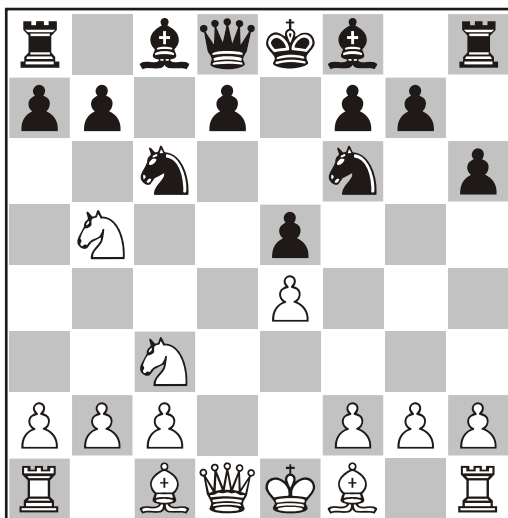


CHAPTER 10

Dimitri Reinderman

The Haberditz Variation



NIC KEY SI 35.2

Play 6...h6 in the 'Sveshnikov'

The Sveshnikov Variation gives Black active play and is theoretically sound. A lot of top players are playing it with Black, and trying to avoid it with White. The Sveshnikov rules and completely owns 1.e4. However, there is one tiny disadvantage to the Sveshnikov: there are not many sound sidelines for Black. In the Najdorf/Scheveningen you can play b5, ♗b7, ♘e7, ♖c7, ♜c6/♞d7, 0-0 in many move orders, but in the Sveshnikov there are often just one or two good moves. That makes it easier for White to prepare, since all you have to do is look at the main line. However, in a 5-minute-game on ICC, someone deviated already on move 6 against me. '6...h6? Never looked at that, but I suppose it's just

good for White' I thought, but alas, though I played normal moves, the opening was a success for Black. So I checked my books and database to see what I had done wrong, but it turned out that I had played the theoretical recommendation. Maybe 6...h6 was not so bad after all!? I decided to keep the move in mind for a suitable occasion, which was this game in the loser's final of the play-offs of the Dutch league.

□ **Dennis de Vreugt**
 ■ **Dimitri Reinderman**
 Netherlands tt 2004

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♜c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4

7.♟f6 5.♞c3 e5 6.♞db5 h6

This is sometimes called the Haberditz Variation. The point is to prevent 7...♞g5. The main disadvantage of 6...h6 is that it allows the knight check on d6. See the next game for 7.♞d6+.



7.♞d5

Some other tries:

– 7.♞e3 d6 8.♞d5 ♞xd5 9.exd5 ♞b8 (not 9...♞e7? 10.c3! a6 11.♖a4+-) 10.c4 a6 11.♞c3 ♞e7 12.♞d3 ♞g5 13.♗d2 ♞xe3 14.♗xe3 0-0 15.0-0 ♞d7 16.♞ac1 f5= and the players agreed a draw in Zaitsev-Gheorghiu, Sochi 1976.

– 7.♞c4 a6 (7...d6 8.♞d5 ♞xd5 9.♞xd5 is good for White) 8.♞d6+ ♞xd6 9.♗xd6 ♗e7 10.♗xe7+ ♞xe7 11.♞e3 d6 12.0-0-0 ♞e6 13.♞d5+ ♞xd5 14.exd5 b5 15.♞b3 ♞a5 16.f3 ♞hc8= Karpov-Hug, Graz 1972.

– 7.♞e2 is not so innocent. 7...d6 8.♞d5 ♞xd5 9.exd5 ♞b8 10.c4 is a little better for White. 7...a6 8.♞d6+ ♞xd6 9.♗xd6 ♗e7 has never been tried, but should be OK, since a6 is a useful move here (it prevents 10.♞b5).

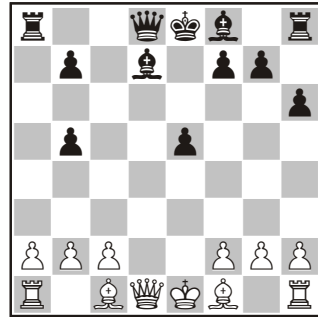
7...♞xd5 8.exd5 a6

Compared to the normal Sveshnikov line (6...d6 7.♞d5 ♞xd5 8.exd5) we cannot say that h6 is such a useful extra move in this position – it weakens the kingside. However, not having played d6 makes the text possible!

9.dxc6

Here 9.♞c3 ♞d4 10.♞d3 d6 11.0-0 g6 is OK for Black.

9...axb5 10.cxd7+ ♞xd7



In this position Black has two weaknesses: pawn b5 and the kingside. In exchange for that, Black can develop freely and has an extra centre pawn.

11.♞d3

Now I had to think for myself, and there follows a series of second best moves. Fortunately the damage wasn't so bad.

11...♞d6

11...♞c6 followed by 12...♗d5 is better, when Black is close to equality. For example, 11...♞c6 12.0-0 ♗d5 13.♗g4 h5 14.♗h3 ♞e7 15.♞e3 ♞d7 16.♞f5 ♞xf5 17.♗xf5 g6 18.♗d3 ½-½, Vitolinsh-Lutikov, Soviet Union 1970.

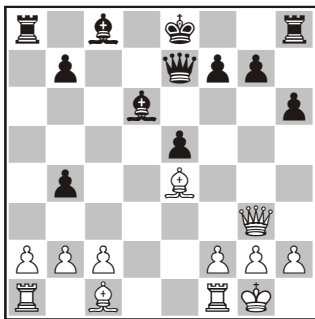
12.0-0 b4

After 12...0-0 13.♗e2 with the double threat 14.♞xb5 and 14.♗e4 is annoying. But 12...♗c7 still keeps everything together.

13.♞e4 ♞c8

I didn't like the position after 13...♞c6 14.♞xc6+ bxc6 15.♗g4 ♗f6 16.♗e4 (or 16.♗c4). After 16...0-0 17.♗xc6 ♞fc8 18.♗e4 ♗g6 19.♗xg6 fxg6 20.♞d1 ♞e7 21.c3 White has some winning chances in the endgame.

14.♗f3 ♗e7 15.♗g3



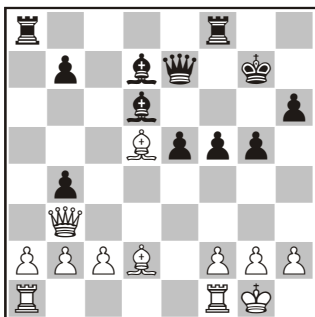
15...g5!?

I calculated 15...g6 16.f4 exf4 17..♙xf4 ♙xf4 18.♞xf4 0-0 19.♙xg6 fxg6 20.♞xg6+ ♞g7 21.♞xf8+ ♖xf8 22.♞f1+ ♖g8 23.♞e8+ ♖h7 24.♞f7+— here and wasn't very happy. 15...f5 and 15...♖f8 are bad also, so after a process of deduction and elimination I got to 15...g5, which had the bonus of reducing my fear for the move f4. There is a fourth alternative in 15...♞f6 but after 16.f4 exf4 17.♙xf4 ♙xf4 18.♞xf4 ♞b6+ 19.♞f2 ♞xf2+ 20.♞xf2 White is better.

16.♞f3 0-0 17.♙d2

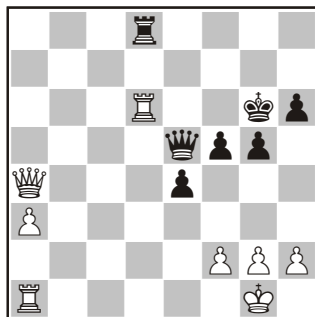
White must be better here, but 17.♞h5 ♖g7 18.h4 f5 19.♙d3 e4 20.hxg5 exd3 21.♞xh6+ ♖g8 22.♞g6+ ♖h8 is only a draw. 17.♙f5 is another logical move, when I wanted to play 17...♖g7 and 18...♞f6. Maybe 17.g4!?! is best.

17...f5 18.♙d5+ ♖g7 19.♞b3 ♙d7



Now the position is about equal.

20.a4 bxa3ep 21.bxa3 ♙a4 22.♞b2 ♞ac8 23.c4 b5! 24.♞fc1 bxc4 25.♙xc4 ♞b8 26.♞c3 ♖g6 27.♙d5 e4 28.♞a5 ♞b5 29.♞xa4 ♞xd5 30.♙b4 ♞e5 31.♙xd6 ♞xd6 32.♞d1 ♞fd8 33.♞xd6



33... ♞xd6

Something very strange happened here. I had considered 32...♞d3 instead of 32...♞fd8, and the image of the rook on a1 hanging stayed in my mind. When Dennis took on d6, I thought he had blundered. I did a short check that I was really winning and took the rook on a1. The Fide rules don't allow this move though, since I was in check, as Dennis pointed out. Oops. So, I put the queen and rook back, and took on d6 with the rook, thinking about whether the extra moves would cause trouble with the digital clock, which keeps score of the amount of moves made. In the meantime Nijboer and Timmerman on the board next to me were laughing their heads off about my illegal move(s). That's plural yes: I had totally forgotten about the touch-and-move rule, and so had Dennis. Fortunately it doesn't make a big difference, after 33...♞xd6 chances are still about equal.

34.♞d1 ♞xd1+ 35.♞xd1 e3 36.fxe3 ♞xe3+ 37.♖f1 ♞xa3

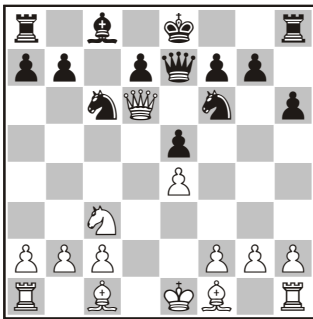
OK, now Black is even better. I could vaguely remember having read that 3 versus 2 on a wing in a queen endgame gives serious winning chances to the side with a pawn up. Maybe my memory is wrong though, I have no idea how Black should try to win it. It showed, as Dennis had no trouble making a draw.

38. ♖d5 ♗a6+ 39. ♘f2 ♗a7+ 40. ♘f1 ♗f7 41. ♗c6+ ♔h7 42. ♗d6 h5 43. ♗d8 g4 44. ♗g5 f4 45. ♘f2 ♗a7+ 46. ♘f1 ♗a1+ 47. ♘f2 ♗b2+ 48. ♘f1 ♗c1+ 49. ♘f2 ♗e3+

Draw.

□ Aarne Saastamoinen
 ■ Jyrki Salonen
 Tampere 1998

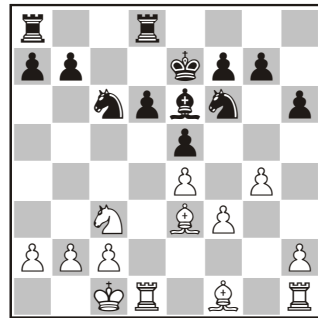
1.e4 c5 2. ♖f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4 ♘f6 5. ♘c3 e5 6. ♘db5 h6 7. ♘d6+ 7... ♙xd6 8. ♗xd6 ♗e7



9. ♘b5

More logical than 9. ♗xe7+, though that move has been played more. After 9... ♗xe7 10. ♙e3 (10.b3 d6 11. ♙a3 ♖d8 12.0-0-0 a6 13. ♘d5+ ♘xd5 14.exd5 ♘b8 15.c4 with a tiny advantage for White) 10...d6 11.0-0-0 ♙e6 12.f3 White has scored very well in practice, for example 12... ♗hd8 13.g4 ♖ac8

14.h4 ♘e8 15. ♗h2 a6 16.g5 hxg5 17.hxg5 b5 18. ♙b6 ♖d7 19. ♘d5+ ♙xd5 20.exd5 ♗b7 21. ♙e3 ♘b8 22.f4 ♘d7 23. ♙h3 ♖c4 24. ♖e2 with a clear advantage for White in Stein-Miagmasuren, Sousse 1967. However, things are not that bleak. Let us go back to the position after 12... ♗hd8 13.g4.



Instead of Miagmasuren's 13... ♖ac8 Black can play 13...d5!, since after 14. ♙c5+ ♗e8 15. ♘b5 ♖ac8! 16. ♘d6+ ♖xd6 17. ♙xd6 dxe4 Black gets two pawns for the exchange. However, see the postscript below.

9... ♗b8!

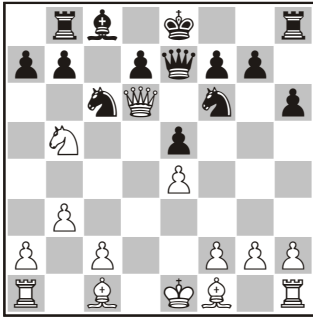
This was a new move, also played by my opponent on ICC. Previously, Black took on d6, but after 9... ♗xd6 10. ♘xd6+ ♗e7 11. ♘f5+ ♗f8 12.b3! White is better according to theory. There are two main roads now:

- 12...d5 13. ♙a3+ ♗g8 14.exd5 ♘d5 15. ♘d6 ♖b8 16. ♙c4 ♙e6 17.0-0-0 with a pleasant game for White in Spassky-Gheorghiu, Bath 1973, and
- 12... ♘xe4 13. ♙a3+ ♗g8 14. ♘d6 ♘xd6 15. ♙xd6 'and Black can hardly move'.

Actually, concerning the second line, I am not sure if theory is right here: after all Black has an extra centre pawn, and I can't find anything convincing for White if Black just develops. Still, 9... ♗b8 is safer.

10.b3

Otherwise the knight has to go back to c3.



10...dxe4 11.♖xe7+ ♔xe7 12.♙a3+ d6 13.f3

Or 13.0-0-0 ♖d8 14.f3 a6 15.fxe4 axb5 16.♙xb5 ♖a8 17.♗b2 ♘d4=.

13...a6!

Again this intermediate move is necessary and good.

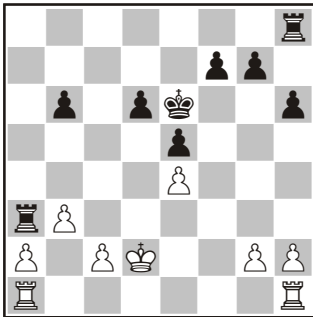
14.fxe4 axb5 15.♙xb5 ♖a8 16.♙xc6

Better is 16.♙b2, but Black is equal after 16...f5 or 16...♗b4!?

16...♖xa3

After 16...bxc6 Black is also a little better.

17.♙d5 b6 18.♗d2 ♙e6 19.♙xe6 ♗xe6



Black can be very happy with the outcome of the opening. The rest of the game is not important from a theoretical point of view. Black outplays his opponent to obtain a winning rook ending, only to spoil it in the end when White succeeds in (barely) saving his skin. 20.♗c3 g6 21.g4 f6 22.♖hd1 h5 23.gxh5 ♖xh5 24.♖d2 ♖a7 25.a4 ♖h4 26.♖e1 ♖ah7 27.♖ed1 ♖d7 28.♖g1 g5 29.♖e1 d5 30.exd5+ ♖xd5 31.♖xd5 ♗xd5 32.♖f1 ♗e6 33.b4 f5 34.♖a1 ♗d5 35.a5 ♖h3+ 36.♗b2 bxa5 37.♖xa5+ ♗d4 38.b5 ♖xh2 39.b6 ♖h7 40.♖a7 ♖h6 41.b7 ♖b6+ 42.♗c1 ♗c4 43.♖a5 ♖xb7 44.♖xe5 ♖f7 45.♗d2 g4 46.♗e3 f4+ 47.♗f2 ♗d4 48.♖g5 g3+ 49.♗f3 1/2-1/2

So is 6...h6 a sound move or mainly good for its surprise value? It seems to me that it's better than theory gives it credit for. So if you like to play the Sveshnikov with Black, but want to avoid your opponent's preparation, or if you like to get an ending straight from the opening, try it!

Postscript by the author

After writing this article, I played a lot of blitzgames with this variation on ICC. It seems that White can improve on Stein's play against Miagmasuren: 6...h6 7.♘d6+ ♙xd6 8.♖xd6 ♗e7 9.♖xe7+ ♗xe7 10.♙e3 d6 11.0-0-0 ♙e6 12.f3 ♖hd8 and now, instead of Stein's 13.g4, White obtains an advantage with 13.♗b1 followed by 14.♘d5+. Alas, I don't see a good way to avoid this as Black.