

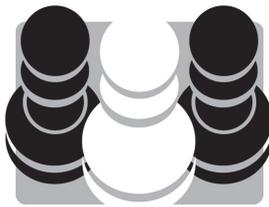
*Judit Polgar Teaches Chess 3*

# A Game of Queens

by

# Judit Polgar

with invaluable help from Mihail Marin



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## Judit Polgar – Ivan Sokolov

Wijk aan Zee 2005

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♘f6  
5.0-0 ♙e7 6.♞e1 b5 7.♙b3 d6 8.c3 0-0

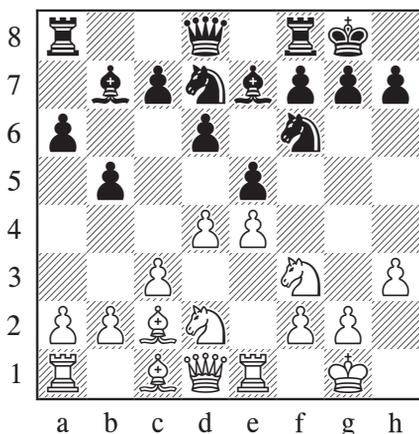
Ivan has played the Ruy Lopez throughout his career, so he has had the time to try out all kinds of systems: the Berlin Wall and the Marshall Attack, the Open and Bird variations, as well as several systems in the closed variations.

Back in 1994 in Madrid, I won my first game against Ivan by somewhat restricting his choice with 9.d4, but by 2005 I used to stick to the main lines.

9.h3 ♘b8

No more Marshall Attacks for me in this tournament!

10.d4 ♘bd7 11.♘bd2 ♙b7 12.♙c2



12...c5

In our 8th round game, Short played the main line 12...♞e8 and I used my good old weapon 13.b3, which had served me well during my 1993 match against Spassky (see Volume II). I obtained a huge advantage but failed to win.

Ivan had played the game move before, so it did not come as a surprise to me. He might

have relied, though, on the fact that I had never before faced it in practice.

13.d5

It looks logical to block the centre after Black no longer has the freeing ...c7-c6. In the long run, Black will have to re-develop his bishop, most likely with ...♙c8-d7.

If White wishes to maintain the tension in the centre, the alternatives are 13.♘f1 ♞e8 14.♘g3 and 13.b3.

13...g6

13...c4 is a typical reaction after d4-d5, but since White has not weakened the b3-square yet with a2-a4, 14.b4 would be possible.

14.♘f1 a5

This was a new move, aiming to transform the fight into a race on the opposite wings. Black plans to take the initiative on the queenside with ...c5-c4, ...♘d7-c5, ...♙a6, ...b5-b4, ...♞c7 and so on.

The traditional plan is 14...♘h5 15.♙h6 ♘g7 as played by Gligoric in the 70s. One famous game is Karpov – Gligoric, Riga Interzonal 1973, which ended in a win for the future World Champion.

If I would limit myself to just carrying out the kingside plan, the consequences of the novelty would be rather unclear and, most likely, everything would be decided by just one tempo.

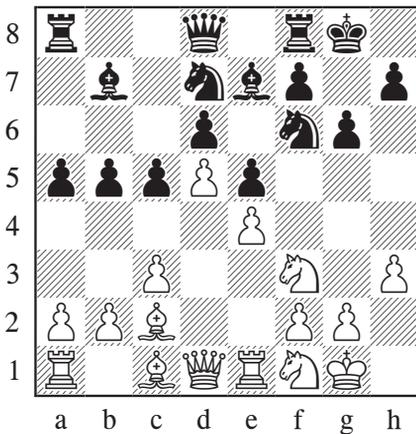
One of the reasons why the Ruy Lopez is so complicated and interesting is that both sides can alternate moves on the opposite wings. In order to handle this method well, one has to have a clear idea about one's own plan and anticipate the opponent's intentions.

At times, the slightest structural change on either wing may cause a major readjustment of plans. In a wider sense, one must always have

an understanding of what is happening across the whole board.

In positions with a blocked centre, piece exchanges tend to occur rather late. It may well happen that on move 30 or 40 there would still be all the pieces on the board! Under such circumstances, opening the position by tactical means can be possible and you have to make sure the coordination of your pieces is adequate for such circumstances. Obviously, all these points complicate the process of planning and anticipating.

Having more space, White is in a better situation from this point of view. My next move is a good illustration of many of the aspects mentioned above.



### 15.a4!

This is the best way to cross Black's intentions, taking advantage of the weakening of the b5-square.

If 15.♘g3 c4 it would be too late for the thematic break: 16.a4 b4 Threatening to lock in my bishop and rook forever with ...b4-b3. With my knight on g3 already, Black would have little trouble defending his c4-pawn.

### 15...b4

Black could not avoid weakening the c4-square, so it looks safer to keep his structure compact at least.

If 15...♙a6 16.axb5 ♙xb5 I could immediately switch to queenside play with 17.♙a4 ♜b6 18.♘3d2 followed by ♘e3 and the occupation of the c4-square. This line proves the flexibility of my development, which allows me to change plans according to the circumstances.

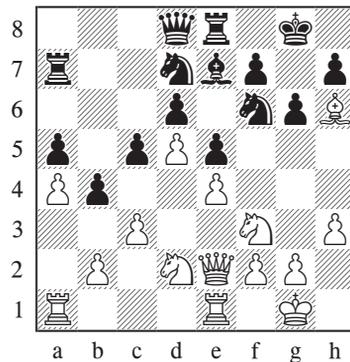
### 16.♙d3!

An important move in the fight for the light squares. I could of course block the queenside with 16.c4, retaining some attacking chances on the kingside, but this would have simplified Black's defence considerably. For the attacking side it is always better to keep the tension on both wings.

### 16...♞c7

Threatening to break the blockade with ...c5-c4.

Exchanging the passive bishop with 16...♙a6 would simplify my task of occupying the light squares. 17.♙xa6 (17.♙b5 is also possible) 17...♞xa6 18.♞e2 ♞a7 19.♙h6 ♞e8 20.♘1d2! Followed by ♘c4.



Although this may look like a loss of time, it actually is more of a display of flexibility. The other knight should stay on f3, controlling the g5-square and thus avoiding ...♘h5 followed by ...♙g5.

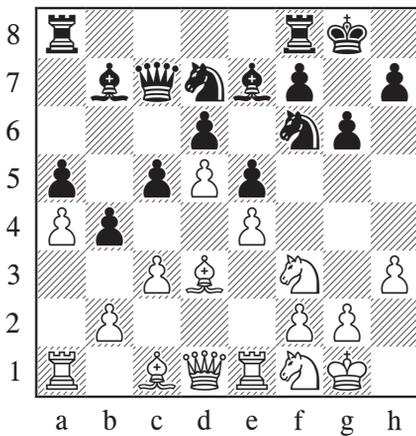
Having more space and a good blockade on the light squares, I could combine play on

both wings. One important thing would be to prevent any kind of counterplay for Black, even if this might require investing some tempos on apparently neutral moves.

On the queenside my plan would be to find a good moment for c3xb4. If ...c5xb4, my rook might land on c6, while ...a5xb4 would leave me with a strong passed pawn.

On the kingside, I could play ♖h2, g4, ♜g1, getting prepared for a rapid switch with ♜c4-e3-f5.

Black would have nothing better than waiting passively for the execution.



17. ♜e3?!

During the 11 minutes I spent on this

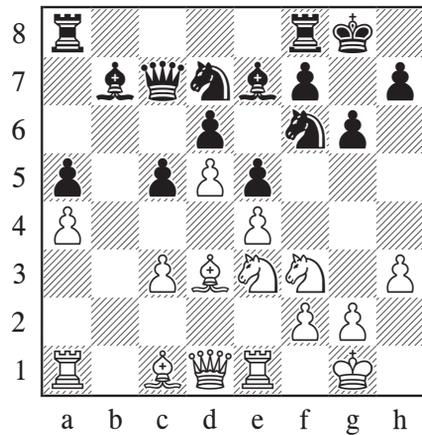
inaccurate move, I failed to anticipate Black's counterplay.

I should have played 17. ♘b5 or 17. ♘h6 followed by 18. ♘b5 and only later transferred my knight to c4.

17...bxc3!

The correct move order to break the blockade, as if 17...c4 18. ♜xc4 bxc3 I could stabilize my knight with 19.b3!. The c3-pawn would be doomed.

18.bxc3



18...c4!



This came as a surprise and during the 16 minutes I spent on my next move my surprise became even greater that his move really is working!

19. ♖c2

I thought this would offer me the best practical chances.

19. ♖xc4 requires some detailed analysis, though. Black would get nowhere with the thematic combination 19... ♖xe4 20. ♖xe4 ♖xd5 because of 21. ♖e3 ♖xe4 22. ♖xe4 with firm control of the light squares.

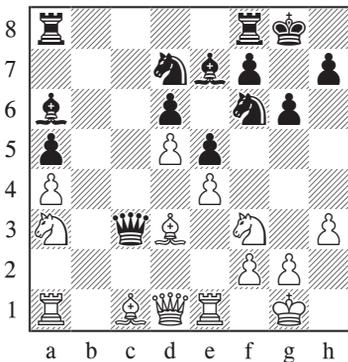
Better would be the simple:

19... ♖a6

Activating the bishop. The best answer would be the not very nice-looking:

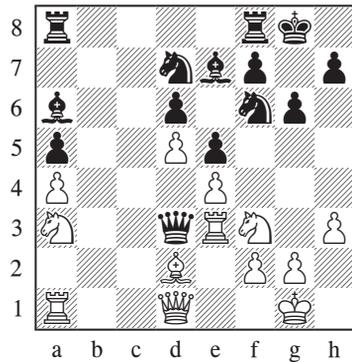
20. ♖b2!

The knight seems to be passive on b2, but it defends the a4-pawn and is ready to return into play with ♖b2-c4 at a later moment. Unfortunately, the logical 20. ♖a3, aiming to occupy the b5-square, does not work for dynamic reasons: 20... ♖xc3

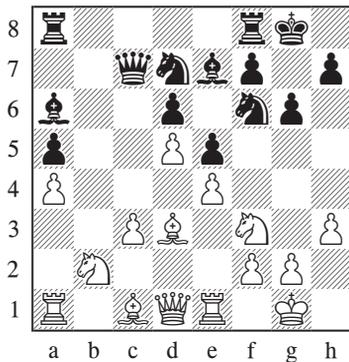


1) 21. ♖xa6 ♖xa1 22. ♖b5 ♖fc8 23. ♖c4 During the game I calculated 23... ♖ab8 and stopped, not being happy with my position. However, 23... ♖xc4 24. ♖xc4 ♖c5 would be even stronger. Once again, the a4- and e4-pawns are weak.

2) 21. ♖d2 ♖xd3 22. ♖e3 fails to trap the queen:



22... ♖f1†! Returning the extra bishop and exchanging the queen rather than losing it. 23. ♖xf1 ♖xf1 24. ♖xf1 ♖c5 If White were better coordinated, she would have an advantage, due to the “bad” black bishop. The way it is, White loses a pawn.



20... ♖xc3 21. ♖xa6 ♖xa6 22. ♖e2

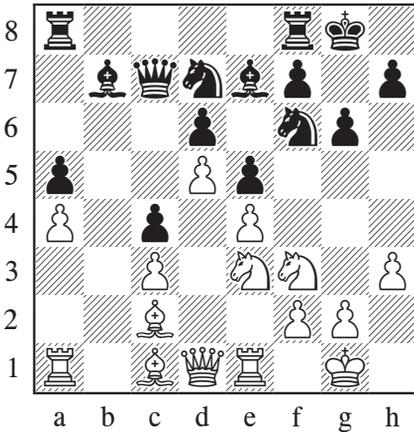
Over-defending the knight in order to allow the bishop to develop.

22... ♖c8 23. ♖g5

Objectively, White may still have some advantage. Black is quite active, but in the long run the knight jump would put him under constant pressure.

I remember that during the game I was very disappointed that 20. ♖a3 does not work, finding 20. ♖b2 very unappealing at the same

time. By the method of elimination, I chose the game move, after which the position is fairly balanced, but still complicated and with chances for both sides.



### 19...♙a6

Black rightly decides to improve his position little by little.

The impulsive 19...♗c5 20.♘d2 ♗d3 21.♙xd3 cxd3 22.c4 would doom the d3-pawn and leave the b7-bishop passive.

### 20.♘d2

For the time being, there can be no talk about a kingside attack. I was just very worried about a possible ...♗c5 and focused on preventing it.

### 20...♜fc8

This move has two main ideas. It clears the f8-square for the bishop and also over-defends the c4-pawn, thus allowing a regrouping with ...♞a7 and ...♙d8-b6, with very active play.

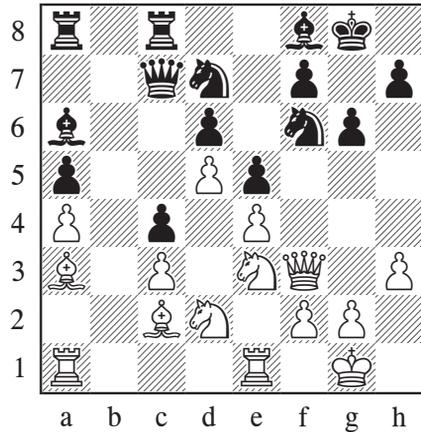
20...♗h5 is the kind of move I always have to watch out for, but the typical 21.♗f5 would do for now.

### 21.♙a3

With my knights blocking the c1-h6 diagonal, this is the only way to develop the

bishop. By putting pressure on the d6-pawn, I prevent the black bishop transferring to b6.

### 21...♙f8 22.♞f3



Connecting the rooks and putting pressure on the f6-knight.

### 22...♙g7

Ivan probably wanted to free his d7-knight, but frankly I was expecting the more active 22...♙h6.

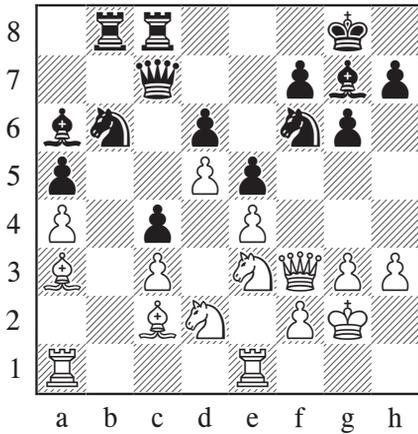
### 23.g3

Finally I switch to an active plan consisting of ♗g2 and ♗g4. If ...♗xg4, hxg4, I could start an attack along the h-file with ♜h1.

### 23...♜ab8 24.♗g2 ♗b6?

Black has a good position, but he does not have time for everything! Ivan's plan is quite ambitious but rather slow: ...♗fd7-c5-d3. Moreover, it allows an unexpected switch in my play.

24...h5 would have been a better way of keeping the balance between the opposite wings, planning ...♗h7 and ...♙h6, with ...♗h7-g5 or ...h5-h4 to be taken into account at all times.



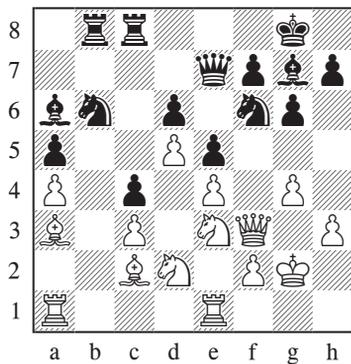
25.g4!

Now is the only moment when this resolute advance of the g-pawn works. Normally, Black would be happy to answer with ...♙g7-h6-f4, but right now this is impossible due to the fact that the d7-knight has moved away.

25...♘fd7

Black does not pay attention to my attack and keeps carrying out his queenside plan.

25...♙e7 would have been an important alternative, aiming to fight back on the kingside.



The immediate threat is ...♙h6 and 26.g5 would not do because of 26...♘h5 followed by an invasion on the f4-square. I would instead parry the threat with:

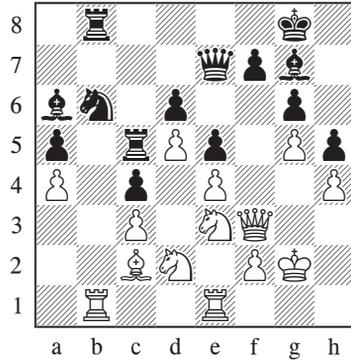
26.h4

Planning h4-h5.

26...h5 27.g5 ♘fd7

For the time being, Black does not seem to be in danger, but the potential threat is ♘e3-f5. For instance:

28.♙ab1 ♘c5 29.♙xc5 ♙xc5



With all my pieces optimally placed, I could finally deliver the tactical blow:

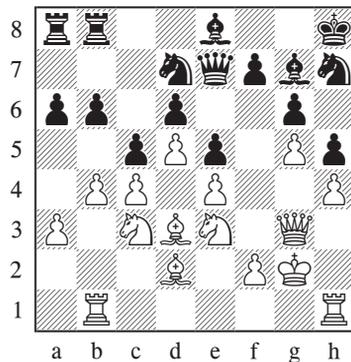
30.♘f5! gxf5 31.exf5

Despite the computer's scepticism, my feeling is that Black is crushed!

After the game I showed this idea to my second, and years later this inspired him to defeat a strong opponent:

### Mihail Marin – Julio Granda Zuniga

Andorra 2012



White has an ample space advantage, but no favourable pawn breaks in sight, since f2-

f4, ...exf4 would only activate the d7-knight and the g7-bishop. At the same time, Black plans 26...cxb4 27.axb4 a5, followed by ...♖c5 soon.

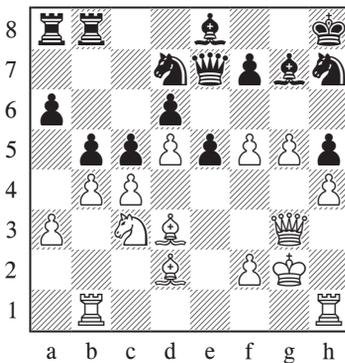
26.♗f5!

Time trouble was approaching and White played this without any hesitation.

26...gxf5 27.exf5

Despite the missing piece, White threatens to improve his position with quiet moves: ♖e4, ♖f3xh5 and at the right moment f5-f6. If Black reacts with ...f7-f6, the simple g5-g6 followed by ♖xh5-g4 and h5-h6 would crush him.

27...b5!?

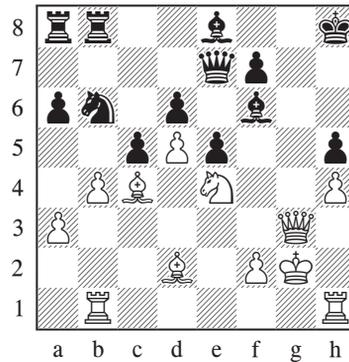


The only way to get some play. The game continued 28.♖f3 and White eventually won, but the strongest line would have been: 28.♖e4 bxc4 29.♗xc4 ♖b6 30.f6

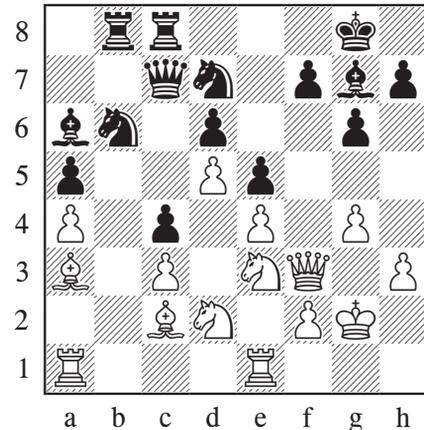
White regains the piece while retaining the attack.

For instance: 30...♗xf6 31.gxf6 ♖xf6 32.♖g5+-

Or else: 30...♖xf6 31.gxf6 ♗xf6



32.♗g5!!+- Actually, this is what White had missed when playing 28.♖f3. The h-file opens with decisive threats.



26.h4

I continue my attack without disclosing my real intentions yet: it could be g4-g5 or h4-h5.

26...♖c5 27.♗xc5!

I wanted to exchange Black's most threatening piece.

If 27.h5 ♖d3 28.♗xd3 cxd3 the black c4-pawn would have cleared space for most of the black pieces massed on the queenside.

27...♖xc5

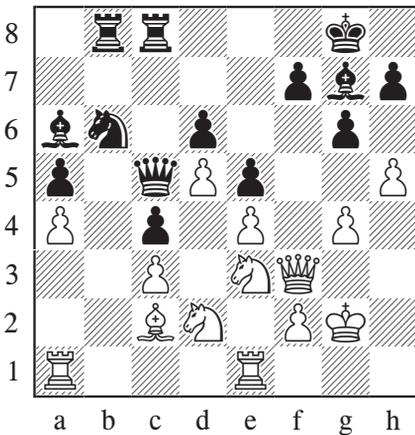
Apart from the strategic idea of my previous move, there is also a dynamic element involved: the black queen will soon have to return to the seventh rank to defend the kingside.

**28.h5?!**

This inaccuracy, underestimating Black's possible answer mentioned in the next comment, fortunately remained without consequences.

28.g5 might have led to a different type of position.

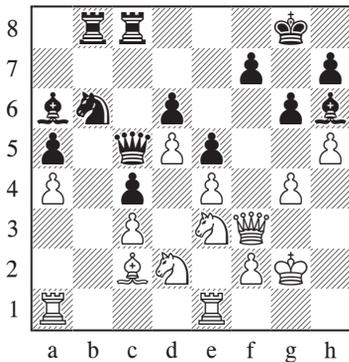
But if I wanted to attack with h4-h5, I should have prepared it with 28.♖h1!, possibly transposing to the game.



**28...♘d7**

After seven minutes, Ivan fails to grab his chance. His move looks logical, preparing to defend the kingside with ...♘f8 and allowing the start of effective counterplay with ...♖b2.

I do not know whether he underestimated the power of my attack or simply thought that 28...♗h6! would be too risky, thus sharing my opinion when playing my last move.



The main question remains which way to recapture after 29.hxg6.

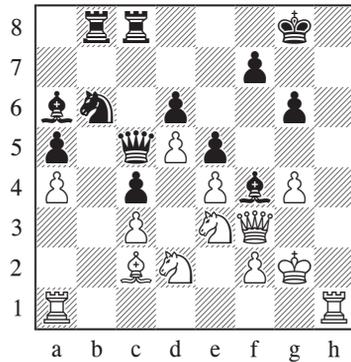
The strategically solid move is:

29...hxg6?

But in fact this leads to trouble:

30.♖h1 ♕f4

It may seem as if Black has managed to defend, while keeping nice control on the dark squares. But I had managed to see a bit further than that, much in the spirit of the chapter *Fluid Attacks* from the second volume.



**31.g5!!**

A thematic multipurpose move, clearing space for my knight and rook, but also offering the queen support on f6 in certain lines.

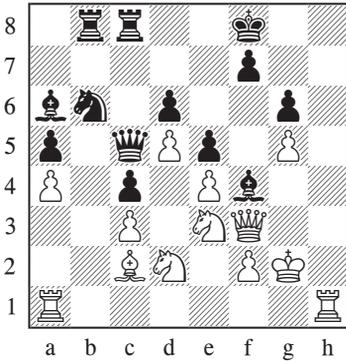
31...♗f8

Trying to evacuate the danger area before it is too late. Other moves fail to thematic combinations.

If 31...♗g7, hoping for ...♖h8, then: 32.♖h7†! Gaining time to double on the h-file. 32...♗xh7 33.♖h3† Since 33...♗g7 34.♖h6† ♗g8 35.♖h1 is curtains, Black has to play 33...♗g8 when 34.♖h1 ♗f8 35.♖h8† ♗e7 36.♖f6† wins.

The pawn is pretty much poisoned: 31...♗xg5 32.♖h8†! This time, the rook sacrifice has the aim of leaving the f7-pawn undefended. 32...♗xh8 33.♖xf7 ♗h4

The only way to avoid immediate mate.  
 34.♖h1 g5 35.♜f6† ♔g8 36.♘f3 ♚c7  
 37.♘f5 With a massive and decisive attack.



32.♖h4!?

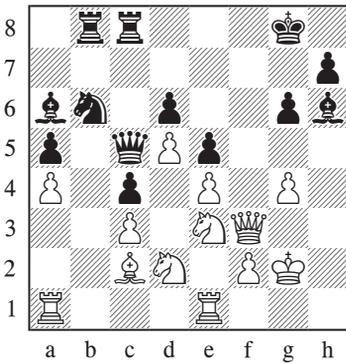
Aiming to remove Black's main defender, his bishop.

32.♖h7 is also possible.

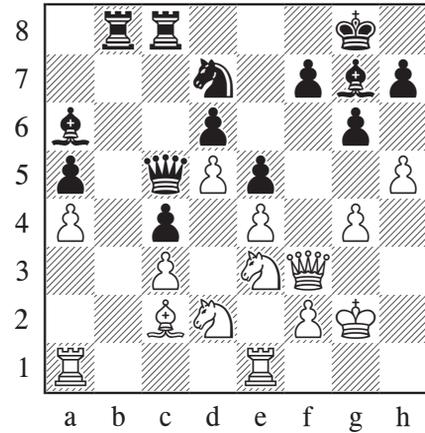
32...♔e7 33.♖xf4 exf4 34.♜xf4

With crushing pressure.

But we both seem to have underestimated:  
 29...fxg6!



By clearing the f-file and the seventh rank, Black manages to escape wet out of deep water. There seems to be nothing better than forcing a perpetual check with: 30.g5 ♕xg5 31.♜g4 ♕f4 32.♜e6† ♔f8 33.♜f6† ♔g8=

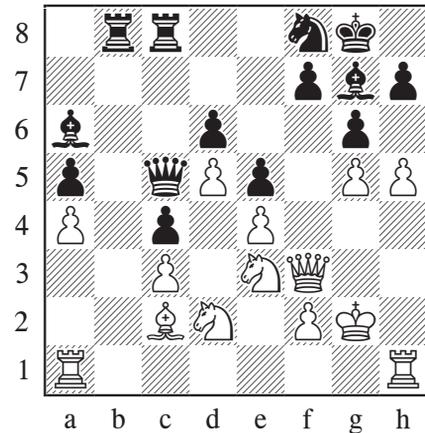


29.♖h1!

Not giving Black a second chance. Ivan must have understood that the position is less easy that he might have hoped, as he spent 14 minutes, leaving himself only 19 minutes to reach move 40.

29...♘f8 30.g5

This pawn advance, no longer connected with a sacrifice, prepares the knight's incorporation into the attack with ♘g4.

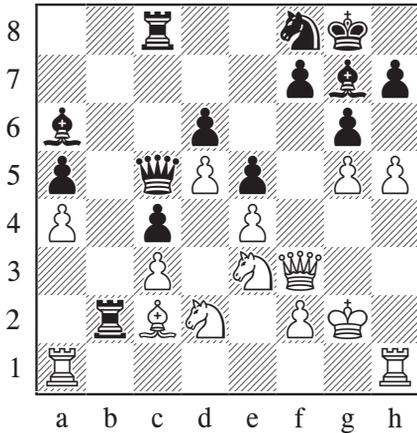


30...♖b2

Sokolov hoped that by attacking my bishop he would keep my knight busy.

A more solid, but also passive, approach would have been 30...♜c7 31.hxg6 fxg6. I could have

played 32.♖a2 preventing Black's queenside counterplay and planning to activate the bishop with ♗d1-g4 and/or the thematic knight sacrifice ♘e3-f5. White's advantage would be beyond any doubt.



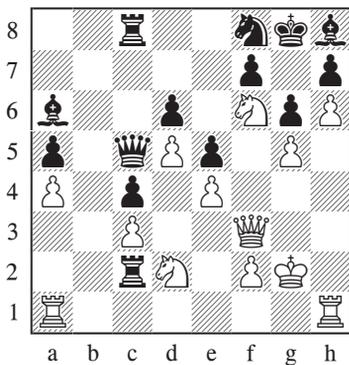
**31.♘g4!**

During my six-minute think, I correctly evaluated that a bishop would not be too high a price to pay for my attack, but I failed to anticipate all the concrete details, as we will see.

**31...gxf5**

Black has to eliminate my dangerous h-pawn.

If 31...♖xc2 32.h6 he could not play 32...♗h8 due to 33.♘f6†.



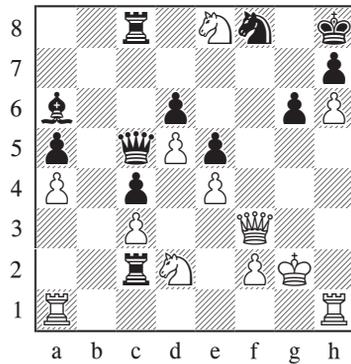
A fantastic position! The black king has no squares so 33...♗xf6 is forced, when 34.♖xf6 will mate soon.

This means that, instead of 32...♗h8, the only defence is:

32...f5 33.gxf6 ♗xf6

Only not 33...♗h8 34.f7 mate!! A fantastic mating net!

34.♘xf6† ♗h8 35.♗e8!



I stopped my calculations here, thinking that in view of the threats of ♖xf8 mate and ♖f6† (or ♖f7) followed by ♖g7 mate, it was all over. In fact, Black could hang on with:

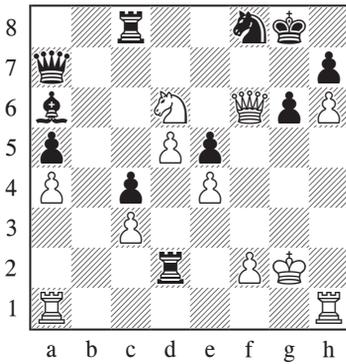
35...♗g8! 36.♖f6 ♖a7

Parrying all the immediate threats.

Now is the time to speak about how the approach to defence has changed in modern times under the influence of the computers. Engines have taught us that miraculous saving moves are available in the most unexpected situations, and players do not give up their resistance so easily in positions which would have been considered simply hopeless just a few decades ago.

I must confess that there is a fair chance I would have panicked a bit if I had faced this unexpected defence. The position is still winning, but the concrete way is not obvious.

37.♘xd6! ♖xd2



Black is a piece up and the pressure against the f2-pawn seems to restrict my active possibilities. The only winning path is the quiet move:

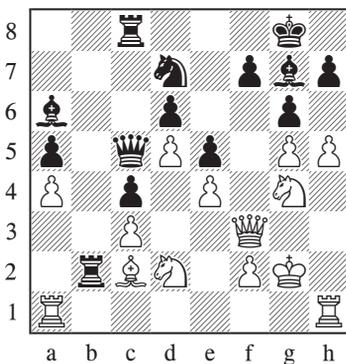
38. ♖h3!!

Threatening ♜f3 followed by ♘f7 and mate on either g7 or h8 and thus forcing:

38... ♜d3 39. ♜xd3 cxd3 40. ♘xc8 ♙xc8 41. ♜d1 ♙a6 42. ♗xe5

Since the pressure on f2 has been removed, White can safely take this central pawn, followed by the unstoppable advance of the central pawn mass.

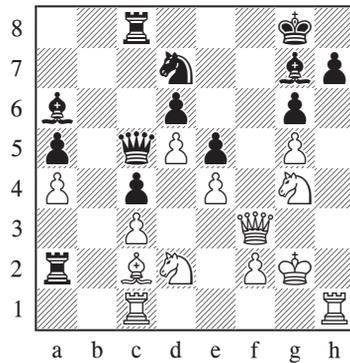
In the analysis above, the black king's lack of space proved decisive in certain moments. This makes 31... ♘d7, clearing the f8-square and defending the f6-square, worth mentioning.



The only problem is that the defence of the h7-square would be weakened. True, 32.hxg6 fxg6 33. ♖xh7, based on 33... ♗xh7 34. ♗f7

followed by ♖h1, would be premature due to 33... ♜f8 34. ♗h3 ♜f4 when the hanging second-rank pieces would restrict my active possibilities.

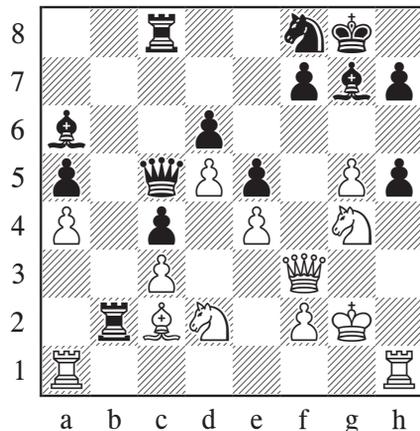
Instead the quiet 32. ♖ac1, threatening the same combination, would be simply winning, as Black could not do much to improve his position. For instance, 32... ♜f8, hoping for 33.hxg6 fxg6, would only make things worse after the simple 33. ♗h3, while after any neutral move such as 32... ♖a2 the combination would work out better: 33.hxg6 fxg6



34. ♖xh7 ♜f8 35. ♗h3 ♜f4

My bishop (and subsequently the second rank) would be safely defended, allowing me to either strengthen my attack with 36. ♘f3 or even start forcing operations with: 36. ♘h6† ♗xh7 37. ♘f5† ♗g8 38. ♘e7†

Black's pieces would be hanging, but this would not be relevant if my bishop was also hanging.



After Sokolov's move there are two possible knight checks, but only one wins.

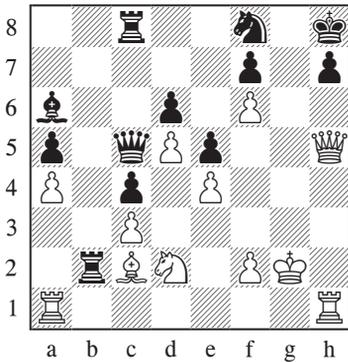
**32. ♖f6†!**

If 32. ♖h6†? ♗xh6 33. gxh6 ♖g6 34. ♗f6 ♕f8 and the king escapes.

**32... ♗xf6**

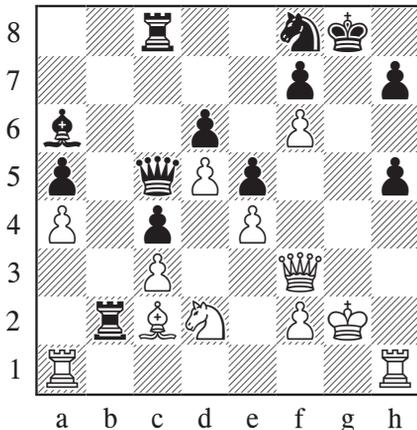
Practically forced.

If 32... ♕h8 then 33. ♗xh5 threatens mate in two with 34. ♗xh7† so Black could not avoid taking the knight anyway: 33... ♗xf6 34. gxf6



His situation would be worse than in the game. The f8-knight needs to defend the h7-pawn, so there is no defence against ♗h6-g7 mate.

**33. gxf6**



My main threat is ♗xh5-h6-g7 mate, so Black has some time to organize his defence or even try to start counterplay. There are two main ways and Sokolov made his decision only after 12 minutes.

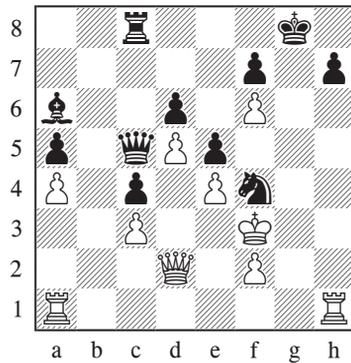
**33... ♖g6**

If instead:

33... ♗xc2 34. ♗xh5 ♗xd2

The threat on f2 would force me to deviate from the main path with:

35. ♗g5† ♖g6 36. ♗xd2 ♖f4† 37. ♕f3



Black has a small material advantage and his knight has managed to cut off my queen from the attack. However, the other black pieces are mere spectators. Moreover, the f6- and (surprisingly!) d5-pawns create a deadly net around the enemy king, allowing me to carry out the attack with only my rooks.

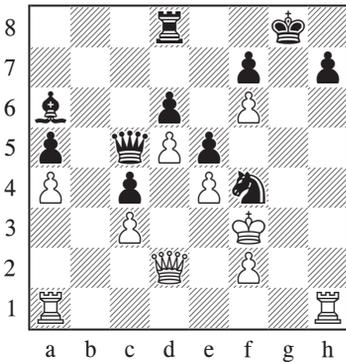
The immediate threat is 38. ♗ag1† ♕f8 39. ♗xh7 ♕e8 40. ♗g8† ♕d7 41. ♗xf7 mate!

There can be no hiding in the corner, as 37... ♕h8 38. ♗h6 followed by ♗ah1 is curtains.

So the best Black could do is:

37... ♗d8

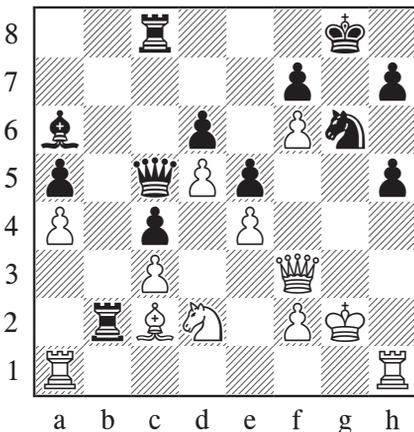
Preparing the king's escape along the path f8-e8-d7-c8, but this would not save him either.



38. ♖ag1† ♕f8 39. ♖xh7 ♕e8 40. ♖g8† ♔d7  
41. ♖xf7† ♕c8 42. ♖fg7

And the f6-pawn would soon queen.

After Ivan's last move, many people (including my second!) thought my attack was about to run out of steam. I had my own secret plans, though!



34. ♕f1!!

I am no longer sure when exactly I found this quiet but killing move. I spent only three minutes on it, which means it came to my mind either during my opponent's relatively long think or even before that.

By getting my king out of the g6-knight's range, I renew my threat of ♖xh5.

However I will not hide that while my opponent was thinking, I briefly entertained

myself with the queen sacrifice 34. ♖xh5 ♕f4† 35. ♕f3 ♖xh5 36. ♖xh5, threatening the same mating mechanism as in the previous comment, but I soon understood that it would not work for several reasons.

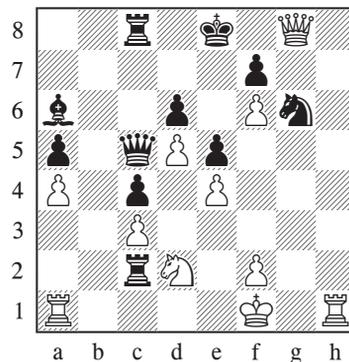


The most convincing refutation is 36... ♖xc2 37. ♖g1† ♕f8 38. ♖xh7 ♖xc3† 39. ♕e2 ♖h3! deflecting my rook from the seventh rank, so that the king can escape with ... ♕e8.

34...h4

Hoping to slow down my attack along the h-file.

If instead 34... ♕f8 35. ♖xh5 ♖xc2 36. ♖xh7 ♕e8 37. ♖g8†:

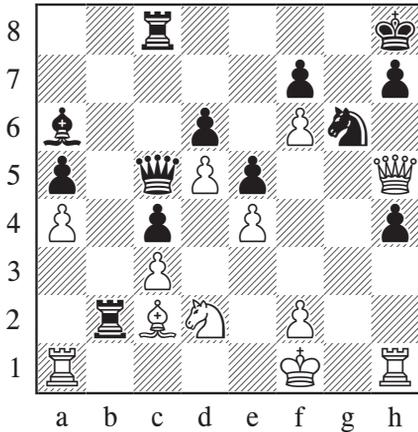


Now 37... ♔d7 38. ♖xf7† ♕d8 is obviously hopeless, but there is even a cute mate available: 39. ♖h8† ♖xh8 40. ♖e7 mate.

The essential point is that 37... ♖f8 fails

to protect the king due to 38. ♖xf8†! ♔xf8  
39. ♖h8 mate.

35. ♖h5 ♔h8

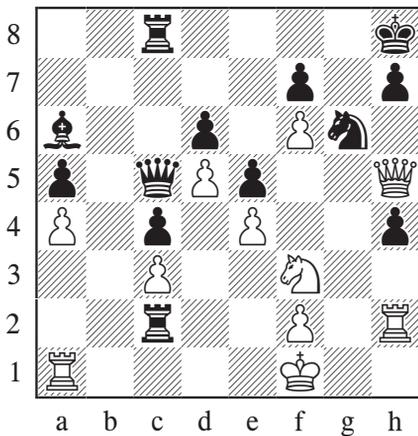


36. ♘f3!

When I played this I saw the winning variation all the way to the end. There is no need to defend the bishop, which is not taking part in the attack anyway.

White threatens 37. ♖h6 ♖g8 38. ♘g5 or 37. ♘g5 ♘f8 38. ♖h6.

36... ♖xc2 37. ♖h2

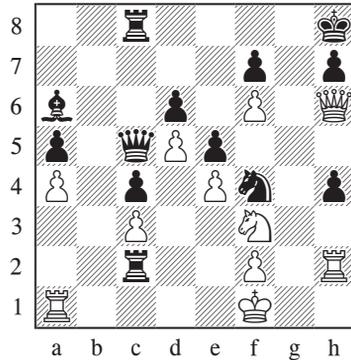


Parrying the mate on f2 and renewing my own threats. Black needs radical measures.

37... ♖xf2†

It would have been trickier to keep this desperate resource in reserve with 37... ♘f4.

Now the tempting 38. ♖h6? looks as if it would simply win, but in fact it allows a fantastic defence.



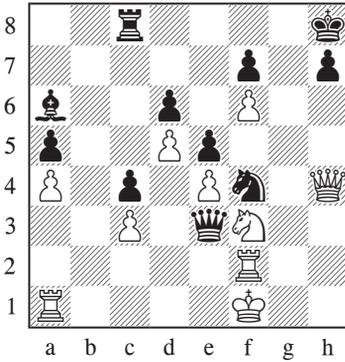
38... ♖xf2† 39. ♖xf2 ♖g8 (planning ... ♘c8)  
40. ♘g5 ♖xg5 41. ♖xg5 ♖xf2† 42. ♔xf2 ♘h3†  
43. ♔g2 ♘xg5 44. ♖b1 h5 Black would lose the bishop, but get several pawns in compensation for the exchange.

The winning continuation would be: 38. ♖xh4 h5 39. ♖g5 The similar combination does not save Black anymore: 39... ♖xf2† 40. ♖xf2 ♖xf2† 41. ♔xf2 ♘h3† 42. ♔e3 ♘xg5 43. ♘xg5 ♔g8 And now I would have a choice between 44. ♖h1 followed by ♖xh5-h7 with a continuing attack, and 44. ♖b1 with a decisive invasion along the b-file.

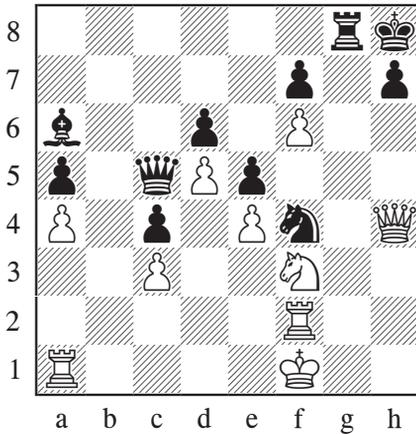
38. ♖xf2 ♘f4 39. ♖xh4 ♖g8

Probably hoping for 40. ♘g5 ♖xg5 41. ♖xg5 ♖xf2†! which would transpose to an acceptable line from the previous comment, with the only difference that the h4-pawn would be missing.

The counterplay based on 39... ♖e3 would not suffice either.



40. ♖g5 h5 41. ♞e1 ♛d3† 42. ♔g1 (Threatening ♞xf4 followed by ♛xh5 and mate.) 42... ♕g8 43. ♞xf4 exf4 44. ♘f3! Preventing ... ♛g3 and threatening ♛g5† with mate to follow.



40. ♞h2!

Ivan resigned without giving me the chance to show my last trick: 40... h5 41. ♛xh5†! ♘h5 42. ♞xh5 mate!

1-0

I remember how happy I was about the final attack, being especially proud of my quiet move ♔g2-f1.

A last-round draw with the winner of the tournament, my compatriot Peter Leko, maintained my +1 score, with a rating performance of 2747. The final classification at the top was: 1st Leko 8½/13, 2nd Anand 8, 3rd Topalov 7½, 4th–7th on 7 points were Polgar, Grischuk, Adams, Kramnik (in the exact order of our tiebreaks).

This tournament convinced me that even though my priorities had changed after Oliver's birth, I had preserved my former strength and I was still able to play good moves and games.

After Wijk aan Zee my rating reached 2732. A few months later I had another good result in Sofia, bringing me to my lifetime peak rating of 2735, placing me in eighth position in the world rankings.

On the basis of my rating, I qualified for one of the eight places in the 2005 San Luis World Championship. In life you sometimes need to be lucky. When Oliver was one year old, my husband and I were planning to have a second child, so my qualification to the World Championship, clearly the highest point of my career, arrived at the right moment...

*I always love to attack! The defender is boxing world champion Mihaly Kotai*

