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Preface

It is safe to assume that the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit is one of the most controversially discussed opening systems of our time. Being a 1 e4 player for most of my life I never thought about adopting the Blackmar-Diemer as White, and being a successful practitioner of the Nimzowitsch Defence always allowed me to avoid it with Black (after 1 d4 d5 2 e4 Ìc6); only as I started to work on this project did I realize the tremendous momentousness of the controversy around the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit.

The Blackmar-Diemer Gambit is not a boxing jab; it is a knockout punch – and White gets to throw the first punch! Stop playing for the endgame; play to end the game! Be a winner. Play the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit!
(Rev. Tim Sawyer)

[...] the infamous and rather generous Blackmar-Diemer Gambit. I must say that I am delighted to see these moves as Black because I understand that my opening choice has been successful.
(IM Andrew Martin)

As can be seen by the two quotes above, players who set their wits to the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit can be split (except for the occasional one) into two opposite camps: Here, we have a legion of dedicated followers who wholeheartedly worship their beloved opening, sometimes even to the extent of religious proportions. And then we have the sceptics who simply cannot believe in the correctness of the many grandiose sacrificial lines that make the Blackmar-Diemer a living, breathing entity. But which side is correct? As I will try to point out in this book, the truth lies somewhere in between.

The Blackmar-Diemer Gambit in current literature
Since Emil Joseph Diemer published his (for the evolution of the Blackmar-Diemer

Gambit) groundbreaking work *Vom ersten Zug an auf Matt!* (which certainly is one of the best books I have read when it comes to chess entertainment), an enormous amount of written material advocating the Blackmar-Diemer (especially in German language) has been produced. Recent reference works (in English) include Gary Lane's *Blackmar-Diemer Gambit* and Rev. Tim Sawyer's *Keybook II*, not to mention the countless periodicals, be it the (now defunct) *Blackmar-Gemeinde*, the *Gambit Revue* or Tom Purser's magazine *BDG World*. There have also been a number of disquisitions from Black's perspective, but most of the works about the Blackmar-Diemer (from either side) have at least one serious problem...

What this book is about

When judging the quality of an opening book, one common criterion is whether the author has – or, at some point, had – the opening in his repertoire. I have never played the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit in a serious tournament game (yet), but for two reasons this might actually be an advantage. Firstly, a major problem with most (if not all) works about the Blackmar-Diemer (regardless of whether they are "for" or "against" it) can be summarized in three words: lack of objectivity. And secondly, whenever an accounted expert (such as Rev. Sawyer) writes about the Gambit, sometimes very elementary (but nevertheless important) concepts are left out; this is not because the expert is in any way sloppy, but rather that these concepts just have become too self-evident over the years. With this book, I would like to address both of these problems; and I like to think that my previous ignorance of the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit has been of great help.

What you will find in this book

Upon closer reading, you will discover that this is neither a repertoire book (which treats only a few selected lines) nor a complete guide (which incorporates every possible crossroads). First and foremost, this book is meant as a stimulus to kindle an objective debate about the Blackmar-Diemer, and to introduce the opening to players who were previously unaware of it (like me). To these ends, it provides a sound basis by presenting the elementary concepts of this opening as well as the most important old ideas and many new ideas for both sides in the most critical variations. For the larger part of interested players, the conclusions will probably be hard to accept: the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit is neither a weapon that wins by force, nor is it refuted. The only thing for sure is that it remains to this day an uncompromising opening system with chances for both sides (which is why it is still played in a tremendous amount of correspondence games); and for now I would like to invite you, dear reader, to enter the matrix...
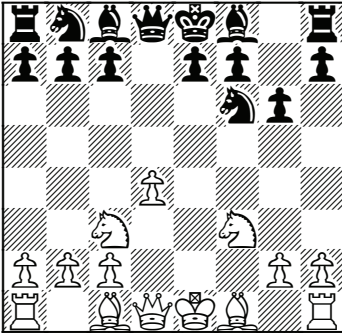
Acknowledgements

Chapter Nine
Bogoljubow Defence

1 d4 d5 2 e4 dxe4 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 f3 exf3 5 ♘xf3 g6

In the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit, fianchettoing the dark-squared bishop is usually known as the Bogoljubow Defence, even though Efim Dmitriyevich only played it occasionally (he also employed the Euwe Defence and the Brombacher Counter-Gambit). Among those who regularly deal with the Blackmar-Diemer, Georg Studier would undoubtedly have to be named as the one who contributed most to the basic theory underlying this system.

The design of Black's game plan quickly becomes obvious: the bishop on the a1-h8 diagonal puts itself forward for play against the white d-pawn by means of ...c7-c5 and/or ...♘c6. White's main objective, on the other hand, has not changed from that in the previous chapters: a direct assault on the enemy king. The only question is how best to carry it out.

A: 6 ♗c4 *170*
B: 6 ♗f4 *200*

Sometimes White plays 6 ♗g5 ♗g7 (6...♘bd7 is note "c32' in Chapter 7) 7

♕d2 (7 ♗c4 is note 'd' to White's 7th move in line A below) 7...0-0 (7...h6 8 ♗f4 would render Black's castling problematic) 8 0-0-0, which can be compared with 6 ♗f4 in line B and may just transpose if White follows up with ♗g5-h6 (for instance, after 8...b6, 8...♘bd7, or 8...c6).

The drawback to putting the bishop on g5 comes after 8...c5! (8...♗g4 9 ♗e2 c6 10 h3 ♗xf3 11 ♗xf3 ♕a5 12 ♔b1 b5?! 13 ♘d5! ♕d8 14 ♘xf6+ exf6 15 ♗f4 ♕c8 16 g4 a5 17 ♕g2 ♖a6 18 h4 gave White a strong attack in K.Soller-Würgler, correspondence 1953) 9 d5 a6, since 10 d6 (as in line B) is clearly no good here. Instead, G.Müller-R.Pape, correspondence 1975, continued 10 h4 b5 (10...♗g4 may be stronger, and if 11 ♕f4 then 11...♕d6!) 11 h5 b4 12 ♗xf6 exf6 13 ♘e2 ♗g4 14 hxg6 hxg6 15 c3 a5 16 ♘f4 ♕d6 17 ♖h4 f5 18 ♗c4 ♘d7 19 ♖dh1 ♘b6? (19...bxc3 20 bxc3 ♖fb8 was correct) 20 ♘e6!! fxe6 (not 20...♘xc4?? 21 ♖h8+ and wins) 21 ♖h8+ ♗xh8 22 ♖xh8+ ♔xh8 23 ♕h6+ and White escaped with a draw.

A: 6 ♗c4 and the Studier Attack

To this day, the Studier Attack (6 ♗c4 ♗g7 7 0-0 0-0 8 ♕e1) is the most popular way of dealing with the Bogoljubow Defence. And this is hardly surprising: the attacking patterns are as easy to learn as they are effective. Black has to play very accurately in order not to go quickly to the dogs.

6...♗g7

This is almost invariably played. It makes little sense to hold this move back; and, indeed, playing differently can cause problems. For instance, 6...♗f5?! 7 ♘e5 e6 8 ♗g5! sees Black already in a mess (8 g4 ♘fd7! 9 ♘xd7 ♕h4+ is less clear), while after 6...♘bd7? 7 ♗xf7+! ♔xf7 8 ♘g5+ ♔g8 9 ♘e6 ♕e8 10 ♘xc7 ♕d8 11 ♘xa8 ♘b8 12 ♕f3 ♘c6 13 d5 ♘d4 14 ♕f2 ♘f5 15 ♕xa7 White won in E.J.Diemer-M.Kloss, correspondence 1956.
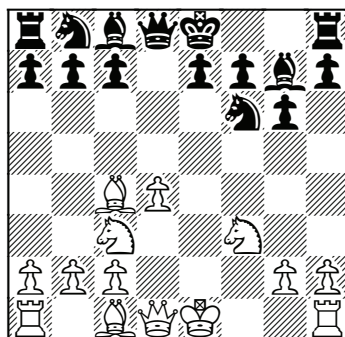
7 0-0

I cannot recommend other moves:

a) **7 h4?!** is the so-called Mad Dog Attack. The idea is to take the black kingside by storm, but this rather primitive assault can be fended off quite easily: 7...0-0 8 h5 (Lane has suggested 8 ♗g5 followed by ♕d2; this can be compared to the ♗g5 lines examined below, in which an early h2-h4 is often premature; nevertheless, as opposed to the text, this would still be the better choice) 8...♘xh5 9 ♖xh5 gxh5 10 ♕d3 (necessary, as otherwise Black plays ...♗f5-g6) 10...♕d6! and White is lost as he cannot build enough force:
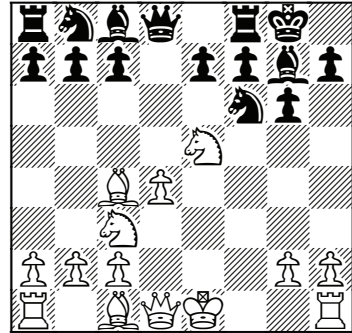
main idea is to play aggressively against f7. After 7...0-0 we have:
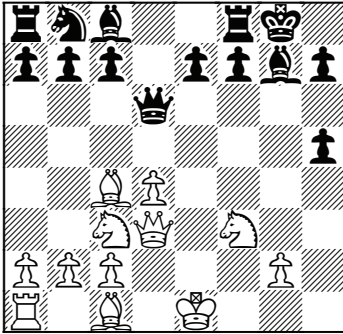
a1) 11 ♘g5 ♕g6 12 ♕f3 (12 ♘d5 ♘c6 13 c3 ♗f5 14 ♕f3 e6 15 ♘xc7 ♖ac8 16 ♘b5 ♘xd4! and wins was P.Fraemohs-A.Osipov, correspondence 2002) 12...e6 13 ♗d3 f5 14 ♘b5 ♘a6 15 c3 h6 16 ♘h3 ♕g4 and even though White eventually won in N.J.Jensen-H.Scott, correspondence 1988, Black's advantage is undeniable.

a2) 11 ♘d5 ♕g3+ 12 ♔f1 ♘c6 13 ♗f4 ♕g6 14 ♕b3 ♗e6 15 c3 ♗xd5 16 ♗xd5 ♕d3+ 17 ♔g1 ♘a5 18 ♕a4 c6 19 ♕xa5 b6! 20 ♗c4 ♕xc4 21 ♕xh5 f6 and Black soon won in T.Purser-J.Richter Mendau, correspondence 1987.

a3) 11 ♘e4 is met by 11...♕g6 (better than 11...♗f5 12 ♗xf7+ ♖xf7 13 ♘xd6 ♗xd3 14 ♘xf7 ♗xc2 when Black's advantage is only minimal) 12 ♘h4 ♕g4 13 g3 and now, instead of 13...♖d8?! from R.Holland-NN, England (skittles game) 1992, simply 13...h6 leaves Black with a clear advantage (Sawyer).

b) I would like to call **7 ♘e5** the Outpost Variation (even though it is generally known as the Nimzowitsch Attack, for whatever reason). Obviously, the

b1) 8 ♕e2 was played in the game E.J.Diemer-Platz, correspondence 1950, which went 8...e6 9 ♗e3 ♘bd7 10 ♗g5 c6 11 0-0-0 ♕c7 12 h4 b5 13 ♗b3 a5 14 a4 b4 15 ♘xd7 ♕xd7 16 ♘e4 ♘xe4 17 ♕xe4 ♕c7 18 h5 ♕g3 19 ♗e7 ♖e8 20 ♖h3 ♕c7 21 ♗g5 e5? 22 hxg6 hxg6 23 ♕xg6 ♔f8 24 ♖f1 ♗e6, when White forced mate by 25 ♕xg7+! ♔xg7 26 ♗f6+ ♔g6 27 ♖g3+ ♗g4 28 ♖xg4+ ♔h5 29 ♖g5+ etc. However, after the critical 8...♕xd4 9 ♘b5 (or 9 ♗d2 c6 10 0-0-0 ♘d5) 9...♕b6 10 ♗e3 c5 as suggested by Nickl, it is highly doubtful if White has enough for two pawns.

b2) 8 ♗f4 ♘bd7 – to my surprise, this natural move was not examined by Sawyer. The idea is not so much to trade the knight on e5, but rather to close the a2-g8 diagonal by transferring the knight via b6 (an idea we have already seen in the Langeheinicke Defence and which will also feature quite frequently below). One example of how play might continue is 9 0-0 ♘b6 10 ♗b3 c6 11 ♕d2

♘bd5 12 ♗h6 ♗e6 and Black has safely closed the a2-g8 diagonal, which leaves the knight on e5 grasping at nothing. After the further 13 ♖f3, as in G.Fiebig-Hartmann, correspondence 1985, then 13...♗xh6 14 ♕xh6 ♘g4 15 ♘xg4 ♗xg4 would have led to simplifications that favour Black (who is, after all, still a pawn up).

b3) 8 ♗g5 has the advantage that if Black blocks the a2-g8 diagonal with ...♘bd5 now, the bishop is not attacked on f4. On the other hand, the knight on e5 lacks additional support, which makes a counter-thrust by ...c7-c5 more attractive: 8...c5! 9 dxc5 (9 d5 ♘bd7 10 ♘xd7 ♗xd7 11 0-0 h6 leaves Black a clear pawn up, while 11 d6? ♗g4 12 ♕d2 ♕xd6 13 ♕xd6 exd6 14 0-0 ♗e6 gave him two pawns in P.Grott-G.Fiebig, correspondence 1989) 9...♕a5 10 ♕e2 ♕xc5 is assessed as slightly better for Black by Sawyer. E.J.Diemer-M.Kloss, correspondence 1955, continued 11 ♘f3 ♘c6 12 ♗e3 ♕b4 13 0-0 (13 0-0-0? ♘e4) 13...♕xb2 14 ♘b5 ♕b4?! 15 ♖ab1 ♕a5 16 ♗f4 a6 17 ♗c7 b6 18 ♘bd4 ♘xd4 19 ♘xd4 ♘d7? 20 ♘b3 ♕xa2 21 ♕xe7 and Diemer won eventually, but after 14...♗g4! there would not have been much hope for White, since 15 ♖ab1 doesn't trap the queen because of 15...♗xf3.

b4) Finally, 8 0-0 is well met by 8...♘c6! (which was not considered by Lane at all). Black directly targets the d-pawn, ignoring any temporary weaknesses occurring after 9 ♘xc6 (9 ♗e3 is no better: 9...♘xe5 10 dxe5 ♕xd1 11

♖axd1 ♘g4 12 ♗c5 ♘xe5 13 ♗b3 c6 14 ♗xe7 ♖e8 15 ♗h4 was played in D.Rosner-J.Kessler, correspondence 2000, when 15...♗e6 leads simplifications with Black still a pawn up) 9...bxc6. Following 10 h3 (10 ♗e3 runs into 10...♘g4; or if 10 ♗f4 ♘g4 11 d5 e5! 12 dxe6 ♕d4+ and Black was winning E.J.Diemer-S.Wolk, Germany 1951; while after 10 ♘e2 ♘h5 11 c3 e5 12 d5 ♗b7 13 ♕b3 ♖b8 14 dxc6 ♗xc6 15 ♗xf7+? ♔h8 16 ♕c2 ♕d7 17 ♗c4 ♕g4 White was hit on the break in E.J.Diemer-E.Kos, Germany 1950; Diemer later described f7 as a "strychnine pawn") 10...♘h5 (or 10...♘d5 11 ♗b3 ♗a6 and Black is clearly better, as noted in *Schach-Echo 6/1953*) 11 ♘e2 e5! 12 g4 ♕h4! we reach a position where Black sacrifices a piece, but gets more than enough pawns after 13 gxh5 ♗xh3 14 ♖f2 ♕g4+ 15 ♔h1 ♕xh5 and has an ongoing initiative on top.

c) After **7 ♗f4** 0-0 8 ♕d2 (8 0-0 transposes to 7 0-0 0-0 8 ♗f4, see note 'd' to White's 8th move) Black again plays 8...c5!. White now has:
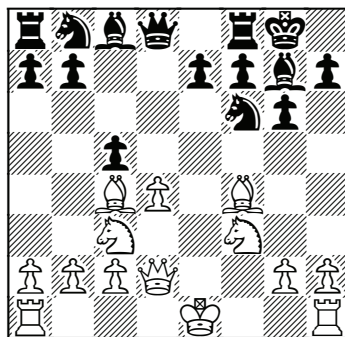
c1) After 9 d5 the d-pawn can be safely blockaded with 9...a6 10 a4 ♘e8!. M.Nicholls-R.Druon, correspondence 2001, continued 11 0-0 ♘d7 12 ♖ae1 ♘d6 13 ♗a2 b5 14 ♗h6 ♘f6 15 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 16 ♘e5 ♗b7 17 ♘c6 ♗xc6 18 dxc6 ♖c8 19 ♘d5 ♘de4 20 ♕e2 c4 21 ♘xf6 ♘xf6 and Black was better.

c2) 9 0-0-0 was played in A.Neumeyer-J.Kainz, correspondence 2002, but after 9...cxd4 10 ♘xd4 ♗g4 11 ♖de1 ♘h5 12 ♗e3 e5 13 ♘b3 ♕xd2+ 14 ♘xd2 ♘c6 Black simplified the position and remained with an extra pawn.

c3) 9 dxc5 seems critical, though there is little relevant practical material. Black should probably reply 9...♘c6 10 ♕xd8 (10 0-0 ♕a5 11 ♘b5 a6 regains the pawn since 12 ♘c7 ♕xc5 is check, while after 10 0-0-0 ♕a5 11 ♘b5 Black can play 11...♕a4) 10...♖xd8 11 0-0 (11 ♘g5 is coolly met by 11...h6! 12 ♘xf7 ♖d4 and White lost material in H.Schulz-H.Acker, correspondence 2004) 11...♗f5 12 ♗b3 ♘b4, followed by ...♖ac8, and it has become difficult to protect c5.

d) **7 ♗g5** should also be met by 7...0-0 8 ♕d2 (8 ♘e5 returns to 'b3' above; while 8 0-0 transposes to note 'f' to White's 8th move) 8...c5! (Lane doesn't give this move even though it led to a clearly better position for Black in his line after 7 ♗f4) and then:

d1) 9 dxc5 allows Black to simplify the position with 9...♕xd2+ 10 ♘xd2 ♗f5 11 0-0-0 ♘bd7 and it will be difficult for White to hang on to the c-pawn.

d2) 9 d5 a6 10 a4 ♘bd7 11 0-0 ♘b6 12 ♕f4 ♘xc4 13 ♕xc4 ♗f5 14 ♖ad1 ♕b6 15 ♖d2 ♕b4 16 ♘e5 was played in P.Motta-P.Heikkinen, Billings 1991, and now instead of 16...♕xc4, either 16...♘d7 or 16...♘g4 is winning almost instantly.

d3) 9 0-0-0 cxd4 10 ♘xd4 ♗g4 11 ♖de1 ♕c7 12 ♗b3 ♖d8 13 ♘cb5 ♕d7 14 h3 a6 15 hxg4 axb5 16 ♘xb5 ♕xd2+ 17 ♗xd2 ♘c6 was seen in A.Neumeyer-P.Leisebein, correspondence 1998, but this allowed 18 g5 ♘e8 when a draw was agreed. The immediate 16...♘c6 is better as now White cannot play g4-g5.

Returning to **7 0-0**:
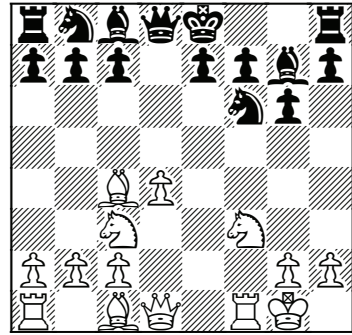
7...0-0

7...♗g4!? is not entirely without merit. White should refrain from 8 ♗xf7+?! as after 8...♔xf7 9 ♘e5+ ♔g8 (9...♔e8 is even better) 10 ♘xg4 ♘xg4 11 ♕xg4 ♕xd4+ 12 ♕xd4 ♗xd4+ 13 ♔h1 ♗xc3 14 bxc3 ♘c6 Black remained a comfortable pawn up in A.Frömmel-H.Schilling, correspondence 1986. Therefore, White should try 8 h3 ♗xf3 9 ♕xf3, when we have:
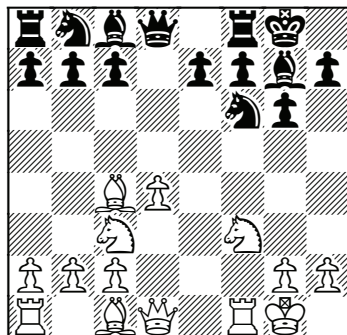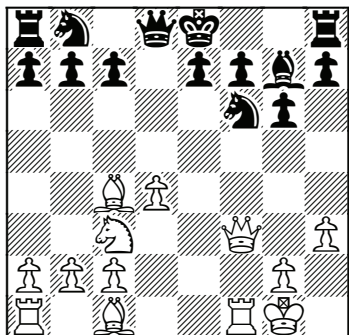
a) 9...♕xd4+? 10 ♗e3 ♕xc4 11 ♕xb7 ♕c6?? (but 11...0-0 12 ♕xa8 ♘c6 13 ♕b7 ♖b8 14 ♕xc7 ♖xb2 15 ♖ab1! is clearly better for White) 12 ♕c8 mate was actually played in A.Hall-M.Darlow, correspondence 1986.

b) With 9...c6 Black can try to adopt defensive ideas already seen; in turn White may try to exert pressure via the half-open f-file after 10 ♗e3 ♘bd7 11 g4. Practical examples are still missing, but I think that White has good chances.

c) 9...♘c6 is more active and requires precise play: 10 ♗e3 0-0 11 ♖ad1, when 11...♕d6 12 g4 ♘a5 13 ♗e2 c6 14 a3 ♘d5 15 ♘e4 ♕c7 16 ♗c1 b5 17 ♕f2 ♖ad8 18 ♕h4 ♘f6 19 ♘g5 h6 20 ♘f3 ♘d5 21 ♖f2 ♘f4 gave Black the better position in U.Gohla-C.Wunderlich, correspondence 2001. White should try 12 a3, which ensures that the light-squared bishop can stay on the a2-g8 diagonal. Black can strike in the centre with 12...e5, but after 13 dxe5 ♕xe5 (13...♘xe5 allows 14 ♕xb7) 14 ♘d5 ♘xd5 15 ♗xd5 ♕xb2 16 ♗c5 ♘d4 17 ♗xf7+ ♔h8 18 ♕e4 White has compensation in view of the bishop pair.

8 ♕e1

This move initiates the Studier Attack, which plans a straightforward assault with ♕h4, ♗h6 and ♘g5. Many other ideas have been tried, but none of them are truly satisfactory:

a) 8 ♘e5?!, despite its weaknesses, is surprisingly often played, but as given above Black has an effective counter in 8...♘c6! (see note 'b4' to White's 7th).

b) 8 h3 prevents ...♗g4 to take pressure off d4, intending to follow with ♗g5 and ♕d2 (as pointed out by Lane), but in my view it is too slow: 8...♘c6 (this is more to the point than 8...♘bd7 9 ♕e1 ♘b6 10 ♗d3 c6 11 ♕h4 ♘bd5 12 ♗h6 followed by ♘g5) 9 ♗g5 (or 9 ♗e3 ♘e8 10 ♕d2 ♘d6 intending 11...♘f5 with pressure against d4) 9...♗f5 10 ♖e1 (10 ♕d2 allows 10...♘e4 11 ♘xe4 ♗xe4 12 c3 ♗d5 with a better position for Black in R.Walmisley-E.Rasmussen, correspondence 1993) 10...h6 11 ♗f4 g5 12 ♗e3 e6 13 ♘e2 ♘b4 14 ♗b3 ♕d6 and White had no compensation for the pawn in J.Dowling-E.Rasmussen, correspondence 1993.

c) 8 ♗e3 protects the d-pawn but is again too slow; the bishop needs to go to h6 in one move as now Black manages to trade too many pieces: 8...♘bd7 (8...♘c6 is also possible, intending 9 ♕d2 ♘g4!, while 9 h3 transposes to the previous note) 9 ♕e1 (or 9 ♕d2 ♘b6 10 ♗b3 ♘bd5) 9...♘b6 10 ♗b3 ♘bd5 11 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 12 ♗xd5 ♕xd5 13 ♕h4 ♗f5 14 ♘g5? (but 14 ♗h6 is met by 14...♕e4) 14...h6 15 ♘f3 ♕e4 and Black was winning in J.Menella-A.Renna, USA 1992.

d) 8 ♔h1 is the Kloss Attack. Sawyer only gives an unannotated White win, which is bad insofar as, to some, this might suggest a certain validity; in reality ♔h1 is just a loss of an important tempo: 8...♗g4 9 ♗e3 (or 9 ♗g5 ♘c6 10 ♘e2 ♘e4 11 ♗e3 ♘d6 12 ♗b3 ♘f5 13 ♗g1 ♗xf3 14 ♖xf3 ♘cxd4 15 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 16 ♖d3 ♘xb3! 17 axb3 ♕c8 and Black is two pawns up for nothing, while after 17 ♖xd8 ♖fxd8 and 18...♘xa1 Black has too much material for the queen) 9...♘bd7 10 h3 ♗xf3 11 ♕xf3 ♘b6 12 ♗b3 c6 and, in contrast to 7...♗g4, Black can close the a2-g8 diagonal just in time; e.g. 13 ♘e2 ♘bd5 14 ♗g1 e6 and White had no compensation for the pawn in A.Hollnbuchner-J.Strasser, Wattens 1999.

e) 8 ♗f4 is problematic because ...e7-e5 is now even stronger; e.g. 8...♗g4 9 ♕d2 (or 9 h3 ♗xf3 10 ♖xf3 ♘bd7 11 a3 ♘e8 12 ♗b3 ♘d6 13 ♘e2 e5 14 dxe5 ♘xe5 was clearly better for Black in R.Sicker-J.Kessler, correspondence 2000) 9...♘c6 10 ♖ad1 ♗xf3 11 ♖xf3 e5 12

dxe5 ♕xd2 13 ♖xd2 ♘h5 14 ♖d7 (not 14 e6?! ♘xf4 15 exf7+ ♔h8 16 ♖xf4 ♗h6, skewering the rooks, H.Offenborn-F.Cottegnie, correspondence 2006) 14...♘a5 15 ♗xf7+ ♖xf7 16 ♖xf7 ♔xf7 17 ♗c1+ ♔e6 18 g4 ♘c6 19 gxh5 gxh5 20 ♘e4 ♘xe5 21 ♖g3 gave White just enough play to draw in W.Trumpf-C.Muck, correspondence 2007.

f) 8 ♗g5 can be rebutted as well. Black plays 8...♘c6 9 ♕d2 (9 ♕e1 ♘xd4 10 ♖d1 ♘xf3+ 11 ♖xf3 ♕e8 12 ♗xf6 exf6 13 ♘d5, from A.Junker-P.Woelfelschneider, correspondence 2000, doesn't give White enough activity, as after 13...♕xe1+ 14 ♖xe1 f5 15 ♘xc7 ♖b8 Black still has two bishops and an extra pawn; while 9 d5 is not recommended either, as after 9...♘a5 10 ♗e2 c6 White cannot play 11 b4 due to 11...♕b6+) 9...♗g4 10 ♖ad1 (10 d5 is again met by 10...♘a5 11 ♗e2 c6) 10...h6 11 ♗f4?! (but 11 ♗h4 ♘a5 12 ♗e2 ♗f5 allows Black to secure his kingside) 11...e5! gave Black the better game in A.J.Dries-E.De Vries, correspondence 1991.

Returning to **8 ♕e1**,
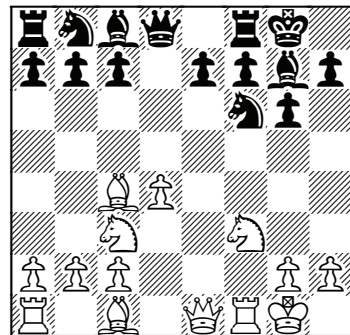
Black has no less than four serious alternatives:

A1: 8...♘bd7 *176*
A2: 8...♗f5 *179*
A3: 8...♗g4 *181*
A4: 8...♘c6 *183*

Two other moves should also be mentioned:

a) 8...c5?! is premature, as after 9 dxc5! Black has to waste time regaining the pawn. S.Soetewey-F.Wantiez, Antwerp 1997, continued 9...♕a5 10 ♗e3 ♘c6 (10...♘g4 runs into 11 ♘d5!) 11 ♕h4 ♗f5 12 h3!? (preventing ...♘g4) 12...♕b4? (but otherwise White plays 13 a3 and 14 b4, e.g. 12...♗xc2 13 a3 ♖ad8 14 b4 ♕c7 15 ♘b5 ♕c8 16 ♗h6 with the usual attack) 13 a3 ♕xb2 and now simply 14 ♗d2 followed by 15 ♖a2 would have won for White.

b) 8...c6 is a semi-useful move, but does nothing to deter White's attack with 9 ♕h4 and then:

b1) 9...♘bd7 10 ♗h6 ♘b6 11 ♗b3 transposes to line A1 (see the note with 10...c6).

b2) 9...♗f5 10 ♗h6 ♗xc2 (10...♗xh6 11 ♕xh6 ♘g4 is only a temporary deterrent: after 12 ♕d2 ♘d7 13 h3 ♘gf6 14 ♖ae1 ♘b6 15 ♗b3 ♕d6 16 ♕h6 the attack was back on in K.Stummer-C.Sallner, correspondence 1990) 11 ♘g5 ♗xh6 12 ♕xh6 ♕xd4+ 13 ♔h1 ♘bd7 was W.Wittmann-K.Rakoczy, correspondence 1968, where White found 14 ♗e6!

fxe6 15 ♘xe6 ♘g4 16 ♕xf8+ ♖xf8 17 ♖xf8+ ♘xf8 18 ♘xd4 ♗d3 19 ♖e1 ♔f7 20 h3 ♘f6 21 ♘f3 and the players agreed a draw, though White is slightly better in the final position.

b3) After 9...♗g4 Lane suggests 10 ♗e3, but in the Studier Attack this bishop belongs on h6! It makes more sense to strengthen the d-pawn with 10 ♘e2, seeing as 10...♘d5 is not possible. The game F.Drill-A.Diehm, Griesheim 2002, continued 10...♗xf3 11 ♖xf3 ♘h5 12 ♗g5 ♗f6 13 ♖af1 ♘d7 14 g4 ♕a5 15 ♗xf6 ♘hxf6 16 g5 ♘h5, and here 17 ♘g3! would have won for White.

A1: 8...♘bd7
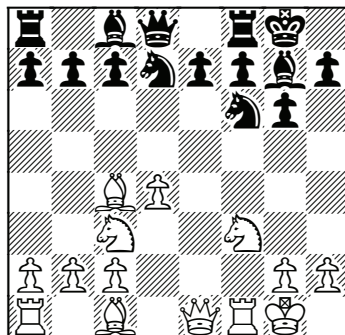
8...♘bd7 is a flexible move that retains two possibilities: for one, Black is now even more ready to strike with ...c7-c5, but more important is the idea to close the a2-g8 diagonal by means of ...♘b6-d5, a defensive idea that should be familiar by now. The line was advocated by GM Ludek Pachman in his book *Damengambit*, which is why it is also known as the Pachman Variation.

9 ♕h4
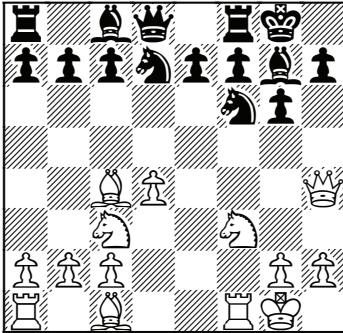
9...♘b6

As mentioned above, there is also the idea of 9...c5. However, it is surprisingly easy to deal with; i.e. 10 dxc5! and then:

a) 10...♕c7 11 ♗e3 ♘xc5 (instead, 11...♘e5 was tried in E.J.Diemer-Schijlt, Zwolle 1959, but after 12 ♘b5! ♘xf3+ 13 ♖xf3 ♕e5 14 ♗d4 ♕h5 15 ♗xf6 ♕xc5+? 16 ♕d4 Black also bit the dust) 12 ♘b5 ♕c6 13 ♘e5 ♕e4 was seen in a game NN-N.Barnett, correspondence 1978, when 14 ♕xe4 ♘fxe4 (or 14...♘cxe4? 15 ♘xf7! ♖xf7 16 ♗xf7+ ♔xf7 17 ♘c7 ♖b8 18 ♗xa7 and wins) 15 ♗xf7+ (15 ♘xf7 ♗e6!) 15...♔h8 16 ♗d4 would have given White a clear advantage.

b) 10...♘xc5 11 ♗e3 (the standard 11 ♗h6?! now runs into 11...♕b6) 11...♗e6 (11...♘e6 can be met by 12 ♖ad1 ♕a5 13 ♘d5; e.g. 13...b5 14 ♘xe7+ ♔h8 15 ♗xe6 ♗xe6 16 ♗d4! and the threat of 17 ♕xf6! is quite annoying) 12 ♗xc5 ♕c7 13 ♗xe6 ♕xc5+ 14 ♔h1 (14 ♕d4 ♕xd4+ 15 ♘xd4 ♘e4 16 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 17 ♘xe4 ♗xd4+ 18 ♔h1 ♗f6 19 ♖d1 ♔g7 20

♗xf7 ♔xf7 21 ♘xf6 ♔xf6 led to a level endgame in C.Liew-A.Schenning, correspondence 1998) 14...fxe6 15 ♘g5 and White has a slight advantage (as analysed by Smith & Hall).

10 ♗b3
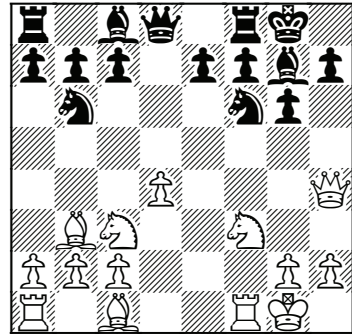
10...a5

Alternatively:

a) 10...♘bd5 closes the a2-g8 diagonal immediately, but it seems White has enough more than play for the pawn; e.g. 11 ♗h6 (11 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 12 ♗h6 might be met by 12...f6!?) 11...♘xc3 (11...c6 is note 'b') 12 bxc3 ♗xh6 13 ♕xh6 ♘g4 14 ♕h4 h5 15 ♘g5 ♗f5? 16 ♖xf5! gxf5 17 ♕xh5 ♔g7 18 ♗xf7 and Black resigned in G.Goanos-M.Donovan, Savannah 1999.

b) 10...c6 has the same idea, but suffers from being too slow; e.g. 11 ♗h6 ♘bd5 12 ♘g5 ♘e3? (but if 12...♗f5 13 g4 ♗xh6 14 ♕xh6 ♘e3 15 gxf5 ♕xd4 16 ♔h1 ♕d2 17 ♖g1 ♘xf5 18 ♕h3 should win anyway) 13 ♗xg7 ♘xf1 14 ♗xf6 h5 15 ♘xf7 ♖xf7 16 ♗xe7 1-0 A.Costa-A.Alvim, correspondence 1995. If instead 11...♗xh6 12 ♕xh6 ♘g4 13 ♕h4 h5,

then 14 h3 ♘f6 15 ♘e5! resumes the attack. P.Leisebein-R.Fischer, correspondence 1989, continued 15...♔g7 16 ♖f3 ♕d6 17 ♖af1 ♗e6 18 ♗xe6 ♕xe6 19 ♘e4 ♘bd7 20 ♘g5 ♕d6 21 ♕f4 ♖ad8 22 c3 c5, and here 23 ♘exf7! would have regained the pawn with a clear advantage as 23...♕xf4 24 ♖xf4 ♖xf7? loses the other rook to 25 ♘e6+.

11 a4
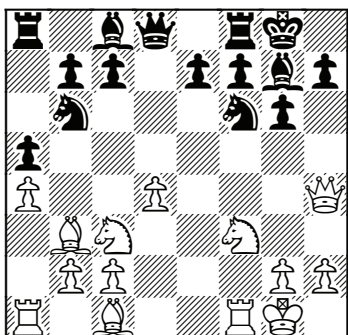
Necessary, since the direct 11 ♗h6 is not sufficient here: 11...a4 12 ♘g5 axb3 13 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 14 ♖xf6 h6 15 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 16 ♕xh6+ ♔xh6 17 ♘xf7+ ♔g7 18 ♘xd8 bxc2 and Black is winning; e.g. 19 ♖c1 (19 ♖f1 runs into 19...♗g4! and should White save the knight, 20...♗d1 is rather embarrassing; while 19 d5 allows the neat 19...♗f5 20 ♘xb7 ♘xd5! 21 ♘xd5 ♖xa2! 22 ♖c1 ♖xb2 winning) 19...c6 20 ♖xc2 ♗f5 21 ♖e2 ♖xd8 22 ♖xe7+ ♔h6 23 ♖xb7 ♘c4 24 ♖b4 ♘e3 followed by ...♘c2 and a pawn falls.

11...♗g4

Pachman's continuation, which looks like the best here. Black has also tried:

a) 11...♘g4?! 12 ♘e2 ♘d5 13 c3 ♗f6! 14 ♗g5 ♘de3 saw Black clearly better in L.Hayden-D.J.Rogers, correspondence 1975. But it is hard to see what was intended after simply 12 h3, as given by Harding. Taking on d4 is near suicidal (12...♗xd4+? 13 ♘xd4 ♕xd4+ 14 ♔h1 leaves the knight on g4 pinned to the queen, and 12...♗f6 13 ♕g3 ♗xd4+ 14 ♘xd4 ♕xd4+ 15 ♔h1 ♘f6 16 ♗h6 wins the exchange), while 12...♘f6 has just wasted two tempi.

b) 11...♘bd5 is little different than on the previous move: 12 ♗h6 ♗xh6 (not 12...♘xc3 13 bxc3 ♗g4? 14 ♘g5 ♗h5 15 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 16 ♗xf7! ♕d7 17 ♗b3 ♖a6 18 ♖ae1 and White won in A.Hall-R.Mitchell, correspondence 1984) 13 ♕xh6 ♘g4 14 ♕d2 (14 ♕h4!, as before, was more logical) 14...♘xc3 15 bxc3 ♔g7 16 ♖ae1 ♖a6 17 h3 ♘h6 18 ♕g5 f6 19 ♕f4 ♖c6 20 c4 ♕d6 21 ♘e5! g5 22 ♕f2 ♖a6 23 c5 ♕d8 24 ♘d3 with an unclear position in A.Hall-B.Thomas, correspondence 1986.

12 ♗e3

This time it is correct to put the bishop here as neither ...♘d5 nor ...♘g4 are now possible. Instead:

a) 12 ♘g5 was analysed by Studier and Gegner, but after 12...♕xd4+ 13 ♔h1 h6! 14 ♘xf7 ♖xf7 15 h3 (or 15 ♗xh6 ♖af8) 15...♘fd5! (rather than 15...g5? 16 ♗xf7+ ♔xf7 17 ♕xg4 ♕xg4 18 hxg4 and White is slightly better) 16 ♖xf7 ♔xf7 17 ♘xd5 ♕d1+! 18 ♔h2 ♘xd5 Black comes out clearly on top.
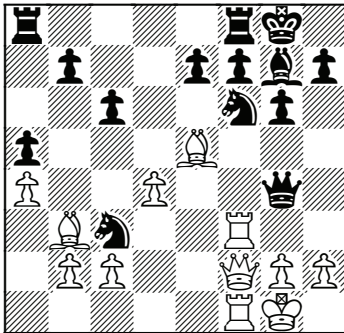
b) 12 ♘e2 ♗xf3 13 ♖xf3 ♕d7 14 ♗h6

♘bd5 15 ♖af1 c6 also left Black a solid pawn up in J.Felber-V.Drüke, correspondence 1997, especially after the further 16 c3 ♕g4!.

12...♗xf3

Otherwise White will move the knight away; e.g. 12...c6 13 ♘e5! ♗c8 14 ♖ae1 ♘bd5 15 ♗h6 ♗xh6 16 ♕xh6 ♕b6 17 ♔h1 ♗e6 18 ♘e4! ♕xd4 19 ♘g5 ♖fd8 20 ♖xf6 1-0 "Chochoyp"-"Salo", online game 2002.

13 ♖xf3 ♕d7 14 ♖af1 ♕g4 15 ♕f2 c6 16 ♗f4 ♘bd5 17 ♗e5 ♘xc3

We are following P.Vanhamme-O.Masquelier, correspondence 2002. Here White should have recaptured with the pawn, 18 bxc3, when the bishop pair and the pressure along the f-file would yield enough compensation. Instead, the game continued:
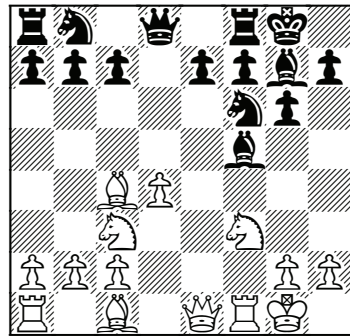
18 ♖xc3?! ♘e4! 19 ♗xf7+ ♔h8 20 ♗xg7+ ♔xg7 21 ♕e1 ♘xc3?!

It is true that Black should not play 21...♖xf7 22 ♖xf7+ ♔xf7 23 h3 ♕e6 (or 23...♕f5 24 ♖f3) 24 ♖e3, but 21...♘f6! 22 ♗b3 ♕xd4+ would have regained the pawn with a clearly better position.

22 ♕e5+ ♔h6 23 bxc3 ♕g5 24 ♕e1 e6 25 h4 ♕e7 ½-½

In view of 26 ♕e3+ ♔g7 (but not 26...g5?? 27 hxg5+ ♕xg5 28 ♖f6+) 27 ♕e5+ ♔h6 28 ♕e3+ etc, the players agreed to a draw.

A2: 8...♗f5

Here Black decides to block the f-file with his bishop in order to pre-empt any sacrificial ideas involving ♖xf6 which are so common in the Studier Attack. Often the game will transpose to 8...♘c6 9 ♕h4 ♗f5 which is covered below (see line A42), though there is some independent value should Black decide to go after the poor white c-pawn.

9 ♕h4

The consequent reply. 9 ♗b3?! protects the c-pawn but allows Black to harass the bishop with 9...♘c6 10 ♘e2 (or 10 ♕h4 ♘a5! – see note 'c' to White's 10th move in line A42) 10...a5! 11 c3 a4. P.Wölfelschneider-V.Ivanov, correspondence 2001, continued 12 ♗c4 ♘a5 13 ♗b5 a3 14 ♘g3 (or 14 b4 c6 15 ♗a4 ♘c4 16 ♗b3 ♗d3) 14...axb2 15 ♗xb2 ♗e6 16

♗a3 c6 17 ♗d3 ♖e8, when White's pieces had been completely distracted, and after 18 ♗b4 b6 19 ♘g5 ♗d5 20 ♕e2 e5 21 dxe5 ♘h5 22 ♘xh5 ♖xe5 23 ♖xf7 ♗xf7 24 ♘xf7 ♔xf7 25 ♕f3+ ♗f6 26 ♘f4 b5 27 ♗xa5 ♖xa5 28 ♕xc6 ♕e8 29 ♕xe8+ ♔xe8 Black went on to win.

9...♗xc2?!

As already noted, 9...♘c6 transposes to 8...♘c6, while 9...c6 returns to 8...c6 above. Two other moves that have been tried (but should not be feared) are:

a) 9...♘g4?! 10 h3 ♗xd4+? 11 ♔h1 ♗f6 12 ♕g3 and White wins a piece.

b) 9...♘bd7 10 h3! (the immediate 10 ♗h6 is well met by 10...♗xh6 11 ♕xh6 ♘g4 12 ♕h4? ♘e3 or 12 ♕f4 ♘b6 13 ♗b3 ♕d6 and Black is better, C.Herbrechtsmeier-B.Filipovic, Swiss Team Ch. 2005) 10...♘b6 (or 10...♗xc2 11 ♘g5!) 11 ♗b3 ♘bd5 12 ♗h6 c5 13 ♖ae1 ♖c8 14 ♘xd5 ♘xd5 15 c4 ♘f6 16 d5 b5 17 ♘g5 with a massive initiative in E.Höhne-Z.Ivanovic, correspondence game.

10 ♗h6
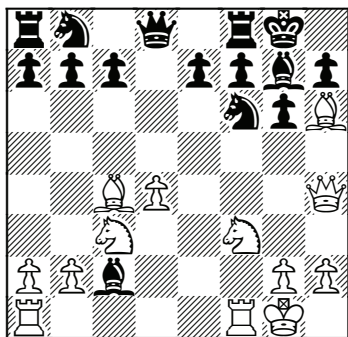
10...♗xh6

There was no way to successfully defuse the white attack:

a) 10...c6 is note 'b2' to 8...c6.

b) 10...e6 11 ♘g5 ♘h5? (11...♗xh6 12 ♕xh6 returns to the main line) 12 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 13 ♖xf7+! ♖xf7 14 ♘xe6+ is a standard motif in the Studier Attack that should be memorized.

c) 10...♘bd7 11 ♘g5 ♗f5 12 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 13 ♖xf5! h6 (13...gxf5 14 ♗xf7 is another version of the motif just introduced) 14 ♘xf7 ♖xf7 15 ♗xf7 gxf5 16 ♗e6 was quite uncomfortable for Black in R.Rost-H.Erbe, correspondence 2003.

d) 10...♘c6 11 d5 (not 11 ♘g5?? ♕xd4+ and the queens come off) 11...♘a5 (11...♘b4 once more allows 12 ♘g5! ♘h5 13 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 14 ♖xf7+! ♔g8 15 d6 ♕xd6 16 ♖xe7+ 1-0 H.Vosselman-Wilske, correspondence 1986) 12 ♘g5 ♘xc4? (but if 12...♗f5, then 13 ♗d3!) 13 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 14 ♖xf6! h6 15 ♖xf7+! 1-0 O.Grantz-H.Naused, correspondence 1998, since 15...♖xf7 (15...♔g8 is answered by the cute 16 ♖g7+!) 16 ♘e6+ should be familiar by now.

11 ♕xh6 e6

This seems most resilient, but White still has enough momentum. Other moves:

a) 11...♘c6 12 ♘g5 1-0 A.Junker-D.Rosner, correspondence 2000, due to 12...♕xd4+ 13 ♔h1 ♗f5 14 ♘d5! ♖fd8 15 ♘xf6+ ♕xf6 16 ♗xf7+ and wins.

b) 11...♘g4 drives the queen back only temporarily: after 12 ♕d2 ♗f5 13 h3 ♘f6 14 g4 ♗d7 15 ♕h6 she was back

with more force in J.Andersson-T.Sawyer, correspondence 1996, which finished 15...♗c6 16 d5 1-0.

c) 11...♘bd7 12 ♘g5 ♗f5 13 g4! ♗xg4 14 ♖xf6! ♘xf6 15 ♘d5 ♔h8 16 ♖f1 was T.Sawyer-"SharpShooter", Internet Chess Club 1999, where Black had to give up his queen to avoid mate. In the further course of the game White did not manage to convert this material advantage (0-1, 43), but this is of no further theoretical interest.

12 ♘g5 ♕xd4+

12...♗f5 13 ♖f4! gives White an overwhelming attack.

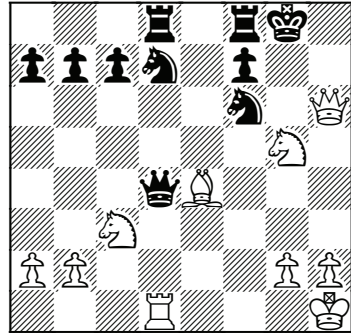**13 ♔h1 ♗f5**
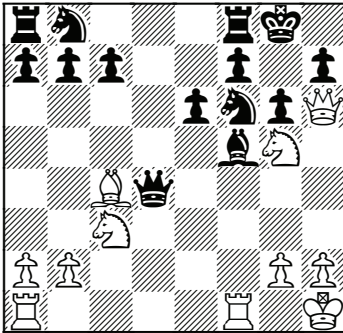
14 ♖xf5! gxf5

14...exf5 allows 15 ♘d5! ♘bd7 16 ♘e7+ ♔h8 17 ♗xf7 ♘e5 18 ♘xf5 with a winning position (Lane).

15 ♗xe6! ♘bd7

15...fxe6 16 ♘xe6 wins the queen or king, while 15...♕e5 16 ♘d5! ♘bd7 17 ♘e7+ ♔h8 18 ♘xf7+ ♖xf7 19 ♘g6+ ♔g8 20 ♘xe5 ♘xe5 21 ♕xf6 1-0 was D.Gedult-Thelliers, Paris 1973.

16 ♗xf5! ♖ad8 17 ♗xh7+ ♔h8 18 ♗e4+

♔g8 19 ♖d1

Black has no defence. T.Sawyer-S.Wead, correspondence 1991, concluded:

19...♕f2

Nothing else is any better:

a) 19...♕e3 20 ♗h7+ 1-0 was T.Sawyer-S.Wead, correspondence 1995.

b) 19...♕e5 is met by 20 ♖xd7! ♕f4 21 ♗h7+ ♔h8 22 ♗g6+ ♔g8 23 ♗xf7+ ♖xf7 24 ♕g6+ and mate next move.

c) 19...♕xd1+ 20 ♘xd1 is hopeless; e.g. 20...♖de8 21 ♘e3 ♖xe4 22 ♘xe4 ♘xe4 23 ♘f5 followed by ♕g7 mate.
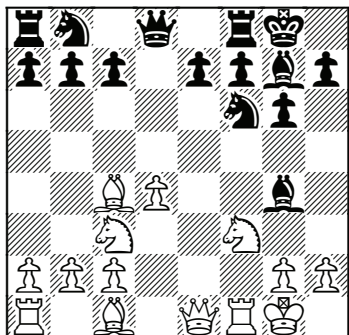
20 ♗h7+ ♔h8 21 ♗g6+ ♔g8 22 ♘ce4! fxg6

In the earlier game R.Berthelsen-N.Grant, correspondence 1970, Black just resigned here.

23 ♕xg6+ ♔h8 24 ♘xf2 ♖de8 25 ♘f7+ 1-0

A3: 8...♗g4

This move has even less independent value than 8...♗f5. As it usually transposes to 8...♘c6 lines of A43, I will only cover a few separate ideas here.

9 ♕h4 c5!?

The most interesting deviation. Instead, 9...♘c6 (the best course of action) and 9...c6 again transpose to 8...♘c6 and 8...c6 respectively. Black has also tried:

a) 9...♗xf3 10 ♖xf3 ♘c6 is inaccurate in that it gives White the choice between 11 ♗e3 (transposing to the 8...♘c6 main line) and 11 ♘e2!, which reaches note 'a' to White's 10th move in A43 (while avoiding the stronger possibility of 8...♘c6 9 ♕h4 ♗g4 10 ♘e2 ♗f5!). Alternatively, 10...c5 11 dxc5 ♘bd7 12 ♗e3 ♘e5 transposes to 9...c5 10 dxc5 ♘c6 below.

b) After 9...♘bd7 10 ♘g5 is both primitive and effective: 10...h6? (10...♘b6? failed to 11 ♖xf6! h5 12 ♗xf7+ ♖xf7 13 ♖xf7 ♗xd4+ 14 ♔f1! 1-0 F.Keller-H.Tuchtenhagen, correspondence 1989; 10...h5 11 h3 ♗f5 12 g4! and 10...e6 11 d5! are also good for White) 11 ♘xf7 ♖xf7 12 ♗xf7+ ♔xf7 13 ♕xg4 and White went on to win in H.Klett-H.Erbe, correspondence 2000.

10 dxc5 ♕c8

10...♘c6 11 ♗e3 ♗xf3 12 ♖xf3 ♘e5

13 ♖h3 ♘xc4 (similarly 13...h5 14 b4 a5 15 ♖d1 ♕c8 16 a3 axb4 17 axb4 ♖d8 18 ♖f1 ♘eg4?! 19 ♘e4 ♕c6 20 ♘g5 ♖f8 21 ♖g3 ♘e5 22 ♗b3 ♖ad8 23 ♗d4 ♘fg4 24 c3 gave White a huge advantage in J.Böhm-Y.Razuvaev, Dortmund 1985, when Black took his "grandmaster draw") 14 ♖d1 ♕c8 15 ♕xc4 led to a decisive endgame advantage for White after 15...♕c6 16 ♗d4 ♖ad8 17 ♖hd3 ♖d7 18 b4 a6 19 a4 ♖fd8 20 b5 ♕c8 21 ♗xf6 axb5 22 axb5 ♖xd3 23 ♖xd3 ♗xf6 24 ♘d5 in P.Leisebein-A.Neumeyer, correspondence 1999.
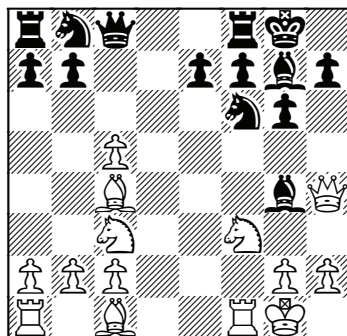

11 ♗e3

Gegner's idea 11 ♘g5 ♕xc5+ 12 ♔h1 ♕xc4 13 ♖f4 works well after 13...♕c6? 14 ♖xf6! and wins, or 13...♕c8 14 ♘d5 ♖e8 15 ♖xf6 h6 (15...exf6 loses to 16 ♘xf6+ ♔f8 17 ♘gxh7+) 16 ♘xf7, when it is obvious that it is Black who has to be more careful. Unfortunately, a third queen move refutes this variation: 13...♕c7! 14 ♖xf6 h5 15 ♖f1 ♗xc3!? (or just 15...♘c6) 16 bxc3 ♕xc3 and White has zero compensation for the material deficit.

11...♗xf3 12 ♖xf3 ♕g4 13 ♗g5

13 ♖f4!? ♕xh4 14 ♖xh4 ♘c6 15 ♖f1 might be a better try, when White has more control over the centre.

13...♕xh4 14 ♗xh4 ♘c6
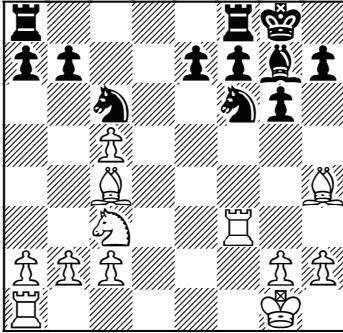
Lane assesses this position as equal, quoting H.Schuh-H.Neunhoeffer, Viernheim 1984, which concluded:

15 ♖e1 ♖ad8

15...♘g4 (as in K.Kent-J.Heikkinen, correspondence 1997) should be met by 16 ♖f4 (but not 16 ♗xe7?, due to 16...♗d4+! 17 ♔h1 ♘f2+ 18 ♖xf2 ♗xf2 19 ♖f1 ♘xe7 20 ♖xf2 ♖ac8 21 ♘e4 ♔g7 and Black is clearly better) 16...♗xc3 17 bxc3 ♘ge5 18 ♗b3, when the two bishops and active rooks give White enough play for his wrecked pawn structure.

16 ♖d3 ♘g4 17 ♘d5 ♗xb2 18 ♘xe7+ ♘xe7 19 ♖xe7 ♖xd3 20 cxd3 ♗d4+ 21 ♔h1 ♗xc5 22 ♖xb7 ♔g7 23 h3 ♘e5 24 ♗e7 ♗xe7 ½-½

A4: 8...♘c6

This move, directly attacking the white d-pawn, leads to the main lines of the Studier Attack.
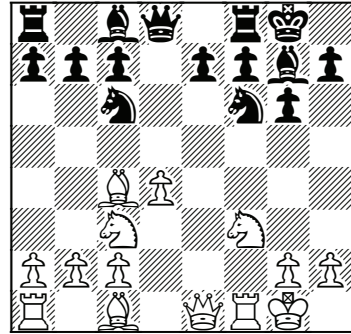
9 ♕h4

A pawn down, White doesn't have the luxury of playing defence; for example, 9 ♘e2 ♗f5 10 c3 saves the c-pawn as well as the light-squared bishop, but after 10...♘a5 11 ♗b5 a6 12 ♗a4 b5 13 ♗d1 ♘c4 Black was in complete control in R.Smook-J.Labelle, Canadian Ch., Toronto 1972; or 10 ♗b3 a5 11 a4 ♘b4 and Black already has everything in place while White lags behind.

After the text Black has three main ways of handling the position:

A41: 9...♘g4!? *184*
**A42: 9...♗f5** *189*
A43: 9...♗g4! *194*

Others:

a) 9...b6? 10 ♗h6 ♗b7 11 ♖ad1 ♘a5 is far too slow: 12 ♘g5! ♘xc4 13 ♗xg7 ♔xg7 14 ♖xf6 h6 15 ♖xf7+! ♖xf7 16 ♘e6+ wins in a familiar way (but not 16 ♘xf7? ♔xf7 17 ♕xh6, as in G.Alexopoulos-S.Niculescu, Jamaica rapid 1992, when 17...♕h8! defends).

b) 9...♘b4!? is a recent try. Then 10 ♗b3 (10 ♗h6? fails to 10...♘xc2 11 ♘g5? ♕xd4+ or 11 ♖ad1 ♗xh6 12 ♕xh6 ♘g4 13 ♕h4 e5 etc) 10...♗f5 11 ♖f2 (still not 11 ♗h6? ♗xh6 12 ♕xh6 ♘xc2 13 ♘g5 ♕xd4+ 14 ♔h1 ♘e3 15 ♖ae1 ♘eg4 16 ♕h4 ♕d6 17 ♖d1 ♕xh2+ 18 ♕xh2 ♘xh2 19 ♔xh2 h6 20 ♘f3 ♘g4+ 21 ♔g1 ♘e3 22 ♘d5 ♘xd1 23 ♘xe7+ ♔h7 24 ♖xd1 ♗g4 and Black should have won in P.Leisebein-P.Woelfelschneider, correspondence 2002) 11...♘g4 12 ♖e2 ♘c6 13 d5 ♘d4 14 ♘xd4 ♗xd4+ 15 ♔h1 e5 16 ♗g5 f6 17 ♗d2 g5 (to give the knight a retreat) 18 ♕g3 was quite unclear in K.Behrendorf-N.Luzuriaga, correspondence 2000. Black has retained his pawn, but his position is somewhat loose. The game continued 18...♔h8 19 ♖f1 ♘h6 20 ♘b5 ♗b6 21 ♖xe5!? a6 22 ♗c3 ♗a5 23 ♗xa5 axb5 24 ♗c3 b4 25 ♗xb4 fxe5 26 ♕xe5+ ♕f6 27 ♗c3 ♕xe5 28 ♗xe5+ ♔g8 29 d6+ ♖f7 30 dxc7 ♔f8 31 h3 ♗c8 32 ♗xf7 ♘xf7, leading eventually to a draw.

A41: 9...♘g4!? – The Kloss Variation
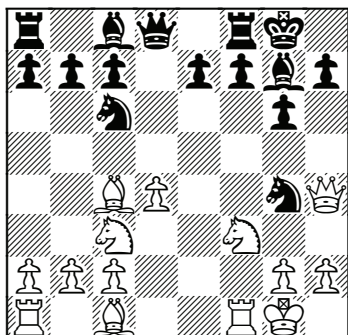
Black's simple idea is to prevent ♗h6 while attacking the white d-pawn; though, as we will see, taking the pawn creates its own problems.

10 ♗f4!

Gegner's move. Other lines are less promising:

a) 10 ♘e2? is just bad as it trades a precious attacking piece without eliminating Black's dark-squared bishop: 10...♘xd4 11 ♘exd4 ♗xd4+ 12 ♔h1 (not 12 ♘xd4?? ♕xd4+ and 13...♕xc4) ♗f6 13 ♗g5 ♘e3 14 ♖fe1 ♘xc4 15 ♕xc4 ♕d6! (better than 15...e6 16 ♕h4 ♗xg5 17 ♘xg5 h5 18 ♖ad1 ♕e7 19 g4 f6 20 ♘e4 hxg4 21 ♕xg4 g5 22 ♖g1 e5? 23 ♕h5 ♖f7 24 ♘xg5 ♖g7 25 ♘f7 ♗e6 26 ♕h8+ ♔xf7 27 ♖xg7 mate, E.J.Diemer-M.Kloss, correspondence 1958) 16 ♖ad1 ♕b6 17 ♕f4 ♗f5 18 ♗xf6 ♕xf6 19 ♕xc7 ♕xb2 was good enough in L.Czismadia-K.Kerek, Paks 1994, although 16...♕xb2 17 ♕xc7 ♗f5 would have been even better.

b) 10 d5 can be met by 10...♕d6! 11 ♔h1 (11 dxc6 ♕c5+ is the point) 11...♘ce5 12 ♗b3 ♗f6 13 ♕g3 ♘xf3 14 gxf3 ♕xg3 15 hxg3 ♘e5 16 ♘e4 ♗g7 17 ♗g5 ♖e8 and White had no compensation in J.Hobson-A.De Vriendt, correspondence 1970.

c) 10 ♔h1, removing the king from the g1-a7 diagonal, is met by 10...♘xd4 11 ♘g5 ♘h6 12 ♖d1 (or 12 ♗e3 ♘df5 13 ♖xf5 ♗xf5 14 ♖d1 ♕e8 15 ♘d5 ♖d8 16 g4 ♗xg4 17 ♖d4 ♗h5 and Black fought off the attack in another Soller-Müller game) 12...e5 13 ♘e2 ♗e6 14 ♗xe6 fxe6

15 c3 was played in K.Soller-G.Müller, correspondence 1987, and now Black uncorked 15...♘f3! 16 ♕a4? (but after 16 ♖xd8 ♘xh4 17 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 18 ♘xe6 c6 Black remains a clear pawn up) 16...♘g4!! 17 gxf3 ♕xd1+ 18 ♖xd1 ♘f2+ 19 ♔g1 ♘xd1 20 ♘g3 ♖fd8 21 ♘xe6 ♖d6 22 ♘xg7 ♔xg7 23 ♔f1 and here, according to my database, the game was drawn – though that's hard to believe, as Black is winning easily, for instance with 23...♖b6!.

d) 10 ♘d5? was awarded an exclamation mark in Eric Schiller's book on the Blackmar-Diemer. His analysis runs 10...♘xd4? 11 ♘xe7+!! ♔h8 12 ♘g5 ♘h6 (12...h6 13 ♘xf7+ ♖xf7 14 ♘xg6+ and 12...♘f6 13 ♖xf6 are equally losing – even better is 13 ♕xh7+!! ♘xh7 14 ♘xf7+ ♖xf7 15 ♘xg6+ ♔g8 16 ♗xf7 mate) 13 ♘xf7+ ♖xf7 14 ♘xg6+ and White won in A.Melchor Munoz-A.Günther, correspondence 1990. Unfortunately, the more natural 10...♗e6! is ignored. Then the direct attack 11 ♘g5 fails to 11...h5 12 ♘xe6 fxe6 13 ♘e3 ♖xf1+ 14 ♔xf1 ♘xd4 15 ♘xg4 ♘xc2 16 ♗xe6+ ♔h7 17 ♔e2 ♕d6 18 ♗c4 ♖d8 0-1 Feldtmann-M.Jager, correspondence 1985; while after 11 c3 ♗xd5 12 ♗xd5 ♕xd5 13 ♕xg4 e5 14 dxe5 ♘xe5 15 ♘xe5 ♕xe5 16 ♗f4 ♕c5+ 17 ♔h1 ♖ad8 White was just a pawn down in V.Bürger-A.Freidl, correspondence 1970.

e) 10 ♘e4?! was Smith & Hall's choice for the exclamation mark, but without mentioning 10...♗f5! 11 c3 (equally hopeless are 11 ♘g3 ♗xd4+ 12 ♔h1 ♘f2+ 13 ♔g1 ♘e4+ 14 ♔h1 ♗f6 15 ♘g5 ♘xg5 16 ♗xg5 ♗xg5 17 ♕xg5 e6, as in H.Burger-P.Leisebein, correspondence 1989; and 11 ♘eg5 h6 12 c3 hxg5 13 ♘xg5 ♘h6 14 g4 ♗xg4 15 ♘xf7 ♗xd4+ 16 ♔h1 ♘xf7 17 ♕xg4 ♗g7 18 ♕xg6 ♘ce5 19 ♕g2 ♘xc4 20 ♖g1 ♘g5 21 ♗xg5 ♕d6, as in P.Stader-P.Leisebein, correspondence 1992, when 22 ♕xb7 ♔h8 23 ♖g4 c6 24 ♗xe7 ♕d5+ 25 ♔g1 ♖fb8 26 ♕c7 ♖g8 27 ♗g5 ♗d4+ 28 cxd4 ♖xg5 29 h3 ♘e3 led to a fitting end) 11...♗xe4 12 ♘g5 h5 13 ♘xf7 (or 13 ♘xe4 ♘xd4!) 13...♖xf7 14 ♗xf7+ ♔h7 15 ♕e1 (if 15 h3 ♗xd4+! or 15 ♗g5 ♘xd4!) 15...♗d3 16 ♖f3 ♕d6 17 ♗f4 e5 18 ♗g3 ♖f8 19 ♗b3 ♖xf3 20 gxf3 ♘h6 and Black was clearly better with his knights in H.Wundt-R.Brachtel, correspondence 1994.

f) 10 h3?! was Studier's idea, but this also is too slow; i.e. 10...♘xd4! and then:
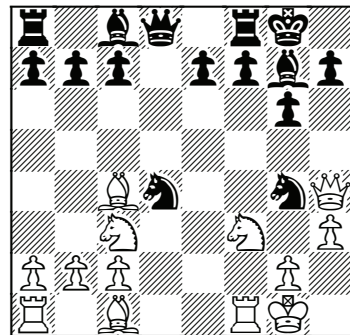
f1) 11 hxg4 doesn't win a piece because Black has 11...♘xf3+ 12 ♖xf3 ♕d4+ followed by 13...♕xc4. Note that 13 ♗e3 ♕xc4 14 ♖h3 can be met by either 14...h6 or 14...h5.

f2) 11 ♖d1, pinning the knight, is met by 11...♕d6! 12 hxg4 ♕c5 13 ♕f2 ♘xf3+ 14 gxf3 ♕xc4 15 ♘d5 ♗e6 as in M.Pape-R.Genz, correspondence 1968.

f3) The desperate 11 ♘d5 fails to 11...♘xf3+ 12 ♖xf3 ♘f6 13 ♖d3 ♗f5 14 ♘xf6+ ♗xf6 15 ♗xf7+ ♔h8 (or even 15...♔xf7 16 ♕xh7+ ♔e8! 17 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 18 ♕h6 ♖d1+ 19 ♔h2 ♗e5+ 20 ♗f4 ♗xf4+ 21 ♕xf4 ♖xa1) 16 ♖xd8 ♗xh4 17 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 and Black went on to win in H.Krongraf-P.Leisebein, correspondence 1991.

f4) Finally, the direct 11 ♘g5 should be answered by 11...♘h6 12 ♗e3 ♘df5 13 ♖xf5 ♗xf5 14 ♖d1 ♕c8; for example, 15 g4 (or 15 ♘d5 ♖e8 16 ♗c5 e6 17 ♘e3 b6 18 ♘xf5 gxf5 19 ♗e3 e5 20 ♗d5 f4 21 ♗f2 c6 22 ♗c4 ♖d8 23 ♗xf7+ ♔h8 24 ♖c1 ♕f5 and Black soon won in N.Kampars-I.Schwartz, correspondence 1965) 15...♗xg4! 16 ♘d5 ♔h8 17 hxg4 ♕xg4+ 18 ♕xg4 ♘xg4 19 ♗c5 ♘e5 20 ♗b3 h6 21 ♘e4 c6 22 ♘xe7 ♖fe8 23 ♖f1 f5 24 ♘d2 ♗f6 and the knight on e7 was doomed in L.Merill-K.Behrendorf, correspondence 2001.
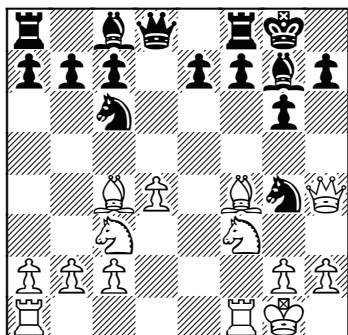

10...♗xd4+

Black has also tried:

a) 10...♘xd4 is the most direct move, but after 11 ♖ad1 c6 (not 11...♘xf3+? 12 gxf3! ♗d4+ 13 ♔g2 e5 14 ♗g5 ♘e3+ 15 ♔h1, winning material) 12 ♘xd4 ♗xd4+ 13 ♔h1 White has a dangerous initiative; e.g. 13...♗f5 14 h3 ♘f2+ 15 ♖xf2 ♗xf2 16 ♕xf2 ♕a5 17 ♗h6 ♖fd8 18 ♖e1 ♕b4 19 ♕h4 ♗e6 20 ♖xe6 1-0 P.Leisebein-K.Behrendorf, correspondence 1995.

b) 10...♗f6 11 ♕g3 ♘xd4 12 ♖ad1 c6 is similar, except that here the white queen in on g3. After 13 ♔h1 (13 ♘xd4 ♗xd4+ 14 ♔h1 gives Black the extra option of 14...e5!?, though this didn't help him in P.Leisebein-B.Riepe, correspondence 2001: 15 ♗c1 b5 16 ♗b3 ♕b6? 17 h3 ♘f2+ 18 ♖xf2! and wins, since 18...♗xf2 19 ♕xe5 is terrible for Black due to the weakness of the dark squares) 13...♕b6 14 ♘xd4 ♗xd4 (here 14...e5?! 15 h3! exf4 16 ♕xf4 is good for White) 15 ♘a4 ♘f2+ 16 ♖xf2 ♗xf2 17 ♕c3 ♖d8! 18 ♗d5! cxd5 19 ♘xb6 ♗xb6 20 ♗h6 f6 21 a4 a5 22 ♗e3 ♗xe3 23 ♕xe3 with rough material parity which eventually led to a draw in W.Trumpf-M.Michalek, correspondence 2002.

c) 10...h6 denies access to g5 (and h6 for that matter). Therefore, White concentrates his attention on the c7-pawn with 11 ♕g3. Now in A.Lannaioli-R.Watson, correspondence 1997, Black tried to simplify matters with 11...e5, but was rather disappointed after 12 dxe5 ♘gxe5 13 ♗xe5 ♘xe5 14 ♘xe5

♕d4+ 15 ♔h1 ♕xe5 16 ♕xg6 ♗e6 17 ♗xe6 ♕xe6 18 ♕g3, when White had regained his pawn with a slight advantage.

d) Striking the centre at once with 10...e5 is critical. After 11 ♗g5 we have:
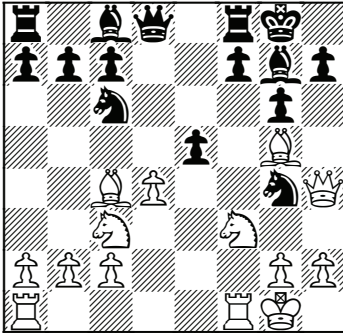
d1) Interposing with 11...♗f6 fails to 12 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 (or 12...♕xf6 13 ♘g5) 13 ♘xe5 ♗f5 (not 13...♕xd4? 14 ♕xd4 ♘xd4 15 ♖xf6) 14 ♘xc6 bxc6 15 ♖ad1 with a clear advantage.

d2) 11...♕d6 allows 12 ♘e4 ♕b4 13 ♗b3 exd4 (13...♗f5 should be met by 14 c3 ♕b6 15 ♘g3, while 13...♘xd4?! 14 ♗e7 ♘xf3+ 15 gxf3! ♕d4+ 16 ♔h1 is even better) 14 ♗d2 ♕e7 15 ♘fg5 h6 16 ♖xf7 ♖xf7 17 ♗xf7+ ♔h8 18 ♗d5 and White had a good game in P.Leisebein-K.Behrendorf, correspondence 2000.

d3) 11...♕d7! seems best. P.Leisebein-J.Plock, correspondence 2000, continued 12 ♘d5 e4 13 ♘e5 ♘gxe5 14 dxe5 ♕g4 (14...♘xe5 15 ♗f6!) 15 ♘e7+ ♘xe7 16 ♕xg4 ♗xg4 17 ♗xe7 ♗xe5 18 ♖ae1 ♗d4+ 19 ♔h1 ♗f5 20 ♗xf8 ♖xf8 21 g4 ♗d7 22 ♖d1 c5 23 c3 ♗xg4 and a draw was agreed. It is unclear if White can

create any serious winning chances here; e.g. 24 cxd4 ♗xd1 25 ♖xd1 ♖d8! 26 d5 ♖d6.

11 ♔h1 ♗f6

Nothing else is any good here:

a) 11...♗xc3? 12 bxc3 e5 leaves the kingside too weak. R.Allen-B.Nater, correspondence 2000, continued 13 ♗g5 ♕d6 14 h3 e4 and now 15 ♖ad1! ♕c5 16 ♘d2 h6 17 ♗f4 would have won for White, e.g. 17...g5 18 ♕h5 ♕e7 19 hxg4 gxf4 20 ♕g6+ ♔h8 21 ♕xh6+ ♔g8 22 ♘xe4 ♕xe4 23 ♗d3.

b) 11...♗g7? unpins, but after 12 h3 e5 13 ♗g5 f6 14 hxg4 fxg5 15 ♘xg5 White's attack is just too strong: 15...h6 16 ♖xf8 ♕xf8 (or 16...♗xg5 17 ♖f7+ ♔h8 18 ♕xg5 hxg5 19 ♘e4 and Black is helpless against the threat of 20 ♘f6) 17 ♘f7 ♗e3 18 ♖f1 ♕e7 19 ♕xe7 ♘xe7 20 ♘xe5 restores material equality while retaining decisive threats.

12 ♗g5
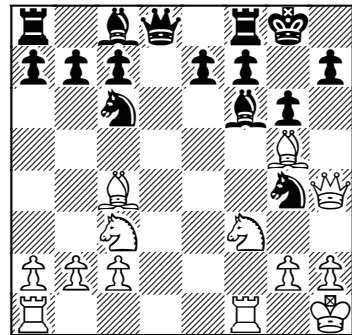
12...♘e3

Other moves:

a) 12...♗f5 is once again meant to close the f-file, but White has 13 ♖ad1

Qe8? 14 Nd5 Rc8 15 h3 h6 16 Bxf6 Nxf6 17 Qxh6 and wins, as in D.Lewis-A.Harju, correspondence 1980.

b) The direct 12...h6 doesn't work either: 13 Rad1! (13 Bxf6 exf6 14 h3 Ne3 15 Rad1 Qe7! is less clear) 13...Bd7 14 Bxf6 exf6 15 h3 Ne3 16 Qxh6 Nxc4 17 Ne4 Nd6? (17...Qe7 was correct, though White is still better after 18 Ne5! N4xe5 19 Nf6+ Qxf6 20 Rxf6) 18 Rxd6 cxd6 19 Nh4 Ne5 20 Nxf6+ Qxf6 21 Rxf6 and White won in T.Purser-C.A.Magee, correspondence 1993.

c) In view of the two previous lines, one might think that 12...Kg7, which removes the king from the a2-g8 diagonal and additionally supports ...h7-h6 might be a problem solver. However, White also gets his way here: 13 Rad1 Bd7 (13...Qe8 14 Nd5 Na5 doesn't help after simply 15 Be2!) 14 h3 Nge5 (14...Bxg5 is met once again with 15 Nxg5 Nh6 16 Bxf7!, while after 14...h6 White can play 15 Rxd7! Qxd7 16 Qxg4) 15 Nxe5 Nxe5 16 Qh6+ Kh8 17 Bxf6 exf6 18 Ne4 Rg8 19 Nxf6 Rg7 20 Rd4 Nxc4 21 Rh4 and Black has to give up the queen in order to avoid mate.

13 Rad1! Bd7

Taking the rook at once leads to disaster: 13...Nxd1? (13...Qe8? also fails to 14 Bxf6! exf6 15 Rde1 or 14...Nf5 15 Qf4 exf6 16 Nd5) 14 Rxd1 Bd7 15 Nd5! Bxg5 16 Nxg5 h5 17 Nf4 Kg7 18 Nxh5+! gxh5 19 Qxh5 e6 (19...Bf5 20 Rxd8 Nxd8 21 Nxf7!) 20 Rf1 1-0 W.Schneider-J.Prins, correspondence 1984.

14 Bxf6 exf6

14...Nf5? 15 Bxe7 Ncxe7 16 Qf4 Nd6 17 Ne5 Nef5 18 g4 Ng7 19 Rxd6! cxd6 20 Bxf7+ Kh8 21 Nxg6+ was a nice finish in A.Hall-D.Lewis, correspondence 1983.
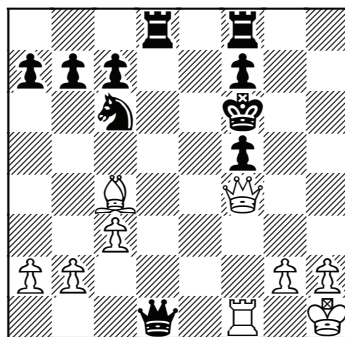
15 Ne4 Nxd1

Not 15...Kg7?! 16 Rxd7! Qxd7 17 Qxf6+ Kg8 18 Qg5 with a clearly better position for White, T.Purser-N.J.Jensen, correspondence 1985.

16 Nxf6+ Kg7 17 Qxh7+! Kxf6 18 Nh4+ Bf5 19 Nxf5 gxf5 20 Qh6+ Ke5 21 c3! Nf2+ 22 Rxf2 Qd1+ 23 Rf1 Rad8 24 Qf4+

24 Qg7+ Ke4 (not 24...f6? 25 Qg3+ and mates) 25 Qg3 Qxf1+ (or 25...Qd2 26 Re1+) 26 Bxf1 also looks promising.

24...Kf6 ½-½

The game P.Leisebein-K.Behrendorf, correspondence 1998, was agreed drawn at this point, though White still seems slightly better: after 25 Qxf5+ Kg7 26 Rxd1 Rxd1+ 27 Bf1 Rfd8 28 h4, the queen, bishop and passed h-pawn should be more effective than Black's knight and two rooks, especially in view of his exposed king.