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Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

General recommendations

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

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

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

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

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

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

Portisch, Sarkosy *600 Endgames*

Gelfer, *Positional Chess Handbook 1-2*

Kotov, *Think Like a Grandmaster*

Euwe, *Strategy and Tactics – A course of chess lectures*

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

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

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

Hort + Jansa, *The Best Move*

Volokitin, *Perfect your Chess*

Dvoretsky's oeuvre.

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

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

As far as possible, one should try to control the pupil's fulfilment of his work tasks. To combat the natural laziness of youngsters, one must constantly reiterate the important lesson that without constant hard work,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The middlegame is usually the part that most interests children, and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I wish you all success on this thorny path!

Konstantin Sakaev

This is Volume 2 of a two-volume work. Volume 1 was about the opening and the middlegame.

Chapter 4

A pawn wedge in the enemy camp

This is the case of a pawn cut off in the enemy camp, but which can cause chaos there and mess up the opponent's position. Such pawns often die, but in return, they can destroy the coordination of the enemy pieces.

18 *
Alexander Khalifman 2649
Nidjat Agayev 2318

Nakhchivan 2012 (6)

1.d4 ♘f6 **2.c4** c5 **3.d5** e6 **4.♗c3**
exd5 5.cxd5 ♕d6



This system is a rare guest in tournament practice. It relies chiefly on surprise value. The main idea is to transfer the bishop via d6 and c7, after which White can very reasonably reply d5-d6. An interesting, non-standard battle then develops, in which White's chances are nonetheless superior, thanks to the powerful pawn in the black position, on d6.

6.g3

The bishop transfer to c7 can be radically prevented by 6.e4, and now 6...♕c7?? simply loses after 7.d6 ♕a5 8.e5! ♘e4 9.♖g4 ♘xc3 10.♖xc3 ♘e4+ 11.♘d1 ♗f8 12.♕h6+-.

The bishop can only be transferred to c7 after 6.♗f3 ♕c7!?, and now

things are not so clear after 7.d6 ♕a5 8.♕g5 ♖b6! 9.♕xf6 ♗xb2! 10.♕xg7 ♗g8 (or 10...♕xc3+ 11.♕xc3 ♗xc3+ 12.♘d2 b6) 11.♗b1 ♕xc3+ 12.♕xc3 ♗xc3+ 13.♘d2 ♗g6 14.♗b3 ♗d4±.

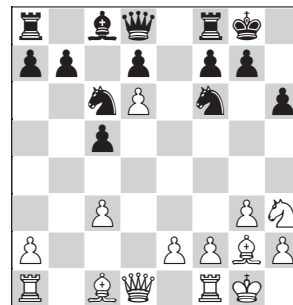
6...♕c7

The main line is 6...0-0 7.♗f3 ♕c7 8.d6 ♕a5 9.♕g2 ♘e4 10.♗d3 ♗f6 11.0-0! ♘xc3 12.bxc3 h6 13.♕f4!, which is also dangerous for Black.

7.d6 ♕a5 8.♕g2 h6

On 8...0-0, White can transpose to a favourable variation with 9.♗f3 (or 9.♘h3!?, which is also not bad).

9.♘h3 0-0 10.0-0 ♕xc3 11.bxc3
♗c6



12.e4

White's play is simple – he advances his pawns in the centre. Black, cramped by the pawn on d6, has no chance of developing any activity. His position is effectively lost.

12...♗a5 13.♗c2 ♗e8 14.f4 b5
15.e5 ♘h7 16.♕e3

The black pieces are almost invisible, and the rest is largely a matter of fairly simple technique.

16...♙a6 17.♙xc6 dxc6 18.♙xc5 ♖f8 19.♖f2 ♙c8 20.♖e4 ♙h3 21.♗fe1 ♖d7 22.♗f2 ♗a4 23.♙b4 a5 24.♖c5 ♖xc5 25.♙xc5 ♗c4 26.♗d4 ♗xd4+ 27.♙xd4 a4 28.♗ad1 ♗eb8 29.♙c5 ♗b7 30.♙f2 ♗d7 31.♙e3 ♙f8 32.c4 ♙e6 33.cxb5 cxb5 34.a3 ♗c8 35.♗c1 ♙e8 36.g4 g6 36...♙xg4 37.♗g1+-. 37.h3 ♗b7 38.♙e4 ♖d7 39.f5 gxf5+ 40.gxf5 ♙c4 41.♙b4 ♗bb8 42.♗g1 ♙b3 43.e6+ fxe6 44.♗g7+ ♖d8 45.♙a5+ 1-0

19

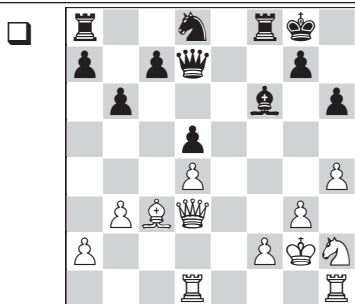
**

Konstantin Sakaev

Alon Greenfeld

Russia tt 1998 (1)

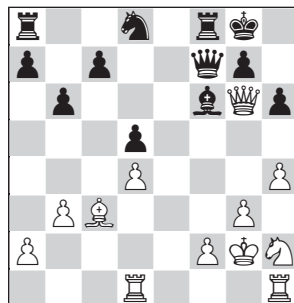
Weak squares



The position looks roughly equal. The e5-square is the wrong colour to serve as a convenient outpost for the white knight – Black simply takes on e5 with the bishop, and begin play on the light squares. Therefore, White instead tries to seize the e-file, and is able to assist this with play on the kingside, by exploiting the barely-noticeable weakness of the g6-square.

19. ♗g6! ♗f7

19...♖c6 20.♖g4 ♖e7 21.♗h5 (21.♖xh6+ ♙h8 22.♖f7+ ♙g8=) 21...♖f5 22.♗he1, and White also keeps the initiative.



20.h5!

The black pawns are fixed on the same colour squares as his bishop, which is useful in the long term. White has also realised that after the exchange on g6, the white pawn appearing on that square is a strength, not a weakness. It seriously cramps Black, and cannot easily be attacked.

20.♗xf7+ ♙xf7 does not offer anything serious.

20... ♗xg6

20...♙e7 21.♗xf7+ (21.♖g4!? ♗f3+ 22.♙h3 ♗xc3 23.♖xh6+ ♙h8∞) 21...♖xf7 22.♖g4±.

21.hxg6

The g6-pawn disturbs Black and in the end, decides the game.

21...♖c6 22.♖g4 ♗ae8?

Bad is 22...♖e7? 23.♙b4 – the pin on the knight decides.

It was worth considering 22...a5!?, but after 23.♗he1 or 23.♗c1, Black still experiences problems.

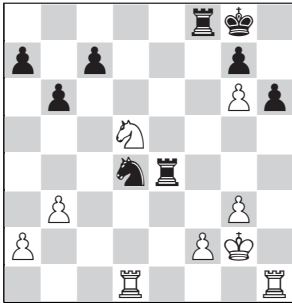
23.♖e3 ♗e4

More tenacious is 23...♙g5, but here too, after 24.♖xd5 ♗e2 25.♗hf1 ♗xa2

26. ♖xc7 ♜c2 27. ♜d3! (he can keep the pawn with 27. ♖d5, but here Black's drawing chances are greater) 27... ♖xd4 28. ♜xd4 ♜xc3 29. ♖e6 ♜e8 30. ♜e1 ♖f6 31. ♜d7, White retains his domination, and every chance of winning – Black suffers from...

Back-rank weakness

24. ♖xd5 ♖xd4 25. ♖xd4 ♖xd4



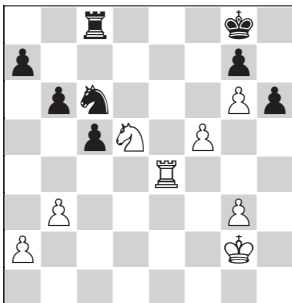
26. ♜he1!

White is not distracted by the pawn on c7 – it is more important to seize the e-file.

26... ♜xe1 27. ♜xe1 c6 28. ♖e7+

Even more convincing and simply winning was 28. ♖f4!, bringing the knight to h5.

28... ♖h8 29. ♜e4 c5 30. ♖d5 ♖c6 31. f4 ♜c8 32. f5 ♖g8



The black king is in a cage, and White finds a way to shut it in completely:

33. ♜e7! ♜d8 34. f6! ♖xe7 35. fxe7 ♜e8 36. ♖f3

The white king rules the board.

36... b5 37. ♖e4 c4 38. bxc4 bxc4 39. ♖d4 ♜c8 40. ♖c3

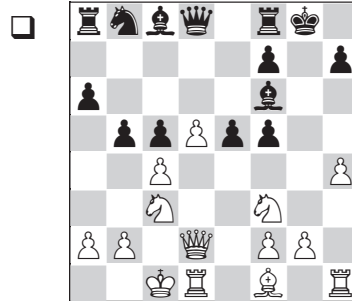
Black resigned.

It is never too late to go wrong – after 40. ♖c7?? c3, the result changes 180 degrees.

20

Alexei Shirov
Veselin Topalov
Sarajevo 2000 (3)

2751
2702



There followed...

14. d6!

Surely Alexei Shirov isn't counting on queening his pawn? No, of course not. By advancing to d7, the pawn cuts the black position into two halves, and is also prepared to lay down its life in due course. The other important thing is that he opens a group of squares for the attack – d5 for the knight, d6 for the white queen, and also the a2-g8 diagonal.

14... ♖c6

The knight heads for d4, but this does not bring great benefits, since the other black pieces are uncoordinated, especially his rooks.

It was stronger to open up the bishop with 14...e4, or stop the white pawn by 14...♖d7.

15.d7! ♙b7



16.♙d6

Another tempting possibility was 16.♖h3, first including the rook in the attack. Black has to move the king into the corner with 16...♔h8, when White can choose between two promising squares for his queen – d5 or d6 (Black loses after the direct 16...♖d4 17.♙h6 ♙g7 18.♖g3 ♖e6 19.♖xg7+ ♖xg7 20.♖g5+-).

16...e4

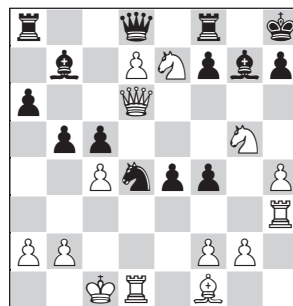
If the bishop moves away from the ♖d5 in advance, with 16...♙g7, there is the strong 17.♖h3!

17.♖d5 ♙g7 18.♖g5

Thanks to the knights, a mating net is forming around the black king.

18...♖d4 19.♖e7+ ♔h8 20.♖h3 f4

Dynamics. Prophylaxis / 'quiet' moves in the middle of an attack



21.♔b1!

Black has no moves to strengthen his position, so White permits himself some prophylaxis – the king moves away from the knight check.

21...b4 22.♙e2!

The inclusion of the bishop in the attack settles things.

22...f3 23.gxf3 ♖xe2 24.♙xc5 ♖f4
25.♙f5 ♖g6 26.h5 ♙xe7 27.hxg6

Black resigned.

Chapter 17

A blow at the most heavily-defended point

It often happens that a player, having securely defended a certain point, 'forgets' about it, thinking that it is already 'his'. And a blow on that very point is a typical chess device. The blow can be decisive or just helpful, such as deflecting enemy pieces before landing a decisive blow elsewhere, or freeing space for one's own pieces. One can free squares, lines or diagonals, depending on the situation. Sometimes, one can exploit tactical nuances to put a piece that cannot be taken on that square, so as to create threats. One must always pay attention to the opponent's possibilities, even on the most heavily-defended part of the board!

88

Konstantin Sakaev

Rinat Zhumabaev

Zvenigorod 2008 (3)

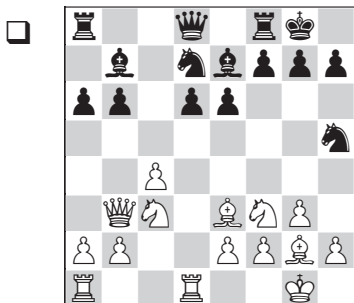
*

2635

2442

suffer for the rest of the game from the weakness of c6.

18...♙xa4 19.♚xa4 ♖xc1 20.♗xc1
♚xb6



14.c5!

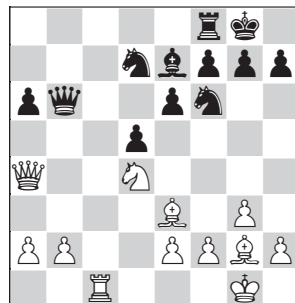
This blow is possible thanks to the offside knight on h5, which Black put there to drive away the white bishop from f4.

14...d5 15.cxb6

Of course, the b6-pawn will soon be recaptured, but White strives to sell it as expensively as possible.

15...♗hf6 16.♗ac1 ♖c8 17.♗a4
♙c6 18.♗d4!

Black will regain the pawn, but at the cost of exchanging off his most valuable piece, and now he will



21.♗b3!

Why bother calculating long variations involving the knight jump into the enemy camp, when we can simply force a favourable endgame? With the c-file and two bishops, it will be easy to realise white pluses in the endgame.

21...♚b5 22.♚xb5 axb5 23.♗d4
b4

Preferable was 23...♖a8, but here too, after 24.♗c6 (weaker is 24.a3 b4 25.♗c6 bxa3! 26.♗xe7+ ♙f8 27.bxa3 ♙xe7 28.♙d2 ♗d8 29.♙b4, although

even here White has the advantage) 24...♔d6 25.a3, Black has a difficult endgame.

24. ♖c6 ♔d6 25. ♔d2 b3 26. axb3 ♜a8 27. ♔a5 ♕f8 28. b4 ♗e5 29. e3 ♘xc6 30. ♝xc6 ♖e7 31. ♔f1 ♘d7 32. ♖g2

White unhurriedly strengthens his position. In his plans for the near future is seizing space with his pawns on the kingside. Over time, the black pieces will become tied down and, in addition, he will contract pawn weaknesses. It must be said that such a device is typical, especially when one has more space or the bishop pair.

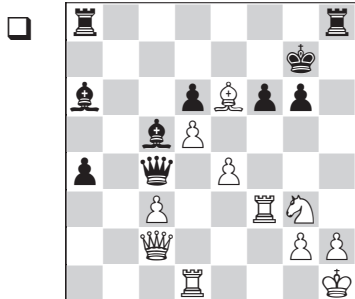
32... ♗e5 33. ♝c2 ♜a7 34. h3

I repeat once again that White is in no hurry, as Black has no counterplay. For the moment, he just takes the square g4 from the black knight.

34... h5 35. f4 ♘d7 36. ♝c6 g6 37. ♖f3 ♗b8 38. ♝c8 ♕d7 39. ♝d8+ ♖e7 40. ♝c8 ♕d7 41. ♝c1 ♖e7 42. g4 hxg4+ 43. hxg4

Black could have resigned, but he lost on time.

89 *
Alexei Shirov 2500
Daniel King 2515
 Gausdal 1990 (4)



It is obvious that White's chances are tied up with play on the light squares. The e5-square is covered by two black pawns, but not actually blockaded! Consequently, White clears the diagonal, and brings his queen into the attack with decisive effect:

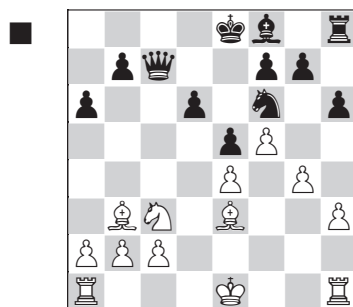
32.e5! dxe5

The counterattack on the h-file does not work: 32... ♝xh2+ 33. ♖xh2 ♜h8+ 34. ♔h3!

33. ♗f5!+ gx f5 34. ♝g3+ ♕f8 35. ♝xf5 ♖f4 36. ♝g6 ♜a7 37. ♝h3 ♝xh3 38. ♝g8+ ♖e7 39. d6+

Black resigned, because after 39... ♔xd6 40. ♝f7+ ♕d8 41. ♝xd6+ he is mated.

90 *
Vladislav Nevednichy 2470
Konstantin Sakaev 2555
 Moscow ol 1994 (4)



White's entire strategy revolves around using the d5-square as an outpost for his pieces. For the sake of this, he has gone in for a positional queen sacrifice. Undoubtedly, if White manages to castle queenside, exchange a pair of knights and entrench his bishop on d5, his pawn structure will be ideal. The e4-pawn and ♔d5 will defend each other,

and the d3-square will be used as a transfer point to bring a rook to the queenside, to attack the black pawns there.

Therefore, Black plays a counter-sacrifice, to sow disharmony in the white position:

16...d5! 17.exd5

The white pawn, lacking piece support, is not dangerous.

17...♖b4 18.0-0 ♖xc3 19.d6 ♖c6

20.bxc3 ♖xc3 21.♞he1 0-0 22.g5

This does not help, but after other continuations too, Black puts a rook on d8 and takes the d-pawn.

22...hxg5 23.♙xg5 ♜d8 24.♚b1

♞xd6 25.♞xd6 ♖xe1+ 26.♚b2

♖b4 27.♞d8+ ♚h7 28.c3 ♖e7

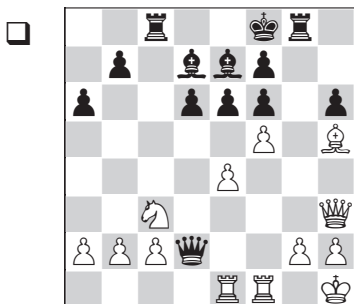
and Black realised his material advantage.

91

Rashid Nezhmetdinov

Leonid Shamkovich

Krasnodar 1957



On the d-file, the ♙d7 and ♖d2 can come under fire, whilst the same can happen to the black king along the f-file. Apart from the threat of opening these lines, after the move...

22.e5!

there is also a threat to bring the knight to e4.

22...♙c6

This allows the f-file, on which the king stands, to be opened, which should not have been allowed in any circumstances. Consequently, a more tenacious defence was 22...exf5, after which the strongest resort is 23.exd6 (23.♞e2 ♖d4 24.exd6 ♙xd6 25.♙f3 ♖f4 leads to a double-edged battle, with only a small advantage to White; 23.♞d1 ♖xc2 24.exd6 ♙d8 25.♙f3 ♜g6 26.♙xb7 retains the advantage, but Black gets counterplay) 23...♖xd6 24.♞d1 ♖c7 25.♙d5 – the white attack will henceforth develop almost of its own accord.

23.♞e2 ♖g5 24.fxe6 fxe6 25.exf6

♙xf6 26.♙e4 ♙xe4 27.♞xe4 ♞xc2

28.♞xe6 ♞f2

More tenacious was 28...♙g7, after which the cleanest win is 29.♞exf6 ♖xf6 30.♖d3 ♞d2 31.♖g3+ ♖g5 32.♞f7+ ♚h8 33.♖c3+ ♖e5 34.♖xd2 ♖xh5 35.♞xb7.

29.♞e8+ ♚g7 30.♞xg8+ ♚xg8

31.♖c8+ ♚g7 32.♞xf2

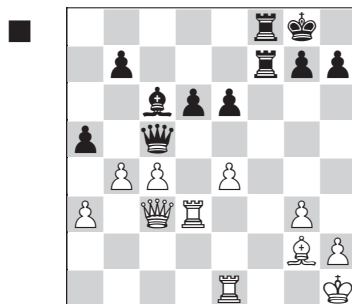
Black resigned.

92

Akiba Rubinstein

Rudolf Spielmann

San Sebastian 1912 (10)



On the board, we have a structure typical of many Sicilian variations [Although the game actually began as a Dutch Defence! – Translator’s note]. Black has managed to exchange a lot of pieces and his position is not really cramped. Even so, he has some worries over the d6-pawn. If Black does not come up with some decisive action, his position could become difficult.

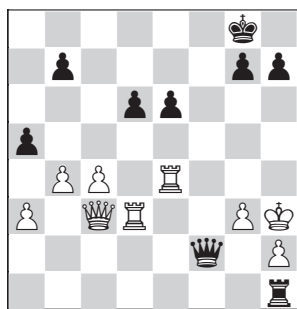
25... ♖xe4!!

The preliminary pawn exchange 25...axb4 26.axb4 would be to Black’s benefit, but White can recapture with 26.♖xb4!?, cutting off the combination at the roots.

Of course, the strongest now is

26. ♖xe4!

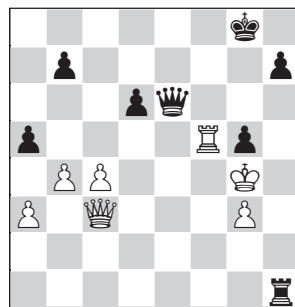
The queen is untouchable, because of 26.bxc5 ♖f1+ 27.♖xf1 ♖xf1#. In the game, White lost his head: 26.♖xe4??, which loses. 26...♖f1+ 27.♖xf1 ♖xf1+ 28.♔g2 ♖f2+ 29.♔h3 ♖h1.



analysis diagram

If White had a bishop on e4, instead of a rook, Black would not have this move. 30.♖f3 ♖xh2+ 31.♔g4 ♖h5+ 32.♔f4 ♖h6+ 33.♔g4 g5 34.♖xe6 ♖xe6+ 35.♖f5 (after 35.♔xg5 h6+ 36.♔f4 ♖e1, Black has equal material and a decisive attack on the weak king – the dream of every player!

37.♖e3 (37.g4 ♖e4+ (a quicker way to the target is 37...♖g1) 38.♔g3 axb4 39.axb4 ♖xc4 40.♖d2 ♖xg4+, winning) 37...♖f7+ 38.♔g4 (38.♔e4 ♖g6+ 39.♔d5 ♖d1+ –) 38...♖g6+ 39.♔f4 ♖g5+ 40.♔e4 ♖g4+ 41.♔d5 ♖d1+ 42.♖d3 ♖f5+ 43.♔d4 ♖e5#)

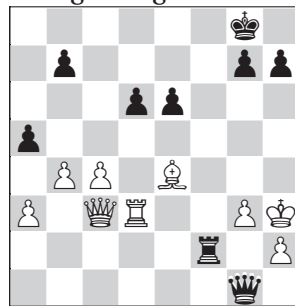


analysis diagram

35...h6 36.♖d3 ♔g7 37.♔f3 ♖f1+ 38.♖xf1 ♖xf5+ 39.♔g2 ♖xf1+ 40.♔xf1 axb4 41.axb4 ♔f6 42.♔f2 h5, and White resigned.

26...♖f1+ 27.♖xf1 ♖xf1+ 28.♔g2 ♖g1+

An important move. It is tempting to play 28...♖g1+ 29.♔h3 ♖f2, putting White’s king to flight.



analysis diagram

A) 30.♖xd6 ♖f1+ (30...♖xh2+ 31.♔g4 h5+ 32.♔g5+–) 31.♔h4 ♖e2! 32.♖xe6 ♔f7!! allows Black to hope to save himself: 33.♖d5 ♖xh2+ 34.♔g5 ♖h5+ 35.♔f4 ♖f2+ 36.♔e3

93

Vlastimil Babula

Twan Burg

Germany Bundesliga 2012/13 (6)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.g3
♙b7 5.♙g2 g6

Quite an original way of handling the Queen's Indian Defence. Black aims for a non-standard, doubled-edged position, where play is for three results.

6.♗c3 ♗e4

The standard reaction to the move ♗c3 in most Queen's Indian variations.

More solid is 6...♙g7 7.♙c2 0-0 8.0-0 d5, reaching a cross between a Queen's Indian and a Grünfeld.



7.d5! ♙b4

7...♗xc3 8.♙d4! shows the minuses of an early ...g7-g6: 8...♗g8 9.♙xc3 exd5 10.♙e5+ ±.

8.0-0 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 ♙xc3 10.♙h6!

Stopping Black castling.

10...d6

Accepting the sacrifice at once is dangerous. After 10...♙xa1 11.♙xa1 f6 12.♗g5!, White develops a very strong attack. For example, 12...♗g8 13.♗e4! ♖f7 14.dxe6+ dxe6 15.♗d1 ♙e7 16.♗g5+ fxg5 17.♙xb7 ♗d7 18.♙xg5+–.

**

2571

2490

11.♗g5 e5 12.♗e4

12.♗b1±.

12...♙xa1 13.♙a4+ c6

For the moment, Black is saved by this check-blocking pawn.

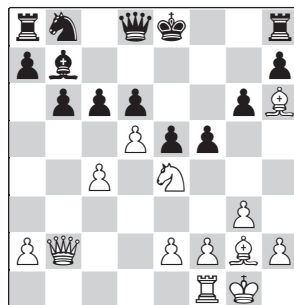
13...♗d7 14.♙g5 ♙c8 15.♗f6+ ♖f8 16.♗xd7+ +–.

14.♙a3 ♙b2

14...c5 15.♙a4+ +– – now, there is nothing with which to block.

15.♙xb2 f5

15...cxd5 16.cxd5 ♙xd5 17.♗f6+ ♙xf6 18.♙xd5+–.



16.♗c5!

A blow on the strongest point.

The continuation 16.♙g5 ♙c7 17.♗f6+ ♖f7 gives White nothing.

16...♙e7

16...bxc5 17.♙xb7 ♗d7 18.dxc6+–; 16...dxc5 17.♙xe5+ ♙e7 18.♙xh8+ +–.

17.♗xb7 ♙xb7

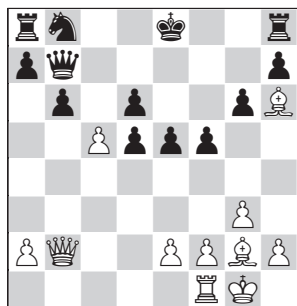
He loses after 17...c5 18.♗xd6+! ♙xd6 19.♙g7 ♗f8 20.♙xe5 ♙d7 21.e4 ♗a6 22.♙f6 fxg5 23.♙h3 ♙xh3 24.♙e5+ ♖d7 25.♙e7+ +–.

18.c5!

Another blow, which allows White to break through to the enemy king.

18...cxd5

18...♙c7 19.cxd6 ♙xd6 20.♙g7 ♗g8 21.♙xe5 ♙c5 22.♗c1+–.



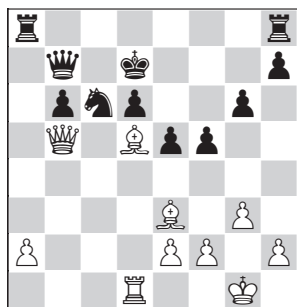
19. ♖d1

White's threats are even stronger after 19.cxd6 ♘d7 20.♖d1 0-0-0 21.♙xd5 ♖a6 22.♗c3+ ♘c5 23.♗xe5 ♖he8 24.d7+! ♘xd7 25.♙e6, with an irresistible attack.

19... ♘c6 20. ♙xd5 0-0-0 21.cxb6! ♘d7

21...axb6 22.♖c1+-.

22. ♙e3 axb6 23. ♗b5 ♖a8



In this position, White missed the chance to land a third blow on the most well-defended square. He wins convincingly after...

24. ♙c5!

In the game, there followed 24.a4 ♖hc8 25.♗c4 ♖a6 26.♙e6+ ♘c7 27.♗h4 ♖xa4 28.♗xh7+ ♘b8 29.♖b1, and White went on to win anyway.

24... ♖hc8 25. ♙xd6 ♖a5 26. ♗c4 ♘d4 27. ♗xd4! exd4 28. ♙xb7 ♖c4 29. ♙f4 ♘e6

29...♖xa2 30.♙d5+-.

30. ♖d2 ♖ca4 31. ♙f3
With a decisive advantage.

94

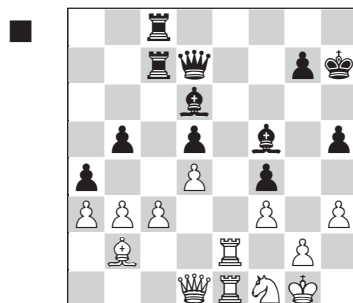
Gata Kamsky

Vasily Ivanchuk

Linares 1991 (4)

2640

2695



Black has the advantage, since the white pieces are completely deprived of mobility. The ♙b2 is bad, but the biggest problem is the knight, which simply cannot be activated – there is no route by which to get it to d3. The question facing Black is how to break through. Preparing the advance ...g7-g5-g4 is risky, as the king is opened up, and the white knight might in the future get into the game.

Black finds a great way of changing the structure on the queenside:

34...b4! 35.axb4

35.cxb4 ♙c2 36.♗d2 axb3♞. Black will bring his bishop away from c2, and penetrate there with his rook.

35...a3 36. ♙xa3

His problems are not solved by 36.♙a1 ♖xc3 37.♙xc3 ♖xc3 – the passed a-pawn is potentially dangerous, whilst there is still no path to activate the knight.

36... ♖xc3 37. ♘h2 ♖a8 38. ♙b2

He has more chances of equalising with 38.♖a2, with the idea of ♖a2-a1 and ♕a3-b2, but it is psychologically hard to decide to pin oneself.

38...♗d3 39.♖c1

39.♗d2 ♕xb4 40.♗xd3 ♕xe1—+ leads to the loss of the exchange.

39...♗c8 40.♗c2

But here, the best defence was 40.♖a1!, although after 40...♖b7 (40...♗xb3 41.♖a2 ♗xb4 42.♖xd5 ♗b5 43.♖a2 ♕b4) 41.♕c1 ♖xb4, Black keeps the advantage.

40...♗xc2 41.♖xc2 ♕g6

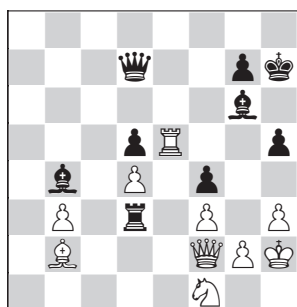
Retaining a stable positional advantage, despite the pawn deficit.

He can win with the surprising 41...♗xf3! 42.♖e2 (42.♖d1 ♗f2 43.♖xh5+ ♕g8 44.♗e8+ ♕f8—+) 42...♗xh3+! 43.♕g1 ♕e4! 44.gxh3 ♖xh3—+.

42.♖f2 ♕xb4 43.♗e5

More tenacious was 43.♗a1 ♗xb3 44.♖e2♯, and it is possible somehow to resist.

Dynamics – trapping pieces



43...♗d1!

The ♕b2 is trapped, although nothing is attacking it.

44.♖e2 ♗b1 45.♗g5 ♖c6 46.♗e5 ♖c2 47.♗xh5+ ♕g8 48.♖e6+ ♕f7 49.♗h8+ ♕xh8 50.♖xf7

♖c6 51.♕c3 ♕xc3 52.♖f8+ ♕h7 53.♖f5+ ♖g6

White resigned.

95

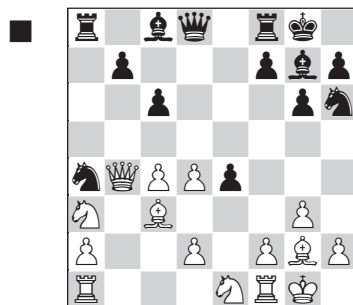
Smbat Lputian

2598

Vasily Ivanchuk

2719

Montecatini Terme 2000 (2)



15...e3!!

The attacked pawn sacrifices itself! The aim of this unexpected blow is to weaken the dark squares in White's camp. Now, the e3-square, instead of being a strong square for White's knight, becomes his main weakness instead.

There was no time to defend the central pawn, as after 15...♗e8 16.♗ec2 ♗f5 17.c5 b6 18.cxb6 ♗xb6 19.♗fe1 ♗d5 20.♖b2 ♗d6 21.♗b4, the advantage gradually dissipates. Although the white pieces are somewhat passive, his position is solid and has no weaknesses.

A tempting possibility was to bring the knight into the centre with 15...♗f5, but after this too, and 16.♗ec2 ♗xd4 17.♗xd4 ♕xd4 18.♕xd4 ♖xd4 19.♗c2 ♖d3 20.♗e3 ♗e8, the white kingside pawn structure is so solid, and the knight on e3 so well-placed, that it is hard

to bring Black's ♖c8 into the game. Here too, Black's advantage is minimal.

16.fxe3

16.♟f3 exf2+ 17.♞xf2 ♟g4 18.♞ff1 c5 19.dxc5 ♟xc3 20.dxc3 ♟e3—+, and the difference in piece activity becomes decisive.

16.♟ec2 c5 17.dxc5 ♟xc3 18.dxc3 exf2+ 19.♞xf2 ♟g4±.

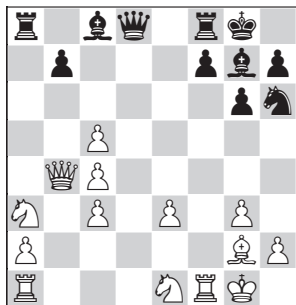
16...c5

Without this blow, the previous move would just be a senseless loss of a pawn.

17.dxc5

Rather more tenacious was 17.♞b3! cxd4 18.exd4 ♟xd4+ 19.♟h1 ♟xc3 20.dxc3 ♟c5 21.♞d1, with an inferior, but defensible position.

17...♟xc3 18.dxc3



18...♞d2!

The dark squares start to creak.

Additional material

Browne-Ljubojevic, Tilburg 1978

19.♟b5

19.♞f2 ♞xc3—+.

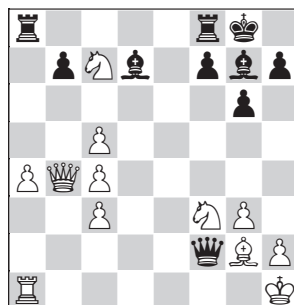
19...♟g4 20.♟f3 ♞xe3+ 21.♟h1 ♟f2+ 22.♞xf2 ♞xf2 23.a4

Now, a tactical motif appears, as a result of which White cannot bring his knight to b5 and then d6, which is his only chance of counterplay. It was essential to play the surprising 23.a4!, and Black still has technical problems in realising his advantage.

23...♟d7!

Having put his bishop on c6, Black starts to exert pressure on the long diagonal, as well as solving his problem with the defence of the b7-pawn.

24.♟c7



24...♞xa4!

White resigned, because of 25.♞xa4 ♟h3! 26.♟xh3 ♞xf3+ 27.♟g1 ♟xc3—+.