



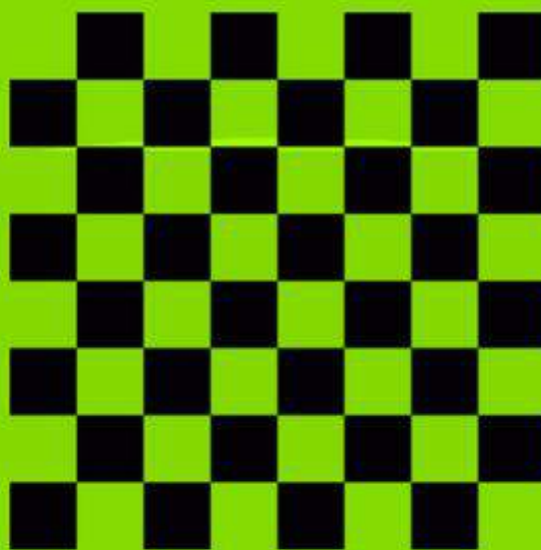
ISSUE 1

MODERN CHESS

MAGAZINE

Understand GM Thinking Process

- Soviet Chess School
- Grab the Initiative in the Opening
- The Secrets of the Sicilian Dragon



- Fight the Dutch
- Endgame Series
- Test Yourself

In This Issue:

GM Viktor Gavrikov
GM Grigor Grigorov
GM Davorin Kuljasevic
GM Boris Chatalbashev
GM Petar G. Arnaudov
IM Spas Kozhuharov



We live in a time where chess knowledge is more accessible than ever. Yet it can be extremely difficult for one to find a reliable source of information. Maybe this is one of the reasons why you are reading these lines now.

When we created Modern Chess magazine, our mission was to provide the chess community with a structured education in the field of chess. “Modern chess” is not a chess magazine in the generally accepted meaning of the word. We are confident that our product is an interactive educational platform. Every month you will enjoy articles that are part of an integrated educational program.

On the list of contributors are the names of experienced players and trainers such as GM Viktor Gavrikov (1985 URSS champion), GM Davorin Kuljasevic, GM Boris Chatalbashev, GM Grigor Grigorov, GM Petar Arnaudov, IM Spas Kozhuharov, GM Kiril Georgiev and many others..

Over the course of the first year, our expert team will have the pleasure to offer you:

- Opening repertoire based on original and creative analyses
- High level of understanding of the grandmaster thinking process
- Comprehensive knowledge of the basic pawn structures arising right after the opening
- Revolutionary methodology of studying the endgame

Last but not least, we would like to highlight the fact that we consider our readers as our lifetime students and we look forward to working with you.



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Endgames Series

by GM Davorin Kuljasevic



such as drawing a winning position, or losing a drawn one. Chess is such a game, where all of your previous gains can be erased by one careless move. Nowhere is that more visible than in the endgame, as the game is very often decided in this stage.

What does it mean to play the endgame well?

„Ok“, you might say, „now I know why endgames are important, but how do I become good at them?“

There are two things that make a strong endgame player:

- 1) Knowledge of **theoretical endgames and principles**
- 2) **Endgame technique**

Countless chess books have been written on the subject of theoretical endgames. Most of them contain examples of how to play **pawn endgames, rook endgames**, endgames with **light** and **heavy pieces** and mixed endgames. Typical endgames are explained in detail and chess students are expected to learn them as an integral part of their chess education.

For a quick example, let us look at one of the most important theoretical rook endgames.

A rook endgame - "Sixth rank" defense

Additionally, every chess player who studies endgames gets acquainted with basic endgame principles, such as **king's opposition, knight's opposition, square rule, triangulation, zugzwang, rook behind the passed pawn**, etc. These principles and their application in games should become the „staple diet“ of every aspiring chess player.

Here is an example of one of the most basic rules in endgames with passed pawns:

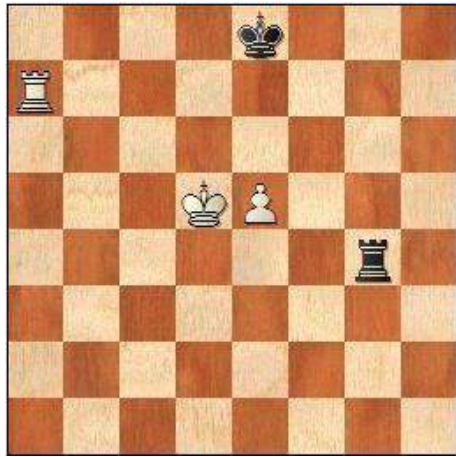
Dear Reader,

Welcome to the wonderful world of endgames! In this series, we will talk about the final part of a chess game - the endgame. But before we go any deeper into our topic, let us determine why knowing endgames is essential for every chess player.

Why are endgames important?

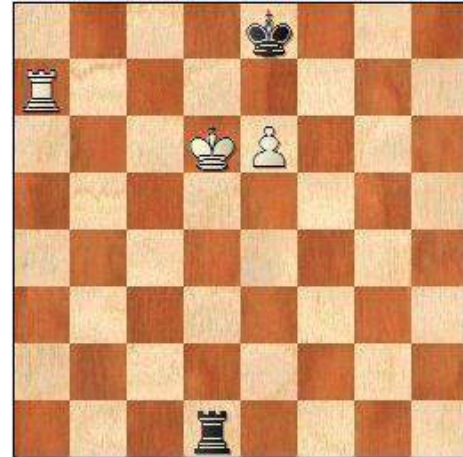
Some chess players, when they hear the word „endgame“, tend to think of it as something tedious and boring. But, as they soon find out, knowledge of endgames is important for every player who likes to win games. Why is that so?

Well, because a lack of knowledge and skill in the endgame often leads to disappointing results,



5...♖h1 6.e7 ♜d1+ 7.♔c6 White executes a typical manoeuvre of moving closer to black rook. 7...♞c1+ 8.♔b5 ♞b1+ 9.♔c4 ♞c1+ 10.♔b3 ♞b1+ 11.♔c2 The king is too close and Black has no more checks. 11...♞e1 12.e8 ♚ ♞xe8 13.♞xe8 and White's win is a now matter of checkmating with rook and king against the king.

3.♔d6 ♜d1+

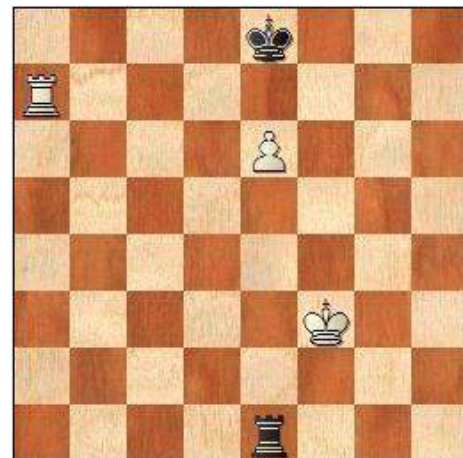


Stopping White from giving the deadly check on a8.

4.♔e5 ♞e1+ The problem for White is that he can't hide from checks on e6 anymore because his pawn is already there. This is another characteristic of the 6th-rank defense – luring white pawn on e6!

5.♔f5 ♞f1+ 6.♔g4 White has nothing better than moving towards black rook.

6...♞g1+ 7.♔f3 ♞e1!



This is one of the most important theoretical and practical rook endgames. White has an extra pawn. His winning plan is simple - push the pawn forward and promote it to a queen. But in this position, black king is in the way of the pawn. So White needs to kick away the king from e8 with his rook and king. Having all this in mind, Black plays a move that disrupts White's plan.

1...♞g6! This move cuts white king off the 6-th rank (this is why this is called a sixth-rank defense), securing the position of his own king in front of white pawn.

1...♞g1?! would be an inaccurate defense because White has 2.♔d6! (2.♔e6 would allow the sixth rank-defense 2...♞g6+ just like in the game.) 2...♞d1+ (or 2...♞g6+ 3.e6!) 3.♔e6 and white king hides on e6! With the following ♞a8 check, White has succeeded in his plan.

2.e6 The only attempt. White threatens ♔d6. The point is that White can not chase the king away only with his rook: 2.♞a8+ ♔e7 3.♞a7+ ♔e8 and there is no progress for White.

2...♞g1! The right move. The rook has done its job on the 6th rank and now goes behind white pawn in order to give checks from behind.

2...♞h6? would be a mistake that would lose the game. White would get his king to the sixth rank with: 3.♞d6 threatening checkmate in one move (♞a8). The only defense is 3...♔f8 but after 4.♞a8+ ♔g7 5.♔d7 White has finally succeeded in his plan – he kicked away black king from e8. Now the pawn can freely promote to a queen.

But now he realizes that the pawn has lost protection of the king. After
8.♖a6 ♕e7 9.♕f2 ♜xe6 10.♜xe6+ ♕xe6 we have a draw. Sixth-rank defense works in similar situations with a passed pawn on any other file (a, b, c, ..., h).

The square rule



This pawn endgame serves to show one of the most important rules of endgames with passed pawns – the "Square rule". Both White and Black have dangerous passed pawns. Since neither king is positioned in front of the pawns, the only way to prevent them from promoting is catching them or, as chess players like to say, "getting into their square". As shown in the diagram, White on the move has to get into the square of black e-pawn, which is marked by the square with angles: e1, b1, b4, e4.

1.♕b4! And White just manages to do that. The king is now in the square of the pawn and he can stop it.

This rule is very important to know because otherwise White could even lose the game, should he engage in a pawn race with 1.h5? e3 2.h6 e2 3.h7 e1♔+ and Black promotes the queen with check 4.♕b5 ♔h1 and wins the pawn, so all he needs to do to win the game is to checkmate with the queen against the king.

1...e3 Let's see what happens if Black tries to catch white pawn. He is obviously out of the square marked with h8–d8–d4–h4. Taking it a move

further, 1...♔c7 2.h5 ♕d6 he is still out of the square. This means that White promotes the queen after 3.h6 ♕e6 4.h7 ♕f7 5.h8♔ with a winning endgame.

2.♕c3 Again, white king gets into a square of the pawn, this time a smaller one (e1, c1, c3, e3).

2...e2 3.♕d2 and he finally catches the pawn. We have already seen that black king is out of white pawn's square, so White safely promotes a new queen with a winning position.

Once a chess player gets a handle on the basic theoretical endgames and principles, he can proceed to mastering endgame technique. For this, he needs to understand **advanced endgame principles**. Let us name a few of them here: **schematic thinking, the principle of two weaknesses, good and bad piece trade, king centralization, suppressing counterplay**, etc. Many of these principles were explained in an excellent endgame book called „**Endgame Strategy**“ by **Mikhail Shereshevsky**. In our endgame series, we will build upon these principles with classical and modern examples from endgame practice.

Let us begin with a great endgame player, the ex-World Champion (1957-1958), **Vassily Smyslov**. (see the photo below)



Milev,Zdravko - Smyslov,Vassily

Leipzig ol (Men) fin-A Leipzig (1), 28.10.1960



In this middlegame position, White just announced check to black king with the queen on d4. Smyslov offers queen trade with:

33... ♖f6! The alternative 33...e5 probably didn't appeal to Smyslov because White gains counterplay against the f7 pawn after 34. ♖d5 followed by ♗d7.

34. ♖xf6+ ♔xf6 White has accepted the opposite-colored bishops endgame with rooks on the board. The position might look drawish at first sight, but Black holds a long-term edge, thanks to the spoiled pawn structure on White's kingside (potential weaknesses).

35. b3?!



Milev makes the first mistake in the endgame. It is important to notice that White may take the bishop with 35. ♗x8 but then Black could take it back with 35... ♗x1+ Now we have a rook endgame in which Black wins a pawn after 36. ♔g2 ♗b1 with excellent winning chances. It is

understandable why white player didn't go for this position (he correctly solved the "Problem of piece exchange", which we will talk about later). However, White forgot about another, even more important endgame principle - "Centralization of the king". 35. ♔e2! was, therefore, the right move. White king gets closer to the center and gives support to its bishop.

35... ♗h6 36. ♔g2? White does not only fail to bring his king closer to the center - he withdraws it even further!

36. ♔e2 was, again, the right choice.

36... ♗b1 Smyslov starts to methodically strengthen the position. He begins by placing pressure on the first potential weakness - the b3-pawn.

37. ♗c2 ♗b2 38. ♗c8 ♗d2! A strong move. Black does not only activate the bishop - he also threatens to block the connection between white rook and the bishop by putting his own bishop on c3.

39. ♔f1 White realizes that his king should occupy a position in the center after all, but he might be too late...

39... ♗c3 Mission accomplished - and now white bishop is hanging.

40. ♗d1 ♗d4!



Another strong move. Black bishop holds a dominant position in the center of the board, at the same time attacking the second weakness, the f2 pawn.

41. ♔c2 Here we have the principle of two weaknesses at play, where defending the f2 pawn with 41. ♕e2 would allow Black to take advantage of the first weakness 41... ♖xb3 - the b3 pawn!

41... ♖g5! "King's activity" - another common theme in endgames. Black king is moving towards another weakness in White's position - the f3 pawn.

42. ♖c4 ♕e5 43. ♕d1? The decisive mistake. White gives up the h-pawn, but underestimates the strength of Black's h-pawn.

43. h3 was necessary to save the pawn, and White is still fighting on, despite a difficult position.

43... ♖b1!



A very strong intermediate move. At first sight it seems illogical to draw white king towards the center, but there is a deeper idea behind the plan. Black will take the h2 pawn and then push the h-pawn toward the promotion square. In this case, white king could stop the pawn from the g2 square. But now the king is forced to e2 to protect the bishop, so it can't protect the h-pawn as well. This is yet another example of the two weaknesses principle, the first weakness being the d1 bishop, and the second one the h- passer. Another important principle at work here is "prophylaxis", or in other words - preventing your opponent's ideas (♕g2 in this case).

44. ♕e2 ♕xh2 45. ♖xb4 White won the b- pawn in exchange for his h-pawn, but Smyslov shows that his passed pawn is much stronger than white's.

45... h5 46. ♖b7 ♕f6 47. ♖d7 h4 48. f4 As we explained earlier, White's king was deflected from stopping

the h-pawn with a precise 43... ♖b1! Now he has to give up the f-pawn to get into the square of the h-pawn.

The attempt to stop the pawn with the rook with 48. ♖d8 and ♖h8 runs into 48... ♕g7!

48... ♕xf4 49. ♕f3 Now white king is in the square of the pawn, but Black has two passed pawns on g and h files so his position is winning.

49... g5 50. ♕g2 ♕e5! Once more Smyslov demonstrates his understanding of the importance of king's activity in endgames.

51. ♕h5?



The final, tactical, mistake. White's position was getting very difficult to play anyway, and mistakes are quite common in such positions.

51... h3+! A precise move that forced Black to resign, because after 52. ♕xh3 ♖h1+ Black wins the bishop on h5.

Smyslov's game enabled us to observe several important endgame principles. However, it is one thing to observe, another thing - to be able to use in our own games. This is where **practice** comes into play As a player gathers experience in tournament games, he/she gets a chance to apply some of the learned endgame positions and principles. If necessary, the player could improve on different aspects of his/her endgame skill by **studying games of old masters**. In a nutshell, it is through a combination of study and practice that one can reach mastery.

Masters of endgames

Chess history recognizes many great endgame players. In fact, virtually all World Champions were excellent endgame players, including such reckless attackers as **Mikhail Tal** (see the photo below) or **Garry Kasparov**.



Take the following example:

Tal - Trifunovic

Palma de Mallorca, 1966



Tal, with white pieces, is a pawn up, but is still far from winning the game. One of Black's main trumps is his advanced passed h-pawn. How does a brilliant tactician deal with it?

1.e6! The beginning of a beautiful combination. Had White blocked the pawn with 1.♔h2 Black would get enough counterplay attacking the f4 pawn with 1...♖h4

1...♕xe6 If Black took the pawn with the king, it would interfere with Black's bishop defense of h3 pawn, so White could now take it with 1...♔xe6 2.♕xh3+; On the other hand, Black could play an intermediate move 1...h2!? threatening to promote the pawn on the next move. Therefore 2.♖xh2 3.♔xh2 forced, when 3...♕xe6 4.♕g2 ♕d7

5.♔g3 would lead to an unpleasant same-color bishops endgame for Black. White would eventually create a passed pawn with a b4-b5 breakthrough.

2.♖a7+ ♕d7?! Trifunovic is apparently still unaware of Tal's idea. Otherwise he would have played 2...♔f8 3.♖a8+ ♔g7 4.♖xh8 ♔xh8 5.♕xh3 again trying to defend a pawn-down bishops endgame.

3.♔h2!!



This is the point of Tal's combination – the famous "Zugzwang". The term derives from German and implies that the opponent is losing, regardless of what move he makes next. Let's see for ourselves that Black is indeed losing:

3...♖h5 3...♔d8 allows 4.♖a8+! ♕c8 5.♕a6 ♔c7 6.♕xc8 ♖xc8 7.♖xc8+ ♔xc8 8.♔xh3 with a winning pawn endgame; 3...♔e6 runs into 4.♕c4+! ♔e7 5.f5 followed by ♕e6, winning as well. 3...f5 looks like a good enough defense, but White strikes from the other side with 4.b5! cxb5 5.c6 winning the bishop. Finally, 3...♖b8 stops b5, but leaves the h3 pawn unprotected, so White wins with 4.♕xh3! f5 5.♕xf5 also transferring into a winning pawn endgame.

4.b5! ♖xc5 Black prevents losing the bishop after 4...cxb5 5.c6

5.♕xh3 f5 Black counted on this move to get out of the pin. But, as it turns out, it is only a temporary measure.

5...♖c2+ 6.♔g1 (6.♔g3 ♖c3+ 7.♔g2 ♖xh3)

6.bxc6! Tal finds the "second weakness" - the c6 pawn, which is so often the winning theme in endgames.

6...♖xc6 7.♗xf5 ♖d6



Forced, and here comes the final point of the combination

8.♔g3! Before taking on d7, White improves the position of his king.

It would be a huge mistake to take the bishop at once 8.♗xd7 ♖xd7 9.♖xd7+ ♔xd7 as the pawn endgame after 10.♔g3 ♔e6 11.♔g4 ♔f6 is theoretically drawn. In order to win such an endgame, White needs to have his king in front of the pawn so that he could achieve the "Opposition".

8...♔e8 9.♖xd7 Now is the right time to exchange all pieces and enter a pawn endgame.

9...♖xd7 10.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 11.♔g4 ♔e6 12.♔g5
 Extra tempo that Tal won with 8.♔g3 allowed him to take control of f6, the critical square in front of the pawn.

12...♔f7 13.♔f5!



and now White wins by opposition! Tal's opponent Trifunovic resigned at this moment, but let us take this basic endgame a little further to show the importance of opposition.

13...♔e7 Black is forced to move out of the way. It is worth noting that if it was White to move, Black would hold the opposition and the game would be drawn.

In the case of 13...♔g7 White goes the other way 14.♔e6

14.♔g6 ♔f8 15.♔f6 White forces another opposition.

15...♔g8 16.♔e7! Finally, White kicked out black king from the f-file and his pawn has a free pass toward the promotion square.

16...♔g7 17.f5 ♔g8 18.f6 ♔h7 19.f7 ♔g6 20.f8♖ and the rest is easy.

It is also true that Tal's endgame skill never reached its full potential, as many of his games would end before the endgame. A lot of them finished in the middlegame, where he either destroyed his opponent in a sweeping attack, or died by the blade of his own sword. Thankfully, there were quite a few people who not only played the endgame well – they played a lot. Enter Akiba Rubinstein (see the photo below), a Polish Grandmaster (1880-1961). Almost half of the tournament games he ever played ended in a rook endgame! Rubinstein was a fine player whose games have become a valuable source of endgame wisdom for many generations of chess players.



Some of the other great masters of endgame are **Jose Raul Capablanca, Salo Flohr, Vassily Smyslov, Bobby Fischer**, and the current World Champion **Magnus Carlsen**, to name just a few. One can always admire and learn from their endgame prowess, so I encourage the reader to study endgames of these players if he/she wants to improve their skill.

We hope that this short endgame guide, along with the future endgame lessons in our magazine, will help the reader learn more and get better at one of the most captivating parts of a chess game!

Fighting for the Initiative

by GM Boris Chatalbashev

Sokolov, Andrei (2555) –
Shirov, Alexei (2715) France, 1994

1.e4 g6 2.♘c3 ♗g7 3.f4 c6 4.♚f3?!



Generally, whatever opening you choose, you must develop your pieces as fast as possible, trying to also control the center. Then in the middlegame, try to impose on your opponent the plan you have chosen. If possible, ensure that your pieces become active enough so they dominate the board. To do this one must strive for the initiative. After this initial stage, one can expand by domination or a direct attack against the king. So far, so good, however, in practice, things rarely happen 'for free'. Your opponent is also alert and also has a reasonable plan. He is just as keen on being active himself or exchanging your good pieces. So in order to win the tempos needed to take the initiative, quite often one must make some concessions - either positional or material. Of course every player has to evaluate what is more important. But generally I must tell you that every top player seizes the opportunity to take the initiative as soon as possible. As you will see from the games, such opportunity typically presents itself after one or two slow, somewhat aimless moves on the part of the opponent, awkward piece placement, just a temporary weakness - and one must be ready to exploit that! In certain types of positions - with kings in the center or castled at the opposite sides, dynamic, with a lot of tension and tactics - the initiative is more important than anything. We are going to start with the fight for the initiative right from the opening.

Quite often it happens that a player wants to avoid theory and makes a somewhat strange move. Here the idea is to discourage d5, but developing the queen so early is not good, as this can give Black tempos to attack the strongest piece at a later stage.

After 4.d4 d5 5.e5 we reach, though not with the normal move order, a well-known position where I prefer for Black 5...♘h6

4...d5! Nevertheless! There is nothing wrong with 4...d6, of course, but I am sure that the majority of GMs would play the more active move, in an attempt to exploit the awkward placement of the queen. And a player like Shirov does not need a second invitation for a sacrifice.

5.d3 Sensible.

After 5.exd5 ♘f6 you do not need to calculate more to know that Black is somewhat better. Just to spot the ideas - ♗g4, ♘c6-d4, the weak diagonal g1-a7. For example: 6.dxc6 (6.♗c4 ♗g4 (6...0-0 7.♘ge2 ♗g4 8.♚g3 b5 (8...♗xe2)) 7.♚g3 ♗f5) 6...♘xc6 7.♗b5 ♗d7

5...♘f6 6.h3 Again a little slow.

6...e5!?



Third sacrifice! Even though it is an obvious one, it shows once your attack has been launched, you'd better once your attack has been launched, you'd better not allow your opponent to breathe even for a single move!

10. ♖f2

After 10. d×e4 ♘×e4 11. ♘×e4 d×e4 12. ♖×e4 ♖e8,

Black tries to act fast - second pawn sacrifice. Not sure it is the best move, but it surely is the most aggressive one!

7.f5 White should have probably accepted that one. After 7.f×e5 ♗fd7 8.d4 c5 the position is not so clear. The play may continue 9.d×c5 (9. ♗e3 ♘c6 (In his book "Fire on the board" Shirov gives 9...c×d4 10. ♗×d4 ♘c6? missing 11.e6!, which comes to show that nobody is capable of taking into account everything and many sacrifices are just by intuition.) 10. ♗ge2 d×e4 11. ♘×e4 0-0) 9...d4 10. ♘b5 0-0 11. ♘×d4 ♘×c5 12. ♗e3 ♘bd7 13. 0-0-0 ♘×e5 14. ♖f4 ♖a5 15. ♗b1 ♗d8 16. ♗e2 ♗e6

7...gxf5 8.exf5 0-0 9. ♗ge2 e4!



the position opens up so much that it is tough to imagine that the white king will survive in the center.

10...exd3 11.cxd3 ♖e8 12. ♗d1 ♘bd7?



This time Black plays too slow. Strange, as he had seen the fourth sacrifice - 12...c5 with advantage.

12...♖a6 is a computer suggestion, but for humans is not easy to see that after 13.g4 he has 13...♗e4!



with the idea 14.d×e4 d×e4+ 15.♗e1 e3! and ♖b4 to follow; 12...c5 threatening d4 13.♙×c5 ♗×f5

13.g4 ♗e5 14.♗g3 d4 15.♗ce4 ♗d5 16.♖h2?



Because of the Black's mistake earlier, White has managed to play g4 and ♗g3, creating serious chances on the kingside. Now he had to play the active 16. ♗h5 with very murky, approximately equal play.

16.♗h5 ♗c4 17.♗g5 (17.d×c4?! ♗e3+) 17...♗ce3+ 18.♗c1 ♙a5 19.♗×g7 ♗×g7

16...b6! Black's last piece comes into play.

White is unable to defend the pawn on d3.

17.♗h5 ♗a6 18.♙xd4

18.♗×g7 ♗×g7 19.♗f4 c5

18...♗h8!

Rare but interesting line in Trompovsky

Of course, there are many openings where one side (usually White) sacrifices material for initiative and fast development. But I think this is a good example for our theme, as both Black and White are a pawn up at a certain moment and give it back almost immediately. The initiative is more important!

1.d4 ♗f6 2.♗g5 ♗e4 3.♗f4 c5 4.f3 ♗f6!?



The main line is 4...♙a5+ 5.c3 ♗f6 6.♗d2 c×d4 7.♗b3 ♙b6 8.♙×d4 Not every player, though, likes to exchange queens that early. Also it has been analyzed in considerable depth. With the rare 4...♗f6 Black can not only surprise his opponent, it is a good move anyway.

5.dxc5 After 5.d5 ♗h5 6.♗c1 e5 Black has a good version of similar positions in Classic Benoni/Kings Indian (6...e6 is also interesting.)

5...b6!



6.e4 Hardly any good player has accepted the sacrifice and understandably so - after 6.cb6 ♖xb6 Black wins another tempo because of b2 pawn and quickly occupies the center. His next move is easy - d5, ♘c6, e5, ♙c5. Note that all this is possible because White has played f2-f3, not only weakening the diagonal, but the knight on g1 cannot develop normally.

6...bxc5 7.e5 White has given back the pawn, but now he is ahead in development. He must try to make quick use of it, though, as Black after bxc5 may prevail in the center and has better strategic perspectives in general.

7.♗c3 ♗c6 8.♘d5 d6 9.♙c4 ♘d7 10.♗e2 e6
 11.♗dc3 ♗b6 12.♙b5 ♙b7



0-1 Korobkov,P (2460)-Chatalbashev,B (2566)/Rogaska Slatina SLO 2011

7...♖c7!



The key move. If the knight has to retreat, then all Blacks' concept is just a failure.

8.♗c3 ♗c6 9.♙d2 ♗h5
 9...♗xe5?! 10.♗b5 ♖b8 11.0-0 e6 (11...a6
 12.♙xe5! ♖xe5 13.♙a5) 12.♙a5 ♗d3+ 13.♙xd3 ♖xf4+
 14.♗b1 ♗e7 15.♙e4 with initiative

10.♙e3



When preparing that line, I was somewhat afraid of that move, although nobody had used it in practice. It seemed to me that White gains too many tempos for the pawn and his play is easy - 0-0-0, g4, g5, f4 with nice initiative. 10.♗d5 is not winning, but rather losing a tempo 10...♖b8 11.♙e3 (11.e6 ♗xf4)



11...e6; 10.♗b5 ♖b8 11.♙e3 a6 12.♗c3 ♖xe5 is similar to the main line.

10...♖xe5 It proved that 10...♗xe5 is also not bad. Then it is up to White to decide if he will force a draw or play a very unclear position – 11.♗b5 ♖b7 12.♖a5 (12.♗xc5 d6 13.♗e3 ♗d7) 12...♗c6 13.♗c7+ ♔d8 14.♗e6+ ♖e8 15.♗c7+

11.0-0-0 e6 12.g4 ♗f6 13.g5 ♗d5!



Like it or not, in order to avoid bigger trouble, Black gives up the material advantage but manages to exchange the queens.

The alternative 13...♗h5 is not losing, but very dangerous - 14.f4 ♖c7 15.♗e2 g6 16.♗xh5 g×h5 17.♗e4 d5 18.♗f6+ ♔d8 19.♗f3 with attack; And 13...♗g8 is a move that you must never consider. 14.♗b5!

14.♗xd5 ♖xd5 15.♖xd5 exd5 16.♗xd5 d6 17.♗f4 ♗e6 18.♗d1 0-0-0=



Bruzon Batista, Lazaro (2609) - Flores, Diego (2558) Iberoamerican-ch GpB 2nd Morelia (2), 16.02.2008

1.d4g6 2.♗f3 ♗g7 3.e4 d6 4.♗c3 ♗d7 5.♗c4 e6 6.0-0 a6 Black has played a rather passive set-up. But it has been used in even higher profile games, especially in 'must win' situations for Black, for example in FIDE knock-outs. The reason - no exchanges at all, no forced draw variations. Here or at next move, though, it was better to start developing the kingside with 6...♗e7 and 7...0-0. Since Steinitz and Lasker, there is a principle to develop first the side where you are likely to castle. Now Black's king stays at center for one move too long, which White cleverly uses.

7.a4 b6 8.♗e1 ♗b7 9.e5!



9...dxe5 Somewhat safer is 9...d5 but after 10.♗f1 Black's bishops are looking very grim.

10.d5! Opening lines against the king.

10...exd5 11.♖xd5 ♗e7 12.♙g5 ♙xd5 12...f6 does not really help Black's cause - 13.♗xe5!

13.♙xd5 ♖b8 14.♙c6 f6 15.♙xf6! ♙xf6 16.♗xe5 ♙xe5 17.♖xe5 ♖f8 18.♙d5?!



13...♙xd5 14.♗xd7 ♙xc4 15.♙xf6! ♖xd7 (15...♙xf6 16.♗xf6+ ♖f7 17.♙f3 ♗f5 18.♖ad1! ♙xf6 19.♖d7+) 16.♖xe7+!

Here White goes astray. In such situations the attacker must seek to regain the material without loosening his grip or giving up the initiative. There are some other moves offering big advantage, but the best is the prophylactic 18.♖e6!



The consequences of that move and the following computer geometry are not easy to calculate in advance. Still, the ideas are the same - White lacks material, but has initiative and huge lead in development. He will take one of the bishops by force. (For a practical player it is enough to see that 16.♙xd7+ ♖xd7 17.♖xe7+ ♖c6 18.♖xg7 is a pawn up) 16...♙xe7 17.♙xe7 ♖xe7 18.♙g4 ♙f7 19.♙b4+ ♖d7 20.♖d1+ ♖c8 21.♙g4+ ♖b8 22.♖d7 ♖c8 (22...♖f8 23.♙f4) 23.♙b4 a5 24.♙d2+

aimed against 18... ♖f6. Black is so tied-up, pins everywhere, he will lose the extra piece anyway 18...♖f7 19.♙d2 ♖f8 20.♙xd7 No exchanges in that line compared to the game, White is winning.

18...♖f7 19.♖ae1 ♖f8 The white queen is now hanging, so Black relieves his position by eliminating some of White's active pieces.

20. ♖xd7 ♜xc6 21. ♖xc6 ♗d4



In the following battle Black managed to save half a point.

Draw

This might seem like a theoretical article and someone may use the variation (it is definitely good), but I think it is also a great example of logic in chess. Multiple transformations between material and development advantage happen so often in games, not only in the opening. Unfortunately, even the most enterprising chess sometimes ends in just an equal ending...

Portisch, Lajos - Matanovic, Aleksandar
 Skopje/Ohrid Skopje (5), 1968

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 e6 3.g3 d5 4.♗g2 ♗e7 5.0-0-0
 6.d4 dxc4 7.♗e5 c5 These days almost everybody plays 7...♗c6



The idea is that White loses some tempo if he takes the pawn on c6. Also b file is opened for the black rook

and the strong bishop on g2 gets exchanged. When that happens White's kingside is somewhat vulnerable and Black gets some initiative. Note that after taking on c6, White has to lose also some time for the c4 pawn. The main line is 8. ♗xc6



(8. ♗xc6 bxc6 9. ♗xc6 ♖b8 10. ♗c3 the bishop on c6 is somewhat misplaced and Black can try either to cut it from the rest of White's army with 10...♗d5 or exchange it immediately (10...♗b7)) 8...bxc6 9. ♗xc6 ♖e8 10. ♗xe7+ ♗xe7 when Black normally loses the pawn on c4, but frees himself with either c5 or e5. White must be careful with the squares around his king. Alas, as in many similar variations, there is plenty of theory which estimates the position as an almost forced draw...

8.dxc5 ♖c7 9. ♗xc4 ♗xc5 Black's idea is that because of ♗xf2 threat, White has to make some passive move, defending the knight. If so, he will develop rather comfortably. The fight is for one single tempo!

10. ♗c3!



And Portisch ignores the threat!

10...♖d8 The problem is that 10...♗xf2+

11.♗f4!



11.♖xf2 ♗xc4

Again trying to win as many tempos and develop as fast as possible.

11...♗xf2? Blunders most often happen when someone already does not like his position...



The best move 11...♗e7 does not solve all the problems 12.♗c2 ♖c6 13.♖ad1 and White is better off, his pieces are well-placed, Black still has to find a way to develop the queenside.

12.♗xf2 e5 13.♖b5!

will be met by 12.♗xf6! gxf6 13.♗h6 followed by ♖e4, possibly e3 threatening mate on g4 and so on. Black is an exchange and a pawn up, but the king is very weak, the queenside is not developed at all. White can gain even more tempos with ♖c1 or ♖d6, his play generally is very easy.



This is what Black missed, in all variations checks on c5 will be countered with ♗e3.

13...♗e7 14.♗d2 ♖c6 15.♖ba3 ♗e6 16.♖c1e4 17.♖g1
 White defended accurately and gradually won the game.

1-0

Rare Weapon against the Leningrad System in Dutch Defense

by GM Grigor Grigorov



nightmares to your opponents. The main position arises after the moves:

1. $\text{d}f3$ $f5$ 2. $\text{d}4$ $\text{d}f6$ 3. $\text{g}3$ $\text{g}6$ 4. $\text{g}2$ $\text{g}7$ 5. $0-0$ $0-0$
6. $\text{b}d2$ $\text{d}6$ 7. $\text{e}1$



We have reached the main crossroads of this rare line. With his last move, White prepares the advance $e2-e4$ after which the rook will be able to exert pressure along the semi-open "e" file. I would also like to emphasize the fact that White has not yet played the move $c2-c4$ and he has the possibility to restrict the "g7" bishop by means of $c2-c3$.

7... $\text{d}e4$ The main move in this position. Black takes radical measures against the pawn advance. He wants to open the "f" file for his rook after possible exchange of the knights. Before we move on, it's necessary to take a look at other possible continuations.

7... $\text{d}c6$ Very interesting idea. Black not only prepares the $e7-e5$ advance but also increases the pressure over the "d4" pawn. The main drawback of this move is that the knight is placed in front of the "c7" pawn. As a consequence, the "c" pawn can no longer participate in the fight for the center by $c7-c6$. Furthermore, as it will become clear later, in some cases White could use the restricted mobility of Black's queen in general, therefore you must think twice before placing your knight in front of the "c7" (c2) pawn!

Hello dear reader!

I have the pleasure to introduce you to the extremely interesting Leningrad system in Dutch Defense. Thanks to the flexible pawn structure in this variation, the arising positions do not easily lend themselves to computer analysis. One needs deep understanding in order to treat correctly such types of positions. That's why the Leningrad system is the favorite choice of creative players like Nakamura, Bartel and Malaniuk. In the present article, I would like to share with you my favorite weapon against this dangerous system. The variation that I am going to show you is not only positionally sound, but also less popular than the main lines. In my experience, most players are not well prepared for this rare line. You can also seize the opportunity to cause

8.e4! In order to use the "bad" position of the knight, White should play very energetically. The move 8...e5



Allows White to obtain the favorable pawn structure which we have already discussed.

a) After 8...fxe4 9.♖xe4 ♗xe4 (9...♗g4 10.c3 ♕d7 11.♗b3+ ♖h8 12.♗fg5 ↑ ½ – ½
 Steinmacher,J-Denk,J/Forchtenberg
 2003/EXT 2004 (12) 10.♗xe4



We reach an extremely important position where black has 3 options: ♗f5, d5 and e5. Let's analyze them one by one. 10...e5



a1) 10...♗f5 11.♖e1 The move 11...♗g4



is almost always well met by

a1.1) 11...e5 + This option leads by force to an endgame which is highly favourable for White. 12.dxe5 dxe5 13.♗xd8 ♖axd8 14.c3



We have a typical position where Black has problems due to the weakness of the "e5" pawn

and the restricted mobility of the Black's dark-squared bishop. In such positions, our plan includes 3 main stages:

1) blockade of the "e5" pawn by means of g5-e4 and e3.

2) exchange a pair of rooks along the "d" file.

3) Launch a queenside expansion (b2-b4, a2-a4) which will be supported by the minor pieces. 14...e4 Black couldn't afford himself to wait anymore.

15. e5 16. e4 d3 17. d1! h6 Not only preventing the move g5 but also planning to double the rooks along the "d" file. Fortunately, White finds an interesting way to undermine the stability of Black's knight.

18. f4! Planning e2 on the next move. 18...c5 Very interesting idea. Black tries to support their knight at any price! (The move 18... fe8 Doesn't offer Black enough compensation. Play might continue: 19. e2 e8 20. g4! e4 21. a4 c1 e3 22. e4± White is just pawn up) 19. e2 c4 (19... e2? 20. e4 d8 e4 21. e2 d1 22. e4 b7+- White threatens to play Bf3 after which the game is over.) 20. e4 d3 e4! 21. d2 cxd3 22. e4 e5 (22... e2 23. e6) 23. e4 b7 White's plan is very simple - he wants to play d1, e2 and e3 with completely winning position. Black's compensation for the missing pawns doesn't seem to be sufficient. His only decent idea is to transfer the dark-squared bishop on the "a7-g1" diagonal but White has enough resources to prevent this plan.

23... fe8 24. e2 e8 25. b4!+-;

23... fe8 24. e2 e8 25. b4!+-;

23... fe8 24. e2 e8 25. b4!+-;

a1.2) 11... d7



Quite a typical idea in such structures. Black activates his queen and at the same time wants to prepare e7-e5 advance by means of ae8. Also in some cases he could try to exchange the white-squared bishops by playing h3. 12.c3 This move forces Black to lose important tempo in order to parry the threat b3+ 12... h8



13.d5! Typical idea in such kind of structures. White's play is now based on the backward pawn on "e7". 13... e5 14. e5 e5 15. e3



White's plan is fairly simple: After the exchange of the dark-squared bishops he will seize the opportunity to build tremendous pressure against the "e7" pawn. Despite of the wide choice of moves, Black is doomed to passivity. 15... e6



Black tries to get rid of his weakness on "e7" by playing e7-e5 as soon as possible. In order to achieve this advance, he should remove his pieces from the long diagonal (b6, ♖ae8 and only then e7-e5). Although, White gains valuable time to organize his invasion along the "e" file. For instance: after 15...♗h3 16.♗xh3 ♖xh3 17.♗d4 ♕f5 18.f4!

prevents the exchange of the bishops but allows for a clever tactical trick. 16.♗xc5! ♗xc3 17.♗d4+ ♗xd4 18.♖xd4+ ♖g8 Now it's time to make use of the awkward position of Black's bishop. 19.h3! Preparing the advance g3-g4. The pawn on h3 is untouchable because of the unprotected position of the "e7" pawn. 19...♖d8 (19...♗xh3 20.♗xh3 ♖xh3 21.♖e7 ♖f7 22.♖xf7 ♖xf7 23.♖f4+ followed by ♖d6) 20.♖e3 ♖f7 21.♖ae1 a6 22.♖h4 ♖f8 23.g4 ♗c2 24.♖c3 ♖a5 (24...♗a4 doesn't help either. 25.♖f3!+- Black couldn't defend simultaneously "h7" and "e7" pawns.) 25.♖h6+ ♖g8 26.♖d2 Black resigns in view of the threat ♖c8. 1-0 Bogdanovski,V-Nikac,P/Niksic 1994/EXT 98 (26); After 15...a6 16.♗d4 ♗xd4 17.♖xd4+ ♖g8 White executes his typical plan without facing any difficulties. 18.♖e3! ♖f7 19.♖ae1±



White is almost winning. 18...♗f6? Loses on the spot. (18...♗xd4+ is somewhat better although White's advantage is still close to decisive. For example: 19.♖xd4+ ♖f6 20.♖xe7 ♖xd4+ 21.cxd4±) 19.♖xe7 ♖ae8 20.♗xf6+ ♖xf6 21.♖xc7+- 1-0 Szekely,P-Simons,R/Rosmalen 1993/EXT 2002 (50);

15...c5?!

Despite the fact that White's advantage is obvious, I would like to give you some useful tips to help you convert your advantage in this type of positions. As you could see, Black has enough resources to defend the weakness on e7. That's why we should try to create a second weakness in Black's camp. In order to achieve that, we should take the following actions:

- 1) Exchange white-squared bishops by means of $\text{B}e4$ in order to make use of the weakened "e6" square.
- 2) Place the rook on e6 while the queen should on e4.
- 3) Create second weakness on the kingside using h4-h5 pawn contact;
 16. $\text{g}d4$ $\text{B}ae8$ 17. $\text{B}e3$ b6 18. $\text{Q}d2$ e5! 19. dxe6 $\text{B}xe6$
 20. $\text{B}ae1$ $\text{B}xe3$ 21. $\text{Q}xe3$ $\text{Q}g7$ 22. $\text{g}xf6$ $\text{Q}xf6$ 23. $\text{Q}e7!$ ±
 1-0 Schulz, K-Zysk, R/Germany 1992/GER-chT (30);

a1.3) It looks tempting to play 11... $\text{b}b4?$ but White has a powerful response up his sleeve. 12. $\text{h}h4!$ $\text{Q}d7$ (The "c2" pawn is untouchable: 12... $\text{b}xc2?$ 13. $\text{b}xf5$ $\text{b}xa1$ 14. $\text{b}xg7$ $\text{c}xg7$ 15. $\text{g}e3+$ --; 12... $\text{g}xc2?$ 13. $\text{Q}d2!$ with the idea to attack the knight by a2-a3. 13... $\text{b}d3$ 14. $\text{B}f1$ $\text{b}xc1$ 15. $\text{Q}xc2+$ --) 13. $\text{b}xf5$ $\text{Q}xf5$ 14. $\text{B}e2!$ c6 15. c3 $\text{b}d5$ 16. $\text{Q}b3$ $\text{B}ab8$ 17. $\text{g}d2$ ± The strong pair of bishops and the weakness on "e7" gives White an obvious advantage. Now he is planning to play $\text{B}e1$; 12.c3 with the idea $\text{Q}b3+$ followed by $\text{g}g5$ 12... $\text{h}h8$ Allowing White to grab the bishop pair but there is no better option. (12...e6?!



Prepares the move $\text{Q}f6$ which allows Black to make use of the weakened "f" file. Fortunately, that idea doesn't work because White can take advantage of the unprotected position of the bishop on g4 to transfer his rook into the kingside. 13. $\text{B}e4!$ $\text{g}f5$ 14. $\text{g}g5$ Typical for this variation intermediate move. White's plan is quite logical - $\text{B}h4$, $\text{Q}d2$, $\text{g}h6$ followed by $\text{h}g5$. For instance: 14... $\text{Q}d7$ 15. $\text{B}h4$ $\text{B}ae8$ 16. $\text{Q}d2$ $\text{Q}c8$ 17. $\text{g}h6$ $\text{B}e7$ 18. $\text{B}e1$ $\text{g}xh6$ 19. $\text{Q}xh6$ $\text{b}d8$ 20. $\text{h}g5$ ± ½-½ Geisler, R - Jugelt, T/Germany 1994/GER-chT2 (35); 12... $\text{Q}d7?$ is losing immediately after the typical: 13. $\text{Q}b3+$ $\text{c}h8$ 14. $\text{h}g5$ Because after 14... $\text{b}d8$ White make use of the restricted mobility of the black-squared bishop. 15. f3! $\text{g}f5$ 16. $g4$ h6 17. $gxf5$ $hxf5$ 18. $\text{g}xg5$ $\text{g}f6$ 19. $\text{g}xf6+$ $\text{B}xf6$ It seems that Black has parried all the threats but White has the following hidden rook transfer available along the 3rd rank. 20. $\text{B}e3!$ $gxf5$ 21. f4!→ c6 22. $\text{B}h3+$ $\text{c}g7$ 23. $\text{B}g3+$ $\text{B}g6$ 24. $\text{B}xg6+$ $\text{c}xg6$ 25. $\text{Q}g8++$ 1-0 Szekely, P-Theocharides, C/Athens 1997/EXT 2001 (29)) 13. h3 $\text{g}xf3$ Otherwise White plays d4-d5. After: 14. $\text{g}xf3$ e5 15. dxe5 $\text{g}xe5$ 16. $\text{g}g2$ $\text{Q}d7$ 17. $\text{g}e3$ $\text{B}ae8$ 18. $\text{Q}a4$ ± We reach an open position where the potential of the bishop pair is extremely high. =Δ-Δ Schulz, K-Vokac, M/Prague 1987/EXT 97 (65);

a2) 10...d5



11. $\text{B}h4!$ Very important moment. The reader already knows that the rook could be very well placed on h4 - from here it controls the "g4" square and at the same time participates in the

kingside attack. That's exactly the move that I have chosen in my game against GM Michal Krasenkow from Poland. (11.♖e1 doesn't work here because of: 11...♗g4 12.c3 e5! and Black is completely fine.) 11...♗f5!



The best way to play this position! Krasenkow wants to put his bishops on e4 and f6 and only there to play e7-e5. (11...♖f5 12.c3 e5? 13.dxe5 ♗xe5 14.♗xe5 ♖xe5 15.♗f4! (15.♗e3?c6 16.♗d4 ♖e8 17.♗xg7 ♗xg7 18.♖d2± 1/2-1/2 Lytchak,A-Reinderman,D /Groningen 1996/EXT 98 (31)) 15...♖f5 16.♗e4!+-) 12.c3♗f6 13.♗g5!♗



(In the game I played: 13.♗g5 and after: 13...♗e4 14.♗xf6 exf6 15.♗d2 ♗xg2 16.♗xg2 We have reached an equal position which I managed to win after a few lapses on the part of my opponent. The strong knight jump was identified only in the

analysis.) After: 13...e6 What has a forced way to obtain a pair of bishops in slightly better endgame? 14.♗xh7 ♗xh4 15.♗xf8 ♗e7 16.g4 ♖xf8 17.♖e2! It's good to activate the queen before we capture the bishop. Now White is planning to play ♖e3 and ♗h3 after taking the bishop. 17...♗e4 18.f3 White a slight edge.; 11.♗g5! Once again we have this typical intermediate move. As I mentioned in my comments to the move 7...♗c6, black queen lacks good squares. White's pressure could be very dangerous. 11...♖e8 12.dxe5 dxe5 Black is forced to accept the inferior pawn structure. 13.♖h4 White is willing to play c3 ♖d5+ and ♖e1 after which his advantage is undisputable. For instance: 13...♗f5 14.c3 e4 15.♖d5+! ♖f7 16.♖e1! ♖f8 17.♗d2 h6 18.♗e3 g5 19.♖xe4!

This quality sacrifice ensures total domination on the light squares. 19...♗xe4 20.♗xe4± 1-0

Hoffmann,M-Hoang Thanh Trang/Budapest 1999/CBM 72 (34);

b) 8...f4



Quite an original pawn sacrifice which couldn't be accepted immediately in view of 9...♗h5. Black is planning to increase the pressure on "d4" pawn by playing simple moves like ♗g4, ♗h5 and e5. White couldn't waste time! 9.d5! The only way to fight for an advantage! 9...♗b8.



(12...gxf5 doesn't work in view of: 13.h3 $\text{e} \times \text{f} 3$ 14. $\text{e} \times \text{f} 3$ $\text{d} \times \text{f} 6$ 15.exf5± With $\text{d} \times \text{g} 3$, $\text{e} \times \text{e} 6$ and $\text{e} \times \text{g} 5$ to follow) 13.♖d2! Very deep idea – White not only attacks the knight but is preparing a queen transfer to g5! 13... $\text{e} \times \text{f} 3$ 14. $\text{e} \times \text{f} 3$ c5 15. $\text{e} \times \text{h} 5$ g×h5 16.c3 $\text{d} \times \text{a} 6$ 17.♗g5+ $\text{e} \times \text{h} 8$ 18.♗xh5+– The game is over. 1–0 Heinbuch,D- Gupta,M/Germany 1992/GER-chT2 (24);

b2) 9... $\text{d} \times \text{e} 5$ Creates defects in the pawn structure which could be exploited in a very interesting way. 10. $\text{d} \times \text{e} 5$ d×e5 11. $\text{d} \times \text{c} 4$ $\text{d} \times \text{h} 5$ 12.b3!

This solid move also fails to equalize. White's plan is to transfer the knight on d2 to d4.

b1) After 9... $\text{d} \times \text{b} 4$



White makes use of the vulnerable position of black knight. 10.gxf4! $\text{d} \times \text{h} 5$ 11. $\text{d} \times \text{f} 1$ $\text{e} \times \text{g} 4$ It seems that Black finally has sufficient counterplay but White is in time to execute the following blow: (11... $\text{d} \times \text{f} 4$?? Is impossible due to: 12. $\text{e} \times \text{f} 4$ $\text{e} \times \text{f} 4$ 13.♖d2+– Winning a piece) 12.f5! $\text{e} \times \text{e} 5$



It's already very difficult for Black to defend the "e5" pawn – $\text{e} \times \text{b} 2$ is coming. 12...b5 Eliminates the threat but weakens the queenside. 13. $\text{d} \times \text{a} 5$ c5 (After 13... $\text{e} \times \text{d} 7$ White can make use of the weakness on c5 14. $\text{d} \times \text{b} 7$ With the idea $\text{d} \times \text{c} 5$) 14. $\text{d} \times \text{c} 6$ ♖d6



Black has defended everything and he intends to continue with $\text{e} \times \text{d} 7$. Unfortunately for him White hasn't said yet his last word! His plan is to open a line on the queenside. 15.a4! b4 16.c3! $\text{e} \times \text{d} 7$

17.cxb4 cxb4 18.♙b2 fxg3 19.hxg3 ♖f7 20.♞c1±
 White's advantage is beyond any doubt. By playing ♔d2 he will force Black to defend the b4 pawn by a7-a5. Only then the queen will go to b6 square and the rooks will be doubled along the "c" file. 1-0 Gruber,T- Effert,K/Zell 1991/GER (34); 10.♘b3 fxg3 11.hxg3 ♘g4 12.♘bd4 c5 13.dxc6 ♘xc6 14.c3 White retains an edge due the space advantage and the weakened light squares in Black's camp. Moves like ♔b3 followed by ♘e6 are always in the air. 1-0 Franke,H- Borngaesser,R/Bad Neuenahr 1987/CBM 04 (99); 9.exf5 ♙xf5 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.c3



Extremely creative approach. Black is ready to meet e2-e4 advance by f5-f4 and at the same time prepares e7-e5. 8.h3! Very strong reaction after which f4 is no longer possible due to g4. Now White is planning to play e4. 8...♘c6 Black prepares e7-e5 but doesn't control the "d5" square. As a rule, in this kind of pawn structures White always tries to advance further his central pawn when Black is not controlling the "d5" square. (The direct 8...e5 fails to 9.dxe5 dxe5 10.e4 The e5 pawn is very weak. This variation illustrates the rule that it's not advisable to break in the center while you are behind in development.) 9.d5 ♘b4 10.e4 fxe4 11.♘xe4 White's advantage is tremendous. Now he wants to occupy the "e6" square by playing ♘eg5. 11...h6 12.c3 ♘a6 13.♘d4± 1-0 Huhndorf,AWolf,U/Germany 2002/EXT 2004 (28); Another option for Black is to play Stonewall type of positions after 7...d5 8.c4 c6 9.b3 ♘bd7 10.♙b2



The position on the board is extremely difficult for Black. As always White should block the e5 pawn by ♘g5-e4 and later prepare his queenside expansion by means of ♔e2, ♘b3-c5, ♙e3, ♞d1 and b4.; 7...c6 Typical idea in Dutch Defense. Black ensures better control over the center and at the same time is planning to prepare the advance e7-e5 by ♔c7 or ♔e8. The drawback of 7...c6 is that e7-e5 takes much more time while White is ready to break in the center. 8.e4 fxe4 9.♘xe4 Now Black has huge problems caused by the weakened "e" file. White is already threatening ♘eg5. 9...♘xe4 10.♞e4 ♙f5 11.♞e1 Black is almost helpless in front of the typical threat c3 followed by ♔b3 and ♘g5. For example: 11...♘d7 12.c3 ♘h8 13.♔b3 ♞b8 14.♘g5! ♔e8 15.♘e6 ♙xe6 16.♔xe6± 1-0 Szekely,P-Roy Chowdhury,S/Calcutta 1996/CBM 50 ext (52); 7...♘h5



We have reached highly unusual version of the Stonewall system in Dutch Defense. The main difference is that Black's black-squared bishop usually stands on d6 where not only controls the "e5" square but also makes White's play on the queenside more difficult. In order to use that drawback, White could play b4 as soon as possible. Later he may choose the following plan: ♖ac1, ♜b3, a4 and b5. Also, it's important to mention that due to the move g7-g6 Black is no longer able to activate his light-squared bishop using the route d7-e8-h5. Taking into consideration these factors, we could conclude that White's position is better.

14. exf3 ♞xe5 15. ♞f4 c6 16. ♙e3 ♞e8 17. ♙d4



8. ♞xe4 fxe4 9. ♞g5 d5 10. f3 White must attack the center before the development of Black's queenside.

10... ♞c6 The main move.

After 10... exf3 11. exf3 The "e" file is too weak. White's immediate threat is ♞e6. The play may continue: 11... ♞c6 12. c3 ♞f6 13. ♞h3 Now the knight will go to d3 via f4. Black's position is strategically very difficult.

11. c3 h6 12. ♞h3 e5 13. dxe5 exf3 The move 13... ♞xe5 doesn't seem to propose enough compensation for the pawn. 14. fxe4 c6 (14... dxe4 15. ♜xd8 xd8 16. ♞f2±) 15. exd5 ♜b6+ 16. ♞h1 cxd5 17. ♜xd5+ ♙e6 18. ♜d4! ♜a5 19. ♞f4 ♙f7 20. ♜g1 With the idea ♙e3 - d4. Dydyshko, V Ibragimov, I /Azov 1991/CBM 25 (50)

I believe that White could claim a slight edge in this position. The g6 pawn is weak and black knight is far from being stable. In the future battle White will be trying to combine the threats against Black's kingside with pressure along the "d" file. 1-0 Schulz, K-Jahr, U/ Porz 1989/EXT 97 (36)

Dragon Variation in Sicilian Defense

IM Spas Kozhuharov



10.0-0-0 ♖c8 11.♗b3 ♘e5



This is the main starting position of the variation.
12.h4

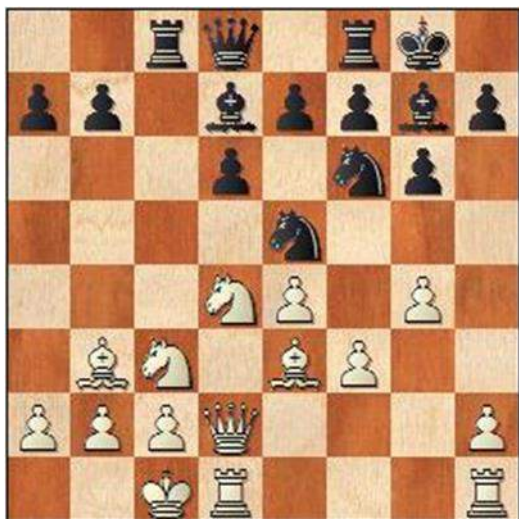


Hello, dear friends of the ancient game. In the next issues of our magazine, we will present the contemporary situation of the Dragon variation. The present article is useful for the creation of the opening repertoire. By means of the most sophisticated computer chess programs, many forgotten and old variations have been improved and turned into games at the highest level. The Dragon variation is not an exception. Over the years, the variation has suffered much criticism, however, it has been kept alive by its supporters and still survives to the present day. In this series of articles, each will begin with a discussion of one of the most acute and dangerous variations, where every move is crucial and the knowledge of the smallest details of the position is compulsory for both sides. This is the variation where White makes the long castle. The defining moment in this system occurs on the ninth move when Whites have to choose between two moves ♗4 and 0-0-0. The first article of the series is dedicated to the Dragon variation with 9. ♗4.

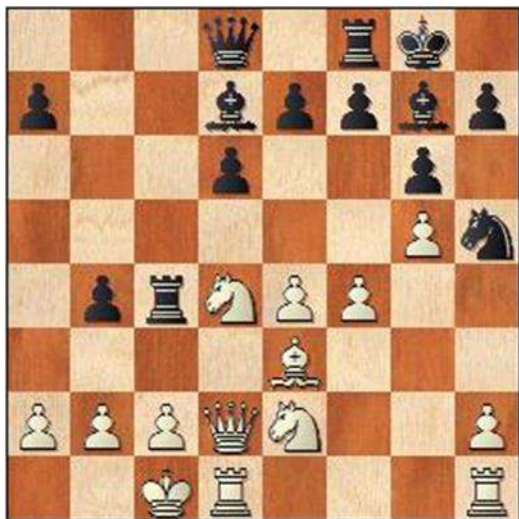
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 g6
 6.♗e3 ♗g7 7.f3 0-0 8.♙d2 ♘c6 9.♗c4 ♗d7

This is the main and most dangerous move. White is planning on pushing h4-h5, sacrificing the pawn in order to open the „h“ line. It is necessary to point out that the white attack becomes even more dangerous after the exchange of the dark-squared bishops. Many of you probably know the famous quote of the world champion Robert Fisher: „In the Dragon variation Black is strategically lost – White opens the „h“ line, exchanges the dark-squared bishops, gives several checks and declares checkmate.“ Despite the joking tone, this statement shows what we have to be aware of when paying this position. Before proceeding to the analysis of the baselines, let us take a look at some rare

continuations. The first continuation that we will look at is 12.g4.



This move is ill-advised, because it weakens the „f3“ pawn. 12...b5! 13.g5 The pawn on “b5” cannot be taken due to the weakness on “f3”. (13.♖c×b5? ♗×f3! Black’s advantage is obvious.) 13...b4 14.♗ce2 ♗h5 15.f4 (After 15.♗×b4? White has problems, caused by the limited mobility of the light-squared bishop. 15...a5! 16.♗a3 a4→) 15...♗c4 16.♗×c4 ♖×c4



After tripling heavy pieces on the “c” file, Black can pursue the attack on the queenside by pushing the pawn a7-a5-4-a4. The Black’s reaction to 12.♗h6?! is very instructive.



12...♗×h6 13.♗×h6 ♖×c3!



This is a typical sacrifice of the exchange, which can be found in great many games. The idea behind it is to destroy the cover in front of the white king by removing one of the attacking white pieces (♗c3). 14.bxc3 a5!



This move intends to cause more weaknesses in front of the white king. 15.a4 ♖c7 16.♖e3 ♗c5 17.♕d2 ♟x4 Black has more than enough compensation for the sacrifice of the exchange: 12.♟b1



Interesting prophylactic move which shows White's intention for a positional play. On the other side, Black uses the opportunity to organize a pawn attack on the white king who castled on queenside. 12...♟c4 13.♟xc4 ♜xc4 14.g4 b5 15.b3 b4!?



Interesting continuation, which has recently gained more popularity among chess players. This move is thoroughly analyzed by Czech Grandmaster Jiri Stochek. The idea is that through the sacrifice of the exchange, Black manages to destroy the defense in front of the white king and to gain some interesting counter

chances. The fight intensified. 16.bxc4 The acceptance of the sacrifice is the most principal continuation. Black has no difficulties after 16.♟ce2 ♜c8 17.g5. (Major mistake 17.♗xb4, because white knight is captured in the center of the board. 17...a5 18.♗d2 e5 and Black wins.) 17...♟h5 18.♟g3 ♗a5 19.♟xh5 gxh5



The Black's position is more preferable. Black has the pair of bishops in an open position and is ready to take advantage of the weakened white queenside. On the other hand, White cannot open the file against the black king.) 16...bxc3 17.♗xc3 ♗c7



Critical position for the assessment of the variation. The Black's compensation is due to the weak white king and compromised white pawn structure. We should also not underestimate the power of the black dark-squared bishop who

stands threateningly against white queen. Here's how we could put the figures in this type of position: ♖c8, ♕a4 (e6), ♜d7-b6 (e5).

12...h5



Black is trying to stop White's attack on kingside using radical measures. The next step is to neutralize white light-squared bishop by ♜c4.

13. ♕g5



Very dangerous continuation. By putting the black knight under target, White strengthens its typical threats ♜d5 and g4. It is necessary to underline that in many variations, the "e7" pawn remains unprotected. Another interesting continuation for Black is 13. ♕h6 ♜c4 14. ♕xc4 ♖xc4 15. ♕xg7 ♜xg7



Extremely characteristic for this variation. Dragon position. White attacking potential diminished after the exchange of the white pair of bishops. Black's attack is a totally different story. His attack on the queenside develops for itself. Further plan includes moves like ♖a5, ♖fc8 and b7-b5-b4. At a certain moment it is possible to move e7-e5, followed by ♕e6. 16. ♖b1



White prefers the prophylactic move. a) 16. ♖he1



When in this variation White places his king rook in the center of the board, he shows his desire to steer the game into strategic waters. As the readers will see for themselves, it is very difficult to win against Dragon variation with positional play! 16...♔a5 17.♖g5 White seeks for the exchange of the queens. Otherwise, Black's initiative takes a dangerous turn. 17...♗xg5+ 18.hxg5 ♖h7 19.e5 ♗xg5 20.exd6 exd6 21.♗db5 ♗xb5 22.♗xb5 ♖e6= with a completely equal endgame.

b) Another standard move for White is 16.♗d5



16...e5! A typical reaction to white offensive knights in the center. The weakness of the "e6" pawn will be compensated by the threats on the semi-opened file "c". 17.♗e2 ♗xd5 18.♗xd5 ♖c6. The black game is more preferable - his plan includes move like: ♗e6, ♗c7 and ♖fc8.

c) Another interesting option for White is 16.g4



A typical Dragon position occurred. White does not stop with material sacrifices, in order to as soon as possible to the black king. On the other hand, if Black manages to stop the attack, the material advantage will be decisive for the game. Here is how the game could continue: 16...hxg4 17.h5 ♖h8!



Ingenious defense which jeopardizes the plan with 16.g4 18.hxg6 (after 18.fxg4 game quickly turns into an equal endgame. 18...♗xg4 19.hxg6 ♖xd4! 20.♗xd4 ♗xd1 21.♖xd1 ♗b6 22.♗xb6 axb6 23.gxf7 ♗xf7=) 18...fxg6



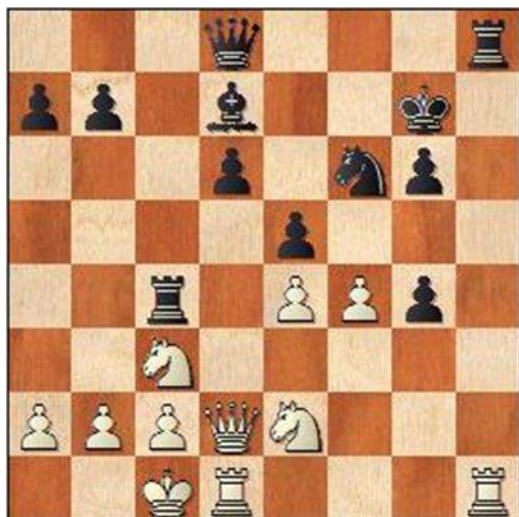
White is again at the crossroads – he needs to decide whether to look for a break in the center (f3–f4 followed by e4–e5) or to seek to open the file against black king (fxg4). 19.f4 (19.fxg4 ♗xg4 20.e5 Energetic move, which is the only possibility if White is to keep material. 20...dxe5 21.♗e6+ ♗xe6 22.♗xd8 ♖xd8 23.♖xd8 ♗f5

Black has more than enough compensation for the sacrifice of the exchange.) 19...e5



22.♖hf1 ♜f3 23.♞xf3 gxf3 24.♞h1 ♟g4 25.♞d1 ♟f6
The equal outcome is inevitable.

Black accepts the challenge. The game takes a very particular character. 20.♞de2



c2) Another interesting possibility is 20.♞xh8 ♜xh8

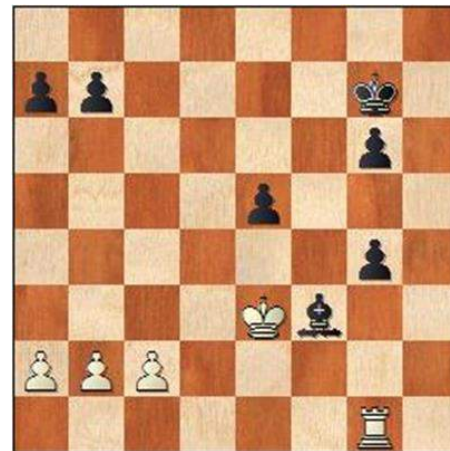


The principal continuation. "e2" square is the most suitable place for the white knight, because it can easily get on the kingside (♟g3) and also prevents the typical sacrifice on "c3". The critical position arises after the moves:

c1) The attempt to conquer the white "h" file is doomed to fail because the black top has ideally a support point "h3". 20.fxe5 dxe5 21.♞b3 (After 21.♞e6+ ♟xe6 22.♞xh8 ♞xd8 23.♞xd8 ♟xe4 24.♞xe4 ♞xe4 Passed pawn "g" is too dangerous.) 21...♞h3!

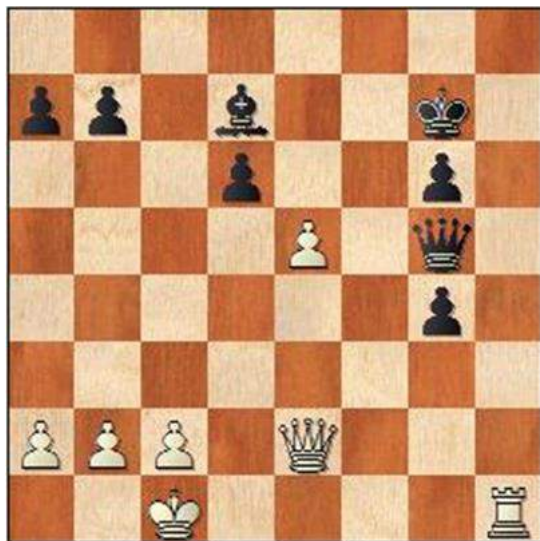
White willingly grants his opponent possession of the "h" file in exchange for putting pressure on the backward pawn "d6". However, Black has enough resources to protect it. 21.♞de2 (21.♞b3 ♜f8! 22.fxe5 (22.♞xd6 ♜xd6 23.♞xd6 ♟c6 Black has an enormous advantage.) 22...dxe5 23.♞g5 ♜e7= With approximately equal game.) 21...♞c6! Black manages to defend his weakness. The strong passed pawn "g4" and the possession of the only opened file allows Black to be optimistic about the rest of game.

c3) 20. ♖b3



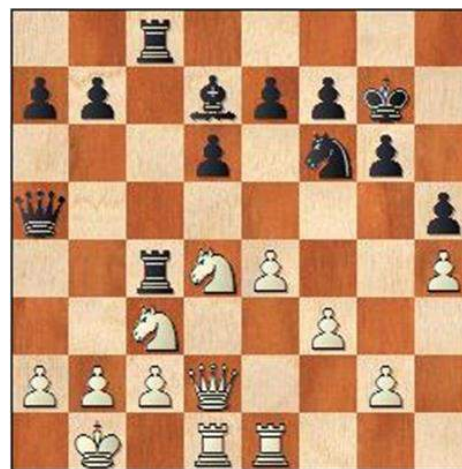
The assessment of this endgame is a draw. To support this argument, we give you the following example of possible continuation: 29. b4 ♖f6 30. c4 ♖e6 31. ♖c1 e4 32. b5 g3 33. c5 ♖d7 34. c6+ ♖c7 35. cxb7+ ♖xb7 36. ♖c6 g5 37. a4 g2 38. ♖f2 g4=; 16... ♖a5 A typical move for the Dragon variation, Black develops the queen in an attacking position and prepares to double the heavy pieces on the "c" file. 17. ♖he1 (17. ♖b3 ♖c7 Black achieved his goal. White knight is away from the center of the board and the typical sacrifice on "c3" is pending. 18. g4 hxg4 19. h5 ♖xc3! An excellent sacrifice of the exchange, after which the game takes on a double-edged character with mutual chances. 20. hxg6 fxg6 21. bxc3 gxf3 22. ♖h6+ ♖f7 It is necessary to point out that in this type of positions, the white king is more vulnerable. The black king is fully protected by the strong ♖f6.) 17... ♖fc8

20... ♖xc3! Again the sacrifice on "c3" is actual. 21. ♖xh8 (21. ♖xc3 ♖xh1 22. ♖xh1 exf4 23. e5 dxe5 24. ♖xe5 f3 25. ♖e3 ♖e8!) 21... ♖xh8 22. ♖xc3 ♖h6 23. ♖b1 ♖xf4= Black king is well protected, and "g4" pawn is very dangerous. There is a dynamic balance on the board. 20... ♖xh1 21. ♖xh1 ♖xe4 22. ♖xe4 ♖xe4 23. fx e5 ♖xe2 24. ♖xe2 ♖g5+

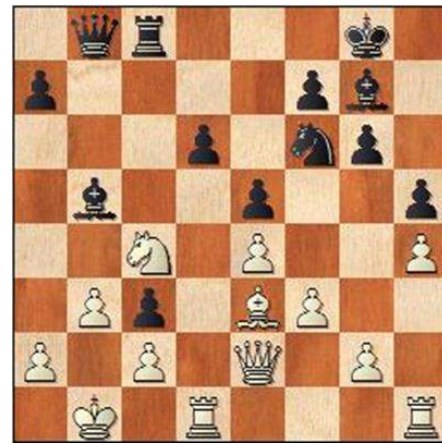


25. ♖d2 The most dangerous continuation. (Inaccurately 25. ♖b1 ♖c6 26. ♖e1 (26. ♖g1 ♖f3 27. ♖f2 dxe5=) 26... dxe5 27. ♖xe5+ ♖xe5 28. ♖xe5 ♖f6 with advantage for Black.)

25... ♖xd2+ 26. ♖xd2 dxe5 27. ♖e3 ♖c6 28. ♖g1 ♖f3



In order to illustrate the risks associated with this position we will look at a fragment of the match between GM Ian Nepomniachtchi (2723) and GM Wei Yi (2551), which took place two years ago. 18.♖e3 a6 19.♞e2 ♗c5 20.♞dd2 b5 21.♞d1 e5 22.♞b3 ♗c7 23.♗g5 ♙e6 Black's advantage is undisputed. He managed to place the heavy pieces on the semi-opened file "c" and now is planning a pawn attack by pushing a6–a5–a4 and b5–b4.; Quiet slowly is 13.♙b1



A fascinating position! White is helpless.
 13...♞c5 14.♙b1



13...♞c4 14.♙xc4 ♞xc4 15.♞b3 (A typical mistake in this kind of position would be 15.♙h6? because after 15...♞xd4+ White loses immediately.) 15...♗b8 Rarely played, but an interesting continuation. The idea is to clear the "c8" square for the rook from "f8". The queen, on the other hand, supports the movement of the pawn b5–b4. 16.♙d4 (16.♙h6 ♞fc8 17.♙xg7 ♙xg7 18.g4 hxg4 19.h5 ♞h8 20.♞d5 ♞xh5! 21.♞xf6 exf6 22.♞xh5 gxh5=) 16...♞fc8 17.♗e2 e5!

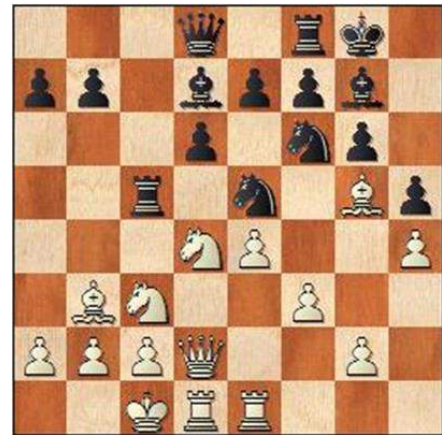


The main variation. With this prophylactic move, White has not yet defined his plan. White can still play in the center by pushing f3–f4 or ♞he1. Either way, the main idea is to strike the center by playing e4–e5. However, Black has more than enough counter play. Here are several examples:

14.♞he1



After this move, Black manages to master the initiative and to get ahead with the attack. 18.♙e3 b5 19.♞a5 b4! 20.♞xc4 bxc3 21.b3 ♙b5+



14...b5 15.f4 ♞c4 16.♙xc4 ♞xc4 17.e5 b4! 18.exf6 exf6 19.♗d3 ♞xd4! 20.♗xd4 bxc3 21.♗xd6 fxg5 22.♗xd7 ♗a5 23.♞e8



15.g4 The most acute continuation! From this point, our analysis will be based on the game played by Radjabov – Carlsen in Baku, 2008. The other options are not dangerous:

15.♖he1



15...♖a5 16.f4 ♘c4 17.♙xc4 ♖xc4 18.♙xf6 ♙xf6
19.♘d5 ♖xd2 20.♘xf6+ exf6 21.♖xd2 f5=;
15.♙h6

This position was reached in six games. In four of them, Black has won. The other two finished with a draw.

23...♖x a2 24.♖xf8+ ♙xf8 25.bxc3 gxf4=; 14.f4



14...♘c4 15.♖d3 ♘g4! 16.♙xc4 ♘f2 17.♖e2 ♘xh1
18.♙b3 ♙g4 19.♘f3 ♖xc3! 20.bxc3 ♖a5 21.♖xh1 ♖xc3
22.♖d1 (22.♖d1 ♖a1+ 23.♘d2 ♖c3+) 22...a5! The Black's chances are better!

14...♖e8



By defending the "e7" pawn, Black prepares the retreat of the bishop in case of ♙h6.



15...♘c4 16.♙xc4 ♖xc4 17.♙xg7 ♙xg7 18.g4 hxg4
19.h5 ♖h8 20.hxg6 fxg6 21.f4 e5 22.♖xh8 (22.♘de2 ♖xh1
23.♖xh1 ♘xe4 24.♘xe4 ♖xe4 25.fxe5 ♖e8 26.♖h6+ ♘f7
27.♘f4 ♖xe5⇒) 22...♖xh8 23.♘de2 ♖f8 24.fxe5 ♘xe4
25.♖d3 (25.♘xe4 ♖xe4 26.exd6 ♖f3) 25...♘xc3+
26.♘xc3 ♖f4 27.♘d5 ♖f3 28.♖d4 dxe5 29.♖xe5+ ♙h6



Despite the unprotected king, Black is not threatened by a checkmate and he can look forward with optimism.

15.f4 ♖c4 16.♔d3 ♔c8 Excellent move. By supporting the knight from "c4", the black pieces create very unpleasant threats around the white king. 17.f5 gxf5 18.exf5 ♗e5 19.♔e2 ♗eg4 20.♖hf1



20...♖xc3! Once again, we come across this typical sacrifice! 21.bxc3 ♔xc3 Black has a fantastic compensation for the sacrifice of the exchange.

15...hxg4 16.h5 ♗xh5 17.♖xh5 gxh5 18.♔h2 ♗g6 19.♔xh5



19...♔a5! Energetic and strong countermeasures against White's dangerous threats.

20.f4 Obviously 20.♔xg6? loses immediately after the elegant move 20...e6! 21.♔h5 ♖xg5+; Was also tested: 20.♗d5 e6 21.♗f5



The main problem with White's plan. Unfortunately for White, Black has a powerful counterstrike. 21...♖xd5! 22.♗xd5 exf5 23.♖h1 (23.♔xg6 ♔xd5! 24.♔xg7+ ♗xg7 25.exd5 ♗g6 26.♗f4 gxf3 27.♖f1 ♗h5-+) 23...♗e6 24.♔h7+ ♗f8 25.♗h6 ♗xh6 26.♔xh6+ ♗e7 27.♗xe6 ♗xe6 28.exf5+ ♔xf5 29.fxg4 ♔f2 Valenti 2201-Gonzalez 2474 0-1 2013

20...♖xc3!?



An interesting decision of the world champion Magnus Carlsen! Black liquidate one of the most dangerous white attacking figures (♗g5).

21.fxg5 21.♔xg5 ♔xg5 22.fxg5 ♗xd4 23.♖xd4 ♗g7-+

21...e6 22.♗f5? An ambitious move, which appears to be a mistake. It would have been wiser to play g4 with a slightly better position for Black.

Positions with Open Center – Part 1

GM Viktor Gavrikov



opening repertoire on extremely solid foundations. Also, I would like to point out that quite a few of the examples given will change from middlegames to endgames. The first article of the course is dedicated to the positions with open center, where the “c” and “d” pawns are not on the board. Since this topic is very broad, it will be divided into smaller sections. In this issue of our magazine we will discuss the weak point “c3” (“c6”) in

position with an open center. As you will see later, this is an extremely important position indicator, whose importance is often underestimated even by strong grandmasters. At the end of the article, you will have the opportunity to test your understanding of the material. Let us begin by introducing a masterpiece of positional play in a game of the patriarch of the Soviet Chess School and sixth World Champion Mikhail Botvinnik.

Botvinnik, M – Donner, J
 Amsterdam (4), 15.12.1963

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♗f3 e6 3.g3 d5 4.♙g2 ♙e7



This variation is also very popular in modern practice among Grandmasters, but also at the amateur level. In this position, the main alternative is quite ambitious: 4...dxc4 5.♙a4+c6 6.♙xc4 b5!? 7.♙c2 ♙b7 Black’s idea is to play c6-c5 and if he does so, he will have solved his debut problems. 8.d4 (8.♗c3 ♗bd7 9.0-0 ♙e7 10.d3 0-0 11.♙f4 ♗c8 12.♗ac1 ♙b6

Dear Reader,
 This article marks the beginning of a middlegame course, throughout which I intend to share with you not only my specific knowledge of the middlegame, but also my personal chess philosophy. Learning resources that will be provided are the result of my long practice as a chess player and trainer. I want to emphasize that despite the name of the course, it will not focus exclusively on the middlegame. Over the course of the year, our task will be to acquaint our readers with the main pawn structures arising from the opening – open center, isolated pawn, hanging pawns, isolated pair of pawns c3+d4, pawn advantage on the queenside, pawn chains and Sicilian pawn structures. As a results of honing your knowledge of these pawn structures, you should be able to build your



Black is fully prepared for the c6-c5 move. Gavrikov,V (2575)-Dautov,P (2595)/Germany 1997/ 1/2-1/2) 8...♖bd7 9.♗e5 (9.0-0 c5)9...♞b6 10.♙e3 c5 11.♗xd7 ♗xd7 12.♙xb7 ♞xb7 13.0-0 ♜c8 14.♞c1 ♙e7! 15.dxc5 ♗xc5 16.b4 ♙f6 17.♗c3 ♗d7 (17...♗a4 18.♞e4) 18.♞e4 ♞a6 19.♙d4 0-0= 1/2-1/2 Raetsky,A (2405) - Rasch,H (2250) /Biel 1997/

White has sufficient compensation for the exchange, but nothing more. The position is unbalanced and both sides remain equally equipped to win.) 12...e5 13.d3 ♖h8 14.a3 f6 With good game for Black. Gavrikov,V - Ziatdinov,R/ Biel 1992

5.0-0 0-0 6.b3 In this position, Black has several equal continuations.

6...b6

6...a5!?

7.♙b2 ♙b7 8.cxd5 ♗xd5 To a different pawn structure leads 8...exd5 9.d4 With a transfer to a position similar to New-Indian defense, which will be discussed in subsequent articles.

9.d4 c5

It seems safer to play 9...♗d7 10.♗c3 c5 11.♞c1 ♞c8 12.♗xd5 ♙xd5 13.♞d3 cxd4 14.♙xd4 ♞xc1 15.♞xc1 1-0 Smyslov,V- Simagin,V/Moscow 1966 15...♗c5 16.♞c3 f6=

10.dxc5 ♙xc5 11.♗bd2 ♗d7 12.a3 ♗5f6



This is another strategic plan that leads to a good position for Black after 7.♗c3 (7.♙b2 a4 8.♗a3 c6 Black can be satisfied with the opening and look forward with optimism.) 7...d4 8.♗b5 c5 9.e3 ♗c6 10.exd4 cxd4 11.♞e1 ♗d7! A key move 12.♙b2?! (Black's idea is revealed in the following continuation 12.♗bxd4! ♗xd4 13.♗xd4 ♙f6 14.♗c2 (14.♙b2? ♗c5 with victory) 14...♙xa1 15.♗xa1

Black prevents e2-e4, but allows White to gain space on the queenside.

It was possible to play 12...a5 without fearing 13.e4 ♖5f6 14.e5 because of 14... ♗e4 15. ♗xe4 ♙xe4 16. ♖e2 ♙d5 17. ♗d2 ♙xg2 18. ♖xg2 ♖e7 19. ♗e4 ♗fd8= With approximately equal chances. Razuvaev, Y (2510)-Klovans, J (2480)/Tbilisi 1973/MCD (32), 1/2-1/2

13.b4 ♙e7 14. ♗d4!



Therefore, we come to the main topic of the article, namely the weakness of the “c6” square. The strategic battle in the game is whether White will manage to place his knight there, which will shrink Black’s position and will give White the opportunity to develop easily the initiative. The first task is to exchange the light-squared bishops, as the one from “b7” defends the “c6” square.

14... ♙xg2 15. ♖xg2 ♖c7 16. ♖b3



16... ♗fc8

It may have been wiser to play 16... ♗ac8!? 17. ♗fc1 ♖b7+ 18. ♖f3 ♗d5 19.e4 ♗5f6 20.b5 ♗b8 Preventing d4–c6.

17. ♗fc1 ♖b7+ 18. ♖f3 ♗d5

Even after the exchange of the queens, White will remain with initiative 18... ♖xf3+ 19. ♗2xf3

19.e4 ♗5f6 20.b5!



Black’s position became tenser - ♗c6 is a real threat.

20...a6? A serious mistake.

It was necessary to exchange the rook by playing 20... ♗e5 21. ♖e2 ♗xc1 22. ♗xc1 ♗c8 because after 23. ♗xc8+ (23. ♗d1!? ♗ed7 24. ♗c6 ♗b8 25. ♗xe7+ ♖xe7±) 23... ♖xc8 24.f4 ♗ed7 The invasion of the “c6” square is now less dangerous for Black: 25. ♗c6 ♙f8 26. ♖c4 (26. ♗xa7?! ♖c2 27. ♙xf6 ♗xf6) 26... ♖a8 (≤26... ♗c5 27. ♙xf6 gxf6 28. ♖d4 a6 29.a4 axb5 30.axb5+/-) 27.a4 (27. ♙xf6 ♗xf6 28. ♖a4 ♖b7! 29.e5 ♖d7 30. ♗f3 ♖d3! =; 27.e5 ♗d5 28. ♖a4 a5; 27. ♖a4 a5 28.bxa6 ♗c5 29. ♖b5 ♖xa6) 27... ♗e8 White has a slightly better position, but it is hard to materialize the advantage.

21. ♖c6 ♕f8 22. a4 axb5 23. axb5 ♖xa1 24. ♖xa1 ♖a8
 25. ♖d1!



The white rook is more active, that is why the exchange is not reasonable. Black is coerced into assuming his current position by the knight on "c6". The main principle is not to exchange the pieces when you have spatial advantage.

25... ♖e8? This move is weak, but Black is almost in zugzwang.

Worse was 25... ♖a4? 26. e5 ♖d5 27. ♖d8; if 25... ♖a2?! Then 26. ♖c4 ♖a4? 27. e5! ♖d5 28. ♖d8 ♖a8 (28... ♖c8 29. ♖xf7+ ♖h8 30. ♖xc6) 29. ♖xf7+ ♖h8 30. ♖c6; The only way to continue to resist was 25... h6 26. ♖c4 ♖c7±

26. ♖c4 ♖c5 27. e5!



This move leads to a loss immediately.

27... ♖c8?
 27... ♖c7? Constraining the queen's activity is in White's favor, because it creates additional tactical threats. 28. ♖d7! ♖xd7 29. ♖e7+ ♕xe7 30. ♖xb7+-

28. ♖a1!



With an inevitable threat a7, because a8 is impossible to play. 28... ♖c7 29. ♖a7 ♖xa7 30. ♖xa7 ♖xa7 31. ♖xb6
1-0

Lerner, K - Anastasian, A
 Novi Sad, 1988

1. c4 c5 2. ♖f3 ♖f6 3. ♖c3 e6 4. g3 b6 5. ♕g2 ♕b7 6. 0-0 ♕e7
 7. b3 0-0 8. ♕b2 d5



Another possible arranging of the Black pieces is:
 8...d6 9.e3 ♖bd7 10.♖e2 a6 11.♖fd1 ♖c7 (or 11...♗e4)
 12.♖ac1 (12.d4 ♖fe8) 12...♗e4 13.♗b1 b5 14.d3 ♗ef6=
 ½-½ Hort,V (2580)-Gavrikov,V (2535)/Lugano
 1989

9.cxd5 ♗xd5 10.♗xd5 ♗xd5 11.♖b1



This move prepares ♖d1 and prevents ♗c6 because of e2-e4.

11...♗f6 To a possible draw led 13...♗c6 14.d3 (14.d4?! ♖f6) 14...♗xf3 15.♗xf3 ♖c8 16.♗g2 ♖d6 17.a3 ♖c7 18.♖ac1 ♖fc8 19.e3 h6= 0- Larsen,R-Smejkal,J/Reykjavik 1978

14.d4 ♖c8



14...♖f6?! 15.♗e5; 14...♖c7

15.dxc5 ♗xc5 16.♗e5 ♗xg2 17.♗xg2 ♖d8

Weaker was 17...♖b7+ 18.f3 ♖ad8 19.b4 ♗a4 (not 19...♗d7? 20.♖d4! ♗xe5 21.♖xd8) 20.♖c2 b5 21.♖c6+/-; or 17...f6 18.♗c4 ♖c6+ 19.f3 b5 20.♗a5 ♖b6 21.b4 ♗a4 22.♖b3 ♖ac8 23.♖d3



Another option is 17...a5 Δ18.♖d6 f6 19.♗c4 b5 20.♗b6? ♖c7 21.♖d4 ♖ad8 22.♖d1 ♗b7 23.♖d7 ♖xd7 24.♗xd7 ♖d8

18.b4 ♗e4?



This move is weak, because it allows White unimpeded implementation of his main idea - to place the knight on "c6".

White keeps the initiative and after 18...♗a4?!



Seeking counter play, Black only weakens his position.

27...h6

28.♖d5 e4?

19.♖b3 ♖b7+ (19...♖c3 20.♗xf7! ♖c6+ 21.f3♗xf7 22.b5) 20.f3 b5 21.♗xd8+ ♗xd8 22.♗d1;
 It was necessary to choose between 18...♗d7 Δ19.♗ac1 ♖b7+ 20.♗c6 ♗c5! 21.b5 a6!

(Doubtful is 21...♗d1?! 22.♗xd1 a6 because of 23.a4! Δ♗xa4? 24.♖d4+-) 22.♗xd8+ ♗xd8 23.f3 ♗a8=; ♣ 18...♖b7+ 19.f3 ♗d7 20.♗c4 (20.♖d4?!



On this square, the pawn becomes vulnerable.

28...f6

29.f4 h6 30.♖c4 e3 It is a mistake to play 30...♖a1? 31.♗f5 ♗e6 32.♗d8 ♗f6 33.♗xf7!; And after 30...♖b7 White plays 31.♗d6 ♖c7 32.♖d5±



20...♗f8 21.♖xd8? ♗xd8 22.♗xd8 ♖c7+-) 20...♗f6=

19.♗xd8+ ♖xd8 20.♗c6! ♖d7 21.♖c2 ♗c5
 22.b5 Despite the fact that there are not too many pieces on the board, White has a better position due to the strong knight on "c6".

22...♖b7 23.♗d1 a6 24.a4 ♗e8 25.f3 ♖a8

25...h6

26.♗d4 axb5 27.axb5 e5?!

31. ♖f5 ♜b7 If 31... ♗e6 then 32. ♖xf7!



32... ♕xf7 33. f5 ♜e8 34. fxe6+ ♘xe6 35. ♜d5±

32. ♜d5 ♘e4? The decisive mistake in an already tricky position.

32... ♜d7 33. ♜xd7 ♘xd7 34. ♖d5±



34. ♕f3 ♘f6 35. ♖e5±



33. ♖e5 ♗xe5 34. ♜xe5 ♘c5 35. ♜e8+!

It is important not to give the black queen a chance to step up in the game in case of 35. ♜xe3 ♜d7

35... ♕h7 36. ♕f3+-



36... ♘e6 37. ♕xe3 ♜c7 38. ♕f3 ♜d6 39. ♘e7!



This move forces the exchange of the queens, after which the knights' endgame is hopeless for Black.

39... ♜d8 40. ♜xd8 ♘xd8 41. ♕e4



1-0

Kosic, D (2500) – Mackic, Z (2420)

YUG-chT Vrnjacka Banja (8), 1998

1.d4 ♖f6 2.♗f3 e6 3.e3 b6 4.♙d3 ♙b7 5.0-0 ♙e7

5...d5 6.c4 dxc4!? 7.♙xc4 a6 it is also possible

6.c4 0-0 7.♗c3 d5 8.b3 ♗bd7 9.♙b2 c5 10.cxd5 cxd4



11.♗xd4 ♗xd5 Again, a position with an open center.

12.♗xd5 ♙xd5 13.♙b5!



A move with multiple ideas, such as: ♗c6, ♙c6 or ♗f5.

13...♗f6 The idea is that 13...♗c8?! is not good, because 14.e4! ♙xe4 15.♗xe6 fxe6 16.♙xd7 ♗c2 17.♗d4 (17.♙xe6+ ♗h8±) 17...♙f6 (17...♗xb2 18.♙xe6+ ♗h8 19.♗xb2 ♙f6 20.♗c1 With better chances for White to realize his material advantage.) 18.♗xe4 ♗xb2 19.♙xe6+ ♗h8 20.♗ad1

Every chess player should be satisfied to reach such a position. White has a pawn up in a position without any risks. Black can try 13...♙f6, but even in this situation, White has initiative after 14.♙c6!



14...♙xc6 (14...♙xd4? 15.♗xd4 ♗g5 16.♙xd5 exd5±)



15. ♖xc6 ♕e8 (15... ♖c7 16. ♖c1 ♖b7 (16... ♖c5?
 17. ♗xf6 gxf6 18. ♖g4+ ♖h8 19. ♖h4!



17. ♖f3!



With the queens on the board, White has better chances.

17... ♖e7 18. ♖c4 ♖fd8 19. ♗e5 19. ♗b5!?

19... ♗d6 19... ♖d2

20. ♗c3 ♖d7 21. ♖h5 ♖f8 22. b4!



Well-known idea, the white pawn on “b5” assures the defense of the bishop and additionally constrains Black’s position

22... ♖g6 23. b5 White intensifies the control of the “c6” square.

23... ♗c5 23... f6 24. ♖h3

24. a4 A useful move

24... ♗d6 25. g3 Prophylactic move. Remember this trick, when the opponent has no counter play - strengthen absolutely the position and then move on to the decisive actions.

19... ♖xc6 20. ♖xf6+ ♖g8 21. ♖c4 ♖fc8 22. ♖g4+ ♖f8
 23. ♖g7 ♖c7 24. ♖xh7 ♖e8 25. ♖d1+-) 17. ♖f3! ♖h8
 18. ♗xf6 ♖xf6 19. ♖c2 (19. b4)) 16. ♗xf6 ♖xf6
 17. ♖c1 ♖d5 18. b4 With a better position, well-known from the previous examples.

14. ♖c6 White gain the pair of bishops

14... ♗xc6 The bishop from “c6” is less effective than a knight in the same place, but it still shrinks Black’s position.

15. ♗xc6 ♖c8 16. ♖c1 ♗c5?!



Better was to play 16... ♖xd 17. ♖fxd1 ♖fd8
 18. ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 19. ♗b5 ♗c5! White’s position is more favorable, but it is hard to materialize the advantage. (19... ♖d2 20. ♖c8+ ♖f8? 21. ♗a3 ♖d7 22. ♖d8! ♖xa2 23. ♗e7 ♖a1+ 24. ♗f1+-)

25...♔c7 26.♖c1 ♕e7?!



This move is imprecise and allows White to take control over the “c5” square. It is difficult to play position without counter play.

26...♕c5

27.♕d4!



27...♕f6? The decisive mistake

27...♔d6

28.♕xf6 gxf6 29.♕e8! ♖xc4

29...♔b7 30.♕xf7+! Most likely this tactical strike escaped Black’s attention.

30.♕xf7+!



30...♔g7 31.♖xc4 ♖xc4 32.♕xe6 ♖c1+ Also hopeless was 32...♖xa4 33.♔f3 ♖e8 34.♔c6 ♖e7 35.h4 with definitive advantage.

33.♔g2 ♖d2 34.♕f5 ♖a1 35.♔f3 ♖aa2 After 35...♖xa4 White wins 36.♔b7+ ♔h6 37.♕e6 Threatening ♕g8.

36.h4 ♖e5 37.♔b7+



White has a technical winning . No commentary shall be offered on the remainder of the game as it is not related to our subject.

37...♖f8 38.♜b8+♔e7 39.♜xa7+ ♕f8 40.♜b8+ ♕e7
 41.♜c7+ ♕f8 42.♔h3 h5 43.♜c8+ ♕g7 44.♙e6 ♜xf2
 45.♜g8+ ♕h6 46.♙xa2 ♘g4 47.♜h8+ ♕g6 48.♙f7+

Hoenlinger, B - Kashdan, I
 Gyor Gyor, 1930

16...♙a3!



17.♜fd1 ♘d5 The knight seeks to go on the "c3" square

18.♙b1?



A mistake that allows Black to realize his plan unimpeded.

It was necessary to play 18.♙x3 ♜xa3
 19.♜d2 b4 (19...♜xc1 20.♜xc1 b4 21.♘g5 h6 22.♘e4)
 20.♜xc8 ♙xc8 (20...♜xc8 21.e4! ♘f6 (It is weak
 21...♘c3? 22.♙xa6! ♘xd1 23.♙b7♜b8 24.♜xd1±)
 22.♘e5 ♜a5 23.♘c4 ♜c5 24.e5 ♜c6 25.f3 ♘d5)
 21.♜c2 g6 22.♘e5 ♘c3 23.♜d2 ♜a5 24.♘c4 ♜c7
 25.♙e4; or 18.♘d4 ♙xb2 19.♜xb2 Δb4 20.♘e2

18...♙xb2 19.♜xb2 b4!



20.♜e5? ♘c3+



21.♜xc3 bxc3 22.♙xh7+ ♕xh7 23.♜h5+ ♕g8
 24.♘g5 ♙e4

Also wins: 24... ♖xg5



25. ♖xg5 c2 26. ♖c1 ♖fd8 27. ♖g4 ♖d1+ 28. ♖xd1 c1 ♖

25. ♖xe4 c2 26. ♖c1 ♖fd8 27. h3 f5 28. ♖g5 ♖xg5
 29. ♖xg5 ♖d1+ 30. ♖h2 ♖xc1

0-1

Test on the material covered so far!

Khalifman, A (2505) – Lau, K (2540)
 Dordrecht Dordrecht, 1988



28. ♖b6! White attacks both pawns on “b5” and “a5” at the same time.

28... ♖xc6 28... ♖d5? 29. ♖xd5! exd5 30. ♖xc7 ♖xc7
 (30... ♖xc7 31. ♖e6+-) 31. ♖b8+-

29. ♖xc6 ♖c7?



A mistake, Black obviously misses the subsequent combination in the game.

29... ♖e8 30. ♖c1 ♖d5 31. ♖xb5 ♖a8±
 30. ♖d8+!



This tactical strike is possible due to the knight on “c6”.

Mistaken is 30. ♖xc7? ♖xc7 31. ♖d6 (31. ♖xa5 ♖c2=)
 31... ♖e4 32. ♖xe6 ♖g5 33. ♖d6 ♖f7 34. ♖e6 ♖g5
 With repetition of the moves

30... ♖f7 31. ♖c5!



Using the vulnerable position of the black king, White forcing gets a technically won position with decisive material advantage.

But not 31. ♖e5+?



31... ♗e7 32. ♖xc7+ ♖xc7 33. ♖a8 ♖c2 34. ♖xa5 ♖xe2
 35. ♖xb5 ♖xa2 36. ♖b7+ ♗d6 37. ♗c4+ ♗c5 38. ♖xg7 ♗g4
 39. ♖xh7 ♗xf2= With a fair chance for salvation

31... ♖xd8 32. ♗e5+ ♖xe5 33. ♖xe5 ♗d5 34. ♖d4 ♖a8

After 34... ♖d7 it was possible 35. ♖c5 ♖b7
 36. ♖c6 ♖b6 37. ♖d7+ ♗f6 38. ♗g4!?



(38. ♖a7) Δ38... ♗xg4? 39. e4 with a victory

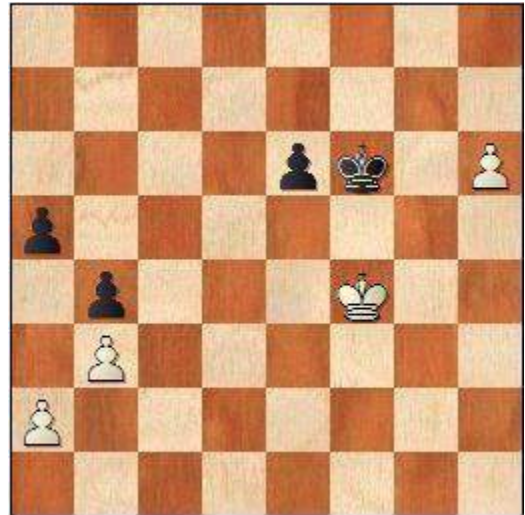
35. ♖f3 ♗b4 36. e4 ♗xe4 37. ♗xe4 ♗c3 Or 37... ♗f6 38. ♖b6

38. ♖d7+ ♗f6 39. e5+ ♗xe5 40. ♖xg7+



Khalifman confidently converted his material advantage.

40... ♗d6 41. ♖xh7 ♖f8 42. h4 ♖f3 43. ♗g2 ♖c3 44. h5 ♗e4
 45. ♖g6
 45. ♖g6 ♖xg3+ 46. ♖xg3+ ♗xg3 47. ♗xg3 ♗e5
 48. h6 ♗f6 49. ♗f4+-



1-0

TEST YOURSELF

By GM Petar G. Arnaudov



Test №3

Black to move... Evaluate the position!



Try to find the best move in each position

Test №1

White to move...



Test №4

Black to move...



Test №2

Black to move...



Test №5

White to move...



Test №6
Black to move...



Test №9
White to move...



Test №7
White to move...



Test №10
Black to move...



Test №8
White to move...



Test №11
White to move...



Test Yourself Solutions

(1) Iljiushenok, Ilia (2450) - Eljanov, Pavel (2727)

EICC 2015 Jerusalem (1.3), 24.02.2015

21. ♖xf6+! gxf6 21... ♖h8 22. ♖g3±
 22. ♖g3+ ♖h8 23. ♖g7!! fxe5 23... ♖xg7
 24. e×f6+ ♖×f6 25. ♖×c7+–
 24. ♖h6 ♖xf1+ 25. ♖xf1 ♖b5+ 26. ♖g1=
 26. ♖e1!+–
 26... ♖d3=

(2) Veinberg, Nimrod (2350) – Smirin, Ilia (2650)

EICC 2015 Jerusalem (1.29), 24.02.2015

9... ♖fxe4! 10. ♖xe4 ♖xe4 11. ♖e3 11. ♖×e4 ♖f5
 11... 0–0

(3) Aharon, Ofir (2311) – Ivanisevic, Ivan (2638)

EICC 2015 Jerusalem (1.35), 24.02.2015

38... d3+! Black is winning, the bishop stops b– and h– pawns from f8 and White is hopeless.

39. ♖d1 ♖a3 40. ♖g6 ♖d4 41. ♖f5 e3 42. ♖g4 ♖c3
 43. h5 ♖f8 44. h6 ♖xh6 45. ♖f3 ♖xb3 46. ♖g4 ♖c3
 47. ♖f3 ♖d4 48. ♖h5 ♖f8 49. ♖g4 ♖e4 50. ♖h5 ♖f4
 0–1

(4) Shimanov, Aleksandr (2594) – Navara, David (2735)

EICC 2015 Jerusalem (3.1), 26.02.2015

22... ♖8xe4!! 23. ♖xe4 ♖e2 24. ♖xe1 ♖xd3

(5) Moiseenko, Alexander (2695) – Huzman, Alexander (2582)

EICC 2015 Jerusalem (3.19), 26.02.2015

31. bxc6 ♖xd2 32. ♖xg5+ hxg5 33. h6++–
 1–0

(6) Indjic, Aleksandar (2546) – Smirin, Ilia (2650)

EICC 2015 Jerusalem (3.29), 26.02.2015

29... ♖xg2! 30. ♖xd5 ♖xe3 31. fxe3 ♖xe3

(7) Khismatullin, Denis (2653) – Eljanov, Pavel (2727)

EICC 2015 Jerusalem (10.3), 06.03.2015

44. ♖g1!! ♖xd1+ 45. ♖h2 ♖xc6 46. ♖e7+ ♖h6
 47. ♖f8+ ♖g5 48. ♖xf7 ♖f6 49. f4+ ♖h6 50. ♖xf6 ♖e2
 51. ♖f8+ ♖h5 52. ♖g7 h6 53. ♖e5+ ♖h4 54. ♖f6 ♖h5
 55. f5 gxf5 56. ♖xf5+ ♖h4 57. ♖g6
 1–0

(8) Riazantsev, Alexander (2688) – Vocaturo, Daniele (2579)

EICC 2015 Jerusalem (2.7), 25.02.2015

16. ♖e4! ♖e8 17. ♖h6+ ♖g8 18. ♖fg5 ♖xg5
 19. ♖xg5+ ♖h7 20. ♖h6+ ♖g8 21. ♖g5+ ♖h7
 22. ♖h6+ ♖g8

(9) Riazantsev, Alexander (2688) – Vocaturo, Daniele (2579)

EICC 2015 Jerusalem (2.7), 25.02.2015

23. a4!! ♖e7 24. ♖a3+–

(10) Baron, Tal (2510) – Dreev, Aleksey (2643)

EICC 2015 Jerusalem (7.40), 03.03.2015

30... ♖xc2!! 31. ♖xc2 31. ♖×c2 ♖a3+ 32. b×a3 ♖×c2++
 31... ♖a3+ 32. ♖c1 ♖b7 33. ♖h3 b4 34. ♖g1 ♖xc3+
 35. ♖xc3 ♖e4
 0–1

(11) Muzychuk, Mariya (UKR) Koneru, Humpy (IND) WWCC2015 Sochi (22.1), 26.03.2015

26. ♖d2!! ♖f8 27. ♖d5+ ♖xd5 28. ♖xd5+ ♖h8 29. ♖f7!
 1–0