axb6 17.bxc5** The players agreed a draw.

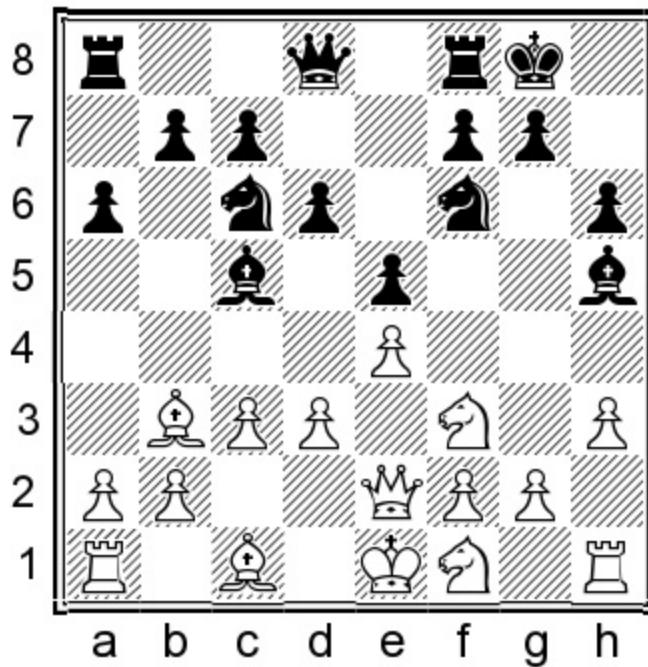
234. Kramnik – Anand, Dortmund 2004



Show/Hide Solution

16... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ Exchanging White's active knight. **17. $\mathbb{Q}xe7\#$** $\mathbb{W}xe7=$ **17... $\mathbb{E}xe7?$** blocks the diagonal d8-h4 and allows **18. $\mathbb{Q}h4!+–$** when the knight reaches f5.

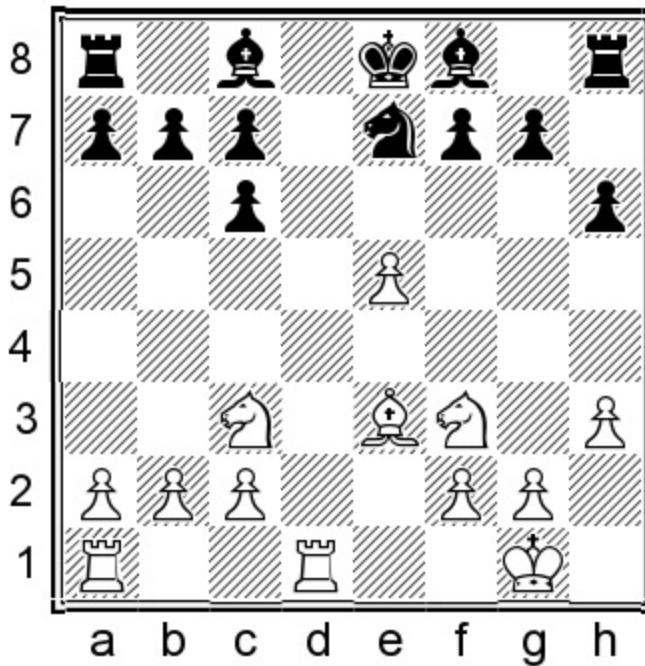
235. Kasparov – Queiroz, Sao Paulo (Simul) 2004



Show/Hide Solution

11.g4! Black's bishop will be passive on g6. **11... $\mathbb{B}g6$** **12. $\mathbb{Q}g3\pm$** **12.g5!** $hxg5$ **13. $\mathbb{Q}xg5+–$** was even stronger, as Black can't get out of the pin in any convenient way. White continues with $\mathbb{Q}g3$ and h4-h5.

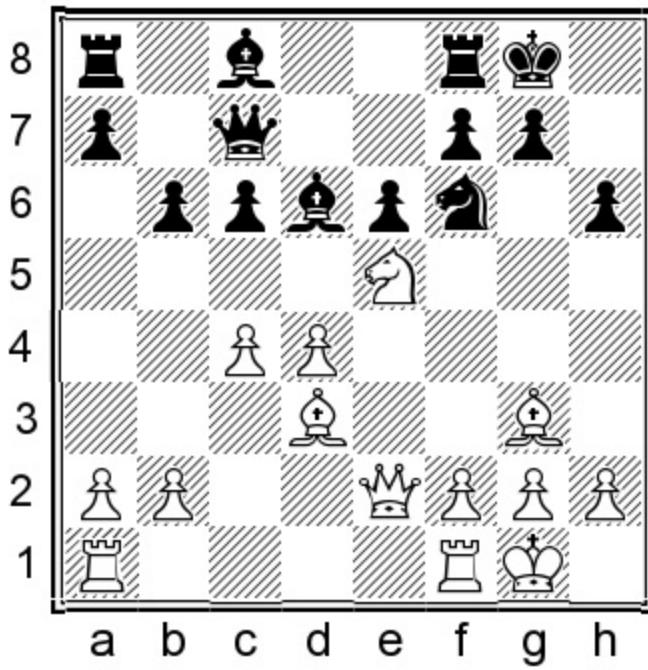
236. Kramnik – Anand, Monte Carlo (Rapid) 2005



Show/Hide Solution

12...♞g6 Often the best placement for the knight in the Berlin endgame. The knight avoids obstructing the light-squared bishop, and at the same time makes it harder for White to prepare ♜d4 and f2-f4 (as the e5-pawn would be hanging). Black will continue developing with ...♝b4 or ...♝e7, and will then prepare to exchange a pair of rooks with ...♜d8. 12...♝e6 13.♞d4±; A test solver noted 12...a5 13.a3 ♜g6 14.♞d4 ♜xe5 15.♝f4 ♜c4 16.♞db5!!± as an argument for not starting with 12...a5. A better argument is that we should develop pieces before pawns, unless there's a truly compelling reason not to.

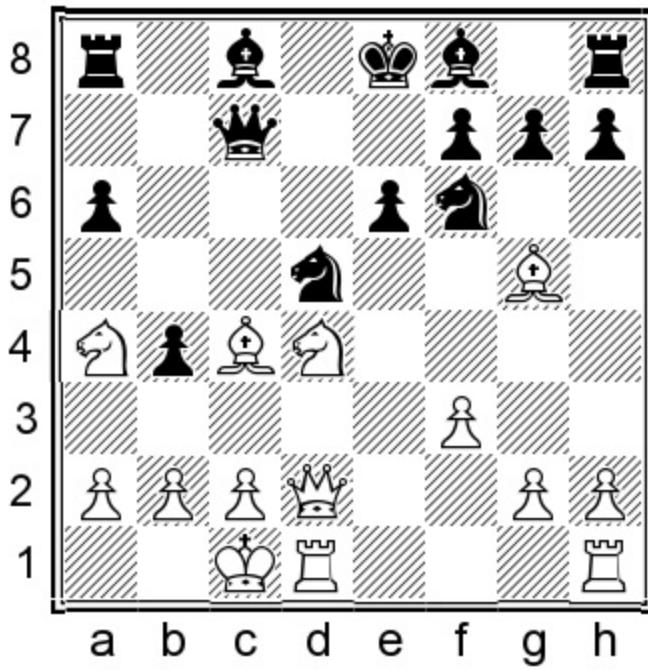
237. Karpov – Zechner, Vienna (Simul) 2005



Show/Hide Solution

17.c5! Forcing Black to part with the bishop, and at the same time stopping ...c6-c5 forever. 17.b4 is a decent move, with the idea to meet 17...c5 with: 18.dxc5 bxc5 19.b5± **17...♝xe5** 17...bxc5 18.dxc5 ♝xc5 19.♝g6+– **18.♝xe5 ♜d7** If 18...♜d8 19.f4+– White's attack should decide the outcome, as Black is essentially a piece down. **19.♝xf6 gxf6 20.♝g4† ♔h8** Surprisingly, Karpov opted to force a draw by repetition. In a serious competition he would surely have played for (and most likely obtained) the win. One good method is: **21.♝f4** The game ended: 21.♝h5 ♔g7 22.♝g4† ♔h8 23.♝h5 ♔g7 24.♝g4† ♔h8 ½–½ **21...♝g7 22.♝fd1+–** Intending to transfer the other rook to the kingside via the third rank.

238. Leko – Topalov, San Luis 2005

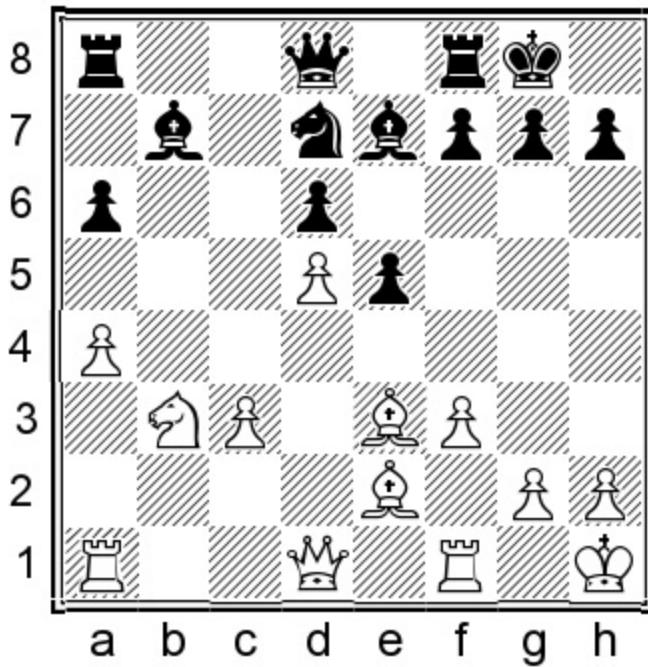


Show/Hide Solution

14.♗xd5! Rather than losing a tempo by moving the bishop, White opens up by exchanging.

14...♝xd5 15.♝he1 ♜b7 16.♝e2! Threatening to sacrifice on e6. **16...♛d6 17.f4!+–** The most direct and powerful. **17.♔b1±** was the game continuation.

239. Adams – Anand, Bastia (Rapid) 2005

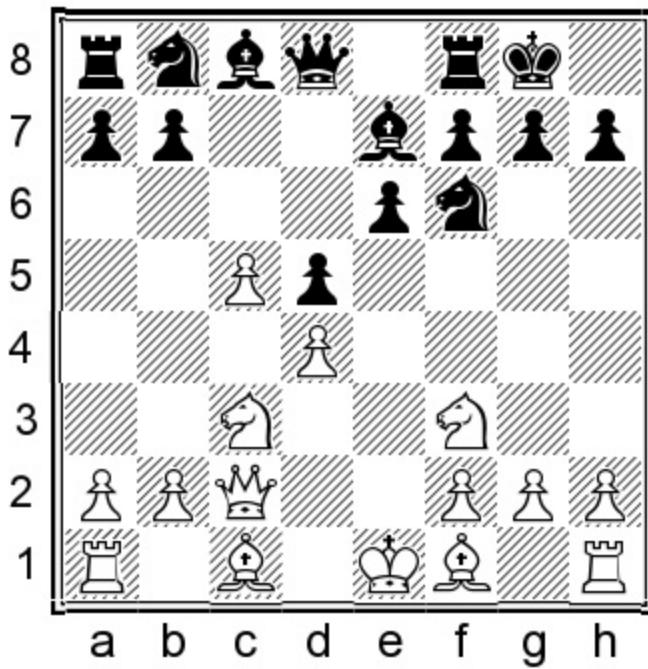


Show/Hide Solution

16...♝g5 Activating the passive bishop is correct, even though White can (and should) avoid the

exchange.

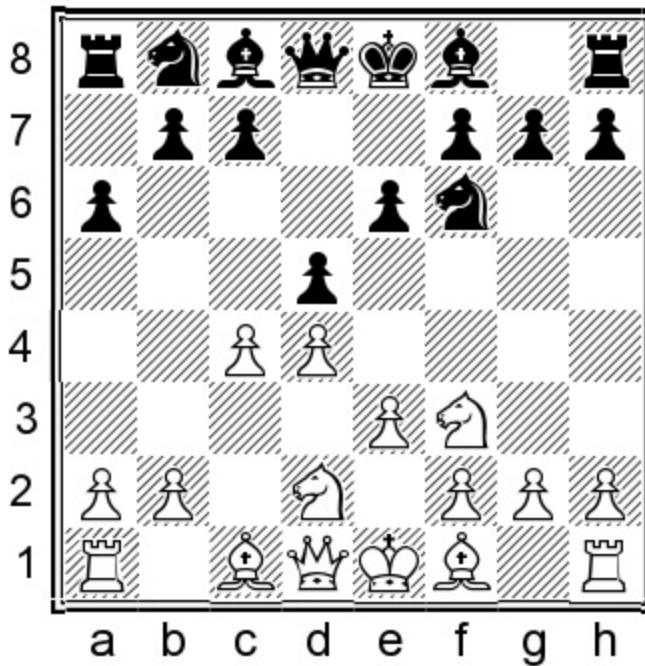
240. Yemelin – Karpov, Tallinn (Rapid) 2006



Show/Hide Solution

8...b6! Challenging White's pawn before it's properly defended. **9.b4** $9.cxb6 \mathbb{W}xb6\bar{=}$ **9...a5** $9...bxc5?$ $10.bxc5\pm$ **10.Qa4!** The only way to avoid a collapse. **10...axb4** $10...\mathbb{Q}bd7$ allows $11.b5$ with the c5-pawn still protected. **11.Qxb6 Qa5!** Karpov played $11...\mathbb{Q}a7$ but the text move is stronger. Black develops actively and will exert pressure on the a2-, c5- and d4-pawns. For example: **12.Qxc8** Or $12.Qd3 Qa6 13.0-0 Qxd3 14.Wxd3 Qe4\bar{=}$ threatening $15...Qxc5$. **12...Wxc8** **13.Qd3 Qc6** **14.0-0 Wa8\bar{=}**

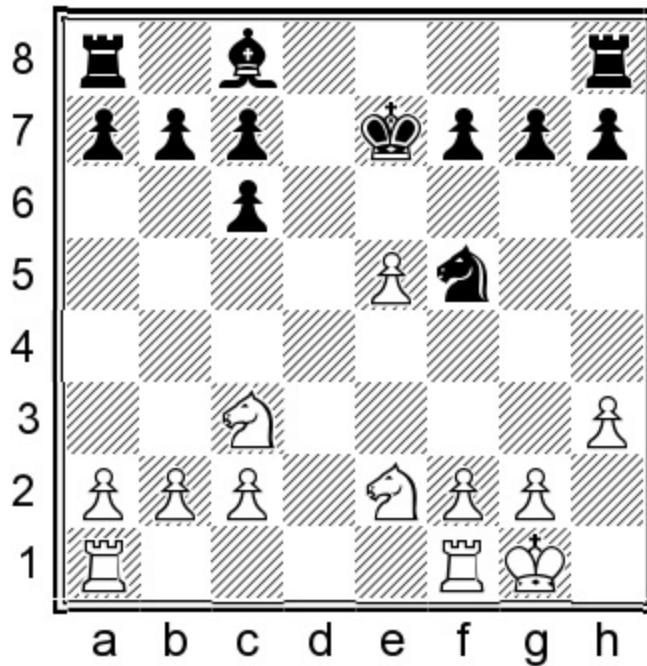
241. Gustafsson – Anand, Germany 2006



Show/Hide Solution

5...c5!= 5... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ is another way of playing. In some ways the choice is a matter of taste, but I included it as an exercise since there's no better moment to go for the Tarrasch approach with an isolated pawn. One reason is that the knight on d2 does not exert pressure on d5, and would be better on c3. The fact that White has committed to e2-e3 also helps Black in two ways: it prevents the c1-bishop from going to g5, and it means that the f1-bishop is likely heading for e2 rather than g2. (The kingside fianchetto is considered optimal against the IQP structure, as it fortifies the kingside while enabling the bishop to exert pressure against d5.)

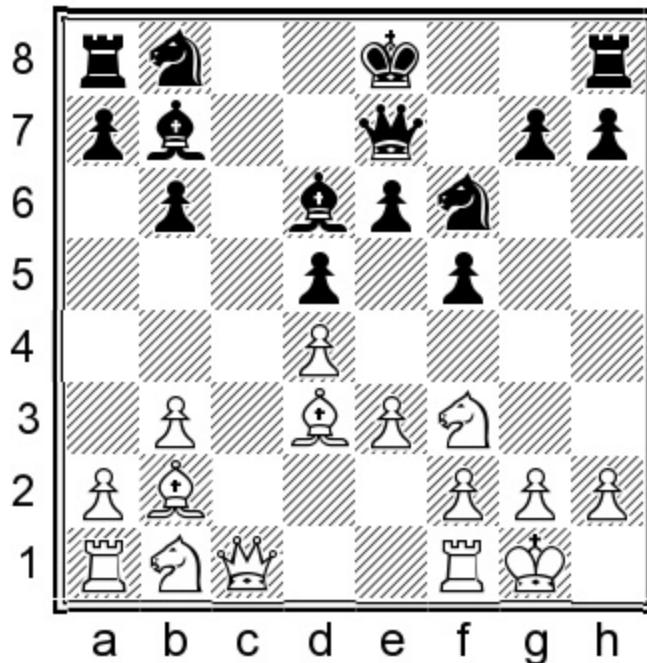
242. Anand – Almasi, Germany 2006



Show/Hide Solution

14...h5 Prophylaxis against g2-g4. (It's not clear if it was an immediate threat, but Black could not ignore it for much longer.) A test solver argued that 14...b6 is “as good”, but I disagree. The computer may not indicate much of a difference, but from a human perspective Black’s first priority should be the kingside.

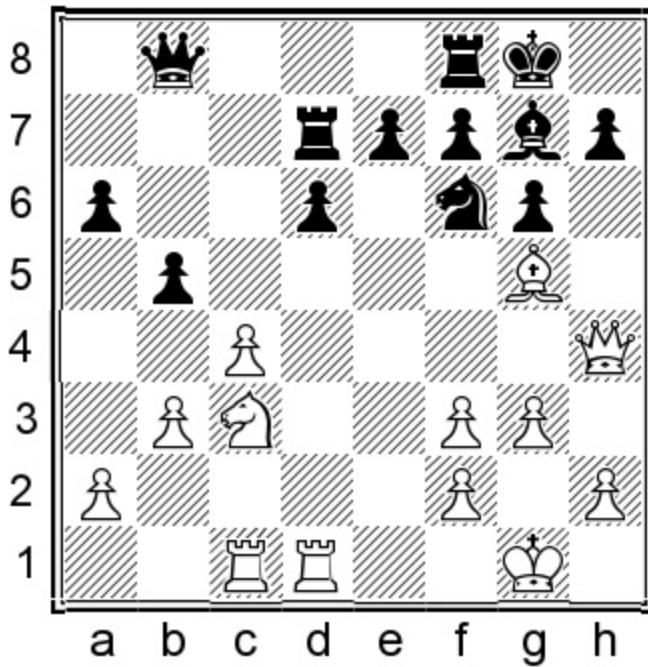
243. Kramnik – Caen University, Paris (Simul) 2006



Show/Hide Solution

11.♗a3!± Exchanging the black bishop that controls e5. **11...♝xa3** In the event of 11...♝bd7 12.♝xd6 ♜xd6 White might, in the long run, manoeuvre with ♜c3-e2-f4-d3. **12.♝xa3±** 12.♝xa3 is not so logical with Black's king still in the centre.

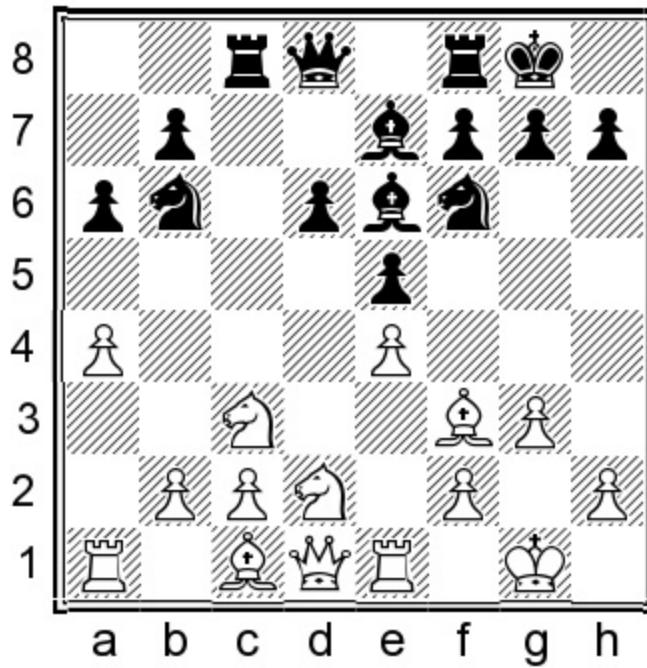
244. Kramnik – Aronian, Turin (Ol) 2006



Show/Hide Solution

18.♘d5! Threatening to take on f6. 18.cxb5 axb5 19.♗b4 ♘b7± **18...♘xd5** In the event of 18...♗d8 19.♗xf6 ♘xf6 20.♘xf6† exf6 White has some pressure on the d-file, but mainly a dangerous plan with 21.♗h6± followed by ♘d4-h4. **19.cxd5** Black is not in time to defend e7 and fight for the c-file. **19...♘c7 20.♘c6±** Or simply: 20.♘xe7+–

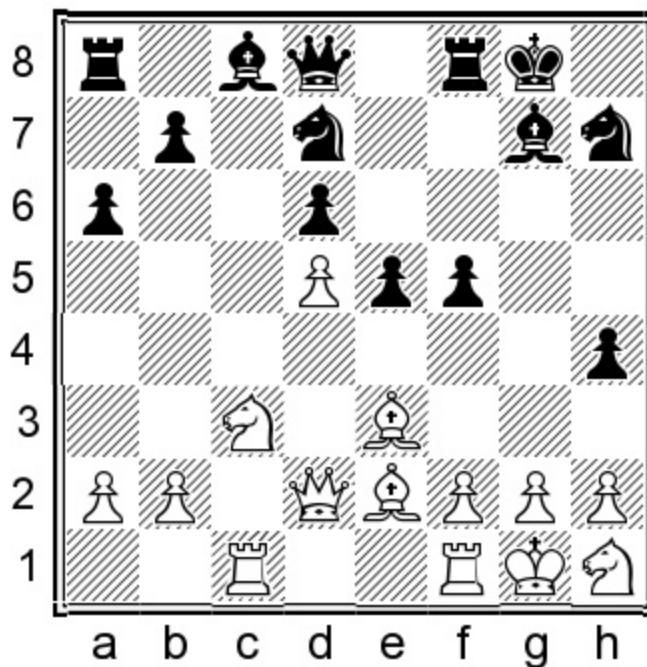
245. Vallejo Pons – Topalov, Leon (Rapid) 2006



Show/Hide Solution

14. $\mathbb{Q}f1!$ Preventing the positional threat of ...d6-d5, while preparing $\mathbb{Q}e3$ followed by a timely occupation of d5 or perhaps f5.

246. Ponomariov – Bologan, Tomsk (Rapid) 2006



Show/Hide Solution

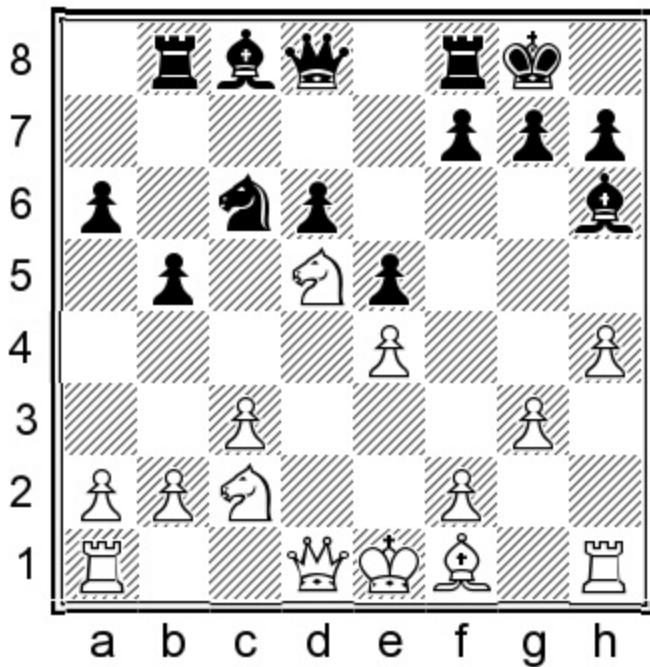
16. $f4!$ Black's pawn duo e5-f5 is halted. 16. $f3?$ $f4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $h3$ and White's king is weak. 16. $\mathbb{Q}h6?!$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xh6$ $\mathbb{W}f6\mp$ **16...exf4** 16... $b5\pm$ **17. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$** Black has an active knight but weak pawns.

18. $\mathbb{Q}f2\pm$

Ruslan Ponomariov

“Even the slightest details are important, and if something goes wrong, your rivals will pounce on it.”

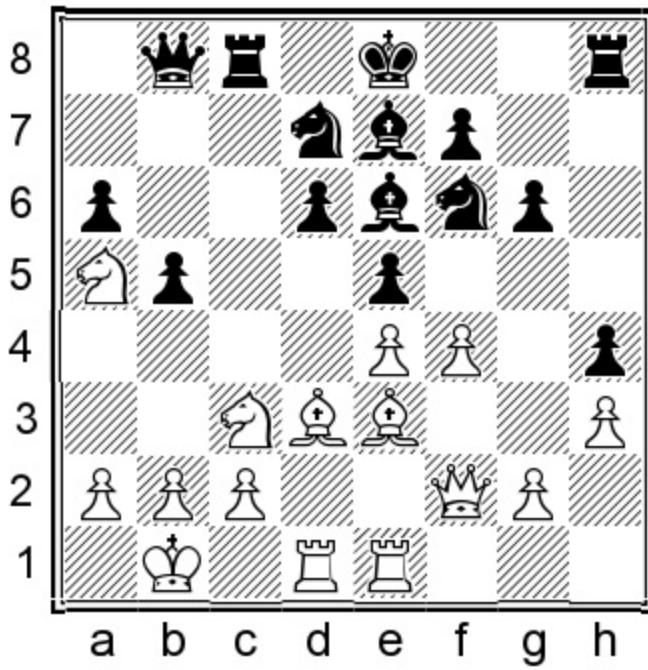
247. Polgar – Topalov, Bilbao (Blindfold) 2006



Show/Hide Solution

15. $\mathbb{Q}h3!$ Exchanging bishops to get rid of a piece that can challenge for the weak d5-square. 15. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ is less testing. 15... $\mathbb{Q}xh3?$ Positionally correct is: 15... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}cb4$ Reinforcing d5 without allowing ... $\mathbb{Q}xe3$. 16... $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $fxe6$ 19. 0-0 a5 20. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 21. $\mathbb{W}e2$ White can try to play on the queenside where the black bishop doesn't participate. 15... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ is also better than the game continuation. 16. $\mathbb{Q}xh3\pm$

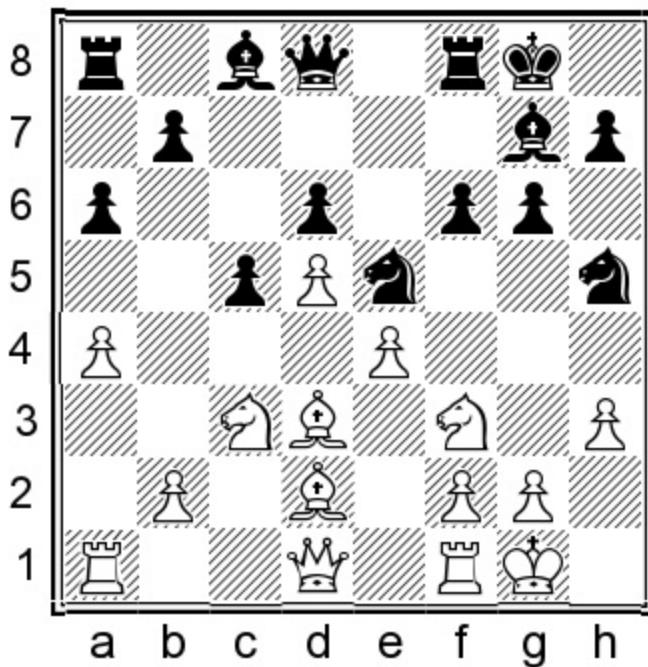
248. Karjakin – Topalov, Wijk aan Zee 2007



Show/Hide Solution

18.f5! Forcing Black to part with the bishop. **18...gxf5 19.exf5 ♜c4 20.♗xc4 bxc4 21.♕e4 21.♕e2** is also good. **21...♗xe4 22.♗xe4 ♛f6** White dominates the light squares. A good way to continue would have been: **23.♗xf6† ♛xf6 24.♖a7 ♜c7 25.♖d5+—**

249. Karpov – Marin, Calatrava (Rapid) 2007

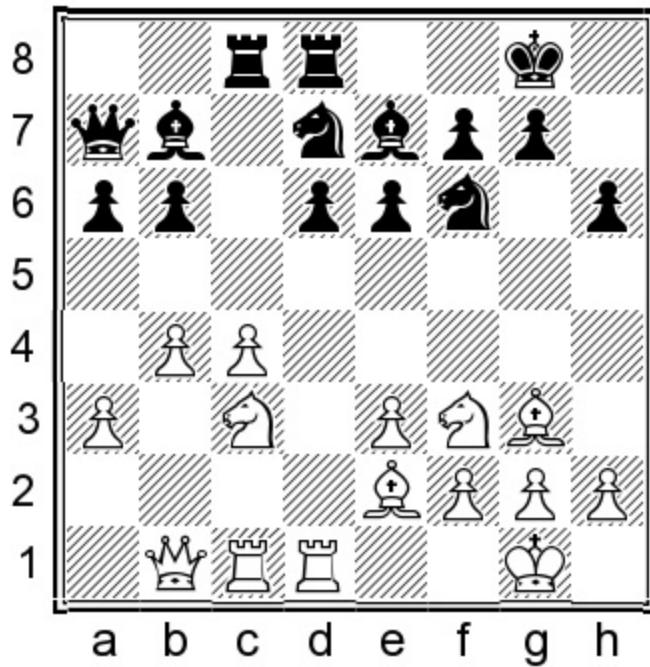


Show/Hide Solution

14.♕e2! Black can't avoid the upcoming ♜xh5. However, retreating the bishop to e2 would have been

a standard move even if the h5-knight could retreat. 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$?! $fxe5$ helps Black to control f4. 14...f5 Defending against g2-g4 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ $gxh5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ – 17. $\mathbb{W}xh5$ allowed 17...f4± in the game.

250. Carlsen – Aronian, Elista 2007



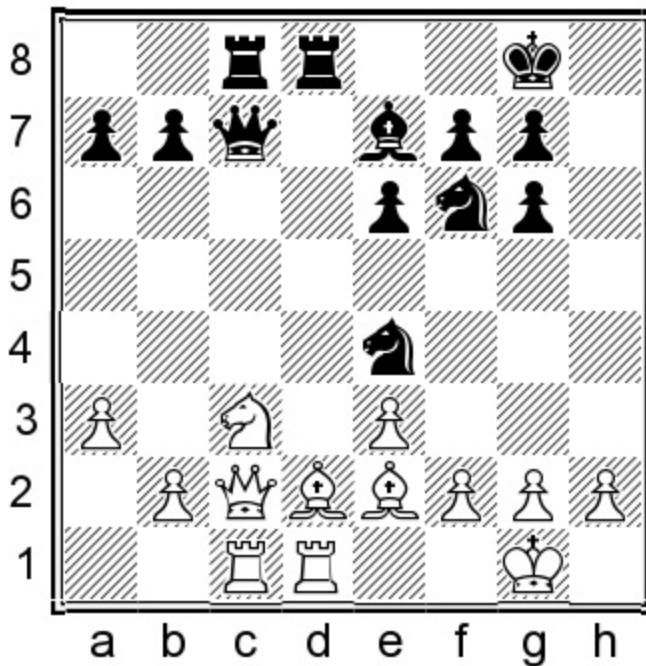
Show/Hide Solution

19...d5!= It's generally a good idea to get rid of the slightly weak d6-pawn, provided White is unable to achieve anything concrete from the opening of the centre. 19...e5? 20. $\mathbb{Q}h4\pm$; 19... $\mathbb{W}b8$ 20. h3±

Public Education Exercises 251-296

Show in Text Mode

251. Carlsen – Anand, Dortmund 2007



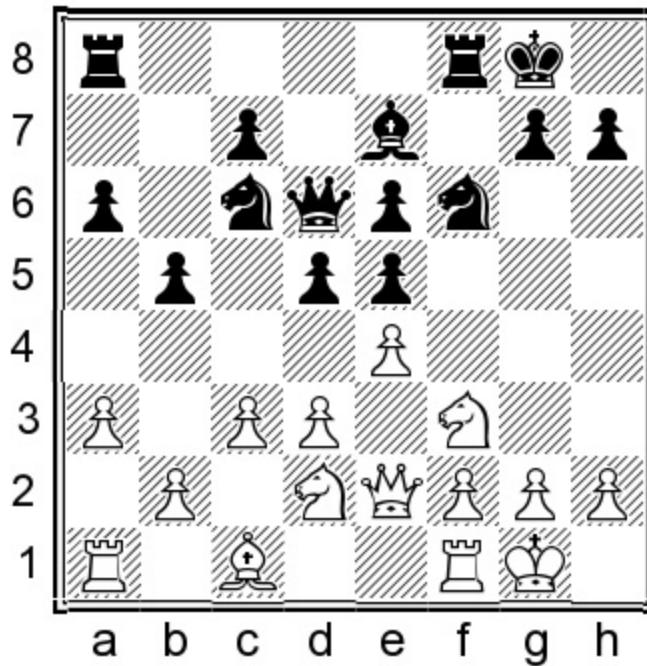
Show/Hide Solution

18. $\mathbb{Q}e1!$ Keeping the bishop pair is the only way to fight for the advantage.

Magnus Carlsen

"I spend hours playing chess because I find it so much fun. The day it stops being fun is the day I give up."

252. Anand – Aronian, Mainz (Rapid) 2007

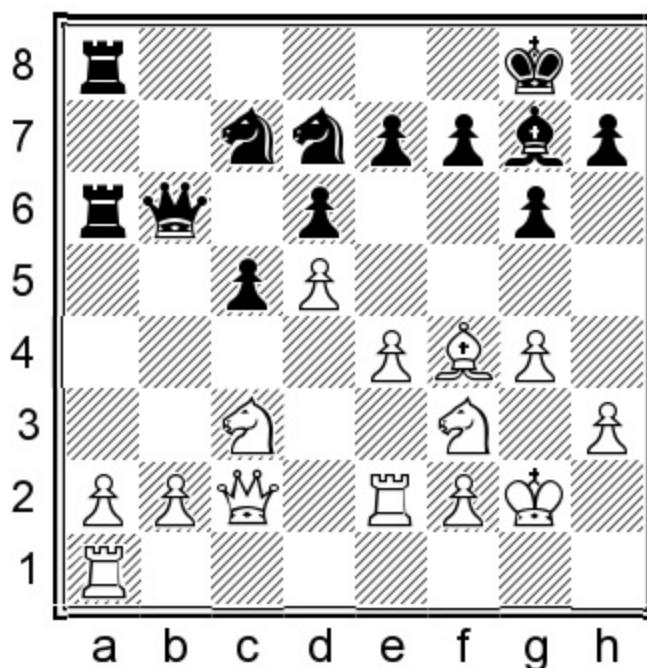


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13.b4! With this move White fixes the pawn on b5, thus preparing a3-a4 without allowing ...b5-b4 in reply. White may also be happy to develop the bishop to b2, eyeing the slightly weak e5-pawn.

13.a4?! b4= is fine for Black. **13...♝fd8** 13...a5 14.♗b2 threatens a3-a4, and if 14...a4? 15.c4! Black's centre collapses. **14.♝d1** Defending the d3-square. **14...dxe4** Aronian tries to be active, but it doesn't lead anywhere. **15.♝xe4 ♛xe4 16.♛d5 ♛d5 17.♝b2±**

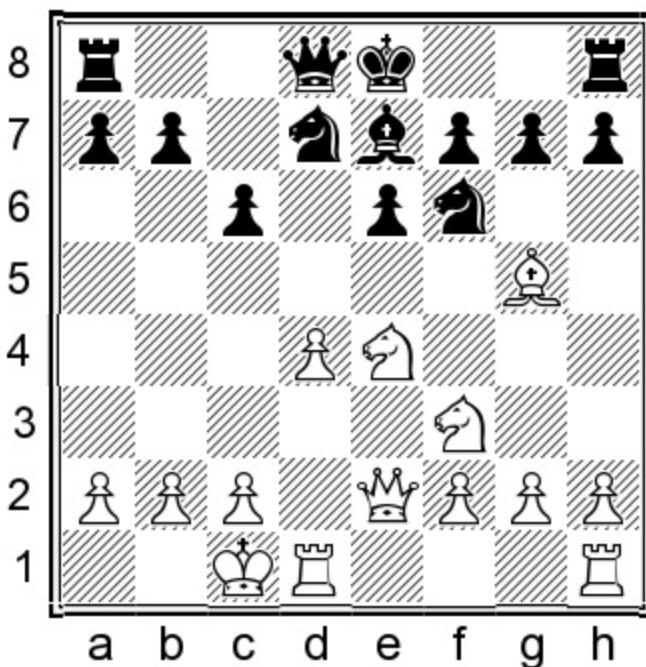
253. Karpov – Levitov, Ajaccio (Blitz) 2007



Show/Hide Solution

19...♝b5 Exchanging the defender of the a2-pawn while opening the g7-a1 diagonal. Black is generally happy to exchange minor pieces. **20.♝xb5** After 20.a4 Black can take on c3, but another option is: 20...♝d4 21.♝xd4 cxd4 22.♝b5 ♕b7!± The last move prepares ...♝c5 by ensuring that b2-b4xc5 will not hit the queen. **20...♛xb5 21.a3 ♜b6=**

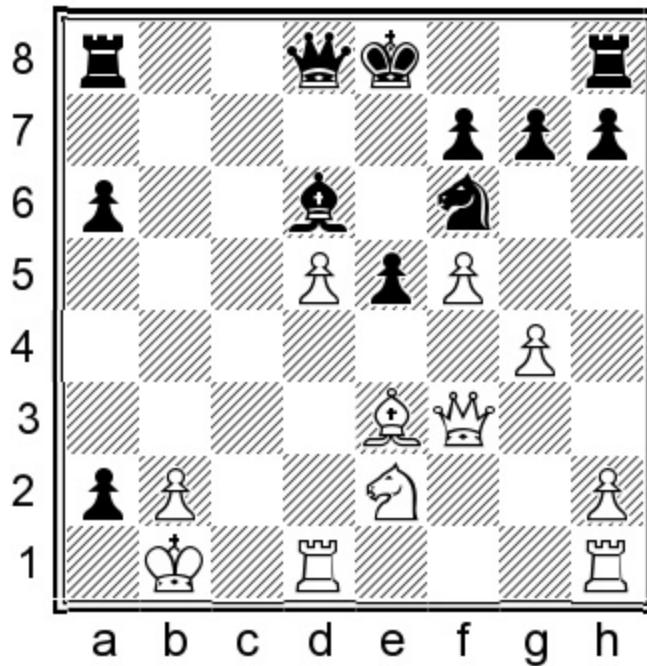
254. Drazic – Karpov, Ajaccio (Blitz) 2007



Show/Hide Solution

10...♝xe4 11.♝xe7 ♜c3! A standard intermediate move, with many different versions. **12.♝xd8** **12.bxc3 ♕xe7± 12...♝xe2† 13.♝d2 ♜xd4!±** Black is a healthy pawn up.

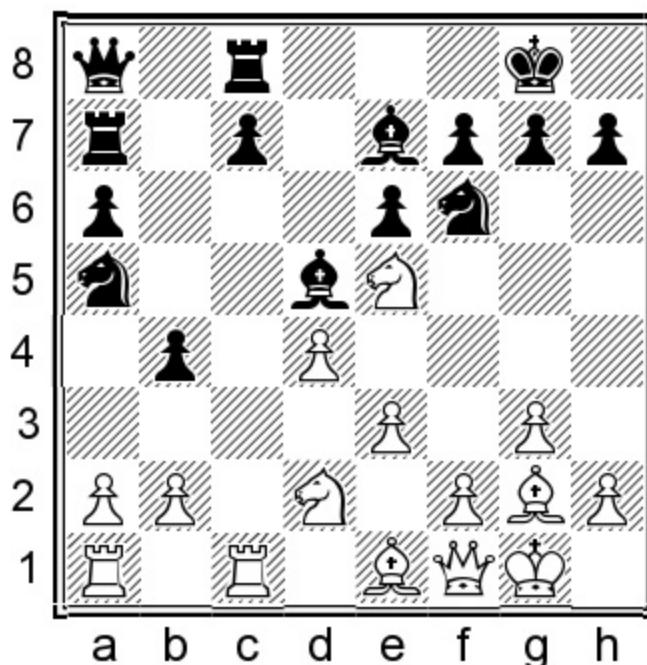
255. Nisipeanu – Topalov, Vitoria-Gasteiz 2007



Show/Hide Solution

20.♔a1± Keeping the pawn to hide behind. White's attack with g4-g5 and f5-f6 has more potential than Black's. 20.♔xa2? ♔a5† 21.♔b1 ♔b8+–

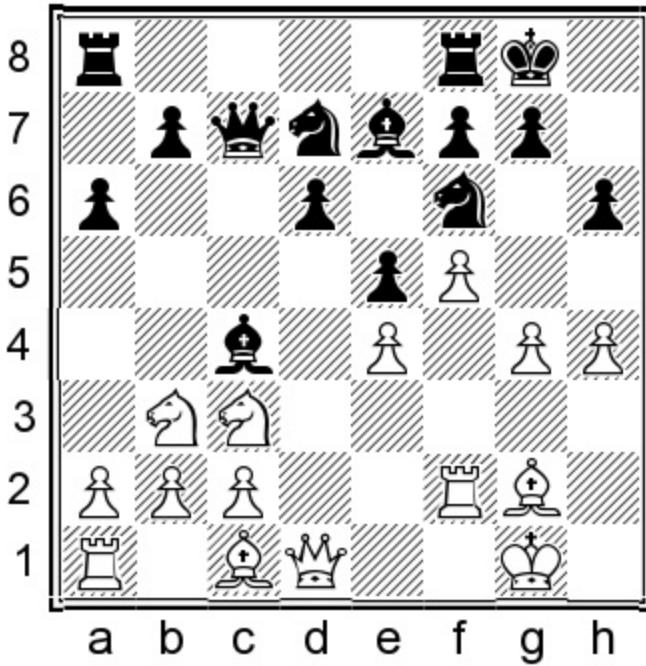
256. Kramnik – Leko, Moscow 2007



Show/Hide Solution

18...c5 Exchanging a backward pawn and activating the rook on a7. There is no other move to consider, so we don't need an evaluation.

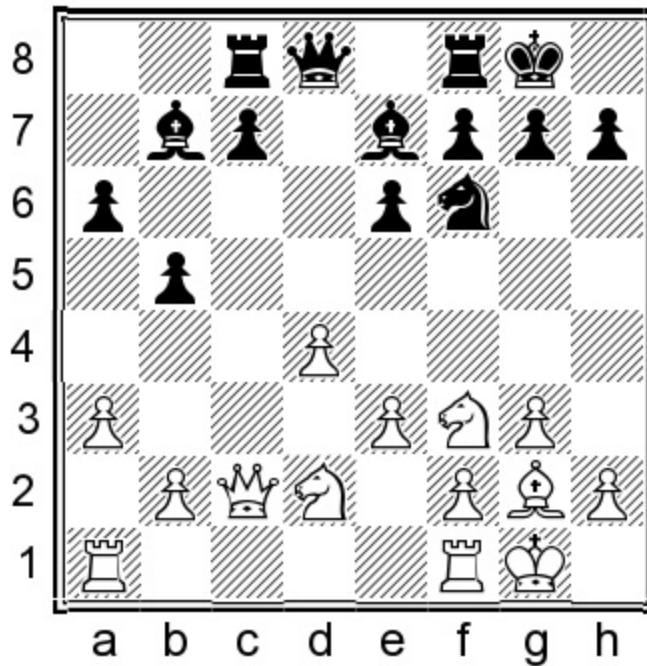
257. Savchenko – Anand, Moscow (Blitz) 2007



Show/Hide Solution

14...♝h7! The best way to handle g4-g5, which White nevertheless is forced to play as the h4-pawn is hanging. 14...h5!? 15.gxh5 d5 is okay (better) for Black according to the engine, but 16.h6∞ still looks shaky for Black's king. **15.g5** 15.h5 is positionally lost for White. **15...hxg5 16.hxg5 ♜xg5** The time control must be the explanation why Anand chose to keep the bishops with 16...♝xg5?. After 17.♝g4 f6 18.♝e3± there is no doubt as to which bishop is best. **17.♝xg5 ♜xg5** Black continues with ...f7-f6, avoiding any mate on the h-file as the king has an escape square.

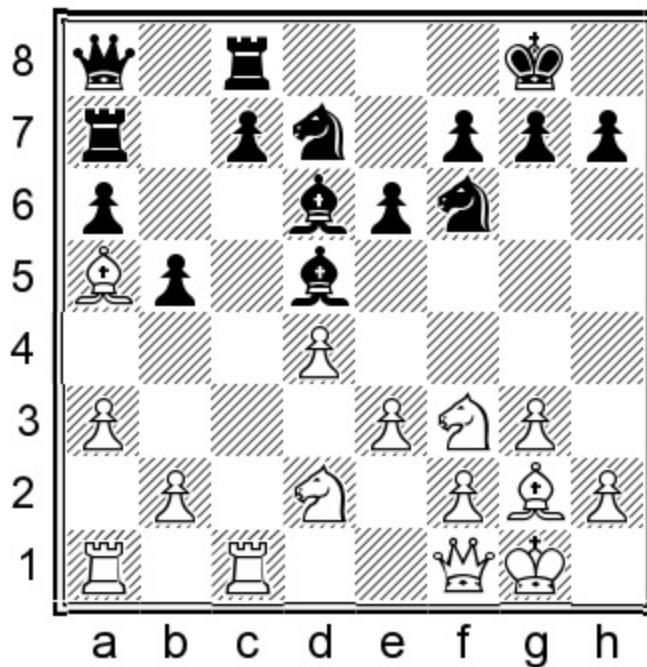
258. Kramnik – Carlsen, Dortmund 2007



Show/Hide Solution

15.b4! Stopping Black from executing the pawn lever that would exchange his weak pawn and open the file for his rook **15...a5 16.♗e5!** **16.♖fb1 axb4 17.axb4 ♗d5** gives counterplay. **16...♗d5?!** The game continues in Exercise 943. **16...♗xg2 17.♔xg2 c6±** was a better defensive try.

259. Kramnik – Anand, Wijk aan Zee 2007

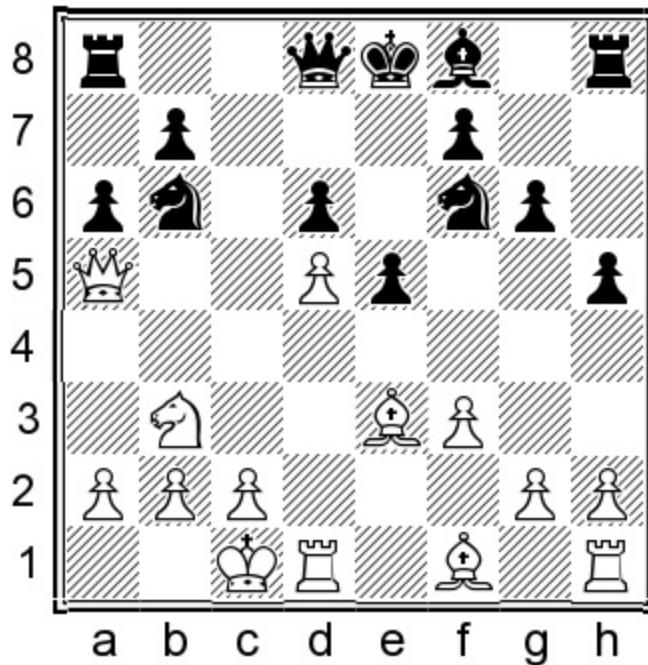


Show/Hide Solution

19.b4! White's entire strategy has been based on stopping ...c7-c5. His next plan is to double up on

the c-file. 19...e5 A less tasty pawn lever. 20.dxe5 ♖xe5 20...dxe5 21.♘xe5 ♖xe5 22.♗a2!± 21.♘xe5 ♖xe5 22.f3!?± Not forced, but given an exclamation mark by Kramnik. He will expand in the centre (while Black's c-pawn can't reach c5) and the queen on a8 may feel uncomfortable.

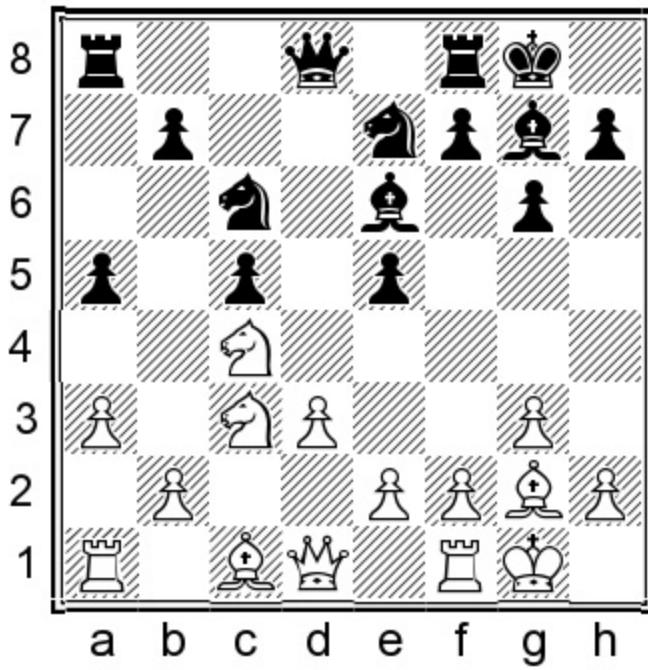
260. Anand – Topalov, Wijk aan Zee 2008



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13...♝h6!= Exchanging the bishop pair.

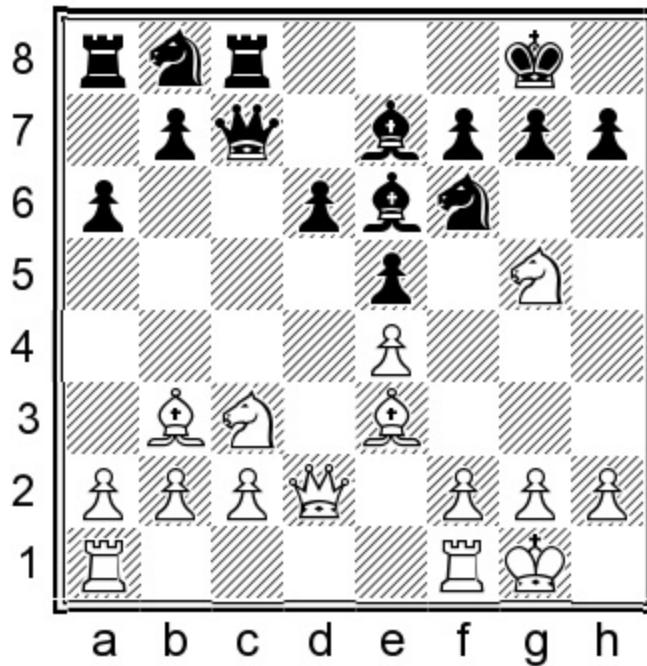
261. Kramnik – Navara, Prague (Rapid) 2008



Show/Hide Solution

14.♗g5! Threatening ♗xc6. **14...f6** After 14...♝c7 the knights defend each other, but Black's position is shaky. 15.♘a4! is interesting (but not the only good move). 15...b5 (15...f6 16.♕d2±) 16.♘xc5 bxc4 17.♘xe6 fxe6 18.♘xe7 ♘xe7 19.♘xa8 ♘xa8 20.♖c1 ♛b6 21.dxc4 ♛xb2 22.c5± **15.♗e3** By inducing ...f7-f6, White has reduced the scope of the g7-bishop and opened the diagonal leading towards Black's king. No further lines are needed, but let's see one anyway: **15...b6 16.♗a4 ♘d7?** This would be a good move if the pawn was still on f7, but here it loses to **17.♗b3!** with a double threat thanks to ...f7-f6.

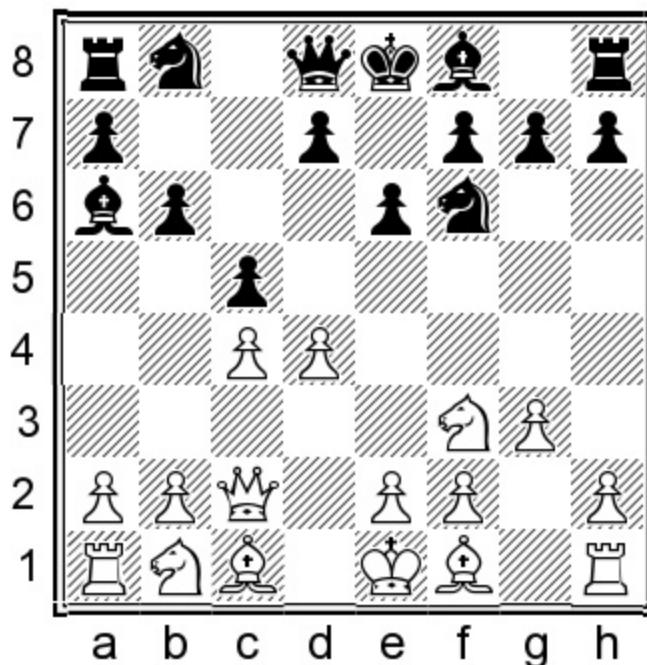
262. Ivanchuk – Anand, Leon (Rapid) 2008



Show/Hide Solution

12...♝c4= 12...♝xb3?! 13.cxb3!± opens up the c-file in White's favour – Black was supposed to exert pressure along this file.

263. Kramnik – Leko, Dortmund 2008

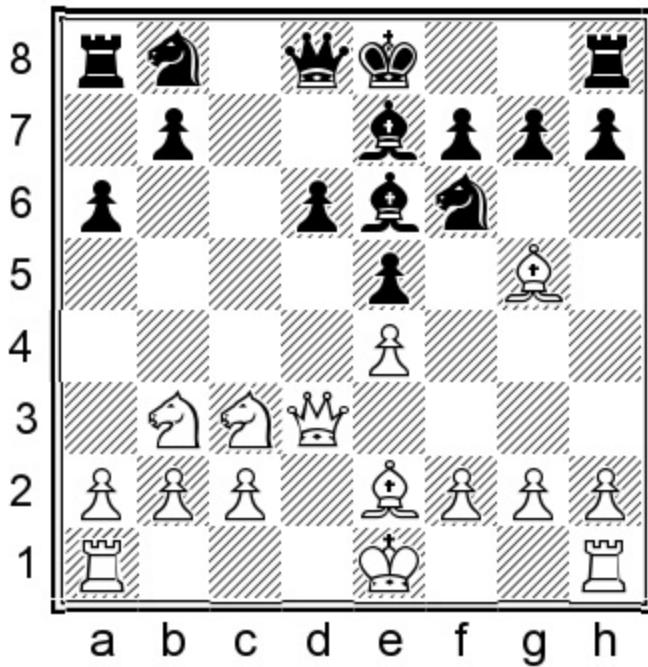


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6.d5! Not allowing Black to get a Hedgehog. 6.♗g2 allows 6...♞c6. **6...exd5 7.cxd5 ♜b7 8.♗g2 8.e4 ♜e7 9.♗g2** is another way to sacrifice the pawn, but allowing a queen exchange is less critical.

8...♝xd5 White's compensation consists of development, a semi-open d-file and the d5-square. Practice has shown that White tends to have the easier play, although several World Champions and other elite players have tried the black side as well.

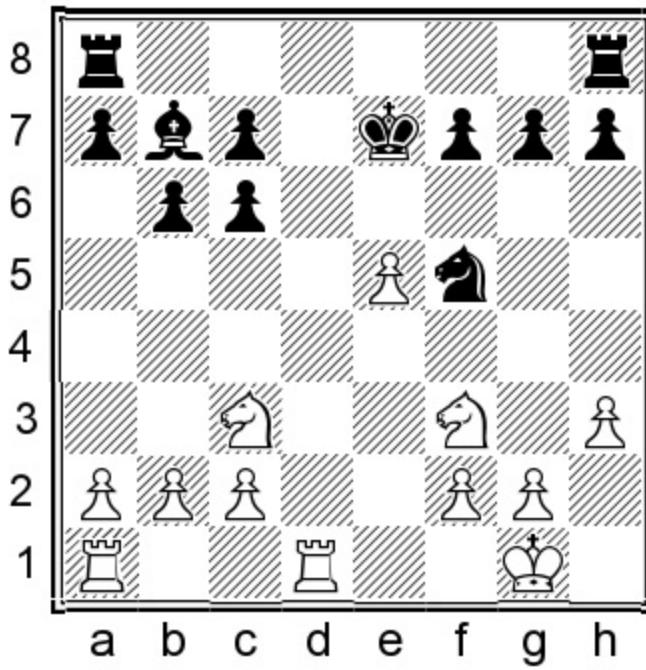
264. Polgar – Anand, Mainz (Rapid) 2008



Show/Hide Solution

9...♞bd7 The knight almost always belongs on d7 rather than c6 in this structure. The main advantages are that the c-file is kept open for the rook and, in the event of an exchange on f6, Black can recapture with the knight to maintain control over d5. Moreover, ...♝b6-c4 is an attractive possibility in some lines. (...♝c6-a5-c4 would be less threatening due to the possibility of ♐xa5.) A quick search shows that in games between strong players, the knight is developed to d7 in 90% of the games. Does anyone want to argue with decades of experience? Not even Stockfish. 9...0-0 may be okay, but it gives White the option of 10.♜xf6!? with increased control over the d5-square.

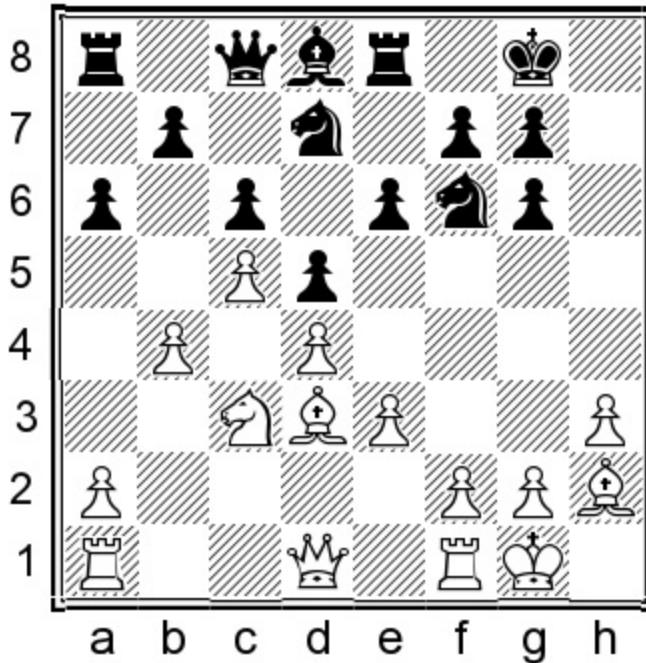
265. Ivanchuk – Kramnik, Moscow (Blitz) 2008



Show/Hide Solution

14.g4! White wants to use the pawn majority on the kingside, if the pawns are not too weak after an immediate ...h7-h5. That's not going to happen with Black's knight on h6. 14.♘d3 ♘hd8† **14...c5!** A pawn sacrifice is the best chance. The game went 14...♘h6?! when White is positionally dominating, though still a long way from winning the game. **15.♗d5†** 15.♗d5!? also wins a pawn: 15...♘h6 16.♗ad1 ♘hd8 17.♗xd8 ♗xd8 18.♗xd8 ♗xd8 19.♗g5 Black is unable to defend h7. **15...♗xd5** **16.♗xd5 ♗e6** **17.♗d2 ♗d4** Black has good drawing chances.

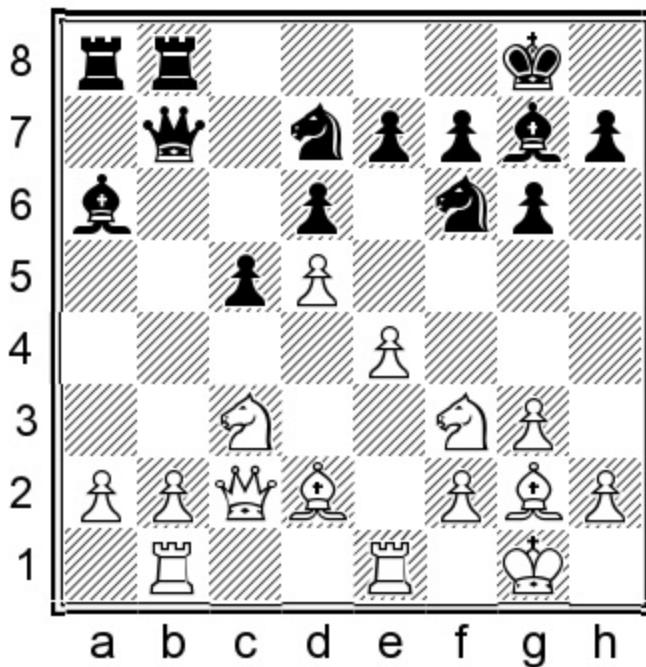
266. Anand – Wang Yue, Nice (Rapid) 2009



Show/Hide Solution

15.f4! Stopping ...e6-e5. Only this move is needed to solve the exercise. **15...b6 16.a3 16.g4!?** is a logical alternative suggested by some test solvers. **16...a5 17.♗c2 ♗b7±** Black will continue with ...♝c7 followed by rook exchanges on the a-file. This should stop White's kingside attack from becoming too dangerous, but Black is still on the defensive.

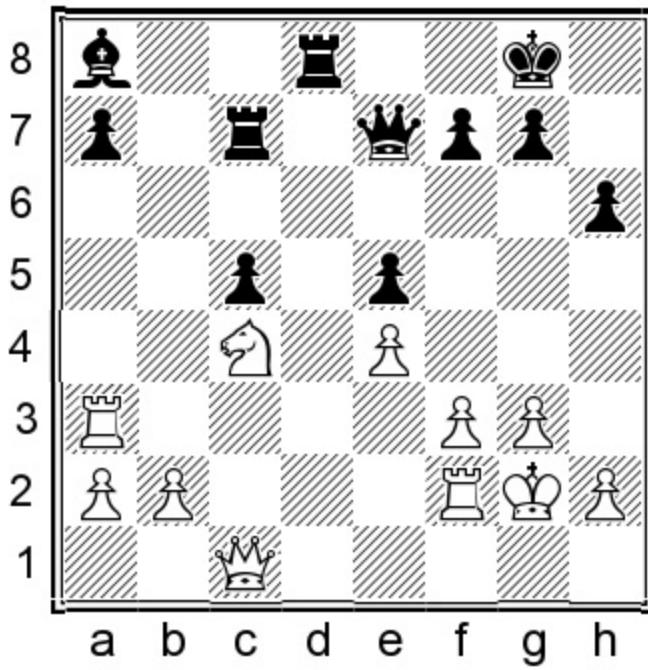
267. Ponomariov – Bareev, Moscow (Blitz) 2009



Show/Hide Solution

16...♝g4! Not only preparing a knight exchange (which is in Black's favour in the Benko Gambit), but also eyeing the d3-square. White would have loved to replace e2-e4 with h2-h3. **17.♝ed1 ♘ge5 18.♝e1 ♘c4 19.♝c1** White has been pushed back. The best way to increase the pressure was **19...♛b4! 20.♝d3 ♛a5**, threatening to take on c3.

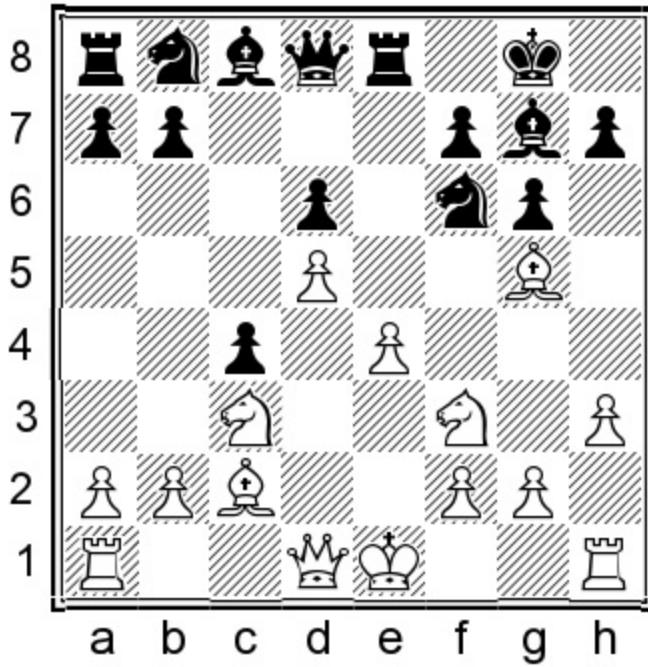
268. Topalov – Anand, Sofia (12) 2010



Show/Hide Solution

30...f5! To activate the bishop. **31.exf5?** **31.♗e2?? fxe4 32.fxe4 ♜d4†; 31.♗d2!=** was the best way to fight against the bishop. **31...e4 32.fxe4?** Losing, but White was in trouble anyway. **32...♛xe4† 33.♔h3 ♜d4** Black is winning. Anand's next moves were instructive: **34.♘e3 ♛e8! 35.g4 h5!—+**

269. Kramnik – Grischuk, Monte Carlo (Rapid) 2011

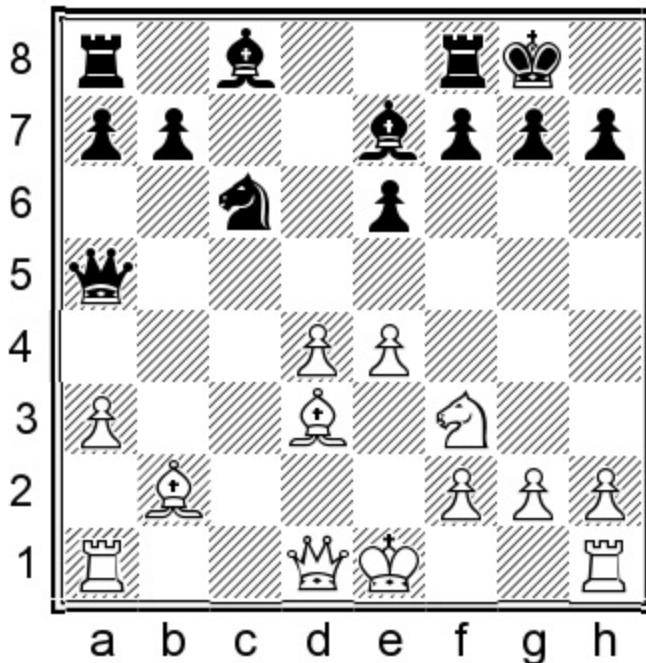


Show/Hide Solution

11...b5! The move Black wants to play in the Benoni. Black should not start with **11...h6?? 12.♗e3** as

it gives White a tactical idea: 12...b5 13.a3 $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 14.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c5?$ 15.e5! **12.a3** 12. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{W}a5\ddagger$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ and White loses a pawn. 12.0-0 b4 13. $\mathbb{Q}b5\infty$ **12... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 13.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c5\infty$** It's possible to delve deeper into these lines but there's no need – when it comes to the decision on the first move of the exercise, Black's b-pawn should be pushed.

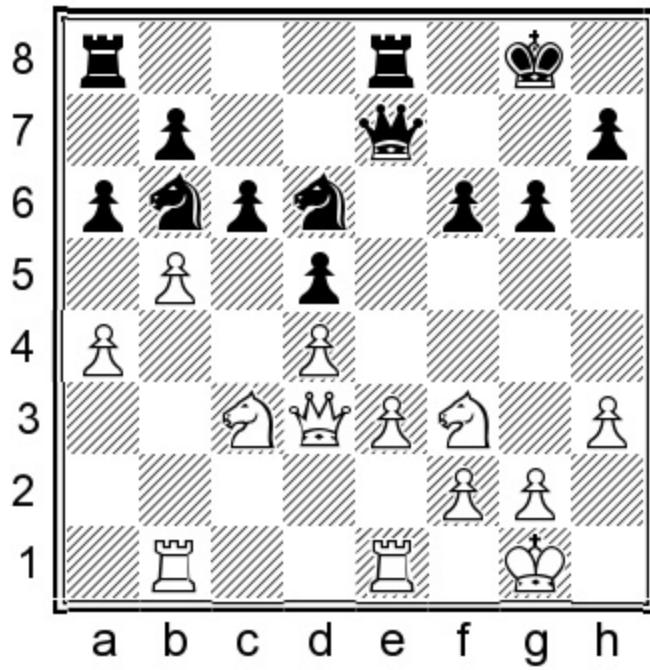
270. Vitiugov – Khalifman, Taganrog 2011



Show/Hide Solution

12. $\mathbb{Q}f1!$ The strong pawn centre would be less valuable without queens. Yes, White would have preferred to castle, but the rook can still become useful on the h-file after h2-h4. **12...b6 13. $\mathbb{W}e2!\pm$**

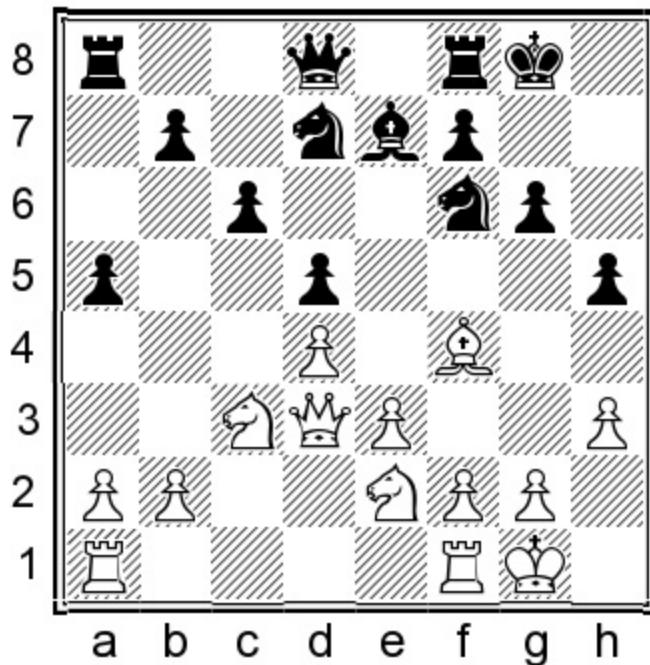
271. Giri – Ponomariov, Beijing (Blitz) 2011



Show/Hide Solution

21...cxb5! 21...axb5 22.axb5 ♜bc4 23.bxc6 bxc6± reaches a position where it's hard for White to win, but the weak c6-pawn will be there for a long time. **22.axb5** 22.a5 ♜bc4 23.♗xd5 ♛f7† Black controls the most important light squares. **22...a5** White has not achieved anything on the queenside; the a-pawn is more strong than weak. **23.♗d2** Black could now have prevented e3-e4 at the price of a weak e5-square. **23...f5!?** 23...a4 24.e4∞

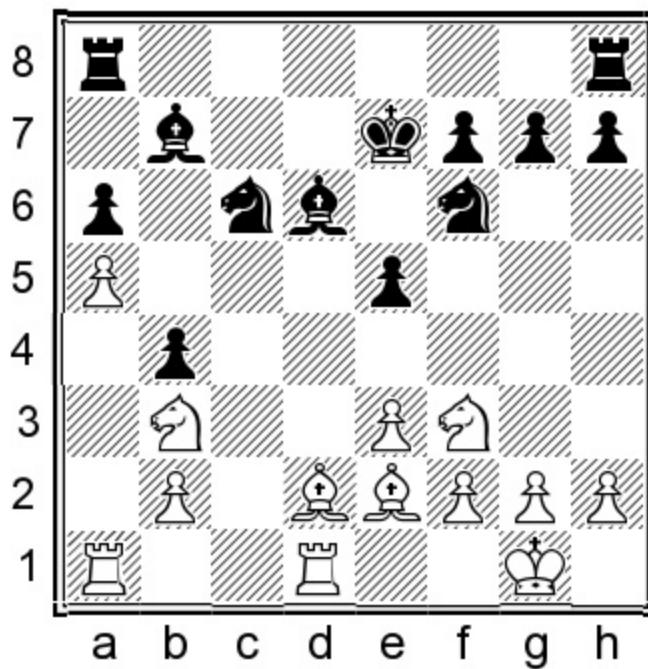
272. Carlsen – Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2012



Show/Hide Solution

14.f3!± Mobilizing the central pawns. 14.♘ad1 is a decent move but puts less pressure on Black. One difference is 14...a4 15.f3 b5 16.e4 b4 when White can't go to a4 with the knight.

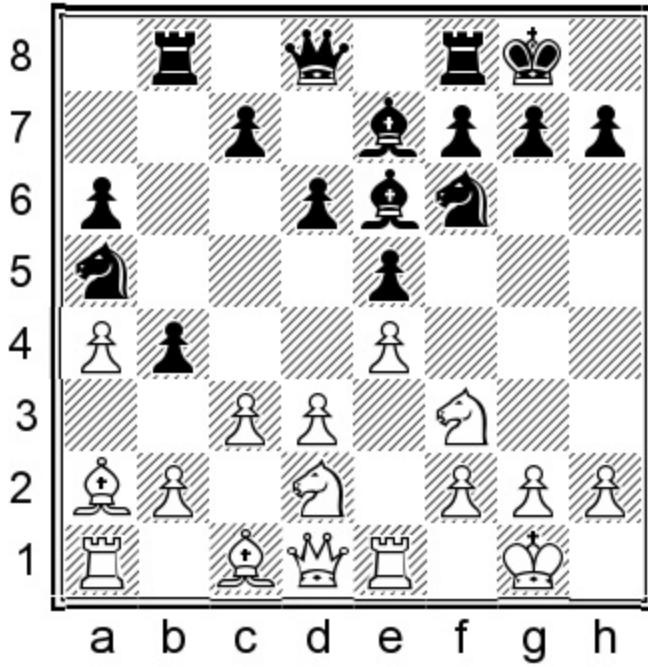
273 Karpov – Humeau, Ciamannacce (Simul) 2012



Show/Hide Solution

16.♗e1!+– Preparing ♘d2-c4 to make use of the weak squares on the queenside. Black is surprisingly helpless.

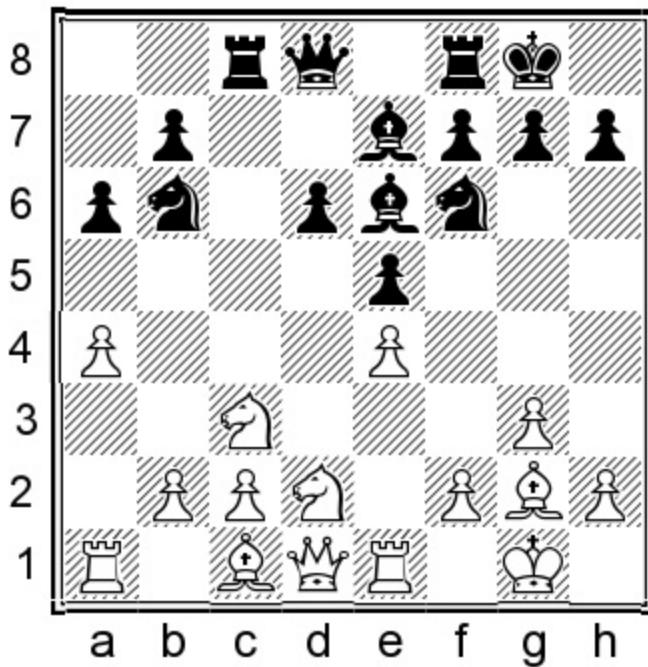
274. Ponomariov – Harikrishna, Leon 2012



Show/Hide Solution

13.♗xe6 13.d4 ♗xa2 14.♗xa2 exd4 15.cxd4 c5± **13...fxe6** Black's doubled pawns are not weak for the moment, but they are (as usual) making it difficult to advance other pawns without creating weaknesses. For example, White does not have to worry about ...d6-d5 as it would weaken the e5-pawn. Even so, White's standard reaction after doubling Black's pawns is to exchange one of them. **14.d4! bxc3 15.bxc3 exd4 16.cxd4±** Black soon needs to spend energy defending the e6-pawn. With the position opening up, Black's king would have preferred to have a pawn on f7.

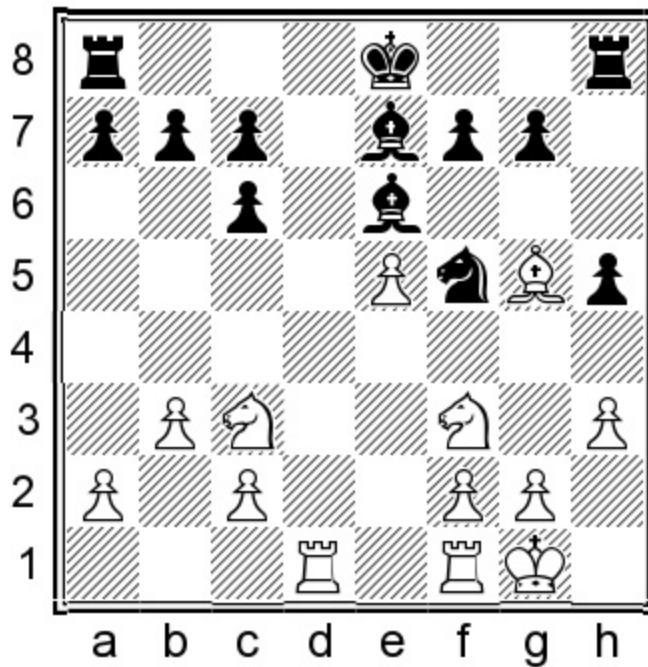
275. Ponomariov – Cheparinov, Leon 2012



Show/Hide Solution

13. $\mathbb{Q}f1! \pm$ Heading for e3 to control d5. (Black was threatening ...d6-d5.)

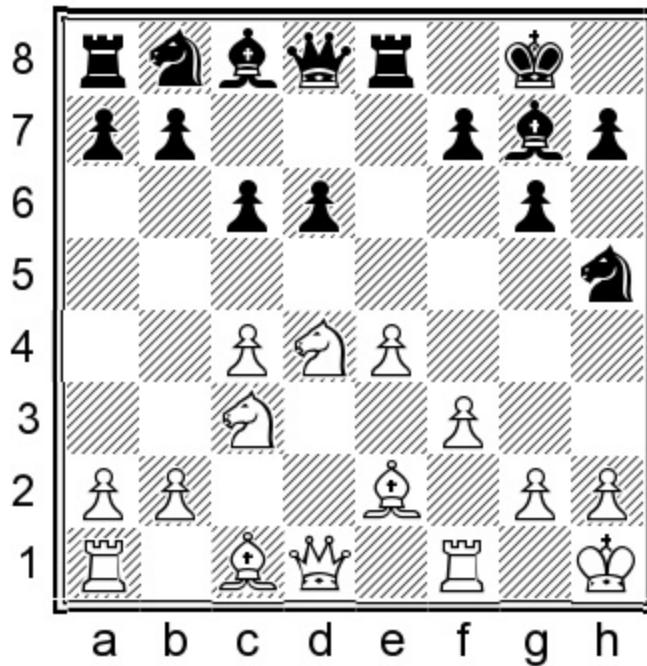
276. Aronian – Kramnik, London 2012



Show/Hide Solution

13...h4 Planning ... $\mathbb{B}h5$ (sometimes) and restricting White's pawn majority before g2-g3 is played.

277. Kasimdzhanov – Topalov, Zug 2013



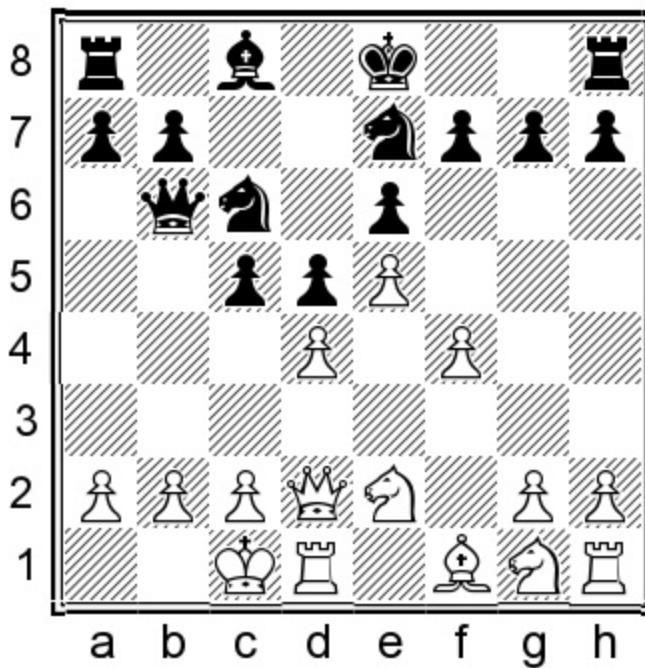
Show/Hide Solution

11.g4! Before Black has played ... $\mathbb{W}h4$. **11... $\mathbb{Q}f6$** Black has spent a tempo to weaken White's kingside. (Moving the knight from f6 to h5 and back to f6 takes one more tempo than g2-g4.) There is some logic to the idea, but practical results have favoured White. **12. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ h5 13. $\mathbb{Q}f5!?$** The sacrifice is strong, but the details of it are another story. White has other decent options, so you don't need to have planned this move to solve the exercise.

Rustam Kasimdzhanov

"I've been playing chess for 35 years and I'm still warming up!"

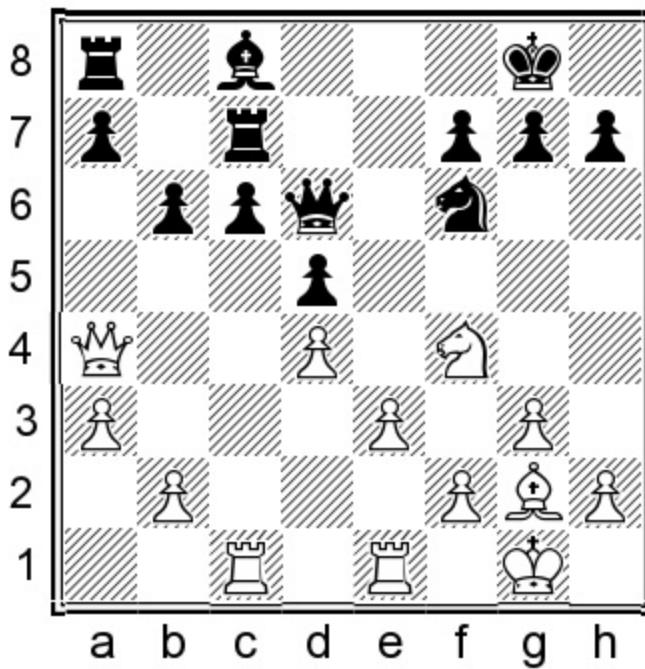
278. Ardelean – Khalifman, Legnica 2013



Show/Hide Solution

9...c4! White should not castle long before the pawns have been exchanged with $dxc5$ or ... $c5xd4$. Black has a self-playing attack 9... $\mathbb{W}a6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ c4! is an alternative leading to the same type of situation.

279. Carlsen – Anand, Moscow 2013

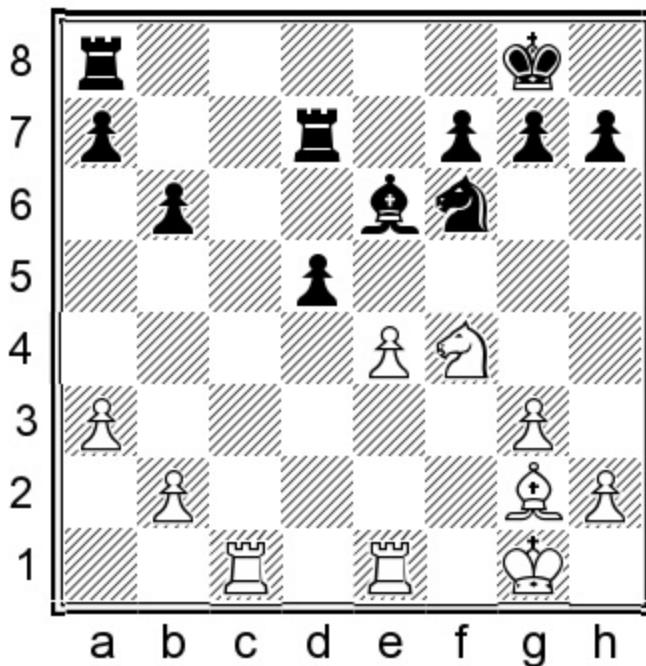


Show/Hide Solution

19.f3! Making use of the centre pawns. 19.b4?! is unnecessary because Black cannot play ... $c6-c5$

anyway. 19. $\mathbb{W}b4!?$ tries to exchange the well-placed black queen, but 19... $\mathbb{W}d8$ is a possible reply. **19... $\mathbb{Q}e6$** 19... $c5?!$ 20.e4 and the threat of e4-e5 leaves Black on the brink of collapse. **20.e4 $dxe4?!$** 20... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 22.e5 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 23.f4± White will not manage to push f4-f5 soon, but will slowly increase the pressure on the kingside while holding back ...c6-c5. **21.fxe4±**

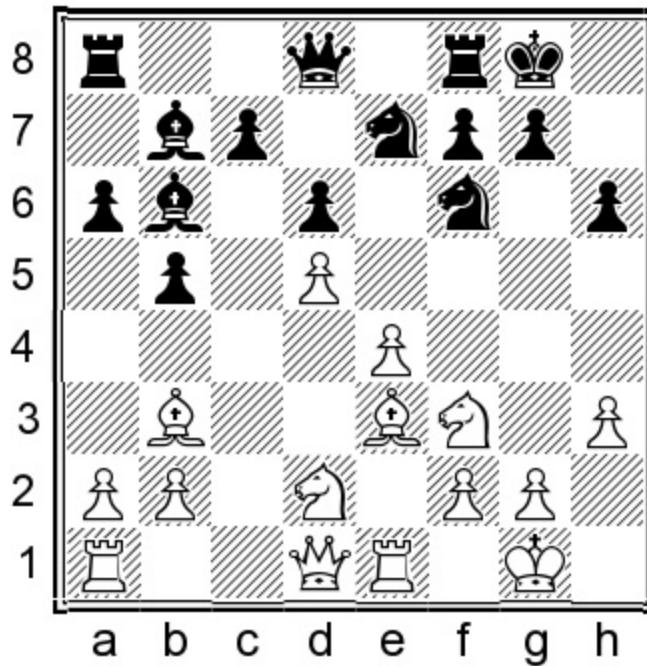
280. Carlsen – Anand, Moscow 2013



Show/Hide Solution

24. $\mathbb{Q}xe6!$ After 24.exd5 Black can't recapture on d5, but 24... $\mathbb{Q}f5!$ leaves White with only a small advantage. **24...fxe6 25. $\mathbb{Q}h3+–$** Black collapses. (A tactical exercise? Well, $\mathbb{Q}h3$ is a standard move.)

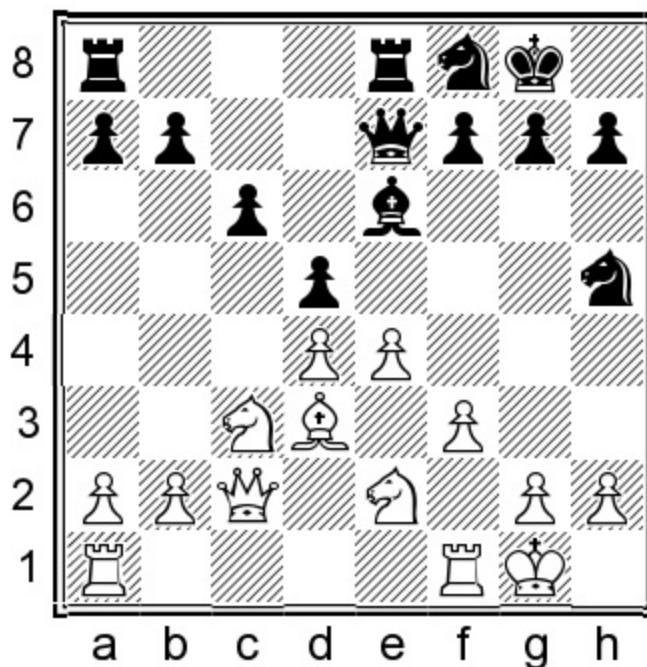
281. Khalifman – Predke, Voronezh 2014



Show/Hide Solution

14...c6! Activating the b7-bishop as well as the e7-knight. 14... $\mathbb{Q}xe3$?! 15. $\mathbb{R}xe3$ helps White's rook to develop, making it easier to double up in the future. **15.dxc6 $\mathbb{Q}xc6=$** Black has plenty of active possibilities, so the backward d6-pawn is no big deal.

282. Kramnik – Giri, London (Rapid) 2014

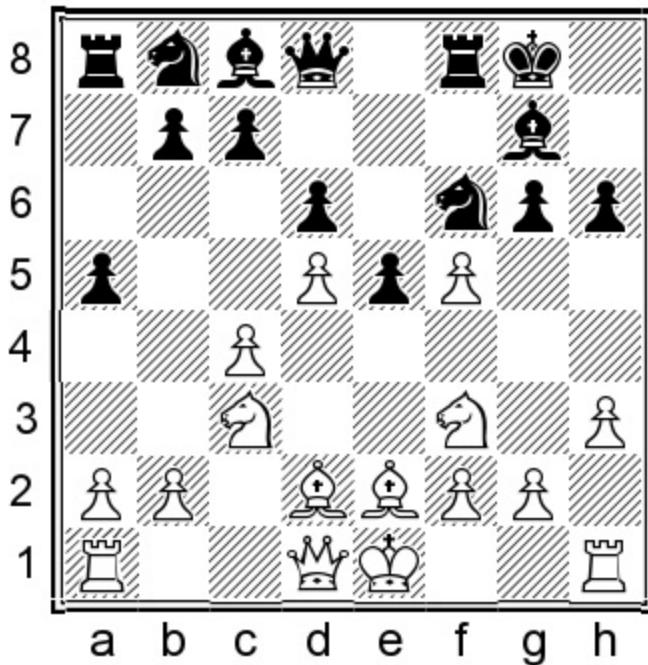


Show/Hide Solution

14.e5!± White continues with f4-f5 (unless g2-g4 traps the knight). The e4-e5 advance can be

delayed, but it's most forceful if played immediately. **14...g6 15.f4 ♜g7 16.♗g3 f5** The normal way to avoid f4-f5. Kramnik should now have directed his attention to the queenside, while having g2-g4 as a long-term plan.

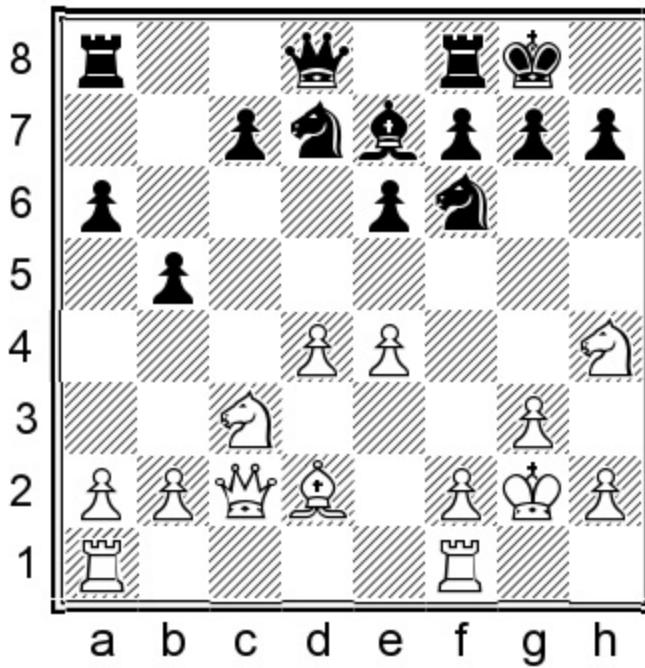
283. Kramnik – Nakamura, London 2014



Show/Hide Solution

12...gx_f5 Every Russian schoolboy knows that Black must take back with the pawn. Every American superstar as well. **12...♝xf5 13.g4! ♜d7** and White's pieces are better – especially after **14.g5!±** gaining the g5-square. The following moves are not part of the exercise, but since they are instructive, let's include them: **13.♛c1! f4! 14.g3! e4! 15.♗h4 e3! 16.fxe3 fxg3 17.♗g6** With a position that's been discussed a lot in top-level games.

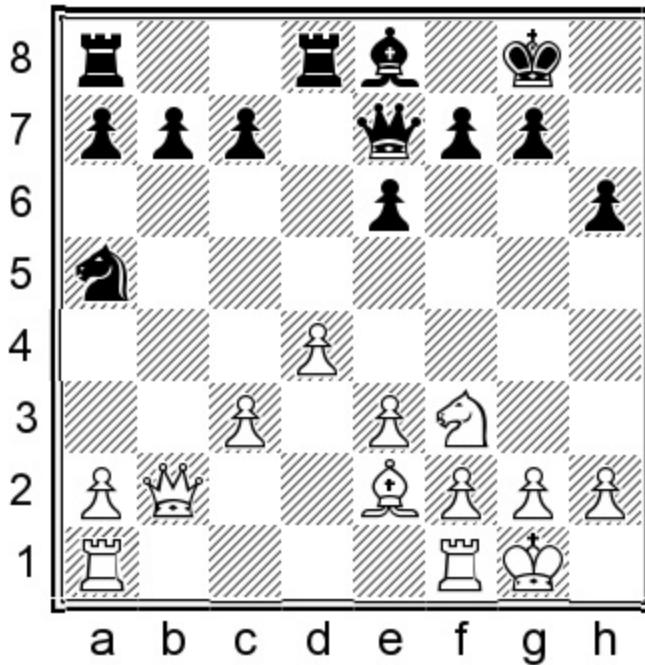
284. Caruana – Anand, Stavanger (Blitz) 2015



Show/Hide Solution

14...c5 Getting rid of the backward pawn. **15.dxc5 ♜xc5±** White's pieces are misplaced.

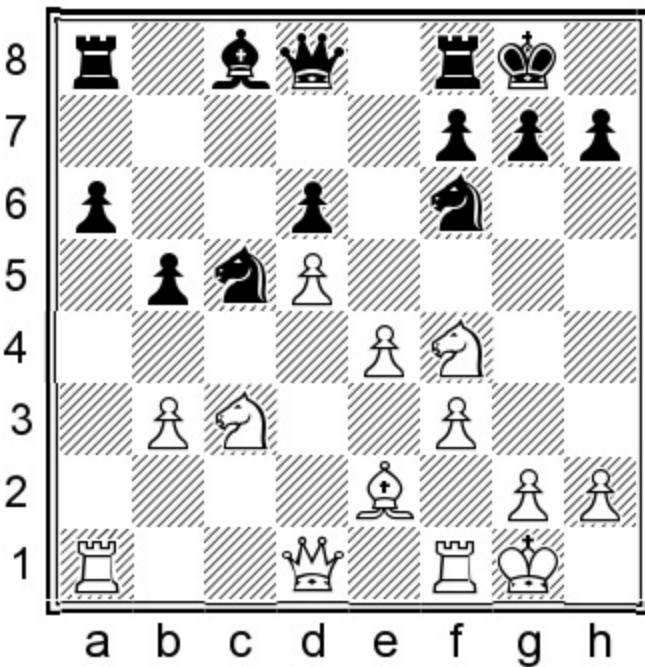
285. Topalov – Aronian, Stavanger (Blitz) 2015



Show/Hide Solution

16.♗b4! Before Black has time for ...c7-c5. To avoid losing material Black is forced to exchange queens, which opens the c-file in White's favour. **16...♕xb4 17.cxb4 ♜c6 18.♖ab1±**

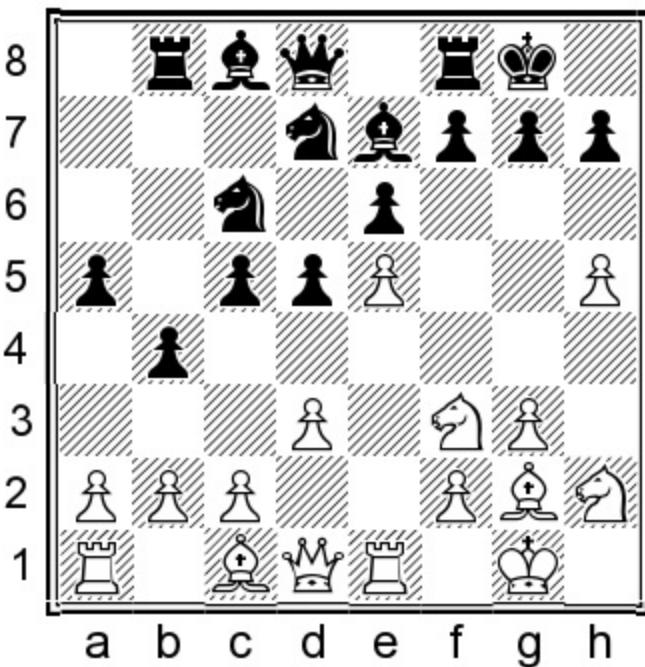
286. Grischuk – Topalov, Stavanger 2015



Show/Hide Solution

15...b4 Not allowing White to play b3-b4. 15... $\mathbb{W}b6$ can be included first. **16. $\mathbb{Q}a4$** **16. $\mathbb{Q}b5?$** $\mathbb{W}b6$ **17. $\mathbb{Q}h1$** **g5!** was the game, and Black soon won a piece. **16... $\mathbb{Q}xa4$** **17. $\mathbb{Q}xa4$** **a5=**

287. Kasparov – Rajkovic, Pula (Simul) 2015

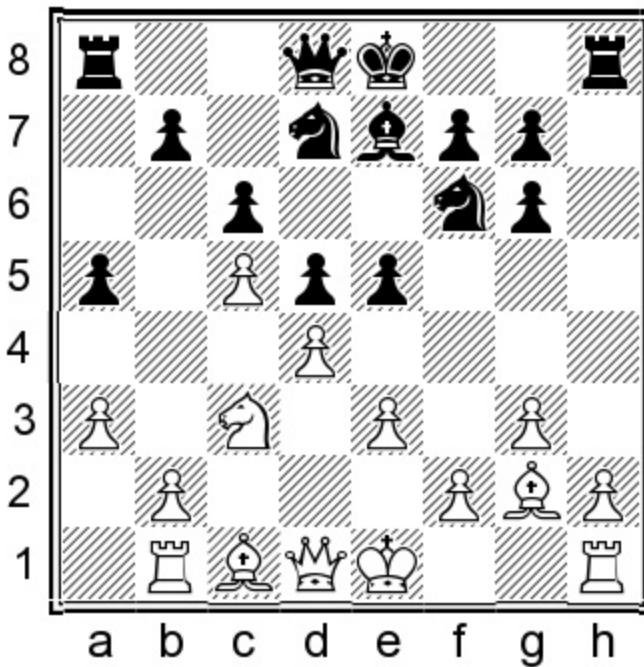


Show/Hide Solution

13...h6! Not allowing h5-h6, which would create eternal weaknesses in Black's position. After h5-h6

and ...g7-g6 White could attack on the dark squares in the middlegame, and Black would also have to worry about the back rank and weak h7-pawn in future endgames. 13...f5? 14.exf6±; 13...a4? 14.h6 g6 15.c4!± **14.♗g4** A sacrifice on h6 is not yet a threat, but Black will have to prepare for it by playing ...♝f8 at some point. Kasparov managed to sacrifice an exchange on a3(!) and later the bishop on h6, winning in style.

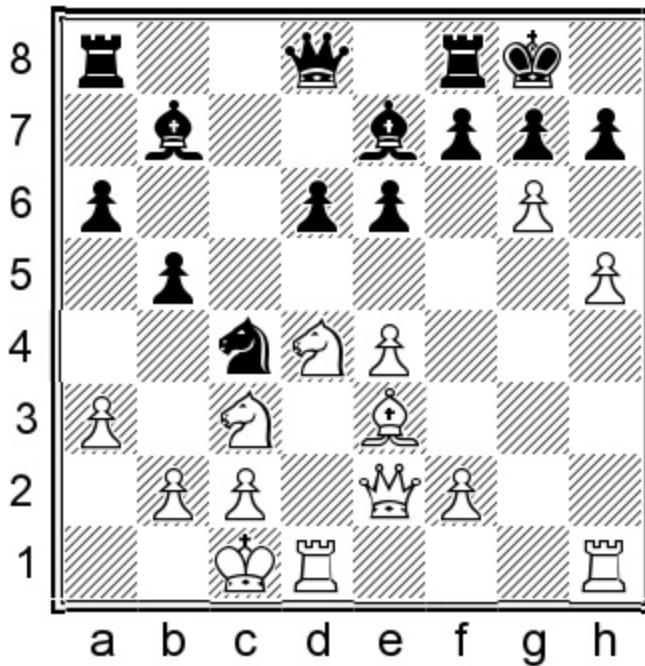
288. Nakamura – Topalov, Moscow 2016



Show/Hide Solution

12...e4 This pawn provides the starting ground for an expansion on the kingside. 12...exd4 13.exd4 is usually only advisable when Black can follow up with ...♝e4 soon. 12...0-0 is okay for Black, but less flexible given the choices mentioned at the end of the main line. (This is in contrast to the common scenario where it's most flexible to start by castling!) 12...b5 13.b4 leaves the pawn on c6 weak, which encourages White to play for e3-e4. In the event of 13...e4 White plays 14.f3 exf3 15.♝xf3± with good chances on the light squares. **13.b4** Now 13.f3? exf3 14.♝xf3 is well met by 14...♝f8 intending ...♝e6-g5. **13...axb4 14.axb4 ♝f8 15.b5 ♝e6 16.♝d2∞** Black has two major choices to make. Should he castle or keep the rook on the h-file? And should the knight go to g5 quickly, or wait until ...g6-g5-g4 has been played? These decisions are beyond the scope of the exercise; but in any case, White is not playing on the queenside for free.

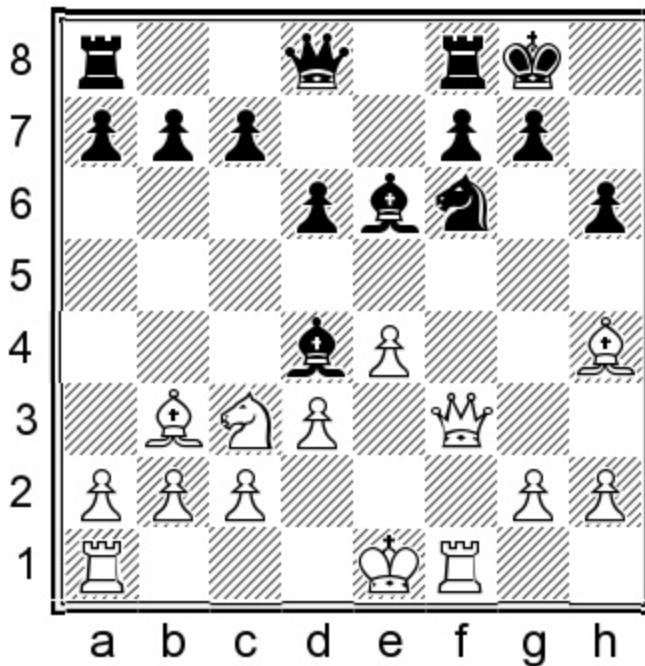
289. Karjakin – Topalov, Moscow 2016



Show/Hide Solution

17...♞f6!∞ Defending the king while also having active possibilities in mind. 17...♝c8? was played in the game, and we'll return to it in Exercise 542. 17...♝c8?! guards e6 but is too passive. The exercise ends here, as White has many possibilities and we can't realistically expect to calculate all of them. One of many possible continuations is: **18.h6!?** **f×g6!** **19.h×g7** **19.♗xe6?!** **♔e7** **20.♗xf8 ♜xc3** **21.bxc3 ♜xe4∞** is balanced according to the engine, but from a human perspective it's clearly more dangerous for White. **19...♝e8** **20.♗h3!** The complicated fight continues.

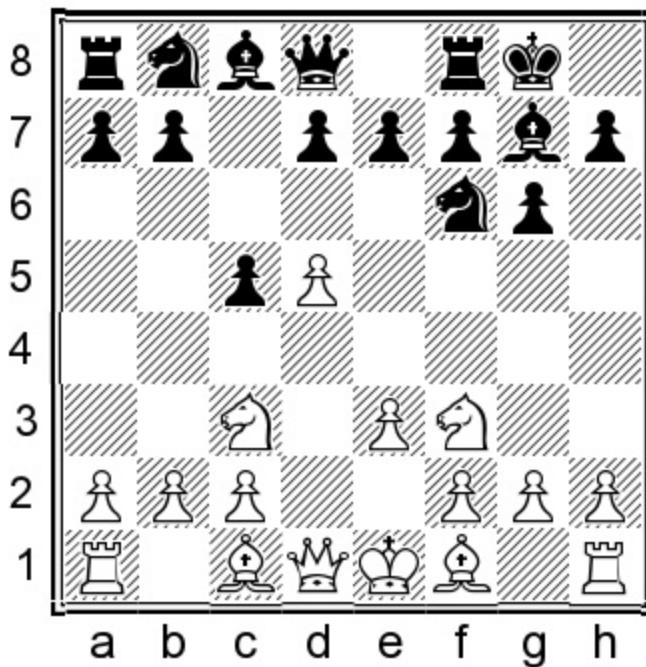
290. Kasparov – Caruana, St. Louis (Blitz) 2016



Show/Hide Solution

13.♗e2! Chasing away the bishop from the defence of the knight. **13...♝xb2 14.♝b1 ♝a3** White has two good options here, the strongest being: **15.♝xe6!** **15.♝xf6 ♜xf6 16.♝xf6 gxsf6 17.♝xf6±** is excellent for White. **15...fxe6 16.d4** Trapping the bishop! A tactical exercise? Well, the first move is a standard one.

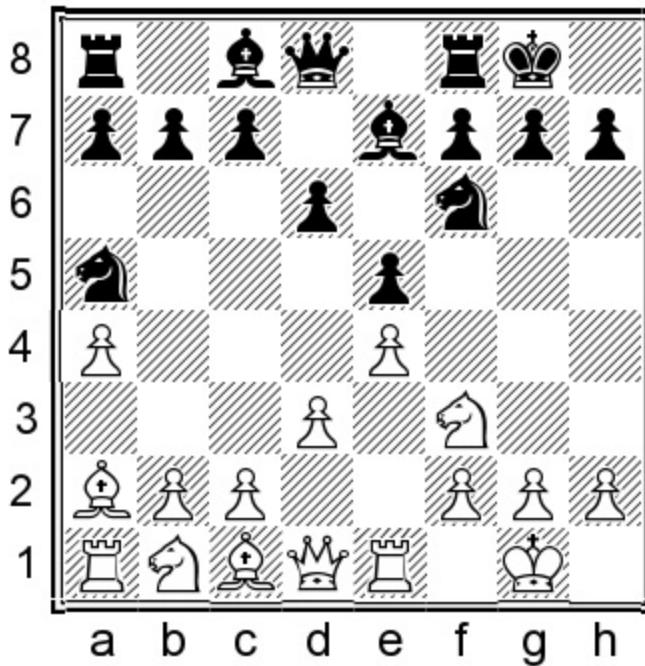
291. Kramnik – Sjugirov, Sochi 2016



Show/Hide Solution

6.♝c4 Since White has omitted c2-c4, it's possible to put the bishop there. It overprotects the centre, and makes (if needed) ♜d3 possible later on to hold back ...b7-b5. Another good point is that the bishop doesn't obstruct the d- or e-files.

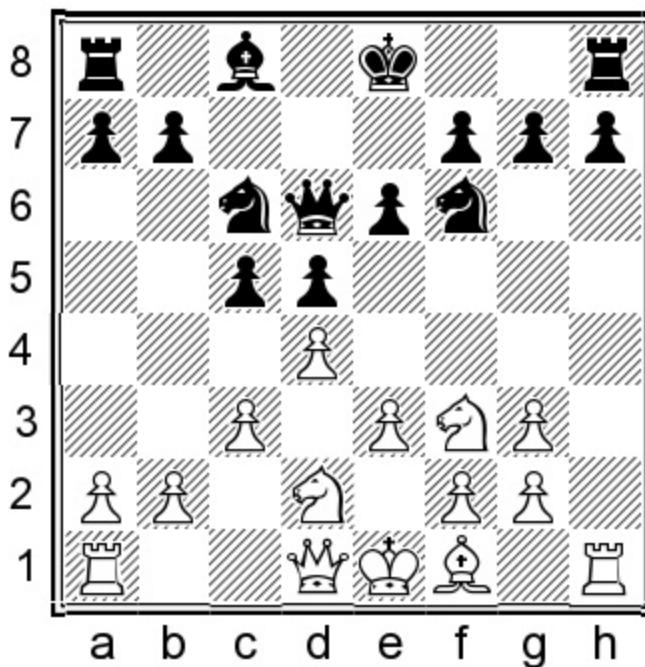
292. Kramnik – Carlsen, Paris (Blitz) 2016



Show/Hide Solution

8...c5! Controlling the centre. The move has to be played straight away, as White would otherwise go b2-b4.

293. Carlsen – Ghaem Maghami, Baku (Ol) 2016

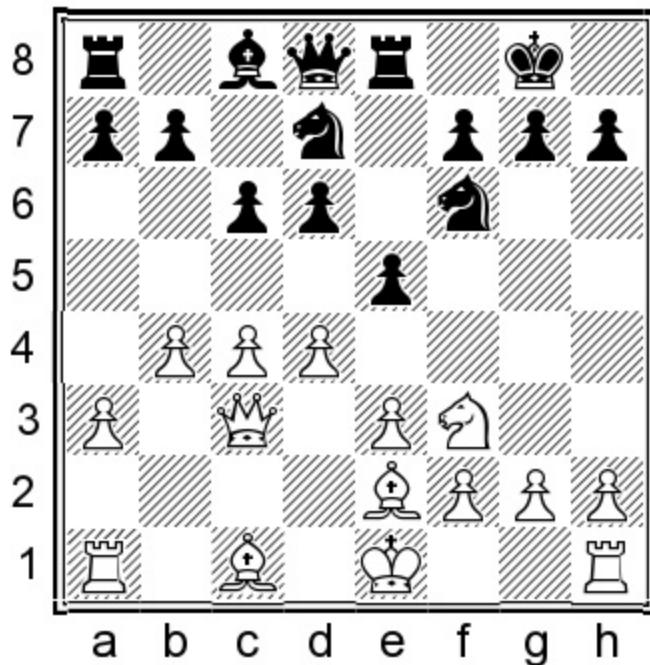


Show/Hide Solution

9.Nb5 Playing for the e5-square. **9...Nd7 10.Qxc6 Qxc6 11.Qe5±** White doesn't follow up with f2-f4, but rather with active moves such as $\mathbb{W}f3$ and/or $g3-g4$. If the knight needs to be defended, $\mathbb{Q}df3$ is a

better choice.

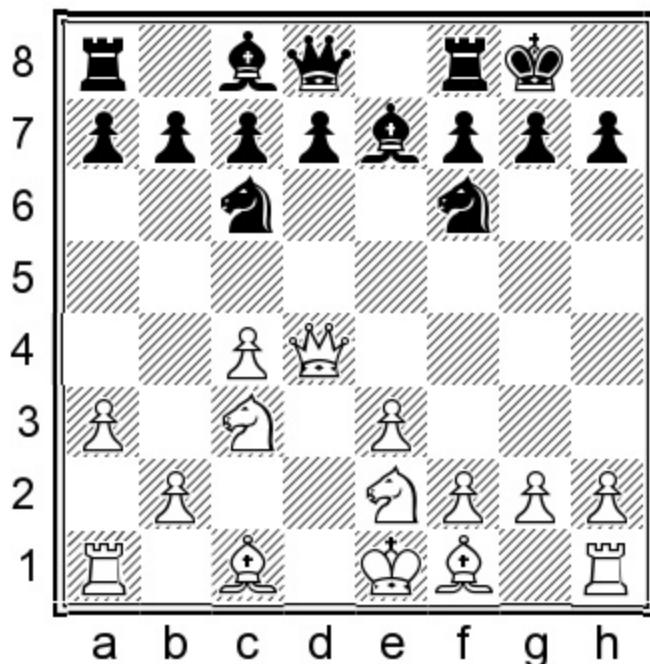
294. Caruana – Anand, Stavanger 2017



Show/Hide Solution

12...e4 13.♘d2 d5! Black can slowly prepare an attack on the kingside. Trying to fight back with f2-f3 would weaken White's position too much.

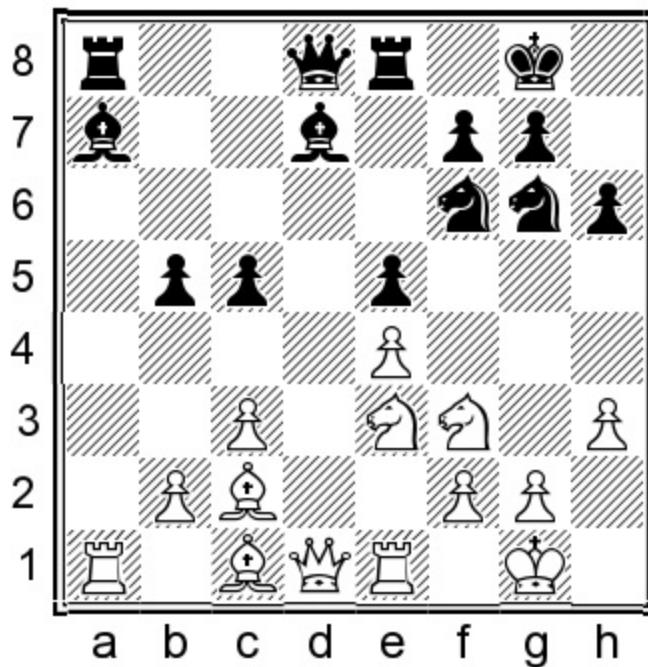
295. Carlsen – Grigoriants, Riyadh (Blitz) 2017



Show/Hide Solution

8. $\mathbb{W}d1! \pm$ The only square where the queen isn't harassed further. Moving the queen two times to end up on the starting square looks odd, but Black has also spent one tempo (...e5xd4) and can't use the other to open up with ...d7-d5. Without that, White has a favourable structure. White's next moves are likely to be $\mathcal{Q}f4$, $\mathcal{Q}e2$ and 0-0.

296. Anand – Nakamura, Moscow (Rapid) 2018



Show/Hide Solution

18. $c4! \pm$ Preparing $\mathcal{Q}e3-d5$, and most probably $e4xd5$ if Black exchanges. Note that Black's knights are far away from d4. Black to move would go 18...c4.



Chapter 2

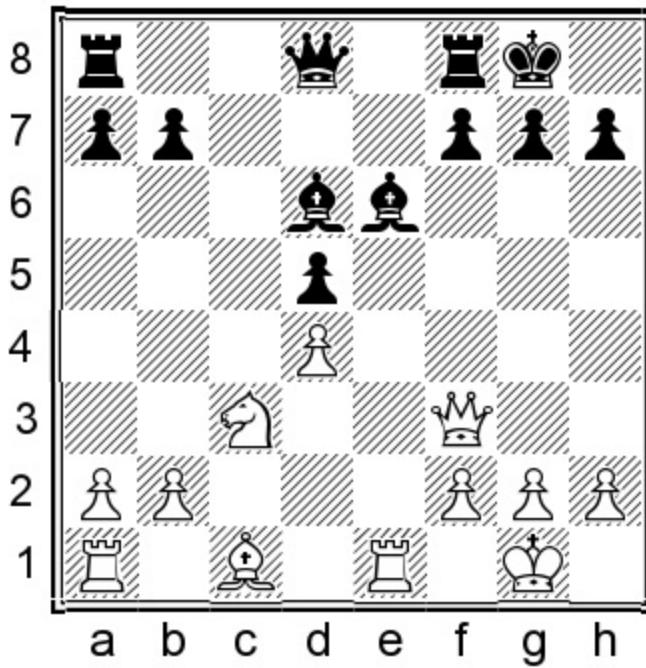
Exam Exercises



I was recently called a pessimist because I said that I don't think a computer will ever be as strong as a master. – Max Euwe (1981)

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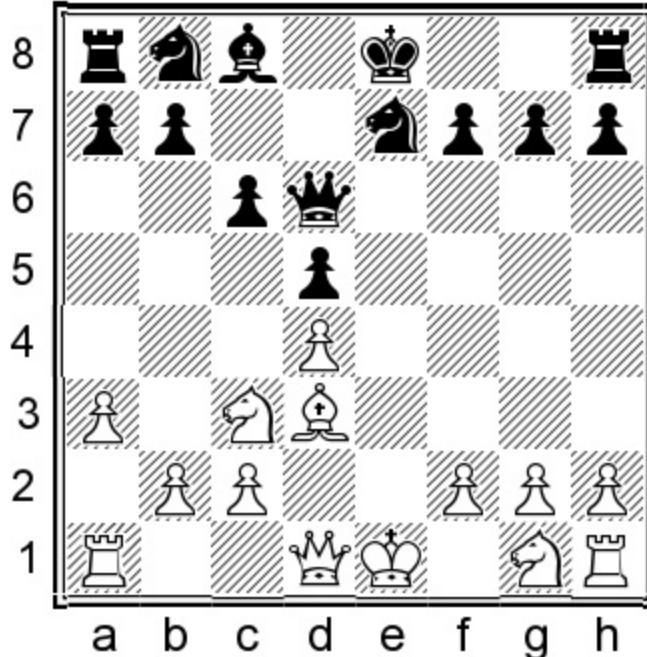
297. Queen's Gambit Accepted



Show/Hide Solution

14. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ Trying to exchange Black's good bishop, to play with the knight against the other bishop 14... $\mathbb{Q}b4!$ Keeping a companion for the restricted light-squared bishop. 14... $\mathbb{Q}e7!?$ is also possible, with the choice depending on how Black feels about playing with opposite-coloured bishops after an exchange on c3. Either way, White is happy to have developed the bishop 'for free', but can't claim a meaningful advantage.

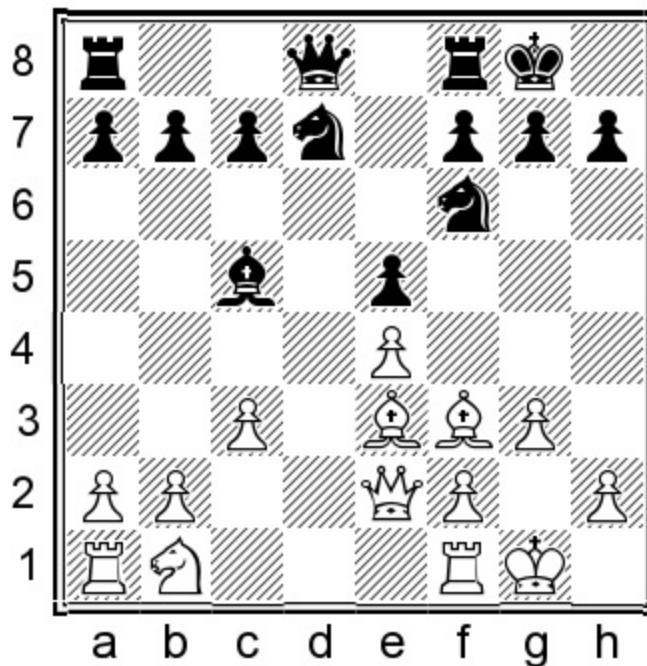
298. Exchange French



Show/Hide Solution

9.♗f3! Stopping Black from exchanging the bad bishop with ...♝f5. No other move serves that purpose. White can play for an advantage.

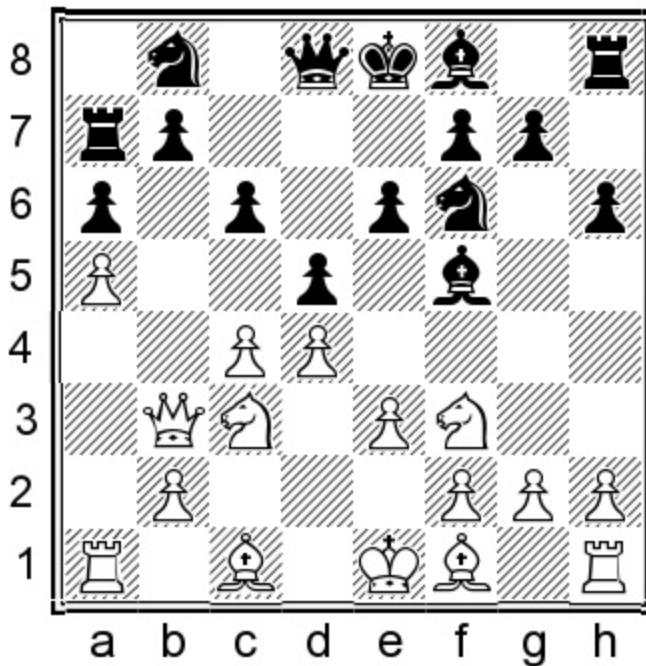
299. Reti Opening



Show/Hide Solution

12.♗c1! Keeping the bishop pair. 12.Bd2 would keep the bishop “developed”, but on d2 it obstructs White’s other pieces. **12...a5 13.a4** The moves with the a-pawns are normally included, whoever starts. The evaluation is, as often, between equal and a slight plus for White.

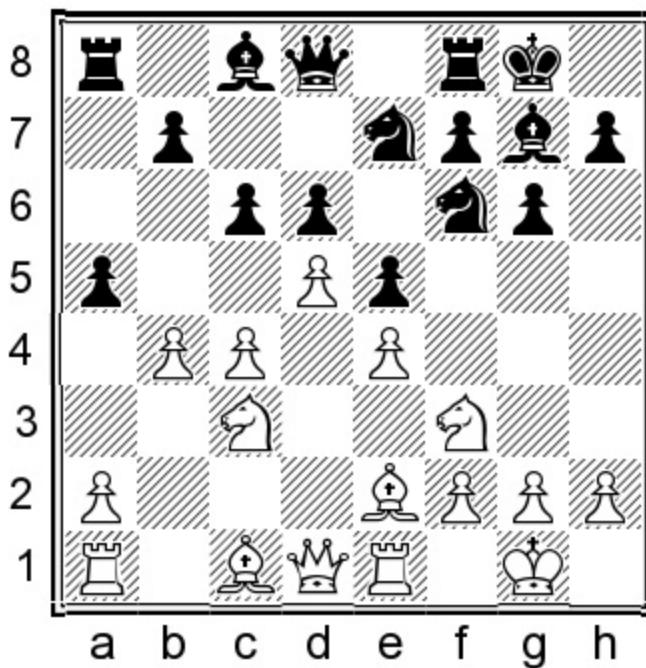
300. Erigaisi – Howell, Riga (Rapid) 2021



Show/Hide Solution

9.♗b6! ♗xb6 10.axb6 ♕a8 11.c5± Black's queenside may look solid but, after ♔d2-b3-a5, it will be hard to defend against sacrifices on b7 and c6 in the long run.

301. D.H. Nguyen – V.H. Nguyen, Vung Tau City (Rapid) 2008

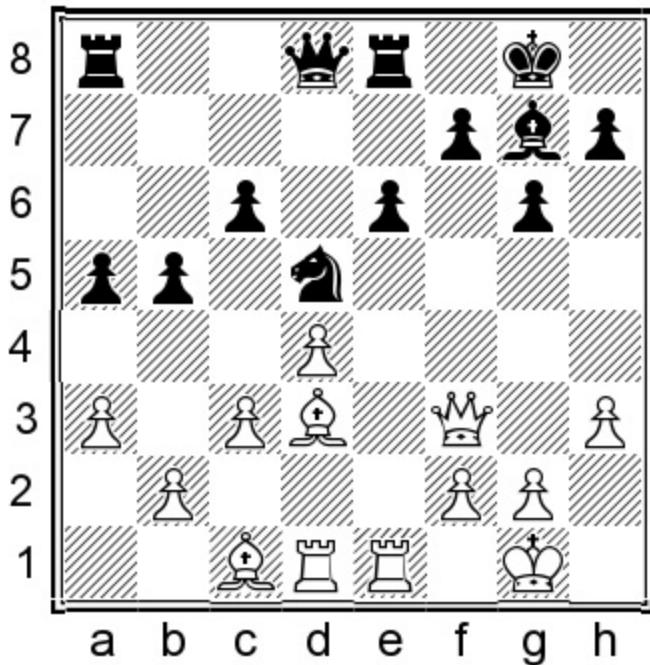


Show/Hide Solution

11.bxa5! 11.♗a3?? is a standard move, preparing bxa5 and ♗b4 (or c4-c5 immediately), with the

bishop pointing towards c5 and d6. But with Black's pawn on c6 (instead of c7), it runs into 11...axb4 12.♗xb4 c5 and the bishop is trapped. 11.b5? c5 closes the position on White's stronger wing, giving Black a free hand on the kingside. 11.♗b1 is equally strong according to Stockfish, but it turns out half a tempo worse than 11.bxa5. **11...♗xa5** White's plans include ♜d2-b3 and a3-a4 before completing development and eventually opening up the queenside.

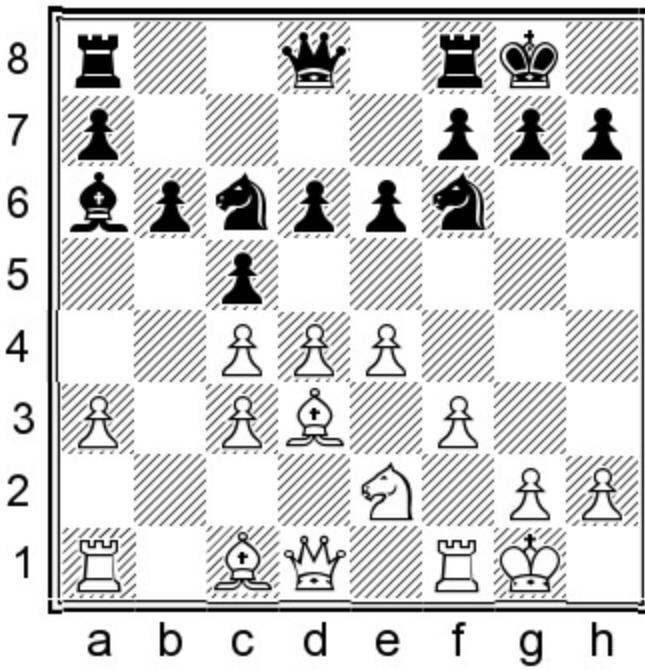
302. Smith – Danielsen, Aarhus 2019



Show/Hide Solution

21.g3 The bishop pair is a long-term advantage, but it's not yet working properly. By pushing the h-pawn, White starts to soften up the light squares. **21...♝d7 22.h4 b4** Black aims for counterplay. 22...h5 halts White's h-pawn but permanently weakens g6. 23.♗g5! is a good move: Black can't dislodge the bishop with ...h7-h6, and White can think about preparing g2-g4. (The immediate 23.g4!? is also possible, but after 23...hxg4 24.♗xg4 ♛d6± Black is ready to counter in the centre with ...e6-e5, with reasonable chances.) **23.♗e4±** It was possible to exchange the a-pawns, but this would have opened the file for the rook on a8. The drawback of maintaining the tension is that White might be left with a weak pawn on a3, but in this particular position it should not be a big problem. In the next phase of the game White can consider c3-c4 to put pressure on the c6-pawn, as well as h4-h5, with a view to establishing a troublesome pawn on h6.

303. Berkes – Tudor, Bucharest (Rapid) 2022

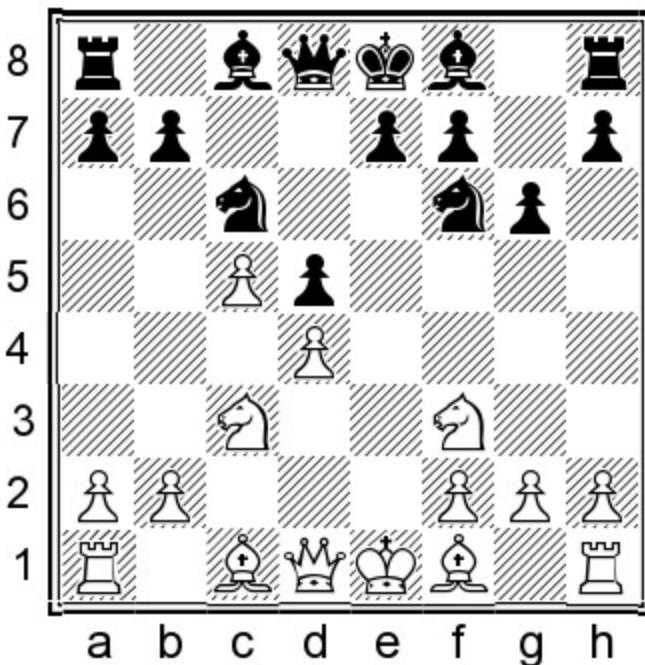


Show/Hide Solution

Bucharest (Rapid) 2022

11.♗g5! To get rid of the annoying pin, Black will need to seriously weaken the king's shelter.
11...h6 12.♗h4 g5 12...♝a5 attacks c4, but White's attack is too dangerous after 13.f4+– followed by e4-e5. **13.♗e1!** 13.♗g3± gives White a smaller advantage. White intends f3-f4 with a big attack, and 13...e5?! does not help because **14.f4!! exf4 15.♝xf4! gxf4 16.♗h4+–** is crushing.

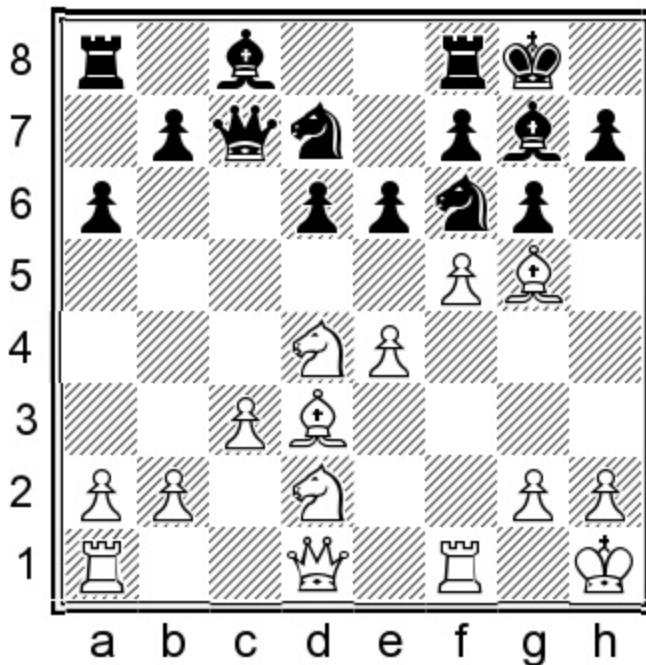
304. Aronian – So, Internet (Rapid) 2023



Show/Hide Solution

7... $\mathbb{Q}g4$! Putting pressure on a piece that controls the centre. 7... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 8.h3 and it would have been too late. 8. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 9.0-0 0-0= Black will be in time for either ...e7-e5 or ...b7-b6. (With one move more, White would have been able to keep everything protected.)

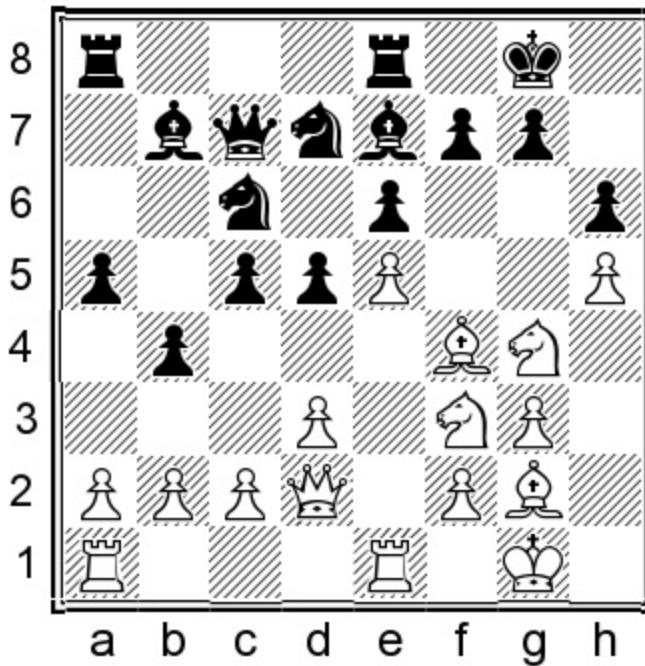
305. Scheveningen



Show/Hide Solution

12... $\mathbb{Q}e5$!= The knight settles on an excellent square, while keeping e6 and f6 sufficiently protected. 12...e5 13. $\mathbb{Q}c2\pm$ and the knight moves towards d5. 12... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ threatens b2-b4. 12...gxf5 13.exf5 e5 14. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ d5 15. $\mathbb{W}e1\pm$ Black's centre is as fragile as it is strong, and the weak king is always there.

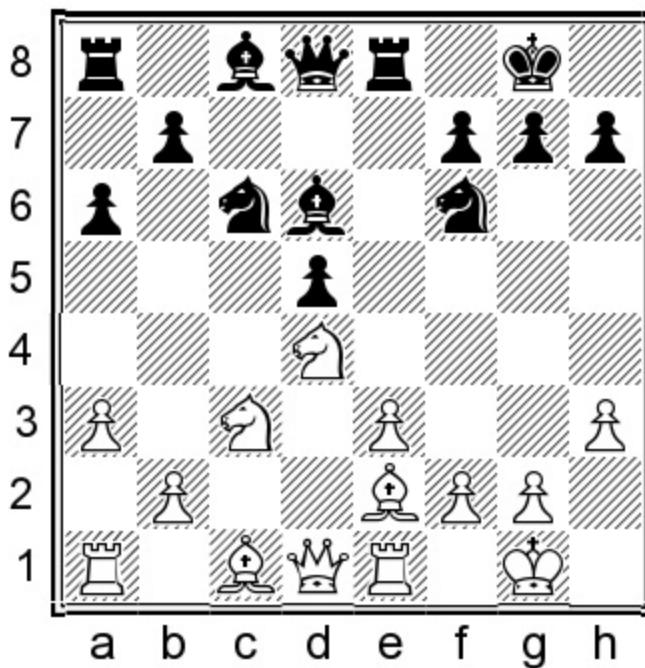
306. Osmak – Ward, Internet (Rapid) 2022



Show/Hide Solution

17...Qd4! Potentially opening up the c-file or the a8-h1 diagonal. Exchanging on f3 is also important to avoid White's sacrifice with $\mathbb{Q}xh6$, $\mathbb{Q}xh6\#$ and $\mathbb{W}f4$, as White would need the second knight for the attack. **18.Qxd4** 18.c3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3\#$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ bxc3 20.bxc3 d4# **18...cxd4** Black has enough counterplay not to let White attack for free.

307. Braamhaar – Juth, Internet (Rapid) 2023

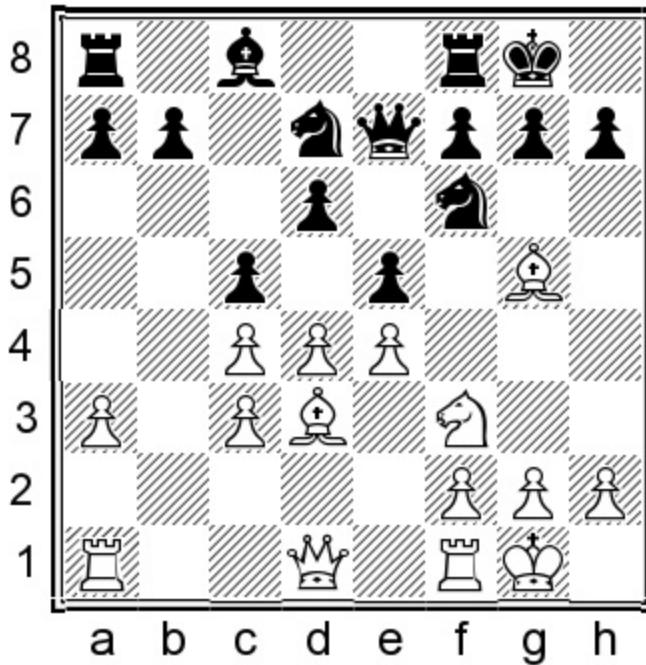


Show/Hide Solution

12...Qc7 Preparing ... $\mathbb{W}d6$. Since White has played h2-h3, it's not currently possible to close the

diagonal with g2-g3. (However, ... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ followed by ... $\mathbb{W}d6$ is also a standard plan in positions with the pawn on h2.) 12... $\mathbb{Q}b8$ is also possible, but less natural – and who knows, maybe the rook will want to move one day... 12...h5!? is a useful move, since 13. $\mathbb{Q}xh5?$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ wins a piece – but Black should still go for ... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ and ... $\mathbb{W}d6$ in the near future. If this was your idea, then it also counts as a correct solution. **13. $\mathbb{Q}f1$** It seems best to protect the h3-pawn in advance, thus preparing g2-g3. 13.b4 $\mathbb{W}d6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5 \rightarrow$ **13...h5!±** White's problem is the bishop on c1.

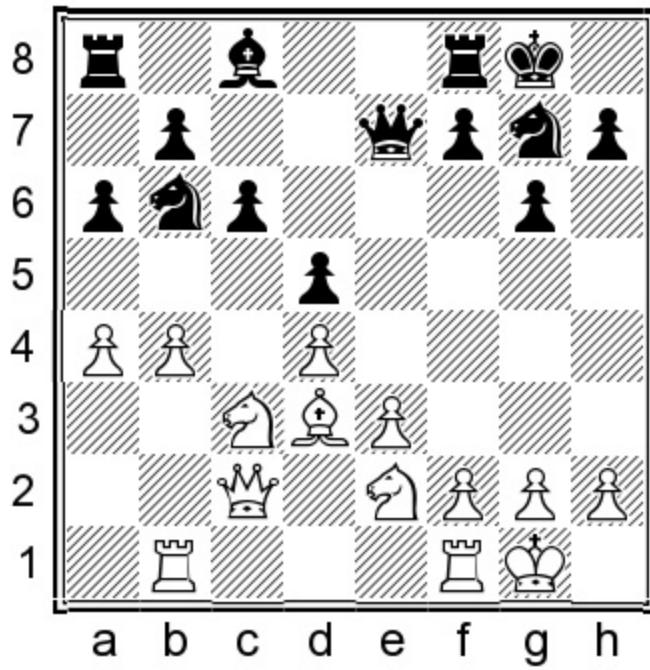
308. Nimzo-Indian



Show/Hide Solution

11. $\mathbb{Q}h4!±$ Black's unfortunate piece arrangement makes f5 a tasty square. **11...g6?** would make things much worse: **12.f4+–**

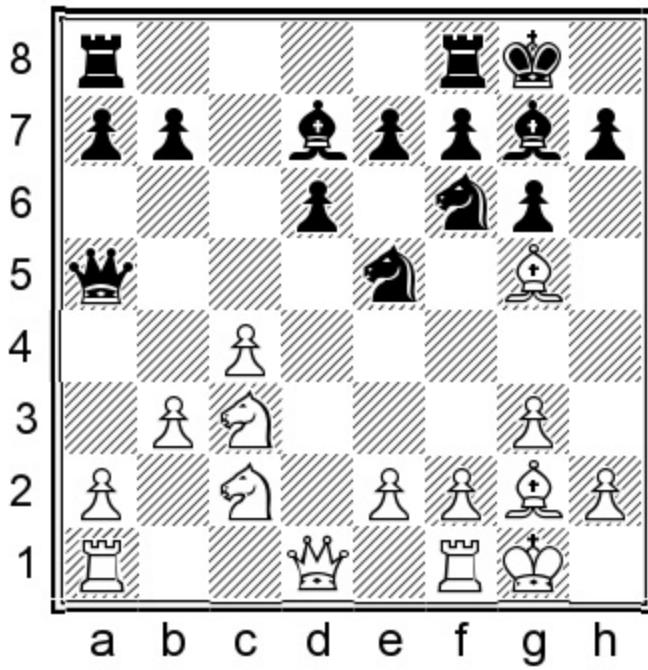
309. Smith – Johansson, Uppsala (Rapid) 2022



Show/Hide Solution

15.b5 With the knight on b6 undefended, this standard move comes with a threat. 15.a5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ looks nice, but there's not much to achieve on the queenside. 15. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ stops ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$, but the game continuation is a better way to do it. **15...axb5** 15...cxb5 is an important option to consider. (16.axb5 a5 would be fine for Black. However, since Black has delayed ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$, White can play 16.a5!± to target the d5-pawn. A useful idea to remember!) **16.axb5** The knight on b6 is hanging, so Black doesn't have time for the desirable ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$. **16...c5** 16... $\mathbb{Q}c4$?! 17.bxc6 bxc6 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ dxc4 19. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ ± **17.dxc5** $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ ± This position has been reached in several games besides my own – but none involving a World Champion.

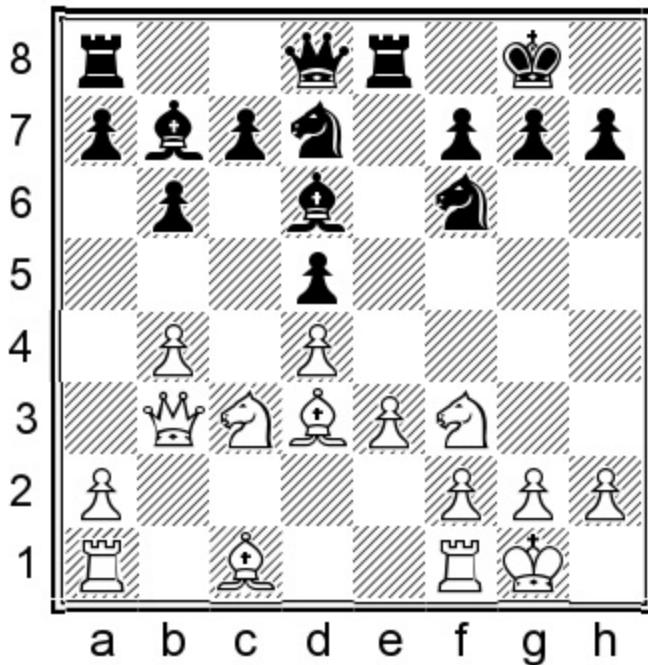
310. Symmetrical English



Show/Hide Solution

12.♗xf6! **12.♗d2± 12...exf6** The change in pawn structure isolates the d-pawn and makes it impossible for Black to control the d5-square with ...e7-e6 in the future. After 12...♗xf6?! 13.♗d5+– Black will be forced to recapture with ...e7xf6 anyway, with an even worse version. **13.♗d5±** A golden square on d5 is more important than the bishop pair. Black has only one pawn lever (...b7-b5) and it does not open the position much.

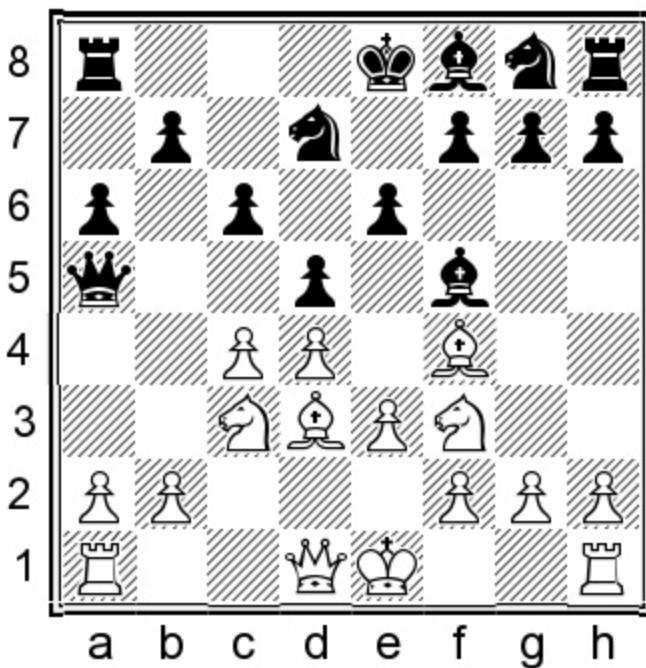
311. Queen's Gambit



Show/Hide Solution

Black has stayed with the c-pawn on c7 in a Carlsbad structure, avoiding White's standard minority attack. White should still play on the queenside **11.b5!** White may proceed with a4-a5, or with ♘a3 followed by doubling up on the c-file. **11...a6** loses a pawn after **12.bxa6 ♘xa6 13.♘xa6 ♕xa6 14.♗xd5 ♘xd5 15.♕xd5±**, although Black does have some compensation due to the weak a-pawn.

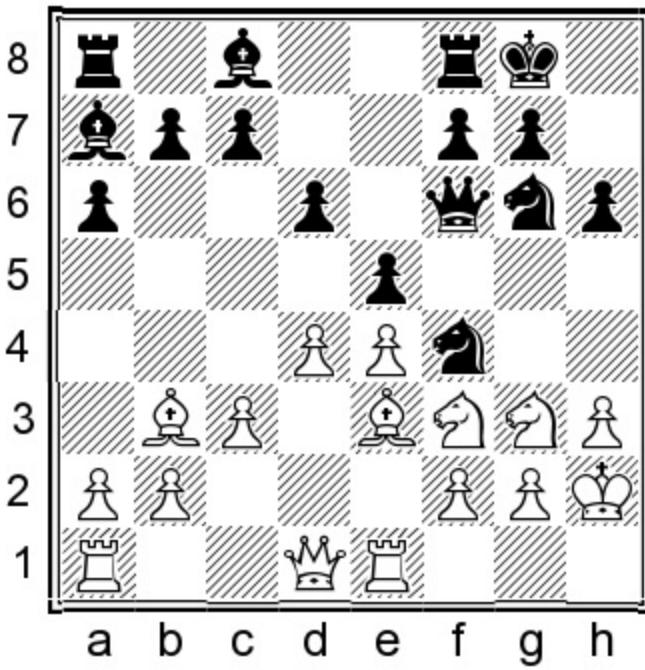
312. Slav Defence



Show/Hide Solution

8...♘a3! The pawn on b2 is overloaded and White loses material. (White's queen is busy defending the bishop on d3.) Remember that the same configuration might occur with a white queen on a4, black knight on c6 and so on.

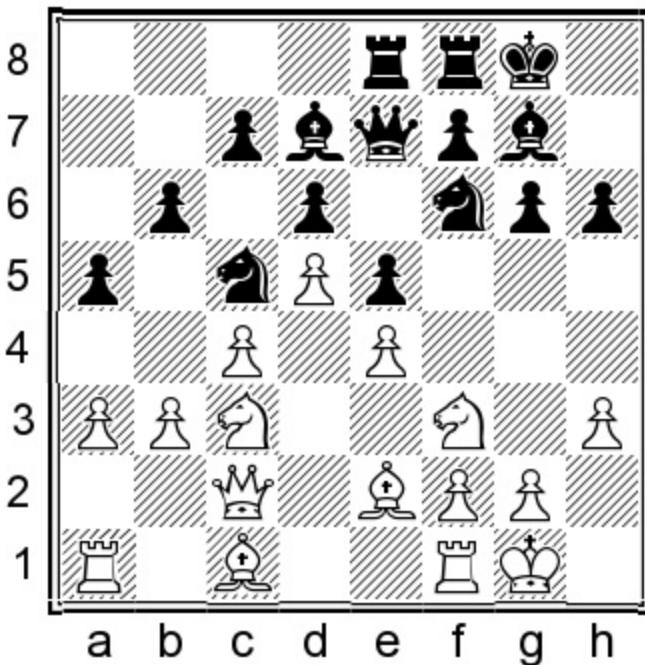
313. Vocaturo – Grandelius, Wijk aan Zee 2010



Show/Hide Solution

15...c5! Challenging White's centre, and threatening to capture several times on d4 to get the e5- or h4-square for the knight. 15... $\mathbb{Q}h4?$ runs into 16. $\mathbb{Q}xh4 \mathbb{W}xh4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}f5\pm$ when exchanging on f5 opens up for White's rook, putting pressure on the e5-pawn. **16. $\mathbb{W}d2$** 16.d5 is met by 16... $\mathbb{Q}h4=$ when the $\mathbb{Q}xh4/\mathbb{Q}f5$ idea is no longer dangerous. 16.dxc5 dxc5↑ Black threatens ... $\mathbb{Q}d8$, chasing White's queen from the defence of the knight on f3. **16...exd4 17.cxd4 cxd4 18. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$** 18. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ leaves White short of defenders on the kingside. Without going into details, 18... $\mathbb{Q}xh3!↑$ is a promising sacrifice. (18... $\mathbb{Q}xg2!?$ is also adequate.) **18... $\mathbb{Q}xd4 19. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5 20. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ dxe5=$$**

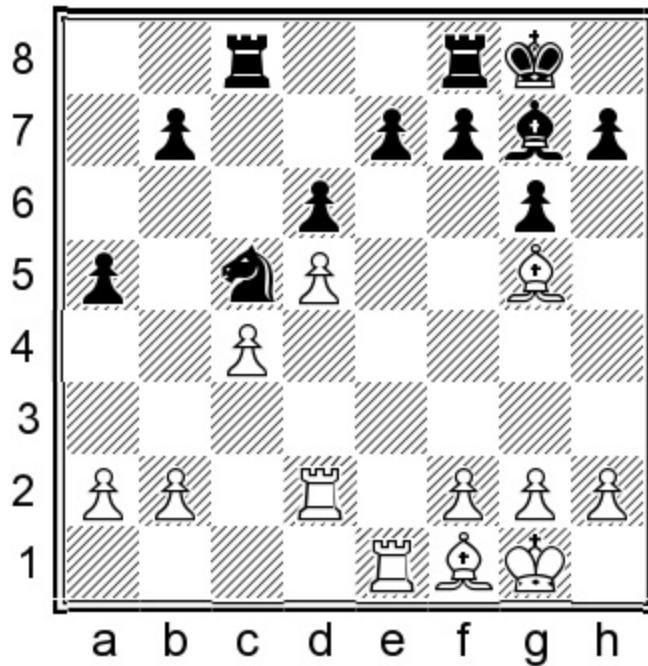
314. King's Indian



Show/Hide Solution

White threatens b3-b4. 17...a4! Getting not only a square on b3... 18.b4 ♜b3 19.♗b1 ♜d4± ...but also one on d4.

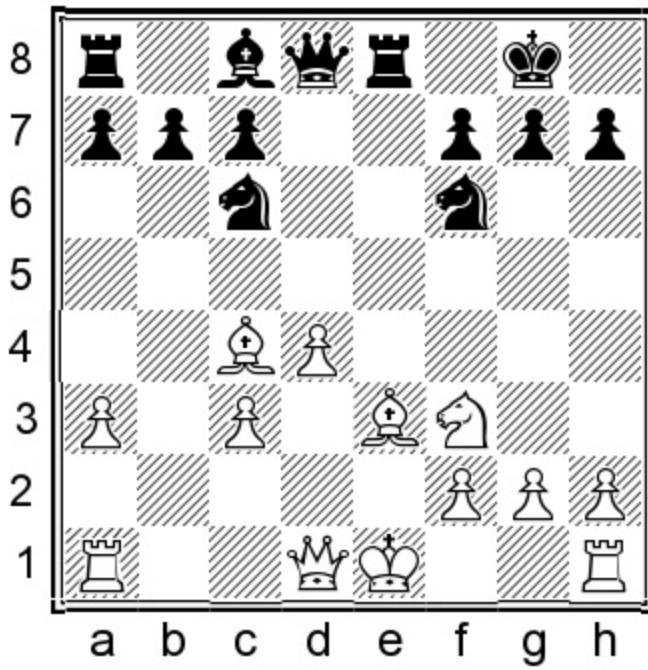
315. Accelerated Dragon



Show/Hide Solution

19...♝f6! A convenient way to defend the pawn. Exchanging bishops would only help Black.
20.♝e3!= 20.♝xf6 exf6± gives Black good chances with the superior minor piece.

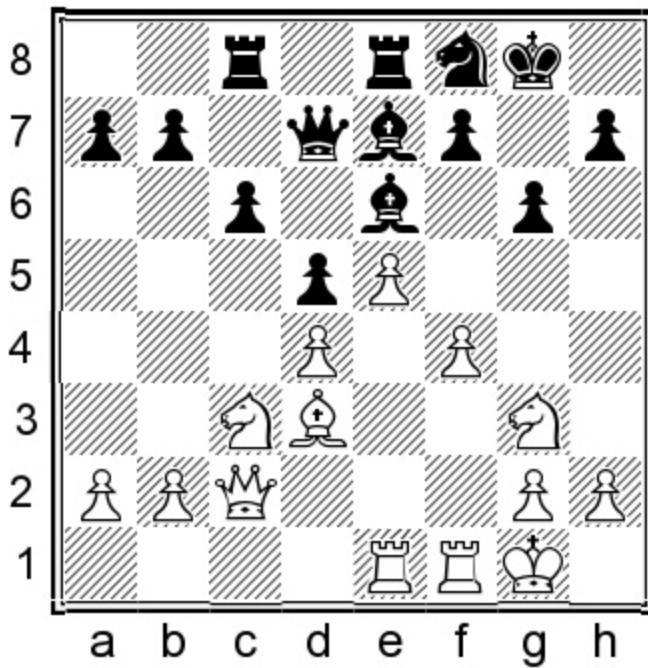
316. Siebrecht – Farago, Arco 2010



Show/Hide Solution

11...♝a5! Taking control over the light squares. **12.♝d3** **12.♝a2?!** **♝e6** When playing for colour domination (in this case, the light squares c4 and d5), it's generally favourable to exchange the bishops that control those squares. **12...♝g4!** Immediately controlling the c4-square with 12...♝d5 allows White to avoid the pin: **13.♛a4** **13.h3** **♝h5†**

317. Queen's Gambit – Exchange Variation

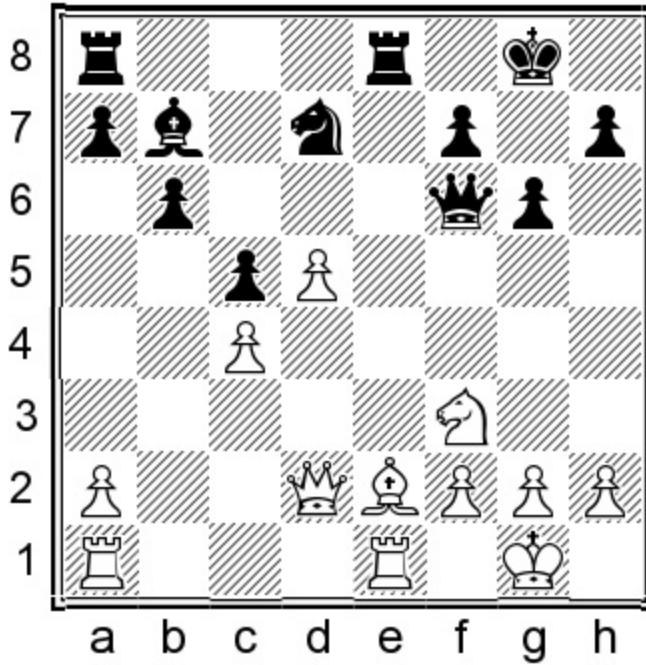


Show/Hide Solution

17...f5! The only good way to stop f4-f5. **18.♝ge2** White can play for g2-g4 in the long run, but that's

a lot less dangerous than f4-f5. 18.exf6? $\mathbb{Q}xf6\mp$ 18... $\mathbb{Q}h8!$ 18... $\mathbb{Q}f7?!$ 19.g4! \pm Or in the short run, if Black gets careless. 19.a3 $\mathbb{Q}f7=$ The knight reaches e6. Note that the otherwise desirable 19...c5? loses an exchange: 20. $\mathbb{Q}b5+-$

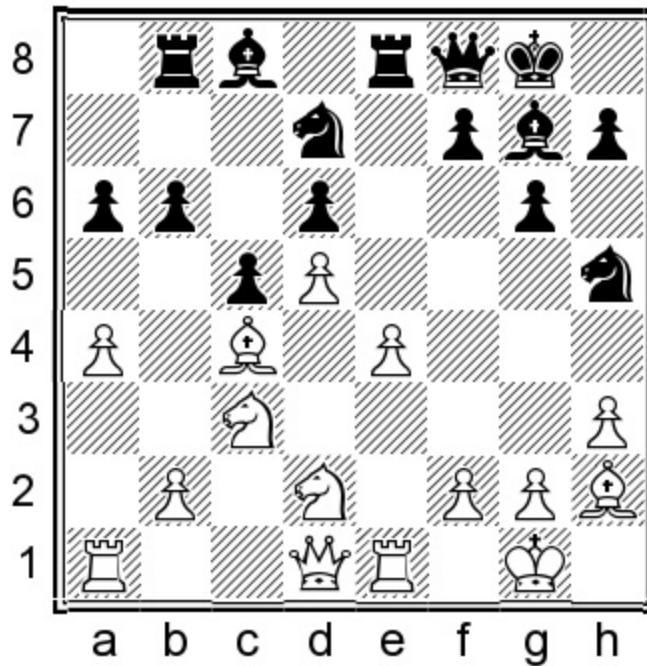
318. Grünfeld



Show/Hide Solution

17.a4! \pm Planning to exchange White's isolated pawn, while also creating a backward pawn in Black's camp. The next two moves may be a4-a5 and $\mathbb{R}eb1$. White should keep the rooks and not care about the e-file.

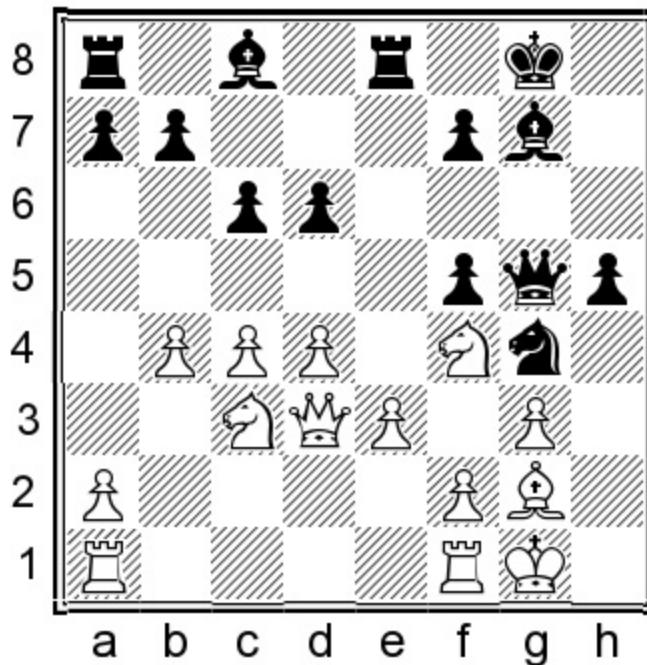
319. Benoni



Show/Hide Solution

16...Qe5! Taking control over f4 before the knight was kicked back by g2-g4. White is still better after several different moves, but Black has to play like this. **17.g3!?** Keeping pieces on the board is the most ambitious, but at least Black has managed to temporarily shut in the bishop on h2.

320. Mensch – Giffard, Belfort 2004

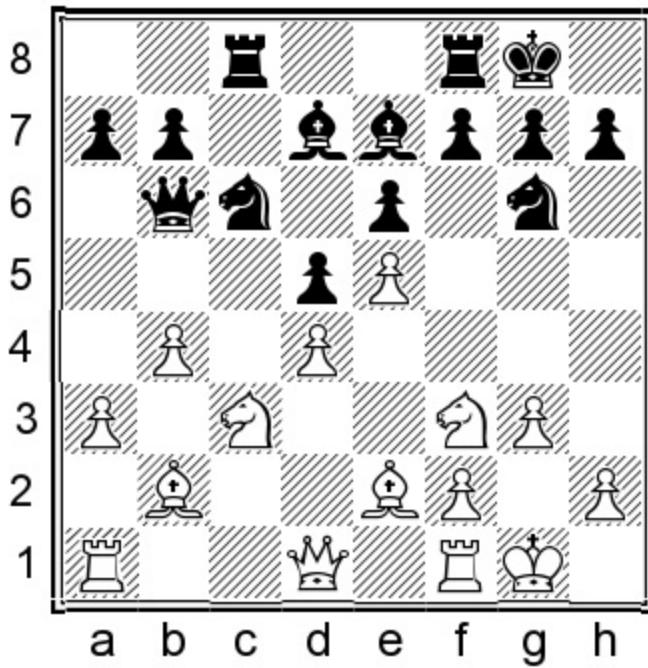


Show/Hide Solution

16.Qf3! As the c3-knight is too far away from the f3-square, another defence is needed against ...h5-h4. 16.Qh3 also does the job, but in that case the bishop is worse placed in the event that Black

refrains from ...h5-h4. **16..h4** **17.♔xg4 fxg4** **17...♕xg4** **18.♗g2!** hxg3 **19.♖h1+–** (19.f3 is also good.) **18.gxh4 ♕xh4** **19.♗g2±**

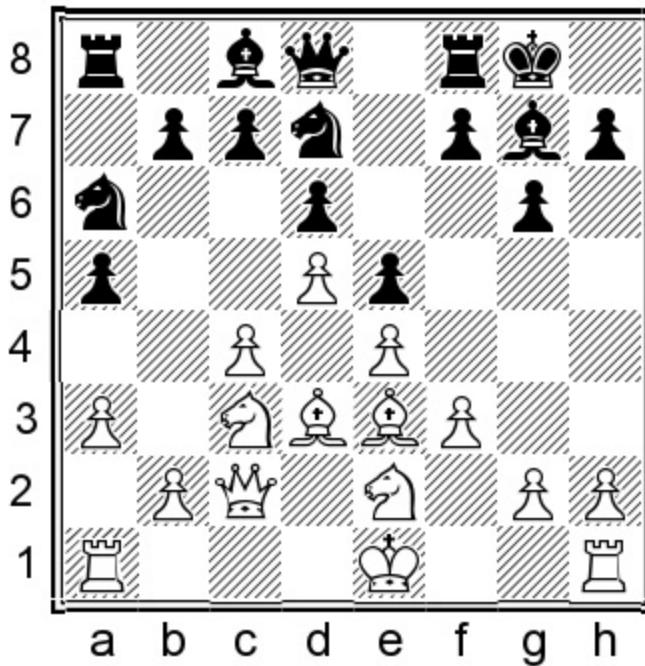
321. French



Show/Hide Solution

11...♘a5! Activating the knight – a standard manoeuvre. White has two ways to play for the advantage. **12.♘d2!?** **12.♘a4** is the simpler option. After **12...♗xa4** **13.♕xa4 ♘c4** **14.♗b3 ♖c7** the c4-knight is strong, but its colleague on g6 is the worst-placed piece on the board. **12...♕xd4!** **12...♘c4** **13.♘xc4 dxc4** **14.h4!±** Another standard move, which must be played before Black has time for **...♖fd8** and **...♗c6**, threatening **...♘xe5**. **13.bxa5 ♖xc3** **14.♘xc3 ♕xc3** **15.♘c4!±** Let's not analyse any longer – the exercise was about seeing ...♘a5-c4.

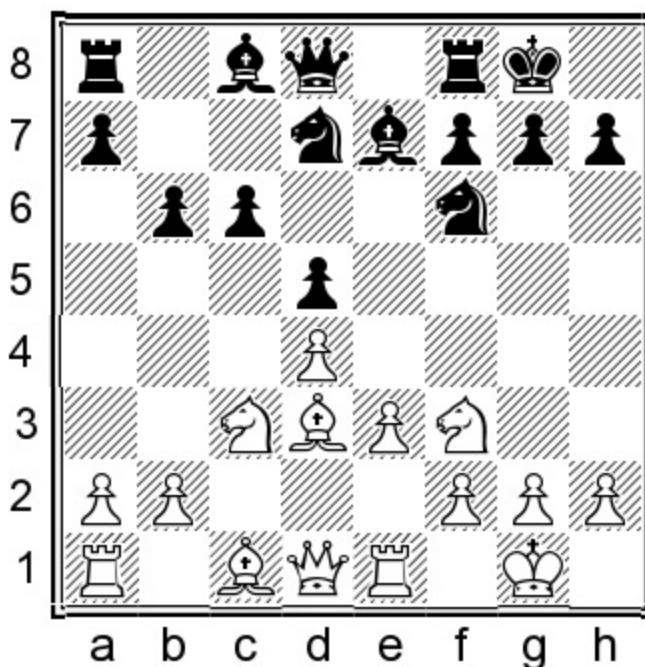
322. King's Indian



Show/Hide Solution

11...♝h6! Black's bishop in the King's Indian is restricted by the pawn on e5, but it does a good job of defending the king, and often comes alive later in the middlegame. Nevertheless, when situations arise such as the present position, where Black can fight for the dark squares (c5 and e3, for instance), it's generally a good idea to exchange it. In the event of 11...♝ac5 White could consider 12.0-0-0-0!?, intending h4-h5. **12.♝xh6** 12.♝f2 avoids the exchange, but Black is obviously the one who has benefited from the inclusion of the bishop moves. 12.♝d2?! ♜xe3 13.♝xe3 ♜ac5 14.0-0 a4= **12...♛h4†** 13.♝g3 ♛xh6=

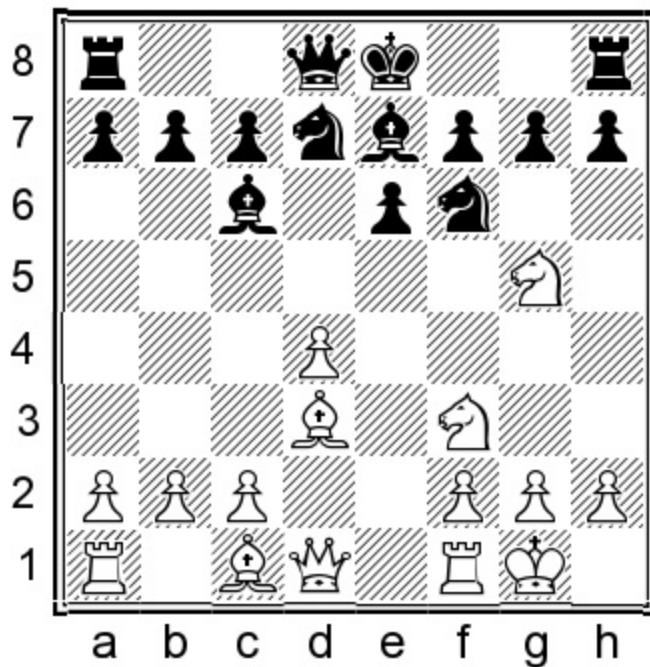
323. Bureev – Agalakov, Novokuznetsk (Rapid) 2013



Show/Hide Solution

10.e4! Opening up for the bishop on c1. The isolated d4-pawn will never be weak, as Black will need to arrange ...c6-c5 to liberate the light-squared bishop. 10.♗e5 can be adequately met by: 10...♗xe5 Black should exchange before the knight is reinforced with f2-f4. 11.dxe5 ♗g4 12.f4 f6= (12...d4!? is also possible.) 10...dxe4 11.♗xe4 ♖b7 12.♗e2 c5 12...♖e8 13.♗e5± 13.♗eg5± White has some initiative.

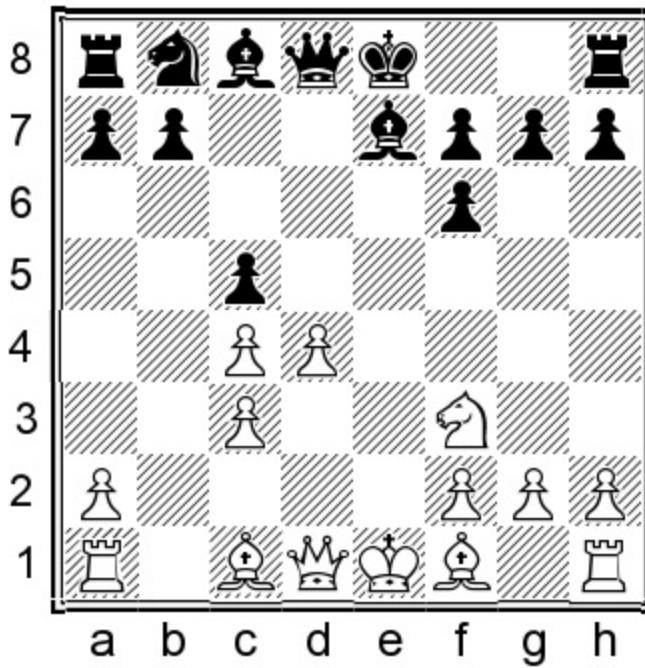
324. Nilsson – Smith, Lund (Rapid) 2006



Show/Hide Solution

9.♘xf7! White only gets two pawns for the knight, but more importantly deprives Black's king of a safe future. 9...♗xf7 9...♗xf3 10.♗xd8 ♗xd1 11.♗xe6 ♗g4 12.♗xc7† ♔f7 13.♗xa8 ♕xa8+– and White has too many pawns. 10.♗g5† ♔g8 11.♗xe6 ♜c8 White is not in a hurry, but should still play forcefully. 12.♗e1!± First priority: developing.

325. Smith – Namini, Lund (Rapid) 2019



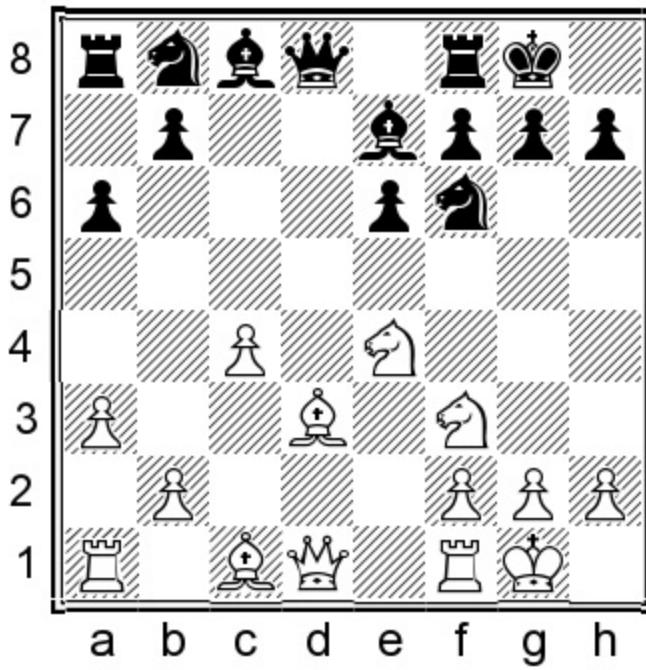
Show/Hide Solution

This highly unusual pawn structure can be compared with two popular opening variations featuring doubled pawns. The Caro-Kann with 4... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5. $\mathbb{Q}xf6\#$ exf6 features the same doubled f-pawns on Black's side, but White does not have doubled c-pawns.

Conversely, the Mikenas Variation of the English Opening (1.c4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 2. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ e6 3.e4 d5 4.e5 d4 5.exf6 dx3 6.bxc3 $\mathbb{W}xf6$) produces the same queenside structure for White, but without the doubled f-pawns for Black.

Compared to the former, White's queenside structure is weaker and less mobile, and there is no chance of White's king being able to settle on the queenside. Compared to the latter, Black has a safer king. It might sound as if White is doing badly, but it's actually not the case. 9. $\mathbb{Q}d3!$ \pm White's advantage is the d5-square. The best set-up is $\mathbb{Q}d3$, 0-0, $\mathbb{Q}e3$ and later $\mathbb{Q}e4$ (the key move). The bishop can sometimes continue to d5. 9. $\mathbb{Q}e2?$ $!$ was the less purposeful continuation that I chose in the game. 9... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ Threatening the pawn. 9... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 10.h3! $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}b1\pm$ leaves Black with weak light squares on the queenside; having been driven to h5, the bishop has no way back. 10.d5! $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ fxe5 12.f4 \pm

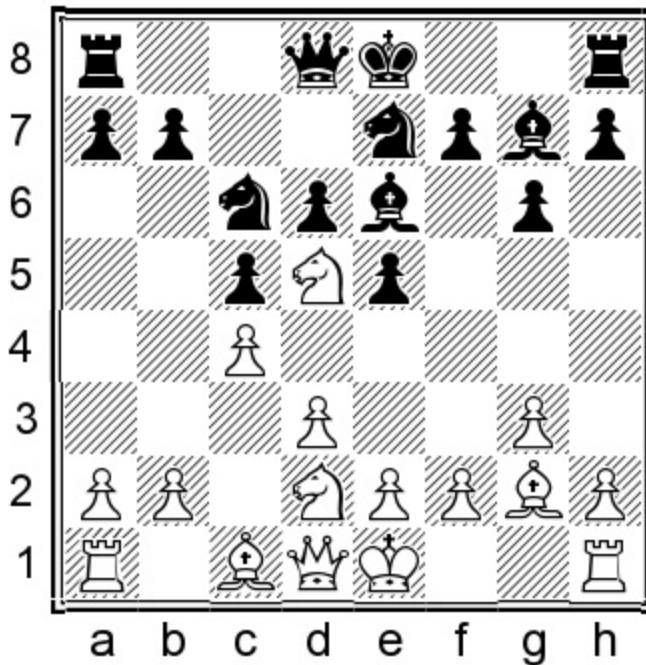
326. Browne – Marovic, Skopje (Rapid) 1970



Show/Hide Solution

11...Qxe4 A neutral move like 11...Qbd7 leaves Black slightly worse due to some development challenges (especially with the c8-bishop) and White's more active pieces. **12.Qxe4 f5!** Black mobilizes the kingside pawn majority. Notice that this would not have been possible with a knight on c6 due to Qxc6, gaining control of the e5-square. **13.Qc2 Qf6** The following moves are ...Qc6 and ...e6-e5. The bishop on f6 stops White from developing smoothly. The chances are balanced.

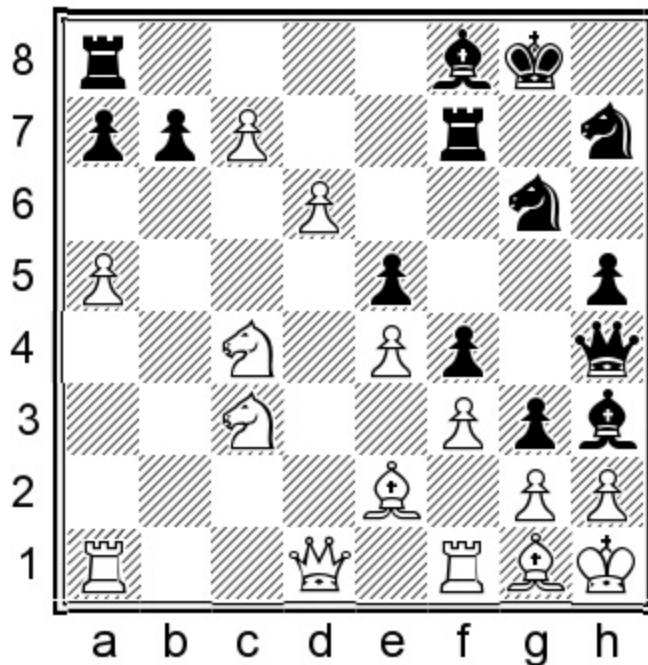
327. Kryavkin – Smith, Lund (Rapid) 2019



Show/Hide Solution

9.♘b1! Shifting the knight to c3, from where it controls d5 as well as b5. Delaying castling also makes it possible to meet Black's short castling with h2-h4. This is hardly a revolutionary idea, and Black would answer with ...h7-h6 or ...h7-h5 – but still, it's useful to have the option.

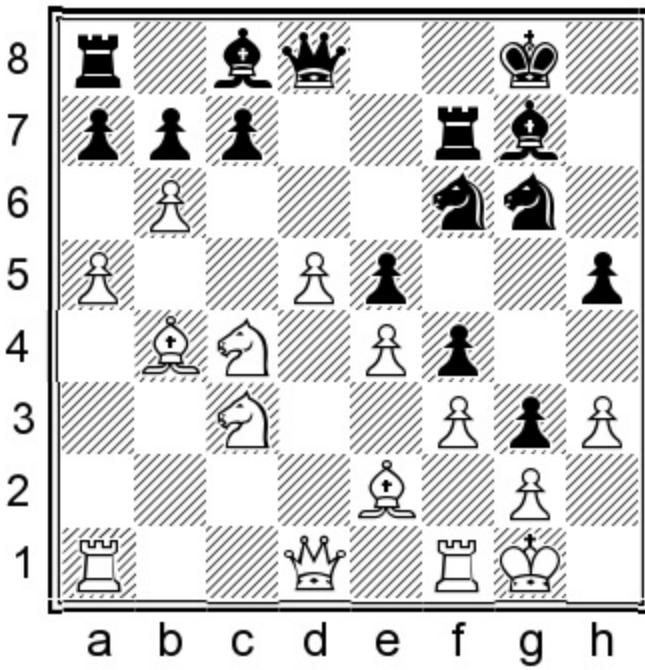
328. Smith – Hirneise, Pardubice (Rapid) 2010



Show/Hide Solution

Dozens of games have reached similar positions, and in almost half of them White has missed Black's mating combination. **24.gxh3!** $24.\mathbb{Q}a2?? \mathbb{Q}xg2\# 25.\mathbb{Q}xg2 \mathbb{W}h3\#!!$ is the sacrificial motif that both players must be aware of in such positions. $26.\mathbb{Q}xh3 \mathbb{Q}g5\# 27.\mathbb{Q}g2 \mathbb{Q}h4\# 28.\mathbb{Q}h1 g2\#$ **24...Wxh3 25.Qf2** The only move that defends against mate. Not an easy move to play if you haven't seen the idea before, but it's a standard defence in many similar positions. **25...gxf2 26.Qxf2** Black is an exchange up, but the attack is stopped and White wins on the queenside and with the d5-square.

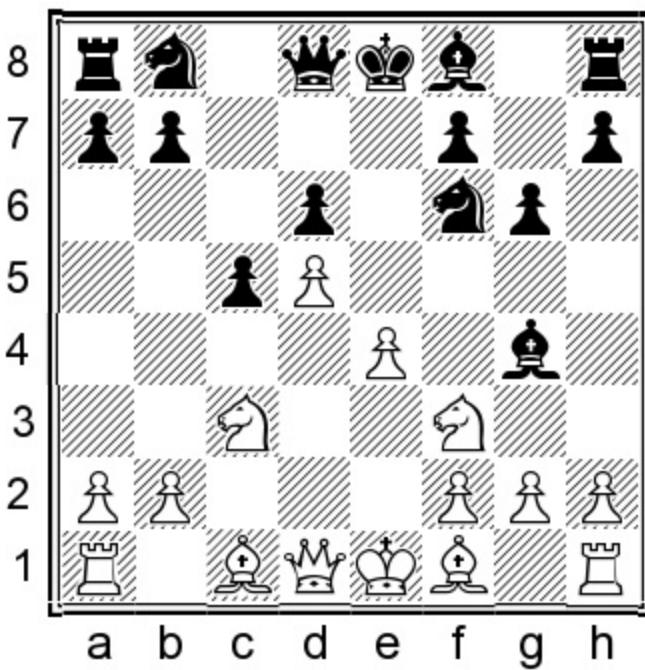
329. King's Indian



Show/Hide Solution

21...♝xh3! It is said that Black needs the light-squared bishop for an effective attack on the kingside. (A positional remark.) **22.gxh3 ♜d7** White can't really defend. Here is a sample variation (that you don't need to have calculated): **23.♝d3 ♜xh3 24.♝a2 ♜h4 25.♝e1 g2 26.♝f2 ♜g3† 27.♝e2 ♜xf3** Finally winning material.

330. Rajkovic – Vratonjic, Bar (Rapid) 2007

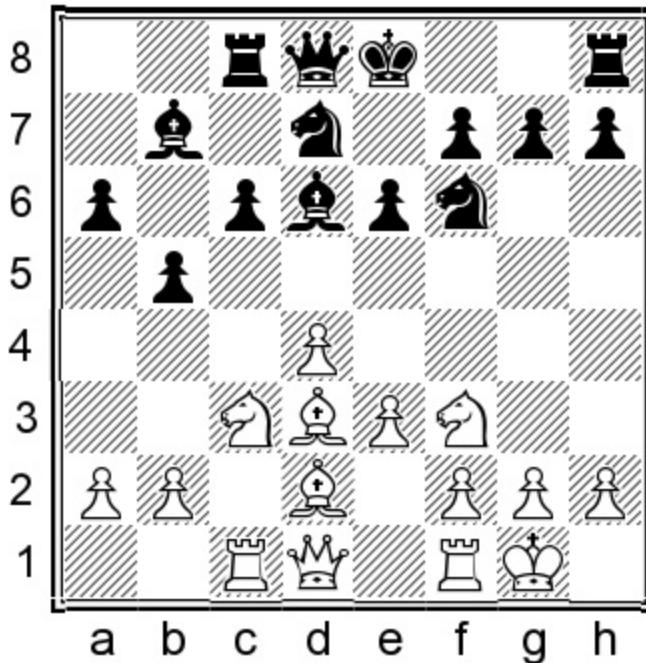


Show/Hide Solution

8.♛a4†! With less space, Black is happy to exchange one (or several) minor pieces in the Benoni

pawn structure. The queen check avoids any such exchanges. 8... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 8... $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ To avoid getting the bishop on g4 trapped, Black has to play the ugly ...g6-g5, or the even uglier ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}b6$. 9. $\mathbb{W}b3\pm$ Black would have preferred a knight on d7.

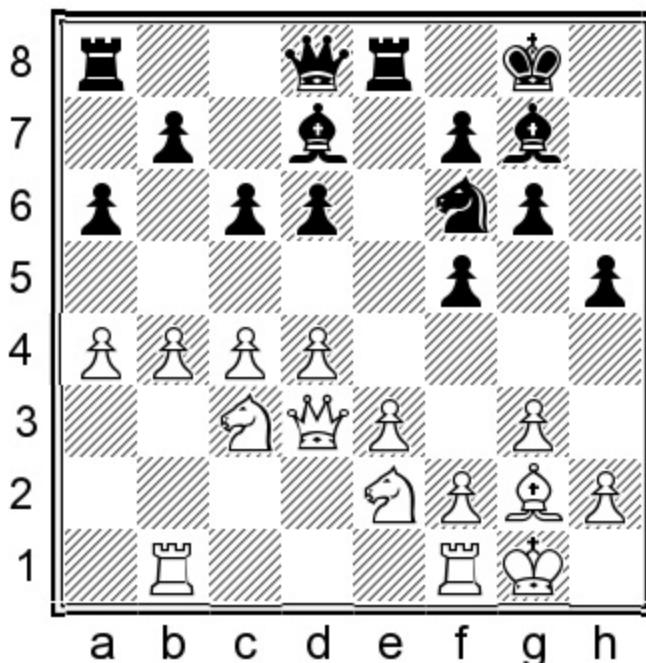
331. Meran Variation



Show/Hide Solution

12.b4! An important trick to stop ...c6-c5. **12...0-0±** The tactical justification speaks for itself:
12... $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xb5!$ cxb5 (13... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}a7+-$; 13... $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}d6\#+-$) 14. $\mathbb{Q}xb4\pm$

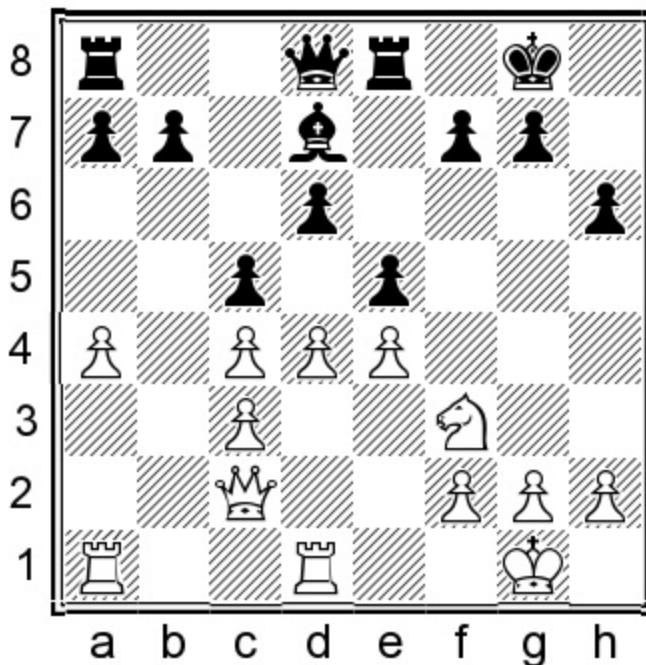
332. Zucchelli – Gladyshev, Budapest 1996



Show/Hide Solution

15.h4! To stop ...h5-h4, which would prepare an attack against the white king and the h2-square. In the structure with ♜g5xf6 and ...e7xf6, White's main objectives are to restrict Black's dark-squared bishop and make any necessary prophylactic moves on the kingside, while gradually expanding on the queenside. The knights can be placed on e2 and c3 (as in this example), or d2 and e2 (to have ♘f3 available in case Black plays ...g6-g5), or even c3 and h3. In any case, ...h7-h5 is almost exclusively answered by h2-h4. No other moves are required for the exercise, but it's worth seeing how the game may develop from here. **15...♝g4 16.♞f3!** As White does not have a knight available to come to f3, another defence is needed against ...g6-g5 and ...h5-h4. **16...g5 17.♝g2! gxh4** Black's best is to sacrifice a pawn with: 17...f4! 18.gxf4 gxf4 19.♜xg4 hxg4 20.♝xf4 ♕f6!± Followed by ...♞f5 and ...♞h6. **18.♝h1 hxg3 19.♜xg4 hxg4 19...fxg4 20.♝xh5± 20.♝xg3±**

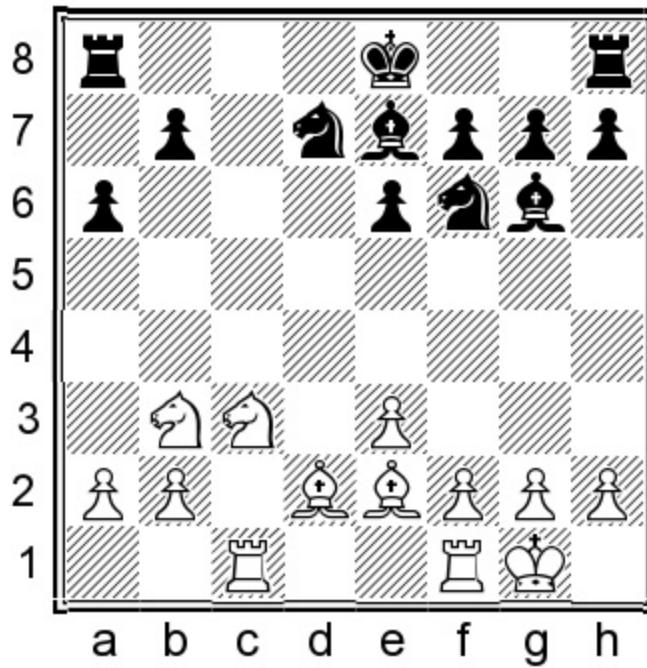
333. Nimzo-Indian



Show/Hide Solution

18.dxc5! Not allowing Black to open the e-file. 18.dxe5 is the same. **18...dxc5 19.♞d2** The knight manoeuvres towards d5. However, Black is doing okay by playing for ...f7-f5. **19.♝d5?! ♕c7** and the rook has to return soon. **19...♝c6 20.♝f1 ♘h4! 21.f3 f5!** To avoid the risk of being worse, White had to start the knight manoeuvre towards d5. However, Black's energetic last few moves have created enough counterplay. **22.♝g3 fxe4 23.♝xe4 ♞ad8=**

334. Slav Defence

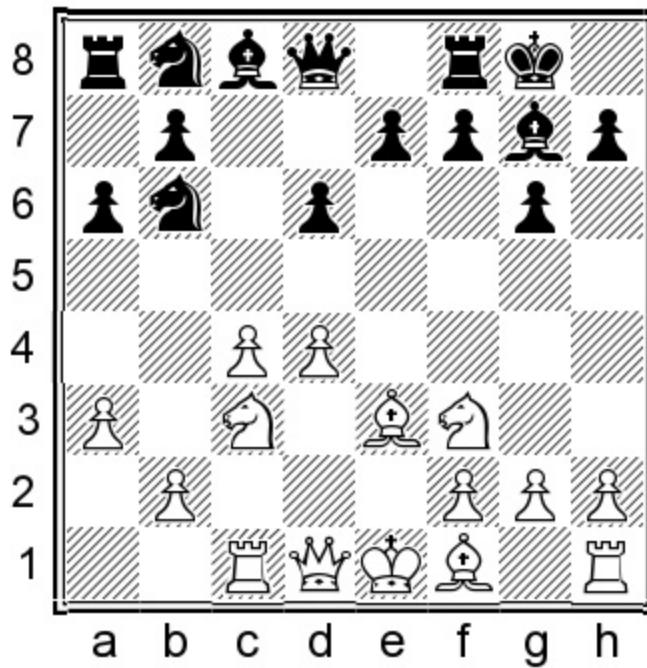


Show/Hide Solution

15.f3!± Intending to lock the g6-bishop in jail with e3-e4. Black will require many tempos to free it by shifting the knight from f6, followed by ...f7-f6, ... $\mathbb{Q}g6-f7$ and ...e6-e5.

15. $\mathbb{Q}a5?!$ does not create a real threat, and 15...0-0 16. $\mathbb{Q}f3 \mathbb{Q}c5=$ makes it impossible to carry out the plan of f2-f3 and e3-e4.

335. Alekhine's Defence

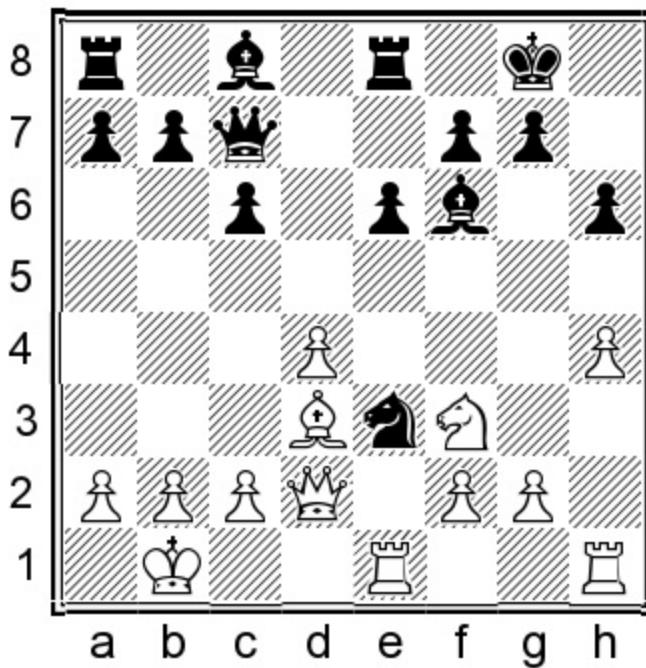


Show/Hide Solution

10... $\mathbb{Q}g4!$ Attacking the centre by pinning/exchanging the knight on f3. All recaptures will then have

a disadvantage: $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ leaves the c4-pawn en prise, $\mathbb{W}xf3$ weakens the d4-pawn and $gxf3$ weakens White's kingside structure. 10...d5?! 11.c5 $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ dxc4 13.0-0± 11... $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 11.h3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 12. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ e5± Everything against d4!; 11.d5 e6±; 11.b3!= is the best way to keep White's position together. 11... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 12.gxf3 might be the lesser evil, although Black can obviously be happy to have provoked this. 12... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$...a7-a6 was an important move! Black has an excellent position.

336. French Defence – Burn Variation



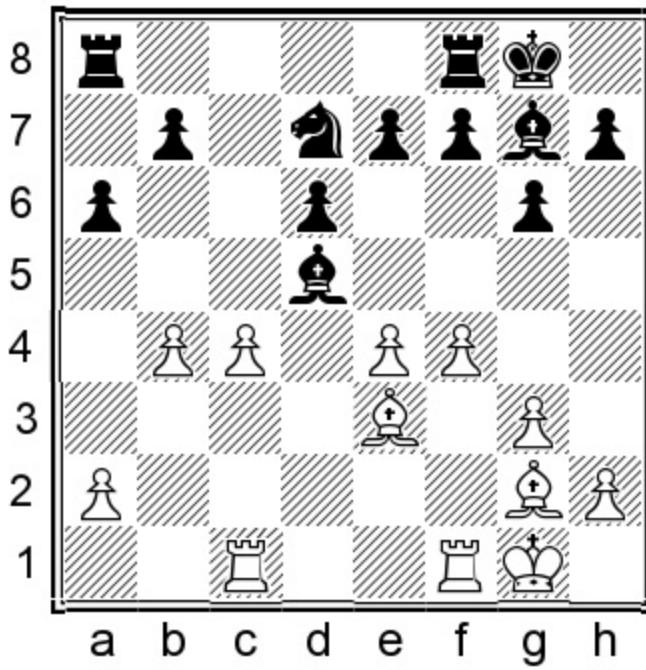
Show/Hide Solution

16. $\mathbb{W}xe3!+–$ Holding back both ...c6-c5 and ...e6-e5, and at the same time preparing $\mathbb{W}e4$. Black has no defence against g2-g4-g5.

16.fxe3? e5±;

16. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ c5±

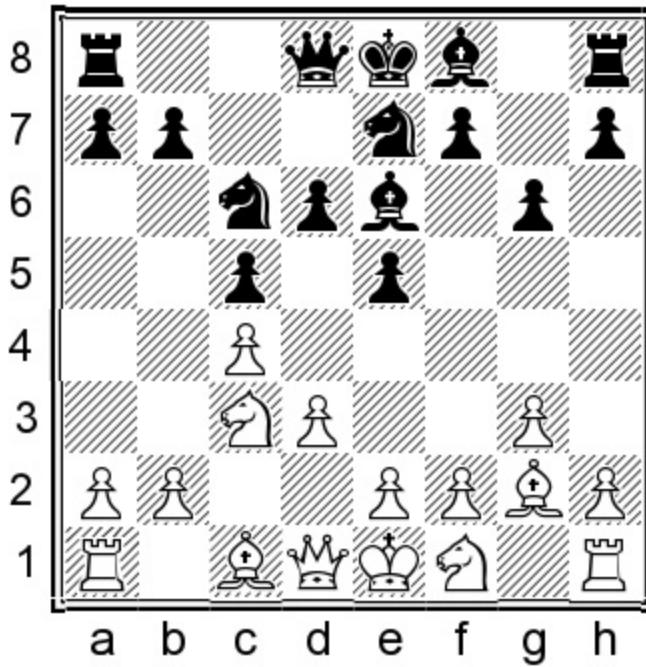
337. Accelerated Dragon



Show/Hide Solution

20.cxd5 Black is a tempo short to defend the queenside, since **20...♝fc8 21.♝h3!+–** decides matters. Black would need a spare tempo for ...♚f8-e8 in order to survive.

338. Skrondal – Kvisvik, Oslo (Rapid) 2009

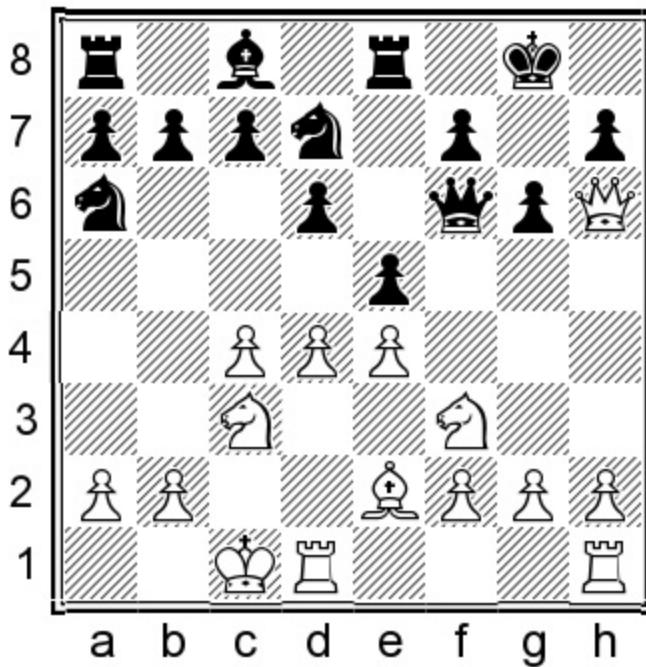


Show/Hide Solution

To stop ...d6-d5, White has been clever with ♟f3-d2-f1-(e3) before castling. But Black has also been clever by avoiding ...♝g7. Or has he? **8...♝g7!** Black should focus on completing development and accept the hole on d5...d5? was played in the game, when 9.♝g5!± would have left Black in a mess

due to the threats of cxd5 and ♜f6. **9.♗e3 0-0** The exercise is over, but it's worth seeing a few sample lines from here. **10.a3** 10.♗ed5 ♜b8 11.a3 a6= **10...♜b8** 10...a5?! 11.♗ed5± **11.♝b1 b5!! 12.0-0=** 12.cxb5?! ♜d4+ threatens ...♜b3, so Black should get the pawn back immediately. 12.♗xb5 d5∞

339. Stojanovic – Saric, Borovo (Rapid) 2005



Show/Hide Solution

12.c5! Attacking the knight and threatening to exchange on d6. That would be in White's favour, since the knight can settle on d5 without being chased away by ...c7-c6. **12...exd4** **13.♗d5 ♜d8** **14.♕xa6 bxa6** **15.♗xd4+-** White's knights are tremendous and there is already a threat to trap the queen.



When I was growing up, what we tried to pass on to people was: how do you find better moves? But now, when the computer is giving you the best moves right away, or the quickest answer, the thinking almost has to change. How do you remember what it tells you? How do you pick out what is essential? So, the skillset has changed. – Viswanathan Anand



Chapter 3

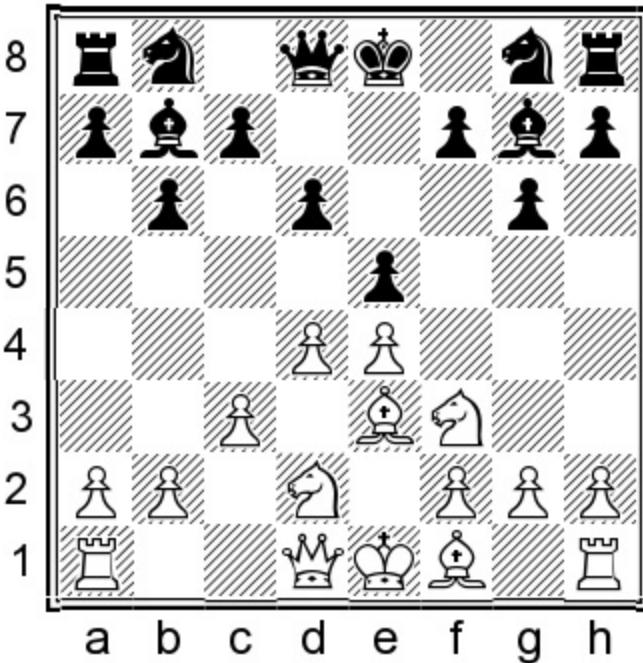
Academic Level Exercises



When I was a kid, the most difficult challenge was simply qualifying for the world championships in your age category. Actually winning it was not a big deal. That was normal. But winning the Soviet championships to qualify, that was much more difficult. – Vladimir Kramnik

340. Steinitz – Mongredien, London 1863

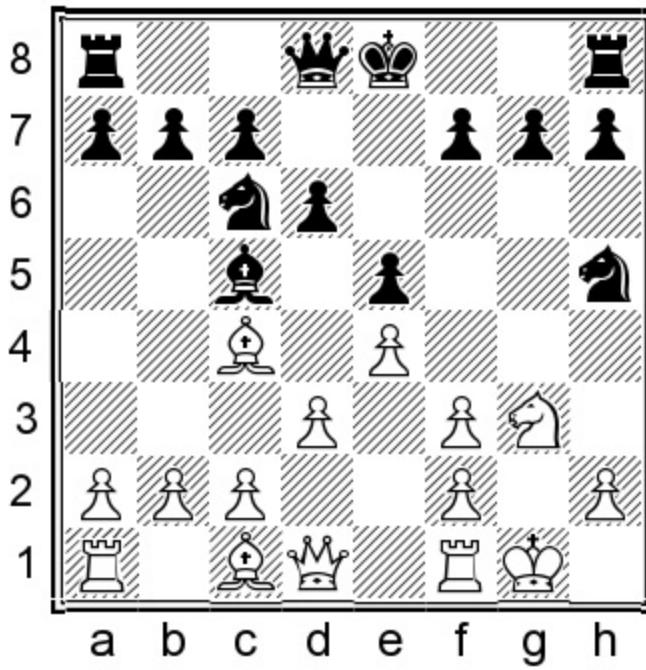
Show in Text Mode



Show/Hide Solution

7.dxe5! 7.♗c4 allows Black to keep the bishop on g7 alive: 7...exd4 8.cxd4±; 7.♗b5† is mildly irritating for Black, but less thematic. 7...dxe5 Black's fianchettoed bishop on g7 is doomed to passivity for a long time. (But if White's c-pawn was on c4 rather than c3, the bishop would make a good job helping Black to plant a knight on d4.) In the long run, the dark-squared bishop may be relocated via f8, but first Black needs to complete development and defend the e-pawn. That gives White time to create play on the queenside (where the bishop doesn't participate). The first plan is a2-a4-a5, and if Black stops that by playing ...a7-a5, White will use the b5- and d5-squares for his pieces. If White can provoke Black into playing ...c7-c6 to control these squares, new weak squares arise on b6 and d6. 8.♗c4± Key factors: a black bishop on g7, a white pawn on c3.

341. Green – Steinitz, London (1) 1864



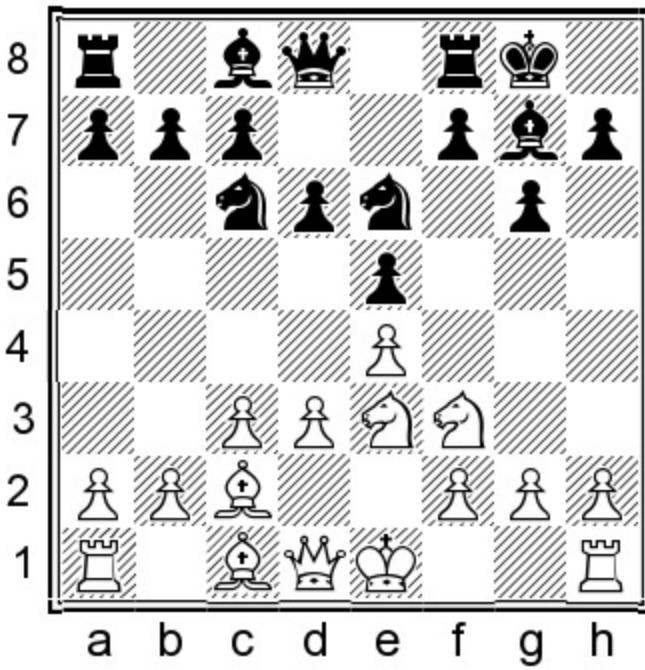
Show/Hide Solution

9...♞f4!? The knight is irritating, and if it's taken, Black recaptures with tempo and gets time to jump with the other knight. The game continued 9...♝h4?! 10.♞xh5 ♚xh5 11.c3∞ when White was allowed to exchange the strong knight without any concession. 9...♞xg3 10.hxg3 h5∞ tries to attack, but White can always meet ...h5-h4 with g3-g4. **10.♝xf4? exf4 11.♞e2 ♞e5 12.♝xf4 ♚h4** Black is winning. There is no need for additional analysis, but for those who are uncertain, here is an illustrative line: **13.♞g2?! ♚h3 14.♞e1 0-0-0** Black threatens ...d6-d5 followed by ...♝d6, and if **15.d4 ♞xc4 16.dxc5 dxc5** Black will win with ...♝d2 or...♞e5, or a deadly rook lift.

William Steinitz

"The king pawn and the queen pawn are the only ones to be moved in the early part of the game."

342. Steinitz – Chigorin, Havana (4) 1892



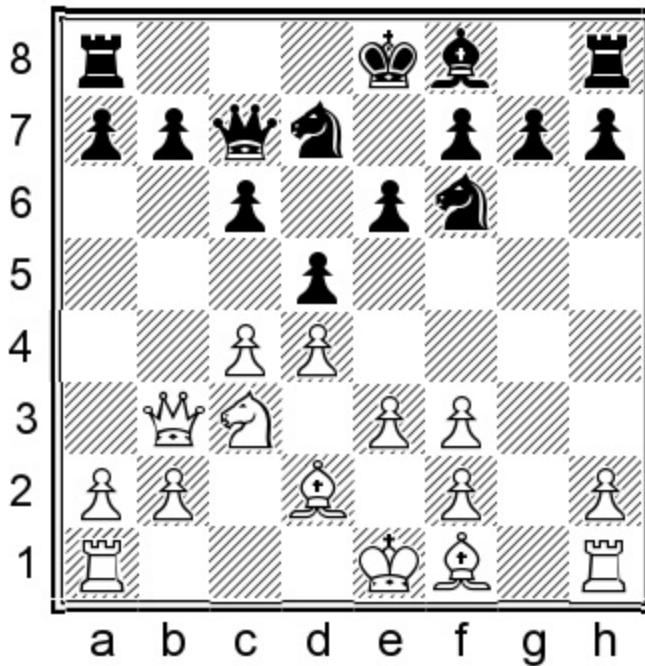
Show/Hide Solution

Black is well placed to fight against d3-d4, so White needs another plan. **11.h4!** Moving the flank pawn is justified by the “hook” on g6. Opening the h-file with h4-h5 and hxg6 would be an achievement; alternatively, advancing the pawn to h6 would make it a long-term asset. Notice also that Black cannot easily open the centre with ...d6-d5 (and even achieving that would not threaten much, if White just avoids the exchange of queens). **11...♝e7** If ever 11...f5 should be played, it is now. After 12.h5 (12.exf5 gxf5 13.d4 is another logical reaction) 12...f4 13.♝d5 g5 14.h6 ♜f6± Chigorin said that “the consequences of this counterattack are very hard to foresee.” Had he met AlphaZero, he would have been more afraid of the pawn on h6. 11...h6?! 12.h5 g5 abandons the f5-square. 11...h5 may have been the best response, but it deprives Black of the option to continue with ...f7-f5. White is satisfied and castles short, probably after taking space on the queenside with 12.b4. 11...♝f4 invites White to soon (maybe now) go for 12.h5 ♜xh5 13.♝f5 ♜xf5 14.exf5 with compensation. **12.h5 d5 13.hxg6 13.h6!?** also favours White. After the text move Chigorin made the mistake of recapturing with the f-pawn instead of the h-pawn, and Steinitz went on to win a famous game.

William Steinitz

“I may be an old lion, but I can still bite someone’s hand off if he puts it in my mouth.”

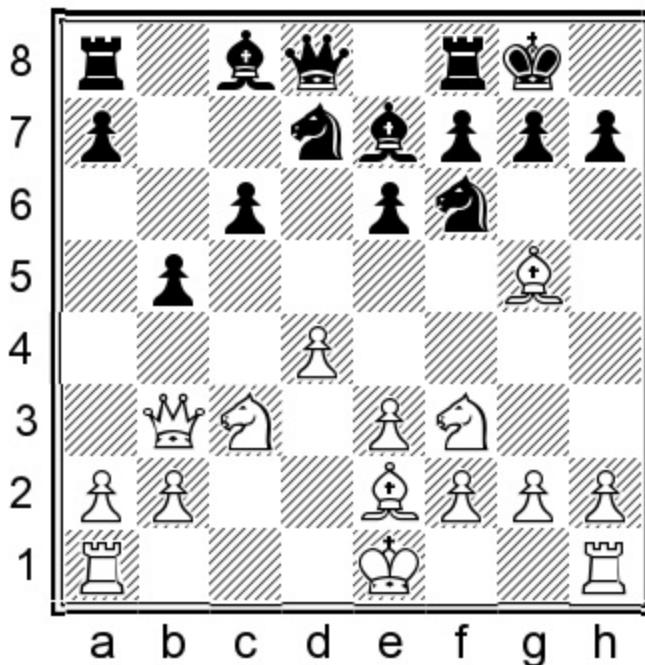
343. Lasker – Blackburne, London (4) 1892



Show/Hide Solution

9.cxd5 This becomes attractive as soon as Black's knight has moved from b8 – otherwise there is ...c6xd5 and ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$. Lasker's 9.f4 ruled out e3-e4 as an idea. 9.0-0-0 can be met by 9...dxc4,, followed by ...b7-b5. 9.e4?! is too ambitious: 9...e5↑ 9... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 9...exd5 10.0-0-0± is good for White, who might follow up with $\mathbb{Q}b1$ and e3-e4. 9...cxd5? 10. $\mathbb{Q}c1$ wins material. **10. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ exd5** With the knight on d7, Black can't afford to open the c-file. **11.0-0-0±**

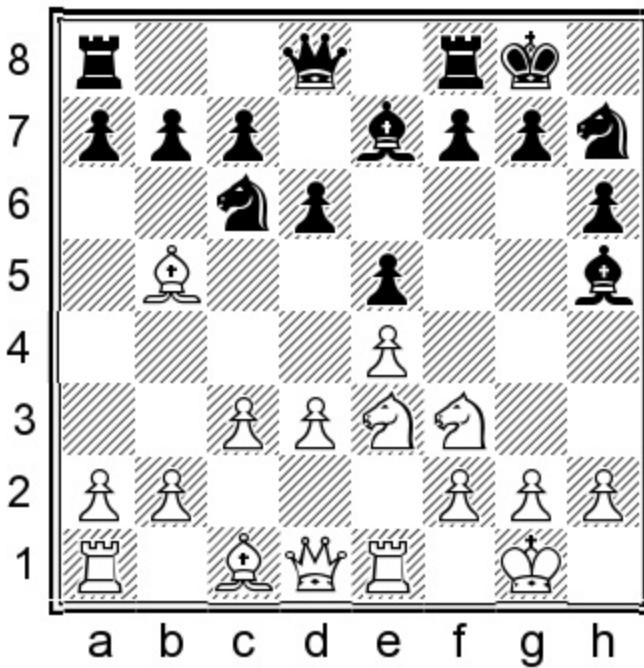
344. Steinitz – Lasker, Moscow (17) 1897



Show/Hide Solution

10...a6! Preparing ...c6-c5 is the top priority, to activate the bishop (which will soon go to b7) and get rid of the backward pawn. 10... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 11.0-0 a6 allows 12. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ (to stop $\mathbb{Q}e4$) 13. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{W}c7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 16.dxc5 and the bishop is temporarily bad on b7. Black's position is still okay, but the game continuation is more precise.

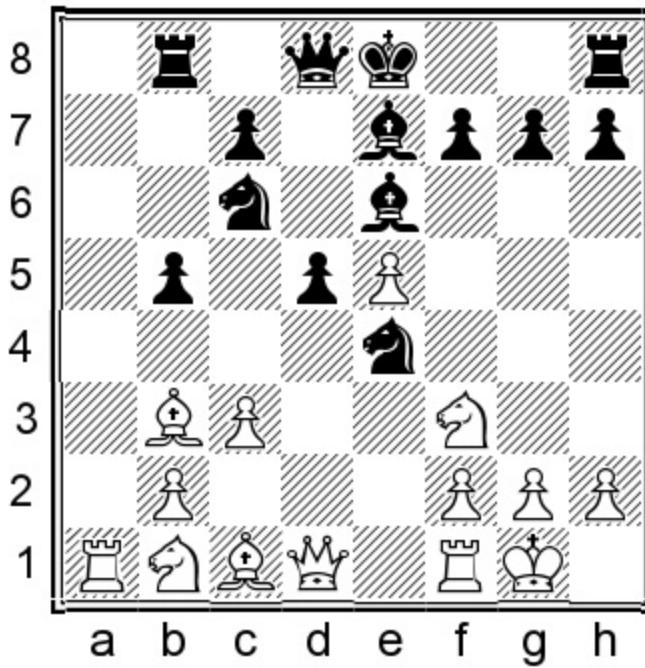
345. Capablanca – Marshall, New York (6) 1909



Show/Hide Solution

11.g4! With an extra move, Black could have stopped this advance with ... $\mathbb{Q}g5$. 11. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}g5=$ **11... $\mathbb{Q}g6$** **12. $\mathbb{Q}f5\pm$** Black is not in a position to make use of the weakened squares (f3, f4, h3 and h4). White can answer ...h6-h5 with h2-h3.

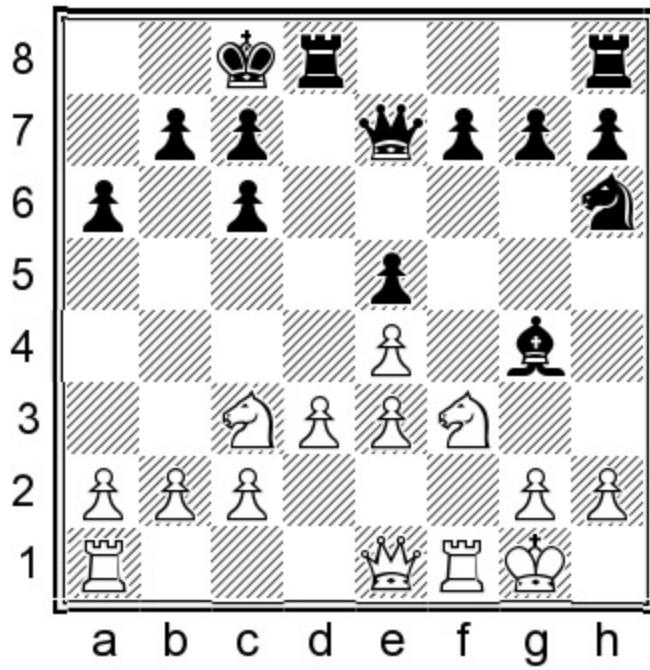
346. Capablanca – Meyer Phillips, New York 1913



Show/Hide Solution

12.♘d4! White's idea is to play c3xd4 to control the escape square on c5, and thus threaten to harass the e4-knight. 12.♕a6?! ♘d7 and White does not have the same trick anymore. **12...♘d7** 12...♘xd4? 13.cxd4+– Black has no convenient way to meet f2-f3 followed by h2-h4 or f3-f4-f5. (Another merit of moving the knight from f3 is to open a path for the f-pawn.); 12...♘xe5?! 13.♘f4± wins an exchange with ♘c6, or a piece after: 13...♘d6? 14.♘xe6 (But not 14.♘xe5 ♘xe5 15.♘c6?? which runs into a trick: 15...♗xh2† 16.♔xh2 ♘d6†–+) 14...fxe6 15.♘xe5 ♘xe5 16.♗h5†+– **13.♗e1±** Indirectly defending the pawn on e5. Capablanca played: 13.♕a6? Challenging the knight to obtain the cxd4 structure is a good idea, but here it allows: 13...♘xe5∞

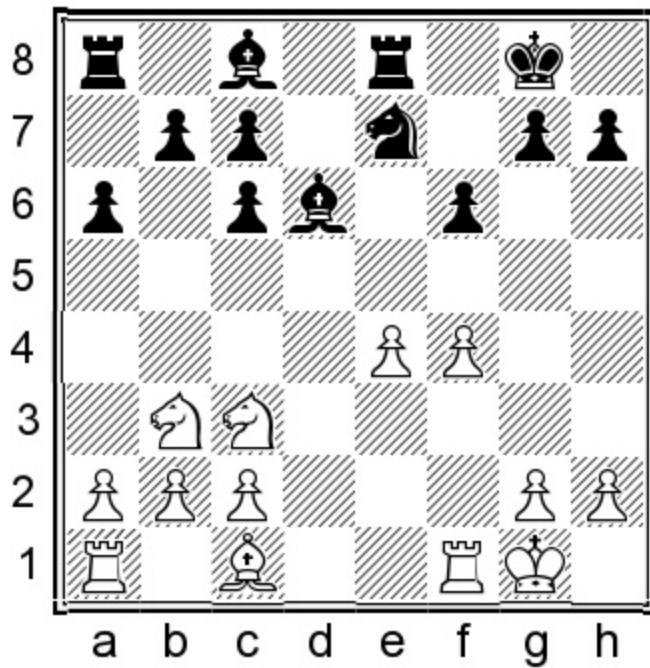
347. Capablanca – Janowski, St. Petersburg 1914



Show/Hide Solution

11.♗b1! Preparing an attack with b2-b4 is White's best plan. 11.♔h4?! f6 and the queen will be hit by ...g7-g5 sooner or later. **11...♝hf8∞** Black's best may be to capture on f3 and go ...f7-f5-f4. The game went: 11...f6 12.b4 ♝f7 13.a4 ♜xf3 14.♝xf3 b6 15.b5 cxb5 16.axb5 a5 17.♝d5 ♜c5 18.c4± Capablanca managed to push d3-d4 and c4-c5 with a winning attack.

348. Lasker – Capablanca, St. Petersburg 1914



Show/Hide Solution

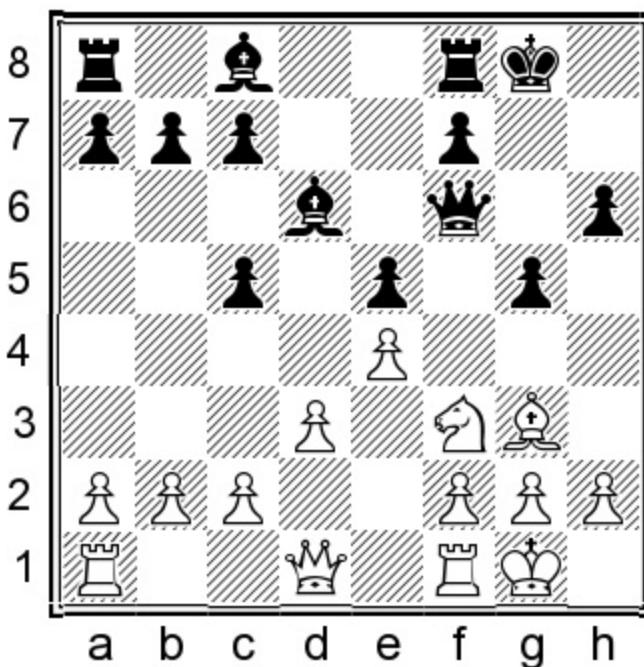
In the Exchange Ruy Lopez, Black gets the bishop pair while White has a healthy pawn majority – a

pawn ending would be winning. White's next move compromises the structure and produces a backward pawn on e4, but restricts Black's pieces. **12.f5!** White does not stand better, but that does not change the fact that Lasker's move is clearly best. It's difficult to find another plan for White. Black, on the other hand, had the easy plan of completing development with ... $\mathbb{Q}g6$, ...b7-b6, ... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}ad8$. As soon as the knight arrives on g6, f4-f5 loses its effectiveness as the knight continues to e5. **12...b6 13. $\mathbb{Q}f4=$**

Emanual Lasker

"The intelligent perusal of fine games cannot fail to make the reader a better player and a better judge of the play of others."

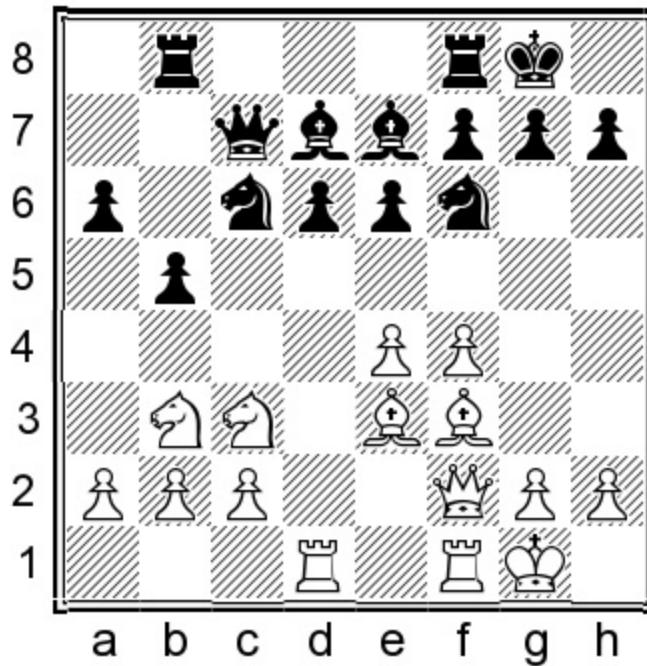
349. Winter – Capablanca, Hastings 1919



Show/Hide Solution

12... $\mathbb{Q}g4!$ 13.h3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 14. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{W}xf3$ 15.gxf3+ A classical example where the bishop on g3 is essentially dead. Black's bishop does not have any active prospects for the moment, but Capablanca eventually managed to force through ...c5-c4.

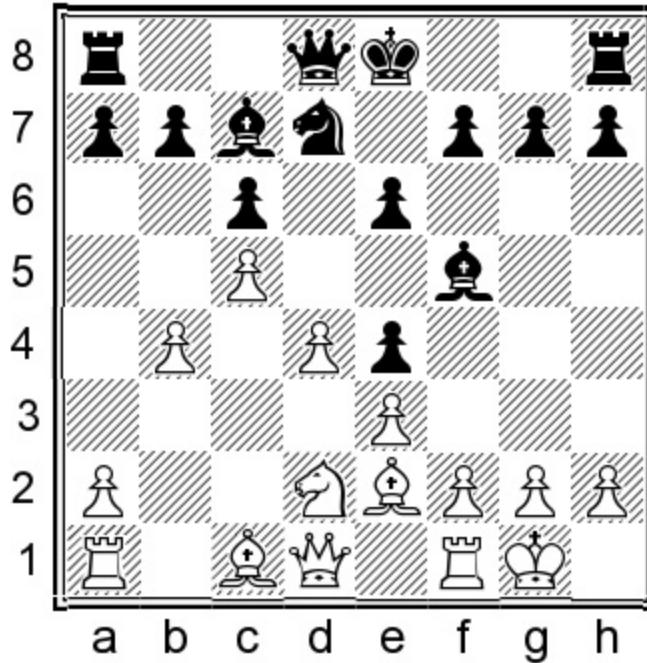
350. Euwe – Fontein, Scheveningen 1920



Show/Hide Solution

15.g4!± Chasing back the knight before Black gets too far on the queenside. 15.♘h1?! b4 16.♗e2 a5 17.g4 a4 18.♗bd4 d5 is an example of g4-g5 coming too late. 19.e5 ♘e4± **15...b4 16.♗e2 d5 16...♕c8 17.g5 ♘d7 18.♗g3± 17.e5** Jumping forward to e4 will lose a pawn. **17...♗e8 18.♗c5±**

351. Kmoch – Alekhine, Vienna 1922

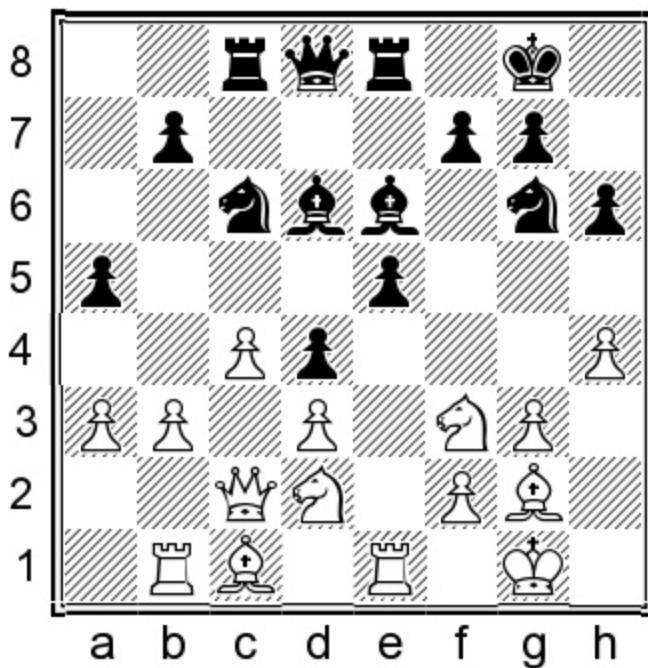


Show/Hide Solution

11...h5! With the annoying e4-pawn, it's logical to prepare an attack and this is the way. 11...♗f6!? is also slightly better for Black. 11...♗h4 12.g3 ♗h3 plans to continue the attack with ...♗f6-g4 or ...h7-

h5-h4. However, after 13.f3! ♜f6 14.♕xe4 ♜xe4 15.fxe4 ♜xe4 16.♔f3 Black does not have anything better than a draw: 16...♜xg3 17.hxg3 ♜xg3† 18.♔h1 ♜h3† 12.f4 A bonus of ...h7-h5 is that 12.f3 ♜h4 13.g3? is no longer available as a drawing line, as Black has 13...♜xg3 14.hxg3 ♜xg3† 15.♔h1 ♜h3† 16.♔g1 ♜h6! with mate. 12.b5!? discourages the immediate 12...♜xh2†, as White gets counterplay with bxc6 and ♜a4 later on. (The sacrifice should ultimately lead to a draw.) However, Black can maintain some initiative with: 12...♜f6! 13.f4 (13.bxc6? is what White wants to play, but it is refuted by: 13...♜xh2†! 14.♔xh2 ♜g4†–+) 13...exf3± 12...g5↑ Alekhine attacked, and the game lasted only eight more moves.

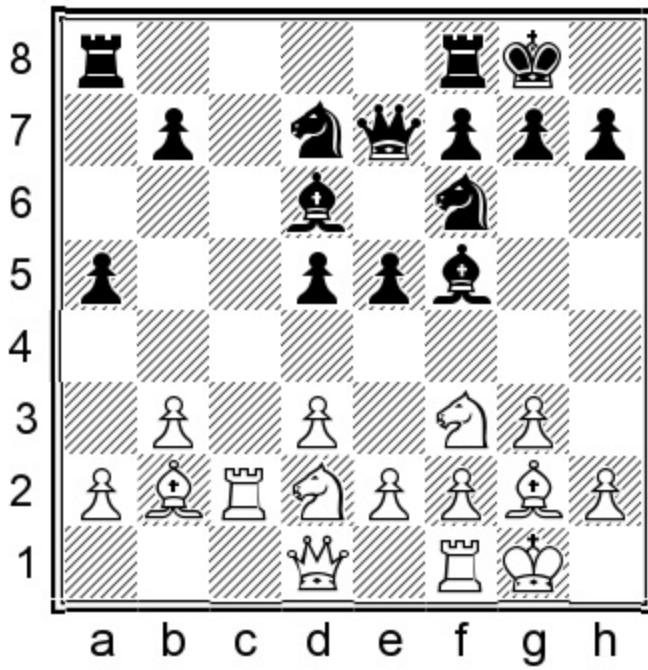
352. Capablanca – Janowski, New York 1924



Show/Hide Solution

16.c5± A reversed Benoni where White's main plan is to advance with the pawn majority on the queenside. Black to move could have stopped White's progress by 16...b6. 16.h5?! unnecessarily weakens the pawn. **16...♜b8 17.♘c4±** Followed by b3-b4. It's important to get the move order right, since 17.b4? is met by the clever 17...axb4 18.axb4 b5!± when White's queenside play is stifled, as capturing en passant runs into a discovered attack.

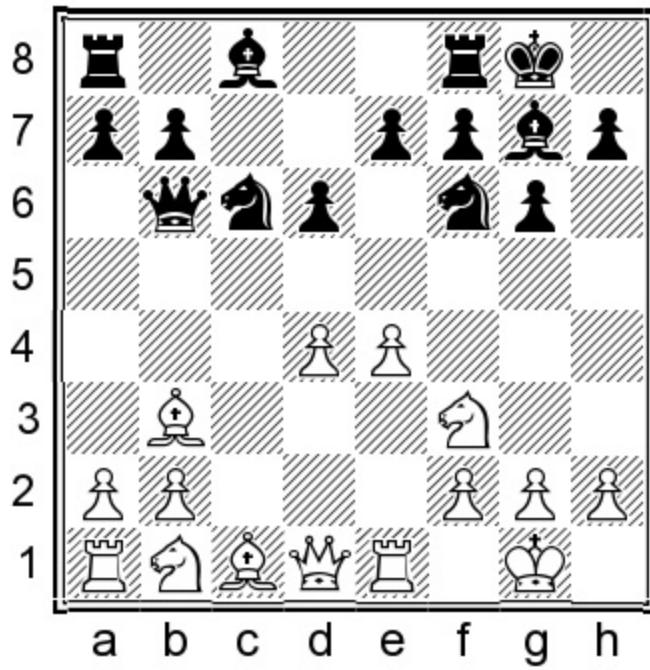
353. Reti – Lasker, New York 1924



Show/Hide Solution

13.e4! Nowadays a standard tactical idea in the Reti opening. The game continued 13.a4 h6 and Black was fine. 13.♘h4?! is not necessary to force through e2-e4. The knight would be better on f3 after: 13...♗e6 14.e4 (14.f4? backfires as the knight on h4 becomes undefended: 14...exf4 15.gxf4 ♘h5+) 14...dxe4 15.dxe4 g6=; 13.♗e1?! allows 13...♗e6 14.e4 d4, taking space and limiting the scope of the b2-bishop. **13...dxe4** Black needs to exchange. 13...♗e6 runs into either 14.d4± or 14.exd5± followed by ♘c4. 13...♗g4 14.exd5 ♘xd5 15.♘c4± **14.dxe4 ♗e6** The bishop must retreat, as capturing loses material. 14...♗xe4? 15.♗xe4 ♘xe4 16.♗h4+–; 14...♗xe4? 15.♗h4+– **15.♘c4 ♘xc4 16.♗xc4±**

354. Ed. Lasker – Capablanca, New York 1924

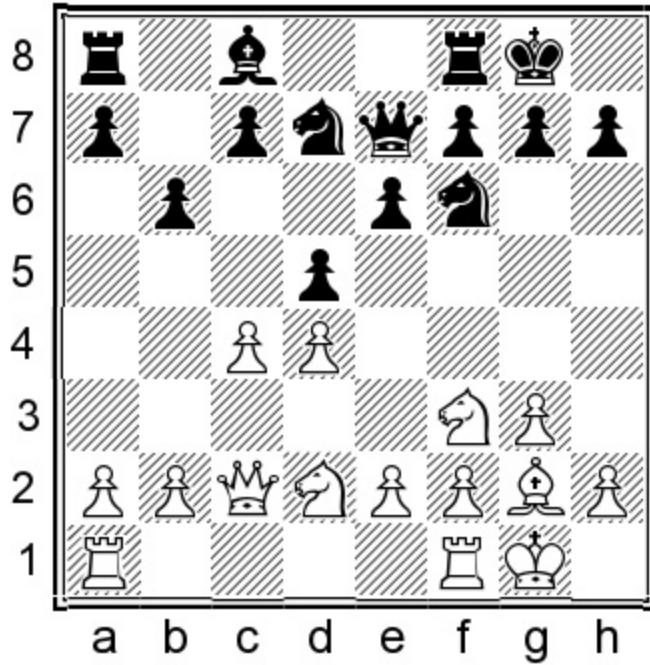


Show/Hide Solution

10.h3!± Keeping all the minor pieces on the board while securing the centre.

10.♘c3 ♜g4∞ forces White to take back with the g-pawn on f3.

355. Capablanca – Marshall, New York 1927



Show/Hide Solution

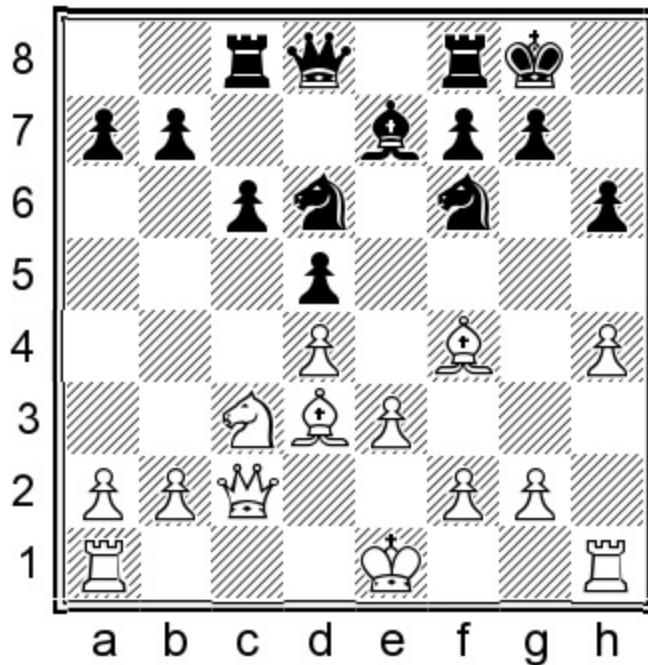
10.cxd5! With ...b7-b6 played, Black does not want to take back with the pawn, since it's not possible to establish a solid pawn chain from b7-c6-d5. And recapturing with the knight runs into e2-e4, as there's no knight on c3 to capture. **10...♘xd5** White has (at least) two good options after 10...exd5:

11. $\mathbb{W}xc7$ $\mathbb{W}xe2$ 12. $\mathbb{B}fe1\pm$ or 11. $\mathbb{B}fe1$ c5 12. e4 \pm . 11. e4 $\mathbb{Q}b4$ 12. $\mathbb{W}c3\pm$ But not 12. $\mathbb{W}xc7?$ $\mathbb{Q}a6\infty$.

Jose Raul Capablanca

"Chess is something more than a game. It is an intellectual diversion which has certain artistic qualities and many scientific elements."

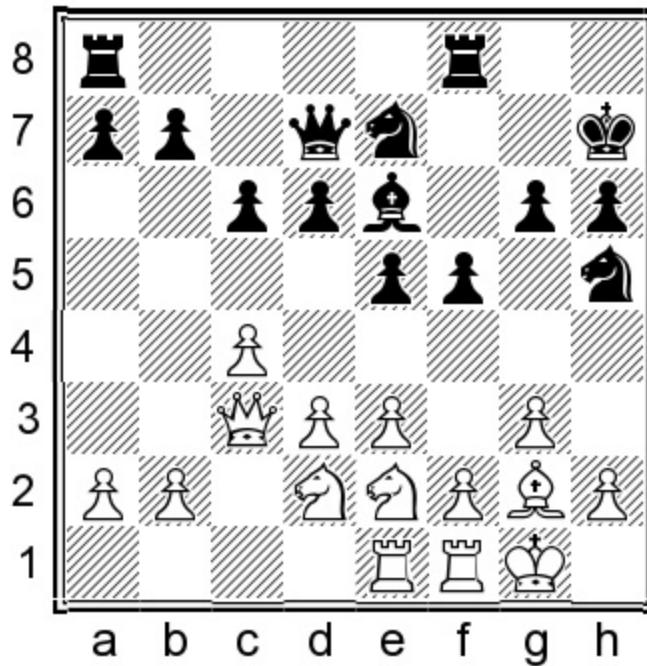
356. Alekhine – Capablanca, Buenos Aires 1927



Show/Hide Solution

16.g4! White must choose the right way to attack. 16.0-0-0?! c5↑ is less promising. The point is that g4-g5 might be met by ... $\mathbb{Q}fe4$, and it's important for White that this only happens when the c-file is still closed. 16.f3 is not necessary and 16...b5 17.g4 c5! gives Black decent counterplay. **16... $\mathbb{Q}xg4$** The game went: 16... $\mathbb{Q}fe4$ 17.g5 \pm ; In the event of 16...c5 17.dxc5 $\mathbb{B}xc5$ 18.g5 $\mathbb{Q}fe4$ 19.gxh6 \pm White's king is not entirely safe, but Black's is more exposed. **17. $\mathbb{B}g1$** 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd6?$ $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ h5! \mp will give Black more than enough compensation for the exchange. **17...f5** 17...h5 is met by 18.0-0-0 \pm and f2-f3. **18. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$** White wins back the pawn and keeps some advantage. **18... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}h2$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}f3\ddagger$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}xc8$ 22. $\mathbb{W}g6\pm$**

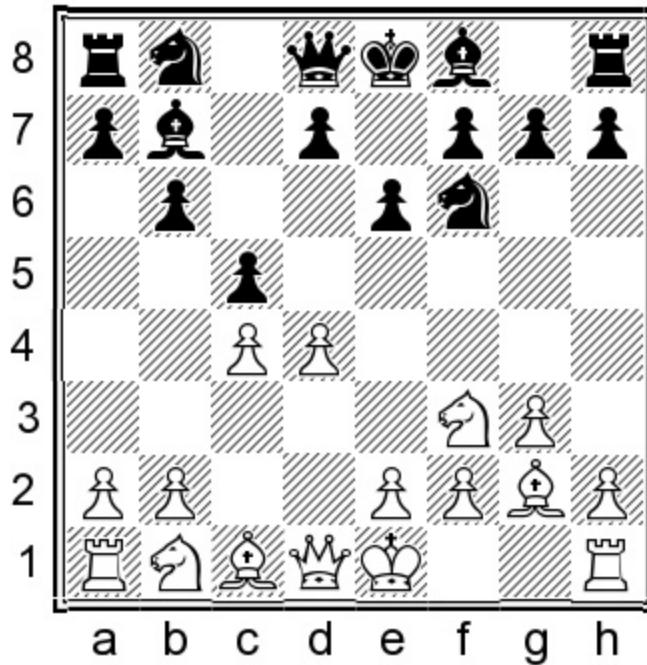
357. Capablanca – Michell, Ramsgate 1929



Show/Hide Solution

17.f4! Otherwise Black would have pushed the f-pawn. **17...exf4 18.Qxf4!** Exchanging the knight that blocks the rook. **18.exf4± 18...Qxf4 19.exf4!** White will double up on the e-file, with something near the borderline between a slight and a clear advantage.

358. Capablanca – Marshall, Karlovy Vary 1929

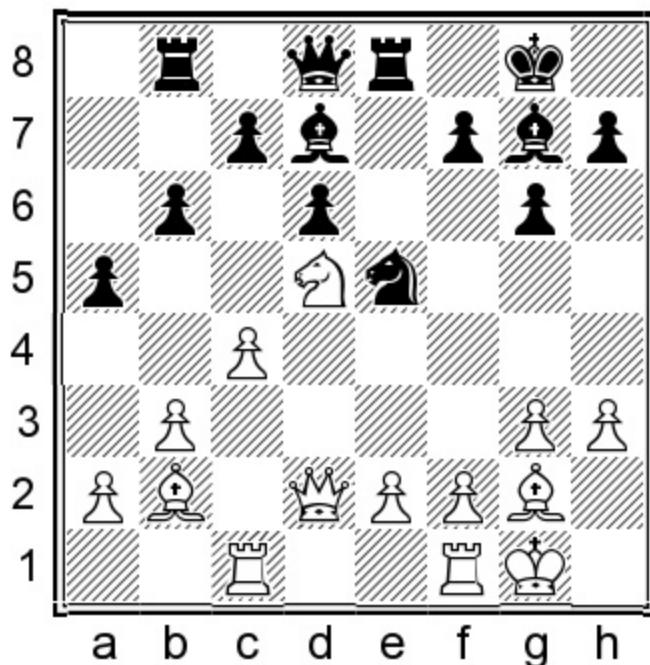


Show/Hide Solution

6.d5! Not allowing Black to get a Hedgehog. Notice the similarity with Exercise 263, where we saw the same idea with the queen on c2. **6...exd5 7.cxd5!** A standard sacrifice. If Black doesn't take, it

becomes a Benoni with a misplaced bishop on b7. The simple 7. $\mathbb{Q}h4\pm$ sets up a pin that allows White to recapture the pawn. For maximum flexibility, White should avoid a premature $cxd5$ in favour of moves like $\mathbb{Q}c3$, 0-0 and $\mathbb{Q}g5$, keeping the option of taking on d5 with the knight. However, it would be even more favourable to recapture on d5 without having to play $\mathbb{Q}h4$. 7... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 7... $\mathbb{Q}xd5??$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ wins outright. 8. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9. $e4\pm$ Practice has shown that White's lead in development and central control are worth more than a pawn. Black is even allowed capture a second one: 9... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 11. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 12. 0-0 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}f4\pm$

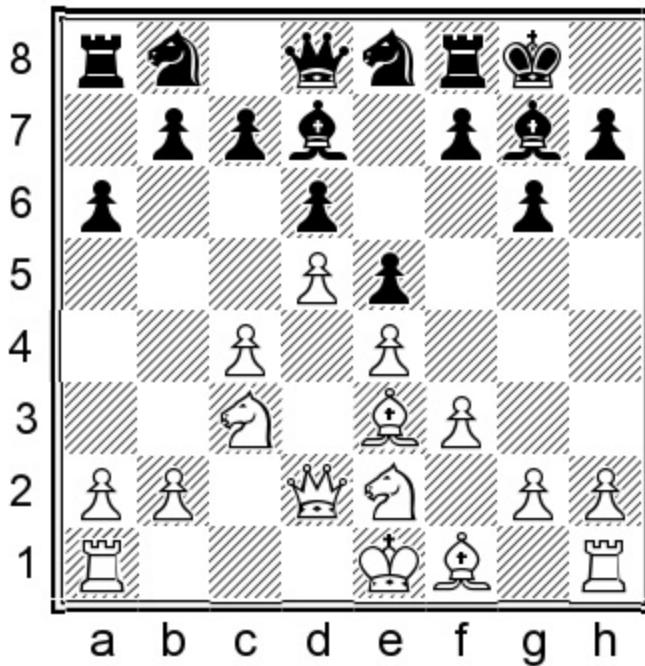
359. Capablanca – Yates, Barcelona 1929



Show/Hide Solution

16.f4! Exchanging bishops is generally in White's favour as it weakens Black's kingside. 16. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ or any other reasonable move yields a small advantage. 16... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 18. $\mathbb{W}b2\ddagger$ Immediately attacking the dark squares, but there's nothing wrong with 18. $e4$. 18... $f6$ 19. $g4!$ $\mathbb{Q}b4$ The only way to defend the f6-pawn. 20. $g5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 21. $cxd5+-$ Another exchange in White's favour, as c7 is eternally weak.

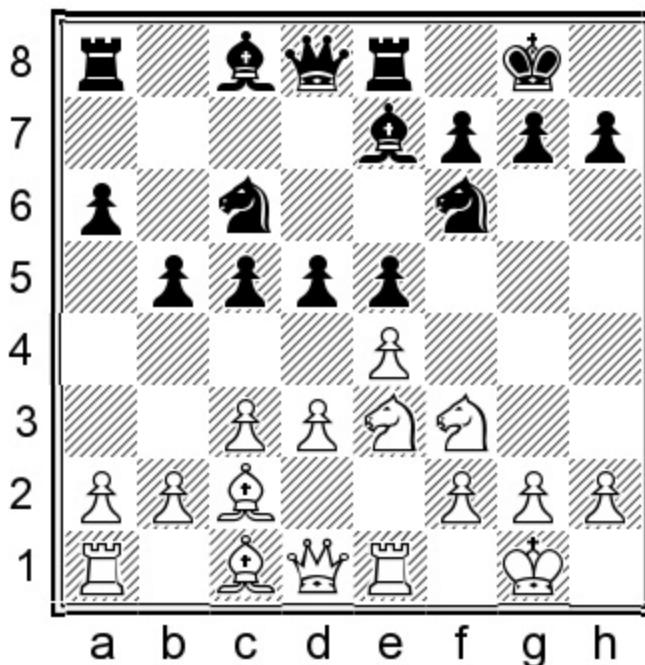
360. Capablanca – Menchik, Moscow 1935



Show/Hide Solution

10.g4! The standard method: preparing to capture twice in case of ...f7-f5. 10.h4 is also reasonable, for instance: 10...f5 11.exf5 gxf5 12.Qg5 Qf6 13.g4!?,; 10.c5?! dxcc5 11.Qxc5 Qd6= **10...h6** 10...Qf6 is the only potential argument against g2-g4. Black plans to post the bishop on h4, but 11.g5 Qe7 12.h4 spoils Black's plan. 12...f6 can be met in several ways, for instance: 13.f4± **11.h4 ♕h7+**—White has no straightforward way to open the kingside, and will probably keep the king in the centre in order to play on the queenside later. Without ...f7-f5 as a means of counterplay, Black has no compensation for White's extra space.

361. Alekhine – Eliskases, Podebrady 1936



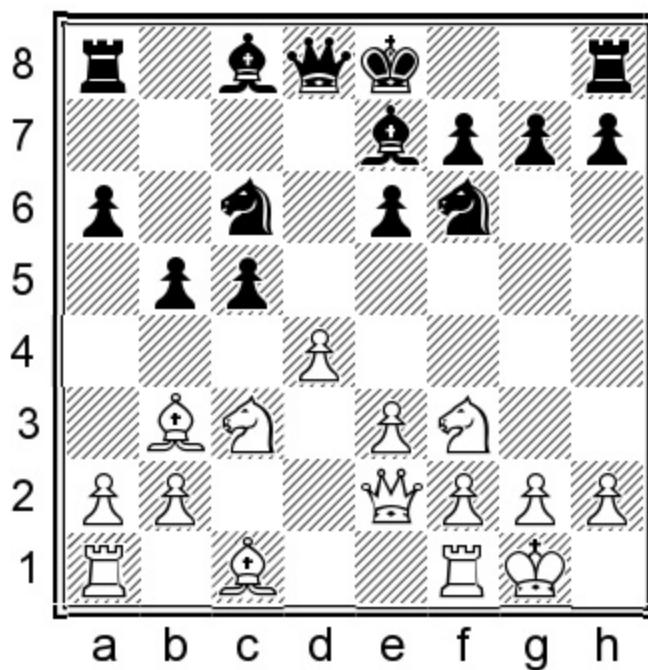
Show/Hide Solution

Black to move would play ...d5-d4. **14.exd5** Or taking with the knight first. **14...♘xd5 15.♗xd5 ♖xd5 16.d4!** Preparing ♘e4, which is why it was good to help Black's queen to develop. **16...exd4 17.♘e4 ♖d7 18.♘e5!** 18.cxd4 was played in the game, when 18...♗b7! would have been okay for Black. **18...♘xe5 19.♗xa8±**

Alexander Alekhine

“During a chess tournament, a master must envisage himself as a cross between an ascetic monk and a beast of prey.”

362. Euwe – Alekhine, Netherlands (5) 1937



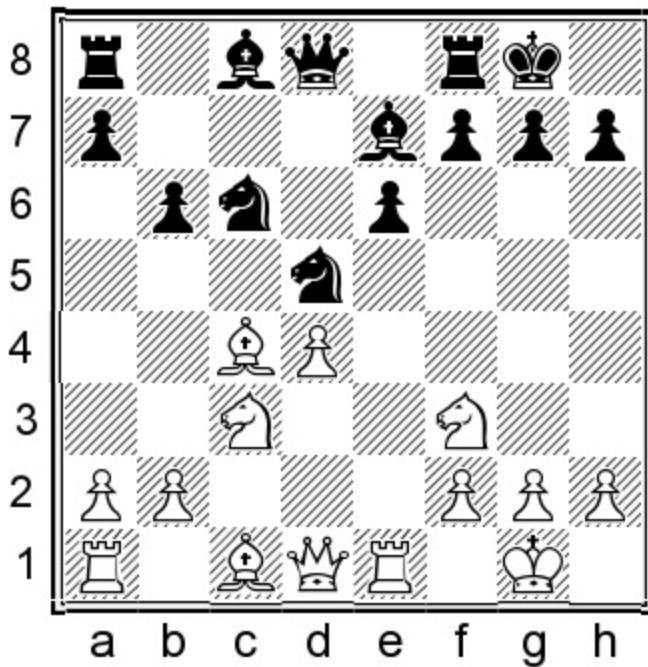
Show/Hide Solution

10.dxc5! To push e3-e4-e5. **10.♗d1?!** **♗c7 11.d5?!** does not yield anything: **11...exd5 12.♗xd5 ♗xd5 13.♗xd5 0-0=** **10...♘xc5?!** Black should have kept the bishop on e7 to protect the g5-square. After **10...0-0 11.e4 ♗b7±** it's possible to take back the pawn with ...**♗d7xc5. 11.e4±** Black is not in time to control the e5-square. (Given an extra tempo, ...**♗c7** and ...**♗d6** could be played.)

Max Euwe

“Alekhine can see five or six times as much as I can; but I have a plan, and that plan sometimes permits me to win.”

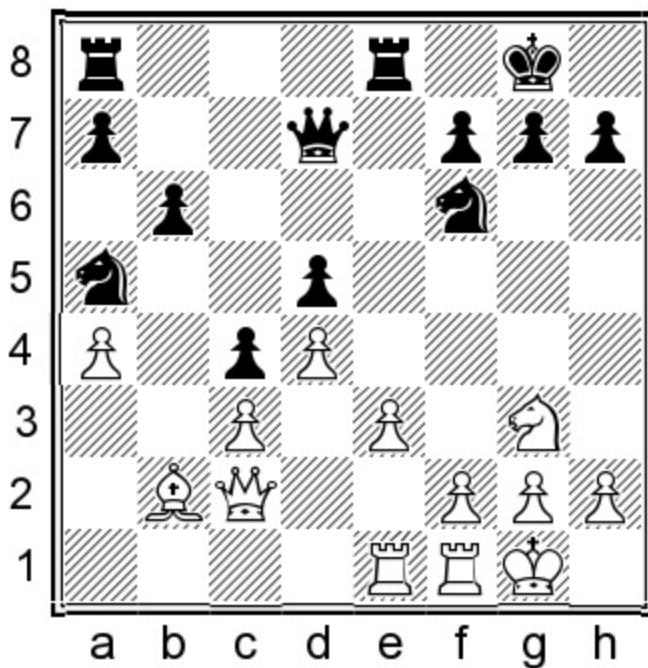
363. Botvinnik – Alekhine, Netherlands 1938



Show/Hide Solution

11.♘xd5 Otherwise Black would take on c3. **11...exd5 12.♗b5±** Black would like to develop the light-squared bishop to f5 or g4, and keep the knight on c6. That's not possible. Transforming an IQP position to a symmetrical pawn structure, while keeping the more active pieces, is a standard plan.

364. Botvinnik – Capablanca, Netherlands 1938



Show/Hide Solution

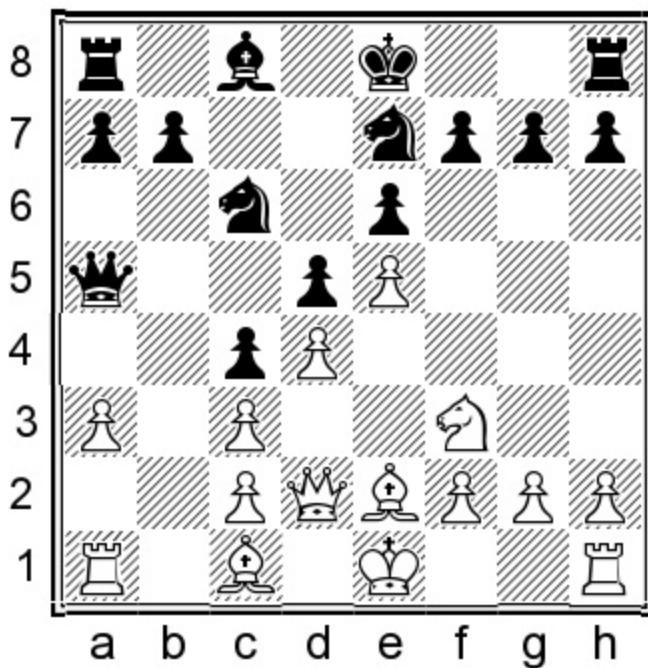
18.f3 Preparing e3-e4 to use the pawn majority and the rooks. **18.e4? dxе4†** is positionally horrible

for White, giving up the light squares. **18...Qb3 19.e4 Qxa4** 19...dxe4 20.fxe4 Qxa4 allows, among others 21.Qxf6 gxf6 22.Qf2+– with a crushing attack. **20.e5** Black has an extra pawn, but can't really defend against the galloping pawns. Botvinnik went on to win a game which deservedly became known as a classic.

Mikhail Botvinnik

"I claim that nothing else is so effective in encouraging the growth of chess strength as such independent analysis, both of the games of the great players and your own."

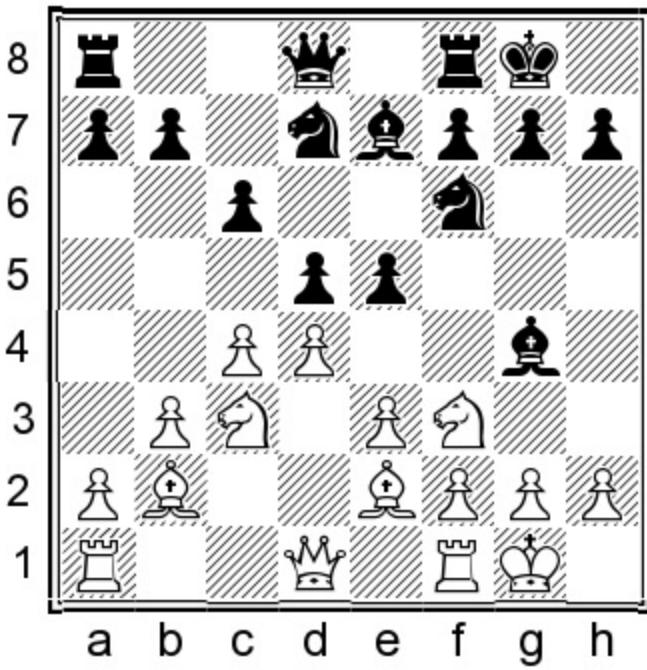
365. Pogrebissky – Botvinnik, Leningrad 1939



Show/Hide Solution

10...Qa4!∞ The queen is normally not a good blockading piece, but stopping a3-a4 and Qa3 is essential. White can't chase away the queen easily. Pogrebissky eventually did so with Qg5-h3-f2-d1-b2, by which time Botvinnik had castled long and taken over the kingside.

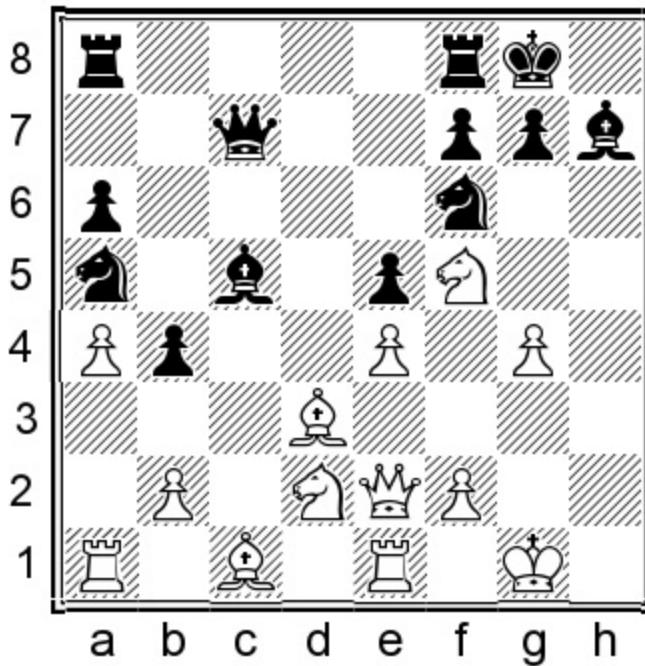
366. Bondarevsky – Botvinnik, Leningrad/Moscow 1941



Show/Hide Solution

10...e4! Simple reasoning: the pawn on e4 is strong. 10...exd4 11.♘xd4 ♜xe2 12.♘cxe2 dxc4 may equalize, but Black can play for more. 10...♝xf3?! 11.♝xf3 e4 gains half a tempo compared to the game, but more important is that White keeps control over g4. **11.♘d2** 11.♘e5 is more logical, exchanging the knight since White has less space. 11...♝e6! (11...♜xe2 12.♝xe2 ♜d6 13.cxd5 cxd5 14.♗b5!=) **11...♜xe2** 11...♝f5 is also reasonable. **12.♝xe2 ♜e8** Black should be ready for f2-f3, while slowly arranging the pieces for an attack with moves like ...♞f8-g6, ...♝d7 and ...♝d8-c7. The game continued 12...♝b4 13.a3 ♜xc3 14.♝xc3 ♜e8, when 15.♝b4! would have prepared to exchange the knight as soon as it goes to f8.

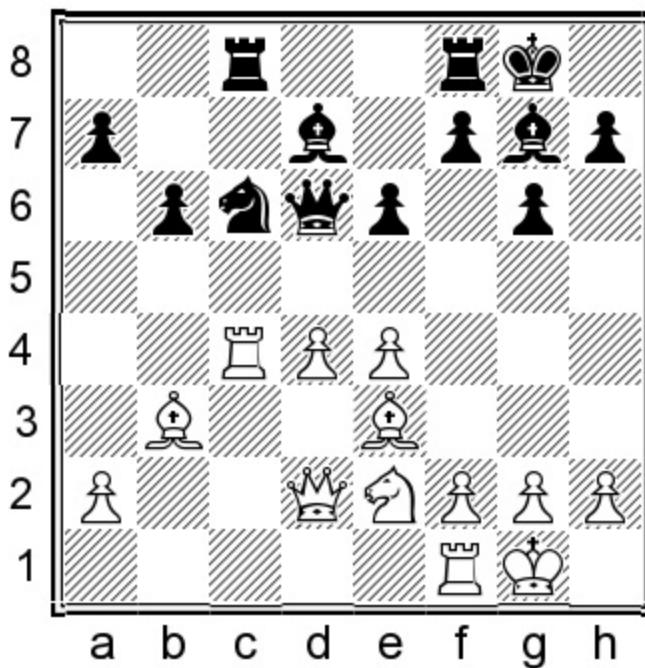
367. Smyslov – Koenig, Radio 1946



Show/Hide Solution

22.♕g2!± The rook is transferred to the h-file, with a dangerous attack. 22.g5 was the game continuation, when Black should have played 22...♗xf5! 23.exf5 (in the event of 23.gxf6? ♔g6 24.fxg7 ♕xg7–+ it is Black who gets to exploit the open files on the kingside) 23...e4! 24.♗xe4 ♗xe4 25.♔xe4 ♗g3†∞ with sufficient counterplay.

368. Tipary – Smyslov, Budapest 1949

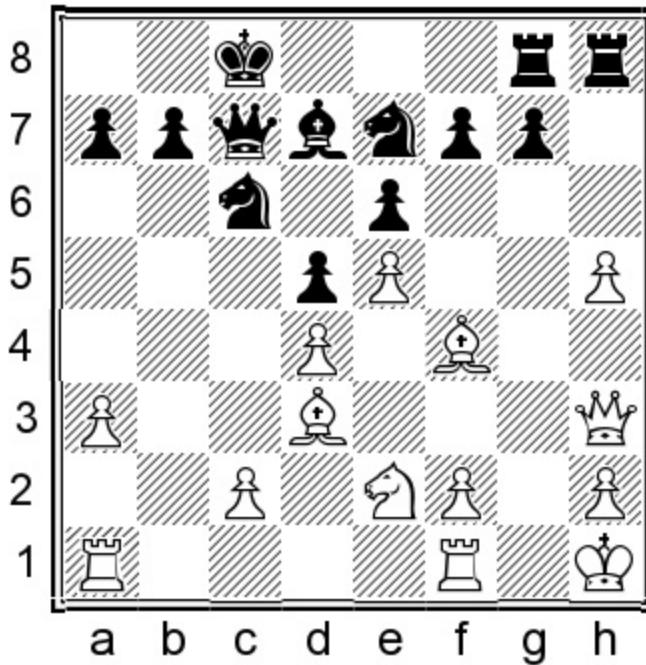


Show/Hide Solution

18.e5! Planning to send the knight to e4, via c3 or g3. Something has to be done before the black

knight heads towards c4. 18. $\mathbb{B}fc1$ $\mathbb{Q}a5=$ **18... $\mathbb{W}a3!$** \pm The queen cooperates with the knight (... $\mathbb{Q}a5$) to create counterplay. 18... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ (19...f6 20. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ fxe5? 21. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ –) 20. $\mathbb{B}xc8$ $\mathbb{B}xc8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e4+$ It's now too late for 21... $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 22.axb3 $\mathbb{W}a3$ since the queen would have needed to be on b3 after: 23. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ $\mathbb{B}c6$ 24.d5+– In the game White opted to exchange the dark-squared bishops. An improvement is: **19. $\mathbb{B}a4!?$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}g5$** Provoking a weakening of Black's pawn structure. **20... $f6$** **21.exf6** $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ **22. $\mathbb{Q}e3!?$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$** 23. $\mathbb{B}xa5$ bxa5 24. $\mathbb{W}xa5\bar{=}$

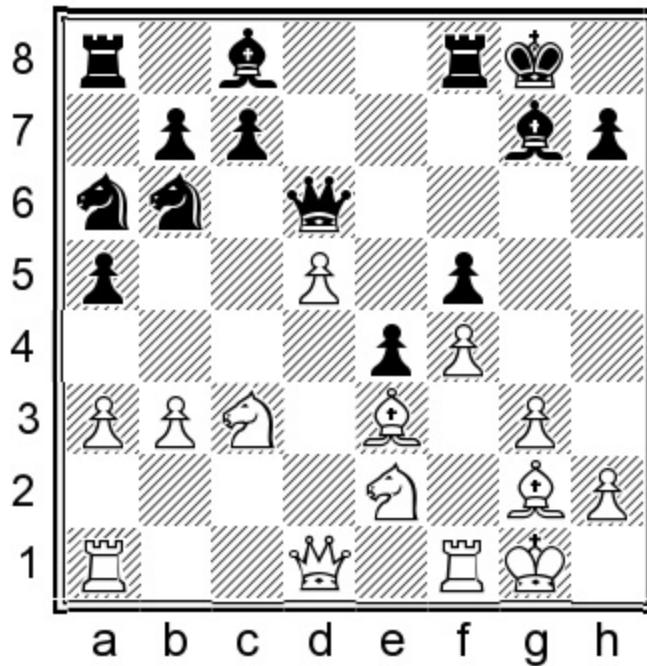
369. Dubinin – Petrosian, Gorky 1950



Show/Hide Solution

16...f6! A tactical trick allows Black to play the favourite move in the French. 16...g5?! was the game. 17. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 18. $\mathbb{B}g1\pm$; 16...g6? 17.h6 g5? tries to round up the h-pawn with ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ next, but 18.h7+– refutes Black's scheme. **17.h6!∞** 17.exf6? e5 does not win a piece, but White's kingside is in ruins after: 18. $\mathbb{W}g2$ exf4 19.fxe7 $\mathbb{B}xh5+$ –

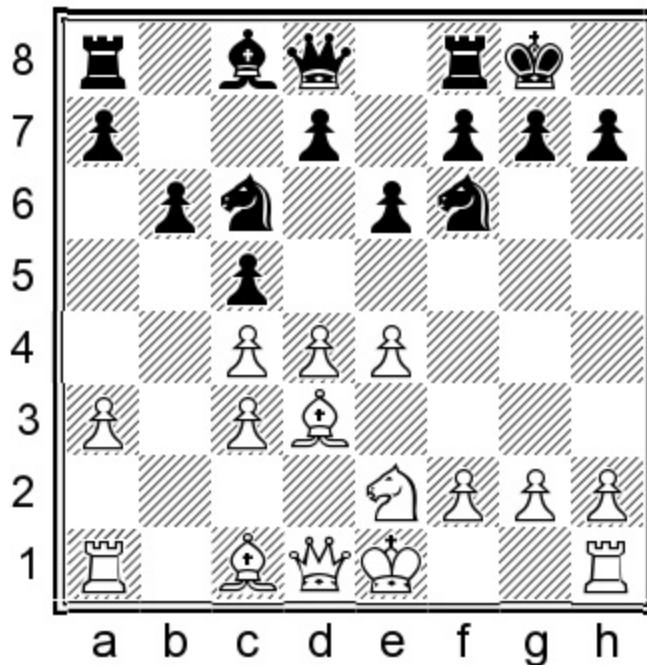
370. Smyslov – Suetin, Moscow 1950



Show/Hide Solution

17.g4!+– Undermining the e4-pawn. White wants to continue with $\mathbb{Q}d4$ and $\mathbb{Q}g3$ (and maybe $gxf5$ in between), but should probably prepare with $\mathbb{Q}h1$ first. 17... $\mathbb{E}c1$ gave Black time to attack the d-pawn with 17... $\mathbb{E}d8$ (which he didn't do).

371. Mukhiddinov – Petrosian, Tashkent 1951

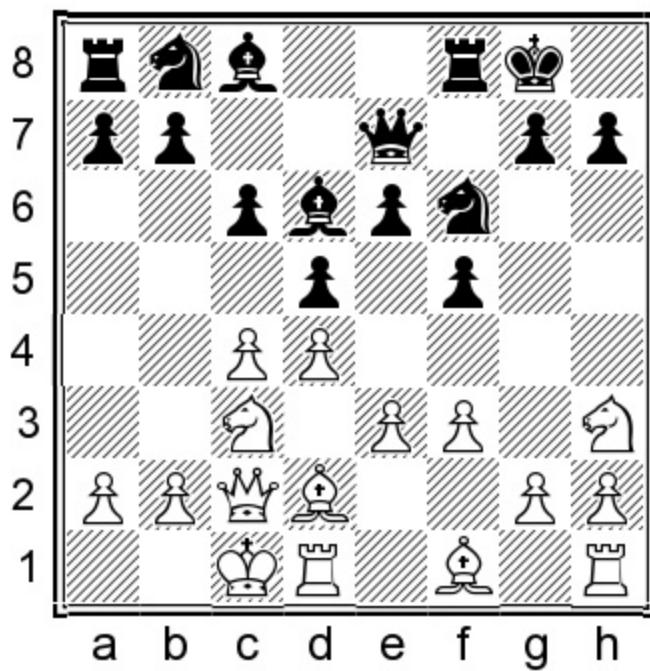


Show/Hide Solution

9... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ Retreating the knight avoids the pinning $\mathbb{Q}g5$, while also preparing to answer f2-f4 with ...f7-f5. In the seventy-plus years that have passed since Petrosian's game, ... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ has become a standard

resource in the Nimzo-Indian.

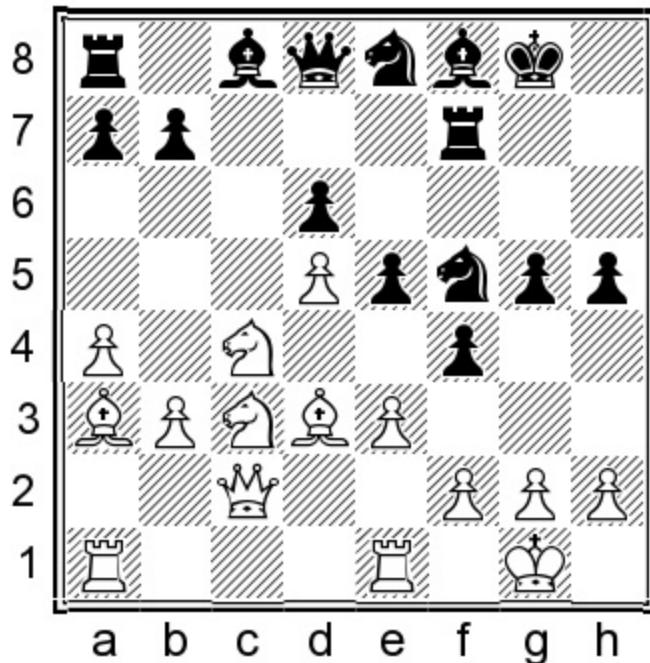
372. Bronstein – Botvinnik, Moscow (12) 1951



Show/Hide Solution

9...dxc4! Before White threatens e4-e5. 10.♘xc4 10.e4 fxe4 11.♗xe4 (11.♗xc4 exf3±) 11...b5± 10...b5± Black continues with ...a7-a5, ...♗a6 or ...e6-e5. Let's not go into the details.

373. Tolush – Smyslov, Bucharest 1953



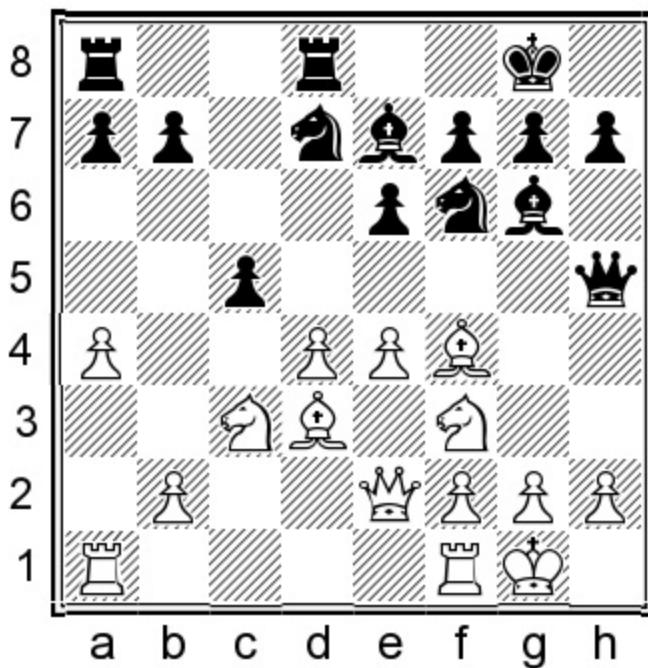
Show/Hide Solution

19...f3! Better now than later, since Black's next moves depend on White's reaction. **20.gxf3** 20.g3 is met by 20...g4 followed by ...h5-h4 and an invasion on the h-file. White has time to escape with the king, but is clearly on the defensive. 20.♔e4 g4→ **20...♗h4** 21.♗d2 ♗h3!→ Followed by ...♗d7, when the queen joins the attack.

Vasily Smyslov

"No fantasy, however rich, no technique, however masterly, no penetration into the psychology of the opponent, however deep, can make a chess game a work of art, if these qualities do not lead to the main goal: the search for truth."

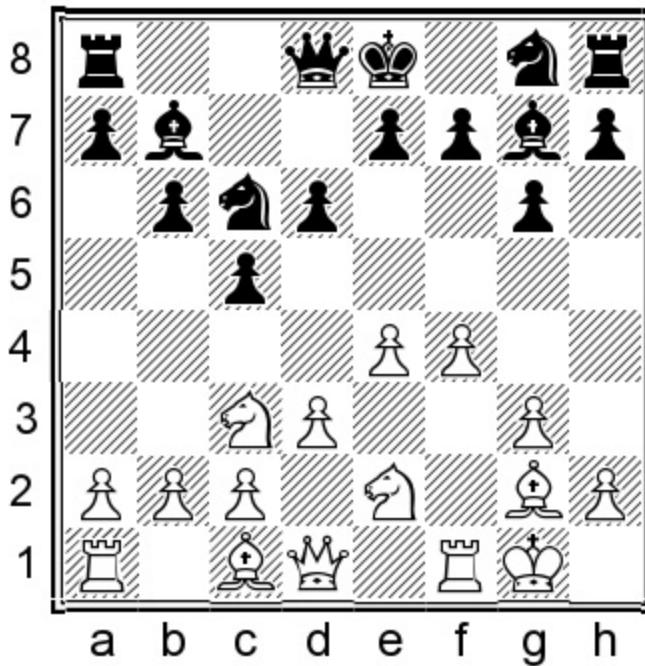
374. Szabo – Smyslov, Zurich 1953



Show/Hide Solution

16.d5! exd5 17.e5!± The knight is forced to retreat, after which White will recapture on d5 with a dominant position. Playing d4-d5 before e4-e5 deprives Black of the d5-square.

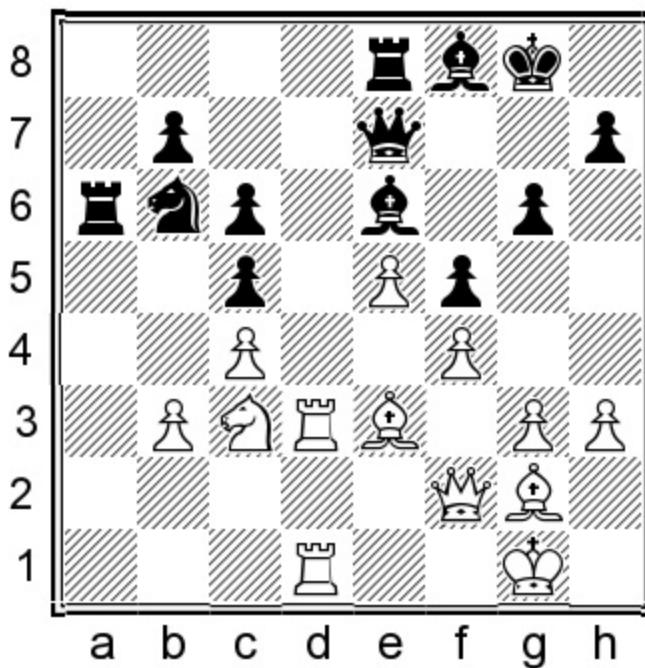
375. Smyslov – Botvinnik, Moscow (13) 1954



Show/Hide Solution

8...f5! Black strikes first in the centre – before White has developed the bishop to e3, which would threaten d3-d4. 8... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 9.f5± **9. $\mathbb{Q}e3$** The game was a rumble: 9.g4 fxg4 10.f5 $\mathbb{W}d7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ gxf5+ 9... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ **10.h3** Preventing ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$. **10... $\mathbb{W}d7\bar{=}$** Black should be happy to have gained some space with the pawn on f5.

376. Botvinnik – Smyslov, Moscow (24) 1954

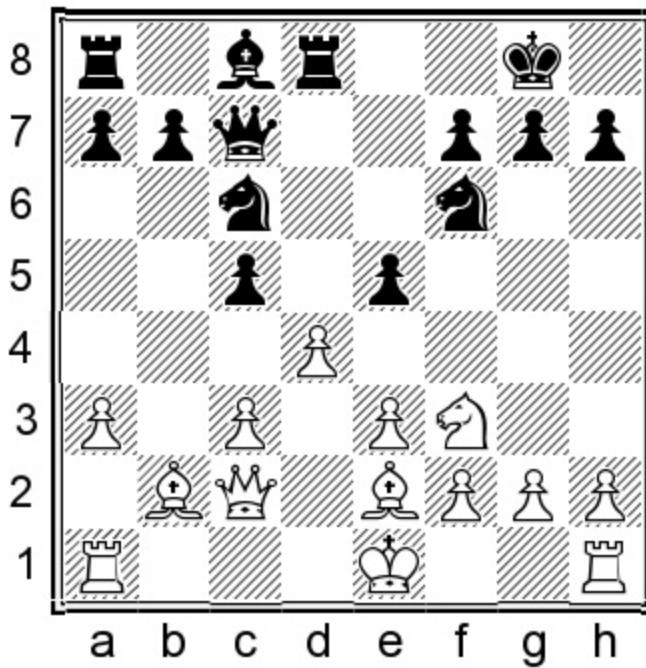


Show/Hide Solution

23.g4! White could have built up slowly but, since it's possible to use the pawn majority

immediately, the text move is the most logical option. **23...fxg4** **24.Qe4+-** is the tactical justification. **24.gxf5 gxf5** **24...Qxf5** **25.Qe4** threatens to invade with the knight, and exchanging off the f5-bishop will lead to the destruction of Black's kingside. **25.Qh2+-** Count White's and Black's pieces on the kingside!

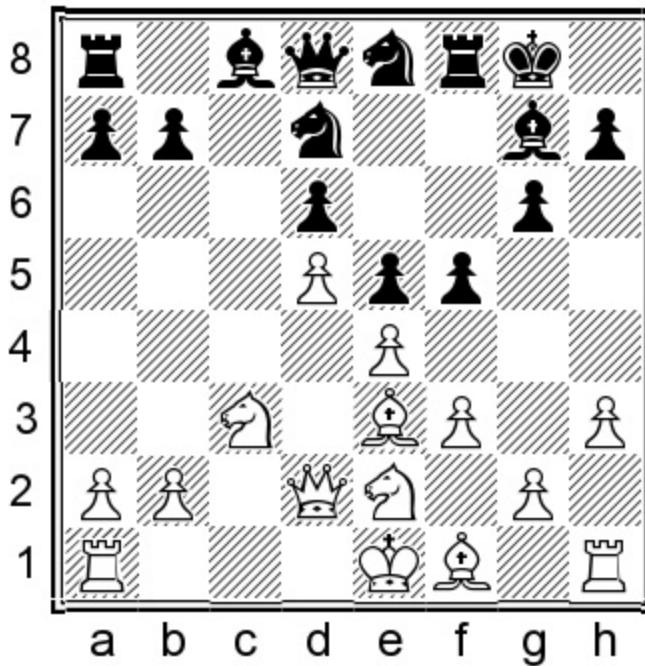
377. Botvinnik – Furman, Moscow 1955



Show/Hide Solution

13.dxe5 Avoiding ...e5-e4. **13...Qxe5** **14.c4±** The ideal way to activate the b2-bishop. **14.Qxe5?!** would activate Black's queen.

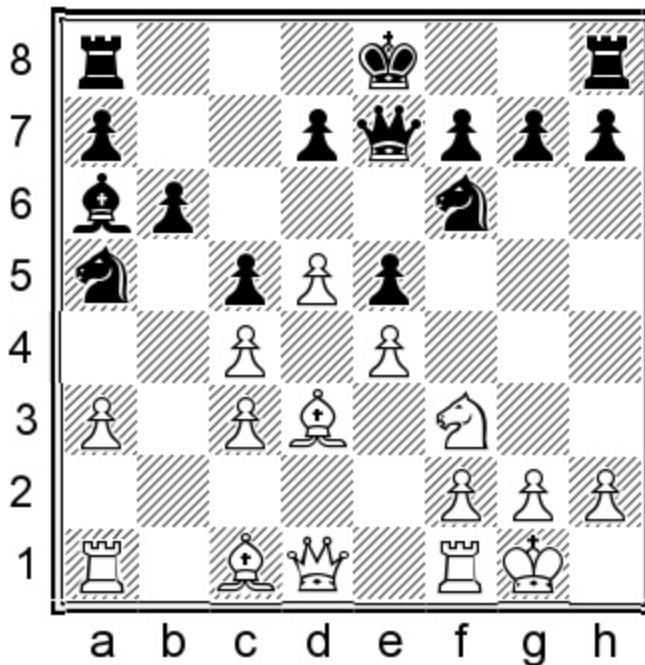
378. Smyslov – Geller, Moscow 1955



Show/Hide Solution

12.exf5! 12.g3?! was played. 12.g4 runs into 12...fxg4 13.fxg4 $\mathbb{W}h4\#$ and the king has to move. 12.0-0-0 $\mathbb{W}a5\#$ Black follows up with ...b7-b5. **12...gxf5 13.g4±** White fights for the e4-square, while gaining space on the kingside. The king is likely to seek shelter on the queenside.

379. Petrosian – Benko, Budapest 1955

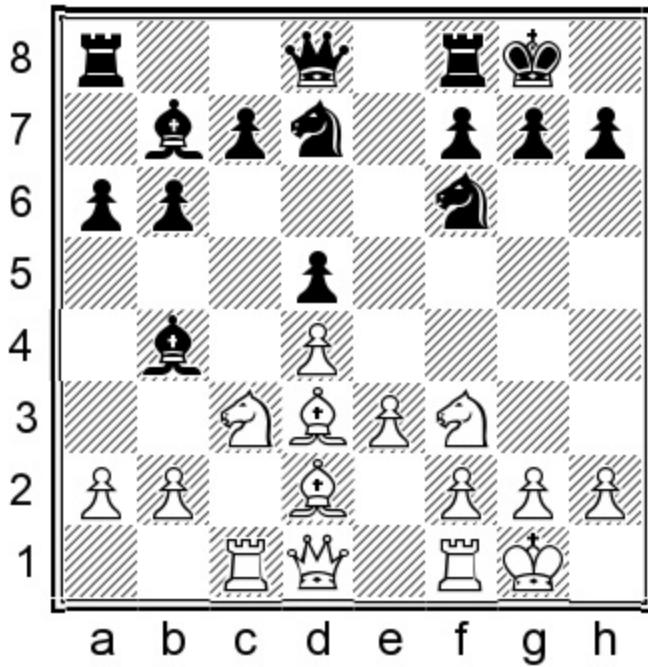


Show/Hide Solution

12.♘h4! There is no need to spend a tempo defending the c-pawn. 12.♗g5 is not a problem for Black: 12...h6 13.♘h4 g5 14.♗g3 d6#; 12.♗d2 d6= **12...g6 13.f4!** Attacking the newly weakened knight on

f6. Black can't defend properly, for instance: 13...exf4 13... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ wins a pawn, but there is 14.fxe5 $\mathbb{W}xh4$ 15. $\mathbb{B}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 16. $\mathbb{W}d2+$ — when the e5-pawn is positionally decisive. 14.e5! $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ — White's powerful central pawns decide.

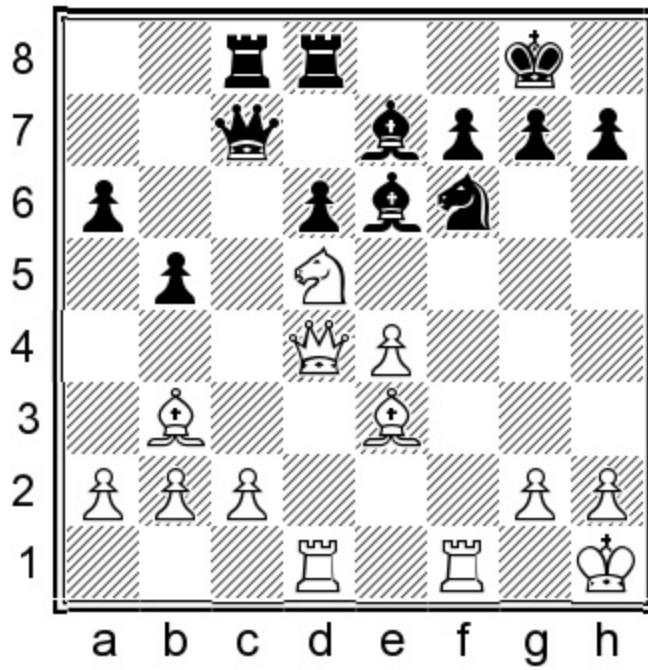
380. Smyslov – Bisguier, Moscow 1955



Show/Hide Solution

11. $\mathbb{Q}e5!$ On the next move, it would have been too late. 11. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ tries to exchange the passive bishop on d2, but in vain. 11... $\mathbb{Q}d6!$ White will not have any fruitful pressure along the c-file, for instance: 12. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ g6 13.b4 $\mathbb{W}e7$ 14. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}e4\#$ **11... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$** This is the only critical reply. 11... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 12.f4± gave White a pleasant edge in the game. **12.dxe5** $\mathbb{Q}d7$ **13.f4** White is ready to attack, but Black can create some counterplay. **13... $\mathbb{Q}c5$** **14. $\mathbb{Q}c2$** **d4!** **15. $\mathbb{Q}a4!$** **a5!** After 15... $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xd2$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ dxe3 18. $\mathbb{W}xe3+$ — White's pawn majority and rooks are crushing. **16. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$** **axb4** **17. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$** **bxc5±** Material will be equal, with slightly weak black pawns. You don't need to have seen this far to have decided on 11. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ – it was the only move not to leave White in a passive position.

381. Khasin – Tal, Leningrad 1956



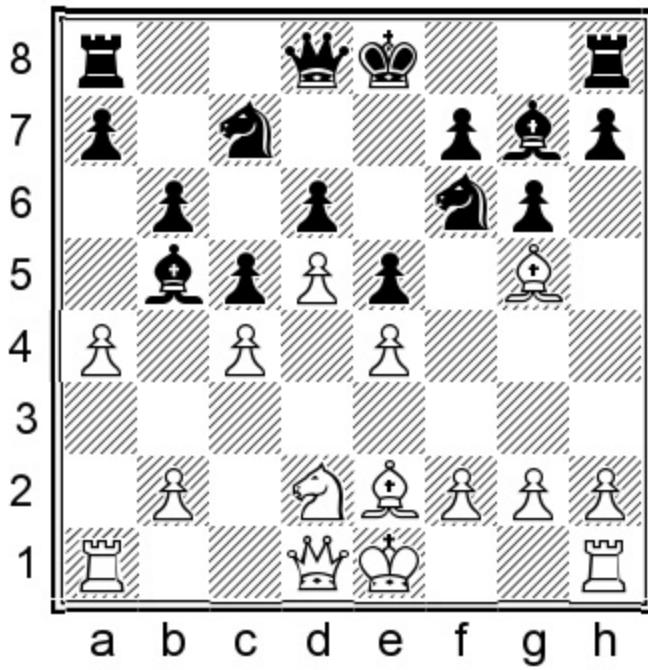
Show/Hide Solution

16...♝xd5! 16...♝xd5 17.exd5 ♜d7 18.♝f4± White is ready to meet ...♝f6 with ♜d4. **17.exd5** 17.♝xd5! offers the c2-pawn to avoid being left with a bad light-squared bishop. 17...♝xd5 (17...♝xc2 18.♝b3∞) 18.♝xd5 ♜c4= Both sides have weaknesses and the chances are balanced. **17...♝d7†** A standard dark-square strategy.

Mikhail Tal

"I'd like to always be romantic in chess. Sadly, it doesn't always work like that."

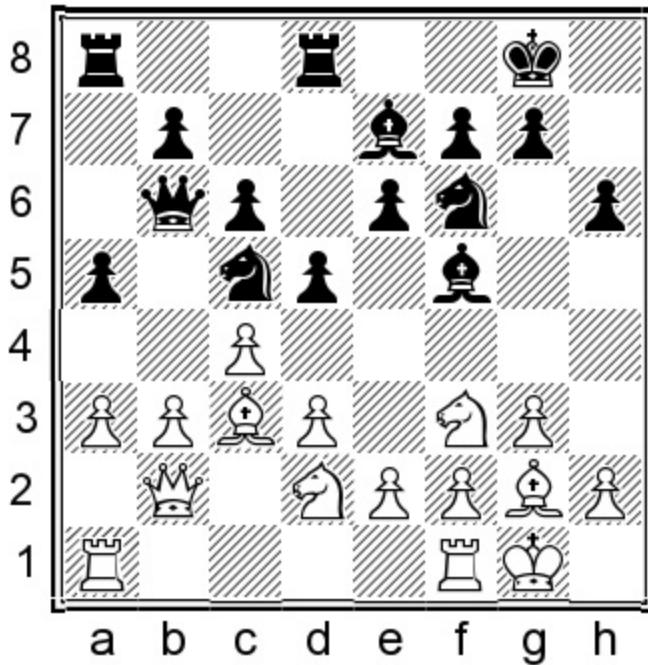
382. Petrosian – Pilnik, Amsterdam 1956



Show/Hide Solution

12.cxb5! Getting the c4-square for the knight. **12...0-0 13.b4!?**± Taking the pawn would give the rook immediate access to c6; otherwise White continues to put pressure on the queenside with bxc5 and/or a4-a5.

383. Smyslov – Djurasevic, Belgrade 1956

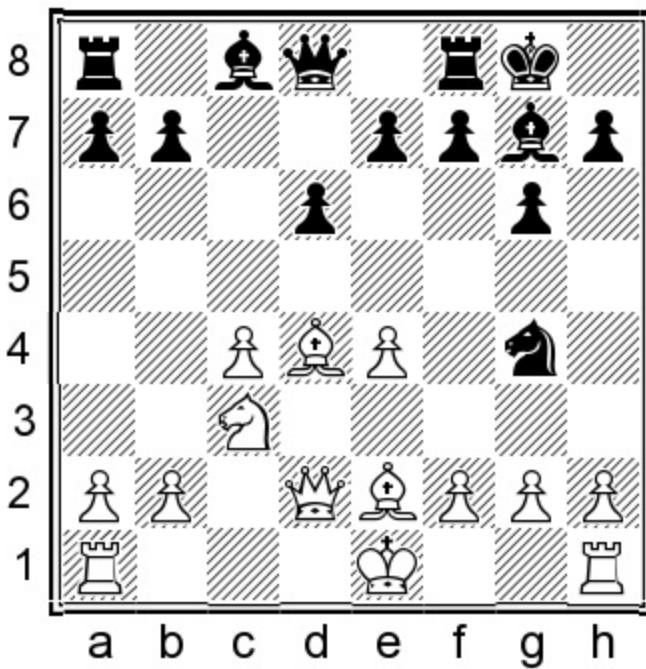


Show/Hide Solution

14.Qd4! Threatening b3-b4, forcing Black to retreat. **14...dxc4** A concession; White's first move has thus achieved something. **14...Wc7 15.b4 Qcd7?± 15.dxc4!?**± Also possible is: 15.Qxc4!? Wxb3

16. $\mathbb{W}c1\pm$; 15. b4 cxd3! ∞ is not so clear though.

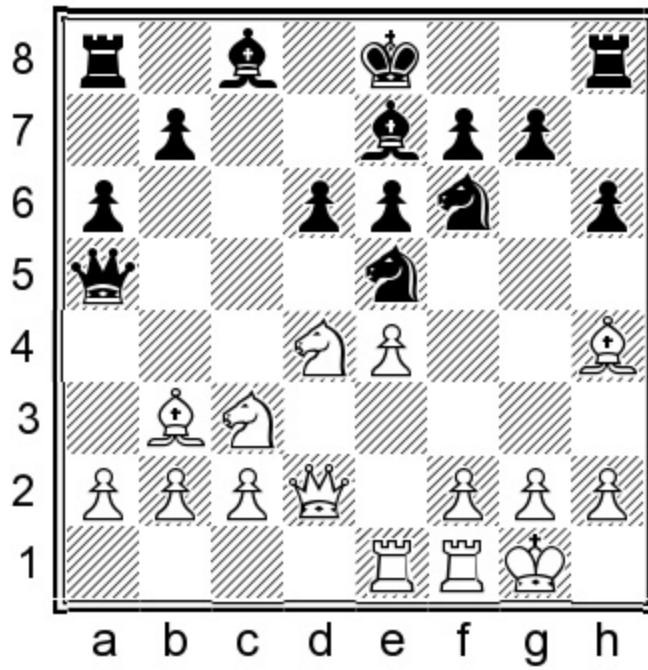
384. Tal – Gurgenidze, Tbilisi 1959



Show/Hide Solution

11... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ Playing actively to avoid White's normal plus (which is bearable for those choosing to play the Maroczy with Black). You don't need to have calculated any of the lines that follow. 11...e5² forces the elimination of White's dark-squared bishop, but the d5-square and backward d6-pawn are more important factors. **12. $\mathbb{Wd1}$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$** Threatening ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$, trapping the bishop. 12...e5? 13. $\mathbb{Q}xa7!\pm$ **13. $\mathbb{Q}d5$** 13.f3 is met by 13... $\mathbb{Q}e6$, and if 14.b3? $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ Black wins material. **13... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e3!$** 14. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ was the game, when 14... $\mathbb{W}h4!$ would have made it impossible for White to defend the e-pawn in a good way. **14... $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $\mathbb{W}a5\ddagger$** White has to make a concession. With the queens exchanged, Black can defend the d6-pawn with the king. Still, White's position is slightly easier to play.

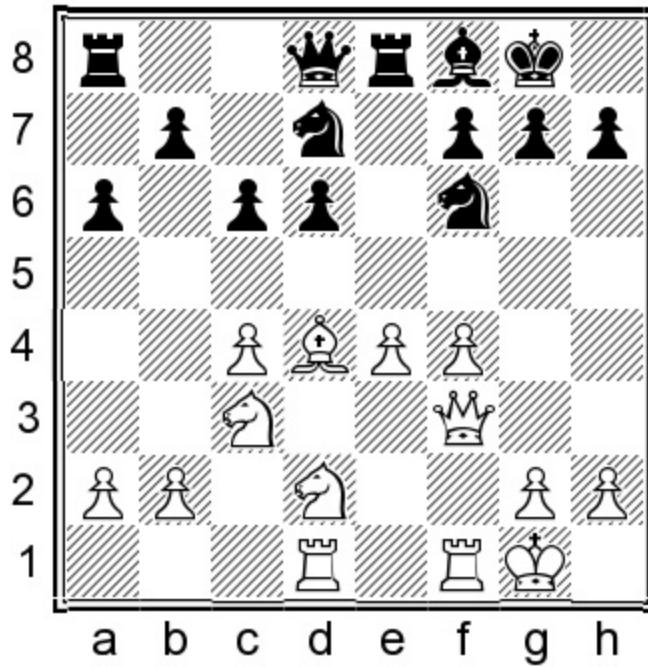
385. Nikitin – Tal, Tbilisi 1959



Show/Hide Solution

12...g5! 12... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 14.f4± **13. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}h5!$ †** Black will remove the bishop when appropriate. Tal's 13... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ allowed the bishop to escape.

386. Petrosian – Larsen, Copenhagen 1960



Show/Hide Solution

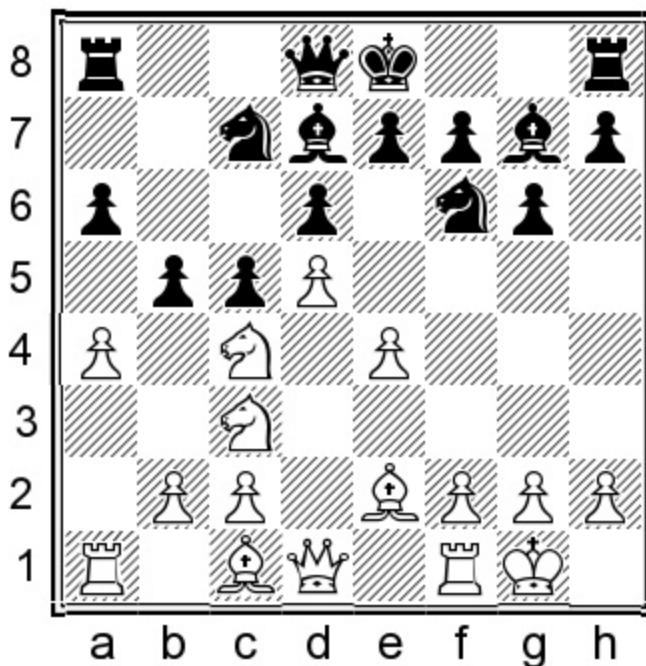
15.g4 With the black bishop being passively placed on f8, White is not worried about weakening the king. 15.c5 sacrifices a pawn to achieve e4-e5, with decent but not overwhelming compensation. 15... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ dxc5 17.e5 $\mathbb{Q}d5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}de4$ $\mathbb{W}b6\infty$ **15... $\mathbb{Q}c5?!$** 15...g6 was a better defence. White

would like to open the f-file with 16.e5? dxe5 17.fxe5, but 17...c5! 18.♗e3 ♗xe5 19.♘xf6 ♘xf6 20.♗xf6 ♗xg4 saves Black. For that reason 16.♔h1!? gives the bishop an escape square on g1. A possible line: 16...b5?! 17.e5! c5 18.♗g1 dxe5 19.fxe5 ♗xe5 20.♗de4+– **16.♗xc5 dxc5 17.e5+–** The pawn majority is running over Black.

Tigran Petrosian

“Chess is a game by its form, an art by its content and a science by the difficulty of gaining mastery in it. Chess can convey as much happiness as a good book or work of music can.”

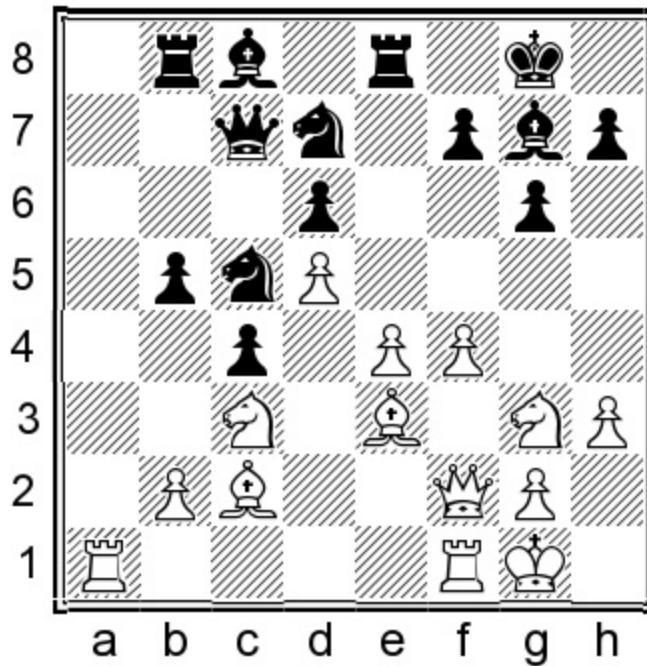
387. Botvinnik – Schmid, Leipzig (Ol) 1960



Show/Hide Solution

11.e5! Making use of the knight before it has to move. 11.axb5? axb5 12.♗xa8 ♘xa8 13.e5 is not as strong due to 13...bxc4 14.exf6 ♘xf6 15.♗xc4± when Black benefits from the removal of the a-pawns. If 11.♗b6?! ♘b8 (11...b4!? is also an option) 12.♗xd7 ♘xd7 Black's initiative on the queenside more than compensates for the bishop pair. **11...dxe5** 11...bxc4 12.exf6 ♘xf6 13.♗xc4± With the a-pawns on the board, the black knight is a passive piece. **12.axb5!** But not 12.♗xe5? b4 and Black wins a pawn. **12...axb5 13.♗xa8 ♘xa8 14.♗xe5 b4 14...♗fxd5 15.♗xd7 ♘xc3! 16.♗xc5±** White stands better due to the bishop pair. **15.d6!±** A nice detail, but not a move you need to see before deciding on 11.e5.

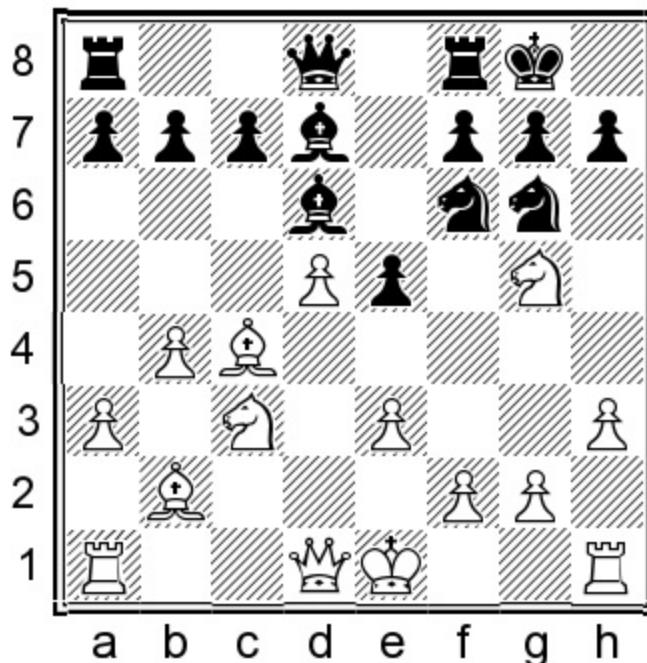
388. Penrose – Tal, Leipzig (Ol) 1960



Show/Hide Solution

19.e5! dx_e5 20.f5 The pawn sacrifice has deprived Black of the e5-square (compared to f4-f5 immediately), while giving White the e4-square. **20...Qb7 20...Rf8** defends f7, but 21.f6 wins a piece since the knight on d7 is overloaded. (White is also winning after a normal move like 21.Qge4.)
21.Rad1 White has a decisive positional advantage. There was an immediate win: 21.fxg6 fxg6 22.Qxg6! hxg6 23.Wf7† Qh7 24.Qh5! gxh5 (24...Rg8 25.Qf6†+-) 25.Rf5+-

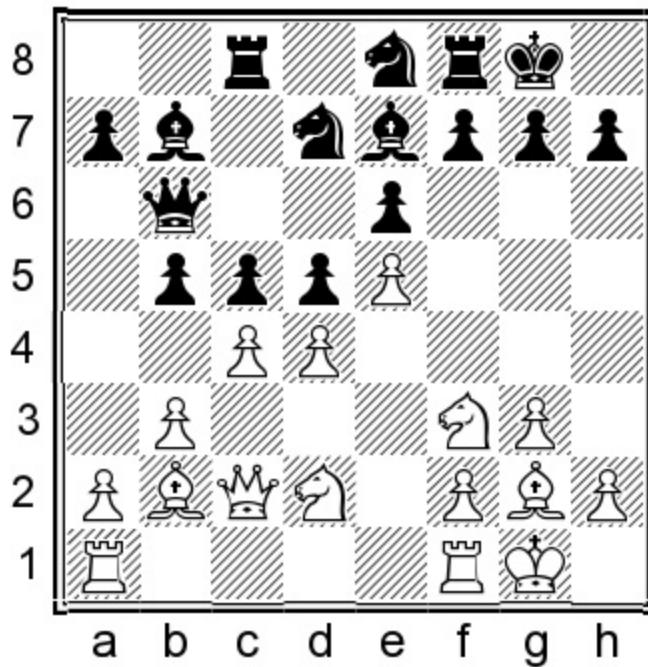
389. Botvinnik – Tal, Moscow (3) 1961



Show/Hide Solution

14.♕e6! After 14.♗c2 ♜e7 it's too late to jump to e6. Black is okay with ...a7-a5 next. **14...fxe6** **15.dxe6 ♔h8** **16.exd7±** A standard sequence, eliminating the light-squared bishop for a knight, while also damaging Black's structure.

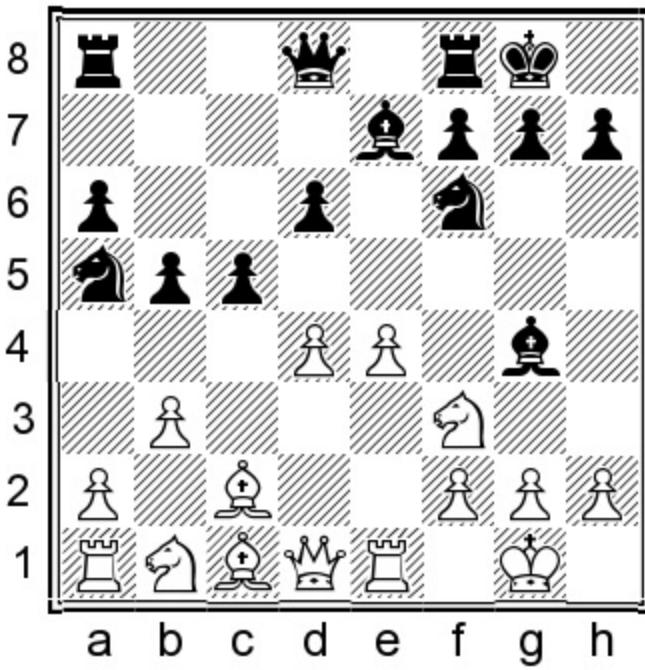
390. Botvinnik – Bisguier, Hastings 1962



Show/Hide Solution

14.b4! White gets a pawn to c5 regardless of Black's answer. The problem of the black rook pointing towards the white queen is thus solved. **14...cxb4** **14...bxc4** **15.bxc5±** **15.c5 ♜c7** **16.♗d3** Avoiding ...♗b6-c4. White can't win back the pawn on the queenside, and instead focuses on the kingside with ♘fe1, ♘f1-e3, h2-h4 and further knight jumps. **16...a5** **16...f6?!** is met by **17.exf6 ♘xf6** **18.♗h3 ♜c6** **19.♗b3** with the nasty threat of ♘a5. **17.♗f1!** Preventing ...f7-f6 and intending to build up on the kingside.

391. Fischer – Korchnoi, Stockholm 1962



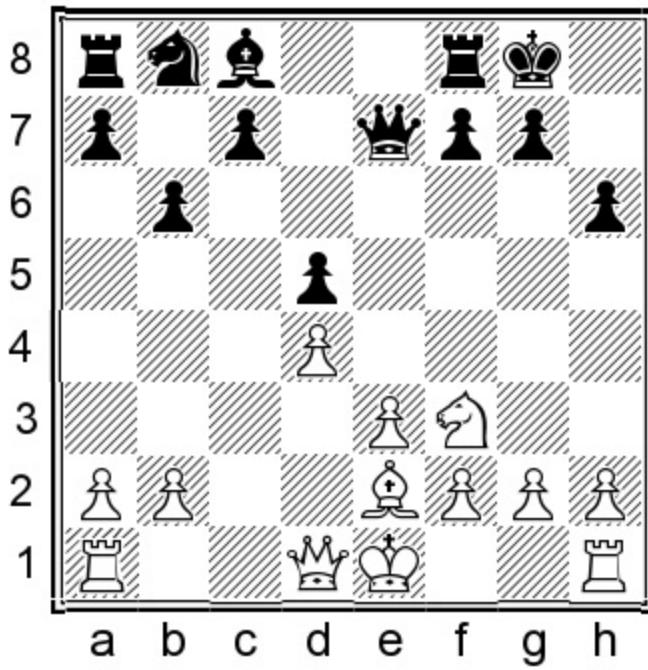
Show/Hide Solution

A reason why White can exert pressure in the Ruy Lopez is that Black's knight on c6 blocks the pawn on c7. To release the tension against the knight, Black often chases the bishop on b5 with ...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5 (before White is ready to take on c6). If Black can follow up with ...c7-c5, the queenside expansion can be a strength; otherwise it may be a weakness which White can exploit by a2-a4. Thus, after ...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5, the knight on c6 must move. Redeveloping with ... $\mathbb{Q}b8-d7$ is one way, but to avoid losing time Black usually chooses ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$, hitting the bishop on b3. That is what we have here – but this is an unusual version with Black's bishop on g4. (Normally White prevents it with h2-h3.)

15.d5! The knight is out of play on a5 and White has scored tremendously at the top level. Black's best hope is to achieve ...c5-c4, but what then? ...c4-c3 followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}b7-c5$ takes too many moves, giving White time to occupy the weak d4-square with a knight. (White can afford h2-h3 and g2-g4 to break the pin.) A few more moves of the game will clarify. 15. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ is the dream for Black's knight, putting pressure on d4 and threatening ... $\mathbb{Q}b4xc2$, as played in Capablanca – Bogoljubow, London 1922. 15. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ is met in the same way. 15.e5 achieves nothing after the tactical trick:

15...dxe5 16.dxe5 $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6!=$ **15... $\mathbb{Q}d7$** The temporary piece sacrifice 15... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ b4 19. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ bxc3 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xc3\pm$ only reinforces Black's problem with the knight on the rim. 15... $\mathbb{Q}xd5?$ does not work: 16. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 17.e5+– **16. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ c4** 17... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ was played in Tal – Gligoric, Belgrade (7) 1968. **18.h3** There is no need to play 18.b4 because ...cxb3 isn't a threat. **18... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$** 18... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ is met by 19.g4 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}f1\pm$ with $\mathbb{Q}g3$ and $\mathbb{Q}g2$ coming. **19. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ cxb3 20.axb3 $\mathbb{W}c7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e3\pm$** Black's temporary initiative is fading, and White is soon ready to (slowly) go for the king, still with the knight on a5 far away.

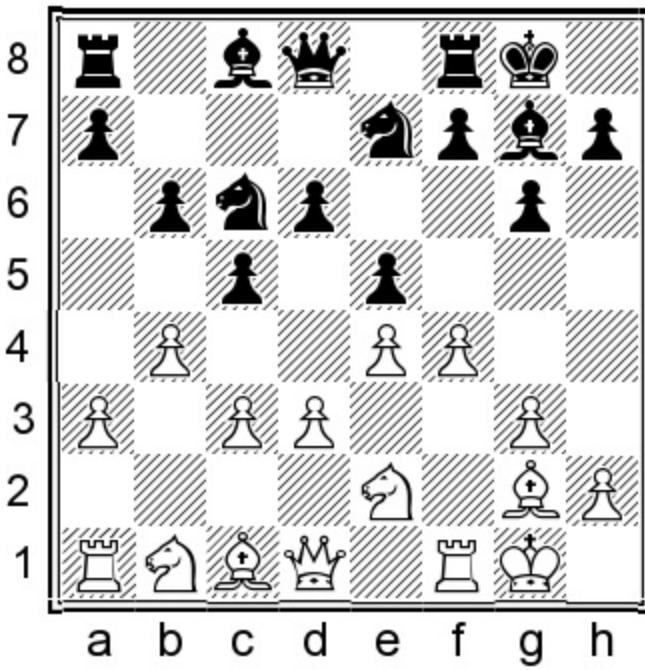
392. Bertok – Fischer, Stockholm 1962



Show/Hide Solution

11...♝e6! When White has exchanged on d5, the bishop belongs on e6. Black normally continues with ...c7-c5, ...♝d7 and ...♝fc8. The bishop may later continue to g4 or f5, where it controls the centre (e4) and the b-file (b1). The engines consider 11...♝b7 to be of equal strength, but the verdict of decades of grandmaster practice is unquestionable. Black's main plan is to play for hanging pawns with ...c7-c5, dxc5 and ...bxc5, which opens the b-file. On b7, the bishop would stop ...♝b7 and make ...♝ab8 less effective. To hide the bishop on a8 is not ideal either. It costs time but it also deprives Black's rook of the a8-square in case White plays b2-b3 and after ...a5-a4 continues with bxa4. 11...c5?! 12.dxc5± and Black can't take with the pawn. 11...♝b4†?! 12.♝d2 An exchange on d2 helps White to develop and get the rooks to the c- and d-files. **12.0-0 c5 13.dxc5 bxc5** ↳ By the way, if White didn't exchange on d5, Black would have placed the bishop on b7. In that case, in the event of a subsequent cxd5, Black almost always recaptures with a piece rather than the e6-pawn, to avoid restricting the bishop.

393. Keres – Fischer, Curacao 1962



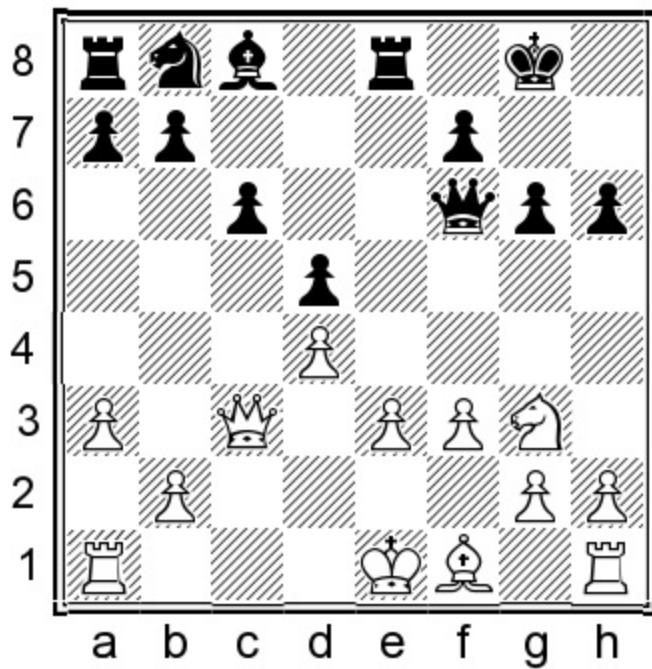
Show/Hide Solution

10...exf4! White threatened 11.f5±, smothering Black's kingside and being ready to continue with the g-pawn. The tactical point is that 11...gxf5? 12.exf5 ♜xf5 13.♖xc6 costs Black a piece. There are other ways to stop White's threat. 10...d5?! is a thematic move for these positions. It shields the c6-knight and thus stops White from pushing the f-pawn. The drawback is that 11.b5! forces the knight to an unfavourable square. 11...♝a5 White takes on d5 or e5 and the game goes on, but Black can do better than this. 10...f5 is another option, when 11.fxe5!? exchanges the same pawns as in the game, but under slightly different conditions. Normally it's better to allow the opponent to release the tension by exchanging, since it helps your development, but the problem for Black here is that every recapture has a disadvantage. (11.exf5? ♜xf5 12.b5 wins material but after 12...♝a5 13.♜xa8 ♕xa8 Black is positionally winning! After weakening the kingside with g2-g3, f2-f4 and e4xf5, White's light-squared bishop should not be 'sacrificed' for a mere rook.) 11...dxe5 The g7-bishop is restricted. Black still has a good position, but the game continuation is more logical. (11...♝xe5 allows 12.d4; 11...♝xe5 allows 12.♝h6.) **11.gxf4** 11.♝xf4 offers to sacrifice a pawn on the queenside, but I would decline it in favour of 11...♝e5!± with ideas of ...♝g4 and possibly the unusual ...♝c8-a6 manoeuvre. Black's pieces are more active. 11.♝xf4 d5 is also pleasant for Black, whose pawn on c5 is controlling more important squares than the pawn on c3. (Well, they are controlling exactly the same squares! But as they are on White's side of the board, Black controls more space.) **11...d5!±** 11...cx b4? is well met by: 12.f5↑; 11...f5?!∞ is playable but less accurate than the main line. After the text move, play could continue: **12.e5 ♜f5 13.d4 ♜h4** Threatening to take on g2.

Bobby Fischer

"I don't recommend trying to cram a lot of long opening-move variations into your head. The main idea behind any opening is to get a strong pawn centre and give your pieces a lot of scope so that you cramp your opponent's position and can attack weaknesses in his game."

394. Petrosian – Botvinnik, Moscow (1) 1963



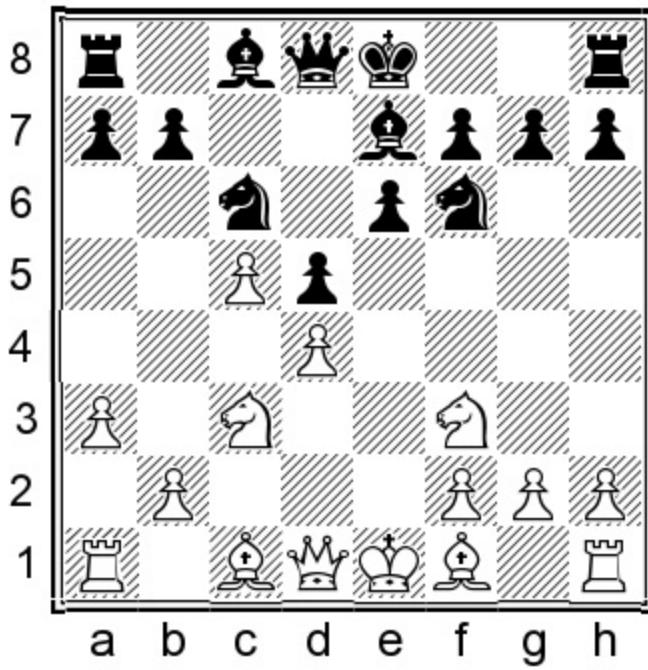
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13...h5! Harassing the knight. It's possible to delay the move, but doing so would unnecessarily give White more options, like ♔h1-f2. 13...c5 does not yield an initiative after: 14.♔f2! Not a bad square for the king. 14...cx d4 (14...c4 15.b3± Black has to capture.) 15.♕xd4= **14.♗e2** 14.h4± is not a fun move to play, as the rook needs to stay on h1 to keep the pawn protected. **14...h4±** Black continues to develop.

Mikhail Botvinnik

"If Tal sacrifices a piece, take it. If Petrosian sacrifices a piece, don't take it."

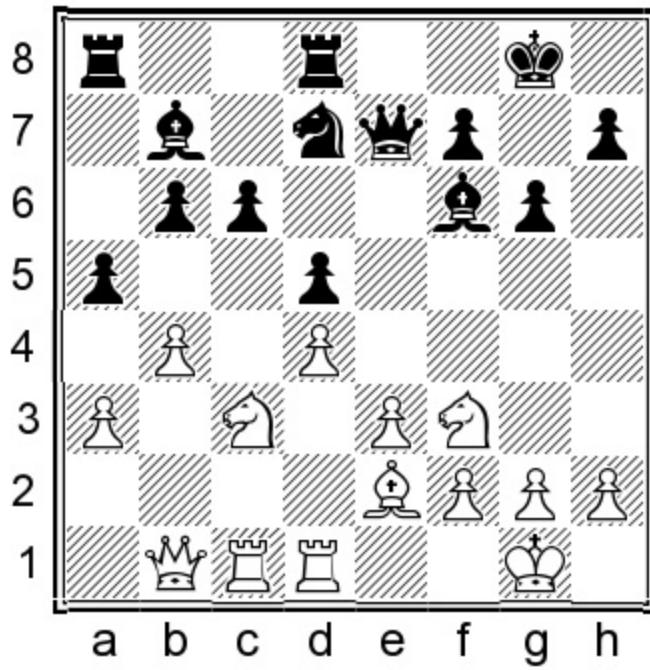
395. Petrosian – Olafsson, Los Angeles 1963



Show/Hide Solution

In Exercise 73 we saw that 8.c5! was a good option for White. Now your task is to determine the best reply for Black 8...Qe4. Black has less space and is happy to exchange a piece, while leaving the f6-square empty. That's good since: a) in case of ...e6-e5, White doesn't capture with a threat; b) ...Qf6 is possible; c) ...f7-f6 can prepare ...e6-e5 (though this is not common) 9.Qc2 White doesn't want to recapture with b2xc3; the b-pawn should reach b5! (Kasparov didn't agree in a similar position though.) 9...Qxc3 9...e5? loses a pawn. 10.Qxc3 0-0 Black should be able to find sufficient counterplay. For example: 11.b4 11.Qb5 e5!? 12.Qxc6 exd4 13.Qxd4 bxc6 14.Qxc6 d4! 15.Qxd4 Qd5∞ also gives Black nice activity. 11...e5! 11...a6 was a bit too passive in the game, although Olafsson went on to draw. 12.Qxe5 Qxe5 13.dxe5 d4 Black has enough activity, with ...a7-a5 the likely follow-up.

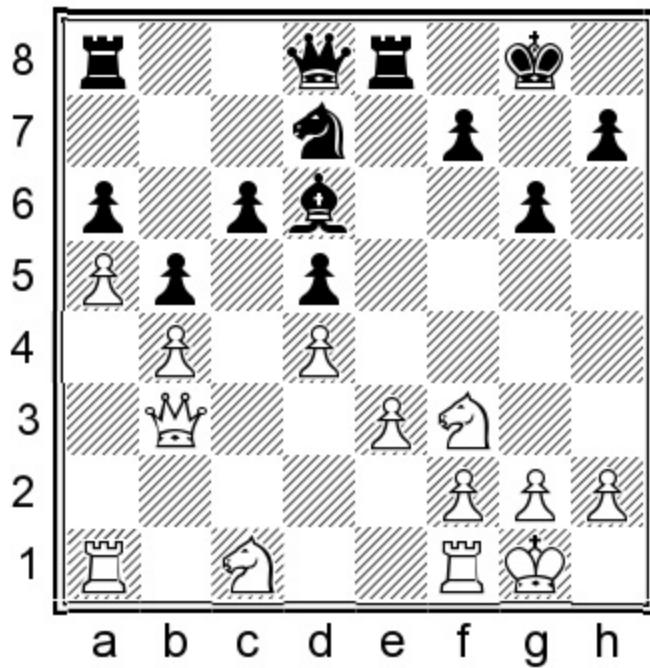
396. Benko – Petrosian, Los Angeles 1963



Show/Hide Solution

16...b5! Preventing b4-b5, as well as White's other thematic idea of bxa5 followed by a2-a4. Now Black intends ... \mathbb{N} b6, aiming at the c4-outpost. Later ... \mathbb{Q} g7-f8 might attack the b4-pawn. Black has the more comfortable game, although White might be able to hold the balance by preparing e3-e4. 16...axb4 17.axb4 b5 is playable but slightly less flexible.

397. Polugaevsky – Spassky, Leningrad 1963



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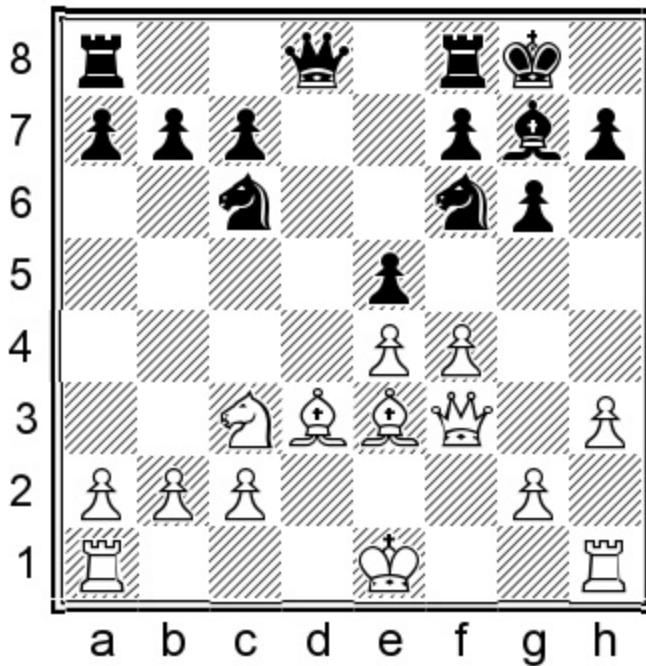
18...g5! Black has a weak pawn on c6, but it's hard for White to pick it up. In the meantime Black

plays for an attack, with ...g5-g4 and ... $\mathbb{E}e6$ likely to be the next moves. White might be objectively slightly better in a double-edged position.

Boris Spassky

"I try to help develop junior chess. When I lived in the USSR, I got a lot of free help from very good coaches – now I am trying to repay that debt."

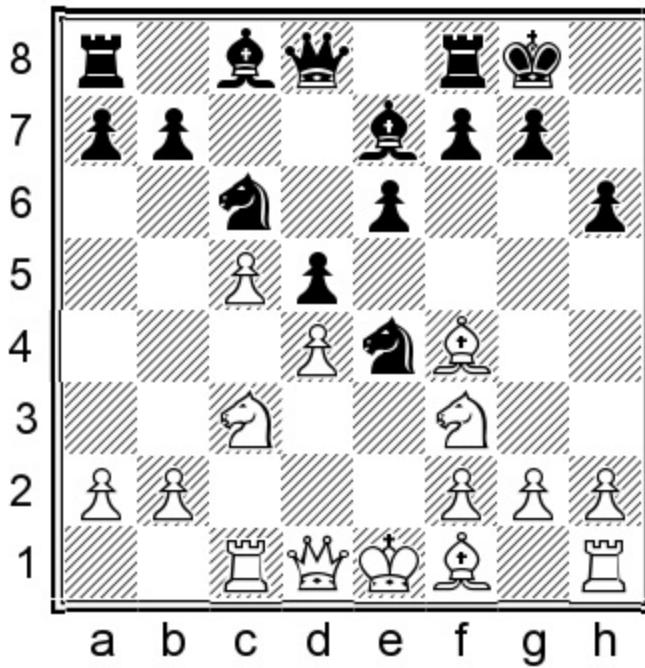
398. Fischer – Benko, New York 1963



Show/Hide Solution

There is trade-off in this position. White has the bishop pair and space on the kingside, while Black has a strong square on d4 for his knight. **11.f5!** Planning g2-g4-g5. Allowing Black to activate his fianchettoed bishop with ...exf4 would be a mistake. 11.g3± is a reasonable move, but not the best. **11...gxf5** 11... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 12. $\mathbb{W}f2$ gxf5 13.exf5 and White continues with 0-0-0 and g2-g4, as seen in Bednarski – Kaidman, Tel Aviv (ol) 1964. **12. $\mathbb{W}xf5$** 12.exf5 is what White wants to play, but it allows Black to sacrifice a pawn with 12...e4!, leading to compensation consisting of counterplay along the e-file and the long diagonal. **12... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 13. $\mathbb{W}f2$** White is better due to the semi-open f-file and plans to kick away the knight from d4 quite soon. Fischer castled short, but hiding the king on the other wing is also possible. In *My 60 Memorable Games*, Fischer mentioned that 13. $\mathbb{W}xe5!$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 14. $\mathbb{W}xg7\#$ $\mathbb{K}xg7$ 15.hxg4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ is tempting but that Black's defence is "hard to crack."

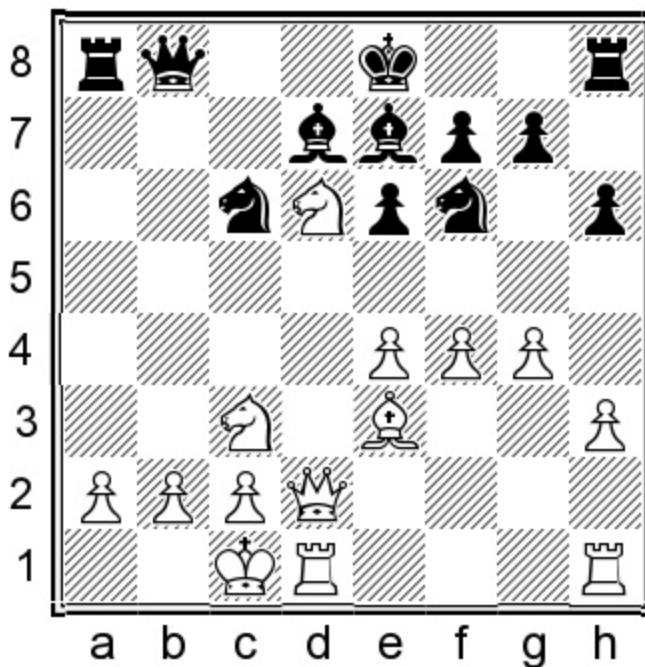
399. Petrosian – Bronstein, USSR 1967



Show/Hide Solution

11.♗b5! Making it harder for Black to achieve ...e6-e5. **11...♝d7** Without the bishop on b5, Black could have played 11...g5 12.♗e3 f5, but not when White has: 13.♗xc6! bxc6 14.h4 f4 15.♗d2 g4? 16.♗e5+–; Black needs to have the option of ...♝xe5 to make this type of continuation possible. 11...♝a5? goes for the a2-pawn – unsurprisingly not a good decision. 12.♗xc6 bxc6 13.0-0 ♜xc3? 14.♜xc3 ♜xa2 15.♗e5+– The rook joins the attack. **12.0-0±** White will soon capture on c6. A sample line: **12...b6 13.♗xc6 ♜xc6 14.♗e5 ♜e8!±** After 14...♝xc3? 15.♜xc3 ♜b5 16.♜e1 bxc5 17.♜xh6! the attack is decisive, but this is not really a part of the exercise.

400. Suetin – Tal, Budva 1967



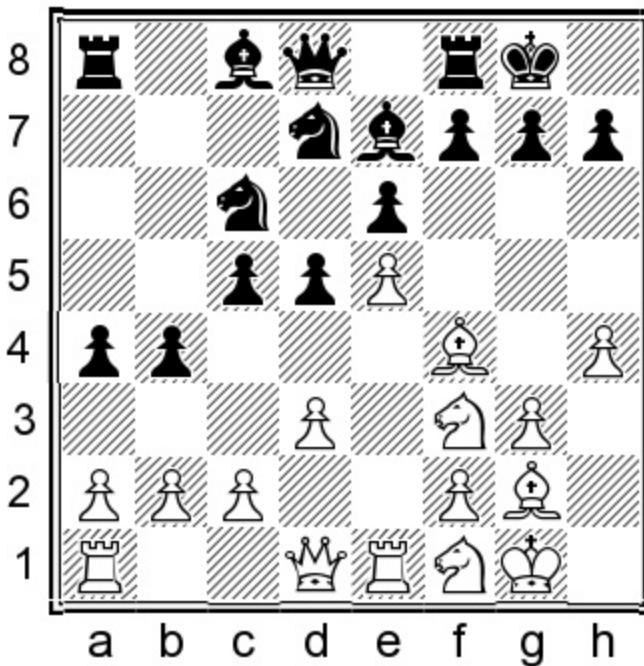
Show/Hide Solution

White has executed a standard sacrifice in the Sicilian with ♜xb5, getting three pawns for a piece. **15...♝f8!** With an extra piece, Black wants to play for an attack with the queens on the board. The rook on h8 gets stuck for the moment, and before moving the queen Black needs to make sure that White doesn't have anything concrete. Tal got a reasonable position after 15...♜xd6 16.♝xd6 ♛xd6 17.♝xd6 ♜a5!± but, since the pawns are best in the endgame, it's logical for Black to keep the queens. **16.g5** This is the critical continuation. 16.e5?! must also be checked, but 16...♝d5! 17.♝xd5 ♜xa2!+ does the trick **16...hxg5 17.fxg5 ♜h5 17...♝b4!?** 18.gxf6 ♜xf6 is the solution proposed by Swedish youngsters who tried to play in the style of Tal. They did it even better than the wizard himself. **19.♝b1 ♜xa2 20.♝d4 ♛xd6= 18.♝xf7 ♜xf7 19.♛xd7 ♛c8∞** The queen exchange is more palatable now that Black's king is exposed and White kingside pawn structure has been compromised.

3. Academic Level Exercises 401-450

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401. Fischer – Myagmarsuren, Sousse 1967



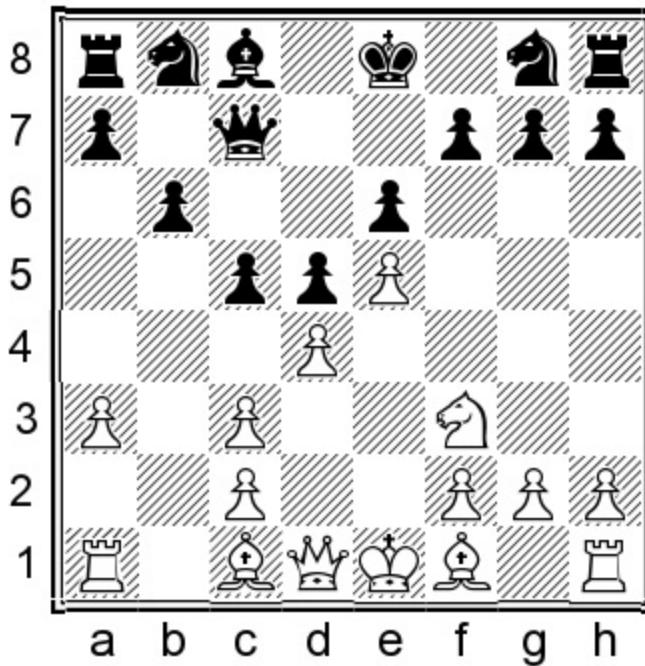
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13.a3!∞ A move that soon became standard for these positions. Fischer breaks the principle of avoiding moving pawns on the wing where you are weaker, because in this particular case a2-a3 actually makes it harder for Black to make progress. After 13.♘h2 a3 14.b3 Black can proceed with 14...♞a7 intending to send the knight towards c3, possibly followed by a timely ...c5-c4. 13.c4!? stops Black from gaining as much space, but allows the queenside to be opened.

Bobby Fischer

“Chess is a matter of delicate judgement, knowing when to punch and how to duck.”

402. Tal – Donner, Wijk aan Zee 1968



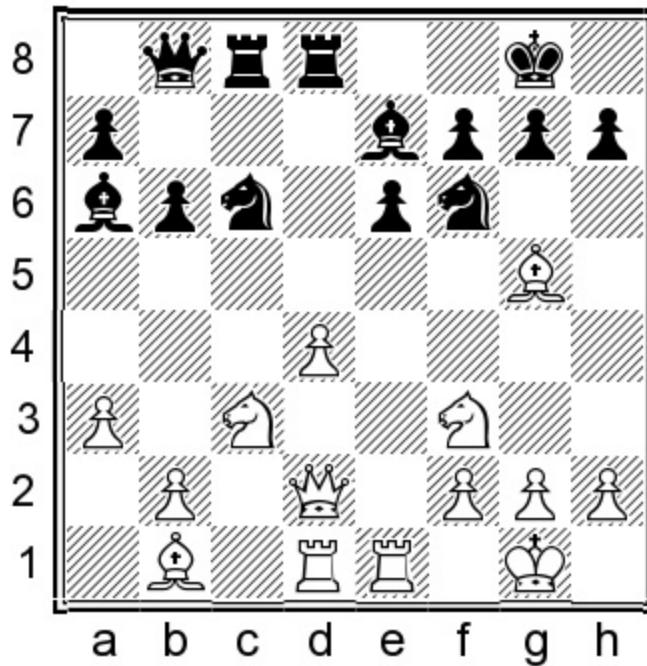
Show/Hide Solution

8.a4 Simply preparing to make use of the a-file. At the same time, it's good to make a useful move while waiting for ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$. **8. $\mathbb{Q}b5\uparrow$** $\mathbb{Q}d7$ **9.a4** is another standard way of playing. **9... $\mathbb{Q}xb5$** **10.axb5±** White plays against a backward a-pawn or a b-pawn (in case of ...a7-a6). But it's a long way from getting anything concrete; and given that Black can aim for counterplay along the c-file at some point, I think White can do better than the axb5 structure. **8... $\mathbb{Q}a6$** **8... $\mathbb{Q}e7$** **9.a5±** **9. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$** **9. $\mathbb{Q}b5\uparrow$** $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ **10.axb5** transposes to the note to White's previous move. **9... $\mathbb{Q}xa6$** **10. $\mathbb{W}e2$** Stopping ...b6-b5 before pushing the a-pawn. **10. $\mathbb{W}d3$** would have been a more active square, and a better move since Black doesn't want to close the queenside with ...c5-c4 with the bishop poised to go to a3. **10... $\mathbb{Q}b8$** **11.a5±** Despite the minor inaccuracy on the previous move, Tal kept a slight plus. Notice that **11... $\mathbb{Q}xd4?$** would be ill-advised, since **12.0-0** gives White a great initiative.

Mikhail Tal

“As long as my opponent has not yet castled, on each move I seek a pretext for an offensive. Even when I realize that the king is not in danger.”

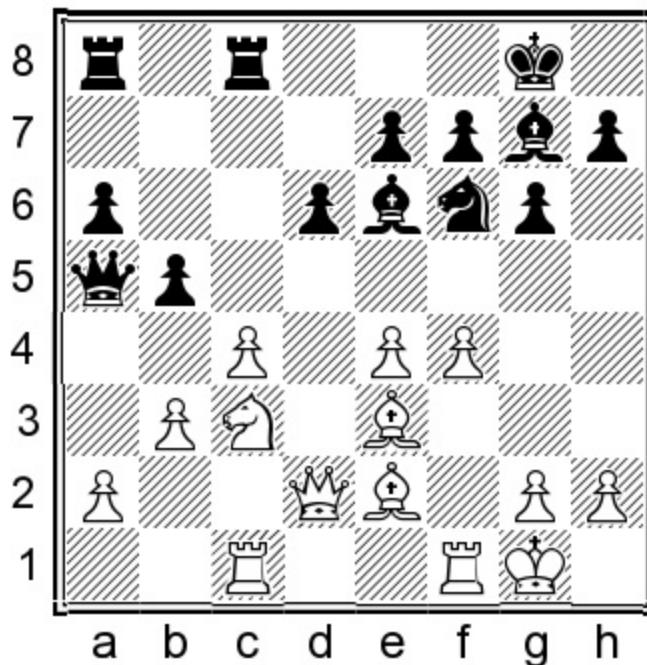
403. Tal – Chikovani, Gori 1968



Show/Hide Solution

17. $\mathbb{W}c2!$ Forcing a weakness. **17...g6 18. $\mathbb{Q}a2!$** There was no more to gain on the b1-h7 diagonal. Black has no defence against d4-d5. The game ended in just five more moves: **18...h6 18... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$** is a tactical try that doesn't quite work: **19. $\mathbb{Q}xd4 \mathbb{Q}xd4 20. \mathbb{Q}xd4 \mathbb{Q}g4 21. \mathbb{Q}f3! \mathbb{Q}xg5 22. h3+– 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe6!$$** The most stylish, although **19. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$** also wins easily enough. **19...hxg5 20. $\mathbb{W}xg6\# \mathbb{Q}h8 21. \mathbb{W}h6\# \mathbb{Q}g8 22. $\mathbb{Q}xg5 \mathbb{E}f8 23. \mathbb{E}e4 1-0$$**

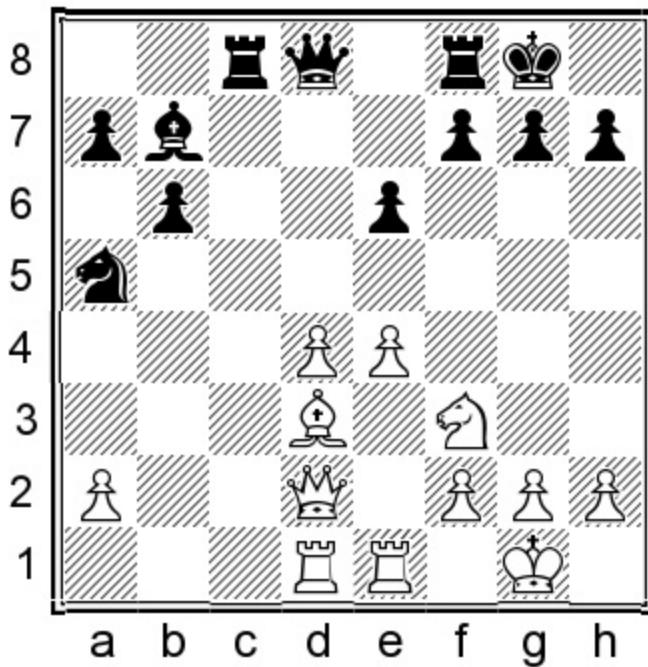
404. Spassky – Panno, Palma de Mallorca 1969



Show/Hide Solution

15.f5 Chasing back the bishop is the only convenient way to defend the c4-pawn. **15...♝d7** White should continue to play actively. Spassky chose: **16.fxg6 16.♝f3 ♜ab8 17.c5** is Stockfish's preference, with the following line: **17...b4 18.♝e2 gxf5 19.exf5 dxc5 20.♝f4 ♜b6 21.♝g3=** **16...hxg6 17.e5 b4=**

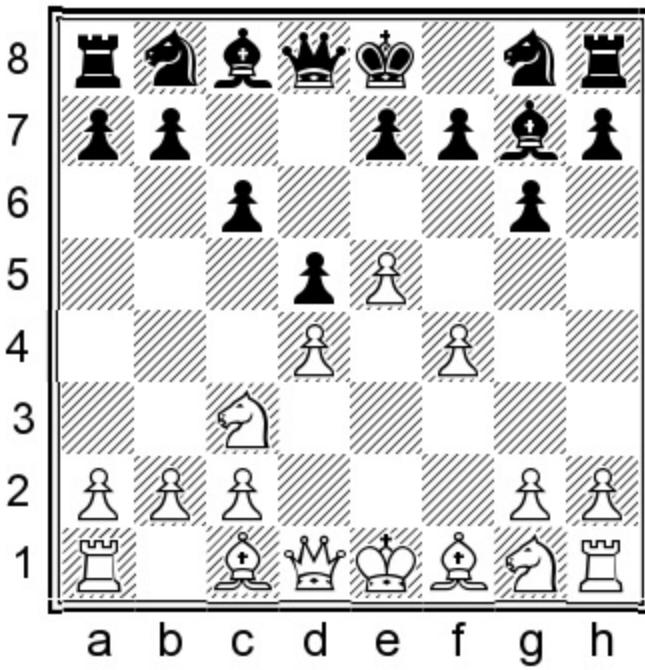
405. Polugaevsky – Tal, Moscow 1969



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16.d5! exd5 It doesn't really help Black to delay the capture. For example, after **16...♜c5** White can choose between exchanging on e6 or playing some other useful move. **17.e5!** At the cost of a pawn, White has blocked the b7-bishop and created an outpost on d4, which the knight might use as a springboard to get to f5. Moreover, the b1-h7 diagonal has been opened for the d3-bishop, and the black queen is unable to aid the defence from f6. Let's see how Polugaevsky brilliantly exploited these factors in the next phase of the game. **17...♝c4 18.♛f4 ♜b2 19.♝xh7†! ♛xh7 20.♝g5† ♛g6 21.h4!!** Threatening **22.h5† ♛xh5 23.g4†** followed by either winning the black queen or forcing checkmate. **21...♜c4 21...f5 22.♝d4!** renews the threat. **21...♝e7** prepares ...♝h6 without a decisive discovered knight check, but **22.♝b1 ♜c4 23.♝b3+–** decides. **22.♝g3!+–** Polugaevsky played **22.h5†** and eventually won an endgame, but not convincingly. **22.♝d4 ♜xd4 23.♝xd4 ♜c4 24.♝d3†** also wins.

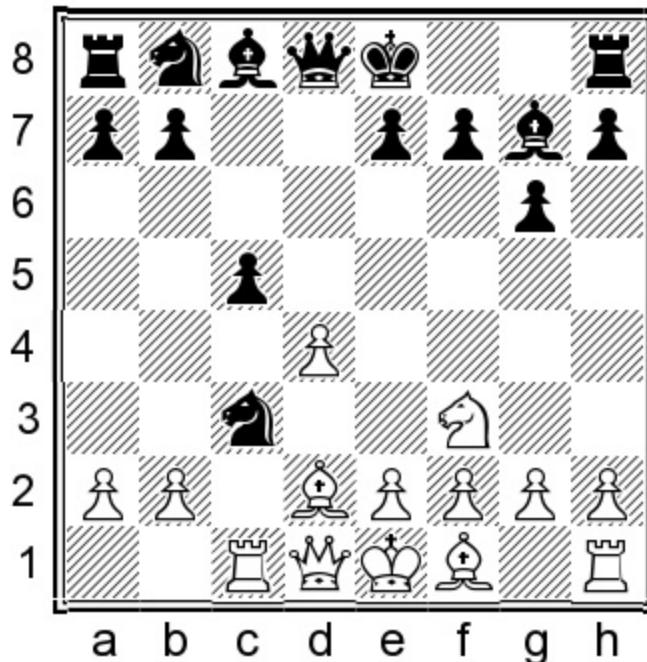
406. Fischer – Petrosian, Belgrade 1970



Show/Hide Solution

5...h5! Pushing the h-pawn is strategically the soundest way of handling the Gurgenidze structure. It fights for the f5-square by preparing ... $\mathbb{Q}g4(xf3)$ followed by ...e7-e6, while being ready to meet h2-h3 with ...h5-h4 before g2-g4 can be played. Black also prepares ... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ without blocking the h-pawn. Some test solvers questioned the validity of the exercise because the whole opening is known to be disadvantageous for Black. Indeed, I certainly would not recommend playing it. However, it should still be a part of one's general chess understanding to know how to handle such a structure from either side. 5... $\mathbb{Q}h6!?$ is an equally valid option although White still stands better. Nevertheless, from a positional/structural point of view, ...h7-h5 is the move I want to emphasize because it stabilizes Black's kingside for a long time to come. **6. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 7.h3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 8. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ e6 9. $\mathbb{Q}d3!$** Fischer played 9.g3 to avoid getting his kingside structure immobilized, but his slow approach gave Petrosian time to develop counterplay by placing his queen on b6, knights on d7 and e7, long castling and ...f7-f6. Later it became clear that White can simply develop normally without fearing ...h5-h4. Let's see a few more typical moves. **9...h4 10. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}f2\pm$** White's best plan is to castle short and follow up with b2-b3 and c2-c4. Black has a solid position but not many chances for counterplay. After completing development, White can further improve with the regrouping plan of $\mathbb{Q}h2$, $\mathbb{Q}g1$, $\mathbb{W}e2$ and $\mathbb{Q}f3$.

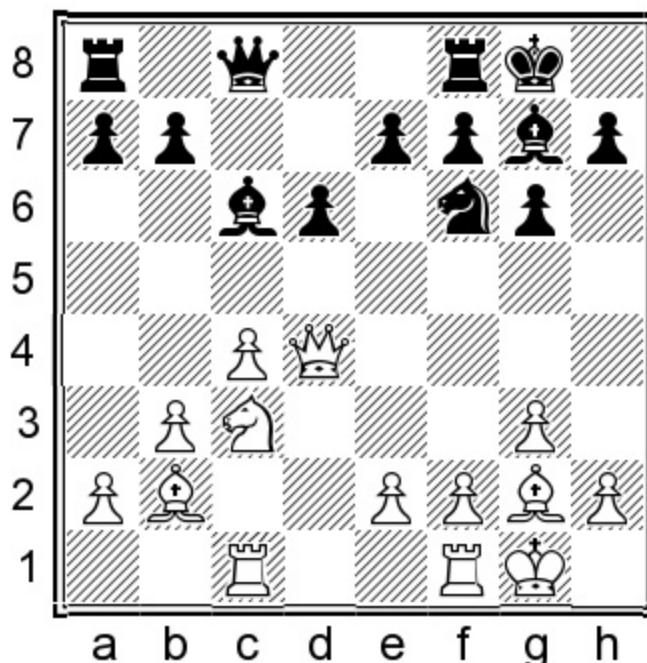
407. Petrosian – Fischer, Belgrade 1970



Show/Hide Solution

8.♗xc3! There are several reasons why White should recapture with the bishop. It's likely that the dark-squared bishops will be exchanged, which will leave Black with some holes on the kingside. On a related note, White will have the option of dxc5 without being left with a weak pawn on c3. Finally, White keeps the c-file open for the rook. By contrast, 8.bxc3? ♜c6 9.e3 e5± leaves the d2-bishop and c1-rook misplaced.

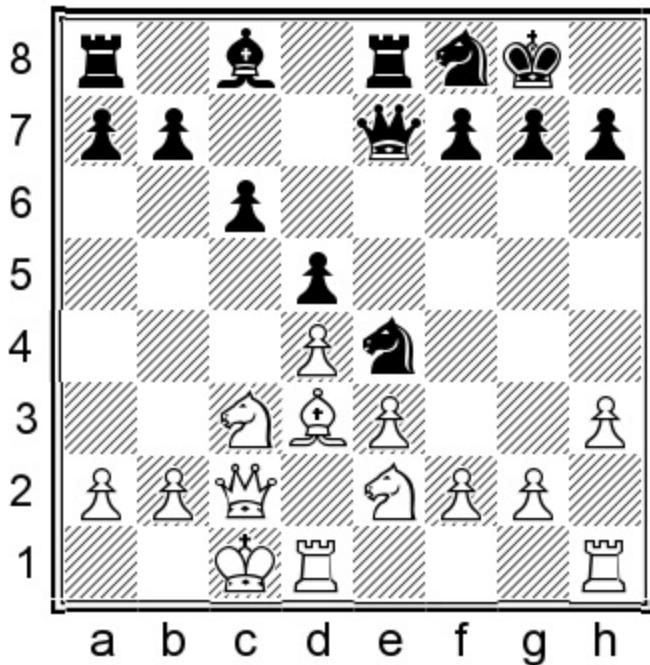
408. Smyslov – Browne, Zagreb 1970



Show/Hide Solution

13.e4! White is also slightly better after other moves; but with extra space, it's generally advisable to avoid unnecessary exchanges. 13.f3?! is slightly weakening and also leaves White unable to follow a future ♜d5 with e4xd5. **13...♝d7** There is a tactical sequence that makes 13.e4 possible: 13...♝xe4? 14.♝d5! ♖xd4 15.♝xe7† ♕g7 16.♝xd4† f6 17.♝xc8± **14.♝d5** 14.♝d2± **14...♝xd5** **15.exd5!±** White will double up on the e-file. This exchange of minor pieces was a different matter to the exchange referred to in the opening comments, as it changed the structure in a beneficial way.

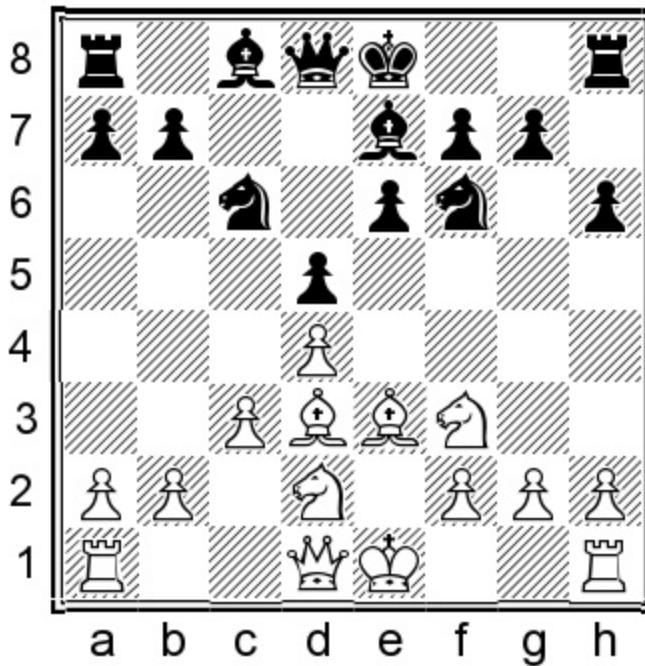
409. Petrosian – Tomic, Vinkovci 1970



Show/Hide Solution

13.♝xe4 dxe4 14.g4! Isolating the e4-pawn and threatening ♜g3. 14.d5!? is a good alternative. Black should play 14...♝d7± with a slight disadvantage. 14.♝g3?! is the wrong idea, and after 14...f5 15.d5 ♜g6± Black starts to take over. **14...f5 15.♝dg1!±** Petrosian opted for 15.gxf5?!, which helped Black to develop. After the text move, play could continue: **15...♝g6 16.gxf5 ♖xf5 17.♝g3 ♜h4 18.♝xf5 ♜xf5 19.♝g4+–**

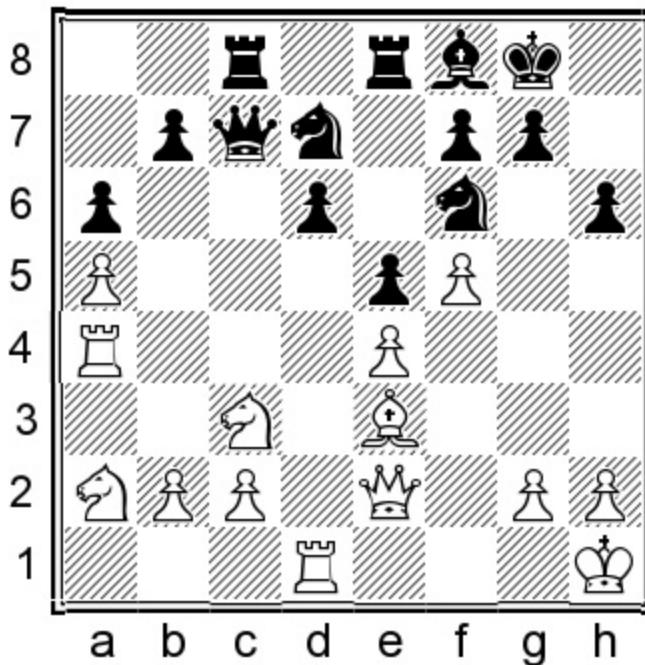
410. Petrosian – Mecking, Wijk aan Zee 1971



Show/Hide Solution

11.Qe5! 11.0-0 Qd6= and it's too late for Qe5. 11.Qf4 doesn't control e5 for long: 11...Qh5!
11...Qd7 11...Qd6 can be met by 12.f4. (12.Qdf3 and 12.Qf4 are also good.) 11...Qxe5?! 12.dxe5± was the game continuation. **12.Qdf3±**

411. Tukmakov – Tal, Moscow (Blitz) 1972

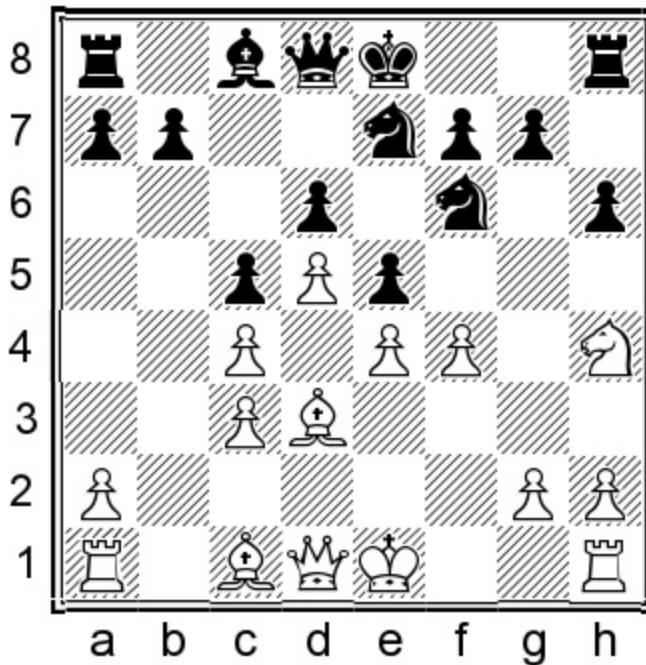


Show/Hide Solution

19...d5! It's essential to play this before White has time for Qb4, clamping down on d5. **20.exd5 e4≈** For the pawn Black has obtained nice squares on d6 and e5 (...We5/...Qd6 or ...Qd6/...Qe5 are

possible set-ups), while keeping the a2-knight passive for the moment.

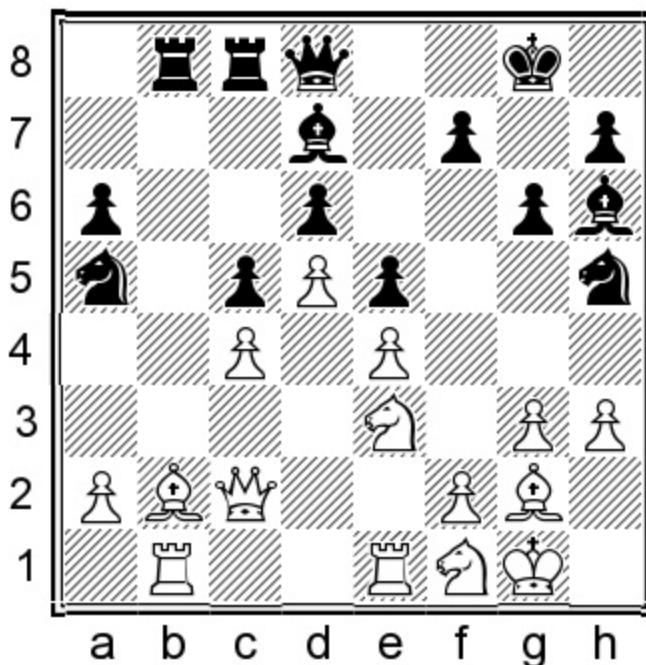
412. Spassky – Fischer, Reykjavik (5) 1972



Show/Hide Solution

11...Bg6! The ...fxg6 structure makes it easier for Black to defend the kingside. 11...exf4?! 12.Qxf4 g5 13.e5! turns out badly for Black. 11...Bg4² is the second-best option. **12.Bxg6 fxg6 13.fxe5 dxе5∞** The position is less than ideal for the bishop pair, and Fischer went on to score a famous victory.

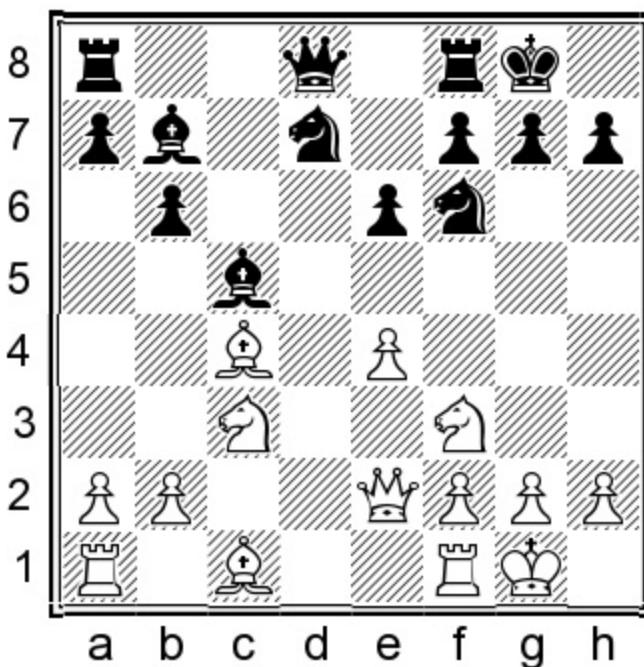
413. Saidy – Petrosian, Las Palmas 1973



Show/Hide Solution

22. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ The evaluation of the position depends on whether or not Black manages to find a meaningful purpose for the knight on a5. With the last move, White puts pressure on it before Black has time for ... $\mathbb{B}b4$. If White waits, Black has 22. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{B}b4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4!$? 24. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ $cxb4$ 26. $\mathbb{W}d2$ a5 with almost enough compensation. 22... $\mathbb{W}c7\pm$ The game soon ended in a draw, but White stands much better. A good plan is to slowly advance on the kingside with h3-h4 followed by $\mathbb{Q}f3-e2$, kicking the knight from h5 and overprotecting the c4-pawn. Later g3-g4-g5 can be considered.

414. Petrosian – Karpov, Moscow 1973



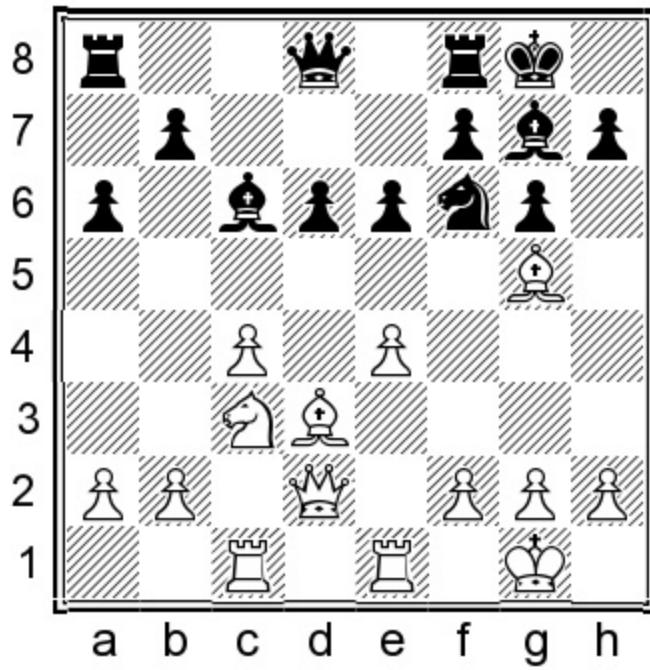
Show/Hide Solution

12. $e5!$ This is the move White wants to play, to kick away the f6-knight and gain access to the e4- and d6-squares. When thinking about this move there are two issues to consider: will the e5-pawn be lost, and is ... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ a problem? 12. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{B}b4=$ 12... $\mathbb{Q}xf3?$! 12... $\mathbb{Q}g4?$! 13. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}b8$ tries to pick up the pawn. White can simply defend, or refute the idea with 14. $\mathbb{Q}ad1!$ intending: 14... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 15. $gxf3$ $\mathbb{Q}ixe5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd7+$; 12... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ is the lesser evil but White maintains a nice plus after: 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (13. $\mathbb{Q}xd5?$ $exd5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ tries to win a pawn, but backfires: 14... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5\mp$) 13... $exd5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}d3\pm$ 13. $gxf3$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}d1!$ Preventing ... $\mathbb{W}h4$. 14... $\mathbb{W}e7?$! 14... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 15. $f4$ $g6\pm$ was a better try, preventing f4-f5 (since e5 would drop). 15. $f4$ $g6$ 16. $f5!$ $exf5$ 17. $e6+$ —

Tigran Petrosian

“It is easy to play against the young players; for me they are like an open book.”

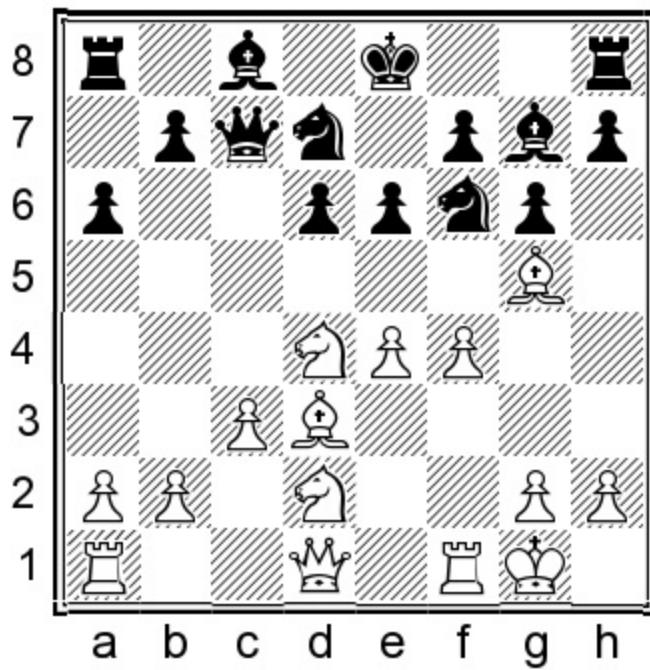
415. Petrosian – Beliavsky, Yerevan 1975



Show/Hide Solution

14.b4± Space is generally useful, and specifically it's good to defend the a2-pawn with the queen as it stops ...b7-b5.

416. Adorjan – Karpov, Skopje 1976

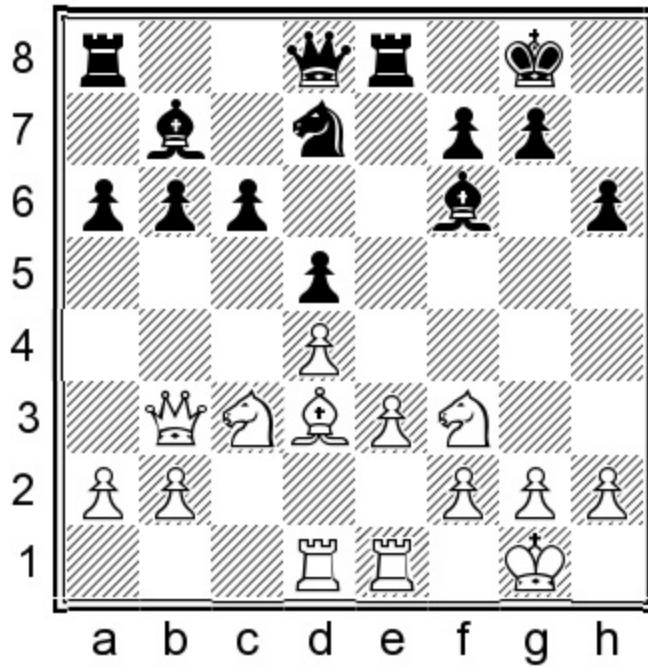


Show/Hide Solution

11.f5! A slow move like 11.a4 can be met by 11...h6 12.♗h4 0-0 and it's now possible to counter 13.f5 with: 13...g5!? 14.fxe6? (14.♗g3 is better and balanced.) 14...♝e5! With a double threat. **11...e5** Black can't play 11...♝e5? because of 12.fxe6+– when the f6-knight hangs. 11...gxsf5?! 12.exf5 e5

13. $\mathbb{Q}e6!$ ± opens up Black's king, and is not even a real sacrifice. 12. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ ± On the way to e3. The central clamp would have been even better with the c-pawn on c4, but Black can't really stop it anyway, for instance: 12...b5 13. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 14. c4±

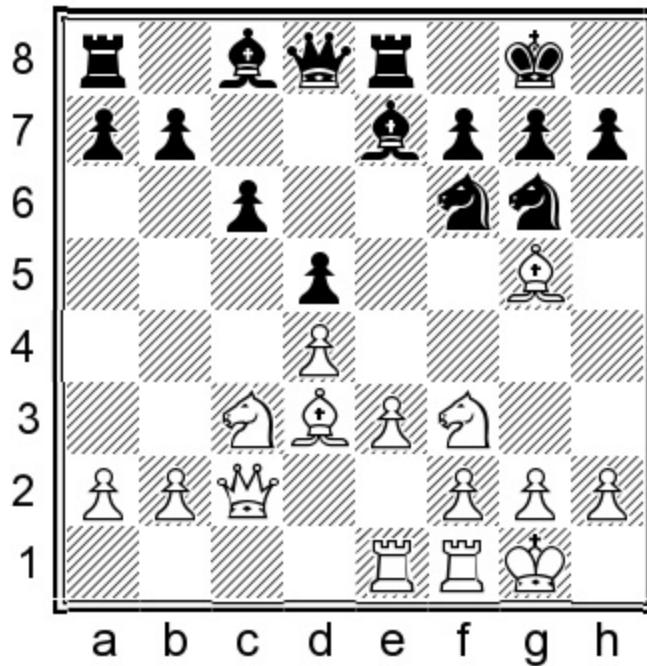
417. Tal – Pribyl, Tallinn 1977



Show/Hide Solution

15.♗f5! Threatening ♖xd7 and soon forcing ...b6-b5. 15.♗b1 was Tal's choice. 15.e4 is thematic but 15...c5± keeps Black's disadvantage within reasonable bounds 15...♝f8 15...b5 16.e4± leaves the b7-bishop out of play. 16.♝a4 g6 17.♗h3 b5 18.♗c5±

418. Kasparov – Pigusov, Riga 1977

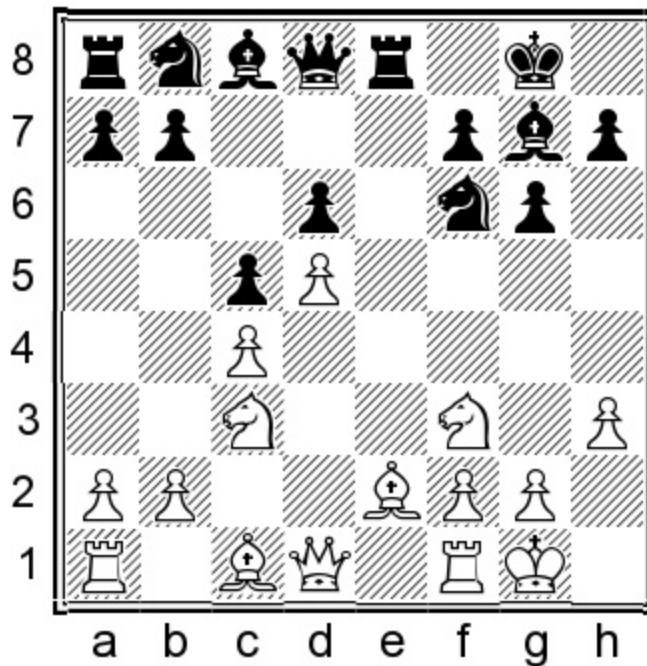


Show/Hide Solution

12.♗e5! The knight is irritating since Black can't really capture it. (The same idea tends to work even better when Black has included ...h7-h6, since it makes it harder to kick the knight with ...f7-f6.)

12...♝d7 12...♝xe5 13.dxe5 ♝g4 14.♝xe7! (After 14.♝xh7† ♜h8 White can't both defend the e5-pawn and save the bishop.) 14...♝xe7 15.f4!± **13.♝xe7 ♛xe7 14.f4±**

419. Tukmakov – Kasparov, Tbilisi 1978

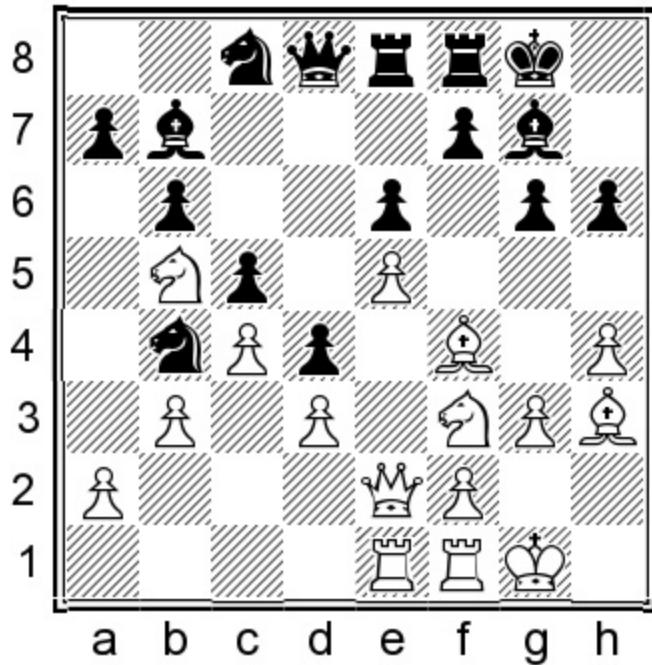


Show/Hide Solution

In this pawn structure, White wants to keep all the minor pieces. **10...♝f5!** Otherwise White stops it

with $\mathbb{Q}d3$. 10... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ also serves the purpose of exchanging, but the rook is clumsy on e4 when Black is underdeveloped. 12. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}g5\uparrow$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ avoids the exchange, but allows a sacrifice: 12... $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xh4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}c7$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$ Black can either recapture on a8 with compensation or force a draw with: 15... $\mathbb{Q}xh3?$ 16. $gxh3$ $\mathbb{W}xh3$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe1\uparrow$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xe1$ $\mathbb{W}g4\uparrow$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{W}h3\uparrow$ White must settle for a perpetual, since running with the king loses the queen in three moves. 11. $\mathbb{Q}e1!$ is a critical test, based on the following line: 11... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4?$ (Black should prefer 12... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ when White stands better, but let's not debate how much.) 13. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6?$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d3!$ White wins because of the undefended rook on e8. **11... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$** With only two minor pieces remaining for each side, Black's lack of space is of little concern.

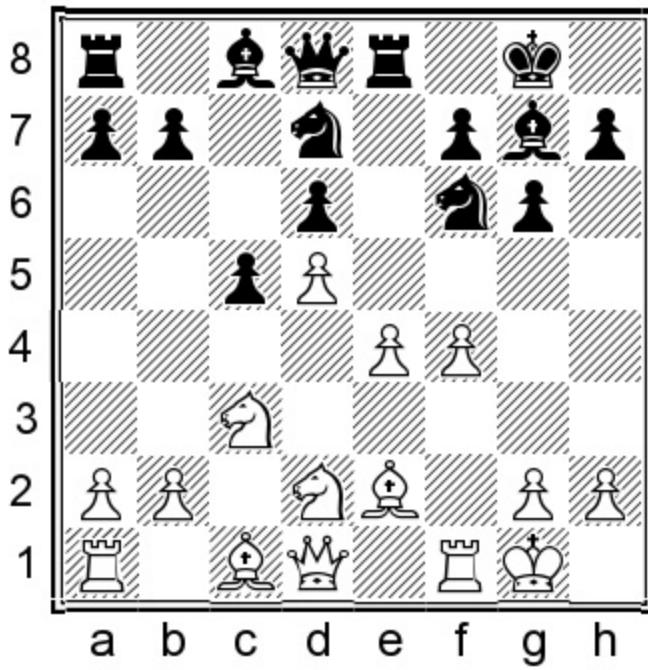
420. Rodriguez – Tal, Riga 1979



Show/Hide Solution

20. $\mathbb{Q}h2!$ Continuing the attack by redirecting the knight. **20...a6** **21. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$** After 21...h5 White should manoeuvre the a3-knight to the kingside before breaking with g3-g4. **22. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$** 22...h5 **23. $\mathbb{Q}f6\uparrow\pm$** **23. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}d2\pm$** White went on to build a decisive advantage, but the Latvian wizard escaped.

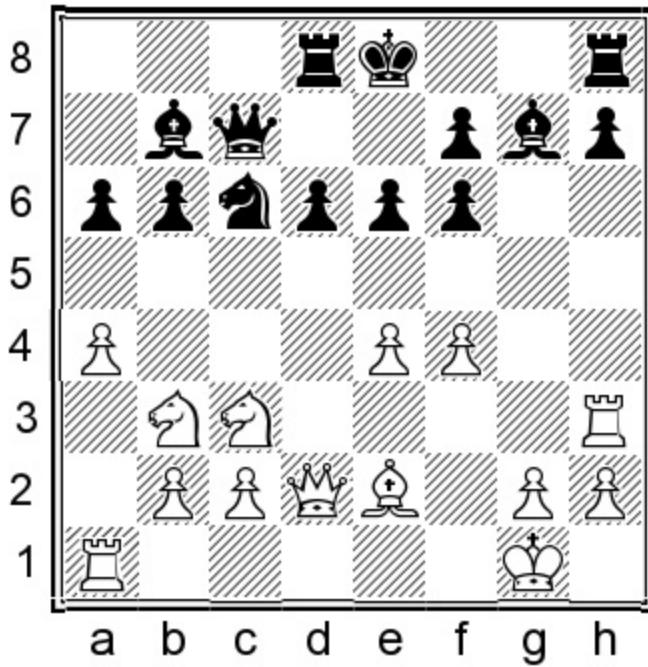
421. Rytov – Tal, Tallinn 1979



Show/Hide Solution

11...c4! Creating counterplay before White has overprotected the e4-pawn. **12.♔h1** **12.♕xc4 ♔c5** and White can't defend e4, for instance: **13.♗c2? ♔g4 14.♗f3 ♕b6 15.♔h1 ♕xc3 16.bxc3 ♗xe4+** **12...♗c5⇒ 12...b5⇒** is also a typical move.

422. Kasparov – Anikaev, Minsk 1979

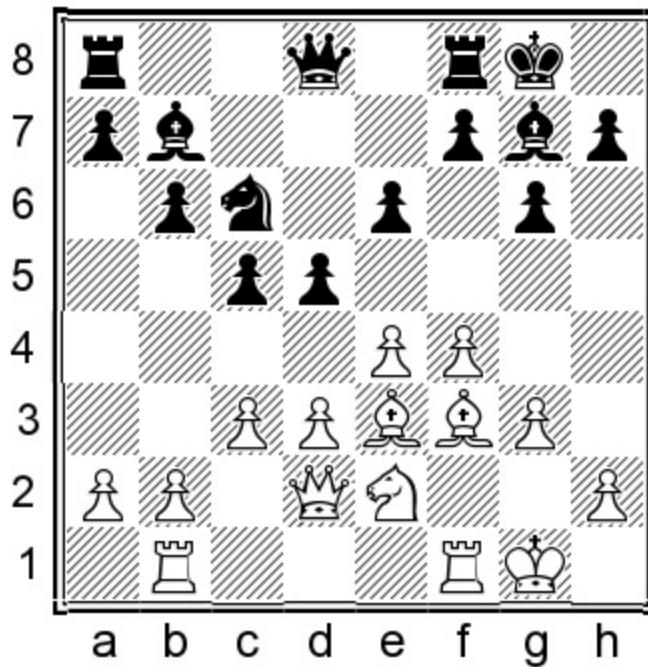


Show/Hide Solution

16.f5! Opening up around Black's king. **16.♗d5?** might look standard, but it's far too easy for Black to defend: **16...exd5 17.exd5 ♗e7+ 16...0-0 16...♔e7 17.♔h5±** places the bishop on an excellent

square. 17. $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5\pm$ White has a great position and there's no need to analyse it in detail. Some of the ideas under consideration include $\mathbb{Q}h1$, $\mathbb{Q}d4$, $\mathbb{Q}h5$, $\mathbb{Q}ce2$ and even $\mathbb{R}a3$ to lift the second rook into the attack.

423. Karpov – Quinteros, Buenos Aires 1980



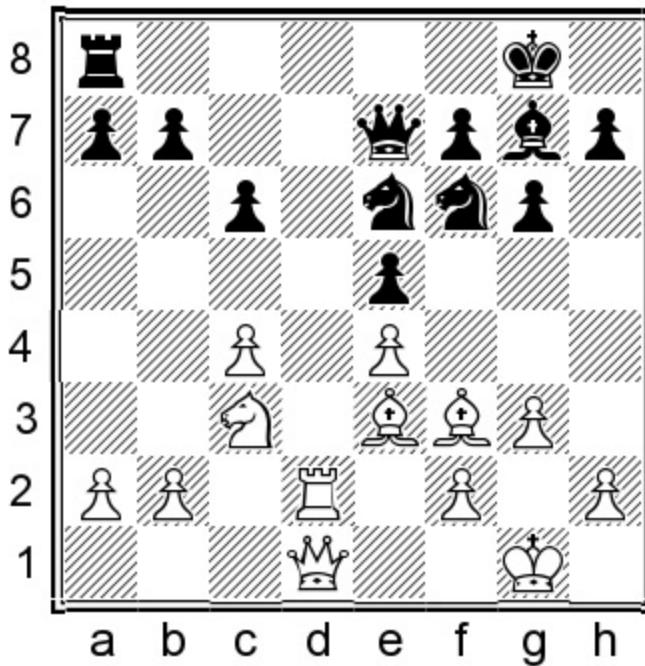
Show/Hide Solution

15.e5! Black can't stop d3-d4, restricting the bishop on g7. 15.exd5 exd5 16.d4 isn't a great idea with the white knight far away from e5. 15...a5 15...d4 16.cxd4 cxd4 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd4\pm$ **16.d4±**

Anatoly Karpov

“Happiness should always remain a bit incomplete. After all, dreams are boundless.”

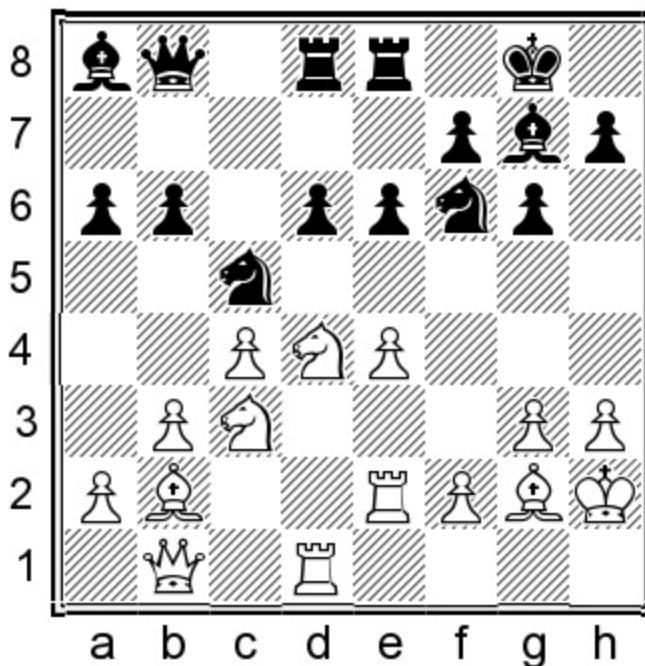
424. Karpov – Quinteros, Malta (Ol) 1980



Show/Hide Solution

18...h5! Preparing to exchange the dark-squared bishops on h6, which would increase Black's control over the d4-square. 18... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ was played. Black eventually managed to exchange bishops on c5, but the text move is a faster way to achieve the goal. 18... $\mathbb{W}f8$ can be met by 19. $\mathbb{W}b3!$ with an annoying threat against b7. **19.h4 $\mathbb{Q}h7\#$**

425. Garcia Gonzales – Karpov, Linares 1981

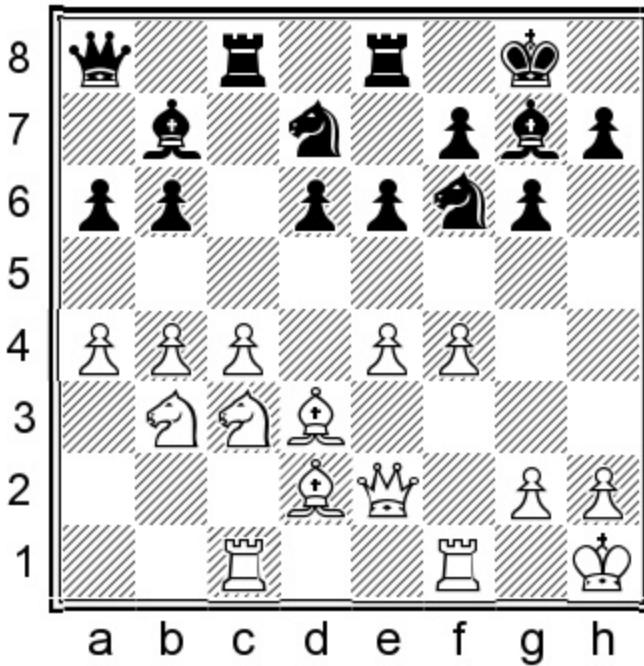


Show/Hide Solution

23...h5! Creating a weakness around White's king, which the bishop and queen on a8 and b8 are

perfectly placed to attack. **24.h4** Stopping ...h5-h4, but now Black obtains the g4-square. A logical alternative is: 24.♔g1 h4 25.g4 (25.gxh4 also weakens the f4-square: 25...♗h5†) 25...e5 26.♕c2 ♔e6∞ The knight continues to f4. **24...b5!?** 24...♗c8 was played in the game. **25.cxb5 axb5** **26.♗dxb5 d5 27.exd5 ♗g4† 28.♔g1 exd5=**

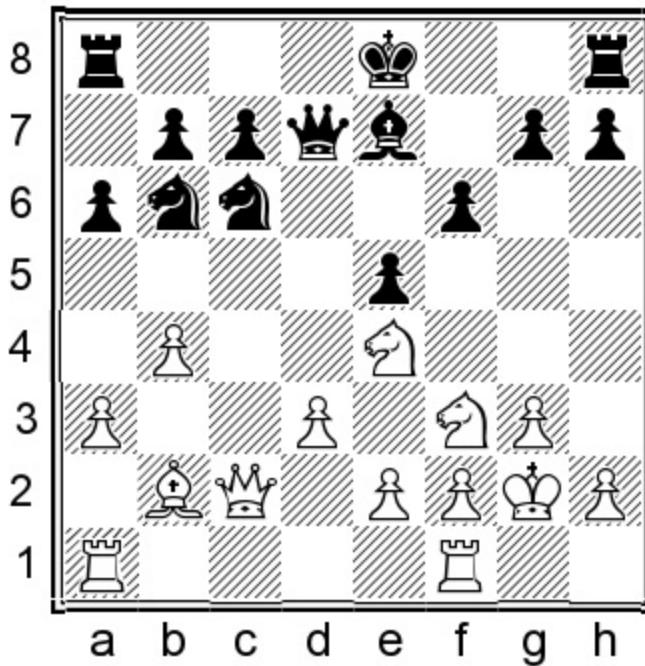
426. Karpov – Bellon Lopez, Linares 1981



Show/Hide Solution

We saw an earlier part of this game in Exercise 116. **20...d5!** This is what Black always wants to play in the Hedgehog, but doesn't always succeed with it. It's a good moment, with the e8-rook pointing towards White's queen and the queen on a8 increasing the pressure along the diagonal. **21.cxd5** 21.e5? fails: 21...dxc4 22.♗xc4 ♘xc4! 23.♗xc4 (23.exf6 ♘xb4 24.fxg7 ♘xb3+) 23...♗xg2†+ **21...♗xe4!** 21...exd5 22.e5± **22.♗xe4** 22.♗xe4? exd5 23.♗f3 Sadly the only square 23...♗xc3 24.♗xc3 d4+ 22...exd5 **23.♗xd5 ♘xd5** 24.♗xd5 ♘xd5† Black is more active.

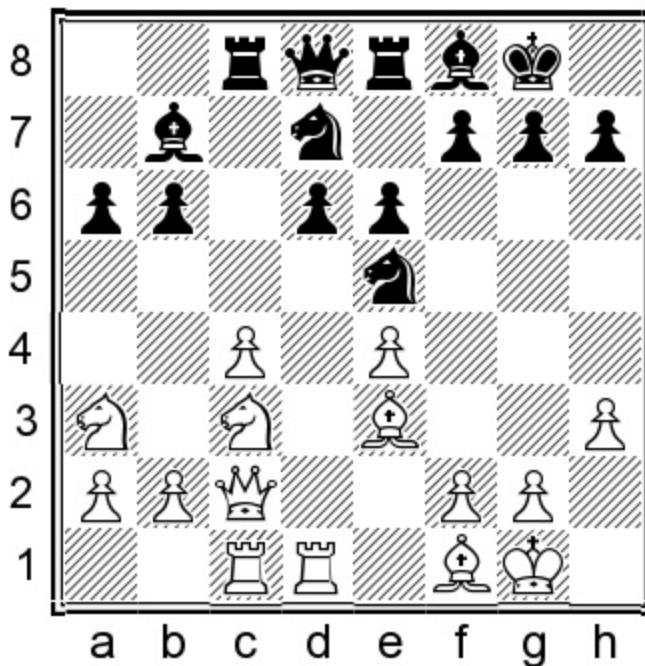
427. Portisch – Karpov, Linares 1981



Show/Hide Solution

14...g5! Black stops d3-d4, while preparing to attack the king. 14...0-0-0 15.d4!= **15.d4?!** 15.♘fd1 g4 16.♗h4 0-0-0† **15...g4** 16.♗h4 exd4 17.♗f5 0-0-0†

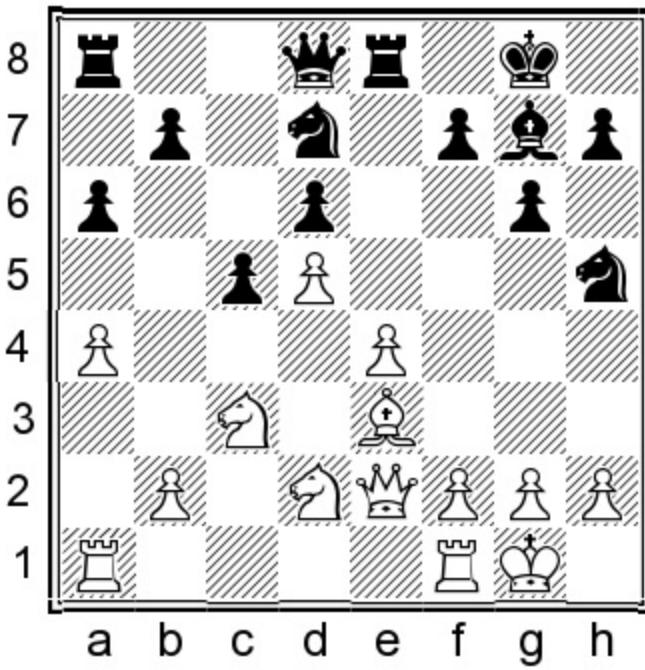
428. Karpov – Romanishin, Moscow 1981



Show/Hide Solution

17...g5! A radical method to make sure that the knight stays on e5. 17...♗c7 was played. **18.♗d2 h6†**

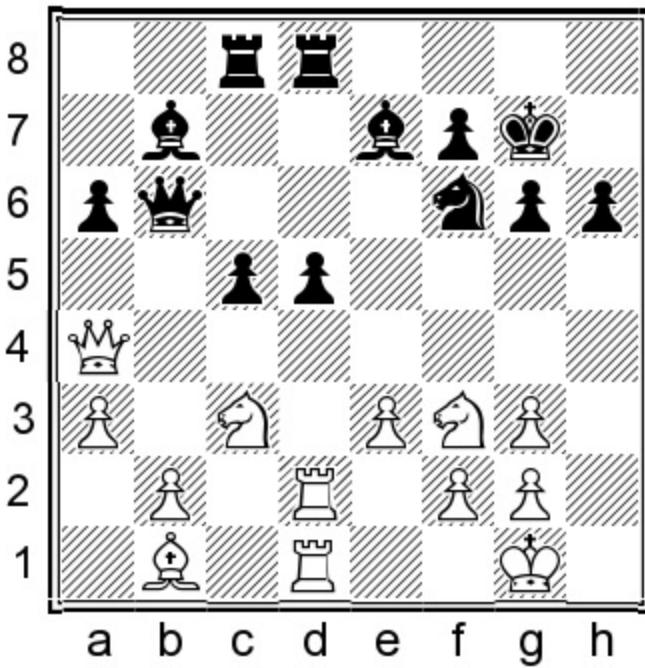
429. Portisch – Kasparov, Moscow 1981



Show/Hide Solution

15.g4! Weakening squares, but winning time. A slow move would allow Black to fight for the dark squares with ... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ or ... $\mathbb{W}h4$. **15... $\mathbb{Q}hf6$ 16.f3±** 16.h3 is also possible.

430. Kortchnoi – Karpov, Merano (1) 1981

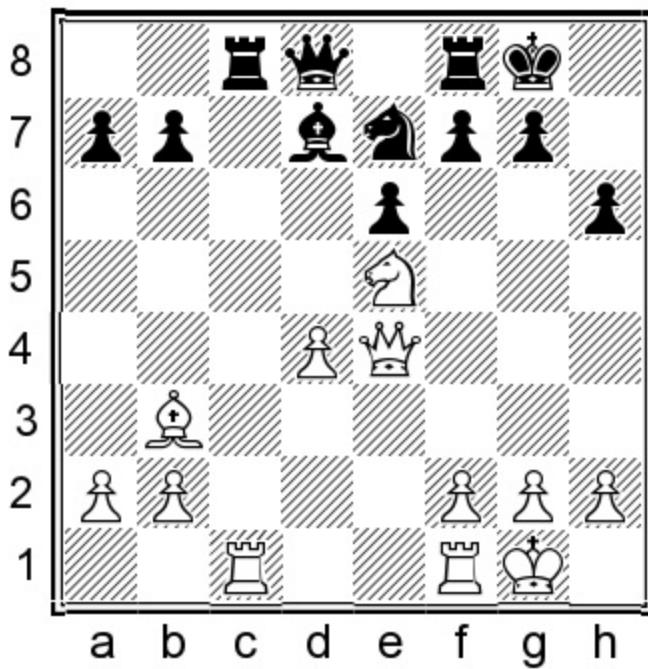


Show/Hide Solution

24...d4! The dream when playing with hanging pawns. **25. $\mathbb{Q}e2$** The tactical justification is: 25.exd4 $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}c4$ The only square. 26...cx d4 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f3$ Winning material. **25...dxe3 26.fxe3 c4** Black went on to win. It's obvious to the human eye that White is in trouble, but it's still surprising that

Stockfish evaluates it as -7!

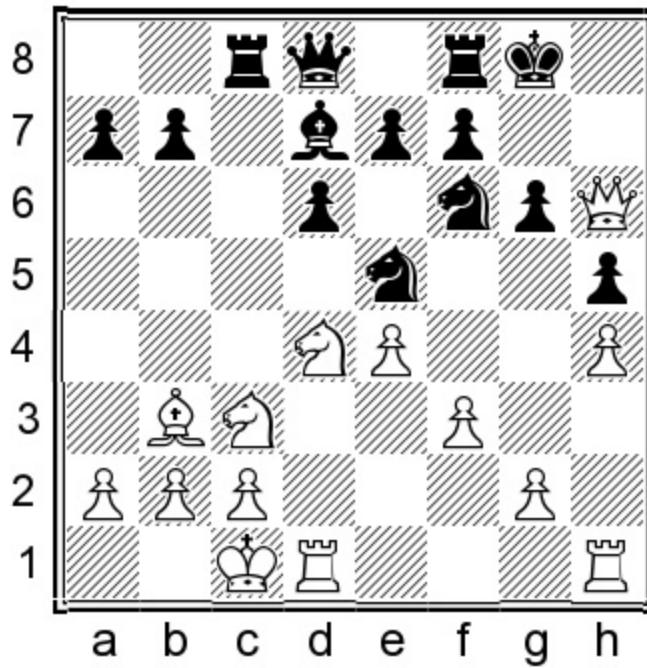
431. Korchnoi – Karpov, Merano (9) 1981



Show/Hide Solution

17...♝c6! Black takes control over d5 at the cost of splitting his queenside pawns. **18.♞xc6 ♜xc6** With less space, Black is happy to exchange rooks. 18...♝xc6 19.d5 and White has a slight initiative. 18...bx_c6 19.♜c3 would allow White to use the rook on the kingside. **19.♜c3** 19.♜xc6 bx_c6! and the pawn on d4 is weaker than the one on c6, since it will never have an opportunity to advance. Still, it shouldn't be a great problem for White, who can defend actively with ♜c1-c4 **19...♛d6** **20.g3 ♜d8** **21.♜d1 ♜b6**! Black will target the d4-pawn.

432. Spassky – Mestel, London 1982



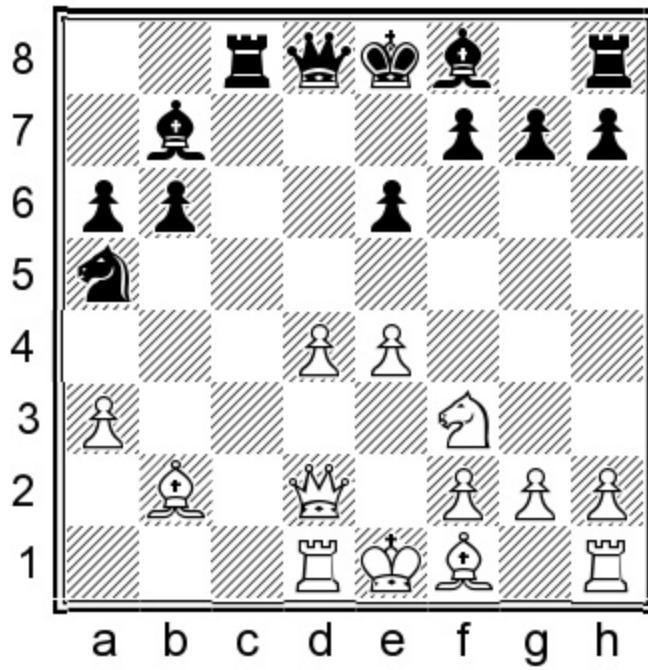
Show/Hide Solution

14...♝xc3! 14...♛a5? 15.♝d5 ♛xd5 16.exd5+– followed by g2-g4 with a devastating attack. **15.bxc3 ♛a5=** Black's compensation consists of the squares along the c-file, and the queenside being more open than the kingside.

Boris Spassky

"When you play Bobby, it is not a question of if you win or lose. It is a question of if you survive."

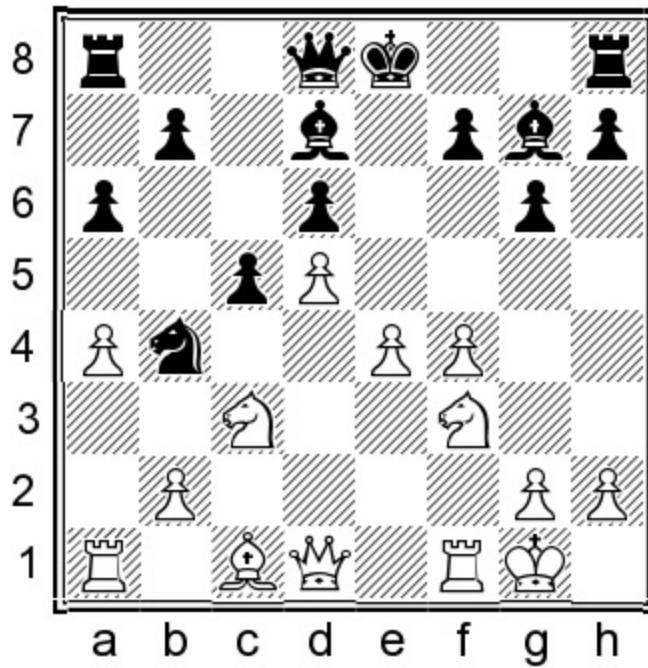
433. Kasparov – Murey, Moscow 1982



Show/Hide Solution

14.d5! Black can't develop the bishop from f8, as this would leave the g7-pawn en prise. **14...exd5** **15.exd5+–** The pawn also threatens to advance another step.

434. Kasparov – Nunn, Lucerne (Ol) 1982



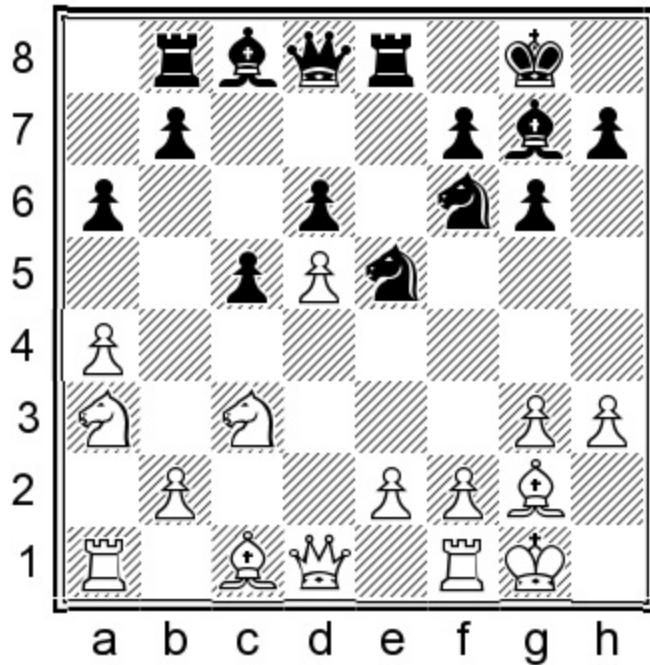
Show/Hide Solution

13.f5! Preparing ♜g5. Giving up control over e5 doesn't matter as the black knight is so far away from there. **13...0-0 14.♗g5 f6±** Black's bishop on g7 is out of play.

Garry Kasparov

"Chess is one of the few arts where composition takes place simultaneously with performance."

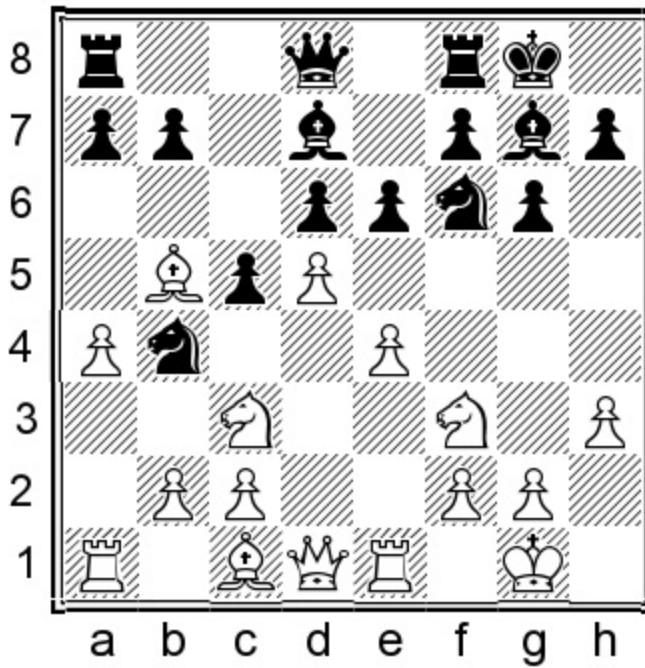
435. Korchnoi – Kasparov, Lucerne (Ol) 1982



Show/Hide Solution

14...♝h5! Preparing ...f7-f5 and ...g6-g5 to take space on the kingside. **15.f4** 15.g4 gives Black a choice 15...♝f6 has provoked a weakness, while the potential sacrifices make it too risky for White to continue pushing the e- and f-pawns. 15...♝xg4 16.hxg4 ♛xg4 gives Black enough compensation. 15...♛h4!? also turns out okay after: 16.♝e4! h6! (The analysis goes on and on, but let's stop here.) 15...♝xg3∞ 15...♝d7∞ is also acceptable.

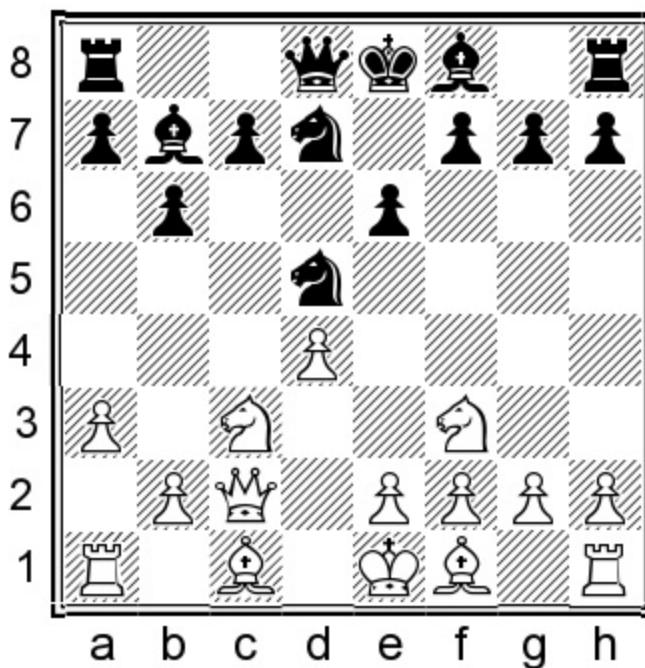
436. Kasparov – Beliavsky, Moscow (9) 1983



Show/Hide Solution

11.♘f4! Creating a threat before Black has time for ...e6xd5 and ...♗f5. **11...e5** 11...♝e8 is passive. 11...♝xb5 12.♝xb5 exd5 exchanges pawns in the centre, but a white piece on d6 is worth more. One of several possible lines is: 13.c3 dxe4 14.cxb4 exf3 15.♘xd6 a6 16.♘xf8 ♗xf8 17.♗xd8 ♜xd8 18.♗c3 cxb4 19.♖ad1± White has some even better options along the way, but you don't need to calculate them to decide to play 11.♘f4. **12.♘g5±** Black has no more active possibilities, and White can slowly prepare f2-f4. The b4-knight can be kicked away by c2-c3 if necessary.

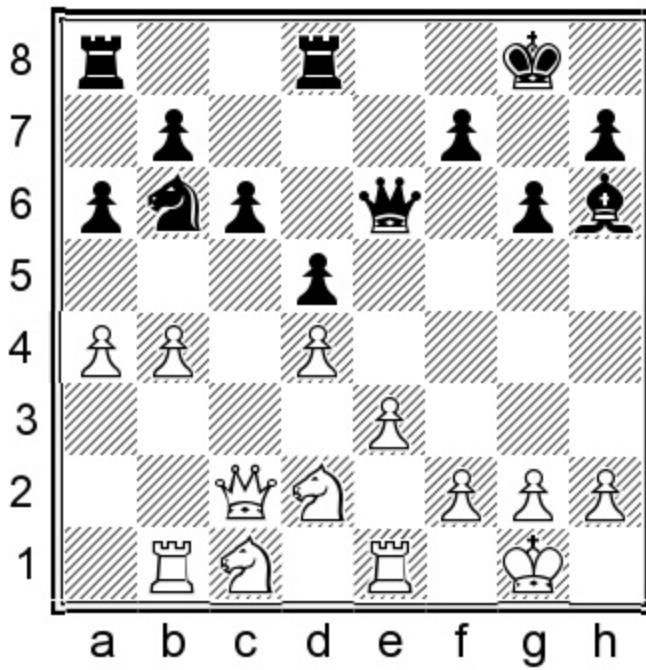
437. Kasparov – Karpov, Moscow (32) 1984



Show/Hide Solution

8.♗xd5! Taking back with the bishop allows e2-e4 with gain of tempo, and taking with the pawn leads to a worse pawn structure with the bishop on b7 restricted. (White is in time to develop before Black gets active with ...c7-c5.) **8...exd5 9.♗g5 f6 9...♝c8** can be met by 10.g3± followed by ♘h3. **10.♗f4 c5 11.g3± 11.dxc5±** is also possible.

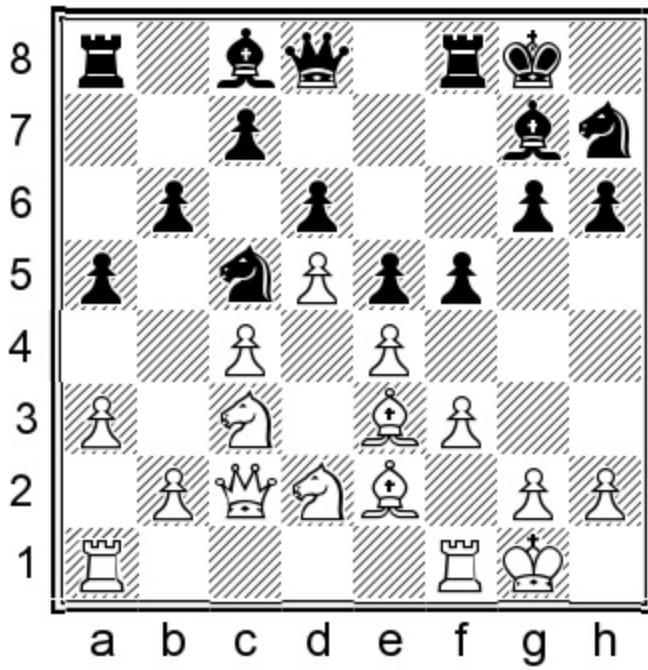
438. Andersson – Kasparov, Belgrade (2) 1985



Show/Hide Solution

21...♝c4! Using a tactical detail to clamp down on c4. **22.♝c3!** 22.♗xc4 dxc4 23.♗e2 (23.a5? It looks like White will round up the pawn, but 23...♝xd4!+ refutes White's last move.) 23...b5± **22...♝d6=** 22...b5= is also fine.

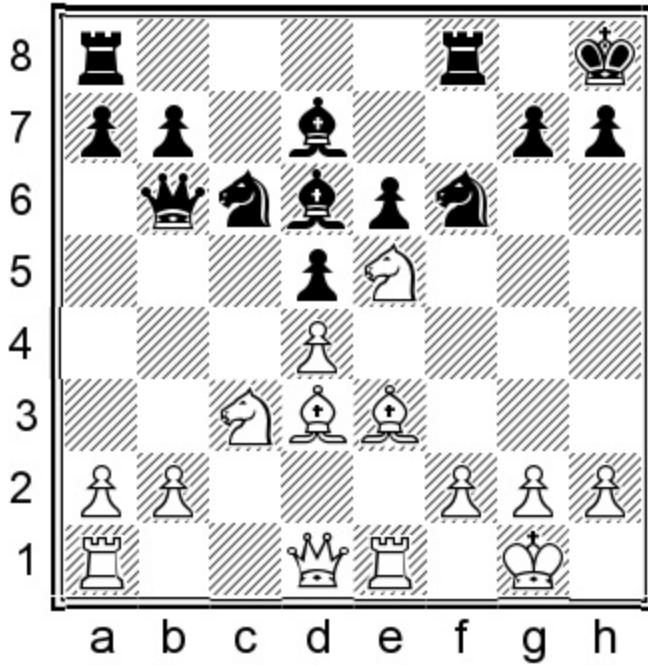
439. Palatnik – Anand, New Delhi 1986



Show/Hide Solution

14...a4! Sacrificing a pawn to stop b2-b4. **15.♗xc5 bxc5 16.♘xa4 h5!≈** Black has good compensation and will focus on the kingside. The last move prepares to activate the dark-squared bishop via h6. Anand soon followed up by pushing the pawn to h4, with the knight coming to h5 and bishop to f4.

440. Tal – Wiedenkeller, Moscow 1986

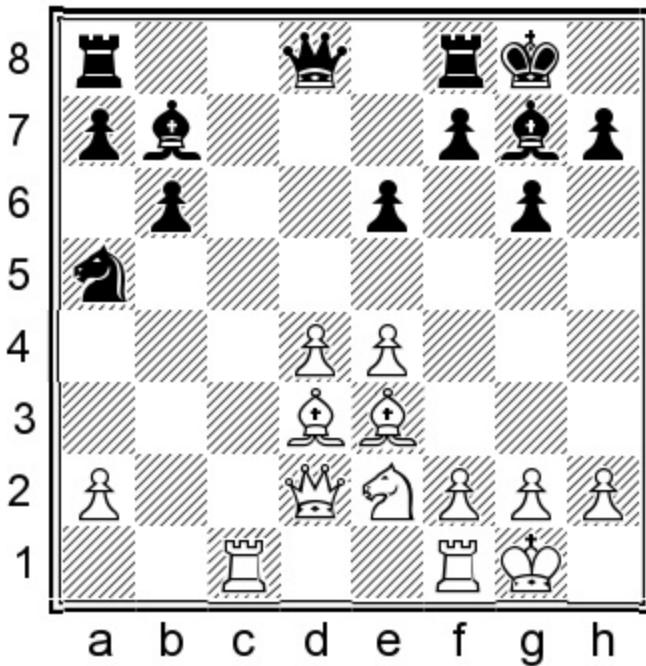


Show/Hide Solution

15...♗e8! Relocating the bishop to h5, while at the same time threatening the d4-pawn. **15...♕xb2?!** is not good due to **16.♘a4** intending **♘xd7** and **♖b1**, winning back the pawn at least. (Or the queen, if

Black gets careless). 15... $\mathbb{Q}xd4?$ is even worse in view of 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}b5+-$ with a double threat.

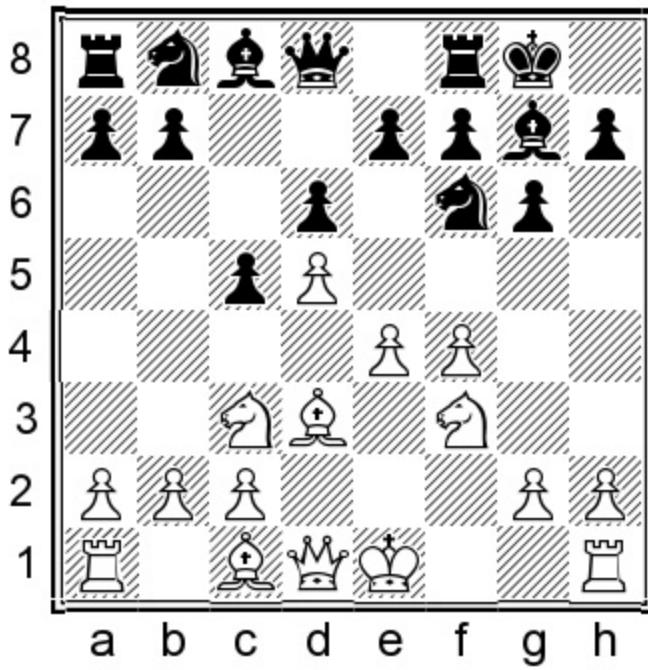
441. Kasparov – Lutz, Frankfurt (Simul) 1986



Show/Hide Solution

15.h4! Other moves have been played in many games, but both the statistics and the engine confirm that Kasparov's move is the most dangerous. (33 years before AlphaZero and Carlsen started to play h2-h4 in all kinds of Grünfeld positions.) **15... $\mathbb{W}d7$** The tactical justification is: 15... $\mathbb{W}xh4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}g4$ 17.f3 $\mathbb{W}h5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4\#$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf2\#$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{W}h2$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}h1+-$; 15...h5 is well met by 16. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}h6\pm$ when the ...h7-h5 move has seriously weakened Black's kingside. White threatens to continue with $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ and $\mathbb{W}g5$, followed by $\mathbb{Q}f4/g3$ and/or f2-f4, with a huge advantage. **16. $\mathbb{Q}h6\pm$** Kasparov takes the opportunity to play this before Black has time to move the rook from f8, which would have made ... $\mathbb{Q}h8$ possible.

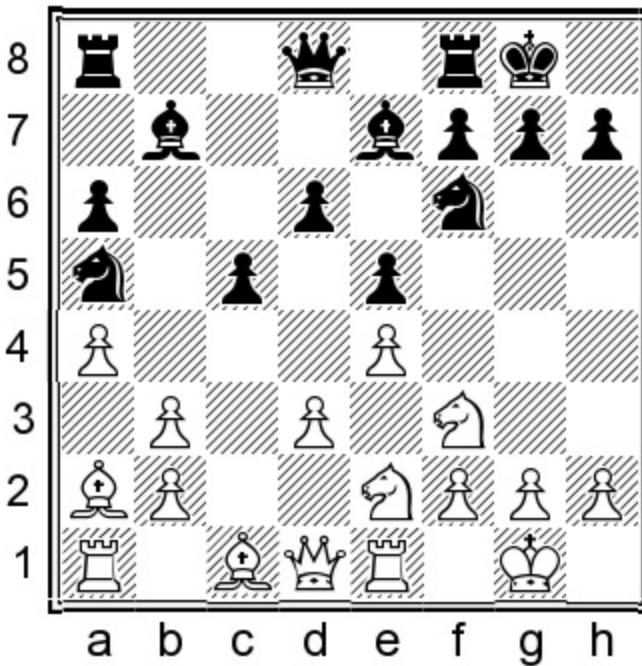
442. Tal – Quinteros, Santiago del Esterol (Blitz) 1987



Show/Hide Solution

7...b5! Black should create immediate counterplay. Quinteros chose a neutral move: 7... $\mathbb{Q}a6$?! 8.0-0±; 7... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ is fairly sensible although 8.h3 $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 9. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ ± is pleasant for White. 7...c4!? 8. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ b5 is a logical alternative in the same spirit as the main solution. White should respond with 9. $\mathbb{Q}d3$! when it's hard to prove full compensation. Nevertheless, the objective evaluation is similar to the main line, so this option also counts as a correct solution. 8. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$? $\mathbb{Q}xe4$!±; 8.e5 dx5 9.fxe5 $\mathbb{Q}g4$ is unclear, for instance: 10.d6 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ ∞ 8...c4! 9. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ ∞ Black needs to play forcefully to keep compensation. One test solver analysed deeper and provided a long line: 10.0-0 $\mathbb{W}b6$ † 11. $\mathbb{Q}bd4$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ f5 14. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 16.gxf3 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 17.fxe4 fxe4 18. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xe4$ ± Ultimately Black may not be able to claim enough compensation for full equality. However, I don't feel this is relevant to the initial position, where we followed the general rule for Benoni structures of striving for counterplay rather than sitting passively.

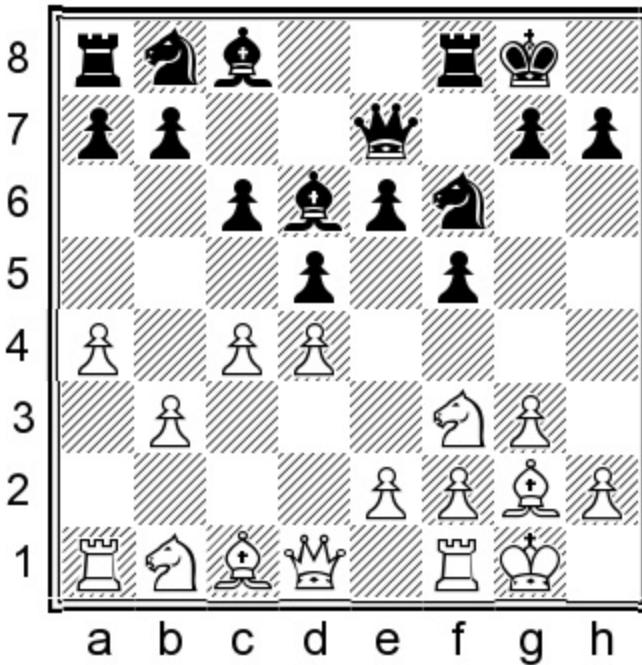
443. Tal – Sygulski, Jurmala 1987



Show/Hide Solution

14.b4! Giving back the pawn to avoid getting the bishop imprisoned after ... $\mathbb{Q}c6-b4$. 14. $\mathbb{Q}d2 \mathbb{Q}c6\equiv$
14...cxb4 15. $\mathbb{Q}g3\pm$ White continues with the normal slow attack on the kingside, having a more active light-squared bishop than usual.

444. Kasparov – Short, London (Rapid) 1987

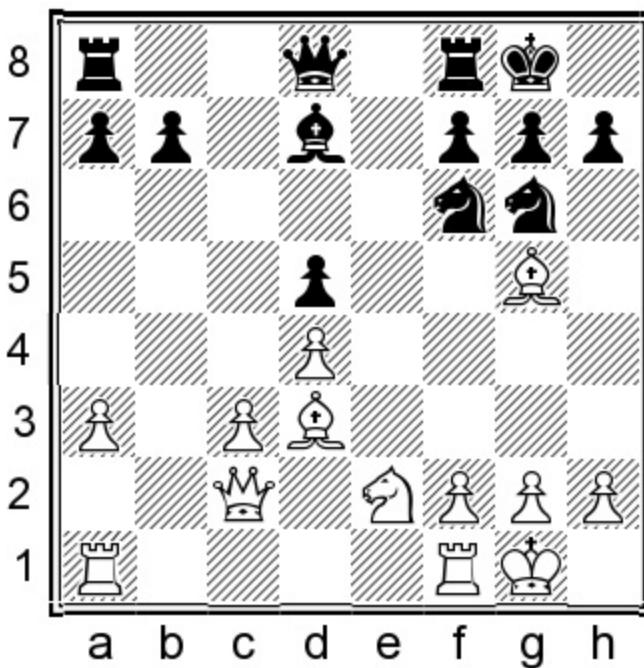


Show/Hide Solution

9.a5! Not giving Black a chance for ...a7-a5. GM Todorcevic is one of only a few players who have pushed the a-pawn before exchanging bishops when this position arose. Next comes $\mathbb{Q}a3$. 9. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ is a

standard move which has been executed in hundred of games, but it's a slight inaccuracy. 9... $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ $\mathbb{Q}bd7?!$ (Short should have played 10...a5! intending ... $\mathbb{Q}a6-b4$.) 11.a5± Kasparov took the opportunity to seize some additional queenside space. It's worth noting that Black does not have time to exploit White's move order by posting a knight on b4, as 9... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}b4??$ runs into 11.c5.

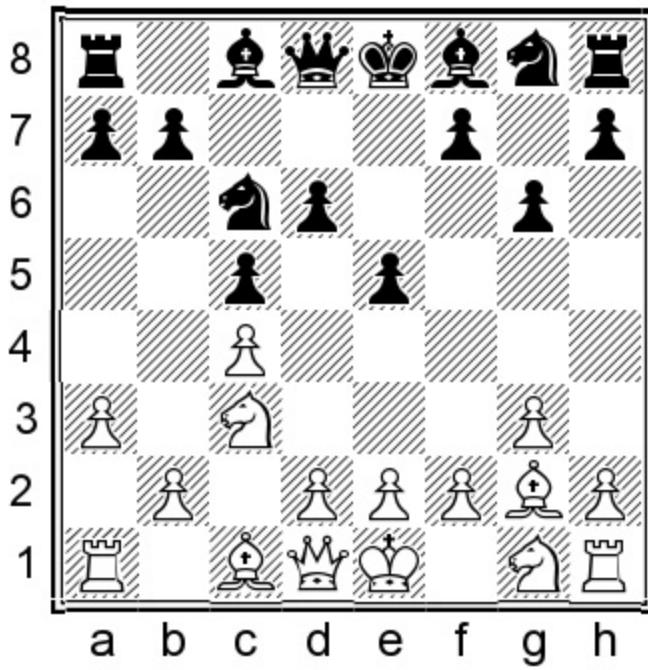
445. Kasparov – Tal, Brussels 1987



Show/Hide Solution

14.f4! Intending to push Black back with f4-f5. 14...h6 15. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 16.f5 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}g3\pm$ White can double up on the f-file and push f5-f6 as soon as the queen moves.

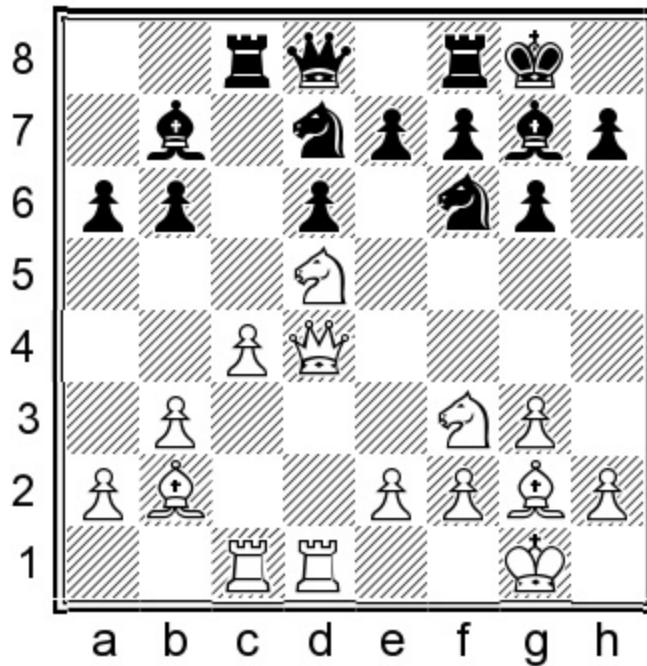
446. Kasparov – Karpov, Seville (8) 1987



Show/Hide Solution

6.b4 6... $\mathbb{R}b1$ is not obligatory and can be met by 6...a5, when White needs more time to prepare b2-b4. (And if White changes plan, the $\mathbb{R}b1$ move makes little sense.) 6... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 6...cxb4 7.axb4 $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ gives White the option of winning back the pawn immediately by checking on a4 and taking on c6. However, I'm sure Kasparov would have preferred 8. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ when White has great compensation, and the vulnerability of the d6-pawn makes it difficult for Black to develop smoothly. 7. $\mathbb{R}b1\pm$ The rook is moved only now when White has already played b2-b4, and the b-file can be opened. By removing the rook from the long diagonal, White also prepares $\mathbb{Q}f3$ without allowing ...e5-e4 in response.

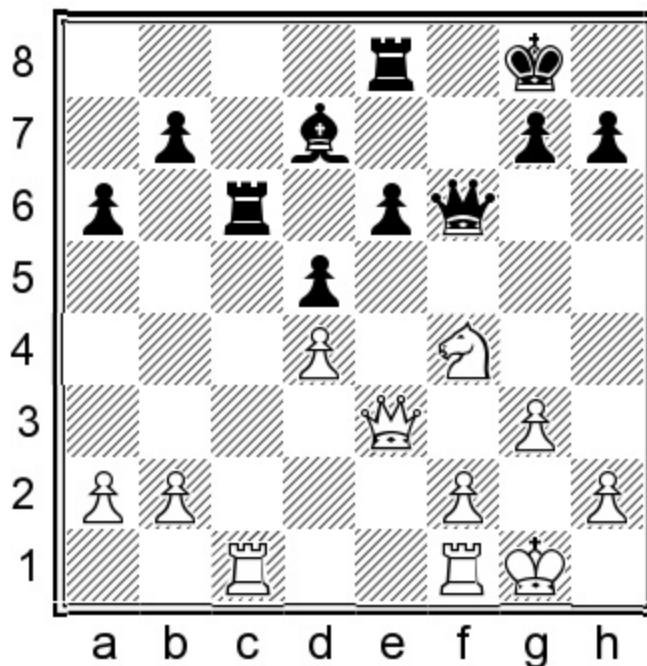
447. Georgiev – Kasparov, Saint John (Blitz) 1988



Show/Hide Solution

13...b5! 13...e6?! leads to a Hedgehog structure with a backward pawn on d6. In such positions, Black would prefer to keep all the minor pieces on the board. 14.♘xf6† ♕xf6 15.♗d2 ♘xb2 16.♗xb2 The d6-pawn is weak, and if 16...d5 17.♗e1!? Black must deal with an awkward pin. **14.♗e1 ♘xd5!** 14...♗c5 was the game. **15.cxd5 ♗a5** White must take care to avoid becoming worse.

448. Kramnik – Ulibin, Odessa 1989

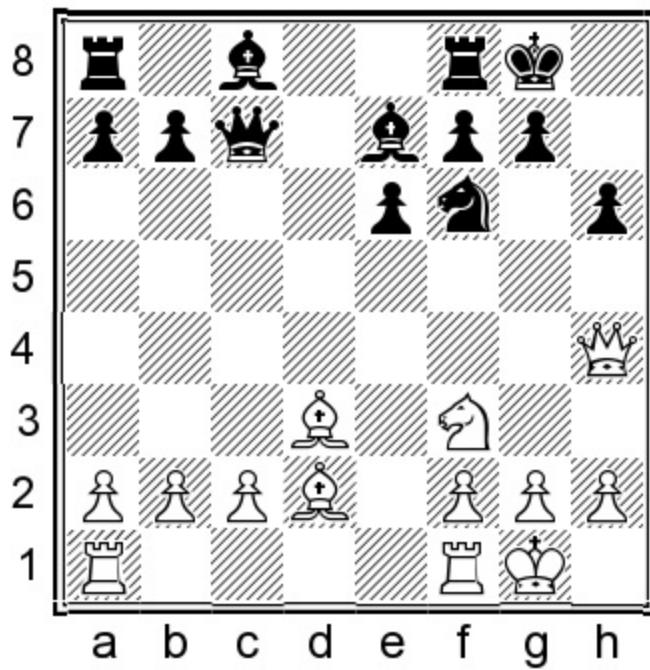


Show/Hide Solution

22...e5! It's better to have an isolated d-pawn than a hole on e5 and a passive bishop. **23.dxe5 A**

tactical detail is 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd5?$ $\mathbb{W}d6+$ when Black wins back the pawn (at least) and White's coordination is ruined. 23... $\mathbb{W}xe5$ Black should provoke the exchange of queens, since White's queen was more active. Black is fine in the endgame, since the d-pawn is not only isolated, but also a passed pawn, and White lacks a convenient way to blockade it with the knight on d4. (If, on the other hand, something similar arose but with White having a pawn on c3 to immobilize the d-pawn, then White would stand better.)

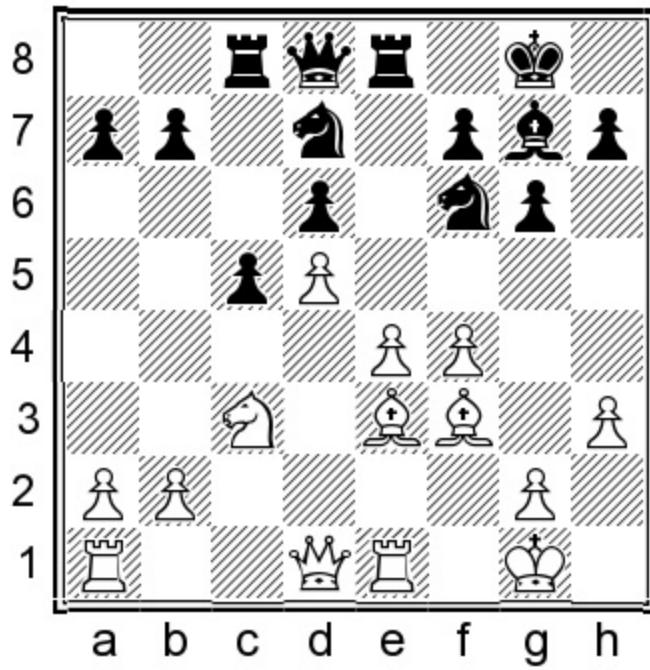
449. Khalifman – Arkell, Leningrad 1989



Show/Hide Solution

18. $\mathbb{Q}xh6!$ A standard sacrifice in this set-up, with a queen on h4 and bishops on adjacent diagonals pointing towards the black kingside. 18... $g \times h6$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xh6$ White threatens $\mathbb{Q}g5$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}h7\#$, or a rook lift. 19... $\mathbb{B}d8$ The only move, preparing to capture on d3. 20. $\mathbb{B}ae1$ $\mathbb{B}d5$ To stop $\mathbb{B}e5$. 21. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ Threatening $\mathbb{Q}h7\#$ with mate. 21... $\mathbb{B}xd3$ Again the only defence. 22. $c \times d3$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ Defending the knight and thus preparing ... $\mathbb{Q}f8$. Black is just in time to survive, but White still has an ongoing attack. 23. $\mathbb{B}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 24. $\mathbb{W}h4!?\rightarrow$ 24. $\mathbb{W}h8\#\pm$ was the game.

450. Nogueiras Santiago – Kasparov, Barcelona 1989



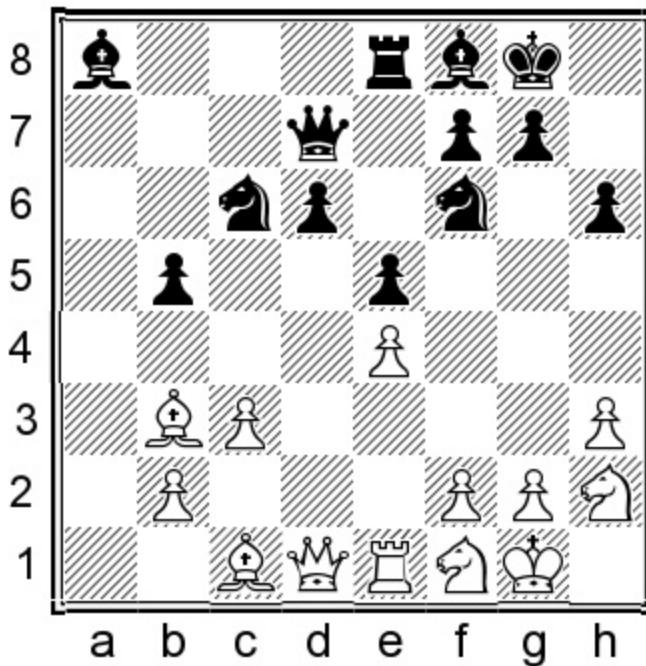
Show/Hide Solution

14...b5! A standard pawn exchange to create counterplay. **15.♘xb5** 15.a3!? is possible, but after 15...a6 it's clear who has benefited from the inclusion of these moves on the queenside. **15...♗xe4** **16.♗xe4 ♜xe4** **17.♗xd6 ♜xe3** **18.♗xe3 ♘d4** **19.♗f3 ♜b8=** White must give back the pawn immediately.

3. Academic Level Exercises 451-500

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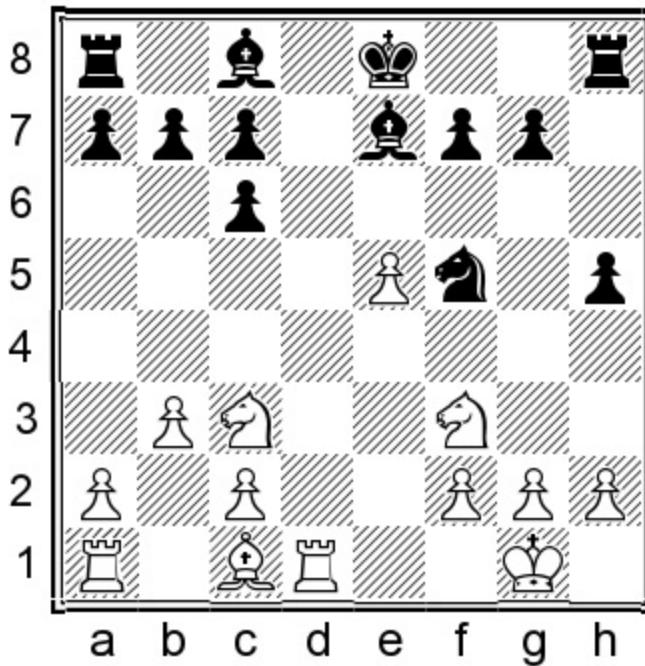
451. A. Sokolov – Karpov, Linares 1989



Show/Hide Solution

21.♗g4! Increasing White's control over d5 by exchanging Black's knight. After 21.♗g3 ♜a5 22.♗a2 ♜c4= Black will soon be able to play ...d6-d5. **21...♝xg4 22.hxg4!±** The g4-pawn will offer additional support to a knight on f5, and also gives White an open h-file which might eventually be used for attacking purposes in conjunction with g4-g5.

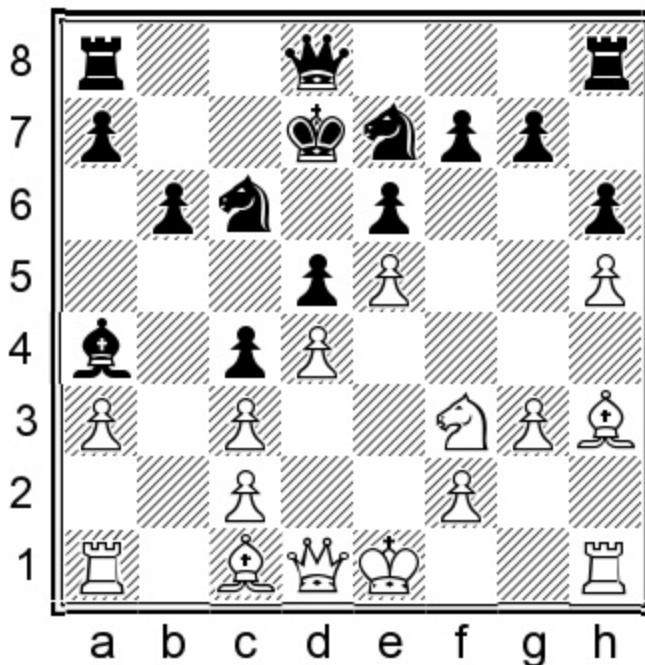
452. Karpov – Miles, Biel 1990



Show/Hide Solution

12. $\mathbb{Q}g5\pm$ White is happy to make this exchange, to avoid a potential scenario of being left with a bad bishop restricted by the e5-pawn. Black should normally avoid this exchange, and Kasparov is another player who took the opportunity for $\mathbb{Q}g5$ in a similar position. If Black was to move, the best plan would be to try to exchange knights with 12... $\mathbb{Q}h4$, preventing the $\mathbb{Q}g5$ possibility and making it easier for Black to complete development.

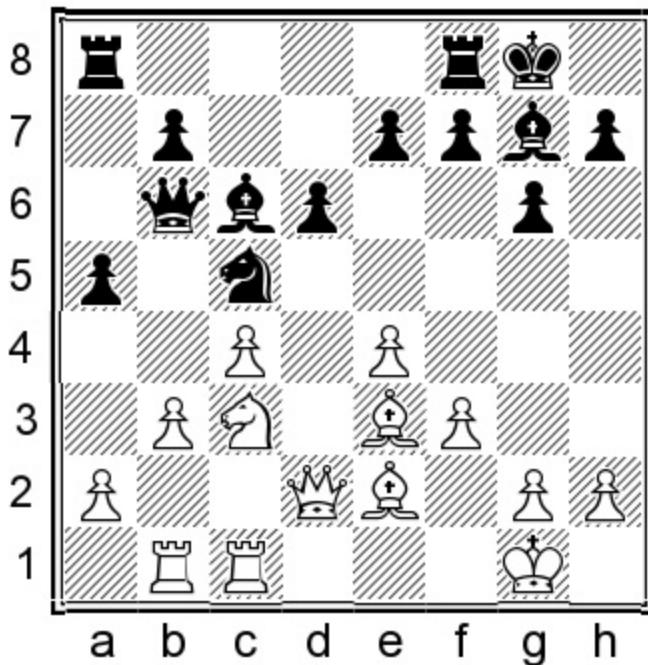
453. Anand – Quillan, Prestwich 1990



Show/Hide Solution

14...Bg8 The queen cooperates with the bishop on the other wing. **15.0-0 Bh7 16.Ra2 g6** The position starts to open up on the kingside, with the a2-rook and a4-bishop unable to participate for the time being. Black has the safer king, but White can point to the strong e5-pawn and Black's weak dark squares. Overall the chances are balanced.

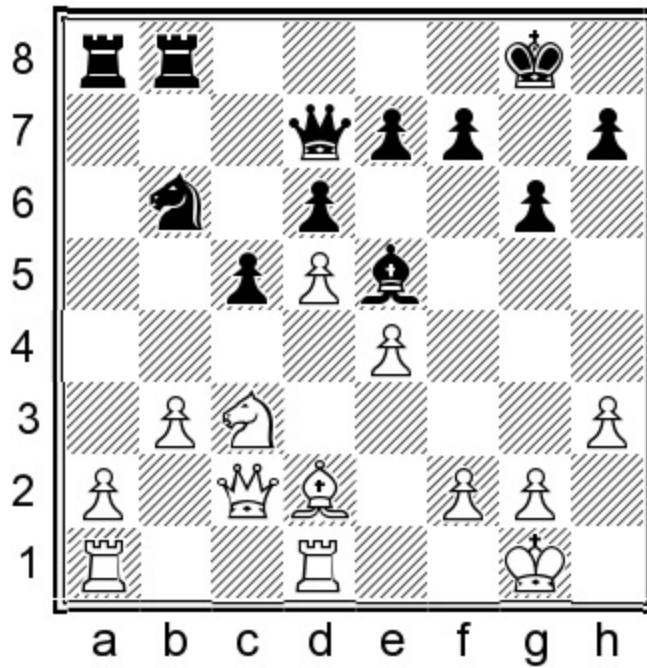
454. Gelfand – Anand, Manila 1990



Show/Hide Solution

16...Bb4 Blocking the b-pawn and thus preparing ...a5-a4. **16...a4?? 17.b4+–** would have been good for White even without winning a piece. If White had a free move, then 17.a3 would be a logical choice. **17.Rc2** White should stop ...a5-a4, and Gelfand's choice is the most popular way of doing it. **17...Bxc3!?** 17...a4? 18.Qd5 wins a pawn. Anand played 17...Rfc8, again threatening ...a5-a4. **18.Qc1!±** is the right answer, preparing a2-a3. **18.Qxc3 18.Rxc3 a4→ 18...Qxc3 19.Rxc3 b6±** Black has given up the bishop to simplify and avoid a knight jump to d5. Still, it's a defensive task ahead.

455. Kramnik – Atkinson, Arnhem 1990



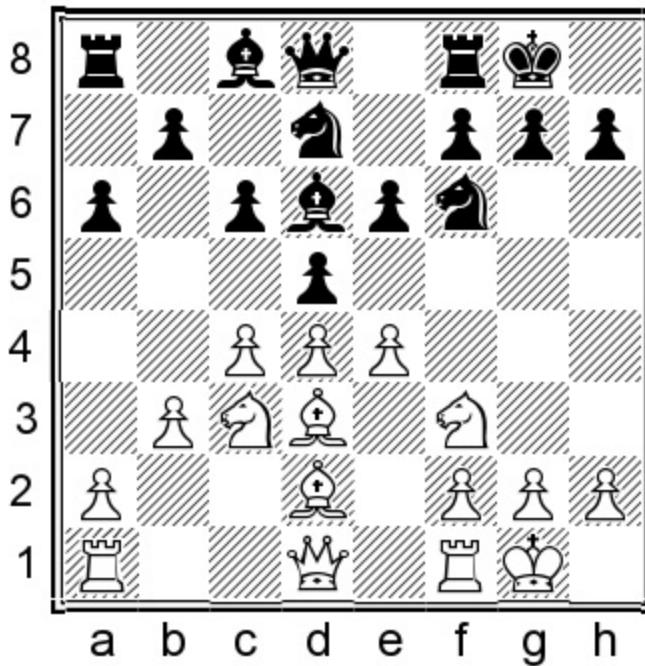
Show/Hide Solution

21.a4! Before Black has played ...c5-c4. **21...c4 22.a5!+–** White's extra pawn should decide matters. **22.b4 ♜xc3 23.♕xc3** is better for White because of the dark squares, but not winning.

Vladimir Kramnik

"I don't like to show my emotions at the board, not because they might give something away to an opponent, but because that's my style: I like to keep it to myself."

456. Kasparov – Gelfand, Linares 1991

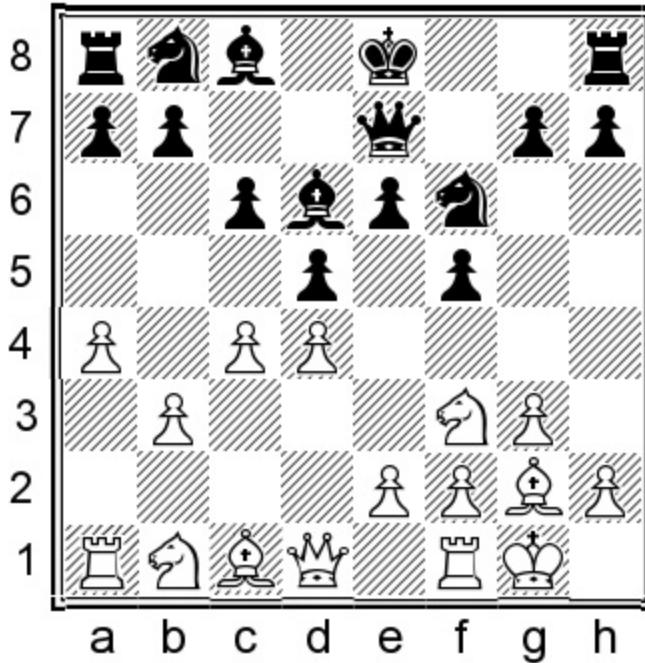


Show/Hide Solution

10...dxc4! This move is possible since it hits White's bishop (meaning that there is no time for e4-e5). It is the standard reaction when White advances in the centre. 10...dxe4 11.♗xe4 ♗xe4 12.♗xe4± It's hard for Black to develop the c8-bishop. The following moves are not forced, but they represent Black's most direct attempt to complete development. 12...e5 (12...f5 13.♗c2 e5 14.♗g5+–) 13.♗c2 g6 14.c5 ♗c7 15.♗g5 f6 16.♗h6+– If the rook moves, then ♗xg6 is killing. 10...e5 sacrifices a pawn on d5. It would have worked better if White had played another passive move earlier in the game.

11.bxc4 11.♗xc4 e5= 11...e5 12.c5! 12.d5 ♗c5= 12...♗c7 13.♗a4∞

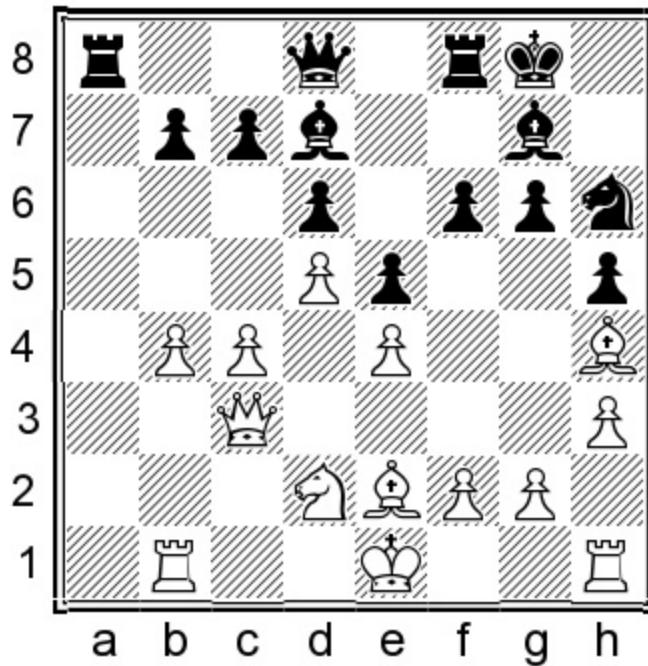
457. Akopian – Kramnik, Moscow 1991



Show/Hide Solution

8...a5! Halting White's a-pawn before it reaches a5. Black develops normally with ...0-0, ...b7-b6 and ... \mathbb{N} b7. The queenside knight usually goes to d7, although it can also consider the a6-b4 route.

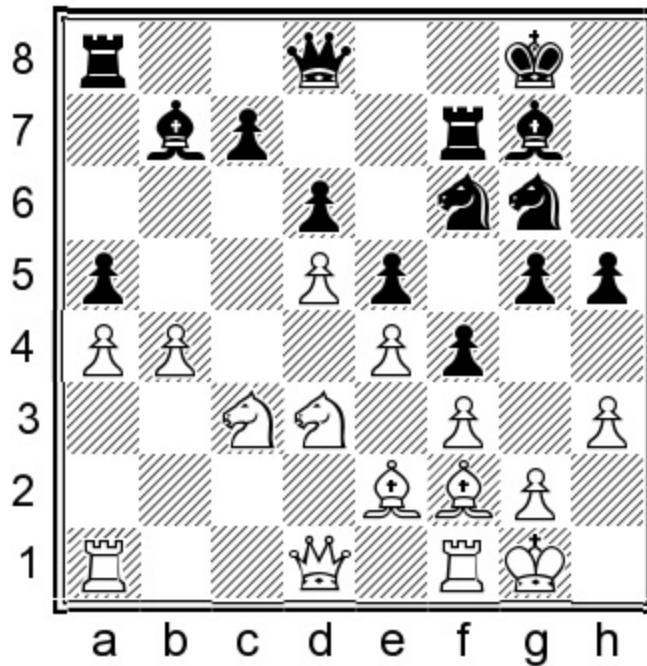
458. Bareev – Kasparov, Tilburg 1991



Show/Hide Solution

18...g5 The kingside is Black's wing. Pushing back the bishop is better done before it can retreat to f2. 18... \mathbb{Q} f7 19.c5 \mathbb{N} h6 is also a standard manoeuvre, just not as active. 20.0-0= **19. \mathbb{N} g3 h4** Keeping the h-pawn on the board. **20. \mathbb{N} h2 f5↑**

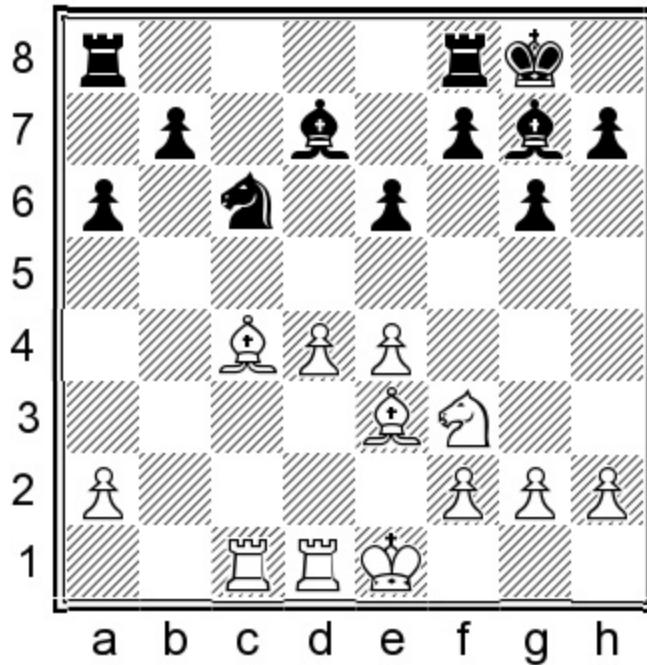
459. Korchnoi – Kasparov, Amsterdam 1991



Show/Hide Solution

19...♝c8! The bishop is needed to support ...g5-g4. Black can also reverse the move order: 19...♝h6 20.bxa5 ♜c8! **20.bxa5 ♜h6!** **21.♝b4 g4↑** If White takes the pawn with **22.fxg4?** **hxg4 23.hxg4** Black prepares an invasion on the h-file: **23...♜h7†**

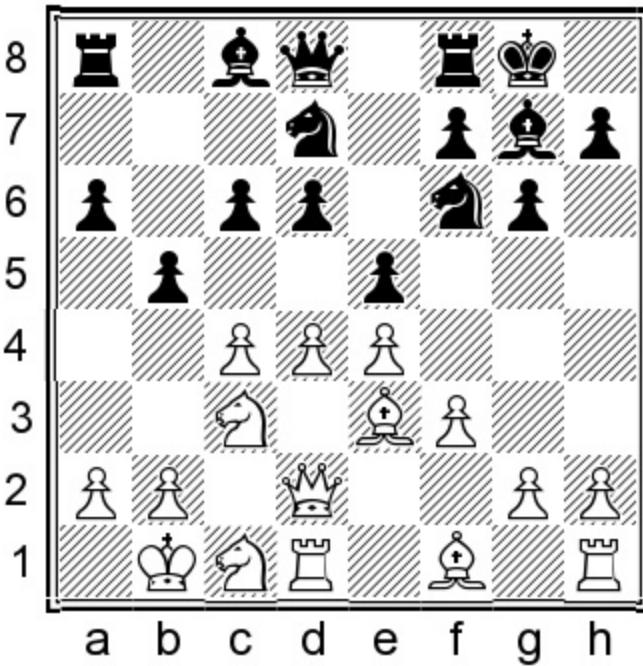
460. Karpov – Kamsky, Tilburg 1991



Show/Hide Solution

16...♝a5 Kicking the bishop before White gets time for d4-d5. **16...♞fc8??!** **17.d5 exd5** (**17...♝a5** is too late: **18.dxe6±**) **18.♝xd5± 17.♝e2 ♞fc8=**

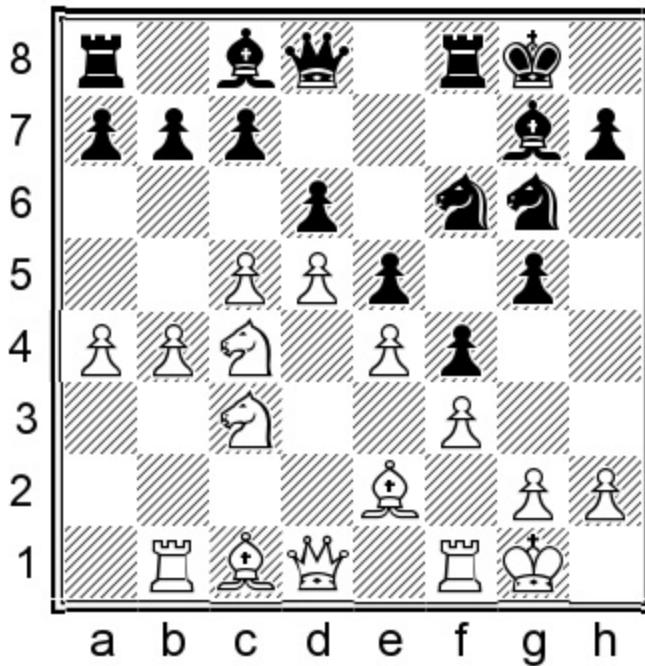
461. Shirov – Kasparov, Dortmund 1992



Show/Hide Solution

11...exd4! A normal move when White can't recapture on d4 with the knight. 11... $\mathbb{E}e8$?! 12.d5! is standard, as the rook is misplaced on e8. With a closed centre Black wants to play for ...f7-f5. But White's last move is actually mainly based on a tactical justification: 12...cx d 5 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$! (13.cxd5 yields a positional advantage but the text move is stronger.) 13... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$?! 14. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$? 15. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{W}xb6$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xa8$ With the rook on e8 undefended, Black does not have ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ available to trap the queen. **12. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$** This position has been reached many times. Black has several options, and should be ready to sacrifice the d6-pawn in case White gives up his dark-squared bishop, as happened in the game. **12... $\mathbb{E}e8$** 12...b4 was played by Kasparov against Kramnik a year later, the game ending in a draw. **13. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$** 13. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ is met by 13... $\mathbb{Q}f8$! when attempts to win the d-pawn only help Black: 14. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 15.c5 d5 16.exd5 cx d 5 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 13... $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 14. $\mathbb{W}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ Black's active pieces, especially the mighty dark-squared bishop, offer enough compensation.

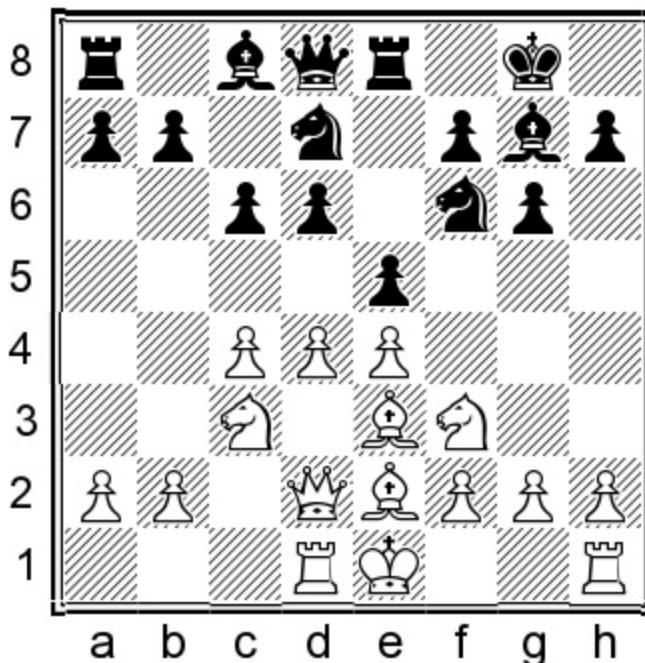
462. Kamsky – Kasparov, Paris (Rapid) 1992



Show/Hide Solution

Black should regroup to support ...g5-g4 and defend the d6-pawn. The following moves show the standard scheme. 15... $\mathbb{E}f7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 17.a5 $\mathbb{E}g7\infty$ Black's next moves on the kingside may be ...h7-h5 and ...g5-g4, although in some cases ...g5-g4 can be played without the support of the h-pawn – this would typically occur when White moves the knight away from c3, leaving the e4-pawn vulnerable in the event of f3xg4.

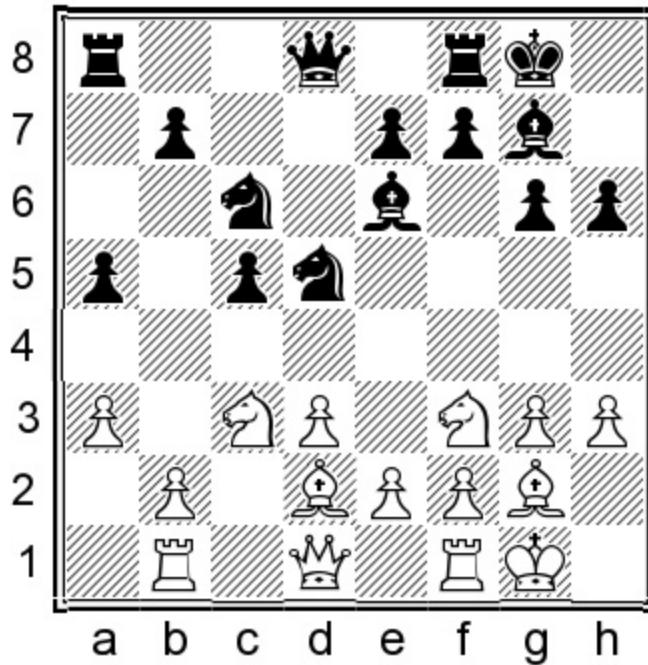
463. Kasparov – Ivanchuk, Reggio Emilia 1992



Show/Hide Solution

10.d5 This is the normal response to ... $\mathbb{E}e8$ in the King's Indian. Not only does it avoid the threat of ... $\mathbb{E}xd4$ followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$, but it also leads to a central structure where the black rook would be better on the f-file. 10.dxe5 is not critical.

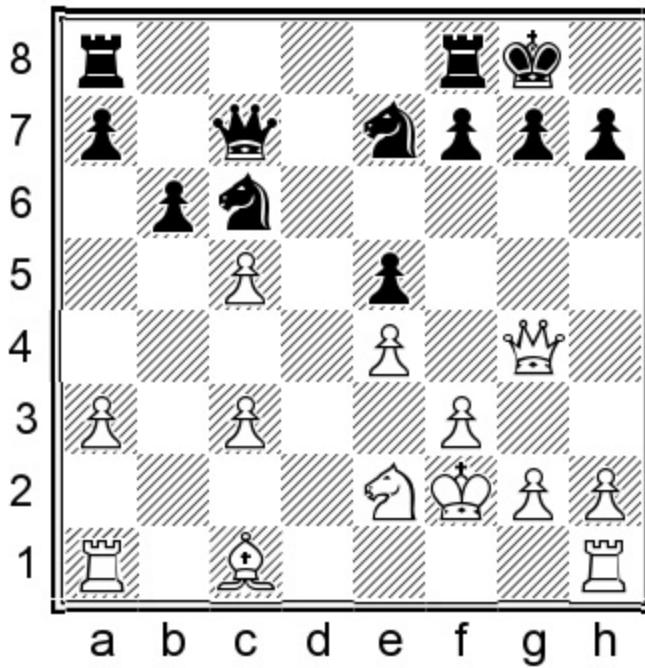
464. Kasparov – Beliavsky, Reggio Emilia 1992



Show/Hide Solution

White is threatening $\mathbb{W}c1$ with a double attack on h6 and c5 (the latter after $\mathbb{Q}xd5$). **13...b6!?** It makes sense to defend the c5-pawn, as this pawn could be threatened in various ways such as $\mathbb{Q}e4$, $\mathbb{E}fc1$ etc. Another reason is that 13... $\mathbb{Q}h7?!$ invites 14. $\mathbb{W}a4!$ with ideas of $\mathbb{W}h4$ and $\mathbb{Q}g5\#$. Beliavsky played 13... $\mathbb{Q}d4=$ but exchanging pieces is not ambitious. 13... $\mathbb{E}c8$ is another playable move, but less flexible as the rook may be useful on the a-file.

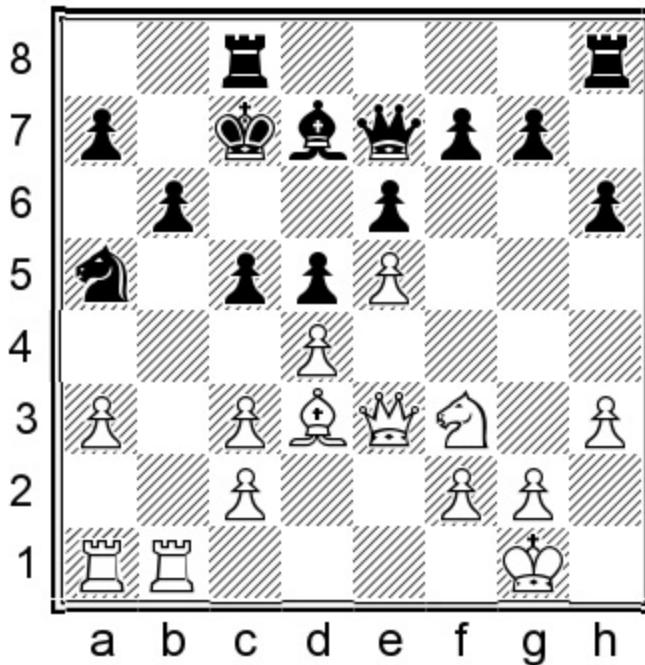
465. Shirov – Karpov, Biel 1992



Show/Hide Solution

16...Qa5! Rather than taking the pawn back, Black sacrifices a pawn to keep the c-file open and increase the impact of the outpost on c4. **17.cxb6 Qxb6†** **17...axb6†** is good as well. White's restricted bishop, Black's two semi-open files and the c4-square practically always offer compensation in such positions. Karpov didn't want to allow **18.Qd1 Qfd8 19.Qxd8† Qxd8 20.Qg5** with simplifications. **18.Qe3 Qc6†**

466. Anand – Ivanchuk, Linares (8) 1992



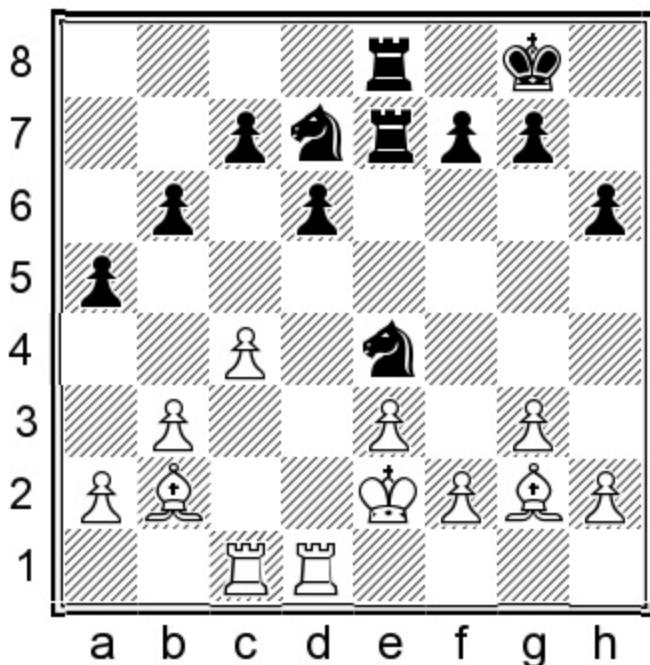
Show/Hide Solution

20.♕a6! Black should have closed the queenside with ...c5-c4 on the previous move. 20.a4 c4=; 20.dxc5 ♜xc5= Black attacks the c-pawn, making 21.♘d4 impossible. **20...♝b8 21.dxc5!** Again avoiding ...c5-c4. **21...♝xc5?** 21...bxc5 was the lesser evil, even though 22.c4± leaves Black's king rather unsafe. For instance: 22...♝b6 23.cxd5 exd5 24.♔e2 ♜hb8 25.♝d1± **22.♝d4±**

Viswanathan Anand

"Intuition in chess can be defined as the first move that comes to mind when you see a position."

467. Kramnik – Ulibin, Chalkidiki 1992

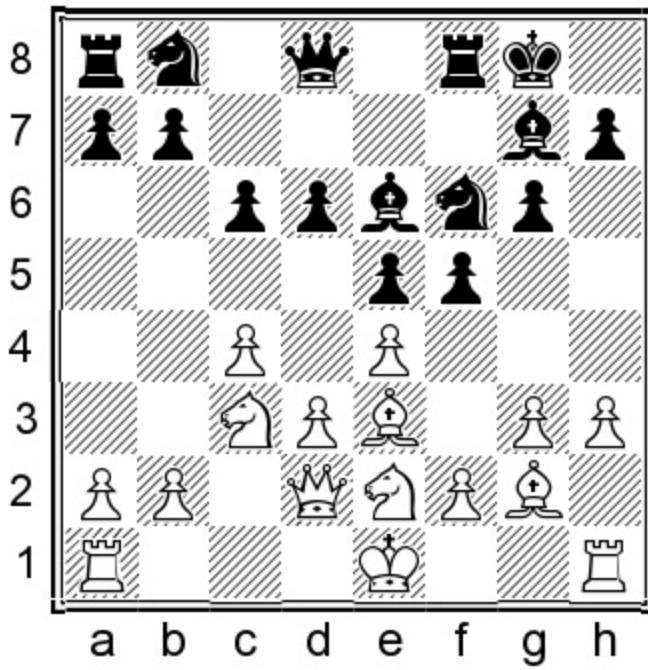


Show/Hide Solution

25.g4!± Stopping ...f7-f5, and also ...h7-h5. White continues by taking more space on the kingside and keeps the bishop pair as a long-term trump.

468. Ljubojevic – Kasparov, Linares

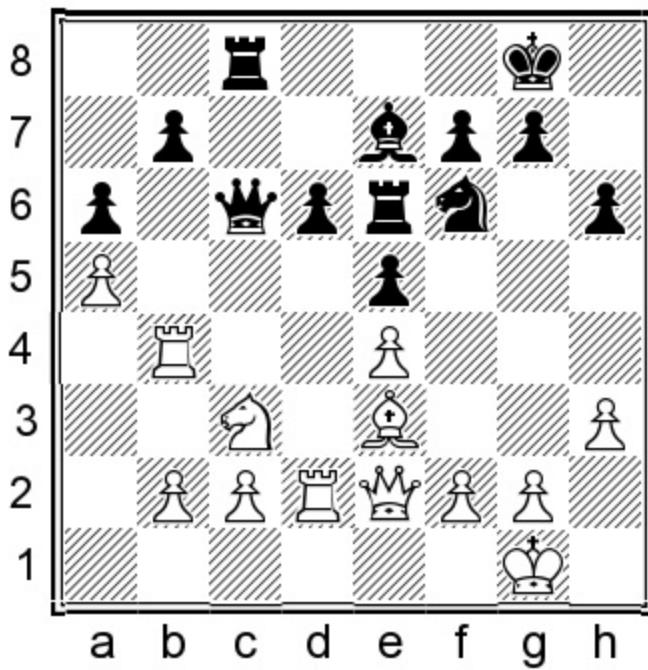
1992



Show/Hide Solution

10...fxe4! Good timing when White can't take back with the d-pawn due to ... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$. **11. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$** $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ **12. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$** $d5\bar{=}$

469. Adams – Anand, Roquebrune (Rapid) 1992



Show/Hide Solution

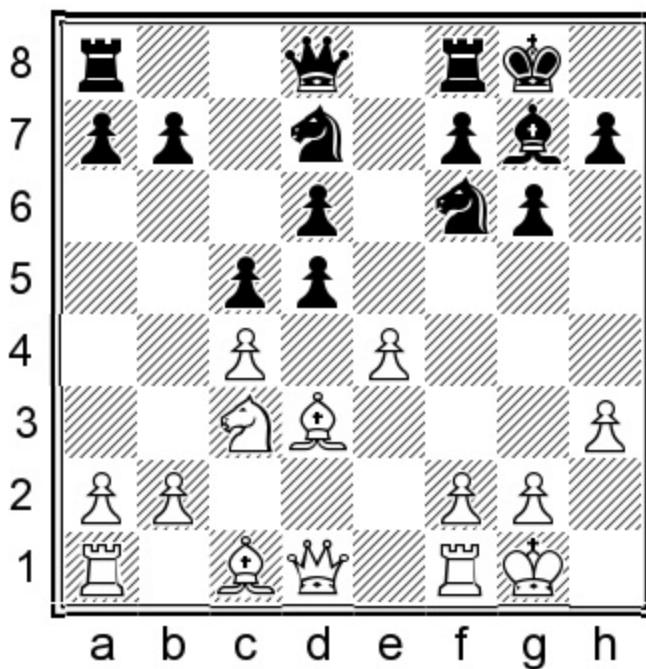
22... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ Finding a more active diagonal for the bishop and more or less forcing White's reply.

23. $\mathbb{Q}b6$ **23. $\mathbb{Q}a4$** loses coordination. There might follow: **23... $\mathbb{W}d7$** Threatening ... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ and ... $\mathbb{W}xa4$.

24. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ **25.bxc3** $\mathbb{Q}xe4\bar{=}$ **23... $\mathbb{Q}xb6$** **24. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$** $\mathbb{W}d7\pm$ Black still has the worse structure, but suffers

less without a bad bishop.

470. Spassky – Fischer, Sveti Stefan/Belgrade (26) 1992



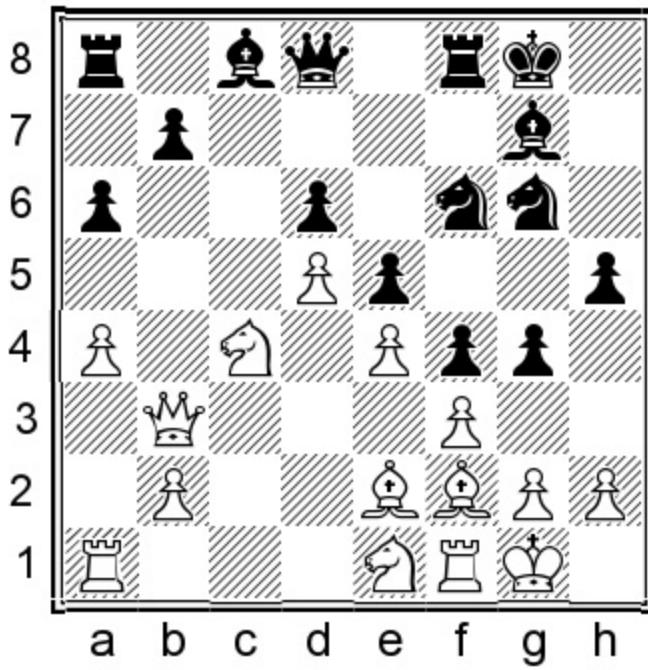
Show/Hide Solution

12.exd5!± Delaying ...e6xd5 in the Benoni has the downside that White can recapture with the e-pawn. That gives Black less counterplay, since it's harder to carry out ...b7-b5 and there is no pawn on e4 to attack. True, White lacks the possibility of a central break with f2-f4 and e4-e5, but White still controls more space and can look to slowly expand on the kingside. 12.cxd5 is a normal Benoni position.

Boris Spassky

“My forte was the middlegame. I had a good feeling for the critical moments of the play. This undoubtedly compensated for my lack of opening preparation and, possibly, not altogether perfect play in the endgame. In my games things often did not reach the endgame!”

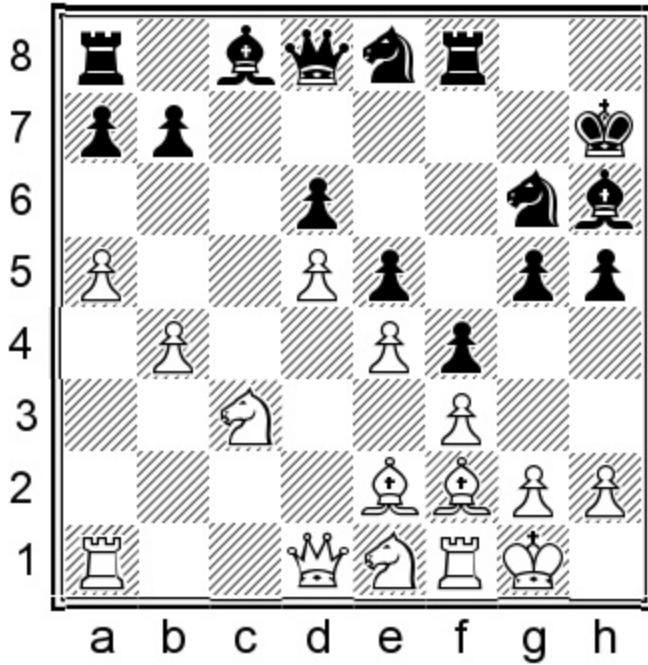
471. Shirov – Kasparov, Manila (Ol) 1992



Show/Hide Solution

19...g3! A standard sacrifice, gaining squares for the pieces. **20.hxg3** **20.Qb6 We7** also leaves White in some danger on the kingside. **20...fxg3** **21.Qxg3 h4** **22.Qh2 Qh5** **23.Wb6 Wg5=** Sacrificing the pawn was the correct way to be fast enough before White could win on the queenside.

472. Kortchnoi – Kasparov, Debrecen 1992

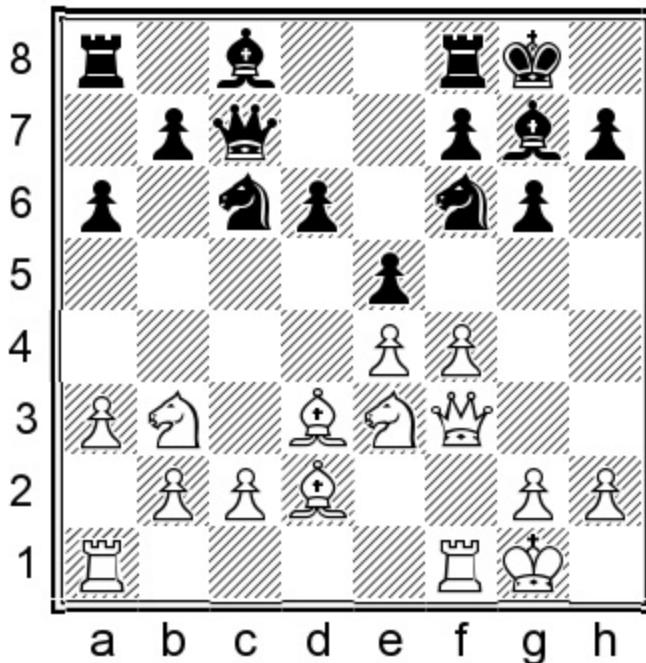


Show/Hide Solution

18.Qb5 The way forward in this typical King's Indian position. **18...a6** Kasparov sacrificed a pawn: **18...g4** **19.fxg4** **hxg4** **20.Qxg4 Qxg4** **21.Wxg4 Qf6** **22.Wf3** And another pawn: **22...Wd7** **23.Qxa7 Qg4**

The game was eventually drawn, but the engine is not impressed by Black's concept. 18... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xa7 \mathbb{B}xa7$ is another standard sacrifice, though not good enough here. (19... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 20.a6+–) 20. $\mathbb{Q}xa7 g4$ 21. $\mathbb{B}c1 g3$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}h1+–$ **19. $\mathbb{Q}a3$** A standard manoeuvre to force a weakness. I won't give an assessment – it's enough to know that this is the way White should play. **19... $\mathbb{E}g8$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}c4$** This is the most thematic continuation, heading for b6. 20.b5!? also deserves consideration.

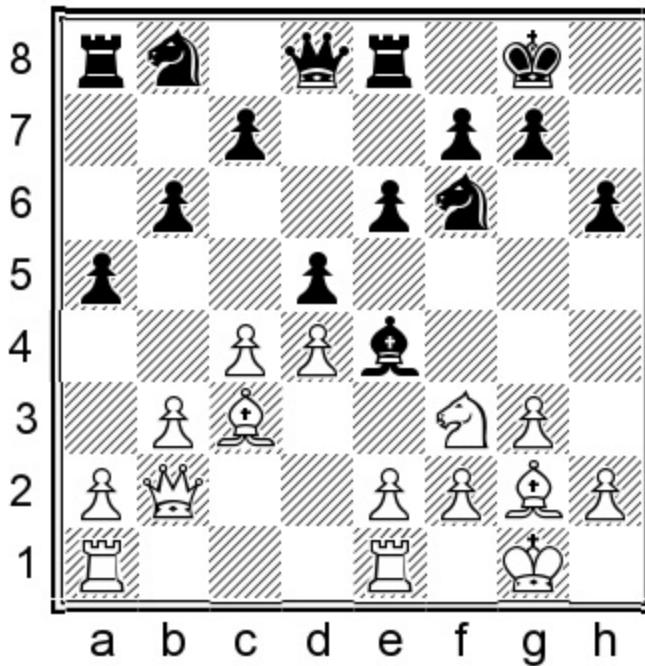
473. Short – Kasparov, Debrecen 1992



Show/Hide Solution

14...exf4 Opening the diagonal before White pushes f4-f5. After 14... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 15.f5 $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 16.cxb3 $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 17. $\mathbb{W}h3\infty$ White's attack compensates for the pawn on b3. **15. $\mathbb{W}xf4 \mathbb{Q}e6\mp$** The activity of the bishop on g7 makes all the difference compared to a normal position with the bishop on e7. Going after the b2-pawn with 15... $\mathbb{Q}h5?!$ would allow White to get active with $\mathbb{Q}d5$, either immediately or after moving the queen somewhere.

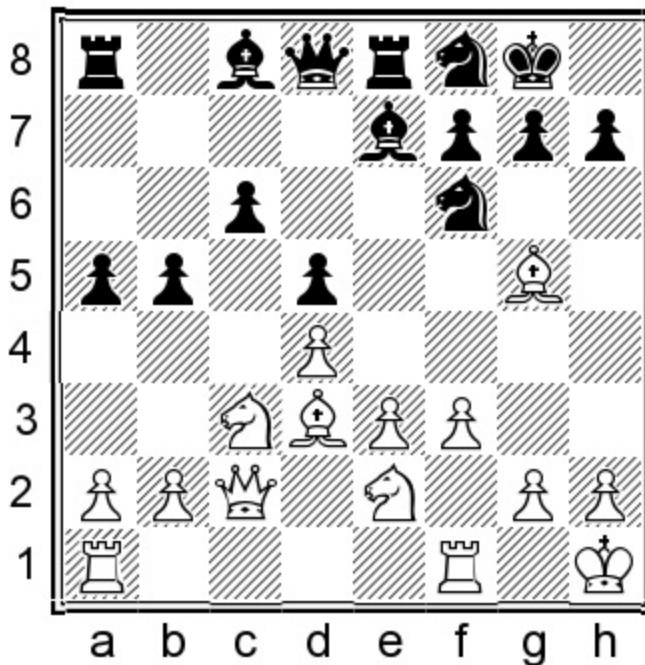
474. Polugaevsky – Anand, Roquebrune (Rapid) 1992



Show/Hide Solution

14.♗f1! To avoid a bishop exchange when gaining space (with either ♜e5 or ♜d2, followed by f2-f3 and e2-e4). 14.♗h3 has the same idea, but the bishop does not do much on that diagonal. Black can also offer a bishop exchange with ...♗f5. **14...♗xf3** **14...♗bd7** **15.♗e5±** **15.exf3±**

475. Kasparov – N.N., London (Simul) 1993

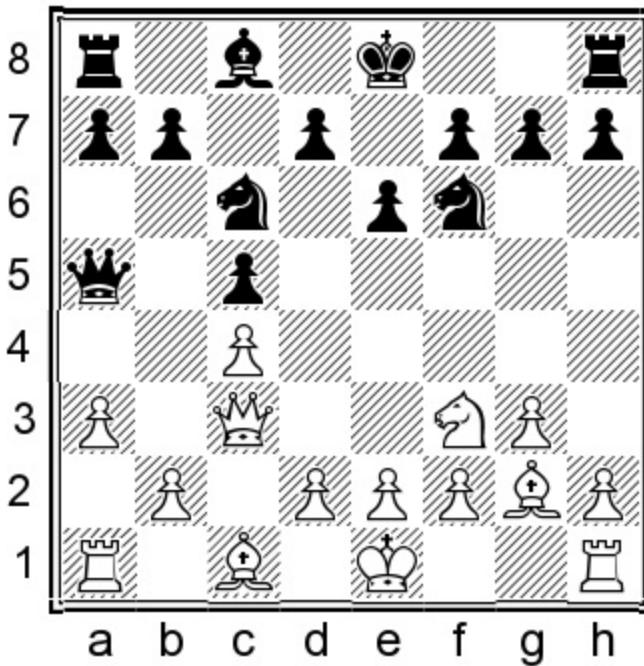


Show/Hide Solution

13.e4 Threatening e4-e5. 13.♗ad1 is a slow move that keeps the advantage, but there's no reason to wait for Black to develop. **13...dxe4** **13...b4** can be met in two ways, both tactical. **14.♗a4** (**14.♗xf6**

$\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $dxe4$ 16. $fxe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\#$) 14... $dxe4$ 15. $fxe4$ It's important that 15... $\mathbb{Q}xe4?$ doesn't work due to 16. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ with a fork. 14. **fxe4** $\mathbb{Q}g4$ 15. **Qd2?** Keeping the bishops is logical, since White has more space, but it should have retreated to c1. Black now had a strong tactical idea to avoid the positional suffering. Let's see it, even though it's not part of the exercise. 15... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 16. $h3$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4!$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 18. $hxg4$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}af1\infty$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}g3?$ $\mathbb{W}e5!$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{W}h5\#$

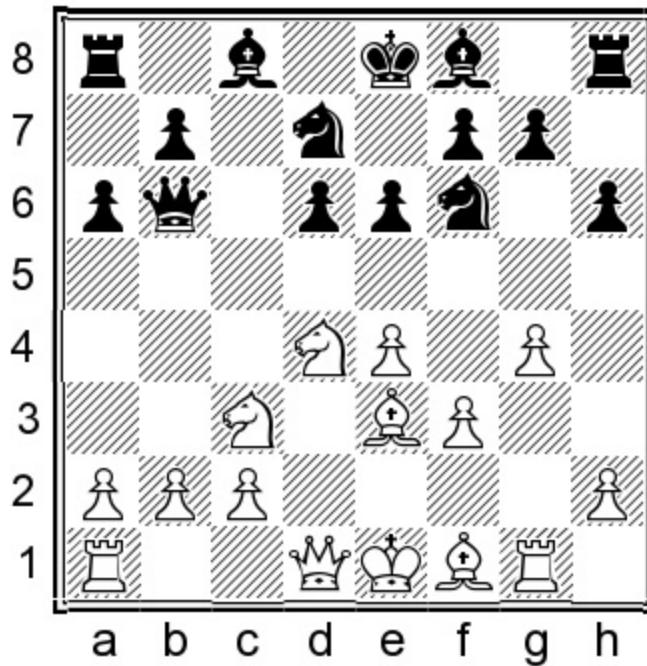
476. Kramnik – Romanishin, Belgrade 1993



Show/Hide Solution

9. **b4!** Sacrificing a pawn to open files and exploit the weak dark squares in Black's position. It increases White's advantage. 9... $cxb4$ 10. $AXB4$ $\mathbb{W}xb4$ 11. $\mathbb{W}xb4$ 11. $\mathbb{W}d3\pm$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}a3$ is also strong. (Other squares for the queen also work.) 11... $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}d4\pm$ Next comes $\mathbb{Q}a3$.

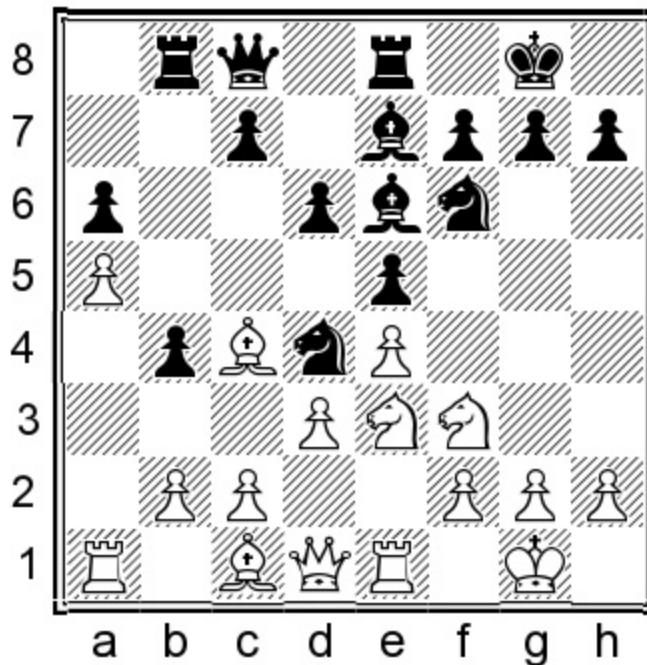
477. Kasparov – Kamsky, Linares 1993



Show/Hide Solution

10.a3! Tactically defending the pawn without making any big concession. After 10. $\mathbb{B}b1$ White can't castle long. 10. $\mathbb{W}c1$ threatens $\mathcal{Q}xe6$. (10... $\mathbb{W}c7$ 11. $\mathbb{W}d2$ would be good for White. However, Black has: 10...d5! 11.exd5 $\mathcal{Q}e5$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathcal{Q}xd5$ 13. $\mathcal{Q}xd5$ exd5=)

478. Kasparov – Short, London 1993

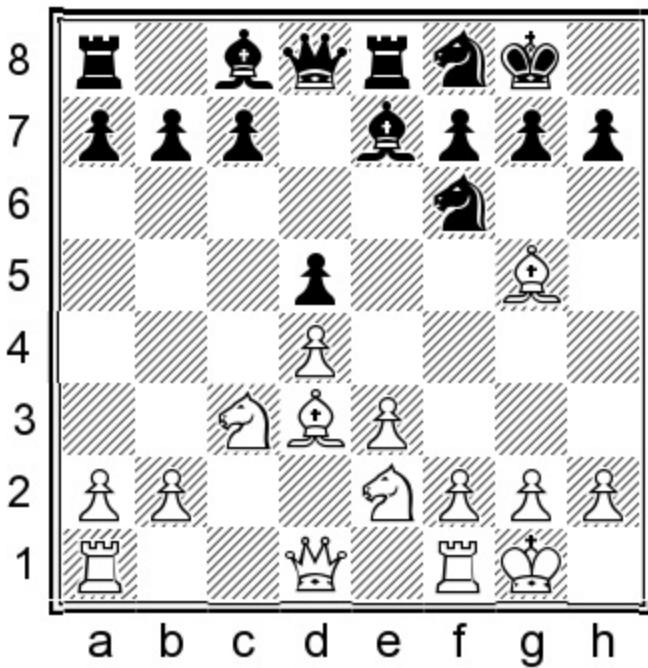


Show/Hide Solution

15. $\mathcal{Q}xd4$ The structural change after ...exd4 helps White, as it slightly reduces Black's central control. Ordinarily, both f2-f4 and e4-e5 would be new possibilities for White; but in this particular

position, the pawn structure will soon change again. 15.♕xe6 ♜xe6= 15...exd4 16.♗d5! 16.♕xe6?? helps Black, who will either recapture with the pawn towards the centre, or with the queen coming forward. 16...♗xd5 17.exd5± Both sides have doubled d-pawns, but the pressure on the a6-pawn makes it easier for White to fight for the e-file.

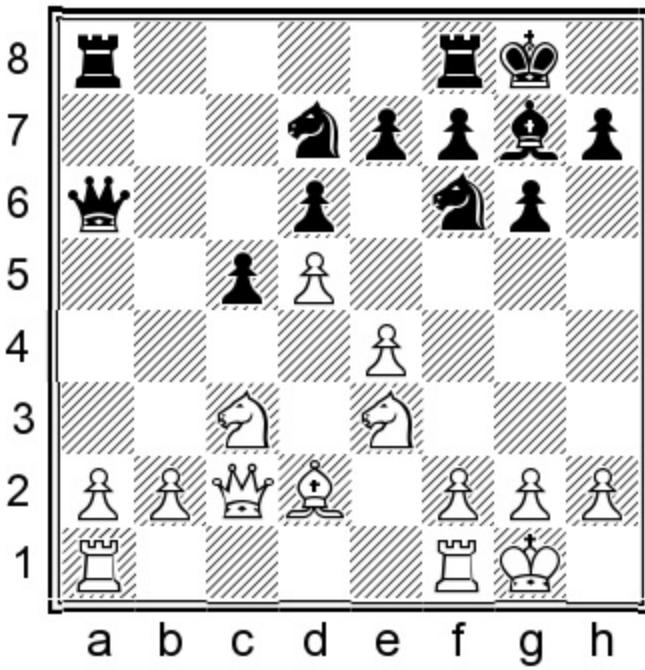
479. Kasparov – Short, London (15) 1993



Show/Hide Solution

We have a Carlsbad structure where White either plays in the centre (f2-f3 and e3-e4) or for a minority attack on the queenside (b2-b4-b5xc6). 10.b4! This tactical idea, to push b2-b4 earlier than normal, has for a long time been considered strong. 10.f3 is normal and not bad at all, but it misses a good opportunity to expand on the queenside. 10...♗xb4? The game continued 10...a6 11.a3 c6 when, having seized some queenside space, Kasparov reverted to the plan of expanding in the centre and won in instructive style. However, from the perspective of the exercise, we should focus on what happens if Black makes the mistake of grabbing the pawn. 11.♕xf6 gxf6 11...♗xf6 12.♗xd5 ♗d6 13.♗a4 wins material after: 13...♗d7 14.♗xb4 ♗xd5 15.♗c4 ♗c6 16.♗b3 ♗e7 17.♗d5 12.♗xd5 12.♗c1± followed by ♗g3 is also good. 12...♗xd5 13.♗a4± White regains the piece while keeping a highly favourable structure.

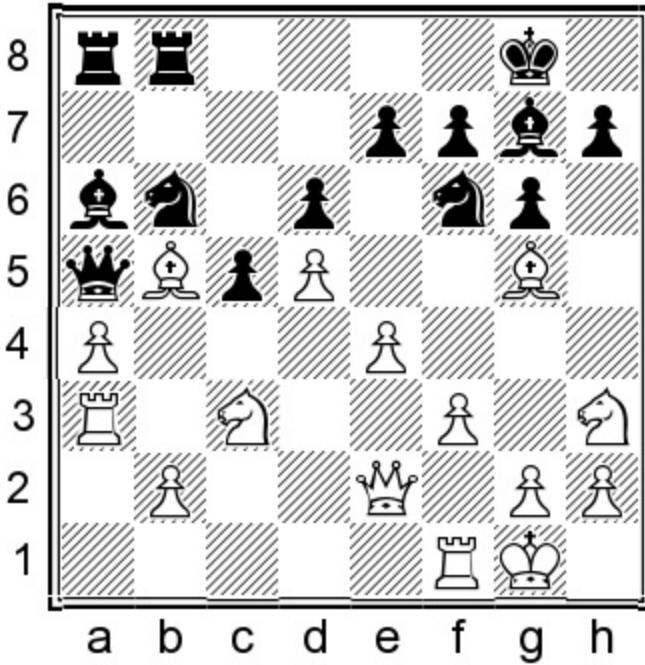
480. Bareev – Kasparov, Linares 1994



Show/Hide Solution

14...c4! Preparing ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ before White has played b2-b3. Kasparov's 14... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ is best met by 15.a4±, planning $\mathbb{Q}b5$ and b2-b3, which is White's ideal set-up. **15.a4 $\mathbb{Q}c5\bar{\bar}$**

481. Lutz – Kasparov, Horgen 1994

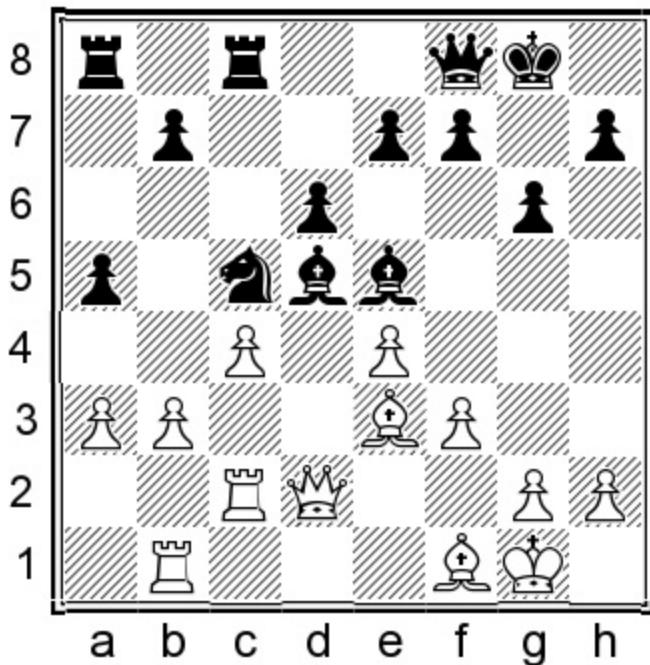


Show/Hide Solution

15... $\mathbb{Q}fd7!$ By opening the diagonal Black creates a tactical threat against White's piece configuration on the queenside. That is important, as it means White has no time for $\mathbb{Q}xe7$. 15... $\mathbb{Q}xa4!?$ is also playable, based on the following line: 16. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 17. $\mathbb{W}c4!$ $\mathbb{W}xa3!$ 18.bxa3 $\mathbb{Q}d7!±$ Black wins the

bishop on a6 and should be okay. This also counts as a correct solution – but only if you calculated this entire line. **16.♗fa1** 16.♕xe7? ♕xc3 17.♕xc3 ♗xa4 wins an exchange. White collapsed after the game continuation: 16.♔d2?! ♘xb5 17.♘xb5 ♖a6+ The pawns on b2 and a4 are threatened, and 18.b3 runs into: 18...♗xd5! (Kasparov played 18...♗c8 and eventually won, but the text move is much stronger.) 19.exd5 ♘xb5 20.♖xe7 ♘b7+ Black will destroy the white queenside with ...♗b2 and ...♘xb3. **16...♗xc3** 17.bxc3 ♘xb5 **18.♖xb5 f6=** Defending against ♕xe7 without losing a tempo. Black will sooner or later win back a pawn on the queenside.

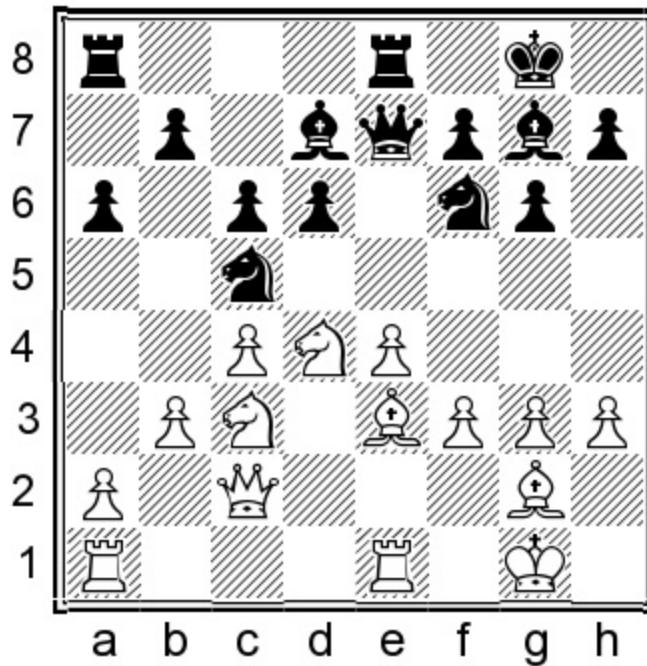
482. Khalifman – Hracek, Pardubice 1994



Show/Hide Solution

21.exd5 After this move, White can either advance on the queenside with a timely b2-b4, or prepare a gradual attack on the kingside. It is best to keep the c-file closed, as 21.cxd5 a4!= enables Black to create immediate counterplay on the queenside. 21.♗xd5!?± is a decent option which keeps an edge for White. **21...♗g7?** 21...a4?! 22.b4 ♗b3 23.♗f2±; Black should keep a tighter queenside defence with 21...b6. **22.b4 axb4 23.axb4 ♗a4 24.c5+**– The last move seems strongest, although Khalifman's 24.♗b3 also maintained a near-decisive advantage.

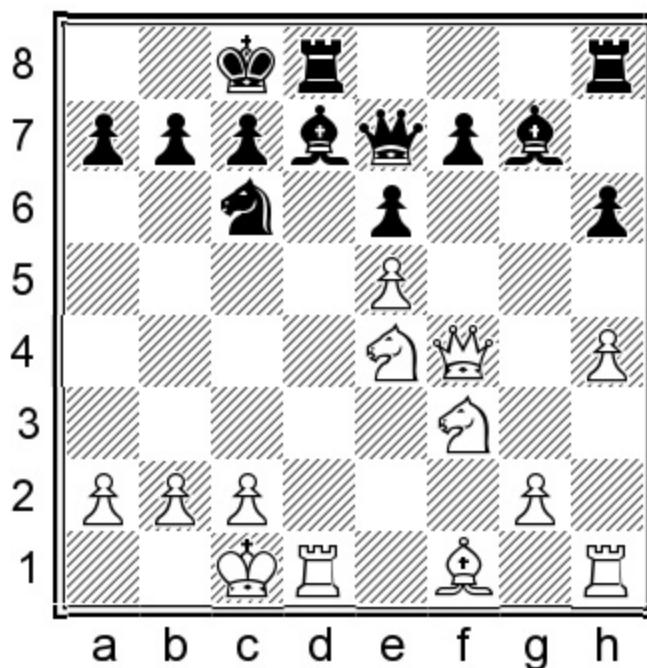
483. Nikolic – Kasparov, Tel Aviv (Simul) 1994



Show/Hide Solution

15...♝h5 Black has an inferior pawn structure and needs to create play before White is fully developed. **16.♔h2** **16.g4** **♝f4!** was the game. **16...f5** **17.exf5** **♝xg3!** **18.♔xg3** **♝xd4** **19.♔xd4** **♝g5†** **20.♔h2** **♝f4†** **21.♔h1** **♝xd4** A nice line, but you don't need to see all of it to decide on the standard move **15...♝h5**.

484. Adams – Karpov, Las Palmas 1994

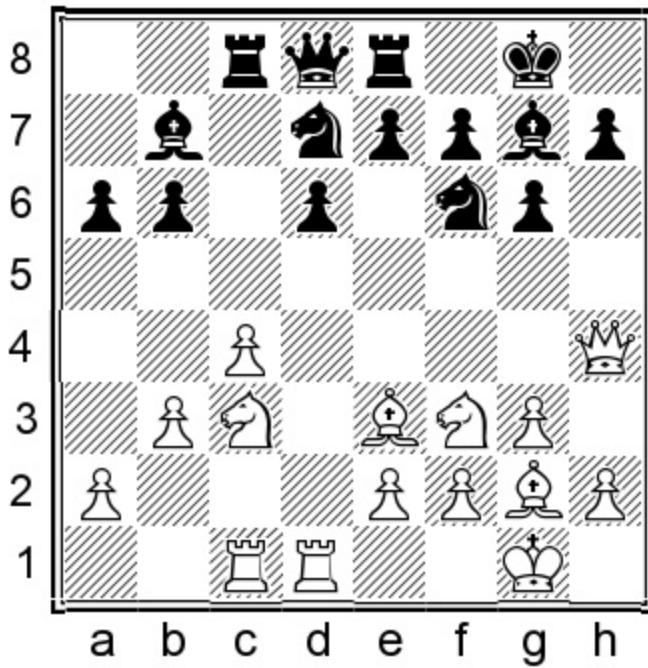


Show/Hide Solution

14...♝b8! Activating the light-squared bishop. **14...♝b4?** allows: **15.♝d6†!** **cxd6** **16.♝xb4±** **15.♚e2**

15. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}f6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 17. $exf6$ $\mathbb{W}c5=$ **15... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}f6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$** Black's regrouping is complete, and White should have exchanged knights with a balanced position.

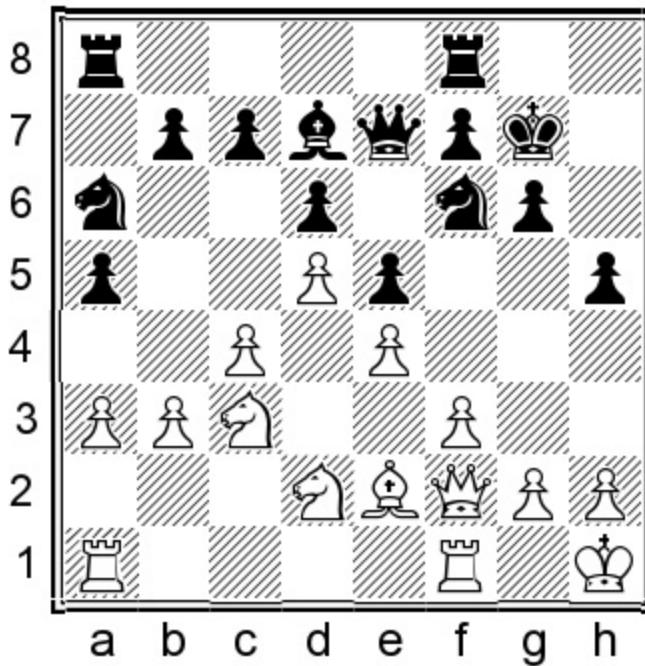
485. Kramnik – Karpov, Monte Carlo (Blindfold) 1994



Show/Hide Solution

14. $\mathbb{Q}h3!$ This move not only pins the d7-knight, but also serves an important purpose in controlling the g4-square, helping to prepare both $\mathbb{Q}h6$ and g3-g4-g5. 14.g4 is met by 14...h6! when $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ doesn't win a pawn, and 15.h3 g5∞ is satisfactory for Black. 14. $\mathbb{Q}h6$ allows 14... $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 15. $\mathbb{W}xh6$ b5! 16. cxb5 axb5 17. $\mathbb{Q}xb5?$! $\mathbb{W}b6\#$ when ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ (or ... $\mathbb{W}xf2\#$) is a threat. **14... $\mathbb{B}c7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 15.g4** is also possible. **15... $\mathbb{B}c5$ 15...b5 16. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 17. cxb5 axb5 18. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$** leaves Black with insufficient compensation. **16. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 17. $\mathbb{W}d4\pm$**

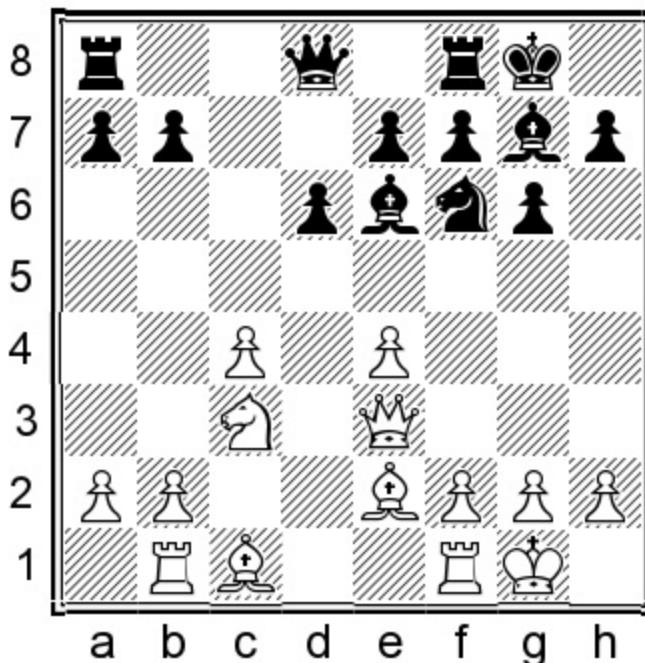
486. Galko – Kasparov, Moscow (Rapid) 1995



Show/Hide Solution

18...h4! Preparing ... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ and ... $\mathbb{B}h8$ with play on the h-file. **19.f4?!** Acting before Black has created threats, but it does not make things better. 19. $\mathbb{W}xh4 \mathbb{Q}xd5\bar{=}$ is a tactical justification, but 18...h4 could also have been played as a pawn sacrifice with the open h-file providing compensation. 19. $\mathbb{B}fb1$ seems best, although 19... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 20.b4 $\mathbb{B}h8\uparrow$ gives Black nice play. **19...exf4 20. $\mathbb{W}xf4 h3\bar{=}$** White will be weak around the king, and has weak dark squares as well.

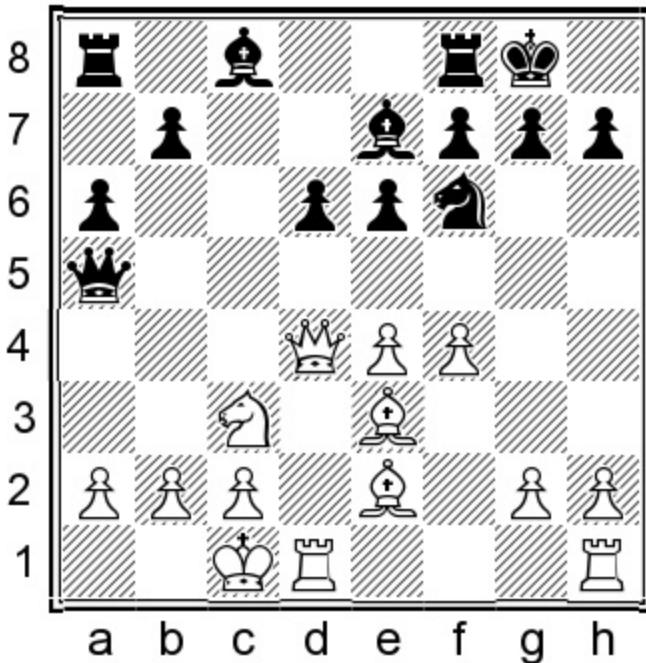
487. Krasenkow – Khalifman, Elista 1995



Show/Hide Solution

11... $\mathbb{W}b6$! Offering an exchange, as Black has less space. Against 11... $\mathbb{Q}g4$?! White can exchange the restricted light-squared bishop, but can also go 12. $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 13.f4!± when it is not possible to capture on c4, and f4-f5 follows. **12. $\mathbb{W}d3$** Black's last move developed the queen for free, and if White plays $\mathbb{Q}e3$ the queen can continue to b4 to attack a pawn. After 12. $\mathbb{W}xb6$ axb6 the b6-pawn is easily defended, while Black intends ... $\mathbb{E}fc8$, or perhaps ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ with threats such as ... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ followed by ... $\mathbb{E}xa2$. A possible continuation is 13.a3 $\mathbb{E}fc8$ 14.b3 b5! with good counterplay.

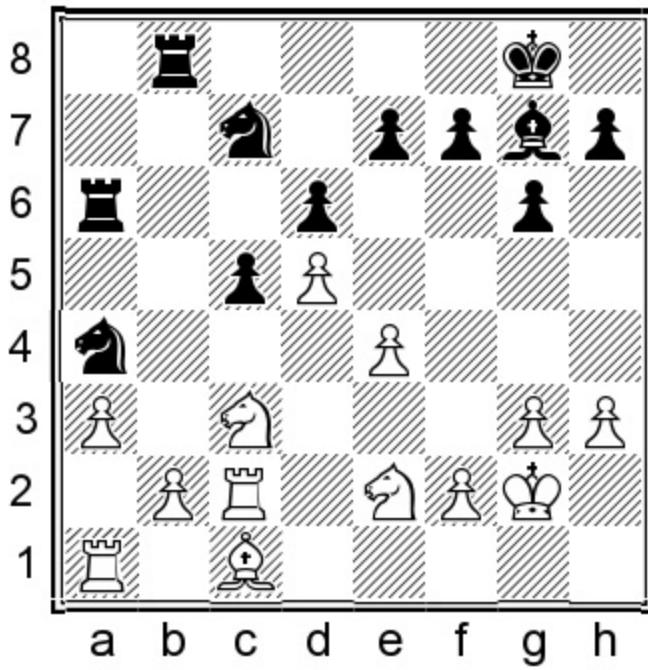
488. Anand – Kamsky, Las Palmas 1995



Show/Hide Solution

12. $\mathbb{W}b6$! White is often happy with a queen exchange on b6 in the open Sicilian. **12... $\mathbb{W}xb6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$** Black has a hard time completing development, and the d6-pawn may prove vulnerable in some lines. **13... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 13... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 14.e5 $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}c5$!+– 14.e5 d5 15.f5±** Anand's choice, following up with $\mathbb{Q}g4$. 15. $\mathbb{Q}f3$!± is an excellent alternative, threatening to capture twice on d5 and trap the bishop on e7.

489. Beliavsky – Khalifman, Linares 1995

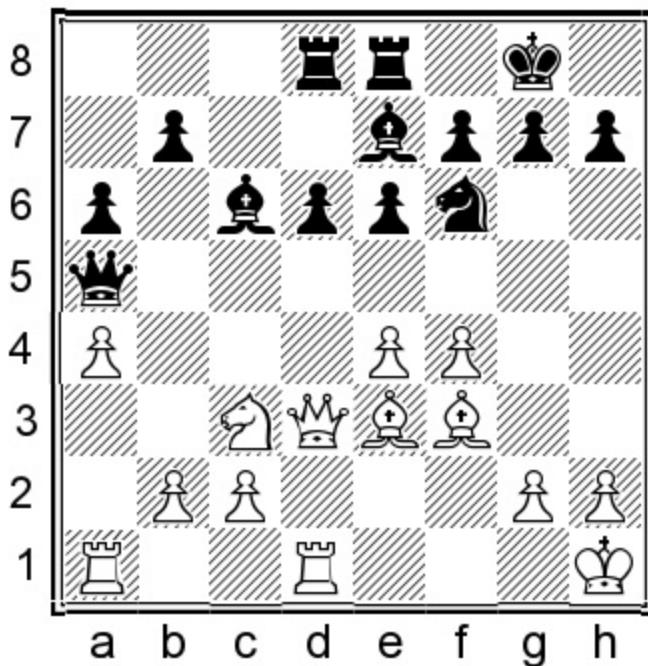


Show/Hide Solution

20...f5! Indirectly threatening the d5-pawn. Often, ...f7-f5 weakens the e6-square and e7-pawn considerably; but without queens, White is far too passive to make use of those weaknesses.

20... $\mathbb{Q}b3\infty$ 21.f3 The normal reaction. 21...fxe4 22.fxe4 $\bar{\mp}$ Compared to the starting position of the exercise, the e4-pawn is an additional weakness that can be attacked with ... $\mathbb{Q}a4$ and/or ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$. A sample line: 22... $\mathbb{Q}b5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}bxc3$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{Q}e5\bar{\mp}$ White is unable to do anything with the extra pawn, and Black may advance on the kingside to create an additional target.

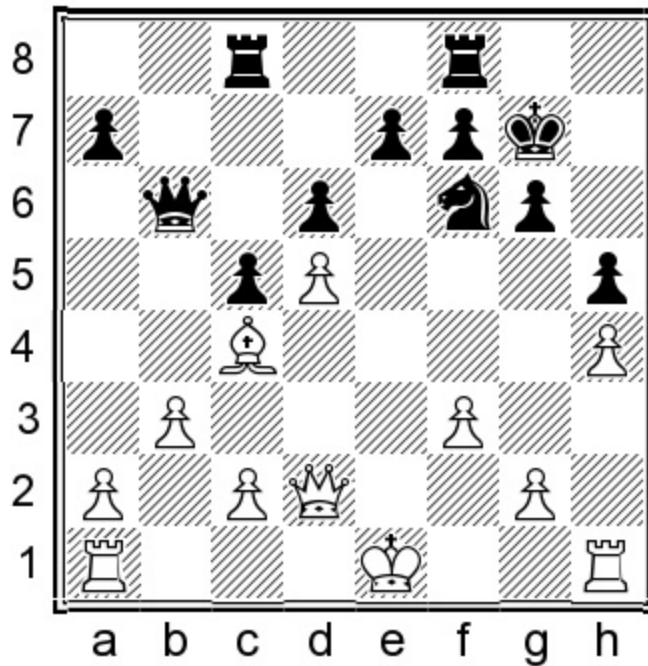
490. Anand – Kasparov, New York (9) 1995



Show/Hide Solution

17.b4! Gaining space by a tactical idea. **17... $\mathbb{W}c7$** **17... $\mathbb{W}xb4?$** **18. $\mathbb{B}db1$** **$\mathbb{W}a5$** **19. $\mathbb{Q}b6$** and the queen is trapped. **18.b5!** Otherwise Black pushes ...d6-d5. **18... $\mathbb{Q}d7$** **19. $\mathbb{B}ab1\pm$**

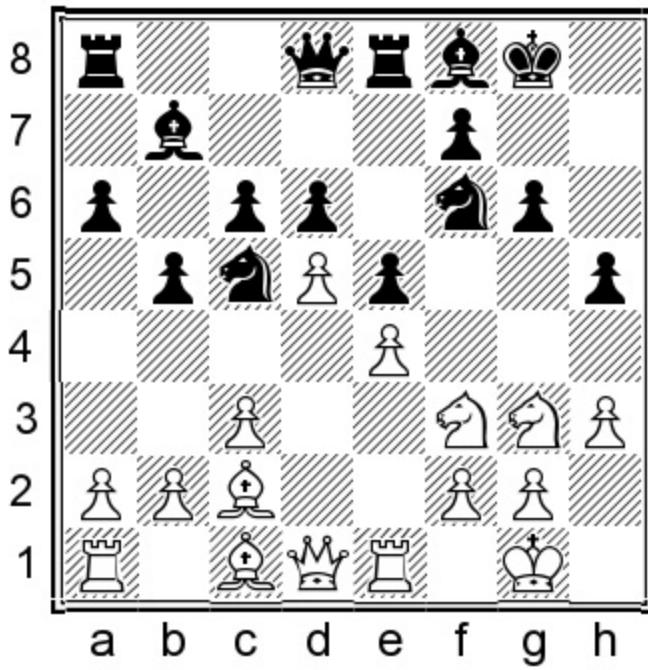
491. Anand – Kasparov, New York (13) 1995



Show/Hide Solution

18...e5! Black gets rid of the backward pawn on e7. 18...e6 is simply met by: 19.0-0-0 **19.dxe6??!** 19.0-0-0 is the lesser evil, when Black has several options. (19...e4 \mp questions White's pawn structure; 19... $\mathbb{W}b4\mp$ angles for a promising endgame; 19...a5 \mp prepares a slow attack.) **19...d5!** **20. $\mathbb{Q}e2$** Black has become active and has many good moves **20. $\mathbb{Q}xd5?$** **$\mathbb{B}fd8$** **21.c4** fxe6 wins the bishop. **20...c4** Kasparov later commented that he was happy to “prevent castling on two wings with one move” (as castling long loses the b3-pawn).

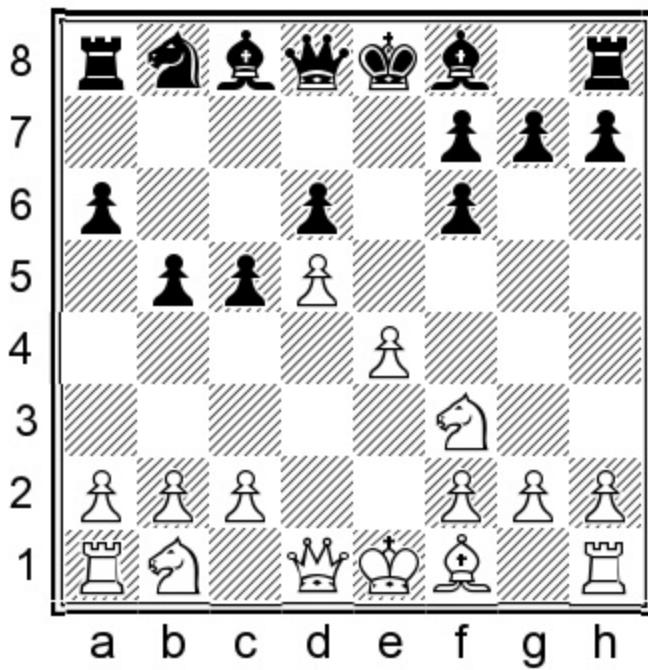
492. Anand – Ivanchuk, Dos Hermanas 1996



Show/Hide Solution

18.b4 Capturing on c6 first would give the knight the e6-square. **18...♝cd7 19.dxc6 ♞xc6 20.♝b3±** Black won't be able to push ...d6-d5.

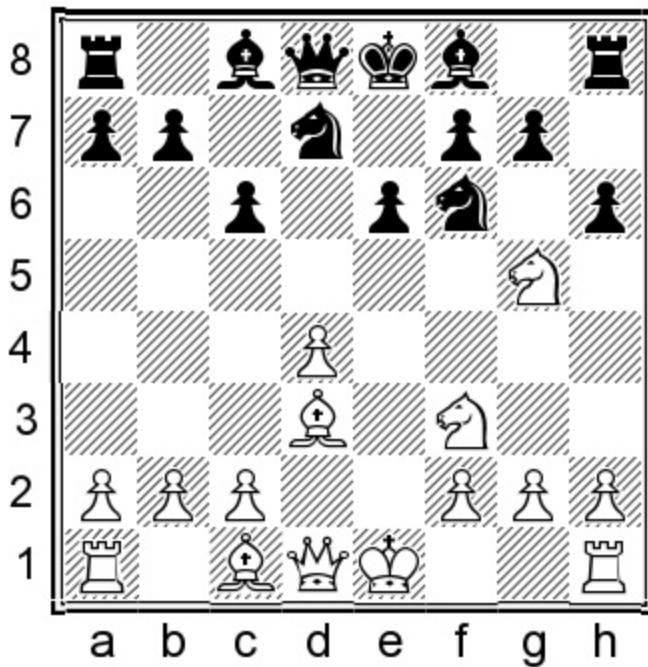
493. Kasparov – Graf, Moscow (Rapid) 1996



Show/Hide Solution

7.a4 Forcing the b-pawn to move is a good idea with the knight still on b1. **7...b4 8.♝d3±** White follows up with ♜bd2 and ♜c4.

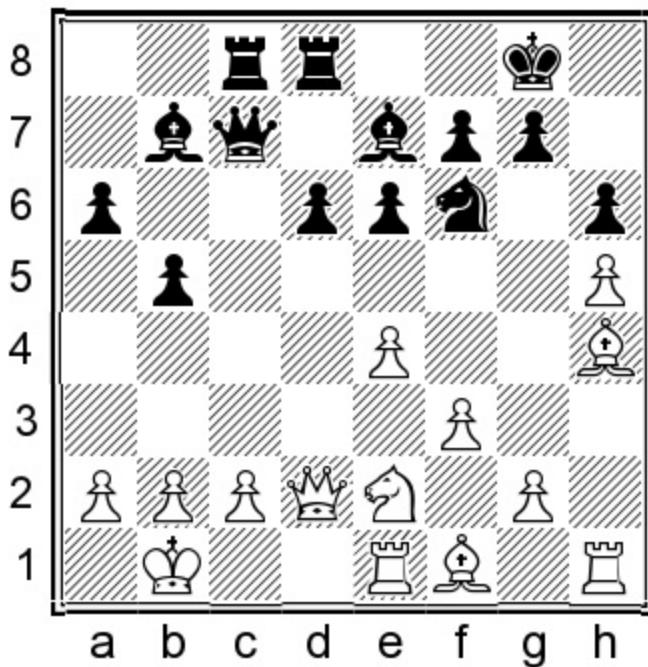
494. Deep Blue – Kasparov, New York (6) 1997



Show/Hide Solution

8. $\mathbb{Q}xe6 \mathbb{W}e7?!$ After 8...fxe6 9. $\mathbb{Q}g6\# \mathbb{Q}e7$ 10. 0-0 White has scored excellently in practice. The next few moves are likely to be $\mathbb{E}e1$ and c2-c4. Black's best chance is to put the queen on c7 and king on d8, preparing to develop the kingside. 9. 0-0 fxe6 10. $\mathbb{Q}g6\# \mathbb{Q}d8$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}f4\pm$ Black is too passive and the king has long-term problems. There have been many games, White winning almost all of them.

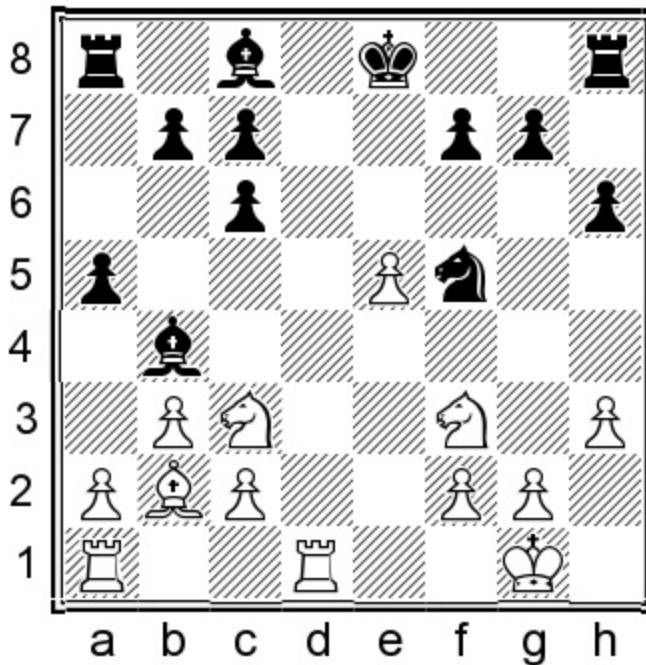
495. Ivanchuk – Anand, Linares 1998



Show/Hide Solution

17...e5! 17...d5? allows 18.e5! with the following justification: 18... $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}f5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}h7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}h8$ White is winning even without finding the decisive: 22. $\mathbb{Q}xe6!$ fxe6 23. $\mathbb{W}xe6+$ – **18. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$** The only way to stop ...d6-d5. 18. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ d5!– **18... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}g5$ –** A problem for White is that $\mathbb{Q}d5$ followed by $\mathbb{W}xd5$ isn't possible due to the loose c2-pawn. Black can push the queenside pawns with an attack.

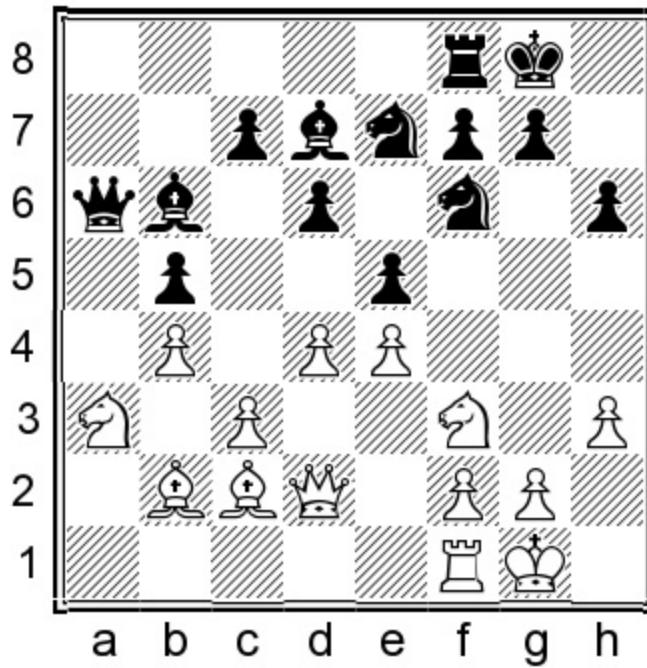
496. Fritz 5 – Anand, Frankfurt (Rapid) 1998



Show/Hide Solution

13... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$! The Berlin endgame gives Black the bishop pair, but perhaps a more important theme is to play for domination of the light squares. That can be achieved by swapping the dark-squared bishop for a knight, and reaching a position with opposite-coloured bishops on the board. Of course, it's important not to allow e5-e6 under favourable conditions. Some might argue against this exchange, but it's not only Anand's choice to beat a computer – it has also been played by Kramnik in similar positions. **14. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ a4=** 14...c5 was the game.

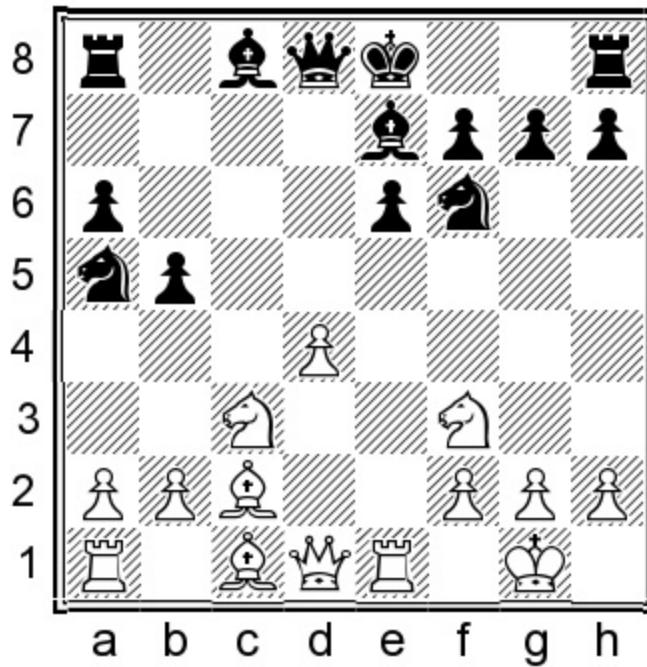
497. Topalov – Anand, Dos Hermanas 1999



Show/Hide Solution

17...exd4! Black exchanges the vulnerable e5-pawn. The game went 17... $\mathbb{Q}g6?$! reaching another exercise. **18.cxd4 d5** 18... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 19.d5 $\mathbb{Q}h5\infty$ is a valid alternative. **19.e5 $\mathbb{Q}e4$** A standard method against the d4/e4 pawn centre. **20. $\mathbb{W}e3$** White is not really threatening to take on e4, as Black gets compensation on the light squares. Black also has a move to create counterplay. **20... $\mathbb{Q}c6\infty$**

498. Kramnik – Karpov, Frankfurt (Rapid) 1999

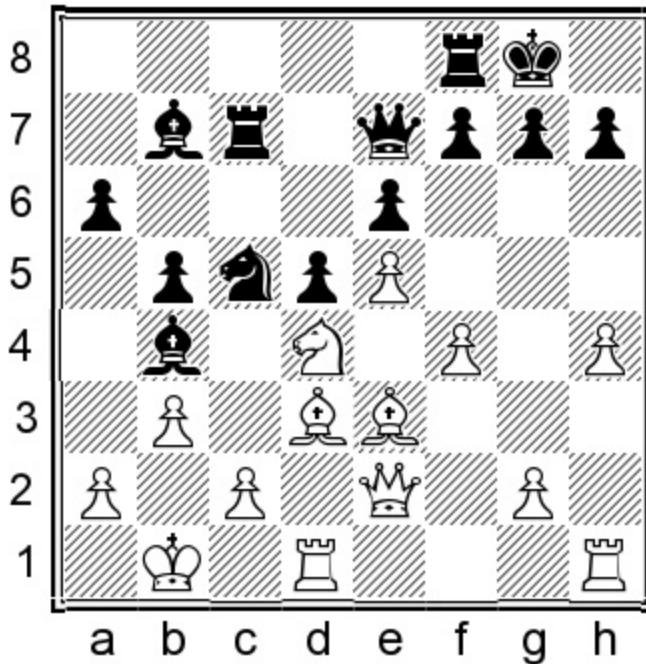


Show/Hide Solution

12.d5! The standard break, possible since Black hasn't castled yet. **12...b4** 12... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$

is met by 14. $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ ± intending $\mathbb{Q}e4$ and $\mathbb{Q}c1$, when Black will do well to survive. (14. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $exd5$ ±); 12... $exd5$? 13. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ 0-0 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe7!$ +–; 12...0-0 is a better try, although it does not fully solve Black's problems. 13. $\mathbb{W}d3$ g6 14. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ ± 13. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ †± Black has to move the king, and the position continues to open up.

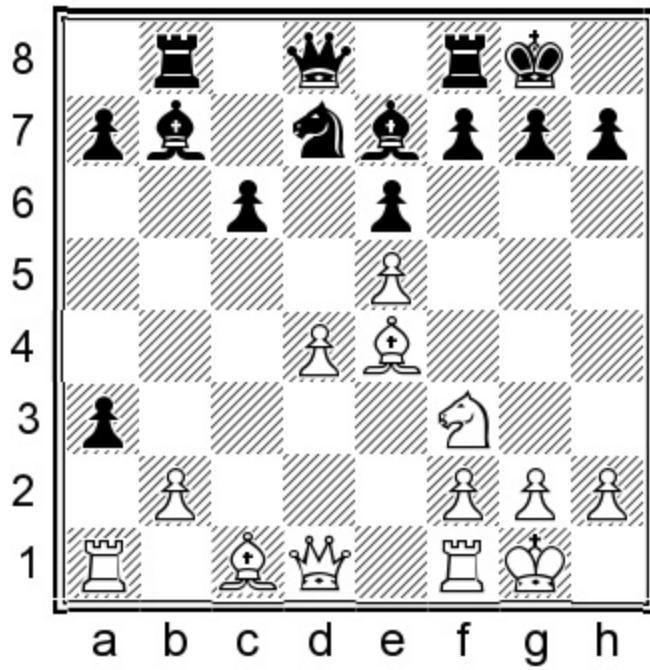
499. Anand – Shirov, Monte Carlo (Rapid) 2000



Show/Hide Solution

21.f5! Threatening to destroy Black's king shelter with f5-f6. **21...Qc3** After 21... $exf5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 23. $\mathbb{W}g4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ White wins with $\mathbb{Q}d4$ or $\mathbb{Q}f4$ next. **22.f6 gxf6 23.Qxh7†** White's attack is decisive.

500. Khalifman – Bareev, Dortmund 2000



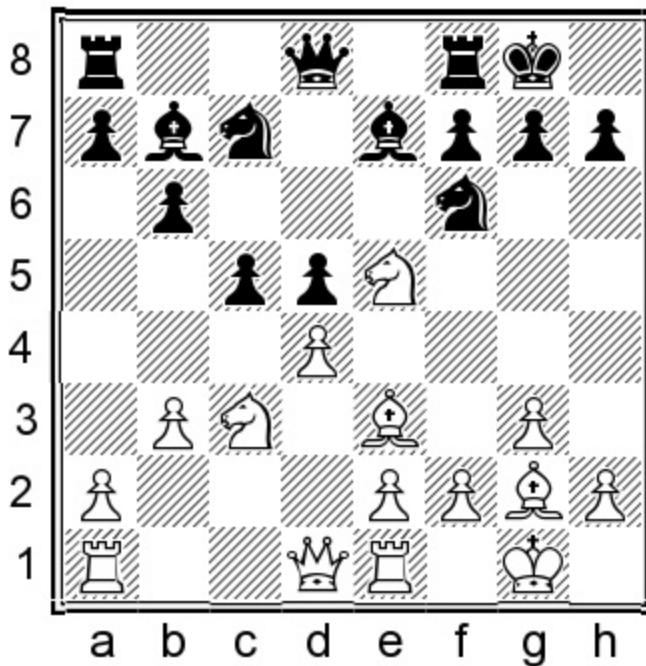
Show/Hide Solution

16.b4! Directed against ...c6-c5. 16.bxa3 c5= **16...f5** 16... $\mathbb{Q}xb4?$ stops protecting the g5-square, thus allowing: 17. $\mathbb{Q}xh7\#!$ (17. $\mathbb{W}b3?$ merely gives positional compensation.) 17... $\mathbb{Q}xh7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}g5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 19.h4 $\mathbb{E}h8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}d3\#$ f5 21.exf6# $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 22. $\mathbb{W}f3\#$ +- **17. $\mathbb{Q}d3\pm$** Black's backward c-pawn and bad bishop will remain after White picks up the a3-pawn. **17... $\mathbb{Q}xb4??$** is inadvisable since **18. $\mathbb{Q}c4$** wins the e6-pawn. (White can follow up with $\mathbb{W}b3$ and/or $\mathbb{Q}g5$ if necessary.)

3. Academic Level Exercises 501-545

Show in Text Mode

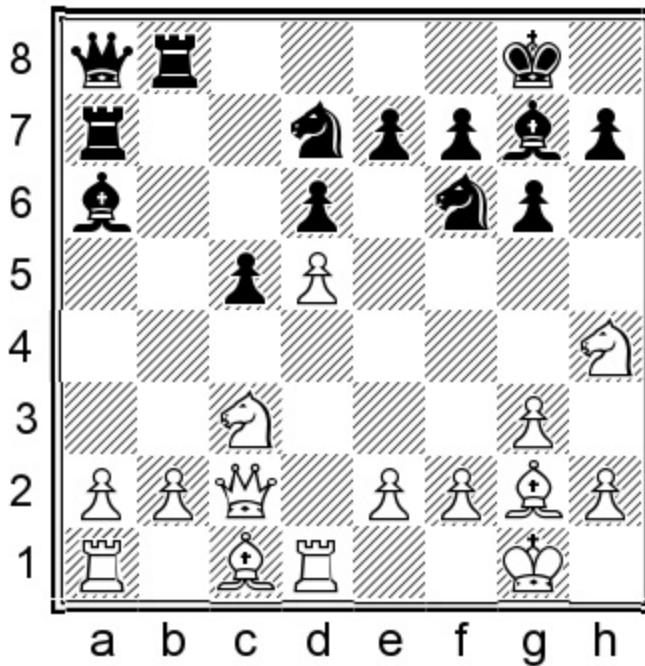
501. Anand – Gelfand, Shenyang 2000



Show/Hide Solution

14.dxc5! Giving Black vulnerable hanging pawns. 14.♖c1 cxd4 and Black somehow semi-escapes. **14...bxc5** White follows up with threat after threat. **15.♘a4 ♘e6 16.♖c1 ♘c8 16...♗b8!?** is Stockfish's choice, to defend the bishop and be able to move the d-pawn. 17.♘d3 d4 18.♗f4 ♘xf4 19.♘xf4 ♘xg2 20.♘xg2± **17.♘d3 ♗a5 17...d7 18.♗f4! ♘xf4 19.gxf4±** and Black loses a pawn. **18.♘axc5! ♘xc5 19.♘xc5 ♘xc5 20.♘xc5 ♘xc5 21.b4 ♗xa2 22.bxc5±** White is better placed to exploit the open files on the queenside and has two weak pawns to attack. Anand went on to win a nice game.

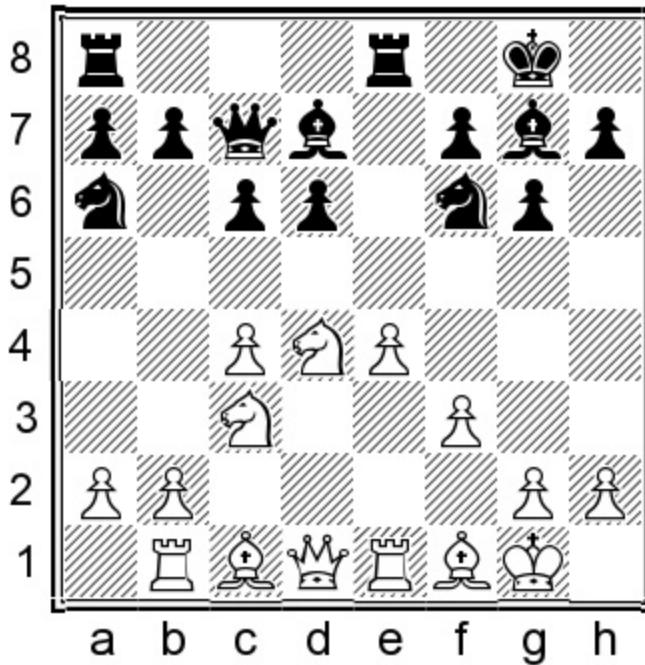
502. Karpov – Staikopoulos, Rethymno (Simul) 2001



Show/Hide Solution

14.♖b1! Preparing b2-b3 as a response to ...♗c4. (The rook needs to leave a1 before the long diagonal opens.) A good set-up is to have the pawns on b3 and a4. 14.b3 c4!∞; 14.e4? ♗c4∞ and White can't untangle.

503. Kramnik – Piket, Monte Carlo (Rapid) 2001

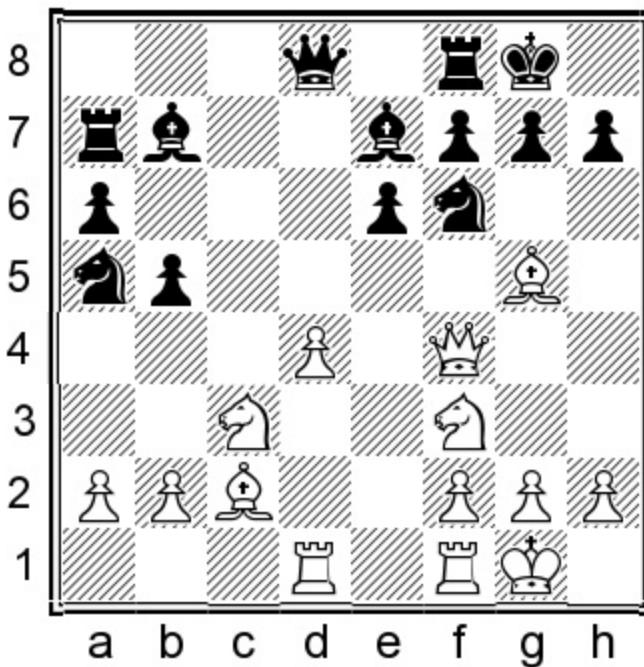


Show/Hide Solution

14...d5! Fighting for the centre and getting rid of a potentially weak pawn. 14...♖ad8 can be met by 15.♗g5 (or 15.♗f4) and it's too late. **15.cxd5 ♔xd5!** Exchanging knights opens the diagonal for the

bishop on g7. 15...cxd5 16.♗db5± 16.exd5 ♜xe1 17.♗xe1 ♗xd4† 18.♗e3 ♜b6=

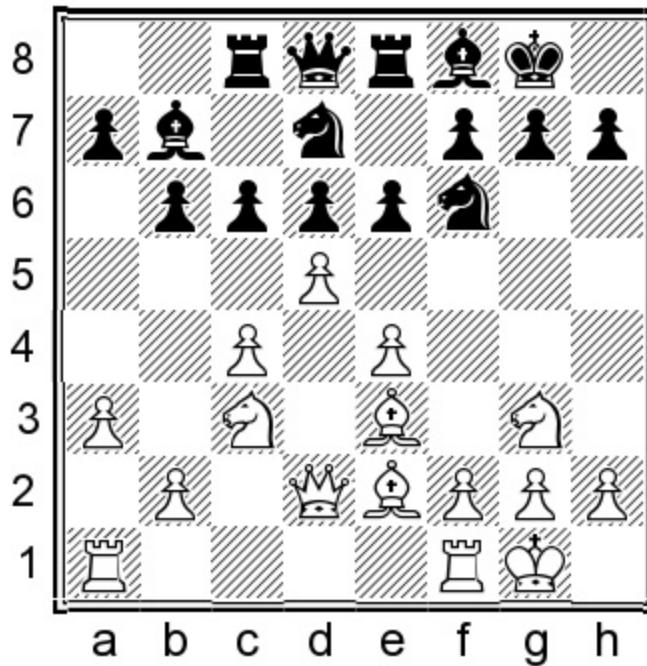
504. Kramnik – Anand, Dortmund 2001



Show/Hide Solution

15.d5! The thematic break, making use of the d-file (rook against the queen) and the h4-d8 diagonal. A few key variations secure White a clear advantage, and that's chess: positional moves are backed up by concrete calculation. **15...♗xd5** Other captures are worse: 15...♗xd5? 16.♗xh7† ♗xh7 17.♗h4† ♗g8 (17...♗g6 18.g4 ♗xg5 19.♗h5† ♗f6 20.♗xg5#) 18.♗xd5!+– After the knight lands on g5, Black will have to give up the queen. 15...exd5? 16.♗h4 h6 (16...g6 17.♗fe1+– and the pin decides.) 17.♗xh6 with a mating attack. **16.♗xd5** 16.♗e5? ♜c7† **16...exd5** 16...♗xd5 can be refuted in more than one way. For instance: 17.♗xd5 exd5 18.♗xh7† ♗xh7 19.♗h4† ♗g6 (19...♗g8 20.♗xe7 ♜xe7 21.♗g5+–) 20.♗e5† ♗f5 21.♗g4† ♗xe5 22.♗f4† ♗f6 23.♗e1 With mate on the next move. **17.♗h4 h5±** Other moves lose in the same way as after 15...exd5. After the text move, White should not hurry to pick up the pawn with ♗xf6 and ♜xh5, but instead play for an attack. **18.g4!?** is one of a few good options.

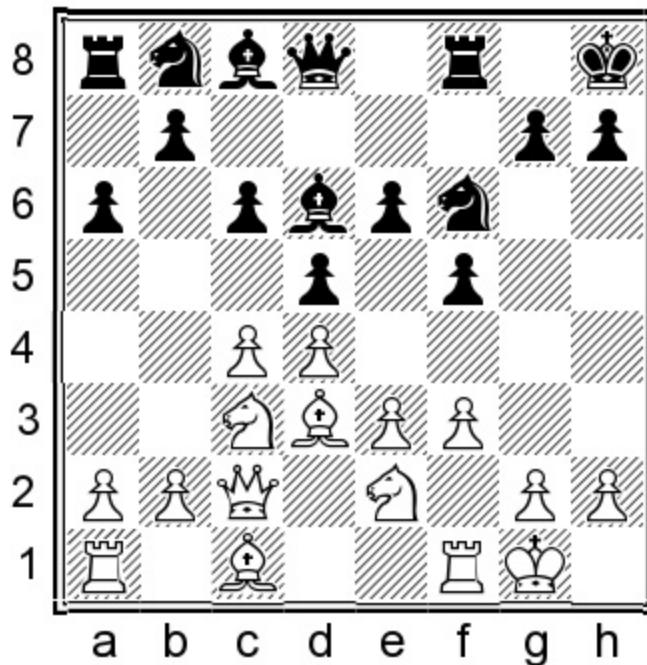
505. Kasparov – Kramnik, Moscow (Rapid) 2001



Show/Hide Solution

14.dxe6! Black wanted to exchange several times on d5, with a static pawn structure. 14... $\mathbb{Q}fe1$ exd5 15.exd5 cxd5 16.cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}c5\pm$ **14...fxe6** 14... $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}ad1\pm$ **15.f4±** Black has an extra central pawn, but no good way to use the pawns.

506. Kramnik – Tregubov, France 2002

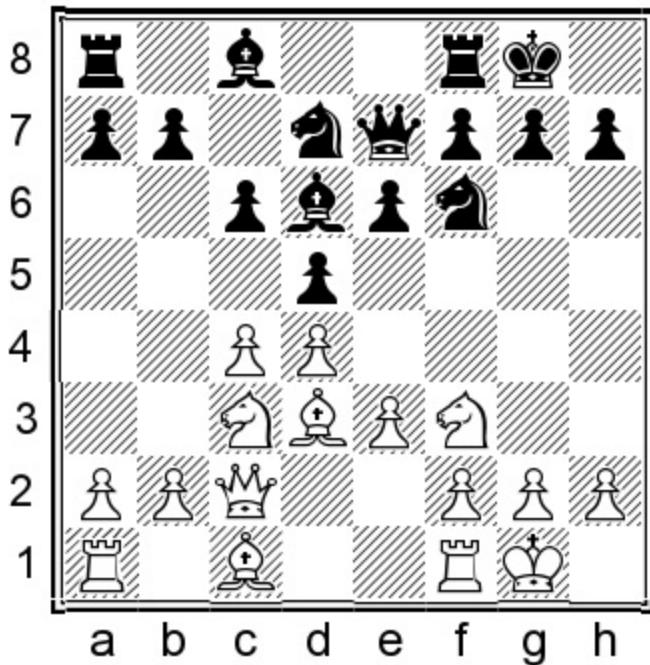


Show/Hide Solution

10.c5 Gaining space on the queenside before Black has time for ... $\mathbb{W}c7$, hitting the h2-pawn. The downside with c4-c5 is that it allows Black to push his e-pawn without weakening d5. However,

Black will first have to play ...g7-g6 to defend f5; and when ...e6-e5 finally comes, White has more than one way to deal with it. 10.b3 dxc4 11.bxc4 c5= **10...♝c7 11.b4 ♝bd7 12.♝d2±** When ...e6-e5 eventually happens, White will most likely be able to meet it with e3-e4, exploiting his lead in development. A second possibility is to play dxe5 followed by f3-f4, gaining an outpost on d4 and intending to play on the dark squares.

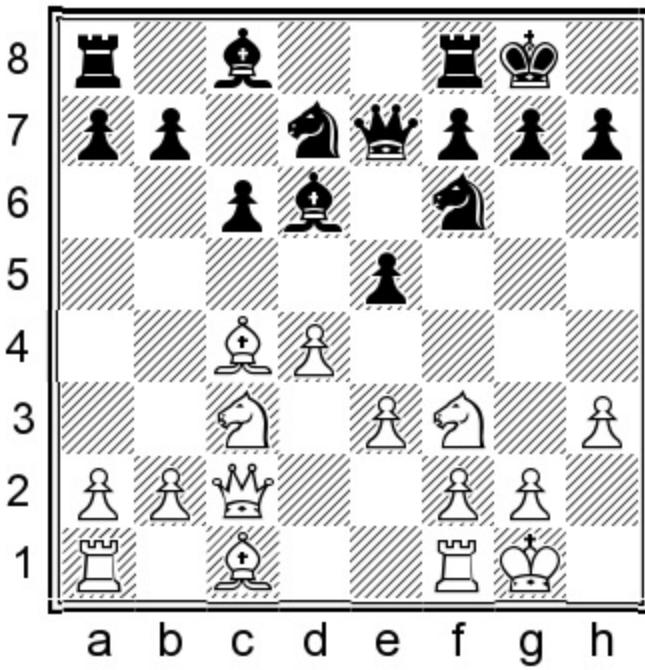
507. Karpov – Kosteniuk, Manises (Rapid) (1) 2002



Show/Hide Solution

9.c5 Avoiding ...dxc4. 9.e4 dxc4 10.♝xc4 e5= **9...♝c7 10.e4!** Before Black gets time for ...e6-e5. **10...e5?** Black is not ready for this. 10...dxe4 11.♝xe4 ♛xe4 12.♝xe4 h6 13.♜e1± The square on d5 is outweighed by the bad bishop on c8. **11.exd5 cxd5 12.♜e1!?** 12.♝g5+– was the game. **12...e4 13.♝xd5! ♛xd5 14.♝xe4+–** White will be at least a pawn up.

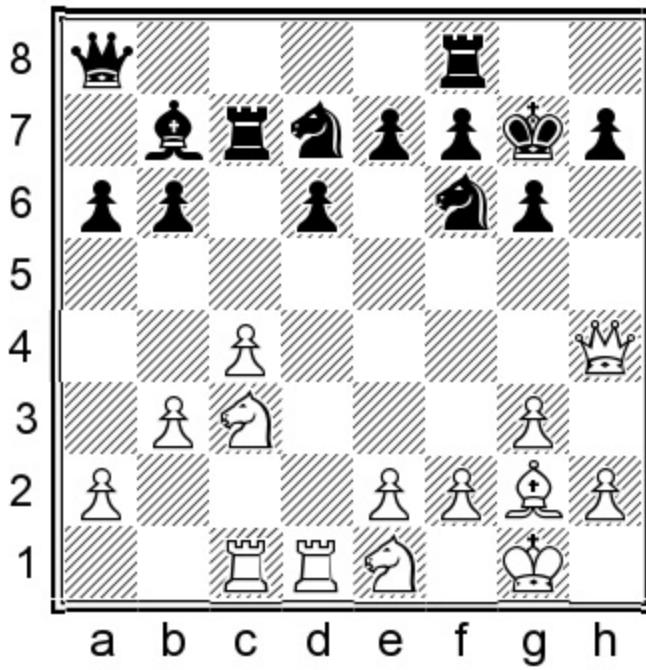
508. Karpov – Kosteniuk, Manises (Rapid) (3) 2002



Show/Hide Solution

A difficult position where the main point is to understand that White wants to play useful prophylactic moves, waiting for a reaction in the centre. Possible moves are $\mathbb{Q}b3$ (avoiding $\dots \mathbb{Q}b6$ with tempo), $a2-a3$, $h2-h3$ (already played), $\mathbb{Q}d2$ and $\mathbb{Q}ad1/e1$. Black also has prophylactic moves: $\dots \mathbb{Q}c7/b8$, $\dots h7-h6$ and $\dots \mathbb{Q}e8$. Apologies in advance for the number of variations below. They are included to aid our understanding of this pawn structure. **11.a3!** $11.\mathbb{Q}b3$ was Karpov's choice, and a natural move. However, the bishop is better on $a2$, as there are some possible lines where $\dots \mathbb{Q}d7-c5$ might hit the bishop on $b3$. $11.dxe5?!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $12.\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5=$ frees Black's game, and the bishop can go to $e6$ in the near future. $11.e4$ $exd4$ $12.\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}e5=$ **11... $\mathbb{Q}c7$** $11...\mathbb{Q}b6? 12.dxe5\pm; 11...exd4?!$ $12.exd4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ $13.\mathbb{Q}e1\pm$; The possible downside of playing $a2-a3$ instead of $\mathbb{Q}c4-b3$ is shown after $11...e4!?$ $12.\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$, but White is still better with exact play. $13.\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $14.f3$ A must before $\dots h7-h6$. $14...\mathbb{Q}bd5$ $15.\mathbb{Q}gxe4$ ($15.\mathbb{Q}cxe4$ $\mathbb{Q}ae8=$) $15...\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $16.\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}ae8$ $17.\mathbb{W}f2!$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $18.fxe4$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ $19.\mathbb{Q}b1\pm$ The $e3$ -pawn will march to $e4$ and $e5$ with gain of time. **12. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $h6$** Preparing $\dots e5-e4$. $12...\mathbb{Q}e8$ $13.\mathbb{Q}d2$ $h6$ $14.\mathbb{Q}b5!\pm$ gains time for $\mathbb{Q}b4$. After Black's last move we have transposed to Karpov – Anand from Exercise 161, where we saw that **13. $\mathbb{Q}h4\pm$** is a good move.

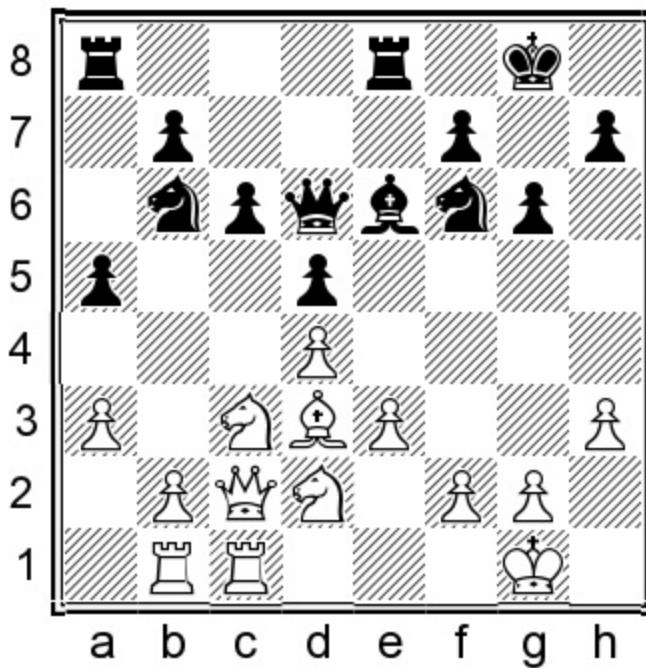
509. Karpov – Gelfand, Cap d'Agde (Rapid) 2002



Show/Hide Solution

16...b5! A pawn lever that works more often when White has fianchettoed the light-squared bishop (thus controlling d5, but not b5). The downside with 16... $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ b5 is that it allows the knight to hop from g2 to e3, with equal chances. (Note that 17...d5? is too shaky, and 18.cxd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc1$ $\mathbb{W}xd5$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xe7$ picks up a pawn.) **17. $\mathbb{Q}d5$** 17.cxb5? $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ $\mathbb{Q}fc8-$; 17. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{W}xb7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ bxc4 19.bxc4 $\mathbb{Q}e5\bar{=}$ **17... $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$** 17... $\mathbb{Q}xd5=$ was the game. **18.cxd5** $\mathbb{Q}fc8$ **19. $\mathbb{Q}c6$** $\mathbb{W}a7$ **20. $\mathbb{Q}dc1$** $\mathbb{Q}e5\bar{=}$ Black plays on the dark squares, or rather against White's passive bishop.

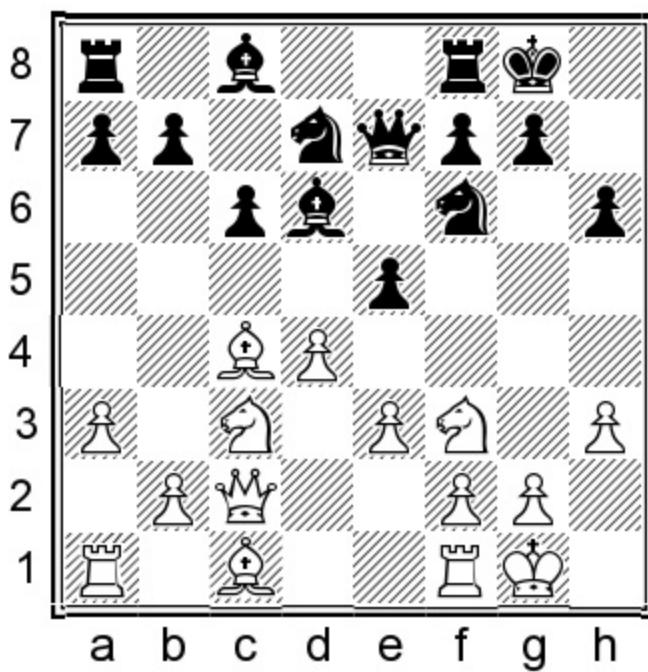
510. Khalifman – Filippov, Sochi 2004



Show/Hide Solution

18.b4 axb4 19.♗xb4!± The b7-pawn is weak. 19.axb4 is a standard minority attack, intending b4-b5 to create a weak pawn on b7 or c6. Black has a long line that seems to equalize. Let's leave it unannotated: 19...♝c4 20.♝xc4 dxc4 21.b5 c5! 22.♝ce4 ♛xe4 23.♝xe4 ♜e7 24.♝xc5 ♜f5 25.e4 ♜xe4 26.♝xe4 ♜xe4 27.♝xc4 ♜ad8 28.♝d1 ♜d5∞

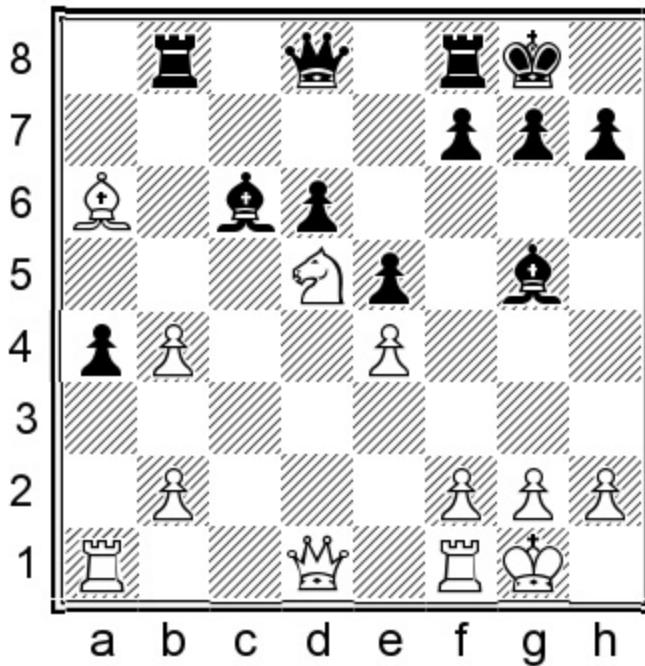
511. Karpov – De Dovitiis, Villa Martelli (Simul) 2005



Show/Hide Solution

12.♝h4! Threatening 13.♝g6 and 13.♝f5. **12...♝b6** 12...♝d8 moves the piece that's part of both forks, but it's passive. 13.♝f5 ♜c7 14.♝d1±; 12...♝d8 13.♝f5 ♜f8 14.♝xd6 ♜xd6 15.♝d1 Black will miss the dark-squared bishop. **13.♝g6 ♜c7 14.♝xe5!** Or taking with the pawn first. 14.♝xf8? ♜xc4+ and the knight is trapped on f8. **14...♝xe5 15.dxe5 ♜xe5 16.♝d3±** White has good chances with the bishop pair. Depending on Black's next move, White will either mobilize the central pawns with f2-f4 and e3-e4 or develop the dark-squared bishop on b2.

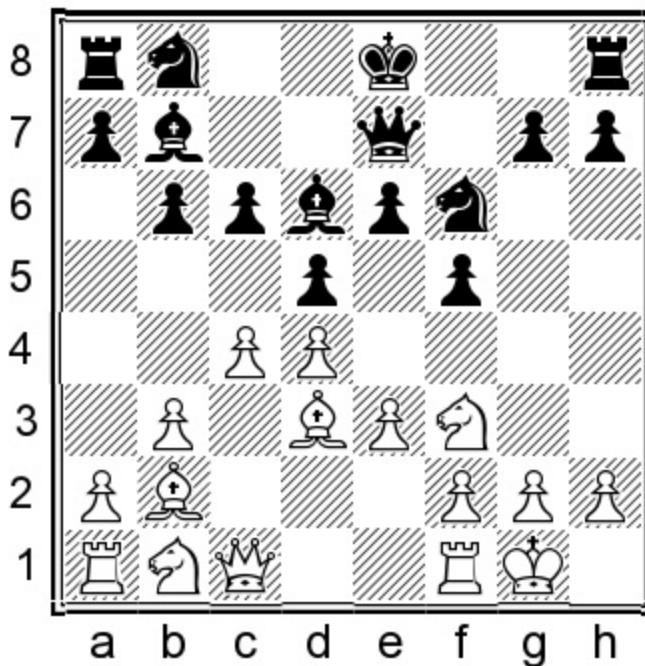
512. Anand – Van Wely, Wijk aan Zee 2006



Show/Hide Solution

18.Bxa4! Bxa4 19.Qxa4± For the exchange, White has a passed pawn and firm control over the light squares. Black needs to redirect the bishop to d8 to keep the b-pawn under control.

513. Kramnik – Caen University, Paris (Simul) 2006

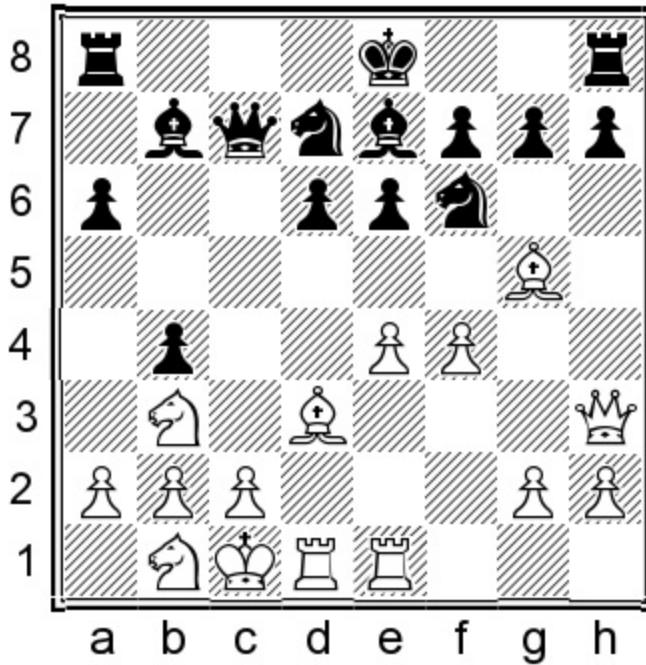


Show/Hide Solution

10.cxd5! A standard exchange when Black can't take back with the e-pawn (f5 would drop). 10.Qa3 is a normal plan, but White may only get one chance for the text move. **10...Qxd5±** White has an advantage in the centre. The strategic plan is e3-e4, opening the e-file and the b1-h7 diagonal.

10...cxd5?! 11.♗a3±

514. Kamsky – Topalov, Sofia 2006



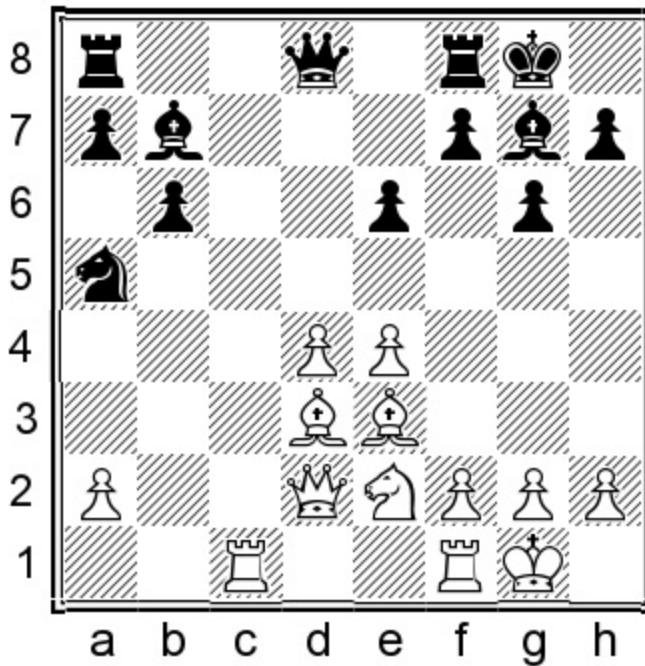
Show/Hide Solution

14...e5! 14...a5 is a mistake due to 15.♘d4, so Black starts by stopping the knight's journey. 15.♘1d2 a5 16.♗b1 16.♗c4 a4 is sometimes dangerous due to: 17.♘d4!? (Black could have gone for the prophylactic 16...♝c8!? on the previous move to avoid this, but it wasn't necessary.) 17...exd4 18.e5 On this occasion Black remains on top after: 18...dxe5 19.fxe5 b3!+ 16...a4 17.♗c1 0-0 Black's attack is faster – which normally means winning.

Veselin Topalov

“...I always play only for first place, with my style, 100% effort in every game...”

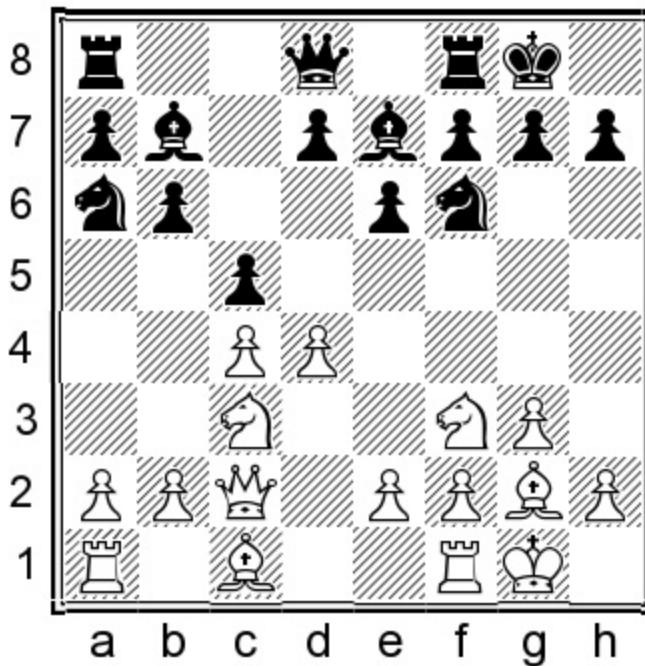
515. Carlsen – Ivanchuk, Morelia/Linares 2007



Show/Hide Solution

15.h4!± Preparing to put Black's kingside under pressure. **15...♝e7** It's required to calculate a line:
15...♝xh4? **16.♕g5 ♝g4 17.f3 ♘h5 18.♗g3 ♖xd4† 19.♖f2+– 16.h5±** Exchanging on g6 is always an option, but it's more likely that White will play h5-h6 at some point. With that being said, it makes sense to postpone the decision for at least a few moves, to keep Black guessing.

516. Khalifman – S. Cao, Dresden 2007

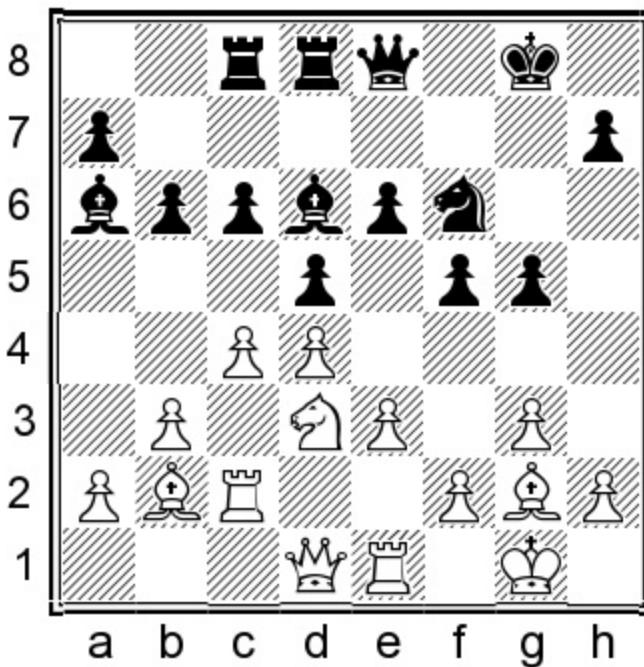


Show/Hide Solution

9.d5! The bishop on b7 would be misplaced in a Benoni structure, as would the bishop on e7. **9...exd5**

10. $\mathbb{Q}h4! \pm$ White gets the pawn back. 10. $\mathbb{Q}g5 \mathbb{Q}c7\infty$

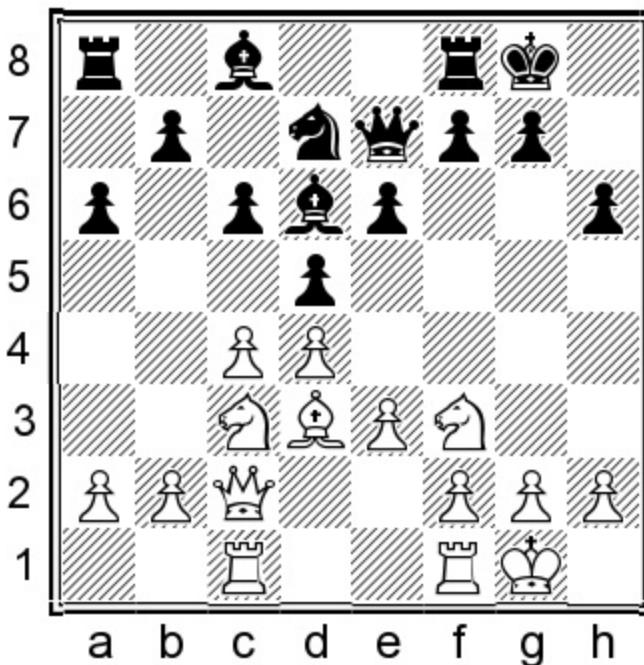
517. Kramnik – Anand, Nice (Rapid) 2008



Show/Hide Solution

20...g4!∞ Securing the e4-square à la Yusupov, a great expert in this system and Anand's former coach. 20... $\mathbb{B}c7$ 21.f3 g4 is too late: 22.e4! gxf3 23.e5±

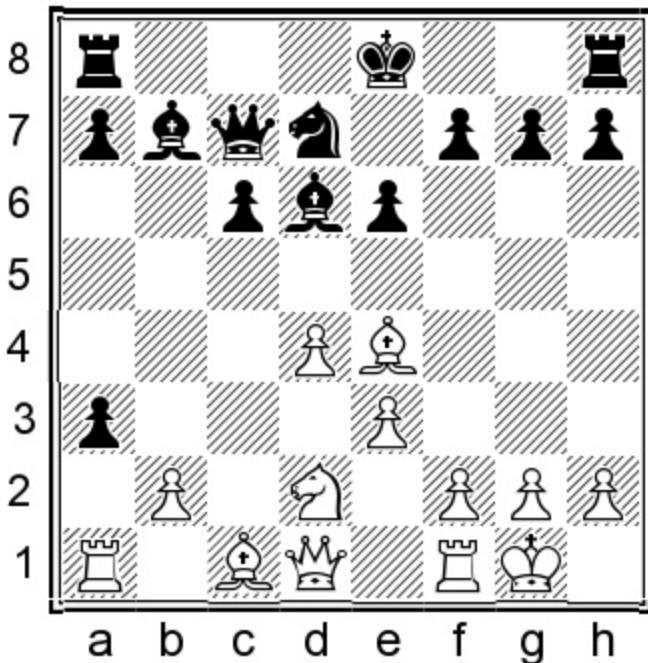
518. Ivanchuk – Topalov, Sofia 2008



Show/Hide Solution

12.c5! Together with the next move, this is a standard method. 12.e4 allows 12...dxc4 13.Qxc4 and Black has several options, 13...c5= for instance. **12...Qc7 13.e4!** Otherwise Black goes ...e6-e5. **13...dxe4 14.Qxe4±** White plays against the bishop on c8, and with the idea that **14...e5 15.Qfe1** leaves Black's queen exposed. It's possible to analyse further, but this is all you need to see to decide to play 12.c5.

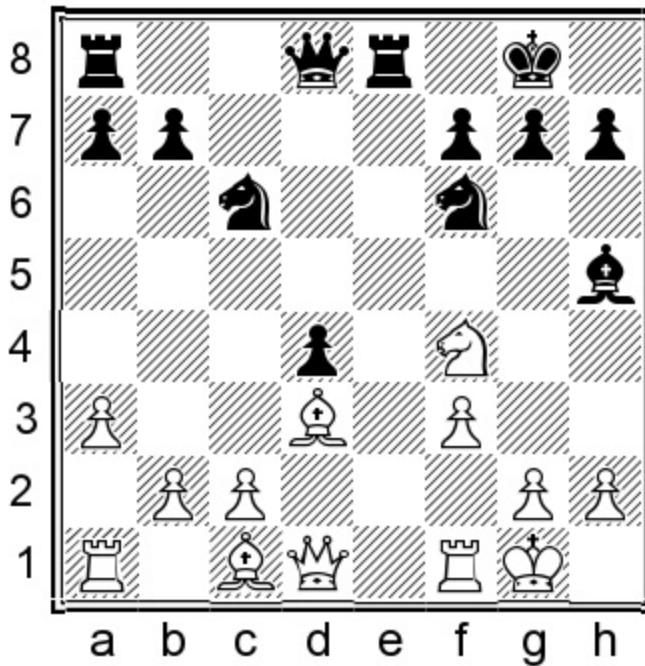
519. Kramnik – Shirov, Moscow 2008



Show/Hide Solution

14.Qc4! In many similar positions, the h-pawn is less important than controlling the dark squares on the queenside. **14...Qxh2† 15.Qh1 Qb6 15...Qd6 16.Qxd6† Qxd6 17.b3!** and Black's king is kept in the centre. 15...axb2?!± picks up another pawn but speeds up White's development. **16.b3!** In the game there followed 16.Qxb6 axb6 17.g3 Qxg3 18.fxg3 Qxg3 19.Qh5 and White eventually won. However, Sveshnikov later introduced 18...a2!! when Black has more than sufficient compensation for the piece. **16...Qxc4 17.bxc4 Qd6 18.c5 Qe7 19.Qxa3±** In return for the sacrificed pawn, White benefits from a superior pawn structure and an active bishop on e4, in contrast with its counterpart on b7. The plan from here is simply to develop with Qd2, Qc2 and Qf1, putting pressure on the a-pawn. Also note that Black doesn't have any active use for the extra pawn for the moment.

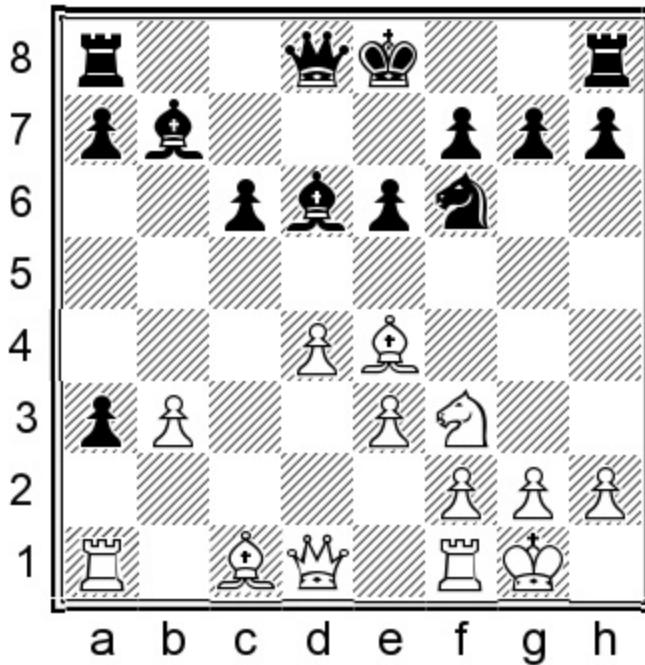
520. Topalov – Ivanchuk, Nanjing 2008



Show/Hide Solution

15. $\mathbb{Q}xh5!$ White's main plan is not to attack the isolated pawn, but to gain space on both wings and use the bishop pair. Sending Black's knight to h5 wins time. **15... $\mathbb{Q}xh5$ 16.f4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 17. $\mathbb{W}f3\pm$**

521. Anand – Leko, Elista 2009

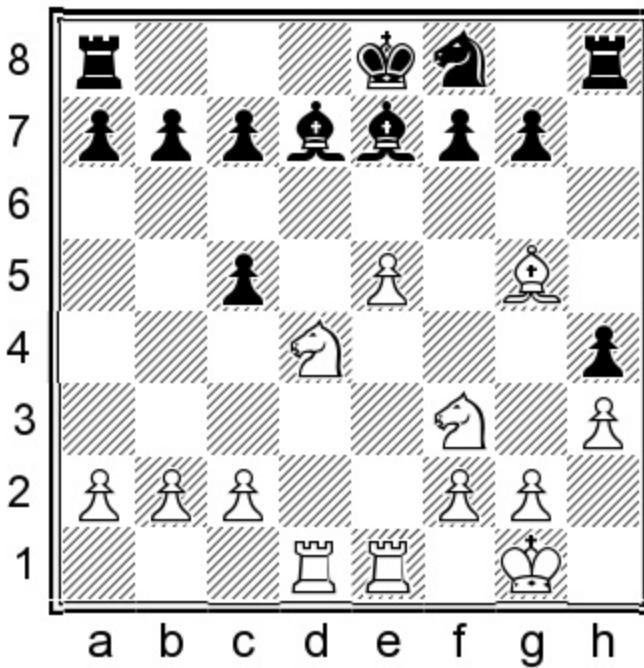


Show/Hide Solution

14. $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ White would rather sacrifice a pawn than allow the freeing ...c6-c5. 14. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}e7!$ defends the a3-pawn temporarily, and supports ...c6-c5 (after castling). 15.e4 $\mathbb{Q}b4=$ **14... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 14... $\mathbb{W}c7$** was played by Kramnik against Topalov in their 2006 match, after which Topalov continued to sacrifice

the h-pawn. 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xh2\#$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ $\mathbb{W}h4\#$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 18. f3 $\mathbb{W}g6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ Black can't castle and White's bishop is much better than Black's. Those factors would normally be worth much more than a pawn, but Leko had seen at home that he could create just enough counterplay to achieve a draw. 19...h5! White will soon have to think about a queen exchange.

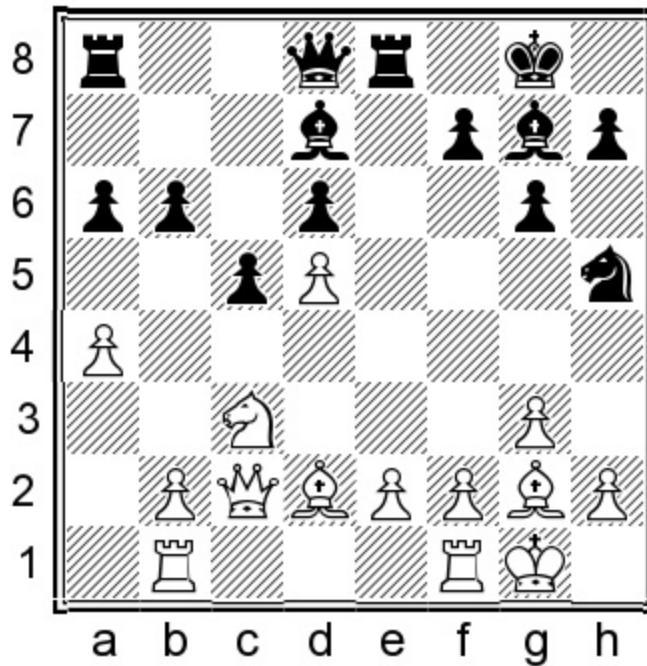
522. Carlsen – Naiditsch, Dortmund 2009



Show/Hide Solution

20.e6! White should always be on the lookout for opportunities to play this move in the Berlin endgame, as it increases the scope of virtually all White's pieces, and may also lead to attacking chances against the black king. (With some chess education, you should automatically recognize this as a position where Black cannot castle – although in this particular case, Black would not get a chance to castle even if it were legal.) 20...fxe6? 21. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xg7\#$; 20... $\mathbb{Q}xe6??$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f5\pm$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e3\pm$ $\mathbb{Q}g4\#$ comes next.

523. Karpov – Nueesch, Zurich (Simul) 2009

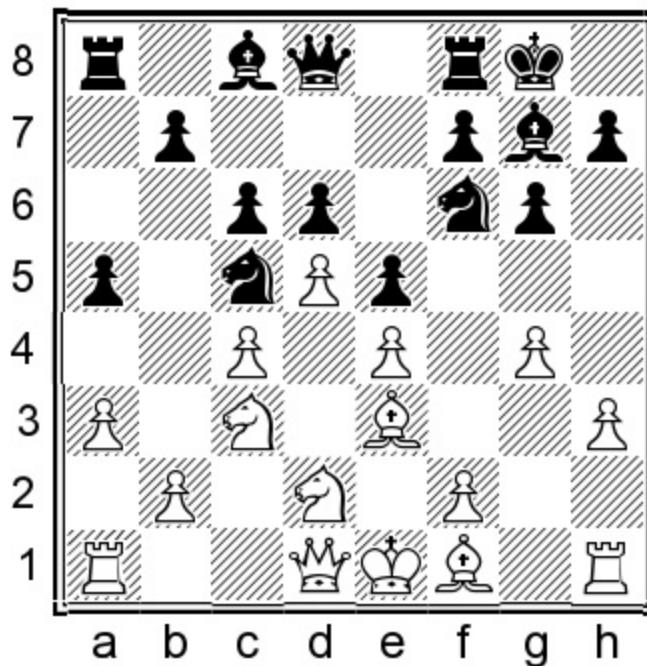


Show/Hide Solution

18.b4!= Before Black has time for ...b6-b5, which is now stopped.

18.e4 b5 $\bar{=}$

524. Carlsen – Topalov, Nanjing 2009



Show/Hide Solution

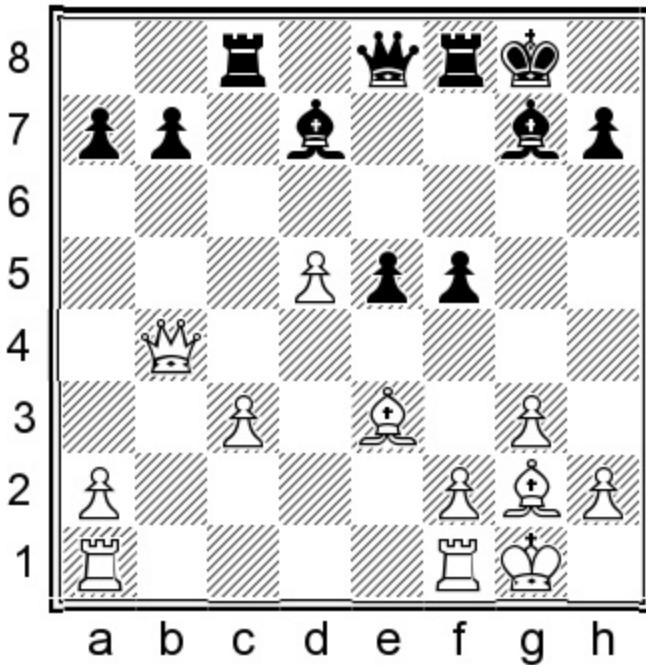
11...a4! A standard sacrifice. With g2-g4 played, White hardly wants to give up the dark-squared bishop. Topalov played 11... $\mathbb{Q}fd7$. **12. $\mathbb{Q}xc5?!$** Critical but dubious. 12. $\mathbb{W}f3!?$ is one of a few moves which offers White chances for an edge in a complicated position. **12...dxc5 13. $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 13.dxc6? bxc6**

14. $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ is worse in view of 14... $\mathbb{W}a5$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8\bar{f}$ when the knight heads towards d4. 13... $cxd5$ 14. $cxd5$ $\mathbb{Q}h6\bar{\infty}$ Black has good prospects on the dark squares.

Veselin Topalov

"Magnus's huge advantage is that he's able to play well for a very long time, to make a lot of good moves, as if forever. His brain works well after the fifth, sixth or seventh hour of play... In my view he should give his brain to science..."

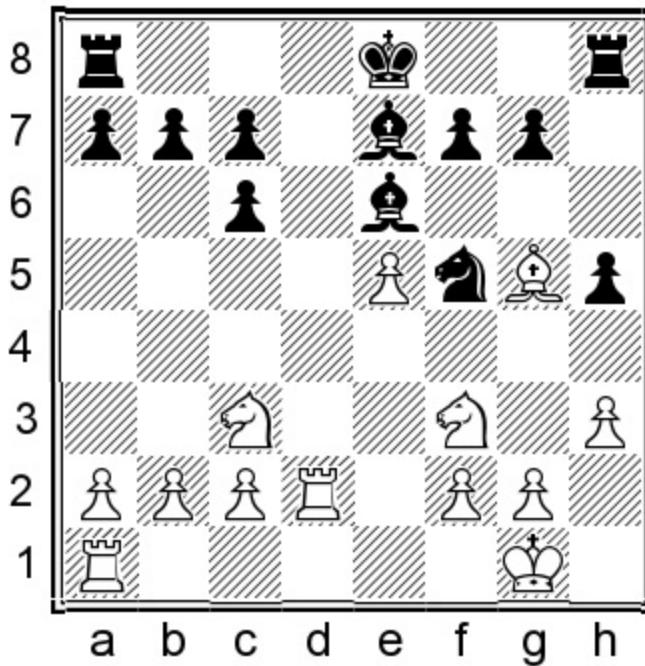
525. Leko – Topalov, Nanjing 2009



Show/Hide Solution

22... $f4!$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ There is a tactical point: 23. $gxf4$ $exf4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3\bar{f}$ Winning an exchange. 23. $\mathbb{Q}xa7!$ is the best chance. Play continues 23... $f3$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $b5!\bar{f}$ when Black is still the favourite, but at least White has a couple of pawns to compensate for the dead bishop. 23... $f3$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ kills White's bishop forever. 24... $\mathbb{Q}f4!$ is a nice detail, after which 25. $c4$ $b6$ sees Black pick up the $c4$ -pawn with a strategically won game. 24... $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xb7$ $fxg2$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xg2-$ + Materially White is more or less okay, but Black should be able to use the bishops to create decisive threats against the king.

526. Anand – Karjakin, Moscow (Blitz) 2009

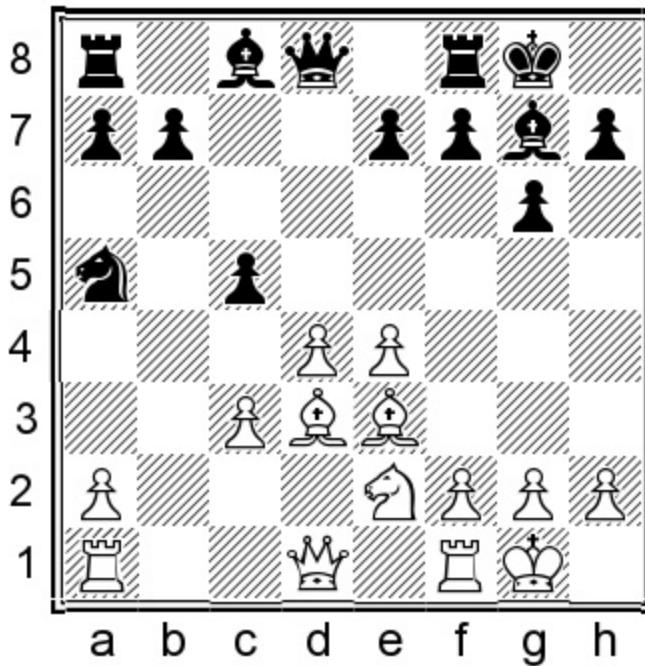


Show/Hide Solution

13...♜d8! Black can't castle (since the king has moved – you should realize this when seeing the pawn structure!), and exchanging one pair of rooks makes it easier to live with less space. Black should carry out this plan immediately, otherwise it can be stopped by ♜ad1. However, Black wants to keep the second rook, for several reasons. Firstly, the presence of a rook makes it harder for White to advance the kingside pawn majority, as this would expose White's king. On a more general note, a rook tends to cooperate well with a bishop or pair of bishops. Furthermore, preserving one rook reduces the risk of Black ending up in a bad endgame with a single bad bishop against a stronger knight.

A test solver mentioned the strange-looking 13...♜g8!? to prepare ...f7-f6. However, after 14.♝e4! it's time to revert to the main plan: 14...♜d8=

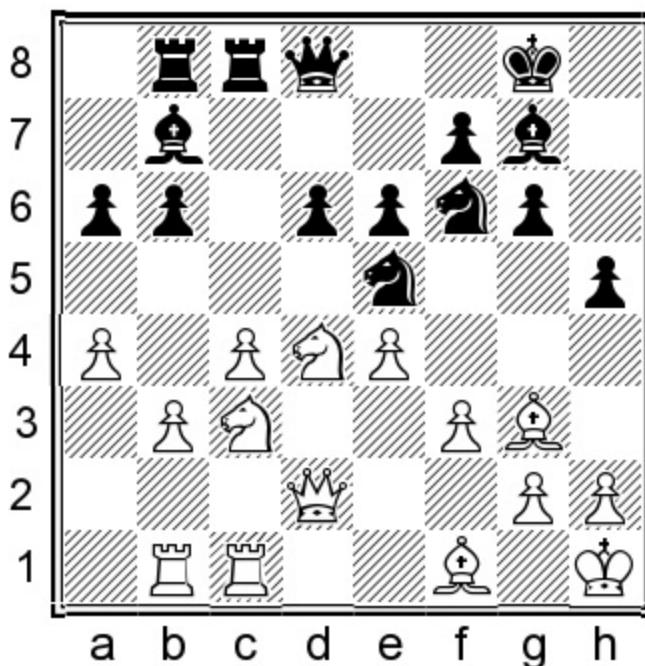
527. Topalov – Anand, Sofia (1) 2010



Show/Hide Solution

11...b6! Black doesn't want to capture on d4 yet, opening the c-file for White's rook. Instead, Anand makes a standard move offering a pawn sacrifice. 11...cxd4 12.cxd4 b6 13.♖c1 ♕b7 14.d5± **12.♗xc5** This is the critical move to check. 12.♗d2 was the game continuation. 12.♗c1 is met by 12...e5!⇒ and if White answers with d4-d5, Black is satisfied to have the c-pawns on the board. **12...♗xc5** 12...♕c7 is also a normal move, to open the a-file as well. **13.♕xc5 ♕c7** Black's activity and use of the c4-square yield enough compensation for the pawn.

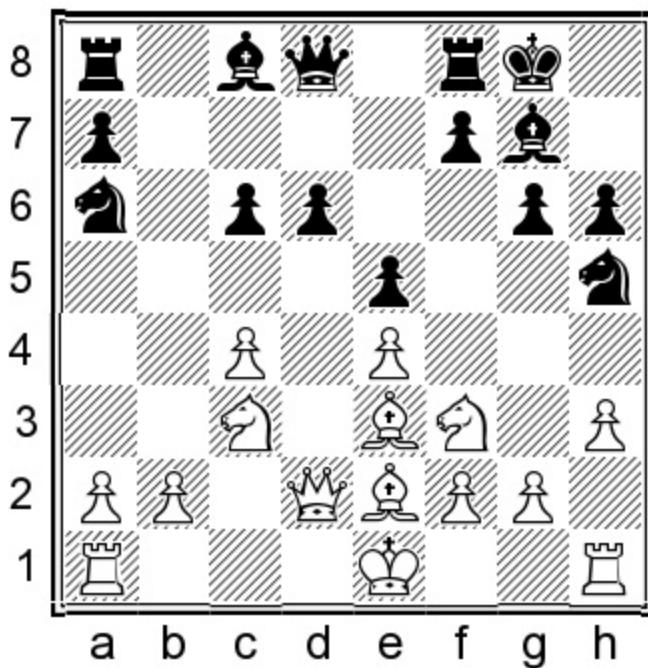
528. Hammer – Carlsen, Kristiansund (Rapid) 2010



Show/Hide Solution

21...h4! Gaining space. The tactical justification is so standard that we can call it a positional motif. 21... $\mathbb{W}f8$ 22. $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}h6$ 23. $\mathbb{W}e1\pm$ **22. $\mathbb{Q}f4$** The h-pawn can become weak, of course, but Black trusts that he will achieve a pawn lever with the b- or d-pawns if White goes after it. 22. $\mathbb{Q}xh4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4!$ is the tactical point, when White is worse in every line: 23. $\mathbb{W}e1$ (23. $\mathbb{Q}xd8?$ $\mathbb{Q}xd2-$; 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe4?$ $\mathbb{W}xh4$ and if 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd6?$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ White loses one of the knights.) 23...g5! \mp Forcing the exchange of knight for bishop is the most ambitious approach, giving Black excellent prospects on the dark squares. (But even after the more modest 23... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ or 23... $\mathbb{Q}f6$, Black would benefit from exchanging the h-pawn for White's central pawn. The b7-bishop would certainly approve!) **22... $\mathbb{Q}c5!?$** It's worth including a few more moves to see how Carlsen uses the h-pawn. 22... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}a8\pm$ is a reasonable alternative. **23. $\mathbb{B}e1$** 23. $\mathbb{Q}g1!\pm$ is an improvement pointed out by a test solver. **23... $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}g3\ddagger!$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ 25.hxg3?** hxg3 is too dangerous for White. (The analysis contains some nice points, but the details are too much for this book.) **25... $\mathbb{Q}xf1$** Black soon gained a strong attack on the light squares.

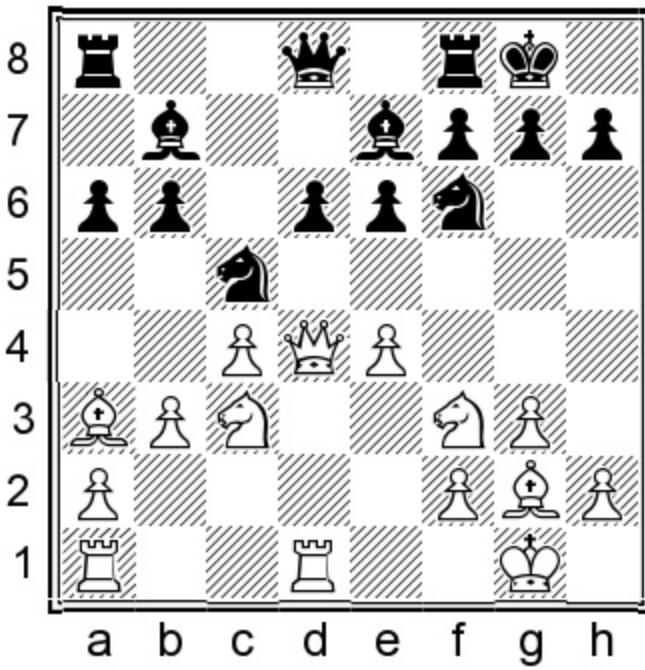
529. Bluvshtein – Topalov, Khanty-Mansiysk (Ol) 2010



Show/Hide Solution

12... $\mathbb{Q}f4$ The knight belongs here, and sacrificing a pawn is no big deal. 12... $\mathbb{W}f6?$ 13.g3 \pm **13.0-0-0 ∞** 13. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ exf4 14. $\mathbb{W}xf4$ gives Black the initiative, and moves such as ... $\mathbb{B}b8$, ... $\mathbb{E}e8$, ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ and ... $\mathbb{W}b6/a5$ will mostly come with gain of tempo.

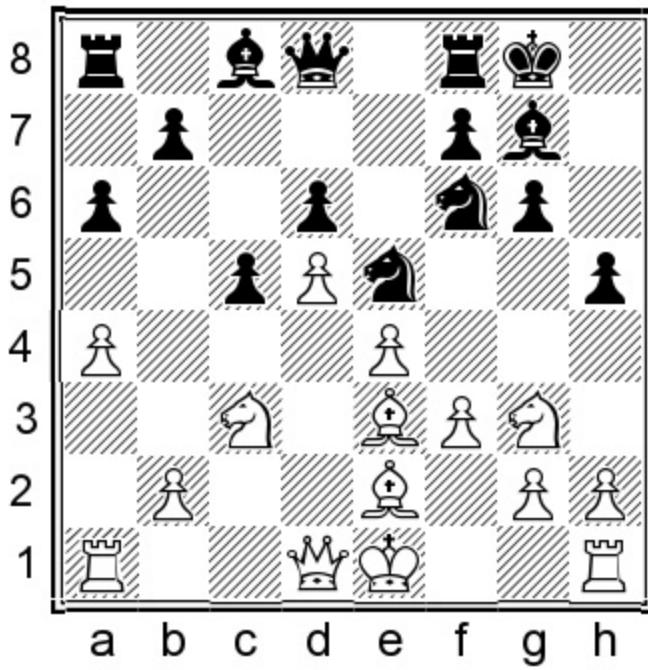
530. Karpov – Milliet, Cap d'Agde (Rapid) 2010



Show/Hide Solution

13.e5! This is a theoretical position, but it finds its way into the book because it's a standard method which can be applied in similar positions. White takes concrete measures before Black has developed with ... $\mathbb{Q}c7$, ... $\mathbb{B}fd8$ and ... $\mathbb{B}ac8$. **13...dxe5 14. $\mathbb{W}xd8$ $\mathbb{B}fxd8$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$** The c6-square is White's first asset. **16... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 16... $\mathbb{B}dc8$** can be met by: 17.b4!? Not the only good move. 17... $\mathbb{Q}ce4$ (17... $\mathbb{Q}b7$? 18. $\mathbb{Q}a4!$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 19. $\mathbb{B}xd8\#!+-$) 18. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d7\pm$ **17... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$!?** 17.f4 was Karpov's move. **17... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 17... $\mathbb{B}xc5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}a4\pm$** The knights will soon enter, giving White control over the d-file. **18. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{B}ac8$ 18... $\mathbb{Q}f8$?** 19.b4! $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ is winning for White. **19. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{B}xc5$ 20.a3±** Instead of trying to put pressure on the "weak" d6-pawn, the best idea was to exchange it straight away, leaving White with a pleasant edge in the resulting endgame.

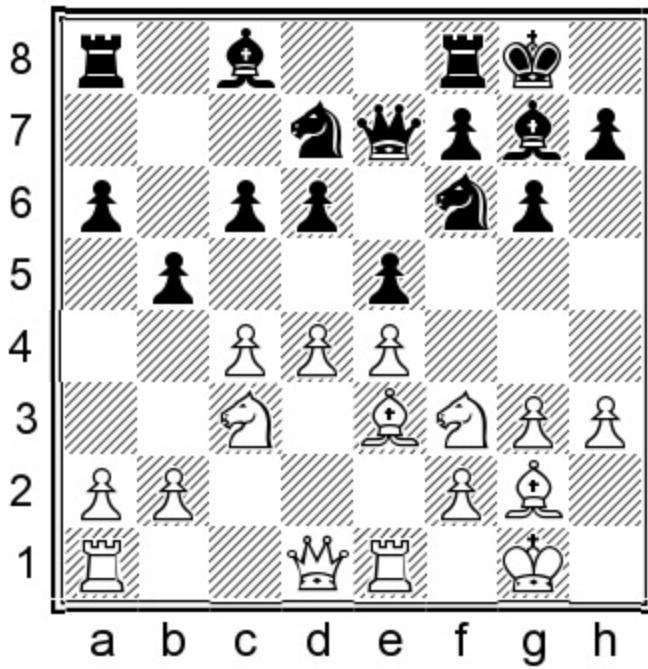
531. Ponomariov – Moranda, Warsaw (Blitz) 2010



Show/Hide Solution

13.0-0! It's better to redeploy the knight via h1 and f2, rather than obstructing castling with ♞f1. 13.♗g5 is met with 13...c4!∞ when the bishop would have preferred to be on e3. Note that White can't castle short due to the check on b6. 13...♞h7 13...h4 14.♘h1 h3?! is premature in view of: 15.g4!± 14.♗d2 h4 15.♘h1 f5 Many games have reached this position, with a 58% score for White.

532. Khalifman – Puusep, Puhajarve (Rapid) 2011

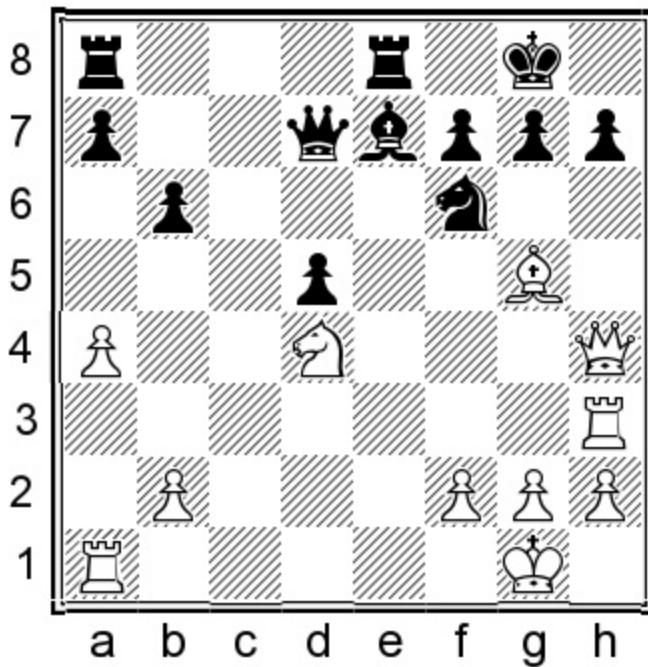


Show/Hide Solution

12.c5! Undermining the defence of the e5-pawn. 12.♗c2± gives White a modest plus. 12...dxc5

12...exd4 13.cxd6 $\mathbb{W}xd6$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 15.f4+– and Black will be forced backwards. 13.dxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 15.f4 $\mathbb{W}e7$ 16.e5+– White wins back the pawn, and has much better minor pieces. At least one more black pawn will drop.

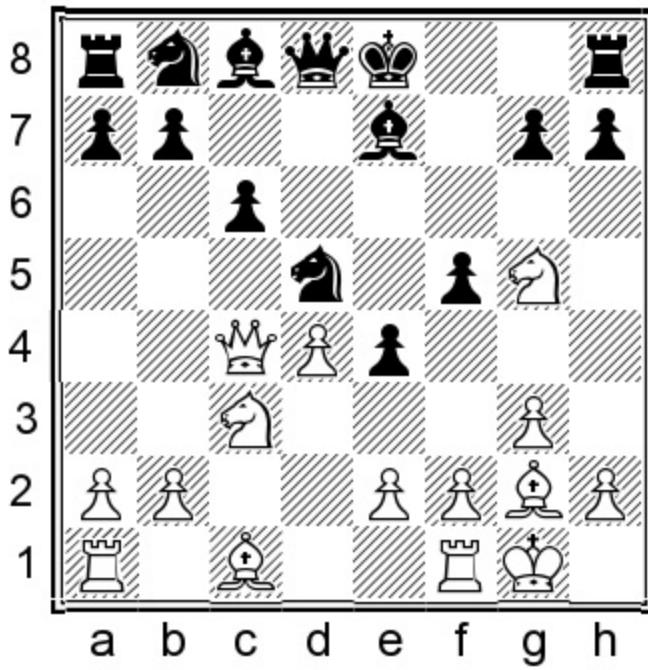
533. Anand – Howell, London 2011



Show/Hide Solution

Black is a pawn up, but White has a crude attack along the h-file. 22... $\mathbb{Q}f8!$ Ensuring that $\mathbb{W}xh7$ will not come with check. White has no time to take back the pawn. 22...h6?! is met by 23. $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ when Black can't take the bishop, although 23...g6= is still okay. (23... $\mathbb{W}g4$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xg7!±$); 22...h5!? is another standard defence which is good enough for equality. 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xh5$ g6 The fianchettoed bishop defends the king well. 25. $\mathbb{W}h7†$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 26. $\mathbb{W}h6†$ Black can avoid the repetition. The isolated d-pawn is not a problem because it's also a passer, and because Black can challenge the blockading knight with ... $\mathbb{B}e4$. 23. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 23. $\mathbb{B}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}d8†$; 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf6??$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xh7$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4+$ 23... $\mathbb{B}ac8$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xh7$ It is now possible to capture on b2, but 25... $\mathbb{B}c4!†$ is the strongest move, preparing to block the e-file if White starts checking.

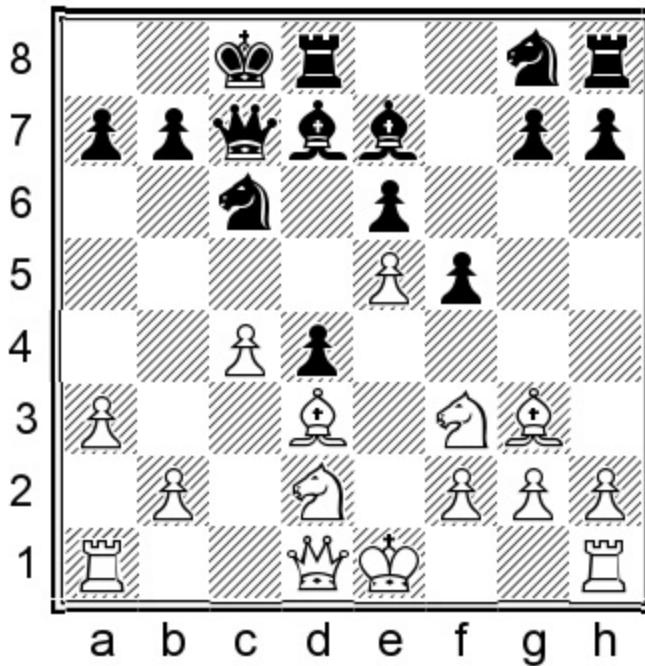
534. Topalov – Greet, Edinburgh (Simul) 2012



Show/Hide Solution

11.f3! Instead of retreating or defending the knight, White wants to open the centre to increase the scope of the g2-bishop and punish Black's slow development. Simple tactics are used to carry out positional objectives. Topalov played 11.h4 and this book's editor went on to win, finishing with a discovered-check motif that would have been at home in the first Woodpecker. **11...exf3** The point is that 11... $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$ $\mathbb{W}xg5$ is met by 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd5+-$ when the knight cannot be captured and the centre soon opens up. 11... $\mathbb{Q}xc3?$ is refuted by 12. $\mathbb{W}f7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 13.bxc3 when the knight still can't be captured, now because of a different pin. **12. $\mathbb{Q}xf3+-$** Other captures are also strong, but this one is best. Captures on g5 are met in the same way, and Black is desperately behind in development with the centre opening up.

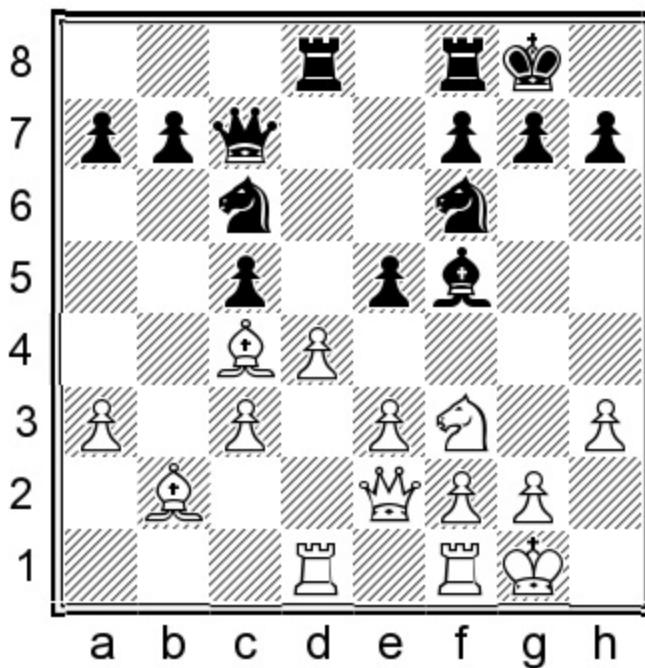
535. Areshchenko – Topalov, Kyiv (Rapid) 2013



Show/Hide Solution

13.h4!± Stopping Black from grabbing space with ...g7-g5. It may seem counterintuitive to move a pawn on the wing where White may wish to castle, but it's an important prophylactic move before starting the promising attack on the queenside. White can delay castling: in the game the king moved to f1 twenty moves later.

536. Korobov – Topalov, Kyiv (Rapid) 2013

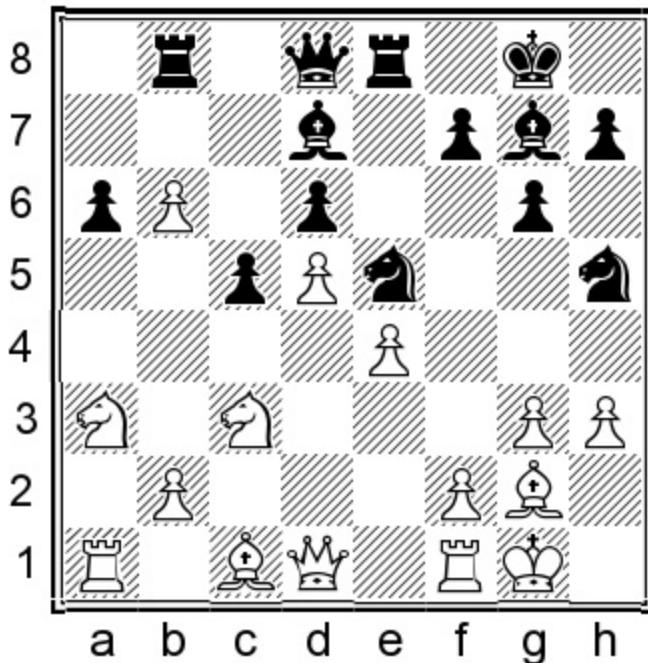


Show/Hide Solution

14...e4 Chasing away the main defender of White's king. **15.♘d2 ♗g6!** Forcing White to either

weaken the kingside, or misplace two heavy pieces. 15... $\mathbb{Q}a5$?! 16. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ does not help. White threatens c3-c4, and if 16...cx d 4 17.cxd4 $\mathbb{W}c2$ 18. $\mathbb{B}b1$ the knight is out of play on a5. **16. $\mathbb{Q}c1$** If 16.f3? exf3 \mp Black exerts pressure on the e-file with ... $\mathbb{B}fe8$ next. **16... $\mathbb{Q}a5$!** Now this move works well. 16... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ was played in the game. **17. $\mathbb{Q}a2$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$!** White must either weaken the kingside or allow: **18. $\mathbb{W}e1$ c4!** White's bishops have had happier days.

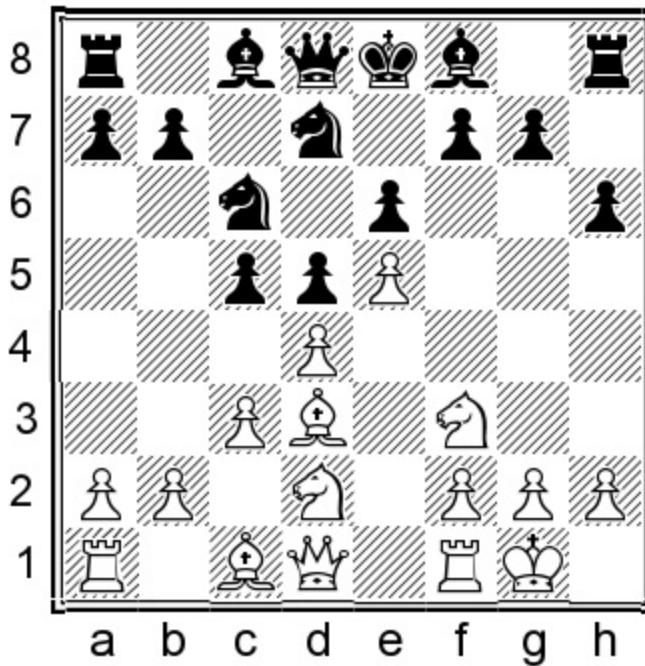
537. Ponomariov – Etienne Bacrot, Elancourt 2013



Show/Hide Solution

17... $\mathbb{Q}b5$! Giving a pawn to avoid suffering after f2-f4. 17... $\mathbb{W}xb6$? 18.f4 \pm **18. $\mathbb{Q}axb5$ axb5 19. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{W}xb6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}a3$** Aimed at controlling the c4-square, but in the long run White might have problems with this knight. **20... $\mathbb{W}b3\bar{=}$** The start of a typical queenside invasion.

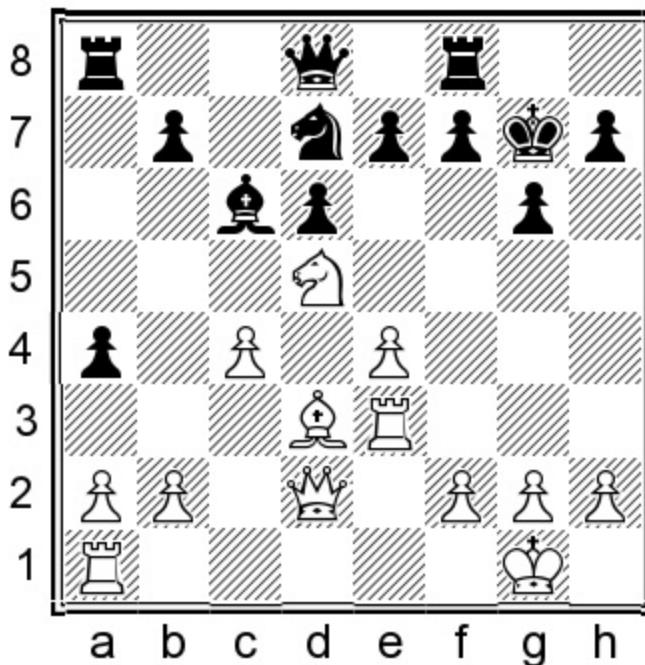
538. Anand – Nakamura, Zurich (Blitz) 2014



Show/Hide Solution

8...g5! White has castled, so Black takes the opportunity to launch a flank operation – attacking the centre. With the c-pawns exchanged, White would conveniently be able to defend the d-pawn with $\mathbb{Q}b3$, but now, that runs into a fork. **9.dxc5?!** A concession, giving Black a pleasant game after capturing either of the available pawns. 9.h3 would be met by 9...h5. 9. $\mathbb{Q}h1!?$ and 9.b3!?

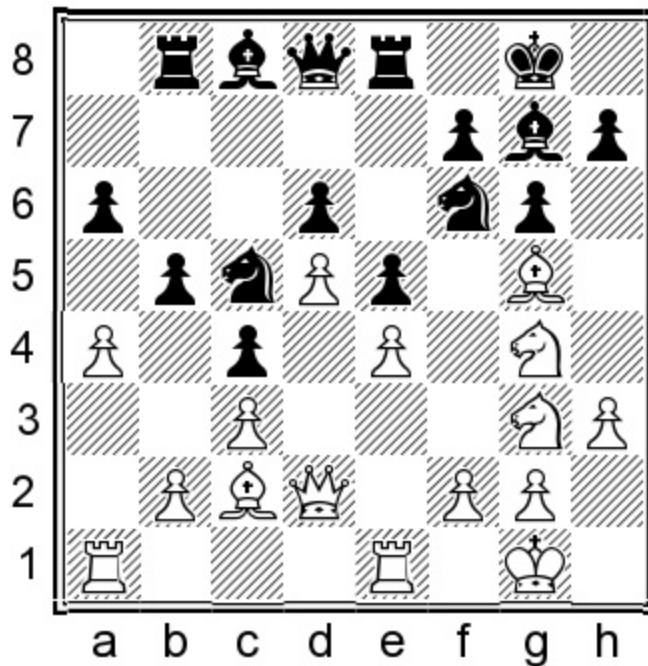
539. Tarasov – Khalifman, Voronezh 2014



Show/Hide Solution

16...e5! Threatening ... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ (with a good knight against a bad bishop) without getting a backward pawn on e7. It's also important to open the d8-h4 diagonal for the queen. **17. $\mathbb{B}h3$ h5** With the pawn still on e7, White would have been able to crash through with $\mathbb{B}xh5$. **18. $\mathbb{Q}c3$** Avoiding ... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$. **18... $\mathbb{Q}c5$** Black's position is preferable.

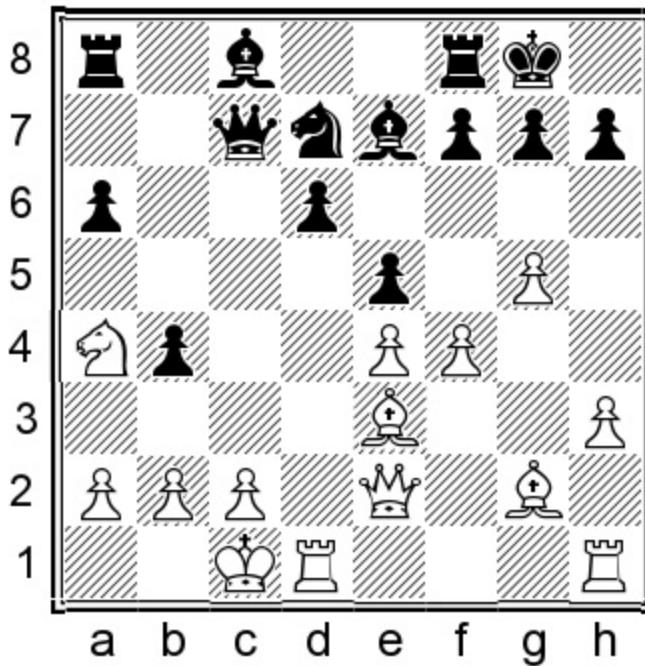
540. Anand – Carlsen, Stavanger 2015



Show/Hide Solution

21. $\mathbb{Q}h6\#!$ $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ 21... $\mathbb{Q}f8??$! is dangerous, as White may soon arrange f2-f4. **22. $\mathbb{Q}xh6\pm$** Even though it's not possible to exploit them for the moment, Black's dark squares are chronically weak.

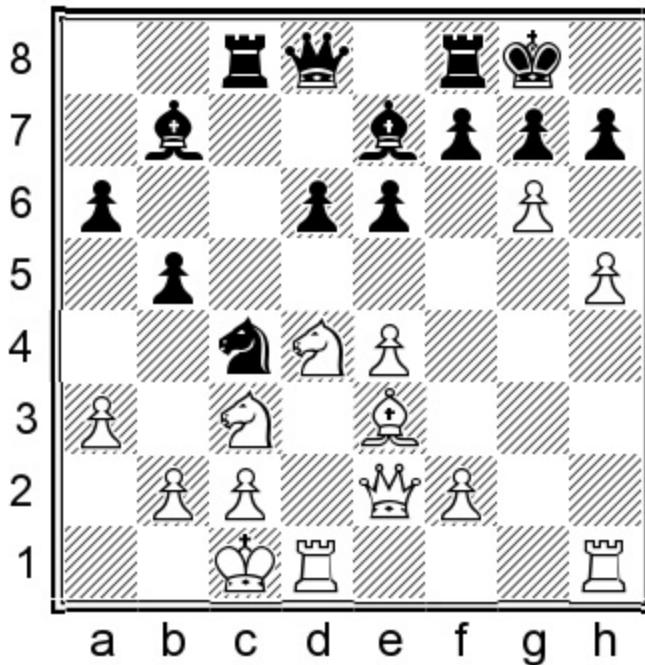
541. Caruana – Kasparov, St. Louis (Blitz) 2016



Show/Hide Solution

16...exf4! Avoiding f4-f5. **17.♘xf4 ♗e5†** White's knight is not happy on a4.

542. Karjakin – Topalov, Moscow 2016

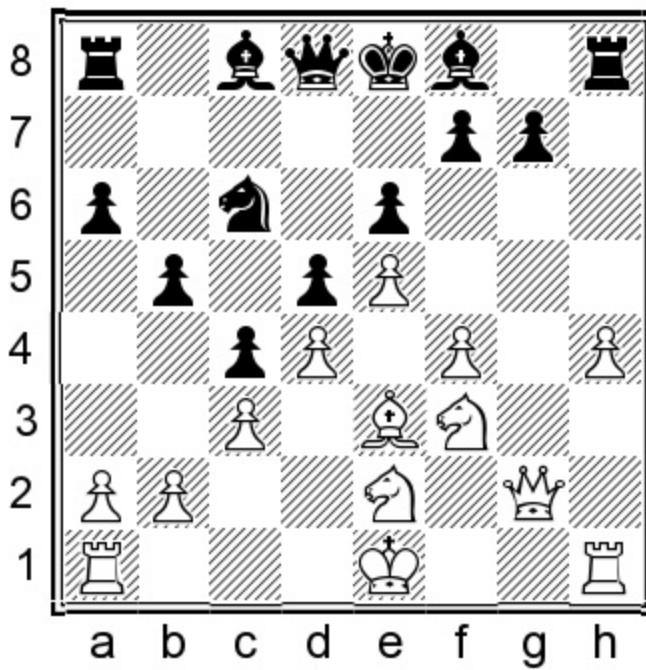


Show/Hide Solution

In this exercise we will see why **17...♝c8?** was a worse move than **17...♝f6!.. 18.h6!** Black can't avoid having the h-file opened. **18.gxh7†?** is met by **18...♚h8 19.h6 g6†** when the kingside is kept closed. **18.♝dg1 ♝f6 19.h6±** is promising for White, but including the additional moves before h5-h6 has slightly improved Black's chances. **18...fxg6 19.♞xe6** Without any ...♝xc3 ideas to worry about,

there is no reason for White to avoid this. 19.hxg7 $\mathbb{E}f6$ 20. $\mathbb{E}h6\pm$ 19... $\mathbb{W}d7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 21.hxg7 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d4+-$ White is an exchange up.

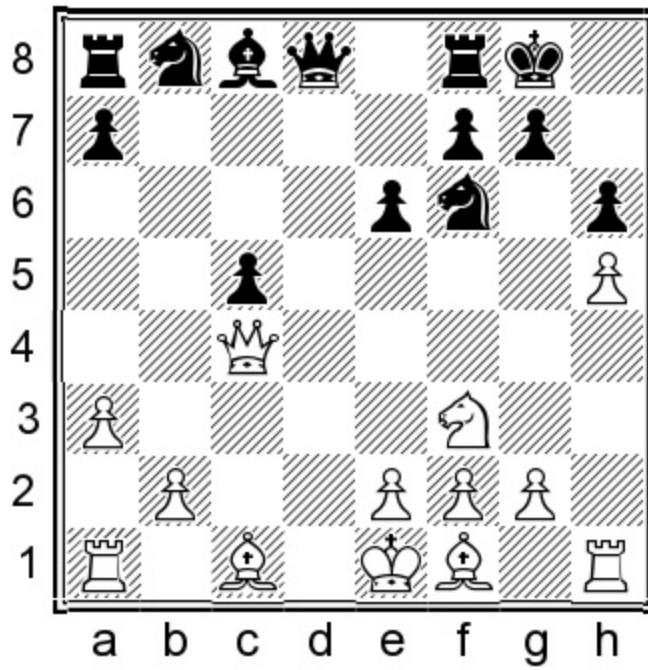
543. Anand – Pelletier, Zurich 2017



Show/Hide Solution

18.f5! Otherwise Black would control the f5-square with ... $\mathbb{Q}e7$. **18...exf5** If Black kept the tension, then f5-f6 ideas would have been unpleasant (perhaps with $\mathbb{Q}g5$ coming first). But White is also better after the text move, with g5 and f4 being nice squares for the bishop and knights. Black's king is vulnerable wherever it goes. There is no need to see more moves.

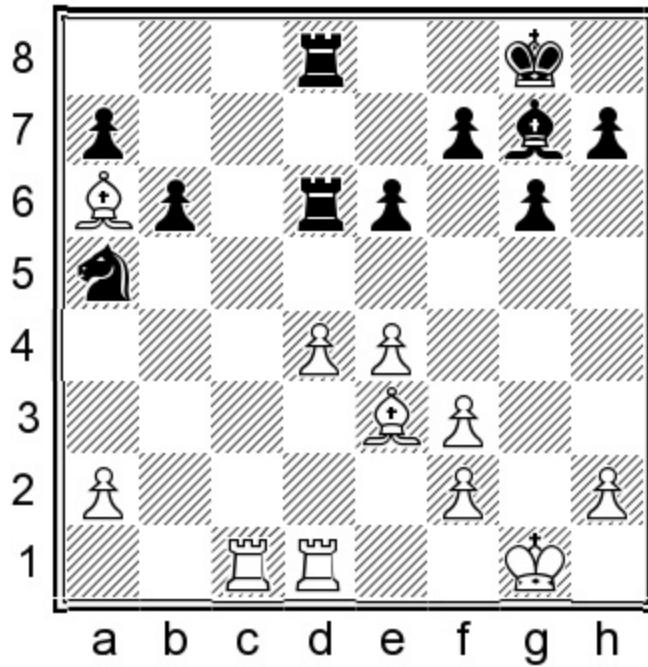
544. Kasparov – Nakamura, St. Louis (Blitz) 2017



Show/Hide Solution

12.g4!± Playing in Alpha Zero's style. The flank attack is justified because Black can't attack White's king. **12...♝d5 13.♝xd5 ♗xd5 14.g5±** Even after the queen exchange, White's attack is strong.

545. Carlsen – Vachier-Lagrange, Zagreb 2019



Show/Hide Solution

20.♝g5! A normal move to disturb Black, or provoke the awkward ...f7-f6 (weakening e6 and blocking the bishop). **20.d5 exd5 21.♝f4 ♜c6 22.exd5 ♜xc1 23.♝xc1 ♗c6!= 20...f6 20...♜e8 21.d5!**

This move is possible when Black only has one rook on the d-file. 21...exd5 22.♗b5! ♜a8 23.exd5+– The pawn runs. 21.♗e3± Note that 21...♝c6 is met by 22.d5! when Black can't take twice.

Magnus Carlsen

"There wasn't any particular player I modelled my game after. I tried to learn from everyone and create my own style. I studied past players... Truth be told, I never had a favourite player. It's just not my nature to go around idolizing people. I just try to learn."



I have no other dream than to play chess. – Anatoly Karpov

Chapter 4

Medium Difficulty Exercises

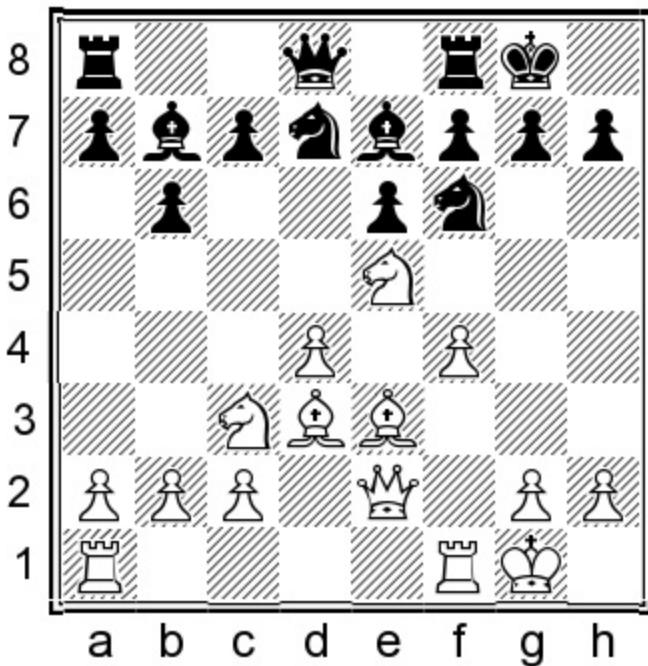


When I was young, I spent days and nights at the board, studied everything that was created, all stages and twists of theory and chess history. My knowledge was encyclopaedic. And then – also for

hours, very intensively – I studied music. These are two things that I love. Music gave me rest, a special state of mind, and opportunities to connect with people emotionally. Chess was more of a struggle. – Vasily Smyslov

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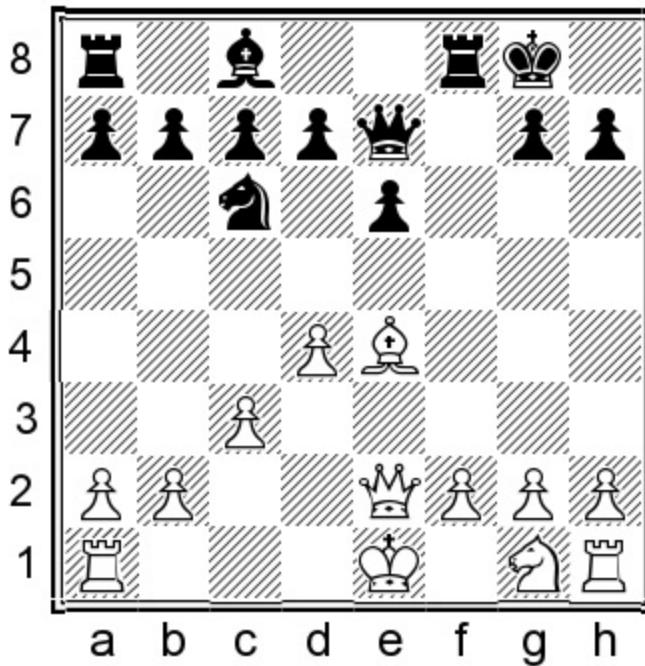
546. Steinitz – Mongredien, London 1862



Show/Hide Solution

11...c5! Challenging the centre and undermining White's strong knight on e5. The game went 11... $\mathbb{Q}d5$?! 12. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ exd5? 13. $\mathbb{B}f3$ and Steinitz won a beautiful attacking game. **12. $\mathbb{B}ad1$** After 12.dxc5, Black can recapture with either the knight or the bishop with comfortable equality. **12...cxd4** **13. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$** A safe choice, since White can't take back with the pawn. **14. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}c8=$**

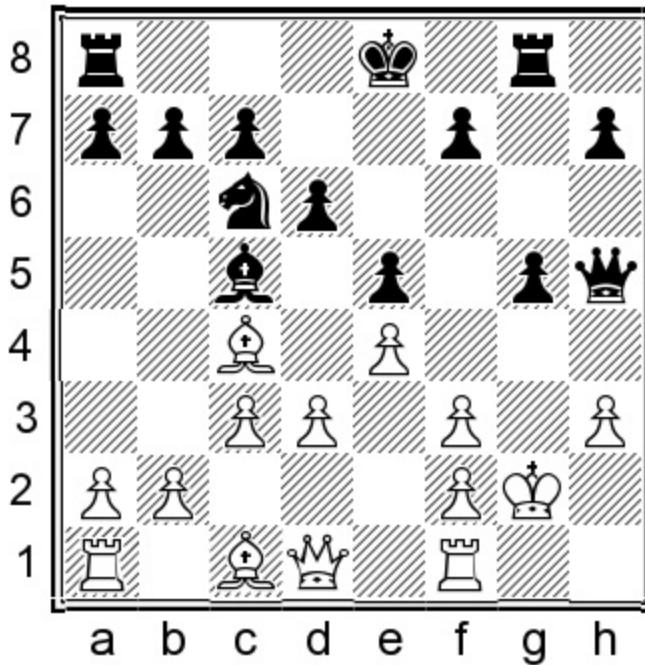
547. Blackburne – Steinitz, London (4) 1862



Show/Hide Solution

10...d5! Developing with tempo. **11.Qc2** **11.Qf3** **Wd6** Black defends the d5-pawn and threatens ...e6-e5. After **12.0-0-0** **EBb8#** an attack is coming up. **11...e5!#** White is more or less forced to castle long soon, leaving temporarily weak pawns on g2 and f2.

548. Green – Steinitz, London (1) 1864

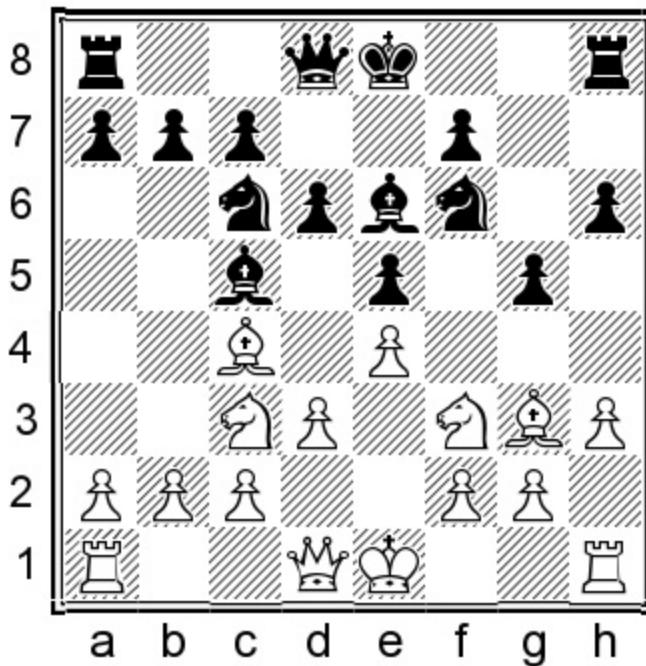


Show/Hide Solution

13...N e7!# Redirecting the knight to the attack.

13...Bg6 gave White the opportunity for **14.Qb5!**, which he failed to take.

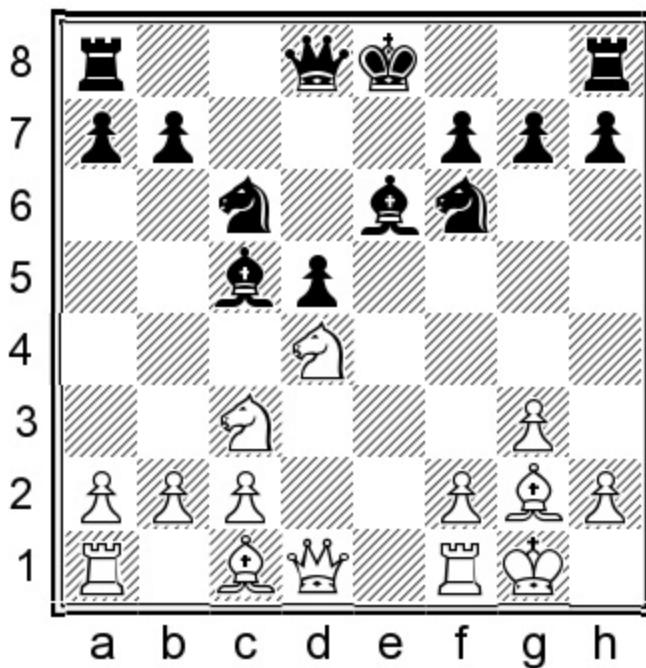
549. Green – Steinitz, London (Casual) 1864



Show/Hide Solution

9... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 10.dxc4 $\mathbb{Q}b4!$ 11. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc3\#$ 12.bxc3# The moves speak for themselves. To keep equal material White had to accept tripled, isolated pawns.

550. Steinitz – de Riviere, Paris 1867

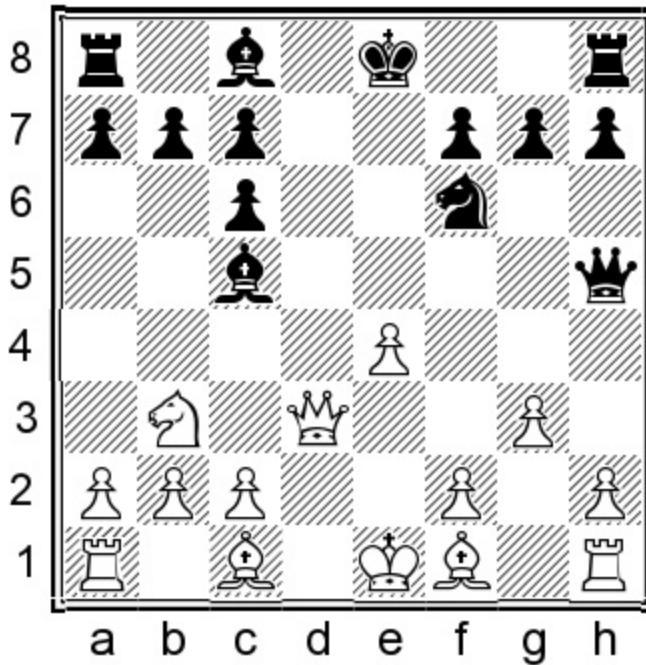


Show/Hide Solution

10. $\mathbb{Q}xe6!$ A difference compared to a normal isolated pawn position is that White has a c-pawn

instead of an e-pawn. That makes it much easier to attack e6. 10. $\mathbb{Q}b3$?! was played in the game. **10...fxe6** Typical moves include $\mathbb{Q}h3$ and $\mathbb{E}e1$, but another good idea is to start by chasing away Black's bishop: **11. $\mathbb{Q}a4+$** – This also prepares c2-c4.

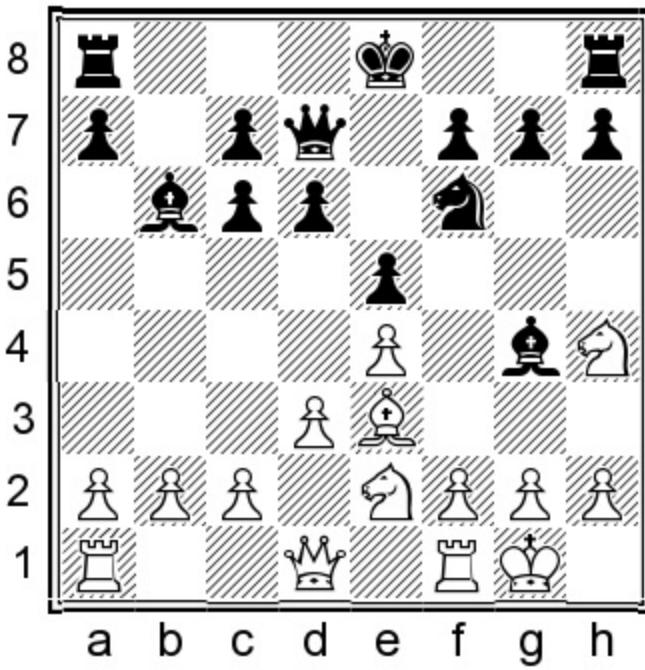
551. Kolisch – Steinitz, Paris 1867



Show/Hide Solution

9... $\mathbb{Q}g4$! An active move, making use of White's dubious development. Black threatens ... $\mathbb{E}d8$ and if the queen moves, then ... $\mathbb{E}d1$ mate. **10. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{E}d8$ 11. $\mathbb{W}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}b6+$** White can't develop properly and if nothing else, Black continues smoothly with ...0-0 and ... $\mathbb{E}fe8$. **10. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{E}d8\#$ 10... $\mathbb{E}d8$ 11. $\mathbb{W}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 12. $fxe3$ 0-0+** Losing the e4-pawn is far from White's only problem.

552. D'Andre – Steinitz, Paris 1867

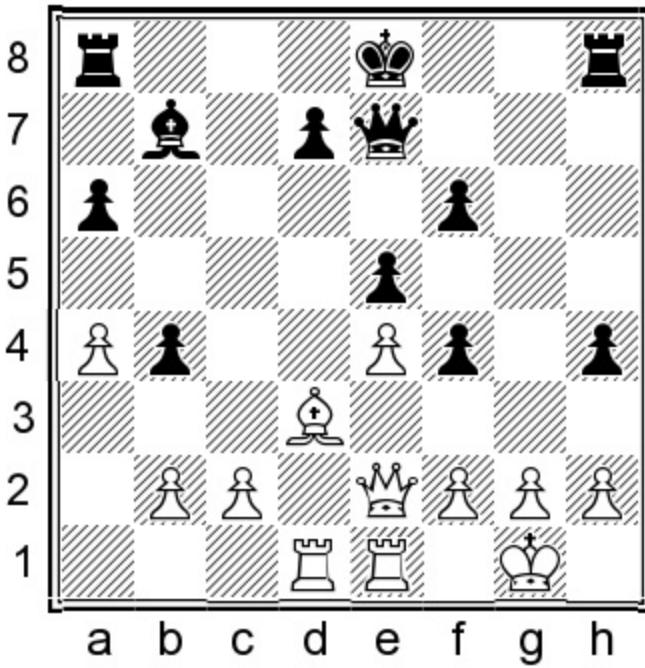


Show/Hide Solution

10...d5! Good timing when White can't defend with f2-f3. 10...g5? is a swashbuckling try, but after 11.♕xg5 ♜g8 12.♕xf6 ♜e6 13.♕xe5 ♜xe5 14.♕f5± Black's compensation should not be enough.

11.♕xb6† A concession, allowing Black to connect the pawns. Both recaptures are possible although 11...axb6 feels more natural.

553. Steinitz – Baker, Great Britain (Simul) 1868

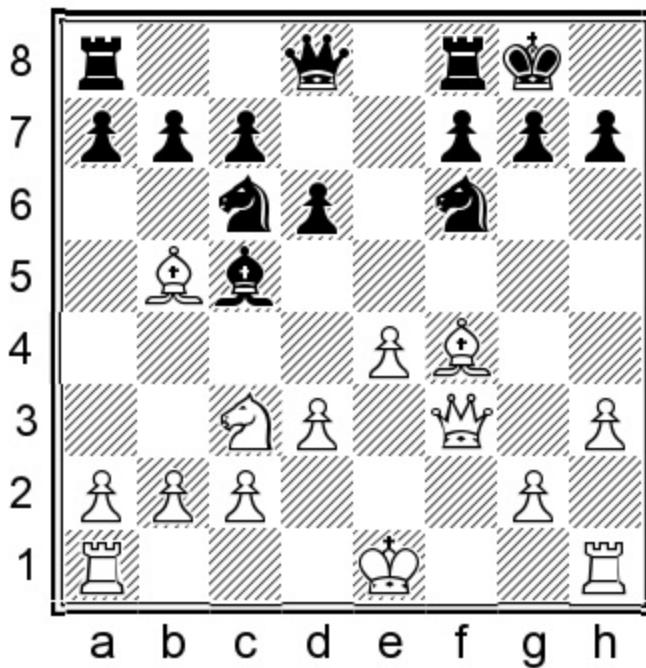


Show/Hide Solution

25.h3!+– Avoiding ...h4-h3, weakening White's king.

25. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $h3$ 26. $g3$ might still be winning, but the risk that something goes wrong is much bigger with the black pawn on $h3$. Having a superior position is no excuse for not choosing the best moves.

554. Steinitz – Mocatta, England (Consultation) 1875

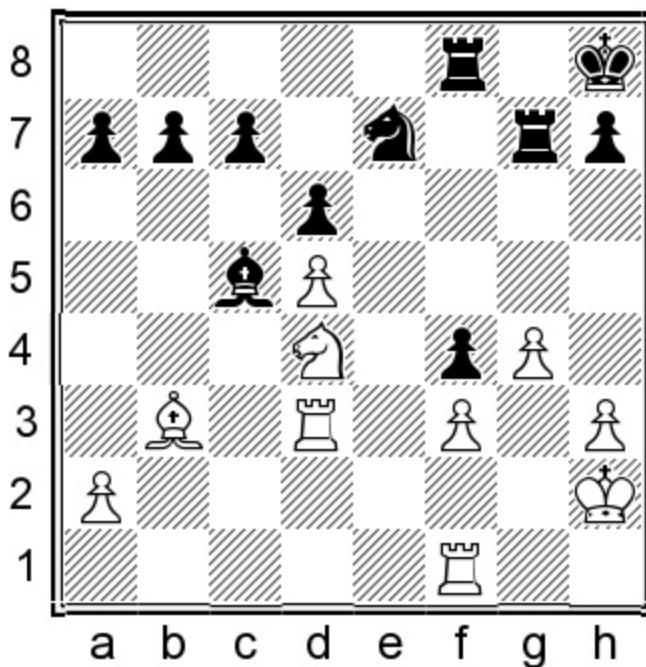


Show/Hide Solution

10. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$! Avoiding ... $\mathbb{Q}d4$. You don't need to plan any further than this to solve the exercise.

10... $bxc6$ 11. $0-0-0$!? \pm Normal. Instead, Steinitz started with 11. $\mathbb{Q}e2\pm$ and castled short ten moves later. 11. $\mathbb{Q}g5$?! $\mathbb{Q}d4$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ 14. $c3\pm$ is unnecessarily complicated.

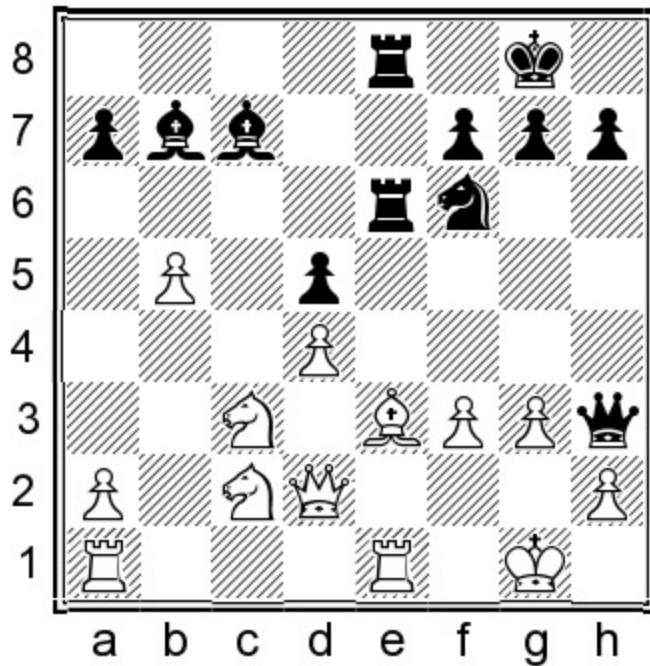
555. Zukertort – Steinitz, England (Consultation) 1875



Show/Hide Solution

29...♝xd4! The knight must not be allowed to reach the outpost on e6. **30.♝xd4 ♟g6†** In addition, Black gets a beautiful knight on e5, which White can't challenge with the bishop.

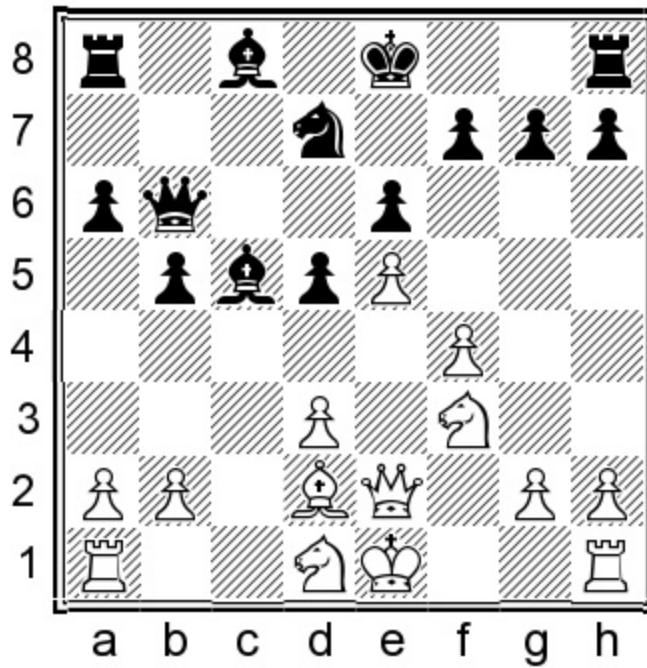
556. Steinitz – Rosenthal, London 1883



Show/Hide Solution

27.♞a4! Heading for c5, hitting two of Black's pieces. **27.♝f4 ♜a5?** **27...♞h5?** It's not your task to find Black's best defence, but it was not Rosenthal's desperate try. **28.♞c5 ♜xg3 29.♞xe6 ♜xe6 30.♝g2+–** It's over. Instead, White gave back material with **30.♝f4??** and later lost. **30.hxg3+–** also works.

557. Steinitz – Sellman, Baltimore 1885



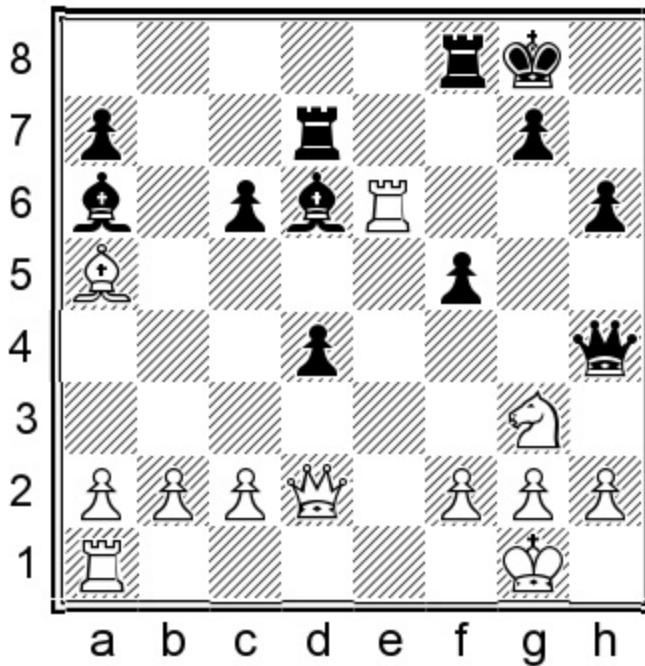
Show/Hide Solution

13.b4! Taking control over the dark squares in the centre. **13...Qe7 14.Qf2±** Continuing with the same strategy. Steinitz played 14.a3, which is a reasonable move but not essential at this point.

William Steinitz

"The task of the positional player is systematically to accumulate slight advantages and try to convert temporary advantages into permanent ones, otherwise the player with the better position runs the risk of losing it."

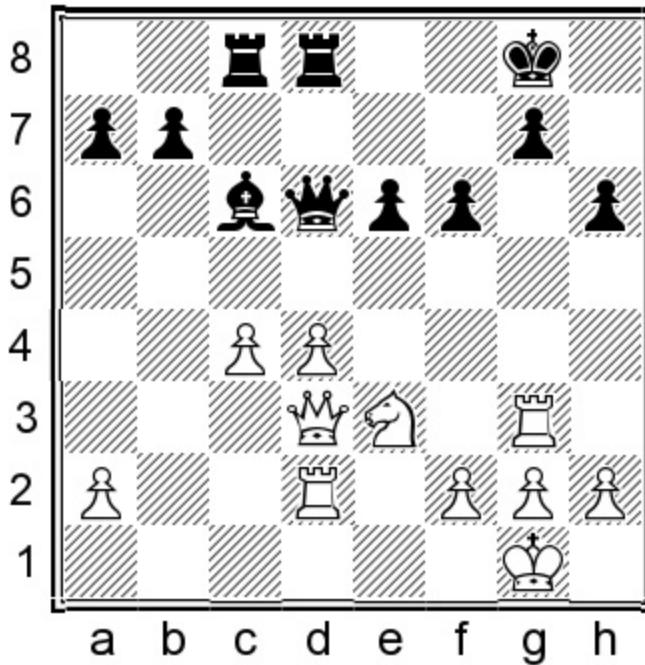
558. Steinitz – Zukertort, USA (2) 1886



Show/Hide Solution

22.♗xd6! Exchanging two pieces puts an end to Black's active possibilities. 22.♕ae1? c5= and it's too late to get rid of Black's dark-squared bishop. **22...♗xd6 23.♗b4±** Black has weak pawns and the bishop hits empty air.

559. Zukertort – Steinitz, USA (9) 1886

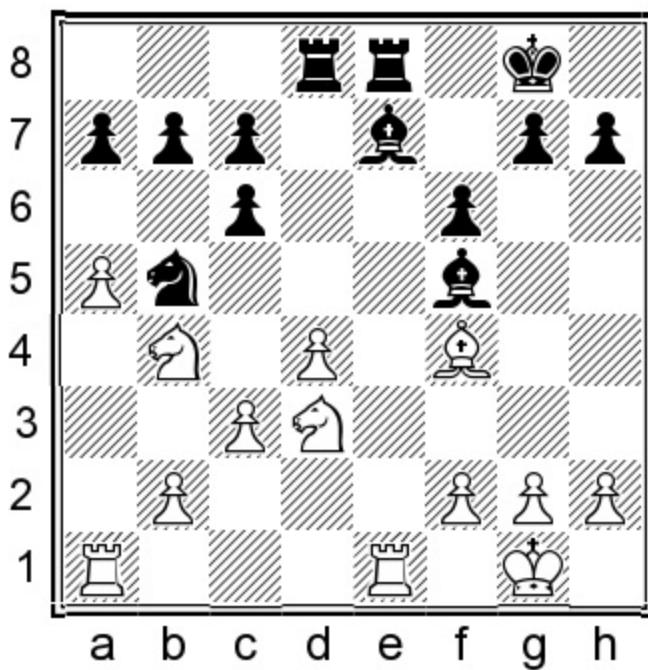


Show/Hide Solution

30...f5! White's rook has no convenient way back. **31.♗g6?** Making things worse. The knight can't reach d6 after 31.c5 ♕e7 32.♘c4 as Black has 32...♗b5!, and if 33.a4 ♘xc4 34.♘xc4 ♕xc5= Black

wins a pawn. 31... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 32. $\mathbb{W}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}f7+$ White loses material. 32... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 33.c5 $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}c1\#$ also works, as the game showed.

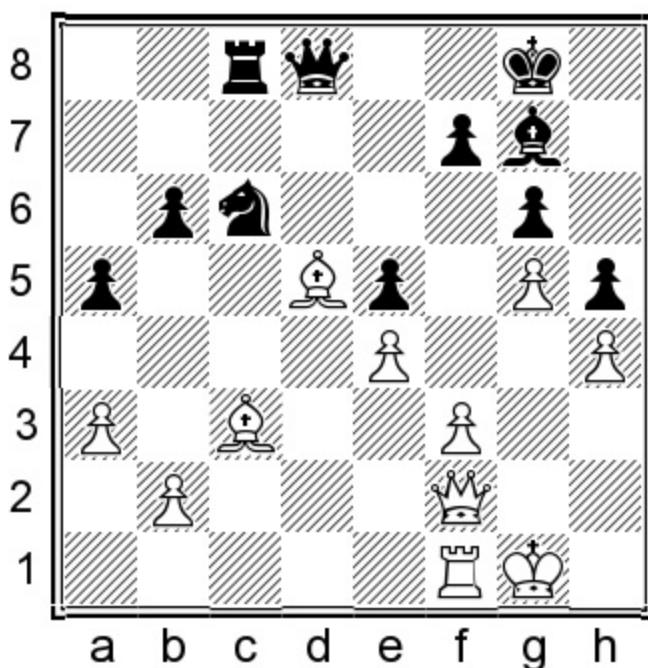
560. Steinitz – Zukertort, USA (12) 1886



Show/Hide Solution

22.a6! Undermining the c6-pawn. Black is forced to give up the bishop pair. (Given another move, Black would have played ...a7-a6.) 22... $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ 22...b6? 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc6+$ — 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ b6± The pawn on a6 is an asset.

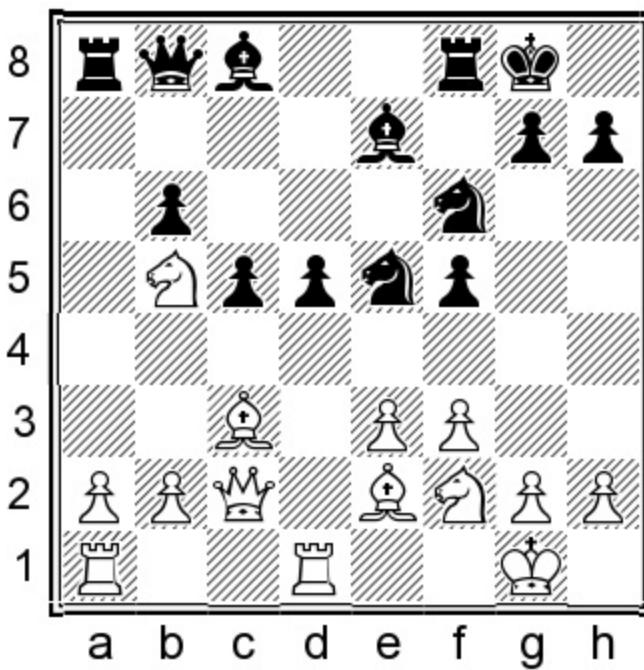
561. Steinitz – Zukertort, USA (18) 1886



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35.f4! Improving the scope of White's queen, rook and dark-squared bishop, while not allowing Black's knight to settle on d4. **35...♝d7 36.f5!±** Preventing a check on g4. 36.fxe5 attacks f7, but 36...♞xe5 37.♚xe5 ♞xe5 38.♝xf7† ♜xf7 39.♝xf7 ♔h8= gives Black enough counterplay with ...♞xb2 or ...♝c2 coming. **36...♔h7 37.♝xb6 ♞d4 38.♝xa5±**

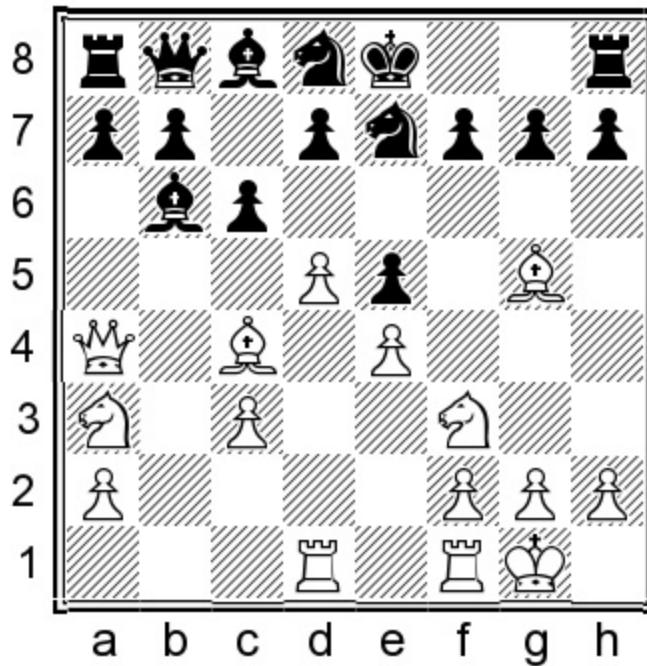
562. Steinitz – Chigorin, Havana (16) 1889



Show/Hide Solution

23.♞h3! The knight is heading for the splendid f4-square. White thus improves the worst-placed piece. 23.f4 does not win a pawn due to 23...♝c6! when 24.♝xf6?! (24.♝f3 ♛e6±) 24...♜xf6 25.♝xd5? runs into a fork: 25...♝b4 **23...♝d8±** To preserve the d5- and f5-pawns while keeping the e6-square protected, Black stayed passive with the bishop on c8. The lesser evil might have been to give up a pawn with: 23...♝g6!? 24.♝xf6 ♛xf6 25.♝xd5±

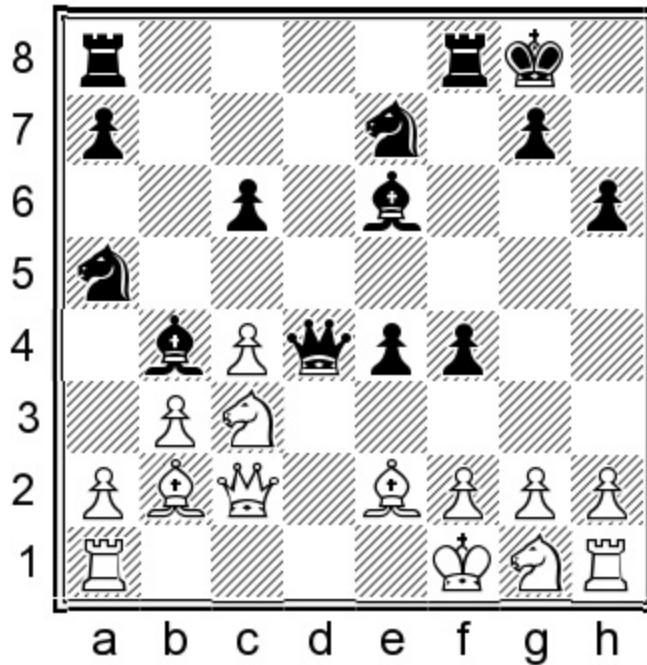
563. Chigorin – Steinitz, Havana (17) 1889



Show/Hide Solution

13.♕xe7! Keeping Black's king in the centre. **13...♔xe7 14.d6†!** Just look at the state of Black's queenside pieces. **14...♗f8** White just needs to prevent ...♗c5xd6 to have a winning position. Chigorin did that with: **15.♗b4!**

564. Steinitz – Chigorin, Cable (2) 1890

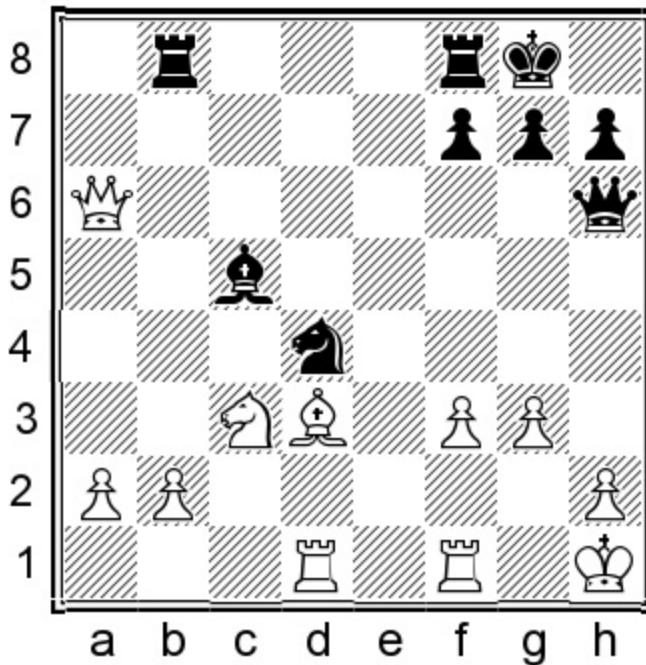


Show/Hide Solution

21...f3! Opening the f-file at the small cost of a pawn. **22.gxf3 exf3 23.♗xf3 23.♗xf3 ♔h3† 24.♗e1 ♕xf3** Most straightforward. **25.♗xf3 ♔e8–+** White's king won't survive. **23...♗f5–+** Chigorin won

both games in this famous telegraph match, which was something of a philosophical duel between dynamic and static factors in chess. 23... $\mathbb{Q}xc4!$ would have been even stronger, with a rook sacrifice coming up: 24.bxc4 $\mathbb{W}xc4\#$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ (25. $\mathbb{Q}g2 \mathbb{B}xf3!$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xf3 \mathbb{W}g4\#$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}f1 \mathbb{W}xf3$ and the light-squared bishop soon joins the party.) 25... $\mathbb{B}xf2\#$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xf2 \mathbb{W}h4\#$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}g2 \mathbb{Q}f5$ White is a rook and a piece up, but Black's attack is the deciding factor.

565. Steinitz – Lasker, St. Petersburg 1895



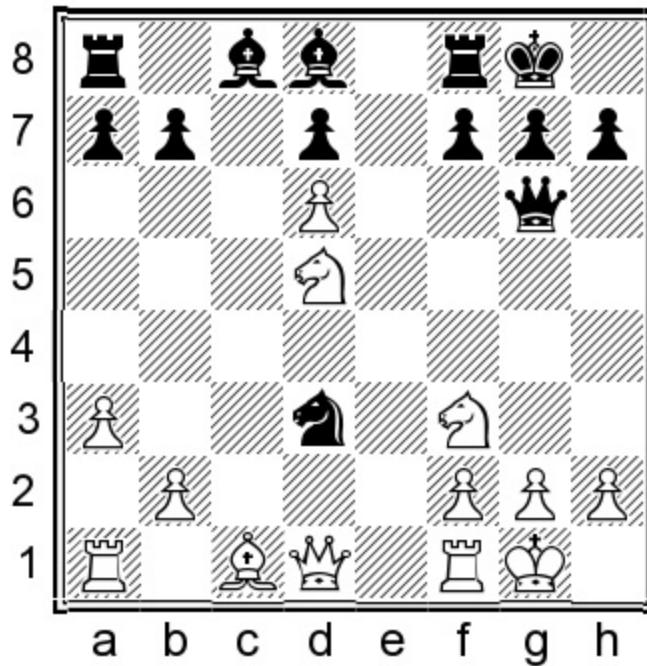
Show/Hide Solution

24... $\mathbb{B}b6!$ Keeping queens on the board is an easy decision, being material down and having an attack.
25. $\mathbb{W}c4 \mathbb{B}xb2$ 26. $\mathbb{h}4\#$ Any move that defends the bishop gives Black decent compensation for the pawn.

Emanuel Lasker

"By some ardent enthusiasts chess has been elevated into a science or an art. It is neither; but its principal characteristic seems to be – what human nature mostly delights in – a fight."

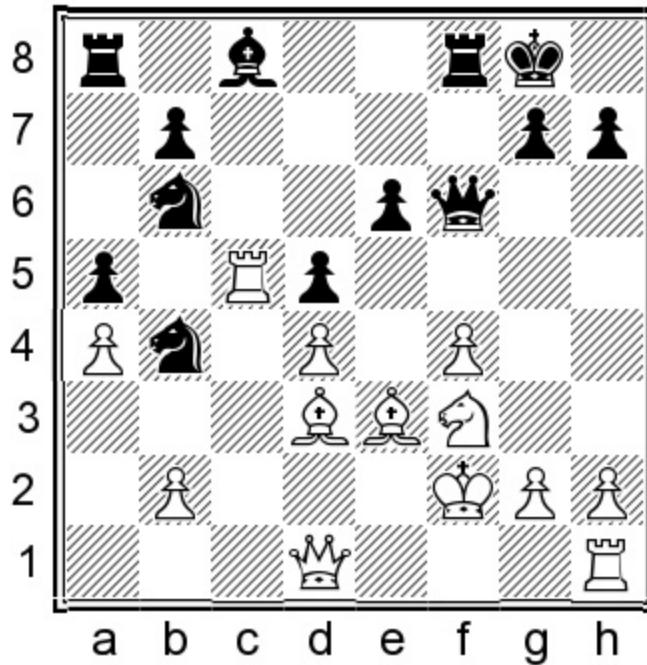
566. Lasker – Steinitz, St. Petersburg 1896



Show/Hide Solution

15...b6!± Preparing to develop the light-squared bishop to b7 or a6. 15...♝xc1? tries to win the d6-pawn, but White has 16.♞e7†! ♜xe7 17.dxe7 ♜e8 18.♝xc1 ♜xe7 19.♝e1± when Black is too passive with the back rank vulnerable. **16.♞f4** 16.♞e7† ♜xe7 17.dxe7 ♜e8† **16...♝xf4** 17.♝xf4 ♜b7†

567. Steinitz – Schiffers, Rostov-on-Don (6) 1896

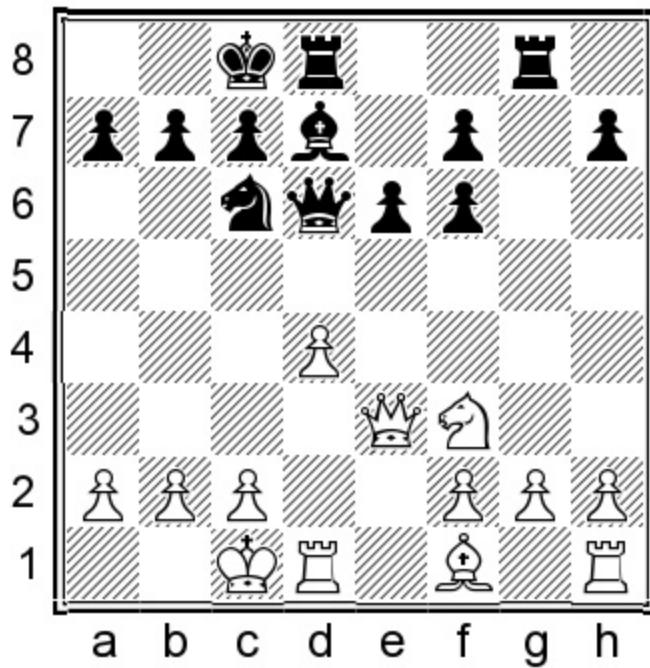


Show/Hide Solution

18.b3!± To keep White's king safe, it's important to prevent the b6-knight from reaching c4. 18.♝b1? ♜c4†; 18.♝b5 is met by 18...♝d7! and Black will obtain great play on the light squares. If White gets

greedy with 19. $\mathbb{Q}e5$?! $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ dxc4 22. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$? $\mathbb{Q}d3\#$ Black obtains a decisive initiative, helped by the superior minor piece. 18. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ also stops ... $\mathbb{Q}c4$, but gives up the a-pawn: 18... $\mathbb{Q}xd3\#$ 19. $\mathbb{W}xd3$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ Trying to catch the knight does not work: 20. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ b6 21. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5!$ 22. dxc5 $\mathbb{W}xe5\infty$

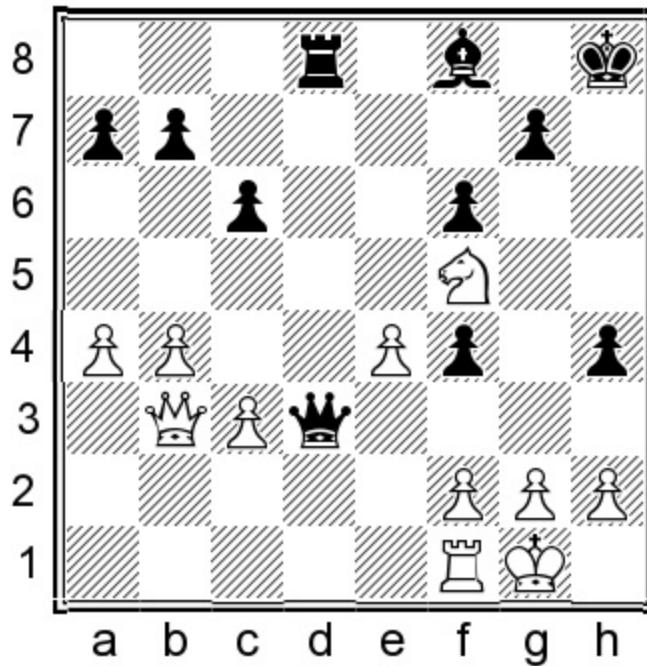
568. Lasker – Marshall, USA (8) 1907



Show/Hide Solution

15.g3 Releasing the bishop from the defence of the g-pawn. No evaluation or further arguments are needed, although it's worth mentioning one small detail: **15... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 16.d5! \pm** The a7-pawn is hanging.

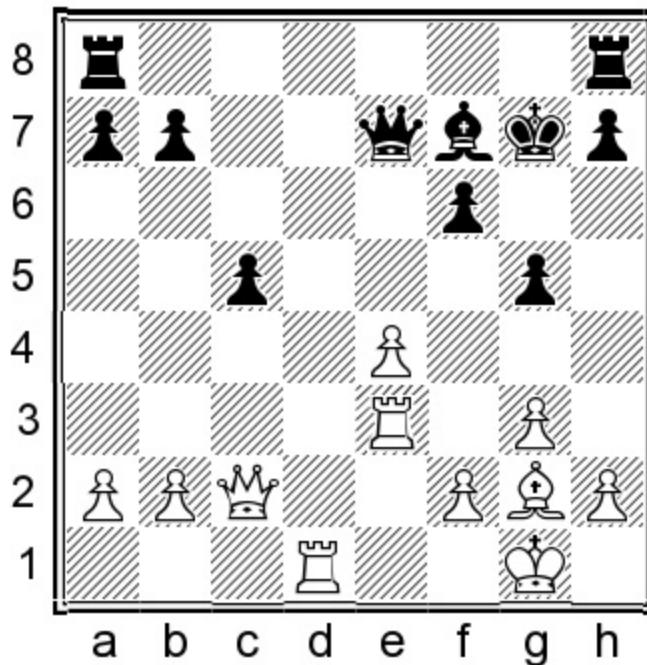
569. Blumenfeld – Alekhine, Moscow (2) 1908



Show/Hide Solution

29...h3! It doesn't have to be difficult. After ...hxg2, White can't defend against both ...f4-f3† and ... $\mathbb{W}xe4$ †. 29... $\mathbb{W}xe4$? 30. $\mathbb{Q}xh4=$ The game ended: 30. $\mathbb{W}e6$ 30.gxh3 $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}d5+$ 30...hxg2 31. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ f3† 32. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}xf1$ † 33. $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $\mathbb{Q}d1\#$ 0–1

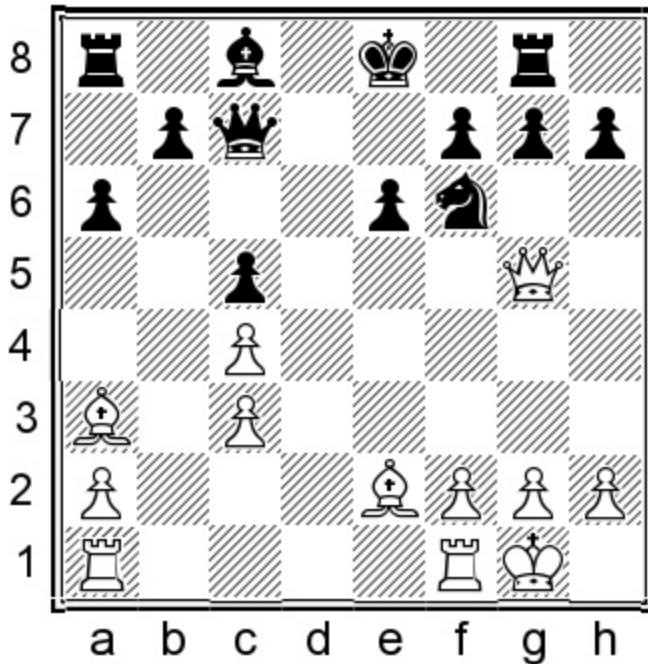
570. Alekhine – Dus Chotimirsky, Karlovy Vary 1911



Show/Hide Solution

21.e5! Opening up Black's king. 21...fxe5 21... $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ was the game. 22. $\mathbb{Q}de1\pm$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}de1$ Black can't defend the pawn: 22... $\mathbb{Q}he8$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 25. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}ae8$ 26.f4+–

571. Alekhine – Levenfish, Vilnius 1912



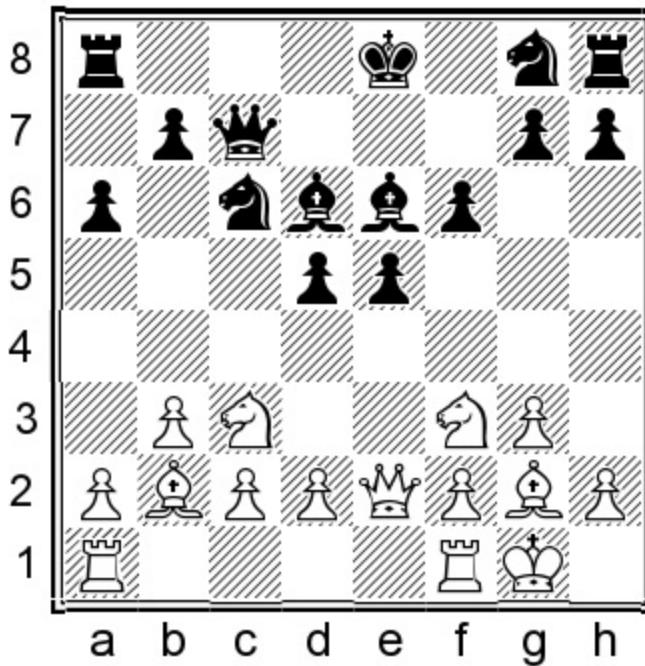
Show/Hide Solution

15.♘f3! Hindering Black's development is more important than capturing the c-pawn (which would lead to a queen exchange and an open c-file). **15...♝d7** **15...♞d7** **16.♞xc5±** is now possible, since ...♝e4 is not an option. **16.♝fe1±**

Alexander Alekhine

"As a rule, so-called 'positional' sacrifices are considered more difficult, and therefore more praiseworthy, than those which are based exclusively on an exact calculation of tactical possibilities."

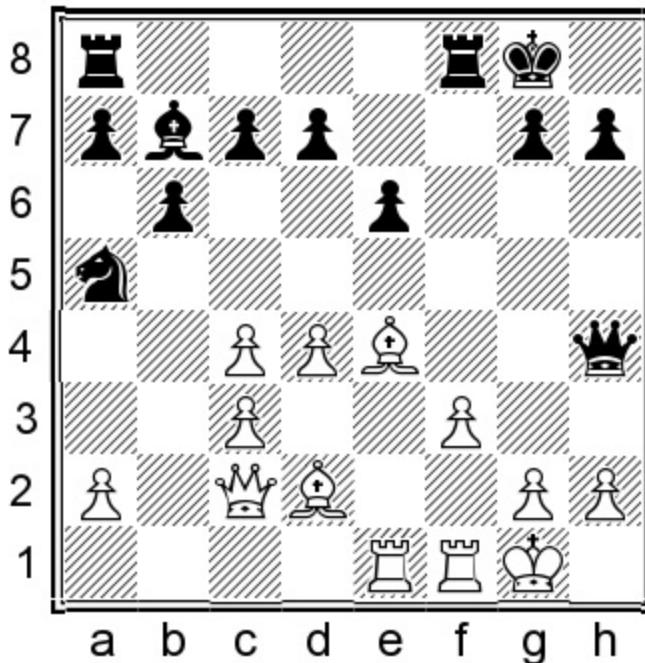
572. Euwe – Reti, Amsterdam (3) 1920



Show/Hide Solution

11.d4! Fighting for the centre and opening the position, as Black is two moves away from castling short. **11...Qge7** **11...e4?** is refuted by: **12.Qxe4!** **dxe4** **13.Wxe4+-** The pin and the d4-d5 fork ensure that White will immediately regain the piece with interest. **11...0-0-0±** is not what Black wants with the c-pawn missing. **12.dxe5 Qxe5** **12...fxe5** **13.Qg5 Qg8** Black is again two moves from castling. **14.Qad1+-** **13.Qxe5 fxe5** **14.Qad1 0-0-0±** Euwe went on to win a great game. **14...Qd8** **15.f4±**

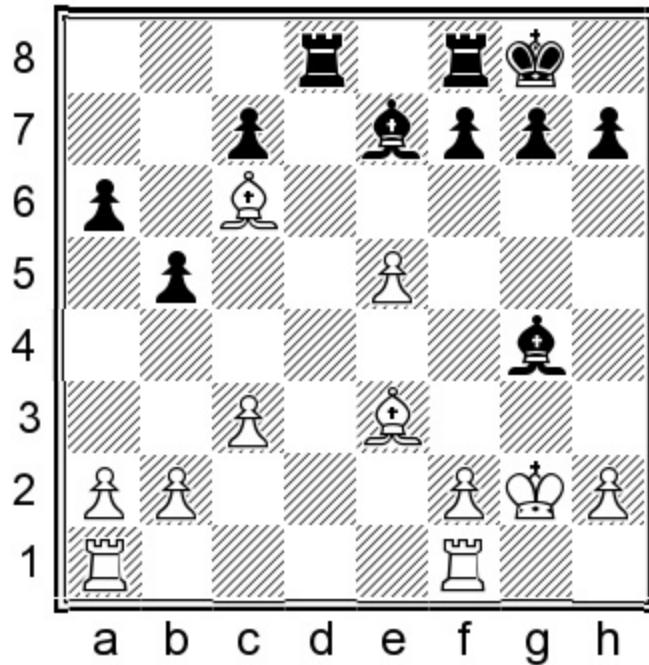
573. Rabinovich – Alekhine, Moscow 1920



Show/Hide Solution

15...♝xe4! Making sure that the bishops are exchanged. If White were to move, then 16.♝d3 would be strong. **16.♝xe4** Otherwise ...♝xc4. **16...♞h5±** The pawn on c4 is weak, and without the bishop pair, White does not have enough active play.

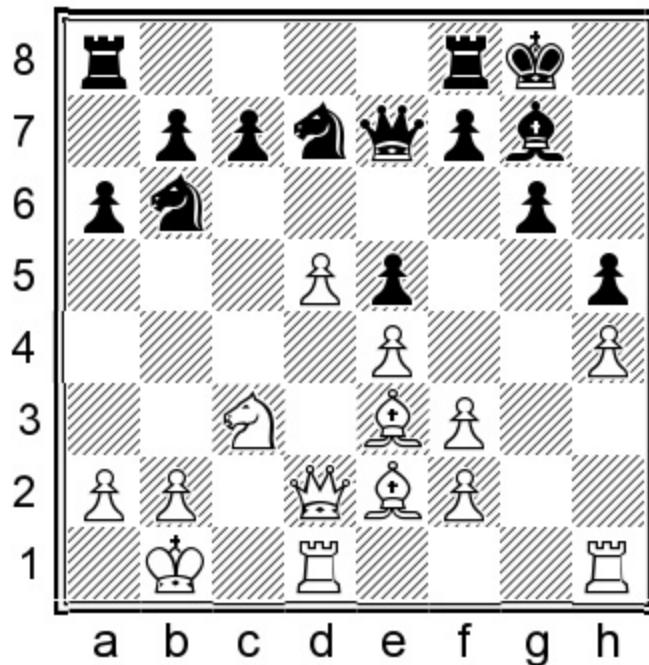
574. Alekhine – Teichmann, Berlin (4) 1921



Show/Hide Solution

17.a4! Activating the rook with a threat. **17...b4** **17...f6±** was played. **18.cxb4** **♝xb4** **19.♜fc1±** White has some pressure against the pawns, along with better bishops and (soon) better rooks.

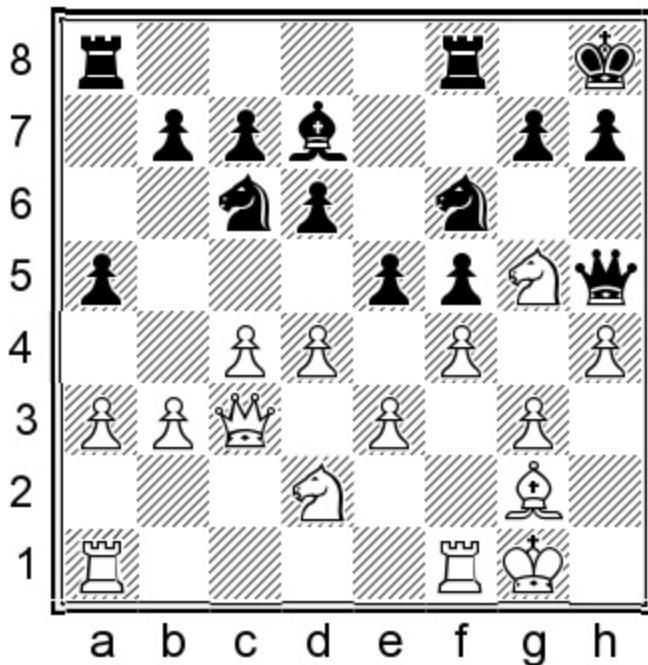
575. Alekhine – Marotti, London 1922



Show/Hide Solution

15.d6! Opening lines for the queen, rook and the bishop on e3. Black doesn't lose material yet, but will be horribly passive. Alekhine's 15. $\mathbb{E}c1$ was less clear. **15... $\mathbb{W}d8!$ 16.dxc7 $\mathbb{W}xc7$ 17. $\mathbb{W}d6 \mathbb{E}fc8$ 18.a4+**– White is dominating.

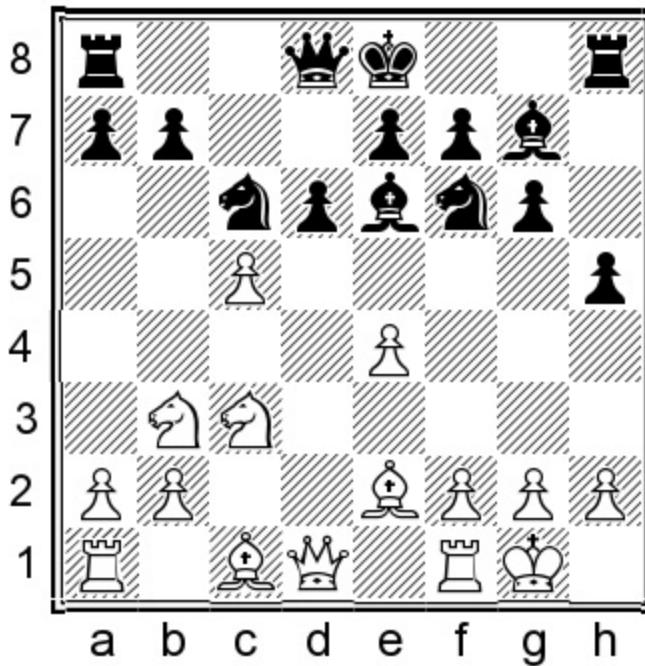
576. Bogoljubow – Alekhine, Hastings 1922



Show/Hide Solution

17...e4! Closing the diagonal of the g2-bishop is just one of the merits of putting the pawn on e4. The f3-square, g4-square and not losing the e-pawn are others. Black is positionally winning.

577. Alekhine – Sämisch, Vienna 1922

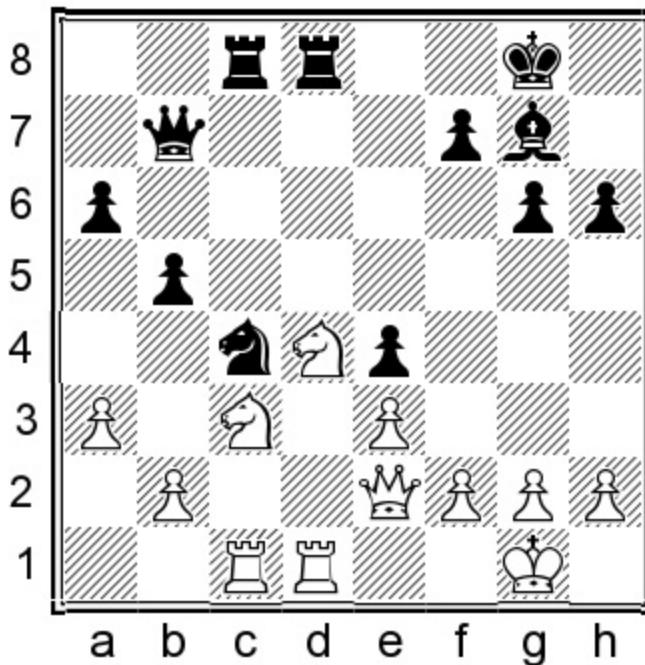


Show/Hide Solution

10...d5!± Black attacks the centre and plans to open the diagonal of the g7-bishop by recapturing with the knight. White is not active enough to use the queenside pawn majority.

10...dxc5? 11.♘xc5 ♜c8± left Black passive in the game.

578. Grünfeld – Alekhine, Karlovy Vary 1923

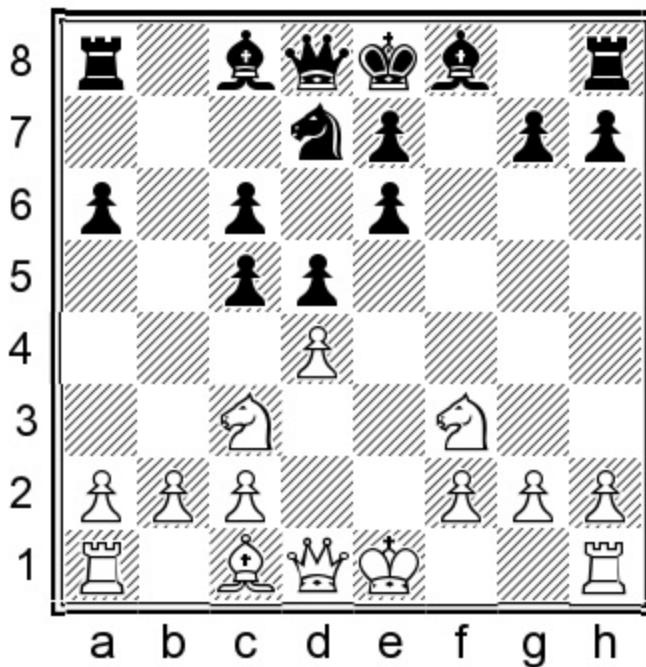


Show/Hide Solution

27...♘e5!± The knight will be even stronger on d3. White lasted for only seven more moves. **28.♘a2** ♘d3 **29.♗xc8 ♜xc8** **30.f3?** 30.♘c3 was more resilient. **30...♗xd4** **31.fxe4 ♘f4** **32.exf4 ♜c4** **33.♗xc4**

$\mathbb{E}xd1\#$ 34. $\mathbb{W}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}d4\#$ 0-1

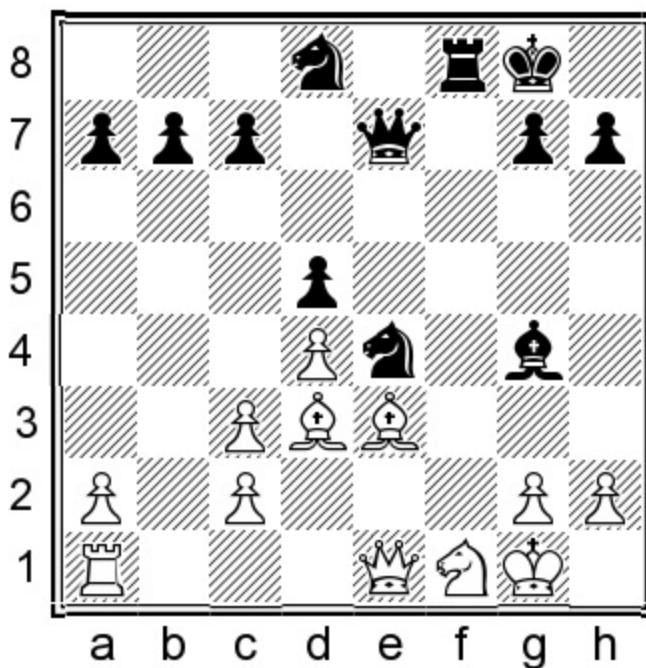
579. Bogoljubow – Alekhine, Karlovy Vary 1923



Show/Hide Solution

9. $\mathbb{Q}f4!\pm$ Making sure that it's possible to capture on e5 with a minor piece. 9.0-0 allows Black some respite with: 9...cxd4 (The game continuation of 9...e5 also enables Black to give back the pawn to free the position.) 10. $\mathbb{W}xd4$ e5 11. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 12. $\mathbb{W}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}d6\pm$

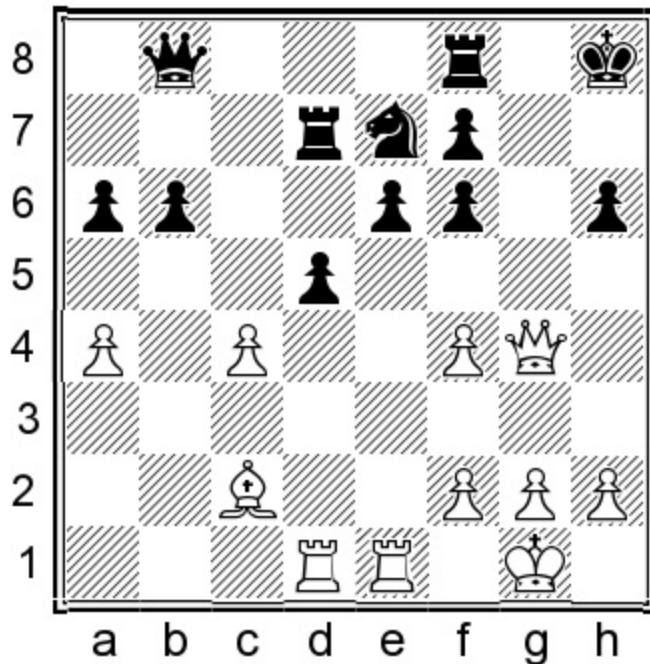
580. Alekhine – Lille, Paris (Simul) 1925



Show/Hide Solution

17.c4 Using the doubled pawn before it's too late. **17...dxc4** **17...c6** **18.cxd5 cxd5** **19.c4±** **18.♗xc4† ♕h8** **18...♗e6** **19.d5±** **19.♗g3±** The bishop pair gives White an advantage.

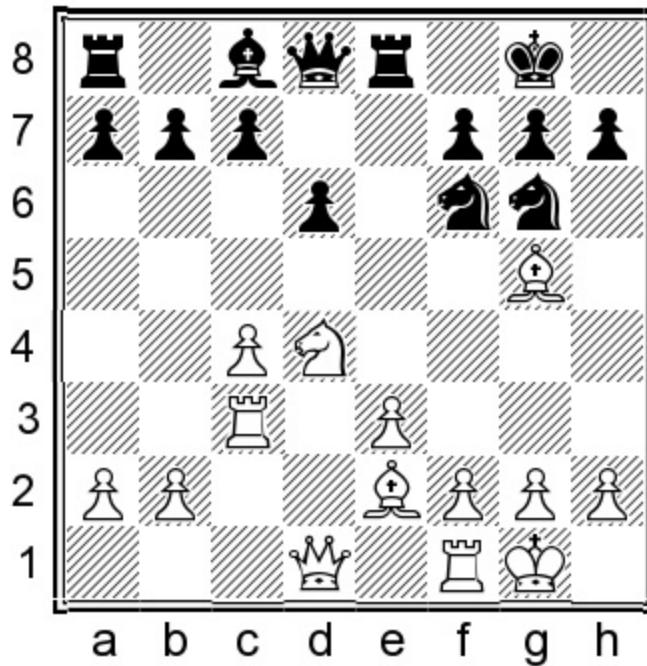
581. Alekhine – Colle, Baden-Baden 1925



Show/Hide Solution

31.f5! Otherwise Black would play ...f6-f5. **31...♗xf5** **31...e5** gives White a choice of strong options; **32.♕e3±** for instance. **32.♗xf5 exf5** **33.♗xf5 ♗d8** **34.cxd5±**

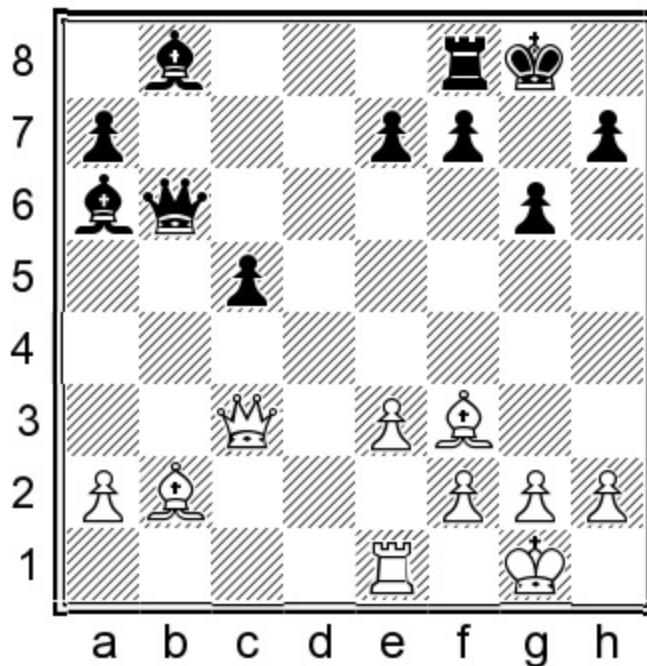
582. Alekhine – Yates, Semmering 1926



Show/Hide Solution

12. $\mathbb{Q}b5! \pm$ The queen has to stay on d8 to defend c7, so Black has no defence against $\mathbb{Q}xf6$, doubling the pawns.

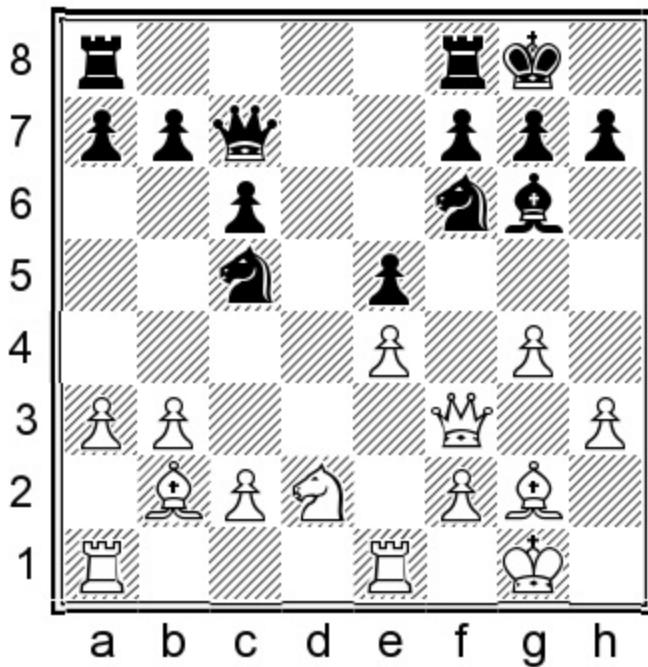
583. Alekhine – Zagrodzki, Warsaw (Simul) 1928



Show/Hide Solution

20...f6!? 20...e5? restricted the bishop and weakened numerous squares. White can respond with:
21. $\mathbb{Q}a3!$ $\mathbb{Q}d6$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d1\bar{\infty}$ With the pawn on e7, the bishop would be stable on d6.

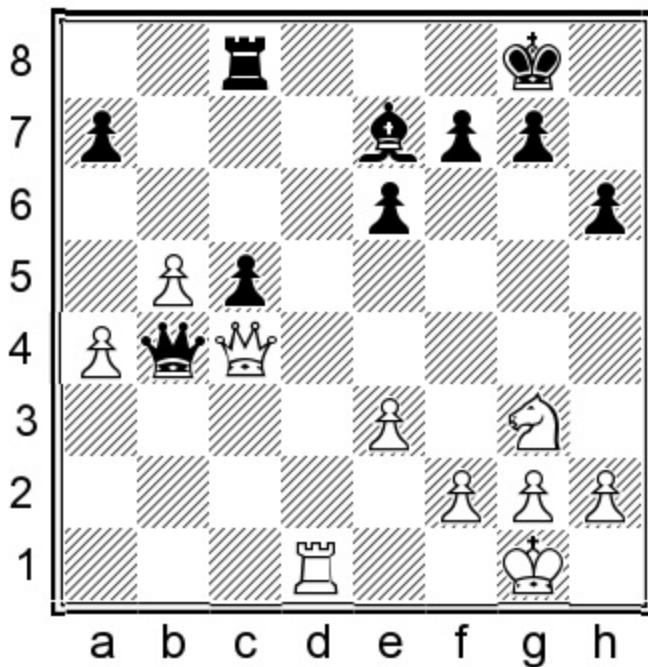
584. Euwe – Bogoljubow, Amsterdam & The Hague (6) 1928



Show/Hide Solution

17. $\mathbb{W}c3!$ Threatening the e5-pawn is the only way to avoid ... $\mathbb{Q}e6-f4$. **17... $\mathbb{Q}fd7$** **17... $\mathbb{Q}cd7$** is not critical since Black's knight can no longer reach f4. White is much better since the bishop on g6 is out of play. **18. $a4\pm$** is a good move, playing for the d6-square. **18. $f4$** Again creating a threat to avoid ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$. Black is forced to react passively. **18... $f6$** **19. $b4$** **$\mathbb{Q}a6$** **20. $f5\pm$** $g4-g5$ comes sooner or later.

585. Bogoljubow – Alekhine, Germany/Netherlands (10) 1929

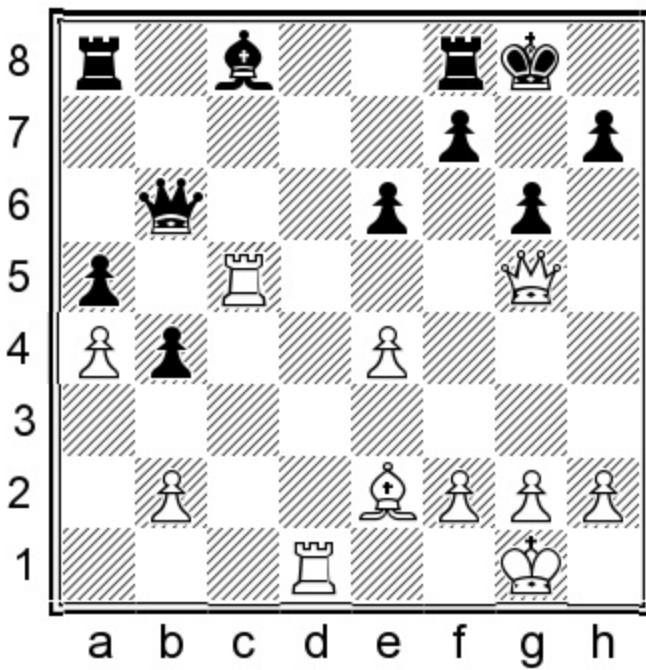


Show/Hide Solution

30. $\mathbb{B}c1!=$ Keeping Black's pawn on c5.

30. $\mathbb{W}c2?$ c4 was bad for White, with ... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ and ...c4-c3 coming.

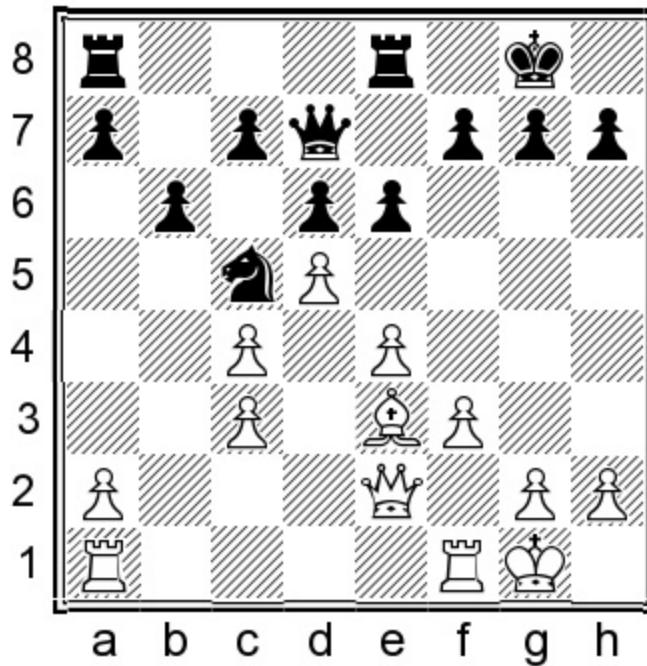
586. Alekhine – Flohr, Bled 1931



Show/Hide Solution

24. $h4!$ Attacking the king is logical with Black's queen on the other wing. 24... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ White has a good choice, but the exercise ends here. There's no need to decide on your next move before executing 24. $h4$. 25. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{W}xa6$ 26. $\mathbb{W}f6!$ (26. $h5$ runs into the triple threat 26... $\mathbb{W}e2$.) 26... $h5$ The only way to avoid $h4-h5$. (26... $\mathbb{W}e2$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}d7$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 28. $h5+-$) 27. $\mathbb{Q}d7$ Threatening $\mathbb{Q}g5\times g6\#$ with mate to follow. 27... $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ The rook on a7 can't challenge White on the c-file. The threat is $g2-g4$. 28... $\mathbb{W}b7$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xh5!$ $gxh5$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}g5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{W}xe4$ 32. $\mathbb{Q}xh5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 33. $\mathbb{Q}g3\#$ $\mathbb{W}g6$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}c5$ $\mathbb{W}xg3$ 35. $f\times g3+-$ White advances the kingside pawns. This line was, of course, far too long for anyone to calculate. 25... $f6$ 25... $\mathbb{Q}ac8$ is met by: 26. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ 27. $h5+-$ 26. $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{Q}ad8$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ A position from *The Woodpecker Method*. There is a tactical win: 28. $e5!$ $f5$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}c8$ Black resigned. 1-0

587. Bernstein – Alekhine, Pasadena 1932

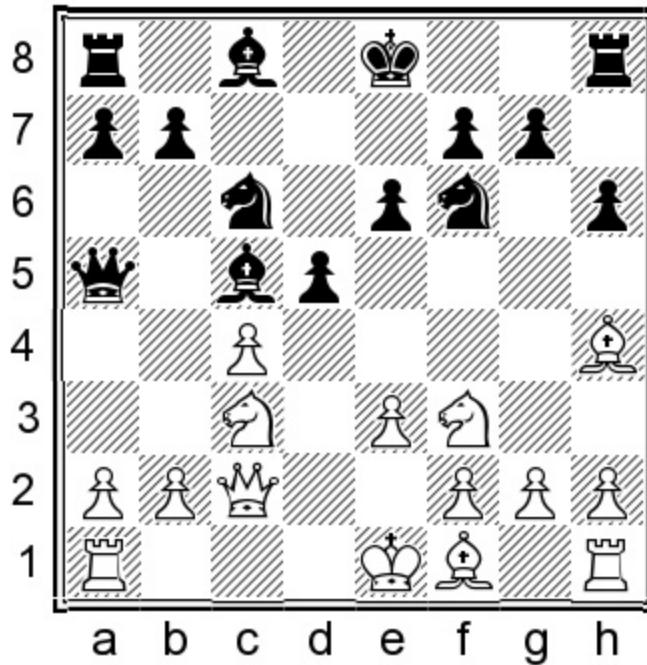


Show/Hide Solution

16...♝b7!? Avoiding ♜xc5, which would close the c-file and thus safeguard the weak c-pawns. Black can attack them with ...♜a4 and ...♝a5.

16...exd5 17.cxd5 f5 18.♜xc5 bxc5 19.♜ae1=

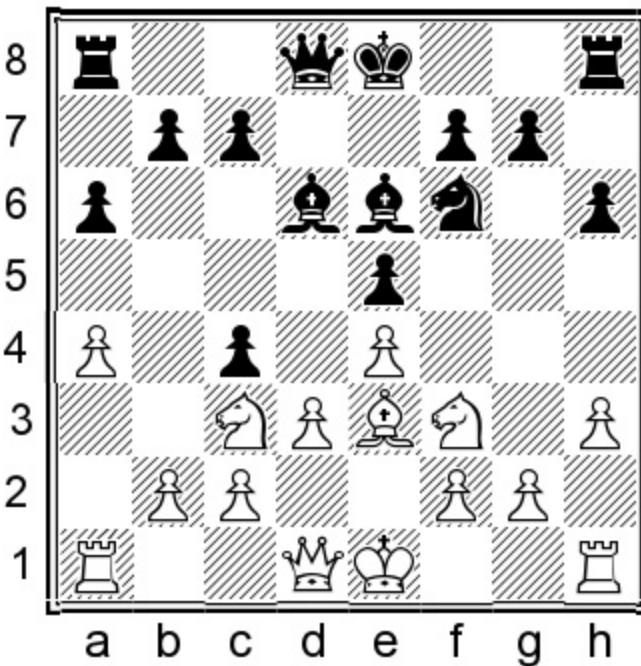
588. Alekhine – Sultan Khan, London 1932



Show/Hide Solution

10.♜xf6 Weakening Black's pawn structure. (Positional chess consists mostly of easy moves.)
10...gxf6 11.cxd5 exd5?± 11...♝b4 would have limited Black's disadvantage.

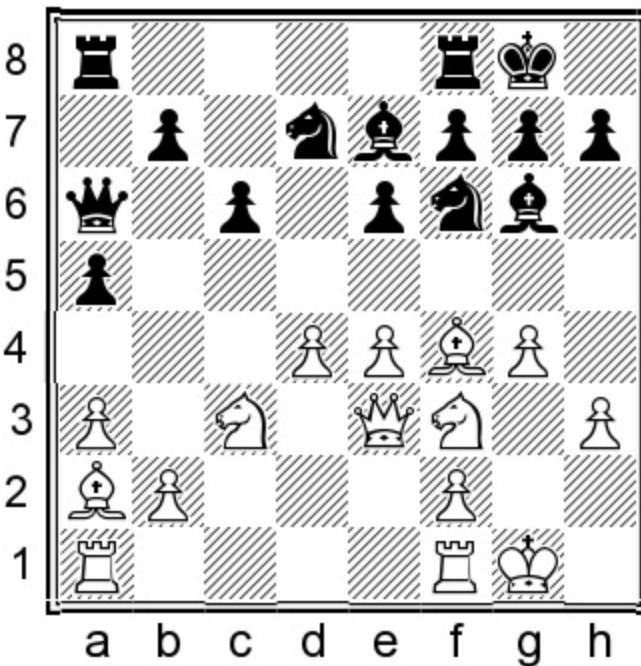
589. Alekhine – Bogoljubow, Germany (16) 1934



Show/Hide Solution

11.d4!± Instead of allowing Black to get rid of the doubled pawns, White gets an advantage in the centre (with a pawn majority on the kingside).

590. Bogoljubow – Alekhine, Germany (25) 1934

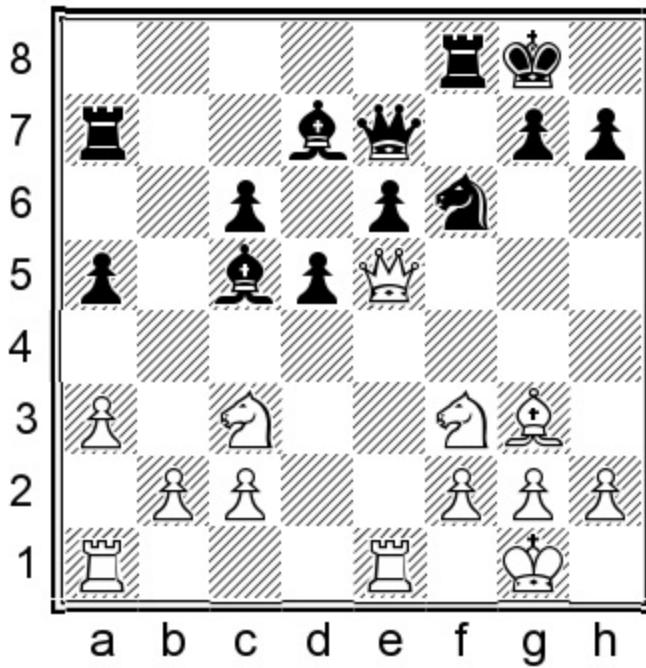


Show/Hide Solution

15...b5 Preparing to attack the knight that defends the e4-pawn. (After 16...b4 17.axb4 axb4 Black

doesn't have to be afraid of a discovered attack, as the queen can capture on a1.) White doesn't want to move the e-pawn. **16.♕e5?!** White should have preferred one of the alternatives: 16.e5 ♜d5=; 16.♗h4 b4 17.♗xg6 hxg6 18.axb4 axb4 19.♗e2 ♕b7= followed by ...c6-c5. **16...♗xe5** 17.dxe5 ♜d7± gives Black a mobile queenside majority, while White does not really have an attack. **17...b4 18.♗xf6 ♜xf6±** Exchanging minor pieces makes the centre less important, and the bishop pair is a bonus.

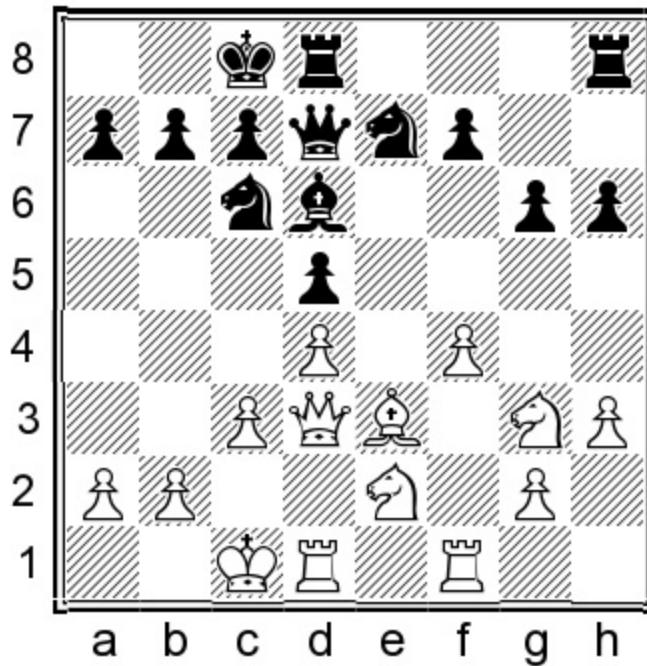
591. Alekhine – Euwe, Nottingham 1936



Show/Hide Solution

16.♗a4!± Catching the bishop, winning the dark squares. Note that **16...♗g4?!** followed by the exchanging ...♗d6 does not improve Black's situation on those squares.

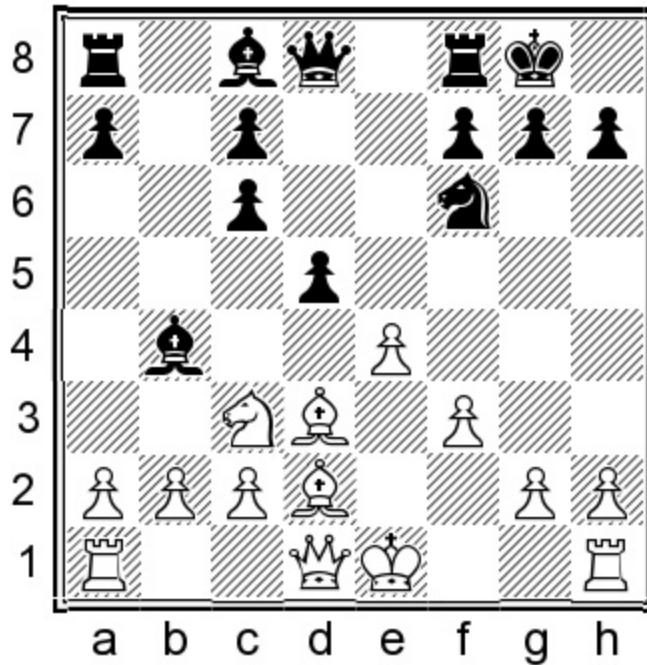
592. Winter – Alekhine, Nottingham 1936



Show/Hide Solution

16...h5!† Preventing f4-f5, which would have activated practically all of White's pieces. By chasing the knight away from g3, Black also enables ...♘f5. **17.h4** would avoid one problem while creating a new one by weakening the g4-square: **17...♗g4†**

593. Alekhine – Alexander, Margate 1937

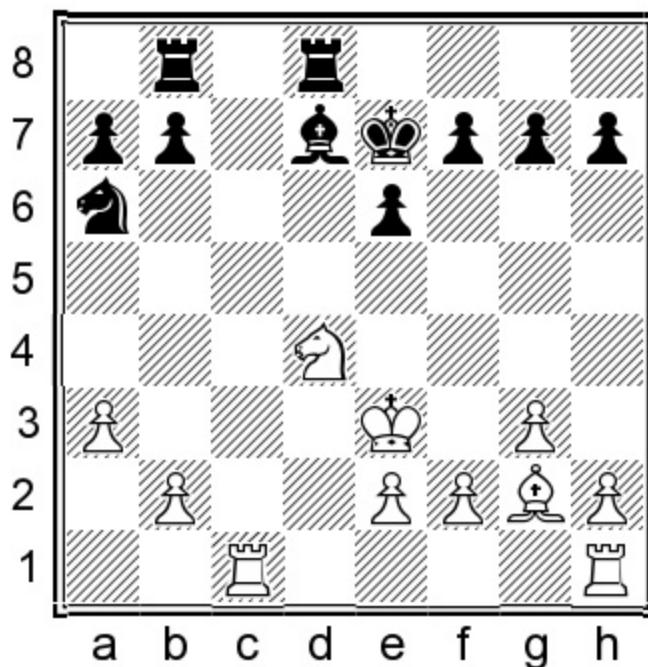


Show/Hide Solution

9...♗c5! To stop short castling. **9...dxe4?!** **10.♗xe4†** Exchanging pieces makes life easier for White. **9...♗xc3?** **10.♗xc3 dxe4 11.♗xe4± 10.♗e2** The queen is badly placed on the e-file but has no other

convenient square. White is more or less forced to castle long. 10... $\mathbb{E}e8\pm$

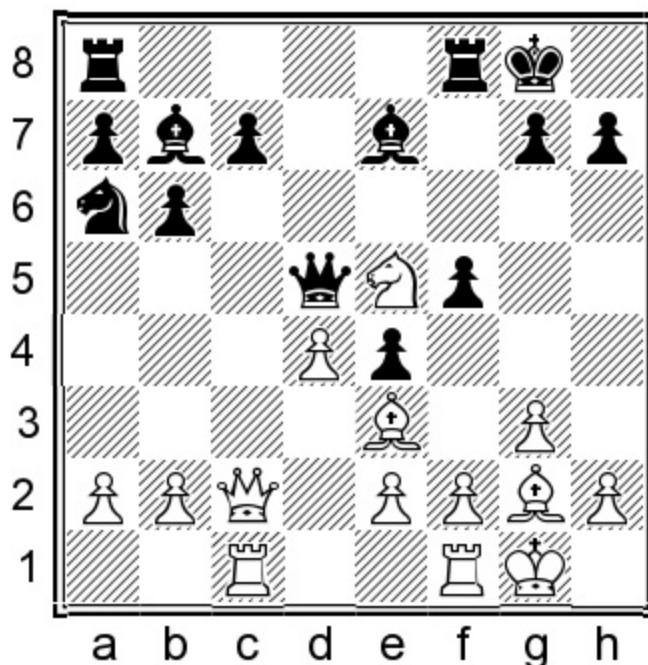
594. Alekhine – Euwe, Netherlands (24) 1937



Show/Hide Solution

16.f4!± Securing the knight on d4 for the moment. Playing ...f7-f6 and ...e6-e5 would leave Black with a weak e-pawn.

595. Euwe – Capablanca, Netherlands 1938



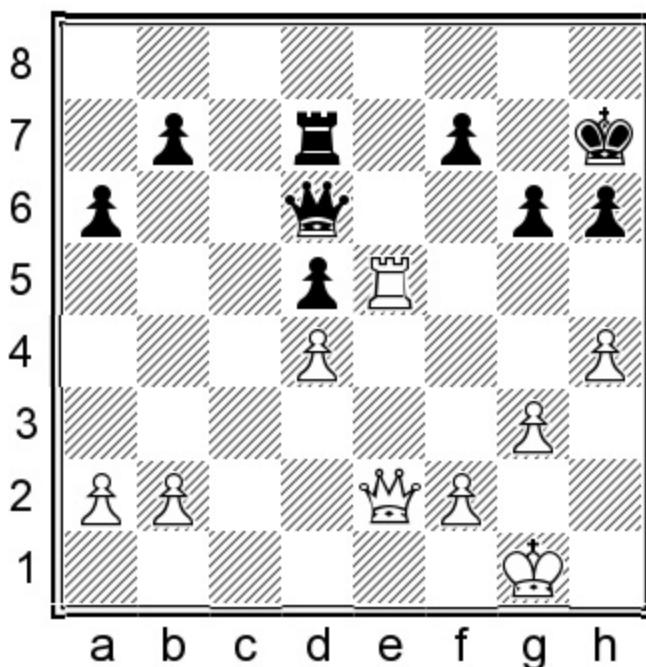
Show/Hide Solution

14. $\mathbb{Q}c6!$ Blocking Black's c-pawn on c7. **14... $\mathbb{Q}xc6$** **14... $\mathbb{Q}d6$** **15. $\mathbb{W}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$** **16. $\mathbb{B}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}b4!$** The best try. **16... $\mathbb{E}f6$** **17. $\mathbb{B}fc1\pm$** was the game. **17. $\mathbb{Q}c4!$** After **17. $\mathbb{B}xc7?$ $\mathbb{Q}d5=$** White's extra pawn will not be worth much with opposite-coloured bishops on the board and the g2-bishop restricted by the pawn structure. **17... $\mathbb{Q}d5$** **17... $\mathbb{Q}xa2?$** **18. $\mathbb{B}xc7\pm$** **18. $\mathbb{Q}d2\pm$**

Max Euwe

"I honestly feel very humble when I study Capablanca's games."

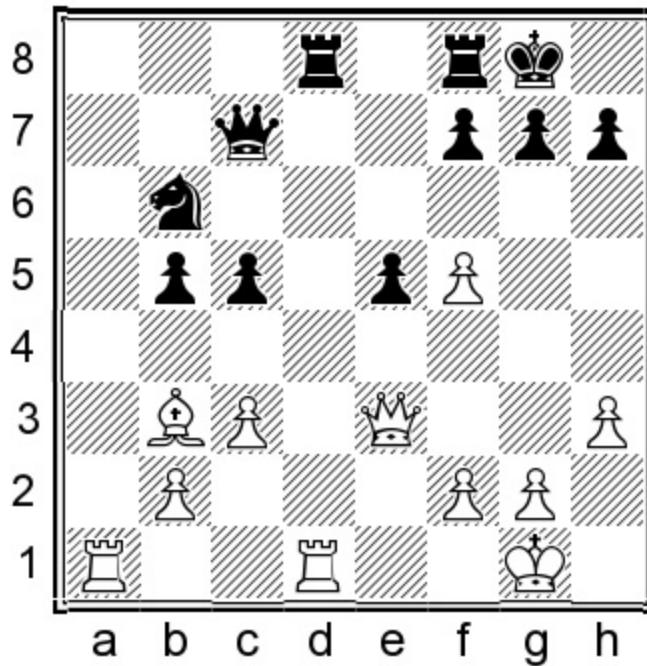
596. Alekhine – Eliskases, Buenos Aires (Ol) 1939



Show/Hide Solution

27. $h5!\pm$ Weakening Black's king. Black to move would have played ... $h6-h5$.

597. Alekhine – Junge, Poland 1942

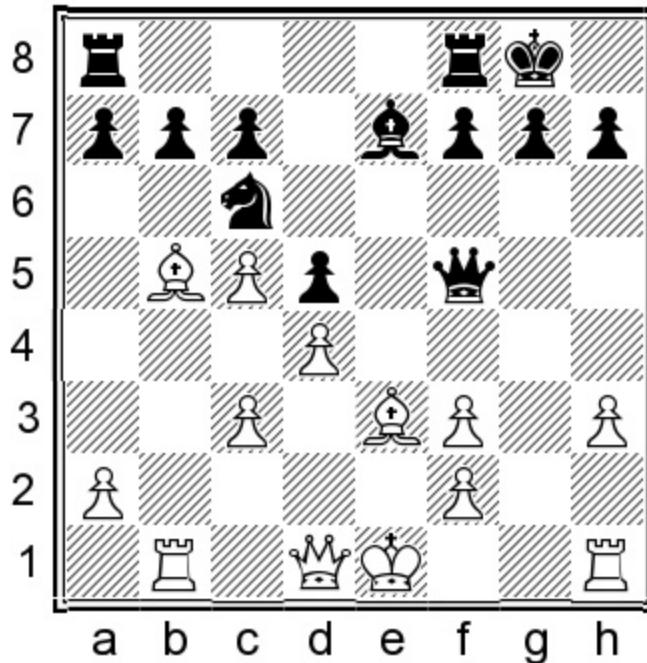


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24.f6 An obvious attacking blow, ruining the king's position. Let's see how the game ended:

24...gxf6 25.Wh6 f5 A position from *The Woodpecker Method*. **26.Qxf7†! Qxf7 27.Qxd8 Qa4 27...Qxd8 28.Qg5†** with a fork. **28.b3 1-0**

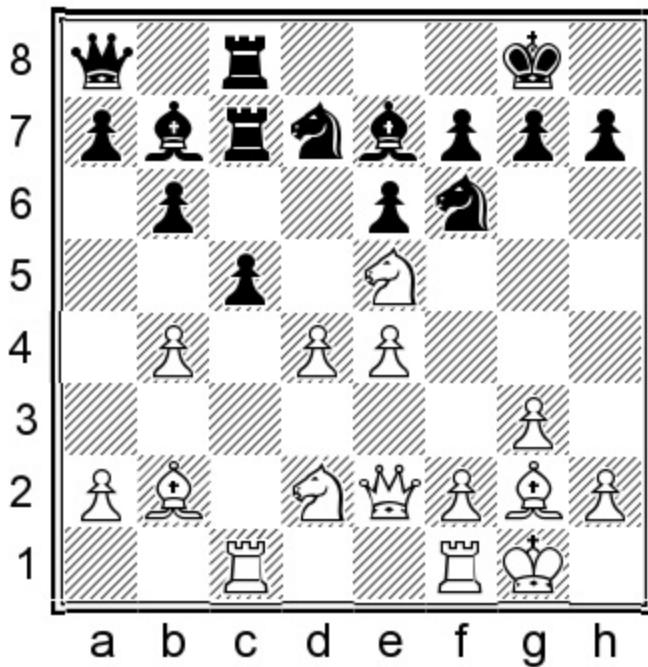
598. Alekhine – Bogoljubow, Salzburg 1942



Show/Hide Solution

17...Qg5!† By exchanging bishops, Black gets closer to White's king.

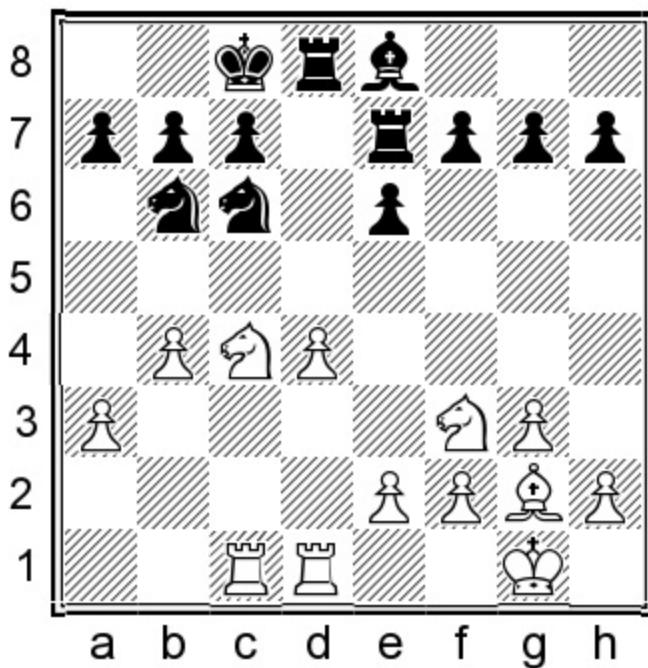
599. Alekhine – Keres, Munich 1942



Show/Hide Solution

17.dxc5 bxc5 18.b5± Black is left with a weak c-pawn while White has obtained a mobile pawn majority. Notice that the c-pawn limits the scope of Black's two rooks, the dark-squared bishop and one of the knights!

600. Alekhine – Bogoljubow, Warsaw (2) 1943



Show/Hide Solution

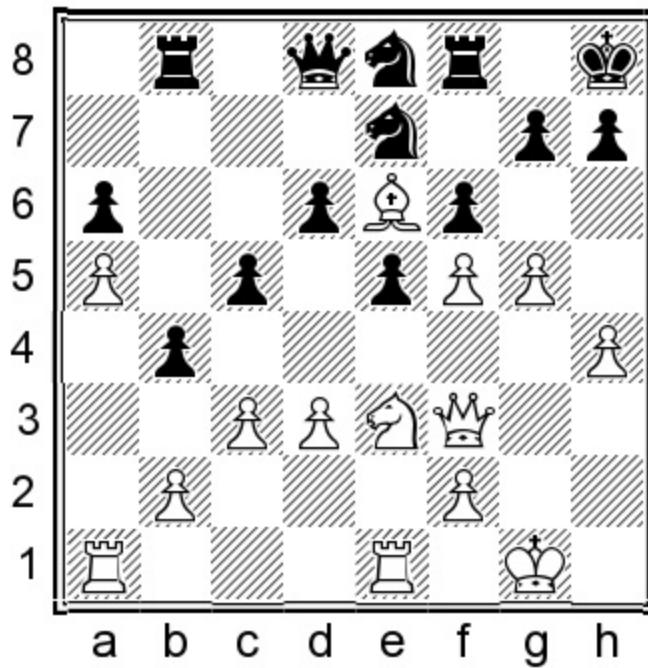
18.b5! Pushing back the knight is the only argument needed. 18.♘xb6† axb6 19.b5 allows the knight

to go to a5. **18... ♜b8** 18... ♜xc4 19.bxc6± **19. ♜xb6† axb6 20.a4±**

4. Medium Difficulty Exercises 601-650

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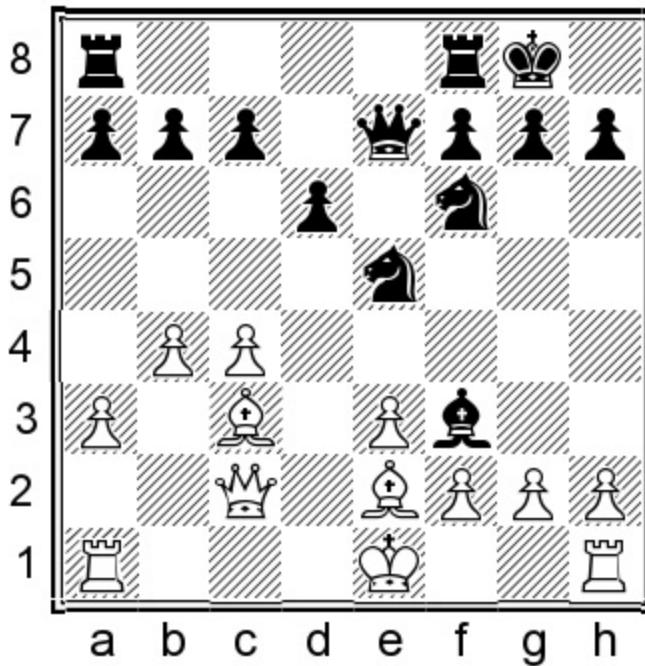
601. Alekhine – Novotny, Prague 1943



Show/Hide Solution

28.g6!± Black will always have to defend against a sacrifice on h6 (which was finally executed, with decisive effect).

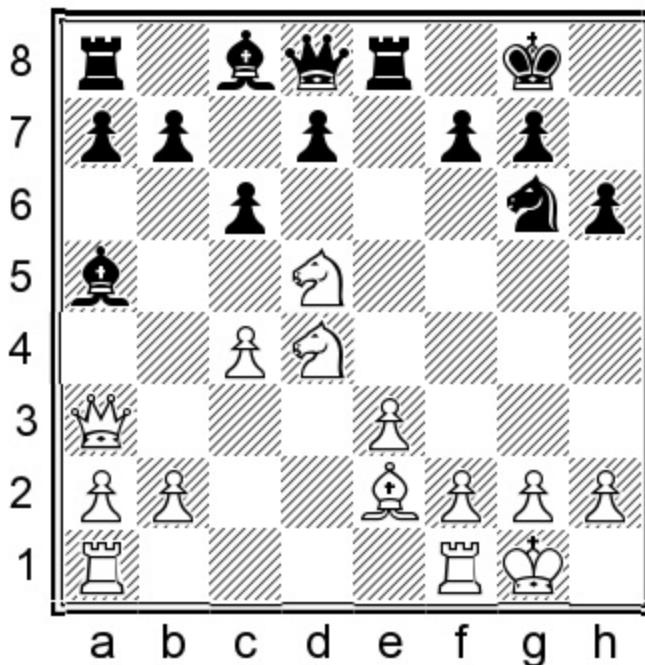
602. Euwe – Kitto, Plymouth 1948



Show/Hide Solution

13.gxf3± Keeping the bishop pair. Exchanging minor pieces would make White's king less secure.

603. Szabo – Smyslov, Budapest 1950



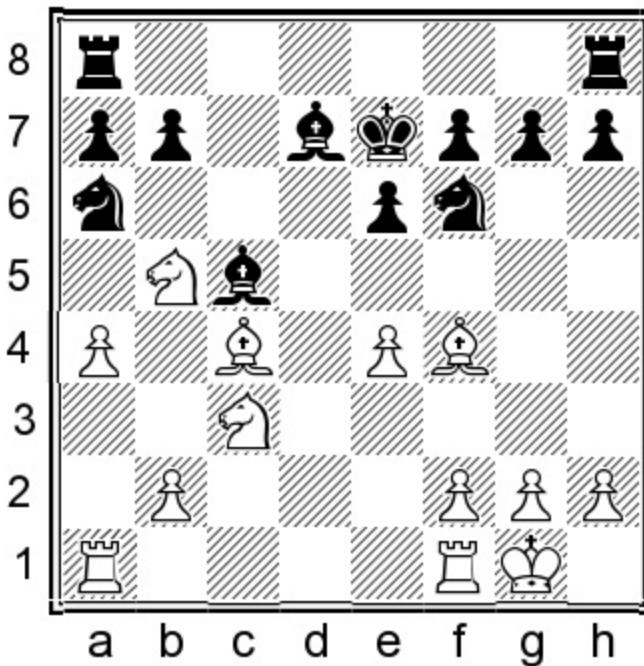
Show/Hide Solution

15.b4!± A standard trick, using the threatened knight instead of moving it. White forces a favourable exchange while keeping a lead in development.

15.♗b3 has the same idea, but after 15...cxd5 16.♗xa5 b6= Black gets the tempo needed to develop.

15.♗c3=

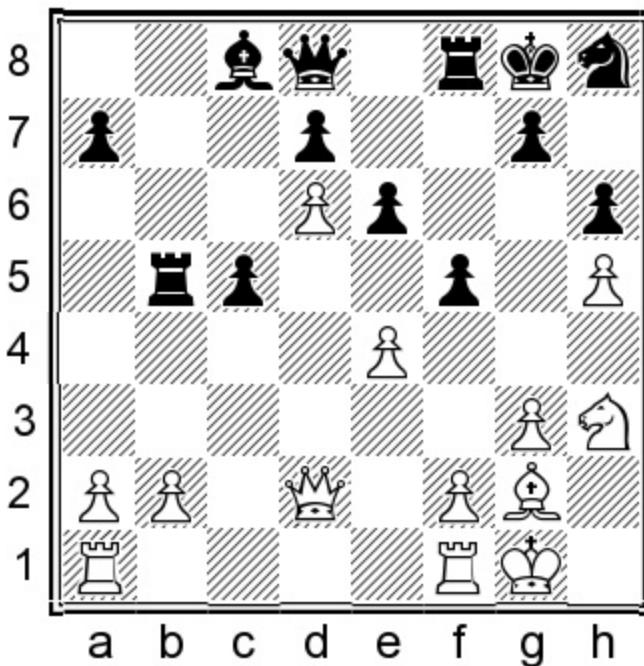
604. Boleslavsky – Smyslov, Budapest 1950



Show/Hide Solution

13.e5! Forcing Black's knight to retreat before the rook on h8 is developed. **13...♝e8** After 13...♝h5 14.♗d2 there is no good way to save the knight from being trapped by g2-g4, as 14...f5 15.♗g5† is crushing. For instance, 15...♚f7 16.♗ad1 ♚c6 17.♗d6† ♚xd6 18.♗xd6 ♗c7 (18...♝he8? 19.♗xa6 picks up a piece) 19.b4! and Black is positionally busted. **14.♗e4** White is almost winning.

605. Smyslov – Szabo, Budapest 1950



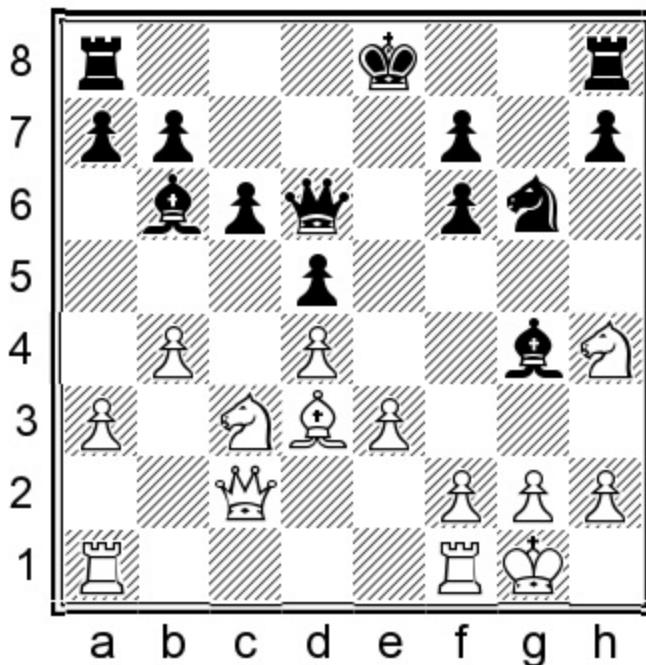
Show/Hide Solution

18.e5!± Keeping Black restricted, with f2-f4 coming soon. Black is not without chances, though, as ... $\mathbb{Q}f7-d8-c6$ is a possible manoeuvre.

It was not a good idea to allow Black's rook to escape after 18.exf5?! $\mathbb{R}xf5$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ (19. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{R}xh5$ 20. $\mathbb{W}e2$ c4 \mp) 19... $\mathbb{Q}b7$; for instance, 20. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ $\mathbb{R}xb7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$ $\mathbb{Q}b4\mp$ and ... $\mathbb{R}bxf4$ is a threat.

White can also start with 18.a4!? $\mathbb{R}b4$ before 19.e5!±.

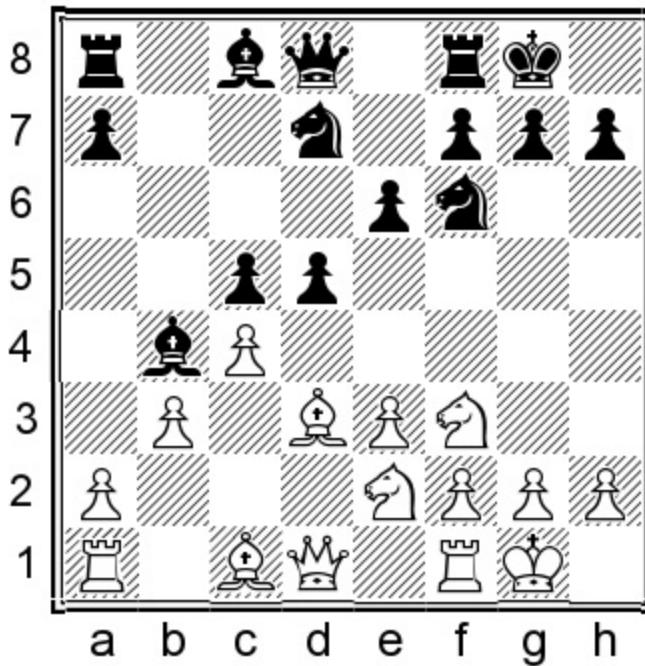
606. Kotov – Smyslov, Budapest 1950



Show/Hide Solution

15. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ No exclamation mark, as there was no choice. The alternatives either improve Black's structure or weaken White's. 15. $\mathbb{Q}f5?$ $\mathbb{Q}h5\mp$ favours Black. (15... $\mathbb{Q}xh4!$? 16. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{R}g8$ is a good alternative, with a promising attack.) **15... $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xf5\pm$** Kotov went on to carry out a strong positional squeeze for most of the game, but eventually lost after miscalculating a rook sacrifice on move 39.

607. Petrosian – Keres, Budapest 1952

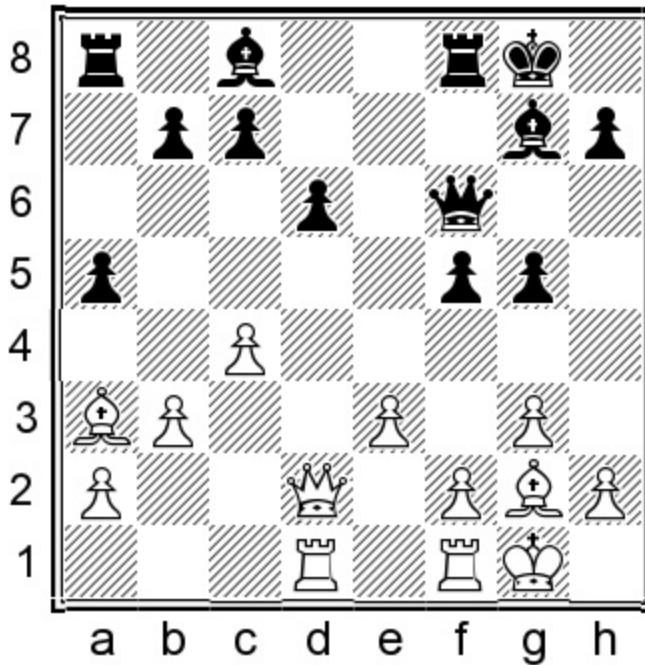


Show/Hide Solution

10...e5!↑ The threat of ...e5-e4 forces White to retreat. Black can continue with ...d5-d4 or ...e5-e4, but there's no need to decide until White has made a move.

10...♝e7?! 11.cxd5±

608. Smyslov – Kotov, Gagra (Training) 1953

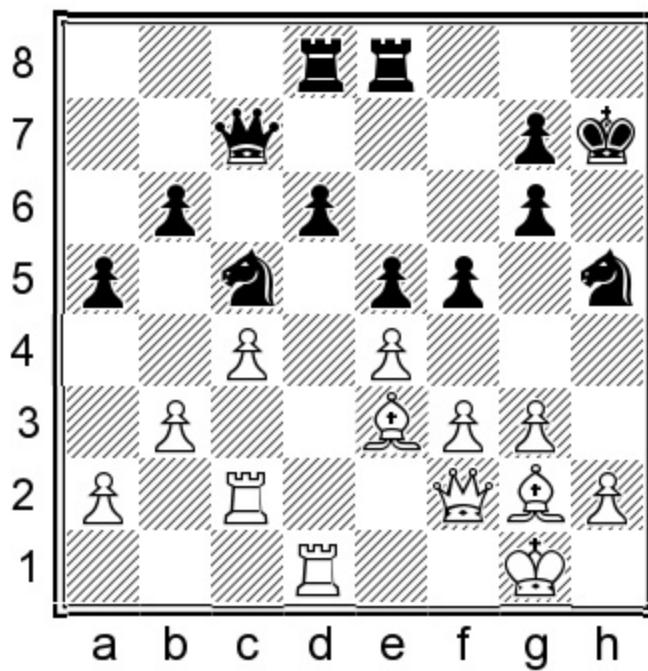


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18.c5! Activating the bishop. **18...dxc5** Kotov desperately gave away a pawn with 18...a4. **19.♝xc5 ♞e8 20.♞d5† ♔h8** It's not over yet, but Black is far from happy with the position opening up while

still not having developed the queenside.

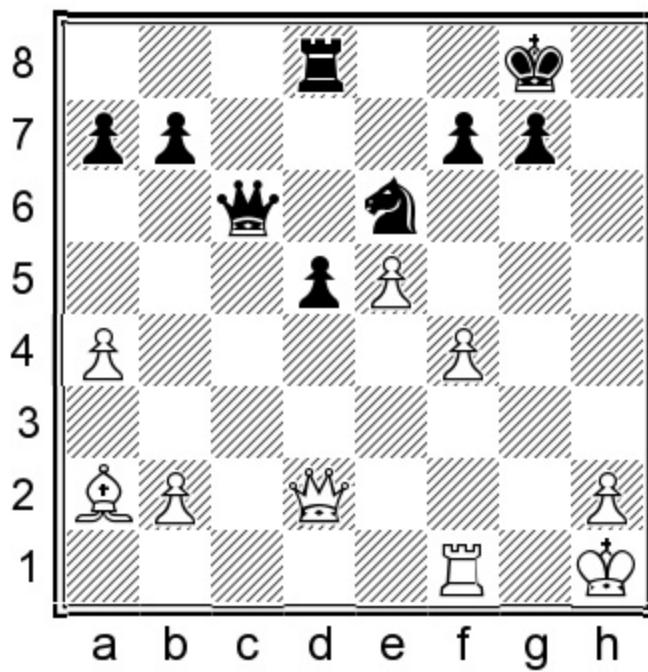
609. Smyslov – Reshevsky, Zurich 1953



Show/Hide Solution

34.exf5! A first step towards opening the diagonal for the light-squared bishop. **34...gxf5 35.g4 fxg4?** After Reshevsky's **35...Qf4+**– White wins a pawn with gxf5, before or after Qxf4 and Wh4†.
36.fxg4+– A second and final step.

610. Botvinnik – Smyslov, Moscow (12) 1954



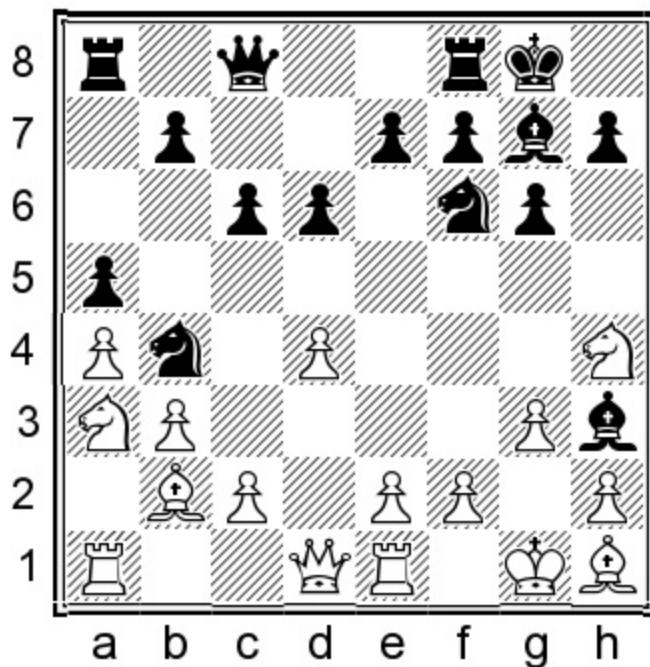
Show/Hide Solution

27.f5 Using the pawn majority. **27...Qc5** **27...Qc7** is better, but not challenging. **28.Wg5 Ed7?** This gives White time to create decisive threats before the knight jumps to e4. **28...f6!** was essential, although White can keep some advantage with **29.Wg2!** followed by **Eg1.** **29.Eg1** But not **29.f6? Qe6=** and Black has defended. **29...f6 30.exf6 Qe4 31.f7†! Exf7 32.Wd8† Wh7 33.Qxd5 Qf2† 34.Qg2 Wf6 35.Wxf6 Exf6 36.Qxf2 Exf5† 37.Qf3 Ef4 38.Qg4** Black resigned. White won with a long tactical line, but there was no need to calculate it before pushing the f-pawn. The moves can be found step by step, and there were good alternatives along the way. **1–0**

Mikhail Botvinnik

"Above all else, before playing in competitions a player must have regard to his health, for if he is suffering from ill health he cannot hope for success. In this connection, the best of all tonics is fifteen to twenty days in the fresh air, in the country."

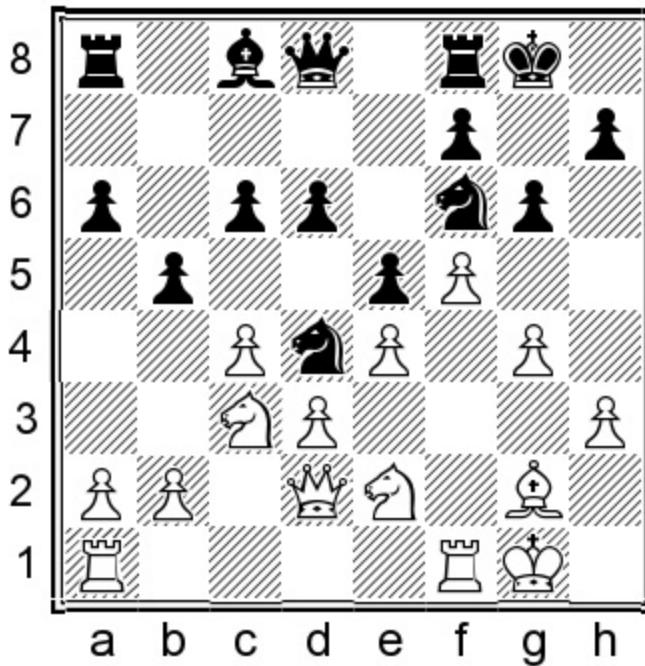
611. Smyslov – Borisenko, Moscow 1955



Show/Hide Solution

14...d5! Not allowing White to take space with e2-e4 (which would have secured an advantage). We don't need a precise evaluation of the resulting position, but it's safe to say that Black is not worse.

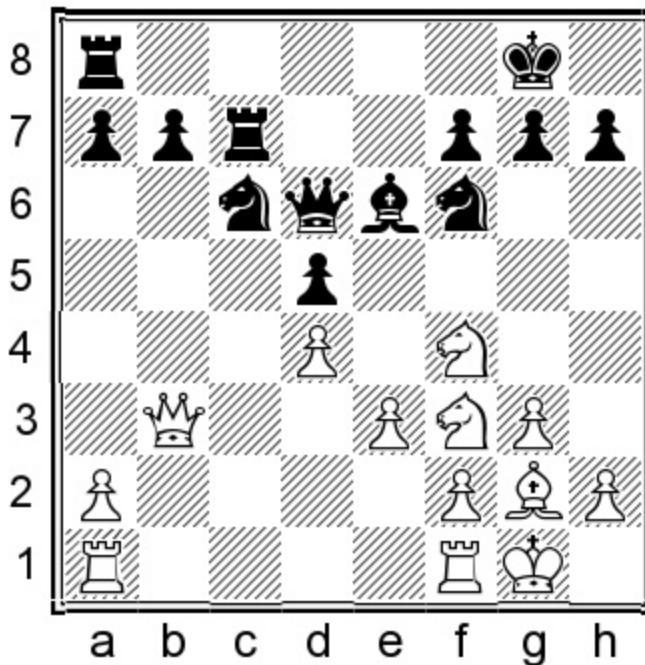
612. Botvinnik – Shcherbakov, Moscow 1955



Show/Hide Solution

17. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ Black is seldom happy recapturing with the e5-pawn in such positions. **17...exd4 18. $\mathbb{Q}e2$** White threatens the d4-pawn, and ...c6-c5 is not possible, since it would open the long diagonal. The only way to defend the pawn is **18... $\mathbb{B}b6?$** but then White's kingside attack is decisive.

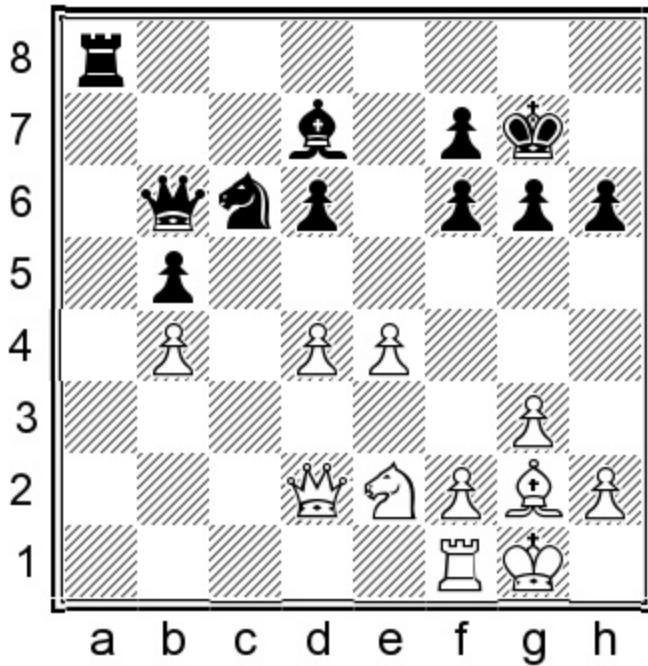
613. Smyslov – Lisitsin, Moscow 1955



Show/Hide Solution

16. $\mathbb{Q}g5! \pm$ Exchanging the bishop for the passive knight (f3), while keeping the strong knight (f4). White follows up with $\mathbb{Q}gxe6$ and $\mathbb{Q}h3$.

614. Smyslov – Shcherbakov, Moscow 1955



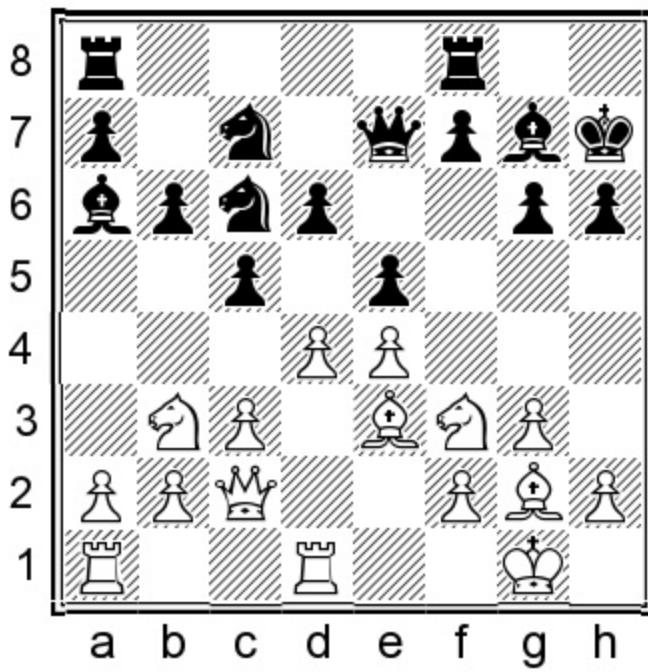
Show/Hide Solution

21.e5!± Opening the diagonal. To make the move, White just needs to make sure that the pawn can't be taken twice.

Vasily Smyslov

"My study of chess was accompanied by a strong attraction to music, and it was probably thanks to this that from childhood I became accustomed to thinking of chess as an art, for all the science and sport involved in it."

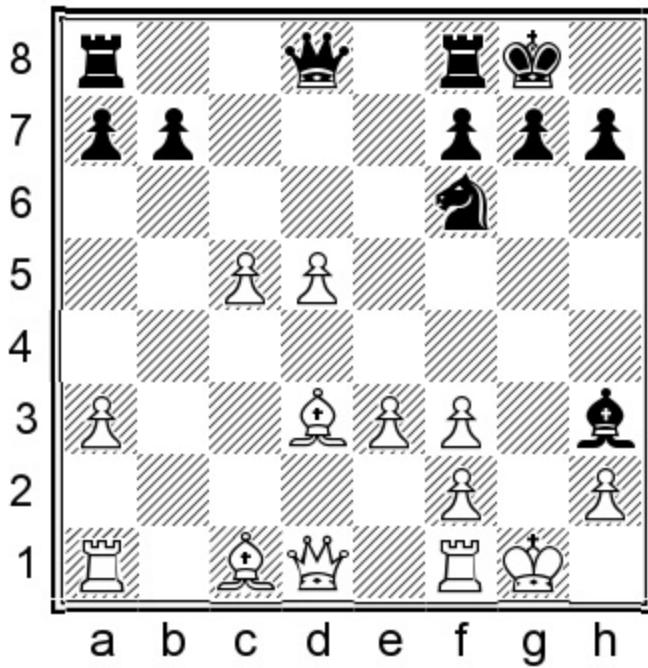
615. Korchnoi – Botvinnik, Moscow 1955



Show/Hide Solution

16.d5! Black was set to fight for the initiative with: 16...exd4 17.cxd4 ♖b4 **16...♝b8 17.a4±** Black's pieces are worse than normal for this structure.

616. Botvinnik – Averbakh, Moscow (Training) 1955

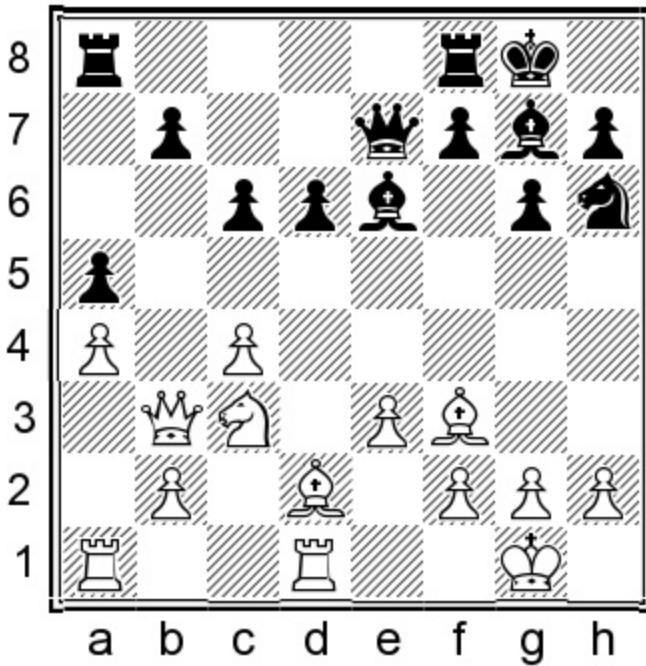


Show/Hide Solution

15.e4!+– White's bishop pair, passed pawn and control over the centre are far more important than the exchange.

15.♗e1? ♜xd5∞

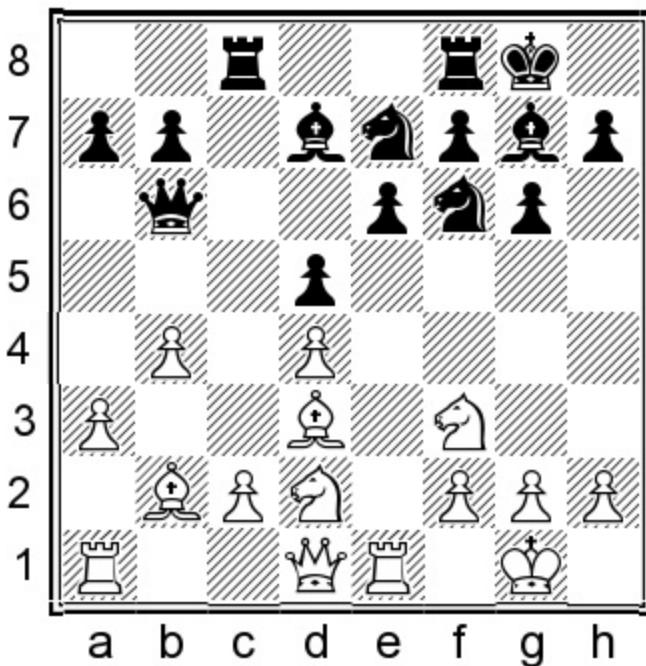
617. Smyslov – Bertok, Zagreb 1955



Show/Hide Solution

14.♗e2! Immediately redirecting the knight to f4, harassing Black's bishop. It's important to do this before Black has played ...♗g4-e5. **14...♗g4 15.♘f4!** Smyslov chose 15.♘d4 which is less strong, since after 15...♗e5 16.♗e2 ♜c8 he can't put pressure on Black's d-pawn as the knight obstructs the d-file. **15...♗e5** As White was fast with ♘e2-f4, the bishop can retreat to e2. **16.♗e2±**

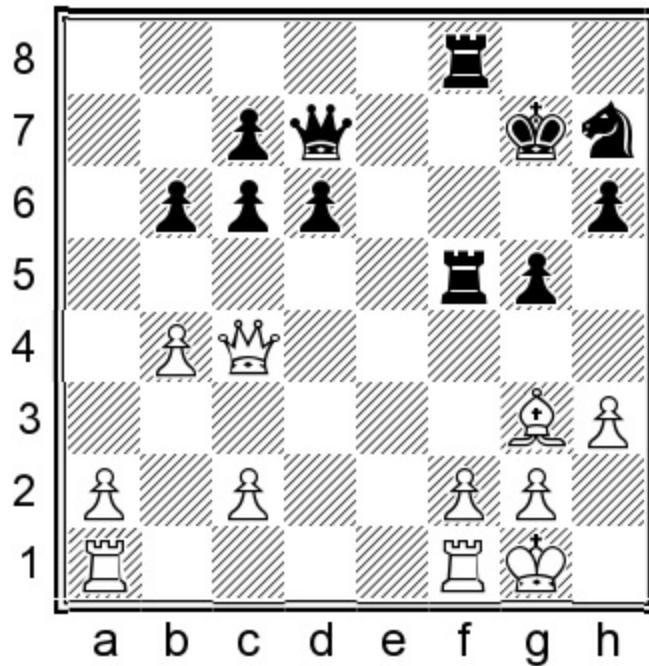
618. Pirc – Smyslov, Zagreb 1955



Show/Hide Solution

14.a4!± Activating the bishop via a3, taking space, and stopping ... $\mathbb{Q}b5$. The only thing you need to see is why Black can't take on b4.

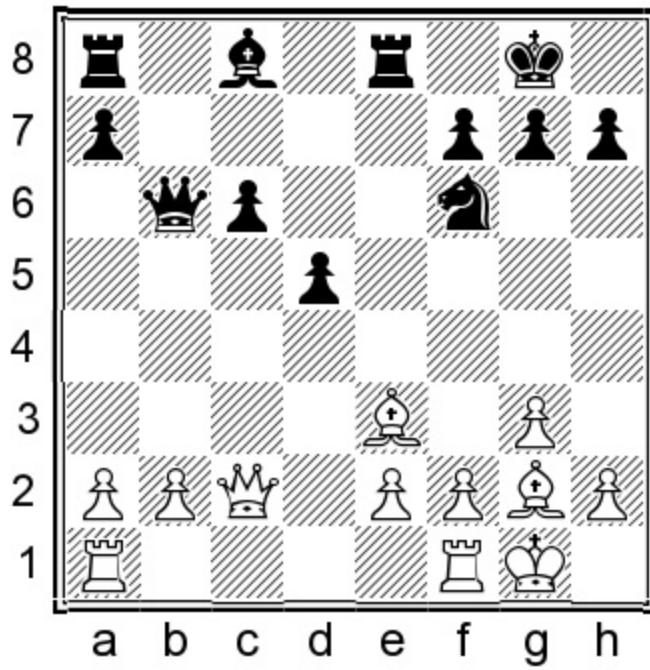
619. Smyslov – Dueckstein, Zagreb 1955



Show/Hide Solution

21.a4! Pushing the pawn passer before Black has time to stop it with ...b6-b5 or ...c6-c5. **21... $\mathbb{Q}f6$** 21...b5 is met by a check followed by a4-a5. **22.a5+–** Smyslov won smoothly.

620. Smyslov – Keres, Amsterdam/Leeuwarden 1956



Show/Hide Solution

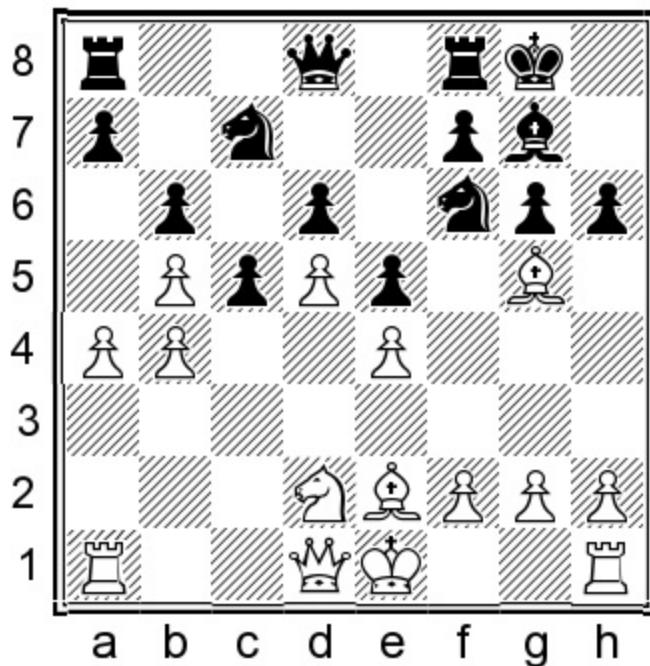
14... $\mathbb{B}xe3!$? 14... $\mathbb{W}b5$ was played. Let's not debate how big White's positional advantage is; it's enough to say that it's undoubtedly.

When they agreed to a later draw, Smyslov was clearly winning.

15.fxe3 $\mathbb{W}xe3\#$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}h1 \mathbb{Q}d7\pm$ White's position is preferable, but Black is not without chances.

Black's ideas include ...h7-h5-h4 and ... $\mathbb{B}e8$, while keeping the queens on the board. The e4-square has been weakened, and if White captures a knight there, the light squares around the king become weak. I think sacrificing the exchange improves Black's chances compared to not doing so.

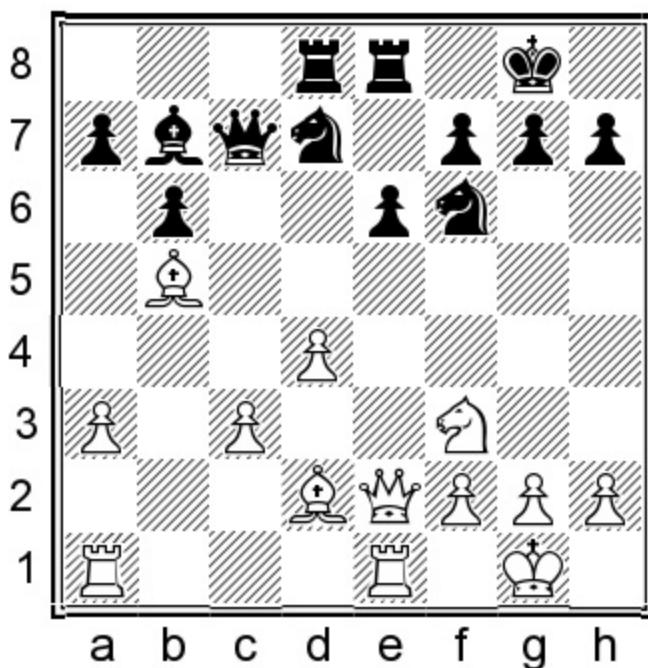
621. Petrosian – Pilnik, Amsterdam 1956



Show/Hide Solution

14.♗xf6 Removing pieces that can control the light squares is more important than keeping the bishop pair. **14...♝xf6 15.0-0 ♜fd8 16.♘c4 ♜f8** 16...cx b4 would have led to something similar to the game. **17.g3!?** Petrosian probably rejected 17.bxc5 dxc5 on the basis that Black would be ready to improve the knight with ...♘e6-d4 or ...♘e8-d6. However, it turns out that 18.f4! exf4 19.e5 is close to winning for White. **17...cx b4** This is not forced, but after other moves White would have continued building up his position and taken on c5 at a good moment. **18.♗b3** If Black only could place his knight or bishop on c5! Instead, White's rook reached c6. **18...♝g7 19.♖fc1 h5 20.♘e3 ♘e8 21.♗xb4 ♜dc8 22.♖c6** Game over! (Positionally, even though Stockfish gives less than +2.)

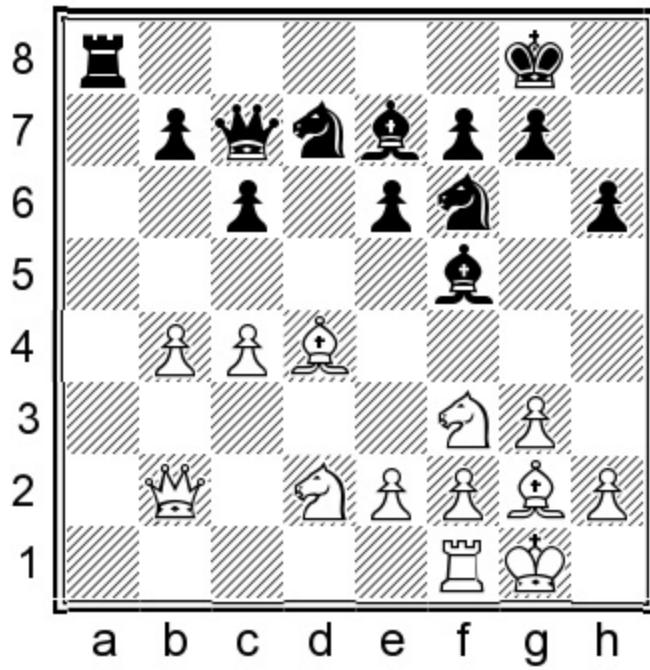
622. Smyslov – Karaklajic, Belgrade 1956



Show/Hide Solution

16...♘e4!? Hitting the bishop before it can retreat to e1. Black captures on d2 on the next move. Exchanging minor pieces is something Black wants when playing against a hanging pawn couple.

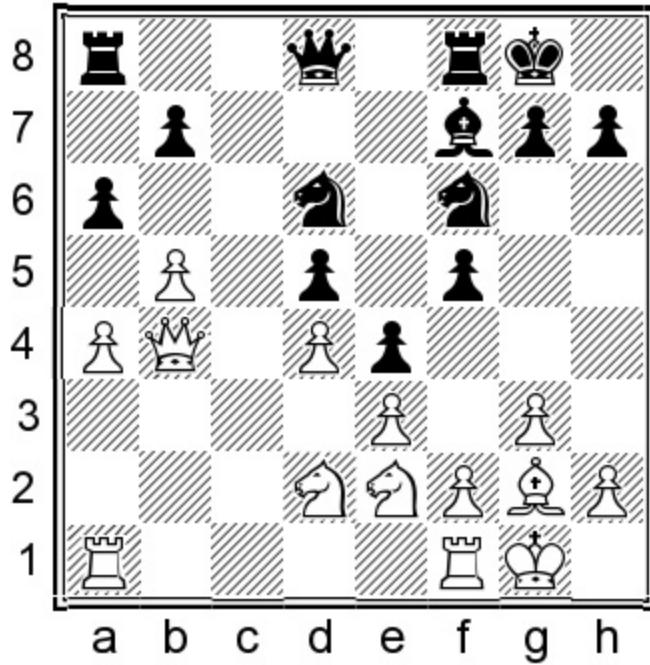
623. Smyslov – Djurasevic, Belgrade 1956



Show/Hide Solution

19.c5!± Avoiding Black's threat: to get a strong square on c5 by exchanging the c-pawn with ...c6-c5.
19.♗c3 is a less active way to avoid Black's threat.

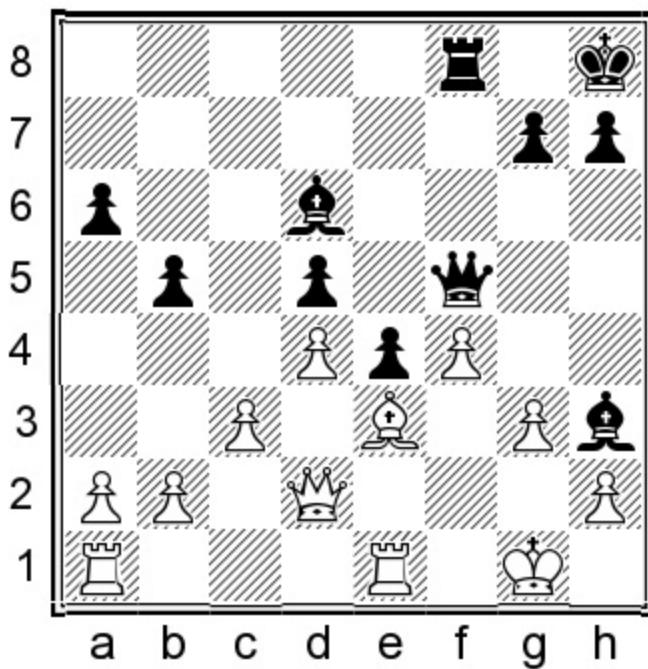
624. Lorson – Smyslov, Moscow (Ol) 1956



Show/Hide Solution

19...a5! Keeping the queenside closed. 19...g5 20.bxa6± and it's harder for Black to focus on the kingside. **20.♘a3 g5!†** The next moves are ...♗h5 and ...♔h8, with an attack.

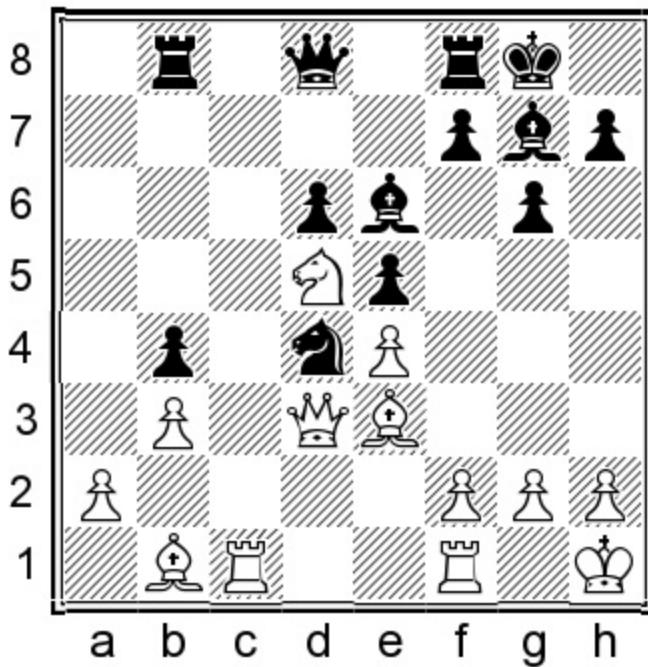
625. Smyslov – Johannessen, Moscow (Ol) 1956



Show/Hide Solution

25.a4!+– White is an exchange up and activates the rook as quickly as possible. No more arguments are needed.

626. Smyslov – Botvinnik, Moscow 1956

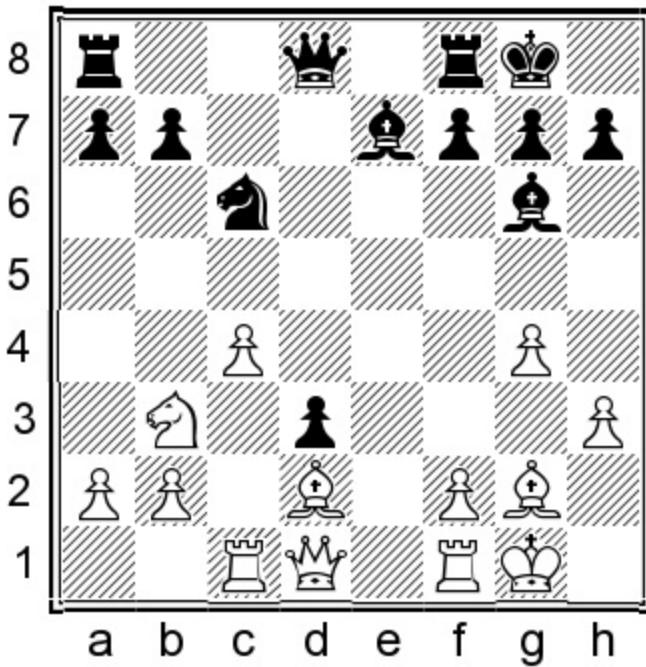


Show/Hide Solution

18...♝xd5! Eliminating the knight before it jumps to c7. **19.exd5** To play for an advantage, Black should avoid the exchange on d4. **19...♝b5!** is the best choice, threatening to settle on c3. **20.♝d2**

$\text{Qa3}\#$ Black can trade the knight for the bishop any time, keeping the better pawn structure.

627. Golombek – Smyslov, Moscow 1956

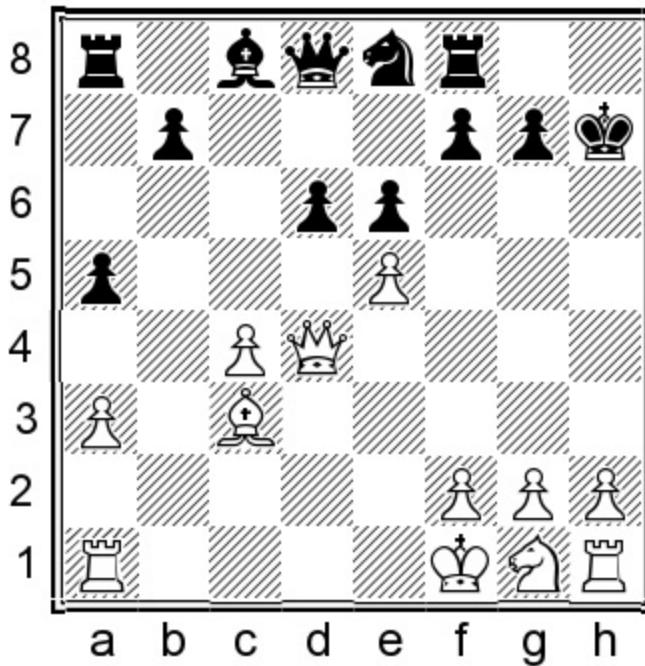


Show/Hide Solution

18...a5! Chasing the knight. 18...f5!# is worth considering, but it's best to save this idea for later.

19.a4 19.Qc3 a4 20.Qd2 Qd4+ Placing the pawn here is a concession; just look at the b4-square. Black can settle the knight there (after exchanging bishops), or do like Smyslov and switch to the other flank: 19...f5! If a positional advantage is enough to claim the position to be winning, let's do it here.

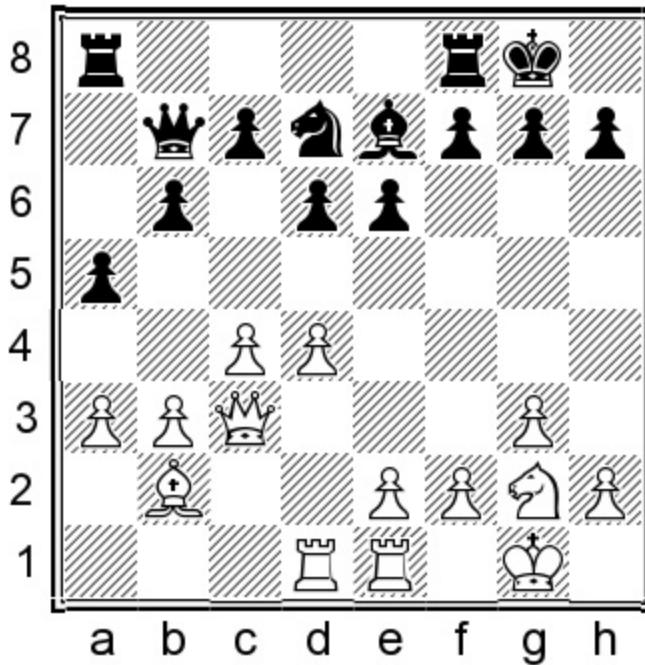
628. Szabo – Smyslov, Moscow 1956



Show/Hide Solution

16...f6! To open the f-file. **17.exf6** **17.exd6** $\mathbb{W}xd6\mp$ and Black will probably win the c4-pawn before White has developed the rook on h1. **17...Qxf6\mp** White is behind in development. Note that **18.Qd1** can be met with **18...e5** – although it's not necessary to have seen this when solving the exercise.

629. Pachman – Smyslov, Moscow 1956

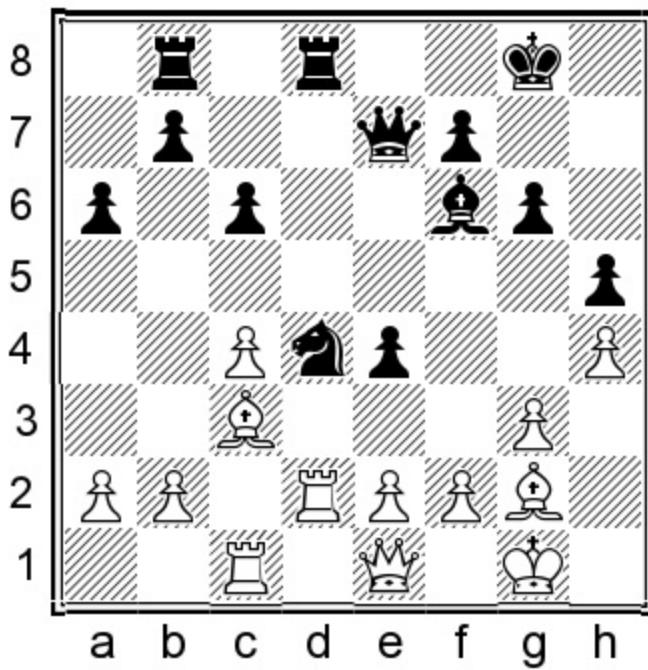


Show/Hide Solution

16...b5!\mp Creating a weakness on the b-file, regardless of how White responds. **16...d5?** is met by **17.cxd5 exd5 18.Qc1 Qd6 19.Qe3\pm** followed by $\mathbb{W}c6$ soon. **17.Qc1** There is one forcing sequence to

see: 17.cxb5 $\mathbb{W}xb5$ 18. $\mathbb{W}xc7$ $\mathbb{E}fc8$ 19.a4 $\mathbb{E}xc7$ 20.axb5† Black takes back the pawn and puts pressure on b3. 17. $\mathbb{E}b1$ bxc4 18.bxc4 $\mathbb{E}fb8\bar{f}$ 17...bxc4 18. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ c5†

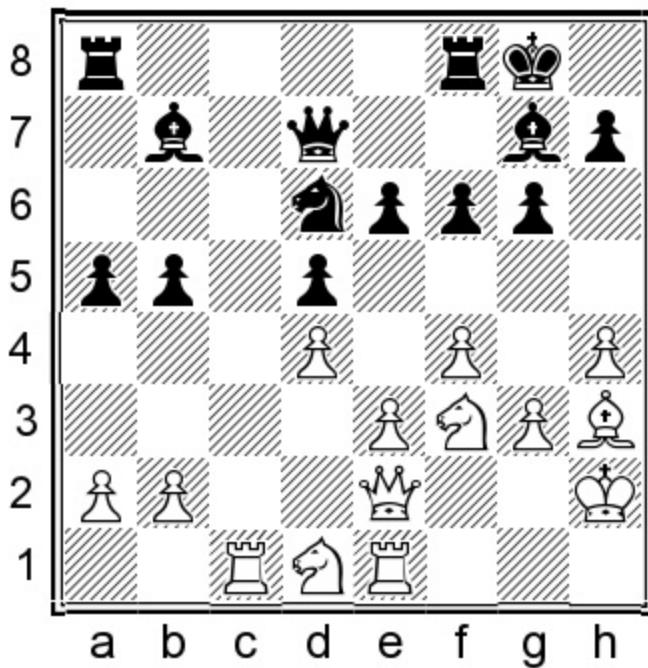
630. Bannik – Tal, Moscow 1957



Show/Hide Solution

25...e3! 26.fxe3 $\mathbb{W}xe3\bar{f}$ The e2- and g3-pawns are clearly weak. 27. $\mathbb{W}f2?$ Missing a tactical refutation. 27. $\mathbb{Q}h2\bar{f}$ was necessary. 27... $\mathbb{Q}xe2\bar{f}-+$

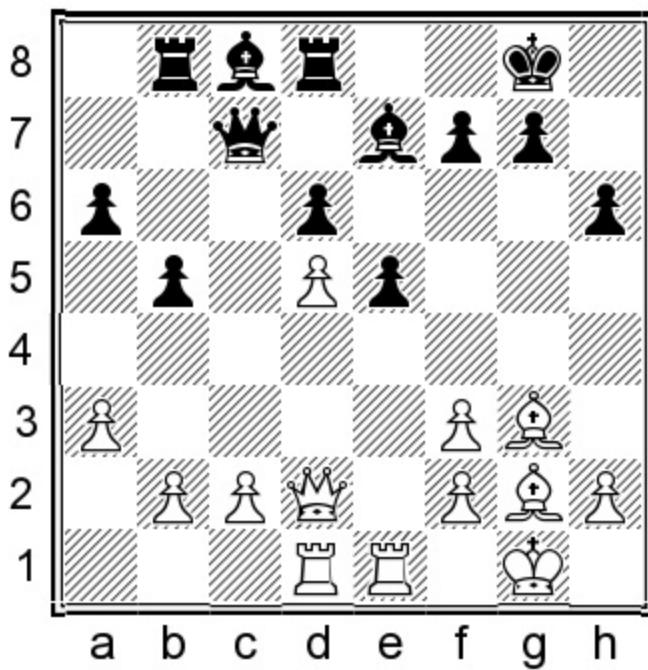
631. Botvinnik – Smyslov, Moscow (17) 1957



Show/Hide Solution

21...b4! 21... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ followed by ...b4 transposes. (Full points if you chose this.) Putting a rook on the c-file before ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ would be a mistake, as Black can't take back with the rook after: 21... $\mathbb{R}fc8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ b4 23.h5 $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc8\#$ = 22. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6\#$ The queen has no convenient square. Smyslov went on to control and infiltrate on the c-file, winning after 69 moves.

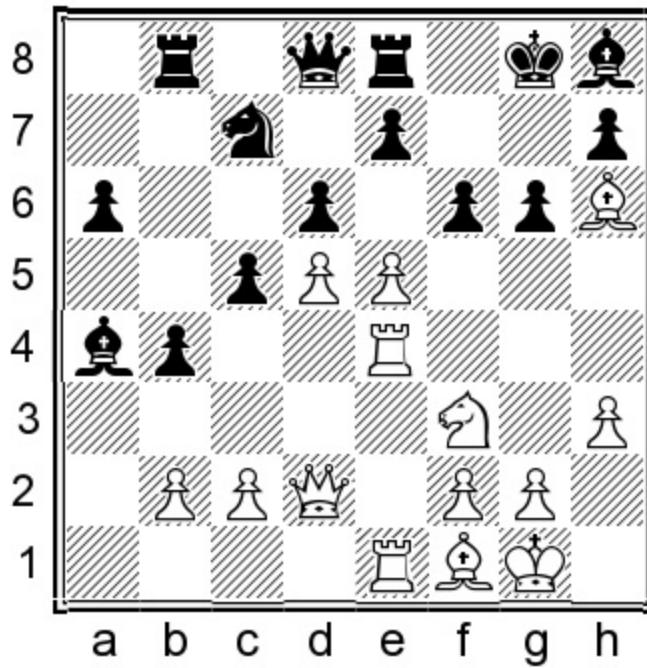
632. Reissmann – Tal, Munich (Ol) 1958



Show/Hide Solution

22...g5!–+ The bishop on g3 is dead and buried.

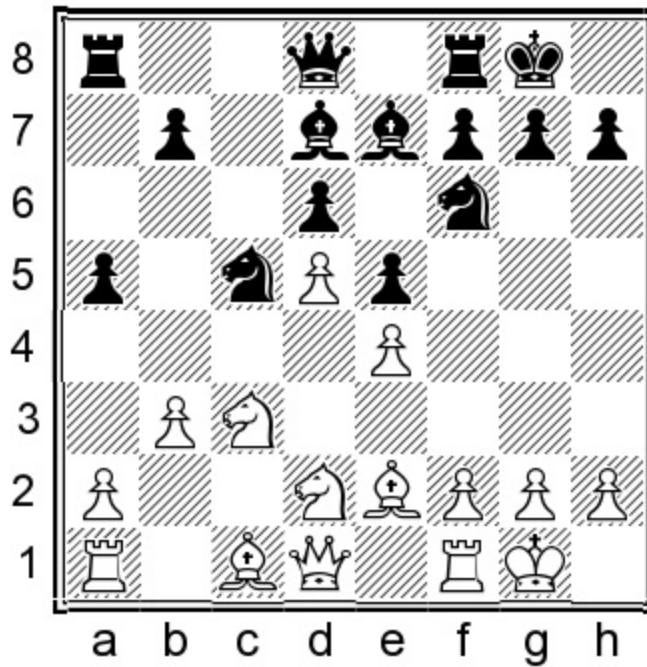
633. Tal – Benko, Bled/Zagreb/Belgrade 1959



Show/Hide Solution

21.e6+– Black's pieces on the queenside can't defend the king, and the finish is only a matter of time.

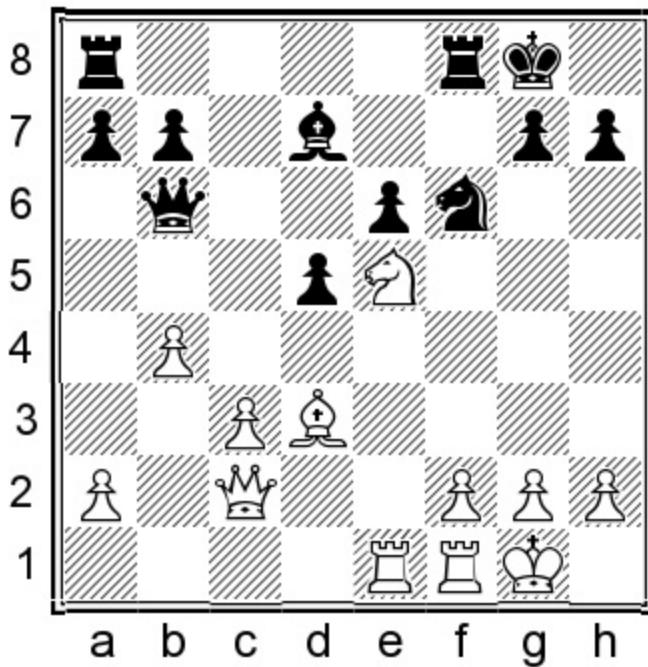
634. Petrosian – Larsen, Beverwijk 1960



Show/Hide Solution

12.a4± Putting a halt to Black's queenside ambitions. (12...b5 was a positional threat, since the knight on c3 would be overloaded.) Two other moves that also stop ...b7-b5 have disadvantages: 12.f3 allows 12...h5; and 12.Wc2 moves onto an open file, inviting 12...Hc8.

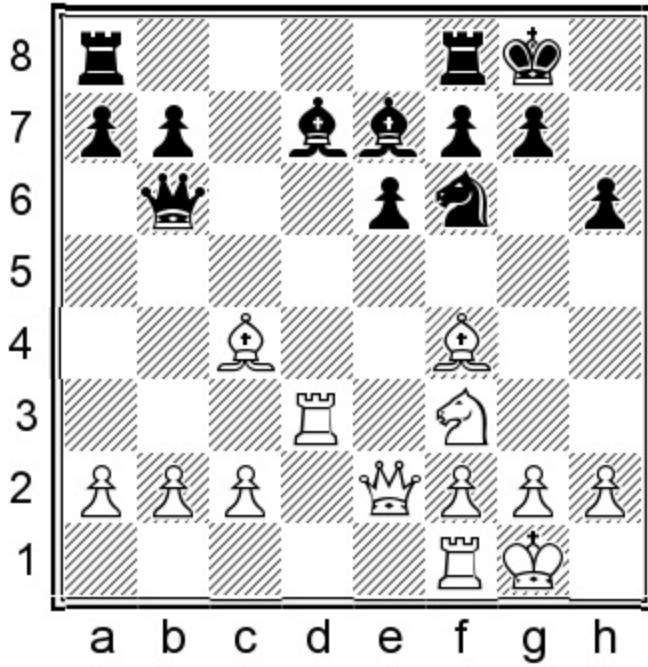
635. Tal – Hoppensack, Berlin (Simul) 1960



Show/Hide Solution

17... $\mathbb{Q}b5=$ Exchanging the bad bishop for White's good bishop.

636. Tal – Benko, Curacao 1962

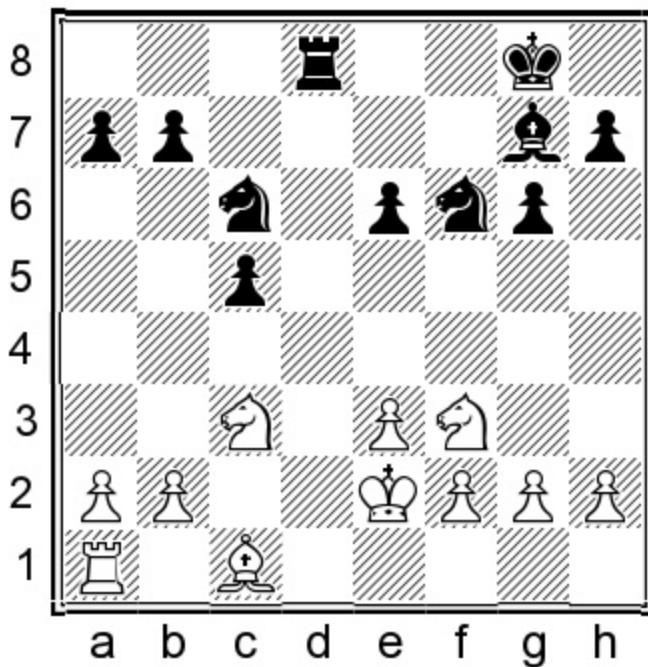


Show/Hide Solution

14... $\mathbb{Q}b5!$ By exchanging bishops, Black (who has less space) gets access to the d5-square. 14... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}e5\pm$; 14... $\mathbb{Q}fd8?!$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}b3\pm$ and it's too late to exchange bishops. 15. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ $\mathbb{Q}fc8=$ Avoiding any structural damage. White can't win a pawn with 17. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ because of

18... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ and Black has a double threat.

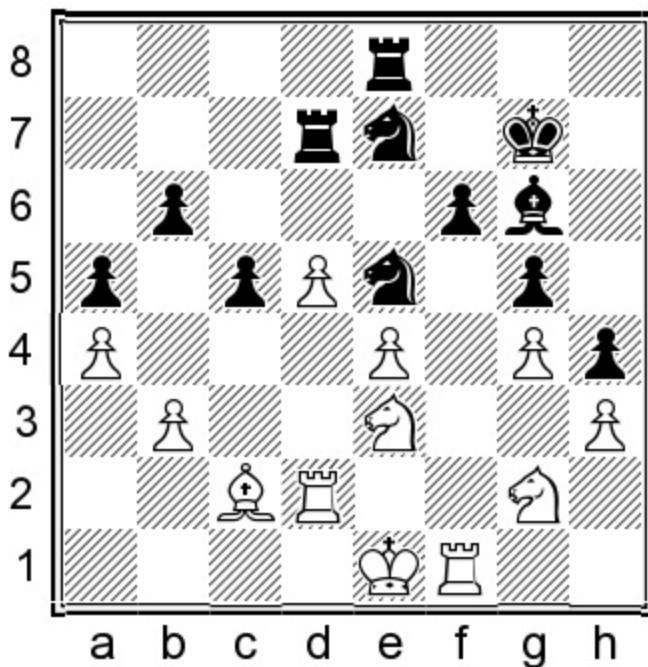
637. Petrosian – Botvinnik, Moscow 1963



Show/Hide Solution

15. $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ Forcing Black to place the rook on a passive square. Delaying this move would allow the black king to go to f7 and e7. 15... $\mathbb{R}e8\pm$ 15... $\mathbb{R}d6?$ runs into: 16. $\mathbb{Q}b5+-$ After the text move the knight can always continue to e4 – a strong and secure outpost due to Black's pawn structure. We don't need to think any further.

638. Botvinnik – Petrosian, Moscow (18) 1963



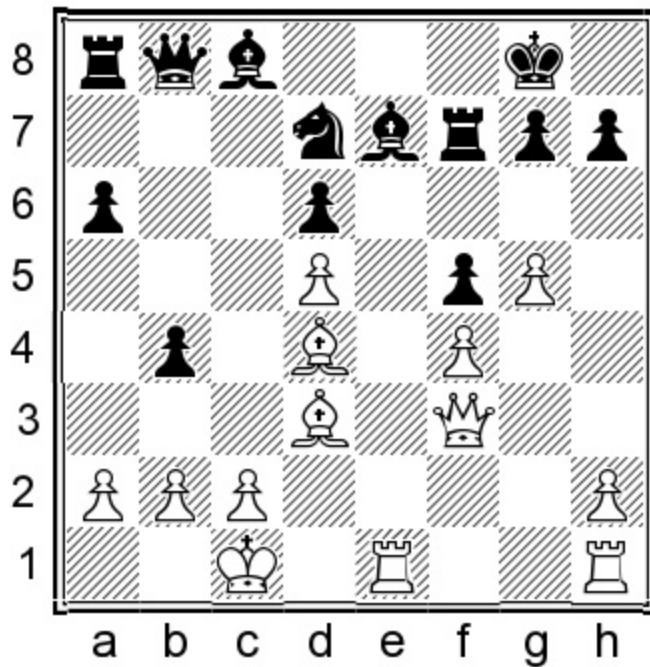
Show/Hide Solution

45...♝c8! Improving Black's worst-placed minor piece while opening the e-file for the rook. White has to defend the e-pawn, and then Black smoothly opens the queenside. Stockfish evaluates Black's advantage in excess of -2.

Tigran Petrosian

"If it is true that a player's style is his person, then everyone plays as he is intended to by nature. I am naturally cautious, and I altogether dislike situations which involve risk."

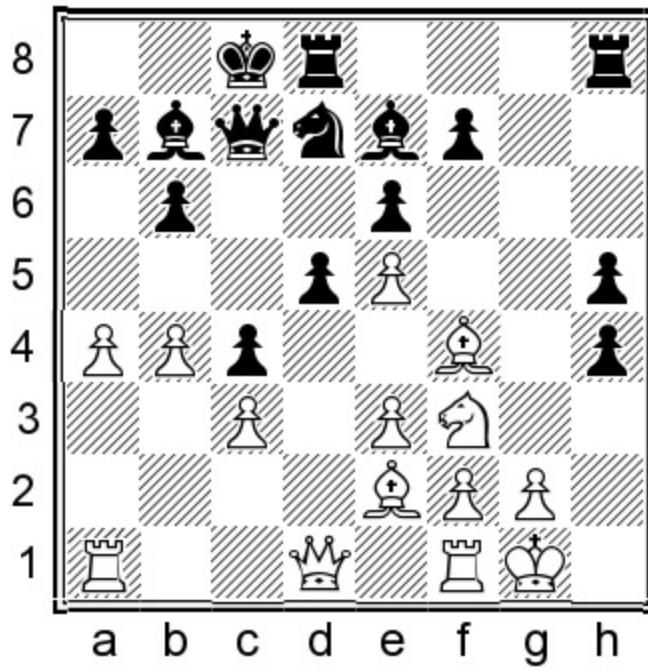
639. Tal – Larsen, Bled (10) 1965



Show/Hide Solution

19.h4+– To attack Black's king. With the rook needed on f7 (to defend the e7- and f5-points), Black can't keep the g- and h-files closed.

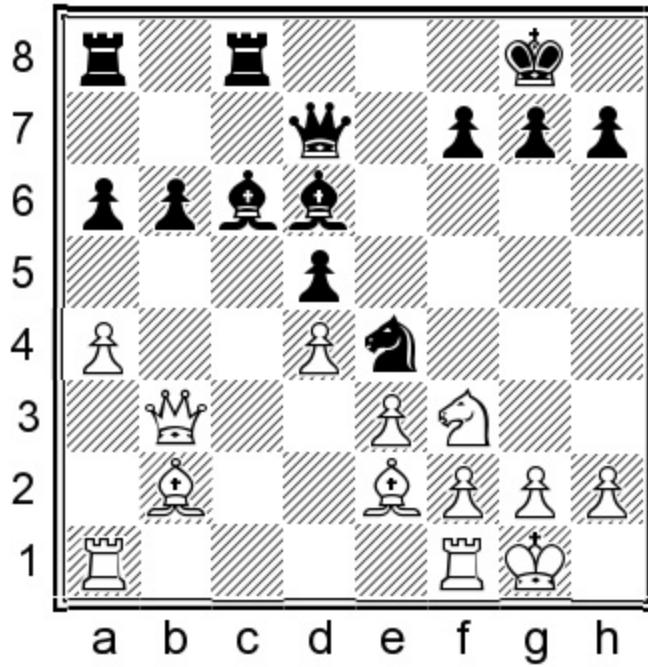
640. Spassky – Petrosian, Moscow (7) 1966



Show/Hide Solution

18...a6!+ Black can now avoid opening any queenside files after a4-a5 or b4-b5.

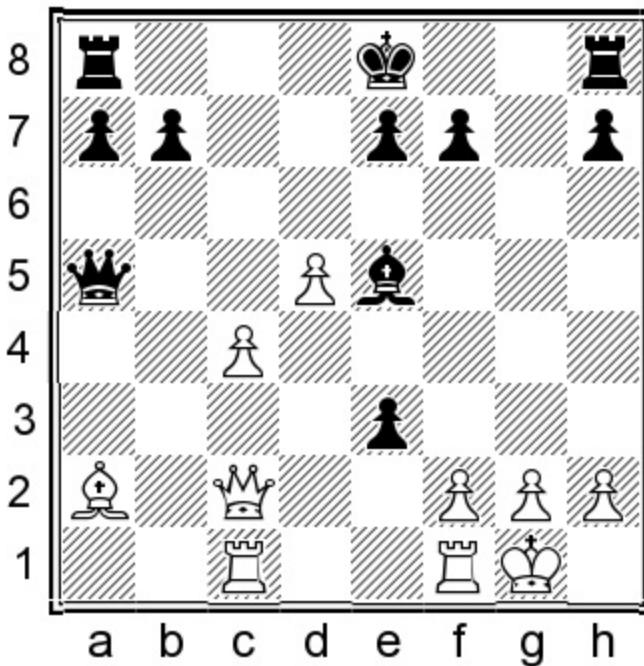
641. Spassky – Petrosian, Moscow (11) 1969



Show/Hide Solution

20...b5 Playing actively before White has mobilized the last rook. Black has both rooks on the queenside, so it's logical to open things up there. **21.a5** **21.axb5** **22.Qxb5** **Wxb5+** **21...b4–+** Intending ...Qb5, winning control over the c4-square. Petrosian's **21...Qb7** was less active, although he won with the help of a ...Rc4 exchange sacrifice later.

642. Petrosian – Fischer, Buenos Aires (2) 1971



Show/Hide Solution

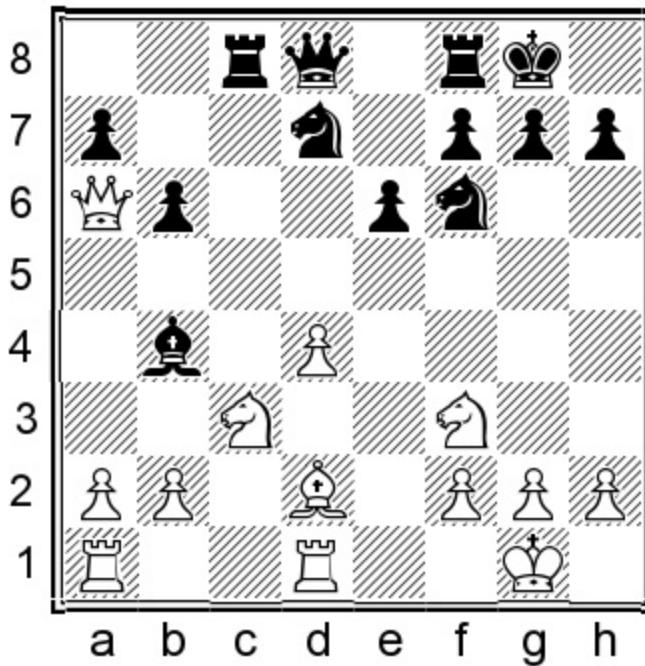
20.c5!+– Creating a passed pawn (soon), opening the diagonal for the bishop on a2 and denying Black the use of the c5-square. These factors are more important than a pawn.

20.fxe3 ♜c5±

Bobby Fischer

“Don’t even mention losing to me. I can’t stand to think of it.”

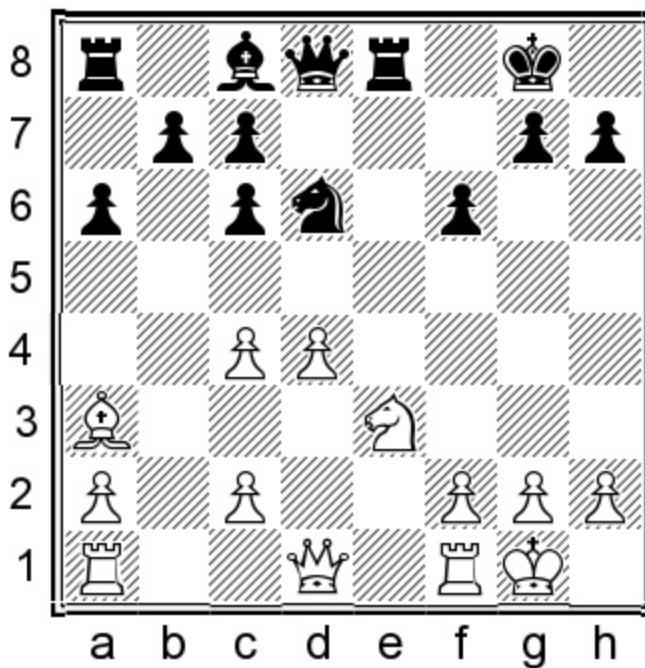
643. Taimanov – Karpov, Moscow 1973



Show/Hide Solution

14...Qxc3! Starting to play for the light squares. **15.Bxc3** $15.Qxc3\#$ leaves White with a bad isolated pawn position: two minor pieces exchanged and the passive bishop still on the board. **15...Wc7** Karpov's $15...Bc7$ was fine as $16.c4? Wc8!$ wins a pawn; however, it seems safer to settle on c4 with the queen. **16.Bdc1 Wc4!#** The idea is that $17.Wxa7?? Ba8 18.Wb7 Bf8$ traps the queen.

644. Kurajica – Karpov, Skopje 1976

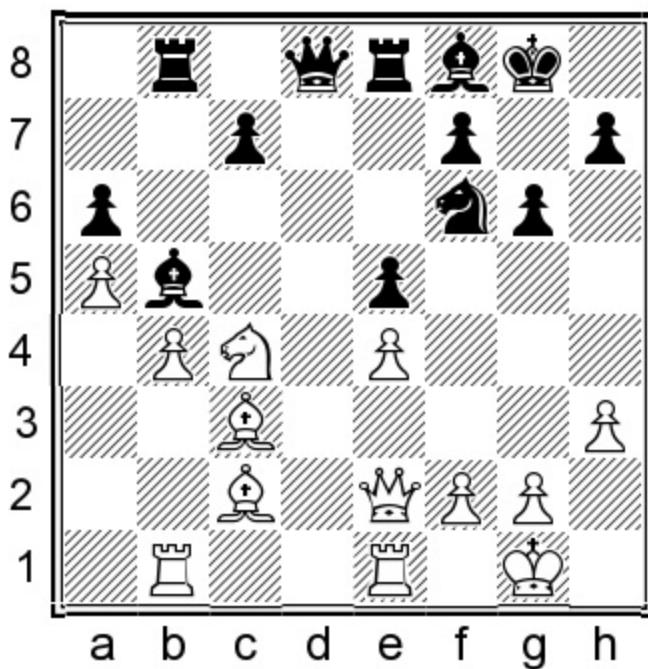


Show/Hide Solution

14...Qf5# Black exchanges knights to get smooth development. White has weaker pawns and a

passive bishop – especially when/if c4-c5 is provoked.

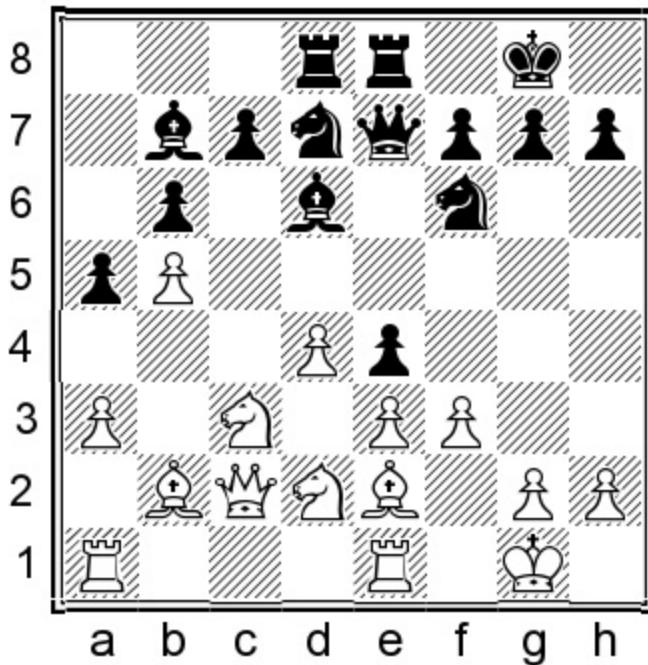
645. Browne – Karpov, Amsterdam 1976



Show/Hide Solution

24...c5!= Opening the c-file against White's three minor pieces. It's important to do it before White has solved the problem of the pinned knight and started to threaten the pawn on e5.

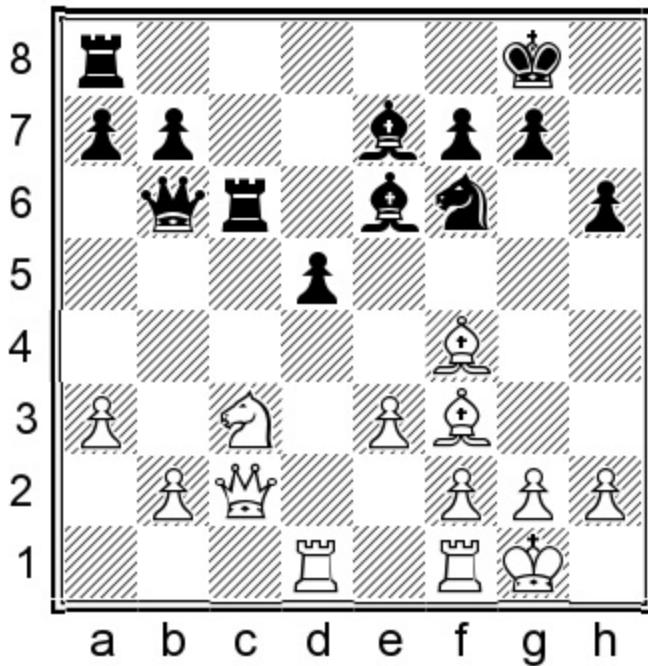
646. Portisch – Petrosian, Lone Pine 1978



Show/Hide Solution

17...exf3 White threatened to gain the advantage of the bishop pair by capturing on e4 multiple times. **18.♗xf3 ♗xf3 19.♗xf3** 19.gxf3 gives White a weak king; no further moves needed. **19...♝e4** Black must prevent e3-e4. **20.♝xe4 ♜xe4 21.♜xe4** White can finally force through e3-e4 but, after all the exchanges, it's not anything to worry about. There is also a tactical trick that's not part of the solution. Let's give the line without comments: **22.♝d2 ♜e7 23.e4 ♜c5! 24.e5 ♜d3 25.♝f3 ♜xe1 26.♜xe1 c6 27.exd6 ♜xe1† 28.♝xe1 cxb5†**

647. Karpov – Spassky, Montreal 1979

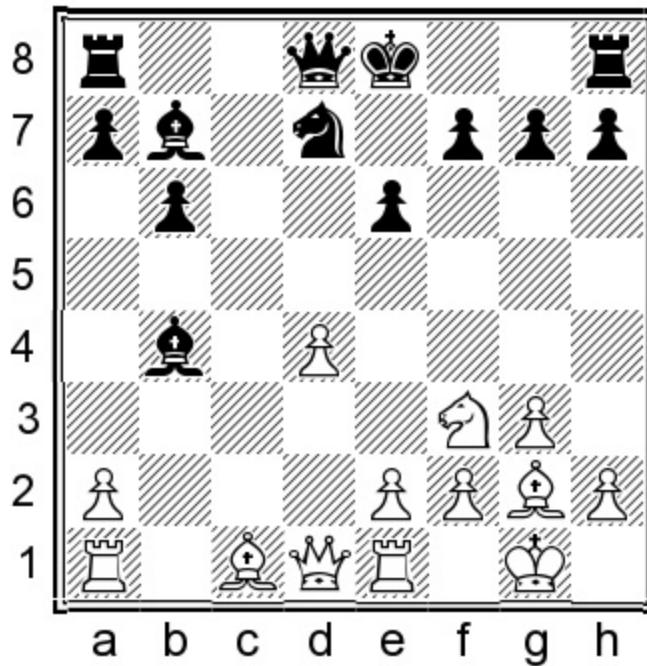


Show/Hide Solution

19.♝e5± Taking control over c3 and d4.

Wasting a tempo would have allowed Black to escape: 19.♝fe1 ♜e4 20.♝e5 ♜xc3 21.♝xc3 ♜f6=

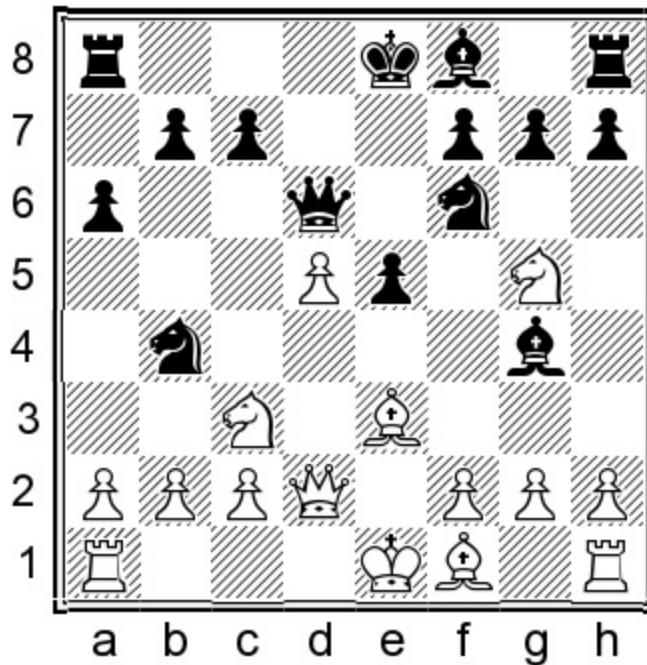
648. Karpov – Hort, Waddinxveen 1979



Show/Hide Solution

12.♗g5!± Before safeguarding the rook, White wins a tempo or forces a weakness (...f7-f6).

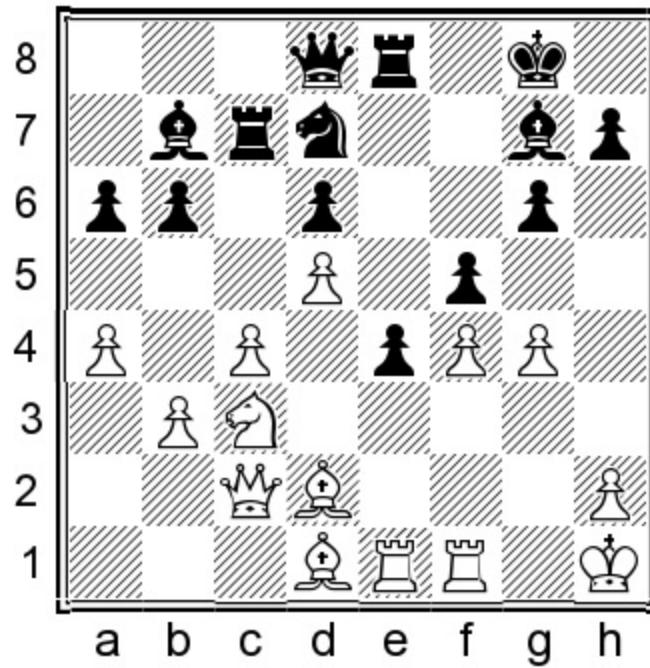
649. Karpov – Lutikov, Moscow 1979



Show/Hide Solution

10.f3 Closing the diagonal to castle long. **10...♗f5 11.♗ge4 ♖d7 12.0-0-0+–** Black is badly developed and has problems with the knight on b4.

650. Tal – Tseshkovsky, Riga 1979



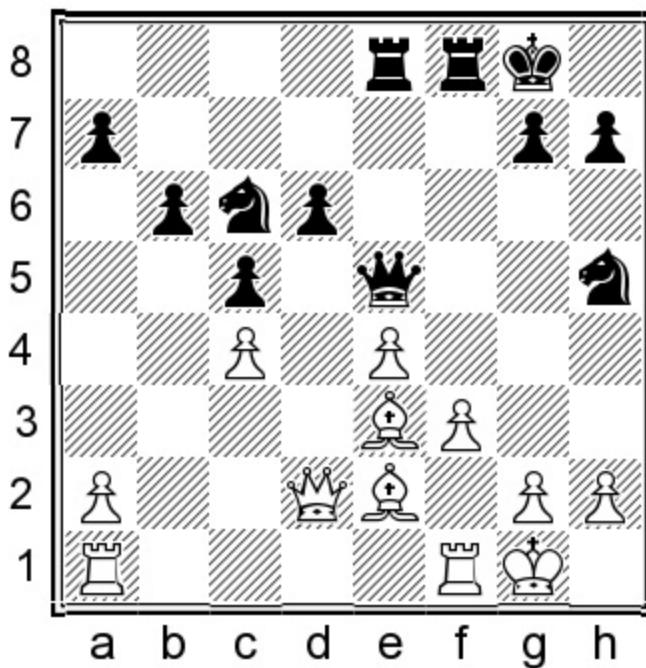
Show/Hide Solution

23.gxf5 Opening the g-file. **23...gxf5 24.♗g1+–** White doubles up with a positionally winning advantage. First things first. 24.♕e3!? was slower in the game.

4. Medium Difficulty Exercises 651-700

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651. Tal – Dobosz, Yerevan 1980



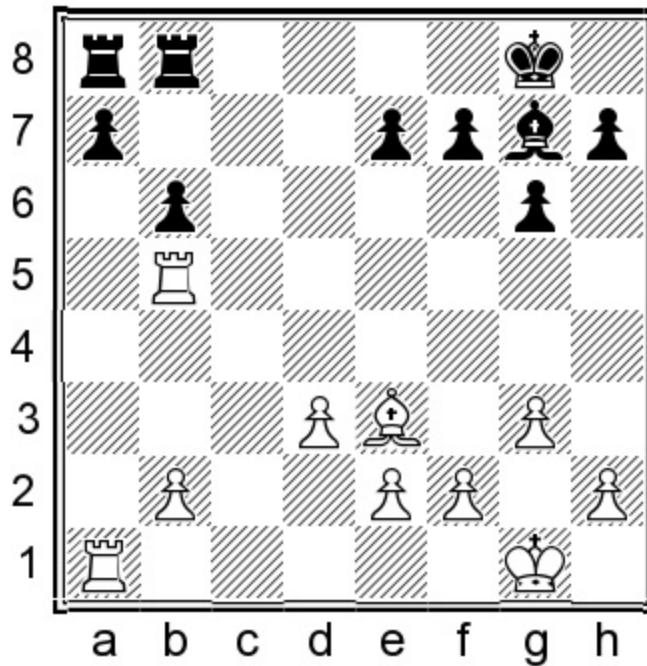
Show/Hide Solution

25. $\mathbb{Wd}5\#$ Exchanging Black's active queen and opening a diagonal for the light-squared bishop.
25... $\mathbb{Wxd}5$ A sad necessity as the knight on c6 was hanging. 26. $\text{cx}d5\pm$ The bishop pair will be strong when both sides advance their pawns.

Mikhail Tal

"It's funny, but many people don't understand why I draw so many games nowadays. They think my style must have changed but this is not the case at all. The answer to this drawing disease is that my favourite squares are e6, f7, g7 and h7 and everyone now knows this. They protect these squares not once but four times!"

652. Karpov – Ribli, Amsterdam 1980



Show/Hide Solution

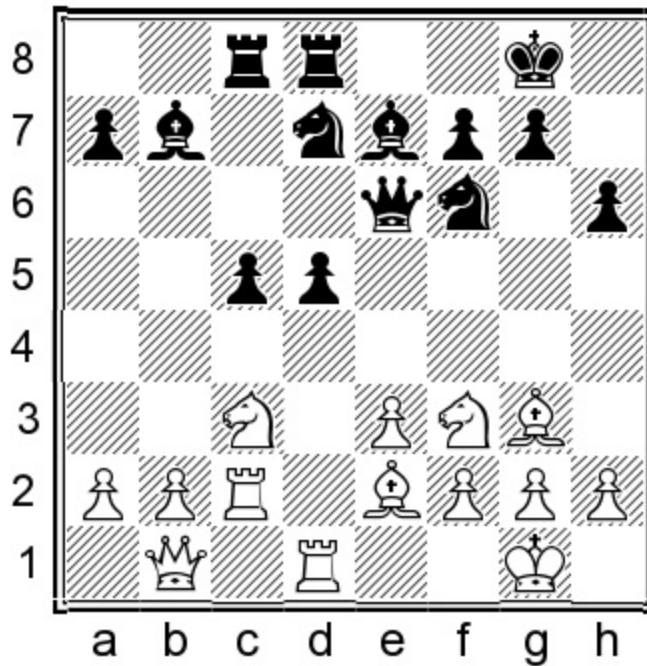
19.♕a6 Controlling Black's pawns. To defend them, Black has to gravely misplace the pieces.

19...♔f8 20.♕b4 ♔e5 21.♕ba4 b5 21...♗xb2 22.♗xb6± 22.♕a2 ♕b7 23.b3 ♕b8 24.♕c5 ♕e8 25.d4±
Karpov won convincingly.

Anatoly Karpov

"I still remember Botvinnik's reaction to each of my games, right from the opening moves. At first he would express amazement, then annoyance, and finally irritation."

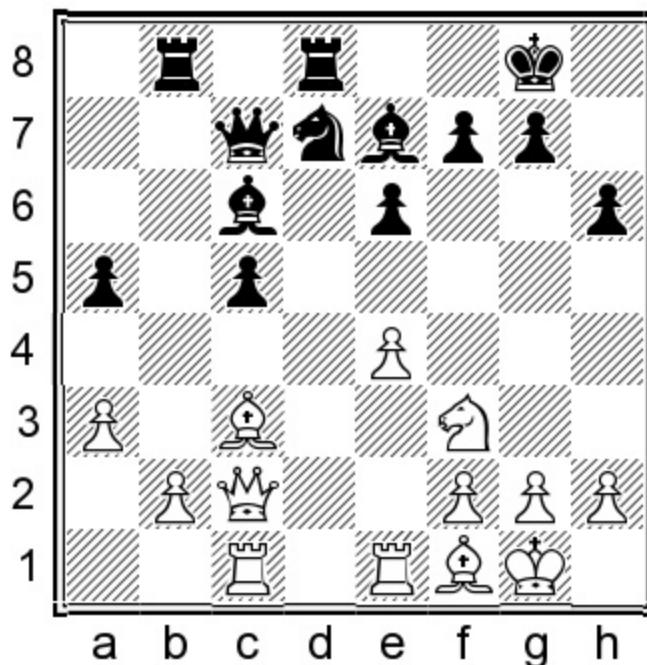
653. Korchnoi – Karpov, Merano (1) 1981



Show/Hide Solution

17...Qh5!± Simply trading minor pieces and leaving Black with the pair of bishops. The bishops have a lot of potential, especially if Black manages to advance the hanging pawn couple and thus open diagonals.

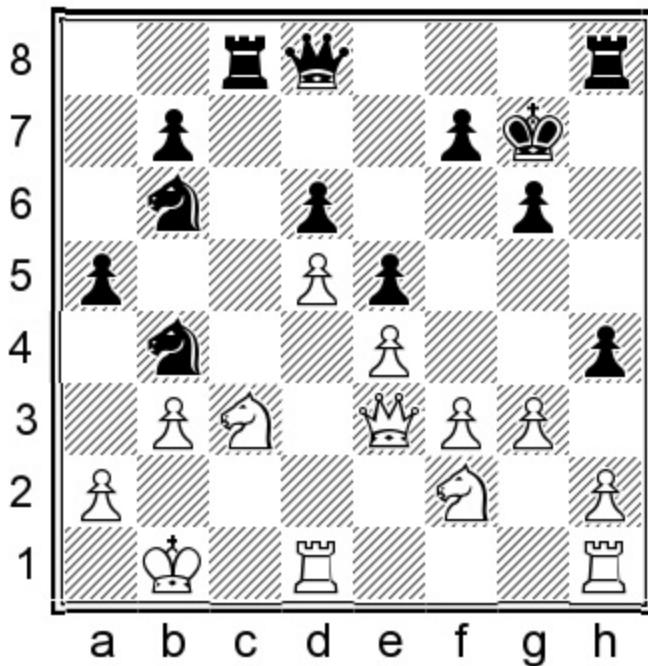
654. Karpov – Najdorf, Mar del Plata 1982



Show/Hide Solution

21.a4± Blocking the a5-pawn, which will be an eternal weakness. White is left with a backward pawn on the b-file, but that one will be easier to defend.

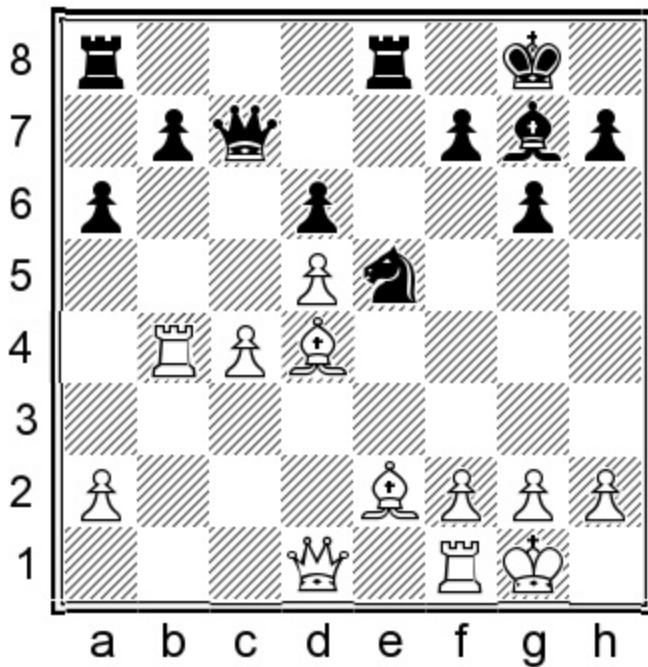
655. Portisch – Petrosian, Tilburg 1982



Show/Hide Solution

25...a4!—+ Otherwise White would play a2-a4. The attack is now decisive.

656. Polugaevsky – Petrosian, Moscow 1983

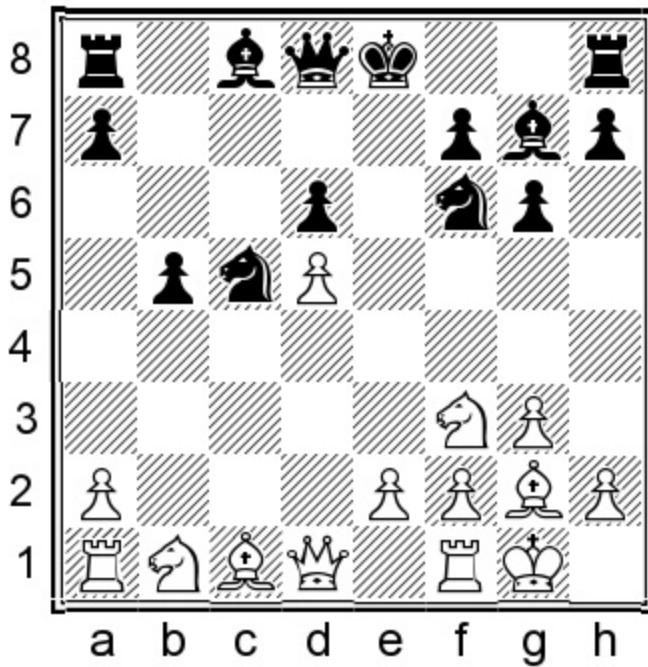


Show/Hide Solution

18... $\mathbb{Q}d7\bar{\mathbb{F}}$ Offering a bishop exchange to increase the control over the dark squares. White's bishop can retreat, but that is also a success for Black. Also note that the black knight has a great square on

c5.

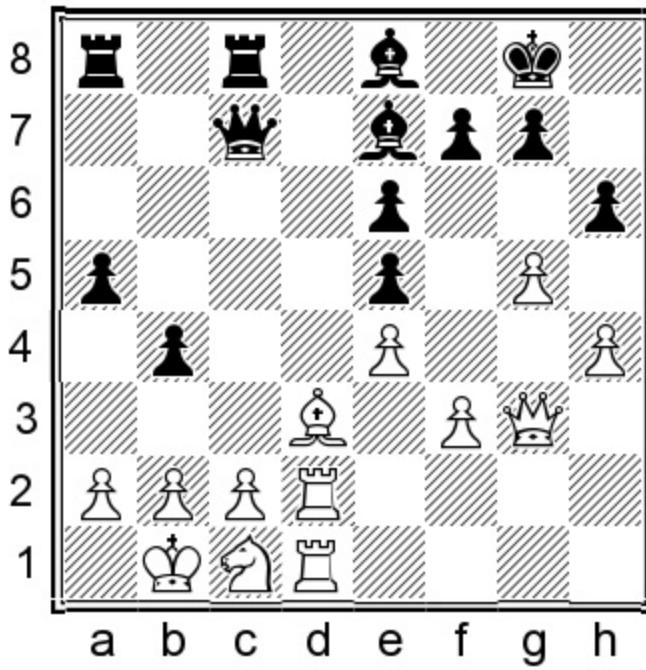
657. Kasparov – Korchnoi, London 1983



Show/Hide Solution

11.♗d4! Reaching the c6-square. 11.♗b2?? makes ♗d4-c6 impossible: 11...♝b6 12.♗d4 ♗a4! **11...0-0** 11...♝d7 The following line is not forced, but it's a good example showing that White doesn't need to worry too much about ...♝xa1: 12.♗c6! ♛xc6 13.dxc6 ♗fe4 14.♗e3 ♛xa1 15.♗d2 White gets a minor piece for the rook. 15...♝xd2 16.♛xa1 0-0 17.♗h6 ♗e6 18.♗xd2± The mighty bishops and the strong pawn on c6 are worth more than the exchange. **12.♗c6±** Kasparov started with 12.♗c3, which is as good.

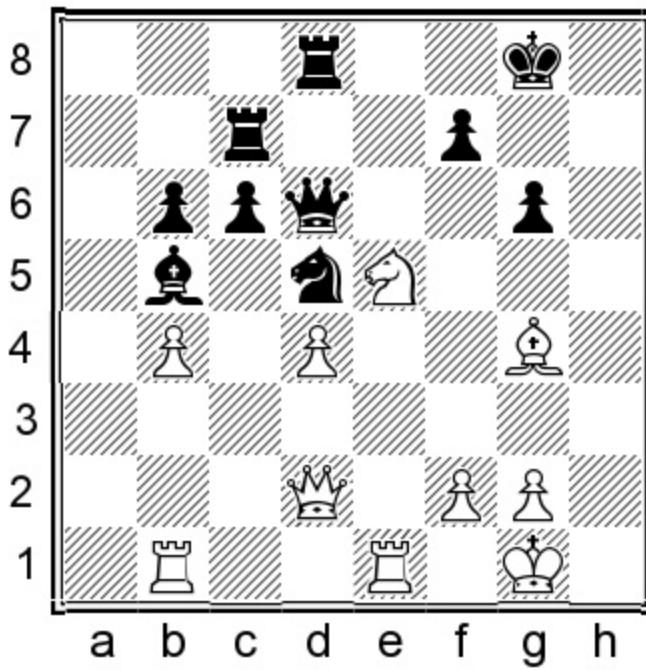
658. Anand – Sandstrom, Kiljava 1984



Show/Hide Solution

24...h5! Keeping the kingside as closed as possible. 24...g6 25.gxh6 ♔h7 26.h5 g5 is also good for Black, but it offers White more chances of counterplay than the game continuation. **25.♔e2** 25.g6 can simply be captured. **25...g6–+** With White's attack neutralized, Black can methodically prepare ...♗c5-d4/e3, ...a5-a4 and ...b4-b3, with a winning attack.

659. Kasparov – Hübner, Hamburg (2) 1985

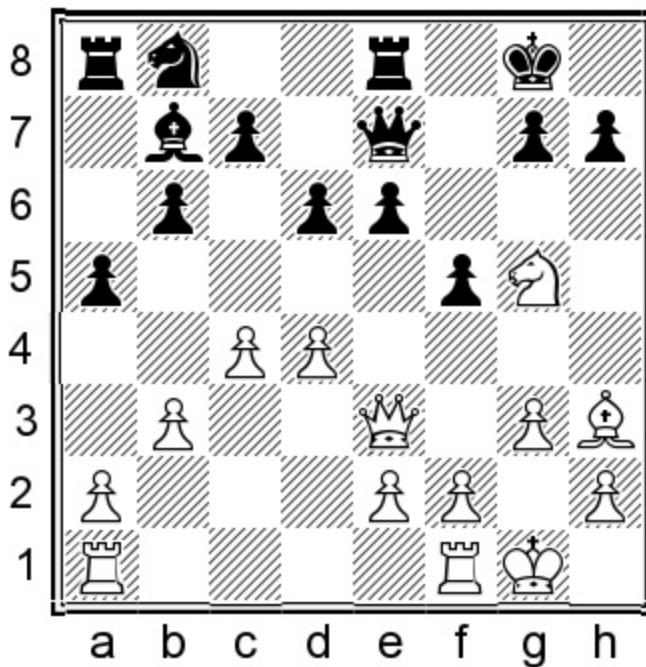


Show/Hide Solution

32.♖b3!+– The rook is transferred to the h-file with a winning attack. Black's kingside is desperately

missing a bishop on g7.

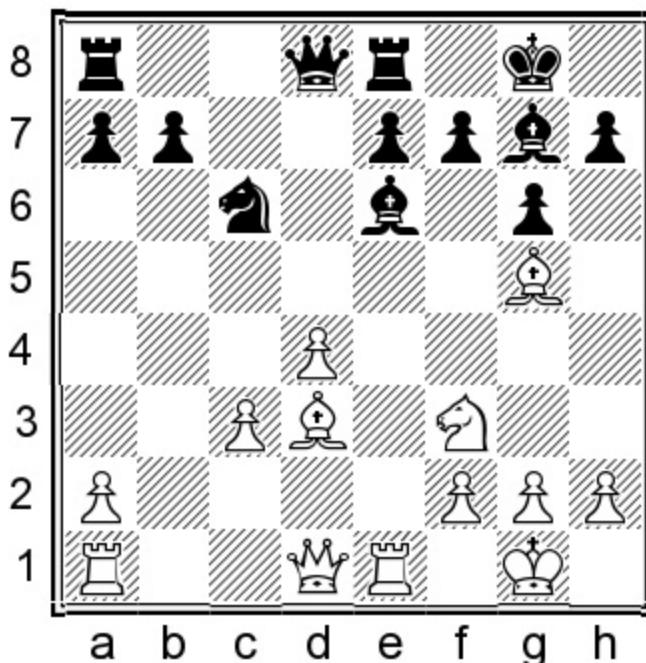
660. Torre – Anand, Dubai (Ol) 1986



Show/Hide Solution

17.d5! Undermining the f5-pawn while Black still hasn't completed development. **17...exd5 18.Qxf5!** It's better to let Black exchange queens, as it opens the f-file. **18.Qxe7? Qxe7 19.Qxf5 h6?? 18...Qxe3 18...h6 19.Qe6† Qh8 20.Qf7† Qh7 21.cxd5+– 19.Qxh7† Qh8 20.fxe3+–** White is not only a pawn up, but also winning against the king.

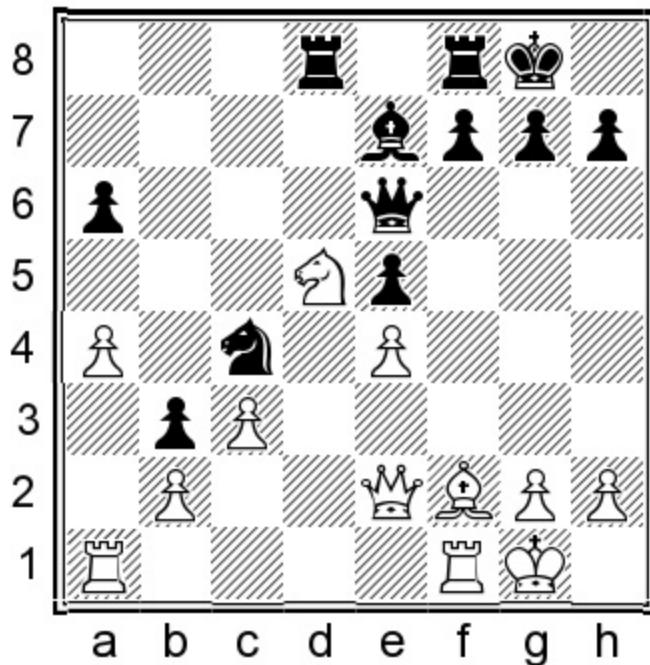
661. Tal – Karpov, Brussels (Blitz) 1987



Show/Hide Solution

13. $\mathbb{E}xe6!$ ± No variations needed; the light squares are worth more than the exchange, as the rooks are far from doing anything meaningful. White continues by attacking the e6-pawn, but also has h2-h4-h5 as a positional plan. (Tal eventually delivered mate on h7.)

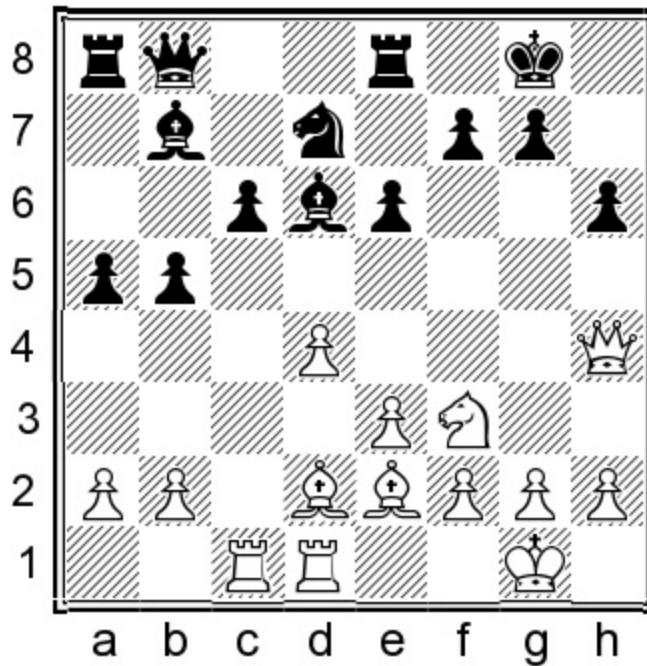
662. Wahls – Kasparov, Hamburg (Simul) 1987



Show/Hide Solution

29... $\mathbb{E}xd5!$ 30. $exd5$ $\mathbb{W}xd5\infty$ In return for the exchange Black wins a pawn and gets rid of White's tremendous knight, while keeping the strong knight on c4. Black's positional compensation will endure, and further moves are not required.

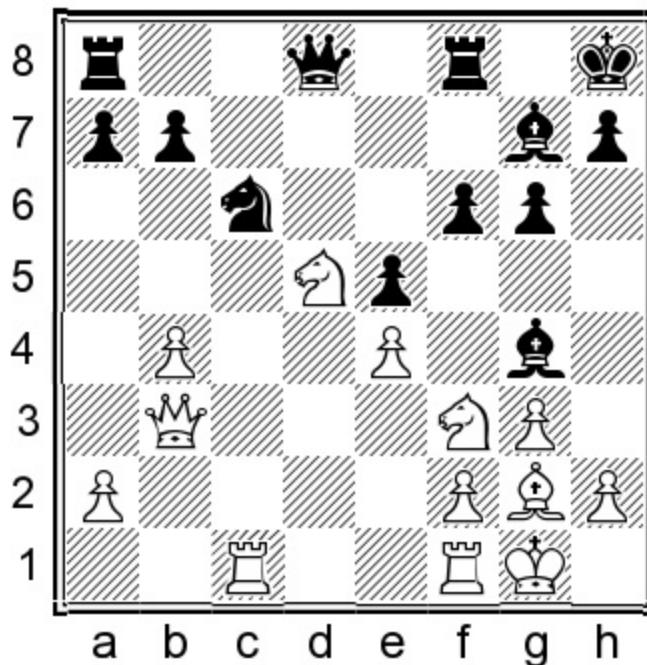
663. Karpov – Van der Wiel, Tilburg 1988



Show/Hide Solution

17.e4! Opening up for the dark-squared bishop while preparing a kingside attack with e4-e5, ♖d3 and possibly ♖xh6. Black has difficulties countering with ...c6-c5 (the b5-pawn is hanging) or ...e6-e5 (the knight on d7 is loose). Karpov chose the unnecessarily cautious 17.♗e1?!. 17...♗e7 17...e5 18.♖xh6! Not the only move, but simply winning a pawn due to: 18...gxh6?! 19.♗g4† Followed by 20.♗xd7. **18.♗h3±**

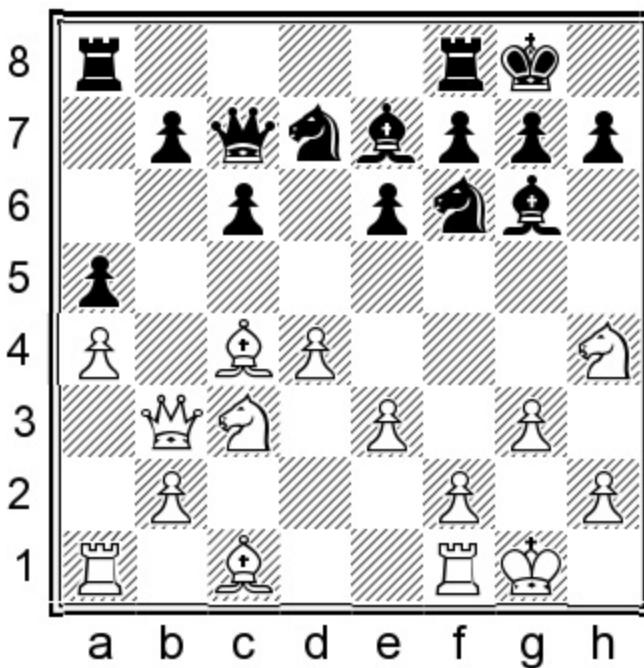
664. Kasparov – Thorsteins, Saint John (Blitz) 1988



Show/Hide Solution

19.b5 Challenging the knight before d4 is made a safe square (by ... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$). **19... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$** **19... $\mathbb{Q}d4$** is met by **20. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ exd4±** when $\mathbb{W}c4xd4$ and $\mathbb{E}c7xb7$ are two ways to go for pawns. **20.bxc6 bxc6** **20... $\mathbb{Q}xg2$** **21.c7+–** **21. $\mathbb{E}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}xg2$** **22. $\mathbb{Q}xg2±$** Black no longer has any minor piece that can challenge the tremendous knight.

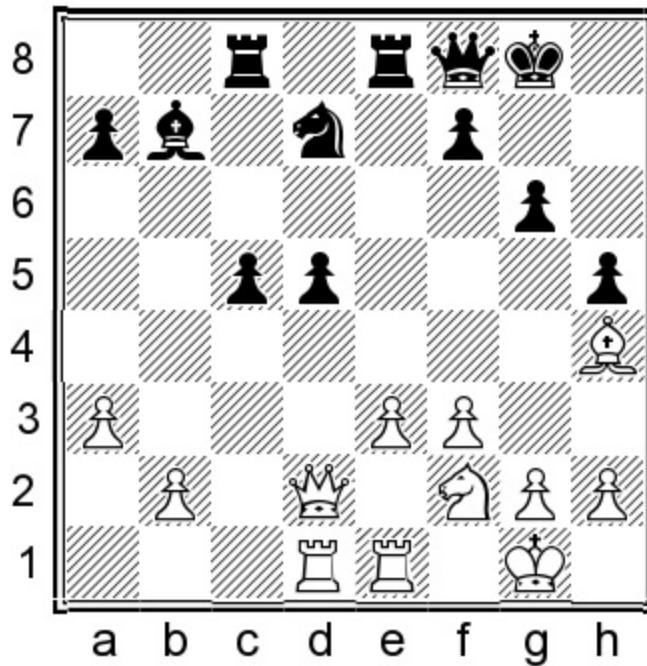
665. Kasparov – Timman, Amsterdam 1988



Show/Hide Solution

16. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ Exchanging on g6 is the only way to play for an advantage – otherwise the bishop escapes to h5. (Following the exchange, White should look to patiently exploit the bishop pair and delay e3-e4 for a while.)

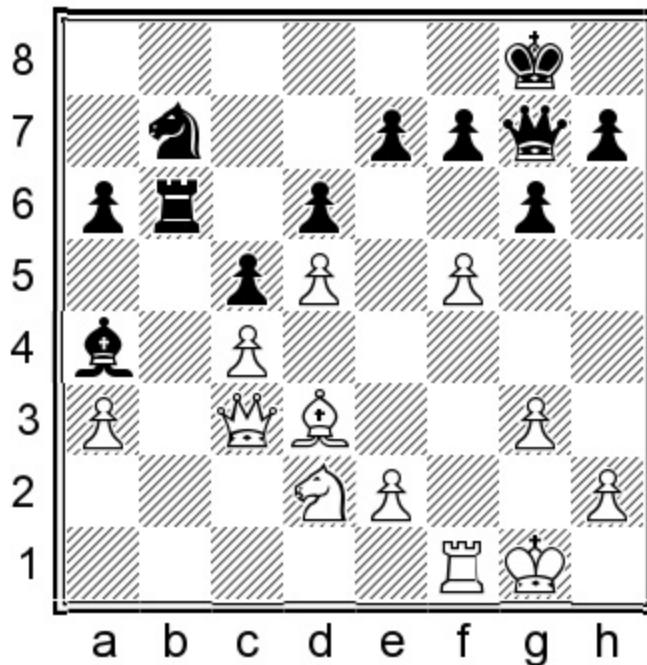
666. Kasparov – Hjartarson, Madrid (Rapid) 1988



Show/Hide Solution

22.e4! Splitting Black's hanging pawn couple. 22.b4 is another way to do it, but 22...cxb4 23.axb4 $\mathbb{R}c4=$ gives Black an active rook. **22...d6** 22...d4 23.b4 cxb4 24. $\mathbb{W}xd4\pm$ wins a pawn. **23.exd5±** Black has more pawn islands.

667. Kasparov – I. Gurevich, New York (Simul) 1988

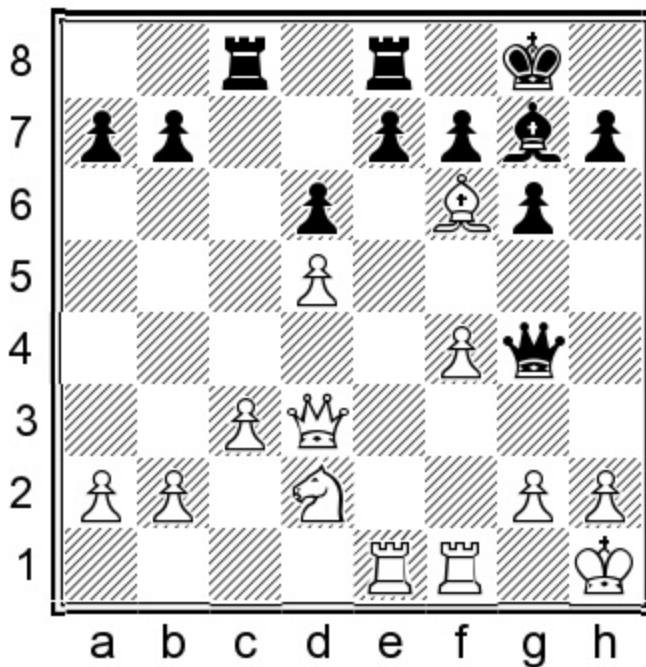


Show/Hide Solution

27.f6 Giving Black a slightly weak pawn on d6. **27...exf6** **28. $\mathbb{R}xf6\pm$** Keeping the queens on the board. **28. $\mathbb{Q}e4?!$ f5!=** No other moves are necessary, but the game continuation was nice: **28... $\mathbb{W}h6$**

29.♗g2 ♜e3?! 30.♕xf7! There is a discovered attack if Black recaptures.

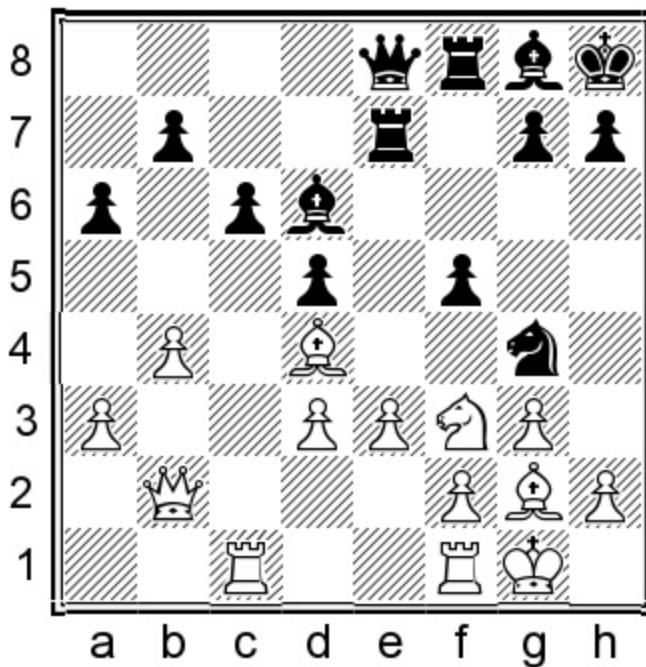
668. Zaichik – Khalifman, Leningrad 1989



Show/Hide Solution

19...exf6!= Getting rid of the backward pawn on e7. The same pawn structure sometimes arises when Black offers a bishop exchange with ...♝f6. 20.f5 is met by 20...♜xe1 21.♜xe1 ♜a4!= and ...♜e8.

669. Kasparov – Short, Paris (Rapid) 1990



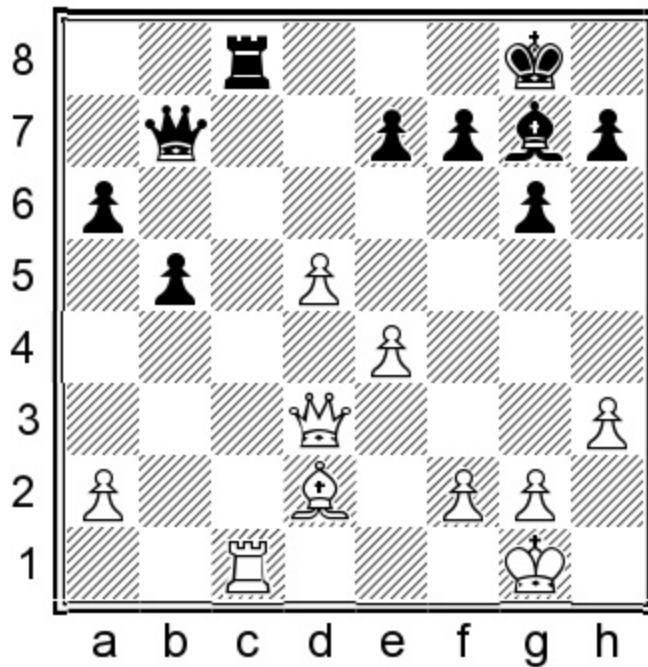
Show/Hide Solution

22.♗c5! Black has most of the pawns on light squares, and is thus weak on the dark squares. Exchanging dark-squared bishops helps White to exploit those squares. **22...♝f6 23.♝xd6 ♜xd6 24.♝d4 ♜f7 25.a4±** With a minority attack.

Garry Kasparov

"The highest art of the chess player lies in not allowing your opponent to show you what he can do."

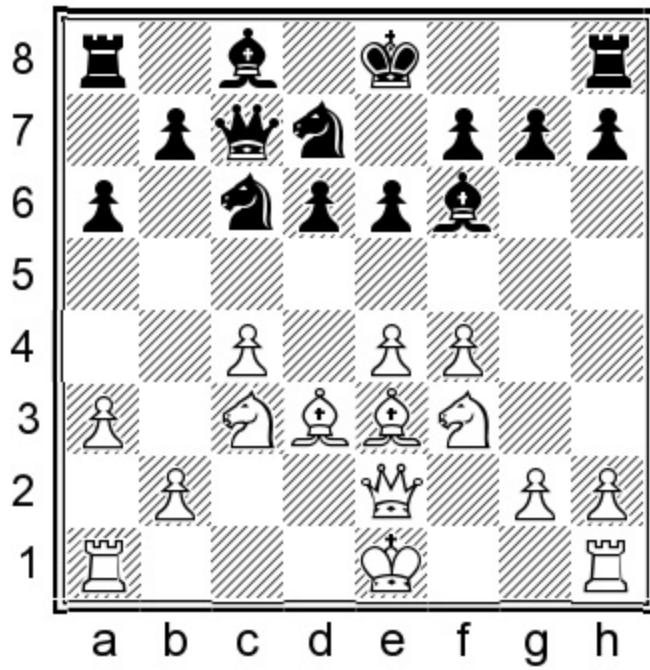
670. Karpov – Kasparov, Lyon/New York (17) 1990



Show/Hide Solution

26.♝c6! Using the weak back rank to clamp down on the outpost. **26...♝e5 26...♝xc6 27.dxc6 ♜xc6 28.♝d8† ♜f8 29.♝h6+– 27.♝c3!±** Another strong move, but there is no need to spot it in the starting position.

671. Ehlvest – Kasparov, Linares 1991

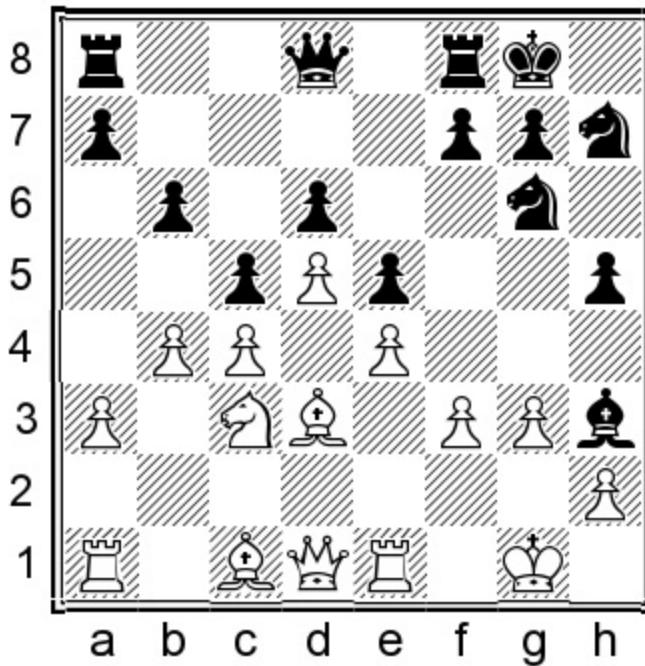


Show/Hide Solution

12...♝xc3†! Black has only one chance to damage White's pawn structure. If 12...0-0 13.♜c1 the knight on c6 is misplaced in this Hedgehog, as shown after: 13...b6? 14.♝d5!± **13.bxc3 e5 14.f5=** Black will finish developing the queenside and exert pressure on the c-file before castling.

Bobby Fischer
"Patzer sees a check, gives a check."

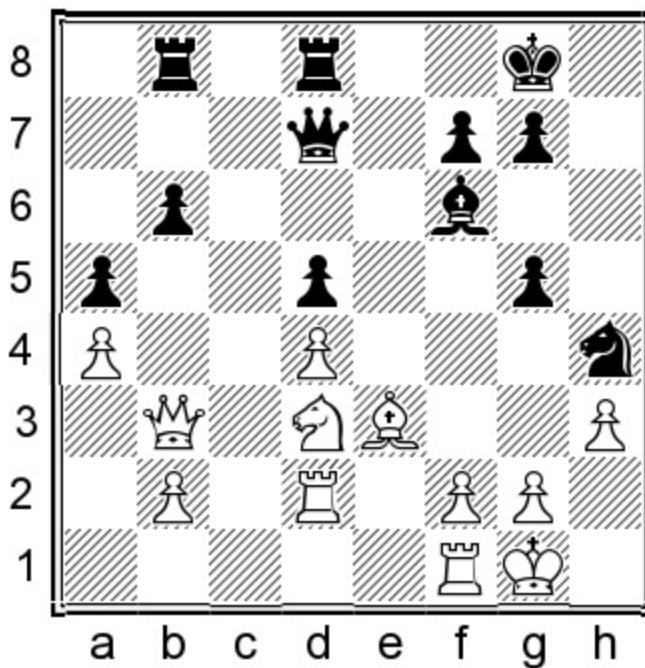
672. Kasparov – Veiga Goy7, Galicia (Simul) 1991



Show/Hide Solution

16.♖a2! The rook is transferred to f2 in anticipation of a future opening of the f-file. (If not, White might play f3-f4 later on.) The text move also overprotects the f3-pawn, anticipating a future ...♗g5. 16.b5 intending a4-a5 is another plan, but it arguably reduces White's advantage. 16.♗f1 defends the king, but with more space, White prefers to keep the minor pieces.

673. Panno – Kasparov, Buenos Aires (Simul) 1992

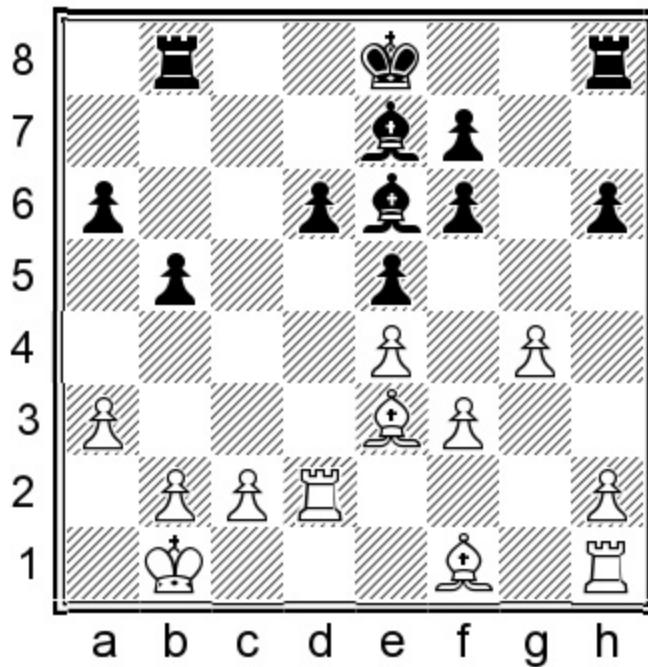


Show/Hide Solution

28...g4! Starting the attack straight away. (Otherwise White may play f2-f3.) 28...♗f5 was the game.

29.hxg4 $\mathbb{W}xg4$ **30.f3** $\mathbb{W}g3$ Black is positionally better and can continue with ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$, ... $\mathbb{E}e8$ and/or ... $\mathbb{Q}g5$. One nice line is: **31. $\mathbb{Q}f4?$** A fork? **31... $\mathbb{Q}xd4\#$** **32. $\mathbb{Q}h1$** $\mathbb{Q}f5!+$ Black gets almost everything for the queen.

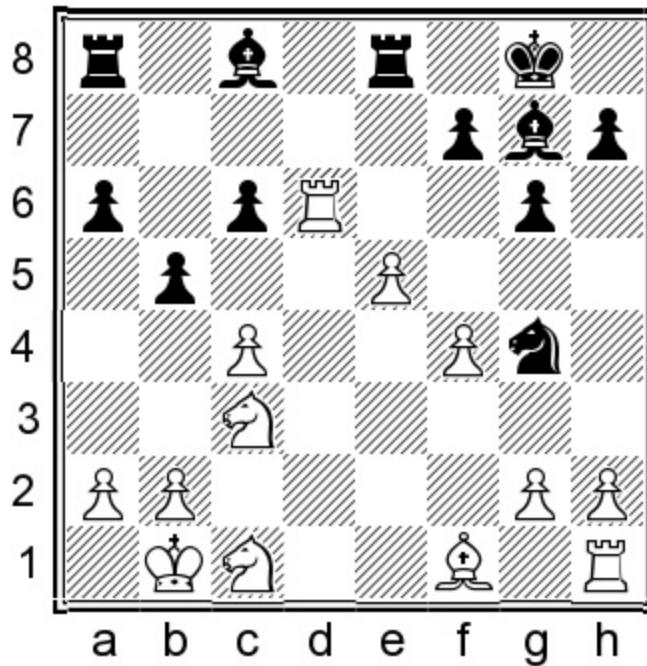
674. Ivanchuk – Anand, Linares (1) 1992



Show/Hide Solution

18...h5! Opening the h-file before White has prepared g4-g5. **19. $\mathbb{E}g1$** **19. $\mathbb{Q}e2$** $hxg4$ **20.fxg4** $\mathbb{E}h3\#$ **19...hxg4** **20.fxg4** $\mathbb{Q}c4\#$ Gaining access to the h3-square. One slow move allows White to defend: **20... $\mathbb{Q}d7$** **21.h3** $\mathbb{Q}c4$ **22. $\mathbb{Q}g2=$**

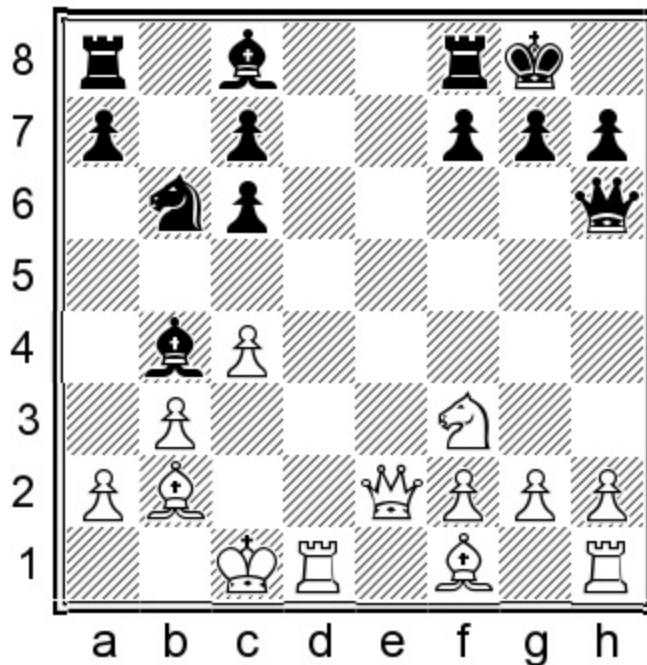
675. Shirov – Kasparov, Dortmund 1992



Show/Hide Solution

17...Qf2 By covering d3, Black can check on f5 to force White's king away. It's a positional move, winning time for development. **18.Qg1 Qf5† 19.Qa1 19.Qd3 Qxd3 20.Qxd3 bxc4+** **19...b4 20.Qa4 f6†** White is far behind in development.

676. Kasparov – Piket, Dortmund 1992

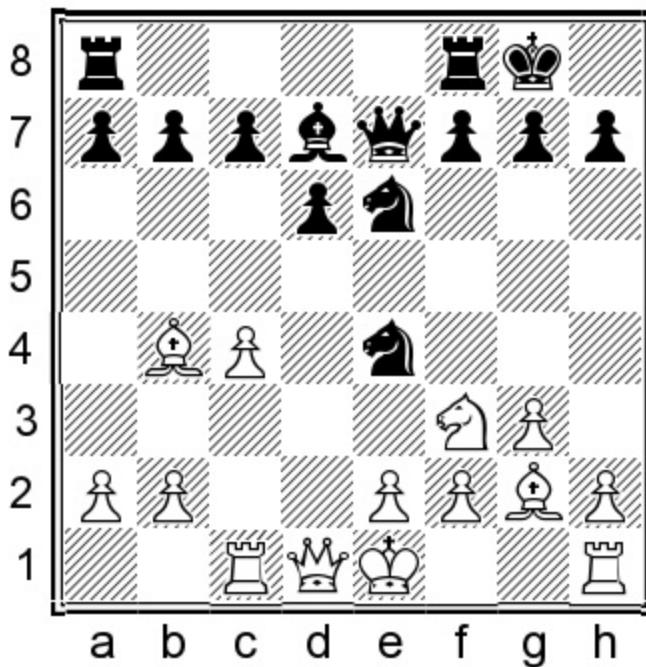


Show/Hide Solution

15.We3 It's better to accept an isolated pawn on e3 than to allow Black to develop with tempo. **15.Qb1? Qf5† 16.Qa1 Qfe8+;** **15.Qd2? a5† 15...Wxe3† 16.fxe3±** The evaluation is not important

(there was no real choice), but at least it's White that plays for an advantage due to Black's isolated doubled pawns.

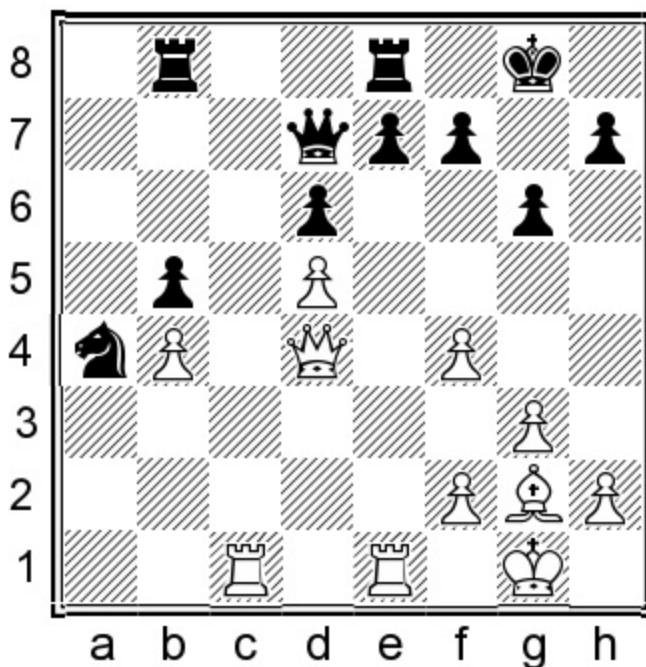
677. Kramnik – Ulibin, Chalkidiki 1992



Show/Hide Solution

13. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ Using a simple tactic to force a favourable trade. 13... $\mathbb{Q}6c5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xd7\pm$ White will enjoy playing with two bishops against a pair of knights.

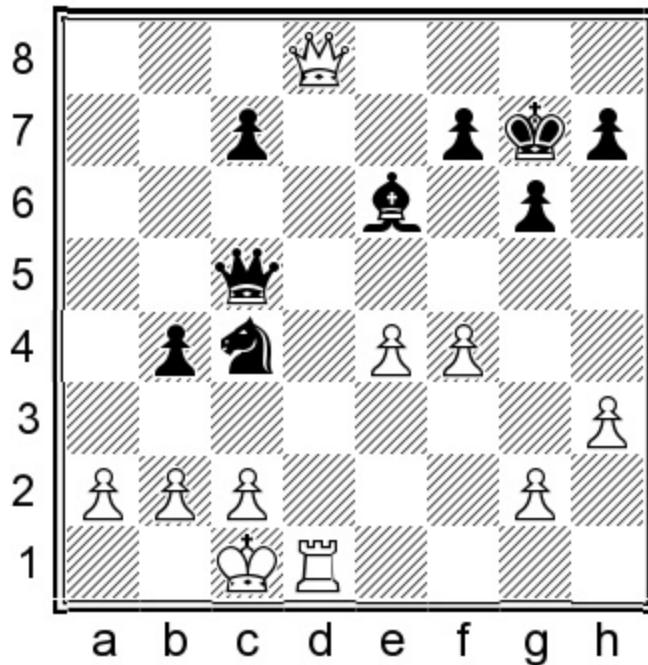
678. Kasparov – Cebalo, Manila (Ol) 1992



Show/Hide Solution

25. $\mathbb{E}c6! \pm$ By settling on c6 immediately, White prevents ... $\mathbb{Q}b6-c4$.

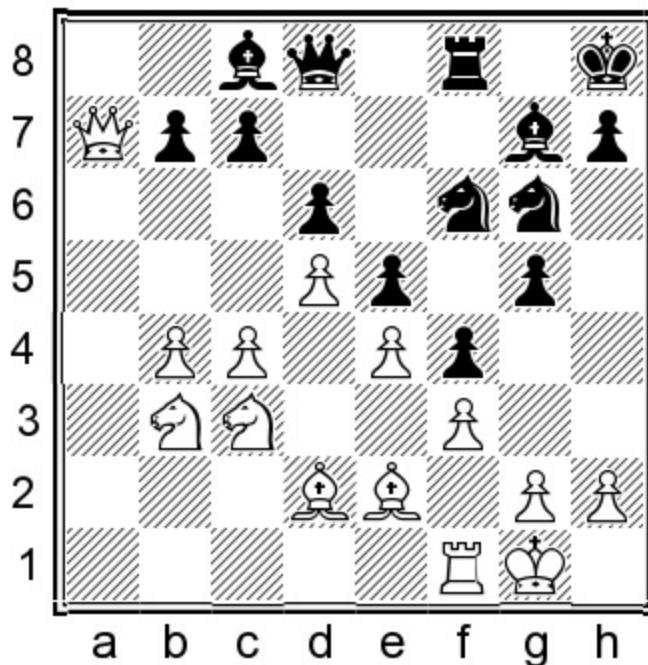
679. Psakhis – Smyslov, Rostov-on-Don 1993



Show/Hide Solution

26. $\mathbb{W}d4\#!$ Other moves would have been unclear. 26... $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 27. $\mathbb{E}xd4\pm$ Without queens on the board, Black has no counterplay. White has a material advantage and good chances to convert it.

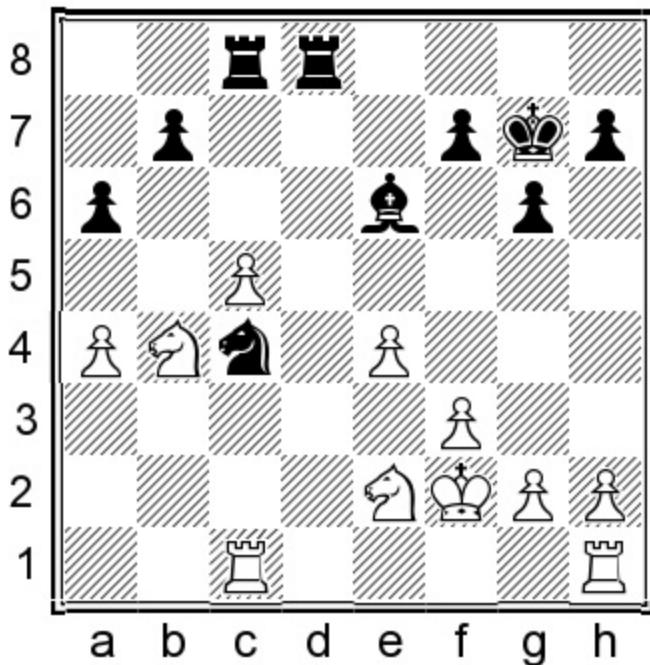
680. Ljubojevic – Kasparov, Linares 1993



Show/Hide Solution

19...g4 There's no reason to delay the attack. Black threatens 20...g3. **20.fxg4** $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ Keeping the light-squared bishop as an attacking piece. **21.h3** 21. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 22. $\mathbb{W}xb7$ f3+ The knight will reach h4 or f4. **21...Qh6±** Black continues attacking with ... $\mathbb{Q}f6-h4$ and ... $\mathbb{Q}g8$.

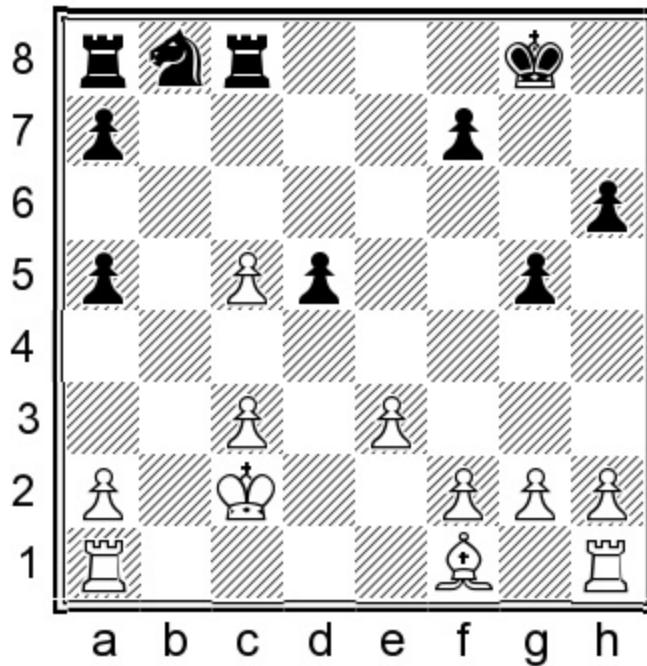
681. Kramnik – Gelfand, Linares 1993



Show/Hide Solution

26.c6! The pawn is doomed anyway, so White may as well use it to split Black's pawns. **26...bxc6** **27.Qf4±**

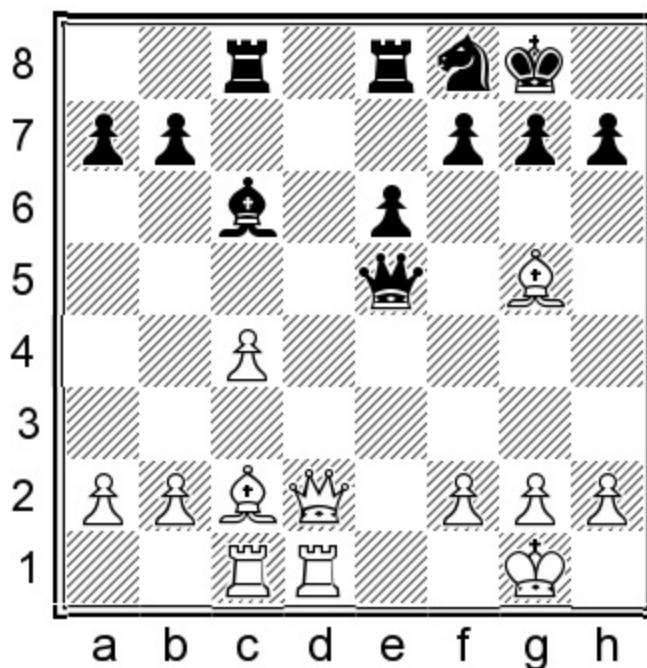
682. Kasparov – Short, London (9) 1993



Show/Hide Solution

20.h4! White either opens the h-file or gets an undefended pawn on g4 to attack. **20...Qd7** **20...g4** **21.Qe2** wins an important tempo, which proves useful after: **21...h5** **22.Qab1 Qd7** **23.Qb5 Qxc5** **24.Qd1 Qe4** **25.Qd3+–** (However, you don't need to see any of this to understand that it's a good idea to win a tempo.) **21.hxg5 hxg5** **21...Qxc5** **22.gxh6+–** **22.Qh5±**

683. Adams – Karpov, Dortmund 1994

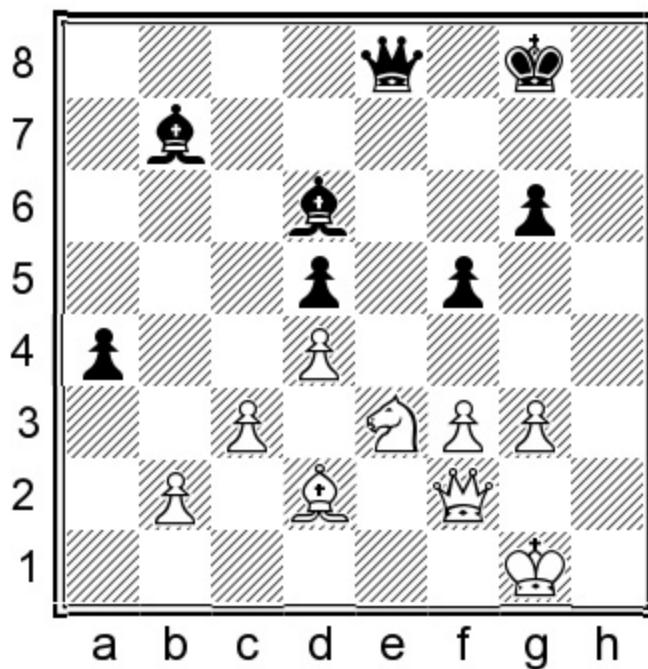


Show/Hide Solution

21.b4!± Using the pawn majority to gain space and control squares. Meanwhile, Black is far away

from doing anything meaningful with the e- and f-pawns.

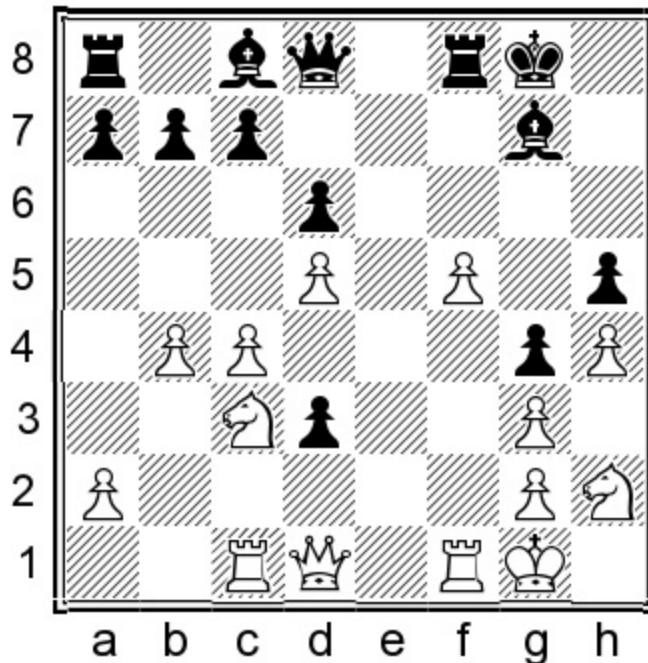
684. Anand – Kamsky, Sanghi Nagar 1994



Show/Hide Solution

35. $\mathbb{Q}g2! \pm$ Preparing $\mathbb{Q}f4$, either depriving Black of the bishop pair and weakening the dark squares in Black's camp, or getting a strong bishop on e5.

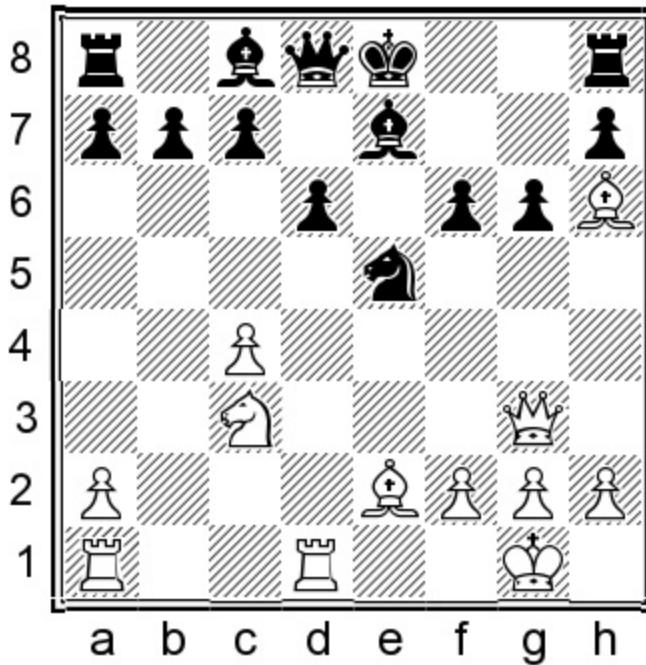
685. Kramnik – Kasparov, Linares 1994



Show/Hide Solution

19.f6! Stopping Black's queen from reaching f6. 19... $\mathbb{W}xd3?$ $\mathbb{W}f6\#$ The f5-pawn drops and Black's king is well protected. **19... $\mathbb{B}xf6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xd3\pm$** By opening the f-file, White gains control over the important f5-square. Next step is sending a knight forward: $\mathbb{Q}b5$, $\mathbb{Q}e4$ or even $\mathbb{Q}e2-f4$.

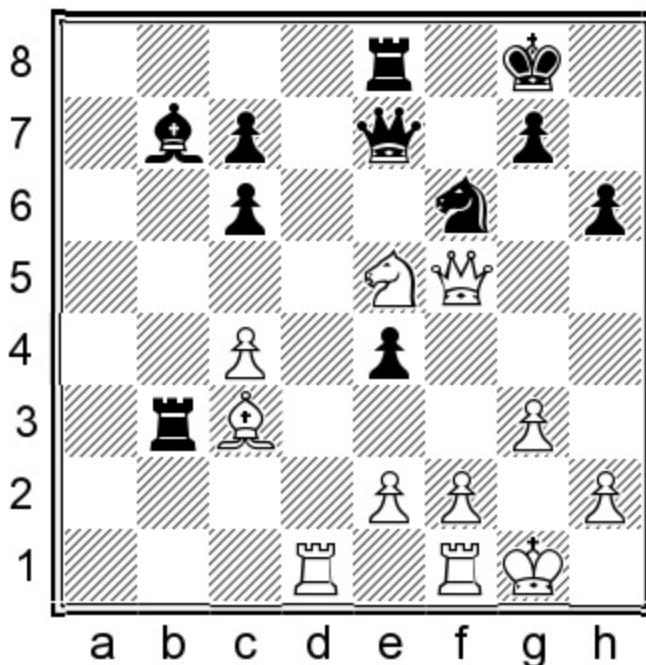
686. Kasparov – Anand, Lyon 1995



Show/Hide Solution

18.c5± White has sacrificed two pawns, and is happy to further open the position against Black's uncastled king. No further variations or exact evaluation are needed to decide on this continuation.

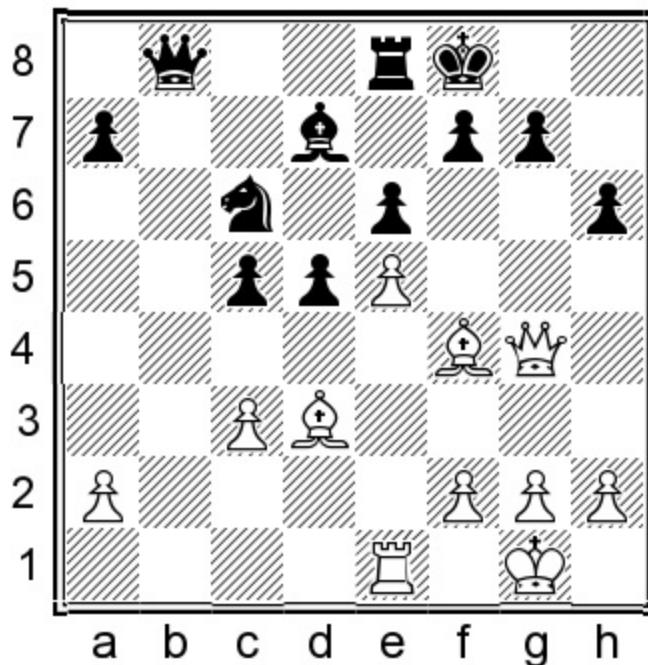
687. Cramling – Smyslov, Prague 1995



Show/Hide Solution

22.♕g6 Winning time – a positional factor. White continues with ♕xf6 and you don't have to calculate any longer. Here are two plausible variations anyway: 22.♔a1?! was played in the game.
22...♛e6 22...♝f7 23.♝xf6 ♛xf6 24.♝xf6 gxf6 25.♝d7+– **23.♛xe6† ♜xe6** **24.♝f4 ♜d6** Black blocks the d-file but loses a pawn: **25.♝xd6 cxd6** **26.♝xf6 gxf6** **27.♝d1+–** In a game, you could play the first move quickly and calculate the follow-up when Black is considering where to go with the queen.

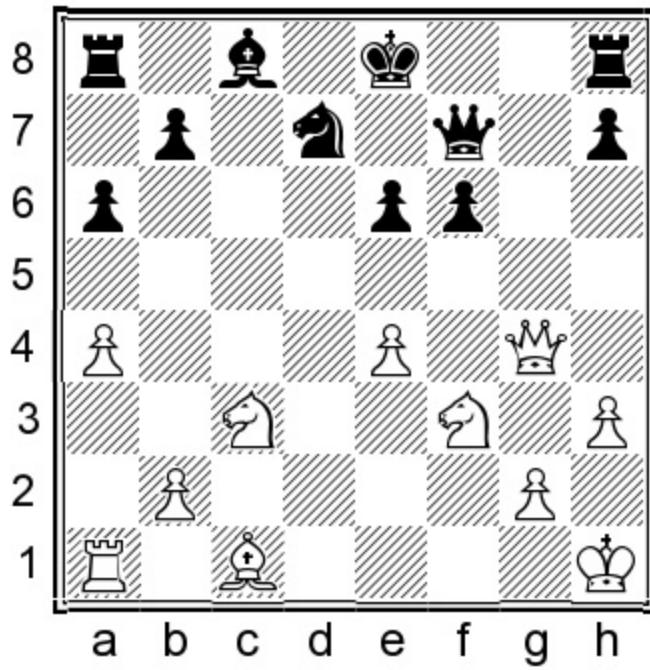
688. Kasparov – Anand, Geneva (Rapid) 1996



Show/Hide Solution

25.♜e3!+– The rook joins the attack before it's stopped by ...d5-d4. There is no defence, for instance: **25...g5?** 25...♝b2 is better, although 26.h4 leaves Black without a good defence against ♜g3. **26.♛h5!** gxf4 27.♝xh6† ♔e7 28.♝f6† ♔f8 29.♝h3 Followed by mate.

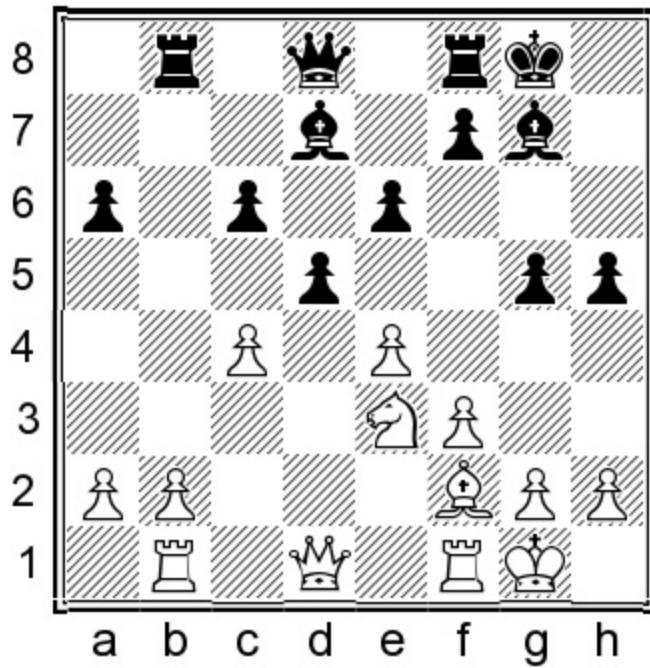
689. Kasparov – Seirawan, Geneva (Rapid) 1996



Show/Hide Solution

18.e5!± The only good move, gaining access to the g5-square. Black is the exchange up, but is severely underdeveloped.

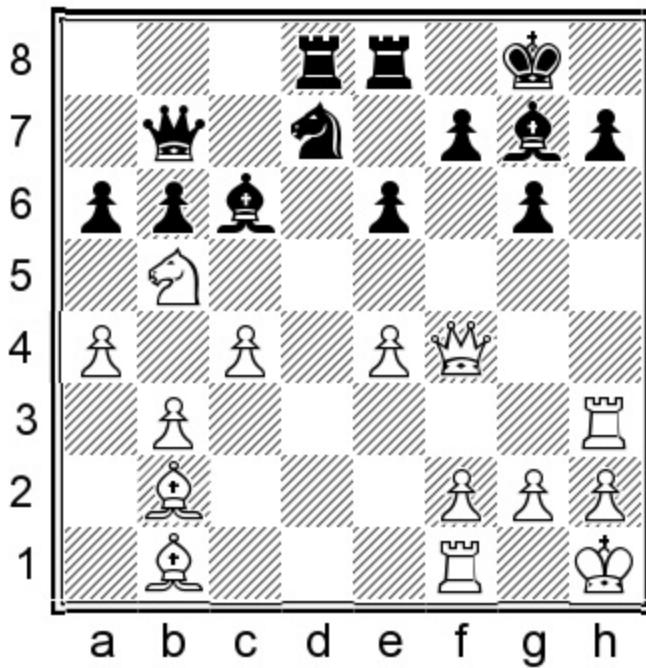
690. Smirin – Kasparov, Yerevan (Ol) 1996



Show/Hide Solution

19...d4 20.♘c2 e5 Better to have space and a protected passed pawn than a weak pawn. Black has a substantial advantage. 20...c5?! reduces Black's advantage in view of 21.♗e1 followed by ♘d3, and later it becomes easier to create counterplay with b2-b4.

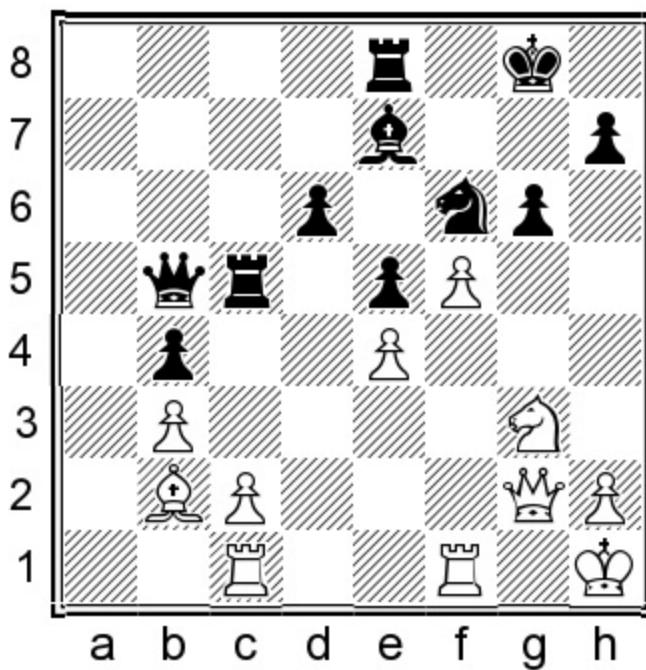
691. Anand – Ivanchuk, Monte Carlo (Rapid) 1997



Show/Hide Solution

22...e5! Black must keep the bishop on g7 to defend the king. The game continued 22...axb5? 23.♗xg7 and White had a winning attack. **23.♘h4 axb5 24.axb5** 24.♘xh7†? ♕f8 leaves White unable to trap the enemy bishop, as ...♗xe4 is available. **24...♗f8 25.bxc6 ♘xc6=** White's extra pawn is of little value.

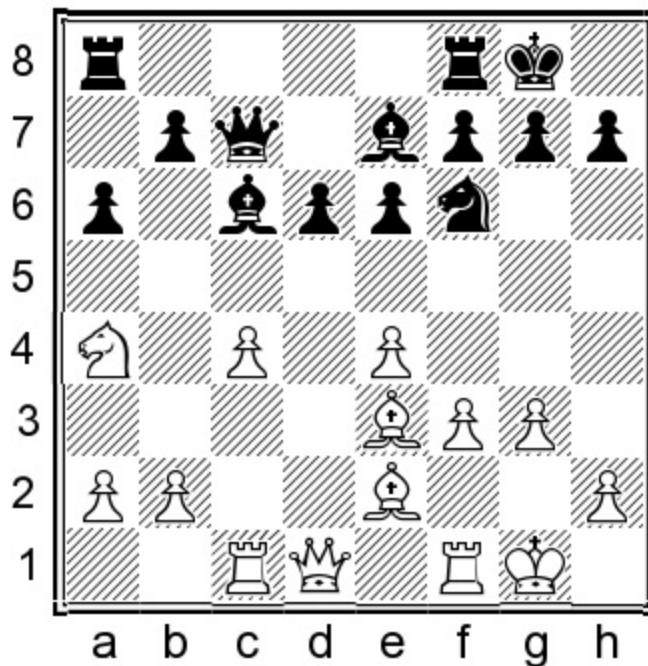
692. Anand – Kasparov, Linares 1997



Show/Hide Solution

31...g5! Not allowing White's knight to reach f5. **32.h4** **32...h6** **32...g4±** is also good. The g5-pawn is not weak. For instance: **33.hxg5?!** **hxg5** **34.Qe2?** **Qf7–+**

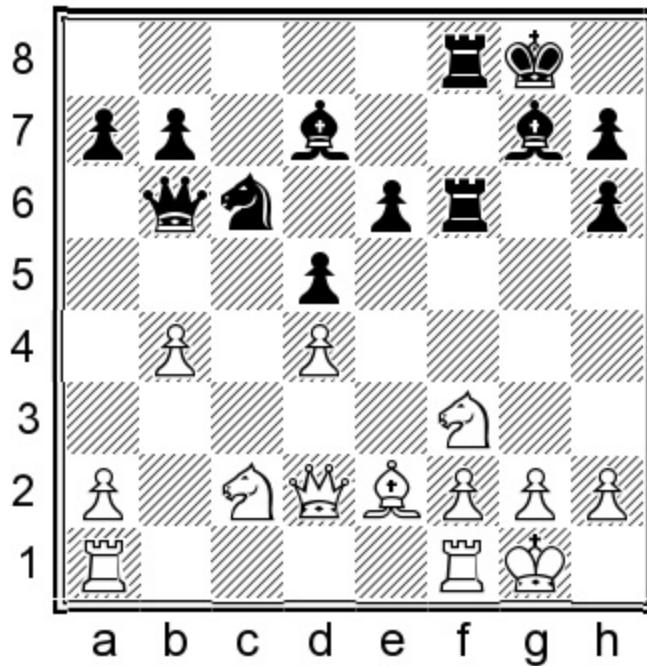
693. Kasparov – Polgar, Linares 1997



Show/Hide Solution

15.Qb6! Before Black has defended with ...Qd7, or captured on a4. **15...Rd8** **16.b4±** **16.Qd5±** is also a typical move, making use of the rook and queen standing on the same file.

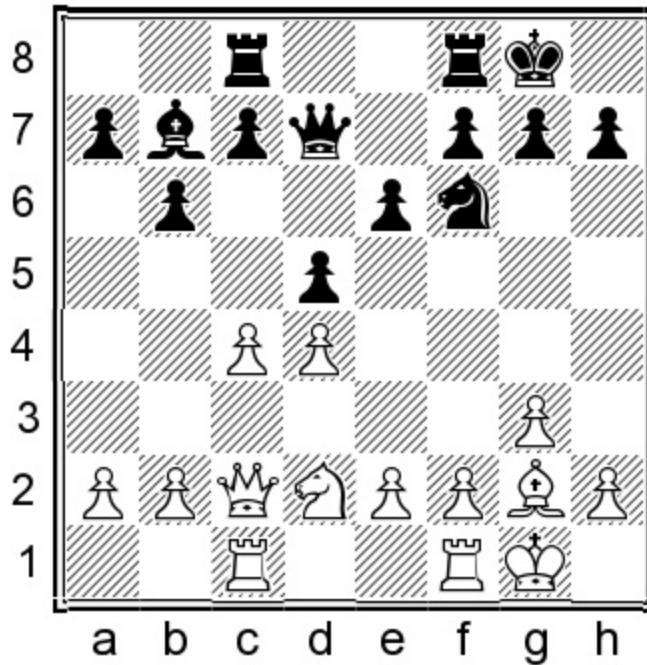
694. Topalov – Bareev, Novgorod 1997



Show/Hide Solution

15.b5! Getting the e5-square for the knight. Even though it won't stay there forever, it is irritating and wins time. **15...♝e7 16.♞e5 ♜e8 17.g3!** Taking control over f4. **17...h5 17...♝g6 18.♝g4±** wins a pawn. **18.a4±**

695. Kramnik – Polgar, Dortmund 1997



Show/Hide Solution

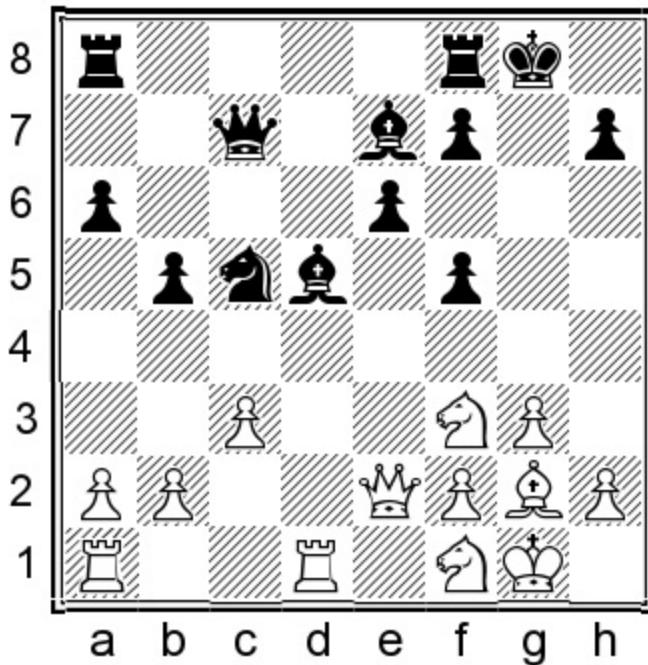
13.c5 As White is not interested in cxd5, it's better to gain space and threaten c5-c6. **13...c6±** The last move made Black's light-squared bishop even worse. After **13...bxc5 14.dxc5!** is best, with a strong

queenside majority. (14. $\mathbb{W}xc5$ is a good alternative though, with pressure against Black's queenside pawns.)

Vladimir Kramnik

"Every month I look through some ten-thousand games, so as not to miss any new ideas and trends."

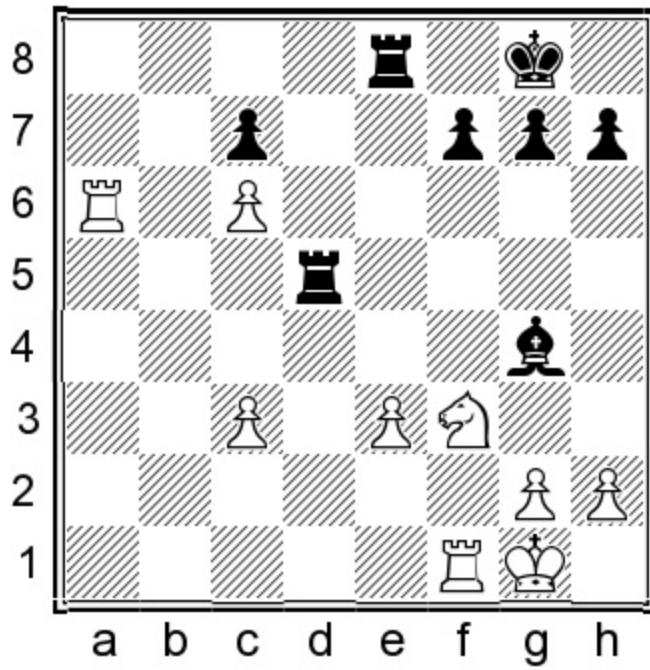
696. Kasparov – M. Gurevich, Sarajevo 2000



Show/Hide Solution

17. $\mathbb{B}xd5!$ $\mathbb{B}xd5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e3\pm$ For the exchange, White has shattered Black's pawn structure. At least one of the weak pawns will quickly be captured, and Black's king is vulnerable. The opposite-coloured bishops only enhance White's domination of the light squares. No further variations are needed.

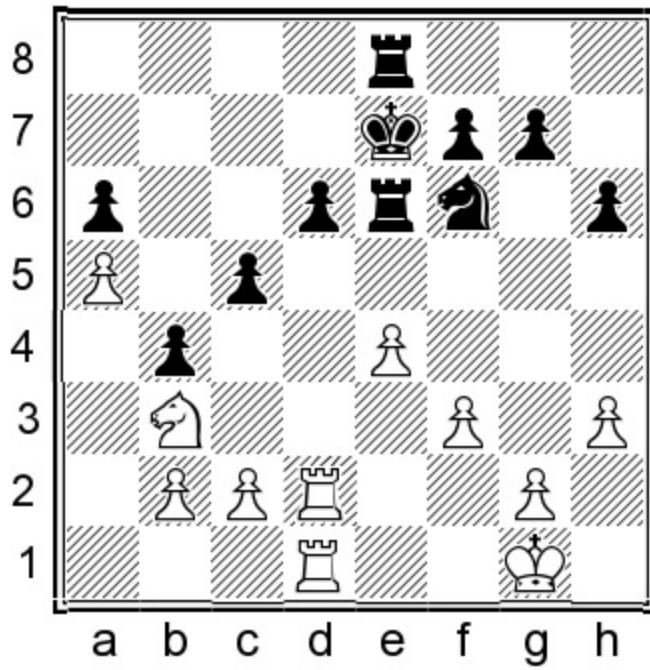
697. Anand – Shirov, New Delhi/Teheran 2000



Show/Hide Solution

21.♘d4± Keeping a strong knight that can't be challenged. Otherwise Black would have captured it on f3.

698. Anand – Ivanchuk, Monte Carlo (Rapid) 2001

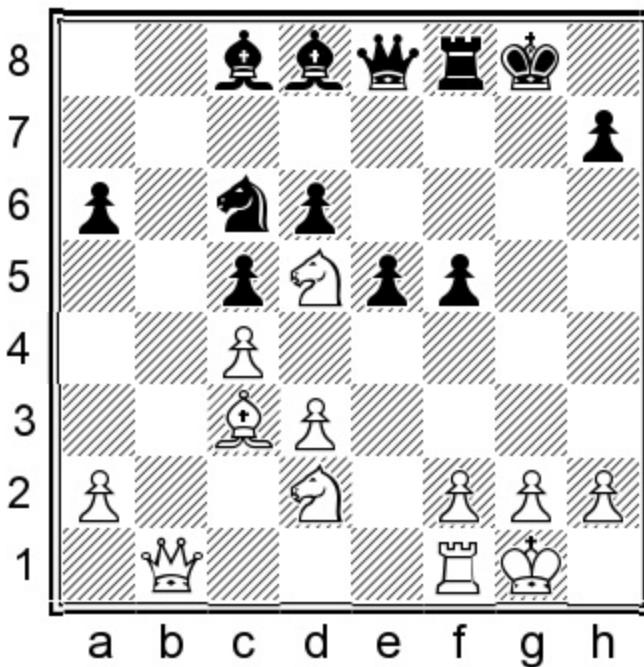


Show/Hide Solution

28.♘c1! The first step in a journey towards d5 or c4. It's important to be quick. If White spends a tempo on 28.♗f2 Black gets time for 28...♝b8 29.♘c1 ♘b5 winning the pawn. **28...♝d8** 28...♝b8 is now met by: 29.♘e2 ♘b5 30.♘f4 ♘e5 31.♘xd6+– **29.♘d3** 29.♘e2 is also okay, but d3 is a better

square, since it threatens the c5-pawn and there is a route to c4 as well (d3-b2-c4). 29... $\mathbb{E}d7$ 30.b3±

699. Akopian – Kasparov, Moscow 2002



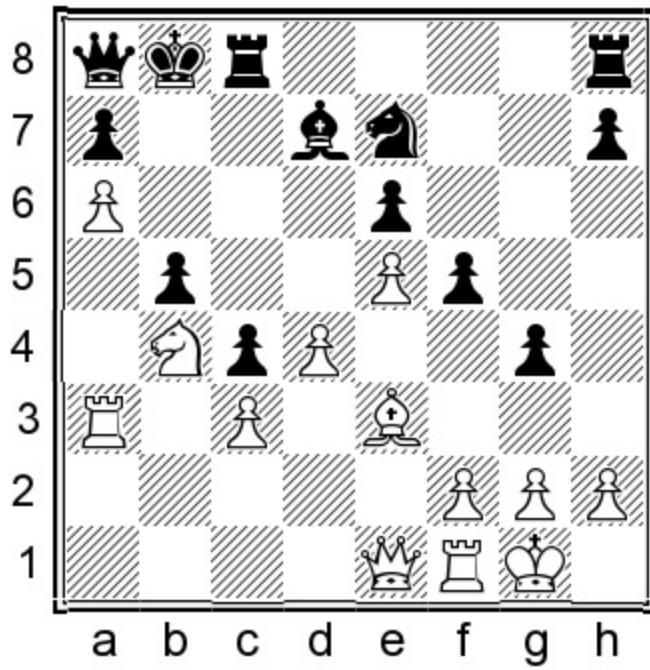
Show/Hide Solution

20.f4! Starting to attack the e5-pawn. At the same time White prevents ...f5-f4, which would see Black weaken the e4-square but, more importantly, gain space on the kingside and improve the prospects of the c8-bishop. 20. $\mathbb{E}e1$ f4± 20... $\mathbb{E}f7$ 21. $\mathbb{W}e1$ $\mathbb{E}g7?$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}f3+-$ White wins the e5-pawn, and Kasparov resigned three moves later.

Garry Kasparov

“Setbacks and losses are both inevitable and essential if you’re going to improve and become a good, even great, competitor. The art is in avoiding catastrophic losses in the key battles.”

700. Van Wely – Topalov, Dortmund 2005



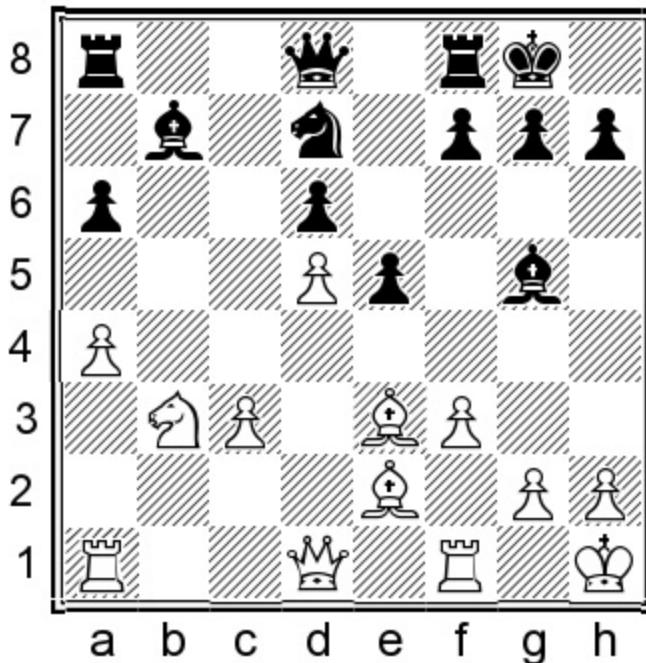
Show/Hide Solution

27.d5!∞ White activates the dark-squared bishop at the cost of a pawn. 27.♕e2?! ♜d5† was the game, when Black was in control and went on to win. 27...♝xd5 28.♗d2! ♖c7 28...♝xe3? 29.fxe3 ♖c7 30.♖f4+– 29.♝xd5 ♗xd5 30.♗xd5 exd5∞ With opposite-coloured bishops and a lot of weak squares, Black's extra pawn is not that important.

4. Medium Difficulty Exercises 701-739

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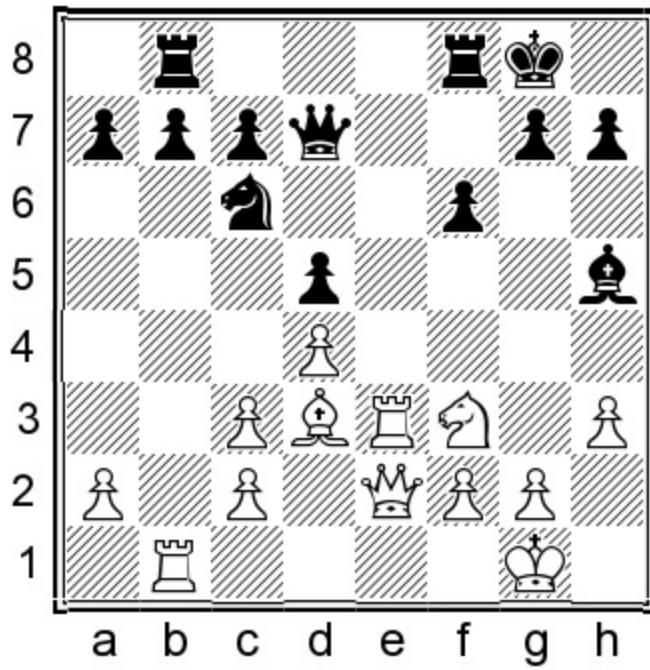
701. Adams – Anand, Bastia (Rapid) 2005



Show/Hide Solution

17.♗g1!± Keeping the bishop that has influence over the queenside and protects c5. White continues with c3-c4-c5. 17.♗f2 is less natural, as the bishop is slightly more exposed, but objectively of equal strength.

702. Anand – Gelfand, Monte Carlo (Blindfold) 2006



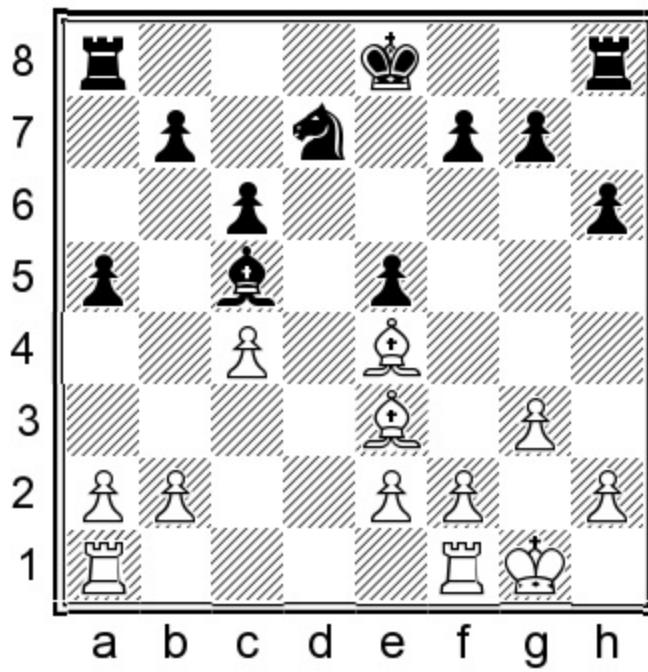
Show/Hide Solution

17.g4! White plays actively before Black gets time to exchange rooks on the e-file. **17...♝f7** **17...♝g6** **18.♜xg6 hxg6** **19.♝h4** **♝f7** **20.♜e1±** With the bishop exchanged, Black can't play ...♝fe8. **18.♝h4** **♝fe8** **18...g6** creates a weakness: **19.♜f3±** **19.♞f5** **♝xe3** **20.♝xe3** **♝e8** **21.♝g3±** The knight is annoying, and Black still has to solve some problems.

Viswanathan Anand

“For me, each game is a new challenge, which has to be dealt with rationally and systematically. At that time, every other thought fades into oblivion.”

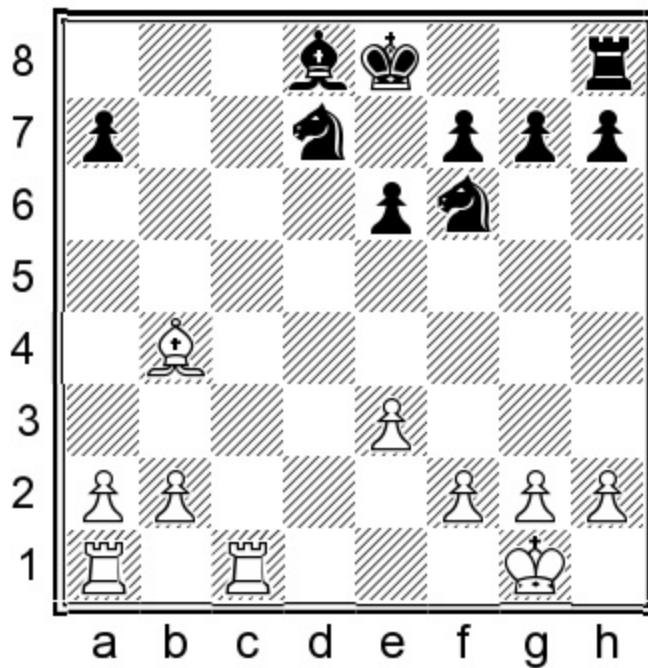
703. Roiz – Anand, Rishon LeZion (Blitz) 2006



Show/Hide Solution

16.♗d2!= Keeping the bishop pair. 16.♕xc5 ♗xc5 17.♗c2 ♔e7† The knight is stronger than the bishop. 16.♗f5? gets rid of the potentially passive bishop at the price of a doubled pawn. 16...♗xe3 17.♗xd7† ♔xd7 18.fxe3 ♔e6 One of the test readers thought that this was okay for White since the d3-square can be used to double rooks, but Black is nevertheless better, with more space and an active king. **16...♗b4** White can return the bishop to e3, or even retreat to c1, later winning a tempo with a2-a3.

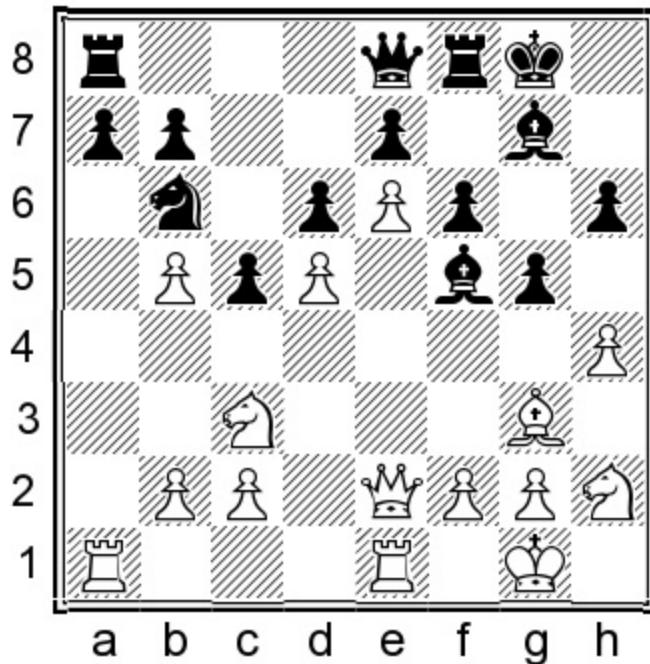
704. Kramnik – Topalov, Elista (8) 2006



Show/Hide Solution

21...♞d5 Centralizing the knight with tempo while preparing an escape square for the king. **22.♝d6 f5∞** It's not necessary to evaluate this position to understand that Black needs to develop.

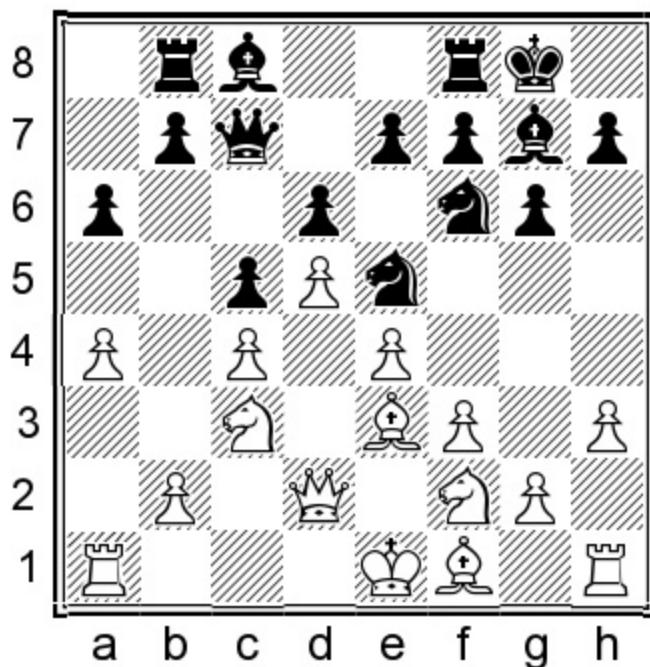
705. I. Sokolov – Topalov, Hoogeveen 2006



Show/Hide Solution

18...♝g6!† Preparing ...f6-f5 to release and activate the dark-squared bishop.

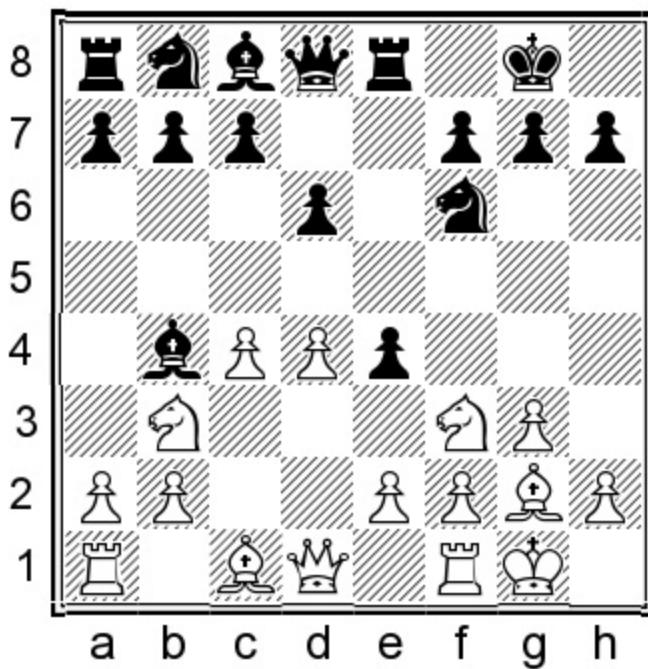
706. Anand – Cubillo Munoz, Benidorm (Simul) 2007



Show/Hide Solution

12...♝h5! Heading for the g3-square. **13.f4 ♝d7 14.g4** White's only way to defend g3 is the passive **14.♝e2** which allows: **14...b5± 14...♝g3 15.♝g1 ♝xf1 16.♝xf1±** Where should White's king hide? With the kingside pawns far advanced, Anand would have preferred to keep all four minor pieces.

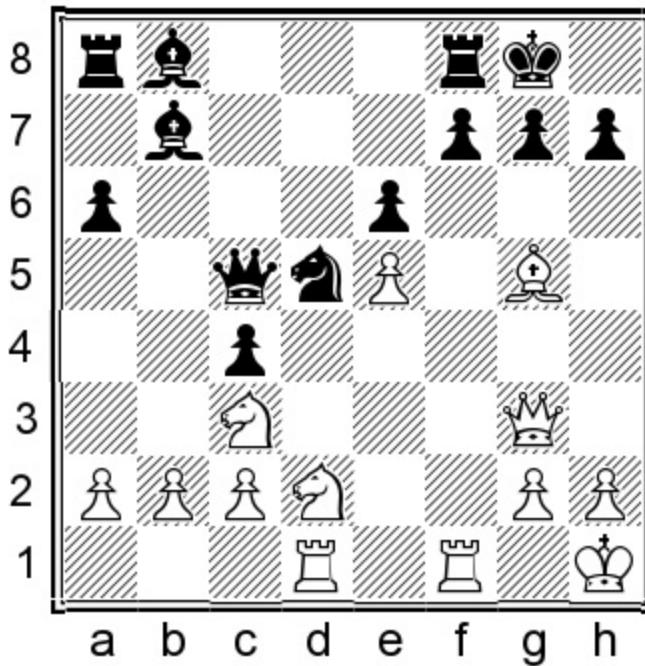
707. Carlsen – Morozevich, Monte Carlo (Rapid) 2007



Show/Hide Solution

9.a3! Gaining the advantage of the bishop pair while improving the structure by opening the a-file. **9.♝h4 c6 10.a3 ♕a5 11.♝xa5±** obtains only one of the advantages mentioned above. **9...exf3 10.♝xf3 ♕xa3 11.♝xa3±**

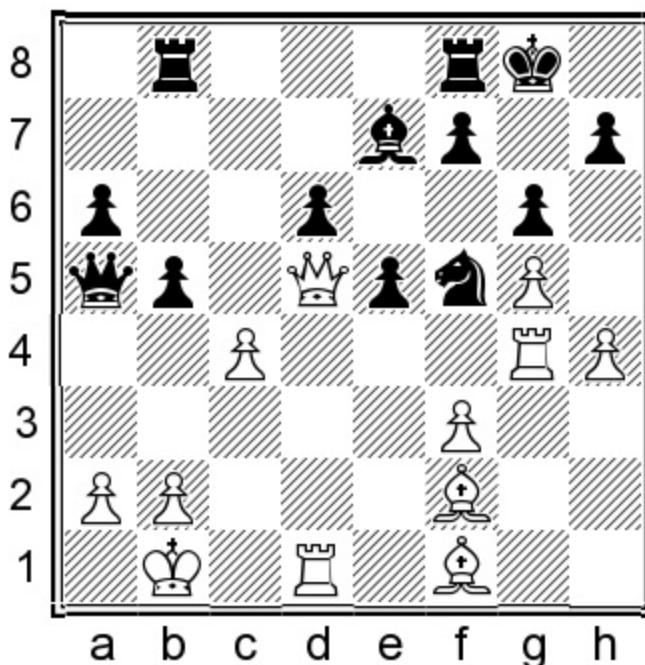
708. Berg – Topalov, Dresden (Ol) 2008



Show/Hide Solution

21...f5!? Defending against the two big threats of $\mathbb{Q}h6$ and $\mathbb{Q}de4$. **22.Qd4!** Berg correctly judged this to be White's best try nevertheless, but the complications were safe enough for Black. **22...fxe4** **23.Qxe4 Qxf1†** **24.Qxf1 Qc7** **25.Qg4?** **25.Qd6!** $\mathbb{Q}a7$ **26.Qh3 Qd7** **27.Qf7 Qxf7** **28.Qxf7 Qxf7** **29.Qxh7** would have given White counterplay against the king, and a draw seems the most likely outcome. **25...Qxe5** **26.Qh5 h6!—+** White's attack was dead in the water.

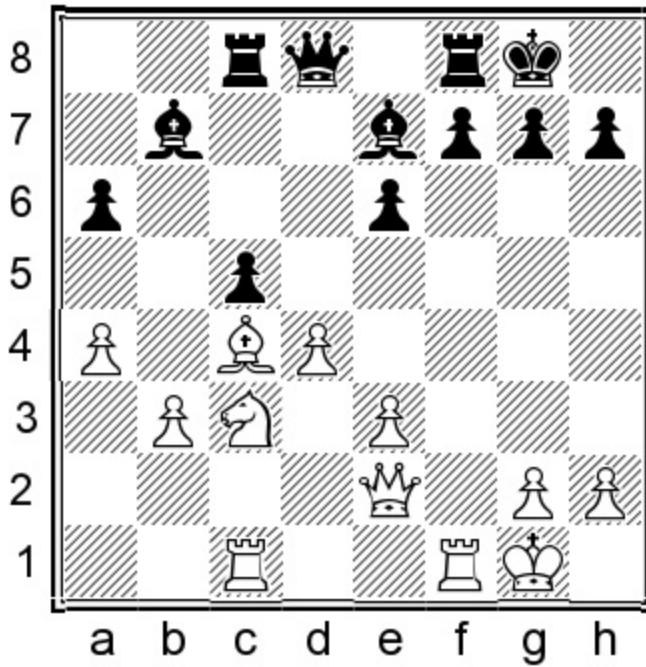
709. Anand – Karjakin, Nice (Rapid) 2009



Show/Hide Solution

22...♝d8! Preparing to exchange the passive bishop, gaining control over the d4-square. At the same time Black defends the queen and thus prepares ...b5xc4. **23.cxb5 axb5 24.♝d3 ♜b6=** 24...b4?! 25.♗b3 ♜b6 26.♗xb4± was the game.

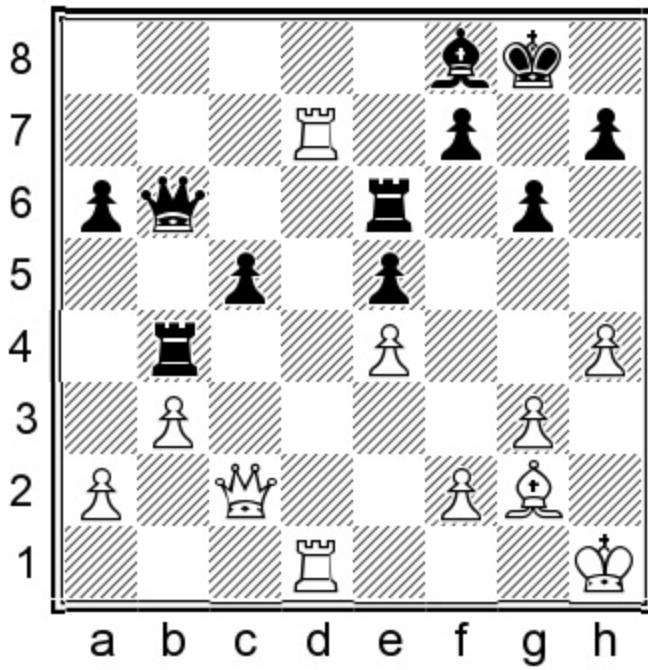
710. Mamedyarov – Anand, Baku (Rapid) 2009



Show/Hide Solution

17.d5! Otherwise White is simply worse with a weak pawn on e3, in addition to Black's bishop pair.
17...exd5 18.♝xd5 No more bishop pair. **18...♝xd5 19.♝fd1=** Both players have weak pawns, and the knight on d5 is not enough to claim an advantage. 19.♝cd1 was Mamedyarov's choice.

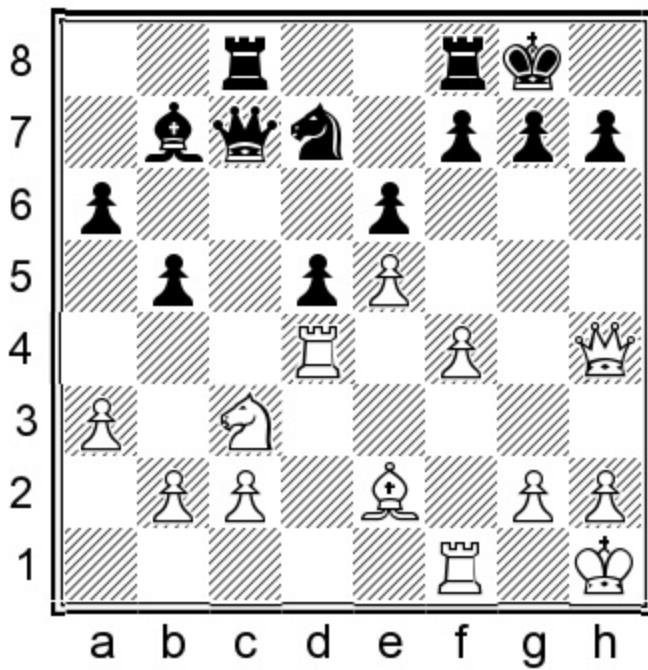
711. Khalifman – Topalov, Zurich (Rapid) 2009



Show/Hide Solution

27...c4 Exchanging an isolated pawn while activating the bishop and rooks. Black just needs to make sure that White doesn't win on the eighth rank. **28.Qd8** 28.bxc4? Qb2+ **28...Qg7!+**

712. Karjakin – Carlsen, Wijk aan Zee (Rapid) 2010

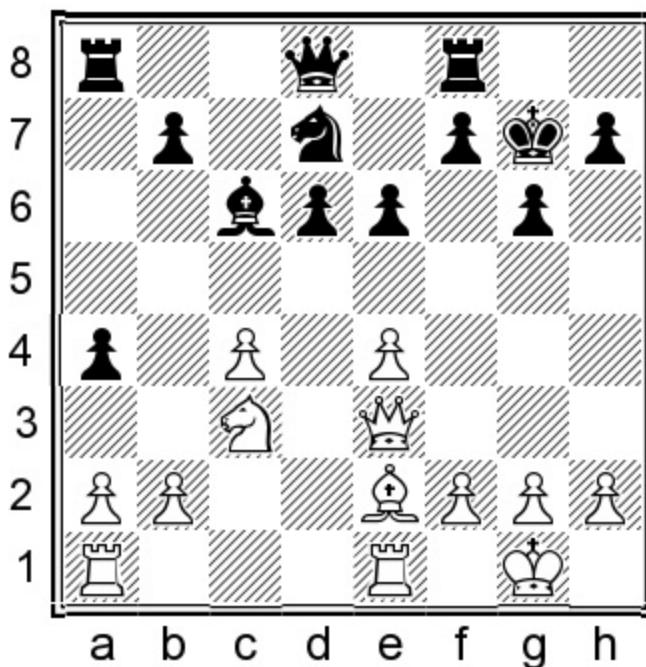


Show/Hide Solution

18...f6! Attacking White's centre, which is insufficiently defended. 18...Qb6?! goes immediately for the c4-square, but 19.Qd3 h6? 20.f5 gives White a winning attack. Black needs to address the kingside first. **19.exf6** 19.Qd3?! h6 only increases White's problems with the rook stuck on d4.

19... $\mathbb{Q}xf6\#$ Black has pressure along the f-file and ... $\mathbb{Q}b6-c4$ is coming.

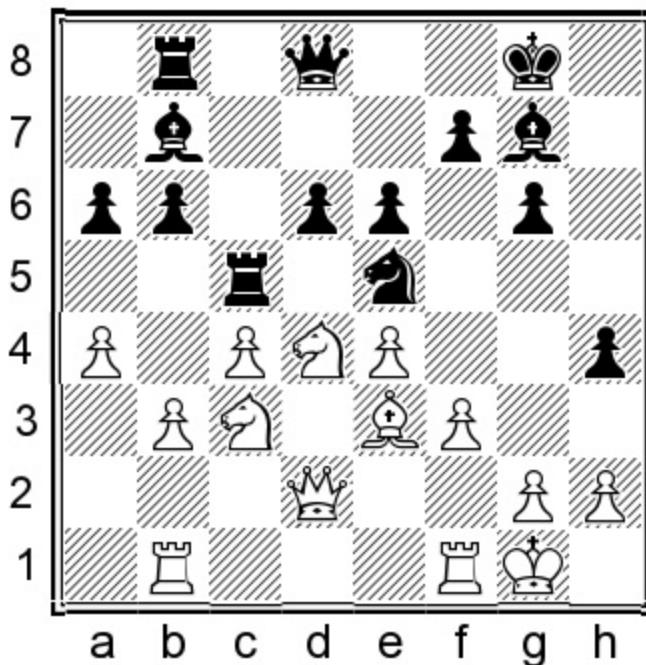
713. Anand – Ivanchuk, Wijk aan Zee 2010



Show/Hide Solution

17... $\mathbb{W}b6$ With the queens exchanged, Black's king would be able to walk to e7, defending the d-pawn. 18. $\mathbb{W}d2$ Black has now activated the queen for free. 18... $\mathbb{Q}fd8$...and the game goes on.

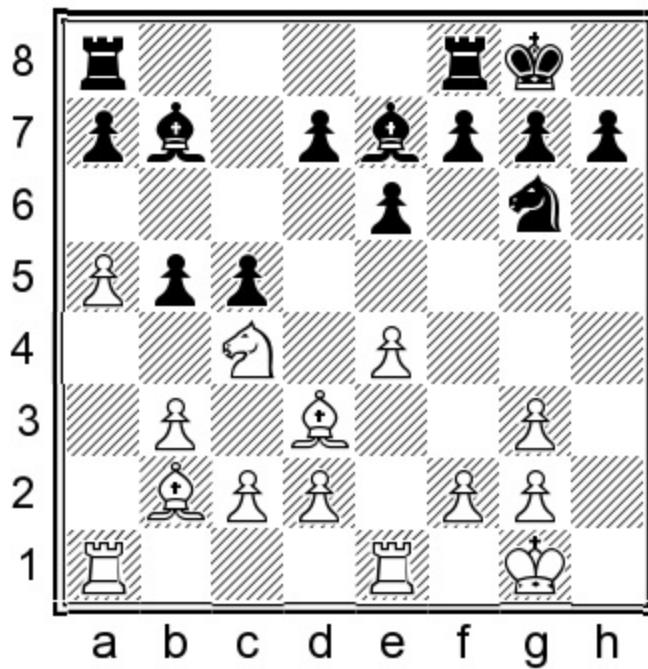
714. Hammer – Carlsen, Kristiansund (Rapid) 2010



Show/Hide Solution

26...h3! White has no light-squared bishop, so it's logical that Carlsen weakens the pawn on f3.
27.♗de2 h×g2 28.♔xg2± Hammer misses his light-squared bishop. At the press conference before the tournament, Carlsen was asked whether he could possibly lose against Hammer. He answered that he was celebrating ten unbeaten years against his friend, rapids included. Well, later in the game Hammer got a decisive king's attack and won – on the light squares! The outcome of chess games is not always logical.

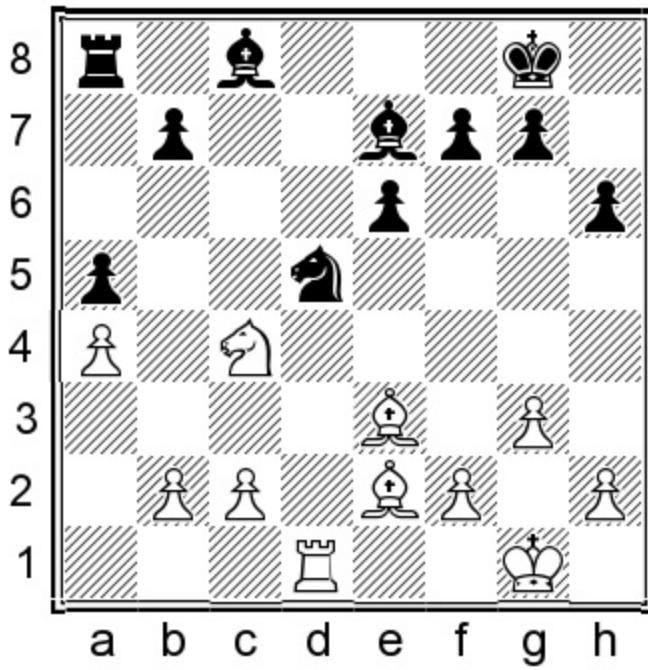
715. Carlsen – Polgar, Kristiansund (Rapid) 2010



Show/Hide Solution

15.a6! ♜c6 15...bxc4 16.axb7 ♜ab8 17.♗xc4 ♜xb7± White has the bishop pair and the a-pawn is chronically weak. 15...♜c8 16.♗e3 Black is forced to weaken the light squares with ...b5-b4, either now or on the next move. The pawn on a6 is an asset, and the knight can move forward instead of retreating: **16.♗a5±**

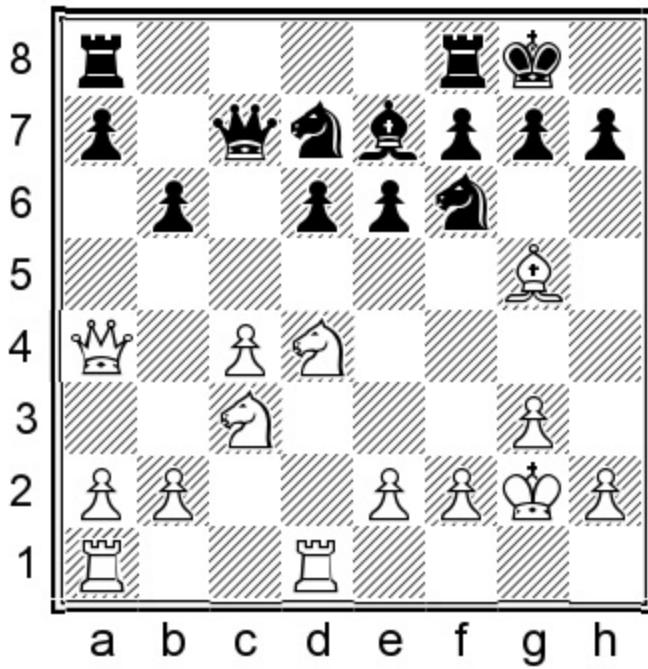
716. Carlsen – Short, London 2010



Show/Hide Solution

20.♗b6! Keeping Black's bishop on c8 is worth more than losing the bishop pair. 20.♖xd5 exd5 21.♗b6 ♜b8 22.♕f4 is not winning material due to: 22...♗c5!= **20...♗xe3** 20...♗xb6 21.♕xb6+– **21.fxe3 ♜b8+–** To develop the bishop, Black needs to go ...e6-e5, which allows the rook to snatch a pawn with ♜d5xa5.

717. Ponomariov – Carlsen, Wijk aan Zee 2011



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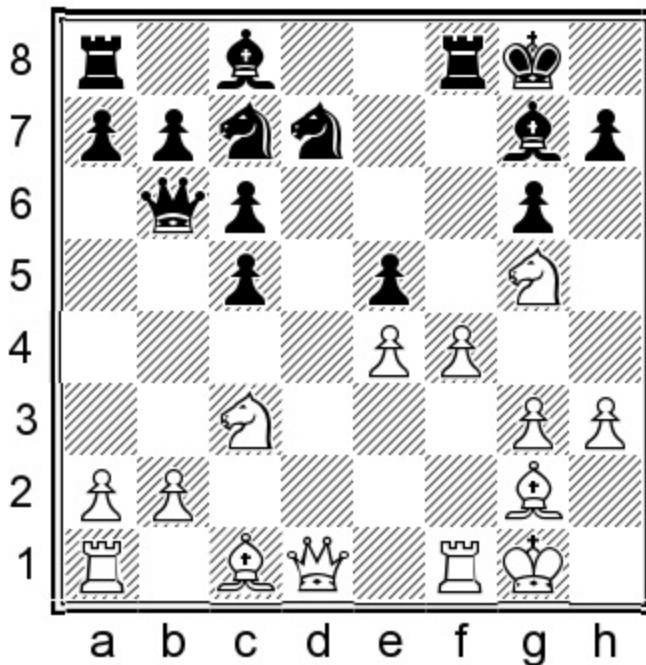
13.♗c6 Exchanging Black's bishop and thus making it realistic to attack the d-pawn. **13...♝d8** The

best defence. 13... $\mathbb{E}fe8$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe7\#$ $\mathbb{E}xe7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}b5\pm$ wins the pawn. **14.b4** Capturing on d8 was good enough for an advantage, but Ponomariov opted to stay with the irritating knight for a few more moves. However, you would not need to decide on this before making the previous move.

Ruslan Ponomariov

"I have no plans to marry. Thanks to the amount of travel and, it must be said, our rather egotistical natures, chess players have a very high divorce rate."

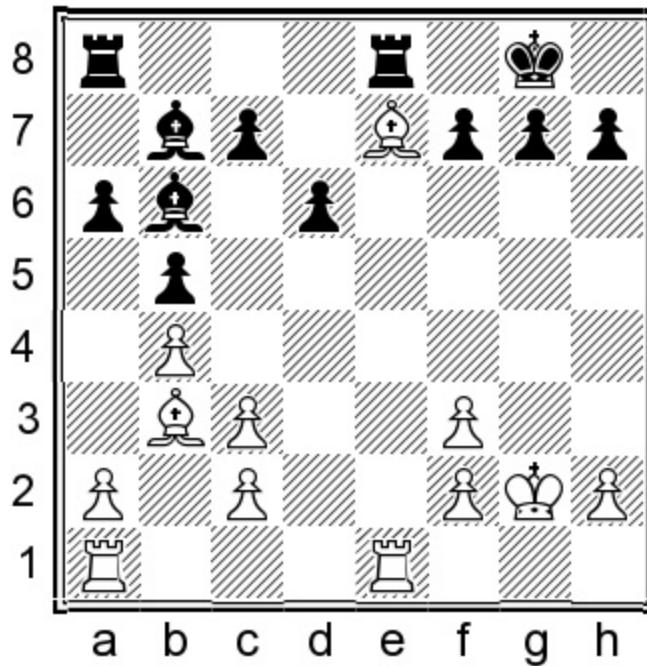
718. Khalifman – Gabrielian, St. Petersburg 2011



Show/Hide Solution

15.f5± White should not allow ...e5xf4, opening the diagonal for the bishop on g7. In addition, White starts to put pressure on Black's kingside.

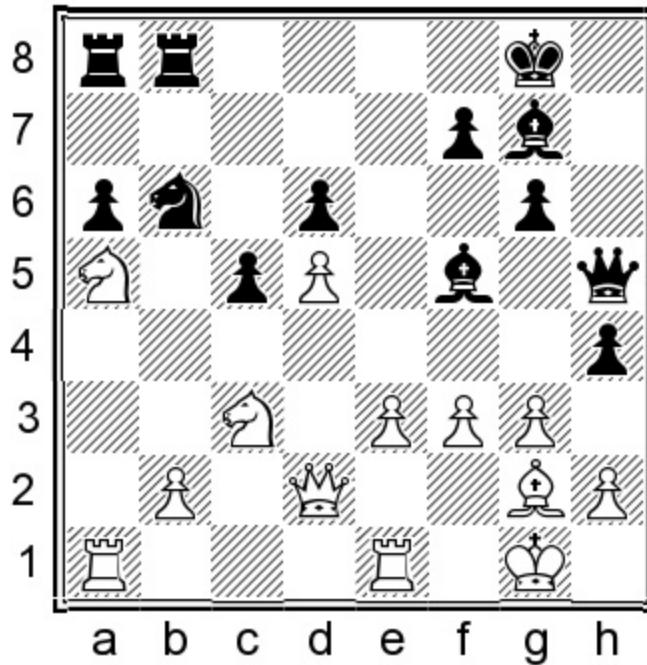
719. Short – Kramnik, London 2011



Show/Hide Solution

19...d5!+— The bishop on b3 is killed forever. It moved five times between b3 and a2 before White resigned on move 44. According to Jacob Aagaard, this is “one of the greatest instructive games of history”.

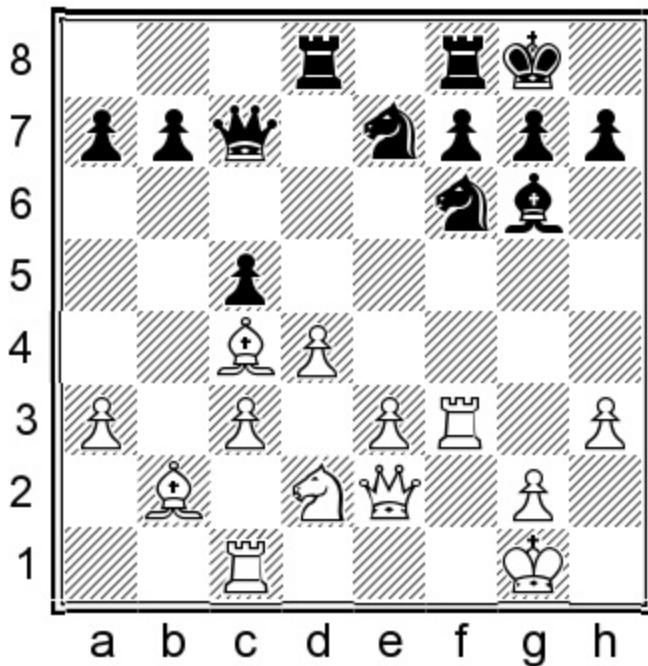
720. Topalov – Karjakin, Zug 2013



Show/Hide Solution

22...h3! 22... $\mathbb{W}h8?$! allowed 23.g4 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 24.h3= in the game. **23. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{E}e8\#$** g3-g4 is not winning a piece, and the pawn on h3 is a potential winner in the middlegame as well as in the endgame.

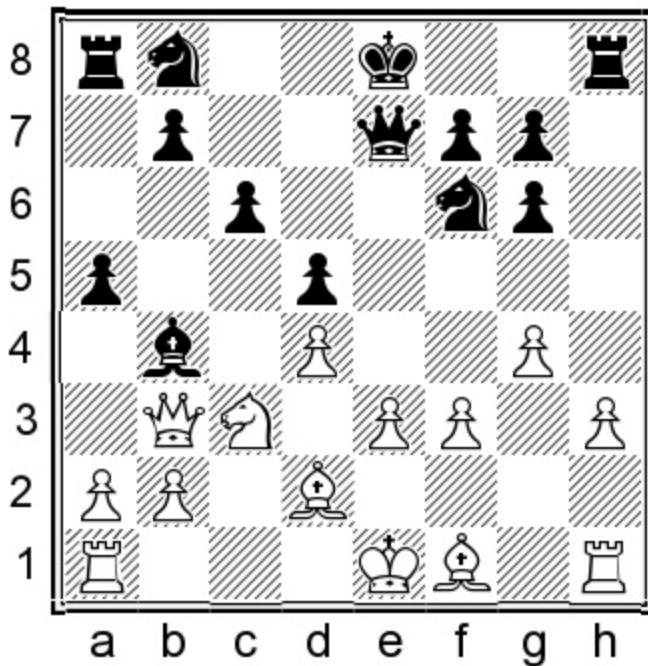
721. Korobov – Topalov, Kyiv (Rapid) 2013



Show/Hide Solution

18...♞f5!? On the way towards e4, via either g3 or d6. White's centre is more fragile than strong. After 18...♝fe8 19.♛f2 it would be too late to jump to f5.

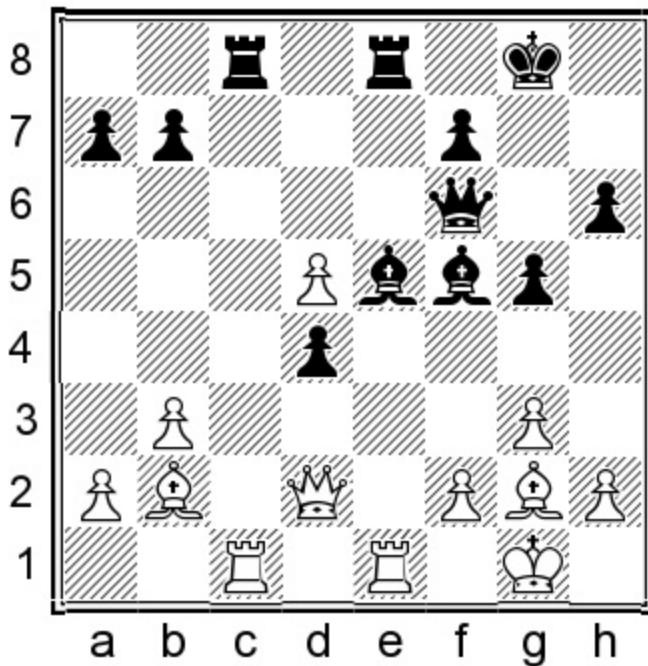
722. Gelfand – Anand, Zurich 2014



Show/Hide Solution

13...a4 14.♝c2 a3?? The last two moves stopped White from kicking the bishop with a2-a3.

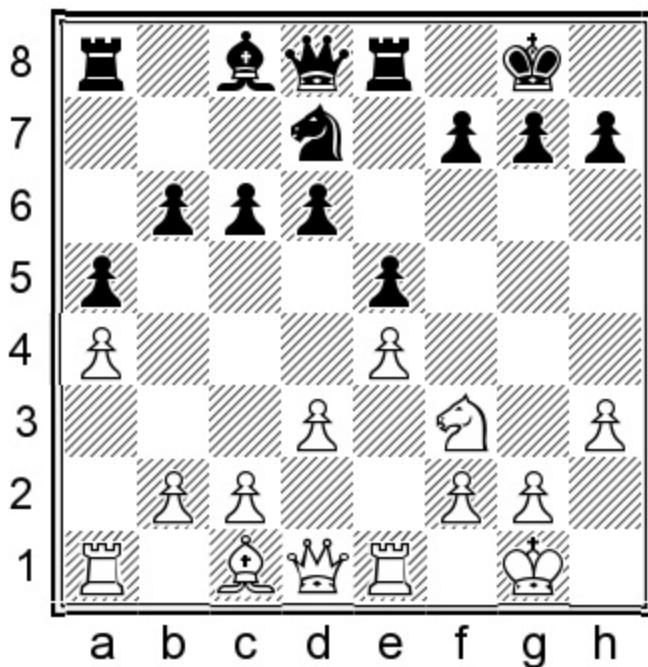
723. Navara – Topalov, Bilbao 2014



Show/Hide Solution

21...♝xc1! Diverting one of White's pieces in order to push ...d4-d3. **22.♝xc1** **22.♛xc1** allows **22...♝c8** followed by invading on c2. **22.♝xc1!?** **d3** **23.h4!** gives White chances to hold after exchanging some pawns and the queens, although Black is still thoroughly in control. **22...d3** **23.♝xe5** **23.♝e1** **♝e7** does not change much. **23...♛xe5†** White will have a hard time controlling the passed pawn.

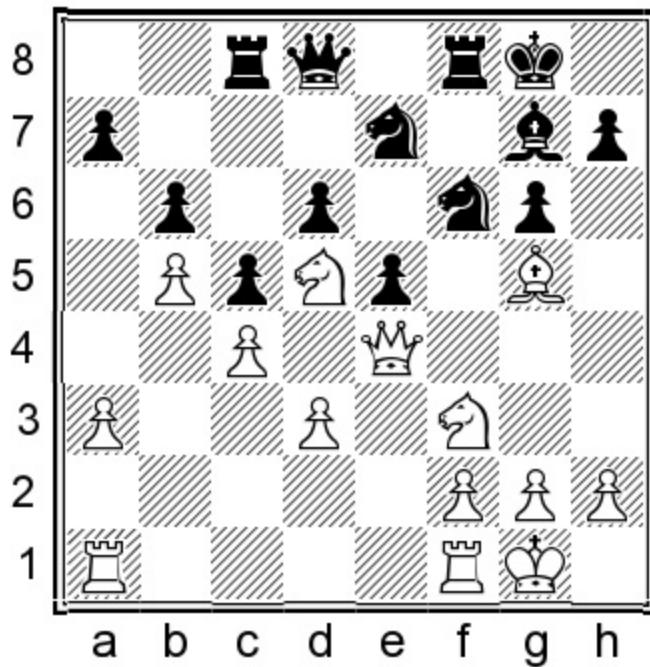
724. Carlsen – Anand, Sochi (2) 2014



Show/Hide Solution

13.d4± Taking over the centre before Black has time to do so. If Black was to move then 13...d5! would be a good choice. **13...♝c7 14.♝a3!?** The rook is developed without moving the bishop from c1. Many squares along the third rank could be interesting.

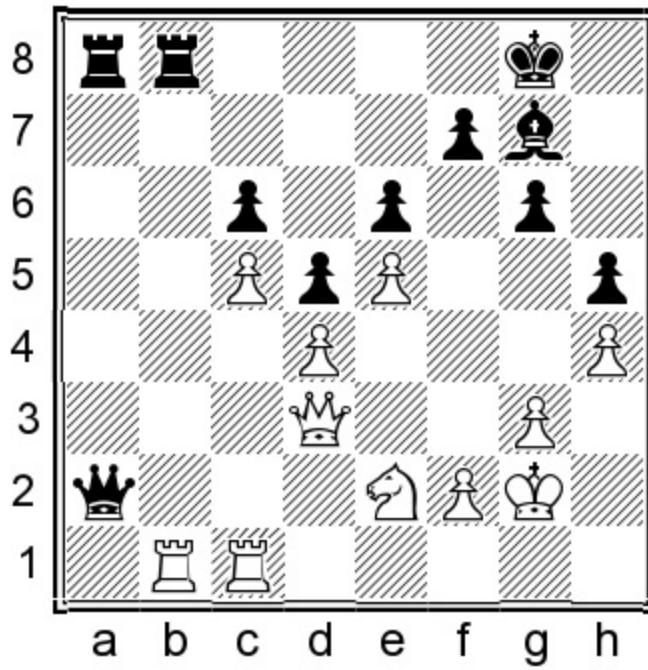
725. Anand – Nakamura, Zurich (Blitz) 2015



Show/Hide Solution

19.♝xf6 Keeping control over the light squares, while leaving Black with a bad dark-squared bishop. **19...♝xf6 20.a4± 20.♝xe7†** is logical, to make sure the knights are exchanged, but it helps Black to fight for the d5-square after: 20...♛xe7 21.a4 ♛f7 22.a5 d5±

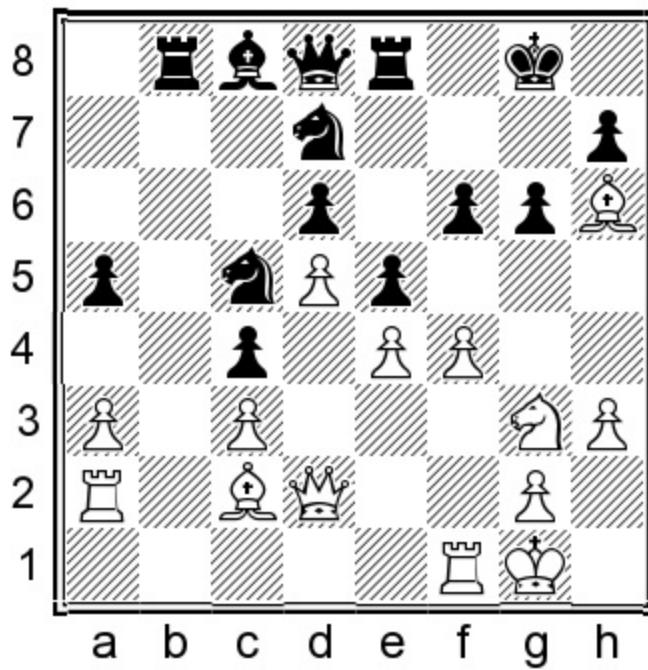
726. Anand – Nakamura, Zurich 2015



Show/Hide Solution

25.♗b6!± Using the outpost to threaten the c6-pawn. An exchange on b6 would give White a strong passed pawn.

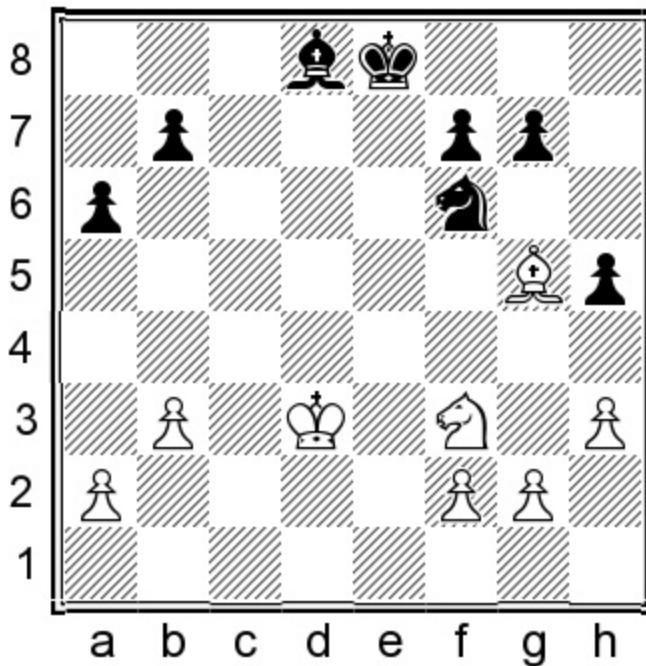
727. Anand – Carlsen, Stavanger 2015



Show/Hide Solution

27.f5± Not giving Black the e5-square for the knight (by ...e5xf4). One idea for White is h3-h4, f5xg6, ♜e3 and h4-h5, finally getting the f5-square. Black can't keep the position closed with 27...g5 because of: **28.h4+–**

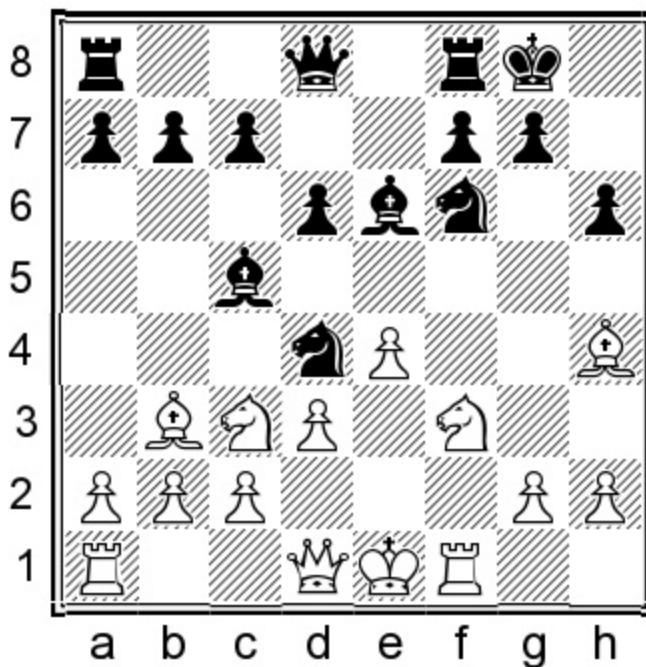
728. Gledura – Anand, Gibraltar 2016



Show/Hide Solution

31.♕xf6! Exchanging the knight makes Black's bishop a bad piece. White can put everything on the light squares. **31...♕xf6 32.♔e4 ♕d8 33.♘e5 ♕e7 34.♘d5 ♕b6?** Black can hold a draw with **34...♕c7!** followed by further precise defence, but that doesn't change the fact that 31.♕xf6 was the correct move. **35.♘d3 ♕d7 36.♘c5†! ♕xc5** Or 36...♕c7 37.♔e4 and White wins with f2-f3 followed by ♘d6. **37.♕xc5** The pawn ending is winning, but that's not for this book.

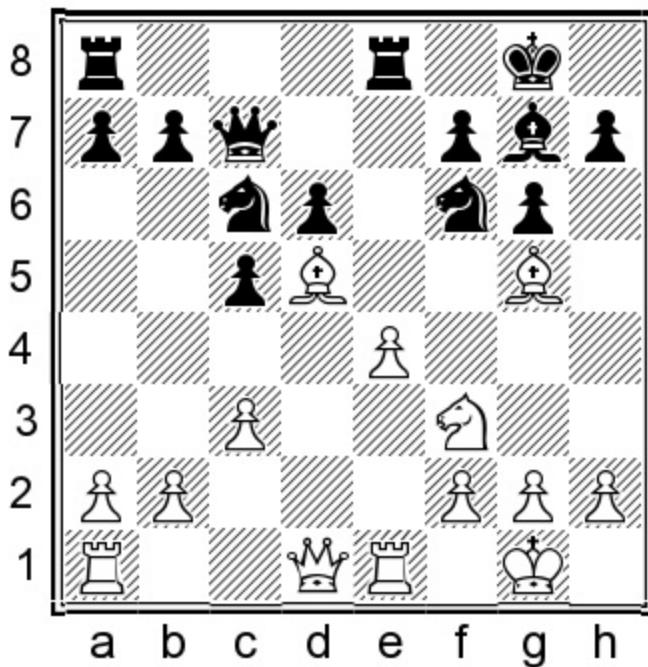
729. Kasparov – Caruana, St. Louis (Blitz) 2016



Show/Hide Solution

11... $\mathbb{Q}g4!$ The pin is problematic for White; for instance, if 12. $\mathbb{W}d2?$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4!+-$ Black wins a pawn.

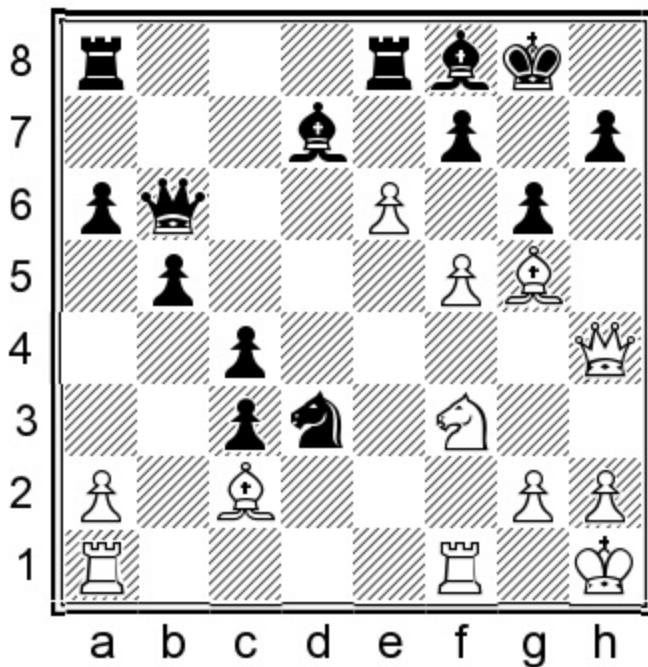
730. Kramnik – Sjugirov, Sochi 2016



Show/Hide Solution

14. $\mathbb{Q}xf6!$ A correct exchange, considering that Black has a weak light square on d5. Kramnik later won with opposite-coloured bishops.

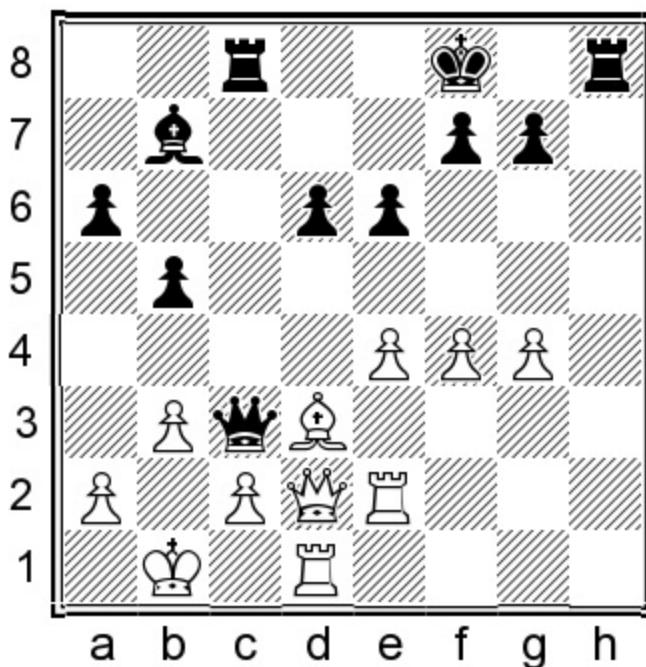
731. Topalov – Mamedyarov, Shamkir 2018



Show/Hide Solution

25...♝xe6! 25...fxe6? gives White a winning attack in several ways, 26.fxg6 for instance; there is no need to calculate more. **26.fxe6 ♜xe6 27.♝ad1 ♜ae8** The best choice, as Black does not need all the pawns. **28.♝xd3 cxd3 29.♝xd3 b4†** Black's three healthy pawns, supported by well-coordinated forces, are more than a match for White's extra knight. The game move 29...♝e4?! allowed 30.♝f4! threatening both ♜xc3 and ♜g5.

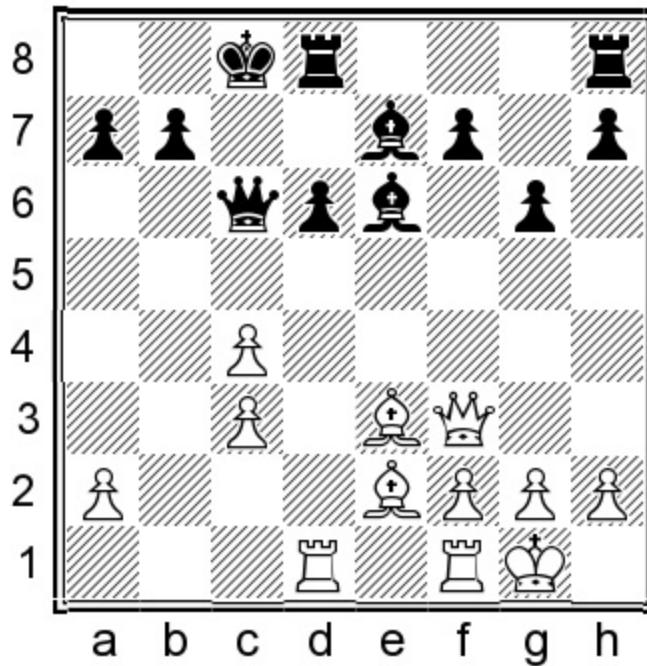
732. Carlsen – Wojtaszek, Shamkir 2018



Show/Hide Solution

25.♛e3!± With Black's weak king, White should keep the queens on the board. The game did not last long: **25...♜c5?!** 25...♛c5 or 25...♜c7 would have offered more resistance. **26.e5! dx5 27.fxe5 ♜h1?** **28.♝xh1 ♜xh1 29.♝h2 ♜xe5 30.♝h8† ♔e7 31.♛a7† 1–0**

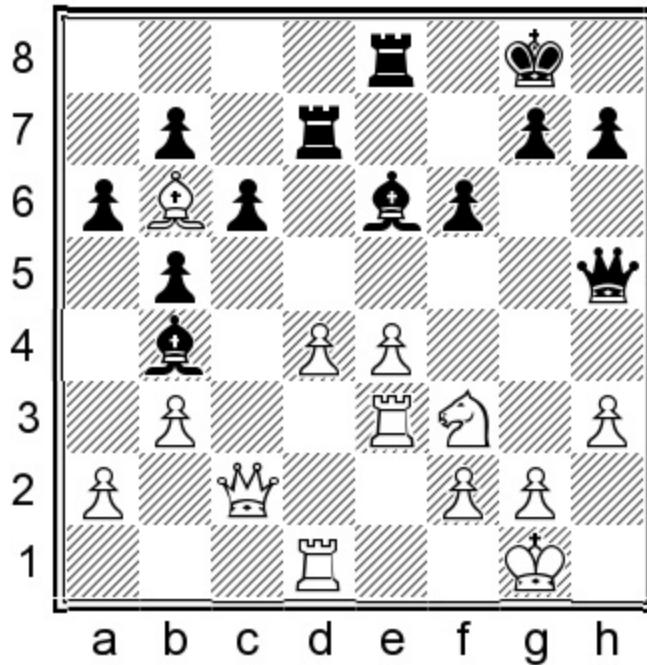
733. Carlsen – Giri, St. Petersburg (Blitz) 2018



Show/Hide Solution

18. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ With Black having the weaker king, White should keep the queens on the board. 18. $\mathbb{Q}g3?!$ gives Black a chance to activate the queen with ... $\mathbb{Q}e4$. Winning a pawn with 18. $\mathbb{Q}xc6\#$ $bxc6$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ is fruitless. Black has three weak pawns to put pressure on after 19... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 18... $b6$ 19. $a4! \rightarrow$

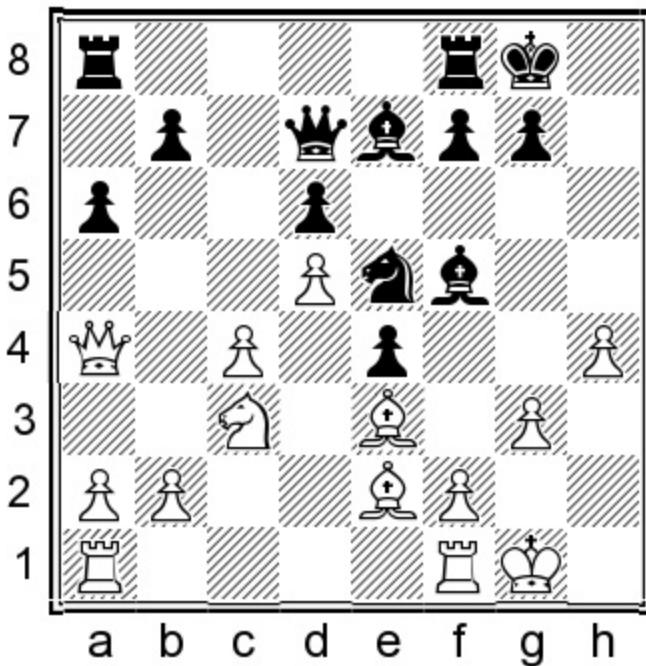
734. Anand – Giri, Shamkir 2019



Show/Hide Solution

23. $\mathbb{N}e1\pm$ Redirecting the knight to d3, where it controls the c5-square and leaves the f-pawn free to advance with f2-f4.

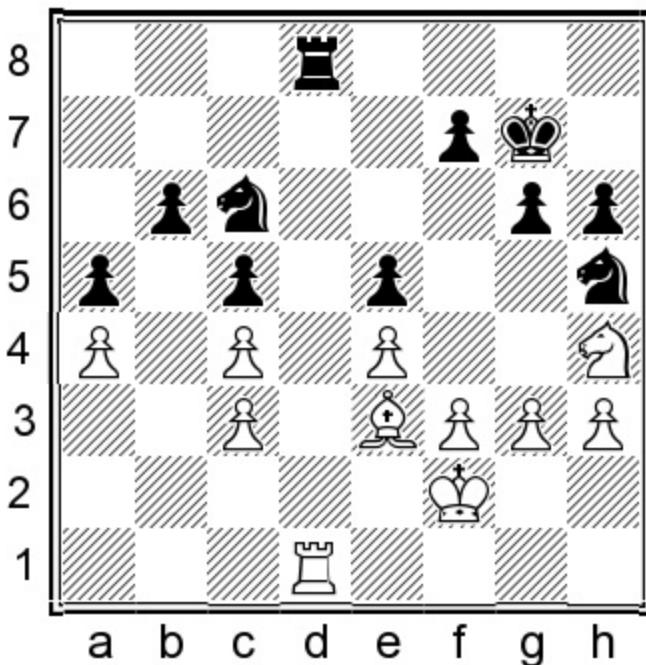
735. Karjakin – Carlsen, Shamkir 2019



Show/Hide Solution

23... $\mathbb{W}c8! \mathbb{Q}$ Keeping the queens, as all Black's minor pieces point towards the kingside. The plan is ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ to gain control over the f3-square. Karjakin was soon in deep trouble. He should have given back the pawn with **24. $\mathbb{W}d1 \mathbb{Q}xc4$** , with approximate equality.

736. Carlsen – So, St. Louis 2019



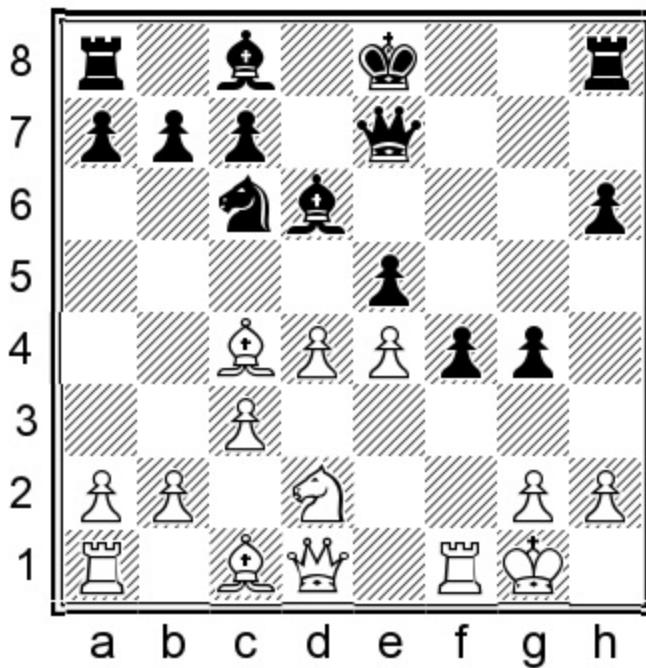
Show/Hide Solution

27. $\mathbb{E}b1!$ The b6-pawn is a great weakness, but not if White exchanges rooks. **27... $\mathbb{E}b8$ 28. $\mathcal{Q}g2\pm$** The knight is heading towards d5.

Magnus Carlsen

"Not winning a tournament is not an option for me, unless it's no longer theoretically possible – then of course winning becomes impossible. But up to that point, not winning is just not an option."

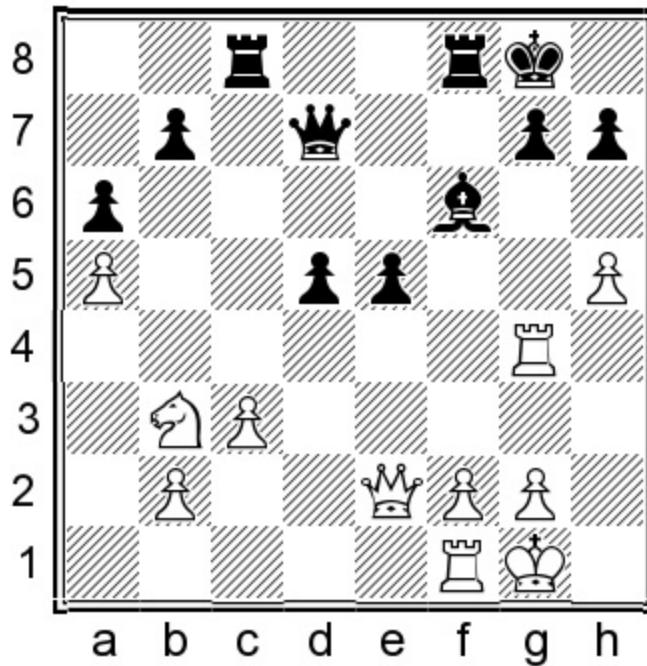
737. Anand – Caruana, Bucharest (Rapid) 2019



Show/Hide Solution

15. $\mathbb{Q}d5\pm$ Against a flank attack, it's logical to counter in the centre. Anand's move prepares $\mathcal{Q}c4$ to put pressure on the e5-pawn. In the game, White won the pawn on f4 six moves later. However, there is no need to calculate further at this stage.

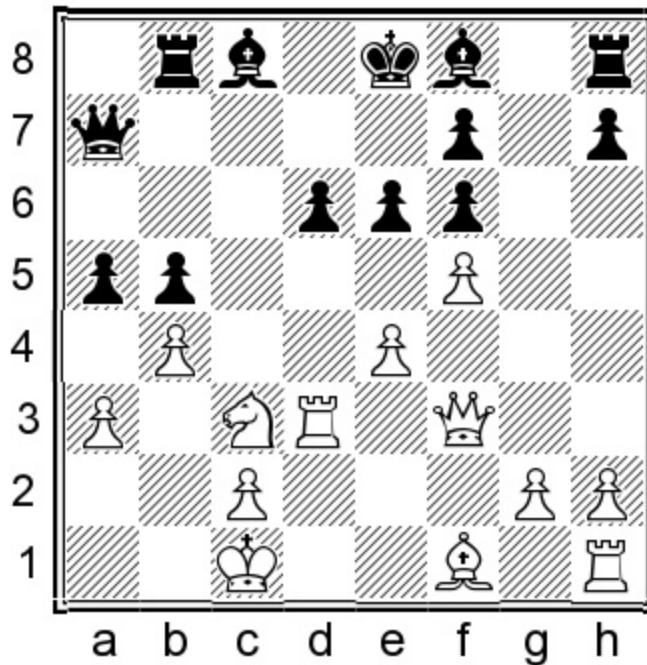
738. Carlsen – Aronian, London 2019



Show/Hide Solution

22.h6± Weakening the kingside, whether Black allows h6xg7 or plays ...g7-g6.

739. Anand – Kasparov, Zagreb (Blitz) 2021



Show/Hide Solution

16.♘a2!± Keeping the a-file closed is necessary to halt Black's attack. 16.bxa5? allows: 16...b4†; 16.♘b1? is also bad in view of: 16...axb4 17.axb4 ♜a1†



Previously there was a lot of respect for the thinking and creativity of a grandmaster. Now you see spectators saying that the machine took three seconds to come up with a move but the player took half an hour, negating all their creative effort. – Veselin Topalov

Chapter 5

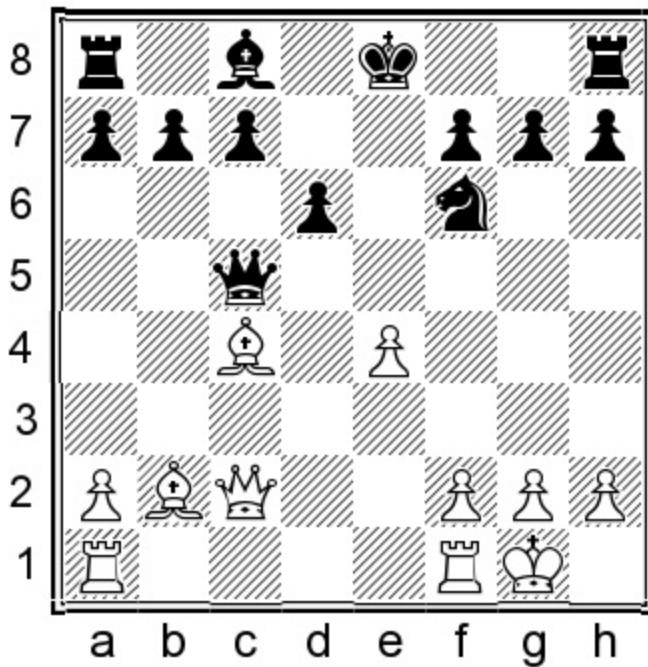
Hard Challenge Exercises



Blitz is intuition and fast calculation. A lot of emotion, and spectators love it. But! There's no depth or possibility to show the beauty of chess as an art... in chess, apart from the result of the game we also value the thought itself and the psychological struggle. That's absent in blitz. – Anatoly Karpov

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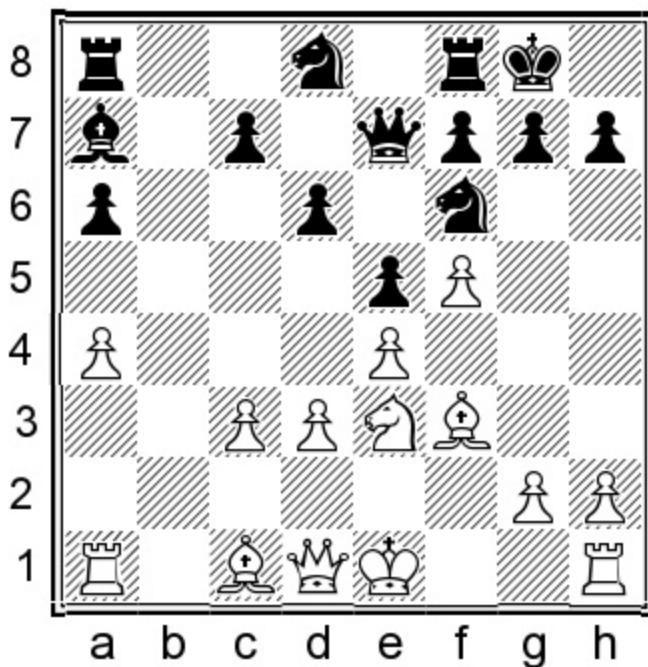
740. Steinitz – Strauss, Vienna 1860



Show/Hide Solution

15.e5! Opening the position before Black has castled. **15...d5** **15...dxe5??** **16.Qxf7†** is a tactical shot. **16.exd6 0-0** Black is forced to defend g7, which means that White has regained one of the sacrificed pawns. Black opted to give up the g7-pawn with **16...cxd6?** in the game, but may have regretted it after his king was chased around the board and eventually mated. **17.Wb3 c6 18.Wg3 f6 19.Qac1±** The strong pawn on d6 and the active bishops more than compensate for Black's extra pawn.

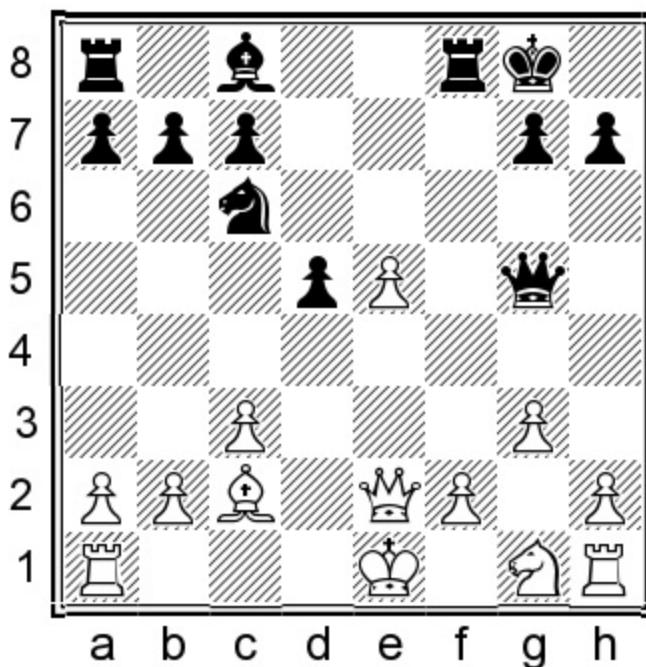
741. Steinitz – Robey, London 1862



Show/Hide Solution

15...d5!∞ Striking in the centre before White has time for g2-g4-g5. 15... $\mathbb{B}b8$ was played in the game, when 16.g4! would have been best. **16. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$** 16.exd5? e4+ opens things up with White's king in the centre. 16.g4 can be met in two ways: 16...d4 17.cxd4 $\mathbb{W}b4\uparrow$ with unclear counterplay; or 16...dxe4 17.dxe4 $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 18.g5 $\mathbb{E}fd8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ and Black is better developed, even though 20.f6!? ∞ looks scary. **16... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$** **17.exd5 $\mathbb{Q}b7\infty$**

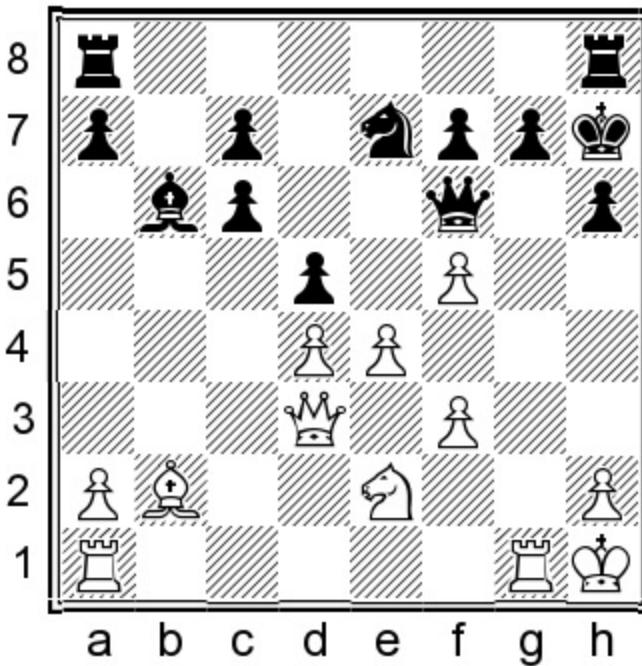
742. Blackburne – Steinitz, London (4) 1862



Show/Hide Solution

13... $\mathbb{Q}g4!$ Developing fast to make use of White's uncastled king. **14. $\mathbb{W}e3$** 14.f3 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 15.fxg4 $\mathbb{B}ae8-$ + White will lose the queen, to begin with. **14... $\mathbb{W}h5$** 14... $\mathbb{W}xe3\uparrow$ is also winning. **15.f4 $\mathbb{Q}xe5!$ -+** The game lasted only four more moves: **16.fxe5 $\mathbb{B}ae8$** **17. $\mathbb{Q}xh7\uparrow$ $\mathbb{Q}xh7$** **18. $\mathbb{W}d4$ $\mathbb{W}g5$** **19.h4 $\mathbb{B}xe5\uparrow$** 0–1

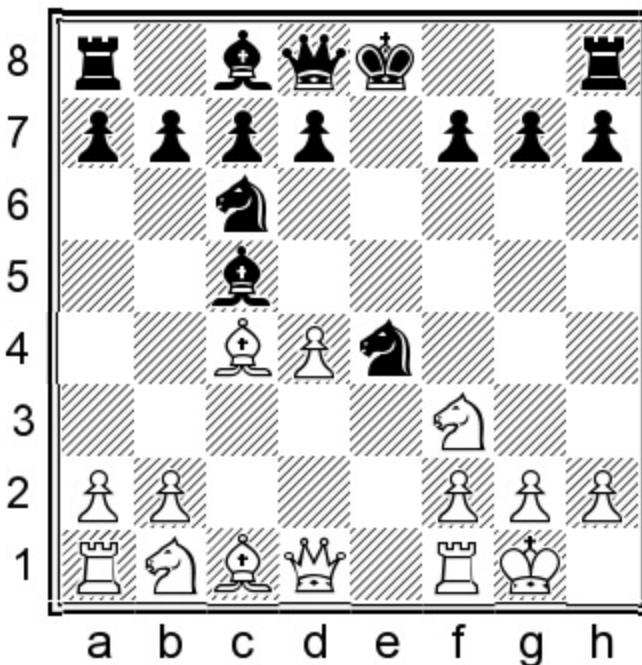
743. Blackburne – Steinitz, London (Casual) 1863



Show/Hide Solution

22...c5! Freeing the bishop on b6 before it's too late. Steinitz played 22... $\mathbb{Q}ad8?$ but would have had great problems after 23. $\mathbb{W}c2!+-$ when Black's extra pawn is of no help at all. 22...g6? 23.a4 a5 24. $\mathbb{Q}a3!+-$ is also great for White. **23. $\mathbb{B}g4$** 23.dxc5 $\mathbb{W}xb2$ 24.cxb6 axb6 $\bar{=}$ Black is still a pawn up and threatens to activate the rook on the a-file. 23. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ threatens $\mathbb{Q}h5$ with a fork, but 23... $\mathbb{B}hg8\bar{=}$ defends. **23... $\mathbb{B}hg8$** **24. $\mathbb{Q}g3$** cxd4 **25. $\mathbb{B}g1$** g5 ∞

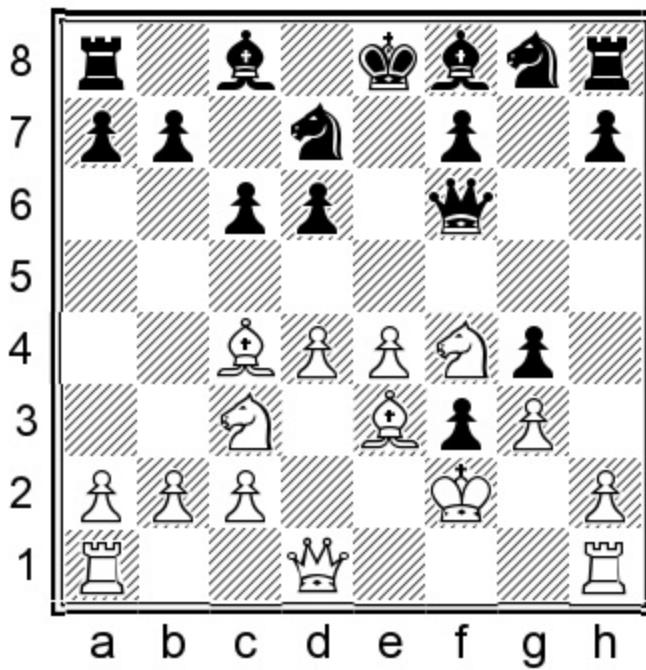
744. De Vere – Steinitz, London 1865



Show/Hide Solution

7...d5! 7... $\mathbb{Q}e7$? allowed 8.d5± in the game. 8.dxc5 dxc4 Black is not losing a piece on the e-file: 9. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $\mathbb{W}e7$ and the knight can move if needed.

745. Steinitz – Anderssen, London (2) 1866



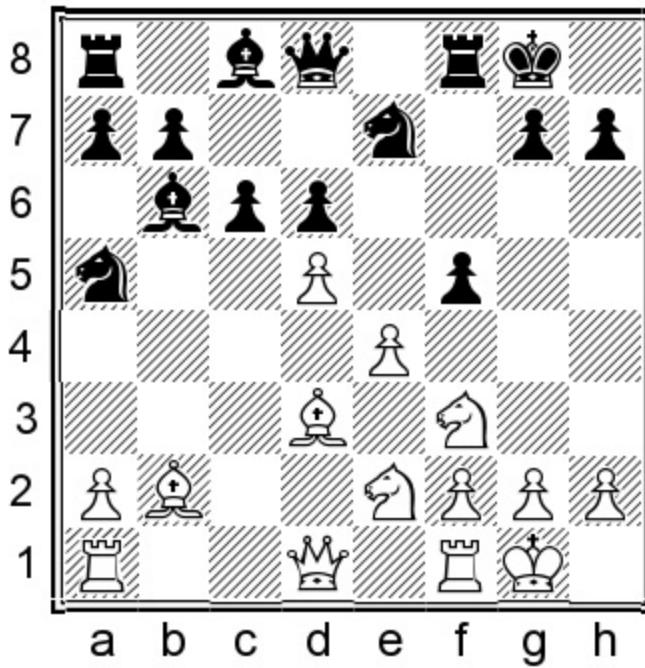
Show/Hide Solution

16.e5!! Sacrificing a second pawn to exploit Black's lagging development. 16...dxe5 16... $\mathbb{W}e7$? was the game, when 17. $\mathbb{R}e1$ is most direct – rook against queen. 16... $\mathbb{W}g7$! was the best chance to survive, although Black's position is clearly not pleasant. 17.dxe5 17. $\mathbb{Q}e4$? $\mathbb{W}f5$!威胁 both knights and 18. $\mathbb{W}d3$? exf4! 19. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ † $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xf5$ fxe3†–+ gives Black too many pieces for the queen. 17... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 19. $\mathbb{W}e1$!– In time before Black has castled long. 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$? $\mathbb{Q}c5$ †!–+ would spoil things.

William Steinitz

"Only the player with the initiative has the right to attack."

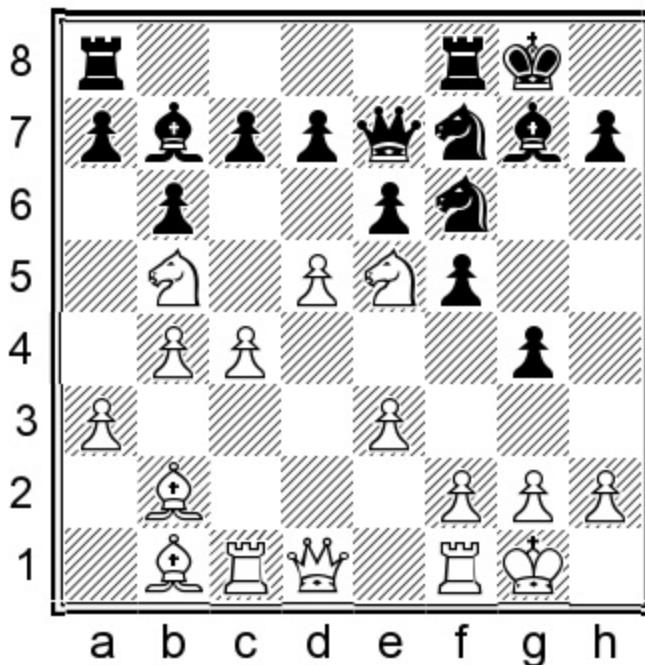
746. Anderssen – Steinitz, London (1) 1866



Show/Hide Solution

14. $\mathbb{Q}g3!$ To stop Black from playing ...fxe4 followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$. Anderssen's 14. $\mathbb{B}c1$ allowed:
 14...fxe4 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5!=$; 14. $\mathbb{W}c2$ also fails to stop Black's idea: 14...fxe4 15. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ $\mathbb{Q}f5=$ **14...fxe4**
15. $\mathbb{Q}xe4+-$ The knight on g3 stops Black from exchanging the active bishop on e4. **15... $\mathbb{Q}f5?$** doesn't work. 15... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xh7\#$ wins a pawn. **16. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 17. $\mathbb{W}d3$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}g5!$** and Black soon loses material.

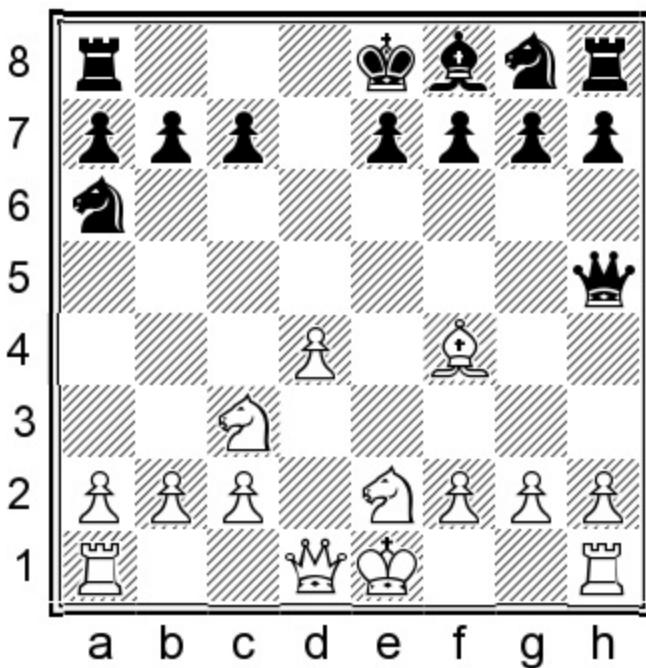
747. De Vere – Steinitz, Paris 1867



Show/Hide Solution

15...Qe8! Defending c7 while keeping everything else protected. 15...Qxe5 16.Qxe5 d6± gives Black problems with the f5-pawn, since the d-pawn no longer defends e6. 15...c6? should also be avoided due to: 16.d6± **16.Qd3 Qxb2** Steinitz played 16...e5 but he should have exchanged bishops, as it wins time and forces White's knight to retreat. **17.Qxb2 Qg5†** Black has good attacking chances.

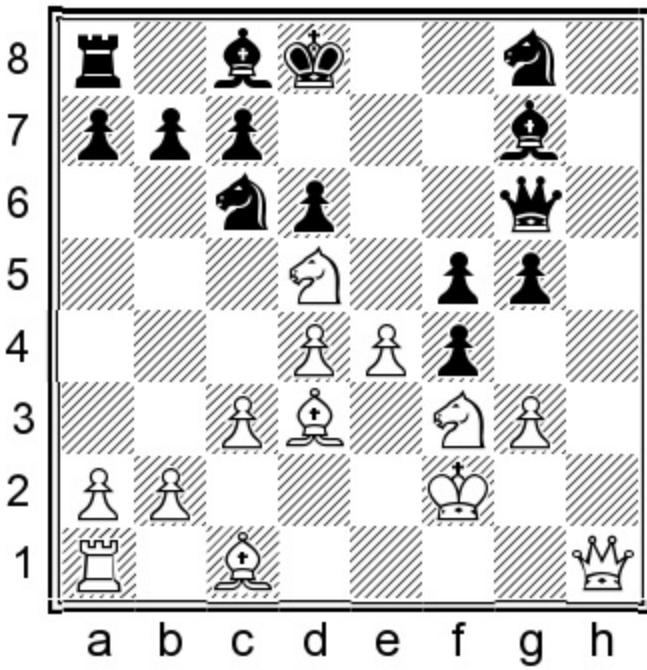
748. Steinitz – Hamel, Dundee 1867



Show/Hide Solution

8.d5! Making it difficult for Black to move the c- and e-pawns, while preparing $\mathbb{W}d4-a4\ddagger$. **8...0-0-0** **9.Wd4!** There is no check on a4, but the queen move is still strong, as Black can't defend the a7-pawn in a good way. For example: **9...Qb8?** **9...e5!?** is the best chance to prolong the game, sacrificing a pawn to get the queens off. **10.Qb5 b6 11.Wa4 Qb7 12.Qxc7!+–** It's no surprise that White has a tactical blow, but you didn't need to foresee it when deciding on 8.d5.

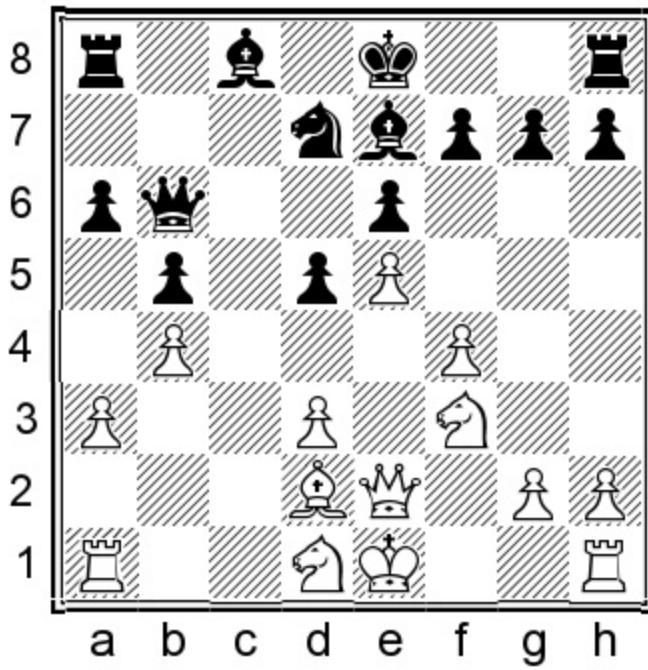
749. Steinitz – Dufresne, Great Britain (Simul) 1874



Show/Hide Solution

16. $\mathbb{Q}xg5!$ Sacrificing a piece to get closer to Black's king. There is no other good way to cope with Black's threats against e4 and g3. 16.gxf4 runs into 16...fxe4 17. $\mathbb{Q}c2 \mathbb{W}e6\#$ when Black wins a piece anyway. (17... $\mathbb{Q}e6\#$ is also good.) **16... $\mathbb{W}xg5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xf4 \mathbb{W}g6$** Following the previous sacrifice, the positional part of this exercise is to evaluate the current position. White is a piece down but the black king is unsafe, and the a8-rook will take quite some time to get into the game. White has easy moves available to develop the initiative. Calculation does not give a clear verdict, but if you've seen similar positions you can use your intuition. **18. $\mathbb{W}h4\#$ $\mathbb{Q}ce7$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}g5 \mathbb{W}f7$** White needs to play actively to develop the attack. The best way is to invite the rook to the party with: **20. $\mathbb{Q}xe7 \mathbb{Q}xe7$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}f1! \pm$**

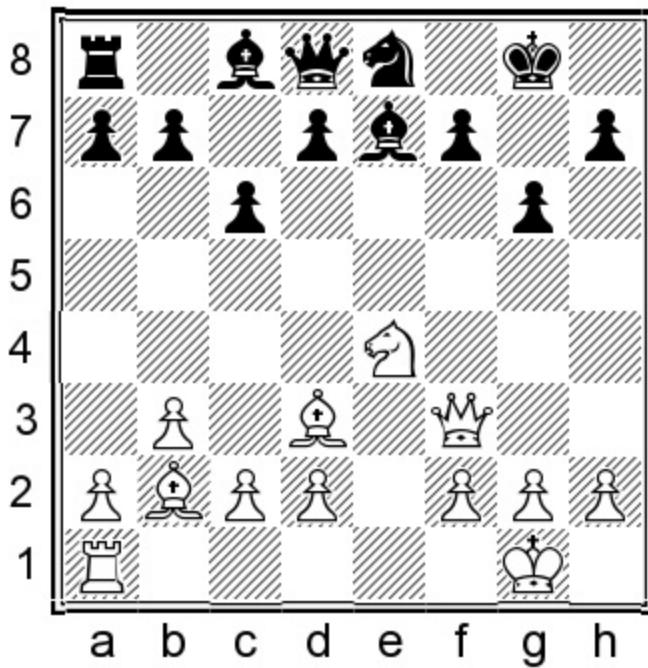
750. Steinitz – Sellman, Baltimore 1885



Show/Hide Solution

14...d4! Black gives a pawn to open the b7-h1 diagonal, and stops White from easily controlling the dark squares. There are other less exact ways to play the same kind of pawn sacrifice. 14...f5? is described by Kasparov as: “Essentially the decisive positional mistake: Black leaves himself without counterplay.” One possible line is: **15.♘f2 ♜b7 16.0-0 0-0 17.♗xd4 ♜fd8∞**

751. Steinitz – Zukertort, USA (6) 1886

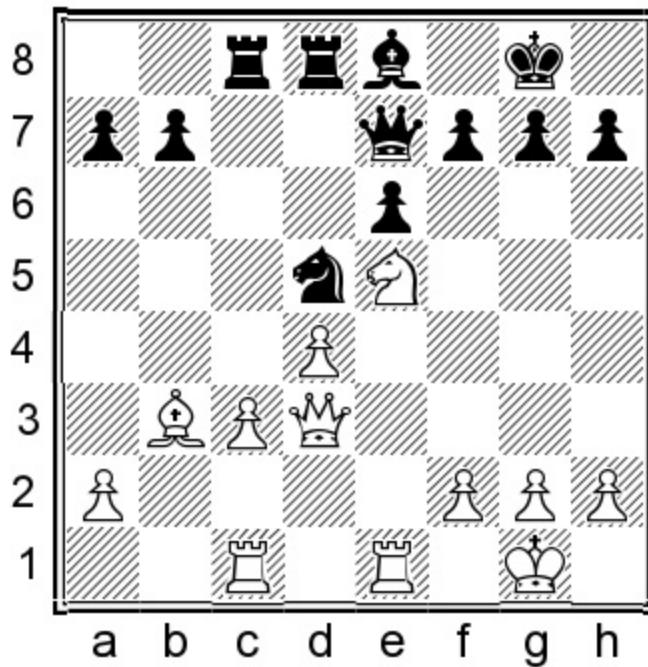


Show/Hide Solution

16.♗e3! Moving to d4 to provoke another weakness. **16...d5 16...♗b6 17.♕f6†!+–; 16...♝f8** is not

what Black wants to play, since the bishop leaves the protection of the g5-square. One nice and logical line continues: 17.♗e1 d5 18.♗g5 ♕d7 19.♕d4 f6? (19...♗g7±) 20.♗xh7! ♖xh7 21.♕h4+ ♖h6 22.g4!+– 17.♕d4 f6 18.♗g3±

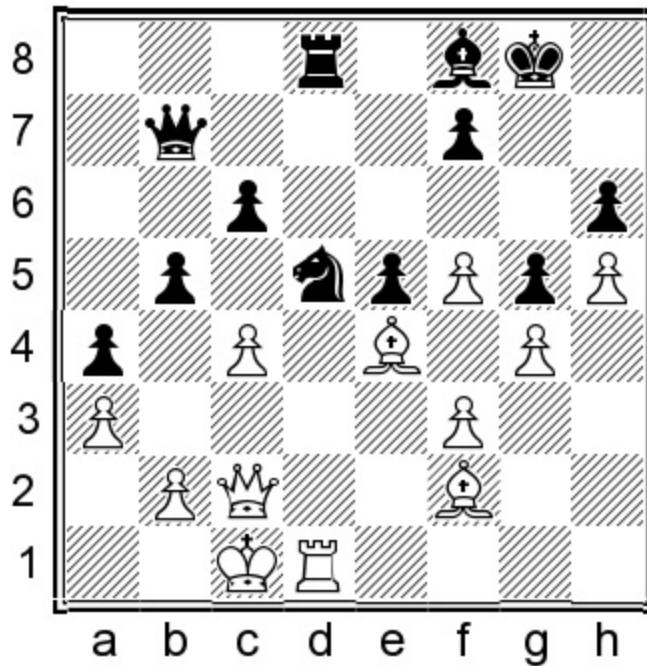
752. Zukertort – Steinitz, USA (9) 1886



Show/Hide Solution

21.c4 Chasing away the centralized knight and using the advantage of a hanging pawn couple: covering squares. Zukertort played 21.♗xd5? ♕xd5 22.c4† probably with the idea that the knight was more active than Black's bishop. However, with hanging pawns White wants to keep as many minor pieces on the board as possible. **21...♗f6** The position is easier to play with White, but Black should be okay. 21...♗f4 is about the same.

753. Steinitz – Zukertort, USA (16) 1886

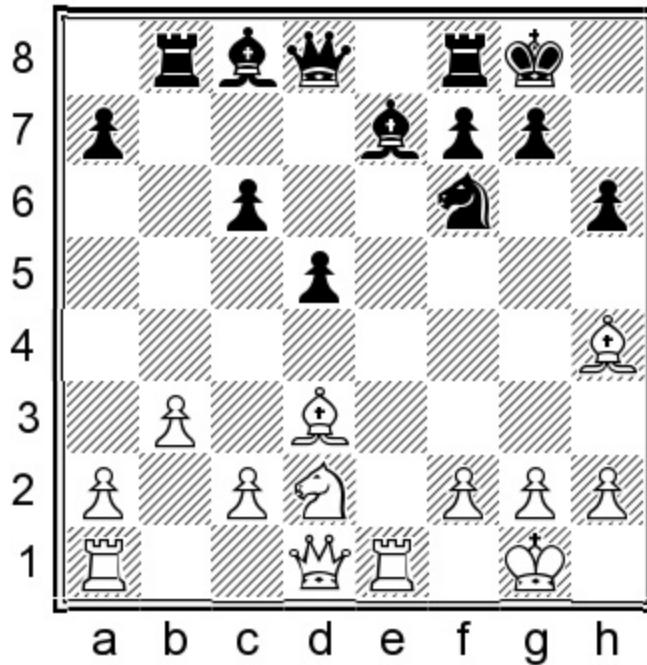


Show/Hide Solution

32...♝c8!∞ Keeping the knight on d5. It's hard for White to make cxd5 a threat. The queen and the king need to move, and the latter doesn't want to be on the b-file.

The game continued 32...bxc4 33.♛xc4 ♜b8 34.♝d2± and Black had no active follow-up.

754. Gorham & Lester – Steinitz, Correspondence 1888

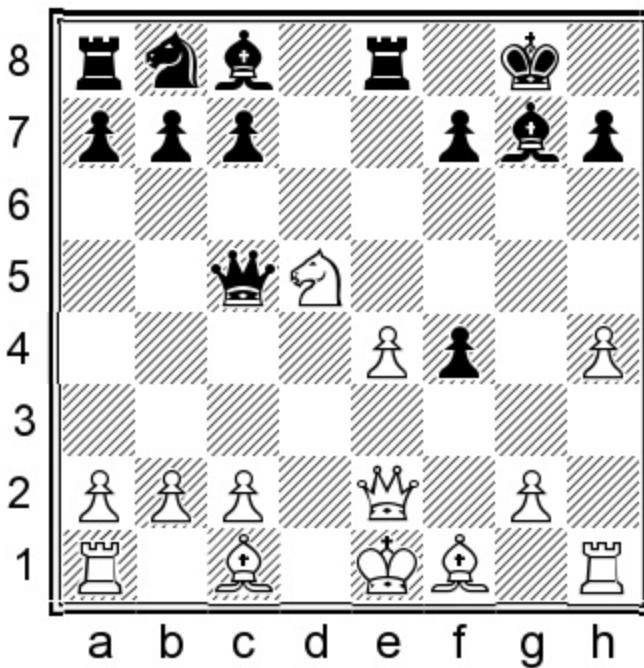


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13...♝b4! Disturbing White with a pin. **14.♝e2** **14.c4?** dxc4 and Black wins a piece. **14.♝e3** is a better try, to meet **14...♝c3** with a simplifying check on h7. (Instead, **14...♝c5!** prepares to put the bishop on

d4.) 14... $\mathbb{Q}c3\#$ White's c-pawn will have a hard time moving. (In the game, Black eventually carried out ...c6-c5-c4.)

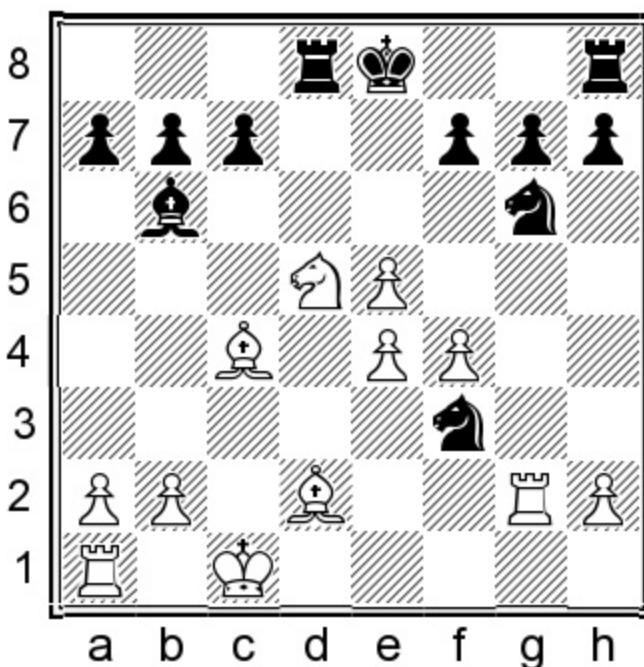
755. Steinitz – Gorham & Lester, Correspondence 1888



Show/Hide Solution

14. $\mathbb{Q}xf4!$! White needs to develop! The pawn on b2 is less important. Steinitz played the materialistic 14. $\mathbb{Q}xf4?$ and was in trouble after: 14... $\mathbb{Q}f5\#$ 14... $\mathbb{Q}xb2$ 15. $\mathbb{B}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}g7\infty$ After 15... $\mathbb{Q}c3\#$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ $\mathbb{W}xc3\#$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}f2\pm$ Black misses the dark-squared bishop.

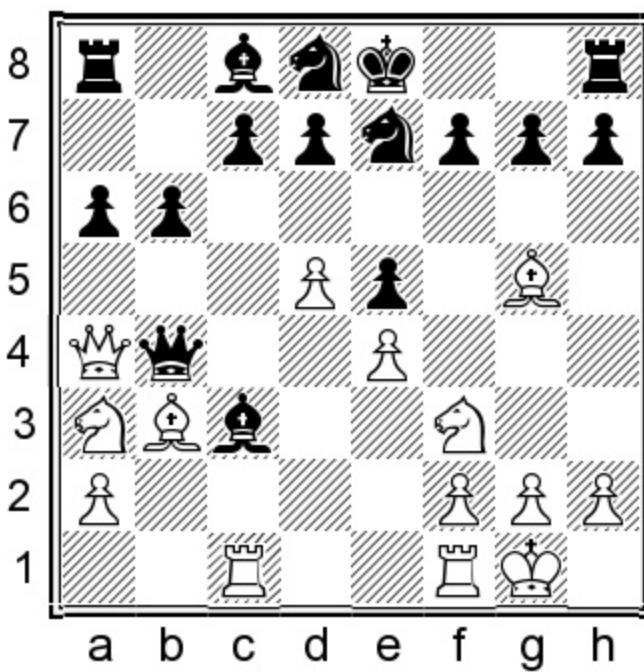
756. Steinitz – Chigorin, Havana (6) 1889



Show/Hide Solution

16.♗c3! Keeping the bishop. White will be in time to defend the f4-pawn. 16.♗xb6 allowed 16...♝xd2 17.♝xd2 axb6± when the f4-pawn will fall. **16...c6** 16...♝xf4 tries to trick White. There are many decent replies, but the strongest is: 17.♝g3!! ♜xd5 18.exd5 ♜d4 19.♝d2± The bishop pair and centre are more important than Black's extra pawn. **17.♗xb6 axb6 18.♝f2±**

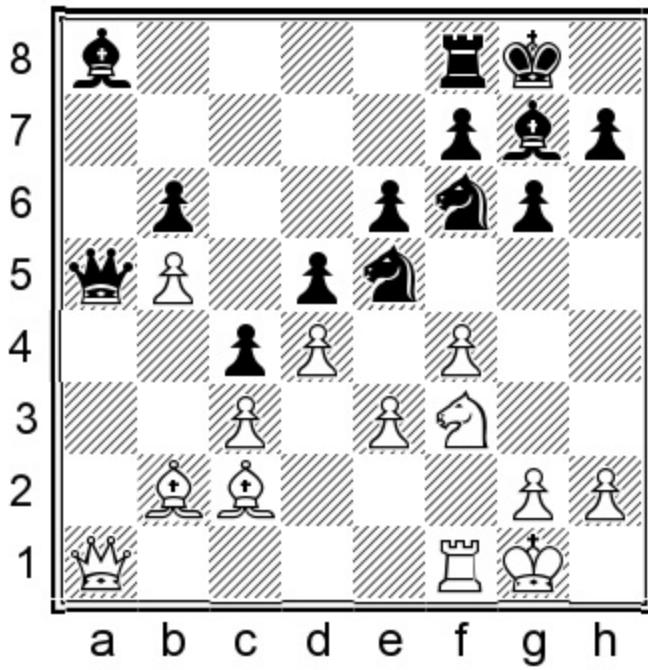
757. Chigorin – Steinitz, Havana (9) 1889



Show/Hide Solution

14.♝xc3! In the game, there followed 14.♝b5?? ♜xb5–+ and the forced queen exchange was certainly not in White's favour. 14.♝xb4?? ♜xb4–+ is similar. **14...♜xc3** The exchange sacrifice kept the queens on the board. There are now several ways to stop Black from castling. **15.♝c4** 15.d6!?
cx d6 16.♝c4± **15...b5** 16.♝a3 f6 16...b4 17.♝a5+– **17.♝c1+–**

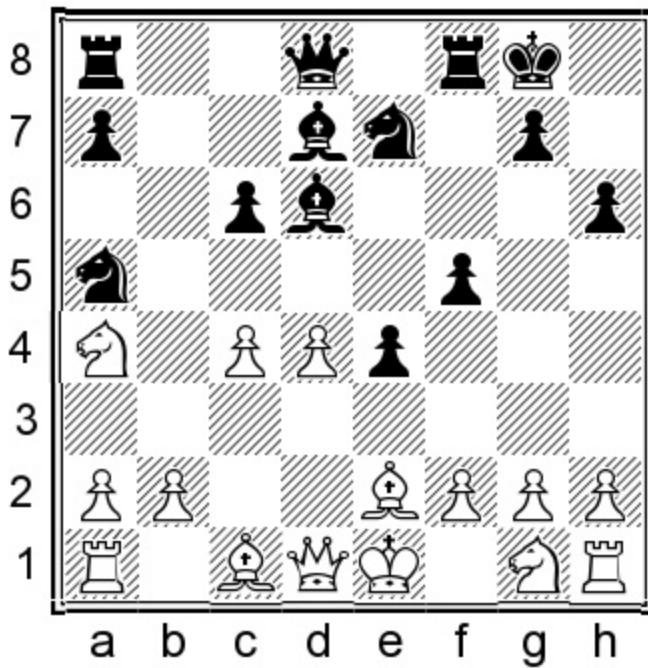
758. Bird – Lasker, Liverpool (3) 1890



Show/Hide Solution

22.dxe5! The natural capture, gaining the d4-square for the knight. Black will have a hard time defending the queenside pawn. The game ended abruptly with: 22.♕xa5?? ♜xf3† 22...♜g4 23.♕xa5 ♜xa5 24.♖e1± White's next moves are likely to be ♜d4, h2-h3 (possibly with g2-g4 afterwards) and ♜a1.

759. Steinitz – Chigorin, Cable (2) 1890

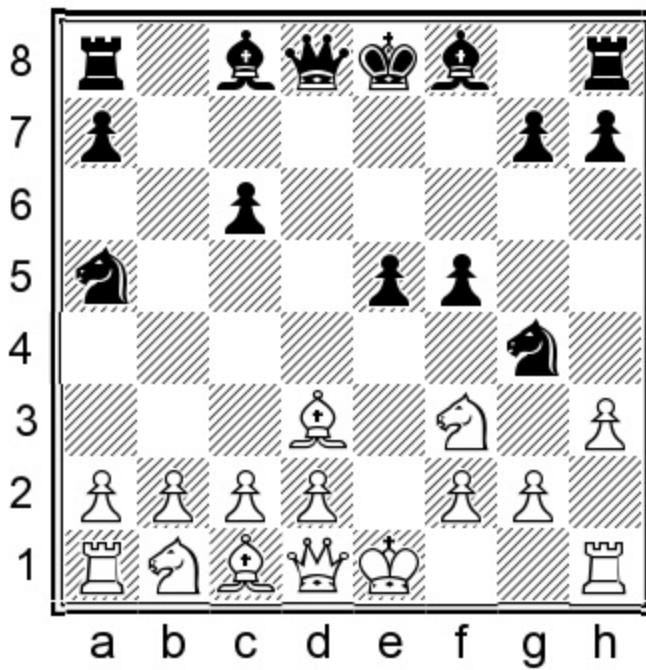


Show/Hide Solution

17.f4!± Stopping ...f5-f4. The game continued 17.♗c3?! ♜e6 18.b3?! ♜b4 19.♗b2 f4 and Black had

an attack. After 17.c5? $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 18.b4 Black can move the knight, but even stronger is: 18... $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ 19.bxa5 f4±

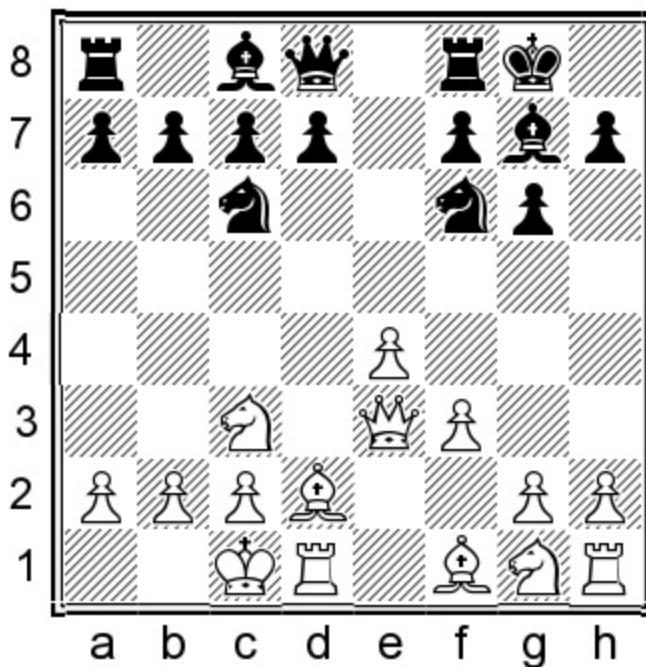
760. Bird – Lasker, Newcastle-on-Tyne (4) 1892



Show/Hide Solution

10... $\mathbb{Q}xf2!$ 10...e4 11.hxg4 exd3 allowed White to keep the position closed with 12.g5! (which was not played). 11. $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5\#$ Black gets the piece back with White's king in the centre. (White will be a pawn up, just as in the initial position.)

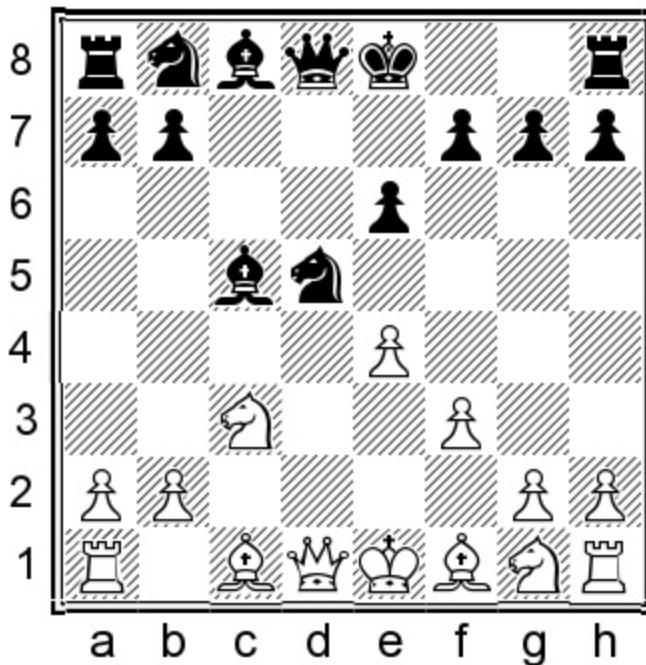
761. Blackburne – Lasker, London (7) 1892



Show/Hide Solution

8...d5! Both this and ... $\mathbb{E}e8$ are natural moves, and it's often best to start with the most active. Black threatens to move the pawn another step. 8... $\mathbb{E}e8$ 9. $\mathbb{W}f2$ d5 10. $\mathbb{B}g5\infty$ 9. $\mathbb{W}c5$ 9.exd5 $\mathbb{Q}xd5\mp$ opens the diagonal for the g7-bishop. (9... $\mathbb{Q}b4\mp$ is also good.) 9... $\mathbb{d}4\mp$ 9...dxe4?! was played.

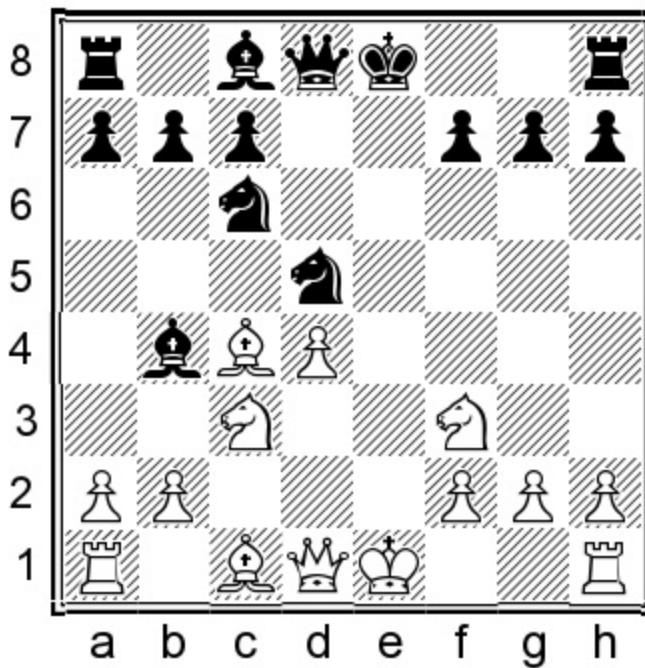
762. Steinitz – Lasker, NY/Philadelphia/Montreal (10) 1894



Show/Hide Solution

7... $\mathbb{W}h4\mp$! Making it worse for White to exchange queens. 7... $\mathbb{Q}xc3?!$ 8. $\mathbb{W}xd8\mp\mp$ was too kind. 8.g3 $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ 9.bxc3 9.gxh4 $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 10. $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ $\mathbb{Q}c6\mp$ Compared to the game continuation, White has the king stuck in the centre and a scattered pawn structure. 9... $\mathbb{W}f6\mp$ Black benefits from keeping the queens.

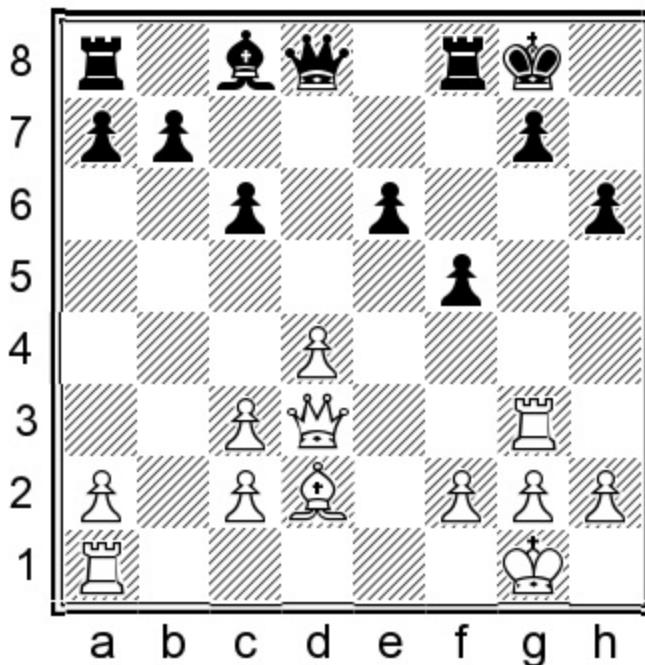
763. Steinitz – von Bardeleben, Hastings 1895



Show/Hide Solution

9.0-0! Developing is more important than keeping material equal. White now threatens to take on d5, so Black has no time to castle. **9...♝e6** **9...♝xc3** **10.bxc3** **♝xc3** **11.♝b3!** A double threat. **11...♜xa1** **12.♝xf7†** **♚f8** **13.♚a3†** **♝e7** **14.♜xa1+–** The pin is decisive. **10.♝e1!** Strongest. **10.♝g5!?**± was the game. **10...0-0** No better is: **10...♝xc3** **11.bxc3** **♝xc3** **12.♝g5** **♝d6** **13.d5+–** **11.♝g5** **♝xc3** **12.♝d3!** Followed by **♝xe6** with a decisive advantage.

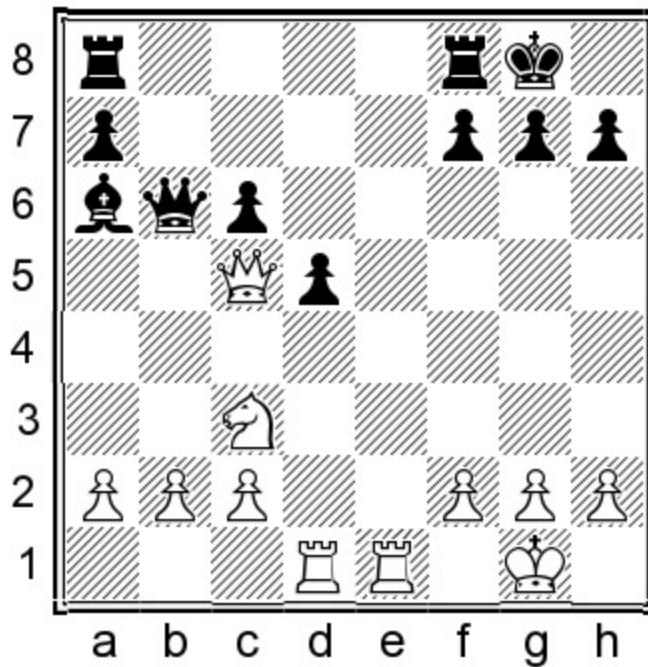
764. Lasker – Chigorin, St. Petersburg 1896



Show/Hide Solution

19...f4! Black defends against $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ with tempo, which is important as it gives Black time to release the bishop on c8. 19... $\mathbb{W}h4$ was played, when 20. $\mathbb{R}e1\pm$ would have ended Black's dream of activating the bishop. **20. $\mathbb{R}f3$** Other rook moves are met in a similar way. **20...e5! 21.dxe5 $\mathbb{W}xd3$ 22.cxd3 g5=**

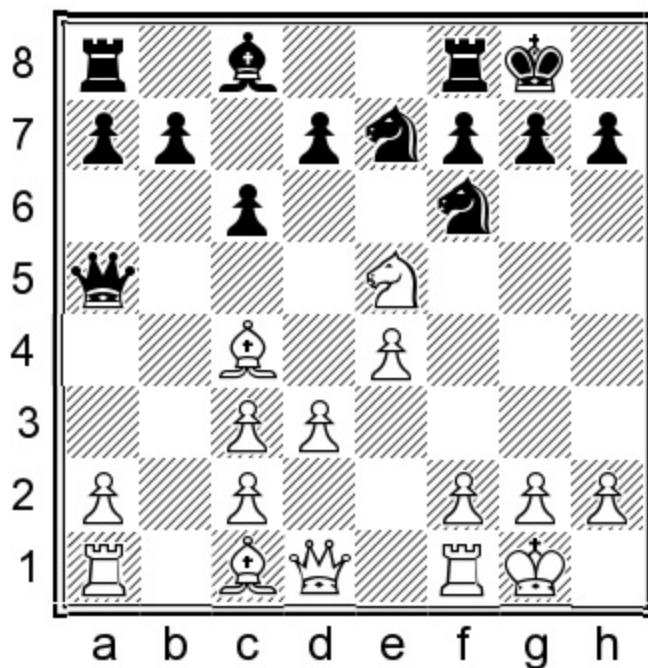
765. Lasker – Levitsky, Moscow (Casual) 1896



Show/Hide Solution

20. $\mathbb{Q}a4!\pm$ Controlling the dark squares. Exchanging on b6 would have repaired Black's structure.

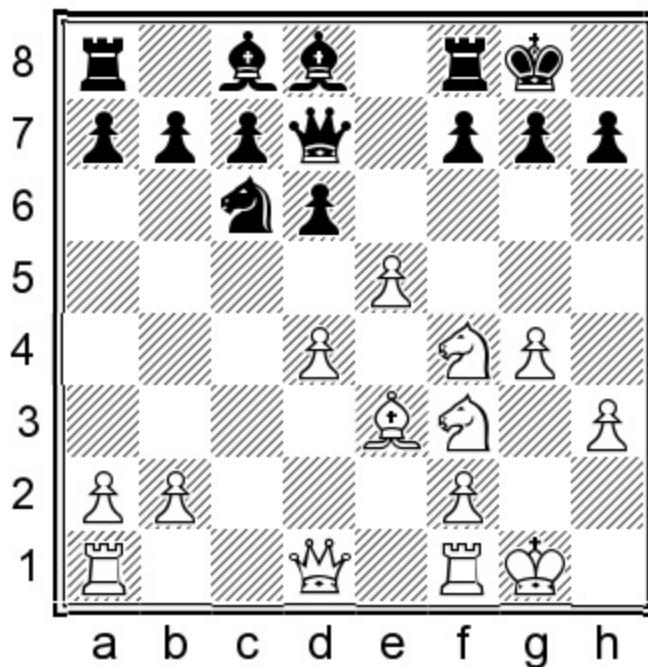
766. Schifflers – Steinitz, Rostov-on-Don (7) 1896



Show/Hide Solution

Defending/retreating the knight allows Black to take back material with ... $\mathbb{W}xc3$. White would still be clearly better with the bishop pair, but there is an even stronger way to play. **10. $\mathbb{Q}xf7\#!$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 12.c4±** Black's pieces won't find good squares.

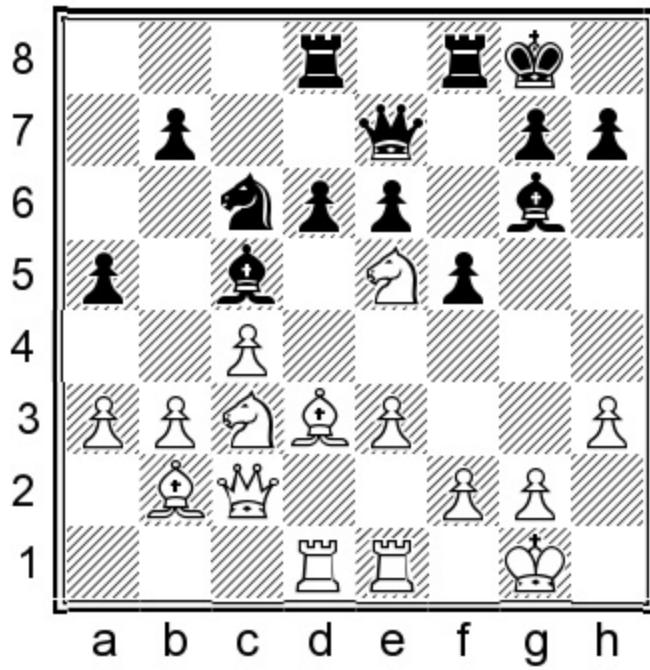
767. Schiffers – Steinitz, Rostov-on-Don (5) 1896



Show/Hide Solution

15...b6!± Immediately putting the bishop on the weakened long diagonal. 15...dxe5 16. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 17.dxe5 $\mathbb{W}xd1$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}fxd1=$ With the exchange of queens, g2-g4 is no longer a weakening move, and White's centralized pieces compensate for Black's bishop pair.

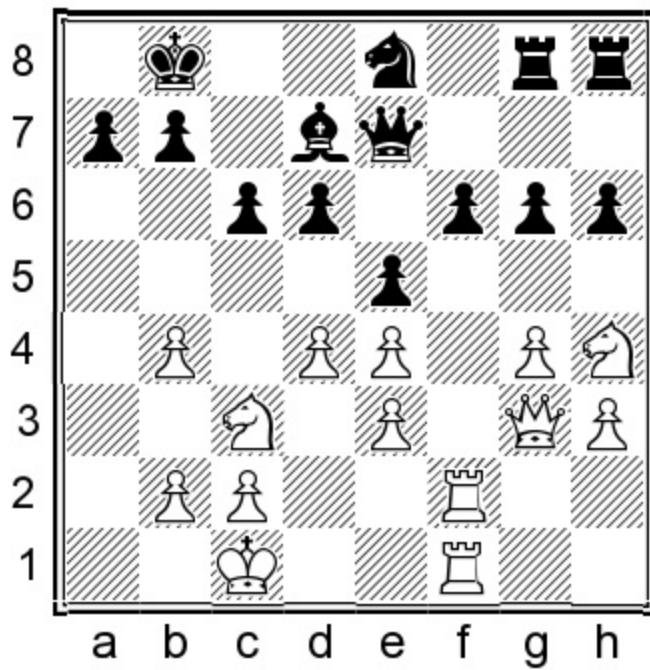
768. Lasker – Albin, Nuremberg 1896



Show/Hide Solution

20...dxe5! Black gets a great initiative on the kingside. Threatening the pawn on a3 wins a tempo.
20...Qxe5 21.f4= 21.Qb5 Qg5† ...e5-e4 and ...f5-f4 are on the way.

769. Lasker – Steinitz, Moscow (6) 1896

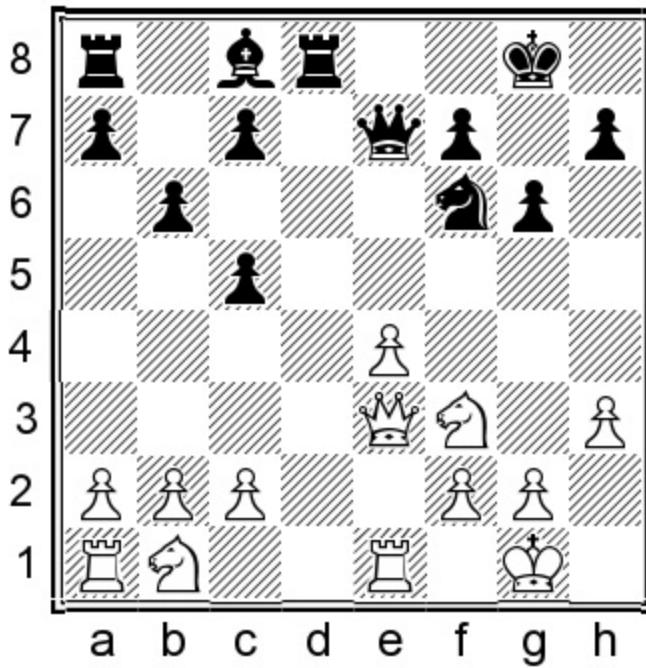


Show/Hide Solution

26.b5! Exchanging an undefended pawn while weakening Black's king. **26...cxb5** A logical reply, giving up the f6-pawn but keeping the black king reasonably safe. **26...Ka8 27.bxc6†** was the game.
27.Qd5 Qd8 28.Qxf6! An important detail. **28.Qxf6 Qxf6 29.Qxf6 Wa5 30.Qb1 Qc8!** gives enough

counterplay due to the trick 31. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{W}c7!$. 28... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xf6!$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}xf6?$ g5! is winning for Black.
29... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 30. $dxe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 31. $exd5$ White is clearly better.

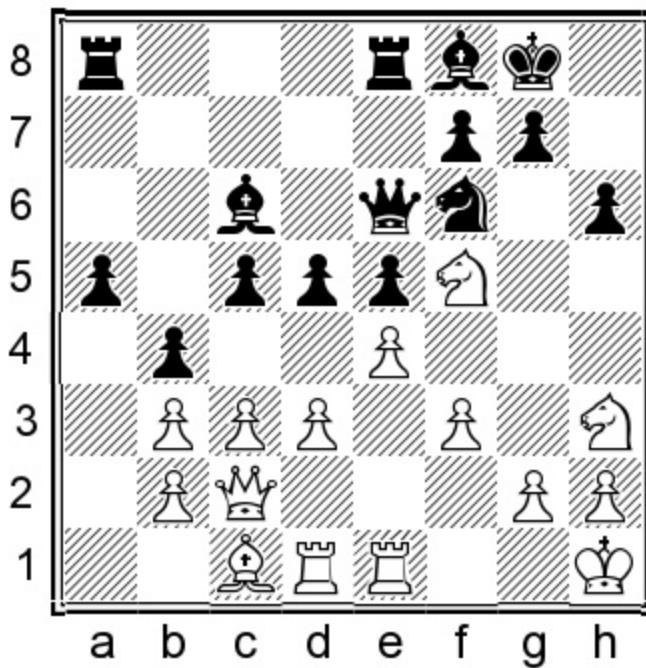
770. Lipschuetz – Steinitz, Thousand Islands 1897



Show/Hide Solution

15. $c4!$ The game went 15. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 16. $\mathbb{W}h6$ and eventually ended in a draw. 15... $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}c3\pm$ The pawn on c4 gives White the possibility of $\mathbb{Q}d5$.

771. Lasker – Chigorin, London (14) 1899

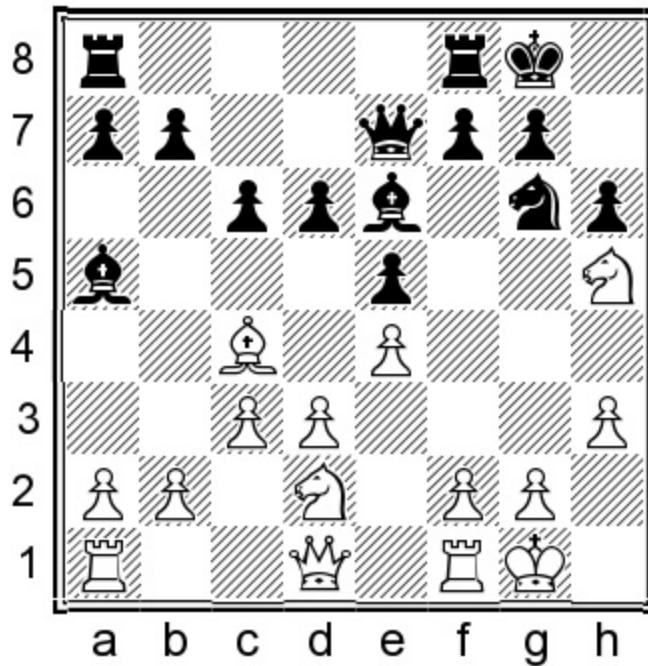


Show/Hide Solution

23.c4!? Keeping the queenside as closed as possible limits Black's advantage.

23.g4 or a more timid move is met by 23...bxc3 24.bxc3 a4+

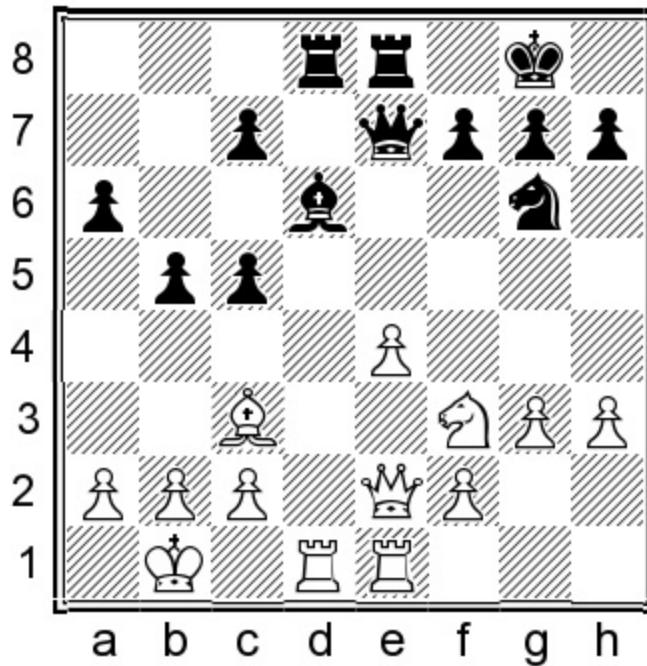
772. Corzo y Prinzipie – Capablanca, Havana (4) 1901



Show/Hide Solution

15...d5! 15... $\mathbb{W}g5$ was the game. **16. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ f5!?** Black has a strong centre and White's decision to put the knight on h5 suddenly looks premature.

773. Lasker – Chigorin, Cambridge Springs 1904



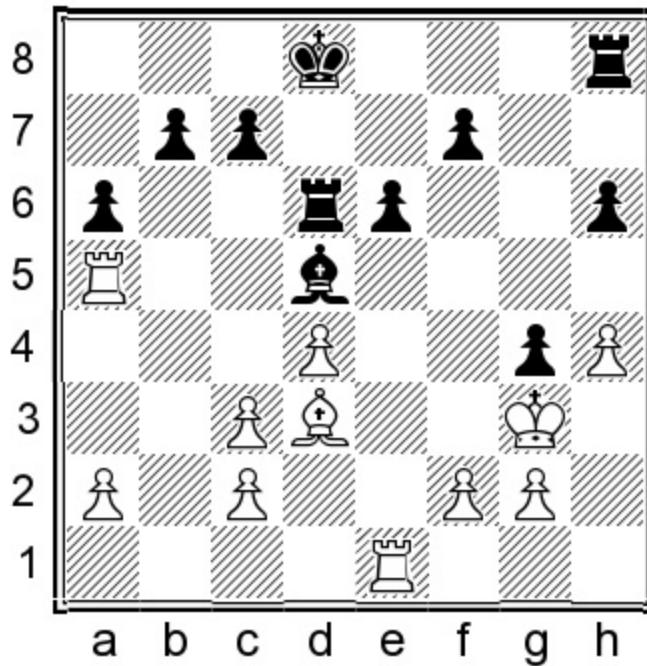
Show/Hide Solution

19.h4 Using the pawn majority and planning h4-h5-h6 to weaken Black's king. **19...Qe5** After 19...f6?! 20.h5± White was ready to jump with Qh4-f5. **20.Qxe5 Qxe5 21.Qxd8!?** Qxd8 **22.Qd2±** Planning to push all the kingside pawns. Black's doubled c-pawns make it harder to do anything threatening with the queenside majority.

Emanuel Lasker

"To find the right plan is just as hard as looking for its sound justification."

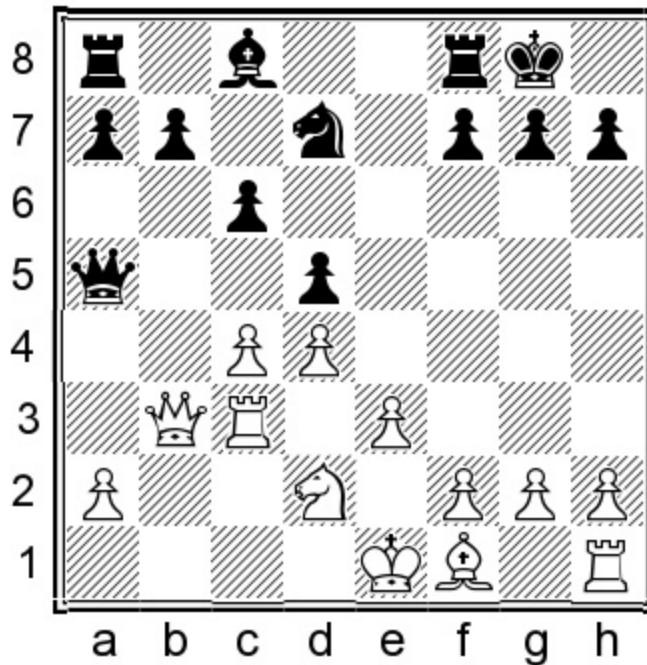
774. Lasker – Bampton/Kaiser/Martinez, USA (Simul) 1907



Show/Hide Solution

22.c4! ♖c6 23.c3± The two moves with the c-pawns have gained space and pushed back Black.

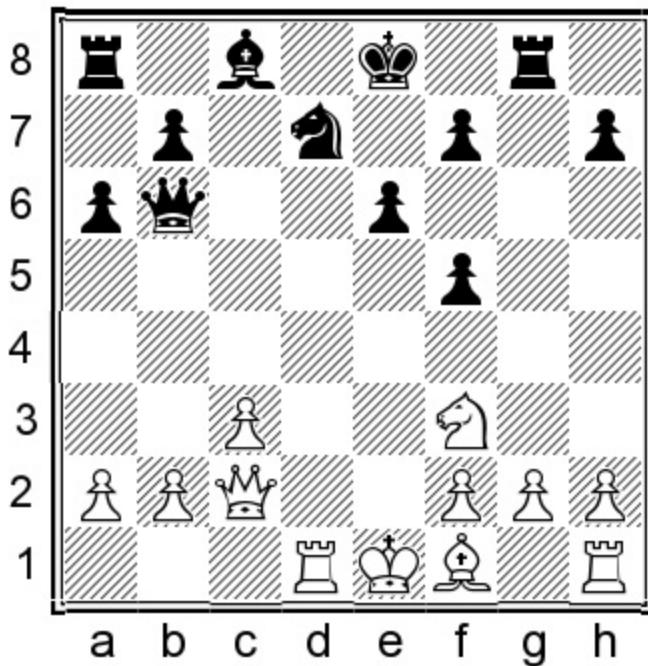
775. Marshall – Lasker, USA (15) 1907



Show/Hide Solution

14...c5! Opening up the position, as White is two moves from castling. Black has some initiative, although with exact play White can hold the balance. **15.♖a3!** Black's ambition paid off in the game: 15.cxd5? cxd4 16.exd4 ♖e8† (This keeps some initiative, but 16...♗f6!† was even stronger.) 17.♖e3 ♖xe3† 18.fxe3 ♗f6† **15...♗xa3 16.♗xa3 dxc4 16...cxd4 17.cxd5= 17.dxc5=**

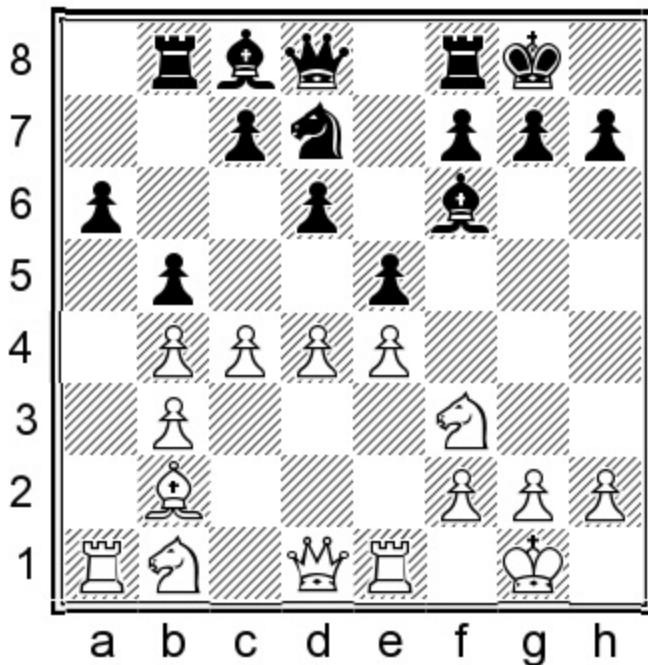
776. Lasker – Tarrasch, Düsseldorf/Munich (11) 1908



Show/Hide Solution

15.g3± The only convenient way to develop. It also helps that the bishop reaches a nice diagonal.

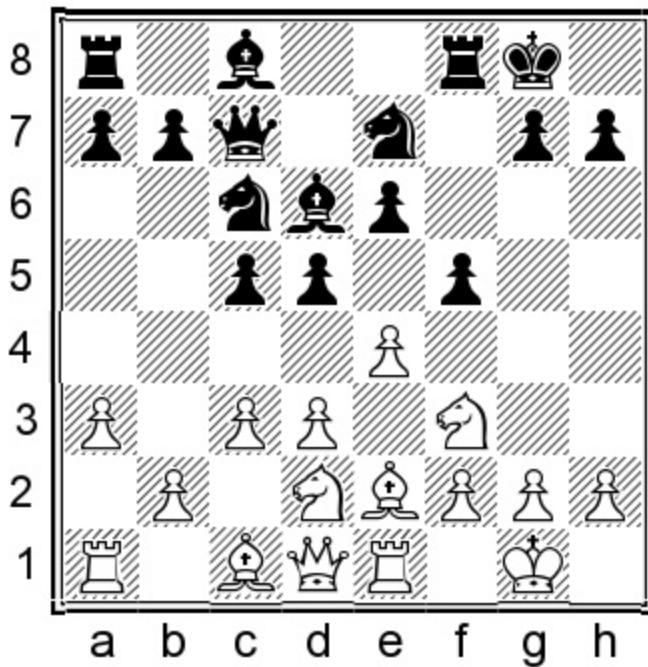
777. Lasker – Janowski, Berlin (9) 1910



Show/Hide Solution

14.c5!± Not allowing Black to open the b-file. 14.♗d2?! was the game.

778. Nimzowitsch – Capablanca, San Sebastian 1911



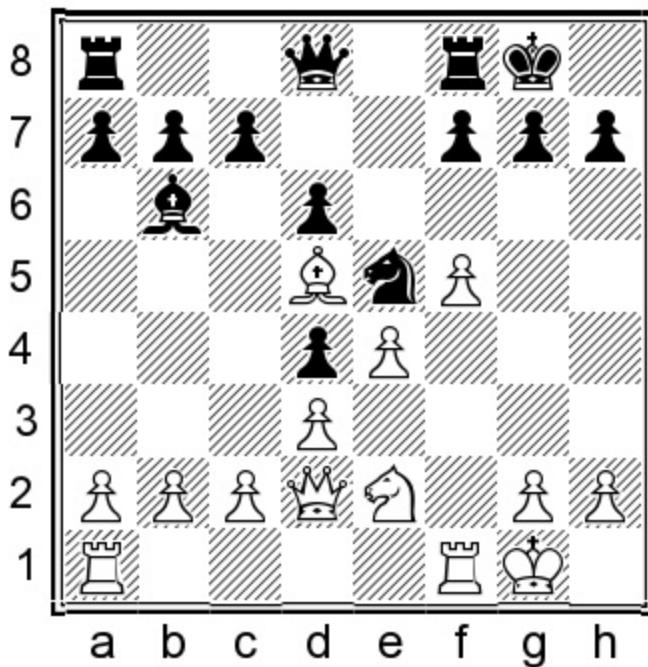
Show/Hide Solution

10.exd5! White should not allow Black to open the f-file with ...fxe4. 10.♗f1?! was played.

10...♝xd5 10...exd5!? 11.d4± leaves Black suffering from weakened squares on the e-file. As compensation, Black would have wanted to place a knight on e4, but both knights are too far away.

11.d4 cxd4 12.cxd4± Followed by ♜c4 or ♜c4.

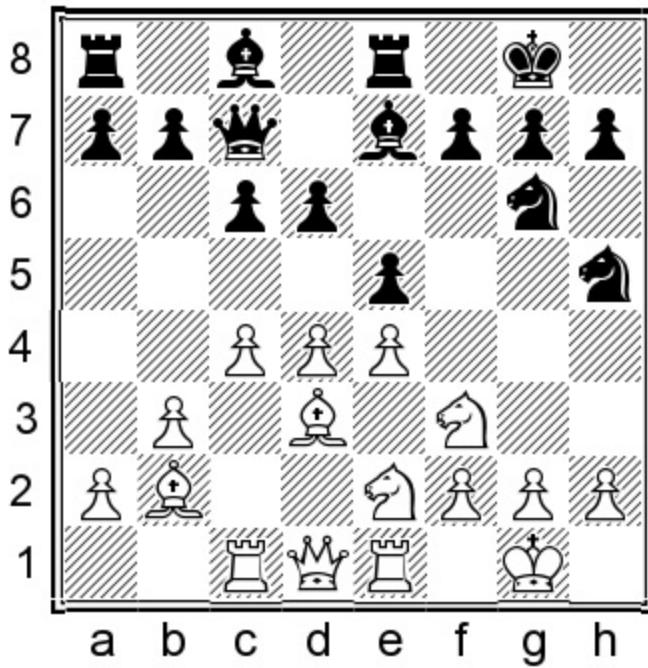
779. Lasker – Baumeister, Germany (Simul) 1913



Show/Hide Solution

14.f6! Black is a piece down on the kingside. Good moves are still needed, but White is winning.
14.♗xb7!? ♜b8 15.♗d5± allows Black to escape the worst (f5-f6) with ...♝f6, ...♝g4 or ...♝d7.

780. S. Rubinstein – Capablanca, New York 1913



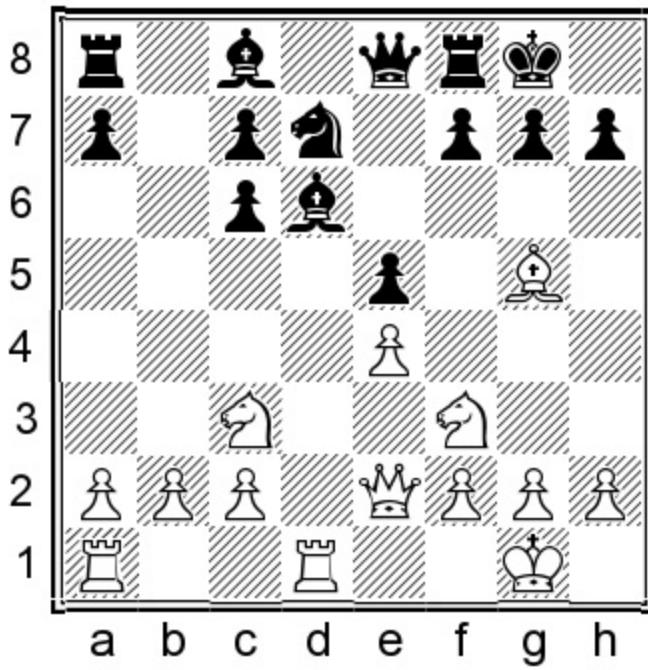
Show/Hide Solution

13...♝g4! 13...♝hf4 is met by 14.♝xf4 ♜xf4 15.♗f1 followed by g2-g3, and Black does not achieve anything. **14.♝g3 ♜hf4** It's hard to get rid of Black's annoying pieces. **15.♝f5** 15.d5 ♜xg2++;
15.♗f1 ♜h4+ **15...♝f6†**

Jose Raul Capablanca

“As one by one I mowed them down, my superiority soon became apparent.”

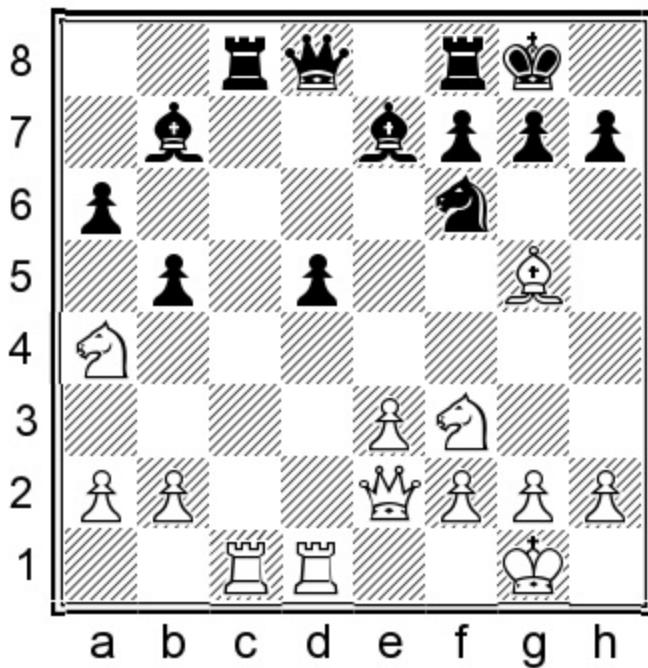
781. Capablanca – Janowski, Havana 1913



Show/Hide Solution

12. $\mathbb{Q}h4! \pm$ Black must decide what to do about the threat of $\mathbb{Q}f5$. **12... $\mathbb{Q}c5$** The game went: 12...g6? 13. $\mathbb{Q}h6+ -$; 12...f6 13. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ g6 allows White to pick up a pawn with 14. $\mathbb{W}c4\#$; 12... $\mathbb{W}e6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ plans ... $\mathbb{Q}f8$. White is not forced to, but I think it's a good idea to exchange one type of advantage for another with: 14. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ cxd6 15. $\mathbb{W}d2\pm$ **13. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ 14. exf5** White threatens $\mathbb{Q}e3xc5$ followed by $\mathbb{Q}e4$, and also has f5-f6 as an idea. **14...e4!±** is the strongest reply, when Black stands worse but remains in the game.

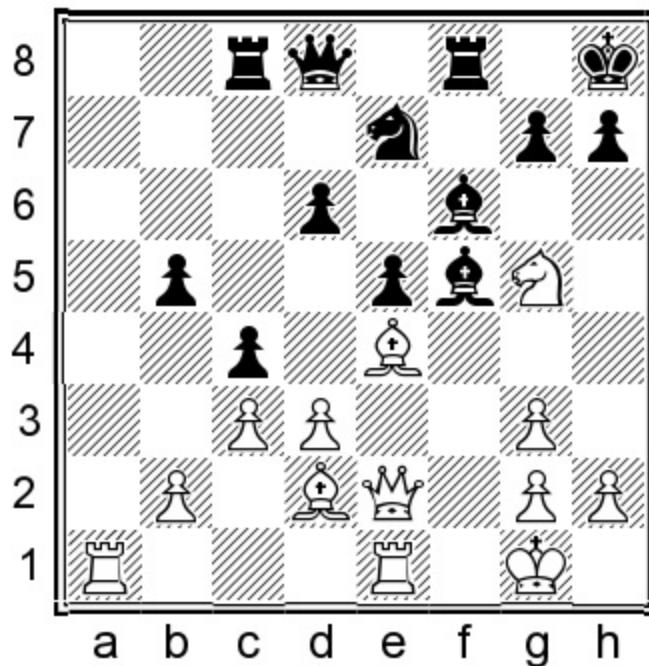
782. Capablanca – Teichmann, Berlin (2) 1913



Show/Hide Solution

16.♗xf6! Gaining access to c5. 16.♗xc8?!= was Capablanca's choice. **16...♝xc1 17.♝xc1 ♗xf6 18.♘c5 ♜c8±** Black keeps both bishops; but with nice squares on c5 and d4, the knights are stronger.

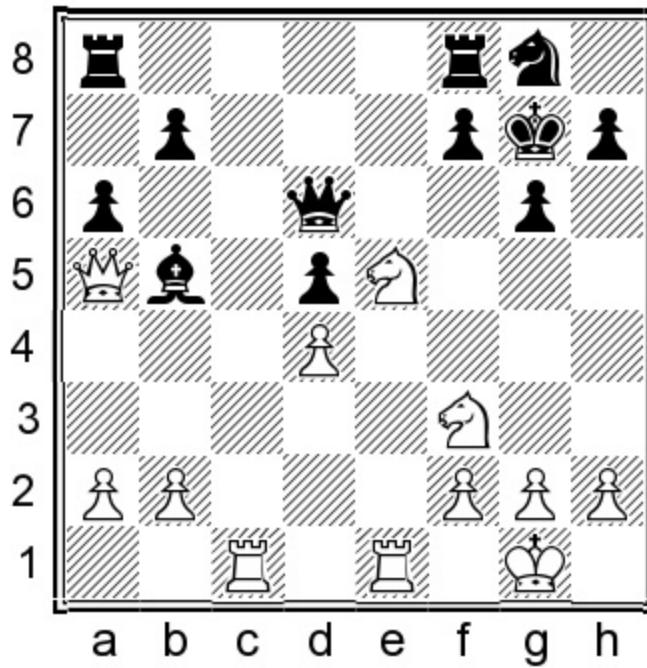
783. Znosko-Borovsky – Capablanca, St. Petersburg 1913



Show/Hide Solution

23...d5 Pushing pawns in the centre is a good thing. The only thing Black needs to see is that there's no knight fork on e6 after: **24.♗xf5 ♘xf5†** Due to a check on b6.

784. Capablanca – Alekhine, St. Petersburg 1913



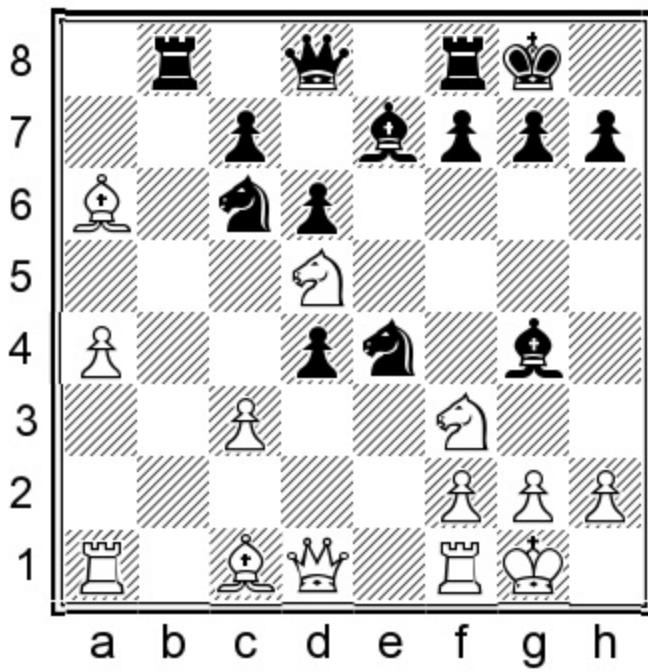
Show/Hide Solution

22. $\mathbb{Q}c7!$ Exchanging the queens creates weaknesses on both wings of Black's camp. 22. $\mathbb{R}c7$ b6
 23. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ $\mathbb{R}ae8$ doesn't lead anywhere. 22... $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$ h6 23... b6 24. $\mathbb{Q}g5+$ — threatens both
 25. $\mathbb{Q}gxf7$ and 25. $\mathbb{Q}e6\#$. 24. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ White soon won.

Jose Raul Capablanca

"The winning of a pawn among good players of even strength often means the winning of the game."

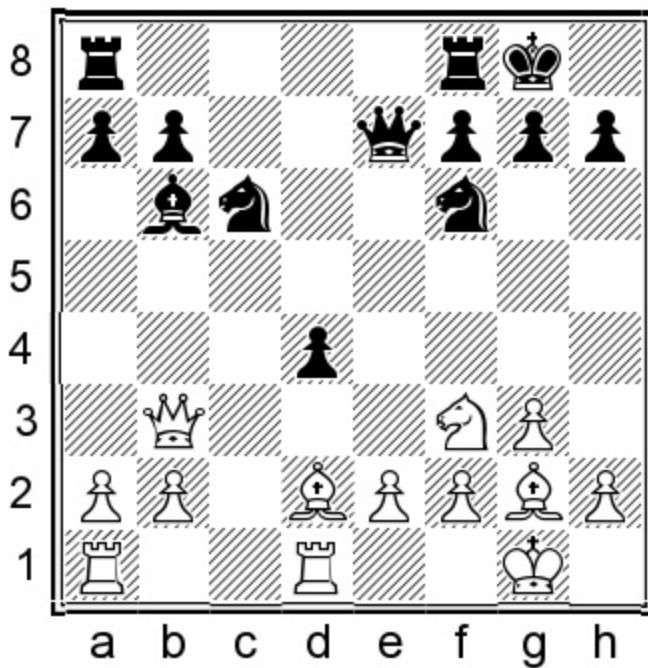
785. Tarrasch – Capablanca, St. Petersburg 1914



Show/Hide Solution

15. $\mathbb{Q}xd4!$ 15.cxd4± was the game. 15... $\mathbb{Q}xd1$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}dxe7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 18. $\mathbb{R}xd1$ $\mathbb{B}b6$ Black can include 18... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ which gives White the option to play with three pieces against the queen after 19. $\mathbb{R}d3$; or White can get a similar piece configuration as the main line after 19. $\mathbb{R}d4$. Both options are good. 19. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{R}xc6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ White has a rook and bishop pair versus Black's queen and knight. Even though Black is materially slightly ahead, the passed a-pawn is a great asset, and with accurate play White should win.

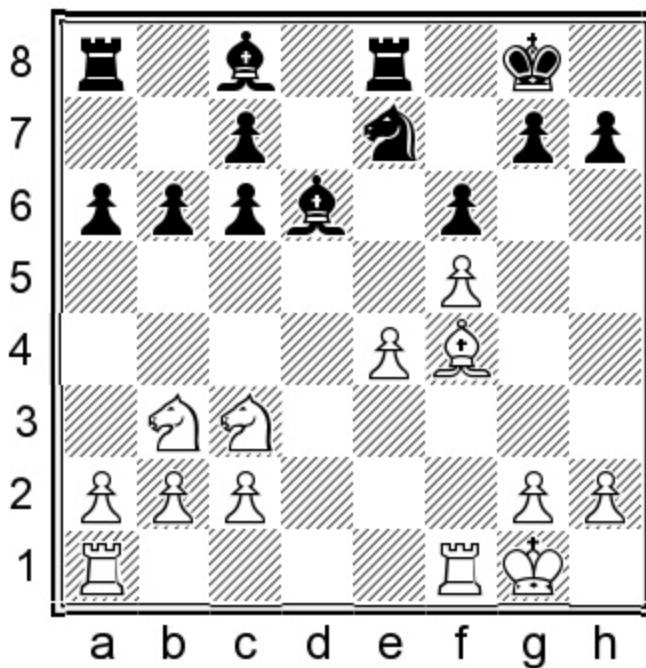
786. Lasker – Tarrasch, St. Petersburg 1914



Show/Hide Solution

15.a4! Targeting both of Black's minor pieces on the queenside. **15...♝e4** **16.♛e1 ♜ad8** **17.a5 ♜c5** **18.♜ac1!** Lasker chose 18.a6 which is also strong, and he went on to win convincingly. After the text move Black's position is even worse than it looks. For example: **18...a6?** **19.♝h4!+–** Black can't keep everything defended.

787. Lasker – Capablanca, St. Petersburg 1914



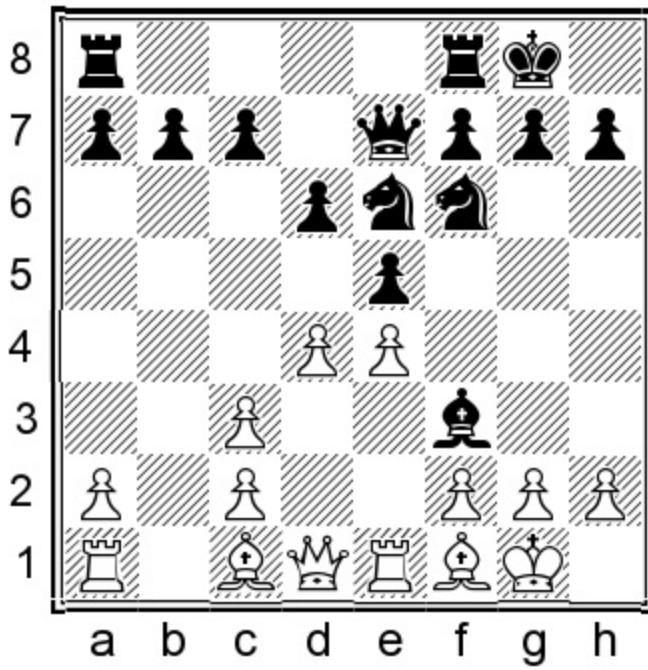
Show/Hide Solution

13...♝xf4! Capablanca accepted a weak pawn on d6 with: **13...♝b7?** **14.♞xd6 cxd6** **15.♝d4± ♜ad8?** (**15...♜c8** was better but, as Kasparov noted: "Black still does not take his opponent's plan seriously and does not realize his mistake – and yet the knight at e6 will be like a bone in his throat!") **16.♝e6± 14.♜xf4 c5=** Black is comfortably equal. Nevertheless, Black can't easily manoeuvre the knight to e5 without allowing **♝d5** with an initiative, so White should be able to hold the balance.

Emanuel Lasker

"Truth derives its strength not so much from itself as from the brilliant contrast it makes with what is only apparently true. This applies especially to chess, where it is often found that the profoundest moves do not much startle the imagination."

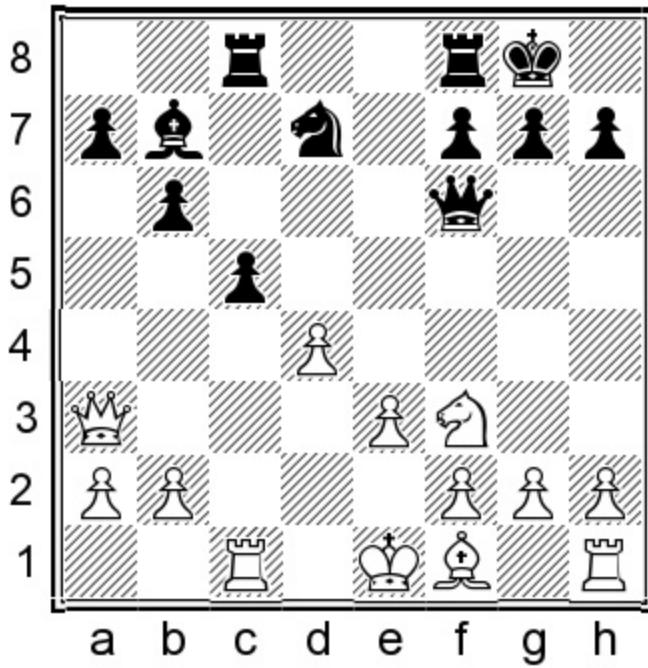
788. Bernstein – Capablanca, New York 1916



Show/Hide Solution

13. $\mathbb{W}xf3$ Sacrificing a pawn. Weakening the f4-square with 13.gxf3? should be out of the question, but that is what happened, and Black won easily. **13...exd4** The bishop pair gives White full compensation for the pawn; but even if it did not, White simply had to avoid weakening his kingside in such a dreadful way. **14.cxd4**, **14. $\mathbb{E}b1$** and **14. $\mathbb{Q}b2$** are all possible moves.

789. Capablanca – Lasker, Havana (5) 1921



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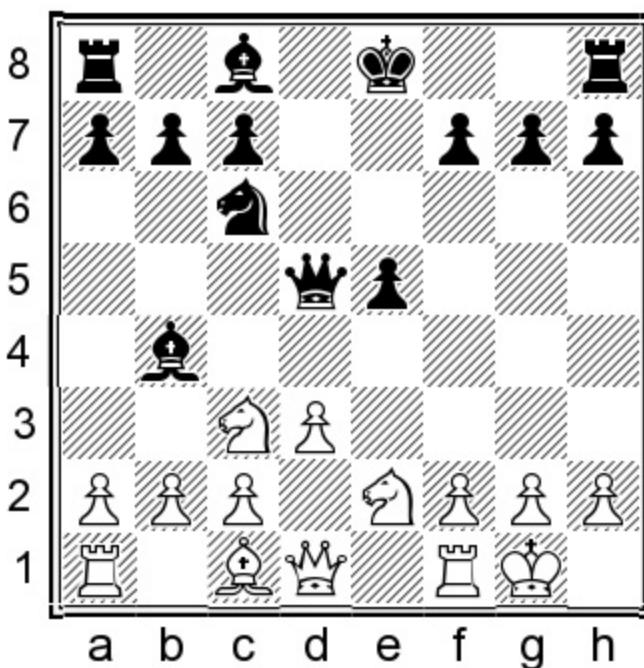
16. $\mathbb{Q}a6$ Developing while keeping a material advantage. **16.dxc5??** would help Black's knight to

come forward, as well as allowing a structurally disastrous exchange on f3. 16. $\mathbb{Q}e2?$ cxd4 17. 0-0 dx e 3 \bar{f} ; 16. $\mathbb{W}xa7$ is the wrong priority. One of Black's decent replies is 16... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xd7$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ followed by ... cxd4, and White has to give back both pawns to develop. 16... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ 16... $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 17. $\mathbb{W}xa6$ and Black's c-pawn is pinned. 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc8$ $\mathbb{B}xc8$ 18. gxf3 $\mathbb{W}xf3$ 19. $\mathbb{E}g1\pm$ With the white king stuck in the centre, the game is far from over. Nevertheless, White's extra exchange is the most important factor.

Emanuel Lasker

"I have known many chess players, but among them there has been only one genius: Capablanca!"

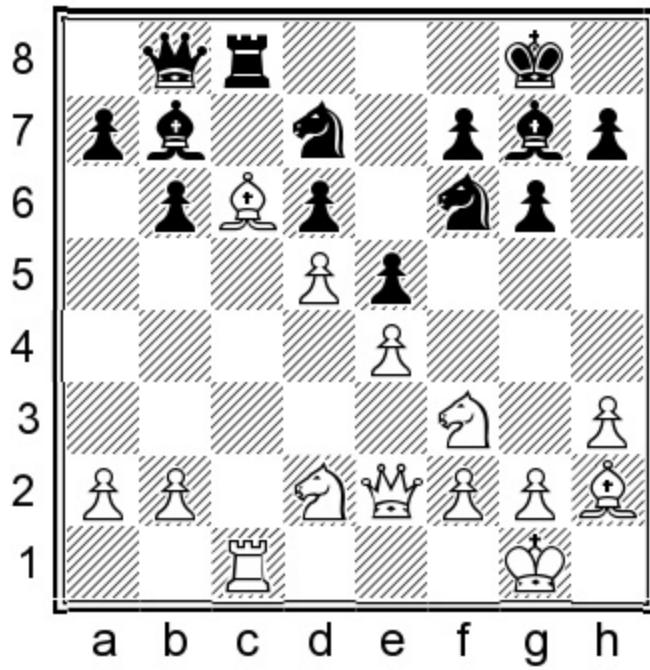
790. Alekhine – Bernstein, Paris 1922



Show/Hide Solution

8... $\mathbb{W}d7!$ \bar{f} The queen would be slightly exposed on a5, c5, d6 or e6. Two squares remain: d8 and d7. The latter is more active, but it blocks the light-squared bishop. However, the bishop is best on the long diagonal! 8... $\mathbb{W}d8$ was played in the game. An advantage of having the queen on d7 rather than d8 is shown after: 9. f4 b6 10. a3 $\mathbb{Q}c5\bar{f}$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}b7$ 12. fxe5 $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 13. d4 And now 13... 0-0-0 is possible thanks to the queen being developed.

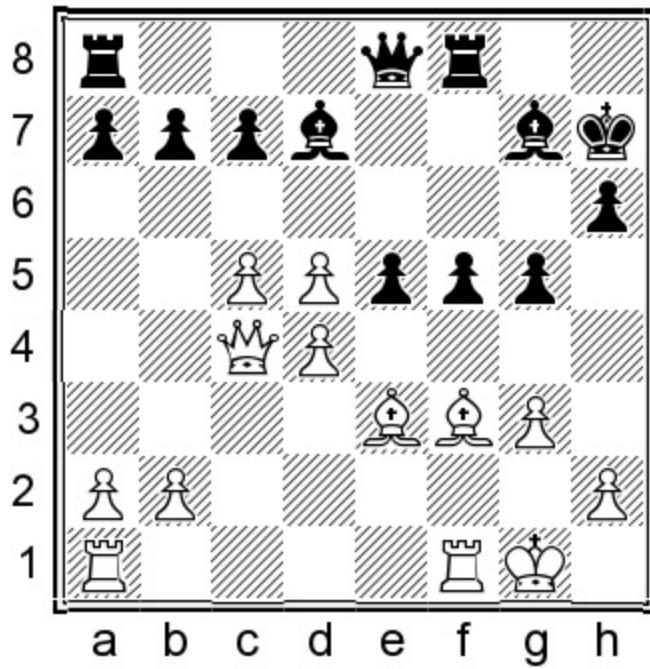
791. Capablanca – Reti, London 1922



Show/Hide Solution

18... $\mathbb{W}a8!$ Threatening the bishop while there's still a pin along the c-file, and before White can defend with b2-b4-b5. 18... $\mathbb{Q}h6$ was played in the game. **19. $\mathbb{Q}c4!$** 19. $\mathbb{W}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}b8$ soon wins material for Black. **19... $\mathbb{Q}f8\#$** White has to exchange on b7 or d7, after which Black becomes active with ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ and – depending on which way White traded the c6-bishop – ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ or ... $\mathbb{W}a6$.

792. Alekhine – Tarrasch, Vienna 1922

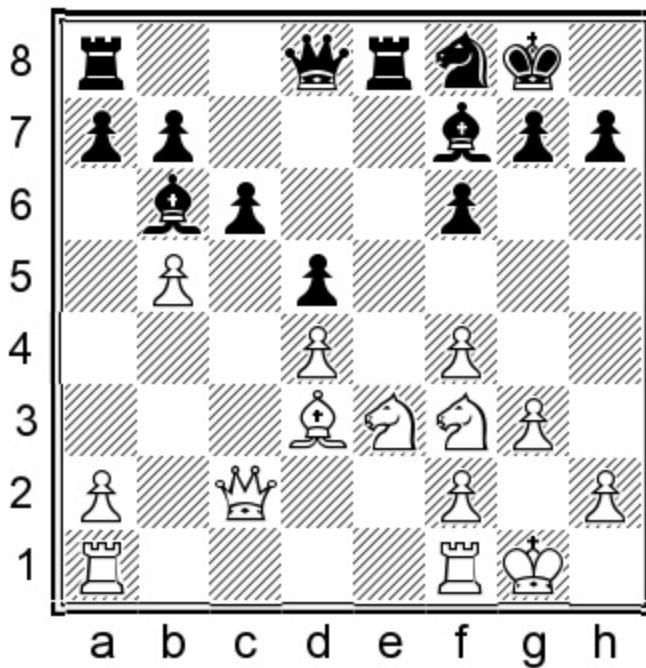


Show/Hide Solution

19.c6 By defending against ... $\mathbb{Q}b5$ with gain of tempo, White ensures that Black doesn't get time for

...e5-e4. 19.♕fe1? e4+ 19...bxc6 20.dxc6 ♕e6 20...♕c8 21.dxe5± 21.d5 ♕g8 22.♕g2 ♕h8± White is more active. Black still doesn't have time for 22...e4?! because 23.g4!+– destroys Black's structure.

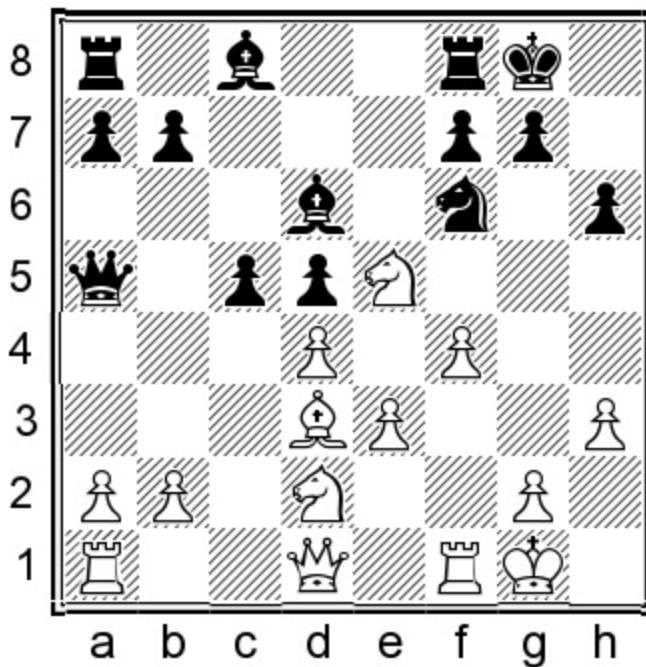
793. Alekhine – Lasker, New York 1924



Show/Hide Solution

18...♕h5! Forcing a weakness. 19.g4 19.♕e2 ♕xf3 wins a pawn. 19...♕f7# The f4-square is weak.

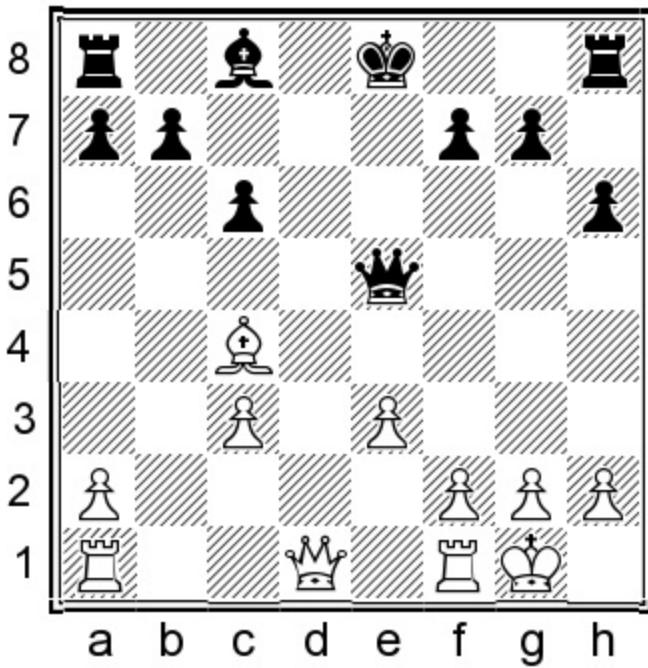
794. Capablanca – Tartakower, Moscow 1925



Show/Hide Solution

15. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 16. $dxc5$ $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ $\mathbb{W}xc5$ 18. $\mathbb{W}d2\pm$ White got rid of Black's bishop pair and created an isolated pawn on d5.

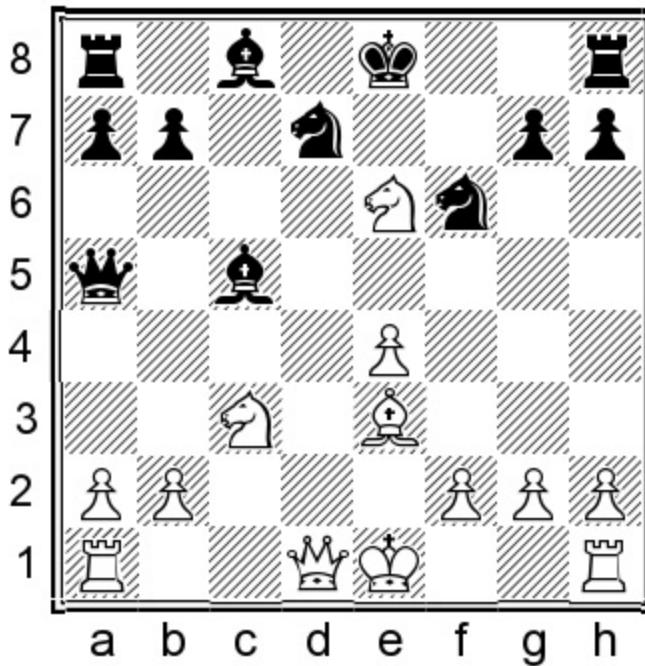
795. Lasker – Spielmann, Moscow 1925



Show/Hide Solution

14. $\mathbb{W}d4!$ White uses the temporarily undefended g7-pawn to improve the pawn structure. **14... $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 15. $exd4$ \pm** is also promising, getting two pawn islands instead of three. White has a nice centre, but plays against a pawn majority on the queenside. If Black tries to advance the a- and b-pawns, the c6-pawn will be left backward and weak. **15... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 15...0-0 16. $\mathbb{R}fe1$** offers a slight initiative, but Black should be able to neutralize it with careful defence. **15...f6!?** keeps the king in the centre. **16. $\mathbb{R}fe1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}xe6\#$ $fxe6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e5\pm$** Lasker went on to win. White only has a slight advantage in all these lines after 14. $\mathbb{W}d4$ – but without that move, there's no advantage at all.

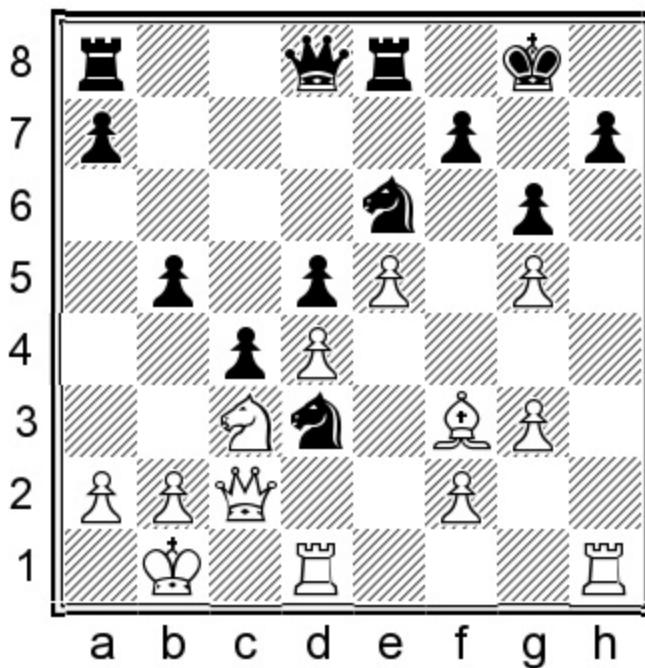
796. Capablanca – Bogoljubow, Moscow 1925



Show/Hide Solution

11.0-0! White has sacrificed a piece, and there are loose pieces and pawns on various squares. Even so, the only winning continuation is to move the king to safety. A positional move! 11. $\mathbb{Q}xg7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}f5$ $\mathbb{Q}e5\pm$ 11... $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 12. $f\times e3+-$ Black has an extra bishop, but the king is stuck in the centre and White has strong threats of $\mathbb{Q}b5$ and $\mathbb{Q}d5$, as well as $\mathbb{Q}xg7\#$.

797. Alekhine – Flores Alvarez, Santiago de Chile (Simul) 1927



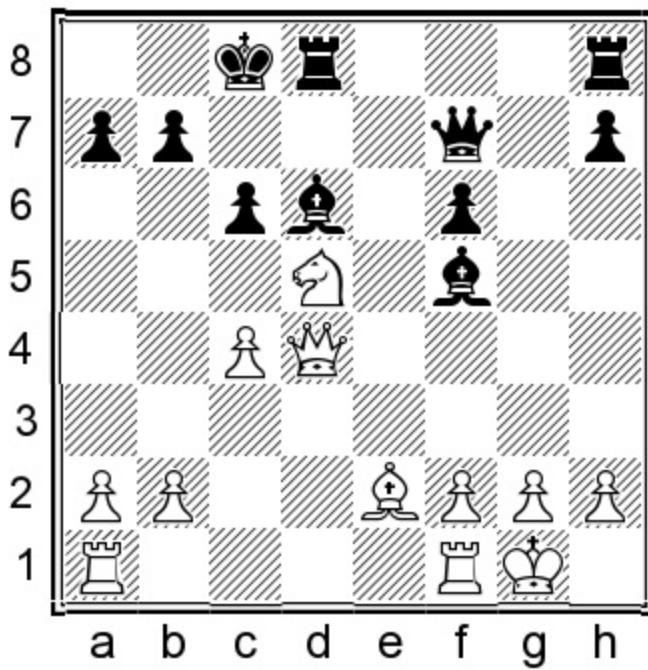
Show/Hide Solution

22. $\mathbb{Q}h4\!+-$ A multi-purpose move, defending d4 while preparing to double rooks. The d5-pawn is

now really hanging.

22. $\mathbb{Q}xd5?$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f6\#$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ was okay for Black in the game.

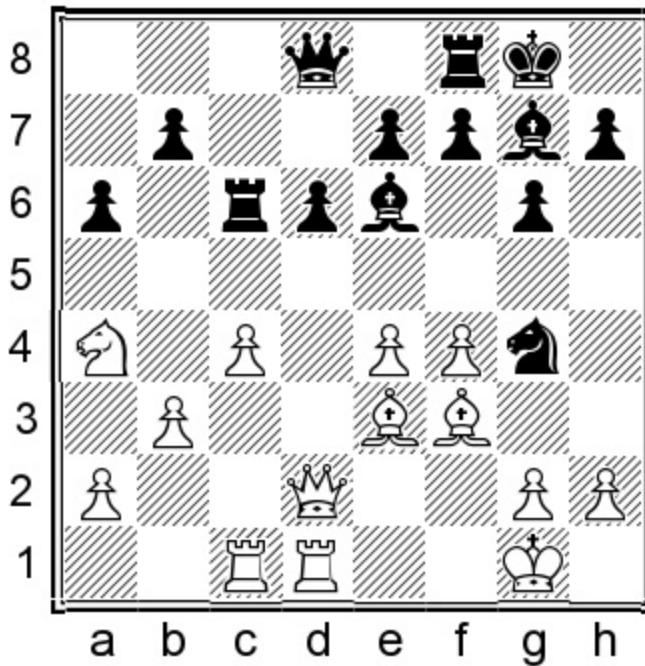
798. Capablanca – Tartakower, Bad Kissingen 1928



Show/Hide Solution

16. $\mathbb{W}xa7!$ Sacrificing a piece to get an attack. 16. $\mathbb{W}xf6?$ allowed Black to escape, especially if he would have found: 16... $\mathbb{W}g6! \mp$ 16... $\mathbf{cxd5}$ 17. $\mathbf{cxd5+}$ – Before entering such a position you should of course check some lines, but you don't need to calculate everything to a finish before evaluating the position as favourable for White. As it happens, there is no good defence against $\mathbb{E}ac1\#$.

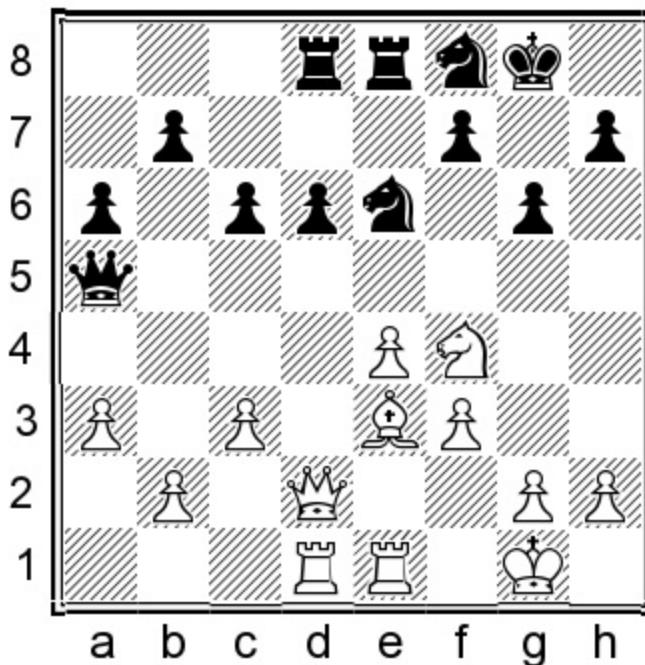
799. Capablanca – Yates, Bad Kissingen 1928



Show/Hide Solution

19. $\mathbb{Q}d4+$ — Capablanca allowed the knight to exchange itself: 19.e5? $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 20. $\mathbb{W}xe3\pm$ **19... $\mathbb{Q}xd4\uparrow$** **20. $\mathbb{W}xd4$** Black's knight is in danger. The threat is f4-f5; and if the knight retreats to f6, then e4-e5 will kill. **20... $\mathbb{Q}h6$** is not a fun move to play. 20...b5 21. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ bxc4 22. f5+— wins a piece. White is positionally winning with: **21.e5** There is also 21.f5 $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 22. $\mathbb{W}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 23. c5 and White soon wins material. **21... $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 22. $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 23. g4 $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}b6+$ —**

800. Tarrasch – Capablanca, Berlin 1928



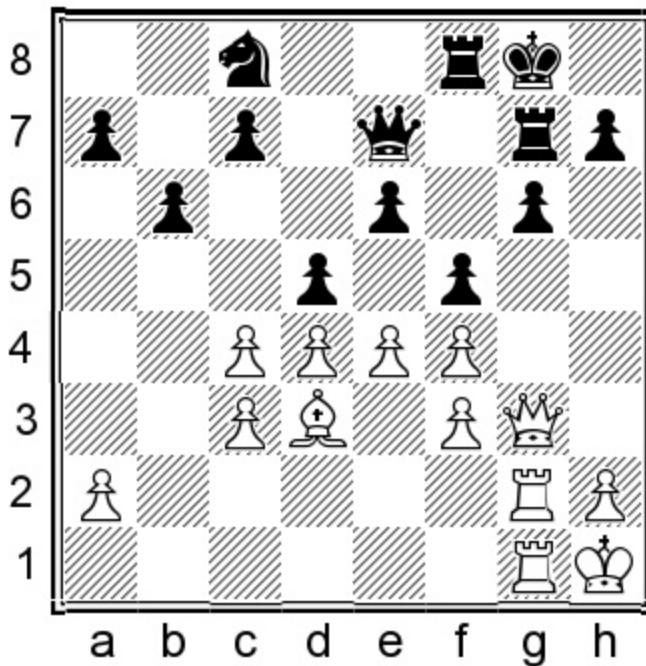
Show/Hide Solution

22...d5! Exchanging on f4 would help White's bishop. 22... $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ d5 24. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{E}d7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f6+-$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ $\mathbb{E}xe1\#$ 25. $\mathbb{W}xe1$ $\mathbb{E}xd5=$ Black got rid of the backward pawn and has opened the position enough to defend against a mate on g7.

5. Hard Challenge Exercise 801-850

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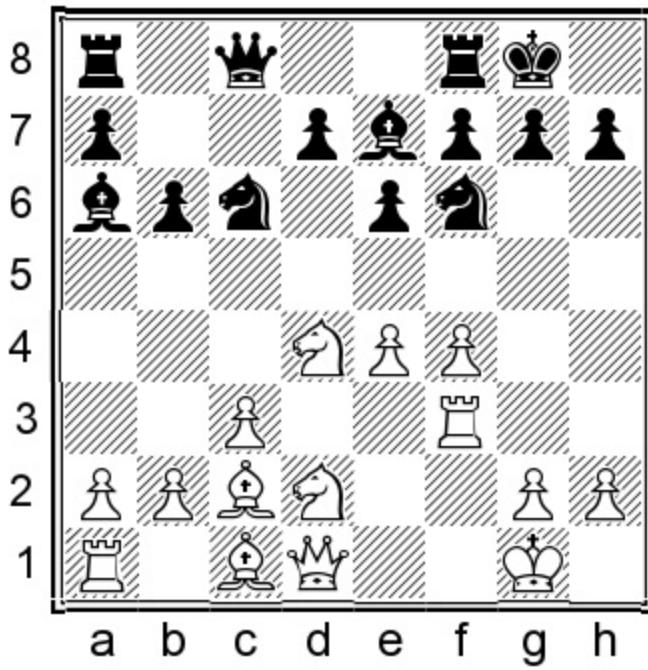
801. Winter – Capablanca, Ramsgate 1929



Show/Hide Solution

26...fxe4! Opening the f-file. Otherwise White might have taken on f5. **27.fxe4 dxe4 28.Qxe4** White has weak pawns. Capablanca moved the queen to d6 next but it looks more logical to go with the knight: **28...Nd6†**

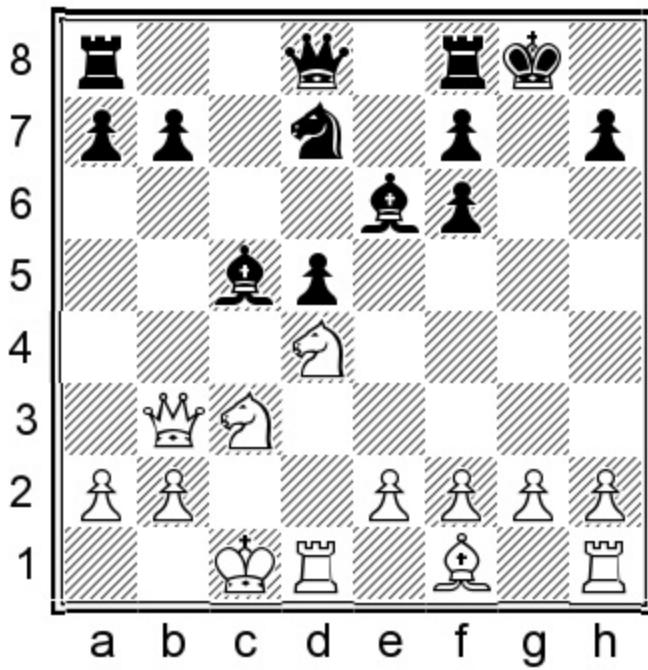
802. Colle – Capablanca, Karlovy Vary 1929



Show/Hide Solution

14...Qxd4! 14...g6 was the game. **15.cxd4 Qe2!** **16.Qxe2 Qxc2** The position has opened up without White's queenside pieces taking part. **17.Qc3 Wa4 18.Qf3 Qac8 19.Qd2** White's cost for completing development was to give up control over the light squares in the centre. **19...Qxc3 20.Qxc3 d5!†** Black gets a strong knight.

803. Alekhine – Bogoljubow, Germany/Netherlands (21) 1929

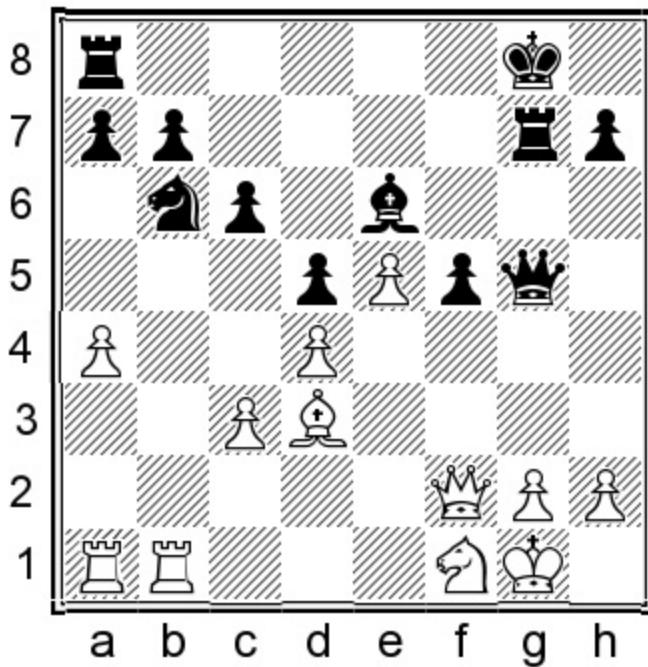


Show/Hide Solution

12.Qxe6! White does well to trade one advantage (the doubled f-pawns) for another (the light

squares). 12.e3± was played. 12...fxe6 13.e4 ♖xf2 Otherwise Black simply loses a pawn. 14.exd5 e5 The b7-pawn will not taste good, but instead after 15.d6† the passed pawn is a second trump. White is positionally winning.

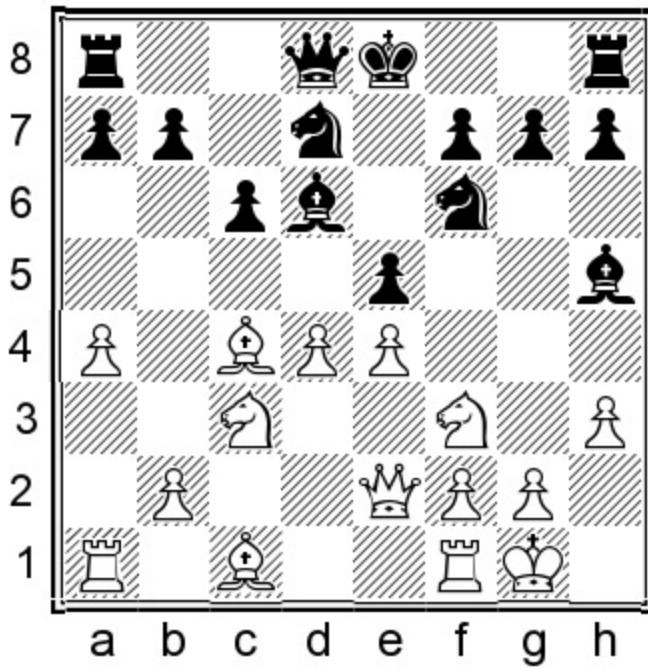
804. Stahlberg – Alekhine, Prague (Ol) 1931



Show/Hide Solution

26...♔h8! Inviting the a8-rook to join the attack. 26...f4 gives White time to defend more smoothly with: 27.♗d2 ♔h8 28.♔h1 ♕ag8 29.♕g1∞ 27.♗d2 27.♗g3 f4 28.♗e2 ♕f8 gives Black a strong initiative, for instance: 29.♔h1 (29.♕f1? f3 30.♗g3 h5+) 29...♗c4+ Black will increase the pressure on g2 with ...♗e3 or, in the event of an exchange on c4, with ...♗d5. 27...♕ag8† The game lasted only six more moves: 28.♗f1 f4 29.♗f3 ♕h5 30.♕b2 ♗c4 31.♕ba2 ♗e3 32.♕e1 ♗g4 33.♕xf4 ♕f7 0–1

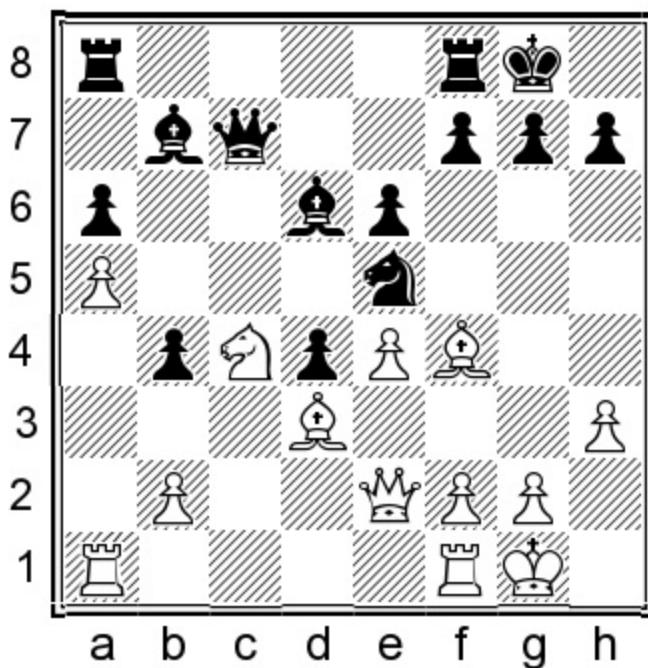
805. Euwe – Bogoljubow, Bern 1932



Show/Hide Solution

12.g4! Preparing $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ and f2-f4, almost trapping the bishop – a common motif. **12...Qg6** **12...Qxg4** **13.hxg4** $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ gives White a choice. **14.We3+–** is the easiest option, avoiding the pin. (Also possible is **14.d5 Wf6** **15.Qg2 Wg6** when **16.Qh1+–** and **16.We3+–** both win.) **13.dxe5 Qxe5** **13...Qxe5** **14.Qxe5 Qxe5** **15.Qa2+–** **14.Qxe5 Qxe5** **15.f4 Qxc3** Retreating is no better. **15...Qd4†** **16.Qe3** also doesn't help, as f4-f5 will soon come. **16.bxc3 h6** Black loses a piece if capturing on e4. **17.f5 Qh7** **18.e5 Qd5** **19.Qa3+–** White has a decisive positional advantage.

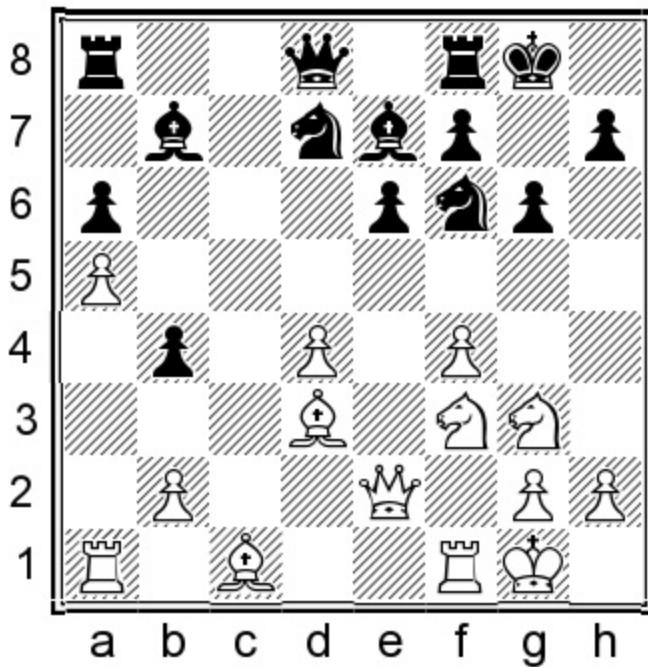
806. Alekhine – Bogoljubow, Germany (2) 1934



Show/Hide Solution

20.♘xe5! Opening the c-file to threaten the queen. 20.♘xe5 was played. **20...♗xe5 21.♕fc1 ♖d6 22.♘xe5 ♖xe5 23.♘c4±** Winning a tempo was the main point of the exercise. Thanks to that, White will restore material equality by collecting the b-pawn, and remain with a better structure.

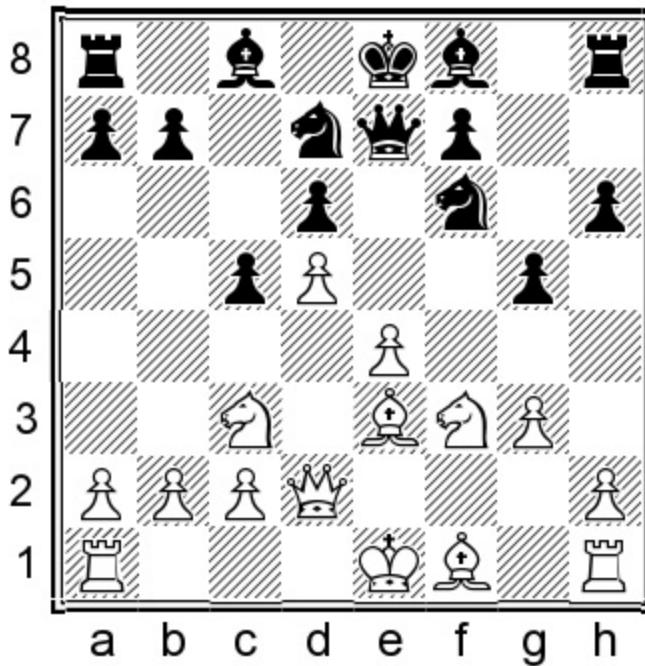
807. Alekhine – Bogoljubow, Germany (4) 1934



Show/Hide Solution

16...♞b8! On c6, the knight would threaten two pawns. **17.♘e5 ♞c6 17...♝xd4†? 18.♚e3↑ 18.♘xc6 ♞xc6†** The d-pawn is weaker than before the exchange of knights. Moreover, Black has ...h7-h5-h4 as a possible plan, since there is no knight on f3 defending the h4-square.

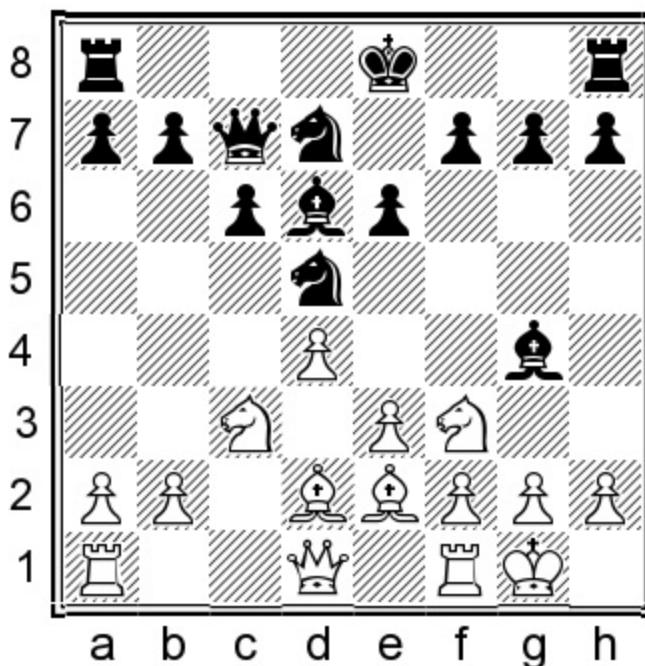
808. Bogoljubow – Alekhine, Germany (9) 1934



Show/Hide Solution

11.e5! The game continued with 11.0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}g4=$ when the opportunity was gone. **11... $\mathbb{Q}g4$** The best defence, fighting for the e5-square. **11... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 13.0-0-0** The e-file decides, for instance: 13... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}f4+-$; 11...dxe5 12. $\mathbb{Q}b5+-$ Not the only move, but the threat of d5-d6 followed by $\mathbb{Q}c7\#$ is strong. **12.e6! fxe6 13.dxe6 $\mathbb{W}xe6$ 14.0-0-0** Black gets a beautiful knight on e5, but everything else favours White: the d- and e-files, the long light-squared diagonal, and the d5-square. **14... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}ge5$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}g2+-$**

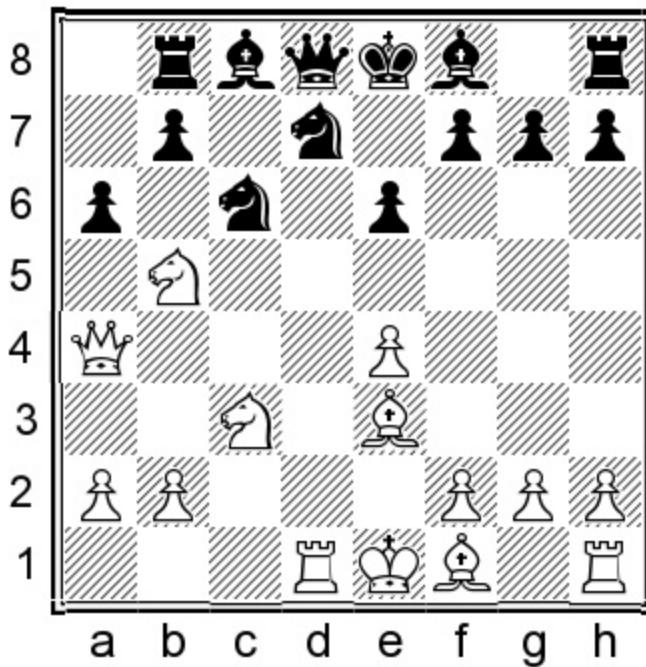
809. Lisitsin – Capablanca, Moscow 1935



Show/Hide Solution

10. $\mathbb{Q}e4!$ Rather than allowing Black to exchange knight for knight, White forces the trade of a knight for an enemy bishop. **10... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 10... $\mathbb{Q}7f6$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}xd6\#$ $\mathbb{W}xd6\pm$** was the game. **11. $\mathbb{Q}g3\pm$** Followed by h2-h3.

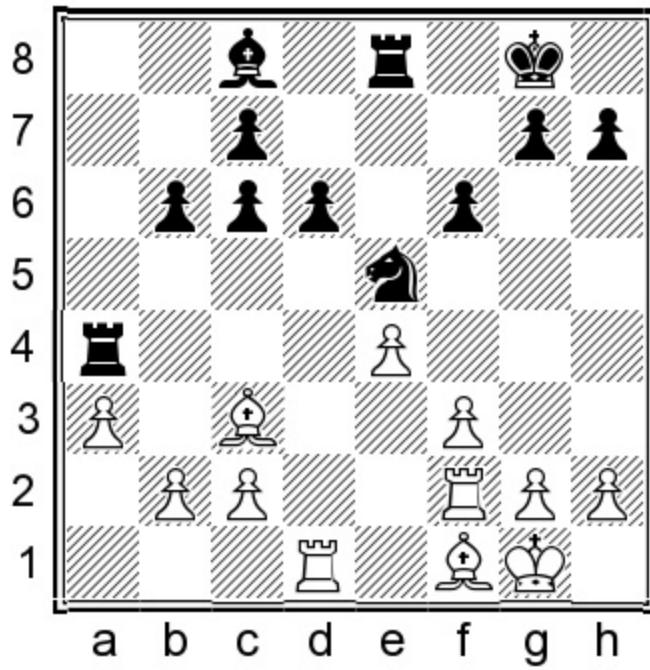
810. Capablanca – Menchik, Margate 1936



Show/Hide Solution

12. $\mathbb{Q}d6\#!$ Simply gaining the advantage of the bishop pair. Capablanca played: 12. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 13. $\mathbb{W}xd4\pm$ **12... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd6\pm$**

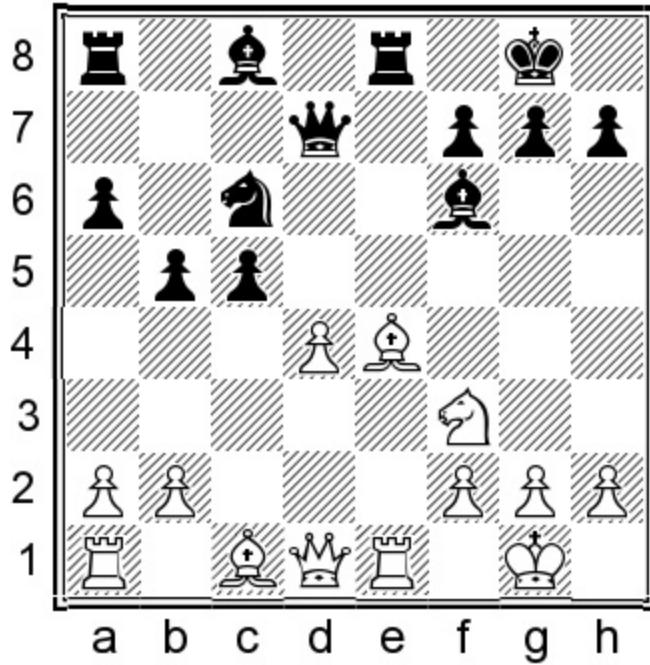
811. Kan – Capablanca, Moscow 1936



Show/Hide Solution

20...♝a6!= Depriving White of the bishop pair. (White to move could have avoided it by g2-g3 and ♝g2.)

812. Alekhine – Eliskases, Podebrady 1936

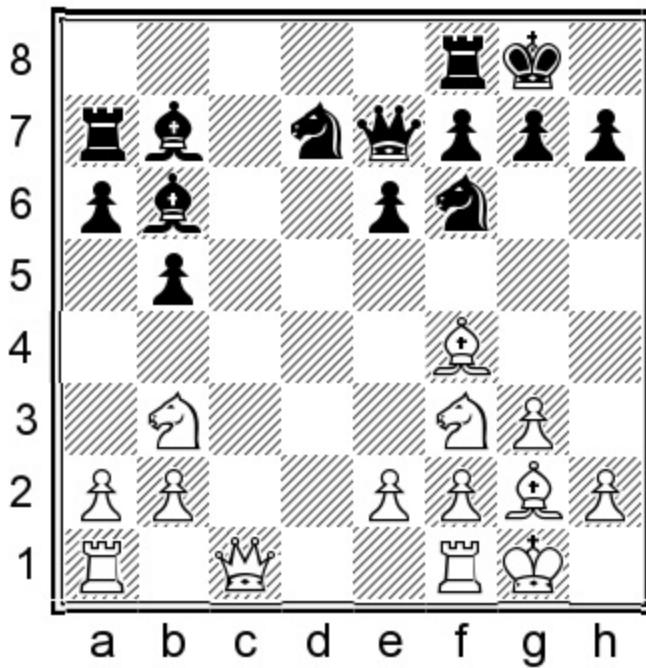


Show/Hide Solution

19.♝g5! Exchanging an undeveloped bishop for an active one. 19.♝e5 tries to make use of the e4-a8 diagonal, but Black doesn't lose material. 19...♝xe5 20.dxe5 ♜xd1 21.♝xd1 ♜b7 22.f4± **19...♜xe4** Sadly the best defence. 19...♝xg5 20.♝xg5 leaves Black's king undefended, and dxc5 is also a threat.

If 20...h6 then 21.♕xf7+– and 21.♗h5+– both win. The other option is 19...♝xd4, when the position screams for a tactical solution. There is one: 20.♝f5+– **20.♝xe4 ♜xd4 21.a4!+–** The last move is the most precise, but you don't need to have planned it to solve the exercise. Alekhine's 21.♝xd4 kept a big advantage and he soon won the game.

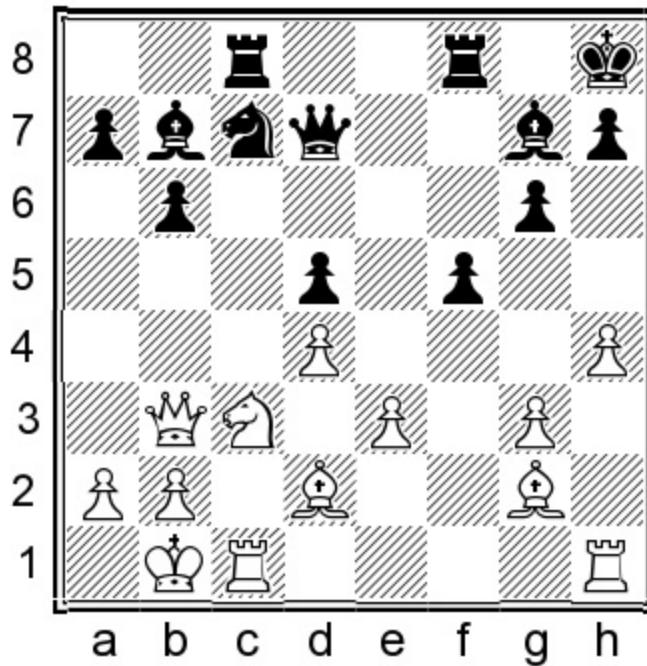
813. Capablanca – Reshevsky, Nottingham 1936



Show/Hide Solution

15.♝e3!= Neutralizing Black's strong bishop. White just needs to calculate a few moves: **15...♝c8 16.♝d2 ♜e4 17.♝d3** There are no more dangerous threats against the queen.

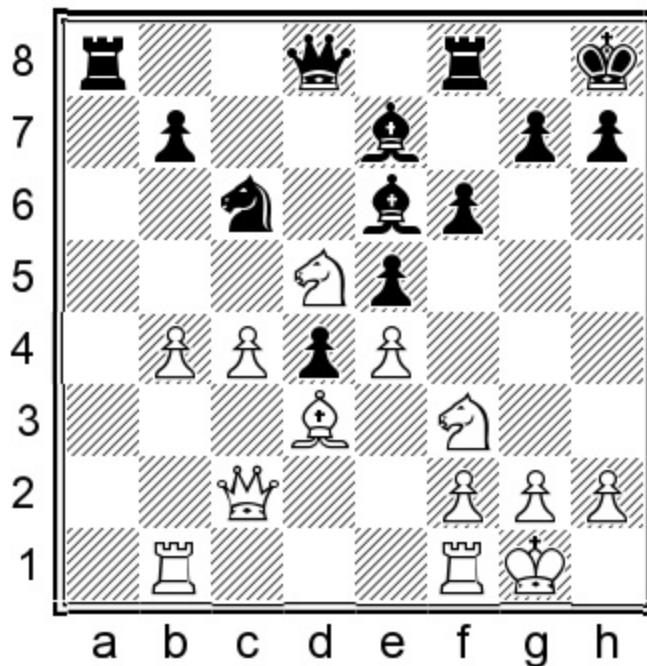
814. Capablanca – Alexander, Nottingham 1936



Show/Hide Solution

23.h5 If White delayed this move, Black could have played ...h7-h5. **23...g5 24.h6!±** Black will always have to worry about the king.

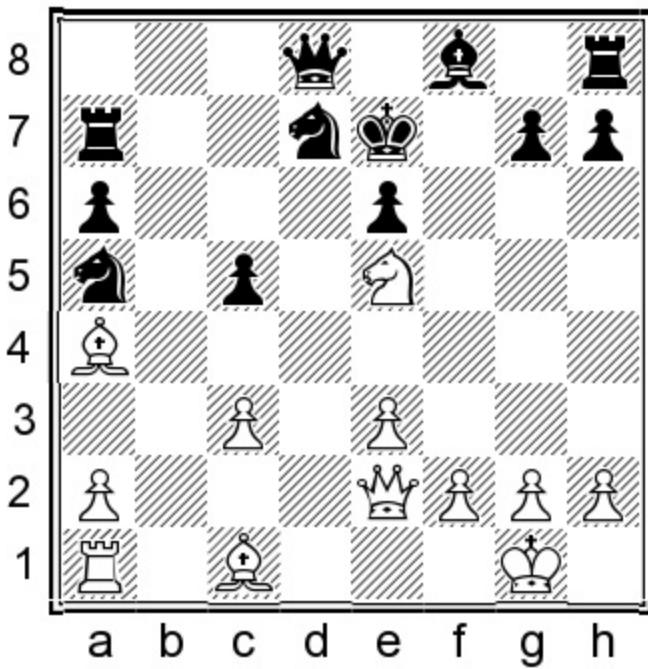
815. Euwe – Alekhine, Netherlands 1937



Show/Hide Solution

18.c5! Pushing the majority. **18...♝a3** White just needs to see that 18...♝xd5? 19.exd5 ♛xd5 20.♝xh7+– leads to a disaster on the light squares. **19.♝c4±**

816. Alekhine – Book, Margate 1938



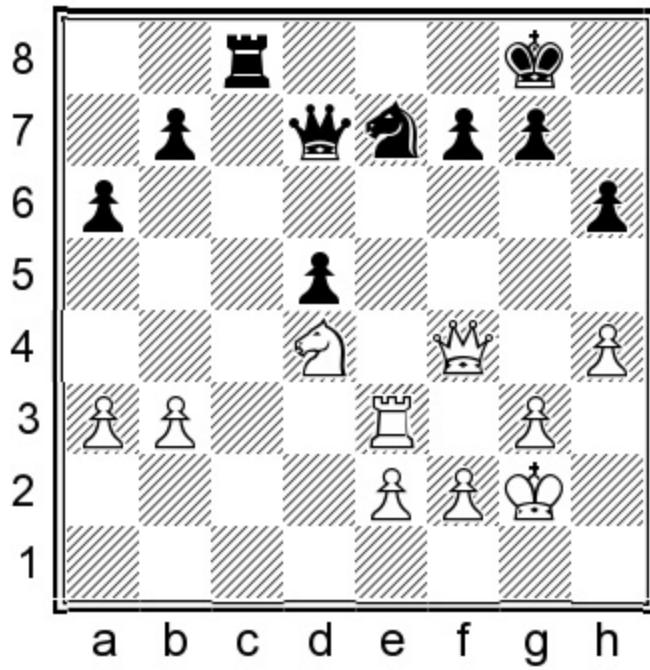
Show/Hide Solution

17.e4! The only way to win is following the positional rule of inviting the last pieces to the party. Being a whole rook down, this is not the time to take back part of the material: 17.♕xd7? ♜xd7+ 17...♝f6 18.♝g5 Threatening ♜d1 and ♜h5. 18...♛c7 19.♛h5 This is the most precise, although 19.♛f4+– was good enough in the game, and Alekhine soon won. 19...♛xe5 The only critical move, but it allows a forced mate: 20.♛e8† ♔d6 21.♜d1† ♔c7 22.♛d8† ♔b7 23.♜b1† ♔b3 24.♜xb3# 1–0

Alexander Alekhine

"Yes, chess is an art, beautiful and aesthetic... I derive tremendous spiritual satisfaction from delving into its intricacies. Liking for it must be intuitive. It's like music."

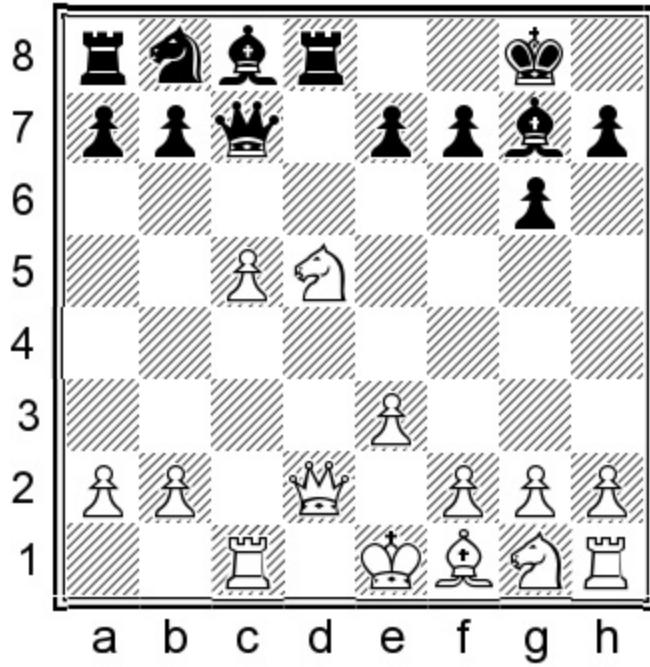
817. Capablanca – Menchik, Margate 1939



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27.h5!± Fixing Black's kingside and stopping ... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ (even though it wasn't an immediate threat). The pawn is undefended on h5, but Black is in no position to exploit that.

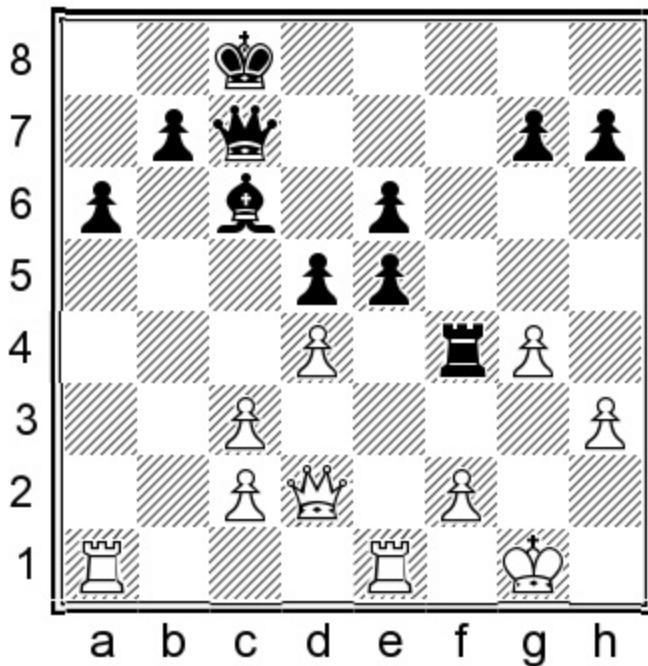
818. Tolush – Botvinnik, Leningrad 1939



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11... $\mathbb{B}xd5!$ 11... $\mathbb{W}d7$ is quite promising for Black but the text move is stronger. **12. $\mathbb{W}xd5 \mathbb{Q}c6!↑$** Black continues with rapid development. The b2-pawn is hanging, and White is far away from castling. Trust your intuition, or update it! Botvinnik's 12... $\mathbb{Q}e6\bar{\infty}$ was less flexible.

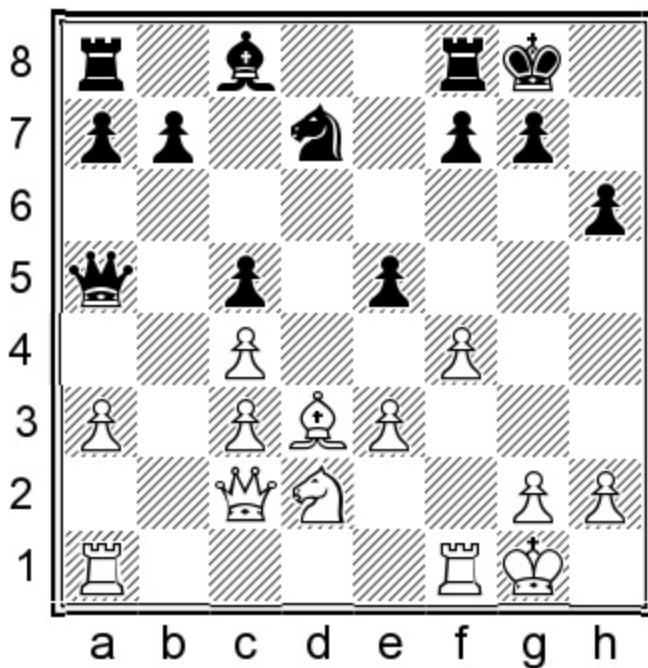
819. Rabinovich – Botvinnik, Leningrad 1939



Show/Hide Solution

25...e4+ Knowing the evaluation is less important than the decision to keep the e-file closed.
25...exd4? 26.cxd4+– gives White an open e-file.

820. Botvinnik – Kan, Leningrad 1939

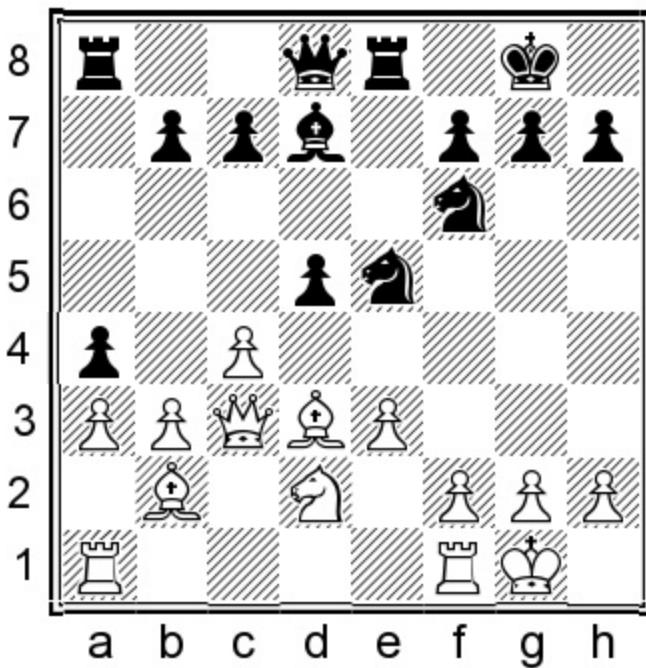


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15.f5 White secures the e4-outpost, gains space and plans f5-f6 (after ♜e4). 15...♝f6 16.♝e4 ♕d8

17. $\mathbb{Q}xf6\#$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}e4\pm$ White can continue with $\mathbb{Q}d5$ and e3-e4. Black's queen is not comfortable as a blockading piece.

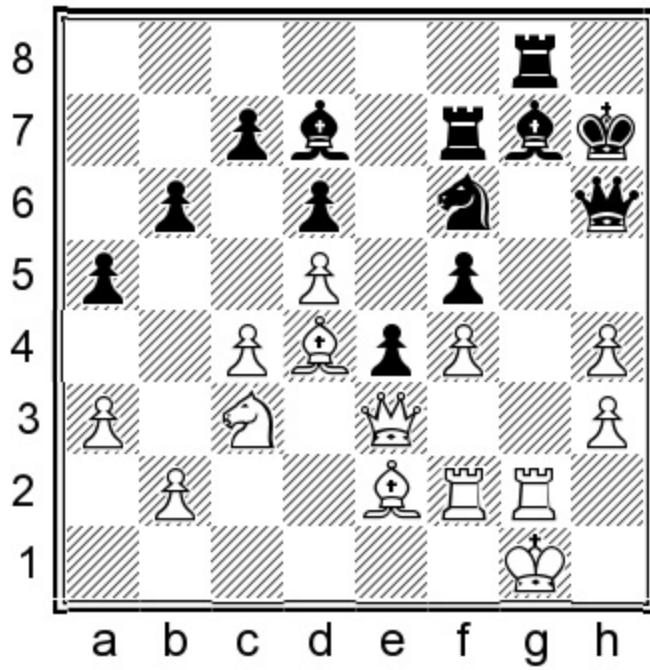
821. Kotov – Botvinnik, Leningrad 1939



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14...axb3 A positionally desirable move to split White's pawns. Black just needs to decide whether to include ... $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ first. The general answer is no, as it opens the diagonal for the b2-bishop. But also, after 14... $\mathbb{Q}xd3?!$ 15. $\mathbb{W}xd3$ axb3?! 16. $cxd5\pm$ the d5-pawn is defended! **15. $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ 15. $cxd5?$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5\mp$** There are several good moves; Botvinnik's **15... $\mathbb{Q}e4\mp$** is one of them.

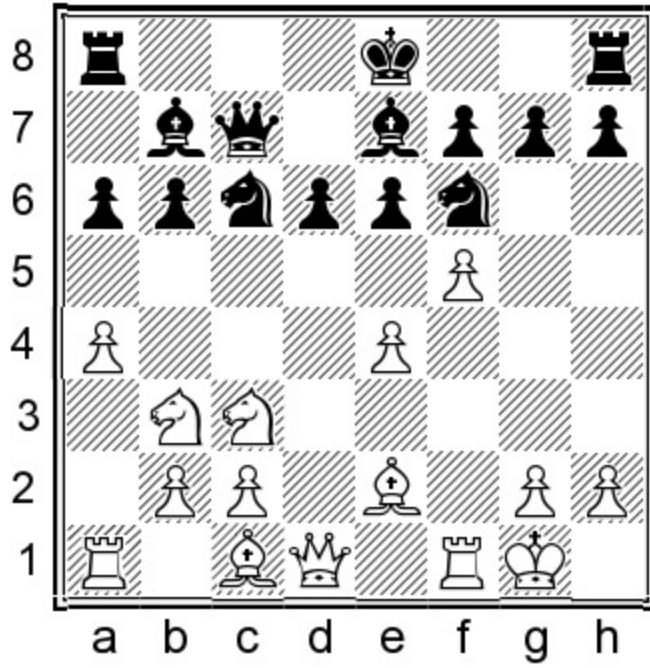
822. Botvinnik – Boleslavsky, Moscow 1940



Show/Hide Solution

32.Bg5! The rook occupies a strong outpost, planning to double up. 32.Bg3?? is less logical from an abstract perspective, as the rook is less secure. Concretely, it loses outright to: 32...Qxd5! 33.Qxd5 Qxd4 34.Qxd4 Bxg3† 32...Bxh4 33.Bfg2+– White threatens Qxf6 followed by Bh5†.

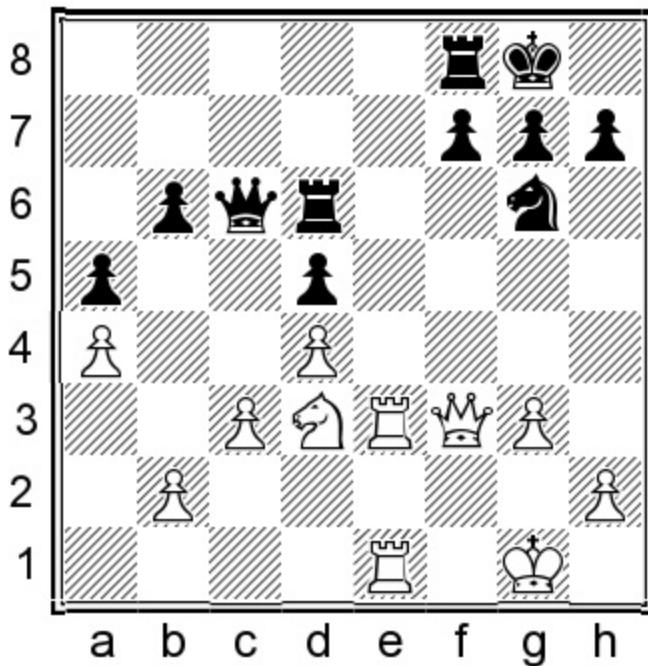
823. Botvinnik – Konstantinopolsky, Moscow 1940



Show/Hide Solution

12.fxe6 fxe6 13.Qh5†! Black surely regretted the decision to delay short castling. 13...g6 A weakness that Black is not happy with. 14.Qg4±

824. Botvinnik – Boleslavsky, Leningrad/Moscow 1941

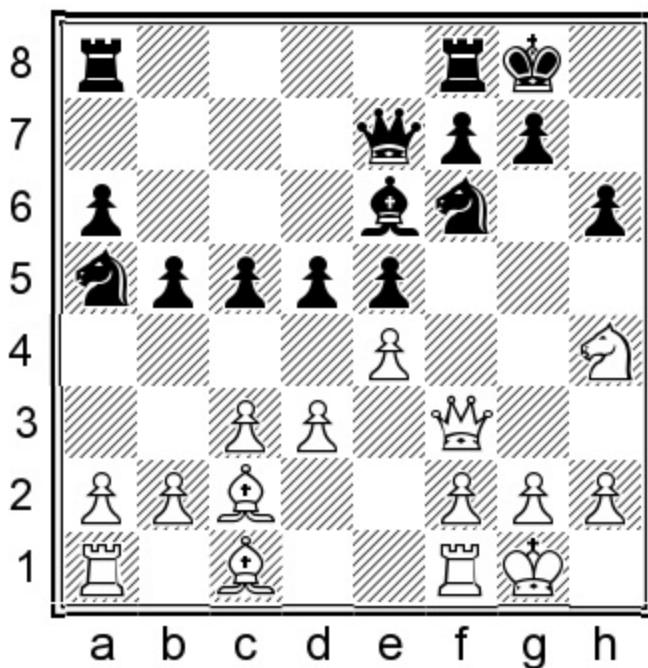


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26.h4! Harassing the knight. 26... $\mathbb{Q}a1?$ is the only way to defend the a-pawn, but it looks stupid.

26...f6± was the game continuation. Black should avoid 26... $\mathbb{W}xa4?$ 27.h5 $\mathbb{Q}h8$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}f4$ $\mathbb{W}c6$ 29. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}xd5+$ — when White regains the pawn with a winning position. 26... $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ 27.h5 $\mathbb{Q}f6!±$ followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ was Black's best chance to resist.

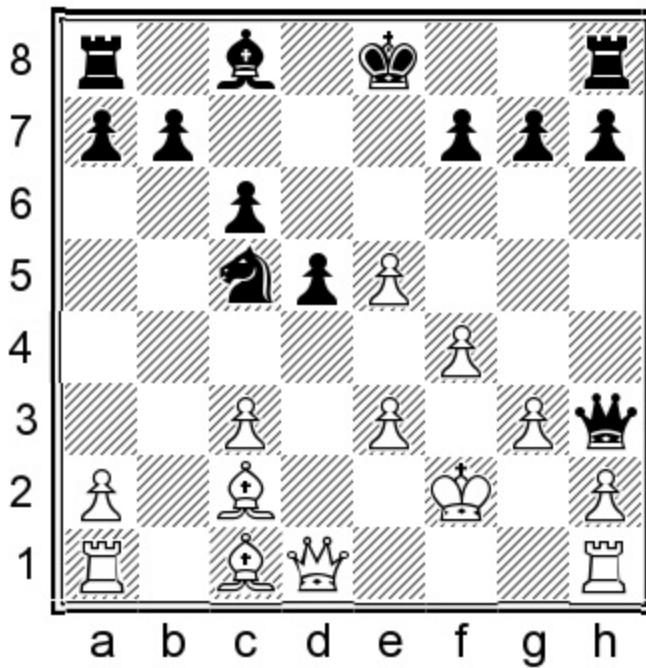
825. Alekhine – Bogoljubow, Munich 1941



Show/Hide Solution

15.exd5! Disturbing Black's coordination. Neither the knight nor the bishop wants to leave its current square. 15... $\mathbb{W}g3??$ loses the knight after: 15... $\mathbb{Q}h5-$ + 15... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 15... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ leaves f5 undefended, and after 16. $\mathbb{Q}f5!$ \pm White will follow up with $\mathbb{W}h3$, with the plan to sacrifice on h6. **16. $\mathbb{W}g3$ $\mathbb{W}f6$** Keeping h6 and e5 defended. **17.f4** \uparrow

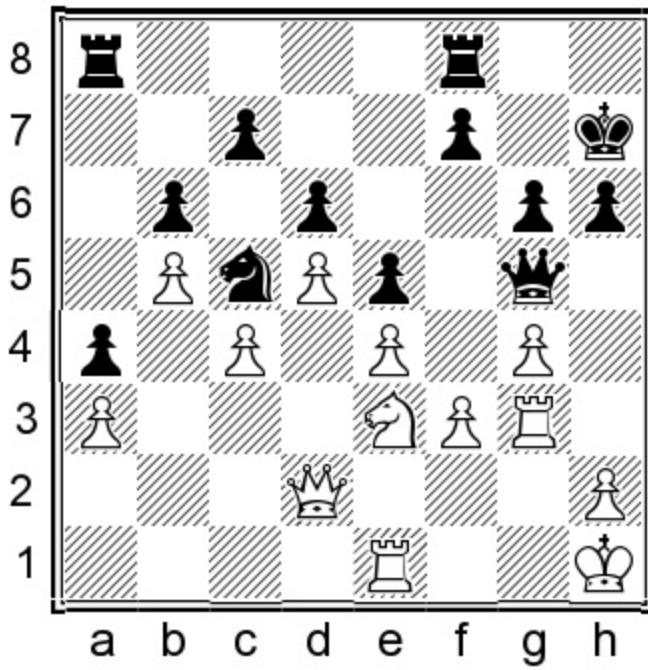
826. Makogonov – Botvinnik, Sverdlovsk 1943



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14... $\mathbb{Q}f5-$ + Gaining access to e4.

827. Guimard – Euwe, Groningen 1946



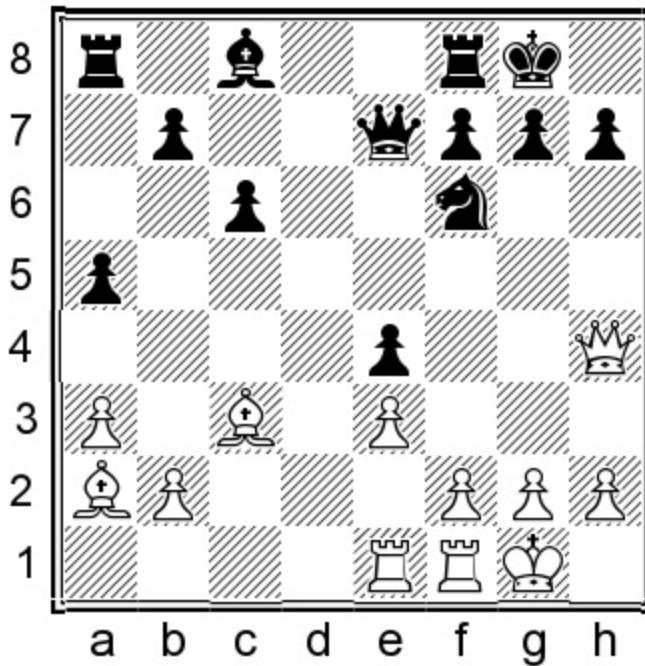
Show/Hide Solution

26...♜h8! Preparing to attack along the h-file. 26...♝g7 is the right idea but wrong timing: 27.♗f5† (No damage done, as Black can repeat.) 27.♕e2 ♜g7 28.♗g2 28.♗f5† ♜f8—+ shows why it's better to start with the rook. 28...h5 29.h4 hxg4 30.fxg4 ♜xh4†! 31.♗xh4 ♜h8 32.♗g2 ♜xh4—+ White soon had to resign.

Max Euwe

“Strategy requires thought; tactics require observation.”

828. Botvinnik – Euwe, The Hague/Moscow (2) 1948



Show/Hide Solution

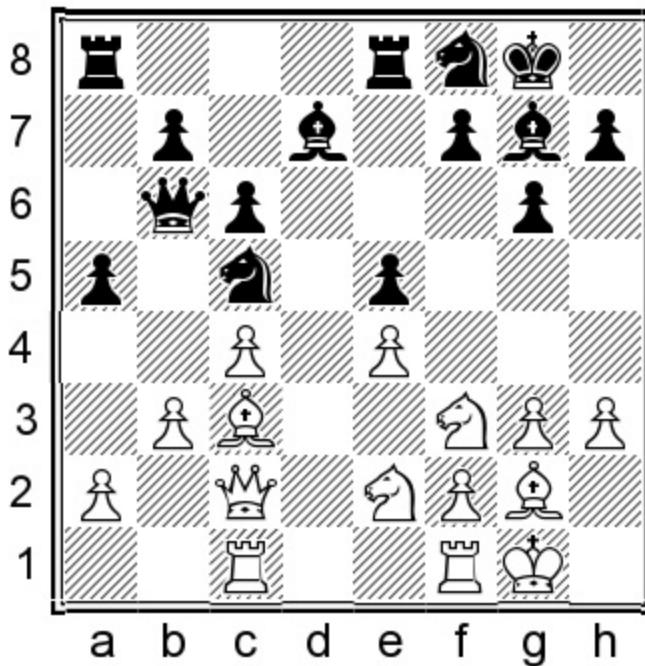
White has sacrificed a pawn, and has strong bishops and a lead in development as compensation.

20.f3 Opening the f-file and the b1-h7-diagonal. 20... $\mathbb{Q}xf6?$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 21. $\mathbb{W}xf6$ gxf6 22.f3 fails to win back the pawn: 22...exf3 23. $\mathbb{Q}xf3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6! \mp$

20... $\mathbb{Q}d5??$ The best defence was: 20...exf3! 21. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8! \pm$

21. $\mathbb{W}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ 22.fxe4±

829. Ratner – Petrosian, Gorky 1950

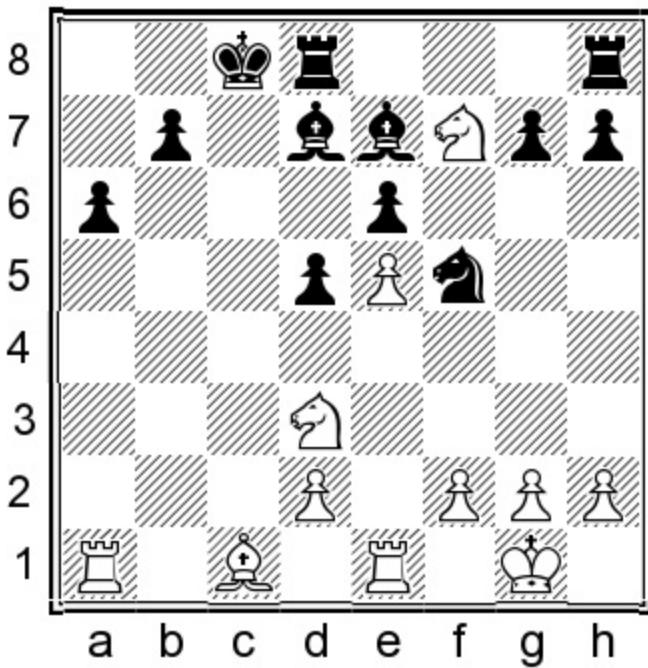


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19...f5! This pawn thrust is more common with a closed centre. However, it's strong here due to the

clumsiness of White's set-up with the knight on e2, bishop on c3 and rook on c1. The weak d4-square is also there after 19...f6†, but Black's advantage is smaller than in the game. 20.♘d2 ♘fe6† White's last move took away the pressure on the e5-pawn, making this possible. After 21.exf5? ♘d4!—+ Black will take back on f5 with the bishop.

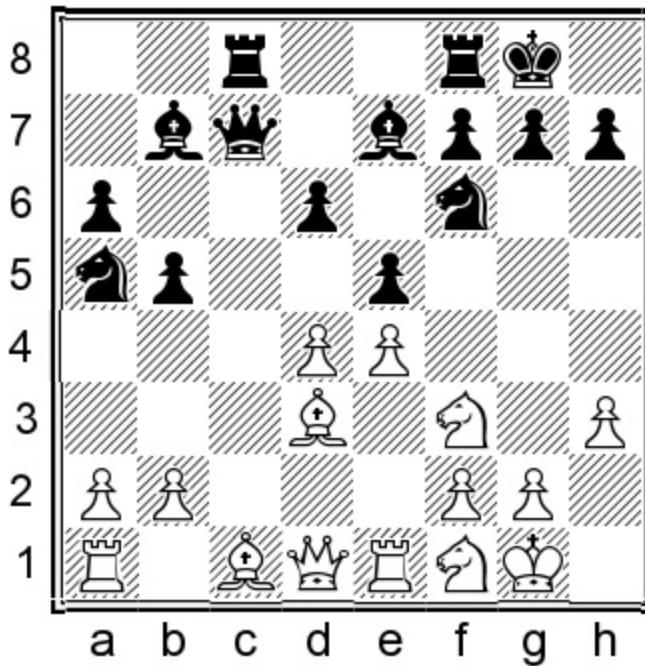
830. Smyslov – Flohr, Budapest 1950



Show/Hide Solution

24.♗a3!± White will win the exchange anyway, and Smyslov exchanges the bishop pair to increase the power of the rooks. 24.♖xh8 may transpose, but unless you have a good reason, it's better to delay capturing one of the rooks. It may win a tempo. 24...♝xh8 25.♗a3 Let's look for a difference compared to the game continuation. 25...♝xa3 26.♝xa3 ♘d4 27.♝c3† ♘b8 28.♝c5?! ♘b5 29.f4 Black should not win the exchange back, since White's e-pawn becomes too strong. But it's possible to use the rook actively with: 29...♜c8 This would not have been possible in the analogous line when White delays capturing on h8.

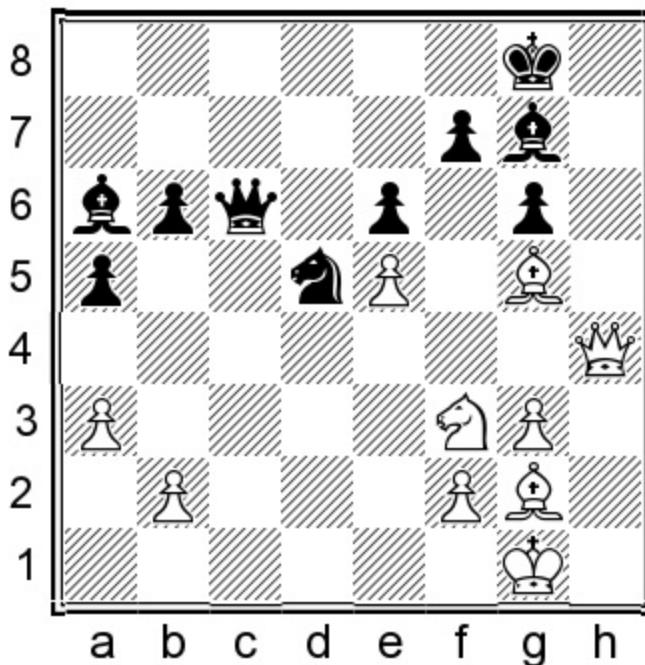
831. Unzicker – Euwe, Düsseldorf 1951



Show/Hide Solution

15...d5! If it works tactically to strike in the centre with a fianchettoed bishop (or two), it's usually a good idea since it extends the diagonal. On this occasion, it involves a pawn sacrifice. **16.exd5 e4!** 16...exd4 helps White's knight forward: 17.♘xd4 ♘xd5 18.♘f5± 17.♗xe4 ♗xe4 18.♗xe4 ♗xd5 19.♗e1 ♖b7∞ The threats against the f3-knight and d4-pawn provide full compensation. Also possible is: 19...♗c6 20.♗e3 ♖b4 21.♗d2 f5!∞

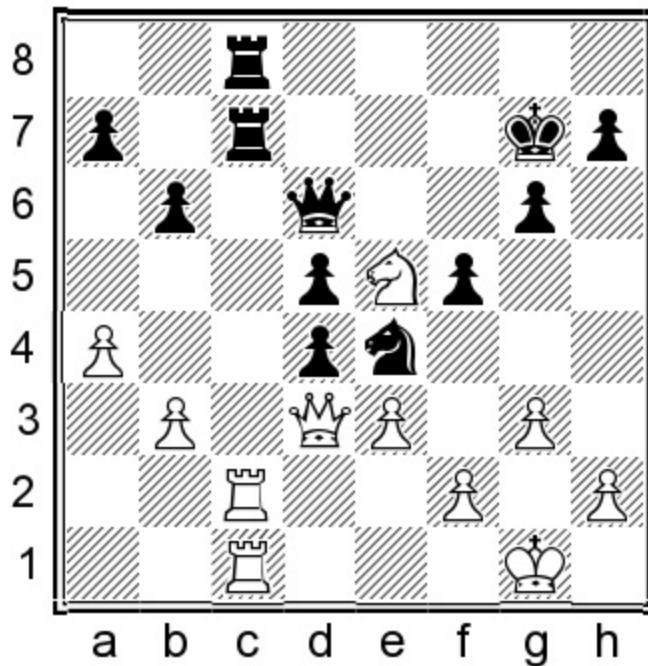
832. Botvinnik – Ragozin, Moscow (Training) 1951



Show/Hide Solution

29.♕h6 Weakening Black's king, preparing ♕xg7 and ♔g5. **29...♔f8** 29...♔h8?? 30.♗d8† ♔h7 and White wins in many ways, the fastest being 31.♗g5† with mate in five. Black could have escaped to a pawn-down endgame with: 29...♕xh6 30.♗xh6 ♕c2 31.♗g5 ♕d1† 32.♔h2 ♕h5† 33.♗xh5 gxh5 34.♗f3 **30.♕xf8 ♔xf8 31.♗g5+–**

833. Botvinnik – Bronstein, Moscow (7) 1951



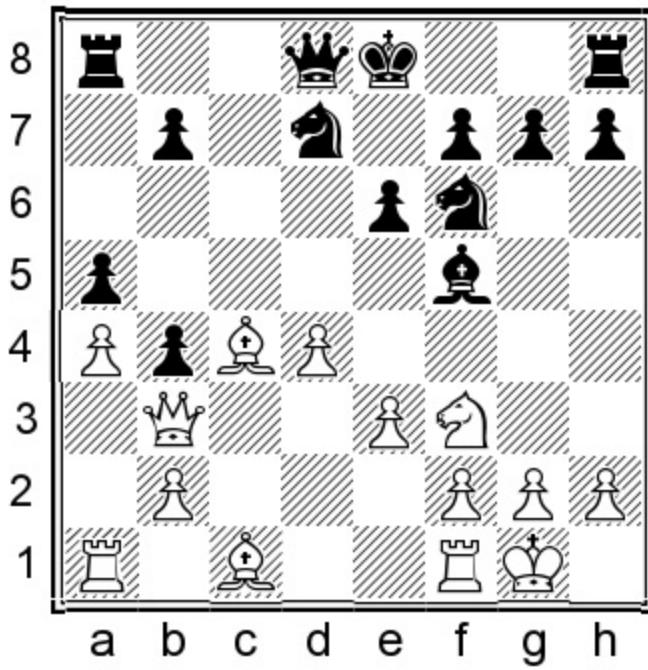
Show/Hide Solution

29.exd4!± Black's king is weaker, and White can kick away the knight with f2-f3. To capture with the queen on d4 (and keep Black's isolated pawn), White needs to give up the c-file: 29.♗xc7† ♗xc7 30.♗xc7† ♕xc7 31.♗xd4 Black has sufficient counterplay after 31...♕c2= or by offering a queen exchange. This time, a dynamic factor (the c-file) is more important than a static factor (pawn structure).

Mikhail Botvinnik

"I only think well when my mind is calm."

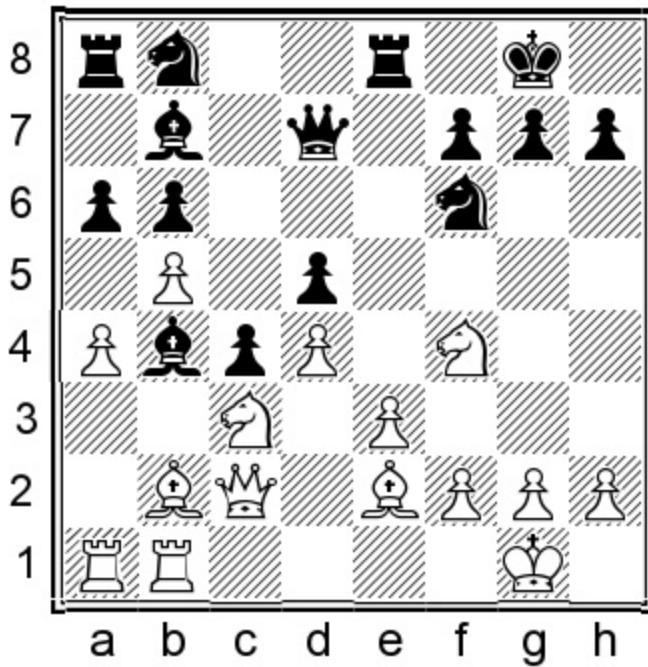
834. Euwe – Rico Gonzalez, Gijon 1951



Show/Hide Solution

12. $\mathbb{Q}e1! \pm$ Planning f2-f3 and e3-e4, while the knight can continue to d3.

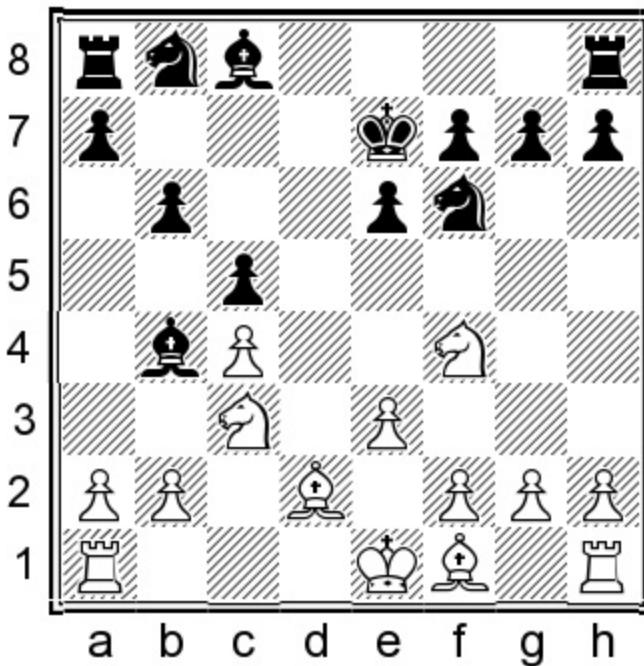
835. Botvinnik – Moiseev, Moscow 1951



Show/Hide Solution

17. $\mathbb{Q}a3$ It is logical for White to act on the queenside, which may be opened after ...axb5, and it's also good to exchange the bishop before Black has time for ... $\mathbb{Q}d6xf4$. **17... $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xa3 \pm$** Black should close the queenside with ...a6-a5. In the resulting position White stands better due to the additional queenside space, more active bishop and more flexible pawn structure.

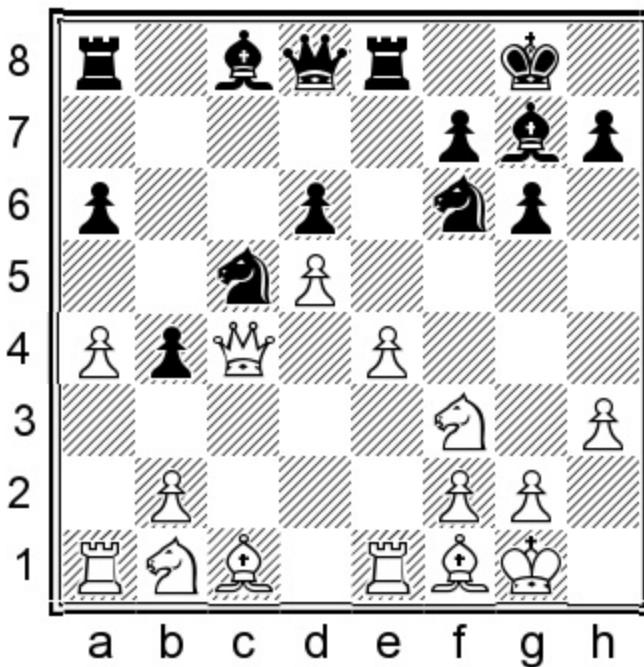
836. Smyslov – Stoltz, Bucharest 1953



Show/Hide Solution

10.a3! Forcing Black to part with the bishop – it has to be done before the knight has reached c6.
10...♝a5?! 10...♝xc3 11.♝xc3± 11.b4! cxb4 12.axb4 ♛xb4 13.♝cd5†! ♛xd5 14.♝xd5† exd5
15.♝xb4†± The resulting position suits the bishop pair.

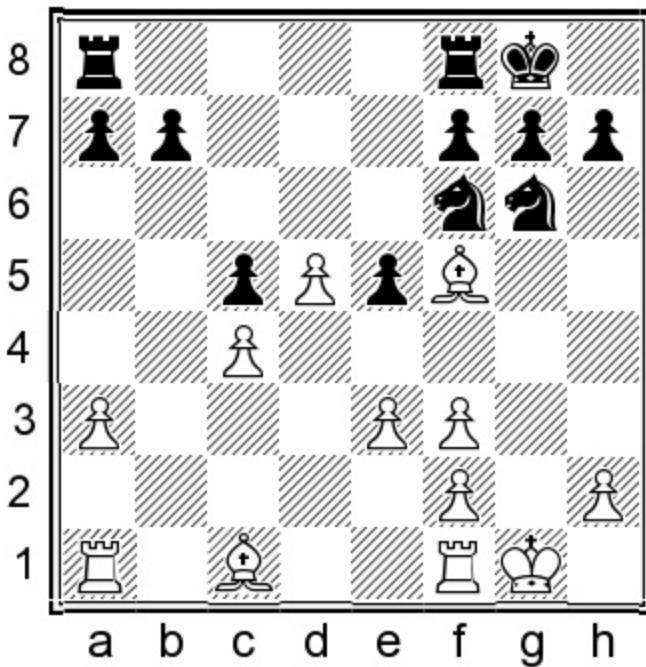
837. Taimanov – Petrosian, Gagra (Training) 1953



Show/Hide Solution

16...a5! Getting active with ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$ and ... $\mathbb{E}c8$ is more important than immediately regaining the pawn. 16... $\mathbb{Q}fxe4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}bd2=$ was the game. 17. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 18. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}xf1$ $\mathbb{E}c8$ 20. $\mathbb{W}b1$ The only move that keeps the pawn. 20... $\mathbb{W}b6+$ The queen goes to a6 next.

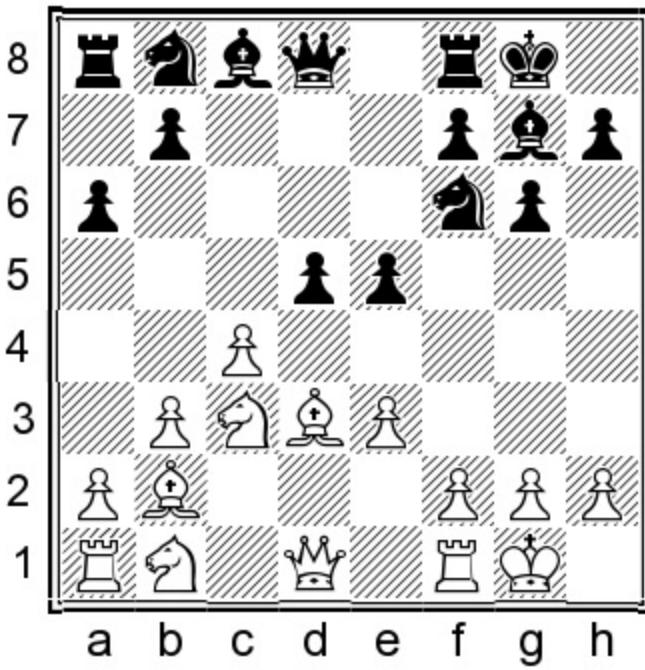
838. Taimanov – Euwe, Zurich 1953



Show/Hide Solution

18... $\mathbb{Q}h4$ Either winning a pawn or exchanging one half of the bishop pair. 19. $\mathbb{Q}e4$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 20. $fxe4$ $f5$ Playing for the light squares. 21. $exf5$ $\mathbb{Q}f3\#!$ The game went 21...e4 and now 22.f4! $exf3$ 23.e4# saw Taimanov limit the damage. 22. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $e4+$ Black has full light-square control and White's king is in some danger.

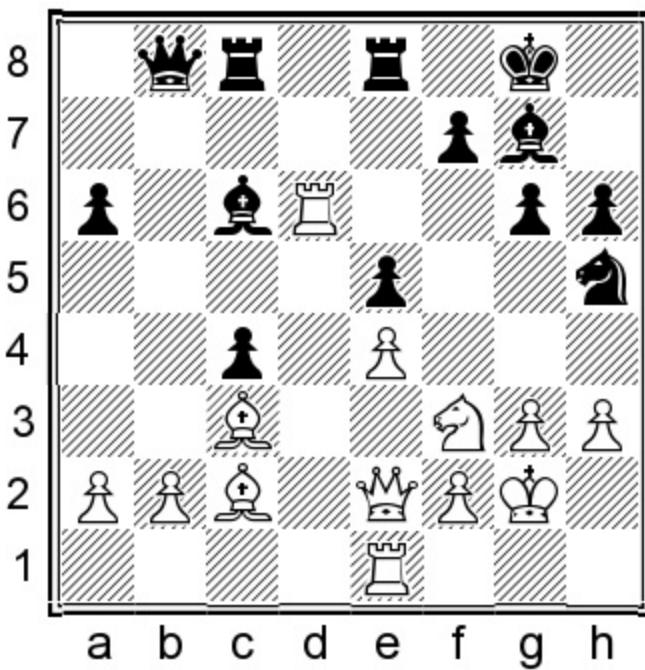
839. Kotov – Smyslov, Zurich 1953



Show/Hide Solution

11...d4! Smyslov's 11...dxc4 should have been met by 12.bxc4! to avoid ...b7-b5. Black has nice squares (c5 and c6), but so does White (d5). **12.exd4 exd4 13.♘e4 ♘c6†** The d-pawn is not only isolated, but also passed, which makes it harder for White to keep control over d3 in the long run. White is not active enough to push the queenside majority.

840. Smyslov – Kluger, Amsterdam (Ol) 1954

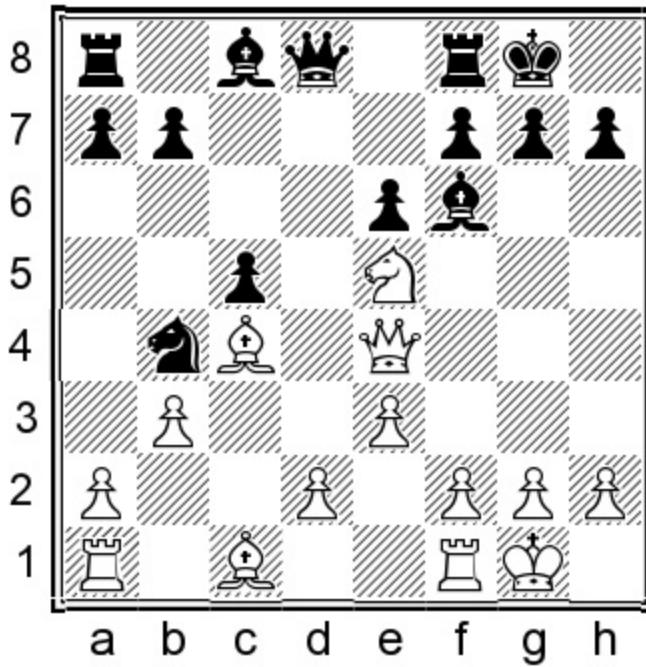


Show/Hide Solution

29.♗xc6! White was clearly better after Smyslov's 29.♗ed1, but the text move is the best way to

increase White's advantage. **29...♝xc6 30.♝a4** The exchanges make the c4-pawn vulnerable, and/or provide entrance squares on the d-file. **30...♛c7 30...♝ec8 31.♝xc6 ♛xc6 32.♝d1+– 31.♝xc6 ♛xc6 32.♝c1 ♜f6 33.♝d2+–**

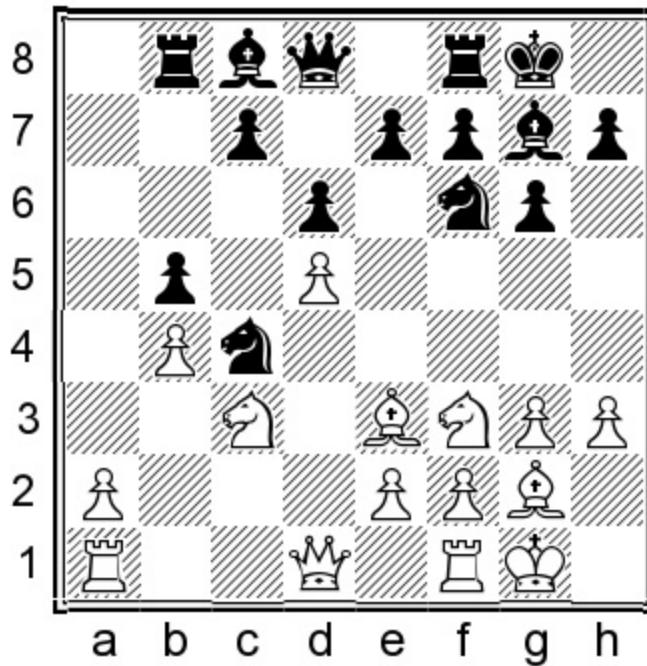
841. Smyslov – Sliwa, Lodz 1955



Show/Hide Solution

13...♝b8! Black prepares to put the bishop on its best square. There is a short line to calculate. 13...♝d7= was played. 13...b5!? is a nice try, but the main move is better. 14.♝xb5 ♜b7 15.♛xb7 ♜xe5 16.♝b1 ♜b8 17.♛e4! (17.♛d7 ♜a5+) 17...♝xh2† 18.♝xh2 ♜xb5 19.♝b2∞ Black can grab a pawn but White's strong bishop provides compensation. **14.a3 b5!** 14...♝d5= **15.axb4 bxc4†** White might win a pawn (on a7), but Black's passed b-pawn and active bishops are more important.

842. Smyslov – Petrosian, Amsterdam/Leeuwarden 1956



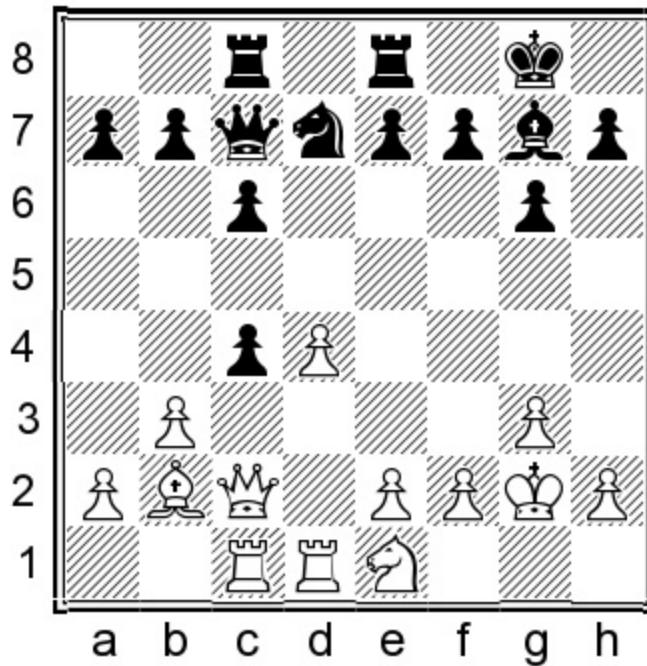
Show/Hide Solution

13.♖a7! Misplacing Black's rook before putting the bishop on d4 **13...♗b7** **13...♕a8** **14.♘xb5 ♖d7** **15.a4+–** (or **15.♗fd4+–**) **14.♖d4±** **14...e5** is less effective with the rook on b7. (Petrosian played it nevertheless.)

Vasily Smyslov

"I have frequently stated that I regard chess as an art form, where creativity prevails over other factors."

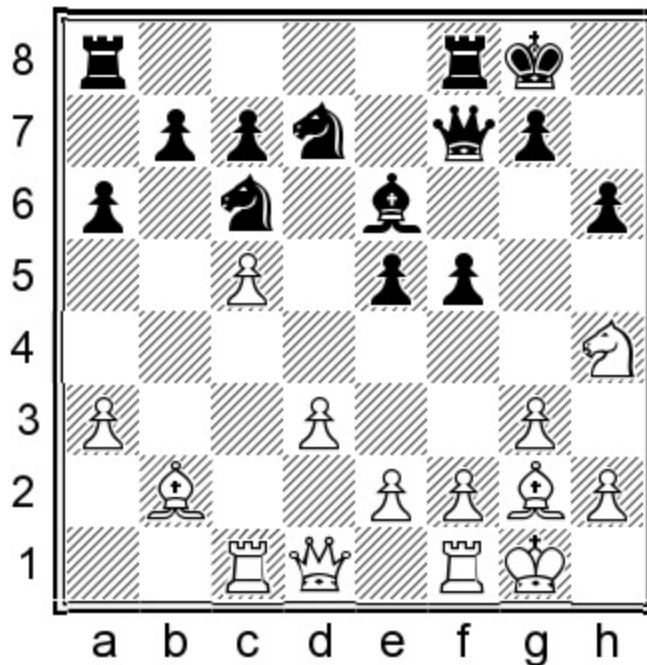
843. Botvinnik – Stahlberg, Moscow (Ol) 1956



Show/Hide Solution

19. $\mathbb{W}xc4! \pm$ To be able to answer ...e7-e5 with d4-d5. After 19.bxc4 e5= White will either be left with an isolated pawn on the c- or d-file, or allow 20.e3?! e4 \bar{f} when White's knight is ridiculous, unless f2-f3 is played (which gives Black the e4-square).

844. Botvinnik – Benkner, Moscow (Ol) 1956

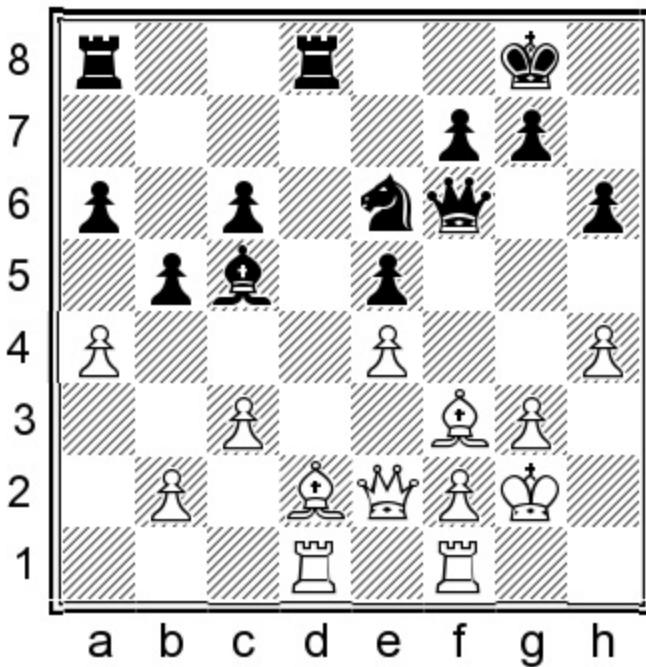


Show/Hide Solution

17. $f4 \pm$ Not allowing ...f5-f4, and preparing to put pressure on f5 after f4xe5. **17...exf4 18.gxf4 \pm** This simple recapture is strong enough to justify White's previous move. However, 18. $\mathbb{E}xf4!$ was even

stronger, thanks to the following tactical justification: 18...g5? 19.♕xf5! Threatening a fork on h6, so Black has no time to capture the rook. 19...♕xf5 20.♖xf5 ♕xf5 21.♗b3† ♔f7 22.♗f1 ♕g6 23.♖xf7 ♕xf7 24.♔d5 Winning the queen.

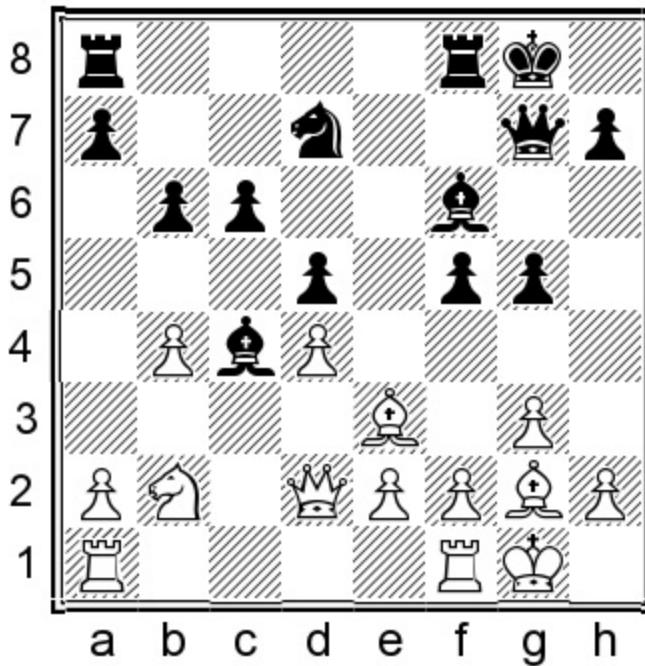
845. Smyslov – Keres, Moscow 1956



Show/Hide Solution

21.a5!± Avoiding ...bxa4 (even though that isn't the most dangerous threat), while keeping the a-file closed and fixing the pawn on a6. White continues with ♗g4, b2-b4 and ♗e3, with the ultimate plan to infiltrate on the queenside – perhaps with ♕b6. Instead, Smyslov played 21.♔c1 and there slowly followed exchange after exchange with a draw.

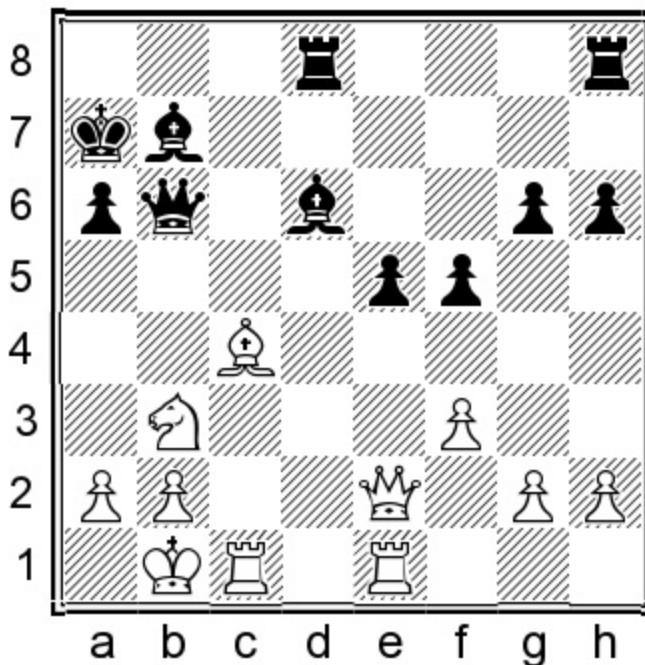
846. Sliwa – Smyslov, Moscow 1956



Show/Hide Solution

20...♝a6! This retreat is forced, to avoid activating White's bishop on g2. The game went: 20...b5? This is a good positional idea, but concretely it doesn't work, as White can undermine the pawn centre. 21.♗xc4 bxc4 22.b5! If only the king was on h8, Black could have taken on b5. 22...♝b6 23.bxc6+– Black does not have a convenient way to regain the pawn, as a4-a5 attacks the d5-pawn once again. **21.a4 ♔h8 22.♝ad1±**

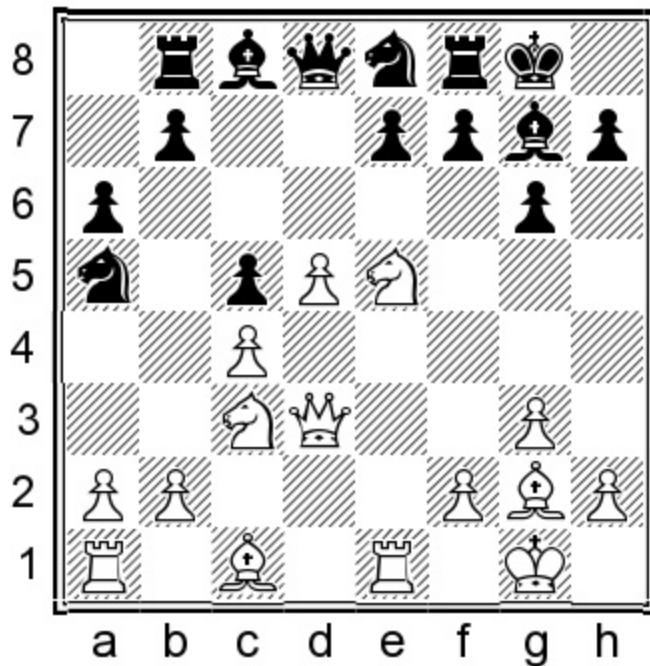
847. Smyslov – Botvinnik, Moscow (4) 1957



Show/Hide Solution

27.♖ed1! Using the worse-placed rook to prepare the exchange of bishops. 27.♖cd1?! e4 28.♕d5 ♕b4 and Black wins material. 27...e4 27...♗b8 prevents ♕d5, but allows 28.a4∞ followed by a4-a5, a check on the diagonal and ♜c5 or ♜c5. **28.♕d5! ♜f4 29.♖c5!=** Smyslov gave up the exchange with 29.♗xb7? and lost.

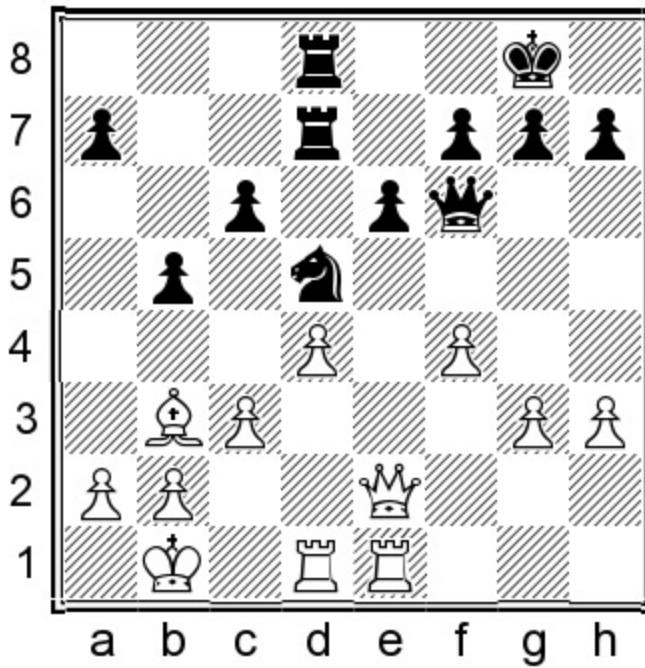
848. Euwe – Yanofsky, Munich (Ol) 1958



Show/Hide Solution

13...f6 13...♗d6 was played. White stands better, especially after 14.♗e2! hitting the e7- and c5-pawns with ♗e5-d3. **14.♗f3 e5!=** With a tactical detail (seeing that capturing en passant loses the queen), Black avoids the backward pawn on e7.

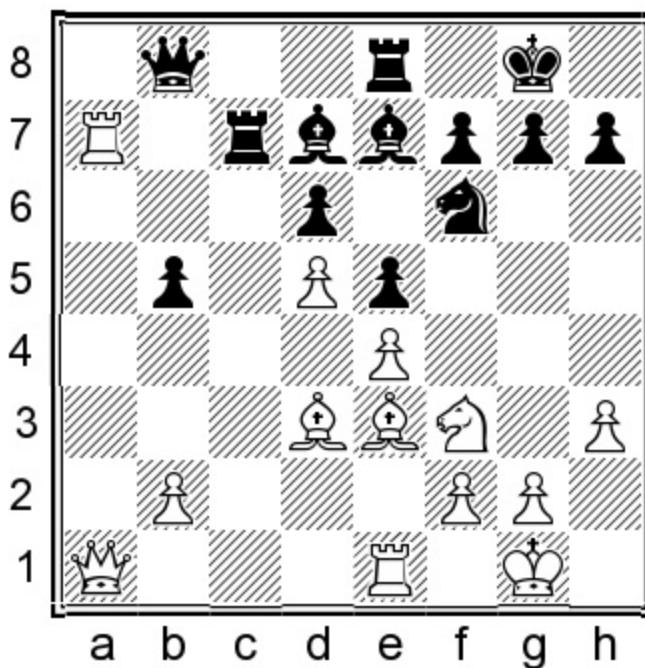
849. Matanovic – Petrosian, Kyiv 1959



Show/Hide Solution

20...b4!? **21.Qxd5?!** Trying to avoid a weak pawn on d4 or c3. **21.Qf3?!** bxc3 was the game. **21.cxb4** is the best try although **21...Qxb4?** is no fun for White. **21...Qxd5 22.cxb4 Qg6†!** Taking on d4 would give Black some advantage, but the text move is much stronger. **23.Qd3** To defend the g3-pawn. **23...Qxd4! 24.Qxg6 Qxd1† 25.Qxd1 Qxd1† 26.Qc2 fxg6! 27.Qxd1** White can't create a passed pawn on the queenside, but Black can on the other wing. **27...Qf7 28.Qe2 g5! 29.fxg5 Qg6 30.h4 Qf5+** A single passed pawn is better than two doubled pawns.

850. Tal – Krogius, Tbilisi 1959



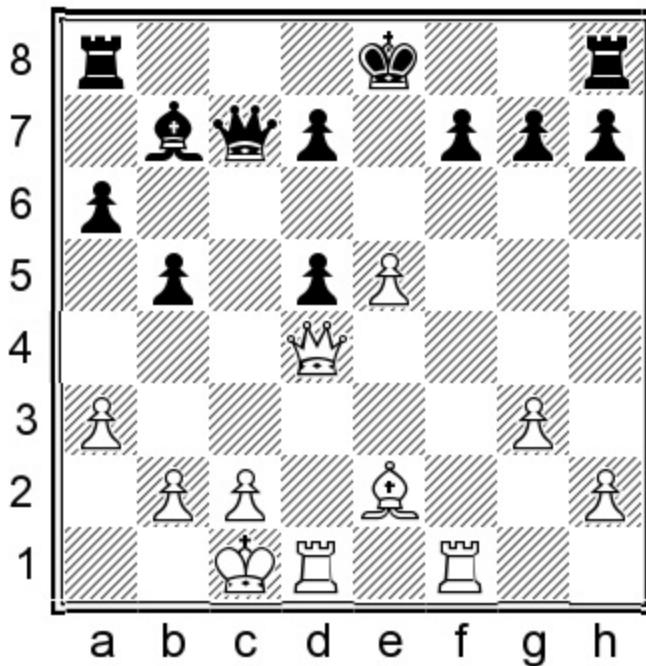
Show/Hide Solution

24. $\mathbb{R}a6! \pm$ Keeping the active rook. White will soon send the other rook to a1, while Black has no entrance square on the c-file.

5. Hard Challenge Exercise 851-900

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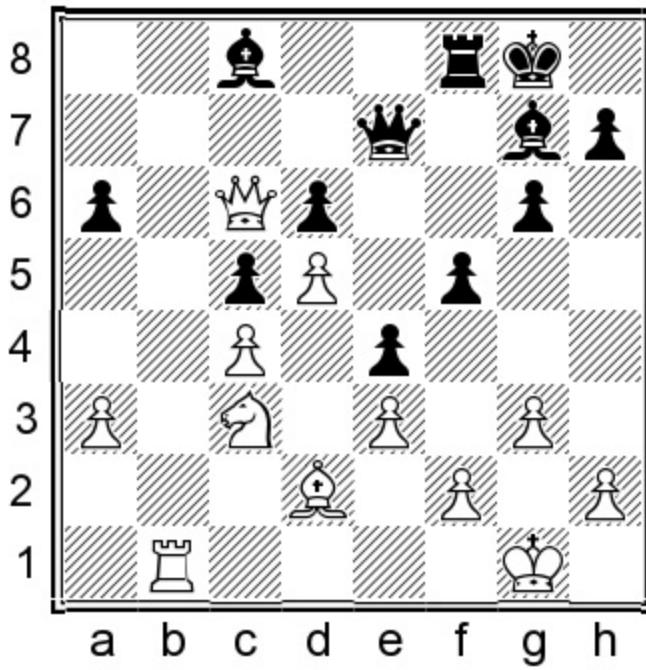
851. Nezhmetdinov – Tal, Tbilisi 1959



Show/Hide Solution

18.e6! Very natural, but some thought is needed. **18...0-0** **18...fxe6** tries to castle long, but runs into: **19.Qh5†**; **18...dxe6** **19.Qxg7 Qf8** was the game. White subsequently mishandled his advantage and lost, but he could have won by stopping long castling: **20.Qg4!** **0-0-0** This loses tactically, but Black's position was untenable anyway. **21.Qxe6† fxe6** **22.Qxf8!** **Qxf8** **23.Qxf8† Qd7** **24.Qf7† Qd6** **25.Qxc7+–** **19.exf7† Qxf7** Black's king is weak – and just compare the bishops! – but there's nothing decisive. **20.Qxf7 Qxf7** **21.Qf1† Qg8** **22.Qf2 d6** **23.Qh5±**

852. Benko – Tal, Bled/Zagreb/Belgrade 1959



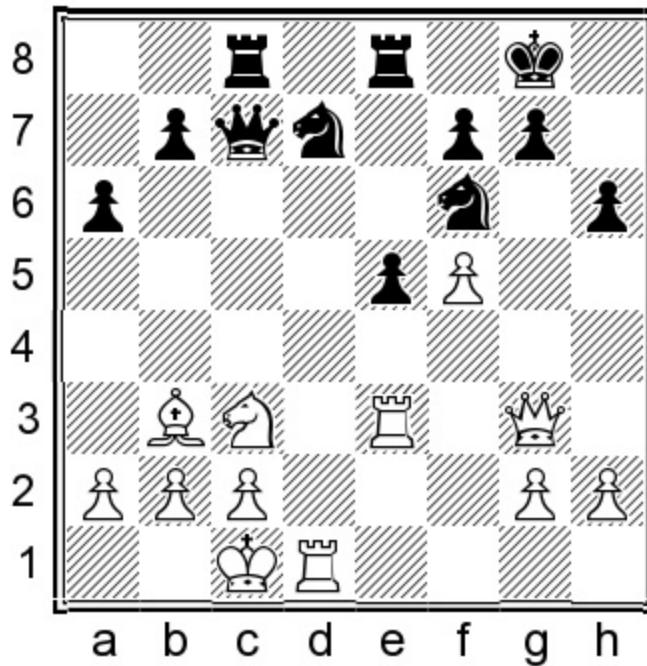
Show/Hide Solution

25...f4! Aiming for the weak light squares. **26.♗b8** 26.exf4 is how White wants to capture, but it loses material: 26...e3 27.fxe3 (27.♔e1 exf2† 28.♕xf2 ♔d4†–+) 27...♕xc3 28.♕xc3 ♕xe3†–+; 26.gxf4 ♕h4 is almost mate. **26...♕h3** Black's queen infiltrates via the b-file. 26...fxe3 also gives a winning position. **27.♗xf8† ♕xf8 28.exf4 ♕b8!–+**

Mikhail Tal

“Just as one’s imagination is stirred by a girl’s smile, so is one’s imagination stirred by the possibilities of chess.”

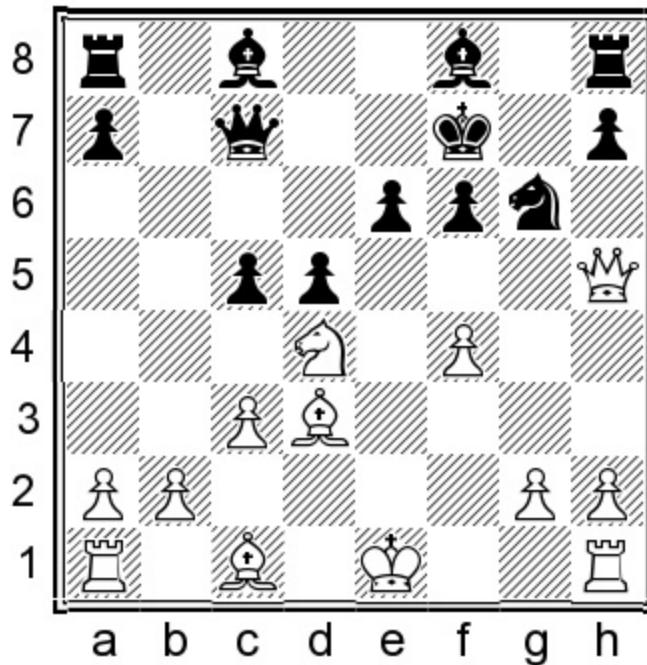
853. Tan – Petrosian, Beverwijk 1960



Show/Hide Solution

22...♝c5!† Threatening the bishop (with check) before White has time for ♜d5 and ♖xd5.

854. Bronstein – Petrosian, Leningrad 1960



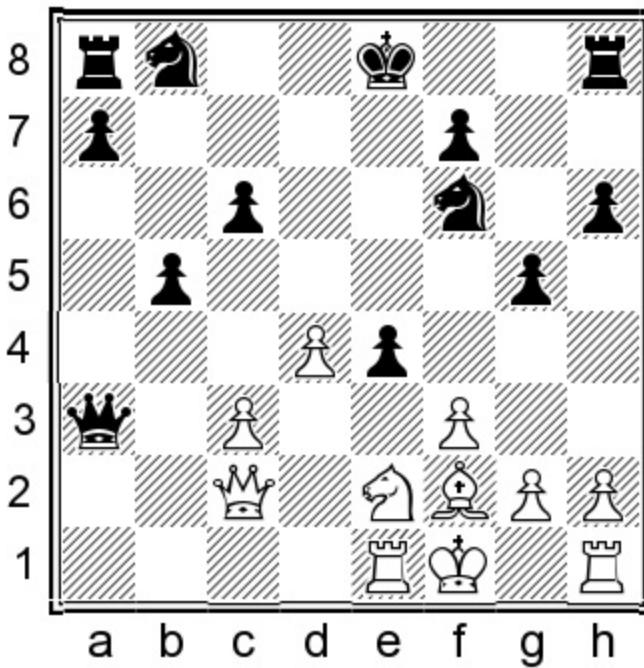
Show/Hide Solution

15...cxd4! Ignoring White's threat. **15...♝g7∞ 16.♕xg6† hxg6 16...♝g7= 17.♗xh8 dxc3–+** For the exchange, Black got a pawn, an offside white queen, and White's king stuck in the centre. (Castling is met by ...♗b6† and ...cxb2.) The positional evaluation is that the position is too open to give any chances for White to survive.

Tigran Petrosian

“Even the most distinguished players have in their careers experienced severe disappointments due to ignorance of the best lines or suspension of their own common sense.”

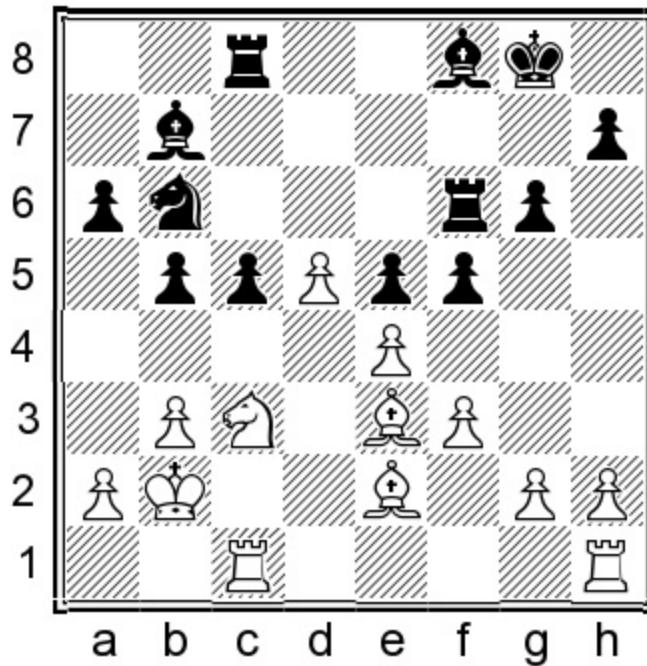
855. Botvinnik – Tal, Moscow (7) 1961



Show/Hide Solution

17.h4! Activating a piece (a positional factor). White makes use of the rook on h1 before deciding how to act in the centre. 17.fxe4 ♕a4!∞ 17...gxh4 17...g4 18.fxe4 ♕a4 19.♕d2+– The white queen is much stronger compared to the 17.fxe4 line above, as the f4-square and h6-pawn have been weakened by ...g5-g4. 17...exf3? is as bad as it looks. One way: 18.♘f4† ♔f8 19.hxg5+– **18.♗xh4+–** Other captures were equally strong.

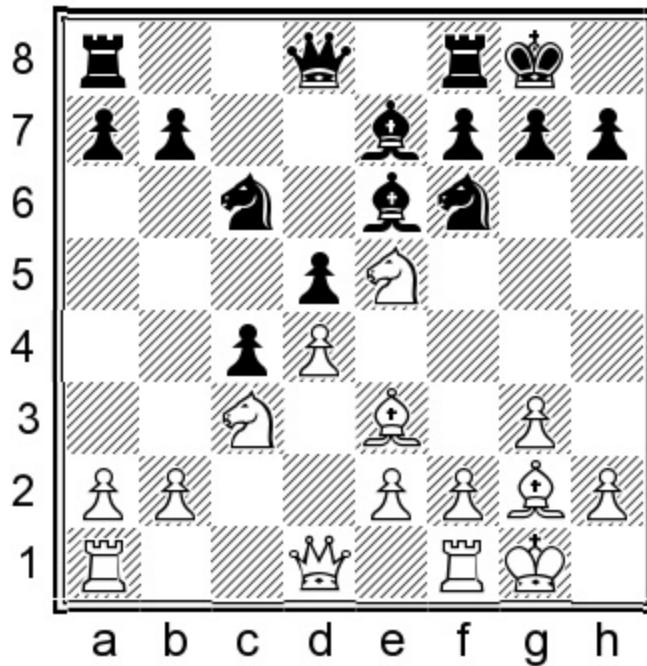
856. Botvinnik – Tal, Moscow (13) 1961



Show/Hide Solution

22.a4! Taking action on the queenside before Black does it (...c5-c4). **22...bxa4** 22...b4 23. $\mathbb{Q}b1+$ leaves White with a great square on c4 and a weak pawn on c5. **23.bxa4+–** White will win the b-file.

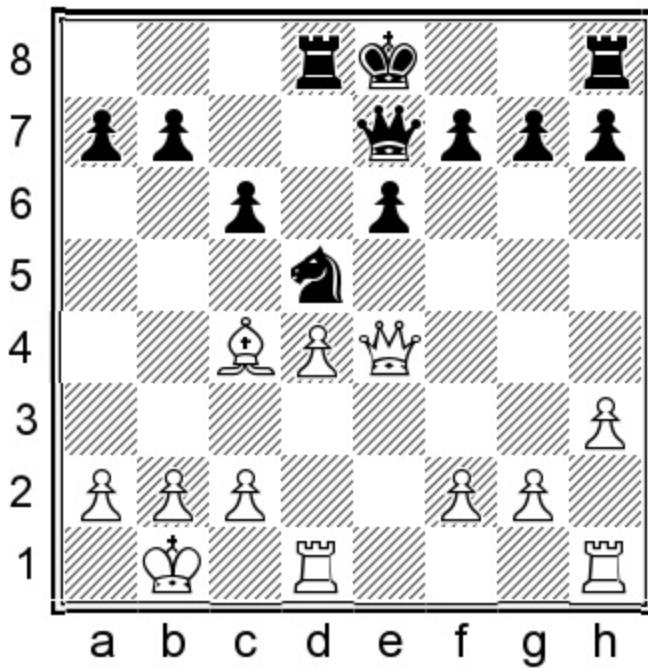
857. Botvinnik – Unzicker, Oberhausen 1961



Show/Hide Solution

11. $\mathbb{Q}xc4!$ dxc4 12.d5 To avoid getting a weak pawn, Black needs to take on d5. **12... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd5\pm$** White has a powerful knight; and if Black exchanges it, the bishop pair will be strong.

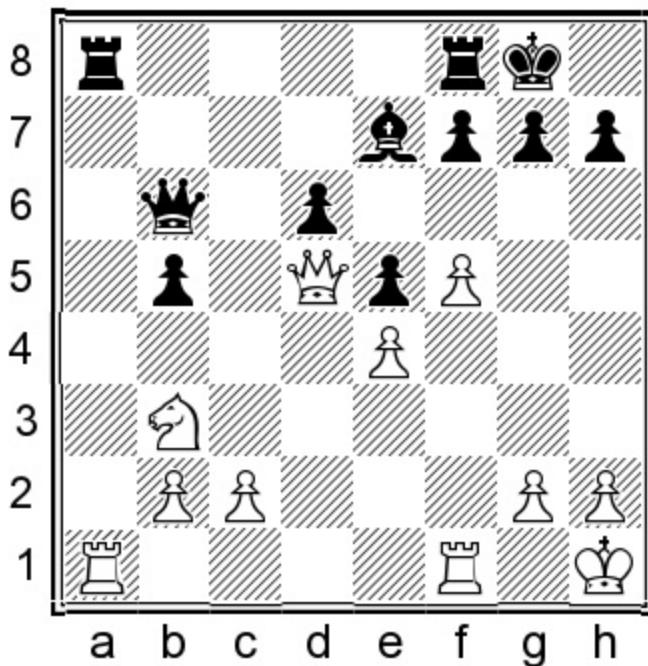
858. Fischer – Petrosian, Bled 1961



Show/Hide Solution

15...b5! Black delays castling to be the first to launch his pawns against the opponent's king. 15...0-0= **16.♗d3** No mating threat on h7. 16.♗xd5 gives Black a pleasant choice. 16...cxd5 followed by short castling and advancing the queenside pawns looks promising; as does 16...♝xd5 with pressure on the d-pawn. White will be reluctant to play c2-c3, as this will invite Black to prepare ...b5-b4.
16...b4↑ Stopping White's c-pawn from moving. 16...a5 was played in the game.

859. Unzicker – Fischer, Varna (Ol) 1962



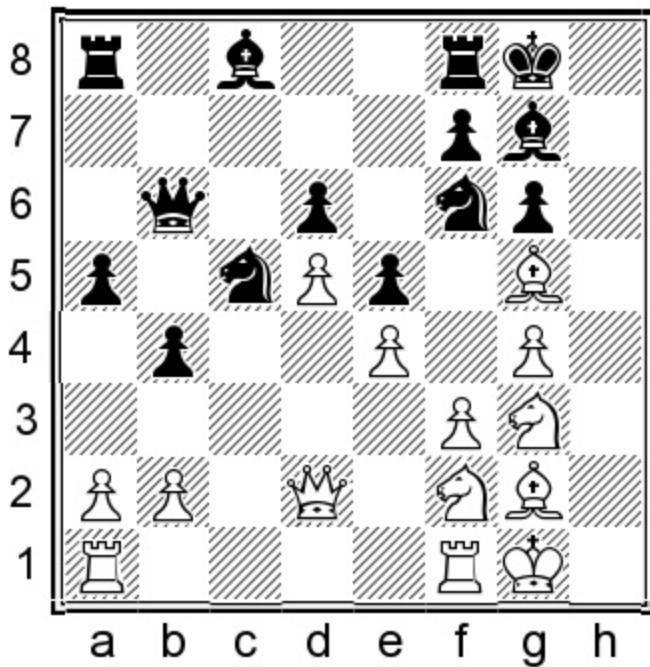
Show/Hide Solution

White would be positionally winning with the knight on d5, but it's too far away. **19...♜a4!** Black puts pressure on the e4-pawn and is ready to take control over the a-file. **20.c3** If Black was allowed four free 'quiet' moves, they may be ...♜c8, ...♝g5, ...h7-h6 and ...♜cc4. Pursuing a minority attack to open files on the queenside with ...b5-b4 is also in the air. White can't kick the rook away with the b-pawn, and 20.♜xa4? bxa4 enables Black to pick up the b2-pawn. **20...♝a6** Fischer beat Unzicker after only five more moves. Interestingly, Fischer had already reached the exact same position earlier the same year against Tal, who managed to manoeuvre his knight to d5 while losing a queenside pawn. That was enough to make a draw.

Bobby Fischer

"The turning point in my career came with the realization that Black should play to win instead of just steering for equality."

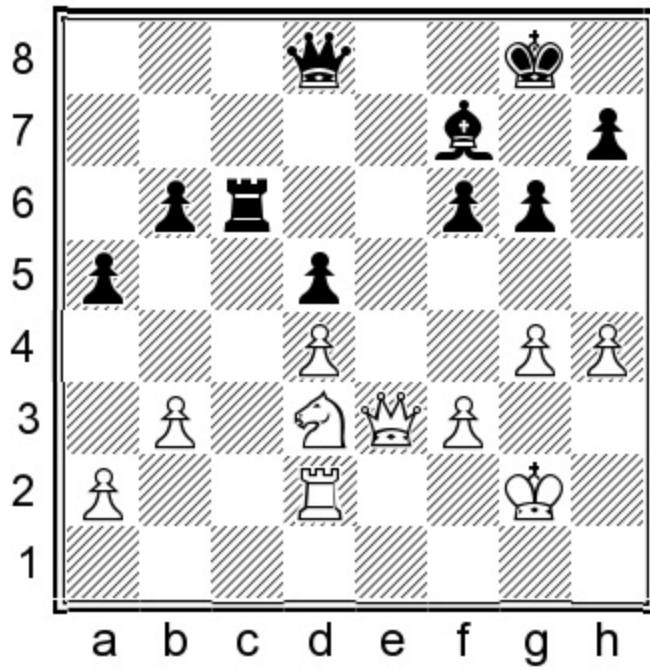
860. Botvinnik – Penrose, Hastings 1962



Show/Hide Solution

19...♝h7! Fighting for the dark squares. After 19...♝a6 20.♜fc1 it was too late for ...♝h7 followed by ...♝d8-h4, not because c5 would be hanging but because White would have time for ♜f1 and ♜g2 to defend the knight on g3. **20.♞e3** ♜d8!± Black follows up with ...♝h4, and then either ...f7-f5 or ...♝f6-g5.

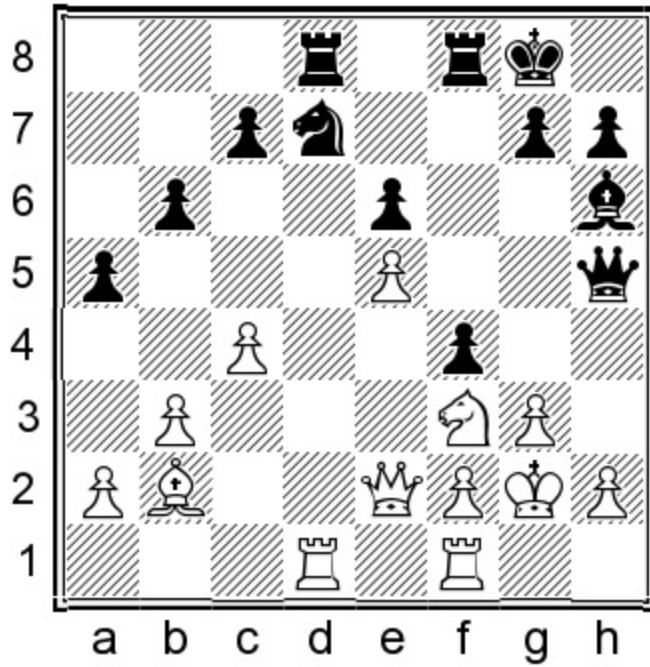
861. Botvinnik – Petrosian, Moscow (14) 1963



Show/Hide Solution

33.g5!± Weakening the e5-square.

862. Petrosian – Botvinnik, Moscow (19) 1963

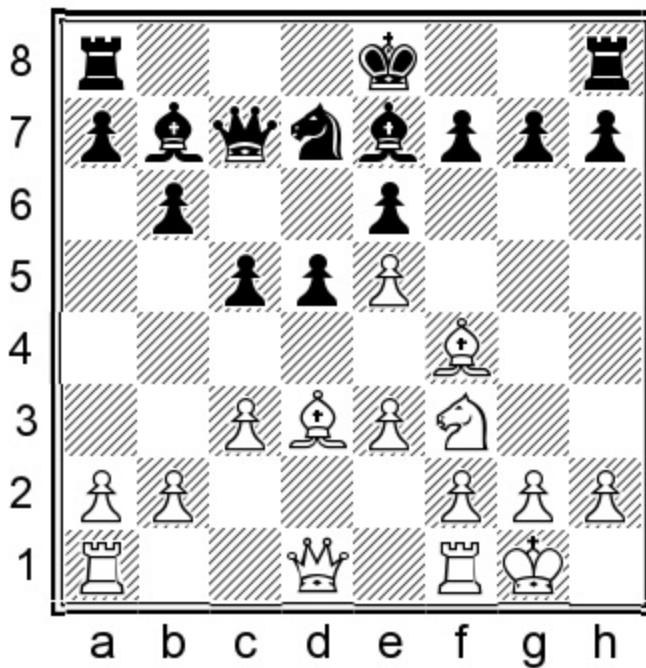


Show/Hide Solution

23.♘a3! Forcing Black to choose between passivity (...♝fe8, leaving the open file), bad coordination (...♝f7, leaving the d8-rook undefended), or being deprived of the c5-square for the knight while weakening the d6-square (...c7-c5). 23.♗e4 g5 24.♗c6 ♘c5 → **23...♝fe8** White is satisfied with the inclusion of the last two moves; no further calculation or evaluation is needed. 23...♝f7 temporarily

creates a pin along the d-file. 24.h3+–; 23...c5 24.♔e4+– White follows up with ♔c6 and ♕d6 to collect material.

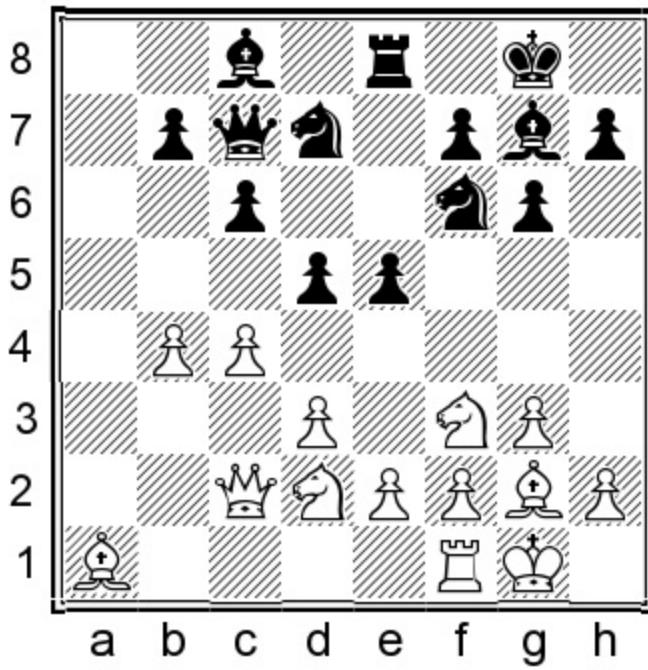
863. Spassky – Petrosian, Moscow (7) 1966



Show/Hide Solution

12...h6! Starting an attack by harassing White's pieces on the kingside. 12...♗g8? 13.♕xh7 is a safe pawn-grab. 12...0-0-0 allows the surprising: 13.h4! h6 (13...g6 is slower than 12...h6. Stockfish gives a surprising line: 14.♔e2 h6 15.♗g3 g5 16.h5 g4 17.♘d4! cxd4 18.cxd4 ♘b8 19.♕fc1 ♘c6 20.♗b5=) 14.h5! and Black's g-pawn is halted. **13.b4** 13.h4 g5± **13...g5** **14.♗g3** h5±

864. Petrosian – Najdorf, Santa Monica 1966

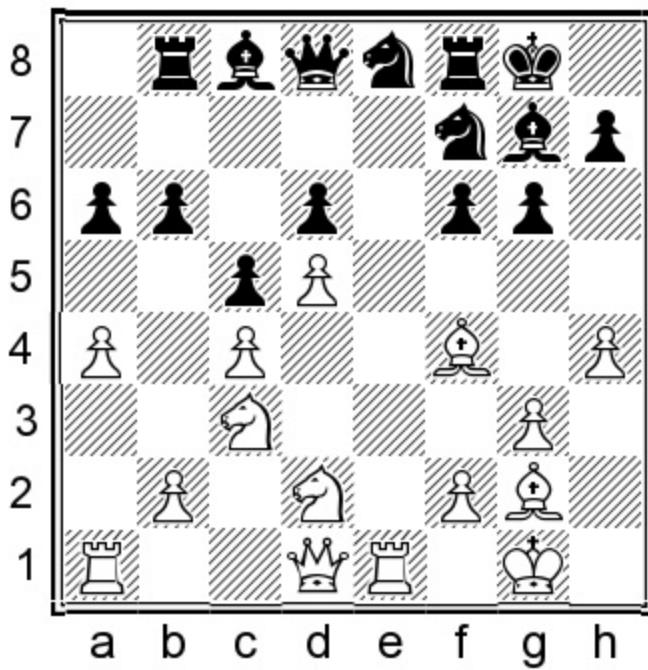


Show/Hide Solution

15.cxd5 Not allowing ...e5-e4 or ...d5-d4. White wants to improve the scope of the g2-bishop.

15...♝xd5 16.♜b1± 16.b5 cxb5 17.♝b3± was logical (but not necessarily better).

865. Najdorf – Petrosian, Santa Monica 1966

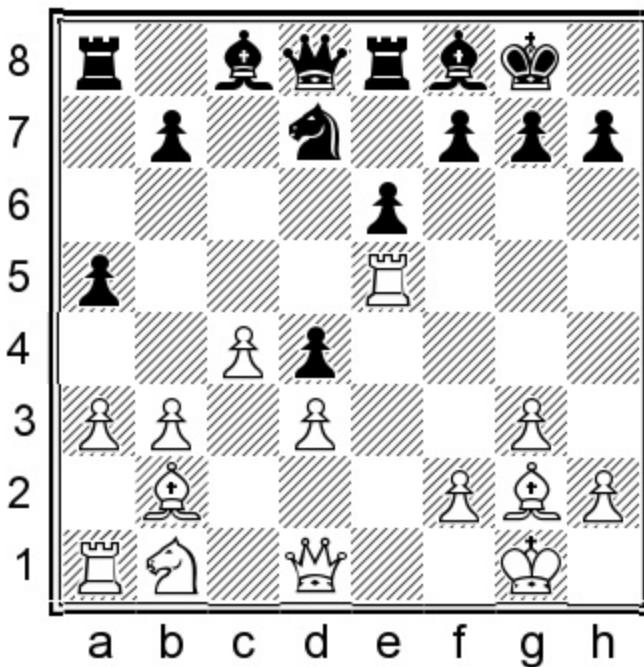


Show/Hide Solution

18...g5! A risky move to force the bishop back and be able to put a knight on e5. As it comes with tempo, Black's activity is more important than the weakness. **19.hxg5 19.♝e3!?** was worth considering, although Black still does well with 19...gxh4 20.gxh4 ♜e5± followed by ...♝g4 or ...f6-

f5. 19...fxg5† Opening the diagonal for the g7-bishop.

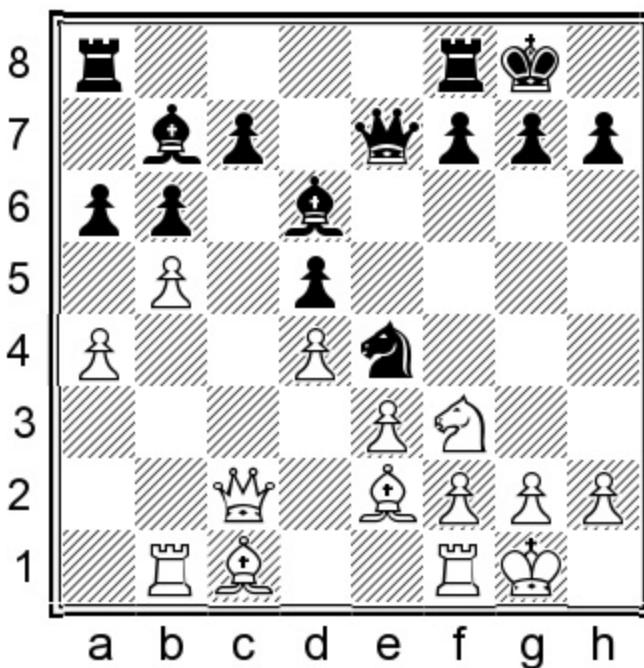
866. Tal – Zhuravlev, Kharkov 1967



Show/Hide Solution

15. $\mathbb{E}b5!\infty$ The rook is useful (hitting b7 and supporting b3-b4), and the risk that it gets trapped in the future is something White has to accept to play actively. 15. $\mathbb{E}e1$ e5† The bishop on b2 is misplaced in the reversed Benoni structure.

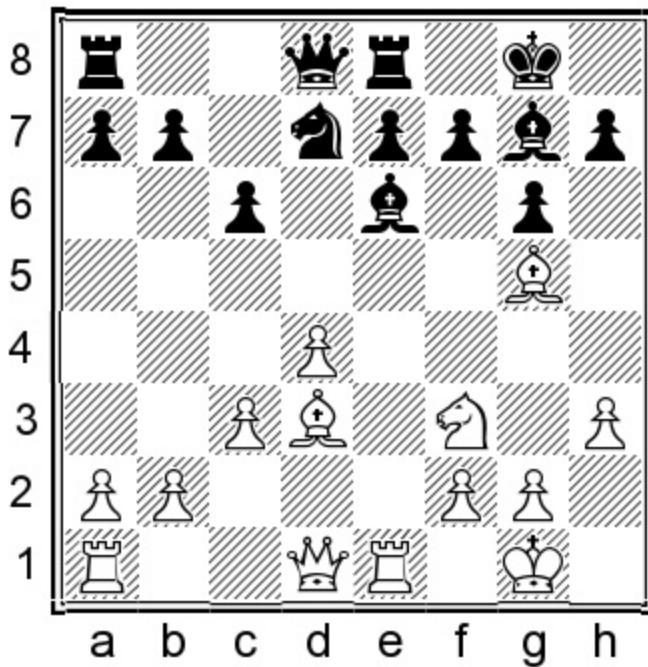
867. Spassky – Petrosian, Moscow (11) 1969



Show/Hide Solution

16... $\mathbb{E}fc8$! Intending to open the c-file before White has completed development. White should still be close to equal, but in the game Spassky was unable to tame Petrosian's initiative. 16...axb5 17.axb5 $\mathbb{E}fc8$ has the downside that White gets rid of the weak a4-pawn.

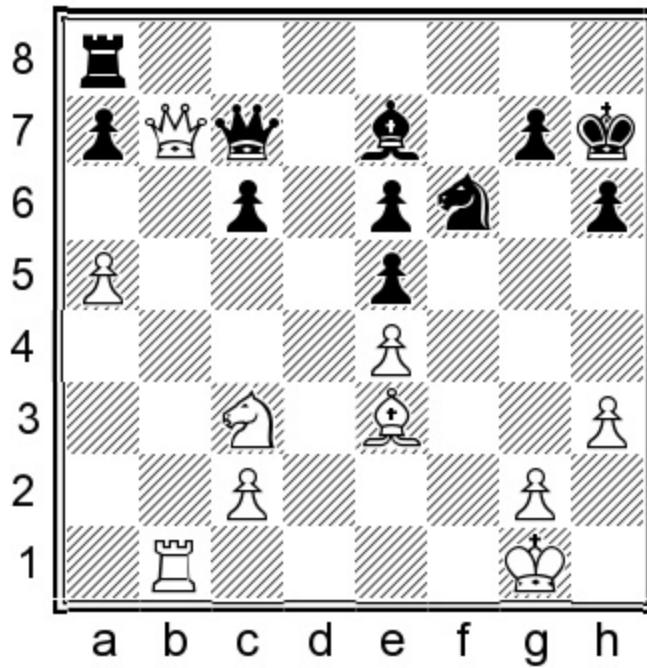
868. Tal – Kolarov, Kapfenberg 1970



Show/Hide Solution

16. $\mathbb{E}xe6$! $f xe6$ Black's weak light squares and shattered structure are more than enough to compensate for the exchange. The key point is that Black's rooks have no open files. **17. $\mathbb{W}e2$ $e5$** **17... $\mathbb{Q}f8$** **18. $\mathbb{Q}f4+$** — White prepares $\mathbb{Q}c4$ and $\mathbb{Q}g5$. **18. $\mathbb{Q}c4\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$** **19. $dxe5$ $\mathbb{W}c7$** **20. $\mathbb{E}e1!$** Keeping control. It's hard for Black to do anything against h4-h5, and White is close to winning. **20. $\mathbb{Q}f7?$!** was the game move.

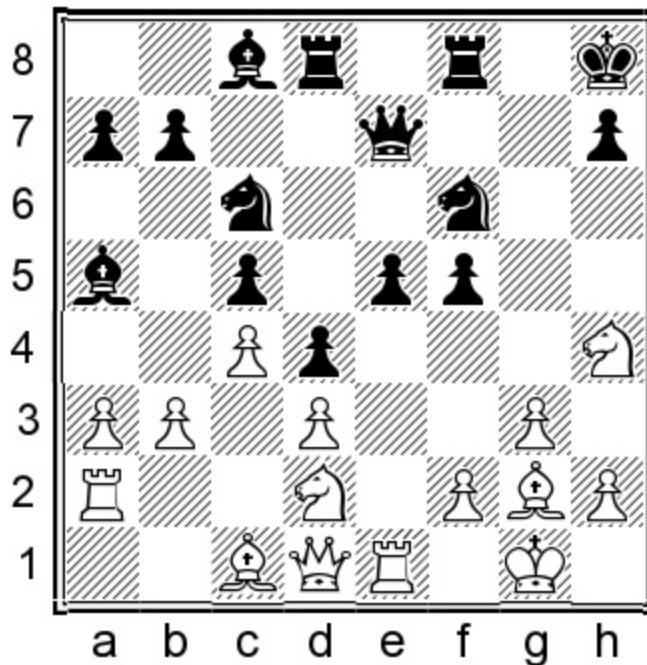
869. Hübner – Petrosian, Seville (7) 1971



Show/Hide Solution

22... $\mathbb{W}xa5!$ After 22... $\mathbb{W}d8$ 23.a6± it is possible to tactically defend the a7-pawn, but Black is still under some pressure. **23. $\mathbb{W}xa8$ $\mathbb{W}xc3$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xa7$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$** The exchange sacrifice (Petrosian's trademark) won a few pawns. Black's pawn structure may not be pretty, but the pawns are still of some value – and more importantly, Black has reached an open position where it's easy to create threats against the enemy king. Hübner should have gone for: **25. $\mathbb{W}xe7$ $\mathbb{W}xe3\#$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ $\mathbb{Q}f2\#$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{W}f4\#$ 28. $\mathbb{Q}g1$** Black can play on in a position with balanced chances, or go for an immediate draw with: **28... $\mathbb{Q}xh3\#$ 29.gxh3 $\mathbb{W}g3\#$**

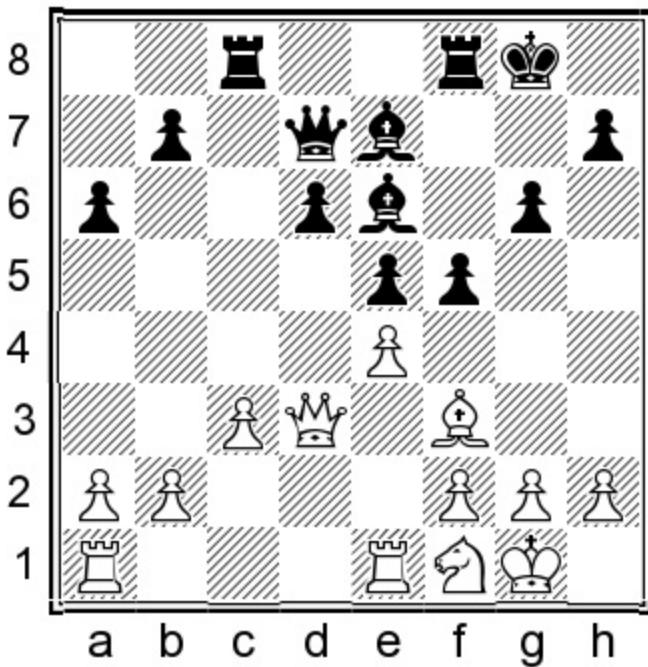
870. Petrosian – Korchnoi, Moscow 1971



Show/Hide Solution

22.b4! Positionally, White wants to advance on the queenside, and tactically it is possible. **22...cxb4** **23.Qb3** White threatens to win a piece with $\mathbb{Q}xc6$. **23...Qb6 24.Qxc6!** Best, but not the only move. **24...bxc6 25.axb4±** The pawn can't be taken and White threatens c4-c5 (winning the a7-pawn).

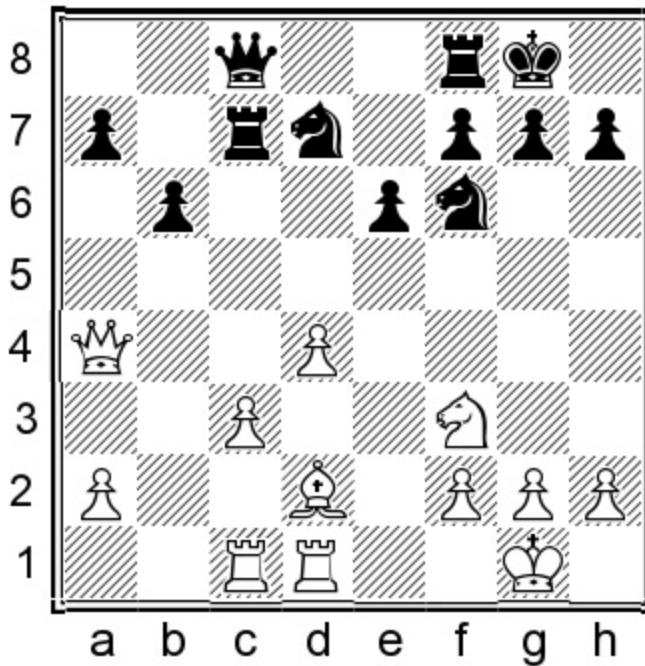
871. Tal – Grigorian, Leningrad 1971



Show/Hide Solution

19.exf5 A necessary move to exchange the bishops and avoid Black's easy kingside expansion. In the game, there followed 19.Qe3?! f4 20.Qd5 Qd8† when White had a nice square, but not much to do as Black pushed the pawns on the kingside. **19...gxf5 20.Qd5 f4!?** Prophylaxis against Qe3. Due to Black's restricted bishop, and the weak squares on d5 and e4, White is still better.

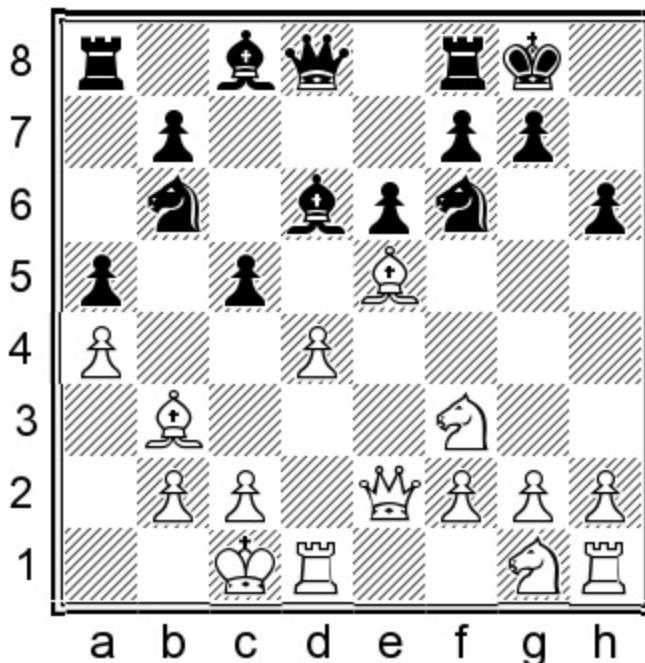
872. Taimanov – Karpov, Moscow 1973



Show/Hide Solution

17...Rc4! The light squares are worth more than the pawn on a7. Putting the rook on c4 stops c3-c4, since it's difficult for White to challenge the rook with the knight. 17...Nxe4 18.c4= **18.Qxa7 Qc6** **19.Qa3 Rc8** White can't do anything active and only hopes to hold on to the extra pawn for as long as possible. It's not necessary to know how much better Black is. By the way, **20.Qe5?!** would be a mistake, as White would be exchanging the last minor piece that can challenge the light squares.

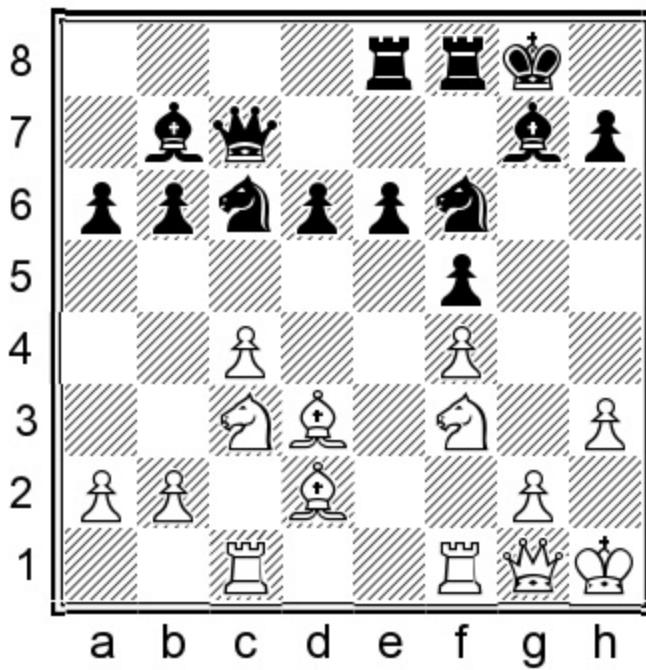
873. Tal – Petrosian, Moscow 1973



Show/Hide Solution

13...c4! The pawn exchange keeps the d-file closed, and starts to open things up around White's king.
14.♗xc4 ♗xa4† 14...♗xc4 15.♘xc4 ♗d5† was also possible.

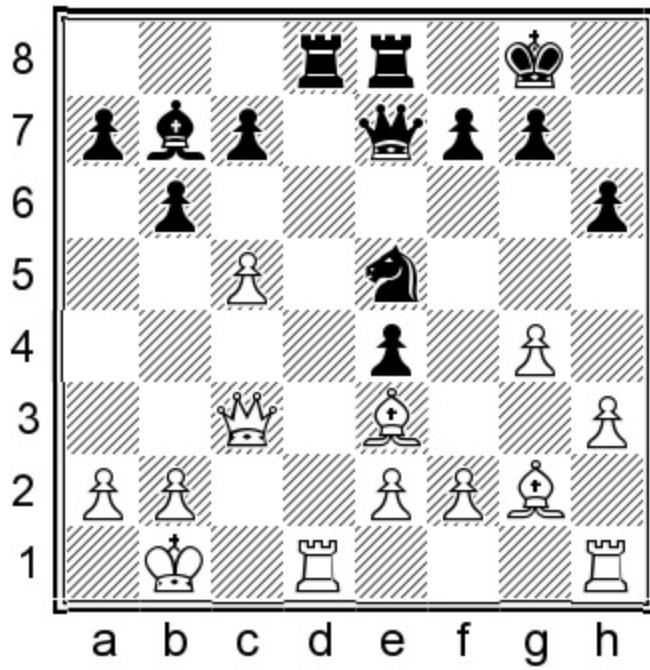
874. Garcia Martinez – Karpov, Madrid 1973



Show/Hide Solution

19.♗d5! ♘d8 19...exd5? 20.cxd5+– gives Black a ruined pawn structure. 20.♗xf6†! You need to have planned this move to have fully solved the exercise. The game continued 20.♘xb6 ♘xb6 21.♗xb6 ♗e4 with reasonable compensation for Black. One important detail is that White has to part with a bishop to hold on to the extra pawn. 20...♗xf6± White is happy with the knight exchange. With fewer minor pieces on the board it becomes easier to attack the d6-pawn, and Black no longer has the option of sending the f6-knight via h5 to g3.

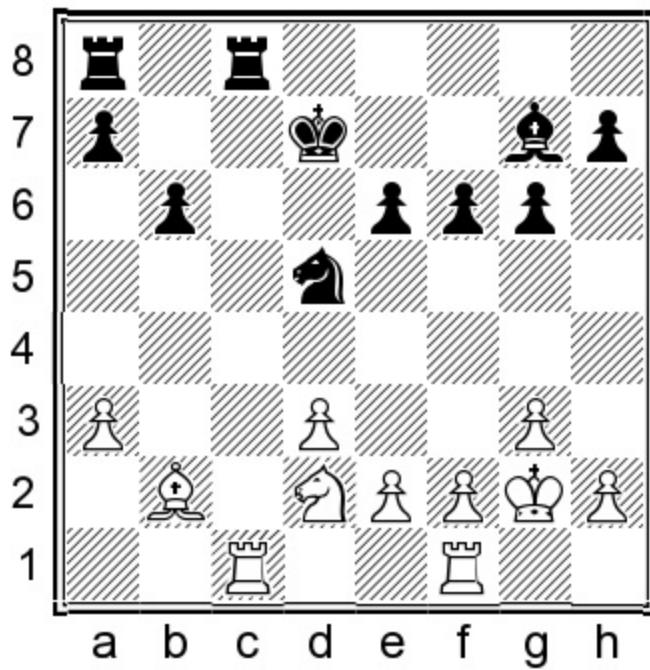
875. Larsen – Petrosian, Milan 1975



Show/Hide Solution

19...♞d5!↑ Eyeing the a2-pawn, with ...♝e6 coming next. Closing the d-file also avoids a rook exchange on d8, which would leave the knight on e5 less stable.

876. Hübner – Karpov, Tilburg 1977

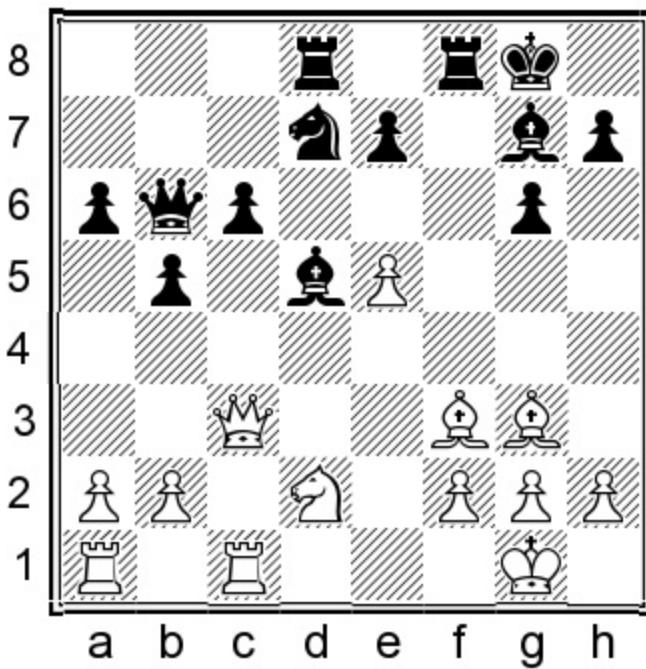


Show/Hide Solution

22...♝h6! 23.e3 Giving up the c-file would be devastating. **23...♞xe3! 24.fxe3 ♞xe3† 25.♔f3 ♞xf1 26.♗xf1** White would have liked to keep the rooks, but it loses material. **26...♜xc1 27.♝xc1 ♜c8+–** After a small tactical sequence, it's time to evaluate the position. The two minor pieces are not

working together and they can't stop Black's rook from invading. It's over.

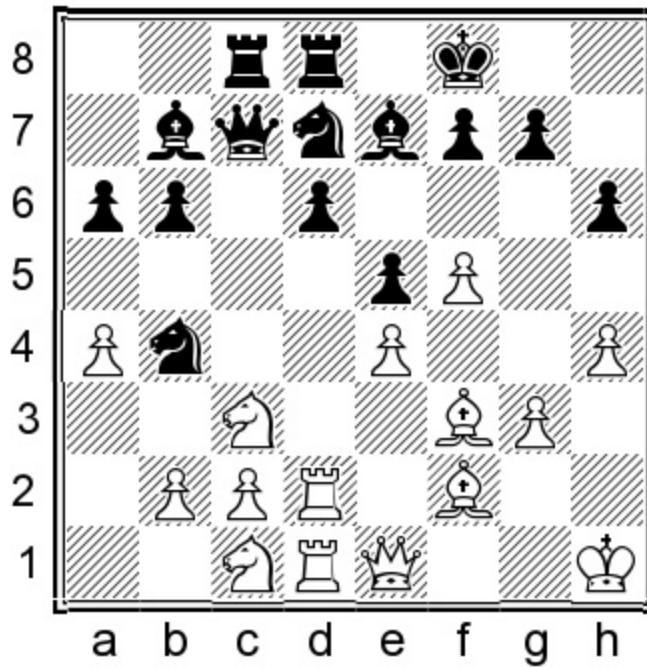
877. Petrosian – Gulko, Vilnius 1978



Show/Hide Solution

19.♘xd5† Consider what you get instead of what you have. 19.b4?! is a positional move to keep the c6-pawn backwards, but it fails to achieve its objective after: 19...♕xf3 20.♘xf3 c5! 21.bxc5 ♘xc5 Black has equalized, with 22.♗xc5?? ♘d1† the tactical justification. But even if the b2-b4 idea worked, opening the c-file secures a bigger advantage. **19...cxd5 20.♘f3±** White can follow up by offering a queen exchange on c6 or c7, or by improving the rooks in some way.

878. Karpov – Bukic, Bugojno 1978



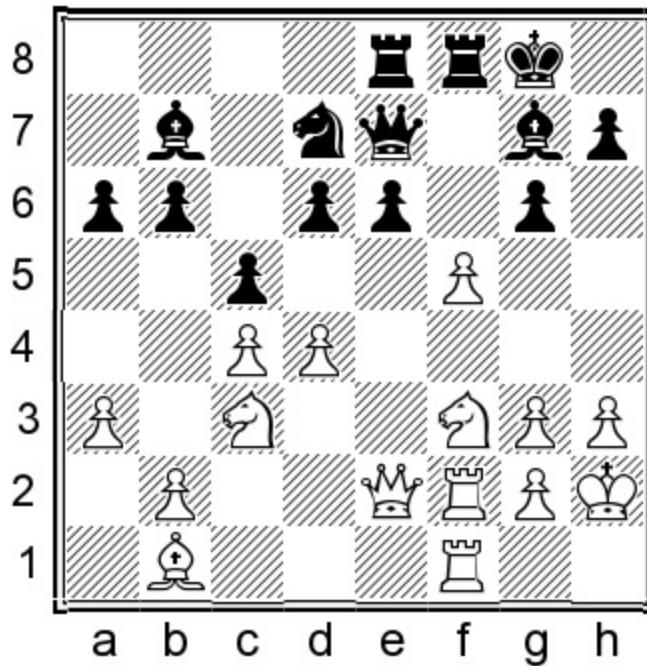
Show/Hide Solution

26. $\mathbb{W}g1! \pm$ A prophylactic move, directed against any central counterplay. White will continue with $\mathbb{Q}1e2$ and perhaps $b2-b3$, before preparing to attack on the kingside. 26. $\mathbb{Q}1e2$ $d5!$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xd5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6 \rightarrow$ is the key idea which Karpov's move prevents.

Anatoly Karpov

"My studies with Botvinnik brought me immense benefit, particularly the homework assignments which forced me to refer to chess books and to work independently."

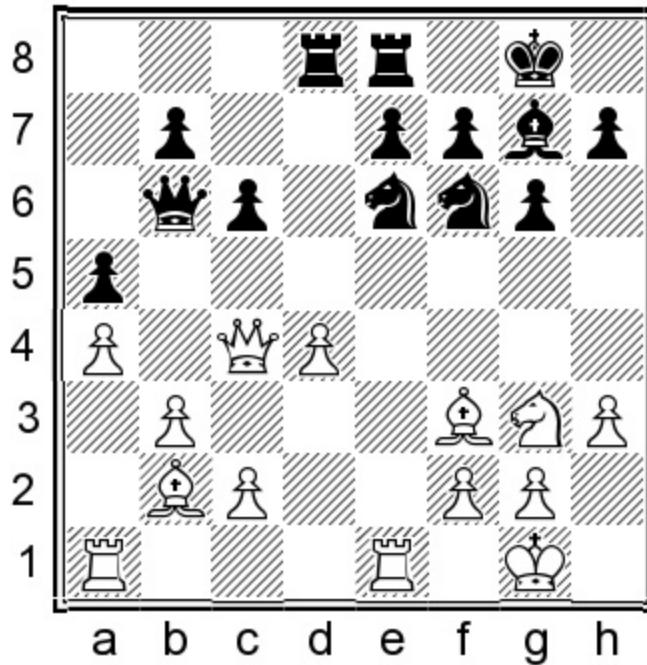
879. Spassky – Karpov, Montreal 1979



Show/Hide Solution

20...exf5!† With the strong bishop on g7 and control over the e-file, Black stands much better.
 20...gxf5? 21.d5=; 20...cxd4 21.♘xe6† ♘xe6 22.fxe6 ♜c5 23.♗d5 ♘xe6† is promising for Black, but not to the same extent as the main move.

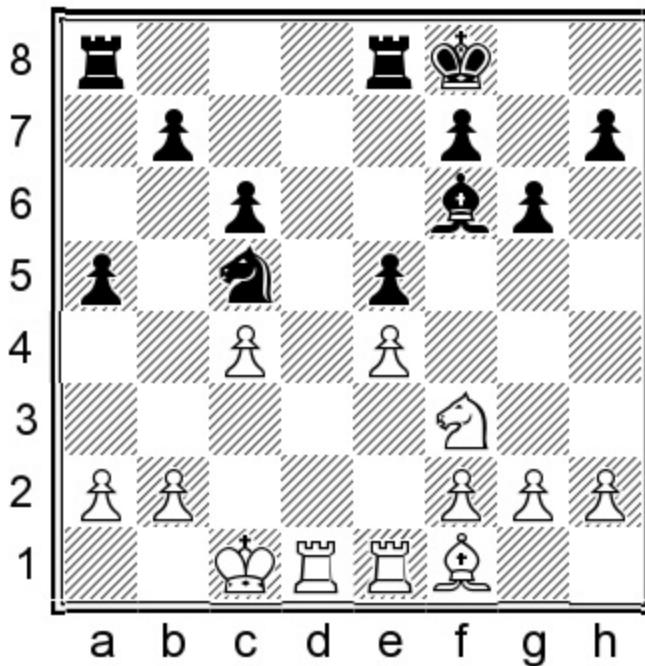
880. Karpov – Larsen, Tilburg 1979



Show/Hide Solution

17.♘xe6! fxe6 18.♗xe6† ♔h8± For the exchange, White has a pawn, the bishop pair and weak light squares to exploit. Karpov won convincingly.

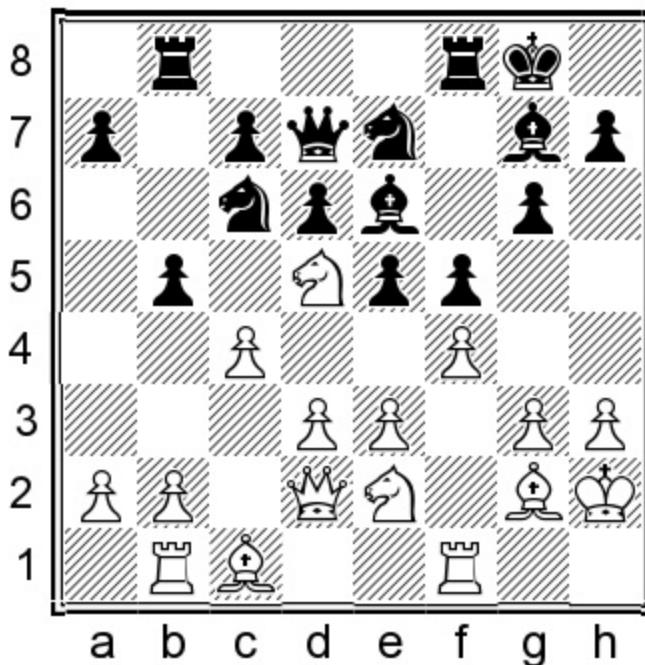
881. Danailov – Kasparov, Dortmund 1980



Show/Hide Solution

17... $\mathbb{Q}d8$ Manoeuvring to an open diagonal. (It's also possible to postpone it a move or two.) 18.g3 a4 19. $\mathbb{K}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 20. $\mathbb{E}e3$ $\mathbb{E}ad8$ Taking control over the d-file increased Black's pressure, and Kasparov soon won.

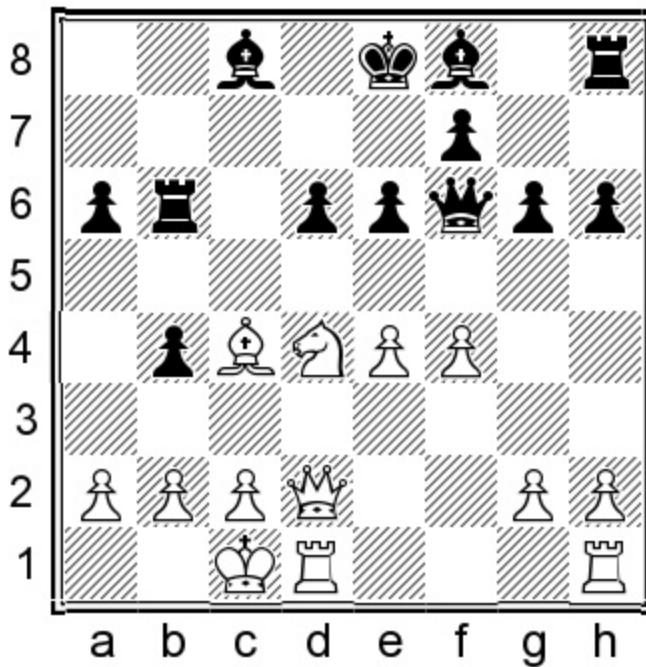
882. Ribli – Karpov, Tilburg 1980



Show/Hide Solution

14...bxc4! Preparing Black's next move. 14...e4 15.dxe4 fxe4 leads to balanced play after a few possible continuations. **15.dxc4 e4†** The bishop on g2 is restricted. To add to White's difficulties, Black threatens ... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}b4$.

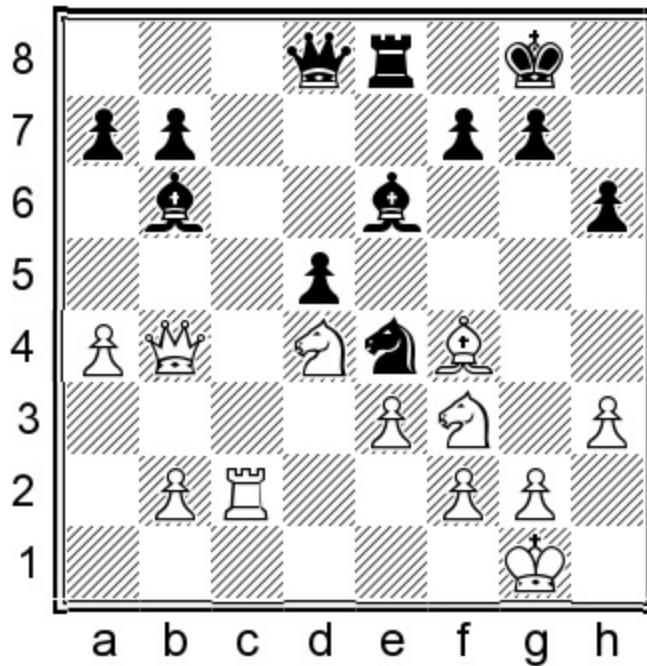
883. Tal – Radulov, Malta (Ol) 1980



Show/Hide Solution

16. $\mathbb{Q}b3$! Planning $\mathbb{Q}a4†$. **16... $\mathbb{Q}d7$** 16... $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}a4†\pm$ **17. $\mathbb{Q}f3$** Clearing the d-file, with ideas of e4-e5. **17...a5** Black must keep the bishop on f8 to defend the d6-pawn. 17... $\mathbb{Q}g7$? 18.e5+– **18. $\mathbb{Q}e5$!?** 18. $\mathbb{W}e3$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}d4$ is another way to try to develop an initiative. **18... $\mathbb{Q}b5$?** Black had a narrow path to a playable position: 18... $\mathbb{Q}g7$! 19. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ a4! 20.e5 $\mathbb{W}d8$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$ axb3 22. $\mathbb{W}xd6$ bxa2 23. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 24. $\mathbb{W}xd8†$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}c7$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}c4$ $\mathbb{Q}a8$ The bishop pair gives decent compensation. **19. $\mathbb{Q}g4$ $\mathbb{W}g7$** Otherwise $\mathbb{W}d4$ with a double threat. **20.e5+–** Black's position collapses after $\mathbb{W}d4$ and/or $\mathbb{Q}f6†$.

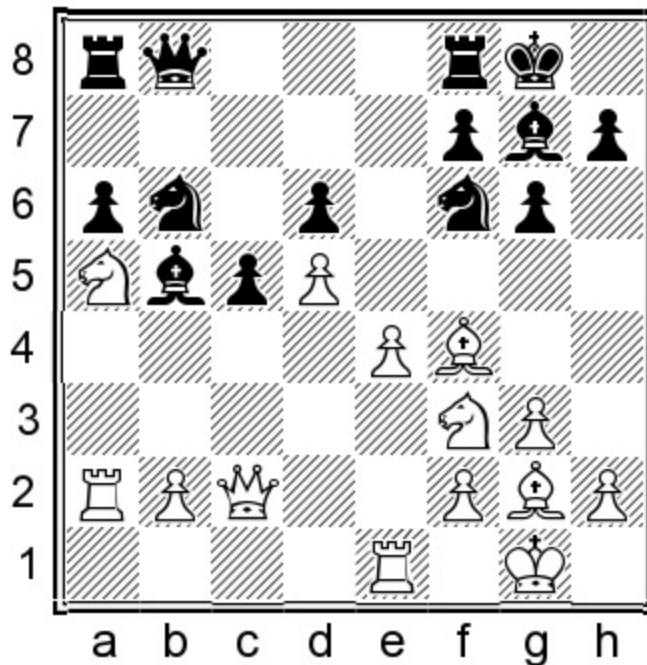
884. Karpov – Beliavsky, Moscow 1981



Show/Hide Solution

22.♗xe6! Otherwise the bishop might move. **22...fxe6** **22...♝xe6** **23.a5!** **♛xa5** **24.♝xb7+–** with threats of **♝c8** and **♛xa7**. **23.a5** Exchanging pawns makes it easier to exploit Black's weaknesses. **23.♝e5±** **23...♛xa5** **24.♝xb7±**

885. Karpov – Ljubojevic, Amsterdam 1981

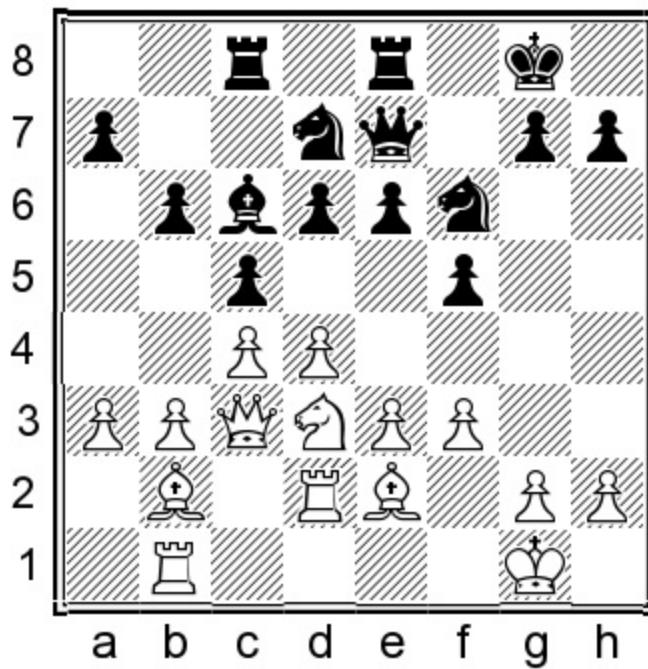


Show/Hide Solution

22.♝c6! Starting to open up the light-squared diagonal. **22...♝xc6** **22...♛c7** **23.♛xc5!+–** **23.dxc6** There's no good way to defend against e4-e5. **23...♝h5** **23...♝c8** **24.e5+–** **24.♝d2+–** e4-e5 comes

next.

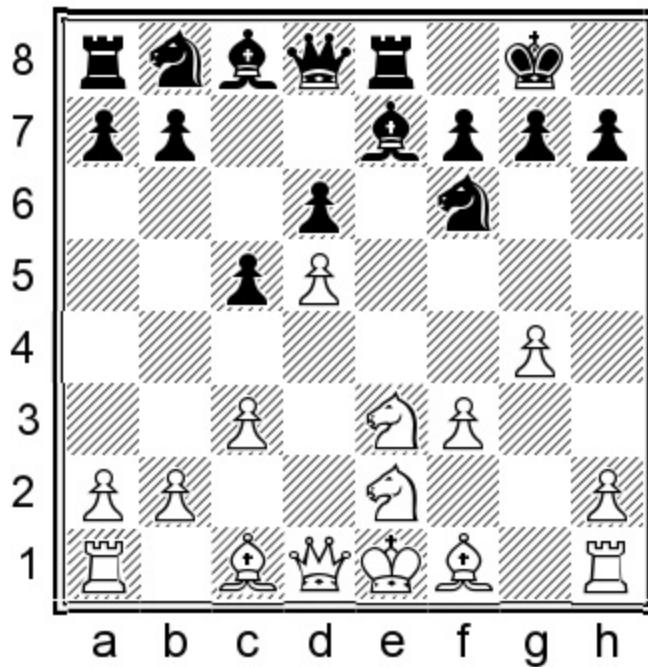
886. Petrosian – Bronstein, Kislovodsk 1982



Show/Hide Solution

23.dxc5! 23.♗bd1 allows 23...cx d4! opening the c-file. 24.exd4± (24.♗xd4 e5 25.♗c3 e4! splits White's pawns.) **23...bxc5±** With a pawn on c5, it's more difficult for Black to advance with the d- or e-pawns without getting a weak pawn. The Hedgehog set-up (with a pawn on b6 instead) is more solid. After 23...dxc5± Black regrets ...f7-f5. The bishop on b2 is strong.

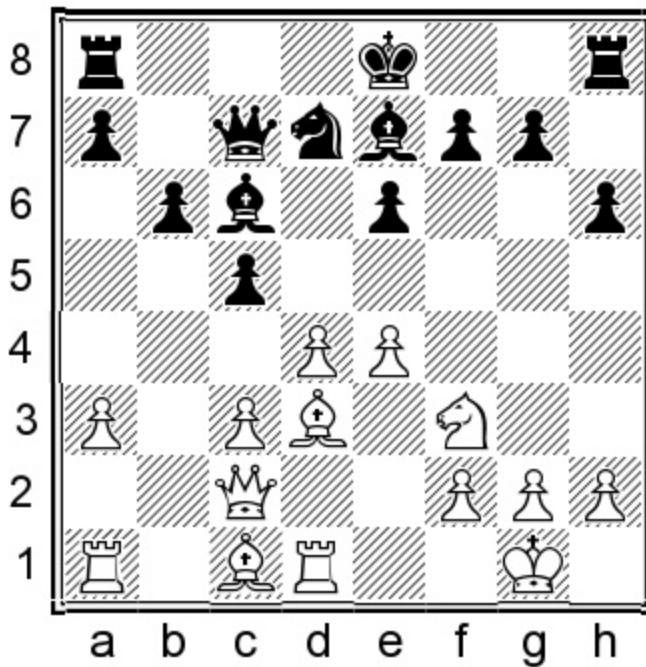
887. Van der Wiel – Kasparov, Moscow 1982



Show/Hide Solution

14...♝fd7! Preparing to deploy the bishop on g5 or h4. Black has less space and is generally happy to exchange minor pieces. 14...♝bd7 15.♝g3±; 14...b5 is not a big achievement without a white knight on c3. 15.♝g3± **15.♝g3 ♜g5!** **16.♞f2 ♜e5∞**

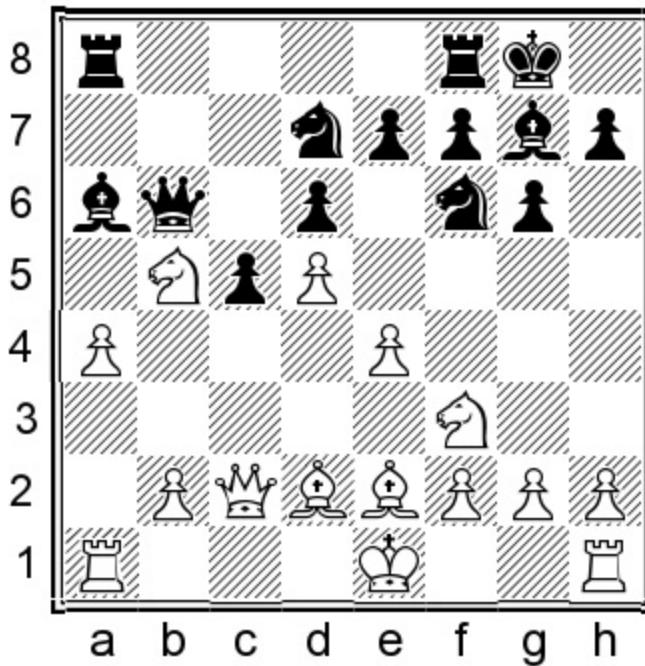
888. Kasparov – Gheorghiu, Moscow 1982



Show/Hide Solution

14.d5! Opening the position before Black has castled. **14...exd5 15.exd5 ♜xd5 16.♝b5 a6 16...♜e6 17.♜e4** and the bishop on e7 makes it impossible for Black to castle. **17...♝d8** (**17...0-0 18.♝xd7 ♜xd7 19.♝xe7+–**) **18.♝f4 ♜c8 19.♝e5+– 17.♝f4!** **17.♝xd5?!** axb5 18.♜e2 gives White a promising position but is still far less convincing than Kasparov's move. White should avoid **17.♝xd7†? ♜xd7 18.c4?** because of: **18...♝e4!–+ 17...♝xf4 18.♝xd7† ♜xd7 19.♝xd5†+–** Black's king is too exposed and White continues to develop with tempo.

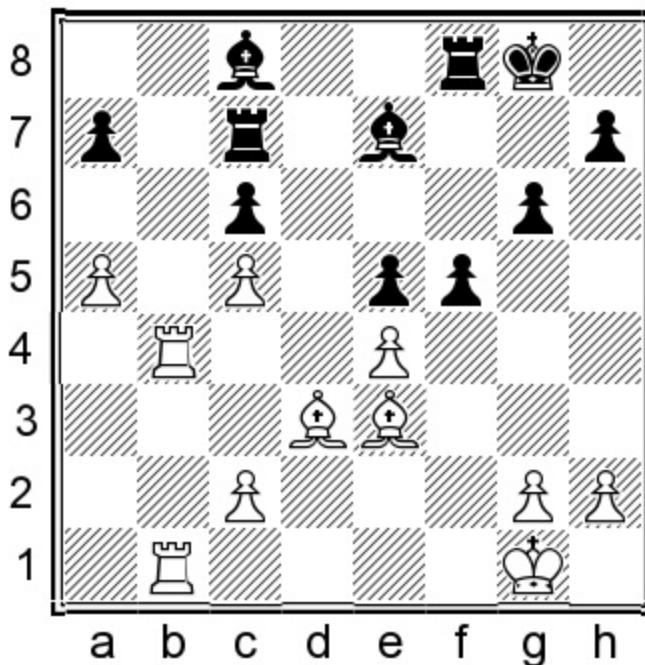
889. Albürt – Kasparov, Lucerne (Ol) 1982



Show/Hide Solution

Securing a minor piece on b5 (with a2-a4) is White's best set-up in Benko positions. Black needs to act before White has castled, and there is a good option. **14...♝xb5 15.♞xb5 ♛xb5! 16.axb5 ♜xa1† 17.♝c1 ♜xe4 17...♜h6?** leads nowhere after: 18.0-0 **18.0-0 ♜ef6** Black has only a knight and a rook for the queen, but there are also some weak pawns to attack. Most importantly, Black's position is solid and well-coordinated, so the queen is unable to show her full power.

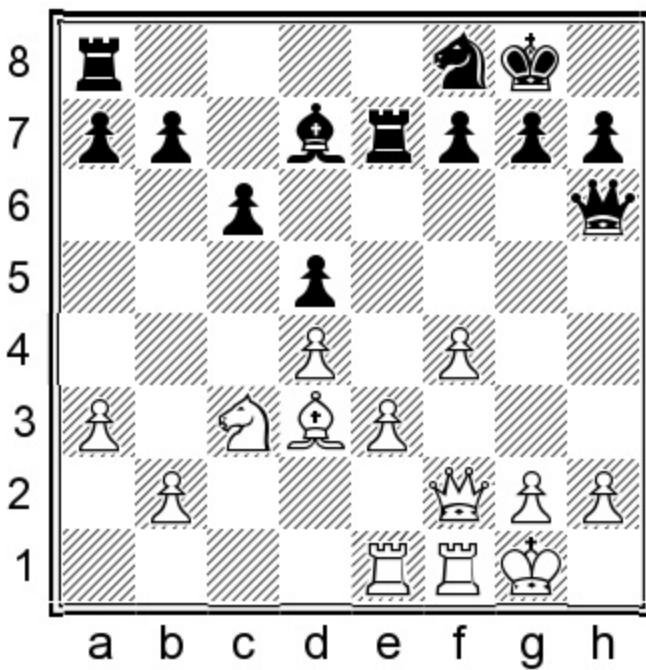
890. Bouaziz – Karpov, Hannover 1983



Show/Hide Solution

22...f4! 22... $\hat{\square}g7$ or any other slow move allows 23.exf5 gxf5 24.g3± when White benefits from the opening of the position due to the more active bishops. A possible plan is doubling rooks on a8 and b8, followed by some tactics with $\hat{\square}xc8$ and $\hat{\square}xf5$. **23. $\hat{\square}f2$ g5=** White has no effective plan of invasion; however, Black's pawn majority is also not too dangerous.

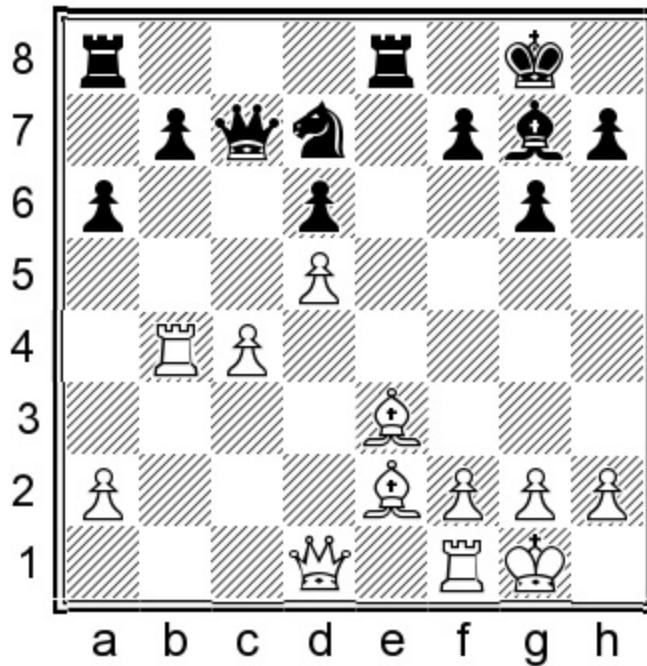
891. Petrosian – Beliavsky, Moscow 1983



Show/Hide Solution

18.f5!± Extending the f-file for the queen and the rook. Next comes e3-e4, with great pressure. 18.e4?! dxе4 19. $\hat{\square}xe4$?! threatens f4-f5, but 19... $\hat{\square}f5$!± is a convincing answer.

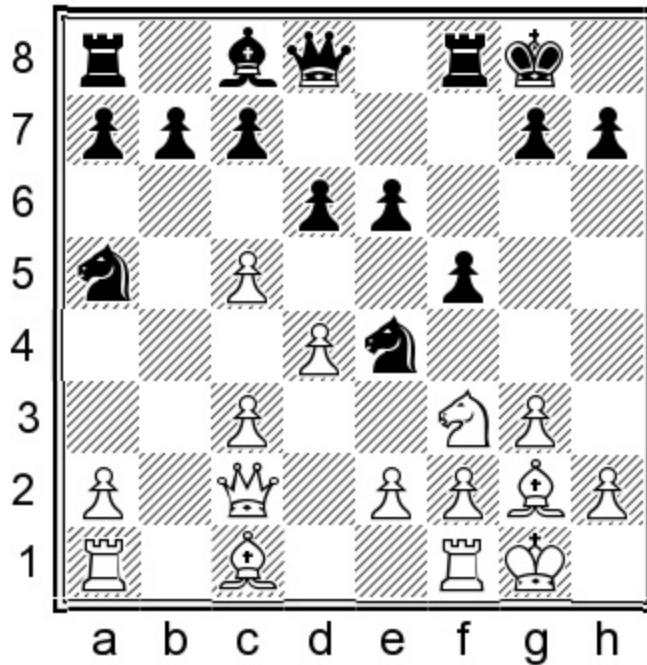
892. Polugaevsky – Petrosian, Moscow 1983



Show/Hide Solution

19...♝xe3! 20.fxe3? The opposite-coloured bishops make the exchange sacrifice strong. There will be so many weak dark squares, with ...♝e8, ...♝h6, ...♝c5 and ...♝e7 as possible moves. Petrosian made all those (in another order) and then won after a blunder.

893. Kasparov – Karpov, Moscow (19) 1985

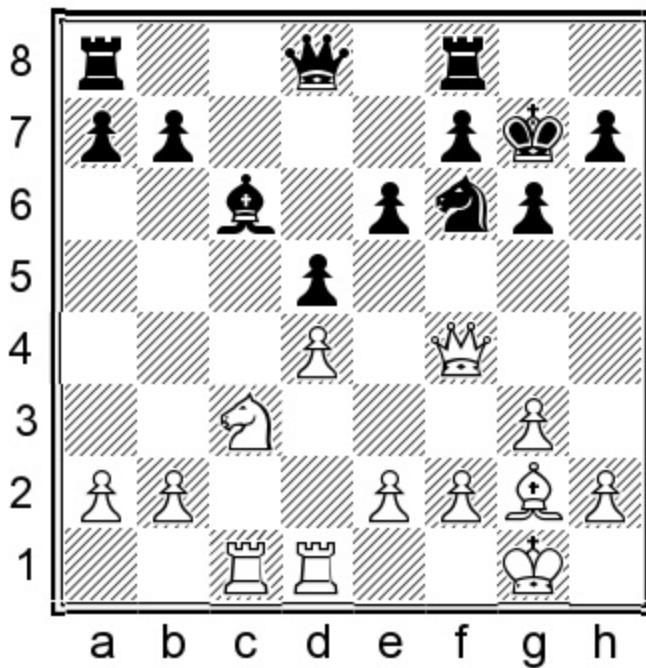


Show/Hide Solution

11.c4! Playing actively before Black is ready to settle on c4. ♜d2 may be the next move to challenge the e4-knight (when ...d6-d5 can be met by c4xd5). 11.♝d1 b6=; 11.♜d2 ♜xd2 12.♜xd2 d5=; 11.♞f4

Qc4= 11... b6 11... dxc5 12. $\text{Qa3}\pm$ 12. Qd2! 12. $\text{Qd2}\pm$ is good but the text move is even better.
 12... Qxd2 13. Qxd2 **d5** 14. $\text{cx}d5$ exd5 15. $\text{e}3\pm$ Black is left with a bad bishop.

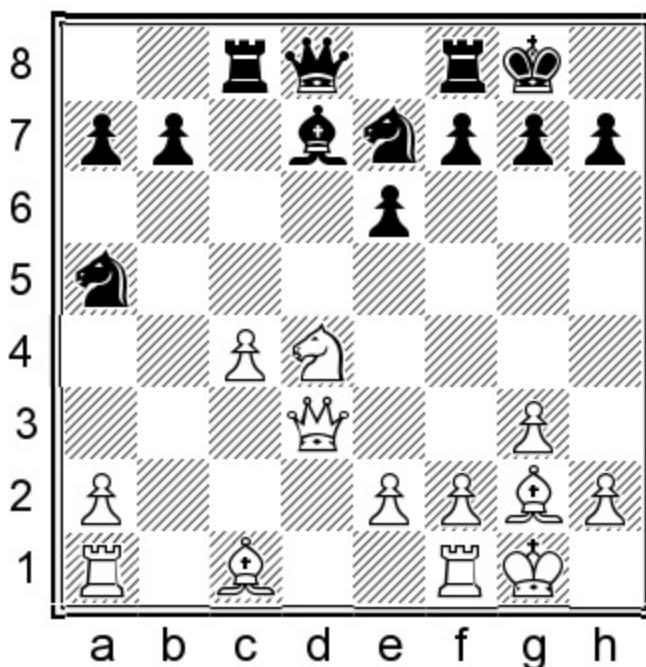
894. Karpov – Kasparov, London/Leningrad (3) 1986



Show/Hide Solution

18... $\text{Wb8}!=$ Challenging White's best piece. Other moves are not so bad, but they allow White to double up on the c-file, with chances to get an edge. For example: 18... Ec8 19. Ed2 a6 Otherwise White has Qb5 after an exchange of queens on c7. 20. $\text{E}dc2$ Wc7 21. Wxc7 Exc7 22. $\text{Qa4}\pm$

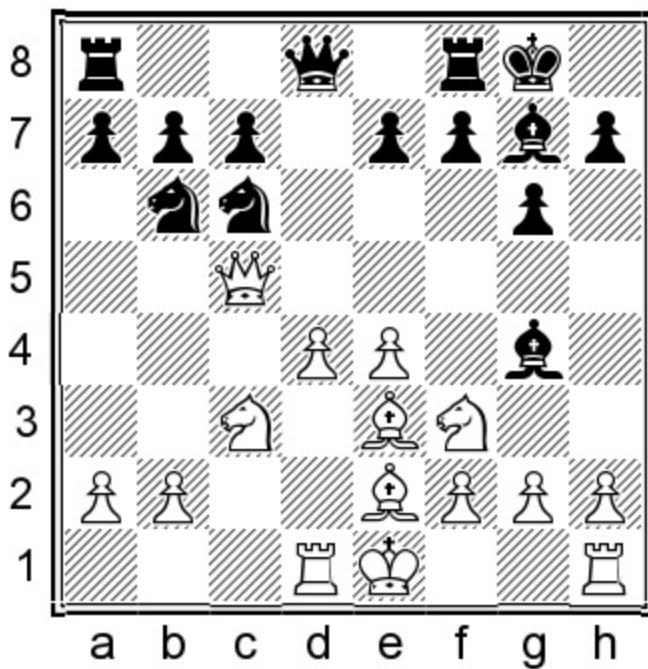
895. Kasparov – Karpov, London/Leningrad (4) 1986



Show/Hide Solution

15.♗b3 Solving the problem with the weak c4-pawn while b7 is still hanging. **15...♝xc4** **15...♝ac6** is passive and not what Black wants to play. **16.♝xb7 ♜c7** **17.♝a6!±** Challenging the knight again. The bishop pair gives White an advantage.

896. Karpov – Kasparov, London/Leningrad (15) 1986



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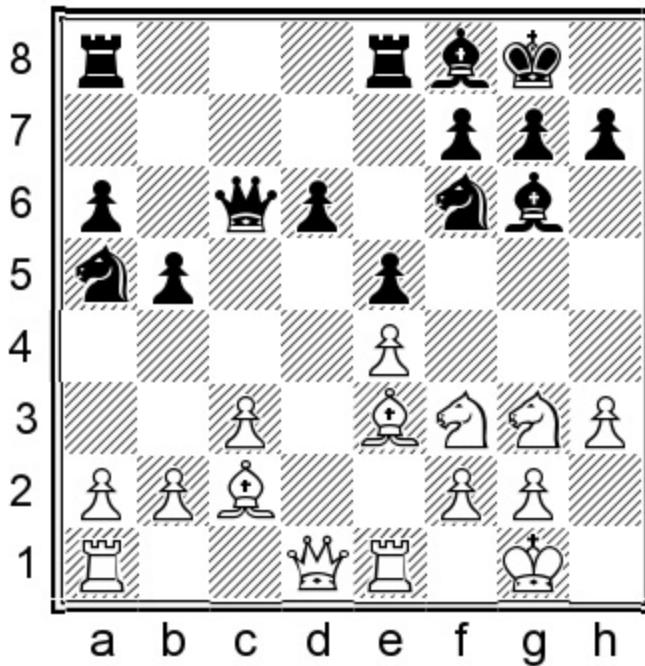
11...♛d6! Exchanging queens diminishes the impact of White's centre, and evacuating the d8-square allows Black to increase the pressure with ...♝fd8. White had been threatening 12.d5 pushing the knight back, since 12...♞e5 allows the standard idea of 13.♝xe5 ♜xe2 14.♝xf7 winning a pawn.

12.e5 12.d5 is now safely met by 12...♞e5 13.♝xe5 ♜xe2 since White's try to win a pawn backfires:

14.♛xd6 cxd6 Opening the c-file. **15.♝xg6 ♜xd1** **16.♝xf8??** (**16.♝xe7†** would give decent compensation for the exchange.) **16...♞a4+** The knight is trapped. **12.♛xd6 cxd6= 12...♛xc5**

13.dxc5 Nothing else is needed for the exercise, but it's worth taking a quick look at Black's options from here: **13...♞d7** Or **13...♞c8** with a further split: a) **14.♝b5** was played in the present game. The e5-pawn will be captured but White will win back the c7-pawn. b) In his next game with the white pieces, Karpov improved with **14.h3!** and won. **14.h3 ♜xf3** **15.gxf3!** Capturing on e5 loses a piece, so White gets time for f3-f4, but it doesn't fully secure the centre. **15...♝fd8** **16.f4 g5!∞**

897. Tal – Larsen, Brussels (Blitz) 1987



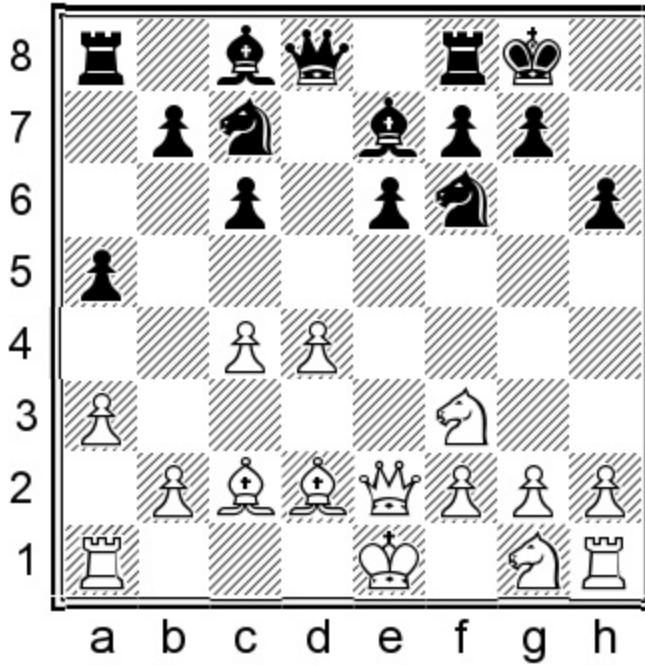
Show/Hide Solution

18.♘g5 By attacking the knight, White stops ...d6-d5. At the same time the rook defends the e4-pawn.

18.♗h4?! ♘xe4!± No further variations are needed; but for the curious, the engine gives: **18...♗h5**

19.♗xh5 ♘xh5 20.g4 ♘g6 21.♗h4 d5 22.♗xg6 ♗xg6 23.♘c1±

898. Tal – Speelman, Subotica 1987

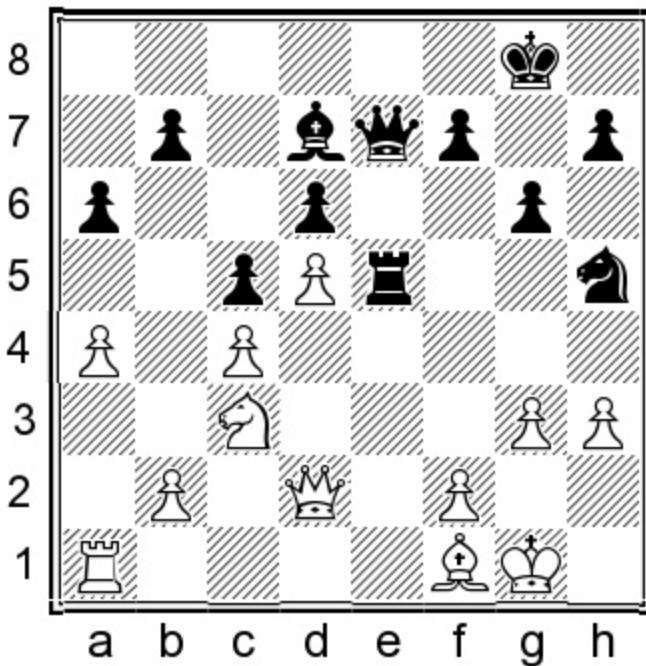


Show/Hide Solution

14.♘e5! Developing the g1-knight is White's top priority. Tal sacrifices a pawn to do it. **14...♗xd4**

15.♘c3 ♗d8 16.♗gf3+– White pushes the kingside pawns, with a huge attack.

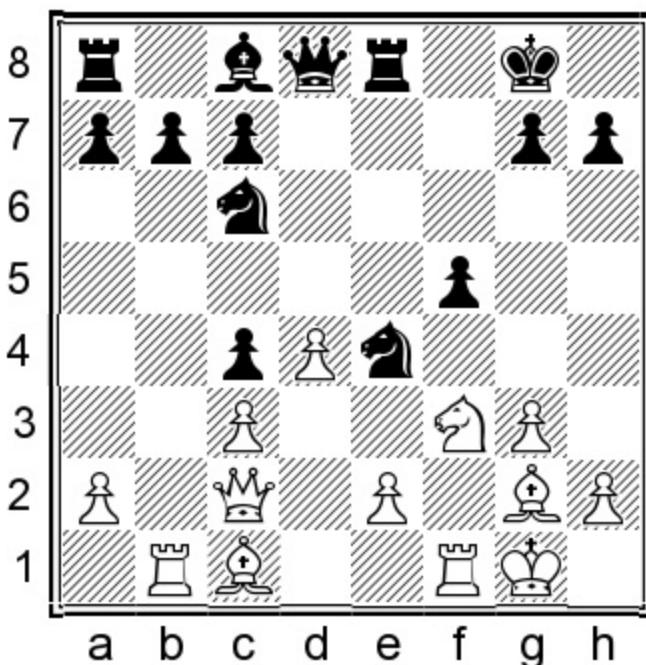
899. Xu Jun – Tal, Subotica 1987



Show/Hide Solution

21...Qg7! Aiming for d4. **22.g4** **22.Qd3!?** may be the best defence, and if Black captures the h3-pawn, White counters with f2-f4. Nevertheless, White remains under some pressure. **22...g5??** Next is ...h7-h5 or ...f7-f5.

900. Kasparov – Ivanchuk, Moscow 1988



Show/Hide Solution

14.g4! Undermining the knight on e4, while the b7-pawn is still not properly defended. 14.♘d2? also tries to challenge the knight, but allows: 14...♗xd4! 15.cxd4 ♕xd4† 16.♗h1 ♗f2† 17.♕xf2 ♕xf2± **14...♔e7** 14...fxg4 is the first (and maybe only) move to calculate. 15.♗e5! Black can't hold on to the pawn. 15...♗f6 (15...♗xe5 16.♔xe4 ♗g6 17.♔xg6±) 16.♗xc6 bxc6 17.♔xc6 ♔d7 18.♔g2!± **15.gxf5 ♘d6?** Necessary was: 15...♔xf5 16.♗g5 ♗g6 17.♔xe4 ♔xe4 18.♗xe4 ♕xe4 19.♕xe4 ♕xe4 20.♕xb7± **16.♗g5!+–** A nasty check on d5 is coming.

Garry Kasparov

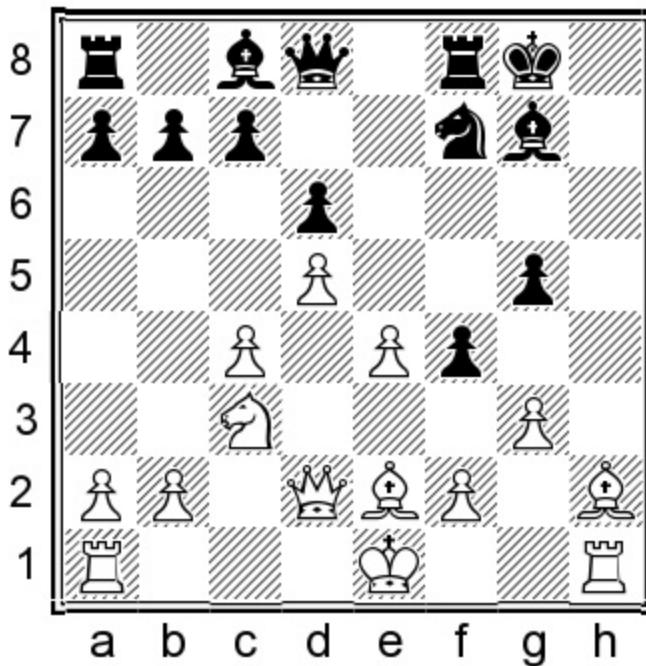
“A brilliant strategy is, certainly, a matter of intelligence, but intelligence without audaciousness is not enough.”



5. Hard Challenge Exercise 901-950

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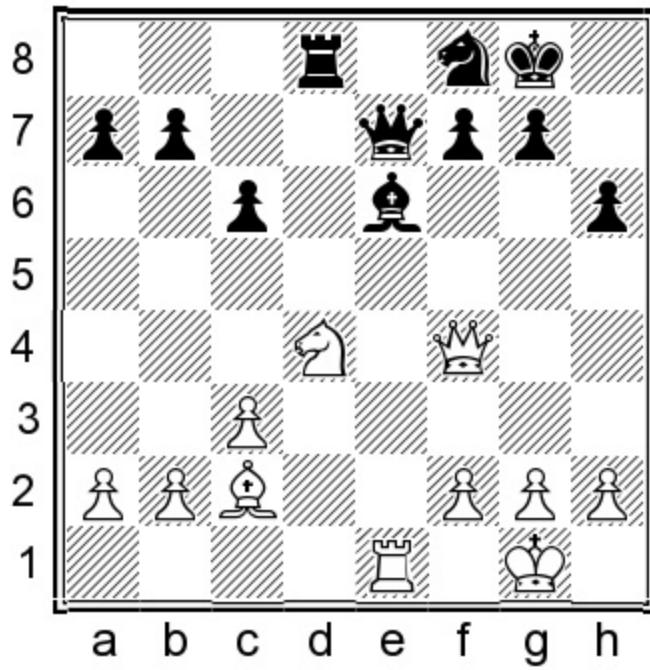
901. Speelman – Kasparov, Madrid (Rapid) 1988



Show/Hide Solution

19...f3! Sacrificing a pawn to keep the g- and h-files closed. 19...fxg3? 20.Qxg3+– 20.Qxf3 g4!– Black follows up with ...Qh6 and ...Qe5. Kasparov's 20...Qe5?! 21.Qe2 g4 led to a similar type of situation but was marginally less accurate, because ...Qh6 cannot (yet) be played.

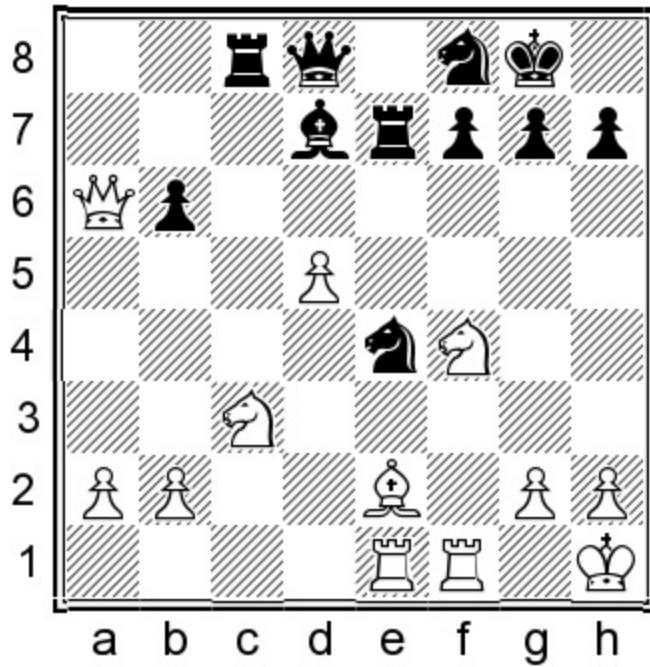
902. Kasparov – Karpov, Amsterdam 1988



Show/Hide Solution

20.h4! Prophylaxis against ... $\mathbb{W}g5$, while preparing the sequence shown in the note below. **20... $\mathbb{W}c5$**
20... $\mathbb{W}d6$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ 22. $\mathbb{W}e4$ g6 23.h5± shows another purpose of moving the h-pawn. **21. $\mathbb{E}e3\pm$**

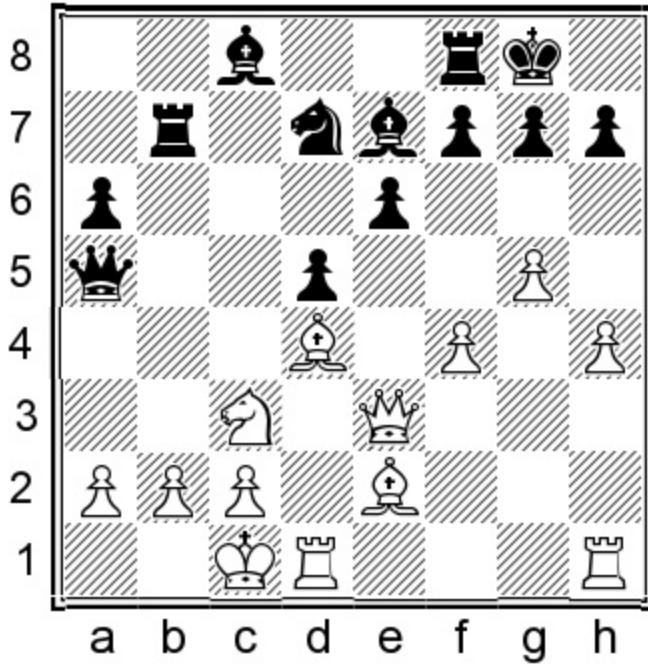
903. Kasparov – Andersson, Belfort 1988



Show/Hide Solution

White has an extra pawn, but at least Black controls the blockading square d6. With a short tactical sequence, Kasparov increases his advantage by exchanging the d-pawn for Black's b-pawn. **25.d6!**
25. $\mathbb{W}d3\pm$ 25... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}fd5$ $\mathbb{E}e5$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xb6+$ – The queenside pawns are decisive.

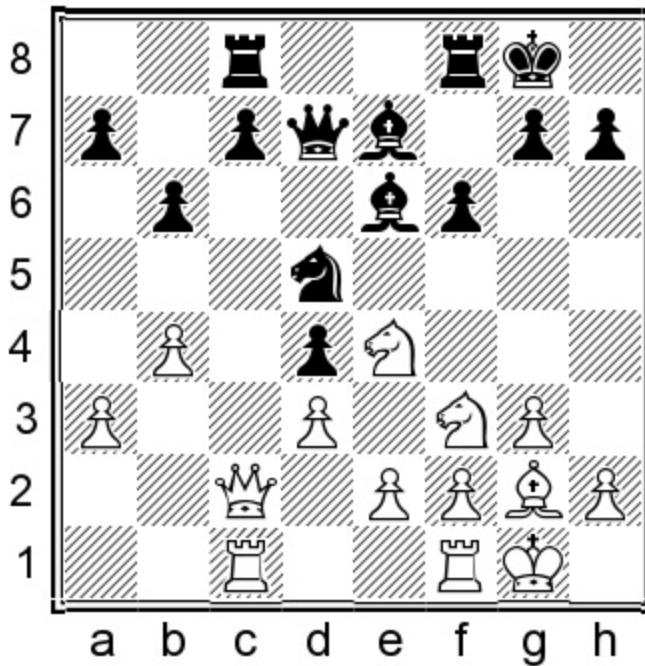
904. Short – Kasparov, Belfort 1988



Show/Hide Solution

19...♞b8! Black is in a hurry to do something before White's attack breaks through. The knight manoeuvre prepares to hunt down the dark-squared bishop. **20.♝e5!** White should take the opportunity to provoke a weakness. The game went: 20.f5 ♞c6 21.f6 ♞xd4 22.♝xd4 ♛c5 23.fxg7 ♜d8±; In the event of 20.h5 ♞c6 21.h6 g6 22.♝g7 ♜d8± White's bishop has escaped, but at the price of closing the kingside. **20...f6 21.gxf6 ♛xf6 22.♝d6 ♛e7=** Black is not forced to repeat moves, but the position is balanced anyway.

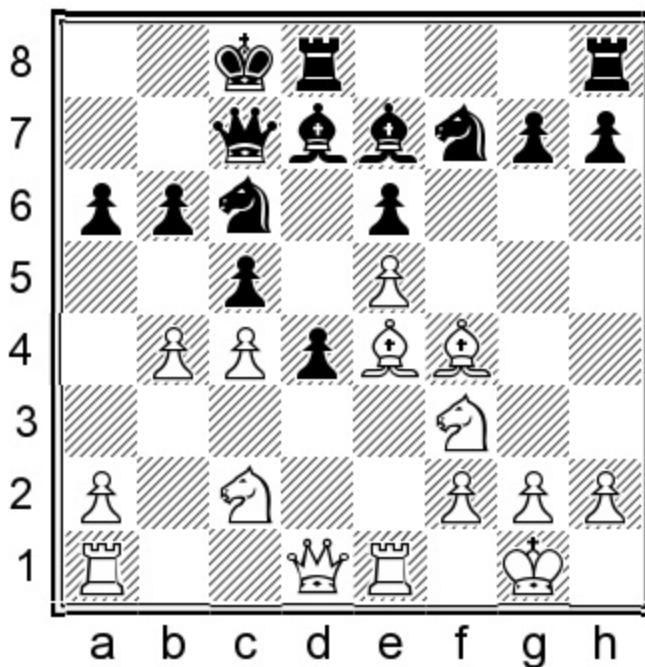
905. Karpov – Hjartarson, Seattle 1989



Show/Hide Solution

17. $\mathbb{W}c6!$ Stopping ...c7-c5. 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{Q}xb4$ 18. axb4 $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 19. b5 gives White a clear advantage, but Karpov's choice is even more convincing. **17... $\mathbb{W}xc6$ 18. $\mathbb{E}xc6$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$** If the rook retreats, Black will play ...c5, but Karpov has something else in mind. **19. $\mathbb{Q}xd4!$ $\mathbb{Q}xc6$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc6+$** — White has overwhelming compensation for the exchange, with complete domination over the light squares and a tremendous knight on c6. Moreover, Black's minor pieces are tactically loose, and the a7-pawn can soon be captured. The game continued: 20... $\mathbb{E}ce8$ 21. $\mathbb{E}c1$ f5 22. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ White went on to win convincingly.

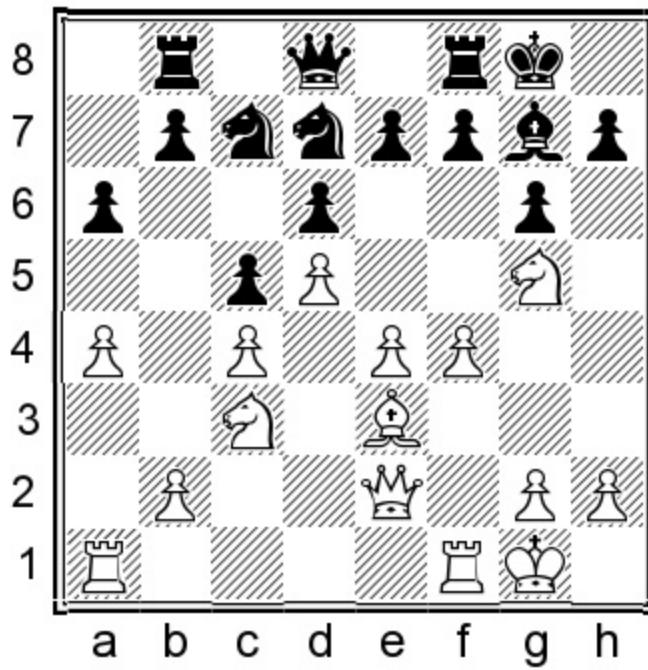
906. Anand – Rogers, Manila 1990



Show/Hide Solution

16...g5! Undermining the e5-pawn and creating problems for White's bishop. **17.♗g3 h5!** 17...g4 was the game, when 18.♘h4 ♗cxe5 19.bxc5 gives White compensation. **18.h3 g4→** The ...g7-g5 thrust often works well in similar positions. Keep in mind that sometimes you can allow White to capture on g5, as Black can get e5 in return.

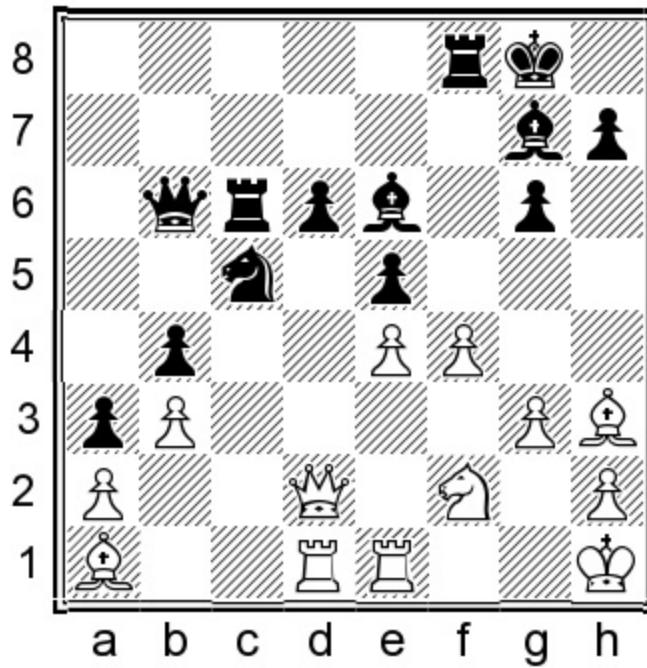
907. Khalifman – Larsen, London 1991



Show/Hide Solution

14.e5! dxе5 15.f5!± A standard sacrifice. White has improved the prospects of multiple pieces by vacating the e4-square and denying Black the use of the e5-square (unless giving back the pawn). One unsophisticated plan is ♘ce4 followed by ♕g4-h4.

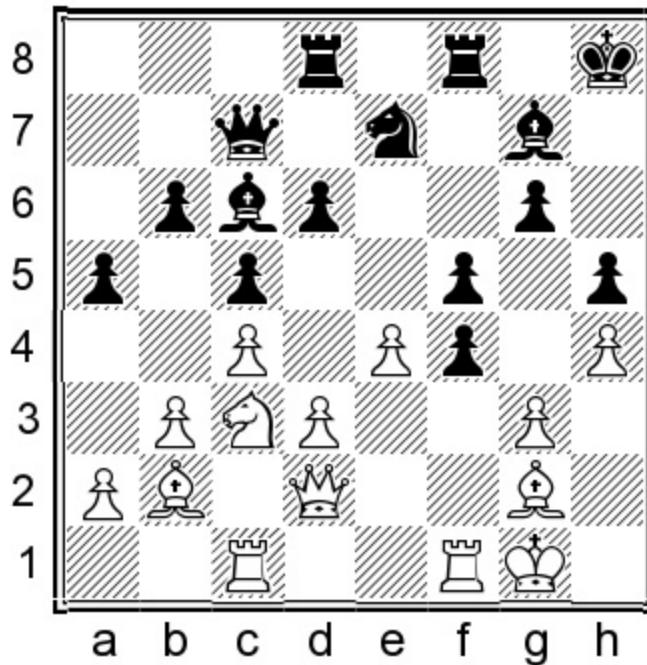
908. M. Gurevich – Kasparov, Reggio Emilia 1991



Show/Hide Solution

29...♝f7!± Black's bishop is more useful than White's – especially with ideas of ...♝xb3 in the air.

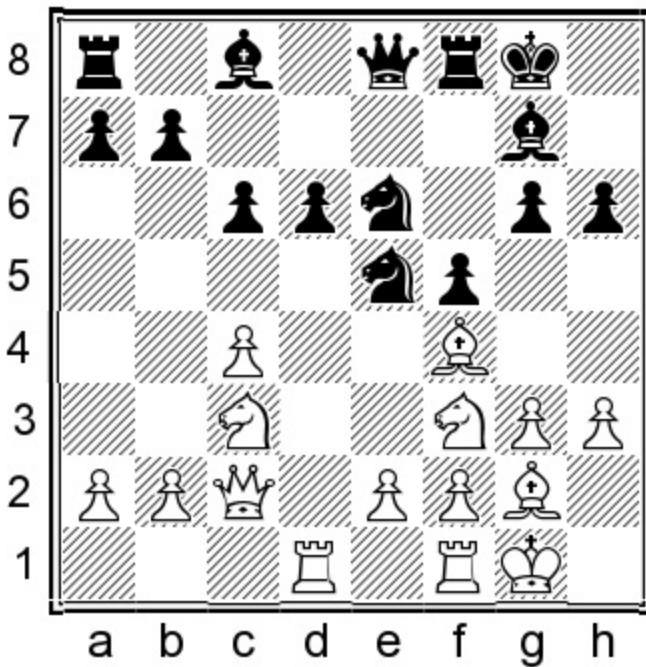
909. Ehlvest – Karpov, Linares 1991



Show/Hide Solution

25.♞e2!+– Manoeuvring towards the weak e6-square is more important than recapturing the pawn. No variations are needed – Black has to resort to gymnastics to keep everything defended. The game move 25.♞d5?!= allowed the knight to be captured.

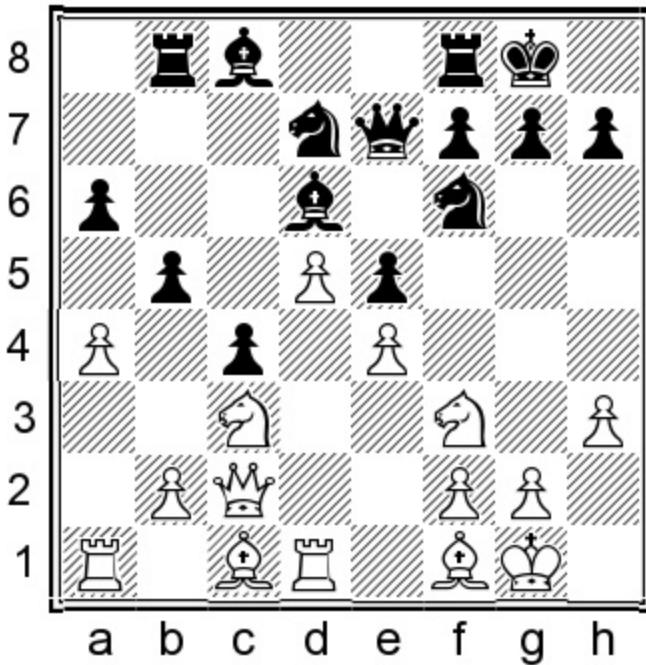
910. Karpov – M. Gurevich, Amsterdam 1991



Show/Hide Solution

16. $\mathbb{Q}c1!$ Not allowing ... $\mathbb{Q}xf4$. The game went: 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ 18. $gxf4=$ **16... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$** 16... $\mathbb{W}e7$ 17. $b3\pm$ **17.b3 $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}xd6\pm$**

911. Karpov – Anand, Brussels (4) 1991

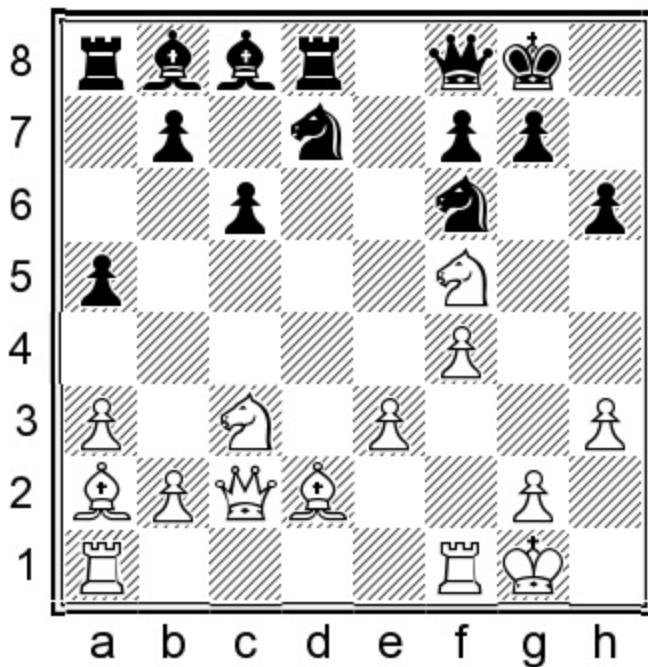


Show/Hide Solution

16. $axb5$ $AXB5$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}a5$ Provoking Black's next move in order to weaken the pawn on c4. 17... $b4$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{W}d8$ The rook has only one square, but that's enough. 19. $\mathbb{Q}a7$ White is likely to win material

soon.

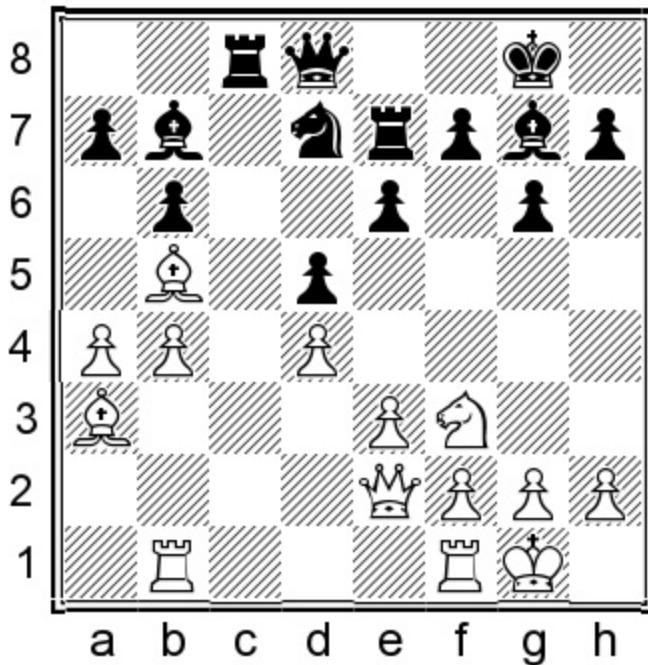
912. Karpov – Anand, Brussels (8) 1991



Show/Hide Solution

20.♗e1!+– Redirecting the bishop. Black has insufficient time to activate the pieces on the queenside before White breaks through with ♜h4, ♜ad1 and capturing somewhere – possibly with ♛xh6†.

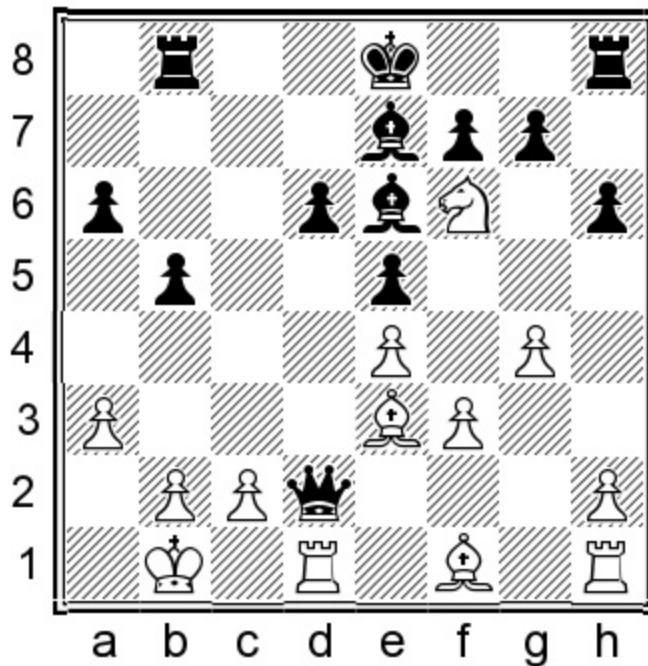
913. Kasparov – Timman, Tilburg (8) 1991



Show/Hide Solution

17.a5! Simply planning to get an annoying pawn on a6. 17... $\mathbb{Q}f6$ Timman's 17... $\mathbb{E}c7$ was not challenging. 17...e5 18.a6 $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 19. $\mathbb{E}bc1\pm$ **18.a6 $\mathbb{Q}a8$ 19. $\mathbb{Q}d3!$** White is happy to be in time with b4-b5 (threatening $\mathbb{Q}xe7$) before Black can play ... $\mathbb{Q}e4-c3$. (So it was important to push 17.a5 immediately.) **19... $\mathbb{Q}e4$ 20.b5 $\mathbb{E}ec7$ 21. $\mathbb{E}bc1\pm$**

914. Ivanchuk – Anand, Linares (1) 1992

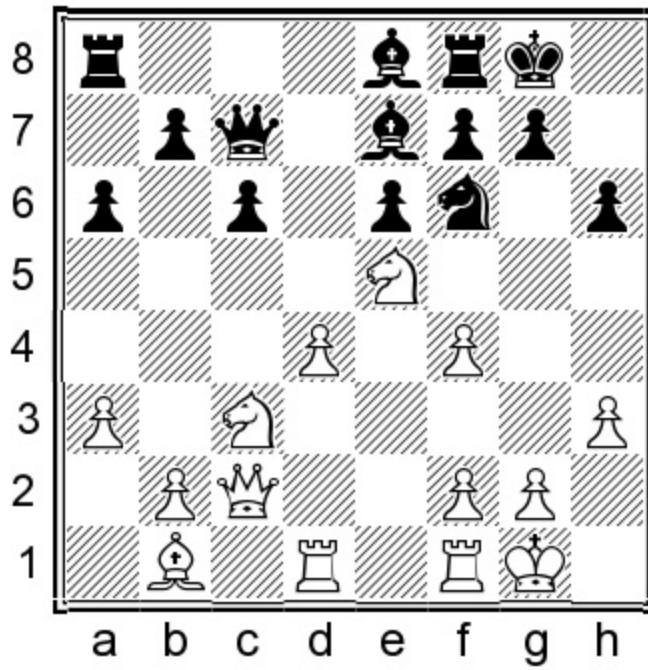


Show/Hide Solution

17...gxf6!! To carry out ...h6-h5 and open the h-file for the rook. The pawn on f6 stops White's reply g4-g5 and the bishop on e7 keeps the d6-pawn defended, saving a tempo. 17... $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ is equal.

18. $\mathbb{E}xd2\bar{\mp}$ We have reached the (simpler) Exercise 674.

915. Kramnik – Lputian, Debrecen 1992



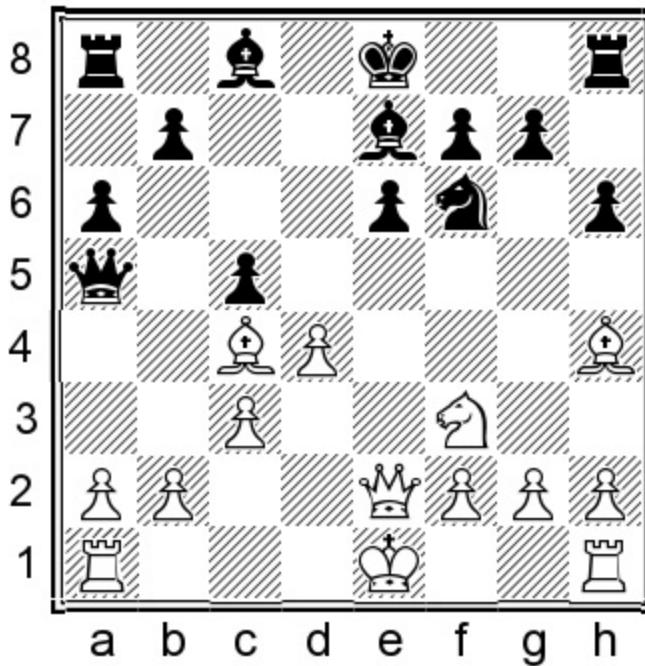
Show/Hide Solution

17.d5! Kramnik uses a minor tactical detail to get rid of the isolated pawn and weaken Black's pawn structure. **17...♝d8** 17...cx d5 18.♝xd5+– wins with a combination of tactical themes: discovered attack (on the black queen), intermediate check (♝xe7†) and removing the defender (the knight guarding h7). **18.♝fe1+–** A good alternative is 18.dxe6+– with a winning positional advantage.

Vladimir Kramnik

"I started playing chess when I was about four or five years old. It is very good for children to learn to play chess, because it helps them to develop their mental abilities. It also helps to consolidate a person's character, because as it happens both in life and in a chess game we have to make decisions constantly. In chess there is no luck and no excuses: everything is in your hands."

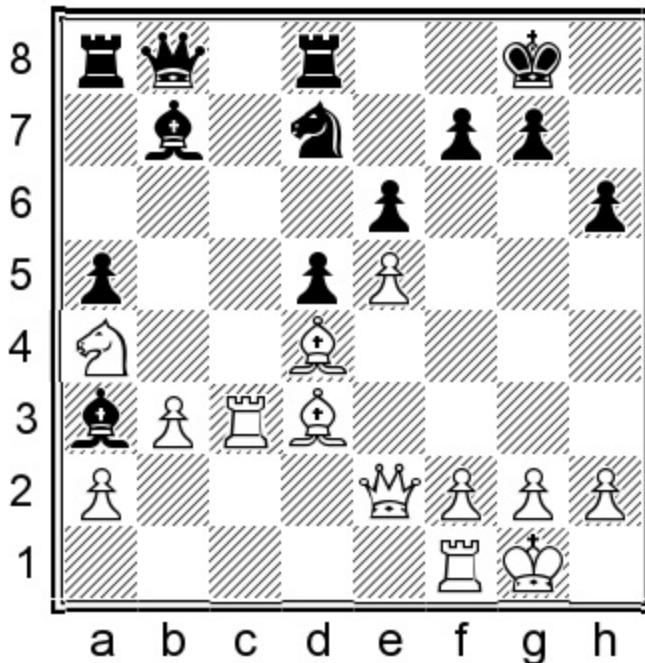
916. Shabalov – Smyslov, Tilburg 1993



Show/Hide Solution

12.d5 A move White wants to play before Black has castled. Some calculation is required though, as Black has a clever defence. **12...Qxd5** **12...exd5?** **13.Qxf6 gxf6 14.Qxd5+–**; After **12...Wb6±** White can exchange many times on e6, giving Black a weak pawn, or play more aggressively. **13.Qxd5 Qxh4 14.Qxh4 Wd8** A double threat. **15.Qf5!** **15.Qg6± 15...Wxd5 16.Qxg7†** The knight is not lost, and Black's king will soon find itself under an attack, which is likely to decide the outcome.

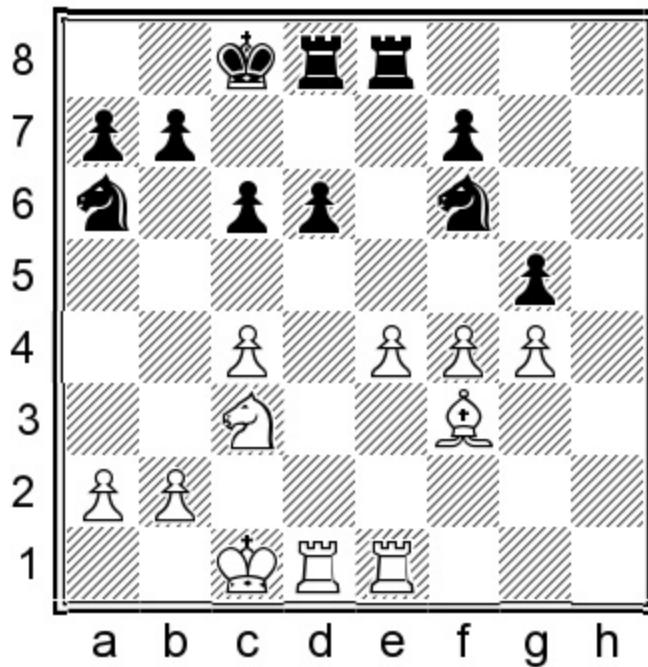
917. Smyslov – Hansen, Biel 1993



Show/Hide Solution

20.♗b5! Black wanted to exchange rooks with ...♜c8, but White's rook will now escape towards the kingside. The b5-square was the only logical option for the bishop, as retreating to c2 or b1 would allow ...♝a6. White's attack may already be winning.

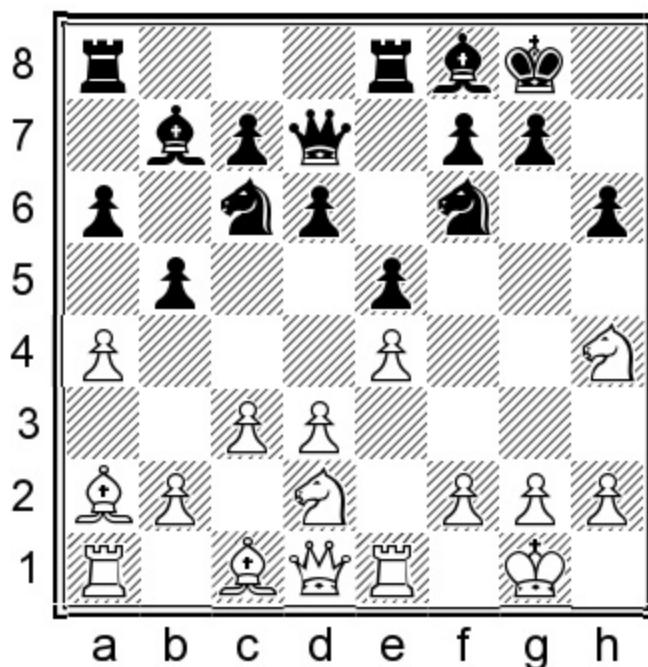
918. Smirin – Smyslov, Biel 1993



Show/Hide Solution

19. e5! Clearing the e4-square for the knight, or possibly the bishop. After 19. fxe5? ♜h7± Black regains the pawn with some advantage. **19...dxe5 20. fxe5 ♜h7 21. ♜e4±**

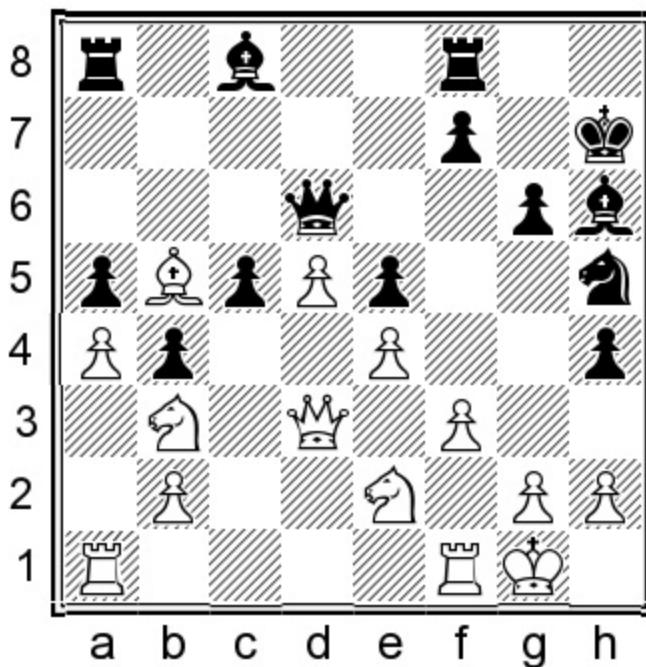
919. Kasparov – Short, London (3) 1993



Show/Hide Solution

14.♗g6± White will have an edge with the bishop pair. If White wants to play for an attack, 14.h3 stops the idea of ...♝g4 to exchange queens. After 14...♝e7 Black plans 15...d5. 15.d4∞ avoids it; but with the e4-pawn slightly loose, it's hard for White to manoeuvre the d2-knight to g3. There's no real attack going on.

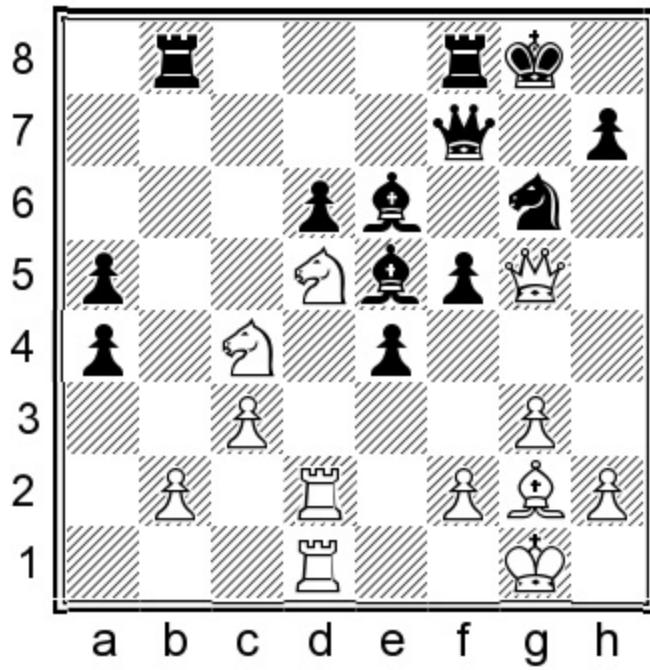
920. Arbakov – Kasparov, Paris (Rapid) 1994



Show/Hide Solution

22...c4!† Opening the a7-g1 diagonal and the c-file. **23.♝xc4** 23.♛xc4? is strongly met by: 23...♝e3† 24.♔h1 ♐g3†! (The simple 24...♝f6 followed by ...♝g5 also yields a strong initiative.) 25.♝xg3 (25.hxg3? hxg3 26.♝xg3 ♛f6+) 25...hxg3 Black will soon create decisive threats along the h-file. **23...♝d7!?** Black gets a clear advantage by simply playing for the c-file. 23...♔g7† is the attacking option which was chosen by Kasparov.

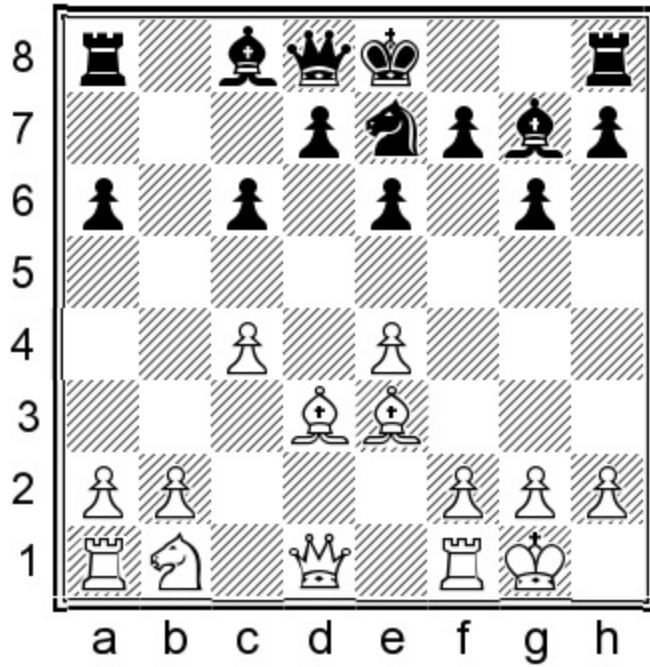
921. Short – Kramnik, Novgorod 1994



Show/Hide Solution

25...♞h8!† Preparing ...♝g8, but also to recapture on e5 with the knight.

922. Topalov – Polgar, Las Palmas 1994

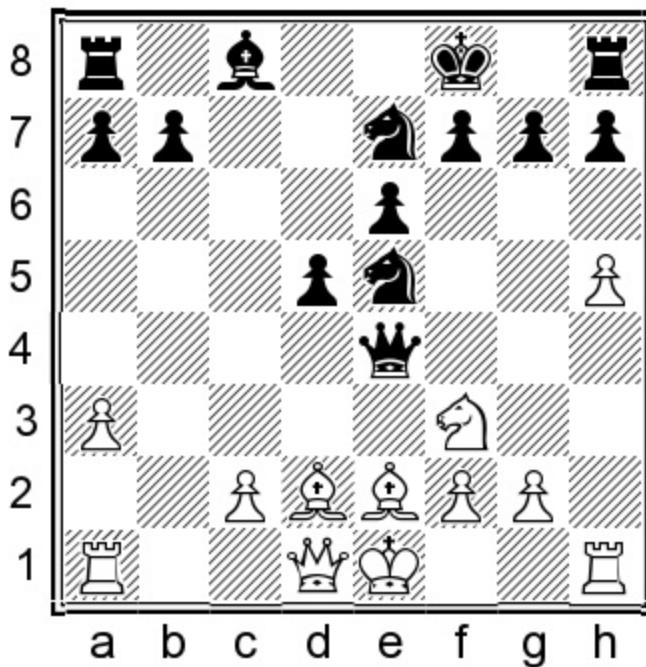


Show/Hide Solution

10.c5! Holding back Black's d-pawn is more important than defending the pawn on b2 and the rook on a1. 10.♞c3 d6± **10...♝xb2 11.♝d2 0-0** After 11...♞xa1 12.♝xa1 0-0 13.♞h6 f6 White can either take back the exchange, or be more flexible with: 14.♞c4± White can later choose between f2-f4-f5 (attacking) and ♜d1 (increasing control). **12.♝b1 ♛g7 13.♞c4±** Black's extra pawn on d7 is of little

use, and Black's pieces (with the exception of the dark-squared bishop) are badly restricted.

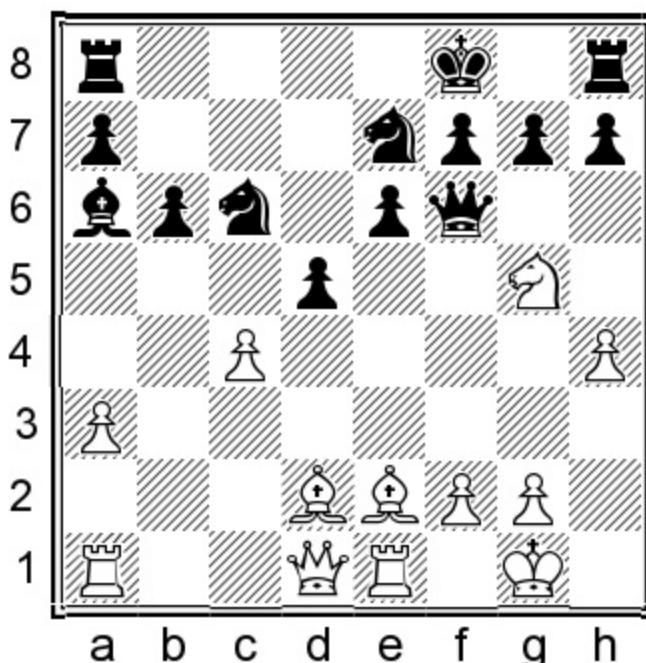
923. Kasparov – Nikolic, Paris (Rapid) 1994



Show/Hide Solution

15.h6 First things first: White should weaken the dark squares around Black's king. 15. $\hat{Q}f1$ (or 15.0-0) avoids doubled pawns on the f-file. However, after 15... $\hat{Q}xf3$ 16. $\hat{Q}xf3$ $\hat{W}c4\uparrow$ 17. $\hat{Q}e2$ $\hat{W}c6$ the same idea of 18.h6 is less dangerous due to: 18...g6! ∞ Followed by ...f7-f6 and ... $\hat{Q}f7$. **15... $\hat{Q}xf3\uparrow$** 15...g6 16. $\hat{Q}c3\pm$; 15...gxh6 16. $\hat{Q}xh6\uparrow\pm$ was the game. **16.gxf3** $\hat{W}e5$ **17.hxg7\uparrow** $\hat{Q}xg7$ **18. $\hat{Q}h6\uparrow$** ,

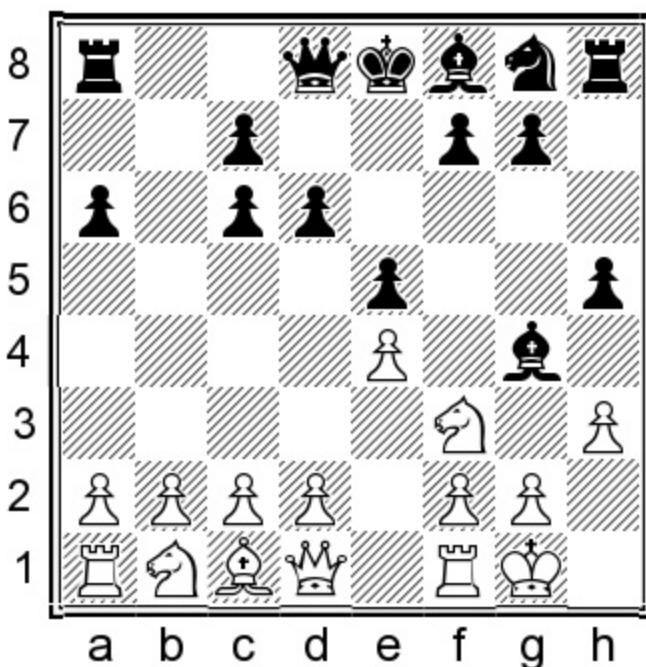
924. Kasparov – Nikolic, Novgorod 1994



Show/Hide Solution

18.♗h5! Creating a weakness. **18...g6** 18...♝g6? loses control over c6 and d5. White has a few ways to win, the simplest being 19.cxd5 exd5 20.♕c1+– with threats of ♜e6† (followed by taking on c6) and ♜e3-f3. **19.♗g4!±** White threatens to sacrifice on e6. Black will not be able to use the g7-square for the king in a secure way. The game continuation of 19.cxd5?! exd5 20.♗g4 was less exact, as Black could have played 20...♝c8! to simplify. **19...♝c8** 19...♝g7 20.♗xe6 fxe6 21.♗xe6+– White has several ways to increase the pressure. A nice line is: **20.♗f3 h6 21.♘c1± ♜g7?** **22.♗g5! hxg5** **23.hxg5+–** Trapping the queen.

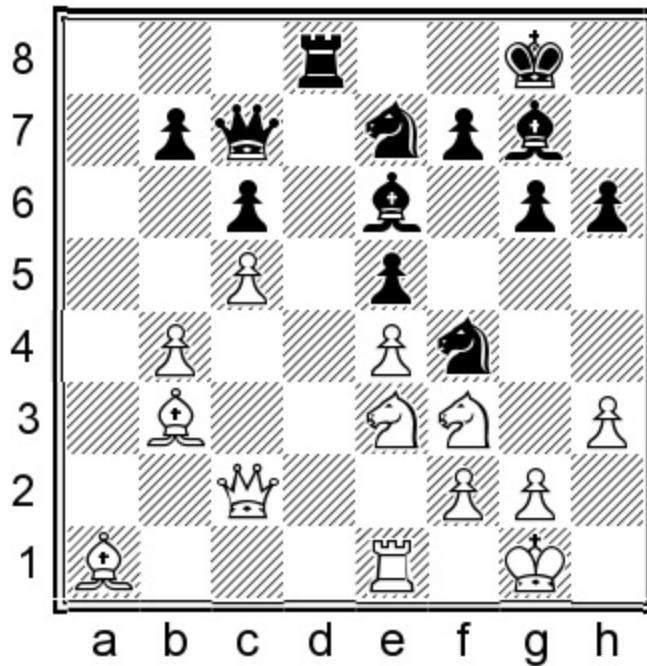
925. Smyslov – Yandemirov, Elista 1995



Show/Hide Solution

8.d4! A flank attack should be met with a break in the centre. 8.d3 was the game. **8...♝f6** 8...♝xf3 9.♝xf3 exd4 and White's development is worth more than the pawn, with e4-e5 coming either immediately or in the near future. 8...exd4? loses control of the f4-square, making 9.hxg4! hxg4 10.♝h2 ♜h4 11.♗f4+– possible **9.♗bd2 g5 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.♗c4±** Without 8.d4, this move would not have come with a threat, and that makes all the difference.

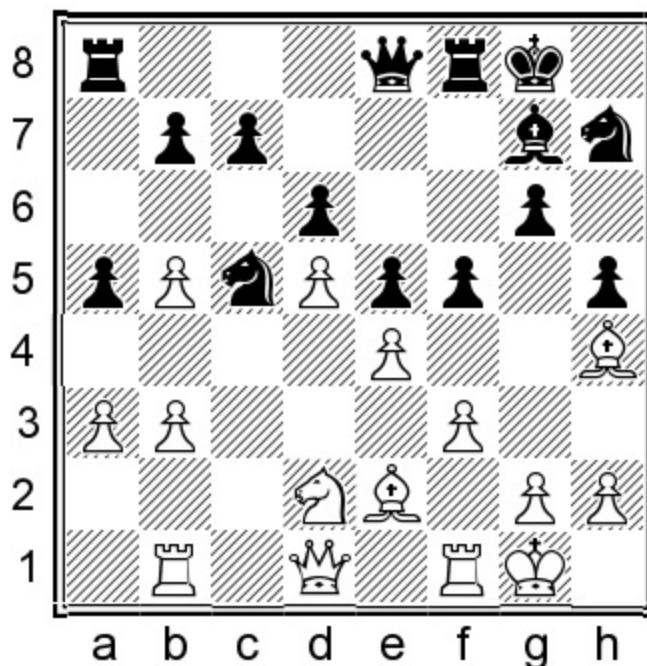
926. Kasparov – Morozevich, Paris (Rapid) 1995



Show/Hide Solution

23.♘xe6 The exchange helps Black to manoeuvre the knight from f4 towards d4, but it's still worth it because White gets to exert immediate pressure. **23...♗xe6 24.♘c4** Threatening to capture on e5. A secondary idea is to invade on d6; this isn't really a threat right now, as Black can respond with ...♘c8, but it might be strong later. **24...♘d4 24...f6 25.♗b3+–** wins material. **25.♘xd4 exd4 26.♘d6+–** White can increase the pressure with ♘c4 and e4-e5. Morozevich tried sacrificing the exchange, but in vain.

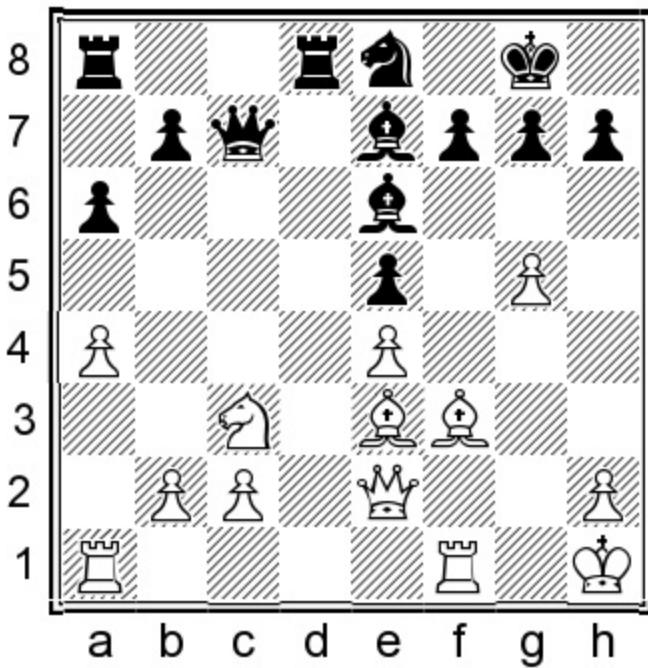
927. Kramnik – Kasparov, Riga 1995



Show/Hide Solution

17...fxe4! The only good way to create counterplay before White smashes through with b5-b6 and $\mathbb{Q}c4$. 17... $\mathbb{Q}h6?$ allowed 18.exf5 gxf5 19.b6± in the game. 17...b6? 18.b4± leaves Black with problems on the c-file. **18. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$** 18.fxe4 $\mathbb{Q}h6\rightleftarrows$ threatens ... $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$. **18... $\mathbb{Q}xe4$** **19.fxe4** $\mathbb{Q}xf1\uparrow$ **20. $\mathbb{W}xf1$** $\mathbb{Q}h6\rightleftarrows$

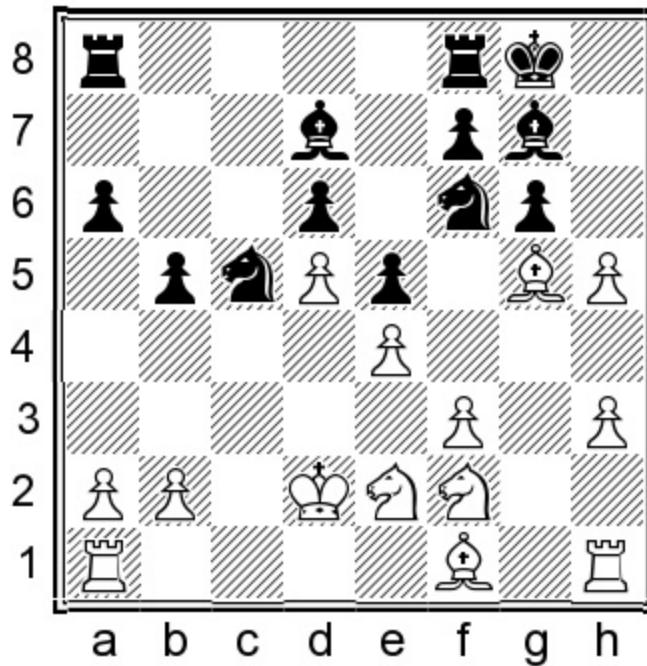
928. Topalov – Kasparov, Yerevan (Ol) 1996



Show/Hide Solution

20. $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ 20. $\mathbb{W}f2$ was the game continuation, when 20... $\mathbb{Q}dc8!$ would have stopped $\mathbb{Q}d5$ for a while. For instance, if 21. $\mathbb{B}ac1$ then 21... $\mathbb{Q}a3!$ is a good move. **20... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$** **21.exd5±** The light-squared bishop is a good piece, ready to move to g4 when needed.

929. Piket – Kasparov, Amsterdam (Rapid) 1996

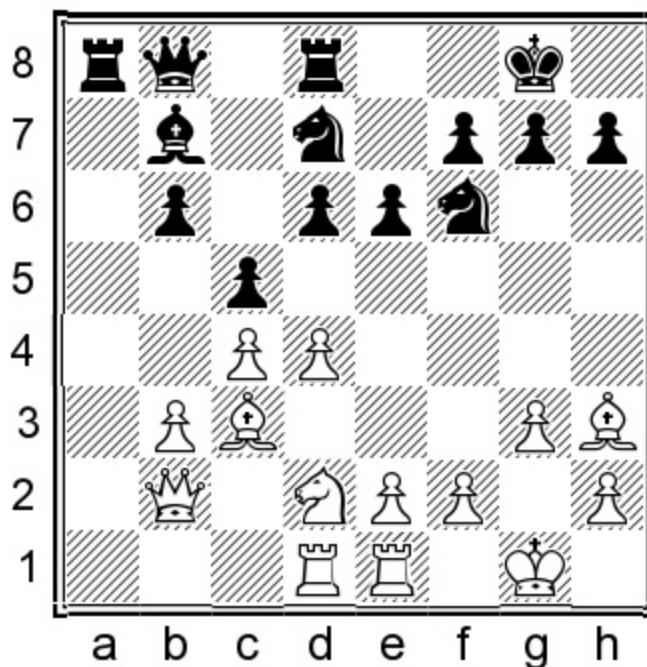


Show/Hide Solution

17...Qxh5! Black is happy to give up the d-pawn in order to gain time to develop an initiative.

17...gxh5? would be a horrible positional decision. 18.Qg3± 18.Qe7 Qfc8 19.Qxd6 Qb7 20.Qe7 f6± White's bishop will be forced to retreat to a3, after which ...a6-a5 forces a weakness on the queenside. It is not easy to evaluate that Black is better, but you don't need to be certain of that to solve the exercise – you only needed to see that this direction was clearly better than any of Black's other options.

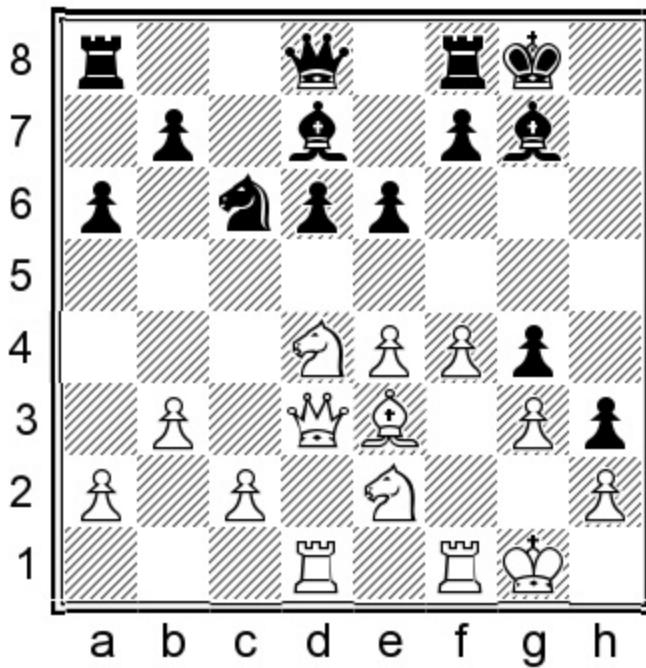
930. Van Wely – Karpov, Tilburg 1996



Show/Hide Solution

19.d5! 19.e4 allows 19...cxd4 20.♗xd4 e5= when the b7-bishop is active and Black has the c5-square for the knight. **19...e5** 19...exd5 keeps the black bishop alive, but Black will have problems on the b2-g7-diagonal. 20.cxd5 ♗xd5 21.♗xd7 ♜xd7 (21...♝xd7 22.♗xg7±) 22.♗xf6 gxf6 23.♗xf6± **20.e4±** Black's bishop is dead and White can play for f2-f4.

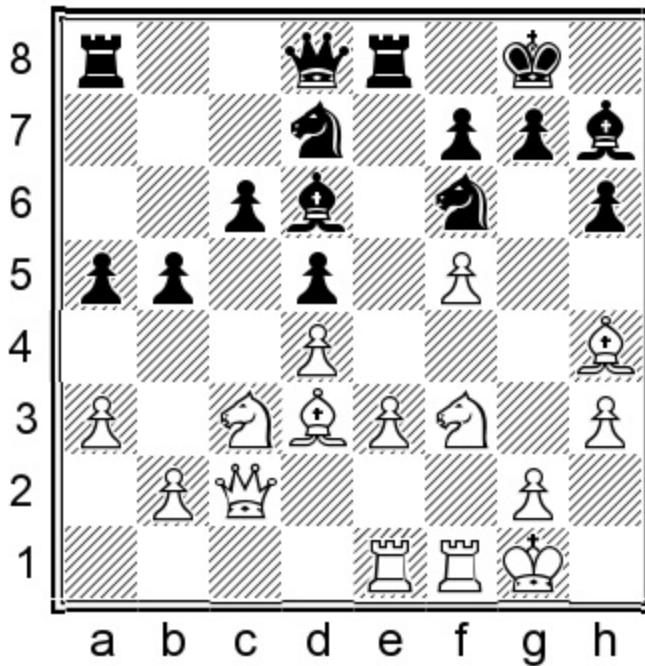
931. Shirov – Kasparov, Linares 1997



Show/Hide Solution

21...f5!± Preventing any ideas of f4-f5 (especially after an exchange on c6, which White might include to avoid ...♝e5), while solidifying Black's kingside pawn chain and starting to carve open a path towards the weak light squares around White's king. It's a double-edged decision because White gets the d5-square, but the benefits outweigh this drawback. **22.c4 ♕a5 23.♗c3 ♜ae8 24.exf5** 24.♗fe1?! e5!± gave Black a larger advantage in the game. **24...exf5 25.♗f2 25.♗d5?** allows 25...♗xe3! 26.♗xe3 ♗xd4 27.♗xd4 ♗e8 28.♗f2 ♗xd4 29.♗xd4 ♗xa2+ when Black wins thanks to the threat of mate on g2. **25...b5!±** White will be able to land a knight on the d5-outpost, but the knight doesn't play alone. Black has a potential stronghold on e4 as well, and can also exchange the powerful knight.

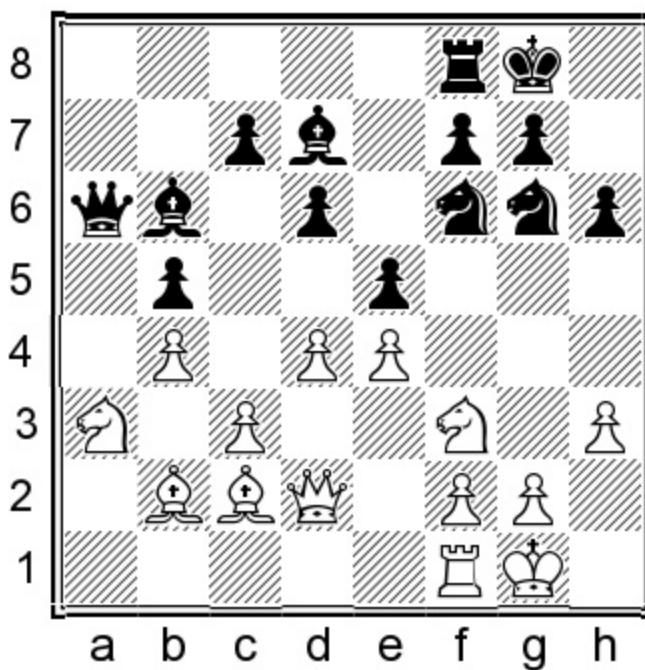
932. Kramnik – Kasparov, Moscow (Blitz) 1998



Show/Hide Solution

20.e4! Just in time before Black has kicked the knight with ...b5-b4. **20...b4** 20...dxe4 21.♗xe4 ♕c7 Defending d6 and c6. 22.♗xd6 ♕xd6± That bishop on h7... **21.e5 bxc3 22.exd6 ♕xe1 23.♕xe1 cxb2 24.♕xb2+–** White would stand better even if the d6-pawn were missing. With the pawn surviving, the contest is virtually over.

933. Topalov – Anand, Dos Hermanas 1999

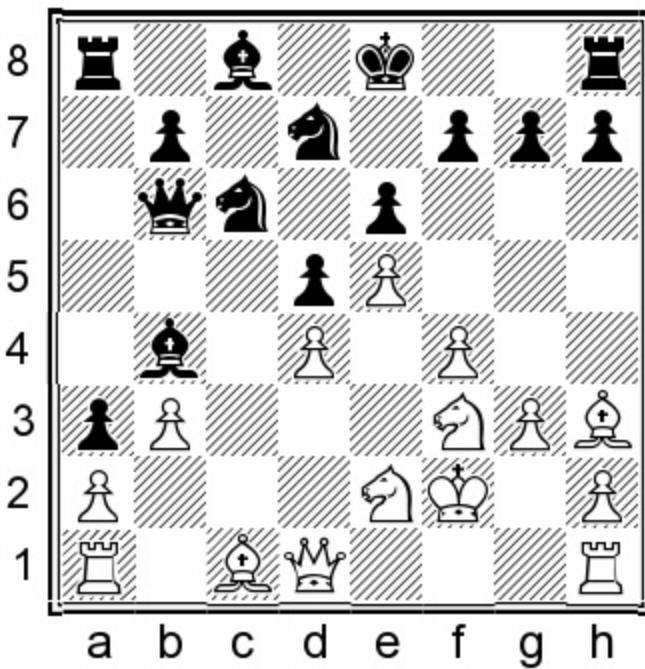


Show/Hide Solution

18.dxe5 dxe5 19.c4!± Activating the bishop on b2. 19.♗xe5!? ♗xe5 20.c4 is working tactically, but it

unnecessarily gives Black more opportunities.

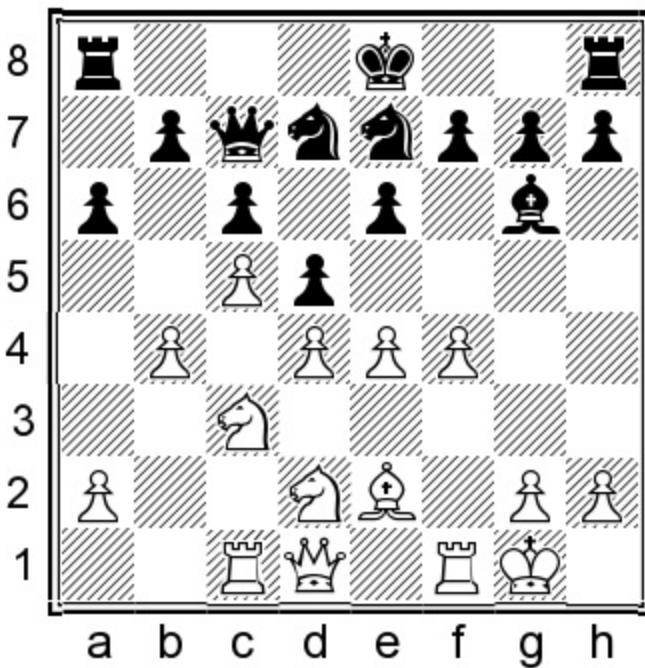
934. Khalifman – Volkov, St. Petersburg 1999



Show/Hide Solution

13... $\mathbb{Q}db8!$ Vacating the d7-square for Black's bishop, while redirecting the knight to a6 and later b4. Black should not castle (yet, anyway), since it would make White's attack easier. 14. $\mathbb{K}e3 \mathbb{Q}d7$ 15. $g4$ $h5!?$ Volkov later castled on the queenside.

935. Kramnik – Topalov, Dortmund 1999



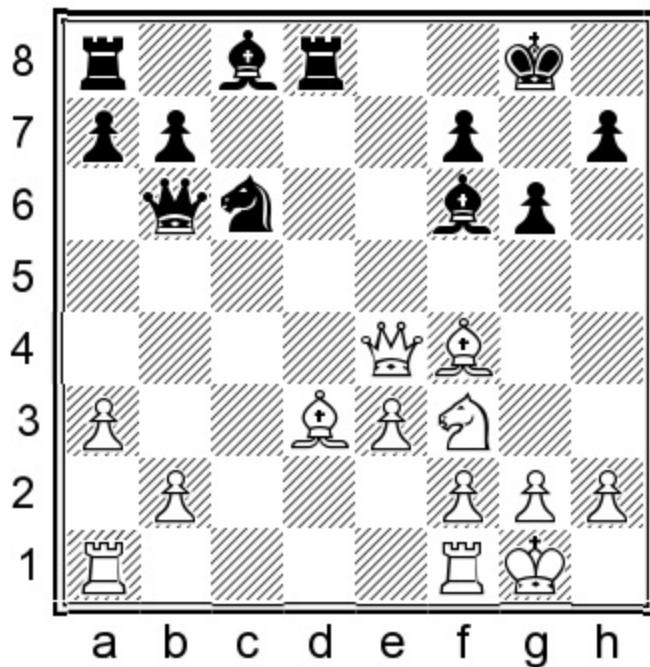
Show/Hide Solution

16.f5! A sacrifice to compromise Black's pawn structure. Advancing on the queenside does not yield an advantage: 16.a4 0-0 17.b5 axb5 18.axb5 $\mathbb{Q}f6\rightarrow$ Black is less restricted than normal for this type of structure. **16...exf5 17.exd5 cxd5±** For the sacrificed pawn, White has isolated the weakness on d5 and restricted the bishop on g6. In the long term, White is free to advance on the queenside without worrying about the centre being opened.

Veselin Topalov

"It is not always right to play for a win in every game. At certain moments I simply lose my head, as they say. I just want so much to win, and this sometimes leads to defeats. I need to control myself better."

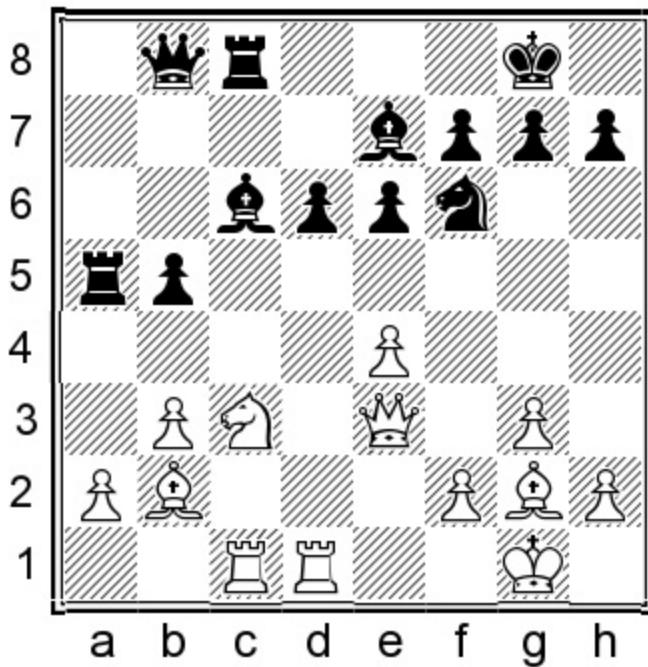
936. Kramnik – Short, Wijk aan Zee 2000



Show/Hide Solution

16.♗g5! Exchanging the (for the moment) only piece defending Black's king. **16...♝xb2?!** 16...♝f5? 17.♝h4 ♚xg5 18.♝xg5 is an important tactical detail, threatening mate in two. 16...♝xg5 17.♝xg5 ♚g7 is the best defence the engine can come up with, but Black remains in a depressing situation a pawn down. **17.♝c4→** You don't need to have calculated any further, but it's worth seeing the instructive continuation of the game. **17...♝g7 18.♝h4 h5 19.♝xf7** An elegant tactical blow, although 19.♝ab1 is equally winning. **19...♝xg5 19...♚xf7 20.♝ab1 ♜c3 21.♝fc1+–** The point of the combination is that White can recapture on g5 with check. **20.♝xg5+–** With an extra pawn and the safer king, White is winning.

937. Lautier – Kramnik, Monte Carlo (Rapid) 2000

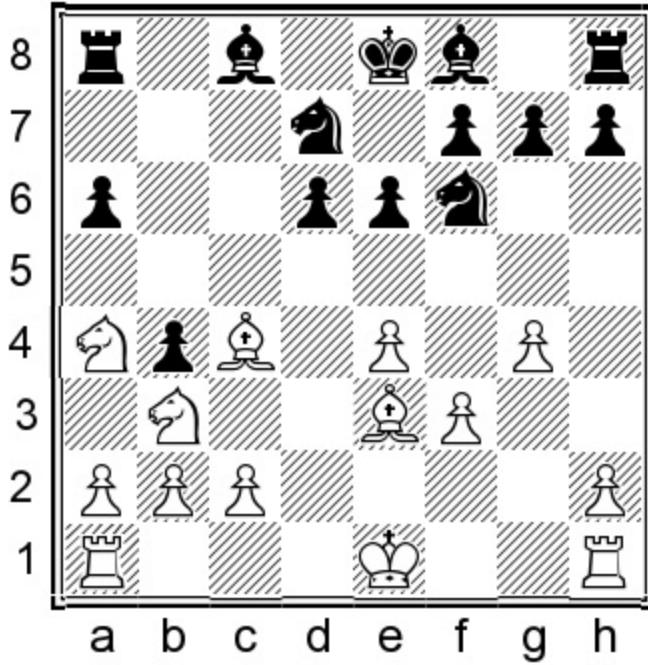


Show/Hide Solution

19. $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ 19...exd5? 20.exd5+– The double threat wins back the piece, after which the white bishop(s) will be too strong. 19... $\mathbb{Q}d8?$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xf6\#$ creates a weakness that's fatal for Black's king.

20. exd5 e5± The bishop pair works well in conjunction with White's queenside pawn majority.

938. Grischuk – Kasparov, Linares 2001

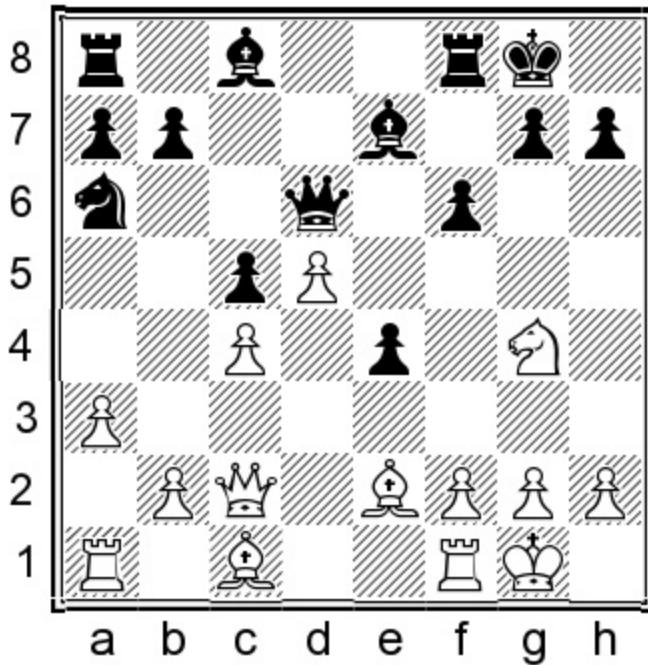


Show/Hide Solution

13...d5! The move order is important. 13... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ d5 does not come with a threat, so White has

an intermediate move: 15.g5+– Black will not be able to recapture on d5 with the knight. **14.exd5 ♕e5!** **15.♕e2 ♔xd5=** The knight arrives with tempo on an active square, from where it also defends the weak b6-point.

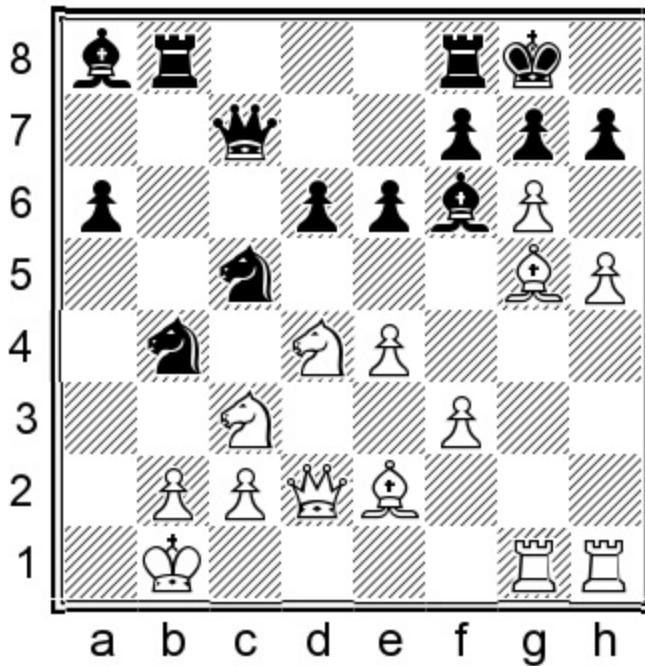
939. Anand – Shirov, Moscow 2001



Show/Hide Solution

White stands better. The protected passed pawn on d5 is strong, while the queen isn't the best blockading piece. Black would rather have the bishop or the knight on d6. However, White has to handle Black's kingside majority before it takes off. **17.f3!** Immediately getting rid of the pawn on e4. **17.g3 f5 18.♕f4±** also favours White to some extent, but Black will get counterplay with ...g7-g5 at some point. **17...f5 18.♘f2±** Black can't maintain the pawn on e4, and nothing else is required to solve the exercise. The game continued **18...♗f6 19.fxe4 ♕e5 20.h3 ♘d4**, taking us to Exercise 995.

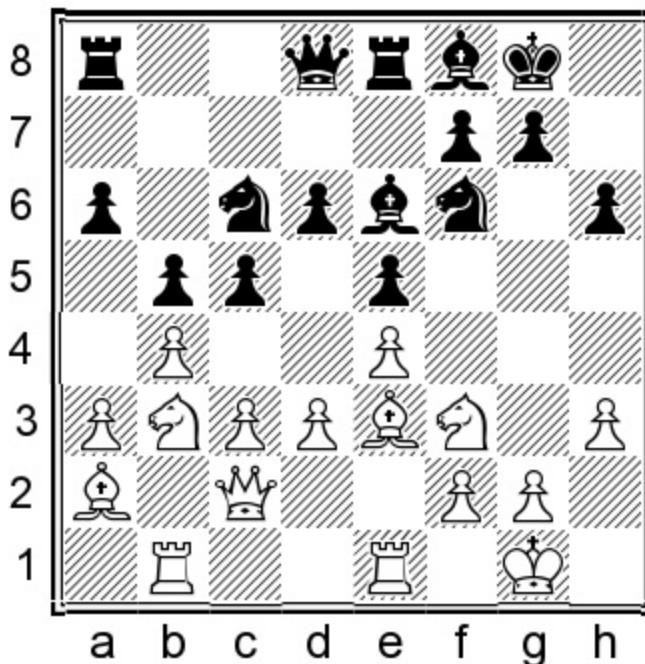
940. Adams – Kasparov, Linares 2005



Show/Hide Solution

20...♝e5!∞ Keeping the bishop to both defend and attack. 20...♝xg5? 21.gxh7†+–; 20...fxg6?? 21.hxg6 hxg6 (21...h6 22.♝xh6+–) 22.♝xf6 ♜xf6 23.♝h4± **21.gxh7†?** 21.f4? ♜xe4 22.♝xe4 ♜xd4+–; 21.h6?! fxg6†; 21.♝e3!∞ keeps White in the game, maintaining flexibility regarding taking on f7 or h7. **21...♝xh7†!** Black's attack is stronger. The king could also have sidestepped to h8, but it's in no danger after capturing the pawn. On the contrary – it is helpful for Black to avoid any potential threats involving h5-h6 followed by a check on the a1-h8 diagonal.

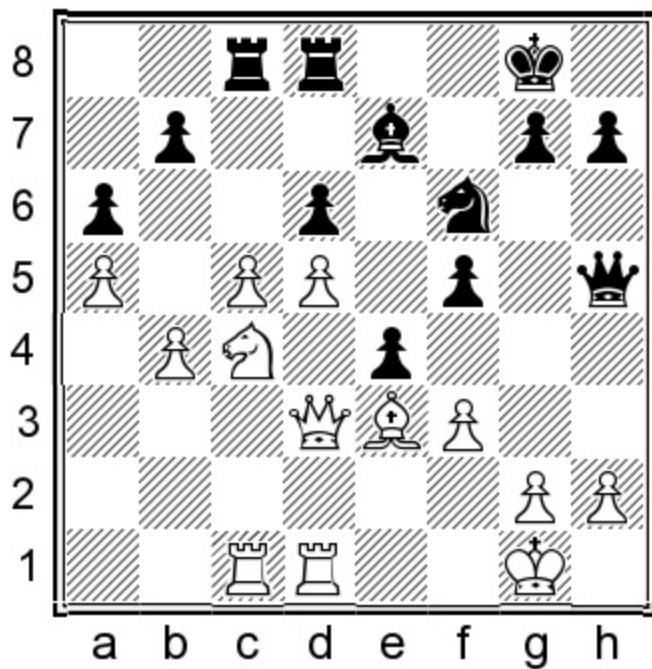
941. Topalov – Anand, Sofia 2006



Show/Hide Solution

18...♜c8 The rook stands opposite the queen, threatening to win a pawn. **19.♝b2 c4** Black has other decent options, but the text move is both direct and strong. **20.dxc4 ♜xc4†** The rook is useful on the c-file.

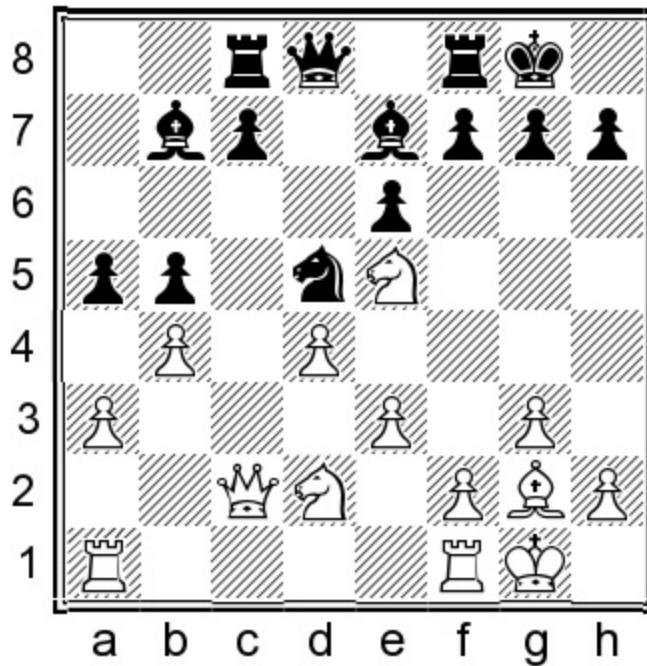
942. Leko – Topalov, Morelia/Linares 2007



Show/Hide Solution

24.♛f1+– White is winning on the queenside and defends the king well enough. **24.fxe4?** gave Black access to the g4-square. (The exercise is about understanding this.) **24...fxe4 25.♝b3 ♜g4 26.h3 ♜xe3 27.♝xe3 ♜g5†**; **24.♛e2** is also good, but it's unnecessary to have the queen exposed on the h5-e2 diagonal.

943. Kramnik – Carlsen, Dortmund 2007

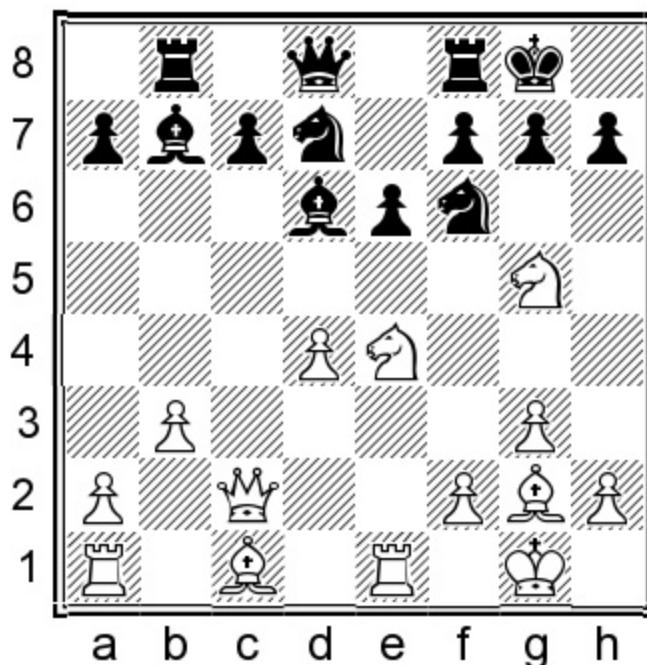


Show/Hide Solution

17.♗b3! 17.bxa5?! c5=; 17.e4 is better for White, but not to the same extent as the game continuation. **17...axb4 18.♗a5!** Aiming for c6, while gaining a tempo against the b7-bishop.

18...♝a8 19.♞ac6 ♝xc6 20.♞xc6 ♜d7 21.♞xd5! exd5 22.axb4+– A tactical sequence leading to a positional dream. Black can't challenge the knight and White can continue by winning the b5-pawn with ♜a5.

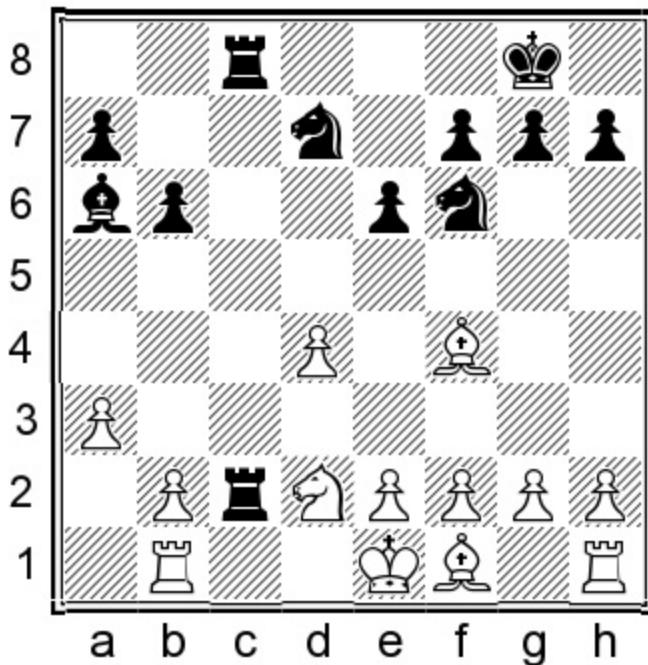
944. Mamedyarov – Anand, Dortmund 2007



Show/Hide Solution

15.d5! White gives a pawn to open the b2-f6-diagonal, thus creating threats against h7. 15.♗b2 h6= 15...exd5 15...♗xd5 16.♗xf6† ♗xf6 17.♗xd5 exd5 18.♗b2 is likely to transpose to the game after Black simplifies with ...♗e4. Black does have the additional option of 18...g6 19.♘c3 h6 20.♗f3 ♔g7±, but it looks uncomfortable to step into a pin. After 15...e5 16.♗xf6† ♗xf6 17.♗b2 Black does not manage to keep the b2-g7-diagonal closed after, for instance: 17...♗e8?! 18.f4± 16.♗xf6† ♗xf6 17.♗b2 ♗e4 18.♗xe4 dxe4 19.♗xe4 ♘xe4 20.♗xe4± Material is equal, but White has a strong bishop and the better pawn structure.

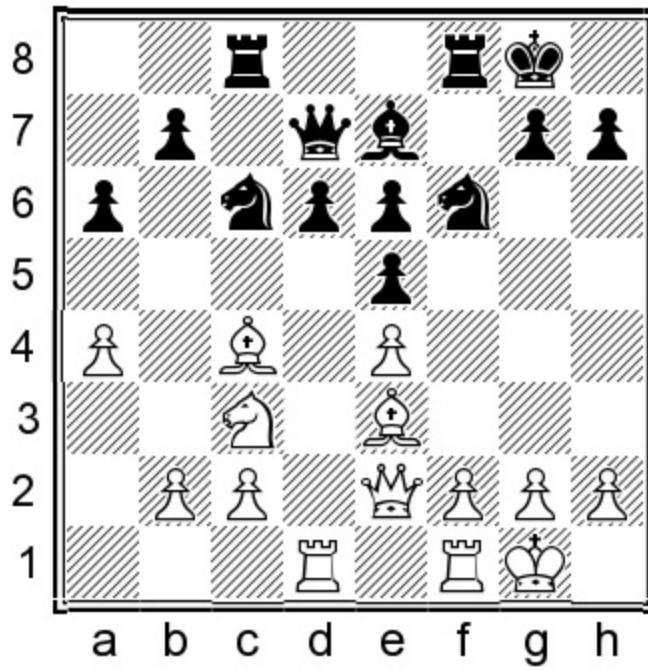
945. Carlsen – Adams, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007



Show/Hide Solution

15.♗b3!± Defending against mate on c1, while preparing to chase away the annoying rook. 15...♗c4 16.♗a1 ♗a2 17.♗xc2 ♗xb1 18.♗a1± White keeps the extra pawn that was there in the initial position.

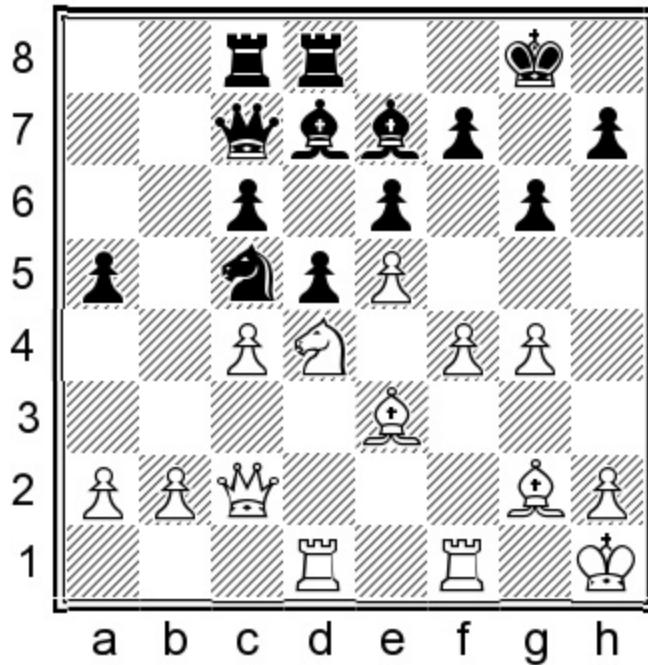
946. Karjakin – Anand, Nice (Blindfold) 2008



Show/Hide Solution

14...♝d8 The bishop is redirected to a5 (or b6, in case White plays f2-f4 and ♜xf4). The position can be evaluated as slightly better for White, but it doesn't matter for the exercise – the best move is still the best move.

947. Cheparinov – Topalov, Sofia 2008

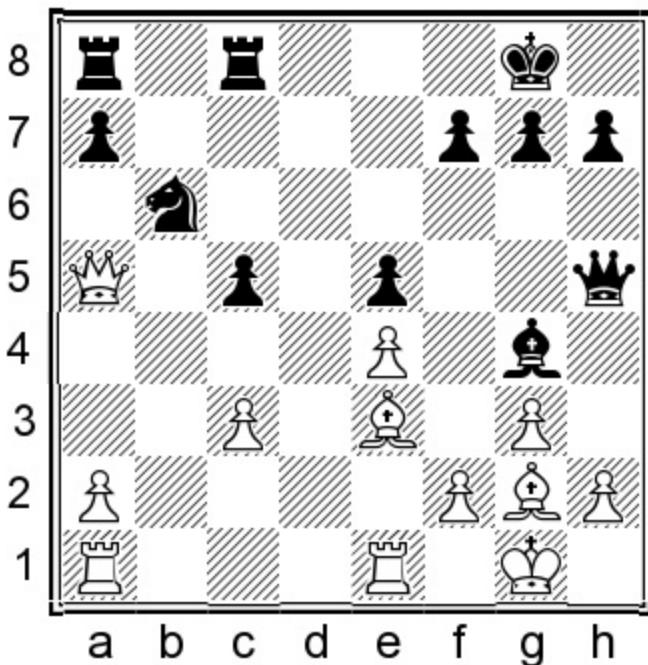


Show/Hide Solution

21.♛f2! 21.f5 ♜xe5∞ gives White decent play for a pawn, but anything could happen from here. The text move is all that's needed to solve the exercise. White positions the queen in preparation for

opening the f-file and landing on f7. The veiled attack on the c5-knight might also be useful in some lines. There's no need to calculate White's next move until Black has chosen what to play. Let's see the game continuation along with a few sample variations. 21... $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 21...dxc4 22.f5 exf5 23.gxf5 $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 24.fxg6 fxg6 25. $\mathbb{W}f7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h8$ Black has a couple of extra pawns but the king is too weak. 26. $\mathbb{E}fe1$ $\mathbb{E}f8$ 27. $\mathbb{W}xc4$ There is no defence against $\mathbb{Q}f3$ and $\mathbb{Q}d4\#$ (among other threats). 21... $\mathbb{E}f8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{Q}a6$ 23.f5 exf5 The e5-pawn is untouchable due to $\mathbb{Q}d4$, f5-f6 and $\mathbb{W}h4-h6$. 24.cxd5 cxd5 25. $\mathbb{Q}f4+-$ 22.f5! $\mathbb{W}xe5$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}f3!$ Hitting c5 as well. Cheparinov squandered his advantage with 23.fxe6? $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ and eventually lost. 23.fxg6 $\mathbb{W}g7\#$ enables Black to keep fighting. 23... $\mathbb{W}d6$ 24.fxg6 fxg6 25. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ With a crushing attack.

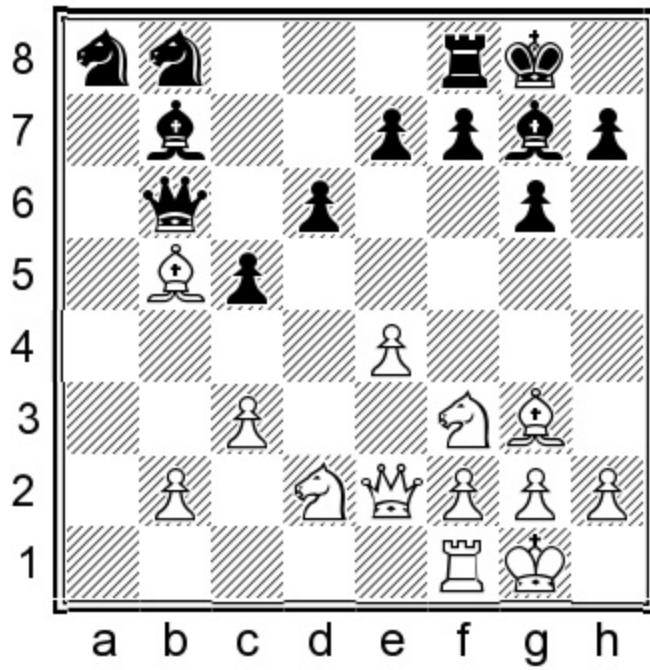
948. Kramnik – Anand, Bonn (10) 2008



Show/Hide Solution

23. $\mathbb{W}a6!$ Stopping ... $\mathbb{Q}c4$ while preparing a2-a4-a5. 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc5?$! $\mathbb{Q}c4$ 24. $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}e6\#$ and the active knight gives Black more than enough compensation. 23. $\mathbb{W}b5?$! is objectively of equal strength to the game continuation, although to me it feels more natural to place the queen on a6, where she is less likely to be prodded by an enemy piece. Nevertheless, this also counts as a correct alternative solution. 23...f6? An improvement is 23... $\mathbb{Q}e6!$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ planning ... $\mathbb{Q}f6-g4$. White can still fight for an advantage, but Black is doing better than in the game. 24.a4 $\mathbb{W}f7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}f1!\pm$

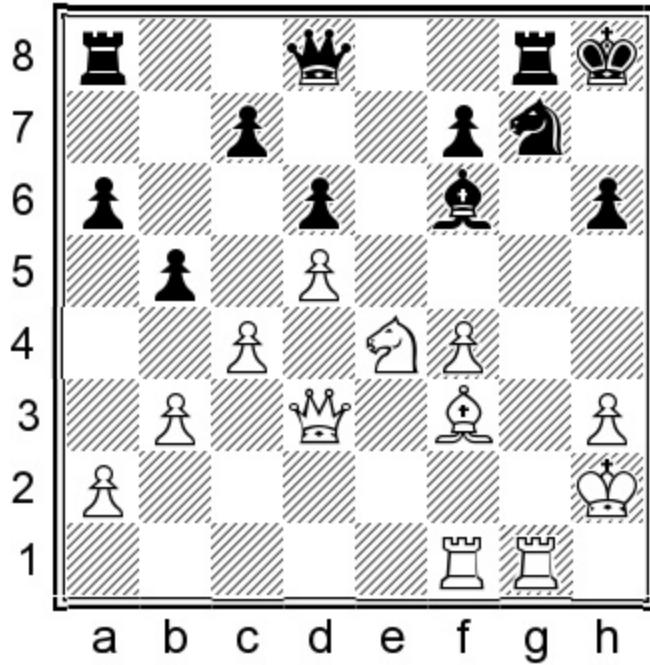
949. Kamsky – Kramnik, Baku (Rapid) 2010



Show/Hide Solution

15...♝c6! The undefended b2-pawn forces White to exchange bishops, which makes it easier for Black to exert pressure along the queenside files. **16.♝xc6 ♜xc6 17.♝b1 ♜c7 18.h4 ♜a8†**

950. Adams – Carlsen, Khanty-Mansiysk (Ol) 2010



Show/Hide Solution

30.♝d1! The bishop is redirected to a diagonal that Black has weakened by moving the g-pawn and exchanging the light-squared bishop. You don't need to calculate anything else to solve the exercise, but let's see a few more moves anyway. **30...bxc4 31.bxc4 ♜h4 32.♝g5!** This flashy move is the

engine's favourite, although the game continuation of 32.♗c2 f5 33.♕g6! was also good enough to win. 32...hxg5 33.fxg5 ♕xg5 34.♖xf7 There is no defence against 35.♗c2.

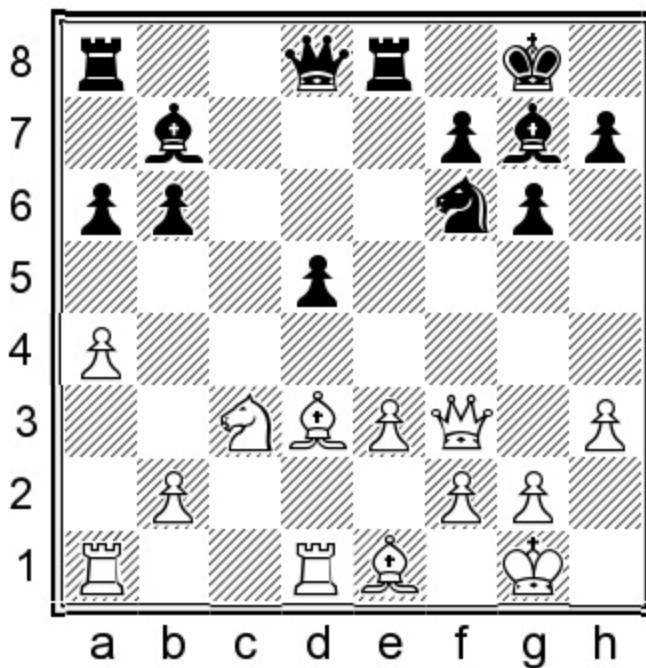
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5. Hard Challenge Exercise 951-980

Show in Text Mode

951. Aronian – Anand, Moscow (Rapid) 2011



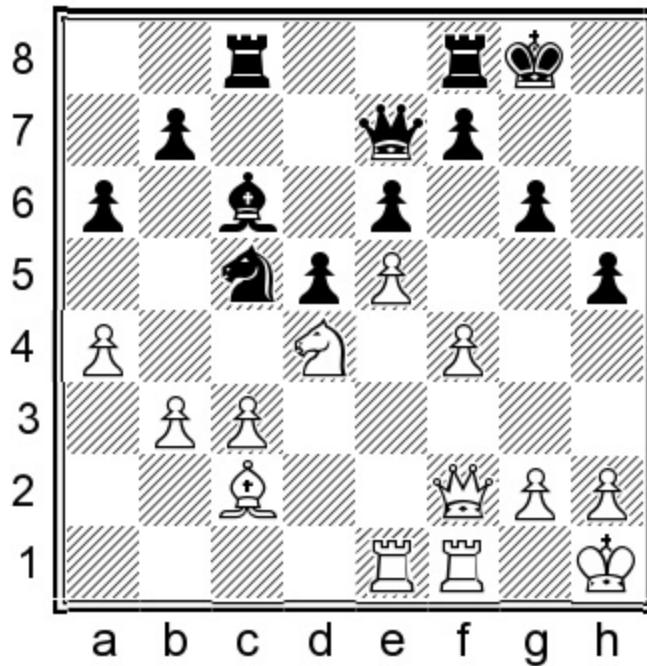
Show/Hide Solution

16... $\mathbb{W}b8$! Defending the bishop on b7 and thus preparing ...d5-d4. As the black queen also takes control over the diagonal, White's queen has no good squares! 16... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c2=$; 16... $\mathbb{W}c7??$ 17. $\mathbb{E}ac1$ d4?! 18. $\mathbb{Q}d5\pm$ 17. $\mathbb{W}f4$ $\mathbb{W}xf4$ 18.exf4 Black has practically got an extra pawn in the centre. There is still some work required to win the game, and 18... $\mathbb{Q}d7!+$ was a good start, eyeing the weak b3-square.

Viswanathan Anand

“Chess is like a language; the top players are very fluent at it. Talent can be developed scientifically but you have to find first what you are good at.”

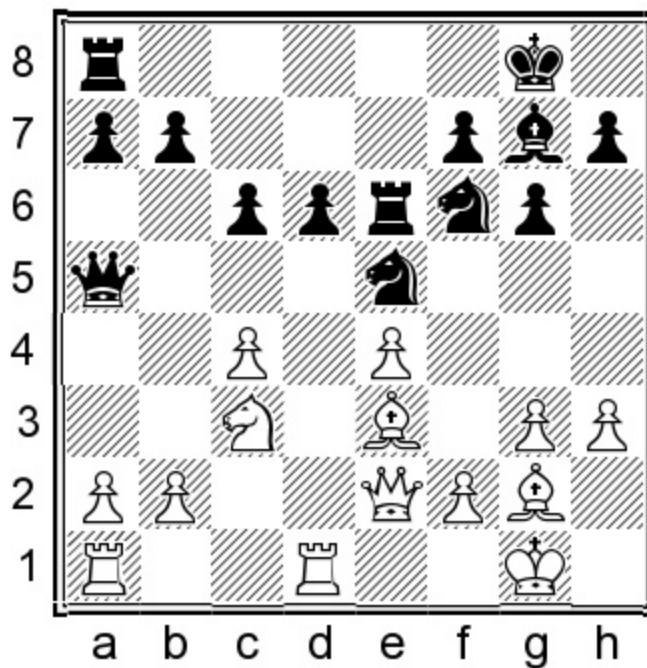
952. Carlsen – Radjabov, Moscow (Blitz) 2012



Show/Hide Solution

26.f5! Sacrificing a piece to destroy the black king's shelter. Notice that all the white pieces participate on the kingside, while Black has three pieces far away on the c-file. **26...exf5?!** **26...Qe4** would have survived for longer, but after **27.Qxe4 dxe4 28.f6** followed by **Qf4** and **Qe3**, White is winning. **27.Qxf5 gxf5 28.Qg3†** Checkmate will follow shortly, so Radjabov resigned. **1–0**

953. Khalifman – Lavrov, St. Petersburg 2012

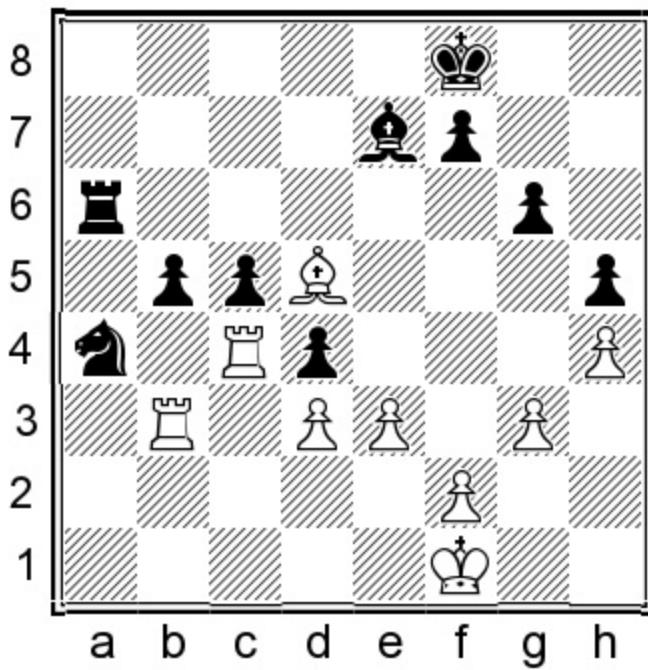


Show/Hide Solution

15.c5! After deflecting the d6-pawn, White will be able to push e4-e5. **15...dxc5 16.f4 Qed7 17.e5±**

The only way for Black to avoid losing a piece is: 17... $\mathbb{E}ae8$ 18. $\mathbb{B}f2$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 19. $\mathbb{W}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}6d7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}e4\pm$
Black's pieces are not a pretty sight.

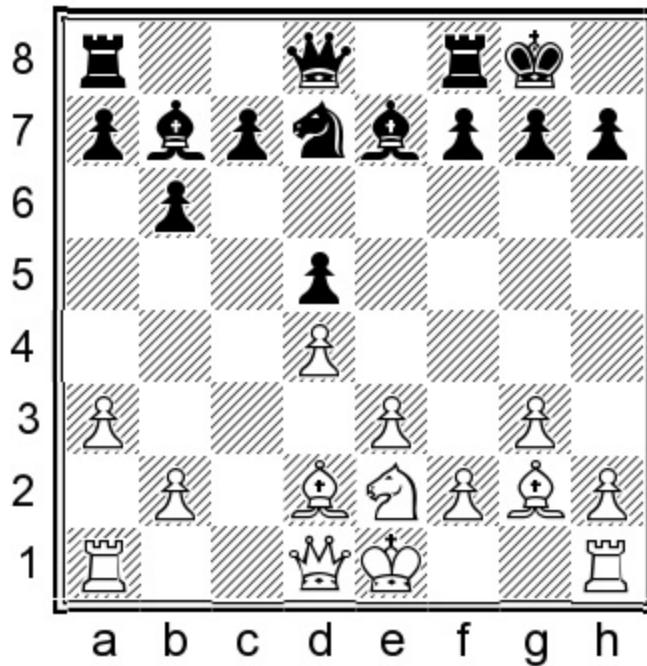
954. Carlsen – Karjakin, Wijk aan Zee 2013



Show/Hide Solution

49. $\mathbb{E}xb5!$ 49. $\mathbb{E}c1?$ $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 50. $\mathbb{B}f3\pm$ is a textbook example of a good exchange sacrifice with opposite-coloured bishops. White's bishop is quite useless, the main deficit being that it can't challenge the knight. The best that White can hope for is to draw, possibly by giving back the exchange at a good moment. 49... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 50.e4! $\mathbb{Q}xc4$ 51. $\mathbb{E}b8\ddagger$ The check is optional, and the evaluation is essentially the same with or without it. 51... $\mathbb{W}g7$ 52. $\mathbb{Q}xc4\pm$ Black's pawn on c5 is useless, while White can advance the majority on the kingside.

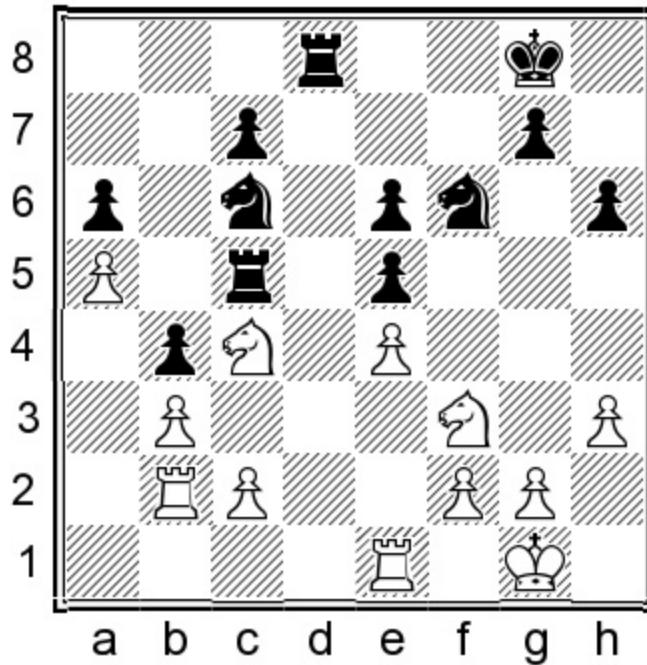
955. Carlsen – Anand, Moscow 2013



Show/Hide Solution

12.♗b4! White will either exchange the passive bishop or get hanging pawns to attack. Had Carlsen delayed this move, Black might have stopped it with ...a7-a5. **12...♝f6** After 12...c5 13.dxc5 bxc5 14.♗c3± White's bishops are active and the d5-pawn can be targeted. **13.0-0±**

956. Carlsen – Aronian, St. Louis 2013

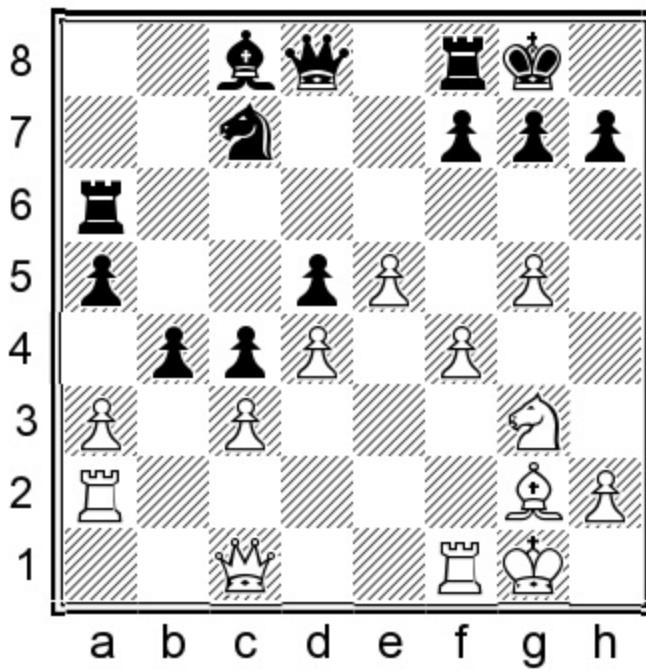


Show/Hide Solution

23...♞e8! Getting rid of the knight on c4 would be a success, especially with ...cxd6 to improve Black's structure. But Black's knight also has other prospects. **24.♝a2 ♞d6 25.♞fd2 ♜b5!+** The last

move takes aim at the c3-square. 25... $\mathbb{Q}b7\bar{f}$ wins the a5-pawn but allows White to regain some coordination.

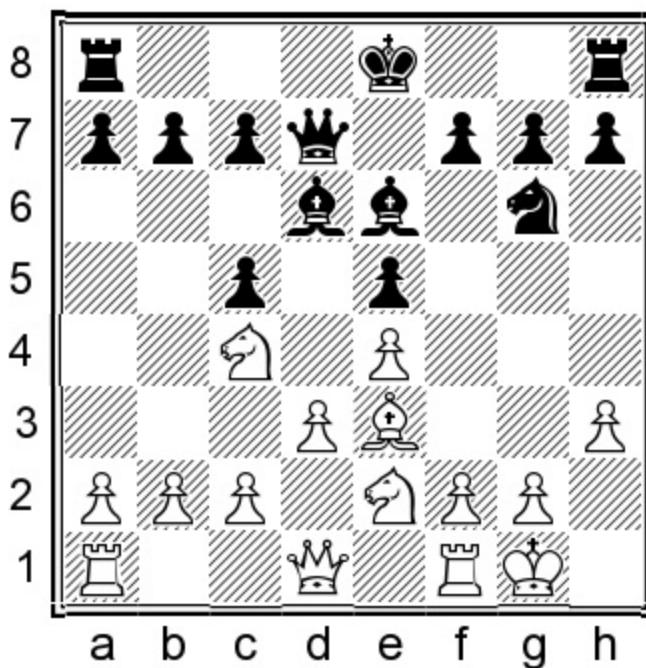
957. Anand – Carlsen, Chennai (9) 2013



Show/Hide Solution

20.f5!± White should keep the rooks on the board, as $\mathbb{R}af2$ may add a useful piece to the attack.
Anand played: 20.axb4?! axb4 21. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ $\mathbb{Q}xa6$ 22.f5

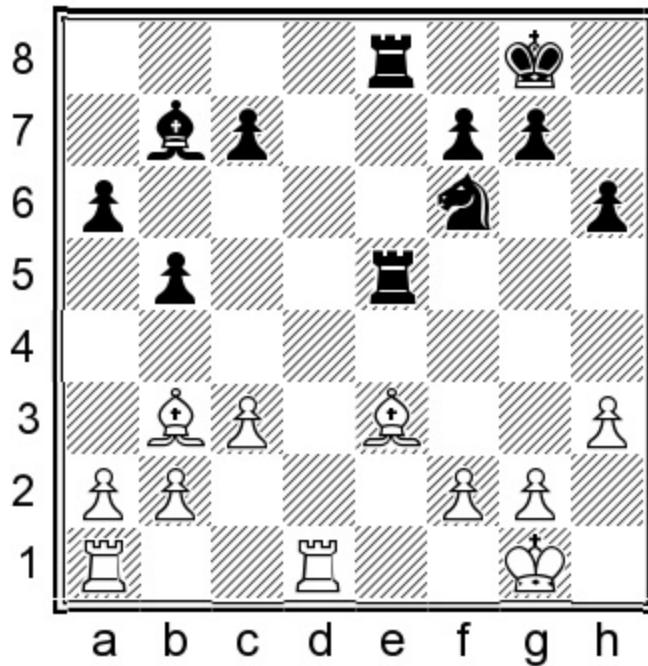
958. Carlsen – Caruana, Zurich 2014



Show/Hide Solution

13.♕xd6† To enable White's next move. 13.f4? ♕xc4= 13...cxd6 14.f4 exf4 15.♕xf4± White has slightly more space and a modest initiative.

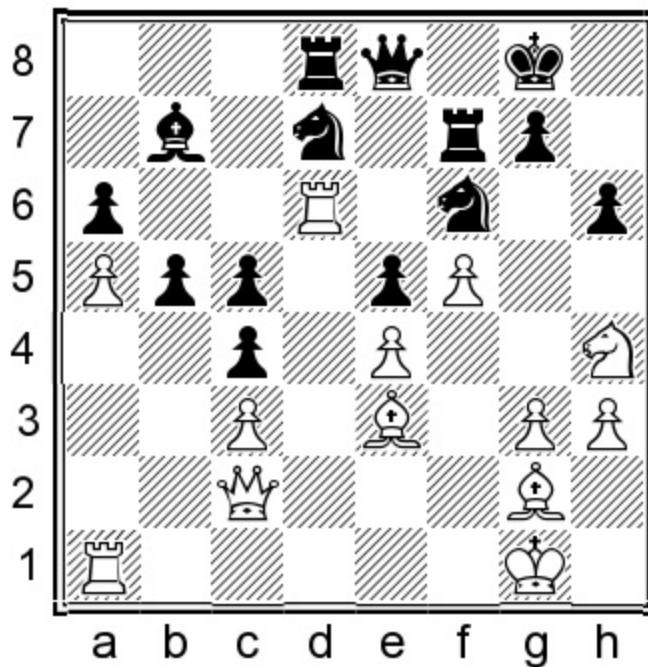
959. Anand – Aronian, Khanty-Mansiysk 2014



Show/Hide Solution

23.c4!± Opening files on the queenside while keeping the bishop pair. 23.a4?! allows: 23...♗d5!=

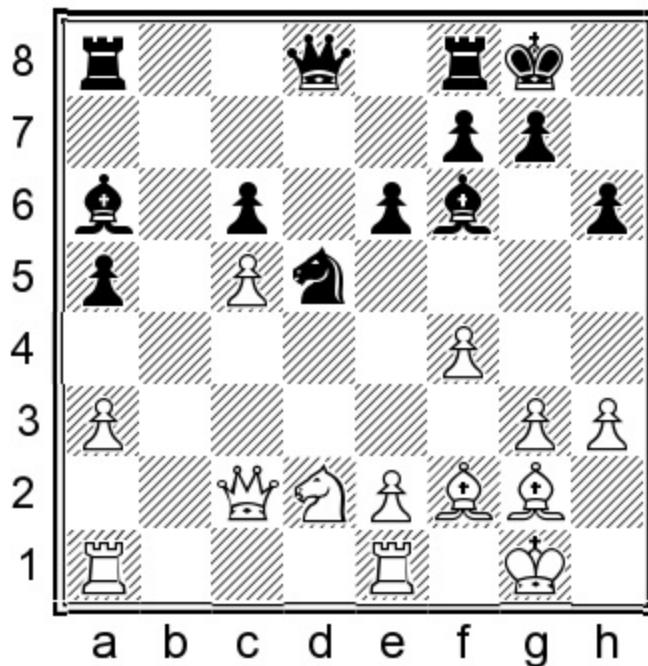
960. Mamedyarov – Carlsen, Shamkir 2014



Show/Hide Solution

22... $\mathbb{Q}f8!$ Taking control over the d-file instead of hanging on to the extra pawn on c5. The game did not last long: 23. $\mathbb{Q}xc5??$ $\mathbb{E}xd6$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ $\mathbb{E}d7$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ $\mathbb{W}xf8$ 26. $\mathbb{E}d1$ $\mathbb{W}c5\#$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 0–1

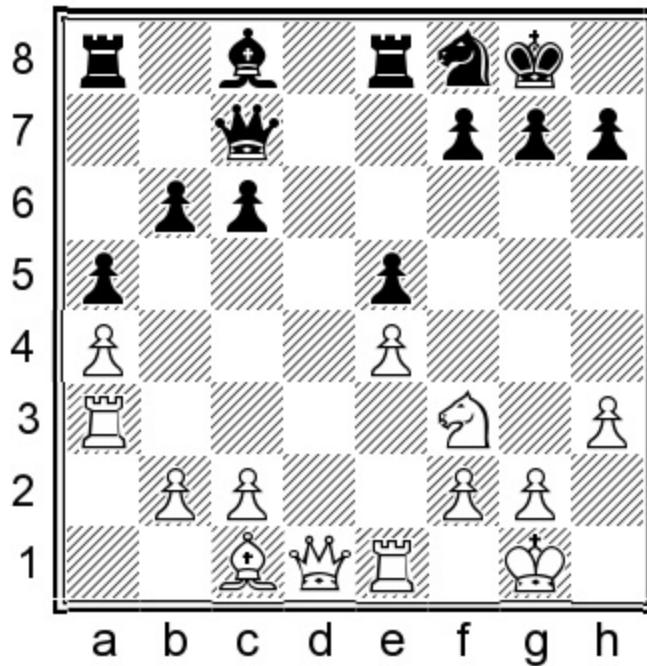
961. Kramnik – Topalov, Tromso (Ol) 2014



Show/Hide Solution

30.e4! 30. $\mathbb{E}ac1$ $\mathbb{E}b8\rightleftarrows$ 30... $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 31. $\mathbb{E}xd5\pm$ For the exchange, White gets a huge passer (after Black safeguards the a1-bishop and White continues with d5-d6), with good chances to pick up the c6-pawn later. Another option would be $d5xe6$, in order to pick up a pawn and weaken the light squares around Black's king, but the d5-d6 idea is the best.

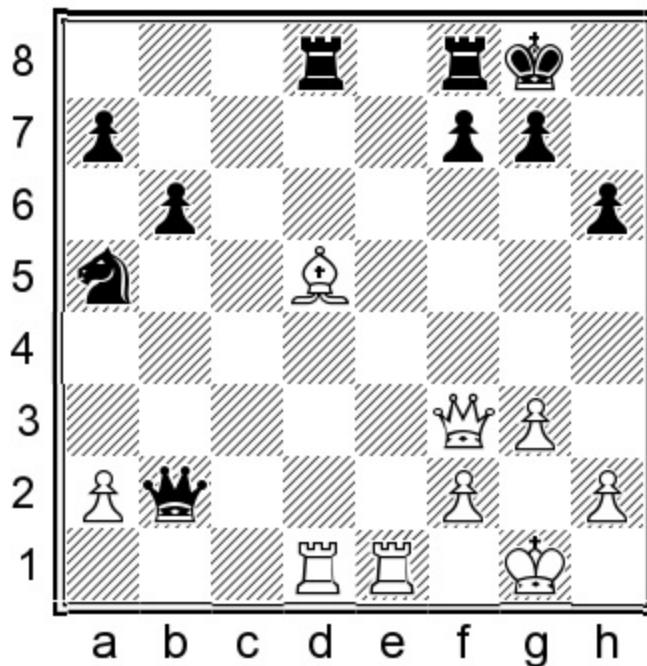
962. Carlsen – Anand, Sochi (2) 2014



Show/Hide Solution

16.♘h4! → Preparing ♘g3, ♘h5 and ♘f5. Such a primitive plan is possible since the centre is closed. The game continued: **16...♝d8??!** **17.♗h5 f6 18.♘f5 ♔e6 19.♗g3 ♘g6 20.h4±**

963. Anand – Carlsen, Sochi (5) 2014

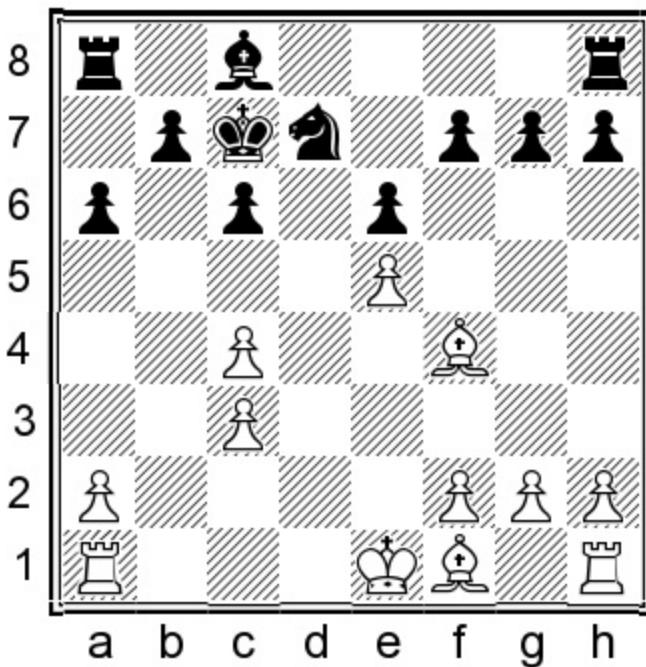


Show/Hide Solution

23...♗f6! The alternative is **23...♔h8 24.♗e7 f5 25.♖xa7±** when White can continue to press. **24.♗xf6 gxf6** The doubled pawns are not really a problem, as White's bishop can't attack the dark squares and the rooks are unable to coordinate for an attack on f6 or f7. **25.♗e7 ♔g7 26.♖xa7 ♘c6=** Exchanges

follow, with a draw.

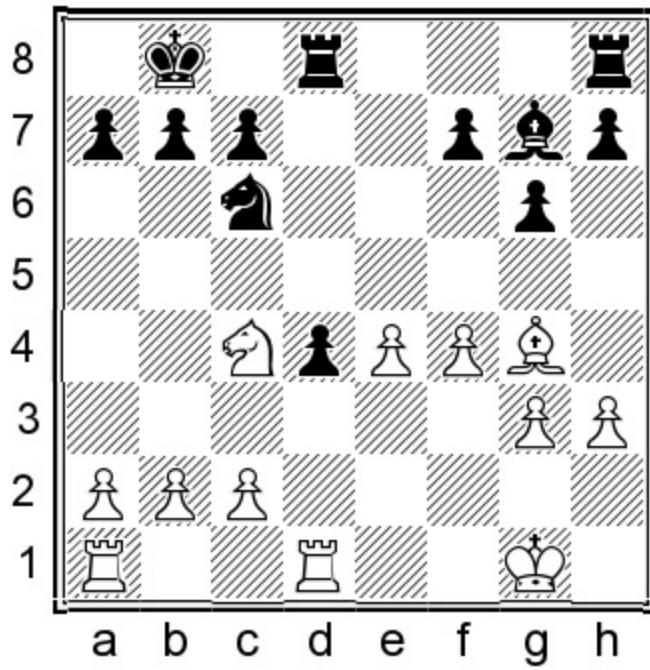
964. Carlsen – Anand, Sochi (6) 2014



Show/Hide Solution

13.h4! 13.0-0-0 is less threatening. **13...b6** 13...h5 has its own pros and cons. I quote Hans Tikkanen: “A possibility to prevent h4-h5-h6, but it creates a so-called hook that White can use to open up the kingside later by forcing ...g7-g6 and then getting through 1.g4 hxg4 2.Qxg4 and 3.h5. Not always a disaster, but it gives White more possibilities compared to allowing h4-h5-h6 or h4-h5xg6.” **14.h5 h6** Tikkanen recommends 14...Qb7 15.h6 g6 as the lesser evil. However, it’s clear that the pawn on h6 is an asset, being only two moves away from promoting. Black’s dark squares have also been permanently weakened. **15.0-0-0±** As Tikkanen points out, the problem with Black’s previous move is that the g7-pawn is fairly easy to attack, so White will sooner or later be able to provoke ...g7-g6, leading to further weaknesses.

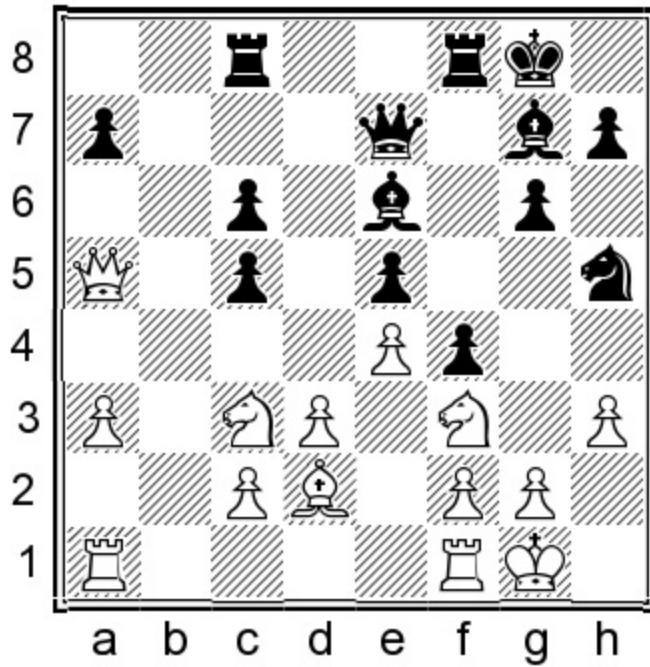
965. Caruana – Anand, London (Blitz) 2014



Show/Hide Solution

16...b5! Pushing back the active knight. **17.Qa3** **17.Qd2 Qb4** and White doesn't have Qd2 anymore. **18.Qdc1 d3± 17...a6±** Black can now start to play on the kingside.

966. Caruana – Carlsen, Wijk aan Zee 2015

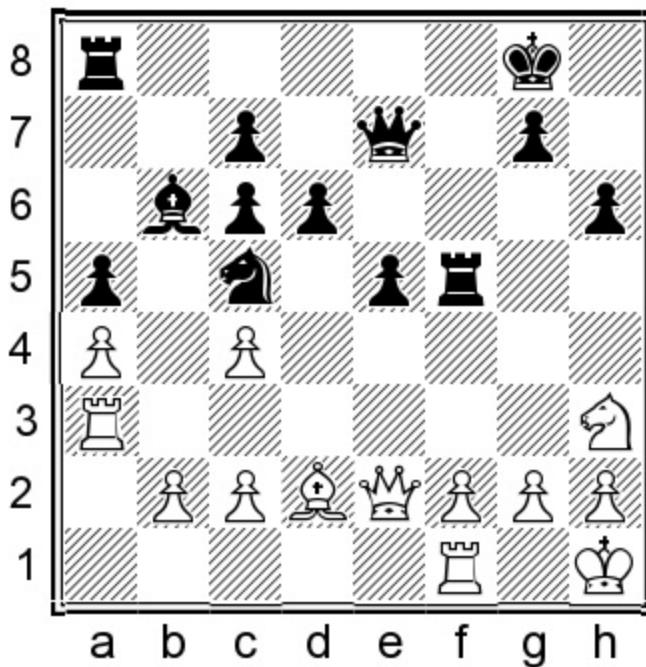


Show/Hide Solution

17...g5! Prioritizing the attack over defending the c-pawn. **17...c4?!** **18.Qa4 c5 19.dxc4 Qxc4 20.Qfe1** leaves Black under pressure, with little hope of counterplay. For instance, if **20...g5?!** **21.Qc3±** there is no real attack with the bishop on c4. **18.Qa4?!** **18.Qfe1 g4∞ 18...g4 18...c4??** is too late: **19.Qb4+-**

19.hxg4 ♘xg4 20.♘xc5 ♖f6↑

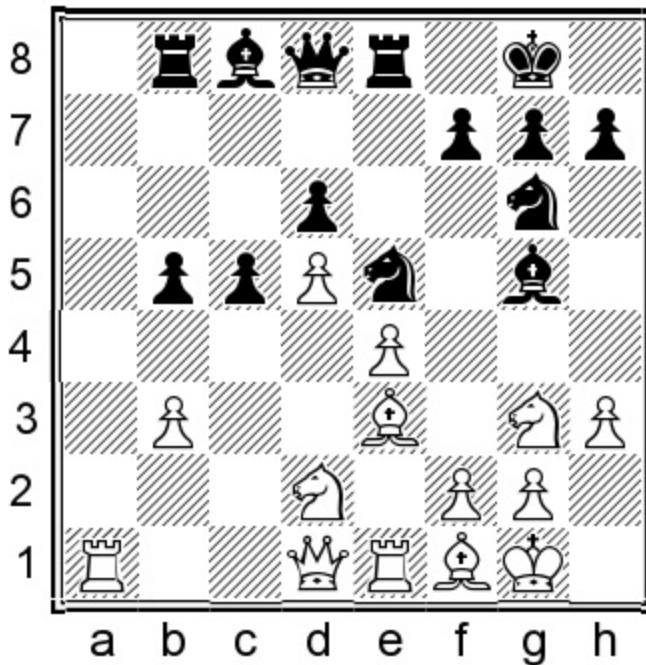
967. Bartel – Topalov, Gibraltar 2015



Show/Hide Solution

18.g4! With several of Black's pieces on the queenside, it's logical to start action against the king.
18...♜ff8 19.g5↑

968. Topalov – Grandelius, Stavanger 2016



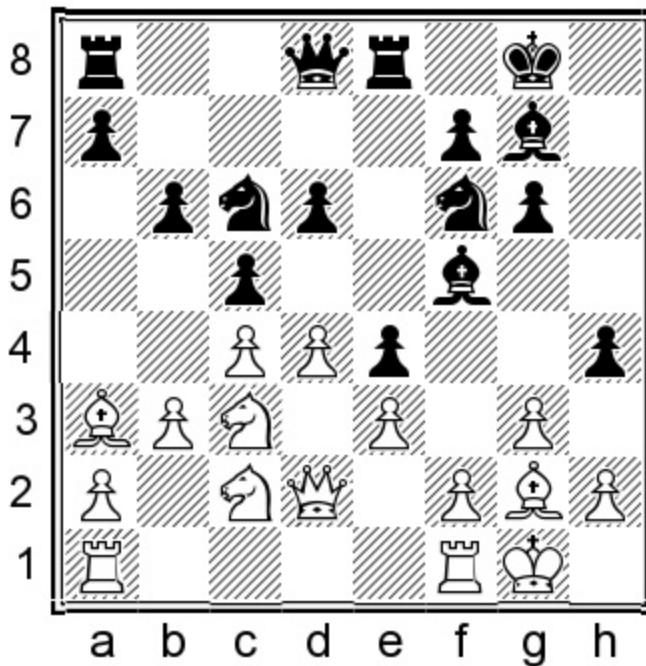
Show/Hide Solution

23.♘h5! Preventing ...♘f4, and preparing f2-f4 in the long run. No further lines are needed to justify this choice, but it's worth including a few more moves from the game: **23...♗xe3 24.♗xe3 ♘d7 25.♗a7 ♗e5 26.♗e2 ♘df8 27.♗a1!+–** With the threat of f2-f4. The immediate 27.f4 allows 27...♗b6! with some counterplay.

Veselin Topalov

"We recently watched the Oscar-winning film 'No Country For Old Men.' But for the time being, the 'old men' in the chess world are holding their own!"

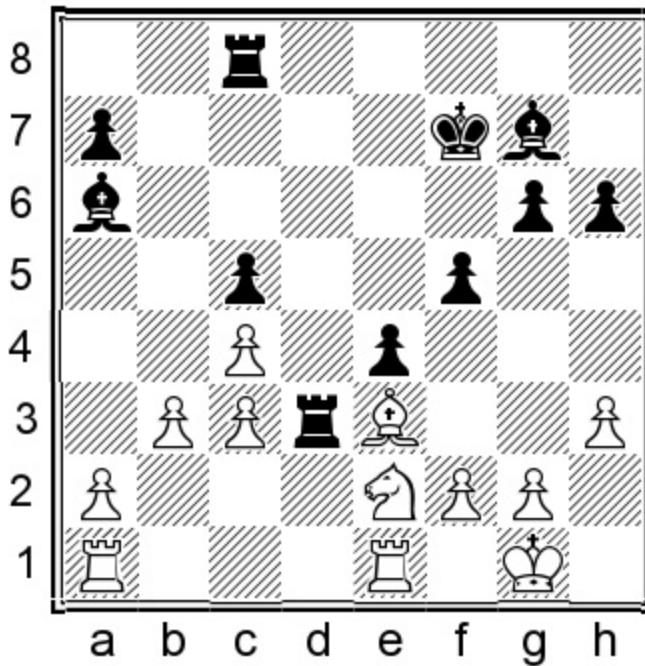
969. Caruana – Kasparov, St. Louis (Blitz) 2016



Show/Hide Solution

15.h3!∞ The only way to fight for the kingside light squares. White follows up with g3-g4. The game continued 15.♗fd1?! ♗g4 followed by ...♗d7, and Kasparov went on to win in characteristic attacking style.

970. Anand – Gelfand, Moscow 2016



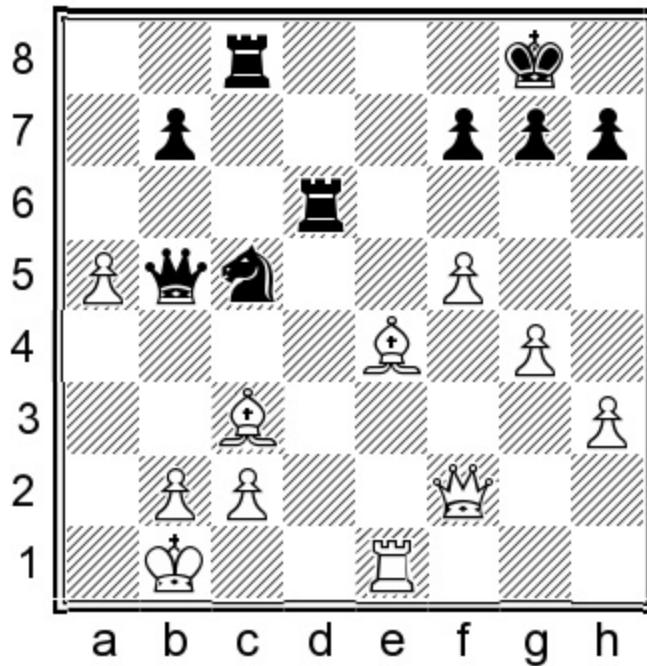
Show/Hide Solution

23.h4! Stopping Black's pawn majority. 23.Qf4 is met by 23...Qdd8 when it's too late to stop ...g6-g5, since the c3-pawn is hanging as well. **23...Qf6** 23...Qxc3? 24.Qxc3 Qxc3 25.Qxh6+– Black's problem is the weak c5-pawn. **24.Qxh6** 24.Qf4 was played in the game, but is inexact due to: 24...Qdd8 25.Qd5 Qxd5! Gelfand overlooked this resource. 26.cxd5 Qxc3± **24...Qxh4** **25.Qf4±** If Black captures on c3, either rook to d1 gives White a big initiative.

Viswanathan Anand

"I attend to my fitness. I go the gym every day and try to maintain my physical fitness; without that, it is tough to take challenges on the chess board."

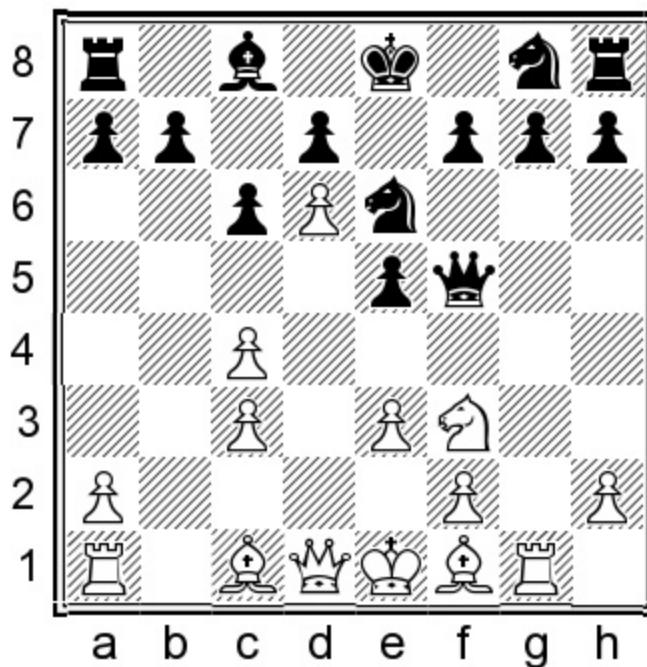
971. Anand – Vachier-Lagrave, London 2016



Show/Hide Solution

27.♔e2! White has to exchange queens before Black's knight reaches a4. 27.♕f3? ♜a4+ 27...♛xe2 27...♝d7 28.♕f3 ♜a4 29.♕b4+– **28.♜xe2±** Two pawns are more than enough for the exchange, regardless of whether Black exchanges the rooks or the knight.

972. Carlsen – Vachier-Lagrange, Leuven (Blitz) 2017

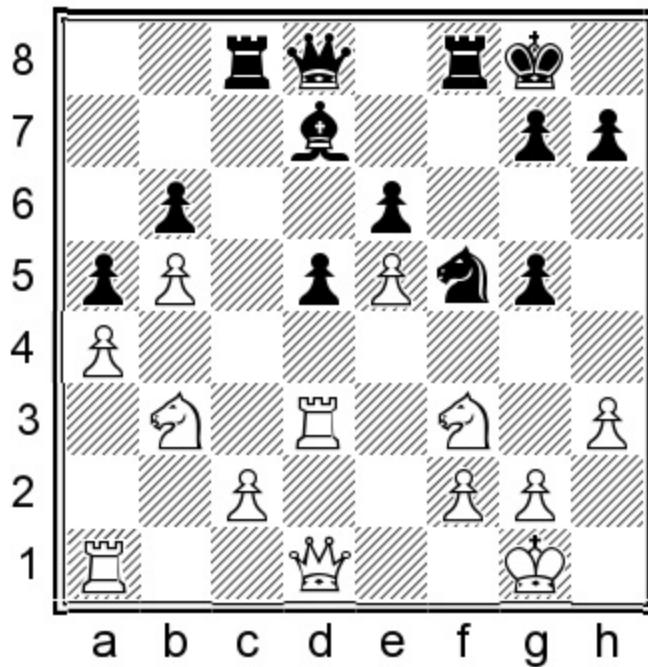


Show/Hide Solution

White has already sacrificed one pawn, and should aim to achieve something before Black has time to consolidate and move the king to safety. **12.e4!** Sacrificing a second pawn enables White to gain

additional time. 12... $\mathbb{W}xe4\uparrow$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ Threatening to trap the queen with $\mathbb{Q}d3$. 13... $\mathbb{W}f5$ 13... $\mathbb{Q}f4?$ 14. $\mathbb{B}g5$ f6 15. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}d3\uparrow$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$ $\mathbb{W}xd3$ 17. $\mathbb{B}xg7+-$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}g5\uparrow$ A great battle lies ahead, with White in the driver's seat.

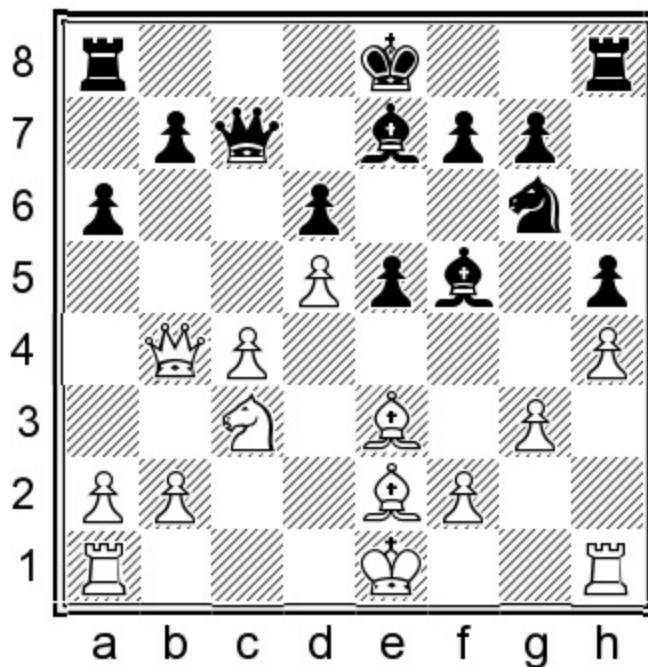
973. Anand – Mamedyarov, Wijk aan Zee 2019



Show/Hide Solution

20.c4! Using tactics to get rid of a backward pawn. **20...Bxc4 21.Bxd5** There is a fork if Black takes. **21...Bf7 22.Bd3±** Black has many weaknesses: the pawns on b6 and g5, and the bishop on d7.

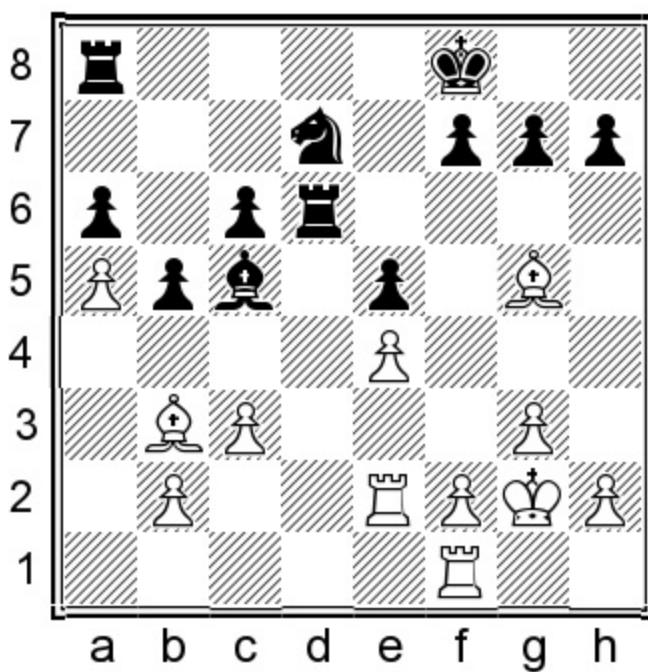
974. Karjakin – Carlsen, Shamkir 2019



Show/Hide Solution

19...e4! 19... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ is a somewhat logical alternative. I quote Peter Heine Nielsen's instructive comments comparing this with Carlsen's choice: "Playing ... $\mathbb{Q}f8-d7$ and covering h5 before castling of course is possible, but [the game continuation] is so much more tempting, as the knight on e5 touches vital squares at f3 and d3 and starts making the "aggressive" h4 and g3 by White look like weaknesses." **20.0-0** 20.0-0-0 $\mathbb{Q}e5\rightarrow$; 20. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ is met by 20... $\mathbb{Q}e5$, and if 21. $\mathbb{Q}xe5?!$ $dxe5\mp$ the improved scope of the dark-squared bishop counts for more than Black's doubled pawns. **20...0-0!** 20... $\mathbb{Q}e5$ is inaccurate due to 21. $\mathbb{W}a4\ddagger!$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 22. $\mathbb{W}d1$ with a double threat, when Black's best continuation is to sacrifice a pawn under less favourable conditions than in the game. **21. $\mathbb{Q}xh5$** $\mathbb{Q}e5$ **22. $\mathbb{Q}e2$** $\mathbb{W}d7\overline{\infty}$ Black has a promising initiative in return for the sacrificed pawn, and already threatens to invade on the light squares with ... $\mathbb{Q}g4$.

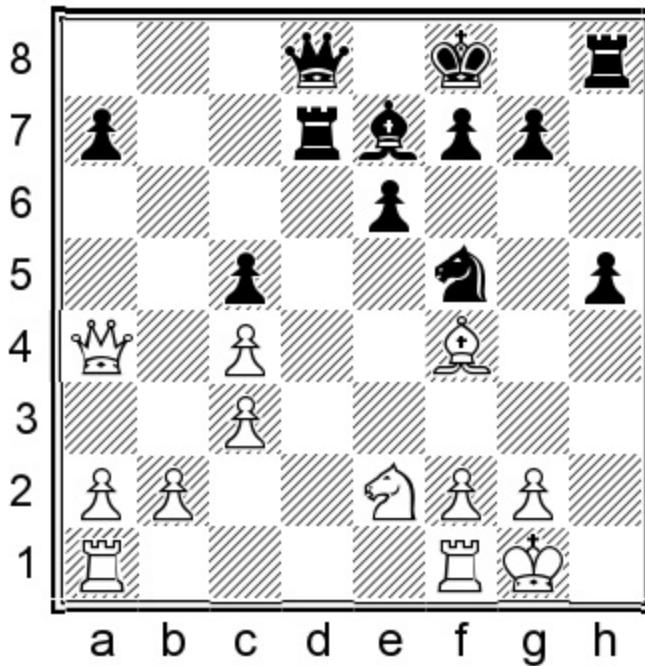
975. Carlsen – Grischuk, Shamkir 2019



Show/Hide Solution

24. $\mathbb{Q}c1!$ White prepares f2-f4 without having the bishop stuck on g5. With the a1-rook already having moved to the kingside, the bishop is happy to return to its original square. **24... $\mathbb{Q}a7$** **25.f4±**

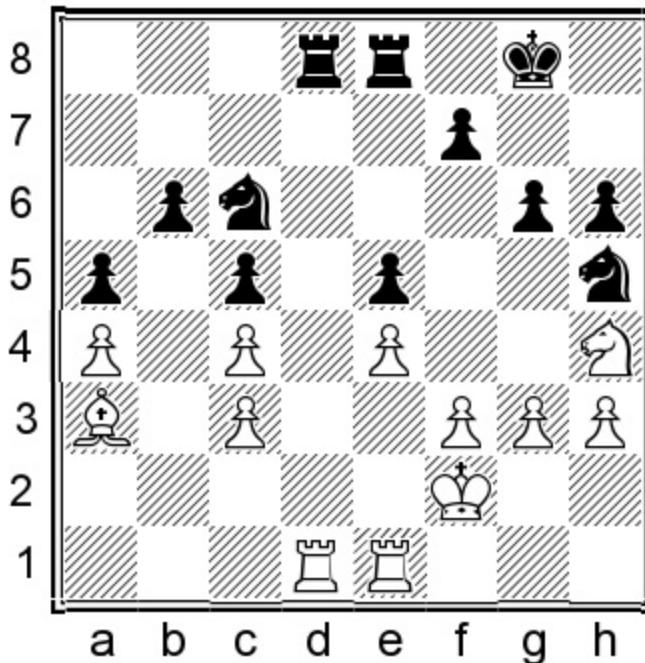
976. Giri – Carlsen, Zagreb 2019



Show/Hide Solution

19...g5! Quick-starting the attack, following the saying that “the execution is often better than the threat”. (I am not joking.) Let’s see an example of what could happen if Black delays the advance of the g-pawn: 19...h4 20.♖ad1 ♖xd1 21.♖xd1 ♜a8 22.♗b3 g5 23.♗b8†!† White is still worse, but the queen exchange brings some relief. **20.♖ad1 ♖xd1 21.♖xd1 ♜a8 22.♗c7 22.♗c1 ♔h4+ 22...h4 23.f3** White has no time to exchange queens: 23.♗b5 ♔g7+ **23...h3** White resigned. **0–1**

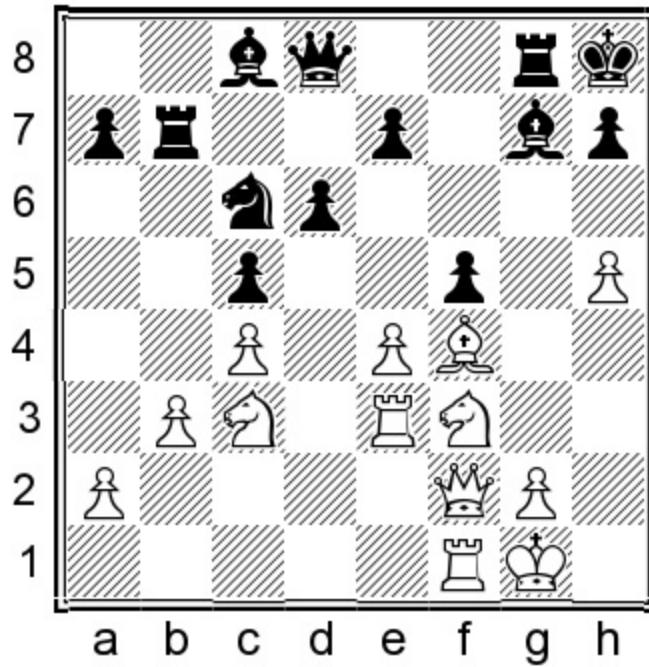
977. Carlsen – So, St. Louis 2019



Show/Hide Solution

White wants to attack the b-pawn but needs to start with a prophylactic manoeuvre. **24.♗c1! ♖g7**
25.♗e3± Redirecting the bishop protects the entry square d2, which makes it possible to move the rook to b1.

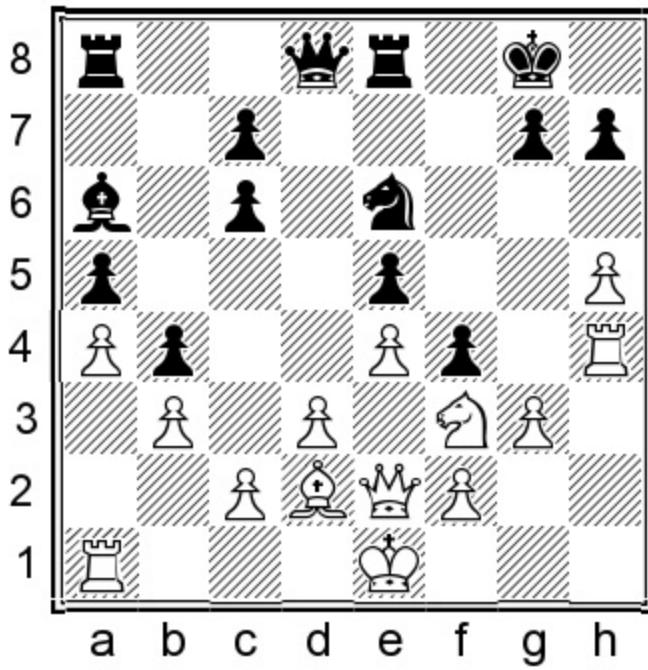
978. Vachier-Lagrange – Carlsen, St. Louis 2019



Show/Hide Solution

22...♝xc3! Making it possible to force through ...e7-e5 and ...f5-f4. The exchange has additional benefits, as Black swaps off the bishop which would have been restricted behind the pawns, in return for the knight which might otherwise have settled on the d5-outpost. **22...e5?** **23.♜g5±** **23.♝xc3 e5** **24.♝c1** Vachier-Lagrange desperately gave up material with **24.♝d3**, but after **24...exf4** **25.♝b2†** **♝bg7** **26.h6 fxe4** it proved to be in vain. **24...f4+** White can't defend g2.

979. Nakamura – Carlsen, Internet (Rapid) 2020

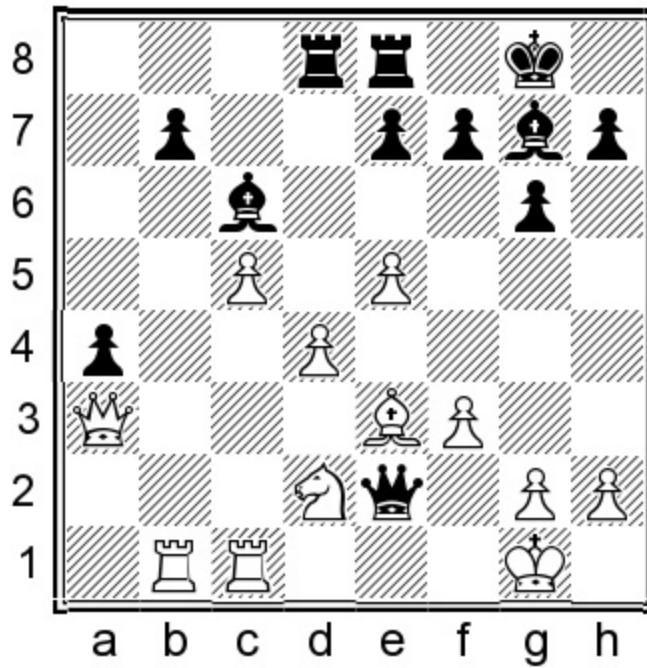


Show/Hide Solution

The exercise is not about finding a strong move – it's about avoiding a tempting but bad continuation.

18... $\mathbb{W}f6$ A normal, neutral move. The position does not need to be evaluated more than “quite balanced”. 18... $\mathbb{B}f8$ is another decent option. Instead, the game continued with: 18... $\mathbb{Q}d4?$ Marin cites Botvinnik, who wrote that when you have pawn weaknesses, you should keep a knight on the board. 19. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 20. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $fxg3$ 21. $fxg3$ $\mathbb{W}g1\#$ 22. $\mathbb{W}f1$ $\mathbb{W}xg3\#$ It's easy to understand why Carlsen was tempted to go for a forcing sequence involving capturing a pawn with check, but it was a bad decision. 23. $\mathbb{W}f2$ $\mathbb{W}xf2\#$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xf2\pm$ Even though Black has won a pawn, the position is strategically dangerous for Black because of the numerous weak pawns fixed on dark squares. Later the rooks were exchanged and Nakamura won convincingly.

980. Caruana – Carlsen, Wijk aan Zee 2022



Show/Hide Solution

26...♝xd4! 27.♝xd4 ♕xd2 28.♝d1 ♕f4† Black has a pawn for the exchange, and will soon pick up a second. Another highly important factor is that the light-squared bishop now has an eternal, stable home on c6.

Magnus Carlsen

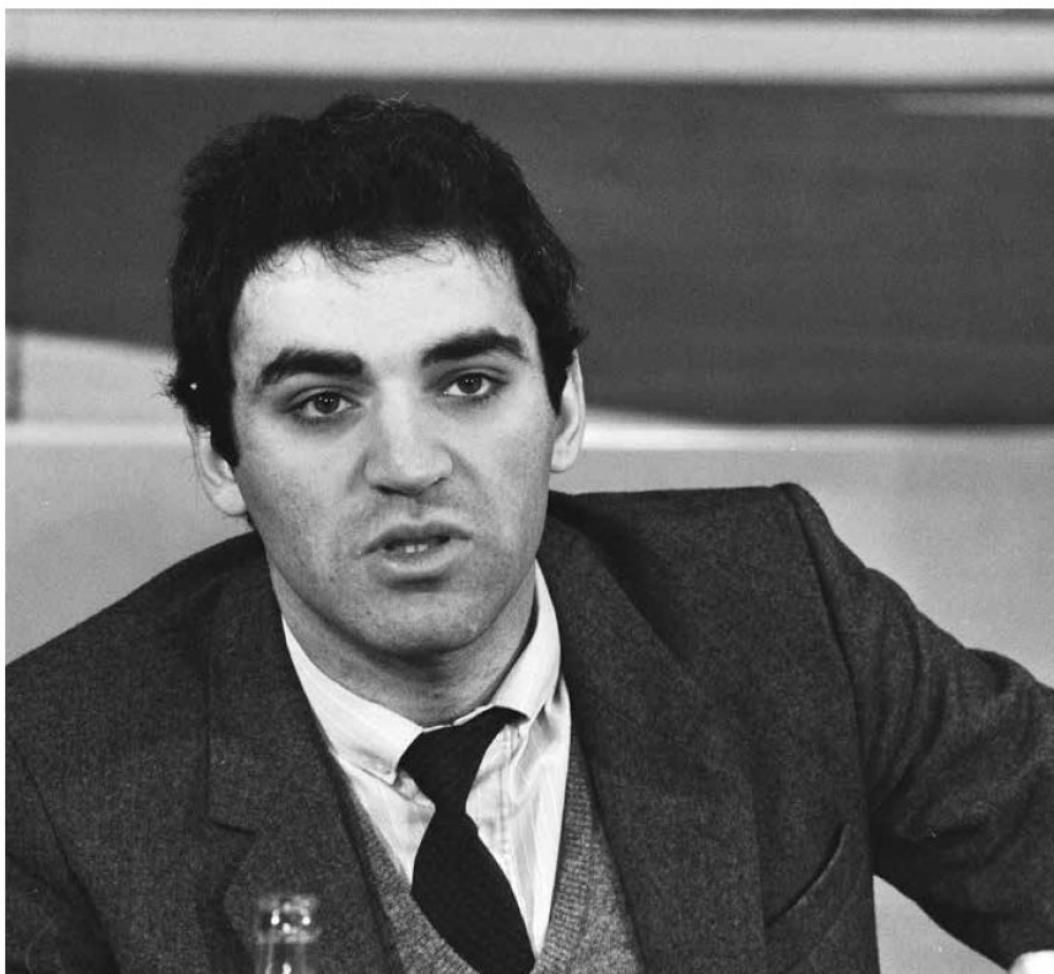
"I normally do what my intuition tells me to do. Most of the time spent thinking is just to double-check."



My grandfather was a pharmacist; my father was a doctor; my elder brother was a doctor; my son is also a doctor. The only man who played Black against medicine was me, and medicine probably took revenge on me because of that. – Mikhail Tal

Chapter 6

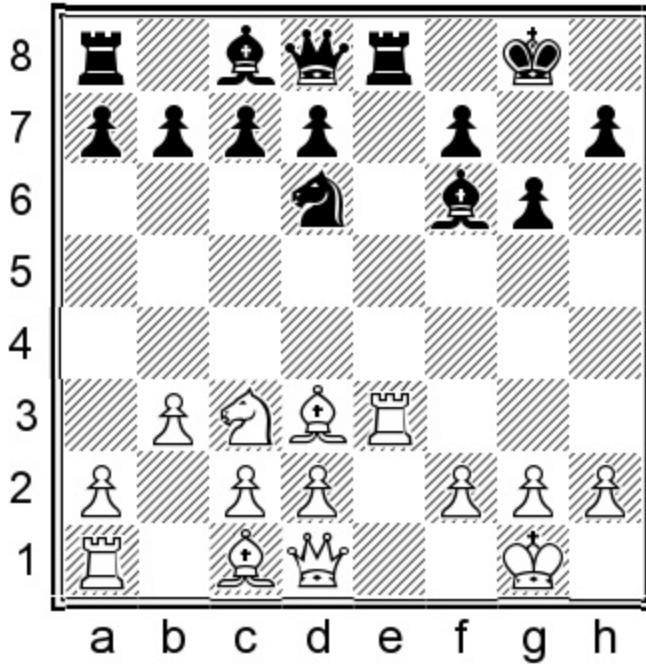
Expert Exercises



Tactics involve calculations that can tax the human brain, but when you boil them down, they are actually the simplest part of chess and are almost trivial compared to strategy. – Garry Kasparov

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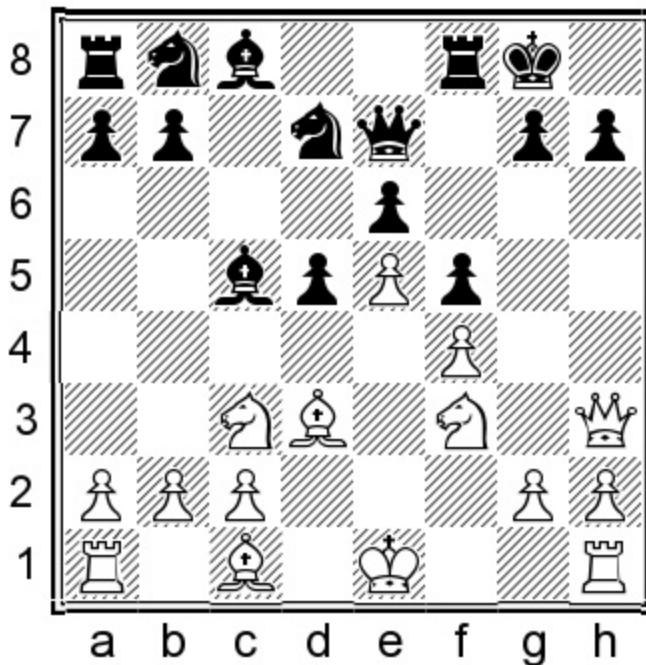
981. Steinitz – Zukertort, USA (6) 1886



Show/Hide Solution

A hard exercise. With some tactics, White gets a positional advantage. 12. $\mathbb{Q}a3!$ 12. $\mathbb{W}f3$ was played in the game. 12... $\mathbb{B}xe3$ 13. $fxe3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ This is Black's normal way to develop, preparing ...d7-d5 (and ...c7-c6). 14. $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ This is the reason why it was better to develop the bishop to a3. (Besides the fact that it threatened $\mathbb{Q}xd6$.) 14... $c6$ 14... $\mathbb{Q}xa1?$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}e7!+-$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xf6\#$ 16. $\mathbb{W}c1$ White attacks on the long diagonal, and Black soon has to play the weakening ...f7-f6.

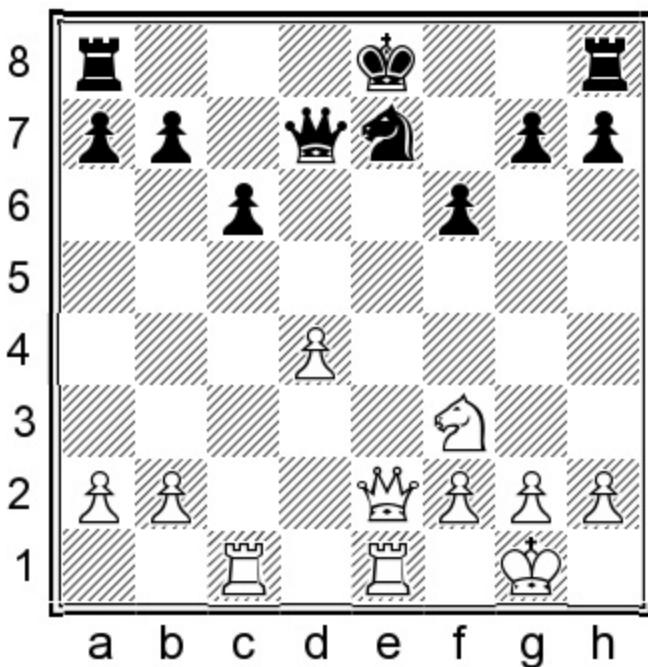
982. Steinitz – Clemente Vasquez, Havana (Casual) 1888



Show/Hide Solution

To tame White's attack, Black should hit the d3-bishop as quickly as possible. **10...♝b6!†** White is now slightly worse, since it's not possible to use the queen on h3 actively. The slow 10...a6? allowed 11.g4+– in the game. 10...♝c6 looks natural but 11.a3! prevents ...♝b4, and if 11...♝b6 White can play 12.♞a4!± in order to exchange the knight when it arrives on c5. The g2-g4 plan remains strong. **11.g4?!** White should develop modestly, but let's see what happens if White tries to attack. 11.♞a4? does not work here because 11...♝b4† forces the knight back. **11...♝c5 12.gxf5 ♞xd3† 13.cxd3 ♜xf5†** The main point of removing the d3-bishop was to facilitate this recapture with the rook.

983. Steinitz – von Bardeleben, Hastings 1895



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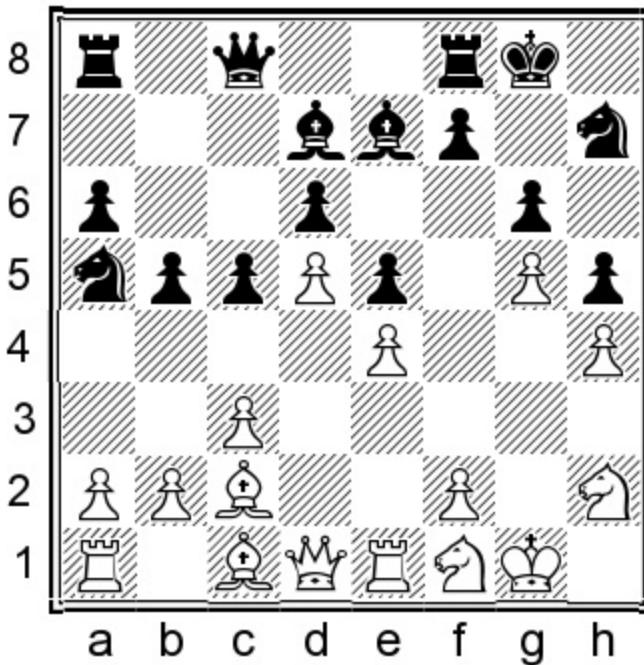
17.d5!! For a pawn, White deprives Black's knight of its outpost and creates one for his own knight, while opening the c-file for the rook. It's a positional move, even though the rest of the game follows for pure pleasure. (You have probably seen it before, but it's difficult to get tired of great art. How long have you kept the same paintings on your wall?) **17...cxd5 17...♞f7±** is a better defence, but still clearly in White's favour. **18.♞d4 ♜f7 19.♞e6** Threatening ♜c7. Other moves give enough compensation, but not more. **19...♜hc8 19...♜ac8 20.♝g4** The dual threats of ♜xg7 and ♜g5† can't be defended, as in the game. **19...♝c6 20.♝c5** and White is close to winning. **20.♝g4! g6 21.♝g5† ♜e8 22.♜xe7†! ♜f8!** White's weak first rank almost saves Black. **22...♜xe7 23.♜e1† ♜d6 24.♝b4† ♜c5 25.♜e6†+– 23.♜f7†! ♜g8! 24.♜g7†! ♜h8! 24...♜f8 25.♜xh7†+– 25.♜xh7†!** The game ended here in an unusual way, as von Bardeleben left the playing hall without resigning. Based on such behaviour, I always assumed he was not an especially strong player. However, before this game he had scored 7½/9 in the tournament, including a win over Lasker. After 25.♜xh7†! the conclusion would have been: **25...♜g8 26.♜g7† ♜h8 27.♝h4† ♜xg7 28.♝h7† ♜f8 29.♝h8† ♜e7 30.♝g7† ♜e8 31.♝g8†**

Qe7 32. Wf7\# Qd8 33. Wf8\# We8 34. Qf7\# Qd7 35. Wd6\# 1–0

William Steinitz

“Chess is not for the faint-hearted; it absorbs a person entirely. To get to the bottom of this game, he has to give himself up into slavery. Chess is difficult; it demands work, serious reflection and zealous research.”

984. Stoltz – Alekhine, Munich 1942



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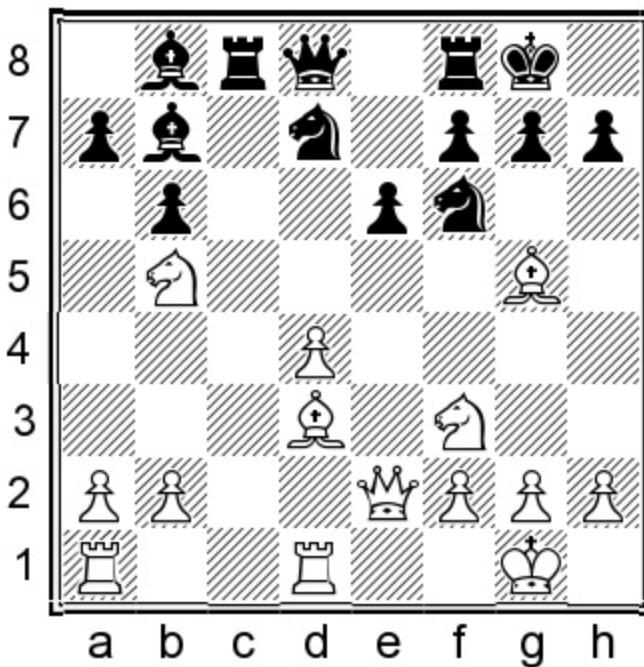
19.f4! White is playing actively, but the main purpose of this move is actually prophylaxis, as Black threatened to become active with ...f7-f6. The downside of f2-f4 is that Black might get a chance to use the e5-square with some combination of ...e5xf4, ... Qc4 , ... We8 and ... Qf8-g7 . However, considering that White also gets to play some moves, there's no chance that Black will have time for such a regrouping. **19...exf4** 19...f6 20.f5! is good for White. **20.Qxf4** 20.e5? was the game continuation, when the simple 20...dxe5 would have been clearly better for Black. **20...Qc4** 20...f6 can be met by 21.e5! with the possible continuation: 21...fxe5 22.Qxe5! dxe5 23.Qxg6 Qf5 24.Wxh5 Qxg6 25.Wxg6† Qh8 26.Qxe5† White has three pawns for the piece, plus the initiative. **21.Qe3** **Qxe3** 21...Qe5 is not what Black wants to play before the knight is defended by another minor piece. **22.Qxe5** dxe5 23.d6 Qd8 24.Wd5± White wins a pawn. **21...Qxb2** 22.Wc1 Qa4 23.Qxa4 bxa4 24.Qc4 also favours White. **22.Qxe3±** Again White is ready to meet **22...f6?!** with: **23.e5!±**

Alexander Alekhine

“I do not play chess – I fight at chess. Therefore, I willingly combine the tactical with the strategic, the fantastic with the scientific, the combinative with the positional, and I aim to respond to the

demands of each given position.”

985. Gligoric – Smyslov, Moscow 1956



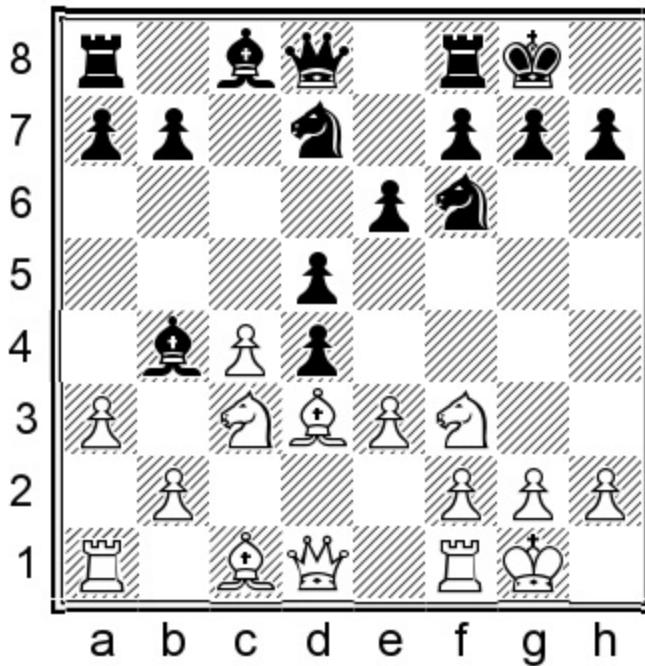
Show/Hide Solution

15... $\mathbb{W}e8!!\bar{f}$ One of the hardest exercises in the book. Smyslov’s move looks artificial but it meets the demands of the position. Black prepares ... $\mathbb{Q}d5$ before White has time to carry out any active plans. 15... $h6$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{W}e8!$ is also good, but it allows 17. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ “saving” the bishop. 15... $\mathbb{W}e8$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ is an example of how things can go wrong. White threatens $\mathbb{Q}xd7$, and after 16... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ Black must worry about $\mathbb{Q}b5$. With careful play Black is still alright, but the game continuation is much easier. **16. $\mathbb{Q}c3$ 16. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ $h6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 18. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{Q}xg3$ 19. $hxg3\bar{f}$** Black is happy to have neutralized White’s bishop.

Vasily Smyslov

“In my opinion, the style of a player should not be formed under the influence of any single great master.”

986. Tal – Tolush, Riga 1958



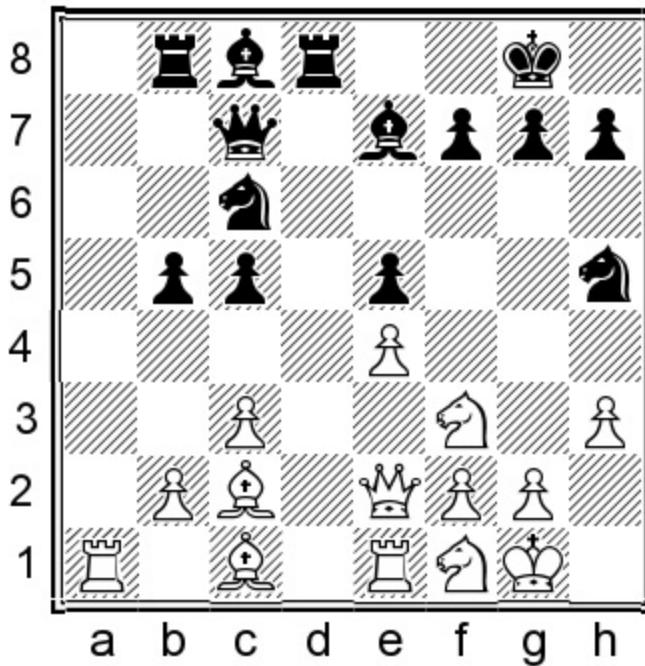
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9. $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$ This tactical strike is really just an exchanging operation. The key point is that, following a few forced moves, Black will be forced to capture on e3 (to avoid being a pawn down), which helps the c1-bishop to develop. 9.axb4 dxc3 10.cxd5 exd5 11.bxc3 $\mathbb{Q}b6$ is a sample line where the dark-squared bishop ends up restricted. **9...exd5 10.axb4 dxc3 11. $\mathbb{Q}xc4 \mathbb{Q}b6$ 12. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ dxe3 13. $\mathbb{Q}xe3\pm$** White is fully mobilized and the bishops enjoy open diagonals. Other ninth moves would have given White a more modest edge with the bishop pair.

Mikhail Tal

“When I asked Fischer why he had not played a certain move in our game, he replied: ‘Well, you laughed when I wrote it down!’”

987. Fischer – Eliskases, Mar del Plata 1960



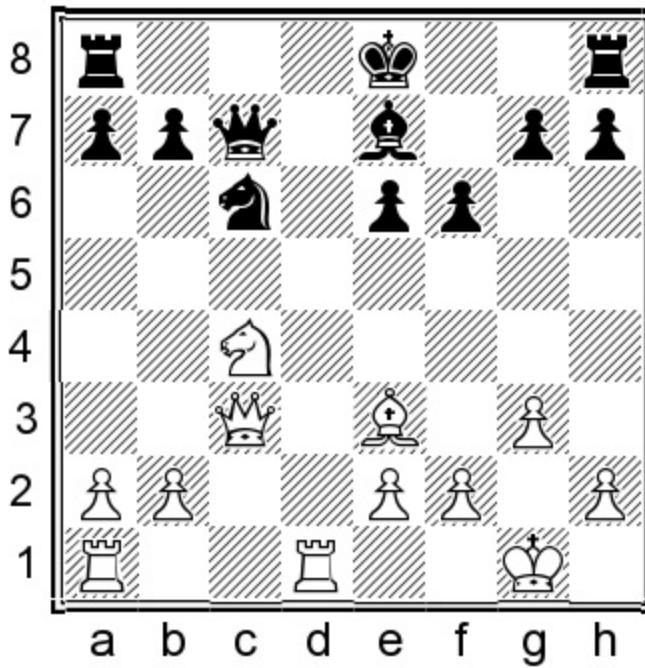
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Another difficult exercise. White's best move is the surprising: **18.g4!** To arrive at this decision, we first need to consider Black's idea. If Black had a free move, then $18\dots \mathbb{Q}f4$ $19.\mathbb{Q}xf4 exf4$ would leave Black with the bishop pair and White with a restricted knight on f1. $18.g3!?$ is a logical way to stop Black's plan before continuing to make use of White's trump: the d5-square. However, $18\dots \mathbb{Q}f6!=$ is a satisfactory reply. (The tactics after $18\dots \mathbb{Q}xh3$ $19.\mathbb{Q}g5\pm$ work out well for White. The game continued $18\dots g6$ $19.h4\pm$ with ideas of $\mathbb{Q}g5$ or $\mathbb{Q}e3-d5$.) **18\dots \mathbb{Q}f4** After $18\dots \mathbb{Q}f6$ $19.\mathbb{Q}e3\pm$ White will land the knight on d5, either on the next move if the tactics work out well, or after g4-g5. **19.Qxf4 exf4 20.e5±** White follows up with $\mathbb{W}e4$ and picks up the f-pawn for less-than-full compensation. If the pawn was on g2 instead of g4, Black could counter with ...g7-g6, preparing to meet $\mathbb{W}e4$ with ... $\mathbb{Q}f5$.

Bobby Fischer

"To get squares you have to give up squares."

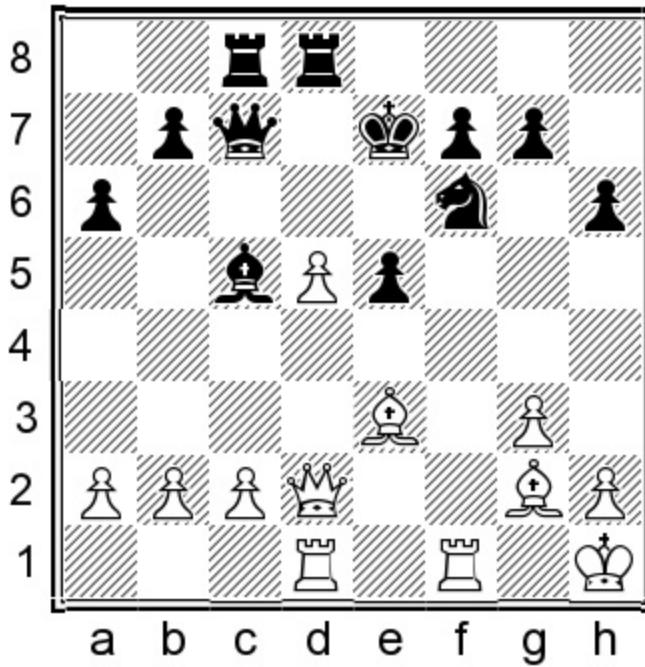
988. Kasparov – Andersson, Belgrade (3) 1985



Show/Hide Solution

16.♗b3! Eyeing e6 to stop Black from castling short. **16...g5** 16...0-0 17.♘d6!+– wins a pawn. 16...♔f7 17.♕f4+–; 16...♝d8 17.♝xd8† ♔xd8 allows 18.♝xb7+– among other options. **17.♝ac1+**– Black still can't develop.

989. Short – Anand, Tilburg 1991

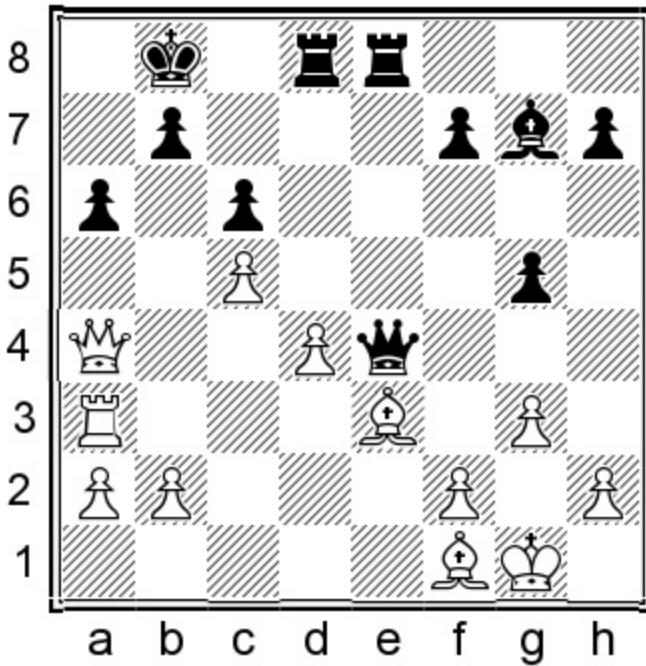


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19.c3!! White should move the pawn from the vulnerable c2-square, and it should go to c3 rather than c4 to keep the queenside closed. The game went 19.c4 ♘d6 20.♗xc5 ♘xc5 21.♗e2 when White is not

doing badly; but thanks to the pawn on c4, Black can obtain counterplay with ...b7-b5, either immediately or a bit later. 19... $\mathbb{W}d6$ 20. $\mathbb{E}f5\pm$ White follows up with $\mathbb{E}df1$. Even though there is no direct breakthrough, Black is not entirely happy with the pressure on the f-file and the king caught in the centre.

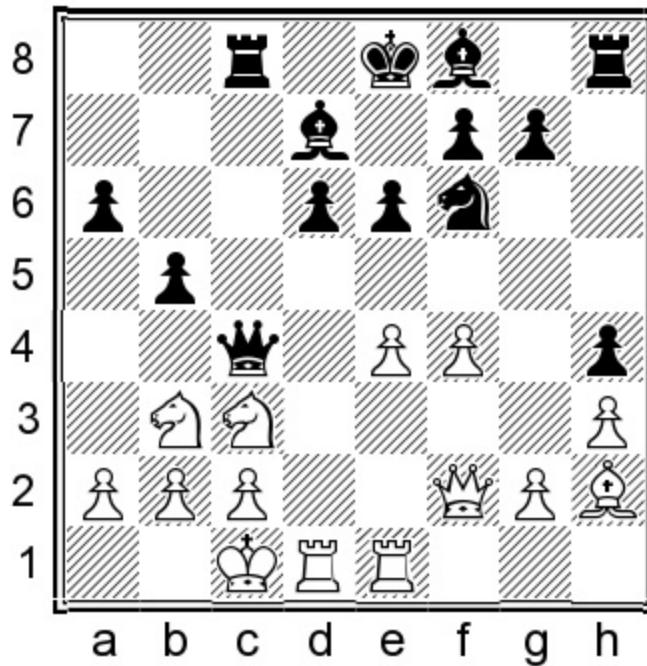
990. Anand – Ivanchuk, Linares 1993



Show/Hide Solution

21. $\mathbb{Q}d3!$ Amazingly, this is a prophylactic move before proceeding with the queenside attack. 21. $\mathbb{Q}xa6?!$ allows 21... $\mathbb{E}xd4!$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd4 \mathbb{W}xd4=$ when Black is fine. 21. $\mathbb{E}b3 \mathbb{E}xd4!$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd4 \mathbb{Q}xd4$ also gives White no more than equality. The positional part of the exercise is understanding that Black threatens to sacrifice an exchange. **21... $\mathbb{W}g4?$** 21... $\mathbb{W}e7?$ also loses quickly: 22. $\mathbb{Q}xa6+-$; Black's best is: 21... $\mathbb{W}d5$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}xa6 \mathbb{Q}xd4$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}xb7! \mathbb{Q}xc5!$ 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc6 \mathbb{W}d1\#$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g2 \mathbb{W}xa4$ 26. $\mathbb{Q}xa4\pm$ White will end up with an extra pawn, but Black can hold with careful defence. **22. $\mathbb{E}b3!+-$** White threatens both $\mathbb{E}xb7\#$ and $\mathbb{Q}xa6$, and Black is unable to defend against both.

991. Ivanchuk – Kramnik, Linares 1993



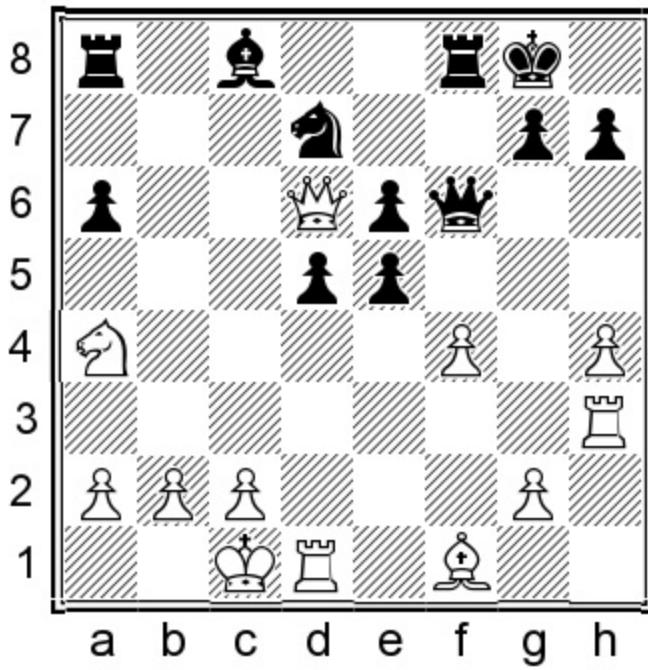
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18... $\mathbb{Q}c7!!$ Black prepares ...b5-b4 without running into a $\mathbb{R}d4$ counter. At the same time, the queen defends e5, which is vitally important in one critical line. 18...b4 19. $\mathbb{R}d4!\infty$; 18...a5!? 19.e5 (19. $\mathbb{Q}xa5$ $\mathbb{Q}c7\mp$) 19...b4 20.exf6 bxc3 21.f5 \rightleftarrows **19.e5 b4!±** 19...dxe5?? fatally opens additional lines for White's pieces. 20.fxe5 Following the exchange on e5, 20...b4 is no longer any good because of 21.exf6 $\mathbb{Q}xh2$ 22.fxg7 $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ 23. $\mathbb{Q}e4+-$ with decisive threats. After the text move, the position is complicated but favourable to Black. A key point is that the counterplay we saw after 18...a5 is not working for White: **20.exf6? bxc3 21.f5 cxb2† 22. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ e5!+–** The queen defends against a bishop sacrifice on e5.

Vladimir Kramnik

“In chess one cannot control everything. Sometimes a game takes an unexpected turn, in which beauty begins to emerge. Both players are always instrumental in this.”

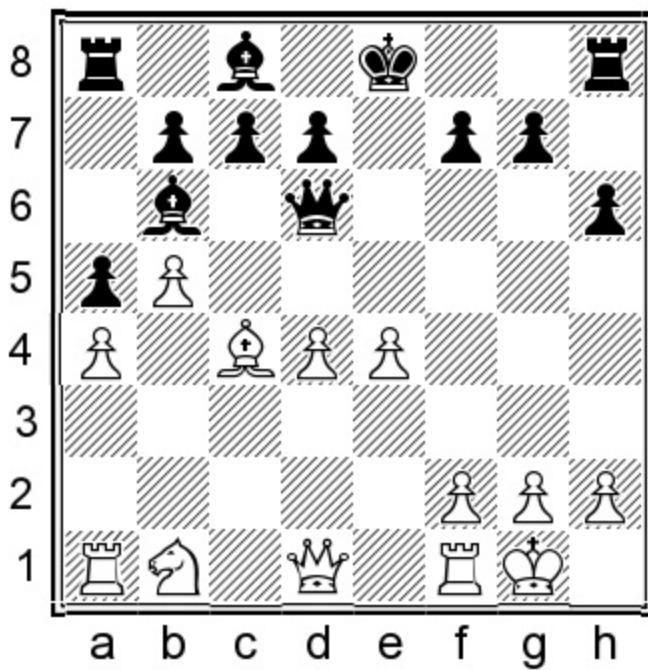
992. Kasparov – Short, Horgen 1994



Show/Hide Solution

18.f5! Undermining Black's centre, with the help of some tactical ideas. **18...Wh6†** The first idea is that **18...Wxf5?** **19.Qf3 Wg6 20.Qxf8† Qxf8 21.Qb6** wins material. **19.Qb1 Wxf5 20.Qf3! Wxf3 21.gxf3+–** The second tactical point is that Black's position collapses after **Qh3**. The knight on d7 can't move due to **Qb6** – the punishment for Black's underdeveloped queenside.

993. Kasparov – Piket, Amsterdam 1995

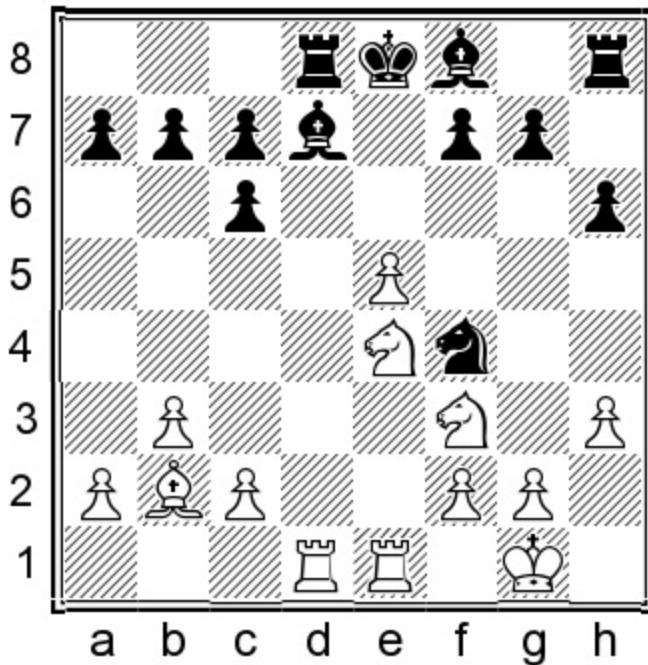


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14.Qc3! Correctly evaluating development as more important than material. **14.d5± 14...Qxd4**

14... $\mathbb{W}xd4$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}d5\pm$ $\mathbb{W}xc4?$ 16. $\mathbb{B}c1$ $\mathbb{W}a2$ 17. $\mathbb{B}xc7+-$ White wins back the piece, and the black king will be stuck in the centre. 14...c6 was worth considering although 15.d5± is stronger than on the previous turn. Black would have preferred ... $\mathbb{W}e7$ and ...d7-d6 (to develop the light-squared bishop) rather than moving the c-pawn. 15. $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ $\mathbb{Q}xa1$ 16. $\mathbb{W}xa1$ 0-0 17.e5 $\mathbb{W}c5$ 18. $\mathbb{B}c1+-$ Black's queen has no good square, and the rook on a8 is also in trouble.

994. Kasparov – Kramnik, Astana 2001



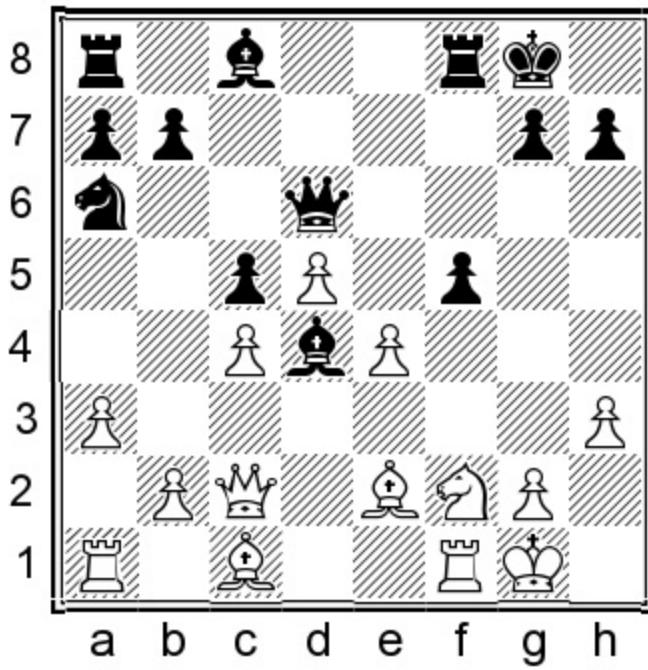
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When Kasparov finally beat Kramnik in the Berlin Defence, he did it with an evacuation sacrifice. **16.e6!!** Opening the e-file and getting the e5-square for the bishop. **16... $\mathbb{Q}xe6$** **16...fxe6?** **17. $\mathbb{Q}e5+-$** is horrible for Black. **16... $\mathbb{Q}xe6$** also loses: **17. $\mathbb{Q}f6\ddagger$ gxf6** (**17... $\mathbb{W}e7$** **18. $\mathbb{Q}a3\ddagger$** wins two exchanges.) **18. $\mathbb{B}xd8\ddagger$ $\mathbb{Q}xd8$** **19. $\mathbb{Q}xf6\ddagger$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$** **20. $\mathbb{Q}xh8+-$** White is the exchange up with a better pawn structure. **17. $\mathbb{Q}e5!!$** **17. $\mathbb{Q}d4$** led to a success for White in the game, but Black could have survived with accurate defence. The text move is stronger. **17... $\mathbb{B}c8$** **18. $\mathbb{Q}h4\!+/-$** There is no good defence against f2-f4-f5.

Garry Kasparov

“Attackers may sometimes regret bad moves, but it is much worse to forever regret an opportunity you allowed to pass you by.”

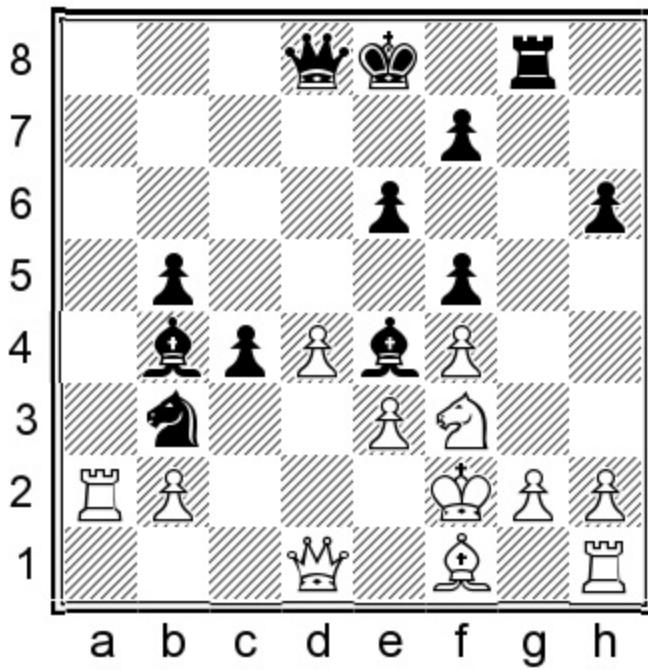
995. Anand – Shirov, Moscow 2001



Show/Hide Solution

21.e5! Keeping the f-file closed is more important than hanging on to the extra pawn. 21.♕h1 ♜g3; 21.♗d2 fxe4 22.♗c3± is a possibility, leading to a long line which is elegant but irrelevant, since the main move is simply stronger. **21...♜xe5 22.♕h1±** White is better developed and has good squares available for all the pieces.

996. Van Wely – Topalov, Wijk aan Zee 2006



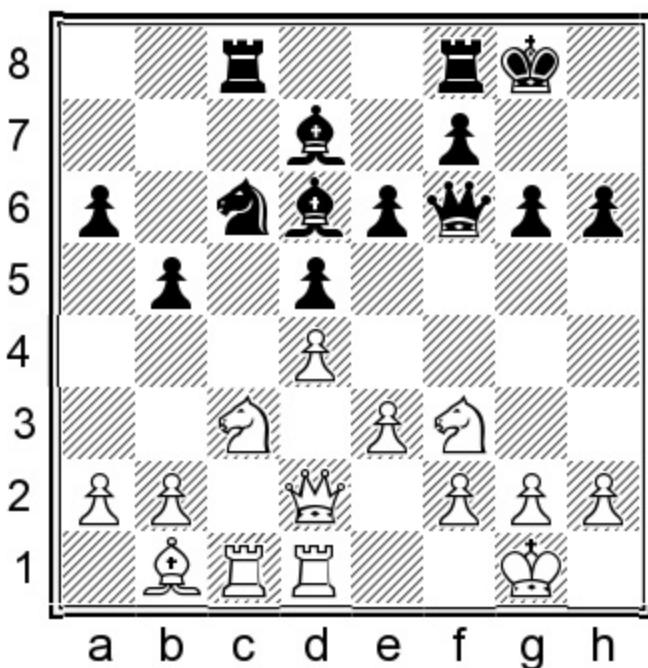
Show/Hide Solution

Black has active development and strong minor pieces as compensation for the sacrificed exchange.

20...e5! Opening up against White's king. **21.fxe5** $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{W}h4\#$ **22.g3** $\mathbb{B}xg3$ **23.hxg3** $\mathbb{W}xh1$ There is no good defence against ... $\mathbb{W}h2\#$, as **24.Qf3 Qxf3** **25.Wxf3 Qe1\#** **26.Qe2 Qc1\#** wins the queen.

21...f4! **22.Qe2** **22.exf4 Qxf3** **23.gxf3 Qd2!+–** wins the crucial d4-pawn. **22...fxe3\#** **23.Qxe3** Black is winning in more than one way. The most convincing is: **23...Qd5!** Black's ideas include ... $\mathbb{W}b6$, as well as involving the rook, either by taking on g2 or by jumping via g4 to e4. **23...Qb7!** is virtually the same. The game continuation of **23...Qd5?!** is also good enough. However, Black should avoid **23...Qxf3??** **24.Qxf3 Qd2\#** in view of **25.Qe2** (but not the 'clever' **25.Wxd2??** hoping to simplify with $\mathbb{B}a8$ next, which runs into **25...Wg5\#**) **25...Qxd4\#** **26.Qf1+–** when Black's initiative dies out.

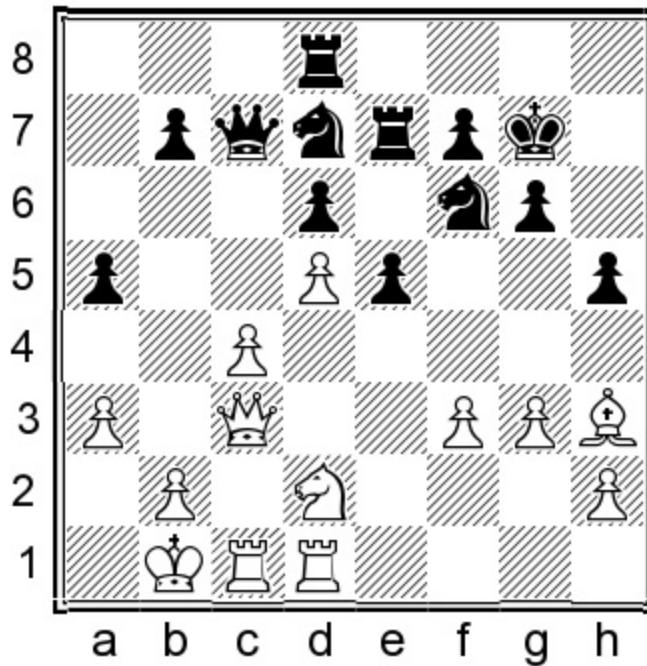
997. Ivanchuk – Topalov, Morelia/Linares 2006



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16...Bc7! Black improves the pieces before going for anything forcing. **16...b4** **17.Qe2** **a5** can be met by **18.e4!** **dxe4** **19.Qxe4=** when Black must defend against $\mathbb{W}xh6$, so White will have time to simplify with d4-d5. **17.Qe2?!** **17.e4?** $\mathbb{Q}f4$ is no good for White. The game continued with **17.We1** to prepare e3-e4. Topalov chose the perfect moment to kick the knight away: **17...b4** **18.Qe2** **a5\#** Black has a better version of the **16...b4** line above, as White no longer gains a tempo against the h6-pawn in the event of e3-e4. White's best may be **17.Bc2?!** even though it doesn't look nice to the bishop on b1. **17.a3** is met by **17...Bfc8** and Black will nevertheless play ...b5-b4 in the near future. **17...Bfc8** **18.e4** **dxe4** **19.Qxe4 Qg7\#** Compared with the **16...b4** line, Black has spent a couple of tempos improving the rooks rather than moving the queenside pawns. White still cannot claim equality, for instance: **20.d5?!** **exd5** **21.Wxd5 Qb4** Threatening ... $\mathbb{Q}e6$, among other ideas.

998. Anand – Topalov, Wijk aan Zee 2008



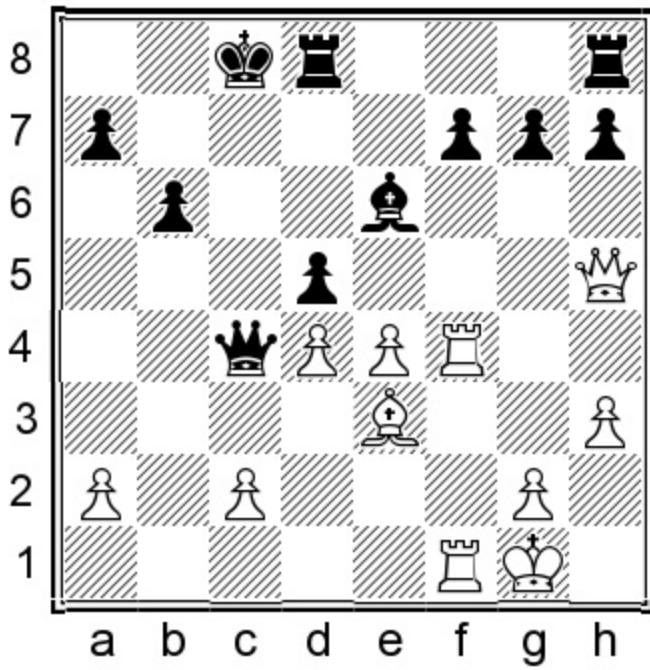
Show/Hide Solution

25.♗xd7! Excellent timing! Black would have wanted to take back with the queen to defend the kingside, but that's not possible since it leaves the a5-pawn en prise. **25...♝xd7** **25...♜exd7** **26.f4!±** Without a rook on e7, Black is unable to take on f4 on pain of ♜e4. 25...♝xd7 gives White the options of f3-f4 and g3-g4 as possible breakthroughs. White can start with 26.♝f1!?, when ♜e4 followed by fxe4 is another idea. **26.f4→** White is likely to follow up with f4-f5.

Viswanathan Anand

"There are some things we do much better than computers, but since most of chess is tactically based they do many things better than humans. And this imbalance remains. I no longer have any issues. It's a bit like asking an astronomer, does he mind that a telescope does all the work. He is used to it. It is just an incredible tool that you can use."

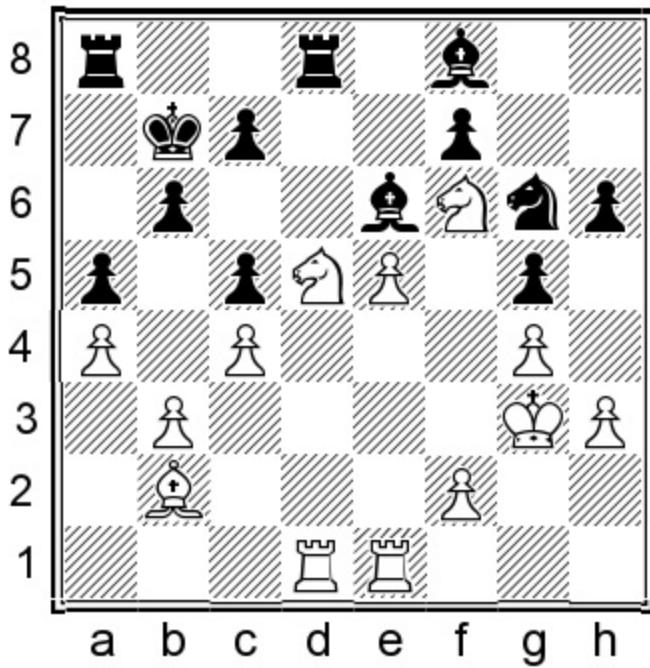
999. Carlsen – Caruana, Zurich 2014



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22.♗xf7! ♗xf7 23.♗xf7+– White's exchange sacrifice has opened both the seventh rank and the h3-c8 diagonal towards Black's poorly protected king.

1000. Carlsen – Anand, Sochi (11) 2014



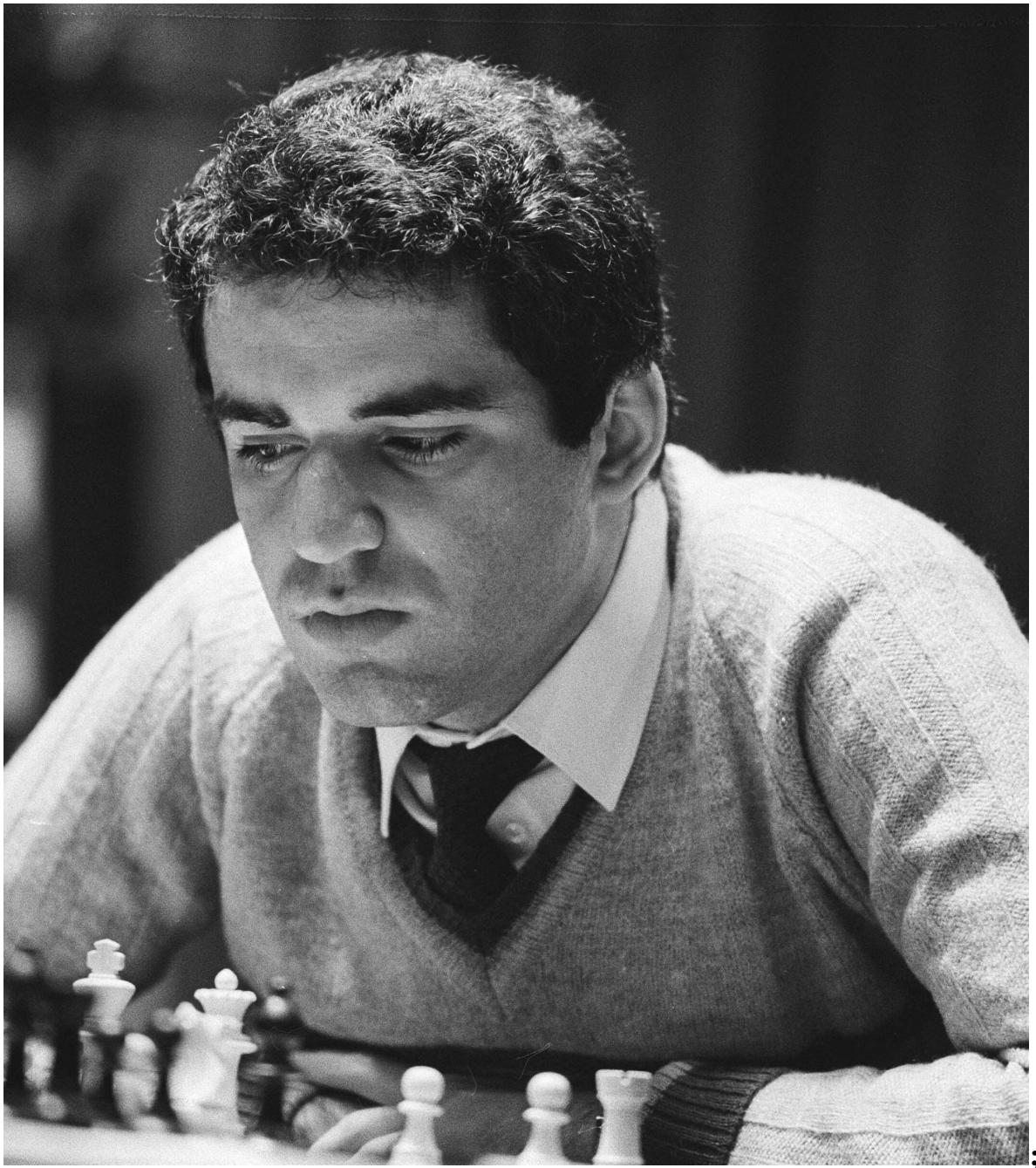
Show/Hide Solution

Black's main asset in the Berlin endgame is the light-squared bishop. The pawns on a4, b3 and c4 restrict the bishop, but the same pawns may become vulnerable if Black can get active late in the endgame after some piece exchanges. **23...b5!!** Or even earlier, as Anand's move shows. **24.♗c3!** If

24.cxb5? c6µ the b3-pawn soon drops, followed by its colleague on a4. 24.axb5?! is met by 24...a4 25.bxa4 ♜xa4± when Black's activity more than compensates for the pawn, with ...♜f4 next on the agenda. **24...bxa4 25.bxa4 ♜c6** Black's plan is simply to use the b-file for a rook. **26.h4!** Jon Ludvig Hammer's recommendation. 26.♗f3± was the game. 26.♗b1? is well met by 26...♜g7± when ...♜xf6 is a serious threat. **26...gxh4† 27.♗h2** The last two moves, which are far from easy to find, enable a quick f2-f4. White should have enough counterplay to make a draw.

Magnus Carlsen

“For me right now I think being the world number one is a bigger deal than being the world champion because I think it shows better who plays the best chess. That sounds self-serving but I think it’s also right.”



Nervous energy is the ammunition we take into any mental battle. If you don't have enough of it, your concentration



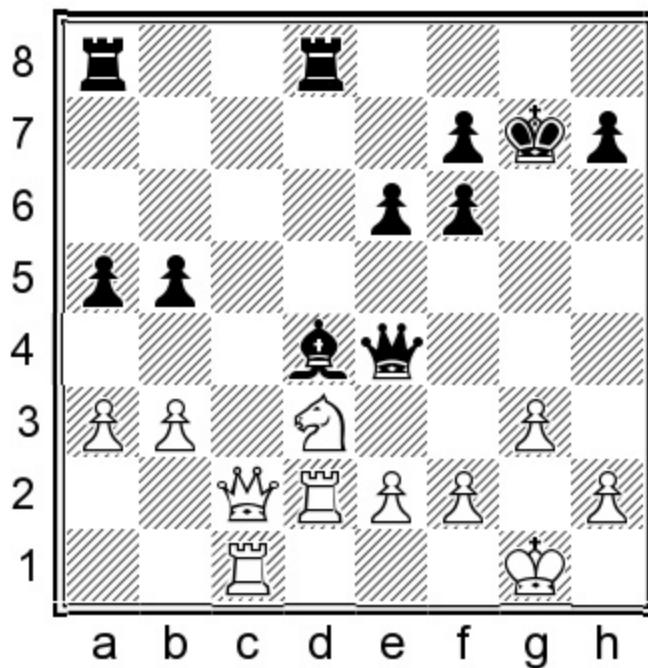
Epilogue

How much should we rely on positional rules of thumb when deciding on a move, and what happens when different positional principles contradict each other? It's a deep topic, and the answer will vary according to the position. In some of the 1000 exercises, it was enough to grasp one key feature of the position and decide on the strongest move without much further thought. Other exercises required a degree of calculation and weighing up of competing factors. In these final pages, we will explore one last example from World Championship play involving more complex decision-making, and consider the kinds of thought processes that may help us to find the best move.

We will use the following position as the basis for a hypothetical discussion between two players.

Magnus Carlsen – Ian Nepomniachtchi

Dubai (6) 2021



Player 1: Black's doubled f-pawns don't matter. They are easily defended, and White has no pawn majority.

Player 2: True, they are not vulnerable to direct attack – but doubled pawns do have the disadvantage that advancing them tends to leave weak squares behind.

Player 1: White is missing the light-squared bishop on the kingside, so Black can attack with the h-pawn.

Player 2: But that would take time. If the pawn goes to h5, White can attack it with ♜f4.

Player 1: Black's king is slightly exposed, so perhaps White should keep the queens on the board to attack it.

Player 2: But it could be good for White to exchange all the major heavy pieces, reaching an endgame with a knight against a single bishop and playing against Black's pawn weaknesses.

Player 1: Black should place as many pawns as possible on light squares, to avoid limiting the scope of the bishop.

Player 2: But a black pawn on b4 would give the bishop a strong outpost on c3, which would also block White's queen and rook on the c-file.

Player 1: Yes, White dominates the c-file for now. The next step might be to occupy the seventh rank.

Player 2: On the other hand, White may wish to prioritize exchanging queens, since Black's queen is perfectly centralized and controls more squares than White's.

Player 1: Black would like to challenge for the c-file with ...♜ac8, but it would lose material.

Player 2: But in the resulting position, the black queen might be a match for two white rooks. The queen is powerful when attacking weak pawns, and White will have two undefended pawns on the queenside.

Player 1: White can kick the centralized bishop with e2-e3 at any moment.

Player 2: True, but that would also render the knight less stable.

Player 1: How will we ever manage to sort this out? We have mentioned a dozen different positional principles.

Player 2: We have not looked in detail at a single move yet. And all those principles may change in importance, depending on other factors in the position.

Player 1: Are there any overarching rules for this?

Player 2: With a handful of small imbalances, like we see here, that would give rise to a huge number of sub-rules.

Player 1: My ears are open.

Player 2: It's too much. In the end, we would be left with only one rule for each position. Find the best move!

Player 1: Where do we begin?

Player 2: Let's start by considering the most forcing option: ...♜ac8. If White retreats the queen then Black would seem to have benefited from activating a rook with tempo, so let's consider the critical continuation where White gets two rooks for the queen.

Player 1: We discussed this imbalance. I said White had a material advantage, but you pointed out that Black's queen could attack the queenside pawns.

Player 2: If White can consolidate, White should have a long-term advantage – but before then, Black will have short-term threats.

Player 1: And which of those factors matters the most?

Player 2: It's a concrete question. We require some calculation, but also some positional intuition.

Player 1: What does your intuition tell you?

Player 2: I don't know yet – it's been busy talking. Please leave my brain alone for a while.

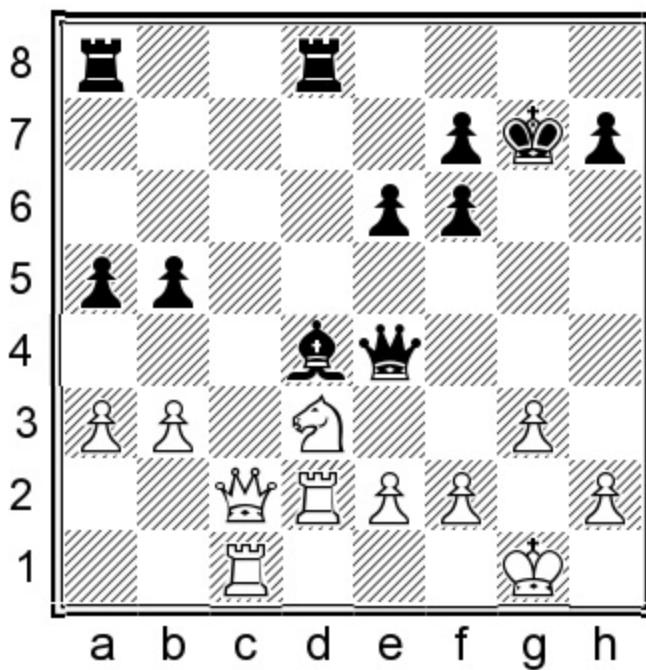
Player 1: So that you can use your experience to determine which factor or factors matter the most.

Player 2: Spot on!

Let's see what actually happened.

Magnus Carlsen – Ian Nepomniachtchi

Dubai (6) 2021



25... $\mathbb{Q}ac8!?$

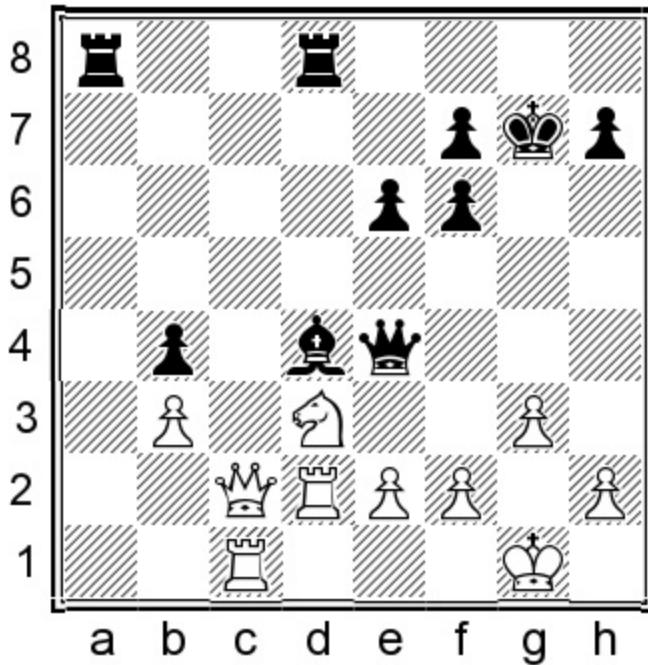
Carlsen subsequently commented on this move: "I felt like we were both risking a bit, but I thought Black was maybe risking a bit more." Let's check a couple of alternatives:

25...h5?! achieves nothing after 26. $\mathbb{Q}f4\pm$. The endgame is still more or less equal after the impending queen exchange, but Black will need to be more careful. As 'Player 2' pointed out, Black's queen on e4 is more active than White's on c2, so forcing a queen exchange helps White

slightly.

25...b4! is the soundest continuation, combining correct judgement of positional principles – specifically, the fact that the outpost on c3 is more important than the notion of not putting pawns on the same-coloured squares as one's bishop – with relatively simple tactics to justify the decision.

26.axb4 axb4



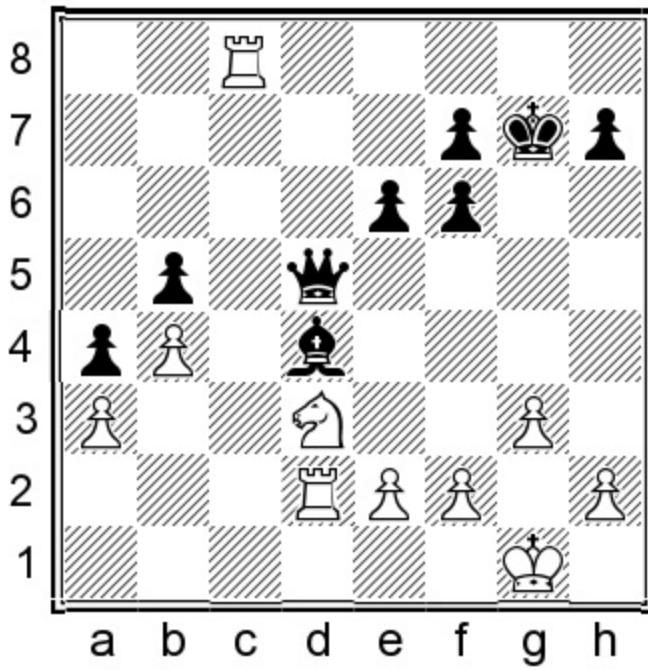
The first tactical point is that 27.♗xb4 ♗xf2† 28.♔xf2 ♗xb4 is absolutely fine for Black.

The second point is that 27.♗c4 can be met by 27...♗f5!, and if 28.♗xb4? ♕ab8 White is in trouble because ...♗xf2† is coming.

26.♗xc8 ♕xc8 27.♗xc8 ♗d5

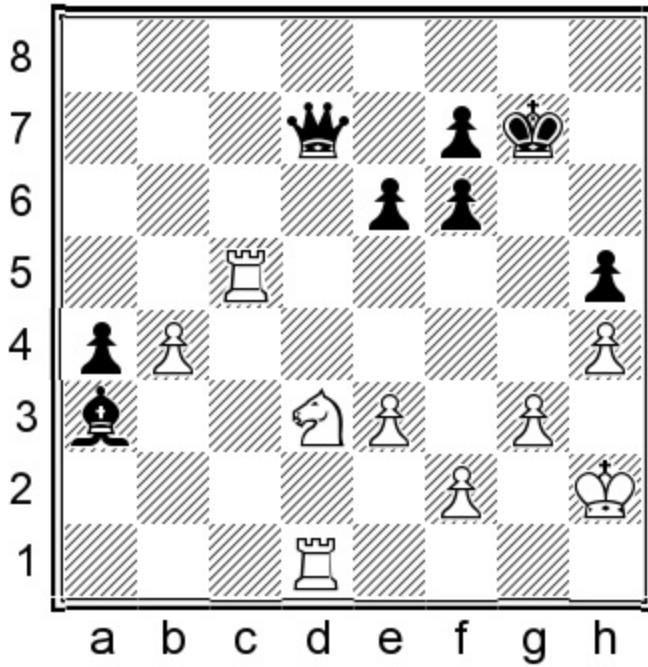
An important point is that White has no convenient way of arranging to double rooks on the seventh rank.

28.b4 a4



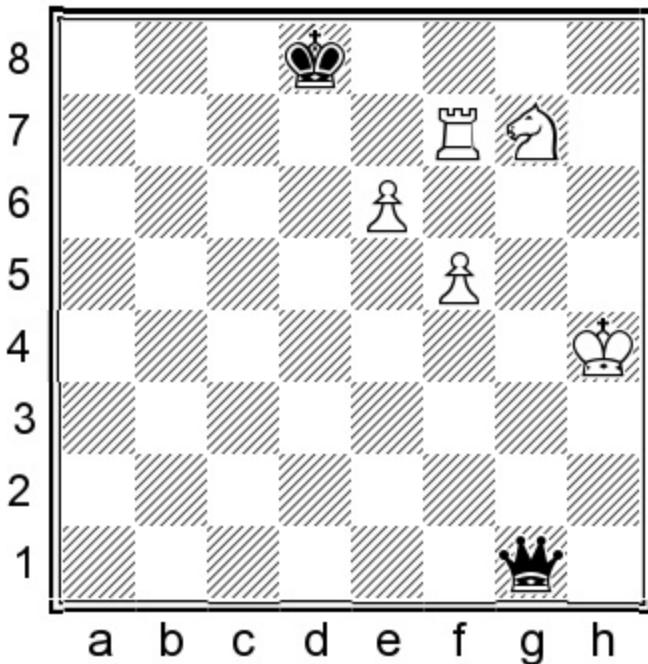
The position is objectively balanced but arguably a bit more dangerous for Black, as stated by Carlsen. As it turned out, both players made mistakes and both missed chances to seize the upper hand before move 40. By the time the time control had been reached and the dust had settled, White stood better and Carlsen eventually managed to grind out the victory. The remaining moves are not so important but I will include them for the sake of completeness.

29.e3 ♜e5 30.h4 h5 31.♔h2 ♜b2 32.♕c5 ♖d6 33.♖d1 ♜xa3 34.♖xb5 ♖d7 35.♖c5



35...e5 36.♖c2 ♖d5 37.♖dd2 ♖b3 38.♖a2 e4 39.♘c5 ♖xb4 40.♗xe4 ♖b3 41.♖ac2 ♔f8 42.♘c5 ♖b5 43.♘d3 a3 44.♘f4 ♖a5 45.♖a2 ♖b4 46.♖d3 ♔h6 47.♖d1 ♖a4 48.♖da1 ♖d6 49.♗g1 ♖b3 50.♘e2 ♖d3 51.♘d4 ♔h7 52.♔h2 ♖e4 53.♖xa3 ♖xh4† 54.♗g1 ♖e4 55.♖a4 ♖e5 56.♘e2 ♖c2 57.♖1a2 ♖b3 58.♗g2 ♖d5† 59.f3 ♖d1 60.f4 ♖c7 61.♗f2 ♖b6 62.♖a1 ♖b3 63.♖e4 ♖g7 64.♖e8 f5 65.♖aa8 ♖b4

66. $\mathbb{E}ac8$ $\mathbb{Q}a5$ 67. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 68. $\mathbb{E}e5$ $\mathbb{W}b3$ 69. $\mathbb{E}e8$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 70. $\mathbb{E}cc8$ $\mathbb{W}h1$ 71. $\mathbb{E}c1$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 72. $\mathbb{E}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 73. $\mathbb{E}e7$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 74. $\mathbb{E}e5$ $\mathbb{W}d3$ 75. $\mathbb{E}b7$ $\mathbb{W}c2$ 76. $\mathbb{E}b5$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 77. $\mathbb{E}a5$ $\mathbb{Q}b6$ 78. $\mathbb{E}ab5$ $\mathbb{Q}a7$ 79. $\mathbb{E}xf5$ $\mathbb{W}d3$ 80. $\mathbb{E}xf7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ 81. $\mathbb{E}b7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 82. $\mathbb{E}xa7$ $\mathbb{W}d5$ 83. $\mathbb{E}a6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}h7$ 84. $\mathbb{E}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 85. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 86. $\mathbb{E}a2$ $\mathbb{W}h1$ 87. $\mathbb{E}a6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 88. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}b1$ 89. $\mathbb{E}d6$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 90. $\mathbb{E}d5$ $\mathbb{W}a2\#$ 91. $\mathbb{E}d2$ $\mathbb{W}b1$ 92. $\mathbb{E}e2$ $\mathbb{W}b6$ 93. $\mathbb{E}c2$ $\mathbb{W}b1$ 94. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}h1$ 95. $\mathbb{E}c7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 96. $\mathbb{E}c6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 97. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}b1$ 98. $\mathbb{Q}g5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 99. $\mathbb{Q}e6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 100. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ $\mathbb{W}h1$ 101. $\mathbb{E}c7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 102. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}b1$ 103. $\mathbb{E}d7$ $\mathbb{W}b2\#$ 104. $\mathbb{E}d2$ $\mathbb{W}b1$ 105. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{W}b4$ 106. $\mathbb{E}d1$ $\mathbb{W}b3$ 107. $\mathbb{E}d6\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g7$ 108. $\mathbb{E}d4$ $\mathbb{W}b2\#$ 109. $\mathbb{Q}e2$ $\mathbb{W}b1$ 110. $e4$ $\mathbb{W}h1$ 111. $\mathbb{E}d7\#$ $\mathbb{Q}g8$ 112. $\mathbb{E}d4$ $\mathbb{W}h2\#$ 113. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $h4$ 114. $gxh4$ $\mathbb{W}h3\#$ 115. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{W}xh4$ 116. $\mathbb{E}d3$ $\mathbb{Q}f8$ 117. $\mathbb{E}f3$ $\mathbb{W}d8\#$ 118. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ $\mathbb{W}a5$ 119. $\mathbb{Q}f2$ $\mathbb{W}a7\#$ 120. $\mathbb{E}e3$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 121. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}d2\#$ 122. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}d1\#$ 123. $\mathbb{E}e2$ $\mathbb{W}b3\#$ 124. $\mathbb{Q}g2$ $\mathbb{W}b7$ 125. $\mathbb{E}d2$ $\mathbb{W}b3$ 126. $\mathbb{E}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 127. $\mathbb{E}e5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 128. $\mathbb{E}f5\#$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 129. $e5$ $\mathbb{W}a2\#$ 130. $\mathbb{Q}h3$ $\mathbb{W}e6$ 131. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ $\mathbb{W}h6\#$ 132. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ $\mathbb{W}h7$ 133. $e6$ $\mathbb{W}g6$ 134. $\mathbb{E}f7$ $\mathbb{Q}d8$ 135. $f5$ $\mathbb{W}g1$ 136. $\mathbb{Q}g7$



Black resigned. At 136 moves, this game set a new record as the longest ever in a World Championship match.

1–0

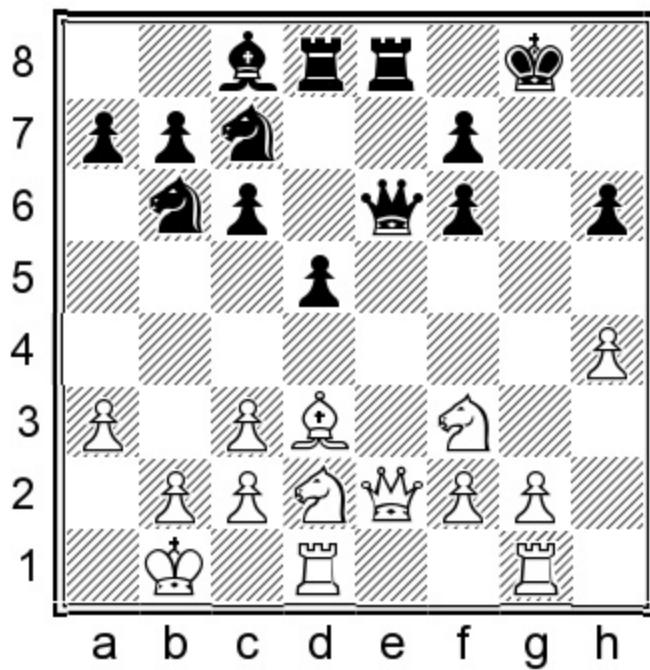
What can we learn from the critical decision on move 25? Firstly, chess is difficult! The introductory hypothetical conversation included all kinds of competing positional considerations, and ultimately the player needs to determine which factors matter the most – backed up with calculation when necessary. The purpose of our positional Woodpecker training is to develop intuition by reinforcing positional themes and principles at a subconscious level. This should improve our ability to think of promising ideas in a position, but we still need to think independently, weighing up competing considerations and calculating any necessary variations before choosing a move.

In the notes to the game, I gave 25...b4! as the simplest route to a good and safe position for Black. With the benefit of hindsight, this may well have led to a better outcome for Black than the game continuation. At the same time, it is important to recognize that Nepo's choice was not an outright

mistake. If the same position occurred in another event involving different players, 25... $\mathbb{Q}ac8!?$ might represent the best practical choice, especially if the tournament or match situation dictates that Black should play for a win.

Let's look at two final positions, both of them far simpler than the example given above. I composed them myself to illustrate the topic of competing positional guidelines.

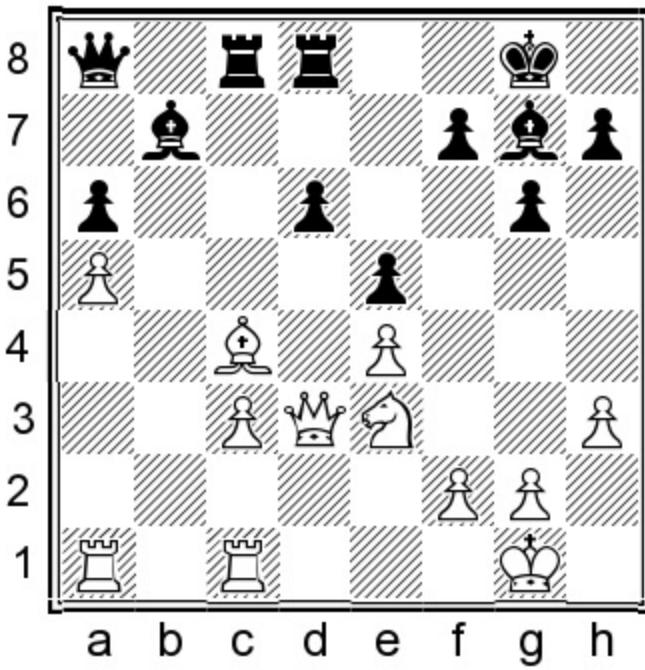
Example 1



Show/Hide Solution

1. $\mathbb{W}f1! \pm$ Black's damaged kingside is the most relevant factor in the position. The solution is White's only way to avoid an exchange of queens, which justifies the otherwise undesirable placement of the white queen on a passive square on the first rank.

Example 2



Show/Hide Solution

The most important positional factor is the weak square on d5, but how should White exploit it?

1.♗d5!+– With this accurate choice, White forces the exchange of Black's last minor piece that controls the key square. 1–0 in minor pieces controlling d5 is, proportionally, a greater degree of domination than a 2–1 advantage. 1.♗d5 appears tempting, as White would have a crushing advantage with opposite-coloured bishops. However, Black is not obliged to exchange on d5, and 1...♝c5! restricts White to a lesser (though still clear) advantage. **1...♝h6** is the critical reply to consider, as exchanging the bad bishop would solve Black's problems. However, White can prevent Black's idea with: **2.♗xb7 2.♝cb1!?** leads to a similar type of positional domination, albeit in a slightly less precise way. **2...♛xb7 3.♝cb1** Avoiding the pin with gain of tempo. Black must move the queen, when ♗d5 maintains White's winning advantage. Simple stuff, but still a useful reminder that positional play and tactics go hand-in-hand.



Final Remarks

The difficulty with positional chess is the constant trade-offs. We continually give up one thing to gain something else, whether it be material, pawn structure, development, king safety, piece activity, passed pawns and so on. Principles and guidelines, while useful, are often not enough to guide you to the correct decision. Instead, you have to use your intuition and judgement to decide what matters most in a position. With experience and training, we can develop a better sense of which trade-offs to make and when to make them.

At the time of writing, I think most chess observers would agree that Magnus Carlsen plays the game of chess at a higher level than any human who has ever lived, so it's worth repeating his words as quoted on page 357:

Magnus Carlsen

"I normally do what my intuition tells me to do. Most of the time spent thinking is just to double-check."

Virtually none of us can aspire to play chess as well as Carlsen does, but we can learn something from his thinking process: the more we train our intuition, the better our chances of finding the right idea or ideas at some point in our thought process. After finishing your Woodpecker training, I hope and believe your positional intuition will be significantly better than it was before.

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