

The French Defense...

...Properly Played

**Wolfgang
Uhlmann**



Joachim Beyer Verlag

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A Life Long French

Joachim Beyer Verlag

Preface	8
The Tarrasch Variation	10
1 Bialas – Uhlmann Leipzig 1951	11
2 Govedarica – Uhlmann Vrbas 1977	13
3 Hamann – Uhlmann Halle 1963	16
4 Kostro – Uhlmann Zakopane 1974	17
5 Prandstetter – Uhlmann Decin 1977	19
6 Stoica – Uhlmann Bukarest 1979	22
7 Prandstetter – Uhlmann Trencianske Teplice 1979... ..	24
8 Radulov – Uhlmann Albena 1983	26
9 Stein – Uhlmann Moskau 1971	28
10 Kuijf – Uhlmann Amsterdam 1990	31
11 Neukirch – Uhlmann Potsdam 1974	33
12 Womacka – Uhlmann Dresden 2001	34
13 Saren – Uhlmann Aarhus 1971	36
14 Kupreychik – Uhlmann Fürstenwalde 1969	38
15 Geller – Uhlmann Amsterdam 1970	39
16 Mestel – Uhlmann Hastings 1973	43
17 Kholmov – Uhlmann Halle 1978	46
18 Suetin – Uhlmann Debrecen 1987	48
19 Karpow – Uhlmann Madrid 1973	50
20 Vogt – Uhlmann Potsdam 1974	52
21 Velimirovic – Uhlmann Vinkovci 1982	55
22 Ibrahimoglu – Uhlmann Siegen 1970	58
23 Nijboer – Uhlmann Amsterdam 1990	59
24 Tischbiereck – Uhlmann Dresden 1984	62
25 Fridman – Blühbaum German Championship	65
The Nimzowitsch Variation	70
26 Kramnik – Buhmann Dortmund 2016	71
27 J. Polgar – Korchnoi Buenos Aires 2001	73
28 Fischer – Uhlmann Buenos Aires 1960	75
29 Fischer – Uhlmann Interzonal Tournament	79
30 Smyslov – Uhlmann Havanna 1964	80

31	Liebert – Uhlmann	Halle 1962	82
32	Bogdanovic – Uhlmann	Sarajevo 1965	84
33	August – Uhlmann	Erfurt 1976	86
34	Pelitow – Uhlmann	Szombathely 1966	88
35	Becker – Uhlmann	Halle 1982	90
36	Suetin – Uhlmann	Berlin 1967	93
37	Hazai – Uhlmann	Halle 1981	95
38	Ghinda – Uhlmann	Zinnowitz 1976	98
39	T. Pächt – Uhlmann	Fürstenwalde 1981	102
40	Unzicker – Uhlmann	Warna 1962	104
41	Sjasjutkina – E. Pächt	Tschakwi 2015	107
42	Enders – Uhlmann	Erfurt 1985	109
43	Anand – Curt Hansen	Middelfahrt 2003	111
44	Bronstein – Uhlmann	Tallinn 1977	112
45	Lanc – Uhlmann	Bukarest 1979	114
46	Bogdanovic – Uhlmann	Sarajevo 1963	116
47	Hartman – Uhlmann	Budapest 1986	118
48	Psakhis – Uhlmann	Tallinn 1987	120
49	Hertneck – Uhlmann	Dresden 1993	123
50	Cs. Horvath – Uhlmann	Debrecen 1988	127
51	Anand – Lputyan	New Delhi 2001	129
52	Garcia-Martinez Uhlmann	Leipzig 1983	133
53	Kaklin – Uhlmann	Budapest 1986	133
54	Hausner – Uhlmann	Halle 1982	135
55	Hausmann – Uhlmann	Weimar 1998	138
56	Schmittziel – Uhlmann	Germany 1992	140
57	Eley – Uhlmann	Hastings 1973	141
	The Advance Variation		144
58	Möhring – Uhlmann	Halle 1982	144
59	Przewoznik – Uhlmann	Zakopane 1980	148
60	Rosen – Uhlmann	Dresden 2001	149
61	Enders – Uhlmann	Eggesin 1978	151
62	Teske – Uhlmann	Nordhausen 1986	153
63	Badestein – Uhlmann	Berlin 1973	155

The King's Indian Attack	158	
64 Sawon – Uhlmann	Skopje 1968	160
65 Browne – Uhlmann	Amsterdam 1972	160
66 Lau – Uhlmann	Potsdam 1988	162
67 Enders – Uhlmann	Jüterbog 1985	165
The Exchange Variation	167	
68 Silva – Uhlmann	Tel Aviv 1964	167
69 Velimirovic – Uhlmann	Skopje 1976	169
70 Böhnisch – Uhlmann	Leipzig 1989	171
71 A. Zude – Uhlmann	Frankfurt 1990	173
72 Varga – Uhlmann	Eger 1986	175
Miscellaneous Lines	177	
73 Kovacs – Uhlmann	Sarajevo 1969	177
74 Lendwai – Uhlmann	Graz 1991	178
75 Santa Cruz – Uhlmann	Havanna 1964	180
76 Eskandary – Uhlmann	Dresden 2002	181
Player list	184	



Dear chess friends!

After having published the book 'The French Defense – Properly Played' in 1991, I would like to complement that part of my lifework concerning opening theory. Since the first edition of the book is out of print, I would like to meet the wish of many chess friends by explaining more details about this fight-oriented opening. I have revised the book, added more games and included the latest theoretical findings.

Since at my actual age of 82 years I could not contribute any current game of my own, I have included five up to date games from other specialists of the French Defense. When I wrote the annotations for the selected games, I paid special attention to the correct evaluation of the theoretical insights. However, my main concern is still to give you practical hints about the positional evaluation in the variety of lines, as this enables you to find the right plan in a given position.

It's an accepted fact among my colleagues that for the best part of my long chess career I've been one of the best connoisseurs of this opening. I was lucky enough to compete against the absolute best in the world (among them most prominent players, like world champions Botvinnik, Smyslov, Tal, Fischer and Karpov) and to achieve many nice successes with this opening. As a result, it's not surprising that in my tournament practice I almost always answered 1.e2-e4 with 1...e7-e6. In this context I would like to mention that my love for this opening was due to my great respect and admiration for my role model Mikhail Botvinnik.

Since I've chosen only my best French games, it was, of course, inevitable that this collection contains many older games from my long career. I wanted to show you the unconditional fight which starts right in the opening. You will witness creative opening treatment and courageous risk-taking with fantastic combinations, but also valuable positional games in which the right strategy leads to success. And finally the comments are enriched by skillful endgames.

I have always considered it right to learn from my own mistakes, and to draw conclusions from them. Playing the French Defense brings joy, is highly interesting, and leads to games which are about life or death. Even in lines considered rather toothless (e.g. the Exchange Variation) there are still ways to play for a win.

When choosing my best French games from the past 40 years, I've also done some statistical research in order to determine how many times I've applied my pet defense, and I was surprised by the result. From the roughly 700 serious games I've played with this opening, I've scored about 420 points, and thus 60%. If you consider that this result was achieved as Black and primarily against strong opponents, it is just fantastic. It also explains my passion for this opening and the fact that I never had to fear even the best prepared opponent.

Dear chess friends, I wish that you enjoy the often complicated lines and recommend you always consider the pawn structure when creating an opening plan. The skillful handling of the transition from the opening to the middle game is also an important part on the way to victory. I wish you a lot of fun and many eventful hours when you study the following games. And I hope that you will also become a fan of the battle-oriented French Defense.

Grandmaster Wolfgang Uhlmann

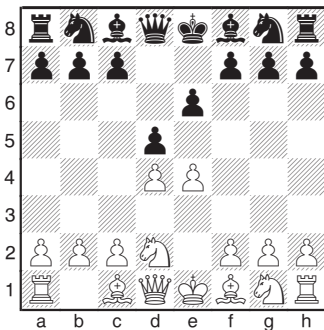
Siegbert Tarrasch was born in Breslau in 1863 and died in Munich in 1934. He was a grandmaster who lived for many years in Nuremberg and later on in Munich. He gave the teachings of Wilhelm Steinitz a scientific framework. He was respectfully called the 'Praeceptor Germaniae' (teacher of Germany). His main works 'Das Schachspiel' (The Chess Game), '300 Schachpartien' (300 Chess Games) and 'Die moderne Schachpartie' (The Modern Chess Game), were pioneering landmarks for entire generations.



Siegbert Tarrasch

The Tarrasch Variation

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2



This setup is characterized by the move 3.♘d2. Its pioneer was Dr. Siegbert Tarrasch, who introduced the system to the tournament practice in 1880. As an ardent advocat

of solid pawn positions he favored this move, which is considered one of the safest approaches against the French Defense. White doesn't intend to exert immediate pressure on the center but instead relies on long-term strategic play. As a rule, sharp lines can be avoided, which are typical, for example, in the Nimzowitsch Variation after 3.♘c3 ♗b4 due to the pin of White's knight.

After 3.♘d2 Black has three completely different answers at his disposal. First of all the move 3...♗f6 which provokes the further advance 4.e5 and leaves White

some space advantage. Little material is exchanged, and White can keep his center stable by f2–f4 and c2–c3, whereas Black tries to counter-attack by means of the levers c7–c5 and f7–f6. This leads to battle-oriented lines and thus to considerably more decided games than draws.

The second answer to 3.♘d2 is the classic move 3...c7–c5 which tries to profit from the relatively passive position of White's knight by immediately initiating the fight for the center, which in most cases leads to the dissolution of the central tension. However, Black has to accept that after swapping pawns on c5 and d5 he remains with an isolated pawn on d5. In an endgame this is often an easy target object, although it can be compensated by active piece play.

And the third possible reply is 3...dxe4. This more draw-oriented approach is currently booming, and top players like Anand, Bareyev, Ponomaryov, Shirov and Radjabov have significantly enriched its theory.

Game 1 Bialas – Uhlmann Leipzig 1951

In 1951 I achieved my first big success as a 16-year-old at the German Youth Championship in Leipzig. I clearly won 1.5 points ahead of the runner-up, a result that provided me with the necessary stimulation for further tournament successes. Already at that time, the French Defense was my favorite weapon against the opening move 1.e4. Although the following sensational game is not free of mistakes, I still consider it a small tactical gem in my collection.

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 ♗f6 4.e5
♗fd7 5.♙d3 c5 6.c3 ♗c6 7.♗e2
♞b6 8.♗f3 cxd4 9.cxd4 f6 10.exf6
♙b4+?!**

From a later point of view, this move should better be replaced by the immediate 10...♗xf6.

11.♙d2 ♗xf6 12.0-0 0-0 13.a3

After the preferable 13.♙xb4 Black would face long term difficulties to activate his light squared bishop, which is, however, a general problem of the French Defense.

13...♙d6 14.b4

Instead of this inaccuracy 14.♗c3 was the right approach, as 14...♞xb2 would run into 15.♗a4.

14...e5!

By opening the position, Black obtains promising piece play even

before the opponent's troops have reached a halfway harmonious setup.

15.dxe5 ♖xe5 **16.♗xe5** ♙xe5

In this sharp position 17.♞c1 fails to 17...♗g4 with a double attack on f2 and h2. And 17.♙e3 could not solve the problems either, as after 17...♞c7 18.♞c1 ♙xh2+ 19.♔g1 ♞e5 20.g3 ♙g4! White cannot ward off the threat 21...♙f3. That's why the textmove is forced.

17.♙c3 ♙xh2+

In youthful exuberance Black launches an attack according to well known patterns. However, the combination has a hole, as I had to recognize several decades later.

18.♔xh2 ♗g4+ **19.♔g3**

This is forced, as after 19.♔g1 ♞h6 only the return sacrifice 20.♙e5 could have prevented the mate. Only by bringing his king out into the open, White can hope to survive and maybe even refute Black's sacrifice combination.

19...♞xf2

That's the real point of the bishop sacrifice, as without the pawn on f2 White's king lacks protection and the attacking queen can come closer by means of decisive moves like 20...♞e3+ or 20...♞d6+. And 20.♞xf2 fails to 20...♞xf2+ 21.♔h3 ♗e3 and mate in a few moves.

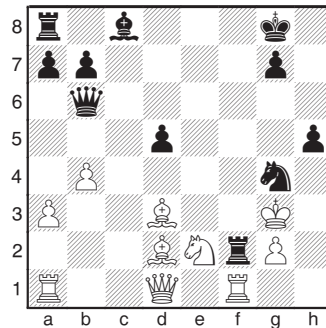
20.♙d2

The best defense, as 20.♞c1 is followed by 20...♞c7+ 21.♗f4 ♞xf1

22.♙xf1 (22.♞xf1 ♞xc3) 22...g5 23.♙d2 ♞d6 24.♞c5 gxf4+ 25.♙xf4 ♞xc5 26.bxc5 ♙f5 with a small edge for Black.

20...♗e3?

When I made this move, I was so much focussed on winning the queen that I didn't properly evaluate the overall consequences. The right move was 20...h5!



It was 60 years later that a German chess friend pointed out to me this move which gives Black winning chances in the following lines:

- 1) After 21.♙f4 and only now 21...♗e3!, the line 22.♙xe3? ♞xe3+ 23.♔h2 ♞h3+ ends with a mate, and after 22...h4+ 23.♔xh4 ♗xd1 White loses a piece.
- 2) 21.♗f4 h4+ 22.♔xh4 ♞h6+ 23.♗h5 ♞xd2-+
- 3) 21.♞e1 ♞f6 22.♞xf2 (22.♞h1 g5 23.♞xh5 ♞e5+ 24.♔h3 ♞h2#) 22...h4+ 23.♔h3 ♗xf2+ followed by ♗xd3.
- 4) After extensive analysis I found a line that probably rescues White

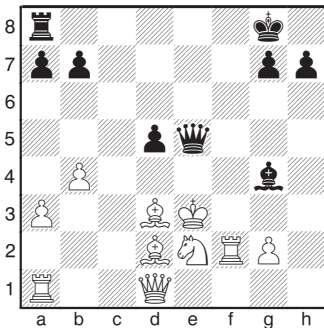
in the sense that while Black still has better chances there's no immediate win: 21.♖c1! ♖d6+ 22.♗f4 h4+ 23.♔xh4 g5+!! 24.♔g3 (24.♗xg5? ♖h2# or 24.♔xg5 ♖h6#) 24...gxf4+ 25.♗xf4 ♖xf1 with a small edge after 26.♗xf1 ♗f5 or 26.♖xf1 ♗d7.

21.♖xf2 ♖d6+ 22.♔f3??

Only this decisive mistake leads to defeat. After the correct 22.♗f4! ♗xd1 23.♖xd1 g5 24.♖h1 Black would have to fight for a draw.

22...♗g4+ 23.♔xe3 ♖e5+

The final position deserves a diagram.



White resigned. A tragicomic picture: The white king dies surrounded by too many of its men, which, instead of helping, form a coffin.

Game 2

Govedarica – Uhlmann Vrbas 1977

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗d2 ♗f6 4.e5
♗fd7 5.♗d3 c5 6.c3 ♗c6 7.♗e2
♖b6 8.♗f3 cxd4 9.cxd4 f6 10.exf6
♗xf6 11.0-0 ♗d6 12.a3

The main moves are 12.♗c3, 12.♗f4, 12.♗f4 and 12.♗g3.

12...0-0 13.b4?

At this stage, the pawn advance is a mistake, and should be replaced by the correct move 13.♗c3. This game was played 26 years after the first one, in a grandmaster tournament in Yugoslavia, which I won in a sovereign manner. I was at the height of my chess career concerning perfected positional and tactical skills. I vaguely remembered my first attempt against Bialas where the small but essential difference consisted in the fact that the white bishop was already on d2, a detail that turns out to be in Black's favor.

13...e5!

This central liberation action at the same time is the beginning of an attack on the kingside.

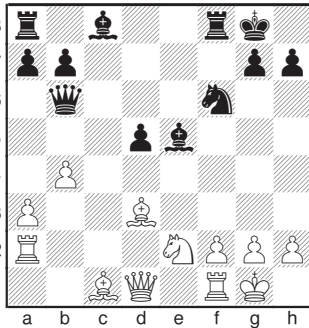
14.dxe5 ♗xe5 15.♗xe5

This move already leads to serious difficulties for White. The alternative 15.♗ed4 would have kept the position in balance.

15...♗xe5 16.♖a2

16.♗e3 loses very quickly in view of 16...♖c7 17.♖c1 ♗xh2+ 18.♔h1

♖e5, as parrying the threat 19...♗h5 would cost material.



16...♗g4!

Here the bishop sacrifice would be wrong, as after 16...♙xh2+ 17.♙xh2 ♗g4+ 18.♙g3! ♗xf2 19.♗b3 Black could not sufficiently reinforce his attack.

17.♗g3 ♙d4 18.♗h1

This retreat is a sad necessity. The alternative 18.♗e1 ♙d7 would be extremely bad, as White could not parry the threat 19...♗ae8.

18...♙d7

18...♗d6 leads to nothing, as the white knight could simply return to g3.

19.h3 ♗e5 20.♙e2 ♙c3!

Right in time Black switches from attacking play to converting the passed pawn on d5.

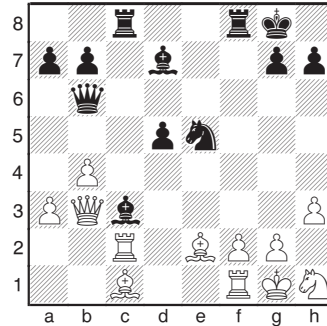
21.♗b3

21.♙d2 doesn't bring any relief either. For example, after 21...♙xd2 (not 21.♗xd5+ in view of 21...♙e6)

22.♗xd2 ♙e6 23.♗g3 ♗ad8 Black has a strong initiative.

21...♗ac8! 22.♗c2

Of course not 22.♗xd5+ ♙e6, as White would lose an exchange.



Although the rook move was seductive, it's a mistake. However, even after the best defense 22.♙e3 ♗e6 23.♙a7 (23.♙c5 d4! with a clear edge) 23...d4 24.♙d1 ♗fe8 Black's attack should get through anyway.

22...♙e6!!

This neat maneuver prevents 23.♗xc3 due to the intermediate move 23...d4, and thus enlarges Black's advantage.

23.♙d2 d4 24.♗a4 ♙xd2 25.♗xd2 d3!

This is the clearest continuation, as after 26.♙xd3 ♗xd3 27.♗xd3 ♙c4 the ending would be won for Black.

26.♙g4

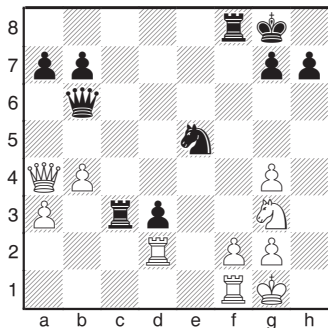
This is still White's best choice. After 26.♙d1 ♗c3 the threat

27...♖c4 would have been decisive.

26...♙xg4 27.hxg4 ♖c3!

This move prevents the check on b3 and protects the pawn on d3.

28.♘g3



28...♙xg4!?

Here Black could have played more precisely. An even stronger continuation consisted in 28...♖c4! 29.♖a2 (29.♖d1 is met by 29...♗b2) 29...d2

1) After 30.♗e2 followed by 30...♖d3! 31.♖d1 ♗e3! 32.fxe3 ♖xe3+ 33.♗h2 ♖xf1 34.♖xf1 d1♖ – or 31.♖c2 d1♖! 32.♖xd1 ♖xf2+ 33.♗h2 ♗e3 Black wins in both cases.

2) After 30.♗e4 Black replies 30...♖c1 31.♖b3 ♖xf1+ 32.♗xf1 d1♖+ 33.♖xd1 ♗e3+, and White loses his queen.

29.♖d7 ♗f6?!

This is not the most precise move. The alternative 29...♖h6! 30.♖xg4

♖xd2 31.♗e4 ♖e2!! 32.♖e6+ ♗h8 33.♖e7 ♖xf1+!! 34.♗xf1 ♖c1# would have won immediately.

30.♖f5 ♖d8 31.♖e1 ♖xa3 32.♖e6 ♖xb4 33.♖d1

White has no time for 33.♖xf6, as after 33...♖a1+ 34.♗h2

(34.♗f1 ♖xf1! 35.♗xf1 ♖b1+ 36.♖d1 ♖xd1#)

34...♖h4+ Black would win.

33...♖g4! 34.♖xf6 ♖xd1+ 35.♗h2 ♖a6! 36.♖xa6 bxa6 37.♖g5 ♖d7! 38.♗h5

After 38.♗f5 ♖e2 39.♗h6+ ♗f8 40.♖f5+ ♗e8 Black wins as well.

38...♖a1! 39.♖f5 ♖d4 40.♖e6+ ♗f8 41.f4 d2

White resigned.

Game 3
Hamann – Uhlmann
 Halle 1963

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 ♘f6 4.e5
 ♗fd7 5.f4 c5 6.c3 ♗c6 7.♗df3
 ♖b6 8.♗e2

This stereotyped move already gives Black good play. The correct continuation consists in 8.g3!, as has already been shown in several theoretically important games from the sixties. After 8.cxd4 9.cxd4 ♖b4+ 10.♔f2 f6 White has the move 11.♔g2 at his disposal in order to avoid the pins in the diagonal g1-a7 and the f-file.

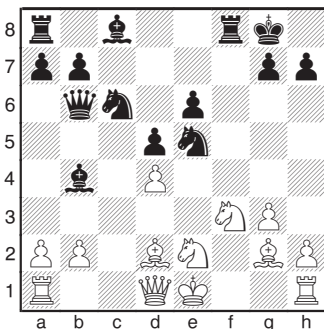
8...f6 9.g3

Now this maneuver is executed one move too late, as Black proves immediately.

9...cxd4 10.cxd4 ♖b4+! 11.♖d2

Here 11.♔f2 would be a mistake, as after 11...fxe5 12.fxe5 ♗dxe5 Black wins a pawn.

11...fxe5 12.fxe5 0-0 13.♖g2
 ♗dxe5!



This nice piece sacrifice is possible because of the open f-file and the fact that White's king is still in the middle.

14.dxe5 ♗xe5 15.♗ed4

Since 15.♗xe5 fails to 15...♖f2#, the text move is the only alternative.

15.♖xb4 ♖xb4+ 16.♔f2 is also bad.

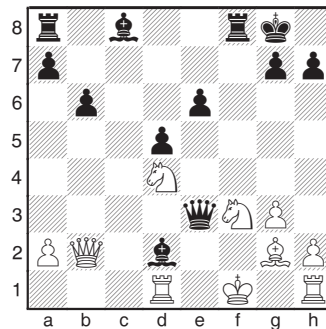
(16.♖d2 is followed by 16...♗xf3+, whereas after 16.♗c3 ♖xb2 Black is winning as well.)

16...♖e4! This strong move comes with the destructive double threat 17...♗xf3 and 17...♗g4+.

15...♗d3+ 16.♔e2 ♗xb2 17.♖b3
 ♖a6+ 18.♔f2 ♖xd2 19.♖xb2 ♖d3

Now Black's queen and bishop pair tie a mating net for White's king. And there's no defense any more, as 20.♖ae1 fails to 20...♖c3! 21.♖d1 ♖xf3+.

20.♖ad1 ♖e3+ 21.♔f1 b6!!



This quiet move threatens 22...♖a6+ and decides the fight on

the spot. After 22.♖xd2 ♘a6+ 23.♗e2 ♖xf3+ 24.♙xf3 ♗xf3+ 25.♔g1 ♖f8 White's king will be mated, whereas after 23.♖e2 ♙xe2+ 24.♗xe2 ♗xd4 or 24.♗xe2 ♖xf3+ 25.♙xf3 ♗xf3+ 26.♔g1 ♖f8 27.♗f4 g5 Black is just winning.

22.♗xd2 ♘a6+ 23.♗e2 ♖xf3+ 24.♙xf3 ♗xf3+ 25.♔g1 ♙xe2 26.♖e1 ♙d3

White resigned. This game was played at the Zonal Tournament in Halle 1963 where it was awarded a brilliancy prize.

Game 4

Kostro – Uhlmann Zakopane 1974

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗d2 ♗f6 4.e5 ♗fd7 5.f4 c5 6.c3 ♗c6 7.♗df3 ♙e7

There are only few samples with this move. It had a bad reputation before this game but Black comes up with a new plan which deserves attention.

8.♙d3 ♗a5 9.♔f2?!

9.♔f1 is probably better.

(By the way, the pawn sacrifice 9.♙d2 ♗b6 10.♗e2 ♗xb2 is unclear.)

Botwinnik played it against me (at the Chess Olympics in Warna 1962), and after 9...cxd4 10.cxd4 b5 obtained some advantage. The correct move is 9...b5, as 10.dxc5 can be answered by 10...b4 with equal chances.

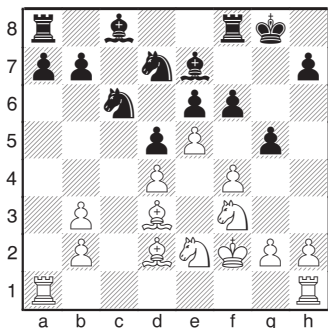
9...♗b6! 10.♗e2 f6!

Now the difference to the main lines becomes obvious, when White mostly plays g2–g3 whereafter his king can find shelter on g2. Black already threatens to win a pawn by means of 11...cxd4 12.cxd4 fxe5 13.fxe5 ♗dx5.

11.♗b3

11.♔g3 should be a better move, although after 11...cxd4 12.cxd4 0-0 White needs some time to follow up with his own king attack.

11...♗xb3 12.axb3 cxd4 13.cxd4 0-0 14.♙d2 g5!



By means of this interesting pawn sacrifice the opponent's center can be busted, and Black's pieces develop their maximum activity. The piece sacrifice 14...fxe5 15.fxe5 ♖dx5!? 16.dxe5 ♗xe5 also came into consideration, as Black obtains very dynamic play for compensation.

15.exf6

15.g3 fails to 15...g4 16.exf6 ♗xf6, as Black wins a pawn.

15...♗xf6 16.fxg5 ♗g7!

That's the point of the key move 14...g5!. On the other hand, winning back the pawn by 16...♗xd4+ 17.♖xd4 ♗xd4 18.♗b4 ♖f7 19.g6 hxg6 20.♗xg6 ♖f6 21.♗c3 leaves White with a slight edge.

17.♗c3

17.♗e3 is even worse in view of 17.e5! 18.dxe5 ♗x5 with the devastating double threat ♗xd3+ and ♗g4+ followed by ♗x3.

17...e5! 18.dxe5 ♗dx5 19.♖hd1

This is the best defense, as the

king obtains the escape squares on g1 and g3.

19...♗g4

The push 19...d4 would be premature. After 20.♖xd4 ♗xd4 21.♗xd4 ♗xf3 22.♗xg7 Black has no discovered check, as his rook is attacked.

20.♗eg1?!

This unprecise move leaves Black the initiative in the center. The best reply was 20.♗xe5 ♗xe5 21.♗d4 ♗f3 22.♗xf3 ♗xb2 with a slight edge for Black.

20...d4!

Now this central push gains more space.

21.♗e1 ♗xd3+

This exchange was not necessary. Better was 21...♖ad8 to maintain the tension in the center.

22.♖xd3 ♗e5 23.♖d2

Of course not 23.♖xd4 ♗f3 24.♖xg4 ♗xh2+ with a winning position for Black.

23...♖f5!

Now Black recovers the sacrificed pawn and obtains the better play.

24.h3

Correct was the bigger step 24.h4! in order to protect the pawn on g5. After 24...♗h5 25.♗g3 ♗c6 26.♗f2 ♖ad8 27.♗g3 ♖b5 28.g4 ♗f7 Black has the better chances.

24...♗xf3 25.♗xf3 a6

More precise was the immediate 25...♗xf3 26.gxf3 ♖xg5 with a clear edge in view of the superior pawn structure and the strong bishop in the long diagonal a1-h8.

26.♔e2?

26.h4 was still the preferable alternative. After 26...♖af8 27.b4 ♗xf3 28.gxf3 ♖xf3 29.♕g2 ♖b3! Black is better.

26...♗xf3 27.gxf3 ♖e8+ 28.♔d1

28.♔f2 is followed by 28...♖e3, whereafter Black can begin to harvest pawns on the third rank.

28...♖xf3 29.h4 d3!

Due to the effective *zugzwang*, breathing becomes more and more difficult.

30.♖h2

30.♖f2 is simply answered by 30...♖xf2 31.♕xf2 ♖e2 and 32...♖xb2.

30...♖f1 31.♔d2 ♕xb2 32.♖a2

After 32.♖b1 ♕a3! followed by ♖xe1 and ♕b4+ Black wins a piece.

32...♕e5! 33.♖g2 ♕f4+

White resigned.

Game 5

Prandstetter – Uhlmann

Decin 1977

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗d2 c5 4.exd5 exd5 5.♕b5+

Exchanging a pair of light pieces with gain of tempo is the standard method, whereafter the isolated pawn on d5 will become a constant target.

5...♕d7

Here 5...♗c6 comes also into consideration. In this case, White can choose Bronstein's creation 6.♗e2 (instead of the usual move 6.♗f3) which the Soviet veteran used very successfully.

6.♖e2+ ♕e7

Victor Korchnoi often played 6...♖e7 in this position. After 7.♖xe7+ ♕xe7 8.♕xd7+ ♗xd7 9.dxc5 White regularly obtains a slight edge in the endgame. The textmove mostly leads to a fierce battle.

7.dxc5 ♗f6 8.♗g3

Another method against Black's setup consists in the attempt to defend the pawn on c5 by means of 8.♗b3 followed by ♕e3 and 0-0-0.

8...0-0 9.♗b3 ♖e8 10.0-0

That's already a small inaccuracy. The theoretical recommendation is 10.♕e3. After 10...♕xc5 11.♕xd7 (but not 11.♗xc5? ♖a5+ 12.♖d2 ♖xb5 with a very good position for Black)

11...♗xd7 12.♗xc5 ♗xc5 13.♖b5 ♖c8 14.0-0 a6 15.♖b4 ♖e4 16.♖d2 ♗e6 the chances are equal; Tsheskovski – Uhlmann, Manila 1976.

10...♗xc5 11.♖d3 ♗b6 12.♗g5?!

Another inaccuracy. White should better play 12.♗xd7 ♗bxd7 with a roughly balanced position. After the textmove Black can continue very effectively and move his pieces to ideal positions.

12...♗c6! 13.a4

The exchange 13.♗xf6 ♖xf6 14.♖xd5 ♗e6 favors Black, as after 15...♖xb2 he will get his pawn back and have the better play.

13...h6 14.♗h4 a6 15.♗xc6 ♗xc6 16.♗fd4 ♖e4!

Black shakes off the pin in the diagonal h4-d8 with gain of tempo, at the same time preparing to double the rooks in the e-file.

17.♗g3 ♖d7 18.a5

This advance was necessary to avoid 18...♗xa4.

18...♗a7 19.c3 ♖ae8 20.♖fc1 h5!

Right in time an attack on the kingside is initiated. White's difficulties consist in the fact that his rooks have no good squares so that no active counterplay can be obtained.

21.f3 ♗b5! 22.♖b1!

22.♖d2 would be a mistake in view of 22...♖e2 followed by ♖xb2.

22...♖e3 23.♗f2 ♗d3

Without much ado the former passive bishop has been transferred to a dominating position.

24.♖a2 ♖2e7 25.♖a3 ♗c4 26.♖d1 ♗h7

This was the most difficult move of the game. Since the knight had no future on f6, changing the plan and opting for the maneuver ♗h7-f8-g6 and ♗f4 is a good decision. From the ideal square on f4 the knight will create fresh impulses.

27.♗c5 ♖c8 28.b4 ♗f8

Despite the lack of space, White has cleverly managed to stay in the game. The pair of knights on c5 and d4 wards off all attacks.

29.♖c1 ♗g6

Taking on c5 fails to 30.dxc5 ♖xc5 31.♗f5, as White wins an exchange.

30.♖d2 h4! 31.♖g5 ♖e5 32.♖g4

By swapping queens White tries to defend against the dangers lurking on the kingside. After the exchange on c5 he will obtain counterplay in the half-open b-file.

32...♗xc5 33.bxc5 ♖xc5 34.♗f5 ♖c8 35.♗d6

35.♗xh4 ♖xg4 36.fxg4 ♗f4! leads to White's disadvantage, as Black threatens 37...♗e2+ followed by ♗xc3 or 37...♗e2 followed by ♗xg4.

35...♖xg4 36.fxg4 ♖8e7 37.♗c5 ♗e2! 38.♖db1 ♗xg4 39.♗xb7 ♖7e6