

Arkadij Naiditsch
Csaba Balogh

Positional masterpieces of 2012–2015



Carlsen vs Anand

25.  h3!!



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Arkadij Naiditsch
Csaba Balogh

Positional masterpieces of 2012–2015



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KEY TO SYMBOLS

= Equality or equal chances

\pm White has a slight advantage

\mp Black has a slight advantage

\pm White is better

\mp Black is better

+ - White has a decisive advantage

- + Black has a decisive advantage

∞ unclear

∞ with compensation

\rightleftarrows with counterplay

\uparrow with initiative

\rightarrow with an attack

Δ with the idea

\square only move

N novelty

! a good move

!! an excellent move

? a weak move

?? a blunder

!? an interesting move

?! a dubious move

+ check

mate

INTRODUCTION

Useful information for our valued readers.

- >>> The book contains the 50 positional masterpieces from 2012 to 2015.
- >>> The games were selected and analyzed by the authors GM Arkadij Naiditsch and GM Csaba Balogh.
- >>> Most of the games are taken from the highest-level tournaments, such as Wijk aan Zee, FIDE Grand Prix series, Olympiads etc.
- >>> Most of the games are played by top Grandmasters: Carlsen, Anand, Kramnik, Aronian, Caruana and many, many more of the world's best chess-players.
- >>> The games are sorted in chronological order, from 2012 through to 2015.

EDITORIAL PREFACE

We are proud to present our last book in a series of 5 — “Positional masterpieces of 2012–2015”.

It was very interesting work trying to select and analyse the 50 positional masterpieces from the past 4 years: the choice was so wide! We were aiming to find the most exciting, spectacular and, of course, useful attacking ideas which might also occur in our own practical games.

The main idea behind this book stands out clearly: We try to reduce the importance of opening theory, and rather get inside the workings of the best chess-playing brains on the planet in an attempt to explain the most complex attacking ideas in a simple and understandable way to any chess lover.

Another very important point of the book which we are proud of is, we have not used much ‘engine’ assistance during our commentary on the games. We try to see the game the way we would do in a practical game, which makes the commentaries very special — which in practice puts the reader fully in the shoes of the world-class players; this is exactly the best way to improve our own chess level.

Sadly, nowadays, we have more-and-more computer analyses and we can hear chess amateurs judging the play even of Carlsen. Yes, you can find tactical mistakes with an engine at home — but the question is, can you do the same during your practical game over the board ?! Chess is a game where everyone is making mistakes — and this is what it is all about in the current book!

We would advise all our readers to take out a real chessboard and enjoy these beautiful masterpieces. This is how we learned to play chess and this is why we still enjoy every wonderful game, even after almost 20 years of being professional chess players!

Yours,

Arkadij Naiditsch & Csaba Balogh

GAME 1

L. Dominguez Perez (2730)

I. Ibragimov (2539)

Russian league

09.04.2012, [C02]

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

We are facing a typical battle in the French Defense advance variation. Black gets a good position out of the opening, but does not find the right plan. With some nice manoeuvring, White takes over the initiative and finishes the game with a pretty mating attack.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.♟f3 ♟ge7

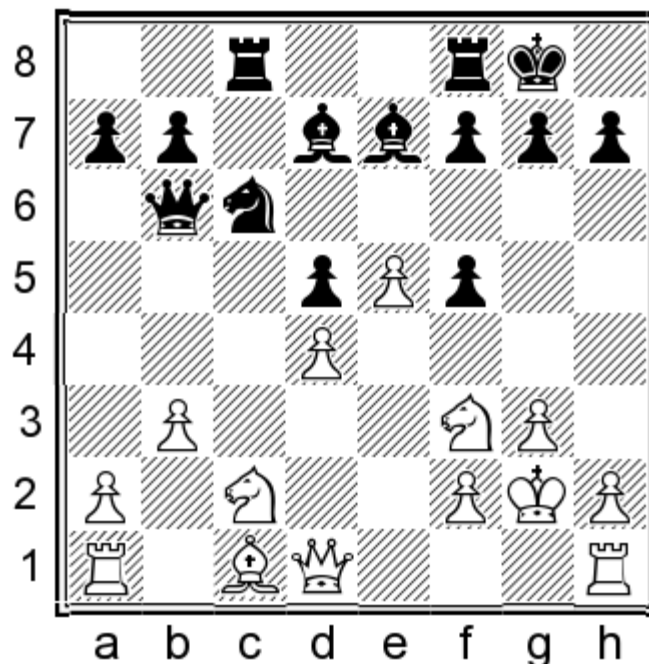
The third most common move after 5...♞b6 and 5...♙d7

6.♟a3 cxd4 7.cxd4 ♟f5 8.♟c2 ♞b6 9.♙d3

There are still many games for the given position, but now Black deviates from the mainline with a logical move.

9...♙d7

Preparing to bring the rook to c8. One of the biggest experts in the French Defense, the Armenian GM Rafael Vaganian, played an instructive game against Nigel Short: 9...♙b4+!? 10.♚f1 in this opening, it is not such a big problem for White to move his king, since the position is closed and in a few moves he can undertake artificial castling with g3 and ♜g2 (10.♟xb4 would lose a pawn 10...♞xb4+ 11.♙d2 (11.♚f1 ♟fxd4) 11...♞xb2) 10...♙e7 11.g3 the d4-pawn is always poisoned in this line, now after exchanging all the pieces on d4, ♙b5+ wins the queen 11...♙d7 12.♜g2 ♞c8 (12...♟fxd4? loses again after 13.♟fxd4 ♟xd4 14.♙e3! ♙c5 15.b4!+- winning a piece) 13.♙xf5 exf5 we will see this structure in our game as well 14.b3 0-0 Black had equalized and after



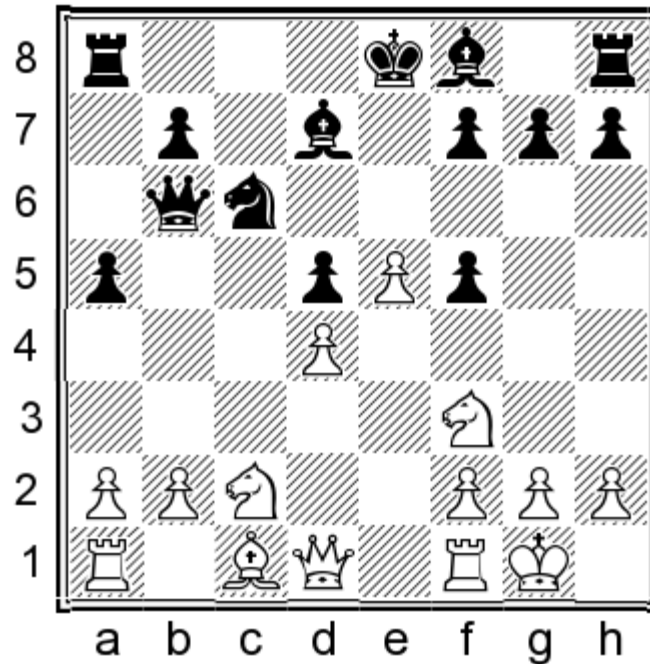
15.♙g5? a big mistake, he already has a big advantage 15...♙xg5 16.♟xg5 f4!! the bishop comes to f5 and the d4-pawn won't be around for much longer 17.gxf4 ♟e7! ♞g6 threatens to win one of the knights 18.♟e3 and at this moment Black missed the win in the Short-Vaganian, Montpellier 1985 game with 18...h6! 19.♟f3 ♞g6+ 20.♚f1 ♙b5+ 21.♚e1

♙e4 Black is completely winning.

10.0-0 a5

A strong move, as Black should organize his play on queenside. 10...♖cxd4? just as in the previous line, the d4-pawn is indirectly protected: 11.♘fxd4 ♗xd4 12.♕e3! ♕c5 13.b4! ♗xc2 14.♕xc5+—

11.♕xf5 exf5



Here we have this peculiar structure. Generally, we can say it is fine for Black, and fans of the French Defense should never be worried about this slightly strange pawn-structure, but still the position requires exact play.

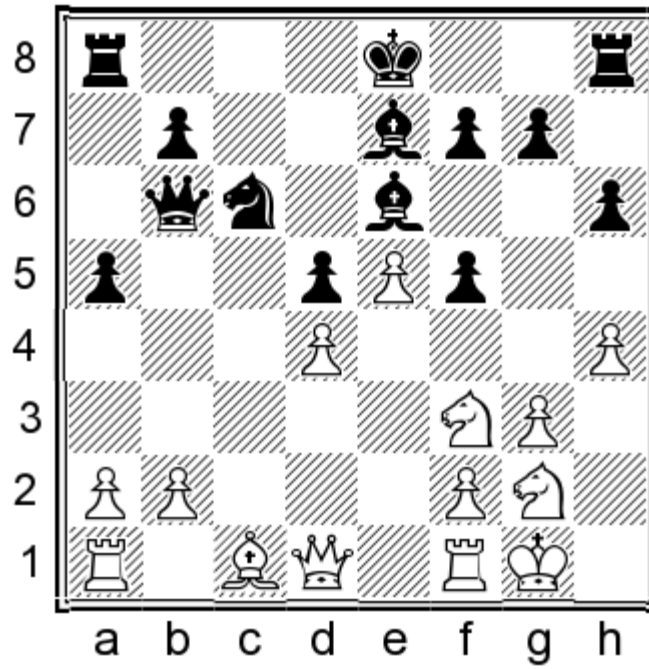
12.♗e3!

Dominguez plays logically. He has a nice square on f4 which he plans to occupy with the knight.

12...♕e6 13.g3! ♕e7 14.♗g2! h6

A useful move. Black should keep his dark-squared bishop, not letting White exchange it at a given moment with ♕g5.

15.h4



15...0-0

I have seen some games in this structure where Black kept his king in the center. It is in complete safety there.
 15...♔d7!? 16.♟f4 ♞hc8

16.♟f4 ♞fc8

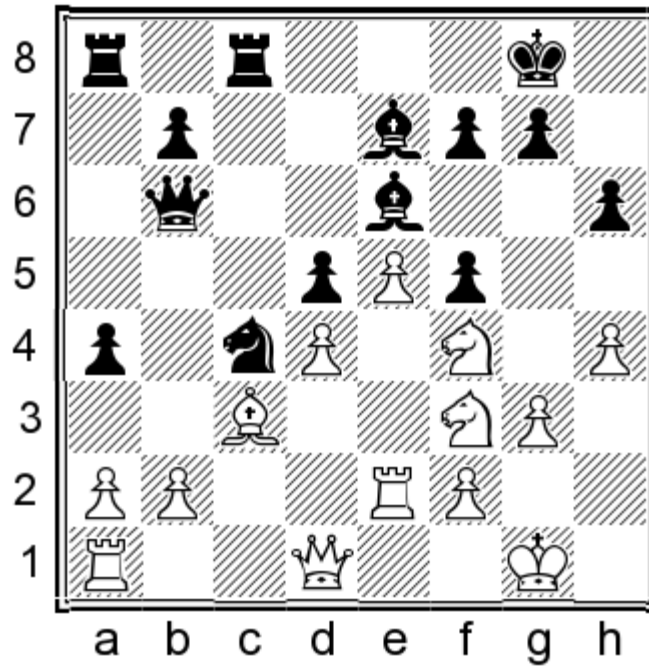
Black prepares for the invasion on the c-file after ...♞b4, something that White must prevent...

17.♞e1!

Just to have ♞e2 available on ...♞b4. Until this point Black has played well, but now he chooses the wrong plan...

17...♞c7

It is logical to double on the c-file, but White can easily neutralize the threats there... In my opinion, it was better to play 17...a4 to install the knight on c4 18.♞e2 ♞a5 Black seems to be completely fine 19.♙d2 (19.♚xa4? is not working 19...♞b3!; 19.♙g2 ♞c4 20.♞e1 ♞c7) 19...♞c4 20.♙c3



and now we see a typical plan for this structure, which might look a bit scary for somebody new to it: 20...g5! 21.♘xe6 ♕xe6 with a comfortable game.

18.♞e2

White defends the b2-pawn in order to develop with ♕e3.

18...♞ac8 19.♕e3

The position of Black's rooks seems to be nice, but in fact they don't really do anything. Black no longer has the ...a4, ...♘a5-c4 plan. It is already not easy to suggest something for him, while White has a clear idea now, which we will see in the game...

19...♘b4 20.♘e1!

The plan was anyway to transfer the knight to d3.

20...♞b5

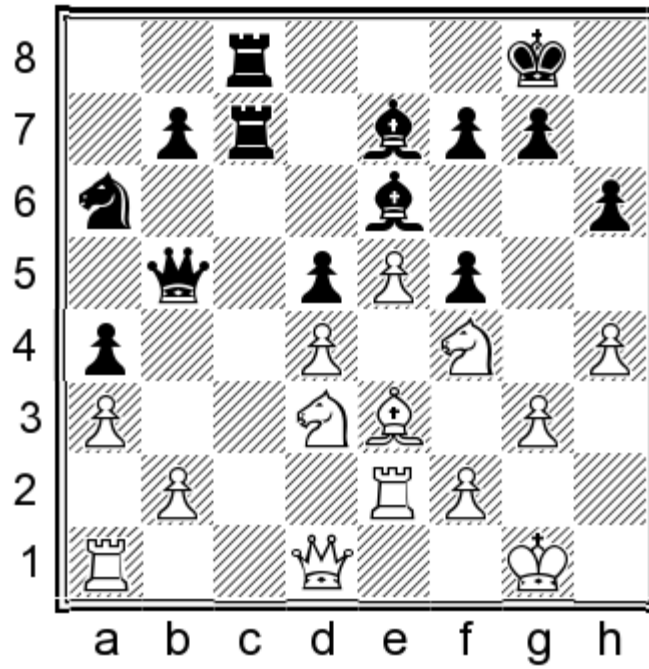
20...g5!? was possible again, but now it is more risky than before 21.♘xe6 ♕xe6 22.hxg5 hxg5 23.a3 ♘c6 24.f4! could be slightly better for White.

21.a3 ♘a6 22.♘ed3

Black is out of counterplay. He tries to maneuver with the pieces, but there is no weakness in White's camp to target.

22...a4

it is already too late, the knight has no opportunity to come to a5.



23.♖d2!

A very deep move! It opens the diagonal for the queen, so White prepares for a kingside attack with g4!

23...♗f8?!

Another bad idea, but the position was already quite unpleasant. Black underestimates the g4 plan... The bishop was better placed on e7, from where it was staring at the h4-pawn. Even after the logical 23...♖c4 24.♘xe6 fxe6 25.g4! was working. White is better anyway.

24.g4!

This creates two threats: the direct one is to take on e6 — then on f5 — and attack with ♖h5, ♘f4. The positional idea is to push g5, disturbing Black's king.

24...♗d7

24...♖d7 was more logical, but the position is bad anyway 25.g5! hxg5 26.hxg5 g6 27.♔g2 White prepares to bring the rooks to the h-file, just as in the game and 27...♖e7 would drop a pawn 28.♘xe6 fxe6 29.♖xa4

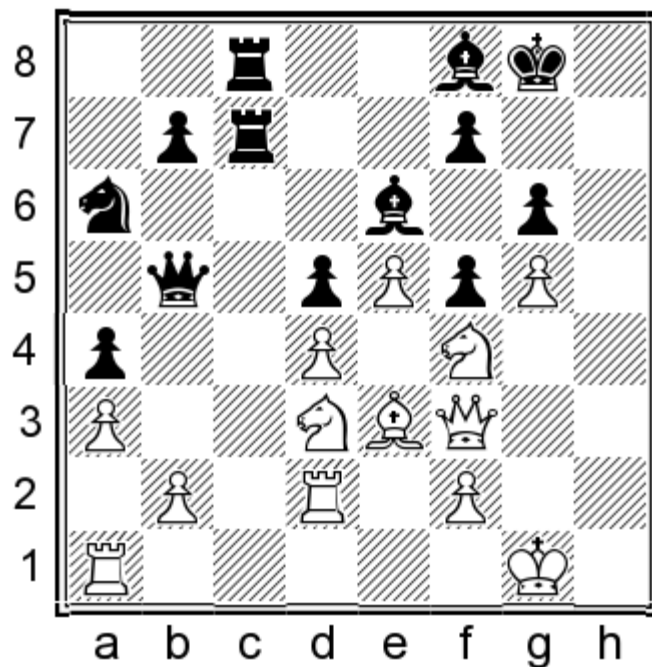
25.g5! hxg5

Black did not want to open the h-file, but to accept gxh6 is not much fun either. 25...g6 26.♖f3 ♗e6 27.gxh6+- ♗xh6 loses to ♘xe6

26.hxg5 g6 27.♖f3

Developing with tempo.

27...♗e6



28.♔g2!

Preparing for ♖h1. You should note that the Black rooks on the c-file still don't do anything.

28...♞c4

28...♔g7 29.♞h1 ♞c2 White only gives up his strong knight for the bad bishop, when it is winning on the spot.
30.♜xe6! fxe6 31.♞xc2 ♞xc2 32.♞f4 ♔e8 33.♞h3+-

29.♞h1 ♞c7 30.♞dd1!

Really nice maneuvering! Dominguez prepares for doubling.

30...♔g7 31.♞h4 ♔d7

31...♔f8 The king has no chance to run away from the danger-zone 32.♞h7! say stop to the king! 32...♞e8 33.♜xe6+ fxe6 34.♞f4+-

32.♞dh1 ♔d8 33.♞g3!

White has time for everything. First he defends the g5-pawn and wants to play ♞h7, ♞h4. Black can do nothing against this...

33...♞b5 34.♞h7 ♞xd4 35.♞h4

Black resigned! A very nice game by Dominguez... It is really enjoyable to watch his games because all his moves are very easy to understand.

1-0

R. Wojtaszek (2706)

A. Fedorov (2609)

Czech league

23.04.2012, [E62]

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

Radoslaw Wojtaszek, one of Anand's seconds, won a very nice game in the Czech League. We will study the typical maneuvers of the King's Indian Defense combined with great tactical elements at the end.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 ♕g7 4.♗f3 d6 5.g3

The g3 system is one of the most popular setups against this opening.

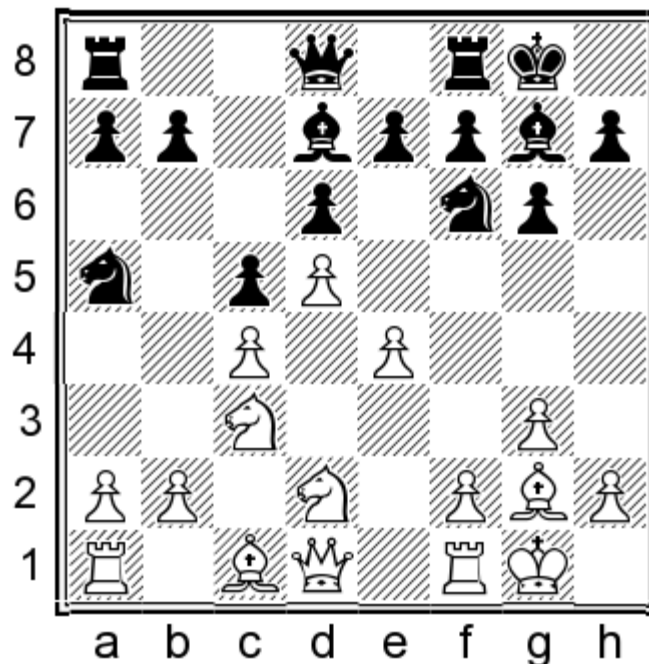
5...0-0 6.♕g2 ♘c6 7.0-0 ♕f5

A "sideline", but still with almost 1500 games in the database. On neutral moves, Black wants to play ♘e4. 7...a6 is the most often seen move. Another sideline is 7...♖b8.

8.d5 ♗a5 9.♗d2

A logical reaction, White defends the c4-pawn and intends to occupy the center with e4. The mainline is 9.♗d4, although it would fall in with the idea of 7...♕f5. 9...♕d7! Black retreats with the bishop to d7 and after White protects the c4-pawn, he pushes ...c5 and achieves a comfortable position.

9...c5 10.e4 ♕d7



11.♖c2

A standard plan — White prepares to fianchetto his c1-bishop.

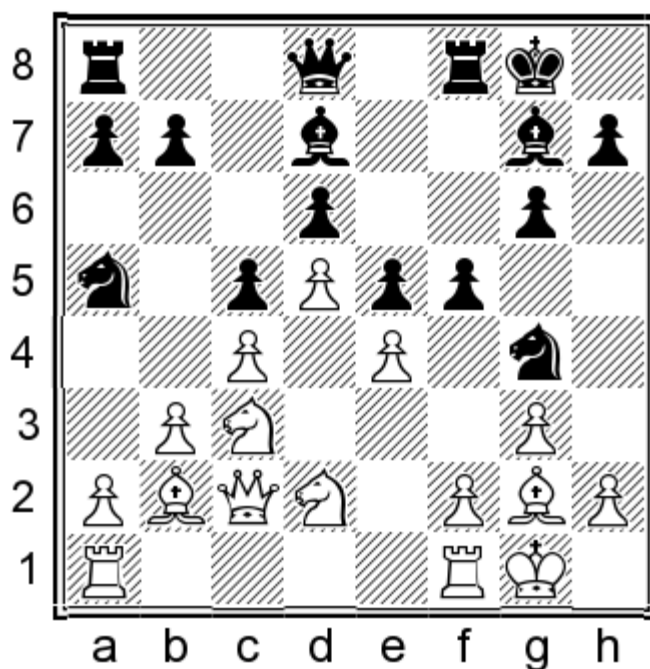
11...e5

11...a6 would lead us to the main pawn-structure of the King's Indian g3 system, e.g. 12.b3 b5 13.♘b2 ♝b8 14.♞ab1 e5 with thousands of games in the pawn formation. In general, theory considers White's chances to be slightly better.

12.b3 ♘g4

Instead of creating tension on the queenside with ...a6 and ...b5, Fedorov — who has played this opening his whole life — initiates direct play on the kingside.

13.♘b2 f5

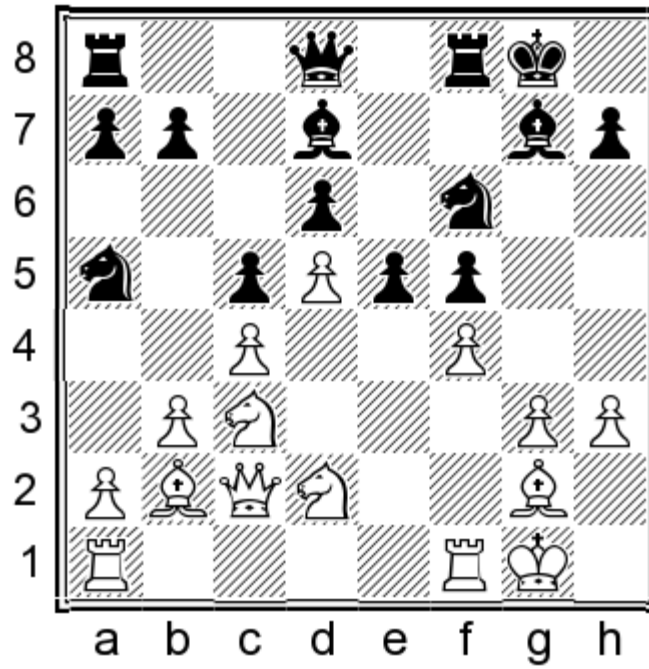


Black wants to push ...f4 with a very dangerous attack, which has to be prevented. In similar structures White reacts with a typical response by pushing f4 himself. It is clear that in the present game White is not prepared well-enough for this move, so Wojtaszek plays the other known method of countering the ...f4 threat.

14.exf5! gxf5

Black, of course, could not give up control over the e4 square.

15.h3 ♘f6 16.f4!



Forcing Black to close the center, and the maneuvering part of the game will begin.

16...e4

16...exf4 Opening the position would be punished in an instructive way: 17.♘e2!! f×g3 18.♘f4!! With this double pawn sacrifice, White completely paralyzes Black's pieces. The next move would be ♖ae1 or ♖f3-g3. A very nice picture, where the White pieces are dominating the whole board!

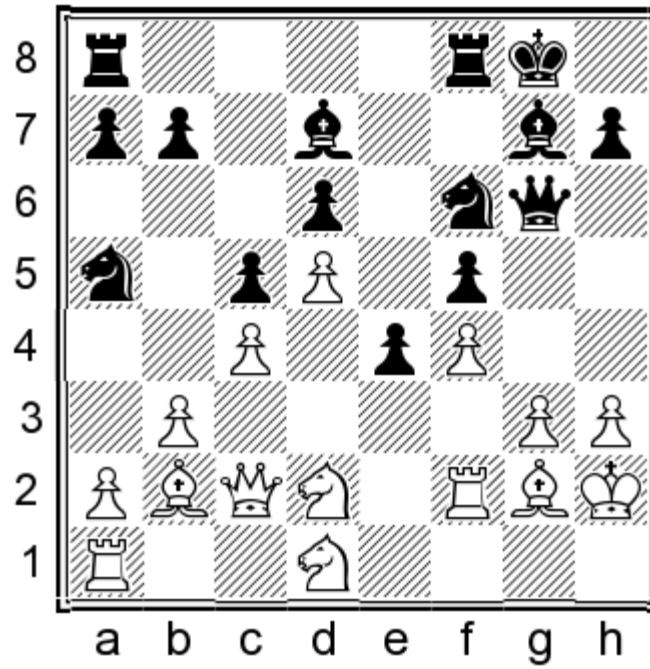
17.♘d1!

The knight is a great blockading piece, and is heading to e3. In general, White has a really long-term idea, to play g4! It would open the position of his own king, so it needs huge preparation. However we will see in the game how effective it can be if White pushes it at the right moment.

17...♙e8!

Black plays logically as well. He transfers his queen to its ideal square on g6. It temporarily prevents the ♘e3 idea, due to the concrete ...♙g6, ...♘h5 threat. The next two moves by White will be prophylactic against this idea.

18.♕h2! ♙g6 19.♖f2!

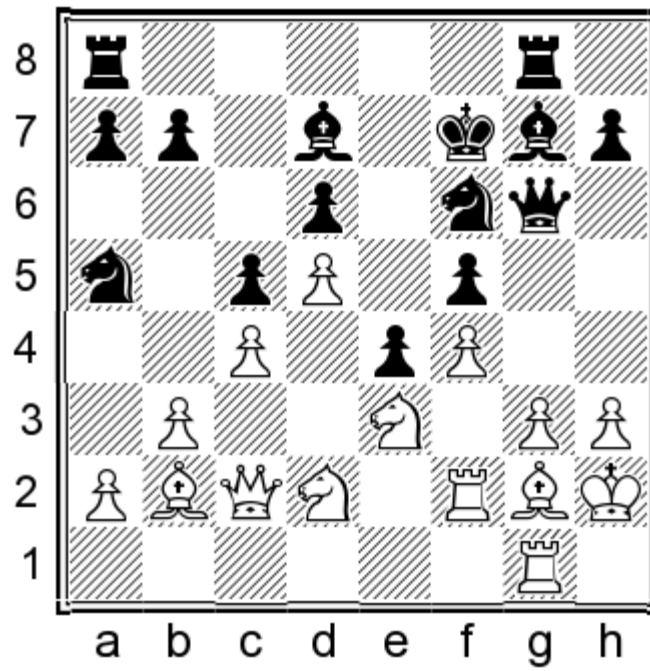


19.♘e3 ♘h5

19...♙f7?

A logical move, which is actually a serious mistake. Black should have forced the knight to go to f1, and we will soon understand why... 19...♘h5! 20.♘f1 ♜f7 21.♘de3 ♔h8 22.♙h1 ♞g8 23.♞g2 with a really sharp, double-edged position.

20.♘e3 ♞g8 21.♞g1!



This is the point! And the reason why Black's 19th move was a mistake. By having the rook on g1, White's chances to push g4 at the right moment increase a lot.

21...♙h6?

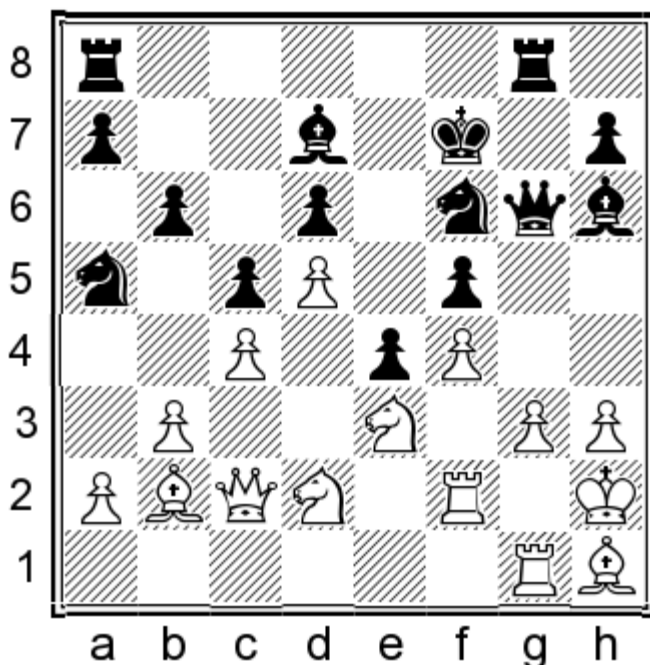
Another mistake, after which the g4-push becomes deadly. White was already better anyway. Let's see what happens if Black fights differently against g4. We will see a really nice regrouping of the pieces in both cases. 21...♙h8 22.♙f1! ♜h6 23.♙e2 ♝g6 Black pins the king and doubles his rooks on the g-file, which was actually the idea behind the 19th move. However, White has a great knight maneuver! 24.♞df1! ♝ag8 25.♞g2! One knight is going to h4 and the other one to e3. The f5-pawn becomes a real weakness!;

21...h5 White uses the same plan that we saw in the other line: 22.♙f1! ♜e7 23.♙e2 b6 24.♞df1 ♝ae8 25.♞g2! ♜d8 Black's king would like to run away from the "battlefield" but, as we will see, there is no safe place for him in this game. 26.♞h4 ♜h7 27.♞e3 ♜c7 28.a3! After paralyzing Black's pieces, White can organize a queenside attack.

22.♙h1!

Wojtaszek already foresaw his next two moves. We understand soon why the bishop went to h1!

22...b6



On 22...♜e7 the same thing happens as in the game...

23.g4!!

This seems like committing suicide, but in reality it leads to winning the e4-pawn — and is why the bishop has to be on h1 now — which means the collapse of Black's position!

23...fxg4 24.♝g3!!

This was the brilliant idea! It stops the ...g3 threat, and Black is helpless against ♞xe4.

24...♝ae8

24...♜h5 25.♞xe4 ♞xe4 26.♙xe4 gxh3 27.♙f3!+— opens the diagonal for the queen to take on h7! 24...♞h5 does not work, because of 25.♙xe4+—

25.♔xf6!

White wins huge material now in all lines.

25...♖xf6 26.♜xe4 ♖e7

To protect the d6 pawn.

27.♜xg4

27.♜g5+ was even easier 27...♔f8 28.♜f5+—

27...♔xg4 28.hxg4

and g5 is coming, Black is helpless.

28...♖h4+ 29.♖h3 ♖xg4 30.♜g5+! ♔xg5 31.♖xh7+

A very instructive game. We learned many ideas of how to play with this pawn structure.

1–0

GAME 3

I. Nepomniachtchi (2716)

Y. Quesada Perez (2625)

47th Capablanca Mem Elite

Havana CUB (6)

10.05.2012, [A18]

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

A highly impressive performance by Ian Nepomniachtchi, who is known for his fast playing style, spending between 30 and 60 minutes for the whole game!

1.c4 ♜f6 2.♜c3 e6 3.e4

Generally, White plays this move order to avoid the Nimzo-Indian Variation (1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 e6 3.♜c3 ♔b4), but it gives Black some extra options.

3...d5

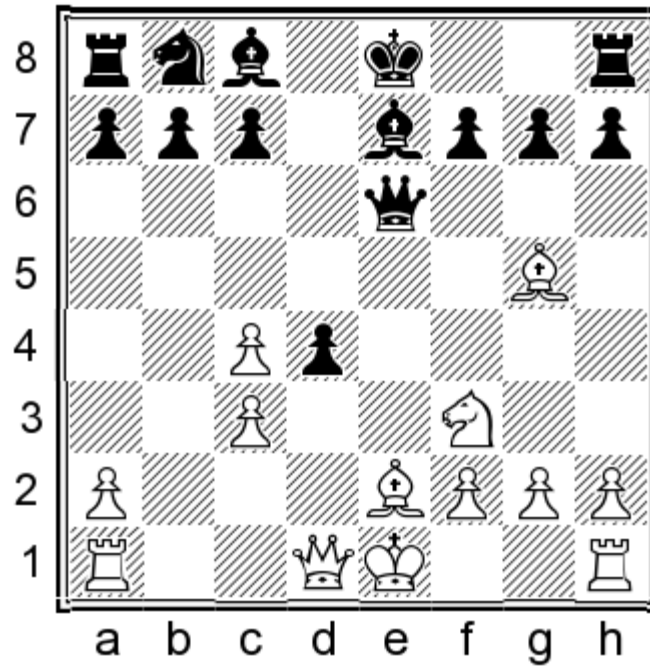
3...c5 is the other move.

4.e5 d4

A well-known push with thousands of games in the database.

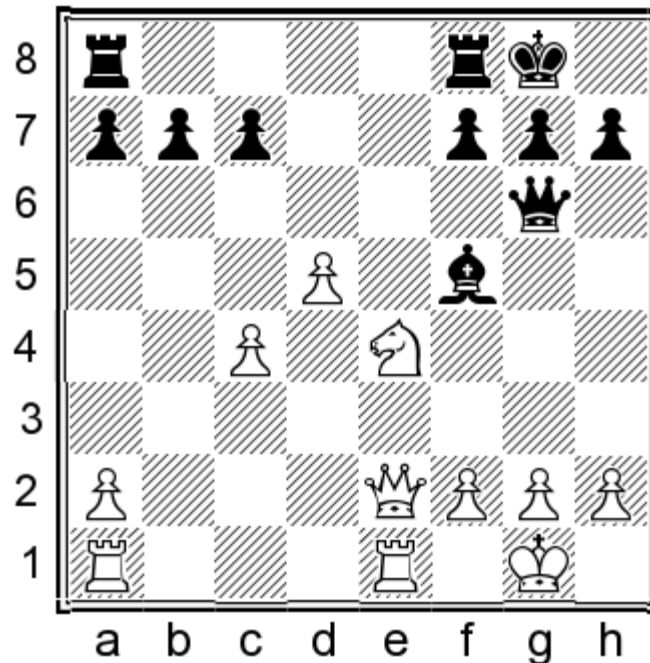
5.exf6 dxc3 6.bxc3 ♖xf6 7.d4 e5 8.♜f3 exd4 9.♔g5 ♖e6+ 10.♔e2 ♔e7

We are at the first critical position of our current game. We can still see more than a hundred games that include players like Kasparov, Aronian, Kramnik and Karpov. Anyway, Nepomniachtchi deviates from the mainline — which was played by all of the top guys — with a move that seems to give White an advantage.



11. ♖xe7!?

Let's first take a look at a very instructive rapid game from the highest-level. 11.cxd4 ♖xg5 12. ♘xg5 ♔f6 13. ♕d2 0-0 14.0-0 White is better developed and has the advantage in the center. However, Black's idea in the whole line is to quickly put pressure on the d4-pawn, forcing the center to move, giving him different kinds of counterplay. For example, in case of d5, Black gets the possibility to undermine it with ...c6. 14... ♘c6 15.d5 ♘d4 16. ♘e4 ♘xe2+ 17. ♕xe2 ♕g6?! This seemingly logical move got punished by Aronian in a really nice fashion! (I found 17... ♕e5 to be an improvement, and on 18. ♖fe1 ♖f5 Black seems to equalize. Probably this is the reason why Nepomniachtchi looked for an alternative for White, and found the 11. ♖xe7 move.) 18. ♖fe1 ♖f5



Black seems to be fine, but Aronian comes up with a temporary pawn sacrifice. 19. ♘g3! ♖d3 20. ♕e5 ♖xc4 21. ♘f5! White threatens with ♘e7, and on 21... ♖h8 (21... ♕f6 22. ♘e7+ ♖h8 23. ♕xc7±) 22. ♘e3! This move was the point of

the maneuver that started with 19.♘g3! White obtains a very strong passed-pawn on d5 after taking on c7. 22...♙d3 23.♚xc7 ♙e4 24.♚f4 ♜fe8 25.f3 ♙d3 26.♞ad1 Black would be fine, if he had a ‘blockader’ knight on d6. 26...h5 27.♞d2 ♙b5 28.♞ed1 ♞ad8 29.d6± Black has huge problems. The end of the game was also very spectacular: 29...♙c6 30.d7 ♞e6 31.♙c4 ♚f6 32.♚xf6 gxf6 33.♙a5 ♙g7 34.♞d4 f5 35.♙f2 b6 36.♙xc6 ♞xc6 37.♙g3 The White king is going to support the d7-pawn, and would also like to collect the weak kingside pawns. 37...♞c2 38.♙f4! ♙g6 39.♙e5! ♞e2+ 40.♙d6! A great run! 40...♙f6 41.♞d5 ♞xg2 42.♙c7 ♞gg8 43.f4 ♞gf8 44.♞g1 ♙e7 45.♞d6 1–0 Aronian-Kramnik, Moscow 2011. It is very rare to see Kramnik losing in such a way, even if it was “just” a rapid game!

11...♚xe7 12.cxd4 0-0 13.0-0

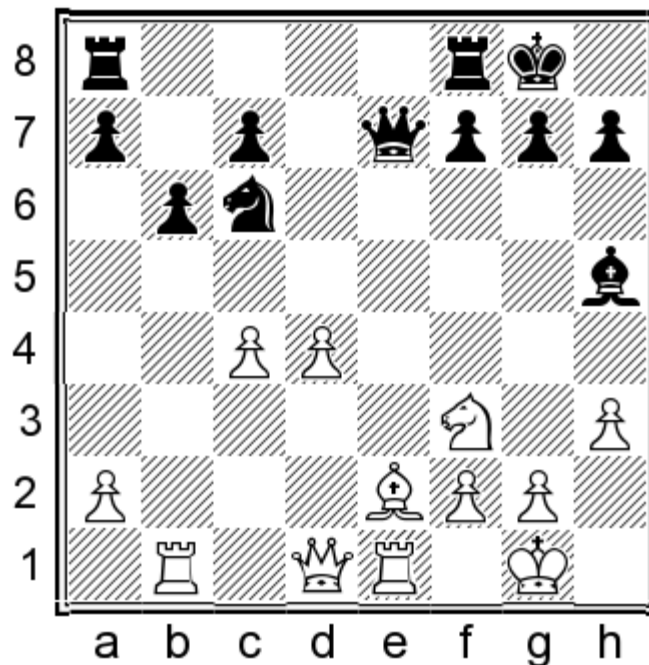
Just as explained in the previous line, Black has to put pressure on the center.

13...♙g4

The most logical move to eliminate the defender. 13...♞d8 seems a bit too slow 14.♞b1! White provokes weaknesses, and after 14...b6 15.♙e5! is very strong 15...♙b7 16.♙f3 c5 17.♙xb7 ♚xb7 18.d5± with a clear advantage, thanks to the protected passed-pawn on d5 and the powerful knight.

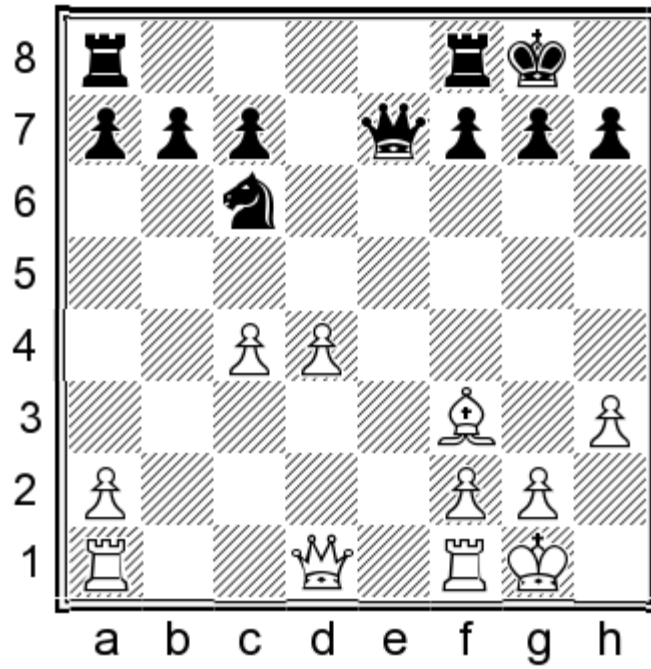
14.h3 ♙xf3

Black decides to force matters, but as we will see, he is not in time to consolidate the position. If Black decides instead to hold the tension with 14...♙h5 White must react energetically 15.♞b1! b6 16.♞e1! ♙c6



17.♚a4! I think that this concrete move is the only way to get an advantage. (On 17.d5 ♙xf3 18.♙xf3 ♙e5 and Black is fine! This is what he is aiming for in this opening.) 17...♚f6 18.♙e5! ♙xe2 (18...♙e5 19.dxe5 ♚g5 (19...♚xe5? 20.♙f3+–) 20.♙xh5 ♚xh5 21.♚c6 with an obvious advantage.) 19.♙xc6± Just as in the Aronian-Kramnik game, the knight becomes much stronger than the bishop. The knight restrains Black’s pieces, while the bishop has no real target.

15.♙xf3 ♙c6



16. ♖b1!

16. ♙xc6 bxc6 Black does not need to worry about the doubled-pawns, as they are doing a good job holding the c4-d4 pawn duo, and so he can start to attack the d4-pawn.

16... ♖ad8

16... ♖ab8 would cost a pawn 17. ♙xc6! bxc6 18. ♖xb8 ♖xb8 19. ♚a4±

17. ♖e1 ♗f6

Things are developing very logically, but unfortunately for Black the complications work out badly for him.

18. ♖xb7!

By exchanging the pawns, White opens the position — thus favoring the bishop against the knight.

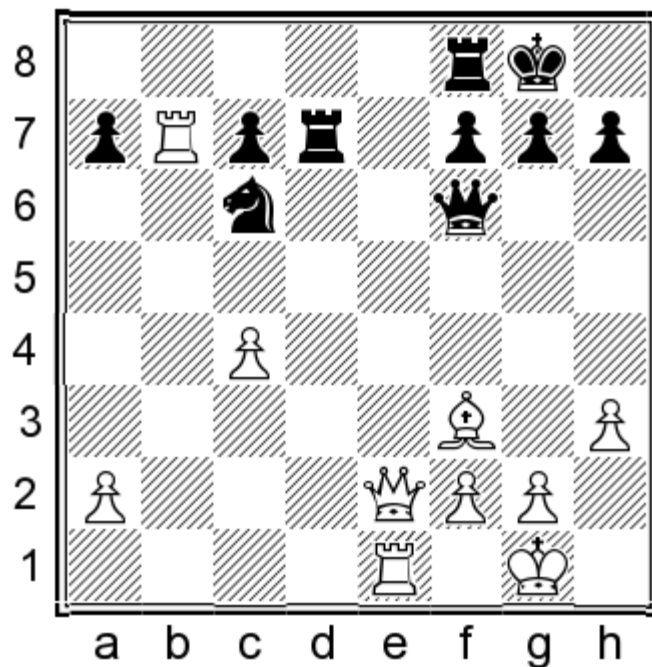
18... ♖xd4

18... ♘xd4 19. ♖xc7 ♘xf3+ 20. ♗xf3 ♗xf3 21. gxf3± The endgame looks quite promising for White, he is not only a pawn up, but also has an active rook on the 7th rank.

19. ♗e2

It is very hard to hold the c7-pawn, therefore Black is in serious trouble.

19... ♖d7



19...Qd6 is met by the very strong 20.c5! Qxc5 21.Rxc7 Qd6 22.Qe8!! winning the c6 knight!

20.Qe8!!

Nepomniachtchi's play is extremely strong! He uses the weak back-rank. Imagine how horrible it would be to have around 10 minutes left, while your opponent makes such moves with 1 hour and 30 minutes on his clock. Black has to find only moves to avoid losing immediately.

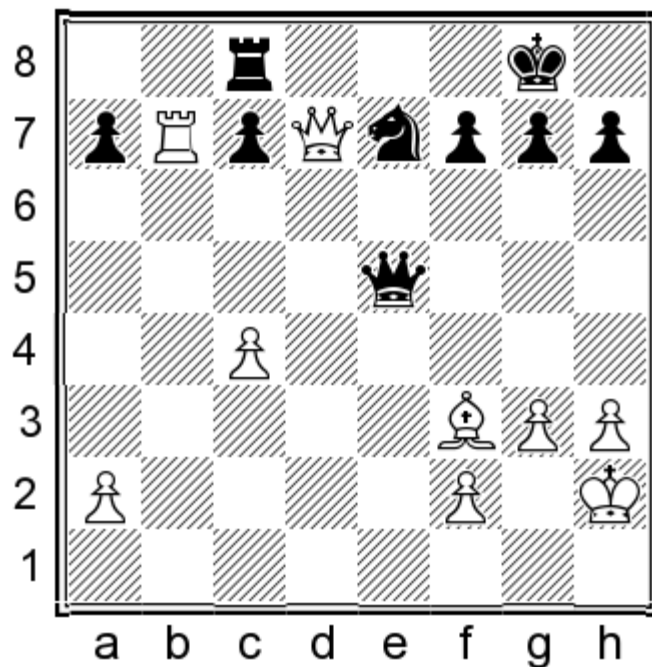
20...Re7!

20...Qd6 would not solve the danger on the 8th rank 21.Qxc6 Qxc6 22.Qxf8+ Kxf8 23.Rb8+-

21.Rxe7 Qxe7 22.Qd7!

Black cannot keep the material balance for long. White's pieces are dominating the board, while the c7- and a7-pawns are just falling.

22...Qa1+ 23.Kh2 Qe5+ 24.g3 Rc8



24...♘g6 25.♞xc7 ♔f6 26.♞c6+-

25.♞b3!

Not the only winning move, but the best practical one for sure. Black is forced to exchange queens due to the ♞e3 threat, transposing into a losing endgame.

25...♞d6

25...♞e6 26.♞xe6 fxe6 27.♞b7+-

26.♞d3! ♞xd7 27.♞xd7 ♔f8 28.♙b7!

The first pawn falls. Black is lost.

28...♞b8 29.♞xc7 ♔e8 30.♙a6 ♔d8 31.♞xa7 ♞b2 32.♙b5!

The f2-pawn does not play an important role with queens off the board. Black cannot create any threats around the king, while the a- and c-pawns start to run.

32...♞xf2+ 33.♔g1 ♞e2 34.c5 ♞e5 35.a4!

Black resigned since he can't take on c5 due to ♞d7! I am pretty sure, that after this convincing victory by White, we will see the move 11.♙xe7 more often in practice.

1-0

GAME 4

V. Kramnik (2801)

A. Grischuk (2761)

Tal memorial (2)

A great novelty based on very deep ideas by Kramnik against the King's Indian Defense...

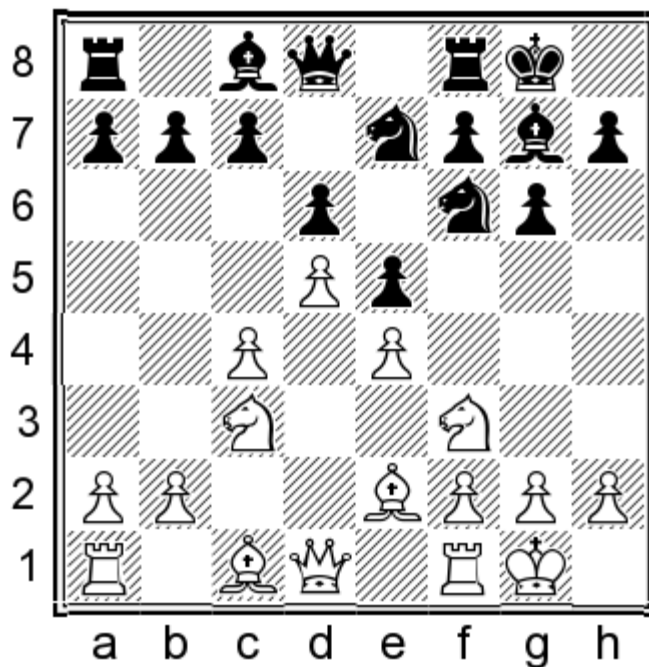
1.♘f3

Kramnik starts the game with the "Anti-Grünfeld" move-order.

1...♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♕g7

By not playing 3...d5, we transpose back into the King's Indian Defense.

4.e4 d6 5.d4 0-0 6.♕e2 e5 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.d5 ♘e7



9.b4

The 9.b4 line is the so-called Bayonet Attack. Kramnik is definitely the biggest expert on this opening; usually all the main developments with White are based on his games.

9...♘h5 10.g3

White prevents the ...♘f4 idea.

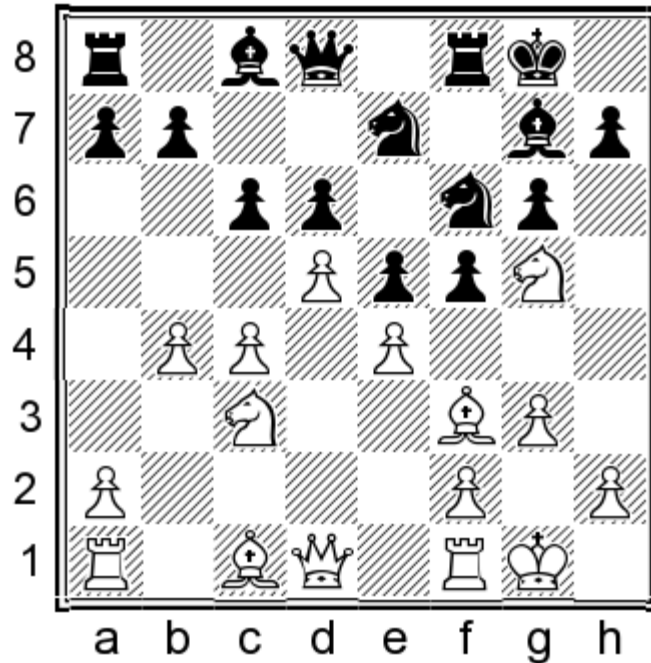
10...f5 11.♘g5

This maneuver, connected with the ♘e6 jump, is a well-known idea in this line and we will see it in this game as well.

11...♘f6 12.♕f3

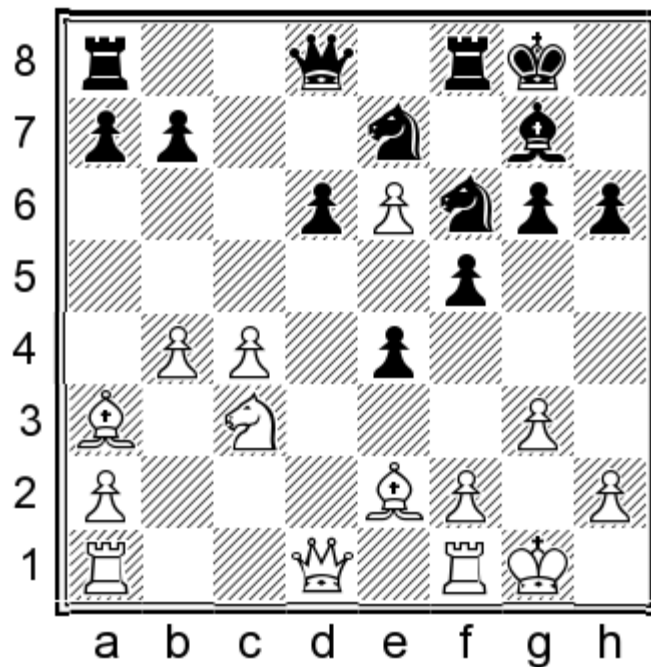
This is a fresh approach from White. By far the main move is 12.f3, but Kramnik introduced this idea in another nice victory against Giri in 2011.

12...c6



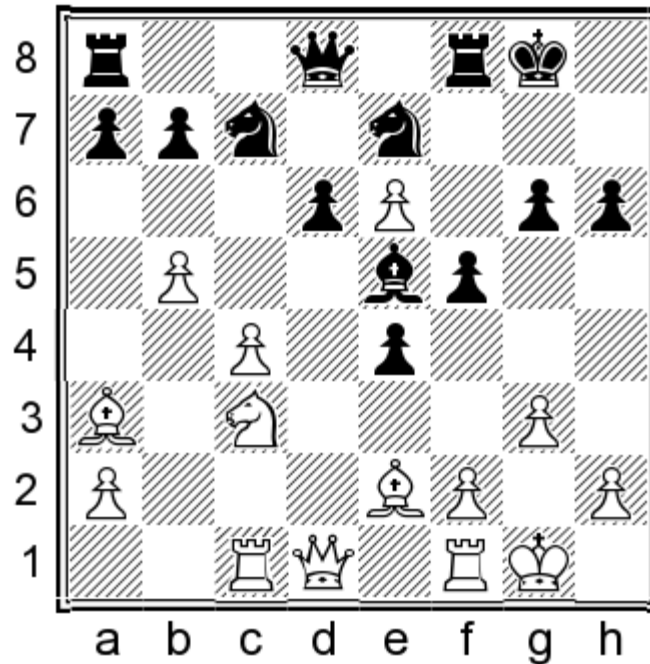
13.♙g2!

Kramnik improves on his own game! 13.♙a3 was played before. 13...cxd5 14.exd5 This recapture is quite a risky move in general, since it allows the opening of the diagonal of the King's Indian bishop. 14...e4 15.♙e2 In my opinion, Grischuk's novelty was at this moment 15...♘e8? Kramnik brutally punished this move (15...h6 seems to lead to a more-or-less forced draw in a tactical line 16.♘e6 ♙xe6 17.dxe6



17...d5! Black would like to push d4, this forces White to go for the simplifications 18.cxd5 ♘fxd5 19.♘xd5 ♗xd5 20.♗xd5 ♘xd5 21.♙c4 It is very hard to improve on the play with either color. (21.♗ac1 is met by the very unpleasant 21...♘c3! 22.♙c4 ♗fc8 and White cannot control the e2-square with the bishop.) 21...♘b6 22.♙b3 ♙xa1 23.e7+ ♗f7

24.♖xa1 ♜e8! 25.b5 ♔g7 Black already threatens to take on e7 26.♙xf7 ♕xf7 27.♞d1 ♜c8 28.♞d7 b6= and we have reached a drawish endgame. Black is going to play ...♕e6 and take on e7. Probably, Grischuk had analyzed this line and decided to go for it...) 16.♞c1 h6 17.♜e6 ♙xe6 18.dxe6 ♜c7 This was the idea behind the 15th move, but White is in time to organize counterplay in the center 19.b5 ♙e5



20.♞b3! ♔g7 (20...♜xe6 21.♞fd1! ♜d4 22.♞xd4 ♙xd4 23.c5+ might be a transposition into the game, since on 23...d5 24.♜xd5! 24...♞xd5 loses the queen 24...♜xd5 25.♞d1! and White wins.) 21.♞fd1 ♜xe6 22.c5! ♜d4 23.♞xd4! A necessary exchange sacrifice, but of course, after foreseeing the ensuing position, White joyfully gives up the material 23...♙xd4 24.cxd6 ♜g8 25.♜d5 The game is practically over. The White rook invades on the 7th rank. 25...♔h8 26.♞c7 ♙e5 27.♙b2 (27.♞e7 was even easier 27...♙g7 (27...♙xd6 28.♙b2+-) 28.♜f4+-) 27...♞xd6 28.♞xb7+- and White won a few moves later. Kramnik-Giri, Hoogeveen 2011.

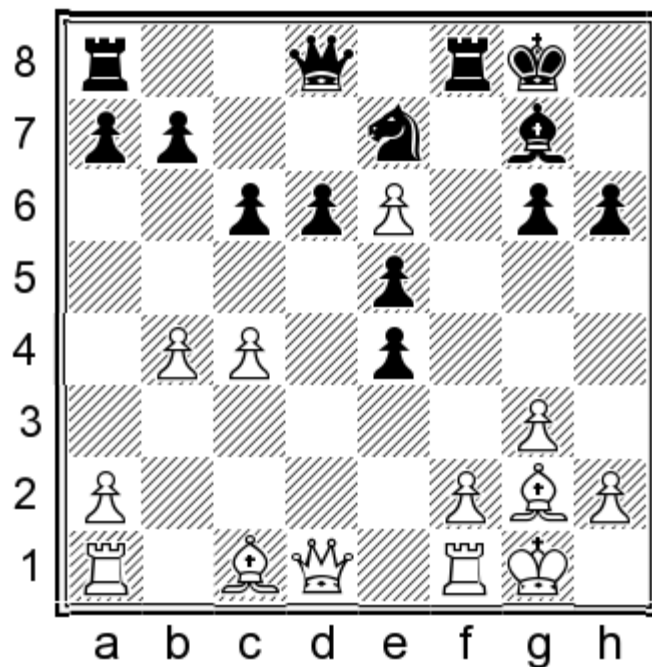
13...h6

Grischuk reacts in the most logical way, but actually I could not find a way to equalize after this move. 13...fxe4 is the computer's recommendation, but it is not in the spirit of the King's Indian, because White manages to consolidate his center. 14.♜gxe4 ♜xe4 15.♜xe4 (15.♙xe4 the best would be if White could take back with the knight on d5, but Black has the concrete 15...♙h3 16.♞e1 ♞b6 with a double-attack on f2 and b4 17.♙e3 ♞xb4) 15...cxd5 16.cxd5 ♜f5 I personally think White should be slightly better, mainly because of the bad g7-bishop which has no future in this game, but the machine believes in Black's position.

14.♜e6 ♙xe6 15.dxe6 ♜xe4

Grischuk is a King's Indian specialist and plays the position in style, but unfortunately for him, Kramnik knows all the details of the position... 15...fxe4 Keeping 2 knights on the board is met with the same 16.b5! preparing for ♙a3 16...d5 17.♙a3 ♞e8 18.cxd5 cxd5 19.♞b3 followed by ♞d1, with an advantage for White. Black cannot hold his center.

16.♜xe4 fxe4



17.b5!

The situation has changed. A few moves ago, Black was fighting to undermine White's strong center. He successfully fulfilled his plan, so this time it is White's turn to do the same. He already has no pawns to go for this plan, but he can focus all his pieces into the attack. White wants to continue the game with ♔a3, trying to force the ...d5 move and then launch a quick attack against it with ♖b3 and ♜d1. If Black cannot hold his center, his position collapses very quickly. After 17.♔xe4 the opening would end with Black's triumph 17...d5! 18.cxd5 cxd5 19.♔g2 ♖d6 collecting the e6 pawn.

17...♜f6

Protecting the e4 pawn would help White to continue his plan 17...d5 18.cxd5 cxd5 19.♔a3 ♜e8 20.♖b3 followed by ♜d1.

18.♔xe4 ♜xe6

Black is a pawn up, but he has serious problems with the coordination of his pieces, and his pawns are vulnerable in the center.

19.♖a4!

White develops with tempo in order not to waste any time. He attacks the c6-pawn and prepares for ♜d1 on the next move.

19...d5

19...♖e8 20.♜d1 and ♔a3 is coming next.

20.♜d1 ♔h7

20...d4 Black could have saved his extra pawn, but only in a really anti-positional way. Please compare the g7-bishop and the one on e4; after this, there is no need to think about White having enough compensation for the pawn or not...

21.bxc6 bxc6 22.♔a3 ♖c8 23.♗ab1 with complete domination. The best option may have been to give back the pawn and try to save a worse endgame after 20...♞e8 21.cxd5 cxd5 22.♗xd5! This is why Black played 20...♔h7. 22...♘xd5 23.♔xd5 ♖d8 24.♔xe6+ ♞xe6 25.♔e3. Black has weaknesses on the queenside, and the isolated pawn on e4 (it had to be pushed there sooner or later to activate the bishop) is also a potential target.

21.cxd5!

White must be precise. The tempting 21.♔a3 would spoil the advantage 21...♞e8! 22.cxd5 cxd5 23.♔xe7 dxe4 24.♔c5 a6 and Black gets counterplay.

21...cxd5 22.♞b3!

And only on the next move ♔a3. Of course, the ...d4 push for Black is always bad, because of the same reasons as on the 20th move.

22...♗b6

Grischuk tries a trick, but such things do not often work against Kramnik... 22...♞d7 23.♔a3 d4 24.♗ac1 and again White's pieces are dominating the board.

23.a4!

One more tempo had to be “wasted” before playing ♔a3. 23.♔a3? would fall into Black's trap 23...♞e8! leaving the pin on the d-file and attacking b5 at the same time.

23...a6

Black tries to get counterplay by opening the a-file, but it is too late.

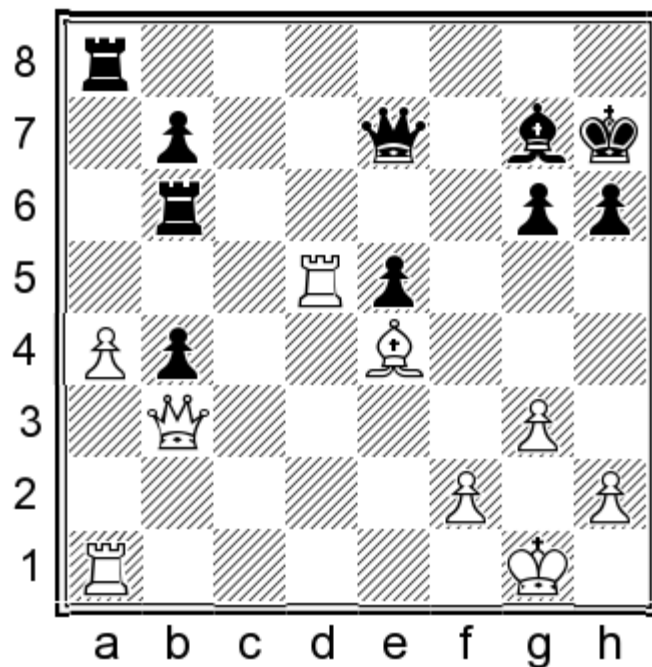
24.♔a3

Finally!

24...axb5 25.♔xe7 ♞xe7 26.♗xd5

In the case of opposite-colored bishops in middlegames, the ‘principle’ says that the side with the more active bishop is better, and material is not so important. Now it is impossible to compare the two bishops equally, and Grischuk collapses in a few more moves.

26...b4



27.a5!

Another excellent decision. White wants to have the ♖b5 option.

27...♔f7

This loses, but objectively the position was hopeless anyway. 27...♖f6 28.♖b5! ♖a7 is very passive 29.♖d1+—

28.h4! h5 29.♖d1!

The triple threat of axb6, ♖d7 and ♖xh5 was too much for Black, so he resigned the game. Kramnik showed, once again, his deep understanding of the Bayonet attack!

1–0

GAME 5

V. Kramnik (2797)

L. Aronian (2816)

Olympiad

03.09.2012, [D10]

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

Now a game between the current World Nr.2 and Nr.3. I must say that Aronian clearly had an off-day today, but it doesn't take anything away from Kramnik's glory.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6

Here comes the first surprise of the game.

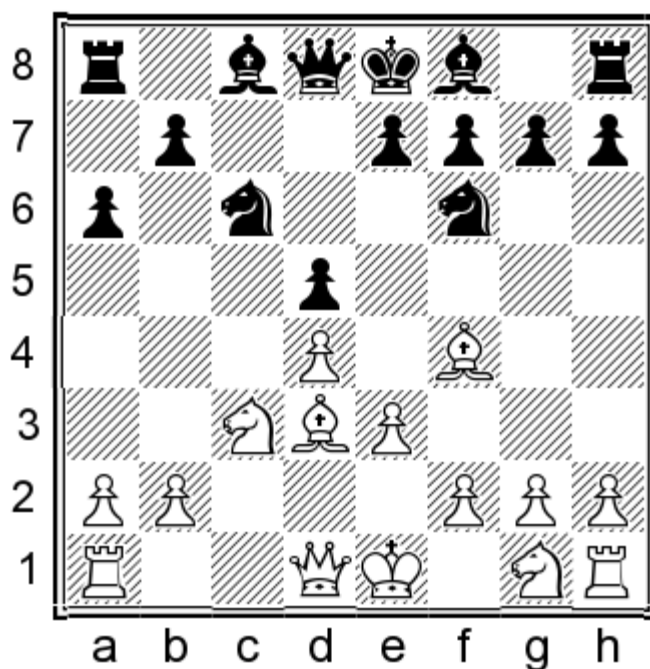
4.cxd5

White goes for the Exchange Slav, which is generally considered to be an opportunity to make a draw, however, as we'll see this is a dangerous weapon in Kramnik's hands.

4...cxd5 5.♖f4 ♜c6 6.e3 a6

6...♗f5 is the other main move.

7.♗d3



7...g6?

This is a really shocking move by a player of Aronian's standard. He probably wanted to avoid Kramnik's preparation, but the bishop finds nothing to do on g7 in this opening; Black has no chance to open the long diagonal and he can't put pressure on the d4-pawn. The best he can do is to transfer it back to f8-d6, exchanging off the strong White bishop...
 7...♗g4 8.f3 (8.♜ge2 e6) 8...♗h5 is the start of the main-lines. Kramnik definitely had some deep idea in mind for this approach, but Aronian should have gone for this anyway.

8.h3

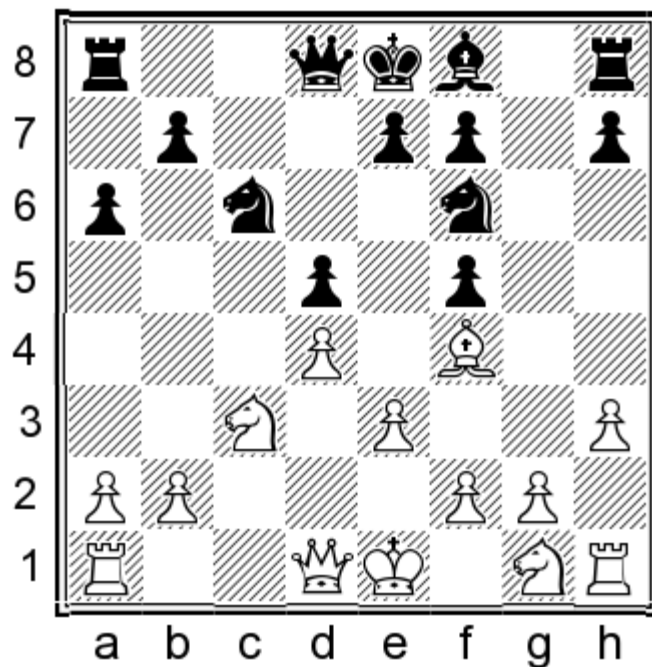
A prophylactic move against ...♗g4 which also frees the h2 square for the bishop against a future ...♘h5.

8...♗f5

A logical move to get rid of the bishop, but it could have resulted in some direct problems. However, Kramnik prefers to lead the game to calmer waters... 8...♗g7 9.♘f3 0-0 10.0-0± and White is better because of his superior dark-squared bishop: he's going to initiate his play on the queenside.

9.♘f3

9.♗xf5! This kind of move is always questionable, since it helps Black to bring a pawn towards the center, but White has concrete reasons for taking. 9...gxf5



10.g4! This is the point! Suddenly Black's position is really unpleasant 10...♖d7 (10...fxg4 11.hxg4± The exchanges on the kingside clearly favor White. He wants to push g5, followed by developing with ♘f3.) 11.♙e5! Without this move, the whole idea would be wrong, but now Black is in trouble. White wants to destroy the pawn structure with ♙xf6, and 11...♙g7 loses a piece after (11...♘xe5 12.dxe5 ♘e4 13.♖xd5± with an extra pawn.) 12.g5 ♘xe5 13.gxf6!±

9...♙xd3 10.♖xd3 ♙g7?!

This is another strange decision by Aronian. Black should have played 10...e6, followed by exchanging the other bishops, when he is very close to equalizing. 11.0-0 ♙d6 12.♙h6 ♙f8 13.♙g5 ♙e7 when the Black bishop always follows its counterpart.

11.0-0 0-0 12.♖fc1 e6 13.♘a4

White plays in typical exchange-Slav fashion, trying to make use of the weakened dark-squares on the queenside.

13...♘e4 14.♘c5

14.♘d2 was principled as well, to exchange the strong knight, but Kramnik did not want to allow any kind of counterplay. Aronian definitely wanted to react with 14...f5! (14...♘xd2 15.♖xd2±) 15.f3 ♘xd2 16.♖xd2 g5! 17.♙h2 f4 Black gets counterplay against the d4 pawn. 14.♖b3!? was quite unpleasant as well.

14...♘xc5 15.♖xc5

White secures control of the only open file.

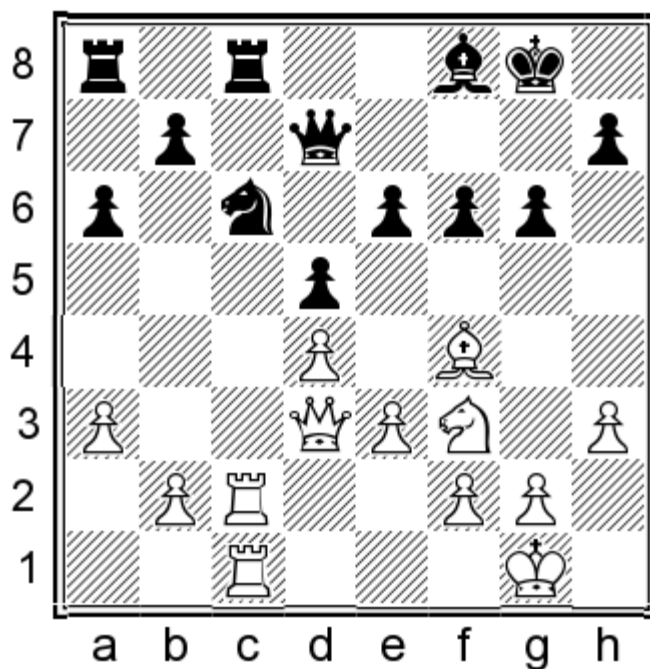
15...♖d7

15...♖b6 was another defensive option, but White keeps an edge here as well. 16.♖c2 ♖fc8 17.♖c1 ♙f8 18.♖c3 with the idea of playing ♘e5 next. Black cannot fight for the c-file with 18...♙b4 because of 19.♖b3! ♖a5 20.♖3c2± when White is better; the b7 pawn is also vulnerable.

16.♖ac1 ♖fc8 17.a3!

Depriving Black from any kind of counterplay connected with ...♕f8 and ...♖b4, and the plan with b4-b5 might increase his advantage in the future as well.

17...♕f8 18.♖5c2 f6



18...♕d6 does not solve Black's problems either. 19.♕xd6 ♖xd6 20.♗b3 and White has big pressure on the queenside. 20...♖c7 21.♗b6! ♖ac8 22.♘e5±

19.♘d2!

Another excellent positional move. The knight has nothing to do on e5 anymore, so Kramnik takes it to the c5 square.

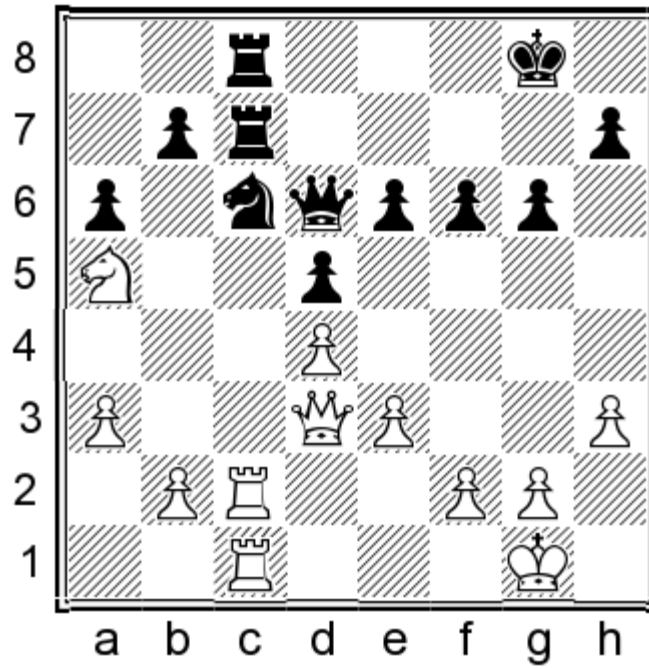
19...♕d6 20.♕xd6 ♖xd6 21.♘b3 ♖c7

21...b6 would be a serious weakening of the queenside. The knight loses its stability on the c6-square and the a6-pawn becomes very weak! 22.♘d2! After the knight provokes the weakness, it gives a free run to the b-pawn. 22...♔g7 23.b4 White is much better here.

22.♘a5!

With the threat of ♘xb7 and on

22...♖ac8



Black is close to a draw, but...

23. ♖xb7!!

Kramnik had a really good day! The pins on the c-file and the 6th rank allow White to gain a decisive advantage.

23... ♜xb7 24. ♕xa6 ♜bc7 25. b4! ♕d7

The only move, but it doesn't help...

26. ♕b6!

This is the most accurate move as Black cannot prevent b5! 26.b5 was also good enough 26... ♖e7 (On 26... ♖d8 the point is 27. ♕xc8!! ♜xc8 (27... ♕xc8 28. ♜xc7 ♕b8 29. ♜c8 wins.) 28. ♜xc8+- The rooks and the b-pawn are dominating.) 27. ♜xc7 ♜xc7 28. ♜xc7 ♕xc7 29. ♕xe6+ White already has three pawns for the piece, but his pawns are also rolling. Black cannot create counterplay. 29... ♔f8 (29... ♔g7 30. a4+-) 30. ♕xf6+ ♔e8 31. a4+-

26... ♕e8

Aronian has fantastic creativity, but here it doesn't get him out of trouble... Other moves were hopeless as well. 26... ♔f7 27. b5 ♜b7 Now the best is 28. ♕xc6! ♕xc6 (28... ♜xc6 29. bxc6+-) 29. ♜xc6 ♜xc6 30. bxc6+- is easily winning. 26... ♜b7 is refuted by 27. ♜xc6! ♜xb6 28. ♜xc8+ ♔f7 29. ♜1c7+-;

26... ♜b8 doesn't help either. 27. ♕xb8+! ♖xb8 28. ♜xc7 ♕b5 (28... ♕d6 29. b5+- the knight is trapped. White simply wants to play ♜b7 with a mate on the back-rank.) 29. ♜1c5 ♕b6 30. ♜e7+-

27. b5!

Kramnik calculates precisely!

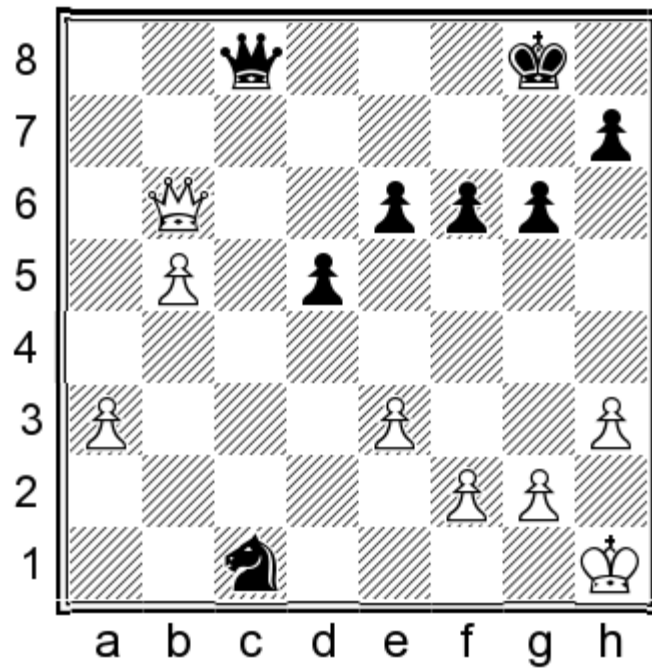
27... ♖xd4 28. ♜xc7 ♖e2+ 29. ♔h1!

It's important not to allow any checks.

29...♖xc1

This was Aronian's idea, but...

30.♖xc8 ♜xc8



31.♜c6!

The b-pawn promotes soon.

31...♜d8

31...♜xc6 32.bxc6+–

32.b6!

White does not even need to take back the knight. Black cannot stop the pawn and it also promotes with check. 32.♜xc1 was also good, of course.

32...♞f7 33.♜c7+

33.b7+– was also good.

33...♞e8 34.♜a7! d4 35.b7

A very nice game by Kramnik!

1–0

GAME 6

V. Ivanchuk (2769)

Wang Hao (2726)

40th Olympiad Open

Istanbul TUR (11.1)

09.09.2012, [E52]

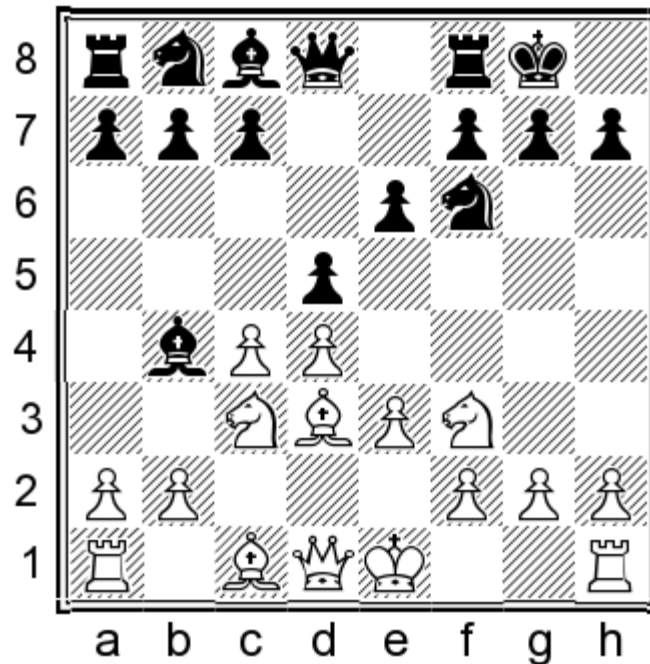
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

We will examine a very important game from the final round. The Chinese team was leading the tournament, but they were facing the 2nd seeds Ukraine, and only a win would give them the gold medal. However, on the top board, Ivanchuk won a very nice game against Biel winner Wang Hao.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e3

The Rubinstein variation of the NimzoIndian Defense enjoys really high popularity now.

4...0-0 5.♙d3 d5 6.♘f3



6...b6

This is quite a rare move, but by no means a bad one. I personally believe it's a good alternative if somebody doesn't want to learn theory and wants to obtain a playable position. 6...c5 is the main line.

7.a3

Ivanchuk also reacts with a side-line. 7.0-0 is the most common move when 7...♙b7 8.cxd5 exd5 9.a3 ♙d6 10.b4 a6 11.♙b3 ♙e7 is the start of the critical lines, but recently Black has achieved good results in some high-level games.

7...♙xc3+ 8.bxc3 c6

This move was played without thinking; clearly a prepared novelty by Wang Hao. However after Ivanchuk's strong

response, White retains the initiative. Black's idea is to play ...♟a6, and after exchanging the bishops, to take back on d5 with the c-pawn. I would personally prefer 8...♟a6 9.cxd5 ♟xd3 10.♞xd3 ♞xd5! 11.c4 ♞e4! as was played in Aleksandrov-Tomashevsky, in Moscow 2012. If White has something, it's really symbolic.

9.cxd5!

A great prophylactic move by Ivanchuk! After the natural 9.0-0 Black's novelty would reveal its point. 9...♟a6! 10.♗d2 (10.♗e5 is met with 10...♗fd7! exchanging the strong knight. 10.cxd5 ♟xd3 11.♞xd3 cxd5 12.c4 ♗c6 with equality.) 10...c5! 11.♞e2 ♗c6 12.cxd5 ♟xd3 13.♞xd3 ♞xd5= with a comfortable position for Black.

9...cxd5 10.♞e2!

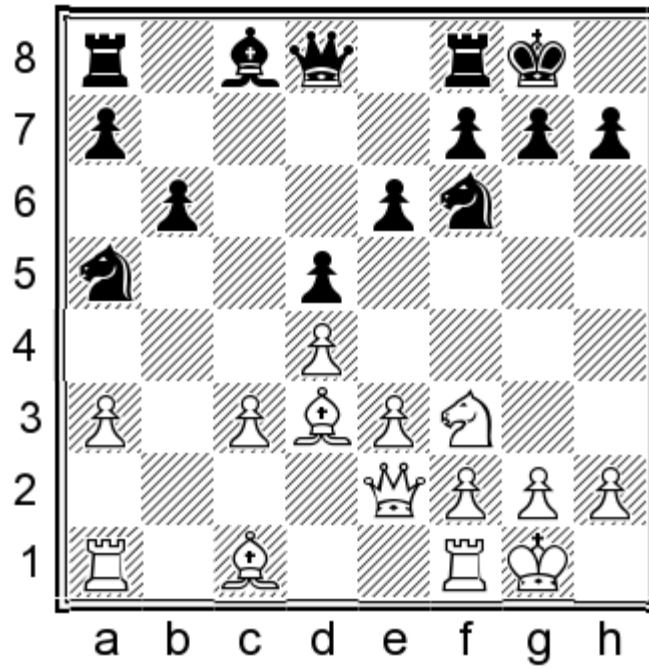
The previous move was connected with this one. White preserves his strong light-squared bishop.

10...♗c6

Black changes his mind and tries to create an outpost on the c4-square, but I think he should have continued with his original plan. 10...a5 with the idea of ♟a6 is a huge weakening move. The b5-square and the b6 weakness will tell in the future... 11.0-0 ♟a6 12.♟xa6 ♗xa6 13.c4! followed by ♞b1, ♟d2, ♞fc1 and ♗e5. White has an advantage. 10...♟b7 11.0-0 ♞c8 was the right move in my opinion, even though White can achieve some edge with energetic play. 12.a4! ♟a6 Black successfully exchanges the bishops, but he spent too many tempi doing it. (The c3 pawn is poisoned 12...♞xc3 13.♟a3 ♞c8 14.♞fc1 ♞a5 (14...♞b3? 15.♟c2! Black loses material. 15...♞xc2 (15...♞c4 16.♟xh7++-) 16.♞xc2+-) 15.♞xc8+ ♟xc8 16.♞c2! White is penetrating on the c-file. It's easy to see that White has more than enough compensation for the pawn. 16...♟a6 (16...♟b7 17.♞c7+-) 17.♗e5 Black has serious problems on the back rank, so the following line is more or less forced. 17...♗bd7 (17...♟xd3? 18.♞c8+) 18.♗xd7 ♗xd7 19.♞c6! ♞d8 20.♞c7 White wins material. Black can still resist a bit with 20...♞c8 21.♞xd7 ♞c3 but it doesn't save him, because of 22.♟xa6! ♞xa1+ 23.♟f1±)

White is in time to retain the initiative by playing 13.♟a3 ♟xd3 14.♞xd3 ♞e8 15.♞fc1 ♗c6 16.c4↑ White is slightly better, but Black still should have gone for this line.

11.0-0 ♗a5



12.a4!

White wants to activate his bishop by playing ♗a3.

12...♞e8

Black prepares for ♗a3, but I think it would have been more advisable to wait until White plays that move, because now he has a strong alternative. However, other continuations were also quite unpleasant for Black. 12...♞b3 gaining the bishop pair. 13.♞b1 ♞xc1 14.♞fxc1 is also better for White. He has a big initiative on the queenside. His plans are connected to the a5 and c4 moves, which could be well-supported by the knight transfer ♞d2-b3, or by the simple ♞e5. 12...♞d7 is met by 13.♗a3 ♞e8 14.♗b4 and White is also better here.

13.♞e5!

Ivanchuk activates the knight, using the fact that Black can't get rid of it by ...♞d7, because the f7-pawn is unprotected...

13...♞e4

Black wants to send away the knight with f6. 13...♞d7? is refuted elegantly by 14.♞xf7! ♞xf7 15.♞h5+ The king cannot withstand the pressure of the bishops and the queen. 15...♞f8 16.♗a3+! ♞e7 17.♞xh7+- wins. If Black manages to parry the direct threats, f4-f5 is killing.

14.f3

An inaccuracy! Actually the only one in the game by White. 14.♞c2! was much stronger, forcing the Black knight to go back to f6. 14...f6 (14...♗b7 is met with 15.f3 ♞f6 16.e4!± with a huge attack. ♗g5 is the main idea now.) 15.f3! is the key move! 15...fxe5 16.fxe4 Opening the position clearly favors White, as the Black king becomes vulnerable!

14...♞d6

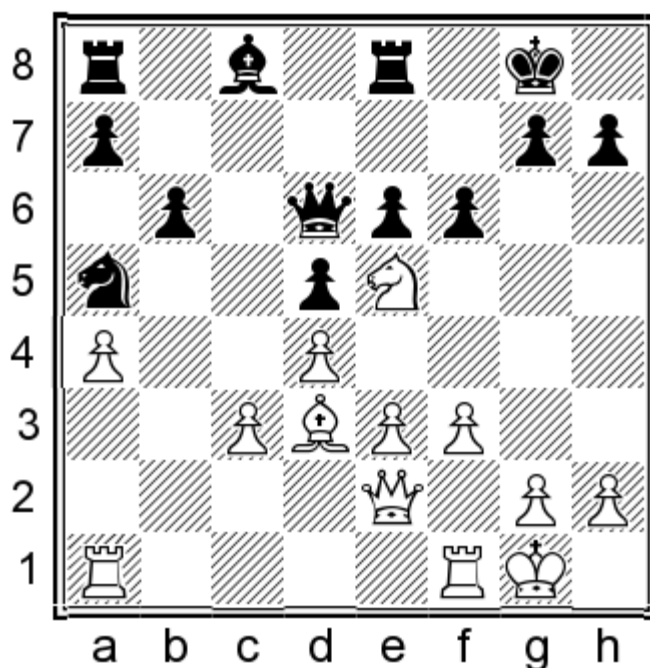
Of course not 14...♖xc3? and the knight has no way out. 15.♔c2+—

15.♕a3!

Great play by White! Ivanchuk finds a very dangerous attacking possibility, which he manages to execute in the game. 15.e4 is not the same as before. Black can simply play 15...♖b3! 16.♖b1 ♖xc1 17.♖bxc1 ♕b7! with a double-edged position. 18.exd5 is always met with exd5 and Black is ready to kick out the knight with f6.

15...♕b7

On 15...f6 Ivanchuk probably wanted to play the same way as in the game: 16.♕xd6 (16.♖g4 ♖dc4 17.♕b4 is also possible.) 16...♖xd6



17.f4!! with the idea of ♖h5, while accepting the sacrifice leads to a crushing victory for White. 17...fxe5 18.♖h5! The following moves are forced. 18...g6 19.♕xg6! ♖e7 20.fxe5 ♖d7 and now, White can slowly build up his attack. Black is too passive to neutralize this... 21.♕d3! ♖g7 22.♖f6 ♖e7 23.♖af1 ♕d7 24.♖1f3! bringing all the pieces in. Black can't hold the attack. I am pretty sure that Ivanchuk had foreseen this line. One illustrative finish could be 24...♖c8 25.♖h6 when Black is helpless against the threats. 25...♖xc3 (25...♖f8 loses to 26. ♕xh7+ ♖xh7 27.♖xh7 ♖xh7 28.♖xf8+ ♖xf8 29.♖xh7+—) 26.♕xh7+! ♖xh7 27.♖xh7 ♖c1+ 28.♖f2 ♖xh7 29.♖g5+ White wins, for example with 29...♖g7 30.♖d8+ ♖h7 31.♖h3+ ♖g6 32.♖g3+—

16.♕xd6! ♖xd6 17.f4!

Suddenly there is a big difference between the minor pieces. The White ones are extremely well-placed, while Black's stand passively. Black must parry ♕xh7 now, followed by ♖h5-♖xf7 and ♖f3.

17...g6

A good move, but on the other hand it creates a new weakness. Without the dark-squared bishop, the f6 and h6 squares might become huge problems.

18.♖g4

White wants to continue his attack by playing f5!

18...♖c4?

Black tries to open the c-file and gain counterplay there, but White is not obliged to accept the pawn, since ...♗xe5 is not a threat for him (due to fxe5 followed by ♖f6 and h4-h5). 18...♖ac8 allows 19.f5! exf5 20.♖xf5→;

18...f5!? would have been the only move. 19.♕e2 ♖ec8 followed by doubling the rooks on the c-file. White should continue the attack with g4! Black seems to be safe now, but actually the attack rolls very quickly. White takes on f5, when the opening of the g-file would be dangerous after the heavy pieces occupy it, while ...exf5 leaves the g6-pawn vulnerable. White will push h4-h5.

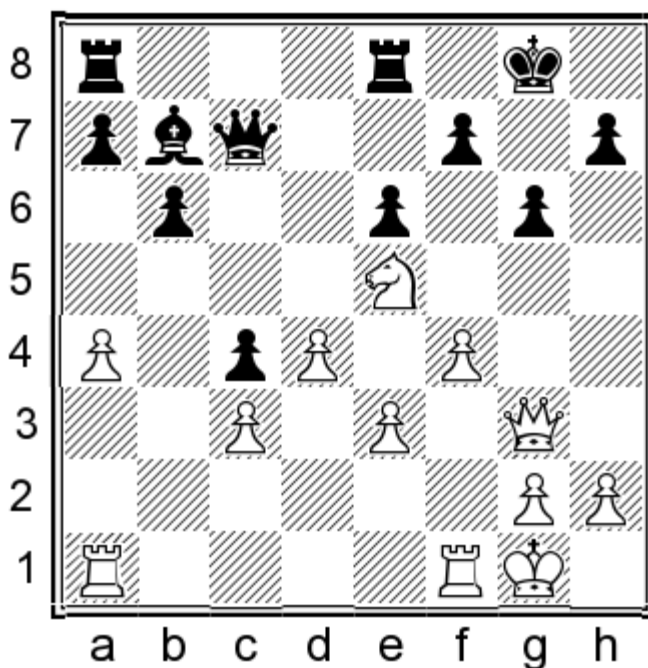
19.♕g3

19.♗xc4 dxc4 20.♕g5! was an alternative, with the idea of ♗g4!

19...♖c7?

This is the decisive mistake, but in a bad position there are no good moves! Ivanchuk finishes the game in style.

20.♗xc4 dxc4



21.f5! f6

The last try to kick out the knight, but it loses to a nice combination. 21...exf5 does not change the outcome of the game. 22.♖xf5 ♗d5 23.e4! ♗e6 24.♖f6+— with a decisive attack after ♖af1 and h4-h5.

22.fxg6! fxe5 23.♖f7!

But not 23.gxh7+? ♔h8 and the Black king is safe behind the h7-pawn.

23...♖c6

23...♖e7 loses to 24.gxh7+ ♔xf7 25.♖f1+ ♔e8 26.h8=♚++-

24.gxh7+!

A small calculating job, which was accomplished perfectly by White.

24...♔xf7 25.♖f1+ ♔e7 26.h8=♚!

A strong intermediate move, but it could have also been played at any point during the following moves ...

26...♖xh8 27.♚g7+ ♔d6 28.dxe5+!

Black resigned in view of the forced mates in all lines... e.g. 28.dxe5+ ♔c5 (28... ♔d5 29.♖d1+ ♔e4 30.♖d4+ ♔xe3 31.♚g3+ ♔e2 32.♚f2#) 29.♚e7+ ♔d5 30.♖d1+ ♔xe5 (30... ♔e4 31.♖d4+ ♔xe3 32.♚g5+ ♔e2 33.♚d2#) 31.♚g5+ ♔e4 32.♚f4#

1-0

GAME 7

S. Movsesian (2699)

M. Matlakov (2665)

St Petersburg Rapid Cup 2012

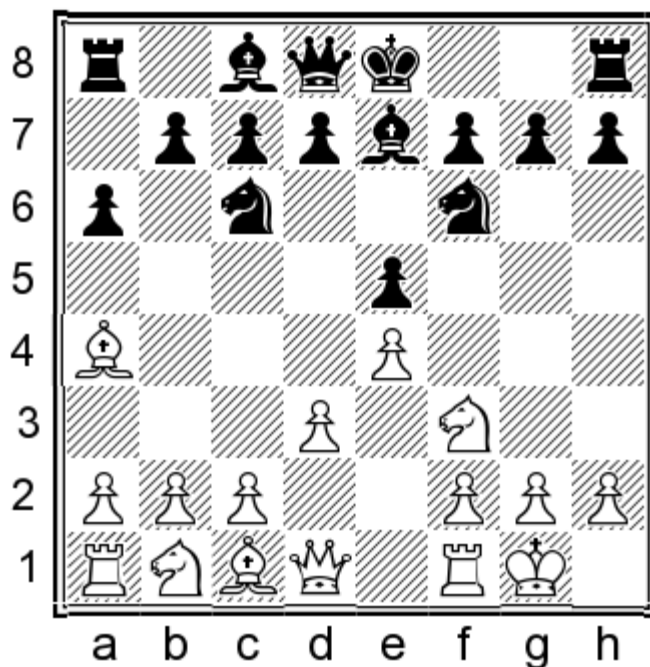
St Petersburg RUS (6.2)

06.10.2012, [C84]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

Even though this was a rapid game, Movsesian shows some very nice play and a lot of clever ideas in the Spanish structures!

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♙e7 6.d3



The main move is 6.♖e1, but a lot of players are afraid of the Marshall, so the move 6.d3 has become very popular

during the last couple of years. These positions look almost equal, but they are quite tricky and require exact play for Black to achieve complete equality.

6...d6

This move is the new fashion. In previous games, much more often we saw the moves 6...b5 7.♘b3, and only then ...d6.

7.c3

Now after Black's ...b5, the White bishop is going to escape to c2, not allowing Black to play ...♘a5 and ...c5. It's hard to say if this is good or bad. At least, according to the results, White often manages to create some trouble for his opponent.

7...0-0 8.♗bd2

White's plan is quite simple here: to play ♖e1, ♕f1–♕g3 and maybe d4 afterwards. This time Black needs to decide whether to play with ...d6-d5 or without it.

8...b5 9.♘c2

Now we can see why White played an early c3... the bishop goes directly to c2.

9...d5

Black decides to push ...d5. Other plans for Black could be to play ...♘d7-♘b6-♘f6, or just the simple ...♖e8-♘f8, h6, ♘b7. All of this is well-known and has already been tried in a lot of games.

10.♖e1

Now White wants to take on d5 because the e5-pawn is hanging.

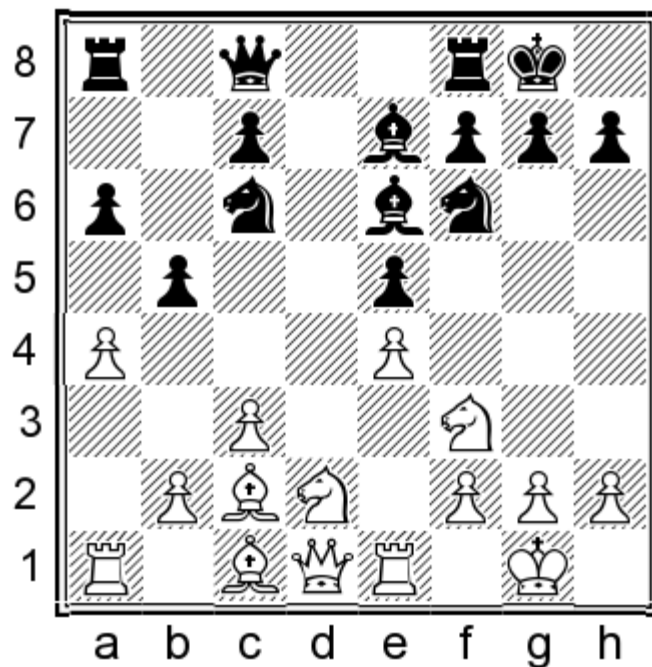
10...dxe4 11.dxe4 ♘e6

Until now everything is more-or-less standard. White now begins a “standard” plan as well.

12.a4

Of course, it would make no sense to play ♕f1 and go for the queen exchange. This would just lead to an equal position, whereas the White queen would be very nicely placed on e2 — attacking the pawn on b5.

12...♙c8



A very playable reaction. Black frees the d8-square for the rook and at the same time brings the Queen to b7, from where she will protect the b5-pawn. 12...b4 13. ♕e2 ♕c8 14. ♖c4 ♜d7 15. a5 f6 16. ♞e3 b3 17. ♙b1 ♞d6 18. ♞d5 Movsesian-Almasi, Olympiad 2012, saw some advantage for White

13. ♕e2 ♕b7

Black tries to avoid weakening the c4-square, but now White goes for another plan.

14. b4!

White fixes the Black pawn on b5, which will become a target very soon and will cause a lot of trouble for Black.

14... ♞fd8?!

A “standard” move, but not the best one. Black is acting against White’s positional threat. 14... ♞ab8!? would have been a better move in my opinion. Black should not exchange a pair of rooks here; the rook on b8 would protect the pawn on b5, while the rook on d8 would take control of the file. The next few Black moves could be ...h6, ... ♞fd8 and I think that if White is better, it should be a very small advantage.

15. axb5!

Another excellent reaction by Movsesian.

15... axb5 16. ♞xa8 ♞xa8 17. ♞d3

And White’s idea is coming true. The b5-pawn is weak and it’s not that easy for Black to find a good way to defend it.

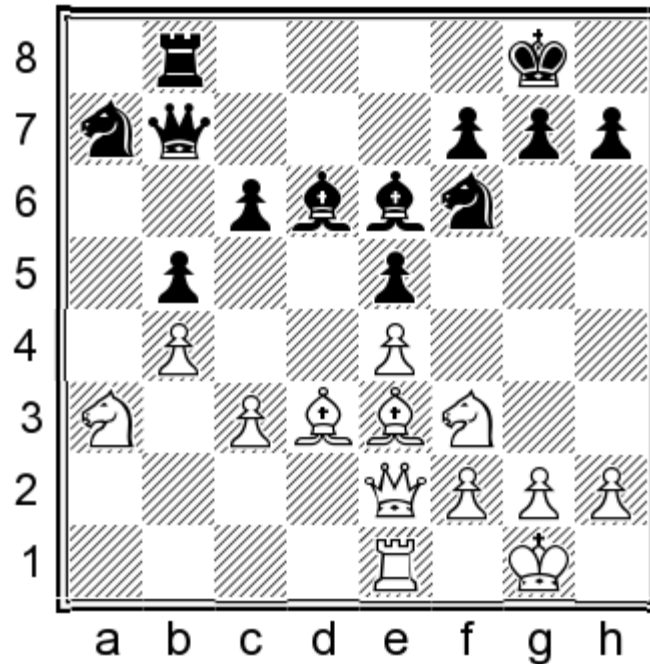
17... ♞b8 18. ♞b1!?

White follows his major plan! Another piece is coming to the attack against Black’s weaknesses. 18. ♞f1! would have been another very attractive option for White. The knight is going to d5 or f5 via e3. White is clearly better.

18... ♞d6

In order to have ...♘a7 next. The pawn on e5 is not hanging anymore.

19.♘a3 ♘a7 20.♙e3 c6



Black defends the b5-pawn, but the knight on a7 is very badly placed...

21.♘g5!?

Exactly when all the Black pieces are concentrated on the queenside, White starts his play on the kingside!

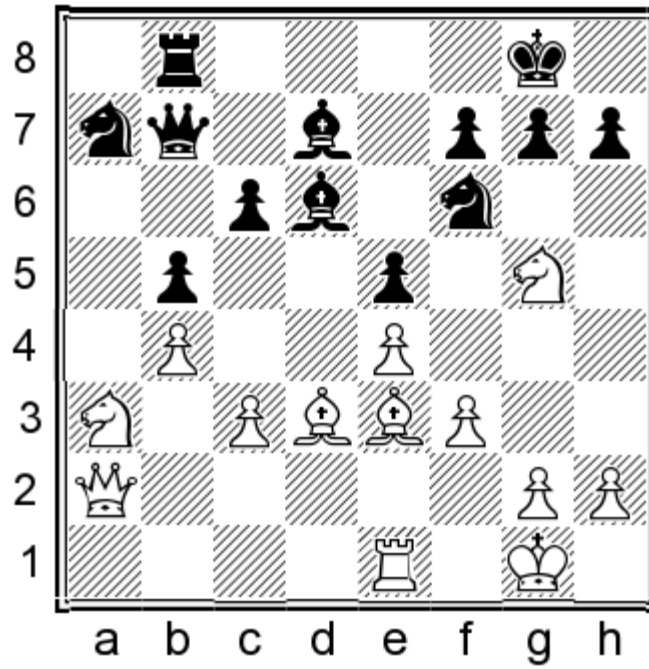
21...♙g4

21...♙c8 22.♖a1 gives White clearly better prospects.

22.f3 ♙d7

An obviously wrong direction for the bishop would be 22...♙h5? when after 23.♘h3 Black's bishop is out of play on h5, and White will continue his play on the queenside by playing c4 eventually. White's position is much better.

23.♚a2



23...♔f8?

A blunder, but it's hard to blame somebody for such a move in a rapid game. 23...♔e8 A passive move, but Black is very solid. White keeps some small advantage but nothing major is going on. In the future, White could try to take control over the a-file by playing ♖c2 and ♙a1. A small plus is guaranteed, but it's not clear if this is enough to win the game.

24.♘c4!

A strong and unexpected tactic. White attacks a7 and f7 at the same time...

24...bxc4

In the event of the passive move 24...♘c8 then we would see 25.♘xd6 ♘xd6 26.♙c5 ♙a8 27.♚b3 and Black's position is very bad...

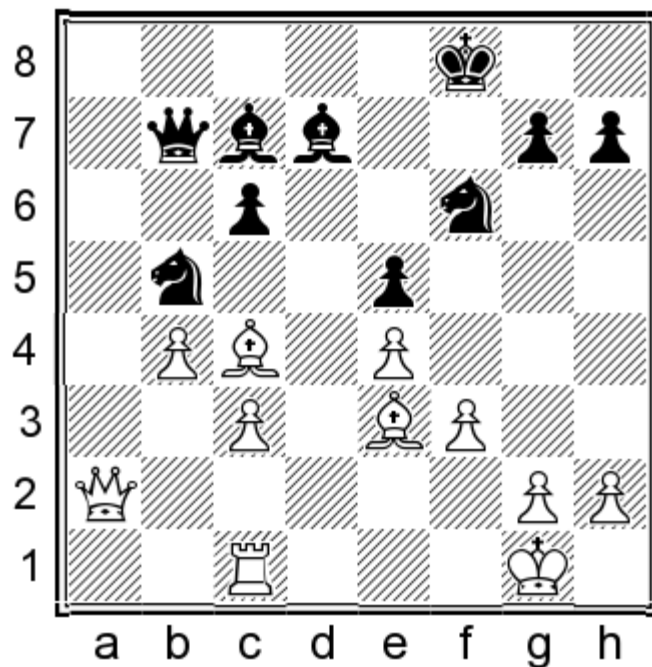
25.♙xc4 ♘b5

Black utilises his practical chances by going into a position with two pieces for a rook and two pawns... This kind of resource is always useful in a rapid game.

26.♘xf7 ♙xf7 27.♙xf7+ ♔f8 28.♙c1!

Another strong move by White, who isn't trying to force things. White's small material advantage gives him a clear edge, so why hurry?! Perhaps White wants to play ♙b3 next, followed by c4, or maybe ♙c4, ♚b3 and ♙a1, winning control over the a-file.

28...♙c7 29.♙c4



29...♙b6

The exchange of bishops doesn't help much...

30.♜f2 ♜d8

The losing move, but it wouldn't have been much better to play: 30...♙xe3 31.♜xe3 ♜a7 32.♜xa7 ♜xa7 33.♙f2 with a very bad endgame. White will play ♙e3-♙d2 next, followed by ♜a1. I don't think Black has any real chances of holding this position.

31.♙c5+ ♙e8 32.♜g3

g7 and e5 are hanging, so one of the pawns is going to fall. This was clearly too much for Black. A great game by White, who showed us the basic ideas in this "tricky" opening!

1-0

GAME 8

M. Carlsen (2843)

V. Anand (2780)

Bilbao

12.10.2012, [B52]

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

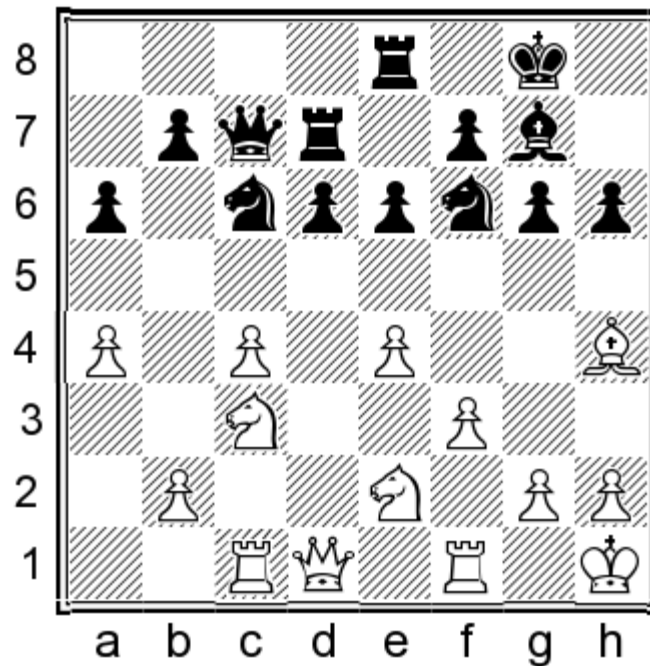
The world's Nr.1 player Magnus Carlsen won the Sao Paulo-Bilbao Masters tournament by avoiding any kind of theoretical battles. He never looked for an opening advantage, and only wanted to get a playable position where he could slowly outplay his opponents. In this game, he was facing the World Champion.

1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 d6 3.♙b5+

Carlsen wanted to avoid the Sicilian Najdorf variation.

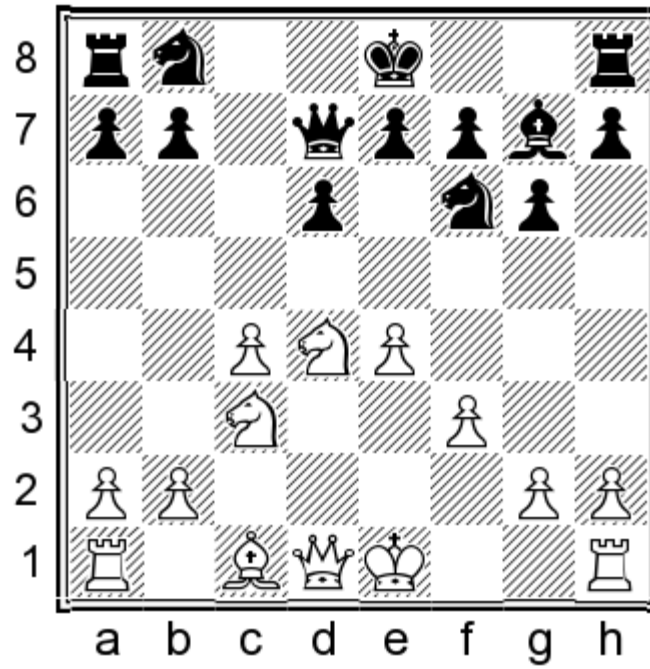
3...♙d7 4.♙xd7+ ♚xd7 5.c4 ♘f6

Anand quickly got into some trouble against Caruana a few rounds before in the same tournament by playing 5...♘c6 6.♘c3 g6 7.d4 cxd4 8.♘xd4 ♙g7 9.♘de2 ♘f6 10.f3 0-0 11.0-0 This is what White is playing for. He has obtained a space advantage and a long-term initiative. If Black wants to equalize, he needs to execute a pawn break with ...a6-b5 or ...e6-d5, but White is ready to meet it now. 11...a6 12.a4 e6 13.♙g5! It's very important to attack the f6-knight to prevent the d5 breaks. 13...h6 14.♙h4 g5 would weaken the kingside too much. 14...♞fd8 15.♞b1 and White has protected the b2-pawn, effectively preventing ...d5. Now it would be met with cxd5 exd5 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 and ♘xd5. 15...♞c7 16.♙h1 ♞d7 17.♞c1 White obtained a small edge, but Anand missed or underestimated a small-but-crucial tactical trick, and his position became critical. 17...♞e8?!



18.♘d5! A well-known motif to use the pin on the c-file. 18...exd5 19.cxd5 ♚b6 20.♙f2! ♚xb2 21.dxc6 bxc6 22.♞xc6 ♞dd8 23.♞xa6± White had a clear extra pawn, although Anand managed to survive later on. Caruana-Anand, Sao Paulo/Bilbao 2012.

6.♘c3 g6 7.d4 cxd4 8.♘xd4 ♙g7 9.f3



9...♛c7

This is practically a novelty. Black prevents White from achieving his standard setup by developing the dark squared bishop to e3 or g5... 9...0-0 10.♙e3 is the main line with hundreds of games.

10.b3 ♞a5 11.♙b2

However, the bishop on b2 stands quite well too.

11...♘c6 12.0-0 0-0

Black can't make use of the pin after 12...♘xd4 13.♛xd4 and White will retreat his queen in the next move.

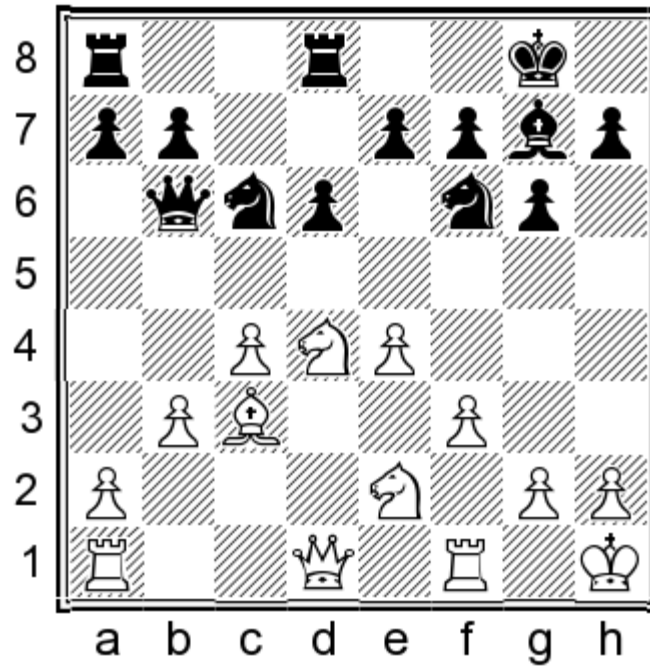
13.♘ce2

White has stabilized his position. He has obtained a slightly better position with a space advantage, but of course, converting it into something more requires a lot of effort.

13...♞fd8 14.♙c3

This is an inaccuracy. The prophylactic 14.♔h1! should have been played, when the ...d5-breaks are not effective anymore. 14...e6 15.♙c3 ♞b6 16.♛d2 White is better. Now on 16...d5 17.♘xc6! the principled 17...bxc6 is met by ♙a5! 17...♛xc6 18.♞fd1± White is well prepared for these actions.

14...♞b6 15.♔h1



15...d5!

This great tactical idea seems to solve all the Black problems. However, Carlsen finds a way to keep the position complex.

16. ♖xc6!

16.exd5 ♘xd5! 17.cxd5 ♖xd5 was Anand's idea. He wins back the piece and gets an advantage.

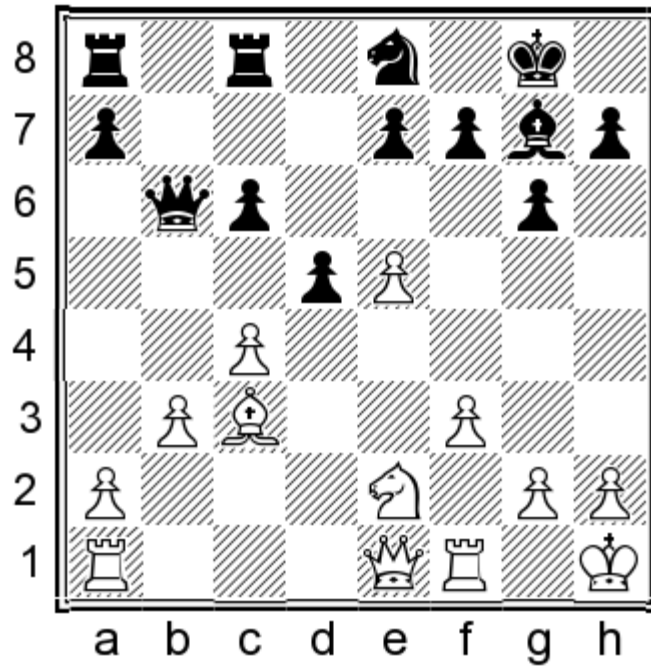
16...bxc6 17. ♔e1!

White escapes the pin, adds the threat of ♕a5, and prepares for a pawn sacrifice.

17...♖dc8?

It's hard to understand this move. The rook was well placed on d8. Black could have parried ♕a5 with the most logical 17...a5! This is a useful move in any case, with the idea of a minority attack with ...a4. Black seems to be fine, since the idea from the game is less effective now. 18.e5 ♘e8 19.e6 because of 19...f5! Black wants to play ...d4, followed by ...c5. 20.♕xg7 ♘xg7 and Black is OK! He might play ...d4, ...c5. Also the e6-pawn might become a potential target later on, after ...♖d6 and♖a6.

18.e5 ♘e8



19.e6!

Suddenly, Black's position is slightly unpleasant; it's not so easy to deal with the e6-pawn.

19...fxe6

Black accepts the sacrifice, but it's clear that he can't hold his material advantage for long. 19...f5 was no better. Now White has 20.♖d1! and in comparison to 17...a5, Black doesn't have ...d4. He can't keep the tension on his d5-pawn, which means that his position is worse.

20.♘f4 ♙xc3 21.♚xc3 d4

21...♘g7 leads to the game by transposition after 22.♞ae1 d4 23.♞d2

22.♞d2 c5 23.♞ae1 ♘g7

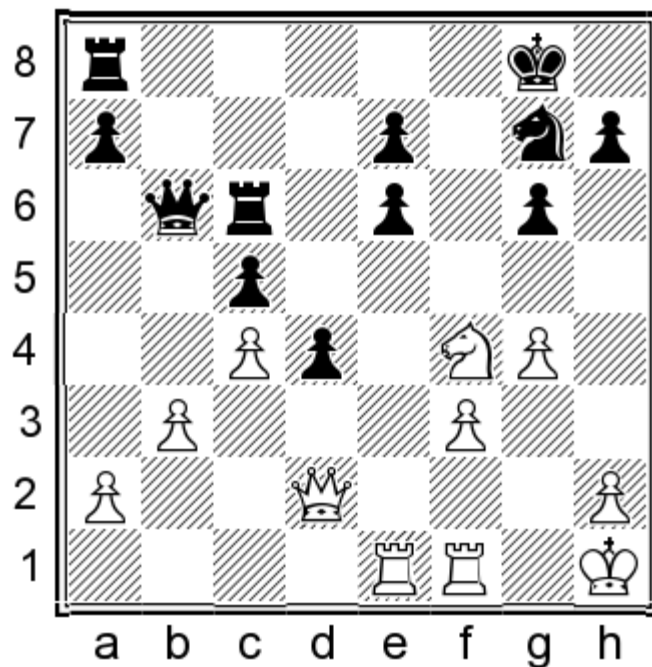
Carlsen finds a very nice idea to combine the pressure of the e6-pawn with a hidden attack against the king.

24.g4!

White restricts the movement of the g7-knight preventing the ...♘f5-e3 maneuver. 24.♘h3 immediately would be met with 24...♘f5;

On 24.♞e5 Black should try to consolidate with 24...♞c6 25.♞fe1 ♞f8 when it's not easy to break through with White.

24...♞c6?



24...♕d6 was probably the only move to stay in the game. Now on 25.♘h3 Black has 25...e5! 26.♖h6

(However, White should be slightly better after 26.♖g5 winning back the pawn.; Or 26.♘f2 and ♘d3 next.)

26...♗e6 just in time to prevent ♘g5.

25.♘h3!!

After this unexpected move, the game is practically over. Black can't prevent the ♖h6-♘g5 threat!

25...♗e8

Black transfers his knight to f6 to cover the h7-pawn, but it leaves the e6-pawn unprotected. 25...♔h8 was the alternative, but it's not much better. 26.♖h6 ♖d8 27.♘g5 ♖g8 28.f4! followed by ♜f3-h3.

26.♖h6 ♘f6 27.♘g5

♜e5-♜fe1 is coming next. The main problem is that Black can't play ...♖d8-f8 because of ♘xe6.

27...d3

27...♖a6 is too slow. 28.♜e5 ♖c8 29.♜fe1 ♖f8 White can choose between 30.♖h3± and 30.♖xf8+ ♜xf8 31.♘xe6 ♜fc8 32.♘f4± White ends up with an extra pawn and a positional advantage.

27...♜f8 28.♜e5+- Creating a new threat of ♘xh7 ♘xh7 ♖xg6 ♔h8 and ♜h5.

28.♜e5

♘xh7 is the threat. Black must waste a tempo to prevent it.

28...♔h8

28...d2 loses to 29.♘xh7! ♘xh7 30.♖xg6+ ♔h8 31.♜h5+-

29.♜d1

Black can't protect the d-pawn, because of ♖f7 check.

29...♖a6 30.a4

After this cold-blooded move, the World Champion decided to stop resisting. His pawns start to fall one after another.
30.a4 ♖c8 31.♞xd3 ♖g8 (31... ♖f8 32. ♖xf8+ ♞xf8 33. ♗xe6+-) 32.♞de3+-

1-0

GAME 9

D. Jakovenko (2741)

D. Andreikin (2723)

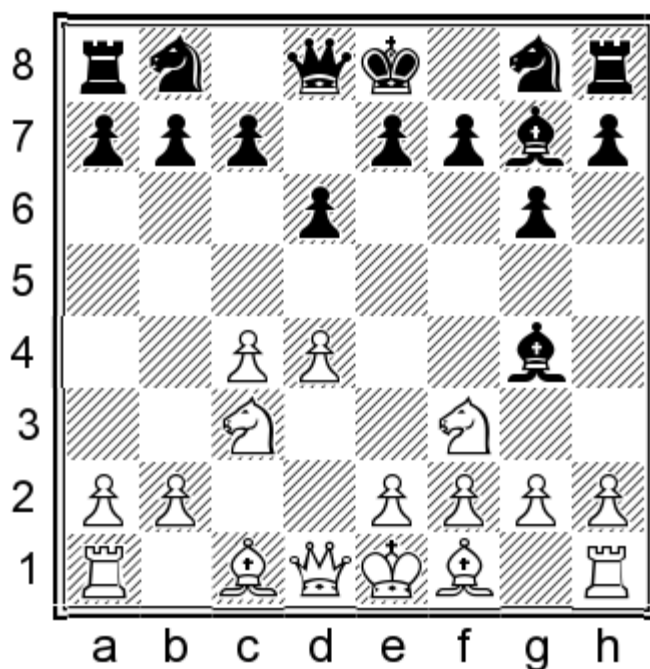
Siberian Bank Cup Novosibirsk RUS (1)

17.11.2012, [A04]

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

A nice positional lesson from Jakovenko, with a pretty tactical blow to put an end to the game.

1.♗f3 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.c4 d6 4.♗c3 ♗g4



In general, such openings are excellent decisions when Black faces a weaker opponent, who immediately gets confused by finding himself in non-theoretical territory. However, as we will see, against a player of Jakovenko's level it doesn't necessarily work well...

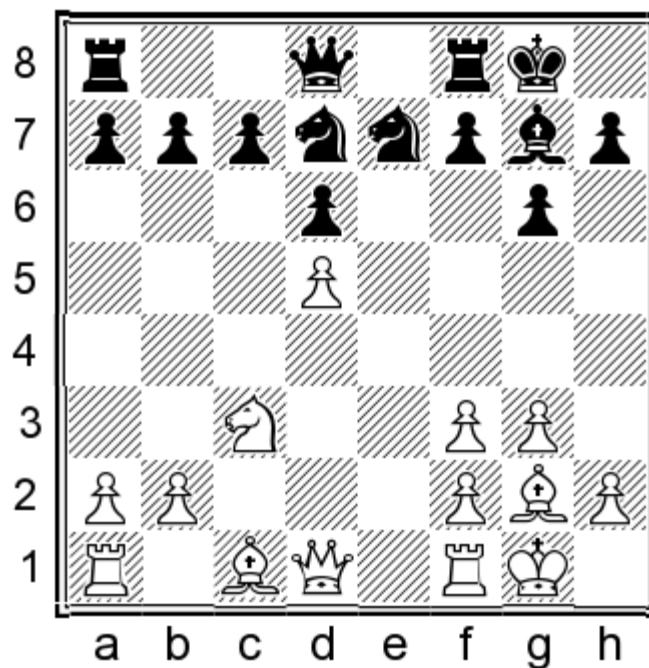
5.g3!?

I like this move a lot. White would like to fianchetto his bishop, and to change the pawn structure with ...♗xf3 has its drawbacks as well. This game shows well that White can make use of the e-file and also obtain the bishop pair in the very early part of the game. Keeping the healthy structure with 5.e3 is the main line.

5...♙xf3 6.exf3 ♘f6

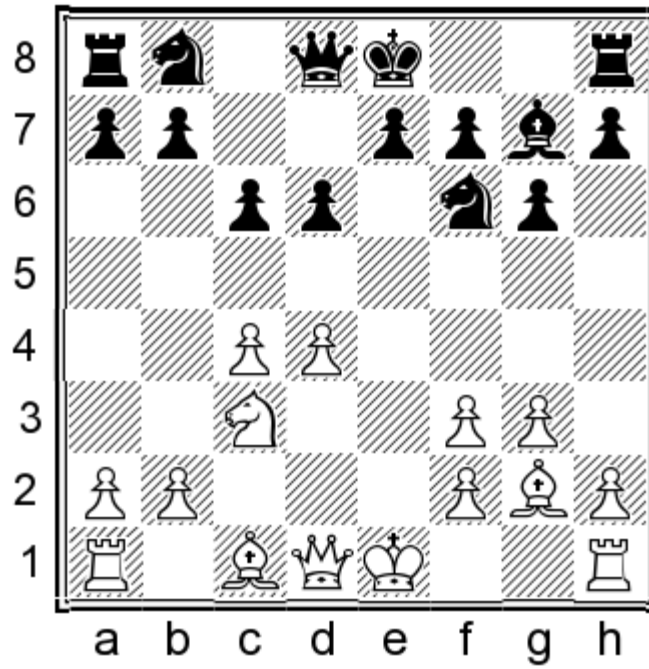
The most often played move 6...e6 is also probably the best one. 7.♙g2 White wants to play 0-0, f4 and d5, achieving a better position with an space advantage. Black's only counterplay is to play ...d5 himself and to attack d4 with the knights (on c6 and f5). 7...♘e7 (7...d5 is a bit premature, Black is not well developed for this action yet. 8.cxd5 exd5 9.0-0 (9.♙b3 looks strong as well, but Black has 9...♘c6! 10.♙xb7 ♘ge7 and suddenly the position is unclear.) 9...♘e7 10.♞e1 0-0 11.♙g5! ♘bc6 12.f4! Due to the d5 weakness, Black is forced to close off his g7 bishop. 12...f6 (12...♙d7 is met with 13.♙b3!) 13.♙h4 The bishop on h4 looks a bit awkward, but the one on g7 is even worse. If Black tries to bring it to the game with f5, it strengthens the h4 bishop as well, while trying to trap it with h6, is simply met by g4, ♙g3 and f5 later on.)

Now Black is ready to push ...d5, so just as in the game, White has to react with 8.d5! exd5 9.cxd5 0-0 10.0-0 The d5-pawn gives a space advantage for White. Black's pieces are slightly paralyzed, and sooner or later he should undermine it with ...c6, but this will be met by dxc6 and f4, when the g2-bishop becomes really powerful. 10...♘d7



11.♙g5! looks like a strong move, forcing a weakness on the kingside. 11...h6 Otherwise, the pin is unpleasant. 12.♙d2 White is slightly better. A possible plan is h4-h5, which looks especially dangerous with the h6-weakness. If Black reacts with ...h5 on h4, then the effect of f4-f5 is increased. (The computer recommends the non-human try 12.♙xe7 ♙xe7 13.♞e1 ♙d8 14.♞c1 and also claims an advantage by pressing the queenside pawns with ♘b5 or ♙b3.)

7.♙g2 c6



Black wants to lock the center with ...d5 and ...e6, which would kill the g2-bishop, so the next move is practically forced.

8.d5!

You could say that now White has killed his own light-squared bishop, but it might get into the game via h3!

8...cxd5 9.cxd5 0-0 10.0-0 ♖a6

Developing with 10...♘bd7 is not better. 11.♙e3 ♘b6 12.♙d4± with similar plans as in the game.

11.♙e3

Basically the ideal setup for White is ♙d4, ♖d2, f4, ♙h3 and doubling the rooks on the e-file. Black should try to do something on the queenside, but White is well-prepared to react properly against any such action.

11...♘d7 12.♖e1 ♖e8 13.f4

White takes control of the e5-square and prepares to undertake measures against his opponent's king with h4-h5 and f5. 13.♙h3 was another logical move, but Jakovenko decided to wait for this until Black plays ...♖c8.

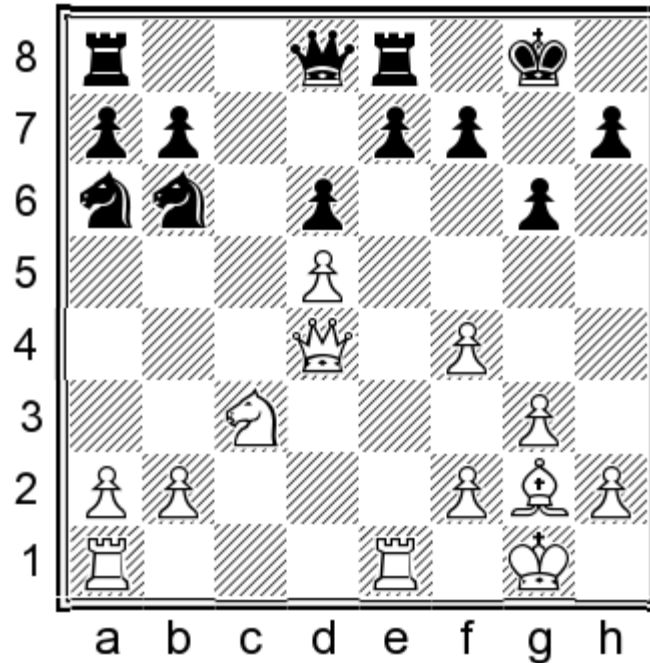
13...♘b6

On 13...♖c8 14.♖c1 ♖a5 White can choose between two plans. The positional one with 15.♙d4 (or the tactical 15.♙h3!? f5 16.g4! also looks quite good. After gxf5 gxf5, ♖h5 or ♖h1-♖g1 are very dangerous threats.) 15...♙xd4 16.♖xd4 By exchanging the dark-squared bishop, White successfully got rid of the strongest Black piece, and now an attack against the king becomes even more effective. 16...♖b6 White should keep the queens on the board 17.♖d2! and f5 or h4-h5 are coming.

14.♙d4!

Here again, removing the strong bishop leaves the black king vulnerable.

14...♙xd4 15.♚xd4



15...♞c8

Black urgently needs to create some counterplay on the queenside, but he has the typical problem that he can occupy one weak square only with one piece. We will soon understand what I mean.

16.♞e2

Before starting concrete actions, White doubles his rooks on the e-file. 16.♙f1!? to prevent ...♞c4 or ...♘c4 was also strong. 16.♙h3!? also made sense. 16...♞c4 17.♚d2 and this is the point. Now the c4-square should be occupied by the knight, but the rook disturbs this plan.

16...♚d7

Black prevents ♙h3. The absence of the light-squared bishops is sensible now.

17.♞ae1 ♘c5

Black would like to exchange a pair of knights on a4, which would definitely improve his position. White should, naturally, avoid it, and he has a lot of good options for doing so. Now again on 17...♞c4 he plays the simple 18.♚d2 and the rook is poorly placed on c4.

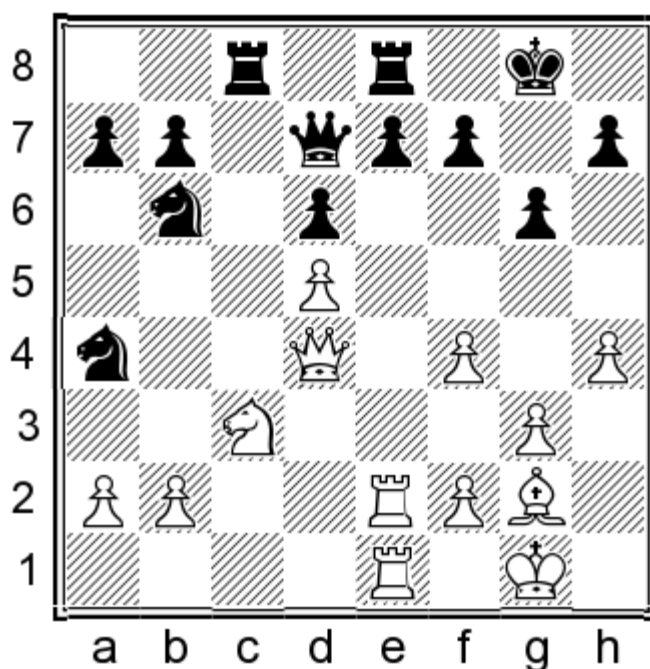
18.h4

Jakovenko decided not to waste any more time and starts the attack. Of course, he had to foresee how to meet the ...♘a4 move. 18.b3 was also fine, depriving Black of his main idea. Its only drawback is that the stability of the c3-knight is gone, but Black needs time to attack it and, even if he succeeds, White can consolidate with ♞e3.

18...♘ca4

On 18...h5 the best is 19.♙h2! with the idea of ♙h3! 18...♘ba4 is met by 19.♘d1! leaving the Black knight useless on

a4, while the White one is going to e3, where it supports the f5-plan and is also ready to jump ahead to g4-h6.



19. ♖e4!

White needs the knight. In addition, Black's pieces are disturbing each other. Now for example, without the knight on a4, Black could try something with ... ♔a4.

19... ♖c5

19... ♖c4? loses to 20. ♖f6++-

20. ♖g5

With his last two moves White has sent the c3 knight to g5, from where it supports the attack and ♕h3. But it was very difficult to suggest something better for Black in response.

20... ♖c7

On 20... ♔a4 then 21. b4! keeping the queens, and e7 is under attack.

21. b4 ♖ca4

In rapid chess, sometimes you need to save some time by playing the most obvious move, this is likely the reason why Jakovenko missed an easy winning combination.

22. h5

22. ♕h3! would have won on the spot. 22... f5 (22... ♔b5 23. ♖xf7! 23. ♖e6 has the same value. 23... ♖xf7 24. ♕e6+ ♖f8 25. ♔h8#) 23. ♖e6 and ♔g7.

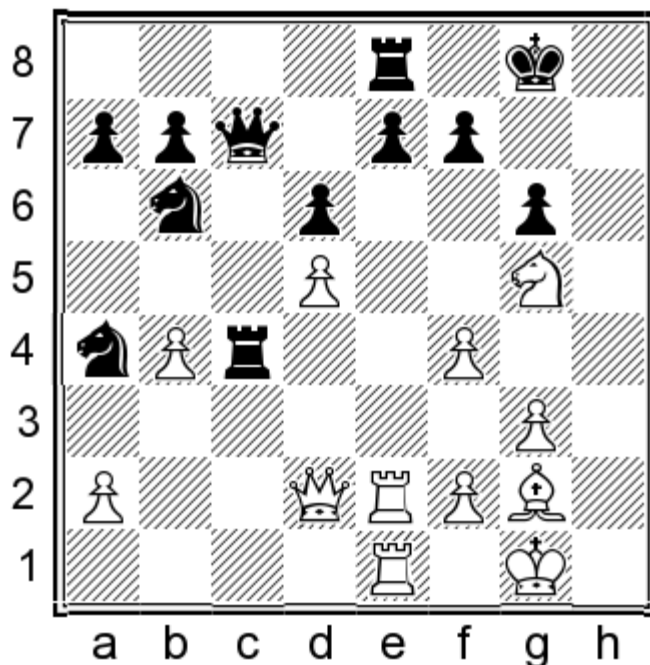
22... ♖c4 23. ♔d2

Sticking to the long diagonal with 23. ♔a1 was also strong.

23...♔c7

23...♘c3 24.♖e3 is also hopeless. The knight has to retreat and ♕h3 is coming.

24.hxg6 hxg6



It's time to finish the game.

25.f5

The end is near. With such a weak king, Black can't resist for long. 25.♖e6!? was a bit more elegant. 25...fxe6 (25...♖c3 26. ♘xf7 ♔xf7 27.f5+- and the queen joins the attack.) 26.♗d3+-

25...gxf5 26.♘e6!

Not the only way to win, but the easiest one.

26...fxe6 27.♗g5+ ♔f8

27...♔h7 28.♖xe6+- with mate to follow.

28.♗h6+ ♔f7

28...♔g8 doesn't change anything. 29.♗g6+ ♔f8 30.dxe6+-

29.dxe6+

Black resigned in view of ♗g6 next. An instructive game on how to handle the structure that arises from this opening.

1-0

GAME 10

M. Carlsen (2848)

L. Bruzon Batista (2706)

Cuadrangular UNAM 2012

Mexico City MEX (1.1)

24.11.2012, [B40]

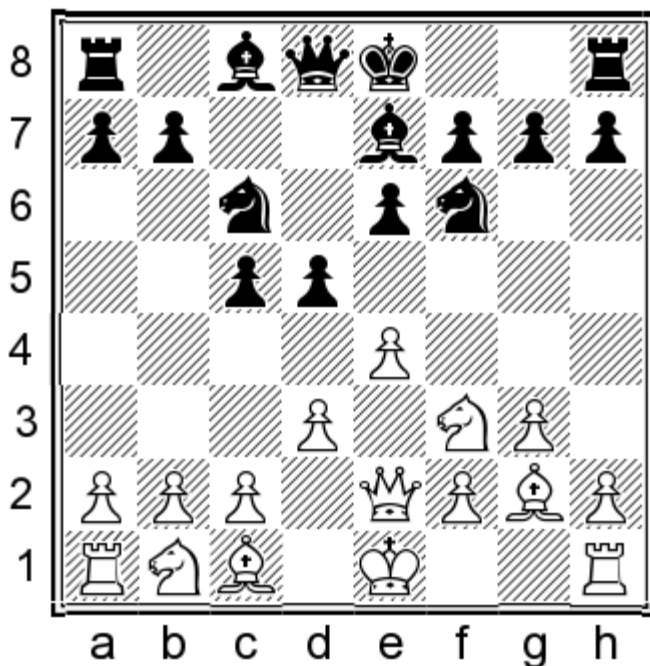
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

A really spectacular rapid game follows from Magnus Carlsen. The game is full of extremely interesting and unusual ideas. However, a closer look shows us that there were many mistakes as well.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d3

Recently, Carlsen has shown that just wants to obtain a playable position out of the opening and avoid the long main-lines. A few weeks ago, reproduced as Game 8 in this book, we analyzed how he beat Anand in the 2...d6 3.♙b5+ sideline of the Sicilian.

3...♘c6 4.g3 d5 5.♚e2 ♘f6 6.♙g2 ♙e7



7.0-0

A closed system without too much theory, where all the pieces are on the board. Carlsen trusts that this will allow him to outplay his opponent in the middle-game.

7...b5

Bruzon is familiar with the main ideas of White's setup and plays a prophylactic move. The most common move is 7...0-0 which is met by 8.e5 ♘d7 9.c4 and ♘c3 next, with a few hundred games in the database. An interesting alternative is 7...b6!? and on 8.e5 ♘d7 9.c4 d4 with the idea of leaving an extra option open for Black: to castle queenside after ...♙b7 and ...♚c7.

8.exd5

This is basically a novelty, and a very interesting and concrete one.

8...exd5

White gets an advantage after 8...♞xd5 9.c4! and the bishop on g2 becomes powerful. 9...bxc4 10.dxc4 ♞f6 11.♞d1 (White can't win material with 11.♞e5 because of 11...♞d4 but, instead, calm development of the pieces guarantees him a clear edge.) 11...♞b6 ♞c7 always walks into ♟f4. 12.♞c3 ♟b7 13.b3 0-0 14.♞a4 ♞a5 15.♟d2 ♞c7 16.♟f4 and the c5-pawn becomes a long-term weakness after the exchange of the dark squared bishops on d6.

9.d4!

A direct attempt to create a drawback in the 7...b5 pawn advance idea. 9.c4 also looked quite logical, in order to open the diagonal of the g2-bishop, but Black has 9...♟g4 which seems to solve all his problems. It's not easy to escape from the pin and the ...♞d4 threat.

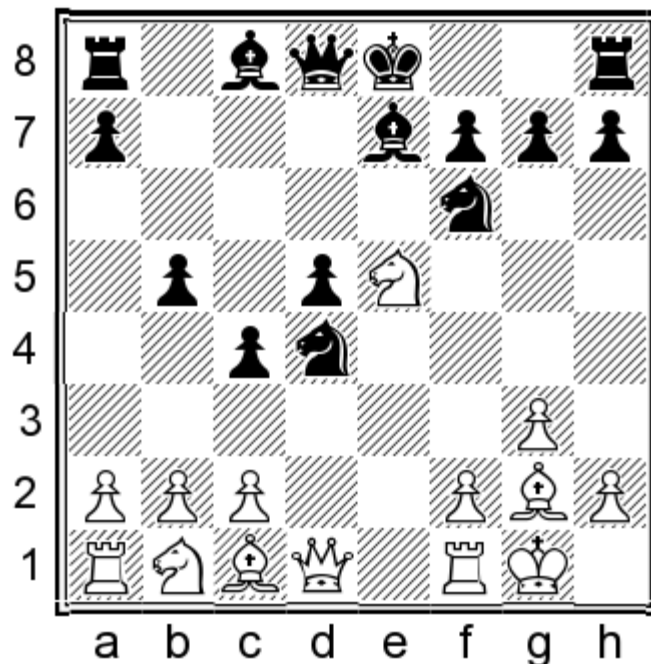
9...c4 10.♞e5!

This is the whole point behind Carlsen's concept! He tries to make use of the fact that Black hasn't castled yet. Now the game becomes very sharp.

10...♞xd4

Black was forced to head for the complications. On 10...♟b7 11.♞xc6 ♟xc6 12.♞e1 and Black faces huge problems to castle.

11.♞d1

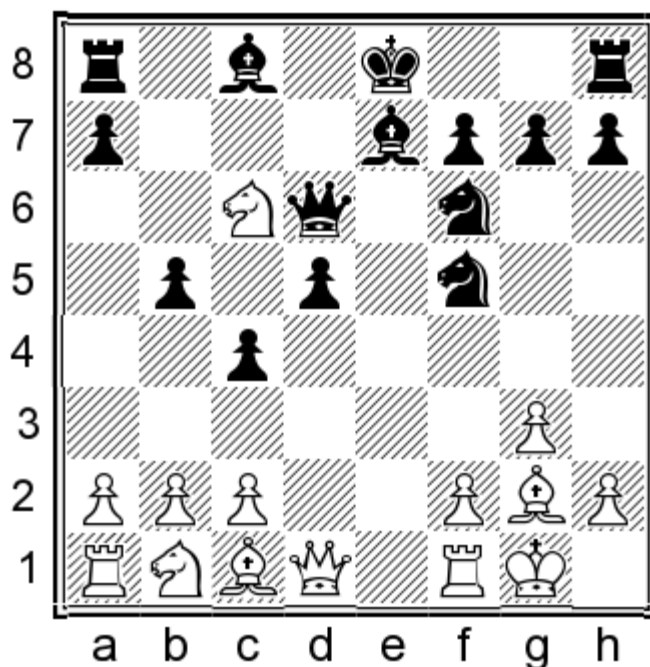


The first critical position from Black's point of view. He has many possibilities, and at first sight it's not clear what the problem is with any of them. Bruzon had to decide quickly, as the time control was only 15 minutes per player.

11...♞b6

Bruzon wanted to control the c6-square, but this walks into other ideas... 11...♞e6 is not enough for equality. 12.♞c6 ♞d7 13.♞xe7 ♞xe7 14.♞c3 White wins back the pawn and obtains a better position, e.g. 14...♞b7 15.♞xb5±;

11...♞c5 probably would have been the best reaction. 12.♞e3 (12.♞c3 ♞b7 13.♞e3 transposes to 12.♞e3.) 12...♞e6 13.♞xc5 ♞xc5 14.♞c3 ♞b7 15.♞xb5 0-0 After this more-or-less forced line, White seems to have a tiny advantage because of the hole on the d4 square, but Black also has a dynamic position, for instance with ...♞e8 and ...♞b6. 11...♞f5 with the idea of taking back the e7-bishop with the knight in order to preserve the extra pawn. This is met with 12.♞c6 ♞d6



13.♞c3!! This pretty combination gives an edge to White in all lines. 13...♞xc6 (13...♞e6 14.♞xe7 ♞xe7 15.♞g5) 14.♞xd5! Black has nothing better than 14...♞b7 15.♞xf6+ ♞xf6 16.♞xb7 with a better position because of the pair of bishops.

12.♞e3 ♞c5 13.♞c3!

A good decision! White had two more tempting possibilities, but they were less strong. 13.a4 looked really dangerous, with the main idea of a5, winning a piece. 13...♞e6!! Actually, this is the only move, but of course, it's enough to have one good move in each position. :) (13...bxa4 loses to 14.♞c3!+- and ♞a4 next. Black can't avoid losing a piece.) 14.♞xd5 ♞xd5 15.♞xd5 White seems to win, but... 15...♞xe3!! 15...♞b7 didn't work because of ♞d7... (15...♞b8 would have also lost after 16.♞xc5 ♞xc5 17.♞xc5 ♞xc5 18.axb5+-) 16.♞xa8 0-0 White is an exchange up, but the absence of the g2-bishop makes his king so weak that he can only dream about an advantage. 17.♞c6 ♞d4! Black needs the queens on the board to compensate for the material deficit. 18.♞f3 (18.fxe3 ♞xe3+ 19.♞h1 ♞xe5 and only Black can be better. If the bishop occupies the long diagonal, the game is immediately over.) 18...♞xf2+! 19.♞xf2 ♞xb2 Black is fine! 13.b4 also suggested itself, but Black has 13...cxb3 14.axb3 ♞f5! 15.♞xc5 ♞xc5 and Black seems to hold.

13...♞e6

13...♞b7 in order to avoid the tricks on the g2-a8 diagonal. This was a decent alternative, and White has to play energetically to get an edge. 14.a4! with the idea of a5! (14.b4 cxb3 15.axb3 ♞e6 Black slips away.) 14...♞e6 15.a5! (15.♞xd5 leads nowhere 15...♞xd5 16.♞xd5 ♞xe3 17.♞xb7 ♞xb7 18.fxe3 0-0 and Black holds.) 15...♞a6 The only move to avoid a6. (15...♞c7? 16.a6 and Black's position collapses.) 16.♞xc5 ♞xc5 17.♞e1 0-0 18.♞xd5 ♞xd5

19.♔xd5 with a small but stable advantage for White due to his active pieces in the center.

14.a4

14.♘xc4!? was also very strong. 14...bxc4 15.♘a4 ♔c6 16.♘xc5 ♘f5 (16...♔xc5 17.♔xd4± Black can't play against such a "beast" on d4.) 17.♔d4 ♘xd4 18.♖xd4 with an obvious advantage. Black has no compensation for the structural weaknesses and the bad bishop on e6.

14...b4!

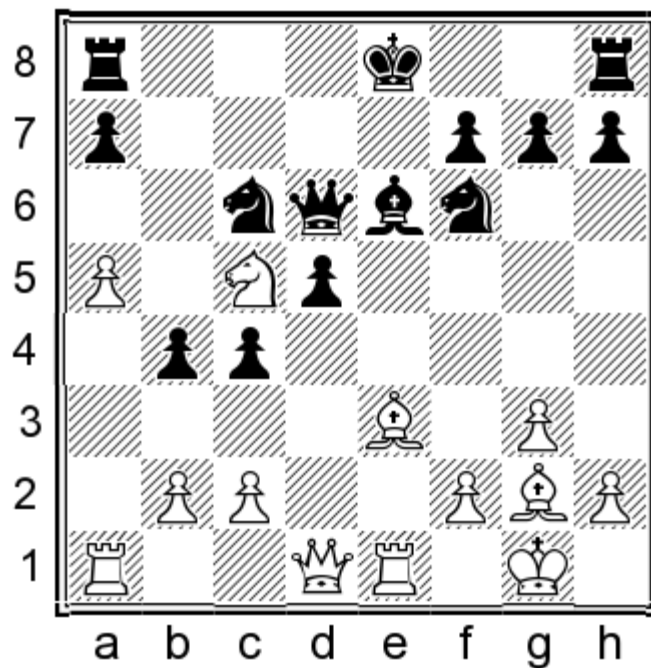
The only move.

15.a5! ♖c7 16.♘a4

16.♔xd4 bxc3 17.bxc3 is also slightly better for White, but Carlsen prefers to keep the position dynamic!

16...♔d6

Black will really miss the dark-squared bishops after 16...♖xe5 17.♘xc5 ♘c6 White gets more than enough compensation with powerful play. 18.♞e1! ♖d6



Black seems to consolidate, but 19.b3!! Black can't allow the opening of the position with bxc4 19...cxb3 (19...c3 is met with 20.♘a6! trying to go for ♔c5! 20...♘e7 21.♖e2± protecting the knight and refreshing the ♔c5 threat, plus the additional ♖b5 check.) 20.♘xb3! and Black must forget about castling because of the ♔c5 move.

17.♘xc4!

White restores the material balance and gets a clear advantage with his active pieces. Up to here Carlsen has showed some brilliant chess.

17...♖xc4 18.♔xd4 ♔e7 19.b3

19.♞e1 0-0 20.c3 was the computer's suggestion, in order to bring the a4-knight back into the game, but I prefer

Carlsen's move.

19...♞c7 20.c4

Here I believe 20.♘b2 would have been stronger, transferring the knight to d3. Carlsen continues playing dynamic chess, but he made a huge mistake in his calculation...

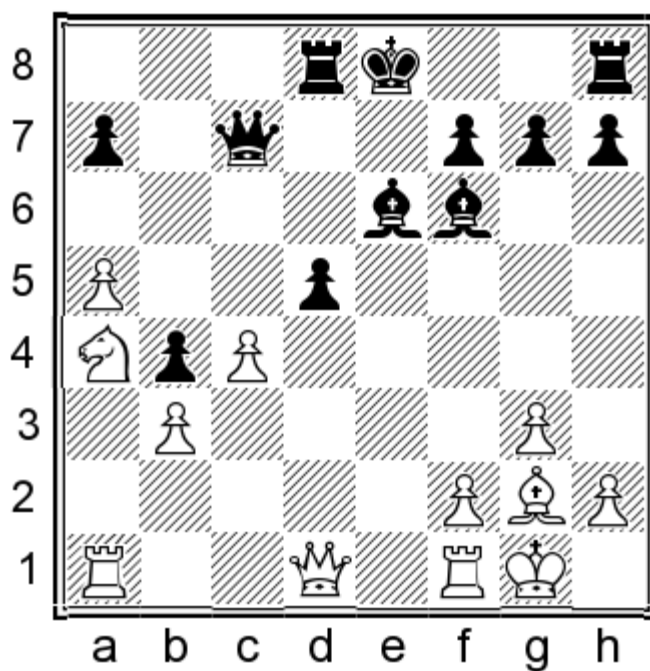
20...♞d8

20...bxc3 21.♘xc3 0-0 22.♞e1 isn't a dream for Black either.

21.♙xf6?

White had foreseen the position after the 26th move, but they both missed an intermediate move. 21.c5! 0-0 22.♘b2 driving the knight to d3 again. This guarantees a clear advantage.

21...♙xf6?



21...dxc4! 22.♙d4 ♙f6 and Black is suddenly winning! Such kind of mutual blunders are possible in rapid chess, even at the highest level.

22.cxd5!

This position was in Carlsen's mind when he started the actions with b3-c4.

22...0-0

Black can't accept the exchange with 22...♙xa1 23.♞xa1 because either the e6-bishop or the g7-pawn will fall. Either of these would spell the end of the game. 23...♙xd5 24.♞xg7+—

23.♞c1 ♞xa5

The position is materially balanced, but the powerful d-pawn gives White the upper hand. White immediately squeezes

down on his opponent.

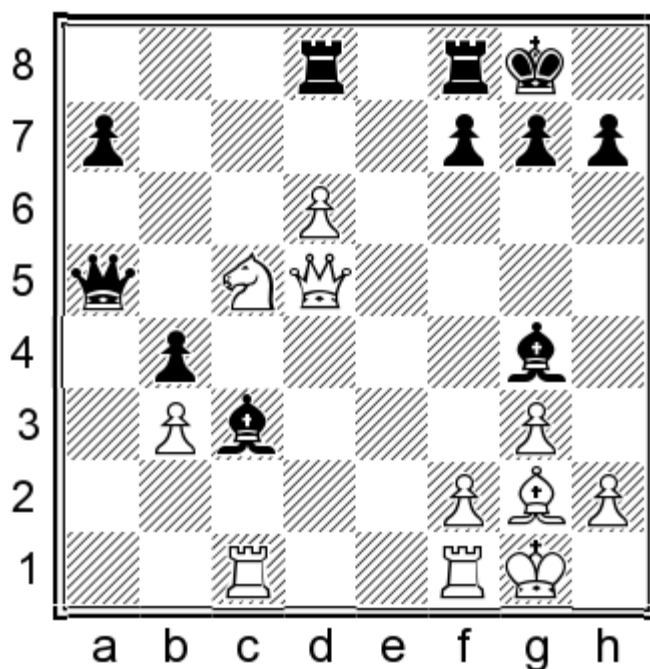
24. ♖c5! ♙c8 25. d6!

Black can't wait for ♜d5 and ♞fd1, since he remains without a single move. Bruzon finds the only chance to create counterplay!

25... ♙c3! 26. ♜d5!

The knight on c5 had to be fortified.

26... ♙g4!



27. h3!!

Excellent intuition! We'll speak about this idea a few moves later. 27. ♞c2 was also possible, but Black would keep his disturbing bishops. 27... ♜b6 28. d7 ♜b5∞

27... ♙e2 28. d7! ♙xf1 29. ♞xf1

Here we are! White doesn't even have a pawn for the exchange, but he is dominating with the d7-pawn. Black's rooks can't be activated because of this factor. The bishop on c3 is well-placed to control the e1-square, but White can go around with ♞d1–d3–e3 and might also transfer his bishop to c4. Black has no active plan, he can only sit and wait to see what happens. It's very important that White should not get tempted to equalize the material with ♖b7, since the knight possesses a much greater value than the paralyzed rooks.

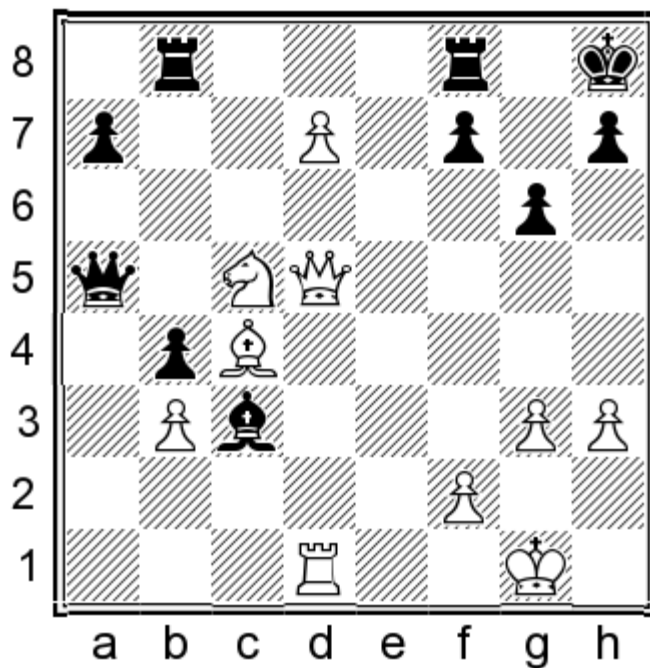
29... g6 30. ♞d1 ♞b8

Black tries to jump out with ... ♞b5, but this just helps White to play the plan that he wanted.

31. ♙f1!

The bishop will be more active on c4, as the new main target is the Black king.

31...♖h8 32.♙c4



♜d3–f3 is coming next. Black still can't do anything more than wait.

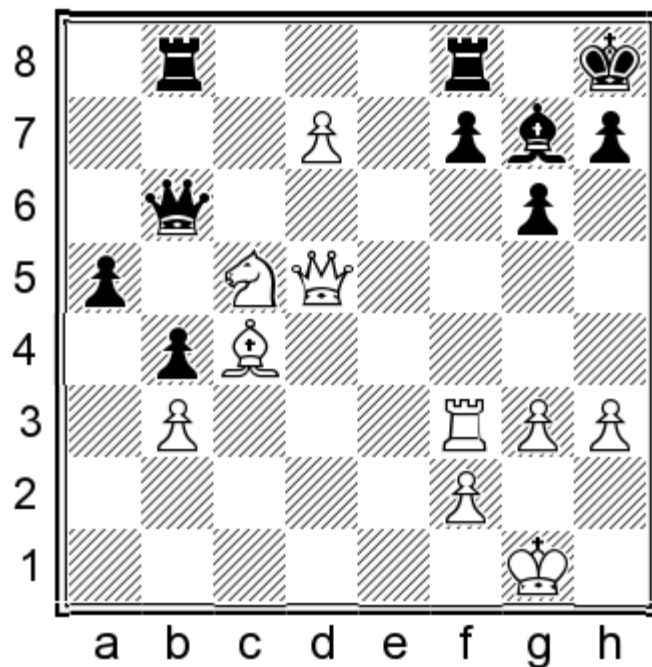
32...♙f6 33.♞e1!

♙e7 had to be prevented, and the rook can continue his journey to the 3rd rank from here as well.

33...♜b6 34.♞e3 a5

Black tries to do something, but ...a4 is never a threat, as White simply takes it...

35.♞f3 ♙g7



Black has temporarily parried the concrete threats, so it's time to increase the pressure.

36.h4!

Forcing a huge weakening with the h5 threat.

36...h5 37.♞e4

A very logical plan to transfer the knight to g5, but it was played slightly prematurely. White could have improved his position with 37.♞g2! and Black is in zugzwang anyway. 37...♙a1 What else?! (37...♞bd8 allows the knight to regroup on d6 38.♞b7 ♞b8 39.♞d6+-) 38.♞g5! with the double threat of ♞h6 and ♞f7. 38...♙g7 39.♞xf7 ♞xf7 40.♞xf7+-

37...♞d4!

Probably this move was missed or underestimated by Carlsen. Black manages, at least, to get rid of the queens.

38.♞g5! ♞xd5 39.♙xd5 ♙c3?

However, this blunder finishes the game... 39...f5 was the only move. 40.♞e6± White holds his advantage and will probably win with good technique, but with the opposite-colored bishops, Black will always retain chances of survival.

40.♞xf7

1-0

GAME 11

M. Adams (2710)

J. Polgar (2705)

4th London Chess Classic

London ENG (3.4)

03.12.2012, [B40]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

1.e4

A great positional victory was achieved by Michael Adams in front of his home crowd, and against Judit Polgar — the strongest female player in the history of chess, who was a very stable guest in the world's Top 10 before she became a mother.

1...c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.g3

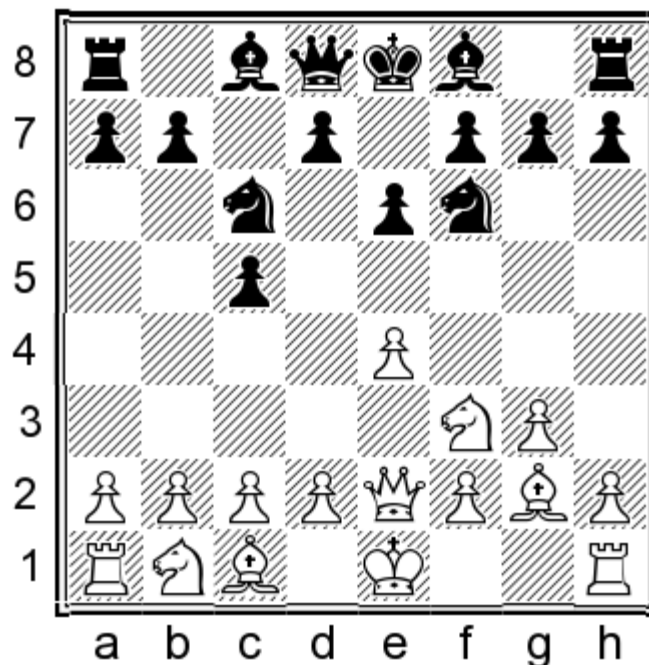
This move takes the opening into the “sidelines” category. As he does regularly in his latest games, and as we have just seen with Carlsen, Mickey Adams tries to just play chess without getting into theoretical battles.

3...♘c6 4.♙g2 ♘f6

4...d5 5.exd5 exd5 6.d4 would lead to the main position of the 3.g3 line.

5.♔e2!?

This is probably White's main idea. In case of 5.d3 d5, we would go back to the best-known positions, but now White has a better move against Black's ...d5.



5...d5 6.exd5

This is the point of 5.♔e2. White forces Black to take with the knight on d5, and so the bishop on c8 is still closed in.

6...♘xd5 7.0-0 ♕e7

Both White and Black have very solid positions, but in just 7 moves from now White will be much better...

8.♞d1!?

A nice move! Clearly White's idea is to play d4 here. After a modest move like 8.d3, Black is doing perfectly fine.

8...0-0

Black allows White to play d4. 8...♕f6 stopping White from playing d4 leads to a slightly worse position. 9.♘c3 (9.d3 0-0 10.♘bd2 ♘d4 11.♘xd4 cxd4 and Black is doing perfectly fine.) 9...0-0 10.♘e4 ♕e7 If White could take on f6, the bishop pair would give a small advantage. 11.d4 cxd4 12.♘xd4 ♘xd4 13.♞xd4 and White is doing a bit better.;

8...♞b6!?! This very strange move might not be as stupid as it looks; Black prevents White from carrying out his main threat — d4. 9.♘a3 0-0 10.♘c4 ♞c7 It seems like has Black lost a tempo, but on the other hand White's knight on c4 is not a "hero" either... I think the position should be close to equal here.

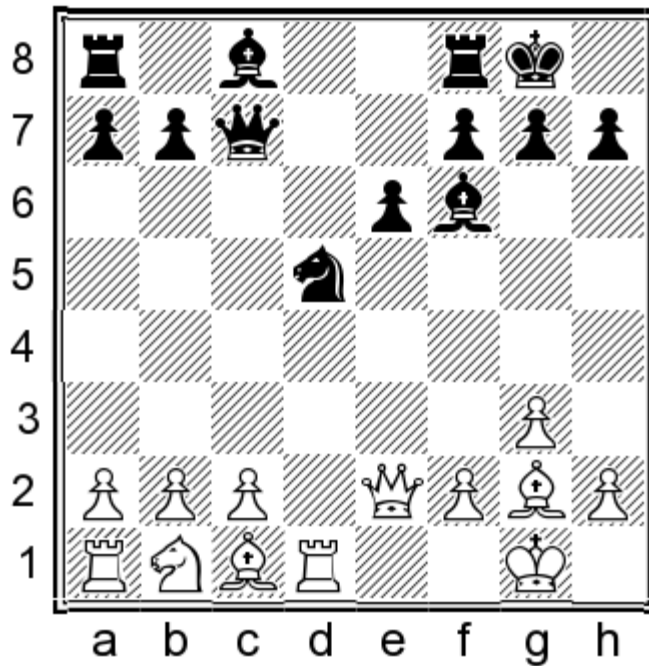
9.d4

White wants to play c4–d5 next.

9...cxd4 10.♘xd4 ♘xd4 11.♞xd4 ♕f6 12.♞d1

Until now all Black's moves looked logical, but the position is already at the limit of being 'much worse'. Adams will show us in a great way why this is so!

12...♞c7



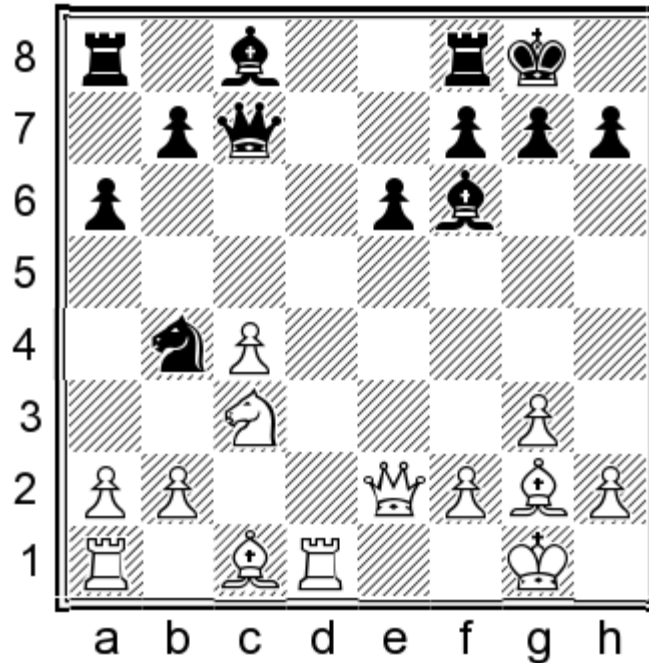
13.c4!

Very strong positional move. The bishop on g2 becomes a very strong piece.

13...♖b4

It isn't better to play 13...♖b6 as after 14.♗a3 Black's knight on b6 has no prospects. 14...♕d7 15.♕f4! A very important move in many lines. White asks Black if he'll play ...e5, after which the bishop on f6 will be bad and the d5-square will be weakened. 15...e5 16.♖e3 ♖c6 17.c5 with a clear advantage for White.

14.♗c3 a6



15.♕f4!

A very strong move by Adams. White invites the move ...e6-e5, after which Black's position is very hard to hold.

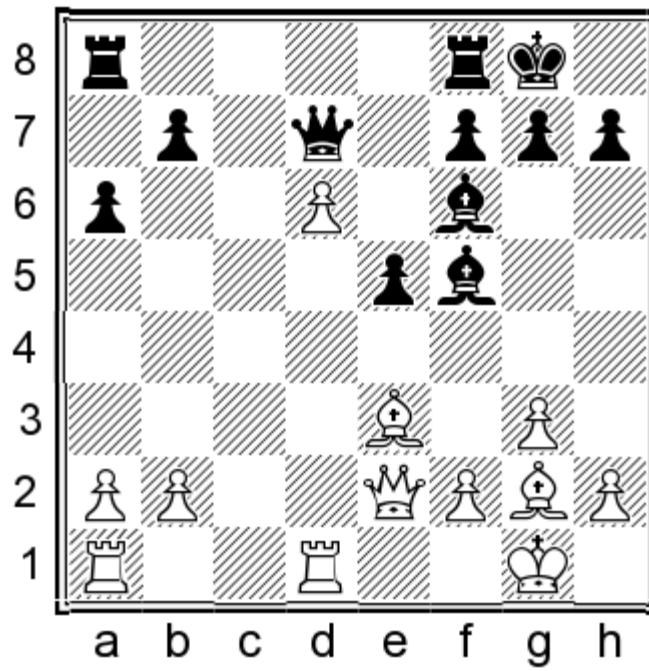
15...e5 16.♖e3 ♖e6

Not a great move to make, but what else to do? White wanted to play a3 followed by ♗d5.

17.♗d5

Simple and good.

17...♗xd5 18.cxd5 ♕f5 19.d6 ♖d7



It seems as though Black has blocked the d-pawn and wants to exchange rooks on the c-file, but White has an ace up his sleeve!

20. ♖b6!

Adams shows one more time why, for more than 15 years, he was in the world's Top 10. A very atypical and killing maneuver — ♖b6-♖c7. Black's pawn on b7 will become very weak and Black won't be able to exchange any of the rooks. Even though the position doesn't look that bad, it is actually very bad!

20... ♜ac8?!

I don't see any point in including ...♜ac8-♖c7 for Black, so if he wanted to play ...♖g4 he should have done it immediately.

21. ♖c7 ♖g4 22. ♖f3 h5 23. ♜ac1

Black's pieces are completely paralyzed...

23... ♜fe8 24. ♖xg4 hxg4 25. ♕e4

What domination! Black's b7-pawn is falling!

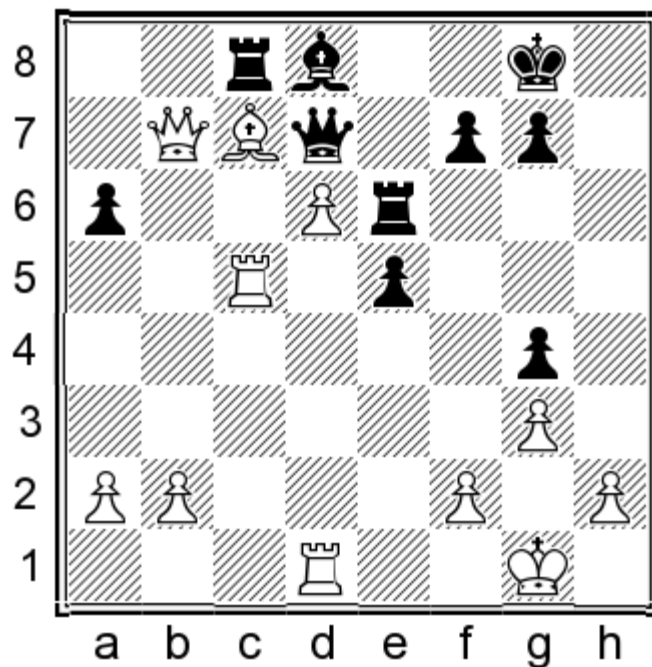
25... ♖g5

An attempt to save the b7-pawn would lead nowhere. 25...b5 26. ♕c6! and White is winning.

26. ♜c5 ♖d8 27. ♕xb7

White is a clear pawn up and Black still doesn't even have a small idea of how to continue.

27... ♜e6



28.♖dd5!

And once again Mickey chooses the safest and strongest continuation. Basically, the position is winning for White.

28...♖f6 29.♘xa6

Why not to take a pawn when you can?!

29...♗f5 30.♗e2 ♖b1+ 31.♖d1 ♗xa2 32.♖xe5

White is two pawns up and the d6-pawn will become a queen. Now was a good time for Polgar to resign the game, but she continued with

32...♙xc7 33.♖e8+ ♖xe8 34.♗xe8+ ♙h7 35.dxc7 ♗a7 36.♗e4+

A really great positional victory by White with a lot of typical ideas, and a great “special one” with ♙b6-♙c7!

1–0

GAME 12

M. Carlsen (2861)

L. Van Wely (2679)

Wijk aan Zee

14.01.2013, [E75]

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

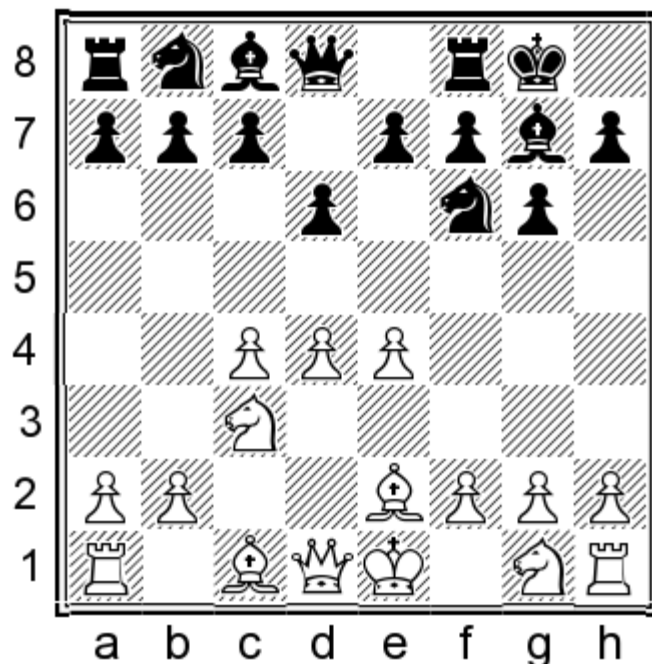
A nice positional lesson from the World Nr.1.

1.c4 g6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♙g7

Van Wely used to be a Gruenfeld player, but in this tournament. he employed the King’s Indian. It’s interesting that

Carlsen himself also chose this opening against Aronian in the previous round with the Black pieces.

4.e4 d6 5.♘e2 0-0



6.♘g5

This is the main alternative to the main line with 6.♘f3. Black has various different setups, and van Wely went for the most common line.

6...c5 7.d5 e6

It's better to include 7...h6 followed by the moves played in the game. The game demonstrates the difference excellently. The bishop on g5 is very annoying from Black's point of view.

8.♞d2!

Black must forget about ...h6 after this move, and the pin is very annoying.

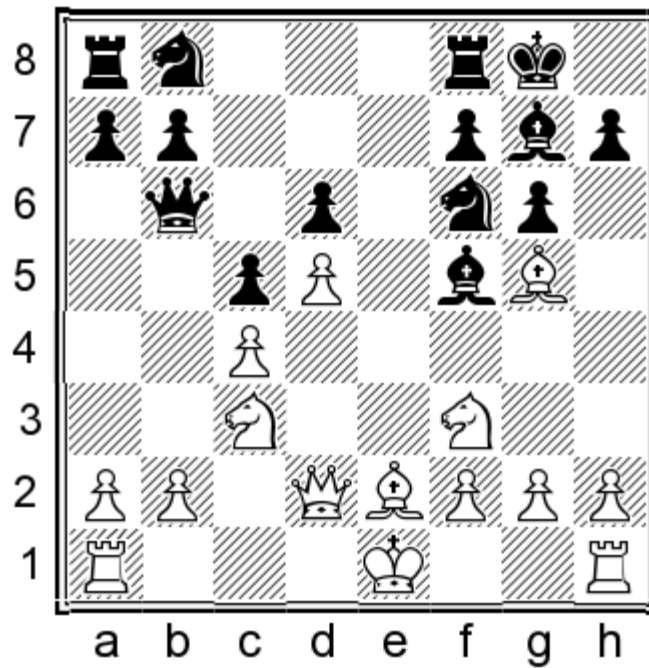
8...exd5 9.exd5!

After this typical recapture, White has a better position due to the space advantage the d5-pawn gives. Black has some difficulties finishing his development. The main idea, which could ease his position, would be the exchange of the f6-knight with ...♘e4, but now the g5-bishop makes it more difficult to execute this plan.

9...♞b6

This concrete attempt to play ...♘f5 and ...♘e4 was played by Mikhail Tal back in 1956. Carlsen, however, knew exactly how to react against it. 9...♞e8 10.♘f3 ♘g4 11.0-0 ♘bd7 12.h3 ♘xf3 13.♘xf3 has occurred in hundreds of games. Black has succeeded in developing his pieces, but it cost him the bishop pair, and now he must suffer with a space disadvantage.

10.♘f3 ♘f5



11. ♖h4!

After this great move Black can't achieve his plans in comfort as the bishop gets into some trouble. 11... ♗d7 would be too passive, leaving Black with long-term suffering. After a careless move like 11.0-0 Black solves his problems with 11... ♗e4! 12. ♖xe4 ♗xe4=

11... ♗e4 12. ♖xe4 ♗xe4 13.f3!

This is the point! Black can temporarily win a pawn on b2, but he must give up his light-squared bishop and destroy his pawn structure.

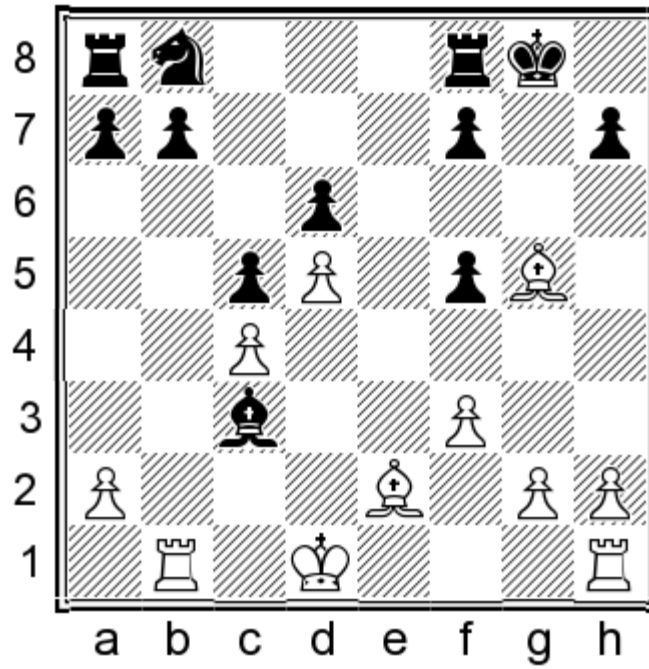
13... ♖xb2 14. ♖c1!

This is an important detail, as otherwise, the bishop could be saved via c2-a4.

14... ♗f5

This is a kind of positional resignation. Black should have tried to find counterplay in one of the following lines: 14...h6 is probably the critical test of the variation, although Boleslavsky already showed in 1970 that White gets an advantage after 15. ♗xh6 ♖xd2+ 16. ♗xd2 ♗f6! 17.g3 ♗xh4 18.gxh4 ♗f5 19. ♗f4 ♖d8 20. ♖g1 with a better endgame for White. We can be sure that Carlsen was familiar with all these lines and played almost without thinking so far, while van Wely had already spent almost an hour. A huge difference between in respective preparations, which is slightly surprising because van Wely usually knows his lines in very deep detail. 14... ♖xd2+ 15. ♖xd2 ♗xd5 has been played in several games, but Black clearly doesn't have enough compensation for the sacrificed piece. 16.cxd5

15. ♗xf5 gxf5 16. ♖xb2 ♗xb2 17. ♖b1 ♗c3+ 18. ♖d1±



Black is a pawn up at the moment, but b7 is hanging. ♖e7 threatens to win the d6 pawn and ♗d3 is always in the air to collect the f5-pawn.

18...♞e8

18...b6 was a more stubborn defense, after which White should play 19.♗d3 (Of course, it would be more important to take on d6 if possible, rather than snatch a doubled f-pawn, but there is a concrete idea that White should avoid. 19.♗e7 ♞e8 20.♗xd6 ♜c6! This is the point. Suddenly, the knight becomes very active on d4, while 21.dxc6 is met with ♞ad8.) 19...♞e8 20.♗xf5 with a clear advantage, although Black can resist for long.

19.♞xb7 ♜a6 20.a3!

Carlsen deprives Black of any kind of counterplay by preventing ...♜b4.

20...♞ab8 21.♞xb8 ♜xb8

21...♞xb8 was probably a slightly more stubborn defense, but the position remains bad here as well. 22.♞c2 ♗e5 (22...♞b2+ can't be played. 23.♞xc3 ♞xe2 24.♗f4!+- and d6 falls. The knight on a6 is dead and the d-pawn will advance soon.) 23.♗c1 Controlling the invasion square, followed by playing on the kingside. 23...♞g7 24.♗d3 f4 (24...♞f6 25.g4 fxg4 26.fxg4) 25.g3! fxg3 26.hxg3± is a favorable exchange for White. He's intending to push f4 and g4. The a6-knight is terribly placed. This is the reason why Black chose to take back with the knight on b8.

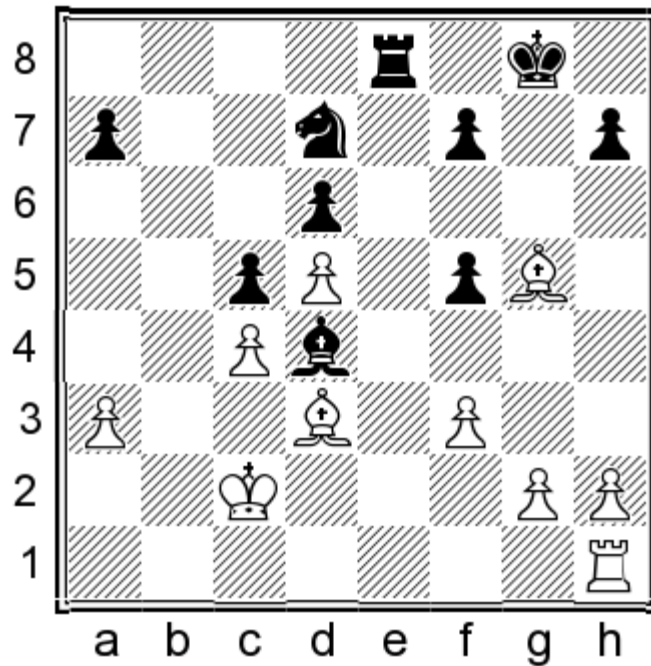
22.♗d3 ♜d7

Black is looking for counterplay against the c4-pawn, but Carlsen doesn't give him any chances...

23.♞c2!

23.♗xf5 would have been premature, because of 23...♜e5 24.♞c2 ♗d4 when 25.♗d3 is the only move to protect c4, but Black has 25...♞b8! 26.♗c1 ♜xd3 27.♞xd3 ♞b3+ and ...♞c3 next, with equality.

23...♗d4



23...♙f6 was probably the only move, but still after 24.♙xf6 ♜xf6 25.♖b1± and invading on the b-file, Black has huge problems.

24.♖b1!

Another accurate move! White lures the knight to b6 with the threat of ♖b7, which deprives Black from his main counterplay with ...♞e5.

24...♞b6

24...♞e5 is simply met by 25.♖b7 ♞xd3 26.♔xd3± All these endgames are horrible for Black.

25.♙f4! ♙e5 26.♖e1

26.♙xe5!? ♖xe5 27.a4! was the tactical way to win the game. 27...♞xa4 28.♖a1 ♞b6 29.♖xa7 The f5- and d6-pawns will automatically fall and Black will collapse soon. 29...♔g7 30.♖a6 ♞c8 31.f4+—

26...♔g7 27.♙g3! ♖e7

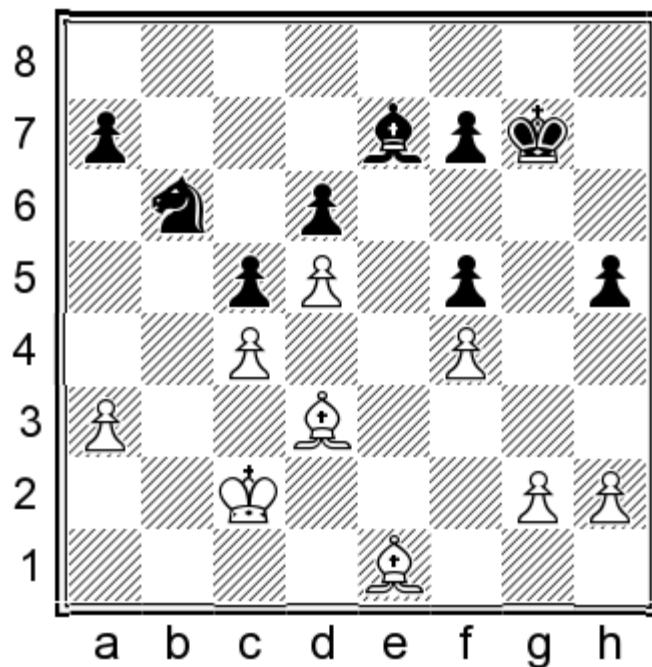
This was the only way not to lose material because of the pin, but this leads to a won endgame by force. 27...f4 is met with 28.♙xf4!

28.f4! ♙f6 29.♖xe7 ♙xe7 30.♙e1!

White wants to play ♔b3, protecting c4 and then taking on f5.

30...h5

Black wants to protect f5 with ...♔g6 and he prevents g4. ...♔f6 was not possible because of ♙h4.



31.g3!

Black can't avoid losing the pawn. ...♗f6 will meet ♕c3, and on ...♖g6, White simply plays h3-g4. Black can't do anything against it.

31...♕f6 32.♖b3 ♖g6 33.h3!

A painful final position! Van Wely decided not to suffer anymore and resigned the game as g4 wins the pawn in the next move. If he had enough time to play ...♕d4 and ...♗f6, he could have hoped for salvation, as White doesn't have ♕c3 check.

1-0

GAME 13

P. Leko (2735)

F. Caruana (2781)

75th Tata Steel GpA Wijk aan Zee NED (5.1)

17.01.2013, [C84]

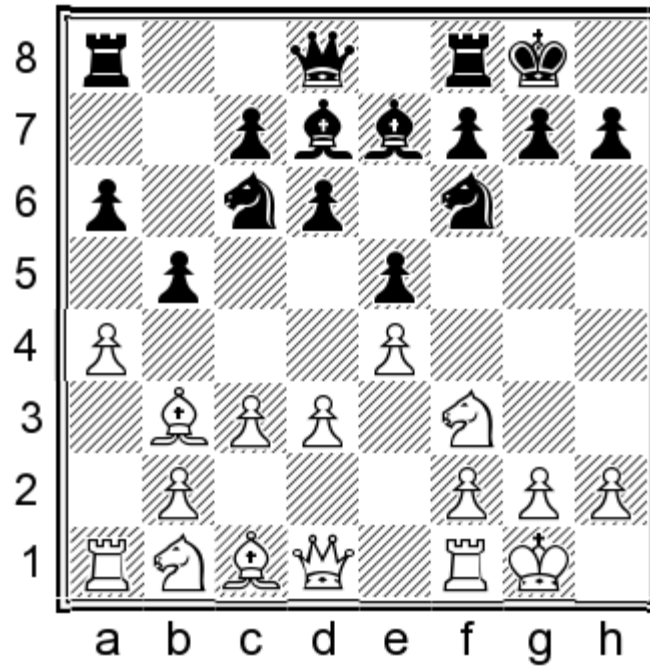
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

We are now faced with a nice strategic victory by Leko. He had a positional idea in mind, which he succeeded in carrying out in the game.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.d3

Another game in the Ruy Lopez with 6.d3. The huge main line, 6.♖e1, is almost forgotten.

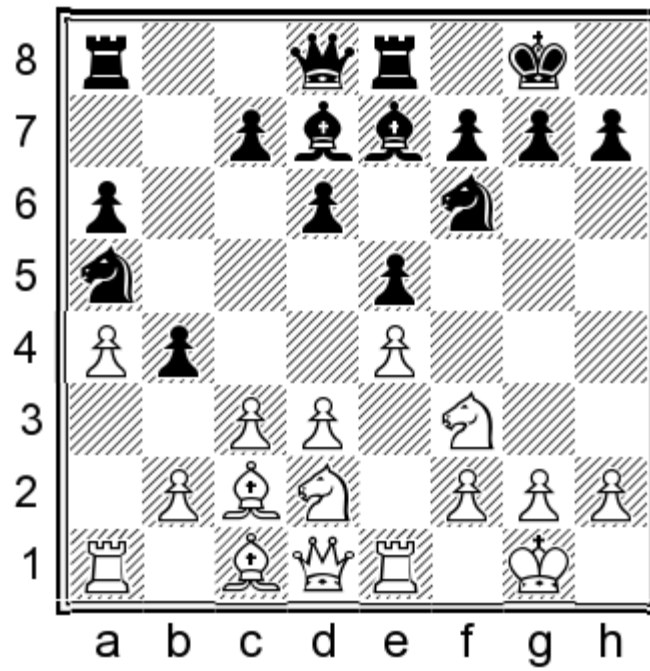
6...b5 7.♙b3 d6 8.a4 ♗d7 9.c3 0-0



10.♙c2

Theory is just about to diverge here, as Black has many different setups. Caruana follows the latest fashion, which was played by Aronian against Karjakin a month ago. 10.♘bd2 is the main, but here Black can fight for the center with 10...♘a5 winning a tempo 11.♙c2 and 11...c5!

10...b4 11.♞e1 ♞e8 12.♘bd2 ♘a5



12...♞b8 was played by Aronian in the afore-mentioned game. Probably Leko had prepared the novelty 13.h3 ♙f8 14.d4 and it looks like White has an initiative.

13.d4!

A logical reaction, After the black knight has left control of the central squares, White doesn't need to worry about motifs like ...exd4 cxd4 ...♙g4. Of course, by playing 6.d3, White doesn't forget about playing d4, he just wants to do it in a better version after developing his pieces. 13.cxb4 is a mistake because of 13...♞c6 when Black wins back the pawn and White loses control over the center.

13...♞f8 14.h3

Both h3 and ...h6 are very useful in general in this kind of position. On the other hand, it was not absolutely necessary. White could have played ♙d3 immediately.

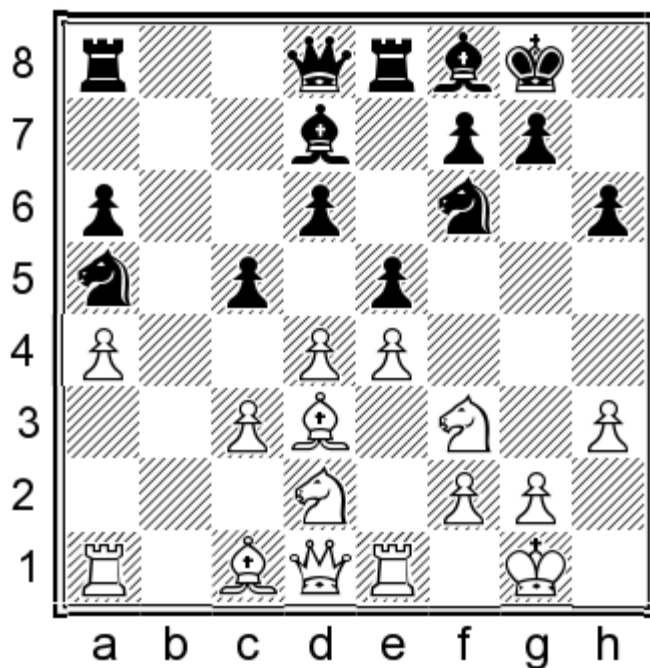
14...h6 15.♙d3!

By pushing ...b4, Black weakened his a6 pawn and the c4-square. ♙d3 tries to make use of this.

15...bxc3

15...c5 immediately would have been an inaccuracy. White plays 16.cxb4! and Black has to take away from the center. 16...cxb4 White can look for an advantage in two different ways: 17.d5 A closed game with a space advantage or 17.b3 with ♙b2 next is also good.

16.bxc3 c5



17.d5!

A strong move! White has the space advantage now. The game demonstrates well the difficulties of Black's mobility problems. The next task for White is to create an outpost on c4 for the knight. To do this, he needs to trade one off, and then transfer the other one from f3.

17...♞c7 18.♞c4! ♞xc4 19.♙xc4 ♞eb8 20.♞d2!

Everything goes according to his strategy.

20...♙e8

Black tries to bring his knight to b6, in order to kick out its colleague from c4.

21.♙d3 ♘d7

21...a5 to prevent the next move is a mistake. White gets the b5 square with 22.♞e2! and ♙b5 next.

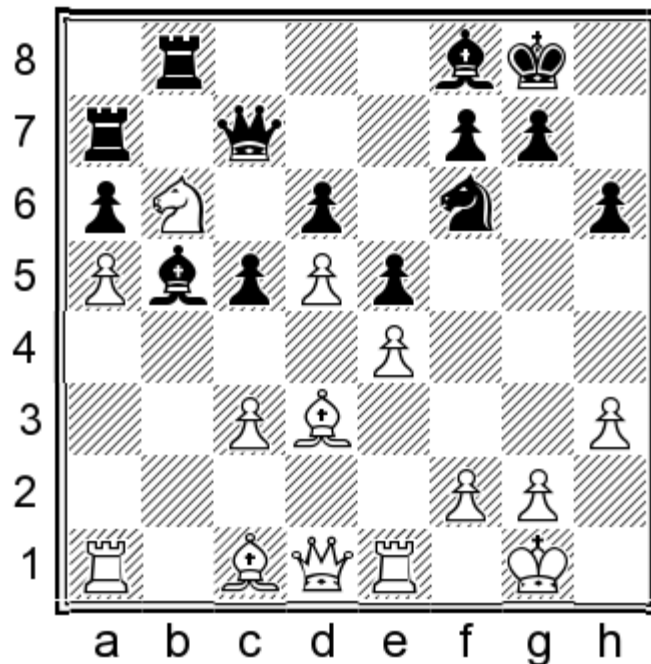
22.a5!

White needs to keep his knight, so it can go to c4. However, this is an achievement for Black as well: he gains the b5 square for the bishop. Lacking space, Black has to move his pieces weirdly, so that they can get to their ideal places.

22...♘f6 23.♘c4 ♙b5 24.♘b6!

It's still important to keep the knight on the board.

24...♞a7



25.♞e2

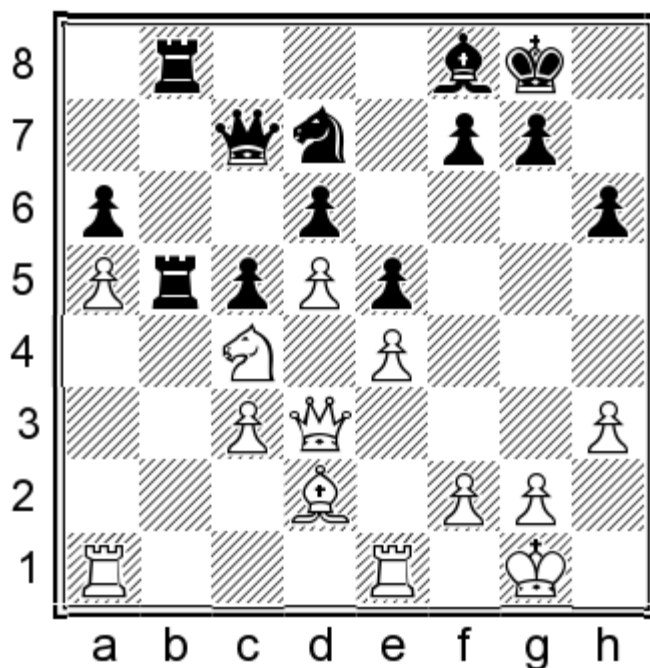
25.♙c2!? was also very interesting, following the principle that you shouldn't exchange pieces when you have a space advantage. 25...♙e8 (Black can't play 25...♘d7 as it drops a piece after 26.c4! ♘xb6 27.axb6!) 26.♞e3! transferring the rook to g3. 26...♘d7 27.♘c4! and of course, White once more keeps his knight. Black has to waste a move again, in order to play ...♙b5, while White can always improve his position.

25...♙xd3 26.♞xd3 ♘d7 27.♘c4!

Finally White has reached his goal. Black can't touch the c4-knight, which is very annoying for him.

27...♞ab7 28.♙d2 ♞b5

This shows very nicely that the only open file is occupied by the Black rooks, but he can't do anything with it. The c4-knight neutralizes all the ideas. The next step for White is to open a new front for the battle.



29. Rf1!

The plan is f4!

29... Qe7 30. f4! Qf6

Black must try to hold the e5 square. 30... exf4? is not an option, as the d6-pawn becomes too weak. 31. Qxf4 Qg3 is a threat.

31. g3

White prepares to improve his position as Black doesn't have a useful plan anyway.

31... R8b7 32. Qg2 Qf8 33. Rf2!

Doubling the rooks.

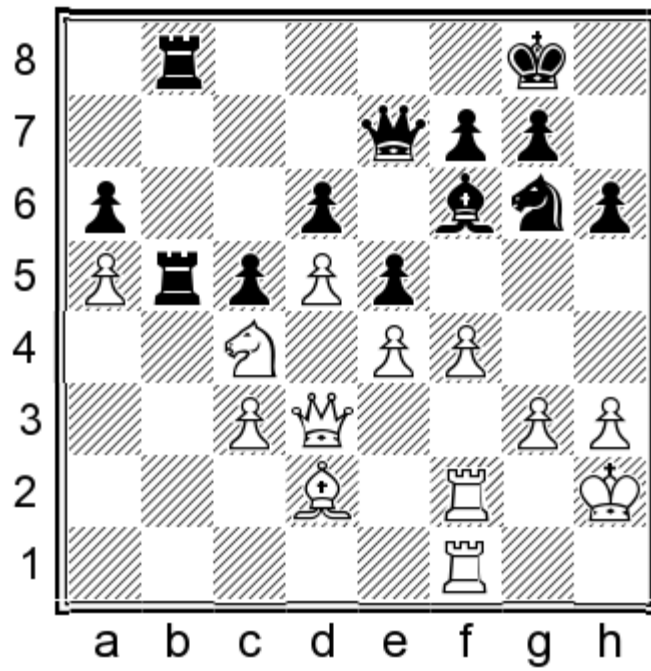
33... Qg6 34. Rxf1

White holds the tension! 34. f5 would be premature, e.g. 34... Qf8 and Black builds up a kind of fortress.

34... Qe7

34... exf4 is still a mistake 35. Qxf4! Qxf4+ 36. gxf4± and White is going to break through with e5!

35. Qh2 Rb8



It's time to devise a new plan for White. How to improve his position?! It must definitely be connected with a kingside attack. 35...exf4 is met this time with 36.gxf4! The previous ♖h2 move was prophylaxis for this position. White avoided different kind of threats, such as the moves ...♘h4 and ...♙h4. (36. ♙xf4 is a mistake, because Black can consolidate the e5 square with 36... ♙e5)

36. ♖g2!

The idea will become clear soon.

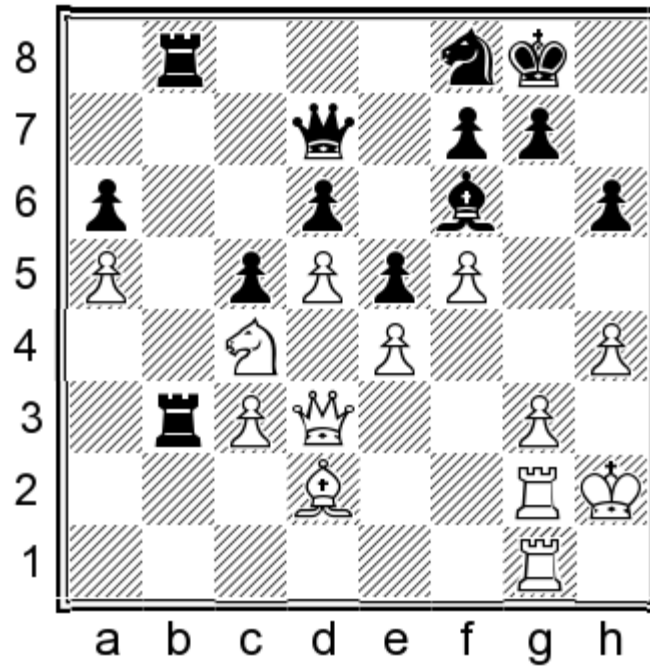
36... ♙c7 37. ♖fg1! ♖b3 38.f5!

With his previous rook moves, White has prepared to close the position, followed by an attack with g4-g5.

38... ♘f8 39.h4!

This is the right move-order for the attack. On 39.g4 Black wanted to react with 39... ♙g5 locking the position.

39... ♙d7?



39...♘h7 was necessary, although White is better here as well after 40.♘b6! Suddenly the Black pieces are focused on the kingside, and White might think about plans on the queenside. a6 is weak and the b3-rook could be trapped.

40.g4!!

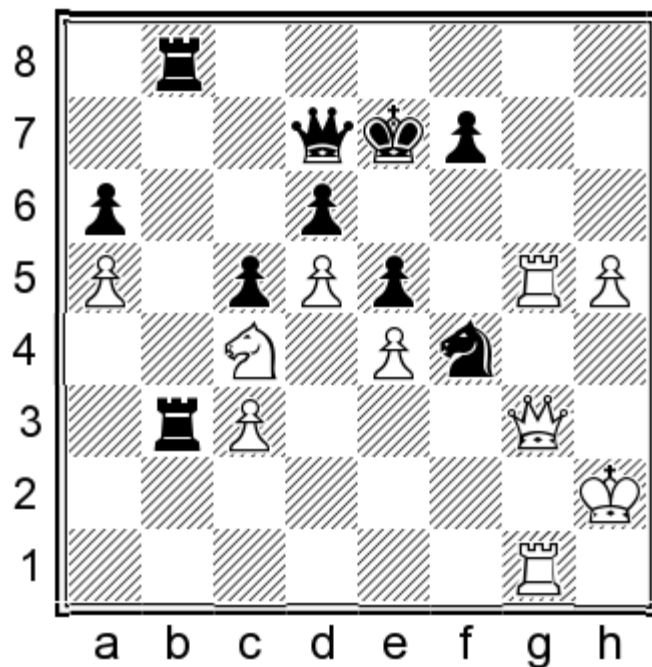
After this nice pawn sacrifice, the game is over. Black can't stop the attack.

40...g5

40...♙xh4 is refuted by 41.g5! hxg5 42.♙xg5 ♙xg5 43.♖xg5 f6 (43...g6 loses to 44.♙h3!+- and ♖h5 next!) 44.♖h5 Black gets mated after ♙h3.

41.fxg6 fxg6

41...♘xg6 also leads to a hopeless position: 42.g5! hxg5 43.♙xg5 ♙xg5 44.♖xg5 ♔f8 45.h5 ♘f4 46.♙g3 ♔e7



The most precise and elegant way to conclude the game is 47.♖xe5+! dxe5 48.♔g5+ f6 (48...♖e8 49.♔xe5+ ♖f8 50.♔xf4+- is over. The knight on c4 dominates both of the rooks still.) 49.d6+ ♖d8 50.♔xf6+ ♖c8 51.♖g8+ ♖b7 52.♖g7+-

42.g5

The g-file is opening on the king.

42...hxg5 43.♕xg5 ♕g7

43...♕xg5 44.♖xg5+- followed by h5 is also lost for Black.

44.h5 ♖8b4 45.hxg6

Black resigned. A really high level performance by Leko.

1-0

GAME 14

V. Kramnik (2810)

P. Svidler (2747)

FIDE Candidates London

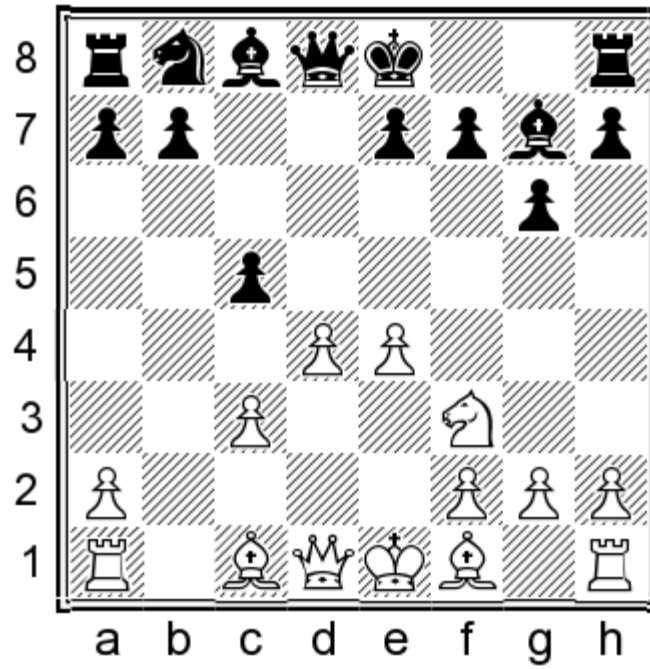
ENG (8)

24.03.2013, [D85]

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

Kramnik showed some nice preparation against the Gruenfeld. He got a small, but distinctly unpleasant, edge which he proceeded to convert with fine technique.

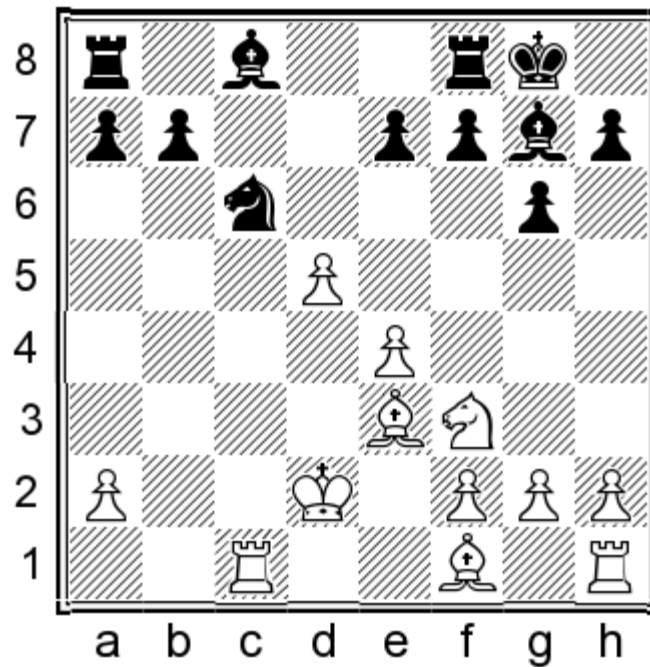
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♗g7 7.♘f3 c5



8...Qe3

Kramnik employed this system many times in the beginning of the 2000's. He even used this weapon against Kasparov in their World Championship match back in 2001.

8...Qa5 9.Qd2 Nc6 10.Rc1 cxd4 11.cxd4 Qxd2+ 12.Qxd2 0-0 13.d5



13...Rd8

This endgame was considered to be completely fine for Black, but here Kramnik introduces a logical novelty — which is also the recommendation of the newest version of Houdini!

14.♔c2

It is very logical to keep the rooks connected. 14.♔e1 was played in all the highlevel games prior to this one.

14...♞e5

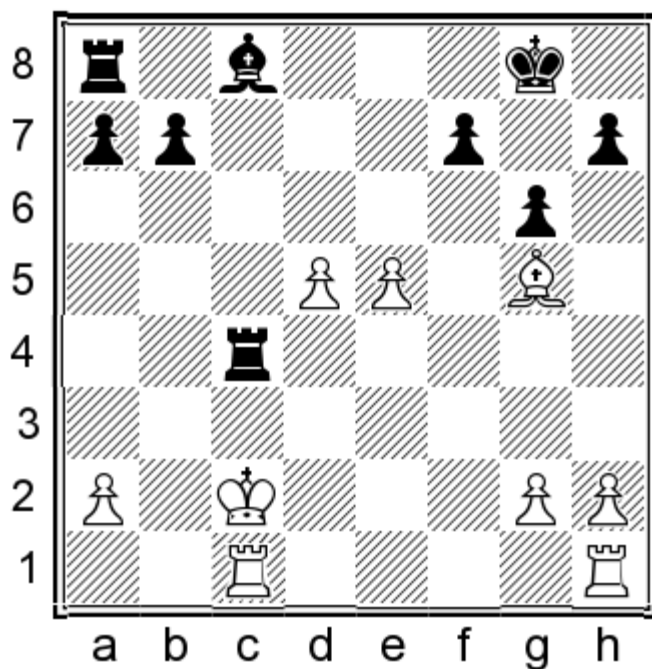
Svidler prefers to avoid Kramnik's preparation and instead decides to go for a slightly inferior endgame, which he hopes he can hold. The tactical test of the line must be 14...♞a5 This is the right move after 14.♔e1 as well. Black intends to undermine the central pawns with ...e6 or ...f5. Kramnik's preparation probably starts with 15.♙g5 and lasts for hundreds of pages... Who knows what his final evaluation is?

15.♞xe5 ♙xe5 16.♙c4

White fights against Black's active attempts to undermine his strong center. If he succeeds in consolidating, he will obtain a better position thanks to his superior pawn structure. The game is a good demonstration of the possible plans — and dangers — in this position.

16...♙d7

The typical 16...f5 does not work because of 17.f4! when e5 is coming next. The strong center guarantees a nice edge for White. 16...e6 is the other typical method, but it is met by 17.♙g5 (17.♞hd1 is also possible. 17...exd5 18.♙xd5 The bishop stands very well on d5 and Black has difficulties with the development of his c8-bishop. The b7- and a7-pawns are weak. White should refrain from playing 17.dxe6 ♙xe6 18.♙xe6 fxe6 White cannot make use of Black's slightly damaged pawn structure in the endgame.) 17...♞d6 (17...♞e8 loses an exchange after 18.♙b5 ♞f8 19.♙e7±) 18.f4! with the idea of e5 with tempo, followed by d6. Black must try to play tactically with 18...exd5 but it does not solve all the problems. 19.fxe5 ♞c6 20.exd5 ♞xc4+



21.♔b3 White has a clear advantage. The d-pawn is very dangerous, White will occupy the most important c-file and the bishop on f6 is going to be extremely annoying from Black's point of view.

17.f4 ♙d6

This is typical in this opening. After the exchange of queens, the Gruenfeld bishop leaves the a1–h8 diagonal. The main reason is to cover the c7 invasion square. However 17...♗g7 might have been stronger, as it supports the undermining of the center. 18.♖b1 (18.♖b3 is now met with 18...b5! 19.♗e2 e6! and on 20.d6 e5! is very strong, with the threat of ...♗e6. White is not in time to consolidate.) 18...b5 19.♗e2 e5! Black needs to fight against the center. These are all well-known moves in the Gruenfeld. 20.♞c7 f5! It seems like Black's counterplay is arriving on time.

18.♗b3 f6

18...b5 was probably better, to avoid the following squeezing on the queenside. 19.♗d3 and only now 19...f6 to prevent e5.

19.a4!

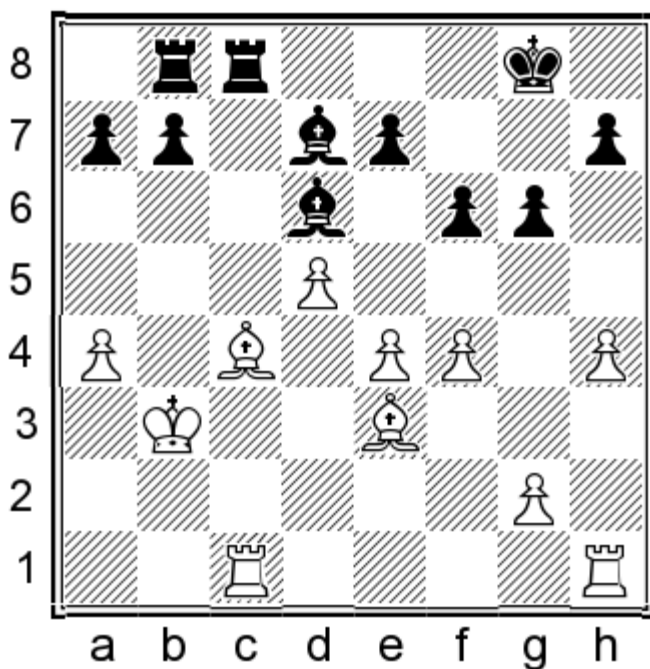
Black has difficulties with the queenside pawns. He should try to create a passer somehow, but the a4-pawn with the two bishops make it impossible. After making the necessary prophylactic moves, White can focus on making progress on the kingside and in the center.

19...♞dc8 20.h4!

With the idea of playing h5; if Black plays it himself, he would weaken his own g6-pawn...

20...♞ab8!?

Svidler aims for counterplay with ...b5, but Kramnik smoothly prevents it.



On 20...h5 Kramnik was probably intending to play 21.♞hf1 overprotecting the f4-pawn with the idea of playing ♗d4 followed by e5!

21.♗b5!

A great positional move to prevent ...b5. Black is forced to trade the bishops, but it leaves the queenside even weaker. 21.♗xa7 is a mistake. 21...♞a8 Black wins the a4-pawn and achieves his aim by creating a passer on the queenside.

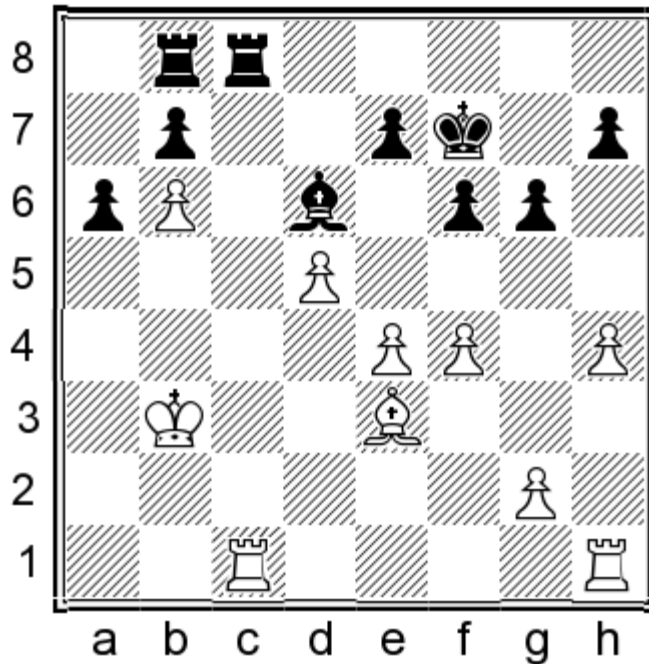
21...♙xb5 22.axb5 a6

22...b6 gives up the c6-square. 23.♖c6! and the a7-pawn is a serious weakness. ♖a1 is coming next.

23.b6!

Of course, White will need this pawn in the future! Later on, it might support the invasion on c7. He basically has an extra pawn now, as Black has zero chances to create something useful on the queenside. The only question that remains is whether White will be able to breakthrough in the center or on the kingside, or if Black will succeed in building a fortress.

23...♚f7



24.h5

24.g4 was also possible, gaining more space.

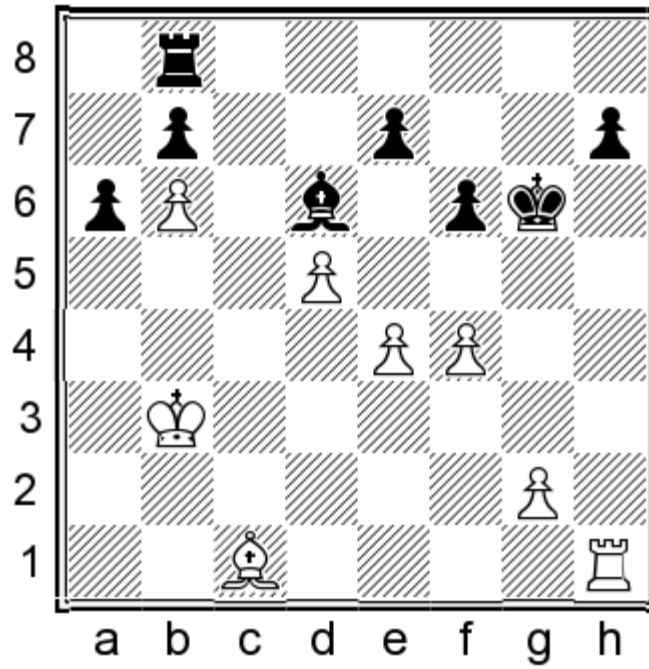
24...♖xc1

24...gxh5 25.♖xc8 ♖xc8 26.♖xh5 is similar to the game. Black has no invading square on the c-file for the rook, so he is doomed to defend passively.

25.hxg6+ ♔xg6

Svidler creates an extra pawn island for himself (on h7) in order to keep the g-file open for some kind of counterplay with the rook. 25...hxg6 26.♙xc1 is also quite bad for Black. He even has difficulties in neutralizing the h-file, because 26...♔g7 runs into the tactical 27.e5! fxe5 28.♙b2! when White has increased his advantage.

26.♙xc1



26...Bg8

Probably the best chance for Black was to play 26...h5!! to avoid the game continuation, and to look for counterplay with ...Bg8. White should not win the pawn with 27.f5+ because after 27...Kf7 28.Bxh5 Bg8! Black gets strong counterplay.

27.g4!

Fine technique by Kramnik! Black cannot open the g-file for the rook, because the only move — ...Kf7 — leaves the h7-pawn hanging with check. The next move is preparation for this, but it has its own drawback...

27...h6

Black intends to play ...Kf7, but he puts his pawn on a dark square, where it becomes much more vulnerable to the White bishop.

28.Bh5!

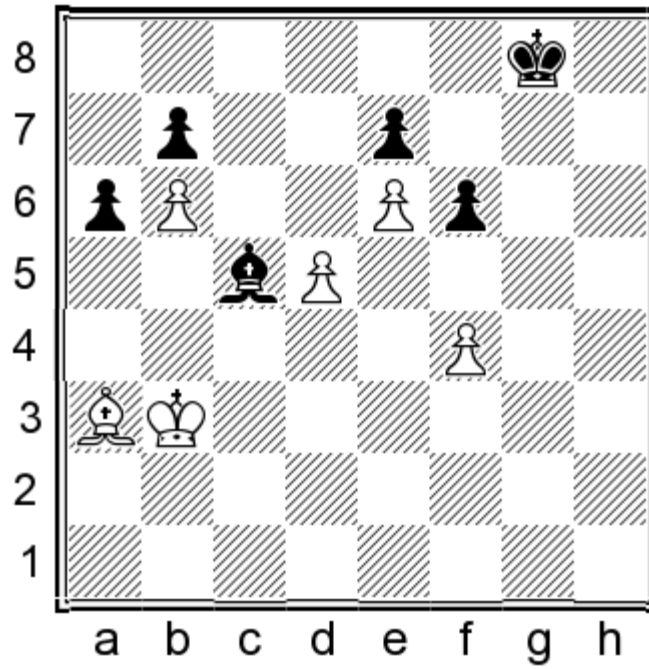
White intends to increase his advantage with e5. Black cannot do anything against this.

28...Kf7 29.e5! Bc5

29...fxe5 does not change much. 30.fxe5 Bc5 31.e6+ Ke8 32.Bxh6 Bxb6 33.g5 is also very good for White. A possible plan is g6, followed by Bb2 and g7. Black stands too passively.

30.e6+ Ke8 31.Bh4!

Very precise calculation from Kramnik! The arising pawn endgame after 31.Bxh6 Bxg4 32.Bh8+ Bg8 33.Bxg8+ Kxg8 34.Ba3 also looks very promising for White, but actually Black holds with



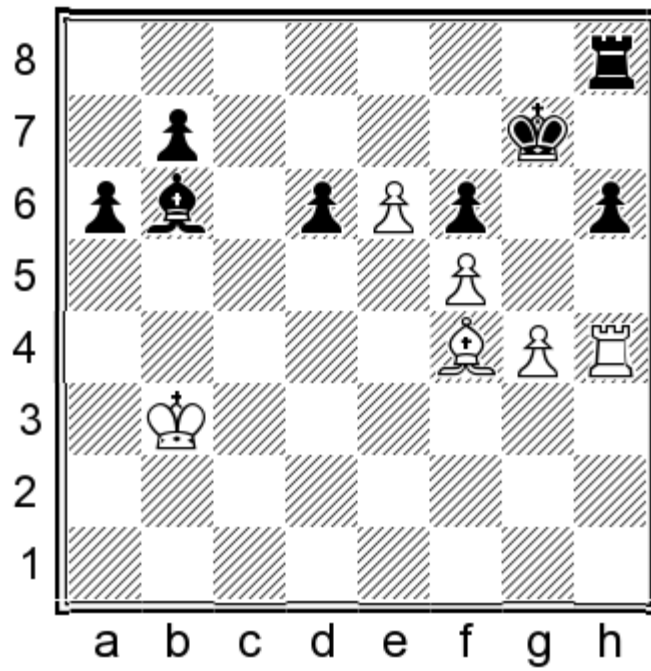
34...♙d6!! (34...♙xa3 35. ♔xa3 ♕f8 36.f5! White wins after the following forced line 36...♕e8 37. ♔b4 ♕d8 38. ♔c4 ♕e8 39. ♔c5 ♕d8 40.d6 ♕e8 41.dxe7 ♕xe7 42. ♔d5 ♕e8 43. ♔d6 ♕d8 44.e7+ ♕e8 45. ♔e6 a5 46. ♔xf6 a4 47. ♔e6 a3 48.f6+-) 35.♙xd6 exd6 Black puts his king on e7 and the draw is inevitable. White cannot go too far with his king, since he must stay within the square of the a-pawn. Finally, a position where Black can make use of his queenside pawns!

31...♕g7

31...h5! would have offered the only practical chance; searching for counterplay at the cost of a pawn. 32.gxh5 (32.g5 is an alternative, but Black gets his chances here as well. 32...fxg5 33.fxg5 ♕g7 34. ♖xh5 ♕g6 35. ♖h6+ ♕f5 and Black goes for the d5-pawn with his king.) 32...♖g1 followed by blocking the h-pawn with the king. White has good winning chances, but at least Black obtained some activity, which always offers a chance to hold. 31...♙xb6 allows 32.♙a3! White's pawns are too strong. The biggest threat is to play ♖xh6, when f6 is hanging because of the pin. It is hard to deal with this.

32.f5! ♖d8

The passive 32...♖h8 leads to a defeat as well. 33.♙f4! is very strong, preparing to break through with d6. 33...♙xb6 34.d6 exd6



White can win in a spectacular way. 35.♙xh6+! ♔g8 Otherwise, the e-pawn promotes. 36.g5! The final breakthrough. 36...fxg5 37.f6! gxh4 38.f7+ ♔h7 39.e7 and White wins!

33.♙xh6+ ♔g8 34.♔c4 ♙xb6

The material is still equal, but White's pawns are superior. The end is near. White only needs to find the best way to create passed pawns, but of course, this is an easy task for Kramnik. 34...♖c8 does not change much. 35.♔d3 ♖d8 36.♔e4+—

35.g5! ♙f2 36.♖g4 ♔h7 37.gxf6! exf6

The job is done! White only needs to promote his e- and d-pawns.

38.e7 ♖c8+ 39.♔b3 ♙c5

39...♔xh6 40.d6+— is also over.

40.♖c4

Black resigned as he cannot defend against ♖xc5 or simply d6. A great performance by Kramnik, who really deserved to win a game after having squeezed unsuccessfully in all the previous rounds.

1–0

GAME 15

M. Carlsen (2872)

B. Gelfand (2740)

FIDE Candidates London

ENG (10)

27.03.2013, [B30]

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

We will look at a great game now by Carlsen! He played in his usual style, avoiding long theoretical battles and simply aiming to get a playable position with many pieces on the board, in order to slowly outplay his opponent.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5

Recently players have preferred to avoid the Sveshnikov Defense, which was the surprise weapon of Gelfand against Anand in their World Championship match last year.

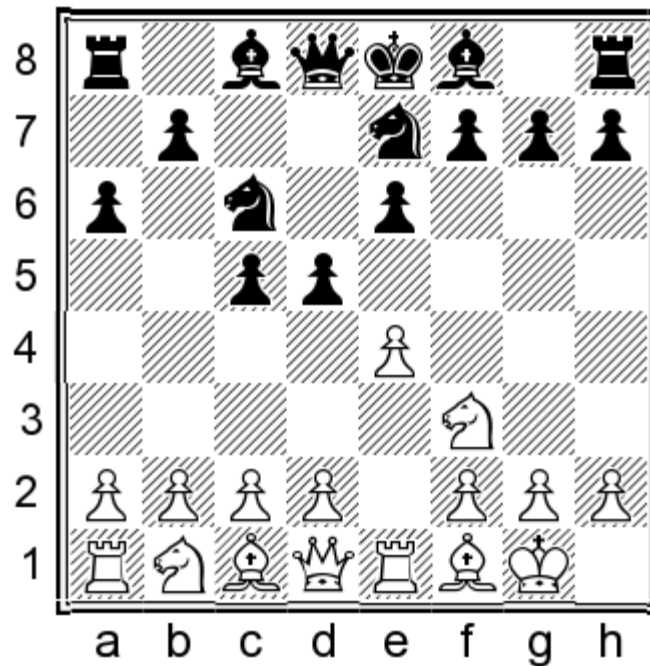
3...e6 4.0-0

A few rounds earlier, Carlsen tried 4.♙xc6 against Radjabov. Later on, he had a lucky escape in that game.

4...♘ge7 5.♖e1 a6 6.♙f1

Quite a positional handling of the opening. White saves his bishop and is ready to occupy the center with c3-d4.

6...d5



7.exd5

Carlsen follows the old main line. Grischuk recently played the fashionable 7.d3 against Gelfand, just a few rounds before this game in fact.

7...♘xd5 8.d4 ♘f6

This is considered to be the most precise reaction, initiating some exchanges in the center. 8...cxd4 9.♘xd4 is similar to the game and slightly preferable for White as well.

9.♙e3 cxd4

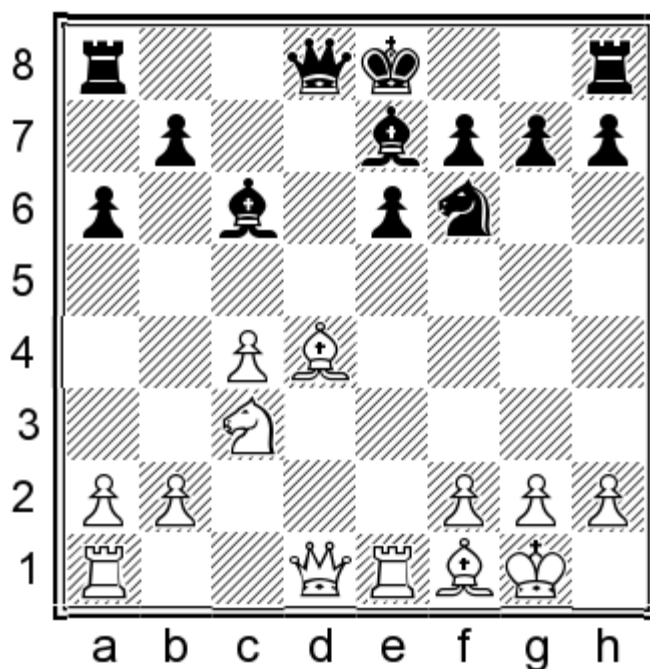
The big expert of this line, Teimour Radjabov, has played some games with 9...♙e7 10.c4 (Black does not need to worry about 10.dxc5 because of 10...♙xd1 11.♖xd1 ♘g4 winning back the c5-pawn.) 10...0-0 11.♘c3 cxd4 12.♘xd4

♙d7 with similar positions to the game.

10.♘xd4 ♙d7 11.c4

White gains ground on the queenside. This kind of pawn structure might arise from various openings. In general, it is considered to be fine for Black, but as we will see, if Carlsen is playing on the White side there might be some difficulties with equalizing.

11...♘xd4 12.♙xd4 ♙c6 13.♘c3 ♙e7



14.a3!

White would like to take further ground on the queenside by playing b4. If he gets it, many further plans are possible. All of them are connected with b5, as the c6-bishop has no good square to move to. Black faces a difficult decision: to allow White to fulfill this plan, or to avoid it with a5? The latter critically weakens the b5- and b6-squares and forces him to forget about the potential freeing break with ...b5 forever.

14...a5

Gelfand considered this option to be the lesser evil.

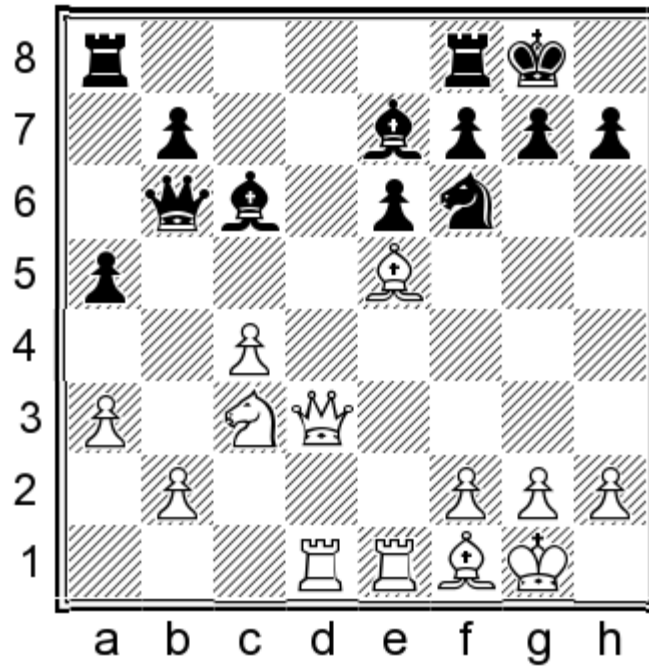
15.♙d3!

Carlsen prepares to activate his a1-rook and is also ready to switch his queen to the kingside for an attack against the king.

15...0-0 16.♖ad1 ♙c7

Black is lacking only one move to finish his development. He only needs to get his rook to d8...

17.♙e5! ♙b6



18. ♖g3!

Carlsen is ready to penetrate on the dark squares with his bishop. The Black queen cannot really find her place.

18... ♜fd8!

Gelfand finds the only move to stay in the game. 18... ♜ac8 loses after 19. ♕d4! ♜c7 (19... ♜b3 loses to the typical pin combination 20. ♘d5 ♜xg3 21. ♘xe7+ wins.) 20. ♜xc7 ♜xc7 21. ♕b6 wins the a5-pawn. The b2-pawn is poisoned, and White wins after 18... ♜xb2 19. ♘d5+—

19. ♜xd8+!

Using the fact, that Black cannot take back with the rook. 19. ♕c7 was not winning because of 19... ♜xd1! 20. ♕xb6 ♜xe1

19... ♜xd8 20. ♜d1 ♜b6 21. ♕d4!

Black is facing the same problem again — he has no good square for the queen.

21... ♜b3

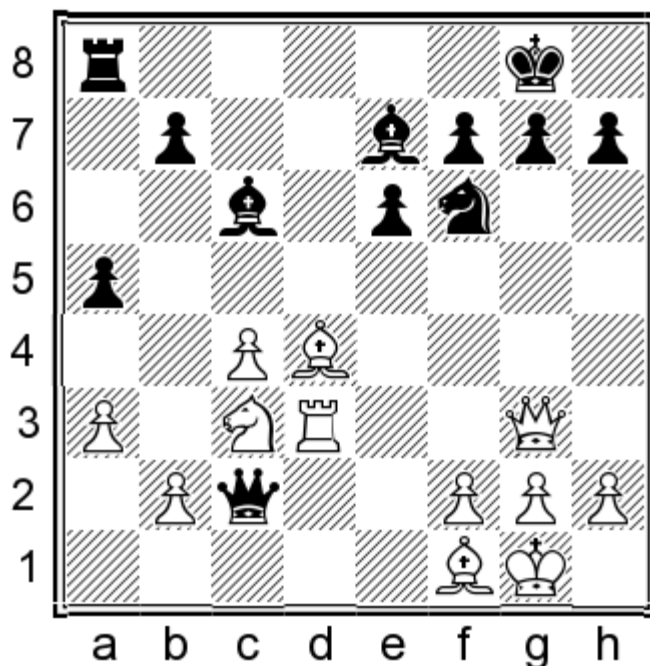
The only move not to lose immediately. 21... ♜a6? 22. b4 axb4 23. axb4 leads to Black's collapse because of the awful placement of the queen. 21... ♜xb2? 22. ♘d5 ♜xa3 23. ♘xf6++— since Black cannot take back the knight.

22. ♜d3!

A very deep and concrete idea! Carlsen had to foresee his 28th move, otherwise, the whole plan makes no sense. 22. ♘d5 leads only to a draw now. 22... ♜xd1 23. ♘xe7+ ♔h8 (23... ♔f8? is bad in view of 24. ♜d6!+— and for instance 24... ♘e4 25. ♕xg7+ ♔xg7 26. ♜xd1+—) 24. ♕xf6 gxf6 White has nothing more than a draw. 25. ♜h4 ♔g7 26. ♜g3

22... ♜c2

The only move to avoid ♖d5!



22...♙xc4 drops the queen after 23.♙xf6 ♙xf6 24.♖d8+! ♖xd8 25.♙xc4 and there is no mate on the back-rank because the c4-bishop retreats... 25...♙xc3 26.bxc3 ♖d1+ 27.♙f1+—

23.b4!

White finally succeeds to a breakthrough of the a5 blockade. Black was again missing only one move — to play a4 — fixing the queenside pawn structure. The e7-bishop is overloaded with the defense of the f6-knight, so White does not need to worry about his b4 pawn.

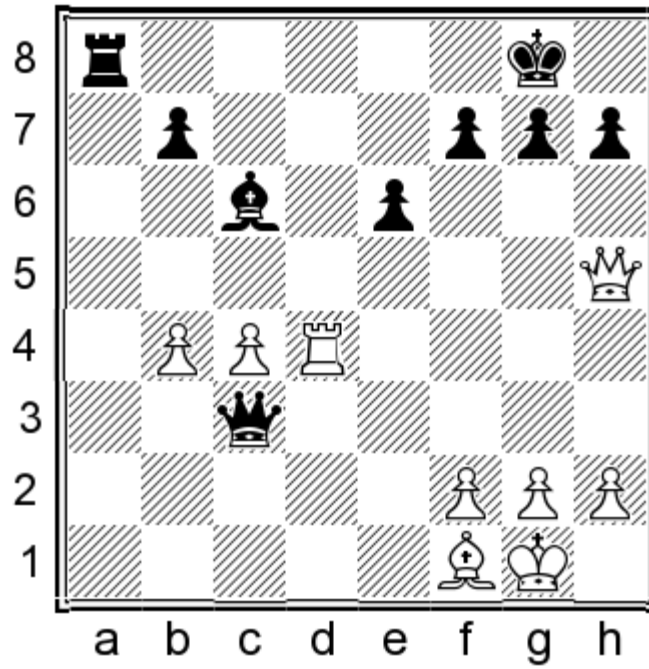
23...axb4 24.axb4 ♘h5!

Gelfand finds the best chance, looking for tactical complications... Otherwise, White simply pushes b5 with a huge advantage. Black cannot leave his back-rank with 24...♖a1 25.♙xf6! ♙xf6 26.♙b8++—

25.♙e5 ♙f6

Gelfand misses a tactical point... 25...♖a1! would have the best chance, although the position remains pretty unpleasant for Black 26.♖d1 avoiding the ♖xf1 and ♙xd3 threats. 26...♖xd1 27.♘xd1 ♙xd1 28.♙b8+ ♙f8 29.♙c5 h6 30.♙xf8+ ♘h7 31.f3± with a small advantage for White thanks to the better pawn structure and the bishop pair.

26.♙xh5 ♙xd4 27.♖xd4 ♙xc3



Black seems to be more than fine, as d4 and b4 are hanging, but a shocking move completely changes the evaluation...

28. ♕a5!!

Using the weakness of Black's back-rank, Carlsen consolidates his position.

28... ♖f8

Black was forced to go into passivity to control the 8th rank.

29. ♖b6

Despite the material equality, White has a big advantage. His pieces are more active and the queenside pawn majority plays the main role.

29... e5 30. ♖d1 g6

Black finally opens the back-rank.

31. b5 ♙e4

Carlsen has played a perfect game until this moment. From now on, he makes some inaccuracies and lets Black back into the game.

32. ♖f6

White should have kept the b7-pawn under permanent attack to avoid the bishop transfer to e6. The next pair of moves are inaccuracies. Black has basically no moves after 32. ♖d7 and White can strengthen his position in many different ways. 32... ♔g7 33. ♖d6 ♖a8 There is no chance for activity because of 34. ♖e7 ♖f8 35. h4+- opening the back-rank and slowly breaking through with c5.

32... h5

32...♔f5! should have been played immediately.

33.h4

33.♞e7! to avoid ...♔f5-e6.

33...♔f5!

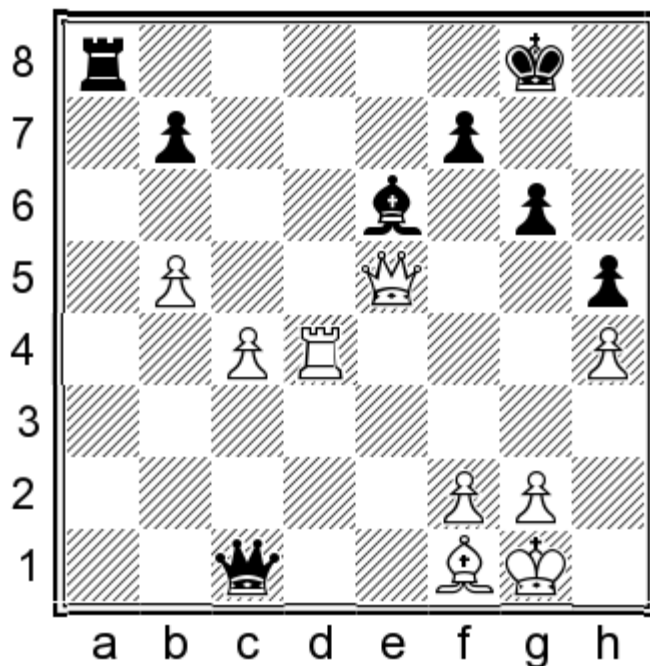
Gelfand has found the right plan. He directs his bishop to e6 from where he can put the queenside pawns under pressure. Finally, there is something to play for as Black, even if it costs a pawn.

34.♞d5 ♞c1

34...♔e6 35.♞xe5 ♞c1 is the game.

35.♞xe5 ♔e6 36.♞d4 ♞a8

Suddenly, Black has succeeded in creating counterplay, but with his following great moves, Carlsen swats away his dreams of surviving in this game.



37.♞e2!!

A brilliant move! White wants to clear the unpleasant pin on the first rank by playing ♞d1, but the question was what would happen if Black plays ♞a1...

37...♔h7

After 37...♞a1? Carlsen has prepared the nice winning line 38.♞d8+ ♔h7 39.♞e5!! ♞xf1+ 40.♔h2 Black can only give a few token checks, while White is mating... 40...♞g1+ 41.♔g3 ♞a3+ 42.f3+—

38.♞d1! ♞c3 39.♞e4!

This is it! It is amazing how, with his last three moves, Carlsen improved his position so much. He has a technical win

again.

39...♖a1

Gelfand tries to create the pin again on the back-rank, but without the rooks on the board, it is no longer dangerous...

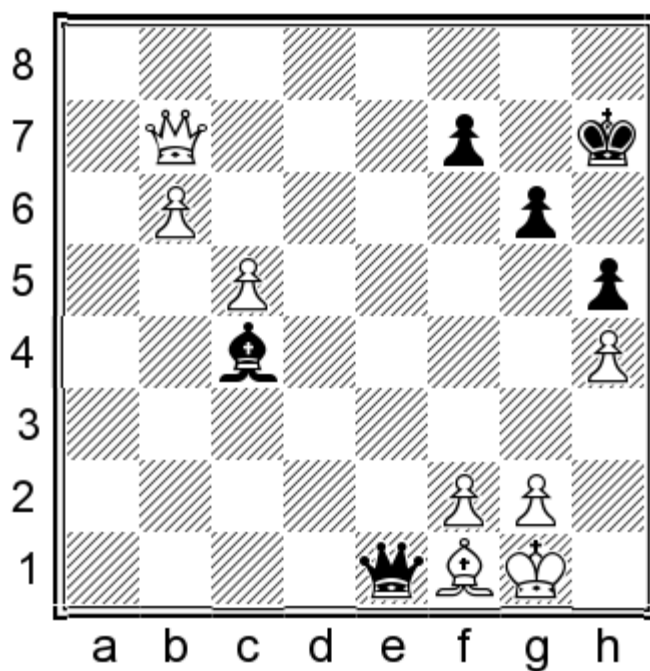
40.♖xa1 ♜xa1 41.c5

White simply wants to push c6, take back with the queen, advance his pawn to b7 and then promote the pawn automatically. It is hard to do anything to counter this plan.

41...♞c3 42.♞xb7 ♞e1

This was Gelfand's last desperate try. He is threatening ...♞c4, but the pawns are too far advanced — White does not need to pay attention to it. 42...♞xc5 43.b6 is also hopeless.

43.b6 ♞c4



44.♞f3! ♞xf1+

44...♞xf1 also loses after 45.♞xf7+ ♞h6 46.♞f4+ ♞h7 47.♞h2! White is ready to push his pawns, Black is unable to create counterplay. 47...♞a6 48.c6+-

45.♞h2 ♞b1 46.b7

The pawns are promoting automatically.

46...♞b5 47.c6 ♞d5 48.♞g3

Black resigned.

1–0

GAME 16

V. Kramnik (2801)

N. Vitiugov (2712)

Paris/St Petersburg FRA/RUS Paris/St Petersburg FRA/RUS (1)

21.04.2013, [A07]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

Kramnik continues to show his great form and practically made a full point “out of nothing” in this game. Somehow, in general, Kramnik manages to win a lot of games against his countrymen. Now Vitiugov, at the Candidates it was Grischuk and Svidler...

1. ♖f3 d5 2. g3 c6

From time to time, Kramnik likes to play the Reti opening and he does it quite successfully. As we can recall, during the Candidates he managed to get a big advantage against Aronian.

3. ♗g2 ♗g4

The line with 3... ♗g4 is one of the most playable answers for Black currently.

4. 0-0 ♗d7 5. d3 ♗gf6

Black does not hurry with ...e6 in order to have an immediate ...e7-e5 in his pocket.

6. ♕e1

Very typical play.

6... e5 7. e4 dxe4 8. dxe4 ♗d6!?

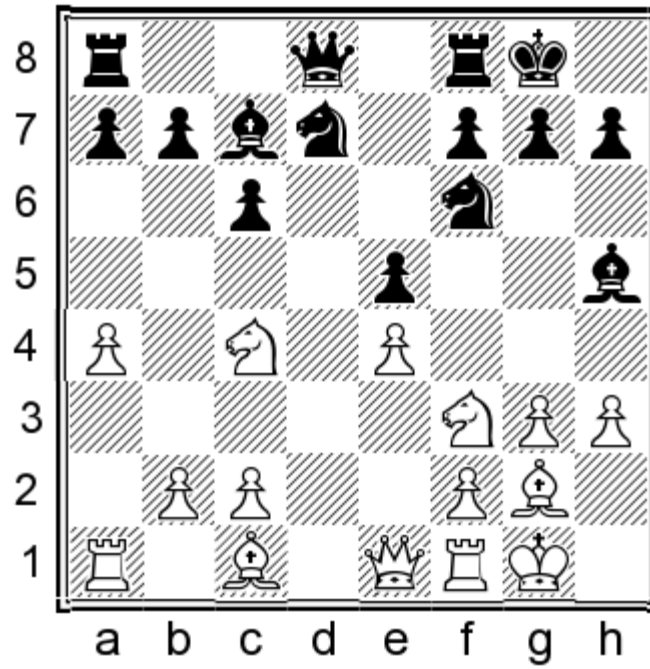
Of course this is all well-known, but anyway it is a nice move. Black is taking his bishop to c7, from where it defends the pawn on e5 and, at the same time, can become active on the b6-square.

9. ♗bd2 0-0 10. h3 ♗h5

Of course, Black does not give his bishop away so easily...

11. ♗c4 ♗c7 12. a4

Securing White's knight position on c4.



12...♖e8?!

I am not sure whether this move just loses a tempo or not. In general, the biggest problem for Black is his bishop on h5. If Black is in time to move the knight from f6 and play ...f6-♙f7, he is at least doing fine. For White, a typical plan could be to play ♕e3-♜fd2 and f3! followed by ♖f2 and ♕f1, leaving the Black bishop out of play on h5.

13.♞h4

The White knight is going to f5 — clearly a nice place to settle.

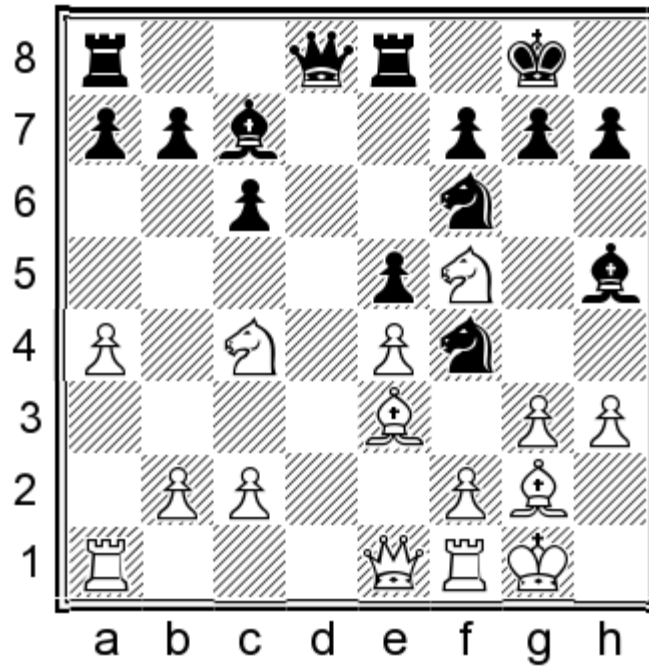
13...♞c5

A possible move, but maybe White is a bit better after this. More often Black chooses a different square for his knight. 13...♞b6 The exchange of knights is clearly good for Black. 14.♞a5 ♜b8 and Black wants to play ...♞bd7 next.

14.♞f5 ♞e6 15.♕e3

White wants to play ♖d1 followed by ♞d6.

15...♞f4



A very spectacular move — but with no great effect. 15...♔b8 would have been a more solid move for Black, even though I think White is still a bit better.

16.f3!

Cool and strong! As we can see, White is slowly reaching the main goal of the opening: to leave the bad bishop on h5 out of the game. Of course not 16.gxf4 exf4! and Black's position is huge!

16...♘xg2 17.♙xg2 ♗g6 18.♞d1 ♘d5

Black continues playing inventively, and what else is left?! Clearly, it is not an option to let the White knight jump to d6.

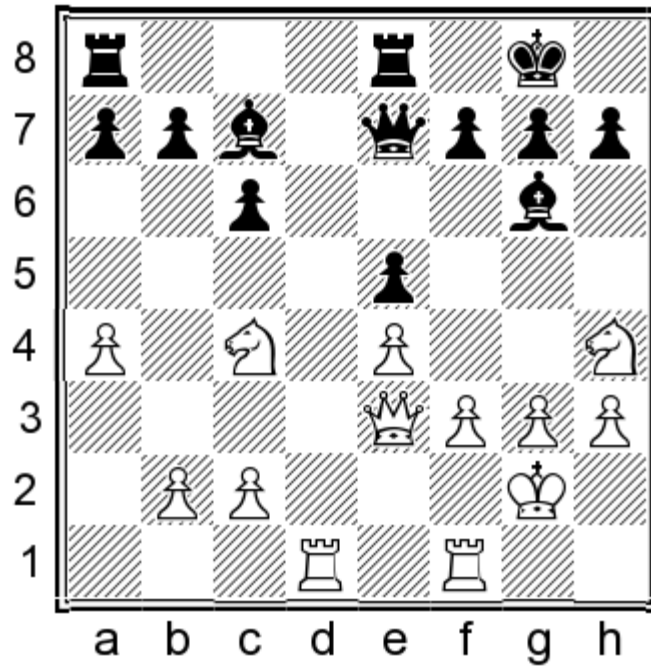
19.♘h4

A solid move by Kramnik. 19.exd5 This would lead to a not-so-clear position: 19...♗xf5 20.dxc6 (20.d6 ♗b6 and probably White should be better here, but the position is pretty complicated.) 20...♔c8 Black's bishop pair should be enough compensation for a pawn.

19...♗xe3+ 20.♔xe3

Which are stronger, the white knights or the black bishops?! The answer is quite simple: of course, the knights. The bishop on g6 is still very bad, White controls the d-file and the queen + knight combo is dangerous.

20...♔e7



21. ♖b3!

White makes sure that Black will not bring out the bishop from g6 for quite some time, and is attacking the very important b7-pawn, which holds the Black structure together.

21... ♜ab8

21...b6 22. ♘e3

22. ♜f2

Why not double on the d-file?

22... ♜ed8?!

This looks very logical, but I think that after 22... ♜ed8?! White's advantage becomes clearer. Maybe an attempt to change the dynamics of the game would work now. 22... ♚e6 23. ♜fd2 b5!? with quite good chances to escape.

23. ♜xd8+ ♙xd8 24. ♜d2

The d-file belongs to White.

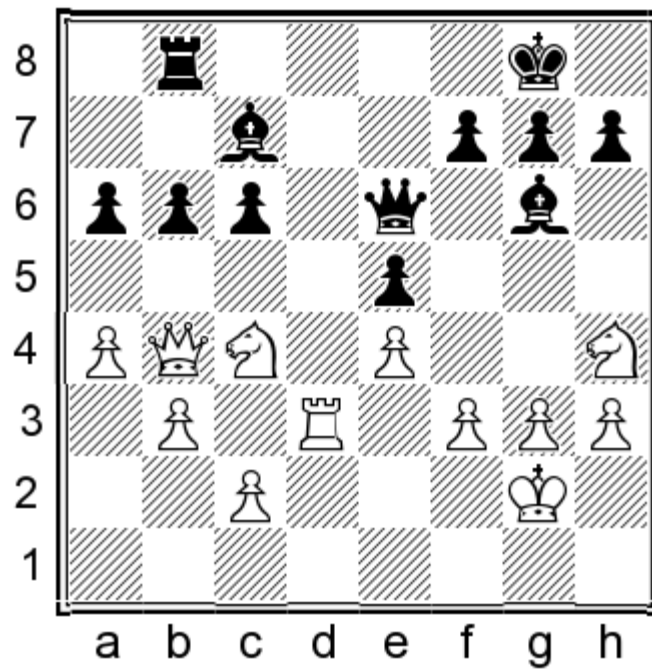
24... ♙c7 25. ♜d3 ♚e6 26. ♚b4

A tricky move, with the idea of ♚d2 and ♜d7 in the future.

26...b6?!

Finally, Black has gained an opportunity to play f6 and I think that such a move is too hard to miss. 26...f6 27. ♘xg6 hxg6 28. ♘e3 with a minimal advantage for White.

27.b3 a6?!



This move already puts Black in big trouble. 27...♖d8! and Black is simply worse.

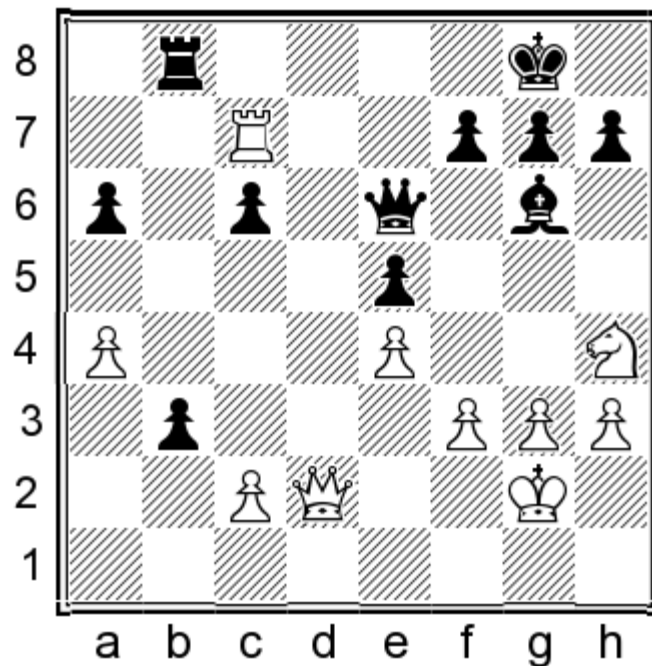
28.♗d2!

Using the right moment.

28...b5 29.♗d7

This is the key idea of 28.♗d2. Black is not in time to kick out the White knight from c4 in order to free the b6 square for the bishop.

29...bxc4 30.♗xc7 cxb3



31.♖b7!

Probably Vitiugov missed this move when he played 27...a6?!.

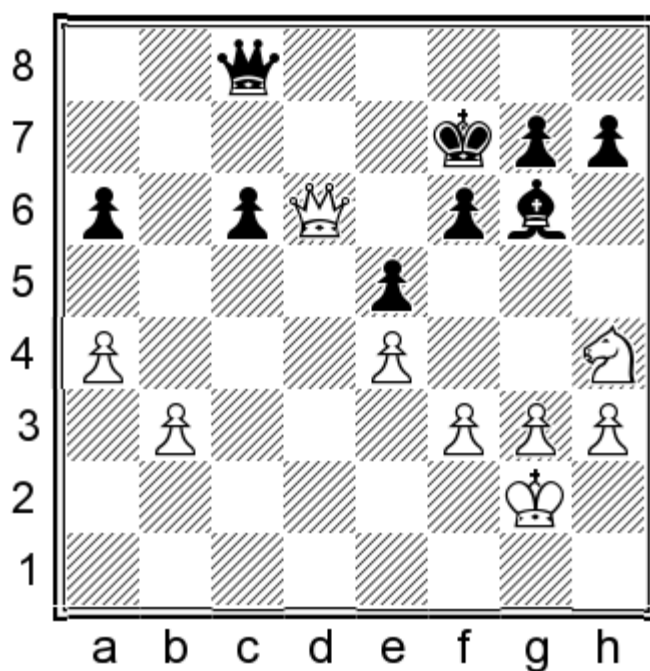
31...♕c8 32.♖xb3 ♖xb3 33.cxb3

White's advantage here is quite serious! He has a better pawn structure, a more active queen, and the ♖+♘ combination leaves Black with very slim chances.

33...f6

Finally.

34.♖d6 ♔f7



It is hard to give Black advice. White's plan is easy, to put the pawns on b4-a5 and get the knight out from h4. If 34...♔f7 35.♘f5

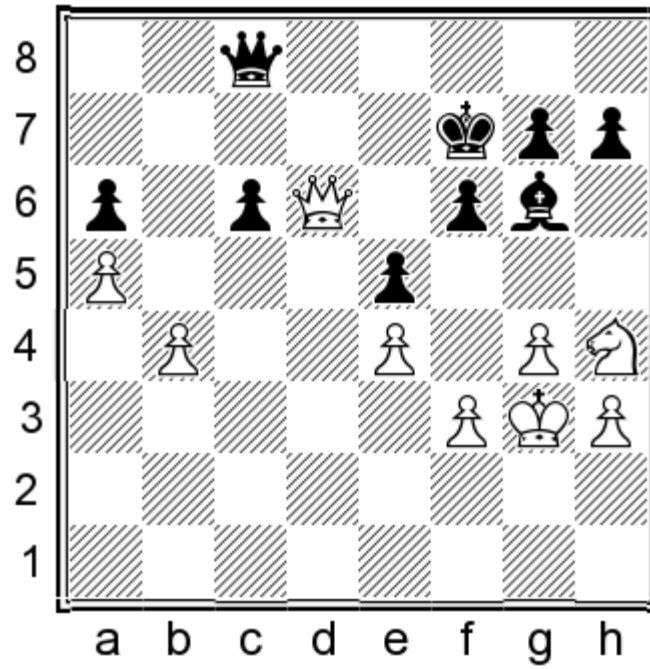
35.g4!

A very strong move. White wants to play ♔g3-♘g2-♘e3 leaving the poor bishop on g6 out of the game again.

35...♔e8 36.♔g3 ♖b7 37.b4 ♖c8 38.a5

White continues to improve his position whereas Black has nothing better to do than just keep on waiting.

38...♔f7



39. ♖g2

and the White knight heads into the game with crucial effect.

39...h5 40. ♗e3 hxg4 41.hxg4

Time-trouble is over and it is time to take a fresh look at the position. From Vitiugov's point of view, things look pretty bad. The main mission did not go too well, the bishop on g6 is still out of play, and the pawn on a6 is a potential target for the White queen and knight. Another plan for White could be just to play ♕c5, followed by ♗c4. All in all, things are looking pretty bleak for Vitiugov.

41... ♕e6

This almost loses by force now, and Kramnik shows us why!

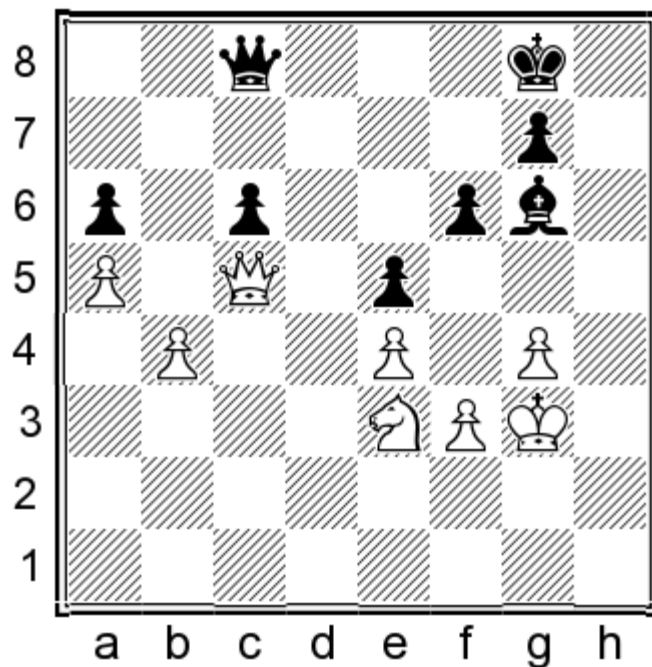
42. ♕d3!

Pushing the Black queen back "home".

42... ♕c8 43. ♕c4+

White puts his queen on the perfect square on c5 via some checks.

43... ♔f8 44. ♕c5+ ♔g8



and the final move

45.b5!

The game is over! Black cannot stop White's a-pawn from queening.

45...axb5 46.♔b6 ♕f8 47.a6 ♖b4

It is too late for any active play...

48.a7 ♖e1+ 49.♔g2 ♖d2+ 50.♔g1

On 50...♖e1 51.♔f1 finishes Black's suffering. All-in-all, a great positional win for Kramnik and "slightly too respectful" play from Vitiugov.

1-0

GAME 17

Ding Liren (2707)

L. Aronian (2809)

Paris/St Petersburg FRA/RUS Paris/St Petersburg FRA/RUS (1)

21.04.2013, [D45]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

Now we will witness a very high level game with really great play by Ding Liren, a 20-year old super-talent from China, who for some reason is not really well-known in Europe. However, I guess that very soon he will be more visible in to level Round Robins.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 a6

This time we see a Slav with 4...a6, a very popular opening, often known as the 'Chameleon'.

5.e3 e6 6.c5

One of the most critical lines.

6...♘bd7 7.b4

White's idea is simple, to hold the e3-d4-c5 pawn structure, which gives him a clear space advantage. 7.♞c2 was played in the match between Gelfand and Anand.

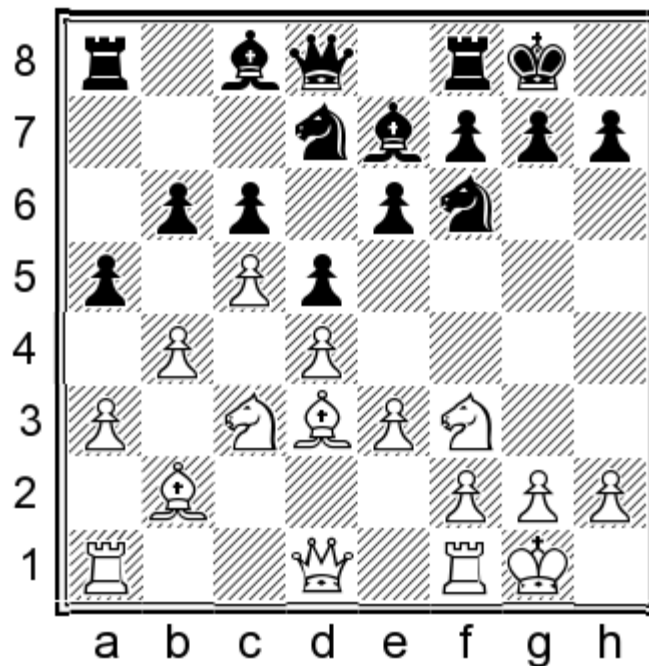
7...b6

A standard move for Black, with the main plan of developing the bishop from c8 quickly. It will go to a6 and will be exchanged.

8.♞b2 a5 9.a3 ♞e7

Aronian himself played this position as White against his countryman Akopian.

10.♞d3 0-0 11.0-0



11...♞a6!

Strong and correct play; Black should exchange the light-squared bishops. Akopian played here 11...♞c7, and after 12.♞e2! he got quickly into a difficult position.

12.♞e1

White transfers the knight from the f3-square to a much better position on d3, in case of ♞xd3.

12...♞c4?

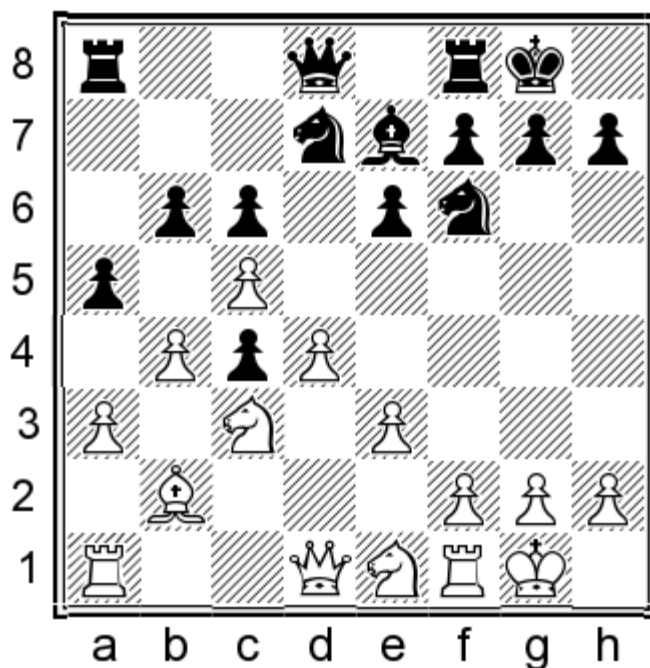
I think this is clearly an over optimistic move from Aronian. A much more solid way of playing would have been

12...♔c7 13.♕e2 It is hard to find a better move for White. 13...♙xd3 14.♘xd3 ♔b7 and if White is better, his advantage is minimal.

13.♙xc4!

No fear shown by Ding Liren against the World Nr 2. They are heading into complications.

13...dxc4



14.♕e2!

Another good move! White is trying to stabilize before starting the action in the center with e4. Too hurried would have been 14.e4?! axb4 15.axb4 bxc5 16.bxc5 when 16...e5! would crush all of White's center.

14...♖b8

It is hard to give advice to Black... Maybe an attempt could have been made to get play on the a-file. 14...axb4 15.axb4 ♖xa1 16.♙xa1 ♔a8 but here White seems to be doing somewhat better as well. 17.♘c2 ♔a6 Avoiding having to play ...b5, which can be important because Black keeps the possibility of playing ...e5 in the future. 18.f4! Stopping Black even from dreaming about the ...e5 move. White's position seems to be better.

15.♖a2

A creative move with the idea of forcing Black to finally play ...b5. I think that the simple 15.♘f3 would have done it as well.

15...b5

The ...b5 move has been made, so now it is time for White to play in the center.

16.e4

Now it is clear that White is rolling.

16...♖b7

Aronian transports his rook to d7, but I am not sure if this was really a good idea. Maybe it was time to admit the mistake and play back with 16...♖a8.

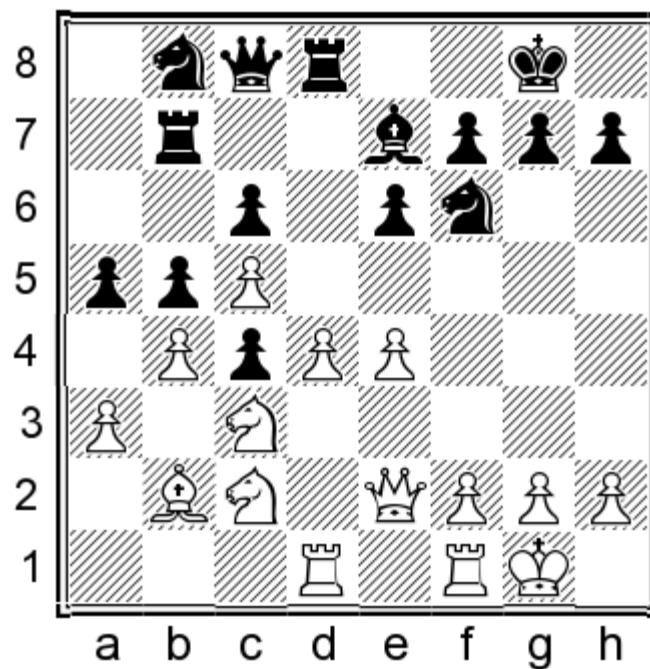
17.♘c2 ♘b8

White has a huge amount of good moves!

18.♖aa1

Ding Liren decides to go for some play in the center. An attempt to crush Black on the spot with 18.a4 axb4 19.♘xb4 would lead only to an unclear position after 19...♙xd4! No fear. 20.e5 and we are in deep complications.

18...♙c8 19.♖ad1 ♖d8



20.♙c1!

Before starting the final action, White takes his time to put his pieces in better positions.

20...♘a6 21.♙f4 ♖bd7 22.h3

Ding continues with his positional play. Another option for White could have been to play 22.bxa5 An ugly looking move, but the idea of 22...♙a8 23.♘a2! looks strong. The White knight on b4 will take up a perfect position.

22...♘e8

Black had nothing better than just keep on waiting... as we can see, White is already much better.

23.♙e3

23.bxa5 with the same idea as before, ♖a2-♖b4.

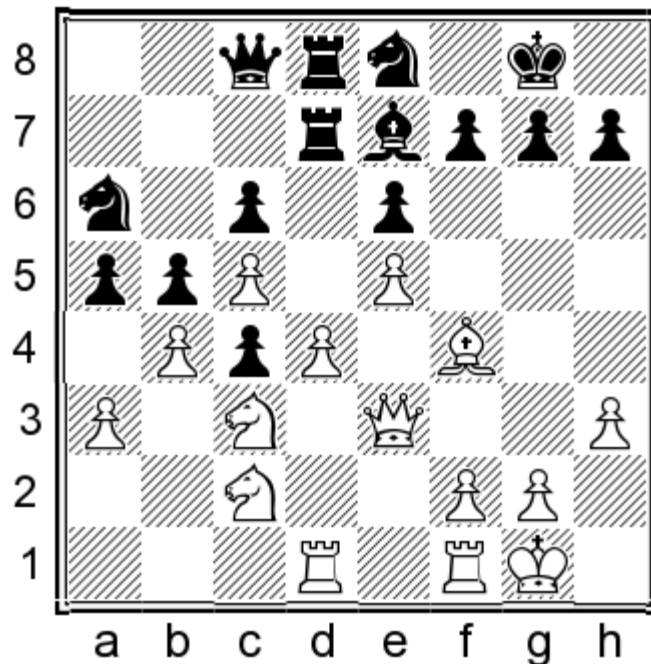
23...♙f6

provoking White to play e5.

24.e5

I am not sure if this was the best option for White. Now Black gains the very important d5-square.

24...♙e7



25.♖e4

White gave up the d5 square but got the one on d6 in return.

25...♖ac7 26.♖d6 ♜a8

Suddenly, Black is very quick on the queenside. The next few moves are ...♖d5-♜a7 and the a-file belongs to Black.

27.♜g3 ♖d5 28.♖e3!?

I think this was a good move by White. It is clear that with such a huge space advantage, he should be trying to play for mate.

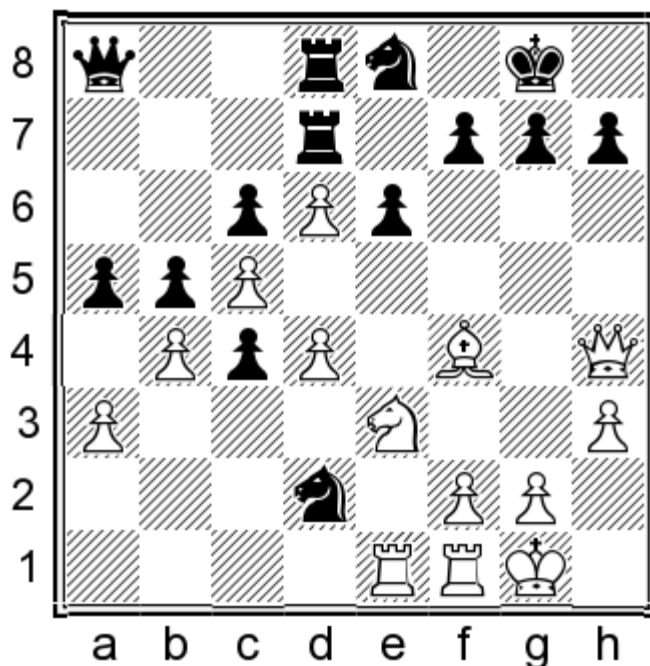
28...♖c3 29.♜de1 ♙xd6

It seems like White has blundered an exchange, but that is not the case!

30.exd6 ♖e4

It is hard to find a better move for Black. Even though it is a forced line, it is probably just lost.

31. ♔h4 ♖d2



and, of course, here Ding found

32. ♖d5!

and the knight on d2 is under attack.

32... ♖xf1

32... exd5 33. ♕xd2 would just lead to a winning position for White.

33. ♖b6 ♔a7 34. ♖xf1

Black is an exchange up, but I think it is clear that White is doing better. The monster pawn on d6 and the knight on b6 are giving Black a hard time. Plus it is very difficult to find a playable plan over the next several moves...

34... ♖f6

Very logical, the black knight is heading d5. 34... axb4 35. axb4 and the next Black move is still unclear...

35. ♕e5!

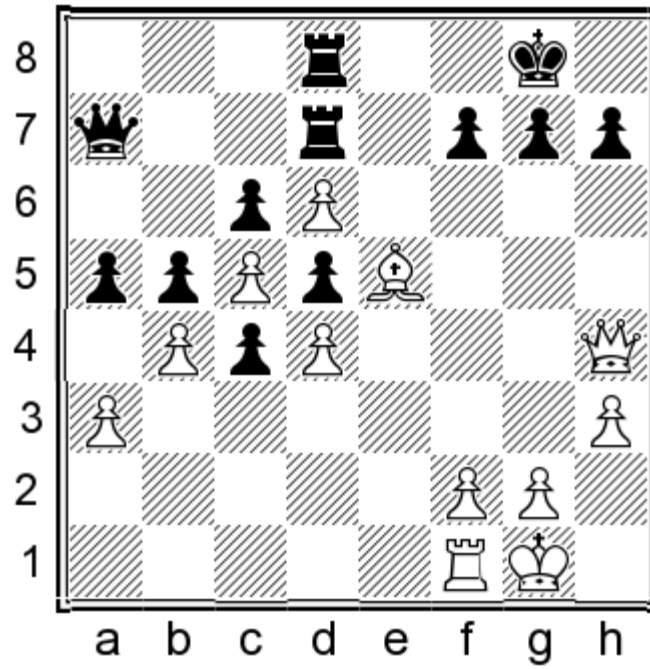
Ding continues playing a fantastic game.

35... ♖d5

What else?!

36. ♖xd5 exd5

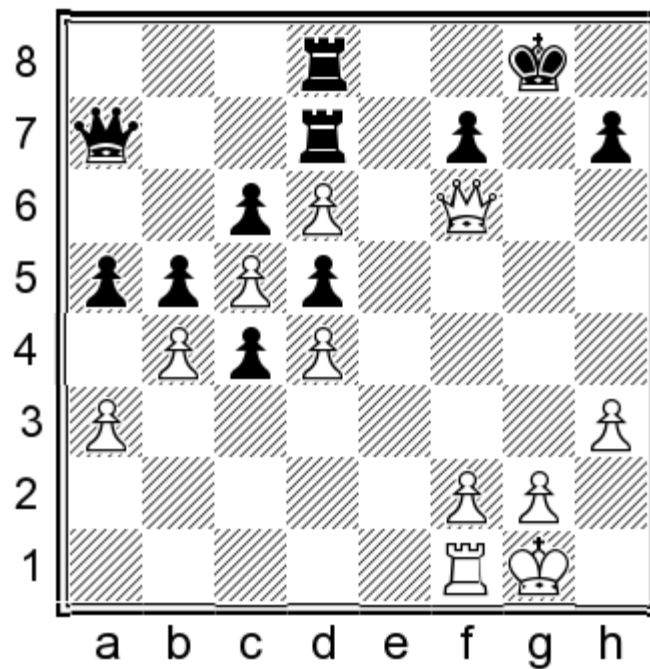
Is Black finally safe?



37. ♕xg7!!

No, Black is lost!

37... ♖xg7 38. ♜g5+ ♔f8 39. ♝f6 ♔g8 40. ♝g5+ ♔f8 41. ♝f6 ♔g8



Ding repeats moves before the time-control, and plays the correct

42. ♞e1!

White just wants to give mate by playing ♞e3-♞g3 or ♞e5-♞g5, and Black has no defense against it.

42...axb4

It does not help to play 42...h6 43.♖e3 ♘h7 when Black has managed to avoid ♖g3, but now White finds a new winning idea. 44.♖e7! The f7-pawn is the new target. 44...♖f8 45.♙f5+ and the rook on d7 is falling.

43.♖e5

A nice finishing move.

43...h6 44.♖h5

Ding Liren, cool until the end.

44...♙xa3 45.♙xh6

The mate on h8 is a serious threat :)

45...f6 46.♙xf6

A really fantastic game by the very talented Chinese player.

1–0

GAME 18

L. Aronian (2809)

P. Svidler (2747)

Alekhine Mem

Paris/St Petersburg FRA/RUS (4)

24.04.2013, [D85]

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

Huge preparation by Aronian against the Gruenfeld Defense is the main feature of this game. White got a nice edge, which he managed to convert into a full point.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5

Svidler goes back to his favorite Gruenfeld Defense. A few weeks earlier, in the Candidates tournament, he surprised Aronian with 1.d4, 1...d5 2.c4 dxc4 and made an easy draw.

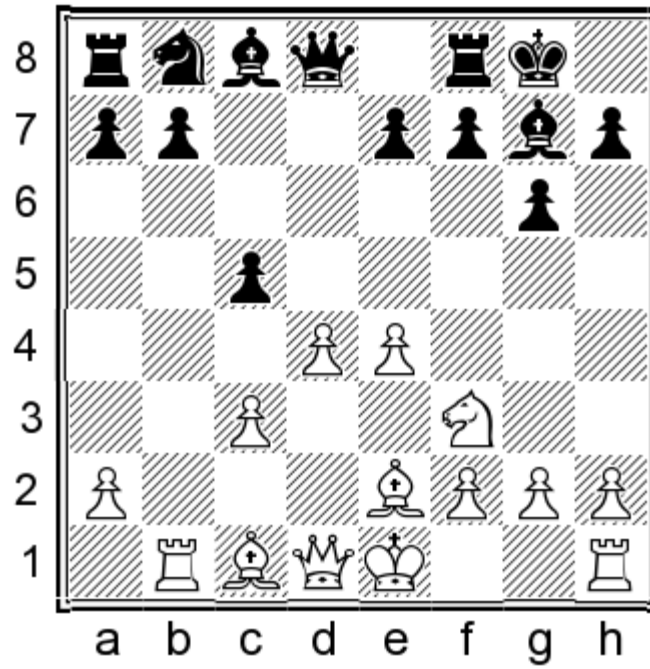
4.♘f3 ♕g7 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.e4 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 c5 8.♖b1

This old main line is becoming more-and-more popular recently. The point of the text move becomes clear after 8.♕e2 when Black has the strong 8...♘c6! 9.d5 ♕xc3+ 10.♕d2 ♕xa1 11.♙xa1 ♘d4! and Black is fine. White escapes from this motif with the 8.♖b1 move.

8...0-0

Now on 8...♘c6 9.d5! ♕xc3+ 10.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 11.♙xd2 White wins back the pawn with the ♖c3 double-attack on the next move, and gets a small advantage.

9.♕e2



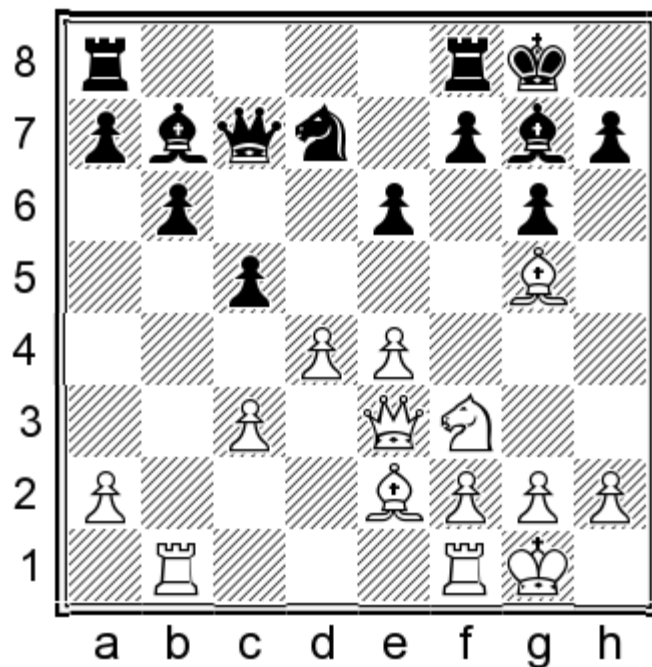
9...b6

This was considered to be a playable alternative if Black wanted to avoid the complications of the main-line. However, after this game, it looks like Black is forced to grab the a2-pawn if he wants to equalize. The critical continuation is 9...cxd4 10.cxd4 ♔a5+ 11.♙d2 ♔xa2 12.0-0 ♙g4 This is basically the starting position of the opening. Probably we will see in the near future what Aronian has cooked up here...

10.0-0 ♔c7

Usually we reach the game's position by the following move order: 10...♙b7 11.♔d3 e6 12.♙g5 ♔c7

11.♙g5 e6 12.♔d2 ♙b7 13.♔e3 ♙d7



Here comes Aronian's improvement.

14. ♖f4!

There was only one previous game with this move. The game becomes very concrete now. All other games have continued with 14.e5 when Black has two good alternatives. 14...a6 This is how Svidler played not so long ago. (14... ♖ae8 is the 'main' mainline, followed by f6 exf6 ♜xf6, undermining the center.) 15. ♘d2 b5 16. ♙e7 ♜fc8 17. ♙d6 cxd4! 18.cxd4 ♜c3 and Black was already fine in Gelfand-Svidler 2010.

14...e5

Black is forced to pin himself and challenge the center. The retreat to the back rank cannot come into the consideration, while 14... ♜c6 runs into 15. ♙b5!

15. ♙g3 ♜ae8

The most principled move to keep the tension, but it seems to be a mistake... The only attempt to fight for equality is in the simplification. 15...cxd4 16.cxd4 exd4 17. ♘xd4 ♜c5 18. ♜fd1 ♜fe8 19.f3 but White seems to be slightly better here as well. Black's pieces are unco-ordinated while White has some dangerous ideas, such as ♜bc1 followed by ♘b5, pointing out the weaknesses of the d6- and c7-squares, and ♙b5 might be unpleasant as well.

16.d5!

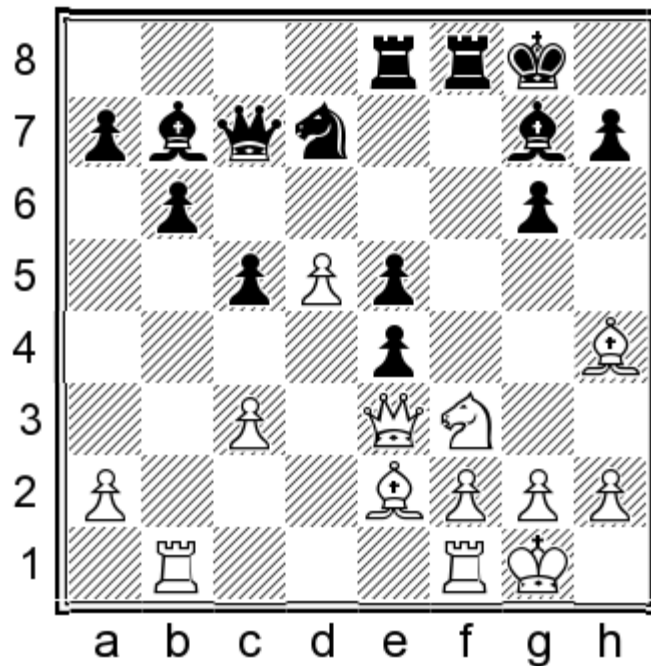
White creates a protected passed pawn, which would undoubtedly give him a big plus in the endgame. However, in the middlegame, Black usually gets strong counterplay with ...f5 — which looks even more dangerous now because of the ...f4 threat. 16. ♙b5 happened in the only previous game to reach this position.

16...f5 17. ♙h4!

White would like to get his bishop to e7, which would be possible if he could play d6 in time.

17...h6

Preparing to trap the bishop with ...f4 and ...g5. The whole idea of 14.♙f4 comes after 17...fxe4



18.d6!! (18.♘g5 ♙xd5 is unclear.; 18.♙xe4 ♞f4 would be fine for Black as he pushes ...e4 next.) 18...♙xd6 19.♙c4+ ♖h8 20.♘g5 Black cannot hold the weak squares in the camp. It is hard to deal with ♘f7. Black cannot trap the bishop with 17...f4 18.♙d3 h6 (18...♙d6 is met by 19.♘d2! when ♘c4 is coming with tempo.) 19.d6! and ♙e7 next move.

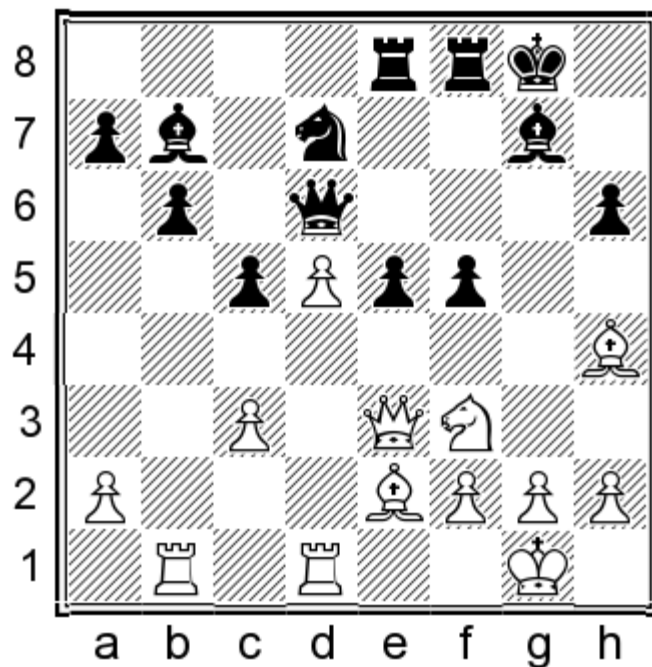
18.exf5!

Aronian still follows his preparation. This is the only way to save the bishop, but this gives Black a dangerous center. However, the game remains more concrete.

18...gxf5 19.♞fd1!

White refreshes the threat of d6, ♙e7.

19...♙d6



19...e4 allows 20.d6 ♖c8 21.♞e1 Black can temporarily push back his opponent, but then he cannot hold the holes in his position. 21...f4 22.♞h3 f3 23.♙c4+ ♔h8 24.♙e7 ♙e6 is coming next. White is crushing.

20.♞d2!

The 'rule' says that the queen is a bad blockader, so the knight is heading to harass it from c4.

20...♞g6

20...♙xd5 is met by 21.♙b5! when almost all the Black pieces are pinned. 20...♞xd5?? 21.♙c4+—

21.♞g3

An excellent practical decision! Black is forced to go into a bad endgame.

21...♞xg3 22.hxg3

Black cannot prevent ♙b5, as ...a6 would critically weaken the b6-pawn.

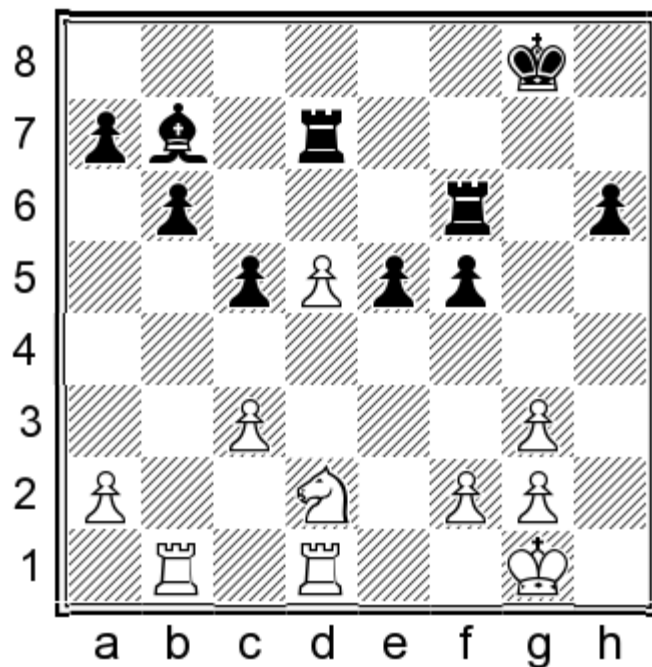
22...♙f6

On 22...♙xd5 White wins an exchange after 23.♙b5 ♙e6 24.♞c4! and ...♞f7 walks into ♞d6.

23.♙b5!

Aronian has a clear target in front of his eyes: he wants to get an endgame with a good knight against a bad bishop, where the protected passed pawn on d5 plays a key factor.

23...♞e7 24.♙xd7 ♞xd7 25.♙xf6 ♞xf6



26.c4!

White has achieved everything he could. Black has hanging pawns on e5 and f5, and additional targets on the queenside. White has several ways to increase his advantage: one is to play ♖e1, provoking an ...e4 push, which could be countered with the ♜f1–e3 maneuver; White can also play on the queenside with a4–a5, or create further weaknesses via the rook lift ♖b3–a3.

26...♖g7

Svidler is searching for counterplay along the 4th rank.

27.♖b3

It seems to be even stronger to provoke ...e4 first. 27.♖e1! e4 White doesn't need to worry anymore about ♖g4–d4, and he can play for instance 28.a4± with a huge positional advantage.

27...♖g4! 28.♖c1!

An excellent prophylactic move against the pinning threat of ...♖d4. It also protects the c4-pawn in order to free the knight.

28...♖d4 29.♜f3 ♖e4 30.♖a3!

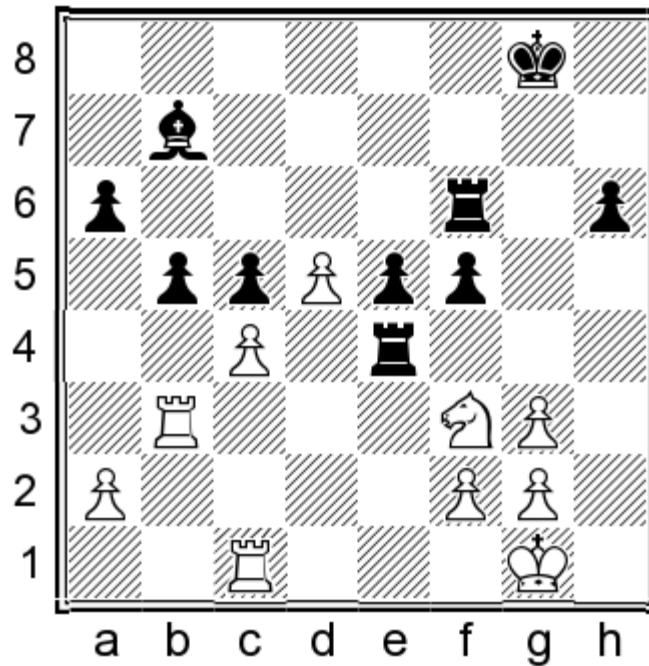
Forcing Black to weaken his b6-pawn.

30...a6 31.♖b3!

The rook has already done his job on the a-file.

31...b5

Svidler tries to complicate matters, but it only hastens his defeat.



31...♔g7 could be met by 32.♖b2 ♜d6 33.♞d2 ♜d4 34.a4! Black has no good defense against a5. 34...a5 (34...♙c8 leaving the pin is met by 35.♞f3 ♜e4 36.a5! bxa5 37.♖a2 and c5 also falls.) 35.♞b3 ♜e4 36.♞xc5! wins.

32.♖b2!!

Another great move! The rook leaves from the cxb5 ♙xd5 tempo. Black cannot avoid losing material.

32...♖f7

32...b4 loses to 33.♞d2! and when the rook moves, ♞b3 wins the c5 pawn. After 32...♜d6 the easiest win is 33.a4! b4 34.♞d2! and the c5-pawn is lost again, which means the end of the game with such connected passed pawns on c4-d5. 34...♖g4 35.♞b3+—

33.cxb5 axb5

33...♙xd5 34.♖xc5+— is equally hopeless.

34.♖xc5 b4 35.d6 ♜d7 36.♖d2

Black resigned in view of ♞xe5 next move. A sweet positional masterpiece by Aronian!

1–0

GAME 19

S. Karjakin (2767)

T. Radjabov (2745)

Supreme Masters 2013

Sandnes NOR (1.5)

08.05.2013, [B30]

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

An impressive positional performance follows now from Karjakin.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c3

White tries to avoid the Sveshnikov Defense. Usually he does this by playing 3.♗b5, but the text move is also possible.

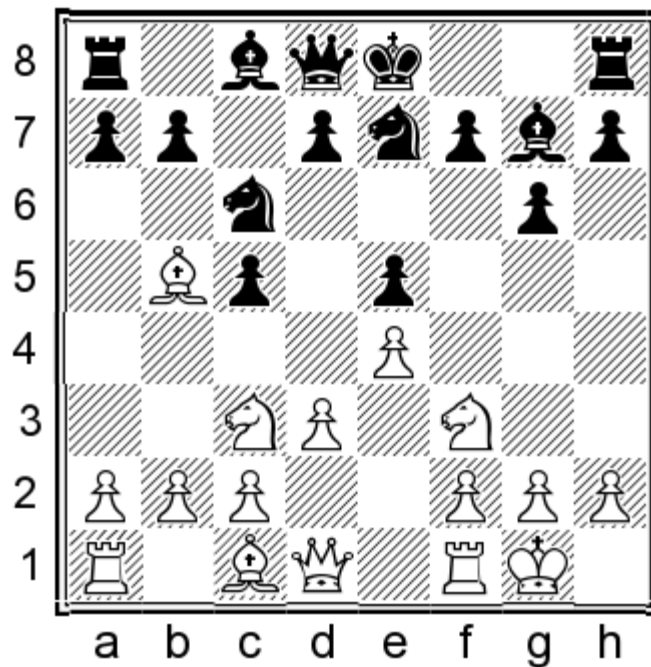
3...g6 4.♗b5

White has succeeded in avoiding Radjabov's pet line with 3.♗b5 e6, but of course this ...g6 system is the other huge main line.

4...♗g7 5.0-0

Black has to decide how to finish his development. Radjabov chooses one of the most popular ways with ...e5-♗ge7, but it has a drawback in that it weakens the d5-square.

5...e5 6.d3 ♗ge7



7.♗c4

White immediately focuses his pieces on the d5-square. Usually Sveshnikov players are not impressed by this, since they are used to facing this in many lines.

7...h6

Black prevents the potential plan of ♗g5, trading off one of the defenders of the d5-square.

8.a3!

This is a known plan in this kind of closed position. White initiates his grabbing of space on the queenside with b4. Black should not prevent it with ...a5 because the b5 square is critically weakened.

8...0-0 9.b4!

White could save a tempo by not playing ♖b1, since accepting the pawn sacrifice would lead to more than enough compensation.

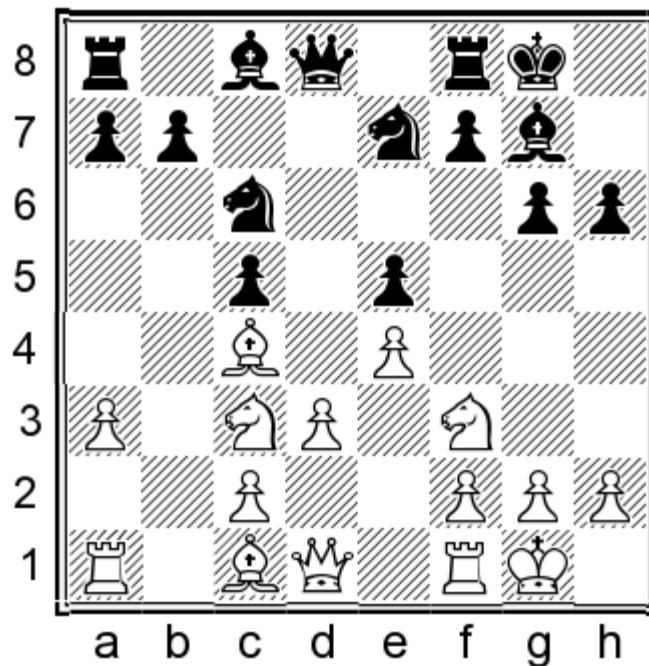
9...d6

9...cxb4? 10.axb4 ♘xb4 11.♙a3! ♘bc6 12.♙d6± Black is completely tied up!

10.bxc5

White has achieved some positional trumps by taking once towards to the center, forcing Black to take 'outwards'. Also, the b-file will be an important factor in the game later on.

10...dxc5



11.♙e1!

At first sight a mysterious move, but actually it is a very deep positional idea. Karjakin would like to settle his knight on d5 and he gets ready to take back with ...exd5, after which the e5-pawn is hanging, thanks to ♙e1.

11...♗h7

Black would like to get counterplay by playing ...f5, so he leaves from the pin. 11...♙g4 just gives temporary activity. 12.h3 ♙xf3 13.♖xf3 ♘d4 14.♖d1 White just got the bishop pair and the d4-knight will be kicked out soon after with ♘d5 and c3.

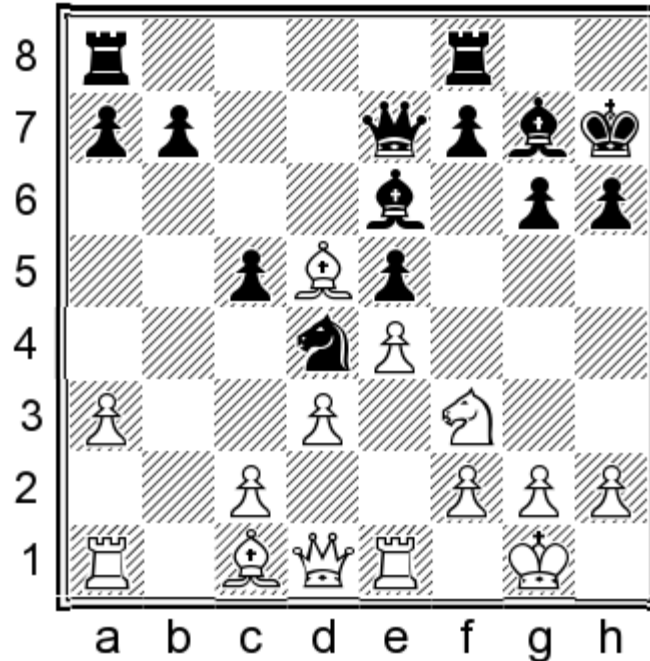
12.♘d5 ♙e6

Black succeeds in getting rid of the d5-knight, but another piece is replacing it there, which will also be very annoying. 12...♘xd5 13.exd5 and e5 is hanging. 12...f5 is premature at the moment. 13.♘xe7 ♖xe7 14.exf5 gxf5 15.♙b2 White quickly puts very strong pressure on the e5-pawn. There is a direct threat with ♙d5, winning the e5 pawn.

13. ♖xe7 ♜xe7 14. ♙d5!

Whenever Black takes on d5, he will create a very strong protected passed pawn (after c4) for White.

14... ♜d4



14... ♙xd5 15. exd5 ♜d4 16. c4± White takes on d4 next (or plays ♜d2, ♙b2-d4 as in the game) and the structure is seemingly similar, but actually White has a large advantage because the d4-pawn is not a passed pawn.

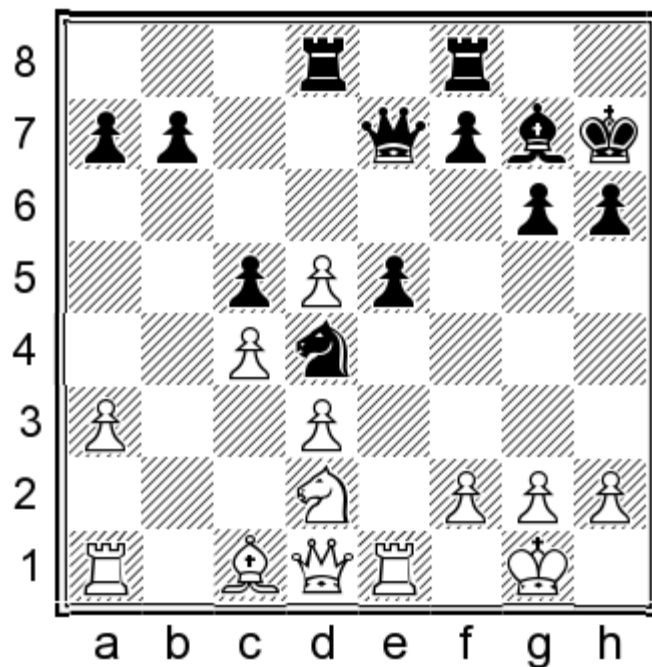
15. ♜d2!

Another strong positional move to save the knight for the future. White sees the following position in his eyes: he will play c4, ♙b2 and ♙xd4, when the knight dominates the g7-bishop. The game demonstrates this well.

15... ♙xd5

15... ♜ad8 would be met by 16. c3 ♜c6 17. c4 ♜d4 18. ♙b2± and ♙xd4 next, followed by queenside play. White forces Black to play ..b6, which is going to be countered by a minority attack with a4-a5.

16. exd5 ♜ad8 17. c3 ♜b5 18. c4 ♜d4



19.a4!

Another great move! Prophylaxis against Black's idea to push ...b5 and ...bxc4, when he will also obtain a protected passed pawn on d4. 19.♙b2 b5 20.♙xd4 cxd4 is what White cleverly prevented.

19...♚d7 20.♞b1

As mentioned, provoking the ...b6 move to make a5 more effective.

20...b6 21.♙b2

White has a very easy game from now on. All the moves on the queenside suggest themselves.

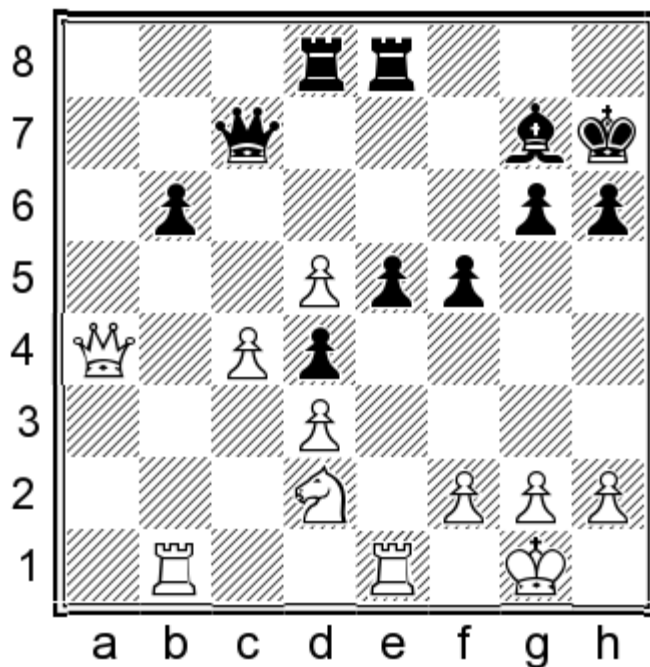
21...♞fe8 22.a5 ♚c7

22...bxa5 would just help White, since it weakens the c5-pawn. 23.♘e4 ♞c8 24.♙a3±

23.♞a4

Focusing all the pieces on the queenside while Black cannot create any serious counterplay.

23...f5 24.axb6 axb6 25.♙xd4 cxd4



White got what he wanted with the passed pawn on d5, the b6-weakness and the superior knight. He has various ways to increase the advantage: he could double his rooks on the b-file or prepare for an invasion on the a-file. Karjakin chooses the most direct way.

26. ♖c6 ♜xc6 27. dxc6 ♜c8

27...♜b8 was clearly a better defense for Black. White plays here again 28.f4! ♜ec8 (28...exf4 29. ♜xe8 ♜xe8 30. ♜xb6± c6 is too strong. The knight is coming to support it with b3.) 29.fxe5 ♜xc6 30. ♘f3 ♙f8 31. ♜a1± with a huge advantage for White.

28. ♜xb6 ♜e6 29. f4!

White wins the e5-pawn.

29...e4

The best chance to get rid of some material, as White has enough left to win the game. 29...♜cxc6 30. ♜xc6 ♜xc6 31.fxe5+— followed by ♘f3, and d4 will also fall soon.

30. dxe4 fxe4 31. ♜xe4 ♜exc6 32. ♜xc6 ♜xc6 33. ♜e7

Taking the rook to its most active place on d7, from where it disturbs the king and prevents all the Black ideas connected with the d-pawn as well.

33...♙g8 34. ♜d7 ♙f8 35. ♘e4

Provoking the advance of the d-pawn, when it becomes more vulnerable. White threatens to take on d4 at this moment, because he has prevented ...♙c5, and ...♜xc4 does not work because of the mate after ♘f6 and ♜h7.

35...d3 36. ♙f2 ♙a3

Black already wants to take on c4, because ♘f6 is not mate anymore after ...♙f8. White simply protects his pawn and

is going to take the d-pawn with the king.

37.♖d4 ♜f7

37...♙b2 would be met by 38.♖d8+ ♜g7 39.c5! ♙a3 40.♖d5+- and ♜e3 next.

38.♜e3 ♙c1+ 39.♗d2

and the second pawn is lost, which is already too much for Black.

39...♙xd2+ 40.♜xd2 ♖a6 41.c5

Black resigned in view of 41.c5 ♖a2+ 42.♜xd3 ♖xg2 43.c6 The black king is cut off from the c-pawn. A great game by Karjakin! It is very hard to win such a clear-cut game at the highest level.

1–0

GAME 20

M. Carlsen (2864)

V. Anand (2786)

8th Tal Memorial

Moscow RUS (5.2)

18.06.2013, [E46]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

We are facing what is probably the last tournament game between the actual World Champion and his challenger. The Match is going to take place in India in November. Could it be that it is Anand's destiny to lose his WCC title in his home country?! We will find out later this year... In the current game, Magnus Carlsen clearly shows that he is to be taken very seriously in the upcoming 12 games of the match!

1.d4

The World Number 1 plays both 1.e4 and 1.d4, which makes preparation very difficult...

1...♗f6 2.c4 e6

Anand also has a huge range of openings in his Black repertoire. From the Slav to the Gruenfeld, or the solid Queen's Gambit and the Nimzo, all of them can be seen on the board.

3.♗c3 ♙b4 4.e3 0-0 5.♗ge2

The line with 5.♗ge2 is not the most popular one, but it is quite tricky and relatively unforced. Magnus Carlsen often tries to reach a normal, "playable" position out of the opening, hoping to outplay his opponents in the rest of the game — which usually works! :)

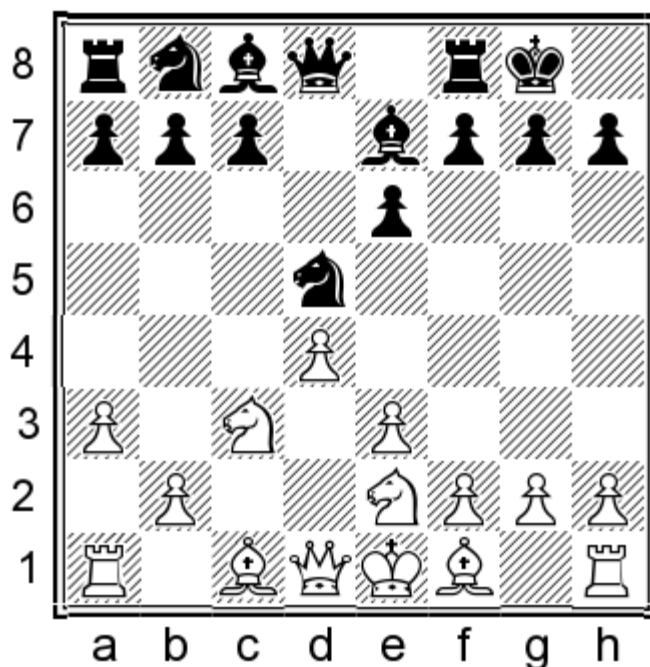
5...d5 6.a3 ♙e7

6...♙d6 is the other main move in this position. 7.c5 ♙e7 Followed by ...b6 and ...a5. This line is considered to be fine for Black.

7.cxd5

In the interview after the game, Carlsen said that he chose this line because Anand didn't have too much experience here. Well, now we can say that it worked!

7...♖xd5



Personally I would not advise playing this move. 7...exd5 would lead us to the main-lines, where White has several ideas. To play 8.b4, trying to fix the pawn structure on the queenside, to play 8.g3, 8.♘f4 or 8.♘g3. All these moves are possible.

8.♙d2!?

A very tricky move! Black's main idea is to play ...c5 and White is preparing to face it.

8...♖d7

After 8...c5 9.dxc5 ♙xc5 10.♘xd5! we can see that ♙d2 was a very useful move as the rook now quickly comes to c1. 10...♙xd5 11.♘f4 Followed by ♙c3 or ♖c1, which should give White a small but pleasant edge.

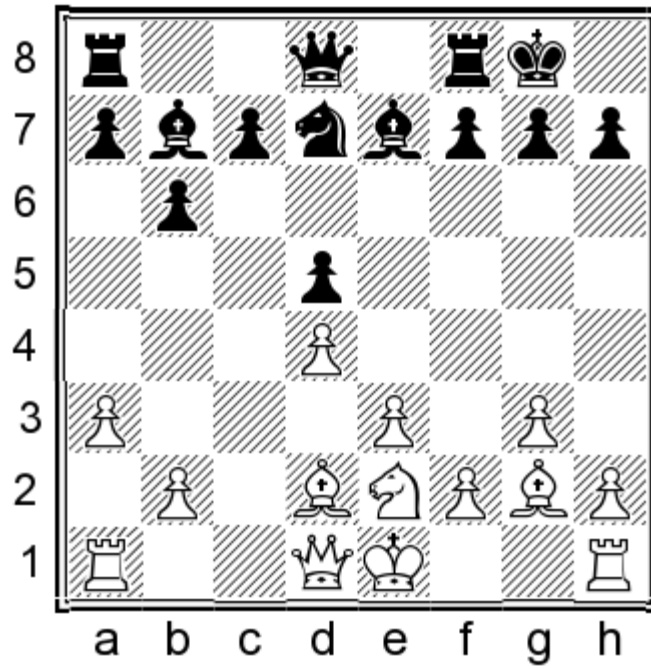
9.g3 b6?!

After this move, Black enters quite an unpleasant position. I think Black should have tried to push 9...c5 10.♘xd5 exd5 11.♙g2 ♘f6 12.dxc5 ♙xc5 13.♖c1 and even though White might be slightly better, Black's position is very playable.

10.♘xd5!

Typical and very strong. After playing 9...b6, Black has a clear weakness: the c6-pawn.

10...exd5 11.♙g2 ♙b7



12. ♖b4

Quite a provocation. 12.0-0 would be a normal move.

12... ♗f6

Too passive again in my opinion. Now it was really time to play 12...c5 13.dxc5 (13. ♖c3 ♗f6 doesn't change much.) 13...bxc5 14. ♖c3 ♗f6 15.0-0 ♜b6 with a normal position.

13.0-0 ♞e8

It was the last chance to play ...c5.

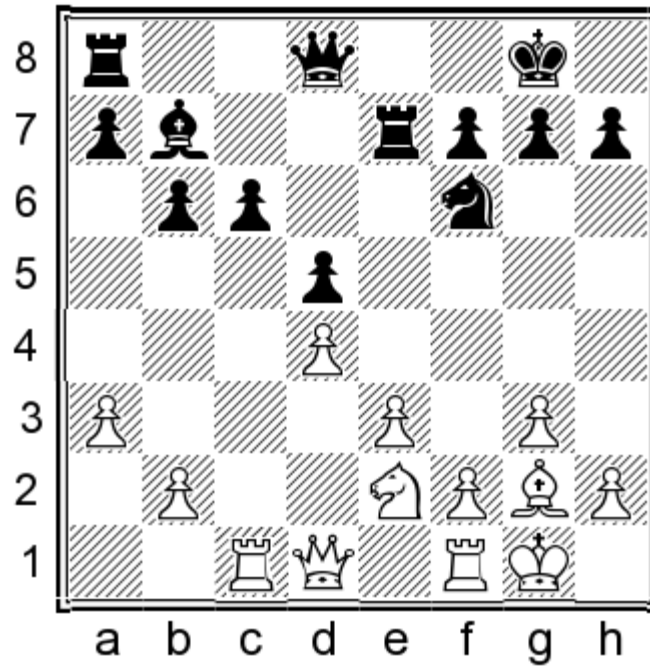
14. ♞c1

Black will no longer be able to play ...c5.

14...c6

14... ♖xb4?! would be a positional mistake as after 15.axb4 White would have full control over the c5 move and b5 could also sometimes be dangerous.

15. ♖xe7 ♞xe7



16. ♖e1

White does not hurry. Black has almost no plan and has to keep on “waiting”. White’s idea is pretty clear: play ♖f4-♖d3 and maybe ♖e5, followed by putting pressure on the c6-pawn or by playing f3-e4.

16... ♔d6

Another “strange” move from the World Champion. 16... ♖e4 followed by ... ♖d6 looks much more solid. Black’s position is passive, but to break through is a hard job.

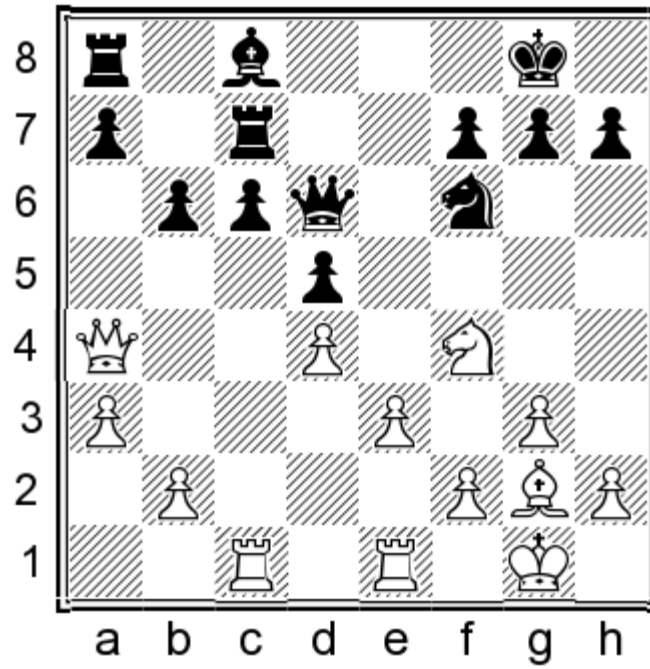
17. ♖f4 ♕c8

It is very logical to transfer the bishop to f5, but could it be that it is already too late for it..? 17... ♖c7 followed by a passive defence would have been a more solid choice.

18. ♔a4

Things are getting pretty forced.

18... ♖c7



19.f3!

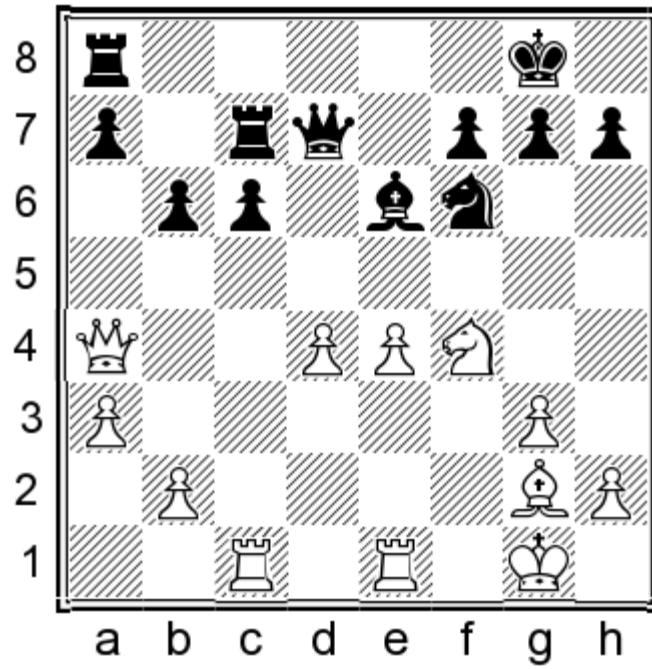
White seizes the moment for a more-or-less final blow. Black's pieces are pretty unco-ordinated and the e4 push is almost a killer.

19...♙e6 20.e4 dxe4

It is already hard to give Black any advice. 20...♙d7 21.♘xe6 ♙xe6 22.e5 looks very ugly for Black too.

21.fxe4 ♙d7

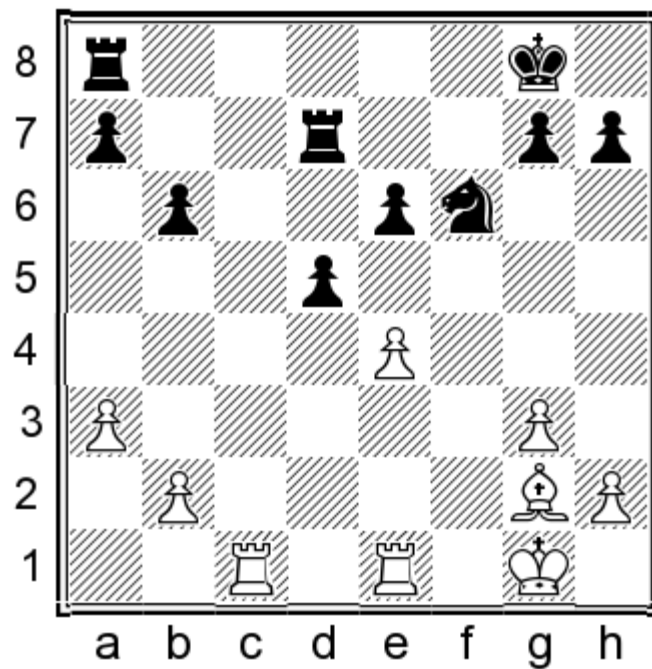
If Black had an extra move, things would be more-or-less fine, but it is White to move and Carlsen does not miss such chances.



22.d5!

The game is over now! After outplaying his opponent in a positional game, Carlsen finishes him off with a nice tactic.

22...cxd5 23.♙xd7 ♖xd7 24.♘xe6 fxe6



25.♕h3!

This is the key move, which the World Champion probably missed. Black's position is now falling apart.

25...♔h8

25...♔f7 26.exd5 followed by ♟xe6 and White is winning.

26.e5

Shutting the black knight out of the game.

26...♘g8 27.♟xe6 ♜dd8 28.♞c7

The position is just hopeless.

28...d4 29.♟d7

White wants to play e6 next, and then ♞d1–♞xd4. I don't think that Anand has lost many games in such a way in his whole chess career. Was this already a “sign” for the upcoming WCC match?! We will see in about 5 month from now!

1–0

GAME 21

A. Morozevich (2736)

S. Mamedyarov (2761)

FIDE GP Beijing

Beijing CHN (10.3)

15.07.2013, [D78]

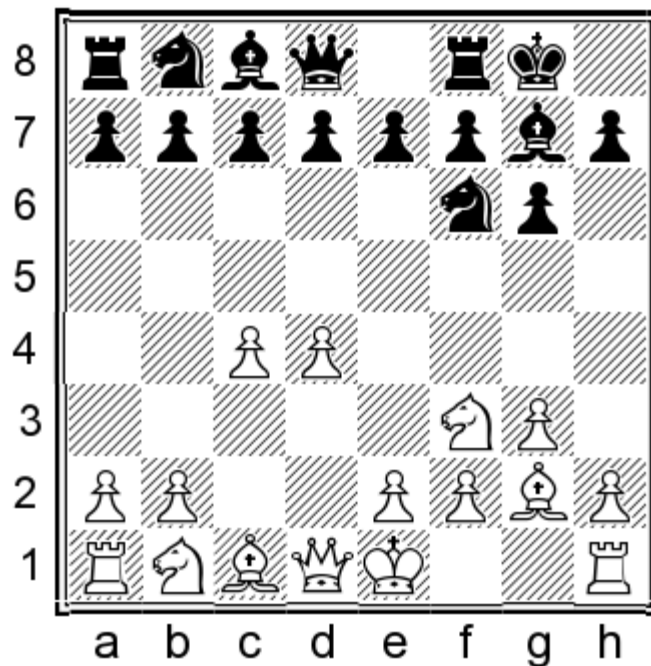
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

Morozevich defeated Mamedyarov in an outstanding positional game.

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6

Mamedyarov recently switched to the popular and sharp Gruenfeld Defence, which fits in well with his style. White decides to try the g3 system against it.

3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2 0-0 5.d4



5...c6

This is considered to be the safest option for Black, creating a stable center with ...d5. 5...d5 6.cxd5 ♘xd5 is the other main line, with much sharper lines as the position is more open.

6.0-0 d5 7.♖b3

A relatively rare variation with the idea of maintaining the tension in the center. The main move is 7.cxd5, which leads to a dry, symmetrical position with a marginal advantage for White.

7...dxc4

Theory considers 7...♖b6! to be the right response.

8. ♖xc4 ♕d5

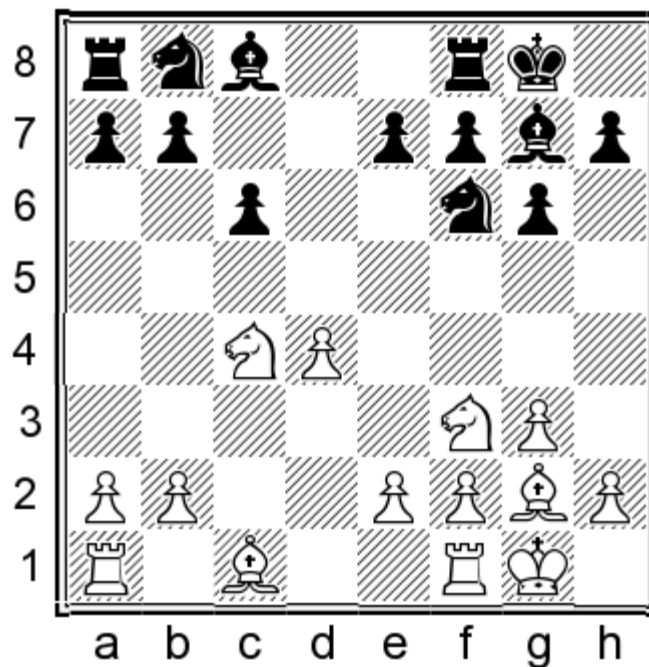
As a draw was enough for Mamedyarov to win the tournament, he aims for simplification, but as we will see he soon ends up in an unpleasant position.

9. ♘bd2

Morozevich is ready to play a slightly better endgame, where the knight is going to be excellently placed on c4. If White tries to avoid the trade of the queens and plays for instance 9. ♖a4, then Black responds with 9... ♕h5 followed by ... ♗h3, exchanging the strong bishop.

9... ♖xc4 10. ♘xc4

The only plusses for White are the small space advantage and the developed knight on c4. The way Morozevich will convert these nuances into a full point reminds us of the best days of Karpov.



10... ♗e6

It is a typical maneuver by Black to transfer the bishop to d5 in order to oppose the g2-bishop. However, it also has the drawback that it leaves the b7-pawn unprotected which might be directly attacked by ♘a5.

11. b3!

White prepares ♗a3 and stabilizes the c4-square for his knight. 11. ♘a5 immediately was not so good: 11... b6! White is normally happy to provoke this weakening because the c6-pawn becomes really vulnerable after ♘e5, but in this case the a5-knight does not find a happy place on the board. It should retreat to c4, but it is not possible. 12. ♘b3 a5 when Black gets too active.

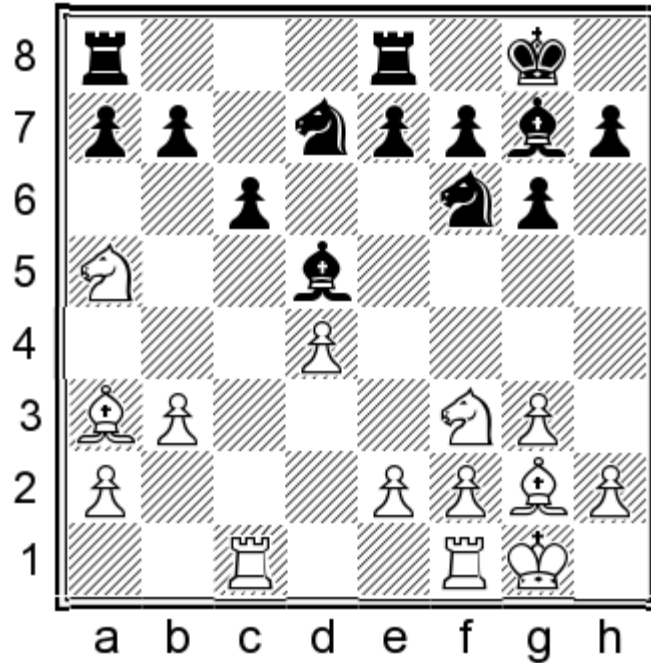
11... ♗d5 12. ♗a3

It would also have made sense to prepare this move with a small positional improvement on the pawn structure by playing 12. a4

12...♖e8 13.♗ac1

Morozevich develops all his pieces to their most natural squares.

13...♘bd7 14.♘a5!



Attacking the weakness. Black is forced to defend passively with both of his rooks, but it is still very difficult to make progress.

14...♗ab8 15.♗fd1

Activating the last unemployed piece. White has “easier” moves due to the space advantage.

15...♕f8

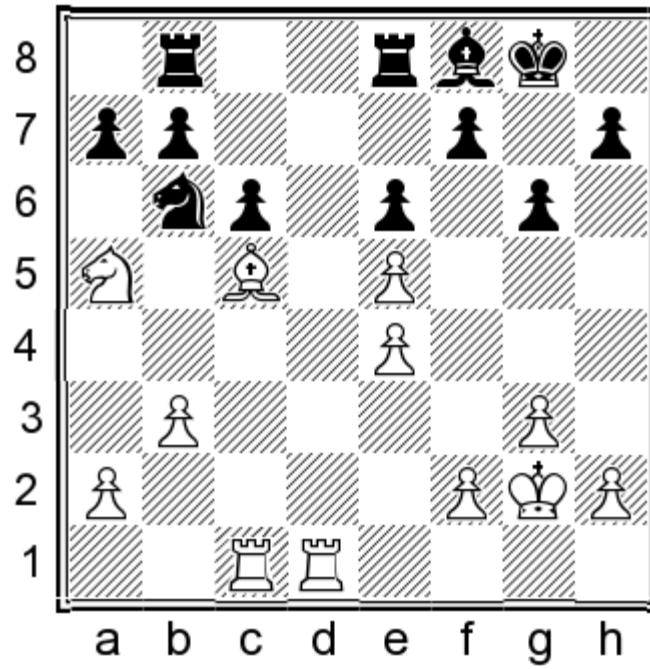
Black prepares for mass of exchanges and equalizing with ...e5, which was not possible immediately because of taking twice on e5 followed by ♗d6 forking the rooks. White must take some active measures against this threat.

16.♘e5!

Using the fact that White is well prepared for the opening of the d-file.

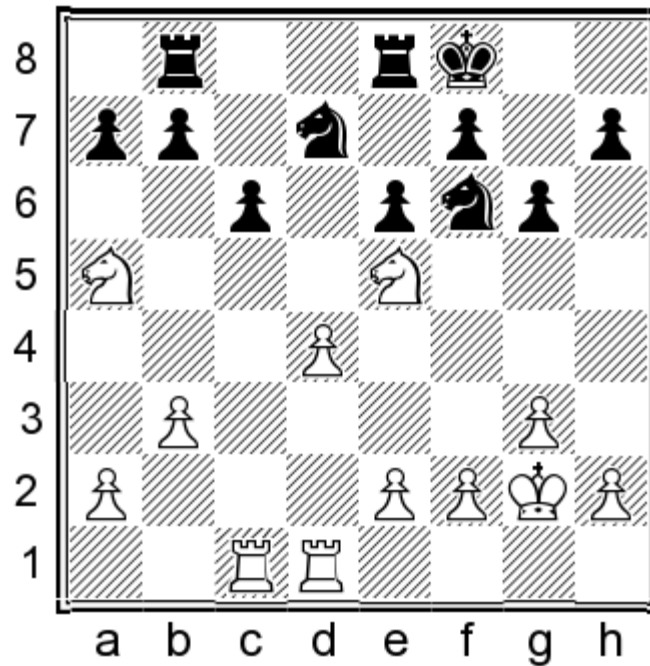
16...♙xg2 17.♔xg2 e6

17...♘xe5 would only increase White’s advantage after 18.dxe5 ♘d5 19.e4 ♘b6 Preventing ♗d7. 20.♙c5! e6



Black is busted. He cannot take on c5, because after bxc5 the rook goes to d7, the knight cannot move because of the same reason and he cannot trade the rooks with ...♖d8 because the b7-pawn is hanging. 21.b4±

18. ♕xf8 ♖xf8



19. ♖ec4!

A strong positional move! As the principle states, the player with a space advantage should aim to keep the pieces on board.

19... ♖e7

Black was forced to control the d6-square, but this deprives Black from freeing his position with ...e5.

20.b4!

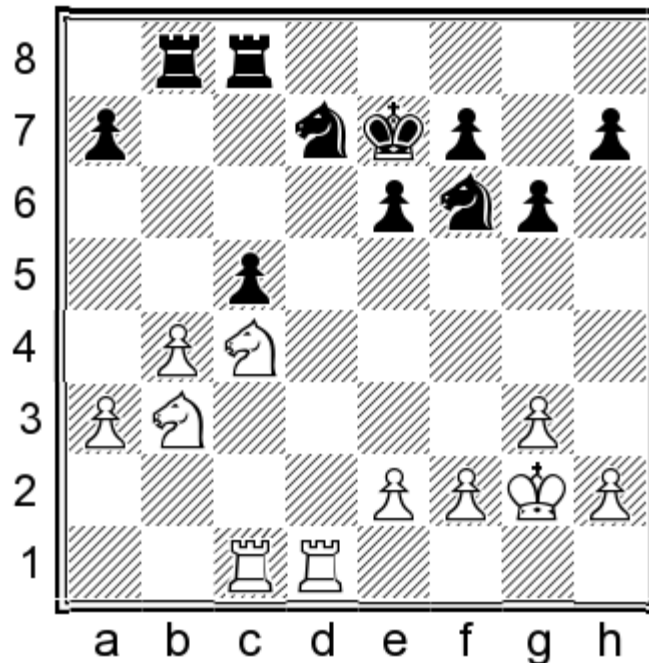
Gaining more space on the queenside. The a5-knight is getting more and more annoying as it disturbs the movements of the Black pieces.

20...♞ec8 21.a3

White is not in a hurry; he protects the b4-pawn 'just in case' against the possible attack with ...♘d5.

21...g5!

Black tries to gain some space and aims to disturb White from progressing with his plans, such as f4-♔f3 followed by g4-g5 or e4. In a few moves he could have become completely squeezed. Unfortunately for Black, the freeing attempt with 21...b6 22.♘b3 c5 did not work because of 23.dxc5 bxc5



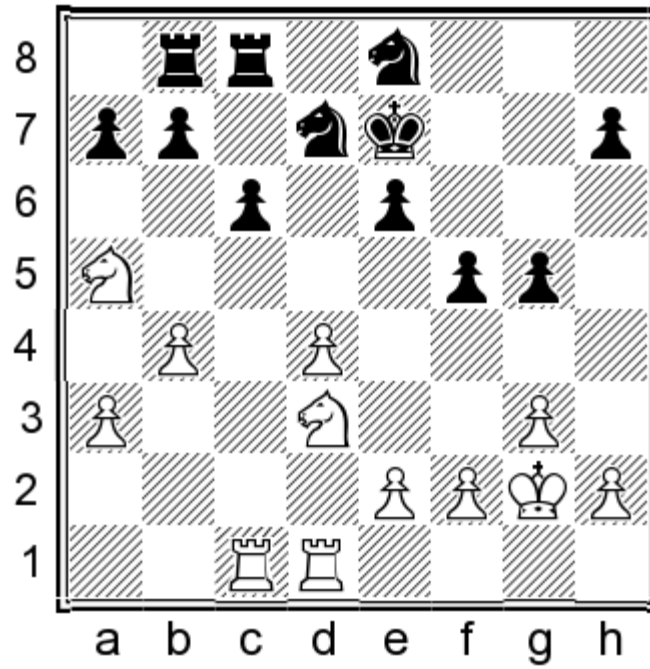
24.♘ca5! With the threat of ♘xc5. 24...cxb4 (24...♞b5 is met by 25.♞c4 and ♞dc1, winning the pawn.) 25.♘c6+! is the point and Black does not get sufficient compensation for the exchange. 25...♞xc6 26.♞xc6 bxa3 27.♘c5 ♘xc5 28.♞xc5± followed by ♞a5, winning the a-pawns.

22.♘b2!

White transfers the knight to d3, from where it will control both of Black's freeing breaks with ...b6-c5 or ...e5. We must add that after g5, ...e5 is not necessarily something to be afraid of, since the f5-square and the g5-pawn would become vulnerable.

22...♘e8 23.♘d3 f5

Black tries to defend actively, but it allows White to provoke further weakenings.

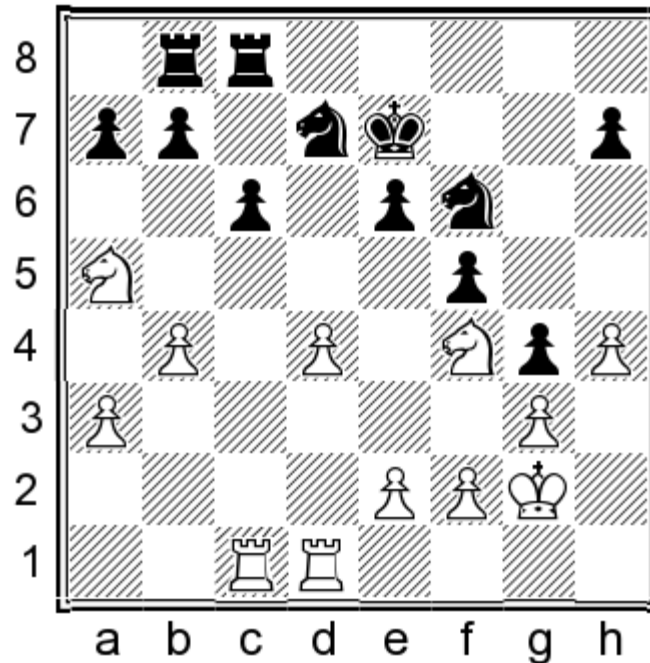


24.h4! g4

A sad, but forced decision. Sad, because it has created another nice outpost for the knight, now on f4. Black could not allow the opening of the h-file. 24...gxh4 is met by 25.♖h1! hxg3 Otherwise White would play ♖xh4 and the new pawn island on h7 would be a serious achievement for him. 26.♖xh7+ ♜d8 27.♞f4+;

24...h6 also allows 25.hxg5 hxg5 26.♖h1 followed by the penetration on the h-file.

25.♞f4 ♞ef6



26.♖c2!

This kind of “small” improving moves were the specialties of Karpov. As they said, when Karpov could not find a plan in a position, he always doubled his rooks. :) White has not decided where to use his rooks yet, he will base it on the circumstances later on.

26...♖d5 27.♖d3!

Following the same principle as on the 19th move. White keeps his pieces on the board because of his space advantage.

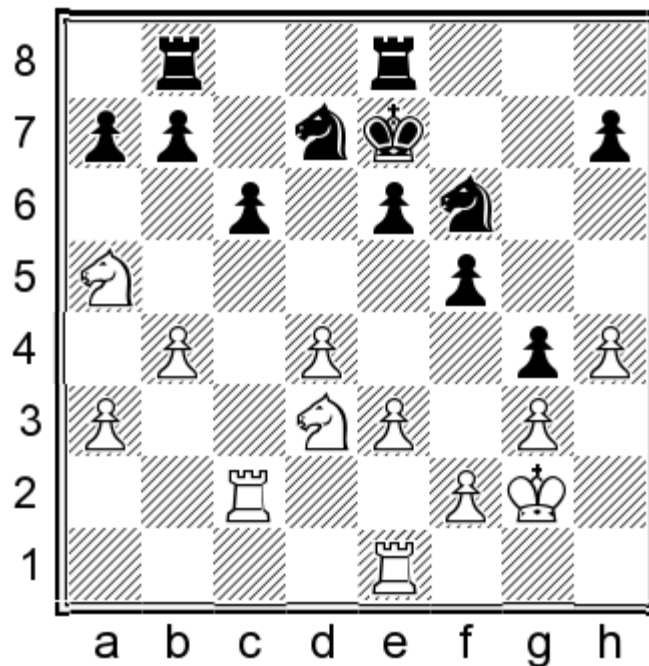
27...♜f8

Mamedyarov tries to get some counterplay by playing ...f4, but of course Morozevich does not allow such chances.

28.e3! ♜fe8 29.♜e1!

Another great move by White! He creates the unpleasant positional threat of pushing e4, when following fxe4 ♜xe4, the g4- and e6-pawns become real targets. Black has to prevent this.

29...♖5f6



30.♜b1!

Switching the rook to the queenside! The new threat is b5 cxb5 ♜xb5 and Black cannot deal with the b7-pawn, since ...b6 walks into ♖c6.

30...♜ec8

Now b5 could be met by cxb5, but...

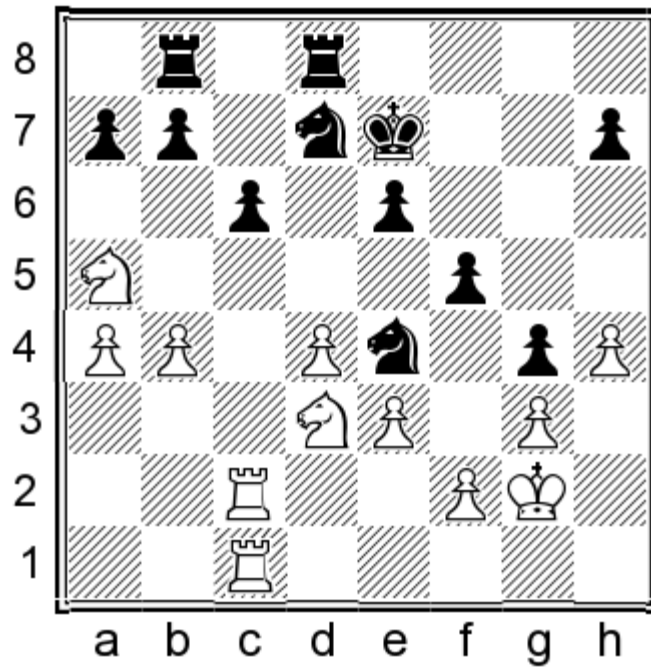
31.♜bc1!

White has refreshed the b5 idea.

31...♖d8 32.a4!

All White's pieces are excellently placed and he is well-prepared for the breakthrough. b5 is coming next, followed by the invasion on the 7th rank.

32...♘e4



32...a6 could be met by 33.♘c5! Black is forced to take, but the opening of the b-file is critical for the b7-pawn.
33...♙xc5 34.bxc5 Followed by ♖b1 and ♖b2, collecting the pawn.

33.b5 cxb5 34.♖c7!

Morozevich finds the decisive blow!

34...♘d6

34...bxa4 35.♘xb7 is over, for instance after 35...♖f8 36.♘e5 ♘ef6 37.♘c6+ wins.

35.♘c5!

Further pressing the b7-pawn, but Black has no more resources to defend it. The game is over.

35...bxa4

35...♘e8 36.♖xb7 ♖xb7 37.♘cxb7 ♖a8 38.axb5+— White has an extra pawn and a winning position.

36.♘cxb7 ♘xb7 37.♘xb7 ♖f8 38.♖1c6!

Morozevich continues to find the best moves! Complete domination. White creates the decisive threat of ♘c5.

38...♖f7

38...a3 39.♘c5+— is also hopeless.

39.♖c5 ♔e8 40.♟xe6+ ♔d8 41.♟ec6!

Black resigned in view of the following lines: 41.♟ec6 ♔e8 (41...a3 is simply met by 42.♟xa7 ♖xc5 43.♟xf7 a2 44.♟a7+-) 42.♖xa4+- with a hopeless position for Black. A real positional masterpiece from Morozevich, and it is very rare to see such games on the highest level. Despite this loss, Mamedyarov deservedly won the tournament!

1-0

GAME 22

Hao Wang (2752)

F. Caruana (2796)

41st GM Dortmund GER (4.3)

29.07.2013, [A07]

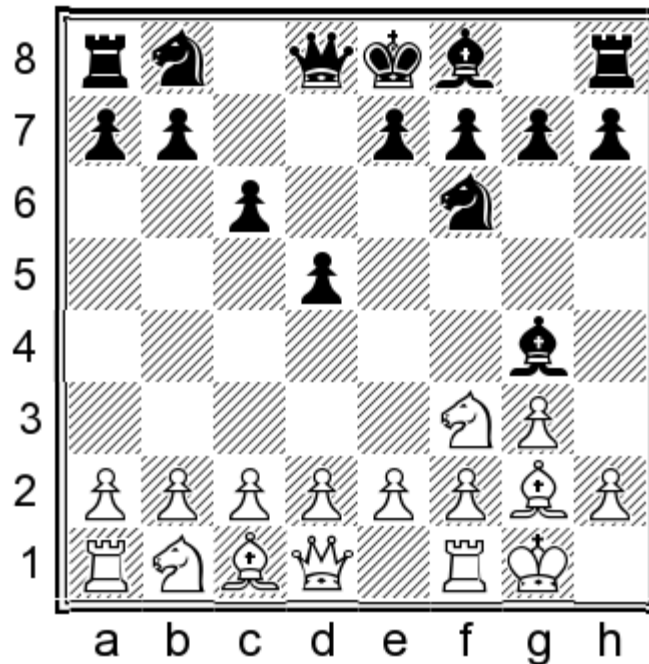
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

Wang Hao scored a very convincing win over Caruana in a game full of nice ideas.

1.♖f3 ♖f6 2.g3 d5 3.♗g2

The Chinese grandmaster wanted to avoid a theoretical debate and so opts for the Reti opening.

3...c6 4.0-0 ♗g4



5.c4

This is the most ambitious handling of the variation. Another setup is d3, ♖bd2 and e4.

5...e6 6.d3

Earlier this year, Caruana defeated Carlsen with Black after 6.cxd5 ♗xf3 7.♗xf3 cxd5 8.♖c3 ♖c6 but this line is

considered to be very safe for Black.

6...dxc4

6...♘bd7 is the main move here.

7.dxc4 ♘bd7

7...♙xd1 8.♞xd1 ♘bd7 is more consequent after taking on c4, but Caruana prefers keeping the queens on the board.

8.♘c3 ♙c7

We will soon see that this move has its drawbacks. A normal development with 8...♙e7 and 0-0 was preferable. In case White plays ♙f4, Black could simply react with ...♙b6 and ...♞fd8.

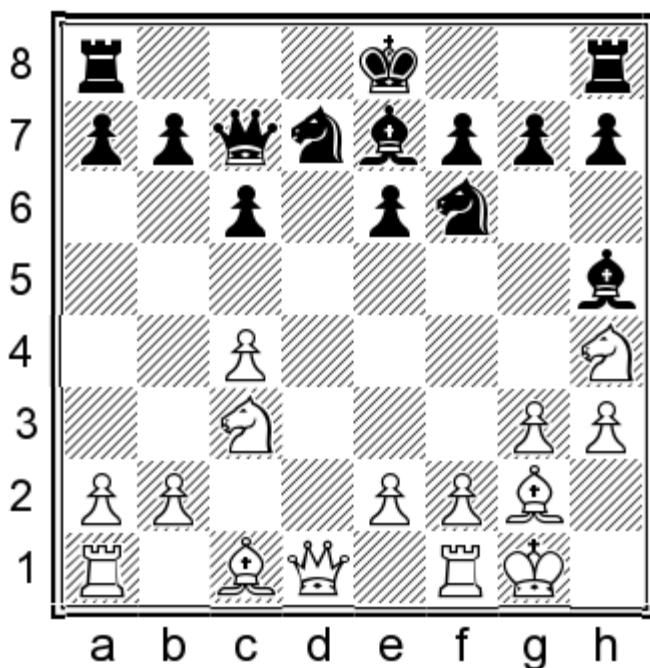
9.h3

White starts to hunt down the bishop.

9...♙h5 10.♘h4!

A typical move to fight for the bishop pair in connection with g4.

10...♙e7



11.♙f4!

A strong positional move, trying to provoke ...e5 and weaken the f5-square, which the h4-knight is immediately ready to occupy. As long as Black has not castled kingside, White should not hurry with 11.g4?! ♙g6 12.♘xg6 hxg6 since suddenly Black might change his mind and castle queenside, with a potential kingside attack thanks to the g4 weakening. There is already a direct threat with ♘xg4.

11...e5

It would have been more clever not to weaken the f5-square, but it is psychologically difficult to admit the mistake of the ...♞c7 move by playing 11...♞b6

12.♘g5

White threatens to play ♘f5.

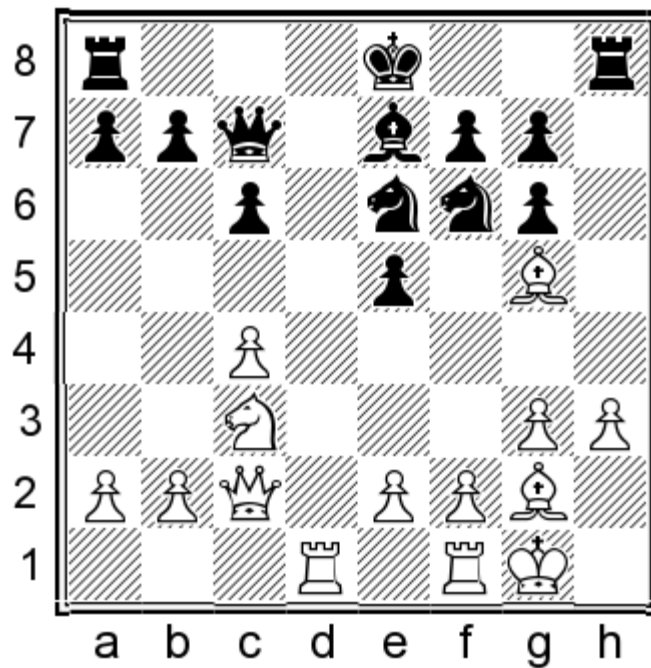
12...♘g6

Black was forced to give up the bishop without provoking the g4 weakening.

13.♘xg6 hxg6 14.♞c2

White has obtained some edge from the opening, but of course Black's structure is very solid and it needs further achievements to break it.

14...♘c5 15.♞ad1 ♘e6



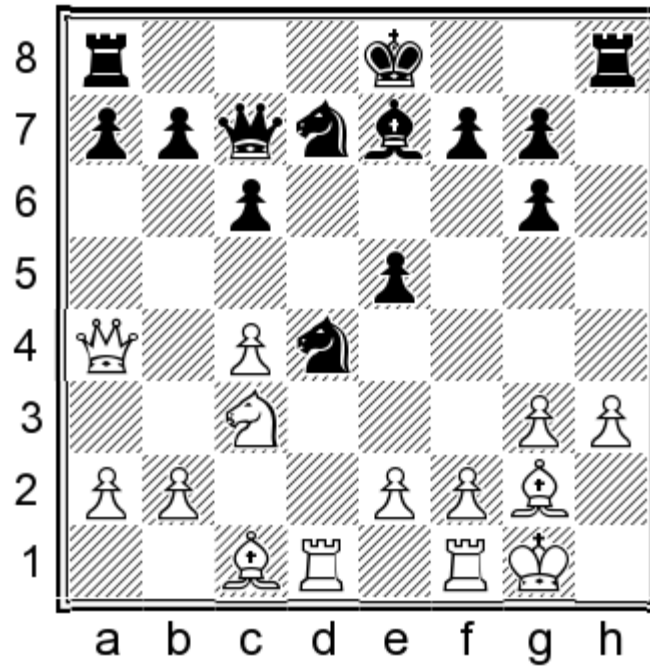
16.♞c1!

It is better to hide the bishop for the future course of the game. Later on, as the game proceeds and the position opens a bit, it might be very useful. On 16...♞e3 Black can play 16...♞c5! Without the two bishops, White has no advantage.

16...♘d4

This knight is only temporarily disturbing, since White is going to kick it out by playing e3 soon.

17.♞a4 ♘d7



Caruana further tries to improve his knights and also threatens to harass the queen.

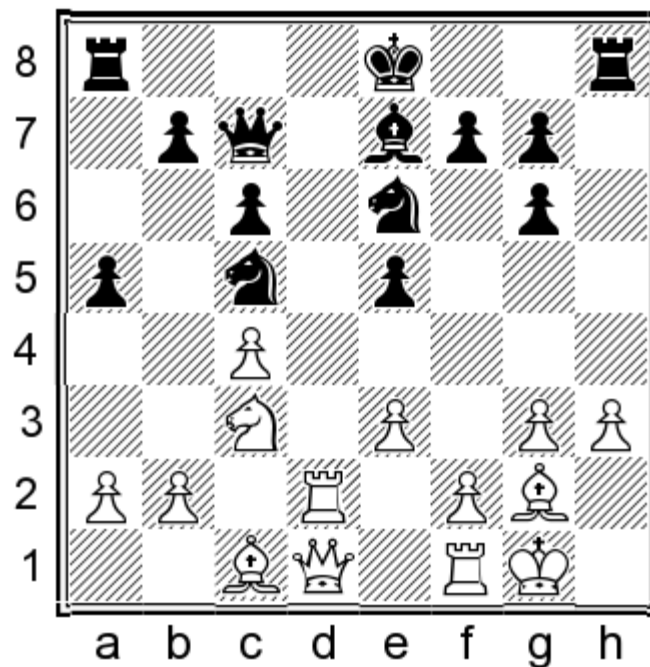
18.♖d2!!

I like this kind of moves a lot! Short and strong! :) Wang Hao frees the d1-square for his queen. Later on the c1-bishop can develop to b2, so it is not a problem to close it in...

18...♞c5 19.♙d1 a5!

Black also plays in principled fashion; he secures the c5-outpost for his knight.

20.e3 ♞de6



21.♘d5!!

A nice tactical shot! It only temporarily gives up a piece, since White wins it back by playing d6, but the important thing is the position opens up now and the bishops start to work. Especially the one on g2 becomes much stronger after the c6-pawn disappears from the board.

21...cxd5 22.cxd5 ♘g5

22...e4 23.dxe6 f5 would have been principled, to lock the g2 bishop, however White gets an advantage here as well: 24.b3 ♘xe6 25.♙b2 and Black cannot castle because of ♖d7, while the g2-bishop has the potential to be improved by ♙f1–c4 later on. 22...♘f8 23.d6 ♙xd6 24.♖xd6 is also better for White, as b3 and ♙a3 or ♙b2 is coming.

23.h4!

Black cannot keep the piece.

23...♞d6

23...♘h7 24.d6 ♙xd6 25.♖xd6 0-0 26.b3 The bishops are going to dominate the knights... 23...♘ge4 is met by 24.♙xe4 ♘xe4 25.♞a4+!± with an extra pawn after taking on e4.

24.hxg5 ♙xg5 25.b3!

It is time to develop the c1-bishop, and on a3 it is going to occupy an excellent place.

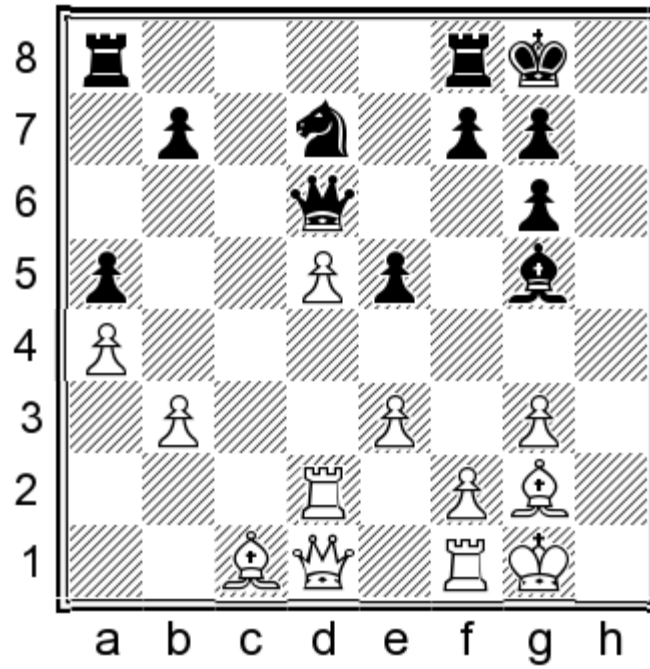
25...♘d7

Caruana makes a prophylactic move against ♙a3. On b2 the bishop would be much less annoying.

26.a4!

A great move in connection with the next move!

26...0-0



27.♖a2!!

Just brilliant how Wang Hao uses this rook: another subtle move after ♜d2! The bishop is going to a3 now! Karpov was the expert of such moves!

27...♘c5 28.♙a3 ♙e7

Caruana wanted to avoid playing this move. He wanted to use the b6 square for the queen, giving potential counterplay against the b3-pawn, but it was too optimistic. 28...b6 White is better anyway after 29.♞c2 followed by the same moves as in the game.

29.♞c2 ♞ac8 30.♚e2!

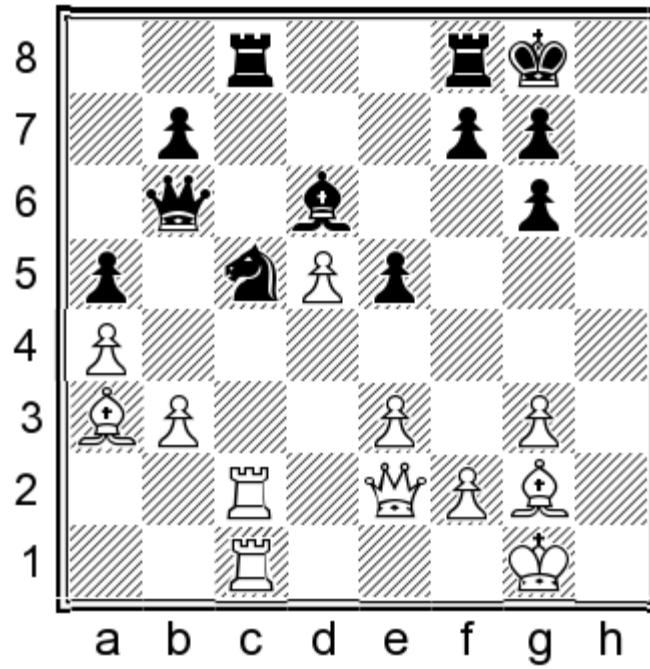
The queen is heading to b5!

30...♜b6

30...b6 31.♚b5 The position is getting more and more unpleasant for Black.

31.♞fc1 ♙d6

White already has a big advantage, but Wang Hao finds another fantastic plan to convert it into a full point.

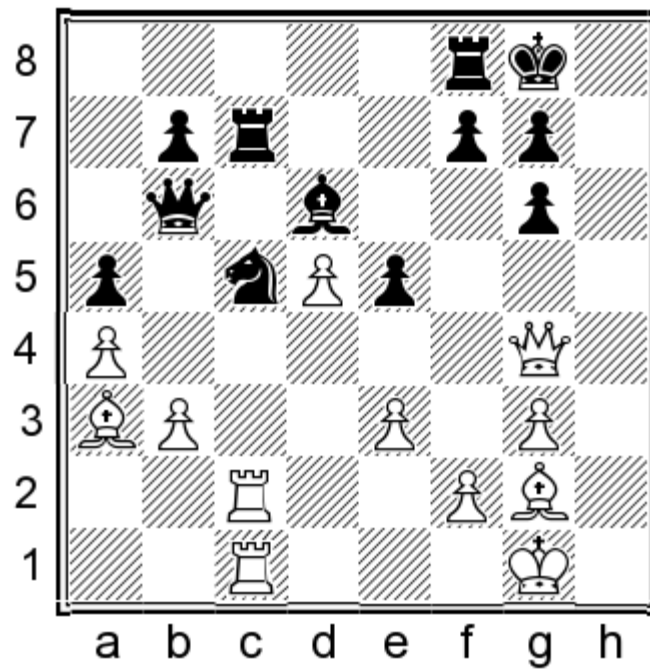


32. ♔g4!

A multi-functional move! We will see its ideas soon.

32... ♖a7

Black is forced to retreat in order to strengthen the c5 knight by playing b6. 32... ♜c7 was definitely Black's intention before, to double the rooks and depart from c5 with the knight, but with his last move White has created a nice trap...



33. b4! axb4 34. ♖xb4 And White wins material using the pin on the c-file. 34... ♖xb4 35. ♙xb4 b6 (35... ♜fc8 loses to 36. ♙a5! ♜e7 37. ♙b6+-) 36. a5+- wins.

33.♙f3!!

Here comes the second idea behind ♖g4! White suddenly has a mating attack after ♔g2, ♖h1 and ♗h3! It seems to take a lot of time, but Black's pieces are pinned and he cannot properly defend against it.

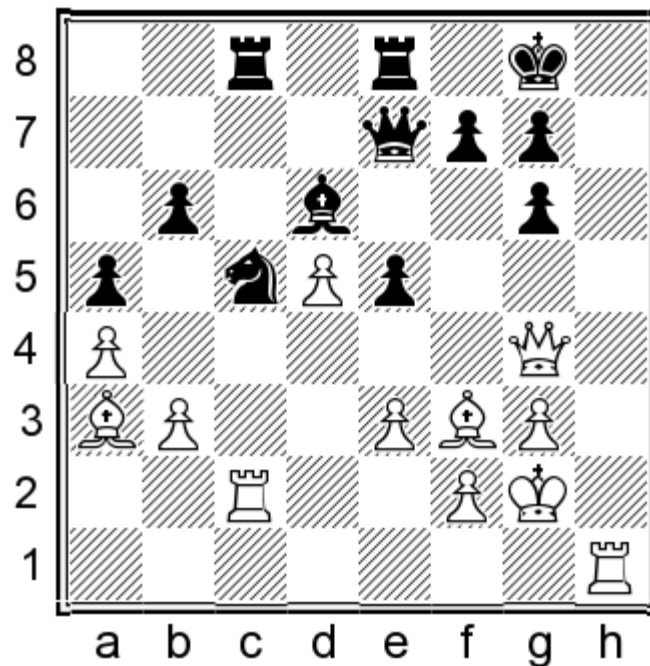
33...b6 34.♔g2!

Everything goes as Wang Hao expected!

34...♜fe8

Caruana finds no other way to defend than to free the route of the king to e7, but of course it cannot bring anything positive for him. The main problem is that he can never play ...f5 and ...♔f7, because the g6 pawn is hanging.

35.♖h1 ♗e7



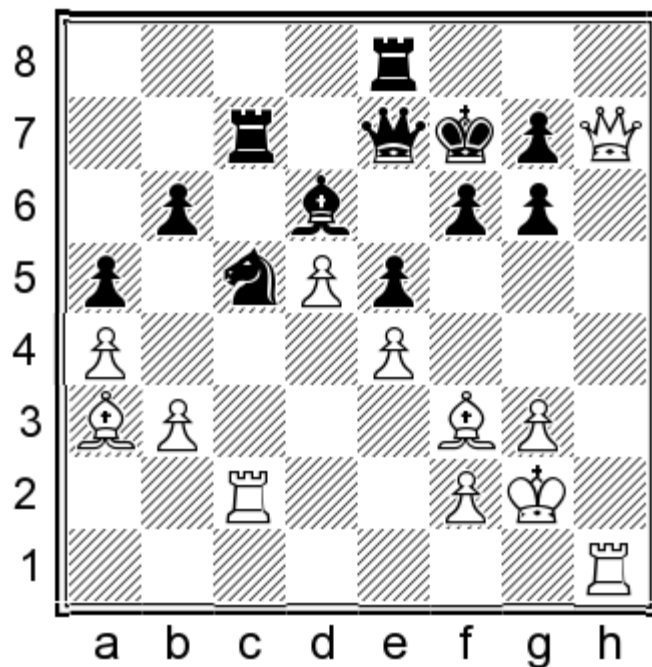
35...e4 does not change anything. 36.♙e2+—

36.e4!

A cool preparatory move before the final blow! After the direct 36.♗h3 Black could have played 36...f5 the g6-pawn is finally not hanging anymore. 37.♗h7+ ♔f7 38.♖h6 ♗f6 and Black can defend. However after e4, all these things are impossible for Black.

36...♞d7

A blunder, but it was over anyway. For instance after 36...♞c7 White wins with 37.♗h3 f6 (37...f5 38.exf5+—) 38.♗h7+ ♔f7



White has many winning moves, but the nicest one is definitely 39. ♖xg6+! ♔xg6 40. ♕h5+ ♔g5 (40... ♔h7 41. ♕f7#) 41. ♕c1# with a spectacular mate!

37. ♖xc8 ♖xc8 38. ♖h3 f5 39. ♕xd6

Black resigned in view of 39. ♕xd6 ♖xd6 40. ♖h8+ ♔f7 41. ♖xc8 A fantastic positional crush by the strongest Chinese player! We can see that it is possible to win great games even without going for the long theoretical main-lines. It is more important to make strong moves in the middle game and endgame.

1–0

GAME 23

A. Moiseenko (2699)

M. Vachier-Lagrave (2719)

Breisacher Memorial

Biel SUI (9.3)

31.07.2013, [D85]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

A nice “start-to-finish” win by Moiseenko in the Gruenfeld, an opening in which we can say that Vachier-Lagrave is one of the biggest experts in the world.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3. ♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4

The pure “main” line of the Gruenfeld.

5... ♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♕g7 7. ♖a4+!?

Moiseenko tries a side-line. On first view, 7. ♖a4 just looks shocking. Can such a move really be good?! What I can say for sure is that this move is an interesting one. The main idea is to get Black to play ... ♘d7, after which the global idea of Black in the Gruenfeld, to play ...c5 followed by ... ♘c6, is no longer possible.

7...♔d7 8.♖b3

White naturally avoids any endgames. To reach an endgame is the dream of any Gruenfeld player!

8...0-0 9.♘e3

White makes preparations against Black's ...c5 move.

9...b6

A completely normal way of developing, but maybe 9...c5 immediately would have been a better option.

10.♘f3 ♘b7 11.♙d3 c5 12.0-0

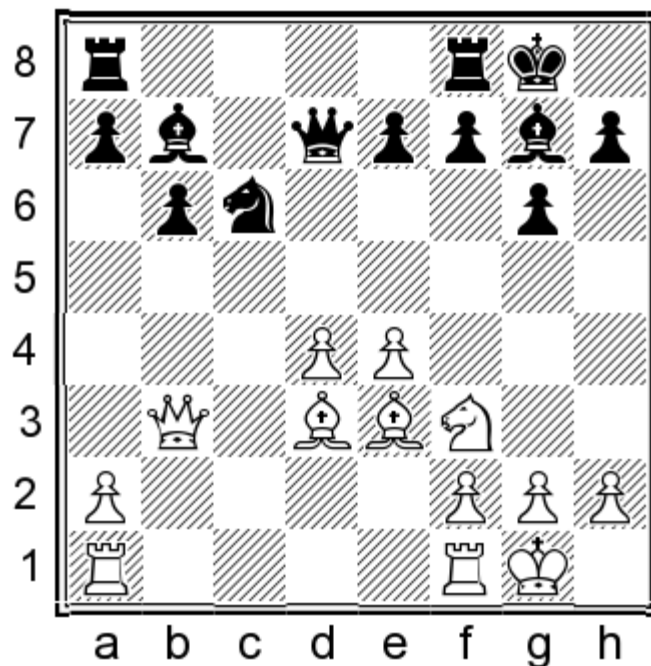
White has managed to keep a solid center, which is already an achievement, but Black is well-developed, so we can expect a complicated game.

12...cxd4

Also very “typical” play by Black against the white center.

13.cxd4 ♘c6

The pawn on d4 is hanging.



14.♙b5!

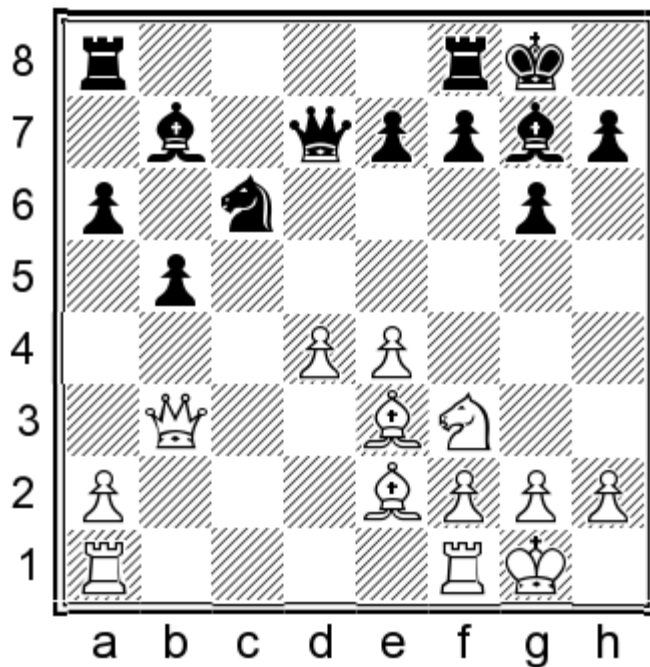
A nice move by White. Could it be that Moiseenko had prepared everything until here?!

14...a6

White wanted to push d5.

15. ♖e2 b5

If Black had a few more “free moves” like ...♖ac8, ...♜fd8 and ...♘a5-♘c4, his position would be perfectly fine. So White needs to act fast.



16.d5!

It is hard to say whether White is better, but what is certain is that White is following the right plan.

16... ♘e5?!

Giving White a very important tempo. 16... ♘a5! had to be played. 17. ♜b4 ♘c4 And White might be better, but the game stays pretty unclear.

17. ♘d4!

A nice move. White completely dominates the center.

17... ♜fc8

Black tries to get the knight to c4.

18.a4!

Another great move by White. It is important to bring the c4-square under control.

18... ♘c4

Black sacrifices a pawn in order to try and make a draw. Of course after 18...bxa4 19. ♜xa4 White would totally dominate the game.

19.axb5

The next few moves are pretty forced.

19...axb5 20.♖xa8 ♜xa8 21.♙xc4 bxc4 22.♚xc4

So White is a pawn up, but Black's chances to make a draw are not that bad. The bishop pair, plus a limited number of pawns, are keeping Black's hopes alive. The big danger is the horrible bishop on b7. If Black manages to solve this problem, the position should be close to equal.

22...♞c8?

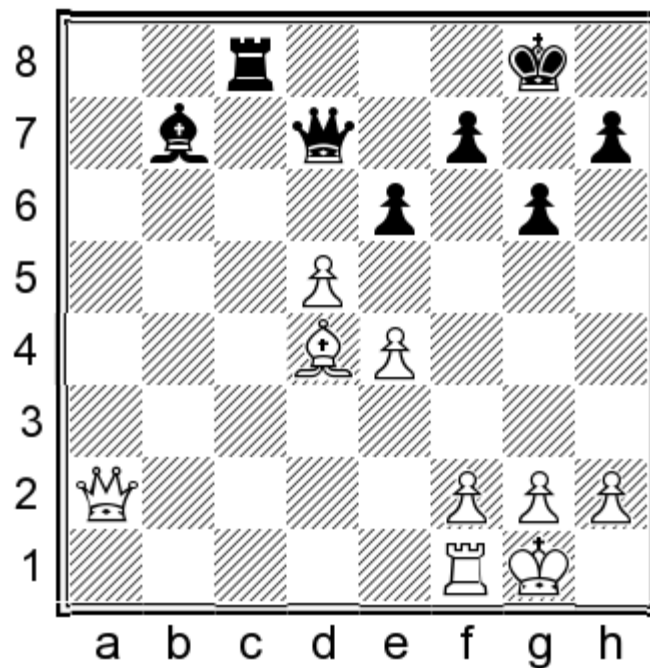
This is a serious mistake. The best way to fight for a draw was to play 22...♞a4 23.♚c5 e6! activating the bishop from b7. 24.d6 e5 and of course White is better, but maybe Black has some chances to escape.

23.♚a2

Perhaps even safer was 23.♚b3

23...♙xd4 24.♙xd4 e6

Black wins a pawn, but his dark squares are very weak.



25.♙a1!

A strong move by White, who builds a “battery” on the dark squares.

25...exd5 26.♚b2

With a little mating threat.

26...d4 27.f3!

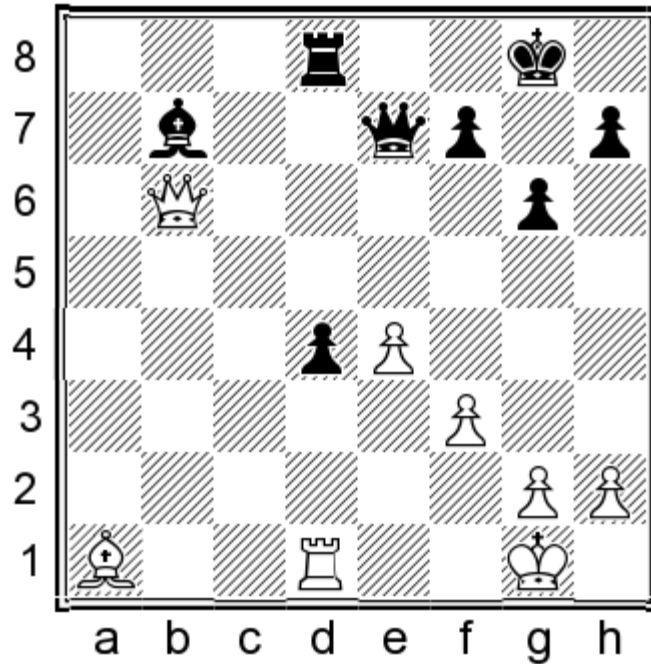
This is exactly how to play such positions. Now in the event that White manages to somehow get the d4-pawn without exchanging queens, it would spell “game over”.

27...♖d8 28.♙b6

Another good move by White. All the black pieces are somehow pinned, and White wants to play ♖d1 next.

28...♙e7 29.♖d1

There is no hurry with the pawn on d4 anymore.



29...f5

Black tries to “break free”, which is maybe the best practical chance, but of course the position of the black king now also becomes very weak. Black can never run away with 29...d3 because of the deadly 30.♙b2

30.exf5 ♖d6

Getting rid of the nasty queen on b6.

31.♙b3+ ♘d5 32.♙b8+

32.♙b4 was also strong.

32...♖d8 33.♙g3 ♘f7 34.♙f2

There is no way for Black to save the d4-pawn.

34...♘b3

This move loses quickly. 34...gxf5 35.♘xd4 would probably lead to a winning position for White, although Black would keep some theoretical chances for a draw because of the opposite-colored bishops.

35.♖e1

With tempo.

35...♖d6 36.fxg6 hxg6 37.h3

A good and safe move by White. As we know, Black can never play ...d3 because of ♖b2, so White has enough time to play a few “comfortable” moves before going for the final action.

37...♖f4 38.♞e4 ♖c1+ 39.♞e1 ♖f4

White repeats moves because of a little time-trouble.

40.♞b2

And play his 40th move...

40...d3?

Black blunders in a lost position.

41.♖b6

What a nice finish to a great positional game by Moiseenko!

1–0

GAME 24

A. Korobov (2720)

B. Jobava (2696)

FIDE World Cup 2013

Tromsø NOR (2.1)

14.08.2013, [A41]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

1.d4

We are in the first game of the 2nd round of the World Cup. Both Korobov and Jobava are very aggressive players who are not scared to risk something, even in such K.O. tournaments. We will now see a great game by Korobov!

1...d6

This move is often played against 1.d4 players because usually a person who plays 1.d4 won't go for the Pirc by playing 2.e4.

2.♟f3

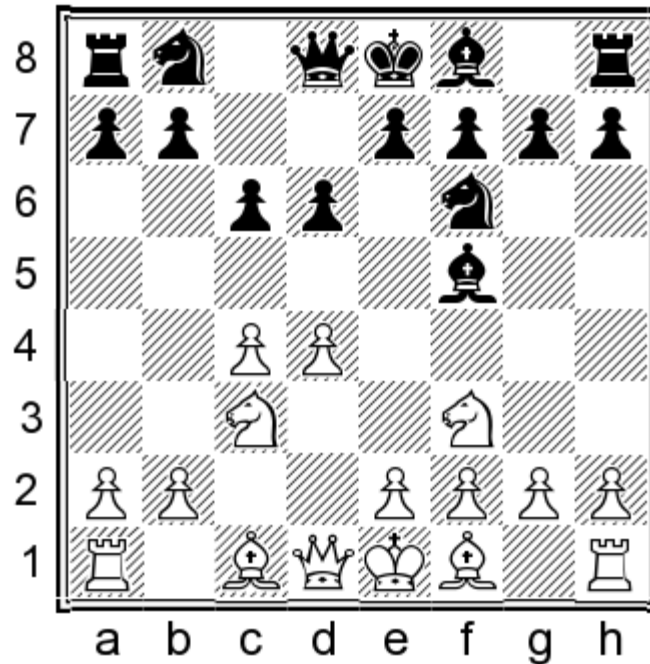
White probably wanted to avoid 2.c4 e5

2...♟f6 3.c4 c6

A very rare move and it looks a bit strange to me. In chess it is important to fight for development or the center during the opening moves, and by playing 3...c6 Black is doing neither.

4. ♖c3 ♗f5

This is probably the key idea of Jobava's play. He is trying to avoid the main King's Indian Defence, but it still looks very strange.



5. ♖h4

Very logical. 5.g3 would also have given White comfortable play.

5... ♗d7 6.e4

and White is back into a known structure.

6...e5 7. ♖f3 ♗g4

Black already has no improvement available, as after 7...exd4 8. ♖xd4 White's position is just much better.

8. ♗e2 ♖bd7 9. ♗e3 ♗e7 10.h3

Korobov once again plays a very logical move. White will have the bishop pair and a small, stable advantage.

10... ♗xf3 11. ♗xf3 0-0 12.0-0

White has an easy plan for the few next moves; to play ♔d2-♖ad1-♗fe1 and maybe g3-♗g2 followed by f4. If the position gets opened up, things could turn out very badly for Black.

12... ♖e8

Black wants to exchange the bishop by playing ...♗g5, which of course is very important.

13. ♗g4

Not the only, but the most simple, way of stopping Black from playing ...♔g5 next. 13.♚b3 is also a possible continuation.

13...exd4 14.♙xd4

White has the center and of course his future plan is to attack on the kingside.

14...♘c5

14...♘ef6 It was maybe more tricky from Black to first come back to check where the white bishop is planning to go, to f3 or e2.

15.♖ad1 ♚c7

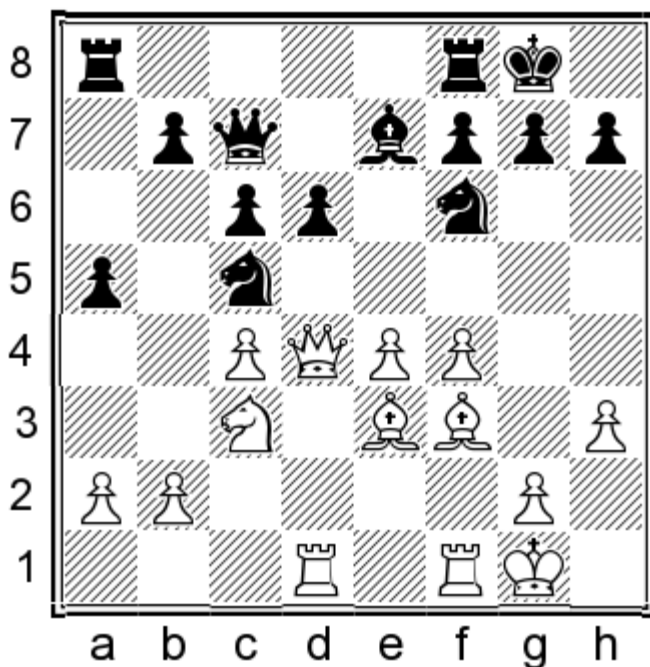
15...♗f6 doesn't work because of 16.e5!

16.f4

And White finally starts to push his pawns.

16...♘f6 17.♗f3 a5

We have quite a typical position of the KID, except that White usually has to work very hard to get it. At the moment White has everything he could wish for; the bishop pair, a solid center... but what's next?



18.g4!

Exactly the right choice! No reason to wait, White has to start the rush!

18...♘fd7

White wanted to play g5 next anyway.

19.g5 ♖fe8

We also often see this defensive idea of putting the bishop on f8 in the Sicilian.

20.h4 ♟f8 21.♚d2

21.h5 was of course also possible.

21...a4 22.h5 ♜a5

White's position looks really great, but Black's is still very solid and White needs to take care about the tricks on the queenside. A move like ...♞b6, for example, could be quite unpleasant now.

23.♚c2

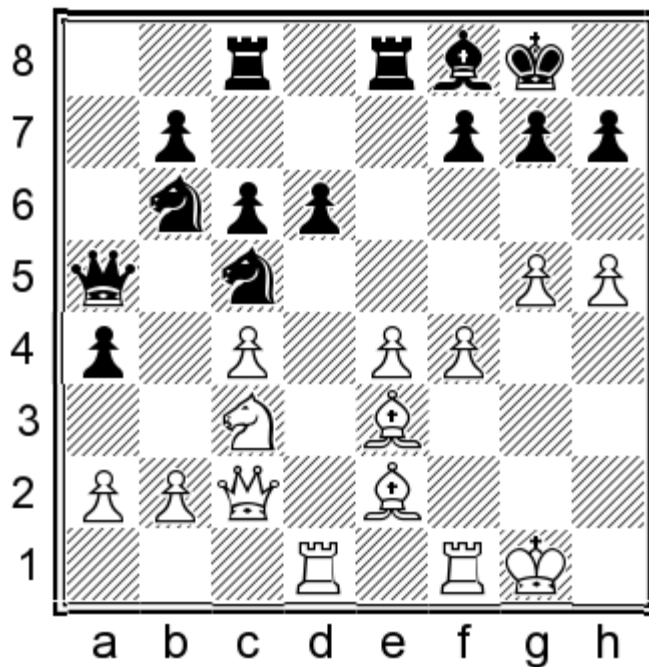
A solid prophylactic move. It was too early for 23.g6 fxg6 24.hxg6 hxg6 when it is not so clear how White should proceed with his attack.

23...♞b6 24.♟e2

Everything is protected.

24...♞ac8

Black is hoping for a ...d5 push at an opportune moment.



25.♟f2!

Another excellent prophylactic move by Korobov. White does not rush with his actions and first stops all the counterplay.

25...♞e6

It is already hard to give Black advice as although White doesn't threaten anything concrete, he doesn't have any counterplay. 25...d5 doesn't work because after 26.exd5 cxd5 27.♖xd5 White is just a pawn up.

26.♔h1

White is working on a future g6 push step-by-step.

26...♞d7

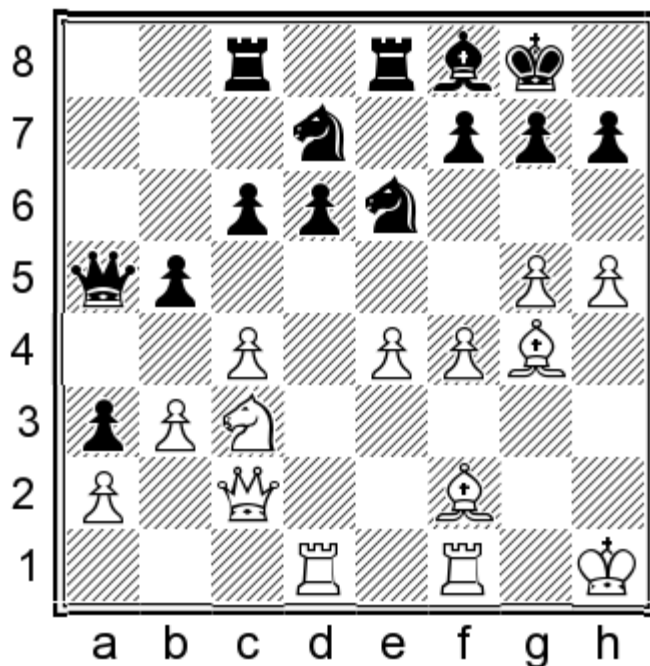
Black is going for the ...b5 push, but it doesn't look too good...

27.♙g4

The highly-positional play of Korobov leads to total desperation from Jobava. White wants to play e5, or he might even already be prepared for g6. Black's position is on the verge of collapse.

27...a3 28.b3 b5?

A desperate move.



Black should have continued to defend passively with 28...♖cd8 and even if the position is very bad, White still needs to find a final blow.

29.e5!

The black knight on d7 is hanging, so it is a good moment to start the final attack.

29...bxc4 30.bxc4

The d6-pawn is lost, so Jobava tries his practical chances.

30...♖b8

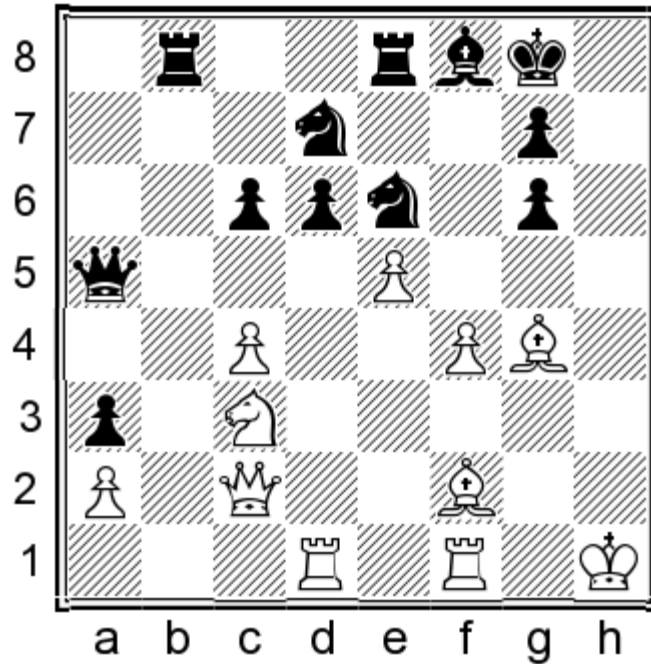
At least a Black rook might be able to come to the seventh rank.

31.g6!

White continues to totally crush Black's position.

31...fxg6 32.hxg6 hxg6

So many black pieces are hanging, but how to finish the game?!



33.♙e1!

Another very strong move by White. Of course not 33.♙xg6?? ♜xf4 and Black is back in the game.

33...♜xf4

Black doesn't have anything better as the white threat of playing ♙xg6 is deadly. 33...♞b2 34.♙xg6

34.♜d5 ♞d8 35.♜xf4 ♜xe5

White is a piece up for 3 pawns, but the attack continues.

36.♞g2

A solid move before the time control. The tempting 36.♙e6+ ♞xe6 37.♜xe6 ♞d7 would still lead to some sort of fight.

36...♜xg4 37.♙xg4

It is hard to give Black any advice here. White's attack is just too strong.

37...g5?!

This move loses on the spot. The best way to continue was to play 37...♞f6 but after White's 38.♞f3! things also look terrible for Black.

38.♟g6!

And the game is over, White wants to play ♖h5 next.

38...♙e7 39.♚e6+ ♜h7 40.♚f5 ♜g8 41.♚f7+ ♜h7

It was too much for Jobava and he resigned. Korobov had 30 minutes now to find 42.♞d2 or 42.♞f2 or 42.♔g2 and many more... :) A really great game by White, slowly building up his positional advantage and finishing with a great mating attack.

1–0

GAME 25

V. Kramnik (2784)

D. Andreikin (2716)

FIDE World Cup 2013

Tromsø NOR (7.1)

30.08.2013, [D58]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

We are in the final of the World Cup. Up until the final all the matches had been based on 2 games of normal chess, and in the event of a draw, a tiebreak was played the next day. The final match consisted of 4 classical games. Before the match it was clear that Andreikin would try to be very solid and fight for survival in the classical games — and only then look for his chances later in the rapid and blitz. So basically Kramnik had 2 tries, both his white games, to win the match in normal chess.

1.d4

Kramniks starts with d4 as usual.

1...e6

A small provocation from Andreikin who seems to be ready to play the French after 2.e4, but of course Kramnik sticks to his “closed” openings.

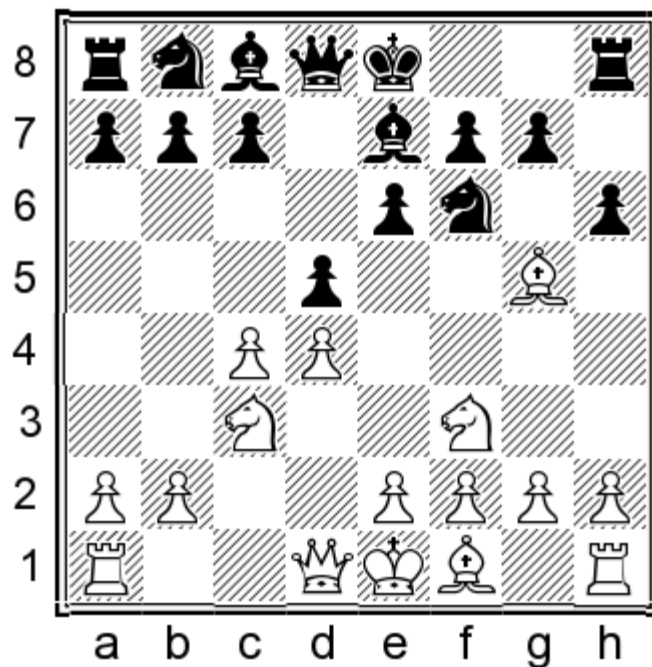
2.c4 ♟f6 3.♟f3

No Nimzo.

3...d5 4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.♟c3

We are in a classical Queen’s Gambit.

5...h6



6. ♖h4

6. ♖xf6 this move is also possible but doesn't seem to give White any advantage according to the latest games.

6...0-0 7.e3 b6

This move has been played for at least 100 years!

8. ♖d3 dxc4

Black uses the fact that White has moved his bishop. Another possible line could appear after 8... ♖b7 9. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 10.cxd5 exd5 11.b4 with maybe a minimal plus for White.

9. ♖xc4 ♖b7 10.0-0 ♘bd7

Black's position is very solid and his play is usually quite easy — to play ...c5 and ...♖c8 — which normally leads to a minimal plus for White but nothing special.

11. ♖e2

This is another normal way of playing for White, to bring the f-rook to d1 and sometimes the idea of ♖a6 could be useful as well to gain control of the white squares.

11...a6

I am not sure about his move, as now Black will always have a weakness on a6 and the rook from a8 will never move. 11...c5 would be the usual way of playing.

12. ♗fd1

Of course Black hoped for 12.a4, while with this move Kramnik questions Black's idea of ...a6.

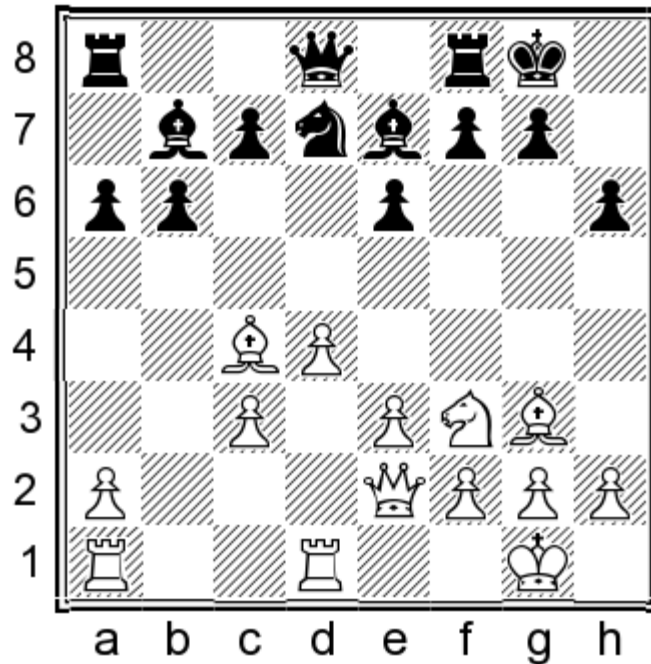
12...♖d5

Andreikin is too afraid to play the intended 12...b5?! This logical move is an inaccuracy. 13.♗d3! The best place for the white bishop in order to support the e3-e4 idea. 13...c5 14.dxc5 Black doesn't have a "good" piece with which it is possible to win the pawn back. 14...♗xc5 15.♗xf6! And White should be better.

13.♗g3

White sees no reason to exchange the bishop, as it is clear that White needs pieces on the board to make use of his intended future play in the center with e4.

13...♖xc3 14.bxc3



14...♗d6!

Andreikin senses the danger and decides to exchange one pair of bishops, which is a good decision!

15.e4 ♗xg3 16.hxg3 b5 17.♗d3 ♖b6

We can see that White is probably a bit better because of the solid center, but Black also has ideas with ...♖a4, and at some good moment ...c5.

18.♔e3?!

A very strange decision by Kramnik, as now the black knight gets to c4 with a tempo. A small, careful move like 18.♗c2! would leave White with quite an advantage, because now after Black's ...♖c4 White has ♗b3.

18...♖a4 19.♗c2

White doesn't have a better move.

19...♖b2 20.♖db1 ♖c4 21.♔c1

White prepares the a4 move.

21...c5!

But Black is also fast with the c5 push.

22.a4 cxd4 23.cxd4 ♖c8

Protecting the b5 pawn.

24.axb5 axb5 25.♚e1

Of course not 25.♖xb5 ♘d6 when White is losing the e4 pawn.

25...♙c6

Black's position is still a bit unpleasant. The b5-pawn is weak and White has some chances to launch play in the center by pushing d5.

26.♖b4 ♖a8 27.♖d1

White is preparing the d5 push and therefore needs both pairs of rooks on the board.

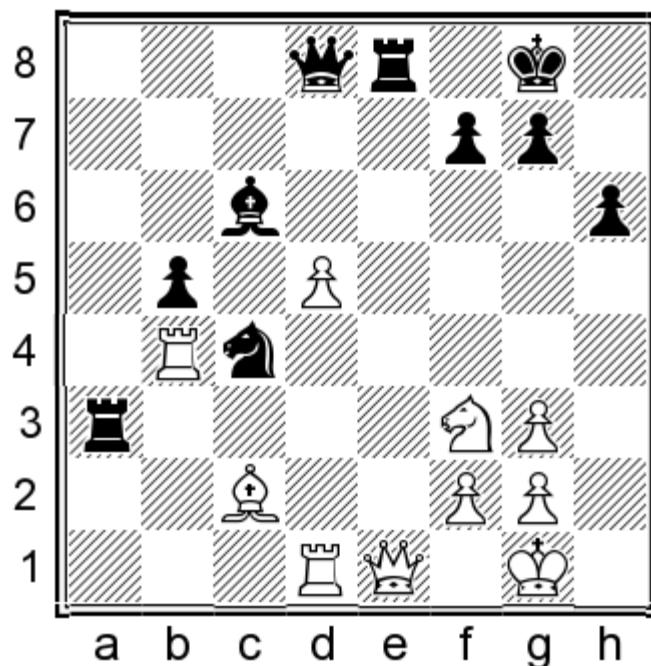
27...♖a3?!

Very risky play. A more solid option would have been 27...♖a7 but White's position is of course still a bit better.

28.d5!

Naturally Kramnik doesn't miss his chance.

28...exd5 29.exd5 ♖e8



I guess Andreikin underestimated White's next move.

30.dxc6!

This is already forced, but it is still a nice idea! White gives up his queen for ♖+♙, but it is clear that only White can win this game.

30...♖xe1+ 31.♗xe1 ♕c7

Black needs to be very careful, as in case White manages to keep the c6-pawn the game could be over.

32.♖xb5 g6!

Good defence by Andreikin! The black king will not have any better place than on g7.

33.♖c5

The c-pawn is secured.

33...♗e5?

This is already a serious mistake. Black should not have let White activate the bishop from c2. 33...♗d6! is the only move. 34.♗d3 this move leads to a draw, but it is unclear if White has anything better. Black just wants to play ...♖a6 and ...♖xc6. 34...♗e4 35.♖c4 ♗d6 With a draw.

34.♙e4!

Black will never have the option of winning the c6-pawn again, which means White's position is much better!

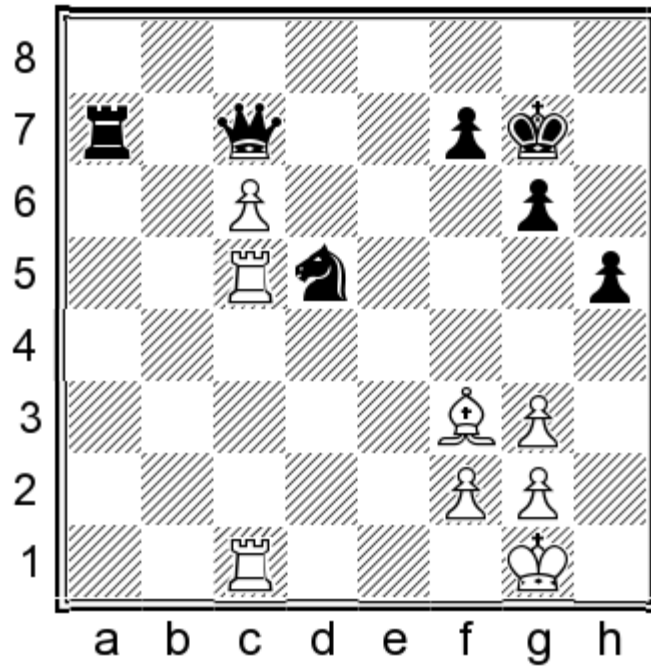
34...♗g4 35.♗d3 ♖g7 36.♙f3

White puts his pieces on very solid squares as there is no reason now to hurry.

36...♗f6 37.♗b4

The exchange of knights is not a bad idea, so we can expect ♗d5 soon.

37...h5 38.♖dc1 ♖a7 39.♗d5 ♗xd5



40. ♕xd5

Black has to make one last move to gain the extra 30 minutes and decides to play

40... ♖d8

which leads to a quite easily winning position for White. It was probably better to play 40... ♖a8, but even here after 41. ♖b5 Black's position is probably hopeless.

41. c7 ♖xc7 42. ♖xc7 ♕xd5

The funny thing about this position is that if the white pawn was not on g3, but on h3 for example, Black would have very good chances to survive. With the pawn on g3 however, White protects his king from checks, so Black's chances for escape are almost down to zero. All White needs to do is to double-attack the black pawns and Kramnik will show us how to do exactly this.

43. ♖e1

The white rook is going to e7.

43... ♔h6 44. ♖ee7 f6

The first step is complete: Black's pawn has been moved to f6, so now it is time to double on the 6th rank, after which the game will be over.

45. ♖ed7 ♖a5 46. f4

This is an even faster way of winning the game. Black is forced to move the g-pawn, which opens his king's position.

46... g5 47. ♔h2

No need to hurry...

47...♔g6 48.fxg5 ♕xg5 49.♖h7!

The threat of playing ♖cg7 is deadly.

49...f5 50.♖cg7+ ♔f6 51.♖a7

Winning the h5-pawn.

51...♜b4

After 51...♜b5 52.♖a6+ ♜xa6 53.♖h6+ White would of course win too.

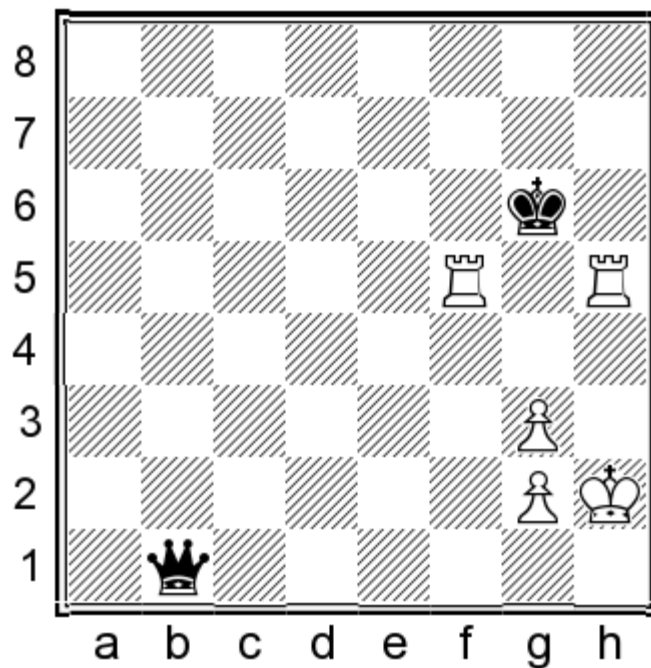
52.♖a6+ ♔e5 53.♖xh5

The h5-pawn is gone, now it is time to take away f5.

53...♜b1 54.♖a5+ ♔f6 55.♖axf5+

and the f5 pawn is also gone.

55...♔g6



56.♖fg5+

Now White will combine the attack on the black queen with checks on the king's rank, which will hunt the black king back to the 8th rank.

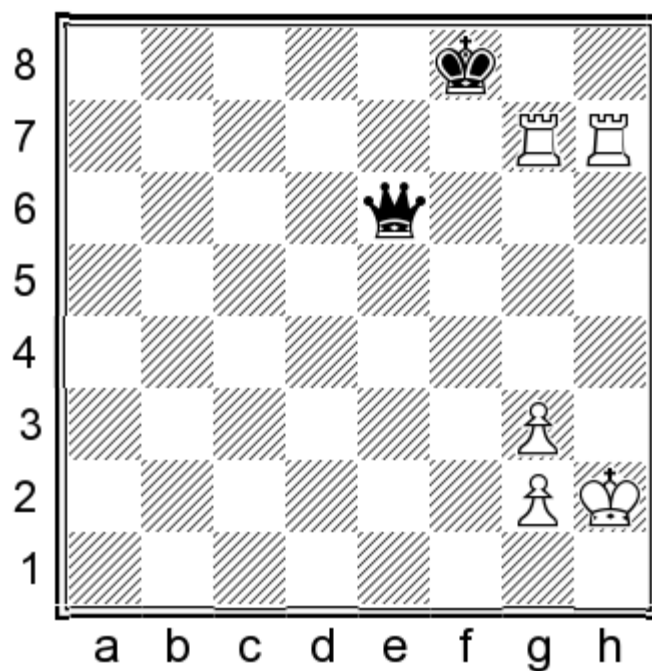
56...♔f6 57.♖b5 ♜c2 58.♖h6+

We can see perfectly how nicely the g2- and g3-pawns protect the white king.

58...♔g7 59.♖bb6 ♜c5 60.♖bg6+ ♔f8 61.♖h7

Black's king is now cut off.

61...♖f5 62.♠gg7 ♖e6



63.♠e7

A nice and also very important win for Kramnik. Andreikin has never been strong in “winning” games, so I guess this game almost decided the outcome of the Final of the World Cup in Tromso.

1-0

GAME 26

V. Laznicka (2677)

V. Topalov (2769)

Topalov-Laznicka m 2013

Novy Bor CZE (6)

25.09.2013, [D31]

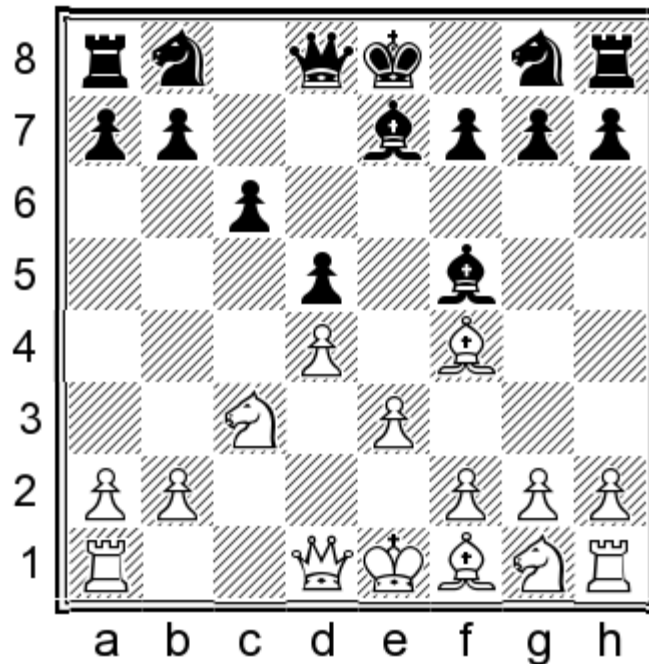
Annotated by Csaba Balogh

We are in the 6th and last game of this friendly match. The score is 3-2 to Topalov. Laznicka has the White pieces and tries to level the match.

1.c4 e6 2.♘c3 d5 3.d4 ♕e7

Topalov plays the Queen's Gambit, one of the most solid openings against 1.d4 nowadays. His intentions are clearly to build a safe position for a draw and if White pushes too hard, he might seize his chances.

4.cxd5 exd5 5.♕f4 c6 6.e3 ♕f5



7.g4

This ambitious move is White's dangerous extra option when they spare the 4.♘f3 ♘f6 pair of moves. White takes ground on the kingside.

7...♕e6 8.♕d3

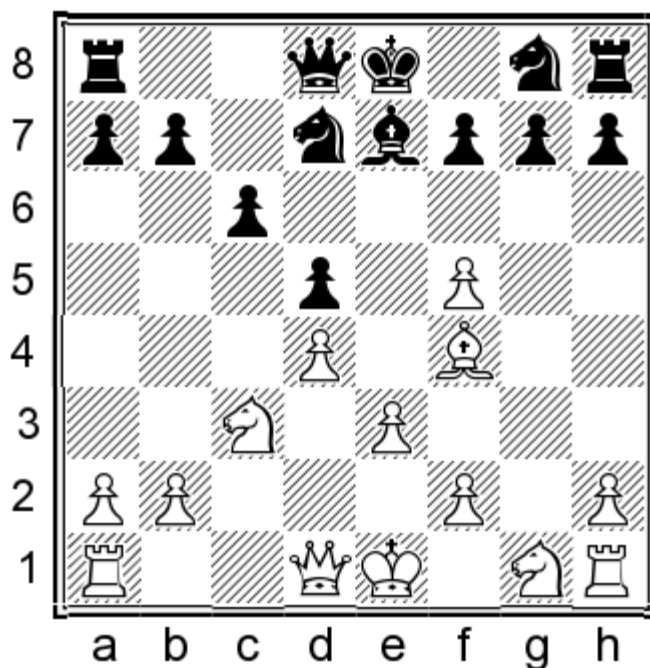
8.h3 and 8.h4 are the two main theoretical lines. This one is considered to be the most critical one. Nakamura had just won a nice game against Bacrot with it a few days ago.

8...♘d7 9.♕f5

This is the novelty. According to the speed at which Laznicka played it, it was a prepared one, but after this game I

doubt that anyone will be interested in repeating it. 9.h3 was played in previous games, with the idea of being able to finish development with ♖ge2 or ♖f3-e5, but Black launches quick counterplay with 9...g5 10.♗g3 h5 and he is fine according to the latest theory.

9...♗xf5 10.gxf5



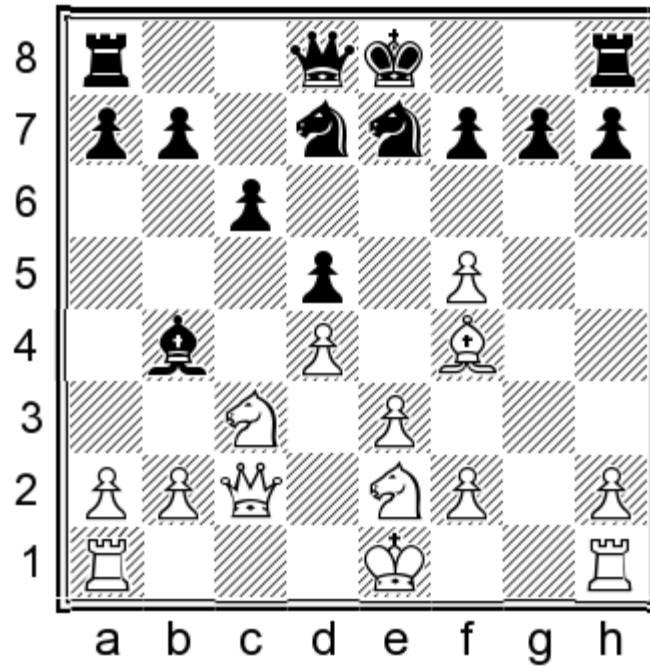
Black has various playable options here.

10...♗b4

Topalov decides to develop the g8-knight to e7, directly attacking the doubled pawn. Trading the bishops was also logical: 10...♗g5 with the same idea of putting the knight to e7. 11.♗g3 ♖e7;

10...♖b6 is a common idea in this kind of position. Black wants to play ...♗d6 here. The most natural reaction is 11.♖f3 with the idea of playing ♖e5 after ...♗d6, but here for instance Black could try 11...♖c4 12.♙c2 ♗d6 and after 13.♖e5 ♙c7! forces White to vacate the nice e5-square with his knight. Black is going to develop his knight to e7 here as well.

11.♖ge2 ♖e7 12.♙c2



12...♖b6

A multifunctional move. Black frees the d7-square for the queen in order to further attack the f5-pawn. He also prepares the trade of the dark-squared bishops with ...♗d6, which is a favorable exchange for him in this structure, and sometimes Black might transfer his knight to its ideal square on d6 through c4. 12...g6 was good immediately as well.

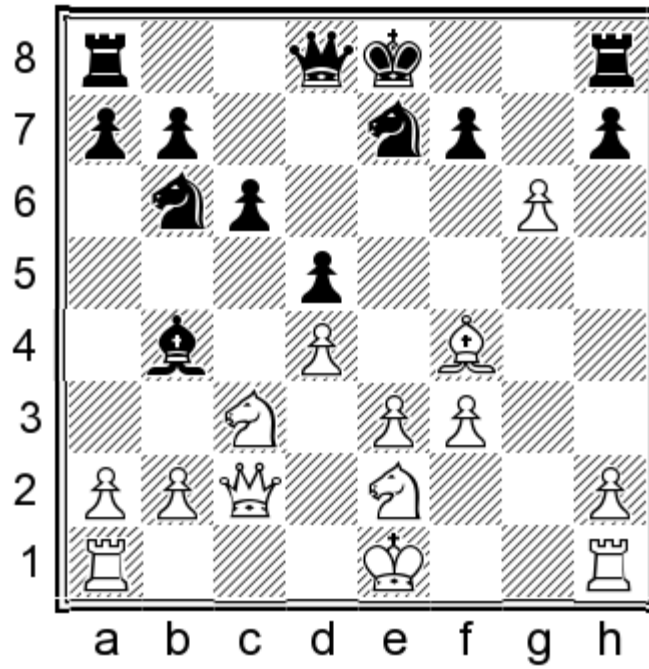
13.f3

With the idea of playing e4, supporting the f5-pawn. 13.♞g1 g6 14.♙e5 ♞g8 is also fine for Black as he intends to castle queenside anyway.

13...g6

13...♗d6 was also good.

14.fxg6



14.f6? looks nice, but it drops the pawn after 14...♘g8+ White is not in time to protect it with e4-e5.

14...♘xg6!

I like this move a lot. After this it is much easier for Black to finish his development. The main idea is to free the e7-square for the queen, followed by castling queenside. 14...hxg6 It was more principled to take towards the center, opening the h-file for the rook and to have only two pawn islands, but Black might have some problems in creating a safe haven for the king. 15.0-0-0 The final preparation before pushing e4. 15...♙d7 16.e4 and the game is very unclear as Black cannot play 16...0-0-0? because of 17.♘b5!±

15.0-0-0

After 15.♗g3 the easiest is 15...♙g5! with the point that after 16.e4 0-0-0 White cannot castle queenside.

15...♙e7

Developing with tempo as Black is now threatening to take on f4 and then on e3.

16.♗d3

White protects the e3-pawn with the idea being to save his bishop with ♗g3. 16.e4 leads to a clear advantage for Black after 16...♗xc3 17.♙xc3 ♘xf4 18.♘xf4 0-0-0 when he is well-prepared for the central break. He is also threatening an unpleasant pin with ♙g5.

16...♘c4

16...♘xf4 17.♘xf4 0-0-0+ was also better for Black.

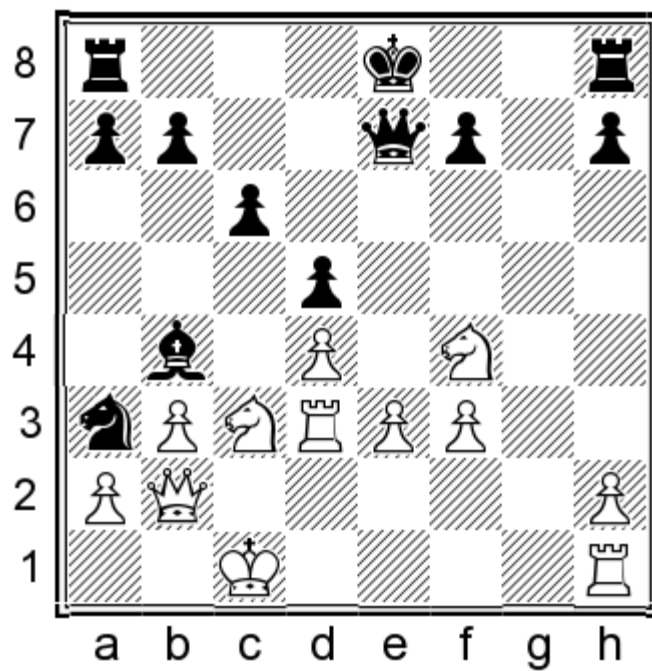
17.b3?!

This is a serious weakening in front of the king, but White was annoyed by the c4-knight. 17.♔b1 was better, but Black is fine anyway after 17...0-0-0+

17...♖a3 18.♜b2 ♜xf4

Black chooses the right moment to get rid of the bishop, as it was threatening to run away.

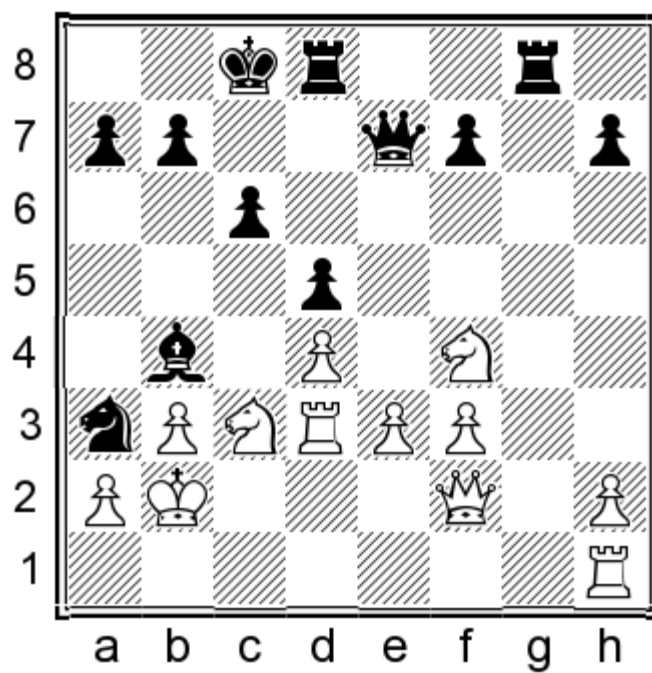
19.♜xf4



19...♞g8!

One more very useful move before castling — Black occupies the open file first.

20.♜f2 0-0-0 21.♔b2



21...♖b8

Obviously not a necessity, but a good prophylactic move against any kind of checks. Black has a big advantage here as all his pieces are excellently-placed and his pawn formation is also perfect. He is well-prepared against the only active idea of White, to push e4, which would only destroy his own position. White is forced to maneuver inside his camp, but Black has a freer game.

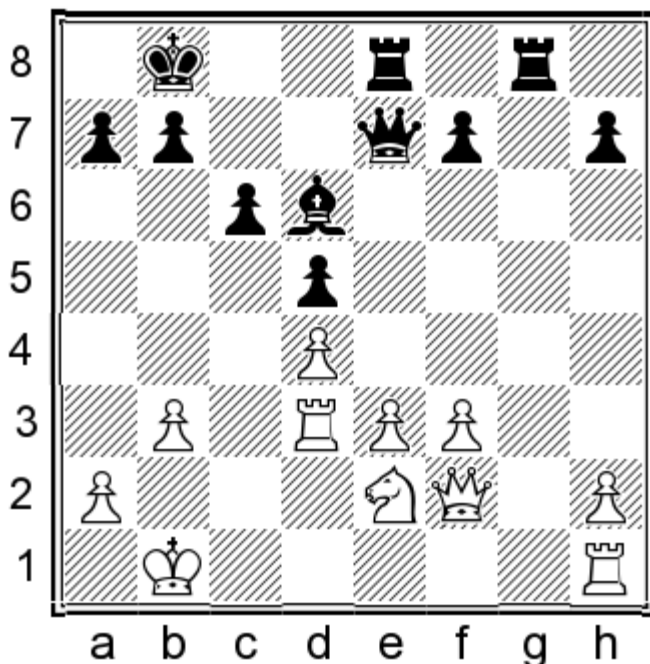
22.♘b1 ♝de8!

Further improving the pieces.

23.♘xa3 ♜xa3+ 24.♖b1 ♜d6!

Topalov plays great! The bishop is much more useful on d6, as Black cannot create an attack which could have been well-supported by the a3 bishop.

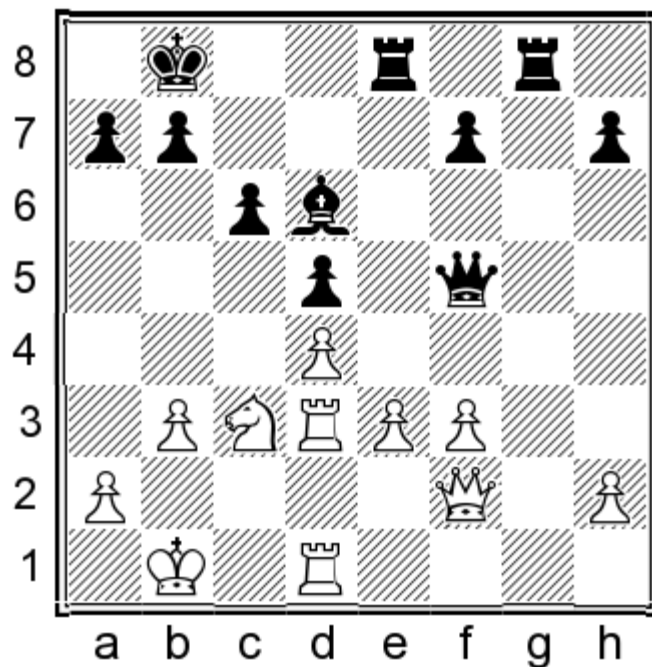
25.♗e2



25...♕e6!

Small and strong moves! Black improves his queen by driving it to f5!

26.♘c3 ♕f5 27.♝hd1



27...♖g6!

Topalov doubles his rooks on the g-file in order to penetrate to the seventh rank. Black might also threaten to play ...♖h6 or ...♖f6, provoking another weakening in White's camp.

28.♞d2 ♜h3 29.f4

A sad move, but what to do, there was nothing better. This destroys the flexibility of the central pawns. 29.♔b2 simply loses to 29...♞eg8+ and ♞g2 next. 29.e4 would have been strongly met by 29...♙f4! 30.♞e2 dxe4 when White cannot take back with the f-pawn and after 31.♘xe4 ♞eg8+ wins.

29...♞f5!

The queen has done its job by provoking f4. Now it leaves from the pin and the e4-e5 threat.

30.♘e2

White tries to lock the g-file to avoid the penetration of the rooks, but Topalov simply sends the g3-knight away with his h-pawn.

30...h5! 31.♘g3 ♜g4 ...

h4 is on the cards next. The knight is really poor and there is no outpost it could occupy in the position.

32.♞e2 h4 33.♞xg4 ♞xg4 34.♘f5

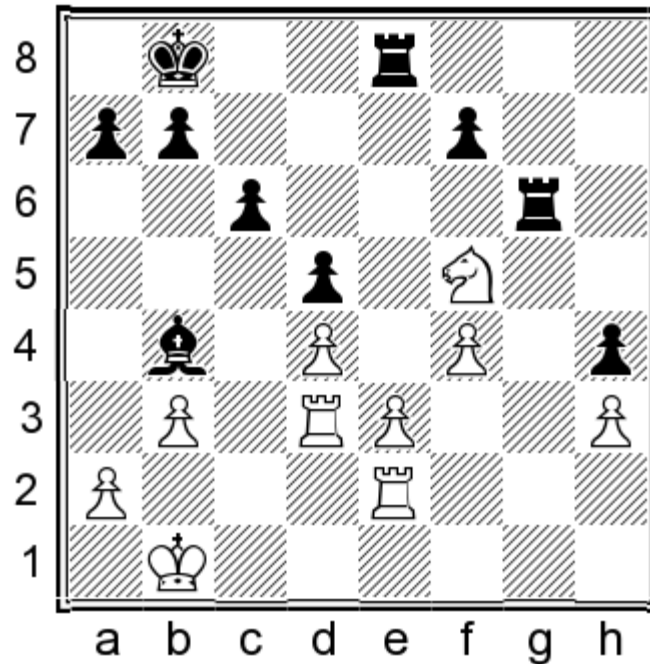
White at least tries to make an active move, but it leads to the trapping of the knight. 34.♘f1 ♙b4 35.♞f2 ♞eg8+ ♞g2 is coming next, White's position is hopeless.

34...♙b4 35.h3

35.♞f2 is met the same way as in the game: 35...♖h8!+ Protecting the h-pawn and threatening ...♖h5, winning the

knight, which White cannot prevent.

35...♖g6 36.♞e2



After 36.♞xh4 the easiest win is 36...♖g1+ (36...♞h6 37.♞f5 ♖f6 38.♞g7 ♞h8—+ also wins.) 37.♞d1 ♞xd1+ 38.♞xd1 ♞xe3 39.♞h1 ♞e4—+ grabbing all the pawns.

36...♞h8! ...

♞h5 is coming next. There is no way back for the knight.

37.e4 ♞f6

Black takes on e4 next. 37...♞h5 would have led to the same result after 38.♞e3 dxe4 39.♞d1 ♞g3—+

38.♞g7 ♞g8

White resigned in view of 38...♞g8 39.♞h5 ♞h6 when both the knight and the game are lost. A great positional achievement by Topalov, who deservedly won the match 4-2 with this neat finish.

0–1

GAME 27

V. Ivanchuk (2731)

A. Grischuk (2785)

FIDE GP

Paris Elancourt FRA (5.6)

27.09.2013, [D83]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

We will see a strange game now, one where White very quickly got into trouble and finally lost the game to a beautiful regrouping of the black pieces.

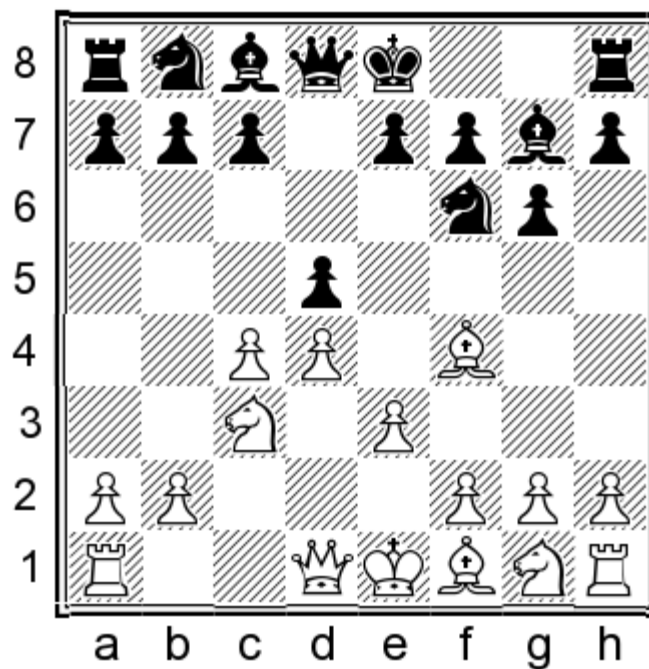
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5

At the moment the Gruenfeld is probably the most popular opening at the top level of chess. Carlsen, Anand, Caruana, Grischuk, Gelfand and Vachier Lagrave are just some of the players who play it as one of their main openings. As we can see from the latest games, the White players can't manage to find some 'global' line to reach a nicer position, so they keep on trying many side-lines, trying to test Black's memory as well as preparing some small improvement which can be quite unpleasant to solve during the game.

4.♗f4

Not the most ambitious line for White to try and reach something out of the opening.

4...♗g7 5.e3



5...0-0

5...c5 is the other main line.

6.♞c1

In case White tries to win the pawn, Black would quickly get equal play: 6.cxd5 ♘xd5 7.♘xd5 ♜xd5 8.♗xc7 and now the very strong 8...♘a6! 9.♗xa6 Anything else leads to a very dangerous position for White. 9...♜xg2 10.♜f3 ♜xf3 11.♘xf3 bxa6 with an equal endgame.

6...♗e6

We are still following theory.

7.c5

Not a new move, but a rare one. It was played on the highest level for the first time by Wang Yue against Carlsen in

2009, but all-in-all it somehow does not look too scary for Black. White's idea is simple: to be solid on the kingside and try to get some play on the queenside, where he has a space advantage.

7...c6

The most logical move. Black consolidates the center. He wants to play ...♘bd7 next and sometime in the future try to play ...e5.

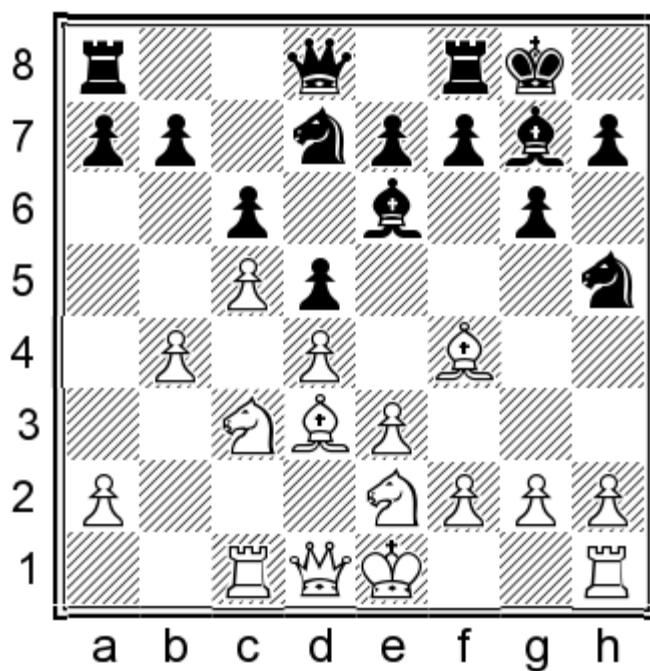
8.b4 ♘bd7 9.♙d3

9.h3 would perhaps have been a more careful move...

9...♘h5!

A very nice move. Without the black bishop I cannot imagine White having even a theoretical chance of being better.

10.♘ge2



10...f6!

Another very logical and strong decision. Black brings the bishop to f7 in order to play ...e5 next.

11.h4?!

This move looks very strange. White weakens his pawn structure too much. 11.0-0 would have been a more normal continuation.

11...♙f7 12.♙h2

White defends against the direct ...e5 move because of the strength of g4 next when the knight on h5 would be caught.

12...f5

Well played! Black continues trying to play ...e5, as the h4-pawn would then be attacked.

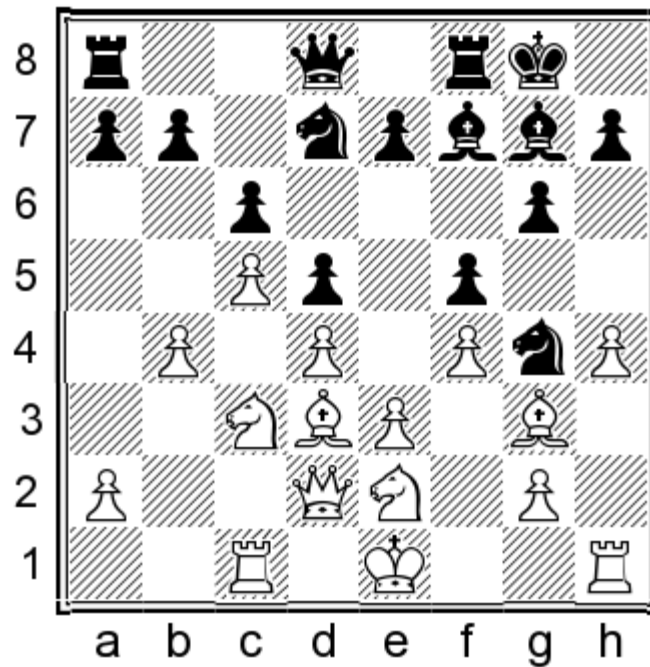
13.f4?

This move is just shocking! White makes a pawn out of the bishop and he totally destroys his structure. Black is just much better now.

13...♖hf6

Black's idea is simple, to bring one knight to e4, the other one maybe to g4 and open the queenside by playing ...b6 and ...a5. He would then get great play because of his much better pieces and the bad white bishop on h2.

14.♙g3 ♘g4 15.♚d2



15...♘df6

Black maneuvers his knights to perfect positions.

16.♘d1 ♘e4 17.♙xe4

White already has nothing better, but now the black bishop on f7 becomes a monster piece.

17...dxe4

Black has all the white squares under control, so all that is left is to open the a-file.

18.a4

Ivanchuk is trying to have b5 available in response to ...a5.

18...b6

But Black firstly opens the b-file. It seems like the game will not last too long, but White finds a little bit of counterplay.

19.h5!

Well, this move doesn't improve the position much, but at least White is going to die with a smile. In case of some waiting move Black would just play ...bxc5 and ...♖b8, followed by doubling on the b-file.

19...gxh5

Why not take a pawn if you can?!

20.♗h4 ♗f6?

I think this is a big mistake by Black; I don't understand why it was necessary to exchange these bishops? 20...♔d7 looks much simpler as after 21.♘f2 ♘f6 the knight will find a perfect position on d5!

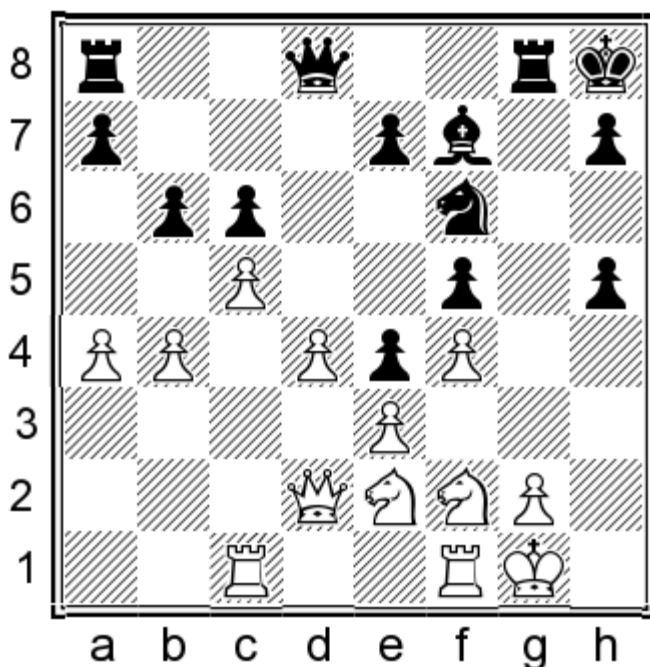
21.♗xf6?!

White helps Black to get the knight to d5, but there was no reason for it! 21.♘f2! It is very important for White to exchange the knights as soon as possible. 21...♗xh4 22.♖xh4 ♘f6 23.b5 and maybe White is still more-or-less in the game.

21...♘xf6 22.♘f2 ♖h8

Black is also trying to be strong on the kingside, but I think there was no need for that, and Black should just have stuck to the plan of crushing on the queenside.

23.0-0 ♖g8



24.b5

White looks for exchanges, which is the correct strategy; his only chance is to exchange as many pieces as possible.

24...♞c8 25.cxb6 ♜xb6 26.a5

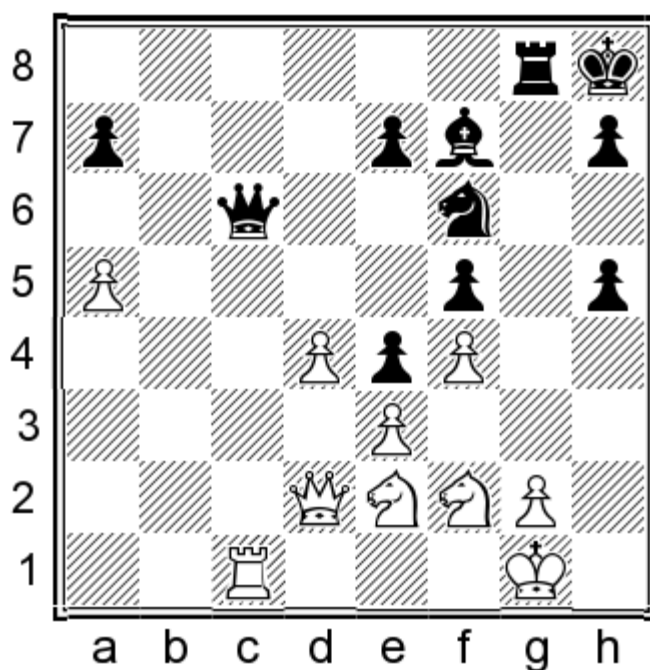
Maybe a better practical try for White would have been to play 26.♞c5 cxb5 27.♞xb5 ♜e6 and of course Black is better, but at least White has a strong rook on the 5th rank.

26...♞b7

A solid move, not falling into any traps.

27.bxc6 ♞xc6 28.♞xc6 ♜xc6 29.♞c1

It looks like White is not doing too badly, but in fact the game is almost lost! Black is a pawn up, and the open g-file plus the possibility of having a monster knight on d5 make things very easy for him.



29...♞a6!

A very nice move! Black not only fixes the a-pawn, he also wants to play ...♞d5 followed by ...♞g6.

30.♞c5?!

The last mistake in a very difficult position.

30...♞c4!

And the dream idea of Black is coming true... The g2-pawn is falling!

31.♞c3 ♞f1

White cannot defend against ...♞xg2. All-in-all it was, of course, not the best game Ivanchuk has ever played, but it was quite interesting nonetheless because of the pawn structures which we don't see too often...

GAME 28**E. Bacrot (2730)****A. Giri (2749)**

Bundesliga 2013–14

Emsdetten GER (1.1)

12.10.2013, [B52]

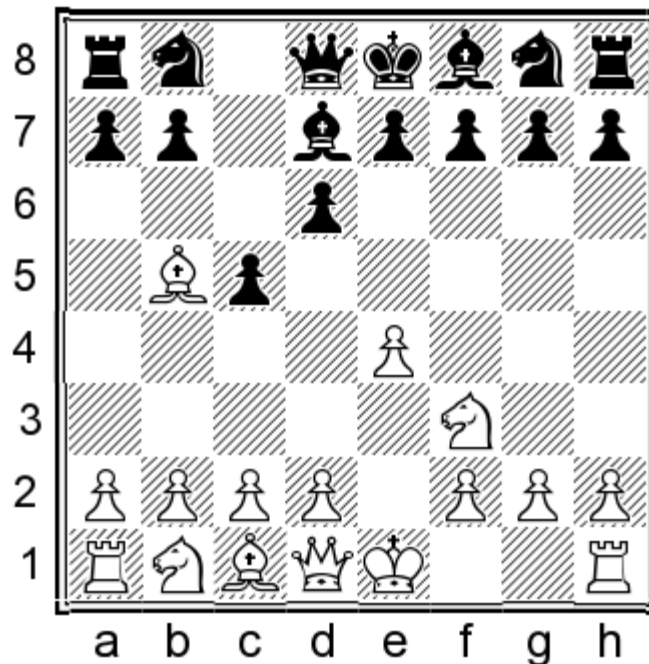
Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

We are in the first round of the Bundesliga season 2013/2014. Our opponent Emsdetten came out with an almost full line-up, so we did not expect to have an easy match, but we won it with an amazing scoreline of 6.5–1.5. The first one to bring us the lead was Etienne, who really completely outplayed his younger opponent from an about equal position and managed to finish the game with a bang!

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♙b5+

Of course this is not the main move to fight for an opening advantage, but it is well known that Giri is usually very well-prepared and it is a good idea to take him out of opening books as soon as possible.

3...♙d7



4.c4

It seems like the French players have been working a bit on this rare move. Just a few weeks ago Fressinet tried it against Gelfand, but without any success.

4...♘f6

The idea behind the move 4.c4 becomes clear after 4...♙xb5 5.cxb5 and the Black knight cannot develop to his optimal

square c6.

5.♘c3 g6

Very solid play by Black. The bishop on g7 is going to take up a nice position.

6.0-0 ♗g7 7.d4

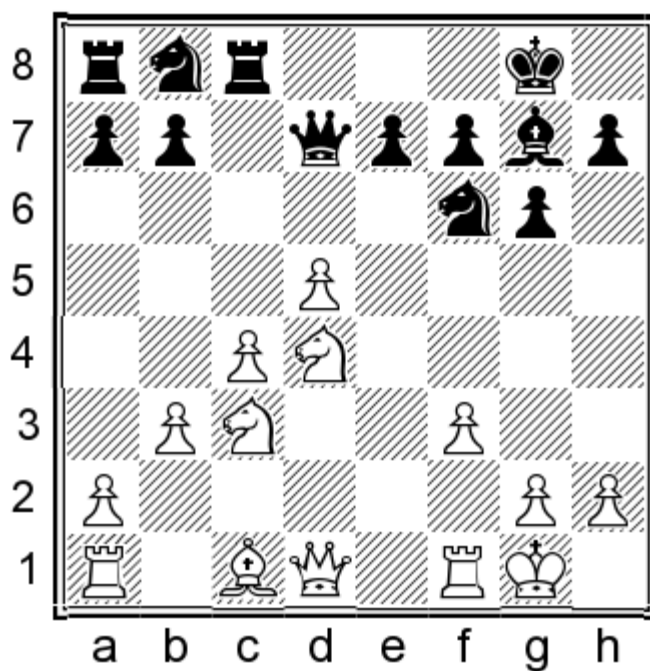
Sooner or later White needs to push d4 anyway, so there was no real reason to wait...

7...cxd4 8.♘xd4 0-0 9.♗xd7 ♔xd7

Now we have a position that could also be reached by playing 4.♗xd7, so we are more-or-less back to the main-line via a different move order.

10.b3!?

This is probably one of the only moves to continue seeking an advantage for White. 10.f3 with the idea of playing ♗e3 next doesn't lead to anything: 10...♖c8 11.b3 d5! This move is nothing new, having already been played many times. 12.exd5



12...♘xd5! Easy but pretty! :) 13.♘xd5 e6 Black wins the piece back with an equal position.

10...♘c6 11.♗b2 a6

A logical move with the idea of playing ...♘xd4 and ...b5 next, breaking White's pawn structure, but I am not sure it was the best one. 11...e6!? followed by ...♖fd8 and ...d5 could be an interesting option for Black, as it is hard to imagine that White has big chances to be better here.

12.♘xc6

Another tricky move by White, giving Black the choice with what to take on c6.

12...♖xc6?!

This already looks like a clear positional mistake. Better was 12...bxc6 13.♞e1 ♔c7 and if White is better, it is a minimal advantage.

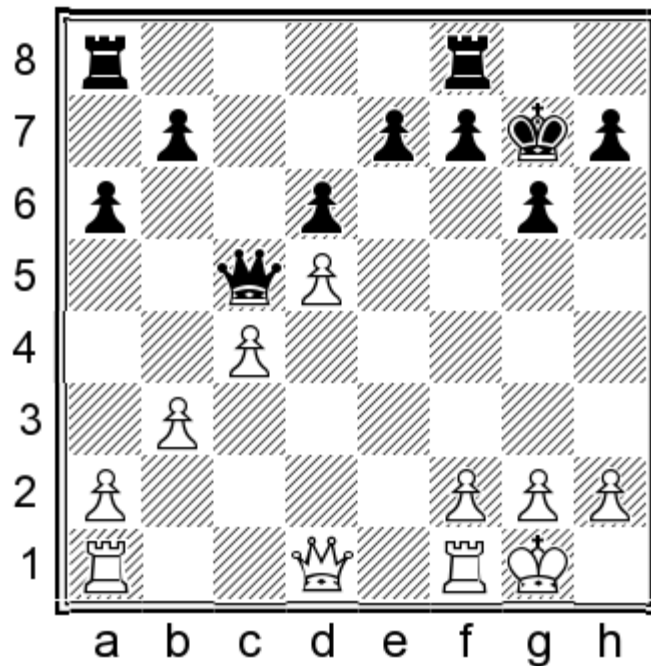
13.♘d5!

With this move White consolidates his slightly-better position. It is already time for Black to be careful in order to not get into serious trouble.

13...♘xd5?!

Once again Black doesn't feel the danger. 13...♞fe8 and only then decide whether to take on d5 or not would have been a clearly better choice. Black should not be afraid of 14.♘xf6+ ♙xf6 15.♙xf6 exf6 followed by ♞e6, with about an equal position.

14.exd5 ♖c5 15.♙xg7 ♔xg7



16.♞e1

Only the heavy pieces are left on the board and we can clearly see that White is better. The pressure on the e7-pawn is quite unpleasant and Black's play with ...b5 is a bit too late.

16...♞fe8

Maybe Black could have tried 16...e5 17.dxe6 fxe6 but after 18.♞d2 White has a slightly better position and very pleasant play by putting pressure on the d6- and e6-pawns.

17.♞d2

The queen is perfectly placed on d2. White has multiple ideas: to play ♞ac1 and b4, or maybe to play ♞e4-♞ae1 and ♞h4, with some attack on the black king.

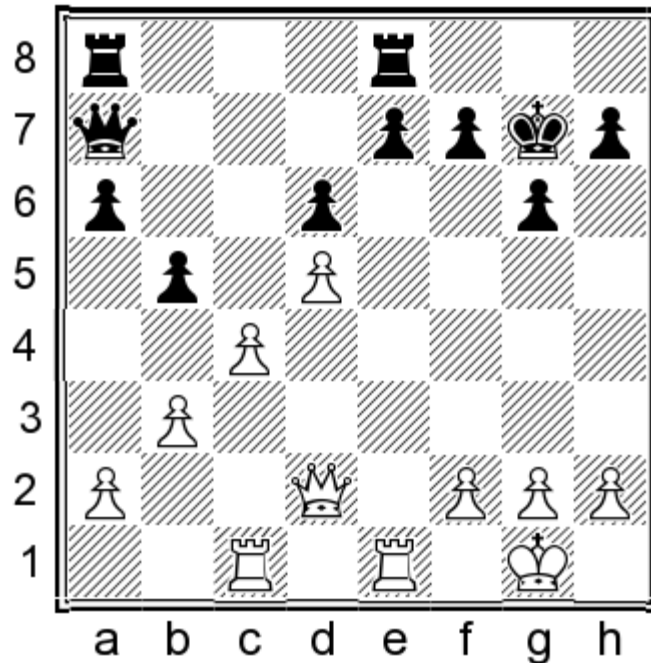
17...b5?

Another positional mistake by Giri. It was really time to look for some play: 17...e5 18.dxe6 ♖xe6 when Black is still holding, although the position is already very unpleasant.

18.♖ac1!

Simple and very strong! Black is suddenly in big trouble! White wants to play b4 next.

18...♕a7?!



Once again Black doesn't choose the best move and after this mistake White's position is probably almost winning! 18...bxc4 19.♖xc4 of course looks very bad for Black. The best chance was to play 18...b4 and of course White is better, but Black is still in the game.

19.b4!

Etienne gives his opponent a very hard time. Black now has a choice whether to give away the c-file or let White play c5. Both options are very bad.

19...bxc4

19...♖ac8 20.c5! and of course Black cannot take on c5 because of the check on d4. 20...dxc5 21.bxc5 ♖xc5 22.♗d4+

20.♖xc4 h5

It would be great for Black to exchange one pair of rooks, but of course it doesn't work: 20...♖ac8? 21.♗c3++—

21.♗c3+ ♔g8 22.♖c7 ♗b6

White has achieved all he could dream of. The c-file is under control, the 7th rank is covered and Black doesn't have any counterplay at all.

23.a4!

Another strong move by White. Black's only counterplay could be based on playing ...a5 at some moment and opening the file, but this could never work now because of White's b5 reply.

23...♖ab8 24.♗e4

White blocks all of Black's counterplay again.

24...f6

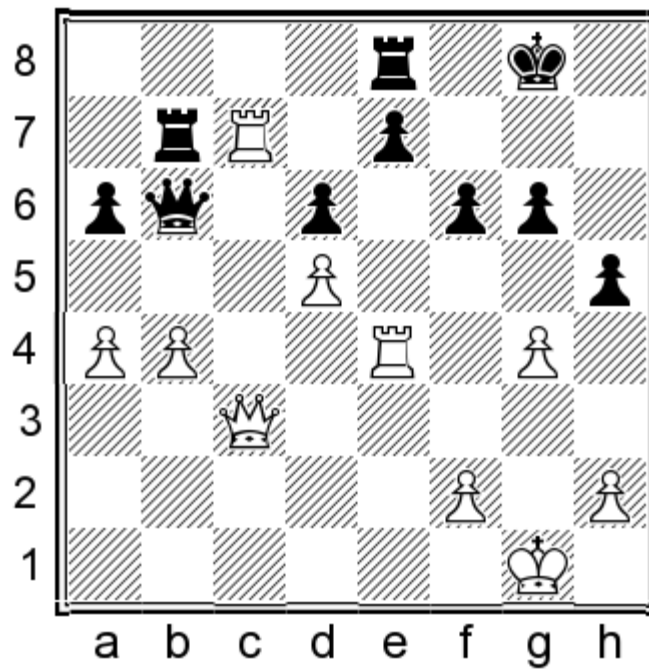
Black's position is hopeless but how to finish the game?!

25.g4!

Another very nice strategic decision. White is not only going to put pressure on the queenside, but also crush the kingside.

25...♖b7

Allowing White a nice finishing move...



26.♕xf6!

And Etienne found it! I guess it was a great pleasure for him to win such a game, completely outplaying his opponent and scoring an important win for the team. 26...♕xc7 27.♕xg6 ♔f8 28.♗f4 mate could have illustrated the game even more! :)

1-0

H. Nakamura (2786)

V. Kramnik (2793)

World Teams 2013

Antalya TUR (2.2)

27.11.2013, [E32]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

We know that these two players don't like each other too much and recently Nakamura has shown great personal results against Kramnik. In the current game it seems as though Kramnik manages to almost equalize, but not completely, and this is where Nakamura takes over with great positional play and a very pretty final calculation. We will witness a great game from the American Number 1.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.♚c2

Quite an interesting choice by Nakamura. Lately Kramnik has had great results in the Nimzo with 4.♚c2 but it seems not to bother the American.

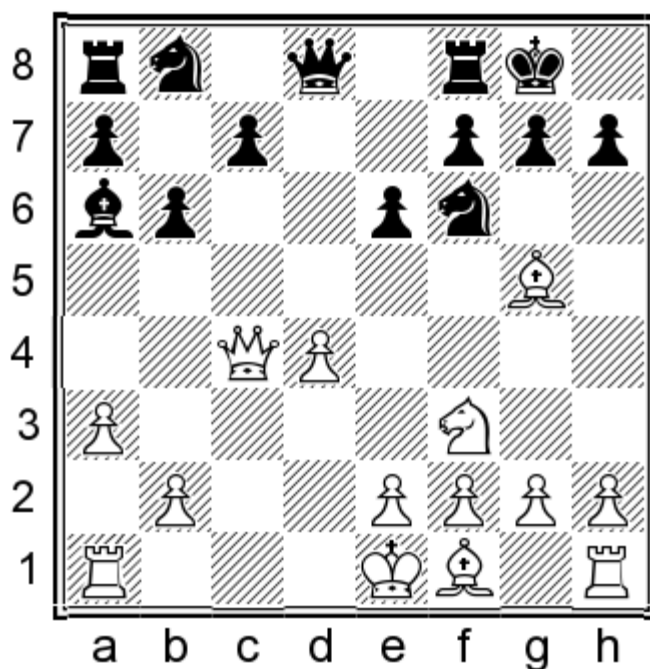
4...0-0 5.a3 ♙xc3+ 6.♚xc3 d5 7.♘f3

We are in the main line, with nothing new so far.

7...dxc4 8.♚xc4 b6

Black's main idea in this line is to develop quickly and play the ...c5 move, with big exchanges.

9.♙g5 ♙a6



10.♚c3!?

An interesting move. The main one is 10.♚a4.

10...h6

A very logical move, quickly played by Kramnik. White needs to decide what to do with the bishop on g5.

11. ♖xf6

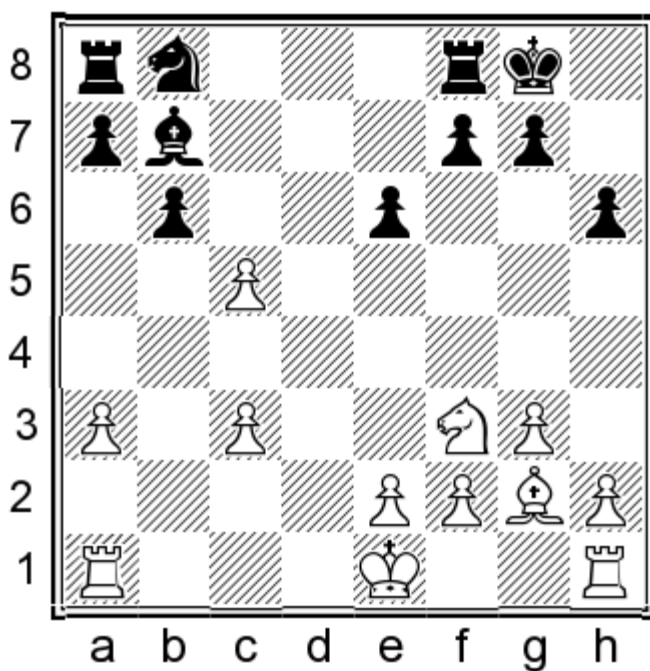
After 11. ♖h4 ♘bd7 Black keeps the important option of playing ...g5 at a good moment.

11... ♙xf6 12. g3

Of course White has to develop his bishop.

12... ♘b7 13. ♖g2 ♜a6

A very strange-looking move to me. I think Black could have avoided placing the knight in such a passive position. 13...c5 looks much more logical. 14.dxc5 (14.0-0 ♘d7 just looks equal.) 14... ♙xc3+ 15.bxc3



15... ♞c8 and I think this position is just a draw.

14.0-0 c5 15. ♞ac1

The position looks like it is close to equal, but Black has to suffer a bit because of the bad knight on a6.

15... ♞ac8

Preparation for cxd4.

16. ♘e5!

A very good practical choice. With this move White chases the queen from f6 and the knight a6 is still in danger of not finding a good square.

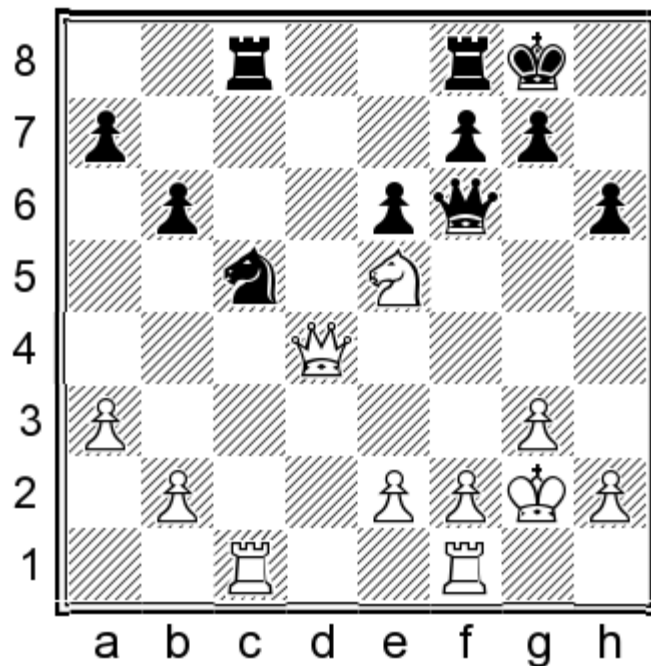
16...cxd4

After this move the position becomes very tricky for Black. Maybe the best option was still to play 16... ♖xg2 17. ♔xg2

♕f5 when the black queen comes back into the game.

17. ♖xd4 ♙xg2 18. ♔xg2 ♞c5

The black knight is finally out, but not for long.



19. b4!

White uses the moment well. b4 is a typical strategic decision in an endgame, as the threat of playing b5 followed by ♞c6 could be deadly.

19... ♞b3

The black knight has nowhere to go.

20. ♖xc8 ♖xc8

Black can't take the queen: 20... ♞xd4 21. ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 22. ♞d7++—

21. ♖d7!

Another very good move. White forces the black rook to return to a passive square on f8.

21... ♖f8 22. f4

An aggressive approach. After 22. ♞f3 Black would face huge trouble. The knight on b3 is almost caught and White's position is simply much better.

22... ♕f5

Better late than never — Black finally activates his queen.

23. ♖f3 ♖c2 24. ♖d3

A good move. The endgame is far from being a draw.

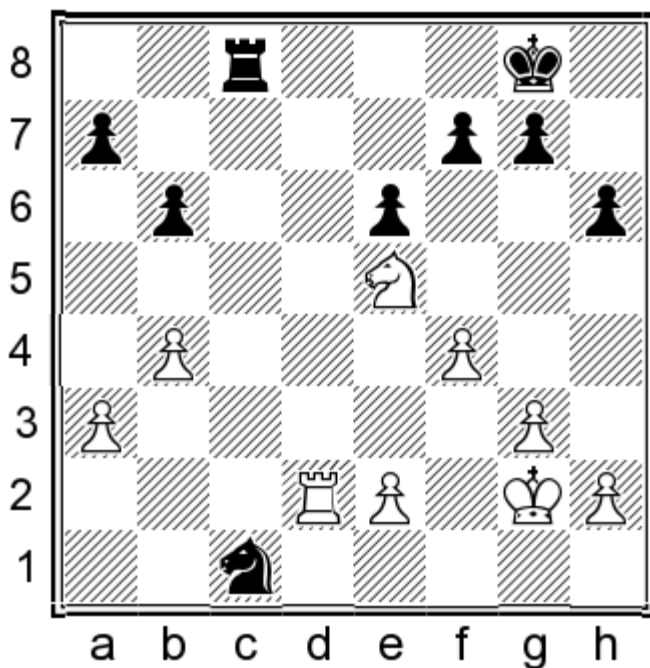
24...♙xd3 25.♞xd3 ♘c1

The black knight is almost caught.

26.♞d2

I think that after 26.♞d7 ♘xe2 27.♞xa7 White should also have very good winning chances.

26...♞c8



27.h4

A usual move, Nakamura just wants to play h5 and fix the black pawn structure. The knight on c1 is cut off and is going nowhere. The direct 27.b5 would probably also lead to about the same position as in the game.

27...h5 28.b5

The knight is going to the best possible position on c6.

28...♞c7 29.♘c6 ♔h7

Black's position is very ugly. White just wanted to play ♞d8-♞a8 and win a pawn.

30.♞b2

The black knight is totally cut off.

30...a5 31.♔f2

Nice technical play. White improves the position of his king and wants to play ♔e3-♔d2 next.

31...♖d7 32.♘e5

Now this comes with tempo.

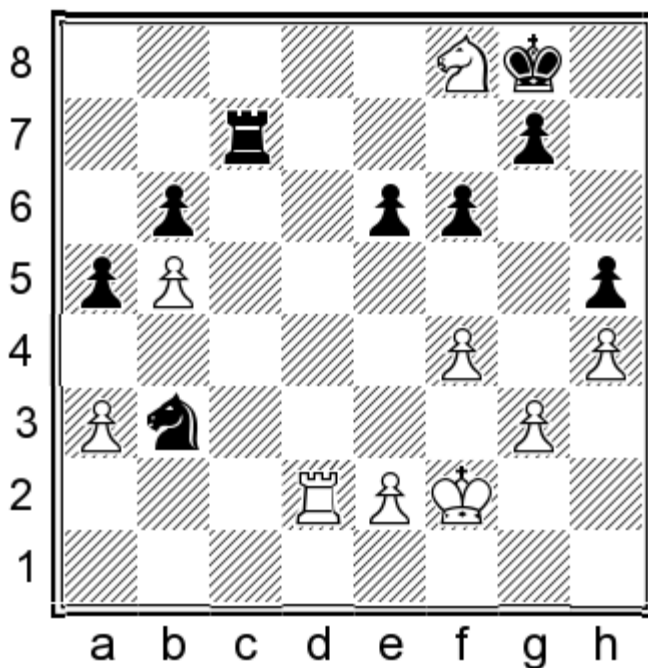
32...♖c7 33.♖d2!

White returns to the d-file, but now ♖d6 or ♖d7 are both looking deadly as the b6-pawn is going down.

33...f6 34.♘d7 ♘b3 35.♘f8+

Nakamura calculates until the end. 35.♖d6 would also lead to a winning position for White.

35...♔g8



36.♖d7!

This was Nakamura's key idea. Before taking the pawn on e6 White fixes the 7th rank, so Black is forced to exchange the rooks.

36...♖xd7 37.♘xd7 ♘d4

Kramnik tries his last practical chance, but of course Nakamura had calculated it before playing 36.♖d7!

38.a4 ♘xb5

If Black lost the b6-pawn White would be winning anyway.

39.axb5 a4 40.♘c5

Of course! The white knight easily stops the a-pawn and the game is over.

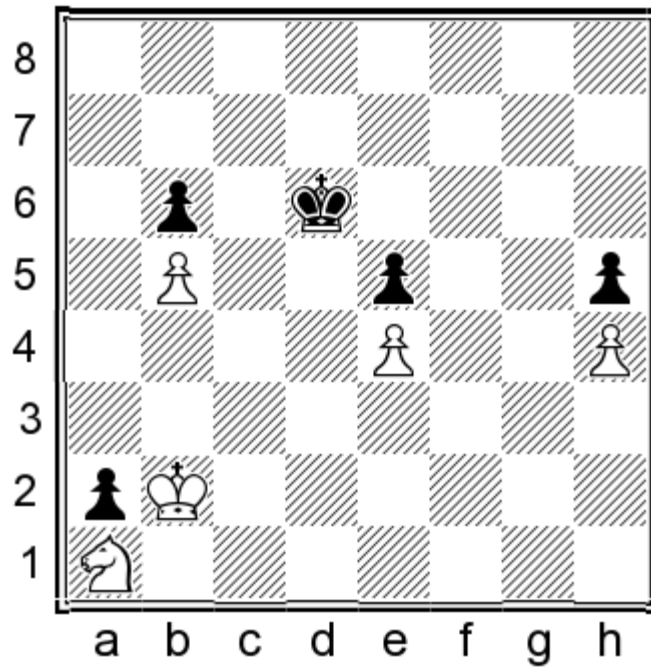
40...a3

40...bxc5 41.b6 a3 42.b7 a2 43.b8=♚+ White queens first with a check.

41.♖b3 a2 42.♔e3

It is hard to say why Kramnik continued the game here...the rest really doesn't require any comment.

42...♙f7 43.♔d4 ♕e7 44.e4 e5+ 45.fxe5 ♕e6 46.♖a1 fxe5+ 47.♔c3 g5 48.♔b2 gxh4 49.gxh4 ♕d6



50.♖b3

All-in-all this was a superb game by Nakamura, who made great use of the bad position of the black knight and finished the game with a fantastic combination on move 36.

1-0

GAME 30

L. Aronian (2801)

H. Nakamura (2786)

World Teams 2013

Antalya TUR (3.5)

28.11.2013, [D56]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

We will now witness a very important game from the 2 leading teams, the USA and Armenia. The clash between these two Top 5 players ended in favor of Aronian, who once again showed great preparation followed by very nice play in the rook endgame. Let's take a more detailed look at what happened.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♖f3 ♖f6 4.♔g5

Could it be Aronian is avoiding the Vienna?! 4.♘c3 dxc4

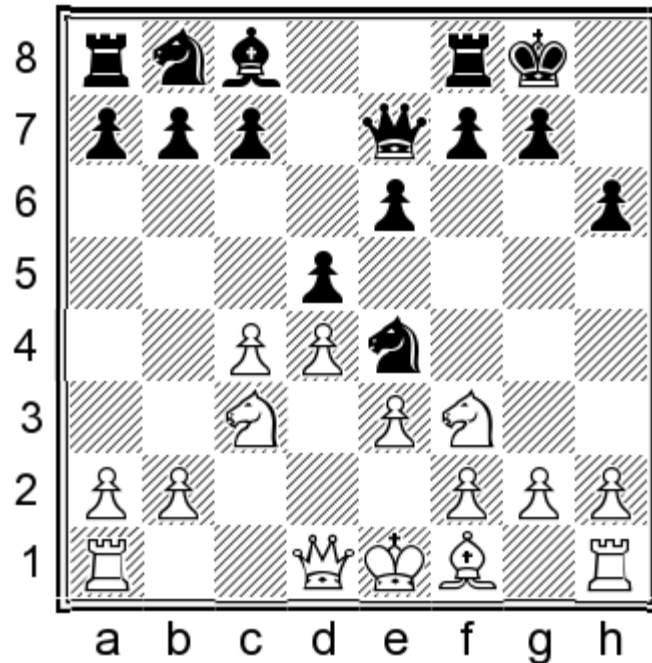
4...♙e7 5.♘c3

and now we are back in the main Queen's Gambit.

5...h6 6.♙h4 0-0 7.e3 ♘e4

7...b6 is the other very popular line.

8.♙xe7 ♔xe7



9.♞c1

This is still theory and will be for many moves. From a general point of view it is easy to see what's going on: White is a bit better developed but Black's position is very solid. Black is trying to exchange as much as possible to reach a slightly worse position but hold on to a draw.

9...c6 10.♙d3 ♘xc3

Of course a move like 10...f5 just looks bad...

11.♞xc3 dxc4 12.♞xc4!?

A very interesting approach. The main move is 12.♙xc4.

12...♘d7

Black is of course playing for the main idea in the line which is to advance ...e5.

13.0-0 e5 14.♙c2

This seems to be White's key idea. The threat of playing ♔d3 next is quite unpleasant and if Black were to play 14...exd4 15.♖xd4 White would be dominating on the d-file, which would leave him with some advantage.

14...♟b6

The most critical move.

15.♞c5

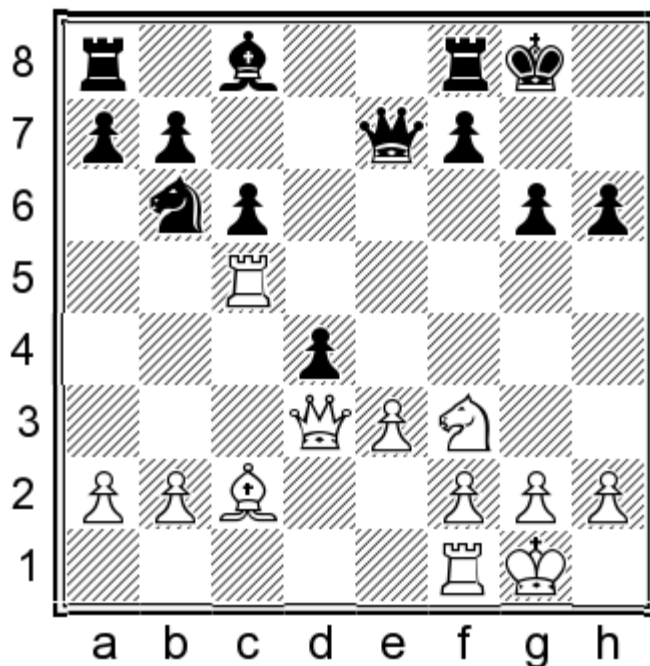
Of course not 15.♔d3?? e4

15...exd4 16.♔d3

It is clear that Aronian is still in his preparation, but Nakamura was already probably out of his, as he spent quite some time for his next few moves.

16...g6

The only move.



17.♟b3!

By threatening to play ♔xg6 next White wins an important tempo and control over the d5-square.

17...♟g7

17...♔xc5 is losing. 18.♔xg6+ ♟h8 19.♔xh6+ ♟g8 and after the very strong 20.e4!! White is totally winning.

18.♔xd4+ ♟f6 19.♞e5

White should, of course, keep the queens on the board.

19...♟d7

Maybe Black could have tried 19...♖d8 20.♜b4 ♘d5 21.♙xd5 cxd5 but here too after 22.♞e7 White seems to be better.

20.h4!

a great move and played very quickly by Aronian. What preparation one more time by the World Nr2!

20...♞ad8

The most logical reply in a complicated position.

21.h5

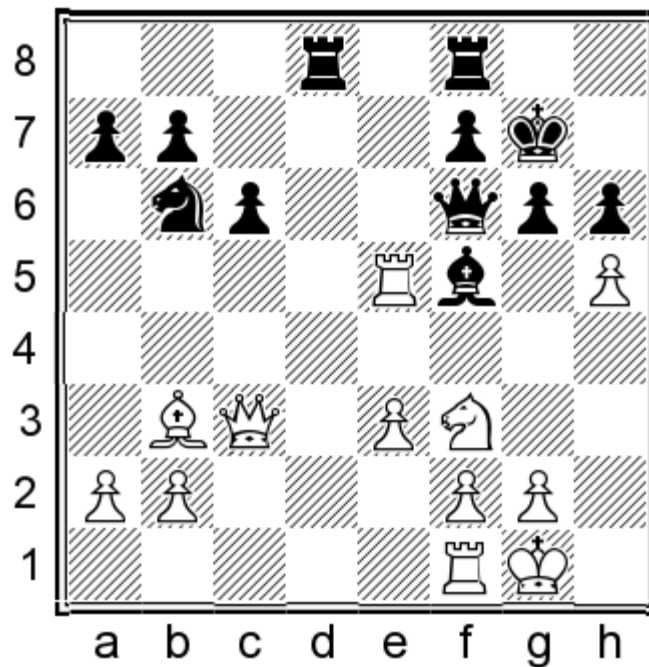
And now we can see White's main idea is to crush Black's pawn-structure on the kingside.

21...♙f5

Once again Black finds a very safe move. The bishop takes up a great place on f5.

22.♜c3

It seems like this move just leads to a roughly equal endgame.



Perhaps a better try would have been 22.♜b4 with a very complex position.

22...♙g4?

After playing some great defensive moves, Nakamura makes a mistake. I think the endgame after 22...♘d7 23.♞a5 ♜xc3 24.bxc3 ♙d3 looks pretty equal. White could be a little better, but this is the maximum.

23.hxg6

The position is very sharp, but Black is in a bit of trouble.

23...♙xf3 24.gxf3

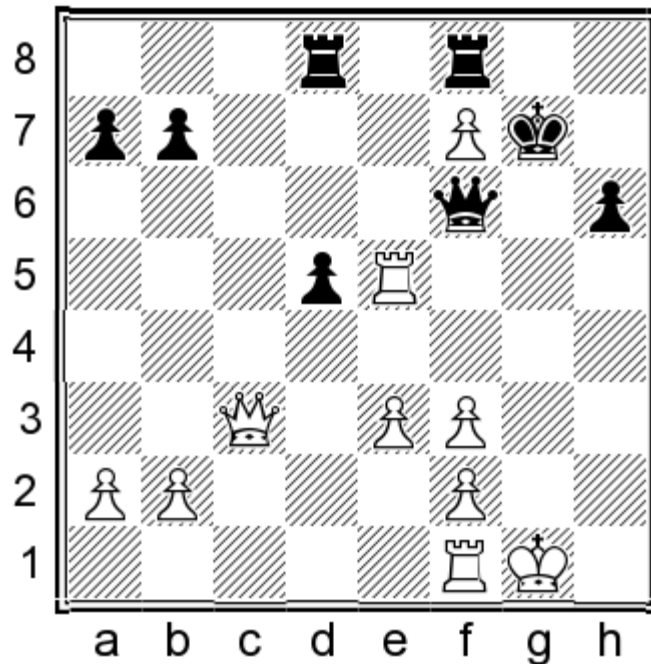
Now the white king is open, but the white rook on e5 occupies a great spot controlling the very important 5th rank.

24...♘d5

What else to do...? 24...♘d7 is not good as after 25.♞e7! the position is very forced, but everything works out better for White: 25...♙xc3 26.bxc3 ♔xg6 27.♞d1 ♘c5 28.♞xd8 ♞xd8 29.♙xf7+ ♕f6 30.♞c7 with very good winning chances for White.

25.♙xd5 cxd5 26.gxf7

Now White is a clear pawn up.



26...d4!

A very good practical decision and a very logical move. Black destroys White's pawn structure in the hope of getting into a rook endgame which he can save ...

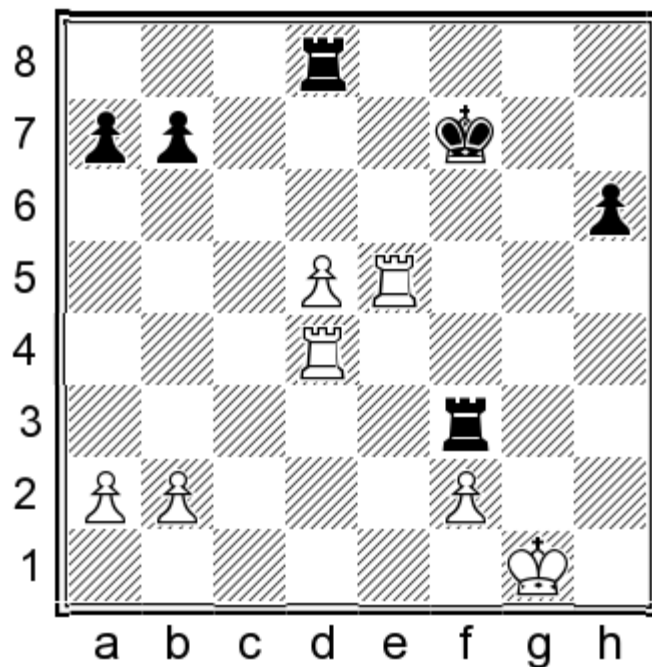
27.exd4 ♞xf7 28.d5

We would get about the same rook endgame after 28.♞fe1 ♙xf3 29.♙xf3 ♞xf3 30.♞1e3 with similarly good winning chances as in the game.

28...♙xf3 29.♙xf3 ♞xf3 30.♞d1

At first sight it is very hard to say if this position is closer to a win or to a draw. If Black managed to exchange one of White's pawns for the h-pawn, the position would probably be a draw, but it is not so simple to do.

30...♕f7 31.♞d4!



31...Re8

Another very logical move. Black cannot continue playing with 2 pairs of rooks on the board with such an open king on f7.

32.Rxe8 ♔xe8 33.♔g2 ♜f5?!

This move looks a little strange to me. 33...♜f7 Black would probably offer the best drawing chances here, although the position is of course still very difficult.

34.f4 ♔d7 35.♔f3 ♔d6 36.♔e4

Both kings are in the center.

36...Rf8

Black puts his rook behind the pawn, which is the correct play.

37.Rd2 h5

loses on the spot. Another try was 37...Re8+ 38.♔f5 ♜f8+ 39.♔g4 h5+ 40.♔g5 h4 41.♜d3 ♜h8 42.♔g4 and here White should probably win the game as well.

38.f5!

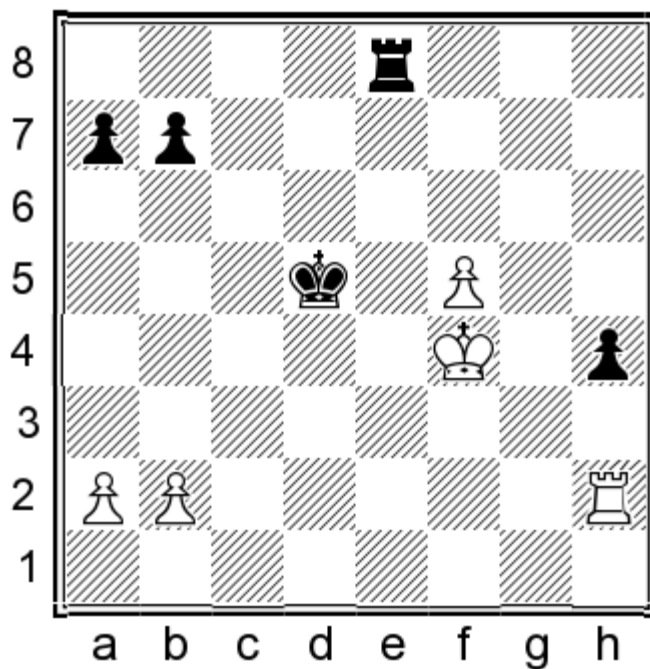
White's pawn is now too close.

38...h4 39.♜h2

A bad idea for White would have been to play 39.♜g2 ♜h8 40.♜g6+ ♔e7 41.♔e5 h3 and Black might be in time to make a draw.

39...♖e8+ 40.♔f4 ♜h8

40...♔xd5 would not have saved Black either.



41.♞d2+! White drives the black king even further away. 41...♔c6 42.f6 And White is winning.

41.f6 ♜e8

41...♔xd5 42.♔f5

42.♞xh4

A great game by Aronian with simply no mistakes! We could have just seen one more time how strong Aronian can be, with very good preparation followed by great technical skill.

1–0

GAME 31

L. Aronian (2812)

Wesley So (2719)

Wijk aan Zee NED

Wijk aan Zee NED (6.3)

18.01.2014, [A15]

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

The first part of the tournament was clearly dominated by Aronian, who started with 5/6. Let's enjoy one of his victories.

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.♘c3 d5

An Anti-Gruenfeld is on the board. Aronian employs a forgotten line...

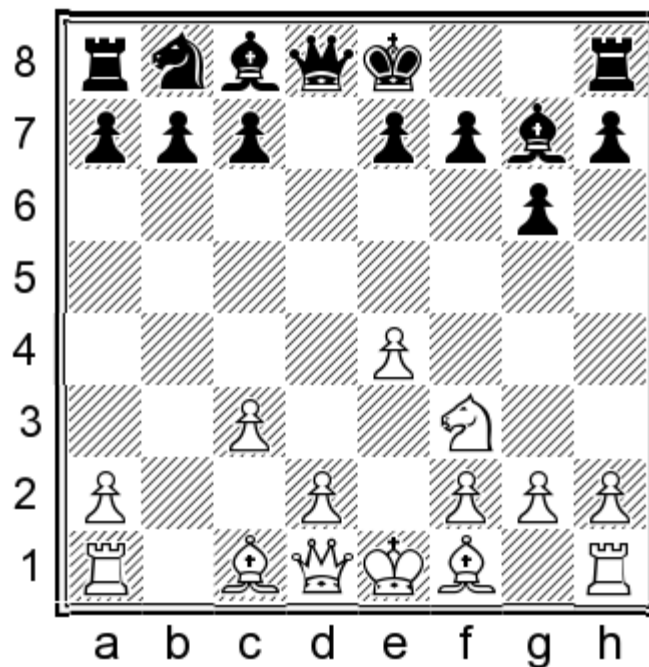
4.cxd5 ♘xd5

White has a wide range of choice here, but Aronian heads for one which is often used when White wants to make a draw — but of course the story is different this time.

5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3

Most of the games continue with 6.dxc3 ♙xd1+ 7.♔xd1 and after some precise moves we reach a completely balanced position. 7...f6 followed by e5.

6...♗g7



Here comes the idea... When White has recaptured with the b-pawn he usually transposes to the main lines with 7.d4, but then there was no point in playing the Anti-Gruenfeld.

7.♗e2!?

White wants to finish his development before playing d4. With this he would like to give Black less options to attack the central pawns with ...c5. Black answers with the most natural reaction and anticipates the d4-idea.

7...c5 8.0-0 ♘c6

Black has temporarily prevented the d4-move and we might think that with a backward d-pawn White cannot hope for an advantage. However Aronian's home preparation is just about to start.

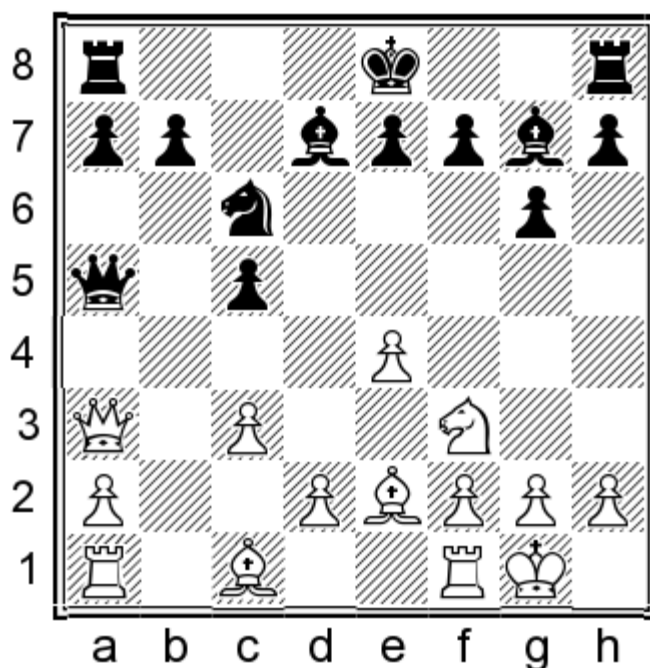
9.♙a4

White does not give up on playing d4, he just wants to support it from all directions. With the queen from the side, and he has left the d1-square for the rook.

9...♙d7 10.♙a3!

Leaving the pin and trying to provoke a small weakening with ...b6. In that case, later on when the rook occupies the opened c-file (after ♖d1, d4, cxd4 cxd4) ♙a6 could be very annoying.

10...♙a5



11.♖d1!

White waits until Black trades the queens in order to develop the bishop with tempo. There was still one previous game in the database and it was played by Aronian's countryman Vladimir Akopian. The Armenians had definitely made a huge analysis of this position.

11...0-0

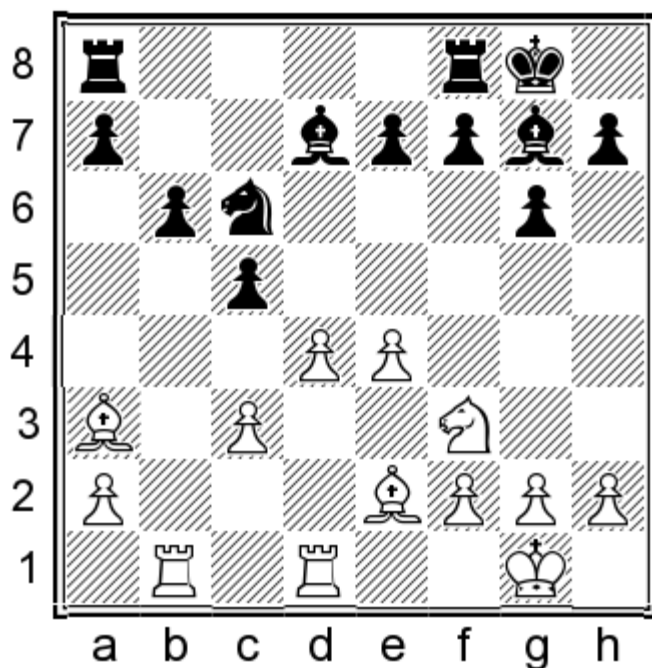
The novelty. In the previous game Mamedyarov anticipated the d4-idea in the most direct way by playing 11...e5 A move that a Gruenfeld player hardly makes as it closes the bishop. Now White forgets about the d4-plan and starts to play on the weakened squares. 12.♙c4 (12.♙b3!? was also possible to preserve the queens.) 12...♙xa3 13.♙xa3 b6 14.♖ab1 Aronian had probably prepared something instead of this move. It looks like a waste of time here. 14...♖d8

15.d3 h6 16.h3 ♘a5 17.♙d5 ♙c6 18.♙xc6+ ♘xc6 19.♗f1 ♚e7 20.♗e2 ♞d7 21.c4 f5 22.♙b2 ♚e6 23.♙c3 ♞hd8 24.a4 ♘b4 and a draw was agreed in Akopian-Mamedyarov, Porto Carras 2011.

12.♞b1

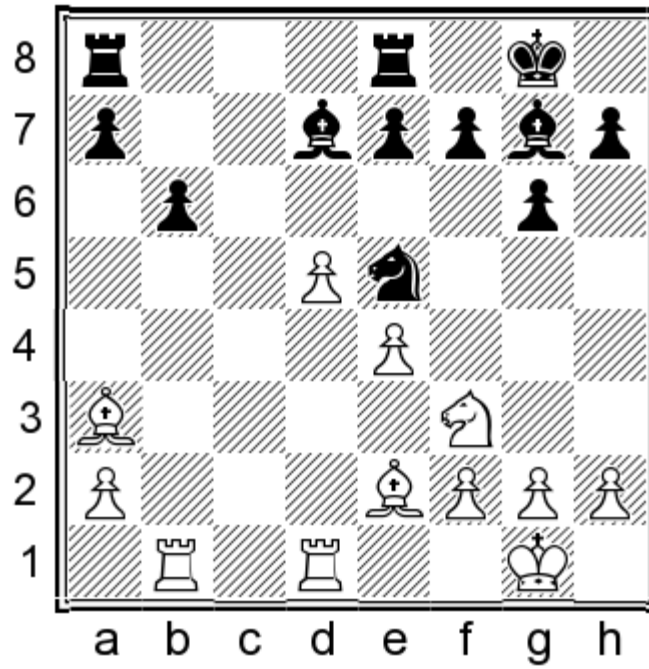
Before pushing d4 White makes a final improvement, forcing a small weakness and leaving the diagonal of the g7-bishop with the rook.

12...b6 13.d4 ♜xa3 14.♙xa3



14...♙g4!

A standard Gruenfeld move! Black tries to remove the defender of the central pawns. It would have been a positional mistake to open the c-file and the diagonal of the a3-bishop: 14...cxd4 15.cxd4 Black has to protect the e7-pawn against d5. 15...♞fe8 16.d5 ♘e5



17.♘d4! With a nice edge for White: ♖ac1 is coming next. The next line illustrates well the point behind forcing the ...b6 weakening: 17...♜ac8 18.♙a6! and now Black cannot hold the c-file because of 18...♜c3 19.♙b4! ♜c7 the only square for the rook. 20.d6! exd6 21.♙xd6 ♜c3 the only square again and now White wins a piece after 22.♞e2!+- and when the rook leaves White has ♙xe5 and the d7-bishop falls!

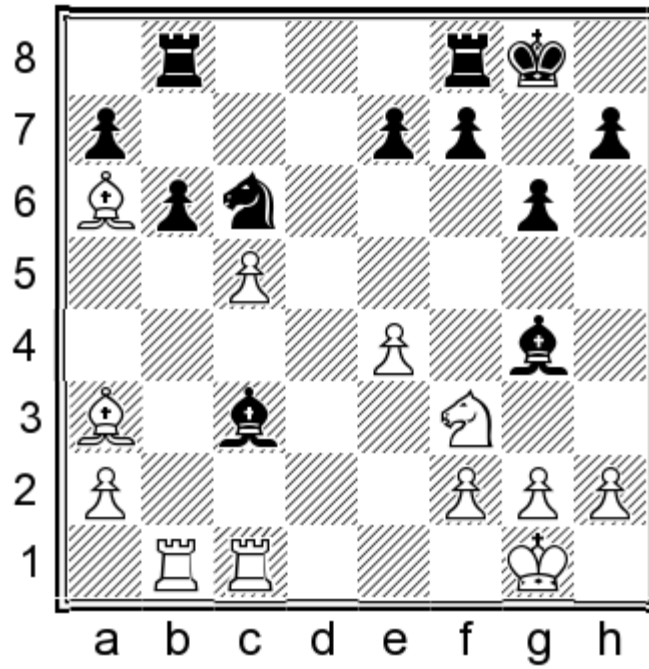
15.dxc5!

The critical reaction. White opens the position and tries to makes use of his better developed pieces. Without having taken on d4, 15.d5? makes no sense as the a3-bishop remains very passive. 15...♞a5 or ♞e5 and Black is more than fine.

15...♙xc3 16.♙a6!

Squeezing Black. Without the queens on the board White never needs to worry about ♙xf3 because in the endgame the doubled-pawns are not bad at all.

16...♜ab8 17.♜dc1



So far Black has defended well, but now he fails to solve his problems with a tactical trick.

17...♙xf3

Now or on the next move Black should have taken 17...bxc5! indirectly protecting the c3-bishop. 18.♙xc5 (With the idea that after 18.♞xb8 ♜xb8! counterattacks the a6-bishop.) 18...♙b2! 19.♞c2 ♙xf3 20.gxf3 ♙d4= and Black achieves equality.

18.gxf3 ♙d2

18...bxc5! should still have been played, with the same ideas as on the previous move.

19.♞d1 ♙c3

It looks a bit suspicious to put the bishop onto the c-file and in front of the knight, but So believes in his calculation. White is also slightly better after 19...♙f4 20.♙g2! White simply protects the f3-pawn in case of ...♜e5. Black is lacking any useful moves as after bxc5 ♙xc5 the a7-pawn becomes extremely weak, while after 20...♞fd8 21.♞xd8+! Black cannot recapture, he either loses the b6- or the e7-pawn.

20.♙g2!

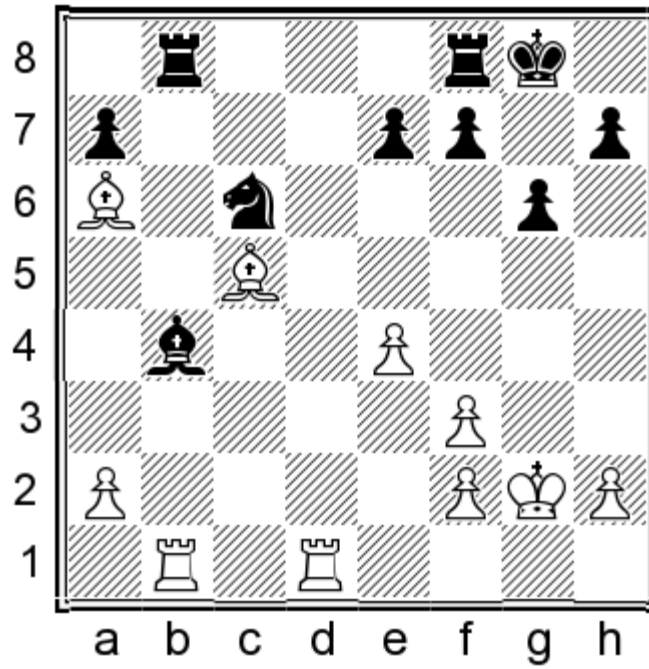
Just as in the 19...♙f4 line, Aronian protects the f3-pawn and enjoys the fact that Black is lacking useful moves. White could still improve his position with f4-e5. The tactical justification of ...♙c3 was 20.cxb6 ♞xb6! 21.♞xb6 axb6 22.♞c1 and here Black holds after 22...♞a8!= and both sides lose their pieces.

20...bxc5

20...♙f6 21.f4 The same story again: Black had no good recapture after 20...♞fd8 21.♞xd8+±

21.♙xc5 ♙b4

Black at least protects the e7-pawn against the threatened ♙b5 or ♙b7.



22. ♙e3!

White's advantage lies in the bishop pair, so he needs to preserve it! The bishop also continues to exert pressure on the a7-pawn. The black pieces have no stability, they cannot be supported by pawns and the a6-bishop is also very annoying as it limits the movements of the black rooks.

22... ♙d6!

Black wants to simplify the position and frees the b4-square for his knight to get counterplay against the a-pawn and also to kick out the a6-bishop.

23. ♖bc1!

Aronian preserves his remaining pieces in order to maintain more pressure on his opponent.

23... ♞b4 24. ♙c4

Black only temporarily solved the problem of the a6-bishop and the knight because a3 is hanging in the air, after which the knight is forced to return to its bad place on c6 again.

24... ♜fc8!

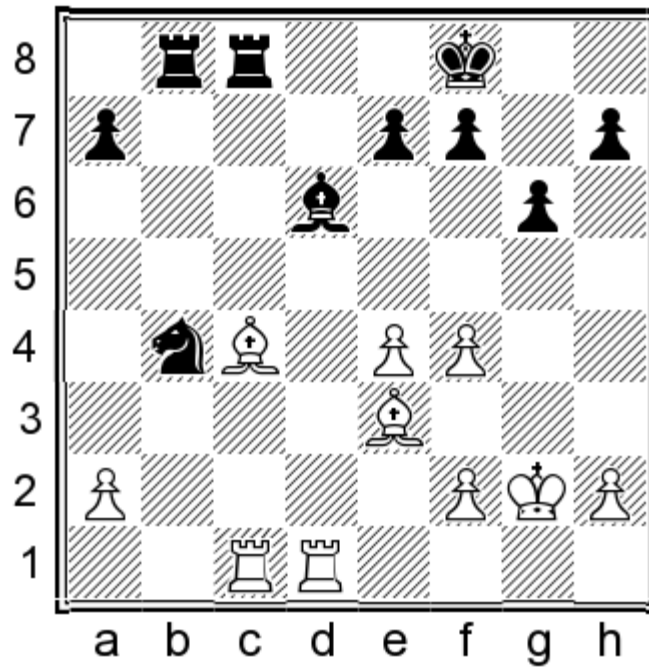
So defends tenaciously! 24...a5 could have been met by 25.f4!± and Black has no good way to deal with the e5-threat, after which the bishop has no square.

25.f4!

Aronian keeps the tension! 25. ♙xa7!? was actually also possible. 25... ♜a8 26. ♙e3 ♞xa2 27. ♙xa2 ♜xc1 28. ♙xf7+! ♞xf7 29. ♜xc1 and Black has good chances to hold this endgame because of the doubled f-pawns. Aronian prefers again to keep all the pieces, especially since Black was low on time and in this endgame he could easily have reached the time-control.

25...♙f8!

Black leaves from the threatening e5 ♖c5 ♙xc5 ♜xc5 ♙xf7 check!



Aronian does a brilliant calculating job here. I believe that at this point he had foreseen the following very difficult line and the position arising after move 32.

26.a3

26.e5 was also possible. 26...♙c5 27.a3 ♙xe3 28.fxe3 ♘c6 29.♙a6 ♜d8 30.♜xd8+ ♘xd8 31.♜c7 and White is clearly better, but Black has chances to survive.

26...♘c6 27.♙a6 ♙xa3!

So again tries to solve the problem using calculation, but Aronian has counted one move further. 27...♜c7 28.♜d3 looks awful as Black is totally pinned.

28.♜c4!

White has nothing after 28.♙xc8? ♙xc1 Black takes the same amount of pieces. 29.♜xc1 ♜xc8;

28.♜a1 could have been met by another intermediate move: 28...♙b2!

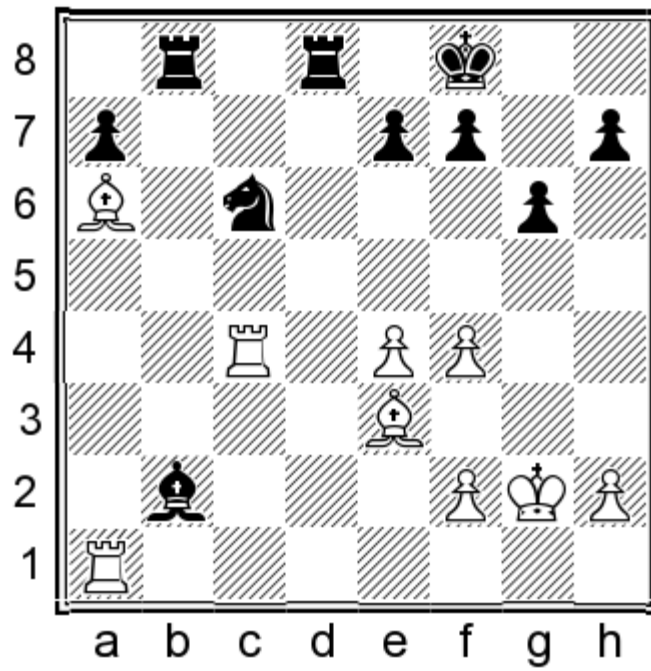
28...♜d8

It is understandable that Black wishes to leave from the deadly pin on the c-file. 28...♜c7 is very suspicious. White either plays 29.f5 with the idea of ♙f4. (Or 29. ♜d2 and ♜dc2 next.)

29.♜a1!

Two pieces are hanging again, Black needs to continue with his intermediate moves

29...♙b2



29...♖a5 would have been the only chance, although I wouldn't wish the defence of the following position on anyone!
 30.♖xa3 ♖xc4 31.♙xc4± with an extremely long and painful torture ahead.

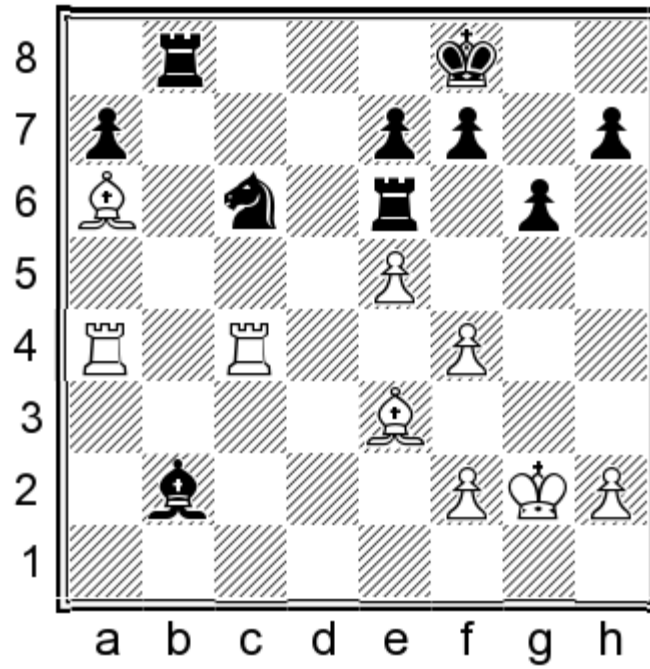
30.♖aa4!!

This was the very deep point of Aronian's play — the c6-knight is trapped. Amazing! That is why both rooks had to move to the 4th rank, to control the d4- and b4-squares. Black has only one move to save the knight.

30...♞d6

But now Black gets one more terribly-placed piece.

31.e5! ♞e6

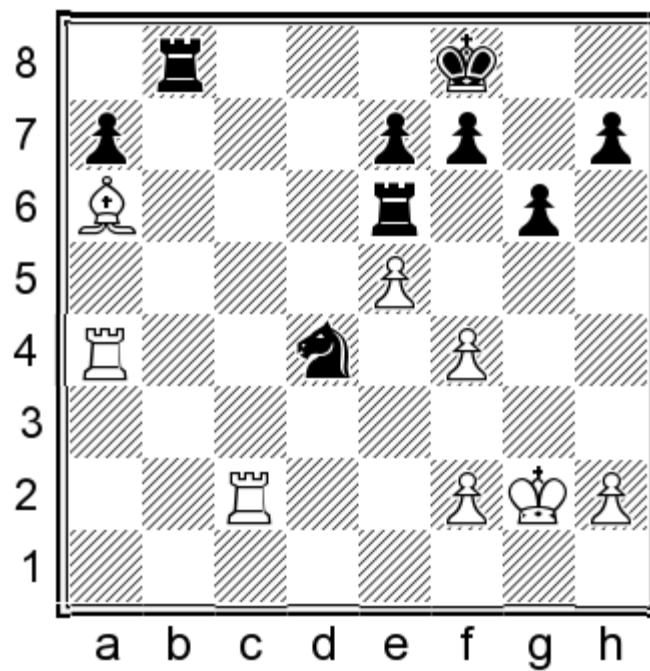


32. Rxc2!!

The last brutally strong but subtle move! White frees the c4-square for his bishop and the rook is trapped. Black cannot avoid big material losses.

32... Nxd8

Another nice line is 32... Bxd4 33. Bxd4 Nxd4



34. Rxc8+! Rxc8 35. Bxc8 Rxc6 36. Bxd7!+- winning the knight and the game.

33. Bxa7!

Black's pieces suddenly become completely confused. Now the rook should protect the b2-bishop, but then ♖c8 wins the knight. Black has pinned his last hopes on another intermediate move...

33...♖a8 34.♙b5

and as a final blow, the b2-bishop finds itself trapped!

34...♙xe5 35.fxe5 ♖xe5 36.♙e3!

A final intermediate move, after which White preserves a healthy extra piece. Black resigned here. What fantastic piece-play by Aronian! Even such an endgame can be full of hidden tactical resources.

1–0

GAME 32

S. Mamedyarov (2757)

V. Anand (2770)

FIDE Candidates 2014

Khanty-Mansiysk RUS (3.4)

15.03.2014, [D11]

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

It is extremely difficult to win a game at the highest level of chess, and doing it with the black pieces — especially in such a convincing way — is just exceptional.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6

Mamedyarov also suffered against the Slav Defence in the first round. In that game against Topalov he tried a sideline with 4.♘bd2.

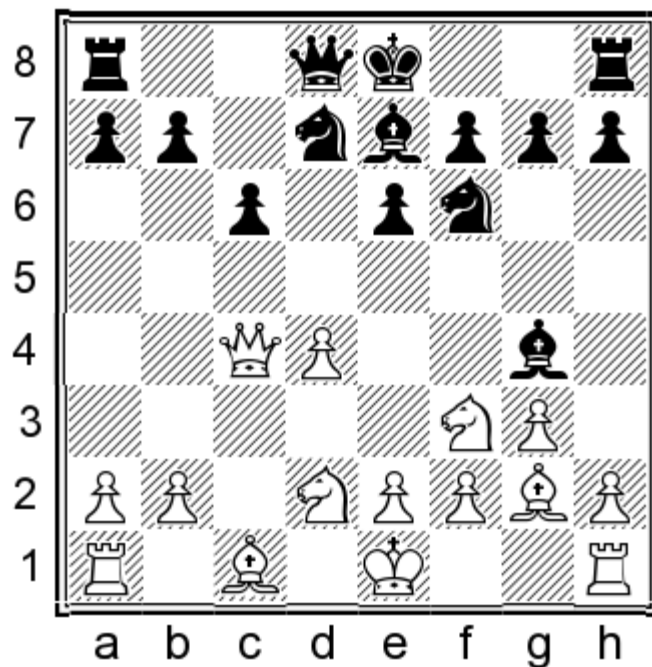
4.♙c2 dxc4 5.♙xc4 ♙g4

5...♙f5 is the main-line, but the text move is also considered to be fine.

6.♘bd2

A safe setup. White prevents the weakening of his pawn structure and intends to develop his bishop to g2. 6.♘c3 leads to much more wild positions after 6...♘bd7 7.e4 ♙xf3 8.gxf3 e5

6...♘bd7 7.g3 e6 8.♙g2 ♙e7



9.♘e5

White trades a pair of knights, using the fact that Black cannot take on e5 due to the loss of the g4-bishop. On the other hand it is not obvious why it is an achievement for White to get rid of some pieces. 9.0-0 0-0 10.♙b3 is the other option for White. 10...♙b6 11.♘c4 ♙a6! is the precise reaction, followed by ...♘b6 and is given as equal by theory.

9...♙h5!

Saving the bishop, and now Black already wants to take on e5.

10.♘xd7 ♘xd7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♘b3

White's chance to prove some advantage lies in queenside play or in the opening of the center and the diagonal of the g2-bishop with e4-d5. At the moment White has created the positional threat of ♘d2-♘a5 and b4 with very unpleasant pressure on the b7-c6 pawns. Black needs to prevent it.

12...a5!

Intending to push back the knight with ...a4, or if White plays a4 himself then Black can use the b4-hole with his minor pieces. We are still following some theoretical games.

13.a4 ♘b4

Anand immediately occupies the b4-outpost with his bishop and frees the ideal e7-square for his queen, in order to explode the center with e5.

14.e4

14.f4 with the idea of preventing ...e5 could have been met by 14...♙e7 15.e4 f6! followed by ...♘f7 and ...e5! This is a standard maneuver in the Slav.

14...e5

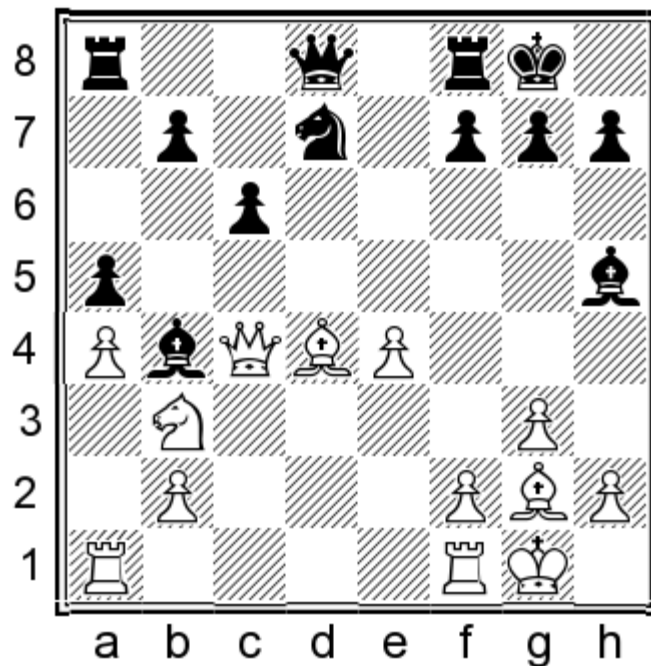
This most natural move is actually the novelty of the game. Black challenges the central pawns.

15. ♖e3

The white pieces are not developed well-enough to create a passed pawn with 15.d5? cxd5 16.exd5 ♖c8 when the black pieces are just too active and he takes over the initiative.

15...exd4 16. ♖xd4

White couldn't improve his misplaced b3-knight with 16. ♖xd4 because of 16... ♖e5! and wherever the queen goes 17. ♖c2 ♖g4! Black grabs the bishop pair and claims the advantage.



16... ♖h8!

The black bishops are well-placed as they are controlling the d1 and e1 squares, the ideal spots for the white rooks. Black's next task is to control the situation in the center. White's only dangerous idea in the position is to advance in the center with f4-e5-f5. With his last move Anand made excellent preparations to place his pawn on f6.

17.e5

17.f4 f6 is also perfect for Black, when White cannot make progress.

17... ♖e8!

Anand already knows that he is going to undermine the e5-pawn with ...f6, but first he forces a huge weakening!

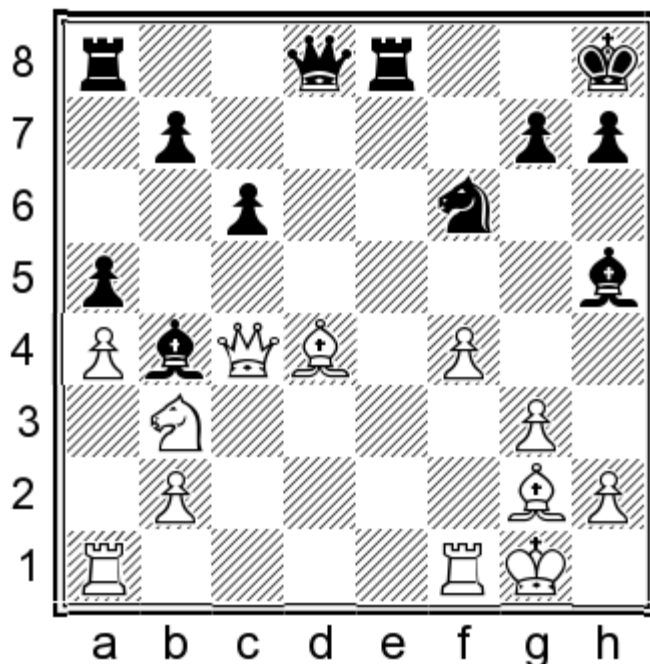
18.f4

There was no other way to defend the pawn as the e1-square is controlled by the bishop.

18...f6! 19.exf6

White could not create a passed pawn with 19.e6? ♖b6 as he is first forced to give up his strong bishop and then 20.♗xb6 ♕xb6+ 21.♔h1 ♕e3! wins an exchange thanks to the double-threat of taking on e6 and ...♗e2.

19...♗xf6



If the pawn was on f2 White would have no problems, but now his king becomes vulnerable. Black is threatening to play ...♗e2.

20.♗f3

A difficult decision, as this further weakens the king's position. The g2-bishop has played an important defensive role, but at least White can finally use the d-file with his rook. Other moves were even worse... White cannot close the e-file with 20.♗e5 because of 20...♗g4! when both ...♗e3 and ...♗xe5 are threatened. 20.♖f2 ♕e7+ is also better for Black. ...♖ad8 is coming next and White still cannot oppose his rooks on the opened files because of the strong black bishops.

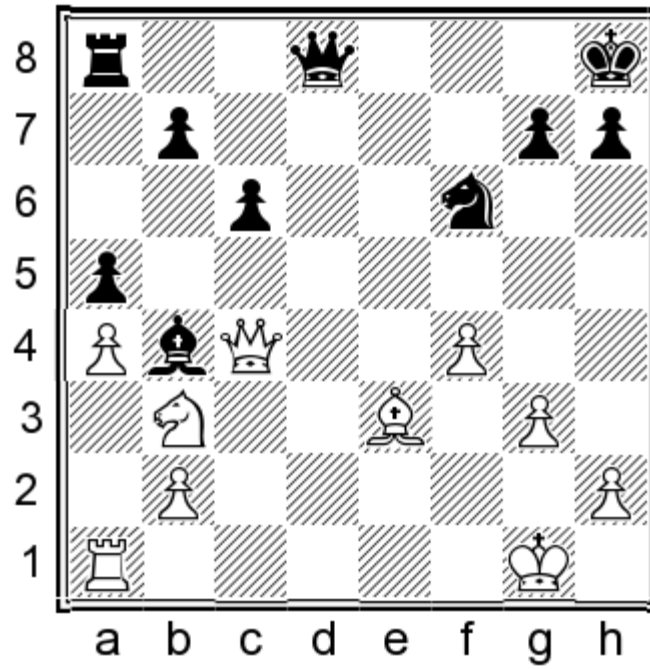
20...♗xf3 21.♖xf3 ♖e4!

Black must play energetically and not give White time to consolidate.

22.♖e3

A logical approach to trade the active rook. The arising endgame after 22.♗xf6 ♖xc4 23.♗xd8 ♖xd8+ is clearly better for Black. The bishop is in general stronger than the knight when there are pawns on both sides. The a4- and b2-pawns are real weaknesses. Black can attack them for instance by playing ...b6 and ...♗e7-f6, followed by ...♖c2 or ...♖b4. The black rooks are also more active.

22...♖xe3 23.♗xe3



23...♔e8!

An excellent positional move with attacking purposes. At first sight ...♔e7 looked more natural, but after ♕b6 it is not so easy to activate the a8-rook because of the a5-pawn.

24.♖b6

Otherwise Black is able to occupy the d-file with his rook. 24.♖d4 ♖d8 25.♖xf6 ♔e3+ 26.♔g2 gxf6+ White has serious problems because of his poor b3-knight.

24...♔h5!

This is the reason Anand played ...♔e8. Black eyes up the h2 pawn and sometimes threatens the very unpleasant ...♘g4. The queen also covers the a5-pawn, therefore Black is ready to occupy the e-file with his rook. It is really hard to parry the ...♖e8-e2 plan, so White is in deep trouble despite the material equality.

25.♖d4

White cannot defend with 25.♖f1 ♖e8 26.♖f2 as Black wins after 26...♖e1+ 27.♖f1 (27.♔g2 ♘g4+) 27...♘g4! 28.♔c2 ♘e3! 29.♖xe3 ♖e2!—+

25...♖e8 26.♖f1

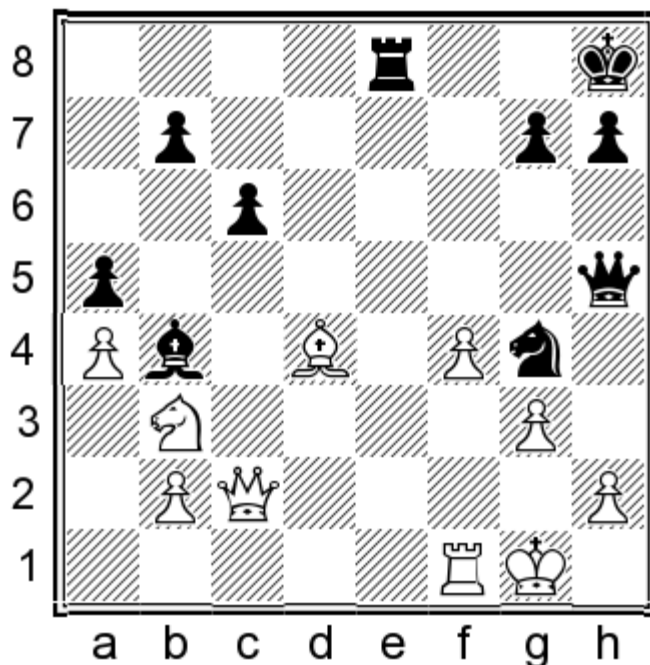
After 26.♖e5 the strongest is 26...♘d7+ and Black either wins a pawn or invades with ...♖e2. (26...♘g4 27.♔e2 is less clear.)

26...♘g4!

The attack is rolling.

27.♔c2

White would like to push back the pieces with ♖g2 and h3. Black is clearly better in any case, but Anand feels the moment and finds the most direct way to break through!



27.h4 loses to 27...♗e3 28.♕xe3 ♖xe3—+ and Black cannot hold his g3-pawn.

27...c5!!

The bishop is overloaded on d4. It has no good square to go to, while accepting the sacrifice would enter a deadly pin.

28.♗xc5

28.♕c3 ♗e3—+;

28.♕e5 c4!—+ is the most precise and ...♕c5 wins next.;

28.♕xc5 ♕xc5+ 29.♗xc5 ♗e3—+

28...♖c8

28...♕xc5 29.♕xc5 ♖c8—+ and b6 next was also winning the piece.

29.♖d1

29.♖c1 b6—+

29...♕xc5 30.♕xc5 h6!?

The easiest. Black opens the back rank to be able to take on c5. It is important that ♖xc5 is hanging with check, otherwise White could have the standard trick of ♖xc5 ♖d8 ♖xd8 ♖xc5.

31.♔h1

Mamedyarov resigned in view of 31.♔h1 ♗f2+ (Of course not 31...♖xc5?? as it is not check anymore and suddenly White wins after 32.♖d8+!) 32.♖xf2 ♖xd1+ 33.♔g2 ♖d5+—+

GAME 33**V. Topalov (2785)****P. Svidler (2758)**

FIDE Candidates 2014

Khanty-Mansiysk RUS (12.1)

27.03.2014, [B49]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

We will see a great positional win now by White, who manages to outplay his opponent from a very equal-looking position. From the opening point of view, this game could also be very interesting.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6

Svidler as usual plays his favourite Paulsen. There are not many players from the top-level who still believe in this opening.

3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘c6

The Paulsen with 4...a6 is also a very fighting opening, often called the Kan Variation.

5.♗c3 ♖c7 6.♙e3 a6

So we are in the very main-lines.

7.♙e2!?

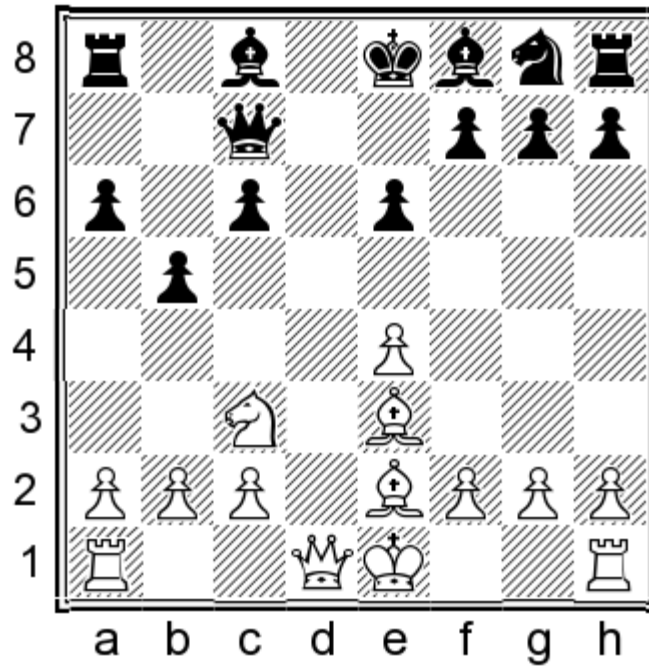
Not the most popular, but a very tricky move. 7.♖d2 would lead us to some sharp lines, for example like in the Karjakin-Svidler game that was played just a week ago during the Candidates.

7...b5

The most critical move. After 7...♗f6 the game could turn into the main Scheveningen line: 8.0-0 ♙e7 9.f4 d6 10.a4

8.♗xc6 dxc6

A very rare move and personally I think a very risky strategic decision.



8...♖xc6 would be the normal move, which has been played in many games even on the top level. 9.♘f3 ♘b7 10.e5 ♖c7 11.♘b7 ♖xb7 12.♗d3 with highly unclear play.

9.a4!

Very strong play. White has no time to lose. If Black is in time to develop his pieces, White's position would not be better because of the great pawn structure a6-b5-c6.

9...b4

It would be a bad idea for Black to try and keep his pawn structure: 9...♘b7?! 10.axb5 axb5 11.♖xa8+ ♘xa8 12.0-0 followed by ♗a1 and strong play on the a-file. Black is just not in time with his development.

10.♞b1

The white knight is going to take up a perfect position on c4.

10...♞f6 11.♞d2 c5

Black tries to develop his bishop to b7, which is not a great position, but what else to do?! It is already clearly too late to switch the plan and play ...e5-♞e6.

12.f3!

White defends the e4-pawn and puts up a wall against the b7-bishop.

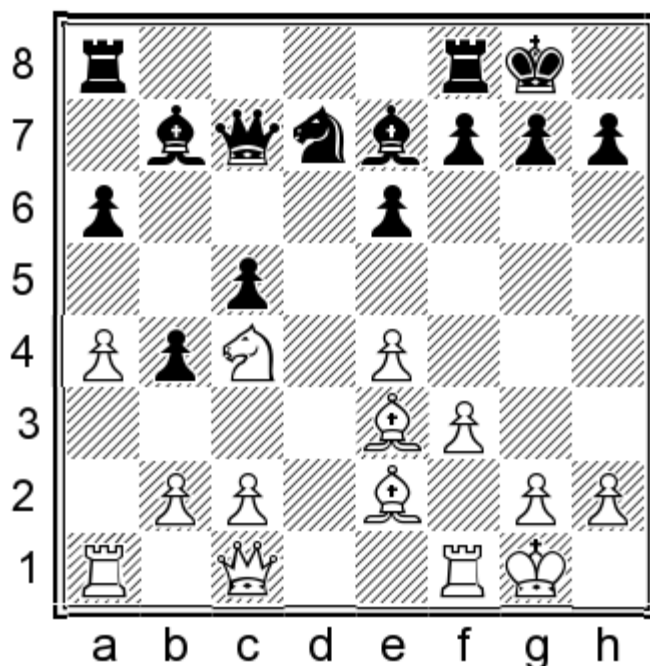
12...♞b7 13.♞c4 ♞d7

This move also just looks too slow... It would probably have been a better choice to play 13...♞e7 14.0-0 0-0 15.♗e1 with a similar idea as in the game, to play c3 — and White should be also be clearly better here.

14.♖c1

Of course White could have castled first, but Topalov probably wanted to be sure that the ...♘b6 move never works. Now of course White always has the ♕f4 idea.

14...♕e7 15.0-0 0-0



16.♕f4!?

A very nice positional move. Before opening the c-file with c3, White weakens Black's position even more. After 16.c3 bxc3 17.♖xc3 ♖fb8 White should still be better, but maybe Black would get some play on the b-file and ...♕f6 could also be strong at some moment.

16...e5

Black doesn't have anything better than playing this. In the case of moves like 16...♖c8, of course the d6-square would become very weak.

17.♕g3

Now White has the double idea of playing ♖e3-♕c4 and try to explore the d5-square, or to try and open the position by playing c3. At first sight the position may seem to be close to equal, but in fact White has a big advantage!

17...h6?!

Strangely Svidler doesn't seem to be in a hurry. His move prepares ...♕g5, but now White is going to crush him in the center. 17...a5!? with the idea of playing next ...♕a6 looks like a better option to me. Black really needs to act against White's c3 move.

18.c3!

Topalov continues to play in a great style. White prepares his play on the c- and d-files.

18...a5 19.♖c2

White sees no reason to hurry and first places his pieces in perfect positions.

19...♙a6 20.♖fd1 ♜fd8 21.b3

A move a move like b3 could be useful in the future.

21...♙g5 22.♙f2

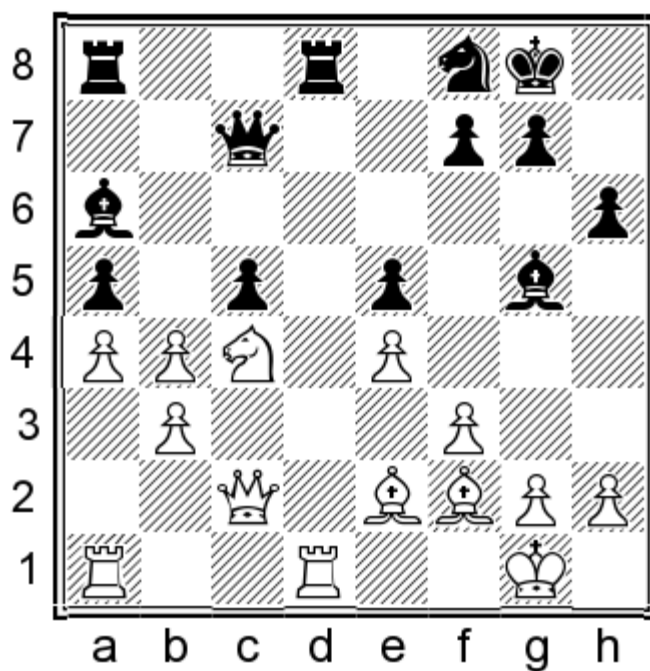
Avoiding some of Black's tricks connected with playing ...♙e3 at some opportune moment.

22...♞f8

Svidler tries to bring his knight to e6 and afterwards to threaten ...bxc3 and ...♞d4.

23.cxb4

Of course White doesn't wait for Black to play ...♞e6 next.



23...cxb4?!

After this move, the game is maybe almost lost. Black's position would be much harder to break down after 23...axb4 24.h4 ♙e7 25.♞e3 ♞e6 26.♙xa6 ♜xa6 27.♞c4 Of course White's position is much better, but Black is still fighting, especially with the upcoming ...♞d4 move.

24.♙b6!

White launches some concrete play so as to not give Black a chance to play ...♞e6.

24...♜xd1+ 25.♜xd1 ♜b8

After 25...♞e7 26.♜d5 Black already loses some material.

26.♙f2 ♚c7

And again Black is not in time to get the knight into the game: 26...♘e6 27.♗b6 ♜a7 28.♘d7 and White is an exchange up.

27.♞d5

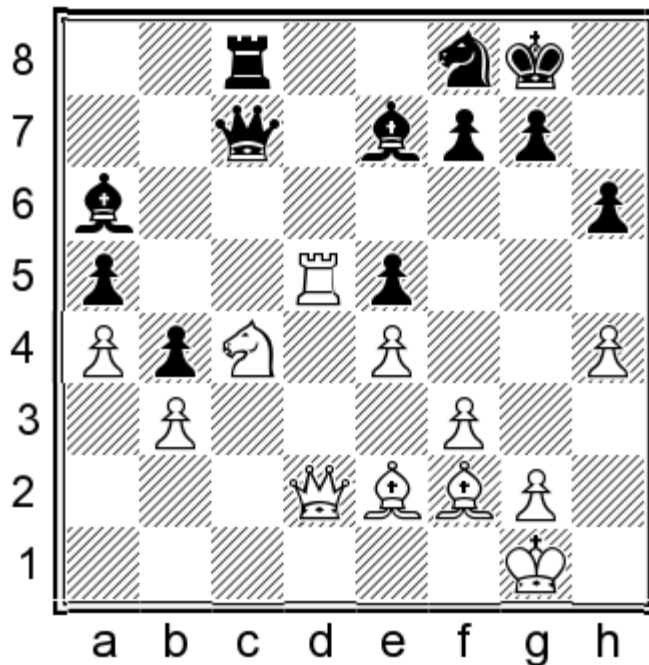
Once again 2 pawns are hanging, on a5 and e5.

27...♞c8 28.h4

Topalov decides not to give Svidler any chances. 28.♞c5 also looks very strong. 28...♚d8 (28...♞xc5 This queen sacrifice doesn't work as after 29.♙xc5 ♜xc5 30.♚d1 White's advantage should be close to winning.) 29.♞xe5 ♘e6 30.♞d5 White is a clear pawn up.

28...♙e7 29.♚d2

Now the pawn on a5 is already hanging.



29...♞d8?!

And this last inaccuracy already leads to a lost position. White would still have had to show some technique after 29...♙xc4 30.♙xc4 ♞d8 and Black is fighting, albeit in a very bad position.

30.♙b6

The pawn on a5 is simply gone.

30...♞xd5 31.♚xd5 ♚b8 32.♚xa5

There is no more hope left for Black.

32...♙xc4 33.♙xc4 ♚d6 34.♙f2

The simplest: White prepares to play ♖b6 followed by a5-a6-a7.

34...♖d1+ 35.♘h2

The position is just too hopeless. We just witnessed a really great positional game where White basically didn't have to calculate any variations and got a decisive advantage. A very nice game to learn from!

1-0

GAME 34

D. Andreikin (2709)

L. Aronian (2830)

FIDE Candidates 2014

Khanty-Mansiysk RUS (13.1)

29.03.2014, [A45]

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

Before the penultimate round Aronian was standing on +1, while Anand was leading with +3, therefore Aronian decided to make a final attempt to catch Anand by playing a dubious opening line.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♙g5

As usual Andreikin chose to play a sideline (the Trompowsky Variation) instead of challenging the homework of his extremely well-prepared opponents.

2...g6

Normally Aronian plays 2...d5 or 2...e6, but this time he went for something different to make his opponent think right from the beginning..

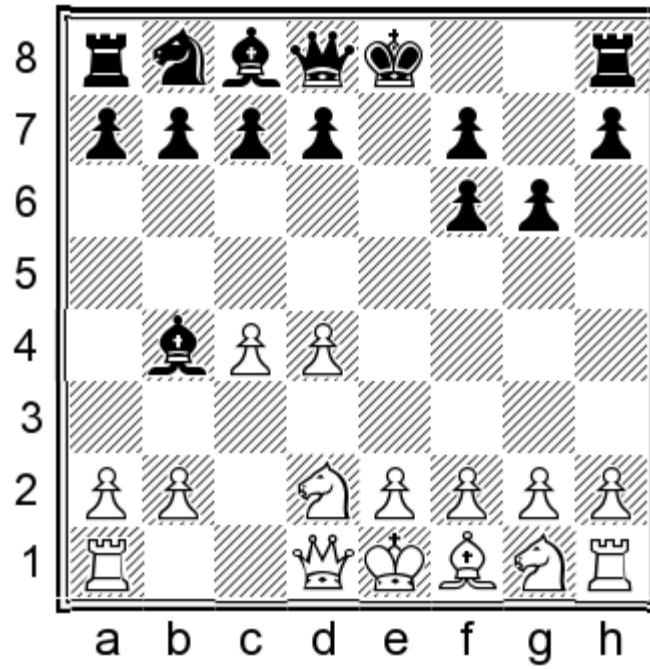
3.♙xf6 exf6 4.c4

If White plays some standard move, such as 4.e3, Black achieves his ideal setup after 4...d5 5.g3 c6 6.♙g2 f5 followed by ...♘d7-f6, with a very comfortable position.

4...♙b4+

Somehow I don't believe that after playing g6, the bishop should be developed on the f8-a3 diagonal. 4...f5 It was much more consequent to play like Svidler did two years ago: 5.♘c3 ♙g7 6.g3 0-0 7.e3 d6 8.♙g2 ♘d7 9.♘ge2 ♘f6 10.0-0 although I believe White's position is slightly preferable. Vitiugov-Svidler, St.Petersburg 2012

5.♘d2



Only 5 moves have been played and we have reached a novel position. Black has already made some dubious decisions, but the next one is the real mistake...

5...c5?

This is very strange. Black clearly wants to confuse his opponent, but he just destroys his own pawn-structure. After the next move he is even forced to give up the bishop pair, the only trump of his position.

6.a3! ♖xd2+

6...♙a5 could have simply been met by 7.dxc5 as White is ready to protect his pawn with b4.

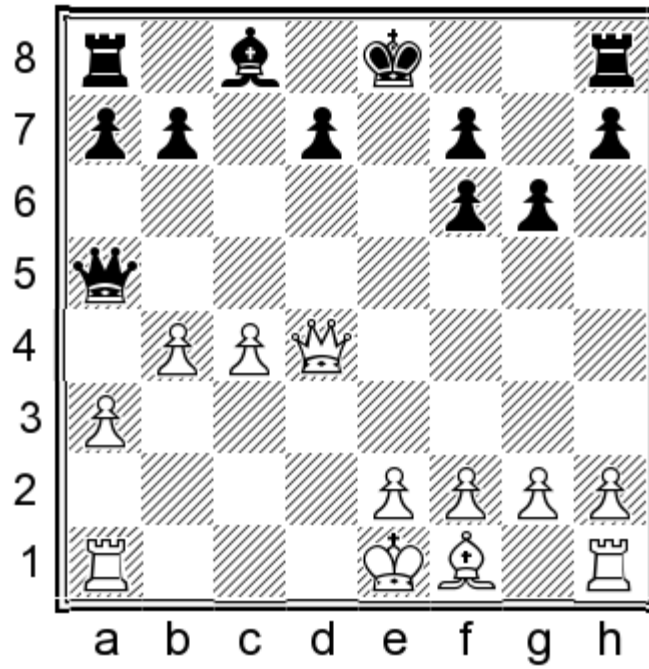
7.♙xd2 cxd4 8.♘f3!

White wants to recapture the d4-pawn with his knight in order to avoid giving away a tempo after ♖xd4 ♘c6.

8...♘c6

Black could have tried to get rid of his isolated d-pawn with 8...d5 but White had probably planned to play 9.c5! followed by ♘xd4, keeping all the advantage of his position. After ...♙e7 the pawn can be defended by the rook from c1.

9.♘xd4 ♘xd4 10.♙xd4 ♙a5+ 11.b4



11...♕e5

Black tries to improve his pawn structure, but White is not forced to take on e5.

12.0-0-0?!

This allows Black to create his counterplay. 12.♖d1! was more circumspect after all, but it was very difficult to foresee all the consequences. 12...b6 (Now on 12...a5 13.b5 is much stronger, because Black cannot finish his development so easily. Now on 13...d6 14.♕xd6 can be taken. 14...♕c3+ 15.♕d2±) 13.e3 (13.h4!? is also very interesting with the idea of activating the h1-rook via the 3rd rank!) 13...♕xd4 Black is forced to trade queens if he wants to develop his bishop, otherwise the d7-pawn hangs. 14.♖xd4 ♖b7 15.f3 followed by ♗e2, ♜f2 and ♖hd1, with a clearly better endgame due to the better pawn structure.

12...a5! 13.b5

Naturally White wants to avoid the opening of the a-file.

13...d6!

A strong dynamic move! Black quickly wants to put pressure on the c4-pawn with ...♗e6 and ...♖c8.

14.♕xe5+

Andreikin comes up with a very deep positional idea. He probably had already foreseen his 20th move! 14.e3 could have been played, but White can hardly hope for an advantage after 14...♗e6 15.♜b2 ♜e7 16.♗e2 ♖hc8 followed by ...♖c5 and ...♖ac8. 17.f4 ♕xd4+ 18.♖xd4 ♖c5 19.♖hd1 ♖d8 followed by ...f5 with a balanced game. The a5-b5 pair of moves are a huge achievement for Black as his pawn structure is no longer worse.

14...dxe5 15.g3

Of course it would be excellent to develop the bishop to g2, pressing the b7-pawn, but the question is what happens if

Black quickly attacks the c4-pawn...?

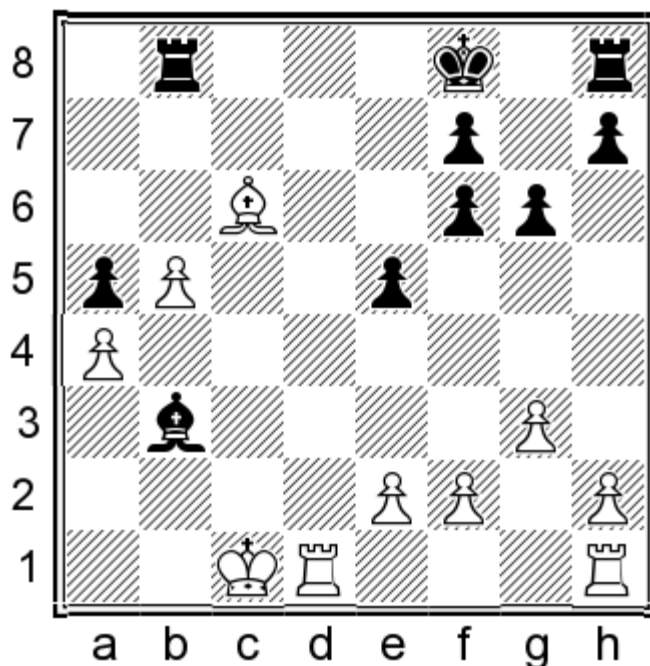
15...♙e6 16.♙g2 ♜xc4

16...♞c8 17.♙xb7 ♞xc4+ 18.♔b2 should be a pleasant endgame for White with the passed pawn on b5!

17.♙xb7 ♞b8 18.♙c6+ ♔f8 ...

♔e7 would have been more logical to connect the rooks, but it would have walked into the ♞d7 tempo!

19.a4 ♙b3



Both players had foreseen this position long ago. Aronian was probably very happy as he double-attacks the rook and the a4-pawn, after which the b5-pawn might also fall, but Andreikin has calculated much deeper and came up with a shocking exchange sacrifice. The e2-pawn has no relevance here as White plays 19...♙xe2 20.♞d7 ♔g7 21.♞a7± and obtains powerful connected passed pawns.

20.♔b2!! ♙xa4?!

Black is lost after this move because the bishop becomes a bit loose on a4, but his position was very difficult anyway. The critical move was 20...♙xd1 21.♞xd1 and the point of White's play is that the black rooks are unco-ordinated, while White is ready to pick up the a5-pawn. All the endgames are extremely dangerous for Black as the king might go to c5 and advance the b-pawn. The bishop simply dominates the rooks. Black has no chance to create his passed pawn on the queenside because of the doubled pawns.

Despite not even having a pawn for the exchange, only White can have the advantage and it is understandable that Aronian did not go for this line. But the materialistic computers of course still show some defensive ideas for Black. 21...♔e7 could be met by (21...♔g7 22.♔c3! (22.♞d7 ♞hd8 gives a free tempo to Black as ♞a7 could have been met by ♞d2.) 22...♞hd8 23.♞xd8 ♞xd8 24.♔c4 and the endgame wins for White as the following line shows: 24...♔f8 25.b6 ♔e7 26.♔c5 f5 27.b7 ♞b8 28.♙d5 ♔d7 29.♔b6 f6 30.♔xa5+→) 22.♞d7+ ♔e6 23.♞a7 wins the pawn, but Black might hope for some counterplay along the d-file. 23...♞hd8 24.♔c3 ♞d1 25.♞xa5 ♞bd8 26.♞a7 to the human eye this is just hopeless, but the computer continues defending Black...

21.♞d5!

The bishop is trapped on a4, but Black has some tactical ideas to save it.

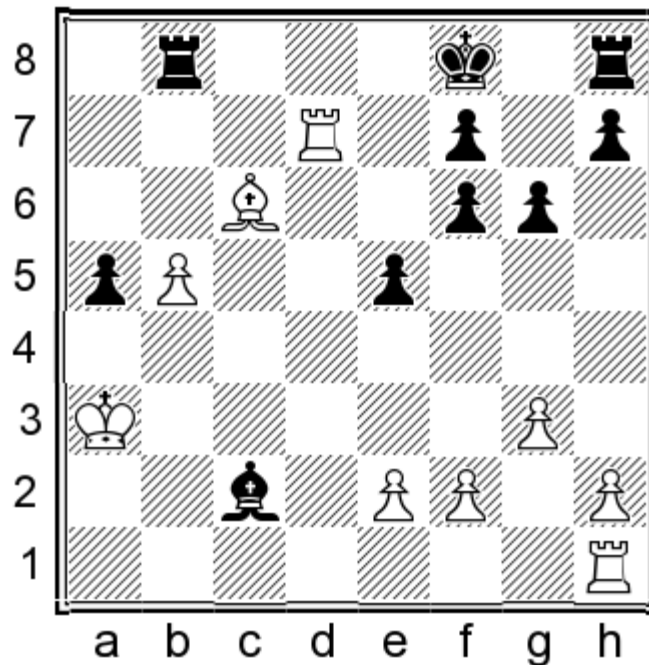
21...♙e7

21...♙g7 is also bad because of 22.♙a3! (22.♞a1 ♞hc8!) 22...♙c2 23.♞d2! leaving from the ♙f4 threat and after 23...♙f5 White simply plays 24.♙a4+– and ♙xa5. The b-pawn and the strong c6-bishop will decide the outcome of the game.

22.♙a3!

Aronian's trick was 22.♞a1 ♞hc8! and Black saves his bishop due to the threat of ♞xc6.

22...♙c2 23.♞d7+ ♙f8



White can choose between many different wins here. Both players were already in severe time pressure and Andreikin now allows practical chances for Black to survive...

24.e4

Andreikin keeps trying to trap the bishop. He closes the route back to f5 and threatens to catch it with ♞c1. One promising win was 24.♞d2 ♙f5 25.♙a4+– with basically an extra pawn and easy win for White, as Black's doubled f-pawns are completely useless. The machine recommends 24.♙d5 ♞xb5 25.♞c1+– a direct tactical blow, which forces Black to sacrifice an exchange on d5 and enter a lost endgame.

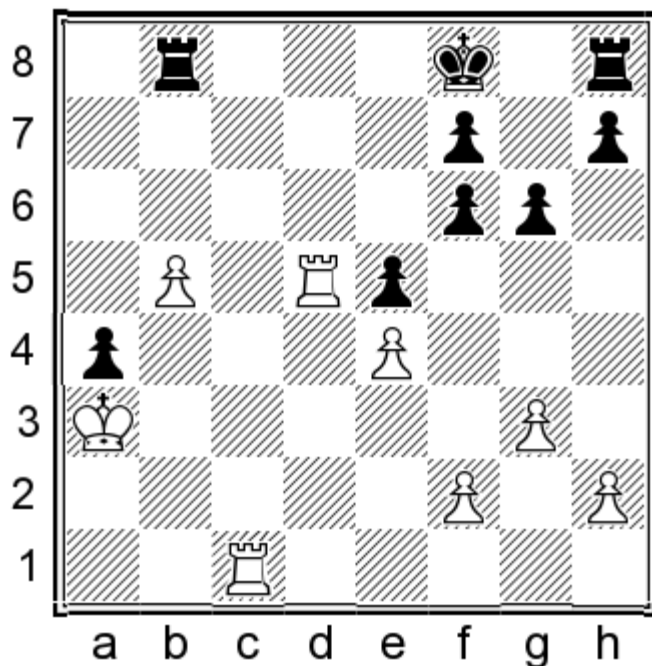
24...a4

24...f5 loses to 25.f3! fxe4 26.♞c1! ♙d3 27.♙a4! White has time for all the moves. After protecting the b5-pawn he recaptures on e4 and wins the game. 27...♙g7 28.fxe4+–

25.♞c1

25.♔d5! would have won much more easily. 25...♖g7 (25...♞xb5 26.♞xf7+ ♔e8 27.♞c7+-) 26.♞xf7+ ♔h6 27.♞b7+-
The b-pawn is supported by all the white pieces, while the a4 one is just a weakness which ties the bishop down to its defence.

25...♞b3 26.♔d5 ♞xd5 27.♞xd5



This endgame is still highly unpleasant for Black, but as we know, the defensive side can always hope for salvation in rook endgames.

27...♔g7

Black needs to bring his h-rook to the game.

28.♞c7

28.♔xa4 would allow some counterplay with 28...♞a8+ 29.♔b4 ♞a2

28...♞b6!

An excellent idea. Black frees the a8-square for his other rook to get activated through the a-file. Defending passively with 28...♞a8 does not lead to anything good: 29.b6 ♞hb8 30.b7 ♞a7 31.♞dd7+-

29.♞c6

29.♔xa4 ♞a8+ 30.♔b4 ♞a2 31.♔c5 ♞b8 is very similar to the game, and Black gets counterplay.

29...♞b7!

Black needs both of his rooks to retain his chances. One of the rooks should try to block the b-pawn, while the other one must go to create counterplay by attacking the white pawns. 29...♞xc6 is hopeless. 30.bxc6 ♞c8 31.♞c5 ♔f8 32.♔xa4 ♔e7 33.♔b5 wins easily. 33...♔d6 34.♞d5++-

30.♔xa4 ♞a8+

The rook is ready to invade and Black is back in the game.

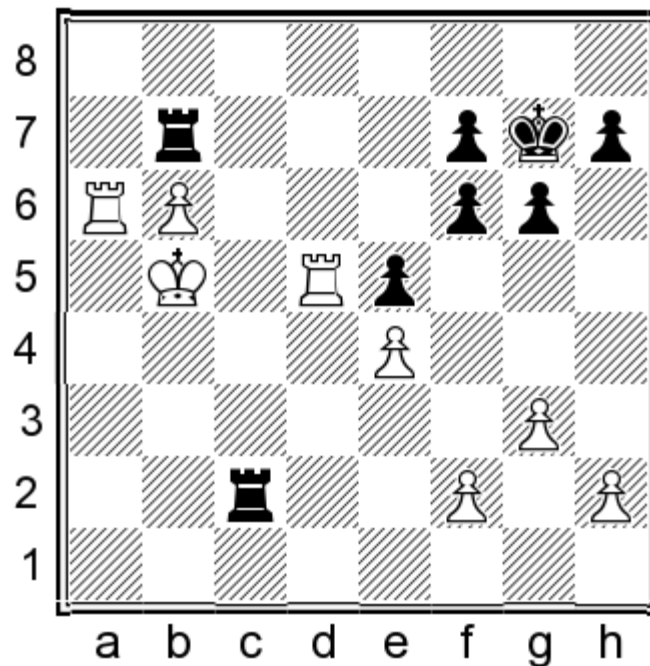
31. ♖a6

Of course White would still like to trade rooks, but Black is not forced to help him...

31... ♜c8 32. b6

Both players were in huge time-trouble and the game becomes very sharp again. The tournament was played without increments after the moves and Aronian was the one who made the final mistake.

32... ♜c2 33. ♔b5

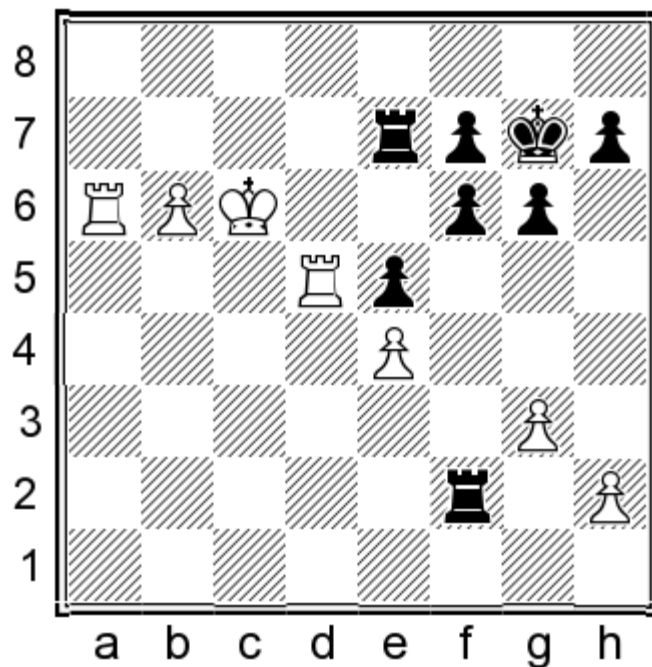


33... ♜xf2?

Black is lost after this move. It was still essential to leave from the ♔c6 tempo before capturing the f2 pawn. It is already unclear whether White is any better or if he has already spoiled all of his advantage. 33... ♜b8! The a6-rook cannot move because of ♜b2. 34. ♜d3 is logical to support the pawn from behind and avoid getting checked on b2. 34... ♜xf2 35. ♜b3 ♜xh2 36. ♜a7 ♜e2 37. b7 ♜xe4 38. ♔b6 White will queen his pawn, but Black already has 4 pawns and some chances to save the game. However, if White succeeds in attacking the f7-pawn with both of his rooks, he might have realistic chances to win the game.

34. ♔c6! ♜e7

34... ♜b8 is now met by 35. ♔c7 ♜e8 36. b7+— when the white rooks are excellently placed to meet both checks with ♜c6 or ♜d7.



When Aronian took on f2, he probably missed the following great move!

35. ♖a5!!

A very subtle move with the idea being to cover the king from the checks along the 2nd rank. 35.b7 ♖c2+ and the b7-pawn falls.

35... ♖e6+

35... ♖xh2 36.b7+— the pawn promotes and Black cannot eliminate all the pawns to obtain some chances for survival.

36. ♖d6 ♖e7 37. ♖dd5

Andreikin repeats twice to get closer to the time-control.

37... ♖e6+ 38. ♔c7!

The checks along the 2nd rank are completely neutralized by the rooks on the 5th rank, while the white king easily hides himself from the checks of the other rook.

38... ♖e7+ 39. ♔c8 ♖e8+ 40. ♔d7

No more checks and the b-pawn is going to be advanced. The rest is very easy.

40... ♔f8

40... ♖b8 41. ♔c7+—

41.b7 ♖e7+

41... ♖b2 42. ♖ab5+—;

41... ♖xh2 42. ♖a8+—

42.♙c6 ♖e6+ 43.♙c7 ♖e7+ 44.♙b6

Black resigned in view of 44.♙b6 ♖e6+ 45.♙a7 ♖e7 46.♙a8 and the pawn promotes.

1–0

GAME 35

M. Adams (2752)

M. Vachier-Lagrave (2758)

4NCL 2013–14

Hinckley ENG (11.111)

05.05.2014, [B90]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

We are in the decisive match in the British League, between the 2 big favourites — the teams of Wood Green and Guildford — who tried to get field their best possible line-ups. Adams, who played very well for the whole of last year and reached an ELO of over 2750, is facing Vachier-Lagrave, a young French superstar who seems to win ELO in every event he plays at the moment and is already the World Nr11! We are sure to see him in the Top 10 soon. Adams tried to keep the game calm, but things quickly became very complicated and Maxime was able to make the more correct decisions and reached a better endgame. Afterwards he showed great technical skills and didn't give Adams any chances to escape. This is really an almost perfect game by Black.

1.e4 c5

Maxime is one of few top players who still has not switched to the Berlin, as his Najdorf seems to bring him a lot of points at the moment.

2.♘f3 d6 3.d4

Actually Adams also likes to play the calmer 3.♙b5+ but it seems as though, perhaps because of the importance of the match, the Englishman decided to go for the very main lines.

3...cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♙e3

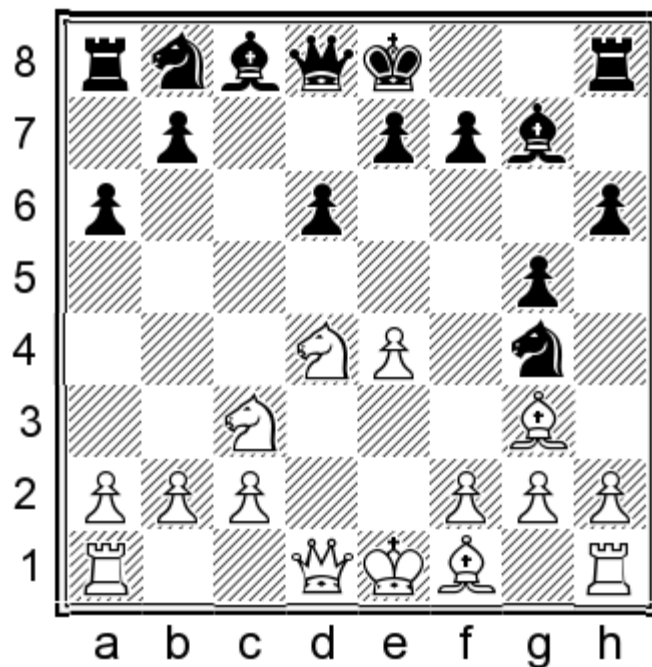
So we are in the main position of the Najdorf, where Black has 3 major choices: 6...e6 or 6...e5 or the move of the game, 6...♘g4.

6...♘g4

I think 6...♘g4 is one of the most dangerous moves for White and especially lately Black has had excellent results in this variation. The game very quickly becomes unstable and this is exactly what the almost 20 years younger French superstar wants against his much older opponent.

7.♙g5 h6 8.♙h4 g5 9.♙g3 ♙g7

And now we are again in a 'main position' from this variation. White has a lot of options here.



10.♔d2

One of the main moves. 10.h3 and 10.♕e2 are the other 2 main-lines with long theoretical analyses behind them.

10...♖c6 11.♘b3

If we take a general look at the position, we can perhaps evaluate a 'global' strategic view for this situation: White is clearly going to play against Black's ...h6-g5 by pushing h4 and trying to open the position to be able to get some play against the black king which is on e8. On the other hand, Black has an excellent bishop on g7 and the idea of ...b5-b4 or ...♕e6-♖c8 is a guarantee of strong play on the queenside. The position, overall, is very dynamic.

11...b5 12.h4

Adams improves on his own game against Gelfand, in which he continued with 12.f3 ♘ge5 13.♕f2 but after the strong 13...♘a5! Black might already have been the one with better chances.

12...b4

12...hxg4 might also be possible, but it seems to lead to more-or-less the same.

13.♘a4

The safest move. 13.♘d5 could also lead to a very interesting position. 13...♕xb2 14.♖b1 and White gets quite strong play for the pawn.

13...gxh4

Black can't let White take on g5.

14.♕xh4

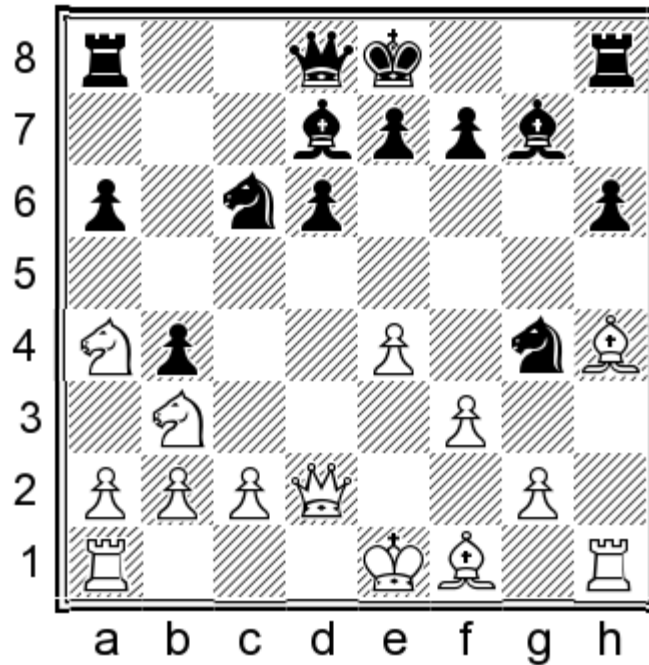
A difficult decision as 14.♖xh4 was of course also possible.

14...♔d7

Black plays against the white knight on a4 who can now easily be caught.

15.f3

White is giving away the initiative.



15.0-0-0 was more principled. If instead 15...♘ce5 then Black has to head into the tactics. 16.♙xb4 ♜b8! A strong and important move. (After the tempting 16...♘g6 White has a very nice tactical blow: 17.♞xd6! the position is complex, but it seems like things are pretty good for White.) 17.♙a3 and only now 17...♘g6 with a very unclear position.

15...♘ce5!

Black wastes no time! Now White's pawn structure is going to be heavily damaged.

16.fxg4 ♔xa4 17.0-0-0

Of course White's only chance now is the attack on the black king.

17...♔d7

A logical move, preparing ...a5-a4 and wanting to take on g4.

18.♔e2

This move can't be wrong either. White completes his development and maybe wants to play ♘d4-♘g4 or possibly even g5.

18...♘xg4

A greedy and maybe somewhat risky move. 18...♙c7 may have been another option for Black, e.g. 19.♙xb4 a5 when Black has excellent play.

19. ♖xb4?!

This is already a mistake. In my opinion — after a move like 19. ♖b1 against Black's ...h5 — followed by ♜hf1 and ♘d4. White could have obtained quite strong play in the center for the pawn.

19...a5!

Now it is Black who will attack, and he also has a better pawn structure and a monster bishop on g7.

20. ♜b7

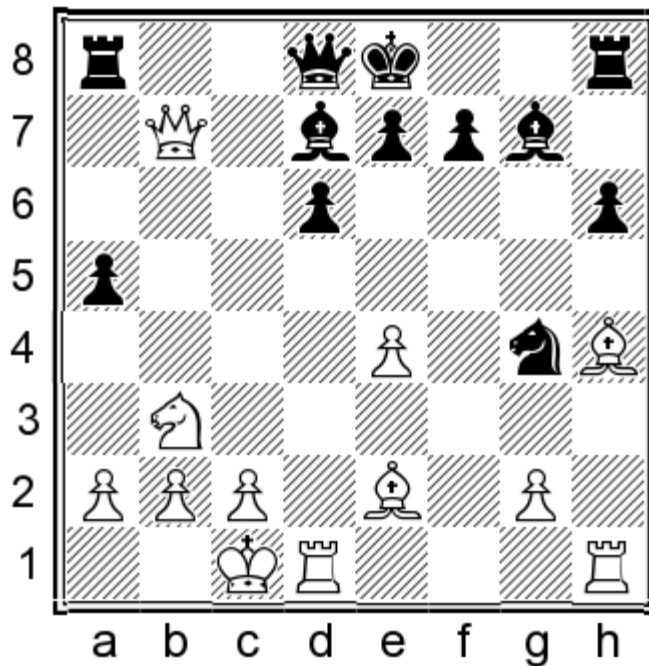
Where else to go?! After 20. ♜d2 ♜b6 Black's play on the queenside is just crushing. We should also not forget that Black can still castle kingside to improve the strength of his attack.

20...♜b8

It was easy to go wrong with 20...a4? which is met by 21. ♘c5! with an already winning position for White.

21. ♜a7 ♜a8 22. ♜b7

After repeating the moves once, Black finds the right approach to continue the game.



22...♜b8!

A very strong move! Of course Black's attack is only half as strong without the queens, but the pressure on the b2-pawn is still very unpleasant.

23. ♜xb8+ ♜xb8 24. c3

There is no other way to defend against the upcoming a4 move.

24...a4 25. ♘d4 ♘e3

Perhaps Black doesn't need to hurry with ♖e3 and can play 25...♖g8 first.

26.♟d1 ♜g8

We can take a fresh look on the position now. Material is equal, but both pawn structures are very strange. Black's big advantage is the open b-file where the rook on b8 is just perfectly placed and the bishop on g7 can also become a very dangerous piece on the a1–h8 diagonal. The white pieces are a bit passively placed and all this gives Black a clear advantage.

27.♙f2

Adams wants to get rid of the annoying knight on e3.

27...♞g4 28.♙e1

After 28.♙xg4 ♜xg4 Black's bishop pair would give him a big advantage.

28...♙e5!

A very good move! Black not only activates the rook on g8, but first brings his bishop to e5 and only after does he plan ...♞f6 starting play against the e4- and g2-pawns.

29.♝b1 ♞f6

Now we can see how important ...♙e5 was.

30.♙f3

White tries to keep things together.

30...h5

Another good positional move. All the black pieces are almost perfectly placed.

31.♙h4

This is probably not the best move, but it is very hard to give clear advice to White what to do instead.

31...♞g4

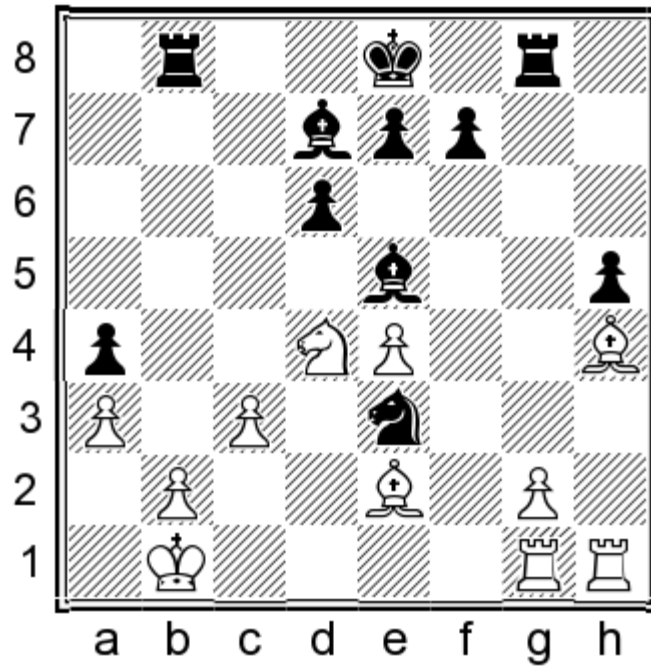
The black knight is going to c4.

32.a3

After 32.♙e1 ♞e3 the threat of playing ...♞c4 next is very dangerous.

32...♞e3 33.♙e2

Adams continues to be as solid as possible.



33...Qxd4!

A fantastic move! Black gives away his great dark-squared bishop, but he gains full control over the light squares. Maxime shows great understanding of the game.

34.cxd4 Qb5

This is the key move: White cannot avoid the exchange of the bishops.

35.Rh3

A logical decision. Adams tries to get a bad, but opposite-coloured bishop endgame in which there is always a chance to escape with a draw. After 35.Qxb5+? Rxb5 White cannot defend against ...Rg2 or ...Nc4.

35...Qxe2 36.Rxe3

This endgame might look quite harmless at first, but I think White's position is very bad. The pawn on a4 blocks both white pawns, and the e4-d4 pawns are clearly potential targets for the black pieces.

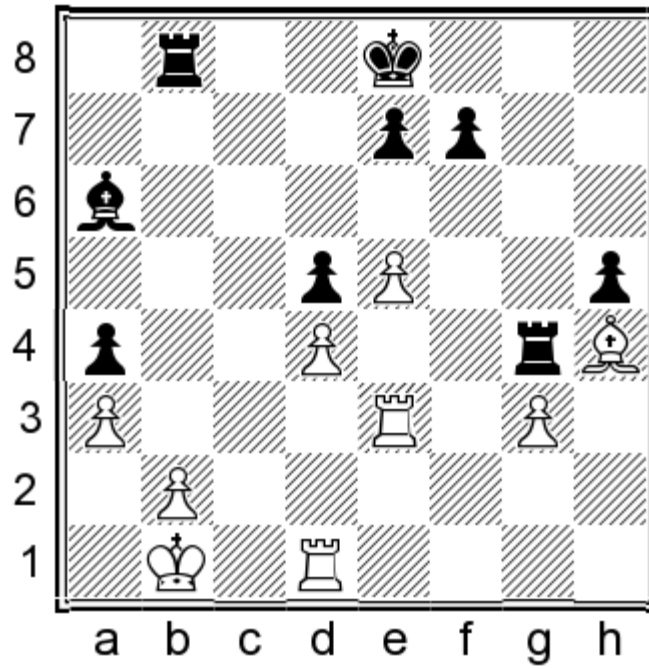
36...Qa6 37.e5

Maybe not the best move either. I think White would have better chances to escape after 37.Qe1 as he needs to bring the bishop into the game. 37...Rg4 38.Qc1 and of course Black's position is much better, but I think White retains some chances to make a draw.

37...Rg4!

A very nice move. Black forces White to play g3, killing his own bishop which is totally out of play on h4.

38.g3 d5 39.Rd1



39...♔d7!

Another very good move. Of course Black avoids playing a move like ...e6 because the black king will be perfectly placed on e6 now.

40.♞d2 ♘c4

White is totally paralyzed!

41.b4

What else to do?! Black has an easy plan, to play ...♔e6, ...♞bg8-♞e4-♞gg4.

41...axb3 42.♔b2 ♔e6

White still doesn't have anything against Black's deadly plan. His position is just hopeless.

43.♞f3 ♞bg8 44.♞ff2

White keeps on waiting.

44...♞e4

But with 2 of the black rooks entering the position, there is simply no hope. Black's attack is also stronger because of the opposite — coloured bishops and the terrible position of the white bishop on h4.

45.♞d1 ♞gg4 46.♔c3 ♞e3+

Black continues the invasion.

47.♔b2 ♞ge4 48.♞dd2

Adams is trying to save the game by covering the second rank.

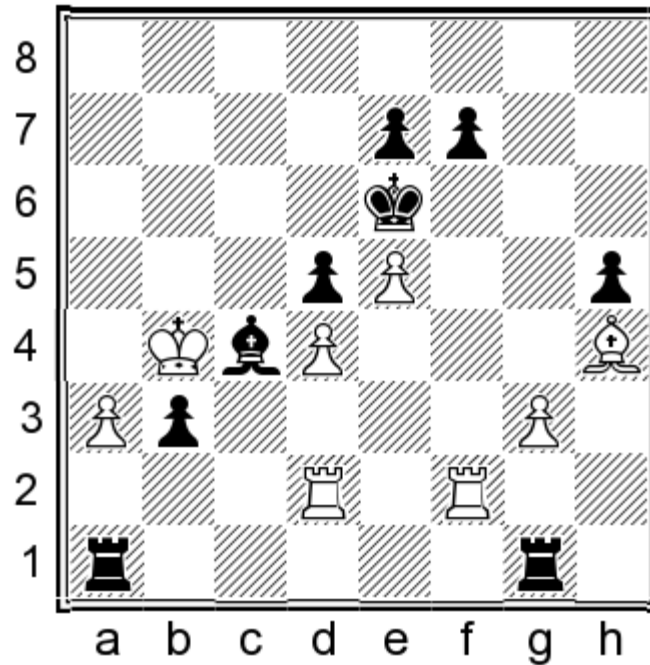
48...♖e1

But now Black is going to do his dirty work on the 1st rank.

49.♖h2 ♜g1 50.♖hf2 ♜ee1

The threat is to play ♜a1–♜a2.

51.♔c3 ♜a1 52.♔b4



52...♜a2

What a game... I can hardly remember Adams losing so painfully — and especially with the white pieces. A real masterpiece game by Vachier Lagrave!

0–1

GAME 36

D. Jakovenko (2730)

E. Sutovsky (2642)

15th Karpov GM 2014

Poikovsky RUS (5.2)

16.05.2014, [D71]

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

We are now going to examine a fine positional win by Jakovenko, in the style of Karpov from his best period.

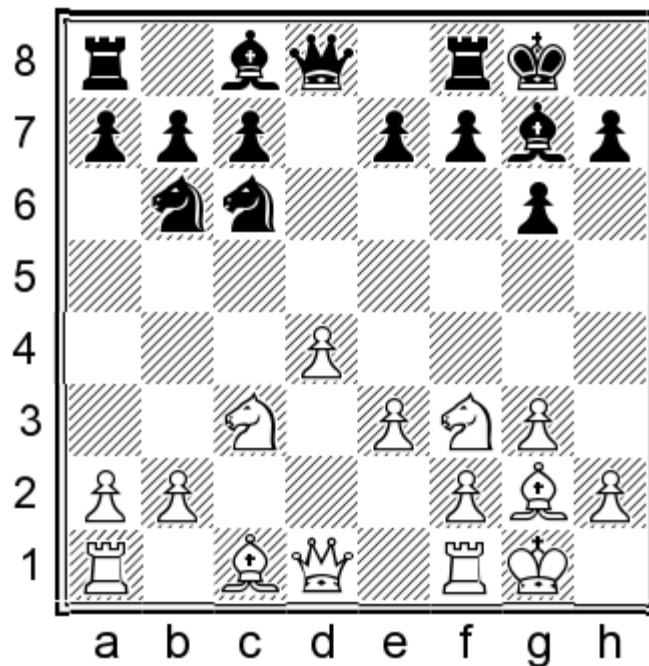
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6

Sutovsky is a Gruenfeld expert and Jakovenko goes for the g3-system.

3.g3 ♘g7 4.♙g2 d5

Black has many options here. The one played in the game is mostly in the spirit of the Gruenfeld; Black opens the position and gives his opponent the opportunity to occupy the center, but he intends to put it under pressure with his minor pieces.

5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♘f3 ♘b6 7.♘c3 ♘c6 8.e3 0-0 9.0-0



This is considered to be the ‘tabiya’, or initial position, of this variation. Black’s main option by far is ...♞e8 (in preparation for the ...e5 break in the center). GM Le Quang Liem recently tried the move that happened in the game and Sutovsky decided to repeat it...

9...a5

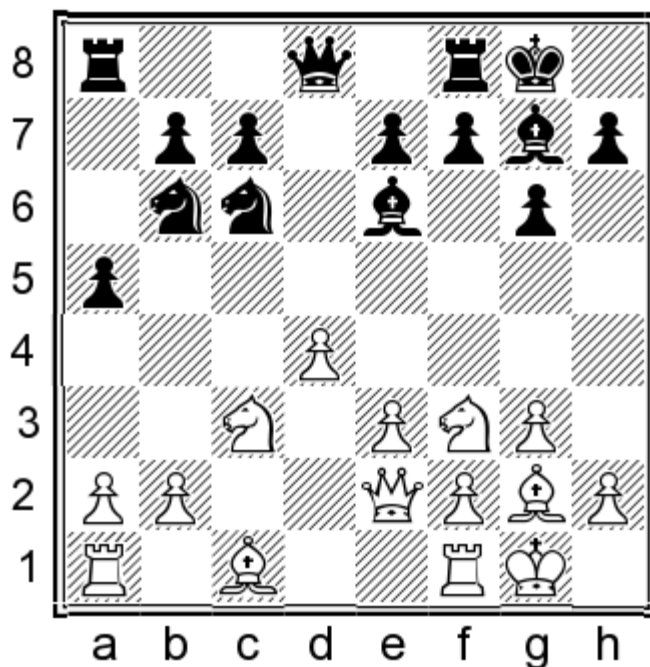
This move is typical in the 9...♞e8 system as well. Black takes some ground on the queenside with ...a5-a4.

10.♞e2!

I guess this is the right move. It's actually the same continuation as White has recently played against the 9...♖e8 line. White wants to strengthen his center with ♖d1, preparing for a central offensive with d5-e4. Giri prevented the ...a5-a4 idea with the direct 10.b3 in an earlier game, but this allows Black to execute the central break 10...e5! with the idea of 11.d5 e4! showing us the drawback of the weakening of the long diagonal.

10...♙e6

This move is also known from the 9...♖e8 line. Black tries to confuse the arrangement of the white pieces with the threat of ...♙c4.



On 10...a4 White could follow his plan with 11.♖d1 with the d5-e4 idea.

11.♘d2!

The most direct way to prevent the threat and White also keeps in mind the idea of transferring one of his knights to c5 through the e4-square. 11.b3 would allow 11...a4! 11.♖d1 is now met by 11...♙c4 and the queen has no good square to move to: ♖c2 and ♖e1 walk into ...♘b4, while ♖d2 is clearly not the place where the queen should sit — Black could simply continue with ...a4.

11...a4 12.♖d1!

A deep, multi-functional move. White creates the x-ray on the d-file to sometimes threaten d5. He also escapes from the ...♙c4 move in order to prepare the ♘de4-c5 plan.

12...♖a5

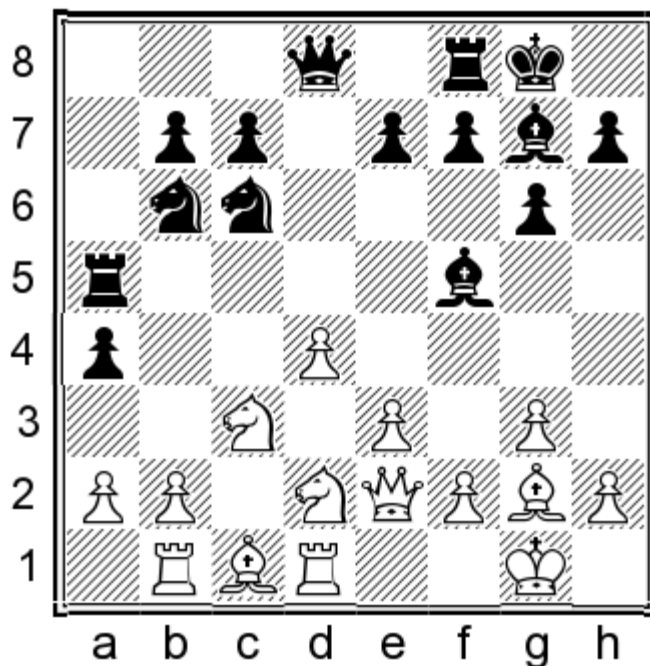
Another standard plan by Black to control the d5-square. 12...♖d7 would have stepped into 13.♘de4 then ♘c5 with tempo. There is no time for 12...♖c8? and ...♖d8, because of 13.d5 which is why Black plays ...♖a5.

13.♖b1!

Another subtle plan. Jakovenko makes use of the placement of the a5-rook and he wants to solve the pressure on the queenside by playing b4, which would be a huge achievement for White, while if Black takes it then ♘xb3 comes with

tempo and then it jumps to c5 with another tempo.

13...♟f5



Again trying to confuse the pieces by forcing one of the knights into a pin, but Jakovenko continues the game in style...

14.b4!!

After this excellent intermediate move, White gets a serious positional advantage!

14...axb3

14...♟xb1? 15.bxa5+- drops a piece. 14...♞a8 15.♞de4± followed by b5 and ♟a3 and later ♞bc1 ♞c5, with excellent prospects for White. In this case the ...a5-a4 plan would just create a weakness, it was more principled to take on b3.

15.♞xb3 ♟xb1

Another positive point of the excellent placement of the knight on b3 is that the pawn on d4 is well-protected and in case of 15...♞a8 White can occupy the center with 16.e4! ♟d7 17.♟e3± again with a clear positional advantage. It is clear that Black is unable to create any pressure on the center now, therefore his entire strategy fails.

16.♞xa5 ♞xa5 17.♞xb1

White claims a clear edge now. He gained the bishop pair and he still has a strong center. The undermining strategy of ...e5 is not so effective anymore as it opens the position for the two bishops. White has clearly won the opening battle and Black is forced to defend passively...

17...♞a8 18.♟a3!

The bishops start to work.

18...♞e8 19.♞c1!

Small, but very strong moves — White improves his pieces with each move. He also takes the c4-square under control to avoid knight jumps and additionally attacks the c7-pawn.

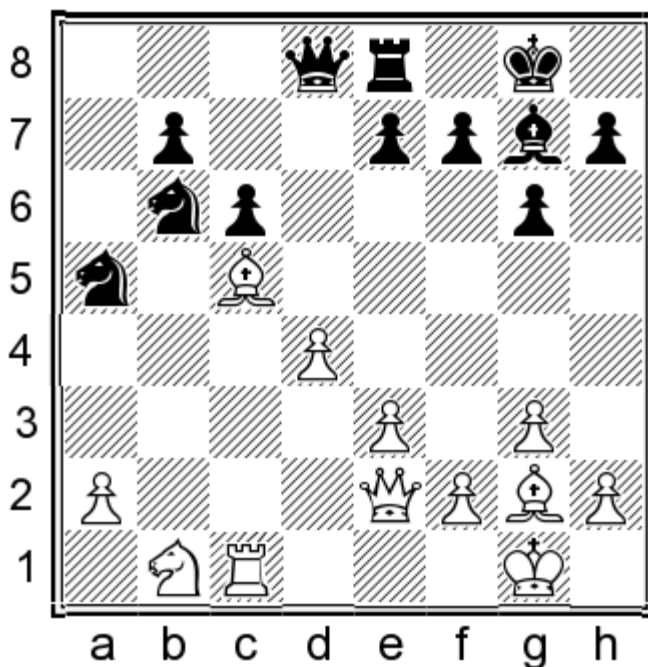
19...c6

There was nothing better, but now the a5-knight is kind of trapped, with no way back to its camp. Jakovenko continues his subtle play based on this new target on a5!

20.♙c5!

A very unpleasant move! The knight has no good square to leave to from b6.

20...♚d8



20...♘d5 walks into 21.e4 with tempo. 20...♘d7 21.♙b4! with the threat of ♚d2, as Black has no ...♘c4 anymore with the knight on d7.

21.♙b4!

The play against the a5-knight has started, so Black must try to find different tactical ideas to save it from direct loss.

21...♘d5 22.♙e1

White could have already won a pawn with 22.♙xd5 cxd5 23.♚b5 ♘c6 24.♚xb7 ♘xb4 25.♚xb4± with a big advantage, but Jakovenko decides to keep the tension as Black suffers even more with his knight on a5.

22...♚b6

Black wants to strengthen his knight with the rook from a8. On 22...e6 White can win a pawn with 23.♙c5 b6 24.♙xa5! bxa5 25.♙xc6± when White has an extra pawn and a better position.

23.♘c3

23. ♖a3 was probably even stronger, with the idea 23... ♜a8 24. ♜c5!± and it is not easy to prevent the threat of ♜xa5 ♜xc4!

23... ♜xc3

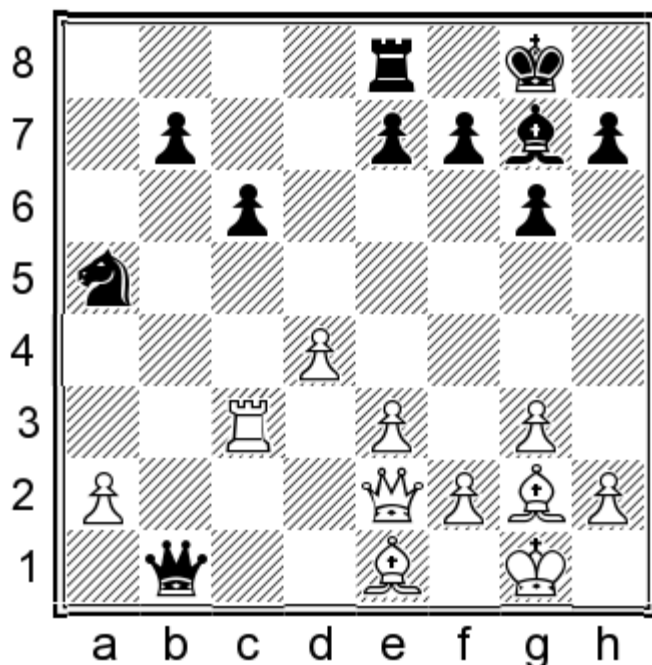
The only move was 23... e6, but White has a big advantage anyway after 24. ♖e4 (Or 24. ♜c2 with the idea of ♜b1.)

24. ♜xc3

Now the trouble surrounding the a5-knight is even bigger. There are already direct threats to trap it with ♜c5 or ♜a3, and on ... ♜a8 then ♜d2 and the knight falls.

24... ♜b1

Black could have tried a last desperate attempt to get some counterplay with 24... e5 25. ♜a3 exd4 26. ♜xa5 dxe3 but after 27. ♜a3 exf2+ 28. ♜xf2!+- there are only two pawns for the bishop, which is clearly not enough.



25. ♜d2!

One more eye on the a5-knight. The threat is ♜c1, winning the piece.

25... ♜a8

25... b6 weakens all the pawns on the queenside and White wins after 26. ♜c1 ♜b5 27. ♜f1 ♜d5 28. ♜b4+- when all the pawns are hanging.

26. ♜c1! ♜b5

26... ♜b6 27. ♜c5+- is also over.

27. ♜c5 ♜c4 28. ♜c1!

and Black resigned in view of losing the knight. A perfect game by Jakovenko. We should mention that he passed

across his half of the board just a few times, but his maneuvers and deep positional threats were so strong in his own camp that it led to the quick collapse of Black.

1–0

GAME 37

A. Motylev (2687)

P. Eljanov (2732)

15th Karpov GM 2014

Poikovsky RUS (6.4)

17.05.2014, [C84]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

We are going to see a very nice positional win now by the current European Champion Alexander Motylev, who was also the second of Sergei Karjakin for many years. It is a very difficult job to combine your own chess career and having somebody for whom you are working most of the time, but it seems like Motylev has managed to find the right way.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6

We are entering the main line of the Spanish opening. Motylev was probably happy not to see 3...♗f6 and another Berlin...

4.♗a4 ♗f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.d3

In the last 5 years, the 6.d3 line has received a lot of attention at the top level of chess. The idea is simple, to save a tempo on playing ♖e1. Currently in the main line with 6.♖e1 followed by c3 White is showing “nothing” against the Marshall (one of the main openings of Aronian for example) so to avoid going into deep analysis 6.d3 is a pretty good choice.

6...b5

6...d6 is another possible way to continue here.

7.♗b3 d6

Black threatens to play ...♗a5 now, to exchange the bishop on b3.

8.a3

This is a relatively new way of trying to achieve a slightly better position. 8.c3 0-0 9.♗bd2 ♗a5 10.♗c2 c5 was played in a lot of games, but I think Black should be fine here. 8.a4 has been another main-line for quite a while, but here as well it looks as though Black even has a few options which lead to a safe position. 8...b4 (8...♗d7 is also very safe.) 9.h3 0-0 10.♗bd2 ♗e6 and Black is perfectly OK.

8...0-0 9.♗c3

This is White’s idea, to quickly bring the knight to the d5-square.

9...♗g4

Black threatens play ...♘d4 next.

10.♙e3

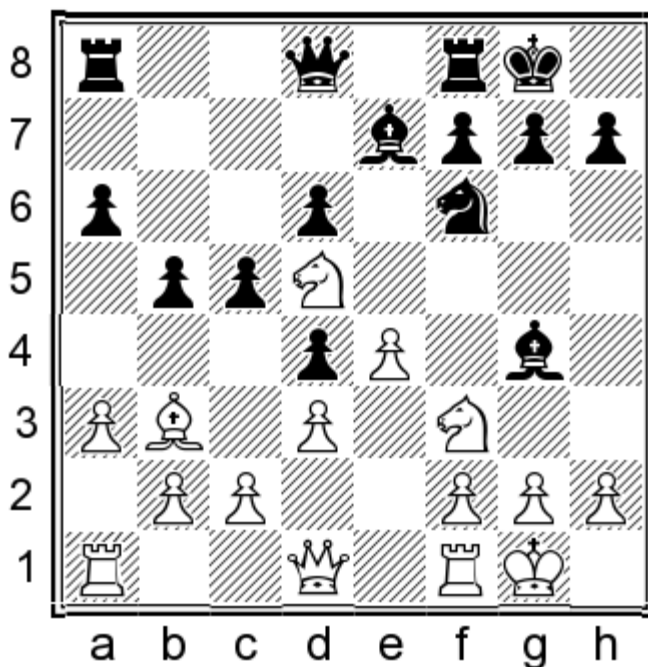
There is no other good way of defending against ...♘d4.

10...♘d4 11.♙xd4 exd4 12.♘d5

This position is far from being a new one, and has been analysed a lot lately because of the recent games from the Super Tournaments. At first sight it is hard to imagine White having any advantage, but things are trickier than they appear. White has a better pawn structure, and the general idea of playing f4 could theoretically be unpleasant for Black.

12...c5

a very logical move; Black protects the d4-pawn and he will also be able to play ...♙e6 next.



13.a4!

Very strong and deep play. Usually we say “never play where you are weaker”, but this time things are a bit different. White needs to have an extra threat of opening the a-file at any moment and the bishop on b3 is a very strong piece, holding everything together.

13...♙e6 14.♘xf6+!

The next very important positional decision. White does not take the bishop on e7 — after which the position would be around equal — but instead initiates a very long-term plan where the white knight is going to be a better piece than Black’s bishop.

14...♙xf6 15.♙xe6 fxe6 16.♚e2

The 16.♚e2 move is not really designed to threaten e5, but rather for connecting the rooks and maintaining flexibility.

16...♔d7 17.b3

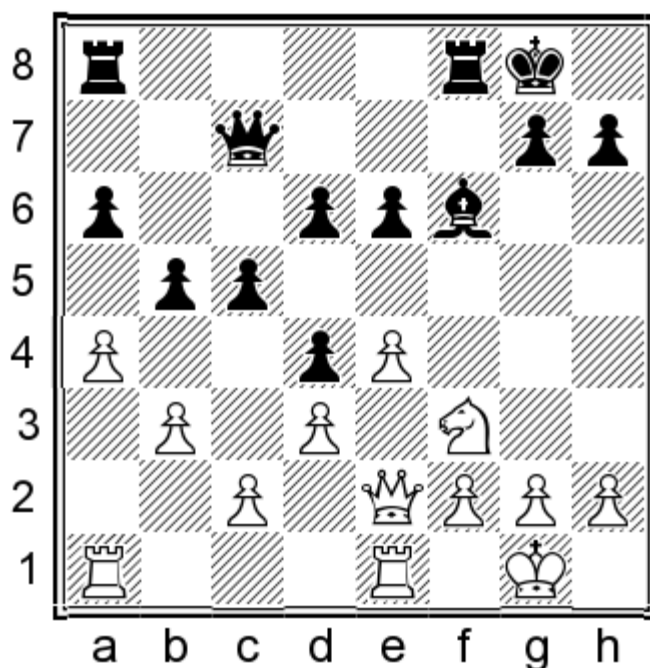
Of course White doesn't allow ...bxa4.

17...♔c7

I find this move a bit strange. The main question for me is: does White get real chances after 17...e5, followed by the simple ...b4 and then ...♖f7-♖af8? Of course, White may do better with a maneuver like ♖d2-♖c4 and somewhere try to break Black's position with the f4-push, but I still think that Black has excellent chances to keep the balance, although of course his position would be a bit passive.

18.♗fe1

Motylev tries to force a decision from Black as to whether he will play ...e5 or not, to give a clearer situation in the center.



18...♕e5?!

This move just can't be good. Black should not look for play on the kingside as it just helps White.

19.g3

A good move. White's main idea is still to play f4 at some point, and now ♖h4-♖g2 is an excellent plan to support it.

19...h6 20.♖h4 ♖f7

Black doesn't really seem to have a plan.

21.♖g2

Motylev is playing very safely. I think it was time to play f4: 21.f4 ♕f6 (21...g5? 22.fxe5 gxf4 23.♖g4+) 22.♖f3 and I think White's position is already a bit better.

21...♙f6

This is directed against the f4 move.

22.♞a2!

A very nice move. By threatening ♞ea1 White forces Black to make a decision. To play ...b4 and close everything on the queenside, which would make things easy for White to focus on the play on the kingside, or to resign the a-file, which is always a very dangerous decision?

22...e5

Better late than never, but the white knight on g2 is now better placed than it was on f3 before.

23.♞ea1

So what to do now for Black, ...b4 or ...♞ac8?

23...♞ac8?!

I think this is already quite a serious positional mistake. To give up the only open file just can't be good. 23...b4 24.♞f1 with maybe a minimally-better position for White because of the upcoming f4, but nothing too dramatic has happened. Black also has an easy plan with ...♞ae8 and maybe ...d5 next, so I think there is nothing to worry about as Black.

24.axb5

Of course White takes control over the a-file.

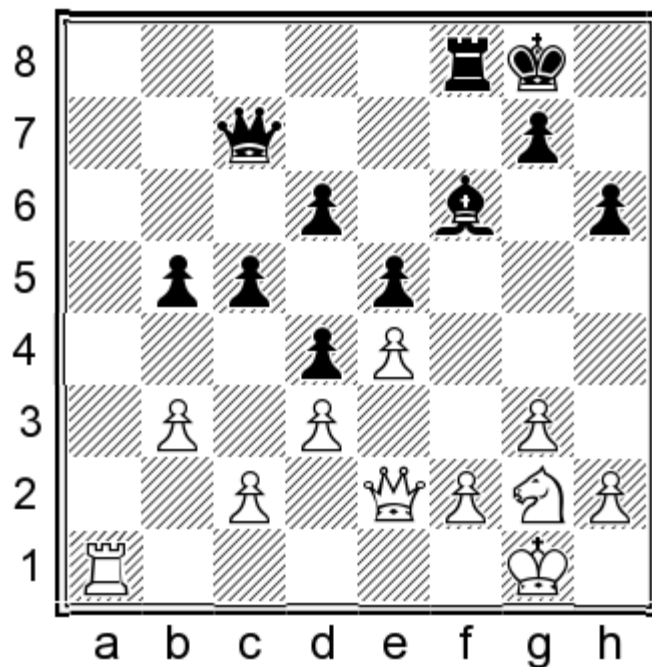
24...axb5 25.♞a7

Smart play from Motylev. By exchanging a pair of rooks, White's combination of queen+knight becomes stronger.

25...♞c7

Of course Black cannot let White dominate on the 7th rank.

26.♞xc7 ♞xc7



27. ♖e1!

A strong move! The white knight has nothing more to do on g2 and is brought into the game via the f3-square. Another idea for White could, for example, be to play h4-♗f3-♗h2-♗g4.

27... ♜c6

Very straightforward play for the d5-push, but does it bring anything good to Black?! 27... ♜d7 not allowing White to play ♜g4 on the spot. Black's position is worse, but still pretty safe.

28. ♜g4

The white queen takes up a great spot on g4.

28... d5?

It is clearly not Eljanov's day, who pushes ...d5 at almost the worst possible moment. Now the white knight is going to be the hero on his perfect e4-square.

29. exd5 ♜xd5 30. ♗f3

Too easy to miss. The ♗d2-♗e4 maneuver is almost deadly to Black. Queen+rook+knight is a very dangerous combination in the attack.

30... c4

Black tries to create at least some play on the queenside.

31. bxc4 bxc4 32. ♗d2 c3

Black's main hope now is clear: to somehow reach a rook endgame where White's c2-pawn could be a possible weakness, but none of this is very realistic.

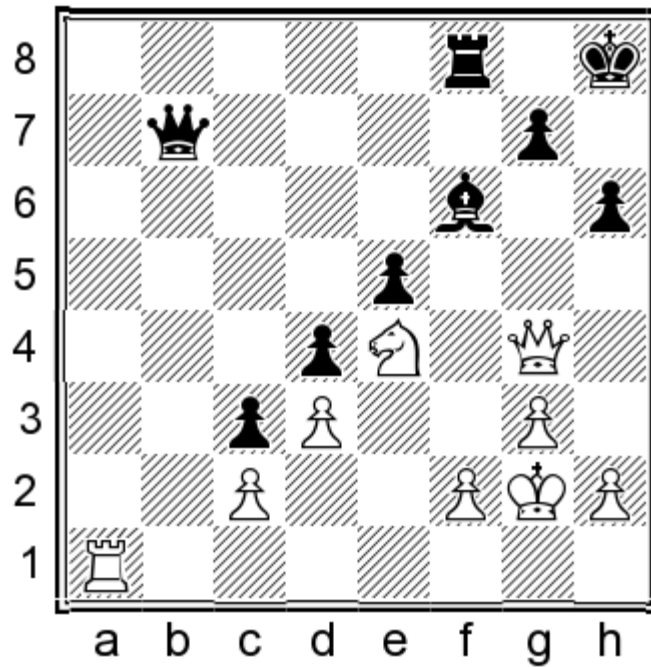
33.♘e4

Motylev has achieved the maximum he could dream of; he has a position where his knight is clearly stronger than the black bishop, the rook is active on the open file, the queen has a great position on g4 and the white king is very safe. From a practical point of view, White's position could already be almost winning!

33...♜b7

Stopping the white rook from entering the 7th rank.

34.♔g2 ♖h8



35.h4

Typical and logical. White prepares to not only play ♖h2 and get out of the pin, but ♜h5-g4-g5 could also be a dangerous break.

35...♞a8

What else can Black do?!

36.♞xa8+ ♜xa8 37.♞f5

This move does not change anything, because Black simply has no play at all. 37.♞g6 could also have been played immediately.

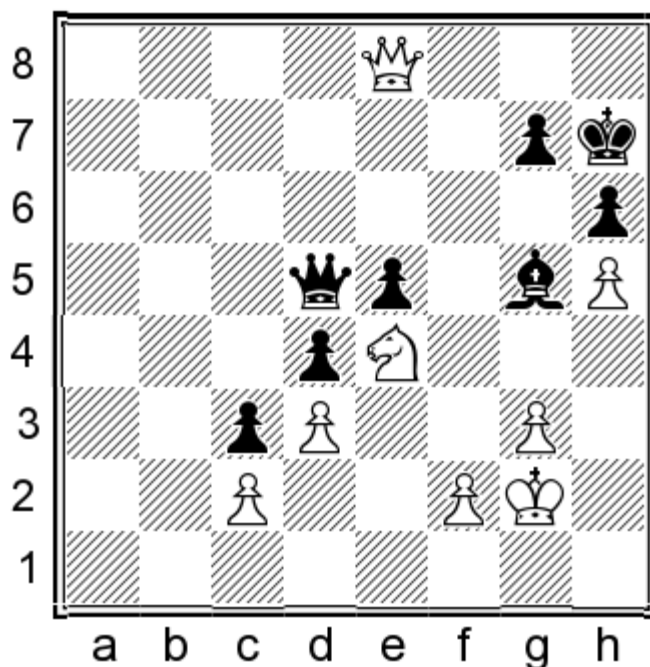
37...♞d5 38.♞g6 ♔d8

Black's position is so hopeless that White has a lot of different plans available.

39.♞e8+ ♔h7 40.h5

Motylev decides to play for total control of the white squares. Now the main threat is to play ♔h3-♔g4-♔f5 and the funny thing is that Black has no way to give even a check.

40...♙g5



41.♔h3 ♚a2

Eljanov ends his suffering by making a fatal error, but I guess there was really no pleasure in suffering a slow death here anymore.

42.♞d6!

Black cannot defend against ♞f7 next. We just saw a great example of a deep strategic plan which Motylev started in the opening phase of the game and managed to bring to fruition in a perfect manner — although of course with a bit of help from his opponent. A great game for learning about and understanding pawn structures, and how dangerous things can become in case of resigning the only open file.

1–0

GAME 38

D. Jakovenko (2730)

A. Ipatov (2613)

Saint-Quentin FRA

Saint-Quentin FRA (9.3)

01.06.2014, [E15]

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

Another classic win by Jakovenko in his usual positional style.

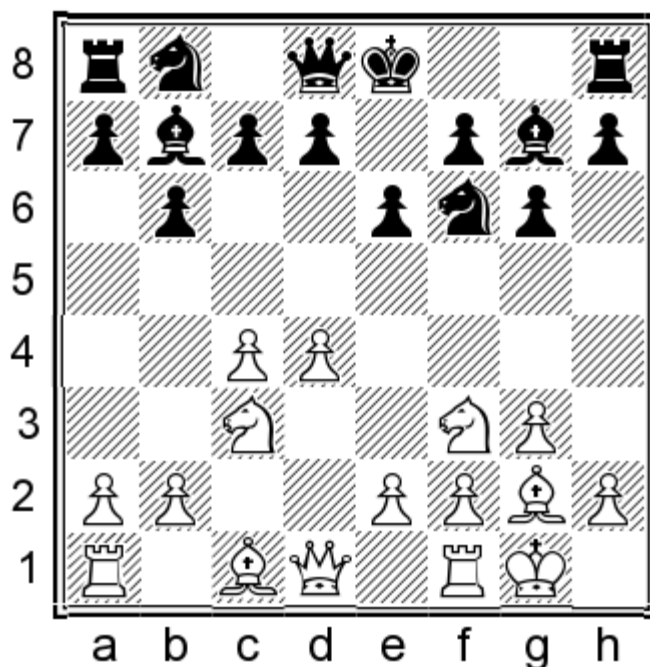
1.d4 ♞f6 2.c4 e6 3.♞f3 b6 4.g3 ♙b7 5.♙g2

The g3-system of the Queen's Indian Defence. Black has a wide range of options here: the most common continuation by far is 5...♘e7, but Black would like to drive the game onto less-explored territory.

5...g6

Black fianchettoes both of his bishops.

6.0-0 ♘g7 7.♘c3



7...♗e4

Carlsen played like this in a blitz game last year, and it is a standard reaction in this variation. White was ready to occupy the center with d5 followed by e4, therefore Black initiates exchanges to make it less-effective. 7...0-0 8.d5! and e4 next gives White a comfortable edge.

8.♗xe4 ♘xe4 9.♘g5!

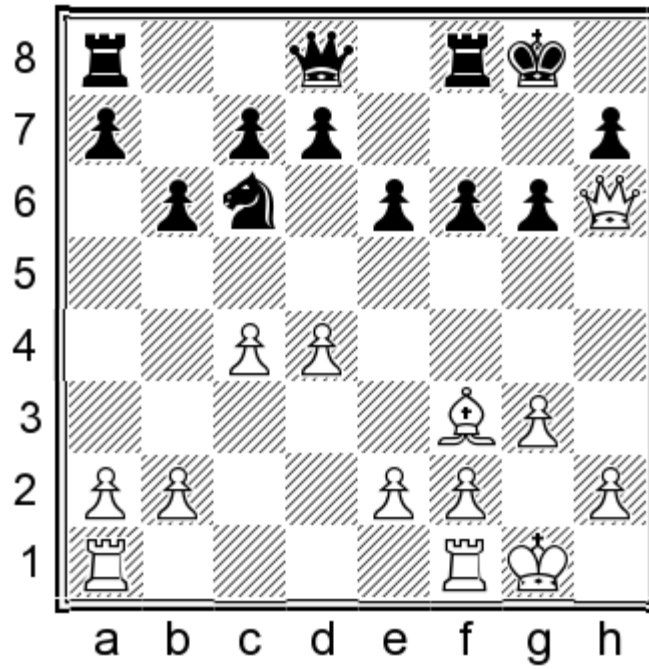
Developing with tempo and preparing to trade the bishop on the long diagonal with ♖d2 and ♘h6. 9.d5 is already much worse, because it does not really lock in the b7-bishop; Black could simply undermine it by playing 9...c6

9...f6

This move was played by great players like Spassky or Eljanov, but on the other hand it is a clear achievement for White to weaken his opponent's pawn structure. 9...♖c8 was played by Carlsen, but White can claim an edge after 10.♖d2 intending to trade the bishops with ♘h6, and after 10...h6 11.♘e3 Black has difficulties with castling because of the h6-pawn.

10.♘e3 ♗c6 11.♖d2 0-0 12.♖fd1!

White activates his rook and strengthens his center. The text move is also a final preparation for ♘h6, which, if played immediately, could have been met by 12.♘h6? ♘xh6 13.♖xh6 ♘xf3! 14.♘xf3



14...♖xd4! Black takes over the initiative with this exchange sacrifice. 15.♕xa8 ♖xe2+ An important intermediate move. 16.♔g2 ♜xa8+ 17.f3 ♖d4+ followed by ...e5 or ...c5, consolidating the strong knight on d4. Black has two pawns for the exchange and enjoys a clear advantage.

12...♖e7

Black improves his knight and he is ready to grab the bishop pair with ...♖f5, but White was intending to play his next move anyway.

13.♕h6 ♕xh6 14.♜xh6 d5

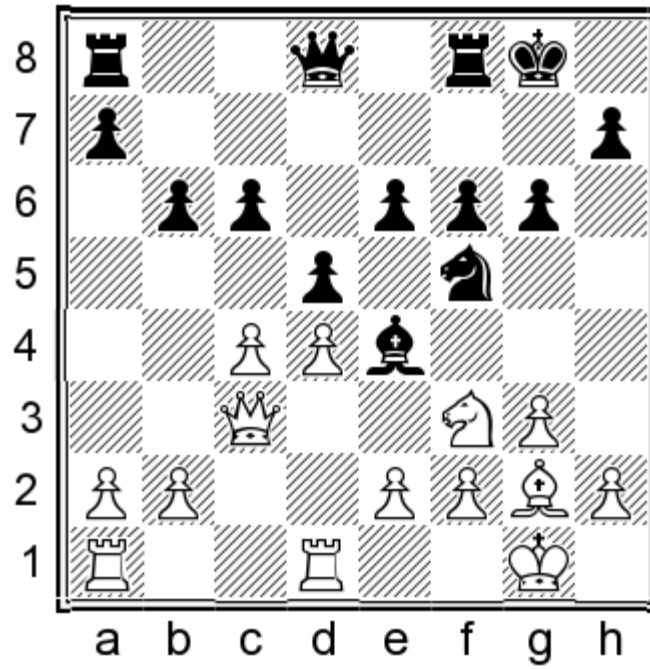
It is time for Black to fight for the center. He could not do it by playing 14...c5?! because of 15.dxc5! bxc5 16.♜e3! and Black is forced to give up his strong bishop in order to save the c5-pawn.

15.♜e3!

A strong positional move! The queen has already done its job on h6 by trading the bishops and White cannot hope for any kind of mating attack. The queen is the most valuable piece, and of course Jakovenko wants it to participate in the battle, therefore he pulls it back.

15...♖f5 16.♜c3 c6

Black wanted to avoid ending up with a backward pawn on c7. White had in mind to take cxd5 and on ...exd5 then ♜ac1 followed by b4-b5 and a long-term pressure against the c7-a7 weaknesses.



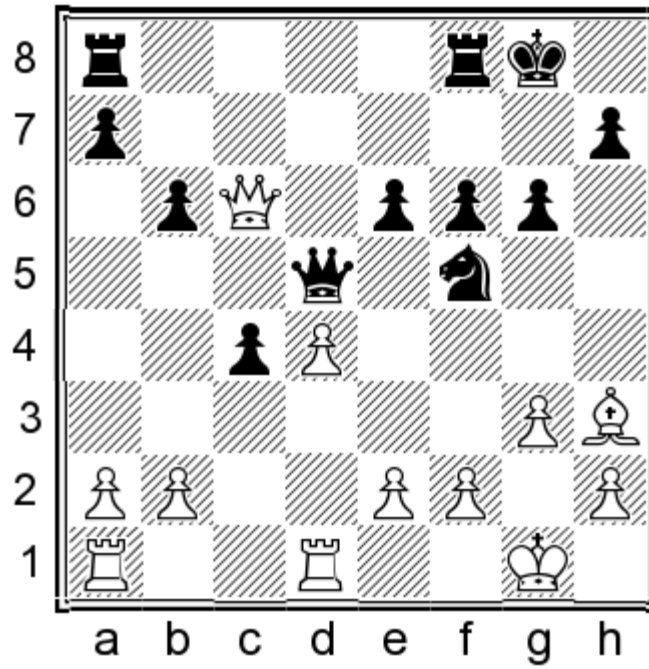
17. ♕h3!

A known move in this system! Black has fortified his bishop on e4 and it seems like a strong one, which controls the entire board and should be exchanged. However instead of some move like ♖d2, Jakovenko plays much more ambitiously — and by removing his bishop from the long diagonal he is threatening to play ♖d2 with the ideas of f3 and ♖xe4. In some other lines this move does not work properly, but White plays ♕f1 with the same ♖d2 idea. Black is now forced to give up his bishop for the knight, but this means White can claim a small but stable advantage.

17... ♕xf3 18. ♖xf3

We can now feel the damage of the f6-move. Black's pawns are much weaker, and especially the e6-pawn is a clear target. White might even think about pushing e4 dxe4 ♖xe4 followed by returning the bishop to g2, with strong pressure on both the e6- and c6-pawns. Black therefore decides to change the structure.

18... dxc4 19. ♖xc6 ♖d5



20. ♔a4!

Another excellent positional decision. White has serious potential on the long diagonal after the bishop comes back to g2, but he can only use it effectively if he keeps the queens on and does not change the pawn structure. 20. ♔xd5 exd5 21. ♕xf5 gxf5 In the endgame, White can not make use of the damaged kingside, rather it is Black who might think about claiming some edge with his passed pawn on the queenside.

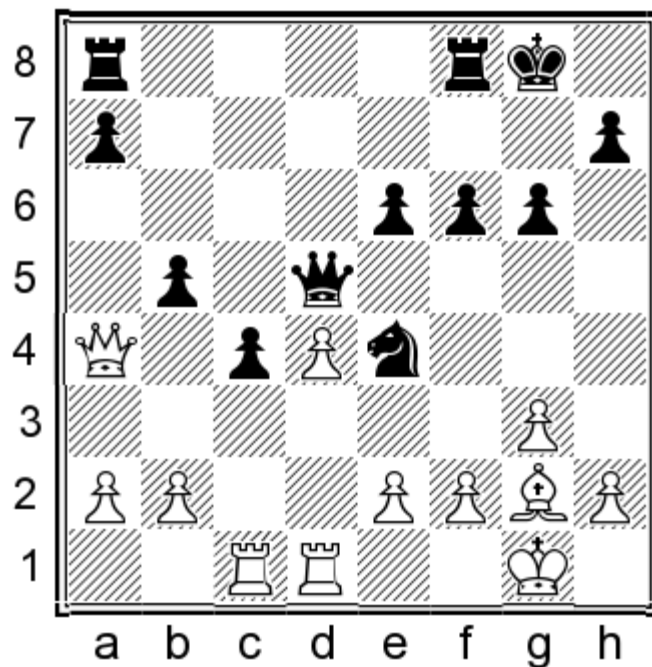
20... ♖d6

Black would like to close the diagonal by putting his knight on e4, followed by ...f6-f5. 20... ♖xd4 would have dropped some material after 21. ♕g2! ♖xe2+ 22. ♕f1 ♔e5 23. ♖e1+—

21. ♕g2 ♖e4 22. ♖ac1!

The most logical and strongest move. It was very tempting to play 22. f3 ♖d6 23. e4 and now the only move is 23... ♔b5! (23... ♔a5 24. ♔d7! wins a pawn.) 24. ♔xb5 ♖xb5 Here White has a choice between two moves, but none of them gives him a clear advantage: 25. ♕f1 (On 25. ♖ac1 ♖d6 26. e5 ♖f5 the c4-pawn cannot be taken because of ♖e3!) 25... ♖ac8 26. ♖ac1 In comparison to the game, Black could bring his a-rook to c8, which changes the evaluation because the f3-pawn is hanging at the very end of the line: 26... ♖d6 27. e5 ♖f5 28. ♕xc4 (28. ♖xc4 ♖e3 29. ♖xc8 ♖xc8 30. ♖d3 ♖xf1 31. ♕xf1 ♖c2 White has won a pawn, but the active rook gives Black excellent drawing chances.) 28... ♖xc4! 29. ♖xc4 ♖e3 30. ♖dc1 ♖xc4 31. ♖xc4 fxe5 32. dxe5 ♖xf3 and Black holds. Jakovenko had probably calculated this line and he correctly took the decision to play 22. ♖ac1!

22... b5



22...♖fc8 White was intending to play 23.f3! ♜d6 24.e4 ♜b5 (24...♜a5 25.♜d7+— We can once again see the drawback of the ...f7-f6 move: the e6-pawn becomes vulnerable.) 25.♜xb5 ♜xb5 26.♙f1! ♜d6 27.e5 ♜f5 Now White can play 28.♙xc4 ♜xc4 29.♜xc4 ♜e3 30.♜dc1 ♜xc4 31.♜xc4± with a healthy extra pawn and a more active rook.;

22...♜ac8 simply drops the a7-pawn: 23.♜xa7±

23.♜a6!

The pawn chain had to be separated. White is ready to undermine the pawns with a4! and has prevented Black from playing ...a6. Additionally White is threatening to win a pawn with ♙xe4 and ♜xb5, therefore the next move is forced.

23...f5 24.a4!

Consequently following the right plan. Black's pawn chain falls apart and the rooks join the game.

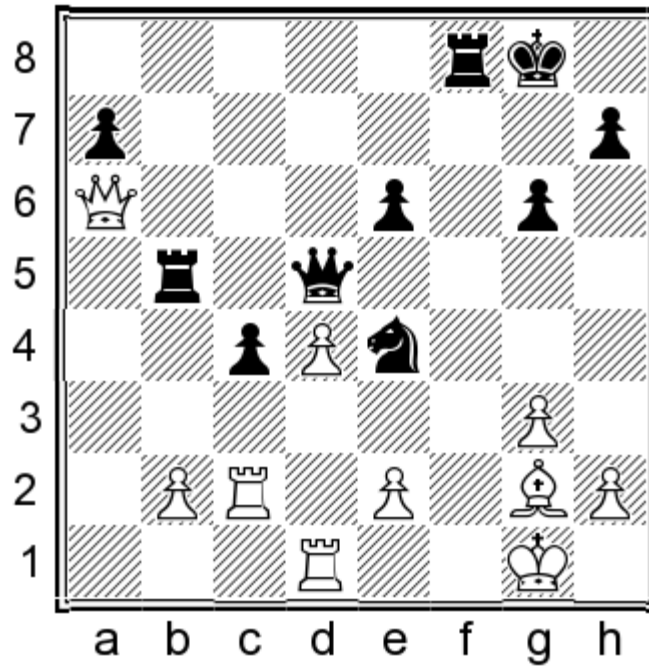
24...♜ab8 25.♜c2

White prepares for the opening of the b-file and protects his b2-pawn.

25...f4

Black decides to look for counterplay on the kingside. An alternative was 25...♜f7 trying to keep things together, but White could have simplified to a very pleasant endgame with the following more-or-less forced line: 26.axb5 ♜xb5 27.f3 ♜f6 28.f4 ♜e4 (There was nothing better as 28...♜d7? loses to 29.♙c6) 29.♜c8+ ♜g7 30.♜xc4 ♜xc4 31.♜xc4 ♜xb2 32.♙xe4 fxe4 33.♙f2± and the e4-pawn is extremely weak — when it falls the game should be lost.

26.axb5 fxg3 27.fxg3 ♜xb5



Black could not increase the pressure on the f-file with 27...♔f5 because of 28.♖f1! ♔g4 29.♕f3±

28.e3!

A perfect consolidating move! White protects the d4-pawn to free his rook and he opens the second rank to cover the f2-square with the other rook.

28...♖b3 29.♖e1!

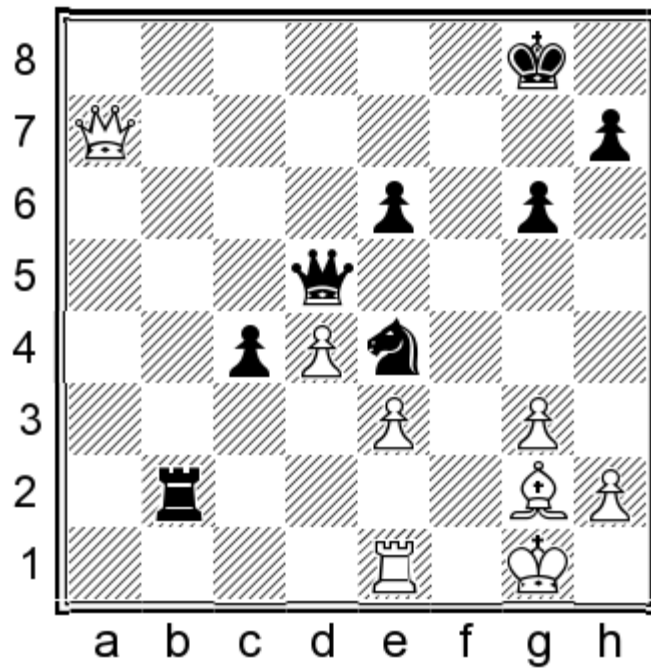
Jakovenko plays some temporary defensive moves to maintain his structure and suddenly the black pawns on a7, c4 and e6 become loose.

29...♖fb8 30.♔xa7!

30.♔xc4 was less clear in view of 30...♖xb2 31.♔d3 and Black is able to escape from the pin with 31...♔a5!

30...♖xb2 31.♖f1?

The only mistake by White in the game, which could have given Black some saving chances... The winning continuation was 31.♖xb2! ♖xb2



32. ♕f3!! An extremely hard move to find. White first gives up the second rank, then he plays a waiting move to prevent the ... ♖xg2 ideas. Black has simply no defence against ♖f1, when White is mating with his queen and rook. Anytime the queen leaves the pin from d5, White wins the knight with ♖a8 check. (32... ♖b7 does not help. (32... ♗f5 33. ♖a8+ ♔g7 34. ♗xe4+-; 32... c3 33. ♖f1+-) 33. ♖a8+ ♔g7 34. ♖f1! Threatening mate on f8 after ♕xe4, which cannot be prevented... 34... ♖f7 35. ♕xe4!+-

31... ♖b1?

31... ♖b7 was the only move. 32. ♖a2 Here Black has a difficult choice. He has some options, and in all of them he must suffer in a worse position, but he has good saving chances as well. 32... c3 (32... ♗g5 33. ♖e1 ♗f5 34. ♖xc4 ♖b1 This kind of active counterplay also gives chances, but of course White is a pawn up.) 33. ♖xd5 exd5 34. ♕xe4 dxe4 35. ♖xc3 ♖b3 as Black I would go for this endgame, where I believe in Black's saving chances, but of course it is going to be a long torture...

32. ♖cf2!

White manages to keep the important f-file with this move! Black cannot escape from the pin between the bishop and the queen. The difference as to why White did not include the check on f7 was that after 32. ♖f7+ ♔h8 33. ♖cf2 ♖xf1+ 34. ♖xf1 ♗g5! Black succeeds in escaping the pin, whereas in the game the b8-rook was hanging.

32... ♖b7

32... ♖xf1+ 33. ♖xf1 ♖f8 does not change the outcome. 34. ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 35. ♖b8+ ♔e7 36. ♖f4+-

33. ♖a3!

Keeping the eye on the f8-square. ♖f8 is actually threatening mate, against which Black can only defend by dropping material. White, in addition, is threatening to play ♖f4, winning the piece. The game is over.

33... ♖d6

33... ♔g7 34. ♖f4+-

34.♖xd6 ♘xd6 35.♙xb7 ♞xb7 36.♟f6 ♞e7 37.d5

1–0

GAME 39

Bu Xiangzhi (2693)

Wei Yi (2634)

5th Hainan Danzhou

GM Danzhou CHN (6)

01.07.2014, [A15]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

Bu seems to know his countrymen very well, as he scored an amazing 4.5/5 score with the white pieces when facing them. In the current game against the (probably) strongest/ youngest GM in the world — Wei Yi, who is just 15 years old — Bu chooses a very solid opening and enters a slightly better endgame. It doesn't seem to be so serious at first for Black, but slowly and surely he outplays his opponent, which makes Wei Yi panic and lose the game on the spot at some point.

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6

The best Chinese players usually choose the Slav or KID.

3.b3

Well, this is not the most aggressive opening choice. Bu's strategy was probably just to play a chess game without going too deep into the theoretical lines.

3...♙g7 4.♙b2 0-0 5.g3

A double-fianchetto opening is actually more tricky than it looks; how to react now as Black?!

5...d6

This is a possible reply, but I don't think it's the strongest one. To me the best reaction seems to be 5...c5 followed by ♘c6 and d5. I think White should have no advantage in this case. In the event of 5...c6, with the idea of playing ...d5 next, White could get a small advantage by playing d3 (not d4) and then ♘bd2.

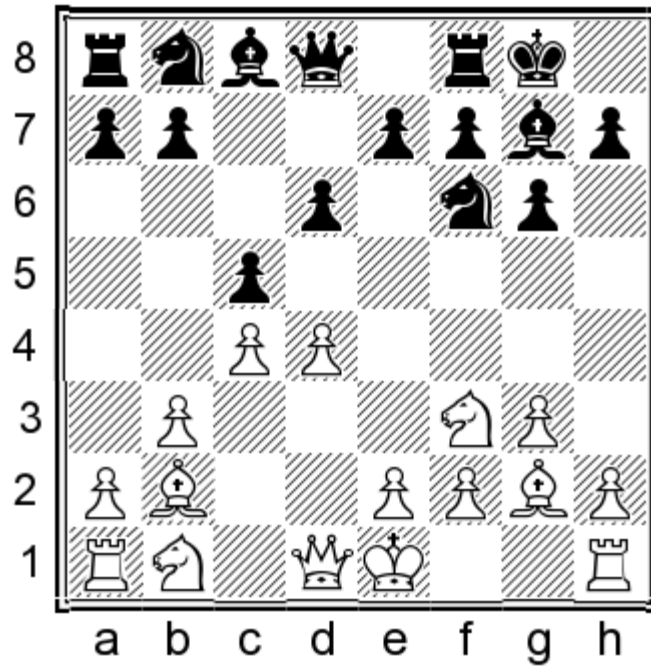
6.d4

This was probably played against the ...e5 move.

6...c5

Yet another possible move, but I think once more that Black is not playing in the most principled way. 6...e5!? seems to be the right way of playing to me, so in case of White's 7.dxe5 Black always has ...♘g4 or ...♘fd7, so there is no reason to be afraid of it. The next black move could be ...♘bd7, with an interesting position.

7.♙g2



7...♛a5+

Quite a creative move. Black provokes the white bishop to c3 in order to have the ...d5 idea, but on the other hand maybe it is too creative because the black queen is not going to be best-placed on c7.

8.♙c3

8.♘bd2 ♘e4 looks more promising for Black.

8...♛c7 9.♘bd2

Black wanted to play ...♘e4.

9...cxd4

Now we can see Black's idea.

10.♘xd4 d5

If we look at the position from a logical point of view, Black lost a tempo with playing ...d6 and then ...d5, and the queen on c7 is only going to come under attack, so I think White's position should be better here.

11.0-0

Bu continues with logical moves. White should never be afraid of ...e5 because of ♘b5.

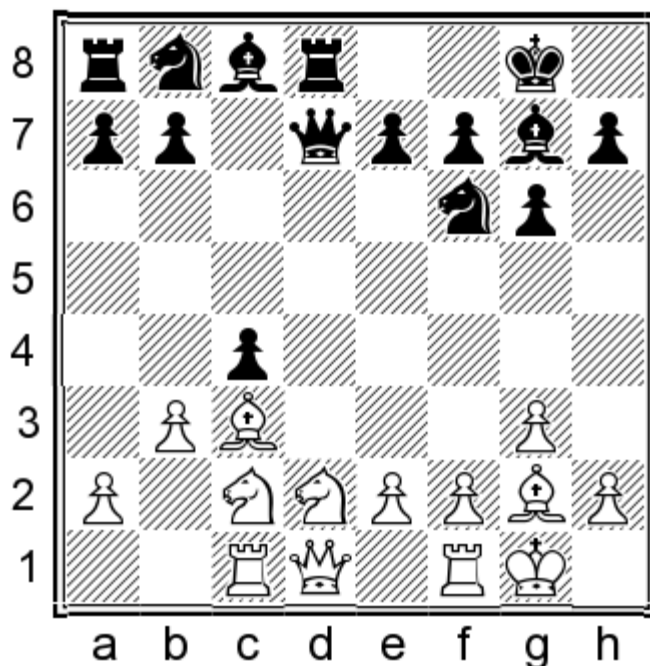
11...♞d8 12.♞c1 ♞d7

A cool move by Black in what is already quite a difficult position. It is not easy to find a way to develop the pieces. 12...dxc4 was losing on the spot: 13.♘xc4 e5 14.♙a5

13.♘c2

Black already threatened to play ...e5 and it seems like the white knight has to move from d4, so Bu decides to play ♖c2 with the future idea of playing ♜e3-♜d5, which is quite logical. Also possible was 13.♜4f3 and White would take the e5 square under control, which would make the g2-bishop even stronger.

13...dxc4



14.♙a5!

Very strong play! After the peaceful 14.♜xc4 ♜c6 Black should be fine because of the bad position of the white knight on c2.

14...♞e8 15.♜xc4

Now the black rook is much more passively placed on e8.

15...♜c6 16.♜b4

I guess Bu planned this move when he played 13.♜c2. It looks quite strange to give up the bishop, but on the other hand the white knight and the bishop on g2 give White a clear initiative. The black bishop on g7 is somehow out of the game.

16...♜xa5

Black has to take on a5.

17.♞xd7

Of course not 17.♜xa5? ♞b5!

17...♙xd7

To play 17...♞xd7? is of course not an option.

18.♞xa5 b6!

The only move after which Black is not losing the b7-pawn.

19.♞c4

White transfers his knight via e5 to c6. After 19.♞ac6 a5 20.♞d3 ♞ac8 Black keeps on fighting for equality.

19...♞ac8 20.♞e5

The position almost looks like a draw, but White still keeps exerting pressure, so Black has to continue being very accurate.

20...♞f5

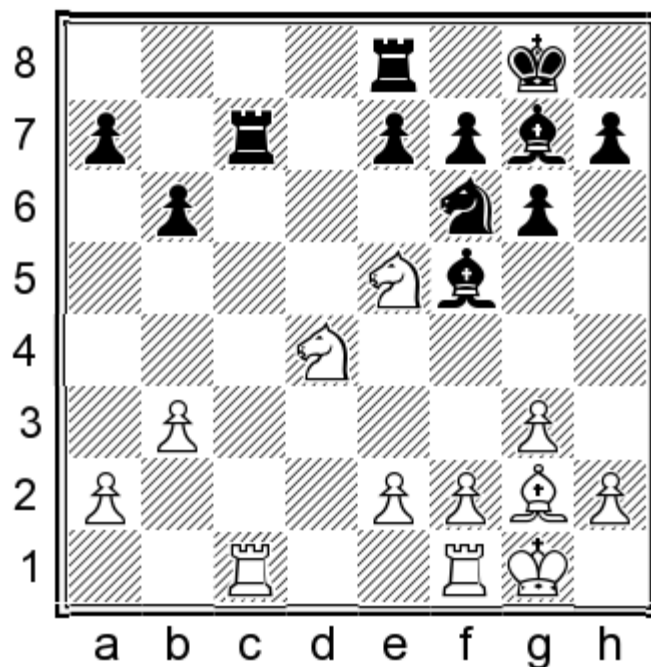
Maybe after this little inaccuracy Black already finds himself in a bad position. It seems as though the best way to fight was 20...♞b5. Of course White has different options too, but let us take a look at the most logical one: 21.♞c6 ♞xc6 22.♞exc6 ♞c7 Black is very passive but also very solid. 23.♞a6 ♞b7 24.♞fd1 e6 Of course White is still better, but it is very hard to prove that there are realistic chances for a win here.

21.♞bc6!

Another very strong move by White. The idea is to win the control over the c-file.

21...♞c7 22.♞d4

Attacking both the f5-bishop and the c7-rook.



22...♞d5?!

Once again Black doesn't take his best chance. After 22...♞xc1 23.♞xc1 ♞e4 24.♞dc6 White has a solid advantage.

The right way to defend seems to be 22...♖ec8! 23.♖xc7 ♖xc7 24.♘xf5 gxf5 25.♗d1 h6 and of course White is better here, but Black's chances for a draw are not that bad. In case White tried to win material with 26.♗d8+ ♔h7 27.♘xf7? Black could even take over the game with 27...♖c1+ 28.♕f1 ♘e4 as the position is already totally unclear.

23.♘xf5 gxf5 24.♖xc7 ♘xc7 25.♘c6

After some forced exchanges, we enter a position where White has a huge advantage. It is not only that the knight on c6 guarantees White a small plus, but the black knight from c7 doesn't have any good squares either and White just wants to enter with his rook to d7 by playing ♗d1–♗d7. Black's position is actually on the verge of being lost.

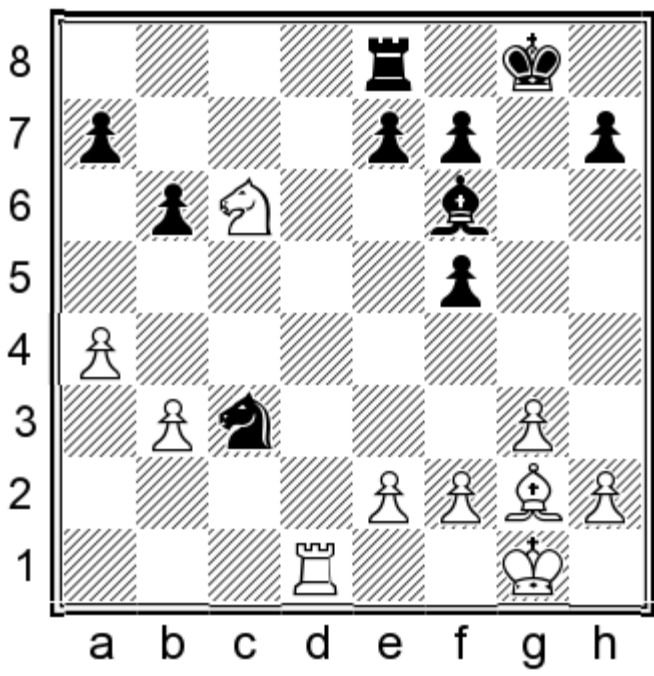
25...♘b5 26.♗d1

Of course not letting Black play ...♘d4.

26...♕f6 27.a4

Another nice move from White. It is clear that Black's only option is to somehow get an opposite-colored bishop endgame a pawn down and try to save it. By playing a4, White takes this hope away from Black.

27...♘c3



28.♗d7 a5

Black continues defending passively. Black should have tried 28...♘xe2+ 29.♔f1 ♘c3 30.♖xa7 and of course White's position is close to winning, but maybe Black could hope for some tricks with moves like ...e5, followed by ...e4, with some practical chances. If Black just waited, White would play b4-a5 and the a-pawn is going to be very hard to stop.

29.♕f3!

Solid and strong. White also keeps the ♕h5 idea in mind.

29...b5?!

Black panics and after this move the game is lost. To a very bad, but still a fighting, position would lead 29...e5. After 30.♔h5 ♖f8 there doesn't seem to be a forced win for White, although Black's position is just horrible.

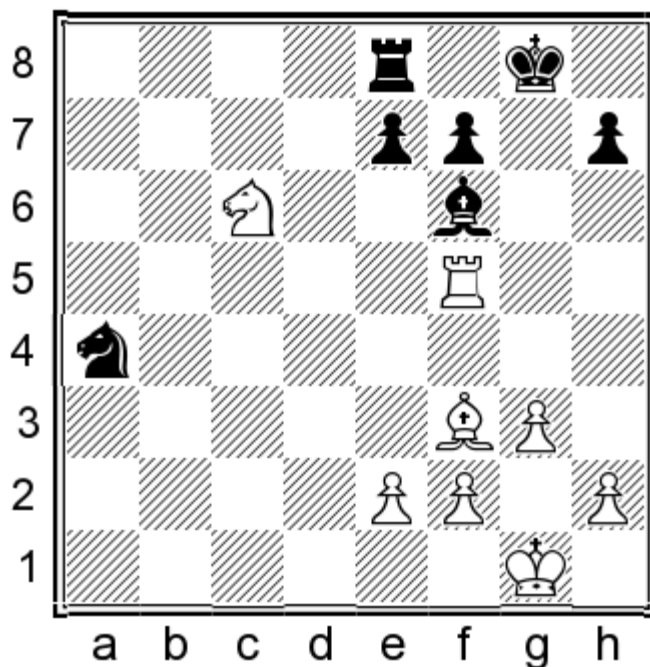
30.axb5 ♜xb5 31.♞d5

Now White just ends up a pawn to the good.

31...♜c3 32.♞xf5 a4

It is too late for exchanges...

33.bxa4 ♜xa4



34.e4!

Accurate until the end. Black can't stop White from playing e5 and ♔h5 next. It is game over.

34...♔g7 35.♔h5

A very clean positional win by Bu, showing great domination of the bishop+knight, which is quite typical for Catalan structures where White often has a strong bishop on the a8-h1 diagonal. A really nice game to learn from!

1-0

GAME 40

F. Caruana (2789)

R. Ponomarev (2723)

Dortmund GER

Dortmund GER

13.07.2014, [C42]

Fabiano Caruana wins a very nice game against the Petroff Defence. In a well-known position he introduces a new plan (or rather he brings back an old plan), which seems to create some problems for Black.

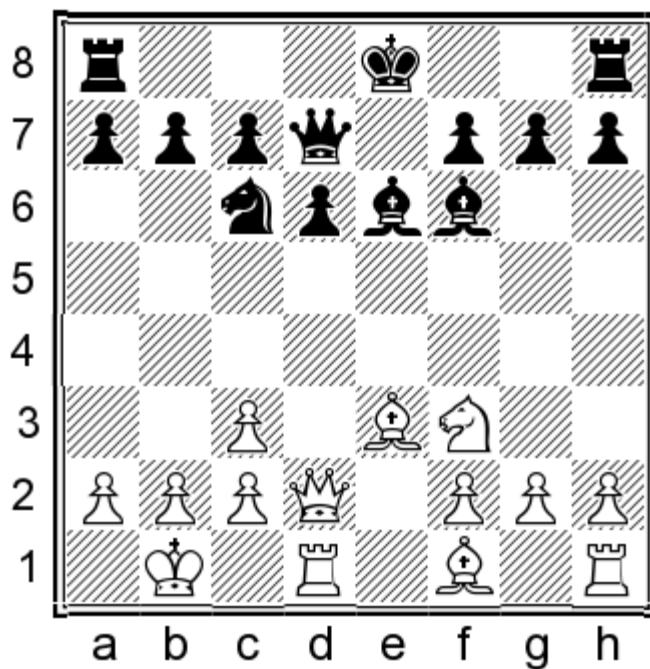
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♗xe5 d6 4.♘f3 ♗xe4 5.♗c3

The most popular setup nowadays against the rock-solid Petroff Defence. Somehow the biggest experts — Kramnik, Gelfand, Giri — have started to play other openings as Black.

5...♗xc3 6.dxc3 ♖e7 7.♕e3

White prepares to castle queenside after ♖d2. Black has a choice here between two very serious plans, which will determine the later course of the game. One is to castle kingside, which often leads to sharp attacking positions with h4, or quickly develop the pieces and castle queenside, which is considered to be a safer option.

7...♗c6 8.♖d2 ♕e6 9.0-0-0 ♖d7 10.♗b1 ♕f6



It is important not to hurry with 10...0-0-0 because White gets an edge after 11.♗d4! White is threatening ♗b5 and also to simply take on e6, getting a long-term advantage due to the two bishops. Black cannot play 11...♗xd4 12.♖xd4± because of the double attack on g7 and a7.

11.h3

This is the forgotten plan, which will probably come back into fashion after this game. White wants to take ground on the kingside and fianchetto his bishop with g4 and ♗g2. Another plan is 11.♗g5 ♗xg5 12.♗xg5 0-0-0 13.♗xe6 ♖xe6 when Black is very slightly worse, but he should be able to hold. 11.h4 was the main move and after 11...h6 White has a wide choice. Ponomarev is a big expert here, having played 3 games recently with white. The last one went 12.♗e2 and he tried both 12.♗b5 and 12.♗d4 previously.

11...h6

A useful waiting move to avoid the ♗g5 ideas of grabbing the bishop pair. 11...0-0-0 is still premature because of

12.♘d4 ♘xd4 13.♙xd4 and Black must allow the destruction of his pawn structure with ♙xf6, otherwise he faces the double attack on g7 and a7, e.g. 13...♙xd4 14.♙xf6

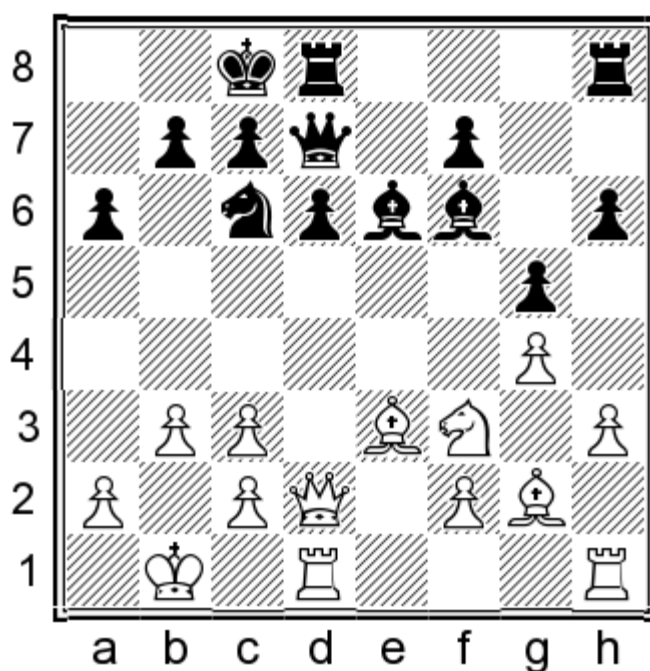
12.b3

White also replies with an useful move. Black often plays ...♘e5 in this line, with the threat of ...♘xf3 and ...♘c4. White takes the c4-square under control, planning to play ♘d4 in this case!

12...a6

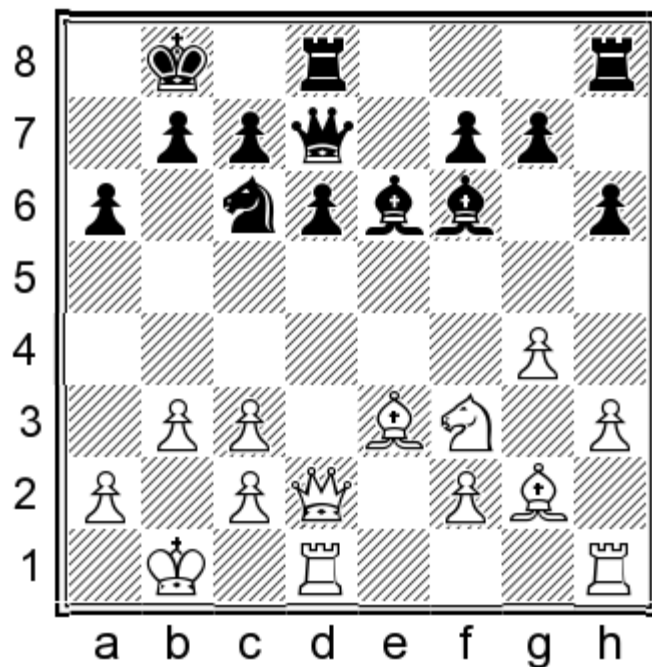
Another useful preparation for 0-0-0, which fits the structure perfectly. Black wants to avoid the double attack which was seen in the 11...0-0-0 line.

13.g4 0-0-0 14.♙g2 g5



Knowing what happened in the game, we can say that this move was wrong and White was better afterwards. However if we take a deeper look, we will see that it is not so easy to play this position as Black.

The most natural move would have been 14...♙b8 but after



15. ♖e1! which I am quite sure was the deep home preparation of Caruana and the worry of Ponomarev — White plays ♗d3 next followed by f4 or even ♖f4 and I don't see how Black can equalize... 15...h5 is logical to disturb the structure, but still White gets an edge after 16.g5 ♕e7 17. ♗d3

15. ♗d4!

Caruana perfectly reads the new situation after Black has changed the pawn structure and therefore also changes his plan. The pawn on g5 becomes a target...

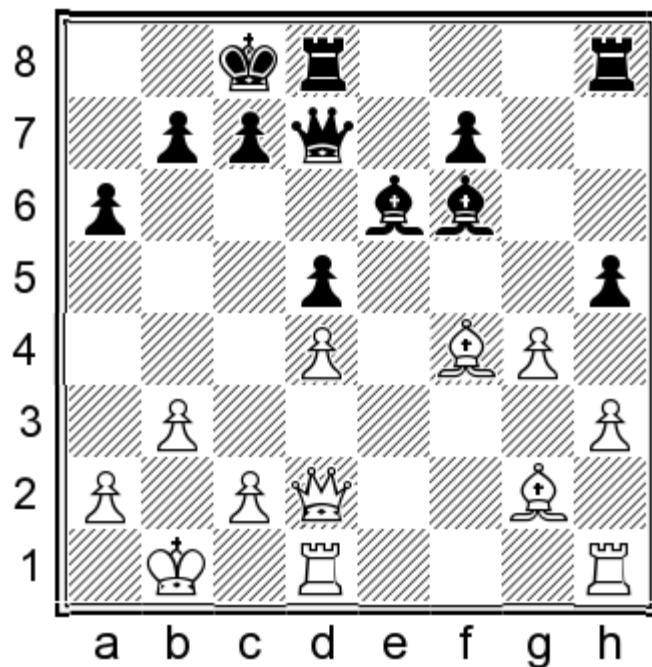
15... ♗xd4 16.cxd4 d5

White was threatening to play d5, but now...

17.f4!

This is the point! White threatens to play f5 (also to take twice on g5), therefore Black is forced to trade on f4, but it leaves him with two pawn islands (f7-h6) . We can conclude that White has a small, but long-term edge because of this.

17...gxf4 18. ♕xf4 h5



19.g5!

Of course, White should not help his opponent to get rid of his weak pawns. Keeping the tension is very important.

19...♙g7 20.♞de1

It seemed to be more circumspect to play 20.h4!? to stop Black from playing this move and fix a target on h3.

20...h4!

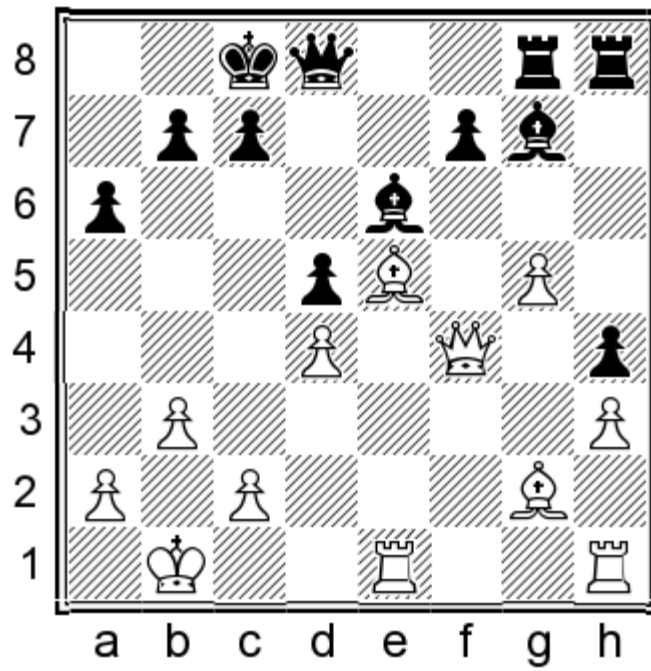
Black has a passive position, but small hopes like fixing the pawn on h3 are increasing his drawing chances, because it pins down two white pieces to protecting the pawn.

21.♙e5!

Another strong positional move by Caruana. He trades the dark-squared bishops and intends to organize his play on the freshly weakened squares, rook to e5, queen to f4 and so on. 21.♞e3 was tempting, but Black can parry the ♞c3 threat with 21...♙b8 22.♞c3 ♞c8 followed by ♙f8-d6.

21...♞dg8 22.♙f4 ♙d8

Black wants to keep an eye on the g5-pawn, but it is never really hanging because the rook will defend it from e5. Black has a difficult position anyway as he is lacking active plans and the only question is how White should make progress. Caruana slowly starts to improve his pieces before making any concrete decisions.



23. ♕f1!

White transfers his bishop to d3, from where it is sometimes threatening g5-g6, destroying the outpost of the e6-bishop or trading it with ♕f5, making the f7-weakness more vulnerable.

23... ♖b8 24. ♕d3 ♕c8!

Ponomarev was rightly afraid of the g6-threat and leaves from the x-ray of the rook. In case of 24... ♗d7 25. ♕xg7 ♗xg7 26. ♗f6! ♗hg8 27. g6!± would have worked because ... ♕xh3 runs into ♗e7!

25. ♖b2!

Caruana continues improving his position, and does not change anything –rather leaving his opponent to suffer in his cramped situation.

25... ♕xe5 26. ♗xe5 ♗g7 27. a4!

Another small improvement. White takes ground on the queenside and is ready to squeeze Black with a5.

27... a5

After 27... ♗hg8 White reaches a better endgame with 28. ♗xh4 ♗xg5 29. ♗xg5 ♗xg5 and here he can choose between two pleasant options: 30. ♗f2 pushing the h-pawn with the queens on board or 30. ♗xg5 ♗xg5 31. h4 ♗h5 32. ♕e2 ♗h6 33. h5 which is also clearly better for White with the distant passed pawn, but perhaps it is better to keep the queens on board.

28. ♖a2

Caruana was already in some time-pressure and he decided to make some waiting moves as his opponent is lacking useful plans anyway.

28... ♖a7

Trying to jump out with 28...♖h5 does not help. 29.♖he1 Black must avoid the invasion of the rook on the back rank. 29...♖h8 30.♖1e3 when White just improved his rook.

29.♖d2 ♖b8 30.♖f4 ♖a7

White was just getting closer to the time-control; of course the game does not finish with a repetition...

31.♖he1!?

Finally White changes the character of the game by trading the h-pawns. His idea is to open the position and try to make use of the difference in the activity between the rook on e5 and the one on g7.

31...♙xh3 32.♖h1 ♙c8

Perhaps it was better to play 32...♙e6 33.♖xh4 ♖hg8 (33...♖xh4 34.♖xh4) 34.♖h5 c6 building a kind of fortress by pressing the g5-pawn with full power. Black starts to play ...♙a8-a7 from now on and waits to see how White makes progress. It is not so easy because the white heavy pieces are also quite busy with protecting the g5-pawn.

33.♖xh4 ♖xh4 34.♖xh4 b6?

A positional blunder. Ponomarev misses the nice regrouping of the queen to c6. 34...c6 should have been played. After 35.♖f4 White is clearly better, but the situation is the same as in the 32...♙e6 line, in that White still needs to show the winning plan, but is limited because his pieces are pinned to the defence of the g5-pawn.

35.♖h6! ♖g8 36.♖c6!

Suddenly Black is in deep trouble. The d5-pawn is hanging and it is not easy to deal with it.

36...♙e6

36...♙b7 is met by 37.♖f6! ♖xf6 38.gxf6 and the rook invades to e7! Black should play ...♙e6 now, but White nicely deflected the bishop to b7 first. Black had probably forgotten about this idea.

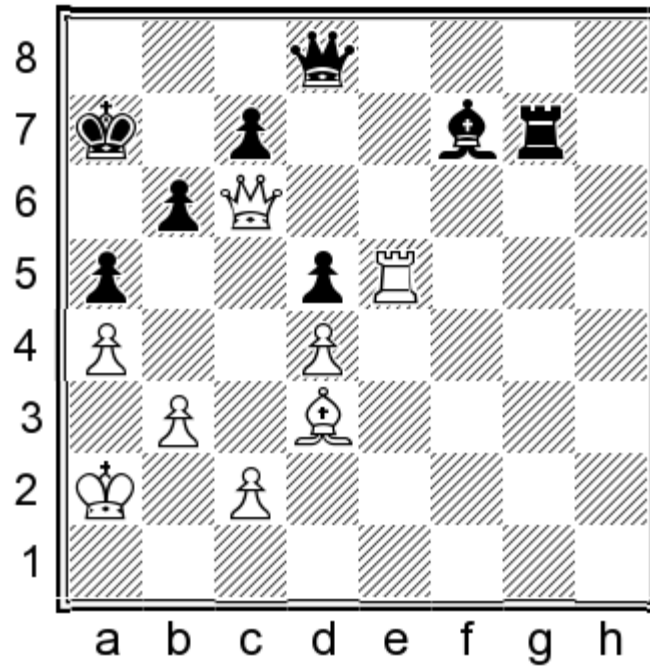
37.g6!

This breakthrough seems to be decisive. The e6-bishop loses its stability and Black collapses.

37...♖g7

Allowing a beautiful finish, but other moves were also bad. 37...♙d7 38.♖xd5 fxe6 39.♙e4 The king becomes too weak. 39...c6 (39...♖c8 40.♖e7+-) 40.♖d6+- The endgame is lost after 37...♖d6 38.♖xd6 cxd6 39.♖e3 when White is threatening to take on f7 and checking the bishop with ♖e7 and if Black avoids it by playing 39...♙b8 he moves into another motif: 40.♙f5!! ♙xf5 41.gxf7 ♖f8 42.♖e8+- Somehow the black king could not find its place...

38.gxf7 ♙xf7



39.♖e7!!

This brilliant combination wins the game on the spot. Caruana found it with only one minute on his clock, but of course that is why he is a 2800 player...

39...♜xe7 40.♙a6!!

This is the point and Black gets mated in any case. Ponomarev was also impressed by Caruana's performance and allowed his opponent to mate him.

40...♚xa6 41.♜a8#

1-0

GAME 41

V. Topalov (2772)

M. Vachier-Lagrave (2768)

2nd Sinquefeld Cup 2014

Saint Louis USA (5.3)

31.08.2014, [B90]

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

Two weeks ago I commented on the Topalov-Wojtaszek game from the Olympiad, a huge theoretical fight between two great Sicilian Najdorf experts. Here comes another one and Topalov once again shows extreme understanding of this very difficult and complex line.

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

The initial position of the Najdorf Defence.

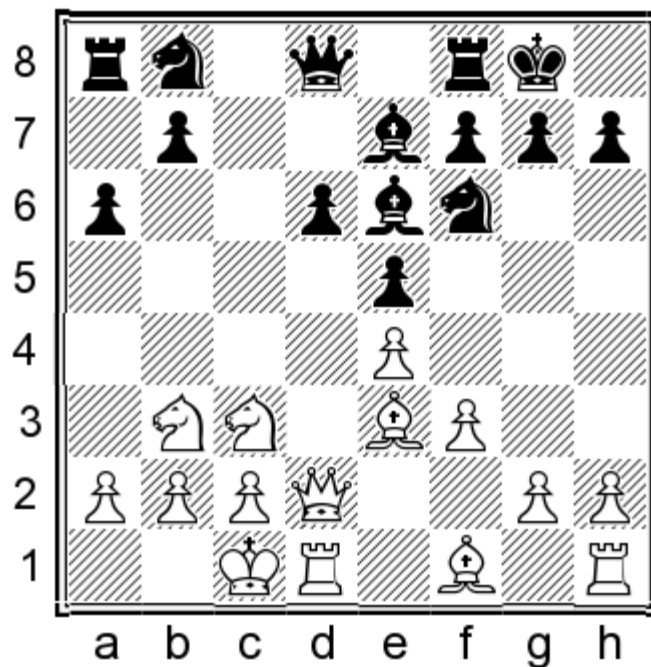
6.f3 e5 7.♗b3 ♕e6 8.♕e3

Black has a wide choice here.

8...♕e7

One of the main moves. In the afore-mentioned game, Wojtaszek went for 8...♗bd7 9.g4 b5

9.♖d2 0-0 10.0-0



10...a5

A very sharp line. Black goes for a direct attack with ...a5-a4-a3, but it also has the drawback that it creates a big hole on b5, which can be vulnerable if White manages to avoid the direct threats. 10...♗bd7 11.g4 b5 is the most common variation, where White has recently employed the subtle 12.♞g1! delaying the g5-push for a move because of some

concrete reasons.

11.a4!

White has tried various setups here, but this seems to be the best. White consolidates the b5-square and keeps his knight on b3 (which would have had to go to an unfortunate square if Black could push ...a4. The drawback of this move is the b4-square. Black immediately drives his knight there, where it might turn out to be dangerous attacking piece. and it also supports the ...d5-break.

11...♟a6 12.g4

Topalov knows what must do, as he also plays this line with Black. He wants to send away the f6-knight to avoid the ...d5 break, and also launches an attack against the opponent's king, which is principled in case of opposite-side castling. The Caruana-Topalov game last year continued with 12.♙b5 ♞c7 13.♙b6 ♚c8 14.♙xc7 ♜xc7 15.g4 ♞fd8 16.g5 ♞h5 with an interesting game that Black went on to win later. Compared to the present game, White misses his dark-squared bishop a lot here.

12...♞b4 13.♙b1

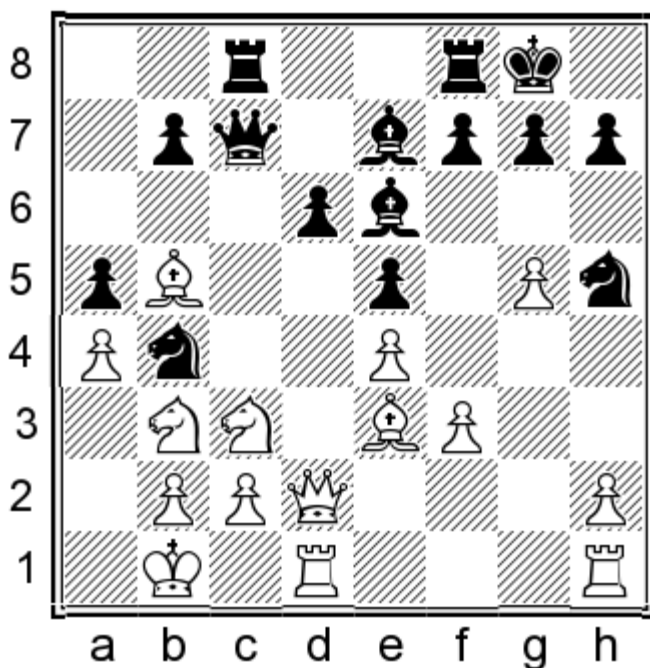
A standard prophylactic move to avoid tactical ideas.

13...♞c7

13...d5 does not work immediately because of 14.g5 d4 In many lines this idea turns the initiative over to Black, but here 15.gxf6 ♙xf6 16.♞xd4! exd4 17.♙xd4± wins a pawn.

14.g5 ♞h5 15.♙b5 ♞ac8

Both players are developing their pieces to their ideal squares.



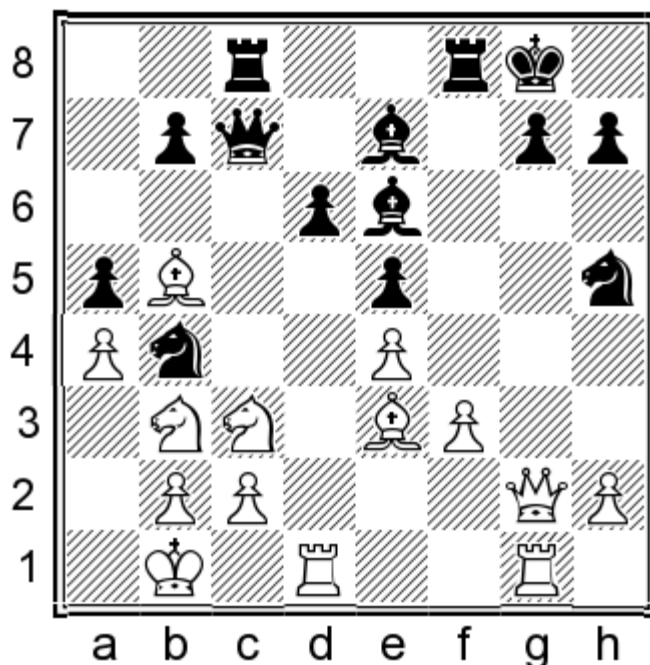
16.♞hg1

A standard move in this line, which might look a bit mysterious at first sight. White has successfully prevented the ...d5 break and the queenside is fixed, so he does not need to worry about any attacking plans. White has different ways to improve his position: one is the regrouping of the knight with ♖c1–d3, trading the strong one on b4 and working out the d5 square for the other knight. The aim would be to jump with the knight to d5 and being able to recapture with a piece, keeping the structure and the pawn on e4. Black does not want to just sit idly and instead usually looks for counterplay with ...f5. The ♜hg1 move is a perfect preparation for this.

16...f5 17.gxf6

Consequent! White opens the g-file for his rook. However, in this particular situation it seems to be even stronger to play 17.♘d5! The point is that after Black has occupied the f5-square he cannot react with ♘xd5 exd5 and ♙f5, attacking the c2-pawn, while retreating the bishop drops the a5-pawn. 17...♙xd5 18.exd5 ♜xc2+ 19.♜xc2 ♜xc2 20.♘xa5± is also perfect for White. The b7-pawn is hanging and ♙d2 threatens to win some material.

17...♘xf6 18.♜g2 ♘h5



18...♜f7 19.♙g5 also looks fine for White, with the idea to play f4 — and in case of ...exf4 ♘d4 could be very unpleasant!

19.♘c1!

A perfect positional plan! As we already discussed, White wants to trade the strong b4-knight and then occupy the d5-square and recapture with a piece. This entire strategic plan is about ‘working out’ the light squares and to obtain an opposite-colored bishop middlegame, where the white one will be more active.

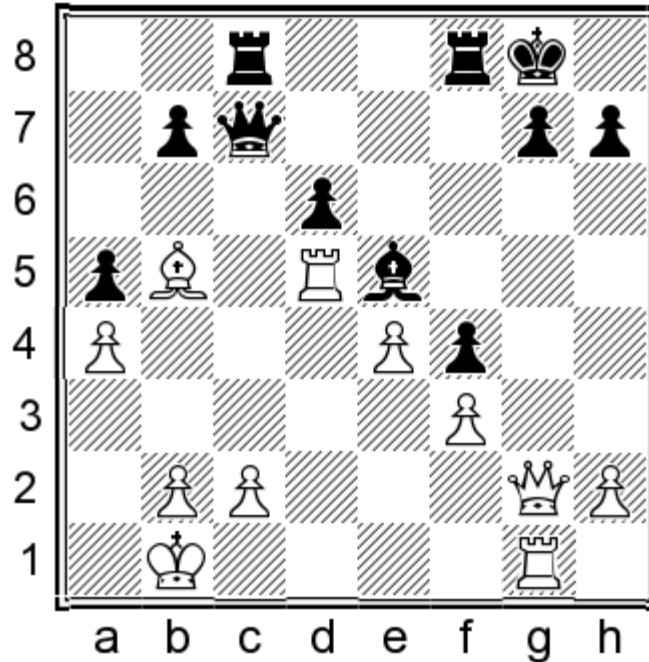
19...♙f6 20.♘d3 ♘xd3

Other moves are not better: After some useful move like 20...♖h8 White continues his plan with 21.♘xb4 axb4 22.♘d5 ♙xd5 23.♜xd5 The b4-pawn and the opened a-file do not give Black any extra attacking ideas. The b5-bishop is controlling everything. 20...♘c6 is interesting to keep the knight and try to jump to d4, but White keeps the advantage with 21.f4! exf4 22.♘xf4 ♘xf4 23.♙xf4 and Black has no time to take on c3 because the d6-pawn is hanging with tempo and after 23...♘e5 24.♘d5 ♙xd5 25.♜xd5 White stands perfectly again with the two bishops in an open position.

21. ♖xd3 ♜f4

Black's defensive strategy involves getting a strong dark-squared bishop on the long diagonal, but as we will see that bishop will only look strong.

22. ♙xf4 exf4 23. ♘d5 ♙xd5 24. ♖xd5 ♙e5



Both sides have achieved their aims, but who was right?! We have reached an opposite-colored bishop middlegame and the principle says, the player who has the more active bishop is better...

25. c3!

This is the key! White completely neutralizes the e5-bishop with this move, while he is going to transfer his own bishop to the a2-g8 diagonal. The drawback of the a5-move can be seen perfectly now. White can maneuver with his pieces as he wishes, creating more-and-more weaknesses in Black's camp.

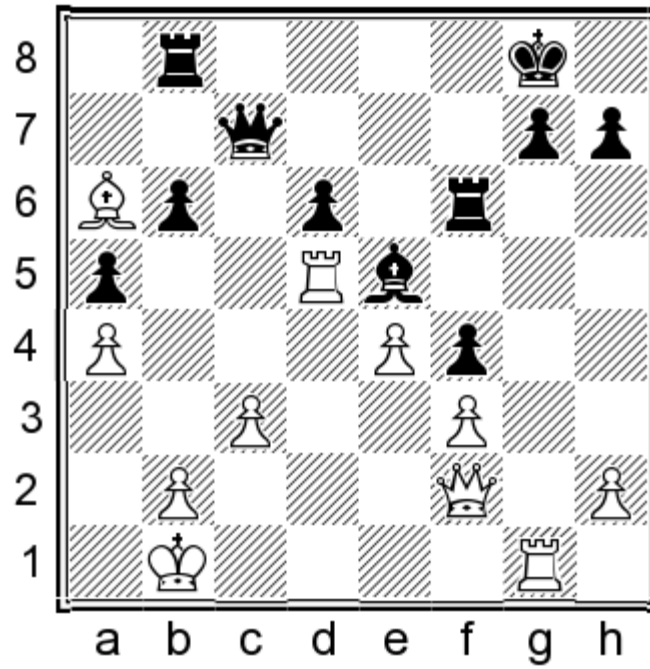
25... ♖f6

Black tries to trade a pair of rooks with ... ♖g6, which would ease his defensive burden, but Topalov rightly avoids it.

26. ♖f2 b6

Black prevents the potential threat of ♖a7, which might spell the end of the a5-pawn after the retreat of the b5-bishop.

27. ♙a6 ♖b8



28.♔d3!

White frees the b5-square in order to pin all the black pieces to the b6-pawn with ♖b5 and then he wants to transfer his bishop to c2-b3!

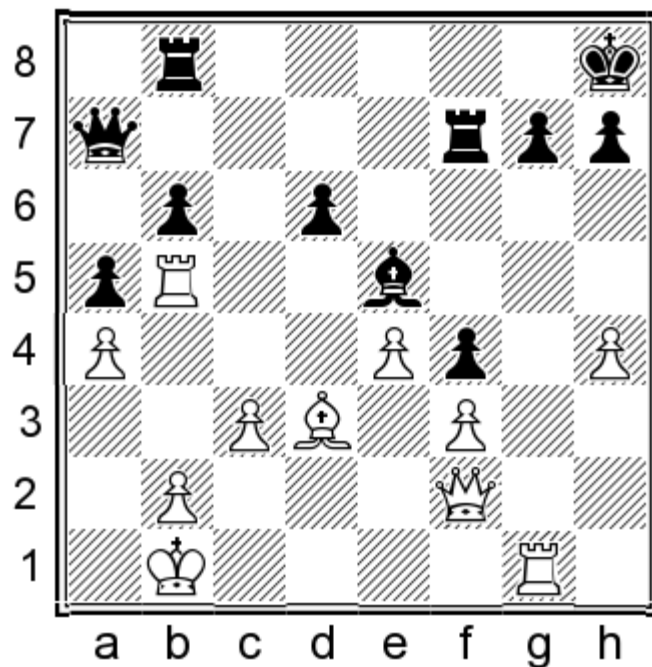
28...♕h8 29.♖b5 ♖f7

It is hard to suggest any plan for Black. Vachier decides to trade the annoying rook on b5 by maneuvering his own rook to c5. In general this should be a good idea to get rid of some pieces and ease the pressure. Meanwhile, Topalov has time to improve his position.

30.h4

Another very useful move. White is squeezing on the kingside with h5 to create potential tactical ideas in the future.

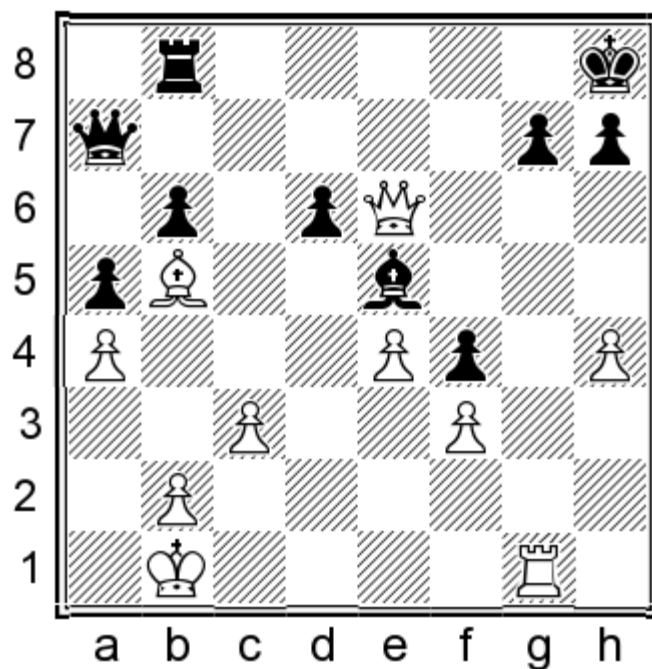
30...♔a7



31. ♔c2!

Suddenly White activates his queen along the b3-e6 diagonal. It is amazing how effectively White can use the light squares, while Black is completely useless on the dark ones.

31... ♖c7 32. ♔b3 ♖c5 33. ♔e6 ♖xb5 34. ♕xb5



A pair of rooks is traded. At least the problems are temporarily solved around the b6-pawn, but suddenly another thing might give Black reasons to worry. The white pieces are still more active, he is threatening ♕g5-f5-f7 and, if Black sticks to his exchanging policy, even the opposite-colored bishop endgame could be easily lost for him, because the white king simply marches to c6 on the light squares and Black cannot protect his queenside pawns.

34...♖f8

I assume Black played this move with the idea to trade queens with ...♙f7, but then he changed his mind... Black cannot hope for any counterplay with 34...♙c7 35.♞g5 ♙c5 White simply continues his plan: 36.♞f5 and there is only one check on g1...

35.h5

35.♙c4 was also possible to keep the queens on the board. 35...♙f7 36.♙c6

35...♙c7

It would have been more consequent, and the only practical chance, to play 35...♙f7 36.♙xf7 ♞xf7 although this endgame is going to be a long torture, which I wouldn't wish on anyone... 37.♞c4!? It is possible to transfer the bishop to this diagonal to lock the black king in the corner! (37.♔a2 ♞c7 38.♔b3 ♔g8 39.♞c4+ ♔f8 is also bad, but Black might continue despite suffering.)

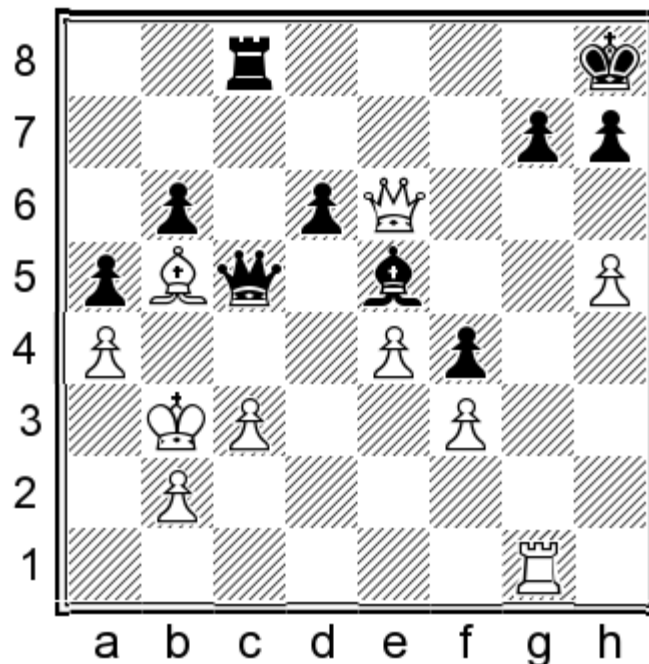
36.♔a2

Topalov prepares for the endgame and improves his king by walking it to b3. Black cannot create any threats against it even there.

36...♙d8 37.♙g4 ♙c7 38.♔b3 ♞c8

Black is hoping for some tricks with ...♞xc3, but it will never work... 38...♙f7+ was more resistant, although the torture starts again with 39.♞c4 ♙e7 40.♞d1 followed by ♞d5-b5. Sometimes ♙g1 afterwards, or h6 g6 and ♞xe5 could be decisive. Black's chances to survive are very small...

39.♙e6 ♙c5



39...♞xc3 loses to 40.♞c1!+-

40.♖g5!

Excellent play by Topalov! White switches his rook to f5-f7 again. Black is simply unable to control all the ideas around the light squares.

40...♜b8 41.♜f5

Black was so impressed that he resigned! It might look a bit premature, but it is justified as the following lines show. First of all, White is threatening ♕e8 and the mate is unavoidable on f8! 41.♜f5 ♜c8 is the most tenacious, but the endgame is easily winning for White:

a) 41...h6 42.♕e8!+-;

b) 41...♜c7 42.♕e8! ♕f6 Here the nicest win is: 43.♜xf6! gxf6 44.h6! when Black cannot avoid getting mated in a few moves. 44...♜d8 (44...♜b7 45.♜xf6+ ♖g8 46.♕b5+-) 45.♜f7! ♜xe8 46.♜xf6+ ♖g8 47.♜g7#;

42.♜xc8+ ♜xc8 43.♜f7 Threatening ♜b7 and after 43...♜b8 44.♕c6 comes ♖c4-b5. Despite the material equality and the opposite-colored bishops, Black can resign.

A masterpiece by Topalov!

1-0

GAME 42

F. Caruana (2801)

V. Topalov (2772)

2nd Sinquefeld Cup 2014

Saint Louis USA (6.1)

02.09.2014, [B46]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

The rise of the new superstar Fabiano Caruana began a few years ago, but what the only 21-year old Italian showed in the Sinquefeld Cup is just unreal! 7 straight wins in the strongest chess tournament in history! Unbelievable. From a professional point of view I can tell that Caruana is not simply very lucky, and his opponents don't just blunder-he is simply playing much better chess. Great preparation, great positional play, great in tactics and precise in converting his advantage, this is what Caruana has shown us in his recent games. And in the current game we will see a great example of how good Fabiano Caruana really is. After the opening Black makes a minimal mistake and gets himself into some trouble. By playing solid/strong moves White's advantage gets bigger and bigger and Caruana doesn't miss the moment to finish his opponent off with a nice winning strike!

1.e4

Caruana almost always sticks to 1.e4.

1...c5

Topalov is also a very fighting player and almost every single one of his games is full of action, which is why his main opening is the Sicilian.

2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3

What is also nice about the play of Caruana is that he always heads for the main-lines and usually has some new little idea up his sleeve.

5...a6

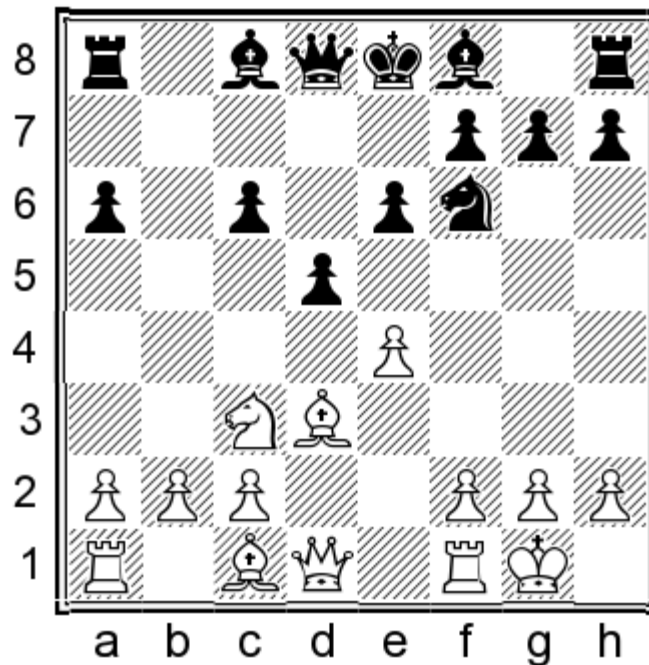
Not the most popular line, but quite a tricky one.

6.♘xc6

Clearly the main move. From a general point of view, of course, it is never great to give Black the possibility of having a strong center, but now the move ...a6 will be redundant.

6...bxc6 7.♕d3 d5 8.0-0 ♘f6

So far things are completely normal and now White has quite a few choices.



9.♖e1

This is one of the main moves. Another possible plan for White is the idea of f4, which can be played via several move-orders and it is usually connected with putting the queen on e2.

9...♕e7

This is also the main move of theory and a very logical one. Black prepares to castle kingside, after which his position would be perfectly fine, so White needs to act quickly.

10.e5

The most logical move.

10...♘d7 11.♙g4

This is the idea behind the move 10.e5. The pawn on g7 comes under an unpleasant attack.

11...♗f8

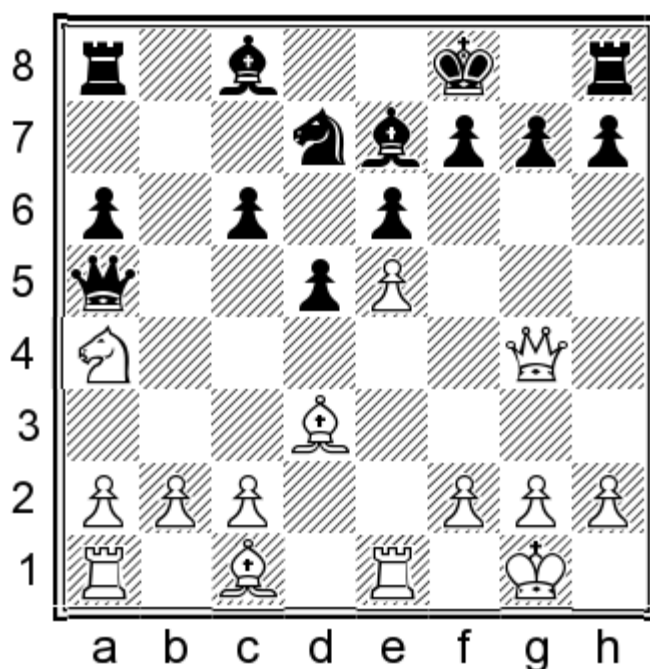
Again clearly the main move. Caruana already has quite some experience in this position as he has played it with both colors. After 11...g6 12.g6 the position is sharp, but White seems to have an advantage.

12.♘a4

An interesting move. White tries to sort of save a tempo on playing the b3 move-which is actually useful anyway, so it is quite unclear if it really brings White anything more than just being a different move order. 12.b3 c5 13.♘a4 is the more usual move order. White's idea is clear; to play c4 and fix the black pawn structure.

12...♔a5

Topalov immediately reacts and tries to figure out the difference.



But maybe he should have continued with the usual 12...c5 and now White has a choice between heading back to the normal line with 13.b3 or trying 13.c4 ♕a5 14.♕d1 d4. For me it is very hard to say if White really did something important in comparison to 13.b3. It seems to me that Black is doing fine here.

13.♕e2!

A very unusual and very strong move. White prepares the ♕d2 move and at the same time in many lines the rook on e2 could be very well placed, for example in case of the f4-push followed by ♖f1.

13...h5?!

Maybe not a bad move, but a very risky one. Black launches some play on the kingside, where it is actually the black king who finds himself “naked”. 13...c5 looks much more solid. 14.♕d2 ♕c7 (14...♘xe5? 15.♖xe5 ♕xd2 16.♘b6 ♖b8 17.♘xc8 ♖xc8 and now White has 18.♖xd5 with a very big advantage.) 15.c4 Once again Blacks seems to be unable to take on e5 and in case of not playing ...♘xe5 the move ♕a5 was just a loss of a tempo. 15...♘xe5 16.♕f4! ♘xg4 17.♕xc7 and because of White's great development, Black's position is very dangerous here.

14.♖f4

There is no other place to go because the knight on a4 is hanging.

14...g5

If you say A with the ...h5 move you need to say B with the ...g5 move.

15.♘d2

This is also the only move for White.

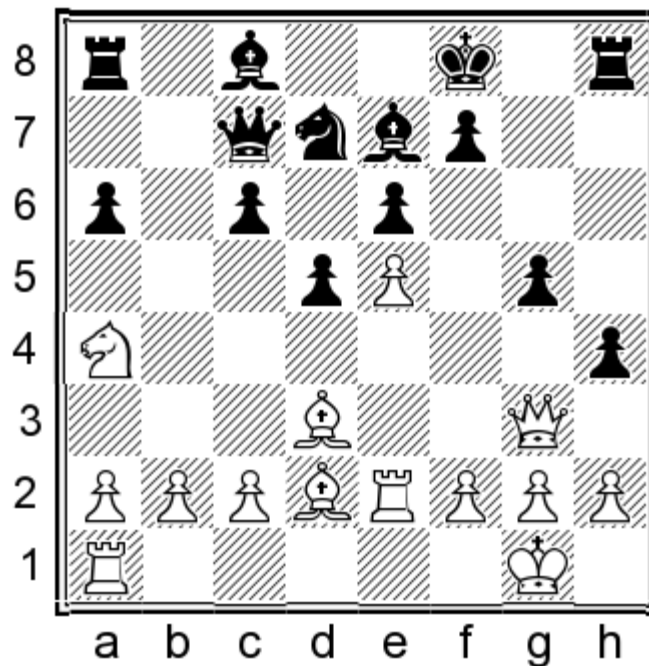
15...♙c7?

I think this is already a serious mistake. By leaving the queens on the board, the h5 and g5 moves become clearly counter-productive. White is only getting more attacking targets. Usually in the Sicilian it is a good idea for Black to exchange the queens if possible and here it is no different: 15...gxf4 16.♘xa5 Now Black has a lot of different moves, but for example after 16...♖g8 if White is better here, it should be minimally better.

16.♙g3

Now the g5-pawn became a target.

16...h4



17.♙g4

Could it be that Black made a miscalculation and was hoping to win the pawn on e5 when playing 13...h5?!

17...♖g8

17...♘xe5? of course doesn't work because of 18.♖xe5! ♙xe5 19.♘c3 and the rook on h8 falls.

18.♖ae1

Simple and good. The e5-pawn is protected.

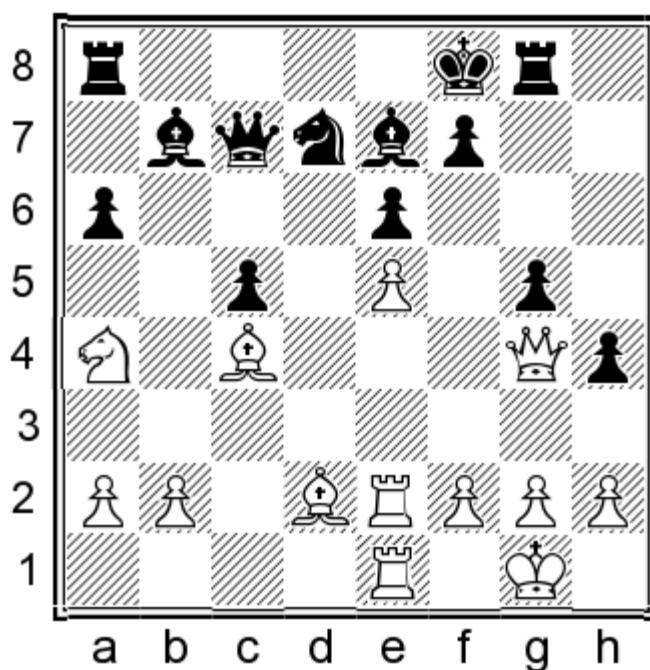
18...c5

What else?!

19.c4 dxc4

This move can't be good either as Black opens the position further while his king has a very unsafe home on f8. 19...d4 was a better move. 20.b3 ♖b7 21.♘b2 with the plan of playing ♕e4 and ♘d3 at the right moment. The problem in comparison to the usual structures with the pawns on h7 and g7, where Black is doing more or less fine, is that now the pawns on h4 and g5 are very badly placed and are under constant attack. White clearly has a big advantage here.

20.♕xc4 ♖b7



21.h3!

I like such moves a lot! Black's only chance is to use the long diagonal a8-h1 and maybe at some good moment to play h3 himself, so Caruana stops all of black hopes, and at the same time h3 could be a very useful move for the future.

21...♞d8 22.♕c3 ♘b8

Topalov tries to at least get his knight to d4.

23.♞e3

Another very strong 'silent' move by Caruana. It stops Black from playing ...♘c6 and White wants to play b3-♘b2-♘d3, bringing his last piece into the attack. Black is almost paralyzed.

23...♘c6?

After this move all is lost! Black falls into the trap. 23...♞g7 was better. Black now wants to play ...♘c6-♘d4, with a

very bad position, but at least the fight would go on.

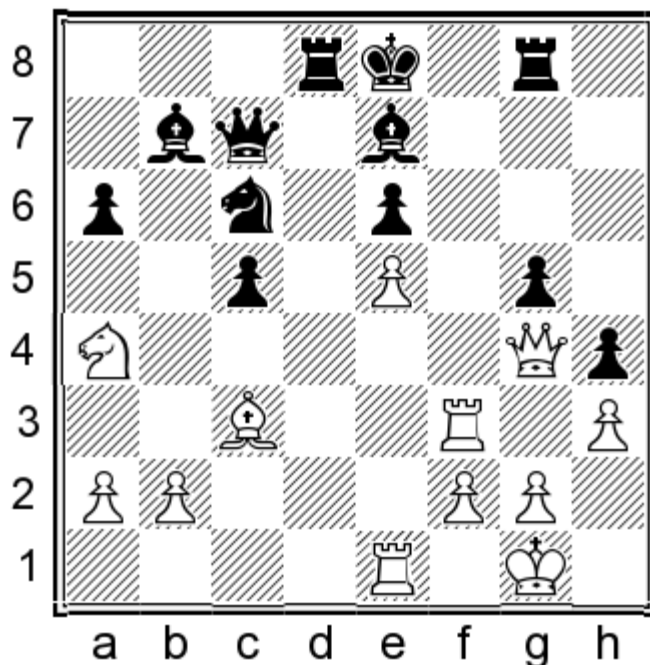
24. ♕xe6!

Black gets what he was asking for. To play with an 'open' pawn position and a king on f8 is very dangerous.

24... fxe6 25. ♖f3+

Black has 2 moves now:

25... ♖e8



Topalov was probably initially planning to play 25... ♖g7 but here White wins with a very nice combination too: 26. ♖h5 ♖df8 27. ♖f6!! and Black has no defence against the mating attack... 27... ♖xf6 28. exf6+ ♕xf6 29. ♖xg5+ winning back the piece and obtaining a completely winning position.

26. ♖h5

There is no more escape here for Black.

26... ♖g7

26... ♖d4 was not much better since after 27. ♖xg8+ ♖d7 28. ♖f7 ♖xf3+ 29. gxf3 White is 2 pawns up and he still has his mating attack.

27. ♖h6

Precision until the end...

27... ♖d4

I guess Topalov still had little hopes to survive this game, but not after the next move!

28.e6!

A very beautiful move! Of course White also had many other moves which probably would have won the game as well, but it is great to see how precise Caruana acts in winning positions, not giving his opponents any chances for survival.

28...♖xf3+

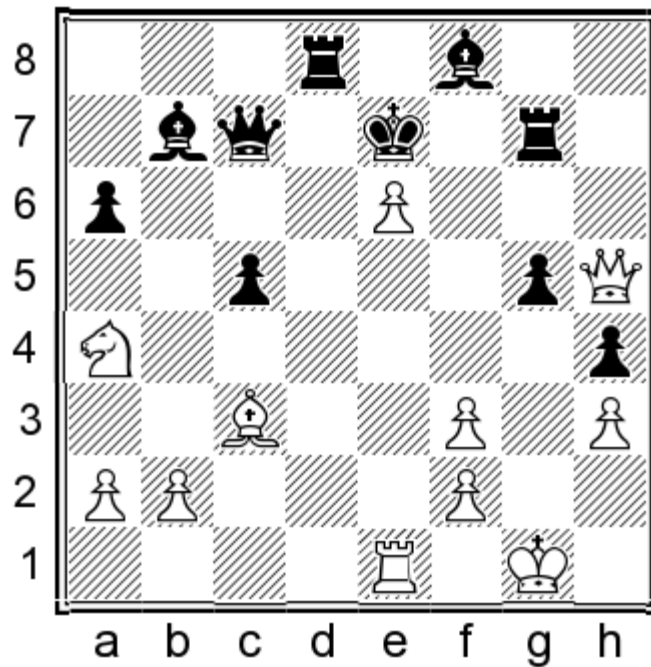
Black doesn't really have many options...

29.gxf3

The rook on g7 hangs, and in case of 29...♖g8 White has an easy win with 30.♕h5.

29...♘f8 30.♕h5+ ♔e7

Now the simplest move is



31.♘xg7

What a great game by Caruana! Logical strong moves and a beautiful finish. Could it be that we are finally seeing somebody who could be a match for Carlsen — or even somebody who is stronger?!

1–0

GAME 43

V. Anand (2785)

F. Vallejo Pons (2712)

7th Grand Slam Masters

Bilbao ESP (4.1)

18.09.2014, [D20]

Anand had a perfect warm-up tournament before his World Championship match. He won some very convincing games, such as this one.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4

The Queen's Gambit Accepted. Anand himself played it as Black some time ago.

3.e4 ♘c6

3...e5 and 3...♘f6 are more popular main-lines nowadays, but the text move also has huge theory behind it.

4.♗f3 ♙g4 5.d5 ♗e5 6.♙f4 ♗g6 7.♙e3 e5 8.♙xc4 ♗f6 9.♗c3

We are still at the beginning of this opening, with hundreds of games in the database.

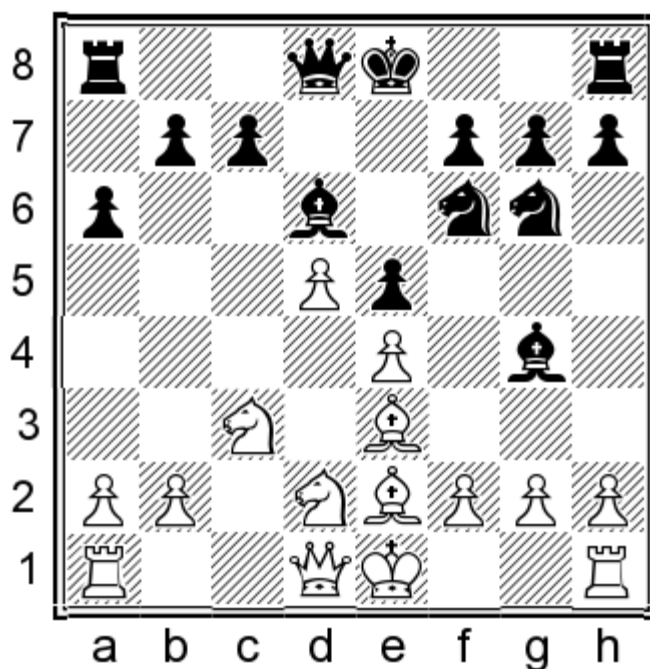
9...a6

This is considered to be the best approach, to avoid the trade of the light-squared bishops after ♙b5. In case of 9...♙d6 then 10.♙b5+ ♙d7 11.♙xd7+ ♔xd7 12.0-0 is very similar to the game.

10.♙e2

Anand unpins himself and intends to improve his knight with ♗d2-c4.

10...♙d6 11.♗d2



11...♙xe2

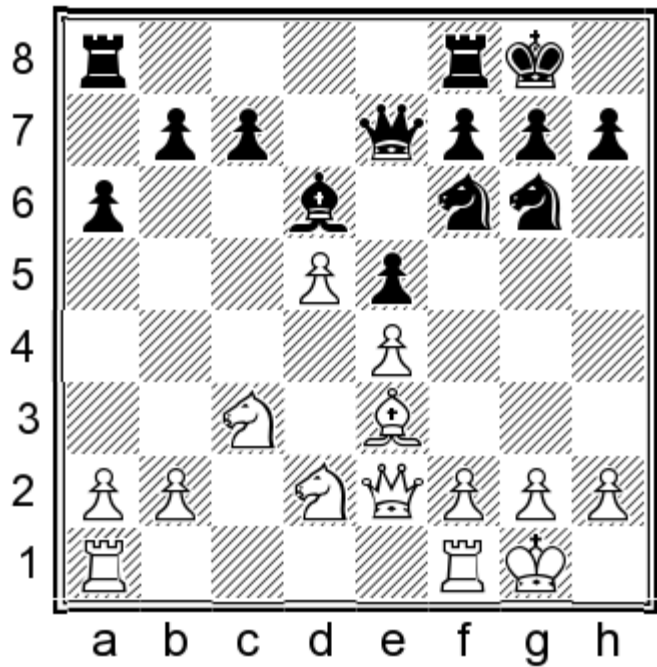
This is a positional mistake, after which White's game becomes very easy and comfortable. All the experts of this variation play 11...♙d7 keeping the bishops and Black plays b5 next, followed by ...c6 undermining the center. 12.♗c4

is met by 12...♗b4 the e4-pawn is hanging and if White protects it, ...b5 works again sending back the knight and then follows ...c6 at some point.

12. ♖xe2 0-0 13.0-0

White is ready to build a pleasant set-up with ♘c4, ♖fd1, ♖ac1. The g3 move is always useful to neutralize the g6-knight. If Black does not succeed in freeing himself with ...c6, he must suffer long-term in a worse position with less space.

13... ♗e7



After the trade of the bishops, the move 13...b5 is rather weakening. White could create some holes with 14.a4 b4 15.♘d1 and the queenside pawns are vulnerable.

14. ♖fd1

Anand knows that Black should aim for the ...c6 undermining, therefore he prepares his rook for the opening of the d-file.

14... ♖ac8

14...♘f4 is possible, with the idea of seeking out the e5-square for the minor pieces. But White is not forced to take, e.g. 15.♗f3 and g3 next, sending back the knight.

15.g3

A very useful move to open the back rank and to paralyze the g6-knight.

15...h6

Black also spends a useful tempo before pushing ...c6. Vallejo was afraid of some ♗g5 pins, after which the knight's jump to d5 could be very unpleasant.

16.♖ac1 c6

Black doesn't wait any longer. In case of 16...♗fd8 then 17.♘c4 is better for White again. He might improve his position by grabbing some space on the queenside with a3-b4. Without the ...c6 move, Black cannot hope for equality, but in the game White was perfectly prepared to meet this break.

17.♘c4

White prepares to land a piece on d5, after which he gives up his structural advantage, but his pieces are going to dominate the black ones.

17...cxd5 18.♘xd5

18.♘b6!? was also good, to have a knight on d5. Perhaps Anand wanted to avoid some kind of exchange sacrifice, such as 18...♗xc3 19.bxc3 dxe4 but White is better after 20.♖c4 when ♘c8! is threatened.

18...♘xd5 19.♗xd5 ♕c5

Less pieces, less problems — but it does not solve everything. The hole on d5 gives White a very pleasant initiative. On 19...♗fd8 20.♗cd1 ♕c7 21.♕c5 ♖f6 22.♘e3 keeps the advantage.

20.♗cd1 ♕xe3

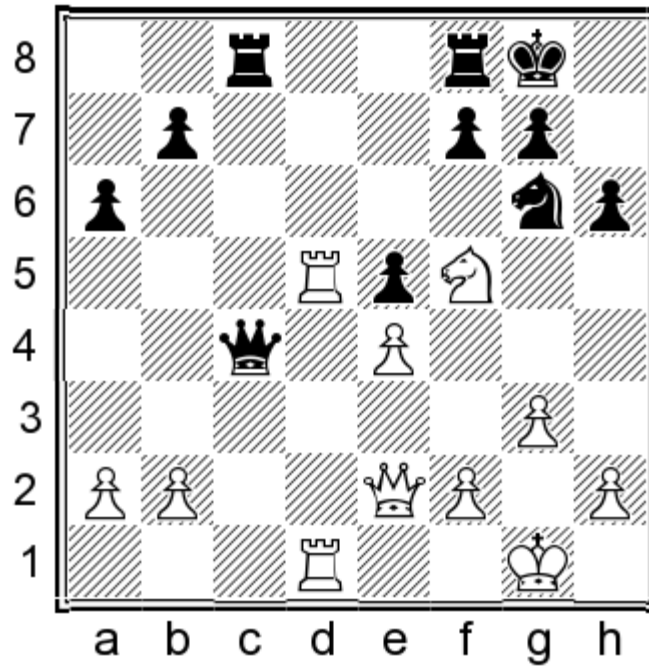
Perhaps it was better to get rid of a pair of rooks with 20...b5 White needs his knight on e3 to remain ready to jump into the holes at f5 and d5. Therefore the right move is 21.♕xc5 ♗xc5 22.♘e3 ♗xd5 23.♗xd5! It is better to fight for the d-file and use the knight on the f5 square. Black cannot equalize with 23...♗d8 24.♘f5 ♖f6 because after 25.♖d3! ♗xd5 26.exd5!± a new problem arises. The passed d-pawn cannot be blockaded well.

21.♘xe3 ♖b4

Vallejo realises that he is unable to neutralize the activity of the white pieces and he starts looking for counterplay.

22.♘f5 ♗c4

Black tries to provoke a serious f3-weakening, after which there is always hope for Black to get counterplay against the king. However Anand finds a nice way to push back the heavy pieces. On 22...♖c4



the endgame would also yield an advantage, but it is much better to keep the queens on the board and play for more. 23.♙f3! ♜xa2 24.h4! with the threat of h5 and ♙g4 or the same with the reversed move order. Black has no adequate defense.

23.♘d6!

Protecting the e4-pawn with tempo.

23...♞c6 24.a3

Sending the queen back to passivity to free the e4-pawn.

24...♞b3 25.♞5d3 ♞b6 26.♘f5!

The knight also returns to its initial place. In the last 3 moves, White has seemingly only retreated with his rook to d3 from a more active square, but actually he has done much more... Black is now left without any counterplay and he must think how he can defend against the deadly threat of h4-h5 and ♙g4.

26...♞e8

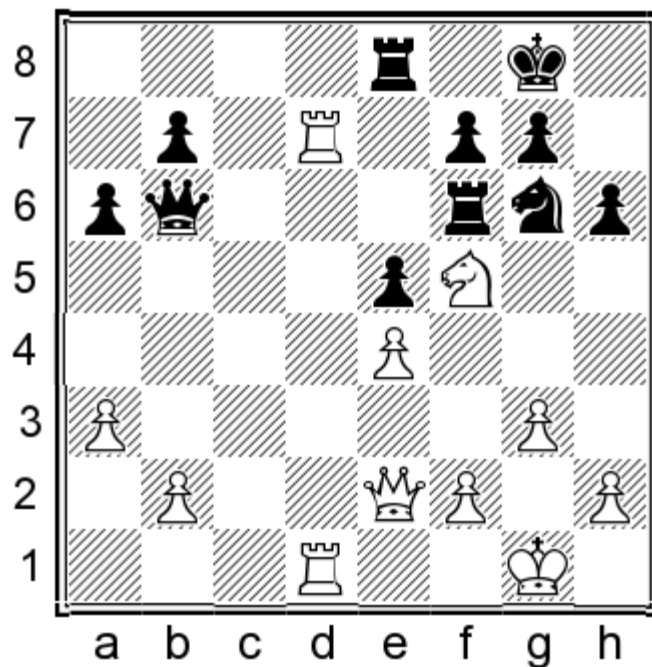
Black would like to get rid of the strong f5-knight with ...♘e7.

27.♞d7!

Simple prophylaxis against ...♘e7 and of course it is always useful to have a rook on the 7th rank. 27.♙g4 ♞c2;

Or 27.h4 ♘e7 were less clear.

27...♞f6



27...♖c7 does not help. 28.♜f3 attacking the f7-weakness and ♘xh6 is threatened. 28...♞e7 29.♞1d6! sends the queen away from the 6th-rank to create the following decisive mating idea: 29...♜c5 30.♞xe7+ ♜xe7 31.♞d8+ ♔h7 32.♜f5+ g6 33.♜f6+—

28.♜g4!

Black has no defense against the simple h4-h5.

28...♜c6

28...♜xb2 29.h4+—;

28...♖c8 29.h4 ♖c2 is met by 30.♞f1! when h5 wins next move.

29.h4 h5

A last try to trade the h-pawn for the one on e4, with the hope that the f5-knight might lose its base, but it weakens the king too much.

30.♜xh5 ♜xe4 31.♞d8 ♜c6

On 31...♞fe6 the easiest win is 32.♞xe8+ ♞xe8 33.♞d6+—

32.♜g5!

Refreshing the h5 threat.

32...♜e6 33.♞1d6

Black resigned in view of 33.♞1d6 ♞xd8 34.♞xd8+ ♔h7 35.♜h5# Such excellent wins against strong players are very helpful for the confidence, before the real challenge against Carlsen.

1–0

GAME 44

B. Gelfand (2748)

B. Jobava (2717)

Tashkent FIDE GP

Tashkent UZB (8)

29.10.2014, [A40]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

When you play Jobava, you never know which opening will show up on the board and you must always be ready for a hard fight. Of course Jobava is much more dangerous with White than with Black, but he can sacrifice something or start to play very aggressively in any position. Such an approach is very risky, but sometimes it brings him great winning games and here we come to the current one. After the opening I think White's position should be clearly better, but Gelfand tries to destroy Black with 8. ♖g4 and lands himself in big danger, with Jobava finishing him off with no mercy.

1.d4 e6

Sometimes Black starts with this move order against the 1.d4 players, knowing they are probably not going to enter the French Defense after 2.e4.

2.c4 b6

Personally I could never understand this opening choice. White immediately wins control of the center and is just a bit better.

3.e4 ♗b7 4.♗d3

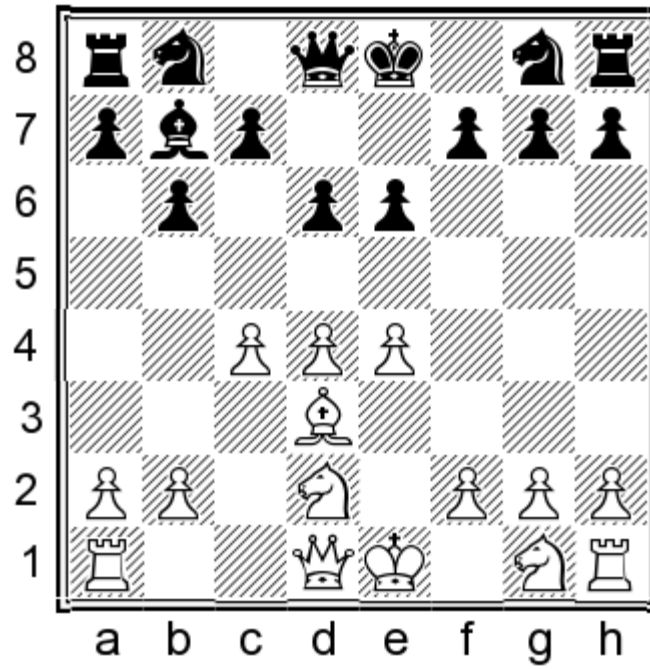
A very good move order for White, which shows again how well-prepared Gelfand is in the opening phase of the game.

4...♗b4+

Black needs to exchange the bishop to get a bit more space for his pieces.

5.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 6.♘xd2 d6

Black's idea is to play ...e5 or ...c5, but in both cases White will most probably react with d5, after which position of the black bishop on b7 will be very unfortunate.



7.f4!

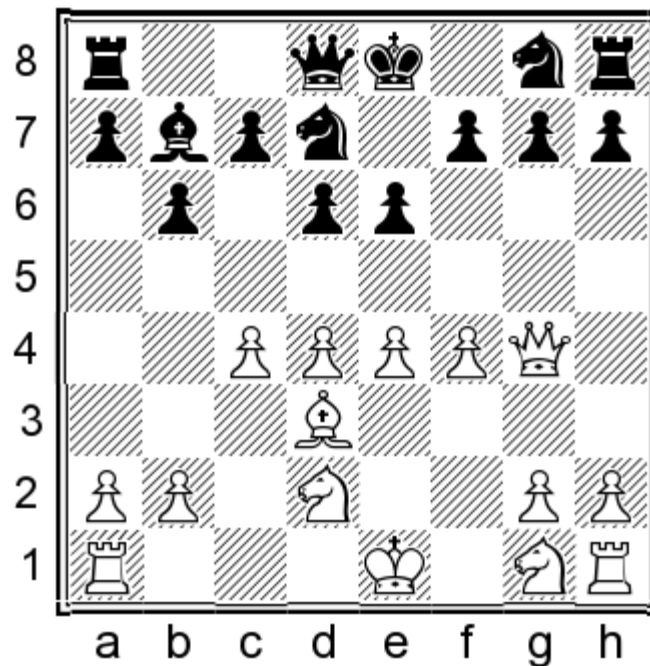
This looks like a very strong move to me! In chess the space advantage is very important, so why not take it if you can!

7...♞d7

Black continues to prepare the ...c5 or ...e5 pushes, which need to be played during the next moves.

8.♞g4?

I can't explain this move of Gelfand. There was absolutely no need for White to enter very unclear complications.



White is just better after a simple move such as 8.♘gf3 ♘e7 9.0-0 0-0 and now White has a lot of different options, but maybe a solid move like 10.♖c2 should clearly give White some advantage. ♗ae1 is coming next.

8...♘gf6!

Of course! Black only had this move and you don't need to ask Jobava twice if he wants to enter complications...

9.♗xg7

Maybe it was still better for White to just play 9.♗h3 but of course if you say A it is difficult to stop yourself from saying B...

9...♗g8 10.♗h6 ♗xg2

Now the position has changed quite a lot. White still dominates in the center, but the disadvantage of the central pawns is that they could quickly start hanging when the black pieces begin to target them. The position is already very unclear now.

11.♘gf3 ♖e7

Black is preparing to castle queenside and White also needs to pay attention to moves like d5 and e5, which could destroy the pawn center.

12.♗h3

A good move. The rook has to be chased away from the 2nd rank.

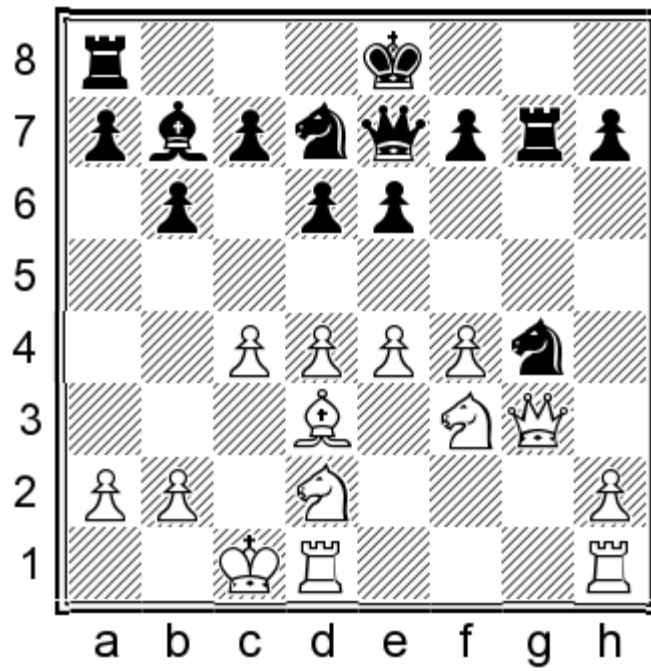
12...♗g7

This move is also very logical, leaving the g8-square for the a8-rook after 0-0-0.

13.0-0-0 ♘g4!

A very strong move! After 13...0-0-0 14.♗hg1 ♗dg8 Black looks fine, but White has this fantastic move: 15.♗g5! and the rook on g5 can never be taken because of fxg5, so White is better here.

14.♗g3?!



Once again White chooses the wrong path... A stronger reply was 14. ♖g2! ♘df6 Black also had other options, but this seems to be the most logical one to me. 15.h3 White probably needs to enter this forced line, as if Black is in time with ...♘h5, White's position might collapse. 15...♗e5 16. ♖xg7 ♘xd3+ 17. ♔c2 ♗f2 Black wins back the exchange and it is very hard to say who is better here.

14...♘df6! 15.♗g5?!

White again fails to choose the best option as after this move Black is gets all he could wish for. White had to take extreme measures already: 15. ♖dg1! looks like the right practical choice to me. 15...♘h5 the f4-pawn is falling. 16. ♗e1 ♘xf4 17. ♔c2! with the idea of playing h3 next and trying to use the fact that Black still has not castled. I think White's chances of creating a huge mess are very good here.

15...h6

sending the white knight to a terrible position on h3.

16.♘h3 0-0-0

So Black has achieved all he wanted: all his pieces are in the game, ...♖dg8 is coming soon to gain control over the g-file, White's central pawns became targets for the black pieces and the knight on h3 is in a terrible position. Black is already much better here and what is even worse is that it is very hard for White to find any decent idea of what to do next.

17.♗de1

White is trying to hold things together in the center, but he lets Black improve his position even more. 17. ♗f3 would have been a better choice in hindsight...

17...♘h5!

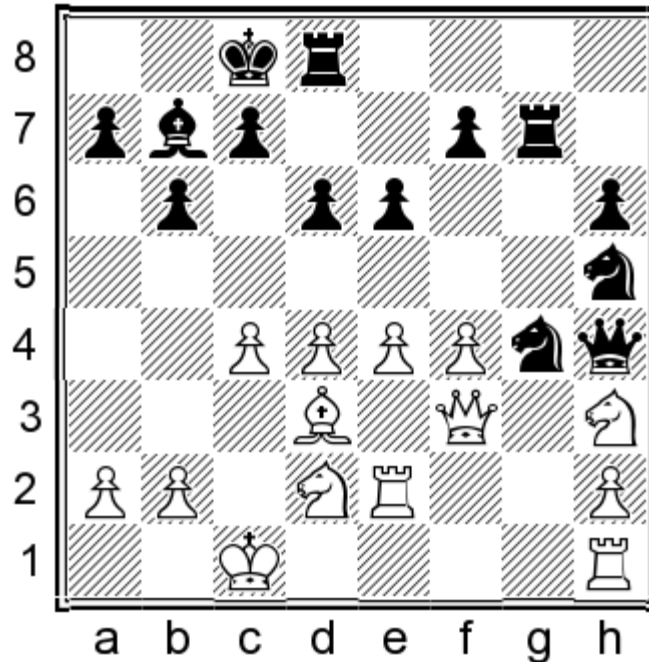
Black plays a perfect game! Jobava brings his queen to a very unpleasant position on h4.

18. ♖f3 ♜h4

White's position is very close to collapsing and still it is very hard to say what his next move might be?! Black wants to play ...f5, ...d5, or maybe just ...♞dg8. At some moment tactical ideas with ...♘xh2 could also be possible, or even ...e5.

19. ♞e2

defending against the direct ♘xh2 threat.



19... ♜b8

A good prophylactic move, but why not just play 19...f5! with the idea of playing ...♘hf6 next. I think Black is already much better.

20. ♞c2

This move does not really help White, but it is very hard to give better advice. Maybe a move like 20. ♖f1 was already White's best option, but it is hard to play such moves during a game as they just look too ugly.

20...f5! 21. ♖f1

freeing the f3-square for the knight.

21... ♘hf6

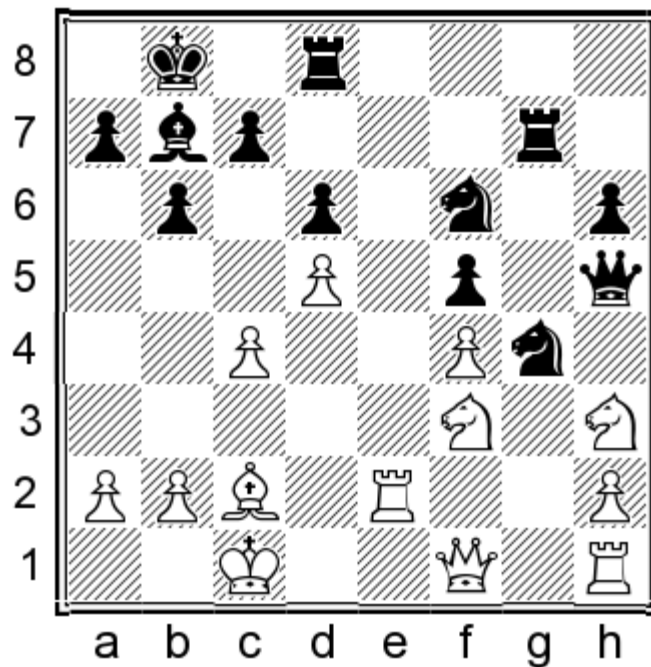
and one more piece attacks the e4-point.

22. ♘f3 ♜h5 23. exf5 exf5

White's position is becoming worse and worse. The strong white center is gone and all the minuses of his position are still there, especially the knight on h3 and the rook on h1, which are totally out of the game.

24.d5

at least closing off the bishop on b7.



24...♖e8!

Another very strong positional move. All Black needs to do to win the game now is to win control over the e-file and Jobava does just that. Black had another very non-human way of continuing with 24...♔a6 and the funny thing is that White can't do anything about Black's threat of playing ...♘xd5 next. 25.b3 ♘xd5 26.♘d4 ♘de3 27.♘c6+ ♔c8 and Black is winning.

25.♖xe8+ ♜xe8

White can't stop Black from playing ...♖e7 next.

26.♜d3 ♖e7 27.♖f1

After 27.♜xf5 ♖e2 Black has about 1000 different tactical threats and White's position, unsurprisingly, is also just lost.

27...♘e3 28.♖f2

28.♖e1 was also losing to 28...♘xc4! A nice tactical blow! 29.♖xe7 ♜xe7 30.♜xc4 ♜e3+ 31.♘d2 ♜xh3 leaving Black a pawn up with an easily winning position.

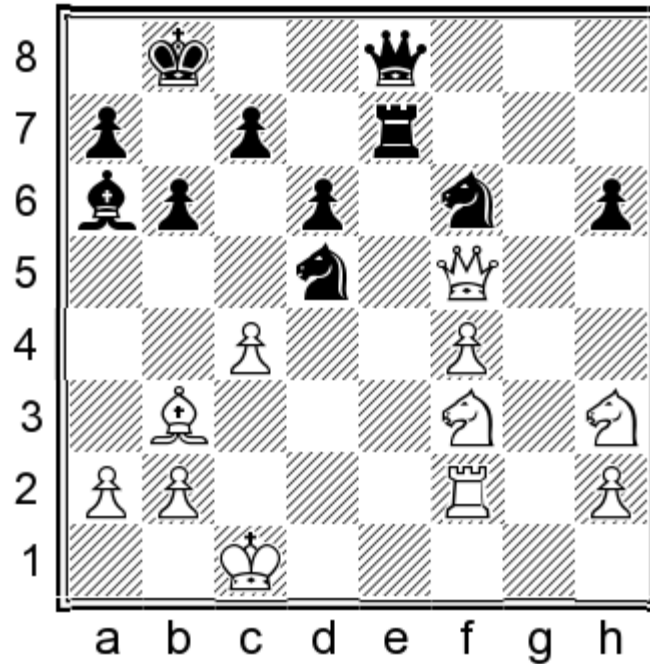
28...♔a6

The c4- and d5-pawns are now the targets.

29.♔b3 ♘exd5

and Black finally starts to take White's material...

30. ♖xf5



30... ♕xc4

after 31. ♕xc4 ♖e1 32. ♘xe1 ♔xe1 33. ♔c2 ♘e3 Black wins the white queen. A really great game by Jobava, who combined tactical motifs with very strong positional play against the white center — and a great example of how dangerous it can be sometimes when pieces are playing against central pawns!

0–1

GAME 45

S. Karjakin (2767)

R. Kasimdzhanov (2706)

Tashkent FIDE GP 2014

Tashkent UZB (11.5)

02.11.2014, [A22]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

This was an interesting pairing as Kasimdzhanov was Anand's for many years, then worked for the website chess24 and lately became the second of....Karjakin! To play somebody who basically knows all you know — at least in the openings — is not an easy task. A slightly strange fact about Karjakin is that the young Russian keeps on announcing that he wants to become World Champion, but a World Champion doesn't make 17 draws in a row.

Karjakin's style is ultra-solid, with very strong preparation, but he is clearly lacking ambition — which is pretty strange, as usually Karjakin wins when his opponents want to beat him too much, with a good example being the game Giri-Karjakin. Anyhow, in the current game White is going totally to destroy Black's position, first positionally and later on tactically with a little combination. A very nice game awaits!

1.c4

Karjakin also plays 1.e4.

1...♞f6 2.♜c3 e5

I think 2...e5 is clearly the most critical move with the move order 1.c4 2.♜c3.

3.g3 d5

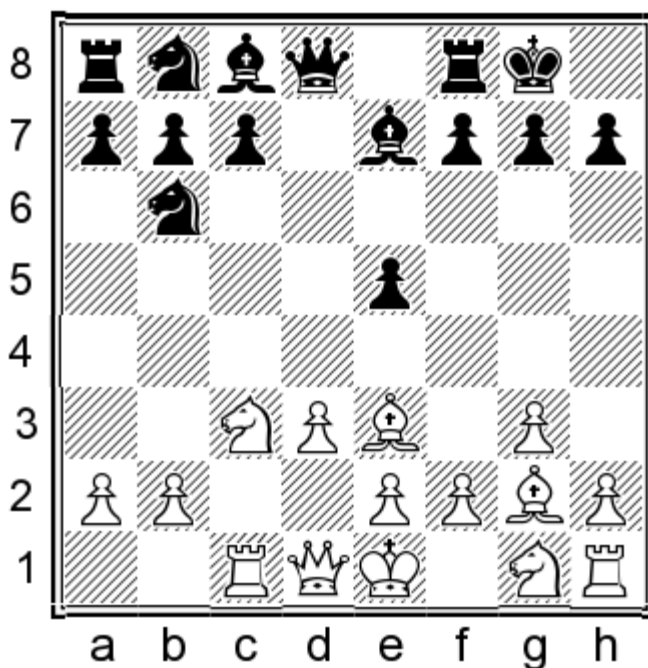
is the main move. Another popular approach for Black is 3...♙b4, or 3...♜c6 and ♙c5.

4.cxd5 ♜xd5 5.♙g2 ♜b6 6.d3 ♙e7 7.♙e3

White picks a tricky move-order. Not developing the knight from g1 too early has the idea of not allowing Black to play ...♜c6 because of ♙xc6.

7...0-0 8.♞c1

White makes another useful move, asking Black what he wants to play next.



8...♞e8

Black also makes an useful waiting move, hoping for White to play ♜f3 next and to get ...♜c6 in. 8...♜c6 9.♙xc6 bxc6 10.♜f3

9.a3 ♙f8

Now finally White runs out of “waiting-improvement” moves so he plays

10.♜f3 ♜d7?!

What a strange decision by Black. Why not 10...♜c6 with a very usual position? I think the knight’s position on d7 is just wrong.

11.0-0 c6

This is a normal way of blocking the g2-bishop, but now White's idea of playing b4-b5 can become a dangerous positional threat.

12. ♖b3!?

An interesting move. White is trying to lure the black knight to c5. A simpler move could be 12.b4 a5! It is very important for Black to activate the rook from a8. 13. ♖b3 axb4 14. axb4 ♘f6 15.b5 and I think White's position should be a bit better, but of course it would be much better to do all this without the opening of the a-file.

12... ♘c5

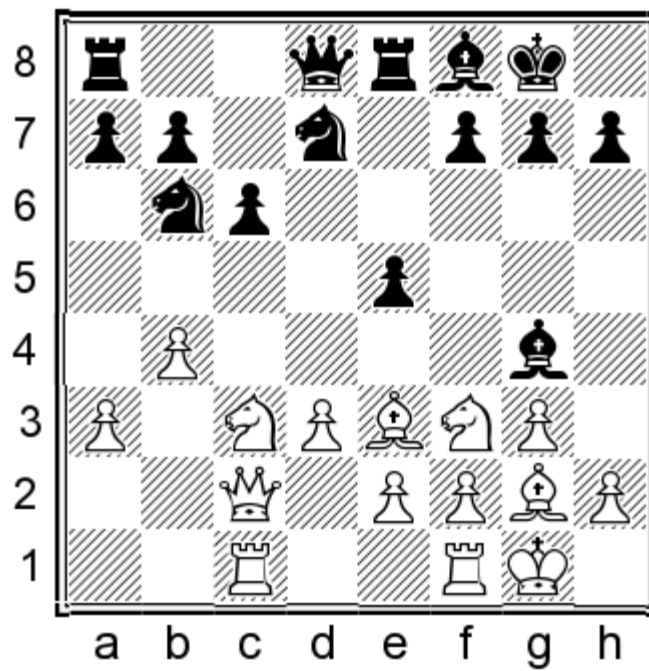
This is the most logical move, even though the knight will have to leave the c5-square soon because of b4. It is very hard to find a better move for Black. After 12... ♘f6 White has the very strong 13. ♘g5! and Black can't defend the f7-pawn in a "nice" way, and of course a move like 13... ♕e6? is just a positional mistake. 14. ♘xe6 and White is much better. 12...h6 with the idea of playing ... ♘f6 next. 13. ♖fd1 and White is already threatening to play d4 next. Black is just too slow.

13. ♕c2

This is a nice square for the queen.

13... ♕g4 14.b4 ♘cd7

Now White has a lot of different plans. The usual play connected with b5, or perhaps choose a plan connected with d4, or maybe transfer the knight to c5 could be very nice as well. Black's position is very passive so White has a lot of time.



15.h3!

I think that this is a very strong positional move by Karjakin! Before taking direct action, Karjakin asks Black where

he wants to keep his bishop?!

15...♗f5

The black bishop should be placed on e6, but now it is not possible because of ♖g5, so Kasimdzhanov finds a temporary spot on f5, which is of course not a great position.

16.♘d2

A logical move, but it gives Black chances to get back into the game. I think that 16.g4 looks much more logical since after 16...♗g6, now that the black bishop can't go to e6, White has 17.♙b3 followed by action on the queenside and I think his position should be much better.

16...h6?!

Black is not fighting back! In any case Black should have tried to get some play with 16...a5! and things are not so clear anymore!

17.♙b1!

Another very good positional move! Now moves like ...a5 probably don't work anymore, and at the same time White is getting ready for play on the queenside.

17...♞c8 18.♙fc1 ♘f6

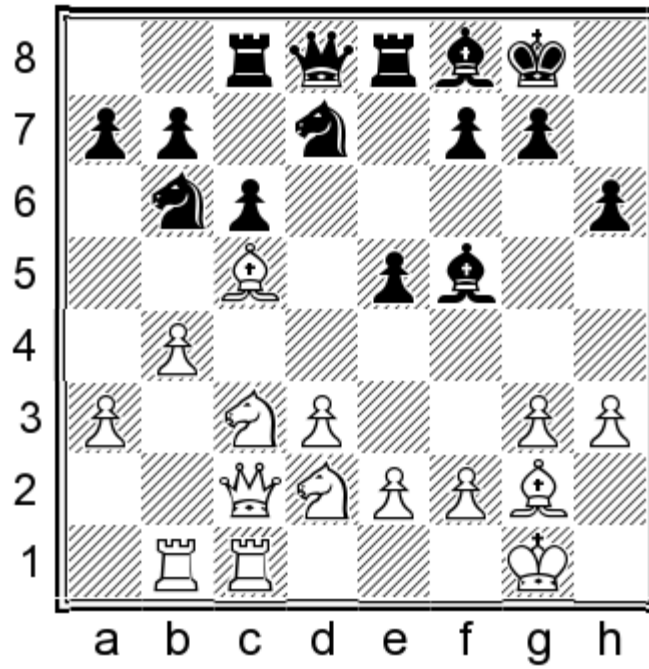
Black has little constructive to do, so Kasimdzhanov decides to at least put his knight on d5.

19.♗c5

At first sight it is difficult to say if it is good or bad to exchange the dark-squared bishops, but in fact it is good for White as later on he will have the c5-square for his knight.

19...♘fd7

Black keeps on playing passively, but is it quite difficult to find something better.



Not much better is 19...♔d7 20.g4 ♕e6 21.♙xf8 ♖xf8 22.♘de4 and the knight gets to c5, with a clear advantage for White.

20.♘ce4

The black pieces have less-and-less space in which to operate.

20...♔c7 21.a4

A good move! Karjakin does not go for any forcing continuation and keeps on improving his position. This is a very good strategy in the type of position where your opponent has no direct play.

21...a6

It may have been best to play 21...♘d5 but after 22.♔b2 it is still pretty hard to find a normal move.

22.♙xf8 ♖xf8 23.♘c5

White has everything he could possibly dream of. The knight on c5 is untouchable because of bxc5, the b7-pawn is a clear target and Black has no counterplay at all on the kingside.

23...♘f6 24.♔b2

The queen is better placed on b2 than on c2, and finally White wants to play b5 next.

24...♔e7?!

After this move Black's position is probably already just lost. Instead 24...♘bd7 and at least Black keeps on fighting in a bad position.

25.a5

Exactly! White uses the fact that the black knight has nowhere else to go other than take up a disastrous position on a8.

25...♖a8

There is nothing else left... 25...♘bd5 26.e4 would lose a piece, and 25...♘bd7 26.♘xb7 loses a pawn.

26.e4

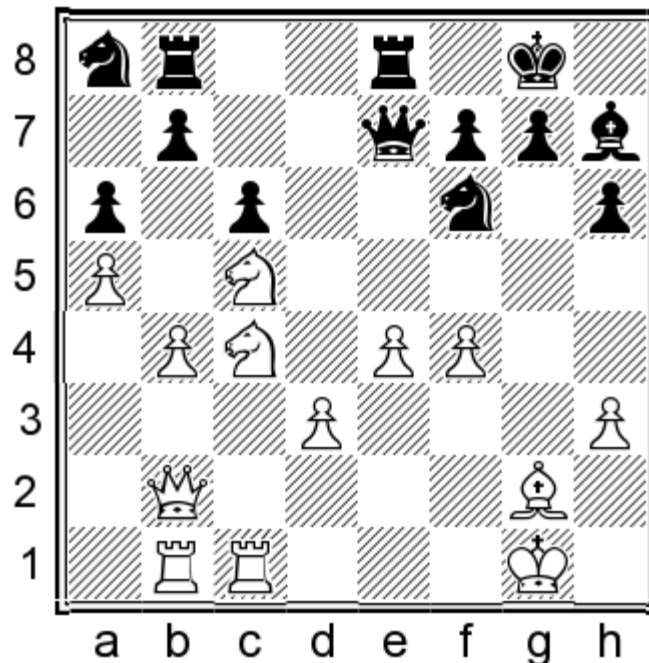
White starts a rush on Black's position. First he fixes the black bishop on the diagonal h7-b1.

26...♗h7 27.♘c4 ♖fe8 28.f4

Another good move. White is totally dominating in the center and it is still unclear what to do next for Black and how to get the knight from a8 back into the game without losing some material.

28...exf4 29.gxf4 ♖b8

Black attempts to get the knight from a8 to c7 without losing the b7-pawn.



30.♗e5!

A fantastic move by Karjakin. I guess many people would try to directly win some material or start an attack, but in fact the threat of a positionally lost endgame is much stronger! White is practically giving Black no chances at all.

30...♗f8

At least looking for some fighting chances... If 30...♘c7 31.♗xe7 ♖xe7 32.♘d6 then White's domination is just amazing! During the next few moves White doesn't even need to hurry about winning anything quickly, he can just keep on improving the position by playing ♖f2-♖e3.

31.♗d6 ♖e7

Black has nothing else left; this is the only way to avoid a horrible endgame.

32.f5

Killing the h7-bishop.

32...♖c7

Finally the knight is back in the game, but it is already too late...

33.♜f4 ♜fe8

What an ugly position for Black and Karjakin continues to enjoy playing slow moves...

34.♙h2

White prepares a final attack on the kingside.

34...♙h8 35.♙f3

Freeing the g-file.

35...♙g8 36.♜e5

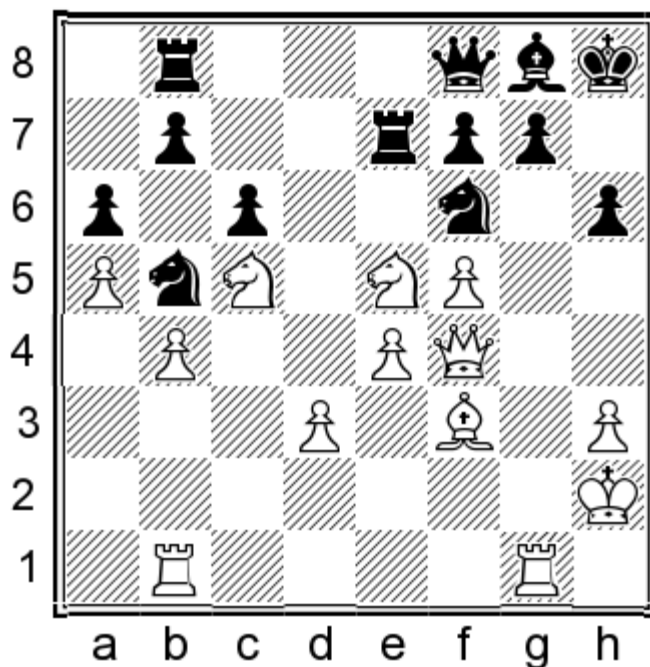
What an amazing domination by the white pieces!

36...♜f6 37.♞g1

White is totally winning.

37...♜b5

Giving White a chance to finish the game with a little tactical blow.



38.♜e6!

A very nice finish to a great positional game!

38...g5

A desperate move...

39.♖xf8

39.fxg6 was winning on the spot as well.

39...gxf4 40.♖fg6+

White is going to be an exchange up.

40...fxg6 41.♖xg6+

We have just witnessed a fantastic positional win by Karjakin, who played very cleverly throughout and effectively squeezed his opponent into despair...

1–0

GAME 46

A. Grischuk (2795)

E. Inarkiev (2688)

Petrosian Memorial 2014

Moscow RUS (1)

04.11.2014, [A13]

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

In the following game Grischuk convincingly outplays his opponent positionally. It is very instructive to see the way he uses the bishop pair.

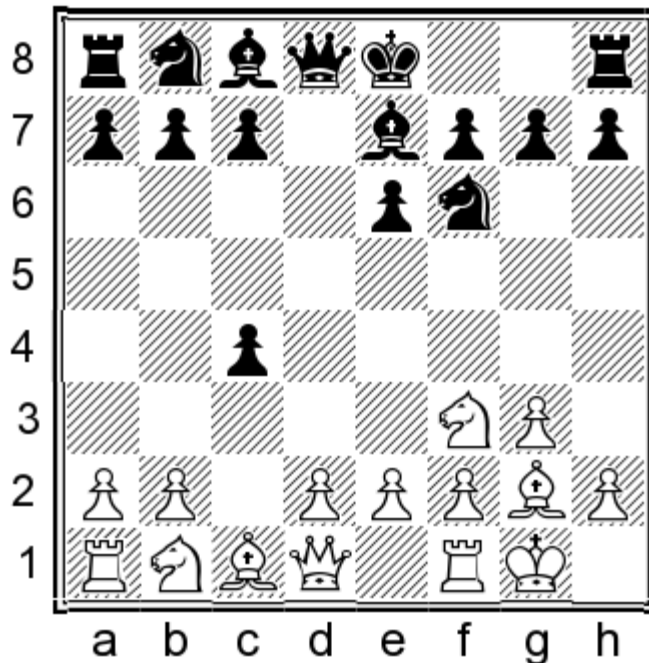
1. ♖f3

Grischuk wants to avoid theoretical discussions against his lower-rated opponent.

1... ♜f6 2. c4 e6 3. g3 d5 4. ♙g2 dxc4 5. 0-0!?

A rare move. White usually wins back the pawn immediately with 5. ♖a4.

5... ♙e7



This is already an inaccuracy which allows White to recapture the c4-pawn in better circumstances. Black should have tried to hold the extra pawn — at least for a while — with 5... a6 or 5... ♜bd7, with the idea ...b5 and ...♜b6.

6. ♖a3!

After Black wasted a tempo on playing ... ♙e7, he can hardly decide to take on a3 now, giving up the two bishops. The doubled a-pawns are not necessarily bad in such situations, as Black might miss his dark-squared bishop after a4 and ♙a3, or just ♙b2 and White also has a lot of potential on the opened b-file.

6... c5

Following on from his previous move. Black occupies the center.

7.♟xc4 ♞c6 8.b3 0-0 9.♞b2

White has completed his development and is ready to open the center with d4. It is very strange, because seemingly Black has done everything correctly, but he finds himself in some trouble. He should have his bishop on b7 to equalize, but ...b6 drops an exchange after ♞fe5! Otherwise, he is just not well-prepared for the d4-push and he ends up in a cramped position.

9...♞d7 10.d4! ♞c8

Inarkiev tries to put all his pieces on healthy squares, which in general is a good idea, but this time it does not help. Grischuk continues the game with very concrete and powerful moves.

11.dxc5!

11.♞c1 was also good, but Grischuk feels that the moment has already come to gain some direct benefits.

11...♞xc5 12.♞d6!

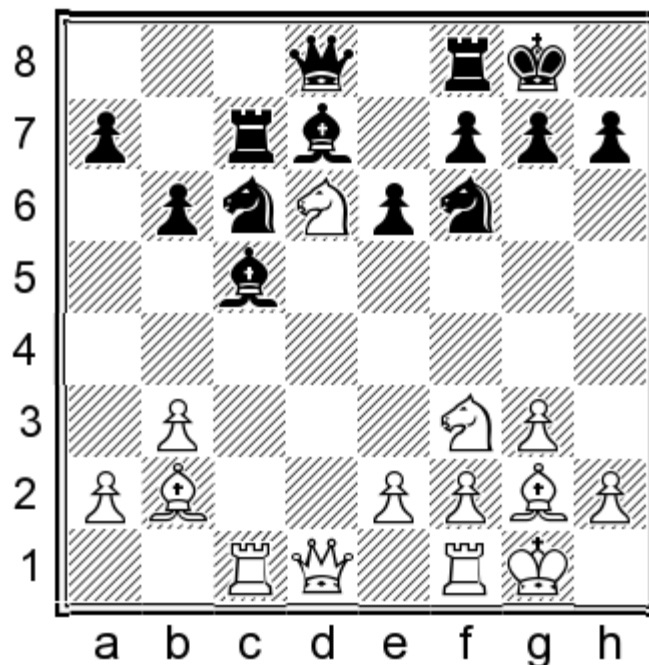
Installing a terribly strong knight on d6. Giving up the dark-squared bishop would be a positional disaster for Black, so Inarkiev tries to temporarily ignore the knight and later kick it out with ...♞e7 and ...♞d8.

12...♞c7 13.♞c1!

Bringing a piece in to the game with tempo is always welcome.

13...b6

The only move.



The natural 13...♞b6 already drops an exchange after 14.♞b5 ♞c8 15.♞a3 ♞e7 16.♞xc8+—

14. ♖g5!

White must play concretely, otherwise he gets pushed back by ...♞e7. There are many positional and tactical threats in the air. The main one is to attack the h7-pawn with the queen, when ♕xf6 is a decisive threat. Grischuk had to foresee this move before playing 11.dxc5, otherwise he would have chosen the calm 11.♞c1.

14... ♞e7

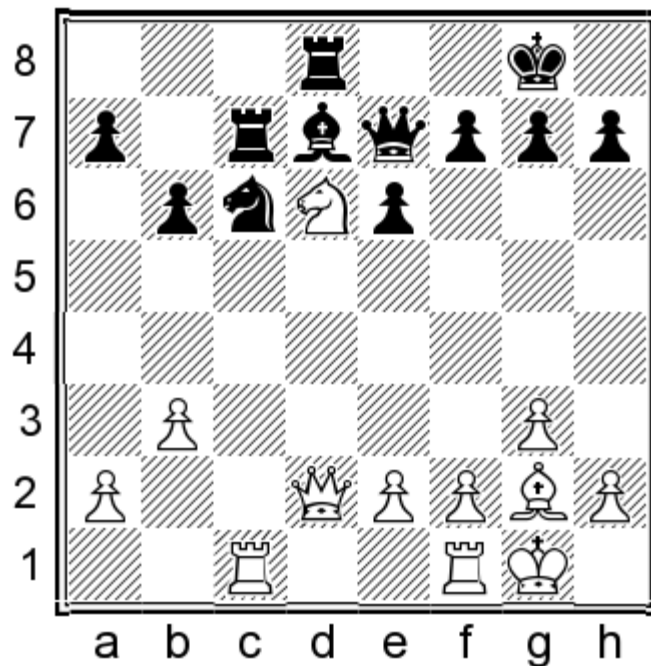
14... ♖d5 attacking both knights, but it does not solve his problems since after 15. ♖ge4± Black is forced to give up his dark-squared bishop.

15. ♖ge4!

Simple and strong. The queen has occupied the retreat square of the bishop to e7, therefore Black loses his important dark-squared bishop.

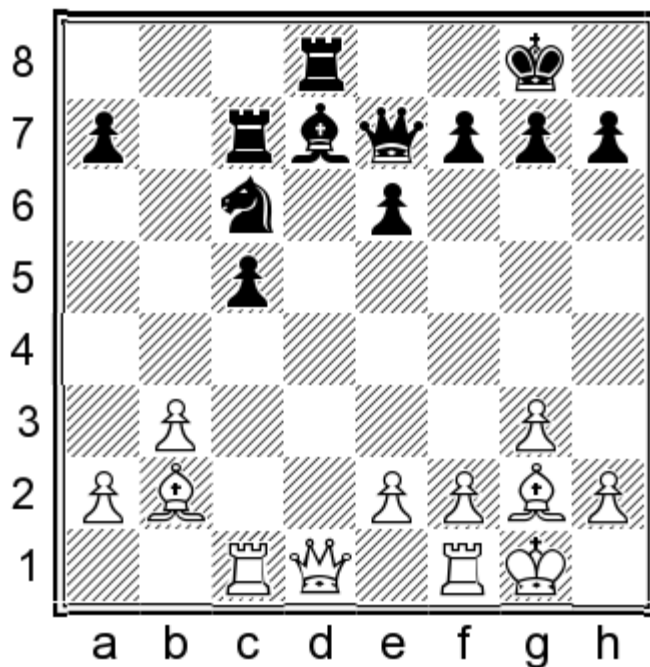
15... ♖xe4 16. ♖xe4 ♞d8

There is a beautiful line if Black tries to save his bishop, as 16... ♖b4 is strongly met by 17. ♖e5! ♞cc8 18. ♖d6! ♖xd6 19. ♖xd6 ♞xd6 which guarantees a big advantage and with superior pieces too. Both players were probably counting on that recapture, but the machine recommends this even stronger one with a neat tactical point: 19... ♞c7 20. ♞d2! with the idea being to play ♞fd1 and on 20... ♞d8



21. ♖xf7!! wins material! 21... ♞xf7 (21... ♖xf7 22. ♞f4+ checks the rook.) 22. ♞xc6+— Quite a unique motif!

17. ♖xc5 bxc5



It is hard to dream of more than this — White has gained the two bishops and there is a clear target on c5! But of course, converting the advantage requires good technique.

18. ♔e1!

I was always a big fan of this kind of move! White improves his queen by taking it to c3.

18... ♖cc8 19. ♔c3 ♘d4 20. ♖fe1

The knight is going to be pushed back with e3, but first the check on e2 had to be covered.

20... f6

Black is forced to weaken his pawn structure even more to avoid getting mated on g7.

21. e3 ♘b5 22. ♔a5!

We can see the strength of the ♔e1 maneuver now. The queen has finally reached its ideal square on a5 — after making a stop on c3 to force a weakening. Now it keeps an eye on both isolated pawns on the queenside.

22... ♙e8 23. ♖ed1!?

Grischuk is not in a hurry. He believes that Black's position is going to fall apart by itself as he has no useful moves. White could have won material by playing 23. a4! ♘d6 24. ♙a3!+— (But not 24. ♖xc5? ♘b7)

23... ♔c7

It is difficult to suggest anything for Black here. Inarkiev decides to trade the well-placed queen on a5, but it does not solve the problems...

24. ♔xc7 ♖xd1+ 25. ♖xd1 ♘xc7 26. ♖c1

White is ready to strengthen the pressure on c5 with ♙a3, while the other strong bishop prevents the defensive

possibility of ...♖a6 because of ♕b7.

26...♖d8

Searching for counterplay along the d-file. 26...♜d5 is met by 27.♕a3! 26...♜b5 is refuted by 27.a4! ♜d6 28.♕a3 and grabbing the weakness next move.

27.♕c3

Grischuk sticks to his policy of avoiding any counterplay and squeezing his opponent slowly. There was actually nothing wrong with 27.♖xc5 and the point is that Black cannot simplify to an opposite-colored bishop endgame with 27...♖d1+ 28.♕f1 ♕b5 because of 29.♖c1! with a technical win.

27...♜d5

Black continues looking for active counterplay. Perhaps it was more tenacious to defend passively with 27...♜a6 28.♕a5 ♖b8 otherwise White plays ♕f1. Now Black could reply with ...♕b5, therefore White simply strengthens his position with 29.e4 followed by f3 and ♜f2. White could transfer his bishop to d2-e3 and the other bishop will attack the knight with ♕f1 at some point. Black cannot hold.

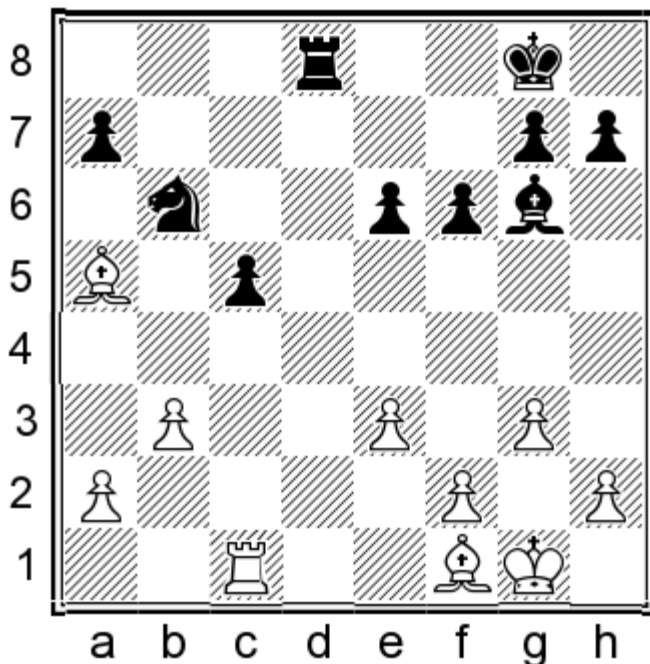
28.♕a5 ♜b6

28...♖c8 29.♕f1 is similar to the game.

29.♕f1

29.♕h3 would have won the pawn on the spot. White can take on c5 next as he does not need to pin himself after the check on d1, but can play ♜g2.

29...♕g6



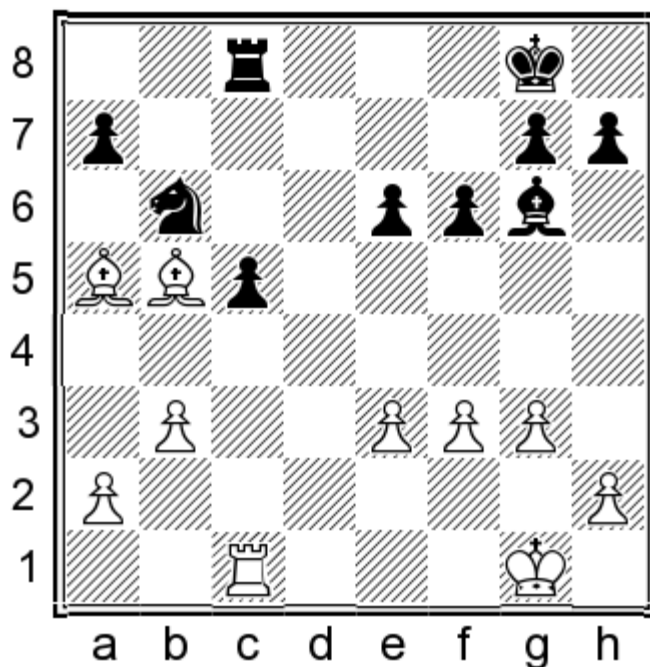
30.f3!

White opens the back rank, intending to bring his king towards the center and wants to limit the movement of the black pieces with e4, closing the bishop and taking away the d5-square from the knight!

30...♖c8 31.♙a6 ♜c6

31...♜c7 is met by 32.e4±

32.♘b5 ♜c8



33.b4

Grischuk finally decides to gain material!

33...c4

33...cxb4 leads to a lost endgame after 34.♖xc8+ ♜xc8 35.♙d7 ♜b6 36.♙xe6+ ♙f7 37.♙xf7+ ♜xf7 38.♙xb4+— This should be an easy technical win for White. Not only does he have an extra pawn, but there are also pawns on both sides, when the bishop is considered to be stronger than the knight as it can be more easily switched to the other side.

34.♙xb6 axb6 35.♖xc4

White has converted his two bishops advantage into an extra pawn.

35...♖d8

35...♖a8 is met by 36.♙d7! (It is better to not give the chance to enter to a rook endgame after 36.a4 ♙d3 37.♖c6 ♙xb5 38.axb5 ♜f7 39.♖xb6 ♖a4 when Black might hope for survival.)

36.♖d4

White is ready to transfer into a bishop endgame, which would be easily won with the passed a-pawn.

36...♖c8 37.a4 ♜c3

The rook endgame is also hopeless after 37...♙e8 because White wins another pawn: 38.♙xe8 ♜xe8 39.♞d6!+–

38.♞d6

38.a5 was also winning 38...bxa5 39.bxa5 ♜xe3 40.a6 ♜a3 41.♞a4 and the pawn promotes.

38...♜xe3

All moves are winning now but Grischuk does not give his opponent any chances...

39.♙f2 ♜b3 40.♜xb6 ♜b2+

40...♜xb4 drops the rook after 41.♞b8+ ♙f7 42.♙e8++–

41.♙e3

Time-trouble is over and so is the game. There is no way to stop the queenside passers.

41...♜b3+ 42.♙d4 e5+

42...♜xb4+ is met by 43.♙c5 ♜b1 44.a5+– and the a-pawn automatically promotes with the support of the 3 white pieces.

43.♙c5 ♜xf3 44.♙c4+ ♙f8 45.♙d6 ♙e8 46.♜b8

Black resigned as ♙b5 is coming next! A very nice positional crush in ‘Karpov style’.

1–0

GAME 47

V. Anand (2797)

H. Nakamura (2776)

4th Zurich CC Classical

Zurich SUI (4.2)

17.02.2015, [D37]

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

Anand has a very bad personal score against Nakamura, but in the following game he beats him in a real positional masterpiece.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙e7 4.♘f3 ♘f6

Nakamura plays the Queen’s Gambit, one of the most solid openings nowadays against 1.d4. He wants to neutralize Anand’s amazing preparation, which he did for his WC match against Carlsen.

5.♙f4 0-0 6.e3 ♘bd7 7.c5 ♘h5

The modern way of dealing with this opening. Black gets rid of the strong f4-bishop in compensation for the space disadvantage on the queenside and the center. Anand won a game against Carlsen in their match last year more-or-less

out of the opening, where Black chose the other main line: 7...c6 8.♔d3 b6 9.b4 a5 10.a3 ♕a6 11.♔xa6 ♖xa6 12.b5 cxb5 13.c6 ♖c8 14.c7 b4 15.♘b5: Anand-Carlsen, Sochi 2014. I have commented on this game in detail in a previous issue of our newsletter-a game which is also included here.

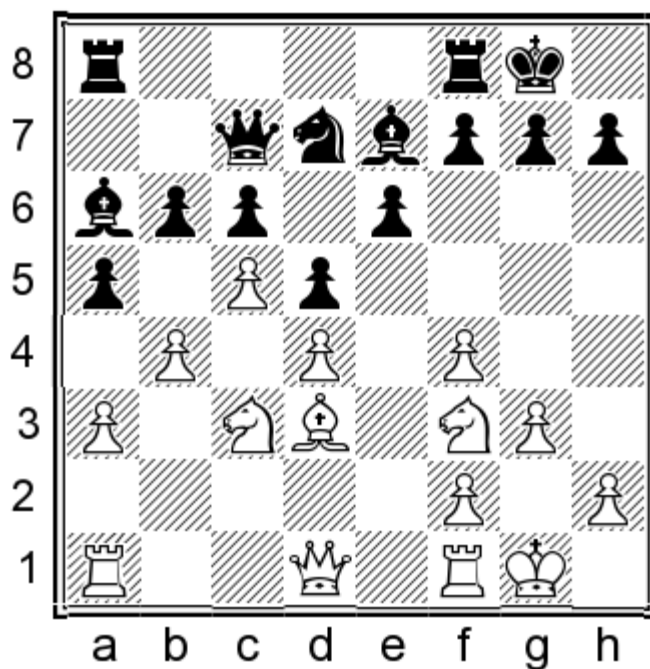
8.♔d3 ♘xf4 9.exf4 b6 10.b4

White must hold his c5-pawn and the space advantage at any cost, otherwise if he was forced to take on b6, then with ...axb6 followed by ...c5 Black would take over the initiative.

10...a5 11.a3 c6

Black would like to trade his poor bishop on c8, but ...♔a6 was not possible immediately because of b5 and c6 catching all the pieces on the queenside. There is no time to prevent this positional idea with ♖e2, because the a1-rook needs protection.

12.0-0 ♖c7 13.g3 ♔a6



We are still following hundreds of games. White has a temporary advantage thanks to his space advantage, but Black stands without any weaknesses and around 90% of the games ended in a draw. However, as we will see in this game, some small positional inaccuracies might let this invisible edge grow into a more significant one.

14.♖e1

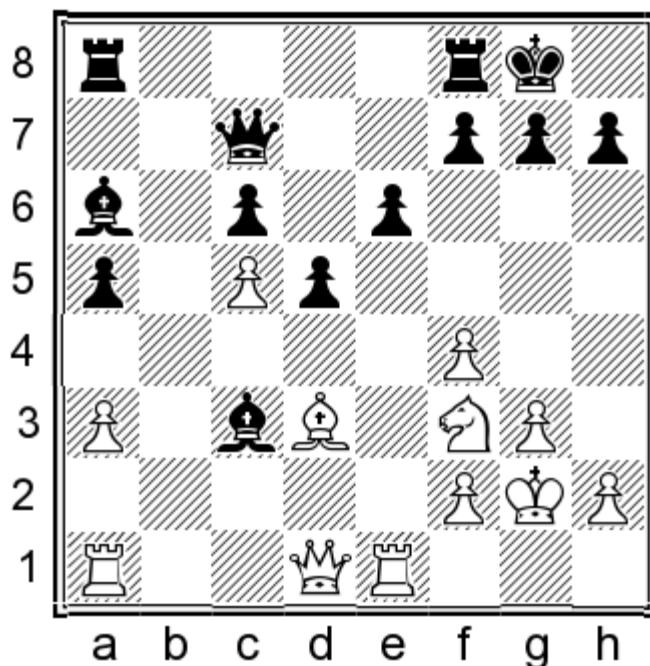
Threatening to play f5, but of course it is easy to parry this idea by leaving from the pin.

14...♔f6 15.♔g2

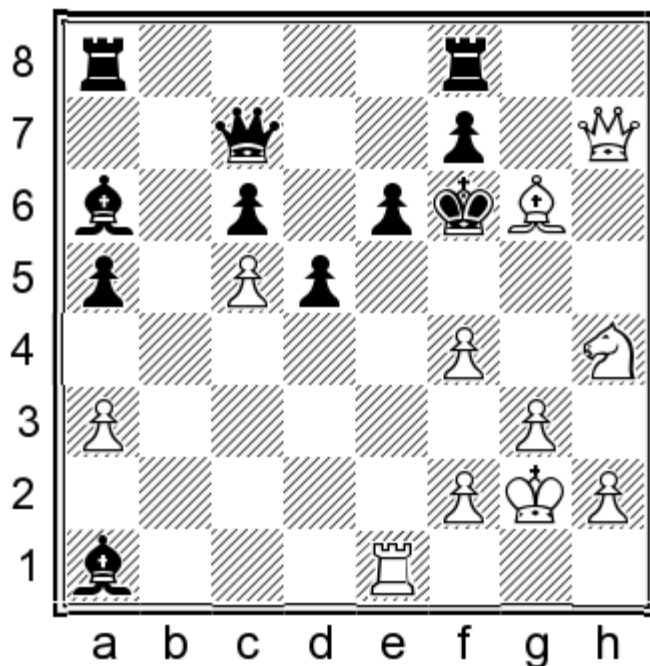
This is the novelty, although it does not change the character of the game; the plans employed in the other games remain valid here as well.

15...♔xd3

Nakamura rightly declines the challenge to complicate the game... At first sight, Anand blundered to the tactical idea of 15...bxc5 16.bxc5 ♖xc5 but of course it was all prepared at home... 17.dxc5 ♙xc3



18.♙xh7+! White wins back the pawn, but if Black rejects taking the piece both rooks are going to be loose. 18...♖h8 (18...♖xh7 19.♙c2+ ♖g8 20.♙xc3 This is a kind of ‘positional dream’, where the knight is going to dominate the bishop when it establishes itself on d4 or on e5. The bishop on a6 seems to be nice, but actually it does nothing and White can simply maneuver with his pieces by ignoring the light squares.) 19.♖h4! Opening the queen’s path to h5. 19...♙xa1 (19...♖xh7 20.♙c2+ ♖g8 21.♙xc3 leads to the same as before. White will bring his knight back to the center in two moves. 19...g6 20.♙xg6! fxg6 21.♖xg6+ ♖g7 22.♖xf8 ♖xf8 23.♙xe6 is complicated, but the numerous pawns and the exposed king gives more than enough compensation for White.) 20.♙h5 g6 21.♙xg6+ ♖g7 22.♙h7+ ♖f6



White has a beautiful winning move here: 23.♙f5!! creating the threat of ♙xe6 and the queen hangs on c7. 23...♙ac8

protects the queen. (23... ♖h8 loses to 24. ♖xe6+! fxe6 25. ♕xc7 exf5 26. ♕xc6++- and everything falls.) 24. ♕h6+ ♔e7 25. ♘g6+! fxg6 26. ♖xe6+ ♔d7 (26... ♔d8 27. ♕xf8++-) 27. ♖f6+ gxf5 28. ♕g7++- with mate to follow...

16. ♕xd3 ♖fb8

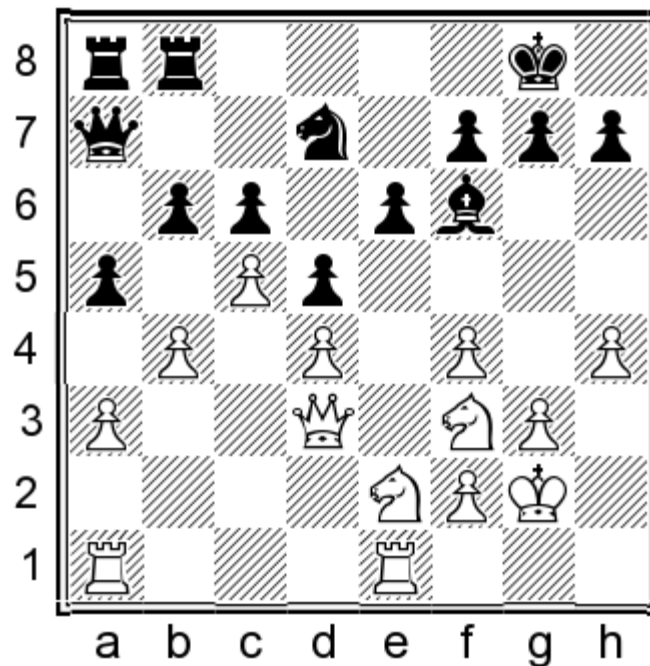
Black prepares for the opening of the queenside and brings his rooks to the open files. 16... ♖a7 serves the same purpose. Black keeps the tension on the queenside and doubles his rooks first, before taking on b4 to win the fight for the a-file.

17. h4 ♕a7

Another way of fighting for the a-file. Black would like to get two rooks for his queen, which is usually considered to be advantageous. 17...h6 was better to avoid the tactical break which could have happened in the game. The reason why ...h6 is preferable to ...g6 will be explained after the 18th move.

18. ♘e2

Anand was familiar with all the ideas, as he has clearly deeply studied this type of position. The game perfectly shows the depth of this move...



However both players seem to have missed a nice tactical blow with 18.f5! The point is that after 18...exf5 19.b5! White actually weakened the d5-pawn with his last two moves! (19. ♕xf5? blunders to the small tactic of 19...bxc5 20.bxc5 ♘xc5!) 19... ♕b7 20.bxc6 ♕xc6 21. ♕xf5 and d5 falls, which leads to the collapse of Black's position. 21...bxc5 22. ♘xd5 cxd4 23. ♖ac1 ♕d6 24. ♖c7±

18...g6

This move was criticized by Anand in the post-game analysis. As he explained, this move leaves the d7-knight without a future. It can never come back into the game because the white pawns are controlling all its squares. The only path to improve it was through f8-g6-e7-f5, but this does not work anymore. This shows again how familiar the ex-World Champion was with all the nuances. Therefore Black should have played 18...h6 to keep the g6-square free for the knight. On the direct 18...axb4 19.axb4 ♕xa1 20. ♖xa1 ♖xa1 21.b5! is very strong and White creates a c6-passed pawn,

which will cause Black serious headaches to deal with.

19.♖ab1

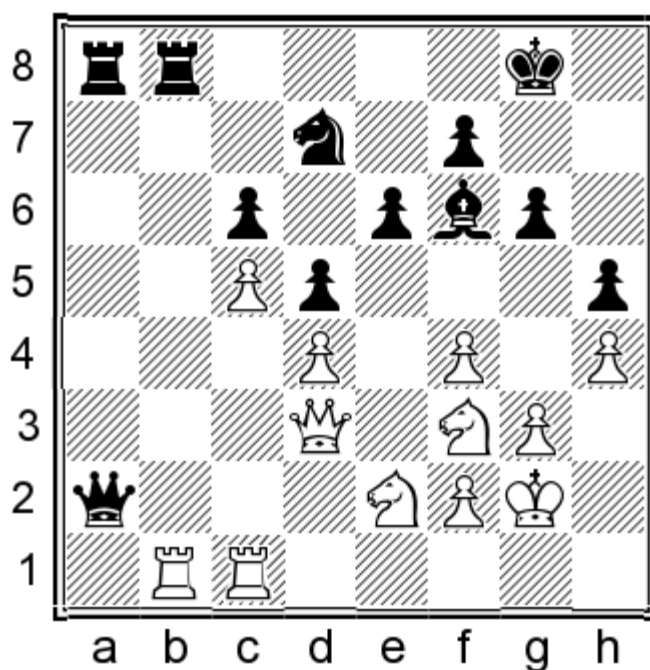
A standard move in this line! White cannot hold the a-file for long, so he allows the queen to invade, but this does not bring much for Black.

19...axb4 20.axb4 ♕a2 21.♞ec1!

These are the usual moves in this line to neutralize the invasion of the black rooks. White is threatening to break through b5 to create a c6-passer now.

21...bxc5 22.bxc5 h5?!

It looks natural to fix the structure, but it turns out to be a serious mistake.



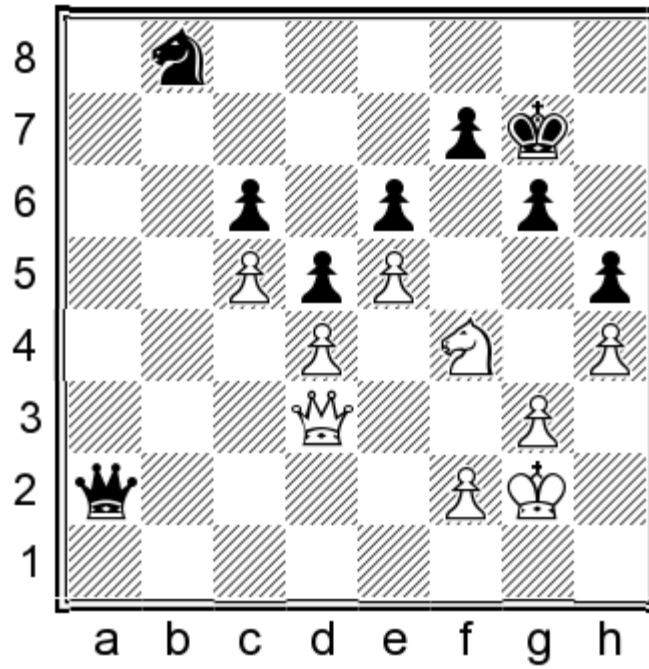
Black should have aimed for simplifications with 22...♞xb1 23.♞xb1 ♞b8 when White has a symbolic advantage, but I doubt that it should be enough to win the game. Now the knight might join the game via a6. There is only one weakness on c6, but it should not be enough to create realistic winning chances.

23.♘e5!

The right moment to change the pawn structure! White takes back with the f4-pawn, which will be followed by ♘f4 and — thanks to the previous h5 move — there will be very dangerous threats on g6!

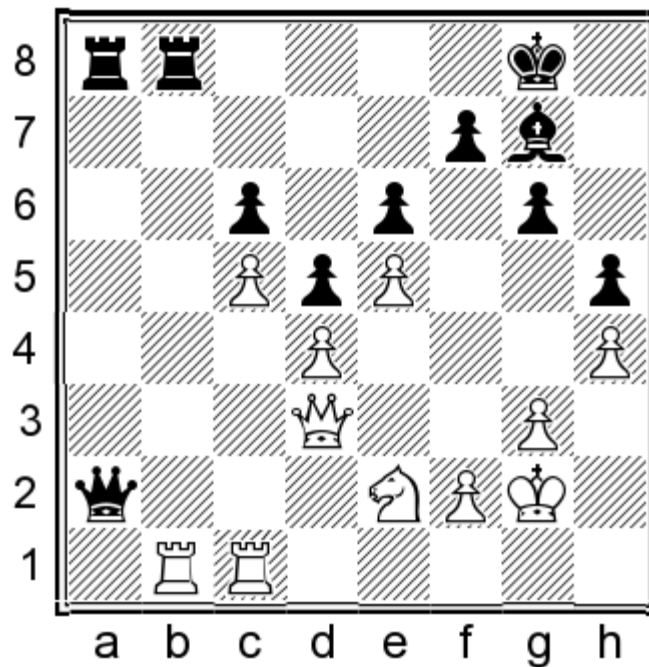
23...♙xe5

Black did not want to end up with a poor knight, but the bishop is not better either. Nakamura thought that it would at least save him from the attack with ♘f4. The key line continued with 23...♙xe5 24.fxe5 ♞xb1 25.♞xb1 ♞b8 26.♞xb8+ ♘xb8 but it is not the same as before, because of 27.♘f4! threatening to take on g6 or e6 and if Black tries to strengthen his structure with 27...♖g7



28.g4!! is suddenly a crusher! 28...hxg4 29.h5 g5 (29...gxh5 30.♖xh5+ ♔f8 31.♕h7 Black cannot save himself against the two attacking pieces... 31...♕d7 32.♕h8+ ♔e7 33.♕g7 mate is threatened on e8 and after 33...♕f8 34.♕h4+! ♔d7 35.♕f6+- the f7 pawn falls.) 30.♕xe6+! fxe6 31.♕g6+- and h6 wins. This line was seen by both players and it explains why Nakamura took on e5 with the knight.

24.fxe5 ♕g7



Black managed to save himself from the ♕f4 ideas, but now his queenside becomes much more vulnerable!

25.♖b6!

White immediately uses the fact that the knight disappeared from d7! White wins the fight for the b-file with this excellent positional move, because the c6-pawn is under attack and taking on b6 creates a too-strong passed pawn

which will be supported by the heavy pieces from behind...

25...♖c8

25...♖xb6 26.cxb6 The c6-pawn is hanging. 26...♔a4 27.b7 ♖b8 28.♖b1±

26.♘c3

Anand consequently drives all his pieces to the queenside and focuses on the c6-weakness.

26...♔a7 27.♖cb1 ♔d7

Black falls into passivity with all his pieces, but it was very difficult to suggest anything better. 27...♖ab8 is strongly met by 28.♖a6! ♔c7 29.♖bb6! followed by ♘a2-b4, putting maximum pressure on the c6-pawn.

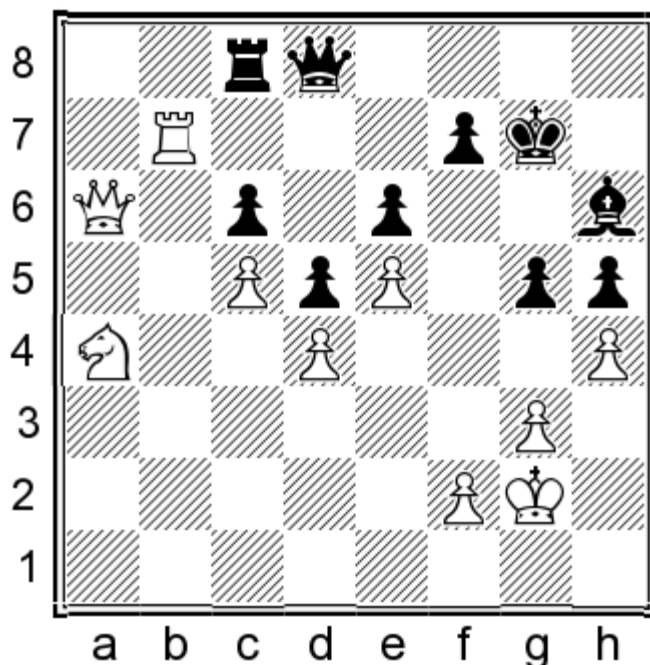
28.♖1b4

In a few moves it all becomes clear! The knight is going to a4-b6.

28...♙h6 29.♘a4! ♔d8 30.♖a6!

Vacating the b6-square for the knight and opening the path for the other rook to invade the 7th rank. In the meantime, White keeps an eye on the c6-pawn to tie down the black pieces.

30...♙g7 31.♖b7 ♖xa6 32.♔xa6 g5



The only chance! Black cannot hold the queenside for long, he must try to find counterplay with some desperate attempts. However Anand neutralizes it in a beautiful fashion...

33.♔e2!

An excellent positional move, which forces the locking of the kingside.

33...g4 34.♖a6

There is no threat on h4, so the queen returns to its ideal square on a6.

34...♖g8

Nakamura continues resisting resourcefully. He pins his hopes on the ...♖h7-e4 counterplay, but Anand remains precise...

35.♜b6 ♜f8 36.♜d7 ♖h7

36...♞a8 loses as well after 37.♞a7! which does not allow any counterplay along the a-file. The queen and knight will collect the c6-pawn anyway. The only hope remains in a counterattack, but it fails by one tempo... 37...♞xa7 38.♖xa7 ♖h7 39.♜f6! controls the e4-square. 39...♖d3 40.♖a8! There is no perpetual and Black gets mated. 40...♖f3+ 41.♔g1 ♖d1+ 42.♔h2 ♔g6 43.♖g8+ ♔g7 44.♖h7#

37.♜xf8 ♖e4+ 38.♔h2 ♔xf8 39.♞b8+ ♔g7 40.♖c8 ♔g6 41.♖h8!

41.♖g8 ♔g7 was not clear, but now the rook comes to g8 and decides the game. Another great ‘Karpovian’ game!

1–0

GAME 48

H. Nakamura (2799)

M. Vachier-Lagrave (2754)

KM FIDE GP 2015

Khanty-Mansiysk RUS (7)

21.05.2015, [A45]

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

Vachier-Lagrave was in terrible shape in the last stage of the Grand Prix series, but it still takes nothing away from the following very convincing win by Nakamura.

1.d4 ♟f6 2.♙f4

A rare attempt by White to avoid the Gruenfeld Defense. To be honest, I am not exactly sure how White wanted to react if Vachier continued playing in Gruenfeld-style by fianchettoing his bishop to g7. Nakamura will hopefully show us in the near future in another game...

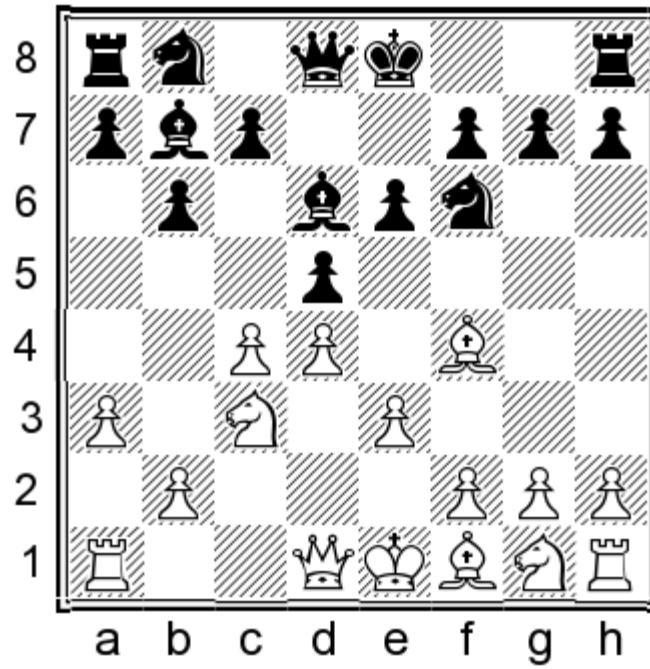
2...b6 3.c4 ♙b7 4.♟c3 e6

We have reached a Queen’s Indian-type structure. A small psychological victory for Nakamura, in that he managed to avoid the Gruenfeld.

5.a3

A very useful move. White prevents the most natural developing move ...♙b4, which would transpose to a kind of Nimzo-Indian Defense.

5...d5 6.e3 ♙d6

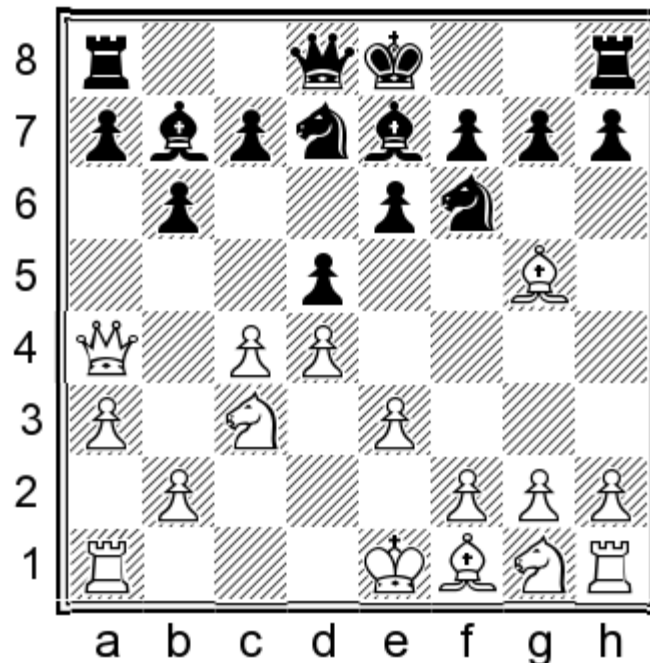


7. ♕g5!

White pins the knight, but the main idea is to keep the healthy pawn structure. 7. ♕xd6 is a positional mistake, because after 7...cxd6, followed by the exchange of the d5 for the c4-pawn, we reach a more-or-less symmetrical position with completely even chances. 7. ♕g3 was the alternative, with the idea being to improve the pawn structure with hxg3 in case of the exchange, but the text move looks much more threatening.

7...h6

If Black tries to unpin himself with 7... ♕e7 then 8. ♖a4+! ♖bd7



White has a typical way to achieve a solid structural advantage with 9. ♕xf6! It is important to take on f6 before cxd5 to

avoid the knight's recapture... 9...♙xf6 10.cxd5 exd5 11.♙a6! This is the key! Without the light squared bishops, the d5-pawn and queenside becomes vulnerable!

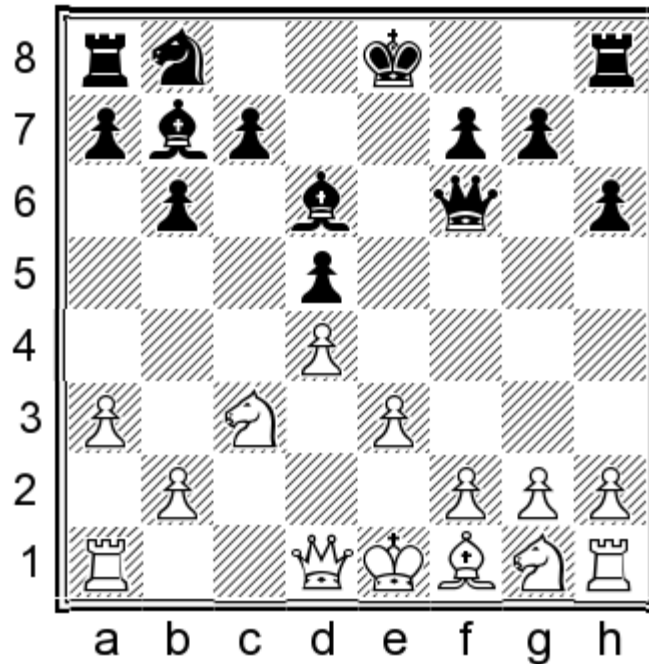
8.♙xf6

White gives up the bishop pair, but he gets big positional benefits in exchange.

8...♚xf6 9.cxd5

A very important follow-up to the previous move! White fixes the structure to limit the movement of the black bishops! Otherwise Black would have taken on c4, and later pushed ...c5, opening the position.

9...exd5



10.♚a4+!

A very unpleasant check to deal with! Black has 4 moves, but all of them have big drawbacks.

10...♙f8

A sad response, but it is difficult to suggest something clever...Black does not want to commit any positional mistake on the queenside and he intends to castle kingside artificially with g6-♙g7. 10...♘d7 allows the trade of the light-squared bishops: 11.♙b5 11.♙a6 is also good, but this is an even better version. 11...♚e6 12.♙c6;

10...♙c6 11.♙b5;

10...c6 This should be the right move positionally: Black strengthens his center and saves his light squared bishop, however it does not work tactically because 11.♘xd5! wins a pawn!

11.g3!

Another great positional move! Nakamura fianchettoes his bishop and provokes the c6-move, which closes off the b7-bishop and allows White to open the game effectively with e4 afterwards... White's plans are clear, but Black cannot

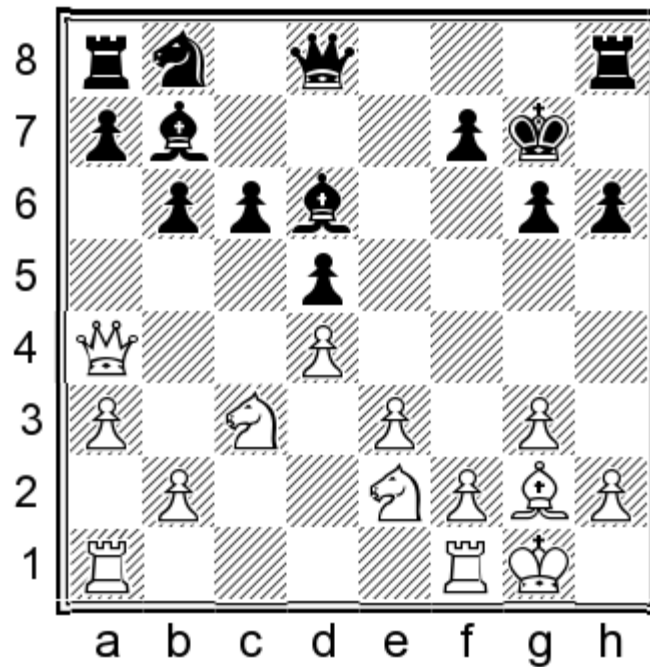
really fight against them.

11...c6 12.♗g2 g6 13.♘ge2

White finishes his development before executing the break with e4.

13...♙g7 14.0-0 ♖d8

Vachier-Lagrave leaves from the e4 dxe4 ♘xe4 tempo, but of course it is coming anyway.



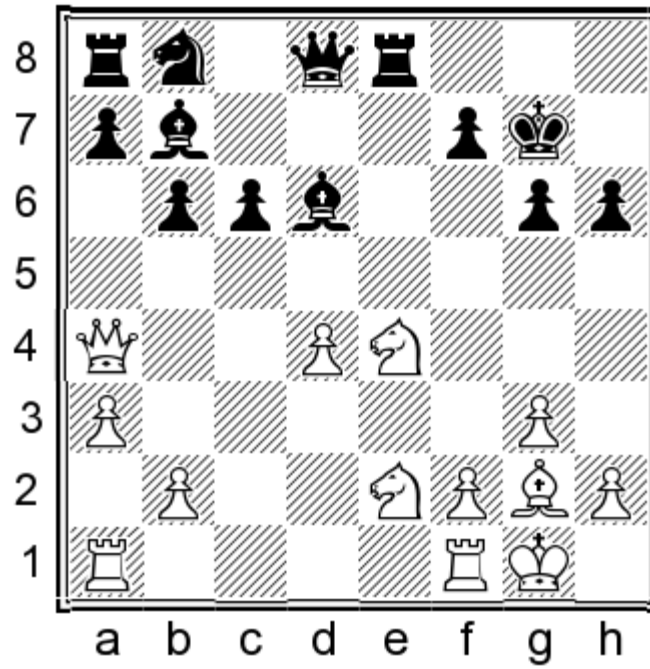
15.e4!

This is another standard break in various different openings with the same structure. White explodes the center and opens his own bishop, which makes the c6-pawn more vulnerable. Before this move both light-squared bishops were locked, but now only the one on b7 remains out of the game.

15...dxe4 16.♘xe4

I have seen this structure in many games, but with the white bishop on a2 and the e2 knight on f3. That one is also very dangerous for Black, because White launches a strong attack with ♘e5!

16...♞e8



17.♞ad1!

The start of the next part of the plan! The black queenside is completely undeveloped, while on the other side of the board all the white pieces are ready for the action. In such cases, a further opening of the position with an eventual d5 could be decisive. As we will see, Nakamura had another tricky move in mind.

17...♞a6

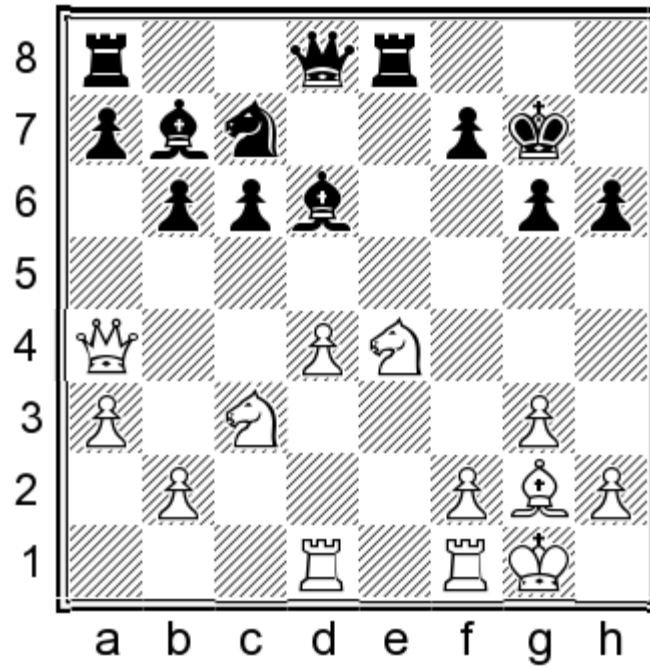
Black tries to establish a blockade on the d5-square with the ♞c7-d5 maneuver.

18.♞2c3!

Supporting the d5-break!

18...♞c7

18...♞f8 escapes the trap which happened in the game, but it has different problems: 19.d5! cxd5 20.♞xd5! ♞xd5 21.♞c3!± White wins back the material in excellent circumstances.



19. ♖c5!!

The hidden point of the 17. ♖ad1 move! The pin on the d-file creates serious problems for Black. Black has no choice — he must accept the sacrifice — but White regains the material right away.

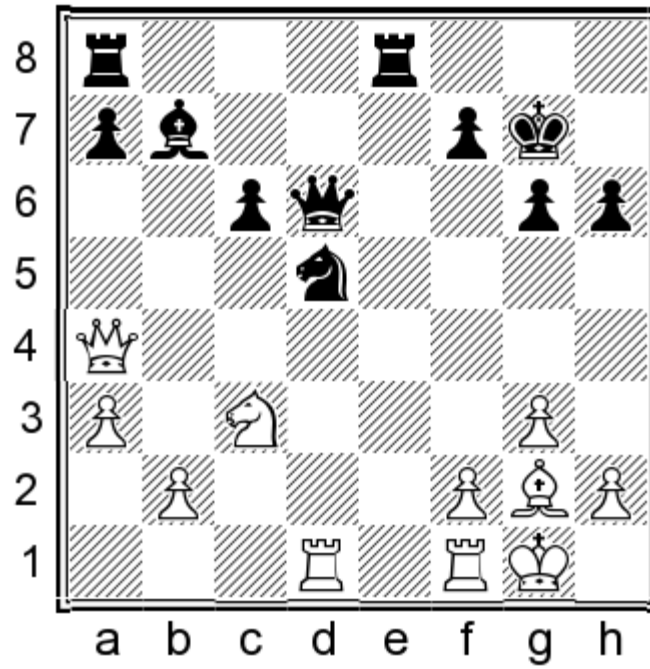
19... bxc5

19... ♗xc5 is even worse in view of 20. dxc5 ♔e7 21. cxb6 axb6 22. ♕d4++ winning the b6-pawn.

20. dxc5 ♘d5

The only move to at least keep the material balance!

21. cxd6 ♕xd6



22. ♖e4!

Perfect play by Nakamura! The new target is the extremely poor bishop on b7: White is going to install his knight on c5. 22. ♖xd5 cxd5 is also better for White. He could double his rooks on the d-file to put pressure on the d5-weakness and also the distant passer on the queenside is a plus. However, the text move is even stronger.

22... ♜e5 23. ♖c1!

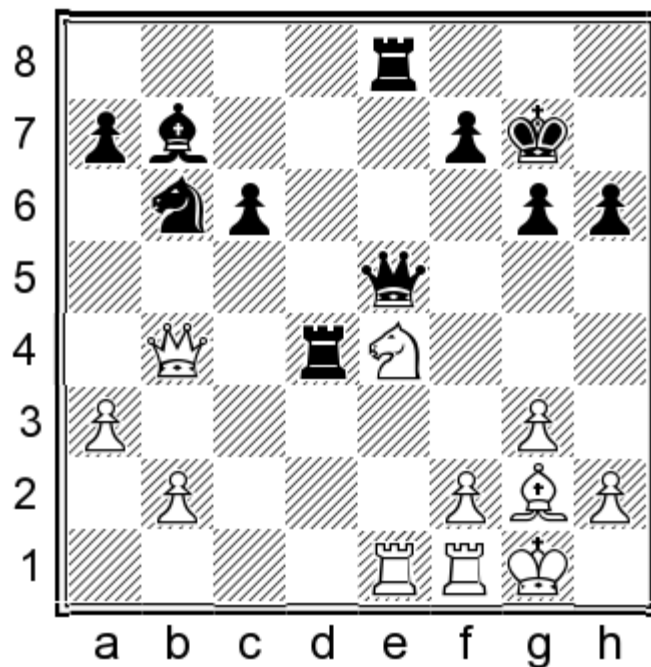
Yet another subtle positional move! White really wants to get his knight to c5 and he avoids any kind of tactical ideas. On the direct 23. ♖c5 Black wants to ease his position with 23... ♖c3! 24. bxc3 ♜xc5 25. ♖d7 White keeps a clear advantage, but there is no reason to lessen Black's defensive difficulties with exchanges.

23... ♖b6

Black wants to free his a8-rook by pushing the queen away from her attack of the a7-square.

24. ♜b4 ♖ad8 25. ♖c5

The only inaccuracy by White in the entire game. 25. ♖ce1! was actually even stronger. Black has problems with the pin; if he moves away with the queen, ♜c3 could be decisive, and after 25... ♖d4



26. ♖d6!! is a very nice winning move! 26... ♜xb4 (26... ♛xd6 27. ♛xd6 ♜xd6 28. ♜xe8+-) 27. ♘xe8+!+- This intermediate check wins decisive material.

25... ♜d4?

A blunder, but Black was much worse anyway. The only move was 25... ♙a8 but of course White's advantage is undisputable with such a piece on a8.

26. ♛c3 ♙c8 27. ♜ce1

Black resigned as he faces big material losses. A great game by Nakamura!

1-0

GAME 49

L. Dominguez Perez (2746)

Yangyi Yu (2715)

50th Capablanca Mem Elite

Havana CUB (3.2)

17.06.2015, [E10]

Annotated by Arkadij Naiditsch

Yu Yangyi is one of the Chinese superstars who are on the rise. He was in the winning Olympiad team, won the very strong Qatar Open and many other top events, all the while just being 21 years old. In the Capablanca Memorial, he once again showed fantastic chess, having an almost perfect start with 3.5/4 points. In the current game, Dominguez risks a lot in the opening and gets a slightly worse position. Playing really great chess, Yu is makes the most out of his position and manages to catch Dominguez' queen, which brings him the full point on the spot! A great game awaits us!

1.d4

As usual Dominguez starts the game with 1.d4. The Cuban Nr.1 is a very safe player who likes to play slightly-better

positions with minimal risk.

1...♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 d5 4.g3

Another Catalan...

4...♙b4+ 5.♙d2 ♙e7

This is one of the main lines. Black's idea behind playing ...♙b4 first, to provoke ♙d2, is that the d2-square is usually perfect for the knight and not the bishop.

6.♙g2 0-0 7.0-0 c6 8.♖c2 ♘bd7

Nothing new so far...

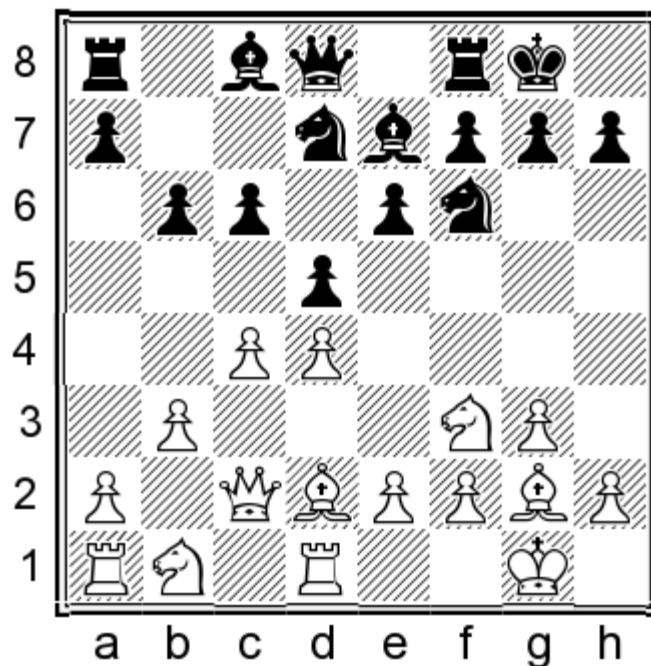
9.♝d1

Usually Black's main idea is to play ...c5 somewhere, so White is prophylactically putting the rook on d1.

9...b6

Another typical move.

10.b3



10...a5!?

An interesting approach. Black doesn't play the standard ...♙b7 and ...c5, but tries to even take over the game by putting the bishop on a6 and then playing ...♝c8 and ...c5.

11.♙f4 ♙a6 12.♗e5

Perhaps a bit premature... More normal is 12.♘bd2 ♙c8 13.e4 with maybe a minimally better position for White.

12...♙c8

Black is ready to play ...c5.

13.e4?!

What a strange decision to give up the g2-bishop... 13.♘xd7 ♙xd7 14.♘d2 c5 just leads to an equal position.

13...♘xe5

is probably not the best. 13...♘xe4!? looks very strong. 14.♙xe4 dxe4 15.♙xe4 and now the interesting 15...g5! 16.♙e3 f5 and I think Black's play is very dangerous.

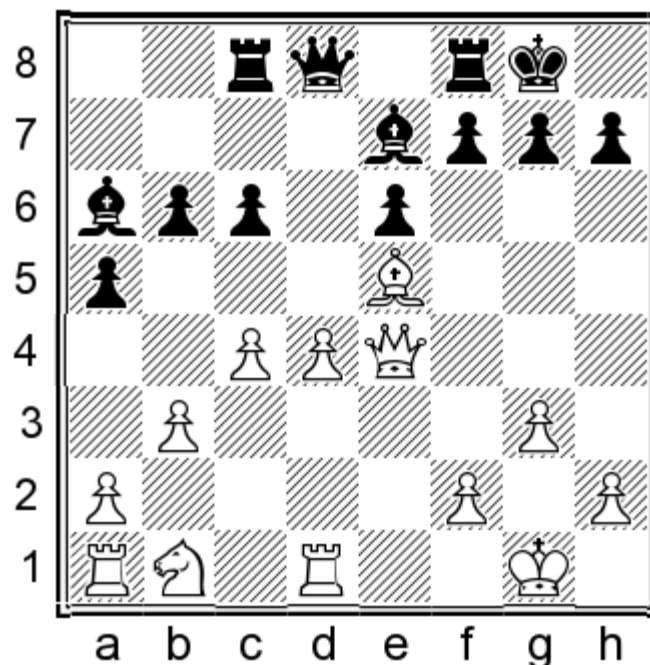
14.♙xe5?!

White should have continued with 14.dxe5 ♘d7 15.exd5 cxd5 16.♘c3! dxc4 17.♘e4 with probably enough counterplay for the pawn.

14...♘xe4

Now Black is going to have the bishop pair.

15.♙xe4 dxe4 16.♙xe4



16...f6!

An excellent move by Yu! Black is not going for the standard ...c5 push — which is not so easy to play because of White's d5, with a probably equal position — but for ...e5, followed by a regrouping idea on the kingside.

17.♙f4 e5 18.♙e3

white wants to play ♖c3 after which the position is equal

18...c5!

Yu shows an extremely good understanding of the position.

19.d5

The only move.

19...♙d6

Now Black will proceed with ...f5, and then with ...♖c7 and ...♙c8, bringing all his pieces to the kingside.

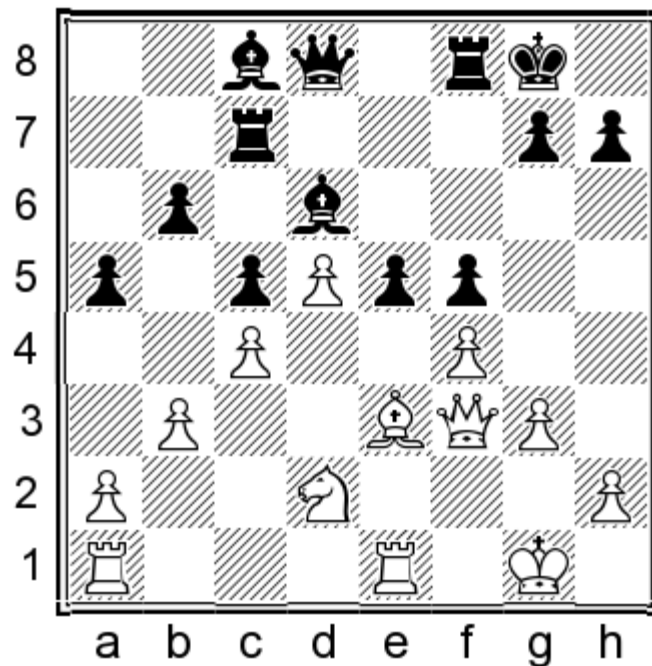
20.f4

Dominguez tries to block this as best he can .

20...f5 21.♘f3 ♜c7

Black needs to bring the bishop to c8.

22.♞d2 ♙c8 23.♞e1



23...g5!?

An interesting approach! 23...e4 was a simpler move. 24.♘g2 ♜cf7, followed by ...♙d7 and then ...h6-♞g8, preparing to play ...g5. In that case it would have been 'a game of 2 results'.

24.fxe5

This is probably the best. It looks very risky for White to play 24.fxe5 f4 25.♙f2 because of the beautiful 25...e4!

(After 25... ♖xg5 26. ♘e4 ♗g6 27. ♗c3 White is fine.) 26. ♘xe4 fxg3 27. ♘f6+ ♖xf6 28. gxf6 gxf2+ 29. ♗xf2 ♖f7 and Black is clearly better.

24... ♗xe5 25. ♖ad1 ♗d6!

Another fantastic move by Black in my opinion. It is clear that the d-pawn has to be blocked, but it looks very tempting to just play ... ♗g7, ... h6 and then ... ♗d6. In fact, I think the black bishop is perfectly placed on d6 and supports Black's main idea, which is to play ... f4 at some point.

26. ♗f2 ♗f6 27. ♗h5

White tries to be as solid as possible.

27... ♖g7

Black brings all his pieces to the kingside.

28. ♖e8

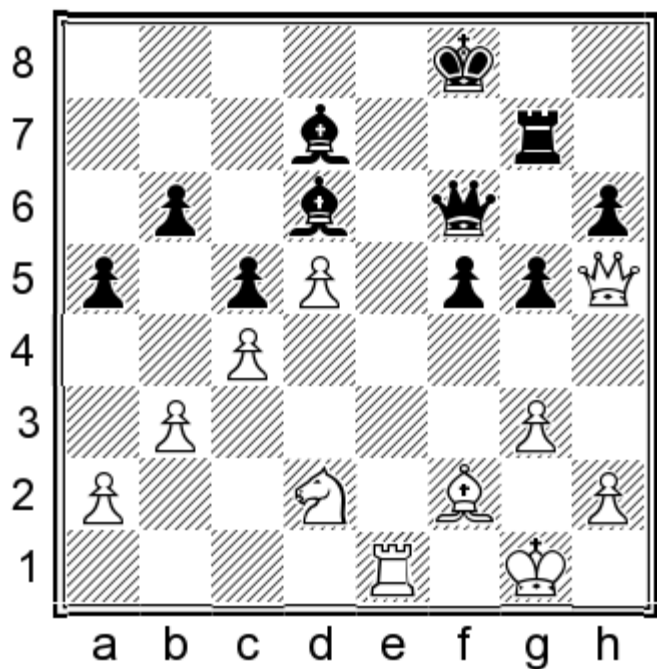
The right decision. White should try to exchange as many pieces as possible.

28... ♗d7 29. ♖xf8+ ♔xf8

Black's advantage is slowly increasing.

30. ♖e1 h6

A nice prophylactic move, but ... h6 might be needed anyway.



31.a4

Dominguez continues playing for survival and tries to close the position.

31...♖f7

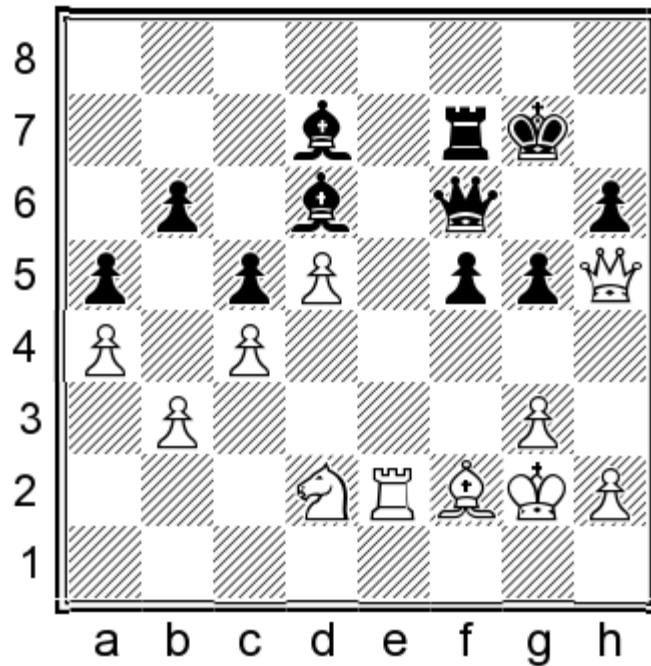
Black improves the position to the maximum before starting his action on the kingside.

32.♔g2 ♕g7

It is too early for 32...g4 33.♙e3 ♕g7 34.♘f1 followed by ♙d2 and White is fighting, although Black is still clearly better.

33.♞e2?!

A very careless move...



White should have been much more careful with his queen on h5... 33.♞f3 but of course Black is much better and it would have been a long road for Dominguez to finally draw this game.

33...g4!

The perfect moment to play ...g4 as White doesn't have the usual ♙e3!

34.♙e3?

This move loses on the spot. White should have defended with 34.♞e1 ♞e7 35.♘f1 and he has a horrible position but is still fighting.

34...♞e7!

The game is over... White probably missed Black's next move.

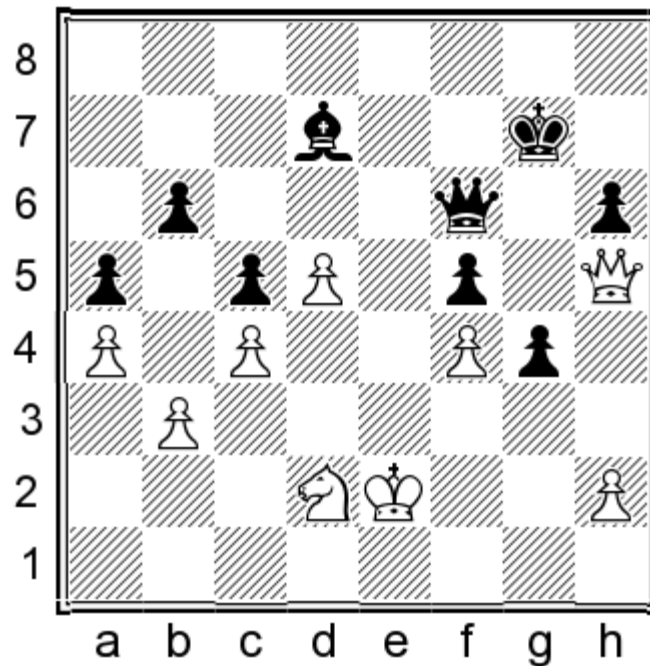
35.♔f1 ♞e5!

35...♙e8? of course doesn't work since after 36.♙xh6+! ♞xh6 37.♞xe7+ ♙xe7 38.♞xe8 the position is about equal.

36.♙f4

Everything else loses as well. White has no defense against ...f4.

36...♖xe2 37.♔xe2 ♕xf4 38.gxf4



38...♔f8!

Black's next move is ...♕e8 after which the queen on h5 is caught! It is very rare in chess to be able to catch a full queen. What can we say about this game?! Basically, we just witnessed perfect play by Yu, who showed great positional understanding and great tactical skills when needed!

0-1

GAME 50

V. Kramnik (2777)

I. Nepomniachtchi (2705)

31st ECC Open 2015

Skopje MKD (3.1)

20.10.2015, [A49]

Annotated by Csaba Balogh

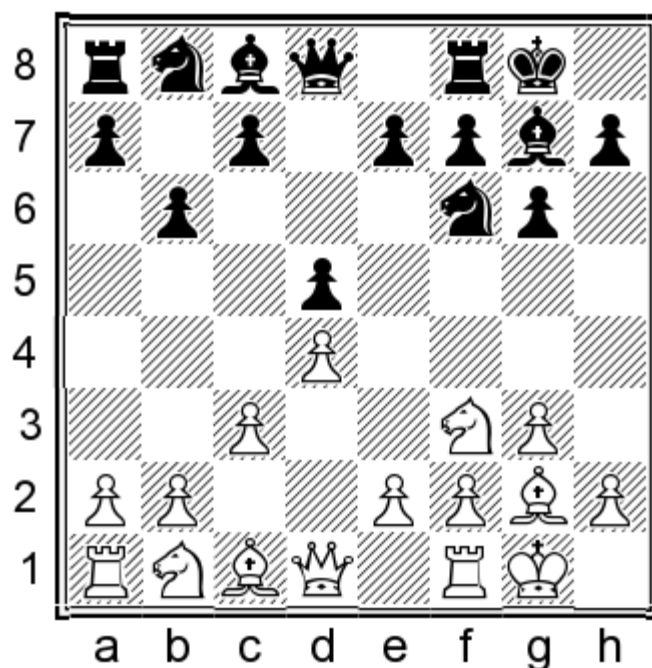
Vladimir Kramnik plays a positional masterpiece.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.g3 ♕g7 4.♕g2 d5 5.0-0 0-0 6.c3!?

White avoids the theoretical discussions in the Gruenfeld Defense. Actually the move is not as harmless as it might look at first sight. We will see some of its ideas later in the game.

6...b6

This seems to be an inaccuracy, which is met by a surprising and unexpected next move...



The most common move is 6...c6 7. ♖bd2 White wants to open the position with ♙e1 and e4, achieving a small edge thanks to the space advantage, and if Black tries to prevent it with 7...♙f5 then 8. ♗h4 and White executes the e4-break anyway.

7.c4!

This must have come as a bit of a shock to Nepomniachtchi! White just has played c2-c3 on the previous move and now pushes c4. The reason is clear: Black weakened the long diagonal with ...b6, so White pushes c4 in better circumstances, despite the cost of a tempo.

7...c6

Black wanted to play like this even if White had pushed 6.c4 at once. However now, the c6-square and the long diagonal are even more vulnerable, which White immediately makes use of. 7...e6 leads to a Queen's Indian-type structure, where White's chances are preferable after 8.cxd5 exd5 9. ♗c3 ♙b7 10. ♙f4 and ♙c1 next move.

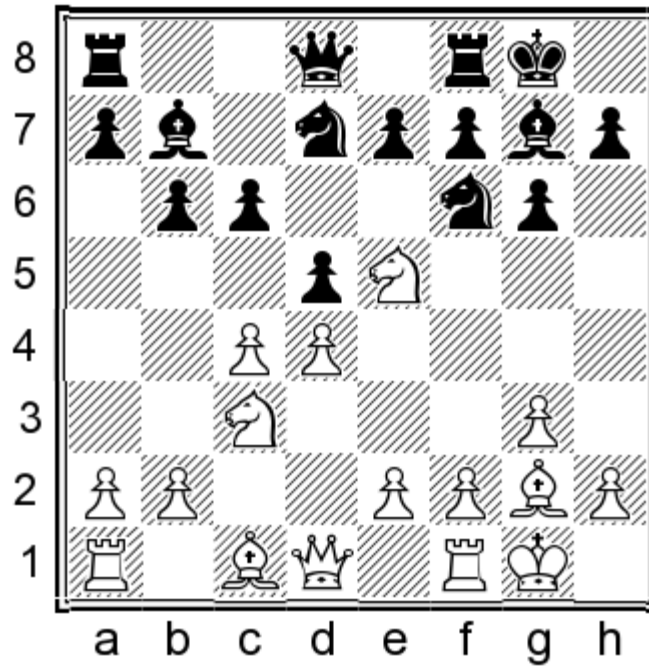
8. ♗e5!

White intends to play ♗c3 and e4, gaining all the benefits of the ...b6-weakening.

8...♙b7 9. ♗c3

9. ♙a4!? also made sense to me, to avoid the most natural developing move ...♗bd7 by keeping the c6-pawn under attack.

9...♗bd7



10. ♖a4!

The most energetic developing move, putting pressure on the c6-square. It forces Black to initiate simplifications in the center. Black is in time to react properly on 10.e4? with 10... ♟xe4! 11. ♞xe4 dxe4 which wins a pawn.

10... ♟xe5

10... ♔c8 is bad in view of 11. ♙f4 and the rook is coming to c1!

11. dxe5 ♞e4

A positional mistake after which White gets a long term advantage. The only move to fight for equality was 11... ♞d7! 12. cxd5 cxd5 13. ♞xd5 ♞c5! A difficult move to foresee. The point is to have the b7-bishop protected. (White gets a pleasant edge after 13... ♞xe5 14. ♖d1 e6 15. ♞f6+ ♔xf6 16. ♙xb7± is better due to the two bishops.) 14. ♔c4 e6! Black wins back the e5-pawn, although White might hope for a small edge after 15. ♞c3 ♙xg2 16. ♙xg2 ♙xe5 17. ♙f4 ♙xf4 18. ♔xf4 and the rook comes to d1 with tempo, followed by sending away the strong knight from c5 with b4!

12. ♞xe4 dxe4 13. ♙f4 e3

The only move to keep the material balance. 13... c5 loses the e4-pawn after 14. ♔c2!±

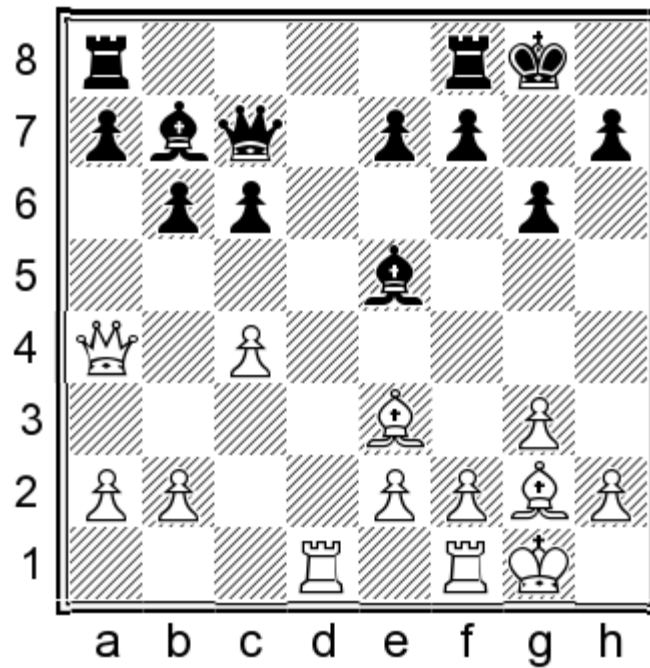
14. ♙xe3

14.fxe3 wins the pawn, but of course these kind of 'tripled pawns' can hardly be termed a healthy extra pawn. Black transfers his queen to e6 and gets compensation.

14... ♙xe5 15. ♖ad1

White could also play 15. ♖ab1!? and push c5 next move, as happened in the game, just saving the b2-pawn as well. Perhaps it was even stronger than the text move?

15... ♔c7



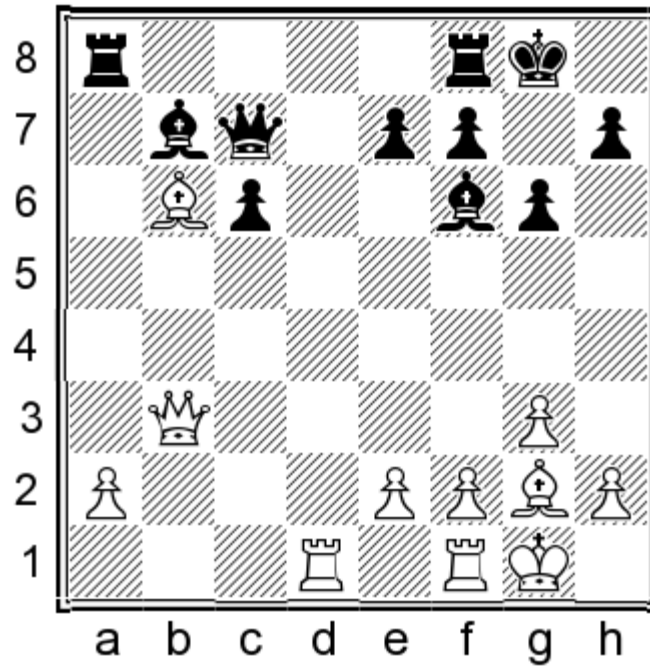
16.c5!

White changes the pawn structure in his favor. This move is known also from some Queen's Indian lines. White locks the b7-bishop and fixes the c6-weakness. The difference between the two light-squared bishops is going to tell. 16.b3 was too slow, with the idea of pushing c5 without giving up the b2-pawn and using the fact that Black cannot push ...c5 himself because of ♖d7. However Black plays 16.b3 ♗d6!= controlling the c5-square and closing the d-file in order to equalize the game with ...c5 next move.

16...♗xb2

If White consolidates with, let's say ♖c2, Black is obliged to suffer all game long.

17.♖b3 ♗f6 18.cxb6 axb6 19.♗xb6



The material is balanced, but White has a small and stable advantage because of the more active pieces and the superior pawn structure. The c6-pawn is weak, while the distant passed a-pawn might cause huge problems in the later stage of the game.

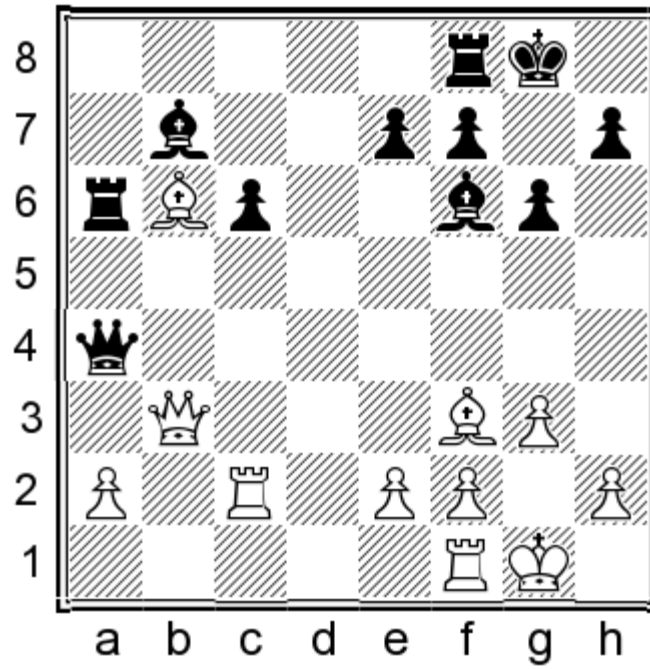
19...♔c8 20.♖c1!

Bringing the f1-rook to the game. 20.♖d2!? was also possible with the idea of doubling the rooks on the d-file as Black cannot oppose on d8.

20...♗g4 21.♖c2 ♖a6

Nepomniachtchi searches for counterplay with active moves.

22.♕f3 ♗a4



Black mis-evaluates the consequences of trading queens and it leads to terrible suffering for him. He should have kept them on the board with 22...♔f5.

23. ♖xa4!

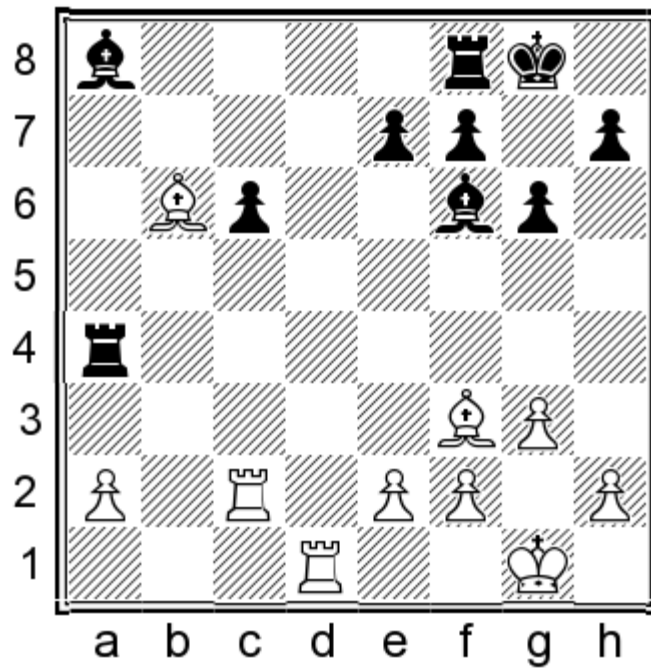
Obviously White must take the queen himself, otherwise Black takes on b3 and the power of the distant passed pawn is gone.

23... ♜xa4 24. ♜d1!

White invades on d7!

24... ♜a8

A sad decision! Black wants to free his position with ...c5, which might be a pawn sacrifice, but at least he gets rid of his poor bishop and activates his f8-rook afterwards. However Kramnik avoids this chance with a strong prophylactic move.



24...♖fa8 was strongly met by 25.♗d7!±;

24...♖a6 25.♕c5 ♖fa8 26.a3± is also bad for Black.

25.♕c5!

Preventing the ...c5 break! Now the a8-bishop is dead.

25...♖b8 26.a3!

White has two ideas in mind. It puts the pawn on a protected square in order to free his c2-rook and play ♖d2-d, and another highly unpleasant threat is ♕b4 followed by simply winning the c6-pawn.

26...e5

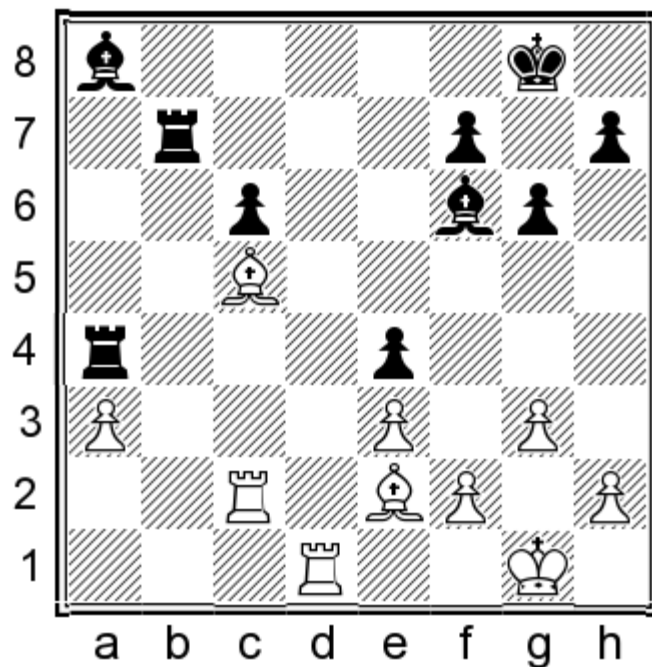
Black tries to shut the light squared bishop out of the game. However it just partly succeeds.

27.e3!

The bishop comes into the game from another diagonal with even greater power!

27...e4 28.♕e2 ♖b7

A resourceful defensive attempt. Black wants to trade bishops with ...♕e7, which would significantly improve his defensive chances as he gets access to attack the a3-pawn with both of his rooks. However Kramnik anticipates this idea with another great prophylactic move...



Black has no opportunity to trade the bishops with ...♗a6, because 28...♗b7 runs into the pin after 29.♖b1!

29.♖c4!

Just great! In general it is very useful to ask ourselves what is the plan of our opponent — what would he do if it was his move? We realize that the idea is ...♗e7, so Kramnik prevents it tactically.

29...♖xc4 30.♗xc4 ♔g7

30...♗e7? loses now as the rooks are traded and the a8-bishop is no longer protected. 31.♗xe7 ♖xe7 32.♖d8++—

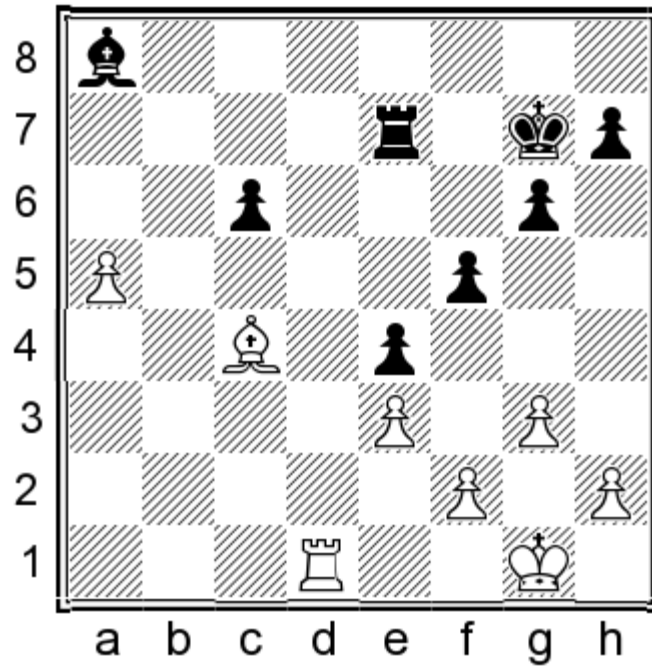
31.a4!

The other point of the 29.♖c4 move — the passed pawn can finally advance.

31...♗e7

Black trades the bishops, but he can no longer attack the a-pawn with both of his rooks. The a-pawn marches forward.

32.♗xe7 ♖xe7 33.a5 f5



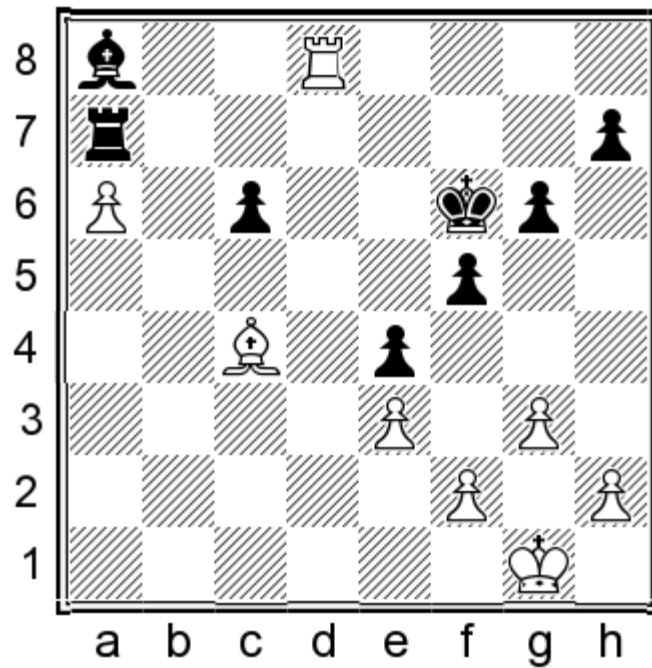
34.♖d8!

The most precise move, placing Black in complete zugzwang.

34...♙a7

34...♙b7 35.a6+- traps the bishop.

35.a6 ♔f6



36.♖e8!

The final piece of precision! White does not allow the king to come towards the queenside, which could have given Black some practical hopes. Now it is cut off along the e-file and Black runs out of counterplay. Despite the material balance the game is over: White simply goes with his king to b6.

36...c5 37.♖f1 ♜g7 38.♖e2 ♙c6 39.♞c8 ♙d7 40.♞g8+ ♜h6 41.♞b8!

This forces the black bishop to return to his poor position on the long diagonal.

41...♙c6 42.♞b6 ♙a8

Another sad moment for Black. He was fighting to get his bishop out of the corner and now it has to go back. 42...♞c7 loses to 43.♞xc6! ♞xc6 44.a7 ♞c8 45.♙d5+;

42...♙e8 43.♞b7+ is also over.

43.♙b5 ♞c7 44.♖d2 ♞c8 45.♖c3 ♜g5 46.h3!

Preventing even the invasion of the king through g4-f3.

46...h5 47.♖c4 h4 48.♞e6 hxg3 49.fxg3

Black resigned as ♙e8 is coming next! A brilliant positional performance by Kramnik!

1–0