



Chess Pattern Recognition *for Beginners*

The Fundamental Guide
to Spotting Key Moves
in the Middlegame

Arthur van de Oudeweetering

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New In Chess 2018

To my proud and always supportive parents Ferrie and Joke.

To my ever encouraging and understanding family Edith, Julie and Ilja.

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Contents

Explanation of symbols

Foreword by Vladimir Chuchelov

Preface

Part I Typical pawns and pieces

- Chapter 1** The lingering king
 - Chapter 2** Queen in trouble
 - Chapter 3** Rook(s) on the seventh rank
 - Chapter 4** Botvinnik's fearsome bishop
 - Chapter 5** Kasparov's favourite
 - Chapter 6** Fischer's knight
 - Chapter 7** Opposites are not equal
 - Chapter 8** Cousins from a distance
 - Chapter 9** IDP: isolated doubled pawn
 - Chapter 10** A central striker
 - Chapter 11** Central supremacy
- Exercises Part I

Part II When pawns meet

- Chapter 12** Reaching for the hook
- Chapter 13** When Harry meets g6
- Chapter 14** Deceptive symmetry after the IQP
- Chapter 15** Breaking free
- Chapter 16** Flank attack!

Part III When to exchange and when not to

- Chapter 17** King of all exchanges
- Chapter 18** Along the open file
- Chapter 19** What remains: towards a good knight versus a bad bishop

Chapter 20 The ace of space

Part IV **Sacrifices – the classics**

Chapter 21 Bishop takes h7

Chapter 22 The Soviet sac

Chapter 23 The silent knight sac

Chapter 24 From Morphy to Magnus

Chapter 25 Capa's bishop sac

Exercises Parts II, III and IV

Solutions

Epilogue

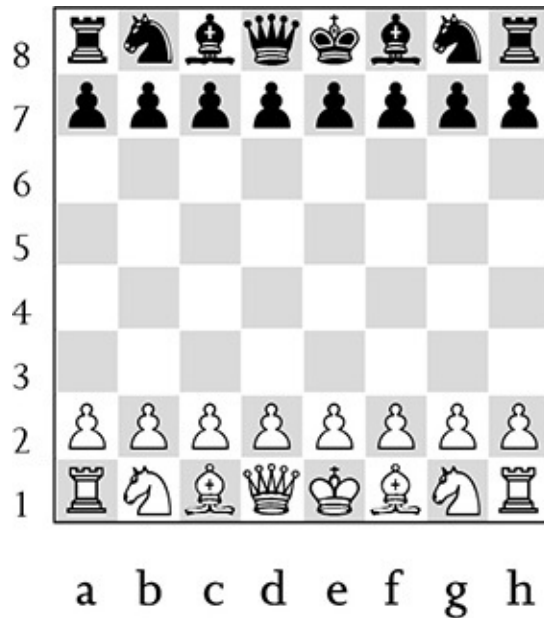
Index of players

Index of openings

Bibliography

Explanation of symbols

The chessboard with its coordinates:



	White to move
	Black to move
	King
	Queen
	Rook
	Bishop
	Knight
	White stands slightly better
	Black stands slightly better
	White stands better
	Black stands better
	White has a decisive advantage
	Black has a decisive advantage
	balanced position
	good move
	excellent move
	bad move
	blunder

!?	interesting move
?!	dubious move

Foreword

by Vladimir Chuchelov

In January this year, at the Tata Chess Tournament, I ran into Arthur, whom I know from the years when we were both trainers for the Dutch Chess Federation.

We both took care of one of the national youth selections; I think he did the youngest group. That really is some time back now, but in recent years I noticed he had become a serious chess author. Moreover, when we met this year, he told me, amongst other things, that he was working on the book which is now in front of you.

Arthur himself has provided an extensive Preface, in which he gives further information and explanation about the contents and structure of the book.

Of course here I could expand on that, and select a couple of the many interesting fragments, but in general it feels unnecessary to me to go through the book with you as well. Instead, I will say a couple of words about the subject itself.

Recognition of strategic patterns is a very essential matter; it really helps during a game. Once we see a certain familiar pattern, we can make a mental link with the current situation on the board and figure out the right way to proceed. Knowledge of different strategic ideas is directly linked to so-called intuition, which is a positional feeling that trainees should develop over the years. This goes for beginners as well as advanced players and even top players. It is part of our general chess development.

In my own praxis, working mostly with advanced players, we rather deal with a complete strategical evaluation of positions, which is known to my students as the 'strategic balance'. One specific strategic pattern will often play a role, but it will always be in the context of the whole evaluation, the pattern being just one

of various elements. Nevertheless, it is something you can talk about at a later stage.

The present book is designed for the starting chess player. And indeed, it provides an excellent means to help you make your first steps towards this competence of making complete strategical evaluations of positions. This may be a long and difficult road to travel, but for now this book will make you acquainted with numerous basic patterns, and allow you to accumulate essential knowledge connected to these patterns.

Get ready and have a good time while working through the book!

Vladimir Chuchelov
Eupen, October 2018

Preface

As this book is about the middlegame, it could hardly be for absolute beginners. When you make your first steps in studying chess, there is a good chance that initially you will be attracted by other subjects than intricate middlegame strategy. For instance, many interesting opening books and DVDs will be available for you, covering fashionable, tempting opening lines. There's nothing wrong with that, it's great fun to play these in practice, and in due course it will hopefully teach you general things about the opening phase as well. Also, probably your eyes may fall on some instructive YouTube videos about the endgame, or you may even be attracted to a concise endgame manual and learn some basics. If it contains well-arranged material covering positions with a limited amount of pieces, this will easily allow you to pick up numerous instructive principles. This is very useful too, of course. Certainly you will be drawn into tactics when you start to be taken into chess. Lots of exercises are available on the internet, as well as in printed form. Apart from all this, chances are that some of you will install one of the easily available chess engines on your computer and experiment with it. If indeed you have done a bit of work and exploring in the diverse areas of chess, as described above, now this book will provide a next step to get acquainted with the game of chess, and will introduce you into the fascinating complexity of the middlegame. That is, with the help of clear patterns, which cover what will be considered basic knowledge by more advanced players.

Like in the preface of my book *Improve Your Chess Pattern Recognition* from 2014 (henceforth to be called IYCPR), I want to make two things clear right from the start. First of all, this book is definitely about pattern recognition, but there will be no such thing as a scientifically proper definition. The truth is, a proper definition can be rather diffuse, just like in current World Champion Magnus Carlsen's statement from 2010, where he emphasized the importance of pattern recognition: '*One of the most important things in chess is pattern recognition: the ability to recognise typical themes and images on the board, characteristics of a position and their consequences.*' (interview in the German

magazine *Der Spiegel*) So before you is just a practical book, where in each and every chapter it will be clear to you which pattern is to be recognized in every example.

There is another important thing to point out: the book is about strategic patterns, not tactical ones such as typical mate patterns. You may encounter some tactical patterns along the way, but generally you should pick those up from good books on tactics. Also, as the title says, this book deals mainly with the middlegame. So, strategic patterns in the middlegame it is!

As this book is designed for beginners, I have selected the more common and obvious patterns that underline the basic rules of the game. Whereas my two former pattern recognition books were partly based on previous columns I had written, this book has been written practically from scratch. To suit the purpose of the book, exceptions to the rules have been eliminated this time. There are no strong knights on the rim in this book, and no more chapters about the possible strength of doubled pawns. On the contrary, in the first section, you will find a chapter on how to profit from the expected weakness of an isolated doubled pawn, or how to profit from a classically strong knight on d5. Where in *Train Your Chess Pattern Recognition* (TYCPR) you could find a chapter with examples where a king could surprisingly stay in the middle, here, in Chapter 1, you will learn about the more standard dangers involved here. So, perhaps this book should have been the first of the series. But things have gone differently, perhaps reflecting the unpredictable course of a game of chess.

Content and structure

The book is divided into four parts, every one with a small introduction. Each chapter has at least six examples of a specific pattern, showing similarities and possible small differences. So, you won't have to digest an entire book on every subject, but the repetition will hopefully do its job as the mother of learning.

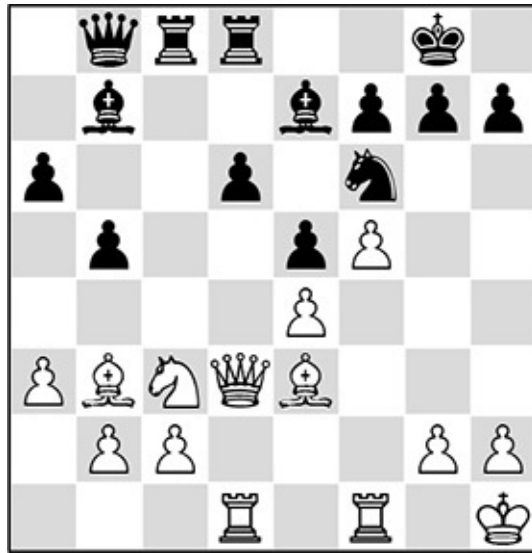
The first part, called 'Typical pawns and pieces', contains eleven chapters about typically strong or weak pawns and pieces – a pretty straightforward subject to start with. Exercises follow right after. Three smaller parts are given next, and exercises on these subjects follow after the fourth and last part. This seemed to be the most appropriate place for a second little test, as now you will

have to choose from a fairer amount of patterns than would have been the case if I had given exercises after each part. Now there is a second set of exercises, offering a decent mix. This is also more reminiscent of an actual game, where the position should lead you to the pattern (and not the fresh subject of the preceding chapter).

First of all, the most common typical break moves in the middlegame are covered in Part II: ‘When pawns meet’ (Chapters 12-16). The third part is actually about ‘when pieces meet’: ‘When to exchange and when not’ (Chapters 17-20). I suppose this is the most difficult subject, because, for instance, an exchange of queens may occur in every other game, but usually not on a specific square. Your memory will have to be triggered in another way to realize the possible importance of the moment and recognize the consequences of a piece exchange. Or, as Elizabeth Pähtz notes: ‘The ability to exchange the right pieces is connected to patterns.’ (on the DVD *How to exchange pieces*, one of the few publications dedicated to what seems an underrated subject) The fourth and last part of this book, ‘Sacrifices – the classics’ (Chapters 21-25) is dedicated, indeed, to classical sacrifices. It’s always fun to look at sacrifices, and so this is probably a pleasurable part to finish with. And, fortunately, this is also a pattern that is easy to pinpoint, although in general the follow-up is often different in each case. A few more words on this subject are in order here.

A small warning

Although it may be easy to recognize a pattern while reading the book, the resulting course of the game may remain pretty complex and difficult. Whereas a tactical pattern will likely yield an immediate result, a strategic pattern does not usually lead to a decisive result immediately. Lots of other factors may have their say, and the examples in each chapter will make that clear. Also, a small battle between two patterns may occur. To make this clear, here is one example, which also gives us a sneak preview into some of the chapters:




Nikolaevsky – Geller

This position is from the 1959 Ukrainian championship, between the later numbers 2 and 1 on the list. Nikolaevsky continued with **18. ♔g5**. Do you have any idea what he was up to? The answer can be found in Chapters 6 and 19: he was intending to exchange some minor pieces with ♔g5xf6 followed by ♔b3-d5, after which he would be left with a good knight versus a bad bishop (see Chapter 19). What's more, he will have a typical strong knight on d5 (see Chapter 6). This is all very sensible, but Nikolaevsky's concept was countered with another pattern. With the typical sacrifice **18... ♖xc3!?** (Chapter 22) **19.bxc3 ♕xe4**, Geller completely changed the picture. The sacrifice is not immediately winning, but the pawn and White's bad pawn structure give Black sufficient compensation. Geller eventually won, but that's another story. Clearly, the knowledge of typical ideas is extremely helpful, although, alas, it does not win by itself. In his middlegame booklet from 1955 called *Strijd om de open lijnen* (*Battling for the open files*), the Dutch former World Champion Max Euwe came to the same conclusion in a more elaborate and lucid way. As always, his writing was hugely instructive. Here it is (abbreviated in the middle):

We might have excellent knowledge of the methods to open rook files, to get diagonals in our possession, or be able to accurately weigh the advantages and disadvantages of different pawn formations, yet in practice we are always in for surprises. It is a rarity when one particular characteristic controls the entire course of a game (...) Nevertheless, the reader should not be put off by all this.

The knowledge he has acquired through study of the foregoing will not be lost. It will often provide valuable guidelines for the strategy to be followed and will therefore give him a sense of self-confidence.

A bit of history

Many ideas on chess strategy have evolved over the years, and specific patterns have become common knowledge. As a result, it is not illogical that numerous examples from the past, just like the one above, have found a place in this book. These games can provide good illustrations of the essence of an idea. The importance of ‘studying the classics’ has been elaborated upon by various renowned authors, such as recently, for instance, Shereshevsky and Tukmakov. This is not to say that, for example, a classical bishop sacrifice like xh7+ (see Chapter 21) never recurs in modern practice. It does, of course, and sometimes it involves more advanced and complicated ideas. Hence, modern examples will also feature in this book, to paint a complete picture. As a result, you will be treated to a little chess history along the way as well.

When you have finished studying the book, surely the basic patterns, as well as the related ideas, will stick in your memory and will doubtlessly prove to be of use in your future games. For now, first of all, I wish you a lot of fun with this book!

*Arthur van de Oudeweetering
Amsterdam, September 2018*

PART I

Typical pawns and pieces

In the initial eleven chapters, we will look at various pieces in positions where they absolutely excel, often in a most obvious way. A rook on the seventh rank, or a minor piece in an undisputed central position: a white knight on d6 (AKA an ‘octopus’) or d5 (a Fischer classic), or a bishop on d5 (a Botvinnik classic). It sounds elementary, and it is, but once you have established such a strong piece, play also just starts from here and there is work to be done!

Two other chapters are devoted to the long-distance force of the bishop. For example, you will find out that when two bishops are shining next to each other, the wing under fire can have a hard time. A completely different situation is created by opposite-coloured bishops: here the attacking bishop rules as there is no counterpart to resist. This is easily said, of course, but again things are not that simple. Did you consider the pawn structure here?

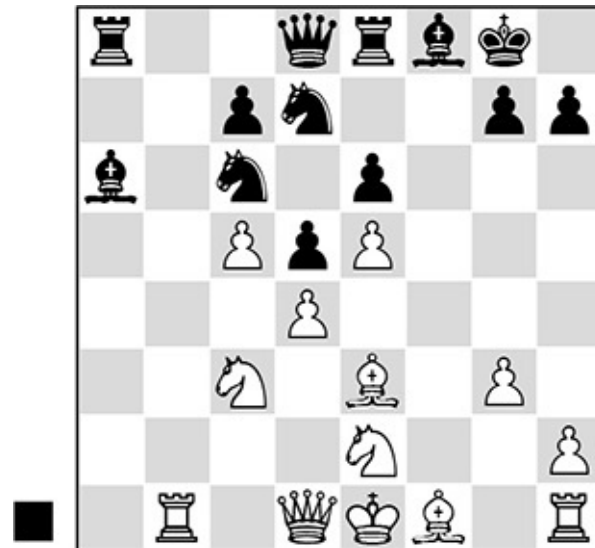
On the other hand, pieces can also be typically bad. For example, two common warnings are given to beginners about the king and queen: ‘bring your king into safety (castle) as soon as possible’ and ‘do not bring out your queen too early’. Although these general rules cannot be applied in every case, the first two chapters deal precisely with what may go wrong when these rules are neglected.

Finally, like pieces, pawns can be both typically strong or weak. As a lucid starting point, we will go into the weakest of the bunch – the isolated doubled pawns. You may know about these, but is your technique up to the task? The two remaining chapters deal with characteristically powerful pawns. First of all, you may be aware that a central advanced pawn may play a dominant role in the course of a game. Just imagine the power of two central pawns that have crossed the middle. Both are excellent illustrations that prove that the importance of central control is not just a fixed idea.

In this first part, there is a lot to be learned besides recognizing the strength or weakness of a typical piece or pawn. Other positional aspects will have their own influence on each of the above-mentioned patterns. These eleven chapters will provide you with some solid basic knowledge. Hopefully, there will be

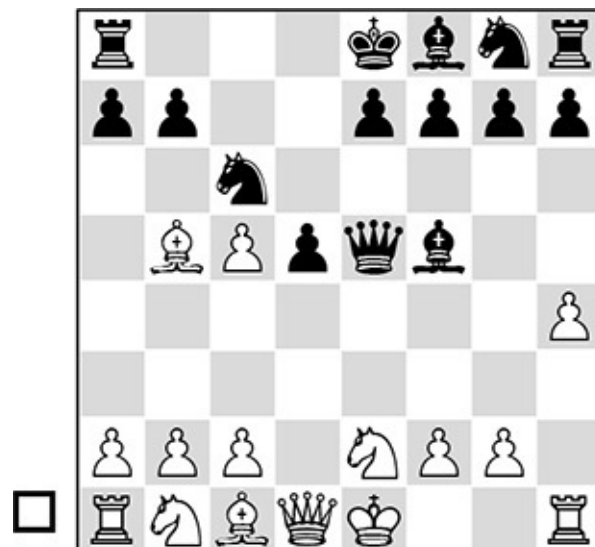
much pleasure as well – enjoy!

1 The lingering king



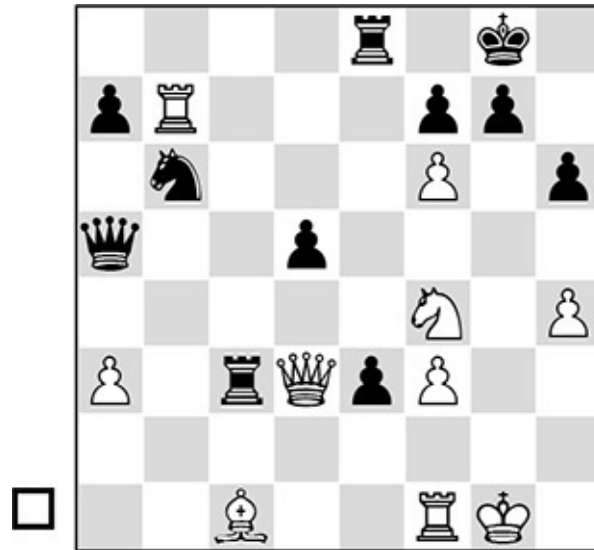
17... ♖cxe5!?

2 Queen in trouble



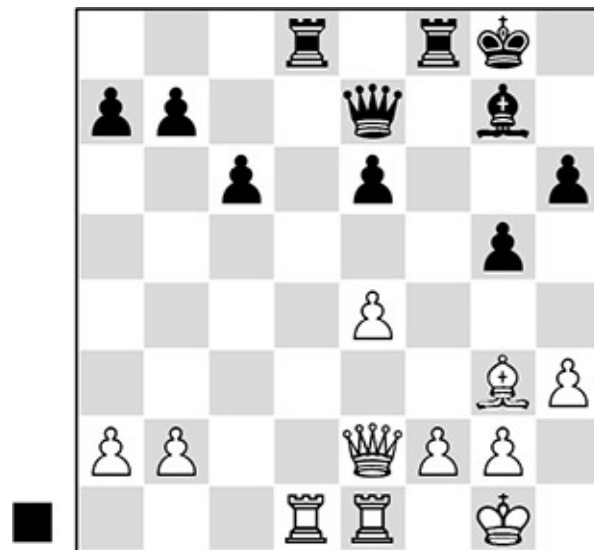
8. ♕f4!?

3 Rook(s) on the seventh



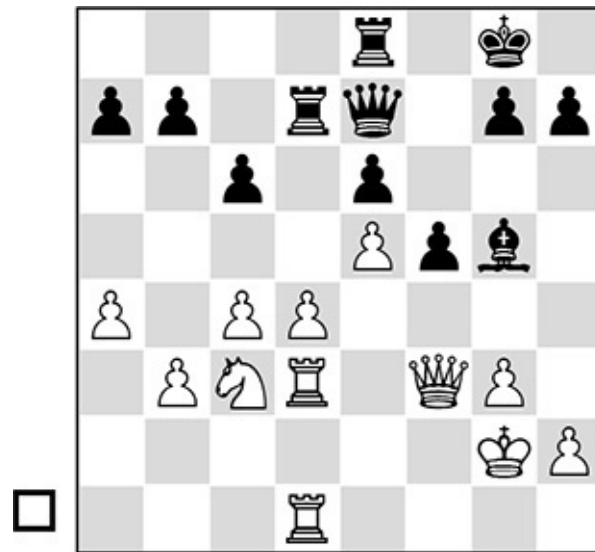
Bronstein (White) to move.

4 Botvinnik's fearsome bishop



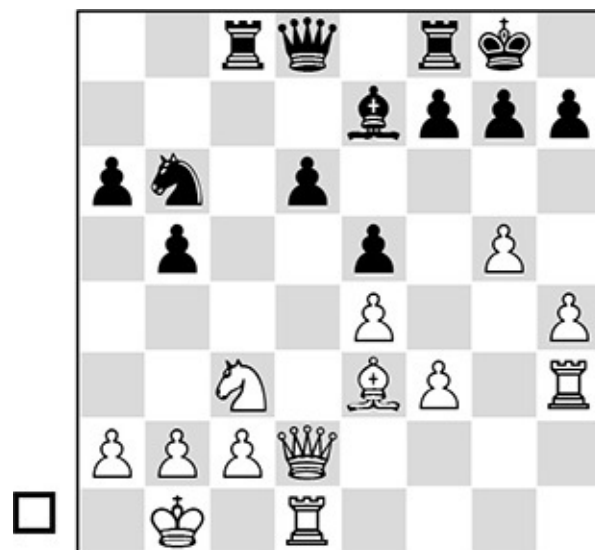
24... ♖d4!

5 Kasparov's favourite



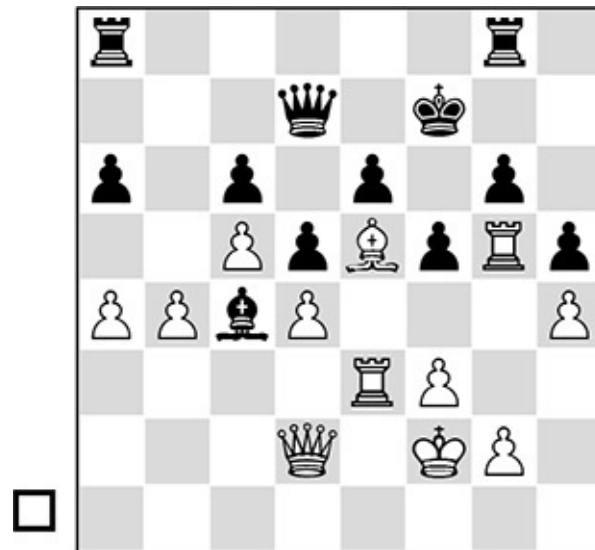
33.c5!, and the knight went to...

6 Fischer's knight



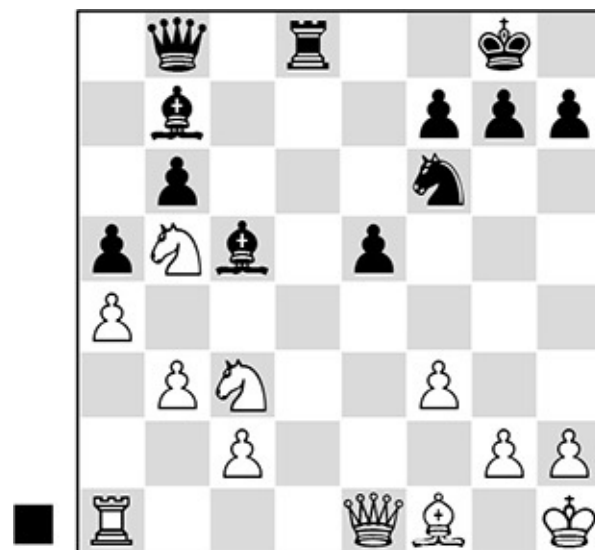
19. Qxb6! Bxb6 20. Bxd5

7 Opposites are not equal



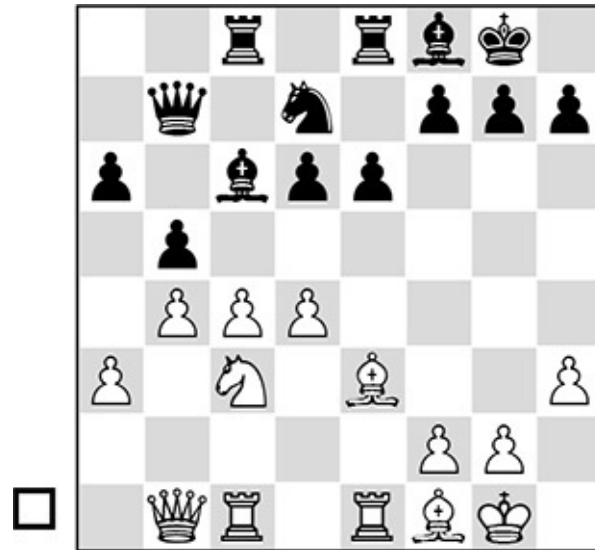
Which bishop do you prefer?

8 Cousins from a distance



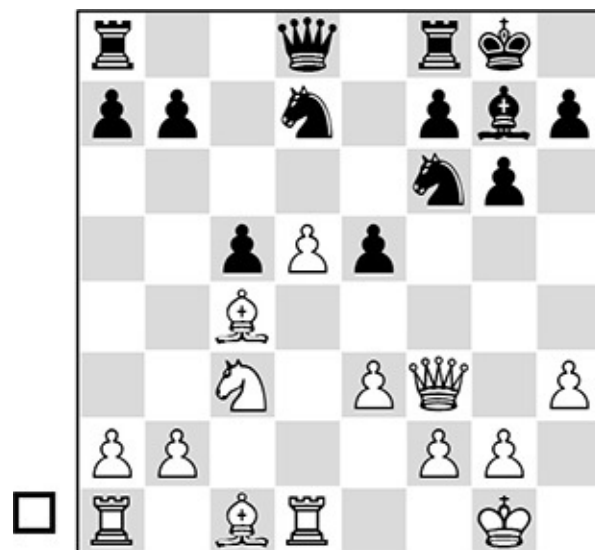
27...e4!

9 IDP: isolated doubled pawn



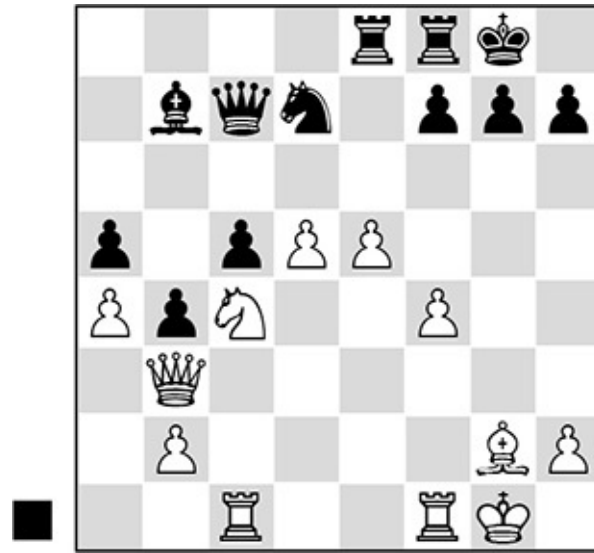
24.d5 exd5 25.cxb5!

10 A central striker



13.d6!

11 Central supremacy



The picture says it all.

CHAPTER 1

The lingering king

In our dynamic game, sometimes it is tempting, or even desirable, to leave the king on its initial square until early in the middlegame. You may want to wait for the opponent's plans or give priority to building up an attack first. Yet, obviously dangers will be involved when the king is held up in the middle. Recklessly or carelessly neglecting these dangers will make you run the risk of severe punishment. Mind you, even strong grandmasters have learned this the hard way. Let's look at some typical errors, as well as at some good ways to exploit a lingering king.

Too optimistic

Caro-Kann Defence

Alexander Motylev

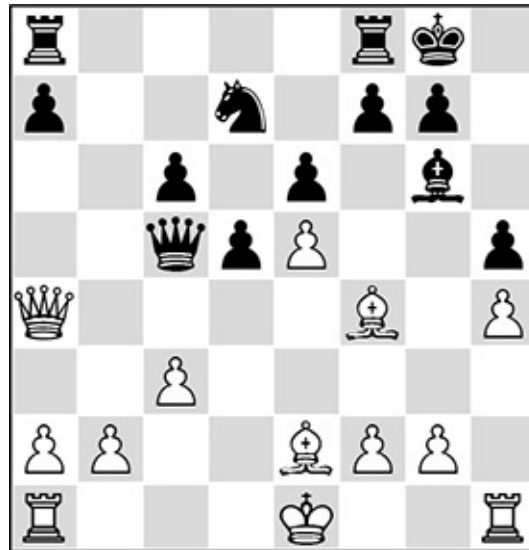
2697

Evgeny Bareev

2643

Moscow 2010 (6)

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♘f5 4.♗d2 e6 5.♗b3 c5 6.♗xc5 ♘xc5 7.dxc5 ♔a5+ 8.c3 ♗xc5 9.♗f3
♗d7 10.♗d4 ♗e7 11.♗f4 ♗g6 12.h4 h5 13.♗e2 ♗c6 14.♔a4 0-0 15.♗xc6 bxc6



16. ♖h3?!

As castling queenside does not look like a tempting option – in view of the half open b-file and the shining bishop on g6 – the text move effectively leaves White's king lingering in the middle for now. 16.0-0 or 16. ♔e3 are safer options, but they will not manage to cause Black any problems.

16...a5

The immediate 16... ♖b6 was good as well.

17. ♖d1 ♖b6 18. b3 a4 19. b4

19. ♔xh5? fails to 19...axb3 20. ♔xg6 fxg6, attacking the f4-bishop.

19...c5 20. a3 d4



Typically, Black opens up the position in the centre with White's king on e1.

21. ♖xh5?

A true optimist! The conservative 21. ♔f1 seems more appropriate, bringing the king to safer places without castling (which would have done so in a single move).

21... dxc3! 22. ♖xg6

After 22. ♖xd7 ♖xh5, the opposite-coloured bishops will not make life less hard for the white king – more on this subject in Chapter 7!

22... fxg6



23. ♖e3

23. ♖xd7 was a way to bail out to a rook ending. A queen exchange would of course immediately make White's king's position less vulnerable, but probably the resulting rook endgame did not look very attractive to Motylev: 23... ♜xf4 24. ♖d6 ♜e4+ (24... ♖xd6 25. exd6 cxb4 26. axb4 c2 27. ♜c3 ♜xh4?! 28. d7!) 25. ♔f1 ♖b5+ 26. ♔g1 ♖c4 27. ♖xc5 ♖xc5 28. bxc5 ♜c4 29. ♜c1 c2 30. ♔f1 ♜c8 31. ♔e2 ♜8xc5.

23... ♖c6

23... ♖b7! would have been a possibly stronger execution, by attacking three pawns at the same time: b4, e5 and g2. Then, 24. ♖d6 would have been a strike into thin air after 24... ♜a6.

Still, White's position proved to be too difficult to handle anyway after the text move.

24. ♖d6 ♖xg2 25. ♖xe6+ ♜f7 26. 0-0-0 ♜f8 27. ♜g3 ♖b7 28. ♖c4 cxb4 29. ♖xb4 ♖a6 30. ♜g4 c2 31. ♜dd4 ♜c8 32. ♜c4 ♜fc7 33. ♖xa4 ♖xc4 34. ♜xc4 ♜xc4 35. ♖b3 ♜e6 36. f4 ♖h8 37. h5 ♜d4 38. ♖d3 ♜c3 39. ♖xd4 ♜b3 40. ♖b6 ♜xb6 41. ♖xb6 gxh5 42. ♖f2 ♖g8 43. f5 ♜c4 0-1

A premature attack

Torre Attack

Vasily Ivanchuk

2757

Levon Aronian

2809

London ct 2013 (3)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 e6 3.♗d2 c5 4.e3 b6 5.♗gf3 ♘b7 6.c3 ♗e7 7.♗d3 0-0 8.♗xf6 ♗xf6 9.h4
♗c6 10.♗g5 g6 11.f4 ♗e7 12.♙g4 h5 13.♙h3 cxd4 14.exd4



White has delayed castling to set up an attack on the kingside. This time though, Ivanchuk's original approach fell short.

14...b5

Initiating play on the other side, which obviously also discourages White from castling there.

15.a3

15.0-0 would allow 15...b4, while 15.♗xb5? would immediately hand the initiative to Black: 15...♙b6 16.♗xd7? ♖ad8 17.♗a4 ♗xd4.

15...♙b6 16.♗g1?!

All or nothing, so it seems, as this move leaves the white king in the middle. 16.0-0 would abandon the kingside attack and give Black easy play after, for example, 16...a5.

16... ♖d5!

Now, White has to protect the f4-pawn, as a result of which his pieces will not coordinate in an attack.

17. ♗ge4 ♘g7 18. ♙f3



18...b4!

Nice. The preparatory 18...a5 was fine as well.

19. axb4 ♗xb4 20. ♗c4

20.cxb4 can be met with 20...f5.

20... ♙b5

The natural 20... ♙c7 would practically have put an end to it: 21. ♗e5 (21.cxb4 f5) 21... ♗xd3+ 22. ♙xd3 d6 23. ♗f3 ♖ab8 24. ♖b1 e5. The position will open up in the centre where the white king has remained. The g1-rook makes a sorry sight.

21. ♗e5 ♗xd3+ 22. ♗xd3



22... ♖f5

Due to Black's 20th, now 22...f5 can be parried with 23. ♘d6. Though White's king's position and the inactivity of the g1-rook continued to cause problems, Ivanchuk managed to keep the position relatively closed before he was knocked out by time trouble.

23. ♘dc5 ♙c6 24. b4 ♜fb8 25. ♜a5 a6 26. ♙e3 ♖g4 27. g3 ♜b5 28. ♜xa6 ♜xa6 29. ♘xa6 e5 30. dxe5 ♙xe4 31. c4 ♜b6 32. ♙xb6 ♙f3 33. ♙f2 ♙a3

33... ♙c3+ 34. ♙d2 ♙a1+.

34. ♘c5 0-1 (time)

Pawn sac for development

Queen's Gambit Accepted

Andrezej Pytlakowski

Vasily Smyslov

Helsinki ol 1952 (3)

1. d4 d5 2. c4 dxc4 3. ♘f3 ♘f6 4. ♙a4+ c6 5. ♙xc4 ♙g4 6. ♘e5

This knight will lose some tempi. The developing move 6. ♘bd2 is the usual continuation.

6... ♙e6 7. ♙d3 ♘bd7 8. ♘xd7 ♙xd7!?

The World Champion-to-be strives for active play, as his two next moves show.

9. ♘c3 ♙b6 10. ♙d2 e5 11. dxe5 ♘g4 12. ♙g3 0-0-0



13.h3

An understandable, but slightly ambitious move, as Black has already taken the lead in development. 13.e3 would be the standard continuation of development, as castling queenside is out of the question, because that will drop the f2-pawn. Then, 13... ♖xb2 could lead to a repetition: 14. ♖b1 ♗c2 15. ♖c1 ♗b2.

13... ♗e6 14. ♖d1?

The anti-developing move 14. ♗c1! was called for, simply protecting the b2-pawn and eliminating the threat of ... ♖xd2, thus forcing the g4-knight to retreat. With 14... ♗h6 15.e4 f5!? Black could try to open up White's undeveloped position, but the real battle is still ahead.

White probably saw that 14.hxg4 would be refuted by 14... ♗xb2 15. ♖d1 ♗b4, but somehow failed to notice that the text move just transposes to this same line with a reversal of move order.

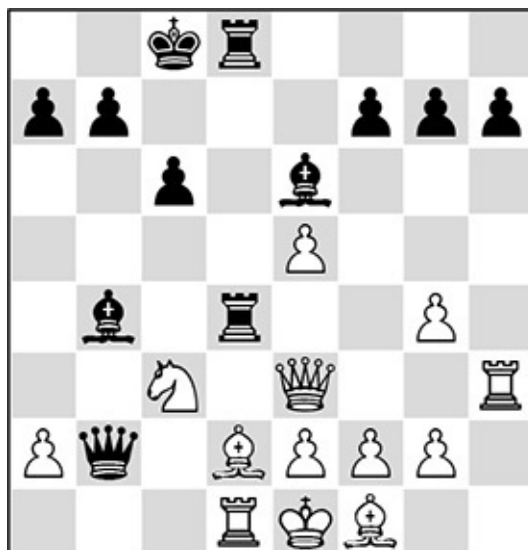
14... ♗xb2 15.hxg4 ♗b4

White now has insurmountable problems. Not only is his king held up in the middle, but also his rooks can't cooperate.

16. ♖h3 ♖d4 17. ♗e3

17.e3 would close the third rank and leave the c3-knight without cover, and thus enable 17... ♖xd2.

17... ♖hd8



White is completely tied up. Black will inevitably win back material, his first threat being 18... ♖xd2 19. ♖xd2 ♜c1+.

18.f4 ♜xg4 19. ♖g3 ♜f5 20. ♖f3 ♜a5 21.g4 ♜c2 22.e6 fxe6 23. ♜xe6+ ♜b8 24. ♖d3 ♜xd3 25.exd3 ♜xc3 26. ♜e5+ ♜a8 0-1

Réti Opening

Vladimir Kramnik

2801

Laurent Fressinet

2706

Paris/St Petersburg 2013 (5)

1. ♖f3 d5 2.g3 ♜c6 3.d4 ♜g4 4. ♖bd2 ♜d7 5.h3 ♜f5 6.c3



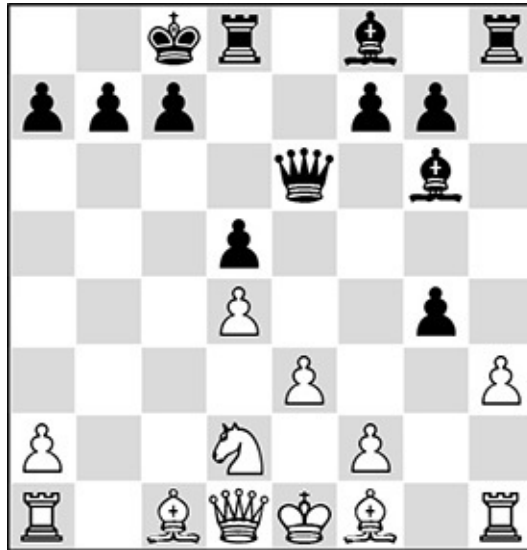
6...e5!?

The same pawn sacrifice as Smyslov's – aiming for quick development.

7.dxe5 0-0-0 8.e3 ♖ge7 9.g4 ♗g6 10.b4

Kramnik compromises his pawn structure on both wings, leaving his king in the middle. He will be sharply countered:

10...h5 11.b5 hxg4! 12.bxc6 ♗xc6 13.e6 ♜xe6 14.♗d4 ♗xd4 15.cxd4



15...♗e7

A very composed move! Black will gain a third pawn on h3 anyway. 15...♗b4 was also strong, when Black will follow up with ...♗e4.

16.♗g2 gxh3 17.♗f3 ♗f5 18.♜a4 ♜b8 19.♗a3 ♗h4! 20.♗f1

Passive defence, but 20.♜f1 ♗d3+ 21.♜g1 (21.♗e2 ♜f5) 21...♜g6+ 22.♜h2 ♗xf2 loses. Now, Black's g-pawn moves forward.

20...g5 21.♜h2

This is pretty desperate already. Clearly White's pieces don't cooperate, which is most visibly demonstrated by the fate of this rook.

21...g4 22.♗e2 ♗e4



23. ♖c1

The desperate attempt to bring the king to safety with 23.0-0-0 would run into the same reply as the text move.

23... ♗g2 24. ♖a5 ♗c8 25. ♖c3 ♗xf2+

This was inevitable.

26. ♗xf2 ♗xf1 27. ♗xf1

27. ♗xf1 g3+ 28. ♗xg3 ♗f5 would lead to mate, as ... ♗cg8 is on the menu.

27...g3 28. ♗f3 gxh2 29. ♗e2 ♗hg8 30. ♗c5 a6 31. ♗h1 ♗g2+ 32. ♗xg2 0-1

The French knight sac

Nimzo-Indian Defence

Zhang Pengxiang

2567

Maxim Matlakov

2684

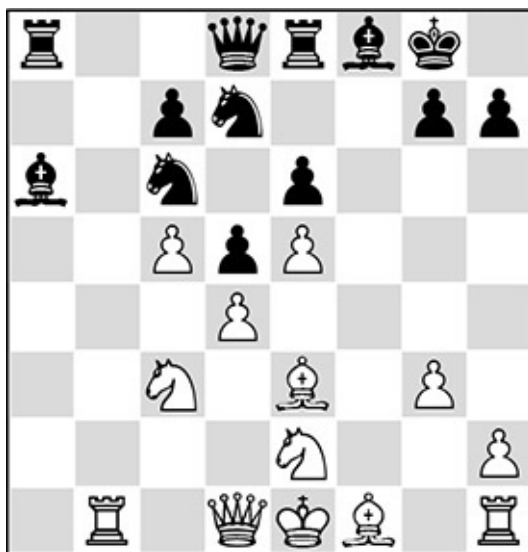
China tt 2016 (6)

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 e6 3. ♗c3 ♗b4 4.e3 0-0 5. ♗ge2 ♗e8 6.a3 ♗f8 7.e4 d5 8.e5 ♗fd7 9.c5

The main line here is 9.cxd5 exd5, and now, instead of 10. ♗xd5 c5 11.dxc5

♗xe5, when Black is clearly better, 10. ♗e3 and 10. ♗f4 have been tried. After the text move, White's centre is undermined from both sides.

9...b6 10.b4 a5 11. ♗b1 f6 12.f4 axb4 13.axb4 bxc5 14.bxc5 fxe5 15.fxe5 ♗c6 16. ♗e3 ♗a6 17.g3



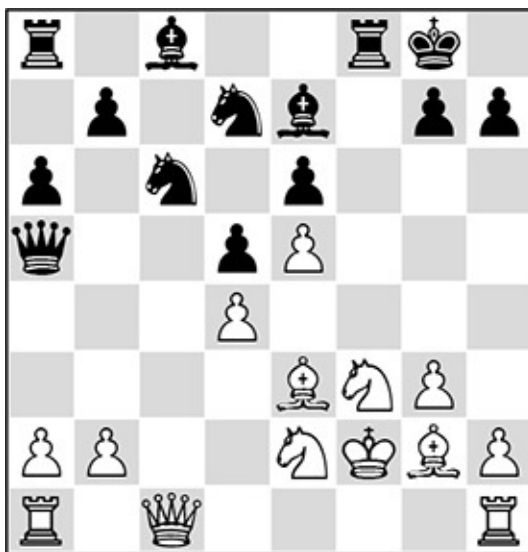
Now, White seems to develop smoothly, while Black's position is a little cramped due to White's central pawns. White's last move invites a typical sacrifice.

17... ♖cxe5!?

17... ♖xc5 18.dxc5 ♖dxe5 might be an even stronger execution.

18.dxe5 ♖xe5

White was coasting for a safe ♖g2 and castling, but suddenly his king is stuck in the middle and plagued by possible checks on d3 and f3. This is a typical sacrifice by the way, which is seen, for instance, in structures that arise from the French Defence. J.van Foreest-Werle, Dutch Team Championship 2017/18, is a recent example (see diagram)...



... where Black won back the piece immediately after 15... ♖dxe5 16.dxe5
 ♗xe5 17. ♖d1 ♗xf3 18. ♕xf3 e5.
 19. ♗d4 ♕xf1



20. ♖xf1

Poghosyan-Oleksienko, Poti 2012, featured this same position, and saw White try to bring his king to safety with 20. ♖xf1 ♗c4 21. ♕f2 ♕xc5 22. ♖g2, but after 22... ♖f8 23. ♕g1 ♗f6, White was firmly in the lead.

20... ♕xc5

That's already a third pawn, yet here too the intermediate 20... ♗c4 seems even stronger.

21. ♗c6 ♗d6 22. ♕xc5 ♗xc6 23. ♕d4?

A very unpleasant position to play for White. He has no prospects of counterplay, and the absence of pawns exposes his vulnerable king in the middle.

23. ♗d4 ♗d7 (23... ♗xc5 24. ♗xe5; 23... ♗d3+!? 24. ♗xd3 ♗xc5) 24. ♕b4 would have put up tougher resistance.

23... ♗d7 24. ♖c1 e5

Now, Black's pawns advance with tempo.

25. ♕g1 d4 26. ♗b3+ ♖h8 27. ♗b5 ♗h6

Of course, there is no queen exchange in view of White's bad king's position.

28. ♗e2 ♗f6 29. h4



29...c5!

Very imaginative! Black patiently advances his pawn mass, enabling ...e5-e4 next.

30. ♖b1

30. ♖xc5 ♜ad8 31. ♜d1 d3 32. ♞c3 (32. ♞e3 ♜g6) 32...d2+ 33. ♚f2 ♜c8 34. ♜b4 ♜xc3 or 30. ♜xc5 ♞e4 both leave White in big trouble.

30... ♜ad8 31. ♜d1 e4 32. ♜c1 e3

The pawns are just unstoppable.

33. ♜xc5 d3 34. ♜f3 ♜d5 35. ♜b6 d2+ 36. ♚f1 ♜h5 37. ♜xe3 ♜f5+ 38. ♞f2 ♜xf2+ 39. ♜xf2 ♞g4+ 40. ♜g1 ♞xe3 41. ♜xd2 ♜f3 0-1

In this last example, White's lingering king was even hunted well into the endgame, after the queens had been exchanged.

Sicilian Defence

Judit Polgar

2550

John van der Wiel

2540

Netherlands tt 1992

1.e4 c5 2. ♞f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♞xd4 ♞f6 5. ♞c3 a6 6.f4 ♞bd7 7. ♞e2 e5 8.fxe5 dxe5 9. ♞f5 ♜b6 10. ♜d3 ♞c5 11. ♜f3 ♞xf5 12.exf5 ♞d6



13. ♖b1

A committal move, in the sense that from now on White can castle only to the kingside.

13.0-0 was an alternative, not fearing a discovered check from the knight.

13...e4 14. ♖f2 ♘c7 15. ♙e3 0-0-0!?

Black spices things up and opts for quick development. The immediate 15... ♘cd7 was quite possible, preserving the option to castle kingside (and threatening to capture on h2).

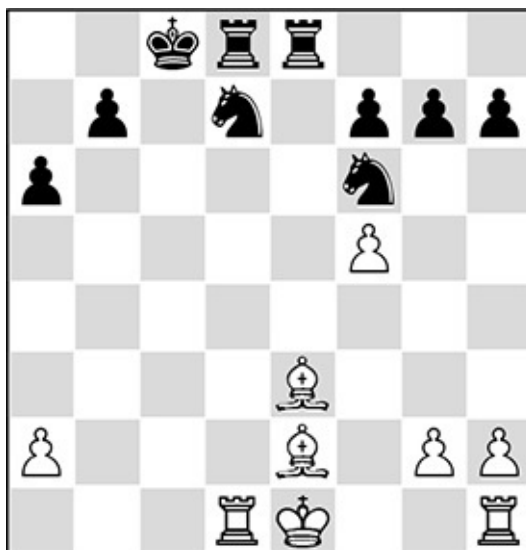
16. ♖d1 ♘cd7 17. ♘d5 ♙a5+ 18. b4 ♙xb4+ 19. ♘xb4 ♙xb4+ 20. c3

20. ♙d2 ♙c5 21. ♙e3 ♙c3+ 22. ♙d2 ♙c7 is safe enough for Black.

20... ♙xc3+ 21. ♙d2 e3!

Without this move, which forces the exchange of queens, White's counterplay against the black king would have been very dangerous. Now, Black remains a pawn up, while, more importantly, his opponent's king turns out to be very exposed on the open e-file even in the ending.

22. ♙xe3 ♙xe3 23. ♙xe3 ♙he8



24. ♖f4 ♗c5 25. ♜xd8+?

25. ♜c1 b6 26. ♔f2, and White will at least be able to develop his king's rook, though Black's extra pawn would still clearly put him on top.

25... ♜xd8 26. ♜f2 ♗d5 27. ♖c1

27. ♖d2 ♗e4+ 28. ♔e1 ♗ec3 loses a piece.

27... ♗c3 28. ♖c4 b5 29. ♖b3

29. ♖xf7 was more challenging, but after 29... ♗d3+ 30. ♜g3 ♗e2+ 31. ♜f3 ♗d4+ 32. ♜g3 ♜e7!, Black wins as well in all lines after 33. ♖g5 ♗xf5+, for example: 34. ♜f3 (34. ♜g4 ♗h6+; 34. ♜h3 ♗f2#) 34... ♗e5+ 35. ♜e4 ♗xf7+ 36. ♖xe7+ ♗xe7. White's exposed king and offside rook are to blame, of course, but it's still remarkable how easily the knights cope with the pair of bishops here.

29... ♗d3+ 30. ♜f3 ♗e1+ 31. ♜g4 ♜e4+ 32. ♜h5 ♗xg2 33. ♖g5+ f6 34. ♜g1 ♜e2 35. ♖c1 ♗xa2 36. ♜d1+ ♜e8 37. ♖d5 ♗xc1 38. ♖c6+ ♜f7 39. ♖f3 ♗f4+ 40. ♜g4 ♗fd3 41. ♖xe2 ♗e5+ 42. ♜f4 0-1

Summary

Keep a close eye on the king positions from early on in the game – they should be a major factor when assessing a position. When you try to profit from your opponent's king lingering in the centre, avoid queen exchanges and try to open up lines in the centre, to expose the king's vulnerable position. To speed up your development and piece activity, it may well be worthwhile to sacrifice a pawn and open up the centre. Even piece sacrifices that take away

the pawn protection of the opponent's king in the centre can be a feasible means to profit from the enemy king's position.

CHAPTER 2

Queen in trouble

A (centrally) activated queen can be fearsome when untouchable, but it will generally be prone to attacks from the opponent's pieces and pawns in the middlegame. Hence, you should be careful when you are tempted to bring out the queen at an early stage of the game. Let's see the dangers this may cause for her majesty, and also what the consequences will be for the entire battle. How will the opposing side profit?

Grünfeld Indian Defence

Rainer Knaak

2510

Josef Pribyl

2415

Budapest 1986

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♗g7 7.♗c4 0-0 8.♗e3 ♖d7



This would not be with the intention to meet

9.♘f3

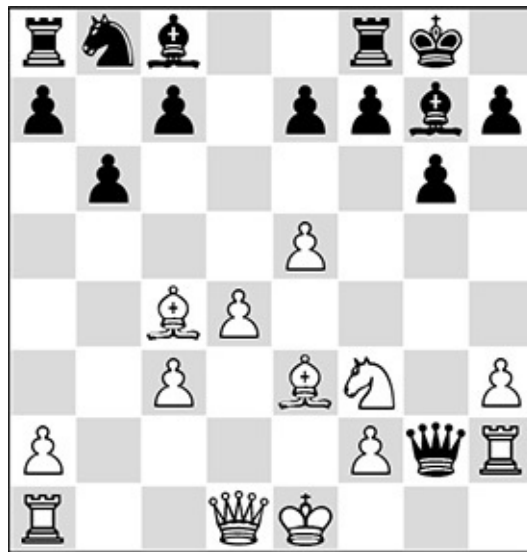
with

9... ♖g4 ?

Yes, 9. ♖f3 was the game continuation, which white players had earlier avoided, perhaps for this reason. Yet it should not be difficult to see that when, from the two pawns attacked, White saves the central pawn, the black queen will be lonesome at the kingside, and it will lose a lot of tempi on the way out and is in danger of getting trapped.

10.e5 ♜xg2

A year later, Bareev refrained from the capture on g2 and continued with 10... b6, but after 11.h3 the queen had to retreat, as after 11... ♜xg2 12. ♖h2, it is just trapped in one move.



analysis diagram

Remember this picture! I will soon show some more typical ‘trapped-in-one’ examples.

11. ♖g1 ♜h3 12. ♖g5 ♜h4

A) 12... ♜d7 13. ♖xf7+ ♜xf7 14.e6;

B) 12... ♜xh2 13. ♖d2!, and the queen is about to get caught, say after 13... ♜c6 (13...e6 14. ♖h1 ♜g2 15. ♖d3, and, among other things, White intends 16. ♖e4) 14. ♖h1 ♜g2 15. ♜b3, threatening 16. ♖ag1.



13. ♖b3

13. ♖f3! would have made Black's reply impossible, as the queen assists with trapping his opponent's queen: 13...e6 14. ♖g4 ♕h5 15. ♖g3, followed by ♖h4.

13...e6 14. ♕e2

Look at the black queen: you really don't want to dare play in this way.

14...h6 15. ♖g4!


Not allowing the queen to retreat to e7.

15... ♖xh2 16. ♕f3 ♖h1+ 17. ♖g1 ♖h3 18.0-0-0 c5 19. ♖h1 ♖f5

19... ♖g4 was needed, but after, for instance, 20. ♖h4 ♖f5 21. ♖dh1

(threatening 22. ♖f4) 21...g5 22. ♖xh6 ♕xh6 23. ♖xh6, White's attack will be too strong, as his queen may join the attack via d1, while Black has no defenders on the kingside.



I wonder what Pribyl was heading for when he repeated 8...d7 in a game against Selig, Liberec 2013?!

Things can go even more badly wrong. Watch this one:

Colle System

Jan Timman

Hans Bouwmeester

Vleuten m 1967

1.d4 ♘f6 2. ♗f3 d5 3. ♖g5 ♗bd7 4.e3 c5 5.c4 cxd4 6.exd4 ♔b6



This was a training game, where Timman, only sixteen years old, was the student, and Hans Bouwmeester, first board player for the Netherlands at the Olympiad one year earlier, the teacher. The latter surely knew of the famous Botvinnik miniature against Rudolf Spielmann from the Moscow 1935 tournament: 1.c4 c6 2.e4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.d4 ♖f6 5.♗c3 ♗c6 6.♕g5 ♜b6 7.cxd5 ♜xb2 8.♖c1 ♗b4 9.♗a4 ♜xa2 10.♕c4 ♕g4 11.♗f3 ♕xf3 12.gxf3 1-0,



analysis diagram

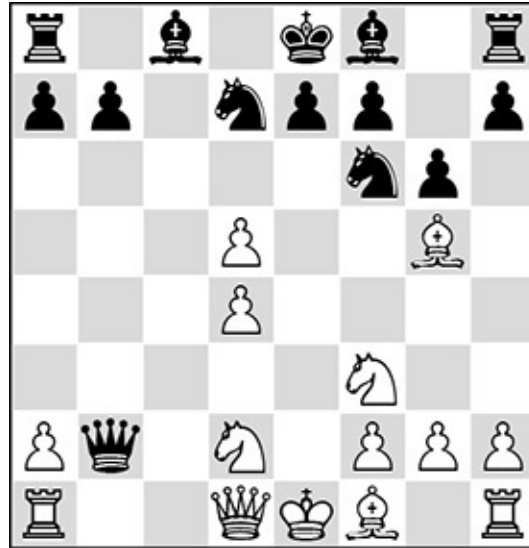
and decided to put his pupil to the test with a slightly different version.
7.cxd5

7. ♖c3! ♜xb2 8. ♗b5 would have been the more active and stronger remedy.

7... ♜xb2 8. ♗bd2

Forced.

8...g6??



Too light-hearted. White's previous forced move also had a little threat in store. Now, this training game ended abruptly:

9. ♗c4

And Black resigned, as the queen is caught after 9... ♜c3+ 10. ♗d2.

Now I will give you some typical examples of 'trapped in one (or two)'. I don't know whether you can call these examples tactical patterns, but just remember the picture and you will be on your guard for these possibilities when you notice an exposed queen.

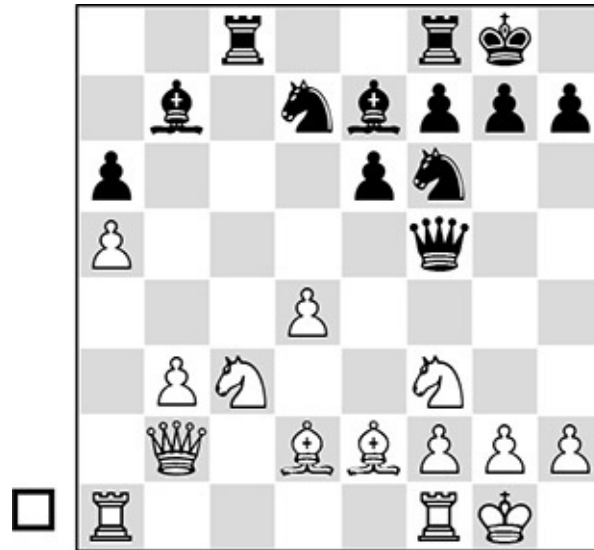
Shakhriyar Mamedyarov

2800

Ernesto Inarkiev

2707

Geneva 2017 (2)

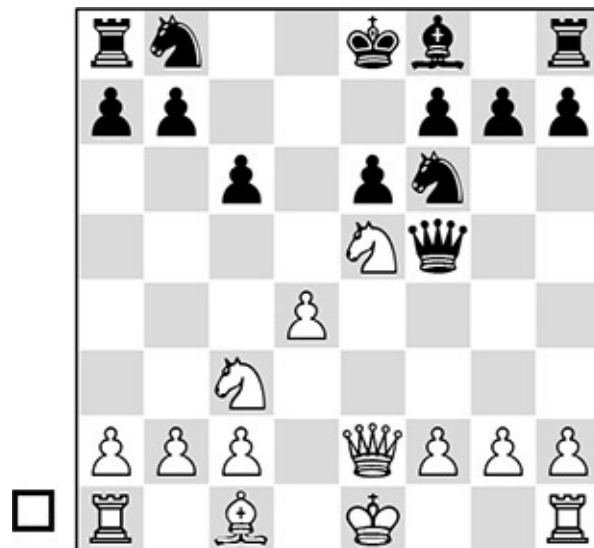


20. ♖h4 1-0

Cayetano Alba Santana
Francisco Martin Perez

2186

Maspalomas 2000 (9)



9.g4
 and 1-0 after 20 moves.

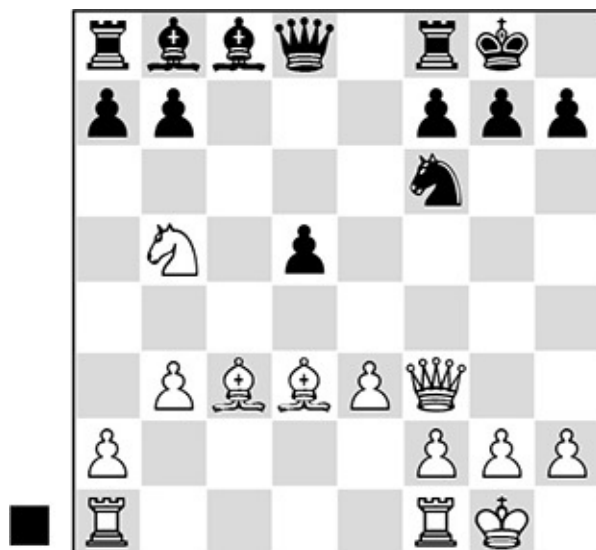
Mark Hebden

2560

Arthur van de Oudeweetering

2389

Hoogeveen 2003 (7)



14... ♕g4! 15. ♕xf6 ♖d7
and 0-1 in 34 moves.

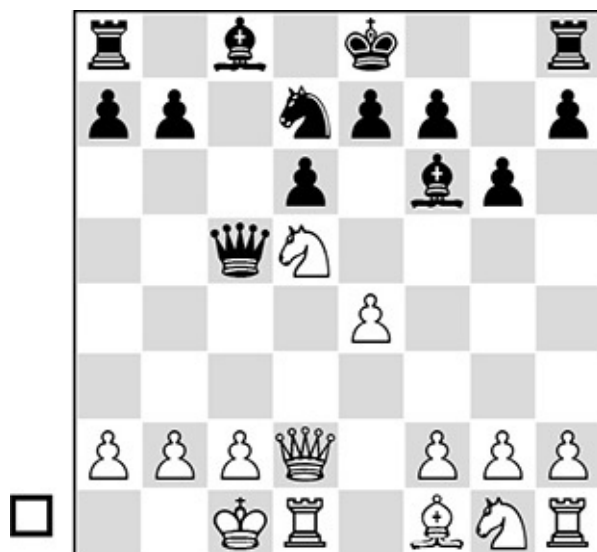
Vladimir Bagirov

2461

Alexander Savin

2134

Moscow 2013 (6)



10.b4 ♖c6 11.♙b5 1-0

Several openings feature an early queen outing, snatching a pawn. Two famous main lines are the French Winawer 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♙c3 ♙b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♙xc3 6.bxc3 c5 7.♙g4 cxd4 8.♙xg7 and the Najdorf Poisoned Pawn. Let's avoid the real theoretical discussions. Here is a small (and unfortunate) deviation from the latter opening.

Sicilian Defence

Hikaru Nakamura

2729

Loek van Wely

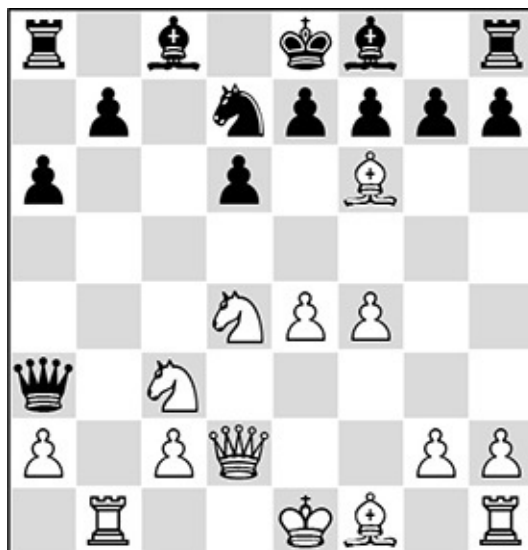
2677

Amsterdam tt 2010 (7)

1.e4 c5 2.♙f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♙xd4 ♙f6 5.♙c3 a6 6.♙g5 ♙bd7

6...e6 7.f4 ♙b6 8.♙d2 ♙xb2 would bring us to the endless and fascinating Poisoned Pawn lines.

7.f4 ♙b6 8.♙d2 ♙xb2? 9.♙b1 ♙a3 10.♙xf6!



10... ♖xf6

10...gxf6 would allow 11. ♗d5, as Black has refrained from ...e7-e6. Practice has seen 11... ♖b8 12. ♖b3 ♙xa2 (12... ♙a4 meets with the surprising blow 13. ♗xa6! bxa6 14. ♙c3!., which was discovered by Alvis Vitolins in the pre-computer era) 13. ♙b4, threatening to catch the queen with 14. ♖a3.

11.e5 dxe5 12.fxe5 ♗d7

12... ♗g4 13. ♗d5 ♙c5 14. ♗b3 ♙c6, and now after 15. ♗a5, the queen finds refuge with 15... ♙d7, a square that was not available in the game (15. ♙a5 is a strong alternative; for example, 15...b6 16. ♗d4 bxa5 17. ♗xc6, and Black can hardly keep his position together). Ugly as it may seem, White seems to have no way to profit from this position; Black will play ...e7-e6 and exchange queens subsequently.



13. ♖d5 ♜c5 14. ♖b3 ♜c6 15. ♖a5 ♜c5

No choice.

16. ♖xb7 ♜c6

After 16... ♖xb7 17. ♜xb7 ♜c8 18. ♖xa6, Black's undeveloped kingside leaves him helpless against the threat of 19. ♖b5.

17. ♜b6

Trapping the queen, as mate follows after 17. ♜b6 ♖xb6 18. ♖f6+ gxf6

19. ♖d8#.

1-0

A hesitant queen

Here is a less theoretical example, where Black's development soon turns out to be severely neglected after the queen has gone on tour.

Sicilian Defence

Bassem Amin

2693

Dmitry Gordievsky

2622

Wijk aan Zee 2018 (5)

1.e4 c5 2. ♖f3 ♖f6 3.e5 ♖d5 4. ♖c3 ♖xc3 5.dxc3 ♖c6 6. ♖c4 e6 7. ♖f4 ♖b6



8. ♖d2!?

A novelty. So far, even strong grandmasters had confined themselves to the careful 8. ♖b1 or 8.b3. A more obvious attempt to ignore the attack on the b-pawn would have been 8.0-0 ♙xb2 9. ♙d3 (though this has not been tried either), but the text move reroutes the knight to a beautiful spot and allows the white queen to switch to the kingside.

8... ♙xb2

Probably the young Russian grandmaster was not too happy here already, but otherwise his last move would have been pointless.

9. ♖e4 ♙b6

Although there is no immediate danger of the queen getting caught on b2, probably you would also be inclined to withdraw the queen now that the spoils have been gained. One drawback is of course a further loss of time, at the cost of development. Also, less obvious perhaps, White's pieces are no longer restricted by the queen's activity on b2. A clear example is that the white queen no longer has to cover the a1-rook, which thus enables White's next move.

10. ♙g4

Now, the threat of 11. ♖d6+ followed by the intermediate capture on g7, can hardly be prevented. Already, Black is clearly worse, and it is almost impossible to detect a decent way of developing.

10... ♖a5 11. ♖e2

11. ♖d6+ ♖xd6 12. ♙xg7 ♖xe5 (12... ♖f8 13. ♙xh8 ♖xc4 14. ♖h6) 13. ♖xe5 ♖f8 14. ♖e2 was also possible, with ♙xh7 and ♖g7 to follow.

11... ♙b2

The queen returns – this time it seems a desperate attempt to cause confusion.

12.0-0 ♖xc2 13. ♜f3 ♜a4

A regular development move like 13... ♞e7 does not help anymore after 14. ♞g5 ♞xg5 15. ♞d3 ♜a4 16. ♞xg5 ♜f8, and now, for example, 17. ♞e4. Tactics and good moves flow easily from such overwhelming positions.

14. ♜ab1 a6 15. ♜fd1 h6 16. ♞g3 ♞c6 17. ♜f4!

After some standard rook development moves, White has detected a concrete target: the f7-pawn. Meanwhile, a discovered check threatens to win Black's queen.

17...b5 18. ♞h5 ♞d8 19. ♞h4 ♞b7 20. ♞xd8 ♜xd8 21. ♜xf7 ♞c6 22. ♞f3 ♜c7 23. ♞g5!

White deals the decisive blow by exchanging the c6-bishop, the crucial defender of Black's king.

23... ♜b6 24. ♞xc6 ♜a7 25. ♜xd7 ♜xa2 26. ♜b7+ ♜xb7 27. ♜xb7+ 1-0

We finish with a more complicated example, where Black purposefully goes for the pawn grab on b2, but this time the queen also takes a central pawn on the way.

Caro-Kann Defence

Anish Giri

2776

Mikhaylo Oleksienko

2620

Doha 2014 (4)

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♞f5 4.h4 c5 5.dxc5 ♞c6 6. ♞b5 ♜c7 7. ♞e2 ♜xe5?!



8. ♕f4!?

Practically forcing Black to capture on b2. Will the queen survive there? 8. ♖bc3 allows 8...e6, but after 9. ♕f4, White has a strong initiative, due to his lead in development. Here too, the black queen is exposed on the middle of the board.

8... ♗xb2 9. ♖bc3 ♕f6

9...e6 would have been met with 10. ♕a4!, threatening to harass the queen with 11. ♖b1, while after 10... ♗b4 11. ♖b1 ♗xc5 12. ♖xb7, Black's position will soon collapse. The inhuman 9... ♕xc2 seems to be easily refuted by the classic double rook sacrifice: 10. ♖xd5 ♗xa1+ 11. ♔d2, but it appears that Black can miraculously hold on with 11... ♕e4!? (11... ♖d8 12. ♕xc6+ bxc6 13. ♖xd8+ ♔xd8 14. ♖xa1 leads to a huge lead in development for White in the endgame) 12. ♖xe4 ♗b2+ 13. ♔e1 ♗a1+ 14. ♕c1 ♖c8.



analysis diagram

The black queen is caught, but not yet easily captured. White's best strategy is to use its absence in the defence starting with 15. ♖b4, when Black still has a hard time. This is all very instructive, but I imagine that if you were so clever to spot 11... ♕e4 in advance, you would have avoided this and have opted out with the sensible 8. ♖bc3.

10.0-0 ♗b4

Again, 10...e6 runs into 11. ♕a4, and the queen is forced to run back.

11. ♖b1 ♗xc5 12. ♕a4 e5

Giving back the pawn to speed up development. It is too late though. 12...0-0-0 protects the b7-pawn, but consequently Black's king lands under an attack:

13. ♖b5 ♗a3 (13... ♗c4 14. ♙b3, and the queen is really caught!) 14. ♗b1 ♖d7
15. ♖b3 ♗c5 16. ♙xc6! ♗xc6 17. ♘b5, with too many attackers for Black to handle.

13. ♙xe5 ♘g4 14. ♙g3 0-0-0 15. ♙xc6 ♗xc6 16. ♘b5 ♙c5 17. ♘ed4 ♗f6 18. ♗f3 1-0

And Black did not wait to be finished off with an elegant mate like 18. ♗f3 ♙d7
19. ♗c3 b6 20. ♗xc5+ bxc5 21. ♘xa7#.

Summary

In the first place: beware of moving out your queen on a board still full of pieces. Do not try to act in an optimistic spur of the moment. You have seen several typical ways in which a queen on an early outing can be trapped. Often, such an immediate punishment will not be possible, but in those cases the other side can just focus on active and quick development moves, to try to profit from the time that has been lost by the opponent's queen manoeuvres. When you have grabbed a pawn yourself, don't worry about quickly rerouting your queen back, as long as you don't see a concrete threat. Probably you will lag in development, so, first and foremost, try to make up for that. The queen will probably keep some of your opponent's pieces busy.

CHAPTER 3

Rook(s) on the seventh rank

A rook on the seventh rank may seem like a lonely, temporary or innocent invader in the middlegame. However, this long-distance piece can support from afar along the seventh rank. Let's look at the dangers this may entail.

Nimzo-Indian Defence

David Bronstein

Efim Geller

Moscow ch-URS 1961

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 ♘b4 4.a3 ♘xc3+ 5.bxc3 0-0 6.f3 d5 7.cxd5 exd5 8.e3 ♘f5 9.♗e2
♗bd7 10.♗f4 c5 11.♘d3 ♘xd3 12.♙xd3 ♖e8 13.0-0 ♖c8 14.♖b1



14... ♙a5

Geller activates his queen, thinking that the rook can be isolated and trapped after the capture on b7. Bronstein, however, saw the dynamic potential and accepted the challenge. A principled battle.

15. ♖xb7 ♗b6 16.g4! h6

16...c4 17. ♙f5 ♙a6, which was probably Geller's idea, runs into 18. ♖xb6 ♙xb6 19.g5, and the knight has no squares.

17.h4



17...cxd4?

Suddenly changing plans, when the rook on b7 will remain unchallenged.

17...c4 18. ♖f5 ♕a6 would have been the consistent follow-up.

A) A surprising option for White would now be 19. ♖xf7!? ♕xf7 20.g5. White will win back a piece, and he will be on top if he manages to keep his attack going. One sample variation is 20... ♖bd7 21. ♕g6+ ♔f8 (21... ♕g8 22.gxh6! ♖e7 23. ♖xd5) 22.e4!?. You would have to be a Bronstein to embark on this;

B) Luckily, 19. ♖xb6 ♕xb6 20.g5 is again a possibility, although now the black knight finds refuge with 20... ♖h7. White will win a second pawn for the exchange on d5, but the battle is still very much open. Anyway, Black should avoid the automatic 20...hxg5, when after 21.hxg5 ♖h7 22. ♕f2!, White is going to use the h-file!

18.g5!

Even the simple 18.cxd4 would have given White a dominating position.

18...dxe3

18... ♖xc3 is met with 19. ♕f5. After 18...hxg5 19.hxg5 ♖fd7, the simplest is again 20.cxd4, when the position of White's b7-rook remains unchallenged.

19.gxf6 ♖xc3



20. ♖g6! 1-0

With a sweet mate to follow. 20. ♖xf7 would have been a similar, albeit longer execution.

French Defence

Viswanathan Anand

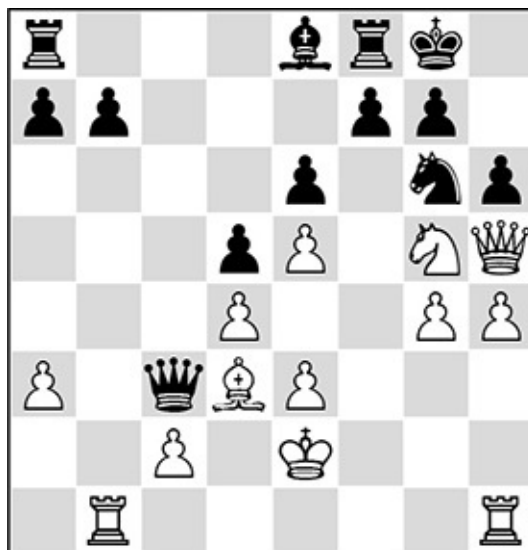
2774

Smbat Lputian

2634

Moscow tt 2004 (1)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.bxc3 ♘e7 7.♖g4 0-0 8.♙d3 ♘bc6 9.♖h5
 ♘g6 10.♘f3 ♖c7 11.♙e3 ♘ce7 12.h4 ♘f5 13.g4 ♘xe3 14.fxe3 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♖c3+ 16.♖e2
 ♙d7 17.♖ab1 ♙e8 18.♘g5 h6



19. ♖xb7

From here, the rook adds great force to White's kingside attack. White's queen is in a sort of deadlock, as White has no immediate tactical threats. For example, after 20. ♗xe6 fxe6 21. ♕xg6, it will be White's king that is in great danger after, for example, 21... ♔c4+ 22. ♚e1 ♖c8, while 20. ♗xf7 is refuted by the elegant 20... ♖xf7 21. ♖xf7 ♗h8!. Yet, there is one piece that can be included in the attack: if White manages to get 20. ♖f1 in, Black's position will collapse. So the rook has to be driven from the 7th rank, to diminish White's attacking forces.

19... ♖c8 20. ♖hb1

Preserving the strong position of the rook, though at the cost of further strengthening the attack.

20... ♗xe5?

A) 20...hxc5 21.hxc5 remained impossible – White would bring his rook to h1 and would soon threaten mate along the h-file;

B) The only move was 20...f5, with some spectacular lines: 21.exf6 ♖xf6 (21... ♗f4+ 22.exf4 ♗xh5 23. ♕h7+ ♔h8 24.fxg7#) 22. ♗h7 ♗f4+ (22... ♔xh7 23.g5, threatening ♗xh6+ thanks to the b7-rook!; 22... ♖f5 23. ♗xh6 gxh6 24.gxf5 exf5 25. ♗f6+ ♔f8 26. ♗h7+ leads to a draw) 23.exf4 ♗xh5 24. ♗xf6+ gxh6 25.gxh5, and White threatens to double rooks on the seventh rank with ♖g1+, securing at least a draw, while 25... ♔f8 is refuted by 26. ♖h7.

21.dxe5 f5 22.exf6



22... ♖xf6

22... ♔xh5 again runs into the familiar mate: 23. ♕h7+ ♔h8 24.fxg7#.

23. ♗f7

White is forced to return the piece, but he was probably happy to do so. The resulting position clearly favours him, as he has the better bishop, the more active rook, and a strong centralized queen.

23... ♖xf7 24. ♖xf7 ♔xf7 25. ♕e5 ♖d8?!

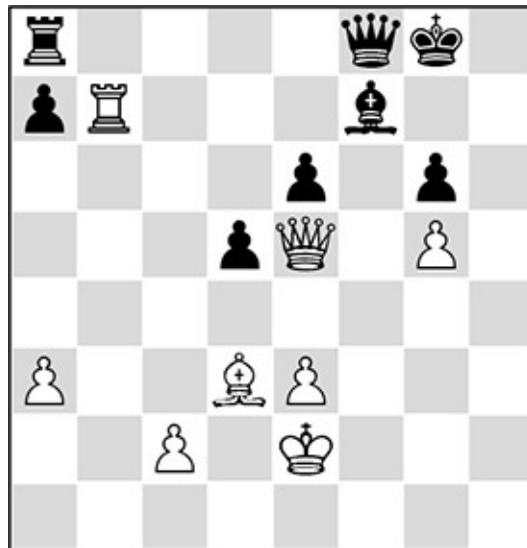


26. ♖b7

For the second time, a rook enters the seventh rank. With less pieces on the board, it is even easier to notice its strength.

26... ♖f8

26... ♖xh4 fails to 27. ♜b8+. You shouldn't be dogmatic about the seventh rank!
 27.g5 hxg5 28.hxg5 g6



Anand gradually converted his big advantage:

29.e4 a5 30. ♜f6 ♜b8 31. ♜a7 ♜a8 32. ♜d7 ♜e8 33. ♜xe6+ ♜f7 34. ♜e7 ♜e8 35. ♜xf8+ ♜xf8
 36. ♜f3 dxe4+ 37. ♜xe4 ♜e5 38. ♜f4 ♜c5 39. ♜a7 ♜e8 40. ♜a6 ♜e7 41. ♜xg6 ♜xg6 42. ♜xg6
 ♜xc2 43. ♜a6 ♜c4+ 44. ♜f5 ♜a4 45. ♜a7+ ♜f8 46. ♜f6 ♜f4+ 47. ♜g6 ♜a4 48. ♜f7+ ♜g8
 49. ♜f3 ♜c4 50. ♜b3 ♜c6+ 51. ♜h5 ♜a6 52.a4 ♜a7 53. ♜b5 ♜g7 54. ♜g4 ♜g6 55. ♜f4 ♜a6
 56. ♜e4 ♜a8 57. ♜d4 ♜d8+ 58. ♜c4 ♜d1 59. ♜xa5 ♜a1 60. ♜b3 ♜b1+ 61. ♜a3 1-0

Scotch Opening

Wesley So

2810

Magnus Carlsen

2822

St Louis 2017 (5)

1.e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 exd4 4. ♘xd4 ♘b4+ 5.c3 ♘e7 6. ♘xc6 bxc6 7. ♘d3 d6 8.0-0 ♘f6
 9. ♜e1 0-0 10. ♘d2 ♜e8 11. ♘f3 ♘d7 12. ♘f4 ♘c5 13. ♘c2 ♘g4 14.h3 ♘h5 15. ♘e3 ♘d7
 16. ♘a4 c5 17.g4 ♘g6 18.e5 ♜b8



Here, White has some spatial advantage, but Wesley So now opted for a liquidation where Black's rook ended up on an active post on b2.

19. ♖f4

19.b3 would have retained the tension and deprived Carlsen from the opportunity to activate the b8-rook.

19... ♜xb2 20.exd6?!

Winning back the pawn immediately, which was most probably the idea of the previous move. However, this helps Black to mobilize all his hitherto passive pieces.

20... ♙xd6 21. ♜xe8+ ♚xe8 22. ♙xd6 cxd6 23. ♜xd6 ♜e2

The tactical justification – not in the least thanks to the b2-rook. Now the knight is no longer pinned and the white queen is forced to go back.

24. ♜g3 ♜f8



Quite a difference from the first diagram! Black has the more active position, and even the f8-knight may find its way to f4. Although White manages to exchange the nasty b2-rook with his next move, his weakened kingside continues to cause him some worries.

25. ♖e1 ♜b1 26. ♜xb1 ♞xb1 27. ♞c6

If 27.a3, White is dangerously passive after 27... ♞e4 28. ♞h2 (the only move) 28... ♞e1+ 29. ♞f1 ♞b1. ... ♞e4-d3 is a threat, and he will lose one of his queenside pawns at least.

27... ♞xa2 28. ♞d6 ♞c4 29. ♞e5? ♞xc3 0-1

The king cut off

Even without queens, a rook on the seventh rank is certainly worth something. Here is a specific, yet charming example.

Nimzo-Indian Defence

Chanda Sandipan

2579

Vasily Ivanchuk

2726

Gibraltar 2018 (6)

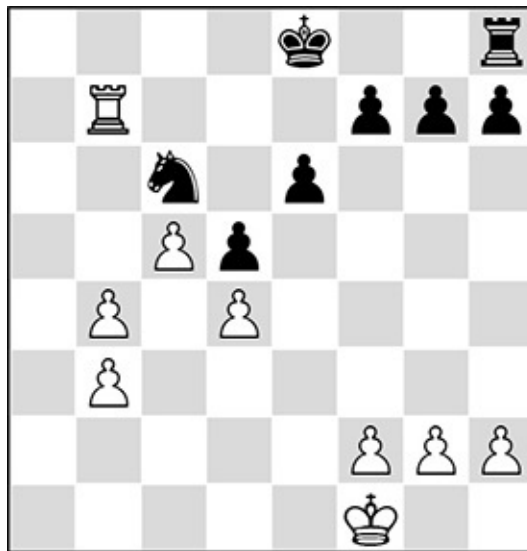
1.d4 ♞f6 2.c4 e6 3. ♞c3 ♞b4 4.e3 c5 5. ♞ge2 cxd4 6.exd4 d5 7.c5 ♞e4 8. ♞d2 ♞xd2 9. ♞xd2 a5 10.a3 ♞xc3 11. ♞xc3 a4 12. ♞xa4 ♞xa4 13. ♞b5+ ♞d7 14. ♞xa4 ♞xa4 15. ♞b4 ♞d7 16.0-0 ♞b5 17.b3 ♞xb4 18.axb4 ♞b5



19. ♖a7!

A rook needs files! After 19. ♖fc1 ♔d7 20. ♖a5 ♔c6 21. ♖a8 ♖d8, the white rooks would have limited activity, while Black has established a perfect blockade.

19... ♙xf1 20. ♖xb7 ♘c6 21. ♔xf1



This is an endgame with a specific material imbalance, but clearly the rook is excellently placed on the seventh rank, keeping Black's king and rook out of play.

21... 0-0?

Black could have saved himself with 21... ♖f8!, to keep his king nearer to White's advanced pawns. For example: 22.b5 ♙xd4 23.b6 (23.c6 ♙xb5

24. ♖xb5 ♔e7) 23... ♔d8 24. ♖a7 (24. ♖b8+ ♔e7 25. ♖xf8 ♔xf8 26.b4 ♔e7 27.b7 ♗c6 28.b5 ♗b8 29.c6 ♔d6, and Black holds) 24... ♗c6 25. ♖c7.

22.b5 ♗a5 23. ♖c7! 1-0

Very accurate. Now, White controls the c6-square after 23... ♗xb3 24.b6 ♗xd4 25.b7.

Doubled rooks – on the seventh!

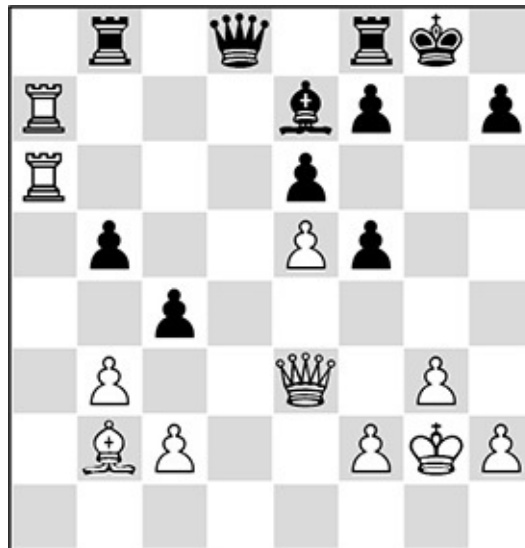
Sicilian Defence

Dragojub Velimirovic

Enver Bukic

Zenica ch-YUG 1963 (19)

1.e4 c5 2. ♗f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♗xd4 a6 5. ♗c3 ♖c7 6.g3 ♗c6 7. ♗g2 ♗f6 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.b3 0-0 10. ♗b2 b5 11.e5 ♗e8 12.a4 ♖b8 13. ♗xc6 dxc6 14. ♗e4 c5 15.axb5 axb5 16. ♖e1 ♗b7 17. ♗h5 g6 18. ♗e2 ♗g7 19. ♖a7 ♗b6 20. ♖ea1 ♗f5 21. ♗d6 ♗xg2 22. ♗xf5 gxf5 23. ♖1a6 ♗d8 24. ♗xg2 c4 25. ♗e3



White is clearly pushing and trying to make something out of Black's weakened kingside. For now, his rooks are not involved there, but he gets a surprising chance.

25...cxb3?

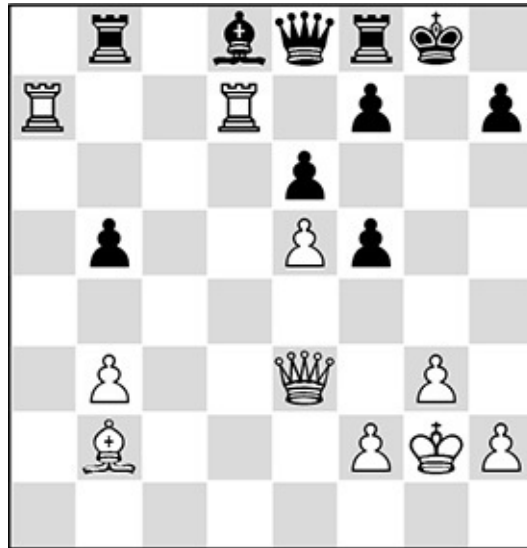
25... ♗g5 was called for.

26. ♖d6! ♔e8

A) After 26... ♗xd6 27.exd6, Black is in trouble on the dark squares; ...f7-f6

will be virtually impossible, and the rook on a7 will assist with mates on g7 or h7, for example: 27... ♖e8 28. ♗e5 f6 29. ♔h6;

B) 26... ♗g5 was relatively best, but Black is not to be envied after 27. ♔f3. 27. ♖dd7 ♗d8 28.cxb3



This is a huge improvement compared to the first diagram: the rooks on the seventh have forced Black into passivity. He is lost already and went down quickly.

28... ♔h8

28... ♗b6 fails to 29. ♔g5+ ♔h8 30. ♔f6+ ♔g8 31. ♗c1.

29. ♔h6 ♖c8 30. ♗a3

Winning material.

30... ♗b6 31. ♗xf8 ♔xf8 32. ♔xf8+ ♖xf8 33. ♖xf7 ♗xa7 34. ♖xf8+ ♔g7 35. ♖f6 1-0

We finish with another Bronstein game. This is a famous one, which did not end in his favour, but one that suits our theme nicely and resembles his earlier game against Geller.

King's Indian Defence

David Bronstein

Bent Larsen

Amsterdam izt 1964 (19)

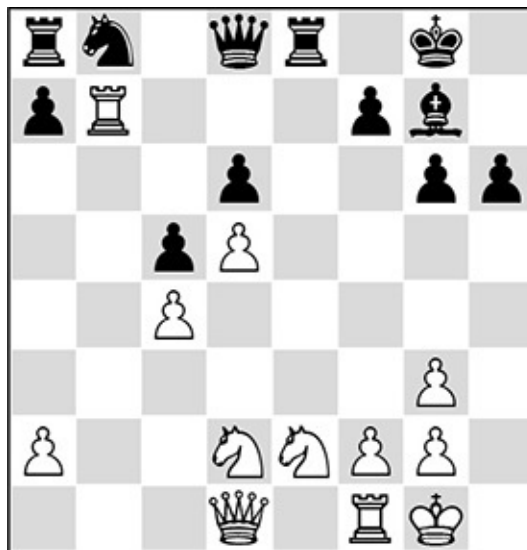
1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3. ♗c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5. ♗e2 0-0 6. ♗g5 c5 7.d5 e6 8. ♗f3 h6 9. ♗f4 exd5 10.exd5 ♖e8 11. ♗d2 ♗h5 12. ♗g3 ♗g4 13.0-0 ♗xg3 14.hxg3 ♗xe2 15. ♗xe2



15... ♕xb2

15... ♖d7 would be more natural, as the text move allows White's rook on b7 again.

16. ♗b1 ♕g7 17. ♗xb7



17... ♕d7 18. ♕f4

Not fearing the inclusion of the b-rook and directing his pieces to the enemy king.

18... ♕b6

Larsen is ambitious as well, trying to catch the rook, but moving a possible defender to the queenside. 18... ♔c8 was the safe alternative, wisely driving the rook from its active post.

19. ♖e1 ♜c3



Threatening 20... ♜xe1+ followed by 21... ♜xd2 and 22... ♜c8, catching the rook. Bronstein goes all out:

20. ♗e4 ♜xe1? 21. ♗e6! ♜xf2+

After 21... fxe6 22. ♜g4, the attack of rook, queen and knight is too strong.

22. ♜xf2?

It's really a pity that Bronstein allowed Black's subsequent defensive rook manoeuvre. 22. ♜h2! would have preserved all threats. Still, here too Black seems to be able to defend by giving up his queen with 22... ♜d4 23. ♗xd8 ♜axd8.

22... fxe6 23. ♜g4 ♜f8+ 24. ♜g1 ♜f6 25. ♜h3?

25.dxe6, with the threat of 26.e7, would have won back material and kept White alive. One essential line is: 25... ♜f8 26.e7 ♜f1+ 27. ♜h2 ♜f5 28. ♜xf5 ♜xf5 29. ♜xa7 ♜b8 30. ♜b7, with a repetition.

25... ♜f8 26. ♗g5

After 26. ♗xf6+ ♜xf6 27. ♜xh6, Black wins with 27... ♜a1+ 28. ♜h2 (28. ♜f2 ♜f8+) 28... ♜h8.

26... ♜f1+ 27. ♜h2 ♜f5 28. ♗xe6 ♜h5 29. ♜xh5 gxh5 30. ♗xf8 ♜xf8 0-1

Summary

It must be clear now that with some space along the seventh rank, an invading rook can support a kingside attack from the queenside. One good plan is to

speed up such an attack, possibly not shying from sacrifices, as long as your rook is allowed on the seventh rank. In quieter positions, or towards the endgame, the rook will also enlarge the scope of the tactical possibilities from its active position.

Not surprisingly, doubled rooks on the seventh rank will often be a devastating force. So, from the other perspective, if a rook happens to land on your second rank, don't ignore it, but be sure to chase it away or exchange it before it hits you.

CHAPTER 4

Botvinnik's fearsome bishop

Central strongholds are not exclusively for knights. Bishops may work excellently from a distance, such as after a fianchetto, but there is nothing wrong with a reigning bishop in the centre that is well-supported on a strong square, where it cannot be bothered seriously. Botvinnik's legacy has a game on this theme, but many more examples can be found.

Grünfeld Indian Defence

Sunilduth Narayanan

2568

Ahmed Adly

2626

Dubai 2018 (7)

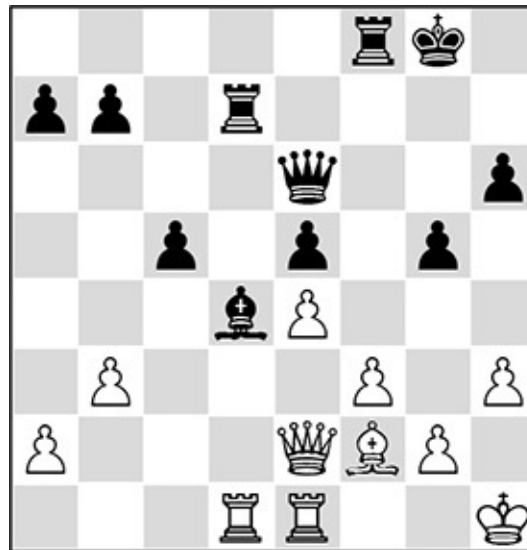
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♘f3 ♙g7 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.e4 ♘b6 7.♙e2 0-0 8.0-0 ♘c6 9.d5 ♘e5 10.♙g5 ♘xf3+ 11.♙xf3 ♙d7 12.♙e1 h6 13.♙h4 ♘c4 14.♙e2 ♘d6 15.♙d3 g5 16.♙g3 e5 17.dxe6 fxe6 18.h3 ♘c6 19.♙e2 ♙e7 20.♙ad1 ♙ad8 21.♘b5 ♘xb5 22.♙xb5 ♙xb5 23.♙xb5 c6 24.♙e2 ♙d4



Black has planted his bishop right in the centre of the board, avoiding the exchange of rooks. Still, what is his plan? The pawn on f2 will not be a problem

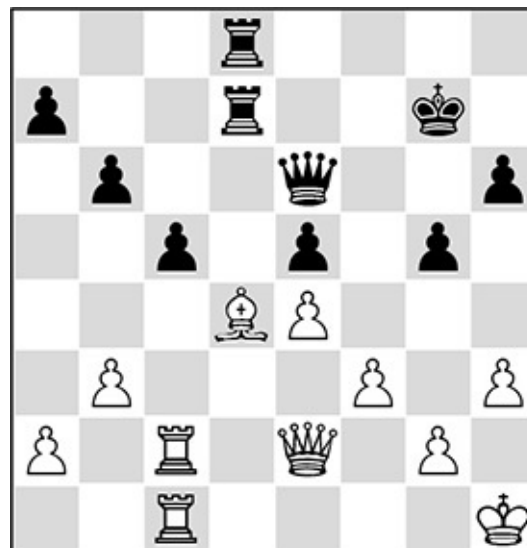
for White. Let's take it a couple of moves further.

25. ♔h1 e5 26. f3 ♝e6 27. b3 ♜d7 28. ♞f2 c5



Obviously, the position of the bishop has been reinforced with 25...e5 and 28...c5, and so Black has a small spatial advantage with a fearsome bishop in the middle. If White is to exchange this bishop, Black will acquire a new advantage: a protected passed pawn.

29. ♜c1 b6 30. ♜c2 ♜fd8 31. ♜ec1 ♞g7 32. ♞xd4



32... ♞xd4!

Obviously, White was ready to meet 32...cxd4 with 33. ♞d3, but now it is Black who rules on the only open file! Black is clearly better, and he liquidated into a

pawn ending, where his opponent blundered the draw on the first move. Food for another kind of book!

33. ♖h2 ♜f7 34. ♜f1 h5 35. ♜e3 ♜f6 36. h4 gxh4 37. ♜h3 ♜d1 38. ♜xd1 ♜xd1 39. ♜c1 ♜xc1
40. ♜xc1 ♜f4 41. ♜xf4 exf4 42. ♜xh4
42. ♜h2!.
42... ♜g6 43. a4 a6 0-1

Next, we have a middlegame position with more pieces on the board, but with the same manoeuvre.

Slav Defence

Johanna Blübaum

1905

Stanislav Savchenko

2557

Dresden 2008 (1)

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. ♘c3 c6 4. e3 ♘f6 5. ♘f3 ♘bd7 6. ♙d3 dxc4 7. ♙xc4 b5 8. ♙d3 ♙b7 9. 0-0 a6
10. e4 c5 11. d5 ♜c7 12. ♙c2 0-0-0 13. dxe6 ♘e5 14. ♜e2 ♘xf3+ 15. ♜xf3 fxe6 16. ♜h3 ♜b8
17. ♙g5 ♙d6 18. f3 h6 19. ♙e3



19... ♙e5 20. ♜ad1

20. ♜xe6 ♙xh2+ 21. ♜h1 ♙c8 22. ♜b3 c4 is just plain bad.

20... ♙d4 21. ♜fe1 e5



Again, Black has firmly established a central bishop. He can gradually improve and advance his pieces, while White has little space to do the same. The young white player quickly lost her track against the grandmaster.

22. ♖b3? c4 23. ♖c2 ♔c5

Suddenly, White has no decent way to protect the e3-bishop.

24. f4 ♕xe3+ 25. ♖xe3 ♖xe3+ 26. ♖xe3 ♖xd1+ 27. ♖xd1 exf4

And Black effortlessly converted his extra pawn:

28. ♖e1 ♖e8 29. e5 ♗d5 30. ♖h5 ♖e7 31. ♗xd5 ♖xd5 32. a3 ♖c7 33. ♖f2 ♖c6 34. ♖f3 ♖c5 35. g3 fxg3+ 36. ♖xg3 ♖xf3 37. ♖xf3 ♖d5 38. ♖f4 ♖f7+ 39. ♖g3 ♖e6 0-1

Slav Defence

Ratmir Kholmov

Livo Nei

Vilnius ch-URS 1955

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. ♗f3 e6 4. ♗c3 ♗f6 5. e3 ♗bd7 6. b3 ♖d6 7. ♖e2 0-0 8. 0-0 dxc4 9. bxc4 e5 10. ♖c2 ♖e7 11. ♖d3 ♖e8 12. ♗g5 h6 13. ♗ge4 ♗xe4 14. ♗xe4 ♖c7 15. d5 ♗f6 16. dxc6 bxc6 17. ♖a4 ♖d7 18. ♖a3 c5 19. ♖c2 ♖b6 20. ♖fd1 ♖c6



When you notice the hole on d5, and after studying the previous examples, your next moves will be clear:

21. ♖xf6+ ♜xf6 22. ♕e4

On its way to d5, of course!

22... ♜ad8 23. ♕b2 ♕c7 24. ♕d5 ♕d7 25. e4

Now, White's light-squared bishop is outside the pawn chain, and can by no means be called 'bad'. On the contrary, it is a very strong and dominant bishop. The same cannot be said of Black's c7-bishop. Now, Kholmov patiently expanded his spatial advantage and converted his advantage in an instructive way:

25... ♜e7 26. ♜d3 ♜h7 27. ♜a3 ♕b6 28. ♜g3 ♕c7 29. f4 ♜b8 30. ♕c3 ♜g8 31. f5 g5 32. ♜e2 ♕e8 33. ♜f1 ♜b6 34. ♜f2 ♜a6 35. ♜h1 ♜f6 36. ♕d2 ♜a6 37. ♕e3 ♕b6 38. f6 ♜f8 39. h4 gxh4 40. ♜f5+ ♜g6 41. ♜xg6 fxg6 42. ♜c8 1-0

Nimzo-Indian Defence

Mikhail Botvinnik

Ilya Kan

Leningrad ch-URS 1939 (10)

Here is the classic example of our bishop manoeuvre. Black has just played his knight to f6, which Botvinnik called 'perhaps the decisive mistake'. He explained that after the exchange of knights, White's bishop will be an almighty visitor on the e4- and d5-squares.

1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♗c3 ♗b4 4. ♗f3 c5 5. a3 ♗xc3+ 6. bxc3 ♗a5 7. ♕d2 ♗e4 8. ♗c2 ♗xd2 9. ♗xd2 d6 10. e3 e5 11. dxe5 dxe5 12. ♕d3 h6 13. 0-0 0-0 14. f4 ♗d7 15. f5 ♗f6



16. ♖e4 ♜d8 17. ♖xf6+ ♜xf6 18. ♙e4 ♜b8 19. ♜ad1 b6 20. h3 ♙a6

After 20... ♙b7 21. ♙xb7 ♜xb7 22. ♜e4 ♜bb8 23. ♜d5, White holds the d-file, though the strong bishop has disappeared – an achievement for Black.

21. ♙d5 b5 22. cxb5 ♜xb5

22... ♙xb5 23. c4 ♙c6 was the last chance to contest the d5-bishop. Black is worse after the text move, according to Botvinnik, though the real trouble for Black arises after his next three moves.

23. c4 ♜b6 24. ♜b1 ♜d8

24... ♜fb8 would be the logical follow-up of the ...b6-b5 break. Black has created an open file for his rooks.

25. ♜xb6 axb6 26. e4

Preventing 26... ♜xd5. Botvinnik proceeded to break through on the queenside, and Black no longer obtained any counterplay:

26... ♙c8 27. ♜a4 ♙d7 28. ♜a7 ♙e8 29. ♜b1 ♜d6 30. a4 ♜h7 31. a5 bxa5 32. ♜xa5 ♜a6 33. ♜xc5 ♜a2 34. ♜e3 ♜a6 35. ♜b8 ♜a4 36. ♜h2 ♜a3 37. ♜c5 ♜a2 38. ♜a8 ♜xa8 39. ♙xa8 ♜xa8 40. ♜xe5 ♙c6 41. ♜c7 1-0

Let's look at some varieties. Here is one from another former World Champion.

Réti Opening

Fridrik Olafsson

2560

Anatoly Karpov

2690

Tilburg 1977 (9)

1. ♖f3 ♖f6 2.g3 b6 3. ♘g2 ♘b7 4.0-0 e6 5.d3 d5 6. ♖bd2 ♖bd7 7.c3 ♘e7 8. ♙c2 0-0 9.e4 c5
10. ♚e1 ♙c7 11.c4 dxe4 12.dxe4 ♚ad8 13.h3 ♘d6 14.b3



14... ♘e5!

As Olafsson wrote in the tournament book, he was surprised by this move and he had only counted on 14... ♖e5.

15. ♚b1

After 15. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 16. ♘b2 (16. ♚e3 ♖c6 17.e5 ♖d7 18.f4 ♖d4) 16... ♖d3 17. ♚e3 ♖xb2 18. ♙xb2 e5, there is no doubt who is better (Olafsson). Both sides will try to direct their knight to d4/d5. Although Black has the better bishop, White still seems quite solid.

15...h6 16. ♖f1 ♘d4 17. ♘f4

Olafsson did not see a useful move. 17. ♖xd4 cxd4 again gives Black space and a central passed pawn. 18.e5 is not convincing after 18... ♘xg2 19.exf6 ♘xh3 (19... ♘a8 20.fxg7 ♚fe8 – Olafsson) 20.fxg7 ♚fe8.

17...e5 18. ♘c1 ♖b8 19. ♖h4 ♖c6

The tournament book calls this a ‘glorious position’ for Black, but as White here has his own strong square available and a piece that he can send there (which was not the case in the Botvinnik game, where only a bishop remained), there is still a whole battle ahead. While Karpov hauled in the full point, Olafsson had his chances.

20.a3 a6 21. ♖f5 b5 22. ♘d2 b4 23.axb4 ♖xb4 24. ♘xb4 cxb4 25. ♖1e3 ♘c3 26. ♚ed1 a5 27. ♖d5 ♘xd5 28.exd5 ♙h8 29. ♚d3 a4 30.d6 ♙c5 31. ♚xc3 bxc3 32. ♙xc3 axb3 33. ♚xb3 ♚b8 34. ♙e3 ♙xc4 35. ♚d3 ♚fd8 36. ♖e7 e4 37. ♚d4 ♙e6 38. ♙f4 ♚b6 39. ♖f5 g5 40. ♙c1 ♙xf5 0-1

Ruy Lopez

Yakov Vilner

Peter Romanovsky

Moscow ch-URS 1924 (7)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 d6 4.d4 ♙d7 5.♘c3 ♗ge7 6.♙g5 h6 7.♙e3 g6 8.dxe5 dxe5 9.♜d2
♙g7 10.0-0-0 ♙g4 11.♜e2 ♜c8 12.♙c5 a6 13.♙a4 b5 14.♙b3 0-0 15.♘d5 ♜e8 16.h3 ♙e6
17.♜d2 ♜b8 18.g4 a5 19.g5 ♙xd5 20.♙xd5 h5 21.♜e3 ♘d4 22.♙xe7 ♜xe7 23.c3 ♘xf3
24.♜xf3 c6 25.♙b3 a4 26.♙c2 a3 27.b3 b4 28.c4 ♜e6 29.♜d3



White has incarcerated his own bishop, and now Black is, of course, about to install his Botvinnik-bishop on d4. Well, not quite. Botvinnik had just started to play chess, while Romanovsky was the reigning USSR Champion.

29... ♙f8 30. ♜hd1 ♙c5 31. ♜e2 ♙d4 32. ♜b1 c5



With opposite-coloured bishops, the difference in strength between the two sides is abundantly clear here. Romanovsky now intended to open the f-file, to invade with his major pieces and start a kingside attack (as he elaborately explained in *Soviet Middlegame Technique*).

33. ♖f3 ♜d8 34. h4 ♞e7 35. ♗g1 ♜f8 36. ♞d3 ♜h7 37. ♗fg3 ♜d6 38. ♜1g2 f6 39. gxf6 ♜xf6 40. ♗g5 ♞f7 41. ♞c2 ♜f4 42. ♗h2 ♜df6

‘Alekhine’s Gun’ – see Chapter 3 of TYCPR, although here too, the famous examples by Alekhine had yet to be played.

43. ♗gg2 ♞xf2 44. ♞d1 ♞d4 45. ♜c1 ♜f1 46. ♜c2 ♜6f3 47. ♞d2 ♜c3+ 48. ♜b1 ♞f3 49. ♜e2 ♜xb3+ 50. axb3 ♞xb3+ 51. ♜c1 ♞b2+ 0-1

Now that you’ve appreciated the force of a central bishop, let’s finish with a recent example where things go a little differently. White sacrifices an exchange to establish a permanent bishop on d5. From here, it dominates the opponent’s rook, despite the fact that the e-file is open and available. It’s a difficult example perhaps, but I hope it’s instructive!

Petroff Defence

Sergey Karjakin

2763

Fabiano Caruana

2784

Berlin ct 2018 (12)

1. e4 e5 2. ♞f3 ♞f6 3. ♞xe5 d6 4. ♞f3 ♞xe4 5. ♞c3 ♞xc3 6. dxc3 ♞c6 7. ♞e3 ♞e7 8. ♞d2 ♞e6

9.0-0-0 ♖d7 10.a3 h6 11.♗d4 ♗xd4 12.♙xd4 ♖g8 13.♙e2 c5 14.♙e3 d5 15.f4 0-0-0 16.♙f3
♙g4



17.♙xd5 ♙xd1 18.♖xd1 ♖c7 19.c4 ♖ge8 20.♗f2 b6 21.g4 ♙f6 22.♖b1 ♖d7

Giri proposes the double-edged 22... ♗e7 23. ♖d3 b5 to undermine the strong bishop (*New In Chess* magazine 3/2018), and indeed it seems that White cannot fully profit from Black's open king position. In the game, the bishop reigned supreme and the black rooks stayed passive.

23. ♖d3 g5

23... ♖de7 could be met with 24.g5 hxg5 25.fxg5 ♙e5 26.♙g2!, with trouble along the long diagonal, but the text move turns out to be the wrong break.

24.♖a2 ♖ee7 25.♗f3 ♖d8 26.♙d2 ♖c8 27.♗f1 ♖d6 28.fxg5 ♙xg5 29.♙xg5 hxg5 30.♗f5+ ♖dd7 31.♗xg5



White has gained a second pawn for the exchange, and, more importantly, has a clear plan to follow. The h-pawn will reach for the other side.

31... ♖e5 32. ♗h6 ♜d8 33.g5 ♖d6 34. ♗h8+ ♜e8 35. ♗h4 ♗g6 36. ♗g4 ♜e5 37.h4 ♗e7 38. ♜d2 b5 39. ♘xf7 ♗f5 40. ♜xd7+ ♗xd7 41. ♗xf5+ ♜xf5 42.g6 ♗e7 43.cxb5 ♜h5 44.c4 ♜xh4 45.a4 ♜g4 46.a5 ♗d6 47.a6 ♗c7 48. ♗b3 1-0

Summary

When you see a strong central square, don't hesitate to bring your bishop there and support it with pawns. If it is exchanged there, this may either yield you a protected passed pawn or leave you in possession of the open file. On the other hand, when the bishop is left unchallenged, it will obviously occupy a dominant position, and guarantee you more space to manoeuvre as well.

CHAPTER 5

Kasparov's favourite

When you can place a knight on the sixth rank, right in the middle of your opponent's position, and you are able to support and maintain it there, you are bound to have made a pretty decent upgrade of your minor piece. What are the resulting advantages and how do you obtain such a terrific knight?

French Defence

Isaak Boleslavsky

Carlos Guimard

Buenos Aires tt 1954 (4)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♗fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♗f3 ♗c6 7.♕e3 cxd4 8.♗xd4 ♕c5 9.♕b5 0-0
10.♗xc6 bxc6 11.♕xc5 ♗xc5 12.♖d4 ♖b6 13.b4 cxb5 14.bxc5 ♖c7 15.0-0



15...b4

This may seem a clever sacrifice, but it turns out to be a 'horrible mistake' (Boleslavsky). 15...♕d7 was called for.

16.♗b5

Capturing is not obligatory in our royal game. Guimard had only reckoned with 16.♖xb4 ♕a6 17.♗fd1 ♗fc8, and Black is on top. He will regain the pawn on

c5 with firm pressure along the c-file.

16... ♖c6 17. ♘d6

Now, this mighty knight dominates the rooks, as a result of which the c5-pawn can no longer be captured easily. ‘White’s position has gone from practically lost to strategically winning.’ (Boleslavsky) Indeed, if you were to award points to the knight on d6, this would be much more than the traditional ‘3’.

17... a5 18. a3 bxa3 19. ♜fb1 ♜a6 20. ♜xa3 ♘a8 21. ♜g3 g6 22. c4 ♙d7



23.f5

The most pleasing way to win.

23... exf5 24. cxd5 a4 25. ♜a3 ♜b8 26. ♜xb8+ ♘xb8 27. h3

Despacito.

27... f4

27... ♙a7 28. ♙h2 ♜a5 29. e6 fxe6 30. ♙f6 was the idea behind White’s former little move. Great prophylaxis!

28. ♘xf4 ♙f5 29. ♘xf5 gxf5 30. d6 1-0

By the way, the same French Defence hides a well-known trap, which allows White to establish a knight on d6 at an early stage.

French Defence

Li Shilong

2515

Huang Qiming

Jinan 2005 (1)

1. ♖c3 d5 2. d4 ♙f6 3. ♗g5 e6 4. e4 ♗e7 5. e5 ♙fd7 6. ♗xe7 ♜xe7 7. f4 c5?



This is a thematic attack on White's pawn centre, but it's too early here. The d6-square is readily available after the exchange of dark-squared bishops. Such an exchange to make the strong square accessible is a common theme. One example from another opening is 1.e4 c5 2. ♙f3 e6 3. c3 ♙f6 4. e5 ♙d5 5. d4 cxd4 6. cxd4 d6 7. ♗c4 ♙b6 8. ♗d3 ♙c6 9. 0-0 ♙b4 10. ♗g5 ♗e7 11. ♗xe7 ♜xe7 12. ♙c3 ♙xd3 13. ♜xd3 0-0 14. ♙e4 dxe5 15. dxe5 ♜d8 16. ♙d6.

8. ♙b5 ♙a6 9. ♙d6+ ♜f8

After 9... ♜d8 10. ♗xa6 bxa6 11. ♜d2 cxd4 12. ♙f3 ♙b6 13. ♙xd4 ♗d7 14. 0-0 White easily won in the old game Gunsberg-Alapin, Frankfurt 1887.

10. ♗xa6 bxa6 11. ♙f3 h6 12. 0-0 g6 13. c3 ♜g7 14. ♜a4 ♙b6 15. ♜a3



And White won:

15... ♖c7 16.dxc5 ♗d7 17.b4 ♜f8 18.♗d4 ♗b8 19.♖c1 ♗c6 20.♖e3 ♗d7 21.a3 ♗xd4
22.cxd4 a5 23.b5 ♜ab8 24.a4 ♜g8 25.g4 ♖h7 26.♜f3 ♜g7 27.♜h3 ♜h8 28.♜xh6+ ♖g8
29.♜xh8+ ♖xh8 30.c6 ♗xc6 31.♜c1 ♖d8 32.bxc6 f5 33.gxf5 1-0

Here is another old game between two great players that also features ‘knight versus bishop’. Again, the knight occupies a mighty spot within the opponent’s position, though White had to work a bit this time. Also, here Black had the possibility of swapping his bishop for the knight when it reached its strong square.

Alekhine's Defence

Mikhail Botvinnik

Salo Flohr

Moscow 1936

1.e4 ♗f6 2.e5 ♗d5 3.d4 d6 4.♗f3 ♗g4 5.♗e2 c6 6.0-0 dxe5 7.♗xe5 ♗xe2 8.♖xe2 ♗d7 9.f4
e6 10.c4 ♗5b6 11.♗e3 ♗e7 12.♗c3 0-0 13.♜f3 ♖e8 14.♜d1 ♜d8 15.b3 f5 16.♗d3 ♗f6
17.♗f2 ♖f7 18.♗e1 ♜fe8 19.♜fd3 ♗f8 20.♗f3 ♖c7 21.♗e5 ♗bd7 22.♖d2 ♗e7 23.♗f3 ♗f6
24.♖c1 ♗e4 25.♗e5 ♗xf2 26.♖xf2 ♗d7 27.♖e3 ♗xe5 28.fxe5 ♖a5 29.a4 ♜d7 30.g3 ♖d8
31.♖g2 ♗g5 32.♖f3 ♖e7



33.c5

Botvinnik’s – as always instructive – comments were: ‘This at first sight somewhat strange move (as it weakens the d5-square!) puts Black in a critical position. It threatens to transfer the knight via b1, a3 and c4 to d6. But after c4-

c5, White also avails of another plan – the advance of the b-pawn. I noticed this idea in one of Romanovsky’s games from the 5th USSR Championship (versus Selezniev). Flohr prevents this second plan, and White goes over to the first.’

33...a5 34. ♖b1 ♜f8 35. ♗a3 ♞d8 36. ♗c4 ♞c7 37. ♗d6



Sure he can take on d6, but then Black’s position will remain utterly passive, granting White a protected passed pawn as well.

37... ♜xb4 38. ♜b1 ♜d8 39. b4 axb4 40. ♜xb4 ♞xd6?!



Understandably, Flohr no longer cares to see the sight of the awesome knight. But he cannot prevent being gradually pushed back.

41. exd6 ♜a5 42. ♜db3 ♜e8 43. ♜e2 ♜a8 44. ♜e3 ♜f7 45. ♜c4 b5 46. ♜c2 ♜xd6 47. cxd6 c5+

48. ♖h3 cxb4 49. ♜c7+ ♜g8 50. d7 ♜f8 51. ♜d6 h6 52. ♜xe6+ ♜h7 53. ♜e8 b3 54. ♜xa8 ♜xa8 55. axb5 ♜d8 56. ♜xb3 ♜xd7 57. b6 ♜b7 58. ♜g2 ♜g6 59. ♜f3 ♜f6 60. ♜b5 ♜e6 61. ♜e3 ♜d6 62. ♜d3 ♜c6 63. ♜c4 ♜d6 64. ♜d5+ ♜c6 65. ♜c5+ ♜d6 66. ♜b5 1-0

Here is a contemporary game with more pieces on the board, but with the same idea!

Queen's Gambit Declined

Bu Xiangzhi

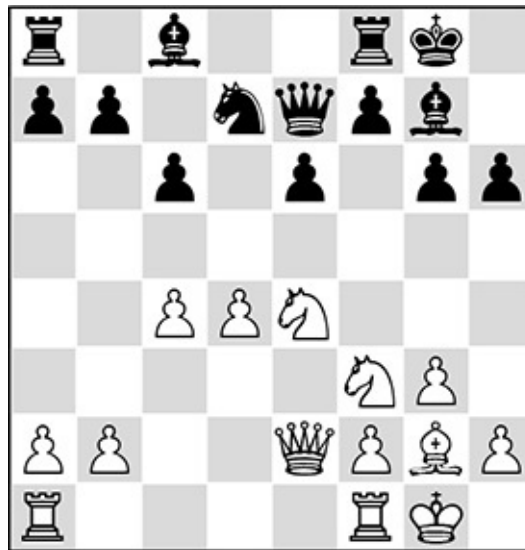
2697

Xu Xiangyu

2534

Chengdu Ach 2017 (5)

1. d4 ♜f6 2. ♜f3 d5 3. c4 e6 4. ♜g5 h6 5. ♜xf6 ♜xf6 6. ♜c3 c6 7. g3 ♜d7 8. ♜g2 g6 9. 0-0 ♜g7 10. e4 0-0 11. ♜e2 dxe4 12. ♜xe4 ♜e7



13. c5!?

Again, giving up the d5-square, but making it possible for the knight to enter on d6.

13... ♜f6

Black wants to be able to challenge the knight on d6 immediately, but his c8-bishop will be restricted soon.

13... b6!? would have been better.

14. ♜d6 ♜e8 15. ♜c4 ♜c7 16. ♜fe5 ♜d7 17. ♜ad1 ♜ab8



White now creates a new front, profiting from his spatial advantage in the centre.

18.h4 h5 19.g4 ♖e8 20.gxh5 ♜xh4 21.hxg6 fxg6 22.♗d6

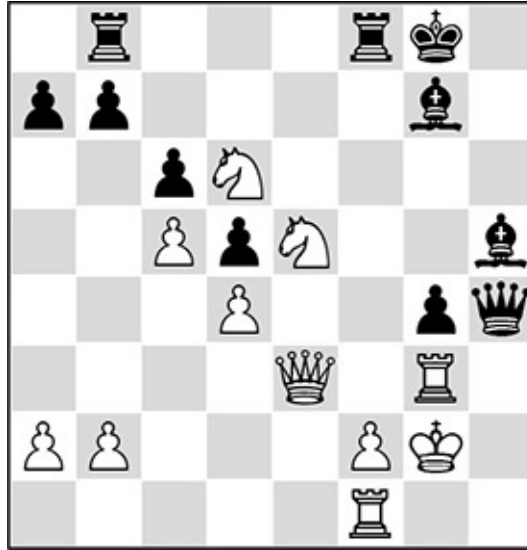
Back home!

22...♗d5 23.♗xd5!



White immediately removes Black's active knight; the subsequent rook switch along the third rank both protects his own king and adds to the attack.

23...exd5 24.♜d3 g5 25.♜g3 ♜h5 26.♜e3 g4 27.♜g2



♖h1 is coming. White's absolute superior activity secures an easy win.
 27...♙xe5 28.♘xe5 ♙g6 29.♙e6+ ♚g7 30.♖xg4 ♙f6 31.♙e5 ♙xe5 32.dxe5 ♖g8 33.f4
 Black resigned.

Such a powerful knight is often fittingly called an 'octopus', because of its eight strong tentacles. It was the favourite piece of Garry Kasparov, who famously used it to dominate Karpov's position in a game from their World Championship Match in 1985. Here is another one from a tournament where he impressively scored his first international success, when he was only sixteen years old.

King's Indian Defence

Roman Hernandez

2500

Garry Kasparov

Banja Luka 1979 (4)

1.c4 g6 2.♘c3 ♙g7 3.d4 c5 4.d5 ♘f6 5.e4 d6 6.♙d3 0-0 7.f4 a6 8.♘ge2 b5 9.cxb5 axb5
 10.♘xb5 ♙a6 11.♘ec3



11...c4

This is a typical tactical shot, which creates the basic support for the octopus later on. Meanwhile, there was another surprising tactic: the immediate 11...

♘xe4 12. ♙xe4 (12. ♘xe4 ♙xb5 13. ♙xb5 ♔a5+) 12... ♔a5, and surprisingly enough the b5-knight cannot be properly covered after 13. ♘a3 (13. ♙d3 ♙xb5) 13... ♙xc3+ 14. bxc3 ♔xc3+.

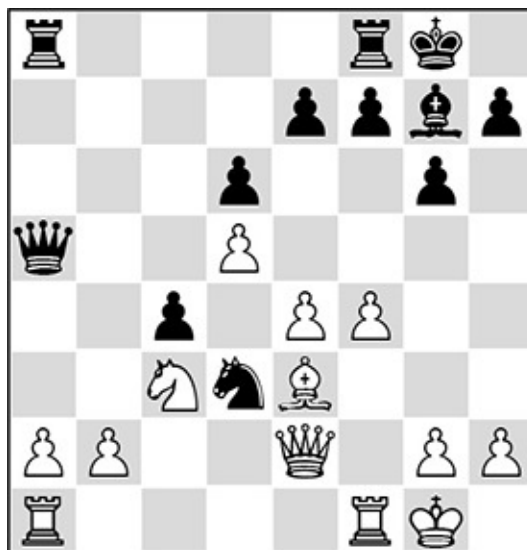
12. ♙c2

12. ♙xc4 ♘xe4.

12... ♙xb5 13. ♘xb5 ♔a5+ 14. ♘c3

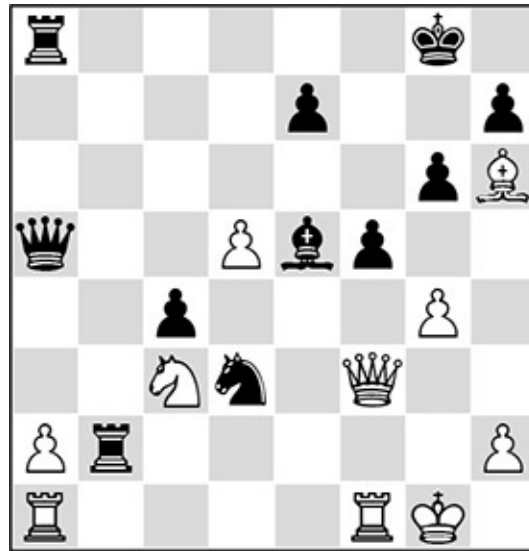
Now watch: the knights go on their respective ways!

14... ♘fd7 15. ♔f3 ♘a6 16. 0-0 ♘b4 17. ♔e2 ♘c5 18. ♙e3 ♘bd3 19. ♙xd3 ♘xd3



In this type of position, where Black has sacrificed his b5-pawn like in the Benko (Volga) Gambit, Black has strong pressure against White's queenside along the long diagonal and on the open files. It goes without saying that the pressure will soon be unbearable with such a beast on d3. White's desperate attempt at active counterplay in the game quickly backfired.

20.e5 dxe5 21.fxe5 ♗xe5 22.♗h6 ♖fb8 23.♙f3 f5 24.g4 ♖xb2



This is a blatantly obvious example for Chapter 3: the rook on the second rank assists in the attack.

25.gxf5 ♗xc3 26.fxg6 ♗d4+ 0-1

Queen's Indian Defence

Yury Kuzubov

2652

Jan-Krzysztof Duda

2707

Spain tt 2017 (6)

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.a3 ♗a6 5.♙b3 c5 6.d5 g6 7.♗c3 exd5 8.♗xd5 ♗xd5 9.cxd5 ♗g7 10.♗g5 f6 11.♗f4 0-0 12.e3 d6 13.h4 ♗xf1 14.♙xf1 ♙e7 15.♙c2 ♗d7



16.h5

The obvious continuation, to open the h-file. But there is more to it: a familiar hole arises on e6 after Black's natural reply.

16...f5 17.hxg6 hxg6 18.♖g5 ♜f6 19.f3 ♜ae8

19...♞xd5? naturally fails to 20.♞c4.

20.♞f2 ♞h5 21.♞e6

Here we are again – shutting off two rooks.

21...♞xf4 22.exf4 ♞d4+ 23.♞g3 ♞f6



24.♞ae1

Another instructive moment: obviously, White does not bother to swap his precious knight for the lousy rook on f8, if only from a practical point of view.

Rather, he prevents Black from sacrificing the exchange on e6.

24... ♖f7 25.b4 ♖fe7 26.♗d3 ♘c3 27.♖c1 ♘d4 28.♖ce1 ♘c3 29.♖d1 cxb4 30.axb4 ♘xb4 31.♖h6 ♖xe6

Black loses patience, as 31... ♖h7 runs into 32. ♖xh7 ♔xh7 33. ♗b5, with a double attack. The exchange sacrifice is understandable but clearly not sufficient.

32.dxe6 ♖xe6 33.♗c4 ♔g7 34.♗c8 1-0

Just for pleasure's sake, we end with another octopus of Garry's. He scored a quick victory when Adams misplayed an opening line that was still in its infancy.

Slav Defence

Michael Adams

2620

Garry Kasparov

2780

Dortmund 1992 (8)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c6 4.e3 ♘f6 5.♘f3 ♘bd7 6.♗c2 ♘d6 7.g4 dxc4 8.e4? e5 9.g5 exd4 10.♘xd4

After 10.gxf6 ♗xf6!, Black will also win back his piece with a great position to boot.

10... ♘g4 11.h3

11. ♘xc4 ♘de5 12. ♘e2 ♘c5 loses material. After the text move, White will no longer be able to capture the pawn on c4, which will be the essential support of the upcoming octopus.

11... ♘ge5 12. ♘e3 ♘c5 13.0-0-0 ♘ed3+



‘Worse than a rusty nail in your knee,’ Bogoljubow is alleged to have said about such an intruder. Anyway, after Kasparov had mobilized his remaining forces, the game was quickly decided.

14. ♖b1 ♜e7 15. ♜g1 g6 16. ♞g2 0-0 17. ♜a1 ♞f4!

Exchanging an important defender.

18. ♞xf4 ♜xf4 19. h4 ♜d8 20. ♜d2 ♞cd3 21. ♜e3 ♞g4 22. ♜d2 ♜e5



And White resigned. Indeed, when you start calculating his possible moves, no rescue comes in sight:

A) 23. ♞c2 is refuted by 23... ♞xb2 24. ♜xb2 ♜d3. 23. ♞de2 ♞xe2 24. ♞xe2 ♞xg2 25. ♜xg2 ♞e1 26. ♜g3 (26. ♜g1 ♜xd2 27. ♜xd2 ♞f3) 26... ♜d3;

B) 23. ♖f3 is relatively best, but no picnic after 23... ♗xf3 24. ♗xf3 b5.

Summary

When you have established an octopus in your opponent's position, most often it will assure you of a decent spatial advantage and it will dominate your adversary's rooks. To achieve this, you may need to exchange a bishop to get proper access. An exchange of the invading knight may gain you a dangerous passed pawn in other cases, and this is one good reason to create a solid support by a pawn, if possible. And for starters: most of all, keep an eye open for these strong squares!

CHAPTER 6

Fischer's knight

In the Sicilian Defence, the d5-square is often permanently available for White when his opponent has moved his pawn from e7 to e5. Therefore, this advance was considered a gruesome horror a long time ago. Views have changed, but indeed, when a white knight does arrive on d5 and it cannot be exchanged, Black may suffer badly. This is a nice occasion for some clear-cut examples about the powers of such an unassailable piece on a strong central square.

Sicilian Defence

Miksa Weiss

Louis Paulsen

Frankfurt 1887 (19)

1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 e6 3.♘f3 a6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♗c7 6.♙e2 ♘f6 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.a3 ♙e7 9.♖h1 0-0
10.f4 d6 11.♙f3 ♙d7 12.♘ce2 ♖ac8 13.c3 ♖fd8 14.♘g3 ♙f8 15.f5 ♘xd4 16.♗xd4 ♙b5
17.♖e1 e5 18.♗f2 ♘d7 19.♙e3 f6 20.♙e2 ♙xe2 21.♖xe2 ♗c4 22.♖d1 ♖c6 23.♖ed2 ♖dc8
24.♗g1 b5 25.♗e2 ♘b6



White (or Weiss – hmm, bad joke) now opted for a liquidation that has become standard today.

26.♙xb6! ♖xb6 27.♘f1

If we look at which minor pieces have remained on the board, it is obvious that White has done a good job: his knight is heading for the strong d5-square, where it will be unchallenged. Black is stuck with a bad bishop.

27...a5 28. ♖f3 ♜bc6 29. ♞e3 ♝c5 30. ♔h1 ♞e7 31. ♞d5 ♞d8



On its way to the only diagonal that will give some prospects. But now White's queen enters, thanks to the clumsy black pieces.

32. ♖h5 h6 33. ♖e8+ ♔h7 34. ♜d3 ♖a7 35. ♖g6+ ♔g8 36. ♜g3 ♖h8 37. ♜h3 ♖d7 38. g4

38. ♜dd3, with the threat of 39. ♜xh6+, was also decisive.

38... ♜a6 39. g5! fxg5 40. f6 ♜a7 41. fxg7+ ♖xg7 42. ♜xh6+ ♔g8 43. ♖e8+ ♖f8 44. ♜h8+ 1-0

In his book *My Great Predecessors Part I*, Kasparov talks about the New York tournament two years later: 'In the spring of 1889 (...) Chigorin shared 1st-2nd place at an important tournament in the history of chess (64 days: a double round event with 20 players).' Here he failed to mention the name of the other prize-winner in New York, who also broke even with Chigorin in the subsequent match to decide a winner (2-2). A year later, he stopped his active career and he never made a big name for himself. Yet, despite his short career, he just made it into Jeff Sonas's chessmetrics top 100 (three-years peak range). Indeed, it was the white player in the above game: Miksa Weiss from Austria.

Here is a game by Fischer that I always enjoy using during training sessions on the topic. It is perhaps not so strange that the game was one of the brilliancy prize winners in the tournament, and Fischer himself included it in his collection

My 60 Memorable Games.

Sicilian Defence

Robert Fischer

Julio Bolbochan

Stockholm izt 1962 (21)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.h3

The height of fashion again nowadays.

6... ♘c6 7.g4 ♘xd4 8.♙xd4 e5 9.♙d3 ♘e7 10.g5 ♘d7 11.♙e3 ♘c5 12.♙d2 ♘e6 13.0-0-0 0-0 14.f3 ♙c8 15.♙b1 ♘d7 16.h4 b5 17.♙h3 ♙xh3

The exchange of the light-squared bishops is the first step in White's plan.

18.♙xh3 ♘b6



After the previous game, White's next move is obvious:

19.♙xb6 ♙xb6 20.♘d5

There it is again: a splendid unchallenged knight on d5.

20... ♙d8 21.f4 exf4 22.♙xf4 ♙d7 23.♙f5!

Don't you dare think about exchanging your pride for a lousy pawn: after

23. ♘xe7+ ♙xe7 24. ♙xd6 (24. ♙xd6?? ♙fd8), White is on top, of course, but a lot a work would still be ahead.

23... ♙cd8 24. ♙a3 ♙a7 25. ♙c3

Elegant manoeuvring by Fischer.

25...g6 26.♙g4 ♙d7 27.♙f3 ♙e6 28.♙c7 ♙de8 29.♘f4 ♙e5 30.♙d5 ♙h8 31.a3 h6

Black tries to liberate his queen now that it has been forced to such a passive

position. However, this is at the cost of his pawn structure on the kingside.

32.gxh6 ♖xh6 33.h5 ♗g5

Now, White breaks open Black's king's position decisively.

34.hxg6! fxg6

After 34... ♗xf4 35.gxf7+ ♖xf7 36. ♖xf7 ♔xf7, 37. ♖h5 is strongest, when Black's king will be an easy victim in the major-piece ending.

35. ♖b3



35... ♖xf4?

Although material is equal after 35... ♖h8 36. ♖xg5 (36. ♗xg6+ ♖xg6 37. ♖xg5 ♖f1+ 38. ♖a2 ♗xg5 39. ♖h3+ ♖g8 40. ♗xf1 is also winning) 36... ♖xf4 37. ♖d5 ♖fxe4 38. ♖xd6, White still has the superior activity, both threatening the black king and to double along the seventh rank. Both the g6- and a6-pawns are prone to attacks.

36. ♖e5+ ♖f8 37. ♖xe8+ 1-0

There is another earlier game of Fischer's (against Gadia, Mar del Plata 1960) that is often quoted as an example of an untouchable knight on d5. This earlier game from the famous Candidates Tournament in Zurich also received much attention and was ground-breaking. Najdorf's pet Sicilian line was in full development at the time.

Sicilian Defence

Efim Geller

Miguel Najdorf

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♙e2 e5 7.♘b3 ♙e6 8.0-0 ♘bd7 9.f4 ♚c7 10.f5

Another way to exchange the light-squared bishops.

10...♙c4 11.a4 ♚c8 12.♙e3 ♙e7 13.a5 h5

This move got a question mark from Najdorf, who recommended 13...0-0. Even 13...d5!? seems possible, for instance: 14.exd5 ♙xe2 15.♙xe2 ♙b4.

14.♙xc4 ♙xc4 15.♚a4 ♙c7 16.h3 h4 17.♚f2 b5 18.axb6 ♘xb6



19.♙xb6!

Najdorf writes: ‘A move worthy of a grandmaster like Geller. It’s notable that he gives up his powerful bishop to realize the advantage of his good knight versus Black’s bad bishop.’ And Bronstein writes: ‘His exchange is aimed at subjugating the light squares, especially d5, since White removes one of the pieces which could defend that square.’

19.♚xa6 ♘c4 20.♙c1 ♙b7 is equal.

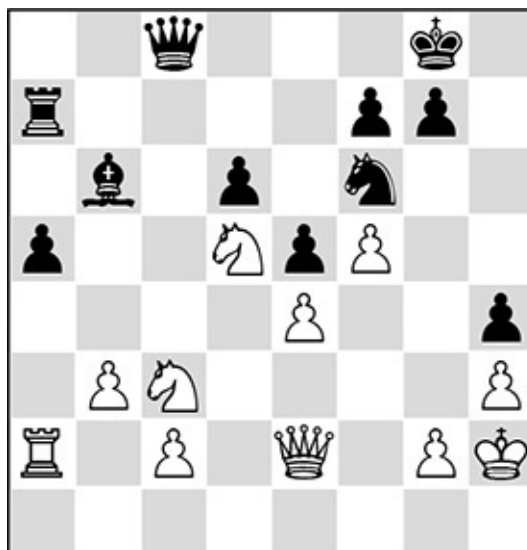
19...♙xb6 20.♙e2

Now, Geller skilfully and patiently relocates his pieces.

20...♚a8 21.♙h2 0-0 22.♚f1 ♚a7 23.♚fa1 ♚fa8 24.♚1a2 ♙d8 25.♘a5

On its way to...

25...♚c8 26.♘c4 ♙c6 27.♘e3 a5 28.♚c4 ♙a6 29.b3 ♙b6 30.♚xc8+ ♙xc8 31.♘ed5



... d5 that is!

31... ♖xd5 32. ♖xd5 ♗c5

At least Black has gotten his bad bishop to an active spot, although 32... ♗c5 would have failed to, for example, 33. ♖xa5. Geller rightfully still deemed the position strategically lost for Black.

33. ♖a1 ♗f2

33...a4 could, just like the text move, have been answered with 34. ♗g4.

34. ♗xf2

Very safe.

34... ♗xf2 35. ♖f1 ♗d4 36.c3 ♗c5 37.g4! hxg3+ 38. ♗xg3 ♖b7 39. ♖b1 f6 40. ♗f3

White will create a passed b-pawn on the queenside, and Black has nothing to oppose this.

40... ♗f7 41. ♗e2 ♖b8 42.b4 g6 43. ♗d3 gxf5 44.exf5 axb4 45.cxb4 ♗d4 46. ♖c1 ♗g7

47. ♖c7+ ♗h6 48. ♗e4 ♗g5 49. ♖h7 ♗f2 50. ♖g7+ ♗h4 51. ♗f3 ♗e1

Black's pieces are dispersed, his pawns are blocked and his king is in trouble.

His game can't be worse, can it?

52. ♗g2 ♖f8 53.b5 ♗a5 54.b6 ♗xb6 55. ♖xb6 ♖b8 56. ♖g4+ ♗h5 57. ♖d5 1-0

The following recent game saw another familiar idea that is connected to the strong Fischer knight.

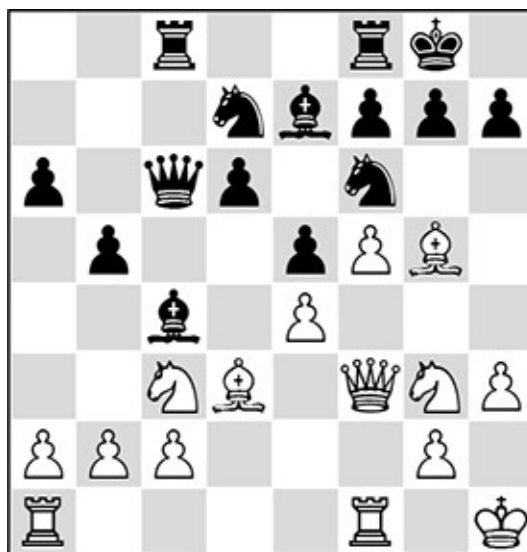
Sicilian Defence

Markus Ragger

Jeffery Xiong

Wijk aan Zee 2017 (1)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 ♘f6 4.♘c3 cxd4 5.♘xd4 a6 6.h3 e5 7.♘de2 b5 8.♘g3 ♗c7 9.♙d3
 ♙e6 10.0-0 ♘bd7 11.f4 ♙e7 12.♗f3 0-0 13.♖h1 ♗c6 14.f5 ♙c4 15.♙g5 ♖ac8



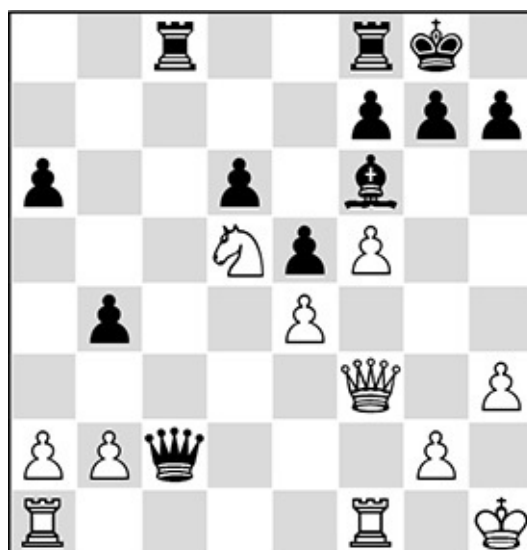
16.♘h5!

Now, after

16...b4 17.♙xf6 ♘xf6 18.♘xf6+ ♙xf6 19.♙xc4 ♗xc4 20.♘d5

Black won a pawn with

20...♗xc2



Of course, this pawn could have been meaningful on the queenside, but you

could also argue that the value of Black's backward d6-pawn is reduced to practically nil now that White has managed to put his knight on d5.

21.b3

White can even win the pawn back after 21. ♖f2 ♙c5 22. ♗xf6+ gxf6 23. ♙g4+ ♔h8 24. ♙h4, but that again would mean giving up the precious d5-knight immediately. Ragger must have thought that it was better to enjoy it for a while longer.

21...a5 22. ♙e3 ♜h8 23. ♖ac1 ♙xa2 24. ♗xf6 ♖xc1 25. ♖xc1 gxf6 26. ♙h6 ♜g8 27. ♙xf6 ♙d2 28. ♖f1

A very unpleasant and difficult to defend position for Black. With only major pieces on the board, the vulnerability of the king's position is of enormous importance.

28... ♖e8 29. ♖f3 a4 30. ♖g3+ ♜f8 31. ♙g7+ ♜e7 32. f6+ ♜d8 33. ♙xf7

White is winning. The threats against the black king will now be enforced by the far-advanced f6-pawn. This is just too much for Black.

33...a3 34. ♙a7 ♙c1+ 35. ♜h2 ♙f4 36. ♙b8+ ♜d7 37. ♙b5+ ♜d8 38. ♙xb4 h5 39. ♙xd6+ ♜c8 40. ♙c6+ ♜d8 41. f7 1-0

This idea had a funny early predecessor.

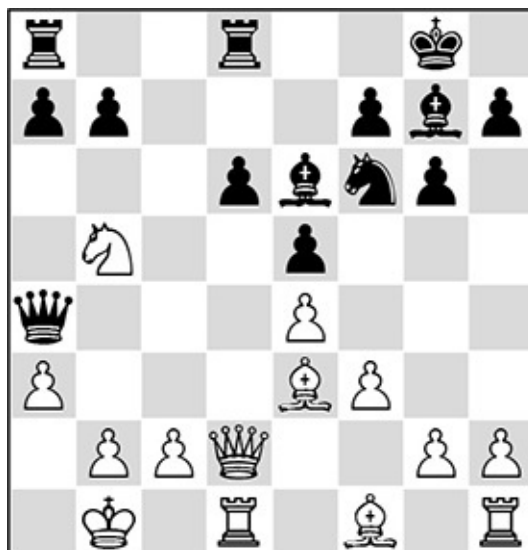
Sicilian Defence

Isaak Boleslavsky

Georgy Lisitsin

Leningrad ch-URS 1956 (13)

1.e4 c5 2. ♗f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♗xd4 ♗f6 5. ♗c3 g6 6. ♘e3 ♘g7 7.f3 0-0 8. ♙d2 ♗c6 9.0-0-0 ♗xd4 10. ♘xd4 ♙a5 11. ♜b1 e5 12. ♘e3 ♘e6 13.a3 ♖fd8 14. ♗b5 ♙a4



Now, Boleslavsky came up with an original concept:

15.c4!?

It took some time before people noticed that 15. ♖c7 would have been much simpler, as White threatens to trap the queen with 16. ♕b5! (one extra catch for Chapter 2!). Funnily enough, Black's queen was also hunted down in the actual game.

15... ♕xc4 16. ♖c3 ♖b3 17. ♕xc4 ♖xc4 18. ♕g5

I guess that you see what is coming over the next two moves.

18... ♖e6 19. ♕xf6 ♖xf6 20. ♖d5

Right on!

20... ♖h4 21. ♖e2 ♕f8 22. ♖f1 ♖ac8 23.g3 ♖g5?! 24.h4! ♖h6

After 24... ♖xg3 25. ♖h3, the queen is trapped again!

25.g4

Black's extra pawn is not worth anything (in general, he would probably be better off without the d6-pawn).

25...g5 26.hxg5 ♖xg5 27. ♖h5 ♖g6 28.g5 h6 29. ♖xh6 ♖xg5 30. ♖h5 1-0

A modern opening theoretical interpretation of this idea is 1.e4 c5 2. ♖f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♖xd4 ♖f6 5.f3 e5 6. ♖b3 ♕e6 7.c4 ♖bd7 8. ♕e3 ♖c8 9. ♖c3 ♕xc4 10. ♕xc4 ♖xc4 11. ♖d3 (11... ♖c6 12.0-0-0 ♕e7 13. ♖b1 0-0 14.g4 a6 15.g5 ♖h5 16.h4 ♖e8 17. ♖d5 ♕f8), which has been tried by Anand and others.

Towards the endgame

Here is one more example of domination by the central knight. In Chapter 19 ('What remains: towards a good knight versus bad bishop'), we consider some

more nuances where the domination is disturbed. Here, MVL makes a concession in his pawn structure on the queenside.

Sicilian Defence

Maxime Vachier-Lagrave

2703

Sebastian Cossin

2486

Nîmes ch-FRA 2009 (9)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♙e2 e5 7.♘b3 ♙e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♚e1
♙e6 10.♙f1 ♘bd7 11.a4 ♚c8 12.a5 ♘c5 13.♙g5 ♘xb3 14.cxb3 ♘d7 15.♙e3 ♘f6 16.b4
♙c4 17.♙xc4 ♚xc4 18.♙b3 ♙c8



19.♙g5 h6 20.♙xf6 ♙xf6 21.♘d5 ♙d8

Black doesn't have much counterplay. White can always think about restoring his pawn structure with b4-b5 and proceed to create a passed pawn. First, however, MVL improves his pieces and contests Black's hegemony on the c-file. 'In the endgame, do not hurry!' is a well-known piece of advice, and I think it's Mikhail Shereshevsky's adage.

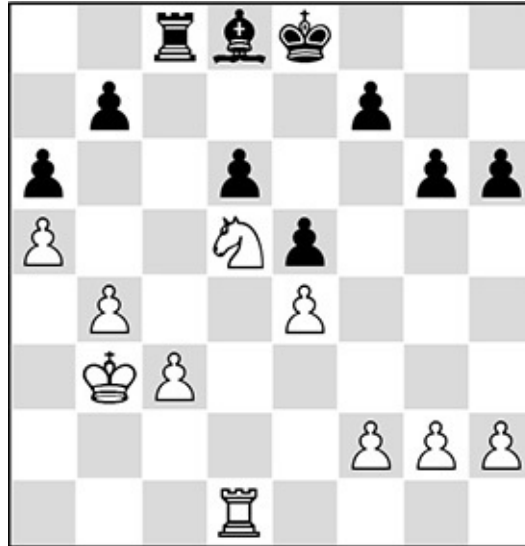
22.♚ad1 ♙h8 23.♚d3 ♙c6 24.♚c3 ♙xc3 25.♙xc3

25.bxc3 seems more logical, but Black obliged anyway on the next move and restored White's pawn structure, since he probably feared White's c-file after a subsequent ♚c1.

25... ♙xc3 26.bxc3 ♙g5

Now, White enjoys a spatial advantage, but he still has to create a breakthrough somewhere. First, he improves his king's position.

27. ♖f1 ♜c8 28. ♔e2 ♚g8 29. ♜d3 g6 30. ♜c2 ♜f8 31. ♜b3 ♜e8 32. ♜d1 ♜d8



33. ♜e3!

It's time to regroup and direct attention to the backward pawn on d6.

33... ♜e7 34. ♜c4 ♜c7 35. ♜d5 ♜b8 36. g4 ♜e6 37. f3 f5 38. b5 axb5 39. ♜xb5

Now, besides the pawn on d6, White's has a second target on b7.

39... fxe4 40. fxe4 ♜d7 41. ♜e3 ♜c6 42. ♜a4 b6 43. ♜d5!

Threatening 44. a6.

43... bxa5 44. ♜xc7 ♜xc7 45. ♜xb8 ♜xb8 46. ♜xa5

And thanks to his spatial advantage, White wins this pawn endgame!

46... d5

No better was 46... ♜c7 47. ♜b5 ♜b7 48. c4, followed by c4-c5, when eventually the e5-pawn will drop.

47. ♜b4 dxe4 48. ♜b3 ♜c7 49. ♜c2 ♜d6 50. ♜d2 h5 51. h3

White's passed pawn on the queenside is far from the kingside, and White's king will be the first to get to the kingside and snap off the g6-pawn.

51... ♜c5 52. ♜e3 ♜c4 53. ♜xe4 ♜xc3 54. ♜xe5 ♜d3 55. ♜f6 1-0

Summary

To obtain a strong and permanent knight on d5, you will have to exchange the right pieces. The only black piece that will never be able to contest your control of d5 is the dark-squared bishop. If you can ensure that this is Black's

last minor piece, your knight on d5 will enjoy invincibility. As a result, further action on either the queenside or the kingside can be set up. Your spatial advantage will supply much freedom for this and will last into the endgame. It may even be worthwhile to sacrifice your c-pawn or compromise your pawn structure to obtain such an invincible knight. For Black, a clear message is that he should be able to fight for piece control of d5, to avoid ending up in a helpless situation.

CHAPTER 7

Opposites are not equal

Drawing tendencies may be high in endgames where the only pieces left are opposite-coloured bishops. The bishops cannot make contact and can attack only on squares of one of the two colours. If some major pieces have remained on the board, the difference in strength between the two bishops may turn out to be considerable, and of decisive influence on the outcome of the game. How should we explain this?

Sicilian Defence

Wen Yang

2585

Lu Shanglei

2640

Xinghua ch-CHN 2018 (7)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.g3 e5 7.♘de2 ♘e7 8.♘g2 b5 9.♘d5
♘xd5 10.♙xd5 ♜a7 11.♘e3 ♜b7 12.♘c3 b4 13.♘a4 ♙c7 14.0-0 0-0 15.b3 ♘d7 16.♜fc1
♜c8 17.♜ab1 h6 18.♙d2 a5 19.h4 ♘xa4 20.bxa4 ♘d7 21.♘f1 ♜bb8 22.c3 bxc3 23.♜xb8
♘xb8 24.♙d5 ♘d7 25.♘a6 ♜f8 26.♙d3 ♘c5 27.♜xc3 ♙d8



28.♘xc5!

28. ♖b5 was possible, as 28... ♗xe4? fails to 29. ♖c8, though 28... ♗xa6 29. ♗xa6 d5 equalizes.

28...dxc5

Now, Black has the better pawn structure, but here this is not of any significance whatsoever. While his own bishop is not much more than a mere pawn, White's bishop will soon dominate the light squares on the board from d5.

29. ♗c2



White wants to keep the major pieces on the board, to put pressure along the open files and possibly later against f7. If you remove both the rooks and the queens from the board, it wouldn't be that much fun – a dead draw.

29... ♗c7

I would consider 29...c4 to liven up the bishop, but after 30. ♖xc4!, White's rook comes into play and Black is still suffering.

30. ♖c4 g6 31. ♖b3 ♗g7

31... ♖b8 looks like the obvious choice, but White can choose from 32. ♖b5 or 32. ♖f3. Now however, with White's b-file control, Black's life seems over almost at once.

32. ♗b2 ♗f6 33. ♖b7 ♗c6 34. ♗d5 ♗xa4 35. ♗b6 ♗d1+ 36. ♗g2 ♗g4 37. ♗a7 1-0

It will be mate soon after the capture on f7 with the rook. Also, Black's bishop is still a bystander in the defence. This game was a crucial step against a main rival for Wen Yang to become Chinese Champion.

Towards f7

Queen's Pawn Opening
Vladimir Kramnik

2801

Sanan Sjugirov

2674

Russia tt 2016 (3)

1. d3 c5 2. e3 f6 3. d4 g6 4. d5 g7 5. c3 0-0 6. c4 d6 7. 0-0 e8 8. e4 e6 9. e1 exd5
10. xd5 c6 11. g5 e6 12. c3 xd5 13. xd5 c7 14. xf6 xf6 15. d2 ad8 16. b3
a6 17. a4 b8 18. c4 e5 19. a5 xc4 20. xc4



Here, Black's bishop is much better than in the previous game. True, its diagonal is blocked by White's c3-pawn, but there are no restrictions from his own pawns here.

20...b5?

Passive defence is always difficult, but after the text move, White obtains an open file that he can use to get to f7. This is the familiar weak spot that cannot be defended by the opponent's bishop.

21. axb6 xb6 22. e2 eb8 23. a2 b5 24. g3 g7 25. xa6 xb2 26. xb2 xb2
27. a4



The b2-rook is active but alone here. Kramnik forces his opponent into utter passivity, and eventually the pressure proves too much.

27... ♖d8 28. ♗a7 ♘e7 29. ♗d7 ♙e8 30. ♙a7 ♜f8 31. ♞g2

A painfully quiet move for Black.

31...h6 32. ♘c6 ♘g5 33. ♗c7 ♙e6 34. ♘d5 1-0

Tarrasch Defence

Andrey Kharlov

2560

Mikhail Baturin

2395

Minsk 1998 (9)

1.c4 c5 2. ♘f3 ♘f6 3. ♘c3 e6 4.e3 ♘c6 5.d4 d5 6.a3 cxd4 7.exd4 ♘e7 8.c5 ♘e4 9. ♙c2 f5
 10. ♘b5 0-0 11.0-0 ♘f6 12. ♘xc6 bxc6 13. ♘f4 ♘d7 14.h3 ♘e8 15.b4 ♘h5 16. ♘e5 ♘xe5
 17. ♘xe5 ♘xc3 18. ♙xc3 ♘e2 19. ♗fe1 ♘c4



In 'Botvinnik's fearsome bishop' (Chapter 4), we saw a really bad white bishop in the game Vilner-Romanovsky. Here, Black's bishop is of the wrong colour, but outside the pawn chain. However, except hindering a possible b4-b5, that is about all it is doing on c4. Kharlov can prepare a break on the kingside at his leisure. Effectively, he will be a piece up there.

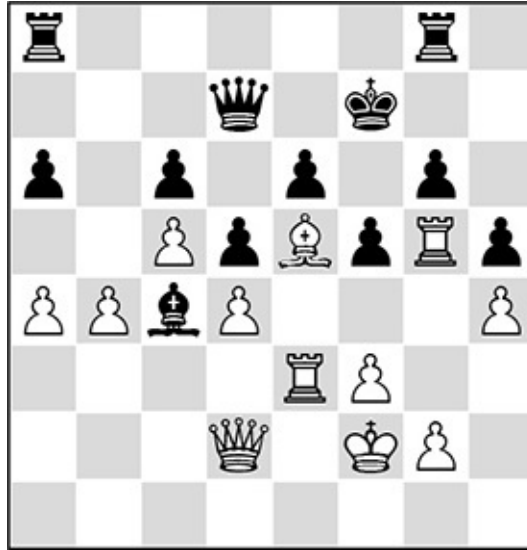
20. ♖d6 ♜f6 21. ♜e5 ♜d7 22. ♜ae1 ♜e8 23. ♜e3 ♜f7 24. ♜f4 a6 25. a4 h6 26. ♜d2 ♜g6 27. ♜5e3 ♜f7 28. ♜e5 ♜g6 29. ♜a3 ♜e7 30. f3! h5?!

Weakening the dark squares, while the g2-g4 break cannot be stopped in the long run.

31. ♜f2 ♜h6 32. h4 ♜f7 33. ♜f4 ♜hh8 34. ♜d6 ♜d7 35. ♜ae3 ♜b7 36. ♜d2 ♜d7 37. ♜f4 ♜hf8 38. ♜e5 ♜h8 39. ♜5e3 ♜hg8 40. ♜f2 ♜c8 41. ♜h1

Kharlov uses his space in an optimal way. The rook is on its way to g5 before the position opens up.

41... ♜d7 42. ♜h3 ♜c8 43. ♜g3 ♜d7 44. ♜g5 g6 45. ♜e5 ♜a8



46.g4

Finally! Black will miss his light-squared bishop in defence, and the game is practically over now.

46...hxg4 47.fxg4 ♖af8 48.♙d6 ♜e8 49.♜g3 ♜g7 50.♙e5 ♜gg8 51.h5 ♜ef8 52.gxf5 exf5 53.♜xg6 1-0

Nimzo-Indian Defence

Aleksander Indjic

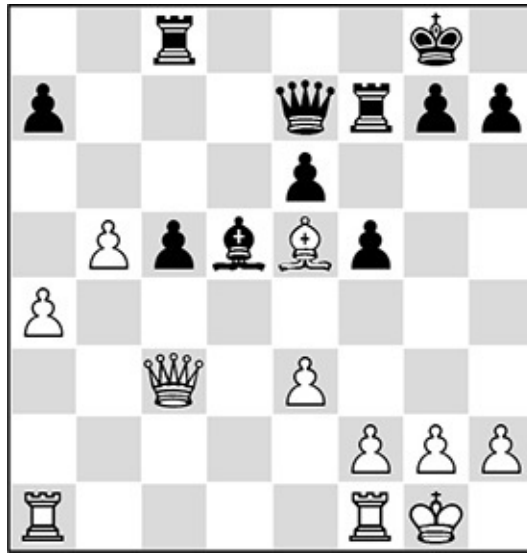
2612

Manuel Petrosyan

2569

Moscow 2018 (9)

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 ♗b4 4.♖c2 0-0 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♖xc3 b6 7.♗f3 ♗b7 8.e3 d5 9.b4 ♗e4 10.♖c2 c5 11.♙d3 ♗d7 12.0-0 ♜c8 13.dxc5 bxc5 14.b5 f5 15.♙b2 ♜e7 16.a4 ♗d6 17.♗e5 ♗xe5 18.♙xe5 ♗xc4 19.♙xc4 dxc4 20.♖xc4 ♙d5 21.♖c3 ♜f7



Here, Black has a pretty good central bishop. The difference is in the pawn structure, where Black would gladly take back the advance of his f-pawn to drive the e5-bishop away. White now blocks the d5-bishop.

22.f3!

Control the squares that you can't control with your bishop with your pawns. In that way, you will also limit the possibilities of the opponent's opposite-coloured bishop.

22...h5?!

This move does not prevent anything, but I suppose Black was intending to follow up with ...g5-g4. However, he refrained from this in the game, where, with hindsight, the text move had unnecessarily weakened g5.

23.h3 ♖h7 24.♜fe1 ♜h4

24...g5 25.e4 fxe4 26.fxe4 ♙b7 27.♞ad1 ♜g8 (27...g4 28.hxg4 hxg4 29.♞d6) 28.♙d6 ♜e8 29.♜xc5 is clearly not sufficient.

25.♜h2 ♜b4 26.♜c1 c4 27.♞b1

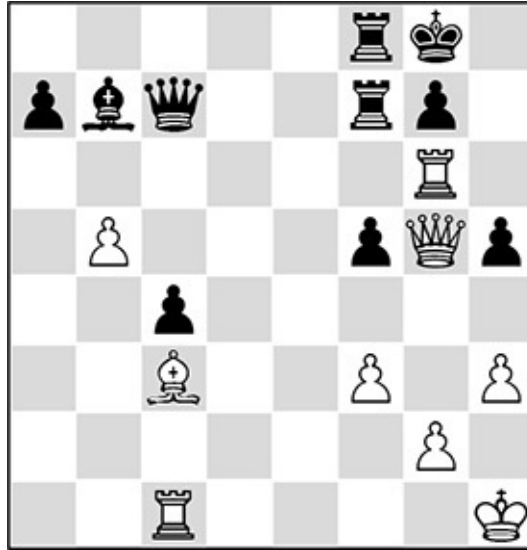
A clever pawn sacrifice – the black king will be trapped in the corner; it will not be able to go back and defend the kingside. The immediate 27.e4 was possible as well, for example: 27...fxe4 28.fxe4 ♙b7 29.♜g5.

27...♜xa4 28.e4 ♙b7 29.exf5 exf5 30.♙c3 ♜a2 31.♜g1 ♜d8 32.♜g5 ♜df8 33.♞bc1!

White does not care about the h5-pawn, but rather mobilizes all his pieces towards the black king.

33...♜a3 34.♞e6 ♜g8 35.♞g6 ♜c5+ 36.♜h1 ♜c7

36...♜e7 37.♜h6 ♜c8 38.♞e1 ♜d7 39.♞ee6 would not help either.



Black is lost – the bottom line is that White’s c3-bishop adds to the pressure against his king, whereas his own b7-bishop is blocked by White’s pawn structure and cannot help in the defence of the dark squares on the kingside.

37. ♖e1 h4 38. ♗xh4 ♖d8

Allowing a little combination.

39. ♕xg7 1-0

Now, 39... ♖xg7 drops the rook after 40. ♖xg7+ ♗xg7 (40... ♗xg7 41. ♖e7+) 41. ♗xd8+.

The activity of the opposite-coloured bishops can also make a huge difference in an endgame with rooks only.

Philidor Defence

Ian Nepomniachtchi

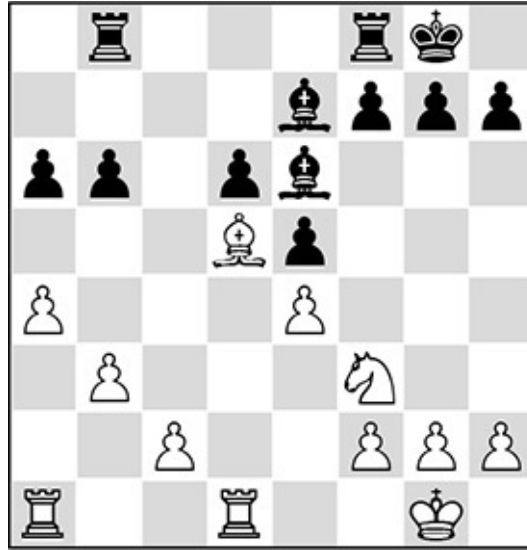
2476

Ana Srebrnic

2257

Ljubljana 2004 (5)

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3. ♘c3 e5 4. ♘f3 ♘bd7 5. ♕c4 ♕e7 6.0-0 0-0 7.a4 c6 8. ♖e1 b6 9.d5 cxd5 10. ♕xd5 ♖b8 11.b3 a6 12. ♕a3 ♗c7 13. ♕c4 ♘c5 14. ♕xc5 ♗xc5 15. ♘d5 ♘xd5 16. ♗xd5 ♗xd5 17. ♕xd5 ♕e6 18. ♖ed1



18... ♖g4

Black did not fancy the positions from the previous chapter after 18... ♖xd5 19. ♗xd5. Understandably so, though for starters it will take some effort and time for White to get his knight to d5.

19. ♗d3 ♖xf3 20. ♗xf3 ♖f6?

With the queens off, it was better to opt for another strategy and put up a blockade with 20...a5.

21.a5 ♗fc8

21...b5 22. ♗c3 ♗fc8 23. ♗xc8+ ♗xc8 24. ♖b7 was no good.

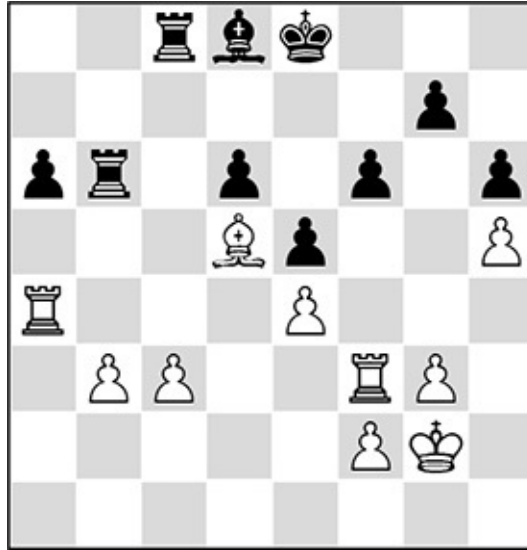
22.axb6 ♗xb6

Now, White has obtained a target on a6 as well – the other one being the backward d6-pawn.

23.c3 ♗c7 24.g3 ♖f8 25.h4 h6 26. ♖g2 ♖e8 27. ♗a4 ♖d8 28. ♗c4 f6

An ugly move, giving up all the light squares on the kingside. 28... ♗a7 29. ♗c8 is nasty as well, as White threatens 30. ♖xf7+ followed by 31. ♗xd8.

29. ♗a4 ♗c5 30.h5 ♗c8



31. ♖h3

Here comes the king!

31... ♜c7 32. ♖g4 ♜a7 33. ♖f5 ♖e7 34. ♜d3 a5 35. ♙c4 ♜c6 36. ♙d5 ♜c8 37. ♖g6

With a third accessible weakness on g7, the defence now proved to be too much for Black.

37... ♖f8 38. ♙c4 ♜c6 39. ♙b5 ♜b6 40. c4 ♙c7 41. b4 ♜b8 42. bxa5 ♜xa5 0-1

Apparently, Black resigned at once because of 43. ♜xa5 ♙xa5 44. ♜xd6 ♙b6 (44... ♜b7 45. ♜a6) 45. ♜d7.

Even when the material is very much reduced and the battle is on one wing, the attacking force of the opposite-coloured bishop can be felt.

Grünfeld Indian Defence

Michal Krasenkow

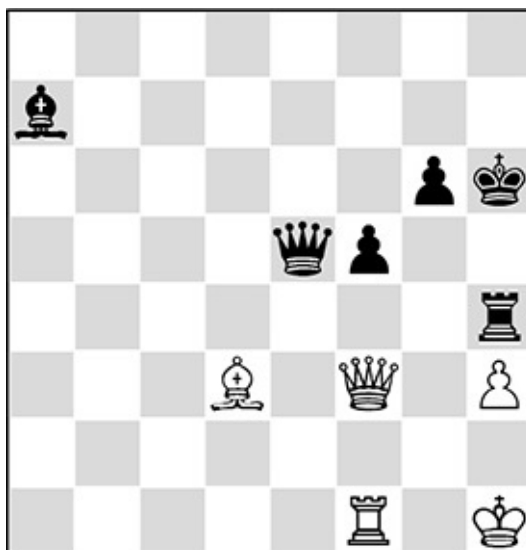
2671

Benjamin Gledura

2613

Stockholm 2018 (9)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3. ♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♙g7 7. ♖a4+ ♘d7 8. ♘f3 c5
9. ♙e2 0-0 10.0-0 ♘b6 11. ♖d1 ♙g4 12. ♙e3 ♙xf3 13. ♙xf3 ♘c4 14.e5 ♘xe3 15.fxe3 ♖a5
16. ♖b3 e6 17. ♜ab1 ♙h6 18. ♜fe1 cxd4 19.cxd4 ♜ac8 20. ♖xb7 ♜c3 21.d5 ♜xe3 22. ♜xe3
♙xe3+ 23. ♖h1 ♖xa2 24. ♜d1 ♙f4 25.dxe6 ♖xe6 26. ♖xa7 ♙xe5 27. ♙d5 ♖f6 28. ♖e3 h5
29. ♖f3 ♖e7 30.g3 ♖g7 31. ♜f1 h4 32.gxh4 ♖xh4 33.h3 f5 34. ♜g1 ♖h6 35. ♖g2 ♜f6 36. ♙b3
♜d6 37. ♙c2 ♖f6 38. ♖f3 ♜d4 39. ♙d3 ♙b8 40. ♙e2 ♜h4 41. ♙d3 ♙a7 42. ♜f1 ♖e5



43. ♖g2

White could bail out with 43. ♖xf5 gxf5 44. ♔xf5 ♕xf5 45. ♖xf5, but in that case he would have to defend the unpleasant ending of rook versus rook and bishop. Krasenkow apparently preferred the text as he thought it offered an easier draw. White's possibilities are restricted though: if the rook moves, Black plays ... ♖h4-f4-f2, while ♖g2 is met by ... ♖b8. A waiting move like 43. ♖c2 was relatively best.

43... ♖h5

Threatening ... ♖h5-g5-g3.

44. ♖f3 ♖e1+

44... ♖g5 was even stronger: 45. ♖d2 ♖h5 46. ♖c1 ♖b6 47. ♖f1 ♖d5.

45. ♖f1 ♖d2 46. ♖e2 ♖c1+ 47. ♖f1 ♖c6 48. ♖b5 ♖c5 49. ♖g3 ♖b8 50. ♖f3

50. ♖g1 was the last chance to make Black work. After 50... ♖xg1+ 51. ♖xg1 ♖xh3+ 52. ♖g2 ♖h2+ 53. ♖f3 g5, the position without rooks would be a theoretical draw.

50... ♖g5

Finally, the rook is there after all. Now ... ♖a7 is coming, and there's not much White can do anymore.

51. ♖c4 ♖a7 52. ♖c1

52. ♖h2 ♖c7+.

52... ♖c6 53. ♖a3 ♖c5 54. ♖c3 ♖g1+ 55. ♖h2 ♖c7+ 56. ♖g3 ♖xg3 57. ♖h8+ ♖g5 0-1

Here too, White's bishop has been a useless bystander, giving Black effectively an extra piece in the attack.

Summary

Clearly the attacking player, the player with the initiative, is helped by opposite-coloured bishops. After all, the defending bishop is often useless, as it can only defend squares that are not attacked. Both sides should try to restrict the activity of the opponent's bishop with their pawns. An attack on the king with opposite-coloured bishops can be fearsome, but also with the queens off and rooks remaining, a difference in the activity of the bishops can be decisive. Remember, an opposite-coloured bishop can virtually be an extra piece.

CHAPTER 8

Cousins from a distance

A central bishop can be strong, but two bishops cooperating from a distance can be fearsome. Aiming at the same wing, and with open diagonals, they can exert pressure from afar without being threatened themselves. Let's see how their diagonals can be opened and how other pieces can be brought in to increase the pressure.

Sicilian Defence

Robert Fischer

Boris Spassky

Reykjavik Wch m 1972 (4)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.♙c4 e6 7.♙b3 ♙e7 8.♙e3 0-0 9.0-0 a6 10.f4 ♘xd4 11.♙xd4 b5 12.a3 ♙b7 13.♙d3 a5 14.e5 dxe5 15.fxe5 ♘d7 16.♘xb5 ♘c5 17.♙xc5 ♙xc5+ 18.♚h1 ♙g5 19.♙e2 ♖ad8 20.♖ad1 ♖xd1 21.♖xd1



White is a pawn ahead, but his pieces are stranded on the queenside, where Black's bishops are beaming at the kingside. How can Black increase their pressure? Remember, this was the fourth game of the match. Spassky had a 2-1 lead, after Fischer's baffling ... ♙xh2 in Game 1 and a default win in Game 2,

followed by a loss in the third game with white after Fischer's almost equally baffling ... ♘h5. I bet the tension was high.

21...h5

Jan Timman in *The Art of Chess Analysis*: 'Almost a thematic continuation. Black threatens to march his pawn to h3 and thus strengthen the grip of the pair of bishops. Yet good alternatives were at hand.' Indeed, the text move is the most obvious continuation, you would think, but later it transpired that the Russian team had foreseen this position and prepared 21... ♖d8, which in itself is also a logical move, as it improves the worst-placed piece. However, it also diminishes the speed of Black's initiative, due to the reduction in material. Still, Black keeps the better position here too. The Russian team was disappointed after the game, and especially Geller was upset that Spassky had chosen to go his own way at the board. Meanwhile, 21... ♙e3 (as later in the game) was a strong move, for example, 22. ♘d6 ♙c6 23. ♘c4 ♙f4 24. ♔g1 a4 25. ♙a2, and now after 25...h5 (Timman), the black bishops exert enormous pressure against White's kingside.

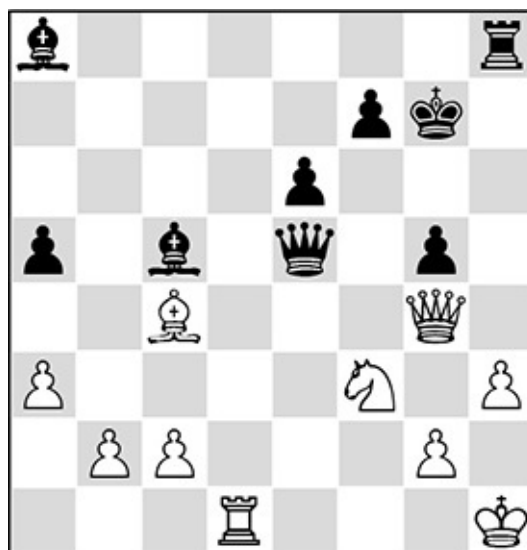
22. ♘d6 ♙a8 23. ♙c4 ♙h4 24. h3 ♙e3

Black's compensation looks tremendous: the e5-pawn is under attack, and White has to watch out for the ♙f4/♙g3 battery.

25. ♙g4 ♙xe5 26. ♙xh4 g5

Again, Spassky had two alternatives: 26... ♙g5 and 26... ♙xb2. The text move has its own merits: after ... ♙g7, the rook can join the fray on h8.

27. ♙g4 ♙c5 28. ♘b5 ♙g7 29. ♘d4 ♖h8 30. ♘f3



One advantage of the pair of bishops is that you can always exchange one. This

may sound a bit inopportune at the moment, but, for example, you can often liquidate to a strong bishop versus knight position. Here, opposite-coloured bishops remain, which does not make it easy for White, as his kingside pawns are on the wrong colour, giving Black free play on the dark squares. See the previous chapter!

30... ♖xf3 31. ♗xf3 ♕d6

31... ♖h4! would have been very strong, developing with tempo. Now, 32. ♕d3 allows 32... ♕d6. 32. ♖f1 ♖f4 33. ♗d3 ♖xf1+ 34. ♗xf1 ♗xb2 leaves Black a pawn up, while 32. ♕e2 can be answered with 32... ♖f4. In the game, Fischer escaped with a draw after the exchange of queens:

32. ♗c3 ♗xc3 33. bxc3 ♕e5 34. ♖d7 ♗f6 35. ♗g1 ♕xc3 36. ♕e2 ♕e5 37. ♗f1 ♖c8 38. ♕h5 ♖c7 39. ♖xc7 ♕xc7 40. a4 ♗e7 41. ♗e2 f5 42. ♗d3 ♕e5 43. c4 ♗d6 44. ♕f7 ♕g3 45. c5+ ½-½

This was a severe blow for Spassky, which had a lot of influence on the further course of the match. For us, the game is a fine example of the force of the bishop pair in the middlegame.

Queen's Gambit Accepted

Lars Bo Hansen

2582

Predrag Nikolic

2645

Wijk aan Zee 1995 (6)

1. d4 d5 2. c4 dxc4 3. ♖f3 a6 4. e3 ♖f6 5. ♕xc4 e6 6. 0-0 c5 7. ♕d3 ♖bd7 8. ♗e2 b6 9. ♖d1 ♕b7 10. dxc5 ♕xc5 11. a3 ♗b8 12. ♖bd2 0-0 13. b4 ♕d6 14. ♕b2 ♖c8 15. ♖ac1 ♖xc1 16. ♖xc1 a5 17. b5 ♕xf3 18. ♖xf3 ♗f8



19. ♖a1!

Here, White's bishops are shining side by side in the direction of the opponent's king. After 19.a4, Black could eliminate the pair of bishops by 19... ♙a3, with easy play.

19... e5

This takes away d4 from the knight and blocks one diagonal, but it opens another!

20. ♗g5 ♘c5?

20... ♙e7 21. ♙c4 ♖f8 would be more passive but solid. After the text move, Black was hit by a small surprise.

21. ♙c4 ♖a7



22.f4!

Open up those diagonals!

22...exf4 23.♔c2!

Threatening mate in two. The bishops are working at full force.

23...♘cd7

This equals resignation, but 23...h6 24.♘xf7 ♜xf7 25.♙xf6 gxf6 26.♔g6+ ♜g7 27.♙xf7+ would have been no real improvement.

24.♘xf7 ♙c5 25.♜h1 f3 26.♞f1 ♙xe3 27.♞xf3 ♜c5 28.♘g5+ ♜h8 29.♘e6 1-0

Sicilian Defence

Patrick Wolff

2565

Walter Browne

2536

Las Vegas blitz 1996

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♙e2 e5 7.♘b3 ♙e7 8.a4 0-0 9.0-0 ♘bd7 10.♜h1 b6 11.f3 ♙b7 12.♙e3 ♜c7 13.♞f2 ♞fd8 14.♙f1 ♞ac8 15.♞d2 ♜b8 16.♘c1 ♘c5 17.♘1a2 a5 18.b3 ♘cd7 19.♙b5 ♞c7 20.♙f1 ♞cc8 21.♘b5 d5 22.exd5 ♘xd5



23.♔e1

After 23. ♞xd5 ♙xd5 24. ♔xd5 ♘f6, the queen is caught in the middle of the board! Another nice example to complement Chapter 2. Yet, it surprised Browne that Wolff gave up his bishop with the text move. ‘Then my pieces gravitated towards the kingside and my bishops were ideally placed for a lethal attack.’ (from *The Stress of Chess*)

23... ♖xe3 24. ♗xe3 ♘c5 25. ♗e1 ♘f6 26. ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 27. ♘ac3



27...e4!

A typical break move to enlarge the scope of the b7-bishop. The tactical justification is not too difficult.

28. ♘e2

28.fxe4? ♘g4 29.g3 ♘f2+ 30. ♖g2 ♗c8, with a fearsome winning attack, just as after 28. ♘e4? ♘xe4 29.fxe4 ♘g4.

28... ♗f4 29. ♖d1 ♖e8

29... ♖xd1 30. ♗xd1 h5 was another good way to maintain the pressure.

30. ♗g3 ♘h5 31. ♗h3?

31. ♗xf4 ♘xf4 32.fxe4 ♘xe2 33. ♘xe2 ♗xe4 would have given Black a very pleasant ending. The text move, however, could have lost right away.

31...exf3

This releases the tension, but can be justified by a concrete continuation.

32. ♘xf3 ♘xf3?

32... ♗e3! was the move: ... ♘f4 is coming and 33... ♗e1 is threatened, while 33. ♖f1 is met by 33... ♗f2!.

33. ♗xf3 ♗xf3

As Black has many pieces on the kingside, a more logical and better try was 33... ♗e5, to keep the queens on the board. Browne nevertheless won this 10-minute blitz game when Wolff blundered in the rook endgame:

34.gxf3 g6 35. ♘e4 f5 36. ♘xc5 bxc5 37. ♘c3 ♘f4 38. ♖g1 ♖e3 39. ♘d5 ♘xd5 40. ♖xd5 ♖c3 41. ♖d8+ ♖g7 42. ♖a8 ♖xc2 43. ♖xa5 c4 44.b4 ♖b2 45. ♖f1 c3 46. ♖e1 ♖b1+ 47. ♖e2 c2 0-1

Philidor Defence

Konstantin Landa

2500

Bosko Abramovic

2520

Noyabrsk 1995 (2)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 ♘d7 4.♙c4 c6 5.0-0 ♙e7 6.dxe5 dxe5 7.♘g5 ♙xg5 8.♙h5 ♙e7
9.♙xg5 ♘gf6 10.♙e3 0-0 11.b3 b6 12.a4 ♙b7 13.♘c3 ♖fd8 14.♙a3 c5 15.f3 ♘f8 16.♘e2
♙c8 17.♙b2 ♘g6



Here is another typical pawn break to open a diagonal.

18.f4!

Of course, the e-pawn might hypothetically become weak, but with the opening of both the a1-h8 diagonal for the b2-bishop and, in this case, the f-file for the f-rook, combining forces with the other bishop against f7, it is very likely that White's activity will outweigh his pawn structure.

18...♙b7

18...exf4 19.♘xf4 ♘xf4 20.♙xf4 ♙e6 would neutralize one bishop, but 21.♙g5 (21.♙e5 is a strong move as well, when you are reluctant to give up your pressure for a pawn in the rook ending that ensues from 21.♙g5) 21...h6 22.♙xf6 ♙xf6 23.♙xf6 gxf6 24.♙xe6 fxe6 25.♙xf6 wins a pawn, and Black's activity after 25...♖d2 will not make up for that.

19.fxe5 ♘g4 20.♙c3!

20.♙xf7+ is a forced continuation you would want to look at, but after 20...♙xf7 21.♙xf7 ♘xe3 22.♙xb7 ♖d2, Black gets some counterplay, for

example: 23. ♖e1 ♜xc2 24. ♙a1 ♜e8 25. e6 ♜xe6 26. ♖xg7+ ♔f8.

20... ♜f8

Now, 20... ♘4xe5 would be refuted by 21. ♖xf7, when the knight cannot recapture due to mate on g7.



21. e6 f6 22. ♘g3

At least Black has blocked White's battery on the a1-h8 diagonal, but at the cost of allowing White a nasty passed pawn on e6. White's minor pieces will soon occupy dominating positions behind it.

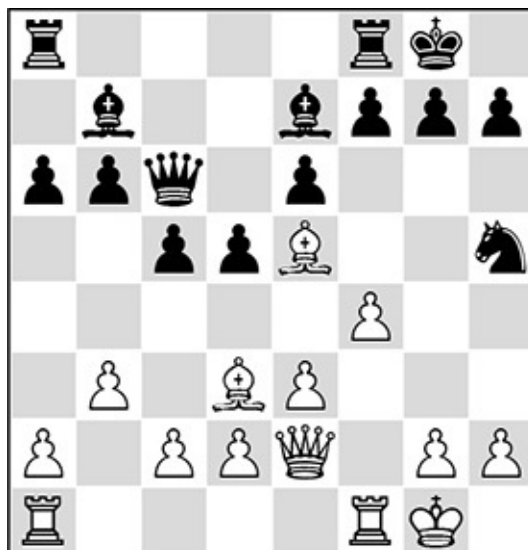
22... ♔h8 23. ♘f5 ♜c7 24. ♜h3 ♘4e5 25. ♙d5 ♜ad8 26. c4 ♙c8 27. ♜g3

An overwhelming position for White – now the threat of 28.e7 wins material.

27... ♜fe8 28. e7 ♜xe7 29. ♘xe7 ♜xe7 30. a5 ♙e6 31. axb6 axb6 32. ♜fd1 ♜c8 33. ♜a8 ♜xa8 34. ♙xa8 h5 35. h3 b5 36. cxb5 c4 37. ♙d5 ♘d3 38. ♜xg6 1-0

Typical sacrifices

When you are asked to mention a typical sacrifice connected with two bishops aimed at a castled enemy king, you will probably think of the game Lasker-Bauer, Amsterdam 1889: 1. f4 d5 2. e3 ♘f6 3. b3 e6 4. ♙b2 ♙e7 5. ♙d3 b6 6. ♘f3 ♙b7 7. ♘c3 ♘bd7 8. 0-0 0-0 9. ♘e2 c5 10. ♘g3 ♜c7 11. ♘e5 ♘xe5 12. ♙xe5 ♜c6 13. ♜e2 a6 14. ♘h5 ♘xh5



15. ♖xh7+ ♔xh7 16. ♜xh5+ ♔g8 17. ♖xg7 ♔xg7 18. ♜g4+ ♔h7 19. ♜f3 e5
 20. ♜h3+ ♜h6 21. ♜xh6+ ♔xh6 22. ♜d7 ♖f6 23. ♜xb7 ♔g7 24. ♜f1 ♜ab8
 25. ♜d7 ♜fd8 26. ♜g4+ ♔f8 27. fxe5 ♖g7 28. e6 ♜b7 29. ♜g6 f6 30. ♜xf6+
 ♖xf6 31. ♜xf6+ ♔e8 32. ♜h8+ ♔e7 33. ♜g7+ ♔xe6 34. ♜xb7 ♜d6 35. ♜xa6
 d4 36. exd4 cxd4 37. h4 d3 38. ♜xd3 1-0.

Well, here is yet another one that you have to watch out for.

Nimzo-Indian Defence

Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu

2679

Stephen Gordon

2527

Legnica Ech 2013 (11)

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3. ♖c3 ♖b4 4.e3 0-0 5. ♖d3 d5 6. ♖f3 dxc4 7. ♖xc4 c5 8.0-0 cxd4 9.exd4 b6
 10. ♜e2 ♖b7 11. ♜d1 ♖xc3 12.bxc3 ♜c7 13. ♖d3 ♜xc3 14. ♖b2 ♜b4



15.d5!

After this second pawn sacrifice, the bishops are in full force. First and foremost, White is threatening 16. ♕xf6 and 16. ♖d4, when the black king is in dire straits. dxe6 is also a plausible follow-up, of course.

15... ♗xd5

A) After 15... ♗xd5 16. ♕xh7+ ♔xh7 17. ♖g5+, the rook joins the king hunt: 17... ♖g6 18. ♗d4 ♕e7 19. ♗g4, and Black will not survive;

B) 15...exd5 does not hinder White's plan: 16. ♕xf6 gxf6 17. ♖d4, and Black's king is on his own;

C) 15... ♖bd7 is by far the most sensible move, when the position may quickly simplify after 16.dxe6 ♕xf3 17. ♖xf3 ♖xb2 (17...fxe6? 18. ♕a3!) 18.exd7 ♖xd7 19. ♕xh7+ ♔xh7 20. ♖h3+ ♔g8 21. ♖xd7.

16. ♕xf6 gxf6 17. ♕xh7+ ♔xh7 18. ♖d4!

18. ♗d4 ♕c3 19. ♗h4+ ♔g7 20. ♗g4+ is nothing more than a draw (this is always reassuring when you opt for a piece sacrifice, unless you are in a must-win situation).



Threatening ♖h5+-g4+ and ♔d3. After the text move, Black has only one defence. Can you spot it?

18... ♔c8! 19. ♖h5+ ♔g8 20. ♖g4+ ♔h7 21. ♔d3 ♔c3

Without this move, Black would obviously have no defence.

22. ♖h3+ ♔g7

22... ♔g8 23. ♔xc3 ♖xd4 24. ♔c8+ ♔g7 25. ♖h8+.

23. ♖f5+!

23. ♔xc3 ♖xd4 24. ♖g3+ ♔h7 is again only a draw.

23...exf5 24. ♔xc3

At the cost of a tempo, White has spoiled Black's pawn structure, and, most importantly, thus robbed the d5-bishop of its solid support. Because of this, Black cannot keep his pieces together, and White's attack proves fatal.

24... ♖d7 25. ♔g3+ ♔f8 26. ♔d3 ♔c4

26... ♔c6 27. ♔xd7 ♔xd7 28. ♖h8+.

27. ♔ad1 ♔c6 28. ♖h8+ ♔e7 29. ♔xd7+ ♔xd7 30. ♖xa8 ♖xa2 31. h4 ♔e2 32. ♖d5 ♔e6 33. h5 ♖xd5 34. ♔xd5 ♔e6 35. h6 1-0

If only because this sacrifice immediately followed the opening theoretical phase, we can safely suppose that Nisipeanu knew about the game Beliavsky-Kasparov, Moscow Candidates' Match 1983, where Beliavsky executed the same idea in the 4th game after 14... ♖c7, and sensationally beat Kasparov (but in the end still lost the match).

Of course, the bishops can also exert a lot of pressure against the opponent's queenside. Here are two former Junior World Champions (from some time back)

fighting it out.

French Defence

Kiril Georgiev

2675

Bojan Kurajica

2580

Sarajevo 1998 (8)

1.d4 e6 2.e4 d5 3.♘d2 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♘d7 5.g3 ♘gf6 6.♘xf6+ ♜xf6 7.♙g2 e5 8.♜e2 ♜e7
9.dxe5 ♜xe5 10.♙f4 ♜xe2+ 11.♘xe2 c6 12.0-0-0 ♙c5 13.♘d4



13...♙xd4

Apparently, Kurajica feared 13...0-0 14.♘xc6 bxc6 15.♙xc6 ♘b6 16.♙xa8 ♘xa8 17.♙d6 ♙xd6 18.♜xd6, and rightly so. After the upcoming exchange of his rook, Black's pieces will find it hard to deal with the slowly advancing queenside pawns.

14.♜xd4

14.♜he1+ was an intermediate move to be considered, but the text move is fine.

14...0-0

Apart from his two bishops, White has a lead in development. If Black manages to get in ...♘f6 and ...♙e6-d5, he will be OK. White has to try to prevent a decent development for Black, posing concrete threats on the way.

15.♜hd1

15.♜e1 seems the more active approach, but perhaps Georgiev did not fancy an

early liquidation, at the cost of a pawn, into an ending with opposite-coloured bishops: 15... ♖f6 16. ♜e7 ♘d5 17. ♙xd5 cxd5 18. ♜xd5 ♙h3 19. ♜c5 ♙g2. Instead, he tried to squeeze his opponent slowly.

15... ♖f6 16.h3 ♜e8

After 16... ♙e6 17. ♜b4, the bishop is forced back. The c6-pawn is essential to stop White's g2-bishop.

17. ♙g5



17... ♙e6

Don't capture after 17... ♘d5, but play 18.c4!.

18. ♜b4 ♙f5

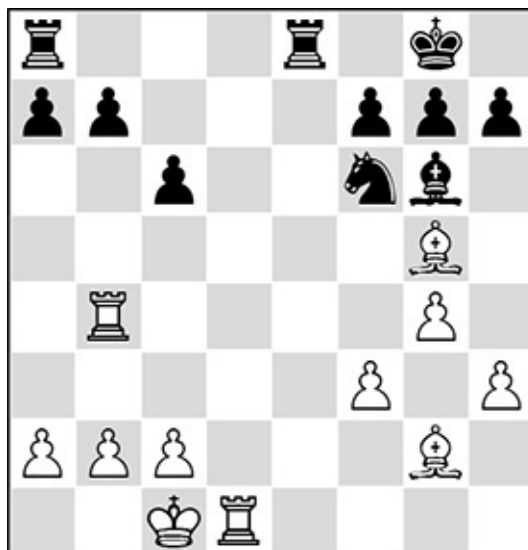
Black searches for active counterplay with ... ♜e2. In general, this is a sound idea, but it doesn't quite seem to work here.

19.g4

Again, Georgiev prefers the slow method, keeping back his opponent's pieces.

After 19. ♜xb7 ♜e2 20. ♙d2 ♜xf2 21. ♙xc6 ♜c8 22. ♙a4, Black is active, though there is no real compensation for White's extra pawn.

19... ♙e4 20.f3 ♙g6



21.b3!

Don't lose your cool in the endgame, and don't hurry! White is preparing to meet 21... ♖e2 with 22. ♖d2, when the king can go to b2 after 22... ♗e1+.

21...a5

A) If 21...b5, White can liquidate with 22. ♗xf6 gxf6 23. ♖bd4, with control of the d-file, a clear target on c6, and f3-f4 coming up, when the g6-bishop is not the happiest of pieces. This is a good example of a transformation of advantages;

B) 21... ♖ab8 runs into the same move 22. ♗xf6. Even in these quiet positions, it is often possible to go terribly wrong: 22. ♗f4 a5 23. ♖b6?! ♖e2 24. ♖d2?? ♗xd2 25. ♗xd2 ♖d8+ 26. ♗c1 ♗d5, and White is punished for temporarily shutting his g2-bishop out of play.

22. ♖xb7 a4 23. ♗xf6 axb3 24. ♖xb3 gxf6 25.a3 c5 26. ♗f1

The bishop returns and White has a winning endgame.

26...f5 27. ♗c4 fxg4 28.hxg4 ♗g7 29. ♖d5 ♖ec8 30. ♗b2 ♖c7 31. ♖c3 f6 32. ♗b5 ♖ac8 33.a4 ♗f7 34. ♖d6 ♗e8 35. ♖e3 ♗xb5 36.axb5 c4 37. ♗c3 ♖a8 38.b6 1-0

Summary

When aimed at the kingside, the bishops offer a great basis for setting up a dangerous attack, as soon as you manage to bring another piece to the spot. Try to improve the scope of your bishop when the diagonal is blocked by an enemy pawn: pawn breaks will do the trick. Pressure by the bishops against the queenside may be less spectacular, but can be equally killing – be patient! Finally, don't be dogmatic about the pair of bishops. You might spot an

opportunity to exchange one bishop and obtain another, perhaps more tangible, advantage.

CHAPTER 9

IDP: isolated doubled pawn

Doubled pawns exist in various forms. They are essentially a structural weakness, despite some obvious dynamic advantages, for instance an open file, or the control of a relevant square. Doubled pawns can be part of a bigger pawn chain, but isolated doubled pawns really should be considered the weakest of the bunch. Have you ever asked why?

Ruy Lopez

Lembit Oll

2550

Alexey Dreev

2570

Odessa ch-URS 1989

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 ♙ge7 4.0-0 g6 5.c3 ♘g7 6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4 d5 8.exd5 ♙xd5
9.♖e1+ ♘e6



10.♙xc6+ bxc6

Here, the isolated doubled pawn is situated on White's half open c-file, which makes it an easier target for the rooks and queen. Still, for now, with so many pieces still on the board, the position holds a lot of other dynamics.

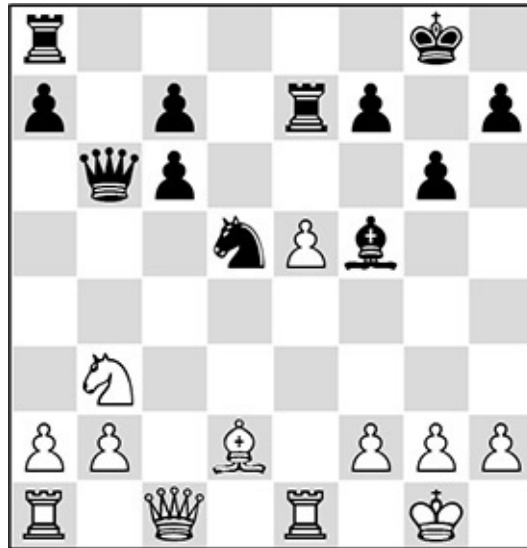
11. ♖g5 ♜d6 12. ♜bd2 0-0 13. ♜c1 ♜fe8 14. ♜e4 ♜b4 15. ♜d2 ♜b6
16. ♜c5

A nice outpost on a strong square: no enemy pawn can touch the knight here.

16... ♜f5 17. ♜e5 ♜e7 18. ♜b3!

With this retreat, c6 is under attack and Black now felt forced to make a concession.

18... ♜xe5 19. dxe5



White's isolated d4-pawn now has become part of a pawn majority on the kingside. Also, Black's bishop pair is gone, and his dark squares on the kingside might become a problem, especially with the opposite-coloured bishops. On the positive side, Black has a dominant knight on d5 and the e5-pawn is a clear target.

19... ♜ae8 20. ♜a5 c5

20... ♜xe5?? is refuted by 21. ♜xe5 ♜xe5 22. ♜c4.

21. b3 ♜d3 22. ♜c4 ♜e6?

This move allows White to alter his advantage.

23. ♜b2 ♜f5 24. ♜xc5 ♜xe5 25. ♜xd3 ♜xd3 26. ♜xe5 ♜xe5

White's pawn majority is gone, as is one of Black's doubled pawns. However, when you look at what has remained on the board, you will easily spot White's advantage: bishop versus knight, with play on two wings, while the dark squares around Black's king are weakened. Black still has to deal with a lousy pawn structure on the queenside. After White's next move, this already nets a pawn, which he duly converted:

27. ♖h6 ♜e8 28. ♜xa7 ♜e4 29. ♜f1 ♜f4 30. ♜xf4 ♜xf4 31. ♜b7 ♜d6 32. ♜b5 ♜e5 33. ♜c4 ♜c5 34. ♜b4 ♜b6 35. ♜d2 ♜c6 36. ♜d8+ ♜g7 37. ♜d4+ ♜f6 38. h3 ♜c2 39. a4 h5 40. ♜e1 ♜c1 41. ♜xc1 ♜xc1+ 42. ♜h2 ♜c2 43. a5 h4 44. a6 ♜a2 45. a7 ♜a5 46. b4 ♜a4 47. ♜c5

Black resigned.

English Opening

Vasily Ivanchuk

2680

Jan Timman

2660

Tilburg 1990 (13)

1. c4 e5 2. g3 ♜f6 3. ♜g2 d5 4. cxd5 ♜xd5 5. ♜f3 ♜c6 6. 0-0 ♜b6 7. ♜c3 ♜e7 8. a3 0-0 9. b4 ♜e6 10. ♜b1 f6 11. d3 ♜e8 12. ♜d2 ♜f7 13. ♜b3 ♜ab8 14. ♜c2 ♜fd8



Here also, all the pieces are still on the board. Ivanchuk decided on:

15. ♜xc6!? ♜xc6

Sure, Black now has two vulnerable pawns and some weak squares on the queenside, but will Black not be able to drum up counterplay on the kingside? In his analysis for *New In Chess* magazine, Timman clearly approved of White's idea and therefore awarded his own 14... ♜fd8 a question mark.

Several of World Champion Tigran Petrosian's games advocated White's approach: give your opponent a structural weakness, when you believe you can neutralize his dynamic play (check out 'A double-edged exchange', Chapter 38 in IYCPR, for some of his games and more examples).

16. ♖a5 ♜e8 17. ♘d2!?

Patiently vacating the c-file, and putting pressure on the IDP.

17. ♖e4 was possible as well, directing the knight to the strong c5-square immediately.

17...f5 18. ♜fc1 ♜d6

Black has parried the first assault, and if he could manage to get in ...♙e6-d7, he could even start thinking of moving his rook and queen to the kingside.

However...

19.b5!

White offers to exchange the foremost IDP! Alas, soon you will discover that Black's queenside falls apart after the capture on b5.

19... ♜h5

19...cxb5 20. ♖xb5 is hopeless.

20. ♖xc6

And White had basically won a pawn. The actual game featured some mind-boggling complications where Timman still had his chances, though Ivanchuk was the luckiest in the end:

20... ♜e8 21. ♖xe7+ ♜xe7 22.f3 g5 23. ♜f1 g4 24.f4 e4 25.dxe4 ♖c4 26. ♙c1 fxe4 27.f5 ♙xf5 28. ♜a4 ♖b6 29. ♜xa7 e3 30. ♜b4 ♜h6 31.h4 gxh3 32. ♜bf4 h2+ 33. ♜h1 ♙h3 34. ♜b8+ ♜e8 35. ♜f8+ ♜g7 36. ♜xc7+ ♖d7 37. ♜1f7+ ♜xf7 38. ♜xf7+ ♜xf7 39. ♜f4+ ♜g6 40. ♜xh2 ♜h5 41. ♜d6+ ♖f6 42. ♜g1 ♜f5 43. ♜d3 ♜h5 44.g4+ ♜xg4 45. ♙xe3 ♜g8 46. ♜h2 ♜h4 47. ♙g5+ ♜xg5 48. ♜xh3 ♖h5 49. ♖d5 ♜g6 50. ♜e3+ ♖f4+ 51. ♖xf4 ♜xf4 52.b6 ♜f5 53. ♜c5+ ♜e4 54. ♜e7+ ♜f5 55. ♜xh7 ♜e4 56.b7 ♜e3+ 1-0

The square in front

Nimzo-Indian Defence

Tiger Hillarp Persson

2511

Tomi Nybäck

2571

Vammala 2005 (2)

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3. ♖c3 ♙b4 4.e3 b6 5. ♙d3 ♙b7 6. ♖f3 0-0 7.0-0 c5 8. ♖a4 cxd4 9.exd4 ♙e7 10.a3 d6 11.b4 ♖bd7 12. ♜e1 ♜c8 13. ♙f1 ♜e8 14. ♙e3 ♜c7 15. ♜c1 ♜a8 16. ♖d2 ♙f8 17. ♖c3 a6 18.h3 ♜cc8 19. ♜b3 ♙c6 20. ♜b1 ♜b8 21. ♖de4 ♖xe4 22. ♖xe4 ♜b7 23. ♖c3 b5



With his next move, White forces an IDP on his opponent.

24.d5 exd5 25.cxb5 ♖xb5

White wins back his pawn after 25...axb5 26.a4 d4 27.♗xd4 bxa4 28.♕xe8 ♕xe8 29.b5, and remains better.

26.♗xb5 axb5 27.♞d3 ♖c4



This is a nice outpost for the rook, of course, but with his next two moves, White just focusses on the IDP.

28.♕cd1 ♞f6 29.♗d4

A wonderful bishop on a central square. It's a perfect blockading square just like in an IQP position, where the piece can't be driven away by enemy pawns.

29... ♕xe1 30.♕xe1 ♞e4 31.♞e3 ♖c7 32.♞d3

I suppose White repeated moves to gain time, and intended to follow up with 32.f3 ♖c5 33.bxc5 dxc5 34.♙e5, where he would still have to work hard to bring home his material advantage. However, apparently Black did not fancy this either, and tried his luck with another move, but ended up much worse:

32... ♗a8? 33. ♗xb5 ♗xa3 34. ♗xd5

Material is equal, but White's b-pawn, supported by the bishops and a centralized queen, is the winner here. Black's next move should have been refuted right away, but White liquidated into a clearly better endgame and won anyway thanks to his passed pawn on the queenside.

34... ♗d2 35. ♗a5

After 35. ♗xg7!, Black cannot take either way: 35... ♔xg7 (35... ♗xg7

36. ♖e8+ ♗f8 37. ♗g5+ ♗h8 37. ♖e8.

35... ♗xa5 36.bxa5 ♗xf1 37. ♗xf1 ♖c4 38. ♗b2 ♗b4 39. ♗c3 ♖c4 40. ♖c1 d5 41.a6 ♗c5 42. ♗d2 1-0

Towards the endgame

Sicilian Defence

Pablo Zarnicki

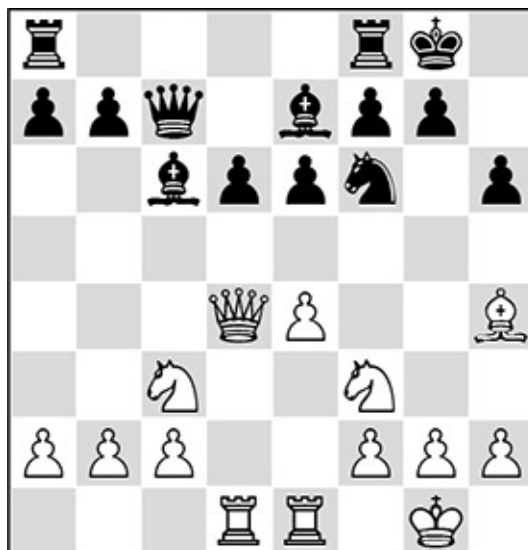
2560

Emil Sutovsky

2560

Buenos Aires 1997 (5)

1.e4 c5 2. ♗f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♗xd4 ♗c6 5. ♗b5 ♗d7 6. ♗xc6 ♗xc6 7. ♗c3 ♗f6 8. ♗g5 e6 9. ♖d1 ♗e7 10.0-0 0-0 11. ♖fe1 h6 12. ♗h4 ♗c7



Again, two former Junior World Champions are at the board, both already grandmasters with a respectable rating at this time. However, White's next move would not be repeated by other players in this position.

13. ♖xf6 ♜xf6 14. ♙xd6 ♜xd6 15. ♖xd6 ♜xc3 16. bxc3

White has won the d6-pawn, at the cost of damaging his queenside structure. And with the exchange of queens, White's chances for dynamic counterplay have decreased.

16... ♜fc8

Black decides to try to keep two rooks, to put pressure against the IDP. White cannot make use of the d-file, as the entrance square d7 is not accessible. Moreover, after the exchange of rooks with 16... ♜fd8, it is easier for White to defend actively: 17. ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 18. ♘d4 ♜d7 19. f4 ♜c8 20. ♜b1!.

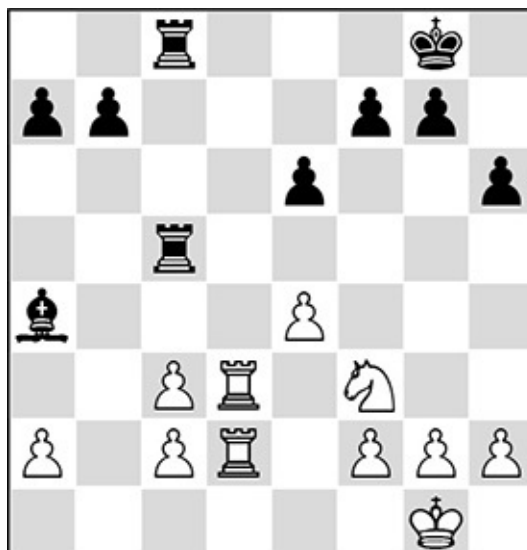
17. ♜e3 ♜a4 18. ♜d2

Clinging on to his IDP, but this passive defence strategy soon causes problems. An active move like 18. ♜d4 was more to the point.

18... ♜c5!

Preparing to double, but the a2-pawn may also become a target.

19. ♜ed3 ♜ac8



20. ♖d4

With essentially simple play – doubling on the c-file – Black is going to win back a pawn, when White is still left with two vulnerable pawns. Black is clearly better, and indeed Zarnicki did not manage to hold on:

20... ♜c6 21.c4 e5 22. ♜d8+ ♜xd8 23. ♜xd8+ ♜h7 24.a3 ♜xe4 25. ♜d7 f6 26. ♜d2 ♜c6 27. ♜d3 ♜a4 28.f3 ♜xc2 29. ♜d7 ♜a5 30. ♜xb7 ♜xa3 31.c5 a6 32.c6 ♜c3 33.c7 a5 34. ♜f1 a4 35. ♜e3 ♜b3 36. ♜f5 a3 37. ♜a7 a2 0-1

A typical break

As we saw in the previous game, the structural weakness of the IDP comes to the fore in the endgame, when dynamic play tends to diminish with pieces getting exchanged off the board. One more clear example – here, only major pieces are left on the board. We start a few moves before the IDP arises.

King's Indian Defence

Adrian Mikhachishin

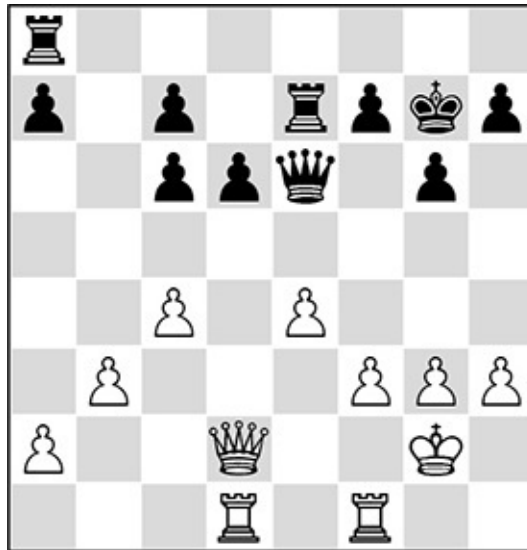
2530

Dragoljub Velimirovic

2530

Yugoslavia 1992

1. ♜f3 ♜f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♜g7 4. ♜g2 0-0 5.0-0 d6 6.d4 ♜c6 7. ♜c3 ♜g4 8.h3 ♜xf3 9. ♜xf3 ♜d7 10. ♜e3 e5 11. ♜xc6 bxc6 12. ♜d2 ♜e8 13.b3 ♜f6 14. ♜g2 ♜d7 15. ♜ad1 exd4 16. ♜xd4 ♜e4 17. ♜xe4 ♜xe4 18. ♜xg7 ♜xg7 19.f3 ♜e7 20.e4 ♜e6



21.c5

A typical pawn sacrifice that causes a further compromise in Black's pawn structure. The idea is well-known, and one notable early example is Boleslavsky-Fine, USSR-USA radio match 1945: 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 d6 5.c4 ♙d7 6.♘c3 g6 7.d4 exd4 8.♘xd4 ♙g7 9.♘xc6 bxc6 10.0-0 ♘e7



analysis diagram

11.c5.

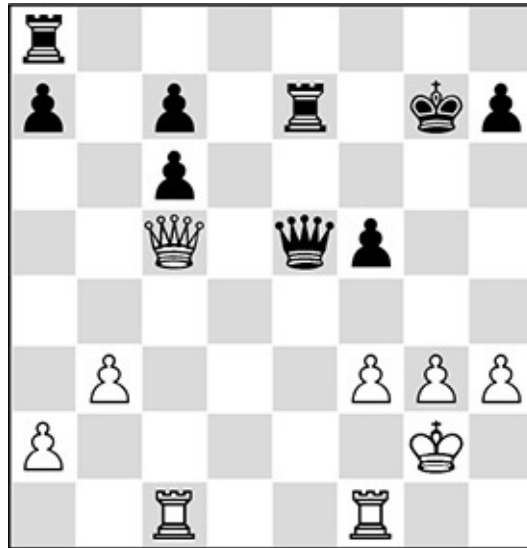
After

21...dxc5

an isolated tripled pawn arises (and a structure similar to Oll-Dreev). Instead,

after 21... ♖d8 22.cxd6 ♖xd6 23.♔c3+, Black is left with the same lousy queenside structure and without an extra pawn. True, the extra pawn also disappeared soon in the game.

22.♔c3+ ♖e5 23.♖c1 f5 24.exf5 gxf5 25.♔xc5



Material is equal now, but Black has three vulnerable pawns on the queenside, with a majority for White on the kingside.

25... ♖d8 26.♖f2 ♖d6 27.♖c4 ♔xc5?!

Not all rook endings are drawn – this one is pretty cheerless.

28.♖xc5 ♖f6 29.♖fc2 ♖ee6 30.h4 h6 31.♖a5

The pawns start to fall. Even the f5-pawn is threatened with 32. ♖2c5. Soon, the battle was over.

31... ♖d5 32.♖xa7 ♖ed6 33.♖xc7 ♖d2+ 34.♖xd2 ♖xd2+ 35.♔h3 ♖c2 36.b4 ♖c4 37.a4 f4 38.a5 fxg3 39.a6 ♖xb4 40.♖xc6+ 1-0

From the opening

Sometimes in an opening line, an IDP is allowed, to create activity as quickly as possible. One example is this line from the Scotch: 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♘xd4 ♙c5 5.♙e3 ♖f6 6.♘b5 ♙xe3 7.fxe3 ♖h4+ 8.g3 ♘d8 9.♔g4 g6 10.♔f4, where White will try to use the half-open f-file to his advantage in the kingside attack. Here is another opening line featuring a central IDP.

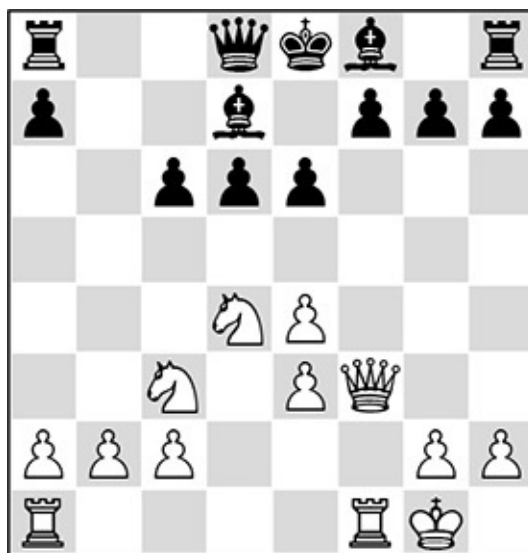
Sicilian Defence

Tigran Petrosian

Alexander Motylev

Tiayuan 2005 (9)

1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.♘f3 d6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♘f6 6.♙e3 ♘g4 7.♙b5 ♘xe3 8.fxe3 ♙d7
9.♙xc6 bxc6 10.0-0 e6 11.♙f3

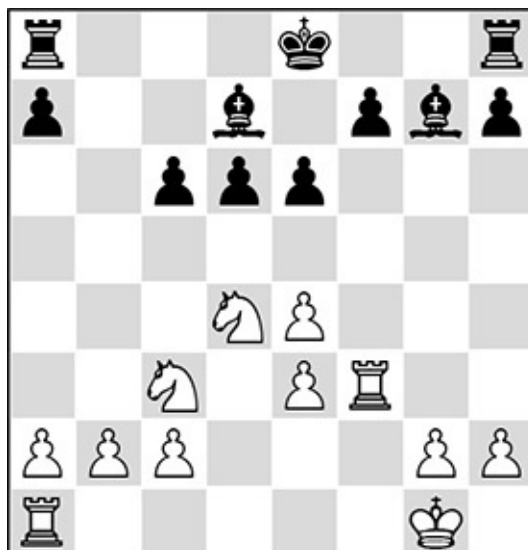


At the cost of a pawn, White's initiative along the f-file is neutralized.

11...♙f6 12.♙xf6?!

12.♙e2 ♙g5 is the more popular attempt, and it is logical if White wants to keep an initiative going (or, for that matter, force a repetition of moves with 13.♙f3).

12...gxf6 13.♙xf6 ♙g7 14.♙f3



The IDP is not on a half-open file, and there is no strong untouchable knight on e5, but with the black bishops cooperating very well, the e4-pawn will be under pressure soon. White's pawn structure is pretty static (just like his knights, which only protect each other from move 16 onwards – IYCPR Chapter 35 'Dances with knights' expands on such superfluous knights).

14... ♖b8 15.b3 c5 16.♗de2 ♘c6 17.♖af1 ♗b7

17...f5 was also possible, and was seen in Damjanovic-Dueball, Bad Pyrmont 1970. Anyway, Black has sufficient compensation, with his pressure on the e4-pawn. If White could move his e3-pawn one square to the left, the verdict would change immediately in White's favour, of course. The game was interesting enough, and Motylev even prevailed after White got too keen on winning material.

18.♗h3 h5 19.♗f4 a5 20.♗fh4 a4 21.♗xh5 ♗xh5 22.♗xh5 ♗b4 23.♗g5 ♖f8 24.♗g4

Clinging on to e4, but ...f7-f5 is in the air – a nice horizontal pin!

24... ♘e5 25.h4 f5 26.♗g6 ♘xe4 27.♗xe6? ♘xc2 28.♗xa4 ♗xh4 29.♗xc5 ♖f7 30.♖f2 ♗h1 31.♗xe5 dxe5 32.♗g1 ♖e7 33.b4 ♖d6 34.a3 ♗h7 35.♗e2 ♖d5 36.♖e1 ♗h2 37.♖f2 ♗h7 38.♖e1 ♗h2 39.♖f2 ♗h1 40.♗g1 ♗h7 41.♗e2 ♖c4 42.e4 fxe4 43.♖e3 ♗a7 44.a4 ♖xb4 45.♗xe4 ♗xa4 46.♗g5 ♖c5 47.♗c3 ♗a3 48.♖d2 ♖c4 49.♗e2 ♘d3 50.♗g1 ♗a2+ 51.♖e3 ♗xg2 52.♗1h3 0-1

Summary

IDPs cannot be defended by neighbouring pawns, and as a result they are much easier targets than other doubled pawns. Also, just as with a standard

isolated (central) pawn, the square in front, the 'blockading square', can be an ideal and untouchable spot for an opponent's minor piece. The IDP will be especially vulnerable on a half-open file, simply because of a frontal attack by rooks or the queen. If you are trying to exploit an IDP, working towards the endgame is not a bad idea. The opponent will have to try to create play elsewhere, to compensate for the structural weakness of an IDP.

CHAPTER 10

A central striker

A passed pawn is an advantage, so let's start with that. Potentially, it has the best chances to reach the other side of the board. The same goes for a central passed pawn in the middlegame. It might be properly blocked by a knight à la Nimzowitsch, or sometimes insufficiently supported, but in principle, it is an asset. 'Passed pawns must be pushed forward,' Fischer is supposed to have said. Let's assume he included the central ones. However, with many pieces on the board in the middlegame, promotion will often not be a realistic goal. So, what forces are hidden behind our central striker?

Exchanging your way forward

Semi-Tarrasch

Viswanathan Anand

2767

Hou Yifan

2680

Wijk aan Zee 2018 (11)

1.c4 e6 2.♘c3 d5 3.d4 ♘f6 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 c5 7.♖b1 ♘e7 8.♘f3 0-0 9.♘c4
♘c6 10.0-0 b6 11.♘e3 ♘b7 12.♗e2 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♖c8 14.♖fd1 ♗c7



15.d5

Although promotion seems a long way off, Anand opts for the straightforward advance. This is not without a concession: he gives up his ideal central control, allowing the black pieces more squares. A couple of months earlier, Wang Yue proceeded more carefully from this position against Lu Shanglei: 15. ♕b5 ♖fd8 16. ♖bc1 ♜b8 17. ♙d3 ♘b4 18. ♙b1 ♖xc1 19. ♖xc1 ♜c8 20. ♖d1 ♖d8 21. ♖c1, with a draw by repetition.

15... ♗e5 16. ♕b5!

This was Anand's idea! It is much more venomous than the automatic 16. ♕b3. Now, the bishop will try to support the d5-pawn from c6, from where it will gain space and restrict the black pieces.

16... exd5 17. exd5 ♗xf3+

After the natural 17... ♖fd8 18. ♖bc1 ♜b8 19. ♖xc8, Black will have to play 19... ♗xf3+ anyway, as 19... ♖xc8 is met with 20. ♗d4!, when 20... ♕xd5 fails to 21. ♗f5.

18. ♗xf3 ♙c5 19. ♖bc1 ♜e7 20. ♗f4 ♗d6?!

After this exchange, White's spatial advantage becomes serious. 20... ♖fd8 would have been better.



21. ♖c6 ♗xf4

21... ♜fd8 22. ♗xd6 ♜xd6 23. ♜e1.

22. ♗xf4

Threatening 23.d6 !

22... ♗xc6 23.dxc6 ♗c7 24. ♜d6

And Anand easily manoeuvred his pieces in all the space behind his c-pawn to win. Black's major pieces are way too passive here.

24... ♜cd8 25. ♜cd1 h6 26.g3 ♜xd6 27. ♜xd6 ♜c8 28. ♗e5 b5 29. ♗d5 ♗h7 30. ♗e4+ ♗g8 31. ♜d7 ♗a5 32.c7 ♜f8 33. ♗e7 1-0

Slav Defence

Mikhail Botvinnik

Viacheslav Ragozin

Leningrad m 1940 (3)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3. ♗c3 ♗f6 4.e3 g6 5. ♗f3 ♗g7 6. ♗d3 0-0 7.0-0 ♗g4 8.h3 ♗xf3 9. ♗xf3 dxc4 10. ♗xc4 ♗bd7 11. ♜d1 e5 12.d5 c5?



13.d6!

Here too, it is of course about gaining space, rather than the immediate danger of promoting. As a result, the c4-bishop becomes active and White now avails himself of the d5-square for his pieces. Apart from that, Black's possible idea of installing his ideal blockader with ... ♖e8-d6 is nipped in the bud.

13... ♜b8 14.e4 ♘e8 15. ♙e3 a6 16.a4 ♜c8 17. ♙d2



17...h6

Preparing a long knight manoeuvre: ... ♘e8-f6-h7-g5-e6-d4.

A) The d6-pawn cannot be besieged, as Botvinnik shows: 17... ♜c6 18. ♙ad1 ♘b6 19. ♙d5 ♘xd5 20. ♜xd5, and now 20... ♘xd6 runs into 21. ♙xc5 and White wins;

B) 17... ♖b8, with the idea of transferring this knight, can even be met by 18.d7, immediately profiting from the fact that the blockading knight has left its post, for example: 18... ♖xd7 19. ♖ad1 ♜c7 20. ♖d5 ♜c8 21. ♖e7+ ♜xe7 22. ♜xd7 ♜f6 23. ♜xb7 ♜xf3 24.gxf3, and though material is equal, White's activity and Black's weaknesses leave no doubt about the assessment of the position.

18. ♜ad1 ♖ef6 19. ♖d5 ♖xd5 20. ♜xd5 ♜b8 21. ♜e2 ♜h7
21...b5 22. ♜c6 c4 23.axb5 axb5 24. ♜d5.
22. ♜c2 ♜f6 23. ♜a2 ♜bc8



24.b4!

Thematically opening a file next to the advanced passed pawn to support it.

24...cxb4 25. ♜c7

Also thematically making use of the available entrance square. Compare this to

21. ♜c6 from the Anand-Hou game.

25... ♜xc7 26.dxc7 ♖b6 27. ♜xb6!

The simplest. The g7-bishop cannot take part in the battle versus the passed pawn.

27... ♜xb6 28. ♜c4 ♜c8 29. ♜d7 ♜c6 30. ♜xc6 bxc6 31. ♜xf7 c5 32. ♜e6 1-0

Here comes the bishop

Sicilian Defence

Santosh Gujrathi Vidit

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 ♚c7 6.g3 a6 7.♙g2 ♘f6 8.0-0 ♘xd4 9.♙xd4 ♙c5 10.♙f4 d6 11.♙d2 h6 12.♙ad1 e5 13.♙e3 ♙e6 14.♙xc5 dxc5 15.♘d5 ♙xd5 16.exd5



16...0-0?

A mistake by the talented young Dutch grandmaster, in a well-known theoretical position. Black usually stops the d-pawn with 16...♙d6, not fearing its immediate advance, but first and foremost stopping the white bishop from becoming active. Of course, ideally the pawn has to be blocked by the knight on d6. From there, the knight can still be active, being the only piece that can see past the enemy pawn right in front of him (see more on this in IYCPR, ‘Nimzo’s strong centre-back’, Chapter 3).

17.d6 ♙b6

17...♙d7 prevents White’s set-up in the game, but gives White other possibilities, such as 18.♙e3.

18.c4 ♙ad8 19.♙fe1 ♙fe8

Threatening 20...♙e6.

19...♙e8 20.d7 ♙f6 21.♙h3 leaves the black rooks terribly passive, due to the little pawn on d7, which on its own grants White a huge spatial advantage.

20.♙h3 ♙h7



21.f4!?

Preventing 22... ♖g5, while if the e-file opens up, a possible promotion will more likely pop up in the calculations of the ensuing lines. Still, the immediate and less compromising rook transfer to the third rank with 21. ♖e3 also appears to be possible.

21...e4 22. ♖e3 g6?

Too slow. After 22... ♖f6, White would still have to come up with a good plan.

23. ♖b3 ♖c6 24.d7 ♖e7 25. ♖d6!

Black's queenside pawns will be easy targets after the queen exchange.

25... ♖xd6 26. ♖xd6 e3 27. ♖f1

And the Indian prodigy converted his big advantage:

27... ♖f8 28. ♖xb7 f5 29. ♖c7 ♖g7 30. ♖xc5 ♖dxd7 31. ♖xd7 ♖xd7 32. ♖d5 ♖e7 33. ♖e2 ♖d7 34. ♖d3 ♖c5 35. ♖xe3 ♖c7 36. ♖g2 a5 37. ♖d5 g5 38. ♖d2 ♖c8 39.b3 ♖f6 40. ♖c3 h5 41.fxg5+ ♖xg5 42. ♖d4 h4 43. ♖e7 ♖g4 44. ♖g7+ ♖h3 45.gxh4 ♖xh4 46. ♖e5 a4 47.bxa4 ♖f8 48. ♖f7 ♖h8 49.a5 ♖g5 50. ♖xf5+ ♖g6 51. ♖f6+ ♖g5 52. ♖c6 ♖d3+ 53. ♖d4 ♖b4 54. ♖b6 ♖h4+ 55. ♖e4 ♖c2+ 56. ♖d3 ♖xh2 57.a6 ♖e1+ 58. ♖c3 ♖xa2 59. ♖b1 ♖a3+ 60. ♖b4 1-0

A second front

Nimzo-Indian Defence

Anton Korobov

2652

Ding Liren

2717

Huai'an basque 2017 (5)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 ♘b4 4.♗f3 0-0 5.♖c2 d5 6.a3 ♗xc3+ 7.♖xc3 dxc4 8.♖xc4 b6
 9.♗g5 ♗a6 10.♖c2 ♗bd7 11.e4 ♖c8 12.0-0-0 ♗xf1 13.♗hxf1 c5 14.d5 c4 15.♖b1 exd5
 16.exd5 ♗e8 17.d6

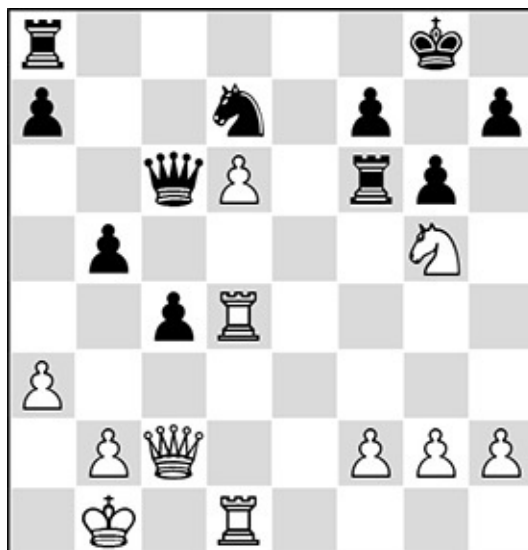


A more complicated position. White has more space, but the d6-pawn is firmly blocked for now. As a result of the opposite-side castling, both sides will try to set up an attack on the enemy king.

17... ♖c6 18.♗d4 b5 19.♗fd1 ♗e6 20.♗xf6! ♗xf6

Removing the blockader is dangerous: 20... ♗xf6 21.♗g5 ♗ee8 22.d7 ♗ed8 23.f4 (the direct 23.♗d6 allows Black to escape with 23... ♖xg2 24.♗xf6 ♖xg5) 23...h6 24.♗f3. After the text move. Black misses the knight as a natural defender on the kingside.

21.♗g5 g6



22.f4!?

A straightforward approach, creating the option of ♖g5-f3-e5, targeting Black's blockading knight.

22... ♜e8 23.h4 h6

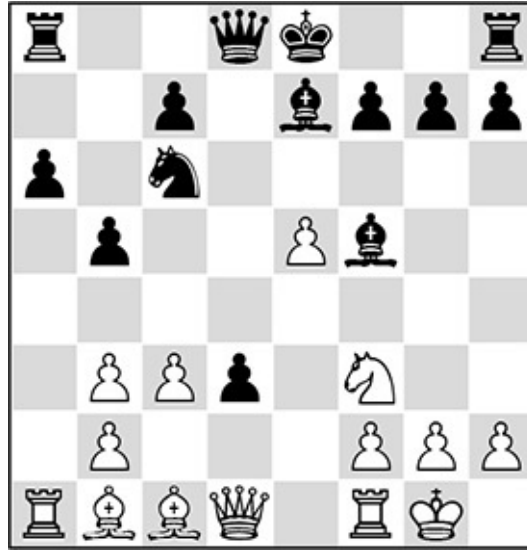
Willy-nilly, Black is making moves on the flank where he would rather not make them.

24. ♖f3 ♜fe6 25.f5 ♜e2 26. ♜1d2 ♜xd2 27. ♜xd2 ♜g7 28.fxg6 fxg6 29.h5

By now, it must be clear that White's initiative has come first. Korobov smoothly converted his advantage:

29...gxh5 30. ♖h4 ♜e5 31. ♜c2 ♜g5 32. ♜e2 ♜e5 33. ♜c2 ♜g5 34. ♜c3 ♜h7 35. ♜e3 ♜c5 36. ♜e7+ ♜g7 37. ♜e4+ ♜h8 38. ♖f5 ♜f7 39. ♜e8+ ♜f8 40. ♜xd7 ♜xf5 41. ♜e4 ♜f8 42. ♜e8 ♜f2 43. ♜e7 ♜xe8 44. ♜xe8+ ♜g7 45.d7 c3 46. ♜e5+ ♜f7 47. ♜d5+ ♜g7 48.bxc3 ♜e1+ 49. ♜c2 ♜e2+ 50. ♜d2 1-0

The passed d-pawn features in several openings. Sometimes, the battle bears a more strategic character, as in the Open Ruy Lopez: 1.e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♖c6 3. ♘b5 a6 4. ♘a4 ♖f6 5.0-0 ♖xe4 6.d4 b5 7. ♘b3 d5 8.dxe5 ♘e6 9. ♖bd2 ♖c5 10.c3 ♘e7 11. ♘c2 d4 12. ♖b3 d3 13. ♘b1 ♖xb3 14.axb3 ♘f5.



Vidit-Van Foreest was another example we have seen.

On other occasions, the balance is tactically tricky, and the assessment very much depends on concrete calculations. This can be very hard and difficult work. Here is one recent example. Watch how the battle revolves around the d3-pawn; again, for a large part, this little soldier determines Black's spatial advantage:

English Opening

Pavel Smirnov

2564

Alexander Grischuk

2752

Chelyabinsk rapid 2016 (10)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 c5 4.♘f3 cxd4 5.♘xd4 d5 6.♘g2 e5 7.♘f3 d4 8.0-0 ♘c6 9.e3 ♘c5 10.exd4 exd4 11.♘bd2 0-0 12.♘b3 ♔b6 13.♘g5 ♘e4 14.♘f4 ♖e8 15.♖e1 ♘g4 16.h3 ♘h5 17.g4 ♘g6 18.♘h4



18...d3!?

An old idea of Tukmakov's (against Sveshnikov, Yerevan 1982).

19. ♖xc5 ♜xc5

Up to now, Black had (successfully) opted for the complicated 19... ♜xc5, when lines like 20. ♜e3 ♜xf2 21. ♜xf2 ♜d4 22. ♜f3 ♜xe3+ 23. ♜xe3 ♜e4+ 24. ♜f2 ♜xb2+ 25. ♜g1 ♜xg2 26. ♜xg2 ♜d4 might ensue. Perhaps Black has sufficient compensation, but Grischuk prefers the more solid text move, not leaving all his pieces in the line of fire and supporting the d3-pawn.

20. ♜e3 ♜b4! 21. ♜xg6 hxg6 22. ♜b1

Smirnov spurns the principled 22.a3 ♜c2 23.b4 ♜b3 24. ♜xb6 ♜xe1+ 25. ♜xe1 ♜xe1 26. ♜xe1 axb6 – when Black is fine anyway – but now ends up in a much worse version.

22... ♜ad8 23.a3?! ♜c2 24.b4? ♜xe3

24... ♜xe3 was also not bad: 25.bxc5 (25. ♜xe3 ♜xe3 26.bxc5 ♜xb1 27. ♜xb1 d2; 25.fxe3 d2 26. ♜e2 ♜e4) 25... ♜xd1 26. ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 27.cxb6 ♜c3 28. ♜b2 axb6.

25.fxe3 ♜e6 26.c5 ♜b5

Even better seems 26... ♜a6 27. ♜d2 ♜xe1 28. ♜xe1 ♜xa3 29. ♜xb7 a5 30.bxa5 ♜xc5, when promotion of the d-pawn becomes a real factor. Now Grischuk reaped all White's queenside pawns instead of taking back the exchange, which eventually won him this rapid game:

27. ♜d2 ♜xa3 28. ♜bd1 ♜c2 29. ♜f1 ♜xb4 30. ♜f2 ♜d7 31. ♜d2 ♜xc5 32.h4 ♜e5 33. ♜c1 ♜c7 34. ♜f1 a5 35.g5 ♜c5 36.h5 gxh5 37.g6 fxg6 38. ♜f8+ ♜h7 39. ♜b8 ♜e7 40. ♜c8 ♜e8 41. ♜h3 ♜xe3+ 42. ♜xe3 ♜xe3 43. ♜f7 b6 44. ♜df2 ♜e4 45. ♜xe4 ♜xe4 46. ♜d7 a4 0-1

Sicilian Defence

Nikola Padevsky

Mark Taimanov

Moscow 1956 (2)

1.e4 c5 2.c3 ♘f6 3.e5 ♗d5 4.d4 cxd4 5.cxd4 d6 6.♗f3 ♗c6 7.♙b3 e6 8.♗c3 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 dxe5 10.♗xe5 ♗xe5 11.dxe5 ♙e7



We finish with an example where White is too eager to establish a central passed pawn. We put our feet on the ground for once, and realize that all that glitters is not gold.

12.♙a3?!

White seizes the opportunity to manoeuvre this bishop to d6, but forgets about his development. After 12.♙b5+ ♗d7 13.0-0, White can just hold the balance, with active play compensating for his weak pawns.

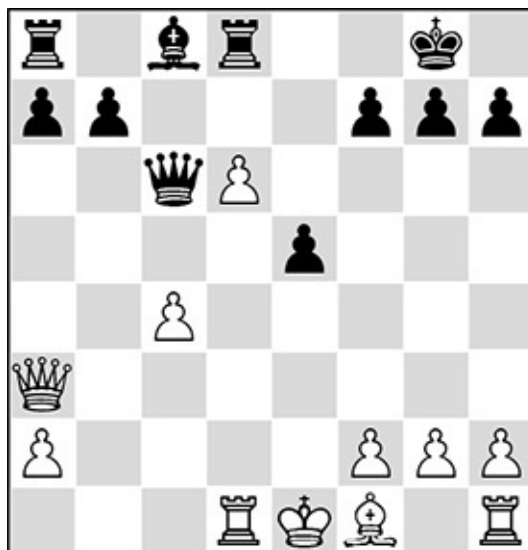
12...0-0 13.♖d1 ♙c7 14.♗d6 ♗xd6 15.exd6

At first sight, the pawn seems to have sufficient support.

15...♙c6 16.c4 ♗d8 17.♙a3

It turns out that 17.♙g3 is also met with 17...e5!, and again the d6-pawn is under attack, while the e5-pawn is untouchable, as White's king still lingers in the middle of the board (18.♙xe5?? ♗e8).

17...e5!



Now, Black will develop easily, targeting both the c4- and d6-pawns, whereas it is obvious that White is struggling with his kingside development. The Bulgarian grandmaster decides to give up a pawn, but his counterplay falls short.

18. ♖e2 ♜xg2 19. ♗f3 ♜g6 20. c5 e4 21. ♕e2 ♘d7 22. ♞g3 ♜ac8 23. ♜d5 b6!

Undermining the support of White's only pride.

24. cxb6 axb6 25. 0-0

Remarkably, up to here, the game was repeated more than fifty years later:

25. ♞xg6 hxg6 26. 0-0 ♜c2 27. ♜e1 ♜xa2 28. ♜d4 ♜a4 was 0-1 in

Garmazhanova-Uzhva, Belgorod 2007.

25... ♜c2 26. ♜g5 ♞f6 27. ♜e1 ♘c6 28. ♘b5 h6 29. ♜e5 ♘xb5 30. ♜xb5 ♜xd6 31. ♜xe4 ♜d1+ 32. ♞g2 ♜dd2 0-1

Summary

When the central striker moves forward in the middlegame, the opponent's pieces will be limited in their mobility. Also, more space will emerge behind the passer to manoeuvre your own pieces in. This constitutes the true force of a central passed pawn. In addition, when you can use the neighbouring files or exchange some blockading pieces, the threat of promotion will become more and more realistic. Sometimes, you may need to create a second front, to deflect your opponent's pieces from the passer. Use your knowledge in those opening lines that feature an early central striker, and always take care to provide sufficient support for your lone forerunner.

CHAPTER 11

Central supremacy

A theoretically ideal pawn centre from the opening would be pawns on e4 and d4, depriving the enemy pieces of all central squares. In fact, the only regular opening where Black allows this for a couple of moves is the Pirc Defence. Now, imagine that you may be able to push both the pawns one square further in the middlegame. No doubt, these pawns, if well-supported, will give you ample space to manoeuvre, and at the same time limit your opponent's possibilities. So, let's study some games that show the possible effects of total central control.

Sicilian Defence

Jon Ludvig Hammer

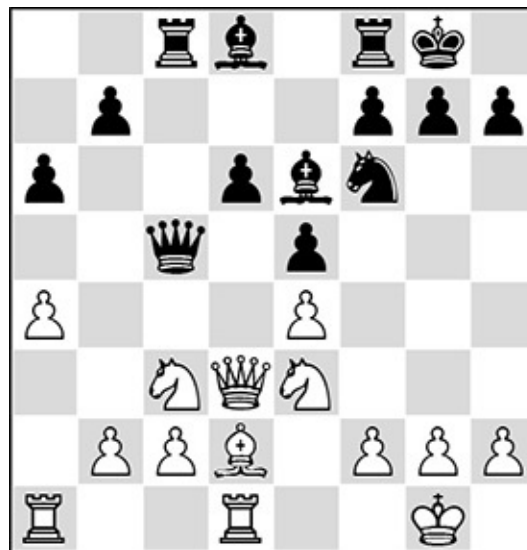
2629

Peter Svidler

2763

Palma de Mallorca 2017 (3)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♙b5+ ♘d7 4.d4 cxd4 5.♙xd4 a6 6.♙xd7+ ♙xd7 7.♘c3 e5 8.♙d3 ♖c8
9.♘d2 ♙e6 10.♘f1 ♙e7 11.♘e3 ♘f6 12.0-0 ♙c7 13.a4 ♙c5 14.♖d1 0-0 15.♙d2 ♙d8



16. ♘f5?!

White's position is not ready for this. He should have been more patient, by

preparing this move with 16. ♖e1. Now, the black pawns take the centre.

16... ♖xf5 17. exf5 d5 18. ♖ac1

18. ♖g5 would put immediate pressure on the pawn centre, but it fails to 18...d4

19. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 20. ♗e4 ♜xc2 21. ♗xf6+ gxf6.

18... ♖b6 19. ♜e2 h6

Now Black has the ideal pawn centre and will go on to build the hyper-ideal centre. But even now, it is clear that the scope of the white pieces is severely restricted.

20. a5 ♖a7 21. ♗a4 ♜c6 22. b3 ♜fe8 23. ♜h1 ♜d7 24. g4 d4 25. ♜f3 e4 26. ♜g2 ♜c6



Black is winning.

27. g5

If White could put his bishop on f4 and his knight on c4, at least his minor pieces would be OK, but it's too late for that: 27. ♖f4 e3 28. ♜xc6 ♜xc6 29. f3 e2

30. ♜e1 d3 31. cxd3 ♖f2.

27... hxcg5 28. ♖xg5 e3! 29. f3

29. ♜xc6 ♜xc6 30. ♖xf6 ♜xf6 31. fxe3 dxe3 leads to a hopeless ending: the e3-pawn is dangerously far up the board, while both the f5- and a5-pawns are obviously weak.

29... ♜e5 30. ♜h3 e2 31. ♜g1 d3 32. ♗b6 ♖xb6 33. axb6 ♜ce8 34. ♖h6 ♗g4 35. ♜xg4 e1 ♜+ 36. ♜xe1 ♜xe1+ 37. ♜g2 ♜8e2+ 38. ♜g3 ♜g1+ 39. ♜h4 ♜xh6# 0-1

You wouldn't expect such an overwhelming pawn centre to occur too often in top-level games, yet here is another example:

English Opening

Magnus Carlsen

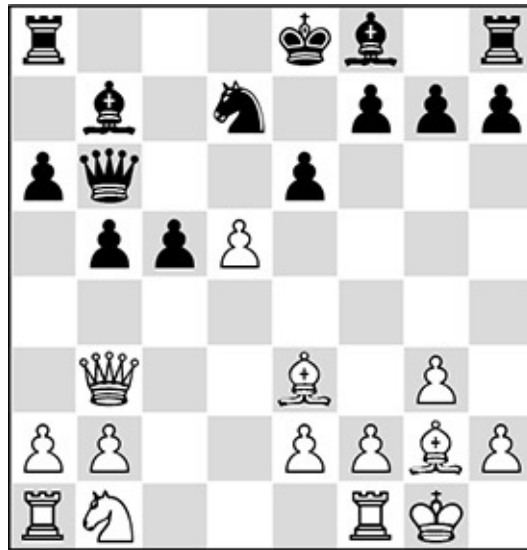
2864

Hikaru Nakamura

2794

Moscow 2013 (8)

1.c4 e6 2.g3 d5 3.♙g2 c6 4.♖c2 ♗f6 5.♘f3 dxc4 6.♙xc4 b5 7.♙b3 ♙b7 8.0-0 ♘bd7 9.d4 a6
10.♘e5 ♙b6 11.♙e3 c5 12.♘xd7 ♘xd7 13.d5



13...e5?

Now, the d5-pawn stays alive, and, more importantly, it will be joined later by its colleague from the e-file.

14.a4 b4 15.♘d2 ♙d6 16.♘c4 ♙c7 17.f4! 0-0 18.♖ac1 exf4

18... ♖ae8 19.f5 gives White a huge spatial advantage. 19.fxe5 was also possible, when Black would have to reply 19... ♙xe5 (19... ♘xe5? 20.♘xd6 ♙xd6 21.♙xc5).

19.♙xf4 ♙xf4 20.gxf4!

Carlsen consistently builds his pawn centre.

20...a5 21.e4 ♖ae8 22.e5



Obviously, again the black pieces are held back by the strong central pawns. It's a small miracle that White doesn't have a decisive blow.

22... ♖a6 23. ♜fe1 ♜h8 24. ♘d6 ♜e7 25. ♜e3 ♜d8 26. b3 g5!

Absolutely not the saving move for Black, but at least challenging White's mighty pawn chain.

27. ♜h1 ♜b8 28. ♜f2 gxf4 29. ♜xf4 ♘d3 30. ♜e3

An unlucky move as it turns out.

30... ♘g6

It appears that Black could sacrifice an exchange with 30... ♜xe5 31. ♜xe5 (now, after 31. ♘xf7+ ♜xf7 32. ♜xf7, the rook on e3 is unprotected: 32... ♜xe3 33. ♜xd7 ♜e8) 31... ♜xd6 32. ♜f5 ♜xf4 33. ♜xf4 c4 34. bxc4 ♘c5, and with the white pawns securely blocked, the black passer on the b-file is a real threat. Even if you still had faith in your position, it's pretty hard to see!

31. ♜f1 ♜xe5

Still! One move too late, though.

32. ♜xe5 ♜xd6 33. ♜e8

Now, this rook is free to go, and Carlsen brings home the full point:

33... ♜xf4 34. ♜xf8+ ♜g7 35. ♜xf4 ♜xf8 36. d6 ♘e5 37. ♘f1 ♘c2 38. ♘b5 f5 39. ♜g2 c4 40. ♘xc4 ♘e4+ 41. ♜g3 ♘xc4 42. bxc4 ♜e8 43. c5 ♘c6 44. ♜xf5 ♘xa4 45. ♜e5+ ♜d8 46. ♜e7 ♘c6 47. ♜c7

Black resigned.

Sicilian Defence

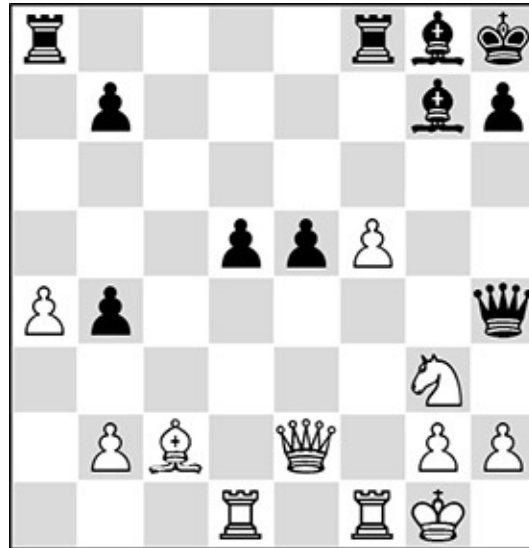
Tamaz Gelashvili

Pavel Kotsur

2576

Lausanne 2001 (6)

1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.f4 g6 4.♘f3 ♗g7 5.♗b5 ♘d4 6.♘xd4 cxd4 7.♘e2 e6 8.♗a4 ♘e7 9.0-0 0-0 10.d3 a6 11.♖e1 d6 12.♗b3 ♔h8 13.♗d2 a5 14.a4 ♗d7 15.♖f2 e5 16.c3 ♗e6 17.♗d1 dxc3 18.♗xc3 f5 19.♖e3 fxe4 20.dxe4 ♘c6 21.♗c2 ♘b4 22.♗xb4 axb4 23.f5 gxf5 24.exf5 ♗g8 25.♘g3 ♖h4 26.♖ad1 d5 27.♖e2



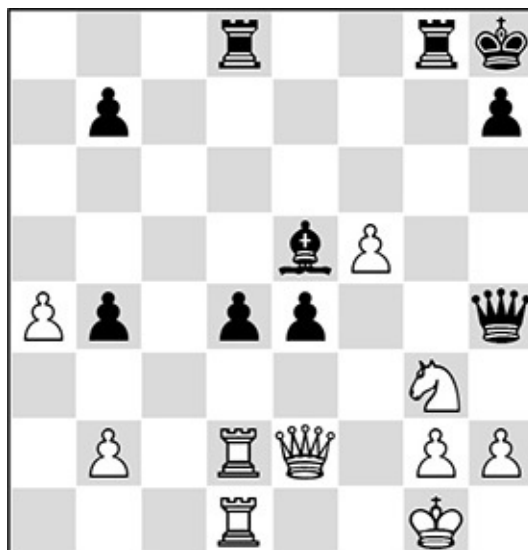
27...e4!

Activating the g7-bishop, but how can Black follow up with ...d5-d4 ?

28.♗b3 ♖ad8 29.♖d2 ♗e5! 30.♖fd1 d4!

Transferring a rook to h6 would have been equally strong.

31.♗xg8 ♖xg8



32. ♖b5

As either way of taking on e4 is impossible – 32. ♖xe4 ♘xg3 – the white rooks are clearly out of place.

32... ♘xg3 33. hxg3 ♖xg3 34. ♖xb4 e3 35. ♖e2 ♖e5!

After this powerful centralization, which covers against possibly annoying checks, it is over.

36. ♖c4 ♖g4 37. ♖d3 ♖dg8 38. ♖e6 ♖xe6 39. fxe6 ♖e8 40. b4 ♖g7 41. a5 ♖xe6 42. ♖f1 ♖h6 43. ♖e1 ♖f6+ 44. ♖g1 ♖f2 45. ♖h1 ♖gxg2 0-1

Ruy Lopez

Peter Leko

2713

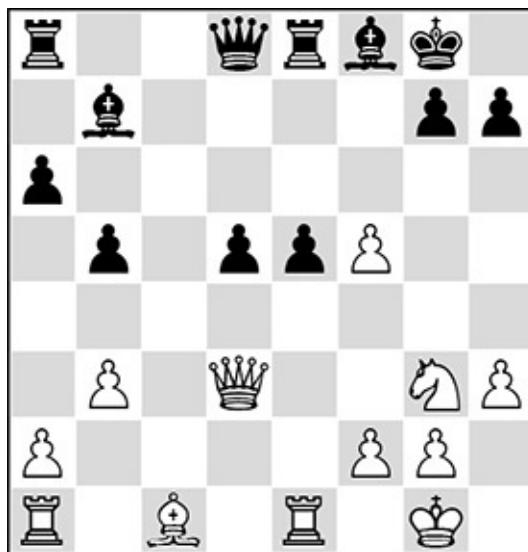
Vladimir Kramnik

2809

Monaco rapid 2002 (4)

For comparison, here is a rapid game where Black also seized the centre after an ...f7-f5 break. Here, the bishop pair is supported from the queenside (remember ‘Cousins from a distance’, Chapter 8?).

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 ♖b8 10. d4 ♖bd7 11. ♖bd2 ♘b7 12. ♘c2 ♖e8 13. b3 ♘f8 14. d5 c6 15. c4 ♖b6 16. ♘d3 ♖fd7 17. ♘a3 cxd5 18. cxd5 f5 19. exf5 ♖xd5 20. ♖e4 ♖7f6 21. ♖fg5 ♖f4 22. ♘c1 ♖xd3 23. ♖xd3 ♖xe4 24. ♖xe4 d5 25. ♖g3



25...e4 26.♘d2 d4 27.♙b2 ♘c5 28.♚ac1 ♙b6 29.♙f4 ♙d5

Who would not have played this? 29...♙e7, with the idea ...♙e5, was safer, apparently.

30.♚c2

30.f6! was better, with very decent counterplay. Black lacks pieces on the kingside. The text move was elegantly refuted:

30...e3 31.fxe3 ♚ac8 32.♚d2 ♚xe3! 33.♚xe3 dxe3 34.♚e2 ♚c2 35.♙g4 ♚xb2 36.f6 g6 37.f7+ ♙xf7 0-1

In the endgame, a hyper-ideal centre may be less forceful, as the opponent will find it easier to manoeuvre with less pieces on the board. Still, he will have to tread carefully with his spatial disadvantage.

Ruy Lopez

Fabiano Caruana

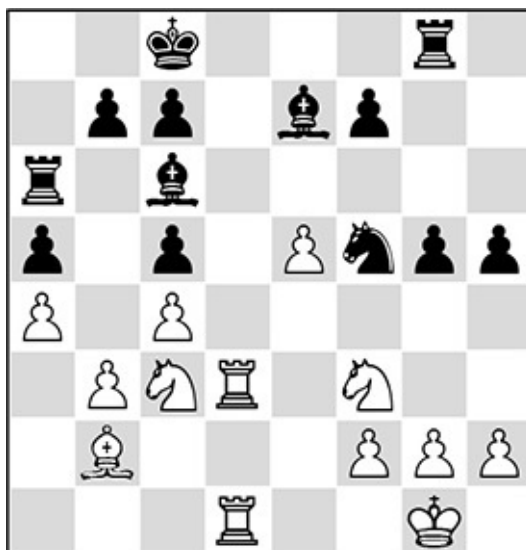
2716

Pavel Eljanov

2724

Russia tt 2011 (2)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 ♘f6 4.0-0 ♘xe4 5.d4 ♘d6 6.♘xc6 dxc6 7.dxe5 ♘f5 8.♙xd8+ ♙xd8 9.♘c3 ♘d7 10.b3 ♙c8 11.♙b2 h5 12.♘e4 ♘e7 13.♚ad1 a5 14.a4 c5 15.c4 ♚a6 16.♚d3 ♙g8 17.♚fd1 ♘c6 18.♘c3 g5



19. d5 xd5

19... ♖d8 20. ♗d2!, with ♘e4 coming, is very unpleasant.

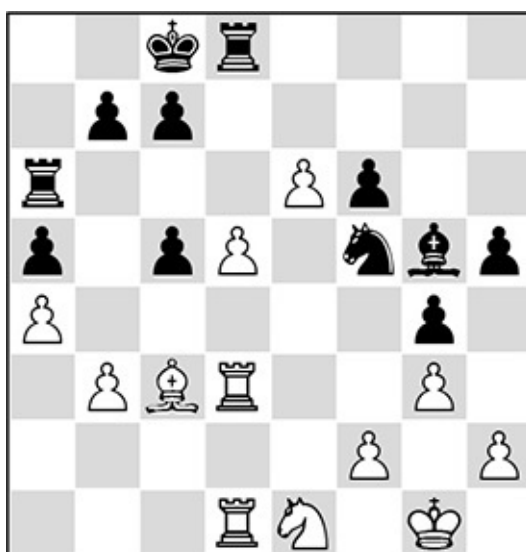
20.cxd5 ♖d8 21. ♔c3

Tying the rook to a5.

21...g4 22.  e1  g5

22... ♖f8.

23.g3 f6? 24.e6



Now, the pawns can be blocked, but the immediate 24... ♖ad6 fails to 25.h4! (after 25. ♙xa5 ♜e7, the d5-pawn drops) 25...gxh3 26.f4 ♙h6 27. ♙xf6. The text move

24...h4

runs into a mirrored version of this same idea:

25.f4! gxf3 26. ♖xf3 hxg3

Eljanov does not want to wait passively and see his position fall apart.

27.h3

27. ♖xg5! gxh2+ 28. ♔xh2 fxg5 29. ♕f6 seems like an advantageous liquidation:
29... ♖f8 (29... ♖g8 30. ♖c3 ♖b6 31. ♖xc5 ♖xb3 32.d6) 30. ♖xg5. In the
game, Caruana got an even better version when Eljanov went wrong with:

27... ♖ad6?

It's hard to say what Black missed, as White's next moves are natural. 27...

♕e3+ 28. ♔g2 ♖f8 was better, with a whole game still ahead!

28. ♖xg5 fxg5 29. ♕e5 ♖b6 30. ♖f1 ♕d6 31. ♖df3 ♖b4 32. ♖f8 1-0

White's 25th move is remindful of the famously missed opportunity in
Kasparov-Kramnik, Wijk aan Zee 2001:



25.g4 was possible, as 25...hxg3+ fails to 26. ♖xg3 ♖xh3 27. ♖xd4!. You will
find more similar surprising breaks in 'The En-Passant Break' in TYCPR
(Chapter 21).

Back to the middlegame. Here, the hyper-ideal centre can become so powerful
that you can give material to achieve it. Here are two examples with World
Champions at work.

Four Knights Opening

Viswanathan Anand

Shamkir 2015 (8)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♗c3 ♗c6 4.♙b5 ♙b4 5.0-0 0-0 6.d3 d6 7.♗e2 ♗e7 8.c3 ♙a5 9.♗g3 ♗g6 10.d4 ♙b6 11.♚e1 c6 12.♙d3 ♚e8 13.h3 h6 14.♙e3 ♙e6 15.♞c2 ♞c7 16.a3 a5 17.c4 a4 18.♚ed1 exd4 19.♙xd4 ♗e5 20.♙e2 ♙c5 21.♚d2 ♗fd7 22.♚ad1 ♚ed8 23.♗h4 ♙xd4 24.♚xd4 c5 25.♚xd6 ♗c6 26.♗hf5 ♗d4 27.♞d2 ♗e5 28.♚d5 ♙xd5 29.cxd5



Anand has sacrificed the exchange and now intends to move his centre forward with f2-f4, ♙e2-c4 and e4-e5. Apart from that, he is already assured of a killer knight on f5.

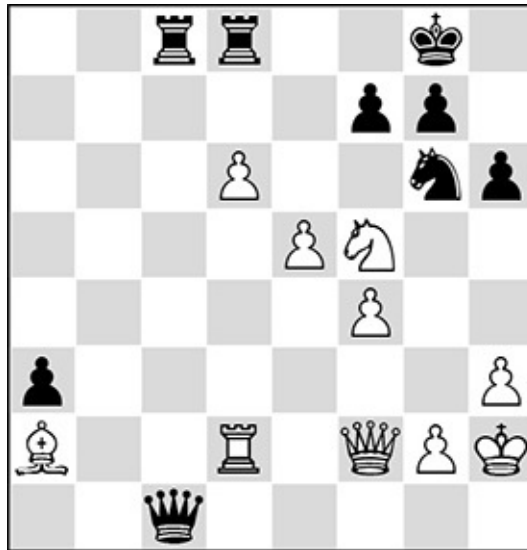
29... ♞b6

29... ♗xf5 30. ♗xf5 ♗g6, to block the pawns, can be met with 31.d6!, for example: 31... ♞a5 32. ♞e3 ♚e8 33.d7 ♚e6 34. ♞c3!.

30.f4 ♗g6 31. ♙c4 ♞a5 32. ♞f2 b5 33. ♗xd4 cxd4 34. ♙a2 b4 35. ♗f5

35.f5 ♗e5 36. ♗h5 ♞b6 37. ♞g3 g6 38.fxg6 ♗xg6 39.e5 was the more concrete and aggressive continuation, but in the game Anand obtained an ideal set-up for his pieces behind his central pawns.

35...bxa3 36.bxa3 ♞c3 37.e5 ♚ab8 38. ♚d2 ♞xa3 39. ♗xd4 ♞c1+ 40. ♞h2 ♚bc8 41.d6 a3 42. ♗f5



All the white pieces are harmoniously and perfectly placed! He even threatens 43. ♖xf7+ ♔xf7 44. ♚a7+.

42... ♜f8 43.d7

And Mamedyarov called it a day.

43... ♜cd8 44. ♚d4 ♚c7 45.e6 ♚xf4+ 46. ♚xf4 ♜xf4 47.e7 would be a fitting finale!

Here is another one by a young Smyslov from the famous tournament in Groningen right after World War II.

Budapest Gambit

Vasily Smyslov

Herman Steiner

Groningen 1946 (2)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 ♘e4 4.♘f3 ♘b4+ 5.♘d2 ♘xd2 6.♘bxd2 ♘c6 7.a3 ♘xd2+ 8.♚xd2 ♘e7 9.♚c3 0-0 10.♜d1 ♜e8 11.♜d5 b6 12.e3 ♘b7 13.♘e2 ♜ad8 14.0-0 ♘b8 15.♜c1!?

Smyslov wanted to avoid the simplification after 15. ♜d2 ♘xf3 16. ♘xf3 ♚xe5, and gives up the exchange for a pawn and a strong centre.

15... ♘xd5 16.cxd5



16...d6

This is a logical move to undermine White's pawn centre. Smyslov gives 16...c5 17. ♖b5 a6 18.d6 ♔e6 19. ♕c4, when Black's queenside pawns will be vulnerable.

17. ♕b5 ♖f8 18.e4 a6 19. ♕d3 dxe5

A question mark from Smyslov: now the b8-knight remains out of play and the c7-pawn is weak. Still, Black has a better alternative on the next move.

20. ♗xe5



20... ♗d6?

Such an attack will not work in an otherwise underdeveloped position. Black had a difficult-to-see, clever option: 20... ♖fe8 21.f4 ♗d7!, when after 22. ♗c6,

22... ♖c5+ holds the position! After 23. ♔f1 ♜xc3 24. ♜xc3 ♜a8 25.b4, White's extra pawn and strong centre just give adequate compensation for the exchange.

21. ♗c4 ♜h6 22. ♗e3 ♜h4 23. ♜xc7 ♜f6 24.g3 ♜h5 25.e5



With the passive b8-knight and f8-rook, the outcome of this game left no more doubts now.

25... ♜h6 26.h4 ♜f3 27. ♜c4 b5 28. ♜f4 ♜h5 29. ♗g4 ♜g6 30. ♗xg6 ♜xg6 31.e6 ♜b1+ 32. ♔h2 f5 33.e7 ♜e8 34. ♜d8 1-0

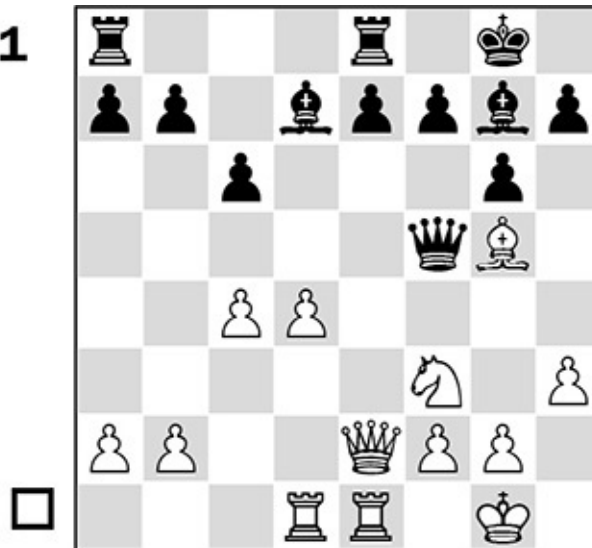
Summary

Two central advanced pawns next to each other splendidly illustrate the force of a strong centre. They are likely to take away a lot of squares from the enemy minor pieces, or even to hold back the enemy rooks. Your own pieces will be mobile and free to manoeuvre and to launch an initiative on either side of the board. Such a spatial advantage is bound to be more important with many pieces on the board, though it can still be valuable towards the endgame. With less pieces on the board, further central advances with promotion threats will more likely play a role. Finally, you may even invest material to obtain a hyper-ideal pawn centre – as always restricting the enemy pieces (for example, Steiner's knight on b8) and creating fine spots for your own (for example, Anand's knight on f5).

Exercises Part I

Exercise Q1

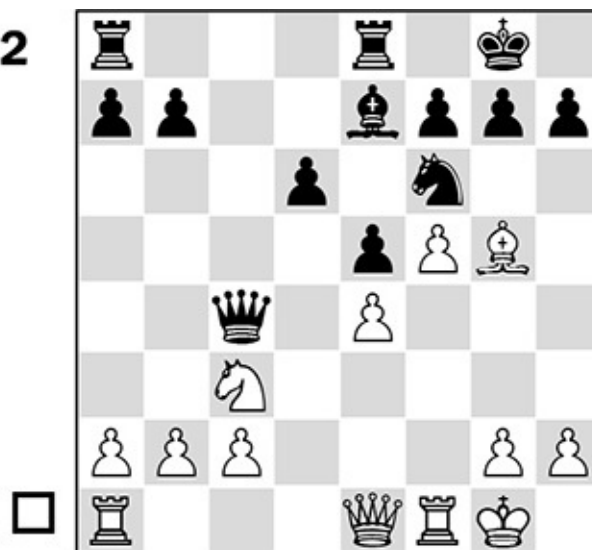
Q1



White quietly proceeded with **16. ♕d2**. Should Black complete his development with **16... ♖ad8** ?

Exercise Q2

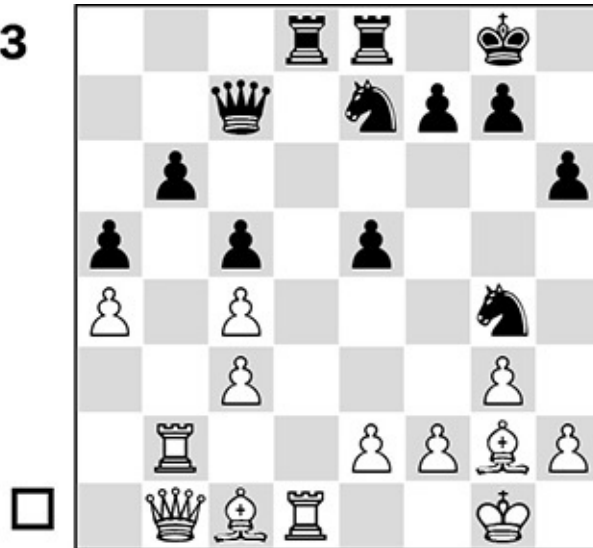
Q2



Best move for White?

Exercise Q3

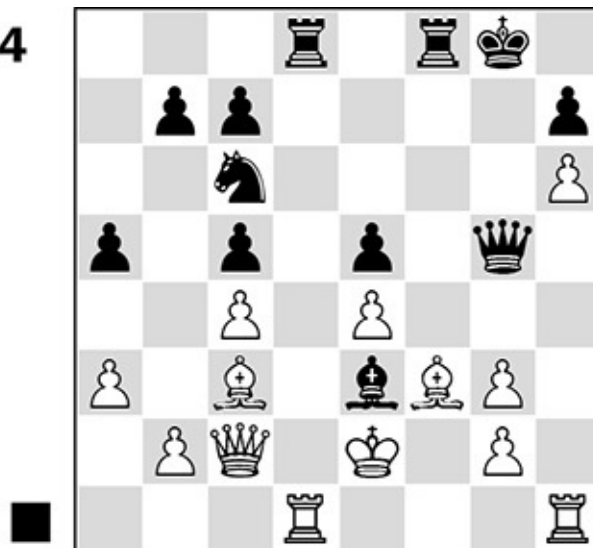
Q3



Best move for White?

Exercise Q4

Q4



How would you judge the position after 25... ♖d4+ 26. ♙xd4 ♜xd4 ?

Exercise Q5

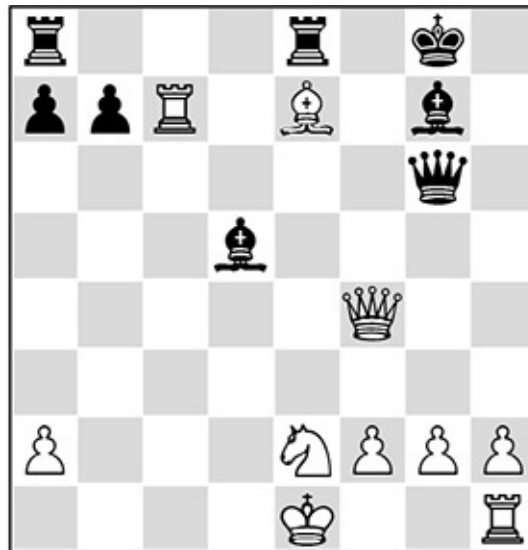
Q5



White has just won a pawn (on e5). How would you judge his chances?

Exercise Q6

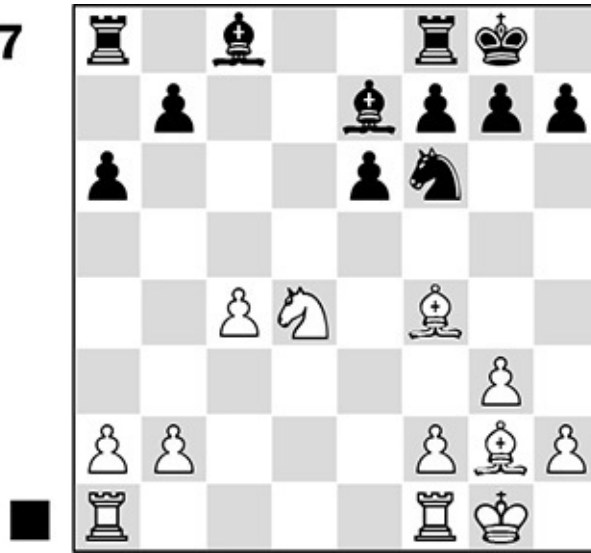
Q6



Black is two pawns down, and has just repeated moves with 24... ♖b1+ 25. ♘c1 ♙g6 26. ♗e2. Should he indeed be satisfied with a draw?

Exercise Q7

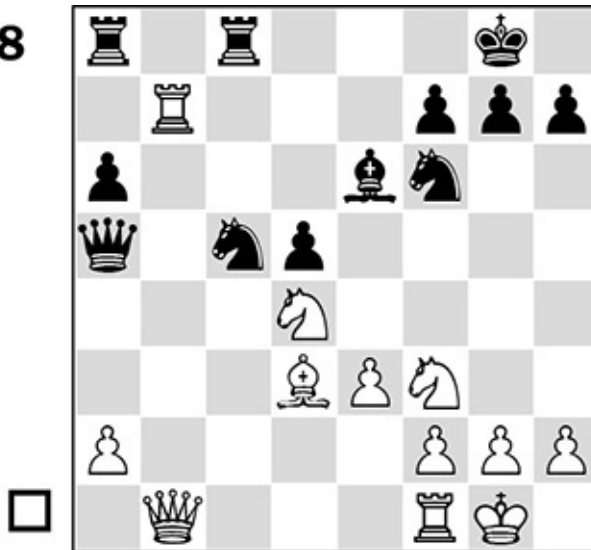
Q7



How would you judge this position?

Exercise Q8

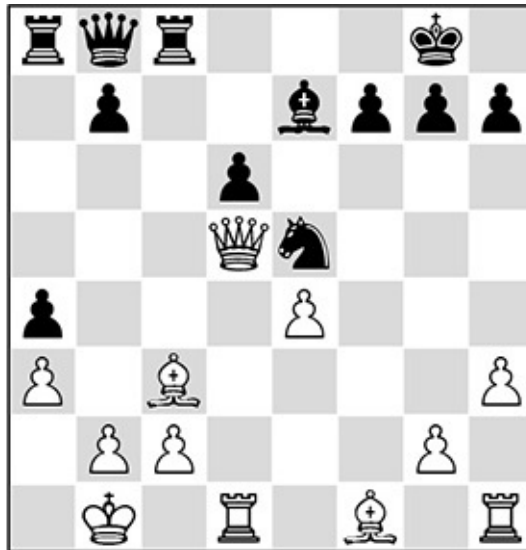
Q8



Where does the b7-rook go?

Exercise Q9

Q9



How should White continue?

Exercise Q10

Q10



Best move for White?

Exercise Q11

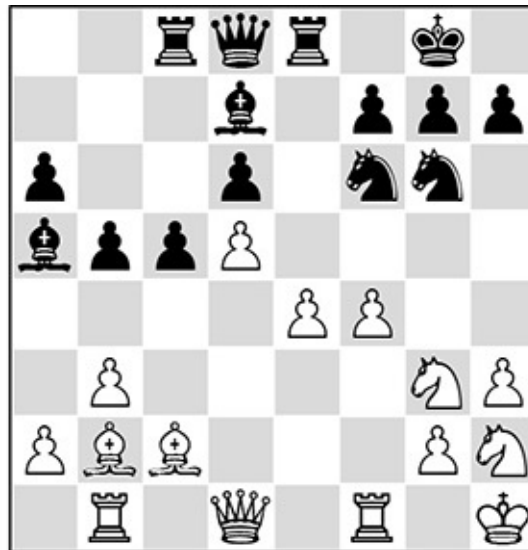
Q11



Black's opening set-up has gone wrong. But how does White continue?

Exercise Q12

Q12



A tricky one. How will the game proceed after **26.e5** ?

PART II

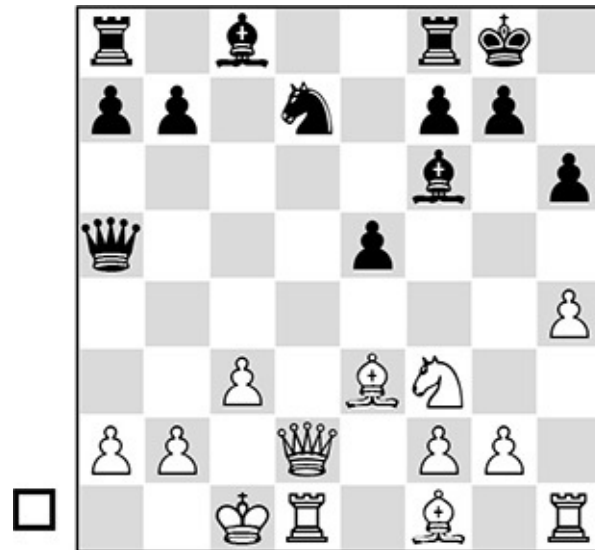
When pawns meet

Although there isn't any statistical evidence, it's clear that the typical breaks in this part belong to the most frequently-occurring ones. This is a perfect starting point to go a bit deeper into the details about pawn break moves. Even with little experience, you are bound to have seen some practical examples before.

We will consider three breaks along the flank, often creating space for the rook: a very common attack from the flank with ...b7-b5 when there is a pawn on c4, the advance of Harry the h-pawn, here towards the red flag raised by the opponent's fianchetto pawn, and finally, the sortie of the g-pawn instigated by a pawn on h3 or h6. The two remaining breaks are in the centre, and both are sure to increase your piece activity considerably. We will dive into the sometimes deceptive consequences of the advance of the isolated queen's pawn, as well as into the complications of the bombshell push ...d6-d5 versus enemy pawns on c4 and e4 – the so-called Maroczy structure.

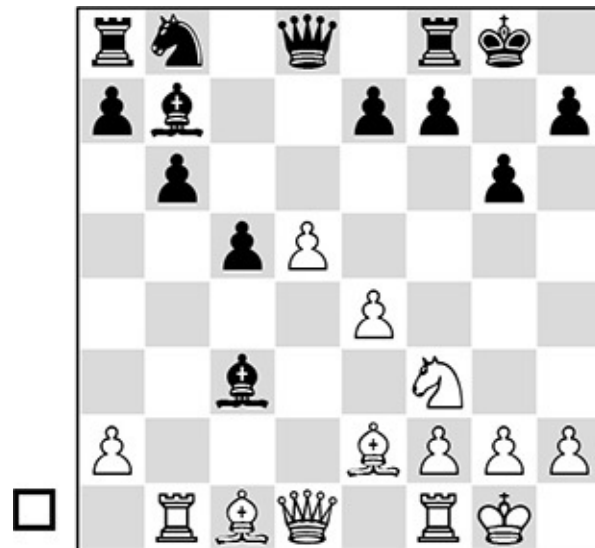
The patterns are easy to recognize and remember, but are also bound to create tension, after which different aspects will come to the fore. Now, let's get down to business.

12 Reaching for the hook



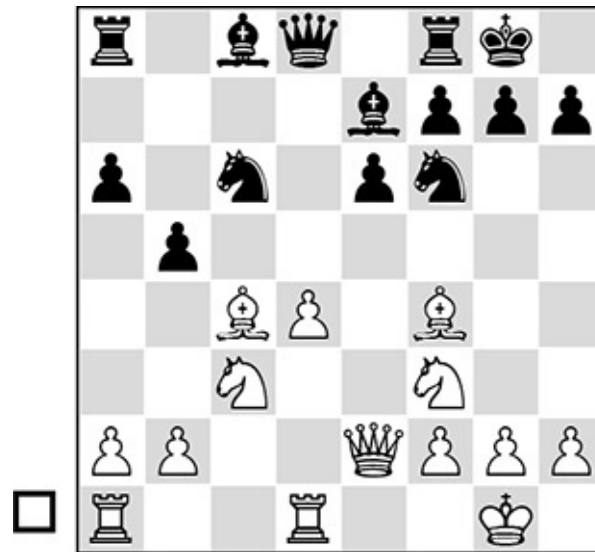
15.g4!?

13 When Harry meets g6



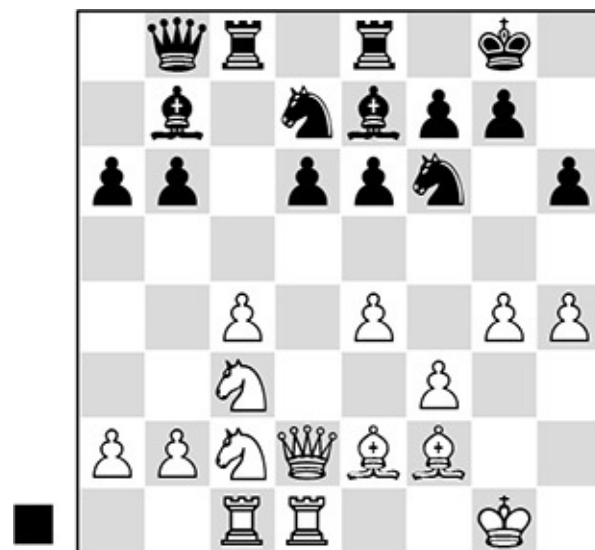
12.h4!?

14 Deceptive symmetry after the IQP



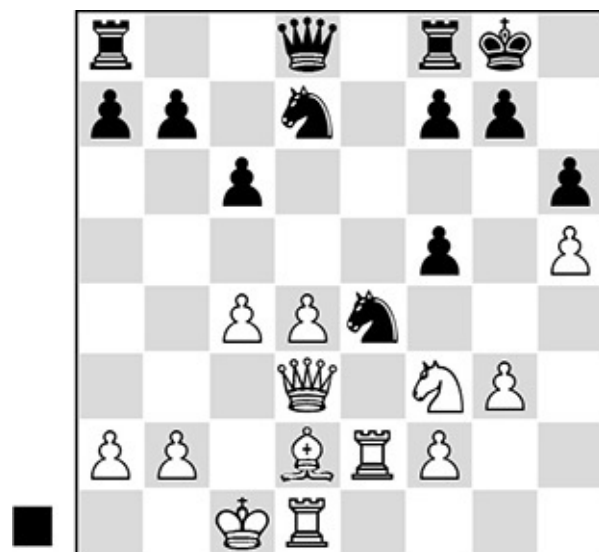
12.d5!

15 Breaking free



17...d5!

16 Flank attack!



20...b5!

CHAPTER 12

Reaching for the hook

When you want to open a file for your rook, a so-called ‘hook’ in your opponent’s pawn formation comes in handy. With a black pawn on h6, the white g-pawn will need only two moves to make contact, and as a result the g-file may be opened soon. Actually, this very example is a frequently-occurring break. We will look at several examples, when the kings’ positions will differ. In all cases though, there will be action!

Opposite-side castling

Caro-Kann Defence

Thomas Luther

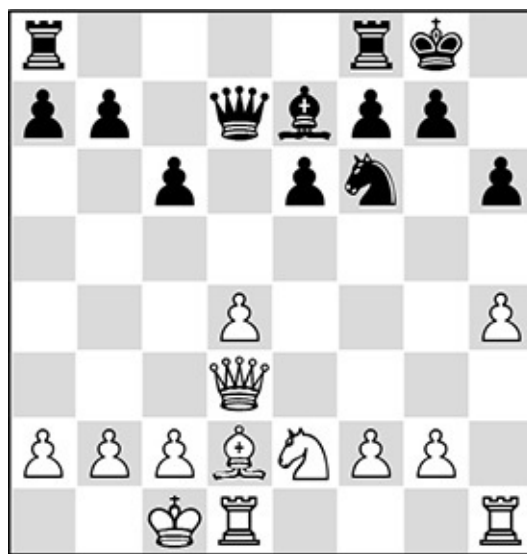
2509

Vladimir Epishin

2667

Nova Gorica 2000 (9)

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♘f5 5.♗g3 ♗g6 6.h4 h6 7.♗f3 ♗f6 8.♗e5 ♗h7 9.♗d3 ♗xd3 10.♙xd3 e6 11.♗d2 ♗e7 12.0-0 0-0 13.♗e2 ♗bd7 14.♗xd7 ♙xd7



In positions with opposite-castled kings, you need to be the fastest to start an attack. Obviously, a hook on h6 helps to gain a few tempi to open a file.

15.g4!

Note that in this Caro-Kann line, the white h-pawn has not yet advanced to h5; as a result, the h-file might be opened right away after g4-g5.

15...e5?

15... ♖xg4 16. ♜hg1 looks rather dangerous, but as a counterattack on the queenside is far off and the text move turns out to be bad, Black just had to be brave!

16.g5 e4 17. ♜b3 ♗g4 18. ♜hg1 ♜ae8

Capturing on f2 is out of the question, for example: 18... ♖xf2 19. ♜df1 ♗g4 20.gxh6 gxh6 21. ♜xg4+. But a move like 18... ♔h7 would have been better. Epishin's move meets with a nasty knight leap.

19. ♗f4



Threatening both 20. ♗g6 and 20. ♔g3. Already, Black is lost! A bad day for Karpov's former second.

19...hxc5 20.hxc5 ♗xc5 21. ♗g6 ♗h6 22. ♗xh6 ♗xh6 23. ♗xf8 ♗xf8 24.d5 ♗e8 25. ♗g5 ♗h7 26. ♗g3 ♗g8 27. ♗h1 ♗d8 28. ♗f4 f6 29. ♗xe4+ g6 30. ♗gh5 1-0

French Defence

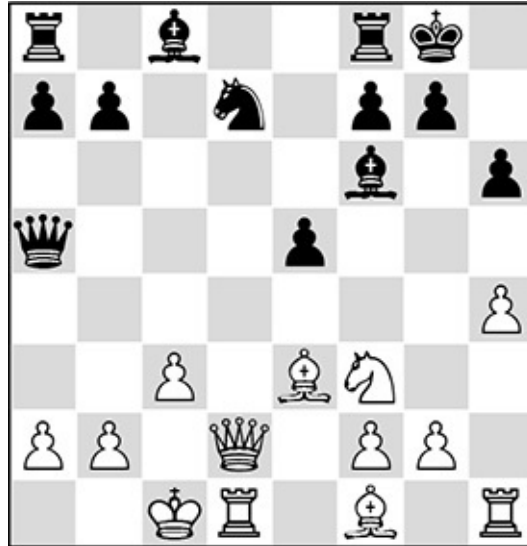
Veselin Topalov

2707

Alexey Shirov

2722

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♙g5 dxe4 5.♘xe4 ♘bd7 6.♘f3 ♙e7 7.♘xf6+ ♙xf6 8.h4 c5
9.♙d2 cxd4 10.♘xd4 0-0 11.0-0-0 h6 12.♘f3 ♙b6 13.c3 e5 14.♙e3 ♙a5



Here, Black has more counterplay. First of all, the a2-pawn is hanging.

15.g4!?

Topalov & company couldn't care less – they speed it up!

15...e4

After 15... ♙xa2 16. ♙d3, I would rather be the player with the initiative in a rapid game like this.

16.g5

Keeping the pace!

16...♙e7

16...exf3 17.gxf6 ♘xf6 18.♙d4 ♘g4.

17.gxh6



17... ♖xa2?

This makes it easy for White. Shirov should have accepted the sacrifice with 17...exf3, when 18. ♕d4 continues a fierce attack, while Black has not developed properly, but the follow-up is not as trivial as in the game: 18... ♘f6 (18...g6 19.h7+ ♔xh7 20.h5) 19. ♖e1 ♕e6 20. ♖g1 g6 21. ♖xe6 fxe6 22. ♖xg6+ ♔h8 23. ♖g5.

18. ♖d4!

Covering the a4-square and attacking both e4 and g7.

18... ♘f6 19.hxg7 ♖e8 20. ♕c4 ♖a1+ 21. ♔c2 ♖a4+ 22. ♕b3 ♖xd4 23. ♘xd4 ♖xg7 24. ♖dg1+ ♔h7 25. ♕xf7 ♖f8 26. ♕g6+ ♔h8 27. ♘f5 ♕xf5 28. ♕xf5 ♘d5 29. ♕xe4

29. ♕d4+ would be the regular choice, but Topalov wants to hunt the bare king with opposite-coloured bishops. An elegant choice.

29... ♘xe3+ 30.fxe3 ♖f2+ 31. ♔b1 ♕c5 32. ♖g5 ♕xe3 33. ♖h5+ ♔g7 34. ♖e1 ♕b6 35. ♖g5+ Black resigned.

Early outings versus early castling

Four Knights Opening

Vasily Yemelin

2522

Andrey Kharlov

2638

Moscow 2002 (4)

1.e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♕b5 ♘f6 4. ♘c3 ♕d6 5.d3 h6 6.h3



6...0-0 7.g4

This is an opening-theoretical position. White launches g2-g4 immediately after Black's castling, and doesn't mind that the white king is still in the middle. Black's counter-action in the centre is delayed as a result of the fashionable bishop on d6.

7... ♖e8

7...a6 and 7... ♘d4 have been played as well.

8.g5 hxg5 9. ♗xg5 ♘d4

9... ♙e7 looks natural as well. White may continue with 10. ♙a4!? (10. ♖g1 ♘d4 11. ♙c4 c6) 10...d6 11. ♙d2.

10. ♘d5 ♙e7 11. ♘xe7+ ♙xe7 12. ♘xd4 exd4 13. ♖g1

That's what it was all about – opening the g-file. Tactically, it just works.

13...c6

White has a dangerous attack after 13... ♙b4+ 14.c3 dxc3 15. ♗xf6 cxb2+ 16. ♙f1 g6 (16...bxa1 ♙? 17. ♖xg7+ ♙f8 18. ♙xa1 ♙xb5 19. ♖h7) 17. ♖b1 ♙xb5 18. ♖g4 ♙e6 19. ♗xb2 (19.e5? d6 20. ♖h4 ♙xf6 21.exf6 ♙g5).

14. ♙f3 ♙b4+ 15. ♙d1



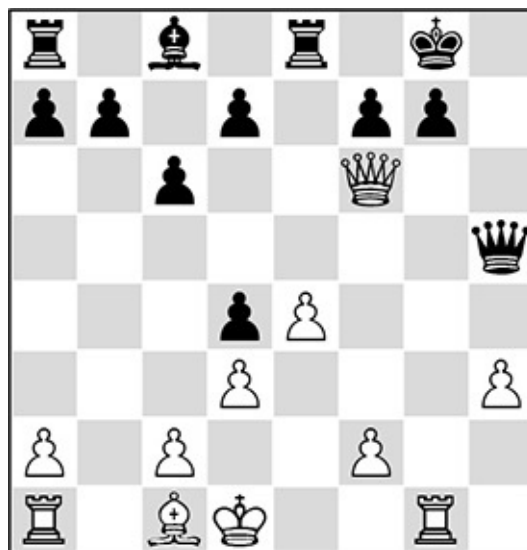
15... Nxb2

15... Bxe4 16.dxe4 Bxb5 17. Qf6 g6 18.a4 Bc5 19. Bg5.

16. Qc1?

The simple 16. Bc1 would have kept all threats alive.

16... Bxb5 17. Bxf6 Bh5+



A small spanner in the works. Luckily for White, he still managed to win the ending, thanks to his lead in development:

18.f3 g6 19. Bg5 Bh7 20. Bxd4 Bg7 21. Qb2 Bxd4 22. Qxd4 d6 23.h4 Bf8 24. Qd2 Be7 25.f4 c5 26. Qb2 Qd7 27.f5 gxf5 28.h5 fxe4 29.h6 Bc6 30.h7 e3+ 31. Qe2 f6 32. Qxf6 Qe6 33. Qh1 Bh8 34. Qxh8 Bxh8 35. Qxe3 b5 36.a3 a5 37. Bh6 a4 38. Bxe6 Bxh7 39. Bgg6 1-0

London System

Yury Kryvoruchko

2692

Daniel Sadzikowski

2590

Germany Bundesliga 2017/18 (6)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♙f4 e6 3.♘f3 c5 4.e3 ♘c6 5.♘bd2 d5 6.c3 ♘e7 7.h3 ♘d6 8.♘e5 0-0 9.♙d3 ♙c7
10.♘df3



This is another sort of theoretical position (it has been seen before in various other games) in the popular London System.

10...h6 11.g4

And again, White immediately seizes the opportunity to try to open the g-file now that Black has castled.

11...♘d7 12.g5 ♘cxe5 13.dxe5 ♘xe5 14.♙xe5 ♙xe5 15.gxh6

And he managed! Now, can he get his pieces involved in an attack? Where will he leave his king?

15...g6

A typical reaction, but here the position will be opened soon anyway. 15...gxh6!? 16.♘h4 ♙d8 17.♙h5 ♙f8 18.♙xh6+ ♙e7 would have been an interesting try.

16.h4 d4 17.h5 g5

A rather desperate try already. A nice line is 17...dxc3 18.hxg6 cxb2 19.g7! bxa1 ♙xa1 ♙xa1 21.♙h7+! ♙xh7 22.gxf8 ♙.

18.♘xg5

18. ♖g1 was just as good.

18...dxe3 19.fxe3 ♗g3+ 20.♔f1 f5 21.♖g1



This is an unusual position, but White has managed to get an attack going, while his own king seems relatively safe on f1. With some fine tactics, the Ukrainian hauled in the full point:

21...♖h8 22.♗f3 ♗e5 23.♗h3 ♗d7 24.♗f4 ♖g8

24...♗xf4 25.exf4 ♗c6 26.♗e3 ♖g8 27.♖g6.

25.♖g6 c4 26.♗c2 ♗c6 27.♗g3 ♗h7 28.♗g5 ♗xf4 29.exf4 ♗f7 30.♖e1 ♗d5

Alas, 30... ♖xg6 31.hxg6+ ♗xg6 runs into 32.♗xf5! exf5 33.♖e7+.

31.♖f6 ♗g2+

And here, 31... ♗d7 is refuted by 32.♖xf5!.

32.♗f2 ♗c7 33.♖xf5 1-0

Sacrificing in the Sicilian

Sicilian Defence

Baadur Jobava

2664

Boris Gulko

2552

Barcelona 2008 (9)

1.e4 c5 2.♗f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♗f6 5.♗c3 ♗c6 6.♗g5 e6 7.♗d2 ♗e7 8.0-0-0 0-0 9.f4 h6
10.♗h4 ♗xd4 11.♗xd4 ♗a5 12.♗e3 b5 13.♗xb5 ♖b8 14.♗a4 ♗a6

14... ♖g4 15. ♗g3 ♙xh4 16. ♗xh4 ♜b6 17. ♗xg4 ♜xb2+ 18. ♔d2 ♖b4.
 15. ♙b3 ♜fc8 16. ♗e1 ♜c7



Black has attempted to create an attack by opening the b-file. Now that this file has been firmly blocked, it is White's turn.

17.g4!

Here, Black may have thought back with mixed feelings to the theoretical 9...h6.

17... ♗xg4?!

17... ♙c4 18.g5 is no picnic after 18...hxc5 19.fxc5 ♗d7 20.g6 ♗e5 21.gxf7+, but the text move is practically losing.

18. ♜g1 ♗f6 19. ♗g3 ♗e8 20.f5

The former Champion of both USSR and USA tried

20... ♙c4 21.f6 ♙xb3 22.fxe7

(22.axb3 was simple enough)

22... ♙xa2



but went down after

23. ♖f6 g6 24. ♜f4 ♜b6 25. ♜xh6 ♜xf6 26. ♜xg6+ fxg6 27. ♜xg6+ ♜h8 28. ♜d3 ♜xc3
29. ♜xc3 ♜xb2+ 30. ♜d2 ♜h7 31. e8 ♜+ ♜xe8 32. ♜xe8+ ♜g7 33. ♜e7+ 1-0

Slav Defence

Mohammed Al Sayed

2505

Ahmed Adly

2594

Dubai Wch rapid 2014 (7)

1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 e6 3. ♜f3 d5 4. ♜c3 c6 5.e3 ♜bd7 6. ♜c2 ♜d6 7. ♜d3 0-0 8.0-0 dxc4 9. ♜xc4 e5
10.h3 ♜e7 11. ♜b3 b6 12. ♜e1 ♜b7 13. ♜d2 e4 14. ♜h2 ♜ae8 15. ♜ad1



Here, both sides have castled on the same side. This did not stop Black from throwing his g-pawn at the hook.

15... ♖h8 16. ♕c1 g5

Very similar to the surprising ‘Nievergelt manoeuvre’ (Chapter 31 IYCPR), now with a pawn on h3.

17.a3 g4! 18. ♗xg4

18.hxg4 fails to the trivial 18... ♕xh2+ (similar to the classic ♕x ♖h2+ – see Chapter 21 – only without sacrificing a piece!) 19. ♔xh2 ♗xg4+ 20. ♔g1 (20. ♔h3 ♖d6) 20... ♖h4, threatening ... ♕a6 21. ♕c4 f5, and there’s nothing much White can do against Black bringing more forces to the attack with ... ♗f6-h5, followed by ... f5-f4. For instance, 22.b4 ♗df6 23. ♕b2 f4 24.exf4 e3 25.fxe3 ♖xe3.

18... ♗xg4 19.hxg4 ♖h4 20.g3 ♖xg4 21. ♖e2 ♖f5 22. ♔g2 ♗g8



The rook has made it to the opened g-file, while White still doesn’t have many defenders available at the kingside.

23. ♖h1 ♕xg3

In such situations, sacrifices come easily.

24. ♖f1

24.fxg3 ♖xg3+ 25. ♔xg3 ♖g8+ 26. ♔h2 ♖g6.

24... ♕a6 0-1

Summary

In positions with opposite-castled kings, when speed is of the utmost importance, a hook on h6 in the king's pawn formation will certainly facilitate White's attack. Without fear for its own king, his g-pawn can storm forward. This is the most obvious example. However, a hook on h6 – in front of a castled king – may also provoke you to play an (early) g2-g4 trust, with your king still in its initial position, or even when castled on the same side. This, of course, deserves more careful considerations about your king's safety and possible counterplay for your opponent in the centre. But certainly, the advance may bring you the activity you are looking for. So, be on the lookout for those hooks!

CHAPTER 13

When Harry meets g6

Harry the h-pawn. I think it was grandmaster and well-known commentator Simon Williams who gave the marching rook's pawn this pet name. It's a signal for the attack, you may think. Indeed, this is true in many cases; in other cases, it just activates the rook behind the pawn. Many ideas are involved, so in this chapter we will confine ourselves to instances where the h-pawn is aiming at a hook: the fianchetto-pawn on g6. Enough food for thought! First we have a straightforward and devastating attack following the march of Harry.

Pirc Defence

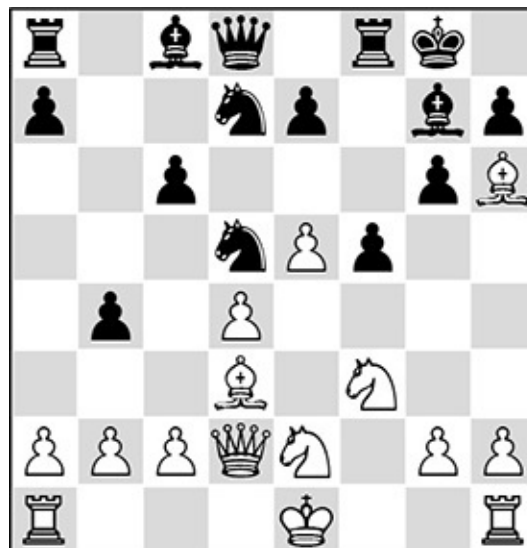
Arthur Bisguier

2430

James Tarjan

Lone Pine 1973 (5)

1.e4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 d6 3.d4 g6 4.♙g5 c6 5.f4 ♙g7 6.♘f3 0-0 7.♙d2 b5 8.♙d3 ♘bd7 9.e5 b4
10.♘e2 dxe5 11.fxe5 ♘d5 12.♙h6 f5



13.h4

With the rook still on the h-file, this is a common way to launch an attack. You

only need to think of the big Dragon lines after 1.e4 c5 2. ♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4 ♘f6 5. ♘c3 g6 6. ♙c4 ♙g7 7. ♙b3 0-0 8.f3 ♘c6 9. ♙e3 ♙a5 10. ♙d2 ♙d7 11.0-0-0 ♖fc8 12.h4. Here, the fianchetto bishop is about to be exchanged, which is also a familiar part of White's attacking plan. The e5-pawn has robbed the black knights of the natural f6-square, so Black will have to build up his defence otherwise.

13...e6 14.h5 ♙e7

14... ♖f7 allows the queen to enter immediately with 15.hxg6 hxg6 16. ♙xg7 ♖xg7 17. ♙h6.

15.hxg6 hxg6 16. ♙xg7 ♖xg7 17. ♙g5



Now threatening to catch the queen with 18. ♖h7.

17... ♖e8 18. ♖h7 ♙f8 19.0-0-0 ♖e7 20. ♖dh1 ♖xh7 21. ♖xh7 1-0

The white queen will soon join on the h-file. Black is utterly helpless.

Sure, that was easy. In this next one, White again storms on his opponent's kingside, but Khalifman's defence is in much better condition.

King's Fianchetto

Viswanathan Anand

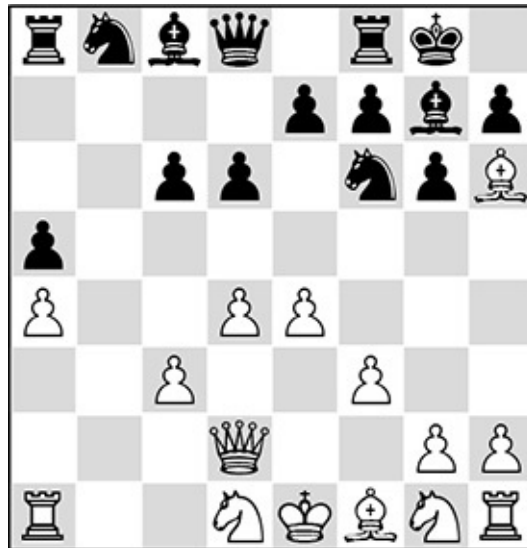
2710

Alexander Khalifman

2630

Las Palmas 1993 (4)

1.e4 d6 2.d4 g6 3.♘c3 ♘g7 4.♙e3 a6 5.♚d2 b5 6.a4 b4 7.♙d1 a5 8.c3 bxc3 9.bxc3 ♙f6 10.f3 c6 11.♙h6 0-0



12.h4

Actually, the fianchetto pawn at g6 is just another hook that makes it possible for the opponent to quickly open up the h-file. As it is such a well-known pattern, we may come up with the idea automatically.

12...e5 13.h5 ♙e8

After 13...♘xh5 14.g4 ♙f6 15.♙xg7 ♚xg7 16.♙h6+ ♚h8! 17.♙e2, the attack continues with g4-g5 and ♙g3 (after 17.♙h3, Black has 17...♙g8).

14.hxg6 fxg6 15.♙xg7 ♙xg7 16.♙f2

Anand has to bring new forces to the attack. The f6-knight safely protects the h7-pawn.

16...♙a7 17.♙b1 ♙e6 18.dxe5 dxe5 19.♙h6+ ♙g8 20.♙gh3 ♙e7 21.♙g5



21... ♖a2

Khalifman does not want to allow his bishop to be exchanged, when White will be positionally clearly better. But now, he runs into a surprise attack anyway.

22. ♜b2 ♜a3 23. ♜xa2! ♜xa2 24. ♞xh7 ♞xh7 25. ♜xg6+ ♜f8 26. ♜xh7 ♜xh7 27. ♜xh7



When you decide on the sacrifice on move 23, it should be sufficient to see this far. White already has two pawns for the exchange, the black king is in the open and the black knight is still on b8. Indeed, Black could not cope.

27... ♜g8 28. ♜h4 ♞d7 29. ♞g4 ♜b3 30. ♜h6+ ♜e7 31. ♜xc6 ♜b1+ 32. ♜f2 ♜b2+ 33. ♞e2 ♞b8 34. ♞xe5

Black resigned due to 34.... ♞xe5 35. ♜c5+ ♜e6 36. ♜d5+ ♜f6 37. ♜d6+.

No rook to back up Harry

Grünfeld Indian Defence

Ivan Cheparinov

2673

Arghyadip Das

2492

Albena 2012 (3)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♗xc3 6.bxc3 ♘g7 7.♗f3 0-0 8.♙e2 c5 9.♚b1 b6 10.0-0 ♙b7 11.d5 ♗xc3



12.h4

What's this? How can this be purposeful without a rook on h1?

12... ♘g7 13.h5 ♗d7 14.hxg6 hxg6 15.♗g5!

This is the idea. The knight can hardly be chased away with the black h-pawn gone.

15... ♗f6 16.♙d3

On her way to h4!

16... ♗c8

16... ♗h7 was tried later, to dispose of the troublesome knight.

17.♙g3 ♙a6 18.♙xa6 ♙xa6 19.♚e1 ♙xa2 20.♚b3 ♙a5 21.♚f1 ♙a4 22.♚f3



Finally, and at the cost of more material, White has led a third piece to the attack.
22... ♖xe4?

Black panics. Although White has several ways to slowly improve his position, such as ♗c1-b2, ♜g3-h2 or a timely e4-e5, there was no need to throw in the towel. After 22... ♜d7, Black's queen can assist in the defence.

23. ♜h4 ♖xg5 24. ♜xa4 ♖xf3+ 25. gxf3 ♜ad8 26. ♜d1 ♜d6 27. ♗f4 e5 28. ♗g5 ♗f6 29. ♗xf6 ♜xf6 30. d6 1-0

Tarrasch Defence

Martin Lorenzini

2488

Martin Mansilla

2071

Villa Martelli ch-ARG 2013 (7)

1.e4 c6 2.c4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.cxd5 ♖f6 5. ♗c3 ♖xd5 6.d4 e6 7. ♗f3 ♗e7 8. ♗d3 0-0 9.0-0 ♗c6 10.a3 ♗f6 11. ♗e4 ♜e8 12. ♗d3 g6 13. ♜d1 ♗d6 14. ♗b5 ♗d8



15.h4

There goes Harry again. This is not an unusual idea in IQP positions. See, for example, Razuvaev's well-known idea: 1.e4 c6 2.c4 d5 3.cxd5 cxd5 4.exd5 ♘f6 5.♗c3 ♗xd5 6.d4 ♗c6 7.♙c4 e6 8.♗f3 ♙e7 9.0-0 0-0 10.♚e1 ♗xc3 11.bxc3 b6 12.♙d3 ♙b7 13.h4!.

15...a6 16.♗c3 ♙d6?

The brave 16... ♙xh4 17.♗xh4 ♚xh4 would have been better here. White will win back his pawn, but no more than that.

17.h5 ♙g7 18.hxg6 hxg6

With the h7-pawn gone, suddenly sacrifices on g6 and e6 become more likely.

19.♙xg6

There you have it. 19. ♗g5, as in the previous game, was very well possible too.

19...fxg6 20.♙xg6 ♙d7

After this natural move, the attack evolves quickly. 20... ♗f6 was a better defence, though after 21. ♗g5 ♗f8 22. ♗ce4 ♙d5 – with the idea ♙f5 – 23. ♗xf6+ ♗xf6 24. ♙h7+ ♗f8 25. ♗e4 ♙f5 26. ♗xf6 ♙xf6 27. ♙d2, White's position still has to be preferred.



21. ♖h6 ♜f8 22. ♗g5 ♜f6 23. ♜h7+ ♜f8 24. ♜h8+ ♜e7 25. ♗xd5+ exd5 26. ♜xg7+ ♜xg7
27. ♜xg7 ♜g8 28. ♜e1+ ♜d8 29. ♗f7+ 1-0

When Harry is stopped

King's Fianchetto

Manuel Petrosyan

2550

Karen Grigoryan

2571

Yerevan ch-ARM 2017 (8)

1.d4 g6 2.e4 ♗g7 3. ♗c3 d6 4. ♗e3 a6 5. ♜d2 b5 6.h4 h5 7.f3 ♗b7 8. ♗h3 ♗d7 9. ♗g5 c5
10.a4 b4



Black has met h2-h4 with ...h7-h5, 'and why not?' you may think. One drawback, as you can see from the diagram, is that the knight has settled comfortably on g5, just like after the exchange on g6 in the earlier games we looked at.

11. ♖c4! e6

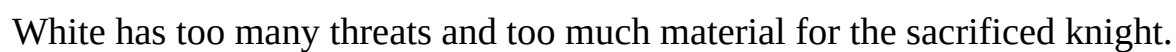
After 11...bxc3 12. ♕xf7+ ♔f8 13.bxc3 (13. ♖e6+ ♔xf7 14. ♖xd8+ ♔xd8 15.bxc3 may also be good, but the queen has to fight three pieces) 13... ♖b6 14. ♕xg6, White already has three pawns for the piece and an ongoing attack.

12. ♖e2 ♖g6 13.dxc5 dxc5 14. ♖f4

This is how the white player's namesake and World Champion used to place his pieces in a Meran line: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. ♖c3 c6 4. ♖f3 ♖f6 5.e3 ♖bd7 6. ♕d3 dxc4 7. ♕xc4 b5 8. ♕b3 b4 9. ♖e2 ♕b7 10.0-0 ♕d6 11. ♖f4 0-0 12. ♖g5.

Things are much worse with the pawns on g6 and h5.

14...0-0 15. ♖fxe6 fxe6 16. ♖xe6 ♖e7 17.0-0-0



The solid solution.

The clever stop?

English Opening

Aleksei Pridorozhni

2568

Nikita Matinian

2475

Taganrog 2017 (8)

1.c4 e5 2.g3 c6 3. g2 g6 4. c3 g7 5.e3 d6 6. ge2 h5



7.h3

Now, Black cannot send a knight to g4, and

7...h4

can be met with

8.g4

In this case, Black immediately takes on the hook on g4:

8...f5 9.gxf5 ♖xf5

So, Black has opened up White's kingside after all. While the kings are still on their initial positions, a difficult strategic battle is ahead.

10.d4 exd4 11. ♘xd4

After 11.exd4 ♗d7, both sides are likely to castle queenside in the near future.

11... ♗d7 12. ♘xf5 ♗xc3+! 13.bxc3 gxf5

Now, White's king has no safe refuge on a wing; with his next move, he tries to obtain scope for his dark-squared bishop.

14.c5 0-0-0

14...dxc5 15. ♗xd7+ ♔xd7 16. ♗a3 wins back the pawn.

15. ♗b1



15... ♖ge7

Here, 15... ♗f6! would have been a smart move, when after 16.cxd6 Black does not need to take back on d6 immediately, for example, 16... ♗e4!?. In the game, White's exposed king brought Black victory anyway when his opponent allowed a central break:

16.cxd6 cxd6 17. ♖a4 ♜hg8 18. ♗f3 d5 19. ♖xh4 ♗g6 20. ♖a4 ♗ge5 21. ♗e2 ♖e6 22. ♖f4? ♗g6 23. ♖a4 ♗ge5 24. ♖f4?



24...d4! 25.cxd4 ♜xd4 26. ♖h2 ♖xa2 27. ♖b2 ♖a5+ 28. ♖f1 ♖c3 29. ♖b1 ♖b4 0-1

Summary

The march of the h-pawn can quickly set up an attack against a castled king, using the hook of the fianchetto-pawn on g6 to open the h-file. Further key factors in the attack are the exchange of the fianchettoed bishop and the presence of a defending knight on f6. When the pawn is immediately stopped by ...h7-h5, g5 can become a splendid square for the knight. A third possible reaction is ...h7-h6, to meet h4-h5 with ...g6-g5, which has its own dynamics. Remember, it is also possible to let Harry walk without a rook behind him. For example, hxg6 will increase the probability of a piece sacrifice, demolishing the pawn chain e6/f7/g6. Here too, fireworks will be coming!

CHAPTER 14

Deceptive symmetry after the IQP

If there is one typical break in Isolated Queen's Pawn positions, it is d4-d5. This can happen when the opponent thought he had the d5-square under firm control, and it can also happen because he might not have been afraid of simplification. After all, Black replies to d4-d5 with ...exd5, when all the central pawns disappear and both sides remain with an equal amount of pawns on both wings. This is where you should watch for the differences in development and mobility. You might be surprised what they can do!

Right through the middle

Here, Rubinstein faces his immortal opponent with white, in the same tournament where their famous game was played.

Queen's Gambit Accepted

Akiba Rubinstein

Georg Rotlewi

Lodz 1907

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 dxc4 4.e3 ♘f6 5.♙xc4 c5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.0-0 a6 8.♙e2 cxd4 9.♚d1 ♙e7
10.exd4 0-0 11.♙f4 b5



Black should have played 11... ♖b4, to control the d5-square. But can he not play this move after White withdraws his bishop from the attack?

12.d5!

No!

12...exd5

12...bxc4 13.dxc6 simply loses the pawn on c4.

13. ♖xd5

Threatening both 14. ♖xc6 and the discovered check 14. ♖xf7+.

13... ♖xd5 14. ♖xd5

You might not suspect this from a symmetrical position, but Black is in big trouble. This is especially because his queen has nowhere to go. Hence, Black replied

14... ♖d7

After 14... ♖a7, there is an instructive choice. You will probably be inclined to play 15. ♖f6+ ♖xf6 16. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 right away, but 15. ♖c2 ♖d7 16. ♖ac1 is a decent alternative, since Black can hardly move.

15. ♖c7 1-0

After 15... ♖e8 16. ♖b6, Black loses material.

Here is another example of deceptive symmetry.

Queen's Gambit Accepted

Vasily Smyslov

Hugo Santa Cruz

Havana 1964 (1)

1. ♖f3 d5 2. c4 dxc4 3. e3 c5 4. ♙xc4 e6 5. 0-0 ♘c6 6. ♗c3 ♗f6 7. ♚e2 a6 8. d4 cxd4 9. ♖d1 ♙e7 10. exd4 0-0



11. d5 exd5 12. ♗xd5 ♗xd5 13. ♙xd5 ♚c7

About the only move already, as the queen has to protect the e7-bishop.

A) 13... ♙d7 14. ♙xc6 bxc6 15. ♗e5 ♖a7 16. ♗xc6;

B) 13... ♚e8 14. ♖e1.

14. ♚e4!

Intending to follow up with ♗f4.

14... ♗f6

A) White wins material after 14... ♙d7 15. ♗f4 ♚d8 16. ♗e5 ♗xe5 17. ♙xe5;

B) 14... ♙d6 15. ♗g5 g6 16. ♗xf7 was how a young Vidit Gujrathi beat S Manush in the Commonwealth Championship, New Delhi 2007.

15. ♗g5 ♗xg5 16. ♗xg5 ♙e6?

Solving the development problems tactically, but alas... Yet, 16... ♙d7 17. ♗f4 was also unpleasant for Black.



17. ♖xe6 ♜ae8 18. ♖f4!

Of course, Black was hoping to bale out with just the loss of a pawn after 18. ♖xf7+ ♜xf7, when White has still some work to do.

18... ♜e7

18... ♜b6 19. ♖xf7+ ♜xf7 20. ♜c4+.

19. ♖d6 ♜f6 20. ♖xf8 ♜xe6 21. ♖xg7 ♜xg7 22. ♜c2 ♜g6 23. g3 h5 24. ♜d5 1-0

Caro-Kann Defence

Viswanathan Anand

2670

Utut Adianto

2485

Manila ol 1992 (5)

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 ♜f6 5. ♜c3 e6 6. ♜f3 ♜c6 7.cxd5 ♜xd5 8. ♜c4 ♜e7 9.0-0 ♜f6 10. ♜e1 0-0 11. ♜g5 a6 12. ♜c1 b5



13.d5

Early in his career, Anand used the same break after ...b7-b5, although the symmetrical structure gave Black more space this time, as there was no rook on d1 eyeing his queen.

13... ♖b4

Take your time to go through the variations:

- A) 13...exd5 14. ♕xd5 (14. ♖xd5) 14... ♗xd5 15. ♖xd5 ♕xg5 16. ♖xc6;
- B) At the time, 13... ♗xd5 14. ♕xd5 exd5 15. ♖xd5 was given as clearly better by Anand in *Informator* 55. This probably was because of 15... ♖xd5 (15... ♕xg5 16. ♖xg5 ♕b7? (16... ♖xd5! transposes to 15... ♖xd5) 17. ♖f5 g6 18. ♖f4 ♖d4 19. ♖ce4 ♖ad8 20. ♖c7, and White won in Bocharov-Ananchenko, Togliatti 2001) 16. ♖xd5 ♕xg5 17. ♖xg5, and now 17... ♕b7 runs into 18. ♖xc6

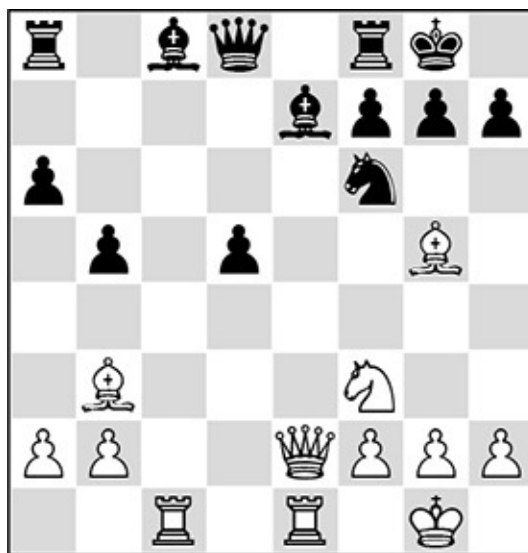


analysis diagram

18... ♖xc6 19. ♗e7+. However, 18... ♜ae8! saves the day! ‘Sit on your hands’ is the advice to avoid making automatic moves – in this case a recapture. However, I suppose in this case sitting on your hands should be done during your calculations.

14. ♖b3 ♗bxd5 15. ♗xd5 exd5 16. ♜e2!?

White is in no hurry to take back on d5. 16. ♗d4 ♖d7 17. ♖f4 is another idea.



16... ♖b4 17. ♜ed1 ♜b6

17... ♖b7 does not look like a useful bishop after 18. ♗d4, so Adianto decides to get rid of the pin and return the pawn.

18. ♖xf6 ♜xf6 19. ♖xd5

White still has a lead in development, but when his initiative peters out, the symmetrical pawn structure will likely render the position dead equal.

19... ♖a7!

The natural 19... ♖b8 runs into 20. ♖d4! ♙d6 (20... ♙a5 21. ♖c6 ♗f5 is another nice one for ‘Queen in trouble’ (Chapter 2): 22.g4! ♗b1+ 23. ♖d1, and trapped) 21. ♖c6, threatening 22. ♖xd6.

20.a3

After 20. ♖c6 ♗e7 21. ♘e5, Black has to find 21... ♗e8, to meet 22. ♗h5 with 22... ♖e7, while after 20. ♖d4, Black has 20... ♙d6 21. ♖c6 ♖e7.

20... ♙d6 21. ♖c6 ♖d7 22. ♙e4 ♗fd8 23.g3

If 23. ♗c2, 23... ♙b7 is possible, because 24. ♖cxd6 ♖xd6 25. ♖xd6 ♗xd6 26. ♙xb7 fails to a back-rank mate after 26... ♗d1+. After the text move, White threatens 24. ♗c2.

23... ♗e7 24. ♙xh7+ ♗f8 25. ♗c2 ♙b7 26. ♙e4



26... ♙xc6

Finally, Black cracks. He could have crowned his excellent defence with the imaginative 26... ♙xa3 27. ♖xd7 ♗xd7, when 28.bxa3 is plainly worse for White: 28... ♙xc6 29. ♙xc6 ♗d1+ 30. ♗xd1 ♖xd1+ 31. ♗g2 ♖a1.

27. ♙xc6 ♖c7 28. ♗h7 ♗e6 29. ♗h8+ ♙e7 30. ♗h4+ ♖f6 31. ♙d5 ♖c4 32. ♗h7 ♗g4 33.h3 1-0
A difficult game despite its apparent simplicity!

Here is one more very similar example to get a good feel for the pieces, from the famous tournament in Nottingham, 1936, won by Botvinnik (with an equally

famous tournament book by Alekhine, who finished fifth), where you can see a combination of the first two games. There is a white queen on d1, but a bishop on f4. Here, the rooks are still on a1 and f1.

Caro-Kann Defence

Conel Alexander

Theodore Tylor

Nottingham 1936 (14)

1.c4 c6 2.e4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.d4 ♖f6 5.♗c3 ♗c6 6.♗f3 e6 7.♙d3 dxc4 8.♙xc4 a6 9.0-0 ♙e7 10.♙f4 0-0 11.a3 b5



12.d5 exd5 13.♙xd5 ♙b7 14.b4 h6 15.♙e1 ♗xd5?

A deserved question mark from Alekhine. Black could no longer resist the temptation to take the bishop, but the white knight on d5 causes much more trouble.

16.♗xd5 ♙g5 17.♙c7 ♖c8 18.♗xg5 hxg5



19. ♖c1?!

A) 19. ♕d6 just wins an exchange, for example: 19... ♖d8 20. ♗b6 ♜f5 21. ♗xa8 ♕xa8 22. ♖a2;

B) 19. ♜h5 is given by Alekhine, with the nice line 19... ♜f5 20. ♖e5 ♜g6 (20... ♜h7 (not mentioned by Alekhine) 21. ♖xg5 f6 22. ♜xh7+ ♔xh7 23. ♖h5+ ♜g6 24. ♖h3 is also good for White, though with merely a pawn down, it's the better option for Black) 21. ♖xg5 ♜xh5 22. ♗f6+ ♔h8 23. ♖xh5#.

19... ♖e8 20. ♜d3?

20. ♖xe8+ ♜xe8 21. ♗b6 ♖a7 22. ♜d2 was still very good for White.

20... ♜g4 21. ♜g3

21. ♗b6 fails to the obvious 21... ♗xb4.

21... ♜xg3 22. hxg3 ♗e5 23. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 24. ♕xe5 ♕xd5 ½-½

The queen finds no rest

Nimzo-Indian Defence

Sergey Dolmatov

2535

Bent Larsen

2585

Amsterdam 1980

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 ♗f6 5. ♗c3 e6 6. ♗f3 ♕b4 7. ♕d3 dxc4 8. ♕xc4 0-0 9.0-0 a6 10.a3 ♕e7 11. ♕a2 b5



12.d5 exd5 13. ♘xd5 ♙b7

13... ♘xd5 14. ♙xd5 ♖a7 was a better try – White may keep a slight initiative after 15. ♗b3 ♙b7 16. ♙xb7 ♖xb7.

14. ♘xe7+ ♗xe7 15. ♙g5 ♘bd7

Now, Black has completed his development, but he has had to give up his pair of bishops. Typically, White is still a tempo up, to hunt down the black queen along the open central files.

16. ♖e1 ♗c5 17. ♙e3

The natural 17. ♖c1? fails to 17... ♙xf3.

17... ♗f5?

Much better was 17... ♗h5, though White maintains some annoying pressure after 18. ♘d4 ♗g6 (18... ♗xd1 19. ♖axd1 ♖fe8 (19...g6 20. ♘e2 ♖fe8 21. ♖d6) 20. ♘f5) 19.f3 ♖fe8 20. ♙f2.

18. ♘h4! ♗e4?!

Also after the queen exchange, Black's position is worse than you might think:

18... ♗g4 19. ♗xg4 ♘xg4 20. ♙d4.



analysis diagram

For example, the obvious 20... ♖gf6 (after the equally obvious 20... ♜fe8, White's knight again reaches for d6 with 21. ♘f5) 21. ♜e7 ♜ae8 meets the simple tactic 22. ♙xf6. Despite the obvious small advantages White has gathered – a pair of bishops, one tempo up on the open file, Black's knight that has temporarily wandered off to g4 – it is still amazing (and instructive!) that this symmetrical position hides so much venom.

19. ♙g5 ♜c6 20. ♜c1 ♜b6 21. ♙e3 ♜d8

Back to square one – but by now he has mobilized all his forces.

22. ♘f5 ♙e4 23. ♘d6

This terrific octopus stops Black's rooks from developing.

23... ♙g6 24. ♜d4 ♜b8 25. f4 ♜d8 26. f5 ♙h5 27. h3 ♘b6 28. ♜xb6 ♜xb6 29. ♙xb6 ♜xd6 30. ♙e3

Material is still equal, but Black cannot stop g2-g4 and thus resigned.

A bishop switch

Tarrasch Defence

Svetozar Gligoric

Oscar Panno

Palma de Mallorca izt 1970 (1)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3. ♘c3 ♙b4 4.e3 c5 5. ♙d3 0-0 6. ♘f3 d5 7.0-0 dxc4 8. ♙xc4 ♘c6 9. ♙d3 cxd4 10.exd4 ♙e7 11.a3 b6 12. ♜e1 ♙b7 13. ♙c2 ♜c8 14. ♜d3 g6 15. ♙h6 ♜e8 16. ♜ad1

This is a position that can arise from various openings, with both 1.e4 and 1.d4.

16...a6



A useful move, perhaps, but a slow set-up that does little for Black's control of the d5-square.

17. ♖b3!

A typical switch of diagonal now that Black has closed the c2-h7 diagonal with ...g7-g6.

17... ♜c7?

Black allows the d4-d5 advance without a fight. 17... ♘a5 18. ♙a2 ♘d5 was called for.

18.d5 exd5 19. ♙xd5 ♙xd5 20. ♜xd5! ♙f8

20... ♘d8 21. ♜d4.

21. ♜xe8 ♜xe8 22. ♙xf8 ♜xf8

22... ♜xf8 23. ♜d7 ♜xd7 24. ♜xd7 ♘a5 was the lesser evil, though 25. ♙a2 will not have appealed to Black.

23. ♜d2



Take a closer look, and you will see that the threats of 24. ♖h6+ and 24. ♗g5 are pretty hard to meet.

23... ♖g8

After 23... ♖g7, 24. ♖c3+ and ♗f3-g5 will follow.

24. ♖h6 ♖e7 25. h4 ♗d8 26. ♗e1 ♖f8 27. ♖e3 ♗a5

27... b5 28. ♗g5.

28. ♖xb6 ♗xb3 29. ♖xb7

Gligoric converted his extra pawn:

29... ♗c5 30. ♖e7 ♖xe7 31. ♗xe7 ♗d1+ 32. ♖h2 ♗d3 33. ♗e2 ♖g7 34. ♖g3 a5 35. ♗e5 a4
 36. ♗c4 ♗c1 37. ♗b6 ♗c5 38. ♖f3 h5 39. g3 ♗d1 40. ♗c2 ♗d3+ 41. ♖e2 ♗b3 42. ♗c4 ♗b8
 43. ♗d2 ♗e8+ 44. ♖f3 ♗e4 45. ♗e3 f5 46. ♗d5 ♗e6 47. ♗c3 ♖f7 48. ♗d4 ♗a6 49. ♗d5 ♗c6
 50. ♖e3 ♖e6 51. ♗d4 ♗a6 52. f3 ♗a8 53. ♗d5 ♖f7 54. ♗c4 ♗e8+ 55. ♖d4 ♗b3+ 56. ♖c3 ♗e1
 57. ♗xa4

Black resigned.

A standard example

Tarrasch Defence

Tigran Petrosian

Yury Balashov

Soviet Union 1974

1. c4 ♗f6 2. ♗c3 e6 3. d4 ♗b4 4. e3 c5 5. ♗d3 d5 6. ♗f3 0-0 7. 0-0 dxc4 8. ♗xc4 ♗c6 9. ♗d3
 cxd4 10. exd4 ♗e7 11. ♗e1 b6 12. a3 ♗b7 13. ♗c2 ♗c8 14. ♖d3 ♗e8



15.d5!

This has become a standard break, which has been overlooked many times by both defenders and attackers, most famously by Smyslov and Karpov in 1971, when they reached this position with Black's king's rook on f8, and Smyslov proceeded with ♖c1-g5 (and won smoothly). One year after this game, Karpov did see 15.d4-d5! played against him by Portisch in Milan, but escaped with a draw.

15...exd5

15...♗a5 16.♕g5 ♜xc3 17.♜xc3 ♜xd5, as in, for instance, Skytte-Nyzhnyk, Capelle-la-Grande 2012, is relatively best. Then, White has to show his technical skills, whereas after the text move, the attack will quickly become stronger.

16.♕g5 ♗e4 17.♗xe4 dxe4 18.♜xe4 g6 19.♜h4 ♜c7

Karpov struggled on with 19...h5 20.♜ad1 (20.♕b3 would have been a less complicated but still forceful continuation: 20...♕xg5 21.♗xg5 ♜xe1+ 22.♜xe1 ♜g7 23.h3 (23.♕xf7 ♜h6!, with sudden counterplay)) 20...♜c7 21.♕xg6 fxg6, when 22.♜e6 would have been best.

20.♕b3 h5 21.♜e4 ♜g7



Now, Petrosian neatly finishes off.

22. ♖xf7 ♜xf7 23. ♖h6!

Threatening mate in one!

23... ♜d6 24. ♜c4+ ♜f6 25. ♜ad1

That ends it.

25... ♜d4 26. ♜xd4+ ♜xd4 27. ♜xd4

Though the queens are off, again the threat is mate in one!

27... ♜c5 28.h4

Now, the pinned bishop on e7 will become a victim after ♖g5 and ♜d7.

Balashov had seen enough, and resigned.

We finish with a classic example where it seems that Black could have escaped the pressure at the cost of a pawn.

Queen's Gambit Accepted

Isaak Boleslavsky

Alexander Kotov

Zurich ct 1953 (9)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3. ♘f3 ♘f6 4.e3 e6 5. ♖xc4 c5 6.0-0 a6 7. ♜e2 cxd4 8.exd4 ♘e7 9. ♘c3 b5 10. ♘b3 ♘b7 11. ♘g5 0-0 12. ♜fe1 ♘c6 13. ♜ad1



13... ♗a5

Various moves have to be considered here.

A) 13... ♗d5 was recommended by Najdorf, but then the typical 14. ♕xd5! (14. ♗xd5 ♖xg5 15. ♗b6? (recommended by Bronstein) 15... ♗xd4! 16. ♗xd4 ♜xb6 17. ♜g4 ♖f6 18. ♗xe6? ♗c8 0-1 Shamkovich-Dlugy, New York 1986) 14... ♖xg5 15. ♖e4 ♖h6 16. d5 exd5 17. ♗xd5



analysis diagram

(Izeta Txabarri-Magem Badals, Spain tt 1995) again leads to a symmetrical position that is very unpleasant for Black;

B) After 13... ♜e8 14. ♗e5 (Boleslavsky) 14... ♗xd4 (14... ♗xe5 15. dxe5

♖d7 16. ♘f4) 15. ♔e3 ♘c5 16. ♗h3, Boleslavsky thinks that White has good chances in both lines;

C) After 13... ♗b4? 14.d5 (already pointed out by Rauzer according to Bronstein, though apparently also another (!) instance of Karpov overlooking this break, in a rapid game versus Andersson, Nyköping 1975), Black loses a piece if he captures on d5, for example: 14... ♗fxd5 15. ♗xd5 ♘xd5 16. ♘xe7 ♗xe7 17. ♘xd5 ♗xd5 18. ♖xd5.

14.d5 ♗xb3 15.dxe6

15.axb3?, which Najdorf suggested as also strong, simply fails to 15... ♗xd5 16. ♗xd5 (16. ♘xe7 ♗xc3) 16... ♘xg5, and White has nothing.

15... ♗b6

After 15... ♘xf3 16.exf7+ (16. ♗xf3 ♗d4 17. ♔e3 was extensively analysed by Najdorf, but 17... ♗c2 18.exf7+ ♖xf7! 19. ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 20. ♗e6 ♗xe1 21. ♗xe1 b4 is not what White wants) 16... ♗h8 17. ♖xd8 ♘xe2 18. ♖xa8 ♖xa8 19. ♖xe2, White remains two pawns up, as Bronstein pointed out.

16.axb3 fxe6 17. ♗d4 ♘d6?

17... ♖ad8, finally making up for his worse development, seems more logical: 18. ♗xe6+ ♗xe6 19. ♗xe6 ♖xd1 20. ♖xd1 ♖c8.



analysis diagram

White is a pawn up, but Black has the pair of bishops, and active play. In general, this is the pitfall connected with White's break: when Black can exchange some pieces or develop properly, simplification will be the only result.

18. ♗xe6+ ♗h8 19. ♗f3

Boleslavsky was the only one to point out that 19. ♖f4, to neutralize the bishop pair immediately, was the stronger option. Eventually, though, he managed to convert his extra pawn in the game:

19... ♖ad8 20. ♖f4 ♖xf3 21. ♖xd6 ♖xd6 22. ♗xd6 ♗xd6 23. ♖xd6 ♖e8 24. ♖xe8+ ♗xe8
 25. ♖e5 ♖c6 26. b4 h5 27. f3 ♗h7 28. ♗e2 g5 29. ♗f2 h4 30. g3 hxg3+ 31. hxg3 ♗g6 32. g4 ♖b7
 33. ♗e3 ♖c6 34. ♗c3 ♖b7 35. ♗e4 ♖d5 36. ♗c5 ♗f7 37. ♗xa6 ♗e6 38. ♖c3 ♖a8 39. ♗c5+
 ♗f7 40. ♗e4 ♗g6 41. ♖e5 ♖d5 42. ♗d2 ♗f7 1-0

Summary

Clearly, d4-d5 can be a big achievement in IQP positions. Of course, in the first place, the structure is repaired, but that alone may lead to a dead draw. However, the black pieces will not be ready for the opening of the position on many occasions. The queen may be uncomfortable in the middle of the board, the rooks may still not be on the open files, etcetera. White should use his temporary initiative effectively, before Black coordinates his forces. If White manages this, his spatial advantage and better mobility can work magnificently for him on either wing.

CHAPTER 15

Breaking free

Once, the Maroczy structure – pawns on c4 and e4, which may arise from various openings – was feared for its strong grip on the central squares. Times have changed and the Hedgehog, as Black's set-up is called, has obtained popularity, particularly because of its flexibility. White has to watch out for both the ...b6-b5 and the ...d6-d5 breaks. Wait, wasn't White's structure thought up to prevent the latter? Let us see what might happen!

Here is a clear and basic execution of the central break. At the first official Olympiad, a future American GM and famous blindfold player and a future World Champion face each other.

King's Indian Defence

George Koltanowski

Max Euwe

London ol 1927 (8)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗f3 g6 3.c4 ♘g7 4.♗c3 0-0 5.e4 d6 6.h3 c5 7.♘e3 cxd4 8.♗xd4 b6 9.♖d2 ♘b7
10.f3 ♗h5 11.g4 ♗g3 12.♙h2 ♗xf1 13.♙xf1 ♙e8 14.h4 ♗d7 15.h5 ♘e5 16.♙h3 e6 17.♙f2
♗f8 18.♗ce2?



With his last move, White has played the wrong knight to e2, facilitating and almost encouraging Black's next break.

18...d5!

First 18... ♖c8 was also possible, but the central break is exactly what Black needs. His light-squared bishop and the e8-rook get scope, and the white king will be exposed.

19.hxg6 fxg6 20.cxd5 exd5 21.exd5?

Giving Euwe all he wants. It was necessary to keep the centre closed, and try 21.f4 ♙xd4 22. ♙xd4 dxe4 (after 22... ♖xe4 23. ♗g3 ♖e8 24.f5, White suddenly has a fierce attack again) 23. ♙e3.

21... ♙xd5

Now, the black moves flow easily.

22. ♗c3 ♙f7 23. ♖d1 ♖ad8 24. ♙c2 ♖d7 25. ♗b3 ♖de7 26. ♙d4 ♙f4 27. ♙d3 ♗e6 28. ♖dh1 ♗g5 29. ♖h6 ♙e3+ 0-1

Fifty years later, this was the household break in Hedgehog positions, certainly when White had compromised his kingside pawn structure.

English Opening

Drazen Marovic

2470

Dusan Rajkovic

2490

Yugoslavia tt 1979 (1)

1.c4 c5 2. ♗f3 ♗f6 3. ♗c3 b6 4.d4 cxd4 5. ♗xd4 ♙b7 6.f3 e6 7.e4 d6 8. ♙e3 ♙e7 9. ♙e2 0-0 10.0-0 a6 11. ♙d2 ♗bd7 12. ♖fd1 ♙c7 13. ♖ac1 ♖fe8 14. ♙f2 ♖ac8 15.g4 ♙b8 16. ♗c2 h6 17.h4



17...d5 18.cxd5 exd5 19.exd5 Qc5

19...Qd6 would have been very strong already, for example: 20.Qf1 Qh2+ 21.Kh1 Qf4 22.Qe3 Qxe3 23.Bxe3, and now the queen enters with 23... Qg3.

20.Bd4 b5 21.g5 hxg5 22.hxg5 Bxd5 23.Bxd5 Qxd5



The centre has been opened, as a result of which Black's pieces have more scope, and it becomes clear that White's kingside has been severely compromised.

24.b4 Qxd4 25.Qxd4 Bxc1 26.Bxc1 Bb7 27.Qd1 Qc6 28.Qe1 Bxe5 29.Qd1 Bc7 30.Qc5 Qd7 31.f4 Qf3 32.Qxe5 Bxe5 33.Qxe5 Qg4+ 34.Qf1 Qg2+ 35.Qe1 Qh1+ 36.Qd2 Qxd1+ 37.Qc3 Qc1+ 38.Qd3 Qc4+ 39.Qd2 Qxa2+ 40.Qe1 Qb1+ 41.Qd2 Qd1+ 42.Qc3 Qc1+

43. ♖b3 ♜c4+ 44. ♜a3 ♜d3+ 45. ♜a2 ♞d5+ 46. ♜b2 ♜d2+ 47. ♜b1 ♞a2+ 48. ♜a1 ♜xf2
 49. ♜e8+ ♜h7 50. ♜e4+ ♜g6 51. f5 ♜xf5 52. ♜h4+ ♜g8 53. ♜xa2 ♜c2+ 54. ♜a3 ♜a4+ 55. ♜b2
 a5

And White resigned.

In his book, *Questions on Modern Chess Theory*, Isaac Lipnitsky uses the following Sicilian variation to illustrate the changing views on the centre in the chess opening. He wrote the book in 1956.

Sicilian Defence

Viktor Kortchnoi

Yury Averbakh

Soviet Union tt 1954 (7)

1.e4 c5 2. ♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4 ♘f6 5.f3 ♘c6

It was Simagin who proposed this move, according to Lipnitsky. The idea was to allow White to play c2-c4, which before this game Black had not allowed, because White's central control was too big according to the general opinion. 5...e5 was the preferred move.

6.c4 e6 7. ♘c3 ♞e7 8. ♞e3 0-0 9. ♞e2

Fischer also followed suit: 9. ♘c2 d5!? 10.cxd5 exd5 11. ♘xd5 ♘xd5 12. ♜xd5 ♜c7 13. ♜b5? ♞d7 14. ♜c1 ♘b4! 15. ♘xb4 ♜xc1+ 16. ♞xc1 ♞xb5 17. ♘d5 ♞h4+, and Black won material in Lombardy-Fischer, New York 1960.



9...d5

This was Simagin's idea. Now, what many had thought was an impregnable centre is attacked.

10.cxd5 exd5 11.♟xc6 bxc6 12.exd5 ♟xd5 13.♟xd5 cxd5

Lipnitsky: 'So, nothing has remained from White's centre. True, Black has two isolated pawns, but one of these may on occasion turn out to be a dangerous passed pawn, while Averbakh uses the other to start active play at the queenside.'

14.0-0 a5 15.♞f2 ♟f6 16.♟d4 ♞b8 17.♟f1 ♟e6 18.b3 ♞b4 19.♟xf6 ♟xf6 20.♞c1 ♞fb8 21.♞c5 ♟d8 22.♟d3 g6 23.♟c2 a4

And Averbakh seized the initiative, again according to Lipnitsky. Indeed, after 24.bxa4 ♞b2 25.♟c3 ♞xf2 26.♟xf2 ♟h4+ 27.♟f1 ♟xa4

he was already clearly better – the a2-pawn is a weakness and the d5-pawn an asset. Eventually, Kortchnoi escaped with a draw, and a few years later he was to play the black side! (against Kieninger, Riga 1957). Lipnitsky ends the chapter with the remark that 'the general conviction is that the centre is the soul of the opening.'

All together, a very lucid example, which still makes sense today.
28.♟c2 ♟d4 29.♞c3 ♟f4 30.h3 d4 31.♞c5 ♟xh3 32.gxh3 ♟xf3+ 33.♟g1 ♟g3+ 34.♟h1 ♟xh3+ 35.♟h2 ♟f3+ 36.♟g1 ♟e3+ 37.♟h1 ♟e1+ 38.♟g1 ♟d2 39.♟f1 ♞b1 40.♟g2 ♟e3 41.♞b5 ♞xb5 42.♟xb5 d3 43.♟g4 ♟c1+ 44.♟g1 ♟h6+ 45.♟h2 ♟c1+ 46.♟g1 ♟h6+ 47.♟h2 ♟e3 48.♟b8+ ♟g7 49.♟e8 ♟h3+ 50.♟g1 ♟g3+ 51.♟f1 d2 52.♟e2 ♟e1+ 53.♟g2 d1 54.♟e5+ f6 55.♟c7+ ♟h6 56.♟f4+ ♟g7 57.♟c7+ ♟f8 58.♟c5+ ♟f7 59.♟a7+ ♟e6 60.♟e3+ ♟d7 61.♟a7+ ♟c6 62.♟a8+ ♟d7 63.♟a7+ ♟e8 64.♟e3+ ♟f8 65.♟h6+ ♟e8 66.♟e3+ ½-½

A restless king

Sicilian Defence

Igor Rubel

Mark Taimanov

Chelyabinsk ch-URS 1959

A couple of years later we see the 1958 Leningrad Champion still opt for a Maroczy set-up in a Sicilian. Igor Rubel will not be a household name; he died in 1963 in a plane crash, only thirty years old. He often had to fly for his work, and, unlike his colleagues, had taken a detour via Moscow this time to witness the Petrosian-Botvinnik match. The plane that took him from Moscow crashed in the Kazan region.

1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♟xd4 a6

Taimanov playing the Paulsen.

5.c4

5. ♖d3 and 5. ♘c3 are alternatives, which later surpassed the text move in popularity.

5... ♗f6 6. ♘c3 ♜c7 7. ♙e3 ♚b4 8.f3

This appears to be rather slow. 8. ♙d3 became the main move, while lately the pawn sacrifice 8. ♜b3 ♙xc3+ 9. ♜xc3 ♗xe4 10. ♜a3 has been tried.

8...0-0 9. ♖c1



9...d5 10.exd5

Very ambitious. 10.cxd5 exd5 11. ♙e2 was a safer try, to finish his development as soon as possible: 11...dxe4 12.0-0!, when 12...exf3 13. ♙xf3 gives adequate compensation. Suddenly, it is Black who has to worry about his development.

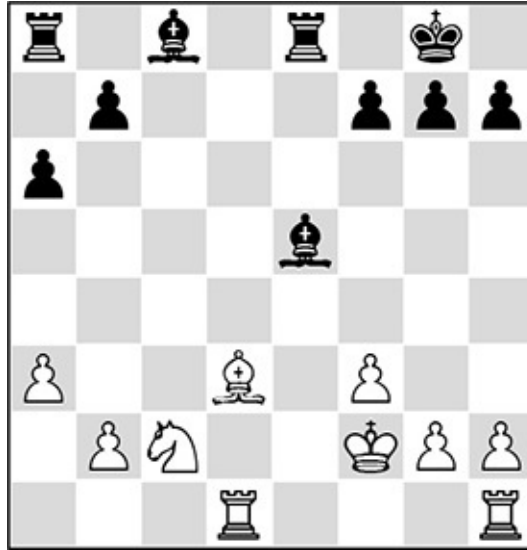
10...exd5 11.a3 ♜e8 12. ♜d2 ♙c5 13. ♘xd5 ♜e5 14. ♜f2 ♘c6

With 14... ♘xd5 15.cxd5 ♜xd5 16. ♙c4 ♜d6, Taimanov could have equalized.

15. ♘c2 ♙f8 16. ♙d3 ♘xd5 17.cxd5 ♙e7 18.d6

18. ♜he1 seems a decent move to do something about the h1-rook and the restless king on f2. Both 18... ♜xh2? 19. ♜h1 and 18... ♘xd5? 19. ♙g5 lose, so Black has to be satisfied with a development move like 18... ♙f5, when chances look equal.

18... ♘d5 19. ♜cd1 ♘xe3 20. ♜xe3 ♙xd6 21. ♜xe5 ♙xe5



From the slight pressure he exerted, Black has squeezed the advantage of the bishop pair. White need not despair, but still he messed up later.

22. ♖he1 ♜f8 23. b4 h5 24. ♙e4 h4 25. g3 a5 26. b5 a4 27. ♚e3 ♘c7 28. ♚c4 ♙e6 29. ♚d6 29. ♙d5.

29... ♜eb8 30. gxh4 ♜a5 31. ♙c2 ♜ba8 32. ♜e4? ♙b3 33. ♙xb3 axb3 34. ♚c4 ♜xb5 35. ♜b1 ♜d8 36. ♜e2 f5 37. ♜e3 ♜c5 38. ♜c3 b5

White resigned.

It seems that in the King's Indian, the idea of ...d6-d5 popped up much earlier. Konstantinopolsky was, amongst many other things, an early trainer of Bronstein; together with him and Boleslavsky, he contributed a lot to the development of the King's Indian. Here is what he had to say on the current subject.

Various Openings

Ivan Osipov

Alesandr Konstantinopolsky

Kiev ch-UKR 1938

1. d4 d6 2. c4 e5 3. e4 exd4 4. ♜xd4 ♚c6 5. ♜d1 ♚f6 6. ♚c3 g6 7. f3 ♙g7 8. ♙e3 0-0 9. ♜d2 ♙e6 10. b3 ♜e7 11. ♚ge2 ♜fe8 12. ♚f4 ♜ad8 13. ♙e2 ♚b4 14. 0-0?



14...d5!

‘One of the first instances where the thematic break ...d6-d5 is executed against the Maroczy structure. As a result this idea became very popular in various set-ups of the King’s Indian’ – Konstantinopolsky. Here, the vulnerability of White’s a1-rook and e3-bishop provide ample tactical justification for the typical central break, which indeed you can find in many later King’s Indian games.

15.cxd5 ♖xd5 16.♗cxd5?

16.♔c1 is more prudent, though Black is on top after 16...♕xe4 17.fxe4 ♗xe4 18.♗xe4 ♔xe4.

16...♗fxd5 17.♗xd5 ♗xd5 18.♕g5 ♗c3

Now, Black is just winning.

19.♕d3 ♖xd3 20.♗xd3 ♗xg5 21.♖ac1 ♗d8 22.♗c4 ♗d2 23.g3 ♗e2+ 0-1

Piece activity

Sicilian Defence

Andras Adorjan

2465

Lajos Portisch

2630

Wijk aan Zee 1972 (10)

1.e4 c5 2.♗f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♗c6 5.♗b5 d6 6.c4 ♗f6 7.♗1c3 a6 8.♗a3 ♕e7 9.♕e2 0-0 10.0-0 b6 11.♕e3 ♕b7 12.♗d2 ♗e5 13.♗d4 ♗ed7 14.♖fd1 ♖e8 15.♗c2 ♗c7 16.♖ac1 ♖ac8 17.f3



Here, we have a typical Hedgehog structure. White seems to have d5 covered...

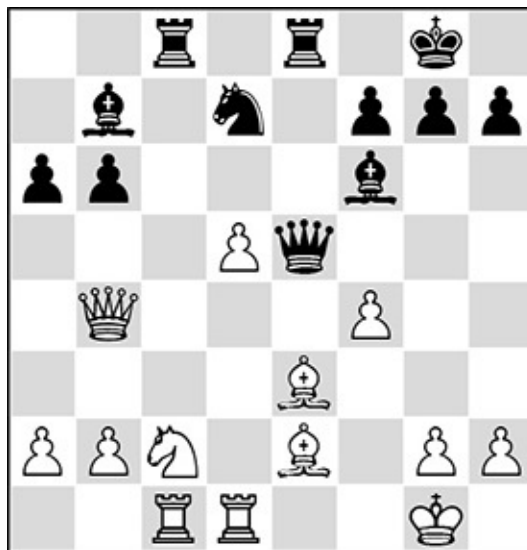
17...d5

But Portisch considered it time to release his pieces!

18.cxd5 exd5 19.♘xd5 ♘xd5 20.exd5 ♙f6 21.♙b4

By an inch, White is keeping his material together.

21...♙e5 22.f4?



A grave error.

22...♙xb2 23.♙g4

23.♙d2 fails to **23...♙xe3 24.♙xe3 ♙xc2.**

23...♙xc2 24.♙xb2 ♙xb2 25.♙xd7 ♙xe3 26.♙c7

With some luck, White wins back the piece. But Black is much too active, and

he will double rooks on the second rank. He soon won:

26... ♖d4 27. ♗h1 ♜d2 28. ♜b1 g6 29. ♜xb7 ♘c5 30. ♘c6 ♜ee2 31. d6 ♜xd6 32. ♘f3 ♜xa2 33. f5 a5 0-1

Understandably, soon Adorjan was to be found on the black side of the Hedgehog, including beating Anthony Miles in a decisive last-round game of the Riga Interzonal 1979. Black's piece activity reminds us of Kasparov's sensationally early 8...d5!? against Karpov in 1985 (12th game): 1.e4 c5 2. ♘f3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4 ♘c6 5. ♘b5 d6 6. c4 ♘f6 7. ♘1c3 a6 8. ♘a3 d5 9. cxd5 exd5 10. exd5 ♘b4, which eventually led to the complete domination in the 16th game after 11. ♘e2 ♘c5 12. 0-0 0-0 13. ♘f3 ♘f5 14. ♘g5 ♜e8 15. ♗d2 b5 16. ♜ad1 ♘d3 (see 'Kasparov's favourite', Chapter 5).

King's Indian Defence

Paul van der Sterren

2560

Vladislav Tkachiev

2575

Wijk aan Zee 1995 (7)

1. d4 ♘f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♘c3 ♘g7 4. e4 d6 5. f3 ♘c6 6. ♘e3 a6 7. ♘ge2 ♜b8 8. ♘c1 e5 9. ♘b3 exd4 10. ♘xd4 0-0 11. ♘e2

Another break was seen in Brenninkmeijer-Bosboom, Hilversum 1988, after 11. ♗d2 ♘xd4 12. ♘xd4 ♘e6 13. ♘e2 c5 14. ♘e3 b5 (on our way to the next chapter!) 15. cxb5 axb5 16. ♘xb5, and only now 16...d5, when Black had sufficient activity for the pawn. This is not an unusual combination of the two breaks, remember that!

11... ♘xd4 12. ♘xd4 c6

Here, the other break was also possible with 12...b5.

13. 0-0 ♘e6 14. a4 ♗a5 15. ♜f2 ♜fd8 16. ♘f1



White's manoeuvring on the last two moves made the central break feasible.

16...d5 17.cxd5

After 17.exd5 cxd5 18.c5 ♖e8, the c-pawn might become a target.

17...cxd5 18.e5

Here, White closes the centre. And why not? In this way, he also obtains a theoretically better pawn structure. However, soon he starts to underestimate Black's piece play. 18.exd5 ♖xd5 suits Black fine. All the central pawns are gone, but Black's pieces are more active. This is very similar to the resulting positions from the d4-d5 break in the IQP positions (see Chapter 13).

18...♖d7 19.♙e2

Too artificial, apparently in an attempt to keep control of e4, while protecting the e5-pawn. 19.f4 ♖c5 20.g4 allows 20...♖e4, but then 21.♙g2 maintains a double-edged position. Now, the white pieces are in each others' way.



19... ♖bc8 20. ♗e1?

Obviously, White was not happy with his position and makes a further error, shedding two tempi – more than his position can bear.

20... ♗c5 21. ♗d1

... ♗c5-b3 cannot be allowed.

21... ♗f5 22. g4 ♗d3 23. ♖e3 ♗c4

Now, the black pieces dance around White's position.

24. ♗e2 ♗h6 25. ♖ea3 ♗e6 26. ♗f2 d4 27. ♗g3

27. ♗xd4 loses a piece to 27... ♗xd4 28. ♗xd4 ♗xf1 29. ♗xf1 ♗c4 30. ♗d3 ♗d5.

27... ♗xe5 28. ♗xc4 ♗xc4 29. ♗b3 ♗dc8 30. ♗e1 ♗c1 31. ♗a1 ♗xe1+ 32. ♗xe1 ♗xa1 0-1

Summary

When the white pawns on c4 and e4 disappear after the central break ...d6-d5, White may suddenly find his remaining structure and king's position vulnerable. Other pawn structures may also arise after this freeing break, and Black may also (temporarily) sacrifice the pawn on d5. In any case, Black's long-range pieces – bishops, rooks and queen – that had been hiding in the trenches, immediately obtain more mobility. This is the thing to watch out for! Are you ready for some deeper study? See Chapter 1 of *Kasparov's Revolution in the 70s* or take Shipov's splendid *The Complete Hedgehog*, where you will find various other, sometimes complicated examples of the break (and much more other stuff!).

CHAPTER 16

Flank attack!

This is the most common break of them all: ...b7-b5, attacking the pawn on c4. Obviously, the b-file will often be opened for a black rook. At the same time, White's central control by the c4-pawn – his 'extended centre' – or the support of a central white piece can be undermined. Let's look at the various appropriate situations and possible consequences of this standard flank attack.

Opposite-side castling

We start with a basic example from one of the many opening lines that feature the ...b7-b5 break (not just the advance).

King's Indian Defence

Tseqmed Batchuluun

2513

Eduardo Iturrizaga Bonelli

2653

Trømsø ol 2014 (9)

1.d4 g6 2.e4 ♘g7 3.c4 d6 4.♗c3 ♗c6 5.♙e3 ♗f6 6.f3 0-0 7.♗ge2 a6 8.♙d2 ♖b8 9.h4



Without castling first, White immediately goes for the jugular. Well, you should be familiar with this. When you are going through the book properly, you've read Chapter 13 'When Harry meets g6'.

9...b5

This was Black's intention all along, as witness his preparatory moves ...a7-a6 and ...♖b8. Yet here, 9...h5 is more mainstream theory.

10.h5 e5

The most sound and principal approach, although Spassky won two games in true King's Indian spirit after 10...bxc4:

A) 11.hxg6 fxg6 12.♗f4 e6 13.♕xc4 d5 14.♕b3?!



analysis diagram

14...♕xb3! Weih-Spassky, Germany Bundesliga 1983/84;

B) 11.g4



analysis diagram

11... ♖xg4 12.fxg4 ♜xg4 Kasparov-Spassky, Niksic 1983. For now, trust me, leave these things to the Spassky's of our world. They know how to manage!

11.d5 ♜a5 12.♜g3 ♜xc4 13.♜xc4 bxc4

Well, the b-file has been opened after the break. The rook is ready to roll from b8.

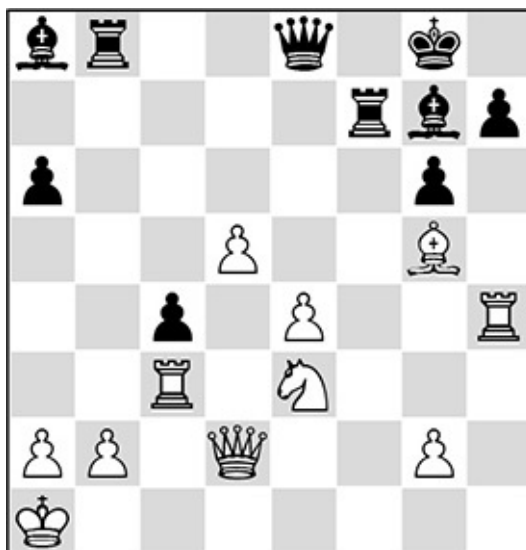
14.0-0-0 ♜d7 15.hxg6 fxg6!

A standard recapture; after 15...hxg6 16.♜h2, Black will soon face trouble along the h-file. Now, the file is blocked, and Black can protect (the pawn on) h7 with ... ♜f7 later. Note that Black has a tricky escape after the automatic 16.♜h6 with 16... ♜f6! 17.♜xf8? ♜g5.

16.♜e2 ♜b6

And Black is just fine. Both sides have a half-open file against the opponent's king's position. From here, a complicated and fluctuating battle evolved. Black managed to increase the pressure against b2. White certainly got his chances too, but eventually made the last mistake.

17.♜f1 ♜d7 18.♜b1 ♜a4 19.♜xa4 ♜xa4 20.♜c1 ♜b5 21.♜c3 c6 22.♜d2 ♜f7 23.dxc6 ♜xc6 24.♜g5 ♜d7 25.♜e3 d5 26.exd5 e4 27.fxe4 ♜a8 28.♜a1 ♜e8 29.♜h4



29... ♖e5

29... ♖f8!, with the idea of ... ♖f7-f2, would have left the b2-pawn and White's position in dire straits.

30. ♗h6 ♖g3 31. ♖h3 ♗xc3 32. ♗xc3 ♖f2 33. ♖h1 ♖e2 34. ♖e1 ♖h5 35. ♗f5 ♖d8 36. ♖a5 ♖b8 37. ♗d6 ♖xh6 38. ♗xf7 ♖g7 39. ♗h6+ ♖xh6 40. ♖xa6 ♖g7 41. ♖e6+ ♖f7 42. ♖a6 ♖e8 43. ♖d1 c3 44. bxc3 ♖c7 45. ♖d3 ♖e5 46. ♖b1 ♖g7 47. ♖b4 h5 48. g3 g5 49. ♖b2 g4 50. ♖b5 ♖f8 51. ♖d7+ ♖f7 52. ♖d8 ♗b7 53. a4 ♖h7 54. ♖b3 ♖c7 55. ♖c4 ♖xc4 56. ♖xc4 ♖xe4+ 57. ♖c5 ♖xd5+ 58. ♖xd5 ♗xd5 59. ♖xd5 h4 60. gxh4 g3 0-1

Here is yet another position with opposite-side castling, though the break serves another positional goal.

Caro-Kann Defence

Gadir Guseinov

2634

Santosh Gujrathi Vidit

2513

Moscow 2012 (4)

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3. ♗d2 dxe4 4. ♗xe4 ♗f5 5. ♗g3 ♗g6 6.h4 h6 7. ♗f3 ♗d7 8.h5 ♗h7 9. ♗d3 ♗xd3 10. ♖xd3 e6 11. ♗f4 ♖a5+ 12. ♗d2 ♗b4 13.c3 ♗e7 14.c4 ♖c7 15.0-0-0 ♗gf6 16. ♖he1 0-0 17. ♗f5 exf5 18. ♖xe7 ♖d8 19. ♖e2 ♗e4 20.g3



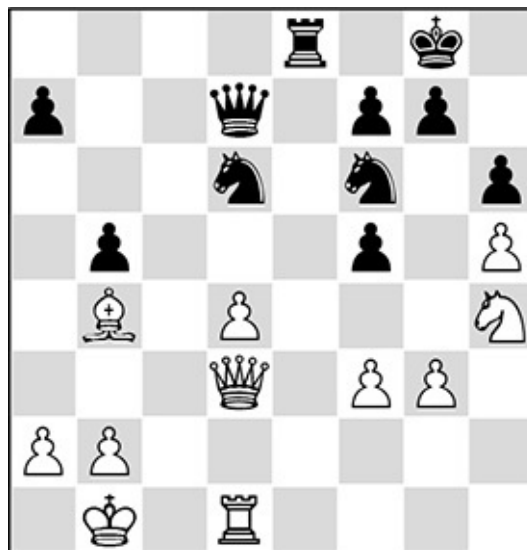
20...b5! 21.cxb5 cxb5

Now, Black has gained the strong d5-square for his knight.

22.♖b1

22.♙xb5 ♜b8 23.♙xf5? is a touch too greedy (23.♙d3 is more sensible, but Black is fine after, for instance, 23...♘df6, so why then should White open the b-file?): 23...♙c7+ 24.♜b1 ♜xb2+ 25.♜xb2 ♜b8+ 26.♜a1 ♙c2.

22...♜e8 23.♙e1 ♘df6 24.♘h4 ♙d7 25.f3 ♘d6 26.♜xe8+ ♜xe8 27.♙b4



27...♘c4! 28.♙xf5

The obvious choice was 28.♘xf5, to bring the knight back into play (and in a strong position). However, after 28...♘d5 29.♙c5 ♘de3 30.♘xe3 ♜xe3

31.♙c2 (31.♙f1 ♙f5+) 31...♙e8!, Black launches an attack that is very tough

to parry.

28... ♖c7!?

With 28... ♖e6!, Black could preserve control over d5, as 29.d5 runs into 29...

♘e3, for example: 29. ♖c1 a5 30. ♙e1 ♘d5, with beautifully-placed pieces.

29. ♖e1? ♗xg3 30. ♖xe8+ ♗xe8 31. ♗xb5 ♗g1+ 32. ♖c2 ♗e3+ 33. ♖d2 ♗f2+

33... ♗f6 34. ♗e2 ♗ed5 also wins a piece, as Black also threatens 35... ♗g5+.

34. ♗e2 ♗c4+ 35. ♖d3 ♗xb2+ 36. ♖d2 ♗c4+ 37. ♖d3 ♗b2+ 38. ♖d2 ♗xd4+ 39. ♖c2 ♗f6

40. ♙c3 ♗xh4 41. ♖xb2 ♗xh5 42. ♙xf6 gxf6 43. ♖b3 ♗d5+ 44. ♖b4 ♗d6+ 45. ♖a4 ♗f4+

46. ♖b3 h5 47. ♗g2+ ♗g5 48. ♗f2 a6 0-1

Undermining a stronghold

Sicilian Defence

Zhang Zhong

2611

Julio Granda Zuniga

2663

Tromsø ol 2014 (10)

1.e4 c5 2. ♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♗xd4 ♗c6 5. ♙b5 e6 6.0-0 ♘ge7 7.c4 a6 8. ♙xc6+ ♗xc6 9. ♗c3 ♙d7 10. ♙f4 e5 11. ♙e3 ♙e7 12. ♗d3 0-0 13. ♘c3 f5 14.exf5 ♙xf5 15. ♗d2 ♗e8 16. ♘e1 ♗g6 17. ♖d1 ♖ae8 18.f3 h5 19. ♘d5 ♙d8 20. ♘d3 h4 21. ♘f2 ♖e6 22.b4 ♗e8 23. ♘e4 h3 24.g3 ♘d4 25. ♗d3



25...b5

Eliminating the support of the strong knight on d5.

26.cxb5 axb5 27. ♖c1

27. ♙xd4 exd4 28. ♗xd4 (the modest 28. ♖de1 seems better, but after 28... ♖e5! Black is OK) 28... ♙xe4 29.fxe4 ♖xf1+ 30. ♖xf1 ♖xe4 31. ♙d3 ♙e5, and with the threat of 32... ♖d4 Black takes over the initiative.

27... ♙g6 28. ♙xd4 exd4 29. ♖ce1 ♖e5

After 29... ♙c6!, White is in big trouble already: 30. ♙xd4 (30. ♙f4 ♖xf4 31.gxf4 d5; 30. ♙b3 ♙f7) 30... ♖e5 31. ♙ec3 ♖xe1 32. ♖xe1 ♖xf3.

30. ♙f4

Mission accomplished. 30. ♙xd4 ♙c6 31. ♙ec3 (31. ♙dc3? ♙b6) 31... ♖xe1 32. ♖xe1 ♖xf3 would transpose to the previous variation.

30...d5 31. ♙xg6 ♙xg6 32. ♙c5 ♙xd3 33. ♙xd3 ♖xe1 34. ♙xe1 ♖e8 35. ♙d3 ♖e3

And Black managed to win... **0-1 (53).**

King's Indian Defence

Alexander Riazantsev

2692

Anton Demchenko

2613

Vladivostok 2014 (6)

1.d4 ♙f6 2.c4 g6 3. ♙c3 ♙g7 4.e4 0-0 5. ♙e3 d6 6.h3 e5 7.d5 ♙a6 8. ♙f3 ♙c5 9. ♙d2 a5 10.g4 c6 11. ♙e2 a4 12.a3 ♙d7 13.h4 ♙e8 14.g5 cxd5 15.exd5 ♙f5 16. ♙xc5 dxc5 17. ♙de4 ♙d6 18. ♙d3 ♙xe4 19. ♙xe4



19...b5!

Black breaks up White's dominant central pawn structure. He will now try to

open up the position, to activate his g7-bishop as well as, of course, the b-file for a rook. When the positions opens up, White's king, still lingering in the middle, will have a difficult time finding a safe place.

20. ♖xd6

After 20.cxb5 c4! 21. ♔c2 (21. ♖xd6 cxd3 22. ♖e4 ♜xd5) 21... ♜b8, Black will win back the pawn and activates his rook along the b-file, unless White gives up his light-square blockade to win a second pawn: 22. ♖xd6?! ♜xd6 23. ♖xa4 e4!. White is temporarily two pawns up, but Black threatens to take on b2, while he can also work with ...c4-c3 or ...e4-e3, to expose the white king even more. The a4-bishop is out of place, and in general, as you know from Chapter 7, the opposite-coloured bishops will strengthen the attack against White's king. Try to find a decent follow-up for White, and you will discover that his life is not easy: 24. ♜b1 (24. ♜e2 ♜a8 25. ♖d1 (25. ♖c2 ♖xb2) 25...c3) 24...e3 25. ♜f3 exf2+ 26. ♔f1 f6.

20... ♜xd6 21. ♖e4 bxc4 22. ♜c1 ♜ab8 23. ♜e2 ♜b3 24. ♜xc4 ♜fb8 25. ♜c2



Of course, the b-file is for Black, which generally comes with the ...b7-b5 break, but White has managed to preserve his central blockade on the light squares.

Now, Black has to come up with a new little plan.

25... ♜f8!

Excellent! Finding another diagonal for his bishop, he improves his worst-placed piece. All this is very logical, but such moves are often harder to find than a cute combination.

26. ♔f1 ♜d7 27. ♔g2 c4! 28. f3 c3 29. bxc3 ♖xa3 30. ♔g3 ♖c5

‘Suddenly’, Black’s bishop is better, his king safer and his passed pawn more dangerous.

31.h5 ♖e7 32.♗g4 ♜b1 33.♞d1 ♜xd1 34.♞xd1 ♙e3 35.♞e1 ♞xg5+ 36.♗h3 f5 37.♙d3 e4 38.♙e2 ♞xh5+ 39.♞h4 ♞xh4+ 40.♞xh4 exf3 41.♙xf3 ♙c5 42.♞e2 a3 43.♞e6 ♞a8 44.d6 a2 45.♙xa8 a1 ♞ 46.♙d5 ♞g7 0-1

King’s Indian Defence

Wang Hao

2733

Etienne Bacrot

2722

Shamkir 2014 (1)

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.♙c3 ♙g7 4.e4 d6 5.♙f3 0-0 6.h3 e5 7.d5 ♙h5 8.g3 a5 9.♙g2 ♙a6 10.0-0 ♙d7 11.♙e1 ♞e8 12.♙d3 f5 13.♞e1 ♙f6 14.a3 fxe4 15.♙xe4 ♙xe4 16.♞xe4 ♙f5 17.♞e1



17...b5!?

Again, White’s pawn chain is attacked in search for activity on the queenside.

18.♙f4

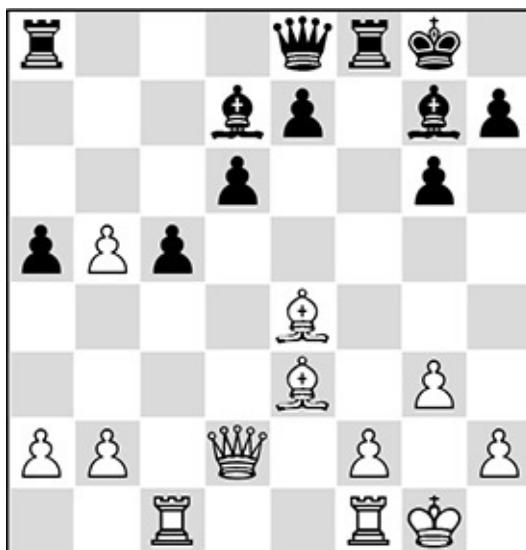
An inventive try to wriggle out of the pressure, as 18.cxb5 ♞xb5 immediately lands White in big trouble because of the awkward position of the d3-knight. A more reasonable alternative was 18.g4 ♙xd3 (the idea was 18... ♙d7 19.c5 ♙xc5 20.♙xc5 dxc5 21.♙e3 c4 22.a4) 19.♞xd3 ♙c5 20.♞c2, when Black can take on c4, play ...a5-a4 first, or, more spectacularly, start with opening the a1-g7 diagonal with the pawn sacrifice 20...e4!?. Also, now the knight may

become an octopus on d3. Here is one sample line if White accepts the pawn sacrifice, when the drawback of the weakened kingside (remember 18.g4) becomes visible: 21. ♖xe4 ♜e7 22. ♜e2 (22. ♜e3 ♜h4 23.cxb5 ♜xe4 24. ♜xe4 ♜f3) 22... ♜ae8 23. ♖d3 ♜f7.
 18... ♜c5 19. ♜e6 ♜xe6 20.dxe6



20... ♜xe6!?

20... ♜b8 was a decent move, but the text move is a strong and appealing exchange sacrifice. 20...bxc4 may have been a stronger execution of the same idea after 21. ♖xa8 ♜xa8 22.e7 ♜e8, with already a second pawn for the exchange and otherwise the same excellent bishops as in the game, whereas the white rooks are not impressive. This is also an improved version of the same idea in Cebalo-Vasiukov, Arvier 2006:



which saw 18... ♖xb5! 19. ♖xa8 ♜xa8 (Black won, see ‘Silent sacrifices’, IYCPR page 109). Our main game ended in a draw after White managed to exchange the dark-squared bishops:

21.cxb5 ♜xb5 22. ♖xa8 ♜xa8 23.a4 ♜b7 24.g4 ♖b3 25. ♜d3 d5 26. ♜g3 e4 27. ♖f4 c5 28. ♖e5 ♖xe5 29. ♜xe5 ♜f8 30. ♜e3 ♖c4 31. ♜e6+ ♜f7 32. ♜e8+ ♜f8 33. ♜e6+ ♜f7 34. ♜e8+ ♜f8 ½-½

...b7-b5 followed by ...d6-d5

Two strong Norwegian grandmasters face up at the European Club Cup:

Sicilian Defence

Jon Ludvig Hammer

2632

Aryan Tari

2578

Antalya tt 2017 (5)

1.e4 c5 2. ♖f3 d6 3. ♖b5+ ♖d7 4.d4 cxd4 5. ♜xd4 a6 6. ♖e2 ♖gf6 7.0-0 e5 8. ♜e3 ♖c5 9. ♖fd2
 Hmm, this is not your regular developing move. These days, engine-assisted opening preparation is often used, and perhaps it had a hand in this, too.
 9... ♖e7 10.c4 0-0 11.h3



This is asking for it, I guess.

11...b5!

Making the most of his slight lead in development.

12.cxb5 d5

The break on the wing made way for the central break. This is not uncommon – take, for instance, Kasparov’s Hedgehog game against Hübner, Tilburg 1981:



which featured 23...b5!? 24.cxb5 d5!, when Black’s pieces sprang to life, and the young Kasparov emerged as a winner from the complications.

13.b4

13.exd5, to at least keep the extra pawn, is too much, as the queen gets no rest, e.g. 13...♘xd5 14.♙xe5 ♘d6 15.♙d4 ♘e6 16.♙c4 axb5.



13... ♖cxe4

Strongest was 13... ♖e6!, as the text helps White with his development. It is already hard to find a decent move for White, as all possible captures fail miserably: 14.exd5 (14.bxa6 ♙xb4 15.exd5 ♖f4 16.♙xe5 ♙d6) 14... ♖xd5 15.♙xe5 ♙f6. In the game, the young Tari still won, though the game went a long way when Hammer managed to get away with an exchange down with only pawns on the kingside: ... 0-1 (100).

Summary

Clearly, the ...b7-b5 break can be multi-purpose and can be used in all kinds of positions. While White can break with g2-g4 or h2-h4 (see earlier chapters), Black can counter with ...b7-b5 and open the b-file against the opponent's king. In other cases, by exchanging or deflecting White's c4-pawn, the d5-square may become available for a black piece. Or, for that matter, the break can undermine your opponent's stronghold or central pawn structure. In general, the break seizes space for activity. So take on that c4-pawn if you spot a suitable goal!

PART III

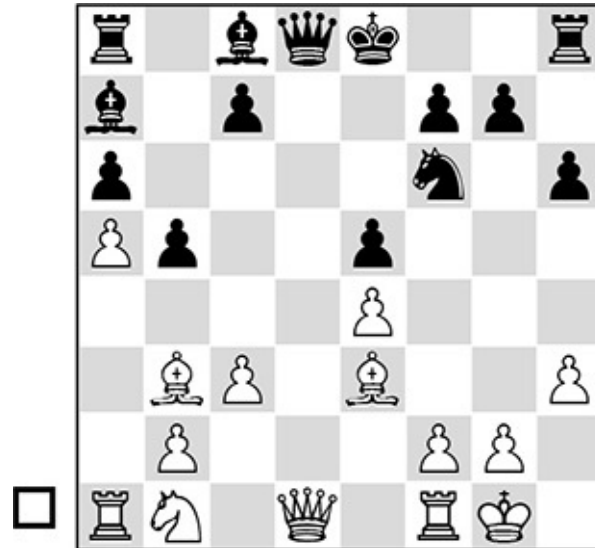
When to exchange and when not to

I do not think that you can consider exchanges to be real patterns, but they do occur in virtually every game you play. Also, the reasons why you should or should not exchange will recur. Frequently, the moment you will have to decide on an exchange of pieces will also be one of several small critical moments in the game. And when the exchange has happened, it will be irrevocable.

In this part, we will consider four subjects connected to piece exchanges. Along the way, inevitably, we will see that other patterns also play a role. The first two chapters deal with quite concrete matters: the exchange of queens and the exchange of rooks. The first one is bound to change the course of the entire game, while for the second one, we will look at the use and control of open files.

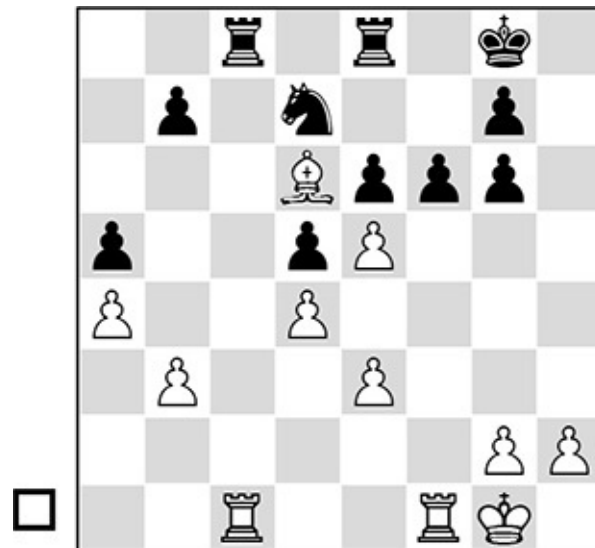
The other two chapters are about piece exchanges, but will be more complex and more difficult to grasp. In particular, spatial advantage (Chapter 20) comes in many forms, and there is much to be learned here about the mobility of the pieces as well. In Chapter 19, consecutive piece exchanges will teach you why you always have to keep an eye on what remains on the board, and not just focus on what is captured. You don't want to get stuck with a bad bishop struggling versus a good knight, do you? Exchange your way now!

17 King of all exchanges



15. ♖f3 or 15. ♖xd8+ ?

18 Along the open file



24. ♕c7!

19 What remains: towards a good knight versus bad bishop

CHAPTER 17

King of all exchanges

An exchange of queens, more than of any other pieces, is able to make a mark on the course of the game. First of all, the exchange of queens will automatically lead to an endgame, which can change other elements of the position profoundly. Think of structural weaknesses (less dynamic counterplay), opposite-coloured bishops (from an attacking force to a drawing factor) and the king's position (a more active role). Take a look again at Chapters 1, 7 and 9 about the king, opposite-coloured bishops and the IDP, and you will get a concrete idea. Secondly, a queen will likely have a leading role in an attack on the king. In such a situation, an exchange of queens will in many cases signify the end of the attack. Let's take a deeper look at some practical examples.

Towards a better endgame

Ruy Lopez

Fabiano Caruana

2827

Kateryna Lagno

2530

Gibraltar 2017 (7)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 b5 6.♙b3 ♙c5 7.a4 ♖b8 8.c3 d6 9.d4 ♙b6
10.a5 ♙a7 11.h3 h6 12.♙e3 ♖a8 13.dxe5 ♘xe5 14.♘xe5 dxe5



‘I always keep the queens on the board, to keep a tense game. Otherwise, I find the game boring.’ I have heard club players say words like these more than once. Without a doubt, they would pass by Caruana’s choice in this position...

15. ♔xd8+

and play 15. ♘d2 or 15. ♖f3.

15... ♕xd8 16. ♗xa7 ♖xa7 17. ♗xf7 ♗xe4



If you take a little time to calculate two (forcing) moves ahead after the queen exchange, it would not be too difficult to assess the position in White’s favour: an isolated target on e5, a weird rook on a7 and the black king not harmonious or comfortable in the centre. Of course, these last two drawbacks in Black’s

position may be repaired within a couple of moves. For example, the a7-rook might develop along the seventh rank after ...c7-c5.

18. ♖g6 ♜d6 19. ♞d2 ♔e7

A) After 19... ♞f5 20. ♞xf5 ♜xf5 21. ♜fe1 ♜e8 22.b4, White can direct his knight to c5 and double rooks on the e-file. This is definitely not the endgame Black wants;

B) 19...c5 20. ♜fd1 ♔e7 21. ♞f3 ♔e6 22. ♜e1



analysis diagram

and already the e-pawn is lost.

So, Lagno decided to bring her king to support the structural weakness on e5.



20.f4!

A very difficult move, as unexpectedly White helps his opponent to get rid of her weak pawn. You might compare this to Fischer's famous knight takes bad bishop on d7 against Petrosian in the final Candidates Match in 1971. Here too, the resulting position is what counts, not the material that goes.

20. ♖fe1 ♔f6 was Black's idea.

20...exf4 21. ♖xf4 ♙b7

Black's position is worse than you might think, with two passive rooks and his king in the line of fire. Two sample variations:

A) 21... ♙e6 22. ♖e1 ♔d7 23. ♗f3 ♖aa8 24. ♗e5+ ♔c8 25. ♙h5!, with ideas like ♙f3;

B) 21...c5 22. ♗e4 ♗xe4 23. ♖f7+.

22. ♖e1+ ♔d8 23. ♖e5 ♙c6 24. ♗b3 ♙e8 25. ♙d3 ♙d7 26. ♗c5 ♖e8

At least Black has managed to exchange one passive rook, but with the white knight on c5, another black piece will be doomed to passivity.

27. ♖xe8+ ♔xe8 28. b4 c6 29. ♙g6+ ♔e7 30. ♖f3 ♙c8 31. ♔f2 ♖c7 32. g4 ♗c4 33. ♔g3 ♗e5 34. ♖e3 ♔d6 35. ♙f5

Exchanging the defender of the a6-pawn.

35... ♙xf5 36. gxf5 ♖f7 37. ♔f4 ♗g6+ 38. ♔e4 ♗e7 39. ♖f3 ♗d5 40. ♗xa6

And Caruana hauled in the point.

40... ♖e7+ 41. ♔d4 ♖e1 42. ♗c5 ♖d1+ 43. ♖d3 ♖f1 44. ♗e4+ ♔c7 45. ♖g3 ♖xf5 46. ♖xg7+ ♔b8 47. ♗d6 ♖f4+ 48. ♔c5 ♗xc3 49. ♔xc6 ♖xb4 50. ♖g8+ ♔a7 51. ♗c8+ ♔a6 52. ♗b6 1-0

Material advantage

Caro-Kann Defence

Artashes Minasian

2571

Karen Asrian

2601

Yerevan ch-ARM 2003 (8)

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4. ♗f3 ♗c6 5. ♙b5 ♙g4 6.c3 e6 7.dxc5 ♙xf3 8. ♔xf3 ♙xc5 9.0-0 ♗ge7 10. ♙f4 ♗g6 11. ♙g3 ♔g5 12.c4 0-0 13.cxd5 ♗d4 14. ♔d3 ♗xe5 15. ♙xe5 ♔xe5 16. ♗c3 exd5 17. ♖ae1 ♔d6 18. ♙a4 ♖ad8 19. ♖e3 ♗e6 20. ♖h3 g6 21. ♔d2



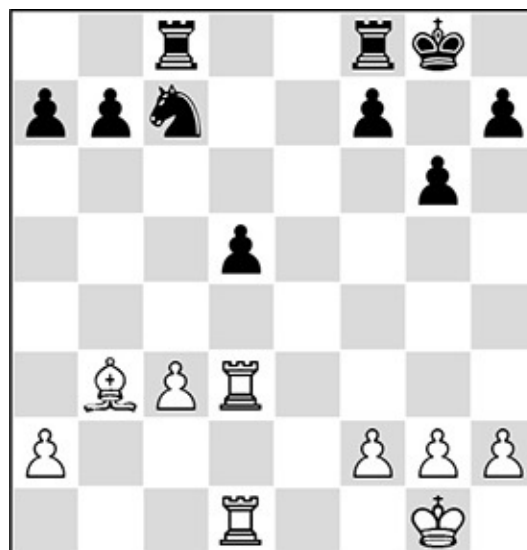
21... ♔f4!

Black is a pawn up, and the general rule in such cases is that you should (not mind to) exchange pieces. After all, with all pieces exchanged, you will have a good chance to end up with a winning pawn endgame, where an extra pawn is normally decisive.

22. ♙xf4 ♜xf4 23. ♖f3 ♜e6 24. ♖d1 ♕d4

Asrian finds a way to dispose of the opposite-coloured bishops. 24...d4!? was not a bad alternative, though. After 25. ♘e2 a6 26. ♖fd3 b5 27. ♕b3 ♖d6!, Black may be a long way from victory, but he is just a pawn up. Patience, my friends!

25. ♕b3 ♕xc3 26. bxc3 ♜c7 27. ♖fd3 ♖c8



In this (passive) way, Black holds on to his extra pawn. One drawback: a lot of material disappears from the board, including pawns. That's good news for White. When you are material down, it is generally advised to trade pawns. The basic thought is that, for example, one sole extra pawn for your opponent or just pawns for both players on one side of the board greatly diminish his winning chances. Sometimes, you may give up a piece for your opponent's last pawn(s).

28. ♖xd5 ♗xd5 29. ♖xd5 ♖xc3 30. ♖d7 ♖fc8 31. ♖xb7 ♖c1 32. ♖f1 ♖xf1+ 33. ♗xf1 ♖c1+ 34. ♗e2 ♖c2+ 35. ♗e3 ♖xa2

A well-known rook endgame has arisen that White should be able to draw with purposeful and accurate play. It is complicated enough though, and Minasian is not the first to trip over the difficulties.

36. h4 h5 37. g3 ♗g7 38. f3 ♖a4 39. ♖c7 ♗f6 40. ♖b7 ♗e6 41. ♖c7 a5 42. ♖a7 f6 43. ♖a8 ♗f5 44. ♖c8 ♖a3+ 45. ♗f2 a4 46. ♖c5+ ♗e6 47. ♖a5 ♖a1 48. ♗g2 a3 49. ♖a6+ ♗e5 50. ♖a8 ♗d4 51. ♖a6 ♗c3 52. ♖xf6 ♖a2+ 53. ♗h3 ♖f2 54. ♖xg6 ♖xf3 55. ♗g2 ♖d3 56. g4 a2 57. ♖a6 ♗b2 58. ♖xa2+ ♗xa2 59. gxh5 ♗b3 60. h6 ♗c4 61. h7 ♖d8 0-1

Attack!

Dutch Defence

Ferenc Berkes

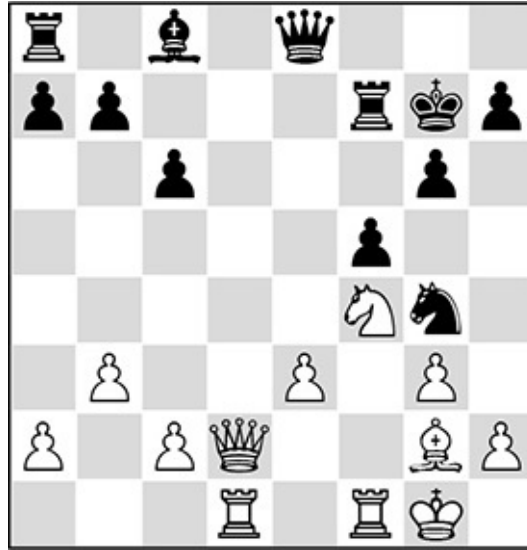
2648

Pouya Idani

2552

Rasht 2017 (5)

1. d4 f5 2. ♗f3 ♗f6 3. g3 g6 4. ♗g2 ♗g7 5. 0-0 0-0 6. b3 d6 7. ♗b2 ♗e4 8. e3 ♗c6 9. ♗fd2 ♗xd2 10. ♗xd2 e5 11. dxe5 ♗e8 12. ♗c3 dxe5 13. ♗d5 ♖f7 14. ♖ad1 e4 15. ♗xg7 ♗xg7 16. f3 exf3 17. ♖xf3 ♗e5 18. ♖ff1 c6 19. ♗f4 ♗g4

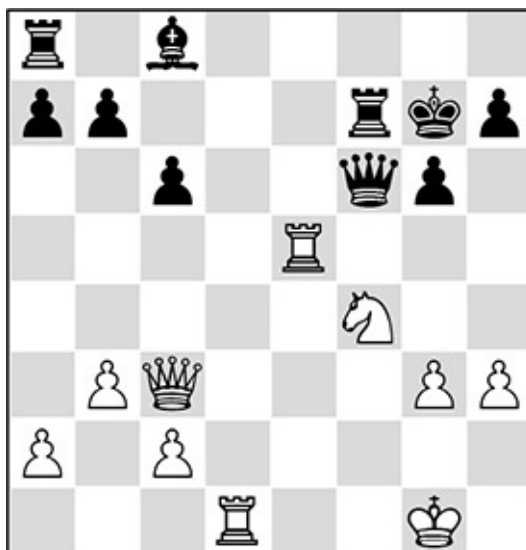


White has a lead in development, and, with the dark-squared bishops gone, Black's king might become vulnerable in view of his compromised pawn structure. That said, it would be logical for White to try to launch a kingside attack. However, the game saw:

20. ♖c3+?!

A) Let us see what would happen after the much more logical move 20. ♖de1, not only to protect the backward pawn, but of course with the idea to subsequently advance it. The game may continue 20... ♘f6 21. ♙d4 ♙g8 22. ♘h3!?, with an edge for White (22.e4 ♘xe4 23. ♙xe4 fxe4 24. ♖xe4 ♙f8 25. ♖fe1 ♙f5 just equalizes for Black);

B) You might try to improve on this with the immediate 20.e4!? fxe4. After 21. ♖de1 ♙f5 (21... ♘f6 22. ♙c3 ♙g8 23. ♘xg6) 22.h3 ♖d8 23. ♙b4 ♘f6 24.g4, Black faces some difficulties. Yet, 21.h3 even seems to save on the move ♖de1 entirely. Now, the rook might come in handy on the d-file as well. After 21... ♘f6 22. ♙c3 ♙e7 (to meet g3-g4 with ♙g8), the surprising 23. ♙xe4!! pops up, and if Black takes on e4, we see another queen caught in the middle of the board: 23... ♙xe4 24. ♖fe1 ♙f5 25. ♖e5, when after 25... ♘e4 26. ♖xe4+ ♙f6 27. ♖e5!



analysis diagram

Black is almost in a complete zugzwang.

Without a doubt, the position is complicated and not lost for Black after 20.e4, but certainly White could have avoided the text move out of general considerations.

20... ♖e5 21. ♗xe5+ ♘xe5 22. ♖d8

This poses no real troubles at all, and the game quickly petered out to a draw:

22... ♖f8 23. ♖fd1 ♘f7 24. ♖8d4 ♖e8 25. ♗f2 ♖e7 26.a4 ♘e5 27.h3 a5 28. ♖d8 ♘f7 29. ♖8d4 ♘e5 30.e4 fxe4 31. ♖e1 ♘d7 32. ♖xe4 ♘f5 33. ♖e2 ♖f8 34. ♗g1 ½-½

Defend!

Sicilian Defence

Emre Can

2548

Alexander Kovchan

2585

Iasi 2015 (8)

1. ♖f3 c5 2.e4 d6 3. ♘b5+ ♘d7 4.0-0 a6 5. ♘d3 ♘e5 6. ♘xe5 dxe5 7.a4 e6 8. ♘a3 ♘e7 9. ♘c4 ♘c6 10.a5 ♘d6 11. ♘xd6+ ♗xd6 12.b3 0-0 13. ♘b2 ♘d7 14.f4 exf4 15.e5 ♘xe5 16. ♘xh7+ ♗xh7 17. ♗h5+ ♗g8 18. ♘xe5



A) 18... ♖xd2? 19. ♙xg7 ♜xg7 20. ♙g5+ ♜h8 21. ♜xf4 and the game is over;
 B) 18... ♜e7 looks more sensible, but 19. ♜xf4 f6 20. ♜h4 also puts an end to things: 20... ♙c6 (20... fxe5 21. ♜h8+ ♜f7 22. ♜f1+ ♜e8 23. ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 24. ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 25. ♜h8+) 21. ♜h7+ ♜f7 22. ♜g4.

And

18... ♜d5 19.c4

doesn't change much, does it?

19... ♜d3!

It does though! The queen gets back to the defence.

20. ♜f3 ♜f5

Other queen retreats are possible, but this one makes sure the queens are exchanged. And with that, of course, White's attack disappears.

21. ♜xf5 exf5 22. ♙xf4 ♙c6

And the position was equal. Apparently (the notation abruptly stops on move 32), Black later even won:

23. ♜e3 f6 24. ♙c7 ♜f7 25. ♙b6 ♜d7 26. ♜a2 f4 27. ♜e2 ♜d3 28. ♙xc5 ♜xb3 29.d4 ♜c8 30. ♜ab2 ♙a4 31. ♜f2 ♜c7 32. ♜a2 ♙c6 0-1

Improving the pawn structure

English Opening

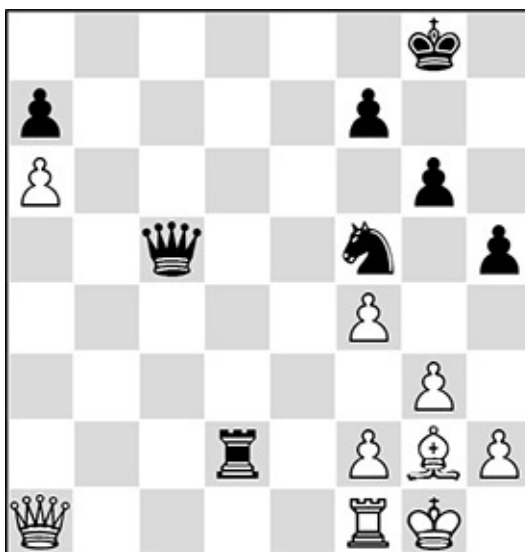
Magnus Carlsen

2853

Maxime Vachier-Lagrave

2731

1. ♖f3 ♗f6 2. c4 g6 3. g3 ♘g7 4. ♗g2 c5 5. d4 cxd4 6. ♖xd4 0-0 7. ♖c3 ♜c7 8. ♖d5 ♜xc4
 9. ♖xe7+ ♜h8 10. ♖xc8 ♜xc8 11. 0-0 ♖c6 12. ♗e3 ♖g4 13. ♖c2 ♖xe3 14. ♖xe3 ♜e6 15. ♖d5
 ♗xb2 16. ♜b1 ♗e5 17. ♜xb7 ♜ab8 18. ♜xb8 ♜xb8 19. e3 ♜b2 20. a4 ♖e7 21. ♖f4 ♗xf4
 22. exf4 ♜b6 23. a5 ♜c5 24. ♜xd7 ♜a2 25. ♜d3 ♜g7 26. a6 h5 27. ♗b7 ♖f5 28. ♜e4 ♖d6
 29. ♜b1 ♜d2 30. ♜a1+ ♜g8 31. ♗g2 ♖f5



White is a pawn up, but it's a doubled one, and it doesn't have much value, you would say. Let's see what Carlsen made of it.

32. ♗e5!

A super-centralized queen! Of course, it can be exchanged, but that will restore White's pawn structure.

32... ♜xe5

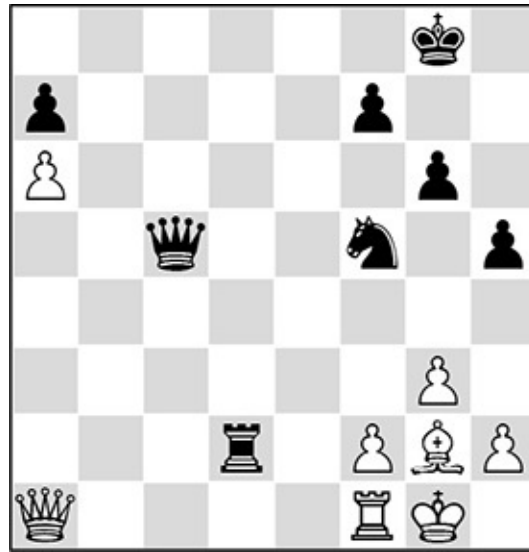
Unfortunately, it seems MVL had not much of a choice. If the queen moves, for instance 32... ♗c4, the a-pawn will drop after 33. ♗b8+. If the queen defends passively (a bad idea often), White easily becomes too active after 32... ♗f8 33. ♜b1 ♜d8 34. ♜b7 ♜e8 35. ♗f6 ♜e6 36. ♗b2.

33. fxe5 ♜e2

Apparently, Black did not fancy a passive defence against the World Champion with 33... ♜d7 34. ♜b1 ♗f8 35. ♜b7 ♜e7 (35... ♗e7 36. ♗c6) 36. f4, which is quite hopeless as well. The text move gives White a passed a-pawn, and when the counterplay on the kingside was neutralized, everything was over:

34. ♜b1 ♜xe5 35. ♜b7 ♜e1+ 36. ♗f1 h4 37. ♜xa7 h3 38. ♜d7 ♜a1 39. g4 ♖h4 40. ♜d3 ♖g2 41. ♜xh3 ♖f4 42. ♜f3 g5 43. ♜b3 1-0

So, how would the position have looked without the useless rascal on f4?



Quite different indeed!

Simplification

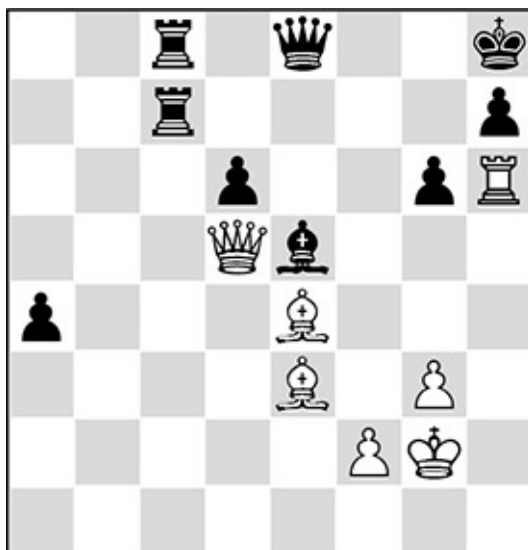
Ruy Lopez

Frederick Yates

Akiba Rubinstein

Baden-Baden 1925 (17)

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.d4 ♙g4 10.d5 ♘a5 11.♙c2 c6 12.h3 ♙xf3 13.♖xf3 cxd5 14.exd5 ♙c7 15.♘d2 b4 16.♘f1 bxc3 17.bxc3 ♖ac8 18.♙d2 ♘c4 19.♙e3 ♙a5 20.♖ad1 ♙xc3 21.♙b1 ♖c7 22.♘g3 g6 23.♖c1 ♙a3 24.♖ed1 ♖fc8 25.♖d3 ♙a5 26.♖f1 ♙g7 27.h4 e4 28.♘xe4 ♘e5 29.♙f4 ♘xe4 30.♙xe4 ♘xd3 31.♙xd3 ♙f6 32.h5 ♙g8 33.♙f3 ♙e5 34.g3 ♙xa2 35.♙g2 a5 36.♖h1 a4 37.hxg6 fxg6 38.♙g4 ♙xd5+ 39.♙e4 ♙f7 40.♙d1 ♙e8 41.♙d5+ ♙h8 42.♖h6



The British Champion was, amongst other things, noted for his doggedness, and had been trying to stir up trouble for Black, although he has been down an exchange for some time already.

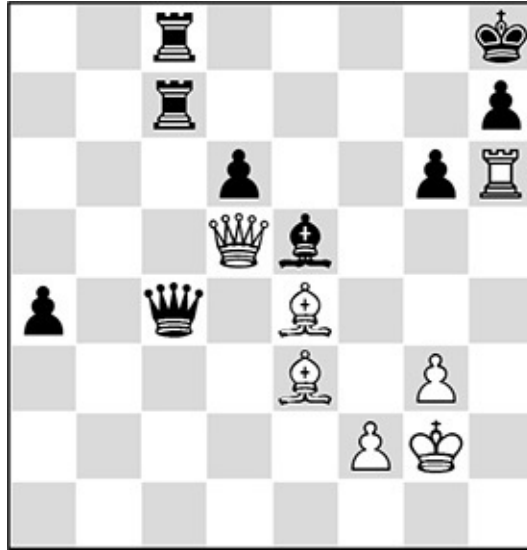
42... ♖c6(!)

Not necessary at all – 43. ♙xg6 was not a deadly threat and could still be met with 43... ♖g8 – but efficiently putting an end to White’s hopes. Rubinstein thus wants to return the exchange, but with the exchange of queens every illusion of counterplay is gone. Also, in a simplified position, Black is less likely to overlook something.

43. ♙d3

White does not oblige. After 43. ♙xc6 ♖xc6 44. ♙xc6 ♖xc6, the h6-rook has become a lonely attacker and is out of place. Moreover, Black is two pawns up, with an unstoppable a-pawn, as the bishop controls a1.

43... ♖c2 44. ♙d5 ♖c4



This time, forcing the exchange of queens.

45. ♖xc4 ♜xc4 46. ♙xg6 ♜4c7 47. f4 ♙c3 48. ♙e4 a3 49. ♙d5 ♜c4

‘I insist!’ This time, enabling the further advance of the a-pawn.

50. ♜xd6 a2 51. ♙xc4 ♜xc4 0-1

This was a proper time to resign, as Black has won back all the material.

Liquidation

So remember, when you are up material, you have the luxury to give it back in return for other achievements. Here is one lucid example of this principle in the endgame.

Slav Defence

Hrant Melkumyan

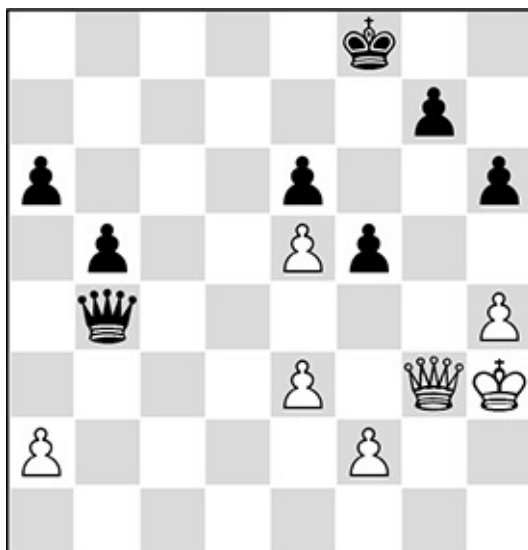
2619

Markus Ragger

2655

Germany Bundesliga 2011/12 (7)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e3 e6 5.♘f3 ♘bd7 6.♖c2 ♙d6 7.♙d3 0-0 8.0-0 dxc4 9.♙xc4 b5
10.♙e2 a6 11.♘e4 ♘xe4 12.♖xe4 ♙b7 13.♙d2 ♜b8 14.♖g4 ♘f6 15.♖h3 ♘e4 16.♜fd1
♖e7 17.♙d3 c5 18.dxc5 ♙xc5 19.♙c3 h6 20.♙xe4 ♙xe4 21.♖g4 f5 22.♖g3 ♜bd8 23.h4
♙xf3 24.gxf3 ♙d6 25.f4 ♙b4 26.♙e5 ♙d6 27.♜ac1 ♜d7 28.♖h2 ♙xe5 29.fxe5 ♜fd8
30.♜xd7 ♖xd7 31.♜c5 ♜c8 32.♜xc8+ ♖xc8 33.♖g6 ♖f8 34.b4 ♖c4 35.♖g3 ♖xb4 36.♖h3



Black is a pawn up in what must be a winning queen endgame. He saved himself a lot of work though – watching out for perpetual checks is a commonly dreaded fear in queen endings, but that’s another subject – by being alert here.

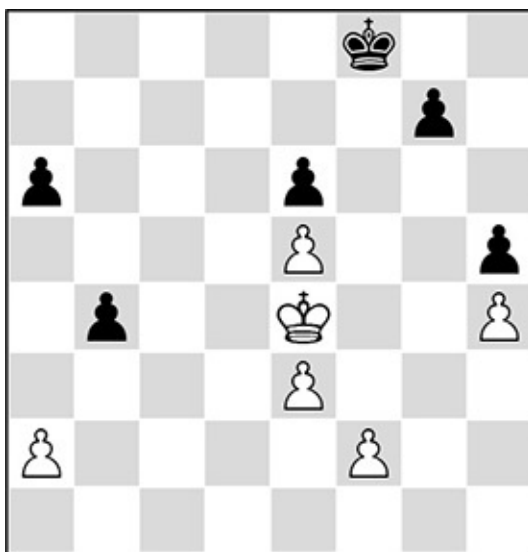
36... ♖g4+! 37. ♗xg4 fxg4+ 38. ♔xg4 h5+!

Obviously, this pawn cannot be taken – the king will be too far away to stop Black promoting on the queenside (after 38...b4 39. ♔f3 a5 40. ♔e2 a4 41. ♔d2 White escapes with a draw). But what if

39. ♔f3

? It seems that now White’s king will be in time to stop the running queenside pawns. Did Black miscalculate after all?

39...b4 40. ♔e4



40...g5!

No! Now, Black gets an outside passed pawn on the kingside, and the king can move. By the way, this is where Black needed to be accurate. 40...a5 would run into 41.f4!, and as the ...g7-g5 break is no longer possible, things have gone horribly wrong for Black.

41.hxg5 a5 0-1

Summary

An exchange of queens, like any other piece exchange, can bring the realization of a material advantage closer. Surely, this is a guideline to remember when you are material up. Again, like other exchanges, it can also achieve a smaller goal, like improving your pawn structure. Above all, you can use it as a weapon (!) to liquidate into an advantageous endgame or to stop an attack immediately. In general, always try to ask yourself ‘who will benefit from the queen exchange?’ when one is about to happen and you will make the appropriate choice!

CHAPTER 18

Along the open file

When there is one open file on the board, unchallenged control of it by the rooks (sometimes supported by the queen) will be a big achievement. However, how do you avoid massive exchanges along the file? And beware, sometimes the rooks may be needed elsewhere. Let's investigate some typical examples.

Stacking up on the open file

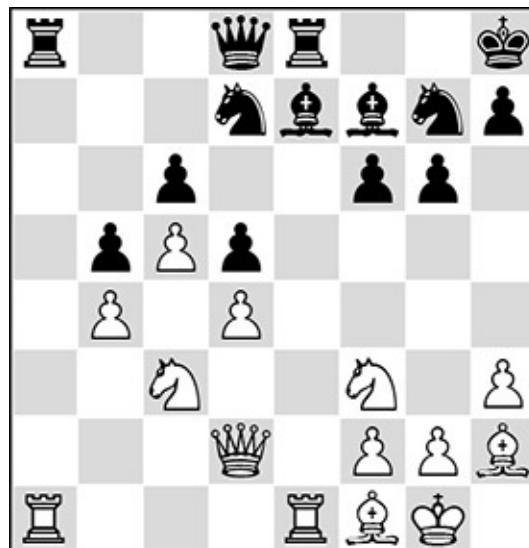
Queen's Pawn Opening

Mikhail Yudovich

Konstantin Klamann

Leningrad ch-URS 1947 (10)

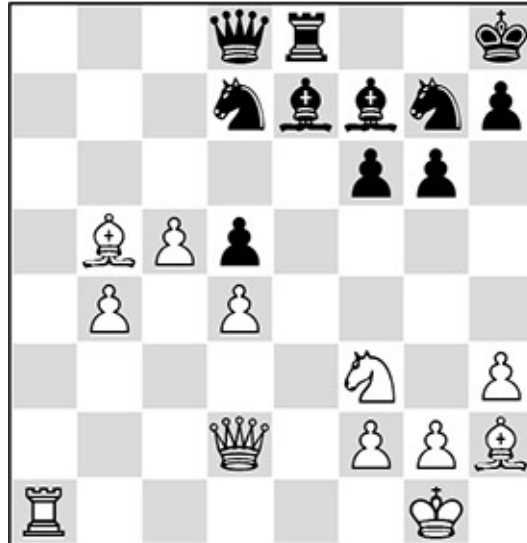
1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗f3 d6 3.♙f4 ♘g4 4.e3 ♗bd7 5.♙e2 e6 6.h3 ♘h5 7.0-0 ♙e7 8.c4 0-0 9.♗c3 ♗e8
10.♙d2 f6 11.♖ad1 ♙f7 12.♙h2 c6 13.e4 ♘h8 14.♖fe1 g6 15.♙f1 ♗g7 16.c5 d5 17.exd5
exd5 18.b4 b5 19.a4 a6 20.axb5 axb5 21.♖a1 ♖e8



22. ♖a2

A standard manoeuvre to double on the open file: ♖ea1 will be the next move. However, White had a strong, albeit more complicated alternative: 22. ♗xb5

cxb5 23. ♖xb5 ♜xa1 (Black is practically forced to give up the a-file, in view of the threat 24. ♜xa8; after 23... ♙e6 24. ♜xa8 ♚xa8 25. ♜xe6 ♘xe6 26. ♙xd7, White will shortly be two pawns up) 24. ♜xa1.



analysis diagram

With ♜a7 coming up, possibly followed by ♙c6 and a march of the b-pawn. The idea of sacrificing the knight will recur in the further course of the game.

22... ♙c8

22... ♜xa2 23. ♚xa2 would leave White with the a-file in any case, as 23... ♚a8 would not help after 24. ♜a1, but in fact is simply impossible here: 24. ♚xa8 ♜xa8 25. ♜xe7.

23. ♜ea1 ♙b7 24. ♙b2!

Consistently pursuing the control of the a-file, and holding the ♘xb5 sacrifice in reserve.

24... ♙e6 25. ♜a3 ♙c7

Now, after 25... ♜xa3, White can recapture with 26. ♚xa3, and thus take control of the a-file.



26. ♖a5

Threatening 27. ♕xc7.

A) 26. ♖a2 was now less convincing because of 26... ♖xa3 27. ♖xa3 ♖a8;

B) 26. ♖1a2!? was a more interesting attempt, trying to build ‘Alekhine’s Gun’ (more on that set-up to be found in IYCPR Chapter 3). 26... ♖xa3 27. ♖xa3, and now after 27... ♖a8 28. ♖xa8+ ♖xa8 29. ♖e2 ♖f8 (Black can improve with 29... ♖d8, when the d8-bishop hinders the white queenside pawns after the same piece sacrifice 30. ♖xb5) 30. ♖xb5 cxb5 31. ♖xb5, the white queenside pawns are virtually unstoppable.

26... ♖xa5 27. ♖xa5!

No, the idea was not to take back with the b-pawn (the passed a-pawn will not be dangerous anyway), but now opposing on the a-file with 27... ♖a8 is impossible because of 28. ♕xc7!.

27... ♖a6 28. ♖a3 ♖ab8 29. ♖a7 ♖c8

Only now that White has conquered the a-file and has entered the seventh rank with the rook, he decides on the long-expected sacrifice on b5.

30. ♖xb5

30. ♖c7 ♖d8 31. ♖a7.

30...cxb5 31. ♖xb5

Now, Black can hardly move.

31... ♖g7 32. ♖xb8 ♖xb8 33. ♖xe8 ♖xe8 34. b5 ♖f8 35. ♖e3 ♖c8 36. ♖f4 1-0

Gaining time

Ruy Lopez

Monica Calzetta Ruiz

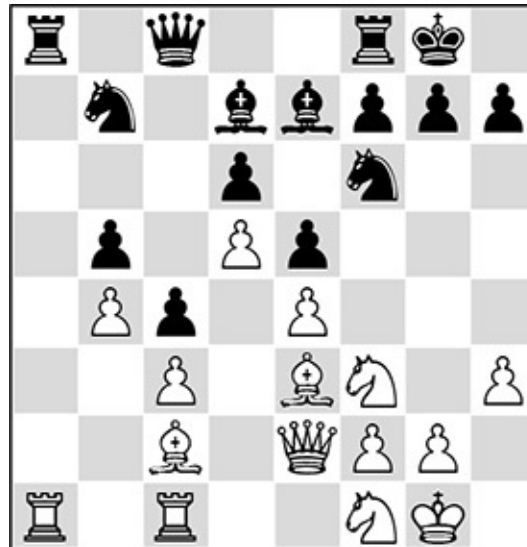
2264

Tatyana Lematschko

2189

Plovdiv Ech W 2008 (3)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♙f6 5.♚e2 d6 6.c3 b5 7.♙b3 ♙a5 8.♙c2 c5 9.0-0 ♙e7
10.d4 ♙c6 11.d5 ♙a5 12.b3 0-0 13.h3 ♙d7 14.♙d2 ♚b8 15.♚c1 ♙f6 16.♙e3 ♙d7 17.♙bd2
♙b7 18.b4 c4 19.a4 ♚c8 20.axb5 axb5 21.♙f1 ♚a8



Here, White would like to double rooks, to gain the only open file in an otherwise closed position. In fact, she does so by... temporarily blocking the file! This technique is well-known from the much-analysed game Karpov-Unzicker, Nice Olympiad 1974. Remarkably, shortly before that game, Karpov had faced ♙a7 from the black side of a Ruy Lopez against Spassky in the semi-finals of the Candidates' Matches. However, we should say that, at that moment, Spassky had already doubled rooks on the a-file, so the strategic idea was different. Still, it seems quite likely that this experience helped Karpov find the concept in his later game against Unzicker.

22.♙a7 ♙e8 23.♙g3 g6 24.♚a2 ♙g7

Black's thematic break 24...f5 may seem premature here after 25.exf5 gxf5 26.♚ca1, and indeed, in the game Black executes it only after the knights have been transferred to the kingside. With hindsight and analysis, you could say that

this was not a bad moment for ...f7-f5 after all.

25. ♖ca1 ♜d8 26. ♙e3

Mission accomplished. Now the bishop retreats and White seizes the a-file.

26... ♜xa2 27. ♜xa2

The remaining rook will have a good entrance square on a7, from where it can exert considerable pressure on Black's position.

27... f6

Now, 27... f5 28. exf5 gxf5 (28... ♜xf5 29. ♜xf5 gxf5 30. ♜a7) is just bad after 29. ♙h6 ♜f7 30. ♙xg7 ♔xg7 31. ♜d4 ♜h6 32. f4.

28. ♜a7 ♜f7 29. ♙d1 f5

Finally, Black decides on this kingside break, but with the white rook on a7, there is a simple tactical refutation.

30. exf5 gxf5 31. ♜xf5 ♜xf5 32. ♙xf5 ♙xf5 33. ♜xe7

And White won quickly:

33... ♙d7 34. ♜g5 ♙d8 35. ♙h5 ♙f5 36. ♜xf7 ♙g6 37. ♜xf8+ ♙xf8 38. ♙g4 ♙f5 39. ♙xf5 ♙xf5 40. f3 ♙f8 41. g4 ♙c8 42. ♙a7 ♙e7 1-0

Slav Defence

Vasily Ivanchuk

2779

Viswanathan Anand

2791

Linares 2009 ()

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. ♜f3 ♜f6 4. ♜c3 dxc4 5. a4 ♙f5 6. e3 e6 7. ♙xc4 ♙b4 8. 0-0 0-0 9. ♙e2 ♜bd7 10. e4 ♙g6 11. ♙d3 ♙h5 12. e5 ♜d5 13. ♜xd5 cxd5 14. ♙e3 ♜e8 15. ♜e1 ♙g6 16. ♙xg6 hxg6 17. ♜d3 ♙b6 18. ♜xb4 ♙xb4 19. b3 ♜ac8 20. ♙a3 ♙c3 21. ♜ac1 ♙xe3 22. fxe3 f6 23. ♙d6 a5



Here, you see the mechanism in a clean form in the endgame between two world-top players.

24. ♖c7!

Refusing the exchange of rooks, and intending to double rooks on the c-file first. 24.exf6 gxf6 25. ♖c7 was also possible, when Black's pawn structure is restored, but he no longer has a counter against White's e5-pawn. But the text is just fine.

24...fxe5 25.dxe5 b6 26. ♖c3 ♖f8 27. ♖fc1 ♖f5 28.g4 ♖f7 29. ♖d6 ♗c5

If 29... ♖xc3 30. ♖xc3, the black rook has no single square on the f-file after a subsequent ♔g2!. On the contrary, the white rook will drop by along the c-file at its leisure. Understandably, Anand seeks refuge in a double rook ending with a pawn down, where he actually pulled off a draw: ... ½-½ **(65)**.

Improving the pawn structure

Nimzo-Indian Defence

Anton Korobov

2660

Alojzije Jankovic

2568

Moscow 2012 (1)

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 e6 3. ♗c3 ♗b4 4.e3 0-0 5. ♖d3 c5 6. ♗f3 b6 7.0-0 ♖b7 8. ♖d2 d6 9.a3 ♗xc3 10. ♗xc3 ♗e4 11. ♗xe4 ♗xe4 12.dxc5 dxc5 13. ♗d2 ♖g6 14. ♗f3 ♗d7 15. ♗e4 ♗h4 16. ♗d6 ♗ad8 17.g3 ♗h3 18. ♗f4 f6 19. ♗ad1 e5 20. ♗f3 e4 21. ♗f4 ♗e6 22. ♗b7 ♗b8 23. ♗c7 ♖f5 24. ♗d6 ♖h3 25. ♗fe1 ♗g4 26. ♗c6 ♗be8 27.f4 ♗e7 28. ♗xe4 ♗e6 29. ♗xe6+ ♗xe6 30. ♗d6

♖d8 31.e4 ♗b8 32.f5 ♜ed7 33.fxe6 ♜xd6



Here, we have another simple example from the endgame. White uses a square on the open file to prepare the doubling of rooks. Black can exchange his opposing rook there, however...

34. ♜d5 ♗c6

A) 34... ♜xd5 35.exd5 would be a huge improvement of White's pawn structure to say the least;

B) 34... ♔f8 was more stubborn, but wouldn't offer much hope either after 35. ♜ed1 ♔e7 36.e5 ♜xd5 37.cxd5 fxe5 38. ♙xe5.

35. ♜ed1 ♜xd5 36.exd5 ♔f8 37. ♙f2 ♗e7 38.b4 cxb4 39. ♙xb4 a5 40. ♙xe7+ ♔xe7 41. ♜b1 ♜b8 42.c5 b5 43. ♜e1 1-0

Here is a more complicated middlegame example.

Grünfeld Indian Defence

Milko Bobotsov

2485

Eddie Scholl

2430

Amsterdam 1971 (10)

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3. ♗c3 d5 4. ♗f3 ♙g7 5.e3 0-0 6.cxd5 ♗xd5 7. ♙c4 ♗xc3 8.bxc3 c5 9.0-0 ♙c7 10. ♙e2 b6 11. ♙b2 ♗c6 12. ♜fd1 ♙g4 13. ♜ac1 ♜ab8 14.h3 ♙d7 15. ♙b5 ♜fd8 16.c4 a6 17. ♙xc6 ♙xc6 18.d5 ♙a4 19. ♜d2 f6 20.e4 e5 21.dxe6 ♙e7



Black controls the d1-square, which prevents White from doubling, but with his next move

22. ♖d5!

White prepares to transfer his other rook via c3: ♖c1-c3-d3.

22... ♗xe6

22... ♖xd5 23.exd5 is not an option, of course. 22... ♖d6!?, on the other hand, was, but the 1970 Dutch Champion sensibly chose to win back his pawn first.

23. ♗d3

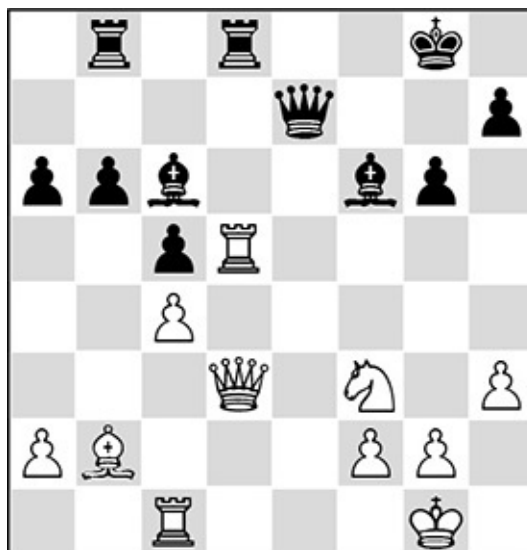
23. ♗d2 would enable 'Alekhine's Gun' after 23... ♖d7 24. ♖c3 ♖bd8

25. ♖cd3, but with 25... ♔c6, Black could force his opponent to release the tension along the d-file. With all the major pieces gone, the resulting ending favours Black, due to the better pawn structure and the pair of bishops.

23... ♗e7 24.e5

The battle for the d-file is a temporary deadlock, and now White opens a new front.

24... ♔c6 25.exf6 ♗xf6



26. ♖e1

Now, White's rook can use the e-file, and with a future exchange of the dark-squared bishop, Black will be robbed of the pair of bishops.

26... ♜f8?

26... ♜f7 invites 27. ♘e5, but that just gives equality after 27... ♜e6 (27... ♜xe5 28. ♜xd8+ 28. ♜xd8+ (28. ♘xc6!? ♜xe1+ 29. ♜h2 ♜xb2 30. ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 31. ♜xd8+ ♜g7 32. ♜c7+) 28... ♜xd8 29. ♜b3.

27. ♜e6

Oops. Suddenly the rooks become too active!

27... ♜xb2

27... ♜xd5 28. ♜xf6 wins material – 28... ♜f7 29. ♜c3.

28. ♜xc6 ♜f6 29. ♜e4

Here, White could have given up the d-file for material with 29. ♜xd8 ♜xd8 30. ♜b3. Still, after the text-move, the Bulgarian grandmaster managed to take home a rook ending.

29... ♜e8 30. ♘e5 ♜b7 31. f4 ♜g7 32. ♜d3 ♜xe5 33. fxe5 ♜be7 34. ♜xb6 ♜xe5 35. ♜xe5 ♜xe5 36. ♜xa6 ♜e1+ 37. ♜h2 ♜e5+ 38. ♜g3 ♜d4 39. ♜a7 ♜c8 40. ♜g4 ♜xg4 41. hxg4 ... 1-0 (59)

Controlling the last square

Sicilian Defence

Toms Kantans

2343

Zaven Andriasyan

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♙b5+ ♘c6 4.0-0 ♙d7 5.♚e1 ♘f6 6.c3 a6 7.♙f1 ♙g4 8.h3 ♙xf3 9.♙xf3 g6 10.a4 ♙g7 11.♙a3 0-0 12.d3 b5 13.axb5 axb5 14.♙f4 b4 15.♙c4 ♙d7 16.♙d2 ♙de5 17.♙xe5 ♙xe5 18.♙e3 ♙b6 19.f4 ♙g7 20.♙f2



By controlling the last square on a file with a piece other than the rook, you secure control of the entire file. This is one effective example.

20... ♙a5!

20... ♚a5 would be the other typical attempt to take control of the open file.

21.e5 ♙b3 22.♚xa8 ♚xa8

Now, the a-file belongs to Black, and the b2-pawn is a target.

23.♙e3 ♚a2 24.♙c2?!

This meets with a surprising reply. 24.♙h4 was a better and more active retort.

24... ♙a1!?

An original idea! 24...bxc3 was the obvious reply. After 25.♙xc3 ♙b8 26.♙f2, Black is also clearly better.

25.♙b1 b3!

The knight threatens to return via c2, and subsequently trap the queen with ...

♚a1.

26.♙xa1

White does not want to wait passively with 26.exd6 ♙xd6 27.♚e2, temporarily preventing 27... ♙c2, and gives up the queen for rook and piece. It was not enough here:

26... ♖xa1 27. ♖xa1 ♜b7 28. ♙e2 h5 29. exd6 exd6 30. ♜f2 ♙f6 31. ♙f3 ♜b5 32. ♜e2 c4 33. dxc4 ♜xc4+ 34. ♜f2 ♜d3 35. ♖e1 ♙xc3 36. ♖e2 ♙d4 37. g3 ♙xe3+ 38. ♖xe3 ♜d4 0-1

Open files: to seize or not to seize...

The presence of an open file does not necessarily mean you have to occupy it with your rooks. An effective follow-up is desirable. Also, other strategic elements might be of more importance. Let's try not to be dogmatic about doubling rooks.

Sicilian Defence

Kristaps Kalnins

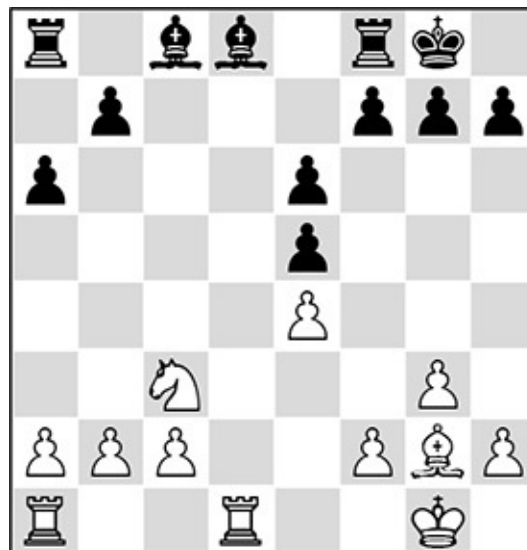
2269

Yusup Atabayev

2431

Kazan tt 2013 (4)

1.e4 c5 2. ♘c3 e6 3. g3 ♘c6 4. ♙g2 ♙ge7 5. ♙ge2 a6 6. d4 cxd4 7. ♙xd4 ♙xd4 8. ♜xd4 ♘c6 9. ♜d3 ♙e7 10. 0-0 0-0 11. ♙f4 d6 12. ♖fd1 ♙e5 13. ♙xe5 dxe5 14. ♜xd8 ♙xd8



The d-file has just been opened and, probably without giving it much further thought, White decided on doubling rooks:

15. ♖d3?

In the first place, as we shall see, the doubling of rooks on the d-file does not achieve much, as White has no useful entrance squares. Secondly – perhaps as a result – it is more important to attend to other matters in this position. The ♘c3

does not have many prospects here, and it blocks White's own pawn majority. It could have been transferred to d3, starting with 15. ♖a4. Preventing Black's next move with 15. a4 was another option.

15...b5 16. ♖ad1 ♗b7 17. a4?

So, White has doubled rooks on the open file, all in accordance with the basic principles. He could now invade Black's position with 17. ♖d7, but after 17... ♗c6 18. ♖7d6 ♖c8, the rook will be driven back even further with 19... ♗e7, just as in the game. The text move turns out to only help Black.

17... ♗c6 18. ♖d6 ♖c8 19. axb5 axb5

So, White has opened another file, but soon it will be Black who will profit from it. The white rooks are almost useless bystanders.

20. ♗a2 ♗e7 21. ♖6d3 ♖a8 22. ♗c1 ♖fc8



Black is clearly better: his rooks will manage to invade White's position via the a-file, while his pair of bishops still controls White's entrance squares on the d-file.

23. f3 g6 24. c3 b4 25. c4 ♖a1 26. b3 ♖ca8 27. f4?

Losing immediately.

27... ♖b1 28. ♗e2 ♖aa1 29. ♖xb1 ♗c5+! 0-1

Avoiding the exchange

French Defence

Sergey Fedorchuk

Daniele Genocchio

Trieste 2009 (8)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 c5 4.♘gf3 ♘c6 5.exd5 exd5 6.♙b5 ♙d6 7.0-0 ♘ge7 8.dxc5 ♘xc5
9.♘b3 ♙d6 10.♚e1 0-0 11.♙g5 ♙g4 12.c3 ♚c7 13.h3 ♙h5 14.♙e2 ♚fe8 15.♘fd4 ♙xe2
16.♙xe2 a6 17.♚ad1 ♙d7 18.♙xe7 ♚xe7 19.♙f3 ♚xe1+ 20.♚xe1 ♙e8



When playing against the IQP, it is advisable to trade pieces, and this is the general guideline. Then, the dynamic counter-chances will slowly disappear, when the isolated pawn can be exploited more easily in an endgame. In his enjoyable and instructional stories in *Chess Training for Candidate Masters*, Alexander Kalinin adds something more specific to the axiom. According to one of his former trainers, Abram Khasin: ‘When playing against an isolated pawn you should exchange minor pieces and keep the major pieces.’ This is something you could have learned from games with this structure in the famous Bronstein-Botvinnik match of 1951 (the first World Championship Match that was preceded by a qualification system – the Candidates’ Tournament – and one that Botvinnik just managed to tie, thus keeping the title). Here, White acted according to that principle.

21. ♚d1!

Relinquishing the open file and targeting the isolated pawn.

21... ♚e5 22. ♙d3 g6 23. ♘f3

To transfer one ‘superfluous’ knight to e3 with 23. ♖c2 was certainly an alternative.

23... ♜f5 24. ♖bd4 ♜f6



25. ♖c2

Okay, now the other knight goes to e3.

25... ♜b8 26. ♜e1

Of course, not the impatient 26. ♜xd5? ♜d6.

26... ♜e6 27. ♖e3 ♖e5 28. ♖xe5 ♜xe5 29. ♜d1 ♜a4

29... ♜e7 30. ♜d2 ♜a7 31. ♖xd5 loses a pawn, but White has some work ahead. The text move saves the pawn, but as a result the black pieces are scattered over the board, and the game ended in just a few more moves:

30. ♖xd5 ♜xa2 31. ♖f6+ ♜g7 32. ♖d7 ♜e8 33. ♜d4+ 1-0

Summary

There is more than one way to obtain control of an open file by doubling rooks. When you advance the first rook along the file, make sure you can recapture with another major piece – it’s as simple as that. You might also create the possibility of recapturing with a pawn, when an exchange will considerably improve your pawn structure. Blocking the line with a piece to gain time for undisturbed doubling is a charming means to the end. Remember though, before you set out to occupy an open file, to also consider other targets and the presence of (useful) entrance squares.

CHAPTER 19

What remains: towards a good knight versus a bad bishop

The exchange of a pair of minor pieces can have many well-considered reasons. For example, you may want to swap an active piece or an attacker of your opponent. This is quite a logical and sensible instigator. Still, you will always have to consider what remains on the board. The classical ‘good knight versus bad bishop’ situation is definitely something to aim for and to watch out for. Let’s see how these positions may come about (and enjoy some free endgame lessons on the way). A well-known classic endgame with knight versus bishop in an IQP position is Flohr-Capablanca, Moscow 1935. For that one, I have to refer you to the classical endgame books.

The following game also features an IQP, but the structure becomes symmetrical and material boils down to the same imbalance. Lilienthal considered it one of his finest achievements.

French Defence

Andor Lilienthal

Igor Bondarevsky

Moscow ch-URS 1940 (19)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♘d7 5.♘f3 ♘e7 6.♘d3 ♘gf6 7.♘xf6+ ♘xf6 8.0-0 c5 9.c3 cxd4 10.cxd4 0-0 11.♖c2 g6 12.♘f4 ♘b6 13.♘c7 ♖e7



14. ♕e4 ♘d5

Black decides to allow White to solve the problem of the IQP, to finish his own development, as after

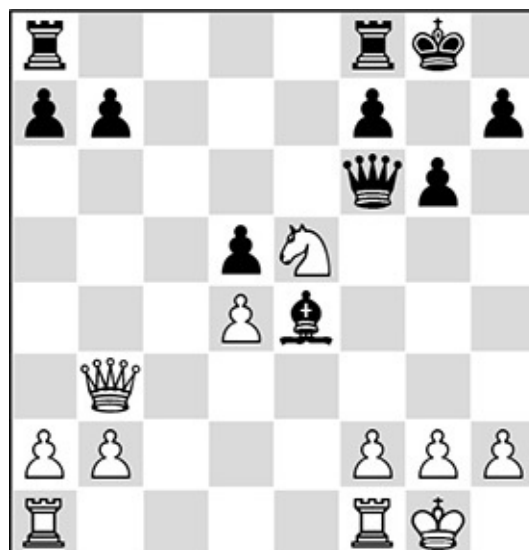
15. ♕xd5 exd5

the c8-bishop can become active. With his following move, White immediately follows up with a second piece swap.

16. ♕e5

Now, Black's bishop pair is eliminated. Because of the exchange on the previous move, the only minor pieces that remain are a white knight versus a black bishop. The latter is light-squared. This is a minor inconvenience in combination with the d5-pawn, which is fixed on a light square.

16... ♖f5 17. ♕xf6 ♜xf6 18. ♜b3 ♕e4 19. ♘e5



White has a slight initiative.

19... ♖b6

In view of White's threats, Lilienthal considered this move to be more or less forced, but active defence might be possible: 19... ♖ac8 20. ♗d7 (20. ♗xb7 ♖c2; 20.f3 ♗f5 21. ♗xd5 ♗g5) 20... ♗g5 21.f3 ♖c2.

20. ♗xb6 axb6

Now, Black has a second weakness: an IDP on the b-file (which will fall almost thirty moves later).

21. ♖fc1 ♖fc8 22.a3 ♗f5 23.g4 ♗e6 24.h3 f6 25. ♗d3 g5 26.f3 ♗f7 27. ♗f2 ♗e7 28. ♗e3 ♗d6 28...h5 is given by Lilienthal to exchange pawns. In principle, this is correct, but 29.gxh5 ♗xh3 still leaves White with an edge.

29. ♖xc8! ♖xc8 30.h4 h6 31.hxg5 hxg5 32. ♖h1! ♖e8

32... ♖c2 33. ♖h6.

33. ♗d2 ♗d7 34. ♖h6

More open files here, and only the white rook has entrance squares!

34... ♖f8 35. ♗e1 ♗e7 36. ♗c2 ♖f7 37. ♗e3 ♗e6 38. ♗c3 ♗d6 39. ♗b4 ♗d7 40. ♗f5+ ♗c7 41.a4 ♗e6 42. ♗g3 ♗d7 43. ♗h5 f5 44. ♗f6 fxg4 45. ♗xd5+ ♗b8 46.fxg4 ♗xg4 47. ♗xb6 ♖f2 48.b3 ♗d1 49.d5 ♗c7 50.a5 ♖d2 51. ♖h7+ ♗b8 52.d6 ♖d4+ 53. ♗c5 ♖h4 54.d7 ♗c7 55.d8 ♗+ 1-0

And Lilienthal ended equal first after this last-round game in the 12th USSR Championship! He was ahead of Smyslov, Keres, Boleslavsky and Botvinnik. This result apparently inspired Botvinnik to come up with the idea for an 'absolute championship', i.e. a match tournament between the above-mentioned players in 1941.

In the 11th USSR Championship, one year earlier, runner-up Alexander Kotov was defeated by Levenfish in the same fashion, albeit with two dissimilarities.

Queen's Gambit Declined

Grigory Levenfish

Alexander Kotov

Leningrad ch-URS 1939 (5)

1. ♗f3 ♗f6 2.c4 e6 3.d4 d5 4. ♗c3 ♗e7 5.cxd5 exd5 6. ♗f4 0-0 7.e3 c5 8. ♗d3 ♗c6 9.0-0 cxd4 10. ♗xd4 ♗xd4 11.exd4 ♗e6 12. ♖c1 ♗e8 13. ♖e1 ♗d6



First of all, the initial minor piece exchange has been a knight versus knight, so a bad bishop versus good knight ending is not yet in the offing.

14. ♖e5!

Instead of exchanging immediately, White cleverly provokes a weakness.

14... f6 15. ♖xd6 ♗xd6

This is forced, to protect the bishop on e6.

16. ♗c2 g6 17. ♘b5 ♗d7 18. ♗e2 ♔f7 19. ♗d2

19. ♖c5!?

19... a6 20. ♗a5 ♖c8 21. ♖xc8 ♗xc8 22. ♘c3 ♗c7 23. ♗xc7+ ♘xc7

Here, there is a second factor that differs from the Lilienthal game: two major pieces are exchanged, but there isn't a second weakness in Black's pawn structure. Also, White still has to exchange a bishop for a knight to achieve the same material balance.

24. ♘a4 ♗d7 25. ♘c5 ♗c6 26. ♖c1 ♖c8 27. h4

Tournament winner Botvinnik analysed this game for the tournament book, which helped him much later, in 1963 versus Petrosian, to liquidate into a similar position with a tiny but nagging edge for White.



The 14th match game saw 22... ♖c4 23. ♙xc4 ♜xc4, and eventually Botvinnik brought home the victory. It was to be his last one in a World Championship Match.

Stuck with a French bishop

French Defence

Bukhuti Gurgendidze

Reinhart Fuchs

Tbilisi 1969 (8)

1.e4 e6 2. ♘f3 d5 3. ♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7 5.d4 c5 6. ♙b5 ♘c6 7.0-0 a6



8. ♖xc6

This was White's intention on move 6, of course. This Gurgendidze idea is not a popular line, but it contains some straightforward strategic ideas. The bishop has just been swapped for a knight, and from the Lilienthal game we know what Black may end up with after more minor-piece exchanges!

8...bxc6 9. ♗a4 ♜e7 10.c3 0-0 11.b3 cxd4 12.cxd4



12... ♞b6

There goes a pair of knights. 12...a5 seems a logical alternative, to develop the c8-bishop to a6.

13. ♞xb6 ♜xb6 14. ♞g5!

Almost there!

14... ♜xg5

Black obliges, though something could be said for 14... ♜a3, declining the exchange of bishops.

15. ♞xg5 f6 16. ♞f3 fxe5?

White had achieved what he wanted: knight versus French bishop, but this move is something of a present, giving him a free stronghold for his knight! 16...a5, for example, would have been better.

17. ♞xe5 c5 18.dxc5 ♜xc5 19. ♜c1 ♜d6 20. ♜d4



That's a mighty central queen! White now creates a passed pawn on the queenside. When all the rooks had disappeared from the board, this proved to be decisive.

20... ♖d7 21. ♜fe1 ♜ac8 22.h3 ♜xc1 23. ♜xc1 ♜c8 24. ♜xc8+ ♜xc8 25.b4 ♜c7 26.f4 ♜c1+ 27. ♜h2 g5 28.fxg5 ♜xg5 29.a4 h5 30.h4 ♜f6 31.b5 axb5 32.axb5 ♜b7 33.b6 ♜h7 34. ♜d3+ ♜h8 35. ♜g3 ♜h7 36. ♜f3 ♜h6 37. ♜c7 1-0

Sicilian Defence

Vladimir Tukmakov

2570

Dragoljub Velimirovic

2525

Odessa tt 1975 (4)

1. ♜f3 c5 2.c4 g6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♜xd4 ♜c6 5.e4 ♜g7 6. ♜e3 ♜f6 7. ♜c3 0-0 8. ♜e2 d6 9.0-0 ♜d7 10. ♜c1 ♜xd4 11. ♜xd4 ♜c6 12.f3 ♜d7



13. ♖h1

White allows the exchange of the dark-squared bishops. Later, 13. ♔e3 was to become the usual answer, avoiding the exchange of Black's strong fianchettoed bishop! This is not illogical though, as Black has to manoeuvre within limited space. Apart from that, it avoids the liquidation that follows in the game.

13... ♗xd4 14. ♘xd4 ♙b6 15. ♙d2 ♘c5 16. ♖fe1 ♗ad8 17. ♘d5

The logical spot for the knight. However after

17... ♗xd5 18. exd5

(18. cxd5 was to be preferred)

18... a5

White is stuck with his light-squared bishop, again restricted by his own pawns. This is certainly not the end of the world, but in the game, Velimirovic slowly created an initiative.

19. ♗f1 ♖fe8 20. ♗e3 e5 21. dxe6 ♗xe6 22. ♗ce1 ♙b4 23. ♙f2 ♗de8 24. ♗xe6 ♗xe6 25. ♗d1 ♙a4 26. b3 ♙b4 27. ♖g1 a4 28. bxa4 ♙xa4 29. ♗d2 ♙b4 30. ♗b2 ♙c3 31. ♙d2 ♙f6 32. ♗b1 h5



33. ♖e1 ♜xe1 34. ♝xe1 ♞e5! 35. ♞f2 ♜f8 36. g3 h4 37. gxh4 ♞e6 38. ♞d2 ♞d4 39. ♜g2 ♞f5 40. ♞f2 ♞f4 41. ♜h3 ♞xh4 42. ♞g3 ♞f6 43. f4 ♞f5 44. ♞e1 ♞d4 45. ♜g2 0-1

Sicilian Defence

Fridrik Olafsson

Vladimir Simagin

Moscow 1959 (8)

1. e4 c5 2. ♞f3 ♞c6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♞xd4 g6 5. c4 ♞g7 6. ♞e3 ♞f6 7. ♞c3 ♞g4 8. ♞xg4 ♞xd4 9. ♞d1 ♞e6 10. ♞d2 d6 11. g3 ♞d7 12. ♜c1 a5 13. ♞g2 ♞c6 14. 0-0 0-0 15. f4 ♜c8 16. ♜fd1 ♞c5 17. ♞f2 ♞e8



18. ♞d4

A question mark from Simagin. 18. ♖d5 was called for. If 18... ♗xd5 19. ♜xd5, White has a spatial advantage with a flexible position and the pair of bishops.

18... ♗xd5 19. ♜xd5 ♜d8 20. ♖d5 e5! 21. ♖f6+ ♜h8 22. ♜c3

22. ♖xe8 exd4 23. ♖f6 ♜g7 24. ♖d5 ♗xd5 25. exd5 ♜fe8 26. ♜xd4 ♜e2 does not promise White much.

22... ♜e7 23. ♖d5 ♗xd5 24. ♜xd5 f6

‘The game has gone in Black’s favour. His knight is considerably stronger than his opponent’s bishop’ – Suetin.

25.f5

After 25. ♜xa5 ♜a8 26. ♜b6 ♜a6 Black takes the initiative (Suetin). The text move prevents ... ♖e6-d4.

25... ♜c7 26. ♜cd1 ♜b6 27. ♜h1 g5

Again, an exclamation mark from Suetin: ‘Confining the bishop’s mobility even more and provoking the capture on d6, when the opening of the position will favour Black.’

28. ♜d2 ♜f7 29. ♜xd6 ♜xd6 30. ♜xd6 ♜b4



Positionally, things look great for Black. He will follow up with ... ♜h8-g7, threatening ... ♜d7. The g2-bishop is pretty bad and is locked in by its own pawns. However, White could have ventured a surprising move.

31.b3

31.h4! not only threatens 32.hxg5, but also vacates the h2-square for the king, enabling ♜b8+, followed by ♜d8. After 31...g4 (31...gxh4 32.gxh4 b6

33. ♜d8+ ♜g7 34. ♜g1 is way too dangerous) 32. ♜h2 ♜g7 33. ♜d5, White’s

major pieces crash through, while his bad bishop is a good defender. On the other hand, Black's knight has no easy target and his rook is passive. At the time of the game, Olafsson was one of the leading players in the world, but he did not grab this difficult chance, and the game evolved according to Black's plan.

31... ♖g7 32. ♜d8 a4 33.bxa4? ♜xc4

Suddenly, Black has many targets, while White's rook has remained passive (unlike after 31.h4!). Though White could have defended better, Simagin won:

34. ♜a5 ♜c2 35. ♜d2 ♜xa4 36. ♜c1 ♜d7 37. ♜e2 ♜a3 38. ♜b1 ♜c3 39. ♜d1 ♜d3 40. ♜f1 ♜c5 41. ♜g4 ♜d3 42. ♜h5 ♜d4 43. ♜e8 ♜d6 44. ♜f3 ♜d2 45.a4 b6 46. ♜b1 ♜d3 47. ♜g2 ♜f2+ 48. ♜g1 ♜g4 49.h4 ♜xg2+ 50. ♜xg2 ♜d2+ 0-1

Philidor Defence

Andrey Kharlov

2555

Alexander Panchenko

2465

Moscow 1992

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♜f6 3. ♜c3 e5 4. ♜f3 ♜bd7 5. ♜c4 ♜e7 6.0-0 0-0 7.a4 c6 8. ♜e1 ♜c7 9.h3 b6 10. ♜g5 ♜b7 11. ♜e2!

Preparing d4-d5, when White can take back with his pieces now that c2 has been protected.

11...a6 12.d5 cxd5 13. ♜xd5 ♜xd5

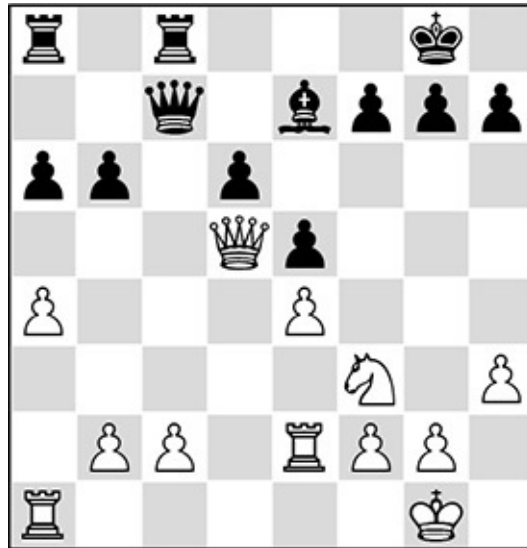
13... ♜xd5 14. ♜xd5 ♜xd5 15. ♜xe7 is good for White after 15... ♜c4 16. ♜d2 ♜fe8 17. ♜xd6.



14. ♖xf6!

Swapping a bishop for a knight, to be... left with a knight against a bishop.

14... ♗xf6 15. ♕xd5 ♗xd5 16. ♖xd5 ♖fc8



Not yet 'Fischer's knight on d5' (Chapter 6), but let's go for it!

17. ♗e1 ♖ab8 18. ♗d3

Threatening 19. ♗b4.

18... ♖c4 19. ♖xc4 ♖xc4 20. a5 b5 21. c3

White's knight is almost there (♗d3-b4-d5). Panchenko decides to get some breathing space.

21... d5 22. ♗xe5 ♖xe4 23. ♖xe4 dxe4 24. ♗c6 ♖b7 25. ♗xe7+ ♖xe7 26. ♖d1

The only open file is for the White's rook, which grants him a huge advantage here. Black liquidates to a pawn endgame, but this won't save him either:

26... ♖f8 27. ♖d6 ♖e6 28. ♖xe6 fxe6 29. ♖h2 ♖e7 30. ♖g3 ♖d6 31. ♖f4 ♖c5 32. b3 b4 33. c4 ♖d4 34. h4 1-0

Still not a good bishop

Ruy Lopez

David Bronstein

2535

Valery Chekhov

2410

Tallinn ch-USSR 1980

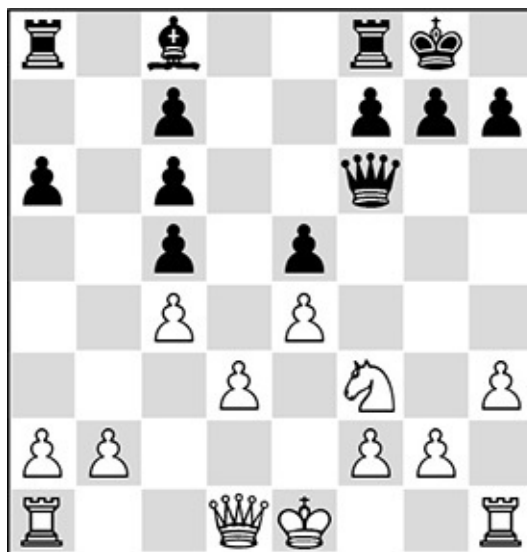
1. e4 e5 2. ♗f3 ♗c6 3. ♗b5 a6 4. ♗a4 ♗f6 5. d3 d6 6. c4 ♗e7 7. ♗c3 0-0 8. h3 ♗d7 9. ♗e3 ♗f6

10. ♖d5 ♜c5



Here, Bronstein decided to exchange three pieces in a row. It's straightforward, so you can, and should, immediately assess the remaining position with a knight for White and a bishop for Black.

11. ♜xc6 bxc6 12. ♖xf6+ ♜xf6 13. ♜xc5 dxc5

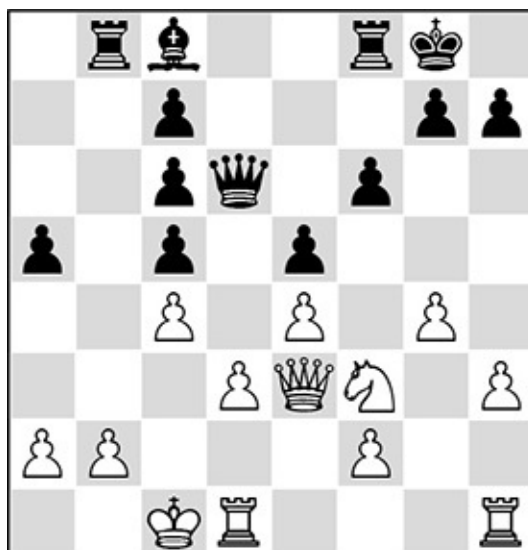


Had the f6-bishop remained on the board (instead of the light-squared bishop), you would probably have concluded 'good knight-bad bishop', but now it is the bishop on c8 that is still there. However, its mobility too is pretty restricted, not due to Black's own pawns, but because of the white pawns.

14. ♜d2 ♜d6 15. g4

The only break that could improve the bishop's life is ...f7-f5, which Bronstein prevented with his last move. Black's tripled pawns leave no possibility for breaks on the queenside.

15... ♖b8 16.0-0-0 f6 17.♗e3 a5



18.♗g1

Rerouting the knight to attack the foremost of the tripled pawns. This is a pawn that cannot be defended either by any neighbouring pawn or Black's bishop!

18... ♗e6 19.♗e2 ♖b4 20.♖d2 ♖fb8 21.a3 ♖b3 22.♗c3 ♗d4 23.♗a4

Everything has fallen perfectly into place. Black struggled on a bit, but the end came inevitably:

23... ♗f7 24.♗xc5 ♖c3+ 25.♗b1 ♖xa3 26.♗xd4 exd4 27.f4 ♗e7 28.e5 fxe5 29.fxe5 ♗f7 30.♖f1 ♖ab3 31.♖f4 ♖3b4 32.♖xd4 ♖d8 33.♖xd8 ♗xd8 34.♗c2 ♗e7 35.♗c3 ♖b8 36.b3 1-0

Pretty old stuff, hey? Well, essentially, nothing has changed. Take a quick peek at the following game, and compare it to Lilienthal's game.

Slav Defence

Alexander Lenderman

2581

Tegshuren Enkhbat

2405

Bethesda 2016 (7)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♗c3 ♗f6 4.e3 a6 5.♗c2 e6 6.♗f3 c5 7.cxd5 exd5 8.♗e2 ♗c6 9.0-0 cxd4

10. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 11.exd4 ♙e7 12. ♙g5 ♙e6 13. ♙f3 ♙d7 14. ♙b3 ♜d8 15. ♜ac1



Here, Black started a liberating operation, but after
15... ♖e4 16. ♙xe7 ♖d2 17. ♙d1 ♖xf3+ 18. ♙xf3 ♙xe7



he ended up with the bad bishop.

19. ♖a4 0-0 20. ♖c5 ♙c8 21. ♜fe1 ♙d6 22. ♙g3! ♙xg3?! 23.hxg3 ♜fe8



24. ♖xe8+!

From the two open files, White wants to use the c-file, because that's where he can more easily enter. On the e-file, Black may control the entrance squares with one move (...♔g8-f8). A famous example that also featured this idea is Botvinnik-Alekhine, AVRO 1938. And remember, of course, that Lilienthal also kept one rook on the board.

24... ♜xe8 25.f3 ♜f8 26.♜f2 ♜d8 27.♜c3 ♜e8 28.g4 h6 29.a3 f6 30.♞d3

And the American grandmaster converted his big plus:

30... ♞e6 31.♜c7 ♜e7 32.♞c5 b6 33.♞xa6 ♜xc7 34.♞xc7 ♞f7 35.♞a8 b5 36.♞c7 b4 37.axb4 ♜e7 38.♞b5 g5 39.♞c3 ♜d6 40.♜e3 ♞g6 41.b5 f5 42.b6 f4+ 43.♜f2 ♞f7 44.♞b5+ Black resigned.

Summary

Before you can reach a bishop versus knight position, there will have to be an earlier exchange of a knight versus a bishop. This is your first sign of where the game may be heading! Several openings are also known for the possibility of resulting in good knight versus bad bishop positions, notably variations from the French Defence, where 'French bishop' is equivalent to bad bishop. Make sure to take a second look at the exchanges preceding 'Fischer's knight' (Chapter 6), which, naturally, is an exemplary good knight. Chekhov's bad bishop was perhaps an atypical one, but still worth remembering, too!

CHAPTER 20

The ace of space

Spatial advantage is determined by the pawn structure, especially in the centre. When your pawns have advanced further than those of your opponent, there will be more space behind them to manoeuvre your pieces in. In this case, the opponent's pieces might struggle to find suitable squares. As a result, every piece exchange will influence the importance of the spatial advantage. Let's see how this works in practice.

Ruy Lopez

Alexey Shirov

2723

Ivan Sokolov

2688

Reykjavik 2003 (9)

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.♘g5 ♚f8 12.♘f3 ♚e8 13.a4 h6 14.♘bd2 ♙f8 15.♙c2 ♚d7 16.b3 b4 17.d5 ♘e7 18.c4 c5 19.♘f1 ♚h8 20.♘3h2 ♘g6 21.♘e3 ♚ad8 22.♘f5 ♙c8 23.♙f3 ♘h7 24.♙d2 ♘e7



Not a single piece, and not even a single pawn, has been exchanged yet. Black's

pieces are somewhat restricted by White's central spatial advantage that is generated by the d5-pawn. With the queenside closed, files will have to be opened on the kingside to make progress. With his next move, Shirov gains further space also here.

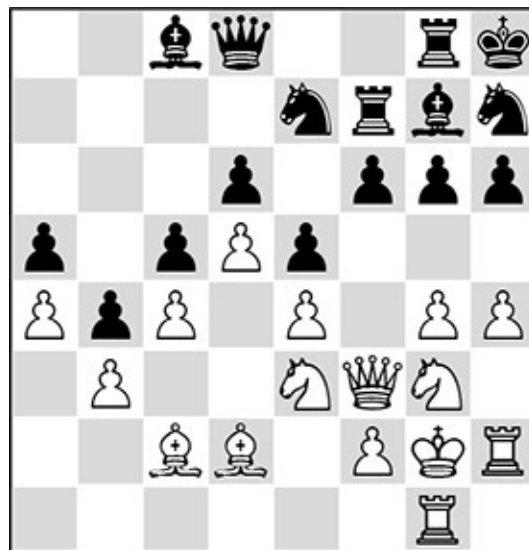
25.h4 ♖g8

25... ♜xf5 was the alternative – generally, it is a good thing to exchange pieces when there is little room for manoeuvring. However, Sokolov probably did not like the resulting position after 26.exf5, when White has gained further space with his f5-pawn. One future idea for White is the march of his g-pawn with g2-g4-g5. Apart from that, the black pieces may have little space, but they cooperate reasonably well from useful positions. Shirov awards the knight retreat an exclamation mark in *Informator 87*. Sokolov continues to improve his pieces up to move 31.

26.g4 g6 27. ♖e3 ♗g7 28. ♔h1 ♖e7 29. ♜g1 ♜g8 30. ♜g2 ♜df8 31. ♜ag1 ♞d8 32. ♖hf1

Black has manoeuvred well in anticipation of his opponent's plan. However, with all his pieces at the right places, it has become difficult to find a useful move for Black. Soon, Sokolov loses his patience.

32...a5 33. ♜h2 f6 34. ♖g3 ♜f7 35. ♞g2!



Shirov intends to transfer his king to d1, before organizing a break with ♖e2, ♞g3 and f2-f4. Check out 'Majestic manoeuvres' in IYCPR for more similar king transfers.

35...f5?

If Black is to become active, this has to be the break. Unfortunately, as it

appears, he had to stay passive. When you come to think of it, waiting moves belong to the hardest ones to make for many of us, too!

36.gxf5 gxf5 37.exf5 e4

With this pawn sacrifice, Sokolov tries to create maximum activity for his pieces (g7-bishop and g8-rook), but the f5-pawn keeps several other black pieces at bay. It took some time, but Shirov went on to win:

38.♙xe4 ♜e5 39.♚f1 ♜f6 40.♙d3 ♜fg7 41.♜hg2 ♜e8 42.♜e4 ♜xg2 43.♜xg2 ♜xg2 44.♜xg2 ♜h5 45.♜f1 ♜f7 46.♜g4 ♜xf5 47.♜xe5 dxe5 48.♜e1 ♜g6 49.♜xc5 ♜g8 50.♙e3 ♜g1+ 51.♜d2 ♜xe3 52.♜xe3 ♜a1 53.♙c2 ♜b2 54.♜d3 ♜f4 55.♜e3 ♙f5 56.♜e4 ♜f8 57.f3 h5 58.d6 ♙xe4 59.♜xe4 ♜e8 60.♜d1 ♜a1+ 61.♙b1 ♜c3 62.♜a8+ ♜f7 63.♜a7+ ♜g8 64.♜h7+ ♜f8 65.♜f5+ ♜g7 66.♜e4 ♜xb3+ 67.♙c2 ♜c3 68.d7 ♜a1+ 69.♙b1 ♜xa4+ 70.♜e1

And Black resigned.

Ruy Lopez

Frederick Yates

Lajos Asztalos

London ol 1927 (5)

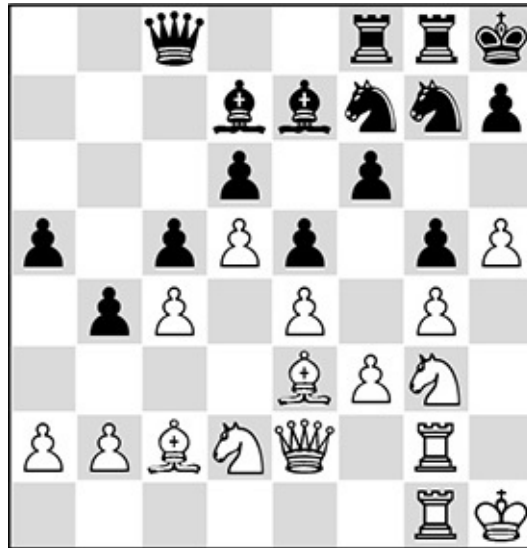
1.e4 e5 2.♜f3 ♜c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♜f6 5.0-0 ♙e7 6.♜e1 b5 7.♙b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 ♜a5 10.♙c2 c5 11.d4 ♜c7 12.♜bd2 ♜c6 13.d5 ♜d8 14.♜f1 ♜e8 15.g4 g6 16.♜g3 ♜g7 17.♜h2 f6 18.♙e3 ♜f7 19.♜g1 ♙d7 20.♜g2 ♜h8



Another line of the Closed Ruy Lopez. And closed it is! Here too, nothing has been exchanged yet. Please note that this not a peculiar position from the past, but a set-up that also features in modern practice. This position was a recurring

one for Yates, too. He had the exact position in the same year against Znosko-Borovsky (at the Tunbridge Wells tournament). That game proceeded with 21. ♖d2, and saw its first exchange on move 39!

21. ♖e2 ♜g8 22. ♗d2 ♝c8 23. ♞ag1 a5 24. f3 b4 25. c4 ♞b7 26. ♔h1 ♞af8 27. h4 ♝c8 28. h5 g5



29. h6!

If Black is allowed to play ...h7-h6, a breakthrough would become nearly impossible, rendering White's space advantage of little value.

29... ♗e8!

Black gains a pawn after 29... ♗xh6 30. ♞h2 ♗f7 31. ♔g2, but White has the activity of his two rooks.

30. ♗f5 ♗d8 31. ♞h2 ♞g6?!

Asztalos goes for the h-pawn after all. If he had not done so, it is hard to see how White could have made progress on the kingside.

32. ♞g3 ♗xf5

This first exchange offers no relief. Now, the f5-pawn yields White more space – just like in the former game – and thus vacates the e4-square for the other white knight.

33. exf5 ♞xh6 34. ♞xh6 ♗xh6 35. ♞h2 ♗g8 36. ♞h3 ♞f7 37. ♗a4 ♗e7 38. ♗e4

Ideal places for White's minor pieces. Now, Yates finds a nice way to improve and create further threats.

38... ♞d8



39.♔g1! ♚c7 40.♙c2 ♚a8 41.♚h1! ♚b6 42.♙c6 ♙f8 43.b3 ♚g7 44.♙h2 ♙e7 45.♙h5 a4

Now, if Black follows up with ...a4-a3, White loses the possibility to break on the queenside with a2-a3. However, Yates found an elegant way to break through on the kingside, where most of Black's congested pieces are.

46.♔g2 ♙b8 47.♙e8! ♙d8 48.♙g6 h6 49.♙f7 ♙f8 50.♙xg8

Only the second exchange in this game, but one which breaks Black's defences.

50... ♚xg8 51.♙f7 ♙g7 52.♙g6 ♚f8 53.♙xg5 1-0

Yates was rewarded the shared first brilliancy prize for this game (Yates did play shorter games; in fact, his first-round victory in 21 moves made him the first winner at this first Olympiad).

French Defence

Efim Geller

2620

Anatoly Karpov

2695

Moscow ch-URS 1976 (3)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♙c3 ♙b4 4.e5 ♙d7 5.♙f3 b6 6.♙d2 ♙a6 7.♙xa6 ♙xa6 8.0-0 ♙b8 9.♙e2



Here too, White has a small space advantage, thanks to his e5-pawn. Thanks to Geller's 6th move, Karpov could now have taken the opportunity to exchange another minor piece, allowing his other pieces to move more freely. However, the then new World Champion surprisingly withdrew the bishop:

9... ♖e7?

After 9... ♖e7 10. ♕xd2, the white queen may be easily transferred to the kingside, but Black is solid. Typically for this structure, Black's dark-squared bishop and king's knight are struggling for space: for the e7-square, that is. Sometimes, the bishop goes back to f8, and sometimes the knight jumps to h6, even if it would cause doubled h-pawns. In this particular position, Black falls behind in development. Therefore, Geller immediately tries to open the position.

10. ♖c1

10.c4!? dxc4 11. ♕c2 seems to the point as well.

10...b5 11. ♗f4 h5 12.b3

12.a4 a6 (12...bxa4 13.c4) 13.axb5 axb5 14. ♖a1 was a suggestion of Geller's, and the rook has found employment.

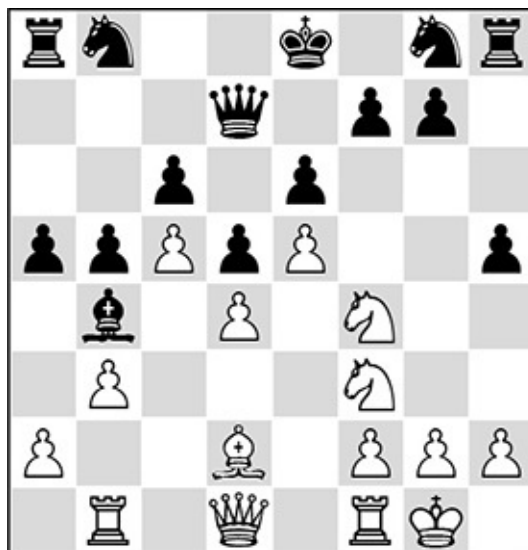
12... ♗a3 13. ♖b1 a5 14.c4 c6

Geller also showed that Black's backward development (king still in the middle) did not allow for 14...bxc4 15.bxc4 dxc4, in view of 16.d5 exd5 17.e6.

15.c5

Shutting out the a3-bishop, which might be trapped, but will be missed at home on the kingside anyway.

15... ♗b4



16. ♖c1!

Of course, no exchange!

16...a4 17. ♗d3 ♕a5 18.bxa4 bxa4 19. ♖xa4 ♖a7 20. ♗g5 ♗c7

Now, Geller sacrifices the exchange, which leads to a very pleasing combination. It was said that Karpov was distressed that Geller, one of his seconds, went for a win against him. Anyway, his position had been uncomfortable for some moves already.

21. ♖xb8+ ♖xb8 22. ♖xc6+ ♖f8 23. ♗f4 ♖a7 24. ♗h4 ♖e8



25. ♖xe6!

Combinations come naturally in such cramped positions, but I bet Geller made this attractive queen sacrifice with special pleasure.

25...fxe6 26. ♖hg6+ ♜xg6

26... ♜f7 27. ♖xh8+ ♜f8 28. ♖fg6+. Sometimes, superfluous knights can be pretty useful. Karpov held on until move 42, but then had to resign. He did become the winner of that year's USSR Championship though, ahead of three former World Champions.

27. ♖xg6+ ♜e8 28. ♖xh8 ♜a4 29. ♜d1 ♖e7 30. ♞xe7 ♜xe7 31. ♖g6+ ♜f7 32. ♖f4 ♞xe5 33.dxe5 ♜xf4 34. ♜c1 ♜e8 35.c6 ♜d8 36.c7+ ♜c8 37.g3 ♜a4 38. ♜c6 ♜xa2 39. ♜xe6 g5 40. ♜d6 ♜d2 41.e6 ♜xc7 42.e7 1-0

Let's vary with another pawn structure. White's space advantage is perhaps less obvious, as none of his pawns have crossed the middle of the board, but Black has no pawn in the centre at all. Here too, the exchange of minor pieces will partly determine the importance of space.

French Defence

Peter Leko

2743

Yasser Seirawan

2647

Istanbul ol 2000 (10)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3. ♖c3 dxe4 4. ♖xe4 ♞d7 5. ♖f3 ♞c6 6. ♞d3 ♖d7 7.0-0 ♖gf6 8. ♖g3

White usually tries to avoid too many exchanges with this move. Other moves with the same thought are 8. ♖eg5, with the idea of 8...h6 9. ♖xe6 fxe6 10. ♞g6+ ♜e7 11. ♜e1 and 8. ♖ed2.

8... ♞e7 9. ♜e1 0-0 10.c3 ♞xf3 11. ♜xf3 c6 12. ♞f4 ♜e8 13. ♜ad1



13... ♖f8

A) The typical break 13...c5, to contest White's pawn centre, runs into 14.dxc5 ♕xc5 15.♕b5. For example, 15...a6 16.♕xd7 ♖xd7 17.♖h5, with nasty threats: 17...♔e7? 18.♖xd7 ♕xd7 19.♗g3;

B) 13...♗b6 looks most logical.

14.a3 ♖g6 15.♕c1!

White does not want to exchange minor pieces, let alone give up his pair of bishops. Here, the bishop is not in the way of White's other pieces, and soon it will return to f4.

15... ♗c7 16.♖e4

Now White exchanges a minor piece anyway?! Well, the g3-knight was not very mobile, due to the e6-pawn, and like in the 4... ♕f5 Caro-Kann, jumps back into play at e4. As we will see, Black is still hampered by his lack of space after the knights have been exchanged.

16... ♖xe4 17.♕xe4 ♖ad8 18.g3 ♖d7?! 19.h4

This was to be expected after White's previous move, so Black should have started rerouting his knight there: 18... ♖f8 (-d7-f6).

19... ♖f8 20.♕f4 ♗d8



21.b4

White is gaining territory on both wings!

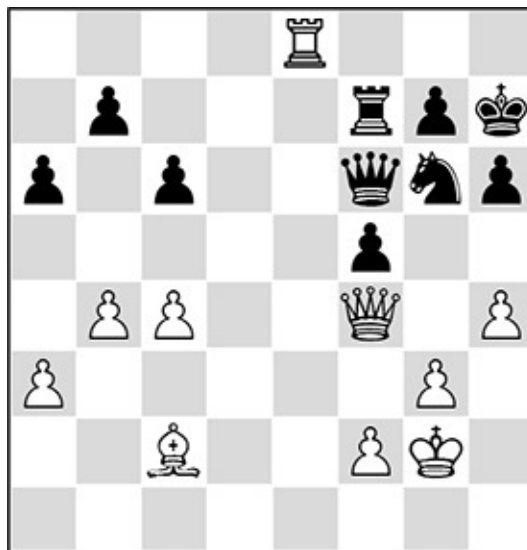
21... ♖d6 22. ♗e3 a6 23.c4 f5

After 23...e5 24.d5, the e4-bishop become very strong. Black drives the bishop back, but of course, he cannot do this without weakening his pawn structure.

24. ♗c2 ♜f7 25. ♗g5 ♜b8 26. ♗c1 ♜d8 27. ♗g5 ♜b8 28. ♜g2 h6 29. ♗c1 ♜d8 30. ♜h1 ♜f6 31. ♗b2 ♗b8 32. ♗c3 ♜h8 33. ♜de1 ♗d7 34. ♜e2 e5

So, Black managed to push through this central freeing break. However, his pieces are badly placed now that the position is opened.

35.dxe5 ♗xe5 36. ♜he1 ♜ee7 37. ♗xe5 ♜xe5 38. ♜xe5 ♗xe5 39. ♜f4 ♗g6 40. ♜e8+ ♜h7



41. ♜f3

41. ♖b8 might have been the strongest. But also after the text move, White was too active, and Black's kingside is too vulnerable, which Leko duly exploited.

41... ♗f8 42.h5 g6 43.hxg6+ ♗xg6 44. ♖e3 ♖g7 45. ♗e6 ♗g5 46. ♗d4+ ♖h7 47.f4 ♗g4 48. ♗d1 ♗h4+ 49. ♖f2 ♗h3 50.gxh4 ♗g7 51. ♗f3 ♗xh4+ 52. ♖e2 ♗h2+ 53. ♖d3 ♗a2 54. ♗d6 ♗xa3+ 55. ♖e2 ♗a2+ 56. ♖e3 ♗h2 57. ♗e2 c5 58.bxc5 a5 59. ♗e5 ♗h3+ 60. ♖d2 a4 61. ♗d3 ♗g2+ 62. ♖c3 a3 63. ♗f6 ♗g7 64. ♖b4 ♗xd3 65. ♗xh6+ ♖g8 66. ♗e8+ 1-0

The exchanges were more successful in the following example. Why?

Scandinavian Defence

Pablo Ruiz Aguilar

2294

Sergey Tiviakov

2650

Bogota 2011 (4)

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♗xd5 3. ♗c3 ♗d6 4.d4 ♗f6 5. ♗f3 g6 6. ♗c4 ♗g7 7.0-0 0-0 8. ♗e2 ♗g4 9. ♗e3 c6 10.h3 ♗xf3 11. ♗xf3 e6



Here, Tiviakov has solved the problem of his light-squared bishop from c8 in a different way. First, by fianchettoing the other one, thus avoiding ...e7-e6. Then, by exchanging it for the knight on f3. White's bishop pair is of little importance, as it will be hard to open up the position any further without the help of the d4-d5 break.

12. ♗ad1 ♗bd7 13. ♗f4 ♗e7 14. ♗fe1 ♗b6 15. ♗b3 a5 16.a4 ♗fd8

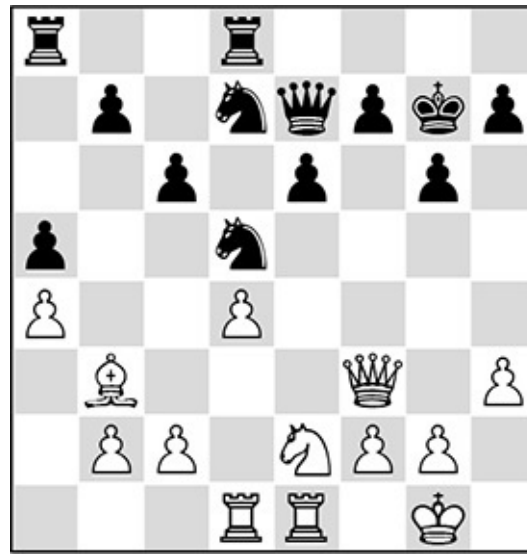
Black has a solid and flexible position (but no more than that).

17. ♖e5 ♜bd5 18. ♗e2 ♞d7 19. ♗xg7

This exchange only seems to help Black: there's more breathing space for his remaining pieces, and no more worries over a potentially dangerous pair of bishops.

19. ♗g3 was to be preferred.

19... ♜xg7



Here, the black pieces are better placed than in the previous example. The d7-knight already supports possible ...c6-c5 and ...e6-e5 pushes, while the central d5-knight will find a strong square on b4 if it is chased away with c2-c4. This makes it clear why the earlier insertion of the moves ...a7-a5 and a2-a4 was useful for Black!

20. c3 ♜f6 21. ♜g3 ♜ac8 22. ♜d3 ♞e7 23. ♗f4 ♜h8 24. ♜e3 ♞f5 25. ♜c1?

This passive move allows Black to free his position completely.

25...e5

25...c5 was even stronger, as 26. ♗xe6 fxe6 27. ♗xe6 ♜e8 28. ♗xc5 ♞xc5 29. dxc5 ♜c6 seems insufficient for White. Thus, Black would activate the c8-rook and preserve a central pawn, as well as a non-symmetrical pawn structure. Generally, the latter provides more chances of disturbing the equilibrium.

26. dxe5 ♞xe5 27. ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 28. ♜d1 ♜e8 29. ♞d3 ♞xd3 30. ♜xd3 ♜e2

With his rook on the second rank, Tiviakov started to take over the initiative, outwitted his considerably lower rated opponent, and eventually won this game: ...0-1 (80).

Here, we start with a slightly different pawn structure, which is soon transformed to a structure that we saw earlier on.

Slav Defence

Etienne Bacrot

2664

Jan Gustafsson

2571

Germany Bundesliga 2003/04 (9)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 dxc4 5.a4 ♘f5 6.e3 e6 7.♙xc4 ♘b4 8.0-0 ♘bd7 9.♚e2 0-0



Here, White's d-pawn is supported by another central pawn, while Black's light-squared bishop is outside the pawn chain. White now advances, and transposes to the same structure as in the Geller-Karpov game.

10.e4 ♘g6 11.♙d3 ♘h5 12.e5 ♘d5 13.♘xd5 cxd5 14.♚e3



White has enlarged his space advantage. The h5-bishop is likely to be exchanged on g6, but the d7-knight and b4-bishop are not particularly useful. Actually, Black has tried many moves in this position, which is not always a good sign. White's immediate threat is 15. ♖g5.

14...h6

A) 14... ♖xf3 is another exchange, and a relatively modern attempt to solve the space issues. White's attacking chances remain serious, e.g. 15. ♗xf3 ♗a5 16. ♗h3 g6 17. ♖g5 ♖d2 18. f4! (no more exchanges!) 18... ♗b6 19. ♖ad1 ♗xd4+ 20. ♗h1 ♗e3 21. ♖f3 ♗c5 22. ♗h6 f5 23. exf6 ♖xf6 24. ♖xg6 ♗c7 25. ♖d3 ♖e4 26. ♖xe4 dxe4 27. ♖g3 Li Chao-Guliyev, Deizisau 2014;

B) 14... ♖e7 seems the most solid, keeping the bishop in the defence. 15. ♖g5 (15. ♖d2 was the stem game Averbakh-Furman, 1954, when Averbakh noted that Black had to conduct a passive defence and try to exchange pieces, transpose into the endgame and make use of the c-file) 15... ♖xg5 16. ♗xg5 ♖g6.



analysis diagram

And here, several super-grandmasters have opted for 17. ♖e2, again avoiding exchanges. White's bishops are not very impressive, but his steady space advantage may continue to give him a slight edge in the endgame. We leave this to the studious theoreticians!

15. ♗e1 ♗g6 16. ♗xg6 fxg6



Even with a pawn on h7, this capture away from the centre is not uncommon in these Slav positions: it activates the f8-rook, and keeps mating patterns after ♗g5 at bay. However, it is not without drawbacks of course.

17. ♗c2 ♗a5

17... ♗e7 looks more natural, but probably Black wanted to be able to protect

his weak e-pawn with ... ♖e7, and at the same time prevent White's bishop from developing to d2.

18. ♗d3 ♔h7



Now, White starts to expand his territory even further, by advancing his pawns on both sides. Compare this to Leko-Seirawan. Pay special attention to the limited scope of the d7-knight.

19. f4 a6 20. b4 ♘b6 21. g4

Ambitious, but White soon creates a half open g-file for his rooks, after which the passive black pieces cannot withstand the pressure:

21... ♗h4 22. ♙e3 ♜ac8 23. ♙d2 h5 24. ♜ae1 hxg4 25. ♜e2 ♜f7 26. ♜g2 ♙f8 27. ♜xg4 ♗e7 28. a5 ♙a7 29. ♜f3 ♗g8 30. ♜h3 ♗e8 31. ♜gh4 ♜fc7 32. f5 ♗f7 33. ♜h8 ♗b5 34. fxg6+ ♗e7 35. ♜f3 ♜c1+ 36. ♜g2 1-0

Summary

A space advantage comes in many forms; for example, in closed structures, when pawns have crossed the halfway line, or in more open positions, when the space advantage is determined by one central pawn. Generally, the defender will benefit from any exchange, although more space can remain an advantage in the endgame as well. In open positions, it will be easier for the defender to exchange pieces, when, as always, it is vital (for both sides!) to consider what remains on the board. The main thing is to be aware of the consequences of each and every piece exchange. Don't swap automatically –

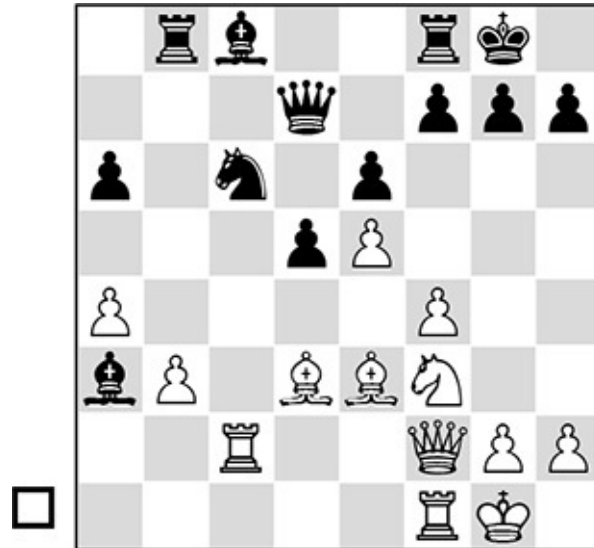
sometimes it just may be useful to avoid or prevent a piece exchange. A spatial advantage is one thing that may give you a clue here!

PART IV

Sacrifices – the classics

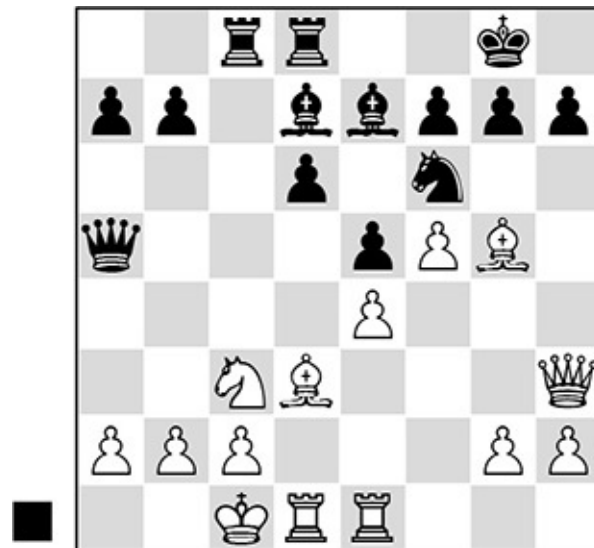
Finally, the part you've been waiting for! Good old-fashioned, straightforward chopping! Luckily, even in this field our game remains pretty complicated, and there is often more to the moves than meets the eye. We will look at circumstances that enable a successful classic bishop sac on h7. For the traditional exchange sacrifice on c3, you will need to develop long-term vision. The silent knight sac on f5, as well as the bishop sac on Black's traditionally weakest square f7, will, amongst others, train your calculating capacities. Finally, Capablanca's bishop sacrifice on e6 is perhaps the least known of the bunch. Long-term vision is needed also here. Will you manage to keep your octopus? Hack away and have fun!

21 Bishop takes h7



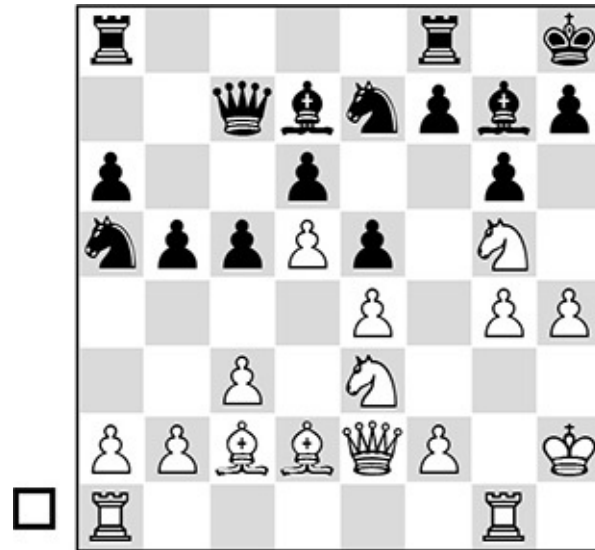
What about 22. ♔xh7+ ?

22 The Soviet sac



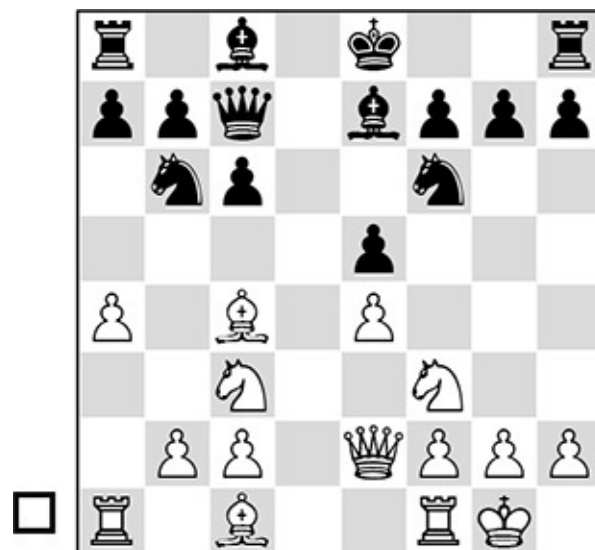
Dare 15... ♖xc3 ?

23 The silent knight sac



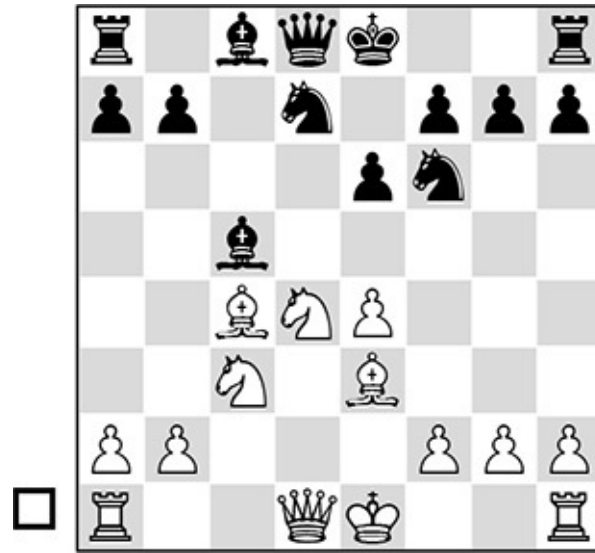
23. ♖f5!?

24 From Morphy to Magnus



Would you go for 10. ♕xf7+ ?

25 Capa's bishop sac



9. Qxe6!?

CHAPTER 21

Bishop takes h7

This is a classic one, of course, but also one for our times. Still, the outcome is not always evident, and circumstances may differ. Let's look at some easy examples, as well as some more complex examples, in various situations. We start with the fairly obvious.

French Defence

Nigel Short

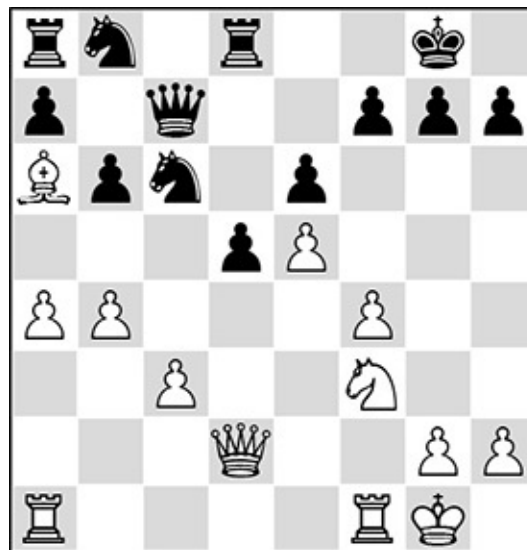
2678

Eylon Nakar

2463

Douglas 2015 (2)

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘b4 4.e5 c5 5.♙d2 ♙e7 6.♙b5 ♘xd2+ 7.♙xd2 0-0 8.c3 ♙d7 9.dxc5 ♘xb5 10.♙xb5 ♙a5 11.♙d3 ♙d7 12.b4 ♙c7 13.f4 ♖fc8 14.♙f3 b6 15.♙a6 ♖cb8 16.c6 ♙xc6 17.a4 ♖d8 18.0-0 ♙db8



19.♙d3

With one logical idea: withdrawing the bishop that just had been attacked. Thus, the move slightly conceals a sneaky second idea.

19...a5?

Naive, you may say, yet Black had a sturdy 2463 rating behind his name. Knowing that his game would end up in this chapter would have helped him.

20. ♖xh7+ ♜xh7 21. ♗g5+ ♜g8

Get familiar with some typical variations:

A) 21... ♜g6 22. ♖d3+ f5 23. ♖h3 ♗xe5 24. ♖h7+ ♜f6 25. fxe5+ ♖xe5 26. ♗ae1;

B) 21... ♜h6 22. ♖d3 g6 (22... ♗h8 23. ♖h3+ ♜g6 24. f5+ ♜xg5 25. ♖g3+ ♜h5 26. ♗f4) 23. ♖h3+ ♜g7 24. ♖h7+ ♜f8 25. ♗xe6+.

22. ♖d3 ♜f8 23. ♖h7 ♗e7

Otherwise, White snatches all the pawns.

24. ♖h8+ ♗g8 25. f5

Now, the f1-rook enters the fray decisively. After

25... ♖xe5 26. ♗ae1

it was curtains.

Of course, this was a piece of cake for a player of Short's strength. But now look at the slip he allowed himself in his heyday in a rapid game:

Queen's Gambit Accepted

Garry Kasparov

2815

Nigel Short

2665

London rapid m 1993 (3)

1. ♗f3 d5 2. c4 e6 3. d4 ♗f6 4. ♗c3 dxc4 5. ♖a4+ ♗bd7 6. e4 a6 7. ♗xc4 c6 8. ♖d1 ♗e7 9. 0-0 0-0 10. a4 b6 11. ♗d3 ♗b7 12. e5 ♗d5 13. ♗xd5 cxd5 14. ♗d2 a5 15. ♗c1 ♗b8 16. ♗b5 ♗a6 17. ♖b3 ♗c8 18. ♗c3 ♗c7



19. ♖d3

White withdraws the bishop, thus not allowing any exchanges, and also attacking the b6-pawn.

19... ♖b4

Now, your engine may need half a minute, but you will probably play

20. ♖xh7+!

immediately, now that another defender has left Black's kingside.

20... ♖xh7 21. ♗g5+ ♖g8

21... ♖g6 22. ♗g3 ♖xd2 23. ♗xe6+.

22. ♗h3

Threatening 23. ♗h8+!.

22... ♗e8 23. ♗f3 ♗d7 24. ♗h5 ♗f8 25. ♗h7+ ♖e7 26. ♖g5+ f6 27. ♗xf6 1-0

We move on to a somewhat more difficult example, where again there is no black knight on f6 defending, due to the space-gaining pawn push e4-e5.

Sicilian Defence

Alexey Shirov

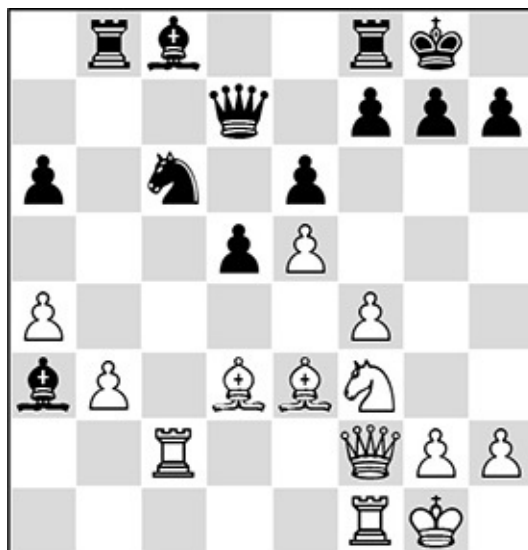
2726

Dimitri Reinderman

2542

Wijk aan Zee 1999 (11)

1.e4 c5 2. ♗f3 ♗c6 3. ♗c3 e6 4.d4 cxd4 5. ♗xd4 a6 6. ♖e2 ♗ge7 7.f4 ♗xd4 8. ♗xd4 b5 9.0-0 ♗c7 10. ♗f2 ♗c6 11. ♖e3 ♖e7 12.a4 b4 13. ♗b1 ♗b8 14. ♗d2 0-0 15. ♖d3 d6 16. ♗ad1 b3 17.cxb3 ♖f6 18. ♗c1 ♖xb2 19. ♗c2 ♖a3 20.e5 d5 21. ♗f3 ♗d7



22. ♖xh7+ ♔xh7 23. ♙h4+ ♔g8 24. ♗g5 ♖e8 25. ♖f3!

Bring on the rook! Remember this – it's often an important means to continue the attack. 25. ♖h7+ ♔f8 26. ♖h8+ ♔e7 27. ♖xg7 was the tempting alternative, and, true, certainly not bad, although the black king gets away after 27... ♔d8.

25... ♘e7

25... ♔f8 26. ♖h7+ ♔g8 27. ♖f6+ gxf6, and here comes the rook with
28. ♖g3+.

26. ♖h7+ ♔f8 27. ♖h8+ ♚g8 28.f5

Again this break, though the follow-up is more complicated this time.

28...exf5 29.e6 fxe6 30.♖g3!

With an irresistible attack. 31. ♖h7+ is inevitable. The rest was child's play for Shirov.

30...g6 31.♔h7+ ♚f7 32.♙h6 ♚e7 33.♙g5+ ♚f7 34.♙f6 ♚f8 35.♚c7 ♙xf6 36.♙xf6+ ♚e8
37.♙xg6+ ♚d8 38.♚xd7+ ♙xd7 39.♙xf8 ♙xf8 40.♙f6+ ♙e7 41.♚g8+ ♚c7 42.♙c3+ ♚b7
43.♚xb8+ ♙xb8 44.h4 1-0

In the next example there is no white pawn on e5, but as you may guess, with h2-h4 being played and the king's rook still on h1, the bishop sac is also an idea here.

French Defence

Mihajlo Stojanovic

2542

Nikola Vasovski

2368

1.d4 ♖f6 2.♘g5 e6 3.♗f3 ♘e7 4.♗xf6 ♗xf6 5.e4 d5 6.♗c3 0-0 7.e5 ♘e7 8.♗d3 c5 9.h4 f6
10.exf6 ♗xf6



11.♗xh7+ ♖xh7 12.♗g5+ ♖g8

12... ♖h6 13.♗d3 ♗xg5 14.hxg5+ ♖xg5 15.♗h7! must have scared off Black, when his king ends up in the open. You will not be able to calculate a forced win here, so you will have to rely on your general assessment.

13.♗h5 ♗e8 14.♗f7+ ♖h8

If you have spotted this line beforehand, it will be easy to opt for the sacrifice. After all, a draw is assured, and you can have a fresh look at the position from here.

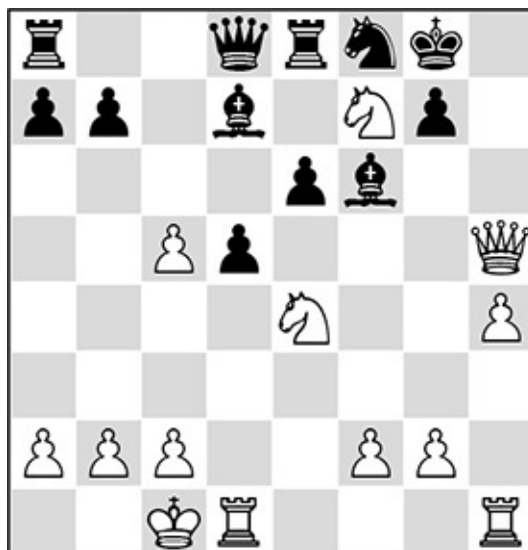
15.dxc5?

Allowing Black time to call in an extra defender. 15.0-0-0 was certainly possible: 15...cxd4 16.♗b5!, threatening 17.♗d6.

15... ♗d7 16.0-0-0 ♗f8

After 16... ♗xc5 17.♗he1, the black king lacks defenders.

17.♗ce4 ♗d7 18.♗h5+ ♖g8 19.♗f7



19...dxe4?

The counter-intuitive 19... ♖e7, blocking an escape route for the king, appears best, though it may not surprise you that Black had no faith in 20. ♗h8+ ♔xf7 21. ♕d6+ ♖g6, when the white queen remains strangely off-side after 22.h5+ ♖g5.

After the text move, Black obtains three pieces for the queen, but he is not able to stop White's gradually advancing pawns.

20. ♕xd8 ♖exd8 21. ♖d6 ♕c6 22. ♖hd1 ♖xd6 23. ♖xd6 ♕e8 24. ♗e2 ♖c8 25.b4 ♕c6 26. ♖xc6!? ♖xc6 27. ♗xe4 ♖c7 28.a3 ♖d7 29.h5 ♖d5 30.f4 a5 31.g4 ♕c3 32. ♗c4 axb4 33.axb4 ♕d2+ 34. ♖b2 ♕e3 35. ♗e4 ♕d4+ 36.c3 ♕f6 37.g5 ♕d8 38. ♖b3 ♖f7 39.f5 ♖d7 40.fxe6+ ♖xe6 41. ♗f5+ ♖e7 42.h6 1-0

An ingenious reversal

I do have to show you Nepomniachtchi's fantastic move reversal here.

Petroff Defence

Ian Nepomniachtchi

2703

Sanan Sjugirov

2674

Russia tt 2016 (5)

1.e4 e5 2. ♕f3 ♕f6 3. ♕xe5 d6 4. ♕f3 ♕xe4 5.c4 ♕e7 6.d4 0-0 7. ♕d3 ♕g5 8. ♕c3 ♕g4 9. ♕xg5 ♕xg5



Ok, let's go:

10. ♖xh7+ ♜xh7

Hmm, and now?

11. h4!!

A tremendous surprise! White is a piece down, but he can move the h-pawn at his leisure! Thanks to a discovered check from the h1-rook, he will regain his material.

11... ♜d2+

What else? The 'normal' 11... ♜f6 12. ♘g5+ ♜xg5 13. hxg5+ is certainly not better.

12. ♜xd2 ♜e8+ 13. ♜f1 ♜xf3 14. ♜d3+ ♜g8 15. ♜xf3

And Nepo converted his extra material:

15... ♜d7 16. ♜d1 ♜f6 17. ♜xf6 ♜xf6 18. f3 d5 19. c5 b6 20. cxb6 axb6 21. ♜f2 b5 22. a3 b4 23. axb4 ♜ab8 24. b5 c6 25. ♜he1 cxb5 26. ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 27. ♜c1 ♜a8 28. ♜xb5 ♜a4 29. ♜c8+ ♜h7 30. g4 ♜b4 31. ♜d6 ♜xd4 32. ♜g3 1-0

No pawn on e5 or h4, yet...

London System

Gata Kamsky

2709

Samuel Shankland

2611

Sturbridge 2014 (4)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♙f4 d5 3.e3 e6 4.♘d2 c5 5.c3 ♘c6 6.♘gf3 ♙d6 7.♙g3 0-0 8.♙d3 ♚e7 9.♘e5
 ♘d7 10.♘xd7 ♙xd7 11.♙xd6 ♚xd6



Here, White has no centre pawn on e5, and no pawn on h4 yet, but Black clearly lacks defenders on the kingside. White has a surprising way to organize an attack.

12.dxc5! ♚xc5 13.♙xh7+ ♚xh7 14.♙h5+ ♚g8 15.♘e4

Thanks to the horizontal pin, White brings his knight to the attack with tempo. This is an opening trap that has been known in the databases since 2009.

15... ♚c4 16.♘g5 ♙fd8

Unfortunately for Black, defence along the b1-h7 diagonal with 16... ♙d3 does not work here after 17.e4!.

17.♙xf7+ ♚h8 18.♙h5+ ♚g8



Here too, White can take a breath and start new calculations, with the draw in hand.

19. ♖d1!

Before hunting down the king, White brings more forces to the battle scene.

19. ♖h7+ ♔f8 20. ♖h8+ ♔e7 21. ♖xg7+ ♔d6 22. ♗f7+ ♔c7 23. ♗xd8 ♖xd8 brought White a win in Sandipan-Parnali, Mumbai 2016, but this is less convincing.

19...e5

Black has no useful move. Now, 19... ♗e5 could be met with 20. ♖d4 ♗d3+ 21. ♔d2.

20. ♖f7+ ♔h8 21. e4 ♗e7 22. ♖xe7 ♗b5 23. ♖d2 ♖xa2 24. ♖f7 ♖a1+ 25. ♖d1 ♖xb2 26. ♖h5+ ♔g8 27. ♖h7+ ♔f8 28. ♖h8+ ♔e7 29. ♖xg7+ ♔d6 30. ♖xd5+ ♔c6 31. ♖f6+

Black resigned.

Summary

When the knight on f6 is missing on a kingside with a castled king, watch out for the classical sacrifice on h7! Often the knight has been driven away by a white pawn on e5. The attack might not be immediately decisive. In that case, remember to look for ways to bring on a rook, either along the third rank, or possibly along the f-file after a pawn-break (f4-f5). On other occasions, the rook may be involved from its starting position, when White has advanced with h2-h4 before castling. And once in a while, a king deserted by his defending pieces will be enough for White to sacrifice the bishop on h7, if he

can bring his pieces to the attack in other ways than those mentioned above.
Now, are you ready to sacrifice your bishop and smoke out the enemy king?

CHAPTER 22

The Soviet sac

The exchange sacrifice on c3 in the Sicilian, with or without opposite-castled kings, can almost be considered as classical as the ♙xh7+ sacrifice. The long-term compensation – White's shattered pawn structure – is obvious. But will it be sufficient? Let's take a small historical route to discover the secrets of the Soviet sacrifice.

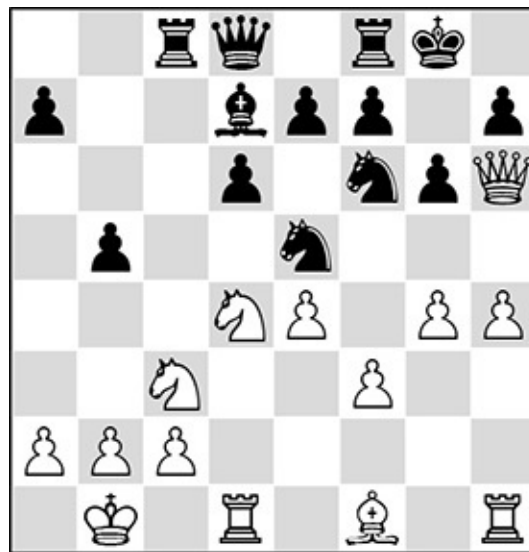
Sicilian Defence

Isaak Boleslavsky

Efim Geller

Zurich ct 1953 (19)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 d6 6.g3 ♙g4 7.f3 ♙d7 8.♙e3 g6 9.♙d2 ♙g7 10.0-0-0 0-0 11.g4 ♖c8 12.♙b1 ♘e5 13.h4 b5 14.♙h6 ♙xh6 15.♙xh6



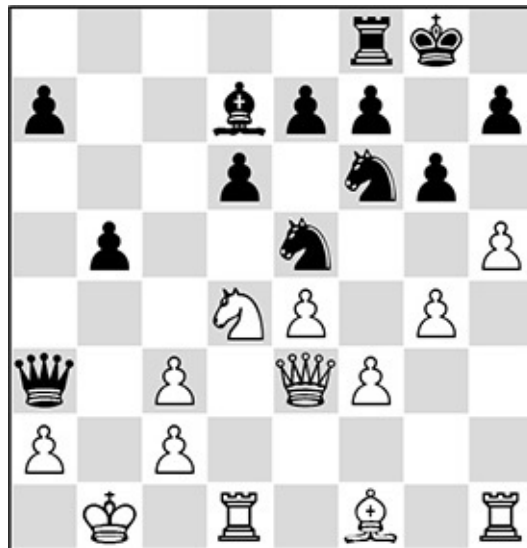
15... ♙xc3

Practically forced, according to Bronstein in his tournament book, as h4-h5 was a real threat now. Najdorf – in his own less well-known book on the same tournament – calls it a sacrifice of both a positional and psychological nature. Clearly, in this position with opposite-castled kings, White's king position is

affected by the weakened pawn structure on the queenside. Furthermore, White is deprived of ♖c3-d5, eliminating Black's important defender on f6.

16.bxc3 ♜a5 17.♞e3 ♜a3 18.h5

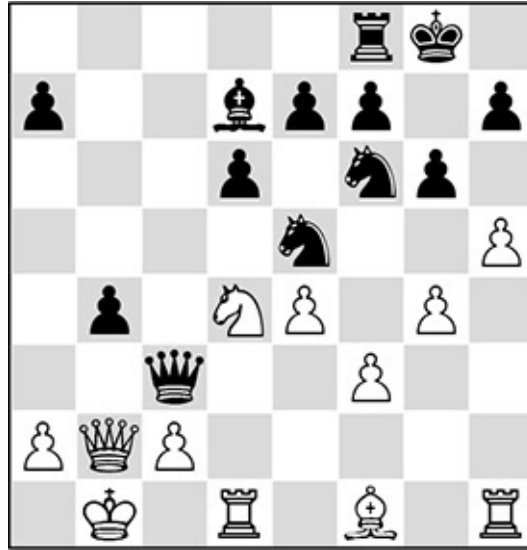
In itself, a logical move, though not in combination with the queen retreat on the previous move. Najdorf even gives the move a question mark, suggesting 18.♞b3 instead. It turns out that he is completely right, but not for any reason mentioned in either of the tournament books...



18...b4

After 18...♞xf3!! 19.♞xf3 (19.♞xf3 ♞e6, and while Black is a whole rook down, his attack is too strong, for example: 20.♞d3 ♞xa2+ 21.♞a1 ♞xe4 22.♞c1 ♞a5) 19...♞xg4 20.♞d3 ♞xd1, and now if 21.♞xd1, 21...♞xe4 22.♞e2 ♞f2.

19.♞c1 ♜xc3 20.♞b2

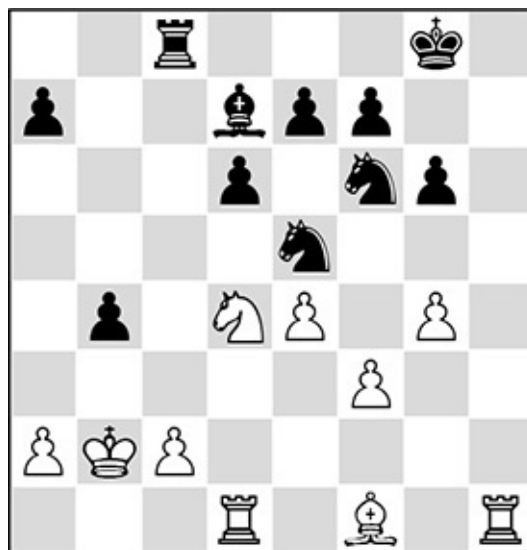


20... ♕c8

A) 20... ♖c5 is more logical, as with White's vulnerable king, Black would want to keep the queens on the board;

B) Here too, you need an engine (or 25 years' experience as a Dragon player) to find the following fantastic resource: 20... ♗xf3 21. ♕xc3 bxc3 22. ♗xf3 ♘xg4, and even with the queens exchanged, Black seems to hold the balance after 23. ♖d3 ♗xe4 24. ♗h2 ♘xh5, with five pawns for the rook. Please do enjoy yourself with this position, but as it is way beyond the scope of this book, we will continue with the text move, which soon brought Black unexpected success, thanks to a peculiar miscalculation by Boleslavsky.

21. hxg6 ♗xb2+ 22. ♕xb2 hxg6



23.a3?

A logical move: rooks need open files, and the a-file would be more than welcome. However, preparation with 23. ♖e2 or 23. ♖a1 was required.

23...bxa3+ 24. ♖xa3 ♗xf3 25. ♗xf3 ♖c3+

As Bronstein informs us, here Boleslavsky had intended the illegal 25... ♖d3, parrying both threats...

26. ♖b2 ♖xf3

Black has more than sufficient (material) compensation now, but one can safely assume that Boleslavsky's oversight prevented him from resisting in the best possible way from here.

27.e5 ♗xg4 28. ♖e2 ♖f2 29. ♖xg4 ♗xg4 30. ♖df1

This rook exchange turns out to help only Black. Boleslavsky could have put up a defence with 30. ♖d4. True, 30... ♗f5 31.exd6 ♖xc2+ 32. ♖b3 exd6 33. ♖xd6 would leave White without any counterplay. But here Black would not have such a massive pawn phalanx as in the game.

30... ♖xf1 31. ♖xf1 dxe5 32.c4 ♖f8 33. ♖a1 ♗f3 34.c5 g5 35. ♖xa7 g4 36. ♖a3 ♖e8 37. ♖c1 f5 38. ♖d2 f4 39. ♖a6 g3 40. ♖e1 ♗e4 0-1

In much later years, this exchange sacrifice would feature in many Dragon lines, with Geller also advocating the white side (for instance, against Kortchnoi 1970). The sacrifice found its way to other Sicilian variations as well. Here is a careful early outing.

Sicilian Defence

Paul Keres

Mark Taimanov

Moscow ch-URS 1952

1.e4 c5 2. ♗f3 ♗c6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♗xd4 ♗f6 5. ♗c3 d6 6. ♗g5 e6 7. ♖d2 ♗e7 8.0-0-0 ♗xd4 9. ♖xd4 0-0 10.f4 ♖a5 11. ♖d3 ♖d8 12. ♖h3 ♗d7 13. ♗d3 ♖ac8 14. ♖he1 e5 15.f5



15... ♖xc3 16.bxc3

Note that 16. ♕d2 can be met by 16... ♖xd3, though 16... ♗xa2 17. ♕xc3 d5 18.exd5 ♗xd5 is much stronger.

16... ♗xc3

Now, Black is threatening 17...d5 followed by 18... ♗a3, while he has a certain draw by repetition after White's reply.

A) Deep analysis shows that Black could have reversed the move order (which is always useful to try when a combination does not seem to work!) with 16...d5 17.exd5 (17. ♖b1 ♗a3 18. ♕c1 ♕xc1 19. ♖xc1 ♖c8; 17. ♕xf6 ♕xf6 18.exd5 ♖c8) 17... ♗xc3 18. ♖b1 ♗b4+ 19. ♖c1 ♖c8 20. ♖xe5 ♗a3+ 21. ♖b1 ♗xd5 22. ♖xd5 ♗b4+ 23. ♖a1 ♕xg5;

B) Less complicated is 16... ♗xe4! 17. ♕xe4 ♕xg5+ 18. ♖b2 ♕c6, when Black does not risk losing according to Konstantinopolsky.

17. ♖b1 ♗b4+ 18. ♖a1 ♗c3+ ½-½

Indeed, there is no clear-cut win for Black, but if he had gradually brought on his pieces to attack the white king, he could have posed Keres very difficult problems with 18...d5!? 19. ♕f1 (19. ♕d2 ♗d4+ 20.c3 ♗c5 21.exd5 ♗a4; 19.exd5 ♕c5) 19... ♗a4 20. ♖b1 ♗a5.

And so, a short draw becomes very interesting. I guess the lines are very difficult to grasp at first sight. Don't worry, it is for a good reason that a world-class player like Taimanov did not fathom everything behind the board. Take your time to play through the variations, and learn to appreciate the growing mobility of the black pieces.

Black's fifteenth move in the first game will not have been a complete surprise for Boleslavsky. He himself had captured a c3-knight with a rook a couple of years earlier, at a time when later World Champion Petrosian had yet to become renowned for his exchange sacrifices, being a relative rookie of 20. There is no opposite-side castling here, but Black just gets enough material.

Sicilian Defence

Viktor Liublinsky

Isaak Boleslavsky

Moscow ch-URS 1949 (5)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♙xd4 ♙f6 5.♙c3 d6 6.♘g5 e6 7.♘e2 ♘e7 8.♙d2 0-0 9.0-0 a6 10.♖ad1 ♗b6 11.♘e3 ♗c7 12.f4 ♙a5 13.♙b3 ♙c4 14.♘xc4 ♗xc4 15.♙d4 ♗c7 16.♗b6 ♗b8 17.h3 ♙d7 18.♗b4 ♖e8 19.♙d4 b5 20.♖f2 ♗c7 21.a3 ♖b8 22.♗b4 ♘b7 23.♗a5 ♖bc8 24.♗xc7 ♖xc7 25.♖e2 ♖ec8 26.♖dd2 ♘a8 27.♗f2



27... ♖xc3 28.bxc3 ♙f6!

Strongest. Now, both e4 and c3 will fall.

29.♖d3 ♙xe4+ 30.♗g1 ♙xc3 31.♖e1 ♙e4

Apart from the two pawns that Black has already grabbed, both a3 and c2 are weak, while the white rooks have no open files to enter Black's position.

32.♙d4 ♘f6 33.a4 bxa4 34.♖a3 ♙c3 35.♙e2 ♙xe2+ 36.♖xe2 ♖c4 37.c3 ♘c6 38.♘d4 ♘e7 39.♖b2 ♘b5 40.♖b4 ♖c8 41.♖a2 f6 42.c4 ♘xc4 43.♖c2 d5 44.♖xa4 ♘d6 45.♘e3 ♗f7 46.♗f2 ♗e7 47.g4 ♖b8 48.♖a5 ♗d7 49.f5 e5 50.♘c5 ♘c7 51.♖a1 a5 52.h4 ♗c6 53.♘e3 h6 54.♘d2 ♖b5 55.g5 ♘b6+ 56.♘e3 ♘xe3+ 57.♗xe3 hxg5 58.hxg5 fxg5 59.♗f3 ♗d6 60.♗g4 e4 61.♗xg5 ♗e5 62.♖c3 ♖b2 63.♖g3 ♖f2 64.♖xa5 ♖xf5+ 65.♗g6 ♖f3 66.♖g4 ♖f4

67. ♖g3 ♜d4 68. ♜aa3 ♜f1 69. ♜xg7 ♜e1 70. ♜g4 ♜c5 71. ♜g5 e3 72. ♜e5 ♜d4 73. ♜f6 e2
74. ♜e6 ♜h1 75. ♜ae3 ♜h6+ 76. ♜d7 ♜h4 77. ♜xe2 ♜xe2 78. ♜xe2 ♜d3 79. ♜e1 d4 0-1

While we are at it, let's take an even earlier example from this Soviet period. Black gets only one pawn for the exchange this time.

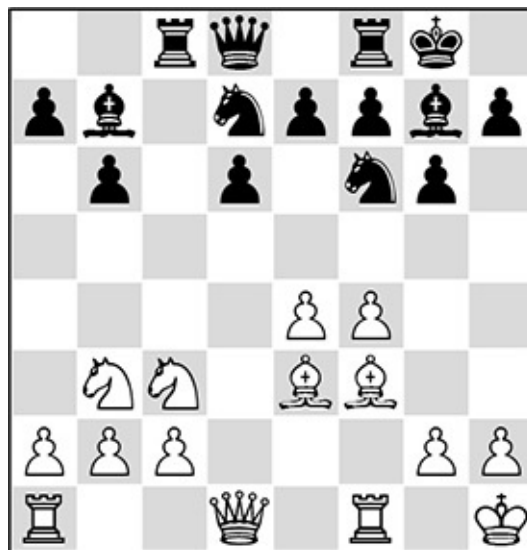
Sicilian Defence

Grigory Ravinsky

Vladimir Simagin

Moscow 1947

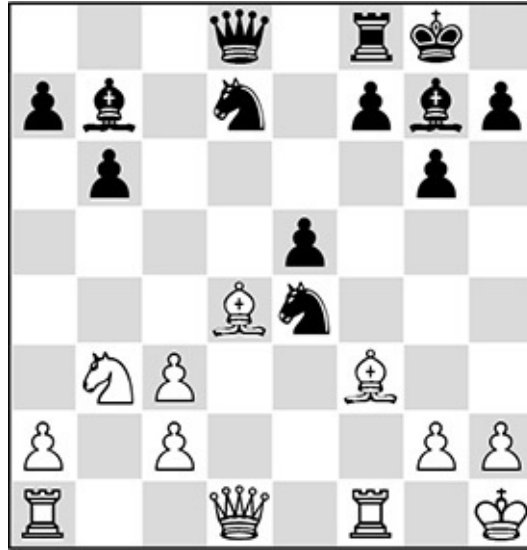
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 g6 6.♚e2 ♚g7 7.0-0 0-0 8.♘b3 ♘bd7 9.♚h1 b6 10.f4 ♚b7 11.♚f3 ♚c8 12.♚e3



12... ♖xc3!

Commenting on this game, Estrin noted that the black pieces occupy excellent positions after this typical sacrifice, while the minor piece is no worse than the rook in the ensuing complicated middlegame. Add to this White's miserable pawn formation on the queenside, and you can easily judge that Black has sufficient compensation.

13.bxc3 ♖xe4 14.♗d4 e5 15.fxe5 dxe5



16. ♖e1

An inventive try.

A) With 16. ♖xe4 ♗xe4 17. ♖e3, White can keep his pawn, but would leave Black with tremendous positional compensation, a strong pair of bishops and mobile central pawns;

B) 16. ♖e1 with the idea to bail out with 16...f5 17. ♖xe4 ♗xe4 18. ♖xe4 fxe4 19. ♖e3 obviously would also leave Black on top.

16...exd4 17. ♖xe4 ♗e8 18. ♖xb7 ♖xe1 19. ♖axe1 dxc3

Unfortunately for White, his pieces don't coordinate – especially, the b3-knight is a sorrow sight – and soon he was overpowered.

20. ♖e3 h5 21. ♖a6 ♗e5 22. ♖xc3 ♗h7 23. ♖h3 ♗d5 24. ♖d3 ♗g8 25. ♖e3 ♖h6 26. ♖g3 h4 27. ♖h3 ♖g5 28. ♖e2 a5 29. ♗c1? ♖xc1 30. ♖xc1 ♗d2 0-1

Simagin himself added that his exchange sacrifice was to become a suitable strategical means to destroy the white centre in the Sicilian. At the time, his opponent seemed not yet to be convinced, as he allowed Simagin to use the same concept ten years later.

As we said, the sacrifice became a regular guest in the decades to come, but still the result is not always as obvious. Here is a complex example.

Sicilian Defence

Edmar Mednis

2455

Walter Browne

2550

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♙e2 ♘bd7 7.♙e3 e6 8.a4 b6 9.f4 ♙b7
10.♙f3 ♘c8 11.0-0



11... ♘xc3!?

Despite his success in this game, Browne opted for 11... ♙e7 a couple of months later in his game against Tal, Milan 1975.

12.bxc3 ♘xe4 13.♘e2

This appears to be too passive. 13.c4 seems awkward after 13... ♙c7, but with 14.a5! bxa5 15.♙e1, White quickly opens files on the queenside, where Black still has to complete his development.

13... ♙c7 14.♙e1 d5 15.♙d4

15. ♙xe4 dxe4 does not change the general verdict. Black has doubled pawns, but at the same time he has acquired a passed pawn, while his knight may strive for d5 now.

15... ♙c5 16.♘g3 f5

‘With a strong grip in the centre and great comp’ – Browne.

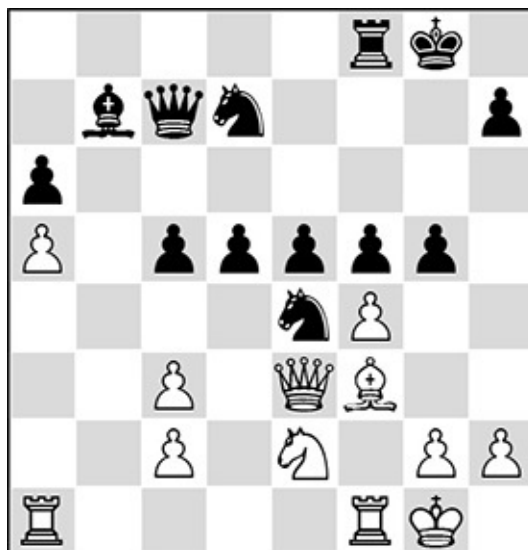
17.♙e3 0-0 18.♙xc5 bxc5 19.a5 e5

This is not the best move, as it forces matters, but it makes for a great picture after Black’s next move, and also brought Browne quick success in the game.

20.♘e2

Missing 20. ♘xe4! fxe4 21. ♙g4, when 21...exf4? 22. ♙e6+ ♙h8 23. ♙xd7 leaves Black in bad shape.

20...g5



I imagine this position appealed to Browne when he made his 19th move!

21.fxe5?

21.fxg5 f4 22.♖d3 c4 23.♖d1 ♔c5+ 24.♔h1 ♕xg5! or 21.♕xe4 gxf4 22.♕xd5+ ♕xd5 give Black the edge, but the text move is clearly worse.

21...f4 22.♖c1 ♕xe5

And Black's spatial supremacy brought him victory:

23.♖b1 ♕c4 24.♖e1 ♕ed2 25.♖f2 ♕xb1 26.♖xb1 ♕d2 27.♕xd5+ ♕xd5 28.♖d1 ♖d8 29.♖xd2 ♕xg2 30.♖e1 ♕a8 31.h4 ♖c6 32.♖h2 ♖h6 33.♕g1 g4 34.♖e7 ♖f8 35.♖d2 g3+ 36.♖h3 ♖g6 37.♖d6 ♖f5# 0-1

So what's the conclusion after all those years? Garry has the floor:

Sicilian Defence

Sergey Movsesian

2668

Garry Kasparov

2851

Sarajevo 2000 (11)

1.e4 c5 2.♕f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♕xd4 ♕f6 5.♕c3 a6 6.♕e3 e6 7.f3 b5 8.♖d2 ♕bd7 9.0-0-0 ♕b7 10.g4 ♕b6 11.♖f2 ♕fd7 12.♖b1 ♖c8 13.♕d3



13... ♖xc3!

‘Without hesitation: such sacrifices are automatic for any experienced Sicilian player, an element of chess culture’ – Kasparov (*Garry Kasparov on Garry Kasparov, Part III: 1993-2005*). However, Movsesian had willingly allowed the sacrifice on c3, on the basis of some online blitz games with Dutch grandmaster Van Wely. Jumping ahead, we can say that – no surprise – chess culture beat the blitz games.

14.bxc3 ♜c7 15. ♘e2 ♙e7

As in the Taimanov game, Black needs to be patient and just has to improve his pieces first. He has time as long as White’s rooks, basically his material plus, are not very powerful yet.

16.g5 0-0 17.h4 ♘a4!

The exclamation mark is from Kasparov, who judges this knight alone to be stronger than a rook. He is absolutely right, of course, as shown by White’s exposed king behind a shattered pawn structure. Check out ‘No innocent bystander’ in IYCPR for more strong knights on the rim!

18. ♙c1 ♘e5 19.h5



19...d5!

Again, compare to Keres-Taimanov! Here, the break brings two bishops to life!

20. ♖h2 ♙d6 21. ♖h3

Now, Black surprisingly gets to his opponent's king. It was better to play

21. ♙f4, although Black is better after 21... ♘xc3+ 22. ♘xc3 ♙xc3 23. ♙d2 ♙xd2 24. ♙xd2 ♘xf3.

21... ♘xd3!

Why give this knight for such an ugly bishop?

22.cxd3 b4!

This is why. Now, too many lines are opened up for the white king.

23.cxb4 ♜c8 24. ♙a1 dxe4 25.fxe4 ♙xe4!

Nice!

26.g6

If 26.dxe4, 26... ♙e5+ 27. ♘d4 ♙xd4+ 28. ♜xd4 ♙xc1+ 29. ♜xc1 ♜xc1#.

26... ♙xh1 27. ♙xh1 ♙xb4 28.gxf7+ ♙f8 29. ♙g2 ♜b8 30. ♙b2 ♘xb2 31. ♘d4 ♘xd1

32. ♘xe6+ ♙xf7 0-1

Summary

Never take on b2, even if it's good. This applies to any early ... ♙xb2.

'Always take on c3, even if it's not correct,' could be said of the automatic exchange sac on c3. Obviously, with opposite-castled kings, the positional compensation comes with attacking chances. With kings on the same side, positional compensation and a pawn (after the capture of the no longer protected central e4-pawn) will often be quite sufficient for equality at least.

Don't forget to bring all your pieces alive before you start the action. Then, when all your pieces are developed, an active minor piece will likely outweigh a passive white rook.

CHAPTER 23

The silent knight sac

A knight on f5 is worth a pawn, as Kasparov has said. And indeed, it will be a fearsome attacker of the opponent's castled king on f5. However, often the f5-square will not be available – when Black has played ...g7-g6, for instance. But beware, in many cases it appears to be possible to put the knight en prise there anyway, giving Black the choice of whether to take or not! This is a common idea in Ruy Lopez positions. Let us look what White can get in return for his silent offer.

Backed up by a successor

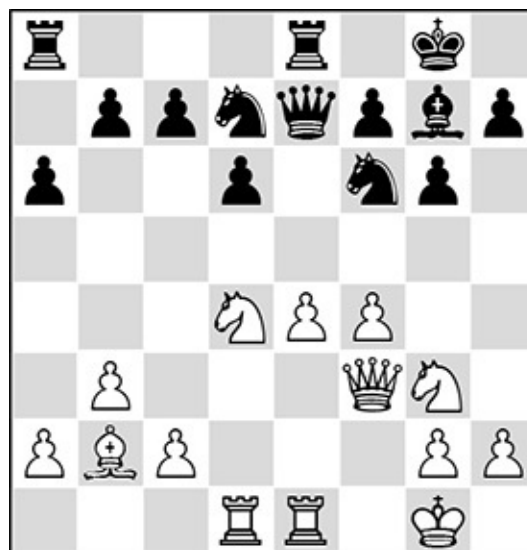
Ruy Lopez

Dawid Janowski

Emanuel Lasker

Paris Wch m 1909 (6)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♙b5 d6 5.d4 ♙d7 6.0-0 ♙e7 7.♚e1 exd4 8.♘xd4 0-0
9.♘de2 ♘e5 10.♘g3 ♙xb5 11.♘xb5 ♚e8 12.b3 ♙f8 13.♙b2 g6 14.f4 ♘ed7 15.♙f3 a6
16.♘d4 ♙g7 17.♚ad1 ♙e7

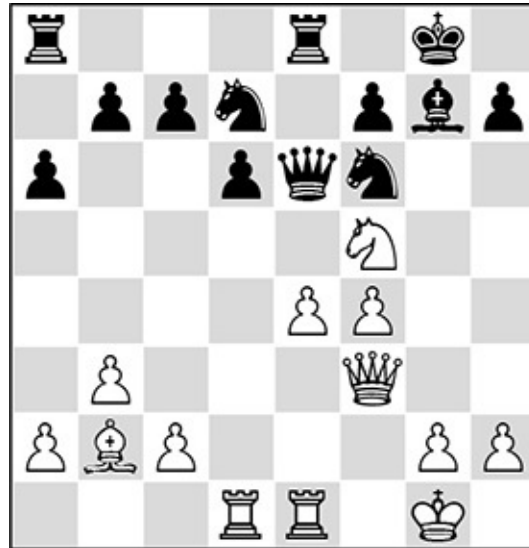


18. ♖df5 gxf5 19. ♖xf5

This g3-knight was ready to take the stand after the first knight had been sacrificed. Together with the immediate attack on the queen by the now unassailable knight on f5, this makes the silent sacrifice fairly easy to spot.

19... ♜e6

The passive 19... ♜f8 is met by 20.e5, when the f6-knight has no square to go to.



20. ♖xg7!

20. ♜g3 was also possible: 20... ♖h5 21. ♖xg7 ♖xg3 22. ♖xe6, but the text move is stronger.

20... ♜xg7 21.e5 ♜f8

21... dxe5 (21... ♖g8 22.exd6+) 22.fxe5 ♖g8 23. ♜xd7, and 23... ♜xd7 fails to 24.e6+.

22.exf6 ♜xe1+ 23. ♜xe1 ♜xe1+ 24. ♜f2 ♜ae8



With two knights directed at the f5-square, you are bound to have a hunch about White's next move. The only question is: which knight is going to jump to f5? (just like the eternal question: 'which rook goes to the open file?')

26. ♖df5

26. ♖gf5! was just as good, when after 26... ♙e5 27. ♙xe5 ♖xe5, White can proceed with 28.f4 ♖ed7 29. ♖h6+ ♔g7 30. ♖df5+ ♔f8 31. ♙d4.

26... ♙e5

Black cannot really accept. After 26...gxf5 27. ♖xf5, White has too many pieces in the attack – both ♖e3-g3 and ♙d1-g4 are immediate threats. For example, 27... ♖e5 28. ♖g3 ♖g6 29. ♖xg7 ♔xg7 30. ♙d4+ ♔g8 31. ♖xb6, and White wins more material.

27. ♖h6+

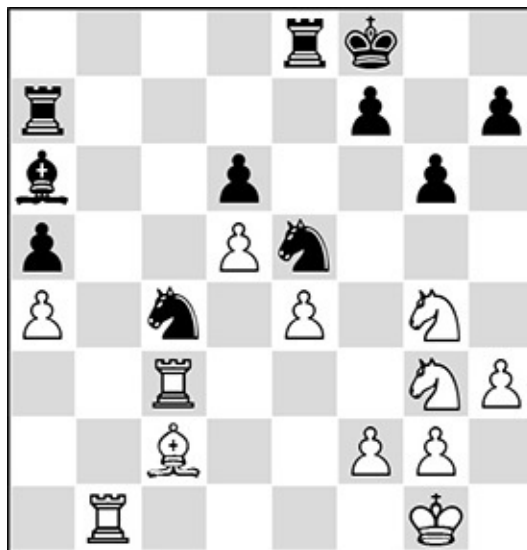
It was also possible to leave the knight on f5: 27. ♙xe5 ♖xe5 28.f4 ♙c5 29.fxe5 ♖c4 30. ♙f3.



27... ♔f8

White wins after 27... ♔g7 28. ♖h5+! gxh5 29. ♗g3+ ♔f8 30. ♗xh5 ♖f6 31. ♗g5.

28. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 29. ♗d4 ♖bc4 30. ♗xc3 ♗a7 31. ♗xa7 ♗xa7 32. ♖g4



White is just a pawn up, but eventually Moro could not capitalize on his extra material: ... ½-½ (102).

Here is a more complex example.

Ruy Lopez

Wesley So

Gata Kamsky

2678

St Louis ch-USA 2016 (1)

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 ♘b8
10.d4 ♘bd7 11.♘bd2 ♙b7 12.♙c2 ♚e8 13.♘f1 ♙f8 14.♘g3 g6 15.♙g5 h6 16.♙d2 ♙g7
17.a4 c6 18.axb5 axb5 19.♚xa8 ♙xa8



20.♘h4!?

Where is this knight heading for? Well, you are in the know...

20...♙d8 21.♙c1 ♙h7

An automatic move. 21...♘h7! was required, when the queen can assist in the defence. 22.♘hf5 gxf5 23.♘xf5 is still a possibility, but Black survives after 23...♚e6 24.♙xh6 ♙xh6 25.♘xh6+ ♚f8.

22.♘hf5

Attacking both h6 and d6, making the capture as good as forced.

22...gxf5 23.♘xf5



A fine killer knight, of course (see IYCPR for other ways to establish such a killer knight). Also, a second pawn will be gained. Does this constitute sufficient compensation for the piece?

23... ♖e6

Black has a difficult defence after 23... ♕f8 24. ♕xh6 ♖g8 (the only move to keep the white queen from entering on h6) 25. ♕g5 ♗gf6 (25... f6 26. ♕e3, followed by ♖c1-d1; 25... ♖c7 26. ♕b3) 26. ♖e3, followed by ♖e3-g3.



24. ♕xh6

24.d5! was also possible in view of a suddenly possible discovered check after 24... cxd5 25.exd5, and if 25... ♕xd5, 26. ♕xh6.

24... ♗e8 25. ♕g5

Again, White will proceed to bring his queen to the kingside via d1 or e3, while the bishop may switch diagonals and go to b3. Black would have a rough time, but Kamsky's next move loses quickly.

25... ♖f6 26. ♕xf6 ♜xf6

White also wins after 26... ♜xf6 27. ♜g5, followed by ♜e1-e3-g3.

27.d5 ♜e7 28.g4 1-0

Black loses a whole rook after the inevitable g4-g5.

The e-pawn recaptures

Ruy Lopez

Lev Aronin

Abram Poliak

Moscow 1949

1.e4 e5 2. ♖f3 ♘c6 3. ♗b5 a6 4. ♗a4 ♗f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6. ♜e1 b5 7. ♗b3 0-0 8.c3 d6 9.h3 ♗a5 10. ♗c2 c5 11.d4 ♜c7 12. ♗bd2 ♗c6 13.dxc5 dxc5 14. ♗f1 ♗e6 15. ♗e3 ♜ad8 16. ♜e2 g6 17.a4 c4 18.axb5 axb5 19. ♗g5 ♗c8 20.b3 ♗a5 21.bxc4 bxc4 22. ♜a4 ♗d7 23. ♜a2 h6 24. ♗f3 ♗e6



25. ♗f5!

There isn't a knight on g3 to recapture, so what's the point here? Firstly, Black has to accept. Not only is the h-pawn under attack, but White also intends the simple 26. ♗xe7+, and the a5-knight falls.

25...gxf5 26.exf5 ♗d5 27. ♗xh6

Already, White has collected two pawns, and a third one is en prise on e5, just like the rook on f8. However, it is questionable whether White is interested in the latter: the bishop makes a fine contribution in the attack against the vulnerable black king.

27... ♖fe8

27... ♘c6, returning material, but activating the knight, seems more sensible, though White is still much better after, for example: 28. ♔e3 ♙h8 29. ♙xf8 ♙xf8 30. ♘h2.

28. ♘xe5

After 28. ♔e3!, it is hard to keep the queen from joining the attack, for example: 28... ♘h5 29. ♙e4 ♘c6 30. ♙xd5 ♖xd5 31. ♔e4 ♘f6 32. ♔h4.

28... ♙f8 29. ♙xf8



29... ♙xf8

Black misses his chance! After the intermediate 29... ♘c6 (bringing back the knight) 30.f4 ♙xf8, Black would still be alive.

30. ♔e3 ♙g8 31. ♔f4 ♙b6 32. ♙a4 ♖e7 33. ♖ae2!

Black's extra piece hardly counts with the a5-knight out of play, and White's initiative is just too strong.

33... ♖d6

Liublinsky suggested that Black could still put up stubborn resistance with 33...

♙h6. Still, White has various ways to stay on top, and the safest seems

34. ♔xh6+ (34. ♔d4!? is another possibility to renew the threat of 35. ♘d7+)

34... ♘xh6 35. ♘g6+ fxg6 36. ♖xe7 ♙xf5 37. ♖c7.

34. ♖d7+ ♜dxd7 35. ♙xd7 ♜xe2 36. ♜xe2 ♖h6 37. ♜e8+ ♜g7 38. ♜g5+ ♜h7 39. f6 ♜b1+ 40. ♜h2 ♜g6 41. ♜xd5 ♜xf6 42. ♜e4+ ♜g7 43. ♜e5 1-0

The g-file

Ruy Lopez

Conel Alexander

Ludek Pachman

Hilversum zt 1947 (9)

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 ♖a5 10. ♘c2 c5 11. d4 ♜c7 12. ♖bd2 ♘b7 13. d5 ♘c8 14. ♖f1 ♜e8 15. ♜h2 g6 16. ♖e3 ♘f8 17. g4 ♘g7 18. ♜g1 ♜h8 19. ♖g5 ♜f8 20. h4 ♖g8 21. ♜e2 ♘d7 22. ♘d2 ♖e7



The young Ludek Pachman was leading the very first zonal tournament with 7½ out of 8 when he was hit by:

23. ♖f5! gxf5?

Accepting the challenge, you could say, though it should not be too difficult to see that the attack is simply too strong after White's next move. A better defence was 23... ♖xf5 24. gxf5 ♖c4, when at least the white pieces have no easy access.

24. gxf5

Now, 25. ♖xh7 or 25. ♜h5 cannot be prevented.

24...f6 25. ♖xh7 ♘e8



Stopping 26. ♖h5, but Alexander wrapped it up neatly:

26. ♖xg7 ♜xg7 27. ♙xf8 ♜xf8 28. ♙h6+ ♜f7 29. ♖h5+ ♙g6 30. fxg6+ ♜g8 31. ♖f5 ♖e7
 32. ♖g1 ♙c4 33. ♙c1 ♙d7 34. ♖f3 ♖f8 35. b3 ♙b6 36. h5 f5 37. ♙g5 fxe4 38. ♖e2 ♖e8
 39. ♙xe4 ♙f5 40. ♙h6 ♖f6 41. ♖f3 1-0

King's Indian Defence

Boris Gelfand

2753

Farrukh Amonatov

2590

Tromsø ol (2)

1. d4 ♙f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♙c3 ♙g7 4. e4 d6 5. ♙f3 0-0 6. ♙e2 e5 7. 0-0 exd4 8. ♙xd4 ♜e8 9. f3 c6
 10. ♜h1 ♙h5 11. g4 ♙f6 12. ♙f4 h5



Black has deliberately lured White into playing g2-g4, and now tries to compromise his opponent's structure even more. Gelfand uses the opportunity to make use of his early kingside advance.

13. ♗f5! gxf5 14. gxf5 d5

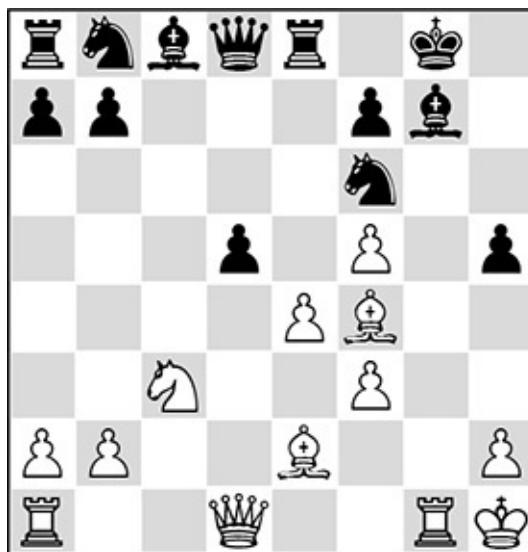
Black's wish to break immediately is understandable, as White's moves flow easily from this position: rook to g1, and the queen will join on the kingside via d2 or e1.

A) 14... ♗bd7 15. ♖g1 ♔h8 16. ♕e1 ♘e5 17. ♙h4 was the first outing of this theoretical knight sacrifice, and brought White a fine win in Shomoev-Ganguly, Moscow rapid 2013;

B) Passive defence led to even more horror in the grandmaster game Sjugirov-Prizant, Yerevan 2014: 14... ♙f8 15. ♖g1+ ♔h7 16. ♕e1 ♙h6 17. ♙xh6 ♔xh6 18. ♙h4 ♗fd7 19. ♕g3 ♙f6 20. ♖ad1, and Black resigned;

C) 14... ♔h8 15. ♖g1 ♗h7 might be best, though after 16. ♙xd6, White still has the better of it, and can gradually improve his position with ♕d1-d2, ♖g1-g2 etc.

15. cxd5 cxd5 16. ♖g1



16... ♖h8

The natural 16...dxe4 17. ♗xe4 ♗xe4 18.fxe4 ♕xd1 unfortunately for Black fails to 19. ♖axd1 ♖h8 20.f6! ♗xf6 21. ♖d5, and only by returning the piece can Black avoid mate!

17. ♖xg7 ♖xg7 18. ♗g1+ ♖h8

The only move: 18... ♖f8 19. ♗h6+ ♖e7 20. ♗g5 or 18... ♖h7 19. ♗g5!, with the idea of ♗h6+.

19. ♗g5

A terrible pin, and ♗c3xd5 and ♗g1-d4 are coming up.

19... ♗xf5!?

White has sacrificed an entire rook by now, so Black may return some material! After 19... ♗d6, White's moves come naturally: 20. ♗d4 ♗bd7 21. ♗xd5 ♖e5 22. ♖d1, and 22... ♗xd5 fails to 23.f4!.

20. ♗xd5!

Black survives after 20.exf5 ♗bd7 21. ♗b5 ♖g8 22. ♗xd7 ♗xd7!.

20... ♗bd7 21. ♖d1 ♖g8 22. ♗xf6 ♖xg5 23. ♗xg5 ♗xf6 24. ♗xh5+ ♖g7 25.exf5

White has won back the material, but the black king is still uncomfortable.

25... ♗b6


Here, the knight is out of play, though the better 25... ♗e5 26.f4 ♗c6 would not have saved Black either after 27. ♗g4+ ♖f8 28. ♗g5.

26. ♗g4+ ♖f8 27. ♗b4+ ♖e7 28. ♗c3 f6 29. ♖g1 ♖c8 30. ♗d2 1-0

Gelfand didn't consider this game a special achievement – he found 17. ♖xg7 behind the board and thought it was pretty standard. I imagine many of you will be more reluctant to sacrifice a whole rook and trust the long-term

compensation. In any case, try to pick up some of the composure Gelfand showed on move 20 and 21!

Summary

Sometimes, a knight on f5 is worth... a knight! When White can recapture with the other knight, it will be a dominant attacker against Black's weakened kingside. Black often needs too much time to reorganize his pieces for the defence or to threaten the f5-knight. In other positions, White takes back with the e- or g-pawn. His other pieces, notably his queen, will try to join the attack, when Black will not find it easy to defend his kingside, where his g-pawn is missing. If you also note that Black's queenside pieces will need considerable time to put up counterplay or join the defence, don't calculate – go for  f5 !

CHAPTER 24

From Morphy to Magnus

The bishop sacrifice on f7 to smoke out the black king has been popular for two centuries already. Although chess has changed, f7 has remained a vulnerable point, and the bishop capture has never disappeared from practical play, even up to the highest level. Elementary as this may seem, first let's get a taste of the resulting positions. We start off with a miniature that is a mix of history and recent play.

Vienna Game

Maxime Vachier-Lagrave

2819

Hikaru Nakamura

2791

chess.com blitz m 2016 (29)

1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.f4 exf4 4.♘f3 g5 5.♙c4 g4 6.0-0 gxf3



7.♙xf7+

Apparently MVL was in a jolly good mood, and considered that the king hunt was worth two pieces! A slightly more regular way to do so would have been

7. ♖xf3:

A) 7... ♗e5 8. ♖xf4 ♖f6 9. ♖g3 ♖g7 10. ♖xg7 ♗xg7 11. ♗b3 d6?! 12. ♗b5! ♗d8 13. d4 ♗d7 14. ♖xf7, with compensation, was a game between two youngsters, both already with a rating above 2400: Lu Shanglei-Eliseev, Moscow 2011. Lu Shanglei became a grandmaster the same year, and Junior World Champion in 2014. Eliseev became under 16 World Champion in 2012, and a grandmaster a year later. The latter's career ended abruptly with a deadly fall from a flat in November 2016, when he supposedly slipped when climbing for fun on the outside of a building. He was only 20 years old;

B) 7... ♗h6 8. d4 ♗xd4?



analysis diagram

9. ♗xf7+! ♖xf7 10. ♖h5+, with a transposition to the main game. This move order was actually used in the game from 1834 that is quoted further on.

7... ♖xf7 8. ♖xf3 ♗h6

Not the best. A good alternative was 8... ♖g5.

9. d4 ♗xd4?

But this is way too greedy and optimistic.

10. ♖h5+ ♖g7 11. ♗xf4



White is two pieces down, but is winning after 11 moves! Black's king is exposed and his pieces are either loose or undeveloped – something that should have put up a big warning sign on move 9.

11...d6

Here, Nakamura deviates from a game that was played two centuries ago in a famous lengthy match (in fact, six matches): 11... ♖xf4 12. ♜xf4 ♘f6 (12... ♘h6 13. ♙e5+ ♚g8 14. ♙xd4 d6 15. ♘d5 ♙g5 16. ♜af1 ♙e5 17. ♙e3 1-0 Narmontas-Rimeiki, Panevezys 2009, was a modern outing) 13. ♙g5+ ♚f7 14. ♜af1 ♚e8 15. ♜xf6 ♙e7 16. ♘d5 ♙c5 17. ♚h1 ♘e6 18. ♜xe6+ dxe6 19. ♘f6+ 1-0 McDonnell-De Labourdonnais, London 1834.

12. ♙e5+ 1-0

There was a slight difference in time controls between the games. This one was played online – the bullet tempo of 1 minute plus 1 second increment per move. No clocks were used at all in the matches of 1834, with McDonnell reportedly thinking one and a half hour over one move...

MVL's sacrifice was speculative, just like Morphy's 7. ♖xf7+ in this game: 1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3. ♘f3 g5 4. ♖c4 ♙e7 5.d4 d5 6. ♖xd5 c6



analysis diagram

7. Qxf7+ (7. Qb3 Bxe4 8. Kf2 was good enough) 7... Qxf7 8. Ne5 Bf6?
 9. Bh5+ Ke7 10. h4 gxh4 11. 0-0 Qh6 12. b3 Nd7 13. Qa3+ c5 14. Bd1 Nxe5
 15. Qxc5+ Ke6 16. Be8+ Ne7 17. d5 1-0 Morphy-Knight, New Orleans 1856.
 However McDonnell's 9. Qxf7+ was correct, and winning on the spot.

Nowadays, we don't see that many King's Gambits, but bishop takes pawn on f7 with check is still on the menu! Here is a very straightforward example – one you would rather call a combination.

Slav Defence

Artur Jussupow

2583

David Baramidze

2569

Germany Bundesliga 2007/08 (5)

1. c4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e3 Nf6 4. Nc3 e6 5. Nf3 Nd7 6. Bc2 Qd6 7. Qd3 0-0 8. 0-0 dxc4 9. Qxc4 e5
 10. Qb3 Be7 11. Qd2 Qc7 12. Bae1 h6 13. Nh4 Qd8 14. f4 exd4 15. exd4 Bb4



16. ♖xf7+ ♔xf7 17. ♗g6+ ♔g8 18. ♕f5 ♗f8 19. ♖e7 ♕e8

White can choose from numerous ways to win.

20. ♖fe1 ♕e5

20... ♕df6 21. ♕xh6+ ♔h8 22. ♖f7 is also hopeless after 22... ♗d6 23. ♖xg7 ♕xg7 24. ♕f7+ ♔g8 25. ♕xd6.

21. ♕xh6+ ♔h8 22. fxe5 ♗xe7

Black is a rook up, but it is all about his king, who has no defenders.

23. ♕f7+ ♔g8 24. ♕g5 1-0

Here is Petrosian's last win in the famous Candidates' Tournament. His overall victory made him the challenger to Botvinnik and, subsequently, World Champion.

English Opening

Tigran Petrosian

Viktor Kortchnoi

Curacao ct 1962 (23)

1. c4 c5 2. ♕f3 ♕f6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♕xd4 g6 5. ♕c3 d5 6. ♗g5 dxc4 7. e3 ♗a5?

Previously, Kortchnoi had beaten Smyslov and Simagin from the position after 7... ♗g7. The text move looks way too provocative though.

8. ♗xf6 exf6 9. ♗xc4 ♗b4

9... ♗g7 would be more consistent, to keep the pair of bishops.

10. ♖c1 a6

Yet another non-development move. This cannot be, don't you think?

11.0-0 ♖d7



The alternatives don't offer much hope: 11...0-0 12. ♖d5 ♖d7 13. ♖b3 ♗a4 14. ♗d4 or 11... ♗xc3 12. ♗xc3 0-0 13. ♗f3 f5 14. ♖b3 ♖d7 15. ♗fc1.

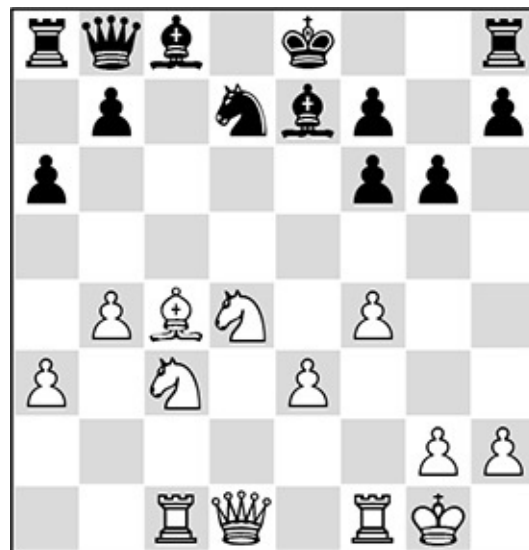
12.a3

12. ♗xf7+! was already possible: 12... ♖xf7 13. ♗b3+ ♖g7 14. ♖d5 ♗d6 15. ♖e6+ ♖f7 16. ♖dc7.

12... ♗e7 13.b4 ♗e5

13... ♗xa3 14. ♖d5.

14.f4 ♗b8



15. ♗xf7+!

With all White's pieces developed and nearly all Black's pieces undeveloped, Petrosian strikes.

15... ♖xf7 16. ♜b3+ ♜e8

No improvement is 16... ♜g7 17. ♞e6+ ♜h6 18. ♜f3.

17. ♞d5 ♞d6 18. ♞e6

White's pieces enter with overwhelming force.

18...b5 19. ♞dc7+ ♜e7 20. ♞d4 ♜f8 21. ♞xa8 1-0

The e7-bishop drops after 21... ♜xa8 22. ♜e6 ♞e7 23. ♞c6.

Now, we turn to some more double-edged examples.

Philidor Defence

Dragoljub Velimirovic

Lubomir Kavalek

Belgrade 1965 (11)

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♞f6 3. ♞c3 e5 4. ♞f3 ♞bd7 5. ♞c4 ♞e7 6.0-0 c6 7.a4 ♜c7 8. ♜e2 ♞b6?

At the time of this game, Kavalek was still a Czechoslovak, but already a strong player and the champion of his country three years before. 8...0-0 and 8...h6 are the regular alternatives to prevent White's continuation in the game.

9.dxe5 dxe5



10. ♞xf7+!

8... ♞b6 would not be repeated many times. Funnily enough, my database provides mainly a couple of games by two former countrymen of Kavalek's

(Zdenek Husek and Eric Kleimanic). Each and every time they got away after 10. ♖b3. The text move was right up Velimirovic's alley, as he was never shy of complications or sacrifices.

10... ♜xf7 11. a5 ♘bd7 12. ♜c4+ ♜e8

12... ♜g6 13. ♘h4+ ♜h5 14. ♜f7+ g6 15. ♘f5.

13. ♘g5 ♘f8

13... ♜f8 14. ♘e6 ♜d6 15. ♘xg7+ ♜d8 16. ♜d1 ♜b4 17. ♜e2, threatening to catch the queen with ♜a1-a4 and ♘c1-e3.

14. ♜d1

The threat is stronger than the execution, they say; here, it could also just have boiled down to a change of move order after 14. ♜f7+ ♜d8 15. ♜d1+ ♘d7 16. ♘e3.

14... ♘d7 15. ♘e3 ♜c8 16. ♜f7+ ♜d8 17. ♘a4



This may be a good moment to take stock. How can you judge (beforehand) that White has sufficient compensation for the bishop? It will help immensely if you have seen this kind of position before. Ideally, you will have played something similar in a practical game, or just studied such positions for a bit. Black's king on the central open file and Black's passive pieces should be clear triggers. Now that we are able to take a look in peace and quiet, you will note that all of black pieces can hardly move.

Does White have a threat? Indeed, he intends to continue with 18. ♘b6!; 18. ♘c5 would not be bad either. Hopefully, now you can have a fresh look at the chaos on the board. For Black it was too late – his position is lost for sure.

17...c5 18. ♖xc5 ♗xc5 19. ♜xg7 ♕g6 20. ♗xc5 ♕h5 21. ♗e7+ ♜c7 22. ♗d6+ ♜c6 23. ♜f7 ♜b5 24. a6 bxa6 25. ♜d5+ ♜b6 26. c4 ♜c6 27. ♜a5+ ♜b7 28. ♗c5 ♜ac8 29. b4 ♜hd8 30. ♕f7 ♜g8 31. ♜d6 ♕gf4 32. ♜xc6 ♜xg2+ 33. ♜f1 ♜xc6 34. ♕d8+ ♜c8 35. ♕xc6 ♗xc6 36. ♗d6 1-0

The f-file

Slav Defence

Konstantin Lerner

2542

Evgeny Postny

2674

Haifa ch-ISR 2008 (9)

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. ♕f3 ♕f6 4. ♕c3 dxc4 5. a4 ♗f5 6. e3 e6 7. ♗xc4 ♗b4 8. 0-0 0-0 9. ♕h4 ♗g4 10. f3 ♗h5 11. g4 ♗g6 12. ♕xg6 hxg6 13. e4 ♜b6 14. g5 ♜d8 15. ♗e3 ♕e8 16. ♜e2 ♕d7 17. ♜h1 ♜a5 18. ♕a2 ♗e7 19. ♜c2



19...e5

Two question marks from Postny.

20. b4 ♜c7 21. ♗xf7+

Postny: ‘Of course. White does not need to calculate until the end, the resulting position is just too promising for him.’ This is very true, but for that you do need some experience in attacking an exposed king, and to recognize some patterns like White’s 23rd move.

21... ♜xf7 22. ♜b3+ ♜f8



23.f4

Of course, just like in the King's Gambit, White is trying to open up the f-file. It's not too difficult to find if you spot White's next move.

23...exd4 24.f5

With the hook on g6, the f-file will inevitably open up – the black king sits in a draught.

24...♞e5 25.fxg6+ ♞f6



26.♞f4!

This quiet move more or less finishes it! The f6-bishop will be lost anyway, and thus the material balance is restored, but Black's king remains in the middle. White's only problem is his a2-knight, which does not participate.

26...♔e7 27.♚g3

The immediate 27.gxf6+ also looks good: 27...♗xf6 (27...gxf6 28.♗c1 d3 29.♖f3 d2 30.♗d3) 28.♚g3 ♔e6 29.♗c1 d3 30.♗b3 b6 31.♗d2.

27...♗d6 28.gxf6+ gxf6 29.♗xe5

29.♗c1 looks more logical – with such an exposed king in the middle of the board, the attacker wants to keep the queens on the board, while 29...♗e6 30.♗xe5 would win a tempo, compared to the game. However, the text move proved strong enough, and Lerner subsequently won the game.

29...♗xe5 30.♗xe5+ fxe5 31.♖f7+ ♔d6 32.♖af1 ♗c7 33.g7 ♗e6 34.♖1f6 a5 35.bxa5 ♖e8 36.♗c1 c5 37.♖xb7 c4 38.♖b6+ ♔c5 39.♖xe6 d3 40.♗a2 ♗xe6 41.♖xe6 ♔d4 42.♖d6+ ♔e3 43.h4 ♖g8 44.♖d7 ♔xe4 45.♔g2 ♔f4 46.♔f2 ♖b8 47.♖f7+ ♔e4 48.♗c3+ ♔d4 49.♗b5+ 1-0

In this chapter's last example, Black's remaining pieces are more mobile, and he has good chances of defending. Yet, the capture on f7 still turned out to be a dangerous practical shot.

Grünfeld Indian Defence

Levon Aronian

2830

Peter Svidler

2758

Khanty-Mansiysk ct 2014 (4)

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5 4.♗f3 ♗g7 5.cxd5 ♗xd5 6.e4 ♗xc3 7.bxc3 c5 8.♖b1 0-0 9.♗e2 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♗a5+ 11.♗d2 ♗xa2 12.0-0 b6 13.♗c1 ♗b7 14.♗c4 ♗a4 15.♗b5 ♗a2 16.♖e1 ♖c8 17.♗d1 ♗c2 18.♗e2 ♗c6 19.♗d3 ♗a2 20.♗c4 ♗a4 21.♗b3 ♗a3



22. ♕xf7+

When the queen is away, the bishop will play ☺. As usual, the bishop sacrifice forces the opponent's king to go out in the open.

22... ♖xf7 23. ♗c4+ e6

A) 23... ♔f8 24. ♘g5 ♘d8 25. ♘xh7+ ♔e8 26. ♙g8+;

B) 23... ♔e8 24. ♙g8+ ♕f8 25. d5 ♘d8 26. ♖b4 ♙a4, and now 27. ♘e5! is strongest: ♙g8xh7xg6 is coming up.

24. ♘g5+ ♔e8



25. ♘xe6!

Aronian goes for it! 25. ♙xe6+ comes with check, but the attack ends after 25...

♙e7 26. ♙g8+ ♔d7, though White can draw at will with 27. ♙d5+ ♙d6

28. ♖f7+.

25... ♖e7 26. ♗xg7+

26.d5 ♗e5 27. ♖b3 would have been an interesting try, keeping the octopus (Chapter 5!) alive. White's queen and bishop can act on either wing, while Black also has to keep a constant eye on f2-f4. Of course, the difficulty is to maintain patience and have faith in the long-term compensation.

26... ♖xg7 27. ♗c3 ♗d8

'Cowards don't play ice hockey' was Svidler's thought when deciding on this brave move; soon, he would regret that he had not equalized with 27... ♗xd4

28. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 29. ♗xd4 ♗c4.

28. ♖b3 ♗c7 29. ♗a1 ♗ac8 30.d5 ♖d7 31. ♖b2 ♖e7 32. ♗bd1 ♗f7 33.e5 ♗c2 34. ♖b5+

And Svidler decided to give back the piece, but this time the endgame with opposite-coloured bishops held too many problems for him:

34... ♖d7 35. ♖xd7+ ♗xd7 36.e6+ ♗d6 37.exf7 ♗f8 38. ♗e6+ ♗d7 39. ♗f6 ♗e2 40.f4 ♗e7 41. ♗e5 ♗exf7 42. ♗d6+ ♗e8 43. ♗e1 ♗e7 44. ♗c1 ♗ff7 45. ♗f6 ♗d7 46. ♗e6+ ♗f8 47.d6 ♗g8 48.h4 ♗f8 49. ♗g5 ♗f7 50. ♗ce1 ♗c6 51.h5 a5 52. ♗e7+ ♗g8 53.hxg6 hxg6 54. ♗1e6 ♗f7 55. ♗xg6+ ♗h7 56. ♗h6+ ♗g7 57. ♗ee6 1-0

Summary

The bishop sacrifice may lead to an obvious result within a couple of moves. When the difference in development is huge, the defending king will have a hard time. On other occasions, you should not wish to be able to calculate to the end. Trust a forceful opening of the f-file or the power of an octopus, while trying to assess the mobility of your opponent's pieces, which will greatly determine his defensive resources. Just play ice hockey, and once in a while you may even put the puck in the net like McDonnell did 200 years ago.

CHAPTER 25

Capa's bishop sac

This is a perhaps lesser-known, but equally effective alternative, when ♕xf7+ is not possible. It is seen in positions that arise from various openings. White sacrifices a piece for two pawns and his knight ends up on the beautiful e6-square, with Black's king still in the middle. It sounds good, of course, but long-term compensation still means you've got to get to work. Let us see how you can go about that!

Queen's Gambit Accepted

José Raul Capablanca

Efim Bogoljubow

Moscow 1925 (19)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 dxc4 4.e4 c5 5.♕xc4 cxd4 6.♘xd4 ♗f6 7.♘c3 ♕c5 8.♕e3 ♘bd7

Both players wrote down their own ideas after the game. This move obtained an exclamation mark from Bogoljubow, who says it provoked White's sacrifice on the next move. Capablanca noted that the text move allowed White a very unusual sacrifice at such an early stage of the game. According to Capablanca, 8...0-0 9.e5 ♘d5 10.♕xd5 exd5 11.0-0



analysis diagram

leads to a decisive advantage for White. Though White has a nice lead in development, this is exaggerated.



9. ♖xe6

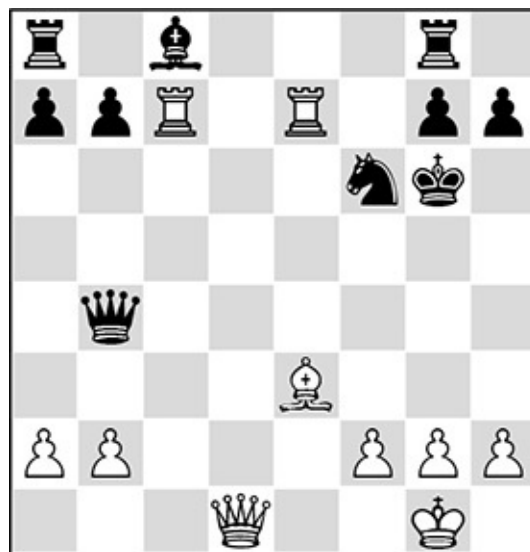
‘Difficult to judge whether this sacrifice leads to a win, but Capablanca felt obliged to try’ – Bogoljubow.

9...fxe6 10. ♘xe6

White has two pawns for the piece. Above that, the e6-knight is a terrific piece, while Black’s king now lingers in the middle of the board.

10... ♖a5?

Already the decisive mistake. 10... ♖b6 11. ♘xc5 (11. ♘xg7+ ♔f7 12. ♘f5 is of course natural, trading two tempi for another pawn, though after 12... ♘e5, you may wonder whether you should have preferred speed and initiative to the gain of the g7-pawn) 11... ♘xc5 12. 0-0 ♖c6 13. ♖c1 ♘cxe4 14. ♘xe4 ♖xe4 15. ♖e1 ♔f7 16. ♖c7+ ♔g6 17. ♕d4 ♖f4 18. ♖ee7 is a line with which Capablanca illustrated White’s attacking chances. As Kasparov pointed out, even without a computer, you can see that after the simple 18... ♖g8, there is no win for White after 19. ♕e3 ♖b4.



analysis diagram

Yet here, I very much like the quiet approach with 20.h3, preparing the next move; no more back-rank mates and the black pieces are deprived of the g4-square (the engine though prefers 20.a3, with a huge winning advantage, for instance: 20... ♖xb2 21. ♔c5 ♘f5 22. ♔xf5). After 20... ♘f5 21. ♔f3, suddenly the black king is in danger anyway. How he would like to switch his g8-rook and king here! Remember, Capablanca's analysis was not computer-assisted! This is certainly the best to start to learn chess – analyse by yourself. The benefit now is that you can check with your engine afterwards.

11.0-0!

Now that the octopus on e6 has remained undisturbed, White quickly develops.

11... ♘xe3 12.fxe3

Apart from ♘xg7+, White wants to continue with ♘c3-d5.

12... ♖f7 13. ♗b3 ♗g6 14. ♘f5

No rest for the black king.

14... ♗b6 15. ♘f4+ ♗h6



16.g4?

16. ♖f7 (threatening 17. ♖h5+ or 17. ♗h5+ and mate on the next move) 16...g6
17. ♘e6 ♗xe3+ 18. ♔h1 would have earned Capablanca an almost trivial win.

Now, after

16...g5! 17. ♗xb6 axb6 18. ♖d1!

the attack continued in a terribly complicated endgame (objectively lost for White) in which Bogoljubow did not take his chances. He did win the tournament though, scoring the biggest victory of his life.

18... ♖g8 19. ♘fd5 ♘xg4 20. ♘e7 ♖g7 21. ♖d6+ ♗h5 22. ♖f3 ♘gf6 23. ♖h3+ ♗g4 24. ♖g3+ ♗h5 25. ♘f5 ♖g6 26. ♘e7 g4 27. ♘xg6 ♗xg6 28. ♖xg4+ ♗f7 29. ♖f4 ♗g7 30.e5 ♘e8 31. ♖e6 ♘c7 32. ♖e7+ 1-0

Guess what? Three years later:

Queen's Gambit Accepted

José Raul Capablanca

Kornel Havasi

Budapest 1928

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3. ♘f3 dxc4 4.e4 c5 5. ♗xc4 cxd4 6. ♘xd4 ♘f6 7. ♘c3 a6 8.0-0 ♗c5 9. ♗e3 ♘bd7



10. ♖xe6 fxe6 11. ♗xe6 ♜a5

Compared to the Bogoljubow game, Capablanca has already castled (and Black has only included the insignificant ...a7-a6). The Cuban had no problems wrapping up this time.

12. ♗xg7+ ♜f7 13. ♗f5 ♗e5 14. ♜b3+ ♜g6 15. ♜ac1 ♗f8 16. ♗e2 h5 17. ♜fd1 ♜g8 18. ♗f4+ ♜h7 19. ♗b6 ♜b5 20. ♜c7+ ♜h8 21. ♜xb5 axb5 22. ♜d8 ♜xa2 23. ♜dxc8 ♗c4 24. h3 ♗xb6 25. ♜xf8 ♗fd7 26. ♜f7 ♜xb2 27. ♗d5 1-0

The sacrifice became more common than Capablanca must have thought. In the following recent game between two very strong Russian grandmasters, Black is aiming at the e4-pawn, but has delayed his kingside development.

Queen's Gambit Accepted

Maxim Matlakov

2730

Evgeny Najer

2699

Antalya 2017 (3)

1. ♗f3 d5 2. d4 ♗f6 3. c4 dxc4 4. e3 e6 5. ♗xc4 c5 6. 0-0 ♗bd7 7. ♗c3 a6 8. e4 b5 9. ♗b3 cxd4 10. ♗xd4 b4 11. ♗a4 ♗b7



12. $\text{Qxe6!?$ fxe6 13. Bxe6 Bxa5

13... Ke7 is not a great option: 14. Bc7+ Kf7 15. Bb3+ Kg6 16. Bxa8 Qxa8 17. f3 , and White is solidly better.

14. Bf4 Bc8 15. Bb3

15. Ke1 was better.



Again, two pawns and an octopus, though here Black is better developed than Bogoljubow was.

15... Bh5?

Of course, you would not want to enter 15... Qxe4 16. Kfe1 , yet this is exactly what the fearless engine does. Is it correct? I'm afraid so: after 16... Qd5 , surprisingly perhaps, White does not seem to have a convincing follow-up. Thus,

the immediate 15. ♖e1 would have been better on the previous move. After the text move, however, Capablanca's sacrifice becomes an instant success.

16. ♗g5 ♗xf4 17. ♖f7+ ♔d8 18. ♖xf4 ♖g8 19. ♖ad1 ♗c6

Or 19... ♗xa4 20. ♖f7.

20.e5! h6

After 20... ♗xa4 21.e6, White wins back one piece, while the attack on the black king continues.

21. ♗f7+ ♔e8 22. ♖f5!

22. ♗c4 is also very strong. White's attack is just too strong.

22... ♗e7 23. ♖g6



23... ♗xa4

A nice gesture, or an oversight? Anyway, 23... ♔f8 24.e6 ♗f6 25. ♗e5 ♗e8 26. ♗d7+ ♗xd7 27.exd7 ♗xd7 28. ♖xd7 ♖xa4 29. ♖e6 ♖e8 30. ♖e1 does not bring Black anything else.

24. ♗g5+ 1-0

Capablanca's sacrifice also occurs in positions from other openings. What would you think about the Sicilian Defence? Here is an early example, from an uncrowned king, the 'eternal second' Paul Keres.

Sicilian Defence

Paul Keres

Jaroslav Sajtar

Amsterdam ol 1954 (10)

1.e4 c5 2. ♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4 ♘f6 5. ♘c3 a6 6. ♙g5 ♘bd7 7. ♙c4 e6 8.0-0 ♙c7?



9. ♙xe6

‘In such positions a typical sacrifice. White, excellently developed, obtains two pawns for the piece, hinders Black’s castling and achieves a very fine attacking position’ (Keres in *Ausgewählte Partien 1931-1958*). Absolutely spot on, though ‘such positions’ remains undefined. A king in the middle with an undeveloped kingside would be one prerequisite.

9...fxe6 10. ♘xe6 ♙c4 11. ♘d5

By now this is a standard move for you, to keep the initiative going. The materialistic alternative 11. ♘xf8 ♖xf8 12. ♙xd6 is not bad either; the black king remains a target.

11...♙f7 12. ♙xf6

Keres vacates the g5-square for a possible knight check, which he planned after the alternative to the actual move in the game.

12...♙xe6?

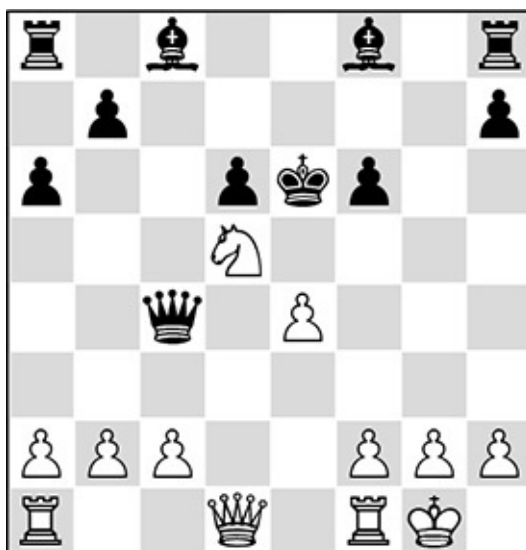
Keres had intended to reply to 12... ♘xf6 with 13.b3, when the queen has no good square and Black would struggle after 13... ♙xf1+ 14. ♙xf1 ♙xe6 15. ♘c7 ♖c8 16. ♘xe6 ♙xe6 17. ♙d3. Still, this is a much better continuation than the one in the game. With hindsight, we can now say that the reversal of the move order with 12.b3 would have been more accurate. If you figured that out behind the board, you don’t need this book.

13. ♘c3 ♘f6

13... ♙f7 14. ♙h5+ ♙g8 15. ♙e8!, threatening 16. ♘e7 mate, or 13... ♘e5 14.f4

is also hopeless. What's the king doing on e6?

14. ♖xf6 gxf6



15. ♗b6

The materialistic approach works quite well here.

15. ♗h5, bringing the major pieces to the scene, would also have been excellent.

15... ♗c6 16. ♗xa8 ♖e7 17. a4 b6 18. ♗d5+ ♖d7 19. ♗a3 ♖d8 20. ♗xb6+ 1-0

White wins a second exchange after 20... ♗xb6 21. ♗f7+ ♖d8 22. ♗xf6+.

As Keres wrote the book in 1964, he probably foresaw some theoretical developments when he wrote down 'typical'.

Sicilian Defence

Baskaran Adhiban

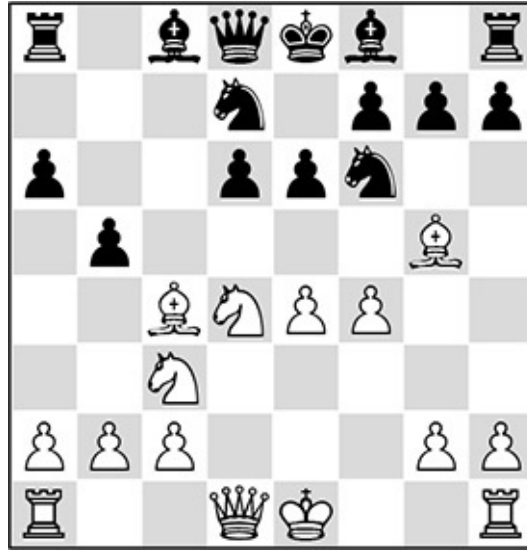
2677

Ian Nepomniachtchi

2751

Tbilisi 2017 (2.1)

1.e4 c5 2. ♗f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♗xd4 ♗f6 5. ♗c3 a6 6. ♖g5 e6 7.f4 ♗bd7 8. ♖c4 b5



Provoking a la Bogoljubow.

9. ♖xe6 fxe6 10. ♗xe6 ♜b6

Here, 10... ♗a5 is interesting after 11.0-0 (11. ♗xf8 ♜xf8 12. ♗xd6 is the usual feasible material alternative) 11... ♗b7 (11...b4 would be illogical, and is good for White indeed: 12. ♗d5 ♜f7 13.f5).

11. ♗d5 ♗xd5 12. ♗xd5

12.exd5 ♗e3+ 13. ♜f1 ♜f7 is not convincing.

12... ♗b8



13. ♗xf8

13.0-0-0, a logical development move, seems a serious alternative. Then, 13...

♗b7 fails to 14. ♗xg7+.

13... ♖xf8 14. ♗xa8 ♘b7 15. ♗xb8+ ♕f7 16. ♗xf8+ ♕xf8

Surely, both players had looked at this before they played the actual game, which ended with a draw by perpetual. Such is life sometimes in modern-day sharp theoretical battles. And even though White did not obtain a clear advantage here, it is useful to study closely the sacrifice on e6, as well as the following ideas. Small details can make a difference.

17.0-0-0 ♗xe4 18. ♖d2 h6 19. ♗h4 ♗a5 20. ♖e1 ♗xa2 21. ♖xd6 ♗a1+ 22. ♕d2 ♗a4 23. ♖d8+ ♕f7 24.b3 ♗a5+ 25. ♕d1 ♗a1+ 26. ♕d2 ♗a5+ 27. ♕d1 ♗a1+ 28. ♕d2 ½-½

Here is yet another early game, in yet another opening. There is one difference: Black's light-squared bishop (which will soon be gone) is outside the chain.

Slav Defence

Samuel Zhukhovitsky

Abram Poliak

Kiev ch-UKR 1936

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3. ♘f3 ♘f6 4. ♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 ♗f5 6.e3 e6 7. ♗xc4 ♘bd7 8.0-0 c5 9. ♗e2 cxd4 10. ♘xd4 ♗g4 11.f3 ♗h5 12. ♖d1 ♗c5



13. ♗xe6 fxe6 14. ♘xe6

At the time, Ilya Kan compared this idea, understandably, to the Capablanca-Bogoljubow game.

14... ♗c8

Running with the king to g6, as Bogoljubow did, is not even possible here: 14...

♙e7 15. ♖c7+ ♔f7 16. ♙c4+ ♔g6 17. ♖3d5!.

15. ♖xg7+ ♔f8 16. ♖xh5 ♖xh5



Here, White has obtained a third pawn for the piece, and material can be considered to be equal. Black's king is in the open, yet White still has to complete his development. Compare this Caro-Kann line: 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3. ♖c3 dxe4 4. ♖xe4 ♙f5 5. ♖g3 ♙g6 6. ♙c4 e6 7. ♖1e2 ♖d7 8.0-0 ♙c7 9. ♖f4 ♙d6 (or 9... ♖gf6 10. ♙xe6 fxe6 11. ♖xe6 ♙d6 12. ♙e1, Sprenger-Bok, Batumi 2018) 10. ♙xe6 fxe6 11. ♖xe6 ♙c8 12. ♖f5 ♙xf5 13. ♖xg7+ ♔d8 14. ♖xf5



analysis diagram

(Simagin-Goldberg, Moscow 1961). A line that Keres also employed!

17.b4!

The young Ukrainian (who didn't become very well-known, lived to be 100 years old, playing chess up to a very old age, and met many World Champions at the board), speeds up his development with verve.

17... ♖xb4 18. ♗b5

The simple 18. ♖b2 was also good.

18... ♗xc3

On 18... ♖xc3 19. ♖a3+ ♔g8 20. ♗g5+ is killing.

19. ♖d2 ♗xd2 20. ♖xd2 ♖xd2 21. ♗xd7 ♖xe3+ 22. ♗f1 ♗g7 23. ♖b1 b6 24. ♗d6+ ♗f7 25. ♗d5+ ♗f6 26. ♖e1 ♖ae8 27. ♖xe3 ♖xe3 28. ♗d4+ ♖e5 29.f4

And Poliak, a future trainer of Leonid Stein, continued to defend stubbornly, but in the end could not prevent defeat:

29... ♖he8 30.g4 h5 31.h3 hxg4 32.hxg4 ♖8e7 33. ♗f2 ♗e8 34. ♗f3 ♗c7 35.g5+ ♗g6 36.fxe5 ♗e6 37. ♗d6 ♖f7+ 38. ♗g4 ♖f4+ 39. ♗g3 ♗f7 40. ♗xe6+

40.g6+.

40... ♗xe6 41. ♗xf4 a6 42.g6 1-0

One last example, preceded by yet another opening:

French Defence

Efim Geller

2575

Algirdas Bandza

Soviet Union 1983

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3. ♗d2 ♗f6 4.e5 ♗fd7 5. ♖d3 c5 6.c3 ♗c6 7. ♗e2 ♖b8 8.0-0 b5 9. ♗f3 b4 10. ♗f4 ♖e7 11. ♖e1 ♗a5 12.c4 dxc4 13. ♖xc4



13...cxd4

13...0-0 runs into the strong 14.d5, but the text move runs into...

14. ♖xe6 fxe6 15. ♗xe6

No longer a surprise? Well, that was the purpose of this chapter! The follow-up is difficult enough here.

15... ♗f8

Here are some sample lines that favour White:

A) 15... ♔f7 16. ♗fg5+ ♕xg5 17. ♗xg5+ ♔e7 18. ♖b3 ♗dx5 19. ♖f7+ ♔d8 20. ♖xg7 ♖e8 21. ♕f4, and inevitably White will win back material;

B) 15... ♗c5 16. ♗xg7+ ♔f7 17. ♗xd4 ♗xd4 18. ♖h5+ ♔g8 19. e6. 16. ♗xg7+ ♔f7 17. ♕h6 ♖d5



Black seems to have done reasonably well, but White quietly brings in new forces.

18. ♖c1! ♜b7

Well, White's move was quiet, but it did come with a threat: 19. ♖xc6 ♜xc6 20. e6+ ♔g8 21. ♘e5 ♜d5 22. ♜g4 ♘g6 23. ♜f5.

19. ♜d3

And now, the queen joins in; things are starting to look tough for Black.

19... ♘g6 20. ♜f5+ ♔g8 21. ♘h5 ♜e8

21... ♘cxe5 would have been more of a challenge for White: 22. ♘f6+ ♜xf6 23. ♜xf6 ♜f7 24. ♜d6 ♜e8 25. ♘xd4, and with the rook out of play on h8, Black's extra piece is not felt. White now wants to continue with ♖c1-c7, when he has more than sufficient play for the piece.

22. ♖c5



This tactical shot must have come as a surprise. Still, such possibilities arise by themselves if the positional advantage is so huge.

22... ♜f7 23. ♜g4 ♘d8 24. e6 ♘xe6 25. ♖f5 1-0

This was not an easy follow-up, but it was a very nice game by Geller, and a good illustration of the long-term compensation.

Okay, one more lightweight game.

Sicilian Defence

Luis Galego

Albert Blees

2405

Cienfuegos 1997 (2)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.♘c3 a6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 d6 6.♙c4 b5 7.♙b3 ♘d7?



8.♙xe6 fxe6 9.♘xe6 ♖b6

White has the usual compensation after 9...♙a5 10.0-0 ♙b7 11.♘d5:



analysis diagram

two pawns, an octopus on e6 and an exposed black king.

10.♘d5 ♙b7

10... ♖b8 might look more natural, but is equally hopeless: 11. ♗dc7+ ♔e7
 12. ♘f4 ♕gf6 13. ♙xd6+ ♔f7 14. ♗g5+ ♔g6 15. ♙e6.
 11. ♘f4 ♕e5 12. ♗ec7+ ♔f7 13. ♘xe5 dxe5 14. ♙h5+ ♔g6 15. ♙f3+ ♔g7 16. ♗e8+



Black resigned.

I am sure that Albert Blee, a former team-mate of mine, was well aware that he was paying tribute (alas, as a victim). After all, this game was played in a traditional tournament: the Capablanca memorial.

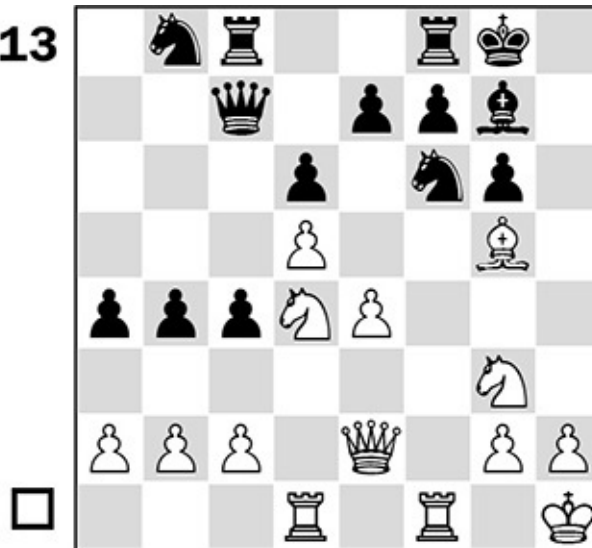
Summary

This bishop sacrifice gives good long-term play against an exposed black king. An octopus on e6 is an important contributor. Just keep on developing and get in as many pieces as you can. If the variations grow beyond your calculating abilities, stop and try to make an objective assessment. If you go for material, such as a third pawn for the piece, make sure you don't waste too much time, and that you will still be able to get all your pieces involved. And my main advice is – enjoy the king hunt!

Exercises Parts II, III and IV

Exercise Q13

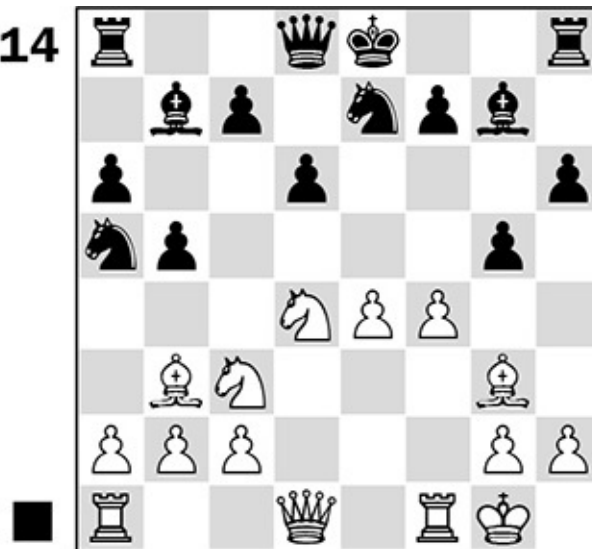
Q13



How did White reinforce his attack?

Exercise Q14

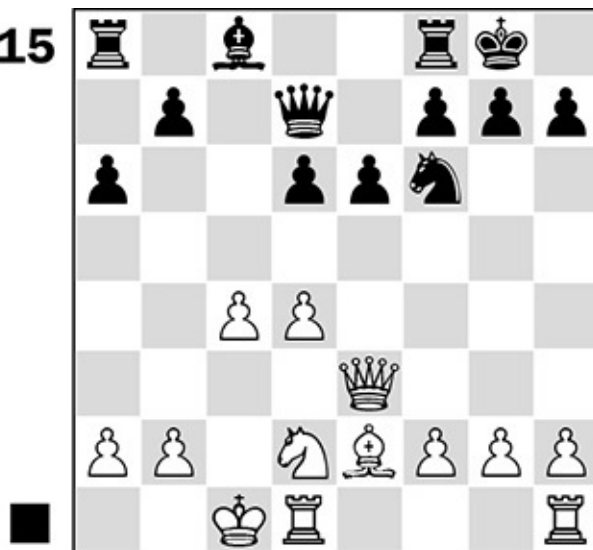
Q14



Where did the knight go after
13...c5 ?

Exercise Q15

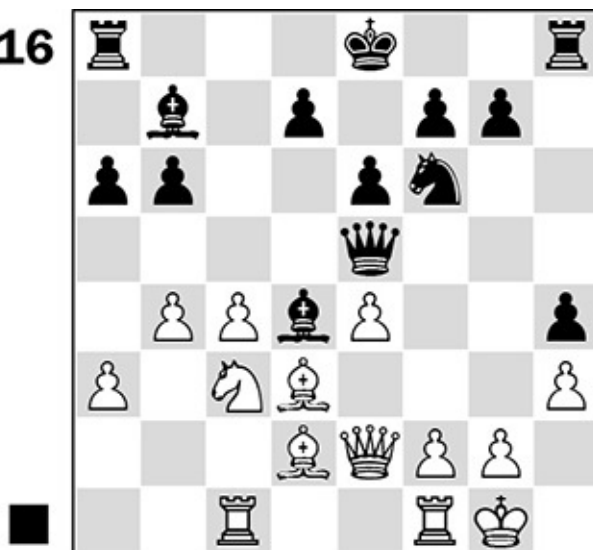
Q15



Any idea for Black?

Exercise Q16

Q16



How should Black continue?

Exercise Q17

Q17



White is a pawn up with one open file. How did White start to convert his material advantage?

Exercise Q18

Q18



Would you prefer 15. ♖c2 or development with 15. ♖g5 ?

Exercise Q19

Q19



How would you assess the position after 15.d5 exd5 16. ♖xd5 ♗xd5 17. ♙xd5 ?

Exercise Q20

Q20



White had just concluded Harry's journey h2-h4-h5xg6. For what purpose? How did he proceed?

Exercise Q21

Q20



How did White continue to build up?

Exercise Q22

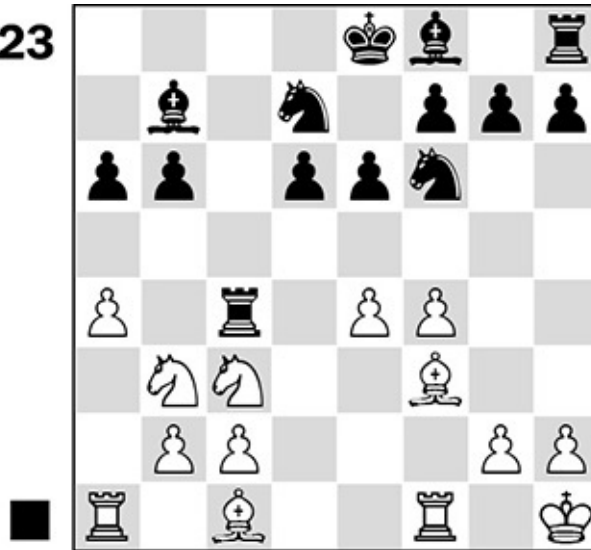
Q22



Was former World Champion Max Euwe right to sacrifice on h7 here?

Exercise Q23

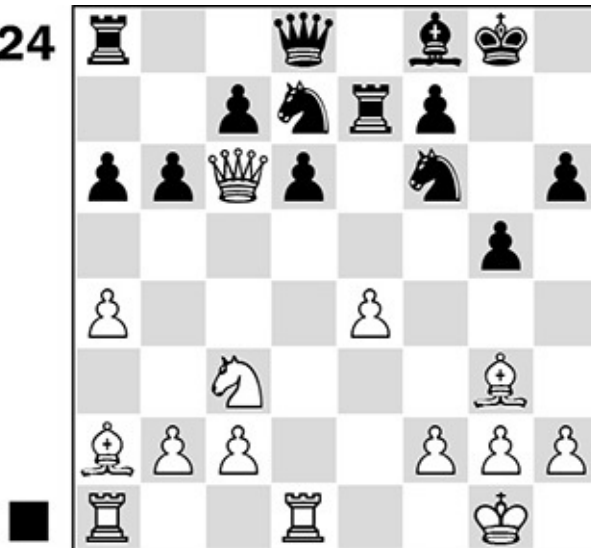
Q23



The knight capture 14... Nxe4 fails to 15. Qxe4 Qxe4 16. Nxd2 . What should Black play instead?

Exercise Q24

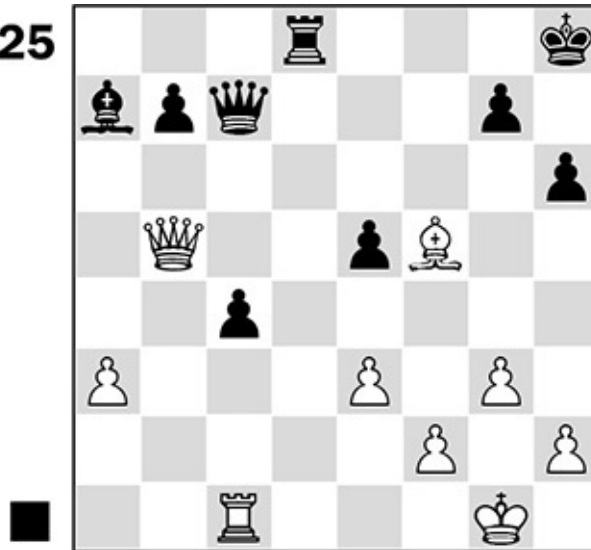
Q24



How should White proceed after 19... Nxe5 ?

Exercise Q25

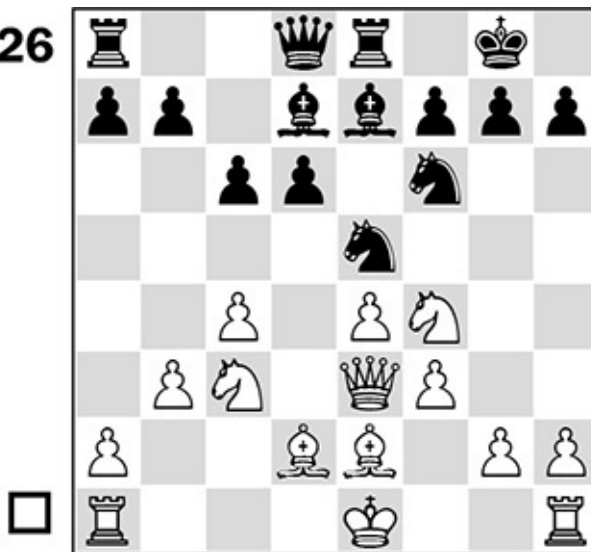
Q25



Should White go for the queen exchange after 34... ♔c5 or grab on b7?

Exercise Q26

Q26



There isn't a hook in sight, but White still ventured 13.g4. What would be your typical retort?

Exercise Q27

Q27



Would you play 15. ♖xe6 ?

Solutions

Mikhail Golubev

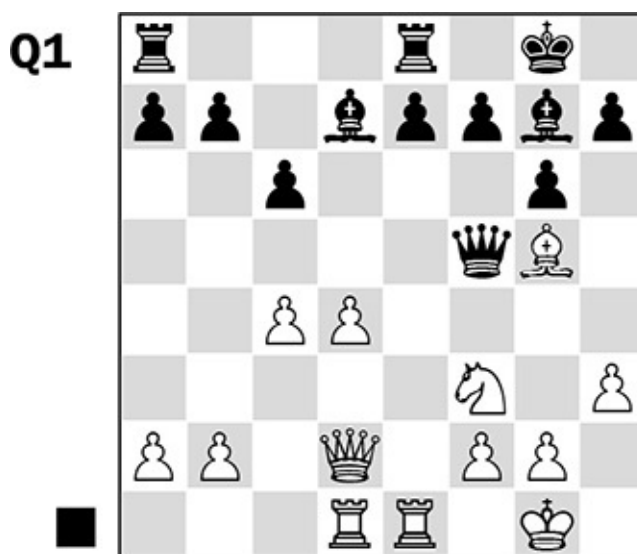
2499

Vlad Victor Barnaure

2416

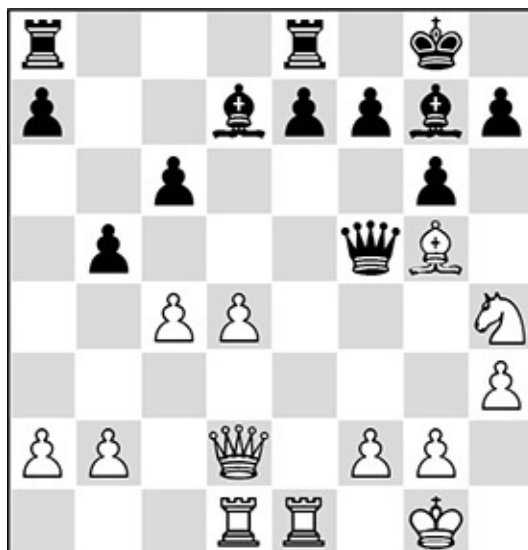
Bucharest 2006 (4)

Solution Q1



No! With his last move White set a disguised trap, protecting the g5-bishop and taking control of the a5-square. Have you got the clue? Look what happened in the game:

16...b5? 17. ♖h4!



Caught by surprise!

17... e6 18. xe6 xe6 19. cxb5 cxb5 20. d5 d7 21. f3

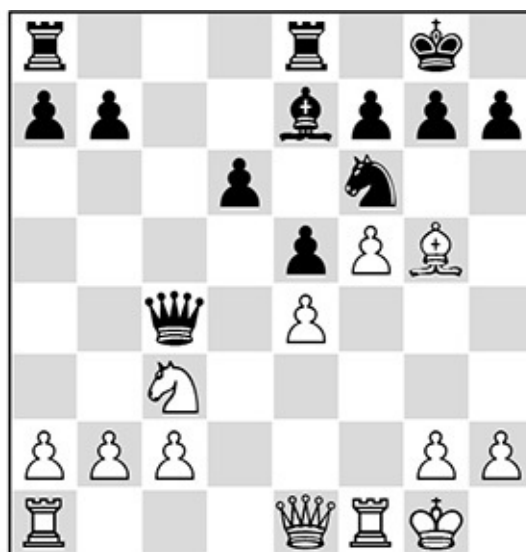
Black resigned.

Vasily Smyslov

Iosif Rudakovsky

Moscow ch-URS 1945

Solution Q2



16. ♖xf6! ♗xf6 17. ♘d5! ♖d8

After 17... ♖xc2, White not only has great positional compensation for the pawn, but he can also win material straight away: 18. ♖f2 ♜c5 19. ♖c1 ♜d4 20. ♘c7.

18.c3



And Smyslov used his great knight on d5 to launch a decisive attack on the kingside:

18...b5 19.b3 ♜c5+ 20. ♜h1 ♜c8 21. ♜f3 ♜h8 22.f6 gxf6 23. ♜h4 ♜g8 24. ♘xf6 ♜g7 25. ♜g3 ♘xf6 26. ♜xf6 ♜cg8 27. ♜d1 d5 28. ♜xg7

Black resigned.

Jiri Stoczek

2543

Ashot Anastasian

2587

Antalya Ech 2004 (10)

Solution Q3

Q3



23. ♕d5!

Taking up a strong central position à la Botvinnik. At the same time, now b6 is under attack and the d-file is closed, avoiding any rook exchanges. More on this in Part III!

23. ♖xd8 does not yield White anything: 23... ♔xd8! (23... ♖xd8 24. ♕f3! ♖f6 25. ♖xb6) 24. ♖xb6 ♖c8 25. ♖b8 ♔d1+ 26. ♕f1 ♖xh2.

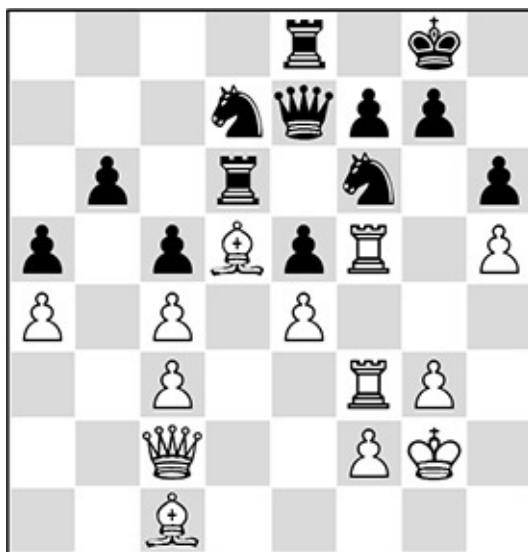
23... ♖c8

23... ♖xd5 24.cxd5 would obviously improve White's pawn structure considerably.

24. ♖bd2 ♖f6 25. ♖d3 ♖d6 26.e4

Now, White can manoeuvre at his leisure. He increased his space advantage (also more on this in Part III), and obtained a clear advantage when Black lost patience and took on d5 anyway:

26... ♖dd8 27. ♖f3 ♖e7 28. ♖g2 ♖d6 29. ♖c2 ♖d7 30.h3 ♖d8 31. ♖e1 ♖g6 32. ♖f5 ♖e8 33. ♖e3 ♖f8 34.h4 ♖e7 35.h5 ♖d7 36. ♖ef3



36... ♖xd5 37.cxd5 f6 38.c4 ♖f8 39. ♗b3 ♖d7 40.f4

However, Black defended stubbornly and eventually held the draw: ... ½-½ **(83)**.

Alexander Stripunsky

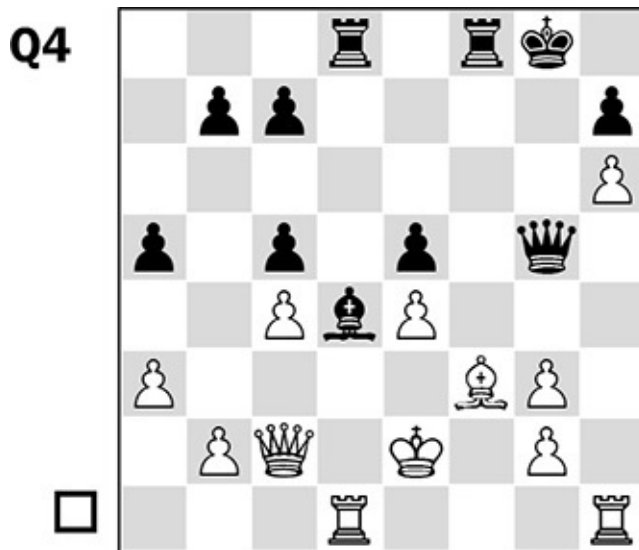
2530

Aleksandr Shimanov

2626

Philadelphia 2018 (7)

Solution Q4



Black is clearly better: he has the attack with opposite-coloured bishops, with

White's king in the middle (not able to run away via g1). White's bishop is almost a mere pawn, while Black's is a superb Botvinnik bishop (see Chapter 4).

27. ♖d3 ♜xg3 28. ♔f1 ♜d6 29. ♜h3 ♜f4 30. ♔e2 ♜b6 31. ♜b3

If 31.b3 a4, also with tremendous pressure.

31... ♜xb3 32. ♜xb3 ♜c1

Perhaps you would not think so right away, but Black is winning!

33. ♜d3 ♜h8 34.a4 ♜xb2+ 35. ♜d2 ♜b3 36. ♜g5 ♜c2+ 37. ♔e1 ♜c3+ 0-1

A lingering king, Botvinnik's bishop and opposite-coloured bishops come together.

Baadur Jobava

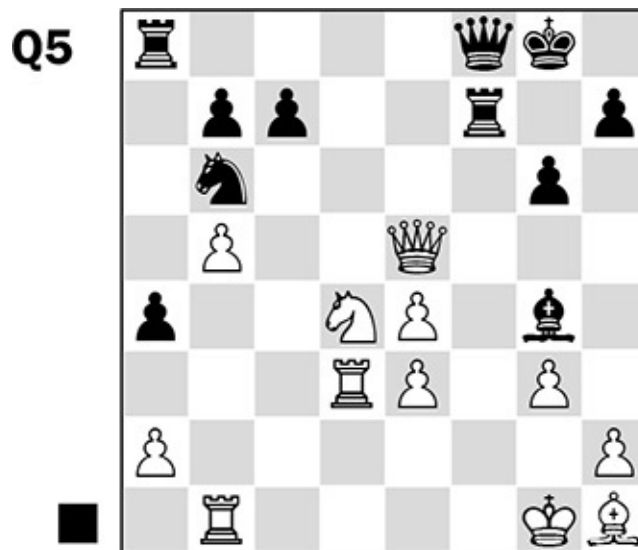
2714

Parham Maghsoodloo

2584

Bandar-e Anzali tt 2017 (1)

Solution Q5



Actually, Black was much better already, as the IDP is a clear (double) weakness.

31... ♜h3

The immediate 31... ♜e8 was also possible, although after 32. ♜g5 ♜h3

33. ♜f5 Black had to find 33... ♔h8!.

32. ♜g2

32. ♜dd1 is met by 32... ♜a3, attacking both the most backward of the doubled

pawns as well as the a2-pawn.

32... ♖e8 33. ♗g5 ♘xg2

White's bad bishop was a good defender.

34. ♗xg2 ♖xe4

Material is equal again, but the pawn structure still favours Black.

35. ♖c1 ♗d6 36. ♗g1 ♘d5 37. ♖cd1 0-1

There are no more moves in my database, yet the young Iranian apparently won.

And indeed, the remaining e-pawn will drop off after 37... ♖e5 (38. ♗h6? ♖h5).

Dimitri Reinderman

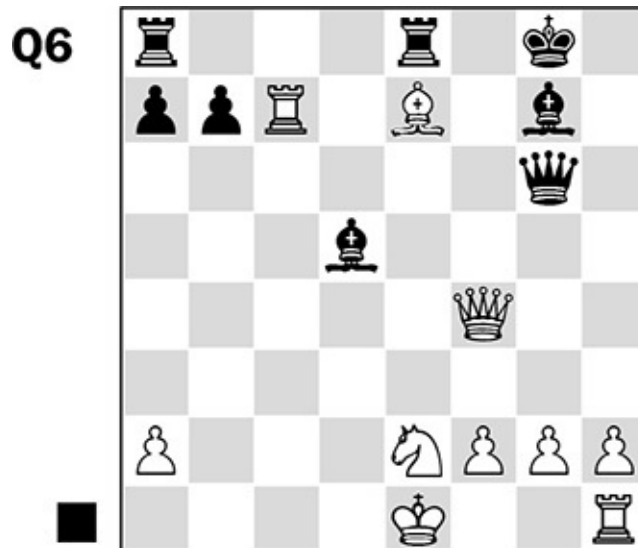
2598

Sipke Ernst

2559

Amsterdam ch-NED 2012 (3)

Solution Q6



26... ♖ac8!

No! White's king is in the middle, and in big trouble, because castling is impossible in view of mate on g2. Black brings on his reserves.

27. ♖xc8 ♖xc8

Without the rook on c7, White's position clearly looks weaker, and in fact he is just lost. His king is vulnerable and lingering, and the h1-rook is out of play.

Black avoided one more pitfall:

28.f3 ♖e8!

And not 28... ♗b1+ 29. ♔f2 ♗xh1, in view of 30. ♗f5, winning back material.

The text move gains a piece.

29. ♗g5 ♗d3 30. ♗d2 ♗c3 31. ♗xc3 ♗xe2# 0-1

Jacek Tomczak

2600

Jasem Al Huwar

2259

Warsaw 2018 (1)

Solution Q7



White is clearly better. Both his bishops, on neighbouring diagonals, exert great pressure on the black queenside. Black has great difficulty in continuing his development. The exchange of queens has not brought any relief. The actual game went:

13... ♗d7 14. ♗fd1 ♖e8

14...e5 15. ♗f5 ♗c5 16. ♗e3 ♗xe3 17. ♗xe3 ♗f6 18.c5! e4 19. ♗c4 bears some resemblance to the game, and is very good for White. After the text move, 15...e5 is a real threat.

15. ♗b3 e5 16. ♗e3 ♗f6 17. ♗a5!

An excellent post on the edge of the board this time (see also ‘A Not So Innocent

Bystander' in IYCPR).

17...e4

Desperately closing one bishop's diagonal.

18.c5! ♕d8

After 18... ♖g4 19. ♜dc1, the b7-pawn is still in trouble.

19. ♘c4 ♗g4

19... ♕c7 20. ♘d6 ♕xd6 21. ♜xd6 ♕f5 22. ♜ad1, and White rules: control of the open d-file, a pair of bishops and a workable pawn majority on the queenside.



analysis diagram

What a dream! However the text move did not save Black either.

20. ♜d4 ♜e7 21. ♘d6 ♕f3 22. ♕xf3 exf3 23. ♜ad1 ♕c7 24. ♘xb7 h5 25. ♘d6 ♗g4 26. ♘c4 ♜c8 27. b4 ♜e6 28. a4 ♜b8 29. ♜b1 ♘f6 30. ♘d2 ♗g4 31. ♜d7 ♕e5 32. ♜d3 ♜f6 33. ♕g5 ♜f5 34. ♘xf3 1-0

Zoltan Ribli

2526

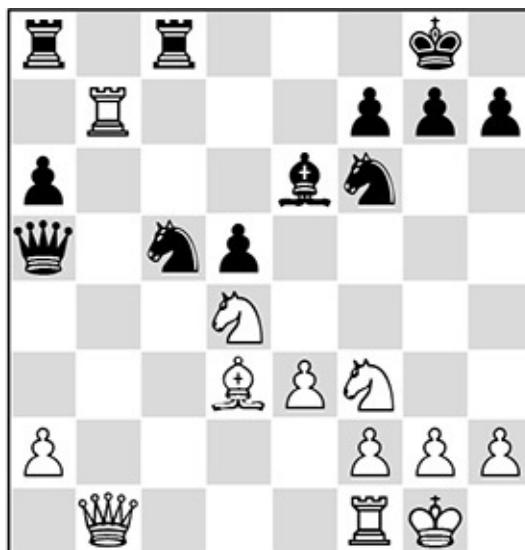
Attila Groszpeter

2441

Hungary tt 2017/18 (7)

Solution Q8

Q8



Are you kidding? There's no way the rook will leave the seventh rank unless absolutely forced.

19. ♖b3

It's good enough if you found this one. But 19. ♖g5! was even better.

Bronstein's games must have given you some clue for this move. Yet Ribli, a former World Champion Candidate, missed this possibility. After 19... ♗xb7?!

20. ♕xh7+ ♔f8 (20... ♔h8 21. ♖dxe6 fxe6 22. ♖f7#) 21. ♖dxe6+ fxe6

22. ♖xb7, a queen on the seventh rank is not bad either!

19... ♗xb3 20. axb3

Now, the game took an interesting course:

20... ♗e4

20... ♖ab8 21. ♖xb8 ♖xb8 22. ♖d4, and Black needs to seriously worry about his a6-pawn, as White's rook may end up on c6 or a1.

21. ♖d4! ♖d6



22. ♖e7

The straightforward 22. ♖xh7+ would just lead to a transposition of moves after 22... ♔h8 (22... ♔f8 23. ♗xe6+ fxe6 24. ♖d7) 23. ♖e7 (23. ♗xe6!? ♗xb7 24. ♗g5 ♗d6 25. ♔d1 is messier, but pretty dangerous all the same).

22... ♔d8 23. ♖xh7+ ♔h8 24. ♖xe6 fxe6 25. ♗xe6 ♔f6 26. ♗d4

Here, 26. ♗f4 was the strongest move, when White is about to reap a third pawn for the exchange. The text move eventually brought Ribli victory as well: ...1-0 (62).

Ma Qun

2645

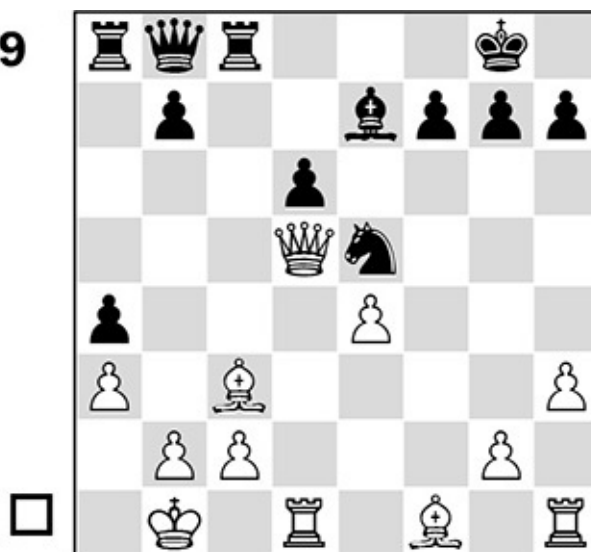
Daryl Johansen

2354

Canberra 2018 (2)

Solution Q9

Q9



22. ♕xe5! dxe5 23. ♕c4 ♖c7

Black gives up a pawn, instead of accepting utter passivity after 23... ♜f8 24. ♜hf1 ♙f6, when the difference in strength between the opposite-coloured bishops is obvious. After 25. ♖b5, White will follow up with ♜d1-d7, and have a big, big advantage.

24. ♖xf7+ ♔h8 25. ♕d3

White has to defend the c2-pawn, but the bishop was active again nine moves later, while Black had dropped the a4-pawn, too:

25... ♜f8 26. ♖c4 ♖b6 27. ♖b5 ♖c7 28. ♜hf1 ♙f6 29. ♕e2 ♜fc8 30. c3 ♜d8 31. ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 32. ♜d1 h6 33. ♖xa4 ♔h7 34. ♕g4 ♜xd1+ 35. ♖xd1 ♖b6 36. ♔a2 g6 37. ♖d5 ♙g7 38. ♕c8 ♖f2 39. ♖xb7 ♖xg2 40. ♕e6 h5 41. a4 1-0

Alexandr Fier

2544

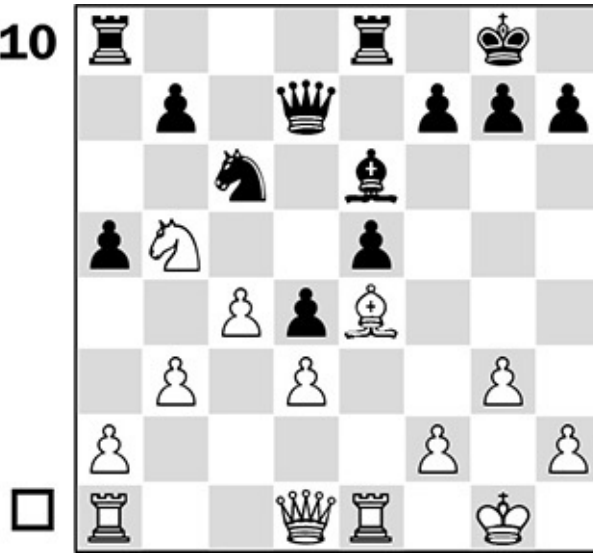
Anna Zatonskih

2447

Amsterdam 2018 (1)

Solution Q10

Q10



19.c5!

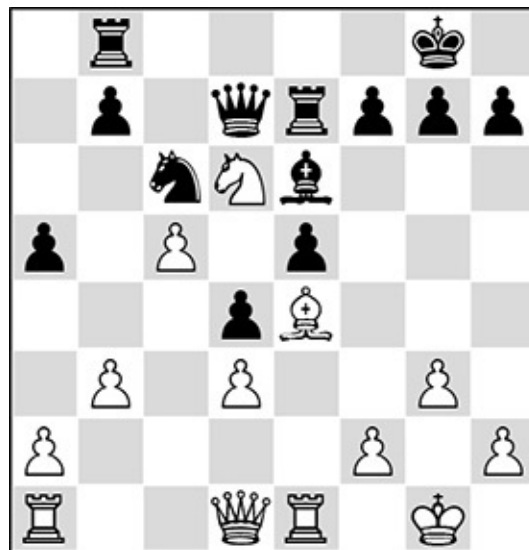
He has spotted the weak d6-square.

19... ♖e7 20. ♘d6

This octopus rules! Black's rooks are at a loss.

20... ♖b8

20...b6? is refuted by 21. ♙f3.



21. ♙h5

Not the greedy 21. ♘xc6? ♙xc6 22. ♖xe5 ♘h3 23. ♖e4 f5!, and White will regret having given up his light-squared bishop for a mere (knight and) pawn.

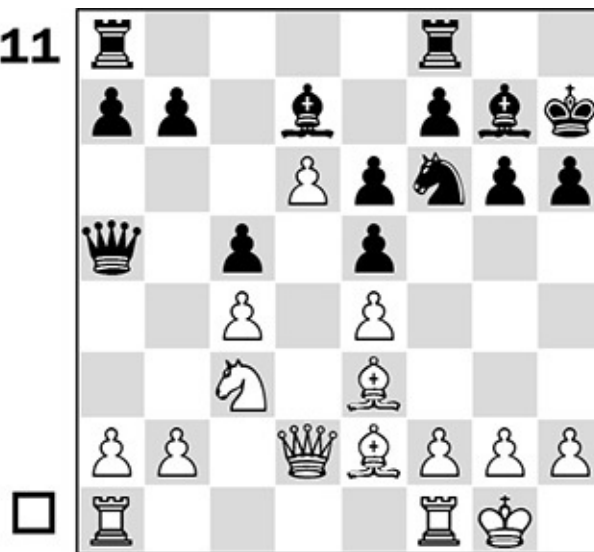
21...g6 22. ♘xc6 gxf3

Now 22... ♙xc6 23. ♙h4 does lose a pawn, as here Black cannot transfer his

And White won material and later the game: ...**1-0 (50)**.

Gothenburg izt 1955 (7)

Q11



15... ♖c6 16.f3 a6 17.b4 cxb4 18.axb4



18... ♖d8

18... ♖xb4 19. ♖fb1 is a trivial queen catch.

19.c5

Solid support of the central striker now.

19... ♗d7 20. ♗c4 ♗h4 21. ♖fb1 ♗f6 22. ♗c2 ♗g5 23. ♗f2 ♗f4 24. ♖b2 h5 25. ♖ab1 ♖fc8

26.b5

Opening up the b-file and the queenside for the rooks. The end is near.

26...axb5 27. ♗xb5 ♗f6 28. ♗xc6 bxc6 29. ♗a4 ♗d8 30. ♖b7 ♖cb8 31.g3 ♗g7 32. ♗g2 ♗a5
33. ♖xd7 ♖xb1 34. ♗xb1 ♗xa4 35.h4 ♗d2 36. ♗b2 ♗d1 37. ♗xe5+ ♗g8 38. ♗f6 ♖f8 39. ♖d8
♖xd8 40. ♗xd8+ ♗h7 41. ♗f6 ♗g8 42. ♗d4 1-0

Dariusz Swiercz

2637

Martyn Kravtsiv

2657

Turkey tt 2017 (1)

Solution Q12

Q12



26...dxe5 27. ♖xg6

White straightforwardly goes for a hyper-ideal pawn centre. This is very logical: first, you will have noticed that the desired immediate advance e4-e5 doesn't have sufficient support. Then, you will have noticed that the intermediate capture on g6 would make e4-e5 possible after all. This would have made you forget about 27.fxe5 ♜xe5 28. ♜f3, when another pattern comes to the fore: two strong bishops working together from a distance; for example, 28... ♜xf3 29. ♚xf3, and it is clear that Black's kingside is under heavy pressure, amply compensating for the pawn.

27...hxg6

The intermediate 27...exf4? fails to 28. ♜c2 fxg3 29. ♜xf6 gxf6 30. ♚h5.

28.fxe5



28... ♖h7

What else? If Black, a grandmaster with a rating around 2650, had asked himself this, he might have found the surprising 28...c4!, when Black will win back the piece after 29.exf6 c3, while White's strong pawn centre has gone. So, with hindsight we can conclude that 27.fxe5 was the better option! In the game, everything went pretty smoothly for White:

29. ♖e4 ♗f5 30. ♖d6 ♗xb1 31. ♗xb1 ♖f8 32. ♖f3 c4 33. ♗d4 ♗e7 34. b4 ♗d7 35. bxa5 ♗xd6 36. exd6 ♗xd6 37. ♗d1 ♖d7 38. ♗c3 ♖f6 39. ♗b4 ♗d7 40. ♗xf6 gxf6 41. ♗c3 ♗d6 42. a3 ♗e8 43. ♗b4 ♗d7 44. d6 ♗g7 45. ♗c5 ♗c8 46. ♗e3 ♗e8 47. ♗d4 ♗e2 48. ♗c5 ♗e6 49. ♖d4 ♗e4 50. ♗c7 1-0

Mikhail Tal

2630

Alexander Chernin

2560

Saint John Wch blitz 1988 (4)

Solution Q13

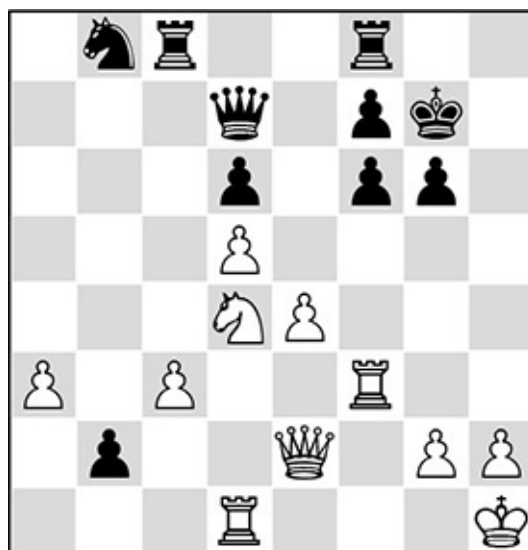
Q13



20. ♖gf5! ♜d7

20...gxf5 fails to 21. ♜xf6 ♜xf6 22. ♖xf5 ♜fe8 23. ♜g4+ ♜f8 24. ♖h6.

21. ♜f3 b3 22. axb3 cxb3 23. c3 a3 24. bxa3 b2 25. ♖xg7 ♜xg7 26. ♜xf6+ exf6



27. ♜xb2

Now, the second knight sacrifice on f5 – not a silent sac, but a forcing one – would have been the logical follow up: 27. ♖f5+ ♜g8 28. ♜e3 g5 29. ♜d4,

though Tal had little trouble winning this blitz game after the text move:
27... ♜e7 28. ♜e3 ♜e5 29. ♖f3 ♜f4 30. ♜e2 ♖d7 31. ♜f1 ♖e5 32. ♜c2 ♜c4 33. ♖d2 ♜g5
34. ♖xc4 ♖xc4 35. ♜d3 ♖e5 36. ♜e3 ♜h5 37. ♜ee1 ♜h8 38. h3 1-0

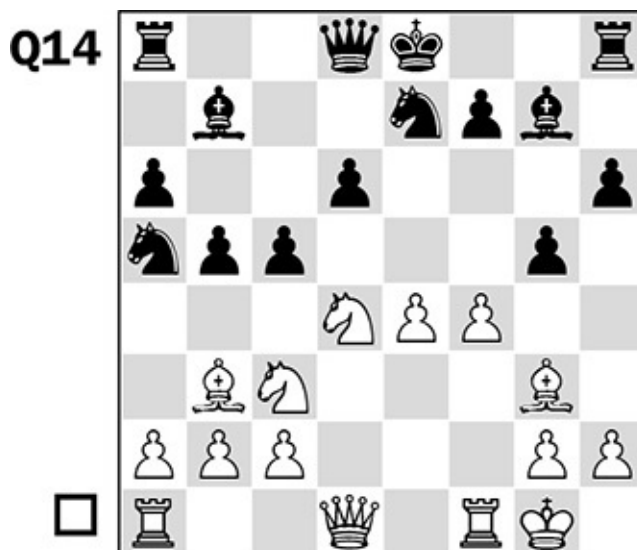
Michael Adams

2731

Marc Narciso Dublan

2517

Spain tt 2001 (8)

Solution Q14

Nowhere! Well, the knight goes to e6 in a couple of moves.

14. ♖xf7+! ♜xf7 15. fxg5+ ♜g8 16. ♗e6

Black's pawns are falling one after another, while his king is not safe either.

16... ♜d4+ 17. ♗xd4 cxd4 18. ♜xd4 hxd4 19. ♜f6 ♜h7 20. ♜ad1 ♜f8 21. ♜xd6

Black will have deeply regretted not taking the b3-bishop when he could. Now, White's initiative continues with equal material. As Black's minor pieces on the queenside are off-side, this proves to be too much.

21... ♜c8 22. ♜f6 ♜ac6 23. ♗d5 ♗xd5 24. ♜xd5 ♜g7 25. ♜xg5 ♜d7 26. ♜xg7+ ♜xg7

27. ♜e6+ ♜h8 28. ♗h4 ♗d4 29. ♜h3 ♜g8 30. ♗f6 ♜f8 31. e5 ♗e2+ 32. ♜h1 ♗e4 33. ♜f2 1-0

Daniil Dubov

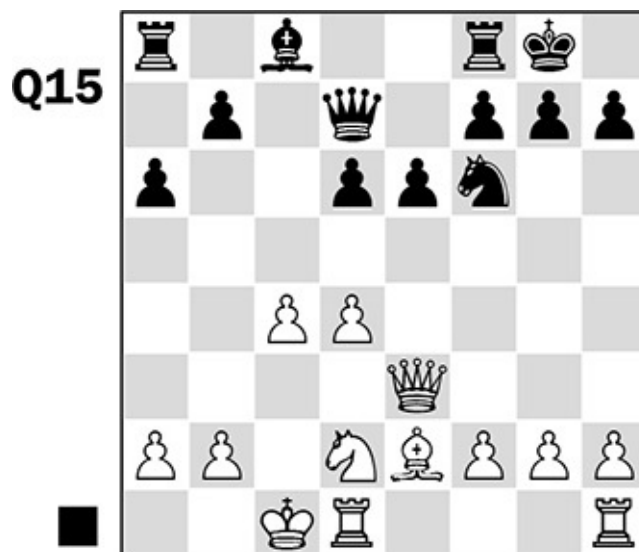
2677

Alexander Rakhmanov

2654

Russia tt rapid 2017

Solution Q15



16...b5!

With opposite-castled kings, Black opens up the b-file for his rook, and tries to obtain a strong square for his knight on d5 as well.

17. ♖f3

If White wants to keep control of d5 with 17.b3, his king's position will be much more open after 17...bxc4 18.bxc4 ♖b8. The text move is not so useful either. Not only does it help Black's development, but the exchange of the light-squared bishops also facilitates Black's control of the d5-square.

17... ♗b7 18.c5 ♜fc8

The straightforward 18... ♗xf3 19. ♘xf3 (19. ♙xf3 ♙c7! 20. ♙g3 ♜fc8; 19.gxf3 ♘d5) 19... ♘d5, followed by a rook-move to c8 and/or ...dxc5, seems simple and strong.

19. ♙b1 ♗xf3 20. ♙xf3 dxc5 21.dxc5

White's c-pawn is in trouble, while Black's knight will be beautifully centralized on the untouchable d5-square. This rapid game saw some further adventures, and Black eventually won: **...0-1 (63)**.

Jozsef Horvath

2591

Anthony Kosten

2533

France tt 2002 (8)

Solution Q16

Q16



16...g5!

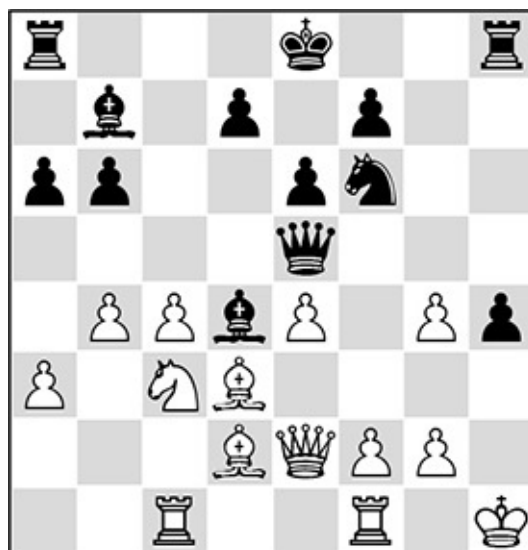
Reaching for the hook on h3! Black has not castled yet, and now he starts an attack on White's king as quickly as possible, intending to open a file for the h8-rook.

17. ♔h1?

Preparing the counter-stroke f2-f4. 17. ♘f3 was about the only move to prevent ...g5-g4, followed by ...h4-h3. But after 17... ♖g8, White can hardly stop ...g5-g4 anyway.

17...g4 18.hxg4?

18.f4 was consistent, though 18... ♗h5 leaves Black clearly on top.



18... ♗g3!

Oops! Now, Black is completely winning.

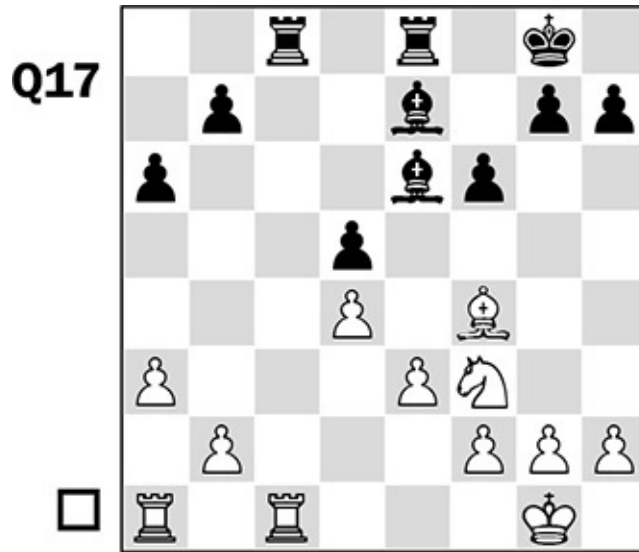
19. e3 xg4 20.fxg3 hxg3+ 21. g1 xe3 22. f2 f5 23.exf5 gxf2+ 24. xf2 xf2+ 25. xf2 ...0-1 (49)

José Raul Capablanca

Richard Réti

Berlin 1928 (7)

Solution Q17



20. ♖c7!




If all the pieces were to be exchanged, the pawn ending would be winning for White. However, 20. ♖xc8 ♗xc8 would clearly be a premature start, granting Black the only open file. Thus, Capablanca used the Karpov stratagem (again, an anachronism, of course!) to gain time for the doubling of his rooks on the c-file.

20... ♖d7 21. ♖c3 ♖c6 22. ♖b6 ♖d6 23. ♖ac1

Mission accomplished!

23...f5 24.g3 ♔f7 25.♘d2

Heading for a5, to break the blockade on the c-file.

25...g5 26.  b3  e6 27.  a5



Another task fulfilled. Soon, Capablanca broke through and managed to get a rook on the seventh, and Réti's defence was broken shortly thereafter:

27... ♖b8 28. ♗b3 f4 29. exf4 gxf4 30. ♘xc6! ♜exc6 31. ♜xc6 bxc6

If 31... ♜xc6 32. ♙c5 (or even the charming strike 32. ♙a7).

32. ♙c5 ♙c7 33. ♜b7 ♜e6 34. ♜g2 ♜f5 35. ♜f3 h5 36. b4 fxg3 37. hxg3 a5 38. bxa5 ♙xa5 39. ♜f7+ ♜g6 40. ♜f8 ♜c7 41. ♜a8 ♜f7+ 42. ♜e2 1-0

Murray Chandler

2505

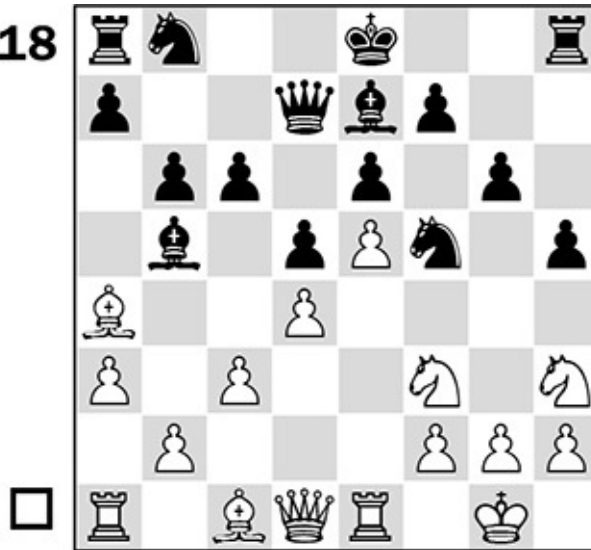
Rafael Vaganian

2555

Dubai ol 1986 (6)

Solution Q18

Q18



15. ♖c2

The withdrawal of the bishop is the most principled choice: avoid exchanges when you have a space advantage. The exchange of two minor pieces would allow Black to solve his spatial problems. There is one exception among the alternatives: 15. ♖xb5 would leave White with the advantage, because after 15... cxb5 16. ♖g5 ♖xg5 17. ♗hxg5, Black's position does not hold many active plans, now that he has been robbed of the possibility of pressurizing the centre with ...c6-c5.

15...c5 16. ♖g5 ♗c6

16... ♖xg5 17. ♗hxg5 ♗c6 was slightly better, avoiding White's next.

17. ♖f6! ♖xf6 18. exf6 ♔d8

18...0-0 19. ♔d2 is no picnic for Black. One sample line: 19... ♔h7 20. a4 ♖a6 21. dxc5 bxc5 22. ♗hg5+ ♔g8 23. ♖xf5 exf5 24. ♗e4 ♔h7 25. ♗xc5.

19. dxc5!



Opening another central file, while Black's king is still lingering in the middle.
The b5-bishop is a pretty useless bystander.

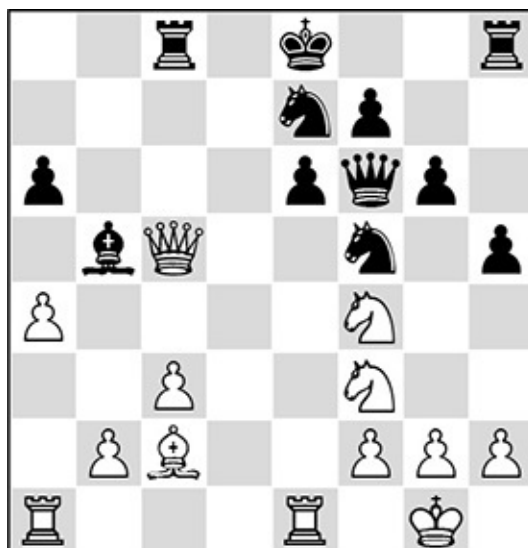
19...bxc5 20. ♖f4

20. ♗xf5 gxf5 21. ♗hg5 was very strong, too.

20... ♜xf6 21. ♜xd5

Again, White had a luxurious choice: 21. ♗xe6 fxe6 22. ♜xd5 ♔f7 23. ♜xe6 ♜d8 24. ♗g5+ or 21. ♗xd5 would have done as well.

21... ♜c8 22. ♜xc5 a6 23. a4 ♗ce7



24. ♗d5! 1-0

That's a nice one too!

Rafael Vaganian

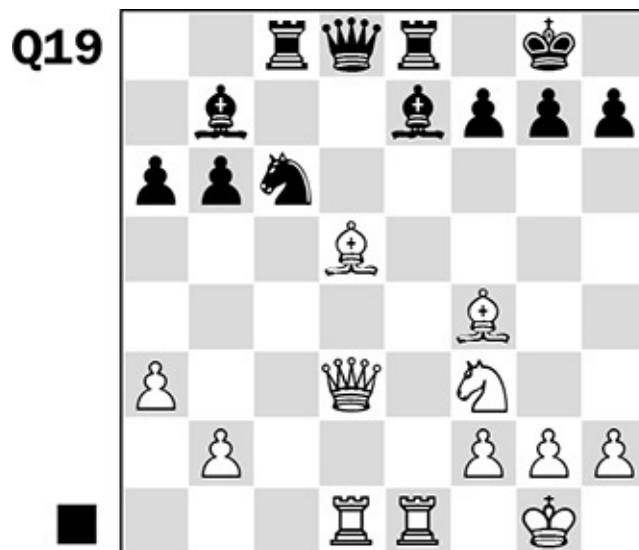
2577

Nikolay Legky

2446

Yerevan Ech sr 2016

Solution Q19



Indeed, the position is actually pretty good, and Black even resigned here! Black has no decent way to prevent 18. ♕xf7+ ♔xf7 19. ♖b3+. For instance, 17... ♔h8 18. ♖b1 or 17... ♖f8 18. ♖f5, and Black's queen remains without good squares: 18... ♖e8 19. ♗g5 g6 20. ♖h3 h5 21. ♕d6, winning big material. So, **1-0** it was, right away!

Bassem Amin

2693

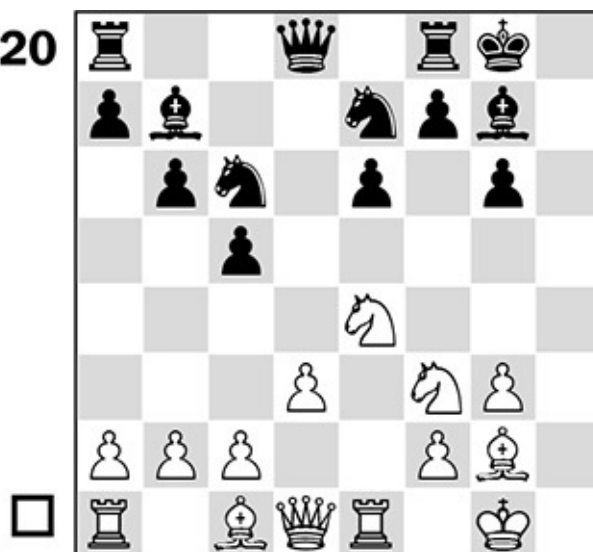
Aman Hambleton

2501

PRO League INT rapid 2018

Solution Q20

Q20



13. ♖fg5!

Black no longer has the possibility of ...h7-h6, to drive this knight away. Now, White wants to follow up with ♕d1-g4-h4.

13... ♗f5

The somewhat awkward 13... ♗e5 was better, preventing White's plan, though White is still better after the persistent 14.f4 ♗5c6 15. ♕g4.

14. ♕g4 ♜e8

14... ♗cd4 would have posed more of a challenge. Enjoy the tactical complications: 15. ♕h3 ♜h6 16.c3 (after the immediate 16.g4, Black can avoid big losses with 16... ♜xe4 17. ♗xe4 ♜xc1) 16... ♗c2 (16... ♗c6 17.g4) 17. ♗xe6! fxe6 18. ♜xh6



analysis diagram

and White has an overwhelming position, for example: 18... ♖xe1 19. ♔xe1 ♜f7 20. ♜g4!.

15. ♜h3 ♜d6

A) 15... ♜h6 can be met with 16. ♜f3 (but the engine will show you the surprising and elegant 16. ♜h7 ♔xh7 17. ♙g5 f6 18. ♜xf6+) 16... ♜f5 17.g4;

B) 15... ♙h6 16.g4 wins material immediately.

16. ♜h7+ ♜f8 17. ♜xd6 ♜xd6 18. ♜e4 ♜d4 19.c3

Planning to follow up with ♙c1-h6, but other moves were equally good here.

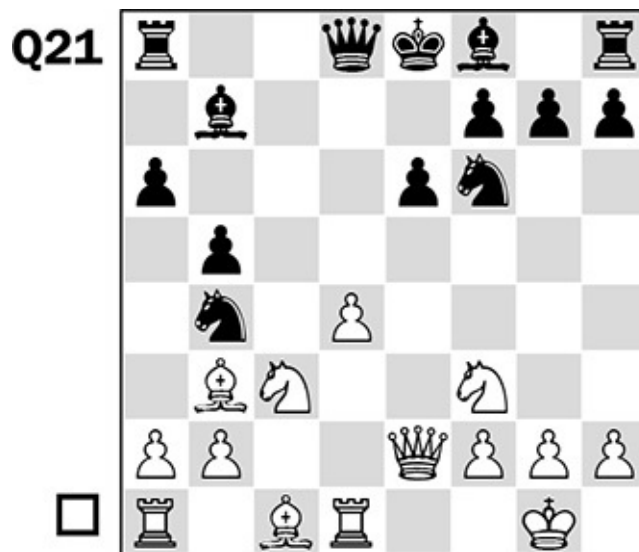
19... ♜d8 20. ♙g5 1-0

Boris Spassky

Sergey Avtonomov

Leningrad jr 1949

Solution Q21



12.d5!

He actually broke through right away! Well done by the 12-year-old lad! This was played well before Boleslavsky's game in Zurich 1953.

12... ♜bxd5

12... ♜fxd5 prevents the pin by ♙c1-g5, but allows 13.a3, and 12... ♙xd5

13. ♙g5 boils down to the same thing.

13. ♙g5

‘Black’s position resembles a prisoner tied by his legs and arms’ – Krogius.

13... ♖e7 14. ♗xf6 gxf6 15. ♘xd5 ♗xd5 16. ♗xd5 exd5 17. ♘d4 ♔f8

17... ♖d7, to keep the knight from f5, does not help after 18. ♖e1 ♔f8 19. ♗h5.
18. ♘f5

‘A knight on f5 is worth a pawn’ (Kasparov). There’s no doubt about that here, also considering the unsafe black king and his shattered pawn structure on the kingside. White is just winning.

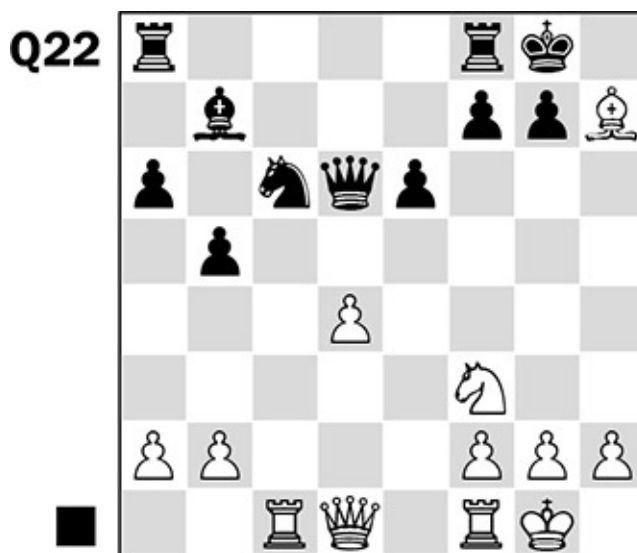
18...h5 19. ♖xd5 ♗xd5 20. ♗xe7+ ♔g8 21. ♗xf6 1-0

Max Euwe

Martin Christoffel

Groningen 1946 (3)

Solution Q22



No! True, Black lacks defenders, but White equally lacks means to attack.

15... ♗xh7 16. ♘g5+ ♔g6

Or 16... ♔h6 17. ♗g4 ♗xd4 18. ♗h4+ ♔g6.

17. ♘e4

The first sign that the bishop sacrifice is not business as usual. 17. ♗g4 can be met with 17...f5, and the attack stops.

17... ♗f4!

17... ♗e7 would give White an attack after 18. ♗g4+ ♔h6 19.d5 (19. ♖c3 g6) 19...exd5 20. ♗h3+ ♔g6 21. ♘g3.

18. ♘c5

18. ♖e1 ♜b4.

18... ♜d8 19. ♜c3

The rook comes to assist in the attack, but the white knight has strayed and the attack should just not be powerful enough. In the actual game, however, Christoffel broke down after

19... ♜h8 20. ♜c2+



20... f5?

20... ♜f5 was fully possible, and even 20... ♜f6 should have won, as 21. ♜xb7 is not possible in view of the mate in one threat on h2.

21. ♜g3+ ♜f7?

21... ♜h7 22. ♜xb7 ♜xb7 23. ♜c6 looks pretty dangerous, but is sufficient for equality: 23... ♜d6 (23... ♜ab8 24. ♜h3+ loses) 24. ♜d7 ♜xd4 25. ♜h3+ ♜g6 26. ♜g3+ ♜h7 27. ♜h3+, with a repetition of moves.

22. ♜xb7 ♜e8

22... ♜xb7 23. ♜c6 is a plainly worse version of the lines after 21... ♜h7.

23. ♜c5 ♜c6 24. ♜d3 ♜xd4 25. ♜d1 ♜d6 26. f4

And Euwe convincingly converted his advantage:

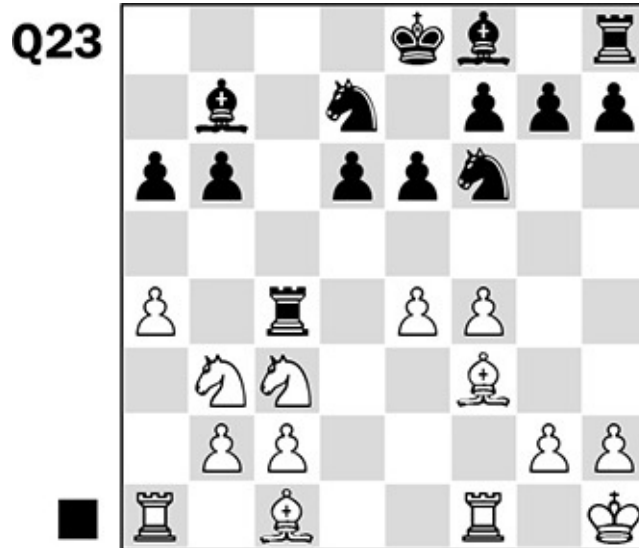
26... ♜h8 27. ♜e5+ ♜g8 28. ♜d3 ♜d8 29. ♜h1 ♜b6 30. ♜f3 ♜c6 31. ♜d7 ♜xd7 32. ♜xd7 ♜d8 33. ♜e8+ ♜h7 34. ♜g5+ 1-0

Anatoly Ufimtsev

Ilya Kan

Moscow 1945 (15)

Solution Q23



14... ♖xe4 can be answered with 15. ♗d2 as well, or with the simpler 15. ♖e2. You might have thought of the Soviet exchange sacrifice 14... ♜xc3 15.bxc3, but after 15... ♗xe4 16.c4, White is just better. Okay, I have to admit that the question was misleading.

After the suggested continuation

14... ♗xe4 15. ♖xe4 ♗xe4 16. ♗d2

Black should just continue with

16... ♜xc3 17.bxc3 ♗xc2

when Kan concluded that Black is just fine with two pawns for the exchange, the pair of bishops and a superior pawn structure, and White should play accurately to maintain the balance. In the game, Ufimtsev was not up to the task, and Kan won, thus qualifying for the USSR Championship.

18. ♜a2 ♗g6 19. ♖a3 ♜d8 20. ♜d1 ♜c7 21.c4

21.a5! (Kan) was a more active and much better defence.

21... ♖e7 22. ♖b2 ♖f6 23. ♖xf6 ♗xf6 24.a5 ♜b8 25.axb6+ ♜xb6 26. ♜da1 ♜b7 27. ♜g1 ♗d7 28. ♜f2 ♗c5 29. ♜e3 f6 30. ♜d4? ♗d3 31. ♜c3 ♗xf4 ... 0-1 (67)

Oleg Korneev

2637

Sergey Yudin

2545

Solution Q24



20. ♖xe5!

And not 20. ♔b7?? c6!, when the queen is caught!

20... ♜xe5 21. ♕d5! ♜b8

21... ♗xd5 22. ♗xd5, with a strong knight versus a powerless bishop.

22. ♖c4

Attacking both a6 and f7, and forcing the following exchange anyway.

22... ♗xd5 23. ♗xd5 c5 24. ♖xa6 ♜xe4 25. ♖d3 ♜e6

25... ♜d4 26. ♖f5.

26.c3

Now, White has a powerful knight on a strong square against Black's dark-squared bishop. The bishop is not a traditionally bad one, due to the pawn structure, but it has no real use or target for now. Korneev brought home the win when the pressure became too much for the weak b6-pawn:

26... ♗g7 27. ♜ab1 ♗d7 28. ♖b5 ♖b7 29. b4 ♜e5 30. c4 ♜e2 31. bxc5 dxc5 32. a5 ♗d4 33. ♖xb6 ♖xb6 34. axb6 ... 1-0 (63)

Jack Easton

2238

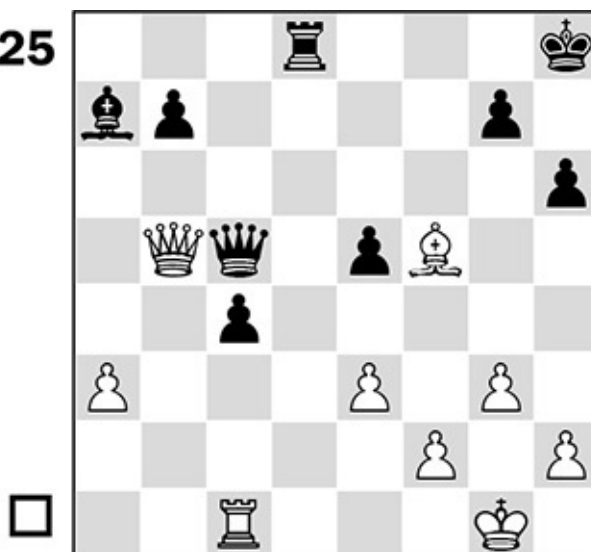
Irina Krush

2422

Philadelphia 2018 (4)

Solution Q25

Q25



No queen exchange! The black kingside pawns are on the wrong colour, and so the presence of queens gives White excellent attacking chances, due to the opposite-coloured bishops. Tactics fail to compensate for that here: 35. ♖xb7 ♜xa3 36. ♜xc4, when 36... ♞xe3 can be met by the cool 37. ♞f7, for example: 37... ♞a6 (37... ♞xf2+ 38. ♔g2!) 38. ♞e4 ♞g5 39. h4 ♞f6 40. ♞g6 ♔g8 41. ♜c6. This will be tough to calculate all the way beforehand, but the general considerations to refrain from the queen exchange are also backed up by the more careful alternatives 36. ♜c2 or even 36. ♜f1, when White is also much better, due to his attacking chances along the light squares. However, the game saw:

35. ♖xc5? ♞xc5 36. a4 b6 37. ♜xc4

Here, White is also a pawn up and is also clearly better, but the technical task is much more difficult. With the queens on, just creating mating threats would have done it. Krush even achieved a theoretically-drawn position when White exchanged the rooks ... ½-½ (71).

Pavel Ponkratov

2622

Grigoriy Oparin

2587

Yaroslavl 2018 (6)

Solution Q26

Q26



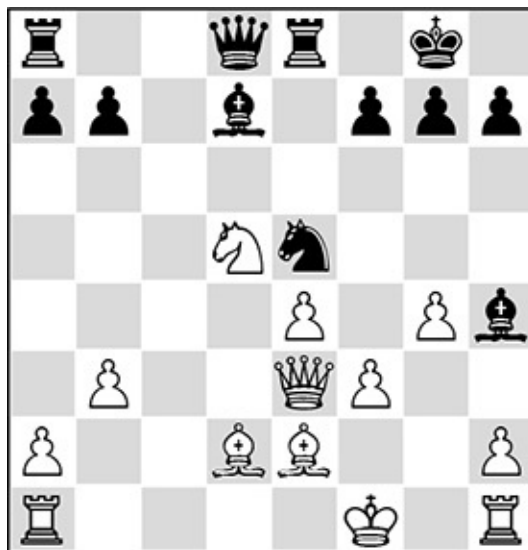
13...d5!

You may also have been tempted by sacrifices on g4, but this thematic central break against White's Maroczy formation is just fine, especially as White's king is still lingering in the middle. Still, the lines are not at all easy in this case.

14.cxd5

14.g5 is complicated: 14...dxe4 15.gxf6 ♖xf3+ 16.♙xf3 (16.♔f1 ♙xf6) 16...exf3 17.fxe7 ♜xe7 18.♙e4 ♙f5, winning back material. We can only guess whether Black had spotted the stronger 14...b6!., diverting attention to White's queen (instead of the white king). The point is that now 15.gxf6 ♙c5 catches the queen in broad daylight! A standing ovation if you spotted this!

14...cxd5 15.♙fxd5 ♙xd5 16.♙xd5 ♙h4+ 17.♔f1



17...f5!?

Both consistent and ambitious. After a quieter move like 17...♔c6, Black would have obtained sufficient play for the pawn as well.

18.gxf5 ♕xf5 19.♖g2 ♕e6 20.♖ad1 ♕xd5

A better continuation was 20...♗g4! 21.fxg4 ♕xd5, when 22.♕c1 (22.♕f3 ♕c6 is about equal) – as in the game – is not possible because of 22...♖xe4. For now, White has an extra pawn on e4, but his king is still vulnerable. In the game, White had his chances, but eventually could not cope with the difficult practical task.

21.♕c1 ♖e6 22.♖xd5 ♖g6+ 23.♖f1

The engine points out the unnatural 23.♖h3!, and after 23...♖c7 24.♖g1!, White's defence is up to the task. 24.♖xh4 ♖f8 looks extremely dangerous for White, but even here he may live.

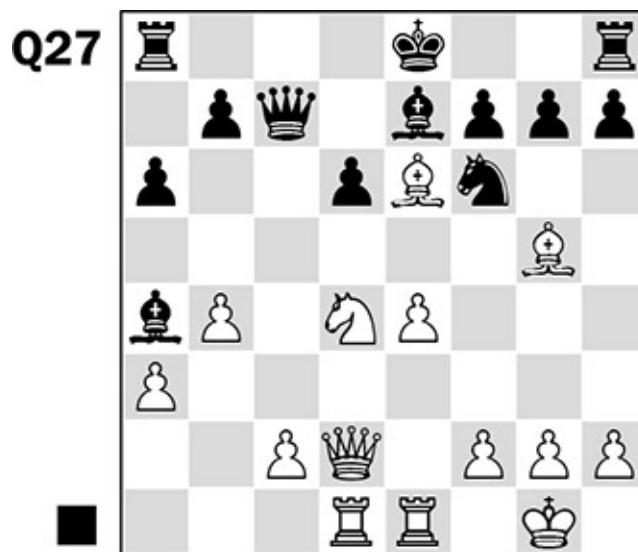
23...♖c8 24.f4 ♗g4 25.♕xg4 ♖xg4 26.♖g1 ♖xg1+ 27.♖xg1 ♗g4+ 28.♖f1 ♖c8 29.♕d2 ♖c2 30.♖d3 ♖d1+ 31.♖g2 ♖g4+ 32.♖f1 ♖xa2 33.♖c3 ♖a1+ 0-1

Mikhail Tal

Lev Polugaevsky

Tbilisi ch-URS 1959 (3)

Solution Q27



This is certainly not immediately decisive, but did you spot a reason why it isn't? Anyway, for Tal this sacrifice was probably a self-evident choice.

15...fxe6 16.♗xe6 ♖xc2

The only reasonable move.

17. ♖d4

17. ♖xg7+ is interesting as well: 17... ♔f7 18. ♖d4 ♔xg7 19. ♖c1 ♗a2 20. e5 dxe5 21. ♖xe5 ♗f7 22. ♕h6+ ♔xh6 23. ♗e3+ ♔g7 24. ♖xe7 ♖hc8 25. ♖xf7+ ♔xf7 26. f3 with unclear play.

17... ♔f7 18. ♖c1 ♗a2 19. e5 dxe5 20. ♗xe5



White has only one pawn for the piece, but he has preserved his mighty octopus, which threatens to take on g7 right now. As you know, it is of vital importance to keep an initiative going against a vulnerable king. Polugaevsky decided to give back the piece with

20... ♗xf2+

thus avoiding variations like 20... ♖he8 21. ♕xf6 ♕xf6 22. ♖c7+ ♖e7 23. ♖xe7+ ♗xe7 24. ♗c7+.

21. ♗xf2 ♕g4+ 22. ♗g1 ♕xe5 23. ♖xe5 ♕xg5 24. ♕xg5+ ♗g6 25. ♕e6

25. ♖c7 ♖he8 26. ♕f3! was more accurate. However, the nagging advantage after the text move still brought Tal victory.

25... ♖he8 26. ♖e3 ♖ac8 27. ♖f1 ♕b5 28. ♖g3+ ♗h6 29. ♕xg7 ♖f8

29... ♕xf1 was a better practical chance, when Tal would have had to show some technique to haul in the win. Now, the black king kept being troubled by mating threats.

30. ♖e1 ♖f6 31. h3 ♖c2 32. ♖e4 ♖c4 33. ♖e5 ♖c1+ 34. ♗h2 1-0

Later, Tal failed by an inch to become USSR Champion for the third time in a row. Remarkably, in the USSR Championship a year earlier (won by Tal, as you

now know), Polugaevsky had fallen victim to the same sacrifice in a game that yielded Spassky (who also missed the title by an inch in that championship) the brilliancy prize: 1.e4 c5 2. ♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4 ♘f6 5. ♘c3 a6 6. ♙g5 ♘bd7 7. ♙c4 ♚a5 8. ♚d2 e6 9.0-0-0 b5 10. ♙b3 ♙b7 11. ♜he1 ♙e7 12.f4 ♘c5 13.e5 dxe5 14. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 15. fxe5 ♙h4 16.g3 ♙e7



17. ♙xe6 0-0 18. ♙b3 ♜ad8 19. ♚f4 b4 20. ♘a4 h6 21. ♘xc5 ♚xc5 22.h4 ♙d5 23. ♘f5 ♙xb3 24.axb3 ♜xd1+ 25. ♜xd1 ♜c8 26.e4 ♙f8 27.e6 fxe6 28. ♚xe6+ ♜h8 29. ♚e4 ♚c6 30. ♚d3 ♜e8 31.h5 ♙e7 32. ♘xe7 ♜xe7 33. ♚g6 ♚e8 34.g4 ♜e1 35. ♚xe8+ ♜xe8 36. ♜d4 a5 37. ♚d2 ♜e5 38.c4 bxc3+ 39.bxc3 ♜g5 40.c4 ♚g8 41. ♜f4 g6 1-0 Spassky-Polugaevsky, Riga 1958.

Who knows, there might still be a successful practitioner of Capablanca's sacrifice who did become Soviet Champion.

Epilogue, or: more fascinating trips by Harry (the h-pawn)

Have you come this far? Well done! I hope you enjoyed the book with all the patterns. How should you proceed with the patterns? Of course, you can find more examples in my earlier Pattern Recognition books. Some of the patterns in those books are less usual, or, as I wrote in the Preface, they are the typical exceptions to the rule, which you now may be ready for, to become acquainted with or to appreciate even more.

Another suggestion is to try to collect examples for yourself when you notice an interesting recurring idea. Some patterns are strongly connected to specific openings. When these are suitable for your repertoire, try to pin down specific recurring ideas or just find them in a proper opening book. This is probably much more useful than focussing on endless database lines and engine evaluations.

Another particularly good source for patterns, as it also turned out for this book, are (auto-)biographies. Basically, you should cherish any annotations by strong grandmasters that feature a lot of explanation of all the ideas involved. These can feature in magazines like *New In Chess*, or even consist of comments in an online post-mortem with both players. Obviously, the advantage of (auto-)biographies is that you are bound to learn a top player's view on a lot of games at the same time.

To give you an idea to start with, I will give you a couple of examples that may help you to elaborate on Chapter 13, where Harry the h-pawn marched forward towards the opponent's fianchetto-pawn on g6. This alone supplied ample material for one chapter in this book. By dropping the condition of the opponent's fianchetto, you will be able to find plenty of other examples where the h-pawn advances. One common characteristic might be the activation of the h1-rook.



This position arose in Drygalov-Burmakin (Samara 2018) after **1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♟xd5 3.♘c3 ♜d6 4.d4 ♞f6 5.♞f3 c6 6.♞e5 ♚e6 7.♞f4 ♟d8**. Here, White played **8.h4!?**, anticipating Black's logical further development with 8...g6, which would now indeed be followed by 9.h5!, for example: 9... ♞xh5 10. ♜xh5! gxf5 11.d5! cxd5 12. ♞b5+ ♞d7 13. ♟xh5. Ouch!



Here, Stein-Smyslov, Moscow 1972 (**1.c4 ♞f6 2.♞c3 e6 3.♞f3 b6 4.e4 ♚b7 5.♟e2 ♞b4 6.e5 ♞g8 7.d4 d6 8.a3 ♚xc3+ 9.bxc3 ♞e7**), saw **10.h4!?**. Is this move just developing the rook on h1? No, it also intends to deprive Black of ... ♞e7-g6, with pressure against the e5-pawn, by following up with h4-h5. You will find this game, for instance, in any of the biographies with Stein's

games. Unfortunately, Stein himself never published an autobiography – he suddenly died a year after this game, still at the top of the chess world.



This position arises after **1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 d6 5.c3 ♙d7 6.d4 ♗ge7**. Have you already guessed the next move? Intending what? Well, amongst others, Euwe-Reshevsky (The Hague World Championship 1948) and Shirov-Rapport (Baku Olympiad 2016) saw **7.h4**. Is this move just activating the h1-rook early? No, this time it anticipates both ...g7-g6 and ...♗e7-g6. I guess that over time such an early advance is being considered in more positions than before.



This year in Hakobyan-Oparin (Batumi European Championship 2018) after **1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.e4 ♙b7 5.♙e2 c5 6.e5 ♘g8 7.d4 cxd4 8.♘xd4 ♘c6 9.♘xc6 ♙xc6**, White uncorked the new move **10.h4!?** (among other things, also getting ready for Black's ... ♘g8-e7-g6) and won a remarkable game after **10...f6 11.♖h3** (11...fxe5 12.♙h5+ g6 13.♙xe5 ♙f6 14.♙e2 ♙f5 15.g4!).

Pretty extravagant, no? This is not to say that the lateral development of the rook is new. Here is a nice picture from Fischer-Durao (Havana Olympiad 1966), where the queenside rook has hopped to b3 via the a3-square.



The open file has been taken for granted, and instead the white rooks are placed in front of White's own pawns, and aiming at the black pawns on b6 and h6.

After **32...♙f8 33.♘xa5!**, Black could not recapture, in view of mate after 33... bxa5 34.♘f6+ and 35 ♖b7+.

In TYCPR (Chapters 4 and 5), you can find more examples of rocking king's rooks and swinging queen's rooks. But let's return to the more striking outings of Harry. I will finish with three recent developments in opening theory.



In this position from the Scotch opening (1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♗xd4 ♗f6 5.♗xc6 bxc6 6.e5 ♕e7 7.♕e2 ♗d5), 8.c4 has been the regular and evident move, when Black has to choose between 8...♗b6 and 8...♕a6. Recently, considerable interest has risen for **8.h4!?**. And not by the least of players: Nakamura, Nepomniachtchi and Morozevich. No piece developed, the queen clumsily placed before the f1-bishop (just like in the Hakobyan and Stein fragments), and now this move!? Things are not clear, as Black has several alternatives, but, for instance, after 8...f6 9.c4 ♕a6 10.♖h3 fxe5 11.♕g5 ♗f6 12.♖e3, things start to fall into place again as regards as White's development. So why did nobody think of 8.h4!? before??? Actually, Dutch grandmaster John van der Wiel did in his younger years, but his games from 1987 did not lead to the increase in popularity we see today.



Yes, White has just played the improbable 6.h4 versus the Najdorf. This is a move that has seen a small but remarkable upsurge from 2017 onwards. It's true that 6...g6 is likely to be met by 7.h5 anyway, but otherwise no quick activity by the h1-rook seems possible.

Indeed, the pawn advance is the same, but the ideas are different. Still, it has some things in common with the Scottish line. In both cases, White is trying to avoid the main lines that have been extensively analysed. Still, knowledge of these theoretical lines is almost indispensable, as the game may transpose to analogous, practically similar positions, only with the move h2-h4 inserted, as well as another move by Black.

In the starting position of the Najdorf with 6.h4, White can answer 6...e6 with 7.g4 – no preparation by f2-f3 is needed – when h2-h4 will be useful for further kingside advances. After the most common continuation 6...e5 7.♘b3, White will search for variations where h2-h4 will prove more useful than the developing moves ♕f1-e2 or ♕c1-e3, which are some of the usual alternatives on move 6. There is new territory to explore, fashion, surprise effect – all factors that will have their influence on the popularity of the seemingly absurd 6.h4. Sure, strong players have opted for it, but often in blitz or rapid games, which definitely lends another sort of credibility to the idea. On the other hand, very strong grandmasters (Wang Hao, Yu Yangyi, Fedoseev, Shankland, to name a few) have given it the occasional try in 'serious' chess.

In short, there is lots of interesting stuff to consider: same move, but various

ideas. Also, several opening-theoretical considerations interfere, which is obviously not the case with purely middlegame patterns.

Here is one last example with the same move, but actually a completely different idea. It's also in a theoretical opening position, albeit less popular than the Najdorf starting position (evidently! which position is?), but as astonishing and attractive (at least, I think so).



In this position, which arises in the Caro Kann after **1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 dxe4 4.Nxe4 Nf6 5.Nxf6+ exf6 6.c3 Qd6 7.Qd3 0-0 8.Kc2 Rf8 9.Ne2**, years have gone by when Black chose between 9...h6, 9...g6 and 9...Kh8. Suddenly in 2017, **9...h5!?!** saw the light of day (at least according to my database this was the first time). Of course, after 9...g6, the natural reaction is 10.h4, and we are on the common grounds of Chapter 13. In that chapter, you also witnessed Harry go without the back-up of a rook on h1. However, there he was heading for the pawn on g6, whereas here White has not moved a kingside pawn yet. When we draw a comparison with 9...h6, you may notice that White's follow up will likely entail Nf3-g3, which can be met by ...h5-h4. This is just like when Euwe, Rapport and Stein were anticipating ...Nf7-g6 in the positions above. There is one big difference: in this position, Black has already moved his rook away from the h-file, having castled earlier. It seems that the credit may go to Irina Krush, when she beat Tatev Abrahamyan in the USA Women's Championship in 2017. Here too, strong grandmasters like Motylev, Grandelius

and Mareco have picked up the idea, as well as Howell and Vidit in blitz and rapid.

Fascinating stuff, no? I hope this last bit will inspire you to detect similar ideas and dive deeper into patterns yourself. It will doubtlessly improve your understanding of the middlegame positions, or, as in this epilogue, of the opening moves.

Index of players (numbers refer to pages)

A

Abramovic 67
Adams 49
Adhiban 203
Adianto 112
Adly 38, 103
Adorjan 124
Alba Santana 26
Alexander 114, 189
Al Sayed 103
Amin 28
Amonatov 190
Anand 32, 79, 90, 106, 112, 147
Andriasyan 149
Aronian 17, 197
Aronin 188
Asrian 139
Asztalos 163
Atabayev 150
Averbakh 121

B

Bacrot 131, 169
Bagirov 27
Balashov 117
Bandza 205
Baramidze 193
Bareev 16
Batchuluun 127
Baturin 59
Berkes 140

Bisguier 105
Blees 206
Blübaum 39
Bobotsov 148
Bogoljubow 199
Bolbochan 52
Boleslavsky 44, 55, 118, 178, 180
Bondarevsky 153
Botvinnik 40, 45, 80
Bouwmeester 25
Bronstein 31, 36, 159
Browne 66, 182
Bukic 35
Bu Xiangzhi 46

C

Calzetta Ruiz 146
Can 141
Capablanca 199, 201
Carlsen 33, 87, 141
Caruana 42, 89, 137
Chekhov 159
Cheparinov 107
Cossin 56
Cruz 112

D

Das 107
Demchenko 130
Ding Liren 82
Dolmatov 115
Dreev 72
Duda 49

E

Eljanov 89

Enkhbat 160

Epishin 99

Euwe 120

F

Fedorchuk 151

Fischer 52, 64

Flohr 45

Fressinet 19

Fuchs 156

G

Galego 206

Gelashvili 88

Gelfand 190

Geller 31, 53, 164, 178, 205

Genocchio 151

Georgiev 70

Giri 29

Gledura 62

Gligoric 116

Gordievsky 28

Gordon 68

Granda Zuniga 129

Grigoryan 108

Grischuk 83

Guimard 44

Gulko 103

Gurgenidze 156

Guseinov 128

Gustafsson 169

H

Hammer 86, 132

Hansen 65

Havasi 201

Hebden 27
Hernandez 48
Hillarp Persson 74
Hou Yifan 79
Huang Qiming 45

I

Idani 140
Inarkiev 26
Indjic 60
Iturrizaga Bonelli 127
Ivanchuk 17, 34, 73, 147

J

Jankovic 148
Janowski 185
Jobava 103
Jussupow 193

K

Kalnins 150
Kamsky 176, 187
Kan 40
Kantans 149
Karjakin 42
Karpov 41, 164
Kasparov 48-49, 173, 183
Kavalek 195
Keres 180, 202
Khalifman 106
Kharlov 59, 101, 158
Kholmov 39
Klaman 145
Knaak 24
Koltanowski 120
Konstantinopolsky 124

Korobov 82, 148
Kortchnoi 121, 194
Kotov 118, 154
Kotsur 88
Kovchan 141
Kramnik 19, 59, 88
Krasenkow 62
Kryvoruchko 102
Kurajica 70
Kuzubov 49

L

Lagno 137
Landa 67
Larsen 36, 115
Lasker 185
Leko 88, 166
Lematschko 146
Lenderman 160
Lerner 196
Levenfish 154
Lilienthal 153
Li Shilong 45
Lisitsin 55
Liublinsky 180
Lorenzini 107
Lputian 32
Lu Shanglei 58
Luther 99

M

Mamedyarov 26, 90, 186
Mansilla 107
Marovic 121
Martin Perez 26
Matinian 109

Matlakov 20, 201

Mednis 182

Melkumyan 143

Mikhalchishin 76

Minasian 139

Morozevich 186

Motylev 16, 77

Movsesian 183

N

Najdorf 53

Najer 201

Nakamura 27, 87, 192

Nakar 173

Narayanan 38

Nei 39

Nepomniachtchi 61, 176, 203

Nikolic 65

Nisipeanu 68

Nybäck 74

O

Olafsson 41, 157

Oleksienko 29

Oll 72

Osipov 124

P

Pachman 189

Padevsky 84

Panchenko 158

Panno 116

Paulsen 51

Petrosian 77, 117, 194

Petrosyan 60, 108

Polgar 22

Poliak 188, 204
Portisch 124
Postny 196
Pribyl 24
Pridorozhni 109
Pytlakowski 18

R

Ragger 54, 143
Ragozin 80
Rajkovic 121
Ravinsky 181
Reinderman 174
Riazantsev 130
Romanovsky 42
Rotlewi 111
Rubel 122
Rubinstein 111, 142
Ruiz Aguilar 167

S

Sadzikowski 102
Sajtar 202
Sandipan 34
Savchenko 39
Savin 27
Scholl 148
Seirawan 166
Shankland 176
Shirov 100, 162, 174
Short 173
Simagin 157, 181
Sjugirov 59, 176
Smirnov 83
Smyslov 18, 91, 112
So 33, 187

Sokolov 162
Spassky 64
Srebrnic 61
Steiner 91
Stojanovic 175
Sutovsky 75
Svidler 86, 197

T

Taimanov 84, 122, 180
Tari 132
Tarjan 105
Timman 25, 73
Tiviakov 167
Tkachiev 125
Topalov 100
Tukmakov 157
Tylor 114

V

Vachier-Lagrave 56, 141, 192
Van de Oudeweetering 27
Van der Sterren 125
Van der Wiel 22
Van Foreest 81
Van Wely 27
Vasovski 175
Velimirovic 35, 76, 157, 195
Vidit 81, 128
Vilner 42

W

Wang Hao 131
Weiss 51
Wen Yang 58
Wolff 66

x

Xiong 54

Xu Xiangyu 46

y

Yates 142, 163

Yemelin 101

Yudovich 145

z

Zarnicki 75

Zhang Pengxiang 20

Zhang Zhong 129

Zhukhovitsky 204

Index of openings (numbers refer to pages)

A

Alekhine's Defence 45

B

Budapest Gambit 91

C

Caro-Kann Defence 16, 29, 99, 112, 114, 128, 139

Colle System 25

D

Dutch Defence 140

E

English Opening 73, 83, 87, 109, 121, 141, 194

F

Four Knights Opening 90, 101

French Defence 32, 44-45, 70, 100, 151, 153, 156, 164, 166, 173, 175, 205

G

Grünfeld Indian Defence 24, 38, 62, 107, 148, 197

K

King's Fianchetto 106, 108

King's Indian Defence 36, 48, 76, 120, 125, 127, 130-131, 190

L

London System 102, 176

N

Nimzo-Indian Defence 20, 31, 34, 40, 60, 68, 74, 82, 115, 148

P

Petroff Defence 42, 176

Philidor Defence 61, 67, 158, 195

Pirc Defence 105

Q

Queen's Gambit Accepted 18, 65, 111-112, 118, 173, 199, 201

Queen's Gambit Declined 46, 154

Queen's Indian Defence 49

Queen's Pawn Opening 59, 145

R

Réti Opening 19, 41

Ruy Lopez 42, 72, 88-89, 137, 142, 146, 159, 162-163, 185-189

S

Scandinavian Defence 167

Scotch Opening 33

Semi-Tarrasch 79

Sicilian Defence 22, 27-28, 35, 51-56, 58, 64, 66, 75, 77, 81, 84, 86, 88, 103,
121-122, 124, 129, 132, 141, 149-150, 157, 174, 178, 180-183, 202-203, 206

Slav Defence 39, 49, 80, 103, 143, 147, 160, 169, 193, 196, 204

T

Tarrasch Defence 59, 107, 116-117

Torre Attack 17

V

Various Openings 124

Vienna Game 192

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