

Andras Toth

Chess Principles Reloaded

Centre – Development – King safety

Chessable 2025

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General introduction

Welcome to *Chess Principles Reloaded* – a book that brings together the essence of chess education through the three most fundamental pillars of the game: the centre, development, and king safety.

These principles are the lifeblood of chess. They are timeless, universal, and form the foundation of every great game ever played. As a chess coach, player, and content creator, I have spent countless hours studying, teaching, and, most importantly, rethinking how we approach the learning of these core ideas. That journey led to the creation of the CPR (Chess Principles Reloaded) courses on Chessable – *CPR: Centre*, *CPR: Development*, and *CPR: King safety* – each of which became a popular and much-liked cornerstone in the learning path of thousands of chess players worldwide.

This book is the next evolution of those ideas. Whether you are a Chessable veteran or you encounter the concept of chess principles for the first time, my aim here is the same: to offer simple, clear and practical guidance you can apply in your very next game.

The core idea behind the CPR courses is not memorizing tons of theory or flashy tricks. It is rebuilding the fundamentals of your chess and learning to think like a chess player. It is about understanding why certain moves make sense and how to apply principled thinking in your own games – from the very first moves, through the fight for the centre, to safe king positioning and smooth development.

What I have seen time and again, even among experienced club players, is that these principles are often learned early on but later forgotten or ignored. Players get lost in openings, worry about tricks, or chase plans without structure, all the while wondering why things aren't clicking. They don't see the forest for the trees. The answer, more often than not, lies in a return to the basics – to the CPR principles.

Speaking of the centre – I famously call it, 'Centah!' – the unique twist of the mixed Australian-Hungarian accent has made it one of the most memorable (and quoted) parts of the CPR video courses. Over time, it has taken on a life of its own and become something of a trademark. If yelling 'Centah!' helps you remember to seize

control of those key squares in the opening, then I'm more than happy to wear the badge.

You don't need to be a grandmaster to understand good chess. You need clarity, structure and repetition with understanding. This book is designed with those needs in mind. Whether you are a beginner trying to navigate the opening stage with confidence or a club player looking to eliminate common errors, *Chess Principles Reloaded* will be your training partner, guiding you toward clearer thinking and better decision-making in every phase of the game.

Let's reboot your chess thinking. Let's reload the principles.

See you in the Centah!

IM Andras Toth

Canberra, Australia 2025

CHAPTER 3

Fighting back: reclaiming lost territory

Many openings – particularly those chosen by Black – concede part or all of the centre to the opponent. These openings can be particularly challenging, as failing to adopt the correct mindset often leads to countless losses without understanding the real cause, with the blame frequently placed on the opening itself.

The key to playing such openings successfully lies in recognizing that the choice to cede the centre demands a rigorous and focused effort to counteract the opponent's control. This requires actively challenging the centre to compensate for the initial passivity of the position. Openings like the King's Indian Defence, Grünfeld Defence, French Defence, and Pirc Defence exemplify this dynamic, where fighting back against the opponent's central dominance is critical.

Below, we explore powerful examples demonstrating how these structures should be handled. These games highlight how adopting an aggressive, centre-oriented strategy can lead to success, showcasing the importance of initiative and dynamic play in these positions.

In the past three examples in the previous chapter, we saw how a sizeable pawn formation in the centre can become the main asset in building up an initiative, an attack, and ultimately scoring a fairly easy victory. Now, we are going to examine what to do when our opponents try to employ the same strategy. We are going to analyse the potential counter-measures and strategies to counter our opponent's ambitious central plans.

Game 9 King's Indian Defence

Rene Letelier

Bobby Fischer

Leipzig Olympiad 1960

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♙g7 4.e4 0-0

An interesting move order that invites White to overextend in the centre. Generally speaking, we love to kick out developed knights with central pushes, but here Black is well set up for a beefy counterpunch with a bishop on g7 and ...d6 and ...c5 ready to go.

5.e5!? ♖e8 6.f4



This game is slightly different from the previous ones in that it is quite clear that White has overextended in the centre. Consequently, the most important component in Black's play should be an uncompromised aggression targeted at the middle at all costs! Fischer delivers on this mandate with characteristic clarity:

6...d6!

A simple and very logical move. The easiest target is always the one that is the furthest advanced. Now, Black is ready to develop his c8-bishop and also prepared to undertake further action in the centre.

7.♙e3

White is trying to develop and support his impressive pawn formation whilst denying Black the ...c5 break. Black needs to strike while the iron is hot.

7...c5!



A great pawn sacrifice which intends to rip the pawns apart. This is a very common procedure when playing against pawns nicely linked together. Material is of no concern for Black, as the centre is much more important than a pawn or two!

8.dxc5

Mission accomplished: White has accepted the inevitable separation of his pawns in the middle, and is happy to keep the extra pawn.

8...♘c6!

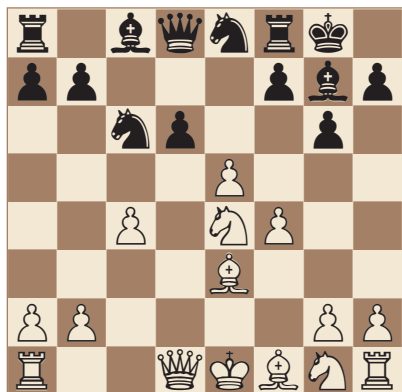
Another awesome move that emphasizes Black's desire to fully take charge of the central squares. Black would, of course, love to see a mass of trades on d6 now as it would allow him to regroup his poorly placed e8-knight too.

9.cxd6 exd6 10.♙e4?

Letelier is trying his best to avoid taking on d6 and instead centralizes his knight. It would be a good policy in more ideal

circumstances, but White is too underdeveloped to maintain such a posture for long.

10. ♖f3 was more natural and preferable.



10... ♕f5!

Another striking example of how simple and obvious moves are very often the most effective tools to enhance one's position. By connecting his queen and rook, Black is now threatening to take on e5, hitting the white knight with a tempo too. Black is already way ahead.

11. ♘g3

11. ♘xd6 would have been well met by 11... ♘xd6 12. ♖xd6 ♖e8! with the idea of blasting open the centre with ...f6, exposing the white king and exploiting Black's huge lead in development. The pawn on e5 seems ripe for capturing, but Fischer has other ideas:

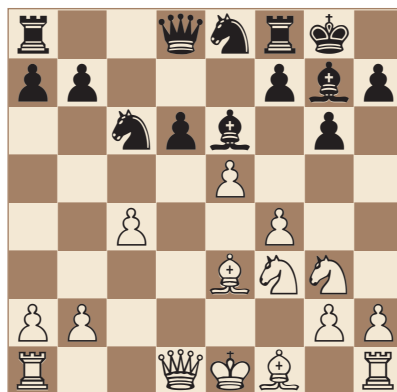
11... ♕e6!

Of course, Black should prefer the initiative and the dynamic

advantages, instead of grabbing the pawn back. The tension on the e5-pawn is still tremendous and White is nowhere near developed enough to sufficiently deal with it.

11... dxe5?? 12. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 13. ♘xf5 gxf5 14. ♕c5 would have turned the tide instantly!

12. ♘f3



Black has a number of options available now, but one move stands out as maintaining Black's initiative and lead in development:

12... ♖c7!

Fischer constantly refuses to allow his opponent an endgame scenario. He tempts White to take on d6, which would bring disastrous consequences along the e-file.

13. ♖b1

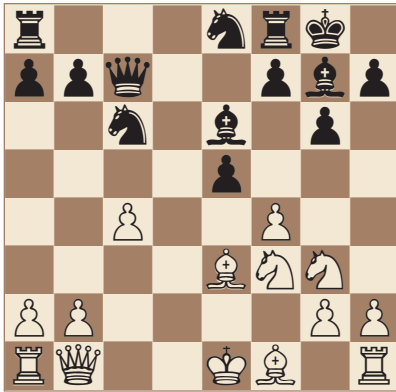
White's whole set-up turns out to be a huge failure. His centre is gone, his king is stuck in the middle and the developmental lag is quite depressing too. Black

is dictating the tempo of the game now.

13.exd6? ♞xd6 14.♚c2 ♜fe8 and White's collapse is inevitable.

13...dxe5

The right time to capture the pawn as now we are also attacking f4, and White has no good developing moves available.



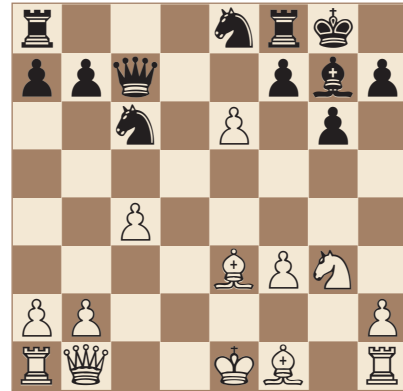
14.f5!

A rather annoying counter-thrust by White, who is now on the mission of keeping the files and diagonals closed. The (future) World Champion rises to the challenge and responds with a counter-punch of his own:

14...e4!

A super instructive move. Instead of giving in to the opponent's will, Fischer puts his foot down and immediately reclaims the right to be the aggressor! Since Black is way ahead in development, complications should favour him!

15.fxe6 exf3 16.gxf3



After a few moves and some trades, there is virtually nothing left of White's once terrifying centre. However, the game is not over yet: further accuracy is required.

16...f5!

A very powerful, space-grabbing move which comes with an instant game-winning threat. White's knight on g3 is now totally sidelined and Black is intending to retake on e6 under far better circumstances.

16...fxe6 would have been worse as it blocks the very important e-file.

17.f4

As White constantly has to deal with imminent threats, his king has become very vulnerable. It is now Black's turn to build an attack...

17...♞f6!

A very common theme in chess: when you are ahead in a certain facet of the game (in this case, development), the simplest way to increase your lead is to

further your given advantage! The black pieces will be ready to strike every moment now. Also, note how, just like in the Carlsen game two chapters ago, White has nothing but a distant rumble of his once glorious centre and it is Black who enjoys more space and better coordination.

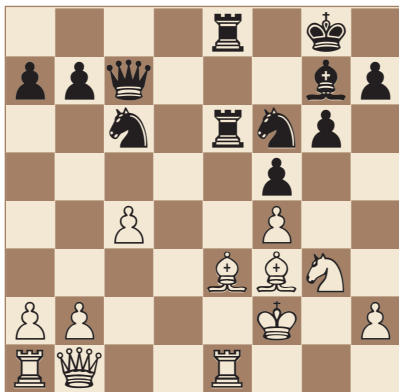
18. ♖e2

White is desperately trying his best to salvage the game, but the position is beyond saving.

18... ♜fe8

The same old mantra: simple, principled chess is almost always the best. Black is now centralizing his heavy pieces, setting up deadly threats along the e-file.

19. ♕f2 ♜xe6 20. ♖e1 ♜ae8 21. ♕f3

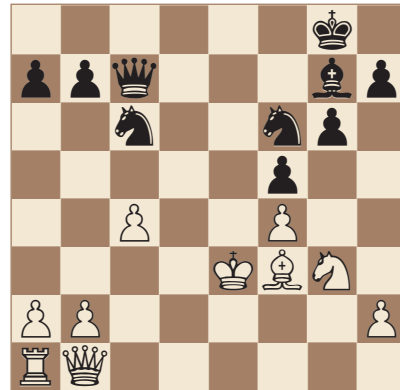


White has just finished building something that resembles a holdable position when lightning strikes from the blue. Fischer silences his opponent's hopes with:

21... ♜xe3!!

A very logical conclusion to a perfectly conducted game. Black, fittingly, finishes the game in the middle with a beautiful flourish.

22. ♜xe3 23. ♕xe3



And now the famous finale:

23... ♕xf4+!!

A fabulous queen sac to complete the masterpiece. The queen is immune to capture due to 24... ♕h6# whereas retreating moves lose to the quick entry of the cavalry by ... ♘g4 and ... ♘d4. White gave up.

Game 10 King's Indian Defence

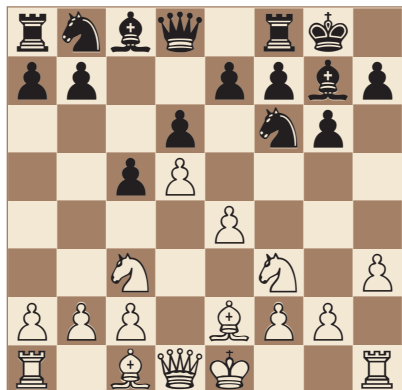
Shota Azaladze 2332

Levan Aroshidze 2531

Georgian Championship, Tbilisi 2007

In this game we are going to see a similar Benoni-esque structure to what we saw in the Van Wely game. Here, however, Black demonstrates a perfect understanding of how to play against a strong pawn centre!

**1.d4 ♖f6 2.♗f3 c5 3.d5 g6 4.♘c3
♙g7 5.e4 d6 6.h3 0-0 7.♙e2**



White's unambitious set-up – ♙e2 and h3 together – looks weird, to say the least, and is asking for a refutation.

Apart from ...e7-e6, Black has a very aggressive and highly effective way to contest the centre:

7...b5!

A very instructive motif, the outline of which is vaguely reminiscent of what we saw in the Carlsen game, and it was also the concept missed by Black in the Van Wely-Van der Marel game. When we are playing against an advanced central pawn formation, very often the best policy is to try to undermine it from the wing. The text move threatens to kick the c3-knight, and so White has to react. Black is already seizing the initiative by trading a side pawn for a central one!

8.♘xb5

If White were to take the bait with 8.♙xb5 – given that the alternatives were equally unattractive – Black had planned 8... ♗xe4! 9.♘xe4 ♖a5+ 10.♘c3 ♙xc3+ 11.bxc3 ♖xb5.

8...♗xe4

Black has partly shattered White's centre already, but his work is by no means done!

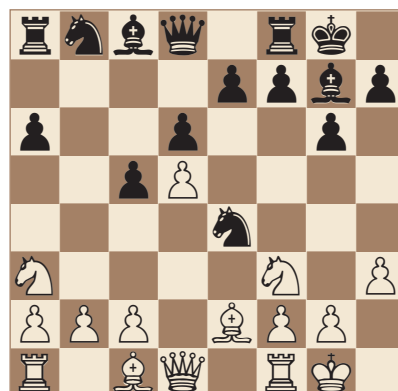
9.0-0

Having managed to trade the b-pawn for White's e-pawn is a huge achievement, but further accurate play is needed to increase the lead.

9...a6!

Although it is only a small detail, this is still an important move. Black wastes no time in sidelining the white knight, from where it has no influence on the main events that will take place in the middle of the board later.

10.♗a3



Black consistently pursues his central agenda:

10...e5!

Black instantly utilizes his pawn majority in the centre, The engine slightly favours the developing move 10...♘d7, but the text is much more to the point as, again, Black is hoping to trade the central pawn on d5 for the f7-pawn! (It is an obscure and somewhat paradoxical concept, but take a look at the board after the exchange and spot which pawns are gone...)

11.dxe6 fxe6

This is super-ambitious. The more conservative 11...♙xe6 is objectively somewhat better. After 12.♙d3 d5! Black rules the centre, and hence the whole board!

12.c3



A very important moment in the game. While it is tempting to settle for a 'can't be wrong' type of move like 12...♙b7, Black grabs the bull by the horns!

12...d5!

Focusing on the centre before continuing development! Black

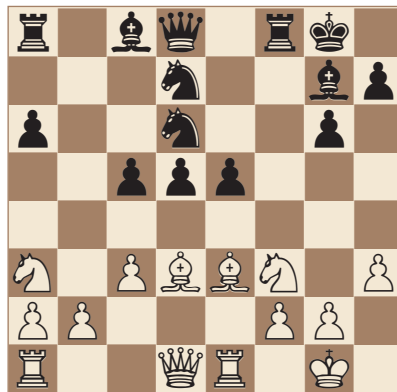
fortifies the knight on e4 and begins to build a mighty and fearsome pawn formation. The times when White had pawns on e4 and d4 are now little more than historical curiosities!

13.♙d3 ♘d6 14.♙e3 ♘d7 15.♙e1

It may have been tempting to play 15...e5 here, but Black chose:

15...♙b7

In contrast to the situation when we played 12...d5, now it is time to practice caution. Black is not afraid of the 'weakness' of the e6-pawn. White is in no position to generate realistic threats and so this developing move is definitely best. The two black bishops exert tremendous pressure towards the centre. Not 15...e5?



analysis diagram

16.♙c4!! A fantastic counter-punch, punishing Black for leaving the d5-pawn a bit too vulnerable: 16...♘xc4 17.♘xc4 dxc4 18.♙d5+.

16.♙g5

16. ♖g5?! ♜f6 with a subsequent ...e6-e5 gives Black a sizeable advantage again.

16... ♖e8 17. ♕h4 ♜f5 18. ♜c2 ♜xh4 19. ♜xh4



Now we can return to the question of whether to play ...e6-e5.

19...e5

The position is ripe for this move. Black is now in full control of the centre and White has nothing with which to hold it back. Due to the pawn exchanges earlier in the game, Black now has e- and d-pawns whereas White has no central pawns at all... a fantastic transition compared to the early opening phase of the game.

20.c4

White is trying to make the pawn structure rigid by forcing ...d5-d4, creating a blockade on e4, but this is all in vain.

20... ♖f7! 21. ♖d2

There seems to be an abundance of choices for Black

here. Aroshidze pushes forward with:

21...e4!

Black continues to push White back. Note that ...d5-d4 in contrast would have been an awful mistake: 21...d4 22. ♕e4! and the pawn storm has been successfully halted, and White can block all the weak light squares.

Whenever possible, try to keep your pawns fluid (side by side) rather than allowing gaps between them.

22. ♕f1

And the logical follow-up is...

22...d4



The central domination is complete: White is already suffocating miserably. Among the many threats, White has to worry about 23...g5.

23.g3 g5 24. ♜g2

24. ♖xg5 ♖xf2+ is terminal.

Aroshidze completes the picture with:

24... ♜e5



The last piece joins the centre, with further deadly threats. White had nothing better to do than to throw in the towel. The once glorious white centre is long gone and the furthest developed piece is on the second rank... this is a textbook example of what can happen when one plays without any focus on controlling the centre. From move 7, Black had one and only one agenda, which he carried out perfectly: CENTRE!!!

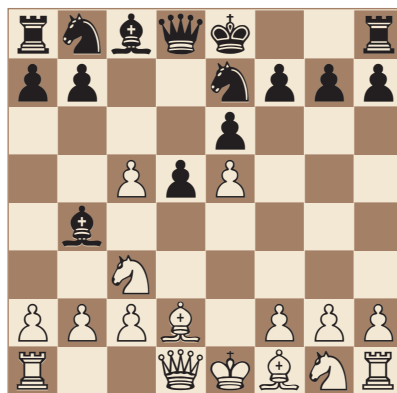
Game 11 French Defence
Mohammed Al Sayed 2411
Valerij Filippov 2612
 Dubai 2002

Let's continue with the topic of undermining the centre with a French Defence game, an opening that is known to be a counter-punching system. As mentioned before, when playing a passive opening, it is vital to approach it with a very energetic and aggressive mindset.

Otherwise, we will lose games without ever firing a shot!

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e5 c5 5.♙d2 ♘e7 6.dxc5!?

White voluntarily surrenders his pawn chain in the centre and now it is Black's turn to prove this concept unsound. The more commonly seen move in this position is 6.♗b5.



6...♗bc6!

An excellent response. Black ignores the c5-pawn (it can be captured at any time) and instead begins to pressure the other central bastion, the e5-pawn.

7.♙g4

White, in response, throws his own counter-punch. The queen targets the g7-pawn – a very typical motif in the French – and indirectly defends the e5-pawn by keeping tabs on the b4-bishop.

7...0-0

Yet again, simple, principled chess is good chess. By securing

his king, Black is now prepared to fight.

8.♘f3

Not 8.♙h6? ♘f5.



Black now needs to find the most effective way to contest the centre and, at the same time, eliminate any hope of a kingside attack White might be dreaming about.

8...f5!?

8...f6! would have been best as this would not have given White the chance to bail out with 9.♖g3.

As 9.exf6 was played, it led to the same position anyway:

9.exf6

White doesn't realize that the opening of the centre is no longer in his interest!

9.♖g3 would have been the lesser evil.

9...♙xf6 10.♙g5

White is desperately trying to stay ahead in development and secure his king, but Black is ready to strike!



10...e5!

Black is already dominating the centre! In the ensuing complications, Black no longer needs to worry about material. His tremendous centre and superior development will take care of everything.

Once again, I would like to encourage the reader to observe the tremendous change that has happened in the centre between moves 5-10. A complete ownership change in the middle!

11.♙h4 ♙xc3+ 12.bxc3

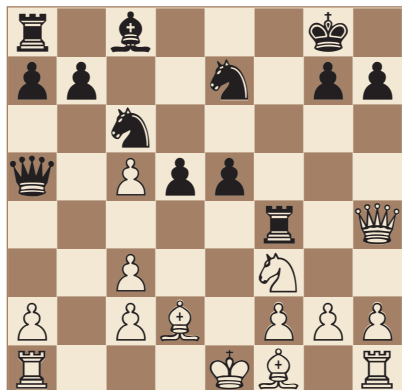
Black finds the most effective way to deal with the hanging f6-rook:

12...♙a5!

The most effective way is, of course, to ignore it! As is often the case, aggression is best met by aggression. Black is happy to begin his assault against the white king as it really is struggling to find reliable defenders.

13.♙xf6

13. ♖d2 is beautifully met by
13... ♜f4!!.



analysis diagram

This is another testament to the strength of the e5/d5 pawn formation. It feels like Black can get away with virtually anything! 14. ♖g3 ♜g4 15. ♖h3 ♜e4+ and White is dead lost.

13... ♜xc3+ 14. ♖e2



White's king is now occupying a particularly awkward spot, and with accurate play, Black can now finish the game off rapidly.

14... ♜f5!!

Of course, yet another centralizing move – hardly a surprise by now. The knight is creating deadly threats and the game is essentially over.

15. ♖a4 ♜fd4+ 16. ♜xd4 ♜xd4+

17. ♖d1 ♜d7! 18. ♖xd7 ♖xc2+

White gets mated by force (19. ♖e1 ♖c3+ 20. ♖d1 ♖xa1+ 21. ♖d2 ♖b2+ 22. ♖e1 ♖c1#), so he resigned.

Black has followed the recipe perfectly: if you play a passive opening, double the aggression!

Game 12 Grünfeld Indian Defence

Svetozar Gligoric

Vasily Smyslov

Kyiv teams 1959

This game provides a model example of an alternative approach to contesting a large central structure. Rather than launching a full-on assault with the intention of complete destruction (as seen in the Fischer game), we will observe a strategy focused on creating a blockade and forcing the structure to transition from fluid to rigid.

In a fluid structure, pawns are free to advance (as seen in the games by Jones and Van Wely), while in a rigid structure, pawns are unable to move forward due to 'gaps' between them. Following the teachings of Nimzowitsch, we can often turn these 'gaps' into

optimal outposts, blockading the opponent's pawns and rendering them completely useless.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7.♙c4 c5 8.♘e2 0-0 9.0-0 ♘c6 10.♙e3 ♚c7 11.♚c1 ♜d8 12.h3 b6 13.f4



A typical Grünfeld middlegame has arisen: White has a massive pawn centre, but Black manages to counterbalance it by putting significant pressure on the d4-pawn.

That said, with the f2-f4 push, Black now finds an additional strategy...

13...e6!

This little move takes the sting out of both f4-f5 and d4-d5, but that is only part of the reason why it is the best move here. It also builds the foundation of the main plan that is soon to come.

14.♚e1

White is obviously gearing up for a kingside attack. ♚d1-e1-h4

is a stock-standard method of regrouping the queen in many openings.

Right now, however, Black has nothing to worry about, so it is time to build our position.

14...♙b7

Clearly the best placement of the bishop, targeting the centre and pressuring the e4-pawn in particular.

Note how all the black pieces are directed towards the centre, following the main concept of the Grünfeld Indian Defence: surrender the centre but then contest it immediately!

15.♚f2?

This timid move allows Black to carry out his plan perfectly. The more aggressive f4-f5 was somewhat better, but even there, Black has nothing to fear. Black can now carry out his main plan, shutting down all potential attacks:

15...♘a5

The first step: kicking out the c4-bishop and opening up the a8-h1 diagonal for the bishop on b7.

It is becoming more and more apparent that, although White has a fearsome central phalanx, the pieces behind it are not well-placed enough to create serious threats.

16.♙d3

Now the time has come to carry out the main idea of our defensive set-up!



16...f5!

An excellent move that instantly shatters all hopes of a central or kingside attack.

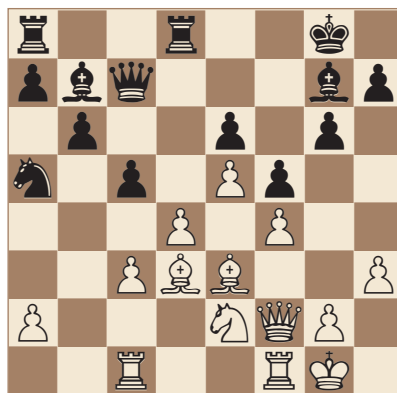
Note that it is typical that when we face a wide pawn centre, we tend to target the middle pawn. This is for two reasons:

- 1) Usually, it is the least defended (like in the given example); and
- 2) Because forcing the middle pawn to go forward creates the largest number of weak squares in the centre. For example, imagine that if we allowed White to play f4-f5, it would not have weakened any squares. As an additional effect of playing f5, however, we have stopped the f4-pawn forever, which means that the knight on e2 and, even more importantly, the bishop on e3, has extremely limited scope for aggression. This defensive mechanism is a very standard operation in various openings including the Nimzo-Indian, Closed Sicilian, etc.

17.e5

White opts to close the centre, after which Black obtains easy play on the light squares and the queenside. The alternative 17.exf5 would have led to a comfortable position for Black, although with a noticeably smaller advantage after 17...exf5 18.♖h2 ♜ac8 etc.

If 17.♘g3 ♞d7.



After 17.e5, the centre has transformed entirely, and this transformation heavily favours Black as now he has a fabulous outpost on d5. Note that White does not have an equivalent outpost on e4. Moreover, the bishop on b7 has become the best piece on the board!

We just need one more step to perfect the central strategy:

17...c4!

Black disallows any funny business that may have occurred from the tension between the d4- and c5-pawns. In the resulting position, White remains utterly planless

whilst Black can freely build up his position as he has play both in the centre and on the queenside.

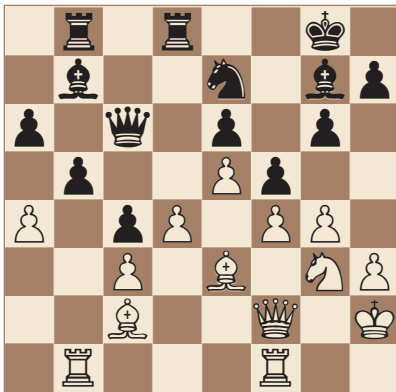
18.♙c2

The next step is to relocate the clumsy a5-knight to the best possible square:

18...♞c6!

Black's position is nearly perfect except for the a5-knight. Needless to say, its ultimate destination is in the centre... the knight will now unstoppably reach d5 and Black will achieve a commanding position.

19.g4 ♘e7 20.♚h2 ♛c6 21.♞g3 b5 22.a4 a6 23.♞b1 ♜ab8



Black has achieved a great position. The rest of the game is outside the scope of this book and so I will provide the rest without commentary.

Black went on to win after a topsy-turvy middlegame with mistakes on both sides.

Black's central strategy is one to keep in mind though, as it is a main operation in many openings. Some further games that come to mind to understand this concept are Jussupow-Karpov, Linares 1993, and Spassky-Portisch, Mexico City 1980.

24.♙d2 bxa4 25.♞a1 ♙a8

26.♙xa4 ♛c7 27.♞a2 ♞b6

28.gxf5 exf5 29.♙c1 ♞d5 30.♞e2

a5 31.♙c2 ♞b3 32.♙xb3 cxb3

33.♞a4 ♙f8 34.♙b2 ♞e3 35.♞fa1

♞c4 36.♞g3 ♙e7 37.♞f1 ♛c6

38.♞xc4 ♛h1+ 39.♙g3 h5

And White resigned.

CHAPTER 10

The subtleties of development

A very commonly occurring mistake at club level is that although the player is aware of the need to develop their pieces, they choose the wrong square and, just as commonly, the wrong piece!

In this chapter, we're going to analyse in detail what makes certain developing patterns and set-ups very potent and coherent, while others are rather disjointed and powerless. The 'how' and 'when' are two of the most important questions we concern ourselves with during the development phase of the game, and I intend to give you useful guidelines to help you answer these questions.

Game 38 Dutch Defence

Geza Maroczky

Saviely Tartakower

Teplice 1922

1.d4 e6 2.c4 f5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.a3!?

Maroczky wants to prevent 4...♗b4.

4...♗e7 5.e3 0-0 6.♗d3 d5 7.♘f3 c6 8.0-0 ♘e4 9.♖c2

Somehow White's set-up just does not add up. Almost all of his pieces are directed towards the e4-square, but White can't contest the e4-knight and so he is badly lacking a plan.

9...♗d6 10.b3 ♘d7 11.♗b2

And so we find ourselves in a situation where the white army is fully mobilized and yet somehow directionless. This is a textbook case of having a lot of 'pretty pieces' but not much to do with them.

In contrast, Black has fewer pieces developed, but we

clearly see the outline of a kingside attack with ...♖f8-f6-h6, ...♗d8-e8-h5, ...♘d7-f6, etc.



11...♗f6 12.♗fe1

12.♘e2 was necessary here, so that White could jump to e5 if need be. 12.♗fe1 was a typical case of what I would call moving wood from A to B, but definitely not developing, as it serves no purpose and also ignores Black's intentions.

12...♖h6!

It turns out that Black has very serious threats and White is too late to go for the neutralizing ♟e2 followed by ♞f3-e5 , shutting the d6-bishop out of the attack! White's very pretty set-up is now quite incapable of dealing with Black's plan. White's development has been misguided due to the following reasons: 1) Although the bishop on b2 is technically well placed on the long diagonal, the knight on c3 is blocking its path, and thus, the bishop has no impact on the vital e5-square; 2) White is over-attacking e4 without being able to trade the pesky black knight; 3) An exchange on e4 would increase Black's space advantage in the centre and kingside. However, White also can't hope to play for f2-f3, as the removal of his knight from f3 would lead to an instant collapse on h2.

In summary, this is a textbook case of an optically nice but practically very clumsy set-up.

13.g3 ♖f6

13...♞df6 would have been more to the point, with the idea of ...♞g4.

14.♙f1 g5 15.♞ad1?

White is intent on finishing his development in a perfect fashion. However, here we witness a huge difference! Whilst Kasparov's 23.♞ad1 against Andersson was a very natural move that had multiple

benefits – pin along the d-file, rook lift possibilities, etc. – here Maroczy's move is purely a move to please the eye, while it has no practical value at all!

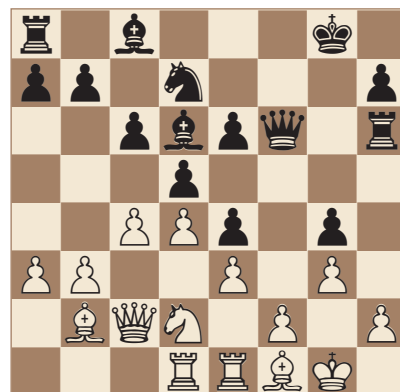


White has an optically perfect and fully completed development, yet he is on the verge of losing against a 'half' army!

15...g4!

Black's kingside attack keeps on gaining momentum whilst White's nicely developed pieces can do nothing but watch.

16.♞xe4 fxe4 17.♞d2



White's set-up is still looking perfect, but the truth is that he is totally incapable of meeting the needs of his position with his optically nice development, while Black's awkward pieces are ready to move in for the kill!

17...♖xh2!

A very thematic and effective sacrifice that shatters the defensive lines of the white king. Although the majority of the black queenside is still at home, White's king is so utterly defenceless that Black's few well-developed pieces can easily finish the job!

17...♖f5 is pointed out by the heartless engine as an even better option where Black keeps building up the attack with ...♘f6, ... ♙d7, ...♗f8, etc. – ironically, fully completing development!

18.♙xh2 ♖xf2+ 19.♙h1

19.♙g2 would have lost to 19...♘f6! 20.♖c3 ♖xg3+ 21.♙g1 ♖h2+ 22.♙f1 ♘h5.

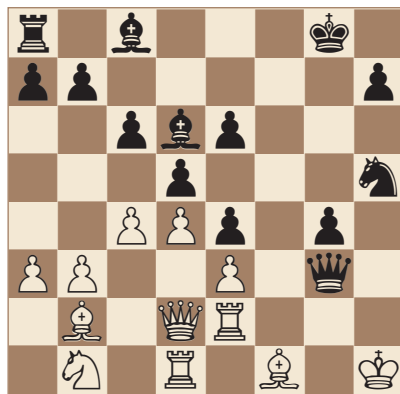


White believes that his defence can withstand the attack presented by a few black pieces. Indeed, 19...♖xg3 seems to offer little, but captures are not compulsory, are they?

19...♘f6!!

An excellent developing move! It turns out that whilst the white army may look developed, there is no harmony among his pieces and they are unable to fulfil their defensive duties. The pin along the second rank makes things even harder, of course.

20.♗e2 ♖xg3 21.♘b1 ♘h5 22.♖d2



White is struggling to coordinate his pieces and get some defenders across to the kingside. Black has all the time in the world, so...

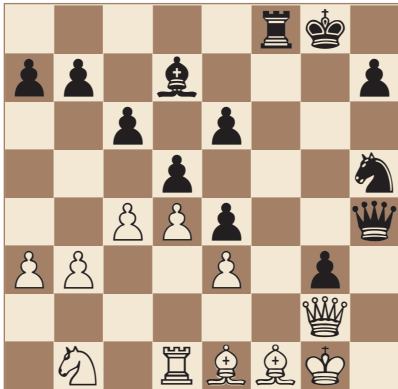
22...♙d7!

... we develop and bring the rook into the game as well! Powerful and simple play, where, just like in the Gambit chapter, we do not look at the material count. That's just painted wood!

**23. ♖f2 ♜h4+ 24. ♔g1 ♙g3 25. ♙c3
 ♙xf2+ 26. ♜xf2 g3 27. ♜g2 ♜f8**

After all, Black finishes his development and with this last piece he creates a game-winning threat!

28. ♙e1



In this overwhelming position, Tartakower cashed in too soon and played

28... ♜xf1+?,

which was still good enough for a win.

There was, however, a cunning way to build the attack a step further, in order to achieve a far more efficient knockout:

28... ♜g5!! 29. ♜d2 e5! (the last preparatory move before the final strike) 30. dxe5 ♜f2 31. ♙xf2 gxf2+ 32. ♙xf2 ♜g3+ 33. ♙e2 ♙g4#.

29. ♙xf1 e5 30. ♔g1 ♙g4 31. ♙xg3 ♜xg3 32. ♜e1 ♜f5 33. ♜f2 ♜g5 34. dxe5 ♙f3+ 35. ♙f1 ♜g3+ 0-1

Although this game features a fair number of mistakes, it also perfectly models how

an aesthetically perfect-looking army can actually be totally unprepared for a fight. Remember that it is not enough to develop – we need to develop with intention!

Game 39 Bogo-Indian Defence

Kevin Spraggett 2550

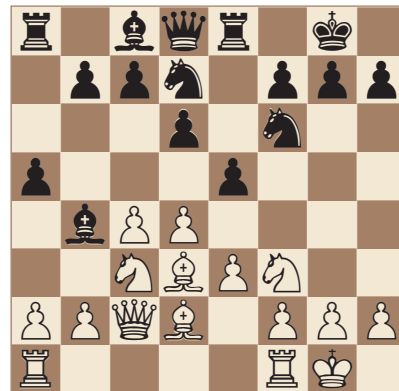
Vasily Smyslov 2595

Candidates Tournament, Montpellier 1985

1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♘f3 ♙b4+ 4. ♙d2 a5 5. ♘c3 0-0 6. e3 d6 7. ♜c2 ♜bd7 8. ♙d3 e5 9. 0-0

This game is another shocking example of how badly things can go wrong with an army that is developed on paper but, in fact, is not able to function as one due to its lack of coordination.

9... ♜e8



A very natural and logical move that floats the idea of an ...e5-e4 thrust. Although the c8-bishop is clearly undeveloped, it is also apparent that the d7-knight has

no good squares to go to and so Black, logically, prioritizes other pieces for the time being! Observe how in many openings the last piece to develop is the queenside bishop. It is often tricky to determine where this piece should be placed and so delaying its development is a wise course.

10.e4

White takes the bait and instantly lands in a slightly inferior position. In the resulting structure, the bishop on d3 and queen on c2 are awkwardly placed and the d2-bishop would also prefer to sit on either e3 or b2. All in all, White is developed, but not in a productive way.

10.♘g5! h6 11.♘ge4 was preferable, after which the white army works very nicely together.

10...exd4!

A very logical response. After this trade, the central dark squares, e5 and c5 in particular, will serve as springboards for the black pieces, whereas the uncoordinated white army will struggle to find meaningful squares and plans. The d3-bishop and c2-queen duo is especially clumsy, as the bishop is blocking the d-file. The bishop is an easy target from both e5 and c5, and its only function is to cover the e4-pawn, which in the Maroczy Bind is almost always done by the far better f2-f3

pawn push that also covers the g4-square. The queen, in turn, performs no positive duties at all – she only blocks the retreat of the misplaced bishop.

11.♙xd4 c6 12.♝ae1



White has completed his development while Black still has a poorly placed knight on d7 and an undeveloped bishop and rook on c8 and a8. And yet, Black stands better! This is due to the fact that, although the white pieces are developed, they are not well-placed to target anything and also fail to accomplish any positional plans. It is tricky to see how the white army could improve its positioning, whereas Black is just getting started!

12...♞e5!

This centralizes the knight, tickles the d3-bishop and the c4-pawn, and opens the diagonal for the c8-bishop. Note that White does not have a single piece on the kingside,

which opens up potential tactical motifs for Black based on the not-so-distant future vulnerability of his king!

13.h3

White is trying to keep the enemy knights away from the juicy g4-square, but this is also a weakening move. Black immediately sets about trying to exploit this timid move.

13...♙c5!

The bishop has done its duty on b4 and is now relocating to a far more important diagonal, aiming at the knight and beyond.

14.♙e3

White finally relocates the bishop to the right square and seemingly achieves a more harmonious set-up, but this actually turns out to be a losing blunder!

14.♘b3 ♙b6 15.♙e3 a4! 16.♘c1 ♙a5 and Black retains a better position with annoying pressure.



14...♙xh3

White has nothing to show for the loss of the pawn, and so, although somewhat prematurely, he called it a day. A fascinating demonstration of completed, yet inharmonious development.

15.gxh3 ♙xd4 16.♙xd4 ♘f3+ 17.♙g2 ♘xd4 is not really playable on this level.

Game 40 Sicilian Defence

Istvan Borocz

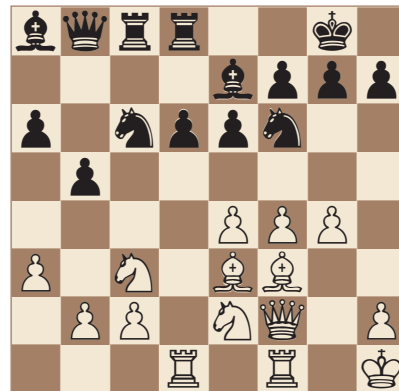
2415

Andras Adorjan

2525

Balatonbereny 1996

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4
4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♙e2 e6
7.O-O ♙e7 8.f4 O-O 9.♙h1 ♖c7
10.♖e1 b5 11.♙f3 ♙b7 12.a3 ♜e8
13.♙e3 ♘c6 14.♞d1 ♞ac8 15.♖g3
♞ed8 16.♖f2 ♖b8 17.♘de2 ♙a8
18.g4



In the position in which we join the game, White is already somewhat passive by most Sicilian standards. In this ♙e2 Scheveningen set-up, White has

played much too hesitantly. He held back the standard attacking idea of g2-g4 and instead played moves like 14.♖ad1 and 17.♘de2, neither of which has any purpose in this structure. Although White is finely developed on paper, the reality is that his attack should already be happening on the kingside at the expense of forcing some black pieces to passivity, thus affecting the value of their development. This is why an earlier g4-g5 push was necessary, to push back the f6-knight.

As things stand, Black will strike before White has a chance to regroup for his own attack:

18...b4!

A very important insertion, before the real fight begins...

18...d5 19.exd5 ♘xd5 20.♘xd5 exd5 21.c3 leaves Black with an isolated pawn and little play.

19.axb4

White had no choice but to take, and now the real fight begins. The seemingly passive black army will jump out like a compressed spring and wreak havoc around the white centre!

19...d5!

An excellent thrust, intending to blow up the centre, utilizing the excellently placed a8-bishop as well as the very agile knight duo.

20.exd5

White again plays what appears to be best, but he is actually playing into Black's hands.



20...♘xb4!

This is the position Black was aiming for with his entire set-up! It is incredible to see how powerful the black army is and how well all of his pieces are placed. White's centre is falling apart and g4 has become a new soft spot.

21.♙a7

A seemingly awkward thrust to face, forcing the queen out of its safe hiding spot.

21...♕b7!

Best. The queen and the bishop together create very dangerous threats along the diagonal, a motif that will eventually lead to White's demise.

22.♙b6

22.dxe6 ♕xf3+ 23.♕xf3 ♙xf3+ 24.♖xf3 ♖xd1+ 25.♘xd1 ♖xc2 would have been White's best defence, when Black's advantage is minimal.

22...♖xd5

Although objectively 22...♖d6! was better, Adorjan showcases his creative qualities and

goes for an inferior but more spectacular idea.

23. ♖xd5 ♜bxd5 24. g5



When in his element, Andras Adorjan was capable of creating world-class masterpieces. Here, playing a bit for the crowd, he has sacked an exchange to showcase the incredible firepower of the black army. After White's careless last move, he does indeed get to demonstrate his point:

24... ♜g4!

A lovely sortie, utilizing the weak long diagonal yet again! The number of black threats keeps increasing and White just can't hold his position together. It is truly incredible to observe how much more potent the black army has become, despite its more passive appearance a few moves earlier.

25. ♖g1

25. ♖xg4 ♜c3+ 26. ♖f3 ♜xf3+ 27. ♜xf3 ♖xf3+ 28. ♜xf3 ♜xd1 and Black is clearly up in this

endgame as the white pawns are tricky to defend.



25... ♜de3

A stunning move, highlighting the beautiful coordination amongst the black pieces. Truth be told, the mundane 25... ♜xb6 was objectively preferable.

26. ♜xg4

Under pressure, Borocz falters. Preferable was 26. ♜xe3 ♜xe3 27. ♖xb7 ♖xb7+ 28. ♖g1 ♜xd1 29. ♜xd1 ♖e4 when Black is only a little bit better.

26... ♜xb6 27. ♜g1

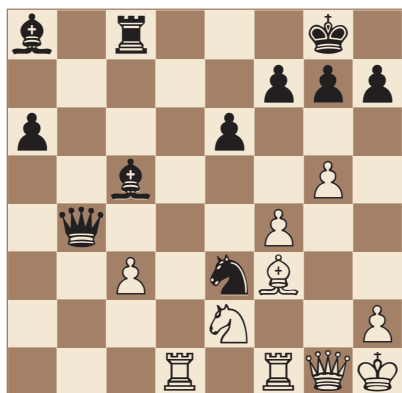
An impressive transition: most of the white army is languishing in the 'back-rank fest' whilst the black pieces are becoming more and more powerful.

27... ♖c5!

The last developing move of the game, and it comes with decisive effect.

28. b4 ♜xb4 29. c3

The position is ripe for a finishing blow. Adorjan finds the cleanest way to mop up:



29...♔e4!!

A lovely finish to a fantastic game. Throughout the game, White struggled with various threats based on the weakness of the long diagonal. It is only logical that the game is decided with yet another long diagonal threat; White is beyond salvation.

30.h4

White is trying to renegotiate the terms of engagement by allowing his king a flight square on h2, but he is much too late. Black delivers the finishing blow:

30...♜xf1!

No escape for you on h2, sir! The game is over.

31.♔xc5 ♔xf3+

And White resigned. Adorjan managed to showcase his excellent understanding of these Scheveningen-type positions, in which he caused a lot of headaches to the world elite in his prime years. The game is a testament to developing with intent: Black prepared his army perfectly

for an eventual ...d6-d5 break and for the subsequent tactical skirmish. What appeared to be a somewhat passive set-up was, in fact, the source of an immensely dynamic power, ready to unleash at any moment!

Game 41 Ruy Lopez

Nguyen Anh Dung
Zaw Win Lay

2535

2475

Bangkok 2004

In this game, I am going to demonstrate a fascinating concept about the nature of developing bishops. In a previous game, I already mentioned that the c1- and c8-bishops are often the last ones to develop, but in this game, we are going to take this concept to a whole new level.

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 9.h3 ♞b7 10.d4 ♞e8 11.♞bd2 ♞f8 12.♞c2 h6 13.a4 exd4 14.cxd4 ♞b4 15.♞b1 c5 16.d5 ♞d7



This is the Zaitsev Variation of the Ruy Lopez. A hugely complex, extremely theoretical, and mind-bogglingly complicated variation. In this position, White's most popular choice is 17.♖f1. However, there is another typical move here that allows White to redirect more pieces towards the kingside:

17.♖a3!?

A very commonly seen idea in the Zaitsev: White wants to swing the rook across to the kingside.

17...f5



Black is trying to undermine the whole white centre, in particular the d5-pawn. White is at a crossroads, and the right choice is partly based on the understanding of the development of the white queenside.

18.exf5!

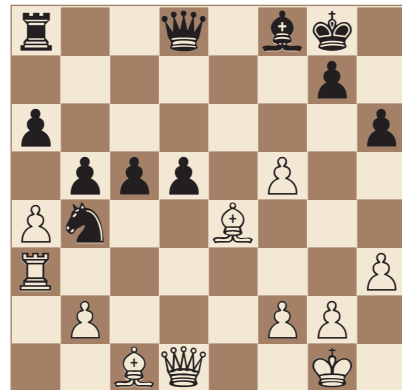
What we need to see clearly here is the fact that White's two bishops are actually developed!

As White's only realistic plan is to attack on the kingside and both bishops are perfectly trained for this purpose, they do not need to move to be developed. This is further facilitated by the a1-rook moving out via the a-file. This is a motif some 1.d4 openings also offer, and one of which we should be really aware.

18...♗f6 19.♗e4 ♕xd5 20.♗fd2

Although this is an unattractive backward move, it has an aggressive concept behind it: allowing the rook to swing across to g3 when possible.

20...♖xe4 21.♗xe4 ♕xe4 22.♖xe4 ♖xe4 23.♕xe4 d5



After masses of trades, the position has opened up. Our bishop did not last long on the active e4-square and now we have to find the right way to retreat.

24.♕b1!

Of course! As indicated before, the bishops are needed to aim towards the kingside.

24.♔f3, whilst it allows White a slight edge, would have betrayed a lack of understanding of what is going on in this position. Despite the peculiar appearance, it needs to be recognized that White is ahead in development right now, as apart from his queen all his other pieces are ready to fight!

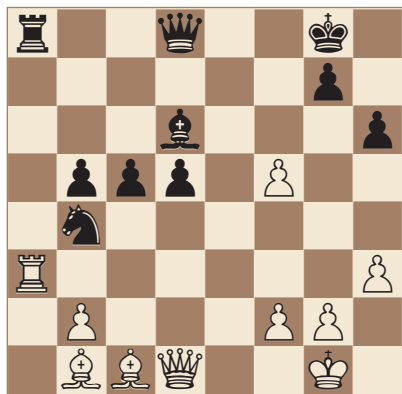
24...♙d6

This is a somewhat meaningless move that abandons the defence of the kingside and actually loses the game almost instantly.

25.axb5!

A clever in-between move that opens up the a-file – thus overloading the black queen – before the strike comes on the other side.

25...axb5



White follows up with an excellent strike that will decide the game instantly:

26.f6!!

A very logical push, intending to open files and diagonals in front of the totally defenceless black king. Note that although neither side has a single piece on the kingside, White is going to be able to jump on the weakened black king immediately thanks to his long-range bishops. A lovely demonstration of how the bishops' development can sometimes look very deceiving.

26...♙a4

All of a sudden, the black king seems extremely lonely. 26...gxf6 27.♙g4+ ♙h8 28.♙xh6 ♙f8 29.♙g3! ♙xh6 30.♙g6 with unstoppable mate.

26...♙xa3 27.bxa3 ♙a6 28.♙xd5+ is terminal too.

27.♙g4!

A simple attacking move that shatters all hopes. Black resigned.

27...♙xf6 28.♙f3 would have been the ultimate demonstration of how quickly the white army could get to the defenceless black king. Note how utterly helpless the optically better-developed black pieces are, whereas the 'funny-looking' bishops are the silent killers in this position! A remarkable game to demonstrate how effective bishops can be, even when they are stationed on the back rank, shooting at their targets from afar!