

The Essential Center-Counter

**A Practical
Guide for
Black**



ANDREW
MARTIN

THE ESSENTIAL CENTER COUNTER

•

**Andrew
Martin**
international master

Thinkers' Press, Inc.
Davenport, IA

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2004

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Okay, I accept your offer

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SYMBOLS

Some or all of the below symbols are used throughout this book.

- ! = a good move
- !! = a very good move
- ? = an error
- ?? = a blunder
- !? = an interesting move
- ?! = a dubious move
- ⊙ = Zugzwang
- = the only move
- + = White is winning
- ± = White is better
- ±̄ = White is a bit better
- + = Black is winning
- ∓ = Black is better
- ∓̄ = Black is a bit better
- = = equality
- ∞̄ = with compensation
- ↔ = with counterplay
- ^ = with the initiative
- > = with an attack
- ⊕ = time trouble
- N = a novelty—new move
- RR = editorial comment
- △ = a better move is
- ≈ = an equivalent move is
- △ = with the idea of

PREFACE

I spend most of my time feeling knackered. Fourteen years of full-on childcare and earning a living from chess, mostly teaching in schools, seems to have reduced me to rubble. Between 1990 and 2000 it got so bad that I hardly felt like writing at all. Just looking at a chessboard was enough to exhaust me. Thankfully, things are gradually getting better as the kids have become more independent. And playing chess... well... difficult again. What use are the ideas and the talent when you can't back them up with energy? Please dry your tears now as, like me, you've surely discovered that there are many in the same boat! Those who love chess and want to carry on but at the same time cannot find the answer to the enthusiasm of youth and the all-embracing knowledge of the database! Enter the Center Counter, a practical answer and a practical weapon! You will not find a more economical answer to 1. e4 nor a comparable opening which will furnish such good results in so short a time. When I'm worn out and playing a young hotshot I turn to the Center-Counter to blunt the attack. When I'm playing a theoretical boffin or a *ChessBase* nerd, 1...d5 takes away the strain. Finally, when I don't want to think too hard or analyze long variations the solid position that this opening affords me enables me to stay cool under pressure. The *Essential Center-Counter* dispenses with stifling detail, concentrating only on the necessary information to get you up and running with this excellent opening. You'll see the latest games and plans discussed in a very user-friendly

way. By the time you have finished you will have a repertoire in your hands to use as you see fit against anyone of any strength. Hey, the energy is returning already!

Andrew Martin
September 2004

PART ONE

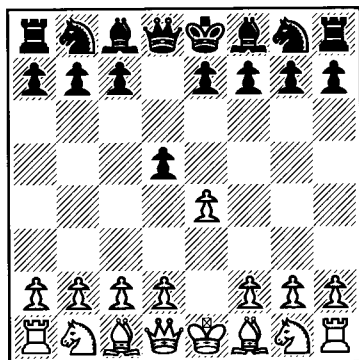
**White does not like the
Center Counter at all**

ONE

SCANDINAVIAN OR CENTER-COUNTER?

What's in a name? Well, quite a lot actually if we are to prevent our game from drying up. Computers seem to be seeing to that anyway. Perhaps the title 'Scandinavian' is appropriate to some but I don't like it. The color and the vibrancy of Black's first counterattacking move is lost for one thing.

1. e4 d5.



A central counter after all! So we will stick with Center Counter in this book and I hope the wider chess

brotherhood will agree. With the greatest of respect to our Scandinavian friends, it's just a much better name.

WHY THE CENTER COUNTER?

I hope that this book will be useful on many levels for players of all standards. For the Grandmaster or Master the Center Counter is an ideal surprise weapon to have in the locker. Used infrequently and at the right moment it provides an effective and very easy-to-learn counter to 1. e4. Botvinnik was the one who said that every strong player should have two or three ideas against each of 1. e4 and 1. d4. 1. e4 d5 fits in very nicely at number three on the list. Below

Master level down to the club player I think this is where the opening has fantastic practical advantages. In the weekend tournament, the important match, or after a long, hard day's work economy of energy is the most crucial factor of all when it comes to winning the game. The Center Counter offers everyone the chance to learn an opening quickly and to assimilate the themes and ideas in the shortest possible time. I think one can turn up and play 1. e4 d5 after only a few hours study and for the most part get it right! Theoretical excellence isn't exactly at a premium here; what is crucial is understanding of ideas. I hope this is what this book will provide.

THE IDEAS OF THE OPENING

1. e4 d5

There is no other move like 1... d5! For starters, Black limits White's choice quite appreciably and that is an advantage not to be sneezed at. Naturally this limitation applies to both colors and I think it's only this narrow focus which prevents the opening from becoming more popular at the highest level. In order to win a game there flexibility and complexity are crucial.

2. exd5

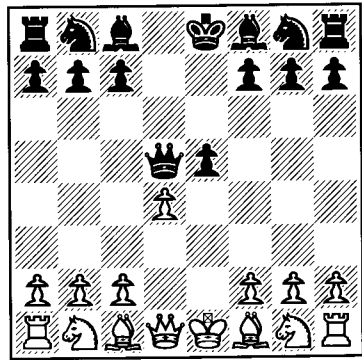
90% of players are going to capture but several other moves need to be mentioned: 2. ♖f3; 2. e5; 2. ♘c3; 2. d4. Of these 2. ♘c3 is the only decent idea, a logical developing move with aggressive intentions. Nevertheless, I'll show you easy ways for Black to defuse the bomb.

2... ♚xd5 3. ♘c3

Still following the main track. 3. ♘f3! has attracted quite a following recently as White has become increasingly disenchanted with the main

lines. It's dangerous. White delays ♘b1-c3, hoping to build up with ♘e2, 0-0, d4 and c2-c4! first, gaining central space. I hope I can show that with 3... ♘f6! Black has plenty of ideas of his own with his tout, counterpunching stance.

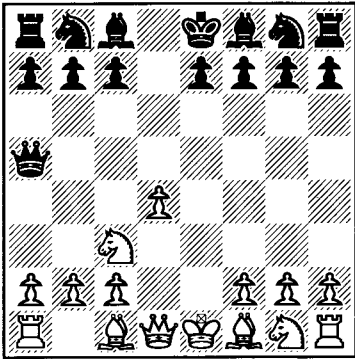
3. d4 is the final alternative to 3. ♘c3, but 3... e5! is the complete counter; a challenge in the center which quite takes the wind out of White's sails.



3... ♚a5

The Queen moves out of the way of White's minor pieces and stays in the game. Although Black has several alternatives already (3... ♚d8, 3... ♚d6, 3... ♚e5†), this is the line I recommend, one that is standing the test of time at master level.

4. d4



Now the way splits. White may delay the 'obvious' 4. d4 or play it immediately.

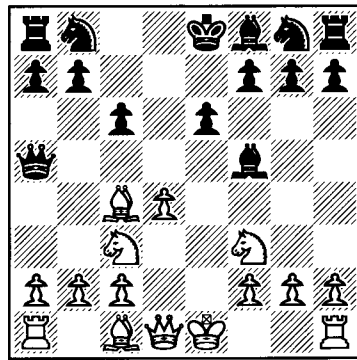
There are several alternatives: 4. ♘c4; 4. ♗f3; 4. g3; and 4. b4. Where possible, and for simplicity's sake, I am going to recommend Black plays an early c7-c6 and develops his pieces roughly in this order: ...♘f5, ...e6, ...♗d7, ...♘b4, ...♗g6, etc. Light-squared pressure is the initial order of the day and flexibility is maintained with castling. I will obviously closely consider variations where Black must adjust his opening strategy to suit the specific needs of the position. However, the above sequence is an important one to keep in mind. If White develops

without a plan (and plenty do) then this scheme comes into its own.

4... c6! 5. ♗f3

5. ♘c4 ♘f5 6. ♘d2 is an important modern line. Maybe this is the one variation where an early ...♗f6 is the only good way.

5... ♘f5 6. ♘c4 e6



And as you can see, Black is well on the way to setting up his/her desired formation. To close this brief introduction, a couple of games. The first is from the recent Women's World Championship. White clearly has only the vaguest idea of theory and so decides to adopt 'natural methods,' bringing out the pieces in apple-pie order and expecting something to turn up. When it doesn't, she

has to start struggling and in the end has to sweat for a draw. The second shows Black whipping up a lethal attack when White miscalculates.

(1)

Kosintseva, N (2425)–

Zhukova, N (2471)

FIDE WCh Women KO

Elista, Russia

May 25, 2004

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3
♜a5 4. d4 c6!

An accurate way, sidestepping various White tries with an early ♘d2 followed by discovered attacks from the ♘/c3. Black delays ... ♘f6 until he or she is ready.

5. ♘f3 ♘f5 6. ♘c4 e6 7. 0–0
♘f6

It's fine now that White has castled short taking outright attack out of the equation.

8. ♜e2

There is nothing to fear from 8. ♘d2 for instance: 8... ♘bd7 9. ♘d5 ♜d8 10. ♘xf6† (10. ♘e3 ♘g6 11. ♜e1 ♘d6=) ♘xf6= (10... ♜xf6!? 11. ♘g5 ♜g6 12. c3 ♘g4∞).

8... ♘b4

Again quite regular. Black is happy to surrender the dark-squared Bishop in order to gain control of the central light squares and to facilitate a queenside pawn advance. 8... ♘bd7 9. ♘h4 ♘g6 10. ♘xg6 hxg6 11. ♘e4 ♘xe4 12. ♜xe4 0–0–0 also seems good.

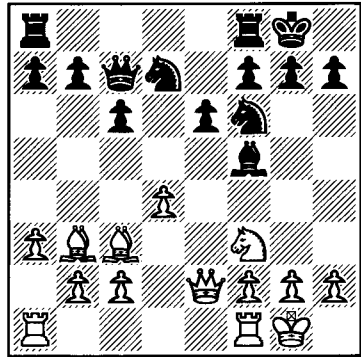
9. ♘b3

A complete waste of time.

9... 0–0 10. ♘d2 ♘bd7

10... ♜c7 11. ♘b5!

11. a3 ♘xc3 12. ♘xc3 ♜c7=



Lots of strong players would be looking at the two Bishops, expecting an advantage as of right. But, it's really tough for White to get the dark-squared Bishop going and often, if Black plays ♘f6-d5, White will just have to surrender the other Bishop, forfeiting any

hope of attack.

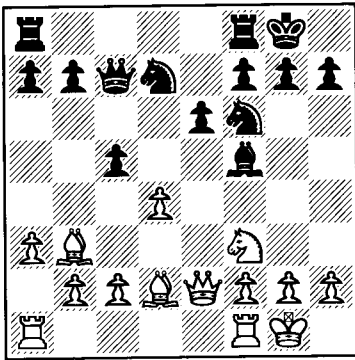
13. ♖d2

The following fragment is a good example of what I mean:

13. ♜fe1 ♜fd8 14. ♜ad1 a5
15. ♜c1 ♜b6 16. ♞e5 ♞xe5
17. ♜xe5 ♞d5! 18. ♞xd5
cxd5= *Kerbrat, J-Kovarcik,*

G/France 2003. Perhaps Black is even for choice.

13... c5!



An unusual counter, but in this instance, with the ♞/b3, completely correct. Black activates at just the right moment, before White is allowed to sit on his trumps.

14. ♜ac1

14. c3? ♜b6.

14... ♜ac8 15. c4 ♞g4

15... ♜b6! was an active deployment: 16. ♞c2 (16. ♜e3 ♞e4! 17. dxc5 ♞xc5 18. ♞c2

♜xb2 19. ♞c3 ♜a2 20. ♞xf6 ♞xc2 21. ♞xg7 ♜xg7 22. ♜c3 ♜f6 23. ♜xc2 ♜b3 24. ♜xb3 ♞xb3) cxd4 17. ♞xf5 exf5 18. b4 ♜fe8 19. ♜d3 ♞e5 20. ♞xe5 ♜xe5 21. c5 ♜d8 22. ♞g5 ♜d5.

16. dxc5 ♞xc5 17. ♞c2 ♜c6

18. b4

The only danger to Black comes from the queenside pawn majority, but Zhukova is active enough to at least keep a balance.

18... ♞ce4

18... ♞xf3 19. ♜xf3 (19. gxf3 ♞cd7 20. ♜fd1 b6∞) 19... ♜xf3 20. gxf3 ♜fd8! 21. ♞c3 ♞d3∞.

19. ♞xe4

A lazy move. White tires of even the thought of complications and heads for quieter waters. 19. ♞f4, keeping some tension, was the way to play for a win, but of course White risks more. 19... ♞xf3 (19... ♜fd8) 20. ♜xf3 ♜xc4 21. ♜fe1 ♞c3 22. ♞d3 ♜d5. 19... ♞xe4 20. ♞f4 ♞d6 21. ♞xd6 ♜xd6 22. ♜e4 ♞xf3 23. ♜xf3 b6 24. ♜fd1 ♜e5=

Black must keep the Queens

on for as long as it takes to adjust Rook endings in his favor. With the ♖/c1 ready to support the advance of the c-pawn it might look as though White is better, but practically, in view of the weakness of White's a-pawn, chances are equal.

25. h3

All roads seem to lead to equality: 25. ♖d7?? ♖xc4; 25. ♖d3 ♖c7 26. h3 h6 27. ♖d6 ♖xd6 28. ♖xd6 ♖fc8=; 25. ♖g3 ♖f6 26. c5 bxc5 27. bxc5 ♖c6 28. h3 ♖fc8 29. ♖d7 a6=.

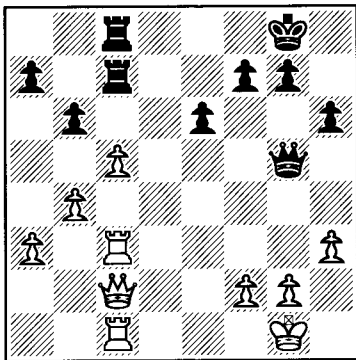
25... ♖c7 26. ♖c3 h6 27.

♖de1 ♖fc8 28. ♖d3 ♖g5 29.

♖d6 ♖c6 30. ♖d7 ♖6c7 31.

♖d3 ♖e5 32. ♖c2 ♖g5 33.

c5



Without this advance, White cannot win.

33... bxc5 34. bxc5 ♖c6 35.

♖c4 ♖e5 36. a4 ♖g5 37.

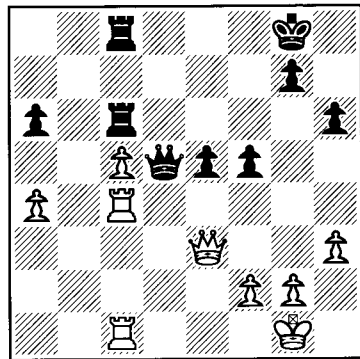
♖c3 ♖d5 38. ♖b4 ♖e5 39.

♖a5

White has to attack or create a second weakness—the c-pawn cannot win alone. In this case there is no weakness to be found.

39... a6 40. ♖b4 ♖d5 41.

♖c3 e5 42. ♖e3 f5!



Just reminding White about her own majority.

43. ♖4c3 ♖g6 44. f3 ♖g6

45. ♖1c2 ♖d8 46. ♖h2 ♖d4!

Progress has been made, the c-pawn might be weak so off come the Queens.

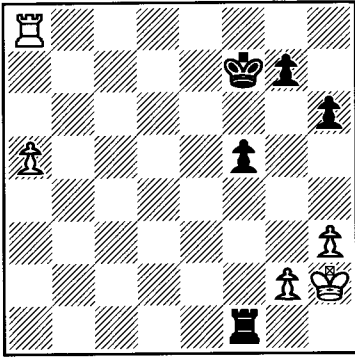
47. ♖xd4 exd4

I would surely have preferred 47... ♖xd4! 48. ♖c4 ♖f7 49. ♖xd4 exd4 50. ♖d2 ♖xc5 51. ♖xd4 ♖e6. With the

Chapter One

white King so remote, Black is slightly better. tenacity?

48. ♖d3 ♖d5 49. ♖c4 ♖cxc5
 50. ♖xc5 ♖xc5 51. ♖xd4 a5
 52. f4 ♕f7 53. ♖d7† ♕f6 54.
 ♖a7 ♖c4 55. ♖a6† ♕f7 56.
 ♖xa5 ♖xf4 57. ♖a8 ♖f1 58.
 a5. ½–½



Black's opening play is very good. By delaying ...♕f6 a lot of aggressive and dangerous White tries are avoided. I believe it was GM Wahls who suggested this approach. Since c7-c6 and ♖c8-f5 have to be played anyway, why not play them first? The story of this game, well... White got nothing with her straightforward piece shunting; she even had to work really hard to make a draw. Who is to say that your opponents will display such

(2)

Klinova, M–Stefanova, A

Elista Women's Olympiad

1998

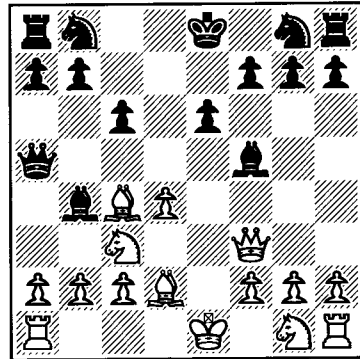
1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♗c3
 ♕a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♖c4 ♖f5 6.
 ♖d2 e6

The ultra-modern way is to delay ...♕f6 for as long as possible although maybe 6... ♕f6 is the wisest choice here, as we'll see later.

7. ♕f3

7. ♕f3, is not especially good.

7... ♖b4



Black had better get on with development rather than doing something silly like capturing on c2!

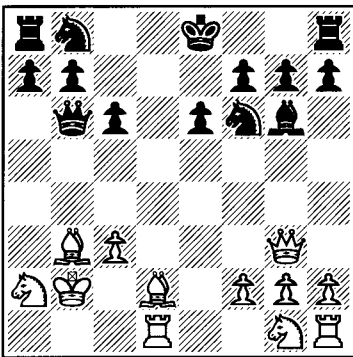
8. ♕g3

I guess this was the main point of 7. ♖f3 but what is the Queen really doing here? Black's next easily covers g7. 8... ♗g6! 9. 0-0-0 ♘f6 10. a3?

A miscalculation. Either of 10. ♘ge2 or 10. ♘f3 were okay.

10... ♗xa3! 11. ♘d5

Panic! White frantically looks around for the best chance. *Deep Fritz* gives an ugly variation: 11. ♘a2! ♖a4 12. ♗b3 ♗xb2† 13. ♖xb2 ♖xd4† 14. c3 ♖b6.



Rather a mess where it is impossible to predict an accurate result. With three pawns for the piece and a wide-open white King, I would rather be Black. 11... ♗b4! 12. ♘c7†

There is no solace to be

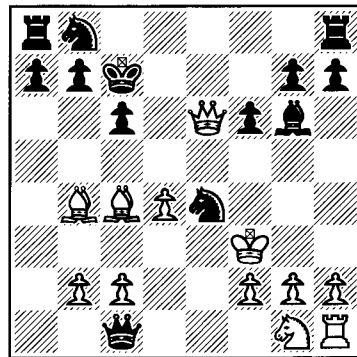
found. 12. ♗xb4 introduces a brief tactical sequence which wins for Black: 12... ♖a1† 13. ♗d2 ♘e4† 14. ♗e1 ♖xd1† 15. ♖xd1 ♘xg3 16. ♘c7† ♗d7 17. hxg3 ♖xc7-+; 12. ♘xf6† gx f6 13. ♗xb4 ♖xb4 leaves Black a clear pawn up.

12... ♖d7 13. ♗xb4 ♖a1†

14. ♗d2 ♘e4† 15. ♖e3 ♖xd1

16. ♖e5 ♖c1† 17. ♗f3 f6 18.

♖xe6† ♖xc7



It won't always go this smoothly.

19. ♘h3 ♖xc2 20. d5 ♖e8 21. d6† ♗d8. 0-1

You've seen the trailer and now it's time for the main feature. Set up the chess set and let's get going!

TWO

1. e4 d5

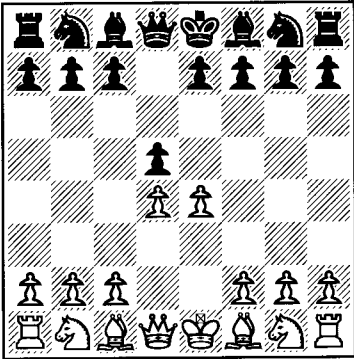
Strangely, we begin at the beginning by considering plausible second moves for White apart from 2. exd5. I will cover.

2. ♘f3—tricky, but poor.

2. e5—timewasting.

2. ♘c3—the best of the rest. Finally,

2. d4—the infamous and rather generous Blackmar-Diemer Gambit. I must say that I am delighted to see these moves as Black because I understand that my opening choice has been successful.



White is wriggling already! I think it's important to study the lines here carefully for it is precisely these odd second moves that will be frequently played at a lower level. Masters cannot ignore this chapter either and particularly 2. ♖c3 which is not a bad move at all. Nevertheless, I show that Black equalizes easily and maybe, a little more.

(3)

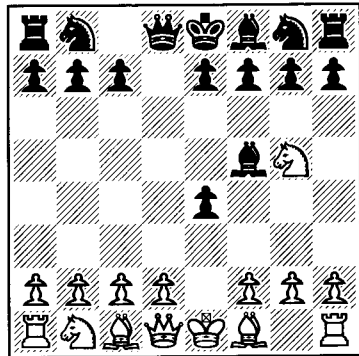
Rivas Pastor, M (2424)–
Gonzalez Merino, F (2171)
[A06]

Spanish Team Championship
Cala Galdana
October 18, 2001

1. ♖f3 d5 2. e4?

I think White is seriously underestimating his opponent. 2. ♖f3 might be a good move for blitz but, with ample time for reflection, Black should be delighted to see this move.

2... dxe4 3. ♖g5 ♕f5!



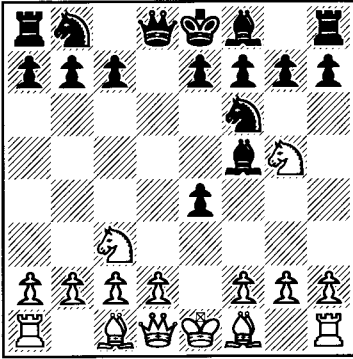
In general, if we can play ♕c8-f5 we will!

4. ♖c3

There are independent 'hacking' lines after 4. ♕c4, all of which are poor: 4. ♕c4 e6 5. g4 (5. h4 h6 6. g4 hxg5! 7. gxf5 exf5) ♕g6 6. h4 h6.

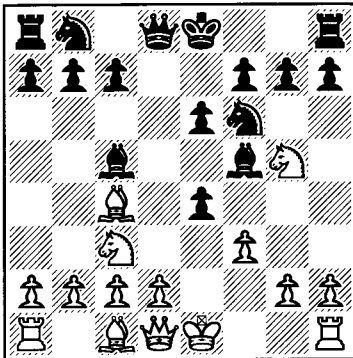
Chapter Two

4... ♖f6



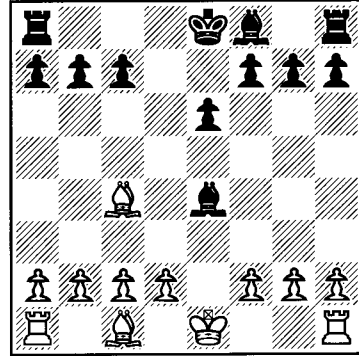
5. ♖e2

5. ♖e2 carries on in the same free-thinking, but ultimately rubbishy, style. With due care Black just obtains a very good position indeed. 5... e6 6. ♖e2 (6. f3 ♖c5! a strong move, suggested by GM Matthias Wahls.



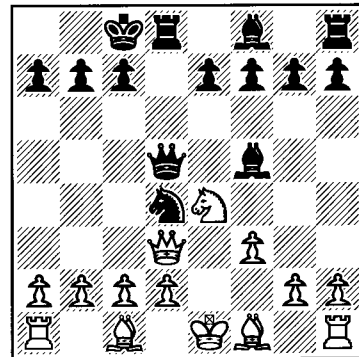
7. fxe4 ♖xe4! 8. ♖gxe4 ♖xe4 9. ♖xe4 [9. ♖b5† c6 10. ♖xc6† ♖xc6 11. ♖xe4 ♖h4†

12. ♖g3 ♖d8†] ♖h4††) ♖c6!
7. ♖gxe4 ♖xe4 8. ♖xe4 ♖d4!
9. ♖d3 ♖h4† 10. ♖xd4 ♖xe4† 11. ♖xe4 ♖xe4. Black wins a pawn.



5... ♖c6 6. ♖c4?

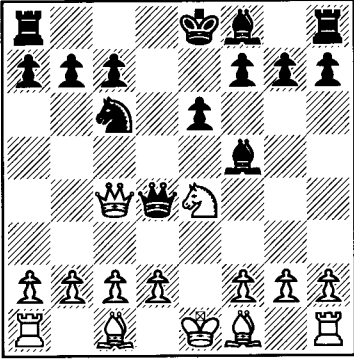
Zero respect. Perhaps 6. ♖gxe4 ♖xe4 7. ♖xe4 ♖d4! 8. ♖d3 ♖d5 9. f3 0-0-0 is the best that White can do, but what sort of advertisement is this for 2. ♖f3?



Black has a clear advantage

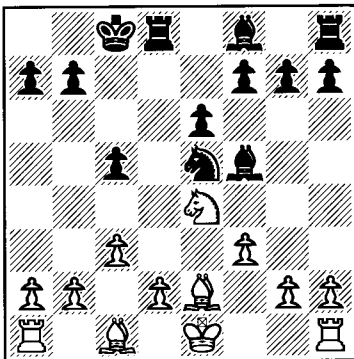
in development and much the easier game.

6... e6 7. ♖gxe4 ♗xe4 8. ♗xe4 ♔d4! ♖



With simple, clear ideas, Black has revealed White's play as artificial. In particular, I would draw your attention to the use of the d4-square; Black often puts either a Knight or his Queen there to jam up the works.

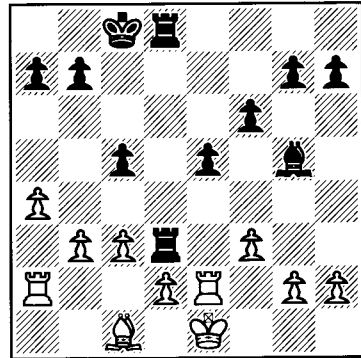
9. f3 0-0-0 10. c3 ♔xc4 11. ♗xc4 ♗e5 12. ♗e2 c5!



Nailing down the ♗/d2.
13. b3 ♗e7 14. ♗f2 ♗d3†

I like 14... ♖d7 intending to double up.

15. ♗xd3 ♗xd3 16. ♖f1 e5
17. ♖f2 ♗g5 18. ♗xd3 ♖xd3
19. ♖e2 f6 20. a4 ♖hd8 21.
♖a2



White's passive development is comical, but I can see that Rivas intends to ride out the storm and win later on. However, *the strategy of waiting for the opponent to make a mistake is a losing one; ceding the initiative deliberately at an early stage, even to a much weaker player, is ridiculous.*

21... ♗h4† 22. ♔d1 ♖xc3
23. ♖c2 ♖xb3 24. ♖xc5†
♔b8

That's it! Black is a pawn up for nothing. Goodnight

Charlie!

25. ♖c4 ♕g5 26. ♔c2 ♜bd3
 27. h4 ♗f4 28. h5 ♗g5 29.
 ♞ce4 ♞3d5 30. ♞c4 ♞8d6
 31. ♔d1 a6 32. ♔c2 b5 33.
 axb5 axb5 34. ♞g4 ♞c5† 35.
 ♔d1 ♞a6! 36. ♞xg5 ♞a1.
 0-1

I hope I've shown that 2. ♘f3 is tricky and nothing else. Sticking to his guns with 3... ♗f5! and keeping an eye on d4 ensures Black an excellent game.

(4)

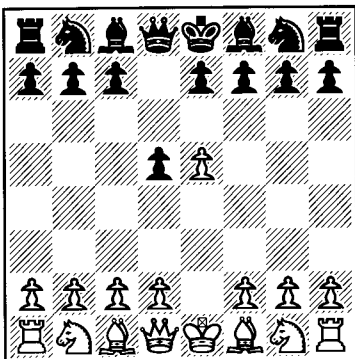
Dyrda, A-Wojtow, A

Befama Memorial correspondence

1986

DOWN AND DIRTY

1. e4 d5 2. e5?!



Branded as weak in many

opening textbooks I'm quite sure that you wouldn't find many masters playing 2. e5. However, there are some interesting ideas connected to this move and Black must play with a clear plan of campaign. The first key move is to take the center and look to develop the ♗/c8 early.

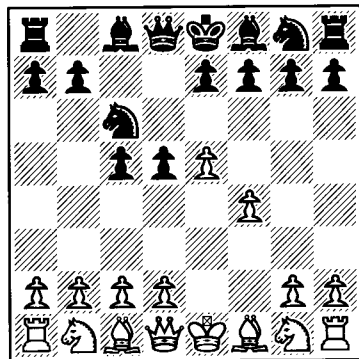
2... c5!

Intending ...♘c6 and ... ♗f5, or ...♗g4, followed by e7-e6. Black aims to get a very good French with his Bishop *outside* the pawn chain.

3. f4

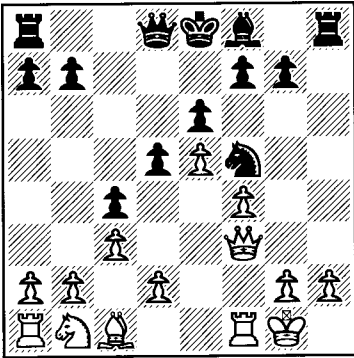
A decent way for White to handle his pawn structure but pushing the pawn to e5 was a committment and it's a target that Black can latch onto.

3... ♘c6



4. c3

Upon 4. ♖f3, 4... ♗g4! is good: 5. ♗e2 (5. h3 ♗xf3 6. ♜xf3 e6 7. c3 g5! is given by Wahls, detonating White's center.) e6 6. 0-0 ♗ge7 7. ♗g5 ♗xe2 8. ♜xe2 ♗d4 9. ♜d1 h6 10. ♗f3 ♗ef5= 11. ♗c3 (after 11. c3 Black demonstrates how easy his position has become: 11... ♗xf3† 12. ♜xf3 (12. ♜xf3 c4⚡) c4!⚡.



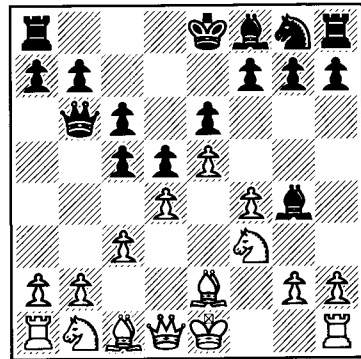
A nice move securing full equality at least.) ♗e7 12. d3 0-0 13. ♗e2 ♗xf3† 14. ♜xf3 ♜c8 *Johansen, A-Tandrup, M/Copenhagen 2003*. One cannot ask more of the opening than this. Black has full development and is ready to take the initiative with either a queenside pawn assault or even f7-f6. Perhaps White's most ra-

tional approach now is to play 15. ♗g3 and try to trade down and make a draw. What sort of message is that?

4... ♗f5 5. ♗f3 e6 6. d4 ♗g4!?

He felt it was even worth a tempo to play ...♗g4. The trouble with White's idea is that his center is cumbersome and the d4-square is easy to attack quickly.

7. ♗e2 ♜b6!



Already Black is better. He has no problems with any of his pieces and a clear target to aim at on d4. What is White to do? He's spent so much time pushing his pawns and now he can't even defend them!

8. 0-0

In a correspondence game this type of move would be sent

Chapter Two

with a second-class stamp. 8. dxc5 ♖xc5.

8... ♗xf3 9. ♖xf3 cxd4

Winning a pawn. The rest should be easy.

10. ♖h1 ♗h6 11. ♖h3 ♗f5

12. ♗d3 g6?!

I prefer 12... ♖d8 holding on to the pawn for dear life. After 13. ♗xf5 exf5 14. ♖d3 dxc3 15. ♗xc3 d4 16. ♗e2 ♗c5 17. a3 a5 Black is still clearly better.

13. ♗xf5 exf5 14. ♖d3 ♗c5

15. b4 ♗e7 16. a3 0-0 17.

cxd4 ♖a6 18. ♗b2 ♖ac8 19.

♗c3

White's back in the game but as this is not strictly relevant to our opening discussion, I will let the remaining moves pass...

19... ♖c4 20. ♗e2 a5 21.

bxa5 ♗xa5 22. ♗c3 ♗c6 23.

♗e1 ♖fd8 24. h3 h5 25. ♖b1

♖d7 26. ♖c3 ♖a6 27. ♖d3

♖a8 28. ♖xa6 ♖xa6 29.

♖a1 ♖a4 30. ♖b3 ♗xd4 31.

♗xd4 ♖xd4 32. e6 fxe6 33.

♗c3 ♖xf4 34. ♖ab1 d4 35.

♗d2 ♖f2 36. ♖d1 ♖e2 37.

♖g1 ♗c5 38. ♖f1 ♖e5. 0-1

I apologize for presenting

some real low-quality chess but that is what the variation with 2. e5 drags us down to. Not many people are going to even think about this pawn advance let alone play it! To those that do like pawn pushing, you can confront them with the simple and very effective c7-c5, following up with speedy queen-side development and possible pressure on d4.

(5)

Hoffmann, A (2290)–

Kacheishvili, G (2598)

[A00]

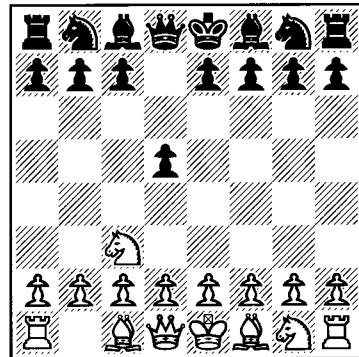
97th New York Masters

New York

March 30, 2004

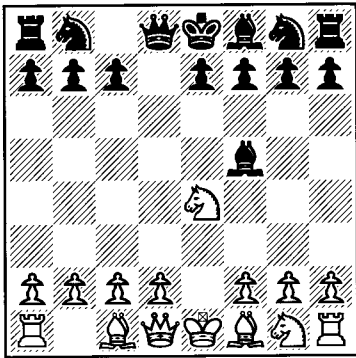
NOT THE CARO-KANN

1. ♗c3 d5



We come to a very important section because lots of people are going to play 2. ♖c3; at least they do against me! They don't want to get involved in your favorite opening and because the Center Counter narrows White's focus there aren't that many decent moves left apart from 2. exd5. Quite obviously there's nothing wrong with 2. ♖c3, but I will show you the simplest of ways to obtain a good game.

2. e4 dxe4 3. ♗xe4 ♕f5!



I recommended 3... ♔d5 in a recent video so just for a spot of variety here's another good move! As I will demonstrate, this is most definitely NOT the Caro-Kann. In some lines Black plays c7-c5 in one move, creating problems for White in

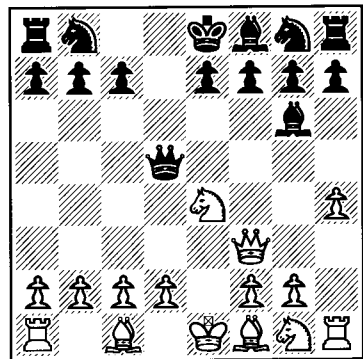
the center.

4. ♖g3

4. ♔f3 is a little tricky. Black should play solidly and defend f7. 4... ♕g6! Now there are several tries: 5. h4 The latest move; not as scary as it looks.

a) 5. ♕c4 ♖d7! 6. d4 (6. ♗g5 e6 7. d4 c5! 8. dxc5 ♕xc5 9. ♔xb7 ♖b8 10. ♔a6 h6 11. ♗5f3 ♕xc2) ♖b6;

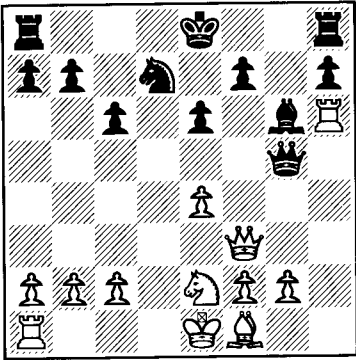
b) 5. ♖c5 c6! 6. ♖xb7 ♔b6 7. ♔b3 ♖d7 8. ♗f3 ♖b8 9. ♔xb6 axb6 10. ♕a6 ♖a8 11. ♕c4 ♖a7-+; 5... c6. (I prefer the much more combative 5... ♔d5! after which I start to like Black.



With ...♗f6† not working White has no other threats to speak of. 6. d3 [6. ♖c3 ♔e6†! 7. ♗ge2 ♖c6 8. d3 ♗f6; 6.

Chapter Two

♖d3 ♗d7! ♗c6 7. ♗c3 ♜xf3
 8. ♗xf3 ♗f6) 6. ♗g5 e6 7. d3
 ♗f6 8. h5 ♖f5 9. h6 ♗bd7 10.
 ♗e4 ♗xe4 11. dxe4 ♖g6 12.
 ♗e2 gxh6 13. ♖xh6 ♖xh6 14.
 ♖xh6 ♜g5∞.



Even here, is Black really worse? It is quite unlikely that the ♖/g6 will be shut out of play and meanwhile Black has plenty of activity.

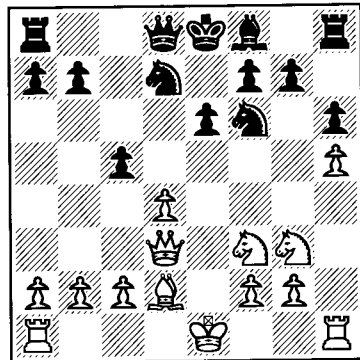
4... ♖g6 5. ♗f3

5. ♖c4 ♗d7 6. h4 h5 (6... h6! looks fine too: 7. h5 ♖h7 8. ♜f3 e6 9. ♜xb7 [9. d3 c6 10. ♖f4 ♜a5† 11. c3 ♗e5=] ♖xc2∞) 7. d4 c6 (7... ♗g6 8. ♗f3 e6) 8. ♖b3 ♗g6 9. ♗h3 ♜a5† 10. ♜d2 ♜xd2† 11. ♖xd2 c5 12. c3 cxd4 13. cxd4 e6 14. ♗f4 ♖e4 15. 0-0 ♖c6 16. ♖fel 0-0-0 17. ♗h3 ♖d6 18. ♗g5 ♖df8 19. ♖ac1 ♜b8

20. ♗f1 ♗d5 ½-½, *Soetewey, S-Barzeele, R/Belgium 2004.*

5... ♗d7 6. ♖c4

Hoffman mentions in a recent interview how important it is to make the opponent think at the earliest stage of the game. That is his original style. Fair enough, but you must choose your weapons and your opponents carefully. White may plod on down the main line of what he THINKS is the Caro-Kann, unaware of the difference: 6. h4 h6 7. h5 ♖h7 8. d4 ♗g6 9. ♖d3 ♖xd3 10. ♜xd3 e6 11. ♖d2 c5!



This is it! Black has an extra tempo, hits at the center and reveals the white Queen as exposed: 12. 0-0-0 ♜c7 13. ♖hel.

a) 13. ♗e4 0-0-0 14. ♗xf6

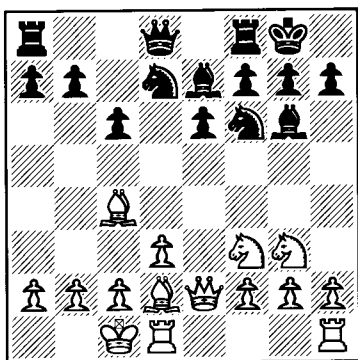
♞xf6 15. ♖h4 ♕d6=;

b) 13. c4? He might even make this mistake: 13... cxd4 14. ♞xd4 (14. ♖b1 0-0-0; 14. ♖xd4 ♕c5) ♞e5; 13... 0-0-0=.

6... e6 7. d3

Perhaps blunting the Bishop on g6. Kacheishvili does not worry about this detail, and continues to get his pieces out!

7... ♞gf6 8. ♖e2 ♕e7 9. ♕d2 0-0 10. 0-0-0 c6



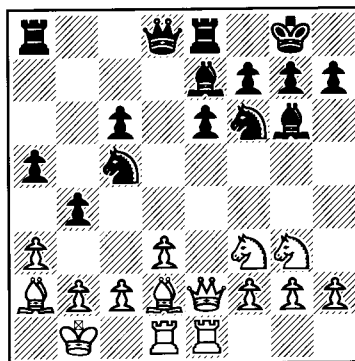
Somehow I prefer Black here. The ♕/c4 seemed primed to be attacked by pawns and White's King could well come under fire too!

11. ♖b1 ♖e8

Safety first in a quick game and leave White thinking about b7-b5. The threat is stronger

than the execution. Why not 11... b5, there was nothing wrong with that move?

12. ♖he1 b5 13. ♕b3 a5, 14. a3 ♞c5 15. ♕a2 b4



One glance shows White's problem; he has no counterplay to offset Black's strong attack.

16. ♞e5 bxa3 17. ♞xg6

It's all gone horribly wrong for Hoffman. He gave the run of the game to far too strong a player. 17. ♞xc6 is equally disastrous: 17... ♖b6 18. ♞xe7 ♖xe7 19. b3 (19. ♕c3 ♖c8) ♕xd3! A crunching blow! 20. cxd3 ♞xb3.

17... hxg6 18. b3 ♖d4

I do believe that Black is starting to enjoy this game.

19. ♖e5

The only move.

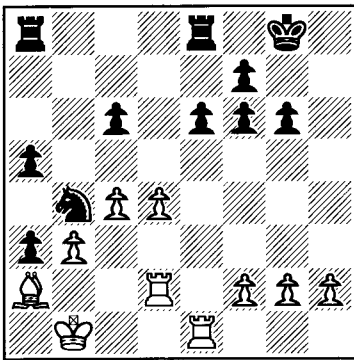
19... ♖xe5 20. ♖xe5 ♞d5

20... a4! lets the big ♖/a2 out of jail, but Black has other assets too: 21. b4 ♖ab8 22. ♖a1 ♗cd7 23. ♖a5 What else? 23... ♗xb4 24. ♖xa4 ♗xd2 25. ♖xd2 ♖a8 26. ♖xa8 ♖xa8♯.

21. d4 ♗d7 22. ♖ee1 ♗b4 23. ♗e4

23. c4 ♗xd2 24. ♖xd2 ♗f4 25. f3 a4 26. bxa4 ♖eb8♯.

23... ♗7f6 24. ♗xf6♯ gxf6 25. c4 ♗xd2 26. ♖xd2 ♗b4



You have to laugh sometimes—look at that ♗/a2!

27. ♖a1 ♖a7 28. ♗b1 ♖d8 29. ♖ed1 ♖ad7 30. ♗e4 f5 31. ♗f3 ♖g7 32. h3 e5-+

Completing the demolition job. Black wins more material.

33. d5 e4 34. ♗e2 cxd5 35. cxd5 ♖xd5 36. ♖xd5 ♖xd5.

0-1 Summarizing, I would say that 2. ♗c3 is completely defused by the ideas suggested here. 2... dxe4 3. ♗xe4 ♗f5 is the introduction to a good, solid plan and very logical too. Black attacks the exposed white Knight! So, long may 2. ♗c3 continue to be popular. Just make sure that I am Black.

(6)

Klett, A-Sawyer, T
[D00]

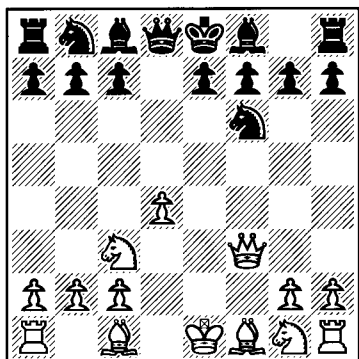
BDG Thematic Correspondence
New York
1996

1. d4

It is going to happen to you one day, someone is going to play the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit! I have never seen an opening with so much propaganda attached to it. Books, websites, articles in magazines hammering away with the message that White has a fantastic attacking game. Rubbish! In most lines of the Blackmar-Diemer White's just a pawn down for nothing and

I'm going to show you here just how to take and live.

- 1... d5 2. e4 dxe4 3. ♖c3 ♗f6
4. f3 exf3 5. ♕xf3?!



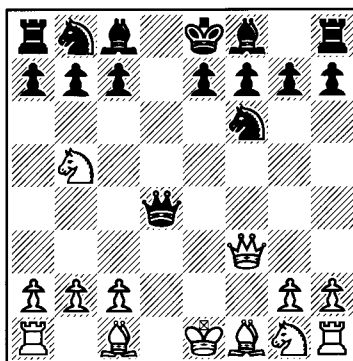
This is the Ryder Gambit although Tim Sawyer's massive book on the *BDG* doesn't tell us how this strange name came about. I love the idea: White sets a few cheapos and against awful defense will probably win. I recommend taking the second pawn on offer; indeed, here is Sawyer himself demolishing his own favorite opening!

- 5... ♕xd4! 6. ♗e3

What can I say, White has open lines for his pawns? Black has to be careful but if this opening was so good, everyone would be playing it! Let's take a look at some other

attacking tries:

6. ♗b5. Some maniacs might try this one.



6... ♕b6 7. ♗e3 c5 8. ♗f4
(8. ♕g3 ♗a6 9. 0-0-0 ♗d7!
10. ♗c3 ♕c7!?) ♗a6 9. a4
♗g4+; 6. ♗ge2 ♕b6 7. ♗e3
♕xb2 8. ♖b1 ♕xc2 9. ♖xb7
c6 10. ♖xa7 ♖xa7 11. ♗xa7
♗fd7 12. ♕e3 e6+; 6. ♗f4 e5
7. ♗ge2 ♕c5+; 6. ♗d3 ♗c6 7.
♗b5 ♕d8 8. ♕g3 e5 9. ♗e3
a6+. Black's position is simply
too solid to fall victim to the
immediate outright assault. He
uses his extra pawns to cover
the sensitive spots! So White
must probably place his faith
in 6. ♗e3, which isn't too great
either.

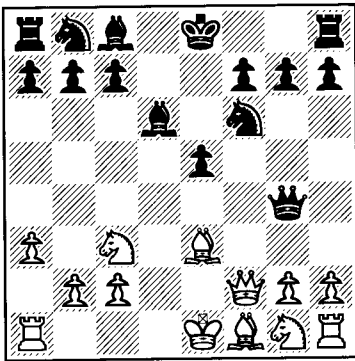
- 6... ♕g4 7. ♕f2 e5!

Why not? Black takes the center and threatens ...♗b4.

Chapter Two

8. a3

Very puny, but what else? Sawyer mentions 8. ♖e2 ♗f5!⚡; 8. ♖d3 ♖b4 9. ♜ge2 e4 10. ♖c4 ♖e6! 11. ♖xe6 ♗xe6⚡; 8. h3 ♗f5 9. ♗d2 ♖b4 10. 0-0-0 0-0⚡; 8. ♜f3 ♖d6 9. 0-0-0 0-0 10. ♖e2 ♗f5 11. h3 ♜e4⚡. White is toiling to prove he has comp.
8... ♖d6!



Considered by both Sawyer and Schiller to be Black's strongest move.

9. ♜f3 ♗f5!

With ideas of ...♖g4 and ...e4.

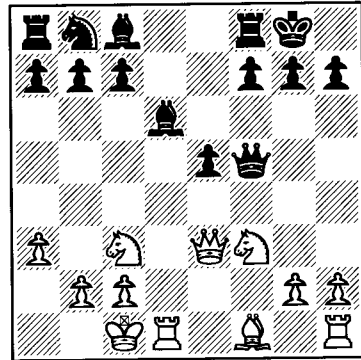
10. 0-0-0

10. ♖d3 e4 11. ♜xe4 ♜xe4 12. ♗h4 ♗a5†-+; 10. ♜b5 ♜g4! 11. ♗e2 ♜xe3 12. ♗xe3 0-0 13. ♖d3 ♗h5⚡.

10... ♜g4 11. ♗d2 ♜xe3 12.

♗xe3 0-0.

It's official, White is lost.



13. ♗b1 ♜c6 14. ♖d3 ♗g4 15. ♜hg1 ♖e6 16. h3 ♗f4 17. ♗f2 f5 18. ♜e2 ♗h6 19. ♜d2 e4. 0-1

I've devoted a fair bit of time and space to this unsound gambit because this is the sort of thing that crops up quite often at the club level and one doesn't want to be left floundering. However, the Ryder Gambit is utterly unsound, and I hope I've shown why.

(7)

Rodriguez, A-Bricard, E (2450)

[D00]

CEIT Open

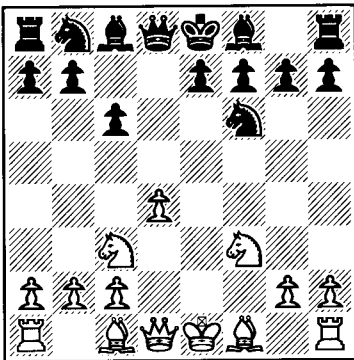
Toulouse

1998

So low is the status of the

Blackmar-Diemer Gambit among master players that it doesn't merit a single mention in the latest *Volume D* of the *Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings!* Nunn's *Chess Openings* gives a fleeting reference. I'm all for attacking free-flowing chess, long live the gambit, etc., but really, the truth is that the BDG isn't sound. Our chosen weapon will be the Ziegler Defense, presumably named after some guy named Ziegler who one day found the c-pawn in his hand. Black takes the second pawn and sets up a formation very similar to the main line Center Counter, except this time with an extra pawn!

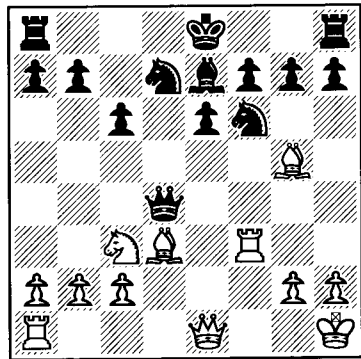
1. d4 ♞f6 2. ♞c3 d5 3. e4 dxe4 4. f3 exf3 5. ♞xf3 c6!



A very good waiting move, keeping options open with the ♞/c8. According to circumstances, either ♞c8-f5 or ...♞g4 will be to hand.

6. ♞c4

6. ♞d3 is the other logical Bishop development, but 6... ♞g4! is now a very good counter. Really, the variations are quite simple. 7. 0-0 (7. h3 ♞xf3 8. ♚xf3 ♚xd4♣) e6 8. ♚e1 (8. ♞e3 ♞bd7 9. ♚e1 ♞xf3 10. ♞xf3 ♞d6♣; 8. ♞e2 ♞bd7 9. c4 ♞d3♣) ♞e7 9. ♞g5 ♞xf3 10. ♞xf3 ♚xd4♣ 11. ♞h1 ♞bd7♣.



6... ♞f5

Not 6... ♞g4 now due to 7. ♞xf7♣!

7. ♞e5 e6 8. 0-0 ♞g6!

Noting the threat of ♞xf7! and positioning the Bishop

very solidly indeed.

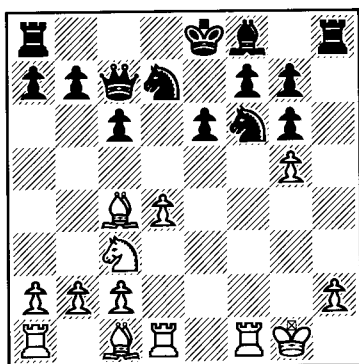
9. g4

To me this type of move is indicative of White's desperation. Seeing no weaknesses, he tries to create one. Naturally Bricard sees his way clearly through the tactics, as most strong players will.

9... ♖bd7

It may well be that 9... ♙xc2 was a heavy duty tactical shot but Black prefers normal development, refusing to get involved. 10. ♚d2 ♗g6 11. g5 ♜fd7.

10. ♜xg6 hxg6 11. g5 ♚c7!



This was Bricard's point. Suddenly White is forced to think about his own weaknesses.

12. ♗f4 ♗d6 13. gxf6

13. ♗xd6 ♚xd6 14. ♖f2

♜h7! 15. ♜e4 ♚e7 16. ♚g4 ♜b6 17. ♗b3 ♜d5.

13... ♗xf4 14. fxg7 ♗e3†.

0-1

Against the BDG, Black can play along the lines of the Slav, Caro-Kann, and Scandinavian by setting up a white-squared strategy prefaced by 5... c6 and led by his Queen's Bishop on either f5 or g4. There will be a few tactics to overcome, usually on f5 or f7, but these are easily sidestepped. The BDG can only work against weak defense. You should be very happy to face it.

OUTRO

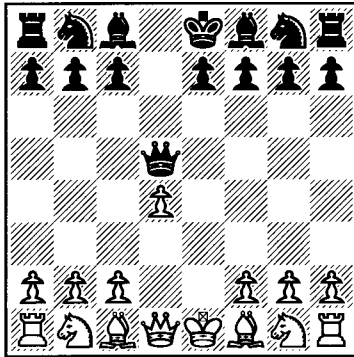
1. e4 d5

Summarizing, early deviations by White on his second move aren't dangerous. I reckon 2. ♜c3 will be most frequent, 2. d4 occasional and the others rarer than a Penny Black. Learn the lines suggested in this chapter and you may face them all with confidence.

THREE

Third move alternatives for White are hard to come by. After **1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♔xd5** there just aren't that many good moves! Let's take a look at the two most common tries:

A: 3. d4



I recommend the central strike **3... e5!** now, hitting White hard before he develops any of his pieces.

B: 3. ♘f3!

A move which has become popu-

lar recently as results with 3. ♘c3 have fallen off. White plans ♗e2 and 0-0, then he'll take a look around to see what is going on. Very often he will follow up with d4 and c4 and Black must pay respect to this very logical sequence.

My own particular experience against 3. ♘f3 has been interesting. I have tried 3... ♘f6 in two games, against GM Rowson and IM Ferguson, and I recommend this cagey move to you here.

Before moving on let's just mention 3. ♖f3 and 3. c4?! in passing. What can one do if a guy offers the Queen exchange on move 3? Just 3... ♘f6 and it's dead level already. Meanwhile 3. c4 ♖e4† 4. ♖e2 ♖xe2† 5. ♘xe2 e5⚡ isn't everything one's little heart could wish for out of the opening.

A

(8)

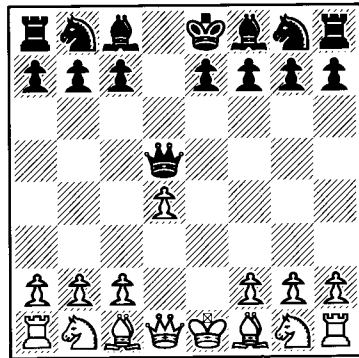
**DeFirmian, N (2575)–
Granda Zuniga, J (2610)**

Donner Memorial

Amsterdam

August 28, 1996

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. d4?!



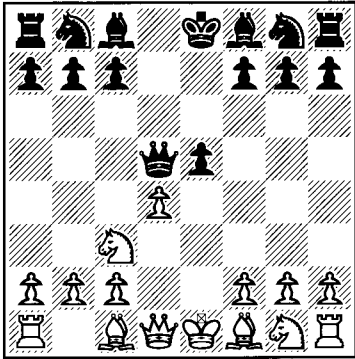
Who could possibly believe that such a natural move could be wrong at this early stage? White takes the center and lets all his pieces out. Yet, by acting energetically and exploiting his developmental advantage, Black can wrest the initiative from White.

3... e5! 4. dxe5?!

I am amazed how many games have gone this way. For a measly pawn which can't even be kept in most cases,

White cedes the initiative; a very poor practical decision. There are other moves here too but Black is comfortable against all of them. Here's how to do it:

4. ♖c3.



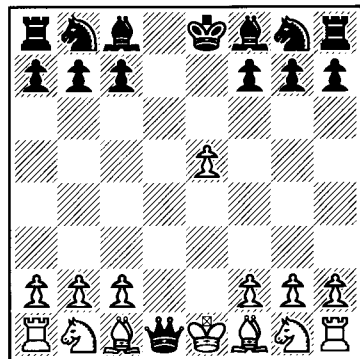
Tricky. Let us not be greedy—concentrate on development. 4... ♗b4! (4... ♖xd4 5. ♖xd4 exd4 6. ♖b5 exposes Black to unnecessary risk.) 5. ♖f3 exd4 6. ♖xd4 ♖e7! 7. ♖db5 (7. ♗e3 ♗xc3† 8. bxc3 0–0 9. ♖b5 ♖c6 10. c4 ♖f5; 7. ♖d2 ♖e5†! 8. ♗e2 0–0=) ♖xd1† 8. ♖xd1 ♖a6 9. ♗f4 0–0! 10. ♖xc7 ♖xc7 11. ♗xc7 ♗f5 12. ♗d3 ♗xd3 13. cxd3 ♖ac8 14. ♖b5 a6 15. ♗d6 ♗xd6 16. ♖xd6 ♖c7! threatening ...♖d7 or ...♖d8.

4. ♖f3 exd4! 5. ♖xd4 (5.

♖xd4 ♖f6 6. ♖c3 ♖xd4 7. ♖xd4 ♗b4 8. ♖db5 ♖a6 9. a3 ♗xc3† 10. ♖xc3 ♗f5!∞) ♖c6 6. ♗e3 ♖f6 7. ♖c3 ♗b4. A pin which appears frequently. 8. ♗e2 ♖xd4 9. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 10. ♗xd4 ♗e6=.

4. ♗e3 ♖c6! 5. c4 (5. ♖f3 ♗g4 6. ♗e2 exd4 7. ♖c3 ♖h5 8. ♖xd4 ♗xe2 9. ♖xe2 ♖xe2† 10. ♖cxe2 ♖xd4 11. ♖xd4 0–0–0=) ♖a5†! 6. ♗d2 ♗b4 7. d5 ♗xd2† 8. ♖xd2 ♖d4=. One might shy away from a long string of analysis but here the play is logical and easy to understand. Black concentrates on simple, aggressive, central development which at least maintains the balance.

4... ♖xd1†



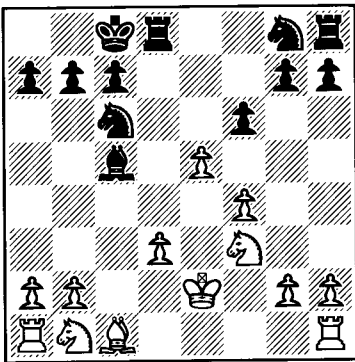
4... ♖xc5† may or may not equalize, but who wants to play

Chapter Three

an endgame already when one can sacrifice a pawn and get on to an early attack? These opportunities don't come around too often as Black. If they are playable, one should take the chance!

5. ♖xd1 ♜c6

5... ♘c5 is an interesting and little-used option. After 6. f4 ♜c6 7. ♜f3 ♘f5 8. ♘d3 0-0-0 9. ♜e2 ♘xd3† 10. cxd3 f6 *Dochev, D-Panbukchian, V/Plovdiv 1994*. Black had pretty good compensation for the pawn.



6. f4

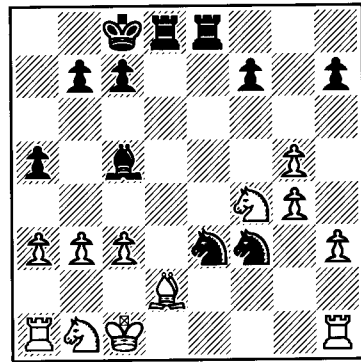
Others: 6. ♘b5 ♘d7! 7. ♘xc6 (7. ♘f4 0-0-0 8. ♜d2 ♜xe5!) ♘xc6 8. ♜f3 ♘xf3† 9. gxf3 0-0-0† 10. ♜e2 ♞e8 11. f4 f6̄;

6. ♜f3 ♘g4 7. ♘f4 ♜ge7 8.

♘b5 0-0-0† 9. ♜bd2 ♘xf3† 10. gxf3 ♜xe5 11. ♘xe5 ♞d5 12. ♘c4 ♞xe5 13. ♘xf7 ♜c6 14. f4 ♞e7 15. ♘d5 ♜b4 16. ♘c4 g6 17. c3 ♜c6 18. ♞e1 ♞xe1† 19. ♜xe1 ♘h6 20. ♜e4 ♘xf4 21. h3 ½-½, *Orel, O-Marinsek, T/Bled op/1993*.

6... ♘f5

6... ♘g4†!? 7. ♘e2 0-0-0† 8. ♘d2 ♜h6 9. h3 ♘xe2† 10. ♜xe2 ♜f5 11. g4 ♜e3† 12. ♜c1 ♘c5 13. c3 a5 14. b3 g5! 15. fxg5 ♜xe5 16. ♜f4 ♜f3 17. a3 ♞he8 → was *Graf-Hardy, England 1990*.



White is in for a drubbing.

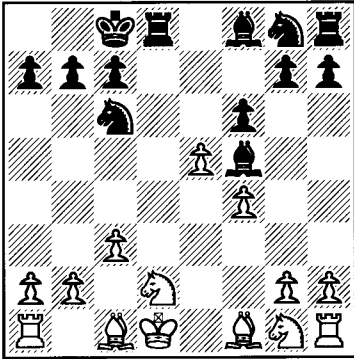
7. c3

7. ♜f3 0-0-0† 8. ♘d2 ♘c5! 9. ♘b5 ♜ge7 10. ♜c3 ♜d4 11. ♜xd4 ♘xd4 12. ♜c1 g5! 13. fxg5 ♘xe5 14. ♞e1 ♜g6 15. h3 a6 16. ♘c4 ♞d7 17. g4 ♘e6.

Black has ongoing compensation as it's difficult to develop the ♖/a1.

7... 0-0-0† 8. ♖e1

8. ♖d2 f6! is thematic.



With White all jumbled up Black opens the game. 9. exf6 ♗xf6 is natural and with threats of ...♗g4 and ...♕c5 followed by a swift ...♖he8, Black has a wonderful position.

8... f6! 9. ♕b5?!

9. ♗f3!? ♖e8 10. ♕b5 ♕d7 11. ♕xc6 ♕xc6 12. ♗bd2 fxe5 13. fxe5 ♕d6! 14. ♗c4 ♕xf3 15. gxf3 ♕xe5 16. ♗xe5 ♖xe5† 17. ♗f2=.

9... fxe5

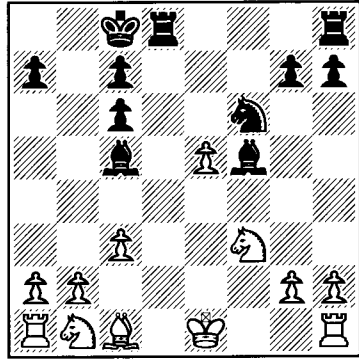
9... ♕e4!?

10. ♕xc6 bxc6 11. fxe5 ♕c5

12. ♗f3

12. b4!? Ftacnik. 12... ♕xg1

(12... ♕e7 13. ♗f3±) 13. ♖xg1 ♖e8 14. ♕f4 ♗e7∞. 12... ♗f6!



A superb idea. White cannot take the Knight.

13. ♕g5

13. exf6? ♖he8† 14. ♕e3 ♖xe3† 15. ♗f2 ♖xc3† 16. ♗g3 ♖c4-+; 13. b4!/? is given by Ftacnik when 13... ♕b6 14. c4 c5 15. exf6 ♖he8† 16. ♗f2 cxb4† 17. ♗g3 gxf6 18. ♗f4 (18. h3 Petursson 18... ♖e2∞.)

18... ♕d3∞ leads to a position where White has obvious difficulties.

13... h6 14. ♕h4

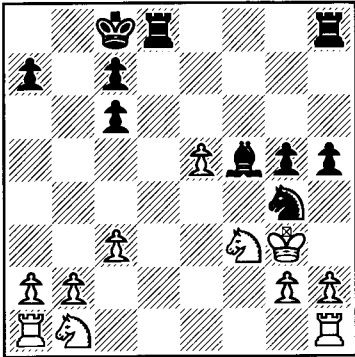
14. ♕xf6 gxf6 15. ♗bd2 fxe5.

14... g5 15. ♕f2

15. exf6 ♖he8† 16. ♗f1 ♕d3#; 15. ♕g3 ♗g4 16. ♗a3 ♗e3.

Chapter Three

15... ♖xf2† 16. ♔xf2 ♕g4†
 17. ♖g3
 17. ♖e1 ♖he8-+.
 17... h5!



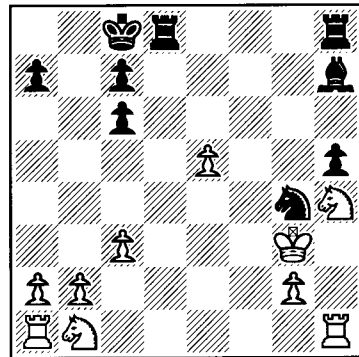
Both 17... ♖he8 or 17... ♖d3 regain the pawn, but Black is out for bloodier fare. One admires the spirit of the decision and this courage is fully justified by the end result.

18. h4

The last chance was 18. ♖xg5! however risky. By treading a narrow path, White can force Black to take perpetual check: 18... h4† 19. ♖f4 ♖df8↑ 20. ♖d2 ♖e6† 21. ♖e4 ♖f5† 22. ♖f4 ♖e6† 23. ♖e4 ♖f5†= and not 24. ♖f3 when 24... ♖hg8! 25. ♖ge4 ♖xe5† 26. ♖e3 ♖xg2 gives Black a winning attack (Emms).

18... gxh4† 19. ♖xh4

19. ♖xh4 ♖e3 (19... ♖dg8!? Ftacnik) 20. ♖g5 (20. ♖a3 Petursson. 20... ♖hg8-+) ♖g4†; 19. ♖xh4 Ftacnik. 19... ♖d1! 20. ♖fd2 ♖xe5-+.
 19... ♖h7!?



20. ♖f3

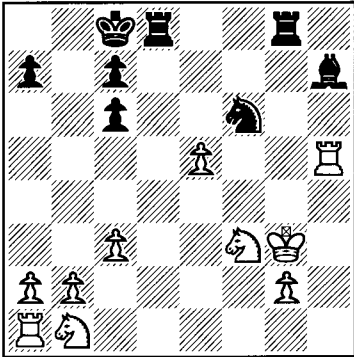
20. ♖a3 ♖xe5†.

20... ♖hg8 21. ♖xh5

A desperate man clutches at any straw. One just cannot survive such a position with the King so exposed.

21. ♖h4 ♖f2! 22. ♖xh5 ♖d3-+; 21. e6 ♖e3† 22. ♖g5 (22. ♖f2 ♖xg2†! 23. ♖xe3 ♖d3† 24. ♖f4 ♖g4† 25. ♖e5 ♖xf3-+ [25... ♖xf3 26. e7 ♖e4#]); 22. ♖h4 ♖xg2† 23. ♖xh5 ♖e4-+) ♖xg5† 23. ♖f4 ♖b5! 24. ♖xe3 ♖d3† 25. ♖f2 (25. ♖f4 ♖f5† 26. ♖e4

- ♖f1† 27. ♔e5 ♜d5#) ♜xb2†
 26. ♖g1 ♜d1† 27. ♖h2 ♜xh1†
 28. ♖xh1 ♜xb1†-+.
 21... ♜f6†



22. ♜g5

22. ♖h4 ♜xh5 23. ♖xh5
 ♜d1-+.

22... ♜e4† 23. ♖h4

23. ♖f4 ♜xg5 24. ♜xg5
 ♜df8† 25. ♖g4 ♜f5-+.

23... ♜xg5 24. ♜xg5 ♜d1

25. e6 ♜g1 26. ♜d2 ♜xa1

27. ♜df3 ♜e4 28. ♜d4 c5 29.

♜b3 ♜g1. 0-1

3... e5 seems like a lot of fun for Black if we are to believe the overall flow of this game. My thanks to Psakhis, Petursson and Emms for help with the notes.

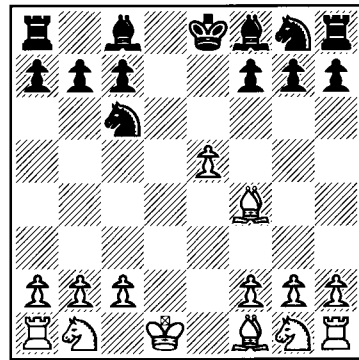
(9)

Movsesian, S (2659)-
 Istratescu, A (2593)

French Team Championships

May 10, 2003

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. d4 e5
 4. dxex5 ♖xd1† 5. ♖xd1 ♜c6
 6. ♜f4!?



The latest choice, hardly inspiring. There is an element of bluff surrounding White's opening play. Having found himself in this uncomfortable situation Movsesian now has to make the best of it. 6. ♜f4 cannot do more than equalize. The Bishop is a target to be hit by ♜e7-g6.

6... ♜c5

First he develops his King's Bishop actively.

7. ♜f3 ♜ge7! 8. ♜bd2 ♜g4

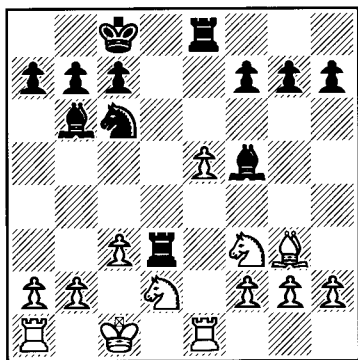
9. ♜g3 0-0-0 10. ♜d3 ♜f5! =

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Effortless pressure. If White tries to keep his e-pawn he ends up too passive. At Grandmaster level maybe White will find all the accurate defensive moves necessary with his King still in the middle. Most players would not like White's position one little bit.

11. h3

Possibly the best move, bailing out. 11. ♖xf5† surrenders a very important defensive piece. After 11... ♗xf5 12. c3 ♜he8 13. ♞e1 ♘b6 14. ♚c1 ♞d3.

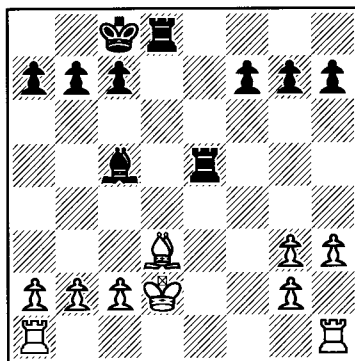


Black runs the game.

11... ♗xg3 12. fxg3 ♗xf3†
13. ♗xf3 ♜he8 14. ♚d2
♗xe5 15. ♗xe5 ♜xe5. ½–½

A draw, but I know many who would play on with Black. Opposite-colored Bishops make the position very dif-

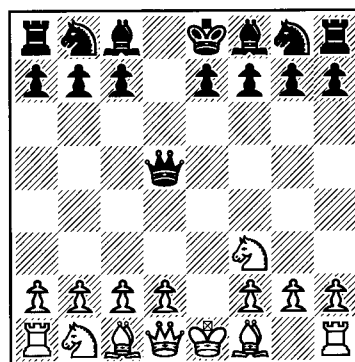
ficult to win but why not turn the screw for a while?



Look at White's pawn structure and Black's better development! Another game typical of this line. After 4. dxe5 White has little hope of obtaining the advantage.

B

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♗xd5 3. ♗f3



Lots of players recognize

that 3. ♘c3 isn't a total solution and so you are probably going to have to face 3. ♘f3 more and more often. Discussions with fellow titled players around the circuit have convinced me that they are all armed to the teeth against 3... ♗g4 so we will head off into the backwoods a little with our featured move.

3... ♘f6!?

I wouldn't say that this is the flavor of the month with the in-crowd, but it is a solid move and the plans for Black are relatively simple to learn. Moreover, as you'll see, it's a move I've used myself with success against very strong players and that does say something. Let's take a look.

(10)

Rowson, J (2512)–

Martin, A (2443)

Redbus Knock-Out

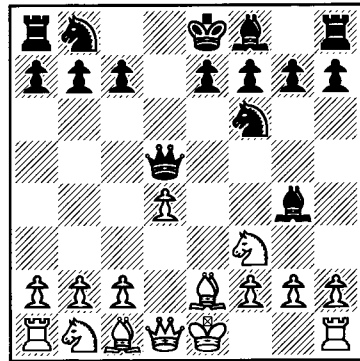
Southend

March 29, 2002

What should Black do against the flexible 3. ♘f3, which leaves open the option of a later c2-c4? Rather than get

involved in the complex tactics after 3... ♗g4, I am going to suggest a compact, easy-to-learn plan which gives Black a solid position.

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘f3 ♘f6 4. d4 ♗g4 5. ♗e2



5... e6

Rowson has also played this position with Black, choosing 5... c6 against *Lyell* in a 4NCL game (2002). After 6. 0–0 e6 7. c4 ♖d8 8. ♘c3 ♗e7 9. h3 ♗h5 10. ♗f4 0–0 11. ♖b3 ♖b6 12. ♖xb6 axb6 13. g4 ♗g6 14. ♘e5. Roughly equal.

6. h3 ♗h5 7. c4 ♖d8 8. 0–0 ♗e7

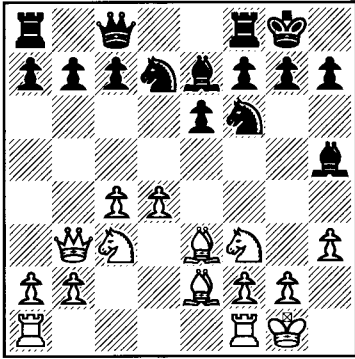
Black's overall plan is to play c7-c5 at the right moment and that is why he has omitted c7-c6.

9. ♖b3 '!

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Hitting at the weakness and forcing the reply.

9... ♖c8 10. ♘c3 0-0 11.
♙e3 ♘bd7

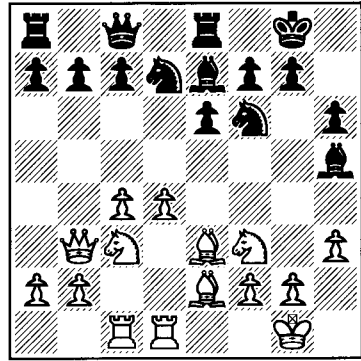


This position has been seen in a number of games. Theoretically White may be slightly better but in practice he has many problems converting this edge. In fact if Black is patient White may go over the top as you will see from the featured games.

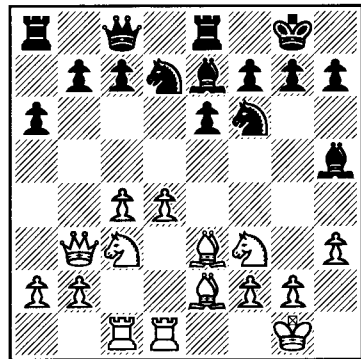
12. ♜ad1

Very natural indeed, although the other Rook has generally been played, presumably with a view to ♜ac1: 12. ♜fd1 ♜e8 (12... a6!? 13. d5 exd5 14. ♘xd5 ♘xd5 15. cxd5 ♙d6 16. ♜ac1 ♜e8 17. ♘d4 ♘c5 18. ♚c4 ♙xe2 19. ♚xe2 ♘e4 20. ♚f3 when 20... ♚d7 would

have been equal in *Kaidanov, G–Dzindzichashvili, R/Parsippany 1996*) 13. ♜ac1 h6!?



Black makes as constructive a move as he can find. Back rank tricks are avoided and there's a hole for the Bishop now if White was ever thinking about g4 and ♘h4. I must say I prefer 13... a6.

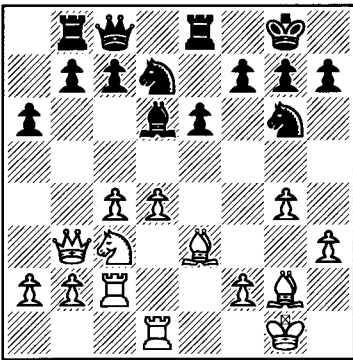


There are two points to an early a7-a6 in this system:

a) Should White go d4-d5

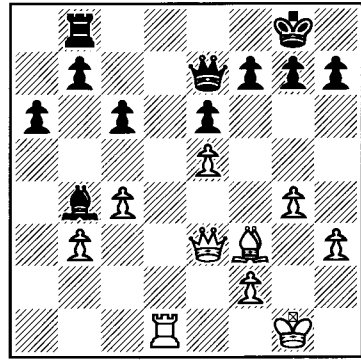
and recapture with a pawn on that square Black wants to blockade with ...♗d6 without being hassled by ♖b5;

b) Sometime in the near future Black contemplates b7-b5 and this small move will assist. 14. g4 ♗g6 15. ♖e5 (15. ♖h4 ♖f8 16. ♗f3 ♖b8 17. ♗g2 ♖6d7 18. ♖xg6 ♖xg6 19. ♖c2 ♗d6.



Black has counterpunching chances.) ♖xe5 16. dx5 ♖d7 17. ♗f3 ♖b8!. White's position looks good but the reality is somewhat different. I think he's gone over the top already and has numerous weak points to defend. The e5-pawn hangs currently and there are kingside holes to monitor. 18. ♖xd7 ♖xd7 19. ♖d1 ♖c8 20. ♗a7 c6! 21. ♖a4? (Perhaps

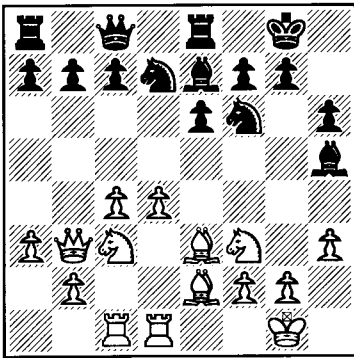
he should take on b8 but it looks like he doesn't want any black pieces near his King: 21. ♗xb8 ♖xb8 22. ♖d7 ♖xe5 23. ♖xb7 ♗d6 24. ♖xc6 ♖h2† 25. ♖f1 ♗e5 26. ♖xa6 ♖xh3† 27. ♖e2 h5!∞) ♖c7 22. ♗xb8 ♖xb8 23. ♖e3 ♗c2!† 24. ♖d2 ♗xa4 25. b3 ♗b4 26. ♖d1 ♗xb3 27. axb3 ♖e7.



So Black is a pawn up and the ♗/f3 is blunted. I don't know whether this position is dead lost against perfect defense but it's certainly not nice for White. 28. ♖d3 h6 29. ♖g2 ♗c5 30. ♖d2 ♖g5 31. ♖e1 ♖f4 32. ♖e4 ♖xe4 33. ♗xe4 g5 34. ♖g3 ♗a3 35. h4 ♗c1 36. hxg5 hxg5 37. b4 ♗f4† 38. ♖f3 ♗xe5 39. ♖b3 ♗d6 40. b5 cxb5 41. cxb5 a5 42. b6 a4 43. ♖b5 f6 44. ♖a5 a3 45. ♗b1

Chapter Three

♔f7 46. ♕a2 ♖e7 47. ♕c4 ♕b4 48. ♜b5 ♕c3 49. ♜b3 a2 0-1, *Mikuev, E-Erendzhenov, S/Elista 1999*. White let the game drift away from him. He thought he was so much better out of the opening that he could do more or less as he liked. Not so!) 14. a3. "Where do we go from here," White is saying?

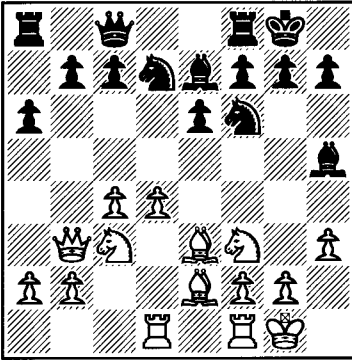


14... ♕g6 15. ♕f4 c6. He didn't like c7-c5 and so a more patient approach is needed. Maybe the plan is ...b6, ...♖b7, ...♜ac8 or ...♜ad8, and only then c6-c5. With what he thinks is a lead in development, White takes action. 16. ♖e5 (16. d5 ♖c5 17. ♖a2 exd5 18. cxd5 cxd5 19. b4 ♖f5∞) ♖xe5 17. ♕xe5 ♖d7 18. ♕f4 ♕g5. There was obviously another point to h7-h6

that we didn't see! (Lovers of the pawn structure may prefer 18... ♕f6 19. ♕e3 ♖c7=) 19. ♕xg5 hxg5 20. ♕d3 ♕xd3 21. ♜xd3 e5 22. ♖d1 exd4 23. ♜xd4 ♖f6 24. ♖d2 ♖f5 25. ♜e1 (25. ♜d1 ♜e7 26. ♜d8† ♜xd8 27. ♖xd8† ♜e8 28. ♖c7 g4∞) ♜xe1† 26. ♖xe1 ♜e8 27. ♖d1 ♖h7. Confident. 28. ♖d3 ♜e1† 29. ♖h2 g6 30. ♖xf5 gxf5 31. g3 ♜c1 32. ♜d2 ♖g7 33. ♖g2 ♖e4 34. ♖xe4 fxe4 35. ♜d4 (35. ♜d7! ♜xc4 36. ♜xb7 ♜c2 37. ♜e7 surely leads to a draw.) ♜c2 36. ♜xe4 ♜xb2 37. ♜e7 ♖f6 38. ♜c7 a5 39. ♖f3 a4 40. h4?!. Looks "right" to create a passed pawn but may well be wrong. I prefer 40. ♖e3= as in 40... gxh4 41. gxh4 ♜b3† 42. ♖f4 ♜c3 43. ♜xb7 ♜xc4† 44. ♖e3 ♜c3† 45. ♖d4 ♜xa3 46. ♜b6 ♜f3 *Lenic, L-Sermek, D/Terme Zrece 2003*. White's pawns are the more vulnerable and he went on to lose. Another one of those games where White knows he's holding a slight edge and feels obliged to do something with it immediately. This sort of thing crops up all

the time in chess; very often a slow increasing of the pressure is the right approach, but not everyone is up to that.

12... a6



12... ♖e8! 13. g4 ♘g6 14. ♗h4 ♗f8 15. ♙f3 ♜b8 16. ♜fel ♗d7 17. ♗xg6 ♗xg6 is a more economical defense, eyeing h4 and f4.

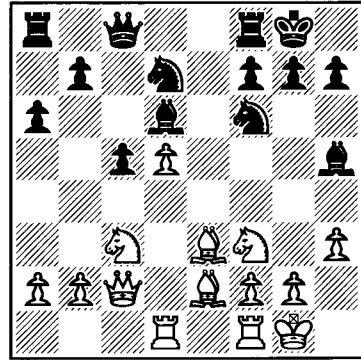
13. ♚c2

It's the second game of a mini-match and White wants to avoid losing. Hence the rather insipid text. I'm sure that if Rowson was really up for the game he would have played 13. g4! which is rather good here: 13... ♘g6 14. ♗h4 Without ...♗f8, Black's a bit cramped.

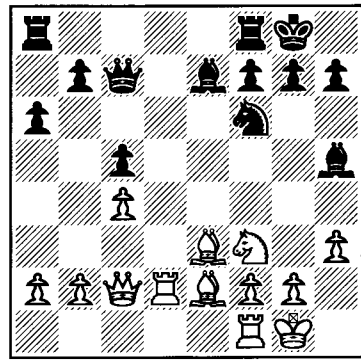
13... c5 14. d5 exd5 15. ♗xd5

15. cxd5 ♘d6! is quite satis-

factory, with b7-b5 coming.



15... ♗xd5 16. ♜xd5 ♗f6 17. ♜d2 ♚c7=



What's wrong with the Black position? It seems quite comfortable. Rowson keeps trying but he doesn't get anywhere.

18. ♗g5 ♘g6 19. ♙d3 ♜ad8

20. ♙xg6 hxg6 21. ♜fd1

♜xd2 22. ♜xd2 b5 23. ♗e4

♜c8 24. b3 ♚e5

Centralization. Unexciting, but extremely effective.

25. ♖xf6† gxf6 26. ♜d5 ♛e6
 27. ♛d3 ♕f8 28. ♜d8 bxc4
 29. bxc4 ♛g7 30. ♜xc8 ♛xc8
 31. ♕d2 ♛e6 32. ♕e3 ♛e5
 33. ♛a3 ♛e6 34. ♛d3 ♛e5
 35. ♛a3 ♛e6. ½-½

(11)

Ferguson, M (2380)–

Martin, A (2425)

4NCL

Telford

January 19, 2003

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♛xd5 3. ♖f3

In some ways an awkward move for Black to meet. The standard white-squared pawn chain plans are no longer available and he has to change tack. I've played the following plan twice now, against GM Rowson and here, and the results have been fine, although as we've seen Black must display cunning and patience. In purely chess terms, White delays ♖c3, giving priority to ♕e2 and 0–0 and then maybe d4 and c2-c4, gaining space and time in the center.

- 3... ♖f6

There are two sharp alternatives: 3... g6 4. d4 ♖h6!?.

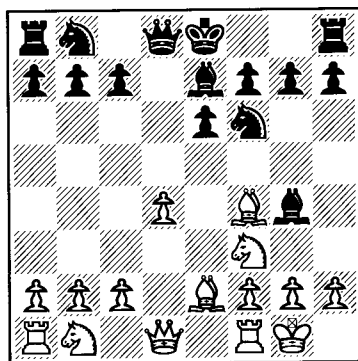
Of course Black doesn't have to play this move, but the idea of pressuring d4 is, without a doubt, interesting. 5. ♖c3 ♛d8 6. ♕f4 ♖f5.

3... ♕g4 4. ♕e2 ♖f6 5. 0–0 ♖c6!?. 6. d4 0–0–0 is another dance on a volcano, e.g., 7. c4 ♛h5 8. h3 e5!?.

4. d4 ♕g4 5. ♕e2 e6 6. 0–0 ♕e7 7. ♕f4

As we've seen, Rowson put his Bishop on e3. Black sticks to the plan.

- 7... ♛d8



The Queen was going to get pushed back anyway.

8. c4 0–0 9. ♛b3 ♛c8 10. ♖c3 ♖bd7 11. ♜ad1 a6

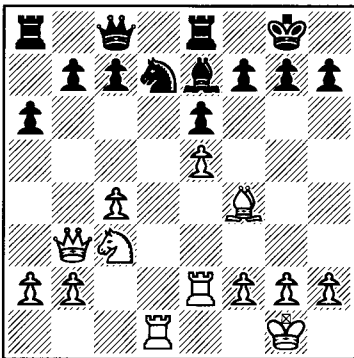
A key move, preventing ♖b5 and planning ...♖d6. Black hopes to get c7-c5 in one move; that is the point of

his play.

12. ♖fe1 ♜e8 13. ♘e5

This variation reminds me of Backgammon. White reaches a good position and from then it can only get worse. Meanwhile Black plods on unravelling, looking out for c7-c5 and e7-e5, and although he's slightly worse at the start, it can only get better! I remember Ferguson using up oceans of time around here, trying to find a way in. Eventually he decided to let Black exchange some pieces and I was quite happy with that.

13... ♙xe2 14. ♜xe2 ♘xe5
15. dxe5 ♘d7



Variations are inapplicable. Black works with a 'manageable disadvantage.' As long as he is modest in his ambitions I

believe the Black position to be defensible.

16. ♘e4 ♘f8 17. ♚g3 ♘g6
Covering g7.

18. ♜ed2 ♜d8□

Or White dominates.

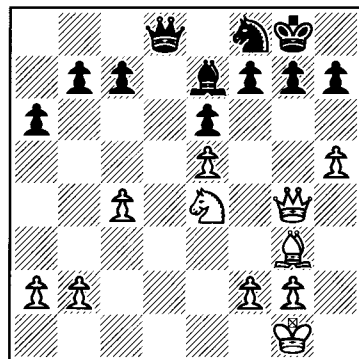
19. ♜xd8† ♙xd8 20. ♚g4
♙e7

Creating room for ... ♚e8 and ... ♜d8.

21. ♙g3 ♚e8!

I was trying to think of myself as a kind of half-baked Petrosian here, nullifying all the threats and at the same time creating a few little nibbles of my own. And if White overlooks one of my nibbles I'll have him.

22. h4 ♜d8 23. h5 ♜xd1† 24.
♚xd1 ♘f8 25. ♚g4 ♜d8=



I was happy. With rational exchanges Black has mini-

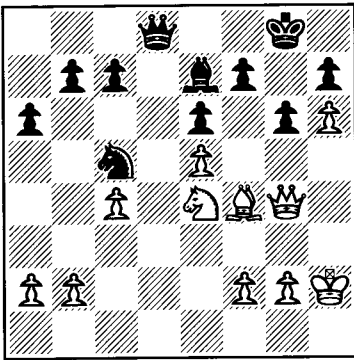
Chapter Three

mized any disadvantage and the next task was to get rid of the powerful ♖/e4.

26. ♖h2

26. ♖f4 ♗d7! (26... ♖d4? 27. ♖g5!. Idea ... ♗f6†!) 27. h6 g6 28. ♖dl c6=.

26... ♗d7 27. h6 g6 28. ♖f4 ♗c5!



Now a curious thing happened. White continued to believe that he was better. That cannot be so once Knights are exchanged. Back rank tricks and possible Queen ending squeezes are counterbalanced by the poor white Bishop.

29. ♗xc5 ♖xc5 30. ♖f3?

30. ♖e3 ♖xe3 31. fxe3 c5 32. b3 ♖f8 is slightly better for Black, but I think White should draw.

30... ♖d4!±

Overlooked completely. The tables turn.

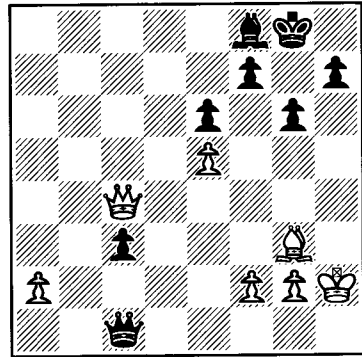
31. ♖g3 ♖xb2 32. ♖f6 ♖f8

33. ♖d8 ♖c1! 34. ♖xc7

♖xh6† 35. ♖g1 ♖c1† 36.

♖h2 b5-+ 37. ♖c6 bxc4 38.

♖xa6 c3 39. ♖c4



39... g5

39... c2! 40. ♖f4 ♖xf4† 41. ♖xf4 ♖a3 would have been a nicer way. I didn't even see this cute line, concentrating on making the win as simple as could be.

40. f4 c2 41. fxc5 ♖d1 42.

♖f4 ♖a3 43. g6

43. ♖c8† ♖g7 44. g6 hxg6

45. ♖h6† ♖h7-+.

43... hxg6 44. ♖c8† ♖g7. 0-1

3. ♗f3 is less common than 3. ♗c3, but it does restrict Black's choice. Obviously one can play ... ♖g4, but that

doesn't fit with our idea of an easy repertoire. Instead, we must recognize that 3. ♘f3 is a good move and react craftily with 3... ♘f6, which is only outwardly passive and will furnish good chances in over the board play.

SUMMARY A

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5

Summarizing, against 3. d4 I am recommending the sharp 3... e5! Black's second central counter of the game already! This strike gives excellent prospects.

SUMMARY B

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘f3

White's plan after ♘f3 creeps up on you. He will play ♗e2, 0-0, d4 and eventually c2-c4, gaining space and time in the center. Rather than fight fire with fashion, e.g., 3... ♗g4, I recommend the solid and less frequent 3... ♘f6, when Black develops his pieces comfortably with

... ♗g4, ... e6, ... ♗e7, ... 0-0 etc. He'll probably have the Queen knocked back to d8 and thence to c8 but he can look to kick back later with c7-c5. Patience is needed, but there are winning opportunities should Black display the necessary calmness. Soak it up and give it back is the motto, in the true Petrosianic style.

FOUR

THE AGE OF ROMANCE IS REALLY DEAD

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3.
♞c3 ♜a5 4. b4?!

The Mieses Gambit.

Yes, there will be those who will give 4. b4 a whirl, as well as 4. g3, and maybe even 4. f4 too. It's the sheer horror of facing the Center Counter you see, anything to avoid the main lines.

For a pawn White gets a hit on the black Queen and a few tricks. That's it!

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♜a5 4. Not d4

(12)

Stein, B-Backwinkel, B
Hamburg

1981

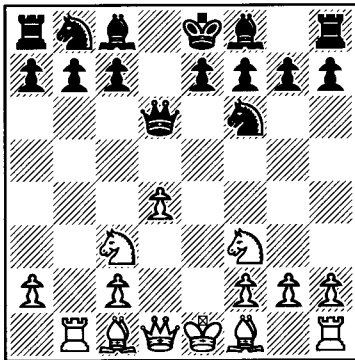
1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♜a5 4. b4?!

I am very skeptical but we must treat this “tricky” stuff with the utmost respect. Firstly, I am going to show you what can happen if Black underestimates White’s hacking.

4... ♜xb4 5. ♖b1 ♜d6!

The right square. Perhaps the black Queen looks exposed but there’s no real way for White to take advantage of it. Ideas of ♘b5 and ♘f4 are easily avoided. E.g., 6. ♘b5 ♜d8 7. d4 a6! 8. ♘c3 ♘f6.

6. ♘f3 ♘f6 7. d4



Once White moves his d-pawn Black has to recognize

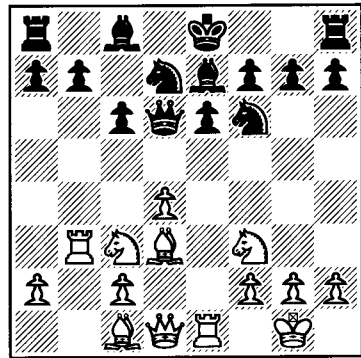
the idea of ♘b5 and ♘f4. I recommend 7... a6! as best, but at this point we see a different, less accurate way.

7... c6?!

Later Black might want to play c7-c5 in one go. After 7... c6, the Black position becomes passive. White is allowed the run of the game for the time being.

8. ♘d3 e6 9. 0-0 ♘bd7 10.

♖e1 ♘e7 11. ♖b3!



This Rook has a great future. Watch out!

11... ♜c7 12. ♘e5 0-0 13.

♘g5 c5

Hey, he played an active move! Too late already.

14. ♘e4!

Clearing the third rank for a Rook transfer and attempting to exchange off the defenders

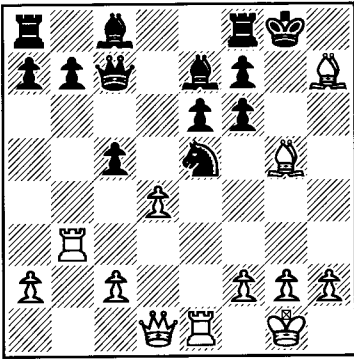
of the black King. So, a very good move.

14... ♖xe5

Perhaps 14... ♖d8 might hold although even here it is possible for White to sacrifice his ♙ at h7. E.g., 15. ♖xd7 ♖xe4 16. ♙xe7 ♖xd7 17. ♙xe4 ♖xe7 18. ♙xh7†.

15. ♖xf6† gxf6 16. ♙xh7†!!

BANG!



A picture postcard from the Mieses Gambit.

16... ♖g7

16... ♖xh7 17. ♙h5† ♖g7

18. ♙h6† ♖g8 19. ♖h3+.

17. ♙h6†! ♖xh7

17... ♖xh6 18. ♖xe5!! fxe5 19. ♖h3† will come to the same thing.

18. dxe5 ♖g8 19. ♙h5 ♖g6

20. ♖h3 ♖g8 21. ♙g7. 1-0

The concluding part of

the game wasn't difficult to understand—Black got his head kicked in. Forewarned is forearmed. Fortunately, the problems can be comfortably handled. We will be looking at a much more active approach by Black where he simply ends up a pawn for nothing.

(13)

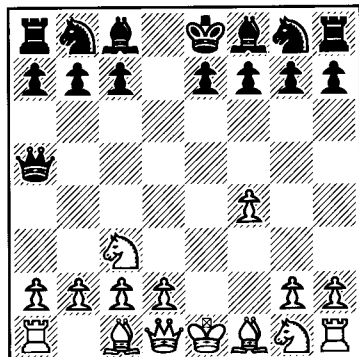
Lendwai, R (2385)–
Sommerbauer, N (2385)

Austrian Championship
Voitsberg
1995

After the last debacle one could have been fooled into thinking that the Mieses Gambit is good.

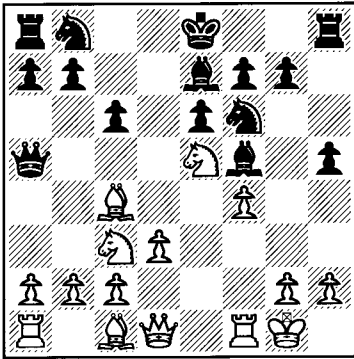
1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♖c3 ♖a5 4. b4

I should mention Bangiev's 4. f4!? in passing.

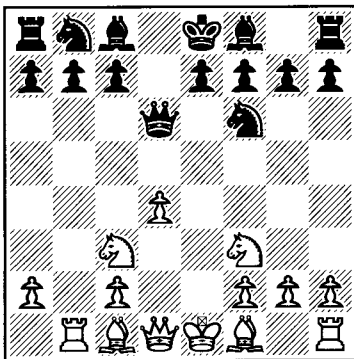


1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♗a5 4. Not d4

If Black plays sluggishly White may well get a kingside attack. Wahls recommends 4... ♘f6 5. ♘f3 ♗f5 6. ♗c4 e6 7. d3 c6. Putting plan into practice. 8. 0-0 ♗e7 9. ♘e5 h5! Black will go queenside after he tidies up the threat to f7.

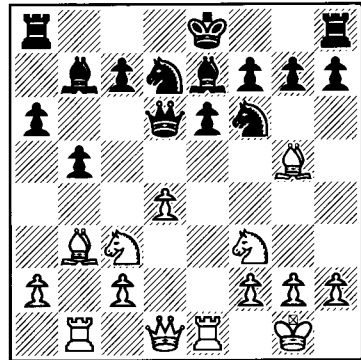


10. ♖e2 ♘bd7 11. ♗d2 ♖c7
 12. ♞ael ♘xe5! 13. ♖xe5 (13. fxe5? ♗c5† 14. ♗h1 ♗g4-+)
 13... 0-0-0=
 4... ♖xb4 5. ♞b1 ♖d6 6. ♘f3
 ♘f6 7. d4

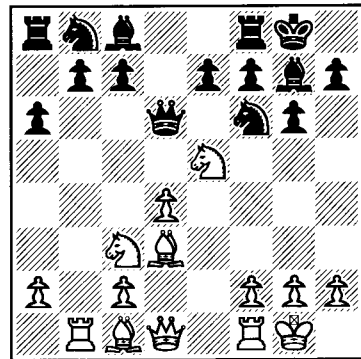


7... e6.

Perhaps 7... a6! is more accurate. The idea is that after 8. ♗d3 Black may play (8. ♗c4 e6 9. 0-0 ♗e7 10. ♞e1 b5! 11. ♗b3 ♗b7 12. ♗g5 ♘bd7+.

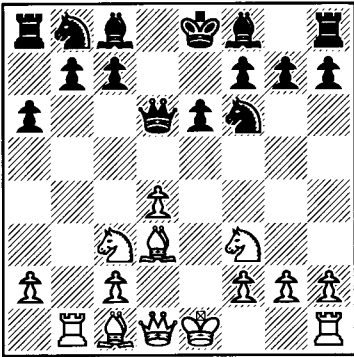


Black has an excellently developed position and remains a pawn up.) g6! blunting White's Bishop. Hungarian analyst Haag then gives 9. 0-0 ♗g7 10. ♘e5 0-0 with zero comp for White.



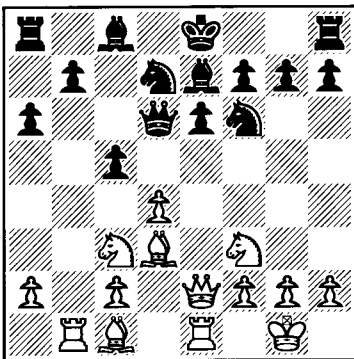
If one wants to be super-accurate it's best to wait for White to develop his ♖ from f1 and then react. If ♕d3 then ...g6; if ♗c4, then ...e6.

8. ♕d3 a6!



Good here too. Black prevents any White cheapos with ♗b5 and ♕f4.

9. 0-0 ♗bd7 10. ♖e1 ♕e7 11. ♖e2 c5



He could have castled first planning ...b5 and ...♕b7.

12. d5

Evidently Sommerbauer calculated 12. d5 and didn't think it was dangerous. Already Lendwai's play has more than the smack of panic.

12... ♗xd5! 13. ♗xd5 ♖xd5

14. ♗e4 ♖d6

14... ♖xa2. Our computer analyst indicates 15. ♖b3 c4! 16. ♖xc4 ♗c5±.

15. ♗xb7 ♗xb7 16. ♖xb7

♖c6

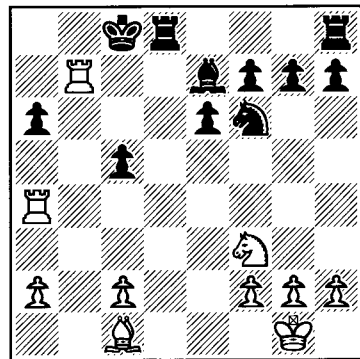
Stepping out of the way of ♗d1.

17. ♖e4 ♖xe4 18. ♖xe4

♗f6 19. ♖a4??

19. ♖e1 keeps White in the game... just. Of course he's clearly worse.

19... 0-0-0!. 0-1



A cute and unique stroke to finish. The Rook is threatened

and so too checkmate! Well, that was rather easy. Tricks to watch out for:

a) The Rook transfer ♖b3 and eventually ♖g3 or ♖h3;

b) ♘b5 followed by ♗f4, hitting c7;

c) Sudden sacrifices on b7. Fortunately all of these shallow ideas are sidestepped by normal development. The key move seems to be an early ... a6, after which Black can follow up very straightforwardly indeed with, say, e6, ... ♗e7, ... ♘bd7, ... b5, ... ♗b7, ... 0-0. No doubt there are occasional reasons why Black has to deviate, but this plan acts a beacon to guide you to the right way during the course of a game.

(14)

Ehlvest, J (2600)–

Braga, F (2434)

Bled Men's Olympiad

Bled

November 7, 2002

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♗a5 4. g3

Something different. White makes no attempt to refute Black's opening play but in-

stead positions his Bishop actively on the long diagonal gazing down on Black's queenside.

Rozentalis is fond of this plan and he is mainly responsible for developing the system in modern master games. I think this is one variation where we have to depart from our little plan and react originally. I've seen too many games where Black plays c7-c6 and White manages to pry open the diagonal in the middlegame with pawn thrusts such as b2-b4!, a2-a4!, and then b4-b5!, backed up by a ♖/b1. The black Queen seems to get in the way. So I'm going to recommend that Black plays with g7-g6! He'll try to follow with either c7-c5 and ♘b8-c6 or even ... ♘c6 straightaway.

4... ♘f6 5. ♗g2 g6!? 6. ♘f3

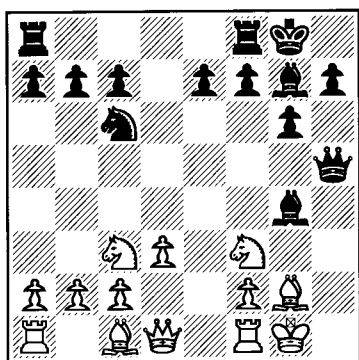
♗g7 7. 0-0 0-0 8. ♖e1

8. d3 could be termed natural but then Black gets on the case with 8... ♗h5! with ideas of ... ♗g4 and ♘c6-d4 or maybe ... ♗h3. Play may proceed 9. ♘d2 (9. ♗f4 ♗g4! 10. ♗xc7 ♘c6 with the awkward threat of ... ♘d4.) ♗g4! 10. f3 ♗h3

Chapter Four

11. ♖xh3 ♜xh3 12. ♘c4 ♘c6 and Black has a fine position.;

8. h3 could well preface d3 then but this does not seem to prevent Black from going through with his plan: 8... ♘c6 9. d3 ♜h5 10. g4 ♘xg4!/? (10... ♜a5∞ is for less aggressive souls) 11. hxg4 ♖xg4∞ with very interesting compensation. ...♘d4 is threatened.



8... ♘c6 9. h3 e5 10. d3

A ♖/f5, as per the normal program, might be stifled by a white ♗/d3.

10... ♞e8

It may be seen that Black is playing very fluidly. He's got a presence in the center and reasonable development. Importantly, White has little pressure against his queen-side. Black must be careful

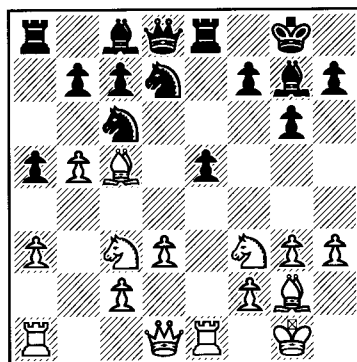
that his Queen doesn't become too exposed on a5 but with ♜b4-d6 or ♜b4-e7 available this shouldn't be too much of a worry.

11. ♖e3

After 11. ♖d2 it's time to leave the premises: 11... ♜b4! 12. ♜c1 (12. ♘d5 ♜d6 13. ♘xf6+ ♜xf6=) ♜d6=.

11... ♜b4! 12. a3 ♜d6

12... ♜xb2 13. ♜d2 is far too risky for Black. E.g., 13... Nd4 14. Nxd4 exd4 15. Bxd4 Rxe1+ 16. Rxe1 Be6 17. Rb1 Qxa3 18. Rxb7 c6 19. Qf4±. 13. b4 a5! 14. ♖c5 ♜d8 15. b5 ♘d7!



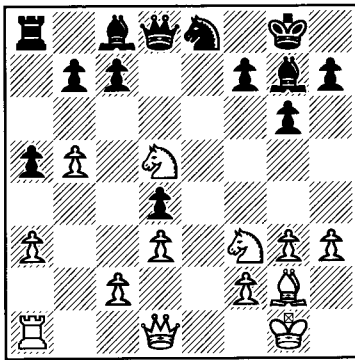
Sharply seen.

16. ♖e3 ♘d4 17. ♖xd4 exd4

18. ♘d5

We're at the first really crucial moment in the game.

I wondered why Ehlvest didn't take on e8 and then go after the d-pawn: 18. ♖xe8† ♜xe8 19. ♗e2. Something like this. However, Black keeps the balance: (19. ♗d5 ♜d8=) ♗c5 20. ♗fxd4 (20. ♗exd4 ♗e6 21. c3 ♗xd4 22. ♗xd4 ♗xd4 23. cxd4 ♜xb5=) ♗e6 21. ♗xe6 ♗xe6 22. ♖b1 (22. ♗xb7 ♖b8 23. ♗c6 ♗d7 24. ♗xd7 ♜xd7 25. ♖b1 ♖xb5 26. ♖xb5 ♜xb5∞) ♗a2 23. ♗xb7 ♖b8 24. ♗c6 ♜xc6!. 18... ♗f6! 19. ♖xe8† ♗xe8=



Equalizing and maybe a little more. Black has the Bishops!

20. ♜e1 ♗d7 21. ♖b1

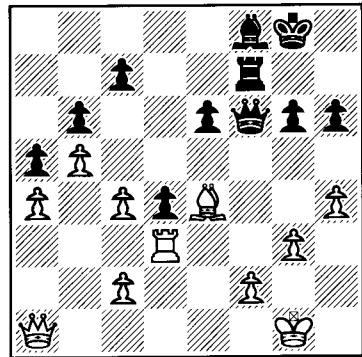
21. a4 ♗xh3! 22. ♗e7† ♜f8 23. ♗xg6† hxg6 24. ♗xh3 ♗d6=.

21... ♗d6 22. a4 ♗e6 23. ♗f4 ♜f6 24. ♗xe6 fxe6 25. h4 h6

Noting the threat of ♗g5. 26. ♜d2 ♜f5 27. ♖e1 ♜f7 28. ♜e2 ♖e8 29. ♗d2 b6 30. ♗c4 30. ♗f3 ♜c5 31. ♗g4 e5=. 30... ♗xc4 31. dxc4 ♜f6 32. ♗e4 ♖e7 33. ♖d1 ♜g8 34. ♜d3 ♜f7 35. ♜a3 ♗f8 36. ♖d3 ♜g8 37. ♜a1

There is not a lot going on here. If either side tries too hard the position could jump up and slap them in the face. Ehlvest could maybe argue that his Bishop is more active and that is the essence of opposite-colored Bishop positions. However...

37... ♖f7



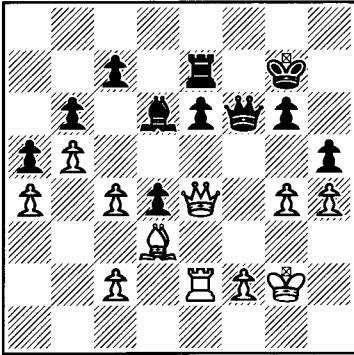
38. ♜e1

38. ♜xd4 e5! 39. ♜e3 ♗c5 40. ♜f3 ♜xf3 (40... ♜e7?? 41. ♗d5) 41. ♖xf3 (41. ♗xf3 e4 42. ♗xe4 ♖xf2 43. ♜h1

Chapter Four

♔g7 44. ♚d7† ♜f7 45. ♜xf7†
 ♚xf7=) ♜xf3 42. ♚xf3
 ♚f7=.

38... ♚g7 39. ♚e2 h5 40.
 ♚g2 ♚d6 41. ♜d1 ♚c5 42.
 ♚d3 ♚d6 43. ♜e1 ♜e7 44.
 ♚e4 ♜f7 45. ♜e2 ♜e7 46. g4



Some players are uncommonly stubborn. As the higher-rated player Ehlvest feels that he must make one last try.

46... hxg4 47. ♚xg4 ♚h6

A deft way to sidestep h4-h5.

48. ♜e4 ♜f7

Reminding White about his own weaknesses.

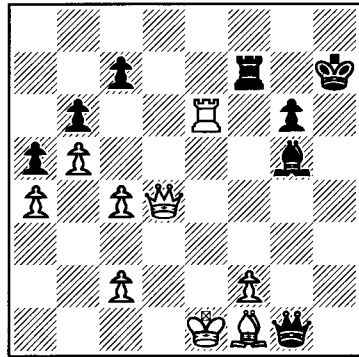
49. ♚e2 ♜g7 50. ♚f1 ♚f4?!

50... ♚b4! is the best move, eyeing e1 and thus providing counterplay against the white King: 51. ♜xe6 ♚xh4.

51. ♜xe6 ♚xh4 52. ♚e4

♚h3† 53. ♚e1 ♚g4 54. ♚h1†

Okay, they have probably been playing for some hours now and both are feeling the pace. Ehlvest is hoping that his extra experience will see him through in this tense situation. 54. ♚h1† indicates that White is tiring because he misses 54. ♜f6! which appears strong: 54... ♚g1† 55. ♚f1 ♚g5 56. ♜e6 ♚h7 57. ♚xd4 ♜f7.



Whether White will actually go on to win from this situation is the big question but he has an extra pawn now, albeit doubled.

54... ♚h5 55. ♚a8 ♚g4

55... ♚d6!.

56. ♚h8† ♚g5 57. ♚d8† ♚h6

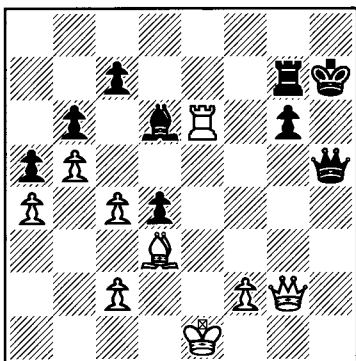
58. ♚h8† ♚g5 59. ♚d8† ♚h6

Mutual time-trouble is written in the moves.

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♗a5 4. Not d4

60. ♗d5

White has renewed chances after 60. ♖e4 ♖f7 61. ♗xd4. 60... ♗d6 61. ♗h1† ♗h5 62. ♗e4 ♗h7 63. ♗g2??



Some you win, some you lose. That's the risk you take when pressing so hard. 63. ♗xd4.

63... ♗b4†. 0-1

A very hard, positional fight which typifies the play after 4. g3. Black must get his head down and tough it out.

(15)

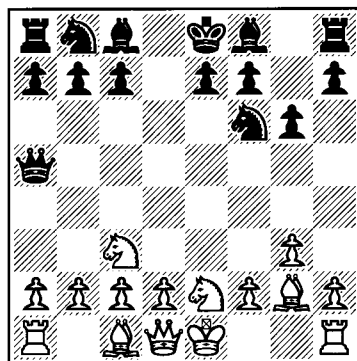
Godoy, G—Tempone, M (2437)

Maestros vs Olavarria Tandil

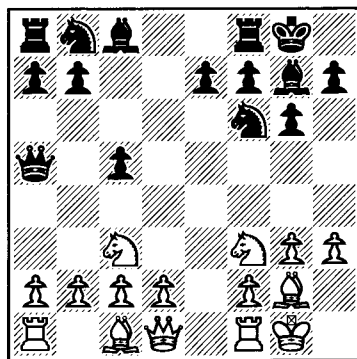
Olavarria

2002

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♗xd5 3. ♘c3 ♗a5 4. g3 ♘f6 5. ♗g2 g6 6. ♘ge2



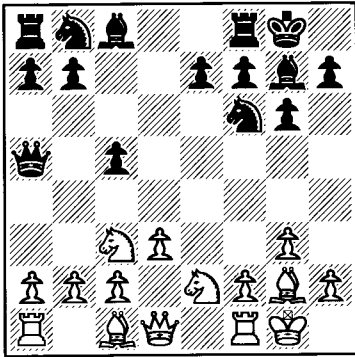
Here's another way for White. Maybe he keeps his f-pawn free for later action although I don't see quite how and when. I prefer the ♘/f3. 6. h3 has been played, tinkering with moves. Then 6... ♗g7 7. ♘ge2 (7. ♘f3 0-0 8. 0-0 c5!).



Passing up the possibility of ♗a5-h5 but controlling d4. We'll see something similar in our featured game.) 0-0 8. 0-0 c5! 9. d3 ♘c6 10. ♗d2 ♗c7

Chapter Four

11. ♖c1 b6 12. ♕h6 ♕b7 13. ♕xg7 ♖xg7 14. ♖e3 ♜fd8 is mentioned by GM Wahls, who prefers Black's spatial advantage in the center and the possibility of ♖c6-d4!
 6... ♕g7 7. 0-0 0-0 8. d3 c5!



If you weren't convinced about swinging the Queen across to h5, here's another way for you; one I like very much. Simultaneously Black grips d4 and provides his Queen with a retreat. It's this aggressive possibility that adds a special dimension to the line commencing 5...g6. **You have a game plan.**

9. ♕d2 ♖c7 10. ♖f4

He must have considered 10. ♕f4, which is outwardly forcing but not much else: 10... ♖b6 11. ♜b1 ♜d8 12. ♖c1

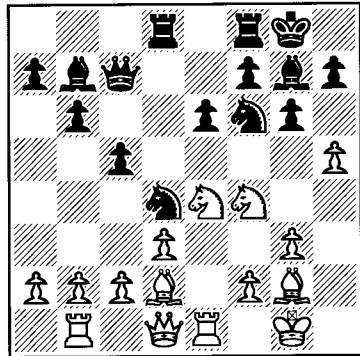
♖c6 13. ♜e1 ♕g4=.

10... ♖c6 11. ♜b1

11. ♖cd5 ♖xd5 12. ♖xd5 ♖d8 13. ♕c3 ♖d4 (13... ♕xc3 14. bxc3 with the idea of ♜b1) ♜e1=.

11... e6!

The white Knights are cut off from d5; Black can proceed with queenside development.
 12. h4 b6 13. ♜e1 ♕b7 14. h5 ♖d4 15. ♖e4 ♜ad8!=



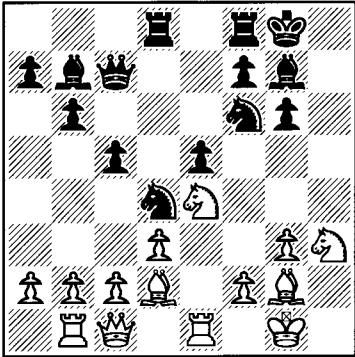
Equality with all to play for. It's easy to understand these moves. Black builds up pressure behind the ♖/d4 and his nicely centralized pieces and the overall balance of the position prevents White from undertaking anything tangible.

16. hxg6 hxg6 17. ♖c1 e5

Tempone starts to show his teeth. The Black position is

ripe for expansion.

18. ♠h3



18... ♠h7

I also like 18... ♠xe4 when any recapture is problematic: 19. ♗xe4 (19. dxe4 ♗d7 20. ♗g5 f6 21. ♗e3 ♗a6) ♗xe4 20. ♖xe4 (20. dxe4 ♠f3) ♗d7 21. ♗g2 f5.

19. ♗h6 ♖fe8 20. ♗xg7 ♗xg7 21. ♠hg5

21. c3 ♠f5 leaves the d3-pawn weak.

21... ♠xg5 22. ♗xg5 ♗e7

Safety first; a feature of the new time-limit that we have come to tolerate. Nevertheless taking either on c2 or e4 increases Black's advantage: 22... ♠xc2 23. ♗f6 ♗g8 24. ♖ed1 ♗e7;

22... ♗xe4! may be best. 23. ♖xe4 ♠xc2 24. ♖h4 ♖h8.

23. ♠f6?

I don't understand. He should just take on e7, accept that he's slightly worse and try to limit the damage: 23. ♗xe7 ♖xe7 24. ♖bc1 f5 25. ♠d2 ♗xg2 26. ♗xg2 ♠f6.

Okay, Black is much better, but to win is something else.

23... ♗xf6 24. ♗xf6 ♗xf6 25. ♗xb7 ♖b8 26. ♗d5

White ends a pawn down after 26. c3 ♖xb7 27. cxd4 cxd4 28. ♖bc1 ♖be7.

26... ♠xc2

Why not? White's next either reveals a sense of humor or that the drugs finally kicked in.

27. ♖e3 ♠xe3 28. fxe3 ♗g7 29. ♖f1 ♖e7. 0-1

The 4. g3 variation may be met successfully with the uncommon 4... ♠f6 5. ♗g2 g6!? Black has active plans available looking out for ♗a5-h5 and a possible kingside attack. Alternatively he may try to play positionally with c7-c5 and ♠b8-c6, gripping d4 and providing the stability necessary to get the rest of the queenside pieces out. Either way, Black is alright.

STOP PRESS GAME

Only a short draw, but a variation of great interest to Center Counter fans.

(16)

Speelman, J–Martin, A

4NCL England

September 2004

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3
♜a5 4. ♘f3

Speelman didn't think too long before playing this. Training in on his thought patterns I sense that something tricky was coming up.

4... ♘f6

4... ♘g4!/? is certainly an interesting move. Black wants to play ...♘f6 and ...c6 but his main priority seems to me to be to develop the c-Bishop without risk. Can this problem be solved? If so then 4. ♘c4 could be White's best, then I think 4... c6! 5. ♘f3 ♘g4! is probably the way. 5. h3 ♘h5 6. ♘c4 e6.

5. ♘c4 c6 6. ♜e2!/?

Dangerous. White sets up ideas of ♘e5 and the usual kingside pawn storm. Speelman mentioned after-

ward that he was under the impression that 6... ♘f5 was a mistake. I was just playing, saw what was coming, just trying to survive.

6... ♘f5

Bad is 6... ♜h5 because of

7. h3 ♘g4 8. ♘xf7†!

7. ♘e5 e6 8. g4 ♘g6

8... ♘xc2? 9. ♘xf7!

9. h4 ♘bd7!

9... ♘d6 is possible. I wasn't sure where to put the Bishop.

10. ♘xd7 ♘xd7 11. d3

Critical is 11. h5 ♘xc2 12. d3 b5 (12... ♘a4!/?) 13. ♘xe6 fxe6 14. ♜xe6† ♘e7 (14... ♜d8 15. ♘g5† ♜c7 16. ♘f4†=) 15. ♘g5 ♜d8 16. ♜d2 ♘xd3! 17. ♘xe7 ♜xe7 18. ♜xe7† ♜xe7 19. ♜xd3 Ne5† 20. ♜d4! ♘xg4 21. ♜hg1=.

11... h5! 12. ♘d2

12. ♘xe6 0–0–0 is too dangerous for White to contemplate.

12... ♜e5 13. g5

½–½

Black's position is slightly better. Play might go: 13... ♜xe2† 14. ♜xe2 b5 15. ♘b3 ♘c5̄. Speelman's line is not in Wahls' mammoth book!

PART TWO

Okay, I accept your offer

FIVE

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3.

♘c3 ♗a5 4. ♙c4 c6.

I hope you are picking up some useful ideas as we go along. We move now to fourth move alternatives by White toward the traditional 4. d4 (Chapters 6 and following).

(17)

Arizmendi Martinez, J (2465)–
Matamoros Franco, C (2462)

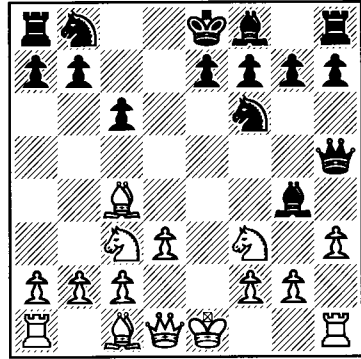
Spanish Team Championship
Cala Galdana

November 16, 1999

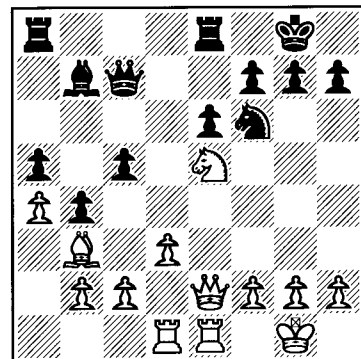
There are quite a few tricky move orders that White can adopt from his fourth move onward. He can play with d3 or d4. He may develop his King's Knight to either e2 or f3. He can castle on either side. As you've seen, Black may play ...c6 and ...♘f5 successfully, but I'll add one more idea to the mix and that is when White plays d2-d3 and ♖ge2. I'm recommending Black play g7-g6 in reply. Systems with an early d3 are directed against ♘c8-f5. White would like this Bishop to 'bite on granite.' A plan with g7-g6 is flexible and takes advantage of the open diagonal down to c3 and b2.

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♖c3 ♖a5 4. ♘c4 c6 5. d3 ♖f6 6. ♖ge2

6. ♖f3 prevents ...g6 due to ♖g5, but 6... ♘g4! is just very satisfactory: 7. h3 (7. ♘d2 ♖h5!) ♖h5!



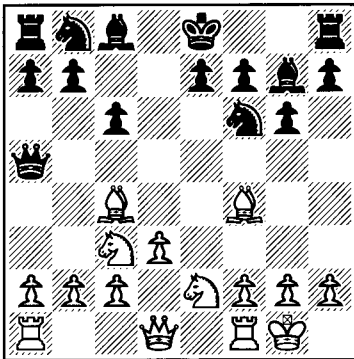
8. ♖e4 ♖xe4 9. dxe4 ♘xf3 10. gxf3 (10. ♖xf3 ♖xf3 11. gxf3 ♖d7 12. ♘e3 e6=) e6 11. ♘e3 ♘c5=; 6. ♘d2 should be met modestly with 6... ♖c7 7. ♖f3 e6 which may look passive but let's not forget that d2-d3 isn't so great either. Play may proceed: 8. ♖e4 (8. ♖e2 b5 9. ♘b3 ♘e7 10. 0-0 0-0 11. ♖fe1 a5 12. a4 b4 13. ♖e4 ♖bd7 14. ♘g5 ♖e8 15. ♖xf6+ ♘xf6 16. ♘xf6 ♖xf6 17. ♖e5 ♘b7 18. ♖ad1 c5.



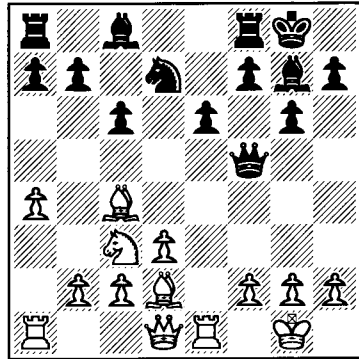
1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♖c3 ♗a5 4. ♘c4 c6

White is not better. Black displayed a typical method of unravelling his position.) ♘e7 9. 0-0 0-0 10. ♖e2 b5 11. ♘b3 ♖bd7=.

6... g6! 7. 0-0 ♘g7 8. ♘f4N



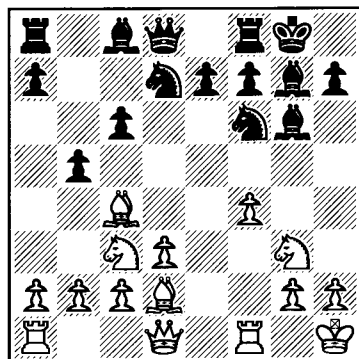
♖d8 12. c3 0-0=; 9. ♖ce4 0-0 10. ♘b3 ♖d7 11. ♖e1 ♖c7 12. c3 e5 13. ♖f3 b6=) ♖xc3 10. ♖xc3 0-0 11. ♖e1 e6 12. ♘d2 ♖f5 13. a4 ♖d7=.



I think White was just improvising and came up with this reasonable, but not especially incisive, move. Frankly, this line is so little played by Black that 99% of your opponents will be on their own too. Overall, Black's plan must be to concentrate on opening the long diagonal, usually starting with ♖f6-d5.

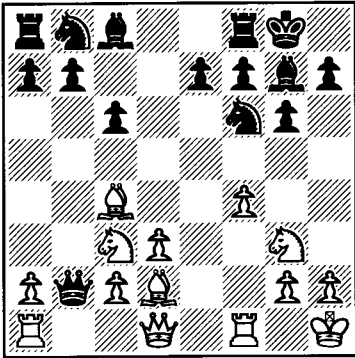
I'll analyze some other continuations for you now: 8. ♖g3. He wants to go f4-f5!, with an attack. Black must be quick. 8... ♖d5! 9. ♖ge4 (9. ♖xd5 cxd5 10. ♘b3 ♖c6 11. ♘d2

White has been happily 'talked out' of f4-f5 and Black stands well. He may slowly complete his development by, say, ...♖e5, ...♘d7, ...c5 and ♘d7-c6.; 8. ♘d2 ♖d8 9. ♖g3 0-0 10. f4 (10. ♖h1 is slow but Black must react actively: 10... ♖bd7 11. f4 b5!



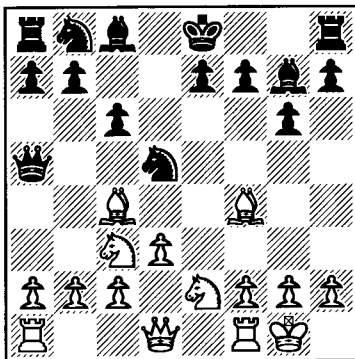
Chapter Five

12. ♖b3 a5! 13. a4 [13. a3 ♗c5 14. ♖a2 ♖g4 15. ♔e1 b4+] ♗c5! 14. axb5 ♗xb3 15. cxb3 cxb5+] ♔b6† 11. ♔h1 ♔xb2. Why not take this pawn?



12. ♜b1 (12. f5 ♔a3 13. fxc6 hxc6 14. ♔f3 ♗bd7 15. ♜ael ♗b6 16. ♖b3 ♗bd5=) ♔a3 13. f5 b5 14. ♖b3 ♗bd7+. 8... ♗d5!

The key move.



9. ♖d2 ♔d8 10. ♔c1 0-0 11.

♖h6

White strips out the Bishop, denuding the kingside. However, Black has adequate resources as long as he focuses on the center and a possible soft spot at b2.

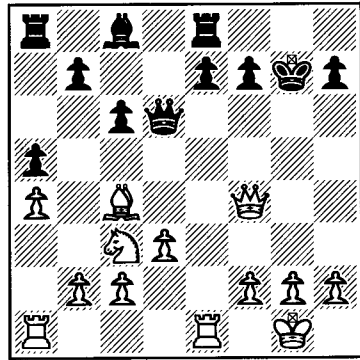
11... ♗xc3 12. ♗xc3 ♗d7 13. ♜e1 ♗f6

Shoring up the defense.

14. ♖xg7 ♔xg7 15. ♔e3 ♜e8 16. a4

Another pawn, another light square. I am not sure.

16... a5 17. ♔f4 ♔d6



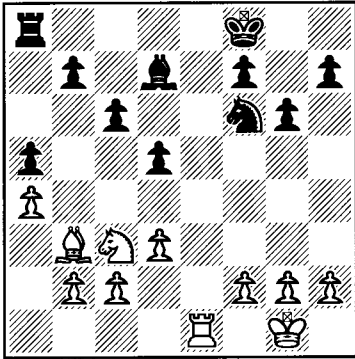
Matamoros plays with logic, exchanging a passive piece for an active counterpart. One wouldn't think that White could lose this as quickly as he does but he finds a way.

18. ♜e5

18. ♔xd6 exd6 19. ♜xe8

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♖c3 ♗a5 4. ♕c4 c6

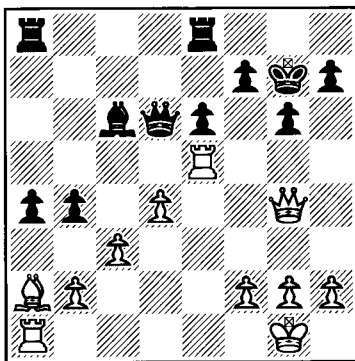
♗xe8 20. ♖e1 ♗f6 21. ♖e7 d5
22. ♗b3 ♖f8 23. ♖e1 ♗d7



Whose Bishop ‘bites on granite’ now?

18... ♗b4 19. ♗a2?

Poor, but what is wrong with Black’s position anyway? If instead 19. ♗d1 ♗d7 20. c3 ♗d6 21. ♗e3 b5!↔ Black secures good counterplay with this move.



22. axb5 cxb5 23. ♗b3
(23. ♗a2 a4 24. d4 a3 25. b4

♖ec8↔) ♗c6 24. d4 a4 25.
♗a2 e6 26. ♗g4 ♗xg4 27.
♗xg4 b4↔.

19... ♗xb2! 20. ♖ae1 e6

The chances of hacking off the black King are very unlikely without a dark-squared Bishop and the ♗/a2 completely out of the game.

21. g4 ♗d7 22. c3 b5 23.

♖5e2 ♗a3 24. ♗e5 ♖g8

He could also survive handily with 24... bxc4! 25. g5 cxd3 26. ♗xf6† ♖g8 27. ♖d2 e5.

25. ♗xf6 bxc4 26. dxc4 e5!

The Bishop jumps to life.

27. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 28. ♖xe5

♗xa2 29. h3 ♗xc4. 0–1

A sudden catastrophe for Arizmendi, but like many instances, when faced with the Center Counter, he ran completely out of ideas. Black’s theater of action seems to lie on the queenside in this line. He must be aware of White’s possibility of f4-f5. ♗f6-d5, opening the long diagonal appears to be an important move and the later advance of the queenside pawns, important, to embarrass the position of the ♗/c4.

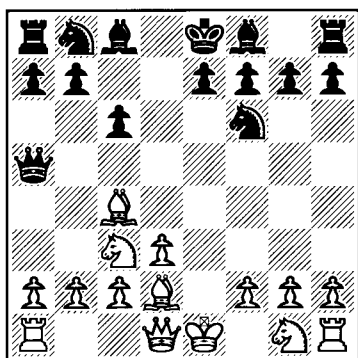
(18)

Delorme, L (2037)–
Molenaar, J (2171)

3rd Open La Fere
France

July 8, 2004

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3
♜a5 4. ♙c4 ♘f6 5. d3 c6 6.
♙d2



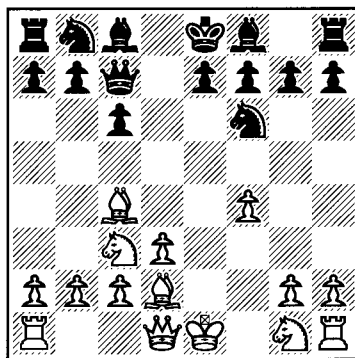
Friends, let us not be down-
hearted! We must recognize
the danger, back ourselves
confidently, and take appro-
priate action.

6... ♖c7!

Wisest. Black buggers off.

7. ♘ge2

7. f4!? is a very recent try;



I regard this as possibly
White's most dangerous try
against the modern Center
Counter, particularly lines
where Black intends ...♙f5.
Most definitely, Black must
not be caught 'shunting' out the
pieces himself. Good points
from the white side:

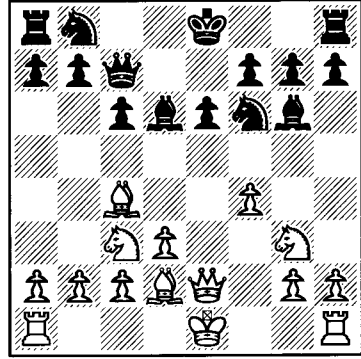
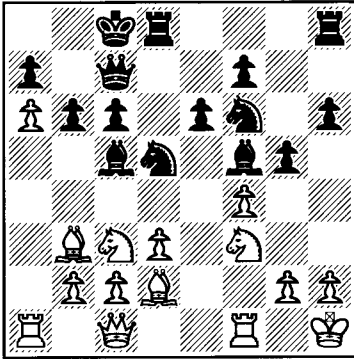
- 1) The ♘/d3 blunts a ♙/f5.
- 2) The ♙/d2 makes the
black Queen uncomfortable.
- 3) White has his f-pawn
ready for action.

in fact I never saw it before
the following game. Ignore
the result because Conquest
is simply much stronger. I
will suggest improvements for
Black. 7... ♙f5 8. ♘f3 e6 9.
0-0 ♙d6. So far, so okay. Black
hits f4 and keeps White out of
e5. 10. ♘g5 ♘bd7 11. a4 ♘b6
12. ♙b3 0-0-0 13. a5 ♘bd5 14.
a6 b6 15. ♖c1 ♙c5† (Inserting
15... ♘h5! 16. g3 ♘hf6 is very
worthwhile. Due to the porous
nature of his King, White is

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♜a5 4. ♙c4 c6

worse.) 16. ♖h1 h6 17. ♘f3 g5

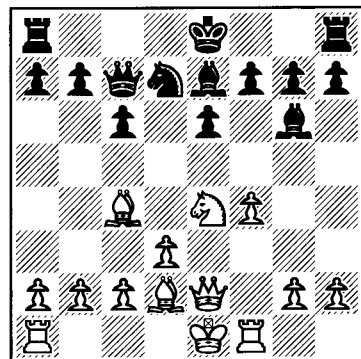
9. ♜e2 e6 10. f4 ♙d6 is rather critical I would say.



(17... ♜he8! is a second improvement, planning e6-e5 at the right moment, refusing to weaken...) 18. ♘e2 ♙d6 19. ♜a4 ♙g4 20. ♘fd4 ♘h5 21. ♜c4 c5 22. ♘b5 ♜d7 23. ♘xd6† ♜xd6 24. ♘c3 ♘dxf4 25. ♘b5 ♜d7 (25... ♜b8!) 26. ♙a4 ♜e7 27. b4 ♙e2 28. bxc5 bxc5 29. ♜b2 ♘xd3 30. cxd3 ♜xd3 31. ♜fc1 1-0, *Conquest, S-Saptarshi, R/Mumbai, India 2004*; 7. ♜e2 ♙f5 8. ♘f3 e6 9. 0-0-0 ♘bd7 10. ♜he1 0-0-0 11. h3 doesn't seem frightening. 11... ♙g6 12. ♘h4 ♘b6 13. ♘xg6 hxg6 14. ♙b3 ♙d6= appears to be an appropriate response.

7... ♙f5 8. ♘g3 ♙g6 9. ♘ce4N

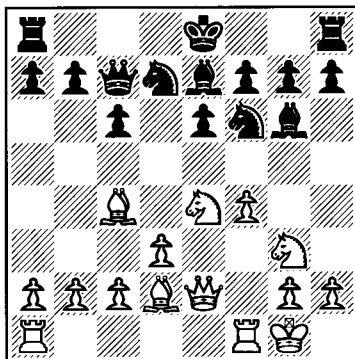
If Black survives this variation with flying colors he is really in business. We must determine whether f4-f5 is a real threat at every stage. If it is not, Black proceeds as per the program. 11. ♜f1 ♘bd7 12. ♘ce4. Now that the ♘/g3 is protected, f4-f5 becomes a worry. 12... 0-0-0?! (I think I prefer 12... ♘xe4! 13. ♘xe4 ♙e7 which is safe as houses.



Chapter Five

The immediate attack doesn't work: 14. f5 ♖xf5 15. ♗f4 ♜a5† 16. c3 0-0 [16... b5!? 17. ♗b3 {17. b4 ♜d8 18. ♗b3 ♞f6} b4∞)] 13. 0-0-0 (13. ♞xd6† ♜xd6 14. 0-0-0 looks a bit better for White.) ♜he8 (13... ♞xe4 14. ♞xe4 ♗e7 15. ♗c3±) 14. ♞xd6†± *Leuw, M-Gozzoli, C/La Fere, France 2004*. Please carefully note the improvement at move 12.; 9. ♜f3 e6 10. 0-0 ♞bd7 11. ♗f4 is a final try, hoping to exploit the early retreat of Black's Queen. However, White played ♗d2 earlier so tempos are equal. 11... ♜b6 (11... ♗d6 12. ♗xd6 ♜xd6 13. ♜fe1 0-0 looks like nothing whatsoever for White.) 12. ♗b3 ♗e7 13. ♜fe1 0-0 14. ♞ge4 ♜ad8. But perhaps this is nothing either. 15. ♞a4 ♜a5 16. ♜g3 ♞d5 17. ♗d2 ♜a6 18. ♞ac3 ♞7f6 19. ♗c4 ♞xe4 20. ♞xd5 cxd5 21. ♜xe4 ♜c6 22. ♜g4 dxc4 23. ♜xc4 ♜xc4 24. dxc4 ♜xd2 25. ♜c7 ♜fd8 26. h3 ♜d1† 27. ♜xd1 ♜xd1† 28. ♜h2 ♗d6† 0-1, *Weidner, J-Patscha, E/Hiddenhausen 1996*.

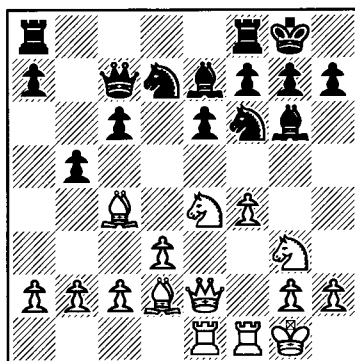
9... ♞bd7 10. ♜e2 e6 11. 0-0 ♗e7 12. f4



White was not to be talked out of his favorite move but the question remains: is it any good? The f-pawn leaves possible dark-squared weaknesses in the wake.

12... 0-0-0

Combative. I think 12... 0-0 13. ♜ae1 b5!



is, maybe, technically best, giving Black easy equality,

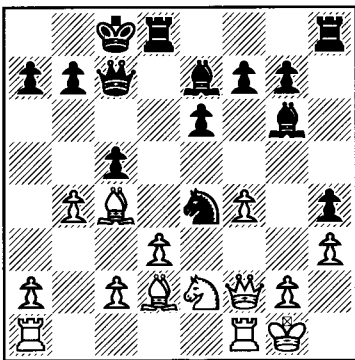
1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♗c3 ♜a5 4. ♘c4 c6

e.g., 14. ♘b3 (14. f5? exf5! 15. ♗xf6† ♘xf6 16. ♘b3 ♘xb2⚡) ♘xe4 15. ♗xe4 (15. dxe4 ♗c5=) ♗xe4 16. dxe4 ♗c5=.

13. b4 h5 14. ♗xf6

14. f5 would avoid embarrassment to the ♗/g3.

14... ♗xf6 15. ♜f2 c5 16. h3 h4 17. ♗e2 ♗e4!



I guess this was just the sort of game he was aiming for.

18. dxe4 ♜xd2 19. ♜e1 ♜d7

There was no real objection to 19... ♜xc2 20. ♘b3 ♜b2 21. ♜c1 ♘xe4!, but a guy like this obviously doesn't want the same treatment that he dishes out.

20. ♘b5 ♜dd8 21. ♗c1 a6 22. f5 ♘h7 23. ♘e2 c4

I don't see why he doesn't take on b4: 23... cxb4 24. ♗d3 exf5 25. exf5 ♜he8.

24. fxe6 ♜e5 25. ♜b1 ♘d6 26. g3 hxg3 27. ♘g4 ♜d4† 28. ♜g2 ♘xe4† 29. ♘f3 ♘xf3† 30. ♜xf3 ♜xh3 31. ♜xh3 ♜h8†. 0-1

Okay, we have the picture. Black is a relentless attacking maniac. Good play! It seems that White's opening idea of 6. ♘d2 should be met carefully with 6... ♜c7! You can then develop regularly having taken away his little fun with ♗d5. f4-f5 has to be carefully watched and calculated. Speedy castling (on either side) would appear to be essential.

(19)

Goutioudi, K-
Sebag, M (2430)

32nd Team Championships
Chalkidiki, Greece
2003

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♜xd5 3. ♗c3 ♜a5 4. d4 ♗f6 5. ♘c4 c6 6. ♗ge2

A system directed against the ♘/f5. I guess White wants to keep ♗/g3 and f4-f5 available although whether that amounts to much is open to doubt. I prefer this idea when

Chapter Five

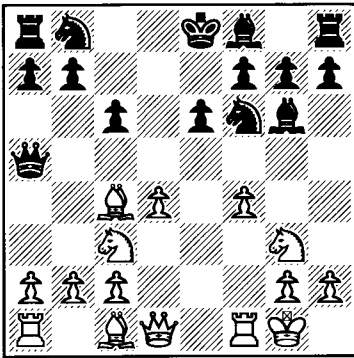
there's a white ♖/d3, stunting the Bishop further.

6... ♗f5

Sebag isn't fazed.

7. 0-0 e6 8. ♗f4!?

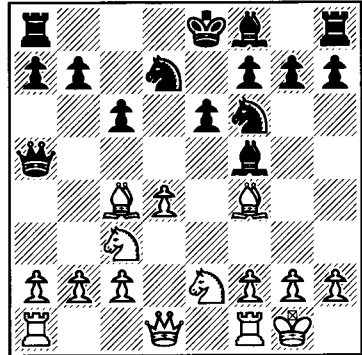
8. ♖g3 ♗g6 9. f4 is more in keeping with the 'system,' but my analysis attempts to show that Black can fight successfully with:



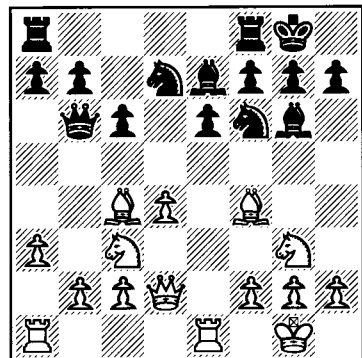
9... ♖bd7! is best, intending 0-0-0. 10. f5 is then the only really disruptive move. 10... exf5 11. ♖e2† ♗e7 12. ♗d2. The parting of the ways. Black's plan is ...♗d8 and castles short so White must be quick. There's also ...♖b6 to worry about in this mix, hitting c4 and probably d4 simultaneously. (12. a3 ♖d8 13. ♖xf5 ♗xf5 14. ♖xf5 ♖b6 15. ♗e3 ♖xc4 16. ♖xc4 0-0 17. ♖af1

♗d7=; 12. ♖e1 0-0-0!†) ♗d8 13. ♖ae1 ♖b6∞. Back now to 8. ♗f4, where we see White 'shunting' out the pieces again.

8... ♖bd7



Both this and 8... ♗e7 seem to be quite okay: 9. ♖g3 ♗g6 10. ♖e1 0-0 11. ♖e2 ♖bd7 12. a3 ♖b6 13. ♖d2 *Chokshi, M-Udeshi, A/Mumbai, IND 2004*



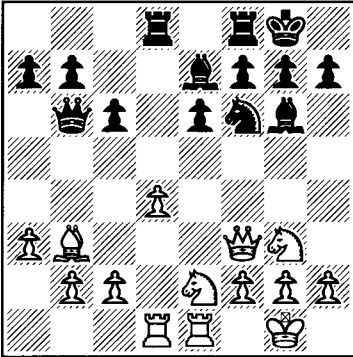
when 13... ♖fe8= appears to

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♗xd5 3. ♖c3 ♗a5 4. ♘c4 c6

be most accurate.

9. ♖e1

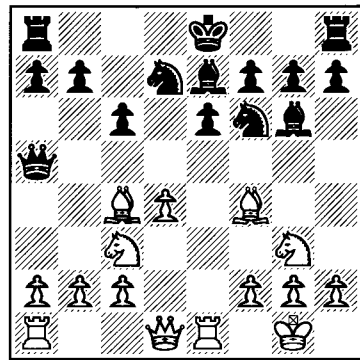
9. a3 ♘e7 10. ♖e1 0-0 11. ♗g3 ♘g6 12. ♖d2 ♖d8 13. ♖ad1 ♗d5 14. ♘b3 ♗xf4 15. ♗xf4 ♗f6 16. ♗f3 ♗b6 17. ♗ce2 ♖ad8.



We should be getting used to this piece set-up for Black. His overall plan might be to play ...♖d7, ...♖fd8 and advance with c6-c5. Naturally, White will try to disrupt this scheme. 18. h4 h6 19. c4 ♘h7 20. c5 ♗c7 21. ♗f4 ♗d5 22. ♗xd5 cxd5 23. ♗g4 b6! 24. ♗h5 g6 25. cxb6 ♗xb6 26. ♖d3 ♗h8 27. ♖g3 f5 28. ♗f4 gxh5 29. ♗xh6 ♗xd4 30. ♖xe6 ♘c5. I admire Black's counterattacking approach! 31. ♖f3 ♗g7 32. ♗xh5 ♖f6 33. ♖e8† ♖xe8 34. ♗xe8† ♖f8 35. ♗c6 ♗e7 36.

♘d5 ♗e1† 37. ♗h2 ♗e5† 38. g3 ♘d4 39. b4 f4 40. g4 ♗g7 41. g5 ♘f5 42. ♗g2 ♖c8 43. ♗a6 ♘b6 44. ♖xf4 ♗e5 45. ♗xc8† ♘xc8 46. ♖f8† ♗g7 47. ♖f7† ♗g8 0-1, *Ginzburg, M-Fiorito, F/Mar del Plata 1993.*

9... ♘e7 10. ♗g3 ♘g6



11. ♗ge4

I think White accepts now that she hasn't achieved very much and so tries to angle the game towards exchanges and the hope of equality. 11. ♗e2 0-0 12. ♗ce4 was much the same: 12... ♗xe4 13. ♗xe4 ♗b6 14. c3 ♘xe4 15. ♗xe4 ♗xb2 16. ♗f3 ♗a3 17. ♗h3 ♗f6 18. ♘e5 ♖fe8 19. ♖e3 ♘d8 20. ♖g3 ♗h8 21. ♘d3 h6 22. ♖f3 ♗f8 23. ♖e1 ♗g8 24. ♘g6 ♘f6 25. ♘b1 ♖ad8 26.

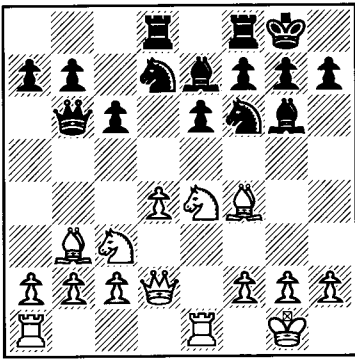
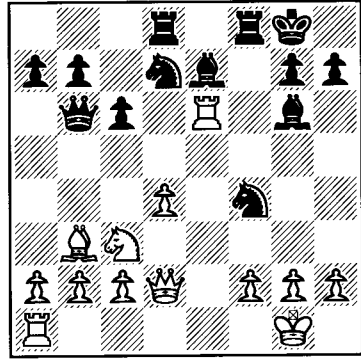
Chapter Five

♙xf6 ♘xf6 27. ♖e5 ♜d5 28.
g4 ♜xe5 29. dxe5 ♘h7 30. ♚h5
♘g5 31. ♚xg5 hxg5 32. ♜h3†
♚g8 33. ♙h7† ♚h8 34. ♙e4†
½-½, Lutz, G-Habermann,
J/Bayern 1997.

11... 0-0

Let White take if she must.

12. ♙b3 ♜ad8 13. ♚d2 ♚b6



A word about the ♘/c3 now, which can often turn out to be misplaced, especially when Black makes a target of the d4-pawn. This is a point often overlooked by White players.

14. ♘g5 ♘d5

Taking away the thought of any sacrifice on e6.

15. ♘xe6?

Or maybe not?? Just 15. ♘xd5 cxd5 16. c3 was indicated, about equal.

15... fxe6 16. ♜xe6 ♘xf4!!

Allowing a discovered check is never easy; one must have confidence in one's calculating ability. But, I think Sebag checked all the captures by the Rook and came to the conclusion that she was okay. White probably calculated to here and thought Black had to resign! 16... ♘f4!! might have been something of a shock!

17. ♜xc6† ♚xb3 18. axb3

bxc6 19. ♜xa7 ♙g5!

Not only does Black have more than enough material; that same material is crawling all over White's position!

20. ♚d1 ♘c5 21. ♘a4 ♜xd4 22. ♚f1 ♘e4 23. f3 ♜d2 24. ♚c4† ♚h8. 0-1

White's system with d4 and ♘ge2 is overrated. It can't lead to anything more than equal-

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♞c3 ♗a5 4. ♙c4 c6

ity. The main line is better, with the white King's Knight controlling or occupying e5.

SUMMARY

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♞c3 ♗a5 4. ♙c4 c6

I have no doubt at all that there are many guys out there who have their own little pet system against the Center Counter. We've looked at just a few here. It's as much a question of confidence and attitude as anything else. If you really believe, you will play much better. I hope I've shown that Black is objectively okay too.

SIX

THE MAIN LINE

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♗c3
♕a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♗f3 ♗f6 6.
♘c4 ♘f5

We come now to the **Main Line Section**. There are a few fiddly move orders to negotiate, one of which we tackle right here.

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♗a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♘f3 ♘f6 6. ♙c4 ♙f5

(20)

Handke, F (2475)–

Motwani, P (2525)

12th Monarch Assurance

Port Erin, Isle of Man

2003

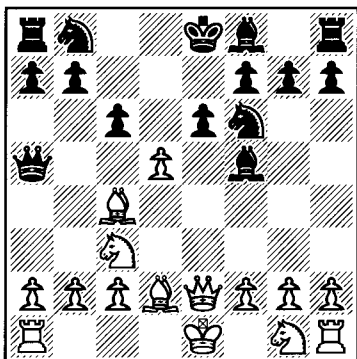
1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♗a5

Paul wrote a very nice review of my video/DVD on the Center Counter. It's good to see that he believes in this very solid opening.

4. d4 ♘f6 5. ♙d2 c6 6. ♙c4 ♙f5

As long as Black is not intimidated by the thought of doubled pawns (♘d5xf6), then he can play 6... ♙f5 with absolute confidence. (cf. Chap. 9)

7. ♖e2 e6 8. d5!?



This could come as a to-

tal shock to the unprepared, but never to the thorough Motwani. Black's position is far too stable to be shaken by such brazen means.

8... cxd5 9. ♘xd5 ♗d8 10.

♘xf6† ♗xf6 11. ♘f3

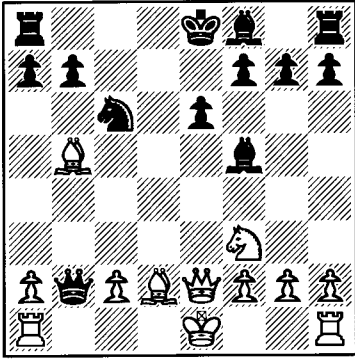
I wonder what Motwani had in mind against immediate castling? 11. 0–0–0 ♘c6 12. g4 ♙g6 13. f4 ♙xc2?! (I suggest GM Wahls' idea: 13... 0–0–0 14. ♘f3 ♙d6! 15. f5 exf5 16. ♙g5 ♙f4†! 17. ♙xf4 ♖xd1† 18. ♖xd1 fxf4 19. ♗d2 ♖d8 20. ♙d3 gxf3 21. ♙g5 ♖xd3! 22. cxd3 ♗e6 23. a3 ♘e5⌘) 14. ♗xc2 ♘d4† 15. ♗b1 0–0–0? (Having reached this crazy position 15... ♘xe2 is the only option. However 16. ♙b5†! ♗d8 17. ♙c3† ♗c7 18. ♙xf6 ♘xg1 19. ♖d7† ♗b6 20. ♙d4† ♗xb5 21. ♖xg1 will be a very rough ride for Black.) 16. ♗e4+– *Rutkowski, I–Schoene, M/Frankfurt 2002.*

11... ♘c6 12. ♙b5

If 12. 0–0–0 ♙g4! is an accurate reply: 13. ♙e3 ♙e7= (13... ♖c8; 13... ♙xf3 14. gxf3 ♖c8 15. ♗b1 ♙e7∞).

12... ♗xb2!

Chapter Six



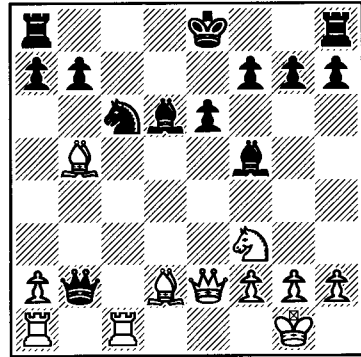
Very brave, but on the other hand, why not? Black calls White's bluff and as long as he can get his King to safety rapidly, should stand well. The less precise 12... ♕g4 is answered by 13. ♖e4 ♕xf3 14. ♕xc6† bxc6 15. gxf3 ♖c8 16. 0-0-0 ♕a3 17. c3 ♕d6 18. ♖hg1 0-0 19. ♕g5 ♖e5 20. ♕h6 ♖xe4 21. fxe4 ♕e5 22. f4 and White has a large advantage. To cede the initiative so easily is not Motwani's style. 22... ♗h8 23. fxe5 gxh6 24. ♖d7 a5 25. ♖f1 ♖g7 26. ♗c2 h5 27. ♖f2± *Nielsen, S-Petersen, F/Aarhus 1990.*

13. 0-0 ♕d6

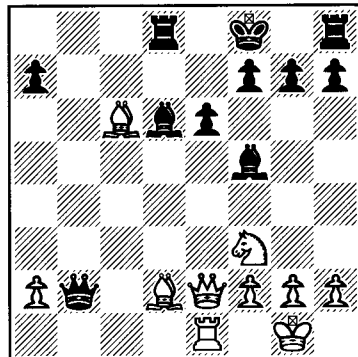
13... ♖d8 also seems perfectly viable: 14. ♖fb1 ♖xc2 15. ♖c1 ♖e4 16. ♕xc6† bxc6 17. ♖a6 ♖d5 18. ♕a5 ♖a8

19. ♖b7 (19. ♖xc6 ♕e7 20. ♖c8† ♖xc8 21. ♖xc8† ♕d8) 19... c5. One can understand Motwani's desire to prepare castling.

14. ♖fb1 ♖xc2 15. ♖c1 ♖b2



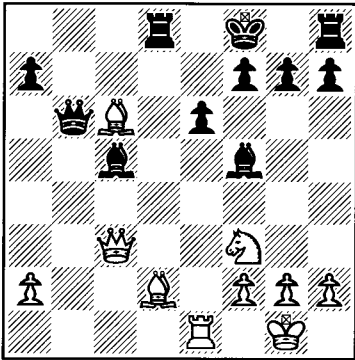
Really playing with fire although as long as he keeps attacking the ♖/a1 he should be surviving. White hacks on as he must—he's down material! **16. ♖xc6 bxc6 17. ♕xc6† ♗f8 18. ♖e1 ♖d8!**



1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♗c3 ♜a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♗f3 ♗f6 6. ♘c4 ♘f5

Keeping the pieces protected is vital in a position like this. As long as Black can buy enough time to safety his King he will be winning.

19. ♖e3 ♖b6 20. ♖c3 ♘c5!±



Verdict: 8. d5 is sharp but perfectly okay for Black as long as he is precise and courageous. Motwani's novelty, the capture on b2, seems exciting, playable and an excellent way of playing flat-out for the win.

With a double attack on f2 and c6. The fate of the position is clarifying.

21. ♘e3 ♘xe3 22. fxe3 ♖d3
23. ♖c1 ♗e7! 24. ♗e5
♖c8!

Black chooses a risk-free way. He returns the exchange to enter a better ending.

25. ♗xd3 ♖xc6 26. ♖a3±
26... ♖xc6 ♖xc6 27. e4
♘g6-+.
26... ♖d6 27. ♗b4 ♖f8 28.
e4 ♖c5± 29. ♖h1

Very calm.

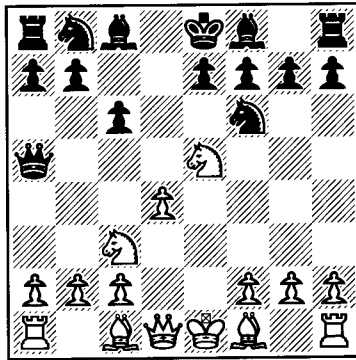
29... ♘xe4 30. ♖a6 ♖d8 31.
a3 ♖f2. 0-1

SEVEN

OTHER 6TH MOVES

6. ♖e5, 6. ♗d2, 6. ♗d3

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♔xd5 3. ♘c3 ♚a5
4. d4 c6 5. ♘f3 ♘f6 6. ♘e5



6. ♗d2; 6. ♗d3

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♗a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♘f3 ♘f6 6. ♘e5; 6. ♘d2; 6. ♘d3

(21)

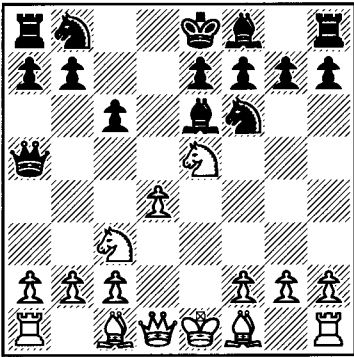
**Pedro, F (2270)–
Flores, D (2435)**

77th Argentinian Championship
Argentina
2003

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3
♗a5 4. d4 ♘f6 5. ♘f3 c6! 6.
♘e5

Our flexible move order with
5... c6 enables us to comfort-
ably deal with this aggressive
idea.

6... ♘e6!

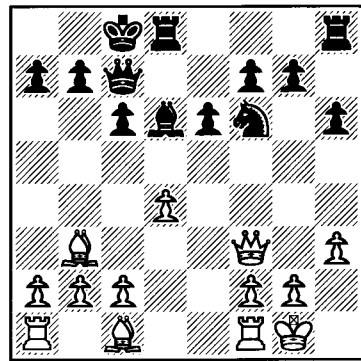


Covering c4 and planning
...g6, ...♘g7, ...0–0, and
...♘bd7. That is to say, unless
White occupies c4 right away.

7. ♘c4

7. ♘c4 ♗c7!? is an inter-
esting and little-played possi-
bility where Black sticks to

his overall plan. (Also very
comfortable is the traditional
7... ♘xc4 8. ♘xc4 e6 9. 0–0
♘d6! making sure that White
does not command the h2–b8
diagonal. 10. ♗f3 ♗c7 11. h3
♘bd7 12. ♘b3 0–0–0 13. ♘e4
♘xe4 14. ♗xe4 h6 15. ♗f3
♘f6=. Take your pick!)



8. g3 g6 9. ♘f4 ♗d8 10.
♗d3 ♘g7 11. ♘g2 ♘d5=.

7... ♘xc4 8. ♘xc4 ♗d8

Either 8... ♗f5 or 8... ♗c7
are perfectly acceptable.

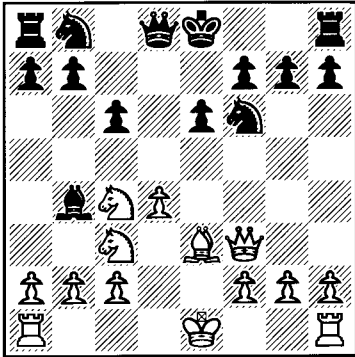
9. ♘e3

9. ♘g5 e6 10. ♘xf6 (10. 0–0
♘e7 11. f4 0–0 12. f5 exf5 13.
♗xf5 ♘a6 14. ♗d2 ♘c7 15.
♗af1 ♘fd5! 16. ♘xe7 ♗xe7
17. ♗e5 ♗d7 18. ♘e3 ♘xc3
19. ♗xc3 ♘b5!) ♗xf6 11.
♘e4 ♗f4! =; 9. 0–0 e6 10. ♘f4
♘e7 11. ♗e1 0–0=. Due to the

Chapter Seven

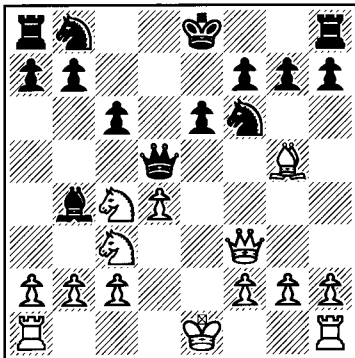
early exchange on c4, White's attacking opportunities are limited.

9... e6 10. ♖f3 ♘b4!



A good move, taking away thoughts of castling long.

11. ♘g5 ♖d5!



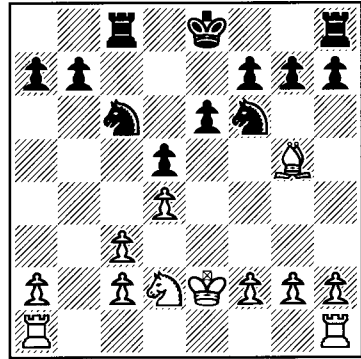
End of White's ambition.

12. ♖xd5

12. ♘xf6 ♖xf3 13. gxf3 gxf6 14. ♖e2 ♘xc3 15. bxc3 b5 16. ♖e3 ♖d7 17. ♖hg1 ♖e7 18. ♖g7 ♖ag8 19. ♖ag1 ♖xg7

20. ♖xg7 ♖b6

12... cxd5 13. ♖d2 ♘xc3 14. bxc3 ♖c6 15. ♖e2 ♖c8

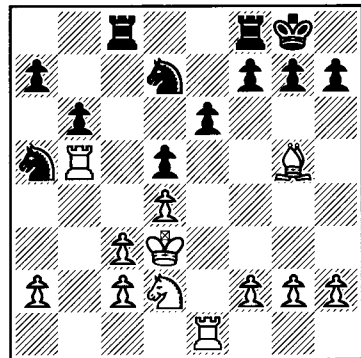


Easy moves. Nobody could complain about this position with the black pieces.

16. ♖hb1 ♖a5

He's aiming for c4. I like 16... b6! too.

17. ♖d3 ♖d7 18. ♖b5 b6 19. ♖e1 0-0



One can only say that White has a lousy middlegame/end-

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♗c3 ♜a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♗f3 ♗f6 6. ♗e5; 6. ♗d2; 6. ♗d3

game, if White makes it to the endgame. He has serious weaknesses.

20. a4 ♖c6 21. ♗e7 ♖fc8 22. ♗b4 ♗b7 23. a5 a6–+ 24. ♖xb6 ♗xb6 25. axb6 a5. 0–1

(22)

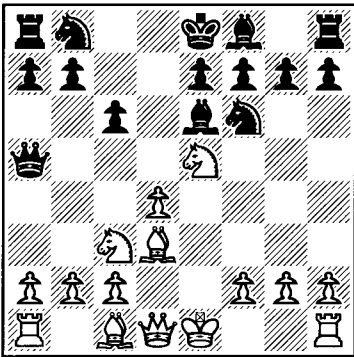
Hossain, E (2353)–
Kotronias, V (2528)

6th Wichern Open

Hamburg

October 21, 2001

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♗c3 ♜a5 4. d4 ♗f6 5. ♗f3 c6 6. ♗e5 ♗e6 7. ♗d3



Kasparov played this move against Anand in the 1995 World Championship match, so this is the one the crowds all want to follow. It's White's sharpest and best option, keeping pieces on. Anand went 7...

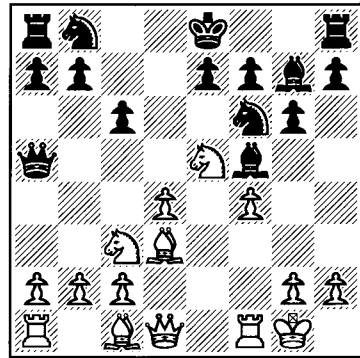
♗bd7. My recommendation is a little different.

7... g6!

Allowing no simplifications such as a capture on f7.

8. 0–0 ♗g7 9. ♗e2

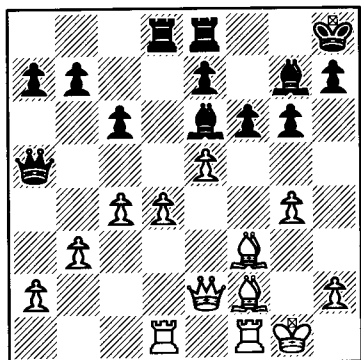
Aiming to embarrass the Bishop with ♗f4. 9. f4 mirrors the plan adopted by Kasparov. Black's best reply is 9... ♗f5!



so that if White takes, there's a square on e4 for a Knight. Otherwise, White's attack is slowed. 10. ♗c4 0–0 11. g4!? ♗c8! (11... ♗xg4 12. ♗xg4 ♗xg4 13. ♖xg4 ♗xd4† 14. ♖g2 ♗xc3 15. f5 ♗g7 16. fxg6 hxg6 17. ♖xf7! ♖xf7 18. ♖c8† ♗f8 19. ♖xb7 is too dangerous for Black.) 12. ♗e3 ♗bd7 13. ♗e2 ♗xe5 14. fxe5 ♗d5 15. ♗xd5 ♖xd5 16. ♗f3 ♖a5 17. ♖e2 ♗e6 18. c4 ♖ad8

Chapter Seven

19. b3 ♖h8 20. ♔f2 ♜fe8 21. ♜ad1 f6.

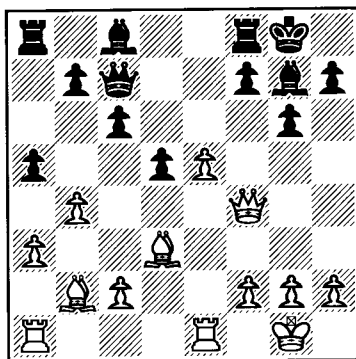


Let's not forget that White has loosened his position with g2-g4. After careful marshalling of the defense, Black now begins his bid for counterplay. 22. b4 ♖xb4 23. d5 cxd5 24. cxd5 ♔c8 25. e6 b6 26. ♜b1 ♖a5 27. ♜fd1 ♔b7 28. ♔e1 ♖c5† 29. ♔f2 ♖a3 30. ♜b3 ♖a4 31. ♔e4 ♜c8 32. ♖f3 ♖c4 33. ♔d4 ♜ed8 34. ♔b2 ♖g8 35. ♜e3 ♖xa2 36. ♜e2 ♖a5 37. h4 ♜c4 38. ♜ed2 ♖c5† 39. ♖h1 f5 40. gxh5 ♔xb2 41. fxg6 ♔g7 42. gxh7† ♖h8 43. h5 ♜c3 44. ♖g4 ♖e3 45. ♜h2 ♜c1 46. ♜xc1 ♖xc1† 47. ♖g2 ♖d2† 0-1, *Heinatz, T-Lau, R/Germany 2000.*

9... 0-0 10. c4

10. ♖f4 ♔c8 may seem

retrograde, however White is spending quite a bit of time moving his Knight around. 11. ♜e1 e6 12. a3 ♖bd7 13. b4 ♖b6 14. ♔b2 a5 15. ♖d2 ♖xe5 16. dxe5 ♖d5 17. ♖xd5 exd5 18. ♖f4 ♖c7=.

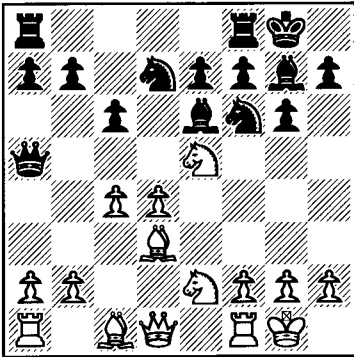


There is no reason why White should be better. Black has a nibble on b4 and e5 and he can get the rest of his pieces out in comfort: 19. ♖g5 ♜e8 20. ♜e2 axb4 21. axb4 ♜xa1† 22. ♔xa1 ♔d7 23. ♔d4 b6 24. ♖e3 c5! White is making what he thinks is the running and quite fails to appreciate that the tables have turned. 25. bxc5 bxc5 26. ♔xc5 ♜xe5 27. ♔b6 ♖c3! 28. ♖c1 ♜xe2 29. ♔xe2 ♔f5= 30. ♖d1 ♖xc2 31. ♖xc2 ♔xc2. It takes a bit of technique from here and I'm pleased to say

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♗c3 ♜a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♗f3 ♗f6 6. ♗e5; 6. ♗d2; 6. ♗d3

that Burnett is up to the job.
 32. ♗a5 f5 33. ♖f1 ♖f7 34. ♖e1 ♖e6 35. ♖d2 ♗b3 36. f4 ♗c4 37. ♗f3 ♖d6 38. ♗b4† ♖c6 39. g3 ♗d4 40. h3 ♗f1 41. ♗c3 ♗f2 42. g4 ♗xh3 43. g5 ♗f1 44. ♗e5 ♗c5 45. ♖c3 ♗c4 46. ♗g2 ♖d7 47. ♗f3 ♖e6 48. ♗d4 ♗f8 49. ♗d1 h6 50. gxh6 ♗xh6 51. ♗e5 g5 52. ♗f3 gxf4 53. ♖d4 ♗g5 54. ♗g2 ♗f6 55. ♗xf6 ♖xf6 56. ♗f3 ♖g5 57. ♖e5 ♗d3 58. ♗xd5 ♖g4 59. ♖d4 ♗e4 60. ♗c4 ♖g3 0–1, *Lappage, J–Burnett, J/Scarborough 2001.*

10... ♗bd7



Completing the initial development plan. Where to go from here? I think Black should look to centralize his Rooks, maybe reduce the pressure by a single

exchange on e5 and then look out for opportunities against the advancing white pawns.

11. ♗d2 ♖b6 12. ♗xd7

Oh, thank you! White does Black's job for him.

12... ♗xd7 13. ♖c2 ♖fe8 14. ♖ad1 e5! 15. dxex5 ♖xe5 16. ♗c3 ♖e7 17. ♗g3 ♖ae8=

Black is absolutely okay. Casting an eye over the position I see an exposed white pawn on c4 and not a lot else. If White is rational, he will certainly keep the draw, but what sort of game plan is that?

18. h3 c5 19. ♖fe1 h5

Kotronias is clearly playing for a win. Perhaps the very best course was to take on e1 twice and shake hands. He is even willing to allow White some winning opportunities in order to try to score the full point.

20. ♖xe7 ♖xe7 21. b3 h4 22. ♗f1 ♗c6 23. ♗e3 ♖c7 24. ♗f1

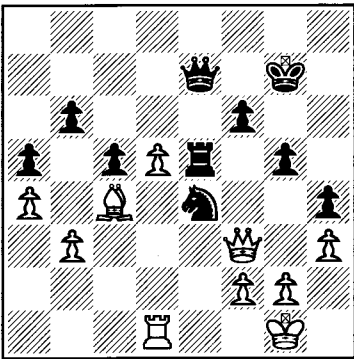
I like 24. ♖b2!, e.g., 24... ♗h5 (24... ♖e6! 25. ♗d5 ♗xd5 26. ♗xg7 ♗f4 27. ♗h6 [27. ♗f1 f6 28. ♗xf6 ♗xg2!? 29. ♖d8† ♖f7 30. ♗xh4+–] f6 28. ♗f1 g5∞) 25. ♗xg7 ♗xg7

26. ♖f6±.

24... ♖f4 25. ♜d5⊕

According to the tournament bulletin White was in time-trouble already, thus explaining the rather opportunistic nature of Black's play.

25... ♙xd5 26. cxd5 ♖d6 27. ♙e2 ♜e4 28. ♙xg7 ♖xg7 29. ♙f3 ♜g5 30. ♙e2 b6 31. a4 a5 32. ♙c4 f6 33. ♖d2 ♜e4 34. ♖e3 ♜e5 35. ♖f4 g5 36. ♖c1 ♜f5 37. ♖e3 ♜e5 38. ♖f3 ♖e7



The Knight finally seems to have found a route to d6, the ideal square. The very thought panics Hossain and, chronical-ly short of time, he blunders.

39. ♜e1? ♜d2. 0-1

Summarizing, I don't feel that 6. ♜e5 poses much of a threat and can be successfully

countered by 6... ♙e6. The overall development plan is ... g6-based, e.g., ... ♙g7, 0-0, ... ♜bd7 and a comfortable game is the result. Should White play either 7. ♜c4 or 7. ♙c4, simply capturing is fine.

(23)

Hossain, E (2436)–

Saptarshi, R (2356)

7th United Insurance

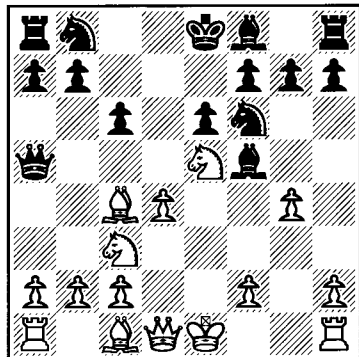
Dhaka

May 9, 2004

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♜c3 ♖a5 4. d4 ♜f6 5. ♜f3 c6 6. ♜e5

6. ♙c4 ♙f5 7. ♜e5 trans-poses to the game line.

6... ♙f5 7. ♙c4 e6 8. g4



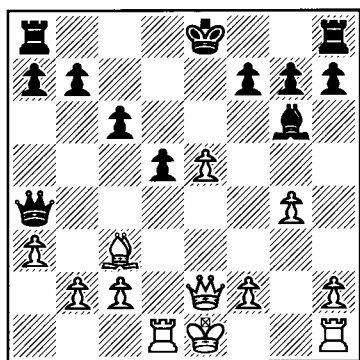
Emms calls this system 'menacing.' As far as I understand Wahls' German he

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♞c3 ♗a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♞f3 ♞f6 6. ♞e5; 6. ♗d2; 6. ♗d3

doesn't think much of it. My own view is that White's play is very committal. If Black survives the initial attack he has every chance of picking White off.

8... ♗g6 9. h4

Consistent, at least. Other moves do not bother Black, as long as he is accurate: 9. ♗d2 ♞bd7 10. ♗e2 ♗b4 11. a3?! An uninspiring move. Better ideas are suggested later. 11... ♞xe5 12. dxe5 ♞d5 13. ♗xd5 exd5 14. ♖d1 ♗xc3 15. ♗xc3 ♗a4.



Whatever White was hoping for hasn't come to much; well, 11. a3 was a waste of a move but in a way it's a typical mistake. Now Black has whatever advantage is going due to his better pawn structure, but it

will be a long, hard grind before he can make something of it. In this current game, White hangs on for the draw. 16. ♖d2 c5 17. b4 d4 18. ♗b2 ♗c6 (18... cxb4 19. ♗c4 0-0 20. ♗xb4 ♗c6 21. 0-0 ♖ad8 22. ♖xd4 ♗xc2 23. ♖c1 ♗g6 is possibly a better winning chance.) 19. 0-0 b6 20. ♖e1 0-0 21. f4 f5 22. g5 ♗e6 23. c3 ♖fd8 24. cxd4 cxd4 25. ♗xd4 ♗e8 26. b5 ♖d5 27. a4 a6 28. bxa6 ♖a5 29. ♗c3 ♖xa4 30. ♖d6 ♗b3 31. ♗d2 ♖a2 32. ♗d5† ♗xd5 33. ♖xd5 ♖c2 34. ♗b4 ♖xa6 35. ♖d8 ♖aa2 36. ♖xe8† ♗f7 37. ♖f8† ♗g6 38. e6 ♖g2† 39. ♗h1 ♖xh2† 40. ♗g1 ♖ag2† 1/2-1/2, Lugo, B-Bartholomew, J/Las Vegas USA 2004; 9. ♗e2 ♗b4! 10. ♗d2 ♞bd7 11. 0-0-0.

a) 11. h4 ♞xe5 12. dxe5 ♞d5 13. h5 (13. ♗xd5 exd5 14. h5 ♗xc2 15. ♖c1 ♗a4!) 13... ♞xc3!;

b) 11. f4 0-0-0 12. 0-0-0 (12. 0-0 ♗b6) ♞xe5 13. fxe5 ♞d5 14. ♞xd5 ♗xd2† 15. ♗xd2 ♗xd2† 16. ♖xd2 cxd5=; 11... ♞xe5 12. dxe5 ♞d5. The ♗/g4 sticks out like

a sore thumb.

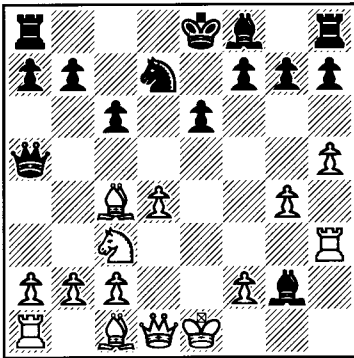
9... ♖bd7! 10. ♖xd7

10. ♔e2 ♖xe5 11. dxe5 ♖e4
12. 0-0 ♖xc3 13. bxc3 h5 14.
g5 ♔xc3♯.

10... ♖xd7 11. h5 ♔e4 12.

♖h3 ♔d5

12... ♔g2!/? is mentioned by both Beat Zuger and Matthias Wahls as an alternative, the point of which is to drive the white Rook to an awkward square.



After 13. ♖e3 (13. ♖g3 ♔d5 14. ♔d3 ♔d6!) ♔d5 14. ♔f1 0-0-0 15. ♔d2 ♔b6 16. ♖xd5 exd5 17. c3 ♖f6 Black has the chance of an attack against White's King. However, 12... Bd5 is also a good move, as we'll see.

13. ♔d3 0-0-0

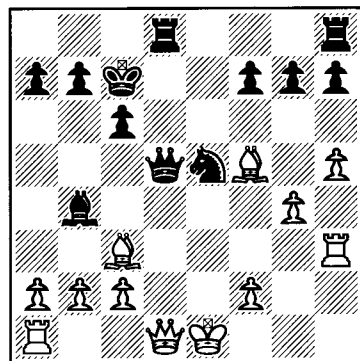
13... c5! is a very strong

idea according to Wahls. He then gives 14. dxc5 ♔c6! with ...♖xc5 to come and a very nice position. But what is wrong with 13... 0-0-0? It's direct, natural, develops the Rooks, and increases Black's attacking potential.

14. ♔d2 e5

Straightforward and he has an improvement in mind. 14... ♔b6! 15. ♖xd5 exd5 16. c3 ♔xb2 17. ♖f3 f6 18. ♖b1 ♔a3 19. c4 dxc4 20. ♔xc4 ♔e7♯ 21. ♖e3 ♔d6 22. ♖e6 ♔xd4 23. ♔a6 ♖c5 24. ♖xc6♯ ♔d7♯ was the strange course of *Rublevsky–Lastin/Russia 1995*.

15. dxe5 ♖xe5 16. ♔f5♯ ♔c7 17. ♖xd5♯ ♔xd5 18. ♔c3 ♔b4!



Great move. After this sud-

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♗a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♘f3 ♘f6 6. ♘e5; 6. ♘d2; 6. ♘d3

den, rather original shot, Black is better.

19. ♖xd5

19. ♘xb4 ♗g2 20. ♖d3□ (20. ♗e2 ♖he8†) ♘f3†!! 21. ♖xf3 ♖he8†-+.

19... ♘xc3† 20. ♖xc3 ♖xd5

And I would say that this position highlights the difficulty facing White in this line. If his attack breaks down, he's left facing weaknesses. Here it's just a bad Bishop, but it's enough to chronically compromise his game.

21. f4 g6 22. ♘e4 ♖d4 23. fxe5 ♖xe4† 24. ♗f2 ♖e8 25. hxg6 hxg6 26. ♖f3 ♖e7 27. ♖e1 ♖xg4

Something had to drop.
 28. ♖f6 b5 29. e6 fxe6 30. ♖fxe6 ♖xe6 31. ♖xe6 a5 32. ♗f3 ♖g1 33. ♗e2 g5 34. ♖g6 ♗b6 35. a3 g4 36. ♖g5 g3 37. ♗d2 ♗c7 38. ♖g6 a4 39. c4 bxc4 40. ♗c2 ♗b6 41. ♖g5 g2 42. ♖g4 c3 43. ♖g5 c5 44. ♖g6† ♗c7 45. ♖g4 ♗d6 46. ♖g5 c4 47. ♖g3 cxb2 48. ♖xb2 c3†. 0-1

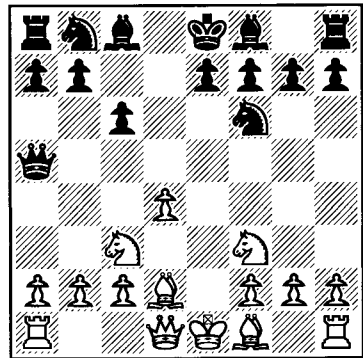
I think Emms 'judgment' will have to be revised.

(24)

**Myhrvold, R (2192)–
 Pedersen, L (2054)**

Norway Open Championship
 Oslo, Norway
 April 8, 2004

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♗a5 4. d4 ♘f6 5. ♘f3 c6 6. ♘d2!?

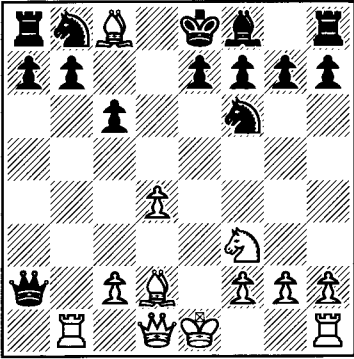


A move recommended by John Emms in his “winning with 1. e4” repertoire book. He figures to play ♘e4 somewhere, double Black’s pawns, and then grind out a small edge as is the Grandmaster’s right. I’m not going to play ball. I should mention 6. ♘d3 before proceeding, a very quiet move with a small sting.

Black can equalize effortlessly with 6... ♘g4! (6... ♘f5?! 7. b4! is the little trick

Chapter Seven

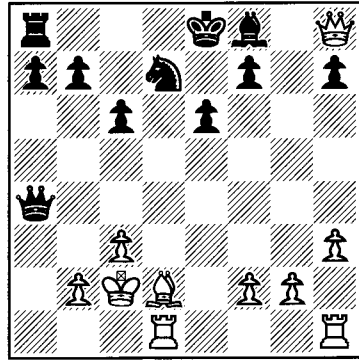
Black should avoid: 7... ♖xb4 ♗e4†, then 19. ♔c1 fails to
 8. ♕xf5 ♗xc3† 9. ♕d2 ♗b2 19... ♘c5!
 10. ♖b1 ♗xa2 11. ♕c8)



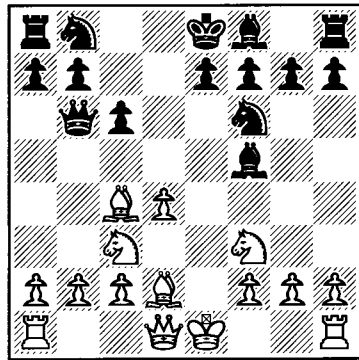
7. h3 ♕h5 8. 0-0 e6 9. ♘e4
 ♘bd7 10. c4 ♘xe4 11. ♕xe4
 ♘f6 12. ♕d3 0-0-0 13. ♕d2
 ♗c7. There are even chances

6... ♗b6!

Fans of the light-squared
 Bishop might well prefer 6...
 ♕f5 7. ♘h4 ♕g4 8. ♕e2
 ♕xe2 9. ♗xe2 ♗a6! 10. ♗f3
 e6 11. 0-0-0 ♘bd7 = *Timman,
 J-Beliavsky, A/Ubeda 1997*;
 6... ♕g4 7. h3 ♕h5 8. ♕c4
 e6 9. ♘d5 ♗d8 10. ♘xf6†
 gxf6 11. g4 (11. ♗e2 ♕xf3 12.
 ♗xf3 ♗xd4 13. 0-0-0 ♗xc4
 14. ♗xf6 ♘d7! 15. ♗xh8
 ♗xa2 16. c3 ♗a1† 17. ♗c2
 ♗a4† = *Golubev*. If 18. ♗b1



11... ♕g6. Black seems to
 have ample resources against
 6. ♕d2.
 7. ♕c4 ♕f5!



One can be greedy and take
 the pawn; *Deep Fritz* just loves
 the idea but as we're concentrat-
 ing on simplicity why not
 just play the Bishop out to the
 normal square? White has a
 very hard time proving any-

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♖c3 ♗a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♖f3 ♖f6 6. ♖e5; 6. ♖d2; 6. ♖d3

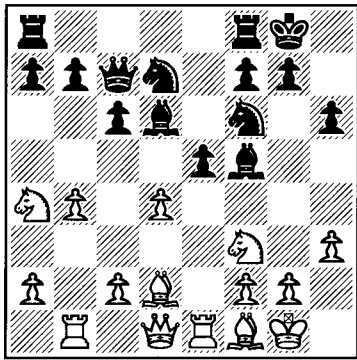
thing.

8. 0-0 e6

Normal service has been resumed.

9. ♖e1

9. ♖b1 planning b4, should be met with a straight bat : 9... ♖bd7 10. b4 ♖c7 11. ♖e1 ♖d6 12. h3 h6 13. ♖f1 0-0 14. ♖a4 e5!=.

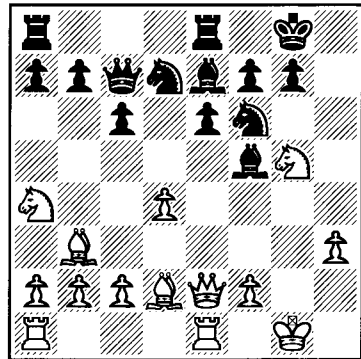


There is nothing difficult about Black's play. 15. ♖c5 e4 16. ♖h4 ♖h7 17. g4 ♖ad8 18. ♖c1 ♖xc5 19. bxc5 ♖h2† 20. ♖h1 ♖xd4 21. ♖c3 ♖e5 22. f4 ♖xf4 23. ♖b2 ♖d2 24. ♖xd2 ♖xd2 25. ♖e2 e3 26. ♖g2 ♖g3 0-1, *Gazarek, D-Horvath, C/Pula 1998*.

9... ♖e7 10. ♖b3 0-0 11. ♖g5N

11. ♖e3 ♖c7 12. ♖h4 ♖g4! 13. ♖f3 ♖d6 is simply good

for Black; and the 11. h3 h6 12. g4 ♖h7 13. ♖f4 ♖bd7 14. ♖e2 ♖fe8 15. ♖a4 ♖a5 16. ♖d2 ♖c7 17. g5 hxg5 18. ♖xg5 ♖f5̄ *Kiss, G-Kamaras, P/Hungary 2002* does not appear earth-shatteringly terrifying.



11... ♖bd7 12. ♖e5

What can one say—White is just hoping something turns up. He is in for an unexpected surprise!

12... ♖xe5!?

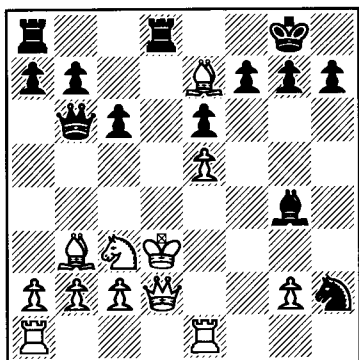
Launching into a vicious attack. It may be that 12... ♖ad8= was the objectively best course, but you sometimes have to play chess for fun!

13. dxe5 ♖g4 14. ♖xe7

What else, now that he's here?

14... ♖xf2 15. ♖d2 ♖g4† 16. ♖f1 ♖xh2† 17. ♖e2 ♖g4†

18. ♔d3 ♖fd8†



Maybe Pedersen saw to here some moves ago and just couldn't resist. Ah, his attitude will be frowned upon by the wily professionals, but that is neither here nor there. I'll let you into a trade secret: *a lot of professionals hate chess.*

19. ♘d6 ♗c5 20. ♔e4??

More than a little disturbed.

20. ♔f4! probably refutes the Black attack: 20... f6 (20... ♖xd6† 21. exd6 ♖d8 22. ♘e4 ♘f5 23. ♖ad1 Black is running out of pieces fast.) 21. ♘e4 fxe5 22. ♗f8†!!

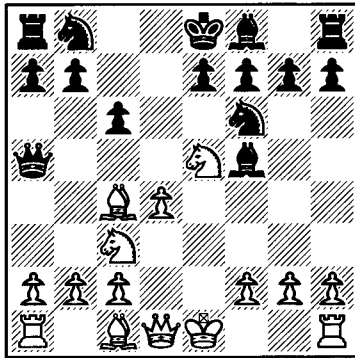
20... ♖xd6 21. ♗xd6 ♘f5†.

0-1

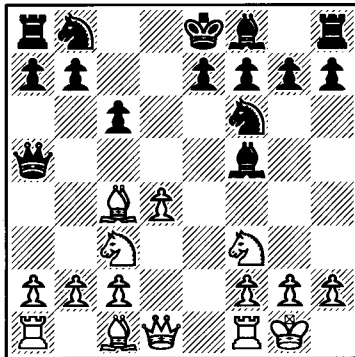
It's mate in three after 22. ♗f4 ♗f2† 23. ♔g5 h6† 24. ♗h5 ♘g4#.

EIGHT

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♔xd5 3. ♘c3
♚a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♗f3 ♖f6 6.
♙c4 ♗f5 7. ♗e5



7. 0-0.



(25)

Malbran, G (2399)–

Soppe, G (2471)

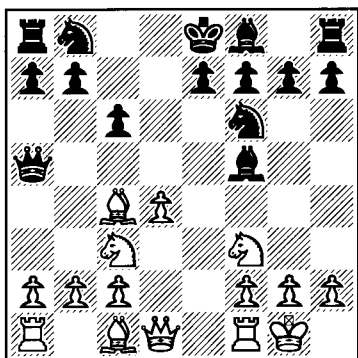
Argentinian Championship

Buenos Aires

October 21, 2000

ON THE SHUNT

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3
 ♜a5 4. d4 ♘f6 5. ♘f3 c6 6.
 ♙c4 ♙f5 7. 0–0



7... e6 8. ♘e5 ♘bd7 9.
 ♞e1

‘Nothing special’ would be a rather accurate way of describing White’s opening play. More interesting is the way that Black spices up the position from this quiet beginning.

9... ♘xe5 10. ♞xe5 ♜c7 11.
 h3

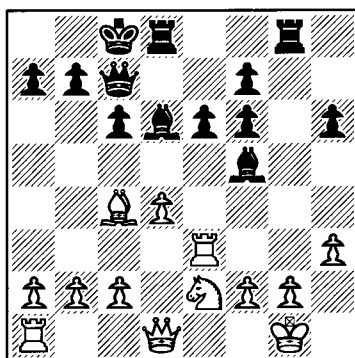
Well, there was the threat of

...♘g4.

11... 0–0–0

Why not castle long and go for the throat? Black’s in much better shape to attack than White. The ♞/e5 is a target and h2–h3 gives impetus to any pawn advance by Black on the kingside.

12. ♙g5 h6 13. ♙xf6 gxf6 14.
 ♞e3 ♞g8 15. ♘xe2 ♙d6



Don’t like this for White at all.

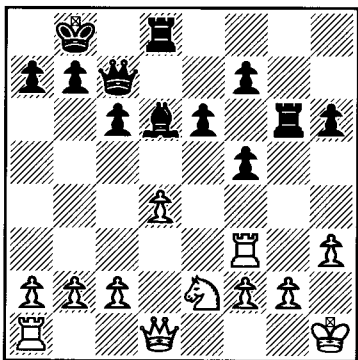
16. ♙d3 ♙g6 17. ♙xg6
 ♞xg6 18. ♜h1

Getting off the g-file is common sense. Amazingly, another strong player came this way as White, possibly lulled into a false sense of security by Black’s ‘quiet’ opening: 18. c4 f5 19. ♜f1 c5 20. ♞d3 ♞dg8 21. ♞ad1 a6 22. a3 cxd4

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♗a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♘f3 ♘f6 6. ♙c4 ♙f5 7. ♘e5

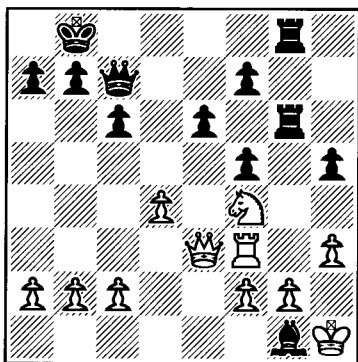
23. ♘xd4 ♙e5 24. b3 ♖c5 25. ♘f3 ♙c7 26. ♘h4 ♖6g7 27. b4. I would say that White has made a very good fist of the defense; why he's almost equalized! *Yu Shaoteng–Wahls, China 1993.*

18... f5 19. ♖f3 23. ♖b8



A brief time out.

20. ♗d3 h5 21. Qe3 Rdg8 22. Rg1 Bh2 23. Nf4 Bxg1



24. Nxg6??

After 24. Kxg1 Rg5 25. c3

Qb6 the game continues, with Black an Exchange ahead. Possibly White wanted to get it over with.

24... Qh2#.

A very brief encounter. As you can see, if White develops planlessly, there is the definite opportunity for Black to assault the enemy King.

0-1

(26)

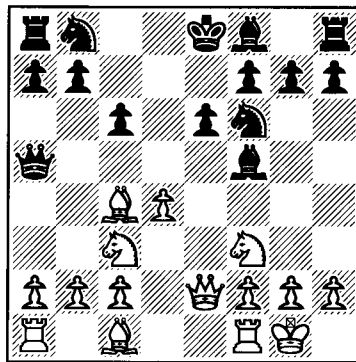
Ashley, M (2499)–
Nisipeanu, L (2611)

Corus-B

Wijk aan Zee

January 29, 2000

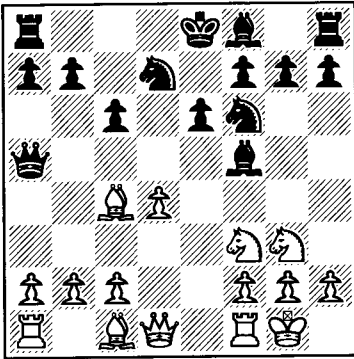
1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♗a5 4. d4 ♘f6 5. ♙c4 c6 6. ♘f3 ♙f5 7. 0-0 e6 8. ♖e2



If Black can rely on solid, natural, easy moves to see him

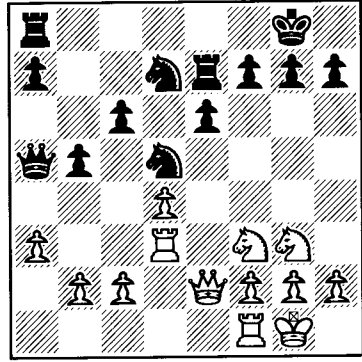
Chapter Eight

through, why can't White? That's basically what Ashley is saying and what a lot of others will echo. As I stated, I don't think this approach gives White anything; Black just has to stay alert. 8. ♖e2 ♖bd7 (8... ♗d6!? 9. ♖g3 ♗g6 10. ♖h4 ♖bd7 11. ♖e2 0-0-0 12. ♗d2 ♖c7 13. b4 ♗f4 14. a4 ♖b6 15. ♗xf4 ♖xf4 16. ♖f3 ♖e4 ♣ DeVreugt-Pomes/Gröningen 1995) 9. ♖g3 is a slow-looking continuation but one which was successful in the following recent game.



I don't feel threatened in any way by this idea; it tells me that Sokolov wants to keep the opening position as safe as possible and hopes to outplay his lower-rated opponent. 9... ♗g6 10. ♖e2 ♗e7 11. ♗g5

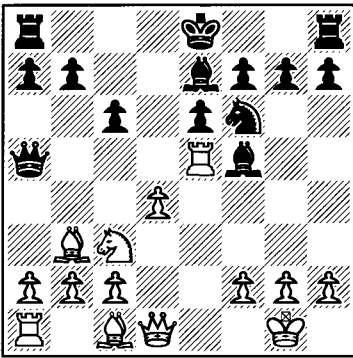
0-0 12. ♖ad1 ♖fe8 13. a3 b5 14. ♗d3 ♗xd3 15. ♖xd3 ♖d5 16. ♗xe7 ♖xe7.



A rather level position. 17. ♖e4 ♖c7 18. ♖e1 ♖ae8 19. ♖e5 c5 20. ♖xd7 ♖xd7 21. dxc5 ♖xc5 22. ♖e5 ♖d6 23. ♖xd6 ♖xd6 24. ♖e4 ♖dd8 25. g3 ♖f8 26. ♖c3 ♖xc3 27. ♖xc3 ♖c8 28. ♖ee3 a6 29. ♖f1 ♖e7 30. ♖e2 f6 31. ♖xc8 ♖xc8 32. ♖d2 ♖c5 33. ♖d3 e5 34. b4 ♖c6 35. a4 ♖d6?! (35... ♖e6! would have done the trick: 36. axb5 axb5 37. ♖d8 ♖d6† 38. ♖xd6† ♖xd6. If anyone is better here, it's Black!) 36. axb5 axb5 37. ♖e3 ♖c6 38. ♖d5 ♖xc2 39. ♖xb5 g5 40. ♖b7† ♖e6 41. ♖xh7 ♖c3† 42. ♖e2 ♖b3 43. ♖b7 g4 44. ♖b6† ♖f5 45. ♖f1 ♖b1† 46. ♖g2 ♖b2 47. ♖b8 ♖e4 48. b5

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♜c3 ♜a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♜f3 ♜f6 6. ♜c4 ♜f5 7. ♜e5

f5 49. b6 ♖b3 50. b7 ♖b1 51. h4! Once he lost the h-pawn, this was always going to be the problem. White liberates his King and with it wins the game. 51... gxh3† 52. ♜h2!! ♜f3 53. g4. This is nice. 53... f4 54. g5 ♖f1 55. ♖d8 ♖xf2† 56. ♜xh3 ♖b2 57. ♖b8 e4 58. g6 e3 59. g7 e2 1–0, *Sokolov, A–Bellini, F/Switzerland 2003*; 8. ♖e1 ♜e7 9. ♜e5 ♜bd7 10. ♜b3 ♜xe5 11. ♖xe5?



It's easy to be caught in this trick. 11... ♜c7 12. ♜f3 (12. ♖e1 ♜g4 13. g3 0–0–0. h5-h4 is coming and a very strong attack.) ♜g4 13. ♜f4 ♜xe5 14. ♜xe5 ♜d6–+ (already) 15. g4 ♜xe5 16. gxf5 ♜xh2† 17. ♜g2 0–0–0 18. fxe6 fxe6 19. ♖h1 ♜d6 20. ♜xe6† ♜b8 21. ♜e4 ♜e7 22. ♜b3 h5 23.

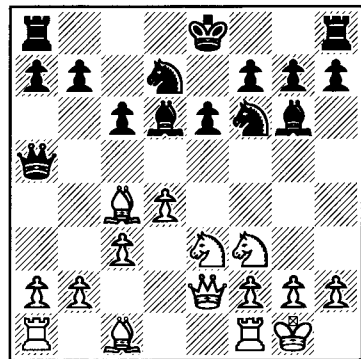
d5 cxd5 24. ♜xd5 h4 25. c4 ♜f4 26. ♜d3 g5 27. b4 g4 28. ♖g1 g3 29. fxg3 hxg3 30. ♜f3 ♖df8 31. ♜b1 ♖h2 32. ♖g2 ♜h6† 0–1, *Bounis, V–Solak, D/Kallithea Chalkidiki 2003*; 8. ♜d2 ♜c7! 9. ♜e2 is a pale shadow of the variation where White castles long. *Franzoni–Westerinen, H/Thessalonika Olympiad 1984* continued 9... ♜bd7 10. d5 cxd5 11. ♜xd5 ♜xd5 12. ♜xd5 ♜d6 13. ♜c3 0–0 14. ♜e4 ♜xe4 15. ♜xe4 ♜e7 16. ♖fd1, draw agreed.

8... ♜b4

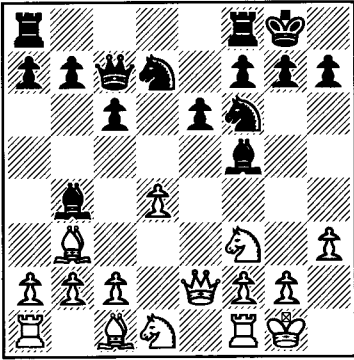
8... ♜bd7 9. ♜f4 ♜g4! with the idea of .. ♜f5 is mentioned by Wahls as okay for Black.

9. ♜d1 ♜bd7 10. h3

10. ♜e3 ♜g6 11. c3 ♜d6 is cool for Black.

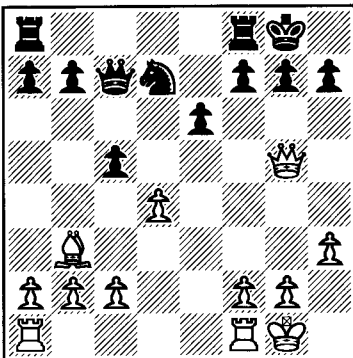


10... ♜c7 11. ♜b3 0–0



Safe as houses. More enterprising is 11... 0-0-0 12. c3 ♘d6 13. ♖e3 ♘g6 14. ♖c4 ♘e7 15. a4 ♖d5. The opposite-sides castling position seems fine for Black here.

12. ♖e3 ♘e4 13. ♖g4 ♘e7
14. ♘g5 ♘xf3 15. ♚xf3
♖xg4 16. ♚xg4 ♘xg5 17.
♚xg5 c5! =



Completing the totally painless process of equalization. Now it's a question of whether

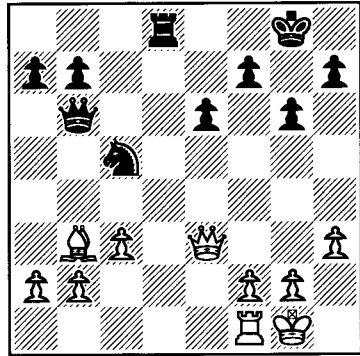
either player can grind out the point. The omens for Black are very reasonable: in Sicilian or French-like fashion, he can station his Rooks on the c- and d-files and try to pressure White's queenside pawns.

18. dxc5 ♖xc5 19. ♚e3 g6

Luft.

20. ♖ad1 ♖fd8 21. c3 ♚b6

22. ♖xd8† ♖xd8



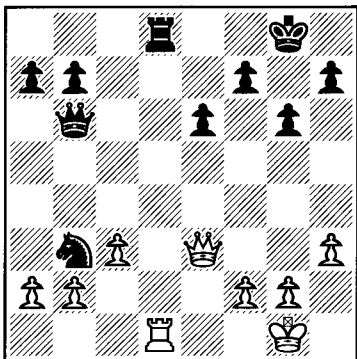
23. ♖d1?

Very casual and symptomatic of the sometimes sterile play emanating from 7. 0-0. It's got something to do with 'wasting a white.' Ashley is frustrated with his own lack of ambition and wants to get the game over as quickly as possible. Some care and a little imagination was needed to make a draw now. I recommend 23. ♖e1

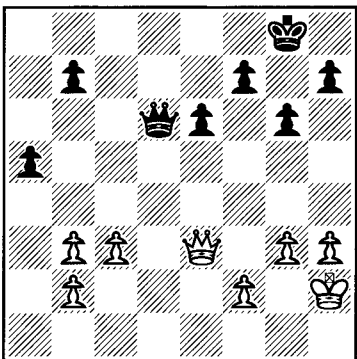
1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♗c3 ♗a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♗f3 ♗f6 6. ♙c4 ♙f5 7. ♗e5

♗xb3 24. ♗xb6 axb6 25. axb3 ♖d2 26. ♖e4 ♖xb2 27. ♖b4!= as the best way, but if you are just churning out boring moves you are unlikely to find this continuation.

23... ♗xb3!



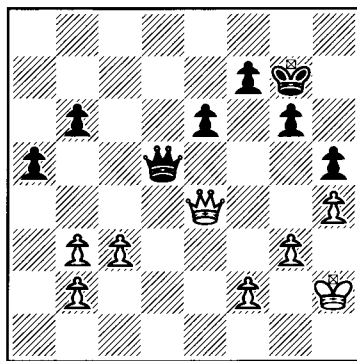
24. ♖xd8† ♗xd8 25. axb3 ♗d1† 26. ♗h2 ♗d6† 27. g3 a5!



This endgame is not a lot of fun for White and by no means an easy draw. Black can play to

freeze the queenside pawns and go after b3 or he may advance his kingside pawn majority. The doubled pawns really do mean (here) that White is playing as if a pawn down.

28. ♗a7 b6 29. ♗a8† ♖g7 30. ♗e4 h5 31. h4 ♗d5!



Yes! King and pawn endings are probably lost due to the doubled pawns and Black's potentially more active King.

32. ♗c2

So White is driven passive.

32... e5 33. ♖g1 ♖f6 34. c4?

My question mark, my instinct. Very poor judgment. I think this weakens White's position beyond repair. In my view he had to wait, e.g., 34. ♖f1 e4 35. ♖e2 ♖e5. I am doubtful that this endgame can be held, but at least there's

Chapter Eight

some hope.

34... ♖d4! 35. ♖c1 ♔e6 36.

♗a1 e4 37. ♗a4 ♖d7! 38.

♗a3 ♖d1† 39. ♔g2 ♗f3† 40.

♔g1 e3. 0-1

Excellent technique by Nisipeanu. The white pawns disappear.

NINE

HITS WITH THE KNIGHT

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♞c3
♜a5 4. d4 ♞f6 5. ♞f3 c6 6.
♙c4 ♘f5 7. ♙d2 e6 8. ♞d5
(8. ♞e4)

(27)

Perunovic, M (2356)–

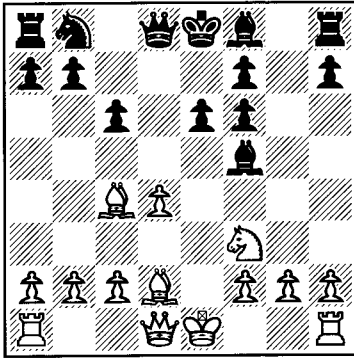
Savic, M (2522)

5th Montenegro Open

Sozina

February 23, 2004

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3
 ♙a5 4. d4 ♘f6 5. ♘f3 c6 6.
 ♗c4 ♗f5 7. ♗d2 e6 8. ♘d5
 ♙d8 9. ♘xf6† gxf6

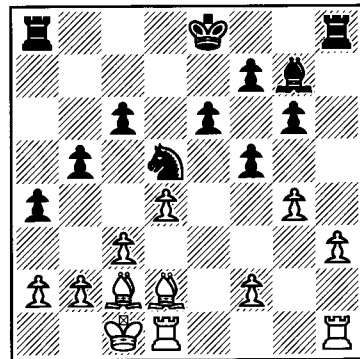


We are interested in practical results. The books may give ‘slightly better for White,’ but in my view they underestimate Black’s resources. In common with a similar line in the Caro-Kann, Black has active piece play and chances along the half-open b-, d-, and g- files to compensate for defects in pawn structure. The fight lies ahead.

10. ♗b3

The move of the moment, at least all the top guys are playing it. White recognizes that he has to be patient if he wishes to exploit his trumps. However, I am optimistic about Black’s chances.

The alternatives: 10. c3 ♘d7 11. ♘h4 ♗g6 12. ♙f3 f5! 13. ♙h3 ♗g7 14. 0–0–0 b5 15. ♗b3 ♘f6 16. ♙f3 ♙d7 17. ♘xg6 (17. ♗he1 0–0! 18. ♘xg6 hxg6 19. h3 a5 20. g4 a4 21. ♗c2 ♙d5 22. ♙xd5 ♘xd5 23. gxf5 exf5=) hxg6 18. h3 a5 19. g4 a4 20. ♗c2 ♙d5 21. ♙xd5 ♘xd5.



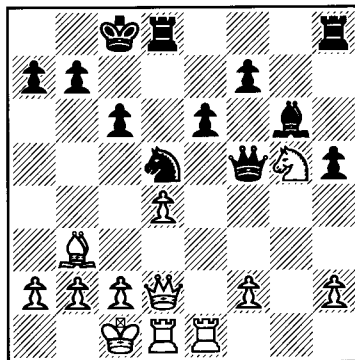
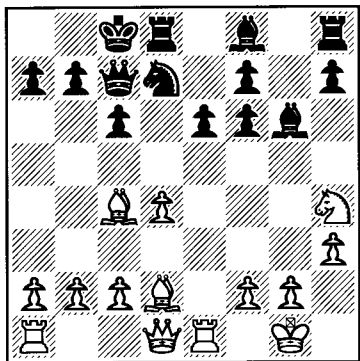
Exemplifying the light-squared theme. Black has a fine position.

10. ♗f4 ♘d7 11. ♙e2 ♘b6
 12. ♗b3 ♘d5 13. ♗g3 ♗h6!?
 14. ♘h4 ♙a5† 15. ♙f1 ♗g6

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♗a5 4. d4 ♘f6 5. ♘f3 c6 6. ♘c4 ♘f5 7. ♘d2 e6 8. ♘d5 (8. ♘e4)

16. ♖f3 ♘h5! An ingenious move securing Black a good game.; 10. 0–0. Rather routine. 10... ♘d7 11. ♖e1 ♖c7 12. ♘h4 ♘g6 13. h3 0–0–0.

♖f5 20. ♗e3 fxc5 21. ♘xg5 ♘f6 22. ♗d2 ♘d5 *Akopian, V–Tzermadianos, A/ECC, Rethymnon, Greece 2003.*



With ♘d6-f4 and/or ...♘b6 in the offing, Black has good chances. So you see it is not so easy to develop any advantage for White.

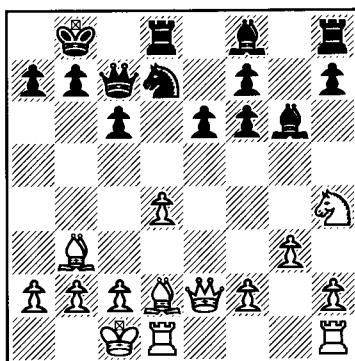
10... ♘d7 11. ♖e2

11. ♘h4 ♘g6 12. ♖f3 is similar to the line above. I don't understand the next move: 12... ♘e7?! (12... f5 13. ♖h3 ♘g7 is the correct way.) 13. g4 ♖b6 14. 0–0–0 0–0–0 15. ♖he1 ♘d6 16. ♘f4 ♘xf4† 17. ♖xf4± the exchange of dark-squared Bishops tends to emphasize the good points of White's position. 17... ♖b5 18. ♘f3 h5 19. g5

Even here Black is okay. He was outplayed later, but that happens.

11... ♖c7 12. ♘h4 ♘g6 13. 0–0–0 0–0–0 14. g3 ♘d6

14... ♖b8 has also been tried.

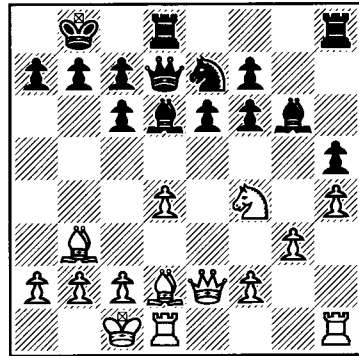
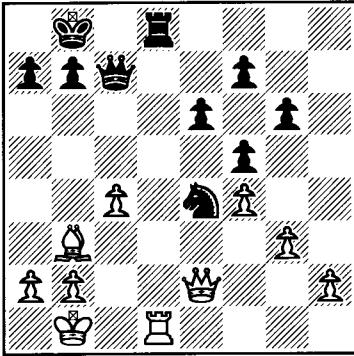


The point of this move is to play c6-c5 somewhere and

Chapter Nine

use the c-file. Let us see if this is viable: 15. ♖g2! (15. f4 f5! 16. c4 ♗g7 17. ♗c3 c5 18. ♖b1 ♖he8 19. ♖he1 cxd4 20. ♗xd4 ♗xd4 21. ♖xd4 ♖f6 22. ♖xd8† ♖xd8 23. ♖xg6 hxg6 24. ♖d1 ♖e4.

♗c5 51. ♖c1 ♗d5 52. ♗d2 ♗e4 53. ♗d1 e5 54. fxe5 fxe5 55. ♗h5 ♖b3† 56. ♖e2 ♖c1† 57. ♗d2 ♖d3 58. g4 ♖f4 59. b4 ♖f3 0–1, Folk, P–Konopka, M/Czech Republic 2003) ♗d6 16. h4 h5 17. ♖f4!.



Certainly Black is untroubled at this point. He went on to win: 25. ♗c2 ♖xd1† 26. ♖xd1 ♖xc4 27. ♖d8† ♖c8 28. ♖d4 ♖c5 29. ♖f6 ♖f8 30. ♖e5† ♖c8 31. a3 ♖d7 32. ♖d4 ♖c5 33. ♖h8† ♖f8 34. ♖d4 ♖c5 35. ♖h8† ♖c7 36. ♖h7 ♖e7 37. ♖h8 ♖f6 38. ♖e8 a6 39. ♖a2 ♖b6 40. ♗b3 ♖c8 41. ♖f8 ♖d6 42. ♗c2 ♖b6?? [42... ♖d4] 43. ♗b3?? [43. ♖xd6† wins] ♖a7 44. h4 ♖d4 45. ♖d8 ♖b5 46. ♖xd4† ♖xd4 47. ♗d1 ♖b6 48. h5 gxf5 49. ♗xh5 f6 50. ♖b1

A more testing maneuver for Black to meet. 17... ♗f5 (17... e5 18. dxe5 ♖xe5 19. ♖b1±) 18. ♖xh5 c5 19. g4 ♖xh5 20. gxf5 ♖xf5 21. ♗e3 cxd4 22. ♗xd4 ♗c5 23. ♗xc5 ♖xc5 24. ♖xd8† ♖xd8 25. h5 ♖xb3† 26. axb3 ♖d5 27. ♖d1 ♖c7 28. h6 ♖xd1† 29. ♖xd1 ♖d5† 30. ♖e2 ♖d8 31. b4 a6 32. c4 ♖h8 33. ♖e3 ♖h7 34. ♖f4 ♖h8 35. ♖h3 ♖g8 36. h7 ♖h8 37. ♖e4 ♖d6 38. ♖d4 ♖c6 39. ♖h6 ♖d8† 40. ♖c3 ♖h8 41. ♖h5 ♖d6 42. c5† ♖c6 43. ♖c4 b6 44. cxb6

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♗a5 4. d4 ♘f6 5. ♘f3 c6 6. ♙c4 ♙f5 7. ♙d2 e6 8. ♘d5 (8. ♘e4)

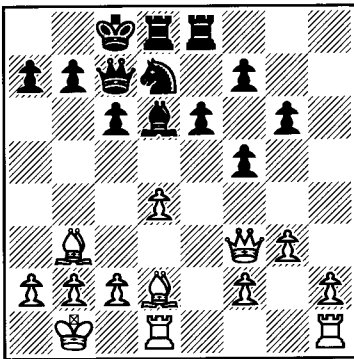
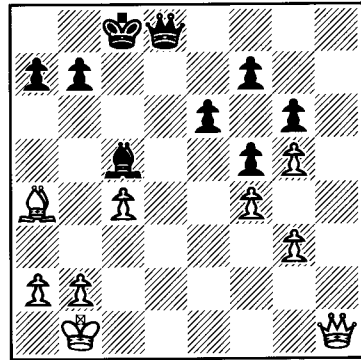
♙xb6 45. b5 1–0, *Ponomariov, R–Papaioannou, I/European Team Championships, Plovdiv, Bulgaria 2003.*

15. ♖b1

After 15. ♘g2 Black can react quickly with 15... c5! 16. d5 c4 17. ♙xc4 (17. ♖xc4 ♖xc4 18. ♙xc4 ♘b6 19. ♙b3 ♙e4 20. ♖hg1 ♙xd5=) exd5 18. ♙b3 ♘c5∞.

15... ♖he8 16. ♘xg6 hxg6 17. ♖f3 f5

♙a4 ♘xg5! 25. hxg5 ♖xh1 26. ♖xh1 ♖d8 27. f4 ♖a5 28. ♖xd8† ♖xd8‡



Maybe it's me, but I really like Black here. He's got watertight pawns, good pieces and c6-c5 coming. He's fine.

18. ♖he1 ♖h8 19. ♖h1 ♖de8 20. h4 ♘f6 21. c4 c5 22. ♙g5

22. ♙a4 ♖d8 23. ♙g5 ♙e7 24. d5 ♘e4!

22... ♘e4 23. dxc5 ♙xc5 24.

No draw today sir! White is tied down and the opposite colored Bishops give Black every chance of winning the game.

29. a3!

I reckon this is the best chance. White gives the King some *luft*. 29. ♖f3 ♖d4! 30. ♖e2 ♖g1† 31. ♖c2 ♖f2! 32. ♖xf2 ♙xf2 33. ♙e8 ♙xg3 34. ♙xf7 ♖d7! sees Black mopping up before White.;

29. ♖f1 ♖d2! 30. ♙e8 ♙d4 31. ♖c1 ♖d3† 32. ♖c2 ♖xg3 33. ♙xf7 ♖e1† 34. ♖c1 ♖xc1† 35. ♖xc1 ♙e3† 36. ♖c2 ♖d7! is the same disgusting ending, 29... ♖d3† 30. ♙c2 ♖d8 31. ♖h7

Why not 31. ♙a4 and then

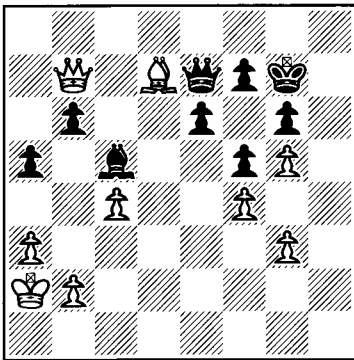
Chapter Nine

inquire how Black is going to win?

31... ♖f8 32. ♗d1 a5 33.
 ♕a2 ♖b8 34. ♗a4 ♗d4 35.
 ♗b5 ♖c7 36. ♖b3 ♖d8 37.
 ♕a2 ♖e7 38. ♖h1 ♖b8 39.
 ♖e1 ♖d8 40. ♖d2 ♗g7 41.
 ♖g2

If he takes on d8 Black's Bishop soon reaches f2.

41... ♖c7 42. ♖d2 b6 43.
 ♖d3 ♖d8 44. ♖f3 ♖f8 45.
 ♖c6 ♖g8 46. ♖f3 ♗d4 47.
 ♖d3 ♖d6 48. ♖f3 ♗c5 49.
 ♖a8† ♖g7 50. ♖b7 ♖d8 51.
 ♗d7 ♖e7



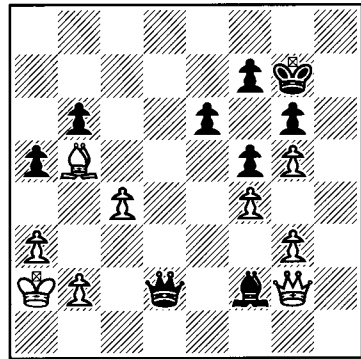
One really must admire the staying power of these guys. Black is still better—the safe King and vulnerable White kingside pawns all add up.

52. ♖b3 ♗f2 53. ♖f3 ♖c5
 54. ♖c3† ♗d4 55. ♖f3 ♖c7

56. ♗b5 ♖d6 57. ♕a2 ♗c5
 58. ♖b7 ♖e7

It's so useful to be able to offer the exchange of Queens.

59. ♖f3 ♖d8 60. ♖b7 ♗f2
 61. ♖g2 ♖d2!



Suddenly, it's very unpleasant (it always was unpleasant) and with the clock ticking down...

62. ♗e8 ♖f8 63. ♗b5 ♗e3

That bloody move again!

64. ♖h1 ♗d4 65. ♖b1 ♖g2!

66. ♗a4 ♖xg3

At last.

67. ♖c1 ♖e3 68. ♖f1. 0–1

Absolute torture for White who must have been gutted as well as exhausted. ♗d5 has a good reputation. I think it's okay but nothing special if Black knows his stuff.

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♗c3 ♗a5 4. d4 ♗f6 5. ♗f3 c6 6. ♗c4 ♗f5 7. ♗d2 e6 8. ♗d5 (8. ♗e4)

(28)

Illescas Cordoba, M (2577)–

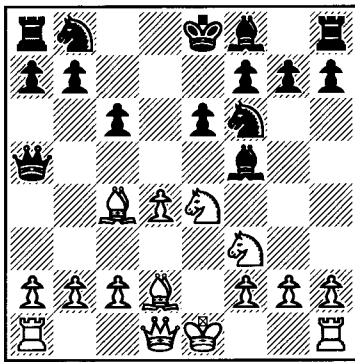
Speelman, J (2596)

Men's East European Team Ch

Leon

November 10, 2001

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♗c3
 ♗a5 4. d4 ♗f6 5. ♗f3 c6 6.
 ♗c4 ♗f5 7. ♗d2 e6 8. ♗e4



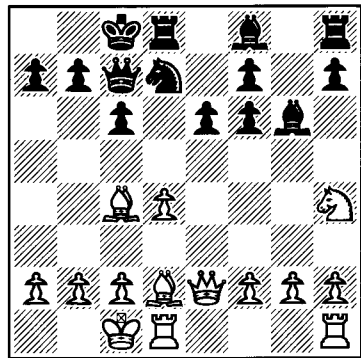
Here's the other Knight discovery. Black calmly retreats to c7.

8... ♖c7 9. ♗xf6†

9. ♗g3 gives a flavor of the Caro-Kann. Black should familiarize himself with the following lines: 9... ♗g6 10. h4 (10. ♖e2 ♗bd7 11. 0–0–0 0–0–0 12. h4 ♗h5! 13. ♗e5 [13. ♗e4 ♗f4♯; 13. ♗xh5 ♗xh5 14. ♗g5 ♖e8=; 13. ♗g5 ♗xg3 14. f×g3 ♗f6♯]) ♗d6!?. A Caro-Kann player would

just bash out h7-h6. 10... Bd6 is much more combative. 11. h5 ♗e4 12. ♗xe4 ♗xe4 13. ♗e3 (13. h6 ♗xd2 14. ♗xd2 [14. ♖xd2 ♗f4=] g6 15. ♖f3 ♗d7 16. 0–0–0 0–0–0) ♗d7 14. ♖h4 ♗ef6 15. ♖e2 0–0–0 16. 0–0–0 ♗b6 17. ♗b3 ♗bd5 18. ♗d2 ♗f4 19. ♗xf4 ♗xf4♯. 9... gxf6 10. ♖e2

10. c3 ♗d7 11. ♖e2 0–0–0 12. ♗h4 ♗g6 13. g3 c5!; 10. ♗h4 ♗g6 11. ♖f3 ♗d7 12. 0–0–0 0–0–0 13. g3 ♗d6 prepares c6–c5. 10... ♗d7 11. 0–0–0 0–0–0 12. ♗h4 ♗g6



13. g3

Black should be looking to free his game with c6–c5 although Speelman does this later rather than sooner in our feature game. Other White

Chapter Nine

tries: 13. ♖b3 c5! 14. d5 ♗b6
 15. ♗xg6 hxg6 16. ♖a5 exd5
 17. ♖xd5 f5 18. ♜f3 (18.
 ♖xb6 axb6 19. h3 ♖g7=) ♖g7
 19. c3 ♖d7 20. ♖xb6 ♜xb6 21.
 ♖c4 ♖hd8 22. ♖xd7 ♖xd7 23.
 ♖d1 ♖xd1† 24. ♜xd1 ♜c7 25.
 g3 ♜e7 is about level.;

13. c3 ♗b6 14. ♖b3 c5 15.
 ♗xg6 hxg6 16. dxc5 ♖xc5 17.
 g3 ♜c6 18. f3 ♗d5= *Spasov,*
V–Belotti, B/Plovdiv 2003.

13... ♗b6 14. ♖a5 ♖g7N

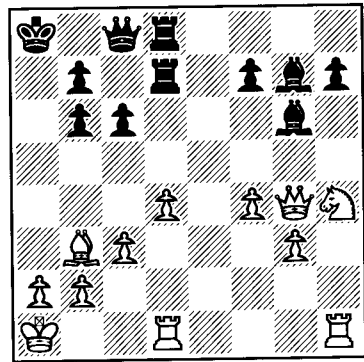
A novelty from Jon Speelman who sees a future for his King's Bishop on the long diagonal. He's a strange player, outwardly placid, who shouldn't really be provoked. When called upon to play, he can REALLY play so even Grandmasters treat him with kid gloves.

14... ♖h6† 15. ♜b1 ♖d6 16.
 f4 ♖hd8 was a coherent continuation for Black. After 17. f5
 exf5 18. ♖d3 ♖d5 19. ♖xb6
 axb6 20. ♖hf1 f4 21. g4 ♖xd4
 22. ♖f5† ♜b8 23. ♖xd4 ♖xd4
 24. ♗f3 ♖d8 25. ♖d1 ♖f8 26.
 ♖xd8† ♜xd8 27. ♜d2 ♖d6
 28. a3 b5 Black had much the
 better of things in *Breyther,*

R–Müller, K/Hamburg 2000.

15. ♜b1 f5 16. c3 f4† 17. ♜a1
 ♜b8 18. ♖b3 ♖d7 19. ♜f3
 fxg3 20. hxg3 ♜d8 21. ♜f4†

21. ♗xg6. There isn't a great
 deal going on after 21... hxg6
 22. ♖xh8 ♖xh8 23. ♖h1 ♖g7
 24. g4 ♜g5! 25. ♖xb6 axb6.
 21... ♜a8 22. ♜g4 ♜c8 23.
 ♖xb6 axb6 24. f4 ♖hd8



One feels now that Black
 is coordinated, he should not
 experience discomfort.

25. ♜f3

25. ♗xg6 hxg6 26. ♖h7
 ♖f6 is equal.

25... c5 26. ♗xg6 hxg6 27.

♖a4 ♖e7 28. dxc5 ♖xd1† 29.
 ♖xd1 ♜xc5 30. ♖d8† ♜a7
 31. ♜d1 b5 32. ♖b3 ♖c7.

½–½

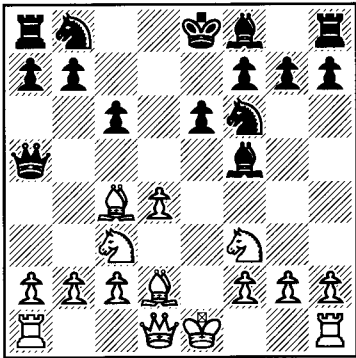
I suppose White could play
 a bit after 33. g4, but 33... g5!

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♗c3 ♜a5 4. d4 ♗f6 5. ♗f3 c6 6. ♘c4 ♘f5 7. ♘d2 e6 8. ♗d5 (8. ♗e4)

gives counterplay. Respecting Speelman's endgame ability and mindful of his talent, Illescas is happy to split the point.

SUMMARY

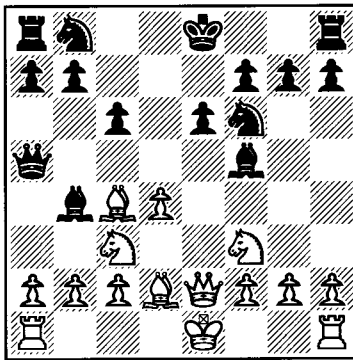
1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♗c3 ♜a5 4. ♘c4 ♗f6 5. ♗f3 c6 6. d4 ♘f5 7. ♘d2 e6



The scene is set for 8. ♗d5 or 8. ♗e4, but Black can be satisfied. He inherits doubled f-pawns in both cases but gets active play in return. It's necessary to learn the specific lines; to try to get by on instinct probably won't do.

TEN

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♔xd5 3.
♘c3 ♔a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♘f3
♘f6 6. ♕c4 ♕f5 7. ♕d2 e6
8. ♔e2 ♕b4



Both sides develop in apple-pie order and we must see whether White can develop an advantage in this, the main line.

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♗a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♘f3 ♘f6 6. ♙c4 ♚f5 7. ♚d2 e6 8. ♗e2 ♜b4

(29)

Hermann, D–Wahls, M

Bundesliga

Germany

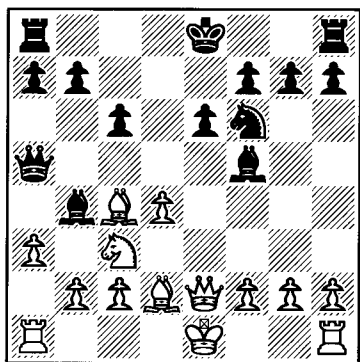
1994

GM Matthias Wahls has been responsible for some of the most important Center Counter games. He has a great understanding of the opening and has written a marvelous book, *Modernes Skandinavisch*.

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♗a5 4. d4 ♘f6 5. ♘f3 c6 6. ♙c4 ♚f5 7. ♚d2 e6 8. ♗e2 ♜b4 9. ♘e5 ♘bd7!

Black reacts immediately, lest White play the annoying g2-g4.

10. ♘xd7 ♘xd7 11. a3 ♘f6!

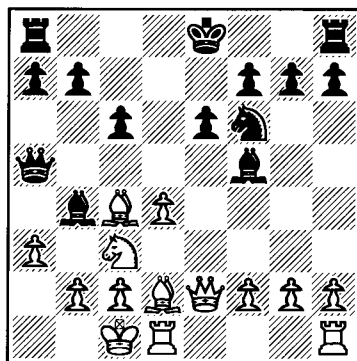


Again preventing g2-g4, which could have given White

the initiative. Black is now ready to castle, but he may well wait for White to do so before he commits.

12. 0–0

12. 0–0–0 is an obviously important move.

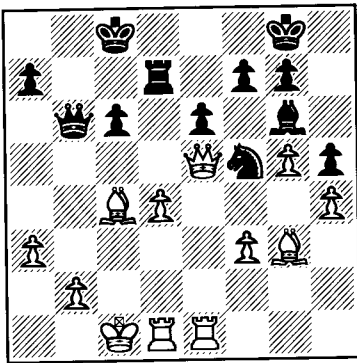
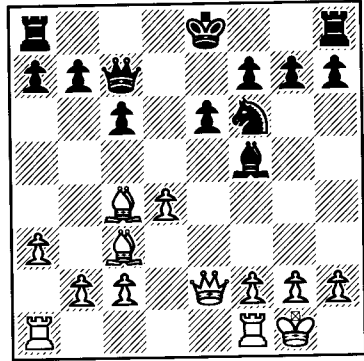


Play continues naturally 12... ♙xc3 (If Black gets the “crazy” idea of a quick win from complications with 12... ♙xa3, he could be surprised by 13. bxa3 ♗xa3† 14. ♗b1 ♗b4† 15. ♗a2 ♙xc2 16. ♘d5 ♙xd1 17. ♘c7† ♗d7 18. ♜xd1 ♗a4† 19. ♗b2 ♗xc7 20. ♜a1.) 13. ♙xc3 ♗c7 14. f3 (14. d5 cxd5 15. ♙xd5 [15. ♙xf6 ♗xc4 16. ♗xc4 dxc4 17. ♙xg7 ♜g8 18. ♙f6 ♜xg2 19. ♜hg1 ♜g6=] ♘xd5 16. ♜xd5 0–0=) 0–0–0 15. g4 ♙g6 16. ♙e1 and now Black must play

very accurately to combat the dark-squared Bishop. Wahls himself recommended 16... b5! 17. ♖b3 ♜d7 18. ♖g3 ♜b6 19. h4 (19. ♖e5 ♜b7 20. h4 h5 21. g5 ♜e8 22. ♜he1 ♜g8 23. a4 a6 24. axb5 axb5 25. c3 ♜d6 26. ♖c2 ♖xc2 27. ♜xc2 ♜f5 28. ♜a1 g6 29. ♜e4 ♜dd8 30. ♜a3 ♜a8!=) h5 20. g5 ♜d5 21. ♜e5 ♜g8 22. ♜he1 ♜e7 23. c4 bxc4 24. ♖xc4 ♜f5!=.

to his plan of light-squared control, Black hopes to nullify this plan.

13. ♖xc3 ♜c7



14. ♜ad1

White has to decide on his middlegame plan and it isn't easy to see how he's going to break the solid Black position down. Moreover, Black has chances against d4. Seeing nothing, Hermann offers a spineless trade of pieces, but as I say, he's probably running out of steam already. He may have been thinking about 14. f3 0-0 15. ♖e1. There had to be some point to 14. f3. 15... ♜ad8 16. ♜d1 ♜d5 17. ♖g3 ♜b6 18. c3 ♜d7 19. ♜d2 ♜d8 20. ♖b3 b5!=;

The regrouping of the Knight to f5 was important in both cases.

12... ♖xc3

A surrender of the Bishop pair, which is very common. Yes, White does obtain a dark-squared Bishop which could become powerful but by strongpointing d5 and sticking

14. ♖b3 0-0 15. f3 ♜fd8!
16. ♜ad1 ♜d5 17. ♖e1 ♜f4

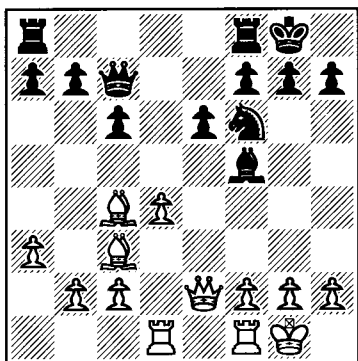
1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♗a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♘f3 ♘f6 6. ♙c4 ♙f5 7. ♙d2 e6 8. ♗e2 ♙b4

18. ♗e3 ♘d5=;

14. h3 0-0 15. ♖ad1 ♘d5

16. ♙e1 ♖ad8=. As you can see, far from easy to make headway.

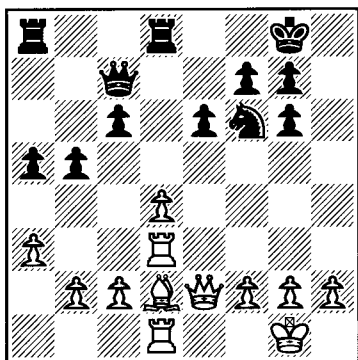
14... 0-0



15. ♙d3 ♙g6 16. ♙xg6 hxg6

17. ♖d3 ♖fd8 18. ♖fd1 a5!

19. ♙d2 b5!

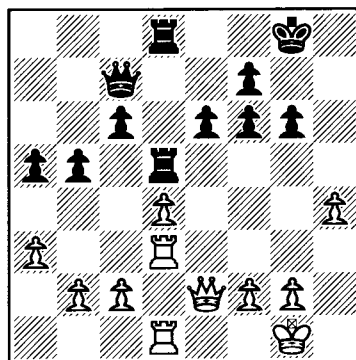


A space grab on the queen-side which is quite in order. If Black intends to establish a piece on d5, he doesn't want

it pushed away by c2-c4 and so the pawn on b5 deters this advance.

20. ♙g5 ♖d5 21. ♙xf6 gxf6

22. h4 ♖ad8



White can only make a draw now. Although the position may be objectively equal, Black has two active Rooks pressing g4 and this makes life very unpleasant. Hermann cannot create any active counterplay; that is his major problem. The ♖/d5 stops everything.

23. g3 ♖g7 24. ♗e3 ♗d6 25.

♖g2 ♖h8 26. ♗f3 a4!

Further cementing his light-squared grip.

27. ♖f1 f5 28. ♖g2 f4! 29.

♖c3 fxc3 30. fxc3 ♖d8 31.

♖dd3

Major piece endgames are all about activity and so White

Chapter Ten

probably didn't relish the thought of 31. ♖cd3 b4! 32. ♔h2 ♖b8.

31... ♖c7 32. ♗e4 ♖b6 33. ♔h3 ♖8d6 34. ♔g2

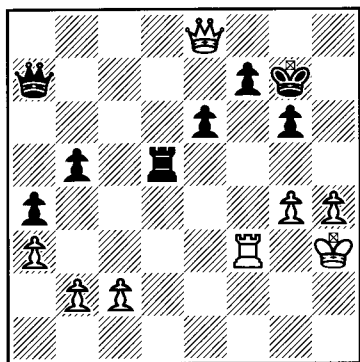
He really is reduced to these feeble King moves.

34... ♔g8 35. ♔h3 ♖a7

Toying with the opponent in time trouble. White sees the idea of ...♗d7 and e6-e5.

36. ♔g2?

But this lets Wahls in to deliver a fatal check. Maybe 36. g4 ♖xd4 37. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 38. ♗xc6 ♖d5 39. ♗e8† ♔g7 40. ♖f3 gives White "chances" to hold.



I don't know though, 40... ♖d1 looks very good. Very good.
36... ♖xd4 37. ♖xd4 ♖xd4
38. ♗xc6 ♖d2†! 39. ♔h3
♗f2 40. ♗a8†. 0-1

After 40... ♔g7 41. ♗h1 e5!, the black e-pawn marches straight up the board. A game which highlights all the good things about Black's opening system.

(30)

Buchanan, W (2115)-

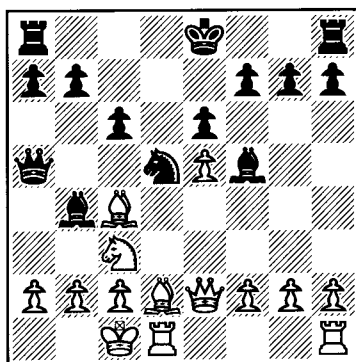
Shaw, J (2435)

Scotland's Championship

Glasgow

July 23, 2000

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♗xd5 3. ♖c3 ♗a5 4. d4 ♖f6 5. ♖f3 c6 6. ♖c4 ♖f5 7. ♗e2 e6 8. ♖d2 ♖b4 9. ♖e5 ♖bd7 10. 0-0-0 ♖xe5 11. dxe5 ♖d5



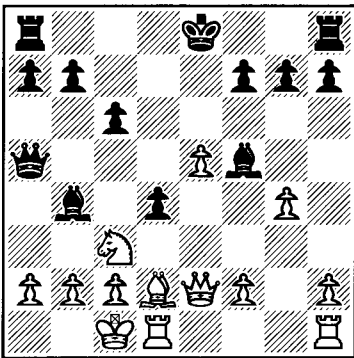
This time White plonks his Knight into e5 and tries to do without a2-a3. Black copes comfortably.
12. ♖xd5

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♗a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♘f3 ♘f6 6. ♙c4 ♙f5 7. ♙d2 e6 8. ♗e2 ♙b4

12. ♘e4 ♙xe4 13. ♗xe4
0-0-0 14. ♙xb4 ♘xb4 15.
a3 (15. ♗f3 ♗xe5 16. ♗xf7
♙xd1† 17. ♙xd1 ♘d5=; 15.
♗f4?? ♗a4 16. ♗e4 b5 17. a3
bxc4 18. ♗xc4 c5 19. ♗b1 ♗a6
20. ♗xc5† ♘c6-+) ♘d5=.

12... exd5 13. g4

I suppose this is always the
move that Black should watch
out for when he puts his Bishop
on f5. In this particular case,
Shaw has an unexpected shot.
13... d4!



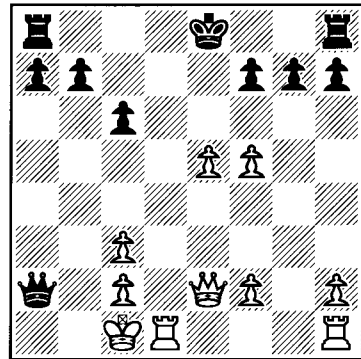
A recommendation of cor-
respondence master Taylor.
It's strong enough to freak
Buchanan.

14. gxf5?

NO. The only way is 14. ♘b1
♙e6 15. a3 (15. ♙xb4 ♗xb4
16. a3 ♗c5 17. f4 0-0-0 18.
♙hel h5↔) ♙xd2† 16. ♙xd2

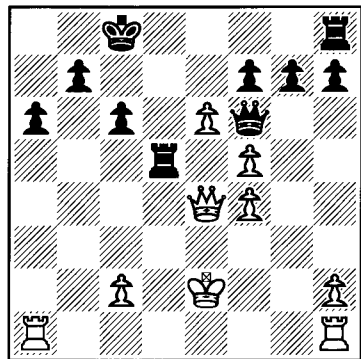
(16. ♘xd2 0-0 17. f4 b5 18.
f5 ♙d5 19. ♙hel b4 and the
Black attack is quicker.) 0-0-0
17. f4 c5=.

**14... dxc3 15. ♙xc3 ♙xc3 16.
bxc3 ♗xa2**



White's lost already.

17. ♗e4 ♗a1† 18. ♙d2 0-0-0†
19. ♙e2 ♗xc3 20. e6 ♗f6 21.
♙a1 ♙d5 22. f4 a6



There are many ways.
**23. ♗c4 ♗xf5 24. ♙xa6
♗xe6† 25. ♙f3 ♗h3† 26.**

♖f2 ♜d2†. 0–1

A brief, brutal game which shows the pitfalls lying in wait for an unprepared White opponent. There will be many of these—players who have a rough sketch in their heads of the way to go and not a precise map.

(31)

Carlier, B (2355)–

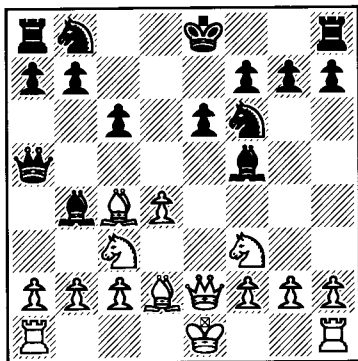
Prie, E (2475)

Orange Open

Orange

1994

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3
 ♖a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♙c4 ♙f5 6.
 ♗f3 ♗f6 7. ♙d2 e6 8. ♚e2
 ♜b4

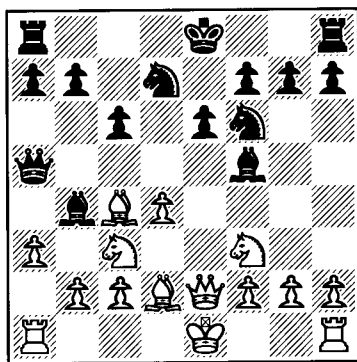


9. a3

Well, here we are at what I think the most common moves

are at club level. Either 9. a3 or 9. 0–0 are going to be the ones that crop up. Players just won't want to get involved in the melee after queenside castling. So it's important that Black gets a good feeling for play in this line. For starters, Black doesn't have to move the Bishop—he may wait a move.

9... ♗bd7!



10. 0–0

10. 0–0–0 ♙xc3 11. ♙xc3 ♖c7 12. ♗e5 ♗d5 13. ♙d2 ♗xe5 14. dxe5 0–0–0 15. g4 ♙g6 16. f4 is a transposition to *Psakhis–Wahls* (page 128).

10... ♙xc3 11. ♙xc3 ♖c7

In my opinion, this position is less critical for Black than it would be if White had castled long. The usual plan of campaign is to push the queenside

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♗a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♘f3 ♘f6 6. ♙c4 ♙f5 7. ♙d2 e6 8. ♗e2 ♙b4

pawns forward and establish a base for a ♘/d5.

12. a4

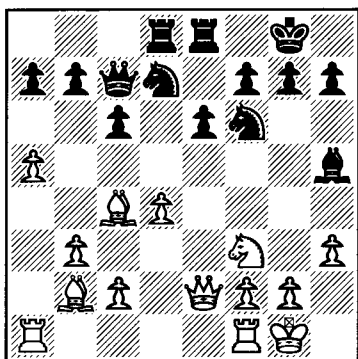
So Carlier tries to stop the pawn advance.

12... 0-0 13. a5 ♖fe8

13... ♘d5 14. ♙xd5 cxd5 (14... exd5 15. ♖fe1=) 15. ♙b4 ♖fe8 16. c3=.

14. b3 ♖ad8 15. ♙b2 ♙g4

16. h3 ♙h5



Sensible moves by Black have resulted in an equal position. Whilst the ♙/a5 is slightly restricting, it has also to be looked after.

17. g4

I toured many European tournaments with Carlier and we had some great times. I remember we decided that it was important to take ginseng before a big game—gave you

energy and a good mood for the fight. I haven't seen him for a while now, which is a pity, but it looks like he carried on dosing himself up. What would the FIDE drug barons have to say about that?

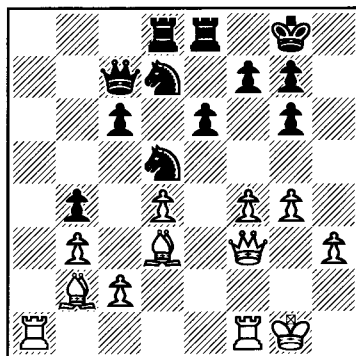
17... ♙g6 18. ♘e5 b5 19.

axb6 axb6 20. ♘xg6?

20. f4 b5 21. ♙d3 ♘xe5 22. fxe5 ♙xd3 23. ♗xd3 ♘d5 isn't too clear; both sides have weaknesses.

20... hxg6 21. f4 ♘d5 22. ♗f3

b5 23. ♙d3 b4!



Stifling the two Bishops and just look at that ♘/d5!

24. ♙c4 ♘7f6 25. ♙c1 ♘c3!?

26. ♙e3 ♘fd5 27. ♖a6 ♘b5

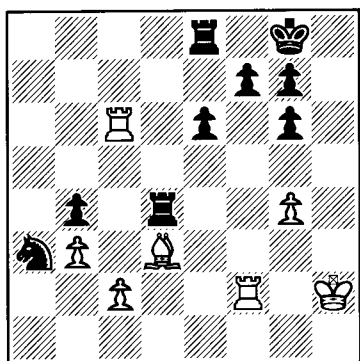
28. ♙f2 ♘a3

28... ♗xf4?? 29. ♙xd5+–.

29. ♙d3

29. c3 ♘xc4 30. bxc4 ♗xf4

31. ♖xf4 ♕xf4 32. ♜e3 ♜e2†
 33. ♗f2 ♜xc3 34. ♖xc6 b3 35.
 ♖b6 ♖b8 36. ♖xb8 ♖xb8-+.
 29... ♖xf4 30. ♖xf4 ♕xf4 31.
 ♖xc6 ♕xh3† 32. ♗h2 ♕xf2
 33. ♖xf2 ♖xd4‡



I remember that both Carlier and Prie liked time-trouble too. The only way Black can botch this is to forget about his clock.

34. ♖c7 f5??⊕

After the simple 34... ♖f8 White has nothing left: 35. ♗g3 ♜b1 (35... f5 36. ♖f4 ♖fd8‡) 36. ♖f4 ♖xf4 37. ♗xf4 ♜c3‡.

35. gxf5 exf5

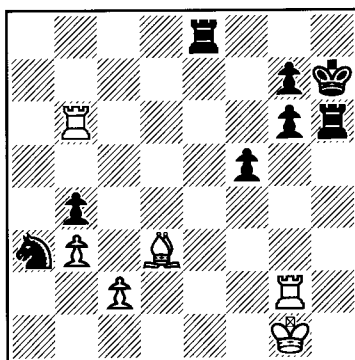
35... gxf5 36. ♖g2 ♖h4† 37. ♗g1 ♖h7 38. ♖b7‡.

36. ♖g2 ♗h7

36... ♖e6 37. ♜xf5!! gxf5 38. ♖gxcg7† ♗f8 39. ♖cf7†

- ♗e8 40. ♖b7 ♖e2† (40... ♖h6† 41. ♗g3 ♖h8 [41... ♖g4† 42. ♖xg4 fxg4 43. ♖xb4=] 42. ♖be7† ♗d8 43. ♖a7 f4† 44. ♗f3 ♗e8 45. ♖ge7† ♗d8 46. ♖g7=) 41. ♗g3 f4† 42. ♗f3 ♖e3† 43. ♗f2 ♖d2† 44. ♗f1 ♖g3 45. ♖h7 ♖g8 46. ♖b8† ♖d8 47. ♖xb4=.

37. ♖c6 ♖h4† 38. ♗g1 ♖h6 39. ♖b6



Black's pieces are, curiously, sprayed all over the board.

- 39... ♜b1 40. ♖xb4 ♜c3 41. ♖d4 ♖e1† 42. ♗f2 ♖e5 43. ♖g1 ♜e2 44. ♜xe2 ♖h2† 45. ♗f3! ♖hx2

45... ♖exe2 46. ♖h4† ♖xh4 47. ♗xe2 ♗h6 48. ♖b1 and the b-pawn is ready to go.

46. ♖c4 ♖5e3† 47. ♗f4 ♖h3 48. ♖g3! ♖h4† 49. ♗g5 ♖h5† 50. ♗f4 ♖hh2?!

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♠c3 ♗a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♠f3 ♠f6 6. ♙c4 ♙f5 7. ♙d2 e6 8. ♗e2 ♙b4

Apparently both players were down to the last 5 minutes of the game each. Instead 50... ♖f2†! gives White a lesser chance to pose any problems: 51. ♗e3 (51. ♖f3 g5† 52. ♗g3 ♖xf3† 53. ♗xf3 ♖h3† 54. ♗g2 g4 55. b4 g5 56. b5 f4 57. b6 f3† 58. ♗g1 g3 59. b7 f2† 60. ♗g2 ♖h1-+) ♖hh2 52. ♖h3†! (52. ♖h4† ♖xh4 53. ♗xf2 ♖h2† 54. ♖g2 ♖xg2† 55. ♗xg2 ♗g8-+) ♖xh3† 53. ♗xf2 g5 54. b4 ♖h1=.

51. ♖c6 ♖ef2† 52. ♗e5 f4 53. ♖g1 ♖h5† 54. ♗e4 g5 55. b4 ♖h6 56. ♖c5 ♖e6† 57. ♗f5 ♖f6† 58. ♗g4 f3 59. ♖c3!

Carlier defends with courage and precision given the chronic shortage of time.

59... ♗g6

59... ♖g2† 60. ♖xg2 fxc2 61. ♖g3=.

60. ♗g3 ♖e2 61. ♖xf3 ♖xc2

62. ♖b3 ♖fc6 63. ♖gb1.

½-½

One thing I did find out about ginseng—it's a slow releasing herb which becomes more potent as the game goes.

(32)

Nunn, J (2605)–

Hodgson, J (2570)

Netherlands Team Ch

Netherlands

1994

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♠c3 ♗a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♠f3 ♠f6 6. ♙c4 ♙f5 7. ♙d2 e6 8. ♗e2 ♙b4 9. 0–0

Nunn can be a little stereotypical, that is one of his major weaknesses. He has a fabulous intellect, but is easily disturbed. What has this got to do with 9. 0–0 you might ask? I think he was disrupted by Hodgson's cheeky choice of opening and tries to find the simplest way out.

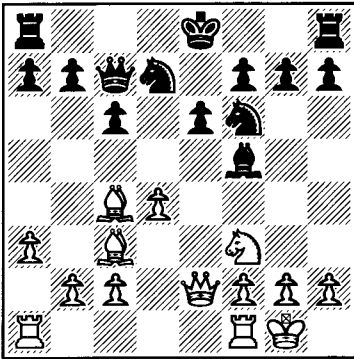
9... ♠bd7 10. a3

I don't rate the variations where White castles short if he wants any advantage. Witness the alternatives: 10. ♠e5 ♠xe5 11. dxe5 ♠d5 12. ♙xd5 cxd5 13. a3 ♙xc3 14. ♙xc3 ♗a6 is rather yawn-inducing but clearly satisfactory for Black.; 10. d5 cxd5 11. ♠xd5 ♠xd5 12. ♙xd5 ♙xd2 13. ♙xb7 ♖b8 14. ♙c6 ♙f4 15. ♖ad1 0–0! 16. ♖xd7 ♖xb2 17. ♠d4

♖xa2±;

10. ♗b3 0-0 11. ♜ad1
♜ad8=.

10... ♗xc3 11. ♗xc3 ♖c7



12. ♗b3

If instead White tries 12. b4 to stop ...c5, play could go 12... 0-0 13. ♗b3 b5 14. ♗e5 ♗e5 15. dxe5 ♗d5= as in *Ward, T-Arganian, D/ Michigan Open 1997*.

White can naturally bang his Knight down on e5 with a belligerent look on his face and claim that he is better. I will try to show that he is not: 12. ♗e5 0-0 13. f4.

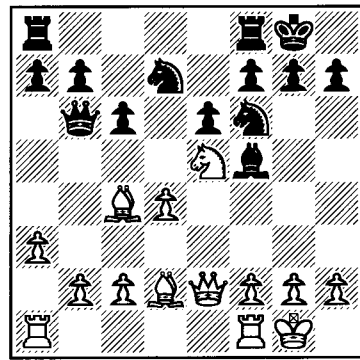
There are many ways to play and I can only give a brief sketch:

a) 13. ♗xd7 I would not be frightened by this. Black can calmly establish a Knight on

d5 along traditional lines. 13... ♖xd7 14. ♜fd1 ♗d5 15. ♗e1 b5=;

b) 13. ♜ad1 ♗d5 14. ♗xd7 ♖xd7 15. ♜del a5 16. a4 ♜fb8 17. f3 b5 18. axb5 cxb5 19. ♗a2 ♜c8↔ here we see Black mobilizing queenside counterplay in typical fashion.;

c) 13. ♗d2 ♖b6!?



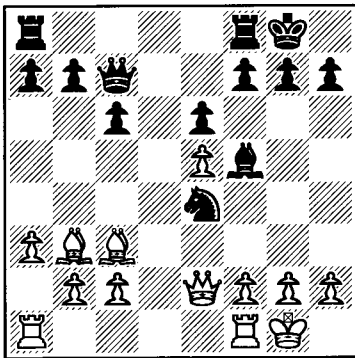
Black is alert for the specific case where he should play differently. As b2 and d4 are both exposed, White's reply is forced: 14. ♗b4 ♜fe8 15. ♗xd7 ♗xd7 16. ♜ad1 (16. c3 ♖c7 17. a4 e5 18. ♜fel ♗e6∞) a5 17. ♗c3 ♗f6=. It's a normal position and the Knight heads for d5.; 13... ♜fe8 14. a4 ♜ad8 (14... c5!? 15. ♗xd7 ♗xd7 16. g4 cxd4 17. ♗xd4 ♗e4!? 18. ♜ad1 ♗d5∞) 15. ♗b3 (15. h3

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♗c3 ♗a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♗f3 ♗f6 6. ♕c4 ♕f5 7. ♕d2 e6 8. ♗e2 ♕b4

♗b6 16. ♕b3 c5!↔) c5. Note that after f2-f4, c6-c5 became much more attractive.

12... 0-0 13. ♖ad1

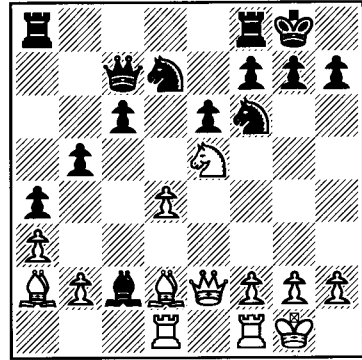
13. ♕d2 c5 14. ♖ac1 ♕g4 15. dxc5 ♗xc5 16. ♗e5 ♖fc8 17. ♗xc7 ♖xc7 18. ♗e5 ♗xb3 19. cxb3 ♖ac8! 20. ♖xc7 ♖xc7 21. ♖c1 ♖xc1† 22. ♕xc1 ♕d1 was the decidedly unthrilling course of *Kudrin, S-Wolff, P/Modesto 1995*. White bails out again.; 13. ♗e5 ♗xe5 14. dxe5 ♗e4 is slightly different and was successful in the following recent game:



15. ♗e3 ♗xc3 16. ♗xc3 ♖fd8 17. a4 c5 18. a5 ♖d4. Around here Black is starting to get on top. 19. ♖fe1 ♖ad8 20. h3 h6 21. ♕c4 ♕e4 22. ♕f1 ♖8d5 23. ♖e2 ♕g6 24. ♖ae1 ♖a4 25. a6 ♖xa6 26. ♖d2

♖xd2 27. ♗xd2 ♖a2 28. ♗c3 ♗b6 29. ♕c4 ♗xb2 30. ♗e3 ♖a1 31. ♖xa1 ♗xa1† 32. ♗h2 ♗d4 0-1, *Swathi, G-Mohota, N/Calicut 2003*.

13... a5 14. ♗e5 b5 15. ♕d2 a4 16. ♕a2 ♕xc2!



We should be familiar with Black's queenside advance and the securing of the d5-square. Now what? Well, Hodgson simply takes on c2! He can see Nunn will get back the pawn, but what is then left on the board?

17. ♖c1 ♕e4 18. ♕g5 ♕d5 19. ♕xf6 ♗xf6 20. ♕xd5 ♗xd5 21. ♖xc6 ♗b7 22. ♖fc1 b4

Equal perhaps, but easier for Black without a doubt. White has some problems on the queenside and the ♗/d5 is

a giant.

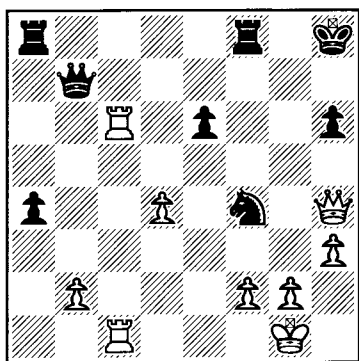
23. h3 h6 24. axb4 ♖xb4 25.

♗xf7?

A miscalculation. Instead 25. ♜6c4 ♖b7 would probably have led to a draw.

25... ♗f4!! 26. ♗xh6† gxh6

27. ♖g4† ♕h8 28. ♖h4 ♗b7!



I think he missed this one. The X-ray attack on g2 saves the day.

29. ♖xh6† ♖h7 30. ♖xh7† ♕xh7 31. ♜a1 ♜f7 32. ♜a3 ♜g8

Hmm. White has a lot of pawns but he'll never get to push them.

33. g4 ♜b8! 34. ♜xa4 ♜xb2 35. ♜a3 ♗e2† 36. ♖g2 ♗xd4 37. ♜d6 ♜bxf2† 38. ♖g3 ♗b5. 0-1

(33)

Kersting, M (2254)–

Duncker, J (2230)

Hessenliga

Germany

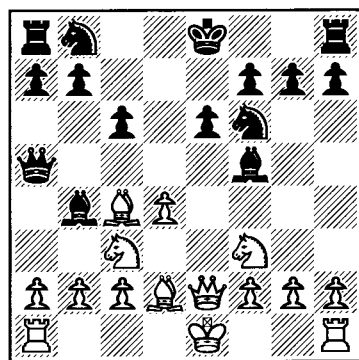
April 21, 2002

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♗c3

♖a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♗f3 ♗f6 6.

♗c4 ♗f5 7. ♗d2 e6 8. ♖e2

♗b4



What is Black trying to achieve in this very common position? It can be broken down:

a) Rapid development and speedy castling on either side according to circumstances.

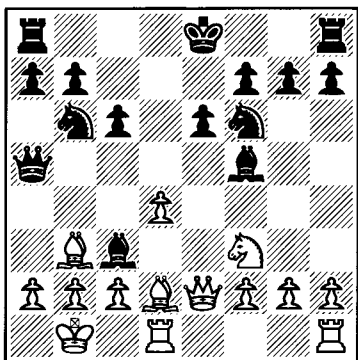
b) Command of the light squares—d5, e4 and c4; the key to Black's success.

Possibly he will establish his pieces on those squares as the game continues. Sometimes,

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♗xd5 3. ♖c3 ♗a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♘f3 ♘f6 6. ♙c4 ♙f5 7. ♚d2 e6 8. ♜e2 ♜b4

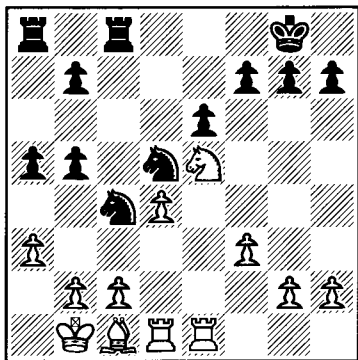
control will be enough. In general, if White takes Black on and wins the battle of the light squares the game is usually his. We use this little game as an introduction to the theme.

9. 0-0-0 ♘bd7 10. ♚b1 ♘b6 11. ♙b3 ♙xc3!



13... cxb5 14. ♘e5 a5 15. a3 ♘fd5

15... ♙e4! 16. ♖he1 0-0 17. f3 ♙d5 18. ♙xd5 ♘fxd5 19. ♙d2 ♘c4 20. ♙c1 ♖fc8 could also have been considered as in *Hjartarson–Hansen, C/ Reykjavik 1995*.



A key exchange. Surrendering Bishop for Knight voluntarily may seem very committal, but as you can see Black has enhanced his control of the center and White's ♙/c3 will be nothing to rave about.

12. ♙xc3 ♗b5!

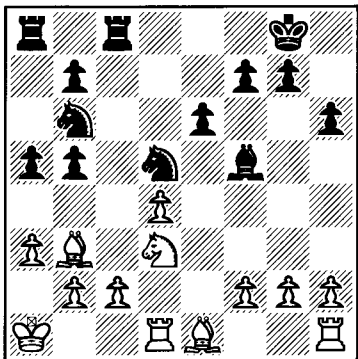
Very instructive. It was the Danish Grandmaster Curt Hansen who first showed the way here.

13. ♗xb5

Leaving the Queens on just exposes White to a5-a4.

The ♙/c1 is very poor and Black has total control of the central light squares.

16. ♙e1 h6 17. ♘d3 0-0 18. ♚a1 ♖fc8



Chapter Ten

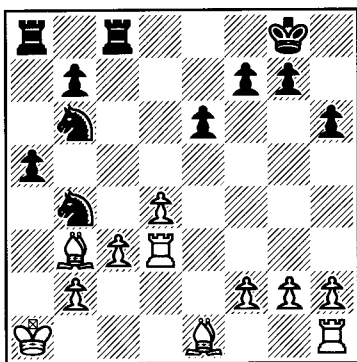
The theme is the same here.
19. c3

White may try to encourage Black to block the position: 19. ♖c5 a4 20. ♗xd5 ♜xd5 21. c3 b6 22. ♜d3 ♞a7; 19. ♞g1 b4 20. a4 ♞c7, but in both cases he faces a protracted struggle to even draw.

19... ♗xd3 20. ♞xd3 b4

With a clear initiative.

21. axb4 ♜xb4!



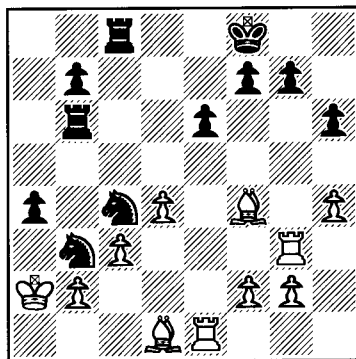
One shouldn't be too surprised when tactics evolve from a superior position. That's the logic of chess. White is very passive.

22. ♞g3 a4 23. ♗d1 ♜c6 24. ♗d2 ♞f8 25. ♗f4 ♜c4 26. h4 ♜6a5 27. ♞a2 ♞a6 28. ♞e1

He might have tried 28. ♗xa4 ♜c6 29. b3 ♜b6 30. ♞a1 ♜xa4 31. bxa4 ♞xa4†

32. ♞b2 ♞xa1 33. ♞xa1 b5 although once again, White is toiling to draw.

28... ♞b6 29. ♞e2 ♜b3 30. ♞e1



30... ♞a8?

White has been fighting hard and his persistence could have paid off after this inaccurate move. Better is 30... ♜bd2! hitting b2 and now White is in real trouble. I just don't see any sort of move: 31. ♗xd2 (31. ♞a1 ♞xb2-+) ♞xb2† 32. ♞a1 ♞xd2-+.

31. ♗e2 a3

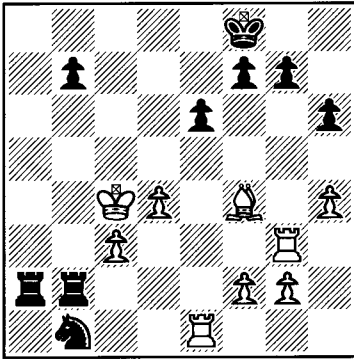
Obviously this was the intention, but White has a hidden resource.

32. ♗xc4 ♜c1†?

32... axb2† is the best that Black can do. Then 33. ♞xb2 ♜d2† 34. ♗b3 ♞xb3† 35. ♞c2

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♗a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♘f3 ♘f6 6. ♙c4 ♙f5 7. ♙d2 e6 8. ♗e2 ♙b4

♙a2† 36. ♗d3 ♘b1 37. ♗c4 ♙bb2∞ leads to a very unclear situation.



33. ♙xc1??

Maybe time-trouble, maybe sheer excitement gets the better of him. White misses 33. ♗b1 axb2 34. ♙d6†! ♙xd6 otherwise ...♙b4 35. ♗xb2 and suddenly the Knight is in trouble, e.g., 35... ♙b6† 36. ♗c2! ♘a2 37. ♙f3!.

33... axb2† 34. ♗b1 ♙a1† 35. ♗c2 ♙xc1† 36. ♙xc1 b1♗† 37. ♗d1 ♙b2 38. ♙d3 ♗a1 39. ♙c2 ♙b6 40. ♙d3 ♙c6 41. ♗d2 b5 42. g3 ♗a2 43. ♗d1 b4 44. ♙d2 ♙xc3. 0-1

I often look at opening books in amazement because they are full of chess that we cannot understand. I daresay

games of the great players are the most instructive but we also need to see games at our own level with typical mistakes that we can relate to. This was one such uneven game.

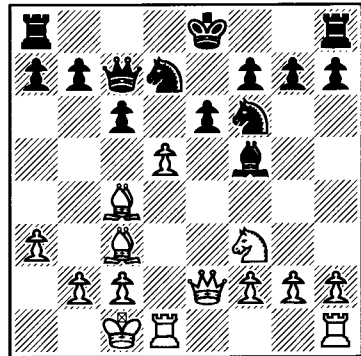
(34)

Kalod, R (2340)–
Chytilek, R (2320)

Czechoslovakian Ch U20
Usti nad Labem

1996

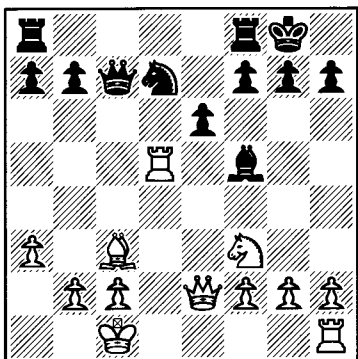
1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♗a5 4. d4 ♘f6 5. ♘f3 c6 6. ♙c4 ♙f5 7. ♙d2 e6 8. ♗e2 ♙b4 9. 0-0-0 ♘bd7 10. a3 ♙xc3 11. ♙xc3 ♗c7 12. d5!?



Not an especially dangerous move. Black has plenty of resources. Perhaps simplest is the move played.

12... cxd5 13. ♙xd5 ♘xd5

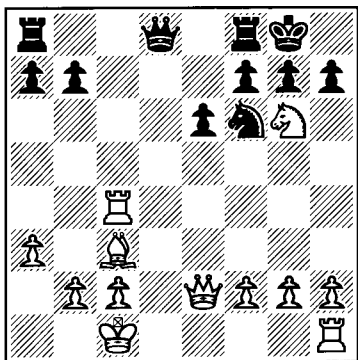
14. ♖xd5 0-0!=



15. ♖d4

15. ♖d2 ♗c5 16. ♖hd1 (16. ♗e5 ♖a5 17. ♖e3 ♗e4 18. ♖d7 ♖ac8! 19. ♖xb7 ♗c5→ [If White insists, he may run into Big Problems after 20. ♖e7 (20. ♖b4 ♗d3†-+) ♗d3† 21. ♖b1 ♖xc2!!] ♖ac8=.

15... ♗f6 16. ♖c4 ♖d8 17. ♗h4 ♗g6 18. ♗xg6. ½-½



If now 18... hxg6 19. h4 then 19... ♖d5! 20. h5 ♖xg2

21. ♖ch4 g5 22. ♖4h2 ♖e4 scotches the attack.

(35)

Psakhis, L (2570)-

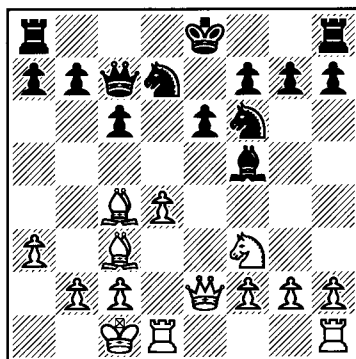
Wahls, M (2540)

Baden-Baden

Baden-Baden

1992

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♗c3 ♖a5 4. d4 ♗f6 5. ♗f3 c6 6. ♗c4 ♗f5 7. ♗d2 e6 8. ♖e2 ♗b4 9. 0-0 ♗bd7 10. a3 ♗xc3 11. ♗xc3 ♖c7



12. ♗e5

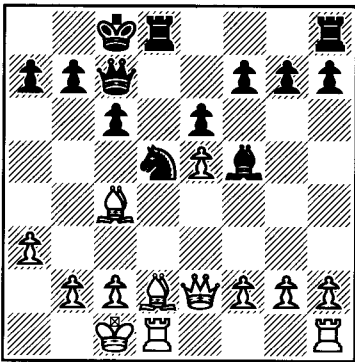
12. ♗d2 may be answered by 12... b5 13. ♗a2 (13. ♗d3 ♗xd3 14. ♖xd3 0-0 15. ♖he1 ♖fc8 16. ♖b1 c5!. Black is on the attack!) ♗e4!. A very important move, getting out of the way of White's g-pawn and redirecting the Bishop to

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♗a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♘f3 ♘f6 6. ♙c4 ♙f5 7. ♙d2 e6 8. ♗e2 ♙b4

the crucial d5-square. 14. ♗b1 0-0 15. ♙g5 ♙d5=.

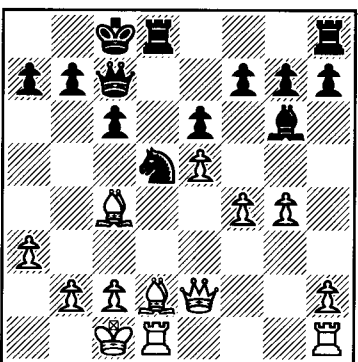
12... ♘d5
12... ♘xe5 13. dxe5 ♘d5.
13. ♙d2

13. ♘xd7. Alternatively.
13... ♘xe5 14. dxe5 0-0-0



We may consider this the *'main line'* of main lines.' Black must stick to his guns and enable counterplay.

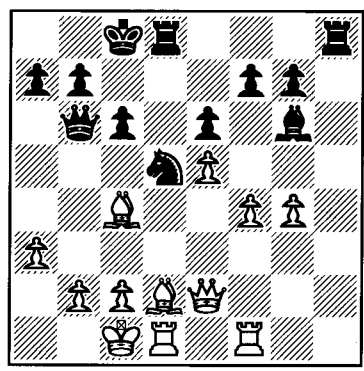
15. g4 ♙g6 16. f4



Trying to crowd out the

Bishop on g6. Wahls' next move is indispensable.

16... h5! 17. h3 ♗b6 18. ♖hf1 hxg4 19. hxg4



19... ♗c5

Hodgson tried 19... ♖h3 in a game against Nijboer but I believe that Wahls' move is the most accurate, tempting the Bishop to retreat to b3.

20. ♙b3

20. f5 exf5 21. e6 ♖de8! 22. ♙xd5 ♗xd5 23. ♗f2 ♗a2! is the counterattack given by Wahls.

20... ♖h3!

Now the Rook move makes a lot of sense as Black threatens ...♖xb3.

21. ♖f3 ♖dh8 22. ♖df1 ♖h2

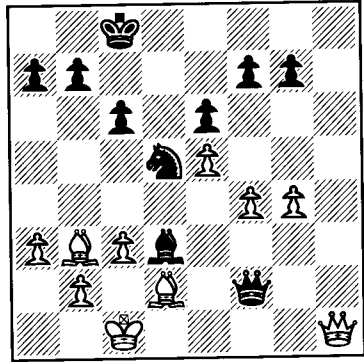
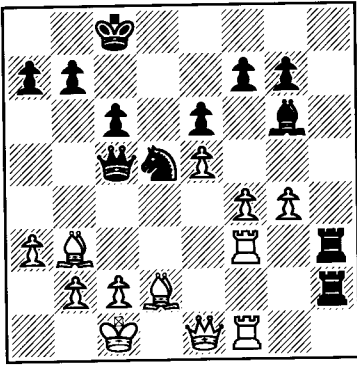
23. ♗e1 ♗d4!

Active centralization is the order of the day. If you do not

Chapter Ten

like the continuation of the game, 23... ♖8h3! may well be a good alternative.

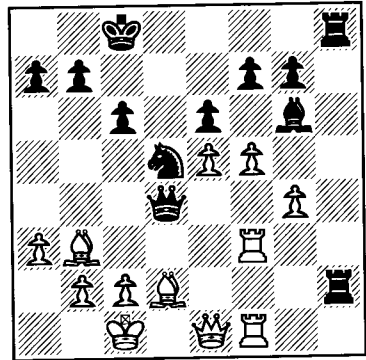
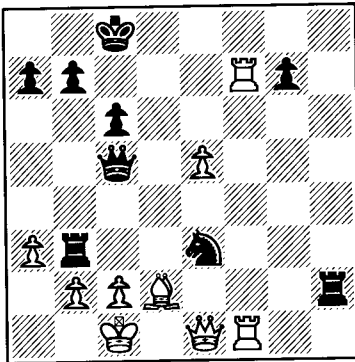
♖h1 ♖xh1 27. ♔xh1 ♔f2↔
Black is fine.



For instance 24. ♖xh3
(24. f5 exf5 25. gxf5 ♔xf5
26. ♖xf5 ♖xb3∞ 27. ♖xf7
[27. e6 ♖xa3!! 28. bxa3 {28.
♔b1 ♖e3∞} ♔xa3† 29. ♔b1
♖xd2 30. ♔xd2 ♘c3† 31.
♔xc3 ♔xc3 32. exf7 ♔b4†=]
♘e3!≠

24. f5

The battle of the light squares is in full flow.



White does not have a forced
draw.) ♖xh3 25. c3 ♔d3 26.

24... exf5 25. gxf5 ♔h5 26.
♖d3 ♔g4 27. ♔xd5

Psakhis and Wahls both
mention 27. c4 ♖e2 28. ♔g3
♘e7 29. ♔xg4 ♔xg4 30. ♖g3
♔xf5 (30... ♖e4 31. f6 gxf6
32. exf6 ♔e2 33. ♖f2 ♘g6
34. ♖xg6 fxxg6 35. f7 ♖f8 36.

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♗a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♘f3 ♘f6 6. ♙c4 ♙f5 7. ♙d2 e6 8. ♗e2 ♙b4

♙h6 ♙xc4 37. ♙xc4 ♞xc4†
 38. ♗b1 ♞xf7 39. ♞xf7±) 31.
 ♙b4 ♞h3 32. ♞xh3 ♙xh3 33.
 ♞xf7. Is this position so bad
 for Black after, say, 33... ♘g6!
 34. ♙d1 (34. ♞xg7 ♘xe5 35.
 ♙c2 ♞g2=) ♞xe5 35. ♞xg7
 ♘f4∞?

27... ♞e2 28. ♗g3 cxd5 29.
 ♞c3†

29. ♗xg4 ♙xg4 30. ♞xd5
 ♙xf5±; 29. ♞h1 ♗xf5 30.
 ♞xd5 b6 31. ♞d4 ♞f2=.

29... ♗b8 30. b3 ♗a8 31. e6

31. ♗xg4 ♙xg4 32. ♞c7
 ♞xe5 33. ♞xf7 b6 34. ♙b4
 ♞h5 35. ♞g1 ♞hxf5 36.
 ♞xg7 ♙f3 37. ♞h7 ♞g5 38.
 ♞f1 ♞ef5= Wahls.

31... ♗xg3 32. ♞xg3 fxe6 33.
 fxe6 ♞xe6 34. ♞xg7 ♞c8 35.
 ♞fg1 ♞ec6 36. c3 d4 37. c4
 b5 38. ♞1g5

Absolutely forced and now
 the opposite-colored Bishops
 presage a draw.

38... ♙e8 39. ♞xb5 ♞xc4†
 40. bxc4 ♙xb5 41. ♙b4
 ♙xc4 42. ♗d2 ♙b5 43. ♞g5
 a6 44. a4 ♙xa4 45. ♙c5 ♞d8.
 ½-½

A sharp struggle where
 Black was in there pitching all

the way through.

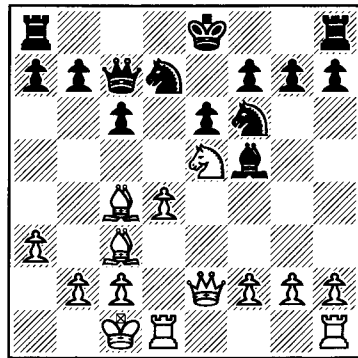
(36)

**Pavlogianni, D (1964)–
 Makropoulou, M (2246)**
 Greek Team Championship
 Aghia Pelagia, Greece

July 4, 2004

Now I think I would like to
 show you an interesting possi-
 bility for Black in the main line
 which is not often played.

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3
 ♗a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♘f3 ♘f6 6.
 ♙c4 ♙f5 7. ♙d2 e6 8. ♗e2
 ♙b4 9. 0–0–0 ♘bd7 10. a3
 ♙xc3 11. ♙xc3 ♗c7 12. ♘e5



12... b5!?

Wahls thinks very highly of
 this move, a sharper alternative
 to the usual 12... ♘xe5 13. dxe5
 ♘d5.

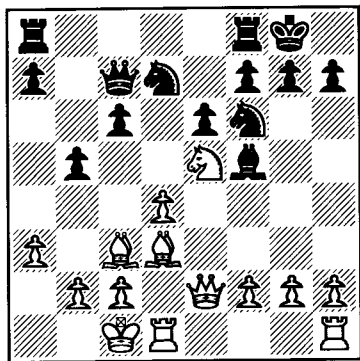
13. ♙d3

Chapter Ten

After 13. ♖b3 Black appears to get a very good game by stationing his Bishop on d5, e.g., 13... ♖e4! 14. ♜hel (14. f3 ♖d5+; 14. ♖b1 a6 15. ♜hel ♖d5=) ♖d5! It's crucial that the tactics aren't working for White: 15. ♗xf7 (15. ♖xd5 ♗xd5 16. ♗xf7 ♖f4+; ♖xf7 16. ♖xd5 exd5 17. ♖e7+ ♖g6 18. ♜d3 ♜he8! 19. ♜g3+ ♖xg3-+.

13... ♖xd3

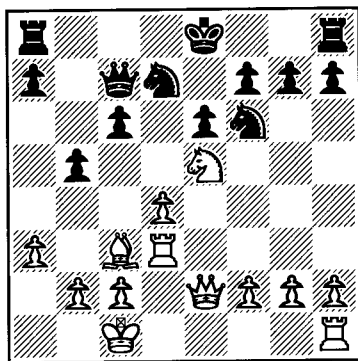
There's also 13... 0-0, which Wahls favors.



White can double Black's pawns but he does not achieve anything in particular by doing so: 14. ♖xf5 exf5 15. ♖f3 ♗d5 16. ♖xf5 ♗xc3 17. bxc3 (17. ♗xd7 ♗xd1 18. ♗xf8 ♜xf8 19. ♖xd1 [19. ♜xd1 ♖xh2=] ♜d8! 20. ♖e4 c5

21. d5 ♖c6! 22. ♜e1 ♖xd5+ 23. ♖xd5 ♜xd5+=) ♗b6 18. ♜d3 ♖e7 19. ♖b2 ♜ac8 when Black has obviously good attacking chances.

14. ♜xd3



Not everyone will like the idea of bringing the white Rook into play on the third rank.

14... ♗xe5

It's obvious that his idea is to hoover the pieces off and go into a good Knight vs. Bad Bishop scenario. I feel White has to react energetically and probe Black's kingside before all the possible middlegame/endgame squeezes take over. 14... ♗d5 is a second move worth consideration: 15. ♖d2 ♗xe5 16. ♖xe5 ♖xe5 17. dxe5 c5 18. ♜g3 ♜g8 19. c4 bxc4 20. ♜g4 ♗b6 21. ♜d1 0-0-0

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3 ♖a5 4. d4 c6 5. ♘f3 ♘f6 6. ♙c4 ♙f5 7. ♙d2 e6 8. ♖e2 ♙b4

22. ♙e3 ♖d5 23. ♖xd5 exd5
 24. ♙xc5 ♘d7= *Abhay, T-
 Murali Krishnan, B/Chennai,
 India 2004.*

15. dxe5 ♘d5 16. ♙d2 0-0-0
 17. f4?

Putting another pawn on a dark square seems wrong. Maybe he should settle for 17. ♖d1 ♖d7 18. ♖g3 when White might be a little better although the black ♘/d5 is very strong.

17... g6 18. g4 h5! 19. f5 hxg4
 20. fxg6 fxg6 21. ♖xg4 ♖xe5
 22. ♖xg6 ♖f5

Our light-squared theme persists all the way through the book.

23. ♖g1 ♖e4! 24. ♖e1
 ♖xe1† 25. ♙xe1 e5 26. ♙f2

26. h4 ♖h5 27. ♙f2 e4 28. ♖g3 a5 is certainly better for Black but not by much.

26... a6 27. h4 ♖h5 28. ♖e1
 ♖f8 29. ♙g3 ♖ff5 30. ♖d2
 ♖d7 31. ♖de2 Ke6

The poor white Bishop is almost redundant.

32. ♙d2 ♘b6 33. b3 ♘d7 34.
 ♙f2 ♖f3 35. ♖g1 ♘f6 36.
 ♖g3??

36. ♖e1 escapes the tactics,

but the uncomfortable end-game pressure persists after 36... ♖hf5!.

36... ♖xf2

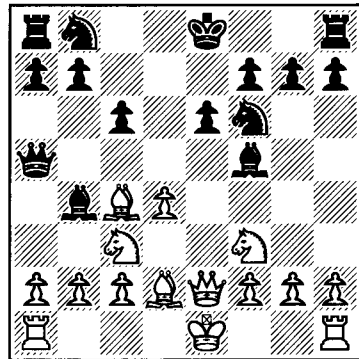
Crushing.

37. ♖xf2 ♘e4† 38. ♖e3
 ♘xg3 39. ♖f8 ♘f5†. 0-1

Black didn't seem in trouble at any stage. Certainly I will be trying 12... b5 myself. The further maneuver ♙e4-d5 is rather nifty!

SUMMARY

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 ♖xd5 3. ♘c3
 ♖a5 4. ♙c4 ♘f6 5. d4 c6 6.
 ♘f3 ♙f5 7. ♙d2 e6 8. ♖e2
 ♙b4



I hope that the games and our brief discussion will help you to play the black side of the

main line. How to summarize the struggle? It's VERY important for Black to concentrate on the central light squares, in particular d5. Time and again we have seen Black put either a Knight or a Rook there, halting the White attack. Advancing the queenside pawns looks to be a good idea because it falls in naturally with the theme of light-squared pressure and creates active counterplay. Finally Black will, in all probability, have to surrender the two Bishops by taking on c3 but we've seen that's no big deal. The ♘/d5 is at least as influential as the dark-squared Bishop. Below master level I expect that 9. 0-0 and 9. a3 will be most common. 9. 0-0-0 is sharper, but the positions are more intricate and difficult to handle for White, as our examples show.

End Credits

I'd like to thank all of you for coming to see me and my little show here tonight. If you've enjoyed it, then it's been worthwhile! So, until we meet again, goodnight and I LOVE YOU ALL.

MUSIC
LIGHTS
APPLAUSE

The Essential Center Counter starred:

Andrew Martin, author
Bob Long, producer
Deep Fritz/Shallow Andy
Make-Up

Mr. Martin and Mr. Long were assisted by:

MegaBase 2004
ECO B
All the Informators
All the New in Chess Yearbooks
Chess Publishing (1 e4 section by A. Martin)
Modernes Skandinavisch by GM M. Wahls
The Scandinavian by GM J. Emms, Everyman Chess
Winning with the Scandinavian by R. Harmon, Batsford
The Scheming Scandinavian DVD by A. Martin, Bad Bishop

JANITOR
SLAMMING OF DOORS
SILENCE

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COLOPHON

The body copy of *The Essential Center Counter* was set in Times Roman 13/16. Page headers and footers were set in Bellevue Script. Chapter titles were set in Compacta Black. Special symbols were set in Chess and the diagrams were set in C.R. Horowitz.

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A Real 1-2 Punch

Grandmaster Jonathan Speelman was an analyst in Vishwanathan Anand's camp for the 1995 world championship match against Garry Kasparov. They looked at the Center Counter (aka 'Scandinavian') and pronounced it as quite playable.

In 2004 one test was made of this decree and it was Speelman-Martin, 4NCL, September. This important game was full of fireworks before eventually being drawn. Martin's ... ♗f5 was more than a little playable—Black possibly had a slight edge.

But the real point is that the Center Counter can be aggressive and dangerous. Because of international master Martin's preferred 2... ♖xd5, the Center Counter also doesn't require a mountain of memorization nor knowledge to learn it and use it.

In 10 chapters you are guided through declined and accepted variations. Transpositional variations from non-CC games such as the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit are not just investigated, they are taken apart.

36 games are annotated in the friendly style that Andrew Martin is known for—his writing makes you want to play the system!

In 2004 Martin set a world record by playing 321 simultaneous chess games, all at once.

He lives in London with his wife and two daughters. His recent *King's Indian Battle Plans for Thinkers'* Press was an international bestseller.



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