

Contents

Introduction	7	
Part I	The Opening	17
Chapter 1	An advantage in development.	18
Chapter 2	The centre and its significance.	25
Chapter 3	Do not make unnecessary pawn moves if you have not completed your development.	37
Chapter 4	Do not develop the queen too early.	43
Chapter 5	Do not move the same piece twice.	51
Chapter 6	Do not leave the king in the centre.	55
Chapter 7	An unprepared attack.	62
Part II	The Middlegame	69
Chapter 8	Calculation of variations and methods of taking decisions. .	70
Chapter 9	The piece and pawn centre and the fight against it.	76
Chapter 10	Coordination and piece activity.	88
Chapter 11	Developing the initiative.	99
Chapter 12	Prophylactic thinking. Fighting against the opponent's ideas.	112
Chapter 13	Limiting the opponent's counterplay and piece manoeuvrability.	122
Chapter 14	Prophylaxis, strengthening one's own position.	133
Chapter 15	Schematic thinking. Regrouping one's forces, transferring pieces to more favourable positions.	143
Chapter 16	A space advantage.	162
Chapter 17	The problem of exchanges. Simplifying positions.	173
Chapter 18	Weak squares. Control of key central squares or a complex thereof.	191
Chapter 19	Open and half-open files.	213
Chapter 20	The advantage of two bishops.	226
Chapter 21	'Good' and 'bad' bishops.	238
Chapter 22	Knight or bishop?	248
Chapter 23	Opposite-coloured bishops.	257
Chapter 24	Secure points, outposts.	261
Chapter 25	A knight on the edge of the board stands badly/well. .	268
Chapter 26	Play on the wing. Do not attack on the wing if the centre is insecure!	272
Chapter 27	Transferring the king from flank to flank.	284
Chapter 28	'Superfluous' pieces.	292
Chapter 29	Paying attention to the opponent's possibilities. Loss of concentration.	296
Chapter 30	Methods of defence.	302
Index of Games.	315	

Introduction

This book is based on instructional material created for chess teachers at the DYSS, the special sports schools for youngsters in Russia. Of course, there are a great many such programmes in existence, as well as many good books, covering this or that theme. However, our beloved game is many-sided, and until now, there has not been a single work that covers as many as possible of the numerous aspects we should like to see treated.

In this book, we have tried to 'encompass the unencompassable' – in the first place, to delineate the most important subjects that a properly-educated chess player should master. Undoubtedly, different trainers do, and indeed should, have their own ideas and methods of preparing young players, but I hope my work will be useful to everyone involved in working in this difficult sphere. As I have had many occasions to see, the strong sides of a young player's play do not arise by accident, but depend crucially on the work he does with his trainer, or under the influence of the books he studies. But certain things may have been overlooked, and I hope that my book will help to reduce to a minimum these 'blank spots' in the education of young chess talents.

Now, a word about the material used in the book. There is no need at all to follow the contents of the books religiously in the order presented, and it is perfectly possible to jump from chapter to chapter, depending on the strength of the pupil and the areas that he most needs to work on. Thus, the process of a player's education can sometimes proceed more creatively and with greater variety, but no less effectively. But it is important that, overall, the pupil eventually becomes familiar with pretty much all of the topics. I believe that many trainers have excellent programmes, based on their own experience, but I hope that the material presented by me here will serve as a useful supplement to these programmes.

I would recommend that the trainer go through the games given here on the board with the pupil, including all the variations given. This is especially important because I have tried not to include too many variations, but only give those that are really essential to understand the position. It is important not just to demonstrate and explain what is happening, but also to ask the pupil's opinion on the key moments of the battle, and make him think. After some thought and discussion, you continue analysing the instructive moments. If an example in the book starts from a concrete position (rather than being a complete game), as the majority do, then one should first invite the pupil to assess the position and propose a move or a plan, and only then to start analysing the example in detail.

The book is aimed at players who are already around first category strength [translator's note: approximately 2000-2200 Elo] but some examples will also be useful to players of a higher standard. The book can also be used as a self-tutor. In this case, whenever you see a diagram, do not be in a hurry to read the subsequent text, but first try to assess the position yourself. The diagrams have been placed at the most interesting and instructive moments.

This textbook has been drawn up on the principle of 'from the simple to the complicated'. Easily understood, simple examples, are marked with a single star *, more difficult ones with two stars **, and, finally, the especially complicated ones with three stars ***. At the end of each chapter, we give links to additional material on the chosen theme.

In simple variations, which do not require text explanation, we have used symbol-based assessments, as follows:

I have tried to take an original look at many very famous textbooks, and to systematize and classify the huge amount of material to be found in them. Even so, the categorisations I have used are not totally beyond dispute, because in chess, different aspects of the battle are closely connected. The ability to accurately assess the significance of various different aspects of a position is something that comes with experience. No matter how talented a player may be, only after playing thousands of games and studying numerous books can he become a fully grown player. One can only call someone such a player if they have absorbed chess culture, and are capable not just of landing the occasional one-off blow, but conducting an entire strategic game. When looking at virtually any position, an experienced player can immediately delineate the important nuances, both static and dynamic. Which pawns and squares are weak, which pieces need to be relocated, what tactical motifs there can be in the position. I hope that my work will, among other things, help you to develop such an ability, which is vital for practical success.

As far as the examples given are concerned, these represent a combination of well-known classic positions, supplemented by cases from contemporary practice. I consider the latter element extremely important, because chess does not stand still, but is constantly developing, and one can often learn more from examples from contemporary practice, where the standard of play is higher. The most precious examples from the current generation of grandmasters are precisely those where they succeed in carrying out their plans in the face of the toughest possible resistance from their opponents.

The endgame is only touched on peripherally in this work, as it is a huge subject in itself, which deserves a separate exploration.

I hope that my experience of play at a high level, combined with discussions and creative work with many leading grandmasters, will make the work presented here of interest, and able to exert a permanent influence of the current generation of young players.

I should like to acknowledge the assistance of International Grandmaster Konstantin Landa.

General recommendations

In working with young players, it is essential to strive that they should develop on a rounded basis, to the greatest extent possible. It is useful if you can form a separate group of kids, who really want to perfect their play, as opposed to those who are only interested in playing and who come to lessons just for the sake of it. Having someone in the group who is bone idle has a poor effect on the others. With the ones who are not so interested and do not get the point about the importance of lessons, you can work less seriously. Such children can be left just to play and enjoy themselves, and they should not be stretched.

So, we proceed on the assumption that we have a group of children who are serious about improving their chess, and we wish to help them do so. A basic grasp of the principles of chess needs to be had by all equally, and so the fundamental work is obligatory for everyone. We can include in such work:

1) **The study of game collections.** Number one in importance! In principle, the study and analysis of any high-level games is useful. Collections of games with text annotations are the most valuable element in the growth of young players. Unfortunately, the importance of this component is very often underestimated. It is no accident that practically every great player had a bedside book, with well-annotated games, which he had read from cover to cover and knew practically by heart. The pupil himself can choose whose style of play and manner of annotation he likes best. I would start by recommending the classics – Capablanca, Rubinstein and Alekhine. In the first half of the 20th century, the standard of resistance put up by these players' opponents was not very high, and consequently the plans and combinations they carried out tended to appear in a very clear, clean form, which is easily understandable. Later, the pupil can move on to games by contemporary grandmasters, the World Champions in particular.

Nor should one ignore books in which top players comment on the games of a certain tournament.

2) **Studying good textbooks.** Of the many monographs available, I would single out the following:

In first place, Alexander Panchenko's works *Mastering Chess Middlegames* and *Theory and Practice of Chess Endings*, Shereshevsky's *Endgame Strategy* and *Contours of the Endgame*

Portisch, Sarkosy: *600 Endgames*

Gelfer: *Positional Chess Handbook 1-2*

Kotov: *Think Like a Grandmaster*

Euwe: *Strategy and Tactics – a course of chess lectures*

At a later stage of development, it is worth studying the books of Nunn, Dorfman, Tukmakov, Dvoretsky and also Beliavsky and Mikhailchishin's book *Intuition*. Of course, this list is very short and could easily be expanded.

3) Watching live games from current super-tournaments, at least to a minimum extent. Sometimes, when you have the chance, it can be useful to watch GM games live on the internet and ask yourself what you would play. In doing so, you should not switch on a chess engine, but rely on your own opinion. If you lack self-control and constantly switch the engine on, then it is better to remove the program from the computer. If you lack the time for live coverage, it is still useful to look through games from super-tournaments after the events. Pay special attention to those games that feature openings you play. Even if certain things remain hard for you to understand, they will stay in your sub-conscious and can grow over time.

4) Solving all different types of puzzles. The habit of playing positional battles is increased by thinking seriously about positions in which there are no tactics, or only a minimum amount thereof. Studies are useful for improving the depth and accuracy of calculation, and solving combinations helps cure you of the tendency to commit simple oversights. Those who solve a lot of combinations usually see tactical motifs immediately, if they appear in a position. You can find positions for solving in the books of Slavin, Ivashenko and Konotop, whilst to older and more experienced students I can recommend:

Hort + Jansa: *The Best Move*

Volokitin: *Perfect your Chess*

Dvoretsky's oeuvre.

5) Careful analysis of your own games, especially those in which you have experienced problems. It is desirable to do this with a trainer, if possible, and better still if the pupil can show the trainer his own (non computer-assisted!) analysis of the game.

Different types of lessons should be combined, so as to avoid a one-sided development and concentration only on one specific component of play. At the same time, lessons should not be a chore for the pupil, and one should try to create interest in those aspects that may not naturally attract the pupil.

As far as possible, one should try to control the pupil's fulfilment of his work tasks. To combat the natural laziness of youngsters, one must

constantly reiterate the important lesson that without constant hard work, they will not achieve the highest results. Of course, they can achieve certain successes in junior events, just on the basis of experience and talent, but they will not become top grandmasters without serious work.

Many youngsters study relatively little, but at the same time play blitz night and day. With care, rapid games can have benefits, but an excessive liking for blitz only spoils a player.

Now, we turn to the individual characteristics of the young player. The ability to make a clear and correct diagnosis in each individual case is the single most important job of the trainer. On the basis of an analysis of the player's games, plus conversations with him, one can determine which problems are the main ones preventing him progressing. These problems can be **physical**, **psychological** and **purely chess-related**.

One should look at a lack of **physical stamina** if the player habitually tires noticeably towards the end of a tournament or even of a single training session. In this case, one should recommend that the pupil pay more attention to maintaining a healthy lifestyle and playing sport. This is especially important nowadays, when chess requires more physical energy than ever. Those who pay no attention to physical fitness start to decline significantly in their play even once they reach the age of 25-30, whereas those who look after themselves physically can maintain top form into their 40s. As an example, one can cite Veselin Topalov, who spends 1.5 hours a day in the gym. During tournaments, he is able to put more and more energy into his games, and frequently comes through with a strong finishing spurt, when many of his opponents are starting to suffer with tiredness. One can also mention Vishy Anand, who is another who regularly goes to the gym, or Vladimir Kramnik, who maintains his fitness with tennis and swimming. Even amongst children, physical fitness can influence results, especially in the second half of tournaments.

Psychological problems can include most of all a lack of self-confidence, which in turn brings a whole raft of problems in its train. A player can start to fear his opponents, get nervous before crucial games, and, most of all, start getting into chronic time-trouble. To overcome these problems, he needs first of all to raise his opinion of himself. This means convincing himself of the slogan 'I can do anything'. He needs to understand that these are not just empty words, and ideally they should be strengthened by some definite successes, even if just in local events. For example, after solving a certain problem of studying a book of games, he should tell himself: 'I have learnt something and become stronger'. This improves one's self-confidence, and allows one to take difficult decisions more easily and avoid time-trouble.

Mikhail Moiseevich Botvinnik argued that players should play special ‘anti-time-trouble’ training games, in which the principal attention is paid to efficient time usage. In practice, nobody does this, but I would recommend keeping a note of time taken per move, and afterwards analysing the reasons for any long thinks. Of course, here the most important thing is self-control, the ability to tell yourself at a certain moment that it is time simply to make a move. No trainer can help with this problem, if the pupil is not himself willing to fight it. Thus, the main task of the trainer in such a situation is to be a good psychologist and raise the pupil’s self-esteem. Of course, there is such a thing as the so-called ‘justified time-trouble’, when time shortage is the result of definite problems over the board. If this happens only occasionally, this can be considered perfectly normal time-trouble.

Finally, **purely chess** problems. Of course, these can cause time-trouble. If a young player spends little time solving studies and combinations, he will have great problems calculating during a game. If he spends little time studying GM games, he will just be unfamiliar with many types of positions, which can also lead to additional long thinks and to mistakes. One such mistake is the incorrect evaluation of positions, whilst when the assessment is changing move by move, extra thought is required over each successive move. Objectivity in assessments is a mixture of chess elements and psychological stability. Even among very strong GMs, there are those who tend to overestimate their position, always thinking it is better than it is. Of course, much depends on the player’s character, but any extremes in this matter are undesirable, and one should always strive to assess the position as objectively as possible.

The opening is a component, the importance of which grows with the growth in the pupil’s strength. At first, it is preferable for pupils to begin the game with 1.e4, because open games help to develop their appreciation of rapid development, and also their tactical sharpness. But the main thing is the importance of a ‘correct’ approach to the game. Trappy, offbeat openings should be excluded from the pupil’s repertoire at an early stage, so as to avoid bad habits. Quick development and fighting for the centre are the most important things to learn, and this is especially clear in open positions. Over time, especially once the pupil has reached first category (c. 2000 Elo) or candidate master (c. 2200 Elo), it is useful to start introducing closed openings into one’s repertoire, and to start to be able to play ‘with either hand’, with the point that such variation in openings is a significant plus at GM level. A player who has reached master level without ever having played closed/open games, will find it much harder to add them at such a stage – the basics should be established at a young age.

The middlegame is usually the part that most interests children, and lessons on this part of the game tend to be received by them with particular

enthusiasm. It is in the middlegame that one faces with particular clarity the question of how to teach the pupil to **calculate variations** cleanly, and which criteria should apply in taking decisions. We will speak about this in detail in Chapter 8. As far as training calculation is concerned, the methods are well-known – one should regularly solve combinations and studies, and then the tactical motifs that arise in a game will not pass unnoticed.

Chess is not chequers and capturing is not obligatory. When one of your pieces is attacked, first of all ask yourself whether you have to move the piece, or whether you can sacrifice it or attack an enemy piece in turn. **Intermediate moves** are something every first category player should be capable of finding. And the converse applies – when you attack an enemy piece, ask yourself whether the opponent has to retreat it.

Speaking of the middlegame, young players are often too willing to trust generally-accepted assessments, based on material, without taking account of the specifics of the position. Their play is often hampered by a **fear of disturbing the material balance**. In such cases, it is useful to remind the pupil that every position is unique. And there are in chess as many exceptions as there are rules. To emphasise this, one can revisit the subjects ‘Positions with a non-standard material balance’, ‘Positional sacrifices’, and ‘Intuitive sacrifices’. One must be willing to take a risk sometimes, as without defeats, there are no victories. There is nothing to be afraid of!

I would also like to draw attention to the subject of ‘**Prophylactic thinking**’. This is a method employed by all top-class players. On every move, one should not forget to ask oneself: ‘What does my opponent want?’. Having answered this question, one can choose one’s reply. The habit of using this technique of choosing one’s move is something that should be inculcated from the very earliest lessons.

Endgame technique is more difficult to develop than middlegame play, because most pupils lack a fondness for this aspect of the game. However, those few youngsters who study the basics of the endgame and those best-seller textbooks on this area of the game have a colossal advantage over their rivals. In my experience, even the most talented youngsters play the endgame quite weakly when they start in adult events, and lose many points because of elementary mistakes at this stage of the game.

Another very important element is the **amount of chess** the pupil plays. His graph of tournaments should be balanced – on the one hand, there should not be long breaks between events, but at the same time, nor should he play non-stop. It is essential to be objective in assessing what he can do and what he can’t, and then work to eliminate his weaknesses. A badly-thought-out tournament calendar brings additional problems, blunders and time-trouble. Of course, one must take into account the individual characteristics of the pupil – the ease with which he plays, and his keenness

on analytical work and self-analysis. I think the optimal number of games per year is between 80 and 120.

Yet another important quality in a chess player is the ability during a game to **maintain concentration**. Unfortunately, this is a quality that tends to come with experience. Sometimes, too much emotion is wasted looking at the positions in other players' games. Another factor is patience, the ability to sit for a long time and think about one's position. In the main, blunders result from problems in this area. The young player needs to absorb the lesson that even the apparently simplest of positions can contain hidden resources. The most difficult thing of all is to maintain concentration in winning positions, or those in which one has a great advantage. It can seem that one has already finished the job, and there is a tendency to relax prematurely. However, many children also lack the ability to concentrate sufficiently on the problems in such positions. They do not like to defend, and prefer to be done with such a game as quickly as possible. An important part of maintaining concentration is maintaining a cool head. This quality is especially precious when you are in time-trouble. Even in a critical situation, with a bad position and time-trouble, one should try to ensure that all of one's decisions are rational. As a rule, young players panic when short of time, and at the last moment will make a move that they have already seen is bad, or one they have not even considered at all. It must be said too that even experienced grandmasters sometimes make such mistakes. Despite the apparent hopelessness of the situation, pupils should constantly remember the importance of maintaining concentration.

I wish you all success on this thorny path!

Konstantin Sakaev

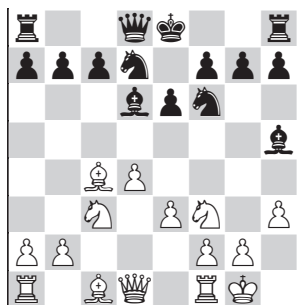
This is Volume 1 of a two-volume work. Volume 2 will be about the middlegame – pawns and dynamics.

Chapter 9

The piece and pawn centre and the fight against it

The middlegame is a continuation of the opening, and so the importance of the centre and its occupation by pieces and pawns is just as great. If you have the centre, you should protect and secure it, and eventually set it in motion. If your opponent has it, it is essential to take action against it, and somehow locate its weak spot.

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Suat Atalik 2570
Gerlef Meins 2454
 Bad Wiessee 2003 (7)



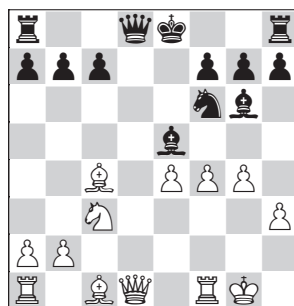
White has a mobile pawn centre. With its help, he begins to disturb the currently well-placed black pieces.

9.e4! e5 10.g4

A committal move. White exposes his king somewhat, but creates an active pawn mass.

10...♙g6 11.dxe5 ♘xe5 12.♞xe5 ♙xe5 13.f4

The critical position. If Black does not find some antidote, the white pawns will sweep all before them. Black faces a difficult choice.



13...♞d4+

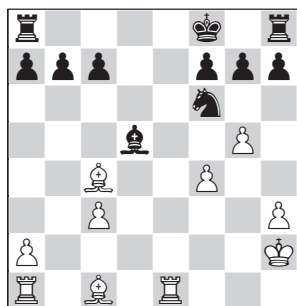
The alternative was the sharp 13...♙d4+ 14.♞h2 h5 (14...♙xc3 15.bxc3 ♞xd1 16.♞xd1 ♙xe4 17.g5 ♞d7 18.♞e1 f5 19.gxf6 ♞xf6 20.♙d3 0-0 (20...♞f7 21.♞xe4±) 21.♙xe4 ♞ae8 22.♙a3 ♞xe4 23.♙xf8 ♞xf8 24.♞e3± Littlewood-Muir, Chester ch-UK 1979) 15.f5 (15.g5!?) 15...hxxg4 16.fxxg6 fxxg6 17.h4! ♞d6+ (17...♙e5+ 18.♞g2 ♞xd1 19.♞xd1 ♞xh4 20.♙f4±) 18.♞g2 ♞xh4 (the threat is 19...♙g5) 19.♙f4 ♞c5 20.♞d5! 0-0-0 (20...♞xc4 21.♞c1+-) 21.♞c1 ♞xe4 22.b4!, with a decisive attack for White, Lipiridi-Rusakov, corr 1981.

14.♞xd4 ♙xd4+ 15.♞h2 ♙xc3 16.bxc3 ♙xe4 17.g5 ♙d5

17...♞d7 18.♞e1 transposes to the game Littlewood-Muir, quoted in the previous note.

18. ♖e1+ ♜f8

On 18...♞d7, White replies 19.♞d1! ♜c6 20.♞d4 b5 21.♙xb5+ ♜xb5 22.gxf6 ♜c6 23.fxf7 ♞he8. This position was seen in the game Flear-K.Norman, London 1979 (23...♞hg8 24.c4 ♙e6 25.f5 ♙xf5 26.♞f4 ♙e6 27.♙b2±; the pawn on g7 is very dangerous). Now, a large advantage results from 24.♞d2! ♞e3 25.♞f2 ♞xc3 26.♙b2±.



19. ♙b5! a6

Black does not manage to defend all his weaknesses after 19...♞e4 20.c4 ♞d6 21.cxd5 ♞xb5 22.♞b1 ♞d6 23.♙a3 b6 24.♞ec1±.

20. ♙a4 b5 21. ♙a3+ ♜g8 22.gxf6!

Now, Black is effectively playing without his rook on h8, and in addition, his king is in a mating net.

22...bxa4 23. ♞e5 c6?

Relatively best is 23...♙e6 24.f5 ♙d7 25.♞d1 ♙c6, although after 26.♞e7 h5 27.♞xc7 ♙e8 28.♞g1 ♞h7 29.c4±, Black is not to be envied.

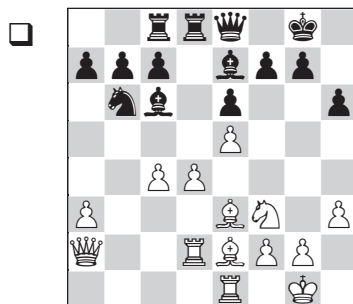
24. ♞g1

He also wins with 24.c4 ♙xc4 25.fxf7 ♜xg7 26.♞g1+ ♜h6 27.f5 ♞ae8 (27...f6 28.♞e4+→) 28.♙c1+ ♜h5 29.♞g5+ ♜h4 30.♞g4+ ♜h5 31.♜g3 ♞xe5 32.♞h4#.

24...g6 25. ♞e7 ♞d8 26.f5 1-0

39

Konstantin Sakaev 2645
Adrian Mikhalchishin 2530
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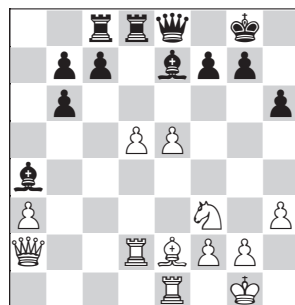
The white pieces have occupied ideal positions, and so it is time to set the centre in motion.

24.d5! exd5

On 24...♙a4, the strongest reply is 25.dxe6 fxe6 26.♞d4 – the e6-pawn becomes a chronic weakness.

25. ♙xb6 axb6 26.cxd5 ♙a4

Preferable is 26...♙b5, reducing the attacking potential of the white pieces by exchanges. Admittedly, after, for example, 27.♞d4 ♙xe2 28.♞exe2, White has a very strong position all the same.



27. ♞d3!

This move underlines the weakness of the light squares in the black camp. This is much stronger than, for example, the attempt to create

a passed pawn on the d-file. The bishop comes onto a diagonal, where it can start to work with full effectiveness.

27...♖a8 28.e6!

Continuing the chosen strategy.

28...♙d6

28...fxe6 29.♖xe6 ♖d6 30.♗de2 ♖xe6 31.♖xe6+–.

29.♘e5

A decisive attack was also promised by 29.♘h4, intending the jump to f5.

29...♙xe5 30.♖xe5 f6 31.♖e3 ♖e7

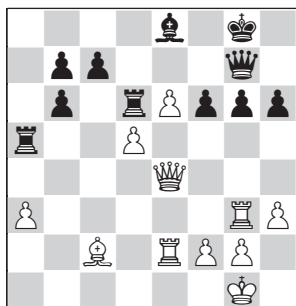
32.♖c4 ♙e8 33.♖e4 g6

On 33...g5, there is the excellent prophylactic move 34.♙c2!, preventing the rook coming to a4, and then h3-h4!, breaking up the defences of the black king.

34.♖g3 ♖g7 35.♙c2

An even more convincing win was 35.e7 ♖d6 (35...♖d7 36.♖e6+ ♔h8 37.♖xg6 ♙xg6 38.♖xd7+–; 35...♖dc8 36.♖e2+–, with the idea of ♙d3-f5) 36.♖xg6 ♙xg6 37.♖xg6+– – the e-pawn promotes.

35...♖d6 36.♖e2 ♖a5



37.♖xg6! ♙xg6 38.♖xg6 ♖xg6

39.♙xg6 ♖xa3 40.e7 ♖a8 41.e8 ♖+

♖xe8 42.♖xe8+ ♔g7 43.♙e4

Black resigned.

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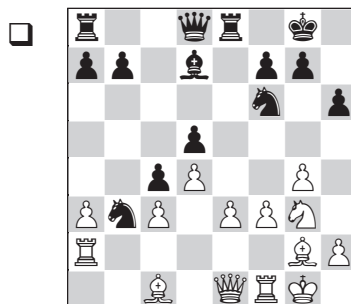
Garry Kasparov

Judit Polgar

Tilburg 1997 (2)

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The black pieces are poorly coordinated, and the fact that she has relieved the pressure on the white centre by playing ...c5-c4 allows White to achieve a central breakthrough in the maximum comfort.

16.e4! dxe4 17.fxe4 ♘xg4

Such trivialities as the g4-pawn pale into insignificance alongside White's total domination of the centre.

18.♙f4

Now, the knight on b3 remains a mere spectator of White's growing attack.

18...♖h4

On 18...♖b6, with the idea of ...♘g4-e5, the strongest reply is the prophylactic 19.♙h1!.

19.h3 ♘f6 20.e5 ♖ad8

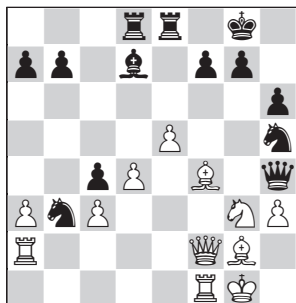
On 20...♙xh3, strong is 21.♙xh3 ♖xh3 22.♖h2 ♖e6 23.♙xh6! ♘g4 24.♙xg7! ♘xh2 25.♙xh2 – and White's attack assumes a decisive character.

21.♖f2

He also keeps a large advantage with 21.♙e3 ♘h7 22.♘e4 ♖xe1 23.♖xe1, but of course it is nicer to

keep the queens on, since White still has attacking prospects on the kingside.

21...♖h5



22.♗xh6! ♔e7

More tenacious is 22...♗e6, after which there follows 23.♖xh5 ♗xh5 24.♗e3, gradually preparing the transfer of the major pieces to the g-file.

23.♖f5 ♗xf2+ 24.♖xf2 ♔e6 25.♗e3 ♗c6 26.♗f1 f6 27.♗xc4 ♗d5 28.♗e2 fxe5 29.♗xh5 exd4 30.♗g5 ♖d7 31.♖ae2 ♗e4 32.♖xd4 1-0

41

Anton Korobov

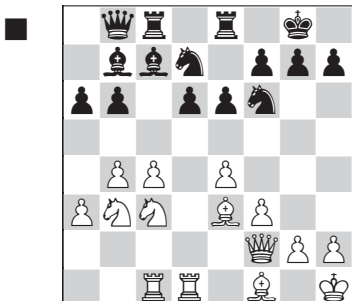
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2705

Vasif Durarbeyli

2584

Baku 2012 (8)



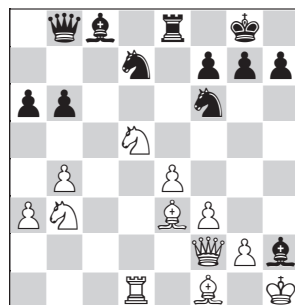
We have a typical Hedgehog structure. White controls the centre and more space, but Black is not bothered! In the Hedgehog structure,

his pieces are very harmoniously placed on the first three ranks, and if the opponent blinks for a moment, one of the standard counterblows ...b6-b5 or ...d6-d5 can occur. White must constantly monitor these possibilities. With his next move, Black bursts open the centre and sets a tactical conflagration going.

19...d5! 20.cxd5 exd5 21.♖xd5 ♗xh2

It is far from easy over the board to calculate the consequences of 21...♖xd5 22.exd5 ♗xh2 23.♖xc8 ♗xc8 24.f4, but now Black has 24...♖f6! 25.♗e2 ♖e4 26.♗f3 h5!. The key move (an interesting repetition arises after 26...♖f6 27.♗f2=). 27.♖xh2 ♗g4 28.♗f1 ♗xe2 29.♗xe2 ♖c3±.

22.♖xc8 ♗xc8



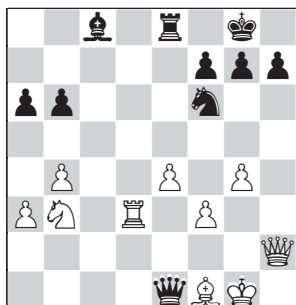
23.g4

The computer suggestion is 23.♖xf6+ ♖xf6 24.♗xb6 ♗g3 25.♗e3 ♗e5 26.♗c4 ♗h5+ 27.♖g1, with the promise of a minimal advantage, although this is unpleasant to defend for a human.

23...♖xd5 24.♖xd5 ♖f6 25.♖d3 ♗f4

Even stronger is 25...♗g3!

26.♗xf4 ♗xf4 27.♗d2 ♗g3 28.♗h2 ♗e1 29.♖g1



Another critical position. The queen on e1 is very strong, but Black's other pieces are rather passive. Black finds a way to activate them.

The attack with the rook's pawn frees squares and opens lines for attack

29...h5! 30.gxh5

Bad is 30.g5 ♘h7 (30...♘xe4? 31.fxe4 ♜xe4 32.♜d8+ ♔h7 33.♞xh5#) 31.♞f2 (31.♞xh5 ♞g3+♞) 31...♞xf2+ 32.♔xf2 ♘xg5 33.♜d5 f6♞.

30...a5

Black plays all over the board! Having just sacrificed the h-pawn to activate his knight, now he frees the a6-square for his bishop! But White has a serious retort to Black's last move. Chess is not checkers and capturing is not obligatory.

Instead, Black can be recommended to play the unexpected 30...♘xe4! 31.fxe4 ♜xe4, reaching the key position, in which White has many possibilities, but the strongest of them allows him only to hold equality:

A) 32.♜g3 ♜e3 33.♜xe3 ♞xe3+ 34.♞f2 ♞xb3 35.♞xb6 ♞g3+ 36.♔g2 ♔h3 37.♞c6 ♔xg2 38.♞xg2 ♞xa3 39.♞a8+ ♔h7 40.♞e4+ ♔h6 41.♞f4+ ♔xh5 42.♞xf7+ ♔h6♞; or 32.♘d2? ♜g4+ 33.♔h1 ♔b7+-; or 32.♞c2? ♜g4+ 33.♔h2 ♞e5+ 34.♔h1 ♔b7+-+;

B) 32.♜d4! ♜e5 (32...♜e3 33.♞f4+-), and now:

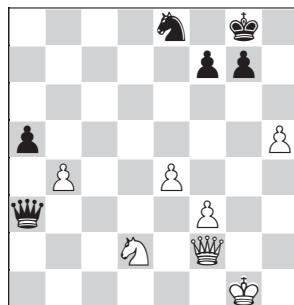
B1) 33.♜d8+ ♔h7 34.♞c2+ g6 35.hxg6+ ♔g7 36.♜d2 ♔h3 37.♞d3 ♜g5+ 38.♔h2 ♔xf1 39.♞c3+ ♞e5+ 40.♞xe5+ ♜xe5 41.gxf7 ♜h5+ 42.♔g1 ♔c4=;

B2) I have also not found a win after 33.♞h4 ♞e3+ 34.♔h2 ♜g5 35.♔g2 ♔b7 36.♜g4 (36.♔xb7?! ♞e2+ (36...♞g1+ 37.♔h3 ♞f1+=) 37.♔h3 ♜xh5♞) 36...♜xg4 37.♞xg4 ♔xg2. In this line, we get a curious draw carousel after 38.h6! g6 39.♞c8+ ♔h7 40.♞f8 ♞h3+ 41.♔g1 ♞h1+ 42.♔f2 ♞f1+ 43.♔g3 ♞f3+ 44.♔h2 ♞h3+=.

31.♞f2 ♞b1 32.♘d2 ♞a1 33.♞xb6 ♞e5 34.♜d8

34.♞c5!? ♞g3+ 35.♔g2 ♞h4 – Black has full compensation. The knight joins the attack via h5.

34...♞g5+ 35.♔g2 ♔h3 36.♜xe8+ ♘xe8 37.♞f2 ♔xg2 38.♞xg2 ♞e3+ 39.♞f2 ♞xa3



And now the desire to win overcame the objective features of the position.

40.b5?!

This move does not actually lose, but it poses problems only for White. It is clear that the b-pawn will be held up, but not so clear whether this will be true of the a-pawn.

40...♞b4 41.b6 a4

41...♘f6 42.h6 ♘d7 43.hxg7 ♞xb6=.

42. ♖c4

The computer helps us find a subtle positional draw: 42.e5!? (playing to limit Black's scope) 42...a3 43.♖e3 a2 44.♗b3 ♖xb3 45.♖xb3 a1♖+ 46.♔g2 ♖xe5 47.b7 ♖b8 48.♖a4 ♗c7 49.♖c6 ♖d8 50.♖b6 ♖b8 51.♖c6 ♔h7 52.♖e4+ ♔g8 53.♖c6=.

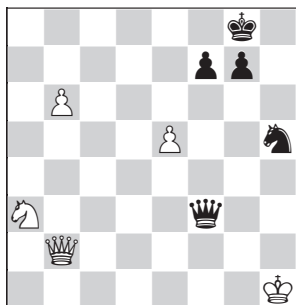
42... ♗f6

42...♖xc4 43.b7 ♖c7 44.♖a7 ♖g3+ 45.♔h1 ♖xf3+ 46.♔g1 ♖g3+ 47.♔f1 ♖f3+ 48.♔g1=.

43.e5 ♗xh5 44.♖b2 ♖e1+ 45.♔h2 a3!?

45...♖g3+ 46.♔h1 ♖xf3+ 47.♖g2=.

46. ♗xa3 ♖g3+ 47.♔h1 ♖xf3+



48. ♔g1??

A blunder. After 48.♔h2!, Black has nothing but perpetual check: 48...♖g3+ 49.♔h1 ♖h4+ 50.♔g1 ♗g3 51.♖c2=.

48... ♗g3 49. ♖g2

49.b7 ♖h1+ 50.♔f2 ♖h2+ 51.♔f3 ♖xb2--.

49... ♖xa3 50.b7 ♖a7+ 51.♔h2

51.♖f2 ♗e2+ 52.♔f1 ♖xb7 53.♖xe2 ♖h1+ 54.♔f2 ♖h2+--.

51... ♗f5 52.♖c6 ♖f2+ 53.♖g2 ♖b6 54.♖c2 ♖xb7?

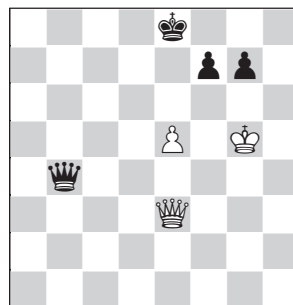
He wins at once with 54...g6! 55.♖c8+ ♔g7 56.♔g2 ♗e7 57.♖a8 ♗c6 58.♖c8 g5!. It turns out that the queen and knight represent such a powerful force against the white king that White is

not able to obtain the desired drawn queen ending of 2 pawns vs 1: 59.♔h2 (59.♔f1 ♖b5+ 60.♔f2 ♖b2+ 61.♔f1 ♗d4--+) 59...♗e7 60.♖a8 ♖f2+--.

55. ♖xf5 ♖c6 56.♔g3 ♔f8 57. ♖g5 ♖d5 58. ♖e3 ♔e8 59. ♔f4

59.♖c3!?

59... ♖c4+ 60.♔g5 ♔e7 61.♖a3+ ♔e8 62. ♖e3 ♖b4



The ending is probably winning for Black, but he would need to demonstrate some technique. But now there followed

63. ♔f5??

which sharply simplifies the task. The only chance was 63.♖e2!.

63... ♖h4

White resigned, because of 64...g6#.

42

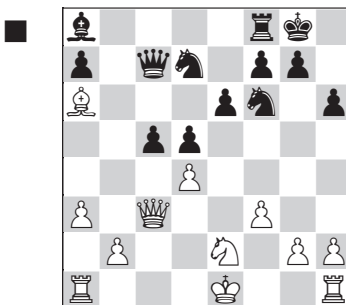
Joel Lautier

2655

Anatoly Karpov

2765

Linares 1995 (8)



For what has Black sacrificed the exchange? A mobile pawn centre!

19...e5! 20.♙d3

Black also gets a decisive attack after 20.dxe5 d4! 21.♖d2 ♗xe5 22.0-0 ♜b6 23.♙d3 c4 24.♙xc4 d3 25.♜f2 ♜d8.

The most tenacious was 20.dxc5!, so as to keep the e-file closed, along which Black is prepared for a decisive attack. Admittedly, after 20...d4 21.♖d2 ♗xc5 22.♜c1 ♜b6 23.♙c4 ♗d5 24.b4 ♗e6 25.♙xd5 ♙xd5 26.♗g3 ♜a6 Black's advantage is unarguable – his central position is very strong, whilst White has trouble castling.

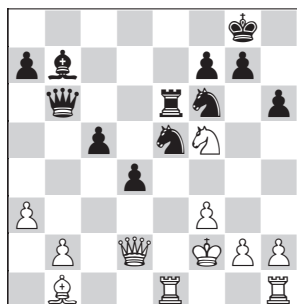
20...exd4 21.♗xd4 ♜e8+ 22.♚f1 ♜b6 23.♗f5 d4 24.♖d2 ♗e5 25.♜e1 ♜e6

White's pieces lack coordination and his rook on h1 is completely cut off. Black can realise his positional advantage in various ways, e.g. 25...♙c6 26.♙b1 ♙b5+ 27.♗g1 d3 followed by ...c5-c4.

26.♙b1 ♙b7

26...♜b3 27.♜c2 ♜b5+, followed by ...d4-d3.

27.♗f2



27...d3!

Black includes the queen in the attack, and shuts out the ♙b1.

28.♜hf1+ c4 29.♗g3 ♗h5+ 30.♗h3 ♗g6 31.g3 ♙c8 32.♜e4 ♜c5 33.g4 ♗gf4+ 34.♜xf4 ♜e2 35.♜c1 ♗xf4+ 36.♜xf4 ♙xf5 37.gxf5

37.♜xf5 ♜c7 38.♜h1 ♜e5 39.♜f4 ♗h5+ 40.♗g3 ♗h3+–+.

37...♜xb2 38.♜e1 ♜f2 39.♜g3 ♜xg3+ 40.hxg3 ♜xb1

White resigned.

43

Anatoly Karpov

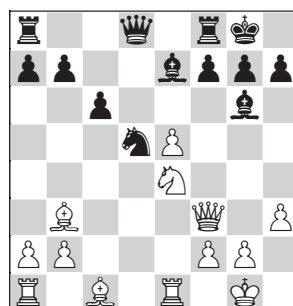
Jan Timman

Amsterdam 1991 (7)

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2725

2630



White's pieces look more active and he also has some space advantage. White strengthened his piece and pawn centre with the move

16.♙f4!

It is not so often that one sees a bishop voluntarily offer itself for exchange by a knight, but here White has realised the subtleties of the position – the piece on d5 is not a mere knight, but an important element in preventing White developing play in various directions.

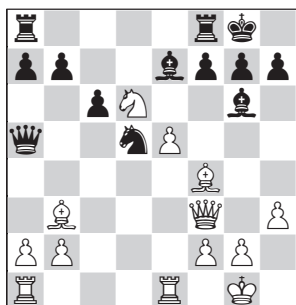
Of course, instead of the developing move, White could also have chosen 16.♜d1, strengthening the pressure on the d-file. The decision taken in the game is more pragmatic – the

chosen move is good, and Black may not see a subtle defence in this non-forcing line.

16... ♖a5

Black resists the temptation, and wrongly! 16... ♘xf4! 17. ♖xf4 ♕c7! 18. ♖ad1 ♔h8 19. ♘d6 ♖ad8, with the idea of ...f7-f6, leads to an inferior, but double-edged position.

17. ♘d6



Now, it is hard to find anything against White's growing pressure on the central lines.

17... ♕xd6

The passed pawn, supported by its pieces, decides the result of the game. Relatively best was to acknowledge the mistake on the previous move by 17... ♘xf4 18. ♖xf4 ♕c7 19. ♖ad1 ♖ad8, when he can still put up some resistance.

18. exd6 ♖fe8 19. ♖xe8+ ♖xe8

20. ♕xd5 cxd5 21. d7 ♖e7

21... ♖d8 22. ♖e3 f6 23. ♖e7+.

22. ♖c1 ♖xd7 23. ♖c8+ ♖d8 24. b4!

A important zwischenzug, depriving Black of a check at e1.

24... ♖b6 25. ♕c7 ♖xc8 26. ♕xb6 axb6 27. ♖xd5

The queenside pawns are indefensible, so there is no chance of a fortress.

27... h6 28. ♖xb7 ♖c1+ 29. ♔h2 ♖c2

30. ♖xb6 ♖xa2 31. ♖d4 1-0

44

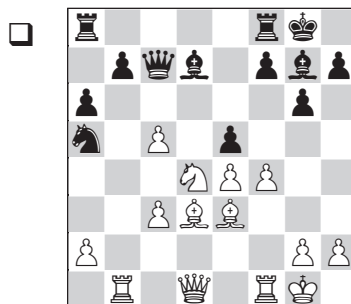
Konstantin Sakaev

2655

Vladimir Belov

2553

Krasnoyarsk ch-RUS 2003 (5)



On the board, we have a typical Grünfeld structure. The white centre has just been subjected to a blow, and he has to decide how to react.

16.f5!

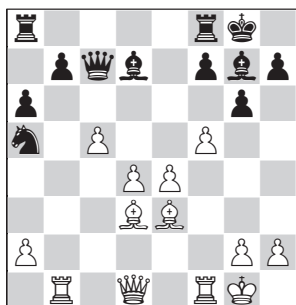
White sacrifices a knight, obtaining in return a powerful pawn group and also good attacking chances on the queenside. The sacrifice is of an intuitive character, as it is not realistic to calculate fully all of the many forcing variations here. There is also a pragmatic element here – it is easier for White to play the position than for Black, who has just suffered an unexpected blow. Mind you, for such a blow to be genuinely effective, rather than merely psychologically, it needs to be correct. In this concrete case, in order to maintain the balance, Black needs to find a decision that is far from obvious, which is extremely difficult in such a complicated position.

Black's idea is revealed by the line 16. fxex5 ♕xe5 17. ♕h6 (on 17. ♘f3, the reply 17... ♕g4 is good) 17... ♕xh2+

18.♔h1 ♕e5! 19.♕xf8 ♖xf8 – despite the exchange down, Black has full positional compensation.

Nor is it very attractive for White to consider the march of the knight via d4-e2-f4-d5, which just takes too much time: 16.♘e2 ♗ad8! 17.fxe5 ♕xe5 18.♘f4 (after 18.h3 ♕e6 19.♗c2 ♘c4 20.♕xc4 ♕xc4, White faces a battle for equality) 18...♕xf4! 19.♖xf4 ♕b5.

16...exd4 17.cxd4



17...♖fe8

A risky but possible alternative is 17...gxf5!?, breaking up the white centre, even at the cost of a marked weakening of the black king, when there are these possible variations: 18.exf5 and now:

A) 18...♖ae8! 19.f6 (interesting is 19.♗d2!?, with sufficient compensation for the piece) 19...♖xe3 20.♗h5 h6 21.♖f5 (equality results from 21.fxg7 ♔xg7 22.♖f6 ♔xf6 23.♗xh6+ ♔e7 24.♗xe3+ ♔d8 25.d5 ♖e8 26.♗g5+ ♔c8 27.c6 ♘xc6 28.dxc6 ♕xc6) 21...♗d8 22.fxg7 ♔xg7 23.♗g4+ ♔h8 24.♗f4 ♖e6 25.d5 ♖g6 26.♖xf7 ♖xf7 27.♗xf7 ♖g7 28.♗f2 – Black needs to defend accurately, because his king is weak;

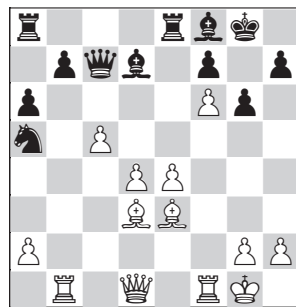
B) Black can also blockade the f5-pawn with 18...♕f6!?. The

position is very rich in possibilities, e.g., 19.d5 (or 19.♖f3 ♖fe8 20.♔h1 ♕c6 21.♖h3 ♖xe3 22.♖xe3 with an unclear struggle) 19...♗e5 20.♗f3 ♖fe8 21.♕f2, with compensation.

18.f6 ♕f8?!

This tempting retreat is a mistake, after which Black is balancing on the edge of the precipice.

Going into the corner with 18...♕h8! does not look very nice at all, because the bishop will remain there, shut in by the f6-pawn, for the rest of the game. However, this was the move he should have chosen. Firstly, White no longer has the idea of exchanging dark-squared bishops via h6, creating mating threats, and secondly, it is far from simple to hold together the white pawn centre. For now, White can play 19.♗e2 or 19.♖b6, supporting the centre, but in both cases, the battle retains a tense and unclear character.



19.♗c1!

Intending to give mate via h6. The move 19.♗d2, with the same idea, fails because of 19...♕b5 20.♕h6 ♕xc5! 21.dxc5 ♖ed8!, and the roles are reversed – Black becomes the attacking side.

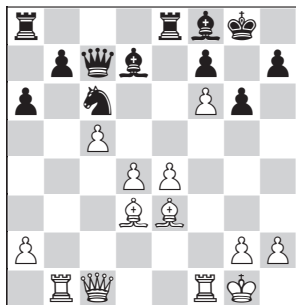
19...♘c6

Let us consider other continuations:

A) 19...♔h8 20.♕h6 ♕g4 (20...♕xh6 21.♖xh6 ♖g8 22.♗f4 g5 23.e5+–) 21.♕xf8 ♖xf8 22.♗h6 ♖g8 23.♗f4 ♗d7 24.e5 ♖ae8 (24...♘c6 25.♗xb7 ♗xb7 26.♗xg4) 25.h3 ♕h5 26.♗e1, followed by ♗h4;

B) 19...♕b5 20.♕xb5 axb5 21.♕h6 ♖e6 (on 21...♗xe4, there follows 22.♕xf8 ♖xf8 23.♗h6+ ♖e8 24.♗be1, with a decisive attack) 22.♕xf8 ♖xf8 23.♗h6+ ♖e8 24.♗xh7 ♖d8. White has a rich choice, with both the aggressive 25.d5, and a quiet, centre-strengthening continuation such as 25.♗fe1 or 25.♗h4, deserving attention.

Quiet moves / prophylaxis in the middle of an attack



20.♔h1!

The king steps away from possible checks, a necessity clearly demonstrated by the variation 20.♕h6 ♘xd4 21.♕xf8 ♖xf8 22.♗h6 ♖e6, and there is not 23.♕c4 because of 23...♗xc5.

20...h5

Freeing the square h7 for the king; there is no other defence to the threat of 21.♕h6.

21.♕f4!

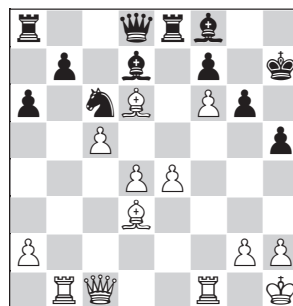
The dark-squared bishop enters the black position from the other side.

White gets nothing from 21.♕h6 ♖h7 22.♕xf8 ♖xf8 23.♗e3 ♖ad8.

21...♗d8

The 'active' 21...♗a5 is most effectively met by 22.♕d6 ♕xd6 23.cxd6 ♖h7 (23...♘xd4 24.♗h6 ♖e6 25.e5, and 26.♕g6) 24.♗xb7 ♗d8 25.♗f5!! ♖g8 26.♖g5, with the irresistible threat of

22.♕d6 ♖h7



23.♗e3

It is hard for Black to do anything about the mass of white pawns and pieces on the dark squares, behind which White can prepare a decisive attack.

Objectively, even stronger was 23.e5, and if 23...♘xd4, then 24.♗xb7. However, White was very reluctant to give the opponent a chance to break up his pawn centre.

23...♕xd6

On 23...♕h6, there would follow the simple 24.♗f2, followed by 25.e4-e5.

24.cxd6 ♕c8?

Passive, and the result of an oversight.

A) White wins beautifully in the event of 24...b5 25.e5 ♗b6 26.♗g5 ♕g4 27.♗f4 ♖h8 28.♗xg4! hxg4 29.e6!;

B) The most tenacious is 24...♖b8
25.e5 ♗xd6 and now:

B1) 26.♖xb7 ♜ad8 27.♗f3 ♘xe5
28.♗xh5+ ♙g8 29.♗h6 ♗f8
30.♗xf8+ ♙xf8 31.dxe5 ♙c8 32.♖b3
♗xe5 33.♙g1 – White's winning
chances are about the same as Black's
chances of drawing;

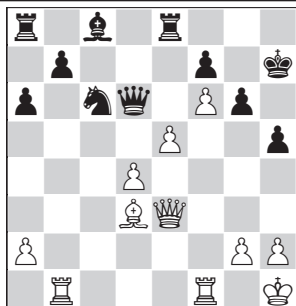
B2) a similar endgame arises after
26.♗f3 ♘xe5 27.♗xh5+ ♙g8 28.dxe5
♗xe5 29.♗h6 ♗f8;

B21) on 30.♗h4 ♖h5 (the threat
was 31.♙g6) 31.♗g3, there is 31...♗b8!
(31...♖h6 32.♖fe1! (after the tempting
32.♖xb7, there is the unexpected
defensive resource 32...♖h3!)
32...♙c6 33.♖e7, and Black is in
trouble) 32.♖f4 g5, with counterplay;

B22) 30.♗xf8+ ♙xf8 31.♖xb7 ♙c6.

25.e5 ♗xd6

Breaking up the king's pawn protection



26.♙g6+!

A simple deciding tactic.

26...fxg6 27.f7 ♗e7 28.fxe8♗
♗xe8 29.♖f6

Black lacks coordination among
his pieces, so a mating attack is
unavoidable.

29...♗e7

On 29...♙g7 there could follow, for
example, 30.♖bf1 ♙e6 31.d5! ♙xd5
32.e6.

30.♖bf1 ♙e6 31.♗e4 ♙f5

Or 31...♖g8 32.d5.

32.♖1xf5 gxf5 33.♗xf5+ ♙g8
34.♖g6+ 1-0

45

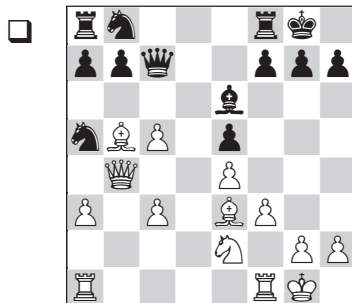
Viswanathan Anand

2810

Wang Hao

2731

Wijk aan Zee 2011 (4)



The game has only just left the
opening stage, and we can draw
some preliminary conclusions.
White has a greater concentration
of pawns and pieces in the centre,
but his coordination is not ideal –
the ♘e2 has limited scope, the
weakness of c4 is noticeable, and
the doubled pawns may soon become
an object of attack. For these
reasons, such positions have for a
long time been considered fine for
Black, but a brilliant idea from the
World Champion forced a complete
re-evaluation of such positions.

16.♘d4!!

Not moving the knight when it is
attacked (as in the previous example)
is striking enough, but actually
putting it en prise is even more so.
Just magnificent! White's assessment
is roughly as follows: Black will have
to return the piece (probably on d5,
for a pair of central pawns), and then

the two bishops and the weakness of the b7-pawn will start to tell.

16...exd4 17.cxd4 ♖bc6 18.♚c3
♜e7

Black is already prepared to return the piece on the square d5, but White can afford not to hurry, and to strengthen his position to the maximum, behind the cover of his pawn centre.

19.♞fd1 ♜ad8 20.♙f2 a6

It was more tenacious at least to take some sort of action against the white centre with 20...b6 or 20...f5.

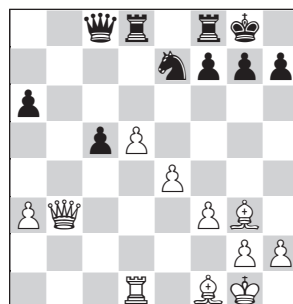
21.♙g3 ♜c8 22.♙f1 b6 23.♞ab1

Due to the hanging position of the knight on a5, Black has no chances.

23...♜b3 24.♞xb3

Also winning is d5 ♜xc5 25.dxe6 – Black loses his pawns.

24...♙xb3 25.♜xb3 bxc5 26.d5



White's central dominance is absolute.

26...♜g6 27.♜b6 f5 28.♙xa6
♜d7 29.♙b5 ♜f7 30.exf5 ♜xf5
31.♜xc5 ♞c8 32.♜d4 ♞fd8 33.a4

Black resigned.

Additional material

Botvinnik-Euwe, The Hague-Moscow Wch (match-tournament) 1948

Bronstein-Boleslavsky, Moscow 1950

Bronstein-Ljubojevic, Petropolis 1973

Euwe-Smyslov, The Hague-Moscow Wch (match-tournament) 1948

Geller-Smyslov, Zurich 1953

Geller-Smyslov, Amsterdam 1956

Botvinnik-Capablanca, Amsterdam 1938

Botvinnik-Keres, Moscow 1952

Denker-Botvinnik, USA-USSR 1945

Tal-Ghiteacu, Miskolc 1963

Kasparov-Timman, Hilversum (match/4) 1985

Kasparov-Timman, Hilversum (match/6) 1985

Kasparov-Andersson, Belfort 1988

Jussupow-Kasparov, Barcelona 1989

Karpov-Kasparov, Amsterdam 1988

Karpov-Kasparov, Belfort 1988

Kasparov-Karpov, Seville Wch (match/2) 1987

Kasparov-Karpov, Seville Wch (match/4) 1987

Karpov-Kasparov, Seville Wch (match/5) 1987

Karpov-Kasparov, Seville Wch (match/7) 1987

Karpov-Kasparov, Seville Wch (match/9) 1987

Karpov-Kasparov, Lyon Wch (match/17) 1990